

**Eliza "Liza" Nebbit,
"Colored Child of the Sacred Heart, first slave what
was brought in dis Convent by Mother Duchesne."**

[Eliza's closing in a letter she dictated in 1880 to Rev. Mother Randall.]



Liza, perhaps born in Kentucky, was a child between 7 and 10 when Bishop Dubourg gave her to Mother Duchesne at Florissant Missouri around 1819. She grew up with the Religious and considered them her family.

In 1825 Mother Duchesne sent her with Mother Eugenie Aude and several other RSCJ to open St. Michael's School in Convent, St. James Parish, LA on the Mississippi river.

Although she never worked at Grand Coteau it is likely she lived there from May to October 1825 on her way to the new foundation.



In gratitude for the dedication and love of the descendants who gave freely of their time on the Planning Committee:

Janice Beatty-Thomas of Sacramento, CA
Roslyn Chenier of Atlanta, GA
Margaret Pickens-Pete of Stone Mountain, GA
Dorson Purdy of Lake Charles, LA
Mary Charlene Rhodes of Hayward, CA
Mary Evelyn Samuel of Humble, TX
Leona Walker of Monroe, LA

Special thank you and appreciation to:

Brother Frank Authello Andrus, Jr. for adding such beauty in sharing his gift of praying, drumming and singing.

Denzel Dawson for sharing his gift of music as a beautiful pianist.

Everyone who helped make this day special and beautiful.



*Slave Quarters, Academy of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau, LA
Original Photo of Enslaved by James F. Gibson & Photo Shop Version by Jerry Naunheim*

Sunday, September 23, 2018

*Today, we the
Descendants, Religious, Friends
and Family are gathered here
to remember,
to celebrate and
give honor to our ancestors.*



St. Charles Borromeo Church & Cemetery
174 Church St, Grand Coteau, LA 70541

"Convent"
Academy of the Sacred Heart
1821 Academy Rd, Grand Coteau, LA 70541



**FRANK HAWKINS 1780-1842 &
JANE "JENNY" EAGLIN MARTIN 1785-1890
THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN
FRANK HAWKINS 1823-1897
& MARGUERITE 1825-1886
BEN HAWKINS 1827-1895
& CAROLINE 1816-1871
THEIR DAUGHTER
EMELINE HAWKINS 1856-1861
JAMES HAWKINS 1834-1879
& EMELINE JONES GREEN
THEIR DAUGHTER
CORA HAWKINS 1862-1882
JENNY EAGLIN'S BROTHER
DAVID EAGLIN 1802-1881
& JULIA ANN 1815-1893**

**MARIE LOUISE PHILLIPS JACOBS 1820-1859
& WILSON JACOBS
THEIR DAUGHTER
CLARA JACOBS EAGLIN SENEGAL 1849-1886**

**CHILDREN NO SURNAMEN
FANNY ANN 1845-1860
JAMES HENRY 1849-1859
PHILOMENE 1855-1859
CHARLES 1858-1860**

AND THOSE KNOWN ONLY TO GOD

FRANK HAWKINS 1780-1842 &
JANE "JENNY" EAGLIN MARTIN 1785-1890
THEIR CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN
FRANK HAWKINS 1823-1897
& MARGUERITE 1825-1886
BEN HAWKINS 1827-1895
& CAROLINE 1816-1871
THEIR DAUGHTER
EMELINE HAWKINS 1856-1861
JAMES HAWKINS 1834-1879
& EMELINE JONES GREEN
THEIR DAUGHTER
CORA HAWKINS 1862-1882
JENNY EAGLIN'S BROTHER
DAVID EAGLIN 1802-1881
& JULIA ANN 1815-1893

SLAVE QUARTERS 1834 – 1865

MARTIN & MELITE

FRANK HAWKINS & JENNY EAGLIN: their children & grandchildren:

- Frank Jr. & Marguerite Hawkins: Mary.
- Ben & Caroline Hawkins: Josephine, Ben, Marie Louise, Frederick Joseph, Emile, Marie Emeline, & Joseph Zephrein.
- John & Rose Eaglin Hawkins: George Washington, & Marie Noraly.
- James & Emeline Jones Hawkins: Marie Coralie, Louise Victorine, & Mary Amelia Xavier Hawkins

DAVE EAGLIN & JULIA ANN

FRANK EAGLIN & ELIZA: their children

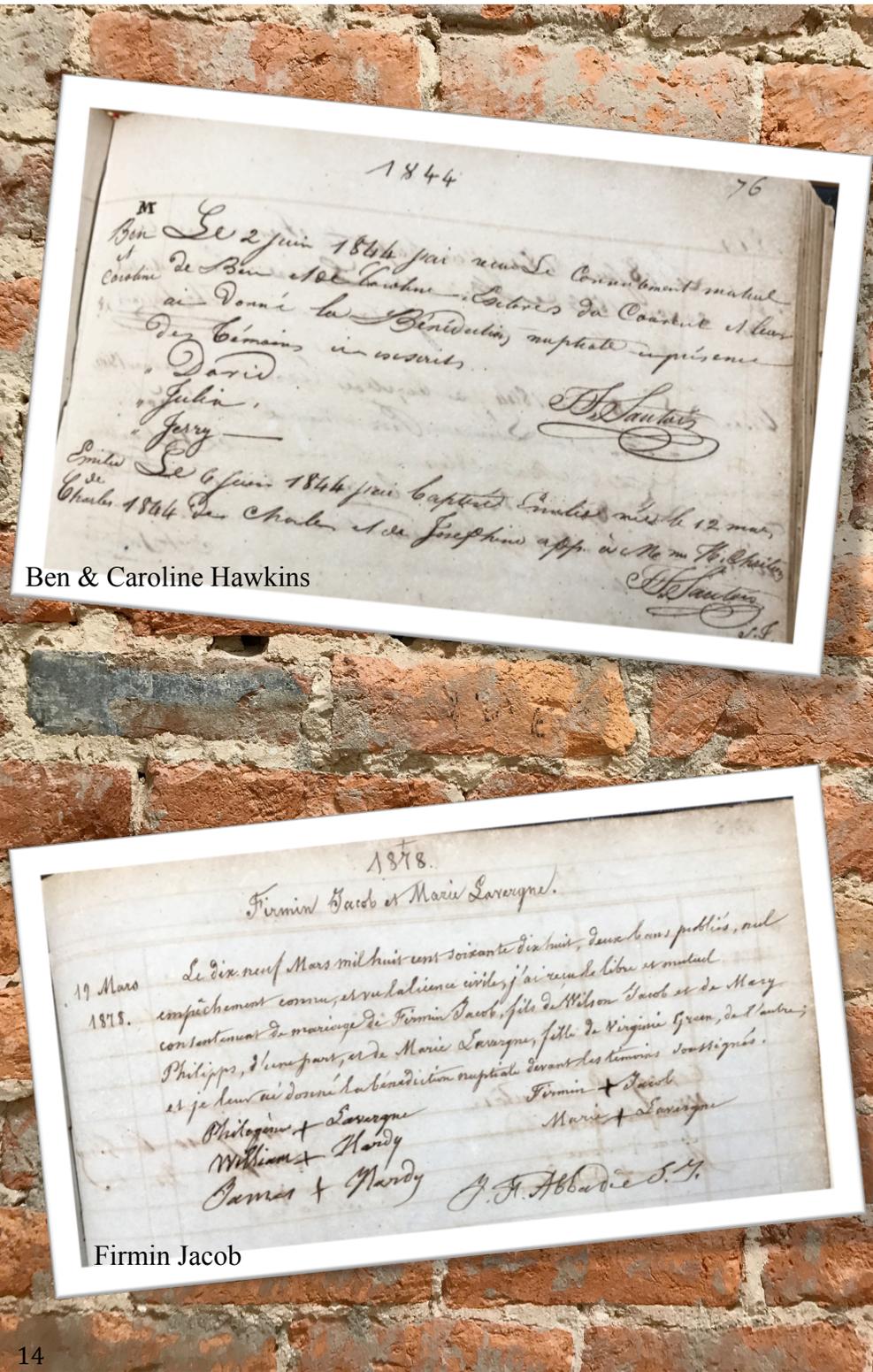
- Rose, Louisa, Matthew & Maria Cornelia

WILSON JACOBS & MARIE LOUISE PHILLIPS:

their children

- Firmin & Clara Jacobs

- William & Josephine; Veslain & Eugenie; August & Rosaline: Marie Louise; Ignace & Eliza: Thomas Ignace; Peter & Eliza: Mary; Phillis: Charles, baby girl; Harriet "Henny": Marie Susanna; Mary Ann: Jane; Single adults: Joseph, Kitty
- Orphan children: Elizabeth, Celestin, Louis, Emeline, Rose, Marie Louise, Mary, Ana, Philomene, Joseph Henry, Charles, James Henry, Fanny Ann



Ben & Caroline Hawkins

Firmin Jacob

Blessing of the Monuments St. Charles Borromeo Cemetery

3:30 p.m. Gather at the St. Charles Borromeo Church
4:00 p.m. African drumming: Brother Frank Authello Andrus, Jr.

Welcome: Sheila Hammond, RSCJ - USC Provincial
Dorson Purdy, Descendant

Gather at cemetery: African drumming

Song: His Eye Is On The Sparrow by Brother Frank

- ❖ Pouring of a Libation: Mary Charlene Rhodes, Descendant
- ❖ Blessing of the Monuments: Deacon Herd Guilbeau
- ❖ A scripture reading: Ecclesiastes 3: "Everything Has Its Time"
Proclaimed by Roslyn Chenier, Descendant

Song: Summertime by Mary Evelyn Samuel, Descendant
and the placing of the white roses

Parting Song: Wade in the Water by Brother Frank



**THE STORY OF THE ENSLAVED PERSONS
OF THE CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART
GRAND COTEAU LOUISIANA 1821 - 1880**

[The beginning . . .]

The founders of Grand Coteau, Mother Eugenie Aude and Sister Mary Layton arrived in 1821 and started a school. The first enslaved persons on the property may have been loaned to them by nearby Catholic families who had daughters in the school such as the Hardey family – slave owners from Maryland whose daughter Mary Ann was one of the first students. Mrs. Charles Smith the donor of the school property had promised a slave family to the school although there is no record of who they were. She owned 25 slaves in 1820 so some of the earliest persons enslaved on the property could have come from her. The school property was surrounded by plantations owned by settlers with roots in Maryland. When the Jesuits founded a school in the same town in 1838 there was a steady back and forth of slaves from their property and that of the Sacred Heart.

Frank Hawkins is the first recorded purchase of a slave by the Convent of the Sacred Heart. His slaveholder Theodore Mudd was a prominent Maryland Catholic living in Baltimore who owned 16 slaves in 1820. Frank was born in Maryland probably around 1790. He was already baptized and married to Jane “Jenny” Eaglin who was pregnant with or had just given birth to their first son Francis Jr. when he was sold south in 1823. This is an example of how families were dislocated by the sale of members although this was condemned by the Catholic Church and prohibited by Louisiana law.

Frank joined other enslaved persons on the Convent property whose exact origin is unknown. Melite an elderly woman is mentioned in the House Journal in 1829 when her husband Martin is acquired with no mention of her being purchased or donated. Records do not indicate a slave cabin but there is mention of several purchases for Frank: a shirt, coat, blanket, tobacco and shoes. Other mentions of enslaved persons during this time in the House Journal refer to them receiving sacraments or attending Mass at the Convent. In 1826 a woman named Philis and her two small children were purchased but are not mentioned again in Convent or church records.

About 1824 Jenny Eaglin Hawkins was purchased from Horatio Harman by Robert Barry a Maryland slave owner. She probably was brought to the area when the Barry family moved to St. Landry parish around that time. She and Frank were able to resume their relationship. She gave birth to a second son Ben around 1826 or 1827 whose birthplace is consistently recorded as Louisiana.

Mother Xavier Murphy purchased Jane known as Jenny and her two children Frank Jr. and Ben in 1829. An entry in the Convent journal refers to this event as Jenny and her children having “finally come to live here, full of gratitude to Mother Xavier, who brought them in order to alleviate their lot.” In the record of Frank’s death his lifelong affection for Mother Xavier is mentioned again perhaps due to her action in uniting his family. The family had three other children from sacramental records: John Henry born in 1832, James in 1834 and Marie Anne Xavier born in 1840.

We Speak Your Names

*We speak your names before God and your descendants
Because we want to remember, we need to remember,
that the Society would not be what it is today
without you.*

WE HONOR YOU, WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES!

And those known only to God—

And those known only to God—

We celebrate your courage.

We celebrate your spirit.

We celebrate your Faith in God and in yourselves.

**We thank you for the dues you’ve paid,
the songs you sang,
and the prayers you’ve prayed.**

We thank you for showing us how to persevere.

**We thank you for not giving up
during those years of enslavement.**

**We stand here today, your living legacy,
and we realize with a knowing deeper than the flow
of human blood in human veins that we are part
of something better, truer, deeper.**

We will not forget!

*May you know the peace that passes all understanding.
And may the houses of your descendants know peace.*

Ashé!

Ashé!

Amen!

Amen!

African Drumming . . .

Inspired by Pearl Cleage and her poem “We Speak Your Names”.

This version created for this occasion by Kim King, RSCJ.

We Speak Your Names

JACOBS/PHILLIPS FAMILY

Wilson Jacobs & Marie Louise Phillips and their son
Firmin Jacobs & his sister Clara Jacobs Eaglin
Senegal

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

*THE MOTHERS AND CHILDREN no recorded surname
Philis: Charles, baby girl; Harriet "Henny": Marie
Susanna; Mary Ann: Jane.*

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

*THE INDIVIDUAL ADULTS no recorded surname
Joseph, Catherine perhaps Kitty, Elizabeth.*

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

*THE ORPHAN CHILDREN
Celestin, Louis, Emeline, Rose, Marie Louise,
Mary, Ana, Philomene, Joseph Henry,
Charles, James Henry, Fanny Ann.*

During the period from Frank's purchase until 1834 there were a number of improvement projects underway at the Convent: a formal garden, fish pond, building a fence, planting trees, making bricks for an addition to the school and the construction of a large slave cabin. Occasionally the Convent hired slaves or free persons to do specific tasks. Enslaved persons would be responsible for the day-to-day activities such as laundry, cooking, cleaning and caring for the farm and any livestock. There probably was a wagon or carriage drawn by horses for local transportation requiring care and a driver.

Another family reunion was accomplished in 1833 when David (Dave) Eaglin, age 20 is united with his sister Jenny Eaglin Hawkins and is purchased for \$600 from Joseph A. Gardiner by Mother Xavier. David moved to the area with the Gardiner family who moved from Maryland about 1832. He appears as a baptism sponsor with wife Julia for his nephew John Henry Hawkins baptism in April of that year. The day David arrived to live at the Convent he and Julia were married in church. Julia, sometimes referred to as Julia Ann, made her first Communion at the Convent in 1836. Dave and Julia would often serve as baptism godparents or marriage witnesses and would work and live at the Convent until their deaths in the late 19th century.



In 1834 the Convent Journal notes: "we have erected" a place to house our three families of Negroes". That building and additions still stands behind the main house of the Convent of the Sacred Heart. The three families were probably Martin and Melite, a couple in their 60's, Frank and Jenny with 3 boys 10 and younger and newly married David and Julia. There may have been other cabins especially in 1850-60 when the population increased. The cabin is in the foreground of the photo above. The middle section, which was positioned near a well (now covered by a swimming pool) was probably a laundry. The cabin beyond the laundry may have been erected at some later date. From 1840 to 1860 there must have been other small cabins on the property to house other enslaved families and individuals who were then living on the property.



The first of many RSCJ to die made a cemetery necessary in 1835 and several more including Frank's beloved Mother Xavier Murphy would fill it with their graves dug by him, Dave, and others who served as pall bearers. Enslaved persons were buried in the church cemetery and the first to die was Martin in 1835. His wife Melite survived until she was over 100 dying in 1859.

Wilson Jacobs and Marie Louise Phillips first appear in sacramental records as slaves of the Convent when they baptize daughter Clara in 1849. Marie Louise dies age 39 in 1859 leaving ten year old Clara and her older brother Firmin age about 15. Wilson does not appear in the burial register of the church or any census record so his fate is unknown. Due to the presence of former enslaved persons from the Hardey plantation as witnesses in later church records for Firmin and Clara it is possible that Wilson and Marie Louise were enslaved by the Hardey family who arrived in 1816 in Grand Coteau. An enslaved man named Wilson appears in Jesuit records in 1845-46 with a slave holder named Alphonse de Bayon clerk to sugar planter Francois Robin. From later records it is clear that all the family were born in Louisiana.

The names of other couples appear as witnesses in the sacramental documents recording baptisms and marriages, but their surnames are not given. They include Bill and Josephine, Veslain and Eugenie, August and Rosaline, Ignace and Eliza, Peter and Eliza, and August and Eugenie. Children born to enslaved persons automatically became enslaved persons themselves. By 1860 two thirds of the persons enslaved on the Convent property had been born there, not purchased.

In 1865, after emancipation, a number of enslaved persons at the Convent signed work contracts with the Convent property overseer, Benjamin Smith, and remained there, although it is not always known for how long. These people included Dave and Julia Eaglin, Jenny Eaglin Hawkins Martin (who had married Jesse Martin after Frank's death), Jenny's son James Hawkins and his wife Emiline and their two or three children, and Jenny's other son Ben Hawkins and his wife Caroline and their six children. Firmin Jacobs, then 20 years old, and Clara Jacobs, age 16, also remained. Kitty, along with Rosalie and her family – whose last names are unknown – also signed work contracts.

We Speak Your Names

**We speak your names to honor
your dignity and our heritage.
We speak your names so that the
mockingbird might sing them;
So that the sweet olive breeze might bear them;
So that the people know that you walked this Earth—
Made it better—
In this place, on this land.
We speak your names.**

*We speak your names to recognize you
In ways we have not in the past.
We speak your names to thank you for your work
That allowed the school to continue in its mission;
And we recognize that it was not work you chose to do.
We speak your names.*

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

COUPLES NO RECORDED SURNAMES

William (Bill) & Josephine

Veslain & Eugenie

August & Rosaline: Marie Louise

Ignace and Eliza: Thomas Ignace

Peter and Eliza: Mary

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

We Speak Your Names

HAWKINS/EAGLIN FAMILY

Frank Hawkins and Jane “Jenny” Eaglin
Frank Jr and Marguerite Hawkins: Mary
Ben & Caroline Hawkins: Josephine, Ben,
Marie Louise, Frederick Joseph, Emile, Marie,
Emeline, Joseph Zephrin

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

John and Rose Eaglin Hawkins:
George Washington, Marie Noraly
James & Emeline Jones Hawkins:
Marie Coralie, Louise Victorine
Mary Amelia Xavier Hawkins
David Eaglin & Julia Ann
Frank Eaglin & Eliza: Louisa, Matthew & Maria
Cornelia

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

We speak your names to honor your strength.
The strength to endure;
the strength to hold your family together;
The strength that got you through
so that we might be here today,
On the same land, with your spirit living on in us.
We speak your names.

After emancipation, census and other records continue to provide significant pieces of information about the now freed men and women associated with the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Dave and Julia Eaglin lived and worked there until their deaths. Dave passed away in 1881 and Julia, or Aunt Julia as the religious referred to her in their Convent records, passed in 1891. They were mistakenly identified in the 1870 census as the “Hawkins” and listed along with four Hawkins children aged 9 to 19. Jenny’s and Frank’s son James died around 1879 when he was just 45, but the 1880 census records that his wife and children were still living on the Convent property. James was son of Jenny and Frank; that he died around 1879; and the Jenny and kids were still on Convent property in 1880.

Both the 1870 and 1880 censuses record the names of Jenny and her husband Jesse Martin. Jenny had reached the age of 105 when she passed away in 1890. Jesse’s place and date of death are not known. Their son Ben and his wife Caroline appear in the 1870 census as Hawkings. Caroline died in 1871, and two years later Ben married a widow, whose name is unknown. The couple had several children and the names of their entire blended family are noted in the 1880 census. Almost everyone in the Hawkins family, along with their spouses and some of their children, were buried by 1880, others in the family had moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana, before moving on to Beaumont, Texas.

Firmin Jacobs married Mary Linton in 1865 and the couple had 5 children. After Mary’s death Firmin married Marie Lavergne in 1878 and the couple had 11 children. The family name appears in censuses up through 1910. Firmin’s occupation is listed as butcher. He was around 60 years old when he died in 1916 and is buried in the St. Landry parish cemetery in Opelousas. In 1866, his younger sister Clara married Ozee Eaglin, whose first name is sometimes given as Hosea or Ose. He had formerly been owned by R. Hardey. When Ozee died at age 36, having had 11 children with Clara, she married Alphonse Senegal, with whom she had at least 3 more children. Clara, Ozee, and Alphonse are all buried in the St. Charles Borromeo parish cemetery.

As of this writing, a number of living descendants of Jenny and Frank Hawkins, have been located. They are descended through Jenny’s and Frank’s sons, James and Ben and their children and grandchildren. Living descendants of Wilson Jacobs and Marie Louise Philips have also been located, descended through their children, Firmin and Clara, and their children and grandchildren. So far as is known today, it appears that David and Julia Eaglin did not have children. The descendants of two other couples, Frank Hawkins Jr. and Marguerite, and John Hawkins and Rose, have not been located.



Maureen Chicoine, RSCJ researched and wrote this essay. It recounts the beginnings of a longer and more complex history that the Religious of the Sacred Heart are striving to bring to light. The essay was edited by Catherine M. Mooney.

Reception



5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

The school community of “Convent”,
The Academy of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau

Welcomes you!

Reception: Dining Hall/Patio Area

Welcome: Dr. Yvonne Sandoz Adler, Head of School

- ❖ Tour of school, the grounds & small history museum
- ❖ Visit the “Slave Quarters” & Plaque Honoring the Women, Men and Children that worked & lived on this land
- ❖ Closing Ritual: “We Speak Your Names” in the Chapel

We Speak Your Names

The Ritual

[**Bold** = Descendants, *Italics* = Religious of the Sacred Heart]

African Drumming Music As We Gather

The Journey: “I Know Where I’ve Been” by Dorson Purdy

Leader/Dorson Purdy:

Our faith tradition tells us that Mary Magdalene turned toward her beloved Jesus when “the gardener” spoke her name. The letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians says that you gave your son the name above all names so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend—in heaven and on Earth, and under the Earth.

Our Hearts are restless until they rest in you...And you, oh God, know the names of each son and of every daughter. You call us by that name when you draw us close, draw us home, to our rest and our reward—eternal life with you.

To speak names aloud is a powerful thing. It is a summoning of spirit, a recognition of dignity, a gathering near of souls we wish to acknowledge and honor.

So we gather today—Religious of the Sacred Heart and descendants of enslaved people—to speak the names of our ancestors, men, women, and children bought as slaves by the Religious to work here at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau, Louisiana.

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—

WE SPEAK YOUR NAMES—