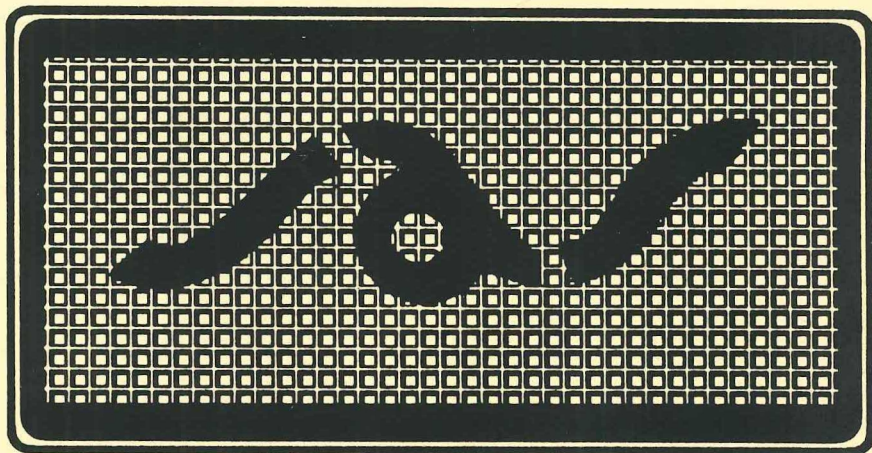


THE SOUTHERN ANTHROPOLOGIST



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THE SOUTHERN ANTHROPOLOGIST



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Dear Colleagues:

The feature item in this issue is Mary Van Rheenen's winning graduate entry in the SAS 1987 Student Paper Competition: "Place as an Indicator of Ethnicity for the Hispanic-Indian People of Sabine Parish, Louisiana." Once again, we congratulate Ms. Van Rheenen for her significant accomplishment. At the same time, we strongly encourage graduate and undergraduate students to send entries for the 1988 competition (please note in this issue the second call for submissions to this upcoming competition).

Your attention also is drawn to other "second calls:" for book exhibit opportunities and for proposals for the key symposium for the 1990 SAS meeting. In addition, abstract and registration forms for the 1988 SAS meeting in Tampa are included (these are duplicates of those recently sent to SAS members under separate cover).

Finally, please continue to send along any announcements and/or news which you wish to be included in upcoming issues of *The Southern Anthropologist*.

Sincerely,

Gifford S. Nickerson, Editor
The Southern Anthropologist

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEWS

CONFERENCE ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

The Qualitative Interest Group at the University of Georgia is holding a conference on Qualitative Research in Education in Athens, Georgia, January 25-27, 1988. George and Louise Spindler, emeritus professors in anthropology and education at Stanford University, will be speaking and consulting. ***For information contact:***

Judith Preissle Goetz, Social Science Education, Tucker Hall 413,
University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602

1988 SAS STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION: *Second Call*

The 1988 Student Paper Competition will provide two awards: one for the best graduate

and one for the best undergraduate paper on any anthropological topic. The Chair for the 1988 competition will be Dr. Charles H. McNutt of Memphis State University. Papers submitted must follow the standard anthropological format for footnotes and references (see the style guide for the American Anthropologist). All submissions must be typed--or run on a letter-quality printer--on bond paper, with double spacing and ample margins. The author's name, address, and class standing should be included in a cover letter, but these should not appear anywhere on the manuscript itself. Winners will be notified in advance so that they may make arrangements to attend the 1988 SAS annual meeting in Tampa, Florida, during which prizes will be awarded at the SAS annual business meeting. The winning papers also will be printed in The Southern Anthropologist. **ENTRANTS SHOULD SEND THEIR PAPERS AND THE \$13.00 REGISTRATION FEE BY JANUARY 12, 1988 TO:**

Dr. Charles H. McNutt, Department of Anthropology, Memphis
State University, Memphis, Tennessee 38152

BOOK EXHIBIT OPPORTUNITIES

Annual Meetings Book Exhibit Chairperson Sought

The job of Book Exhibit Chairperson involves contacting as many persons as possible by letter, urging them to exhibit at the annual meeting. The other main tasks involve coordinating the book exhibit with the local arrangements person and serving as a liaison between the exhibitors and the program chair and local arrangements person. The job is for a minimum of two years, but no more than three. The new chair would assume his/her duties starting with the 1989 meetings.

SAS Authors: Please Take Note

Tim Wallace, our Book Exhibit Chair, thanks all of you who have informed him in the past about books you want to promote at SAS annual meetings. Since the 1988 SAS annual meeting will be held jointly with the Society for Applied Anthropology in Tampa, FL, the size will be double that of the Atlanta meeting. Please let Dr. Wallace know about your latest publications, as your publishers can benefit from the marketing potential of our annual book exhibit. This is a valuable opportunity to bring titles of interest to the attention of your colleagues. If your publisher declines participation, please let him know if you are interested in arranging your own display.

If interested in either of these opportunities, please contact the current Book Exhibit Chair (for the latter opportunity, please give titles and publisher information):

Dr. Tim Wallace, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Box 8107,
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695, 919-737-2491

SECOND CALL FOR PROPOSALS**Key Symposium: 1990 SAS Annual Meeting**

The Board of Directors of the SAS has decided that selection of the key symposium two years in advance would give symposia organizers more time to select the best final presenters and give more time to have papers in final form at the time of the annual meeting. This should increase the already outstanding quality of our key symposium and help reduce the time required to get the proceedings into the hands of the membership.

Therefore, the Board of Directors is in the process of selecting the 1989 key symposium from among the proposals submitted, but not selected, for 1988. The key symposium for the 1989 Memphis meetings will be announced in Tampa.

The Society is now soliciting proposals for the key symposium for the 1990 annual meeting. The location for the meeting is not set, but will likely be New Orleans or Atlanta. Anyone wishing to organize the key symposium and assume responsibility for editing the proceedings volume should submit a proposal to Thomas Arcury by January 15, 1988. The proposal should contain a statement describing the proposed topic, a rationale for the selection of that proposed topic, and a tentative list of participants and individual paper topics. Dr. Arcury will circulate copies of the proposals submitted to the University of Georgia Press at the annual meeting in Tampa in 1988. Selection will be based on the organization and merits of the proposal, probable relevance and appeal of the topic to Society members, and potential contribution of the edited proceedings volume to the SAS Proceedings series. Please send proposals by January 15, 1988 to:

Dr. Thomas Arcury, Center for Developmental Change, 303 Patterson
Office Tower, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0027



**PLACE AS AN INDICATOR OF ETHNICITY FOR THE HISPANIC-INDIAN
PEOPLE OF SABINE PARISH, LOUISIANA**

Mary Van Rheenen
Louisiana State University

Abstract

For the Hispanic-Indian people of Sabine Parish, Louisiana, ethnicity has been closely connected with place. Like many other American Isolate groups in the South, the people's racially and culturally mixed background has precluded simple ethnic identification. The community's time-depth has fostered identification by place, instead, specifically the Zwolle-Ebarb area. Ancestry associated with this territory positions people between Anglo-White and Afro-Americans in the area-wide ethnic hierarchy. Places within the community also signify subtle ethnic differences. Settlement areas and the families associated with them have been ranked according to degree of Indian or pure European descent. Place has been used both internally and externally to define social and ethnic position.

The meaning of a place depends on the significance it holds for the human beings who define it (Richardson 1984). The Hispanic-Indian people of Sabine Parish, Louisiana, have used place to define themselves, to denote both their social and physical location.¹ Indian or part-Indian groups like this community have been deprived of a proper place in the white-or-black structure of the American South; these American Isolates have survived along the fringes of society in pockets of land as metaphorically marginal as their precarious social position (Griessman 1972; Hudson 1971). Ethnic identity often becomes a sensitive, sometimes painful issue for these people. The community in Sabine Parish derived from colonial Spanish and French as well as captive Lipan Apache and refugee Choctaw populations (Gregory 1986; Shoemaker and Van Rheenen 1986). Their multi-stranded heritage and the negative attitudes towards aspects of the people's background complicates simple ethnic identification. The people have tended to identify themselves by their home territory, a place centered around the town of Zwolle and the community of Ebarb, rather than any single component from their complex background.

Place signifies ethnicity both internally and externally for the Hispanic-Indian community. In the local social hierarchy, to have roots within this Zwolle-Ebarb area socially places people between the Blacks and the dominant Anglo-Americans. Within the community itself even finer distinctions rank settlements and family groups according to degree of Indianness as opposed to pure European descent.

¹Research into this correspondence between place and ethnicity draws on observations and interviews begun while I lived in the community (1982-1984) and fieldwork conducted for a master's thesis on identity (May-August 1986).

This community of traditionally Spanish-speaking Catholics has been uncomfortably aware of the differences between themselves and Anglo-Protestant standards of whiteness. Although they would prefer to be considered solely White, when some distinguishing term must be used, the people call themselves French or Spanish. Recently, they have begun publicly claiming their Indianness as well. Outsiders, however, persist in labeling the community Mexican. Among other derogatory connotations, the term implies that the community originates from some recent immigration of foreign transients and dispossesses the people of their deep-rooted connection to their place.

The first published local histories claim that when Whites came into Sabine Parish in the 1840s they encountered nothing but a howling wilderness (Beslisle 1912). In fact, the Hispanic-Indian community was well-established by the close of the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the Catholic cemetery just south of Zwolle. The status of Valli-cillo, this original settlement center, parallels the people's social position. First, the Spanish placename Vallicillo became corrupted to Bayou Scie. Then when the Kansas City Southern rail line crossed the parish in 1896,, the entire settlement center relocated a few miles north and was renamed Zwolle on the whim of a prominent Dutch investor (Jones Collection #58: 382). By this time the Hispanic-Indian community had withdrawn into a protective enclave in the marginal hills and bottom land near the Sabine River (Gregory 1986).

The community members' physical isolation reflected their social isolation. The tensions created by the anomalous position of being not quite Anglo-White and aggressively non-Black contributed to the violent reputation associated with the Hispanic-Indian people and the territory they inhabited. In the words of one local resident, "If you were from Ebarb you were supposed to be hostile, ignorant--nobodies." Shortly after the town of Zwolle had been founded, a shootout between the first town marshall and a member of the Hispanic-Indian community left both men dead. Accounts of who fired first and who acted in self-defense vary in official White (Anonymous1973: 9) and oral community versions (Shoemaker and Van Rheenen 1986). Such a highly-publicized incident contributed to the area's negative image--and the local stereotype of the Spanish-speaking population

The interrelationship of group identity, territory, and reputation resembles urban defended neighborhoods (Suttles 1972). The Hispanic-Indian population reinforced territorial distinctions as a way to maintain the social distance between themselves and Blacks, the other non-Anglo group in the local ethnic hierarchy. As late as 1960 Blacks found on the streets of Zwolle after dark risked the ire of Hispanic-Indian youths, and Blacks still hesitate to venture too far into community territory. As one community member dryly noted: "You didn't see one past the Ebarb School--and if he got that far he was lost."

The locality which has been so intimately--if negatively--associated with the Hispanic-Indian group begins across the railroad tracks in Zwolle. From the western edge of town around St. Joseph's Catholic Church this home territory swings in a rough arc north and south to the Sabine River. A young woman who grew up in Zwolle a few blocks north and east of this region felt initially unaccepted by the Whites around her and also awkwardly distanced from the rest of her people. Conversely, a school principal's decision to build his new home on the Mexican side of the tracks was considered highly irregular by other community elite.

In recent decades a substantial number of community members have moved to the city of Shreveport, Louisiana. Even there, however, association with place continues to correspond to association with the Hispanic-Indian group. Community members can be identified by asking, "Are you from Sabine Parish?" Certain surnames immediately signal people's origins in the Zwolle-Ebarb area.

Genealogy and territory combine to mark even finer ethnic distinctions within the group. Distinct places inside the community developed from settlements named by family nickname or surname. These settlements and the families associated with them reflect an internal community social structure which appears to place people by degree of Indianness.

Oral history accounts refer to two types of Native Americans: "regular wild Indians" and certain community ancestors. However, community founders consistently identified as full-blood Indians appear in records like land grants that did not ordinarily include tribal Indians (Texas, General Land Office; Shoemaker and Van Rheenen 1986: 4). This suggests that although outsiders may have seen these Spanish-speakers simply as "Mexicans," differentiation within the group was more refined.

Such a distinction between Indians who were a part of the community (i.e., Spanish-speaking, Roman Catholic, non-tribal) and Indians who were not remained an important one throughout Spanish America (Gonzalez 1967: 75; Jones 1979: 14, 246). A highly stratified caste system, mirrored in the Spanish colonial censuses for this area, ranked people according to degree of pure European (preferably Spanish) ancestry. Once Indians became baptized Spanish citizens, they would often appear on record as *mestizo* (Spanish-Indian) or some other term which implied European descent.

Available Spanish census records (1792-1806) provide ample evidence of this whitening effect. Out of the 200 residents with genealogical connections to the current Zwolle-Ebarb community, over three-fifths were censused at one time or another with some degree of Indian blood, and over a quarter of the total sample (53) became "whiter" (Shoemaker and Van Rheenen 1986, appendix B; based on censuses for the

Nacogdoches District in east Texas, R. B. Blake Collection and Bexar Archives).

Despite community founders' earlier determination to be whiter than Indians, numerous oral history accounts reflect continuing ties with Native Americans. Two Choctaw settlements lay on the edges of the more Hispanic regions, and some of the surnames connected with these villages initially appeared in Spanish colonial records alongside other community members (for details, see Ebarb ancestry files). Because they retained a tribal affiliation and continued some Choctaw customs, members of these families were distinguished from the larger Zwolle-Ebarb community. Their separate settlements and status illustrate the intracommunity link between place and ethnicity.

Perhaps through no coincidence, individuals accredited with special powers like midwives, herbal doctors, malojos or witches all came from families considered least "white" (see Sepulvado 1977 for further discussion). These individuals also often came from nicknamed family groups.

Individuals invariably laugh about these family nicknames as if they had been caught in some private, community joke. The nicknames' use and etymologies do imply special insider's knowledge. The nicknames serve on one level to distinguish the many sets of people who share the same last name, yet to address someone by their nickname in public (as uninitiates like outside spouses and new priests have had the misfortune of doing) is considered a serious social blunder. Family nicknames derive from non-English words (Ho minty or minty--Choctaw, Ho ming--possibly Choc-taw, Sap[po]--Spanish, Chey--Spanish, Pelow--unknown), Anglicized versions of an ancestor's name (Taylor for Telesforo, J. O. for Jose, Billy for Herculano), or animals linked to a particular patriarch (Bear, Hawk, Sap[po] for Frog, Goat).

The pattern of nicknaming clearly reflects an inner community structure. When I innocently asked a young woman whether her husband belonged to a particular nicknamed family, she exclaimed, "No, thank God, or I wouldn't have married him!" Her strong reaction illustrates the lower status connected with the nicknamed groups. Branches of families without nicknames traditionally claimed more direct European descent and tended to be more acculturated. Individuals from these families have served as leaders who brokered for their people with an outside world where these "whiter" community members moved with greater ease. Nicknamed branches of families, in contrast, tend to look darker, frequently retained their Spanish dialect longer, continued to follow a backwoods lifestyle, and generally acknowledge a stronger Indian connection. In short, nicknaming seems to echo the colonial social distinctions based on degree of Native American ancestry.

A number of family settlements are known by these nicknames. According to internal community perceptions, the distribution of the Hispanic-Indian people in the parish falls into a number of distinct places roughly grouped by the San Patricio and San Miguel Creeks:

Between the creeks--Ebarb Road, Ebarb

Beartown (Ebarb)

Sepulvado or Minty Loop

Billy (Sepulvado) Settlement

Garcie Loop

Across the creek, north

Procell (Chey) and Paddie Settlements

Sulfur Springs/The Ormegas

Round Lakes

Across the creek, south

Grady Hill/Coon Ridge

Loring

Hurricane or Choctaw Creek

Zwolle, periphery

Laroux Settlement

St. Joseph's Church area.

Nicknamed settlements and those from across the creek in either direction have generally been considered more Indian. Again, place concurs with social and ethnic placement.

This strong identification with specific areas suffered a severe jolt in the mid-1960s when the Sabine River was dammed to create the Toledo Bend Reservoir. The reservoir inundated major portions of the community. Family settlements scattered as people scrambled to find land wherever they could. Even those who merely moved two miles up the Ebarb Road from Beartown to the Sepulvado Loop felt dislocated; others were forced to move north towards the town of Converse, east to the parish seat of Many, or further south along the lake.

Population concentrations in specific regions of the parish continue to reflect ethnic placement by place, however. In the 1980 United States Census, 2,028 people out of a total parish population of 25,280 claimed Spanish origin. Additionally, close to 800 (774) identified themselves as Native American. Based on the Spanish-origin data, over half of the community members centered in the Ebarb area (ward 5), nearly one fifth clustered around Zwolle (ward 8), and significant portions of the community also concentrated near Many (ward 4) and the area just north of Ebarb around Noble (ward 6).

The Hispanic-Indian group as a whole has simply expanded from its original circle.

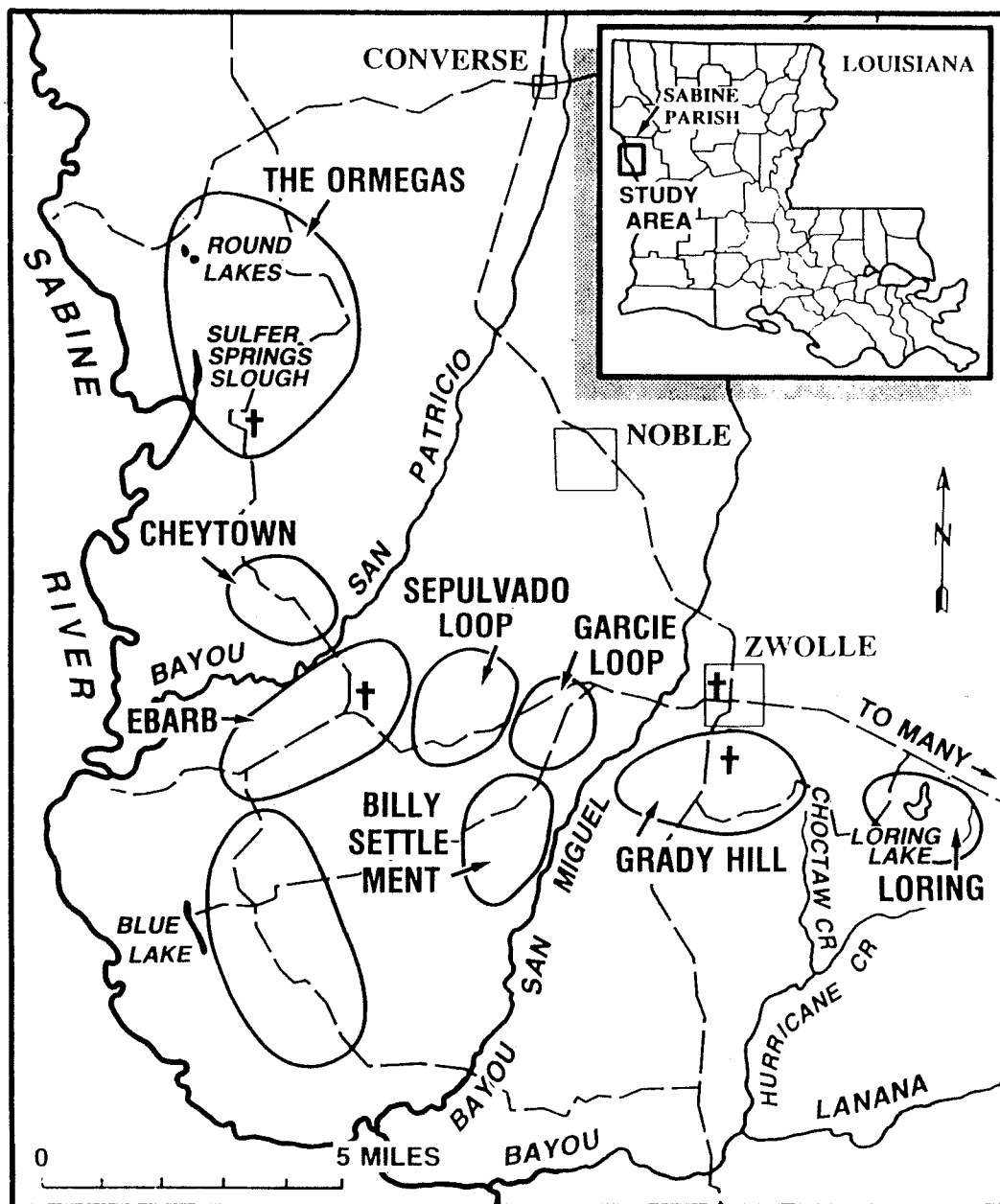
An expanded view of place continues to mark ethnicity within the community as well. The locus of Indian identity centers on Ebarb and the areas directly adjacent across either creek. Leaders from these more backwoods, more heavily nicknamed areas formed a tribal organization, the Apache-Choctaw Community of Ebarb, during the 1970s. About the same time, community elite who had traditionally considered themselves of more direct European descent and had gravitated more toward the White society in Zwolle became instrumental in developing the annual Zwolle Tamale Fiesta, a festival which purports to celebrate the people's Spanish heritage. Intracommunity social distinctions and ethnic emphasis continue to reassert themselves.

The Zwolle-Ebarb people have lived under two highly stratified racial/ethnic systems: Spanish colonial society and the American South. Spanish colonial society, with its dichotomy between European and Native American, has been internalized in the placement of family groups, with those less clearly Indian occupying higher positions and those more clearly Indian placed further down the social scale. The anomalous position of the community as a whole in the stratified White or Black system of the American South manifests itself in the people's definition by place as opposed to non-Whiteness and their defense of distinct territory to emphasize their non-Blackness.

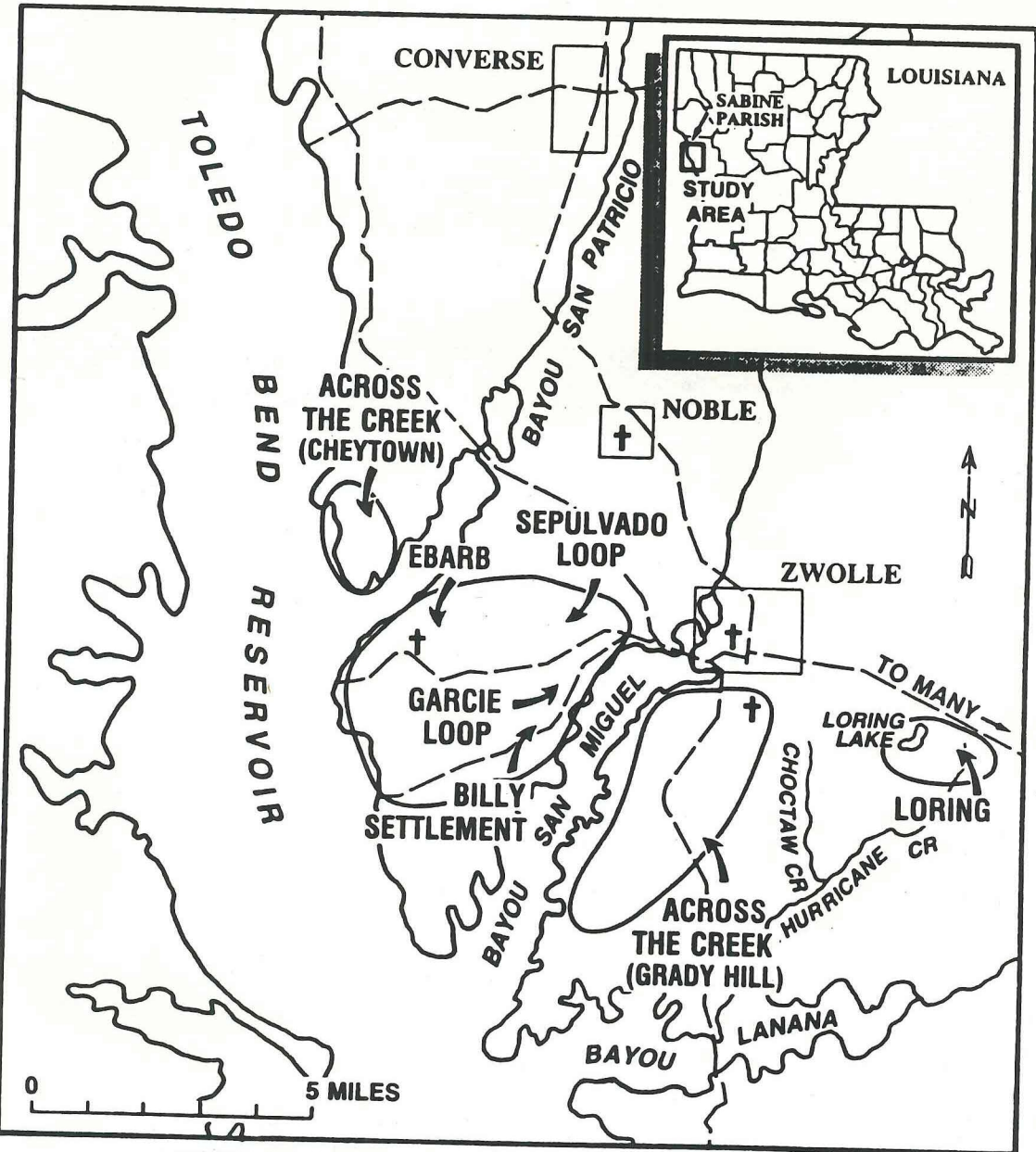
Both internally and externally, locale has served as an important ethnic marker. Family settlements have come to denote the subtle ethnic distinctions made within the group. Ethnicity for the community as a whole has been confounded by these internal differences as well as the ill-defined position the group shares with other American Isolates. Instead, the Hispanic-Indian people of Sabine Parish identify themselves by the territory they have been associated with for over two centuries. For the members of the Zwolle-Ebarb community, place, along with language, religion, and skin color, by taking on ethnic meaning has provided a partial answer to the question which perplexes all humans: "Who am I?"

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank both the Mennonite Central Committee which subsidized my first work in the community and the R. C. West Fund, awarded through the Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University, which made this past summer's fieldwork possible. Due credit should also be given to Mary Lee Eggart for creating the accompanying maps.



**THE HISPANIC-INDIAN COMMUNITY
OF SABINE PARISH BEFORE THE LAKE**



THE HISPANIC-INDIAN COMMUNITY OF SABINE PARISH TODAY

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