

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES AND THE LOUISIANA DIGITAL LIBRARY

## Louisiana Gumbo Lesson Resource

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### BATON ROUGE HISTORY

**Subject** Louisiana/American History  
**Grades** 7, 8  
**Time** 30 minutes

#### Overview

Students research the early 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the city of Baton Rouge, the future capital of the state of Louisiana.

#### Objectives:

Students will

- Use reading comprehension skills and available technology to locate, select, and synthesize information from digital images to acquire and communicate knowledge about events, ideas, and issues related to history.
- Demonstrate historical perspective by participating in a class discussion of events that shaped American and Louisiana history.

#### Content Standards:

- **History: Time, Continuity, and Change**  
Students develop a sense of historical time and historical perspective as they study the history of their community, state, nation, and world.

#### Benchmarks:

- **H-1A-H3** interpreting and evaluating the historical evidence presented in primary and secondary sources;

#### Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs):

- **Historical Thinking Skills**

9<sup>th</sup> U.S. History: Evaluate and use multiple primary or secondary materials to interpret historical facts, ideas, or issues (H-1A-M3)

#### Materials:

[Description of the town of Baton Rouge Louisiana in 1822](#)

### **Historical Background\**

The city of New Orleans dominated Louisiana politics throughout the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1820s, legislators from the central and northern areas of the state complained that the New Orleans dominated legislature did not adequately represent the state. Many also felt the New Orleans lifestyle distracted Congress from the business of government. Eventually the capital would move to Donaldsonville and in 1850, to Baton Rouge.

Students will examine Baton Rouge of the 1820s and gather information that would explain why Baton Rouge was later selected as the seat of government for the state.

1. Divide students into sets of partners
2. Ask each set of partners to read about 1820-era Baton Rouge and write a paragraph of 3-5 sentences that would “sell” Baton Rouge to the state legislature as a perfect site for the seat of Louisiana government.
3. Ask students to present their argument for Baton Rouge as a site for the state capital.
4. Debrief. Ask students to consider what factors might keep the legislature from voting to move the seat of government to Baton Rouge.
5. Ask students to consider what makes Baton Rouge a good location for the 21<sup>st</sup> century capitol of the state. Ask students if they think another site might be better suited for government affairs—provide rationale.

### **Assessment**

- Participation in class discussion

### **Accommodations/Modifications:**

- Cooperative grouping
- Debriefing provides systematic feedback