

Figure 1: A cover delivered to Lt. L.A. Bringier's wife by military courier, endorsed "Hd Qrs 4th Regt. La. Cavalry near Simmsport (La.) Nov 7th/64."

Confederate Military Courier Delivery from Lt. L.A. Bringier

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

The cover in Figure 1 is endorsed "Important: Hd Qrs 4th Regt. La. Cavalry near Simmsport (La.) Nov 7th/64." It is addressed to Mrs. L.A. Bringier near Chicot, Parish of St. Landry with a manuscript directive at bottom, "If Mrs. Bringier be not at home Miss Tureaud will please open this letter & comply with the writer's request. Lt. B."

The cover was conveyed by military courier in lieu of the postal system, a common occurrence during the war, as well as favor covers by friends, family and servants.

Louis Amádée Bringier (1828-1897) Landed Gentry

Louis Bringier was a graduate of the University of Virginia (1845-49). Before the war he was a planter at L'Hermitage Plantation, Ascension Parish, Louisiana, and surveyor general for the state of Louisiana. L'Hermitage, also known as the Hermitage, was built in 1812.

Michel Doradou Bringier (1789-1847) built the Hermitage on land given him as a wedding gift by his

father. Michel had fought with Gen. Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 and named his plantation house in honor of Jackson's property in Nashville, Tennessee.

Creole relatives referred to it by its French name, *L'Hermitage*, and both names have remained associated with the property over the years.¹

At Michel's death in 1847, his second son, Louis Amádée, became owner of the plantation. The Bringier family owned more than 35,000 acres of land on various plantations.²

During the war, Bringier was an aide de camp to Col. John S. Scott, the commander of the 4th Louisiana Cavalry Brigade. He later served as a lieutenant colonel of the 7th Louisiana Cavalry Regiment, 1864-65, and finally as a colonel and commander of the 7th Louisiana Cavalry Regiment, 1865.

Figure 2 displays Louis Bringier's Parole of Honor, signed June 6, 1865, at Natchitoches, Louisiana. It indicates he was a prisoner of war, belonging to the Army of the Trans-Mississippi Department, having been surrendered by Gen. E. Kirby Smith, C.S.A.,

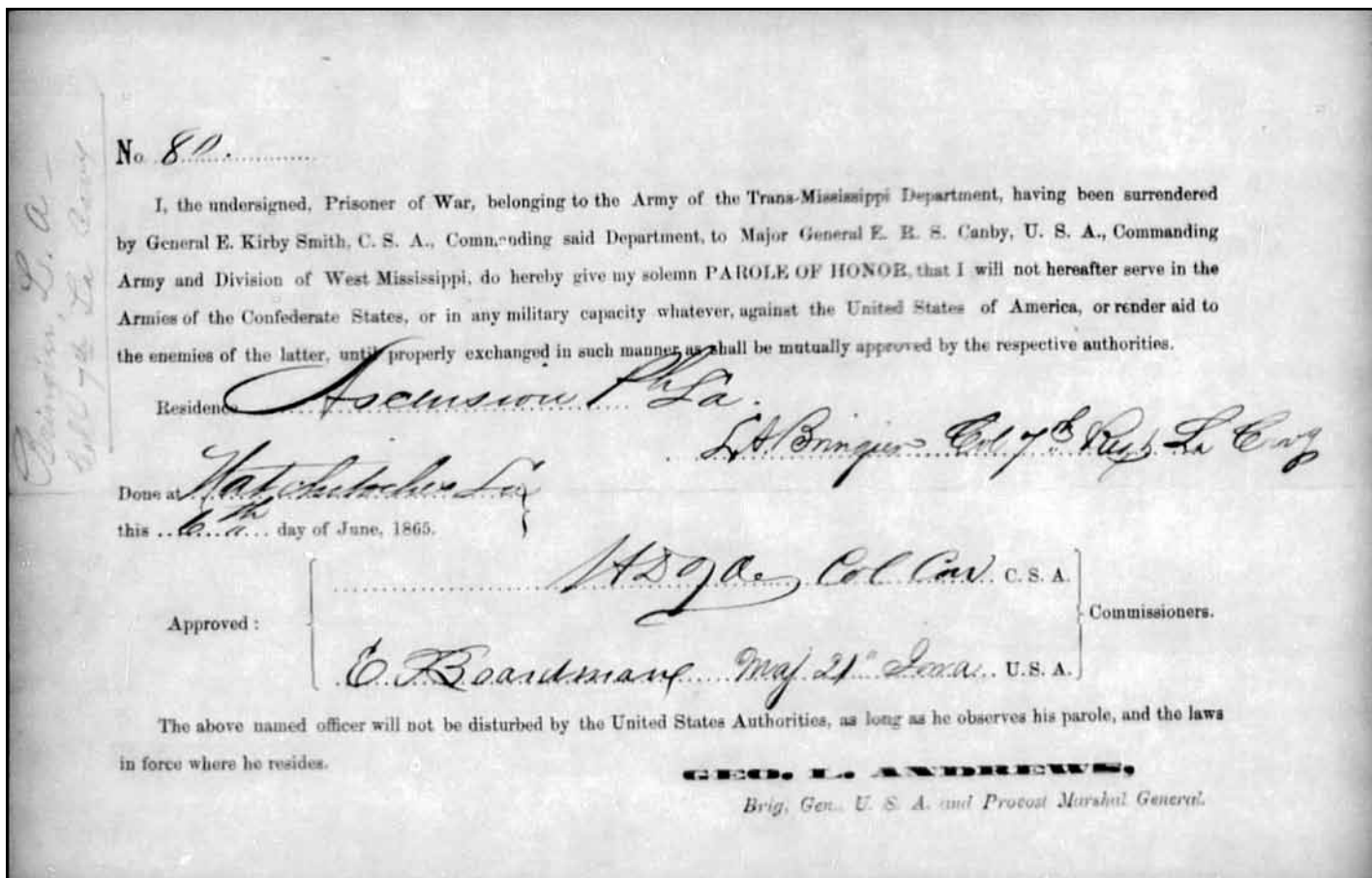


Figure 2: Col. Louis A. Bringier's Parole of Honor, signed June 6, 1865.

commanding said department, to Maj. Gen. E.R.S. Canby, U.S.A., commanding the Army and division of West Mississippi. This record is in the National Archives.

Louis was married to his cousin, Stella Elizabeth Tureaud Bringier (1834-1911). Together, they had five children. After the war, Bringier returned to the Hermitage as a sugar planter and later moved to Florida, at Last Resort, as a fruit farmer.

He died in Tampa, Florida, at age 68, but is buried at Ascension of our Lord Catholic Church Cemetery, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish, Louisiana.³ He is shown in church cemetery records as being encrypted in Section G, Row 1 (Figure 3).

**Pierre Caliste Landry (1841-1921)
First U.S. African-American Mayor**

L'Hermitage is likely the plantation on which Pierre Caliste Landry grew up. Landry was born on the Prevost Plantation (sugar cane) to an enslaved cook, Marcelite, and his father, Roseman Landry, a white laborer.

Caliste, as he was known in his youth, was purchased at age 13 (circa 1854) for \$1,665. I found conflicting statements as to by whom he was purchased, but they agree it was to a Bringier family member and it was

against his owner's wishes who desired that Caliste be freed (the owner's will apparently indicated otherwise when the owner died). Landry was first educated at a local school for free children and continued his education in the plantation schools and was said to have lived inside the family mansion.

By 1866, Landry, then free, changed his name to Pierre and moved to the mostly African-American community of Donaldsonville, the former capital of Louisiana from 1829-31. Two years later, he was unanimously elected mayor of Donaldsonville, making him the first African-American to be elected as mayor of a town in the United States.

Although Landry is most well known as the first African-American mayor in the United States, he also held innumerable other important positions, including postmaster, the appointment made by President Ulysses S. Grant.

He served in many political offices, founded St. Peter's Methodist-Episcopal Church, helped found New Orleans University (the third black private college in Louisiana), served as a minister, was a practicing attorney, a judge, and so much more. His legacy was as a peacemaker in the reconstruction South.

Landry married Amanda Grigsby in 1867 and together they had 12 children. After her death, he

married Florence Simpkins and had two more children. All 14 of Landry's children were college educated, an achievement even today.⁴

Landry wrote an autobiography, but it was never published. He wrote:

"I believe that intelligence and culture should be respected. This has been the rule of my life, not only in the management of the affairs of the State, but also in the church. Perhaps, I was considered corrupt because I affiliated with the best class of Southern white men who composed the wealth, culture, and intelligence of this State. If so, then I have nothing to regret for having labored with such people so as to the betterment of my race, by making it possible to live together in peace."

—Pierre C. Landry⁵

Endnotes

- 1 Karen Kingsley, "L'Hermitage Plantation." In <https://64parishes.org> *Encyclopedia of Louisiana*, edited by David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2010. Article published October 14, 2014. <https://64parishes.org/entry/lhermitage-plantation>. Accessed March 11, 2019.
- 2 Euell A. Nielsen, Pierre Caliste Landry (1841-1921), BlackPast, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/landry-pierre-caliste-1841-1921/> Accessed March 11, 2019.
- 3 *Find A Grave*, database and images <https://www.findagrave.com/>: accessed 11 March 2019
Memorial page for Col. Louis Amédée Bringier (4 Feb 1828–9 Jan 1897), Memorial no. 95573214, citing Ascension of our Lord Catholic Church Cemetery, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish, Louisiana, USA; maintained by Dave Crouse (contributor 47355833).
- 4 Nielsen.
- 5 Elise Dunn Cain, Tulane University Amistad Research Center & The Landry Dunn Family Papers, James Wilson, Dr. E. Jack Jordan, Dr. Charles Vincent, America's First Elected Black Mayor: Pierre "Caliste" Landry, <http://americas1stblackmayor.blogspot.com/> Accessed March 11, 2019.

(Patricia (Trish) Kaufmann, Lincoln, Delaware, was introduced to postal history in 1965 and quickly became engrossed in research and writing. She became a fulltime dealer in 1973, today specializing solely in Confederate States postal history. She enjoys hearing from readers and may be contacted by e-mail at: trishkauf@comcast.net)



Figure 3: The Bringier family crypt in Ascension of our Lord Catholic Church Cemetery, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish, Louisiana.

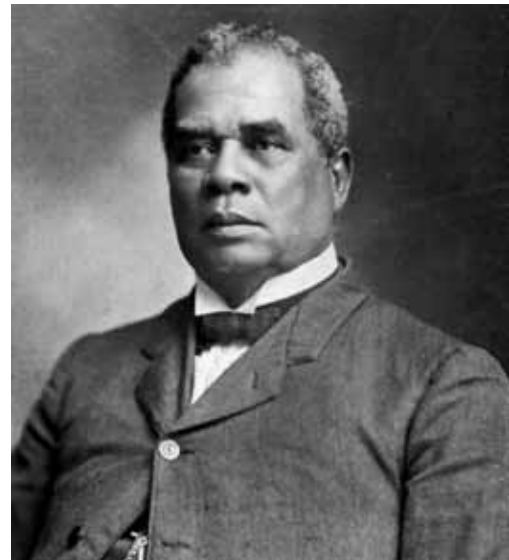


Figure 4: Pierre Caliste Landry, the first African-American mayor in the United States, 1868.

**Support La Posta
Become a Patron,
Benefactor,
or Sustaining
Subscriber**