

Los Adaes

An 18th-Century Capital of Texas in Northwestern Louisiana

Los Adaes is the site of an 18th-century Spanish presidio and mission established in 1721 which served as the capital of the province of Texas until 1773. The presidio—Nuestra Señora del Pilar de los Adaes, and the mission—San Miguel de Cuellar de los Adaes, are named after the Adaes Indians, a group of Caddo Indians. Archeologists follow the shorthand found in historical documents and refer to the site containing both the site and mission as “Los Adaes” (Bolton 1962; Gregory 1983; McCorkle 1981).

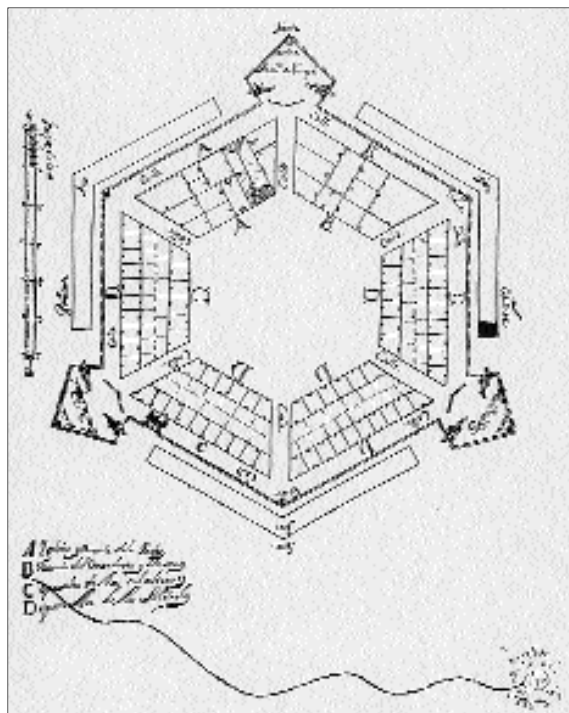
Los Adaes is located in northwestern Louisiana, near Robeline, and was initially established in response to a French trading post established in 1713 by Louis Juchereau de St. Denis some 18 miles away among the Natchitoches Indians, another Caddoan group. In 1714, St. Denis traveled to the northernmost Spanish presidio on the Rio Grande, San Juan Bautista, in order to trade with the Spanish. Such trade was not allowed by the Spanish government and St. Denis was arrested. Within two years, St. Denis had married the granddaughter of the commandant who had arrested him, and in 1716, St. Denis

was hired as a guide for the Spanish expedition which would establish in modern-day East Texas the presidios and missions which were the response to his trading post among the Natchitoches. St. Denis’ trading post later became Fort St. Jean Baptiste, and the settlement around it took the Indian name of Natchitoches. Herbert Bolton, the father of the Spanish Borderlands concept, has described the relation between the Spanish at Los Adaes and French at Fort St. Jean Baptiste as one of “kinfolk diplomacy” (Webb and Gregory 1990; Gregory and McCorkle 1980–1981; Gregory 1973).

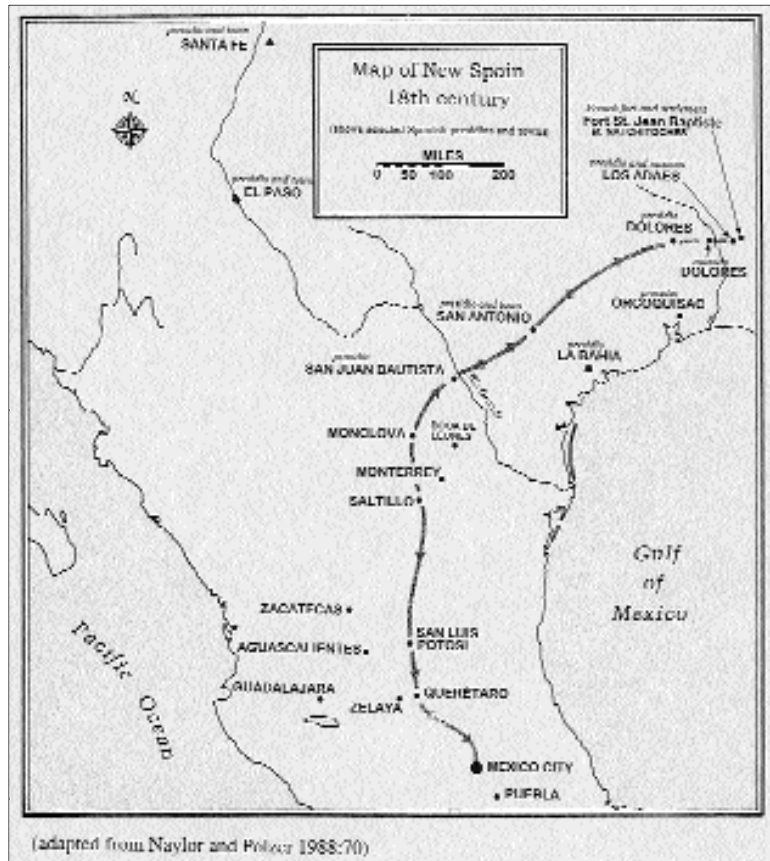
The interaction among the Spanish, French, and Caddoan groups in what is now northwest Louisiana was characterized more by accommodation and mutual support, than by domination and resistance. This cooperative relationship was evident in the spiritual, social, political, economic activities at Los Adaes. Spanish priests from Los Adaes would say mass at Fort St. Jean Baptiste, there was intermarriage among the Spanish, French, and Caddoan groups, and Los Adaes soldiers were sent to help the French fight the Natchez Indians in 1731 (Gregory and McCorkle 1980–1981:39). The composition of the garrison at Los Adaes reflects the intermarriage of ethnic groups in New Spain as a 1731 roster indicates that 29 *Españoles*, 14 *Mestizos*, 8 *Mulattoes*, 7 *Coyotes*, 1 *Lobo*, and 1 *Indio* were stationed at Los Adaes (McDonald and Perzynska 1994, Catholic Archives of Texas, 53.2a:32-34). The terms *Mestizo*, *Mulatto*, *Coyote*, and *Lobo* were descriptions of *casta* or ethnicity and represented designations for the offspring of persons of parents of differing ethnicity (see Esteva-Fabregat 1995). For example, the offspring of a Spaniard or *Español* and Indian was referred to as a *Mestizo*, the offspring of an *Español* and African was a *Mulatto*, and the offspring of an Indian and *Mestizo* was a *Coyote*.

Even though it was prohibited by both governments, there was commercial activity between Los Adaes and Fort St. Jean Baptiste. Archeological investigations conducted at Los Adaes over a 30-year period by Dr. H. F. “Pete” Gregory (1985, 1984, 1982, 1980, 1973) of Northwestern State University of Louisiana at

Architect's Plan of Los Adaes Presidio. Courtesy Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas.



Map of 18th century New Spain showing location of presidios, missions, and recruiting areas mentioned in text. Route of 1727 military inspection of presidios is shown. Adapted from Naylor and Polzer, 1988.



ered from Los Adaes is distinctly Spanish.

Los Adaes was closed in 1773 when roughly 500 people left for San Antonio. Many of the Adaesaños left San Antonio and eventually formed a settlement which became Nacogdoches, Texas. Many Adaesaños returned to what is now northwest Louisiana, and it appears that some may have never left as there exist today communities with Spanish, Native American, and French heritage in northwest Louisiana.

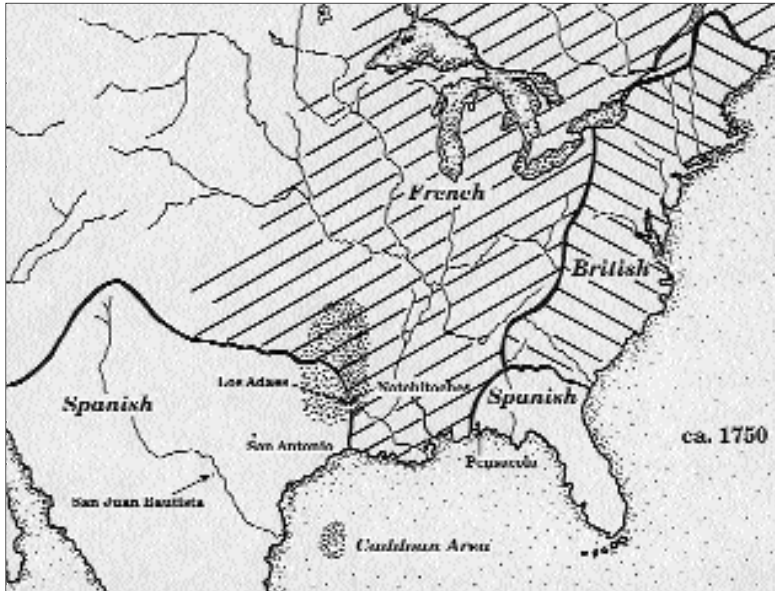
Much of the Los Adaes site is now owned by the Louisiana Office of State Parks as the Los Adaes State Commemorative Area (SCA). The Louisiana Office of State Parks, in cooperation with Northwestern State University of Louisiana, and with funding from the National Park Service and the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, initiated the Los Adaes Station

Natchitoches have recovered a wide variety of French trade goods, including fragments of French wine bottles, brass kettles, firearms, knives, and lead cloth seals. Identification and conservation of all metal artifacts recovered from Los Adaes over the past 30 years was conducted through the volunteered services of Jay C. Blaine, Texas Volunteer Archaeological Steward. Blaine (1993) has suggested that the observation of substantially greater deterioration of metal artifacts collected within the past 10 years compared to metal artifacts collected 30 years ago at Los Adaes might be the result of acid rain.

Like the other 18th-century missions of East Texas in the Caddoan area (see Carter 1995), the mission at Los Adaes had no Indian converts living around, but the Los Adaes pottery assemblage is dominated by Caddoan pottery (90%), and some of the Caddoan pottery forms recovered include brimmed bowls and handled pitchers, which suggests that Caddo potters were meeting the Spanish demand for pottery, in part, with European pottery forms. The Caddoan storage jar appears to have replaced European pottery storage containers, which are very rare at Los Adaes. Roughly equal amounts of Spanish tin-enameled wares made in Puebla and French tin-enameled wares are represented in the archeological assemblage of Los Adaes. The Spanish at Los Adaes clearly maintained their horse tradition as the horse gear recov-

Archaeology program in 1995 to assist in the development of an interpretive prospectus and a master plan for Los Adaes SCA (Avery 1995,1996). The Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program is now fully funded by the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, and so far, the cooperation between the various organizations has mirrored the historic cooperation among the Spanish, French, and Caddoan groups.

Recently, a workshop to identify themes relevant to Los Adaes and to recommend how to interpret these themes was held in conjunction with the Natchitoches/Northwestern State University Folk Festival. The theme of this year's folk festival was Spanish Heritage in Louisiana and the workshop participants gave public presentations at the folk festival in addition to their contributions during the workshop. The participants included representatives of the Caddo Indian Tribe of Oklahoma, the Caddo Adais Indian Tribe, the Choctaw, Apache and Affiliated Tribes, Louisiana Office of State Parks, Jean Lafitte National Park, and Los Adaes Advisory Committee; a linguist from Northeastern Louisiana University and two genealogists from Texas; as well as archeologists from the Texas Dept. of Transportation, Stephen F. Austin University, University of Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory, and Northwestern State University. The two-day affair was funded, in part, by the Louisiana Endowment



The Caddoan area and territories under the control of the Spanish, French and British, c. 1750. Los Adaes and Natchitoches are roughly 15 miles apart, on either side of the Spanish-French border. The Caddoan area of habitation covers a large portion of the Spanish-French borderland. The Caddoan peoples were able to maintain generally peaceful relations with the Spanish and the French, at times playing one off the other, and therefore neither the Spanish or French were able to dominate the Caddo. From Smith, 1995.

for the Humanities, the Louisiana Office of State Parks, the Louisiana Division of Archaeology, Northwestern State University, and the Cane River Creole National Historical Park. Los Adaes SCA is in the Cane River National Heritage Area, and funding from the Cane River Creole National Historical Park was intended to charge the workshop participants to identify interpretive themes which were also relevant to the Cane River National Heritage Area.

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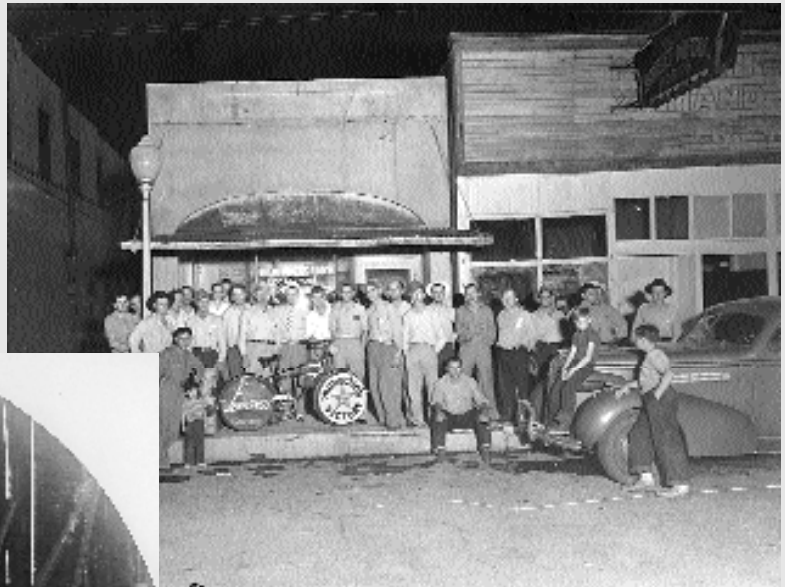
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Hispanics and Mining

Spanish traditions and Hispanic workers played an important role and continue to play important roles in the mining industry of the Far West, from before the placer gold discoveries of California in 1848, to modern copper workings at Santa Rita, New Mexico. Spanish tools, techniques, and legal systems were imported to the New World and influenced mining throughout the U.S.; names alone recognize their contributions—for example at Sonora, California, Terlingua, Texas, and Mines of Spain State Recreation Area near Dubuque, Iowa.

Preservation of historic mining sites related to Hispanic influence and settlement are problematic. Too often earlier settlements have been obliterated by modern workings, or the sites have become ghost towns with only archeological evidence (a recent Historic American Engineering Record project at the Mariscal Mine, Big Bend National Park, for example, included documentation of the vanished workers' village below the furnace works). Fortunately, members of the Hispanic communities in many 20th-century mining towns such as Globe-Miami, Arizona, respect and recognize their past contributions and are working to preserve them.

—Robert L. Spude



Hispanic mine workers join with other miners and a few politicians in front of the Miami Miners Union office, Miami, Arizona, ca. 1940. Early in the century, the union won an unprecedented wage scale for its workers.



mine workers pose in an unidentified Southwestern mine. With candle holders in hand—their sole source of light underground—they pose for a visiting photographer. Hispanic miners were often the majority or entire work force at many mines located in southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and west Texas.

These two panoramic views of the mining town of Ray, Arizona show the more pleasant company houses at upper right and the neighborhood of "Sonora" in the lower view tucked in a notch in the mountain at center. Like many historic mining locations related to Hispanics, all evidence of "Sonora" has disappeared under the Ray open pit mine.



Photos courtesy Bob Spude collection.