

## **Among the First French: The Early Huguenot Experience in the Carolina Lowcountry**

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The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 devastated the French Protestant, or Huguenot, population. The majority eventually converted to Catholicism, but nearly two hundred thousand fled the country, their diaspora spreading across Europe and the Americas. Those who settled in the Carolina Lowcountry lived among settlers from the British West Indies, England, Ireland, and Switzerland—and in close proximity to American Indians and African slaves. They would soon be joined by immigrants from Scotland, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Germany. The traditional interpretation of acculturation among the Huguenots must be seen against the surviving objects that speak to cultural identity within the fluid society of America's first "Creoles."