



Louisiana's Jewish Immigrants from the Bas-Rhin, Alsace, France

Carol Mills-Nichol

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In this her latest book, Ms. Mills-Nichol has written about the French Jewish immigrants from the Bas-Rhin who settled in forty-nine of the sixty-four Louisiana parishes over the course of the last two centuries. She begins by explaining the special pitfalls of Jewish genealogical research, then goes on to show how to use both French and English on-line records in order to unlock the secrets of long-departed ancestors. Ms. Mills-Nichol includes four case studies as examples of how to tackle certain genealogical brick walls. While the novice researcher can expect to unlock many secrets from the past, there will also be many frustrations in store for him, many unanswered questions, and some details which may take years to uncover. Patience is the watchword for the competent genealogist. The remainder of the book is devoted to the study of over six hundred Jewish immigrants who left from places in the Bas-Rhin, Alsace, such as Strasbourg, Haguenau, Hoenheim, Harskirchen, Rothbach, Ingwiller, Schirrhoffen, Schliethal, and Oberlauterbach, to name just a few. Some unlucky souls never even completed the journey. They may have died of disease in European ports while awaiting passage, or perished at sea during the arduous voyage. Those lucky enough to arrive did not always settle in New Orleans. Many journeyed still farther inland to big towns such as Shreveport, Baton Rouge, Alexandria, Opelousas, Donaldsonville or smaller villages like Chackbay, Waterloo, Livonia, Mansura, Hohen Solms, Bunkie, Berwick, Big Cane, Bayou Goula, or Pointe-à-la-Hâche. Still others were employed as store keepers on plantations such as Azima, Belmont, Cinclare, Cora, Cote Blanche, Cypress Hall, Live Oak, and Tezcuco. While many of them prospered in Louisiana, others suffered unspeakable tragedies in their adopted homeland. Some were murdered. Others ended their own lives. A frightening number of them succumbed to cholera, typhoid, or yellow fever, many within a few years of their arrival. Whatever their story, the reader cannot help but be caught up in the drama of the existence of these immigrants who risked everything to start anew in Louisiana.

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