New Orleans and Early Louisiana Timeline, 1541-1815

1541    Hernando de Soto discovers the Mississippi River
1682    LaSalle names the land drained by the Mississippi River “Louisiana” in honor of King Louis XIV and claims the territory for France.
1718    New Orleans becomes a trading colony for the Company of the West, which held a French royal charter for the development of Louisiana.
1723    New Orleans becomes the capital of Louisiana.
1724    Governor Bienville institutes the Code Noir (Black Code) to regulate slavery and religious worship.
1731    Louisiana becomes a royal colony of France.
1762    The Treaty of Fontainbleau transfers New Orleans to Spain.
1763    The Treaty of Paris cedes all of Louisiana, except for New Orleans, to Spain.
1788    Fire destroys over 800 houses in New Orleans.
1800    As part of the Treaty of San Ildefonso, Spain retrocedes Louisiana to France
1803    France takes formal possession of the colony from Spain in the *Palace d’Arms.* Later in the year, the United States receives the area as part of the Louisiana Purchase.
1805    The city of New Orleans is incorporated.
1812    Louisiana is admitted to the Union; New Orleans becomes the state capital.
1815    The American forces defeat the British in the Battle of New Orleans.