

1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 3 — Baton Rouge



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BATON ROUGE, the capital of Louisiana, U.S.A., and of East Baton Rouge parish, on the E. bank of the Mississippi river, about 70 m. N.W. of New Orleans. Pop. (1890) 10,478; (1900) 11,269, of whom 6596 were of negro descent; (1910 census) 14,897. It is served by the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley railway and by the Louisiana Railway & Navigation Company; and the Texas & Pacific enters Port Allen, just across the river. The city lies on the river bluff, secure against the highest floods. Old houses in the Spanish style give quaintness to its appearance. The state capitol was built in 1880–1882, replacing another burned in 1862. At Baton Rouge is the State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College (1860), of which the Audubon Sugar School, “for the highest scientific training in the growing of sugar cane and in the technology of sugar manufacture,” is an important and distinctive feature. The university grew out of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, founded in 1855 near Alexandria and opened in 1860 under the charge of W. T. Sherman. In 1869 the institution was removed to Baton Rouge, and in 1877 it was united with the Agricultural and Mechanical College, established in 1873 and in 1874 opened at New Orleans. The campus of the university is the former barracks of the Baton Rouge garrison, occupied by the college since 1886 and transferred to it by the Federal government in 1902. The enrolment of the university in 1907–1908 was 636. Other important institutions at Baton Rouge are a State Agricultural Experiment Station, asylums and schools for

the deaf and dumb, for the blind, and for orphans, and the state penitentiary. The surrounding bluff and alluvial country is very rich. Sugar and cotton plantations and subtropic fruit orchards occupy the front-lands on the river. The manufactures include lumber and cotton seed products, and sugar. The value of the city's factory products increased from \$717,368 in 1900 to \$1,383,061 in 1905 or 92.8%. The city is governed under a charter granted by the legislature in 1898. This charter is peculiar in that it gives to the city council the power to elect various administrative boards—of police, finance, &c.—from which the legislative council of most cities is separated.

Baton Rouge was one of the earliest French settlements in the state. As a part of West Florida, it passed into the hands of the British in 1763, and in 1779 was captured by Bernardo Galvez, the Spanish governor of Louisiana. The town was incorporated in 1817. In 1849 it was made the state capital, remaining so until 1862, when Shreveport became the Confederate state capital. In 1864 the Unionists made New Orleans the seat of government. The Secession Ordinance of Louisiana was passed on the 26th of January 1861 by a convention that met at Baton Rouge. On the 2nd of May 1862 the city was captured by the forces of the United States under Col. Benjamin H. Grierson (b. 1826), who had led raiders thither from Tennessee; on the 12th of May it was formally occupied by troops from New Orleans, and was successfully defended by Brig.-Gen. Thomas Williams (1815–1862) against an attack by Confederate

forces under General John C. Breckinridge on the 5th of August 1862; Gen. Williams, however, was killed during the attack. Baton Rouge was soon abandoned for a month, was then reoccupied, and was held throughout the rest of the war. It became the state capital again in 1882, in accordance with the state constitution of 1879. For several years after 1840 Zachary Taylor made his home on a plantation near Baton Rouge.

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