

THE WALLOON

Newsletter of Société Huguenot de la
Nouvelle-Orléans

Issue I

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NEWSLETTER RESUMES WITH A NEW NAME: "THE WALLOON"

WHO WERE THE WALLOONS ?

The term Walloon initially referred to the Huguenots and Calvinists living in northeastern France and southwestern Belgium. These groups along with other Huguenots migrated to England, the United States and other countries of the Huguenot Diaspora.

Currently the term Walloon is still used to describe residents of southwest Belgium which includes a Catholic Population.

THE SOCIÉTÉ IN REVIEW

The Huguenot Society of New Orleans was organized as one of the premier social and hereditary associations of New Orleans in 1973 by Beale Howard Richardson IV and David Oliver Crumley.

Our first president, William Ferguson Colcock, was instilled at the initial meeting of the Societe on September 9, 1973 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Beale Howard Richardson, IV, who modeled our organization after the Huguenot Society of South Carolina of which he was a member. Our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws after editing and composition assistance from Harry S. Hardin, III of the Jones Walker law firm, were ratified at the second meeting of the Societe on June 14, 1974. Membership was and is extended to "persons of any faith as long as they have one or more Huguenot ancestors." Our seal was designed by William F. Colcock to include the Louisiana pelican, the fleur de lis of France and the symbolic sailing ship of the Huguenot Diaspora. Approximately seventy charter members celebrated the first annual meeting of the Societe on December 6, 1974 at the home of Frank Garden Strachan, who was elected our second president.

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FAMOUS HUGUENOTS:

JOEL POINSETT: Namesake of the Poinsettia, Botanist, Doctor, and Founder of the Smithsonian Institute

Question: What do the Poinsettia and the Smithsonian Institution have in common?

Answer: The Prominent Huguenot descendant from South Carolina, politician Joel Roberts Poinsett (1779 – 1851). Poinsett was by all reports the son of a Huguenot physician, Peter Poinsett. He was the quintessential Huguenot insofar as he was American and European-educated, studied medicine, law and languages, was interested in military and political matters, served Presidents Madison and Van Buren over the years as an envoy and minister to South America and as a Secretary of War, served in his state legislature and also in Congress, yet always steadily pursued his passion for botany and science. This pervading sense of intellectual curiosity coupled with well-directed energy and political connections contributed permanent and lasting value to American culture. Poinsett's main contributions were twofold. First, while on a trip to the Mexican highlands, he recognized

the beauty of the Aztec perennial plant, the Cuetlaxochitl, also known by the Latin name *Euphorbia pulcherrima*. He sent samples of it to his South Carolina plantations for propagation, and it ultimately became a popular indoor colorful winter plant displayed during the Christmas holiday season throughout North America. Its common name, the "poinsettia," is derived from John Poinsett's surname in honor of his having introduced it to North America. The second major contribution made by Joel Robert Poinsett was to promote scientific study and appreciation in America and make it accessible to the American people, and he contributed to the achievement of tangible results in that regard. In 1838, he made sure there were naturalists on board the six ships that set sail from Norfolk, Virginia on a four year circumnavigation of the world as a part of the United States Exploring Expedition, knowing they would return with specimens from around the globe that could be studied by scientists for years and also displayed for the public to enjoy. In addition, in 1840 he co-founded the National Institute for the Promotion of Science and the Useful Arts, a group of politicians who wanted to centralize and showcase the relics of the country and its leaders in a national museum that would acknowledge and promote American leaders, technology, memorabilia, and the significant scientific collections of like-minded individuals. One such collector was British scientist John Smithson, who bequeathed his estate to his nephew or, if the nephew should die without heirs, to "the United States of America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." The nephew died without heirs in 1835 and Smithson's estate, which included a library, substantial funds, and various scientific collections, was made a part of a charitable trust in America. Thus Poinsett and his group's vision ultimately became the Smithsonian Institution. Poinsett died in 1851.

Sources:

The Cross of Languedoc, Smithsonianmagazine.com; Ecke.com; Edited Appletons Encyclopedia; Huguenot Heritage; Wikipedia.org.

THE GIFT SHOP :

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HUGUENOT TRAVEL DESTINATIONS:

ST. JOHNS, FL – FIRST HUGUENOT
SETTLEMENT IN AMERICA
THE HUGUENOT MEMORIAL SITE

Location: U.S. Highway A1A at Mayport
Naval Air Station.

County: Duval

City: Jacksonville

Description: In 1562, when France was being torn by religious strife, Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France, sent two vessels to the New World in search of a refuge for the oppressed Huguenots. Leading the expedition was the Huguenot explorer, Jean Ribaut, who charted a new course across the Atlantic and arrived off the coast of Florida. On Friday, May 1, 1562, Ribaut's party first landed in the New World on the east shore of Xalvis Island. In the presence of friendly Indians, the Frenchmen fell to the ground and gave thanks to God in the first Protestant worship service held in the New World. Ribaut sailed on up the coast where he founded the colonial settlement of Charlesfort-named in honor of his king. Charlesfort did not last and in 1562 a Huguenot settlement-Fort Caroline-was established on the St. Johns. There, sometime before 1565, the first Protestant white child was born in what is now the United States. On his second voyage to the Americas in 1565, Ruinate and his men were shipwrecked near St. Augustine. The bold explorer and most of his followers were cold-bloodedly murdered at Matanzas Inlet, near St. Augustine, by Spanish Governor Pedro Menendez, who feared the encroachment of France on Spain's Florida empire.

Source: Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials

HUGUENOT TIMELINE – OUR HERITAGE

1533	John Calvin flees Paris
29 January 1536	General Edict urging extermination of Heretics (Huguenots)
1536	John Calvin becomes pastor in Geneva
1550's	Calvinism comes to France with thousands of converts
25 May 1559	First Synod of the French Reformed Church held in Paris, followed by persecutions and issuance of Edict prohibiting “heretical” worship
1559	Attempt to replace Catholic Guises with Huguenot Conde as regent
1560	Huguenots petition the King and threaten revolt if persecution persists
1 March 1562	Massacre at Vassay begins French religious wars; Conde assassinated
1 May 1562	Arrival at St. Johns River, in Florida, of the first pilgrimage by Huguenots to North America
1565	Huguenot colony massacred at St. Johns, FL by Spanish
24 August 1572	St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in which tens of thousands of Huguenots were killed
1585	Huguenots/Protestants expelled from France
13 April 1598	Edict of Nantes by Henry of Navarre which granted religious and civil liberties to the Huguenots promises protection
18 October 1685	Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV which was Published 22 October 1685, and resulted in persecution of the Huguenots; 400,000 flee France to other countries
28 November 1787	Promulgation of the Edict of Toleration by Louis XVI