

# The Teche Country Fifty Years Ago

By  
Francis DuBose Richardson  
of Bayside Plantation

from  
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In 1829 the revolution in agriculture was fairly inaugurated; old things were passing away and all was becoming new. At the purchase of Louisiana in 1803 stock raising was the wealth and business of the Teche country. Its first field money crops were indigo and cotton, with rice and tobacco as side crops for home supply; and so late as 1831-1832, many indigo vats were to be seen along the Teche. But the success of the sugar crop on the lower Mississippi coast, same latitude, had turned the attention of planters to seed cane, and at this time that was the great one thing needful. At that date we recall but few sugar houses on the public road from Franklin to New Iberia, to wit, Agricole Fusilier, Dr. Solonge Sorrel, Frederic Pellerin, and Nicolas Loisel; but in 1835 nearly all the plantations on the Teche were in sugar. Those six years had done the work of a generation in changing the staple commodity of a country, its implements of husbandry, and in many respects the habits and customs of a whole community. They brought to the Teche country a large number of American planters with their capital and enterprise, rushing to the sugar gold fields, each with his own idea of working them to the best advantage, and often there was friendly competition between them. But the native Creole planters had the inside track on them, and for years their advantage kept them in advance of the newcomers. Beside being planters, raised on the soil, frugal and industrious, they were nearly all stock raisers as well, with large herds scattered over the open prairies as far as Texas. This gave them a bountiful supply of beef for their Negroes, while their American neighbors had to follow up the price of pork, no matter where it went. Besides, mingling with these great herds of cattle were the famous Creole horses, or ponies, from which they selected the largest and best for their horsepower sugarmills, general with the first planters, and which to a great extent kept their owners out of the mule market.

These Creole horses are a prominent feature in the livestock department of southwestern Louisiana, of which much has been said and written, and it would seem to be an accepted conclusion that they are degenerate descendants of noble ancestry. No horses were found on this continent when discovered, and the Spaniards under Cortes was the first hoof to press American soil. In view of the nature of that invasion, there seems to be almost a certainty that this cavalry was selected for colonial purposes and propagation as well as for conquest. When the Spaniards burned their ships they also turned their horses loose, after their work was done, on the fertile prairies of Mexico, when they had nothing to do but multiply and replenish. That they did this most effectually in the first hundred years, is shown by the countless herds of

Mexican mustangs which covered the country from the Pacific to the Mississippi, including their first cousins, the Creole horses of Louisiana. In these there was a further diminution in size from the mustang, caused, no doubt, by hard treatment, and by the habit of their owners turning out their smallest scrawny runts as fit for nothing but breeders. This line of ancestry is supported by their small roebuck feet, and falcon eye, so suggestive of the Andalusian stock, of which the Spanish cavalry was so largely composed. They have all the endurance of the mule, and when well cared for, all the spirit of the thoroughbred.

With a change in agriculture came a change in implements of husbandry and all connected with them. The improved clipper plow took the place of the old barshear for cultivation, and the venerable Creole breaking-up plow, drawn by four yoke of oxen yoked by the horns, and which at a distance looked so much like a slow moving funeral processions, was replaced by the bright steel mold-board behind fast-stepping horses. The improved cart and wagon took the place of the all-wood wheel and axle-tree without a scrap of iron about the whole concern, and which, of a clear morning, could be heard half a mile away, screaming like a thousand tomcats having their tails ground off. New carriages and stylish looking buggies were making quite a show on the public road, when in other days was only to be seen the primeval caleche, made entirely of wood and rawhide and in which, no doubt, sad, brokenhearted Evangeline found many a lift by the good-natured, polite Acadians, as she wandered up and down the Teche in search of her lost Gabriel.

But nowhere was the change more perceptible than in buildings generally. In "good old Creole times" nearly all the buildings of the country were adobe, and what the historic loghouse and raising was to the woodlands of the South, so were these to the prairies. Among the laboring classes they clubbed together and made light work of it, so at a given time, all able-bodied men were on hand ready for duty, and refreshments provided. A place was selected with loamy soil and a hole was dug, as if for brick, in size to suit the quantity of material required, and after deep spading up it was watered to the consistency of brick mortar. Then green moss, of which a pile was provided, was spread like a gray blanket over the mortar-bed, when the men, barefooted, with trousers rolled up above their knees, tramped the circle, crushing in the moss to the bottom of the spading. Then another layer of moss and another tramp, the fun becoming fast and furious, till the hole was full of moss and mortar. This adobe was then pulled out by layers and taken to the house ready for daubing; the building all being finished except weather boarding, for which this clay and moss is the substitute, and the chimney as well. Beginning at the still, they go up, driving horizontal sticks between the studding every six inches to hold the mortar in its place, making a solid wall which when half dry is shaved off smooth with a sharp spade, and which when well dried and whitewashed, is solid and looks well. But there was still a "lower deep" in the style of architecture, in which there was no floor or sills. The ground was mortised and round poles used for studding and filled between with moss-mortar; for flooring they had good solid clay, overspread with ashes, which did not take more than one good ball to make hard and smooth. Split boards or thatch could be used for covering and gables. all attesting human invention before the time of sawmills and such luxuries.

On going into sugar the appearance of the country changed very gradually; the primitive sugarhouses were small and cheap affairs. Any kind of long, low building was made to answer for the four kettles and perjurie, or place where it was drained, while the mill was often outside without cover, like a farm hay press. Often the old ginhouse was enlarged and made to answer the purpose. The upper floor was used as a trotoire or circle, where the four, six or

eight horses turned the mill that crushed the cane that made the sugar. In 1829 there were but two plantations where steam was used, from New Iberia to Franklin, Dr. Solange Sorrel and Frederic Pellerin. The bagasse chimney was the invention of Thomas H. Thompson, in 1834 or 1835, and was not patented.

It was not until the early 1840's that the improvements to plantation buildings came to be one of the main things of beauty in the Teche country. The beautiful Negro quarters with other outbuildings looking as if they had been caught in a snowstorm, contrasting with a bright red brick sugarhouse with thin, tall stacks like plantation watchtowers; all of which looks beautiful and shows that the world has been moving on. Who would turn it back if they could?

Fifty-six years ago the Teche was much more thickly settled than now; for it took many small places to make one large sugar plantation, and many of these small farmers moved further up the country or back into the prairies. Much of the splendid forest scenery has been destroyed, and where once stood the giant live oak, with spread unknown to any other tree, the bright, glistening magnolia, overtopping the deep green orange grove, is now a field and nothing more. The stranger then was much more impressed with the natural beauties of the country than now. The keynote of its fame had been sounded by Longfellow, it was wafted upon every breeze from the press until it became the Southern Meca of the wayfaring man and the pride of its people. One of these travelers, well known to fame, who had taken in the beauties of all other lands, when asked, on leaving here, what he thought of it said, "Well, sir, I just think that if there is a spot in all this sin-cursed earth which God in his mercy has left to remind one of the paradise he has lost, it is here." No traveler now will ever see it in this light; all has been sacrificed to railroad short cuts, and he looks out from his luxurious Pullman in vain to catch a glimpse of the far-famed Beulah land of other days. But the car of progress, inexorable as the fiat of Heaven itself, still drives on, nor stops to gaze upon the wreck of beauty that strews his onward course.

In 1830 more than half the population of the Teche country were Negroes, who were much pleased with the change from cotton to sugar. True, during the harvest or rolling season it was more laborious, with the wood cording and night watches, which they called Towers," and which lasted from about October to January. But even this was better than the cold morning baths of cotton picking which often lasted from August to February, the most continuous labor of all the field crops. Moreover, there were pleasures for the Negroes about a sugarhouse unknown to cotton plantations. There is sugar cane, to begin with, and no shifty ducky would be without a stalk to his mouth pretty much all the time he had to spare, and most of them did not wait for spare time. Then there was hot juice to be drunk, with now and then a chance at the strike box, and trough candy, with taffy and molasses ad libitum. As to working half the night, they lost but little to sleep by that, for in his cabin the average Negro slept only two or three hours before daylight. Then, again, there was something inspiring about a caneyard at night, all illuminated, that kept them in a merry mood, and the well cared for Negro seemed to be in his native element in scenes like this. His jokes and loud, ringing laugh kept time with the rattle of the cane as he dashed it on the carrier and wheeled to get another turn. All this was varied every now and then with some wild melody far superior to the Ethiopian minstrelsy of commerce. A leader gave it out line by line, often his own improvised words, when all, men, women and boys, would join in the chorus that fairly made the old caneshed shake. It was a long time ago, but we hear it still:

Dat little dog his name was Venter,  
O juranzo, ho!  
And he could run de coldest scent-er  
O juranzo, ho!  
Possum good wid sop and tater,  
O juranzo, ho!  
Pretty gall but can't get at her,  
O juranzo, ho!

This short meter cornsong would hardly die away in the still night when another would be started up, perhaps on the dirge order, the Negro specialty, and then another and another - so with jests and laughter and songs the night would pass away.

Some of the superannuated Negroes, found generally on plantations, claimed great longevity; not many of them would be satisfied with less than a hundred years and to find out really the age of one was a good deal like chasing an antediluvian. If sugar "cause all our woes" as has been often felt since it was first planted, when down to three cents a pound, it certainly did raise the Teche country to a commercial importance beyond any other portion of the state outside of the Parishes of Orleans and Jefferson. Old Saint Mary took the lead with her fifty thousand hogsheads and kept it until chaos came and all was lost.

Fifty years ago the Creole population of southwestern Louisiana represented the wealth and power of their section. The planters generally had an easy time of it; very few of them in debt, they fared sumptuously every day on what they raised themselves, and dressed in their neat home cottonade. They moved about in good style and equipage, but there was nothing of the snob, no servants in livery, or aristocracy aping, so disgusting to true Americans everywhere. And in those years, as now, they were a polished people; after the similitude of their ancestry, jealous and sensitive of their honor, and brave in defending it. Many a slur is cast upon their language, and often by those who speak only English, and that imperfectly. The educated Creoles of Louisiana have all the advantages of the best schools of our own and foreign lands, and using the same books, writing the same language everyday at home, it does indeed seem strange they "can not be understood." And because they speak to inferiors in a way to be best understood, as we often do to children, they are represented as speaking in an unknown tongue.

They were not a pious people, the men, at any rate, in the estimation of the orthodox American. Indeed, it was a common sentiment among them that "religion was a good thing for the wife and children, but for the man, no use;" and in this respect they acted out their convictions by going with their families to church and waiting patiently outside until Mass was over. In those days they could hardly be considered well informed in religious matters generally, and it can not be denied that the historic pioneer circuit preacher was regarded with no little suspicion, and was "in perils often." Alas, poor Richmond Nelly, who so barely escaped drowning at the hands of a mob in St. Martinville. He was rescued by the good Catholic priest, only to be lost in a swamp a few years after; found dead, beside a log, on his knees. Very few of the Creoles of that

day spoke English, or spoke it very imperfectly, which was no doubt the main cause of the little social intercourse there was between them and their American neighbors, planters of the same social position who had settled among them. Their house servants were used often as interpreters, for it seems no trouble for a Negro to learn a language such as it is among themselves, they carried sociability to an extent rarely met with elsewhere. For years it was their custom in Chicot Noir neighborhood and vicinity to meet at each other's houses every Sunday, and have a good time generally; "eat, drink, and be merry." A description of one of these gatherings may serve as a sort of photograph of the Teche Creole society of long ago. This was at the residence of Nicolas Loisel (one of the very best representatives of Creole character) at which all were Creoles or Frenchmen except a guest of his son.

The company all came up in good time and style and with cordial greetings, and were soon enjoying themselves, each in his own way. Some talked crops, some played cards and dominoes, and all around seemed to be doing their best to amuse themselves and each other, until about two o'clock when dinner, the great business of the day, was announced. And here, while they are skirmishing at the table with two or three on the open shell, before the main attack, let us look back and reproduce the Creole's daily menu. Breakfast with them was a small affair; cafe-au-lait (boiled milk and coffee), an egg or two and sometimes a light chop or small bird on toast, with excellent snow white bread, which every Creole mistress knew how to have baked in her own Dutch oven. Thus fortified they were all right until one or two o'clock, their hour for dining, with no lunches spoiling the appetite between. Dinner was their meal in chief, the grand center of all their culinary ambition; and, as the world moves, there is reason to fear that these old-fashioned Creole dinners will in time take their place among the lost arts, so we intend to rescue this from oblivion, complete in all its appointments.

As usual on extra occasions, extra servants were called in, and the white-aproned darkies were thick around the table, "ministers extraordinary" in their own estimation, watching like hawks to take away your place. The feast began in earnest with their far-famed Creole dish - not national but state sovereign - gumbo, of African descent. I did not count the courses, they were "distinct as the billows, yet one as the sea," and each billow was enough to drown a common appetite. I am not much connoisseur and less epicure, and only know how good a thing is by the old "proof of the pudding, etc.," but I do know that one of those old, long-practiced Creole darky cooks, under the inspiration of madame, could beat the old serpent himself with tempting viands. Exquisite dainties mingled with substantials, like "apples of gold in pictures of silver," in rich profusion: fricasses, and solid English roasts, in happy union joined; all suggestive of Bull-Frog Americanized, and their union cemented by the pure extract of old Mocha, the peerless "cafe noir," and signal for ladies and boys to leave. And it came none too soon for the good claret and champagne had evidently found a lodgement, and was getting in its work. Some would talk while others were singing, and then they would all talk together. Genteel hilarity they called it in French, nothing more, "bons vivants" they were who enjoyed the good things of this vain world without abusing them; and indeed, among all that circle of planters we never heard of a drunkard or a gambler. But there was another class who did abuse them dreadfully and themselves, too. The party left about sunset for home, with the agreement to meet the following Sunday at Charles Pecot's. As we recall them now, in the order of their plantations, Colonel Charles Olivier (a natural born nobleman), two Delahoussayes, Mr. Malus, Nicolas Loisel, Theodore Faye, Dr. Solange Sorrel, Frederic Pellerin, and Charles Pecot. All these lived to a good old age, none less than seventy, except Dr. Sorrel, who met an untimely death at the hands of Negroes of an adjoining plantation, for which five of them dropped from the gallows at one

time in Franklin. Financially they were all successful men and left valuable estates. Their words were as good as their bonds, and their bonds as good as the bank. No stain ever rested on the fair name of any of them. Contemporary in age and position among the American planters were Thomas H. Thompson, Colonel J. G. Richardson, Robert Graham, Martin Campbell, J. D. Wilkins, Henry Peedles, and J. W. Jeanerette. All of them, too, have passed away - death took them in rapid succession.

A glance at the map will show the location of these reminiscences to be about the center of the Teche navigation, from its mouth to Breaux Bridge, and near the present town of Jeanerette, about twenty years before it was founded. Fed on lumber and emancipation money, its growth has been equal to that of the magic railroad towns of the west, and it is already aping the city airs of New Iberia. As it has made its first three-quarter-mile stretch on Main Street in double-quick time, a record of its author may be interesting to its busy throng who "knew not Joseph." This was John W. Jeanerette, as he wrote it, and "mr. Jinret" as she pronounced it, who came to the Teche country in 1830 from the high hills of Santee, South Carolina, and bought what is now known as Pine Grove Place, eight miles below New Iberia. There he lived through good and evil report for seven years, and was generally considered the most important man in the neighborhood, especially at home. He was certainly a man of affairs, and a great man of them - sugar planter, justice of the peace, our first postmaster, pioneer "brag" player, and "mine host of the inn;" moreover, his friends claimed for him the character of the old, highminded South Carolina gentleman. His wife was a good, pious Methodist, and tried very hard to keep their only son, Tom, straight, but it was no use. She did her level best to balance accounts in the family, always had a preaching place in the house, and there were often religious services going on in one part and a big game of cards in the other. Indeed, of all his many irons, this seemed to be the only one he did really keep hot. But his many pupils in "brag" became experts, and so turned his lessons against himself that in 1837 he was sold out and the family removed to Alabama where it became extinct. The post office was then continued in the same house, rented successively by postmasters, Dr. Crawford, Charley Nettleton, and Isaac Applewhite, when the old home of mixed memories was torn down and the post office was removed two miles south, to a small store kept by a Frenchman opposite Bayside dwelling, with F. D. Richardson as postmaster. This was near the famous tall, black live oak stemp, which stood there, "gloomy and peculiar," up to 1800 and gave its name, "chicot noir," to all that "arrondissement." Venerable relic of past centuries!

A glorious tree is the old gray oak,  
He has stood for a thousand year,  
Has stood and frowned on the wood around,  
Like a king among his peers.

An effort was made by petition to change the name of the office to Chicot Noir, but Postmaster General Cave Johnson decided against us, on account of which the then postmaster resigned, and Paul Provost succeeded him. He removed the office to his store, one mile still further, making three miles from its starting point.

Then an effort was made to change the name to Provostville, but the old name had come to stay, and like the shirt of Nessus, will stick through all coming time. Public sentiment, however, was against the latter change, preferring the

more euphonious name, Jeanerette. Paul Provost was a very clever Frenchman, who began with a very small adobe house and very large pipe, and often assisted the priest at Patout's Church in singing. His place grew steadily until it was a store, a saloon, and a tavern. He was esteemed a fair, honest man, of pleasant, social qualities. Here Jeanerette was born, and here it will continue to grow, if the fire engine is kept in good order, until it takes in its old site of Chicot Noir and may in time get back to its original starting place, Pine Grove.

In politics the old Creoles of the Teche were generally solid, old-line Henry Clay Whigs, and could prove it all by the "Courier des Estats Unis," and the "New Orleans Bee." They were inclined to be ultra, and it was not until after the election of Alexandre Mouton as governor in 1843 that they realized fully that there could be such a thing as respectability in Louisiana democracy; all Acadian though he was, as governor he left behind no superior, and as United States senator not many peers.

There seems to have been little or no change in the status of the Attakapas Indians since 1830. They had then pretty much lost their identity as a tribe, though they still had a nominal chief and owned their little reservation at the Indian Bend where about the same number of wigwams or huts stood then as now. No pure bloods remain and the half breeds show no improvement in the stock, indeed they seem to inherit all the lazy vices of the one with none of the "get up and go along" virtues of the other race, especially among the men. As the world is now moving on the Teche, it will not be long before some Chicago capitalist will come down and take the female remnants of the tribe in as partners - as their entailed property can not be sold - and establish a first-class sugar plantation on the old reservation.

The salubrity of the Teche country seems to have undergone no change; it was then considered unequaled in its latitude, and as it was fifty years ago, so it is now, and so we suppose it will ever be; for why not? The same health-giving breeze that fans the green ocean and bathes in its billows thousands of miles away, still whistles through the grand old live oaks which stood in vernal beauty around the cradles of St. Martin and St. Mary, patron saints, holy shrines of the faithful. Here in the vast solitudes of nature were a few adobe homes of the Acadian exiles, victims of the most cruel and outrageous fortune. "O, bloodiest picture in the book of time!" So good and true and yet how hard a fate! But in after years St. Maur became the dwelling place of another race, who knew nothing save of Castile and Aragon, and whose commandant was ruling with semi-regal power, when the name of the poor saint was lost to the world, and "Nova Iberia" lived in its stead. And here for half a century it stood almost loneliness, the monument house of the "pettit souverano" till all was changed and "vox populi" was born. Then commerce came, sweeping the prairies far and near; it came on splendid steamers and by railroads, with palace cars, and bids fair to found a city here.

**Loss of the Civil War Gunboat  
U. S. S Colonel Kinsman  
In Berwick Bay  
February 23, 1863**

by  
**Roland R. Stansbury**

The U. S. S. Colonel Kinsman under the command of Lieutenant Wiggin left Brashear City on Berwick Bay on what he thought to be a routine picket duty at Fort Buchanan, north of Brashear City. In the early morning of February 23, 1863 the U. S. S. Kinsman sunk in Berwick Bay with the loss of five lives. The remains of this vessel still lies on the bottom of Berwick Bay below Morgan City, between the southern most point of the city and Bateman Island.

The original name of this vessel was the "Gray Cloud." She was built in 1854 in Elizabeth, Pa. The first home port for this 245 ton sternwheeler was St. Louis, Mo. She was captured as Confederate steamer Colonel Kinsman in 1862 and named the U. S. S. Kinsman by the Union Navy.

Hopefully, one day, the value of the remains of the U. S. S. Colonel Kinsman will be recognized by the State of Louisiana and the Federal Government. Maybe efforts to salvage this vessel will be undertaken.

Listed below are the reports of the officers involved giving accounts of the sinking of the U. S. S. Colonel Kinsman:

**Report of Rear-Admiral Farragut, U. S. Navy,  
transmitting additional information.**

Flagship Hartford  
New Orleans, February 26, 1863.

Sir: I regret to have to report the loss of the gunboat Colonel Kinsman, which struck a snag in Berwick Bay, and although run ashore, slid off and sank in 50 feet of water at or near Brashear City. I herewith enclose the reports of Lieutenant-Commander A. P. Cooke and Acting Volunteer Lieutenant George Wiggin.

The Colonel Kinsman was one of the boats fitted out by General Butler for river service, with her boilers and machinery protected by iron.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. Farragut,  
Rear-Admiral

Hon. Gideon Welles,  
Secretary of the Navy.

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Report of Lieutenant-Commander Cooke, U. S. Navy,  
commanding U. S. S. Estrella,  
transmitting report of commanding officer.

U. S. Gunboat Estrella,  
Brashear City, February 24, 1863.

Sir: I herewith enclose Captain Wiggin's report in reference to the loss of the steamer Kinsman. I have temporarily detailed some of her men to fill vacancies in the other vessels, as also her two master's mates, one to the Calhoun and the other to the Estrella.

I await your orders in reference to the disposition to be made of her crew, and would request to be permitted to make up deficiencies in the other vessels from her officers and men. Captain Wiggin will examine the wreck tomorrow and see whether it will be possible to recover anything.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. P. Cooke,  
Lieutenant-Commander

Rear-Admiral D. G. Farragut,  
Flagship Hartford.

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Report of Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Wiggin, U. S. Navy,  
commanding U. S. S. Colonel Kinsman.

Berwick Bay, February 24, 1863.

Sir: I herewith submit to you my report about the loss of the U. S. S. Kinsman, under my command.

I received last night a detachment of the One hundred and fourteenth New York Volunteers on board, to accompany me on picket duty, and started for the fort about 9:30 p. m. When within 100 yards of the fort, about 60 feet from shore, the engines being stopped, the steamer struck a snag, apparently floating, on her starboard bow, about 15 feet from the stem. The snag then passed on and struck the starboard wheel very heavily. We went ahead as usual, and made fast to shore, when it was reported to me by the watch below that the vessel was filling. I went below immediately and examined the leak; found the water rushing in very rapidly, the floor being covered some 6 inches in depth. I then ordered the engineer to start the bilge pumps and get up the greatest amount of steam that could be carried with safety. I had the line cut, backed out, and steamed down the bay for the flat below the wharf, in order to save my men and battery, if the water should rise too fast. When opposite the wharf the water was reported to be rising very fast, and I hailed the steamers Diana, Estrella, and Calhoun, requesting boats and men to be sent to our assistance.

In the meantime I had organized my crew into pumping and bailing parties, and they were all steadily at work. Heading inshore, we ran aground with a full head of steam, thereby raising her bow about 2 feet out of water. The carpenter and his gang tried in vain to stop the leak. I ordered the powder kegs and magazine to be brought on deck in order to keep them dry. Then I let go my anchor and ran a line from her quarter to the shore, at the same time sending troops on shore. In a few minutes afterwards her stern began to settle, causing

her to slide down the steep bank, where she finally sank, and at twenty minutes past midnight every vestige of her had disappeared.

The officers and crew were picked up by the boats of the Estrella, Calhoun, and Diana, neither officers nor men having the least chance to save any of their effects. I am sorry that I have to report the following of my men missing:

John Berry, ship's cook; Patk. McGoun, fireman; John Kirby, fireman; Isaac Deer, coal heaver, colored; William Parker, coal heaver, colored.

I also enclose the surgeon's report to me. Early this morning I went in a small boat to examine the bayou and recover what property I might, and succeeded in picking up 6 barrels of powder, with a few pieces of sailor's clothing and bedding.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

George Wiggin,  
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, U. S. Navy

Lieutenant-Commander A. P. Cooke,  
U. S. S. Estrella.

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### Report of Assistant Oltmanns, U. S. Coast Survey.

Berwick Bay, February 24, 1863.

Sir: According to your request, I herewith give to you the details of the loss of the gunboat Kinsman last night, as far as they came under my personal observation:

Between 7 and 8 o'clock p. m. a detail of the One hundred and fourteenth New York Volunteers came on board the steamer to accompany us on picket during the night. The soldiers were stationed on the quarter and hurricane decks. At about 9:30 p. m. the steamer started up the river under, as far as I could learn, about 50 pounds of steam. When nearly up to our station, 1 1/2 miles from this place, just below the fort and about 20 yards from shore, while sitting in Captain Wiggin's cabin, I felt a log or snag striking the steamer on her starboard side, forward of the wheelhouse, and immediately afterwards I heard and felt the wheel striking very hard against this log. Going forward, I heard it reported that the vessel was fast filling. Captain Wiggin gave his order very coolly and deliberately, no idea of danger entering our minds. Upon his request I went forward and found from 7 to 8 inches of water in the hold. The steam pumps had been started before this time, and all hands not engaged elsewhere were bailing the vessel with buckets. At this time, about fifteen minutes after the vessel struck, it was reported two or three times that we were gaining on the water. Captain Wiggin then turned the steamer, and we started back down the river, under the greatest possible pressure of steam, in order to reach the flat below the wharves here, run the steamer ashore, and thus save the lives of all our crew, and also the heavy guns on board. The magazine was ordered to be opened and the powder to be put on deck, if the water should rise to it. When we passed the wharves the water was reported to gain fast and the vessel sinking. Captain Wiggin hailed the Calhoun and the Estrella, requesting boats to be sent to our assistance. In the meantime he ran the

Kinsman, with full steam, head on shore till her bows grounded in 3 feet of water and no bottom with a 15-foot pole under her stern. A line was ordered to be brought out from her starboard quarter to haul her broadside to the bank, but before this could be accomplished the steamer filled and slid backward from the bank and sunk in about 18 fathoms of water at twenty-five minutes past midnight. The steamer Calhoun, as soon as she could get up steam, came up and rendered, with the boats of the Estrella, Diana, and Calhoun, all the assistance possible in saving the crew and soldiers, who otherwise must have perished.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. G. Oltmanns,  
Assistant, U. S. Coast Survey

Lieutenant-Commander A. P. Cooke,  
U. S. S. Estrella

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Order of Rear-Admiral, U. S. Navy,  
to Lieutenant-Commander Cooke, U. S. Navy,  
regarding the disposition of officers and men.

New Orleans, February 25, 1863.

You will order Lieutenant Wiggin and the officers and men of the late U. S. S. Colonel Kinsman to proceed to this place and report to me for further orders. You will also direct that their accounts be transferred to the U. S. steam sloop Pensacola.

Very respectfully,

D. G. Farragut,  
Rear-Admiral.

Lieutenant-Commander A. P. Cooke,  
Commanding U. S. Forces, Brashear City.

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# Obituary of John J. Garrett

From "The Planter's Banner"  
Volume XIV August 30, 1849, No. 35,  
Franklin, St. Mary's Parish, La.

Died on Saturday, the 25th inst., at his late residence on Bayou Sale',  
John J. Garrett, aged 66 year

The deceased was born in Opelousas, on the 3d of September, 1783. When he was about 12 years of age his father moved with his family to a place now owned by Mr. Chas. Grevenberg of this parish. After remaining there a few years he moved farther down the Teche, and settled just below Centreville. Seven or eight years afterwards he moved on Bayou Sale', and lived on the place now owned by Mr. Jesse Lacy, and about twelve years since he moved five miles farther down the bayou, and opened the plantation on which he lived up to the time of his decease.

For fifty four years he lived in this parish, and no man had more friends than he - enemies he had none. He was one of nature's children, a stranger to polished duplicity and fashionable deceit, his thoughts and feelings were all honest, and his lips were always a true index to his heart. His children will always bear testimony that he was one of the tenderest and most indulgent of fathers, and if the voice of his departed companion could break the silence of the tomb its gentle tones would bear witness to the kindness of his heart, and the purity of his affection as a husband; and the public will long remember his rank countenance and friendly deportment.

Possessing an iron constitution and a restless mind, he never felt that time dragged heavily, or that life was a mere blank. In the fore part of his life he engaged in the most laborious toils, and in various hunting excursions in prairie and woodland, and whether following the plough in the field, or plying the axe to the oaks of the forest, or scouring the bayous, forests or prairies in pursuit of the bounding deer or fierce panther, his courage, his spirit, his energies, and his perseverance were always the same. There is not a prairie in the parish with which he was not familiar, not a bayou nor a lake, not a forest nor a marsh that he has not scoured with his unerring gun in the pursuit of the pleasures of the chase.

By his industry and economy he succeeded in amassing a handsome property which he has left to his children, whose interests were always near his heart, and whose happiness was always to him a source of high satisfaction.

Like other men he erred; but his were errors of the head - his heart was always right. He was an honest man - not honest from interest, or from any motive that could be questioned - he possessed no calculating, conventional honesty, it was all the natural fruits of an honest heart. His character, feelings, thoughts, affections and deportment were those of a genuine Creole - a better specimen of a noble Creole never trod upon the soil of St. Mary, and never will. The original Creole character is fast passing away - another race is springing up to fill the places vacated by the Creole fathers - like the subject of this notice, their names and their peculiar customs will only be known by the traditions in the memory of their children. The few of them that remain linger on the last verge of time like other revolutionary fathers - they are as frail links connecting the past with the future, those links will soon be struck from the chain, and breach will be formed which time can never close up.

**Comparative Statement of Sugar  
Produced in the Parish of St. Mary,  
in 1843, '44, '45, & '46**

**Planters' Banner and  
Louisiana Agriculturist  
Volume XII, No. 3  
Franklin, Attakapas County,  
Louisiana  
January 14, 1847**

	1843	1844	1845	1846
	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.
J. C. Marsh	252	409	316	250
Hayes & Rose	167	336	298	185
Peebles & Co.		380	380	250
J. D. Wilkins & Co.		320	dissolved	
J. D. Wilkins	180		181	160
R. E. Wilkins & Co.			62	none
J. Jacobs				15
C. & L. D. Deblanc	220	122	357	235
Charles Oliver	195	268	284	140
Estate of St. M. Darby,	189	342	316	160
T. H. Thompson	180	132	262	125
J. G. Richardson & Sons		173	306	diss
E. M. & D. D. Richardson				150
Nicolas Loisel	182	224	208	127
Robert McCarty		48	52	25
Leake & Rucker			100	132
F. D. Richardson	48	150	100	180
Mrs. N. Leblanc	42	49	60	14
L. & E. Provost		24	40	18
N. P. Provost		45	76	30
Godfrey Provost & Co.	100	95	93	39
Estate D. Weeks	565	758	652	593
Sinnetiere & Verret	22		24	18
Ursin Provost & Co.	64	92	152	51
D. Rawles & Co.	78	144	54	9
Lufroy Bonvillin	64	71	76	30
Olduf Labauve			39	34
Octave Delahoussaye	173	235	290	91
Rawles & Son			74	diss
W. Kilgore	92	142	134	32
Borel & Louviere				20
C. Grevemberg & Son	445	745	615	412
Theodore Fay	130	134	134	107

	1843	1844	1845	1846
	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.
Martial Sorel	613	786	775	460
Charles Pecot & Co.	131	91	124	70
Gregoire Bodin	102	68	129	99
Simon Bodin	30	46		25
Bodin & Pellerin			69	diss
N. L. Pellerin				5
Mrs. Louis Moore			16	none
Louis C. Moore				4
G. L. Fusselier	520	373	466	266
Edward Sigur	62	134	134	96
Laurent Sigur		32	36	none
T. & N. Sigur		166	186	130
L. P. Lange				4
T. Dumennil			52	24
C. Bonin				26
Jim Frere				9
Henry Penn, Jr.	24		47	33
Bernard & brothers	109	77	dissolved	
F. A. Frere			164	135
J. A. Frere			314	214
J. A. & F. A. Frere	390	455		diss
Mrs. Armelin & Son	92	93	82	72
Barthelemy Martel			22	37
S. Patout			99	80
Sundry Persons				22
Fuselier & Mossy			97	105
Estate of Dehart	100	134	142	70
M. A. Frazer	81	103	99	95
Henry Foot	104	132	185	100
Fuselier & Co.	295	184	175	166
Mrs. Fuselier	160	189	192	111
Mason Pilcher			5	97
W. S. Harding	141	65	97	97
Hiram Anderson	73	99	123	none
Stephen Duncan	400	232	234	95
Dr. S. Duncan				180
James Lacy & bro				4
James Porter	339	333	516	330
J. M. Foot	13		39	42
Geo Foot			32	46
James Campbell		48	90	121
Ursin Perrot	176	102	215	180
David Bell	40	16	43	22
G. Elliott	37		sold out	
Bryce Elliott	53	29	66	50
J. S. Tarkington		32	66	31
James Todd				33
Mrs. Sterling	77	96	161	92
Watson McKerll	118	69	159	201
John B. Murphy	76	105	139	114
John Parkerson	76	66	103	60
Huger & Ogden			130	404
S. C. Mathison	79	55	95	65
A. L. Fields	71	51	118	73

	1843	1844	1845	1846
	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.
C. Theodule Carlin	52	55	122	130
Honore Carlin	80	78	82	none
Hilaire Carlin	53		sold out	
Baylies & Bernard		56	85	73
Euphasie Carlin	52	69	93	123
J. H. Bedell & Moss	101	107	117	191
John Moore	129	80	207	65
Adelard Demaret	35	29	41	30
Estate of M. Demaret	94	66	157	88
W. R. Harris		133	166	115
H. Crawford	53	46	114	78
Ulger Sennet		35	133	112
Mrs. C. Ferguson	28	40	49	30
Estate of Mrs. E. Rogers	50	76	97	none
Mrs. Nickelson	20	19	55	40
C. Nettleton				31
James Smith	272		sold out	
J. E. Lacy	82	37	77	40
Desire Carlin	66	90	103	100
Adelard Carlin	92	128	182	140
Estate of P. Carlin	31	45	89	none
John L. Hudgens	49	72	91	90
David Berwick	68	96	178	124
John Merriman	44	55	68	49
Mrs. F. Kemper	16	20	66	37
Leon Verdun	26	18	58	16
John J. Garrett	92	100	161	98
W. S. Gordy		28	103	85
C. M. Vinson	83	122	165	109
John Rice	114	220	320	220
Benjamin Hudson	200	253	246	190
Nathan Berwick	85	121	193	70
Grimball & Callihan	131	162	143	124
Michael Gordy	134	131	133	73
Allen & Garrett		27	75	76
W. Sharp	77	85	104	100
J. M. Kemper				4
McGregor & Compton			58	none
W. Pumphrey	82	126	225	110
Otho L. Pumphrey				35
Romeo Verdun	58	67	78	60
George Sennet	57	72	117	72
Francis Dancy	206	252	219	165
D. P. Sparks	201	202	285	180
Joshua Baker	303	303	440	305
W. T. Palfrey	134	152	336	200
P. C. Bethel	151	214	422	336
John Smith	196	208	322	100
O & N Cornay	193	210	306	163
Estate of Gerbeau	77	126	145	67
Scales & others			42	40
C. M. Charpentier	87	109	180	93

	1843	1844	1845	1846
	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.	hhds.
Mathew Rogers	155	111	216	141
Burnley & Wilcoxon			127	68
J. W. Bowles	71	121	65	83
R. Lynch & Co.			186	
Richard Lynch	132	124	56	104
W. J. Nash	103	115	233	114
J. M. Muggat	90	50	89	43
Est. of Jas Muggah	56	45	139	63
C. R. Muggah			49	41
A. M. Stanley & Co.	140	46	260	120
Michael Hartman	85	40	66	58
David Robbins	77	81	275	63
George Haydel	174	272	265	90
Haydel & Briant				116
Hypolite Magnon			30	none
Louis Daigle	28	22	40	30
T. Landry & Co.			55	17
Antoine Como	47	52	118	74
Zephirin Theriot			41	28
M. H. Carroll & Co.	24	51	154	diss
J. M. Bateman	65	86	174	124
Anthony Hartman	50	30	72	49
Jacob Hartman	40	30	77	54
Valsin Rentrop	21	78	98	70
Broussard & Frytay			21	diss
J. B. Broussard				18
----- Frytay				50
Mrs. A. Cochrane		67	92	83
H. Knight & Son	107	145	163	diss
H. Knight, sen.				125
H. Knight, Jr.				87
Henry Bradley	69	107	93	73
Joseph Knight	28	27	59	50
Mrs. H. Rentrop	202	292	400	135
Dr. W. Brashear	60	95	83	80
Joseph Berwick	79	97	105	104
R. B. Brashear	190	332	357	220
Dr. Tarleton	24	121	102	none
J. Y. Sanders	60	56	81	62
C. G. & A. O'Brien	75	106	190	73
Charles O'Brien			46	33
J. N. Wafford	110	142	236	120
Estate of Collins	32	32	79	34
Edward Stansberry	37	91	124	52
Burriss & Campbell		71	85	43
W. Rochelle, Jr.	71	122	127	64
L. Booth	12		20	8
A. Stansberry	47	102	95	45
A & H Wallis		84	106	68
A. Landry & Son		33	47	35
Gautrau & Aucoins		21	26	24
William Cock				85

According to the above statement the

Crop of 1843 was 14,625 hhds.  
Crop of 1844 was 18,137 hhds.  
Crop of 1845 was 24,671 hhds.  
Crop of 1846 was 16,525 hhds.

There are in this parish 195 sugar planters, and 167 sugar houses.

Source: "Planters Banner and Louisiana Agriculturist, Volume XII, No. 3, Franklin, Attakapas County, Louisiana, January 14, 1847, copied from the "Periodical Collection" of the "Morgan City Archives," Morgan City, Louisiana.

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# Ship Shoal Light-Station, Louisiana

by  
Roland R. Stansbury,  
Commissioner/ Secretary  
Morgan City Archives

Ship Shoal Light-Station, located southwest of Raccoon Point between Atchafalaya and Timbalier Bays, was established in 1859. This Lighthouse was constructed to take the place of the Ship Shoal Lightship originally anchored in 1849 to assist vessels traveling between Raccoon Point, south of the Parish of Terrebonne, and the shoal. <sup>1</sup>

The Ship Shoal Lightship supported two red lanterns, one thirty feet and one forty-five feet above the waterline. The two lanterns each held eight wicks and reflectors. "The vessel was anchored inside the west end of the shoal in about five fathoms (20 feet) of water." <sup>2</sup> This vessel was authorized by act of congress, August 14, 1848, at the cost of \$15,000.00. <sup>3</sup>

Surveys and examinations for the Ship Shoal and Shell Keys lighthouses had been completed in 1854. By 1857 all the materials necessary for the construction of Ship Shoal had been prepared. <sup>4</sup> The drawings for the structure were prepared by J. K. Whilldin, civil Engineer, and the materials manufactured by I. P. Morris & Co. of Philadelphia, Penn. The actual structure was erected on the shoal under the directions of Lieutenant W. H. Stevens, U. S. Engineers. <sup>5</sup> The original plans called for an iron screw pile structure about 100 feet high. The final structure was a "125-foot iron skeleton tower." <sup>6</sup>

The lighting apparatus was a second-order lens. The lens was of the design of Augustin Fresnel, a French physicist interested in optics. Fresnel created seven orders, or sizes, of lenses. The largest lens being that of the first-order. It was the most powerful and used for greater distances. <sup>7</sup>

1 Ship Shoal Clipping Files, Record Group 26, National Archives, Washington, D. C., from copies at Morgan City Archives, Morgan City, Louisiana, Hereafter referred to as Clipping Files.

2. Lighthouses & Lightships of the Northern Gulf of Mexico, David L. Cipra, United States Coast Guard, 1976, page 59.

3 Clipping Files, page 1.

4. Ibid., page 1

5. Ship Shoal Drawings & Plans, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, National Archives, Washington, D. C., from copies at Morgan City Archives.

6. Lighthouses & lightships of the Northern Gulf of Mexico, David L. Cipra, United States Coast Guard, 1976, page 39.

7 America's Lighthouses. Their Illustrated History Since 1716, Francis Ross Holland, Jr., 1972, page 18, The Stephen Greene Press, Brattleboro, Vermont.

A wooden platform used for putting down the iron piles was carried away by a hurricane in August of 1858. The engineer stated that he hopes to repair the damage at a cost of about \$2,000.00. <sup>8</sup> Construction of the lighthouse was finally completed in 1859 and the light-vessel formerly at that station was removed. <sup>9</sup>

On April 19, 1861, President Lincoln announced the blockade of all Southern ports. The Union fleet would attempt to prevent all vessels from bringing aid to the Confederates. In a defensive move, the Confederates ordered navigational aids to be removed from the channels and the lights of the lighthouses be extinguished and removed. In March 1861, R. N. McMillan, an attorney from Franklin, Louisiana, was Collector of Customs and the superintendent of lights for the Teche District. He was in charge of payroll for the following: Keeper of a light vessel, seven lighthouse keepers, a deputy collector, and an inspector at Berwick. The lighthouses of the Teche District included Southwest Reef, Shell Keys, and Ship Shoal. "On June 25, 1861, Collector McMillan ordered his lighthouse keepers to ready the public property in their charges for storage, and help Captain Charles S. Simmons remove the lenses, clockworks, oil, tanks, burners, and so forth." The fixtures were stored at the Custom House at Berwick City and later reclaimed by the Union forces. <sup>10</sup> In 1865, after the Civil War ended, Ship Shoal and several other Lighthouses of the northern Gulf of Mexico were repaired and refitted to begin normal operations. <sup>11</sup>

Because of unknown sanitary problems at this station in 1866, many of the keepers became sick and several persons had been paralyzed. It was imperative that the cause of this unknown illness be discovered, not only for the health and welfare of the keepers, but also to assure the hiring of future keepers that all was in order at this station. Soon it was discovered that the sickness was caused by the contamination of the drinking water by lead. The entire structure was painted with red lead paint. The lead washed from the structure into the rain-water tanks and was consumed as drinking water by the keepers. The problem was solved by the scraping and washing of the lead paint with a solution of caustic potash. The structure was then coated with three successive coats of coal-tar. Water tanks and pipes were also scraped inside and out, washed and coal-tared. This entire project of scraping, washing and applying three coats of coal-tar began September 28th and was concluded at the end of December, 1866. <sup>12</sup>

Maintenance for the preservation of the foundation of Ship Shoal was completed in July of 1869. Concrete was poured around the iron piles of the structure in 15 feet of water. An examination of the foundation in 1874 revealed that the concrete and the balast-stones had been removed a considerable distance west of the lighthouse. This caused considerable erosion in the form of a deep gully in the shoal toward the foundation from the northeast. The results of this erosion of the foundation caused the tower structure to lean to the northeast. Although the inclination had not increased much in the past five years, it presented problems with the proper operation of the machinery of the lens-apparatus. Even though the tower had stabilized, it was not until 1896 that granite blocks were transported from Fort Pickens, Florida and placed around the foundation of the tower. <sup>13</sup>

8 Clipping Files, page 1.

9 Ibid., page 2.

10 Extinguishing the Lights - The Teche District, Carol Wells, Louisiana History, Summer, 1979, page 294.

11 Clipping Files, page 2

12 Clipping Files, page 2

13 Clipping Files, page 3

Routine maintenance was a must for the Ship Shoal Light-Station to remain functional. In March of 1901, metal work was purchased under contract and delivered to the station. "The tower was scaled and painted from the dome down to the third section below the parapet." The last major maintenance done to this station appears to have occurred in 1902 as stated in the following paragraph:

"The old gallery plates and rails were removed, the supporting beams were scaled and painted, and new floor and rails were put on. A new iron ladder was put up leading from the trapdoor on the gallery to lower tiebeams with an iron platform at the foot with a rail around three sides, and another ladder was placed from the platform to the water's edge. The old iron roof was removed and a new one was put on the dwelling with hand rail around it and new gutters. The beams and other supports under the roof were scaled and painted before the new roof was put on. The ceiling around the sides and the floors of the dwelling were taken out and the iron wall plates were replaced by new ones. All the ironwork under floors and ceiling was scaled and painted. An oil room was built. Four new cisterns were installed in rooms in the lower floor of the dwelling and were fitted with faucets, connecting pipes, etc., and painted. New boat davits were put up on the southwest side of the dwelling. The fog bell was hung on a beam above the roof, and a platform was built under it to support the striking machinery. Twelve tension rods of the tower were repaired and all of the ironwork from the top to the bottom of the tower was scaled and painted. Various repairs were made." <sup>14</sup>

The Ship Shoal Light-Station became automated in the 20th century and was still in use in the 1950's

14     Clipping Files, page 5.

[Photograph of Ship Shoal Light-Station courtesy of the "Morgan City Archives, Morgan City, Louisiana]

# Record of The 114th Regiment New York State Volunteers

## Where It Went, What It Saw, And What It Did

By  
Dr. Harris H. Beecher  
Late Assistant Surgeon  
Norwich, N. Y.  
Published By J. F. Hubbard, Jr.  
1866

### Chapter XIV

Defiance traitors, hurl we in your teeth.  
Julius Cesar

Upon Saturday, the 11th day of April, the "Teche Campaign" fairly opened. Early in the morning, General Grover's Division left Brashear City, on the gunboats Clifton, Estrella, Arizona, and Calhoun, and the transports Laurel Hill, Quinnebaug, and St. Mary's. Two small tug-boats had in tow rafts, loaded with artillery and munitions of war. The whole proceeded in line, up the waters of the Atchafalaya, the Clifton taking the lead. As the loaded vessels steamed up the river, one after another, passing the army marching along the road, which moved out from Berwick the same day, hearty cheers were given, hands and handkerchiefs waved, and the joy which shone on the faces of all, could not have been exceeded if the parties had met after a long and dangerous campaign, instead of the few hours which passed since they were together.

The advance of the land force was made by general Weitzel's command, in the following order: Eighth Vermont, Colonel Thomas, extreme right; Seventy-Fifth New York, Lieutenant Colonel Babcock, right centre; One Hundred and Fourteenth New York, Colonel Smith, centre; One Hundred and Sixtieth New York, Lieutenant Colonel Van Patten, left centre; Twelfth Connecticut, Lieutenant Colonel Peck, left wing. Williamson's First Louisiana cavalry was in the extreme advance, closely followed by skirmishers from different Regiments. One Company of the First United States Artillery, Captain Bainbridge, and the sixth Massachusetts Battery, Captain Carruth, accompanied them.

Cheerily the men of the One Hundred and Fourteenth marched out of bivouac at Berwick, and sang and chatted as they tramped along the dusty road, by the banks of the Bay. They did not know where they were going, nor did they care to know. The music of bands, for a time, quickened their steps,

increasing the jest and merriment of song. Going a little distance, they turned to the left, upon the banks of the Atchafalaya. The army had not proceeded far, before the scattering fire of skirmishers was heard, giving notice of the presence of the enemy. Occasionally there could be distinctly seen, across the broad plains, a line of blue-coated cavalry, driving before them horsemen in gray. At times a piece of artillery would explode a few shells among small squads of the enemy, hurrying them away. Yet there was need of much caution in the advance, and the infantry were moved slowly while the cavalry felt the way.

After advancing some few miles, the enemy opened with a battery of six and twelve pound light pieces, posted near a large sugar house on the right. Bainbridge's Artillery was quickly in position, and so effective were the shells, that the rebels soon ceased firing, limbered up their guns, and hurriedly left. By order of General Weitzel, Colonel Smith from this point placed a guard over the houses and plantations. The sugar houses and out-buildings were mostly filled with sugar, cane, and molasses.

Pattersonville, nine miles distant from Berwick City, was reached between five and six P. M. The Atchafalaya runs to the right, and parallel with it. Here the army rested for the night. The One Hundred and Fourteenth filed off from the road, and prepared their bivouac - Colonel Smith, and a portion of the Regimental field and staff, making their quarters in a house near by.

No sooner were the arms stacked, and ranks broken, than the adjoining fences were torn down, and piled up for camp fires. The banks of the river, were lined for miles, with men bathing, watering horses, and filling their canteens. By 9 o'clock they had cleaned themselves from dust, partaken of their suppers, and were lying over the ground, rolled up in their blankets, fast asleep.

Here it was, it will be remembered, That the "Diana" was captured by the rebels, on the 28th of March, just thirteen days before, her commander, Captain Peterson, and Master's Mate, Mr. Dolliver, being almost instantly killed.

Our boys were assigned a camping place, where lay scattered the decaying mules and horses of the enemy, killed by the well directed guns of the "Diana." Their rest, that night, was considerably disturbed by the stench; and from bundles of blankets would now and then proceed a curse, or a call upon the commissary to "remove those rations of meat."

Very early on the morning of the 12th, reveille was sounded, but the army was not put in motion till 10 o'clock. They left the Atchafalaya and moved along the banks of the Teche, (pronounced Tash.) The negroes, scattered along the road, gave interesting and truthful accounts of the enemy, and his defenses. They described the works as but a few miles distant, running in a zigzag course, two miles across the plain, behind a natural ditch, and composed of an embankment of earth five feet high, sustained by piles. Behind this work, they reported twenty-five guns mounted, and a garrison of from fifteen to eighteen thousand men.

The rebels showed themselves in considerable numbers, while the cavalry was having lively times in driving them. After proceeding a short distance, the location was supposed to be near enough to require the formation of the army in line of battle. The One Hundred and Fourteenth was placed near the left of the advance line, upon the border of the forest, while the right of

Weitzel's Brigade rested upon the bayou. A similar formation was made upon the opposite side of the bayou, by other troops of the Division, by means of a pontoon bridge.

The army thus disposed of, or arranged, again commenced to move, although but very slowly. The fields through which it marched, were covered with a growth of sugar cane, so high that the lines were almost concealed, and so dense that it required the most fatiguing labor for the men to push their way through. Jumping from cane row to cane row, leaping over ditches, crowding between stiff cane stalks, wading through mud-holes, beneath a scalding sun, the boys toiled on, stopping every few minutes to re-form the line, which necessarily became broken, for it was impossible for one man to see more than half-a-dozen of his comrades at a time.

At 5 o'clock in the evening, having made but four miles, with great exhaustion to the men - the skirmishers still failing to discover any considerable body of the enemy - suddenly, without the least warning, a couple of cannon exploded in front, and two hissing, shrieking missiles passed over the heads of the men, killing instantly a pair of horses attached to a battery following close behind.

Thus opened the battle of Bisland.

Before the men had time to recover from their astonishment, the simultaneous discharge of artillery all along the front, hurled shot and shell in great profusion among the cane, and far to the rear.

It was a critical moment for untried troops. They had unconsciously approached too near the enemy's works, and were thus unexpectedly and violently attacked. Even veterans could not calmly endure the appalling situation. A deep, dry ditch was near at hand, running parallel to the line, and men were ordered to fall into it. In an instant, the regiment was out of sight, while the batteries, but a few rods back, unlimbered, and were answering the rebels shot for shot. All over the field, the thunder of artillery blended into one continuous roll. For an hour and a half, while lying in the ditch, the men were subjected to the deafening roar of one of the severest and most remarkable artillery duels of the war. A thousand Fourth of July celebrations were concentrated into a second of time. The air was rent with solid shot and grape. A haze filled the atmosphere, from the smoke of discharged guns and bursting shells. The latter, exploding in the air, resembled fire-flies at night, while the falling missiles cut down the cane and threw up showers of dirt. The whole horizon in front appeared to shoot out a sudden jet of yellow fire, which disappearing, was instantly followed by a circle of white, fleecy smoke, which grew less and less, and finally vanished. Pandemonium was let loose. The variety of unheard-of sounds, and whizzes, and screams, are as indescribable as they were innumerable.

"O, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear;  
To make an earthquake!"

During this fight, General Weitzel confirmed his reputation for bravery. Through all the cannonading he did not dismount, but sat patting his horse, to allay the animal's fears.

A staff officer of General Weitzel at length directed Colonel Smith to

march his command to the rear. Steadily, and slowly, the Regiment endured the ordeal of retreating under the enemy's fire, while the captured gunboat "Diana" paid the Brigade particular attention in the way of shells.

The rebels could be seen on their works, and cheering was heard at the supposed discomfiture of the patriot army. After marching back in line of battle about half a mile, out of range of the enemy's guns, the Regiment, about sundown, was ordered to bivouac, while a picket force was kept well to the front.

A mail from Brashear City was here distributed to the troops. Many letters from peaceful homes and loving hearts, were that night read by the light of burning buildings, surrounded by the carnage and desolation of war. Some alas! came too late. Others never more replied to the expressions of endearment from father or mother, brother or sister.

As fires were not permitted along the lines, for prudential reasons, as soon as it was dark the men laid themselves down between the cane rows, rolled themselves up in their blankets, and went to sleep. They went to bed supperless, for their haversacks were empty.

Early on the morning of April 13th, the "Diana" appeared some three miles up the Teche, and commenced, at long range, to hurl shells among the Union camps. A few well directed shots from a section of the Twenty-First Indiana Artillery, inflicted some serious damage upon her, for she could be seen slowly moving away, with her flag gone and her upper decks torn into fragments. Men who were spectators to this seen, applauded with cheers the extraordinary precision of this firing.

Rations were delivered to the command, and then they all moved up again to the attack, in the same order as that of the day before. Going past the position they had occupied the previous night, they laid down among the cane while the artillery opened the battle.

Again the earth shook, and the air vibrated with the concussion of the canonading. The battle of Bisland was fought almost entirely by artillery, the infantry having but little else to do than to support the batteries.

The most trying position for a soldier is to place him where he is compelled to receive the shots of the enemy, without being able to return his fire.

Hour after hour, shot and shell went plunging into the rebel breast-works, or burst over the fort. The skirmishers had crawled up near enough to pick off the enemy's gunners, so that they were more reticent than the day before, only occasionally responding.

Some bullets came whizzing out of the woods at the left of the Regiment, indicating the presence of the enemy at that point. The men were ordered up, and discharged a volley into the thicket. At this time, Lieutenant Colonel Babcock, of the Seventy-Fifth New York, rode up to Colonel Smith, and informed him that he had been ordered by General Weitzel to move his Regiment into the woods, and drive the enemy out. He, at the same time, remarked he was "going to see what was in there," and advised Colonel Smith,

to cause his men to lie down, as they would be in line of the enemy's fire. This judicious order was accordingly given, and the boys hugged the ground between the rows, or screened themselves behind a few scattering trees or stumps. In a short time after the Seventy-Fifth had disappeared, the rapid rattle of musketry in the forrest was terrific, while a shower of hissing, singing bullets poured over the One Hundred and Fourteenth. It was at this time that most of those in the Regiment, killed or wounded at the battle of Bisland, were struck - while lying defenseless upon the ground. Among others was George Ballou, First Sergeant of Company B, whose knee was shattered by a minnie ball, and who died at Brigade Hospital at Brashear City, after a struggle of several weeks. The Seventy-Fifth did their work thoroughly, and after driving the enemy away, came back bringing many wounded, and a few prisoners.

In the mean time, the batteries and skirmishers kept up a deafening din, the low works of the enemy being clearly indicated by flashes and smoke. The faint noise of battle, across the bayou, added to the confusion of sounds. As soon as a battery had expended its ammunition, it would limber up and gallop to the rear to receive a new supply, and as quickly plunge into the fight again. As soon as one Company of skirmishers had exhausted its cartridges, it would be replaced by another.

The men soon lost that nervous, anxious look and manner, so characteristic of recruits, and became accustomed to the sight of carnage, and the fray of battle. Cool and unconcerned, they picked blue-berries under their feet, lighted their pipes, cracked their jokes, and standing up in exposed places, watched with interest the progress of the fight. Shouts and cheers would go up, when a lucky shot made sad havoc among the rebels, disabled their horses or dismounted a gun.

"There, take that, will you?"

"A splendid shot; hit 'em again."

"Duck down, boys; they are shooting this way."

"Hurra! we've set some of those houses on fire."

"Take another gunboat, will you?"

Such were the remarks freely made, as different pleasing incidents occurred. They were particularly delighted upon seeing a party of rebel officers, who had been examining the Federal position, from the peak of a sugar mill, suddenly dislodged, by a shell exploding under the roof, which sent shingles, rafters and men into the air. Thus passed the afternoon, until darkness stopped the firing, and lulled the excitement of battle.

A body of troops moved up in advance of the Brigade, and some changes were made in the formation of the lines - the One Hundred and Fourteenth moving off to the right, some half a mile.

By the light of burning buildings the boys again spread their blankets among cane rows, and laid down "to sleep, perchance to dream" - to dream of quiet homes, and loving parents - to dream of comforts and happiness, around family hearth-stones - lost to them, perhaps, forever. Sleep drove away the forebodings and anxieties which pervaded the breasts of all, relative to the charge which was to take place by daylight of the morrow.

At 5 o'clock on the 14th, the men were called up and began to prepare themselves for the expected assault. After a little, there seemed to be an

unaccountable delay and quietness in the movement of the troops. It was soon explained by hearing hearty, long-drawn and distinct Yankee cheers towards the front, when looking in that direction, a blue column of infantry was seen passing over the breast-works into the fort, without opposition. The enemy had evacuated in the night. General Grover had settled the question, for in the rear, he threatened to capture their whole army, if they remained at Fort Bisland. Cheers were taken up by every regiment and branch of the service, while all commenced to move forward. As they jumped the ditches, clambered the breast works, and entered the fort, they saw the terrible effects of the battle, and evidences of the hasty retreat of the enemy. They passed long rows of dead, laid out for burial, and a few wounded left behind. The ground was strewn with carcasses of horses, ammunition, broken cannon and carriages. Several guns were left uninjured in the works. The troops never stopped to examine the fort and captured material, but pushed on at a rapid gait, after the flying enemy. Straggling rebels were captured in considerable numbers, along the road. They passed the deserted camp of the rebel army, which was composed of huts neatly constructed from palmetto leaves, presenting to military men, a novel and interesting appearance. The rebel hospital, a little distance further on, was an institution of interest, and especially to the medical officers of the Union army, by many of whom it was visited. Its inmates were principally sick men, and these in a deplorable condition, the wounded mostly, or those that could be got away, having been taken by water to Franklin. It contained not a single Confederate Surgeon - the sick having been left to the tender mercies of the despised Yankee.

A star fort, close by the bayou, was also passed, which looked as if made with considerable labor and expense.

At Bisland, the One Hundred and Fourteenth New York fully established its valor. While it would be hardly just to close the narrative of the battle without some special notice of the gallant spirits that engaged in the fight, yet while all acted so bravely and so well, it would be wrong to discriminate. The names of all became a part of the record. Every thing was done with good judgement, and perfect coolness, and when moved about from point to point, as duty called, it was done without reluctance, or the first indication of fear.

The following is a list of casualties the Regiment sustained in this battle: George Ballou, First Sergeant, Company B, knee. Isaac Odell, Company D, thumb. W. H. Roberts, Company D, head, from the effects of which he died within a few days. A. N. Wheelock, Company H, neck, slightly. George Peck, Company A, head, slightly. William F. Weston, Company B, chest and side. C. Tyler, Company B, side. Franklin W. Fish, Company B, shoulder. W. Ernesworth, Company A, hand.

Some estimate can be formed of the character of the men and officers, upon that trying occasion, from the following note received by Colonel Smith, from one who had ample opportunity to Judge:

New Orleans, La. April 29th, 1863

Colonel E. B. Smith, Commanding 114th Regt. N. Y. Volunteers --

Dear Sir: -- You will permit me to take an early opportunity to express my hearty appreciation of the unflinching bravery displayed by yourself, and your Regiment, in the battle at Camp Bisland, on the 12th and 13th inst., while in

support of the battery under my command.

During the first engagement, your Regiment was subjected to as severe a test as is ever required to establish the reputation of a Corps; and during the long hours of the following day, while it was exposed to an incessant artillery fire, its coolness and steadiness were the best proofs of its bravery and determination.

Please accept my willing testimony of the fact,

I remain, my dear sir, cordially yours,

William W. Carruth,

Capt. Sixth Mass. Battery