

Twenty-first Century Lifestyles

As you read, look for:

- elements of the Louisiana lifestyle, and
- important Louisianians in the arts and literature.

Despite the serious challenges facing the state, people in Louisiana enjoy life. The heritage of the many blended cultures results in an interesting mix of activity. Along with the many festivals celebrated around the state, life and culture are also expressed in other ways. These cultural elements show how cultural diversity has expanded and enriched Louisiana's lifestyle.

Music

Music of the past and present combines to enrich Louisiana's culture. Young people are learning the old songs and techniques and showing a renewed interest in their cultural inheritance. Beginning musicians study jazz piano, blues harmonica, and Cajun fiddle. Other Louisiana music lovers, young and old, enjoy more recent forms of music including rap and reggae.

Symphony orchestras and opera were first heard in New Orleans when Louisiana was still a colony. Today, these classical forms of music are still enjoyed around the state.



Above: The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festivals features a variety of music styles in addition to jazz.

Lagniappe

Both the Strand Theatre and the Saenger Theatre are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Theater

Theater also began with the colonial culture. For years, one theater in New Orleans presented plays in French, while the "American" theater offered the English-language version. Theater today includes professional acting companies as well as community groups. Broadway touring companies



provide another theatrical experience. Two beautifully restored theaters, the Strand in Shreveport and the Saenger in New Orleans, provide the proper setting for the big musicals and dramas from the New York stage.

The Arts

The arts are celebrated in formal and informal ways around the state. Art galleries and museums display important works of well-known artists. For example, the New Orleans Museum of Art was built in 1910 with a donation from a wealthy sugar planter. Much of the history of art in Louisiana can be learned from studying the exhibits there. In Shreveport, the Norton Art Gallery has free admission because this family used their wealth from the Rodessa oil field to bring art to their community.

One of Louisiana's famous artists is Clementine Hunter. A self-taught artist, she painted scenes of her days on Melrose Plantation in Natchitoches Parish. In strong, bright colors, Hunter depicted details in the daily lives of her neighbors. Hunter's simple but powerful expressions are prized by collectors worldwide.

Photography is art as well as technology. Photographers record the Louisiana we all see, while showing us images through the artist's eye. William Greiner photographs the people and places of Louisiana in vivid color. His book *The Reposed* documents Louisiana's cemeteries. Phillip Gould records the people and the landscape of South Louisiana. Neil Johnson has offered scenes of North Louisiana, as well as a photographic story of the state.

In his nature photography and writings, C. C. Lockwood of Baton Rouge shares his outdoor adventures in the Atchafalaya Basin and the coastal wetlands.

Sculpture is the means of expression for two well-known Louisiana artists. Some of Frank Hayden's outdoor works depict the history of Louisiana. Clyde Connell created huge wood carvings in her studio near Lake Bistineau.

Another Louisiana artist, William Joyce of Shreveport, is also a writer who has combined these talents to create best-selling children's books. Joyce has also worked with Disney studios to create an animated television show with his characters, including the popular Rolie Polie Olie.

Literature

The art of the written word has described Louisiana since the journals of the explorers. Early well-known writers described the culture and history of Louisiana. George Washington Cable reported life as he saw it, receiving criticism during his lifetime but praise for his honesty from today's readers. Another nineteenth-century writer was Kate Chopin, whose fiction is considered ahead of its time.

More recent Louisiana writers have also received recognition. Francis Parkinson Keyes wrote historic fiction set in Louisiana, and Lillian Hellman was a twentieth-century playwright. The Pulitzer Prize has been awarded to these twentieth-century Louisiana writers: Oliver La Farge, Shirley Ann Grau, Robert Penn Warren, John Kennedy Toole, and historian T. Harry Williams. Two of the most renowned twentieth-century writers are Walker Percy of Covington

Opposite page, above:

This painting of a baptism is by folk artist Clementine Hunter of Melrose Plantation.

Opposite page, below:

William Greiner's "Girl with a Yo Yo, New Orleans 2004."

In 2004, Greiner received a Louisiana Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in photography. **Below:** Originally trained to be a doctor, novelist Walker Percy, seen here at his home in Covington, was one of Louisiana's important writers.





Above: The writer Ernest Gaines walks along a dirt road near the River Lake Plantation in Cherie Quarters, Louisiana. **Opposite page, above:** The LSU Tigers' win over the Oklahoma Sooners in the 2004 Sugar Bowl gave them their first national title since 1958. **Opposite page, below:** The Pointe Coupee girls' volleyball team rides the ferry to a game.

and Ernest Gaines of Pointe Coupee Parish. Percy's novels are considered literary masterpieces, and Gaines is noted for his writing about African American experiences in Louisiana.

In 2004, Ernest Gaines was nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature. He was selected for this important honor because he is recognized as one of the greatest writers in the world today. His writing is described as "giving voice to the voiceless." Gaines was also awarded the first Louisiana Writers Award in 2000. This appreciation for an outstanding living Louisiana writer was presented at the state's first Louisiana Book Festival. This annual event celebrating literature in Louisiana is sponsored by the state library. Crowds of readers join Louisiana writers on the Capitol grounds to share their love of books.

Sports

The climate of Louisiana makes outdoor sports a favorite activity. One of the state's regions has even been called "Sportsman's Paradise."

Today, organized sports are available to anyone who wants to participate. Children and adults enjoy the fun and competition. Soccer has become a popular activity for both boys and girls in many towns and cities.

All of the state's college teams attract loyal fans. The Louisiana Tech women's basketball team, the LSU baseball team, and the LSU and Southern University football teams are among the championship teams that attract huge crowds.



Lagniappe

The first Sugar Bowl was held in 1935 at Tulane Stadium in New Orleans. The two teams competing were Tulane University and Temple University. Tulane won 20-14.



In 2004, Louisiana went wild when the LSU football team won the Sugar Bowl and the National Bowl Championship and the Southern Jaguars won the SWAC championship. The purple and gold of LSU and the black and gold of Southern waved together in a Parade of Champions in Baton Rouge.

Professional football attracts sell-out crowds to cheer on the New Orleans Saints in the Superdome. Professional hockey teams have added an interesting sport to this southern state where enthusiastic fans cheer the Mudbugs in Bossier City.



Map 40 Louisiana's State Parks

Map Skill: What is the state park or forest closest to where you live?

State Parks

Visitors from around the world hike and camp in Louisiana's state parks. Local residents can return again and again to enjoy the natural environment.

The beauty of Louisiana is on display at the parks. Tall pine trees whisper overhead near Lake Claiborne. Spanish moss and live oaks set the scene at Lake Fausse Pointe. A hike through the State Arboretum at Ville Platte provides a glimpse of every kind of tree native to Louisiana.

Lakes and bayous attract visitors for fishing and boating at many of the parks. At the Grand Isle State Park, you can climb a lookout tower to see the ships in the Gulf of Mexico.



Some of the state parks are called commemorative areas. These are locations with special historical importance. The Audubon State Commemorative Area near St. Francisville features Oakley Plantation, the home where John J. Audubon stayed while he painted Louisiana birds. Further north, in Newellton, is Winter Quarters, the restored antebellum country home of a wealthy Natchez plantation owner whose lands were on the Louisiana side of the river. Los Adaes is the site of a colonial Spanish fort established to keep the French from entering Spanish Texas. As you walk on the grounds, you can imagine that long-ago life in the wilderness.

Interpretive programs at the commemorative sites provide more of the history of the sites. People in costume take you back in time to learn more about the past.



Top: The beautiful gardens at Audubon State Commemorative Area. **Above:** Sailing at Cypremort Point State Park on the Gulf Coast.

Check for Understanding ✓

1. What are two kinds of traditional music still being played?
2. When did people start attending the theater in Louisiana?
3. What important award was Ernest Gaines nominated for?
4. What are three popular sports in Louisiana?