

the RECKONING

ONE PLANTATION. TWO FAMILIES. SO MANY SECRETS.



THE RECKONING Discovery Guide

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Robey Theatre Company*

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This Discovery Guide is designed to enrich the theatre experience during and after the play *The Reckoning* by Kimba Henderson. It is comprised of historical information and learning activities.

The historical information spotlights a key backdrop of the play—Antebellum Louisiana. The learning activities spotlight, first, the interplay between contemporary and historic events in the play and, second, the influence of personal family history.

Both the historical information and learning activities in the Discovery Guide are designed to allow you to:

Identify the medley of cultures that shaped the Louisiana of the Robillard family.

Explore the social mores and economic factors that shaped the Louisiana of the Robillard family.

Gain insight into the Robillard family by exploring the history of the Metoyer family.

Explore how the values and aspirations of the play's characters motivated their actions. Compare and contrast their values with yours.

Gain insight into your personal family legacy.

The activities in the Guide can be used in formal educational settings or in informal discussion groups. They are suggestions only. We encourage you to make any modifications that you think will spark interest and excitement in exploring the play.

If you are a teacher who is using the Discovery Guide in an educational setting, you are encouraged to modify activities to make them more suitable for the age group you are teaching.

At the end of the Discovery Guide are links to resources about the events in *The Reckoning*. There is also a short questionnaire asking for your feedback. Your feedback will help us update and improve future versions of the Discovery Guide.

The Reckoning is set in Louisiana on Rubaiyat, a crawfish farm that was once a sugar plantation worked by slaves. This aging yet once elegant working plantation is owned by a genteel Black family—the Robillards. As LJ, the fiery but aging patriarch of the Robillards, prepares to hand over control of Rubaiyat to his devoted yet defiant daughter, Nathalie, long-hidden secrets gradually come to light. The resurgence of an age-old betrayal will bring the Robillards face-to-face with the family whose long-held claims to Rubaiyat and bitter desperation have made them a dangerous force with which to be reckoned.

Cast (in Alphabetical Order)

Terese Aiello	Ashley Robillard/Katherine
Dorian Christian Baucum	Phillippe
Tiffany Boone	Young Natty
Michael Harrity*	Gentry/Captain Burnside
Tanya Lane	Helene/Marie Therese
Tarnue Massaquoi	Christophe Robillard
Alex Morris*	LJ Robillard
Toyin Moses	Nathalie Robillard
Kendrick Sampson	August Robillard
Jacob Sidney *	Nicholas Burnside

Production Team

Kimba Henderson	Playwright
Ben Guillory	Producing Artistic Director
John Paul Luckenbach	Set & Light Design
Naila Aladdin Sanders	Costume Design
John Freeland Jr. *	Production Stage Manager
Teneale Bender	Assistant Stage Manager

**Kimba Henderson**

Miss Henderson studied dramatic writing at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and has since endeavored to combine the visuality of film and the intimacy of theater in all of her writing. Upon graduation, Miss Henderson won a national competition sponsored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences which led to a stint at Paramount Pictures working with television show writers and producers.

Aside from co-writing the film *Last Call* which was featured in the Los Angeles Film Festival, Miss Henderson has most recently been focused on playwriting. As a member of the Incite Theater Group, Miss Henderson has written and directed several plays. She also accomplished a personal dream by adapting, performing in and directing her three-act play called *Love Supreme*. Initially, her senior thesis project at NYU, which among other notices, beat out thousands of scripts to become a Top 30 semifinalist in the Matt Damon/Ben Affleck Project Greenlight Contest and a Top 10 finalist in the AFP Screenwriting Competition, *Love Supreme* enjoyed a healthy theatrical run and good reviews.

Miss Henderson continues to focus on learning the deeper intricacies of her craft and was accepted as a fellow in the Bill Cosby-sponsored Guy Hanks & Marvin Miller Screenwriting Program at USC. During this time, she also took the opportunity to workshop her one-woman show *Women in the Verge* at The Fountain Theatre, and continued to collaborate with them as an associate producer on their production of *YellowMan*. *YellowMan* went on to win several Los Angeles Ovation Awards and an NAACP Image Award.

Miss Henderson continues to write and direct a variety of plays and has written several scripts, one which was recently optioned. Currently, she is looking forward to the theatrical production of her play, *The Reckoning*, in September, which was developed through the Robey Theatre's Playwriting Program.

The European Presence

Louisiana's geographic diversity and its unique history of colonization by the Spanish and French in some ways set it apart from other Deep South states. The French code noir (Black Code) that had been issued for the French West Indies in 1685 and introduced in Louisiana in 1724, imposed harsh penalties upon erring slaves and proved to be one of the more oppressive slave codes in the Americas. Nevertheless, the code gave free blacks legal rights that they were denied in other parts of the South.

Louisianans historically tolerated interracial unions and grudgingly acknowledged their existence. French law, for example, did not initially prevent European settlers in Louisiana from intermarrying or cohabiting with Indians. French colonists accepted interracial marriages and partnership to a greater extent than the Anglo-Americans who arrived later, giving rise to a significant population of native Louisianans with mixed ancestry. Lighter skinned African Americans were not treated equally with white people yet enjoyed privileges that set them apart from most other black people in the South.

Interracial unions occurred often enough that the French and Spanish legal systems recognized three distinct populations: Europeans, free people of color, and slaves. When Louisiana became part of the United States some of the elements of this three-group system—free people of color, black slaves, and whites—persisted.

The Creole Presence

In Louisiana the original European colonial population was French, and the term Creole was initially used to refer to the native born descendants of the colonists. Creole was used to refer whites who were of European extraction (White Creoles) and to enslaved blacks who were native-born to distinguish them from new African arrivals.

Freed slaves constituted a special class in Louisiana that resulted from relationships characteristically between European planter men and African slave or free women. This formative group of Black Creoles was called gens libres de couleurs, free people of color, in antebellum times. In New Orleans these “free people of color” were part of the larger Creole (not American) social order.

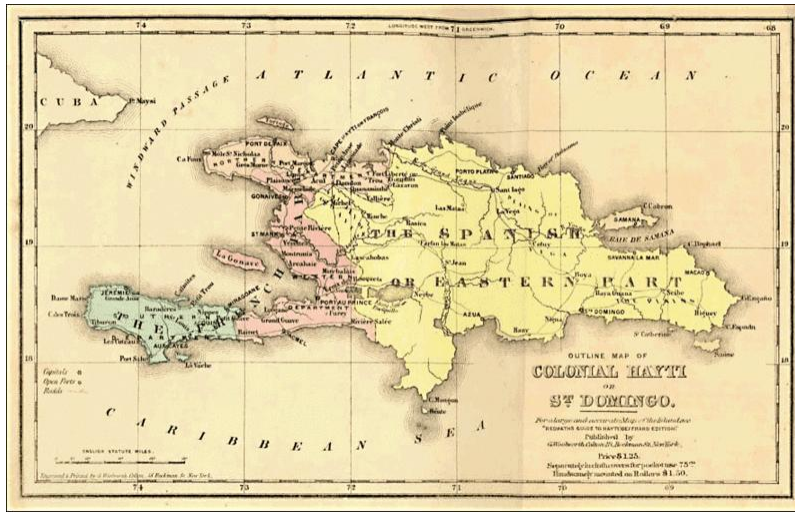
As a group, the mixed-race Creoles rapidly began to acquire skills as craftsmen and artisans, businesses, and property. The Franco-African population owed its success in part to the unique colonial history of Louisiana. The French and Spanish regimes that ruled during the 18th and 19th centuries generally tolerated the social and economic advancement of free Creoles of color.

With the westward migration of Anglo-Americans, the separate status of Creoles was threatened legally and socially. For the Anglo-Americans, there was no middle slot between whites and blacks. Throughout the 1800s, laws increasingly limited the rights of free Creoles of color.

At the end of the Civil War, Creoles of color found the greatest threat to their separate status was the emancipation of the slaves. Once all people of color were free, the American system established itself more firmly in Creole Louisiana. It was not until Jim Crow laws and the “one-drop-rule”—black Americans were defined as anyone having even “one drop” of African blood—were enacted at the end of the 19th century that the separate status of Creoles of color disappeared altogether.

Creoles contributed to the unique personality of New Orleans. Their influence can still be seen in New Orleans today. The iron works of the French quarter and atop cemetery crypts is due to the artisans of iron work that brought this craft from Africa in colonial times, and Creole dishes are a main attraction of New Orleans.

The Haitian Presence



On August 22, 1791, the most successful slave rebellion in history started in St. Dominique and lasted 12 long years. It culminated in the founding of Haiti, the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere and the first black-governed republic. Instrumental in the revolution's success was Toussaint L'ouverture, a former Creole slave.

The slave revolution of St. Dominique produced many refugees who came by shiploads to the Port of New Orleans. Between 1792 and 1809 approximately 10,000 or more refugees left St. Dominique and made their way to the Gulf Coast. Several hundred of these refugees settled primarily in New Orleans. The new arrivals nearly doubled the city's population and infused French culture into the community.

The presence of Haitian refugees in Louisiana also doubled the population of free people of color in New Orleans. The slaves brought by Haitian refugees remained almost entirely in New Orleans, but a small group of free blacks settled near Natchitoches.

The assimilation of these refugees was eased by the similarities between the peoples who created the cultures of St. Dominique/Haiti and Louisiana. Both places had been colonized by France. The Louisiana Creole language was close enough to Haitian Creole so speakers of these two languages could understand each other. French was the language of the elites of both Haiti and Louisiana. Finally, St. Dominique and Louisiana had prosperous slave plantations systems on which sugar was the primary.

The African Presence

Africans were a powerful cultural force in Louisiana, mainly because they were introduced in such large numbers during a short time period (the 1720's-1780's). In addition, they came mostly from one region in West Africa (Senegambia). There were also more blacks than whites in most areas of Antebellum Louisiana. Louisiana had a higher slave population figure relative to the rest of the South because it was an agricultural and slave-trading center.



While under Spanish rule, the Spanish crown implemented a practice by which slaves could buy their own freedom for an amount either negotiated with the owner or determined by the courts. A slave did not have to depend upon the generosity of the master or mistress to attain freedom. Rather the slave relied on his or her own efforts and a favorable legal system.

There were more blacks than whites in most areas of Antebellum Louisiana. Free blacks augmented their population by births, manumissions, and immigration or migration. In New Orleans, blacks made up a majority of the populace during the first four decades of the 19th century.

The number of slave manumissions recorded in court documents increased for each decade during this period. Although for the period as a whole the majority of slaves continued to receive liberty by way of acts instituted by the master, as they had under French rule, a rising proportion initiated manumission proceedings themselves.

For several generations, 1790 to 1865, it was not unusual for young white Creole men to take free women of color as mistresses, set them up in her own houses, and have several children with them. These liaisons between white males and free women of color became known as "placage," a derivative of the French word "placer," which means "to place."

The placage system was established in New Orleans to enable wealthy white men to set up a double household. It was essentially a type of common-law marriage. The young women of the placage system were persons of French or Spanish plus black parentage. These liaisons often ended when these men reached the age of middle to late twenties and married women of their own race to raise legitimate families. However, some relationships were often long-lasting ones, sometimes continuing long after the men married.

The placage system was different from plantation life throughout the South where it was well known that some white masters consorted with their female slaves. Those relationships were not openly recognized, and children born of such liaisons were considered black and slaves, taking their status from their mothers. In New Orleans placage did not involve slave women but rather free black women who had a limited degree of choice as to whether they were to become mistresses and whose mistress they would be.

It is unknown how many women of color were involved in these liaisons, but records from the late 1760s through 1800 reveal dozens of them held prime real estate in their own names. These women often were awarded property and money after the death of their wealthy white lovers. They were able to educate their children and pass on estates to them. Some court records from the 1800s show white men leaving inheritances for their illegitimate children of color.

Children born in placage generally took their white father's last name, were supported by him, and even in some cases indirectly inherited large sums upon his death. Daughters were often raised to become mistresses of the next generation of white Creole men, while sons were sometimes sent to Paris to be educated, since there were few schools for such children in New Orleans.

The offspring from these liaisons were grouped into a new class of Creoles known as gens de couleurs, or free people of color. This class of people expanded when refugees from Haiti and other French speaking colonies migrated to New Orleans, effectively creating a new class between white French Creoles and slaves. They formed a third class in the slave society.

While financial prosperity was common, so was discrimination. Although business was conducted between whites and Creoles of color in public houses, they did not socialize outside of business arrangements.



Antebellum Louisiana's large free population of color was unique in the United States in terms of wealth and influence. This population traced its roots to the Spanish regime, when slaves could attain freedom with greater ease than at any other time. Throughout Louisiana's colonial period, free Creoles of color had separate social status and occupied a middle position between whites and blacks in the colony.

During the colonial era, it was culturally acceptable for planters to enter into lengthy relationships with enslaved Africans, despite French and Spanish legal bans on racial mixing. The children of these relationships often were granted their freedom, forming an influential class of people who blended aspects of French, Spanish, African and Native American cultures.

Free blacks composed about 40 percent of the African American population in New Orleans, reaching a high of 48 percent in 1820. Free blacks played an important role in the New Orleans economy. Many owned successful businesses or engaged in professions and amassed substantial estates that included real, personal, and slave property. Others of these gens de couleurs libres—or free people of color—also became successful planters in their own right.

With the Americanization of Louisiana and commercialization of sugar and cotton production, free blacks encountered increasing discrimination and legal restrictions. Even as they faced increasingly adverse circumstances in the first half of the 19th century, free African American were some of Louisiana's most prosperous planters and farmers, owning more property than free blacks in any other southern state.

Even though many were rich or had established reputations, free people of color were never well treated and never achieved citizenship status. They walked the slippery middle ground between slavery and complete freedom.

Notable Gens de Couleur Libre



Norbert Rillieux (1806 –1894)

Norbert Rillieux was born in New Orleans in 1806 to Vincent Rillieux, a French sugar cane plantation owner, and Constant Vivant, a slave on his plantation. His father sent him to *L'École Centrale* in Paris to study engineering. After graduating, Rillieux remained in Paris and was a teacher of applied mechanics. Eventually Rillieux returned to Louisiana to his father's plantation which was then being used to process and refine sugar.

Sugarcane was a dominant crop in Louisiana, but the refining process was extremely dangerous and very inefficient. The danger stemmed from the fact that workers were forced to transport boiling juice, chancing the possibility of suffering severe burns.

In 1843, Rillieux invented a vacuum evaporation system that revolutionized the sugar-refining process. His system was soon adopted by all sugar refineries in the United States as well as in Mexico and Cuba, and remains the basic sugar refining process in use today.

Like many free blacks, Rillieux experienced increasing racial discrimination prior to the U.S. Civil War. While Rillieux became very wealthy, his racial status precluded social acceptance. Enduring daily humiliations and frustrations, he remained in New Orleans. However, the final insult came when he was required to carry a pass in order to travel without restriction. Rillieux returned to Paris, where he lost all interest in engineering. Eventually however, he returned to engineering and the problems of evaporation and sugar machinery when he adapted his process to the refining of the sugar beet, the main source of European sugar.



Louis Charles Roudanez (1823-1890)

Louis Charles Roudanez was a physician, civic leader, and the owner of the Creole newspapers *L'Union* and *La Tribune de la Nouvelle Orleans*. Born in St. James Parish, the son of a French merchant and a free woman of color, Dr. Roudanez was educated in France, like many young gens de couleur libre. He received his medical degree from the University of Paris in 1853 and a second medical degree in 1857 from Dartmouth. He returned to New Orleans and began a successful practice open to both blacks and whites. During the Federal occupation of the city, Roudanez and his brother Jean-Baptiste founded *L'Union* (1862-1864), which, like its successor the *Tribune* (1864-1868), advocated civil rights for black citizens.



Henriette DeLille (1813–1862)

Henriette DeLille founded the Catholic Order of the Sisters of the Holy Family, made up of free women of color, in New Orleans. The order provided nursing care and a home for orphans and later established schools as well. Henriette DeLille was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her father was French and her mother was a free Creole of color with French, Spanish and African ancestry. The parents' union was typical of the contemporary placage system, a recognized extra-legal system in which white men entered into the equivalent of common-law marriages with women of African and Creole descent.

Trained by her mother in French literature, music, dancing, and nursing, DeLille was groomed to take her place in the placage system as the common-law wife of a wealthy white man. DeLille, however, was drawn to a strong religious belief in the teaching of the Catholic Church and resisted the life her mother suggested. She became an outspoken opponent of the system of placage on the grounds that it represented a violation of the Catholic sacrament of marriage. In 1827, at the age of 14, she began teaching at the local Catholic school.

In 1835, her mother suffered a nervous breakdown. Later that year, the court declared the mother incompetent, and granted DeLille control of her mother's assets. After providing for her mother's care, DeLille sold all her remaining property. In 1836 she used the proceeds to found a small unrecognized Order of nuns, the Sisters of the Presentation. The original members consisted of DeLille, seven young Creole women, and a young French woman. In 1837, Father Etienne Rousselon secured formal recognition of the new Order from the Vatican. In 1842, the Order changed its name to the Sisters of the Holy Family. Henriette DeLille continued a life of service to the poor of New Orleans. At the time of her death in 1862, there were 12 members of the Order. By 1909, it had grown to 150 members and operated parochial schools in New Orleans that served 1,300 students.



Edmund Dédé (1829-1903)

Edmund Dédé was a violinist and composer. The son of free black West Indian parents, Dédé first studied the violin in New Orleans then in Mexico and, in 1850, left for Paris, where he completed his musical education and began a career that lasted for nearly fifty years. As a violinist, musical director and composer, Dédé developed a considerable reputation abroad but returned to New Orleans only briefly in the winter of 1893-94 for a series of successful concerts.

The Robillards in *The Reckoning* are owners of *Rubaiyat*. Their ownership of this plantation dates back to antebellum Louisiana. The prosperity and success of this family of African descent echoes that of another Louisiana dynasty, the Metoyer family of the Cane River region of Louisiana.

The free Metoyer family lived in the Natchitoches area and acquired vast holdings of land and slaves during the antebellum period. This family traced its beginnings to Marie Therese, also known by her African name Coincoin. The Metoyers and other free black families living in the Isle Brevelle colony on Cane River near Natchitoches acquired vast holdings of land and slaves during the antebellum period.

Residents of the Isle Brevelle colony grew cotton and corn on their plantations and traded with white and black merchants in New Orleans. Free people of color from New Orleans and St. Dominique (Haiti) married members of the colony and contributed to its prosperity.

The Franco-African community begun by Marie Therese owes its success in part to the unique colonial history of Louisiana. The French and Spanish regimes that ruled during the various periods of the family's history generally tolerated the social and economic advancement of free Creoles of color.

Marie Therese Coincoin and Her Family



Marie Therese Coincoin was born as a slave in 1742. Her parents were part of the first generation of enslaved Africans brought to Louisiana. She bore fourteen children, ten of them fathered by Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer. The relationship between Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer and Marie Therese began soon after the Frenchman arrived in Natchitoches. Shortly after his arrival, Metoyer began leasing Marie Therese from her mistress. Metoyer later purchased Marie Therese.

The two entered into a long-term liaison that produced ten children, seven of whom survived to adulthood. Marie Therese and Pierre Metoyer lived in open concubinage, a situation often attributed to French attitudes on race. Eight years after their liaison began, he manumitted (formally freed) her when their relationship came to an end with his marriage to a French woman in 1786. All of their children together were also freed.

Pierre Metoyer never publicly confirmed his union with Marie Therese or the paternity of his Franco-African offspring. In his will of 1783, Metoyer refused to admit his paternity of these children: "I declare to be a bachelor and not have any children." His lack of public admittance points towards social conditions and racial dynamics of interracial alliances in a Southern society.

After their manumissions, Marie Therese and her children remained dedicated to the task of freeing members of their family still in slavery. Although Pierre Metoyer freed his mulatto children, Marie Therese shouldered the responsibility of freeing her black children she had before her relationship with Pierre Metoyer. Marie Therese also manumitted her grandchildren.

The Melrose Plantation



Once manumitted in 1792, Marie Therese's eldest son Augustin began his pursuit of the acquiring land on the lower Isle Brevelle. In 1795, the Spanish colonial government authorized Augustin to settle a 395 acre plot of land and to have it surveyed in his name. His acquisition of land in the lower Isle began the migration of the Metoyers of color into this region. This family community became a distinct society within the greater Natchitoches community.

Between 1794 and 1803, Marie Therese and her sons received a number of land grants, the lands forming Melrose Plantation being recorded in the name of her son Louis. Before her death Marie Therese divided her extensive holdings among the children she had borne to Metoyer.

An important part of this emerging empire of Marie Therese and her family was Yucca Plantation, now known as Melrose. Records indicate that Marie Therese's son Louis Metoyer was deeded the property in 1796.



The architecture of the original buildings supports the tradition that Marie Therese founded Melrose. One of the

primary buildings, now called the African House, derives its name from its unusual architecture—likened to that found in subtropical Africa or the West Indies.

Melrose Plantation is a National Historic Landmark in the Natchitoches Parish. The National Park Service states its significance: “Established in the 18th century by Marie Therese Coincoin, a former slave who became a wealthy businesswoman, the grounds of Yucca Plantation (now known as Melrose Plantation) contain what may well be the oldest buildings of African design built by Blacks, for the use of Blacks, in the country.”

The descendants of the free people of color in the Cane River region are known today as Cane River Creoles, many of whom still occupy the same land where their ancestors’ plantations once stood.

Metoyer Family Key Dates

1742	Marie Therese Coincoin was born in Isle Brevelle Louisiana.
1767	Claude Pierre Thomas Metoyer formed a union with Marie Therese Coincoin.
1768	First children of the union of Marie Therese Coincoin and Claude Pierre Metoyer were born, twins Augustin Metoyer and Suzanne Metoyer.
1770-1784	Nine other children are born from the union of Marie Therese Coincoin and Claude Pierre Metoyer.
1778	Marie Therese Coincoin is freed.
1789	The relationship between Marie Therese Coincoin and Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer ends.
1769	The Yucca Plantation (Melrose) is established.

In *The Reckoning*, you see the power of family history. The Robillards' family journal opens a window on the antebellum legacy of the family. The journal both enlightens and changes the lives of characters in the play.

Uncovering the legacy of any African American family in the detail chronicled in the Robillard journal can be daunting, but not impossible. Many of the basic tools of American genealogical research can be successfully applied to the investigation of an African American lineage going back to the Civil War and beyond.

Fundamental genealogy starts from the known and proceeds to the unknown, one generation at a time.

Tony Burroughs, of Chicago State University, is an expert in tracing Black families. Burroughs, the author of [Black Roots: A Beginners Guide to Tracing the African American Family Tree](#) (2001), recommends starting with the present and working back methodically. Burroughs' six-phase strategy provides one approach to tracing one's African American genealogy.

Phase I – Gather Oral History and Family Records

Genealogy begins with 1) recalling and recording things about yourself 2) interviewing parents and older relatives 3) reviewing items such as family papers, records, photos, and souvenirs and then 4) sorting out all this data by organizing it into genealogy charts that trace bloodlines and group people in family units.

Phase II – Research the Family to 1870

Research the family back to 1870. This is a key date because most African Americans were enslaved prior to the Civil War. Additional beginning sources include records in cemeteries and funeral homes, birth and death certificates, marriages and divorce records, obituaries, published biographies and family histories, old city directories and telephone directories, social Security records, and U.S. Census records.

Intermediate sources include records of Wills, probates, estates, real estate, taxes, voter registrations, schools, churches, places of employment, military service, and civil and criminal courts.

Phase III – Identify the Last Slave Owner

This is an advanced stage of research. Once here, if ancestors were enslaved, identify the name of the last slave owner. If the name of the slave owner has been passed down through oral history, search for documentary evidence to verify it.

Slave genealogy cannot be done without the name of the former slave owner. Also study the history of Reconstruction and then research Reconstruction-era sources.

Phase IV – Research the Slave Owner and Slavery

Research the slave owner to see what he did with his property because slaves were considered property. At this point the search focuses on the slave owner as well as the genealogy of the slave.

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Phase V – Go Back to Africa

Look for clues and mentions of slave origins in Africa. Study the slave trade and the Middle Passage, which brought slaves from Africa to America.

Phase VI– Research Canada and the Caribbean

Some may discover ancestors did not come to America directly from Africa. They came from the Caribbean. Study the migrations of enslaved Africans from Africa to the Caribbean to America. You'll need to search records indicating origins in the Caribbean and then from Africa to the Caribbean.

If ancestors came to the United States from Canada, study the Underground Railroad and trace ancestors back and forth across the border and then to Africa or the Caribbean.

To be successful, Burroughs stresses that these six phases should be completed in sequence.

Source: http://www.genealogy.com/83_burroughs_print.html (2010)



Burroughs Family Photo, Chattanooga, Tennessee 1889.
Pictured standing, left to right: Morris Burroughs; Malachias Williams; UNK; Samuel P. Johnson. Seated in the front row are: Robert Elliott Burroughs (baby); Mary Jane Lillie Williams Burroughs; & Martha Williams

Creating Your Family Journal

1. Investigate your family history beginning with the following steps:
 - Create a family tree. Include parents, sisters, brothers, grandparents, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. If you have a stepfamily, you may wish to include them. If you are adopted, you may wish to use your adoptive family.
 - Conduct an interview. Find a member of your family that has known you since your childhood. Ask that person questions about how you grew up, what you were like as a child, and what events in your life were most memorable from their perspective.
2. *The Reckoning* paints a vivid picture of the culture and history of Louisiana. We find out where the original inhabitants came from, what drove their economy, and what the culture was like. Investigate where your family came from, to discover for example:
 - Did most of the inhabitants migrate from a specific country, state, or region of the United States?
 - What were the predominant ethnic groups in the state or city where your family settled?
 - What was the predominant economy there? Agricultural? Industrial? Other?
 - Did the city or state where your family settled have any unique cultural characteristics; for example, food, architecture, music?
 - Is there any other information that you discovered that is important to include in your family journal?
3. Create your journal. Determine how you want to do this. You could create a written journal, a digital journal, a scrapbook, a collage. Be creative and imaginative.
4. What surprises, if any, were there for you as you created your family journal?

What insights, if any, did you gain about yourself or your family?

Getting Started

Here are some resources to get you started:

<http://www.africanaheritage.com/onlinearchives.asp>. A compilation of links to archives and information on African American genealogy and history.

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<http://www.afrigeneas.com>. African American genealogy ancestry in the Americas in particular and general genealogy resources.

<http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/heritage/native-american>. The National Archives holds information about American Indians who maintained their ties to Federally-recognized Tribes (1830-1970). Most records are arranged by tribe.

<http://www.archives.com/resources/trace-your-heritage/lds-mormon>. A wealth of genealogical resources for Mormon and non-Mormon genealogists alike amassed by the Church of Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

<http://www.archives.gov/genealogy>. The National Archives provides records from every branch of the Federal government.

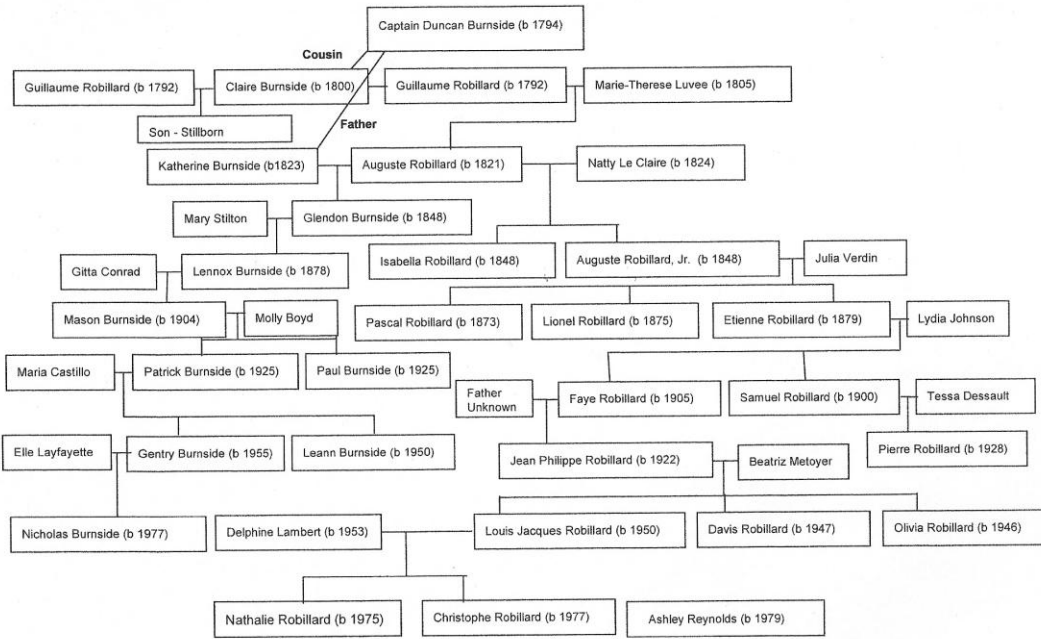
<http://www.ancestry.com>. Self-described as the world's largest online resource for family history documents and family trees.

<http://www.caags.org/library.html>. California African American Genealogical Society, Inc. (CAAGS), research facilities.

<http://www.genealogy.com/genehelp.html>. How-to articles, genealogy classes, and other resources that will help you dig deeper into your family's past.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com>. Online sources or African American genealogists.

Burnside & Robillard Family Tree



Courtesy *The Reckoning* playwright, Kimba Henderson

1. How does each of the following characters perceive his or her responsibility to family?

- Auguste Robillard
- Marie Therese
- LJ Robillard
- Nicholas Beck
- Nathalie Robillard
- Christophe Robillard

Discuss how these characters' perceptions influence the decisions they make and the actions they take?

2. Conflicts are at the heart of the relationships between many of the characters in *The Reckoning*. Discuss the conflicts and the source(s) of the conflicts between:

- LJ and Nathalie
- LJ and Christophe
- Christophe and Nathalie
- Nicholas and Nathalie

3. The relationships among the residents of Rubaiyat are dynamic and changing. Describe how the following relationships evolve during the play:

- LJ and Nathalie
- LJ and Christophe
- Christophe and Nathalie
- Nicholas and Nathalie

4. The following characters face crossroads when decisions are made that shape the future courses of their lives.

- Nathalie
- LJ
- Auguste
- Natty
- Nicholas
- Christophe
- Marie Therese

What crossroad does each face? What influences the choices each makes? If you were to advise the character at his or her crossroad, what course of action would you counsel them to take—the same path or a different path? Why?

5. Through flashbacks and ghost visitations, we experience two Rubaiyats in *The Reckoning*, that of the 19th Century and the 21st Century.

Discuss your reactions to flashbacks and ghost visitations?

Did they aid in your understanding the characters and events at modern-day Rubaiyat? How?

6. Discuss your opinion of at the beginning of *The Reckoning* of:

- Nathalie
- LJ
- Auguste
- Natty
- Nicholas
- Christophe
- Marie Therese

As you learned more about each character, how did your opinion of that character change?

What revelations and events had the most impact on your assessment of the character at the beginning of the play? By the end of the play?

7. Significant events occur in the lives of Auguste, Natty, and Marie Therese between 1821 and 1852. Research what life was like for Creole Blacks, free people or color, and African slaves during this 30-year period in Louisiana.

Based on your research, discuss:

- The ways in which the lives of these groups in Antebellum Louisiana differed from the lives of African Americans in other states in the Deep South.
- The ways in which the lives of these groups were similar?

Were there any surprises for you in the information your research uncovered?

NICHOLAS: ...You've got some beautiful land here, and it's in good shape. How long has it been producing?

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LJ: Since 1810. Sugar cane, rice, then I added crawfish to the mix in the mid-60s.

Act I, The Reckoning

Sugar in Louisiana

Plantation agriculture in Louisiana dates to the early 1700s when the territory was a French colony. By the end of the 1790s, the invention of the cotton gin and the discovery of a way to granulate sugar from Louisiana sugarcane firmly established the system of cultivating a single crop on large estates.

Sugar production, in particular, required large amounts of land, labor, and capital. It was along the fertile river bottoms of the Mississippi delta that one could find the grand extensive plantations commonly associated with the Antebellum South.

Agriculture was the major economic activity in Louisiana during the 19th century, as it had been during the preceding colonial era. Almost all the sugar grown in the United States during the antebellum period came from Louisiana.

However, the sugar industry—so prosperous for nearly two centuries—started to decline by the mid-19th Century. Several factors contributed to its downward spiral: emancipation of the slaves, falling sugar prices, and the development of alternative sweeteners.

Nevertheless, sugarcane remains an integral part of the south Louisiana economy and culture. According to LSU AgCenter (2010), sugarcane contributes \$2 billion to the Louisiana economy.



Sugarcane field south Louisiana

Crawfish in Louisiana

Crawfish are the most widely raised fresh water crustacean in the United States. One third of United States seafood comes from Louisiana making the state the number one seafood producing state in the nation. Louisiana crawfish farmers provide 85 percent of the domestic product brought to the tables of Louisiana and beyond.



Figure 1 Crawfish Boats

Dating back to the Native Americans and the early European settlers, the crawfish has been an inherent part of Louisiana culture. Abundant in the swamps and marshes across south Louisiana, crawfish were a favorite food of early residents.

Both market incentives and technological innovations advanced the Louisiana crawfish industry. In the 1960's, crawfish farming made its debut with the cultivation of crawfish in man-made ponds. During the next 35 years, crawfish farming developed into the largest freshwater crustacean aqua-culture industry in the United States. Louisiana leads the nation, producing more than 90% of the domestic crop. More than 1,600 farmers produce crawfish in some 111,000 acres of ponds. Crawfish season in Louisiana remains an exciting tradition, with crawfish boils and backyard parties being time-honored events.

The Reckoning	Glossary
Antebellum	Existing before a war; existing before the American Civil War.
Code Noir	Also known as Black Code, the name commonly applied to the Edict Concerning the Negro Slaves in Louisiana issued by France's Louis XV. Consisting of fifty-four articles, the code prescribed in detail regulations concerning marriage, religious instruction, punishment, and manumission of slaves. It also defined the legal position and proper conduct of freed or free blacks in the colony. The essential provisions of the code remained in force in Louisiana until 1803.
Concubine	A woman who cohabits with a man to whom she is not legally married, especially, one regarded as socially or sexually subservient; one having a recognized social status in a household below that of a wife.
Crawfish	Any of various freshwater crustaceans resembling a lobster but considerably smaller.
Creoles	A white person descended from early French or Spanish settlers of the United States Gulf states and preserving their speech and culture. A person of mixed French or Spanish and black descent speaking a dialect of French or Spanish.
Gens de couleurs	A French term meaning "people of color." In practice, this term can refer to Creoles of color with Latin blood and certain other free blacks.

Manumission	Formal emancipation from slavery; the act of manumitting, or of liberating a slave from bondage.
Miscegenation	Marriage or cohabitation between a man and woman of different races, especially, in the U.S., between a Black and a White person.
Placage	A recognized extralegal system in which white French and Spanish and later Creole men entered into the equivalent of common-law marriages with women of African, Indian and white (European) Creole descent.
St. Dominique	The French colony on the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola. In 1804, the western portion of St. Dominique became the independent nation of Haiti. Haiti was the first black-governed republic in the Western Hemisphere, created following the most successful slave rebellion in history.



Louisiana's Code Noir (1724)

Primary Documents:

To regulate relations between slaves and colonists, the Louisiana Code noir, or slave code, based largely on that compiled in 1685 for the French Caribbean colonies, was introduced in 1724 and remained in force until the United States took possession of Louisiana in 1803. The Code's 54 articles regulated the status of slaves and free blacks, as well as relations between masters and slaves. The entire body of laws appears below.

BLACK CODE OF LOUISIANA

I. Decrees the expulsion of Jews from the colony.

II. Makes it imperative on masters to impart religious instruction to their slaves.

III. Permits the exercise of the Roman Catholic creed only. Every other mode of worship is prohibited.

IV. Negroes placed under the direction or supervision of any other person than a Catholic, are liable to confiscation.

V. Sundays and holidays are to be strictly observed. All negroes found at work on these days are to be confiscated.

VI. We forbid our white subjects, of both sexes, to marry with the blacks, under the penalty of being fined and subjected to some other arbitrary punishment. We forbid all curates, priests, or missionaries of our secular or regular clergy, and even our chaplains in our navy to sanction such marriages. We also forbid all our white subjects, and even the manumitted or free-born blacks, to live in a state of concubinage with blacks. Should there be any issue from this kind of intercourse, it is our will that the person so offending, and the master of the slave, should pay each a fine of three hundred livres. Should said issue be the result of the concubinage of the master with his slave, said master shall not only pay the fine, but be deprived of the slave and of the children, who shall be adjudged to the hospital of the locality, and said slaves shall be forever incapable of being set free. But should this illicit intercourse have existed between a free black and his slave, when said free black had no legitimate wife, and should said black marry said slave according to the forms prescribed by the

church, said slave shall be thereby set free, and the children shall also become free and legitimate ; and in such a case, there shall be no application of the penalties mentioned in the present article.

VII. The ceremonies and forms prescribed by the ordinance of Blois, and by the edict of 1639, for marriages, shall be observed both with regard to free persons and to slaves. But the consent of the father and mother of the slave is not necessary; that of the master shall be the only one required.

VIII. We forbid all curates to proceed to effect marriages between slaves without proof of the consent of their masters; and we also forbid all masters to force their slaves into any marriage against their will.

IX. Children, issued from the marriage of slaves, shall follow the condition of their parents, and shall belong to the master of the wife and not of the husband, if the husband and wife have different masters.

X. If the husband be a slave, and the wife a free woman, it is our will that their children, of whatever sex they may be, shall share the condition of their mother, and be as free as she, notwithstanding the servitude of their father; and if the father be free and the mother a slave, the children shall all be slaves.

XI. Masters shall have their Christian slaves buried in consecrated ground.

XII. We forbid slaves to carry offensive weapons or heavy sticks, under the penalty of being whipped, and of having said weapons confiscated for the benefit of the person seizing the same. An exception is made in favor of those slaves who are sent a hunting or a shooting by their masters, and who carry with them a written permission to that effect, or are designated by some known mark or badge.

XIII. We forbid slaves belonging to different masters to gather in crowds either by day or by night, under the pretext of a wedding, or for any other cause, either at the dwelling or on the grounds of one of their masters, or elsewhere, and much less on the highways or in secluded places, under the penalty of corporal punishment, which shall not be less than the whip. In case of frequent offences of the kind, the offenders shall be branded with the mark of the flower de luce, and should there be aggravating circumstances, capital punishment may be applied, at the discretion of our judges. We command all our subjects, be they officers or not, to seize all such offenders, to arrest and conduct them to prison, although there should be no judgment against them.

XIV. Masters who shall be convicted of having permitted or tolerated such gatherings as aforesaid, composed of other slaves than their own, shall be sentenced, individually, to indemnify their neighbors for the damages occasioned by said gatherings, and to pay, for the first time, a fine of thirty livres, and double that sum on the repetition of the offence.

XV. We forbid negroes to sell any commodities, provisions, or produce of any kind, without the written permission of their masters, or without wearing their known marks or badges, and any persons purchasing anything from negroes in violence of this article, shall be sentenced to pay a fine of 1500 livres.

XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, provide at length for the clothing of slaves and for their subsistence.

XX. Slaves who shall not be properly fed, clad, and provided for by their masters, may give information thereof to the attorney-general of the Superior Council, or to all the other officers of justice of an inferior jurisdiction, and may put the written exposition of their wrongs into their hands ; upon which information, and even ex officio, should the information come from another quarter, the attorney-general shall prosecute said masters without charging any costs to the complainants. It is our will that this regulation be observed in all accusations for crimes or barbarous and inhuman treatment brought by slaves against their masters.

XXI. Slaves who are disabled from working, either by old age, disease, or otherwise, be the disease incurable or not, shall be fed and provided for by their masters ; and in case they should have been abandoned by said masters, said slaves shall be adjudged to the nearest hospital, to which said masters shall be obliged to pay eight cents a day for the food and maintenance of each one of these slaves ; and for the payment of this sum, said hospital shall have a lien on the plantations of the master.

XXII. We declare that slaves can have no right to any kind of property, and that all that they acquire, either by their own industry or by the liberality of others, or by any other means or title whatever, shall be the full property of their masters ; and the children of said slaves, their fathers and mothers, their kindred or other relations, either free or slaves, shall have no pretensions or claims thereto, either through testamentary dispositions or donations inter vi-vos ; which dispositions and donations we declare null and void, and also whatever promises they may have made, or whatever obligations they may have subscribed to, as having been entered into by persons incapable of disposing of any thing, and of participating to any contract.

XXIII. Masters shall be responsible for what their slaves have done by their command, and also for what transactions they have permitted their slaves to do in their shops, in the particular line of commerce with which they were intrusted ; and in case said slaves should have acted without the order or authorization of their masters, said masters shall be responsible only for so much as has turned to their profit; and if said masters have not profited by the doing or transaction of their slaves, the peculium which the masters have permitted the slaves to own, shall be subjected to all claims against said slaves, after deduction made by the masters of what may be due to them ; and if said peculium should consist, in whole or in part, of merchandises in which the slaves had permission to traffic, the masters shall only come in for their share in common with the other creditors.

XXIV. Slaves shall be incapable of all public functions, and of being constituted agents for any other person than their own masters, with powers to manage or conduct any kind of trade ; nor can they serve as arbitrators or experts; nor shall they be called to give their testimony either in civil or in criminal cases, except when it shall be a matter of necessity, and only in default of white people ; but in no case shall they be permitted to serve as witnesses either for or against their masters.

XXV. Slaves shall never be parties to civil suits, either as plaintiffs or defendants, nor shall they be allowed to appear as complainants in criminal cases, but their masters shall have the right to act for them in civil matters, and in criminal ones, to demand punishment and reparation for such outrages and excesses as their slaves may have suffered from.

XXVI. Slaves may be prosecuted criminally, without their masters being made parties to the trial, except they should be indicted as accomplices; and said slaves shall be tried, at first, by the judges of ordinary jurisdiction, if there be any, and on appeal, by the Superior Council, with the same rules, formalities, and proceedings observed for free persons, save the exceptions mentioned hereafter.

XXVII. The slave who, having struck his master, his mistress, or the husband of his mistress, or their children, shall have produced a bruise, or the shedding of blood in the face, shall suffer capital punishment.

XXVIII. With regard to outrages or acts of violence committed by slaves against free persons, it is our will that they be punished with severity, and even with death, should the case require it.

XXIX. Thefts of importance, and even the stealing of horses, mares, mules, oxen, or cows, when executed by slaves or manumitted persons, shall make the offender liable to corporal, and even to capital punishment, according to the circumstances of the case.

XXX. The stealing of sheep, goats, hogs, poultry, grain, fodder, peas, beans, or other vegetables, produce, or provisions, when committed by slaves, shall be punished according to the circumstances of the case ; and the judges may sentence them, if necessary, to be whipped by the public executioner, and branded with the mark of the flower de luce.

XXXI. In cases of thefts committed or damages done by their slaves, masters, besides the corporal punishment inflicted on their slaves, shall be bound to make amends for the injuries resulting from the acts of said slaves, unless they prefer abandoning them to the sufferer. They shall be bound so to make their choice, in three days from the time of the conviction of the negroes ; if not, this privilege shall be forever forfeited.

XXXII. The runaway slave, who shall continue to be so for one month from the day of his being denounced to the officers of justice, shall have his ears cut off, and shall be branded with the flower de luce on the shoulder : and on a second offence of the same nature, persisted in during one month from the day of his being denounced, he shall be hamstrung, and be marked with the flower de luce on the other shoulder. On the third offence, he shall suffer death.

XXXIII. Slaves, who shall have made themselves liable to the penalty of the whip, the flower de luce brand, and ear cutting, shall be tried, in the last resort, by the ordinary judges of the inferior courts, and shall undergo the sentence passed upon them without there being an appeal to the Superior Council, in confirmation or reversal of judgment, notwithstanding the article 26th of the present code, which shall be applicable only to those judgments in which the slave convicted is sentenced to be hamstrung or suffer death.

XXXIV. Freed or free-born negroes, who shall have afforded refuge in their houses to fugitive slaves, shall be sentenced to pay to the masters of said slaves, the sum of thirty livres a day for every day during which they shall have concealed said fugitives ; and all other free persons, guilty of the same offence, shall pay a fine of ten livres a day as aforesaid ; and should the freed or free-born negroes not be able to pay the fine herein specified, they shall be reduced to the condition of slaves, and be sold as such. Should the price of the sale exceed the sum mentioned in the judgment, the surplus shall be delivered to the hospital.

XXXV. We permit our subjects in this colony, who may have slaves concealed in any place whatever, to have them sought after by such persons and in such a way as they may deem proper, or to proceed themselves to such researches, as they may think best.

XXXVI. The slave who is sentenced to suffer death on the denunciation of his master, shall, when that master is not an accomplice to his crime, be appraised before his execution by two of the principal inhabitants of the locality, who shall be especially appointed by the judge, and the amount of said appraisement shall be paid to the master. To raise this sum, a proportional tax shall be laid on every slave, and shall be collected by the persons invested with that authority.

XXXVII. We forbid all the officers of the Superior Council, and all our other officers of justice in this colony, to take any fees or receive any perquisites in criminal suits against slaves, under the penalty, in so doing, of being dealt with as guilty of extortion.

XXXVIII. We also forbid all our subjects in this colony, whatever their condition or rank may be, to apply, on their own private authority, the rack to their slaves, under any pretence whatever, and to mutilate said slaves in any one of their limbs, or in any part of their bodies, under the penalty of the confiscation of said slaves; and said masters, so offending, shall be liable to a criminal prosecution. We only permit masters, when they shall think that the case requires it, to put their slaves in irons, and to have them whipped with rods or ropes.

XXXIX. We command our officers of justice in this colony to institute criminal process against masters and overseers who shall have killed or mutilated their slaves, when in their power and under their supervision, and to punish said murder according to the atrocity of the circumstances; and in case the offence shall be a pardonable one, we permit them to pardon said masters and overseers without its being necessary to obtain from us letters patent of pardon. XL. Slaves shall be held in law as movables, and as such, they shall be part of the community of acquests between husband and wife ; they shall not be liable to be seized under any mortgage whatever; and they shall be equally divided among the co-heirs without admitting from any one of said heirs any claim founded on preciput or right of primogeniture, or dowry.

XLI, XLII. *Are entirely relative to judicial forms and proceedings.* XLIII. Husbands and wives shall not be seized and sold separately when belonging to the same master : and their children, when under fourteen years of age, shall not be separated from their parents, and such seizures and sales shall be null and void. The present article shall apply to voluntary sales, and in case such sales should take place in violation of the law, the seller shall be deprived of the slave he has illegally retained, and said slave shall be adjudged to the purchaser without any additional price being required.

XLIV. Slaves, fourteen years old, and from this age up to sixty, who are settled on lands and plantations, and are at present working on them, shall not be liable to seizure for debt, except for what may be due out of the purchase money agreed to be paid for them, unless said grounds or plantations should also be distressed, and any seizure and judicial sale of a real estate, without including the slaves of the aforesaid age, who are part of said estate, shall be deemed null and void.

XLV, XLVI, XLVII, XLVIII, XLIX. *Are relative to certain formalities to be observed in judicial proceedings.*

L. Masters, when twenty-five years old, shall have the power to manumit their slaves, either by testamentary dispositions, or by acts inter-vivos. But, as there may be mercenary masters disposed to set a price on the liberation of their slaves ; and whereas slaves, with a view to acquire the necessary means to purchase their freedom, may be tempted to commit theft or deeds of plunder, no person, whatever may be his rank and condition, shall be permitted to set free his slaves, without obtaining from the Superior Council a decree of permission to that effect ; which permission shall be granted without costs, when the motives for the setting free of said slaves, as specified in the petition of the master, shall appear legitimate to the tribunal. All acts for the emancipation of slaves, which, for the future, shall be made without this permission, shall be null ; and the slaves, so freed, shall not be entitled to their freedom ; they shall, on the contrary, continue to be held as slaves; but they shall be taken away from their former masters, and confiscated for the benefit of the India Company. LI. However, should slaves be appointed by their masters tutors to their children, said slaves shall be held and regarded as being thereby set free to all intents and purposes.

LII. We declare that the acts for the enfranchisement of slaves, passed according to the forms above described, shall be equivalent to an act of naturalization, when said slaves are not born in our colony of Louisiana, and they shall enjoy all the rights and privileges inherent to our subjects born in our kingdom or in any land or country under our dominion. We declare, therefore, that all manumitted slaves, and all free-born negroes, are incapable of receiving donations, either by testamentary dispositions, or by acts inter-vivos from the whites. Said donations shall be null and void, and the objects so donated shall be applied to the benefit of the nearest hospital.

LIII. We command all manumitted slaves to show the profoundest respect to their former masters, to their widows and children, and any injury or insult offered by said manumitted slaves to their former masters, their widows or children- shall be punished with more severity than if it had been offered to any other person. We, however, declare them exempt from the discharge Of all duties or services, and

from the payment of all taxes or fees, or anything else which their former masters might, in their quality of patrons, claim either in relation to their persons, or to their personal or real estate, either during the life or after the death of said manumitted slaves.

LIV. We grant to manumitted slaves the same rights, privileges, and immunities which are enjoyed by free-born persons. It is our pleasure that their merit in having acquired their freedom, shall produce in their favor, not only with regard to their persons, but also to their property, the same effects which our other subjects derive from the happy circumstance of their having been born free.

In the name of the King,
Bienville, De la Chaise.

Fazende, Bruslé, Perry, March, 1724.

Sources:

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- 1682** Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle, claims the territory for King Louis XIV of France and names the area La Louisianne for the French King.
- 1718** New Orleans is founded and named for Phillipe Duc D’Orleans.
- 1719** The first large importation of black slaves arrives in Louisiana.
- 1724** The “Black Code” is declared in effect which included provisions imposing restrictions of movement on former black slaves, requiring them to labor, and allowing for punishment for “insubordinate behavior.”
- 1751** Sugarcane is first introduced into Louisiana.
- 1762** Spain gains control of the Louisiana from France.
- 1770** The Spanish government officially assumes control of the Territory of Louisiana.
- 1800** Spain cedes Louisiana to France.
- 1803** The United States buys the Louisiana Territory from France for \$15 dollars. The new territory nearly doubles the size of the United States.
- 1809** A massive immigration of French, African slaves, and free people of color from St. Dominique (Haiti) arrives in Louisiana.
- 1811** A massive slave uprising in St. Charles and St. John the Baptist parishes is suppressed.
- 1812** Louisiana is admitted to the Union.
- 1814** Six hundred African American troops are among the U.S. Army of 3,000 led by General Andrew Jackson, which defeats British forces at the Battle of New Orleans.
- 1815** Battle of New Orleans is won by General Andrew Jackson.
- 1838** The first Mardi Gras is held in New Orleans.

- 1840** Antoine's in New Orleans, the state's oldest continuously operating restaurant, is established.
- 1849** Baton Rouge becomes capital of Louisiana.
- 1861** Louisiana secedes from the Union and after a brief period as a republic, joins the Confederacy.
- 1861** African American men in New Orleans organize the First Louisiana National Guard of the Confederate Army, creating the first and only military unit of black officers and enlisted men to pledge to fight for Southern independence. By 1862, after New Orleans is occupied by Union forces, the Louisiana National Guard becomes a military unit of the United States Army.
- 1865** The Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution is ratified, thus officially abolishing slavery.
- 1867** Shrimp is first canned commercially at Grand Terre Island.
- 1868** Louisiana is re-admitted to the Union.
- 1868** Oscar J. Dunn is Louisiana's first Black Lieutenant Governor, serving until 1871.
- 1868** Louisiana's Reconstruction constitution is adopted.
- 1872** Caesar "C.C." Antoine, a free person of color, serves as Lieutenant Governor until 1877. He served briefly as Acting Governor in 1876.
- 1877** President Rutherford B. Hayes withdraws Federal troops from Louisiana, thus ending Reconstruction in the state.
- 1898** A new constitution is enacted that includes a "Grandfather Clause" to permit illiterate whites to vote; a poll tax and literacy test is included for black voters.
- 1915** The name "Jazz" is given to music of New Orleans origin.
- 1960** Two public schools in Orleans Parish desegregated.
- 1963** Tulane University accepts five black students, the first in its history.
- 1965** The Voting Rights Act is passed. The bill outlaws states from requiring citizens to pass a literacy test to qualify to vote.

- 1977** Ernest Morial is elected mayor of New Orleans, becoming the city's first black mayor.
- 1987** Louisiana celebrates the 175th anniversary of its admission into the Union.
- 1994** Marc Morial (son of former Mayor Ernest "Dutch" Morial) is elected Mayor of New Orleans.
- 2005** Louisiana is hit by Hurricane Katrina, devastating New Orleans and killing hundreds in the state. Of the 160,000 Louisiana buildings declared "uninhabitable" after Katrina, a majority are in New Orleans neighborhoods. Hardest hit of these is the African American community of the Lower Ninth Ward. Floodwaters reach every structure in the Lower Ninth Ward, which spent five weeks underwater. Federal and local officials are widely criticized for the slow and inadequate response to the initial disaster and subsequent recovery programs.



Lower Ninth residents after Hurricane Katrina

Glossary	Basic Theatre Terms
Antagonist	The character who provides the obstacles to the protagonist's objective in a play.
Aside	An observation or remark made by a character to the audience that is not being heard by other actors.
Blocking	The pattern of movement actors follow while on stage.
Casting	Selecting which actors will play which roles/characters.
Characters	The personalities or parts that actors become in a play; roles played by actors in a play; The third of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.
Climax	The point of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action of the play.
Conflict	The point in a play where action meets obstacle; the opposition of persons, forces, or ideas that gives rise to dramatic action in a play.
Costumes	The clothing worn by the actors who play the characters.
Critique	The art of evaluating or analyzing the play.
Dialogue	The words spoken by the actors during a play.
Diction	The word choices made by the playwright 2) the enunciation of the actors speaking the lines; the fourth of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.
Director	Individual who is in charge of all aspects of the production of a play; generally responsible for the final decisions in all areas of production.
Playwright	The individual who writes a play.
Plot	What happens in a play; the order of events; the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means; the first of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.

From <http://www.kyshakes.org/Resources/Vocab.htm>

Glossary**Basic Theatre Terms**

Props	Objects used by characters on stage during a play. Hand Prop - an object small enough to be carried easily.
Protagonist	The principal character around whom the action revolves.
Rehearsal	Preparing a play for performance.
Reversal	A plot event in the action that produces the opposite of what was desired or expected.
Role	A part/character/person written by a playwright.
Script	The play in written form.
Set	The environment of the play; scenery and furniture.
Soliloquy	A speech in which an actor, usually alone on stage, speaks his or her thoughts aloud.
Spectacle	The visual elements of the production of a play; the scenery, costumes props, makeup, lighting and special effects; the sixth of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.
Stage	The area where the actors perform the play.
Stage Left	The left side of the stage as the actors look out toward the audience.
Stage Right	The right side of the stage as the actors look out toward the audience.
Tension	The state of anxiety induced in the audience by the threat of danger to a character in the play.
Theme	What the play means as opposed to what happens (plot); the main idea or message within the play; the second of Aristotle's Six Elements of Drama.

From <http://www.kyshakes.org/Resources/Vocab.htm>

Medley of Cultures

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<http://www.tourism.breauxbridge.com>

Key Dates

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=african-american-history-timeline>

<http://www.shgresources.com/la/timeline/>



Cast and playwright, *THE RECKONING*

From left: Toyin Moses-Nathalie Robillard
Kendrick Sampson-August Robillard
Tiffany Boone-Young Natty
Alex Morris*-LJ Robillard
Kimba Henderson-*The Reckoning* Playwright
Michael Harrity*-Gentry/Captain Burnside
Tarnue Massaquoi-Christophe Robillard
Dorian Christian Baucum-Phillippe
Terese Aiello-Ashley Robillard/Katherine
Jacob Sidney*-Nicholas Burnside



Not shown: Tanya Lane-Helene/MarieTherese

The Reckoning

Feedback Questionnaire

Please take a few minutes to provide your feedback on the Discovery Guide for The Reckoning.

1=Strongly Agree
2=Agree

3=Disagree
4=Strongly Disagree

Assess the following:	1	2	3	4
Organization: The information is presented logically and is easy to follow.				
Background Information: The background information helps put the play in historical context.				
Learning Activities: The activities in the "Reflections" sections of the Guide are helpful in exploring the meaning and relevance of the events in the play.				
<i>If you are using the Discovery Guide in an educational setting or plan to use it in an educational setting, please assess the following:</i>				
Flexibility of Activities: The activities in the "Reflections" sections are easily adaptable to make them suitable to students of different ages and experiences.				
Resources: The resources provided in the Guide are useful and relevant.				
Teaching Tool: I have used or plan to use the Discovery Guide as a teaching tool.				

- Have you attended a performance of the play? Yes _____ No _____
- Please share any suggestions for improving the Discovery Guide or additional comments about the Guide.

Use one of the following methods to submit your completed questionnaire.

E-mail to: gotorobey@gmail.com

FAX to: (213) 489-4520

Mail to: Robey Theatre Company, 514 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Thank you.

Discovery Guide Editor & Writer

Diane Frazier -- Diane Frazier was a trainer; curriculum developer; and training event coordinator for almost 30 years for the Georgia state government. During her career, which ended in retirement in 2007, she developed curricula and conducted training on a variety of subjects including presentation skills; business writing; and group facilitation skills. She worked on inter-agency teams that designed and conducted various *train-the-trainer* programs for adjunct instructors and served on steering teams that coordinated large development conferences. Diane is a

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Special Thanks

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