



BATISTE • LAVALAIS • SAMPSON
FAMILY REUNION NEWSLETTER GOES DIGITAL

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2018 BLS FAMILY REUNION:
MANSURA, LOUISIANA THE
BIRTHPLACE OF OUR
ANCESTORS.

MESSAGE FROM THE 2016 BLS FAMILY REUNION CHAIR - SHARON LOGAN

By now, we have settled into the fact that summer is ending. Some of us are still feeling the heat of the Valley of the Sun, while others are gearing up for the coming cold months of the fall and winter seasons. Our children have returned to school and are eagerly awaiting the holiday season to get time off again. As for me, I wish I could rewind the tape and go back to Smooth Sailing with BLS Family Reunion on July 22-24, 2016.

As I reflect on the 2016 BLS Family Reunion, I can't help but give God praise. Words cannot express how grateful I am for the opportunity to have hosted our family reunion here in the Valley of the Sun. Though the temperatures were hot, the weather cooperated to enable us all to have a good time. The memories of the time spent celebrating family will last a lifetime. I must say, for me, hosting the reunion was one of the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences of my life. From the planning to the actual execution of the work, the reunion committee was always on point. They (Gina, Riley, Sheila, and Trudi) deserve a round of applause.

Watching the family interactions during the various activities, not only put a smile on my face, but it also blessed my heart to see the love shared and new family-friendships formed. At my church, we close each service saying, "We love you; we respect you; and you are part of our community." This very mantra permeated the Reunion weekend with so much joy, laughter, unity, and fun that we positively affected the staff at the Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass. Multiple hotel staff expressed how much they enjoyed serving us and would love to be a member of our family because of what they saw.

I am really looking forward to the 2018 Family Reunion in Louisiana and forming even more family connections. Until then, stay connected through the BLS Family Reunion Facebook group (<http://bit.ly/2d5knf4>); and visiting the family reunion website (www.blsfamilyreunion.com) for updates and support to Rosa Millang who will carry the torch for the 2018 BLS Reunion. Be Blessed BLS Family



**THANKS AJHA MICHELLE BROWN-BRYANT
FOR SPONSORING THE SEPTEMBER 2016
NEWSLETTER**

BUILDING FAMILY, CELEBRATING HERITAGE

MEET THE 2018 FAMILY REUNION CHAIR - ROSA MILLANG

“MY FAMILY AND I HAD SO MUCH FUN AT THE 2016 REUNION. THANKS SHARON AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR PROVIDING SUCH AN ENTERTAINING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT. IT WAS A PERFECTLY WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE!” ...Rosa

How wonderful it is to be part of something great; and if we are lucky, we may get to be part of many great things in life! I was fortunate to be born into greatness, though I did not know this when I first became self-aware. Greatness was not an idea reinforced when I walked down the gravel roads of Mansura. Nor was it reinforced when I went into the cotton fields. Nevertheless, one day, perhaps on one of those walks, I **knew** that I was special and that special people surrounded me. I **knew** that we could do anything we wanted and that we must walk and act a certain way because we were not and will never be “common people,” (to quote most Batiste people). We believed in God and we believed in ourselves.

I am Rosa Veronica Batiste Millang, (Von Batiste) the oldest daughter of Willie Narcise Batiste and Lucille Brooks Batiste, and a proud member of the Batiste-Lavalais-Sampson clan! My father Willie, known to everyone as Jack Batiste, is the seventh offspring of Clabert Batiste, Sr. and Rosa Lavalais Batiste. My father's siblings are Vincente, Rufus, Milburn, Fulgence, Leroy, Mary Easter, Curtis, Baby Batiste, and Clabert Steve, Jr. I met my husband of 38 years, Steve Millang, at LACC; and I have loved the adventure we have had since its orchestration by his business partner, Greg. We have a beautiful and smart daughter, Lorisa, and wonderful smart son in law, Cameron Christian. We were very happy when our daughter decided to work for us after graduating from college. Steve and I have lived in Acton, CA for 25 years. It is a small equestrian town in the high desert, 50 miles northeast of Los Angeles.

I grew up in Mansura, went to Our Lady of Prompt Succor and Cardinal Cushing School, in Mansura, LA, and graduated from Mary Bethune High School, in Marksville, LA. I moved to Kansas City Missouri after high school, where I worked as a reservationist for the commuter airlines and attended college part time. I moved to Los Angeles in 1973 and worked in the Extended Opportunity Program & Services program (EOP&S) at Los Angeles City College (LACC), while attending Cal State Los Angeles where I received a B.A. in Psychology and minored in Pan African Studies. My work in the EOP&S Program, which prepared students to transfer to a four-year university, gave me opportunities to interact with students from varied backgrounds; teach classes; and meet and spend time with prominent people, including Maya Angelou, and then California Governor Jerry Brown and Los Angeles City Mayor Tom Bradley. Steve convinced me to leave the work I loved at LACC to manage his recording studio, which was a complete life style change. In addition to dealing with all the musicians coming into the studio, I began working with many of the major voice-over actors to produce educational products for companies such as Educational Insights, Fukutaki, and commercials for major shopping centers, grocery stores, and Vons, (English & Spanish). When I started managing the studio for Greg & Steve, they became the number one children's artists and an international staple for teachers in Pre-K through 2nd grade. Our company merged with a large educational company where I sat on the board. This work has taken us to Japan, the south of France, and over the United States.

While growing up in our rural small town of Mansura where family gave much love and support, I learned the life lesson of perseverance without making excuses - that your importance is not a measure of what you have but of your attitude. Even now, my father's expression continuously rings true for me, “If you're gone to do something; then do it!” I had long dreamt of attending a show at Carnegie Hall, but my dad's words gave me the confidence to produce **two shows** at Carnegie Hall. As a result, Greg & Steve were the first performers of Children's Music to have **two sold-out shows** at Carnegie Hall (assisted by my then seven-year-old daughter Lorisa and my sister Edwina.)

I remain in awe of our family, which *are most of the people born in Mansura and their descendants*. We are all connected on one side or the other. I cannot believe that one place produced so many awesome people. Identifying and growing these connections are sure to continue during the 2018 Family Reunion in Louisiana. Let's go back and say *bonjour* to where it all began.

IT IS MY HONOR TO BE THE 2018 REUNION CHAIR AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO MAKING EVEN GREATER CONNECTIONS! ---Rosa

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CREOLE PHRASE/WORD submitted by Gwen Patrick, Co-host of 2016 Creole Language Workshop

English	Louisiana Creole *	French
See you later.	Wa (twa) Pli Tar	Au revoir = formal à plus tard = informal

THE RUEsubmitted by Alice Prier (daughter of Mercedes Batiste-Lavalais Prier)

White flour, corn oil, and High flame... Pour in heated skillet 1/3 cup of corn oil. Heat to 350 degrees...Add 1 cup of white flour...Stir continuously...When coloring appears dark brown...Process complete... The darker the flour coloring the better coloring your Gumbo will have. In addition...you control the thickness of THE RUE by either adding additional flour or corn oil to your desired texture or thickness... That's it! Remember to stir constantly so that your RUE doesn't burn. Alice says that her mom, Mercedes Lavalais-Batiste Prier taught her everything she knows about Creole cooking and the Rue is the foundation of many of the dishes especially the gumbo and the étouffée.

HONORING OUR MILITARY

HONORING THE MILITARY SERVICE OF OUR ANCESTORS

Family members are encouraged to submit anecdotal articles about the any of the following ancestors who served our Country in World War I or other family members who may have served at other times. Let's continue the tradition of honoring our family's military service.

SOME ANCESTORS WHO SERVED DURING WORLD WAR I

Fred Batiste	Clifton Lavalais
Luther Lavalais	Mathew Lavalais

CLARIS JEAN SAYS, "THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING OUR COUNTRY A SAFER AND A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE!"

JOIN THE TEAM PLANNING OUR BLS RESTORATION FOUNDATION, a nonprofit foundation

OBJECTIVE OF THE NONPROFIT – To provide the platform for the BLS Family Reunion dedicated to preserving our multi-racial and multicultural identity by promoting and supporting integrated research; identifying, restoring and systematically documenting our multi-racial lineage and multicultural identity and commensurate inheritance; and establishing a BLS Family Reunion Endowment Fund to pass on oral traditions to succeeding generations. The nonprofit will include the BLS website and newsletter as permanent adjuncts. Family members are encouraged to support this effort by volunteering to be on the Board of Directors, or engaging one of the ongoing research projects or reunion planning projects. We'll include a volunteer form with the next issue of the newsletter or go to www.blsfamilyreunion.com and tell us how you would like to volunteer. Read the entire BLS Restoration Foundation position paper at www.blsfamilyreunion.com.

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