



## The Octoroon: Life in Louisiana

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By Boucicault, Dion

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The Octoroon or, Life in Louisiana; A Play in Five acts. ACT I. Scene I. "A view of the Plantation Terrebonne, in Louisiana." A branch of the Mississippi is seen winding through the Estate. "A low built, but extensive Planter's Dwelling, surrounded with a veranda, and raised a few feet from the ground, occupies the L. side." [Seizing a fly whisk.] Hee! ha "git out! [Drives Children away; in escaping they tumble against and trip up Solon, who falls with tray; the Children steal the bananas and rolls that fall about.] Enter Pete, R. U. E. [he is lame]; he carries a mop and pail. Pete. I fetch as much as any odder cook in Louisiana. Pete. What's de use of your takin' it kind, and comfortin' de missus heart, if Minnie dere, and Louise, and Marie, and Julie is to spile it?" You made her life too happy, and now these tears will be. Let me hide them till I teach my heart. O, my "my heart!" Fifteen thousand bid for the Octoroon. Enter Dora, L. U. E. Dora. Were "Quadroon" and "Octoroon" bona fide identities for Louisiana Creoles? Or were they physical descriptors, instead, used in very specific descriptive contexts? Let's have a look. Between 1718 and 1762, as the colony grew, we begin to see terminology (absent in the Code of 1724) employed in Louisiana ecclesiastical and civil records pertaining to the physical description of people of color in the colony whether they were Louisiana Creoles (born in Louisiana), Caribbean Creoles, or n"gres brutes (freshly arrived from Africa). Description: The Octoroon, Dion Boucicault's 1859 melodrama, sparked debates about the abolition of slavery and the role of theatre in politics. This production was recorded in front of an audience at Theatre Royal Stratford East, the venue that saw an earlier production of the same play in 1885. The story centres around the inhabitants of the Louisiana plantation of Terrebonne. Zoe, the "octoroon" of the title, is the daughter of its owner Judge Peyton by one of his slaves, but she has been raised as part of the family. When the Judge dies, the plantation falls into financial ruin and the Judge's handsome nephew George arrives as heir apparent.