

## **Jean-Baptiste Champagne (1745-1803)**

During the Revolutionary War period, Jean-Baptiste Champagne served as a sergeant in the German Coast militia.

Louisiana was a Spanish colony from 1763 to 1800, although its settlers were primarily French and spoke the French language. Spain declared war against Britain on June 21, 1779, and the colonial governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Gálvez, acted as military commander of all the regular and militia troops in his colony. Gálvez waged a spirited campaign against the British, including the capture of Fort Bute on Bayou Manchac on Sept. 7, 1779, the Battle of Baton Rouge on Sept. 21, 1779, the capture of Mobile on Mar. 14, 1780, and the capture of Pensacola on May 10, 1781. Due to devastating hurricanes and a temporary shortage of regular troops, Gálvez relied heavily on civilian militia troops from New Orleans, the German Coast, and the Acadian Coast during his campaign in September 1779, and it is very likely that Jean-Baptiste fought in these battles.

Jean-Baptiste was descended from a military family from the Champagne region of France. His father, also named Jean-Baptiste, was probably born in Les Autels and was stationed in Louisiana where he served as a corporal in the Compagnies Franches de la Marine.

Jean-Baptiste was born in 1745 in New Orleans, and moved to St. Charles parish on the “German Coast” of Louisiana, so-called because of the presence of numerous German settlers who intermarried with the French. There he married Marie Charlotte Edelmayer in 1764, and they had several children together. He owned a small plantation where he grew cotton and indigo, and he also owned a tavern in New Orleans. He died on May 1, 1803, in St. Charles parish. The estate inventory that was taken at his death is one of the most detailed in colonial Louisiana history, and among its items were an “old wool frock coat with double lining” and a “broken sword” which were almost certainly remnants of his old militia uniform.

Respectfully submitted,

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