

## THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN THE SOUTH

[This paper was read before the American Historical Association at New Orleans in December, 1903.]

The subject assigned for this conference may be viewed from so many different aspects that no one can treat it fully in the time allowed by the program. I shall not attempt to say in what way history should be taught in primary and grammar schools. It seems to me that the course of study as outlined for the public schools of New Orleans is very rational, viz., oral teaching and stories related by the teacher, until the fifth grade, when an elementary text-book on the history of the United States is introduced and taught for two years. In the last two years a more complete text-book is used. Before the student is able to understand the book given him in his fifth school year the teacher should have related to him interesting stories concerning ancient and modern history. It is impossible for the child to understand the discovery and the explorations of America if he has not been told something about the countries of Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. Indeed, oral teaching should continue even after the text-book has been introduced. Many interesting incidents suggested by the lesson of the day should be related by the teacher in order not only to impart knowledge, but also to develop the mental faculties of the child by the association of ideas, by comparison. An accurate study of the text should, of course, be required in grammar schools, high schools, and colleges,

but the teacher or the professor should never fail to supplement the lesson by a fuller explanation of the subject. For college work the professor may occasionally devote the whole recitation hour to lecturing, requiring the students to take notes and to study the authorities mentioned.

There is no doubt that the spoken word is far more effective than the written, and it should be resorted to more and more as the student advances in age and in grade until he reaches the university. There he should learn the sources of historical knowledge and acquire the critical sense which will make him adopt or discard the facts furnished by his documents. At the university he will be able to begin his special studies; he will devote himself to single periods in the history of a people, or study diplomatic history, religious history, history of art, or sciences auxiliary to history, such as epigraphy, paleography, historical pedagogy, etc.

In the university the student should study the facts of political history; but the first place, according to Gabriel Monod, should be given to the history of institutions and of social evolution, to the history of civilization. "It is this side of history," says the eminent French professor, "which is considered more and more as the essential part of historical science, that which offers the widest field to new researches, and which calls, at the same time, for the most scientific decision and the most philosophical generalization, that also, where the students of history have the greatest need to be guided. It is therefore, we believe, the history of civilization, of institutions, of social and economic phenomena, which should occupy more and more the first place in the general courses of the university. The aim of the

study of history is to lead to the constitution of sociological science; and sociology will be a solid science, only if it is founded on history, and not on philosophical speculation."

Thus far I have not referred specially to the South; for it seems to me that there is but one way to teach history or literature, and that is to be perfectly impartial in the presentation of facts and in the philosophical lessons presented by these facts. The histories of Greece and of Rome, of England and of France, should be taught according to the same principles in the North and in the South; and differences in the appreciation of facts should depend only on the personality and on the individuality of the teacher whether he reside in the North or in the South. With regard to the history of the Civil War the people of the South should be careful that the text-books given their children should do full justice to the heroism of the men who fought to establish the Southern Confederacy and to the motives which actuated them. One may rejoice at present that the Union was not permanently disrupted, and yet be proud of the deeds of the men and women of the Confederacy. The time will come, perhaps it has come already, when the history of the great Civil War will be taught in the North and in the South from books which will do full justice to Lincoln and to Grant, to Jefferson Davis and to Lee, whatever was the birthplace of the authors of these books.

If we consider now the student of history not in the class room, but in the library and in the departments where are kept the archives of states, I am glad to say that we have here in New Orleans most valuable documents for the study of American history, more especially of the history

of Louisiana. The Louisiana Historical Society, established in 1836 and reorganized in 1846, is the custodian of the documents referring to the history of Louisiana. It has in its library the following important documents:—

Manuscript Catalogue of the Mississippi Valley.

French Manuscripts of the Mississippi Valley, 1679-1769.

Official French Orders, Laws, etc., of the Mississippi Valley, 1690-1719, and 1720-1729.

Magne's *Notes et Documents*, copies made from the archives in France in 1845.

Margry's *Documents sur la Louisiane*, a compilation made by Pierre Margry in 1849—three volumes.

A large number of boxes containing petitions, marriage contracts, etc., from 1719 to 1803.

Four volumes of Spanish Manuscripts, compiled from the archives in Spain by the distinguished writer, Pascual de Gayangos, for the State of Louisiana, secured through the efforts of Mr. Gayarré.

Let us say here that we owe a debt of gratitude to Charles Gayarré, our historian. Not only did he labor indefatigably to write the history of Louisiana, but he amassed precious documents which have enabled other students of history to investigate original sources. In the Gayangos Manuscripts is found a great part of the correspondence between General Wilkinson and Governor Miró and Minister Gardoqui—a correspondence which is highly interesting for the study of the relations between Spanish Louisiana and the western country before the year 1790.

Although the Spanish manuscripts in the custody of the Louisiana Historical Society are very valuable, much important material is yet to be found in the Spanish archives, and the American Historical Association should endeavor to

have copies made of the documents to be found in Madrid, Simancas, and Seville.

With regard to the French documents relating to Louisiana we are more fortunate. They are all to be found at the Ministry of the Colonies in Paris and are admirably kept by Mr. Victor Tantet, librarian and keeper of archives. He made for me in August, 1900, the following list:—

Liste des documents concernant la Louisiane conservés aux Archives Coloniales. (Ministère des Colonies, Pavillon de Flore, Paris.)

Série C—C 13.

Correspondance Générale, Louisiane.

DIVISION CHRONOLOGIQUE

Registre

- |     |            |                                                 |
|-----|------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | 1678–1706. |                                                 |
| 2.  | 1707–1712. |                                                 |
| 3.  | 1713–1715. | M. de la Motte-Cadillac, gouverneur.            |
| 4.  | 1716.      | M. de la Motte-Cadillac, gouverneur             |
| 5.  | 1717–1719. | M. de Lépinay, gouverneur.                      |
| 6.  | 1720–1722. | M. de Bienville, gouverneur.                    |
| 7.  | 1723.      | M. de la Chaise, ordonnateur.                   |
| 8.  | 1724–1725. | M. de Bienville, gouverneur.                    |
| 9.  | 1726.      | M. Boisbriant, lieutenant du Roy.               |
| 10. | 1726–1727. | M. Perrier, gouverneur.                         |
| 11. | 1728–1729. | M. Perrier, gouverneur.                         |
| 12. | 1729–1730. | M. Perrier, gouverneur.                         |
| 13. | 1731.      | M. Perrier, gouverneur.                         |
| 14. | 1732.      | M. Perrier, gouverneur, et Mémoires et Projets. |
| 15. | 1732.      | M. Salmon, ordonnateur—Fonctionnaires divers    |
| 16. | 1733.      | MM. Perrier et de Bienville, gouverneurs.       |
| 17. | 1733.      | M. Salmon, ordonnateur—Fonctionnaires divers.   |
| 18. | 1734.      | M. de Bienville, gouverneur.                    |
| 19. | 1734.      | M. Salmon, ordonnateur.                         |
| 20. | 1735.      | M. de Bienville, gouverneur.                    |

21. 1736. M. de Bienville, gouverneur.
22. 1737. M. de Bienville, gouverneur.
23. 1738. M. de Bienville, gouverneur.
24. 1739. M. de Bienville, gouverneur.
25. 1740. M. de Bienville, gouverneur.
26. 1741. M. de Bienville, gouverneur.
27. 1742. M. de Bienville, gouverneur.
28. 1743-1744. MM. de Bienville et de Vaudreuil, gouverneurs.
29. 1745. M. de Vaudreuil, gouverneur.
30. 1746. M. de Vaudreuil, gouverneur.
31. 1747. M. de Vaudreuil, gouverneur.
32. 1748. M. de Vaudreuil, gouverneur.
33. 1749. M. de Vaudreuil, gouverneur.
34. 1749-1750. M. Michel, ordonnateur, M. de Vaudreuil,  
gouverneur.
35. 1751. M. de Vaudreuil, gouverneur.
36. 1752. MM. de Vaudreuil et de Kerlérec, gouverneurs.
37. 1753. MM. de Vaudreuil et de Kerlérec, gouverneurs.
38. 1754. M. de Kerlérec, gouverneur.
39. 1755-1757. M. de Kerlérec, gouverneur.
40. 1758. M. de Kerlérec, gouverneur.
41. 1759. M. de Kerlérec, gouverneur.
42. 1760-1761. M. de Rochemore, ordonnateur.
43. 1762-1763. M. de Kerlérec, gouverneur.
44. 1764. M. de Kerlérec, gouverneur.
45. 1765. M. Aubry, commandant.
46. 1766. M. Aubry, commandant.
47. 1767. M. Aubry, commandant.
48. 1768. M. Aubry, commandant.
49. 1769. M. Aubry, commandant.
50. 1770-1788.
51. 1795-1802.
52. 1803.
53. 1804-1819.

1804. Amérique du Nord—Préparatifs pour la reprise de possession de la Louisiane.
- 1792-1807. Projets de Madgett—Louisiane, Isthmes Américains, etc.
- 1699-1773. Deuxième Série, Correspondance Générale Louisiane. Divers.
1767. Mémoires et projets—Renseignements divers. Documents non datés.
- 1699-1724. Postes de la Louisiane.
- 1695-1736. Entreprises de Cavelier de La Salle. Lacs et Mississippi.
- 1718-1731. Postes de la Louisiane.

Outre ces documents qui font partie de la série dite de la Correspondance Générale, c'est-à-dire de la correspondance des gouverneurs avec la métropole, il existe encore aux archives coloniales des documents qui intéressent l'histoire de la Louisiane. Ce sont:

1. 1 registre d'Etat civil—1720 à 1730.
2. 2 cartons de Recensements.
3. La correspondance de la métropole avec les gouverneurs (Série B. dite les ordres du Roi.)

*Le sous-chef de bureau archiviste bibliothécaire,*

VICTOR TANTET.

Paris, ce 10 août, 1900.

In December, 1900, the Louisiana Historical Society addressed a circular to the governors of the States in the Mississippi Valley and the presidents of the historical societies in those States asking them to sign the following memorial to Congress:—

*To the Honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States:*

The undersigned Governors of the States of the Mississippi Valley and the presidents of the Historical Societies of the same States respectfully present this Memorial and ask for the publication by the

United States of certain documentary records relating to the history of the Mississippi Valley, especially of the vast territory acquired by the purchase of 1803. These records are contained in a series of volumes in the archives of the Ministry of the Colonies, Paris, France, and consist of hitherto unpublished correspondence, orders, proclamations, official reports, grants of lands and privileges, the registration of births, marriages and deaths, censuses, financial accounts, and various other data of great interest and importance to students and historians.

Several times during revolutionary uprisings in Paris these archives were in danger of being destroyed—notably in 1871, by the Communists. In the event of such destruction the loss would be irreparable.

We respectfully request that Congress have these records copied and an edition printed for distribution as public documents among the universities, colleges, libraries, historical and other learned societies of the United States, and that an appropriation be made for the purpose.

Mr. Tantet has informed me that the 53 volumes of the *Correspondance Générale* could be copied for 10,000 francs. The United States government should certainly have the documents copied and printed, and I call on the members of the American Historical Association to help the Louisiana Historical Society in its efforts to that end.

Without waiting for the help of Congress our local Society has begun to have the French documents copied. We have already received a large volume relating to 1803, and we expect in a few days a copy of the volume relating to 1768, the year of the admirable Revolution which took place in Louisiana when our ancestors resisted foreign oppression and thought of establishing a republic on the banks of the Mississippi.



In the State library are some of the Manuscript journals of Governor Claiborne and of his immediate successors; and at the City Hall in New Orleans are all the proceedings of the Spanish Cabildo, from 1769 to 1803, and of the City Council of New Orleans from 1803 to our days. There are besides complete files of Louisiana newspapers.

We are proud of the history of our State; we wish our children to know it perfectly, and we have in our archives documents which substantiate the pleasing statements which have often been made about our fathers.

ALCÉE FORTIER

THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEW ORLEANS