

Contesting Borderlands: Policy and Practice in Spanish Louisiana, 1765-1803

By

Frances Bailey Kolb

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

History

August, 2014

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Daniel H. Usner, Jr.
Jane G. Landers
Catherine A. Molineux
Dana Nelson

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Acknowledgements

I have had the privilege of working with Daniel H. Usner, Jr. I would like to express my thanks to him most especially. His scholarship inspired me to pursue graduate studies and prompted my inquiry into the eighteenth century Lower Mississippi Valley. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn from his kindness and patience as well as from his scholarship and thoughtful conversation.

I am very grateful to the History Department at Vanderbilt University. The dissertation project began to take form in seminars taught by Dan Usner and Jane Landers. The members of my committee included Dan Usner, Jane Landers, Catherine Molineux, and Dana Nelson. I would like to thank Catherine Molineux for her careful feedback. Jane Landers selflessly and generously gives of her time and expertise to her graduate students. The project also benefited from seminars with Bill Caferro, Jim Epstein, Michael Bess, and Sarah Igo. And many friends have kindly read drafts of chapters along the way: Matt Owen, Ansley Quiros, Miriam Martin Erickson, Erin Woodruff Stone, Amy Gant Tan, Jessica Burch, and Erica Rhodes Hayden.

Grants and awards from Vanderbilt University provided funding for much of my research travels. My work has also benefited from the generosity of many other institutions: the Program in Early American Society and Economy at the Library Company of Philadelphia; the David Library of the American Revolution; the Newberry Consortium in American Indian Studies.

I would like to express my thanks to the many libraries and institutions where I was fortunate to conduct research and to their staffs. The single most important archive for this project has been the Center for Louisiana Studies at the Edith Garland Dupré Library at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Many other repositories and libraries also extended their

hospitality to me: the Louisiana Room also at the Edith Garland Dupré Library; the Jean and Alexander Heard Library at Vanderbilt University; the Sterling C. Evans Library at Texas A&M University; the Hill Memorial Library at Louisiana State University; the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas; the Library Company of Philadelphia; the Historic Society of Pennsylvania; the Newberry Library; and the Howard Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University.

My sisters Caroline Kolb Jadloski and Eleanor Kolb have lent their help and talents. When I was an undergraduate at Texas A&M University, Caroline suggested that I look into the Acadian migration to Louisiana for my senior thesis. That early project was the first iteration of research on the road to this dissertation. I am very much indebted to Katherine Carté Engel and April Hatfield for the example and mentorship they showed as my advisers at Texas A&M and for their encouragement to pursue graduate school. I would also like to thank my parents Helen Bailey Kolb and Frederick Kolb for instilling in us a love of learning and teaching us diligence. I was very fortunate to spend many weeks researching and writing with my grandmother Helen Bailey in Lafayette, LA, and am so thankful to the many wonderful folks who were part of that experience, especially Judy Nero. My research in Louisiana often included visits with Ashton and Scott Smith and with Katie Faust. Other friends I must thank for their encouragement and assistance include Elizabeth Rollins, Kristin Condotta, Kelly Bouquet, April Stevens, Danica Zawieja, Elizabeth Weiland, Bill and Linda Weiland, Josette Ducote, Erin Smith, Janiece Crenwelge, Emily Doucet, Fr. John Sims Baker, and all of my friends at the Frassati House.

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	iii
Maps	vii
Chapter	
Introduction	1
1. The New Orleans Revolt of 1768: Uniting against Real and Perceived Threats	32
Introduction	32
Ulloa’s Arrival in Louisiana: The Question of Possession	34
Ulloa’s Defense Plan: Building a Buffer on the Mississippi River.....	40
Colonial Resistance to Spanish Policy: Tensions Mount.....	49
Currents of Discontent and Fomentation of Revolt.....	78
Conclusions	84
The Aftermath: “La Fureur et la Frénésie”	90
2. Adaptive Borderland Practices in the Era of Partition.....	93
Introduction	93
Spanish Policy Extended to Louisiana, 1769-1776.....	96
Slavery and Freedom at the Beginning of the Spanish Regime	106
Indians Negotiate Alliances across Boundaries	116
British Atlantic Networks.....	122
Contraband and Lower Mississippi Valley Trade Networks	139
Conclusions	152
3. “Commerce in Times of Peace and Arms in Times of War”: Spanish Neutrality and the American Revolution on the Lower Mississippi, 1776-1778.....	155
Introduction	155
Imperial Attention to Louisiana’s Domestic Development.....	157
Arms for Flour: Spanish-American Trade at New Orleans.....	170
Navigating Neutrality: the Willing Raid Brings Turmoil to the Lower Mississippi..	179
Conclusions	199
4. Spanish Louisiana and the American Revolution, 1779-1783.....	202
Introduction	202
Revolutionary Conflict on the Lower Mississippi	204
Libre and Slave Participation in the Campaigns	215
Indian Affairs in the Taking of Pensacola.....	220
The Natchez Rebellion and Wartime Upheaval on the Mississippi River	231
Conclusions	251

5. Accommodating and Resisting the Imposition of Imperial Order, 1783-1787	254
Introduction	254
Many Claims to the Southeast and the Significance of the Indian Trade	256
To Grow the Colony.....	272
The Case of Philipe	282
The Ouachita Post: Bringing ‘le Bon Ordre’ to the Periphery?	321
Conclusions	325
6. Conflicting Policies and the Making of the Trans-Appalachian West, 1787-1793	327
Introduction	327
Pro-American (Anti-British) Policy Shift	329
The Indian Trade in the Southeast.....	357
Indian Relations West of the Mississippi.....	374
Conclusions	379
7. Louisiana in the Revolutionary Atlantic	381
Introduction	381
Territorial Threats and Spanish Response.....	384
Revolution in Louisiana?.....	403
Conclusions	413
8. Slave Resistance and Conspiracy in Spanish Louisiana, 1790-1800.....	415
Introduction	415
Resistance in the Revolutionary Age	419
Conspiracy in 1795.....	434
Conclusions in 1795	465
9. National Borders in the Revolutionary Borderlands, 1795-1803	468
Introduction	468
San Lorenzo and Retrocession	469
Delays in Demarcating the Boundary	472
Red River Valley, an Assessment	484
From Retrocession to Louisiana Purchase	493
Conclusions	496
Epilogue.....	498
References	508

Maps

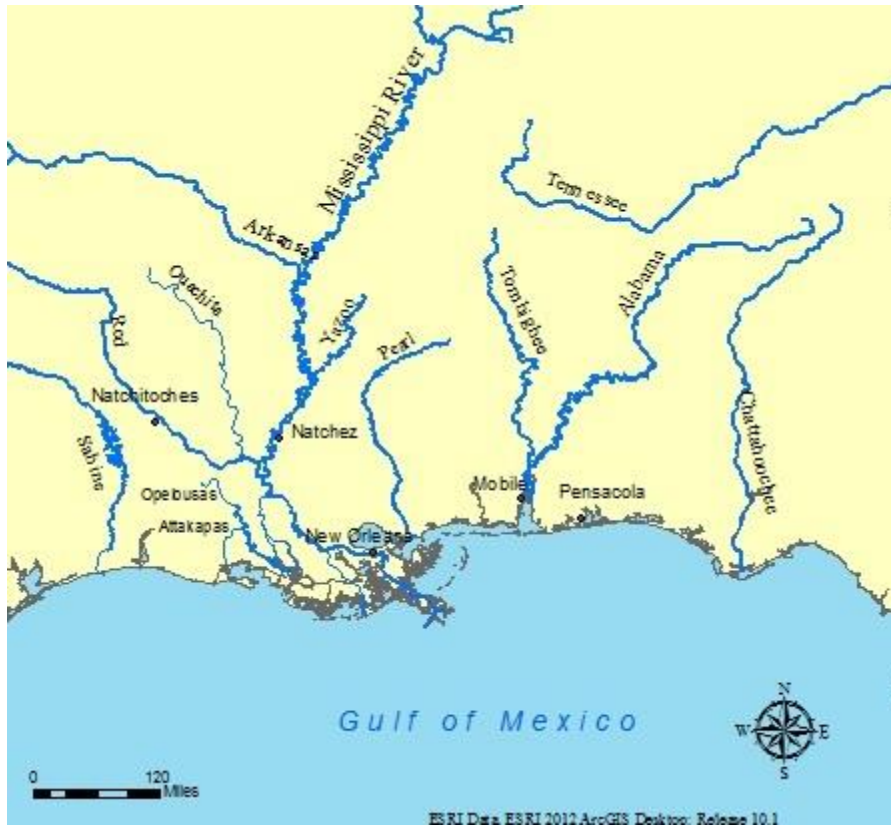


Figure 1. The Lower Mississippi Valley, 1765-1803



Figure 2. Lower Louisiana, 1765-1803

Introduction

Spain in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Border Designers and Borderlanders

Introduction

When historians of colonial North America consider Spanish Louisiana at all, they visualize a weak European empire poorly holding onto a vaguely defined territory that would inevitably fall into the much stronger hands of the United States. Close scrutiny of the Lower Mississippi Valley from 1763 to 1800, however, reveals a far more complicated and contingent story about a region significantly contested by multiple empires and occupied by a dynamic and diverse population. The peoples living in and around Spanish Louisiana played an instrumental role in the competition between empires for territory, alliance, and commerce in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Their autonomous initiatives and interests, along with Spain's imperial plans and projects, are given some long overdue attention in this dissertation, in the hope that historians of Early America might better appreciate the comparative and connected value of Spanish Louisiana. Spanish Louisiana was a microcosm of the changes taking place in the Atlantic World during the second half of the eighteenth century, and it was also an important theatre of the greater competition for North America underway at the same time.¹

After the end of the Seven Years War, empires became more aggressive in their efforts to define political boundaries and govern their colonies in North America. Spain and Britain in particular attempted to centralize and bolster their vast dominions in new ways, more aggressively designing policies to control commerce, migration, and colonial-Indian relations.

¹ For this project, the Lower Mississippi River Valley encompasses the lands west of the Apalachicola River to the Sabine River, and stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Yazoo River.

But as aptly stated by Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “empires and nations never controlled American space in the ways they intended.”² The contest for North America pitted imperial reformers not only against each other but also against inhabitants of their respective empires’ borderlands. Consolidating power and sharpening boundaries brought what we can call “border designers” in contest with the activities and networks of “borderlanders,” that diversity of indigenous, colonial, and immigrant groups actually occupying the contested space. This project examines the changing tensions between the empires’ border designers and their borderlanders during a critical period of North American history. When the fluidity that had long characterized life in the Lower Mississippi Valley became threatened by new imperial policies, Indians, settlers, and slaves responded with a mix of adaptive and resistant practices that contributed to the intended and unintended consequences of the contest among empires.³

The story of Louisiana during the Spanish period highlights the necessity of including the Lower Mississippi Valley in the narratives of North America during the second half of the eighteenth century, an era of profound shifts across the continent and the Atlantic World. Until the end of the American Revolution, inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley vied with competing Spanish and British Empires for the region. Louisiana and the Floridas were a zone of conflict during the American Revolution too often overlooked. Spain provided the rebel colonies with arms and supplies through New Orleans through the work of merchants adept at working within the region and who also had valuable connections to the British Atlantic. The

² Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 98.2 (Sept 2011): 345.

³ See also, J.H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 292-324; François Furstenberg, “The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History” *American Historical Review* 113 (June, 2008): 652-55; Eliga H. Gould, “Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery,” *AHR* 112.3 (June 2007): 779-84.

Spanish conquest of the Floridas swept the British military threat to the American project from the Gulf Coast.

After the American Revolution, competition for the borderlands of the Lower Mississippi Valley shifted significantly as new struggles for the trans-Appalachian West emerged. Now borderlanders and Spanish border designers became caught up in a boundary dispute with the new nation. This dispute, as made manifest both at the policy level and on the ground in the Lower Mississippi Valley, points to the uncertainty of survival and expansion that dogged the early United States. Like the British Empire from which they separated, the thirteen colonies, now formatively united, sought to organize territory, migration, and commerce in experimental ways. The new nation immediately found itself in competition with both Britain and Spain, which were still eager to defend their imperial boundaries of North America with a host of borderland groups just as eager to advance their own agendas. Though they did not sit at the negotiating tables in Europe, American Indians in the Trans-Appalachian West seriously contested the imposition of new borderlines and vied for power according to their own customs and interests. The competition for North American borderlands became further complicated during these years as revolutionary fervor and ideals swept the Atlantic and challenged empires in new ways.⁴

Over the past decade or so, historians have redefined the term “borderlands” itself to better understand places and peoples caught between empires. In their influential *American Historical Review* essay Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron “reserve the designation of

⁴ Indians vied for power as they contested new imperial borders throughout North America. Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History,” *AHR* 104.3 (June 1999): 822, 825; Gene Allen Smith and Sylvia L. Hilton, “Introduction” in Smith and Hilton, eds., *Nexus of Empire: Negotiating Loyalty and Identity in the Revolutionary Borderlands, 1760s-1820s* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida: 2010), 4.

borderlands for the contested boundaries between colonial domains.” Although they understand frontiers as “a meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined,” it is often difficult to untangle borderlands from this particular definition of frontiers. And indeed, the “mixing and accommodation” that are characteristic to frontiers often fittingly characterize relations on the ground in spaces designated as borderlands.⁵ Because borderlands are contested boundaries between colonial domains, they imply a tentativeness or fragility to political boundaries. Perhaps no one was more aware of the uncertainty that loomed in the borderlands than those who lived there. Consequently, the diverse peoples who inhabited these imperially contested spaces sought continuity through participating in practices specific to their borderland rather than solely through imperial loyalty. Thus, this dissertation suggests that the term “borderlands” should consider borderlanders among the competitors for contested zones.

For the purposes of this project, borderland practices denote participation in networks that facilitated the crossing of imperial borders or resistance to the dictates of imperial policies. By participating in networks of trade, alliance, and kinship, borderland peoples attempted to maintain the fluidity of borderlands that they recognized as more beneficial and stable, and as providing greater opportunity than would adherence to a single empire. Participation in these networks provided flexible means for navigating lands affected by shifting empires and allegiances. The diverse borderland inhabitants had often carved out livelihoods and societies at the peripheries of empire that had been much neglected and where imperial policy remained largely unenforced until after the Seven Years War. Life in the borderlands offered individuals

⁵ Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders,” 814-41, quotations 815-6. Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett have suggested that “If frontiers were the places where we once told our master American narratives, then borderlands are the places where those narratives come unraveled” in “On Borderlands,” 338.

and groups opportunity to claim multiple identities, to enter into extensive trade networks, and to claim loyalty to numerous flags. Oft-overlapping networks provided glue to society. As they sought security and endeavored to advance personal interest, borderlands inhabitants often defied the new and changing political boundaries and contested the redefinition of spaces and regions in North America that empires were attempting to define more concretely and to regulate more thoroughly than before. The practices and networks in which borderland inhabitants participated were more important to those inhabitants than the shifting imperial boundaries, although the changing nature of imperial contexts certainly influenced the challenges of negotiating borderlands spaces.

Because borderland practices, not empires, held contested zones together and fostered inter-group alliance and cooperation, the transition from borderlands to bordered lands was a longer process than European treaties and traditional historical periodization might suggest. Networks and practices that involved crossing borders and challenged imperial policies proved very difficult to root out. Empires and inhabitants of contested regions recognized that the shift from borderlands to bordered lands meant that, as Adelman and Aron put it, “to the peoples for whom contested borderlands afforded room to maneuver and preserve some element of autonomy, this transition narrowed the scope for political independence.” Borderlanders had great incentive to preserve the regions in which they lived and operated as contested and porous zones and to protest the strict boundaries empires sought to impose. Colonists throughout the Americas resisted new commercial regulations. Migrant peoples resisted the efforts of empire to dictate the directions of their movements and settlements. Slaves negotiated the limits of slavery

and pursued avenues of freedom. Indians also resisted the shift towards falling into the zone of a single imperial power.⁶

In the face of persistent uncertainty, borderland practices provided greater security, opportunity, and flexibility than adherence to a single empire. This appeared especially the case in regions long neglected by imperial centers where such practices had grown up as a way of life that held society and peoples together. Thus, as empires competed with one another for territory, borderlanders also competed with border imposers.

The Lower Mississippi River Valley is an ideal space in which to study the competition among empires and the competition between imperial rulers and the region's inhabitants during the second half of the eighteenth century. Here, we see the significance of resistance that has become evident in the literature. As Spain and its rivals struggled for geopolitical stability in the region and as Spain attempted to enforce its political boundaries, the inhabitants of Spanish Louisiana and of the larger region employed borderland practices in their efforts to maintain borderlands fluidity.

Once we examine the Lower Mississippi River Valley as a space of competition between border designers and borderlanders, the Spanish regime appears more vigorous than the literature has traditionally indicated. Historians often dismiss Spanish presence in the Mississippi Valley as insignificant, and when they do acknowledge it, they deem Spain largely unimportant for North America during the eighteenth century. However, when the competition is taken as the heart of the story, it becomes clear that Spain did attempt to incorporate Louisiana into its empire, specifically as a border colony. All policy designed for the colony, place-specific or otherwise, was meant to enforce the imperial border. These efforts concentrated on managing

⁶ Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," quotations 815-6; Smith and Hilton, "Introduction," in *Nexus of Empire*, 3-7.

trade, migration, and Indian relations in particular. Policies occasionally appear experimental and suggest relative flexibility in their formulation for the colony while the central objective of Spain's project remained the same throughout: to enforce a political boundary and to incorporate Louisiana into the empire as a border colony in such a way as to thwart first British and then American incursion into Spain's more valuable holdings. Besides competing with other empires and the United States, Spain also had to contend with the inhabitants of the borderlands whose practices were often more difficult to hamper than the projects of imperial rivals.

Against the shifting tides of international and interethnic alliances and imperial interests, inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley employed traditional borderland practices and adopted new ones suited to maintaining the borderlands character of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Perhaps the most dynamic feature of the eighteenth-century Lower Mississippi Valley was the convergence there of many empires, peoples, and networks there. Large and small Indian nations, African and Indian slaves, free blacks, European and North American settlers, traders, merchants, and imperial officials sought to take advantage of the flexibility of the borderland to promote local stability and economic opportunity. The networks inherent in the frontier-exchange economy and their successor networks of trade knit the region together. Contraband trade escalated over the course of the years of partition and through the remainder of the Spanish period and new networks connected the Lower Mississippi Valley outward to the Atlantic and tied it more regularly to networks that stretched along the waterways of North America. Networks of slaves provided solidarity to enslaved peoples as they resisted bondage and reinforced African ethnic identities. Kinship networks assisted slaves to cross into freedom as well. The networks of free blacks were reinforced especially by kinship and participation in the Spanish colonial militia, where loyalty to the Spanish government produced "bounded

freedom.” Kinship was also a source of political power and the basis for society at the various outposts of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Migration and settlement patterns also reflected the family ties and the bonds of ethnicity or common heritage. As new migrants entered or passed through the Lower Mississippi Valley, they too participated in and helped to shape the personal and trade networks that persisted in the region.⁷

When political boundaries were imposed upon the Mississippi River or when empires attempted to stem the movement and practices of the region’s inhabitants, colonial officials found that borderland practices thrived in the environment and topography of the Lower Mississippi River Valley, which in contrast hindered the enforcement of political boundaries determined by border designers. Conditions in the Lower Mississippi Valley made creating borders nearly impossible, but still empires strove to impose them. As they negotiated the changing worlds of the second half of the eighteenth century, the diverse inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley negotiated borderland practices with Spanish policies, at times promoting and at other times undermining Spanish designs for the region. These tensions related also to shifting Indian power and to a changing slave society.

The time between the Seven Years War and the Louisiana Purchase in Louisiana was characterized by extreme uncertainty and the tentative hold of empire on the region meant that borderland networks and practices in Louisiana were as effective as empires in competing for the colony’s future. The protracted contest might have been decided as easily by the efforts of

⁷ An array of scholarship points to the prevalence of these networks. For recent examples see Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, by University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1992); Kimberly S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Emily Clark and Virginia Meacham Gould, “The Feminine Face of Afro-Catholicism in New Orleans, 1727-1852,” *WMQ* 59.2 (Apr., 2002); Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Smith and Hilton, *Nexus of Empire* (2010).

individuals, networks, and groups living and operating in the Lower Mississippi River Valley as by diplomats making treaties. This possibility was recognized in the ‘halls of power’ especially after the American Revolution and after the spread of revolution throughout the Atlantic World. Borderlanders recognized strength and security in the endurance of their traditional but adaptable practices that could compete with the newly aggressive empires. Borderland practices were adaptable and changing but the networks and tendency to cross borders offered continuities often obscured by the periodization dictated by changes to imperial or national boundaries. These continuities countered the constraints that empires and the Early Republic sought to impose.⁸

This project centers on Lower Louisiana in particular, but political boundaries did not isolate Louisiana from the greater Mississippi Valley. An important part of this project is to demonstrate the ways that trade networks, migration patterns, and Indian politics connected the region both to the interior of North America and to the Atlantic World.

Historiography

The period of Spanish dominion in Louisiana sheds much light on the competition of empires and borderlanders for the Lower Mississippi Valley and their roles in the eighteenth century contest for North America. However, the way the period and place have been studied up to this point have obscured this history. Additionally, the periodization dictated by changes in imperial rule and shifts in national boundaries has concealed the continuities offered by borderland practices. The reshaping of the field of borderlands history, especially with the developments in the historiography of the Atlantic World and slavery, opened the way for historians to connect the Lower Mississippi Valley outward and to recognize Spanish Louisiana

⁸ Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands,” 357; Furstenberg, “The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History,” 650.

as a part of the changes taking place in the Atlantic World and in North America. Older histories have focused myopically on administrators, institutions, and specific groups and have rarely brought their scholarship in conversation with one another. Through synthesis of the secondary literature and by employing the correspondence of local officials in Louisiana, this dissertation argues for a larger and more contingent competition for the Lower Mississippi Valley than has yet been recognized. This competition highlights the important connection of the story of Spanish Louisiana to the greater competition for North America during the second half of the eighteenth century. It both sheds light on the significance of borderlanders and their practices in the struggle for contested places, and it provides new perspectives on stories of the American Revolution and Early Republic.

Scholarship relating to Spanish Louisiana has often focused on officials and institutions. While the earliest scholarship claimed the significance of its subject matter by investigating institutions, individuals, and architecture in the face of the dominant rhetoric of American nationalist triumph, other historians turned their attention to describing the diplomatic relations between Spain and the early United States.⁹ Scholars addressing the place of Spanish Louisiana

⁹ Bolton emphasized Spanish presence and the persistence of Spanish architecture and place names that pointed to a Spanish past in America. Bolton turned his attention to explorers, institutions, and politics at the imperial level. Bolton's borderlands stretched from Florida to the Pacific Northwest. Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest*. Chronicles of America Series, vol. 23. 1921. This is Bolton's most widely known work. Colonial Louisiana fit geographically and conceptually into the Bolton School at a time when historians took on borderlands studies specifically focused in the Spanish colonial period. Borderlands historians compiled and translated volume after volume of Spanish language sources as well as examined Spanish institutions and actors. Bolton, himself, published *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1914), and Lawrence G. Kinnaird translated and published *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-94: Translations from the Spanish Archives in the Bancroft Library* (Washington D.C.: American Historical Association, 1949), hereafter cited *SPMV*. These translated works reflect the particular interest in Spanish policy embraced by many of the early borderlands scholars as well as the efforts of these scholars to make sources available to an American audience. For early diplomatic work see Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier, 1783-1795: The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1927); Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803: A Study in Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1934). See also David J. Weber, "John Francis Bannon and the Historiography of the Spanish Borderlands: Retrospect and Prospect," *Journal of the Southwest* 29 (Winter 1987): 331-63; Weber, "The Spanish Borderlands of North America: A Historiography," *History Teacher*, vol. 39.1 (Nov,

in the American Revolution have taken a political and diplomatic approach that has favored British and Anglo-American actors and negotiations in diplomatic centers like Madrid and Philadelphia.¹⁰ Scholars working in the world of Spanish diplomacy have paid close attention to administrative structures and to prescribed policies. Gilbert C. Din is the most prolific of these scholars. For example, Din has examined Spanish defense policy in Louisiana.¹¹ He has also written a detailed study of the New Orleans *cabildo*, or city government, and a biography of Francisco Bouligny, the lieutenant governor of Louisiana responsible for the settlement of the Canary Islanders. In *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, Din presented a legal and structural examination of slavery in Spanish Louisiana.¹² Although crafted by the same historian, these projects remain unconnected with one another, seemingly separate studies.¹³

The conceptual isolation of the histories of the colonial Lower Mississippi Valley has prevented historians from recognizing Spain's efforts to strengthen political boundaries and

2005): 43-56. John Francis Bannon, S.J., *The Spanish Borderland Frontier, 1513-1821*, Histories of the American Frontier Series (New York, 1970).

¹⁰ James A. James, "Oliver Pollock, Financier of the Revolution in the West" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 16 (1929): 67-80; James A. James, "Oliver Pollock and the Free Navigation of the Mississippi River," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 19.3 (Dec, 1932): 331-347; James A. James *Oliver Pollock: The Life and Times of a Patriot* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co, 1937); Light T. Cummins, "Oliver Pollock: An Early Anglo Landowner on the Lower Mississippi, 1769-1824," *Louisiana History* 29.1 (1988): 38-41, *Louisiana History hereafter cited LH*; Cummins, "Anglo Merchants and Capital Migration in Spanish Colonial New Orleans" in ed., Samuel C. Sheperd, Jr., *New Orleans and Urban Louisiana, Part A. Settlement to 1860 volume xiv of The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in LH* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2005); J. Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976); Cummins, *Spanish Observers in the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1991).

¹¹ Gilbert C. Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera': Spain's Defenses in Louisiana, 1763-1779," *LH* 19 (1978): 183-213; Din, "The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro in Spanish Louisiana," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73 (1969-1970): 155-75; Din, "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790," *LH* 11 (1970): 197-215; Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution." *Louisiana Studies* 14 (1975): 241-257.

¹² Gilbert C. Din and John E. Harkins, *The New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana's First City Government 1769-1803* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: the Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999).

¹³ See also Jack D.L. Holmes, *Gayoso: The Life of a Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley, 1789-1799* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1965); John Preston Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766-1770* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1976); Gilbert C. Din, *Francisco Bouligny: A Bourbon Soldier in Spanish Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1993); Light Townshend Cummins, "Spanish Louisiana Land Policy: Antecedent to the Anglo-American Colonization of East Texas, 1769-1821," *East Texas Historical Journal* 33 (1995): 18-26.

integrate Louisiana into its empire. Works detailing migration and settlement during the colonial period reflected conceptual isolation from other histories of the colonial Lower Mississippi Valley. Carl A. Brasseaux's *The Founding of New Acadia* and *From Acadian to Cajun* emphasize the preservation and transformation of Acadian group identity and culture after the group began settling in Louisiana in 1764.¹⁴ Brasseaux and others also highlighted Acadian interactions with colonial officials, especially during the first phase of Acadian immigration and settlement from 1765-1770.¹⁵ In *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana*, Din has provided the only comprehensive examination of the Isleño experience of migration and settlement in Louisiana.¹⁶ These studies of migration and settlement, like the institutional and biographical histories related to Spanish Louisiana, delve deeply into archival material but often failed to recognize commonalities with one another or seek broader connections.

¹⁴ Carl A. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), and Brasseaux, *From Acadian to Cajun: the Transformation of a People, 1803-1877* (1992). For a treatment of the development of Acadian identity and the Acadian Diaspora see also, Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (New York: York: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1973); Naomi E.S. Griffiths, "Acadian Identity: The Creation and Recreation of Community," *Dalhousie Review* 73.3 (1993) 325-349; Naomi E.S. Griffiths "Acadians in Exile: The Experiences of the Acadians in the British Seaports," *Acadiensis* 4 (1974): 67-84; John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005); Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); François Mouhot, *Les Réfugiés Acadiens en France, 1758-1785: L'impossible Réintégration?* (Quebec, Quebec: Septentrion, 2009). Din, *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).

¹⁵ See also, R.E. Chandler, "Odyssey Continued: Acadians Arrive at Natchez," *LH* 19 (1978): 446-463; R.E. Chandler, "The St. Gabriel Acadians: the First Five Months," *LH* 21 (1980): 287-296; R. E. Chandler, "Ulloa and the Acadians," *LH* 21 (1980): 87-91; R.E. Chandler, "Ulloa and the Acadians," *LH* 21 (1980): 407-437; Carl A. Brasseaux, ed. *Quest for the Promised Land: Official Correspondence Relating to the First Acadian Migration to Louisiana, 1764-1769*, trans. Carl A. Brasseaux, Emilio Fabien Garcia, and Jacqueline K. Voorhies. Annotated by Jacqueline K. Voorhies. (Lafayette, Louisiana: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwest Louisiana, 1989), hereafter cited *QPL*; Carl A. Brasseaux, "Frontier Tyranny: the Case of Commandant Louis Pellerin, 1764-1767," *McNeese Review* 26 (1979/1980): 16-25.

¹⁶ Din, *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1988). For a discussion of Isleño culture, see Patricia Manning Lestrade, "The Last of the Louisiana Décimas," *Hispania* 87.3 (Sep., 2004):447-452. On Canary Islanders in San Antonio, Texas, See, Gerald E. Poyo, "The Canary Islands Immigrants of San Antonio: From Ethnic Exclusivity to Community in Eighteenth-Century Béxar," in Poyo, Gerald E. and Hinojosa, Gilberto M., eds.: *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991): 41-60.

The historiography of slavery and race in Louisiana was the first scholarly link between Spanish Louisiana and the Atlantic World. Some historians have focused specifically on the experience of slaves and free blacks in New Orleans. For example, Kimberly Hanger framed her study of free blacks in Spanish New Orleans in the context of the Spanish Empire and Caribbean slave societies and engaged the Tannenbaum thesis, placing her work in conversation with comparative slave studies of Atlantic history.¹⁷ Other scholars have more explicitly located Louisiana slavery within the Atlantic World. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall has considered the African origins of Louisiana slaves as well as the significant role Africans and their descendants played in the development of the colony.¹⁸ Slave studies pertaining to Spanish Louisiana, therefore, represent an important bridge that allowed scholars to escape from the narrowness that has marked study of colonial Louisiana to enter the more capacious field of Atlantic History.

At the very moment that scholars of slavery began to demonstrate Louisiana's connections to the Atlantic World, other scholars published works that altered the field of Indian history, that redefined borderlands, and that described the lives of colonial populations on the ground. The convergence of social history with Atlantic World and Early American history revolutionized studies related to the borderlands.¹⁹ In his *Indians, Settler and Slaves in a*

¹⁷ Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946). Thomas Marc Fiehrer, "The African Presence in Colonial Louisiana: An essay on the continuity of Caribbean Cultures," in *Louisiana's Black Heritage* ed. Robert R. MacDonald, John R. Kemp, Edward F. Haas (New Orleans: Louisiana State Museum, 1979); Kimberly S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Emily Clark and Virginia Meacham Gould, "The Feminine Face of Afro-Catholicism in New Orleans, 1727-1852," *WMQ* 59.2 (Apr., 2002); Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon in Early New Orleans: the First Slave Society in the Deep South, 1718-1819* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999): 409-448, here Ingersoll is arguing against Ira Berlin *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1998), Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, and Hanger who all contend that slavery in the Spanish system differed legally and in practice from slavery in the French and British systems. Other studies of Free Black society in the Spanish world include Jane G. Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois press, 1999).

¹⁸ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1992); Jean Pierre LeGlaunec, "Slave Migrations in Spanish and Early American Louisiana: New Sources and New Estimates," *LH* 46.2 (2005).

¹⁹ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). Weber's extensively researched synthesis successfully portrays the relevance of Spanish borderlands to American history. Rather than prioritizing Spanish leaders and institutions as prior works had done, *The Spanish Frontier in North*

Frontier Exchange Economy, Daniel H. Usner, Jr. considered the broader society and economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley for the first time. He argued that the Lower Mississippi Valley was a society knit together by a network of exchange of goods and services that perpetuated the survival of a largely neglected colonial region. This study considered together groups studied more often separately from one another than as one society, Indians, slaves, free blacks, and settlers, and accordingly revealed the diversity of the colony and that these many participants negotiated their survival through their socioeconomic relationships with one another.²⁰ While this work focused mostly upon French colonial Louisiana and the first half of the Spanish period, it differs greatly from earlier works in that it demonstrates the unique networks of connection among the inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley.²¹

More recent scholarship has benefited from this revolution in the historiography and the association of colonial Louisiana with the re-imagined field of borderlands. As borderlands studies have taken on the flavor of social and cultural history, they have also been influenced by an interest in gender, ethnicity, race, and class.²² With the convergence of Atlantic World and

America addressed Spaniard and Indian, alike, and the societies formed in the borderlands out of their contact, conflict, and generations of interaction.

²⁰ Daniel H. Usner, Jr. *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, by University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

²¹ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*; Usner, *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), Usner analyzes Indian population shifts and geographic movement during the eighteenth century. For a consideration of the French and Spanish colonial period in the Arkansas Valley, see Kathleen A. DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). Such integration of Indian history into colonial history as Usner does in his first work reflect the ideas of the ‘New Indian History’ as promoted by James Axtell. Kathleen Duval’s work also takes up this concept at the same time as she argues for the strength of an Indian “Native Ground” in contrast to the idea of the ‘middle ground’ as proposed in Richard White’s *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Earlier works dealing with Indian history in the Lower Mississippi Valley include Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The Chickasaws* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), and Coker, William S. and Watson, Thomas D.: *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie and Company and John Forbes and Company, 1783-1847* (Pensacola, FL: University of West Florida Press, 1986).

²² For a discussion of kinship, gender, and the slave trade in the Southwest, see James F. Brooks, *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va, by the University of North Carolina

social history, “borderlands history entered the mainstream.” And as “historians have gravitated to tales of economic exchange, cultural mixing, and political contestation at the edges of empires, nations, and world systems,” the field is “[a]nchored in spatial mobility, situational identity, local contingency, and the ambiguities of power.”²³ Unlike earlier scholarship pertaining to colonial Louisiana, this recent work locates itself in the Atlantic World and with an understanding of a complex colonial society. For example, the work of Emily Clark uses the Ursuline convent of New Orleans as a window into the changes in the society there over the span of a century.²⁴ More recently, Jennifer Spear examines the policies and practices of race in New Orleans over the long eighteenth century and considers racial formation as a long process necessitating an Atlantic perspective.²⁵

The nation-centered narrative has also served to isolate scholarship pertaining to the Spanish era and to cast it as insignificant. The narrative has also downplayed the uncertainty that

Press, 2002. The issue of gender in the Pueblo Revolt and in Pueblo-Spanish relations came to the fore with the publication of Ramon A. Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1848* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991). Brooks’ more recent publication refutes some of Gutierrez’s claims by locating the Pueblo Revolt in a greater trajectory of gender conflict, see Brooks, “Women, Men, and Cycles of Evangelism in the Southwest Borderlands, A.D. 750-1750,” *AHR* 118.3 (2013): 738-764. For a discussion of ways that Indians of the Great Lakes adapted strategies through their encounters with Europeans that both resulted in change to their communities and to the preservation of important cultural elements, see Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). Sleeper-Smith too privileges kinship in her analysis of the fur trade and inter-cultural relations and emphasizes the role of women as intermediaries. For discussions of Indian Slavery in the colonial Southeast, see also Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: the Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); and as considered in an Atlantic context with regard to New France, Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012). For a discussion of the variance in marriage between Frenchmen and Indian women and of Indian slavery in French Louisiana, from the Illinois Country to Lower Louisiana, see also Kathleen DuVal, “Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana,” *WMQ* 65 (April 2008): 267-304.

²³ Hämäläinen and Truett, “On Borderlands,” 338.

²⁴ Emily Clark, *Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society, 1727-1834* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007). This work considers both European roots and legacies in the New World and developments across time and empires as Louisiana shifted from French, to Spanish, to American hands.

²⁵ Jennifer Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2009). See also, Spear, “Colonial Intimacies: Legislating Sex in French Louisiana,” *WMQ* 60.1 (Jan., 2003): 75-98; Spear, “Race Matters in the Colonial South,” *Journal of Southern History* 73.3 (Aug., 2007): 579-588.

characterized the colonial and early national periods for the Lower Mississippi Valley. This historiographical problem is shared broadly by the historiography of colonial French and Spanish America and has plagued borderlands history from the time of the first phase of conceptualization of the field. Eliga Gould has proposed considering the entangled histories of Britain and Spain as an improvement upon comparative history. In contrast to comparative histories, entangled histories “transcend ‘national frameworks,’” and “examine interconnected societies” and thus provide “a more capacious form of borderlands history.”²⁶ François Furstenburg has noted the neglect of the Mississippi Valley especially in the period after the Seven Years War and has suggested among the causes for this neglect that the region did not fit clearly into the empires of France or Britain. The historiographical isolation and disconnect of the region from broader historical connections is also a result of the age old problem of a national history that faces west from eastern shores. Usner has suggested that “the construction of nation-states in the Americas tenaciously implicated and distorted colonial histories, as well as indigenous histories of many peoples and places predating the nation-state.”²⁷ Although the conceptual redefinition of borderlands that came at the end of the twentieth century has opened the door to remedying this deficiency, the remedy has not yet been realized.

²⁶ Gould, “Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds,” 764-86.

²⁷ Daniel H. Usner Jr., “Rescuing Early America from National Narratives: A new Comparative Approach to New France and the Lower Mississippi Valley,” paper presented at the 2009 *WMQ-EMSI* workshop, 3 as cited in Eric Hinderaker and Rebecca Horn, “Territorial Crossings: Histories and Historiographies of the Early Americas,” *WMQ* 3rd series 67 (July 2010): 402 quotation. François Furstenberg, “The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History,” *AHR* 113 (June, 2008): 648-50. This westward looking perspective has been challenged in many scholarly works in recent borderlands and Indian histories. It appears boldly in the title of Daniel Richter’s work *Facing East from Indian Country: A Narrative History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001). For other works that problematize the historiographical challenge, see also Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires; Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (New York, 1997) and Gregory H. Nobles, *American Frontiers: Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest* (New York, 1997). For a recent counter to the looking east model and to the Atlantic cores model see also Eliga H. Gould, “Entangled Atlantic Histories: A Response from the Anglo-American Periphery,” *AHR* 112.5 (Dec 2007): 1415-22. This piece is a response to Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, “Entangled Histories: Borderland Historiographies in New Clothes?” *AHR* 112.3 (June 2007): 787-799, which argues that entangled histories should focus more on interactions at the core than at the periphery.

In spite of Atlantic and comparative scholarship, Spanish dominion in Louisiana remains unvisited, and a chasm persists between studies of Spanish policy and scholarship related to social and cultural histories. As the field of borderlands has re-emerged amidst the growing scholarship of the Atlantic World, historians continue to grapple with the problem of reconciling Spanish presence in the borderlands and the place of the Lower Mississippi Valley in the Atlantic World with the historiography of the Early Republic and of the Trans-Appalachian West. Furstenberg has aptly noted that “the new historiography on the Atlantic world... would seem to offer some hope... however, it has tended to remain content sailing aboard ships or landing along coastlines.”²⁸ Furstenberg argues that, “After 1783, the Southwest in general—and New Orleans in particular—emerged as the hot spot of the Trans-Appalachian West.”²⁹ Still, the Lower Mississippi Valley and Spain’s efforts to shape border colonies have been largely omitted from the discussion of the story of the trans-Appalachian west, and designated as insignificant. In spite of his insights, Furstenberg fails to recognize the significance of Spain’s efforts to bring Louisiana and later West Florida into the empire. Articles by both Furstenberg and Daniel Usner reflect the complications that acknowledging Spanish presence in Louisiana bring to United States history. While Furstenberg proposes recognizing connections between the North American interior and the Atlantic World, Usner highlights the importance of considering the theme of crossing political, social, and cultural boundaries to the historical study of the Lower Mississippi Valley.³⁰

Considering Spanish Louisiana as a contest among borderers and borderlanders deals with these historiographical problems directly. It places the tension over the enforcement and

²⁸ Furstenberg, “The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History,” 648.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 657.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 647-77; Usner, “Remapping Boundaries in the Old Southwest, 1783-1795” in ed., Tamara Harvey and Greg O’Brien, *George Washington’s South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004): 25-41.

subversion of borders at the center, and in doing so highlights the local and Atlantic connections at play in the Lower Mississippi Valley. The era between the Seven Years War and the Louisiana Purchase was one of incredible change in the region and in the Atlantic World. This dissertation both builds on the strengths of recent historiography by situating Louisiana in an Atlantic World and borderlands context. Both Spain and the borderlanders emerge as competitors for the region during this era when the Lower Mississippi River Valley transitioned from a site of imperial conflict to an important zone of the Trans-Appalachian West.

Methods

This project depicts a more vigorous Spanish regime, but also one that faced serious challenges on the ground. Much of the primary research for this project includes the correspondence of the local officials stationed at Spanish outposts in Louisiana. These officials were located at the nexus of the contest between diverse peoples of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the governors attempting to implement Spanish policy. Besides reflecting Spain's real efforts to implement policy and shape Louisiana as a buffer colony, the writings of these local officials provided their superiors with copious information about the details of the lives and interactions of the peoples within their jurisdiction. Studying the correspondence at this level of administration grants access to voices of people on the ground, including Indians, slaves, and women. This on the ground perspective, therefore, also points to the ways the many groups living in the Lower Mississippi Valley negotiated their interests with shifting Spanish policies and the ways that their actions undermined and assisted efforts of border designers.

The Post Seven Years War Lower Mississippi Valley: Partition, Migrations, and Awaiting the Spanish Arrival, 1763-1766

The challenges facing settlers, slaves, Indians, and officials in the Lower Mississippi Valley reflects the intended and unintended consequences of the Treaty of Paris and the aftermath of the Seven Years War. These consequences have remained largely unexplored for the Lower Mississippi Valley, unlike the Great Lakes and the Ohio River Valley. The Treaty of Paris redrew the map of North America, eliminating the French presence on the continent. Shifting imperial borders brought change for Indians formerly allied with France and for settlers living in former French colonies and those migrating to the region. The war and the implementation of the treaty brought about dispersals of colonial populations, migrations, new alliances among empires and Indians, and shifts in Indian ability to play imperial powers off one another. For British and Spanish Empires, the decades after the war were a time of reform directed at increased control and centralization for their respective empires. This too had ramifications for North American peoples and colonies.

By the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Spain acquired French lands west of the Mississippi and the Isle of Orleans while Great Britain gained the lands east of the Mississippi and Canada. At this time, the Mississippi River became an international political boundary, understood by officials as dividing a region that had been a single French colony. Spanish policy makers and officials struggled during the next several decades to mold the former French colony into a buffer and to integrate it into the Spanish Empire. Meanwhile, inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley endeavored to stave off the imposition of political borders and policy meant to enforce those borders by adapting their borderland practices to changing circumstances.

Following the Seven Years War, during the final years of French rule, colonial officials in Louisiana focused their efforts on the partition and the transfer of the colony. As governor, Jean-Jacques-Blaise D'Abbadie's chief objective was to transfer French lands to incoming British and Spanish officials.³¹ After D'Abbadie's death in early 1765, Governor Charles-Philippe Aubry and *Commissaire-Ordonnateur*, or financial officer, Denis-Nicolas Foucault assumed leadership of Louisiana. They continued the process of French withdrawal from now British West Florida and anticipated Spanish assumption of power in Louisiana.

Financial constraints and shortage of supplies plagued the final French administration as it sought to cope with the strains of transition in the Lower Mississippi Valley. After 1763, France reduced funding as much as possible to Louisiana, which had long suffered from the neglect of its mother country but especially over the course of the Seven Years War. In addition, by 1764, Louisiana was undergoing a flour shortage, and Aubry also complained to superiors of a dearth of "arms and ammunition."³² French officials hoped that the Spanish would alleviate these problems and quickly take the colony out of their hands, but Spain seemed in little hurry to claim the new colony.

Colonial officials also attempted to monitor the shifting populations of the Lower Mississippi Valley, encouraging the settlement of dispersed populations in Louisiana, "to empower the expansion" of the Spanish Empire, "their host state[.]"³³ Indeed, orders from France directed officials in Louisiana to see to the interests of France's ally Spain. In 1763, the

³¹ Carl A. Brasseaux, "Jean-Jacques-Blaise d'Abbadie," in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 39.

³² Carl A. Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768* (Ruston, La: McGinty Publications, 1987), 44; Aubry and Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 13 May 1765, in *QPL*, 45; Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans 13 May 1765, in *QPL*, 48; and Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, in *QPL*, 49-50.

³³ For another example of a diaspora group serving "to empower the expansion of their host states," see also Owen Stanwood, "Between Eden and Empire: Huguenot Refugees and the Promise of New Worlds," *AHR* 118.5 (2013): 1319-1344, quotation 1321.

region was home to approximately “four thousand whites, five thousand Negro slaves, two hundred mulatto slaves, one hundred Indians slaves, and one hundred free people of color,” and a local Indian population of approximately 32,000.³⁴ Following the Treaty of Paris, colonists and Indians east of the Mississippi began to relocate to what would become Spanish Louisiana.³⁵ *Petites nations* Indians formerly allied with the French such as the Taensas, Mobilians, Biloxis, and Alibamons relocated to the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche, which was already home to the Houmas and Chitimacha’s.³⁶ Some Choctaws migrated nearer New Orleans after 1763, an example of “how some Indians relied on cities in their adjustment to new political and economic circumstances.”³⁷ To complicate matters, many French settlers living in the newly designated British West Florida chose to relocate rather than to remain in British territory, in particular the Alabama ranchers who attempted resettlement first at Pointe Coupée and then again farther west in the Opelousas District.³⁸ At the same time, the first substantial group of Acadians arrived from New York in 1764. A people dispersed by the Seven Years War, these French neutrals sought a new homeland in Louisiana.³⁹ French officials welcomed the migration of new colonists and Indian allies to Louisiana in hopes of bolstering the population before the first Spanish officials arrived in 1766.

³⁴ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 108 quotation, 279; Jaqueline K. Voorhies, comp. and trans., *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians* (Lafayette, LA: University of Southwest LH Series, 1973), 103-4.

³⁵ Carl A. Brasseaux, “Opelousas and the Alabama Immigrants, 1763-1766,” *Attakapas Gazette* 14 (1979): 112; Donald J. LeMieux, “Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlerc,” in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 34.

³⁶ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 45, 130; Donald A. Hesse, “Indians of Louisiana,” (research paper, Department of Sociology, Southwestern Louisiana Institute, 1955), 13; Lillian C. Bourgeois, *Cabanocey: the History, Customs and Folklore of St. James Parish*, (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1957), 1; William A. Read, *Louisiana Place Names of Indian Origin*, (Baton Rouge: The University Ten Times a Year, 1927), 64.

³⁷ Usner, “American Indians in Colonial New Orleans,” 302.

³⁸ Brasseaux, “Opelousas and the Alabama Immigrants,” 112-5.

³⁹ Dabbadie to Choiseul-Stainville, 6 April 1764, in *QPL*, 16; Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 46, 102.

French officials struggled to maintain peaceful relations with the newly arrived British officials and Indian groups. British officials took possession of West Florida in the fall of 1763 and began immediately to establish forts and develop alliances with the region's Indians.⁴⁰ Despite D'Abbadie's efforts to maintain a good working relationship with British officials, he lamented that "the English are giving me here, Sir, more trouble than the Indians....They wish to understand by guaranty even the attacks that the Indians might make."⁴¹ Most Indian groups were initially pre-disposed against the British after decades as enemies of the Chickasaws. Many of the smaller groups had also suffered from slaving at the hands of the Chickasaws, the memory of which predisposed them to skepticism towards British acts of friendship.⁴² The British did not help their cause by refusing to maintain regular gift-giving. Vexed at the lack of understanding among British officials, D'Abbadie noted that "It is more dangerous to deny them guns than to give them guns."⁴³ British inconsistency toward their Indian allies would dog them for twenty years. News of Pontiac's Rebellion contributed to general Indian hostility against the British even as far as the Gulf Coast.⁴⁴ The loyalty of some of the *petites nations* to the French also posed problems initially as Britain attempted to establish a presence on the Lower Mississippi. In 1763, Choctaws and a coalition of *petites nations* made up of Tunicas, Ofogoulas, Chitimacha's, and Houmas prevented 400 British troops from ascending the Mississippi to the Illinois country. Although they succeeded in driving the British convoy back down the River,

⁴⁰ Major Farmar to the Secretary at War, Mobile, 24 Jan 1764, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion, 1763-1766*, vol. 1, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Nashville: 1911), 9-10; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 25 Feb 1765, in *QPL*, 29-30.

⁴¹ D'Abbadie to Kerlérec, Mobile, 6 Nov 1763, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, vol. 5, ed. Patricia Galloway (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 291-3.

⁴² Fabel, *Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans, and Caribs, 1759-1775* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 96. For Indian slavery in French Louisiana, see also, Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 56-59 and DuVal, "Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana," *WMQ*, 65.2 (Apr., 2008): 297-300.

⁴³ D'Abbadie, New Orleans, 10 Jan 1764, AC C13A, reel 44: fo 21-33.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, For a recent study of Pontiac's Rebellion see also Dowd, Gregory. *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

the Tunicas left their settlement, from this time referred to as “Old Tunica” at a place called Portage de la Croix, where they had lived since 1731. They first went to Mobile and then settled again on British side of the Mississippi but closer to the old French settlement of Pointe Coupée with whom the Indians had long been friendly.⁴⁵ Another though smaller coalition of Indians consisting of Houmas and Pacanas delayed the construction of Fort Bute in 1765 with attacks on the British there.⁴⁶

Eventually, the British succeeded in making inroads among the Indians as French gifts dwindled after 1761, straining relations with the Choctaws who were initially skeptical about alliances with either the Spanish or the British. The location of British-Indian congresses at Mobile also put the British at an advantage for Mobile had often been the site of formal French-Indian diplomacy and gift giving. The gap between the arrival of the British and the implementation of any Spanish Indian policy granted British traders a window in which to begin to peddle their goods among the Indians.⁴⁷

The partition disrupted long-held Indian alliances and introduced British and Spanish empires to an Indian world with very specific concepts of trade and alliance. Choctaws, Chickasaws, and other Indians of the southeast understood trade as part and parcel of friendship. A relationship that did not include trade was one of war. Annual meetings with different Indian

⁴⁵ Jeffrey P. Brain, *Tunica Archaeology* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1988), 15-34, 39-41. When they migrated away from the confluence of the Yazoo and the Mississippi around 1700, which is the location that the historical record first located the Tunicas, the Tunicas settled at Tunica Bayou. After the Natchez Revolt, when the Tunicas lost a good number of their people when the Natchez attacked them, the Tunicas relocated closer to the French settlement of Pointe Coupée to Portage a la Croix.

⁴⁶ Aubry to Johnstone, New Orleans, 16 Sept 1765, AC C13A, reel 45: fo 69-70; Aubry, New Orleans, 30 Sept 1765, AC C13A, reel 45: fo 70-72; Fabel, *Colonial Challenges*, 95-6.

⁴⁷ George Johnstone, Mobile, 19 Feb 1765, West Florida Papers, hereafter cited WFLP, reel 1: fo 229; Johnstone, Mobile, 19 Feb 1765, WFLP, reel 1: 233; Johnstone to John Stuart, Pensacola, 4 May 1765, WFLP, reel 1: fo 388; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 124-5. Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 24 April 1765, in *QPL*, 41; Ulloa to Grimaldi, 9 May 1766, in *QPL*, 58; Greg O’Brien, *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 104.

groups were the usual means of distributing gifts. The Indian leaders who attended these congresses then returned to their own people and distributed the gifts among them, thus bolstering their own power within Indian society. In this way, official trade with the French was incorporated into Indian society, politics, and economy in such a way that it contributed to the power of the leaders of these Indian societies.⁴⁸ By requesting gifts, giving talks, and singing the calumet, Indians of the Lower Mississippi Valley demanded diplomacy and negotiation according to their own tradition and on their own terms.⁴⁹ Representatives of the Spanish and British Empire struggled during the years of partition to fully follow their French predecessors in successful diplomatic relations with the Indians of the region. Meanwhile, new settlers, like the Acadians, became integrated into the local frontier exchange trade.

British officials and settlers alike anticipated the expansion of British trade networks from the Floridas into Spanish territory. It was widely accepted that West Florida would benefit the British Empire economically as a base for illicit trade with Spanish colonies.⁵⁰ British manufacturers, including some merchants based in the West Indies, expressed their wish that parliament sanction trade between Spanish colonies and West Florida.⁵¹ The first governor of British West Florida George Johnstone anticipated that Spanish colonists would turn to West Florida to trade when Spain was unable to supply adequately the colony.⁵² Indeed, British

⁴⁸ See Wendy St. Jean, "Trading Paths: Mapping Chickasaw History in the Eighteenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly* 27 no. 3/4, Special Issue: Urban American Indian Women's Activism (Summer - Autumn, 2003), 758-780; Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 26-7, 89-90, 95, 122-5, see this work also for a full treatment of the Indians of the Lower Mississippi during the French period; Greg O'Brien, *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 104; Fabel, *Colonial Challenges*, 90-108.

⁴⁹ Kathleen DuVal has emphasized the importance of understanding Indian-Euro negotiations from the Indian perspective. In the Arkansas Valley, she argues that these negotiations continued on Indian terms for the duration of the colonial period. See DuVal, *The Native Ground* (2006).

⁵⁰ Robin F. A. Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida, 1763-1783* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1988), 75.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁵² Johnstone to John Pownall, 4 May 1765, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion, 1763-1766*, 1 vol., ed. Dunbar Rowland (Nashville: 1911), 279-80; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1992), 174-5.

governors Johnstone and Chester desired that Pensacola be named a free port, like Jamaica, to foster trade with Spanish colonies about the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.⁵³

Perhaps most significant to engaging the trade networks of the Lower Mississippi Valley was the British post at Manchac, which included a settlement with warehouses.⁵⁴ Johnstone identified Manchac as a future commercial center through which the fur trade from the Illinois country might funnel.⁵⁵ During the 1760s, the British surveyor and cartographer Thomas Hutchins noted that Manchac's location situated it perfectly for trade:

this place, if attended to, might be of consequence to the commerce of West-Florida; for it may with reason be supposed, that the inhabitants and traders who reside at Point Coupee, at Natchitoches, Attacappa, the Natchez, on the East side of the Mississippi and above and below the Natchez, at the Illinois, and St Vincents on the ouabashe, would rather trade at this place than at New Orleans, if they could have as good returns for their peltry and the produce of their country.⁵⁶

And British fur traders were able to capture most of this fur trade.⁵⁷

In April of 1765, in his correspondence with his superior the French Minister of Marine, the Duc de Choiseul-Stainville, Aubrey expressed eagerness for the arrival of the long-awaited Spanish officials as he described the challenges facing Louisiana and the transformation of the river into a site of imperial conflict. Aubrey declared that: "the government of this colony is more awkward than ever. It is difficult to conciliate simultaneously the French, the English, and the Indians who are in close contact with one another and whose interests and characteristics are

⁵³ "Charles Town, in South Carolina, January 5," March 5, 1767, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, <http://www.accessible.com/accessible/preLog>; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 77.

⁵⁴ As Usner notes in *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 122: "the settlement of Manchac, situated a hundred miles above New Orleans on the east bank of the Mississippi, became a pivotal point in the movement of merchandise and produce across the river and between provinces."

⁵⁵ Johnstone to Pownall, West Florida, 19 Feb 1765, *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, 273; much of this reasoning was based on the premise that British engineers would be able to open up the Iberville to divert the trade physically away from the port of New Orleans. Although this did not occur, Manchac nevertheless became a hub of British commercial activity in the region.

⁵⁶ Thomas Hutchins, *An Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and West-Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1968), 43,

⁵⁷ John G. Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812: An Economic History* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1970), 177.

so different.” He acknowledged the precarious relations among the British and the Indians and his decision to move twenty cannons to the Mississippi in response to “the continuous flow of warships and foreign troops” on the River, which he deemed a “frightening spectacle.” He noted “the arrival of several Acadian families,” and suggested that “we are expecting more every day.” Finally he turned his attention to the transfer of Louisiana to Spain and the challenges he anticipated:

The Spaniards, whom we are expecting daily now, will find the colony, from Balise to Illinois, in a sad state of affairs. Everything is falling into ruin and is in need of prompt repair. In order to match the opposing forces, the Spaniards will be compelled to construct several forts. They were unnecessary when the country belonged to one of their allies. With the English along the river, these forts are essential. These forts should be appropriately placed, principally on the rivers coming from Mexico, such as the Red River, the Arkansas River, and the Missouri.

In order to establish Indian alliances and to make a good start in their new colony, they [the Spaniards] will have to bring along many presents for the Indians. They must also bring here a sufficient number of troops to counterbalance the English along the river.

If they do not follow this course of action, there is reason to believe that their situation will deteriorate. Before long, they will find that the laws and the finances of this country are in a state of complete disarray.⁵⁸

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1, The New Orleans Revolt of 1768: Uniting against Real and Perceived Threats.

The administration of the first Spanish governor Antonio de Ulloa ended in a revolt. In contrast to earlier interpretations that depict an insignificant coup orchestrated solely in the interests of the colonial elite, this chapter argues that the conflict between borderlanders and border designers reveals that the revolt grew out of grievances of colonists across the socioeconomic spectrum. Although inspired by different interests, elites, small farmers, and

⁵⁸ Aubrey to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 24 April, 1765, in *QPL*, 37-42.

Acadians united against their perceived common enemy embodied in the Spanish governor and against the first real attempt to impose the dictates of empire on the colony in several decades. While Spain and its first governor perceived the early efforts to integrate Louisiana into the empire as liberal, the inhabitants of the colony largely rejected any policies meant to draw the colony into empire. They perceived imperial regulations as a threat to the stability they eked out through their borderlands practices.

Chapter 2, Adaptive Borderland Practices in the Era of Partition.

With the Mississippi River as a site of imperial contest and with the re-establishment of the Spanish regime, the era of partition offered inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley new opportunities to cross borders. This chapter takes up especially the borders between slavery and freedom and the international border of the Mississippi River as it related to Indian politics and the expansion of British trade networks. In doing so, it illustrates the ways that borderlanders took advantage of these opportunities and at times unwittingly strengthened the economy and stability of Spanish Louisiana. In so doing, free persons and slaves who appealed to the Spanish legal codes both reinforced the boundary between slavery and freedom and participated in the growth of a population of libres especially in the city of New Orleans. The *petites nations* made use of crossing the political boundary between British and Spanish territory as they negotiated a place of power for themselves. British Atlantic and North American trade networks converged with the networks of the frontier exchange economy, presenting expanded economic opportunities for the broad and diverse colonial society that engaged those networks. The improved stability and the persistence of cooperation among groups would prove important for Spain's upcoming wartime projects.

Chapter 3, "Commerce in Times of Peace and Arms in Times of War": Spanish Neutrality and the American Revolution on the Lower Mississippi, 1776-1779.

With the prospect of war between Britain and Spain looming in the early years of the American Revolution, Spain recognized Louisiana as strategic by virtue of its border with British West Florida and because New Orleans offered an important site for supplying American patriots with arms and supplies. Now, Spain legalized channels of trade with British America to advance wartime cooperation between Spain and the rebel colonies and thus challenge the age old rival Britain from within its empire. These trade connections with their tentacles in the Lower Mississippi Valley, however, also brought conflict to the region and tested the ability of the respective colonies to enforce their common boundary.

Chapter 4, Spanish Louisiana and the American Revolution, 1779-1783.

Spanish involvement in the American Revolution demonstrated that, in the short-term at least, Louisiana did serve the Spanish Empire as a defensive border colony. However, the colony did so less because of Spanish policy than the persistence of borderland practices that solidified cooperation among Indians, colonists, and slaves and stabilized the economy. Spain launched its attack on British West Florida from Louisiana, and Louisiana militia and slaves remained an important part of the campaigns at Mobile and Pensacola. The war demonstrated the significance of cooperation among colonists and Indians in the military campaigns against British Florida and for local defense and for the sake of the imperial border. Colonists and Indian allies also suppressed a rebellion at Natchez in 1781. Additionally, the centrality of Indian power came to the fore as a force with which to contend for any party wanting to vie in the future for the American Southeast. Strained cross-cultural relations between British officials and Indians of the Southeast undermined British efforts to defend the Floridas. Meanwhile, Spain began to recognize that the best way to ally with these native groups was to engage them through existing networks of trade.

Chapter 5, Accomodating and Resisting the Imposition of Imperial Order, 1783-1787.

Spanish strategy for the years immediately following the revolution took a decidedly anti-American turn as the United States became the new territorial enemy. Spanish officials sought to regulate the society of Louisiana to shape it into what the empire deemed profitable and territorially strategic. Indians of the Southeast were able to employ the border dispute between Spain and the United States to their own advantage and secured networks of British loyalists as their primary suppliers of goods from the Spanish, which meant that the trade became entangled with the tides of international rivalry and alliance. Spain also attempted to monitor migration, settlement, and trade in new ways as it sought to establish “bon ordre” in Louisiana after the chaos of the war. A case study of a band of maroons at the outpost of Lafourche above New Orleans led by a free black man named Philippe reveals the persistence of the fluidity that characterized the Lower Mississippi as it examines the connections, alliances, and challenges between licit and illicit communities.

Chapter 6, Conflicting Policies and the Making of the Trans-Appalachian West, 1787-1793.

After 1787, Spain’s shifting alliances produced policies that seemed at cross-purposes for the imperial and local interests of this colonial periphery. International politics fostered a Spanish policy-shift that opened trade at New Orleans and settlement in Spanish border colonies to Americans at the same time as Louisiana and West Florida were meant to advance Spain’s claim to the Southeast and to hold out against American expansion. Spanish commercial policy aimed to cut off British trade in the Spanish Empire at the moment that Spain relied upon British merchants to supply the Indian trade that was so central to Indian-Spanish relations in the Southeast. An investigation of this trade reveals dominance of Indians in the negotiations.

Chapter 7, Louisiana in the Revolutionary Atlantic.

The revolutions sweeping the Atlantic after 1789 influenced the way Spanish officials attempted to impose borders and interpreted borderland practices and the way that borderland inhabitants expressed resistance. Fear among officials grew to new heights as they attempted to enforce measures to counteract the spread of revolution and recognized most borderland practices as forms of subversion infused with revolutionary meaning. A conspiracy of French revolutionaries and American westerners known as the Genêt-Clark affair sparked spread of revolutionary ideas to Louisiana and official response to the threat posed by the scheme.

Chapter 8, Slave Conspiracies and Resistance in Spanish Louisiana, 1790-1800.

An examination of slave conspiracies and resistance in the Lower Mississippi during the 1790s reveals the entanglement of borderland practices and networks with ideas and rhetoric emanating from revolutions in France and Haiti. Understanding the Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy of 1795 as a moment in a larger arc of resistance in the revolutionary age highlights both the ease with which revolution and resistance employed borderland networks and the tensions inherent in the broader slave society of Louisiana at the end of the Spanish period.

Chapter 9, National Borders in the Revolutionary Borderlands.

As international alliances became complicated by the revolutionary age, Spain reconsidered the borderlands and decided to use them to gain diplomatic advantage first with the United States in the Treaty of San Lorenzo that relinquished Spanish claim to the lands above the 31st parallel and then with France in the Treaty of San Ildefonso that retroceded Louisiana. Spain gained little from the loss of these borderlands. Ultimately, Spanish diplomats and nations interested in definitive boundaries, not borderlands peoples, compromised Spanish presence in the Lower Mississippi. As the task of demarcating the new border between Spanish territory and the United States got underway, colonists at Natchez, Spanish officials on the ground, and

Indians of the region attempted to perpetuate the borderland status of the Southeast and resist a firm international boundary. Colonists and Indians in Louisiana took advantage of new opportunities for trade, both licit and illicit. Meanwhile, the Lower Mississippi entered a new phase as sugar and cotton cultures took root and began to reshape the society and economy. In spite of these changes and new borderlines, uncertainty about the political future of the region continued, as did the borderland practices so adept at enduring shifting territorial claims.

Chapter 1

The New Orleans Revolt of 1768: Uniting against Real and Perceived Threats

Introduction

In the first phase of Spanish colonization of Louisiana from 1766 to 1768, Spain attempted to govern and to grow an unfamiliar and diverse population under especially unstable and unpredictable conditions. Spanish interest in integrating Louisiana into the Spanish Empire as a buffer colony centered on imposing political borders. The effort to make the Mississippi River an international border prompted regulations of trade, settlement, and Indian affairs. Policy created for Louisiana was in many ways place-specific because of the unique location of the colony bordering on British North America.

Although Spain considered its plans for Louisiana liberal, its policies conflicted with existing practices of political authority, trade, and survival in the Lower Mississippi Valley. The imposition of Spanish imperial designs upon the long-neglected borderland threatened the little stability that the Lower Mississippi enjoyed. Additionally, the administration of the first Spanish governor, Antonio de Ulloa, introduced a crisis of authority and governance to Louisiana. The designation of the Mississippi as an international boundary presented opportunities for freedom or for escape to slaves, soldiers, and colonists wanted by the colonial regime. It also complicated traditional trade practices and the movement of Indian groups accustomed to traversing the region's waterways. As the colony reeled from financial strain and from the prospect of an uncertain future, colonists across the socio-economic spectrum, Indians, and slaves resisted Spain's attempt to impose borders and to regulate life in the region.

The colonial elite, small farmers, and newly arrived Acadians had different reasons for opposing Ulloa and the policies that he introduced. The elite clashed with Ulloa over political authority. They and the German Coast farmers also feared that economic incorporation into the Spanish Empire and the enforcement of commercial regulations would kill the contraband trade that Louisiana had long relied upon for survival. The enforcement of these regulations also threatened elite participation in the slave trade because that trade also was contraband. Though often ignored as a factor in the revolt, slave-owners feared the implementation of Spanish Law that would interfere with the brutal practices of slavery in the Lower Mississippi. Finally, the Acadians actively protested Ulloa's defense plan by which many were forcibly settled on the Mississippi to serve as settler-soldiers. Each of these groups was held together through kinship connections. While inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi shared the common practices and networks of the frontier exchange economy, the Acadians adhered to their own kinship, ethnic identity, and the formative experience of diaspora. With a common distrust of the Spanish governor, these disparate groups staged a revolt in New Orleans in October 1768. Rather than primarily a response of the colonial elite, therefore, the revolt in New Orleans in fact grew out of broader discontents and fears shared by various groups living in Louisiana.¹

Broad participation of colonists throughout the lower colony reflected both the real and imagined threats of this first Spanish administration to this way of life. Additionally, though long ignored in discussions of this revolt, the issue of slavery had an important place among its causes. Early policy that Ulloa attempted to enforce included the regulations on the slave trade.

¹ Up to this time, scholars have addressed it as primarily a response of the colonial elite. See, for example, Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766-1770* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1976). Brasseaux, *Denis Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768* (Ruston, LA: McGinty Publications, 1987); Peter Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) 26-27.

His efforts struck fear in the hearts of slaveholders and those engaged in the contraband slave trade. The revolt of 1768 at New Orleans fit into the growing discord between metropole and periphery in the decades that followed the Seven Years War. As Britain and Spain attempted to tighten controls on their respective colonial holdings and to gain greater profit from them, colonial populations resisted what they recognized as unprecedented imperial intrusion in their local practices. This chapter will explore the ways that varying interests united diverse groups of inhabitants against the Spanish regime and fostered a revolt; colonists widely recognized empire as incompatible with their borderland practices.

Ulloa's Arrival in Louisiana: The Question of Possession

Ulloa's arrival in Louisiana should have calmed the rumors of uncertainty over which empire actually held the colony. It did not. Instead, his refusal to take official possession on behalf of Spain left the colony in an ambiguous status. The French colonial government continued to function, albeit in a tentative and improvisational way. Ulloa and the Spanish officials who joined him in Louisiana came into varying degrees of conflict with different vestiges of the French colonial government. Meanwhile, few in the colony, whether within the colonial government or among the populace of New Orleans, were sure of what this new Spanish presence meant for a colony that still seemed in French and local hands.

Antonio de Ulloa was a man of the Enlightenment. A scientist, naturalist, man of letters, and naval officer, born in Seville in 1716, he was fifty years old when he arrived in New Orleans. After serving from 1758 to 1764 as governor of Peru, where he clashed with the local elite, he was recalled to Cuba only to learn of his appointment as governor of the former French colony of Louisiana. Ulloa's familiarity with the French language and his background in

engineering made him a promising candidate for the assignment.² As a relatively insignificant outpost, Louisiana did not merit a more successful or important official to serve as governor.

Ulloa arrived in March 1766 with orders from Charles III only to partially integrate Louisiana into the Audiencia of Santo Domingo and to allow its colonists to retain some of their practices for the short term: “for the present, no change in the system of its [Louisiana’s] government shall be undertaken...in no way shall it be subject to the laws and practices observed in my dominion of the Indies.”³ Spain’s approach to bringing the former French colony into the Spanish Empire veered markedly from Spanish precedent. In most cases new lands and subjects were subsumed almost immediately into the authority of the Council of the Indies and fell under the jurisdiction of the Laws of the Indies. Spanish diplomats such as the Minister of State, the Marquis de Grimaldi, initiated the untraditional policy in favor of their larger goal of strengthening the bonds of the Family Compact that now allied France and Spain.⁴ The result was a policy that left the window open at first to continuity for some borderland practices and postponed full incorporation of Louisiana into the Spanish Empire.

Spanish leaders gave the impression of having thought out their logistics, for the two vessels, the *Volante* and the *Rey de Prusia*, which bore Ulloa with his men and supplies to Louisiana, had been selected for their small size to enable them to safely maneuver the sandbar at the mouth of the Mississippi. Ulloa reached Louisiana with only ninety soldiers, but Spain

² John Preston Moore, "Antonio de Ulloa: A Profile of the First Spanish Governor of Louisiana" *LH* 8.3(1967): 194-198; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 60. For an overview of the life of Antonio de Ulloa see Arthur Whitaker, "Antonio de Ulloa" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 15.2 (May, 1935): 155-194. Ulloa co-authored *Relación histórica del Viage a la América meridional*, published in 1748, and *Noticias secretas de América* or *Discurso, y Reflexiones Políticas sobre el Estado presente de los Reynos del Perú*, and *Noticias Americanas*(Madrid, 1772).

³ Royal Decree Commissioning Don Antonio de Ulloa, Governor of La, 21 May 1765 in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 1.

⁴ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 44; Liss, Peggy W. *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826*(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 18-12; for a discussion of the influence of the Third Family Compact on Bourbon reforms see Allan J. Kuethe and Lowell Blaisdell, "French Influence and the Origins of the Bourbon Colonial Reorganization" *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 71.3(Aug., 1991), 579-607.

had assured him that many French soldiers would elect to remain in Louisiana and transfer their service to the Spanish Crown.⁵

Almost immediately, Ulloa's presence induced a crisis of authority. Because the force of Spanish soldiers was so small and because the French soldiers in Louisiana refused to transfer their service, Ulloa postponed an official act of possession of the colony. He also failed to register his letters of patent with Jean Baptiste Garic, the chief notary of the Superior Council, an action which indicated a transfer of power in both French and Spanish empires.⁶ This decision confused Louisiana officials and colonists alike. Was the colony French or Spanish?

French colonial governor Charles Aubry and Commissaire-Ordonnateur Denis Nicolas Foucault were both anxious for Ulloa to take possession. Tired of negotiating among the discordant peoples of the Lower Mississippi Valley, Aubry was eager to leave his post. Foucault wanted to transfer financial responsibility for the colony as quickly as possible. During 1765-1766, the governor and Commissaire-Ordonnateur had complained repeatedly that the Spanish governor had not yet arrived.⁷ After Ulloa arrived and once his hesitancy became apparent, the two French administrators recognized the futility of transferring the colony to a Spanish governor whose troops had dwindled from ninety to seventy eight by late September 1766. They placed hope in the arrival of Spanish reinforcements, and a transfer of the colony soon after.⁸

⁵ Aubry and Foucault, 8 March 1766, AC C13A, reel 45: fo 6; Gilbert C. Din, "Captain Francisco Riu y Morales and the beginning of Spanish Rule in Missouri" *Missouri Historical Review* 94.2(2000): 123.

⁶ The Superior Council was a "tribunal, which also possessed administrative and quasi-legislative powers, became in effect an autonomous body, which, through legal and extralegal means, was able to control much of the lower colony." Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 194: The body tried civil and criminal cases for the city of New Orleans, heard appeals from the other districts of the colony, and heard cases that involved capital charges. Brasseaux, *Denis Nicolas Foucault*, 57-62: Because of conflict between governors and ordonnateurs of the colony, the Superior Council and in particular the attorney general gained power. According to Brasseaux: "It is not surprising that the attorney general would exercise a leadership role in the late 1760s when Louisianians organized to oppose an unpopular regime" 60.

⁷ Aubry and Foucault, 30 April 1765, AC, C13A, reel 45: fo 3-4, doc 2; Aubry to Choiseul, 30 Sept 1765, AC C13A, reel 45: fo 4-5, doc 3. The Commissaire Ordonnateur was the financial officer for the colony.

⁸ Aubry and Foucault, 29 Sept 1766, AC C13A, reel 46: fo 12; 29 Sept 1766, AC C13A, reel 45: fo7.

To further confuse matters, Ulloa initiated an act of transfer at La Balize, the fort at the mouth of the Mississippi in January 1767, but he quickly withdrew the offer, arguing that he still did not have adequate military force to take possession of the colony. Ulloa deferred the act of possession once more. Instead, a Spanish flag was raised only at La Balize on January 20, and he and Aubry signed an act by which they maintained joint governance of the colony. Imperial authority remained ambiguous. Elsewhere in the colony, the French flag continued to fly. Aubry suggested that a public ceremony at the Place des Armes in New Orleans was not only appropriate but would also assure the fidelity of the colonists to the Spanish Crown because the ceremony would symbolize a proper transfer to the Spanish Empire. A ceremony called upon by tradition would leave no questions about imperial belonging in the minds of colonists or of the other inhabitants of the Mississippi Valley. Aubry worried that colonists would be startled to learn of a ceremony at La Balize rather than at New Orleans.⁹

The question of imperial belonging loomed large over Louisiana for two and a half years. Throughout that time, Ulloa and Aubry continued to act under a confusing joint governorship. According to Aubry, his position “was the most extraordinary” and “uncomfortable,” for he acted “for the king of France and at the same time I govern the colony as if it belonged to the king of Spain; a French commandant, forms the French in Spanish dominion. The Spanish governor gets me continually to render ordinances that concern regulations and commerce, which surprise everyone.”¹⁰ Aubry also reflected that on occasion it was difficult to work with Ulloa because he did not listen to advice and because of his “particular” personality tending

⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, *Denis Nicolas Foucault*, 70; Moore, “Antonio de Ulloa,” 201-2; Aubry, New Orleans, 30 March 1767, AC C13A, reel 47: fo 6-9; Ulloa and Aubry, 20 Jan 1767, New Orleans, AC C13A, reel 47: fo 10-11.

¹⁰ Aubry, New Orleans, 30 March, 1767, AC C13A, reel 47: fo 6-9; Aubry, New Orleans, 20 Jan 1768, AC, C13A, reel 48: 8-12: “Ma position en des plus extraordinaire, et command pour le roy de France, et en meme temps je gouverne la colonie comme si elle appartenoit aus roy d’Espagne; un commandant françois, forme des francois a la domination espagnolle, le gouverneur d’Espagne me prie continuellemen de rendre des ordonnance touchant la police et le commerce qui spurprenent tous le monde, attendu qu’on n’est point accoutumé a toutes ces nouveaulés.”

“often to make difficulties out of things not worth the trouble.”¹¹ While Ulloa lived at La Balize for nine months from the fall of 1766 to the spring of 1767, Aubry found himself mostly in New Orleans and burdened in his efforts to make “concord among all the world,” as he negotiated the “Spanish, French, English, and *sauvages*.”¹² In spite of the awkward and unique conditions of this joint governance, Aubry made his best effort to work in tandem with Ulloa.¹³

Foucault’s post as Commissaire-Ordonnateur lent itself to conflict with Spanish representatives to a greater degree than did Aubry’s position. So long as Ulloa did not take official possession, the question remained as to who would finance colonial expenses. At Ulloa’s request, Foucault authorized a careful and expensive inventory of all of the Spanish Crown’s holdings in Louisiana: the buildings in the city, the artillery, the boats, the slaves, the goods in the storehouses, and the goods for the Indian trade. This inventory took over a year to complete. Ulloa promised that Spain would reimburse the French government for the expenses incurred before Spain took official possession of the colony, including Ulloa’s tour of Louisiana in 1766. But, Foucault did not place much confidence in Ulloa’s promise. Foucault was offended by Ulloa’s demands and by the fact that the Spanish governor did not seek his council over the commercial decree issued in September 1766 as he did Aubry’s.¹⁴

As the body that should have received Ulloa’s papers upon his arrival in New Orleans, the Superior Council remained unsure of the legitimacy of the transfer of the colony.¹⁵ The continuing functioning of the body provided a measure of continuity and stability to Louisiana

¹¹ Aubry, New Orleans, 30 March, 1767, AC C13A, reel 47: fo 6-9; Aubry, New Orleans, 20 Jan 1768, AC, C13A, reel 48: 8-12: “Il me paroît que Mr de Ulloa est quelque fois trop pointilleux et fait souvent des difficultés sur des choses qui n’en voient pas la peine.”

¹² Aubry, New Orleans, 30 March, 1767, AC C13A, reel 47: fo 6-9: “je suis obligé d’avoir de grands menagement avec les Espagnols, françois, anglois, et sauvages qui se trouvent icy et ne peuvent guere s’acroder, je tache de faire regner l’union, et la concorde entre tout le monde.”

¹³ Aubry, New Orleans, 20 Jan 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: 8-12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Brasseaux, *Denis Nicolas Foucault*, 53, 55; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 126.

¹⁵ Brasseaux, *Denis Nicolas Foucault*, 57.

during this period and threatened Ulloa's attempt to assert Spanish authority. As per his instructions, Ulloa did not abolish the Superior Council upon his arrival, although he made preparations with the Marquis de Grimaldi and Antonio Bucareli, Captain General of Cuba, to dissolve it after the official act of possession. As early as January 1767, citing the lack of legal training among the members of the Superior Council and their frequent absence from New Orleans, Ulloa proposed its dissolution to Charles III.¹⁶

The crisis of authority intersected with the financial crisis of the colonial government. As relations between Foucault and Ulloa deteriorated, the French government stopped payment on letters of exchange for 1763, 1764, and 1765, and ordered the Foucault to stop the circulation of the paper money, an action which prompted panic among the colonists.¹⁷ On January 1, 1768, Foucault was relieved of his post as Commissaire-Ordonnateur by Juan Joseph de Loyola, although he did retain his office as a judge on the superior council.¹⁸ Aubry perceived this development as a hopeful sign that Ulloa might be moving towards taking full possession of the colony. However, this step was a bad miscalculation on Ulloa's part because the *situado* needed to fund Spanish projects had not yet arrived.¹⁹ In 1767, at the behest of the secretary of the treasury and Grimaldi, Charles III approved an increase in the *situado* for Louisiana, raising the allotment to 250,000 pesos. However, there was no opportunity for this increase in funding to foster stability in Louisiana at the time because of delays in New Spain, which was the source of

¹⁶Brasseur, *Foucault*, 61-2; Moore, *Revolt in New Orleans*, 52-53.

¹⁷ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 126; Foucault, New Orleans, 28 feb 1765, AC C13A, reel 45: fo 108-9; Aubry and Foucault, 29 Sept 1766, AC C13A, reel 46: fo 12; Foucault to Ulloa, 28 Aug 1766, AC C13 A, reel 46: 53.

¹⁸ Brasseur, *Foucault*, 67, 71, 125—While Brasseur argues that Foucault had lost a good deal of power now that he was no longer commissaire ordonnateur, Foucault remained connected through business and society with the elite of the colony, particularly the other members of the superior council. Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 126.

¹⁹ The *situado* was the money provided for annual colonial expenses. See also Carlos Marichal and Matilde Souto Mantecón, "Silver and Situated: New Spain and the Financing of the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean in the Eighteenth Century," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 74.4(Nov., 1994), 587-613.

the bouillon that financed the situado for Cuba and Louisiana.²⁰ In August of 1767, 60,000 pesos finally arrived at New Orleans from Cuba.²¹ That sum was not enough to cover the outstanding debts Ulloa had already incurred from establishing forts, giving presents to the Indians, and settling the new Acadian colonists in Louisiana, nor was the sum enough to settle the debts of the final phase of the French regime. Ulloa passed 1767 and 1768 lamenting “the peril in which the colony finds itself,” begging his superiors to send funding to pay off the creditors who had been growing in number since before his arrival in Louisiana, and noting that improvements in colonial defense and infrastructure required greater expenditure.²² Ulloa received several allotments from Cuba in response to his pleas but never received enough to stabilize finances.²³

The unstable conditions that Ulloa found in Louisiana only worsened over time. The doubt clouding his position and the persistent financial crisis undermined any authority he had to impose imperial designs on Louisiana. Ulloa’s repeated postponement of the act of transfer further jeopardized his standing in the colony. Despite of the ambiguity of his position, Ulloa promulgated an array of Spanish policies designed to better integrate Louisiana into the empire.

Ulloa’s Defense Plan: Building a Buffer on the Mississippi River

After the Seven Years War, Spain and Britain prioritized developing defense strategy and infrastructure for their respective empires. For Spain, the great embarrassment of the war had

²⁰ Because of investigations and reorganizations of the treasury and tax system in New Spain, shipments of funds were delayed.

²¹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 118-22.

²² Ulloa to Bucareli, 17 June 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 31 quotation; Ulloa to Bucareli, 28 Aug 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 32; Ulloa to Bucareli, 21 Sept 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 35; Ulloa to Bucareli, 25 Dec 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 38; Ulloa to Bucareli, 20 Feb 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 40; Ulloa to Bucareli, 22 June 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 42; Ulloa to Bucareli, 20 Jul 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 52-3; Ulloa to Bucareli, 10 Aug 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 55; Ulloa to Bucareli, 6 Oct 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 62-3; and Ulloa to Grimaldi 6 Oct 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 75.

²³ Ulloa to Bucareli, 28 Aug 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 32; Ulloa to Bucareli, 21 Sept 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 35; Ulloa to Bucareli, 2 Dec 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 38; Ulloa to Bucareli, 20 July 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 55; Ulloa to Bucareli, 20 Aug 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 62.

been the British occupation of Havana. Spain had been forced to trade Florida for the return of Havana. Plans to reshape Louisiana for the interests of imperial defense thus coincided with the re-evaluation and re-structuring of Spanish Caribbean defense, especially that of Cuba, and of New Spain's frontier.²⁴ However, policy in Louisiana differed from elsewhere in Spanish North America because the colony bordered with British territory. Policy makers employed a combination of traditional frontier defense strategies and some French precedents to form a place-specific set of policies aimed at shaping Louisiana into a buffer colony and enforcing the Mississippi as an international boundary.

Ulloa's defense plan was formed in a larger context of re-evaluation of Spain's northern frontier and borrowed from long practiced Spanish strategies for managing its frontier. From 1764 to 1768, the Marques de Rubí, who headed a military mission sent to re-evaluate the defenses of New Spain's northern frontier, made a tour of New Spain to inspect its frontier settlements, Indian relations, and infrastructure. Similarly, under the jurisdiction of the Captaincy General of Cuba rather than of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, Ulloa made a tour of Louisiana and had orders to evaluate the state of forts and settlements and to design a defense plan appropriate for the colony.²⁵ In a border colony like Louisiana, Spain did not want to expend enormous resources but did want the colony to serve its particular role within the empire. The specifics of a defense plan, infrastructure, and manpower were left to Ulloa. He followed patterns employed elsewhere on Spain's North American frontier including the regulation of commerce and the planting of new settlements to populate the colony, while retaining an Indian policy that extended French precedents. In New Mexico and Texas, Spain planted settlements

²⁴ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 295-304. Britain and France were also re-evaluating their empires and evaluating better ways to increase control over their new world colonies. Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 18.

²⁵ Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 204-211.

where the men served as militia and where the agriculture and ranching fed the garrisoned troops at a nearby post.²⁶ Ulloa intended to grow the colonial population, increase settlement on the banks of the Mississippi that bordered British West Florida, and amass Indian allies.²⁷

To Foucault's chagrin, for it was at the expense of the nearly bankrupt French colonial government, Ulloa conducted his tour of the settlements of Lower Louisiana soon after his arrival in 1766. Accompanied by Aubry, he travelled the Mississippi River to Pointe Coupée and then continued to the more distant outpost of Natchitoches near the Texas border and to the Attakapas Post. The tour enabled Aubry to acquaint Ulloa with Indian affairs, the ongoing migration of Acadians, and the threats posed by neighboring British West Florida.²⁸ All factored into Ulloa's defense plan. The French and Spanish governors agreed that Louisiana's ability to defend herself against the British and hostile Indians must be a priority. Ulloa proposed the garrisoning of 1200 troops in Louisiana.²⁹

Next, Ulloa returned to La Balize where, sequestered, he designed a line of forts and settlements along the Mississippi to serve as the center of defensive infrastructure. Convinced that the colony must improve its ability to defend itself and thus better serve as "a buffer for the kingdoms of New Spain," Ulloa devised a strategy in which the Acadians played a central role.³⁰

²⁶ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 12; Gilberto Miguel Hinojosa, *A Borderlands Town in Transition: Laredo, 1755-1870* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1983); much work has been done on Spanish San Antonio as a frontier settlement and these works often examine the development of culture and ethnicity as well as the importance of ranching in the region: Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986); Teja, Jesús F. de la: *San Antonio de Béxar : A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM : University of New Mexico Press, 1995). For discussion of settlement in Spanish New Mexico, see Ross Frank, *From Settler to Citizen: New Mexican Economic Development and the Creation of Vecino Society, 1750-1820* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2000), which addresses economy and society during the Bourbon Era.

²⁷ Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 183.

²⁸ Foucault, 2 April 1766, AC C13A, reel 45: fo 212-214; Aubry, 30 June 1766, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba legajo 109: fo 25, Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana (hereafter PPC).

²⁹ "Governmental Expenses," 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 15. From 1769 to about 1780, Spain posted about 600 men in Louisiana (Upper and Lower), and 1200 through about 1790, and then 1800 through the end of the Spanish period. Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 13.

³⁰ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 29 Sept 1766, in *QPL*, 77-79.

He would establish forts along the Mississippi at key locations: at Isla Real Católica at the mouth of the Mississippi near the old French fort at La Balize; at Manchac; at Natchez; and at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi.³¹ The fort at Manchac was to be built directly across the Iberville from British Fort Bute, and the fort at Natchez would be located on the west bank of the river, across the Mississippi from British Fort Panmure.³² These forts would serve as sites to maintain Indian relations, as places to gather intelligence regarding the British across the river, and as centers around which to build settlements. Ulloa intended to populate these settlements with the migrating Acadians, suggesting that “the inhabitants, as militiamen, must be considered soldiers settled in the territory.”³³ They could also act as a physical buffer along the river. From 1766 to 1768, Ulloa and his subordinates began building forts and attempting to settle Acadians on nearby lands. Given the financial situation of the colony and his debatable authority, perhaps it was not prudent for Ulloa to demand the immediate implementation of these plans, which were unkind to the colonial purse and angered the Acadians. Nonetheless, his superiors endorsed these actions and continued to promise financial support.

The presence of British posts along the Mississippi greatly influenced the shaping of Ulloa’s system of forts and settlements, but in 1767, as General Gage began shifting British forces about North America, the posts along the Mississippi were abandoned and the troops withdrawn to St. Augustine.³⁴ With the threat diminished, Ulloa, now working with limited financial resources and awaiting the arrival of his requested funding, resented the expense that the settlement of the Acadians had incurred. Ulloa’s administration, like the French government before it, became “pressed for funds,” in part because the Spanish governor was financing the

³¹ Din, “Protecting the ‘Barrera.’ Spain’s Defenses in Louisiana, 1763-1779,” *LH* 19(1978): 188, 190.

³² *Ibid.*, 188; “Government Expenses,” 1767 in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 16-17.

³³ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, in *QPL*, 65.

³⁴ Din, “Protecting the ‘Barrera,’” 190-1; Duplessis to Ulloa, Pointe Coupée, 13 August 1768, in *QPL*, 151.

expenses of both French and Spanish governments, the establishment of new settlements, the supplies for these new settlements, and gifts for Indian allies.³⁵ By early October 1767, Ulloa described to his superior Grimaldi “the miserable conditions existing here on account of the scantiness of the funds” and argued that had the British withdrawn earlier, Spain might have avoided the costs of establishing settlements along the river. Instead, Spain now had to support the new settlements, “which are dependent upon them and must be protected from the attacks they might suffer from the Indians.” Ulloa had been suspicious of the British, but now, discouraged, he argued that they had offered the Spanish a viable model: “England now teaches us to economize by abandoning whatever it considers unable to produce any advantage, and without renouncing its dominion or rights, reduces its government to a civil one.”³⁶

Implementing commercial regulations was also part and parcel to the defense plan for Louisiana, as it was meant to tie Louisiana to the Spanish Empire more soundly and to discourage illicit trade that linked Louisiana to the British Empire. Spanish policy makers attempted to foster economic growth in Louisiana and to encourage legal trade that would eventually tie the colony more tightly into Spanish Atlantic networks. Louisiana inhabitants had long participated in a web of illicit trade that stretched throughout the Caribbean and that included Cap Français, Martinique, Jamaica, as well as Campeche, Cartagena, and Havana.³⁷ All

³⁵ Kinnaird, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, xvii.

³⁶ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 6 Oct 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 73, 75.

³⁷ For more on the illicit trade networks of the French period see Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans*, 102, 106, 107-120. Dawdy suggests that with regard to the origins or destinations of ships recorded at New Orleans from 1735 to 1763, vessels trading with Spanish colonies made up 40%, with French colonies 49%, and with other Caribbean ports 11%. For more on contraband trade in the Circum-Caribbean, see Allan Christelow "Contraband Trade between Jamaica and the Spanish Main, and the Free Port Act of 1766," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 22.2 (May 1942), 309-43; G. Earl Sanders, "Counter-contraband in Spanish America, Handicaps of the Governors in the Indies," *The Americas*, 34.1 (July 1977), 59-80; Kris Lane fits a discussion of the connection between British privateers and contraband in the Caribbean into his larger work that considers the changing role of privateering in the Atlantic Empires in *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998). In their assessment of borderlands historiography, Poyo and Hinojosa note that “The Crown trade policies that limited the ports of entry made contraband an essential element of everyday life in many backwater colonial communities. Legally relegated to the very end of a cumbersome

policy directed toward Louisiana sought to curb the contraband trade that thrived at New Orleans and threatened the financial health of Louisiana colonists across the socio-economic spectrum.

Initially, Spain permitted a continuation of trade with the French Empire. On September 7, 1766, Aubry promulgated on Ulloa's behalf the first Spanish commercial decree in Louisiana. The decree fit with Charles III's project of slowly integrating Louisiana into the empire for it granted permission over the short term for trade between Louisiana and France, Saint Domingue, and Martinique so long as French vessels carried a Spanish passport that they could present to Ulloa.³⁸ This policy would grant a degree of continuity and offer some stability to Louisiana. The decree also bought time for the introduction of specie into Louisiana. The absence of specie made it difficult for Louisiana to trade with ports that did not accept its produce as payment. In the minds of Spanish officials, the decree issued in September of 1766 would help Louisiana transition into sanctioned Iberian channels of trade after a moment of straddling French and Spanish Atlantic worlds. The commercial regulations were also meant to protect colonists from profiteering and reduce the flow of contraband trade.³⁹

Two years later in October 1768, Ulloa promulgated another commercial decree forbidding trade outside of the Spanish Empire and restricting trade among its colonies to certain Spanish ports. Additionally, vessels were required to be Spanish built and owned. In an attempt to combat contraband, the decree mandated that vessels travel directly between Louisiana and Spanish ports without stops along the way. From a Spanish perspective it seemed permissive to

commercial network that provided European goods via Veracruz, Mexico City, and Saltillo, colonial Texans traded with French and English smugglers," see "Spanish Texas and Borderlands Historiography in Transition: Implications for United States History," *Journal of American History* 75.2 (Sept., 1988), 406. For more current work, see also Adrian J. Pearce, "British Trade with the Spanish Colonies, 1788-1795," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20.2 (2001), 233-260; Alan L. Karras, "'Custom Has the Force of Law': Local Officials and Contraband in the Bahamas and the Floridas, 1748-1779," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 80.3 (Winter, 2002), 281-311.

³⁸ Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 66.

³⁹ Kinnaird, "introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 1, xvi.

allow trade between Louisiana and nine Spanish peninsular ports.⁴⁰ Formerly, Cadiz had enjoyed a monopoly on trade with the Indies. Enacting a shift away from this monopoly, this decree followed a similar relaxation of regulations extended to Cuba in 1764.⁴¹ To Louisiana colonists accustomed to smuggling as a way of life, these regulations appeared extreme and their enforcement crippling to society and economy.

While Spanish commercial policy in Louisiana attempted to integrate the colony into Iberian Atlantic networks, Indian policy in Louisiana built upon French practices. The Indians were perhaps the most significant factor to consider for colonial defense. Ulloa commented that “it is they who tilt the scales in favor of their allies.”⁴² The Spanish governor already knew the priority of Indian relations. Ulloa was delayed in traveling to Louisiana because he awaited gifts for Indian allies aboard *La Liebre* from La Rochelle. His tardiness in reaching Louisiana promoted doubts there about the intentions of Spain. In their efforts to promote a smooth and successful transfer of Louisiana from France to Spain, Spanish diplomats paid heed to French knowledge of trade and experience with the Indians of the Mississippi River Valley, but the delay in Spanish presence in Louisiana promoted an air of great uncertainty.

Spanish policy makers decided to look to the Indian policies and practices of their French predecessors well before Ulloa set foot in the colony. By the close of the French period, missionary work among Indians of the Lower Mississippi had largely diminished. French evangelization to the Indians had been less integrated into the project of empire than it had

⁴⁰ “Spanish” here is inclusive of naturalized subjects.

⁴¹ John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 303-4. Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 112; “Government Expenses,” 1767 in “Regulation of Louisiana Commerce,” 23 March 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 45-50; Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., “Spanish Commercial Policy in Louisiana, 1763-1803,” *LH* 44.2 (2003), 140-1. The nine ports were Cadiz, Seville, Alicante, Cartagena, Malaga, Barcelona, Santander, Coruña, and Gijon.

⁴² Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, in *QPL*, 69.

during the earlier centuries of Spanish colonization.⁴³ By the time Spain acquired Louisiana, the traditional method of “pacification” of the Indians with a mission system had fallen out of favor. While some missions on the Northern Frontier remained active after Rubí’s report and later missions were established in California in a new wave of effort to lay claim to that frontier, Spain did not institute missions in Louisiana as their primary method of engaging Indians. Instead, over the course of the eighteenth century, and especially during the era of the Bourbon Reforms, Spain increasingly favored gift-giving and treaty-making with Indians on the North American frontiers of its empire. This dramatic policy shift meant little change at the practical level in the colony. Imperial claims to Louisiana depended on successful alliances with the Indians living in the colony since they inhabited the colony in its vastness in a way that neither Spanish soldiers nor colonists could achieve.⁴⁴

⁴³ The Capuchins and the Jesuits were the primary orders that sent Catholic priests as missionaries to Louisiana. For the efforts of the respective orders there see: Jean Delanglez, S.J., “The French Jesuits in Lower Louisiana (1700-1763)” (PhD diss., Catholic University, 1935), for discussion of missions to the Indians, see especially p. 420-90; and Claude L. Vogel, O.M. Cap., “The Capuchins in French Louisiana (1722-1766)” (PhD diss., Catholic University, 1928). For a discussion of the Catholic Church in Louisiana during the early years of French colonization, see Charles E. O’Neill, *Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana; Policy and politics to 1732* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966). These works reveal that at least during the early eighteenth century, both orders attempted to serve the Indians of the Lower Mississippi Valley. In 1726, the Jesuits were invited to the Louisiana mission field because of what was seen as the failure of the Capuchins to make many converts among Indians in Louisiana, in particular powerful Indian groups. The Jesuits did attempt a mission to the Choctaws. The arrival of the Jesuits brought the Jesuits and the Capuchins into conflict with one another, distracting both groups of men from their duties to their flocks. Sadly, the writings of the Jesuit missionaries in Louisiana have been mostly lost. By the end of the French period, the work of missionaries in Louisiana was largely focused on the French and African population rather than the Indians. The missionary effort in the French empire operated largely independent from the colonial apparatus. Soldiers, traders, and religious often worked at cross-purposes, frustrating one another’s endeavors. With regard to Indian relations in Lower Louisiana, French traders were of much greater importance in the long-term than were the French missionaries. This arguably contrasts the Great Lakes region, the Illinois Country, and Canada where missionaries played a larger role in Indian relations. For recent discussion of French presence in these other regions see also Allan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America*, (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2000); Allan Greer, “Colonial Saints: Gender, Race, and Hagiography in New France,” *The WMQ*, Third Series, 57.2 (Apr., 2000), 323-348. The effort of the Catholic Church to evangelize has been a world wide effort. For a sense of this during the eighteenth century, for example, consider the *Jesuit Relations*, letters and accounts of Jesuit missionaries meant to communicate their work, successes, and trials to the Catholics in Europe, especially other members of the order and donors. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France* (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Brothers Company Publishers, 1900).

⁴⁴ Conde de Fuentes to Grimaldi, Paris, 9 Mar 1764, *Santo Domingo Papers* legajo 2542: 216-217; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 212; Lawrence Kinnaird, Francisco Blache and Navarro Blache, “Spanish Treaties with Indian Tribes” *The*

As Louisiana sustained gift-giving as the primary form of Indian diplomacy, the commandants assigned to the forts and settlements became the primary diplomats with whom many Indian groups interacted. Like Aubry and Foucault, the Indians of the Mississippi Valley were anxious about the arrival of the Spanish, and many traveled to New Orleans to meet with Ulloa.⁴⁵ Ulloa identified St. Ange at St. Louis on the Missouri and Athanase de Mézières at Natchitoches as key negotiators with the Indians on the interior extremities of Spanish Louisiana.⁴⁶ Additionally, through Aubry, men such as Delavillebeuvre, Trudeau, and Rousseau distributed gifts and served as interpreters with Indians along the Red River.⁴⁷ Some interpreters

Western Historical Quarterly 10.1 (Jan., 1979), 39-40; Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104.3 (Jun., 1999), 832-4; Weber, *Barbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven, Conn., 2005), especially "Chapter 5: Trading, Gifting, and Treating"; Jeremy Adelman, "An Age of Imperial Revolutions," *The American Historical Review* 113.2 (April 2008), 325. The earliest schools of borderlands history focused on institutional history of the Spanish borderlands. See Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest*. Chronicles of America Series, vol. 23, (1921); Bolton, *Outpost of Empire: The Story of the Founding of San Francisco* (New York: AA Knopf, 1939); Robert S. Weddle, *The San Saba Mission: Spanish Pivot in Texas* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1964); John Francis Bannon, S.J., *The Spanish Borderland Frontier, 1513-1821*, Histories of the American Frontier Series (New York, 1970); Abraham Nasitir, *Borderland in Retreat: From Spanish Louisiana to the far Southwest* (Albuquerque, 1976). For scholarship on the California missions see Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo: *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

⁴⁵ Aubry and Foucault, 29 Sept 1766, AC C13A, reel 46: fo 12.

⁴⁶ It is important to note that relations with Indians at Arkansas, St. Louis in Missouri, and Natchitoches accounted for the largest portion of expense in Indian gifts, a reflection of the importance of alliances with the Indians of these regions. See also Herbert Eugene Bolton, ed. and trans., *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1914); Kathleen A. DuVal. *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

⁴⁷ Aubry to Ulloa, 16 Dec 1766, PPC, legajo 187A, n.p; Loyola to Unzaga, 7 Sept 1769, New Orleans, PPC, legajo 109: fo 303-304. For more on Indian interpreters in Louisiana, see Patricia Galloway, "Talking with Indians: Interpreters and Diplomacy in French Louisiana," in *Race and Family in the Colonial South*, ed. Winthrop D. Jordan and Sheila L. Skemp (Jackson, Miss., 1987), 109-29. "The name of Juan de la Villebeuvre should shine proudly as an example of the self-sacrifice of career officers whose deep sense of duty transcended national ties," Jack D. L. Holmes, "Juan de la Villebeuvre: Spain's Commandant of Natchez during the American Revolution," *Journal of Mississippi History* 37.1(1975): 97-129; Holmes, "Juan de la Villebeuvre and Spanish Indian Policy in West Florida, 1784-1797," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58.4(1980): 387-99; Holmes, "Up the Tombigbee with the Spaniards: Juan de la Villebeuvre and Treaty of Bouchfouca," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 40.1(1978): 51-61; Charles A Weeks, "The Politics of Trade: Delavillebeuvre's 1787 Mission to the Choctaws and Journal," *Journal of Mississippi History* 65.1(2003): 33-72.

were the progeny of French-Indian unions, as was the case with Alexis Grappe, who sometimes aided Athanase de Mézières.⁴⁸

Supplying gifts to the Indians was key to maintaining peaceful relations. French officials advised the early Spanish administration that failure to offer gifts might result in Indian aggression and alliances. The gifts for the Indians transported to Louisiana in 1766 were the first in over four years.⁴⁹ Even at that time, Ulloa already began to express a desire to reduce the expense of gifts, but Foucault warned him that maintaining friendship with Indians was absolutely necessary.⁵⁰ Indeed the French colony would not have survived without it.

Colonial Resistance to Spanish Policy: Tensions Mount

Spanish policy meant to reshape Louisiana into an imperial border colony conflicted with social, economic, and political practices that Shannon Dawdy calls “rogue colonialism.”⁵¹ Further, the frontier exchange economy remained a source of stability and survival that spanned the Mississippi River even after diplomats in far-away Europe decreed it an international boundary. Policies introduced under Ulloa affected every sector of society, and each group responded in a different way. In a colony long neglected by France, “Louisianians realized early on that their interests, if not their survival, depended more on local than on metropolitan

⁴⁸ Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*, 213; “Agreement made with the Indian nations in assembly,” 21 Apr 1770, in Bolton, *Athanase de Mézières*, vol. 1: 157-8; David LaVere, “Between Kinship and Capitalism: French and Spanish Rivalry in the Colonial Louisiana-Texas Indian trade,” *Journal of Southern History* 64.2(May, 1998): 210. Grappe’s mother Louise Guedon was half Chitimacha. Grappe, who spent most of his life near Natchitoches, was thought to have been fluent in Caddo. Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 39, 157. Grappe’s success as an interpreter cannot solely be linked to his Indian heritage, as many individuals at the Natchitoches post and elsewhere in the colony were descended from the unions of Frenchmen and Indian women, often slave women.

⁴⁹ “Governmental Expenses,” 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 18-9; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 24 April 1765, and Ulloa to Grimaldi, 9 May 1766, in *QPL*, 41, 58.

⁵⁰ Aubry and Foucault, New Orleans, 29 Sept 1766, AC C13A, reel 46: fo 12-14.

⁵¹ For a discussion of “rogue colonialism” see Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire*, xv-xvi, 4-5, and her chapter “Conclusion: Revolt and Rogue Colonialism,” 219-246.

economic ties.”⁵² Maintaining Caribbean trade networks and the frontier exchange economy demanded a fluidity that enforcement of any empire’s regulations would have threatened. The persistence of borderland practices undermined imperial reorganization.

The colonial elite consisted of a tight-knit community of merchant-planters who participated in the political life of New Orleans and contraband trade across the Caribbean. Members of the Superior Council were drawn from this stratum of society and were often connected to one another through ties of kinship, marriage, and business.⁵³ New Orleans was the center of government and trade in Louisiana. Many planters had homes in the city in addition to more valuable estates nearby and along the Mississippi where enslaved laborers produced rice and indigo. As the old-guard governing elite, this group clashed with Ulloa as he challenged their authority. Spain’s commercial policy threatened to rip merchant-planters from the Mississippi-Caribbean and Atlantic trade networks that had allowed them to thrive. They also feared that their authority in the local slave regime would weaken.

Aubry rightly anticipated that colonists would decry the regulations when he issued the Commercial Decree on September 6, 1766 on behalf of the Spanish Crown.⁵⁴ Mobilization was immediate. The next day, a group of planters and merchants addressed the Superior Council in a

⁵² Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire*, 102.

⁵³ For a full discussion of the kinship bonds among the colonial elite, see Emilie Leumas, “Ties That Bind: The Family, Social, and Business Associations of the Insurrectionists of 1768,” *LH* 47.2 (Spring, 2006): 183-202.

⁵⁴ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 9 Sept 1766, PPC, legajo 187A, n.p.

petition voicing concern for the loss of “la liberté du commerce.”⁵⁵ Foucault and the colony’s attorney general, Nicolas Chauvin de LaFrénière, led resistance to the new regulations.⁵⁶

Those who signed the petition included prominent planters like Jacques Cantrelle, who was the first commandant of the district named for him at St. James de Cabahannocé and the dominant land owner there, and Joseph Villeré of the German Coast, who was brother-in-law to attorney general Nicholas de LaFrénière. Other petitioners were militia leaders Joseph Milhet and Pierre Caresse, the brothers Jean and François Durand who traded in the Caribbean and had contacts at Marseilles, and merchants Toutant Beauregard, Bartholomew Macnamara, and Jean Lafitte.⁵⁷ Another known smuggler, Denis Braud was the only printer in operation in New Orleans and the official printer for the Superior Council. Like the Durand brothers, Braud had been born in Martinique.⁵⁸ The Durands and Pierre Caresse also invested in the slave trade.⁵⁹ Colonists understood that their personal power and profit as well as the colony’s economic

⁵⁵ New Orleans Merchants to the Superior Council, 8 Sept 1766, AC C13A, reel 46: fo 298-299, signé Joseph Milhet, Rose, Cantrelle, D Braud, J Mercier, L Ducrest, Petit, Duforest, Toutant Beauregard, L Boisdoré, B Duplessy, Braquier, P Carresse, J Vienne, auré Le, S. Segond, Voix, Durel, Blac, M Poupetje, Pre Poupet, Estébe, Rodrigue fils aîné, Jean Sauvaistre, G Gardelle, Ducarps, F Durand, J et J boudes F, Rivoire, Macnamara, F Denis, J Arnoule, A Reynard, J Smith, A Bodaille, Laurent DuBourg, Durand, Testas, Frigier, Louis Ranson, Courmier et Saint pé, Détour et ville France, Salomon, Delassye, Blaignat, Langlois, Portier, J Lafitte, Hinard, Braquier Je, L Estarty, Astiev et Brunet, J Bienvenu, Tarpy, Doraison, Cavelier freres, Papion, Gourrege, Revoil, Guezille, Guignan, Moullineau, F Hery, A Olivier, et Broussard.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the Chauvin family, see also Gary B. Mills, “The Chauvin Brothers: Early Colonists of Louisiana,” *LH* 15.2 (1974): 117-131.

⁵⁷ Extracts of the Proceedings of the, New Orleans, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 147; Jean Baptiste Garic, 9 Mar 1768, PPC, legajo 109: fo 478-481; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 19 Dec 1766, PPC, legajo 187, n.p. In June 1768, Durand’s vessel *La Louisiane* arrived in New Orleans from Marseilles, Grimaldi to Ulloa, 26 June 1768, PPC, legajo 174A: fo 32. Milhet traded with Illinois. 14 April 1771, “Widow Milhet vs. Fournier and St. Pé,” *LHQ* 8 (1925): 322. James Julian Coleman, Jr., *Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent : The Spanish-Frenchman of New Orleans* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1980) 35. Note that this Jean Lafitte was not the same man as the pirate who shared his name, although both may have hailed from families in Marseilles.

⁵⁸ Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire*, 130, 221; Winston De Ville and Florence M. Jumonville, “Denis Braud’s Petition to Ulloa: An Addendum to Early Louisiana Imprints,” *LH* 32.3 (Summer, 1991), 311-315; Henry P. Dart, “The Adventures of Denis Braud, The First Printer of Louisiana, 1764-1773,” *LHQ* 14 (1931): 349-60; Porteous, trans., “Documents Covering the Prosecution of Denis Braud, Regidor of the Cabildo, for the Crime of Running away from Louisiana,” *LHQ* 14 (1931): 361-5; Florence M. Jumonville, “Frenchmen at Heart: New Orleans Printers and Their Imprints, 1764-1803,” *LH* 32.3 (Summer, 1991), 279-310. For an overview of the history of printing in New Orleans, see Florence M. Jumonville, *Bibliography of New Orleans Imprints, 1764-1864* (New Orleans, 1989).

⁵⁹ Garic, New Orleans, 9 March 1768, PPC, legajo 109: fo 478-81.

stability relied upon unofficial channels of trade, which if not already illegal would soon become so.

In this era of uncertain imperial belonging, this colonial elite recognized a window to fight the new policy by pitting the French colonial government against the new Spanish governor. They demanded that de LaFrénière examine the decree before it was accepted as law in the colony. After all, Ulloa had not yet taken possession of the colony. Out of his own concern for local peace and stability, Aubry opted for the status quo and agreed that the commercial decree of September 6 would go unenforced. Ulloa's sojourn at La Balize began just after this clash. His removal from the city distanced him from efforts among colonists to circumvent Spanish authority by continuing to practice smuggling.⁶⁰

Merchants also complained of Ulloa's interference in the fur trade, especially of his granting of a monopoly and his attempt to regulate the trade by requiring the licensing of traders. After the Seven Years War, both British and Spanish empires attempted to regulate the Indian trade so as to have better control over the traders living among the Indians.⁶¹ D'Abbadie had granted St. Maxent, Laclède, and Co. a monopoly over the fur trade of the Mississippi Valley in 1764, which prompted the founding of St. Louis.⁶² Competing merchants objected then, and they objected again in 1768 when Ulloa granted the same firm a monopoly over the fur trade at

⁶⁰ Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 67; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 105-7. For other examples of colonial elite response to Bourbon attempts to reduce contraband trade see also Gustavo Palma Murga "Between fidelity and pragmatism : Guatemala's commercial elite responds to Bourbon reforms on trade and contraband" in Jordana Dym and Christophe Belaubre, eds., *Politics, Economy, and Society in Bourbon Central America, 1759-1821* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2007), 75-100.

⁶¹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 95. On the Spanish Empire and regulation of the Indian trade in the late eighteenth century see, Weber, *Barbaros* (2005).

⁶² Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 118; For a recent history of colonial St. Louis see Patricia Cleary, *The World the Flesh, and the Devil: A History of Colonial St. Louis*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2011). For colonial Missouri see also Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), founding of St. Louis, 50-54. He suggests understanding Missouri as a "confluence region" because of graphic significance of the Missouri, Mississippi, and Ohio Rivers to it (xvii-xxi).

Missouri. Unlike many New Orleans merchants, Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent began almost immediately to endear himself to the Spanish administration and became a personal friend of Ulloa, who stood as god-father to St. Maxent's daughter Marie Anne in 1767.⁶³

Merchants perceived Spanish commercial regulations as threatening to contraband networks, especially to familiar avenues that provided access to necessities in short supply like flour. French colonial officials promoted the use of contraband networks to access the commodity. Flour was a commodity nearly always in want in colonial Louisiana. In the years following the partition of the French North American colonies, the trade in flour created economic ties between New Orleans, the British Atlantic seaboard, and the Upper Mississippi Valley. The French had never secured a consistent trade in flour to the Lower Mississippi Valley, and the flour trade between Illinois and New Orleans had been unpredictable at best.⁶⁴ Under Spanish regulation, French ports remained a source for flour for the short term. In late 1766 and early 1767, French ships, ranging in size from 50 to 200 tons, bore flour to the port of New Orleans from Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Martinique, and Cap Français. Their ports of departure reflected the ways that both the networks of the French Atlantic and of the Circum-Caribbean continued to intersect at New Orleans. Vessels from the aforementioned ports were those that registered at La Balize and that bore the appropriate Spanish passport. Illicit trade probably continued undocumented.⁶⁵ During the 1760s and 1770s, British trade networks began to fill the void left by the loss of trade with France and the diminution of trade with Illinois.

⁶³ Brasseur, *Foucault*, 41; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 118. For more on Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent see James Julian Coleman, Jr., *Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent: The Spanish-Frenchman of New Orleans* (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing, 1968), 34-40. St. Maxent's monopoly was interrupted by the tumult of 1768 and 1769 and the revolt of October 1768.

⁶⁴ Carl Ekberg, "The Flour Trade in French Colonial Louisiana," *LH* 37.3 (1996): 261-282.

⁶⁵ Records of La Balize, 1766-1767, PPC, legajo 109: fo 434-435.

Repeated flour shortages during the 1760s revealed the just concern of merchants, colonists, and officials over the supply. The French had long refused to break with their traditional diet, in which wheat bread was an important part.⁶⁶ When a shortage of flour gripped the colony in 1766 and 1767, Aubry wrote in distress and perhaps disgust that he was forced to eat “soup with rice” because of the lack of bread.⁶⁷ French soldiers went on rations that combined flour and rice. As the scarcity worsened, Aubry called it the worst shortage of “flour, rice, and corn” that the colony had endured in the course of a decade.⁶⁸ And though he may have exaggerated the troops were on rations solely of rice by the summer of 1767.⁶⁹

French officials solicited flour from British sources during the flour crisis, an action that bore witness to the dependency of the colony on foreign channels of trade for this commodity. Further, members of the elite collaborated with officials to secure the flour. In 1766, the French merchant Jean Lafitte of New Orleans was commissioned to find a source of flour for the colony. Because of his contacts, he went to Pensacola and New York looking for the precious commodity. He secured the shipment by the *Africa* from New York, which in May of 1767 arrived with 700 quarts of flour, salted meat, and lard.⁷⁰ “I rejoiced much” wrote Foucault, “The arrival of Capitaine [William] Moore is the best news that we could receive in the deplorable circumstances in which we find ourselves.”⁷¹ Moore’s cargo included seed that was transported

⁶⁶ Eckberg, “Flour Trade in French Colonial Louisiana,” 262-3.

⁶⁷ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 9 Dec, 1766, PPC, legajo 187A, np: “de la soupe au ris.”

⁶⁸ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 20 Apr 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.

⁶⁹ Foucault to Ulloa, New Orleans, 12 May 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 4 Apr 1767, PPC, legajo 187: n.p.

⁷⁰ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 9 Dec 1766, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; unsigned letter, Isle Real Catholica, 29 May 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.

⁷¹ Foucault to Ulloa, New Orleans, Apr or June 1767, PPC, legajo 187A : n.p. : “Je m’enrejois beaucoup;” Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 3 June 1767, PPC, legajo 187A : n.p. : “L’arrivée due Capt Moor...est la meilleur nouvelle que nous poussions recevoir dans la deplorable circonstance ou nous nous trouvons.”

to Natchitoches and Opelousas in 1768, and he continued to travel to New Orleans with supplies at least until 1769.⁷²

While Foucault and Aubry were anxious to obtain the flour, they became caught up in a logistical disagreement with Ulloa.⁷³ After taking 250 quarts for the provisioning of troops and colonists relying on rations, who included the incoming and newly settled Acadians, Foucault wanted to allow Lafitte to sell the rest.⁷⁴ Aubrey concurred, telling Ulloa “Misery is always great here.”⁷⁵ During the summer of 1767, Aubry and Foucault reached an agreement with the New York merchant firm Livingston, Randel & Simpson through their New Orleans factors, Lafitte and Captain Moore. In 1769, the firm was still petitioning the Spanish government for payment for the 1200 barrels of flour, 25 barrels of pork, and 25 barrels of beef shipped as part of the contract.⁷⁶

In late 1767, Aubry continued to argue that exceptions be made from policy for the sake of the dire circumstances of the colony. He made the case to Ulloa that British ships arriving from Marseilles and Amsterdam should be allowed “to stop at the quay of the city to sell their merchandise there... as they carry flour, and oil, soap, and some other things absolutely necessary to the colony.”⁷⁷ He also advocated for Jean Durand, a merchant from Martinique

⁷² Loyola to Ulloa, New Orleans, 29 Aug 1768, PPC, legajo 109: fo 295; “CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES. “Inward entries... W. Moore, New Orleans,” 5 Oct 1769, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES “cleared Packet, W. Moore, New Orleans,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 9 Nov 1769.

⁷³ Foucault to Ulloa, New Orleans, Apr or June 1767, PPC, legajo 187A:n.p.; Foucault to Ulloa, New Orleans, 12 May, 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; Ulloa to Foucault, New Orleans, May 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; Foucault to Ulloa 25 May 1767, PPC, legajo 187A:n.p.; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 23 May 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.

⁷⁴ Foucault to Ulloa, New Orleans, Apr or June 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.

⁷⁵ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 23 May 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.: “La misère est toujours grande hicy.”

⁷⁶ Moore even received permission to go to Cuba to petition for payment. Peter Livingston to the Minister of Marine, New York, 13 Mar 1769, AC C13A, reel 49: Fo 25-26; For more on the Livingston family and trade see Cynthia Kierner, “Family Values, Family Business: Work and Kinship in colonial New York,” *MidAmerica* 71.2 (1989): 55-64. For more on commerce and New York, see Cathy Matson, “Damned Scoundrels’ and ‘Libertisme of Trade’: Freedom and Regulation in Colonial New York’s Fur and Grain Trades,” *WMQ* 51.3 (1994): 389-418; Fabel, *The Economy of West Florida*, 87; Bucarelli, 15, July, 1768, Santo Domingo Papers, legajo 2542: fo 59-60.

⁷⁷ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 16 December 1767, PPC, legajo 187, reel A[12].

who traded with Marseilles.⁷⁸ Assessing the New Orleans harbor in February 1768 for Baynton, Wharton & Morgan, Samuel Young noted that among the vessels, “There is five or six from New York. Two from Old France. Three from Holland Some from Carolina & Pensacola.”⁷⁹ With the scarcity of flour prompting French colonial officials to encourage trade with British America, Ulloa was unable to prevent British merchants from trading at New Orleans.

Merchant-planters feared even more in 1768 that the Spanish commercial policies if implemented would stifle the flour trade or remove it from their hands. More flour continued to arrive from New York in the fall of 1768 following another several months of careful rationing. The *Live Oak* arrived from New York with 823 quarts of flour on October 13, 1768, and the very next day, William Rogers arrived with an additional 539 quarts of flour from New York via Pensacola. The cargo of these British vessels also included butter, candles, lard, and beef. The Captain of the *Live Oak*, Thomas Hammond, had visited Spanish ports before, including a trip to Havana in early 1767 in an attempt to receive payment. Communication networks followed upon trade networks. Hammond brought word to residents of the British American colonies of the New Orleans revolt against Ulloa in 1768.⁸⁰

Merchant-planter elites also found themselves in direct conflict with Ulloa over the implementation of the new Spanish regulation of the slave trade. The Superior Council took aim at the policy as detrimental to the economic development of the colony because it restricted the trade only to Spanish avenues, which placed the trade in the hands of British slave traders rather than members of the elite, like LaFrénière. Additionally, they challenged what they interpreted

⁷⁸ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 9 Dec 1766, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; Grimaldi to Ulloa, 26 June 1768, PPC, legajo 174A: fo 32.

⁷⁹ Samuel Young to Morgan, New Orleans, 18 Feb 1768, BWM, roll 5: frame 1172-4.

⁸⁰ New Orleans, 13 Oct, 1768, PPC, legajo 109: fo 466; New Orleans, 14 Oct 1768, PPC, legajo 109: fo 467; “New York, December 26,” 5 Jan 1769, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (accessed 8/8/2011); “Philadelphia,” 10 Aug 1769, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (accessed 8/8/2011).

to be Ulloa's interference in slave owners' dominion over their slaves, characterizing him as a man opposed to the constructs and practices of the slave society particular to Louisiana.⁸¹

Ulloa saw the increase in slave ownership and in the number of slaves employed in Louisiana fields as a way to advance Louisiana's incorporation into the Spanish Empire. Moreover, the development of slave society along the Mississippi River fit with Ulloa's designs to strengthen colonial presence along the river. In May 1766, the very month he arrived in Louisiana, he had proposed that "[t]o ensure [Acadian] survival," by providing "each family with a [slave], a pair of oxen, and the necessary tools to cultivate the land."⁸² "If His Majesty believes that the colony may be commercially valuable to his royal treasury," Ulloa wrote to Grimaldi, "the increasing number of Acadians that may come... are not capable of cultivating indigo or tobacco unless they have sufficient Negroes to do so." Ulloa tied export crops to Louisiana's becoming "commercially valuable," and slaves to their cultivation.⁸³

The slave trade to Louisiana under France had persisted only on a very small scale through smuggling conducted primarily by colonial elite. The last officially sanctioned slave ship from the Company of the Indies arrived at the colony in 1743.⁸⁴ Inventories of plantations during the 1760 reflect the African origins of older slaves, whereas the names of younger slaves reflect creolization and baptism in Louisiana. For example, in 1764, Quoycon age 60 and Singalle age 70, slaves of the Macarty plantation, lived alongside slaves with Christian names such as François and Charlotte.⁸⁵ From time to time colonists had employed contacts in places such as Saint Domingue to acquire new slaves. British traders had also probably visited the

⁸¹ The *Siete Partidas* not introduced until O'Reilly, 1770, see Chapter 2.

⁸² Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 9 May 1766 in in *QPL*, 59.

⁸³ Ulloa to Grimaldi, September 29, 1766, in in *QPL*, 77-79.

⁸⁴ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 160, 396. A British slave ship arrived in 1758 with 120 slaves.

⁸⁵ Inventory, 26 Mar 1764, Macarty John, Family Papers, 1764-1936, folder 1.1, Hill Memorial Library, LSU.

colony. Among slaves prosecuted during the 1760s, several identified themselves as African not as Creole, thus pointing to a contraband slave trade that forced these slaves and others who may have escaped the historical record to migrate from the Antilles and from Africa to Louisiana in the years prior to the partition.⁸⁶ Inventories of estates also reveal a few younger slaves of African origin. After the violent death of Jean Baptiste LeBreton in 1771, the inventory of his property identified fifteen year old Rosete as from the Congo and thirty year old Juana as from Guinea.⁸⁷ The contraband avenues of slave trading conflicted with the letter of Spanish policy.

It was fitting that the legal slave trade should escalate under Ulloa's watch. Interestingly, Ulloa recognized that at least during these early years as a Spanish colony, Louisiana would necessarily find sources for slaves outside of imperially accepted channels. In 1766, for example, a Frenchman from Nantes received permission to sell as many as five hundred slaves in Louisiana. Guillermo Musculus, an Alsatian, also sold about sixty slaves transported on a British ship from Barbados.⁸⁸ In 1767, Ulloa received a letter from Robert Ross, a Scot who with his three brothers owned land in British West Florida and traded slaves out of Jamaica: "Some of the principal merchants in the slave trade at Jamaica, having advised me to inquire whither my Negroes, and what number of them, would be wanted at New Orleans on the establishment of the Spanish government and expressing at the same time a desire to contract for the supply of them." Ross offered to send slaves to his agent at Pensacola "in the space of three

⁸⁶ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 39; Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon*, 89-90.

⁸⁷ "Succession of Juan Baptista (Cezaire) LeBreton, Inventory and Valuation of His Estate," 18 July 1771, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 8 (1925):512-17. For discussion of the incident surrounding the death of LeBreton, see also Laura Porteous, "Official Investigation of the Murder of Juan Baptiste Cezaire LeBreton on the Night of May 31, 1771, Including the Trial, Condemnation and Execution of the Principals and the Punishment of the Accessories Before the Fact," *LHQ* 8 (1925): 5-22. LeBreton's widow Marie Jeanne Macarty married in 1777 Maurice Conway, the nephew of O'Reilly who remained in Louisiana after his uncle left. Her brother was the Jean Baptiste Macarty, merchant in New Orleans. Le Breton was related through his mother to LaFrénère, another example of the close kinship relations that existed in Lower Louisiana during this period.

⁸⁸ Gilbert C. Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 40.

months after receipt of your letter.”⁸⁹ Ulloa suggested the importation of Jamaican slaves to his superiors as a way to expand the colonial economy.⁹⁰

Although Ulloa might propose and grant permission for slave trade activities in New Orleans that defied policy, he made it clear by example that the colonists might not circumvent such restrictions without his permission when he clamped down on a network of slave-traders that involved members of the Superior Council. Pierre Cadis, a fifty six year old native of Bordeaux, transported 24 “negres bruts” originating in Guinea to Louisiana by way of Martinique in 1767. Cadis and his business partner Antoine Leblanc passed the slaves on to Pierre Caresse and Joseph Villeré who then sent the slaves to Pointe Coupée. This trade was illegal both by Spanish law and by decree of the Superior Council. Both forbade trade with Martinique out of concern that the slaves coming from Martinique might spread revolt to the colony. Additionally, LaFrénère, Villeré’s brother-in-law, was an agent for Caresse and Villeré in this operation. Learning of this particular case of smuggling, Ulloa demanded that the slaves be returned to New Orleans and the incident investigated further. Cadis complained that the affair had cost all of the merchants involved a good deal of money and had resulted in the death of a slave woman. Ulloa permitted some of the slaves to remain but expelled those deemed dangerous, perhaps those with scars that indicated crimes and disobedience.⁹¹ Ulloa’s enforcement of Spanish commercial policy in this particular case challenged and angered the merchant-planters, and it also set a precedent for that enforcement in general in Louisiana.

⁸⁹ Robert Ross to Ulloa, 29 April 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.

⁹⁰ Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 40; Jean Pierre LeGlaunec, “Slave Migrations in Spanish and Early American Louisiana: New Sources and New Estimates,” *LH* 46.2 (2005): 187.

⁹¹ Extracts of the Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 39-40; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 157n; Charles Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, vol. 2 (New Orleans: A. Hawkins, 1885), 200; Brasseur, *Foucault*, 63-4.

Slave owners also resented Ulloa's interference in the slave system. Sieur Jean Francois Raquet, a 43 year old officer in the militia, Jacques Jacquelin, a New Orleans resident, and René Jean Gabriel Fazende, a New Orleans native, all complained that Ulloa had reprimanded them for whipping slaves inside of the city of New Orleans in close enough proximity to the gubernatorial lodgings that the cries of the slaves offended Ulloa's wife.⁹² Ulloa's opponents quickly construed these incidents as representative of Ulloa's lack of understanding of the local slave society and as examples of his efforts to undermine the authority of slave owners. It is important to note that Ulloa had left the Code Noir of Louisiana mostly untouched. And in May 1766, he actually affirmed many of its laws, including those that legislated whipping as an appropriate punishment for slaves disobedient to their masters, bans on slaves carrying weapons except for occasions when they carried permits from their owners to hunt, and limits on the congregation of slaves of different masters.⁹³ Ulloa argued that "the inhabitants of that colony live in a kind of independence that is so general that when one is on his own property he looks upon himself as absolute lord, without subjection to nor obedience to the one in authority."⁹⁴ Slave owners were angered that the Spanish governor might attempt to assert authority that negated their own ability to respond to slave resistance.

Ulloa frequently came into conflict with the colonial elite. Merchant-planters were concerned that Spanish policies would cut them off from their trade connections. The enforcement of the commercial policy as it pertained to the slave trade in particular struck a chord among the elite who understood Ulloa as an opponent to the Louisiana's slave system.

⁹² Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147.

⁹³ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 38-9.

⁹⁴ As quoted in R.E. Chandler, "Ulloa's Account of the 1768 Revolt," *LH* 27 (1986), 411.

The conflict was a power struggle, in which the elite voiced concerns shared by many colonists regarding the ability and the interest of Louisiana to bend to Spain's commercial policies.

Fear of economic ruin also resonated among the colonists living on the German Coast. Residents of the German Coast were mostly small farmers living along the Mississippi above New Orleans in a community founded in the 1720s by colonists recruited from Alsace, Switzerland, and German-speaking principalities. They shared many of the frustrations of the merchant-planter elite with regard to the Spanish policies imposed upon Louisiana, especially the concern over the effects of the commercial regulations. The German Coast became a source of grain and produce for the colony and by the 1760s boasted considerable livestock holdings. Of all the colonists on the Lower Mississippi at the time of partition, residents of the German Coast were perhaps in the best economic situation.⁹⁵

As with the merchant-planter elite, the German Coast residents regarded the commercial policies of Ulloa as vehicles of certain financial ruin that would unravel their way of life. Like most colonists, those on the German Coast were very much in debt. As relatively prosperous colonists, German Coast farmers felt threatened by the commercial decrees designed to end the engagement of Louisiana colonists in French and British markets. These networks had long provided markets to export the indigo, tobacco, cotton, and lumber that farmers produced.⁹⁶ Colonists feared that if trade were limited to the licit channels of the Spanish Empire, then the traditional exports of the colony would have no market. The colonists also feared that their crops could not compete with the quality of those products from other Spanish colonies or even to the

⁹⁵ Reinhart Kondert "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768," *LH* 26 (1985): 386-8; René Le Conte and Glenn R. Conrad, "The Germans in Louisiana in the Eighteenth Century," *LH* 8.1 (Winter, 1967), 67-84; for a more complete treatment of the German Coast see also J. Hanno Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana and the Creoles of German Descent* (Philadelphia: American Germanic Press, 1909), and for discussion of continued German immigration to Louisiana through the eighteenth century see Deiler, "The System of Redemption in the State of Louisiana," *LHQ* 12 (1929): 426-460.

⁹⁶ Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 73.

few French ports to which the 1766 decree restricted them. German Coast farmers and elite alike argued that they had an economic niche to fill within the French Atlantic, not in the Iberian.⁹⁷

German Coast farmers also expressed concern about Ulloa's sincerity in payment of his debts to them. As the Acadians arrived in Louisiana, Ulloa used grain from the German Coast to feed the new settlers until they were self-sufficient. Although payments by colonial governments especially in frontier circumstances were not always prompt, the dire financial straits and the panic beginning to take hold among German Coast residents probably exacerbated their response to the outstanding payment.⁹⁸

The discontent of the colonists settled on the Mississippi was common knowledge.⁹⁹ German Coast residents spoke with British colonists about the possibility of relocating to British West Florida. As early as the summer of 1766, one traveler wrote General Taylor, the commanding general of West Florida at the time, "I have this morning spoke to one of the Germans, he tells me their settlements are very extensive, and they exceed 500 familys, who on Encouragement from the English would Gladly settle on the English side."¹⁰⁰

In contrast to the commercial tension between the elite and the German Coast farmers and the Spanish regime, the conflict that developed between the Acadians and the Spanish administration concerned Ulloa's settlement policy. Ulloa did not anticipate that this diaspora people seeking a new homeland would resist the implementation of his forced settlement policy as it included what Spain considered generous grants of land, supplies, and food until the new colonists could subsist off of their own farms. But Acadian interests diverged from Ulloa's

⁹⁷ Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, vol. 2, 370-1.

⁹⁸ Kondert "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768," 385.

⁹⁹ Haldimand to Gage, Pensacola, 31 April 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 35-40, David Library of the American Revolution.

¹⁰⁰ James Noble to Taylor, 30 June 1766, Haldimand Papers, Reel 5: fo 15, quotation. A migration of Germans to West Florida appears in Governor Browne's correspondence a few years later, Browne to Hillsborough, 29 Aug 1769, West Florida Papers, reel 2: fo 377-387, David Library.

goals. The governor thought that the grateful Acadians would also make excellent settler-militia for the common border with British West Florida because their experiences in Acadia and in the Grand Dérangement would predispose them to hostility towards the British and the Indians alike. Unfortunately for Ulloa, not only did the Acadians fully intend to settle alongside kin already established in Louisiana, they openly resisted the forced settlement.¹⁰¹

Ulloa actively promoted Acadian immigration to Louisiana with support from his superior Grimaldi.¹⁰² In the years following the Grand Dérangement, Acadians had remained in contact with their families and communities dispersed throughout the Atlantic World, as indicated by their networks of correspondence that stretched to the Atlantic Seaboard and to France.¹⁰³ Responding to encouragement from Acadians settled in Louisiana, several hundred more arrived from Pennsylvania and Maryland between 1766 and 1770.¹⁰⁴ Reflecting Spain's relative flexibility in its initial approach to integrating Louisiana into its colonial system, Louisiana differed from traditional Spanish approaches to colonization in that Spain was willing

¹⁰¹ Loyola to Ulla, New Orleans, 8 Feb 1768, PPC, legajo 109, trans. Angelita Garcia Alonzo. The supplying of the Acadians set a precedent within the colony for future waves of migrants. Many cited it and asked for similar consideration from the Spanish government in exchange for settling in Louisiana as loyal subjects.

¹⁰² Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, in in *QPL*, 67; Grimaldi to Ulloa, Aranjuez, 27 May 1767, in in *QPL*, 88; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 3, June 1767 in in *QPL*, 90. It is also important to note that the Acadians who had been arriving in Louisiana since 1764 had been settling at St. James as well as in the western district of the Attakapas.

¹⁰³ The "Grand Dérangement" is the term used for the British expulsion of the Acadians from what is now Nova Scotia from 1755-1763. See also, John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2005); Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (New York: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1973); Naomi E.S. Griffiths, "Acadian Identity: The Creation and Recreation of Community," *Dalhousie Review* 73. 3 (1993). Jerningham to Ulloa, St. Mary's County, MD, 28 November 1767, Santo Domingo Papers legajo 2542: 428-29; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 3 June 1767, in *QPL*, 89; Jean Francois Mouhot, "Une Ultime Revenante? Lettre de Jean Baptiste Semer de La Nouvelle Orleans," *Acadiensis* 34 (2005): 124-129; Carl A. Brasseaux, "A New Acadia; Acadian Migration to South Louisiana 1764-1803," *Acadiensis* 15.1 (1985): 29. According to Brasseaux, the Acadians communicated with each other via a "steady flow of correspondence that crossed the Atlantic in the 1760s, 1770s, and 1780s." Mouhot has found some such correspondence in the French Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 104.

to foster non-Spanish immigration to the colony.¹⁰⁵ The settlement of Louisiana by non-Spanish migrants would be integral to Spain's border defense policies over the next several decades.

Acadians envisioned settlement in Louisiana among kin-based groups from whom they had been separated, but Ulloa did not take this into consideration when designing settlement plans. While Aubry and Foucault had worked with Acadian leaders to facilitate kinship-based settlement on land of Acadian choosing, Ulloa did not work to further Acadian goals to reestablish their communities. Conflict between Acadians and colonial officials ensued.¹⁰⁶

Ulloa directed new colonists to Fort St. Gabriel d'Iberville at Manchac in July 1767 and Fort St. Louis de Natchez on the west bank of the Mississippi in February 1768.¹⁰⁷ The Acadians resisted being settled in both places. After 210 Acadians arrived from Maryland in July of 1767, Ulloa noted that "we had all of the trouble in the world to subject them to our arrangements," namely to force them to settle near Fort St. Gabriel rather than with relatives already settled in closer proximity to New Orleans at St. James.¹⁰⁸ According to Ulloa, only the threat of deportation could persuade these Acadians to accept settlement at Fort St. Gabriel. Acadian resistance to travel to Fort St. Louis de Natchez was even greater. This group of about 150 Acadians, also sailing from Maryland, arrived in New Orleans on February 4, 1768. Like the Acadians who preceded them, they received rations and assistance from Spanish colonial

¹⁰⁵ Kinnaird, "introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 1, xix; John Francis Bannon, SJ, "The Spaniards in the Mississippi Valley: An Introduction," in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804*, ed., John Francis McDermott (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974). Ulloa also communicated with a group of British Catholics in Maryland who were considering relocating to Spanish Louisiana: Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 11 Feb 1768, Santo Domingo Papers, legajo 2542: 425-27; Jerningham to Ulloa, St. Mary's County, MD, 14 Dec, 1767, Santo Domingo Papers, legajo 2542: 428; Jerningham to Ulloa, St. Mary's County, MD, 28 November 1767, Santo Domingo Papers legajo 2542: 428-29.

¹⁰⁶ Carl A. Brasseaux, "A New Acadia; Acadian Migration to South Louisiana 1764-1803," *Acadiensis* 15.1 (1985): 126-7.

¹⁰⁷ Ulloa to Grimaldi, 23 July 1767, in *QPL*, 92; Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 78, 81.

¹⁰⁸ Piernas to Ulloa, St. Louis, 6 June 1767, in *QPL*, 91; Carl A. Brasseaux, *New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 78, 81; Chandler, "The St. Gabriel Acadians: the First Five Months," *LH* 21 (1980): 287.

officials.¹⁰⁹ The Acadians en route to St. Louis de Natchez were themselves a kin-based group hoping to re-congregate with extended family already separated between the St. James and St. Gabriel posts. When the boats stopped at St. James de Cabahannocé en route to Natchez, the Acadians became better informed about their proposed destination, and began to lobby for permission to settle at St. James or at St. Gabriel with kin.¹¹⁰ The Spanish officer leading the party, Pedro Piernas, threatened the group with deportation should they challenge the settlement plans dictated for them.¹¹¹ Over the course of the voyage, several families attempted to leave the expedition at St. Gabriel.¹¹² In an attempt to counteract Acadian attitude towards the settlement sites, Ulloa gave his officials instructions to remind the Acadians of “the great advantages afforded by settlement in this colony.” Nevertheless, the Acadians at St. Louis de Natchez persisted for several years in decrying the hazards of the frontier where they were sent.¹¹³

Ulloa believed that the Acadians were an ideal population to place near British West Florida because of the turbulent history of Acadian-British relations.¹¹⁴ However, the hostilities experienced at the hands of the British did not preclude the Acadians from interacting with the British traders and with the Indians, who provided them access to “meat, grease, lard, etc.”¹¹⁵ Contraband trade with British merchants was not new to the Acadians. In Acadia, they had

¹⁰⁹ Loyola to Ulloa, New Orleans, 8 February 1768, PPC, legajo 109, reel 1; Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 78, 81; Chandler, “Odyssey Continued: Acadians Arrive at Natchez,” *LH* 19 (1978), 447.

¹¹⁰ Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 81-2, 87.

¹¹¹ Piernas to Ulloa, St Louis, 1768, in in *QPL*, 110.

¹¹² Piernas to Ulloa, Pointe Coupée, 8 March 1768, in in *QPL*, 114.

¹¹³ Verret to Ulloa, Cabahannocé, 26 March 1768, in in *QPL* 110; Piernas to Ulloa, St. Louis, 27 March 1768, in in *QPL*, 116-20, quotation 116; Land Distribution at San Luis de Natchez, in in *QPL*, 134. Use of Petitions was important to Acadian resistance and represented continuity as their preferred form for addressing colonial governments as they had in Acadie at least since the early eighteenth century. See Faragher, *Great and Noble Scheme*, 146-7, 154, 168, 176-8, 252-54, 275, 250-3; Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (New York: York: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1973), 23, 27, 40-44.

¹¹⁴ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, in in *QPL*, 67.

¹¹⁵ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 27 March 1768, in in *QPL*, 118.

traded with the British of Massachusetts; now in Louisiana, with the British of West Florida.¹¹⁶ Thus, the Acadians, a people who had developed in an imperial borderland, began to operate adeptly in the imperial borderland of Louisiana, undermining Spanish defense interests in turn. While Ulloa responded with instructions to the commandants of the various posts that trade between Spain and England was not sanctioned, official efforts did little to prohibit Acadians along the Mississippi from taking advantage of opportunities for trade.¹¹⁷ The Acadian conflicts with Spanish officials were different than those of the elite and German Coast farmers. The contraband trade that the Acadians participated in and that undercut Spanish efforts to enforce the Mississippi as a border involved different networks than the circum-Caribbean and French Atlantic ones.

Acadian-Indian relations also differed from Ulloa's vision. Ulloa anticipated that Acadians, eager for land grants, would simply settle according to his dictates and embrace loyalty to Spain in return for its generosity. However, Ulloa's strategizing had not accounted for the possibility of Acadian resistance, even though Fort St. Gabriel and Fort St. Louis de Natchez were both posts exposed to Indian conflict. Acadians sent to settle at these outposts originated from an area of British Nova Scotia that had often been subject to raids by the French and Micmac Indians.¹¹⁸ As victims of inter-colonial violence, these Acadian families sought to avoid settlement under similarly hazardous conditions.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 131; Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005), 99, 312, 337; Faragher, *Great and Noble Scheme*, 53-5.

¹¹⁷ Piernas to Ulloa, San Louis, 3 Sept 1768, in in *QPL*, 153. John Fitzpatrick to Patrick Murphy, Manchac, 26 Dec 1773, in Margaret Fisher Dalrymple, ed. *The Merchant of Manchac*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 166.

¹¹⁸ Faragher, *Great and Noble Scheme*, xxiv-xxvii, 218-220; Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 179-80.

¹¹⁹ Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 184; Brasseaux, *New Acadia* 179-80; Egerton, Douglas R., Alison Games, Jane G. Landers, Kris Lane, Donald R. Wright, *The Atlantic World, 1400-1888* (Harlan Davidson, 2007), 297.

Acadians at St. Louis de Natchez and St. Gabriel rightly characterized their settlements as exposed to frequent contact and occasional conflict with Indian groups. At Fort St. Gabriel, commandant José de Orieta noted that various Indian groups, such as the Biloxis and the Choctaws, frequented the post for gifts, food, and cloth. He indicated further that the Indians told him that the fort was their land.¹²⁰ The Alibamons and Houmas were also in close proximity.¹²¹ The British traded with these Indians, providing them with brandy in particular. After visiting British traders, they arrived at the St. Gabriel post intoxicated.¹²² So many different local Indians visited St. Gabriel that Ulloa and Aubry were compelled to find an interpreter who could speak several Indian languages.¹²³ Ulloa's instructions to Pedro Piernas, the commandant at Fort St. Louis de Natchez, included a provision that the settlers learn how to defend themselves against Indian attack. Indian raids were a strong enough possibility that the settlements along the Mississippi River were provided cannons, which they could use to signal danger of such an attack.¹²⁴ When Piernas issued land grants to the Acadians in May 1768, he provided them with instructions on the meaning of different cannon and flag signals, where to go "in the event of an Indian raid," and how to conduct themselves with the Indians "to ensure their own security."¹²⁵ Along the Mississippi River, the friction between Acadian-Indian undermined colonial-Indian alliances, which the Spanish viewed as crucial to any success of the defense strategy. In addition, exposure to Indian aggression gave the Acadians more reason to protest

¹²⁰ Chandler, "The St. Gabriel Acadians," 128.

¹²¹ Clark, *New Orleans*, 164. When the French arrived in the Lower Mississippi, the Houmas were living at Portage de la Croix. When the Tunicas migrated south to that place, they displaced the Houmas who resettled between the Lower River and the Atchafalaya. Jeffrey P. Brain, *Tunica Archaeology* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1988), 284.

¹²² Chandler, "The St. Gabriel Acadians," 288.

¹²³ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 9 March 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.

¹²⁴ R.E. Chandler, "Odyssey Continued: Acadians Arrive at Natchez," *LH* 19 (1978): 449; Judice to Ulloa, Cabahannocé, 18 Nov 1767, in in *QPL*, 106.

¹²⁵ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 29 May 1768, in in *QPL*, 140.

Ulloa's settlement plan. The financial constraints that Ulloa faced continued to worsen and his attitude toward the Acadians began to shift. Previously lauding the Acadians for their industry, he began to regret the colony's expenditure on the Acadian settlements "which are dependent upon them and must be protected from the attacks they might suffer from the Indians."¹²⁶ As a borderland people transplanted to another borderland, the Acadians proved themselves unwilling to conform to Spanish imperial defense plans.

The regional instability exacerbated by shifting European empires affected Indians of the Lower Mississippi as well. The Spanish and British competed for Indian allies at the same time as the Choctaws and Creeks entered into conflict with one another and as smaller Indian groups tried to negotiate life amidst the new geopolitical divisions imposed upon the Lower Mississippi Valley. Although he initially implemented policies in the same vein as French Indian policy, financial strains gave Ulloa cause to question the prudence of the policy.

Trade as a form of intercultural relations was central to Indian, British, and Spanish understanding of what diplomacy would be in the Lower Mississippi Valley in the decades that followed the Seven Years War.¹²⁷ Here as in other regions, "in their negotiations, Indians and Europeans alike sought to control the culture of diplomacy and trade and to define themselves and others in ways that forwarded their own interests."¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 6 Oct 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 74.

¹²⁷ From the early 1990s forward, American historians have considered trade as an important milieu of social and cultural as well as economic exchange. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves* (1992); Kathleen A. DuVal. *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). For discussion of trade as connected with slaving and gender in Spanish New Mexico see James F. Brooks, *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2002). This and other studies privilege women in their analysis. See also, Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007).

¹²⁸ Duval, *Native Ground*, 4.

British and Spanish officials alike turned to experienced French traders as they tried to win the allegiance of Indians throughout the Lower Mississippi.¹²⁹ Soon, both British and Spanish officials became disgruntled that these same traders engaged in trade across the imperial border. To the traders and Indians, this was an old practice. Now that a border ran through the region, the old practice bespoke unwillingness to cooperate with imperial mandate.

As the Spanish and British agents vied for Indian loyalty in the region, the upheaval of Indian groups and colonists alike, many of whom were in the process of relocating after the Seven Years War, rendered relations between colonists and Indians became increasingly tense. The close proximity of the British enemy across the river and the competition among the British and Spanish for Indian allies served to reinforce Acadian anxieties along the emerging militarized border. The British at Fort Panmure were attempting to build an alliance with both the Choctaws and Chickasaws. This effort at alliance-building was worrisome as the Choctaws had been the most consistent powerful Indian ally of French Louisiana. Ulloa recognized the power that the Choctaws wielded: “This is a tribe which could destroy various settlements of the colony.”¹³⁰ Tensions emerged between various Indian groups and Acadians at St. James and Ascension where both Indians and settlers lived in trepidation of the Creeks who threatened the *petites nations*.¹³¹ Meanwhile, the Houmas and the Taensas became concerned that expansion of Acadian settlements would jeopardize their own villages and displace them. The recent migration of Alibamons to lands near the Houmas also may have made the group more sensitive

¹²⁹ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 124-30; Robert R. Rea and Milo B Howard, Jr., ed. and trans., *Mémoire Justicatif, Indian Diplomacy in British West Florida, 1763-1765* (University of Alabama Press, 1965); Montant de Montberault to Ulloa, March 1766, PPC, legajo 187 A, n.p.; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 1 June, 1767, PPC, legajo 187A, n.p.

¹³⁰ Governmental Expenses, New Orleans, 1767, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 18.

¹³¹ Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 182. St. James de Cabahannocé, was sometimes referred to as various derivatives of that name or as the “First Acadian Coast.” Ascension was also called the “Second Acadian Coast.” Acadians who settled here arrived in Louisiana before Ulloa instituted his settlement policy.

to encroachment on its territory.¹³² After receiving complaints from the Taensas then at Cabahannocé, Ulloa to beseech Verret to tell colonists “not to harass them in any way and on the contrary, to be well disposed toward them.”¹³³

In his efforts to narrow opportunity for contraband and clandestine exchange, Ulloa inadvertently stirred up Indian protest. He aspired to reduce the number of entries to the port of New Orleans to one entry and to eliminate trade along the bayous of the Lower Mississippi Valley, a dream that had little hope of full or even marginal success. Ever the arbiter among conflicting parties, Aubry warned Ulloa of the danger that his plans posed to Indian relations in early 1767. Accustomed to traveling the region’s waterways, the Choctaws, Pascagoulas, Biloxis and other groups living near the lakes expressed anger that their access to these bodies of water was threatened. Called by one Frenchman “the people of the pirogue,” indicating the facility and frequency with which their lifestyle encouraged them to use the small boats, the *petites nations* supplied New Orleans with meat from their hunting.¹³⁴ The waterways were essential to the local market, to transportation, and to communication. Access to them was “a necessary evil” according to Aubry.¹³⁵

To the consternation of colonial officials, British and Spanish alike, Indians and traders persisted in their traditional navigation of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Making use of such

¹³² Ibid., 181-2; Carl A. Brasseaux, “Acadian Life in the Lafourche Country,” in *The Lafourche Country*, ed. Philip Uzee, (Thibodeaux, LA: Lafourche Heritage Society, Inc., 1985): 37; Ulloa to Judice, New Orleans, 19 Nov 1767, PPC, legajo 189A, Reel 1[12]; Fabel, *Colonial Challenges*, 91.

¹³³ Ulloa to Judice, New Orleans, 19 Nov 1767, PPC, legajo 189A, reel 1[12].

¹³⁴ D’Abbadie, New Orleans, 10 Jan 1764, AC C13A, reel 44: fo 21-33. Interestingly, in British cartography, the former site of the Taensas and the Biloxis appear on the map drawn up under John Stuart’s direction published in 1775, Joseph Purcell, “A Map of the Southern Indian District of North America, Compiled under the Direction of John Stuart His Majesty’s Superintendent of Indian Affairs,” Ayer Collection, MS Map 228, Newberry Library.

¹³⁵ Aubry to Ulloa, 21 Feb 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.: “un mal necessaire.” Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 130-1, 165, 168; LeGautrais to Haldimand, 1771, Haldimand Papers, reel 26: 274-76, quotation: LeGautrais wrote “ces petites nasions sont des gans de pirogues.” For another discussion of the *petites nations*, see chapter 3, “The Small Tribes Challenged,” in Robin Fabel, *Colonial Challenges*, 25-42.

mobility now took on the added character of transgressing the international boundary. Like the Spanish, British officials considered ways to counter such mobility. The superintendent of Indians complained

that the Traders from New Orleans find their way amongst the Chactaws of the six villages by the River of Pearls which falls into Lake ponchartrain; and by the Pascagoulas and has wrote to Colonel Taylor about having a Post at Pascagoulas but the Colonel thinks a Post would answer better at a place called Tangipahoh on the East Side of Lake Ponchartrain...Perhaps some armed boats to seize the French traders and their merchandize would be the best means to prevent their coming into his Majesty's Territory.¹³⁶

Taylor did establish a post at Tangipahoa, meant to preempt British traders who were bringing pelts to New Orleans and to prevent the inhabitants near Lake Ponchartrain from peddling their produce.¹³⁷ The British blamed French traders for encouraging the Choctaws living in the Six Towns to kill the livestock of British settlers moving into the area rather than recognizing the acts as a form of Choctaw opposition to British presence.¹³⁸ According to General Gage, French traders and hunters living among the Indians to the east of the Mississippi incited mischief and violence.¹³⁹ For example, the Indians living along the lakes knew the Frenchman Henri DuPlanty well. The Indian commissioner for British West Florida, Charles Stuart, complained that DuPlanty "can cause us as much pain by his speech as by the quantity of drink that he gives them."¹⁴⁰ In spite of British and Spanish imperial policy and efforts, French traders and blacks from the Lower Mississippi continued to travel the Mississippi and its tributaries in search of game, which often meant trespassing in British territory.¹⁴¹ The traders traveled the Mississippi

¹³⁶ Gage to Haldimand, New York, 26 April 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: 26-30.

¹³⁷ Haldimand to Gage, Pensacola, 5 Aug 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 100.

¹³⁸ Haldimand to Gage, Pensacola, 25 Feb 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 190-2.

¹³⁹ Gage to Haldimand, New York, 10 Dec 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 65.

¹⁴⁰ Charles Stuart to Haldimand, Mobile, 5 Oct 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 5: fo 249-50: "Il est beaucoup connue des sauvages et fort capable de nous donner de la paine tant par ses discours que par la quantité de boisson qu'il leurs donne." Fraser to Haldimand, Fort Bute, 12 July 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 25: fo 305-308.

¹⁴¹ Haldimand to Gage, New York, 30 Oct 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 126; George Morgan, 29 Nov 1766 and 7 Dec 1766, in Journal 1766 in Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, Historic Society of Pennsylvania.

as far as the Ohio to hunt buffalo and bear, which they salted and transported to New Orleans with skins and tallow aboard their pirogues.¹⁴² Try to impose an imperial border as they might, Spanish and British officials found their efforts undermined by the borderland practices that still tied the region together.¹⁴³

Although Ulloa smoked the calumet with Indian groups during his tour of Lower Louisiana in 1766 and began the distribution of gifts, his concern over colonial finances influenced his thoughts about Indian policy.¹⁴⁴ Much as awareness of the financial constraints contributed to Ulloa's attempts to reduce support to the Acadians, this awareness also prompted Ulloa to consider the expense of gift distribution inefficient.¹⁴⁵ In this too, Aubry counseled against acting in a way that conflicted with long-held practices in the Lower Mississippi Valley during these turbulent years. Ulloa's inability to continue funding gifts to the Indians undermined Spanish interests in gaining Indian allies, so crucial to securing a foothold in the region.

By 1768, Choctaws, Tunicas, and the Biloxis, Chahtos, and Mobilians living at Lake Maurepas and along the Amite allied with the British. All of these groups welcomed West Florida governor Montfort Browne with the calumet during his tour of the Mississippi. The Tunica chief Perruquier offered his daughter to Browne in marriage. The governor declined because the girl was so young. This offer of marriage into his family indicates Perruquier's intent to cement a permanent alliance with the British according to the terms of Tunica custom.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² George Morgan, 24 Nov 1766 and 8 Dec 1766, in Journal 1766 in Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP.

¹⁴³ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 121.

¹⁴⁴ Ian W. Brown, "The Calumet Ceremony in the Southeast as Observed Archaeologically," in *Powhatan's Mantle*, 371-420.

¹⁴⁵ Aubry to Ulloa, 16 Nov 1766, New Orleans, PPC, legajo 187A, n.p.; Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 4 Aug 1768, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 61-2.

¹⁴⁶ Daniel Rea, Fort Panmure, 16 March 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 25: 134-6; Kirkman to Haldimand, Fort Bute, 7 Apr 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 8: 97; James Lovell to Haldimand, Fort Panmure, 6 May 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 25: 273; Fraser to Haldimand, New Orleans, 29 June 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 25: 293-5; Montfort

Like other groups, the Indians struggled to negotiate their relationship with the Spanish Empire. Unlike other groups, the Indians were at greater liberty because of their recognized status as nations apart from European empires. The ability and facility with which Indians transgressed the new international boundary distressed Spanish and British officials alike.

Runaway slaves challenged both the old colonial regime and the emerging Spanish regime, and the proximity of British and Spanish empires posed a new opportunity for slaves of each slave society to cross the river and to seek freedom. As uncertainty gripped the Lower Mississippi and as rumor of slave conspiracies in the Caribbean circulated, marronage and petty theft took on a connotation of greater deviance than they had previously. For most of the French period, *petit marronage* was a common act of resistance largely tolerated by the society of the Lower Mississippi Valley. When slaves left their masters and became maroons, they often engaged in acts of theft or banditry. However, tales of revolts and conspiracy in Martinique and Saint Domingue bred an atmosphere of fear. During the 1750s in Saint Domingue, the maroon leader Mackandal was rumored to have inspired maroons and slaves to poison their masters. Perhaps these stories resonated in Louisiana where a large band of maroon raiders had become such a threat to colonial order that the governor directed French troops against them in 1748. During the 1750s, the colonial elite and slave owners sought stronger penalties for what had been treated largely as insignificant crimes. In 1764, the Superior Council banned the importation of slaves from Saint Domingue and decreed harsher penalties for theft. Once LaFrénière became attorney general in 1763, he took it upon himself to make examples of maroons and of slaves

Browne, Pensacola, 6 Jul 1768, WFLP, reel 2: 1-15; Fabel, *Colonial Challenges*, 96, 100-3. It is interesting to note that the Tunica language(s), now extinct, were isolates, unrelated to the other language families of the Lower Mississippi Valley. For more on Tunica history and archaeological evidence for their location and migration see Michael P. Hoffman, "Protohistoric Tunican Indians in Arkansas," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 51. 1 (Spring, 1992): 30-53. Brain suggests that Perruquier may have been an Ofogoula who shared leadership among the Tunicas at a time when his village lived with the Tunicas. The Tunicas usually had two chiefs, one who concerned himself with war and the other with civil affairs. Brain, *Tunica Archaeology*, 305.

being tried for crimes.¹⁴⁷ For example, he prosecuted fourteen slaves who fled a plantation just west of New Orleans in 1764 after receiving brutal treatment from the overseer.¹⁴⁸

Slaves used the accessibility of the international boundary in order to pursue freedom.¹⁴⁹ In 1766, a group of runaway slaves from Louisiana were caught together near Mobile. Runaways from West Florida included a slave of Montfort Browne, and four slaves and one mulatto who had indentured himself for a year to John McGillivray. The runaways “deserted in a boat in order to go to New Orleans,” but wrecked because of harsh winds near La Balize. Foucault had directed that the surviving slave and the mulatto man not be given up, but West Florida Governor George Johnstone argued with Aubry for a reciprocal exchange. Montfort Browne’s slave found safe haven on a Spanish vessel. He likely swore allegiance to the King or professed belief in the Catholic faith, for the Spanish refused to return him to Browne.¹⁵⁰ Bob, a slave who fled West Florida for Louisiana, was also caught in Louisiana and returned to West Florida aboard a schooner bound for Pensacola in October 1768. This incident also revealed the importance of the ties between British merchants such as Evan Jones in New Orleans and British officials such as Haldimand, for it was through their business connection that Haldimand made inquiries after Bob and that Evan Jones directed that Bob be returned.¹⁵¹ Slaves from the

¹⁴⁷ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 39; Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon*, 89-90.

¹⁴⁸ Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon*, 89-92; For mention of the slave conspiracy of Makandal and the maroons and slaves rumored to have planned to poison their masters at Saint Domingue in the mid-1750s, see Jeremy Popkin, “Facing Racial Revolution: Captivity Narratives and Identity in the Saint-Domingue Insurrection,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36.4 (Summer 2003): 513, per this source 530n, see also Pierre Pluchon, *Vaudou, Sorciers, Empoisonneurs* (Paris: Karthala, 1987), 162-94; James Sweet, “Denying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World,” *WMQ* 70.2 (2013): 251-272. For discussions of marronage and theft see Brasseaux, “The Administration of Slave Regulations in French Louisiana, 1724-1766,” *LH* 21. 2 (1980), 154-7; Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 34-5.

¹⁴⁹ Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 137.

¹⁵⁰ Evan Jones to Haldimand, 9 Oct, 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 326; Evan Jones to Haldimand, New Orleans, 22 Oct 1768, reel 2: fo 327; Aubry to Johnstone, New Orleans, 3 June 1766, WFLP, reel 1: fo 17-18; Johnstone to Aubry, 2 July 1766, WFLP, reel 1: 21-23, quotation. For a discussion of George Johnstone, who preceded Montfort Browne as governor of West Florida, see Fabel, “Governor George Johnstone of British West Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54.4 (Apr. 1976): 497-511.

¹⁵¹ Evan Jones, New Orleans, 9 Oct 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 295.

western districts of Lower Louisiana fled more easily to Spanish Texas. In 1768, taking on the name Lasonde, a mulatto slave from Opelousas took refuge at the nearby Spanish mission of Los Adaes near the Louisiana-Texas border and was soon followed by a slave belonging to the famed Louis de St Denis of Natchitoches.¹⁵²

Slaves also continued to act in their traditional roles as guides and sailors on the region's waterways. When making his tour of the colony with Aubry, Ulloa encountered the networks that characterized survival and communication in this river valley-borderland and that revealed a feature of the colony that would try him for the next two years: the facility with which Lower Mississippi Valley inhabitants employed their knowledge of the topography. To travel Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Maurepas, and the waterways to Manchac, Aubry and Ulloa paid a colonist of Bayou St. John, Mr. Brazillier, for the assistance of a mulatto and two black slaves who served as guides for the four day excursion. Henri DuPlanty, who owned land on Bayou St. John, furnished the boat.¹⁵³ The water routes were better known to those most accustomed to using them. A few months later a British traveler waited until "at last [he] found an Indian with a negro man and bateau furnish by M du Planty, who is an inhabitant here and answers for their performans" for "no white man in this place, had been ever gone that way."¹⁵⁴

The proximity of two empires across the Mississippi River from one another altered the way slaves in the Lower Mississippi pursued their freedom. Much as in other colonial areas,

¹⁵² DeVilliers to Commandant at Los Adaes, 25 June 1768, 29 June 1768, 4 July 1768, PPC, legajo 187, n.p.; interestingly, the commandant and the missionaries at Los Adaes in this particular case seem to have been less cooperative with Spanish officials in Louisiana than did the British officials of West Florida; in other cases of runaway slaves, they returned the slaves to Louisiana.

¹⁵³ Aubry, New Orleans, 30 June 1766, PPC, legajo 109: fo 25; Loyola to Ulloa, 2 July 1766, PPC, legajo 109: fo 23-24. Brazillier and DuPlanty also appear to be related at least by marriage. Magdalena Brazillier married François Henri Ery, alias DuPlanty. DuPlanty died in 1770. Santiago Lamothe vs. Magdalena, Widow DuPlanty, 23 May 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 332-3. See also "The heirs vs. the succession of Francisco Hery called DuPlanty," 17 Mar 1774, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 10 (1927): 306-9.

¹⁵⁴ Macnamara to Taylor, 29 Nov 1766, Haldimand Papers, reel 5: fo 110.

they attempted border crossing. Not yet under the *Siete Partidas*, Louisiana offered fewer opportunities to British slaves than a traditional Spanish colony.

Disregard for Spanish policy and outright resistance to empire were made manifest by many parties in the Lower Mississippi Valley in the crossing of borders. The waterways of the Lower Mississippi lent themselves readily and naturally to use for travel, for transportation, and for communication. However, the artificial division introduced by the new border offered opportunity for escape to slave and to soldier. Such individuals employed the boundary for their personal benefit. They intentionally crossed the political border. In contrast, traders and hunters ignored the border as pursued their traditional employ. Such actions certainly contradicted efforts to shore up the Mississippi as a boundary and revealed to Ulloa a border more porous than impermeable.

Newly arrived Spanish troops quickly recognized the border fluidity that the regional topography offered. In the cold winter of 1767 on the waters of Baratavia, a crew of Spanish soldiers deserted from a party headed by Jose D'Acosta that was on the watch for interlopers and poachers. The location of Spanish forts along the Mississippi in close proximity to British forts offered opportunity for desertion. Two soldiers stationed at Fort Saint Gabriel d'Iberville took advantage of it. After they crossed Bayou Manchac, which was little more than a "ditch," they agreed to travel with a Choctaw named Sashaw Houmau through the lakes to Mobile.¹⁵⁵ It was among the Spanish party sent to the Illinois Country that the greatest levels of desertion took place. While some soldiers deserted en route along the Mississippi and traveled the bayous to Opelousas, the larger part deserted at the Missouri River, taking the Spanish commissary with them. In November of 1767, they reached Fort Panmure at British Natchez where they

¹⁵⁵ George Morgan, Letterbook 1766-1767, 15 Dec 1766, HSP, quotation; M Kirkman to Haldimand, Fort Bute, 3 April 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 8: fo 96.

expressed a desire to travel through the Choctaw Nation to reach Mobile.¹⁵⁶ Acts of desertion indicated that the Mississippi as a border granted greater opportunity for breach than it did for containment.

An Acadian family opposing forced settlement at Natchez took advantage of the opportunity to cross the imperial boundary and used the waterways of the Lower Mississippi in their resistance. Alexis and Honoré Braud led the group of approximately 150 Acadians from Maryland who migrated to Louisiana with the intention of reuniting with family at Cabahannocé. When the Acadians resisted Ulloa's idea of settling at Natchez, he "discontinued the rations that the Acadians customarily received" and repeatedly threatened to force them from the colony in an effort to coerce the Brauds to conform.¹⁵⁷ After the group of Acadians agreed to travel to the fort at Natchez, the Brauds escaped the notice of Spanish officials.¹⁵⁸ After reaching St. Louis de Natchez, Piernas complained in late March 1767 that the Acadians forced to settle there used the success of the Brauds in remaining in the southern districts to argue for permission to settle at St. James. One of the new leaders of this group of Acadians was Joseph Braud, a cousin of the two brothers, and he, according to Piernas, was "inciting the others to refuse to settle."¹⁵⁹ Alexis had gone so far as to purchase a farm at St. James. Ulloa penned a circular letter to post commandants ordering them to deny refuge and relief to the Brauds. But the Acadian militia refused to give chase to the fugitives. Alexis made his escape to British Manchac while Honoré

¹⁵⁶ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 29 Jan 1767, PPC, legajo 187A, n.p.; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 21 Feb 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; Gui Duffossat, Red River, 8 April 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; DeMezellier, Pointe Coupée, 29 June 1767, PPC, legajo 187A: n.p.; Gage to Haldimand, New York, 26 April 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 221; George Morgan, Fort Chartres, 11 Dec 1767, Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP; James Lovell to Haldimand, Fort Panmure, 30 Nov 1767, Natchez, Haldimand Papers, reel 25: 202-3.

¹⁵⁷ Transcription of Honoré Braud's Depositions before the Superior Council, New Orleans, November 1768 in in *QPL*, 166; Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147.

¹⁵⁸ Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 82-5.

¹⁵⁹ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 27 March 1768; transcription of Honoré Braud's Depositions before the Superior Council, New Orleans, 8-15 November 1768, in in *QPL*, 119-120; Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 85-87; Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147.

took refuge on the German Coast.¹⁶⁰ Ulloa communicated with General Haldimand in West Florida in an attempt to reach an agreement for the reciprocal return of runaway slaves and soldiers. Desertion proved an enormous problem for the British in West Florida as well.¹⁶¹ Haldimand was hesitant to agree to Ulloa's terms because they "include[d] all deserters, whether soldiers or not. This may be construed to extend to settler, which will by no means answer."¹⁶²

Currents of Discontent and Fomentation of Revolt

The summer and fall of 1768 were the most difficult economic times for the Lower Mississippi since the end of the Seven Years War. Amidst severe inflation, the merchants and farmers began to panic.¹⁶³ As the crisis of authority escalated, Aubry and Foucault expressed disappointment that France had sent no directives regarding government of the colony in the absence of an official transfer to Spain. And, the elite were angered at Ulloa's attempts to usurp their governing authority. The new commercial regulations of 1768 provided the impetus for the escalation of a plot to oust Ulloa. The elite could not have executed this project alone, and they relied upon the real fears of the Louisiana colonists to gain followers for a revolt.

Members of the Superior Council were the logical leaders in orchestrating opposition to Ulloa. The outlines of a plan to expel Ulloa emerged over the summer and fall of 1768, probably across the Mississippi from New Orleans on the adjoining plantations of LaFrénière and Mme.

¹⁶⁰ Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 83-4; Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 123-4, 135-137.

¹⁶¹ Haldimand to Gage, New York, 30 Oct 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 126; Haldimand to Gage, Pensacola, 30 Nov 1767, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 140. For discussion of desertion in British West Florida, see Robert R. Rea, "Military Deserters from British West Florida," *LH* 9.2 (1968): 123-137.

¹⁶² Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 82-7; Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147; Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 27 March 1768, in in *QPL*, 119.

¹⁶³ Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 72 ; Moore, "Antonio de Ulloa," 214.

Alexandrine de Pradel, Foucault's paramour.¹⁶⁴ Co-conspirators included Bienville de Noyan and his brother Jean Baptiste de Noyan. The latter was LaFrénière's son-in-law who publically argued that Spanish commercial regulations would ruin the colony.¹⁶⁵

The October 1768 promulgation of the new commercial policy provided the impetus that put the storm of borderland discontent into motion. The conspirators decided on a two-pronged effort to bring about the revolution: first, they would cultivate the fears and frustrations of the Acadians and German Coast farmers to foment broad public participation; second, they would employ the existing legal structure and bring petitions before the Superior Council, which would act in its traditional role of colonial judiciary.¹⁶⁶ Somehow, the conspirators managed to keep word of their plans from reaching Aubry.

The leaders bypassed the notice of Spanish officials, employing the water routes of the Lower Mississippi to circulate rumors, gain followers, and communicate with General Haldimand in West Florida. Balthazar Masan traveled through Lake Maurepas and bypassed New Orleans to solicit help and protection from General Haldimand.¹⁶⁷ The propaganda circulated by the conspirators to the Acadian and German Coasts fell on receptive ears.

Across the socio-economic spectrum, Louisiana colonists opposed and resented Ulloa's policies. The conspirators of the revolt indicated to the Acadians that Ulloa intended to sell them to the British to cover the expenses he had incurred to settle them. While such tales were

¹⁶⁴ Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 47-9, 65-73; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 146. Alexandrine de Pradel was the widow of Jean Baptiste de Pradel who was a successful planter. His plantation Montplaisir produced indigo. When Foucault's property was inventoried in 1769, some of his slaves were living at Montplaisir. Inventory of the Goods Belonging to Foucault, 14-16 Sept 1769, Jean Charles de Pradel Papers, Memorial Hill Library, Special Collections, LSU.

¹⁶⁵ Chandler, "Ulloa's Account of the 1768 Revolt," 412; Noyan received consignments from merchants at LaRochelle. "Luis Ranson, acting for Jacques LeMoyne, vs. The Noyan estate," 29 Mar 1773, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 9 (1926): 336-7.

¹⁶⁶ Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 72.

¹⁶⁷ Moore, *Revolt*, 147; Noyan to Haldimand, Haldimand Papers, Reel 25: fo 343-5; Chandler, "Ulloa's Account of the 1768 Revolt," 410-11.

inaccurate, Ulloa had corresponded with the British in West Florida about indenturing the Acadians.¹⁶⁸ For the Acadians, the rumors may have touched upon a fear of indentured servitude that grew out of time spent in British colonies where authorities planned to separate parents and children by means of indenture.¹⁶⁹ As for the residents of the German Coast, the weight of the potential demise of trade networks and financial ruin of the colony resonated ominously among the farmers of the district. Villeré circulated rumors that Ulloa did not intend to pay his debt to them. Even when Ulloa sent St. Maxent with payment, the merchant was taken and held by the conspirators before he could accomplish his mission.¹⁷⁰ The German Coast farmers were encouraged to participate in the revolt through the influence of the district's long serving commandant Charles Frederick D'Arensbourg, related by marriage to LaFrénière and considered a patriarch in the district.¹⁷¹ The common currents of frustration with Ulloa's administration and policies united the colonists. To consolidate their coalition of rebels, the leaders of the revolt had only to draw upon the diverse fears that pressed upon the colonists.

On October 24 and 25, 1768, Ulloa and Aubry began to hear murmuring about the revolt. Initially more concerned than Aubry, Ulloa urged the French governor to investigate. Confronting LaFrénière and Foucault, the most Aubry could extract from them was a remarkable promise that the revolt would be bloodless. On October 25, 1768, Aubry also learned of the

¹⁶⁸ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 72-3. Indentured servants do appear to have lived in the Lower Mississippi Valley beyond the French colonial period. During the 1760s and 1770s they appear in records pertaining to British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana. For example, Land Grant to Charles Stuart, 7 Apr 1773, in Notes of the Council of West Florida; in 1774, a group of indentured servants fled West Florida for Louisiana, Notes of the Council of West Florida, WFLP, reel 7: fo 203; Land grant to Peter Miller WFLP, reel 6: fo 54; Land grant to Ephraim Wolfe, 11 Feb 1772, WFLP, reel 6: fo 347; Stephenson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 21 Feb 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 63-4; Census of 1777 of Kabbahanocé, PPC, legajo 190: fo 187-194. The infamous Glass case involved an indentured servant woman. The free black Mary Glass and her British husband tortured and killed their indentured servant Maria Emilia. See Henry Dart, ed., "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder 1780," *LHQ* 6 (1923): 589-653.

¹⁶⁹ Brasseaux, "Scattered to the Wind": *Dispersal and Wanderings of the Acadians, 1755-1809*. Louisiana Life Series. (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1991) 21, 24.

¹⁷⁰ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 150.

¹⁷¹ Kondert "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768," 389-90.

disloyalty of the French militia leaders Pierre Caresse, Joseph Milhet, and Braquier and of their companies.¹⁷² All three men had been among the petitioners against the commercial regulations promulgated September 6, 1766.

“The wine of Bordeaux,” a symbol of the colony’s French heritage, became the hallmark of colonial discontent. According to Ulloa, de Noyan coined the phrase, stating that the colonists must bid farewell to the “wine of Bordeaux,” for the “wine of Catalonia” would indeed replace it.” The “wine of Bordeaux” also reminded colonists of borderlands life before empire began to impose its borders. The cry pointed to their traditional channels of trade, licit and illicit.¹⁷³

During the last weeks of October 1768, conspirators milled about the Mississippi River gathering signatures for the petition to the Superior Council. Members of the Superior Council wrote a petition that would be submitted to that very body so that the protest of colonists might occur in accordance with colonial legal tradition. Noyan and Villeré led the Acadian and German Coast farmers to plantations outside New Orleans where they gathered on the evening of October 27. Between three and four hundred German Coast residents and approximately two hundred Acadians from the First and Second Acadian Coast participated in the Revolt of 1768.¹⁷⁴ Given that the census of Cabahannocé of 1769 listed 163 “men bearing arms” in the district, a high percentage of the Acadian men from the district most likely participated in the revolt, which underlined their displeasure with the Spanish regime.¹⁷⁵ That same evening Caresse, Pierre Marquis a Swiss military man, and Braquier presented the petition to the Superior Council, which Foucault turned over to two councilors and put on the agenda for presentation the

¹⁷² Chandler, “Ulloa’s Account of the 1768 Revolt,” 423; Aubry to De La Houssaye, 29 Oct 1768, PPC, legajo 187A, n.p.

¹⁷³ Chandler, “Ulloa’s Account of the 1768 Revolt,” 413, 417-8.

¹⁷⁴ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 25 June 1766, in in *QPL*, 116n; Reinhart Kondert “The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768,” *LH* 26.4(1985): 394.

¹⁷⁵ Jaqueline K. Voorhies, comp. and trans., *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians* (Lafayette, LA: University of Southwest *LH* Series, 1973), 468.

following morning, but the council postponed discussion of the petition until October 29 when the colonists of the Lower Mississippi would descend upon the city.¹⁷⁶

At nine o'clock on the morning of October 29, 1768, a loud crowd of city folk, Acadians, and farmers from the German Coast gathered about a white flag in the Place des Armes of New Orleans. This was the very place Ulloa should have ceremonially taken possession of the colony. The crowd swarmed along the streets at the same time as the Superior Council paraded together in the traditional way through the street to the home of Denis Nicolas Foucault. Aubry arrived separately to symbolize his opposition to the revolt that was erupting around him. Thus, the Superior Council assembled to discuss the petition of grievances against Spanish Governor Antonio de Ulloa.¹⁷⁷

Before the council, LaFrénère declared "Gentlemen: the first and most interesting point to be examined, is the step taken by all the planters and merchants in concert, who being threatened with slavery, and laboring under grievances which have been enumerated, address your tribunal, and require justice for the violations of the solemn act of cession of this colony."¹⁷⁸ Ulloa's refusal to accept possession of Louisiana created the opportunity for members of the Superior Council in October of 1768 to argue that "An officer, (*Don Antonio de Ulloa*,) who, without justifying his titles, pretends to orders from his Catholic majesty, has presented us new laws, destructive of our commerce, abrogating our privileges, and attacking our liberties."¹⁷⁹ LaFrénère argued that the Superior Council had maintained its jurisdiction over the colony because Spain had not taken official possession. After he laid out the case against Ulloa, all

¹⁷⁶ Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 76-7.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 75-9; Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 224; Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, vol. 2, 193.

¹⁷⁸ LaFrénère, New Orleans, 29 Oct 1768, Records of the Superior Council in B.F. French, *Historical Memoirs of Louisiana, from the first settlement of the colony to the Departure of Governor O'Reilly in 1770* (New York: Lamport, Blakeman & Law, 1853), 171.

¹⁷⁹ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 51-52. LaFrénère, New Orleans, 29 Oct 1768, Records of the Superior Council in B.F. French, *Historical Memoirs*, 178.

members of the Superior Council with the exception of Aubry and Foucault voted in favor of a decree that expelled Ulloa from the colony. Horrified, Aubry registered an official protest affirming his loyalty to his duty.¹⁸⁰ The meeting adjourned at noon.

At two o'clock that afternoon, as the members of the Superior Council gathered at the banquet that traditionally followed their meeting, Ulloa learned that he had three days to leave Louisiana. He was already aboard the Spanish frigate *Volante*, the safe haven to which Aubry with a small party of French soldiers had conducted him and his family the night before. Meanwhile, the crowd of armed colonists and local citizenry gathered around the newly hoisted French flag and cried out "Vive Louis le Bien-Aimé," and "Vive la France!"¹⁸¹

On November 1st, Ulloa along with his family, Spanish Capuchins, and Spanish troops that had been with him in the city left New Orleans for La Balize aboard the French vessel the *César*. The *Volante* needed repairs before she was seaworthy for the voyage to Cuba. When word reached New Orleans that the *César* had laid anchor at La Balize, Pierre Marquis, who also commanded the three companies of New Orleans militia and who had refused Aubry's request to disarm the militia a few days before, prepared to expel forcibly Ulloa from the colony, but the *César* set sail for Cuba before the angry party reached La Balize.¹⁸² The bloodless revolution had succeeded, at least for the short-term, and "in this same moment, all the people bore the French flag with demonstrations of the greatest joy."¹⁸³ They preferred the neglect of the French years to the perceived constraints of the Spanish Empire.

¹⁸⁰ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 156-9; Aubry, "Je Proteste," New Orleans, 29 Oct 1768, printed by Denis Braud, 1768, Early American Imprints.

¹⁸¹ Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, vol. 2, 205; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 161.

¹⁸² Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 161-3; Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 78.

¹⁸³ François Caminade to Haldimand, New Orleans, 3 Dec 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 25: fo 385-6: "dans ce meme moment tout ce peuple a arboré le drapeau françois avec les demonstrations de la plus grande joye. L'on a informé la cour de france de tout ce qui s'est passé."

Conclusions

Louisiana colonists succeeded in bringing an end to the administration of Antonio de Ulloa, and by doing so they ended Spain's first attempt to integrate Louisiana into its empire. Spanish policy makers and officials envisioned the development of Louisiana into a defensive border against British aggression. However, the commercial and settlement policies implemented by Ulloa prompted resistance among the population of the Lower Mississippi. Merchant-planters and German farmers opposed the commercial regulations that ended their traditional commerce. Acadians resisted Ulloa's defense plan that forced them to settle on an increasingly tense international border. The diverse inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi continued to employ the waterways of the Lower Mississippi hunting, travel, communication, and acts of resistance to authority. In this way, they defied and ignored the constraints of political boundaries. The crisis of authority in Louisiana further destabilized the colony as its imperial belonging remained in question. Financial crisis added to the frenzy. The local political structure and precedents made the political elite, who were also the leading merchants and planters, the logical leaders at the moment of crisis. While the planter and merchant elite of New Orleans instigated the revolt, the petit gens of New Orleans, the Acadians, and the German Coast farmers all participated in the revolt with good reason. Rumors circulated by the elite convinced members of these groups to participate in the revolt, but only because two and a half years of Ulloa's regime had exacerbated the deplorable financial and economic conditions of the colony. In spite of cross-current interests of colonists, the elite succeeded in uniting a coalition around their common opposition to Ulloa's administration and the constraints of empire. Spanish officials and policy makers misjudged the receptivity of the colonists and the topography of the region to imperial mandate.

By revolting in New Orleans in late 1768, Louisiana colonists attempted to determine their own imperial belonging. The revolt reflects the gap between imperial policy and the perceptions, practices, and priorities of Louisiana inhabitants.¹⁸⁴ Spanish commercial regulations, which included attempts to enforce restrictions against the traditional contraband of the Lower Mississippi Valley, was the contention between colonists and the early Spanish administration that produced the greatest fear. The threat of enforcement of the Spanish commercial regulations frightened colonists across the socio-economic spectrum, and logically so. Partition and incorporation into the Spanish Empire threatened both the frontier exchange economy that knit the local population together and the networks that reached into Mississippi-Atlantic and Caribbean. Those living in the Lower Mississippi Valley recognized that the borders dictated by the Treaty in 1763 endangered their entire way of life and preferred the familiar borderland ways by which they had negotiated survival for decades. Louisiana leaders and colonists reflected nostalgically upon their heritage as part of the French Empire without acknowledging that the colony had been much neglected and the laws of that empire continued largely unenforced for decades. For participants in the revolt, the French Empire became synonymous with the near absence of empire. Given their fears as they faced incorporation into the Spanish Empire, Louisiana colonists, be it known to them or not, resisted the idea of “Empire” in general and its controls, regulations, and restrictions.

The revolt was at once local and Atlantic. Inhabitants of the region looked to their traditional borderland practices, free from much enforcement of imperial policies, as their means

¹⁸⁴ The gaps between new policies meant to provide better order to Empire and the common practices of peoples living in New World colonies, produced problems in both Spanish and British Empires in the second half of the eighteenth century. British North America is the primary example of discontent and tension between metropole and periphery over the enforcement of regulations and the institution of new regulations after the Seven Years War. Louisiana is another example of this problem.

by which to navigate the instability that marked their lives during the 1760s. The local practices of the inhabitants of Louisiana and of the Lower Mississippi Valley included participation in contraband trade networks that provided an outlet for the colony's produce, a source of wealth for the colonists merchants, and sources for the slave trade. Looking to local practice and precedent, then, meant that Louisiana's inhabitants understood their connection outward into the Circum-Caribbean and into the Atlantic World as much as their connections with one another.

However, this elite also recognized that in order to achieve long-term success they must explain themselves to multiple Atlantic Empires. To do this, they composed and Denis Braud printed *Memoires des Habitants et Negociants* and *Manifeste des habitants, Negociants et colons*. Both of these documents were replete with references and rhetoric that tied the colony and the revolt to broader Atlantic experiences and to the Enlightenment that would soon be employed as the philosophical basis for the revolutionary age to come.¹⁸⁵ The writers of the *Manifeste*, who probably included the European educated Marquis and LaFrénière, argued that because the inhabitants of Louisiana gave up their liberty to the French monarch, he in return should have consulted them before ceding the colony to Spain in the Treaty of Fontainebleau.¹⁸⁶ Repeatedly, the leaders of the revolt refer to Ulloa's "tyranny," and the Superior Council gathered grievances to support this charge against the Spanish governor.¹⁸⁷ As the Superior Council opened their proceedings on the morning of October 28, LaFrénière suggested that the planters and merchants of Louisiana were "threatened with slavery."¹⁸⁸ In the context of the

¹⁸⁵ For a full translation of *Manifeste des habitants, negociants et colons de la province de la Louisiane au sujet de la revolution qui est arrive la 29 8bre 1768* and full discussion of the political philosophy that influenced this document see Charles O'Neill, "The Louisiana Manifesto of 1768," *Political Science Reviewer* 19(1991): 247-89 and Wilbur E Meneray, ed and trans., *The Rebellion of 1768 in Louisiana and the Manifesto of the Inhabitants* (Harahan, LA: Jefferson Historical Commission, 1997).

¹⁸⁶ Meneray, *Rebellion of 1768*, 11-13, Meneray, trans., "Manifesto" in *The Rebellion of 1768*, quotation 16, 25.

¹⁸⁷ Meneray, trans., "Manifesto" in *The Rebellion of 1768*, 26.

¹⁸⁸ LaFrénière, New Orleans, 29 Oct 1768, Records of the Superior Council in B.F. French, *Historical Memoires*, 171.

New Orleans Revolt, “freedom” connoted free trade, a condition that existed de-jure under the French in Louisiana during the Seven Years War and that had been promised to last for ten years. Spanish policy threatened this de jure free trade.¹⁸⁹

Colonists revealed their understanding of commerce in the Iberian World. As they expressed themselves to imperial powers, especially to France, the leaders of the revolt reflected upon the problems of their commercial place in the Spanish Empire. On the morning of October 29, 1768, before addressing any other grievance, the decree of the Superior Council first complained of the commercial restrictions Ulloa had promulgated in the colony, “an edict, which confines within the narrowest bounds the liberty necessary to commerce, and forbids the French to have any connection with their own nation.”¹⁹⁰ The Superior Council asked the French Court to approve free trade and to open French ports to Louisiana and to allow French vessels to arrive on the Mississippi.¹⁹¹ The revolutionaries wrote that:

the tobacco of this colony being prohibited in Spain, where those of Havana are the only ones allowed, the timber (a considerable branch of the income of the inhabitants) being useless to Spain, which is furnished in this article by its possessions, and the indigo being inferior to that of Guatemala, which supplies more than is requisite to the manufactures of Spain, the returns of the commodities of the inhabitants of this colony to the Peninsula became a ruinous trade, and the inhabitants were delivered up to the most dreadful misery....¹⁹²

Peru, Cuba, and Campeche already provided wood for the Spanish Atlantic. Furthermore, colonists worried that Spain would not accept in trade their furs. The memorialists argued that

¹⁸⁹ Studies of the American Revolution have revealed the use of the rhetoric of “slavery” versus “freedom” in discussions of trade and imperial tyranny. In *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), David Waldstreicher argued that American slavery enabled American freedom both as the founders depended upon slavery economically, turned to Revolution in attempt to secure their domination of colonial society, and contrasted economic freedom with slavery. For an argument that Americans came to understand a marketplace freedom of spending their capital on goods of their choice, and a sort of slavery in restrictions of that marketplace freedom, see T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁹⁰ Gayarré, vol. 2, 368-9.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 375-6.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 198.

the Spanish commercial policy all but forced them to embrace contraband trade as the only means to get their produce to market. Such observations among the members of the Superior Council indicate an understanding of the workings of the Spanish Atlantic trade and the problems faced in bridging the gap to participation in it.¹⁹³

The revolt of 1768 also suggested the perpetuation of the Black Legend in the borderlands of North America. Ulloa's portrayal in the documents of the revolt personified the Spaniard as the embodiment of the evil of the Spanish Empire. For example, among the grievances against Ulloa, Joseph Songy accused Ulloa of removing Songy's three nephews who suffered from leprosy to La Balize. There, Songy stated, Ulloa denied them proper supplies even after receiving a petition from their influential grandfather Jacques Cantrelle. In reality, Ulloa had granted permission for Pierre Songy to attend to his sons.¹⁹⁴

While some scholars have argued that slavery played little or no part in the 1768 revolution at New Orleans, the grievances of the colonists coupled with the very fact that Louisiana was a slave society suggest that the rebels were concerned about the fate of Louisiana

¹⁹³ *Decree of the Superior Council*, 29 Oct 1768, in B.F. French, *Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, 167.

¹⁹⁴ Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147; Jacques Cantrelle to Ulloa, New Orleans, 11 June 1768, PPC, legajo 109: fo 346-7. For more on leprosy in colonial Louisiana see O. E. Denney, "The History of Leprosy in Louisiana," *Public Health Reports (1896-1970)* 51 (Jul., 1936), 1029-1034; for a broad study of leprosy see Rod Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire: A Medical and Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Some historians have argued that the stigma of the Black Legend has contributed to the understudy of the borderlands and failure of historians of American history to integrate history Spanish borderlands into narratives of United States history. See James A. Hijya, "Why the West was Lost," *WMQ* 60.2 (Apr 1994): 276-92. For more on the Black Legend in historiography, see Benjamin Keen, "The Black Legend Revisited: Assumptions and Realities," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 4 (Nov., 1969): 703-719; and Lewis Hanke, "A Modest Proposal for a Moratorium on Grand Generalizations: Some Thoughts on the Black Legend," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 51.1 (Feb., 1971): 112-127. Joseph Songy lived until 1776, "Juan B. Poeyfarre petitions for the execution of an act of sale for a plantation in conformity to a private agreement made with Joseph Songy, now deceased," 18 Dec 1776, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 12 (1929): 177. Pierre had died by 1778, see "Intestate Succession of Santiago Cantrelle, who died at the Acadian Coast, inventory and valuation of his estate," 8 Jan 1778, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 13 (1930): 173-6. Pierre's wife Marie Eve was one of Jacques Cantrelle's daughters.

slavery, both the local institution and the slave trade.¹⁹⁵ The decree issued by the Superior Council stated as the second point of contention with Ulloa, that

The government, about twelve months ago, forbade the importation of Negroes, on the pretext that the competition would have proved injurious to a merchant of the English colonies, who was to furnish them. How terrible and how destructive a course of action is this! It is depriving the colony of the materials best calculated to develop its resources; it is cutting up by the roots a branch of commerce, which is of more consequence to Louisiana than the rest put together....Constraint keeps the affairs of the province in a state of languor and weakness; liberty, on the contrary, animates all things.¹⁹⁶

In the *Memoire des Commerçants et Habitants*, produced just after the revolt, the colonists complained of Ulloa's restrictions on whipping slaves within the city of New Orleans and of his enforcement of commercial policies as they pertained to the slave trade—in particular the episode involving the trader Pierre Cadis and LaFrénière.¹⁹⁷ Colonists feared Ulloa's enforcement of policy the most. LaFrénière complained that “Mr. Ulloa has supported the negroes dissatisfied with their masters.”¹⁹⁸ To LaFrénière and other slave owners, Ulloa, and through him the Spanish Empire, had undermined their authority.

The revolt of 1768 expressed the extent to which colonists viewed Spanish policy incompatible with the way of life of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Borderland practices had held the fabric of the region together in times marked by scarcity and uncertainty. While the specific grievances against Ulloa and the Spanish regime were exaggerated, they reflected the fears of Louisiana colonists across the socioeconomic spectrum. These fears indicated the gap between Spanish policy and the desire of colonists to maintain borderland conditions.

¹⁹⁵ Shannon Dawdy has argued that “Slavery, however, is conspicuous by its absence as an issue in the revolt, probably because it was the issue most likely to fracture the fragile coalition between a ‘cabal’ and a ‘mob,’” *Building the Devil’s Empire*, 225. Brasseaux and Moore refer to the incidents noted among the grievances of the colonists, but they do not engage the question of slavery as a part of the revolt, Brasseaux, *Foucault*, 63-4, 92, and Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 157-8.

¹⁹⁶ Decree of the Superior Council, 29 Oct 1768, in B.F. French, *Historical Memoires*, 165.

¹⁹⁷ Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147.

¹⁹⁸ LaFrénière, 29 Oct 1768, Records of the Superior Council, in B.F. French, *Historical Memoirs*, 175.

The Aftermath: “La Fureur et La Frénésie”

In the aftermath, Aubry decried the revolt as foolhardy. The leaders truly seemed to have believed that the expulsion of Ulloa, coupled with petitions to Louis XVI and to the French Minister of Marine Choiseul, would gain the colony repatriation into the French Empire. For a brief moment, Marquis even proposed establishing a republic. To solve the financial woes of the colony, other leaders endeavored to create a bank.¹⁹⁹ Both of these efforts came to nothing, and the colony settled into the joint government of Aubry and the Superior Council once again.

The year that followed the revolt of October 29, 1768, proved to be one of continued uncertainty that matched the decade before. Aubry referred to the period repeatedly as one of “fury and frenzy.” Colonial finances came to a complete standstill. Aubry instructed the commandants and Indian agents to assure the Indians of their alliances, but he worried that these relations would become strained in the absence of gifts. Nor were there funds for the upkeep of the posts or to pay the French soldiers still waiting to embark for France five years after the close of the Seven Years War. The rebels began to consider the long-term ramifications of the revolt should the Spanish return and to consider flight to colonies in the French Caribbean or to British West Florida. All remained in Louisiana. Aubry wrote Spanish officials begging them for mercy for himself and for the colonists.²⁰⁰ Although Aubry recognized the deficiencies of Ulloa’s personality and administrative skill for reconciling Louisiana to Spanish rule, his rhetoric took a marked shift following the revolt as in his writings he located blame in the Superior Council.²⁰¹ Aubry complained that the leaders of the revolt continued to excite residents of the Acadian and

¹⁹⁹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 172, 176, 178.

²⁰⁰ Aubry to Bucareli, 15 Feb 1769, AC C13 A, reel 49: fo 3-4; Aubry to O’Reilly, New Orleans, 20 Aug 1769, AC C13A, reel 49: fo 31.

²⁰¹ Aubry, 25 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 23-29.

German Coasts and to refer to Ulloa as “tyrannique.”²⁰² When he noted that the German Coast farmers continued to bear arms into the summer of 1769, Aubry blamed LaFrénière and his extended family who held influence throughout the German Coast.²⁰³

Empires considered the New Orleans revolt in different lights. From British West Florida, Haldimand referred to mounting tensions in the British North American colonies and to the New Orleans revolt in one breath:

I am afraid these ryottous oliverians will be the cause of my remaining upon the continent longuer than I wish. the distemper that rages amongst them has riched as far as N. Orleans; where the French are in the greatest confusion, threatening to send Mr D’ulloa to Madrid and Mr Aubry to France and to shake off the Spanish yocke.²⁰⁴

The French recognized the dangerous example that the New Orleans revolt posed for British North American colonies where the colonists had begun vocally to resist the control embodied in the enforcement of British imperial policies, especially commercial policies. Foremost, French diplomats feared the loss of Louisiana to the British. At the suggestion of advisors, Choiseul considered agreeing to establish Louisiana as a French-Spanish protectorate or even a republic, but this idea was put aside when Spain voiced plans to reassert its imperial authority over the colony. At the time, concord between France and Spain and the containment of British expansion was a significant interest directing French policy.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Aubry, New Orleans, 8 March 1769, AC C13 A, reel 49: fo 9-12.

²⁰³ Aubry, New Orleans, 23 May 1769, AC C13 A, reel 49: fo 26-27.

²⁰⁴ Haldimand to Moor, Pensacola, 14 Nov 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo -333, punctuation my own. For a discussion of Haldimand’s time on the Gulf Coast see Robert R. Rea, “Brigadier Frederick Haldimand: The Florida Years,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 54.4, *The Floridas in the Revolutionary Era: Bicentennial Issue* (1976): 512-531. Haldimand complained that with regard to his time in West Florida, it was “as a Purgatory, where we qualify ourselves, for the happiness of leaving (sometime hereafter) amongst you I have patience; wishing sincerely it may be soon” Haldimand, Pensacola, 20 Apr 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 24: 17.

²⁰⁵ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 174-5. See also Pierre H. Boule, “French Reactions to the Louisiana Revolution of 1768” in McDermott, ed., *The French in the Mississippi Valley* (Urbana, 1965): 143-157.

Colonists may have thrown off the yoke of Spanish border-designers for a moment, but soon General Alejandro O'Reilly mustered nearly 2,000 troops in Havana to join him in claiming Louisiana for Spain.

Chapter 2

Adaptive Borderland Practices in the Era of Partition

Introduction

Word of General Alejandro O'Reilly's arrival at New Orleans on August 16, 1769 alarmed Louisiana colonists. O'Reilly's party included 2,056 troops from Havana, larger than the size of the free population of New Orleans. This formidable show of force communicated the general's mission: to leave no question that Louisiana was a Spanish colony. O'Reilly was uniquely qualified to develop a defense plan for Louisiana that would better integrate the colony into the Spanish Empire as he had personally overseen the reorganization of New World defense following the Seven Years War.¹

On August 18, in a public ceremony from which Ulloa had shied, O'Reilly took formal possession of Louisiana for the Spanish crown: Aubry laid the keys to the city of New Orleans at the general's feet, and the Spanish colors replaced the fleur-de-lis at the Plaza de Armas.² In his response to the revolt and in accordance with the explicit orders of Charles III, O'Reilly made an example of the leaders, executing five of them, including LaFrénère, and imprisoning the rest.

¹ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 22, 118; Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 303. Hanger also notes that O'Reilly recruited free black and mulatto militia to serve Havana. These troops would become important for the Spanish Caribbean at large, and O'Reilly extended the Iberian practice of having free blacks serve in leadership roles in the militia when he appointed Pedro Simón captain of a free black and mulatto militia on the Lower Mississippi in 1770. For other work examining free-black militia and society in the Spanish Caribbean see also Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, and *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution*, and Ben Vinson, *Bearing Arms for his Majesty: the Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.) See also, Jack D. L. Holmes, "O'Reilly's 1769 Commission: A Personal View," *LH* 24.3 (Summer, 1983): 307-313. O'Reilly was born in 1722 in Baltrasna, Ireland. He joined the Spanish army as a cadet at the age of ten. Texada, *Alejandro O'Reilly and the New Orleans Rebels* (USL: Lafayette, LA, 1970), 23.

² Clark, *New Orleans*, 169; Aubry, 1 Sept 1769, AC C13A, reel 49: 88; Bobé, 3 Oct 1769, AC C13A, reel 49:150.

He granted general clemency to all other participants.³ A visitor in New Orleans noted the general's insistence that colonists take the oath of loyalty to the Spanish Crown:

This moment the trumpeter has published before our door the Generals Order for all the Inhabitants of the town without exception to repair on the 26 Instant to his Hotel and take the oath of Allegiance to his Catholic Majesty—To be first tendered to the clergy and then to the different ranks of people in order. This proclamation is in point of affix'd at several publick places.⁴

O'Reilly's imposition of Spanish authority heralded the sense of social order already present across the Spanish world. And on August 26, after hearing an oath in Spanish and then in French, and "after taking this oath with the greatest solemnity, each class signed in the presence of two notaries and two officials."⁵ The colonists living at Pointe Coupée and nearby Fausse Rivière sent representatives François Allain and George Baron to New Orleans to take the oath of allegiance in their names.⁶ Shortly thereafter, O'Reilly dispatched Spanish officers Juan Kelly and Eduardo Nugent to the western posts of Rapides, Natchitoches, Opelousas, and Attakapas to administer the oath, take the census, and assess the settlements.⁷ Spain sought to secure the loyalty of Louisiana colonists throughout the colony, not just in New Orleans.

³ O'Reilly grants Clemency, New Orleans, 21 Aug 1769, AC C13, reel 49: fo 53; Those arrested included Foucault, LaFrénière, Hardi de Boisblanc, Balthasar Massan, Joseph Villeré, Pierre Marquis, Pierre Poupet, Joseph Petit, Pierre Carresse, Julien Doucet, Jean Milhet, Joseph Milhet, Jean Baptiste Noyan, and Denis Braud. LaFrénière, Noyan, Carresse, Marquis, Joseph Milhet were condemned to death. They were shot by firing squad October 25, 1769. Villeré died in prison before a sentence could be carried out. Foucault was actually tried in France because he was the only one among the rebel leaders who held a position to which he had been appointed by Louis XV of France. Foucault's exact role in the revolt remains contested. At the very least, he appears to have been knowledgeable of the plot in advance of the coup; see also, Richard E. Chandler, "O'Reilly and the Rebels: Report to Arriaga," *LH* 23.1 (Winter, 1982), 48-59. For discussion of the prosecution of the leaders of the revolt, see also Texada, *Alejandro O'Reilly*, 26-37, 47-60. LaFrénière's widow Marguerite Belair fled Louisiana and settled at Cap Français. "Nicolas Daunoy Empowered by Mrs. Widow Nicolas Chauvin de la Freniere brings redhibitory action against the estate of the late Alexandro LaFreniere for a plantation and a piece of land," 23 July 1781, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 16 (1933): 530-33.

⁴ George Morgan to James Rumsey, New Orleans, 29 Aug 1769, HSP, Gratz collection, collection 250, box 197, Folder 70.

⁵ O'Reilly to Muniain, New Orleans, 31 Aug 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 92.

⁶ "Oath of Allegiance Taken by the Inhabitants of Pointe Coupee," 10 Sept 1769, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 6 (1923): 146.

⁷ Paulette Guilbert Martin, "The Kelly Nugent Report on the Inhabitants and Livestock in the Attakapas, Natchitoches, Opelousas and Rapides Posts, 1770," *Attakapas Gazette* 11 (1976): 187-92; O'Reilly to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 10 Dec 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 130-132.

Regardless of the new regime, those living in the Lower Mississippi Valley continued to promote the fluidity of the borderland, especially by crossing boundaries. In this era of partition, they negotiated cooperation with imperial regimes and the crossing of borders in ways that seemed most advantageous. The inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi represented a significant challenge to the imposition of imperial boundaries and regulations on the region. Their dexterity in adapting to the changing imperial circumstances reflected the strengths of borderland practices for navigating eras of uncertainty. The developments and changes that grew out of the tensions between attempts to enforce the political boundary and the crossing of boundaries during the 1770s would be significant to the war years to come.

Spanish law provided greater opportunity for slaves to move across the boundary from slavery to freedom. Family networks often facilitated such boundary crossings. Resistance to slavery continued to take on many forms, including marronage, but slaves and libres alike found new opportunities to work with the colonial regime. Meanwhile, slave-owners collaborated especially with the city government of New Orleans to try to enforce the boundary between slave and free.

During the era of partition, Indians living near the Mississippi River frequently crossed it as a method of negotiating a place of power and security for themselves independent of either Spanish or British Empire. Spanish and British officials conceived of alliances differently than did Indian groups. While empires continued to argue that an Indian people might be allied only with one empire, Indian groups entered into diplomatic relations with both Spanish and British representatives. In this instance, the proximity of competing empires offered *petites nations* Indians greater political opportunity.

Although contraband trade had long reigned in Louisiana, the expansion of British trade networks into the Lower Mississippi River Valley changed the character of that commerce. These networks connected with existing borderland networks, used those local networks, and forever changed trade in the region. British merchants recognized the Lower Mississippi as a region ripe for expansion, and connections to British Atlantic and North American trade networks took hold. Those individuals who acted as contacts for British networks in the Lower Mississippi River Valley operated in both British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana. They owned land in both empires, traded in both empires, and developed working relationships and conflicts with officials in both empires. These merchants stood at the nexus of local and Atlantic trade that was reshaping borderlands trade practices. They also introduced easier access to manufactured goods and the opportunity for Louisiana and West Florida colonists to export their raw materials and produce. They participated directly in the Indian trade, introducing both conflict and greater opportunity for trade. They participated in the Atlantic slave trade that bore thousands of enslaved persons from Africa and the Caribbean to the Lower Mississippi. And so, cooperation and participation in these British networks brought greater opportunity for many Louisiana colonists, slaves, and Indians who engaged them.

Spanish Policy Extended to Louisiana, 1769-1770

The institutions and legal codes of Castile and the Indies that arrived with O'Reilly in Louisiana brought the colony into the Captaincy General of Cuba. In his brief time in Louisiana, O'Reilly also implemented new slave codes and re-evaluated Ulloa's defense strategy. By these laws and customs, the introduction of the *Siete Partidas*, and the re-evaluation of Ulloa's defense strategy, O'Reilly both asserted Spanish authority and brought Louisiana colonists, slaves, and

Indians into greater cooperation with Spain. Although the enforcement of commercial policies was lax during these first years, select implementation of policy was directed at pulling Louisiana into the Spanish Empire and protecting the border from British expansion.

Colonists of Louisiana cooperated with the new Spanish government; some even participated in it. Perhaps most significant in its symbolic power, a *cabildo*, or town council, replaced the Superior Council. The six *regidores perpetuos* (or council members) who made up the cabildo included five Louisiana planters who had not participated in the revolt and Denis Braud, who had just become the official printer for the Spanish government. O'Reilly selected men who had also been esteemed by Ulloa.⁸ Interestingly, the successful functioning of a *cabildo* in New Orleans differentiated Louisiana from other Spanish colonies, where these councils had lost their prominence in governing.⁹ Under the Spanish system, the judiciary became a separate branch presided over by the *alcaldes ordinaries*. By participating in these official offices, Louisiana elite began to cooperate with the Spanish government.

By appealing to Indian custom, O'Reilly hoped to shift the current of Spanish-Indian relations. Because of their participation in diplomacy during the early 1760s, the British had gained reputations as more consistent in their gift-giving than Spanish representatives up to this point. O'Reilly meant for these early Spanish negotiations to solidify alliances with the diverse groups living in Louisiana so that they might in turn assist Spain in staving off British incursions

⁸ Din and Harkins, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 53-5. See also, Gilbert C. Din, "The Offices and Functions of the New Orleans Cabildo" *LH* 37.1 (Winter, 1996): 5-30. The first regidores were Francisco Maria de Reggio, Pedro Francisco, Olivier Duvezin, Charles Fleuriau, Antoine Bienvenu, Joseph Ducros, and Denis Braud. On Braud's desertion of the Cabildo and of the colony, see also "Official Prosecution of Dionisio Braud, Regidor, for absenting himself after making application for the office of Regidor," 23 Nov 1773, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 10 (1927): 147-8

⁹ Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 324-5. For the will of Olivier Duvesin, see also, Porteous, ed. and trans., "A Louisiana Will of the Spanish Era, 1776," *LHQ* 11 (1928): 607-19.

in Spanish territory. In meetings with Indian leaders, O'Reilly reaffirmed Spanish friendship and promised "punctuality of the annual presents."¹⁰

O'Reilly also promptly saw to the distribution of 1,270 pesos worth of gifts to the Indians, many of which were years overdue.¹¹ The governor also held a talk with the chiefs of the *petites nations* located within sixty leagues of New Orleans. The talks took the form of a combination of Indian and Spanish customs and symbols. The chiefs, their interpreters, and "Quite a number of Indians singing and playing on their military instruments" gathered at O'Reilly's quarters. The Indians placed their weapons at his feet, waved fans of feathers over his head, and presented him the calumet to smoke. O'Reilly placed around their necks medals with the image of Charles III strung on red silk ribbons and made the sign of the cross over their heads.¹² Among the visitors to New Orleans, only the Biloxi Indians were Catholic as a group. O'Reilly relied upon Kelly and Nugent to meet with Indians along their route of travel in the western part of the colony and to give them gifts, and he relied upon Athanase DeMézières of Natchitoches to maintain relations with Indians of those parts.¹³ Thus, as O'Reilly stamped Louisiana as a Spanish colony, he also initiated broader alliances for Spain among Indian groups.

¹⁰ O'Reilly to Arriaga, 17 Oct 1769, New Orleans, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 98, 101-103.

¹¹ O'Reilly to Arriaga, 29 Dec 1769, New Orleans, and "Statement of Payment for Indian Presents," 9 Jan 1770, New Orleans, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 147-8, 154-5. For a work that considers the Arkansas or Quapaw Indians over the eighteenth century, see DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). An indication of Spanish prioritization among relations with different Indians, the Osages received gifts of the greatest expense, and then the Tunicas, Chitimachas, and then the Choctaws. Though they had been an important ally of the French, at this time, the Choctaws by and large lived to the east of the Mississippi.

¹² Montfort Browne, Pensacola, 8 Oct 1769, WFLP, reel 2: 397; O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 100-103.

¹³ O'Reilly's instructions to Kelly and Nugent, 16 Nov 1769, New Orleans, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 130-2; Inventory of Indian Presents, Martin Navarro, New Orleans, 9 Jan 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 154-5. O'Reilly also granted De Mézières the position of Lieutenant Governor the district of Natchitoches, O'Reilly to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 10 Nov 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 129. For a discussion of the Indian trade over the course of the eighteenth century at Natchitoches, see chapter 5 in Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 105-26.

As he began to assuage Spanish-Indian relations, O'Reilly also reconsidered Ulloa's defense plan. O'Reilly turned to his experience in Cuba to devise a pragmatic strategy for realizing Louisiana as a defensive border colony. After the Seven Years War, O'Reilly had been instrumental in restructuring the military and infrastructure in Cuba where he balanced desires to keep imperial expenditure at a minimum, to build sustainable local military bodies—such as the white, pardo, and moreno militias that he introduced—and to assure that Britain would never again retake the fortified city of Havana.¹⁴ After taking into account the location and situation of the various French forts and those constructed under Ulloa, O'Reilly decided to abandon Isla Real Católica; to leave Fort St. Gabriel in the hands of several German settlers and to withdraw troops; and to allow the Acadians at Natchez to relocate to the Acadian settlements at St. James de Cabahannocé and at Manchac.¹⁵ Ultimately, O'Reilly relocated Fort Real Católica near the mouth of the Mississippi to the site of the Old French Fort at La Balize because the marshy ground had already begun to swallow the Spanish fort. The only forts then that remained functioning were the forts at La Balize, Forts St. Marie and St. Leon at English Turn, Fort St. Jean at Bayou St. John, and Fort St. John the Baptist at Natchitoches, St. Francis at Arkansas, and St. Genevieve.¹⁶

O'Reilly instituted a simple standing militia as a mode for defense and as a way to encourage loyalty among the colonists. Each settlement would have its own militia led by the local commandant who reported to the governor directly and regularly regarding the minute

¹⁴ Frederick, "In Defense of Crown and Colony," 391-5. See, Allan J. Kuethe, "The Development of the Cuban Military As a Sociopolitical Elite, 1763-83," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 61.4 (1981): 695-704.

See also, Allan J. Kuethe and G. Douglas Inglis, "Absolutism and Enlightened Reform: Charles III, the Establishment of the Alcabala, and Commercial Reorganization," *Past & Present* 109 (1985): 118-143.

¹⁵ O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 Dec 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 144-8.

¹⁶ Frederick, "In Defense of Crown and Colony," 398.

affairs of the post and its inhabitants.¹⁷ The thirteen companies of militia totaled 1040 men. Commandants were drawn mostly from among former French military men and planters.¹⁸ Along the Mississippi, these commandants sat at the nexus of imperial policy and the regular undermining of those policies by the militiamen and their families. Sensitivity to the ongoing contraband trade facilitated by British engagement in borderland trade networks also encouraged O'Reilly in his decision to permit the Acadians at Natchez to remove to the lower river where, ideally, their practices could be more closely supervised by local officials who in turn could more easily send them to New Orleans to be reprimanded. Here, they could also bolster the settler population on the banks of the river and might send excess produce to the city.

One of O'Reilly's primary objectives was to implement more fully the commercial policies Ulloa had decreed in 1768 on behalf of the Spanish Crown. This project included suppressing the contraband trade that reigned in Louisiana. In his consideration of Fort St. Louis de Natchez, O'Reilly noted that "Our own people are the ones who can and always want to trade illegally, and that post, far from all control and inspection, would be a secure haven, protecting the greed of everyone employed there."¹⁹ Upon his arrival, O'Reilly was greatly distressed at the entrenchment of British merchants within the colony and at the illicit trade blossoming along the Mississippi River. He lamented that he "found the English entirely in possession of the

¹⁷ Kinnaid, "introduction," and O'Reilly to Grimaldi, 10 Dec 1769, New Orleans, and O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 1 March 1770, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, xxii, 29, 161-2.

¹⁸ These commandants were Nicholas Verret at St. James de Cabahannocé, Louis Judice at LaFourche des Chitimachas, Gabriel Fuselier de la Claire at the combined district of the Attakapas and Opelousas, Athanase DeMézières at Natchitoches, François Allain at Pointe Coupée, Robert Robin de Logny and François Bellisle at the German Coast, and François Vallé at St. Genevieve. For a study of François Vallé, see Carl Ekberg, *François Valle and his World: Upper Louisiana before Lewis and Clark* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002). Pedro Piernas continued to serve as commandant at St. Louis. Also, it is interesting to note that St. Maxent served as captain of the 2nd company in New Orleans, Macnamara as Captain of the 4th company, Jean Lafitte as lieutenant in the 2nd. Jacques Courtableau the long time fur trader was Captain of the militia at Opelousas. "List of Militia Offices Appointed by O'Reilly," 12 Feb 1770, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 158-9; Frederick, "In Defense of Crown and Colony," 391-95.

¹⁹ O'Reilly to Arriaga, 29 Dec 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 146.

commerce of this colony.”²⁰ After only a few weeks in New Orleans, on September 2, O’Reilly issued an order expelling from New Orleans merchants well known for actively participating in contraband. Although sometimes only temporarily, such efforts disrupted, longstanding Circum-Caribbean trade networks. Over time, contraband would continue, and new trade networks would replace these older ones.²¹

Merchants targeted by O’Reilly included those participating in the persistent illicit trade to Campeche and Veracruz, such as the Duraldes brothers and the Durand family. The Durands also traded with Cap Français and had joined in presenting grievances to the Superior Council against Ulloa for meddling with their trade practices. François and Jean Durand dissolved their business partnership in November of 1769 although Jean remained active in the city-life of New Orleans.²² O’Reilly also expelled three Jewish merchant families, the Britos, Fastios, and Monsantos, who besides being engaged in the aforementioned forbidden trade to Veracruz and Campeche, were expelled “for the reason that all three are undesirable on account of their business and the religion they profess.”²³ Isaac Monsanto and his brothers and sisters had begun building their commerce in the Caribbean in 1755 at Curaçao. One brother, Joseph, settled in Santo Domingo while Isaac and other family members settled in New Orleans in 1758. By 1765 most of Isaac’s siblings were also living in New Orleans, brothers Manuel, Jacob and Benjamin,

²⁰ O’Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 104-5.

²¹ “Charlestown(South Carolina) December 7,” 11 Jan 1770, *Pennsylvania Gazette*(accessed 9 Oct 2009); Clark, New Orleans, 173; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 89; O’Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, in *SPMV*, vol.1, 104-5; Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 72- 82. Fitzpatrick did not leave New Orleans for a few months. Those expelled included the following Brito Fastide, Metz, Monsanto, Papion, Elis Huguéz, Jn Souvestre, Durand the elder, and the younger, Burnet, Doraison, Godemár, Boudet, the elder, and the minor, Nicollet, Reinier, Vincent, Chateau, a Bedos, a Saliny, and his mother and Loquet formerly employed in the Spanish kitchen. O’Reilly, 15 Feb 1770, Briscoe Center, University of Texas, Parsons Collection, Box #E482, folder 46.

²² Extracts of Proceedings of the Superior Council, 28 Nov 1768, AC C13A, reel 48: fo 120-147; “Dissolution of a Partnership,” 7 Nov 1769, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 6 (1923): 155. Another firm that dissolved its partnership was that of Detour and Villefrance, “Dissolution of a Partnership,” 8 Nov 1769, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 6 (1923): 155.

²³ O’Reilly to Hernandez, New Orleans, 15 Feb 1770, Briscoe Center, Parsons Collection, Box 3E482, Folder 46; O’Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 97, 103; Clark, *New Orleans*, 175.

and sisters Gracia, Angelica, and Eleanora.²⁴ The merchants expelled from New Orleans were central to the contraband trade network that extended from there through the Caribbean and the Atlantic and suggested the significance of kinship to these networks as well. These merchants also extended supplies and credit to the traders who carried goods throughout the interior of the Mississippi Valley and westward to Spanish Texas.²⁵

Isaac Monsanto was a perfect example: he received furs and flour from Illinois; he was involved in the illegal trade through Natchitoches; with two Havana merchants, he sent shipments to Veracruz and Campeche; he had business dealings with the Gradis firm of Bordeaux, the place of origin of his friend Isaac Fastio, and with Paris, LaRochelle, Cadiz, and London; and he was in contact early on with British military officials in West Florida and supplied them in their attempt to go to Illinois in the winter of 1764-1765. The Monsantos joined the exiled British merchants who only needed to remove to British Manchac or to Pensacola in order to continue the forbidden trade. After O'Reilly left Louisiana in 1770, some of these merchants began to trickle back into New Orleans once again.

Although O'Reilly did succeed in injuring their trade, contrabandists expressed a degree of hubris in their response to Spanish policy, which was perhaps only rivaled by O'Reilly's stubbornness in refusing to acknowledge the persistence of their activities. British traders

²⁴ Clark, *New Orleans*, 175; Robert P. Swierenga, *The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 209-210. The Monsantos were Sephardic Jews. Isaac was born at The Hague, his father David Rodriguez Monsanto at Amsterdam. Isaac appears to have been the leader among his brothers and sisters and the engine in getting most of the family to New Orleans. Three of his brothers returned to Louisiana after the American Revolution. The Brittos, Fastios, and Monsantos has done business together out of Curaçao at least from 1757-1763, and then again at New Orleans. Korn, *The Early Jews of New Orleans*, (Waltham, MA: American Jewish Historical Society, 1969). Korn's is an extensive work examining the presence of Jews in New Orleans through the early nineteenth century. Chapters 5 through 20, pages 10-73, are largely devoted to tracing the Monsanto family. Other Sephardic Jews on the Gulf Coast during this era included José de Palacio and Isaac Mendes at Pensacola, a relative of José de Palacio who had done business at French Mobile and New Orleans was Israel Salomon Palacios, who also fled to Pensacola, "Pedro Saint Pe vs. Israel Salomon de Palacios," 24 Nov 1773, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 10 (1927): 148-51.

²⁵ O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, in *SPMV*, vol.1, 97.

operating in the region were certain of their abilities to circumvent Spanish restrictions.

According to James Jones: “I flatter myself that they will be able to impose none that can impede us from carrying on a very lucrative trade in the River upon a Plan which my brother and me are now exerting ourselves to lay the foundation of.”²⁶ While James lived at Pensacola where he operated stores, his brother and business partner Evan resided in New Orleans where he would continue to thwart Spanish trade restrictions through 1800.²⁷ After his journey to New Orleans from Illinois in 1769, George Morgan recounted his meeting with O’Reilly, when the governor refused to concede that illegal trade and shipping occurred out of New Orleans under the Spanish:

When I waited on him[O’Reilly] on the 13th instant five leagues below the town for permission for my vessel to depart, Capt Campell accompany’d me to pay his respects as he said to the General (Who by the by received and entertained him with great indifference) who ask’d him by which way he purposed going home to England. Capt Campbell apply’d via France. The General said he thought that was impossible No says the Capt. There are many vessels go from New Orleans to Bourdeaux and Marseilles every year. I imagine Sir says the General again, it is impossible adding “that trade Sir has a long time been forbid.”²⁸

After such a reception at New Orleans, Morgan instructed his business partners in Philadelphia to direct their ongoing trade to Pensacola and Mobile.²⁹ In late August of 1769, after sustaining damage en route to New Orleans, the *Sea Flower* flying British colors laid anchor just above New Orleans. O’Reilly was insistent that neither Richard Nichols, the ship’s master, nor any of his crew come ashore. He also forbade them from landing and selling either their wares or the twenty-eight slaves on board the vessel. Nichols made his situation worse when he lied to the

²⁶ James Jones to Haldimand, Pensacola, 14 March 1770, Haldimand Papers, reel 26: fo 117-121.

²⁷ Evan Jones to Cliffords, New Orleans, 17 March, 1803, HSP, Clifford Pemberton Papers, vol. 16, 35. For more on Evan Jones, see also Bradley, “Evan Jones,” in *Interim Appointment: W.C.C. Claiborne Letter Book, 1804-1805*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2002): 374-88.

²⁸ Morgan to James Rumsey, New Orleans, 29 Aug, 1769, HSP, Gratz collection, collection 250, box 197, folder 70.

²⁹ John Baynton to Sam Wharton, Philadelphia, 14 Dec 1769, Letter Books of John Baynton, November 24, 1769-May 27, 1770, David Library, BWM, roll 1: 11-14.

Spanish general. O'Reilly became incensed with Nichols who assured him that the slaves aboard his vessel were *negros bozales*. Closer inspection revealed that twenty five had "marks of having been frequently whipped and punished," an indication that these slaves probably had been taken from the Caribbean where punishment for disobedience and resistance had produced their scars.³⁰ By making examples of certain offenders, O'Reilly tried unsuccessfully to dissuade others from committing similar offenses to policy.

In 1770, at O'Reilly's suggestion, the Crown opened free trade between Havana and New Orleans, but colonists recognized that this trade would only grow slowly. At the same time, O'Reilly ordered his successor Luis de Unzaga to prohibit the shipment of Louisiana tobacco to Cuba. Cuban tobacco was known to be of superior quality. This prohibition encouraged Louisiana planters at Natchitoches and Pointe Coupée to reduce their production. As the memorialists had suggested just a few years prior, it was going to prove difficult for Louisiana to find footing in trade within the Spanish Empire. O'Reilly also intended that Louisiana would ship wood to Cuba, but at least during the early years of free trade between the two ports, such trade was not profitable.³¹ The Spanish Caribbean in this arrangement was meant to replace the French Caribbean as Louisiana's trading partner, for the colony had a long history of exporting lumber to the latter.³² But the trade with Havana proceeded only on a small scale in the early 1770s.

³⁰ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 30-1; Clark, *New Orleans*, 174-5. Richard Nichols to Montfort Browne, Pensacola, 14 Oct 1769, WFLP, reel 2: fo 225-9; John Campbell, Pensacola, 9 Oct 1769, WFLP, reel 2: 213-225; O'Reilly to Browne, New Orleans, 24 Sept 1769, WFLP, reel 5: 41-7. For a discussion of punishment of slaves in Jamaica in the eighteenth century, see also Diana Paton, "Punishment, Crime, and the Bodies of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," *Journal of Social History* 34. 4 (2001): 923-954.

³¹ See John Hebron Moore, "The Cypress Lumber Industry of the Lower Mississippi Valley during the Colonial Period," *LH* 24.1 (1983): 25-47. Louisiana had traded its wood to the French West Indies nearly from the colonies inception. During the Spanish period, illicit traffic carried Louisiana wood also to the British Caribbean; Fitzpatrick to Peter Swanson, 31 May, 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 86-89.

³² Clark, *New Orleans*, 175-6.

Merchants at New Orleans remained distrusting of Spanish commercial regulations. In 1771, Toutant Beauregard told the cabildo that a remedy must be found for the “great devastation of the colony, because of the little commerce” that took place there and worried that it would force merchants and other colonists to leave Louisiana. The regulations were “very damaging to the state and to the Province.”³³ And the cabildo agreed that the state of the colony was indeed “deplorable.”³⁴ Restrictions on trade only encouraged the illicit activities of British merchants. Spain’s inability to maintain the supply of essential goods to its colonies was affirmed when the cabildo agreed at least twice to the purchase of flour from “various English boats” during years of scarcity, 1774 and 1775.³⁵

O’Reilly left Louisiana in early 1770, only a few months after his arrival. Spanish possession of Louisiana was now unquestioned, and colonists, Indians, and slaves even cooperated with the Spanish regime. Nevertheless, assisted by the topography, borderland practices and British trade networks expanding in the Lower Mississippi continued to defy imperial boundaries.

The goal of Unzaga’s administration was to foster cooperation between the Spanish regime and Louisiana colonists and to monitor British activity in West Florida.³⁶ Unzaga’s prompt marriage to Marie Elizabeth de St. Maxent, daughter of the prominent merchant who had been so loyal to the Spanish crown, was meant to signify peaceful connection between the

³³ 16 Aug 1771, Acts of the Cabildo, vol. 1, 55: “se present en este Cabildo la grande devastacion de la Colonia, respect al poco de Comercio...lo que es muy perjudicable al Estado y a la Provincia....”

³⁴ 23 August 1771, Acts of the Cabildo, vol. 1, 56; 4 Oct 1771, Acts of the Cabildo, vol. 1, 58-9.

³⁵ 17 June 1774, Acts of the Cabildo, vol. 1, 164, quotation “varios barcos Ingleses, que navegan este reio en virtud del ultimo tratado de paz;” 3 March 1775, Acts of the Cabildo, vol. 1, 179-80; 23 Feb 1776, Acts of the Cabildo, vol. 1, 203-4.

³⁶ For a discussion of Unzaga’s administration see Frederick, “In Defense of Crown and Colony: Luis de Unzaga and Spanish Louisiana,” *LH* 49.4(2008): 389-422.

colonial elite of Louisiana and the Spanish government.³⁷ Alarm over the growth of the British colonial population and British military presence at Pensacola gave him reason to re-establish Fort St. Gabriel across from Fort Bute at Manchac.³⁸ Even so, with the colony struggling to find its place within the Spanish Empire, Unzaga recognized that the contraband trade with British networks both supplied the colonists with manufactured goods and provided a market for their produce.³⁹ If not significantly hampered by the enforcement of commercial regulations, colonial participation in these networks assured some degree of economic stability; and colonists were less likely to break into open resistance if they could continue these practices relatively unencumbered. It was more important to develop loyalty among colonists than to enforce the letter of commercial policy during this transitional moment.

Slavery and Freedom at the Beginning of the Spanish Regime

Unlike the commercial restrictions, Spanish slave codes took root almost immediately in Louisiana, and colonists and slaves appealed to them even before O'Reilly had left the colony. Both those who appealed to the law for manumission and those who sought to enforce the boundaries of slavery cooperated with the Spanish colonial government. In this case, the motivation of enslaved borderlanders to cross boundaries found common ground with Spanish regulations and customs. The avenues for freedom and redress of grievances combined with local customs like marronage as modes of resistance and agency for Louisiana's slave population. Some aspects of the laws remained unenforced, such as the ban on Indian slavery.

³⁷ Marie Elizabeth de St. Maxent was the eldest of St. Maxent's four daughters. His other daughters also married men of political significance in the colony. Marie Felicité married Bernardo de Gálvez. Victoire married a Spanish soldier, Juan Antonio de Riano y Barcena who went with Bernardo de Gálvez to Mexico. Similarly, Antoinette married Manuel de Flon, another Spaniard who served in the American Revolution and also went with Gálvez to Mexico.

³⁸ Frederick, "In Defense of Crown and Colony," 389-422.

³⁹ Clark, *New Orleans*, 178.

Louisiana's slave population had access to both the avenues for freedom and redress of grievances and traditional marronage as modes of resistance and agency. Kinship networks often served as conduits for such resistance. Meanwhile, the Spanish regime and slave owners united in the goal to reduce marronage, although they did not succeed in making significant inroads into this borderlands practice during this time.

In contrast to Ulloa who had followed orders to keep the *Code Noir* largely intact, O'Reilly implemented the *Siete Partidas*. Louisiana planters had complained that Ulloa embraced practices that differed greatly from their own customary methods of local control of slaves. Under the *Code Noire*, slaves over the age of twenty-five could be freed by masters so long as the Superior Council approved of the action. This restriction was eliminated by Spanish law. By instituting the *Siete Partidas*, O'Reilly removed full oversight of the slave code from the hands of the merchant-planter elite. Slavery in Louisiana did not conform to the letter of the Spanish law, nor were the technical standards of the Iberian world evenly applied throughout the colony. Nevertheless, slaves in Spanish Louisiana frequently appealed to the law especially as they sought legal avenues to freedom. In the city of New Orleans, "the overall number of manumissions, as well as the average per year, rose with each decade of Spanish rule, contributing to the libre population in substantial numbers."⁴⁰ In December 1769, Jean Bordenave sold a 28 year old slave woman Jeanne formerly of the Noyan estate to Louis Mallet, recognizing that Mallet made the purchase with intent to grant Jeanne her freedom. Her emancipation was ratified the same day as the sale.⁴¹ In 1773, Jean Baptiste Blaquet of Pointe

⁴⁰ Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 100-128; Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 27, quotation.

⁴¹ "Sale of a negress," 23 Dec 1769, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 6 (1923): 162; "Ratification of the Sale and Emancipation of a Slave, 23 Dec 1769, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 6 (1923): 162.

Coupée petitioned to buy the freedom of the slave Catalina and her son Francisco who belonged to his neighbor Francisco Maney.⁴²

Slaves also gained the right to purchase their freedom through *coartación*. Even if the master was unwilling, *coartación* allowed a slave to purchase his or her own freedom so long as the payment reimbursed the value that official assessors had determined for the slave.⁴³ In 1771, at the time of the public sale of the property of her mistress, an elderly slave woman named Angelique purchased her freedom. Such an act would not have been possible during the French period or under British law. Spanish tradition granted greater opportunity for slaves to make money or to profit from barter in their own right and to purchase their own freedom.⁴⁴

In 1774, Catherina, a mulatress, purchased her freedom from the estate of Jean Baptiste Destrehan. Her case is illustrative of the benefits of Spanish law and procedure for the slave seeking self-purchase. At first only one of the two administrators of Destrehan's estate, Gabriel Fazende, agreed to her self-purchase, but the other, Estevan Boré, refused. Boré argued that Catherina had injured herself to reduce her own value. However, Catherina succeeded in challenging Boré. Unzaga informed Boré that he must offer a price for Catherina and Felicité her daughter. Boré responded with a value of 600 pesos, a much inflated price for an injured slave woman and a five year old slave girl. Catherina contested the price. In the inventory of

⁴² "Juan Bautista Blaquet petitions to give freedom to a negress, Catalina, and her son, Francisco, slaves of Francisco Maney," 14 Jan 1773, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 9 (1926):149-50.

⁴³ For a better discussion of Spanish legal codes relating to slavery in Louisiana, see Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 24-27; Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, 198-200; Brasseaux, "The Administration of Slave Regulations in French Louisiana, 1724-1766," *LH* 21 (1980): 127-58; Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, chapter 3, p35-47.

⁴⁴ "Succession of Marie Bienvenu Terrebonne Inventory, appraisalment and slave of her estate, emancipation of one heir, an old slave purchases her freedom," 23 Sept 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 707-10. Angelique purchased her freedom for only 12 pesos that she had collected as alms. Another elderly slave woman was described in an inventory in this way: "Item one very old negress named Marianne, considering her decrepitude was estimated of no value and put here for record." Iris, who lived on the same plantation on the Teche, was described in a very similar way. Porteous, transcribed and trans., "Inventory of De Vaugine's Plantation in the Attakapas on Bayou Teche, 1773," *LHQ* 9 (1926): 573.

Destrehan's estate in 1771, she and her three mulatress children Carlota 10, Manon 6 and Felicité 2, had been estimated together to be worth 500 pesos. Unzaga requested another valuation, which returned at 450 pesos, which Catherina contested a final time. Toutant Beauregard, acting as appraiser, returned with the value of 320 pesos for Catherina and Felicité, which Catherina promptly paid, and the mother and daughter were emancipated on October 26, 1773.⁴⁵ This case also suggests some of the ways that leading colonists began to participate in the Spanish regime.

Slaves accessed freedom outside of the bounds of the region's metropole of New Orleans. In 1775, Maria, a slave of Fr. Barnabé at the German Coast, purchased her own freedom and that of her child Carlota for 300 pesos.⁴⁶ Slave owners far removed from the city took the opportunities to free slaves for various reasons. In Natchitoches in 1775, Sieur Poisot, Père, freed a mulatto slave woman named Agnès. She remained in Natchitoches for at least a decade and exercised her rights as a Spanish subject when she filed a complaint against Poisot's son Athanaze in 1784. In 1777, also at Natchitoches, Nanette, a black slave woman, received her liberty from her master Delachaisse.⁴⁷ In 1775, Maria, a slave of Father Barnabé at the German Coast, purchased her own freedom and that of her child Carlota for 300 pesos.⁴⁸ In these early years, the paths to freedom, including manumission, expanded for slaves in Louisiana.

Additionally, some newly arrived Spanish clergy began to advocate for the rights of slaves in Louisiana and for their full participation in the sacraments of the Catholic Church, from which custom had restricted them by the end of the French period. Slaves had received baptism

⁴⁵ "Catalina, a slave, claims her freedom, which after contestation, is granted," 25 June 1773, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 9 (1926): 556-9.

⁴⁶ "Petition of a Priest to Emancipate a Slave Owned by Him," 3 April 1775, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 8 (1925): 728.

⁴⁷ "Acte de Liberté de la mulatresse N[omm]ée Agnès," Natchitoches, 17 May 1775 ; "Libertée accordée par Mr Delachaisse a Nanette Negresse," Natchitoches, 30 May 1777; "Plainte de la N[omm]e Agnès mulatresse libre," Natchitoches, 21 Jan 1784, in "Inventory of the Notary Since 1732," PPC, legajo 198: fo 554-580.

⁴⁸ "Petition of a Priest to Emancipate a Slave Owned by Him," 3 April 1775, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 8 (1925): 728.

and served as godparents for other slaves, but, while reception of the sacraments was inconsistent throughout the broader population of colonial Louisiana, slaves had been denied access to sacraments outright at times. During the Spanish period, slaves particularly in New Orleans gained greater access to the Catholic Church. In contrast with the city, any mediating effects of the Church in the lives of slaves throughout the hinterlands of the colony were smaller if not nil.⁴⁹ However, assessors did visit outposts and appraise slaves there. Based on these appraisals, slaves did purchase their freedom throughout the colony, and local colonial officials came to enforce the rights of slaves to freedom through *coartación* and the rights of slaves to file grievances against their masters for harsh treatment. This gap between slaves at the metropole and the periphery with regard to access to the Church and its sacraments may have been greater than the gap in access to the Spanish customs promulgated by O'Reilly.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 54-7. For a discussion of the place of Catholic women of African descent in Louisiana from the colonial period through the antebellum period, see Clark and Gould, "The Feminine Face of Afro-Catholicism in New Orleans, 1727-1852," *The WMQ*, Third Series, 59.2(Apr., 2002): 409-448. These scholars attribute much of the character of Catholicism especially of Afro-Catholicism in New Orleans to the persistent presence of the Ursuline nuns in the city and to the West African origins of most slaves brought to Louisiana. Both contributed to women's participation as leaders in Catholic practice in Louisiana, especially in catechesis and devotional practices. For more on the Ursuline nuns across the French, Spanish, and American periods, see Emily Clark, *Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society, 1727-1834* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2007).

⁵⁰ Fr. Quintanilla to Bernardo de Galvez, Natchitoches, 7 May 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 557; Fr. Luis de Quintanilla to Bormé, Natchitoches, 30 April 1780, legajo 193b: fo 558; DeMézières to Bernardo de Galvez, Natchitoches, 22 May 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: 560. Quintanilla complained that the DeMézières were working their slaves on Sundays, which seems to have been a widespread practice at that post. Quintanilla also complained against Mme. de Soto and Mr. Metoyer for the illicit relationship between Metoyer and Coincoin the slave of Mme. de Soto that the two slaveholders facilitated. For more on this incident see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Quintanilla's Crusade, 1775-1783: 'Moral Reform' and Its Consequences on the Natchitoches Frontier," *LH* 42.3 (2001): 277-302, and Gary B. Mills, *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1977), 13-22; "Inventory of the Notary Since 1732," Natchitoches, 23 Oct 1777, and "Memoire du P Curé F. Louis de Quintanilla contre le Sr. Mettoyer et Mme Dn Manuel de Stot au Sujet d'une Negresse Louée au dit Sieur Mettoyer," PPC, legajo 198: fo 560. For more on Mme. de Soto, who proved a formidable force in Natchitoches, see Elizabeth M Chrysler-Stacy, "Marie des Nieges de St. Denis DeSoto: Mother of De Soto Parish," *LH* 35.3 (1994): 350-54. See also and succession and related litigation that followed the death of Marie de St. Denis' brother, "Intestate Succession of Mr. St. Denis (Louis Jucheraud de St. Denis) inventory and valuation of his estate," 25 Jan 1778, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 13 (1930): 177-93.

Property of free blacks and of slaves was protected by Spanish law. In contrast to the neighboring British regime, slaves in Louisiana had a legal personality by which they could testify in court and hold property (*peculiam*). Enforcement of Spanish law also secured the right of free blacks to inherit property. In 1774, Louis Ranson contested the right of the free black woman Angelica to receive the clothes, linen, and furniture left to her by the recently deceased Jean Perret of New Orleans. Ranson stated that

We declare notwithstanding the said [blacks] have been set free and jointly with their freedom it incapacitates them to receive from the whites any donation intervivos by cause of death or other motive. We wish in case that this should have been done by anyone let it become null and applied to the nearest hospital.

The ruling of Alcalde Nicholas Forstall was in favor of Angelica, who received the legacy.⁵¹

Libres both bought the freedom of slaves and owned slaves themselves. The story of the libre woman Jeanne reflected these realities. An example of the creolization of slaves transported to Louisiana early in the French period, Jeanne stated that she was born in Guinea whereas the legitimate daughter of Berry and Cecilia she was probably baptized. After she attained freedom, she ran a shop in New Orleans with the free black called “Old Peter,” whom she made executor of her will and her inventory, “consisting of goods by the yard, cotton, calico, silks of various colors, thread, buttons, etc, garments made up, such as shirts, smocks, etc.” At the time of her death, she owned a slave, Francisca, who was about thirty years old. Her will designated a portion of her estate for the purchase of “Joseph aged about 25 and Juana, aged about 20... for the price of their appraisement and when this is done to liberate them from slavery...this act she also does because of the great love she bears for them having raised them as her own children in her own home.” As a free woman, Jeanne could own property, operate a

⁵¹ “Angelica, a free negress, petitions for the clothes, linen and furniture left her by will of the late Juan Perret,” 25 May 1774, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 10 (1927): 445-6.

store, own slaves, and write a will that had standing before the law. Further, she could purchase the freedom of enslaved persons. And in the litigation that followed the inventory of her property, free and enslaved blacks presented testimony.⁵²

After O'Reilly left Louisiana in 1770, Unzaga's administration also witnessed a collaboration of colonists and administrators anxious about social control in a tense borderland. The cabildo and governor came together to tighten control over slaves, libres, and fugitives and to drive a wedge between libre and enslaved populations. In 1770, the cabildo also authorized the creation of a force of free blacks and mulattoes, called *cuadrilleros*, to pursue fugitives and maroon communities. In 1773, after a meeting of the *cabildo abierto*, or open cabildo, in which Unzaga was able to receive the input of slave owners from the wider area around the city, the cabildo agreed to direct the use of the slave fund to pay for the capture of fugitive slaves.⁵³ Unzaga ordered searches to focus on the areas behind plantations near New Orleans, above and below the city where maroons were known to live. Slaves from across the colony gathered in these maroon communities. For example, Jasmin and Guillaume journeyed from plantations in the Attakapas.⁵⁴ Fugitive slaves faced harsh punishment under Unzaga, who proposed "'quick, quite active and severe action...they must be treated with all the sternness of the law.'"⁵⁵ Over the course of the 1770s, the cabildo also issued bounties for fugitive slaves caught to promote

⁵² "Succession of a free negress called Juana, inventory and valuation of her estate with much litigation over the custody of proceeds," 21 Apr 1776, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 11 (1928): 519-26. Another example of a libre woman in New Orleans owning slaves, "Magdalena Canella, a free mulattress, vs. Luis Bearepos for the possession of her slave Adelaide," 20 Jan 1777, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 12 (1929): 341-8. In this case, the slave girl Adelaide had been a gift to Magdalena when she was Bearepos' mistress and by whom she had two children. He also gave her a piece of property near New Orleans. For other incidents of libres purchasing the freedom of the enslaved see: "Intestate Succession of Marie Eva LaBranche, wife of Alexandro Baure. Inventory and valuation of her estate," 14 Sept 1779, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 119-32; "Elena, a free negress petitions for the freedom of her son, a slave of Henrique Desprez at the price of his appraisalment," 12 Aug 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 619-21.

⁵³ Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 154-7.

⁵⁴ Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 60; Porteous, transcribed and trans., "Inventory of De Vaugine's Plantation in the Attakapas on Bayou Teche, 1773," *LHQ* 9 (1926): 573.

⁵⁵ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 139.

their apprehension.⁵⁶ By doing so, the cabildo encouraged cooperation of colonists with the Spanish administration, a chief goal of the Unzaga governorship, at the same time as it promoted order within the colony.

Maroons continued to take advantage of the topography of the Lower Mississippi to form communities, and in doing so they participated in networks that connected them to the enslaved population and suggested a threat to slave and land owning colonists. These communities—some more sedentary and some more mobile but often in the cypress swampland—primarily existed in Spanish Louisiana where they had taken root early during the French period behind the few scattered plantations in the swamps and along the bayous and below New Orleans on the bas-de-fleuve.⁵⁷ Slaves were less likely to fly to Indian nations as they had during the French period because of Spanish and British efforts to create divisions between blacks and Indians.⁵⁸ Marronage was frequently “a group phenomenon” because cooperation encouraged survival and even the establishment of communities such as Terre Gaillarde, situated to the east of New Orleans.⁵⁹ As these communities grew during the 1770s, they also engaged in theft from estates and trade to supplement small scale agriculture, hunting, and fishing.⁶⁰ And maroons often had access to arms, causing further anxiety for authorities. In 1771, a fugitive slave shot Mariana, a slave woman.⁶¹ The criminal proceedings of the German Coast note in 1776 a “sale of a maroon cache of arms in the fields of M. Duparc.”⁶² A band of at least seven maroons was known to be

⁵⁶ Ibid., 138; for a discussion of the efforts of the Cabildo with regard to regulation of slaves and libres throughout the Spanish period, see Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 154-182.

⁵⁷ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 205.

⁵⁸ Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 138-40.

⁵⁹ Thomas Fiehrer, “The African Presence in Colonial Louisiana,” in Robert Macdonald, ed., *Louisiana’s Black Heritage* (New Orleans, Louisiana State Museum, 1979), 17.

⁶⁰ Kerr, *Petty Felony, Slave Defiance, and Frontier Villainy*, 139; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 203; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 138-40.

⁶¹ Kerr, *Petty Felony, Slave Defiance, and Frontier Villainy*, 216.

⁶² Kerr, *Petty Felony, Slave Defiance, and Frontier Villainy*, 270.

“armed with gun and pistolett” in the LaFourche district in the winter of 1772.⁶³ Slaves from West Florida attempted to join these maroon communities also. Meanwhile, some slaves in Spanish Louisiana still attempted to find freedom in West Florida, perhaps seeking kin or travel to Indian villages.⁶⁴ Marronage continued to challenge the slave society of Louisiana and the imperial and local authority structures of that society even as those same structures attempted to constrict the mobility and existence of maroon communities and fugitive slaves.

With a decree issued December 7, 1769, O’Reilly also implemented Spanish law forbidding the enslavement of Indians.⁶⁵ Indian slaves lived among the African and mulatto slaves in domestic settings in the city of New Orleans and on plantations on the Mississippi and outposts as far away as Natchitoches. Indian slaves also intermarried and had children with black slaves, as evidenced by the denotation “grif” or “griffe.” The slave inventory from the succession of Jean de Macarty in 1764 provides a window into this phenomenon. Margueritte, a “sauvagesse” age 19 lived in the Macarty city home with other domestic slaves, including an older woman probably of African origin named Gachie, Hypolitte the only male slave at the city dwelling, and Thereze aged 35 listed with her three black children Françoise, Theodore, and Pierre as a family unit. Meanwhile, Thereze’s “grif” nine year old son Louis lived on Macarty’s

⁶³ Judice to Unzaga, LaFourche des Chitimacha, 15 November 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 466.

⁶⁴ Usner, 137; Descoudreaux, May 2, 1773, Manchac, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 633-4.

⁶⁵ For more on Indian slavery in Louisiana and the French and Spanish borderlands see Stephen Webre, “The Problem of Indian Slavery In Spanish Louisiana, 1769-1803,” *LH* (1984): 117-137; Daniel H. Usner, “American Indians in Colonial New Orleans,” in *The Spanish Presence in Louisiana*, vol. 2: 296-306; H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 55-63; for discussions of Indian slavery in North America see also Allan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (Yale University Press, 2002); Brooks, James F.: *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Kathleen A. DuVal, “Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana,” *WMQ*, 65 (2008), 267-304; Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007); Barr, “From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 92. 1 (2005): 19-46; Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007). For more on métissage, see also, Jennifer M. Spear, “Colonial Intimacies: Legislating Sex in French Louisiana,” *WMQ* 60. 1 (2003): 75-98.

plantation. The inventory indicates that although there were Indian women living on the plantation, there were no Indian men, a reflection of the gender dynamics of the trade in Indian slaves in Louisiana and the Spanish North American borderlands. In 1774 at Natchitoches, the commandant DeMézières himself ceded two Indian slaves, Hector and Felix, to a man named Duchene. Indian slavery continued in this borderland of Texas and Louisiana for years to come.⁶⁶ In spite of the decree banning Indian slavery, Indians continued to live as slaves in Louisiana into the early territorial period.⁶⁷ Thus, by and large, Indian slaves in Louisiana did not receive appropriate access to freedom because this aspect of the Spanish codes went largely unenforced.

The implementation of the *Siete Partidas* did alter the institution of slavery in Louisiana and the slave society itself. It provided greater opportunity for slaves to become free colonists. It also offered new ways for slaves, libres, and slave-owners to cooperate with the colonial government. Spanish Law provided means for slaves to resist the oppression of slavery. They embraced the Spanish legal code as a way to cross borders of slavery and freedom. Those with interests in perpetuating the slave society embraced the Spanish government as a way to increase controls. The greater access to legal freedom introduced to slaves in Louisiana during the

⁶⁶ “Cession des N[omm]és Hector et Felixe Sauvage faite par Mr DeMézières à Duchesne,” Natchitoches, 22 Dec 1774; “cession faite par Pierre Gerald L’veillé Dune Sauvagesese à Nicola Thibault,” Natchitoches, 15 July 1775; “Accord fait entre Augustine Duchenne et Gérôme Matuliche pour les Sauvages Hector et Felix,” Natchitoches, 13 Nov 1775; “Instance de Mr Ch[evali]er Coullon DeVilliers,” Natchitoches, 11 June 1777, in “Inventory of the Notary Since 1732,” PPC, legajo 198 : fo 553-60. The Indian women living on the plantation included Charlotte aged 16, Marie 15, and a “petite sauvagesse” Gotton 8 years of age.

⁶⁷ Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 132-3; see also Villiers to Galvez, Arkansas, 27 Feb 1780, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 373-4; H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 56-62. In his, “American Indians in Colonial New Orleans” in *Spanish Presence in Louisiana*, vol. 2, Daniel Usner has noted that “One also should conjecture that liaisons between Indian and Afro-American slaves produced children who were ascribed by owners to Negro and mulatto identities and that some offspring of Indian women and white men grew up free”(298). The latter was the case, for example, with the children of Nicolas Daublin and his Indian wife Catherine who lived in the LaFourche District. See Census of Acadians at Kabahannosé 1777 Rive Droit, PPC, legajo 190.

Spanish period helped to engender a population of free blacks and mulattoes who would prove important to the Spanish militia in the decades ahead.

Indians Negotiate Alliances across Boundaries

During the era of partition, seeking to maintain their independence and the stability of their communities, many *petites nations* Indians took advantage of the opportunity to cross the imperial border between Spanish and British territories as a means to negotiate simultaneously with Spanish and British representatives. Both Spanish and British colonial governments were interested in exclusive alliances with each of these groups. Because colonial representatives sought out alliances with the *petites nations* on behalf of their respective empires these Indian groups, though small, were able to negotiate from a place of power. Agents of empire overestimated their own influence over the actions of the *petites nations*. By the end of the 1770s, many smaller Indian groups formerly allied with France had crossed the Mississippi to Louisiana, but they had done so in this decade more out of fear of the Creek-Choctaw conflict than out of any interactions with colonial officials. *Petites nations* Indians balanced relations with larger Indian groups besides alliances with empires.

Recently relocated Indian groups, the Taensas, Pacanas, Mobilians, and Alibamons were caught up in the tug of war for Indian allegiance between Spanish and British officials along the river. These officials included individuals such as John Thomas at British Manchac, Louis Judice of LaFourche des Chitimachas, and Charles Descoudreaux at Spanish Manchac. These Indian groups sought to placate both sides, to receive gifts and medals from them both, and thus to locate themselves in a position of relative security, friends of both Britain and Spain. For

example, a Taensa chief and a Mobilian chief each held British and Spanish medals in 1772. British and Spanish officials continued to engage these groups on Indian terms and ceremony.⁶⁸

Spanish and British officials tried to insist that Indians ally only with one European power, but Indians continued to seek negotiations according to their own customs. Balthasar DeVilliers of the Pointe Coupée settlement told the Mobilian chief that he could not receive his gifts nor those of the Biloxis whom he represented because the chief had entered into friendship with the British.⁶⁹ In March 1772, at Thomas's beckoning and bargaining, the Mobilians, Alibamons, and Pacanas left Louisiana. Thomas settled them with the Taensas on land above Pointe Coupée on the British side of the river. Thomas noted that "they gave me the United dance and are now clearing a spot of ground."⁷⁰ Meanwhile, these Indians continued to visit Spanish Manchac. After promising loyalty to the Spanish, a Pacana chief told Descoudreaux that he understood peace between the Spanish and the British to mean that he could take each by the hand.⁷¹ The Alibamons sang the calumet to Descoudreaux at Spanish Manchac just after stopping at British Manchac. Soon the Mobilians returned to Louisiana where for a short time they settled below Pointe Coupée and cultivated land abandoned by a German widow. This plot of land was also a good location for trade and continued access to British merchants.⁷² Smaller Indian groups often chose to relocate near colonial settlements.

⁶⁸ Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 7 May 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 603-4; Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 23 April 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 596.

⁶⁹ Fitzpatrick to Charles Stuart, Manchac, 9 Nov 1772, *Merchant of Manchac*, 137-8. By this time, the Mobilians were a very small nation. The census of Rapides in 1773, has only this to say about them: they numbered 7 men, 6 women, and 4 children. DeVille, *Rapides Post on Red River; Census and Military Documents for Central Louisiana, 1769-1800* (1985): 20.

⁷⁰ Council Chamber, Pensacola, 7 April 1772, WFLP, reel 2: fo 55-67.

⁷¹ Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 20 March 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 585-6; Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 7 May 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 603-4.

⁷² Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 23 April 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 596.

The Tunicas attempted to assemble a boundary to protect their village and their livelihood. With their town across the Mississippi from Pointe Coupée, the Tunicas also continued to negotiate friendship with British and Spanish officials, and they struggled against the encroachment of settlers and livestock. The leader Lattanash received a British medal from Thomas at the same time that Balthasar DeVilliers at Pointe Coupée was giving the Tunicas gifts. A Swiss trader in British West Florida named John Blommart complicated Thomas' relationship with the Indians when he cultivated lands that the Tunicas claimed as their own. Meanwhile, DeVilliers and Descoudreaux worried about the success Thomas seemed to have among the Tunicas and feared Indian aggression at Point Coupée and at Manchac, for the two Tunica chiefs, Lattanash and Perruquier, told of British presents dispensed by Thomas. In 1775, the Tunicas expressed their friendship with Thomas. The "chiefs, head men, warriors, and women" ceded him a tract of land "adjoining to their village" on the Mississippi "after mutual deliberations and several councils and debates." The decision reflects cooperative decision-making within Tunica society and revealed that the group understood themselves to hold land in common. The group also expressed their alliance with Thomas, for they called him "John Thomas Tonica." The gift of land was conditional: Thomas and his heirs must keep up a fence well enough to "keep off the cattle belonging to the white inhabitants in their neighborhood from encroaching on the lands and destroying the cornfields." These fields were most likely tended by the Tunica women. The Indian struggle against encroachment of livestock was thus written into the agreement. The document bore the mark of the then principal chief Mingo Fallia, the second chief Carriere, and the governor of the village Nachuchue Mingo. Interestingly, Tunica names reflect French if not also Christian influence and interaction with other Indian societies, for other

signers included Margaret Arkansa, and three men La O Rose, Jean Baptiste, and Baptiste Dandin.⁷³

The Creek-Choctaw war contributed to tensions on the Lower Mississippi, prompting frequent Indian relocation and encouraging *petites nations* and settlers to cooperate in wake of the persistent threat of being drawn into the conflict. The Tallapoosas expressed anger at both the British and the Spanish, and in their conflict with the Choctaws targeted the *petites nations*.⁷⁴ Throughout 1772 and 1773, rumors of Tallapoosa attacks on Mississippi River communities frightened merchants, Indians, and colonists alike. The Taensas awaited a raid in August of 1772 after the Tallapoosas claimed that one of their chiefs was killed at the Taensa village. The Tallapoosas did attack the Taensa village, killing the chief, and they pillaged Fitzpatrick's store at Manchac. The Taensas and British settlers living at Manchac made haste to Fort St. Gabriel, where they received Spanish protection. Similarly, the Tunicas fled to Pointe Coupée.⁷⁵

By February of 1773, the Taensas, Pacanas, and Alibamons had tired of life near Manchac as tensions among the Creeks and Choctaws began to escalate. After petitioning

⁷³ Descoudreaux to Unzaga, no date but follows document dated 23 April 1772 in a set of chronologically organized documents, Manchac, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 599; Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 27 Feb 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 531; Rea, "Redcoats and Redskins," 16, 28; Agreement of Several Tonica Chiefs, Headmen, Warriors, and Women and John Thomas, 29 April 1775, WFLP, reel 19: 136-8, quotation. Brain, *Tunica Archaeology*, 302, 411, following quotation 319: "The strength of aboriginal beliefs is also revealed by Tunica commitment to the mound concept. Their putative ancestors, the Quizquiz, lived among many mounds. The survivors who became the Tunica adopted the most important mound site on the lower Yazoo River and worshipped in a temple on the summit of the largest mound...the latest known example of 'mound' usage in the valley. Even their final settlement at Marksville is not without the image: as remembered in their folklore, Tunica women were believed to have built the mounds at the nearby Marksville site, although those mounds predated the Tunica by two millennia." Brain makes the suggestion that if this indicates a gendered division of labor, women may have been the recognized builders of the mounds. Brain also notes the limited number of Christian symbols uncovered at Tunica burial sites: only 4 crosses and some rosary beads. These findings reflect the French period because the location of the Tunica village during the Spanish period has been destroyed by changes in the course of the Mississippi River. The Tunicas had received a French missionary in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The minute inroads he made among them had been reinforced over time at the very least by occasional visits from missionaries who did baptize Tunica children and by contact with the French living at Pointe Coupée. Perhaps this accounts for the Christian names of some of the Indians who signed the gift of land to Thomas.

⁷⁴ Unzaga to Verret, New Orleans, 29 July 1773, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 180; Judice to Unzaga, LaFourche, 6 Feb 1774, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 529-31.

⁷⁵ Descoudreaux to Unzaga, No date but follows document dated 23 Apr 1772, Manchac, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 599.

Unzaga, they settled that spring at Opelousas, the same area the Alibamons had left when they migrated east to the Mississippi the year before.⁷⁶ In 1773, twenty three Alibamons living at Rapides were included in the annual census there.⁷⁷ Ultimately, these *petites nations* appealed to Spanish authorities to settle in Louisiana, but it was the threat of involvement in an Indian conflict, the Creek-Choctaw war, not the competing European empires that most contributed to their decision to settle farther west of the Mississippi River.



Fort Bute(a) and Fort St. Gabriel(c) were located across the “ditch” of bayou Manchac off the Iberville River. “Plano a la estima de la costa de Ybervil desde Manchac hasta la largavista de la ysla des Marais,” 15 July 1779, Pares, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Florida Luisiana, 83.

The disruption that the Creek-Choctaw War occasioned produced friction at times between settlers and *petites nations*, as well as some cooperation. Unlike British officials, Spanish officials were instructed to encourage peaceful relations among the warring Indians. However, they failed to understand that the war had less to do directly with European imperial competition than conflict among the Choctaws and Creeks themselves.⁷⁸ Soon, the Houmas

⁷⁶ Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 16 February 1773, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 634-6; Fuselier de la Clair to Unzaga, 31 March 1773, PPC, legajo, 189A: folio 46-7.

⁷⁷ DeVille, *Rapides Post on Red River; Census and Military Documents for Central Louisiana, 1769-1800*, (1985), 20. Several Alibamons had Christian names. These were Antoine and his wife Clemince, Charlo and his wife Lorince, Nicolas and his wife Françoise, Valentin and his wife Jeanneton and their son, Pantiabé and his wife Marie Jeanne, Joalimantela with his wife and two sons, Actayathé with his wife and two sons, and another Alibamon man with his wife and their two sons.

⁷⁸ Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 12 Aug 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 611-3.

began to fear a Tallapoosa raid also and built a palisade for self-defense at Lafourche.⁷⁹ This act of defense frightened the Acadians, who reacted by sending representatives to New Orleans to petition for permission to relocate. Although nothing came of this effort, such a scenario reflects the fears perpetuated along the Lower Mississippi of continuing Indian conflict.⁸⁰ During the summer of 1773, joined by twenty Houma warriors, Judice prepared the militia of LaFourche for a Tallapoosa attack, which never materialized.⁸¹ That winter, the Houmas collaborated with the Choctaws and petites nations in a plan to attack the Tallapoosas.⁸² Meanwhile, the commandant at St. James, Nicolas Verret prepared the colonists of his post and the Houmas for the firing of the canon which would signify Tallapoosa attack.⁸³ Across the river, Charles Stuart and the British commissary to the Choctaws attempted to encourage friendship with that nation.⁸⁴ Governor Chester of West Florida asked continually that the forts at Mobile and Pensacola be prepared to defend against Creek attack. The Chickasaws and Quapaws had promised to come to aid the British.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Judice to Unzaga, LaFourche, 7 October 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 450-1.

⁸⁰ Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 182.

⁸¹ Judice to Unzaga, LaFourche, 29 May 1773 PPC, legajo 189A: fo 476-7.

⁸² Descoudreaux to Unzaga, Manchac, 16 February 1773, PPC, legajo, 189A: folio 634-6.

⁸³ Verret to Unzaga, St. James, 27 July 1773, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 178-9. Nicolas Verret became commandant at St. James de Kabahannocé, also called the First Acadian Coast, at the retirement of his father-in-law, Jacques Cantrelle. Cantrelle's daughter Marie Marguerite married Verret and daughter Marie Jeanne married Louis Judice.

⁸⁴ Stephenson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 5 May 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 129; Dickson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 9 May 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 139-40; Peter Chester, Pensacola, 12 May 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 149-51.

⁸⁵ Chester to Hillsboro, Pensacola, 5 Nov 1772, Haldimand Papers, reel 7: 166; Peter Chester to William Johnstone commanding officer of artillery in West Florida, 26 March 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 97; Alex Ma'cullagh to Thomas Hutchins, Engineer for carrying of His Majesty's Works on the Fort of Pensacola, Council Chamber Pensacola, 26 March 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 98; Stephenson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 5 May 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 129; Dickson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 9 May 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 139-40; Peter Chester, Pensacola, 12 May 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 149-151; Chester to Dartmouth, Pensacola, 7 June 1774, WFLP, reel 7: 219-224. Thomas Hutchins was a cartographer of significance for the early United States. In the war, he sided with the colonies. He became the first geographer general of the United States. See also, Peter J. Kastor, *William Clark's World: Describing America in an Age of Unknowns* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 72-3.

The *petites nations* crossed back and forth from Spanish to British territory many times during the years of partition. Despite any gains local officials perceived that they made among these groups, their decisions to relocate or to engage officials in diplomacy reflected political decisions of each group rather than the diplomatic success of local officials. Finally, while *petites nations* Indians crossed the Mississippi with ease, they took refuge in Spanish Louisiana to put themselves at greater distance from Choctaw towns and villages. The *petites nations* continued to operate independently of empire and to disregard imperially imposed borders.

British Atlantic Networks

As the Spanish turned to stabilizing Louisiana in order to strengthen the border with British North America, British merchants turned their eye to the Lower Mississippi as a new market for trade. The networks of which British merchants living in the Lower Mississippi Valley were a part introduced new ties to the Atlantic World and especially to British North American colonies. Trade in flour and manufactured goods created commercial ties between the Lower Mississippi and British North America while the slave trade connected the region with the British Caribbean. British merchants readily took advantage of opportunities to purchase land on both sides of the Mississippi and to trade and settle in both British and Spanish territories. Although trade through British networks was illegal during the 1770s, local Spanish officials could do little but accept the expansion of British trade. By soliciting flour at times, Spanish governors actually set precedent for sanctioning this particular trade with British North America.

Merchants participating in Atlantic trade networks regularly transcended international borders. In the Lower Mississippi River Valley, they did so both through commerce and land ownership. The activities of the firm Willing & Morris and of their representative Oliver Pollock

best exemplify this phenomenon. Merchants like Pollock used their multiple land grants as places from which to launch participation in local trade networks, negotiate with officials in both Spanish Louisiana and British West Florida, open stores, and begin the production of lucrative crops such as rice and indigo.

O'Reilly's enforcement of Spanish commercial policy was not absolute. In fact he offered the opportunity for sanctioned trade between British North American ports and New Orleans through the merchant Oliver Pollock, who was himself already well connected to Atlantic trade networks. Before setting sail to take possession of the colony of Louisiana in 1769, O'Reilly turned to Pollock to secure flour for the city of New Orleans. Pollock had migrated from northern Ireland to Philadelphia before traversing the West Indies on behalf of several Philadelphia firms. Pollock was involved in the slave trade and also peddled grain, rum, and manufactured goods. O'Reilly met him in Havana where Pollock operated as a factor.⁸⁶ After reaching New Orleans with the requested flour, he stayed on and supplied flour through his business connections in Philadelphia, particularly through the firm of Willing & Morris, which was expanding its trade during the 1770s and turning greater attention to Spanish ports.⁸⁷ Unlike most British merchants operating in Louisiana, Pollock gained licit entry to the Spanish colony.

⁸⁶ James Hunter to Oliver Pollock, St. Kitts, 19 August 1767, Oliver Pollock Papers, Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU, Hill Memorial Library; James, James Alton, "Oliver Pollock, Financier of the Revolution in the West" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 16.1 (1929), 68-9; Light T. Cummins, "Oliver Pollock: An Early Anglo Landowner on the Lower Mississippi, 1769-1824," *LH* 29.1 (1988): 38-41; Light T. Cummins, "Anglo Merchants and Capital Migration in Spanish Colonial New Orleans" in *New Orleans and Urban Louisiana, Part A. Settlement to 1860*, ed. Samuel C. Shepherd, Jr., vol. 14 of The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in *LH* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, ULL, 2005), 251.

⁸⁷ Clark, *New Orleans*, 174; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 36; Richard Harrison to Oliver Pollock, New Orleans, 7 July 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 294-5; James, "Oliver Pollock," 69; Cummins, "Anglo Merchants and Capital Migration," 251; Charles Rappleye, *Robert Morris: Financier of the American Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 23-4. See also, Linda K. Salvucci, "Atlantic Intersections: Early American Commerce and the Rise of the Spanish West Indies (Cuba)" *The Business History Review* 79.4 (2005): 781-809, for a discussion of merchants like Robert Morris looking to the Spanish Empire to expand their business prospects through licit and illicit channels of trade.

Landownership in either Spanish Louisiana or British West Florida did not preclude landownership in the other colony. Indeed, numerous British merchants owned land in both colonies, as did Pollock. They also often engaged in land speculation in the Floridas.⁸⁸ Pollock employed dual identities to facilitate land ownership across empires: he was both a British citizen and a man who had taken an oath of loyalty to the Spanish crown. Although he did business at Spanish New Orleans and owned land in and near the city, Pollock took advantage of his access to British West Florida and as a British subject to obtain land in that colony.⁸⁹ Pollock obtained two land grants on the Mississippi for Thomas Willing and Robert Morris. There Pollock developed a rice plantation that he called “Orange Grove,” with over thirty slaves. The grants that Pollock procured for himself included tracts of land at Tangipahoa, Manchac, and across the Mississippi River from Pointe Coupée. All three locations were already prime loci for the contraband trade. Pollock engaged in trade by permission of O’Reilly and later of Unzaga at the same time as he took part in contraband trade in Spanish Louisiana and in British West Florida.

At Pollock’s suggestion, Thomas Willing’s brother James migrated to West Florida to enter a venture with Pollock, an indigo plantation on the Mississippi, and their efforts to expand trade and access to land suggested the significance of personal networks.⁹⁰ General Frederick Haldimand’s position of authority in West Florida may have served his friends of Willing &

⁸⁸ Rappleye, *Robert Morris*, 24; For land speculation in East Florida and the involvement of Atlantic merchant communities see also David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Jane G. Landers, ed.: *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000).

⁸⁹ Cummins, “Oliver Pollock,” 37, 42; Land Grant to Oliver Pollock, 2 Dec. 1772, WFLP, reel 6: fo 61; “Estevan Barre vs. Santiago Laffont,” 18 Aug 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 627. In this case, it is noted that Pollock has a home in New Orleans on Royal or Conti near the corner where those two streets intersect. “Salomon Mallines vs. Francisco Pascalis de la Barre,” 14 July 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 527, the first document presented in this case indicates that Pollock owned a plantation at Chapitoulas in addition to one at Houmas.

⁹⁰ James, “Oliver Pollock,” 68-9; Cummins, “Oliver Pollock,” 38-41; Power of Attorney, WFLP, reel 17: 356-8.

Morris well in establishing their connections with the Lower Mississippi Valley. Thomas Willing and Frederick Haldimand were personal friends and correspondents.⁹¹ With Haldimand's assistance, James Willing received several grants of land, including land at Tunica Bend, located above Pointe Coupée, and a lot in the town of Manchac.⁹² The land at Tunica Bend was the former site of the Tunica village and was originally granted to Haldimand and thus provides an example of the lands previously used by Indians that settlers came to occupy.⁹³ Pollock and Willing developed the land at Tunica Bend as an indigo plantation, later called "Old Tunica Plantation."⁹⁴ James Willing made further use of his brother's connection with Haldimand to advance his and Pollock's business ventures in West Florida. During the summer of 1772, Willing arrived at New Orleans with a cargo to supply the Indian trade at Illinois, but upon hearing of the reduced British presence there, he sought Haldimand's assistance with its disposal.⁹⁵ Also in 1772, Willing operated a store at Manchac, on town lot 31, and sold dry goods and flour.⁹⁶ Haldimand was also helpful in James Willing's efforts to secure a contract to supply flour for the troops at Pensacola. Meanwhile, Pollock was at New Orleans seeing "about

⁹¹ Haldimand to Thomas Willing, Pensacola, 3 June 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 24: fo 19; Thomas Willing to Haldimand, Philadelphia, 20 Sept 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 193-195.

⁹² Haldimand to Mr. Willing, Pensacola, 30 July 1772, Haldimand Papers, reel 24: fo 41. Pollock had initially proposed acquiring this land. The transaction was problematic perhaps because of the succession of Henry Fairchild. His wife was not in West Florida by the time Willing was attempting to purchase the land, and the transaction was carried out fully only after a series of misunderstandings that involved Blommart who also claimed the land. Fairchild and Haldimand had originally received grants to tracts of land at this place. Cummins, "Oliver Pollock," 41; Stephenson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 14 Jan 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 47-48; Stephenson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 21 Feb 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 63-4; Stephenson to Haldimand, Pensacola, 15 Aug 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: fo 189-190.

⁹³ Brain, *Tunica Archaeology*, 41. Haldimand received four large grants of land, including 500 acres at "Old Tunica Village." This was the same land that James Willing was granted in 1772 and the same place that Pollock owned later. Pollock abandoned it amidst his personal debt crisis after the American Revolution. Surveyor Zenon Trudeau received it as a land grant. Trudeau's widow resold the plantation to Pollock in 1789. In 1801 Pollock sold the property in a transaction in Philadelphia to his brother Jarret Pollock.

⁹⁴ Cummins, "Oliver Pollock," 41.

⁹⁵ James Willing to Haldimand, New Orleans, 6 July 1772, Haldimand Papers, reel 26: fo 292.

⁹⁶ At Council held in the Council Chamber at Pensacola, 12 Nov 1772, WFLP 6: fo 46-49; Fitzpatrick to Evan and James Jones, Manchac, 19 July 1772, and Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Manchac, 3 Sept 1772, *Merchant of Manchac*, 124-25, 129.

makg a contract for supply this colony.”⁹⁷ Indeed, Willing & Morris aspired to supply both British and Spanish troops on the Gulf Coast.

Through James Willing’s and Oliver Pollock’s networks in Louisiana and West Florida, Willing & Morris sent ships laden with flour and manufactured goods regularly from Philadelphia to Spanish New Orleans, and so participated in the early stages of the first consistent flow of such cargo to the Lower Mississippi. The *Nancy & Molly*, *The Robert Morris*, and *The Charming Nancy* were vessels belonging to Willing & Morris that made the trip from Philadelphia to New Orleans many times. Robert Bethel, master of the *Nancy & Molly*, had traveled to and from New Orleans as captain of the *Charming Nancy* in 1767, at least once in 1770, twice in 1771.⁹⁸ Edward Codrington of London, who also did business with Jacob Blackwell, a customs collector at Pensacola, sent goods aboard the *Nancy & Molly*.⁹⁹ As tensions between the British North American colonies and their motherland escalated, Willing & Morris saw fit to sell the *Nancy & Molly* to Pollock in July of 1775.¹⁰⁰

During the 1770s, British merchants in the Lower Mississippi Valley became invested in the region through land ownership and simultaneously promoted stability of Spanish Louisiana

⁹⁷ James Willing to Haldimand, New Orleans, 11 Nov 1772, Haldimand Papers, reel 26: fo 310; Oliver Pollock to Haldimand, New Orleans, 1 Dec 1772, Haldimand Papers, reel 26: fo 315-6.

“Charles Town, in South Carolina, January 5,” March 5, 1767, *Pennsylvania Gazette*;

⁹⁸ “CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES, Cleared at the Customs House “Brig Charming Nancy, R. Bethell, New Orleans,” 20 Dec 1770, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; “CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES “Brig Charming Nancy, R. Bethell, N. Orleans,” 13 June 1771, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; “CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES “cleared...Brig Charming Nancy, R. Bethell, N. Orleans,” 27 June 1771, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; “CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES. “Inward Brig Charming Nancy, R. Bethel, N. Orleans,” 5 Dec 1771, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; “CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES “ Inward Entries...Brig Charming Nancy, R. Bethell, from New Orleans,” 12 Dec 1771, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; “PROVIDENCE (Rhode island) July 4 “Capt. Bethell, in a Brig from Philadelphia, arrived in the River just before Capt. Peck sailed, after a Passage of 32 Days,” 16 July 1772, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; PHILADELPHIA, January 4, “Arrived from this Port...Bethell, at New Orleans,” 5 Jan 1774, *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

⁹⁹ Fabel, *Economy of West Florida*, 32.

¹⁰⁰ Pensacola, 20 July 1775, WFLP, Reel 17: 353-6.

settlements through trade.¹⁰¹ Like Pollock, many of these Atlanticly connected merchants owned sizeable tracts of land in British West Florida. Isaac Monsanto and Patrick Macnamara also developed indigo plantations on or near the Mississippi.¹⁰² John Waugh, who traded with London and was a creditor of Isaac Monsanto, received a grant of 400 acres adjacent to Oliver Pollock's at Tangipahoa in addition to the lot he obtained at Manchac.¹⁰³ Francis Murphy also straddled the empires separated by the Mississippi. Murphy arrived in New Orleans in 1772 as a representative of Barnard and Michael Gratz, an American branch of a London based trade network that stretched from the East Indies to the interior of North America where the Gratz brothers participated in land speculation and in supplying the Indian trade.¹⁰⁴ Involved with the Illinois trade, Murphy had a residence in New Orleans in 1774 and a grant of 400 acres on the Mississippi.¹⁰⁵ Having migrated from New England in 1765, brothers Evan and James Jones had grants of land on the Amite and Thompson's Creek where they turned a profit producing

¹⁰¹ For a discussion of British settlers in the Lower Mississippi and land ownership, see Light T. Cummins, "Anglo Merchants and Capital Migration in Spanish Colonial New Orleans, 1763-1803" *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 4.1 (1988): 7-28.

¹⁰² Cummins, "Oliver Pollock," 41; Haldimand to Willing, Pensacola, 30 July 1772, Haldimand Papers, reel 24: fo 41.

¹⁰³ Land Grant, 2 Nov 1772, WFLP, reel 6: fo 48; Land Grant, 10 Jan 1773, WFLP, reel 7: fo 187; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 97, 217.

¹⁰⁴ William Pencak, "Jews and Anti-Semitism in Early Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 126.3 (2002): 369-70. For a treatment of the Jewish community of Early Pennsylvania see this article (365-408), which places this community within an Atlantic context. For more on Jewish merchants, see Jonathan D. Sarna, "Port Jews in the Atlantic: Further Thoughts," *Jewish History* 20.2 (2006): 213-9; Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan, Dunmore, Jno. Connolly, Geo. Croghan, A. McKee, Aug. Prevost, "Turmoil at Pittsburgh: Diary of Augustine Prevost, 1774," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 85.2 (Apr., 1961): 120n. A.T. Volwiler "George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741-1782," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 46.4 (1922): 304. For Gratz's participation in the Indian trade and in land speculation in the Illinois Country and the Ohio river valley, see Jack M. Sosin, "The Yorke-Camden Opinion and American Land Speculators," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 85.1 (1961): 38-49.

¹⁰⁵ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 92; Land Grant, 2 Dec 1772, WFLP, reel 6: fo 60. Murphy notes in his petition for land that he has a wife, two children and three slaves, one aged thirty. In 1774, when under arrest for participating in contraband trade at New Orleans, cloth merchant Joseph Nash of Rhode Island, was permitted to live in Murphy's New Orleans home for part of his time under arrest. Nash to Unzaga, New Orleans, 28 April 1774, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 15. Murphy's wife was Mary Martha Murphy, and she tended to closing out his affairs in New Orleans after his death, "Maria Marta Murray vs. Pedro Duverge, to collect 2500 pesos," 13 Nov 1782, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 19 (1936): 544-6.

indigo.¹⁰⁶ Arthur Strother, a merchant at Pensacola who received goods from New York and London, obtained 1100 acres of land in 1772.¹⁰⁷ After setting up shop in Pensacola during the 1760s, Patrick Morgan of Morgan & Mather received a land grant near Mobile and later petitioned for land on the British side of the Mississippi above Point Coupée before traveling to England and Ireland to “settle his affairs.” He was also sold considerable merchandise to merchants in New Orleans.¹⁰⁸ After leaving London, James Mather also purchased land on the Mississippi near Manchac, land perfectly situated for doing business on the river.¹⁰⁹ Maurice and Patrick Conway were both nephews of O’Reilly who migrated to Louisiana, traded at New Orleans, and owned land in the LaFourche district near Pollock’s grant.¹¹⁰

Fewer Britain-based land speculators left room for North American land schemes in West Florida. The Jones brothers like many others served as middlemen in the quest to secure western lands. In 1773, they petitioned the Council of West Florida to reserve 25,000 acres for “many of their Friends in the Colonies of New York and New England.”¹¹¹ Similarly Garrett and Jacques Rapalje also of New York traveled to West Florida in a land speculation project.¹¹² Perhaps Phineas Lyman’s Company of Military Adventurers from Connecticut was the best example of

¹⁰⁶ Land Grant, 20 Jan 1772, WFLP, reel 6: fo 299; Land Grant, 17 feb 1772, WFLP, reel 6: fo 357; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 103.

¹⁰⁷ Land Grant, 1 Sept 1772, WFLP, reel 7: fo 71; “Intestate Succession of Luis Charleville, inventory and valuation of his estate,” 14 Feb 1777, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 12 (1929): 350-2; “Patricio Morgan vs. Pedro Gosselin,” 13 June 1777, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, and “Patricio Morgan vs. Salomon Prevost,” 17 June 1777, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, and “Patricio Morgan vs. Baptiste Rolland,” 18 June 1777, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 12 (1929): 512.

¹⁰⁸ Land Grant, 25 aug 1773, WFLP, reel 7: fo 91; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 106-7; “Patrick Morgan and Santiago Mather vs. Juan Bautista Bienvenu as bondsman for the late Nicolas Lamother,” 3 May 1779, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* v. 13(1930): 686-93.

¹⁰⁹ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 107.

¹¹⁰ Census of Lafourche, 1777, Louis Judice, PPC, legajo 190: fo 189. Maurice Conway had come to New Orleans in 1769 with O’Reilly as the general’s private secretary. By 1770, he was running a tannery in the city. “Paul Azema vs. Jean Toupin,” Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 7.3 (1924): 536-7; “Moricio (tanner) vs. Beller (shoemaker),” Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 7.3 (1924): 539-40.

¹¹¹ Land Grant, 9 July 1773, WFLP, reel 7: fo 291.

¹¹² Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 158n, 186n.

such land schemes and, like Montfort Browne's land scheme, it centered on the area of Natchez, an area renowned for its rich soil. The leaders of this group had participated in the Seven Years War and even the capture of Havana, and they sought to take advantage of their rights to land-grants as veterans to the British service. In 1774-1775, after advertising across the North American colonies and sending their sons to survey the land, Lyman and Israel Putnam conducted their fellow settlers to West Florida. In the years preceding the American Revolution, large groups and communities of settlers from New Jersey, New York, and the Virginia and Pennsylvania backcountry were drawn to the area of Natchez where they settled together in grants initially secured as large tracts of 20,000 or 35,000 acres.¹¹³ As tensions rose in the British North American Colonies on the eve of the American Revolution, colonists seeking asylum from the conflict hastened to West Florida particularly after 1775 when it became an official refuge for Loyalists.¹¹⁴

British merchants who migrated to the Lower Mississippi Valley during the years of partition eagerly took advantage of the opportunity to operate out of neighboring colonies of

¹¹³ For a discussion of London merchant investment in East Florida planting, see Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, 143-171. With regard to the Floridas in general, Bernard Bailyn has suggested that "the remoteness of this far borderland colony from familiar sea lanes and trade routes, its obscurity and lack of glamour, meant that the metropolitan entrepreneurs plunging into overseas land speculation were relatively uninterested in its possibilities and hence tied up less of its land in absentee grants." Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 474. For his discussion of the peopling of the Floridas see p. 475-494. See also Fabel, "An Eighteenth Colony: Dreams for Mississippi on the Eve of the Revolution," *The Journal of Southern History* 59.4 (1993): 647-672, which discusses migration and various schemes for colonization along the Mississippi in British West Florida. See also Fabel, "The Letters of R: The Lower Mississippi in the Early 1770s," *LH* 24.4 (1983): 402-427. For discussion of merchants and culture in the Atlantic World during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, eds., *Trading Cultures: The Worlds of Western Merchants: Essays on Authority, Objectivity, and Evidence* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2001).

¹¹⁴ For discussion of loyalists in West Florida see Wilbur H. Siebert, "The Loyalists in West Florida and the Natchez District," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 2. 4 (1916): 465-483. Some examples of loyalists who fled the Atlantic seaboard colonies included the following: Mary Bell, a widow whose family probably traveled by land from South Carolina for asylum in West Florida. She arrived with six children and 4 slaves in Natchez in early 1778. Land Grant, 16 Nov 1778, WFLP, reel 10: fo 730. John Chrystie of New York also went to West Florida as a refugee after persecution for his loyalist stance, Land Grant, 29 Aug 1777, WFLP, reel 9: fo 82-3. The Company of Military Adventurers was also largely composed of loyalists.

competing empires. Individuals like James Willing and Oliver Pollock were perfectly situated to seek contracts with both the Spanish and British colonial governments. In some senses, the international boundary multiplied the opportunities open to these merchants rather than constraining them. They also connected the Lower Mississippi Valley to British trade networks that stretched throughout the Caribbean and Atlantic and into the North American continent. By crossing borders to conduct their trade, British merchants connected the region in new ways to the Atlantic World and to British North American port cities.

Although the Atlantic route was the route preferred by American merchant firms prior to the American Revolution, some Americans in the Illinois country and Ohio River Valley began trading with New Orleans by way of the Mississippi. A Philadelphia firm, Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan developed trade through the interior of North America via its waterways: from Philadelphia manufactured goods, flour, and supplies were sent to Illinois, where they were exchanged for pelts and furs, which were then shipped on bateaux to New Orleans and then from there to Philadelphia. Soon, New Orleans and the Lower Mississippi Valley caught the attention of the firm's junior partner, George Morgan, as another frontier market worth engaging in its own right. The Upper and Lower Mississippi Valley already sustained trade connections dating from the French period. Credit was extended to the Illinois country by merchants at New Orleans. And trade in flour also connected the settlements of Upper and Lower Mississippi, albeit an unpredictable trade.

In the winter of 1767, George Morgan traveled from Fort Pitt to Fort Chartres. During this trip, he began to consider the expansion of the firm's trade at New Orleans. The project begun by Baynton, Wharton & Morgan after the Seven Years War was to infiltrate the Indian trade at Illinois, to supply the British regiments stationed there with flour, and to ship pelts to

New Orleans.¹¹⁵ In 1767, Morgan began assessing the market at New Orleans: “I have already acquainted you with the scarcity of Indian goods at New Orleans. All the boats which have come up from there this season have been loaded with wholly or principally with liquors, owing to the high prices and scarcity of dry goods.” The scarcity in New Orleans meant profits at Illinois and the potential to expand into the market of the Lower Mississippi Valley as well. Morgan asked Bartholomew Macnamara to keep his partners in Philadelphia apprised of French shipments arriving at New Orleans.¹¹⁶ In his instructions to his employee Samuel Young who left Kaskaskia for New Orleans in December 1767, Morgan also asked him to assess the port of New Orleans, in particular the supply of goods for the Indian trade there that had arrived from France, and to estimate the number of bateaux likely to make the voyage from New Orleans to Illinois that year.¹¹⁷

Morgan soon recognized the benefit of the circuitous trade that his firm was developing. It was less expensive to send salted buffalo meat, deerskins, and tallow to Philadelphia or New York via New Orleans than to send them first to Fort Pitt.¹¹⁸ In exchange for these products of the west, Morgan asked his partners to send manufactured goods to Illinois: nails, basins, garden spades, beaver traps, candle molds, saws, paper, axes, and many other items listed. Fort Chartres was in a perfect location to take advantage of proximity to old French settlements in Spanish Missouri. Here, Morgan exchanged manufactured goods for flour and pelts. Morgan noted that he made “a considerable purchase of pelts from our neighbors on the other side of the

¹¹⁵ 27 Oct 1767, and Morgan to Partners, Fort Chartres, 2 Dec 1767, George Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP.

¹¹⁶ Morgan, 11 Dec 1767, Fort Chartres, George Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP. Bartholomew Macnamara bought the plantation of Balthazar Masan, one of the rebel leaders convicted by O'Reilly, when it went up for public sale in 1770. “Bartholomew Macnamara sues De Reggio to quiet title under confiscation sale of Balthazar Masan’s plantation,” 19 Feb 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 309.

¹¹⁷ Morgan to Samuel Young, Kaskaskia, 18 Dec 1767, George Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP.

¹¹⁸ Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Kaskaskia, 5 April 1768, George Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP.

Mississippi.”¹¹⁹ Baynton, Wharton & Morgan took advantage of the opportunity presented by the close proximity of French settlements in Spanish Louisiana to the store at Fort Chartres.

Bartholomew Macnamara, John Fitzpatrick, and Oliver Pollock all served as contacts for Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan in the Lower Mississippi Valley. These men received pelts and flour from Illinois and merchandise from Philadelphia. In 1766, Macnamara wrote Baynton, Wharton and Morgan requesting flour, pork, beef, “good red and blue strouds,” vermilion, brandy, tafia, and claret. Macnamara proposed sending Morgan’s pelts to LaRochelle or Bordeaux, and to send the profits to pay Baynton, Wharton & Morgan’s London creditors.¹²⁰ Although on the periphery, merchants in the Lower Mississippi Valley expressed preference in their instructions to suppliers for dry goods:

The quality and patterns of the cottons & musslins are very far from what I expected. I have mentioned these articles to Capt Croghan & Mr Morgan & upon what they gave me to understand of the Patterns & prices with you, wanted to make a trial of but on the whole quantity I received, there is not above two or three pieces of the white ground cotton chints which is liked all the rest is found of the comfort and commonest patterns that was fabrick’d 20 years ago the musslins I wanted was for Ruffles & this you sent is only fit for womens gounds or petticoats & on the whole I shall come off pretty well if I can this 12 months to come get in the first cost in selling em in retail. However, far be it from me to imagine but what you have acted for the best nether...scarcity of handsomer and livelier patterns...¹²¹

In 1767, Morgan also promised pelts for Macnamara in his spring shipment from Illinois.¹²²

Macnamara was unable to forward the pelts to France having had “no vessels these three months from France.” Instead, he shipped these pelts as per Morgan’s request for consignment to Peter Livingston in New York by the *York*.¹²³ In 1769, Morgan asked Fitzpatrick to secure permission from Spanish authorities to export pelts from New Orleans. Fitzpatrick relied on Baynton,

¹¹⁹ Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, Illinois, 20 June 1768, George Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP.

¹²⁰ B McNamara to BW&M, New Orleans, 8 Aug 1766, BWM, roll 4: frame 983-985.

¹²¹ Macnamara to BW&M, New Orleans, 6 Sept 1767, BWM, roll 4: frame 999-1002.

¹²² Morgan to Macnamara, Fort Chartres, 20 Dec 1767, George Morgan Letterbook, 1766-1768, HSP.

¹²³ Macnamara to BW&M, New Orleans, 28 July 1767, BWM, roll 4: frame 996-8.

Wharton & Morgan for shipments of fabric in 1769.¹²⁴ He also supplied Morgan with sugar and brandy for Illinois.¹²⁵

George Morgan arrived at New Orleans in April 1771 with 40 barrels of flour and pelts from Illinois.¹²⁶ The flour he left with Fitzpatrick from whom he awaited payment in 1772.¹²⁷ The pelts included elk, raccoons, foxes, bats, minks, muskrats, wolves, bears, beavers, dressed deerskins, otter skins.¹²⁸ He sent these aboard the *Nancy*, which Captain Bethel guided back to Philadelphia.¹²⁹ By June, Morgan was in Philadelphia. He soon wrote Pollock about his or Jean Lafitte's sending the December shipment of pelts from Illinois to Philadelphia for Baynton, Wharton & Morgan.¹³⁰ The firm instructed their John Finley to consign the pelts to Oliver Pollock in March 1772 and again that summer.¹³¹

Although the Illinois adventure ultimately proved a failure for Baynton, Wharton & Morgan, it took Morgan until 1776 to wrap up his business in Illinois. In March 1774, he wrote Thomas Bentley at Manchac proposing an exchange of Illinois flour for indigo. The two continued as business correspondents at least through 1775.¹³² British American merchants at North American Atlantic ports like Philadelphia and New York became suppliers of flour to the Lower Mississippi Valley during the 1760s and 1770s.

¹²⁴ Morgan to Fitzpatrick at New Orleans, 25 Oct 1769, BWM, roll 1: frame 398-99.

¹²⁵ Morgan to Fitzpatrick, Manchac, 10 April 1771, BWM, roll 5: frame 914.

¹²⁶ Morgan to Messrs. John Reynoll, Joseph Morris and other, trustees of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, Kaskaskia, 10 Nov 1770, Gratz collection, collection 250, box 197, Folder 70; Morgan to Fitzpatrick, Manchac, 10 April 1771, BWM, roll 5: frame 914.

¹²⁷ BW&M to John Fitzpatrick at Manchac, Philadelphia, 19 Mar 1772, BWM, roll 1: frame 316.

¹²⁸ Skins from Illinois to New Orleans, BWM, roll 1: frame 314-5.

¹²⁹ Morgan to B&W, New Orleans, 15 April 1771, BWM, roll 1: frame 474-5; "CUSTOM HOUSE, Philadelphia, INWARD ENTRIES," 5 Dec 1771, *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

¹³⁰ Morgan to Pollock, Philadelphia, 22 June 1771, BWM, roll 1: frame 476; Morgan to Pollock, Philadelphia, 12 Sept 1772, BWM roll 1: frame 482; Skins from Illinois to New Orleans, BWM, roll 1: frame 314-5.

¹³¹ Skins from Illinois to New Orleans, BWM, roll 1: frame 314-5.

¹³² Morgan to Thomas Bentley, Philadelphia, 1 March 1774, BWM, roll 1: frame 558; Thomas Bentley to Morgan, Manchac, 2 Aug 1775, BWM, roll 5: frame 811-3.

As it had during the French period, the supply of flour from Illinois proved unpredictable as well as insufficient to supply the Lower Mississippi. Nevertheless, expanding British American trade networks established lasting connections with the Lower Mississippi. Through his attempts to expand the business of Baynton, Wharton & Morgan to the west and by crossing into Spanish territory, George Morgan opened an important route of trade and communication between the British colonies on the Atlantic seaboard and the Lower Mississippi Valley, particularly Spanish New Orleans. This connection would be important during the revolution.

The very networks that connected the region in new ways to the Atlantic World were inextricably linked to the forced migration of hundreds of African and creole slaves. Some of the networks that transported African and creole slaves to the region were connected closely with Willing & Morris and Baynton, Wharton & Morgan. Other networks also engaged in the trade connecting the Lower Mississippi to the Caribbean and Atlantic. Through contraband trade, Louisiana's colonists gained further access to slaves in the years leading up to the American Revolution. Many of the merchants who trafficked slaves to the Mississippi held land in West Florida and engaged in trade through local networks in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Merchants could sell slaves to both slave societies that bordered on the Mississippi River.¹³³ Indeed, the greatest migration during the early 1770s was the forced migration of African slaves. By 1774, the British colonists to the east of the Mississippi numbered around 4,000, with 1500 slaves.¹³⁴ The slave trade to West Florida and the Mississippi drew from an existing slave trade to Georgia. Following the Seven Years War, this trade route expanded into the Floridas as enterprising British land speculators and merchants gambled with shipping slaves to the newly obtained

¹³³ Gilbert C. Din, "Slavery in Louisiana's Florida Parishes under the Spanish Regime, 1779-1803," in *A Fierce and Fractious Frontier: The Curious Development of Louisiana's Florida Parishes, 1699-2000*, ed. Samuel C. Hyde, Jr., Forard by Hoddniger Carter III, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2004), 62.

¹³⁴ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 112.

colonies.¹³⁵ Through the hands of such merchants, enslaved Africans and Creoles found themselves in British West Florida and others crossed into Spanish Louisiana.

Merchants along the Mississippi often served as middlemen in the slave trade. John Fitzpatrick and planter William Dunbar were smaller-scale, West Florida resident slave traders, and middlemen in the larger trade for firms like those of the Ross brothers, David Ross & Co. and Robert Ross & George Ross.¹³⁶ These merchants funneled slaves through Manchac and Natchez to residents on the Mississippi in Spanish Louisiana who then sold the men and women within Louisiana. For example, Sieur Marre of Pointe Coupée sold to Etienne Bujreau of Lafourche slaves he bought through Pensacola.¹³⁷

Some West Florida planter merchants, such as Dunbar, Patrick Morgan, and John Waugh outfitted vessels with goods and slaves in Jamaica before sailing to the Mississippi where they would sell some of their cargo to finance the establishment of a plantation in West Florida.¹³⁸ London merchant Edward Codrington also sent slaves to Manchac from Jamaica and Charleston in 1773 and 1774.¹³⁹ Bradley and Harrison was a Kingston firm that sent slaves to the Mississippi. As security for debt to Walker and Dawson of London, the firm offered eleven slaves and the *Africa*, which transported them to the Mississippi.¹⁴⁰ Slave trade was the mainstay of the Comyn family trade with West Florida. Two brothers, Valentin and Philip, operated out of West Florida, while a third Comyn brother, Thomas, remained in London. In conjunction

¹³⁵ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 33-36,

¹³⁶ Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 215, 216; William Dunbar, 27 May 1776, 9 Feb 1777, 4 Sept 1777, 12 Dec 1777, 21 Dec 1777, 4 Jan 1778, in William Dunbar, *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar* (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Historical Society, 1930), 23, 44, 50, 55, 56, 57; Act of Sale, David Ross to James Smith, *Pintado Papers*, reel 4, container 5.

¹³⁷ Judice to Unzaga, LaFourche de Chitimachas, 15 Oct 1772, PPC, legajo 187A: fo 439; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 31.

¹³⁸ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 33, 105; Unzaga to de la Torre, New Orleans, 27 Feb 1772, PPC, legajo, 1145: fo 52-3.

¹³⁹ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 105.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 32, 33, 105.

with McGillivray and Struthers, they brought slaves to Pensacola and to the Mississippi River to Fitzpatrick and others.¹⁴¹

Jamaica was a key port for British slave-traders to the Lower Mississippi Valley from the 1760s onward. The Ross brothers exemplified this branch of contraband in human cargo. They did business with the Bristol-Kingston merchants Lewbridge Bright and David Duncomb.¹⁴² The Scottish brothers and slave traders based out of Jamaica Robert, George, and David Ross all had land grants in West Florida and traded slaves throughout the region, at posts such as Pensacola, Natchez, Pointe Coupée, and New Orleans.¹⁴³ Robert Ross made his residence at New Orleans in 1772, but he owned several tracts of land in West Florida, including 1,000 acres near Natchez. At New Orleans with the permission of Unzaga, he sold dry goods and slaves, which he accessed through Jamaica. By 1777 he was in business with John Campbell who also lived on the Mississippi in British West Florida.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, David Ross operated a store at New Orleans through the 1780s and did business with London.¹⁴⁵ Through the 1790s, Jamaica remained a significant “entrepôt” for many slaves taken by traders to the Gulf Coast with perhaps as many as sixteen vessels reaching Louisiana from Jamaica between 1772 and 1776, such as the *Philip*, which reached the Mississippi in 1776.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 36, 208; “Thomas Comins vs. Guillermo Strother asking to be given an account of the property of Valentin and Philipe Comins, brothers of the petitioner,” 14 Sept 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 17 (1934): 218-9.

¹⁴² Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 101; David Duncomb to Lowbridge Bright, Bristol, 19 June 1790, *Bright-Meyler Papers: A Bristol-West India Connection, 1732-1837* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 542-553. These papers provide insight into trade between Bristol and Jamaica. *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, ship id numbers 17632, 17886, 17643, 17766, 17822, 17859, (Accessed 5 Dec 2009).

¹⁴³ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 280; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 106; Act of Sale Petro Lartigue to William Dunbar, 28 July 1787, *WFLP*, reel 1: fo 142; Act of Sale John Fitzpatrick to Hubert Rowell, 14 July 1787, *WFLP*, reel 1: fo 218; and Inventory of Jacob Nash, 23 Dec 1789, *WFLP*, reel 1: fo 462.

¹⁴⁴ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 101-2.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 106-8; “Marine Protest by Captain against Discharge,” 12 June 1777, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 731.

¹⁴⁶ LeGlaunec, “Slave Migrations,” 188, 190; *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, voyage number 24791 (accessed 23 Nov 2009).

Slave bearing ships also came from Sainte Domingue, Martinique, Antigua, and Barbados.¹⁴⁷ Nine slave ships between 1773 and 1774 entered the Mississippi destined for Manchac, perhaps selling slaves in New Orleans and on the river before reaching the post.¹⁴⁸ Thomas and James Willing's brother Charles lived at Barbados and was an active participant in the family's business. He sent at several slave ships to New Orleans during the mid-1770s. In October of 1775, he shipped 150 slaves from Barbados to New Orleans aboard the *Three Sisters*. At New Orleans, the slaves were consigned to Oliver Pollock, who agreed to remit to the Willings' London creditors the profit from the sale of the slaves.¹⁴⁹ Pollock also turned to connections in North Carolina as a source for the slaves. In January of 1775, Pollock reached Manchac "with a cargo of negroes." Pollock kept several for himself and sold two women to Philip Comyn, several to John Hodge at Pensacola, and others to James Rumsey.¹⁵⁰

The slave trade carried men and women classified as *negros bozales* from the coast of Africa to the Mississippi Valley, and so began the re-Africanization of the slave population of Spanish Louisiana. Most were carried from Fort St. Louis on Gorée Island off the coast of Senegambia.¹⁵¹ James Mather, based out of New Orleans, owned several slave ships, including

¹⁴⁷ LeGlaunec, "Slave Migrations," 188, 191; LeGlaunec, "A Directory of Ships with Slave Cargoes, Louisiana, 1772-1808," *LH* 46.2 (2005): 214-15.

¹⁴⁸ LeGlaunec, "Slave Migrations," 191.

¹⁴⁹ --to Willing and Morris, London, 12 Dec 1775, HSP, Robert Morris Papers, Folder 5: Willing-Morris Correspondence.

¹⁵⁰ Comyn to Pollock, Manchac, 21 Jan 1775; Phillip Francis (Richmond) to Oliver Pollock (New Orleans), 10 Feb 1775; John Hodge (Pensacola) to Oliver Pollock (New Orleans), 14 Feb 1775, Oliver Pollock Papers, LSU, Hill Memorial Library, Special Collections.

¹⁵¹ For a discussion of the slave trade and the importance of West Africa in the shaping of the Atlantic slave trade, see John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Thornton explores the early trade relationship that developed between Africans and Europeans and examines the slave trade internal to Africa and considers the creolization that may have taken place in Africa. For discussion of the slave ship with a focus on the commercial links of the Atlantic world and the agency of the "motley" crew that manned the slave ships see Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000). See also Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). In *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), Stephanie Smallwood focuses on the slave experience of the middle passage.

The Beggar's Bennison, which made at least three voyages from Africa. Built in Poole in 1764, the thirty ton sloop brought 65 slaves from Gorée to Pensacola in 1775. Eighteen slaves had died in the middle passage.¹⁵² The captain, John Hamilton, took the helm of the *Beggar's Bennison* in London again in December of 1775, repeating the voyage first to Gorée Island and then directing the vessel carrying 93 slaves to the Mississippi.¹⁵³ Mather also owned the *Swallow*, which also arrived on the Mississippi in 1775 with slaves.¹⁵⁴ Another vessel by the same name left Senegambia for the Mississippi on March 25, 1778.¹⁵⁵ British slave ships passing through Balize arrived nearly monthly in 1776.¹⁵⁶ After a middle passage of twenty days, the *Lord North* stopped first at St. Vincent to sell slaves before arriving at the Mississippi.¹⁵⁷ That same year, the *Philip* transported 266 slaves to Jamaica and to the Mississippi, and the *Nancy* bore another 150.¹⁵⁸ In 1777, instead of the Gulf Coast, the *Beggar's Bennison* sold its slaves at Jamaica.¹⁵⁹ That at least four of these ships carried slaves from Senegambia to the Americas indicates the introduction of African slaves to the slave systems of the Mississippi Valley.¹⁶⁰ The slave trade would continue to escalate during the Spanish colonial period. These trans-Atlantic slave trade networks coincided with the expanding merchant networks of the British North American seaboard on the banks of the Lower Mississippi. Spanish colonists and local traders gladly engaged these networks through the British merchants settled near the river.

British merchants operating in the Lower Mississippi Valley took advantage of the borderland fluidity that reigned there as they sought land grants and the expansion of trade

¹⁵² *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, id 78160, (accessed Feb 2012).

¹⁵³ *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, id 75123, (accessed Feb 2012).

¹⁵⁴ *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, id 79042, (accessed Feb 2012).

¹⁵⁵ "Cleared for Sailing," Matthias McNamara, 25 Mar 1778, Senegambia, LSU, Hill Memorial, Special Collections.

¹⁵⁶ LeGlaunec, "Slave Migrations," 190.

¹⁵⁷ *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, id 24770, (accessed Feb 2012).

¹⁵⁸ *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, id 24791, id number 24796, (accessed Feb 2012).

¹⁵⁹ *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, id 78241 (accessed Feb 2012).

¹⁶⁰ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 286.

networks. Their actions promoted voluntary migration of Britons to West Florida as well as the forced migration of thousands of slaves to the region. By participating in local trade, these merchants connected the British Atlantic and North American trade networks to local networks and brought new momentum to contraband trade in the Lower Mississippi.

Contraband and Lower Mississippi Valley Trade Networks

By engaging the frontier exchange economy of the Lower Mississippi, these merchants helped to infuse it with new energy and to change it. Merchants settling at Manchac fit easily into the trade networks in close proximity on the Mississippi River. Their activities challenged British and Spanish ability to control movement and trade along their border settlements and complicated it by the introduction of manufactured goods, their interactions with the Indians, and the growth of their settlements on the river. The imposition of the new international boundary meant that the persistence of these local networks guaranteed border crossings. From their stores, British merchants participated in British settlement of the region, traded with the nearby Spanish colonists, interfered with the Indian trade, and engaged trade networks that stretched through western Louisiana and into Texas.

After their expulsion from New Orleans in 1769, many British merchants relocated to Manchac, making it a bustling trading post from which they engaged the trade routes that converged there. These were both local routes that stretched along the Mississippi and into Louisiana and Texas, as well as Atlantic routes. After learning that he would have to leave New Orleans, merchant John Fitzpatrick wrote to business correspondents that

Am now to Advise you of my Determination to Settle at Manchac or Iberville up the River Mississippi which I hope will Answer my Expectations in the Sails of Sundry Goods Suitable to the French and Spaniards at point Coupei&c as no Credit can be Given them; and in all Likelyhood Goods henceforward will be very Scarce in Orleans; they

will always find Means to pay for What they want; in Deer Skins Indego Cotton Tobacco rice & Cash...¹⁶¹

By 1772, merchants had taken up residence at Manchac in former military barracks. Soon merchants like Fitzpatrick and the Monsantos secured land grants nearby and opened stores.¹⁶²

While British merchants joined borderland inhabitants in embracing access to travel, transportation, trade, and movement that the Mississippi and its waterways offered, colonial officials often attempted to suppress the fluidity offered by the regional topography. In 1772, merchants at Manchac complained that Captain John Thomas, deputy superintendent for Indian affairs on the Mississippi and justice of the peace, had challenged the custom of neighborliness.¹⁶³ These merchants described Thomas as “despotic” for his attempts to restrict their trade. Signed by Charles Blanchard, James Kelly, and Isaac Monsanto and bearing the marks of Jacob Leonard, George Harrison, Manuel Monsanto, and W. Escott, a petition to the Council of West Florida described “tranquility and friendship with the Spanish and French our neighbors” that included reciprocal hospitality extended to travelers of each nation at posts of the other. They provided examples of Thomas’ refusal to extend hospitality to French and Spanish travelers, such as Mme. Tarascon, “a very reputable woman” who was traveling to her home at Pointe Coupée.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, customarily Spanish and British posts on the river extended

¹⁶¹ Fitzpatrick to Arthur Strother, Mobile, 7 Nov 1769, *Merchant of Manchac*, 77.

¹⁶² Minutes of the Council of West Florida, Pensacola, 17 Feb 1772, WFLP, reel 8: fo 269; Land Grant, 4 March 1775, WFLP, reel 8: fo 269; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 56.

¹⁶³ For a more detailed treatment of John Thomas see Robert R. Rea, “Redcoats and Redskins on the Lower Mississippi, 1763-1776: The Career of Lt. John Thomas,” *LH* 11 (1970): 5-35.

¹⁶⁴ Council Minutes, Pensacola, 7 Apr 1772, WFLP, reel 2: 55-68. Rea suggests that Jacques Tarascon is the same person as Jaime Terrasco, a Spaniard who went among the Indians of British West Florida and that the woman stopped on the river was his wife. I have not been able to confirm that she was or was not, but Jacques Tarascon does appear to be involved with the Indian trade at the very least. See also, Rea “Redcoats and Redskins.” Mme. Tarascon was probably the wife of Carlos Lorreins or possibly of his brother Santiago, both dit “Tarascon.” This was most likely because their father was born in the town of Tarascon in Avignon. Carlos owned property at Pointe Coupée and at New Orleans. He also served as interpreter for the Houmas. Carlos Tarascon was considered one of the best interpreters for Indians of the Lower Mississippi. Santiago was involved in the Indian trade. Carlos was affluent enough to pay cash when purchasing a slave. Another example of the close connections of kinship in the Lower River Valley, their sister née Pelagie Lorreins, first married Jean Baptiste Brazillier, and after his death

hospitality to travelers of the other nations. Officials often paid one another respects, and earlier, Montfort Browne had even borrowed a pirogue from Spanish Manchac.¹⁶⁵

Thomas complained that Blommart, Fitzpatrick, Monsanto, Masangs, and Harrison were disrupting interactions with the Indians by selling rum. The Tunicas, who lived near Pointe Coupée were distressed that some Choctaws were drunk from the rum Blommart sold them in exchange for bear oil. This trade appears to be Thomas' primary objection to the merchants operating out of the king's buildings and grounds, which he saw as his proper domain as deputy superintendent of Indian affairs.¹⁶⁶ The easy access to British trade goods and to alcohol altered the power dynamic of Indian society and Indian-colonial relations in the Lower Mississippi.

Access to alcohol provided by British merchants brought conflict and strain to Indian societies. Tensions in Indian society arose especially from the social outcomes of access to rum. Trade in rum proved one of the means which British merchants continued to gain access to deerskins.¹⁶⁷ Agents like Henri LaFleur joined Indian leaders in complaining that the traders purchased skins at unfair prices.¹⁶⁸ LaFleur, the Indian interpreter for British Manchac, expressed his concern "That the Chactaws will become so poor by the Rum Trade that the

married Andres Jung of the German Coast. For incidences of Tarascon see "Inventory and Partition of the Estate of the Widow Gerardy," 12 Dec 1770, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 169-70; "Ann Testas vs. Widow Duverge," 16 Sept 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 707; "Francisco Desmazillierees vs. Carlos Lorraine, called Tarascon," 18 Dec 1773, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 10 (1927): 153-4. Tarascon purchased a plantation from Magdalena Brazillier (married first to the brother of Jean Baptiste Brazillier) after her second marriage to Enrique Desprez for 600 pesos. "The heirs vs. The succession of Francisco Hery called Duplanty," 17 Mar 1774, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 10 (1927): 306-9; "Santiago Lorrains, called Tarascon vs. Santiago Philip Jacquelin Durey," 25 Apr 1775, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 11 (1928): 163; most importantly, "Succession of Pelagia Lorreins, wife of Andres Jung," 7 Sept 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 17 (1934): 213-18; "Estate succession of Santiago Llorens called Tarascon. Inventory and appraisal of his estate," 30 June 1784, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 24 (1941): 267-300; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 26 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 304-6; Layssard, Rapides, 26 May 1778, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 505-8.

¹⁶⁵ Kirkman to Haldimand, Fort Bute, 17 Apr 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 8: fo 97.

¹⁶⁶ Rea, "Redcoats and Redskins," 21.

¹⁶⁷ For a treatment of the trade in alcohol, and the effects of alcohol on Indian society see Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

¹⁶⁸ Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 126; Charles Stuart to Chester, 1771, WFLP, reel 6: fo 177-181.

Consequence will be the ruin of the Settlements on the Mississippi.”¹⁶⁹ Repeatedly Choctaw and Chickasaw elders complained to Indian agents and interpreters about the troubles to their communities that they blamed on the trade in rum. Chickasaw chief Paya Mataha complained of “great quantities of Liquor carried into their towns, by which many disorders are occasioned.”

From his conversation with Choctaws, Charles Stuart observed that:

for to this article[rum]...all the Disorders that happen amongst them, for they...are not only kept continually poor and in Want but they loose all Government of their Young Men & Warriors who are perpetually quarelling an killing each other, wherefore it is absolutely necessary that some measure be taken to prevent this evil...¹⁷⁰

So too did the Choctaw and Chickasaw representatives at the Indian Congress at Mobile complain to John Stuart. The Choctaw Mingo Emmitta complained that “when the clattering of the packhorse’s bells are heard at a distance our town is immediately deserted young and old run out to meet them joyfully crying Rum Rum, they get Drunk, Distraction, Mischief, Confusion, and Disorder are the consequences of this the ruin of our nation.” And Indian elders would continue to complain about how it made their young men “mad,” such that the older men “have no command over them, that they would frequently kill one another.”¹⁷¹ Indian elders associated rum with the breakdown of traditional society. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that the Choctaw diplomatic rhetoric traditionally emphasized lowliness among the Choctaws in contrast to the “other” whom the leaders attempted to engage in diplomacy. In relation with the French and later with the British and the Spanish, Choctaws employed this language to mirror the father-child relationship often used to describe Euro-Indian relations and to encourage gift-giving.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Council Chamber, Pensacola, 7 Apr 1772, WFLP, reel 2: 55-67.

¹⁷⁰ Charles Stuart to Chester, 1771, WFLP, reel 6: fo 177-181.

¹⁷¹ Chester to Dartmouth, Pensacola, 7 June 1774, WFLP, reel 7: 219-224.

¹⁷² Stephen P. Van Hoak, “Untangling the Roots of Dependency: Choctaw Economics, 1700-1860,” *American Indian Quarterly* 23 (1999): 117-18.

Intoxication also became connected to acts of banditry. Conflict that emerged as a result of such banditry revealed the importance of alliances and friendship among settlers and Indians. Intoxication was a concern for the frontier society at large.¹⁷³ In times of particular tension, Spanish officials issued strict instructions to tavern-keepers and traders to restrain the sale of alcohol to Indians, slaves, and colonists alike. In 1770, a band of Choctaws, led by Acela Ouma and from the village of the Great Medal Chief Ullisa Mingo, “painted for war” attacked John Bradley’s store at Natchez. After locking Bradley up, they left with rum and horses. Three “Friendly Indians”—two Choctaws and one Quapaw—“told the white People they knew where the Indians were gone with the Booty and determined to follow them and expecting to find them drunk to retake the Goods.” The incident provided such a scare that the settlers at Natchez took to the Mississippi and travelled to the Tunica village near Pointe Coupée where they sought refuge before removing to Manchac. Governor Chester blamed Bradley for supplying the Indians with rum.¹⁷⁴ He also regretted that the traders among the Indians, “are the most wicked and abandoned of all wretches, worse, if possible, than the savages themselves...and are ever cheating the poor Indians, and instead of furnishing them with cloathing and other necessary articles, trade with nothing else scarcely than rum.”¹⁷⁵

John Fitzpatrick provides an excellent example of how British merchants at Manchac connected to the Indian trade. They did so through the web of trade that stretched from the interior of the Lower Mississippi Valley outward to merchants at ports like Pensacola and Mobile who were themselves tied to Atlantic trade networks. Many merchants engaged in the

¹⁷³ See for discussion of banditry Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 127-30.

¹⁷⁴ Minutes of the Council of West Florida, Pensacola, Feb 1770, WFLP, reel 2: 241-5; Jan 1772, WFLP, reel 6: 127; Durnford to Gage, Pensacola, 6 Feb 1770, WFLP, reel 2: 245-6; Bradley to Chester, New Orleans, 1 Feb 1770, WFLP, reel 2: 233-41.

¹⁷⁵ Chester to Dartmouth, Pensacola, 7 June 1774, WFLP, reel 7: 219-224.

Indian trade in Lower Louisiana received supplies and credit through Fitzpatrick. He supplied Indian traders with goods from McGillivray and from Struthers and Miller, Swanson and Co. throughout the Mississippi Valley and funneled their skins to ports on the Gulf. He supplied Jacques Tarascon and even the Commandant of Pointe Coupée Charles Descoudreaux with goods for the Indian trade. Descoudreaux informed Fitzpatrick that he found himself unable to supply licensed traders with goods purchased at New Orleans.¹⁷⁶ In early 1772, a peddler named Morel attempted to land at Manchac to pay his debts to John Fitzpatrick. Morel brought pelts both to Manchac and to New Orleans, where his creditors included the Catalan merchants Feliz and Millet. According to Fitzpatrick, when Morel arrived on January 12, 1772, he was also returning unsold goods obtained from Fitzpatrick on a previous occasion. When Thomas realized that Morel had landed, he threatened to send him to the Spanish fort as a prisoner and managed to force the trader and his boat from the British post before Morel could settle his accounts with Fitzpatrick. At this time and again in September, Spanish officials also attempted to prevent Morel from doing business at Manchac. Thomas dashed the efforts of another of Fitzpatrick's debtors to land at Manchac. Having migrated from British West Florida to Spanish Louisiana, John Hamilton, like Morel, had been operating with the approval of the Spanish regime on the other side of the Atchafalaya at Opelousas and Attakapas in the Indian trade.¹⁷⁷ Hamilton had intended on paying Fitzpatrick in pelts, pelts that Fitzpatrick might send to Philip Livingston or John Miller and Co. at Pensacola or to McGillivray and Struthers at Mobile who in turn would send him such goods as "Nankeen White Shirts proper, Brass Kettles, & Wine,

¹⁷⁶ Fitzpatrick to Jean Lafitte, jr., Manchac, 20 Oct 1772 and Fitzpatrick to Miller, Swanson and Co, Manchac, 22 Oct 1773, *Merchant of Manchac*, 133-35, 163.

¹⁷⁷ Descoudreaux, Manchac, 20 Sept 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 615-6; Land Grant, 3 Feb 1773, WFLP, reel 7: fo 191. It is noted in William Wilton's petition for land near Pointe Coupée that it is the same land "whereon one Hamilton resided some time ago without leave and is since gone over to the Spanish Side of the River Mississippi."

Beeds, Looking Glasses, ribbons, Mohjair Silk Cambricks...ONs. Threat—Hoes & Saddles.”¹⁷⁸

Hamilton reported seventeen hundred Deer Skins that he intended to funnel into British hands.¹⁷⁹

Women also participated in these trade networks. For example, Hamilton’s wife also contributed to the trade at Manchac.¹⁸⁰ Fitzpatrick’s wife, Marie Nivet Blain, actively participated in the trade on behalf of her husband’s business. She had been deserted by her first husband, and lived with Fitzpatrick before they were legally able to marry during the 1770s.¹⁸¹ Elinor “Nelly” Price, a free mulatto woman, relied on Fitzpatrick for supplies to equip her store at Grand Gulf near Natchez. He supplied her with duffels, tafia, strouds, guns, gunpowder, and lead. She sold a barge to Fitzpatrick that belonged to Philip Barbour, another trader of the post with whom Nelly lived and who Fitzpatrick also supplied. The transaction caused considerable conflict among the three. Eventually, Price became considerably indebted to Fitzpatrick who was overcome with anger towards the “strumpet.”¹⁸² Fitzpatrick also supplied Thomas James

¹⁷⁸ Council Minutes, Pensacola, 7 Apr 1772, WFLP, reel 2: 55-68; Fitzpatrick, affidavit, West Florida, 17 Feb 1772, WFLP, reel 6: 354-5; Descoudreaux, Manchac, 20 Sept 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 615-6; Fitzpatrick to Philip Livingston, 9 March 1772, Manchac, *Merchant of Manchac*, 116; Fitzpatrick to John Miller, 5 May 1772, Manchac, *Merchant of Manchac*, 118; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, 31 May 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 86-89; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, 20 Aug 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 93-94; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, 30 Oct 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 96-97; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, 21 Jan 1771, *Merchant of Manchac*, 99-100; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Feb 1771, *Merchant of Manchac*, 102-3 (quotation, punctuation my own). For Morel, take a look at the Morel family as traders and boatmen with ties to Illinois, see Houck, *The Spanish Regime in Missouri and History of Missouri*, 95, 97, 102.

¹⁷⁹ Fitzpatrick to Patrick Murphy, Manchac, 26 Dec 1773, *Merchant of Manchac*, 166.

¹⁸⁰ Descoudreaux, Manchac, 20 Sept 1772, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 615-6.

¹⁸¹ Dalrymple, introduction, *Merchant of Manchac*, 22-3. For more on desertion, separation, and divorce in the Spanish North American borderlands see Light T. Cummins, “Church Courts, Marriage Breakdown, and Separation in Spanish Louisiana, West Florida, and Texas,” *Journal of Texas Catholic History & Culture* 4 (1993): 97-114. Other examples of women deserted by their husbands include Maria Hary or Hanny by her husband Jacques LeMaire, and Juana Adams by her husband Antonio Conrad, “Testimony given by witnesses for Maria Hary, wife of Santiago LeMaire, for the sale of a sloop,” 13 Jan 1776, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 11 (1928): 314-5; “Juana Adam, wife of Antonio Conard petitions for permission to sell a house belonging to her patrimony because she has been abandoned by her husband,” 26 Aug 1777, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 12 (1929): 522-3. Wives also abandoned their husbands, “Despatch issued at the request of Luisa Letellier to have brought to the city from St. Genevieve the movable property and negroes lefty by the death of her husband,” 6 Aug 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 614-7. In these cases, abandonment was something specifically different from separation or divorce.

¹⁸² Fitzpatrick to Thomas James, Manchac, 20 Oct 1773, *Merchant of Manchac*, 162; Fitzpatrick to Miller and Swanson, Manchac, 26 Dec 1773, *Merchant of Manchac*, 166-67; Fitzpatrick to Isaac Johnson, Manchac, 27 Dec 1774 *Merchant of Manchac*, 180-81; Fitzpatrick to Captain Wm McIntosh, Manchac, 11 June 1780, *Merchant of*

and his wife who were also traders near Natchez.¹⁸³ Widows also participated in trade on the Mississippi. Sarah Truly, a widow who had migrated from Virginia to Natchez with her extended family in 1773, traded in her own right with Newman and Hanchel who had a store at Natchez.¹⁸⁴ Anna Testas, a widow living in New Orleans who in 1771, took her debtor the young Natchitoches planter and merchant Louis de Blanc to court for his failure to pay “1000 livres in piasters gourdes, or in pelts for value received in merchandise, at Natchitoches.”¹⁸⁵

The Indian trade in the Lower Mississippi involved a broad spectrum of people: men and women both worked in the trade, as did large and small scale merchants. The trade disrupted the efforts of both Spanish and British officials to form solid alliances with the Indians of the Lower Mississippi Valley and complicated relations within Indian society. Indian societies easily transgressed the imperial boundary during this era of partition, and similarly the Indian trade by its nature followed upon the routes of trade and travel that paid little heed to imperial borders.

Manchac, 347-51. It appears that Nelly was of mixed ancestry as Fitzpatrick refers to her as “yellow” in his letter to McIntosh in 1780. He also refers to her as a “strumpet.” At this time, she appeared to have been living with another unlicensed trader. See also May Wilson McBee, *Natchez Court Records: Abstracts of Early Records* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1979) 177-78, 246. Nelly appears to have lived a rather turbulent life. After the conflict with Fitzpatrick, she continued to live in the Natchez area where she worked for and lived with another Indian trader named Miguel Lopez.

¹⁸³ Fitzpatrick to Thomas James, Manchac, 20 Oct 1773, *Merchant of Manchac*, 162; Fitzpatrick to Miller and Swanson, Manchac, 26 Dec 1773, *Merchant of Manchac*, 166-67; Fitzpatrick to Isaac Johnson, 27 Dec 1774, Manchac, *Merchant of Manchac*, 180; Fitzpatrick to Captain Wm McIntosh, Manchac, 11 June 1780, *Merchant of Manchac*, 347-51.

¹⁸⁴ Newman and Hanchelle, Account Book, 1776 Feb 27, LSU, Hill Memorial, Mississippi Valley Collection; McBee, *Natchez Court Records*, 601-2. James Truly who also settled at Natchez is noted as a loyalist and as having arrived in West Florida in July 1773. He petitioned the Council of West Florida for land in 1777. James Truly, Land Grant, 29 Oct 1777, WFLP, reel 9: fo 331.

¹⁸⁵ “Anna Testas vs. Chabert Pierre,” 24 July 1770, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 7 (1924): 544-5; “Anna Testas vs. de Latour, Jr.,” 11 June 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 509; “Ana Testas vs. Luis de Blanc,” 19 July 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 517-8; “Ann Testas vs. Widow Duverge,” 16 Sept 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 707; “Henrique Voix vs. Mr. Louis De Blanc,” 11 Apr 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 317-9. Louis de Blanc appears in the records of the Natchitoches Post as a prominent citizen there and member of the militia. Widows Mme. Veillon and Mme. Bleignac succeeded their deceased husbands as business partners. “Testimony given on request of Mrs. Veillon and Mrs. Bleignac on the loss of a brig,” 25 Jan 1779, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 13 (1930): 533.

When compared with earlier unregulated commerce and existing borderland trade practices, Spanish commercial policy seemed stifling to Louisiana colonists. Although they disobeyed the letter of Spanish law by engaging in contraband trade, Louisiana colonists ultimately assisted the Spanish Empire in achieving one of its goals for the region: to stabilize settlements along the river and to develop agriculture. Trade with British merchants and colonists along the Mississippi also provided access to goods such as “flour, wine, oil, tools, arms, ammunition, [and] all kinds of clothing” through the existing system of exchange.¹⁸⁶

British trade networks provided an outlet for Louisiana produce outside the confines of the Spanish Empire. Indeed, produce and pelts bypassed New Orleans. The products of Louisiana exported to British markets included “lumber, indigo, cotton, furs, and some corn and rice.”¹⁸⁷ Louisiana colonists traded their surplus grain to British West Florida merchants instead of sending it to New Orleans, much to Unzaga’s consternation. For example, the man known as the prototype for Gabriel of Longfellow’s “Evangeline,” Pierre Arceneaux, “sold [grain] to the English of Manchac,” as did his compatriots who were also settled on the Mississippi.¹⁸⁸ Because the Spanish had set price controls for grain in New Orleans, the Acadians fared better by trading their surplus with the British, and transporting the grain to Manchac proved less costly than transporting it to New Orleans.¹⁸⁹ During the corn and rice shortage of 1770, Unzaga

¹⁸⁶ Clark, *New Orleans*, 125, 160; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 108; O’Reilly to Unzaga, Havana, 3 April 1770, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 165 quotation. O’Reilly listed the items in demand in Louisiana. In all probability these were among the items that colonists sought in their exchange with British merchants as well.

¹⁸⁷ O’Reilly to Unzaga, Havana, 3 April 1770, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 165.

¹⁸⁸ Judice to Unzaga, Lafourch, 23 Jan 1773, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 470-1. Longfellow based “Gabriel” in his epic poem “Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie” on the myth of Pierre Louis Arceneaux and Emmaline Labiche who were separated in the Grand Dérangement. Historic irony witnesses Arceneaux’s re-settlement and commercial cooperation with his legendary British foe. See also Brasseaux, *In Search of Evangeline: Birth and Evolution of the Evangeline Myth* (Thibodeaux, LA: Blue Herron Press, 1988).

¹⁸⁹ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 131.

bemoaned the fact that “the farmers do not wish to descend to sell them.”¹⁹⁰ And Piernas wrote that amidst the scarcity of grain the habitants sold their corn and rice to the “*anglais*, with the excuse of being occupied with their harvest.”¹⁹¹ Although Nicolas Verret, the commandant at St. James, protested that the residents of his post had not traded the precious grain, he did not convince Unzaga who instructed Verret to inventory the grain on the farms in his district and to send excess grain to New Orleans.¹⁹²

Tobacco filtered into British hands because of the constraints of Spanish regulation. O’Reilly’s ban on the export of Louisiana tobacco first encouraged colonists to reduce the production of the crop in the colony and then to sell the commodity to the British. Fitzpatrick received tobacco from French planters at Pointe Coupée and from Monsanto who obtained it at Natchitoches. He sent it to Peter Swanson, John Ritson, and Philip Livingston at Pensacola along with wine he obtained clandestinely through Ranson and Lafitte at New Orleans.¹⁹³

Some reaches of trade stretched between Spanish Texas and Manchac through which British trading operations interfered with Spanish relations with Indians further west. Spanish

¹⁹⁰ Unzaga to Verret, New Orleans, 11 Aug 1770, trans. and ed. Carl A. Brasseaux, “Official Correspondence of Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1803,” *Louisiana Review* 7 (1978): 172-3.

¹⁹¹ Piernas to Dustiné, New Orleans, 11 Aug 1770, PPC, legajo 195: fo 422: “On experimente a cette capital un grand manqué de ris et mahis, parce que les habitants ne veulent pas descendre pour les vendre, et cela pour ne pas vouloir les donner aux prix du tariff, mais bien aux anglais, l’excuse d’être occupé a leur recolte...”

¹⁹² Unzaga to Verret, New Orleans, 11 Aug 1770, trans. and ed. Carl A. Brasseaux, “Official Correspondence of Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1803,” *Louisiana Review* 7 (1978): 173-4.

¹⁹³ Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Manchac, 31 May 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 86-89; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Manchac, 4 June 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 90; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Manchac, 23 July 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 90-91; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Manchac, 12 Sept 1773, *Merchant of Manchac*, 94-5; Fitzpatrick to Peter Swanson, Manchac, 30 August 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 159-60; Fitzpatrick to Peter Swanson, Manchac, 31 Oct 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 97-98; Fitzpatrick to Peter Swanson, Manchac, 21 Jan 1771, Manchac, *Merchant of Manchac*, 98-99; Fitzpatrick to John Ritson, Manchac, 20 April 1771, *Merchant of Manchac*, 105; Fitzpatrick to Philip Livingston, jr., New Orleans, 9 March 1772, *Merchant of Manchac*, 156; Fitzpatrick to Jean Lafitte, New Orleans, 20 July 1773.; Fitzpatrick to John Stephenson, 28 Aug 1772, Manchac, *Merchant of Manchac*, 127; “Santiago Lorrains, called Tarascon vs. Santiago Philip Jacquelin Durey,” 25 April 1775, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 11 (1928):163. Louis Ranson who served as *sindico procurador general*(public advocate) to the cabildo in 1770 also did business with British merchants. For a time a partner of St. Maxent, Ranson traded with Cap Français. Fitzpatrick used Ritson’s plantation below New Orleans to trade Louisiana produce to other British merchants.

officials were aware of the growing British presence at Manchac and of the involvement of Louisiana's colonists in trade with that post.

British goods introduced at Manchac filtered through Natchitoches westward into Texas and even found their way to New Mexico.¹⁹⁴ Wichita Indians raided Texas settlements for horses and cattle, which they exchanged for arms and ammunition. Apaches traded British firearms deeper into the Spanish west.¹⁹⁵ In 1774, Jacob Monsanto was found in Natchitoches trading in goods purchased at Manchac possibly from Fitzpatrick who noted receiving buffalo blankets and "painted Deer skin" from the trade with Natchitoches.¹⁹⁶

British infiltration into these more western Indian trade networks concerned Spanish officials. The British threat was real enough that in 1772, Governor Ripperda of Texas wrote Unzaga about rumors that "Englishmen...were cutting timbers for houses" at the mouth of a river along the Gulf of Mexico. The situation paralleled British activity in other Spanish territories about the Caribbean.¹⁹⁷ In 1773, Hamilton was the lone British merchant at Opelousas, where he traveled with carpenter engagés from New Orleans after stopping to trade at Pointe Coupée.¹⁹⁸ Although Hamilton's passport permitted him to trade among the Indians of the districts of western Louisiana, he was known to have traded as far west as Texas. Ripperda

¹⁹⁴ Clark, *New Orleans*, 175; Usner, *Indian, Settlers, and Slaves*, 133; for more on the Texas-Louisiana border see H. Sophie Burton, "To Establish a Stockyard Farm," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 109.1 (2005): 98-132 and David LaVere, "Between Kinship and Capitalism: French-Spanish Rivalry in the Colonial Louisiana-Texas Indian Trade," *Journal of Southern History*, 64.2 (1998): 197-218.

¹⁹⁵ Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 133-4.

¹⁹⁶ Clark, *New Orleans*, 200; "Procédure contre Jacob Monsanto," Natchitoches, 27 March 1773, in Inventory of the Notary Since 1732, PPC, legajo 198: fo 546; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Manchac, 31 May 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 86-89; Fitzpatrick to McGillivray and Struthers, Manchac, 4 June 1770, *Merchant of Manchac*, 90; Fitzpatrick to Philip Livingston, New Orleans, 9 March 1772, *Merchant of Manchac*, 116.

¹⁹⁷ Ripperda to Unzaga, San Antonio de Béxar, 9 Sept 1772, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 209; Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (New York: M.E. Sharp Inc., 1998), 125.

¹⁹⁸ Fuselier de la Clair to Unzaga, 1 March 1773, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 45. The term "engagés" refers both to those who contracted their service to others for pay, especially for skilled work, and to less formal agreements for unskilled labor. In either case, the laborer agreed to work for a specified amount of time and for an agreed pay. Barton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 121-4. Hamilton's engagés in this case then were probably contracted skilled laborers.

demanded prosecution for his trespassing among the Indians there.¹⁹⁹ Spanish officials were so concerned about the contraband flow between Natchitoches and Los Adaes that the Texas settlement was abandoned for several years in attempt to kill the trade.²⁰⁰

The trade routes that reached from Texas to Natchitoches funneled cattle, horses, and mules eastward into settlements of Spanish Louisiana where they strengthened ranching. DeMézières suspected that Opelousas habitants were buying horses stolen in New Spain and on the Texas plains.²⁰¹ In 1775, at least one Spanish colonist, Sieur Nicolas LaMotte, who did business with Morgan & Mather, conducted horses and mules from the Trinity River to Louisiana. LaMotte was a repeated transgressor of boundaries in this trade. In 1775 or 1776, he promised 21 mules to Pierre Morins in exchange for 300 rolls of tobacco grown in Natchitoches.²⁰² Because of the friendly relations between colonists and the Indians of these western districts of Louisiana, trade with the Attakapas and Opelousas Indians particularly in furs, cattle, and horses developed across the colonies of Texas and Louisiana. The Attakapas Indians, settled mostly to the west of the Attakapas and Opelousas settlements, and the Acadians both participated in driving the herds into Louisiana and in raising the livestock in these western districts.²⁰³ The Attakapas employed the calumet and were linguistically related to the

¹⁹⁹ Fuselier de la Clair to Unzaga, Opelousas, 16 Feb 1773, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 42; Fuselier de la Clair to Unzaga, 1 March 1773, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 45.

²⁰⁰ Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 133-4. For more on this borderlands trade see also David LaVere, "Between Kinship and Capitalism: French and Spanish Rivalry in the Colonial Louisiana-Texas Indian trade," *Journal of Southern History* 64.2 (May, 1998): 197-218.

²⁰¹ DeClouet to Unzaga, Attakapas, 9 Aug 1774, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 95; DeClouet to Unzaga, Attakapas, 12 Aug 1774, PPC, legajo 189A: fo 96.

²⁰² DeClouet to Unzaga, Attakapas, 7 Oct 1775, PPC, legajo 192: fo 193-4; LaMotte and DeMézière's brother-in-law, Manuel de Soto, the husband of Marie de St. Denis, were prosecuted for having traded across the Louisiana-Texas border when Louisiana was still a French colony. See also, "Pedro Morins vs. Nicolas LaMata(La Mothe)," 16 Feb 1776, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 11 (1928): 333. There were apparently two other LaMothe brothers with property at Attakapas and Opelousas and involved in trade together: Jacques and Jean. Both had died by 1778. "Intestate Succession of Juan Lamothe," 15 March 1778, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 13 (1930): 336-7; "Patrick Morgan and Santiago Mather vs. Juan Bautista Bienvenu as bondsman for the late Nicolas Lamothe," 3 May 1779, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 13 (1930): 686-93.

²⁰³ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 186; Clark New Orleans, 175; Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 179-80.

Chitimachas and Tunicas, although culturally they were more similar to Gulf Coast Indians to the west such as the Karawankas.²⁰⁴ As Aubry and Foucault had anticipated, O'Reilly hoped to foster the development of vacheries in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts, particularly as a source of provisions in case of war.²⁰⁵ Already in 1770, Juan Kelly and Eduardo Nugent, sent by O'Reilly to survey the colony and administer oaths of loyalty, noted that in Opelousas "the raising of cattle is the natives' sole occupation," and that in the Attakapas, "the Acadians have settled there and raised cattle."²⁰⁶ By the 1770s, Acadians were the largest component of the free population of the districts, but they settled among colonial elite who owned vacheries on large tracts of land. These were often men who had served in the French military and remained in the colony afterward, such as Alexandre DeClouet, Fuselier de la Claire, de Vauginé, Antoine Bernard Dauterive, Jacques Courtableau, and Jean Baptiste Grevemberg.²⁰⁷ At least Courtableau and de Vauginé were active in the Indian trade also.²⁰⁸ The trade, particularly in livestock,

²⁰⁴ Ian W. Brown, "The Calumet Ceremony in the Southeast and Its Archaeological Manifestations," *American Antiquity*, 54.2 (1989): 312; Lauren C. Post, "Some Notes on the Attakapas Indians of Southwest Louisiana," *LH* 3.3 (1962): 218, 233-5. Much of the work on the Attakapas has not been expanded far beyond the observations and analysis of Swanton at the beginning of the twentieth century. His ground breaking work also colors the scholarship of other Indian groups of the Lower Mississippi Valley. This is largely because he or other ethnographers he cited were among the last to work directly with those who continued to speak Indian tongues of the Lower Mississippi Valley.

²⁰⁵ O'Reilly to Grimaldi, Madrid, 30 Sept 1770, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 185.

²⁰⁶ Paulette Guilbert Martin, "The Kelly Nugent Report on the Inhabitants and Livestock in the Attakapas, Natchitoches, Opelousas and Rapides Posts, 1770," *Attakapas Gazette* 11 (1976): 189, 190.

²⁰⁷ "Magdalena Vinzan (Vincent), widow of Santiago Courtableau vs. Bernardo Dauterive," 19 April 1773, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR*, *LHQ* 9 (1926): 337. Jean Jacques Grevemberg was called "Flamand" because of his birth in Flanders and his six sons were often referred to as the "Flamand brothers."

²⁰⁸ Porteous, transcribed and trans., "Inventory of De Vaugine's Plantation in the Attakapas on Bayou Teche, 1773," *LHQ* 9 (1926): 570-589. "Inventory made for Mr. de Vaugine, as a basis for a partition of the community between himself and his late wife," 6 Feb 1773, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR*, *LHQ* 9 (1926): 161-2. This inventory is a very interesting description of an early Louisiana plantation, including a description of "the principal house which is on sleepers, divided into three rooms enclosed by galleries on two sides with two warehouses of stakes in the ground covered with straw, one is for a drying room with the drag-nets, court and garden enclosed by upright oak stakes... estimated two hundred piasters." It also provides insight into the working of the indigo culture: "two pairs of vats with a chain pump machine to draw up the water and a horse mill to thrash the indigo." The inventory contains a very detailed list of the household effects and tools on the property. This is interesting to contrast to the 1769 inventory of Jean Baptist Prevost's New Orleans property and indigo plantation below the city on Lake Borgne and another at English Turn that produced sugar, see Edith Dart Pris, transcribed and translated, "Inventory of the Estate of Sieur Jean Baptiste Prevost, Deceased Agent of the Company of the Indies, 13 July 1769," *LHQ* 9 (1926): 411-498. This inventory details the specialized tasks of the different slaves on the plantation.

enabled Acadians and other colonists at the Attakapas and Opelousas posts to develop their own vacheries, eventually an important source of beef for the colony.²⁰⁹

Louisiana colonists had long transgressed the border with Spanish Texas. Similar border crossings continued during the years of partition and now merged with the British trade networks that stretched to the Lower Mississippi River Valley. Inhabitants recognized that their economic interest rested in crossing the international border by continuing their customary trade practices. Borderlands fluidity held the promise of greater economic opportunity for the population of the region than did the pursuit of solely legal avenues of trade.

Conclusions

Spanish and British Empires attempted to develop the Lower Mississippi Valley, to expand commerce and to bring their respective colonies into a wider Atlantic connection. In doing this, they found conflict with the frontier exchange economy, used it, and eventually undermined it. However, during the years of partition, the inhabitants of Spanish Louisiana and the Lower Mississippi Valley sought to maintain the porous borderlands character of the region by crossing borders. At times, this fostered cooperation with colonial government or with imperial policy and legal codes. At other times, Indians, colonists, and slaves openly defied the boundaries. Thus, the diverse inhabitants negotiated both cooperation with policy and defiance of it, as they sought to maximize their own political, economic, and personal interests.

As empire understood its role as to impose borders, the inhabitants of the region actively pursued the crossing of borders. Slaves pursued their freedom through the expanded legal

²⁰⁹ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 123-5; Usner *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 179-80; Din and Harkins, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 192-3; New Orleans Cabildo, *Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo, 1769-1803, transcripts in English* ed. and comp. WPA (1939) reel 1, p 163.

avenues offered by the *siete partidas* and the laws of the Indies. *Petites nations* Indians employed the strategy of crossing borders as they tried to bolster their power in negotiations with Spanish and British representatives alike and to evade Creek-Choctaw conflict. British merchants actively engaged both British and Spanish territory in the Lower Mississippi Valley as they expanded Atlantic and North American trade networks into the region.

The fabric of the lives of the residents of the Lower Mississippi was enmeshed in a tradition of participation in networks of exchange and Atlantic trade networks, most of which were illicit. These networks began to shift significantly during the years of partition. The activities of British merchants that engaged these networks reveal the celerity with which they infiltrated all manner of trade in the region, the efforts of Spanish and British empires to regulate boundaries and the movement of people within their colonies, and the persistence of these same peoples in seeking their own economic interest in spite of the regulations. The changes to relations among Indians, traders, slaves, and colonists resulted from the convergence of British and Spanish Empires on the Lower Mississippi, the implementation of Spanish policy, and British trade networks. While Spanish officials tried to create new order, they implicitly and explicitly wanted to minimize engagement with British merchants, but these British merchants catered to local and Atlantic demands and developed commerce even on the Spanish side of the Mississippi. The greatest irony of the success of the contraband trade is that by disobeying the letter of Spanish law, colonists of Spanish Louisiana and subjects of the British Crown furthered the interests of Spanish officials by strengthening the settlements, population, and economies of Spanish Louisiana.

Changes experienced by the society of the Lower Mississippi Valley during the years of partition would be significant in the years to come. The population itself was in flux. The slave

population was beginning to experience a re-Africanization. British colonists flocked to West Florida, increasingly so as discord in the Atlantic seaboard colonies grew. British and Spanish agents attempted to develop strong ties to Indian groups through trade. Colonists and Indians alike were complicit with the expansion of British trade networks across the region.

Merchants who readily engaged in the local networks that defied borders and imperial constraints connected the Lower Mississippi outward to the Atlantic and to the interior of the North American continent. These connections were long lived and proved important during the American Revolution and in the decades that followed.

Chapter 3

“Commerce in times of Peace and Arms in Times of War”¹: Spanish Neutrality and the American Revolution on the Lower Mississippi, 1776-1779

Introduction

Louisiana gained new significance for the Spanish Empire during the American Revolution. Between the outbreak of war in April 1775 and official Spanish entry into the conflict in June 1779, Spain embraced neutrality while preparing to strike against the British Empire. Spain's initiatives during this period meant two policy changes in the shaping of Louisiana as a border colony for the sake imperial defense. First, Spain turned its attention to Louisiana's domestic concerns to shape the colony for the anticipated war. Second, Spain opened New Orleans to trade with North American ports. The implementation of policy rarely achieved the goals envisioned by policy-makers. The policies meant to spur economic growth and military preparedness for the colony did not bear much immediate fruit, though the seeds were planted for economic growth in decades to come. Additionally, unforeseen as a consequence among policy makers, American trade networks introduced the tumult of the revolution to the banks of the Mississippi and threatened to embroil Spanish Louisiana in the conflict prematurely.

Louisiana's proximity to British West Florida magnified the colony's strategic importance for the Spanish Empire. The American Revolution provided an incentive for Spain to renew its efforts to enforce the international boundary through policies regulating trade and

¹ Unzaga to de la Torre, New Orleans, 27 Feb 1772, PPC, legajo 1145: fo 52-3.

settlement. The newly appointed Minister of the Indies, José de Gálvez, was especially interested in the colony's economic development and commercial incorporation into the Spanish Empire. If an attack were to be launched against British West Florida from Louisiana, its colonists must be loyal Spanish subjects, its settlements stable enough to provide food and supplies to New Orleans, and its Indian alliances strong enough to assure wartime cooperation. Spain invested in Louisiana by promoting the cultivation of new crops, funding the transportation and settlement of colonists, and opening trade within the Spanish Empire for Louisiana tobacco. These projects were meant to improve the colony's ability to serve the empire in war. By strengthening the local economy and by tying it to the Iberian Atlantic, Spain hoped to solidify loyalty of Louisiana colonists. An expansion of the colonial population also meant more buffer settlements on the river and more militiamen.

During the period of neutrality, Spain secretly provided supplies for the American colonies at Havana and New Orleans, officially sanctioning a formerly illicit channel of trade as a method for undermining the interests of Britain. Diplomatic relations that secured Spanish assistance and the trade relations particular to the project grew out of British-American trade networks that were already supplying flour to the Spanish Empire at these places and that had contributed to the contraband trade in the Lower Mississippi Valley over the previous decade.

American-Spanish trade at New Orleans brought a party of American raiders to the Lower Mississippi in 1778, and their actions tested the international boundary. This group embroiled the region in the turmoil of the revolution before Spain actually entered the war. American actions disrupted life and trade on the river and revealed that imperial neutrality placed Louisiana in the perplexing position of providing a safe haven to British subjects who claimed a wide spectrum of political allegiance. Invoking the international boundary of the Mississippi

River was a strategy of the Americans who launched raids against British West Florida as well as a strategy employed by British citizens who sought refuge in Louisiana. It became clear that Spanish Louisiana provided greater security to refugees than British West Florida.

This moment also suggested a shift in the loyalty of the inhabitants of Spanish Louisiana. Colonists, Indians, and slaves cooperated with the Spanish colonial government in preparations for a full military conflict. These preparations suggested weakness of infrastructure. Fortunately for Spain, a British attack on Louisiana did not materialize.

On the eve of war, local authorities in Louisiana and West Florida became painfully aware of their vulnerability to military assault and to the porousness of their common border, migration across which proved destabilizing to both colonies. Luis de Governor Unzaga aptly characterized the British trade networks that had become so entrenched in the Lower Mississippi Valley: they brought “commerce in times of peace and arms in times of war.”² During the years of Spanish neutrality, British trade brought a bit of both.

Imperial Attention to Louisiana's Domestic Development

In 1776, José de Gálvez became Minister of the Indies, and his administration marked an important shift within the Spanish Empire that coincided with the outbreak of the American Revolution. José de Gálvez took his new post after serving as a *visitador general* of New Spain where he oversaw the inspections of the northern frontier and the reorganization of the missions from 1765-1770. His administration took an assertive and expansionist approach to the defense of Spanish territory, and in his preparations for war he was particularly mindful of the edges of

² Unzaga to de la Torre, New Orleans, 27 Feb 1772, PPC, legajo 1145: fo 52-3.

empire.³ Known also for his nepotism, José de Gálvez placed his nephew, the thirty year old Bernardo de Gálvez, as governor of Louisiana, a position the younger Gálvez assumed on January 1, 1777. He had previously traveled and worked with his uncle in New Spain.⁴

Spain was attentive to Louisiana as it prepared for war, for the colony was to serve as an important staging ground for any offensive action against British West Florida. The loyalty of its colonists and stability of its economy would also be important to the dependability of the colony during and after the conflict. Spanish defense was inextricably linked to the development of settlements on the Mississippi, which included the incorporation of the inhabitants of these settlements into the empire through participation in militias. Such incorporation also included raising crops that could contribute to feeding the colony and others that might even bring profit to the empire. Spain turned to its traditional borderlands settlers, the *Isleños*, to increase the population of the Mississippi River settlements. They would supplement groups already considered a physical buffer, including colonists along the Mississippi and *petites nations* Indians living among the settlements. By promoting the cultivation of tobacco in the years

³ The Gálvez family was from Málaga in Andalucía. Born in 1720, José de Gálvez studied first theology and then law. Gálvez's legal skill enabled him to rise through governmental ranks and to positions of power. Thomas A. Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States: An Intrinsic Gift* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 9-11; Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 353. José de Gálvez was also mindful of solidifying Spanish presence in California. See also, Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 236-70. Interestingly, as the Church became less central to Spanish policy in general during the Bourbon period, the mission system found new life in the California project. For more on the missions in California see Robert H. Jackson, and Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

⁴ For more on Bernardo de Gálvez, John Walton Caughey wrote the classic biography of the Spaniard, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934). Most literature that addresses Bernardo de Gálvez is focused on his participation in the Gulf Coast campaigns during the American Revolution. Harold D. Williams, "Bernardo de Gálvez and the Western Patriots," *Revista de Historia de América* 65/66 (1968): 53-70; Maury Baker and Margaret Bissler Haas, "Bernardo de Gálvez's Combat Diary for the Battle of Pensacola, 1781," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 56.2 (1977): 176-199. For more on his earlier career, as captain in an expedition against the Apaches and as commander of Nueva Vizcaya and Sonora see Kieran McCarty, "Bernardo de Gálvez on the Apache Frontier: The Education of a Future Viceroy," *Journal of the Southwest* 36. 2 (1994): 103-130. For more on Gálvez's ideas and policies towards Indians of the Interior Provinces of New Spain, see also, Donald Worcester, ed. and trans., *Instructions for Governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain, 1786 by Bernardo de Gálvez* (Berkeley, 1951).

preceding the revolution, Spain hoped to better integrate Louisiana to Iberian economies. With regard to Louisiana, the policies of José de Gálvez reflected continuities with Spanish imperial precedent, the influences of the Bourbon Reforms, and attention to the specific interests of colonists. While the use of Canary Islanders as borderlands settlers had a history within the Spanish Empire, the liberalization of trade and the detailed organization of the efforts to expand hemp and flax production to Louisiana reflected Bourbon influences. Although in some ways innovative, policy-makers continued to focus on their goal of enforcing Louisiana's border with British territory as a type of defense for the Spanish Empire.

Francisco Bouligny, a Spanish officer who accompanied O'Reilly to Louisiana in 1769, returned to Spain in 1775. Indicating his interest in the strength of Louisiana's border, José de Gálvez first encouraged Bouligny to write a *memoria* in 1776 and later met with him to inquire about the status of economic growth and colonial defense in Louisiana.⁵ In his account of the conditions and economic potential of the colony, Bouligny complained that the imperial regulations that governed Louisiana's commerce also promoted contraband as the only pragmatic outlet for the colony's exports. Illicit trade, he argued, fostered disloyalty among borderlands colonists because it accustomed them to ignoring imperial regulations and transgressing the international border. To promote loyalty to the Spanish crown, Bouligny suggested the cultivation of tobacco, hemp, and flax in the colony and licit outlets for Louisiana's crops within the empire. He proposed that such attention to the domestic interests of colonists would promote loyalty to Spain and incorporation into the empire, furthering the imperial defense purposes for which Spain had acquired Louisiana.⁶ Bouligny also advocated an expansion of the slave

⁵ Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 201; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 65, see Din, ed. and trans., *Louisiana in 1776 A Memoria of Francisco Bouligny* (New Orleans: Jack D.L. Holmes, 1977).

⁶ Din, *Memoria*, 59-61, 70-78.

population in Louisiana as a means to bolster the colony's capacity to cultivate tobacco, indigo, and other crops. He addressed his efforts to import 100 *bozales* slaves annually first to *Compañía Gaditana de Negros*, then to Juan Jose de Goicoa, the lawyer of the company, then to the crown with a petition for the *asciento* from two of his brothers in partnership with another merchant, Miguel Kearney in Alicante.⁷ If Louisiana could obtain slaves through legal means rather than by resorting to contraband trade with British merchants, such unwanted British commercial endeavors would dwindle. In his *memoria*, Bouligny proposed an annual importation of two to three thousand slaves to expand Louisiana's economy. Bouligny also offered a full-scale plan for the settlement of colonists near New Orleans in groupings of fifty families each.⁸ Bouligny's *memoria* highlighted for the crown the illicit commerce that reigned in Louisiana, arguing that the populations of colonists and slaves must be expanded and the economy more closely tied to Spain.

In this moment when local and imperial interests coincided, Spanish policy appeared to respond to local opinion. José de Gálvez appointed Bouligny lieutenant governor of Louisiana, and placed immigration, commerce, and Indian relations under his purview. Over the course of 1776 and 1777, policy relating to commercial regulations, promotion of agriculture, and migration shifted significantly. Bernardo de Gálvez was appointed as acting governor of Louisiana during this time. His mission was to prepare the colony for conflict with Britain.

Unzaga argued that Louisiana needed to be populated with loyal colonists. He observed the rapid populating of West Florida as settlers poured into the colony making land grabs, as loyalists sought refuge from hostilities in the American colonies, and as families tried to avoid

⁷ José de Gálvez to Bernardo de Gálvez, 3 May 1777, PPC, legajo 174A: fo 659; Din, *Francisco Bouligny*, 56, 57, 61

⁸ Din, *Memoria*, 81-92.

military conflict altogether.⁹ New migration to Louisiana had come virtually to a standstill following the arrival of a group of Acadians at Natchitoches, where they traveled after being shipwrecked off of Matagorda Bay in Texas in 1770.¹⁰ José de Gálvez's re-evaluation of Louisiana in the empire included instructions to his nephew to encourage settlement of loyal subjects who would receive grants of land on the condition that they take the oath of loyalty to the crown.¹¹ Such colonists could participate in legal commerce during peace times and engage the enemy as militia in war.¹² Thus, they would further economic development in the economy through their participation in legal commerce, which reinforced the boundary of the Mississippi in contrast to illicit commerce which was characterized by its defiance of international borders.

Perhaps it was only natural that policy-makers should turn to the Canary Islands as a source for loyal colonists for the borderland colony. The Canary Islands had been Spain's first effort at colonization in the sixteenth century. Drawn mostly from impoverished peasantry who agreed to serve as colonial militia, Canary Islander colonists, referred to as *Isleños*, settled throughout the Greater Antilles, Venezuela, and Uruguay. Through the eighteenth century the Canary Islands had often been a source of colonists for the Spanish borderlands where they developed frontier settlements and served as militia. Similar to the settlement of *Isleños* families at San Antonio de Bexar in Texas, where in 1731 they supplemented the rancher-military community that already existed at that outpost, *Isleños* arrived in Louisiana, a colonial

⁹ Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution," *Louisiana Studies* 14 (1975): 243.

¹⁰ Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Long Road to Louisiana: Acadian Exiles and the *Britain Incident*," *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 1 (1985): 32. See this article for full treatment of this party of Acadians, also accompanied by Germans, from Maryland. First they were settled at Natchitoches, but after petitioning the governor multiple times, they were permitted to settle with the Acadians at Opelousas and Attakapas.

¹¹ Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution," *Louisiana Studies* 14 (1975), 245-7. Gálvez also instructed Lieutenant Governor Cruzat of Upper Louisiana to encourage the settlement of French Canadians there. Any such efforts there do not appear to have met with much success.

¹² Unzaga to de la Torre, New Orleans, 27 Feb 1772, PPC, legajo 1145: fo 52-3.

borderland already subject to imperial institutions and populated largely by peoples who had lived in the region for decades.¹³ The settlement of Isleños families was part of an immigration policy integral to Spanish defense policy for Louisiana, similar to the settlement of the Acadians along the Mississippi within the previous decade.¹⁴ However, unlike the Acadian colonists who had migrated on their own to Louisiana, Spanish representatives solicited in the Canary Islands families to cross the Atlantic and to settle in Louisiana. Spanish attention to settling loyal colonists in Louisiana would remain constant over the next several decades.

In August 1777, the Crown ordered the governor of the Canary Islands to recruit 700 men to serve in the Second Louisiana Fixed Regiment. Perhaps because of rampant disease and crop failure in the Canaries, the Isleños responded well to the invitation: over 2,000 migrated to Louisiana between 1778 and 1783. The Crown paid for the transportation and settlement of the colonists. In 1778, aboard the *St. Joseph*, some of the first families reached the Mississippi.¹⁵

Gálvez lost no time in settling the newcomers, with an eye towards the role they were to play as settler soldiers. The poverty of the first Isleños to reach Louisiana, however, surprised the governor. Because the majority traveled in family units, Bernardo de Gálvez chose to

¹³ Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), xi; Teja's work is attentive to the detail of the formation of community on the frontier of Spanish North America. For a discussion of the Isleño experience in Texas see Gerald E. Poyo, and Gilberto M. Hinojosa, eds., *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1991), chapters 2 and 3. For a discussion of Isleño contribution to frontier ranching see Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1986). For more on the Canary Islanders in the Spanish Empire, see James J. Parsons, "The Migration of Canary Islanders to the Americas: An Unbroken Current Since Columbus," *The Americas* 39.4 (Apr., 1983): 447-481.

¹⁴ Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution," *Louisiana Studies* 14 (1975), 241.

¹⁵ José de Gálvez to Bernardo de Gálvez, 27 May 1778, PPC, legajo 174B: fo 200. Matías de Gálvez, the father of Bernardo de Gálvez, was governor of Tenifere from 1777 to 1779, Eric Beerman, "Introduction," to A. Montemayor, trans., *Yo Solo: The Battle Journal of Bernardo de Gálvez During the American Revolution* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1978), x. The Spanish made a lesser attempt to promote migration to Upper Louisiana at this same time, offering concessions of land and aid to Catholics wishing to live in Louisiana. This effort targeted French Canadians in particular, but also made reference to Germans and to Italians. See Bernardo de Gálvez to José de Gálvez, New Orleans, 27 Jan 1778; Francisco Cruzat to Bernardo de Gálvez, San Luis de Ylinieses, 8 Dec 1777; -- to Bernardo de Gálvez, El Pardo, 7 Apr 1778; Bernardo de Gálvez to José de Gálvez, New Orleans, 9 June 1778; and Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans, 19 Feb 1778, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, vol 1., 152-7.

designate most as settlers and only to enlist the bachelors in the Second Louisiana Fixed Regiment.¹⁶ The Isleño supplement to Louisiana's military muscle proved marginal in comparison to what had been expected at the initiation of the project. Isleño families were directed to settlements near British West Florida on the Iberville at a place called Galveztown, another called Valenzuela near the LaFourche settlement, and below New Orleans at San Bernardo and Barataria. The settlement sites were selected for their proximity to valuable waterways along the Spanish-British border, which would be important to secure in the event of the outbreak of war.¹⁷ Galveztown and Valenzuela were settlements in the area along the Spanish-British border where conflict was most likely to emerge. Gálvez praised the location of the settlement of Galveztown:

The advantages offered by this settlement are many, the principal ones being the following: It is near this capital, not more than thirty leagues distant. It is possible to go there either by land or by water, which circumstance is very convenient for the transportation of goods; it is within the very island of New Orleans in the lake region where up to now we have not had any settlement, and for this reason all the island is exposed to being surprised by the Indians or by the English, who on this side could approach the capital without being detected. It is the only passage by water that these English have to go from Pensacola to Manchak or Natchez...¹⁸

With aid from St. Maxent and from the nearby LaFourche settlement, Valenzuela continued to be settled during the American Revolution.¹⁹ Little regulated in the past, Barataria was the home to maroons and smugglers. The project of a settlement was soon abandoned because of flooding.²⁰

¹⁶ Din, *Canary Islanders*, 28.

¹⁷ Din, "The Canary Islander Settlements of Spanish Louisiana: An Overview," *LH* 27.4 (1986): 357. The name "Galveztown" was given to the settlement by a group of British settlers who removed there during the turmoil along the river in the wake of the Willing raid—see below. See Bernardo de Gálvez to José de Gálvez, New Orleans, 15 Jan 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 326-7. For more on Galveztown, see also, V.M. Scramuzza, "Galveztown: A Spanish Settlement of Colonial Louisiana," *LHQ* 13 (1930):553-609.

¹⁸ Bernardo de Gálvez to José de Gálvez, New Orleans, 15 Jan 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 326-7.

¹⁹ Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 26 July 1781, PPC, legajo 195: fo 470.

²⁰ Din, "'Cimarrones' and the San Malo Band in Spanish Louisiana," *LH* 21.3 (1980): 242, fn16, 255. Barataria was significant to the Battle of New Orleans, and the Lafitte brothers also found it a strategic location for their operations in the nineteenth century. See, Robert C. Vogel, "The Patterson and Ross Raid on Barataria, September 1814," *LH* 33.2 (1992): 157-170; Vogel, "Jean Laffite, the Baratarians, and the Battle of New Orleans: A Reappraisal," *LH* 41.3 (2000): 261-276; Jane Lucas De Grummond, *The Baratarians and the Battle of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge: LSU

While the Spanish and Isleño immigrants became permanent, loyal Spanish colonists, like the Acadians before them, their settlements proved more costly to the Crown than anticipated, and the new colonists took time to become self-sufficient because of disease and flooding.²¹ Imperial officials and colonial governments often under-anticipated the expense of settling new colonists and the amount of time needed for those colonists to become independent within a colony.

Groups of Spanish colonists migrated to Louisiana as part of an effort to develop crops that would serve both colony and empire. Over the course of 1777 and 1778, the Crown inquired about the possibility of developing flax and hemp cultures in Louisiana and even sent boxes of seeds to begin cultivation. Spain was concerned that in wartime it might not be able to outfit ships with its already inadequate supply of hemp and flax. Successful cultivation of tobacco, hemp, and flax would also provide a potential source of revenue to the empire because the exports were taxable. A group of families from Granada traveled to Louisiana where they were to begin the cultivation of these crops.²² A group of sixteen Málaga families was settled by Bouligny near the Attakapas at a place called Nueva Iberia on Bayou Teche, which provided a water-route access to New Orleans and where Bouligny arranged for the new colonists to begin

Press, 1961); Wilburt S. Brown, *The Amphibious Campaign for West Florida and Louisiana, 1814-1815; A Critical Review of Strategy and Tactics at New Orleans*, (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1969).

²¹ Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution," *Louisiana Studies* 14 (1975), 249-50; Din, *The Canary Islanders*, 25-28. For a very detailed account of the recruiting of Isleños and their settlement in Louisiana and the development of those settlements through the twentieth century see Din, *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana*.

²² Granadine families agreed to try their hands at growing hemp and flax in New Spain and Caracas as well. Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution," 247. The experiment with flax and hemp in Lower Louisiana does not appear to have been a fruitful one. Hemp and flax cultivation was also promoted in Upper Louisiana in 1778, but Bernardo de Gálvez pointed out that the small population would be a hindrance, and he proposed providing settlers with slaves on credit to jump start the effort. Bernardo de Gálvez to José de Gálvez, New Orleans, 27 Jan 1778, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, vol. 2, 158-9. Din, "Francisco Bouligny's 1778 Plans for Settlement in Louisiana," *Southern Studies* 16 (1977): 211-2. In his instructions to Fernando de Leyba when he became Lieutenant Governor of Illinois in 1778, Gálvez asked him to encourage the cultivation of flax and hemp. Gálvez to Leyba, New Orleans, 9 Mar 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 259. Bouligny proposed settling Spanish families along the Ouachita River. Brian E. Coutts, "Flax and Hemp in Spanish Louisiana 1777-1783," *LH* 26.2 (1985): 129-139. The Granadinos made their first efforts near New Orleans. Because of flooding, these first efforts failed, and soon the hemp and flax farmers began to petition to leave the colony. The crown refused to let them relocate in 1780, and in 1781 they established themselves in the Attakapas.

raising livestock. Like the other settlers new to Spanish Louisiana, the Malagueños did not become self-sufficient as quickly as imperial officials had hoped.²³

Although the quality of Louisiana's tobacco was thought too inferior to import to Havana, José de Gálvez wrote to Unzaga requesting that he encourage the cultivation of tobacco with the purpose of supplying New Spain.²⁴ At this time, the demand tobacco of the *renta*, the royal tobacco monopoly, coincided with concern of the Minister of the Indies for finding ways to better commercially incorporate Louisiana into the empire.²⁵ With Louisiana supplying the *Renta*, in Mexico, Bernardo de Gálvez negotiated a tobacco price with Louisiana's planters and encouraged colonists to expand tobacco production.²⁶ This order reintroduced an official export trade in tobacco to Mexico that had been initiated but fallen off in 1770-1771.²⁷

The development of commerce that tied Louisiana in new and legal ways to the Spanish Empire was underway during the American Revolution. But expanding tobacco production took time to develop, and Louisiana tobacco production did not meet a third of the demand that those running the Mexico tobacco monopoly anticipated that it would.²⁸ Although tobacco production was on the rise in Louisiana, it did not become a significant export crop until after the war.²⁹

²³ See Din, "Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Bouligny and the Malagueño Settlement at New Iberia, 1779," *LH* 17.2 (1976): 187-202. Instructions to Nicholas Forstall for the establishment of the Malagueños families, New Orleans, 15 Nov 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 63-5; José de Gálvez to Bernardo de Gálvez, San Ildefonso, 24 July 1778, PPC, legajo 174B: 253; Forstall to Piernas, New Iberia, 4 Nov 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 565; Forstall to Piernas, New Iberia, 20 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193: fo 365-7.

²⁴ José de Gálvez to Unzaga, 27 May 1776, PPC, legajo 174A: fo 430.

²⁵ Brian E. Coutts, "Boom and Bust: The Rise and Fall of the Tobacco Industry in Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1790," *The Americas* 42.3 (1986): 290; Mathé Allain, trans., "Mr. de Clouet Commandant of the Two Districts of Atakapas and Opelousas," *Attakapas Gazette* 3 (1969): 18.

²⁶ "Regulations Governing the Tobacco Trade in Louisiana," 15 June 1777, New Orleans, *SPMV*, vol. 1, 237. Brian E. Coutts, "Boom and Bust," 290.

²⁷ Brian E. Coutts, "Boom and Bust: The Rise and Fall of the Tobacco Industry in Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1790," *The Americas* 42.3 (1986): 290; Mathé Allain, trans., "Mr. de Clouet Commandant of the Two Districts of Atakapas and Opelousas," *Attakapas Gazette* 3 (1969): 18.

²⁸ Coutts, "Boom and Bust," 291, 293. The demand was for 500,000-600,000 lbs. of tobacco and in 1780 Louisiana only furnished ~180,000 lbs.

²⁹ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 119; Kinnaird, "Introduction," *SPMV*, vol. 1, xxvi, and Bucareli to Gálvez, 27 May 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 279-82.

Many of the seeds of commercial and agricultural development of the later years of the Spanish regime were sewn as the empire prepared for participation in the American Revolution.

Posts participating in the tobacco trade included Iberville, Point Coupée, Natchitoches, the Attakapas, and Opelousas, and the inhabitants who agreed to cultivate tobacco included large plantation owners, small farmers, and slaves.³⁰ The fostering of the tobacco culture was ever Bourbon in its attention to detail: providing colonists with fixed prices, instructions for how to tend the crop for best effects, and checks on the quality prior to its export.³¹ Natchitoches residents who had cultivated tobacco since the early years of the settlement's founding responded enthusiastically to the shift in Spanish policy that promoted the crop, many of them agreeing to expand production. Some families involved in the Indian trade began to turn to tobacco at least in part at this time as a means for their livelihood as the Indian trade through Natchitoches began slowly to decline.³² As early as the summer of 1777, colonists at Iberville agreed to plant tobacco for the next season. Among them were Acadian leaders Anselm Blanchard and Joseph Richard—militia captains and the only two literate men in the settlement

³⁰ Regulations Governing the Tobacco Trade, 15 June 1777, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 237; Bucareli to Gálvez, Mexico, 27 May 1778, *SPMV*, vol. 1, 280; Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 257-58. For a discussion of the relationship between tobacco culture and slave lifestyle in the Chesapeake, see Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (UNC Press, Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), 33-44. Unlike the two topographies that Morgan compares in his seminal comparative work, tobacco, indigo, and rice cultures existed in various stages within relatively short distances from one another throughout Lower Louisiana. As Morgan notes, rice and indigo production demanded a larger labor force. Areas of rice and indigo production such as Pointe Coupée and Chapitoulas were home to more well established plantations and slave populations. Whereas, especially during this early phase of imperial promotion of tobacco, the crop appealed to large planter, small farmer, and slave (on his personal plot) alike. Indeed “because tobacco cultivation required close attention from planting through processing, it was most efficiently grown on a small scale,” Morgan, 36.

³¹ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, not dated but falls amidst July and August 1777 correspondence, PPC, legajo 190: fo 388-90; Jose de Gálvez to Unzaga, 27 May 1776, PPC, legajo 174A: fo 430.

³² Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 130-3. For a discussion of the decline of the Indian trade at Natchitoches see also, p112-4, which attributes the decline to the “drop in the numbers of Indian hunters and trade partners” as Indian populations dwindled as a result of disease and to the designation of Nacogdoches as an official trading post for Texas, which in turn attracted many Indians otherwise accustomed to trade at Natchitoches. Disease in particular hit terribly during the years 1777 and 1778.

to trade or perhaps raise money for self-purchase.³³ At Pointe Coupée, some of the slaves planted tobacco on their own time to trade or perhaps raise money for self-purchase.³⁴ In April 1778, with a party of five that included the free black Baptiste and a Quapaw Indian, a merchant of the Natchitoches post set out for New Orleans with a cargo that included 100 carrots of tobacco. They first passed through Pointe Coupé before descending to the city.³⁵ Trade and transportation of cattle and tobacco perpetuated the cooperation of peoples from different sectors of society and among different settlements. In 1778, the commandant of the Attakapas and Opelousas posts Alexandre DeClouet reported that the tobacco grown in his district was finer in quality than that of Natchitoches.³⁶ In 1780, DeClouet perhaps exaggerated as he noted that tobacco was “the sole agricultural production of this post.”³⁷

During the second half of the 1770s, Spain increased its efforts to develop Louisiana’s economy by liberalizing commercial restrictions. Spain hoped that a stronger economy in Louisiana would result in greater loyalty to Spain and a related reinforcing of the border.³⁸ With an eye to the successful and long-term settlement of colonists on the Mississippi, José de Gálvez promoted beneficial commercial relations.³⁹ In 1776, Louisiana was opened to trade with France and the French West Indies.⁴⁰ This act, which extended to the slave trade, legally opened

³³ Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 1777, PPC, legajo 190: 257-58; Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 17 July 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 260. Anselm Blanchard was a leader at the St. Gabriel settlement. He was involved in the settlement of the Isleños at Galveztown. For a map of his land on the Iberville, see 4 March 1772, map, Natchez Trace Collection Provincial and Territorial Records, 1759-1813, The Center for American History, Briscoe Center, University of Texas Austin, Box 2E985, Iberville.

³⁴ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, not dated but falls amidst July and August 1777 correspondence, PPC, legajo 190: fo 388-90.

³⁵ Bormé to Bernardo de Gálvez, Natchitoches, 9 April 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 606-7.

³⁶ DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez, Attakapas, PPC, legajo 191: fo 313-15.

³⁷ Glenn R. Conrad, “Notes on Attakapas,” *Attakapas Gazette* 12 (1978): 104.

³⁸ Kinnaird, “Introduction,” *SPMV*, vol. 1, xxv.

³⁹ Din, “Spain’s Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution,” 241.

⁴⁰ Commerce with France, Madrid, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 116-118; Din, “Spain’s Immigration Policy and Efforts in Louisiana during the American Revolution,” 246-54. The crown reverted to restricting Louisiana trade to Spanish imperial ports in 1778, but shifted back to friendly trade with French ports in 1782.

Louisiana to trade with non-Spanish ships and ports. The decision to encourage Louisiana to supply the *renta* was nearly simultaneous with Spanish expansion of legal avenues for Louisiana colonists to acquire slaves. Such a “direct and licit” trade, policy-makers intended, would swallow up channels of contraband trade that continued to flow between places such as Saint Domingue and New Orleans.⁴¹ Two French commissaries, Joseph DeBreüil de Villars and Charles Philippe Favre d’Aunoy, promptly arrived in New Orleans as part of the arrangement.⁴² Bernardo de Gálvez issued a proclamation to the colonists of Louisiana stating:

that for the sake of their greater advancement, and to augment their property by increasing agriculture...that henceforward they may sell their goods and products to the French vessels and receive in payment Negroes for the cargo, or money or bills of exchange at their discretion, without being accused of violating the laws of the kingdom concerning illegal trading.⁴³

Though they competed with Dutch and British traders, French slave ships began legally arriving at New Orleans in 1777 and 1778.⁴⁴ These changes in commercial policies shifted Spanish policy in a direction that Louisiana’s colonists had favored about a decade earlier.

The liberalization of trade that opened Louisiana to French ports in 1776 was also a moment when Gálvez the minister and Gálvez the governor saw fit to reinforce the boundary by reiterating the ban on British trade in Louisiana. Over the course of 1777, Bernardo de Gálvez

⁴¹ Grimaldi to Aranda, Aranjuez, 6 May 1776, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 132-133, “direct et licite.” See also Jean-Pierre LeGlaunec, “A Directory of Ships with Slave Cargoes, Louisiana, 1772-1808,” *LH* 46.2 (2005): 211-230. LeGlaunec finds 5 vessels arriving from Saint Domingue at New Orleans through 1776.

⁴² Grimaldi to Aranda, Aranjuez, 6 May 1776, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 132-133; Commerce with France, Madrid, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 116-118; Instructions for St Domingue trade with New Orleans, attempt to counteract English Market, 3 Oct 1776, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 113-116; Villars and D’Aunoy, New Orleans, 20 Aug 1777, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 150-151. Favre Daunoy was the nephew of LaFrénière’s widow, Marguerite Belair, and he held her power of attorney until his death when it was passed to his brother Nicolas d’Aunoy, “Nicolas Daunoy Empowered by Mrs. Widow Nicolas Chauvin de la Freniere brings redhibitory action against the estate of the late Alexandro LaFreniere for a plantation and a piece of land,” 23 July 1781, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 16 (1933): 530-33; “Nicolas Favre Daunoy vs the succession of his brother Carlos Favre Daunoy, to have delivered to him, several negroes, some livestock and implements,” 10 July 1781, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 16 (1933): 525-6.

⁴³ “Proclamation Concerning Louisiana Commerce,” New Orleans, 21 November 1777, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 242-3.

⁴⁴ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 286; Usner *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 107; Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 73. Usner, *Indians Settlers, and Slaves*, 111, 118-9; Villars and d’Aunoy, New Orleans, 20 Aug 1777, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 150-151.

and the governor of West Florida Peter Chester took turns initiating and responding to the capture of the vessels flying the flag of the other's empire. Gálvez's orders to take British vessels conformed to royal orders that saw the seizing of British vessels as a means of obtaining intelligence.⁴⁵ Gálvez expressed anger in early 1777 when British officials in West Florida took two Spanish schooners as they traveled to the Pearl River because Gálvez recognized that those same officials promoted the illegal trade practices of British merchants along the river.⁴⁶ Gálvez responded on April 17 by clearing the lower Mississippi of British vessels, capturing eleven in total. Captains of two vessels identified themselves as patriots, Joseph Calvert of Virginia the captain of the *Steady Friend* and William Pickles of the *Norton*. Other vessels included two bound for Britain and at least two others bound for Jamaica. Morgan and Mather, John Campbell, John Waugh, and the Ross brothers, all merchants with homes in New Orleans, also experienced financial loss from Gálvez's seizure.⁴⁷ Gálvez turned a profit with this act that indicated a sea change in the neighborliness that had mostly characterized the relations of officials of British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana during the 1770s.

As they attempted to reconfigure policies for Louisiana that would promote loyalty among colonists and bolster the colonial population and economy, José de Gálvez and Charles III sought out information and advice from individuals who had experience in the colony like

⁴⁵ José de Gálvez to Unzaga, 6 Oct 1776, PPC, legajo 174A: fo 502.

⁴⁶ Fabel, "Anglo-Spanish Commerce in New Orleans During the American Revolutionary Era," in William Coker and Robert Rea, eds., *Anglo Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast During the American Revolution* (Pensacola, Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1982), 35. See also John Caughey, "Bernardo de Gálvez and the English Smugglers on the Mississippi, 1777," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 12.1 (1932): 46-58.

⁴⁷ Fabel, "Anglo-Spanish," 37; Calvert to Bernardo de Gálvez, 21 Apr 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 9-10; Calvert to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans, PPC, legajo 190: fo 47-48; Daniel Clark and John Priest, New Orleans, 13 Oct 1777, PPC, legajo 180: fo 38-39; Dickson and Stephenson, 29 Sept 1777, WFLP, reel 9: fo 169-70. In 1776, Spain began to assert itself in the struggle against British contraband trade. That year a large Spanish fleet "smashed British smuggling operations along the Brazilian coast and retook Uruguay from the Portuguese, Great Britain's allies. Thus, Bernardo de Gálvez's subsequent instructions and actions took place in the context of a continuing global struggle." Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States*, 11.

Boulogne. They also incorporated that information into the policies developed for the border colony. Ever directed to promoting a stronger border with British West Florida, these policies represented innovation especially with regard to commercial policy. Although the goals of these policies may not have been fully realized, and certainly not with the immediacy that policy-makers in the metropole hoped, they did point to efforts on the part of the empire to meet the needs and interests of the colonial inhabitants. José de Gálvez intended that licit channels of trade link the colony more closely to the empire. Licit trade might draw inhabitants away from participation in borderlands trade that was not only illicit but that also involved the enemy British and necessitated the crossing of the border. Loyalty of Louisiana inhabitants—colonists, slaves, and Indians—was paramount to any future success of the ensuing war with Britain.

Arms for Flour: Spanish-American Trade at New Orleans

With the coming of the American Revolution, the nature of the trade between Louisiana and the British North American colonies changed as Spanish officials altered imperial commercial and economic policies to challenge the British Empire and to aid the American colonies. Until 1776, trade with British North American colonies was prohibited. However, on December 24, 1776, Charles III legalized a formerly illicit trade to aid the Americans.⁴⁸

The American-Spanish trade took place at Havana and at New Orleans and developed from American networks that had provided flour to the Spanish Empire during the previous decade. During the 1770s, Willing & Morris of Philadelphia had been granted permission to outfit ships with flour for Havana, New Orleans, and Puerto Rico.⁴⁹ Once the thirteen colonies declared independence, the Americans sought contact with Spain through relationships built

⁴⁸ Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States*, 49.

⁴⁹ Rappleye, *Robert Morris*, 24.

upon such channels of trade. Spain responded, agreeing to supply arms in exchange for flour through these same merchant houses. In order to preserve neutrality, however, Spain insisted that aid to the American colonies remain secret.⁵⁰

During the period of neutrality, Spanish efforts to gain access to wartime intelligence mobilized commercial ties between the Spanish Empire and the rebel colonies. Unzaga and Gálvez used the cover of purchasing flour to dispatch several vessels to American Atlantic ports for the purpose of gathering intelligence about the war.⁵¹ Spain also dispatched agents to Philadelphia to act as observers of the Continental Congress. Agents such as Miguel Antonio Eduardo, Juan Miralles, and Francisco Rendón became personally involved with the American merchant sector of Philadelphia and served as important contacts between Havana and networks of American merchants.⁵² Spanish-American trade took on a new character. Diego de Gardoqui's pre-revolutionary trade with Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts took on new responsibilities.⁵³ Miralles had been a merchant at Havana where he had traded with Morris. This connection granted Miralles a personal and political window into the American Revolution at Philadelphia from which he reported to Madrid and Havana. Meanwhile, through Miralles and Morris, Spain opened a clandestine channel of trade between Philadelphia and Havana.⁵⁴ Havana was the site of preparation for Spanish entry into the American Revolution and consequently required an increased supply of flour during the war years, a supply promised also by Robert Dorsey, of Baltimore. By agreement, this supply would actually take place at the

⁵⁰ Rappleye, *Robert Morris*, 102-3.

⁵¹ Cummins, "The Governors of Spanish Colonial Louisiana and Espionage in the Southeastern Borderlands, 1766-1795," *Locus* 6.1 (1993): 31.

⁵² Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 169, 171; John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, July 1, 1777, *The Adams Papers Digital Edition*, ed. C. James Taylor. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008). See Cummins *Spanish Observers and the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1991) for a comprehensive treatment of Spanish espionage in Philadelphia during the Revolutionary Era.

⁵³ Rappleye, *Robert Morris*, 102-3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 160, 206-7.

Dutch island of St. Eustatius.⁵⁵ In 1776, John Dupuy, an agent for Willing & Morris at Môle St. Nicholas, reported that gunpowder for the Americans had arrived at Martinique.⁵⁶

This war-time trade officially opened New Orleans to distinctly American merchant networks.⁵⁷ Trade with New Orleans was carried out via the interior water-routes of North America that connected the backcountry to the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys. The trade also connected Spanish officials and the revolutionary governments through networks of port-city merchants, especially through the business networks of Willing & Morris.

In July 1776, a West Florida planter and probable loyalist by the name of Alexander Ross prepared to return from Pennsylvania to the Mississippi and en route to tend to the business losses of David Franks & Co. in the Illinois Country.⁵⁸ Ross wrote his friends Robert Morris and Thomas Willing as he attempted to depart from Fort Pitt, for he wanted to travel with the group of Americans that readied to voyage to New Orleans. He suggested to his friends that “by that step I should remove every kind of suspicion.”⁵⁹ But, Ross was detained, perhaps because of his suspected loyalist stance. Ross penned his complaints only a few days after the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia and at the same moment of the preparations for the first American expedition to Spanish New Orleans.

While Ross continued to plea his cause for permission to travel from Fort Pitt, in August of 1776, Captain George Gibson, Lieutenant William Linn, and a party of fifteen soldiers traveled to New Orleans. They disguised themselves as frontiersmen shipping their cargo to New

⁵⁵ Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 171-175, 180-181.

⁵⁶ John Dupuy to Willing & Morris, Môle St. Nicholas, 16 April 1776, HSP, Robert Morris Papers, Folder 4,

⁵⁷ On cattle trading networks in Texas and Louisiana, see Robert Thonhoff, “Texas and the American Revolution,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 98.4 (1995): 510-517. For more on American commerce and trade with the Spanish Empire, see Linda Salvucci, “Atlantic Interceptions: Early American Commerce and the Rise of the Spanish West Indies,” *Business History Review* 79.4 (2005): 781-809.

⁵⁸ Alexander Ross does not appear to be related to brothers Hercules, David, Robert, and George Ross.

⁵⁹ Alexander Ross to Willing & Morris, Pittsburgh, 8 July 1776, HSP, Robert Morris Papers, Folder 7; Gibson, New Orleans, 21 Sept 1776, PPC, legajo 573 in Photostat Reproductions, vol. 1, document 32, Newberry Library.

Orleans. Acting as a representative of the Virginia Committee of Safety, Gibson also carried a dispatch from General Charles Lee that asked that trade be opened between the American colonies and New Orleans. With the assistance of Oliver Pollock, Gibson secured a meeting with Governor Luis de Unzaga. Gibson worked with Willing & Morris in this and his later ventures to secure gunpowder from officials at New Orleans. On September 21, 1776, the two negotiated the first sale of Spanish gunpowder to the rebel colonies. Gibson promised on behalf of Virginia to remit to the royal treasury at Cadiz the sum of 18,050 Spanish milled dollars.⁶⁰ Gibson presented Unzaga with a note that stated: “I am instructed to propose the Following Queries to Your Excellency. 1st Wou’d the acquisition of the Town & Harbour of Pensacola be a desirable Object to His Catholic Majesty[?] 2nd Wou’d his Catholic Majesty receive possession of the Same from the Americans[?]”⁶¹

The Spanish and Americans parties attempted to hide the transaction that had taken place between Gibson and Unzaga at New Orleans. Unzaga permitted the Americans, except for Gibson, to transport the 8,600 pounds of gunpowder back to Fort Pitt. The supplies were carried in a boat with a Spanish captain, flag, and passport and masked as supplies to the Indians.⁶² This powder was then used in the American defense of Fort Henry and Fort Pitt and in the American offensive in the Ohio Valley in 1777 and 1778. Spanish aid proved vital to American military success in these particular conflicts and campaigns. In 1778, George Rogers Clark relied heavily on Pollock and his connection to the Spanish government at New Orleans for access to

⁶⁰ Clark, *New Orleans*, 202-4; Light T. Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 48-50; James “Oliver Pollock,” 67; J. Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976), 61-2; Alexander Ross to Robert Morris, Pittsburg, 2 Aug 1776, HSP, Robert Morris Papers, Folder 8.

⁶¹ As quoted in Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States*, 30.

⁶² Chester to Germain, 9 May 1777, WFLP, reel 20: fo 1; Fabel, “Anglo-Spanish Commerce,” 36; Unzaga to Martin Navarro, New Orleans, 20 Sept 1776, Photostatic Reproductions, PPC, legajo 573, vol. 1., document 30, Newberry Library.

ammunition and to credit, which ultimately destroyed Pollock's personal wealth and credit.⁶³

After holding Gibson in New Orleans for several months in an attempt to prevent British authorities from learning of the transaction with the Americans, Unzaga released him. Gibson returned to Philadelphia aboard one of Pollock's sloops with Captain Bethel, who had made the voyage from Philadelphia to New Orleans many times during the 1770s. This vessel was rumored to be traveling to Cap Français, flying under the protection of the Spanish flag. She carried about two tons of gunpowder for Willing & Morris. Pollock wrote the firm, offering his services to the Continental Congress.⁶⁴ In this transaction, the American colonies initiated commerce with New Orleans via the interior routes of North America. Pollock's ties to Willing & Morris became central to any future engagement of American and Spanish parties in the city.

In spite of Unzaga's precautions, British residents of West Florida were perfectly aware of Gibson's mission at New Orleans, which brought greater concern at the local level than it did in British halls of power. John Fitzpatrick wrote that "[a]s to the Mr. Gibson...it is said the Boat that went up the River had on board 13,500 lb. Gun Powder."⁶⁵ A British merchant at New Orleans reported to Governor Chester of Gibson's visit there.⁶⁶ When news of the American party's departure from New Orleans reached Pensacola, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for

⁶³ Kinnaird, "The Western Fringe of Revolution," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 7.3 (1976): 258-64; *Col. George Rogers Clark's Sketch of his Campaign in the Illinois in 1778-9* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1869), 96-7, Library Company of Philadelphia; Patrick Henry to George Rogers Clark, Williamsburg, 2 Jan 1778; James Alton James, ed., "introduction" in *Papers of George Rogers Clark*, lxx-lxxvii and Clark to Oliver Pollock, Kaskaskia, 18 July 1778, 55, Clark to Pollock, Kaskaskia, 6 Aug 1778, 64-5; Minutes of the Council of West Florida, Pensacola, 7 Jan 1779, West Florida Papers, reel 10: fo 770-7. For more on George Rogers Clark see James Alton James, *The Life of George Rogers Clark* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928); Lowell Hayes Harrison, *George Rogers Clark and the War in the West* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001); Kenneth Carstens and Nancy Carstens, eds., *The Life of George Rogers Clark, 1752-1818: Triumphs and Tragedies* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2004); Nester, *George Rogers Clark: I Glory War* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011). Pollock was still sending Clark gunpowder in 1780, Pollock to Piernas, New Orleans, 5 Sept 1780, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 385.

⁶⁴ Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 50-51; Fabel, "Anglo-Spanish Commerce," 36; Chester to Germain, 9 May 1777, WFLP, reel 20: fo 1; Deposition of Charles Roberts, 28 Mar 1777, WFLP, reel 8: fo 273-4.

⁶⁵ John Fitzpatrick to John Stephenson, Pensacola, 5 Dec 1776, *Merchant of Manchac*, 218-9.

⁶⁶ Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 26 Oct 1776, WFLP, reel 8: fo 81-87.

the Southern Colonies John Stuart sent word to the Chickasaws asking the Indian allies to prevent the rebels from passing on the river, but Indian assistance did not materialize for the British in this instance.⁶⁷ Chester wrote Lord Germain of his great concern that the American rebels planned to continue to employ the inland water routes for their nefarious purposes:

These circumstances which I have abovementioned served to confirm me in my opinion (if the rebellion should continue another year) that the rebels will endeavor to obtain ammunition & clothing thro the channel of the River Mississippi as the great quantities of coarse goods lately imported from Great Britain into that River. I learn are much beyond the usual demand necessary for the consumption & trade of that country. And there are some British Merchants residing at New Orleans, who from their conduct are much to be suspected to be laying in Magazines for the purpose of supplying the Rebels... There is ground to suspect that the Congress at Philadelphia have dispatched Mr Gibson not only on the business of negotiating for Supplies but also to learn our strength disposition of the back Inhabitants, quantities of Provisions & the difficulties attending an Expedition against that Quarter.”⁶⁸

Lord Germain was less concerned: “I confess I do not see any sufficient ground for the alarm taken by you and the Council...that they should come in large Bodies, and in an hostile manner, through the Indian Countries, with the purpose of making Conquests, I can never imagine.”⁶⁹

While Germain rightly identified Indian opposition to American expansion and suspicion of American traders as an asset to British interests and a challenge for the rebel colonies, he overestimated Indian attachment to the British Crown. He also underestimated the potential of British citizens and local officials to undermine relations with Indian nations.

The context of the war transformed the meaning of some forms of exchange, as Louisiana colonists and officials began to look upon trade with loyalists as connoting a particular danger. Louisiana colonists also knew of the revolutionary conflict and anticipated friction with the loyalists living in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Over the course of September of 1777, George

⁶⁷ Chester to Germain, 9 May 1777, WFLP, reel 20: fo 1.

⁶⁸ Chester to Germain, 9 May 1777, WFLP, reel 20: fo 1. Germain was Secretary of State for America.

⁶⁹ George Germain to Chester, Whitehall, 7 Feb 1777, WFLP, reel 8: fo 61.

Urquehart, a Scottish Protestant who married Monsanto's sister Angelica, welcomed various British traders and Acadian habitants to his home at LaFourche. The commandant, Louis Judice, considered George Urquehart a friend, and two years later his support for Angelica Monsanto, Urquehart's widow, would prove him one. Nevertheless, Judice complained to Bernardo de Gálvez that Urquehart was a loyalist and that he entertained other loyalists such as Francis Poussett and the Jones brothers. Perhaps misinterpreting the behaviors of colonists participating in the frontier exchange economy, Judice was concerned that Simon LeBlanc and his brother-in-law Anselm Blanchard of Manchac were British-sympathizers because LeBlanc lent horses to Jones and Poussett for their journey to see Urquehart. Nor did Urquehart's reading from a gazette from Jamaica offer Judice much consolation, for he associated such reading with loyalist sympathies.⁷⁰

Unzaga did not blindly aid the Americans in this trade for gunpowder. To gain additional intelligence of the intentions of the American rebels, he dispatched Captain Bartolomé Beauregard, a member of a New Orleans merchant family, to Philadelphia under the guise of obtaining flour.⁷¹ Significantly, his brother Toutant Beauregard, who had a considerable business

⁷⁰ Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez, LaFourche, 26 Sept 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 300-301; Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez, LaFourche, 7 Feb 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 471-2. After her husband's death, Angelica sold the property on the Acadian Coast. SJHR, 30 Sept 1779, "Petition to sell land situated on the Acadian Coast belonging to the minor children of the late Gorge (Godfrey) [George] Urquhart," *LHQ* 14 (1931): 132. Angelica Monsanto later married Robert Dow, another Scotsman, and a Protestant. He became a *medico* at the royal hospital in New Orleans in 1779 and served in this position until 1785. See also, Jared William Bradley, "Robert Dow," in Bradley ed., *Interim Appointment: W.C.C. Claiborne Letter Book, 1804-1805* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2002), 582-4, and Robert Doire Document, 1783, LSU, Hill Memorial Library, Special Collections. This document's name is misleading. It actually records the manumission of the slave Santiago Durham by coartación in New Orleans in 1783. His master was Robert Dow, not Doire, and is described as the "*medico de rey in esta provincial*." Francis Poussett was a British merchant settled at Pensacola. He arrived in British West Florida in 1763 or 1764 selling goods for the Indian trade to James Adair—goods from Baynton, Wharton & Morgan. His goal was to strike it rich and return in luxury to Philadelphia or "his native land." He did not succeed but remained in the Lower Mississippi. He relocated by the mid-1770s to Manchac and later to Baton Rouge. He was still in the area at the time of the death of Fitzpatrick's widow in 1797. Francis Poussett to Baynton & Wharton, Mobile, 2 April 1764, BWM, roll 5: frame 224-5; Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 139n.

⁷¹ Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*, 63.

with Havana, had been among the merchants who petitioned against the introduction of Spanish commercial regulations in September 1766 and was involved in the contraband trafficking of slaves from the French islands.⁷² Now the Beauregards cooperated in an official capacity with Spanish espionage efforts. In preparation for war, Spain increased the number of troops at Havana and made it the base for intelligence gathering and for executing the supply of aid to the Americans, making New Orleans a key location for contact with the Americans as well.⁷³

In 1777, Oliver Pollock began serving at New Orleans as the representative of the Second Continental Congress and of Virginia. His actions associated him personally and professionally with Atlantically connected merchants living in the region. Pollock played an important role as an agent who both assured the supply of Spanish gunpowder to the American militia in the west and the shipment of American flour to New Orleans.⁷⁴ In 1778, Pollock reassured Gálvez that the Americans intended to continue to supply New Orleans with flour from the Ohio as he personally chartered multiple vessels to transport supplies from the Spanish to American Atlantic ports.⁷⁵ With his operations based in New Orleans, Pollock was able to incorporate trade with British West Floridian Daniel Clark, Sr., and the New Orleans based firm of Patrick Morgan and James Mather.⁷⁶ American merchants who came to New Orleans during the American Revolution, such as James Rumsey and Thomas Pollock, served as sources of intelligence for the

⁷² Douglas B. Chambers, "Slave Trade Merchants of Spanish New Orleans, 1763-1803: Clarifying the Colonial Slave Trade to Louisiana in Atlantic Perspective," *Atlantic Studies* 3(2008), 340; Chambers identified the Beauregards as what he called the "first tier" among slave traders in New Orleans during the 1780s and 1790s. Ingersoll, "The Slave Trade and the Ethnic Diversity of Louisiana's Slave Community," *LH* 37.2 (1996), 144; Francois Duplessis to Robert Morris, New Orleans. 16 Aug 1776, HSP, Robert Morris Papers, Folder 7; Merchants to Aubry, New Orleans, 8 Sept 1766, AC C13A, reel 46: fo 298-299.

⁷³ Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 51-3.

⁷⁴ Pollock to Piernas, New Orleans, 5 Sept 1780, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 385; Clark, *New Orleans*, 204-5.

⁷⁵ Pollock to Gálvez, New Orleans, 2 May 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 271; Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 88.

⁷⁶ Clark, *New Orleans*, 204; Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 240n. Benjamin Morgan and James Mather had a business partnership from 1776 until 1783 based out of New Orleans. Around 1783, Mather and Arthur Strother became business partners.

Spanish.⁷⁷ The trafficking of gunpowder and flour on the Mississippi spurred the cooperation of merchant networks stretching from New Orleans to the Atlantic port cities and to the Caribbean.

Oliver Pollock's connections with Willing & Morris gave him access to French, Spanish, and American shipping. As an actor in a web of Atlantic and Caribbean networks, Pollock sought information and financing to supply the American campaigns in the west. In 1777, Pollock received instructions to send the vessels of Willing & Morris that arrived at New Orleans to Bordeaux and fill them with indigo, pelts, and currency. Pollock consulted Favre d'Aunoy to carry through the shipment.⁷⁸ Pollock's business at Bordeaux was perhaps conducted through the merchant house of Samuel and J.H. Delaps with whom Willing & Morris did business.⁷⁹ Pollock maintained contact with Philadelphia and France through contacts of Willing & Morris in the Circum-Caribbean, such as John Dupuy at Môle St. Nicholas.⁸⁰ Benjamin Franklin and other American agents communicated with Pollock via Havana and Cap Français, "under Cover to Monsr. J.B. Bourgard[Beauregard] Merchant here."⁸¹ With the financial aid dispensed by a Caribbean and Atlantic network of financiers and the supplies provided by the Spanish crown, Pollock reported that "I have been Supporting a Detatchmt. of Troops under the Command of Col. Clark who took possession of the Illinois Country last June as also the ship Morris which I fitted out in a Warlike manner to distress the Enemy's Trade in this River to the Islands."⁸²

On both sides of the Atlantic, Americans pursued an alliance with Spain through existing channels of trade. Although officially neutral, Spain provided arms, ammunition, and supplies.

⁷⁷ Light T. Cummins "The Governors of Spanish Colonial Louisiana," 29.

⁷⁸ D'Aunoy, New Orleans, 15 April 1777, AC C13A, reel 50: fo 143-144.

⁷⁹ Pollock to Franklin, New Orleans, 29 April 1778, Papers of Benjamin Franklin; Pollock to Franklin, New Orleans, 10 April 1779, Papers of Benjamin Franklin; Samuel and John Hans Delap to Willing & Morris and Co, Bordeaux, 20 Mar 1776, HSP, Robert Morris Papers, Folder 4.

⁸⁰ John Dupuy to Willing & Morris and Co, Môle St. Nicholas, 19 Sept 1776, HSP, Robert Morris Papers, Folder 8.

⁸¹ Pollock to Franklin, New Orleans, 29 Apr 1778, Papers of Benjamin Franklin.

⁸² Pollock to Franklin, New Orleans, 10 April 1779, Papers of Benjamin Franklin.

By participating in this trade, Spain set a precedent for licit trade between American ports and New Orleans and fostered enduring business connections with American merchant firms.

Navigating Neutrality: The Willing Raid Brings Turmoil to the Lower Mississippi

Americans sent to New Orleans to carry out the exchange of flour for arms brought revolutionary conflict to the banks of the Lower Mississippi. This conflict interrupted the trade and every-day life of those living on the river and revealed that division in British America stretched well into West Florida. It also pointed to the connections and networks that continued to defy the border. Border crossing was a key strategy for the American raiders, British colonists seeking safety and redress of grievances, and some Indian groups. Spanish protection of American parties in Louisiana strained relations between Spanish Louisiana and British West Florida. In the years preceding formal Spanish entry into the war, Bernardo de Gálvez struggled to balance aid and protection of the Americans with appeasing authorities in West Florida. Spanish neutrality provided rebel and loyalist British alike access to recourse of Spanish law. Both groups sought refuge for themselves and protection for their property in Spanish Louisiana when the revolutionary conflict flared up for the first time in the Lower Mississippi in 1778.

Ideas for an American campaign against British West Florida built upon the experiences of American merchants who had traveled the interior waterways of the continent to New Orleans and who knew the Gulf Coast. Trade networks especially related to the flour trade to New Orleans were as important to the project of trade with the port as to the relations between the rebel colonies and Spain. After the outbreak of the American Revolution, James Willing had returned home to Philadelphia where he advocated for an invasion of West Florida that would secure navigation of the Mississippi for the Americans and easy access to the Spanish at New

Orleans. In 1777, George Morgan brought before the Continental Congress a plan for an expedition against British West Florida. Morgan was the first candidate for the proposed campaign because of his knowledge of the voyage from Fort Pitt to New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast to Mobile and Pensacola. However, when congress determined the scheme too expensive and unviable, Robert Morris used his position on the Committee of Commerce to have General Edward Hand send Captain James Willing, instead of Morgan, with a small force of men. The expedition's mission was to trade for supplies at New Orleans, carry dispatches from the Continental Congress to Gálvez and to Pollock, and take British prizes along the way.⁸³ At Fort Pitt, Willing gathered men and supplies. Now a captain in the Continental Army, George Morgan issued instructions regarding the provisioning of the party of thirty for 180 days and wondered about the return voyage from New Orleans through the interior of North America, "How are they to be supplied?"⁸⁴ James Willing and his party of about thirty left Pittsburg in the cold of winter, January 10, 1778. Others joined their force along the way so that, by the time he reached New Orleans, Willing's men numbered sixty-one.⁸⁵

As they traveled the Mississippi to New Orleans, Willing's men plundered plantations along the river, targeting known loyalists. Before reaching Natchez, they captured a small party of five or six men sent by John Stuart to keep look out at Walnut Hills above Natchez. The

⁸³ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 81-3; Morris's actions were not approved by the Committee but represented his efforts to back Revolutionary War efforts in the South and his appreciation for the importance of French and Spanish aid to the success of the patriot cause. Rappleye, *Robert Morris*, 141; The Commercial Committee to Edward Hand, York in Pennsylvania, 21 Nov 1777, in *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, vol. 2, 565.

⁸⁴ George Morgan to James Willing, 7 Jan 1777, HSP, Edward Hand Papers, 1766-1803, vol. 1, 36. For more on George Morgan during the American Revolution with particular attention to his role in Indian politics, the first Indian council that met with representatives of the Second Continental Congress, the first United States government, see Gregory Schaaf, *Wampum Belts & Peace Trees: George Morgan, Native Americans, and Revolutionary Diplomacy* (Golden Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1990). Morgan spent the better part of his life engaging in business and political connections between Philadelphia and the Upper Mississippi Valley: first through his business with Baynton, Wharton & Morgan, then during the American Revolution as an important player in Indian relations, and later as a land speculator.

⁸⁵ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 84-5; Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1975), 46-7.

purpose of the look-out party was to alert Choctaw allies of Britain to attack the rebels descending the river.⁸⁶ Willing took Fort Panmure and Fort Bute—the first capture of both of these posts during the Revolution. At Natchez, Willing and his company of volunteers appear to have done minimal damage with the exception of targeted attacks on the property loyalists, such as Anthony Hutchins, and of Willing’s personal enemies. After Willing “hoisted the colours of the United States of America,” the British settlers expressed concern for the safety of their property. They took an oath of neutrality in order to reach an accommodation with Willing by which oath they vowed not to take up arms against the United States. As they traveled the river, Willing and his party also took several British vessels near Manchac and New Orleans and plundered the British coast, burning homes and fields, shooting livestock, and seizing slaves and booty.⁸⁷ At Manchac, they took the *Rebecca*, recently arrived from London.⁸⁸ Those who suffered damages included merchant David Hodge, Margaret Thomas who was the widow of John Thomas, Stephen Shakespeare, John Blommart, John Fitzpatrick, Henry Stuart, and William Dunbar among others.⁸⁹ Dunbar aptly noted that:

James Willing of Philadelphia...this was the Gentleman our friend & acquaintance, who had frequently lived for his own conveniency for a length of time at our houses, I say this was the man who it seems had solicited a Commission by which he might have an [opportunity] of Demonstrating his gratitude to his Old Friends.⁹⁰

Soon friend and foe alike turned to the Spanish colonial government in Louisiana for protection amidst the tumult.

⁸⁶ Council of West Florida, Pensacola, March 1778, WFLP: reel 9: fo 377-95.

⁸⁷ Kathryn Trimmer Abbey, “The Intrigue of a British Refugee Against the Willing Raid, 1778,” *The WMQ*, 1.4 (1944): 399; Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 87-8; Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 31 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 504-6; “West Florida, Natches district,” 21 Feb 1778, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, quotation.

⁸⁸ Stephen Shakespeare Petition, New Orleans, 12 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 139-40; Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 25 Mar 1778, WFLP, reel 9: fo 470-1.

⁸⁹ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 92; John Thomas died before the raid. Margaret Thomas also owned land in her own name. John Thomas, Petition for Land, Pensacola, 3 Mar 1773, WFLP, reel 7: fo 195.

⁹⁰ William Dunbar, Accadian Country, 1 May 1778, in Rowland ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar*, 60-1.

Gálvez tried to strike a balance by simultaneously providing safe haven to the refugees and welcoming the Americans at New Orleans. Aiding loyalist and patriot alike was permissible if not necessary because of Spain's official neutrality in the Revolution.

British colonists and Spanish officials anticipated that British colonists would use border crossings to manage the threat posed by American presence on the Lower Mississippi. Rumor of an American attack on British West Florida had rumbled through the Lower Mississippi for some time. As early as October 1777, Henry Stuart joined another colonist named Rose in requesting permission for the British colonists to take refuge at Spanish Pointe Coupée in the event of an American attack.⁹¹ Settlers living on the Mississippi River, especially those living near Natchez, expressed their anxiety over rumors of an American attack and begged for British troops to be stationed at the fort there.⁹² When word reached Gálvez of Willing's attacks on West Florida, he quickly sent a letter to all of the posts along the Mississippi to receive British refugees, protect them from their enemies, and forbid any violence against them.⁹³ Meanwhile, Gálvez received Willing and his party at New Orleans in March 1778. From there, the Americans continued to launch attacks and plot against British West Florida. At almost the same moment that Willing reached New Orleans, petitions of British colonists, now refugees in Louisiana, told Gálvez that the rebels had not been respectful of the imperial border.

Near chaos engulfed the banks of the river. William Dunbar stated that "A Grand Revolution hath taken place upon the English side of the Mississippi since the latter End of february."⁹⁴ At Manchac, Jean Delavillebeuvre described the band of Americans as "without

⁹¹ Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 27 Oct 1777, PPC, legajo 190: 328-9; Bernardo de Gálvez to Grand Pré at Pointe Coupée, 1 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 15; Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 1 Oct 1777, PPC, legajo 190: 393-394.

⁹² Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 10 Mar 1777, WFLP, reel 8: fo 257.

⁹³ Bernardo de Gálvez to Grand Pré at Pointe Coupée, 1 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 15.

⁹⁴ William Dunbar, Accadian Country, 1 May 1778, in Rowland ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar*, 60.

rule and without discipline,” and expressed his disdain for them when he learned of the men’s plot to kill one of their officers.⁹⁵ At Pointe Coupée, Charles de Grand Pré declared the raid was “an occasion of imprudence” on the part of Willing “whose immoderate use of arms brought about inexcusable excesses.”⁹⁶ After hearing of the raid, Chester wrote that his intelligence informed him that the party was made up of thirty five Americans who left Fort Pitt with Willing and “a body of banditti,” who brought their strength to 100 men. Behind Willing’s party, another group of “French and Spanish batteau men—Hunters and other Banditti” travelled and plundered lands along the river.⁹⁷ Choctaws joined in the conflict and began looting and burning property in British West Florida, adding to the woe of already panicked colonists on both sides of the river. Grand Pré forbade merchants from selling any alcohol to Indians, slaves, or colonists as he tried to check the “*desordre*.”⁹⁸

The reaction of colonists living in British West Florida to the events of the spring of 1778 suggested connections of family, trade, and alliance among inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley were stronger than the boundary that agents of empire attempted to impose on the Mississippi River. As word of the descent of Willing’s party spread along the Mississippi, colonists of British West Florida fled for protection to Spanish Louisiana with their families, slaves, papers, and even trade goods. Alexander Ross, William Dunbar, and Henry Stuart all crossed the Mississippi seeking Spanish protection.⁹⁹ “Now all the English coast is abandoned,”

⁹⁵ Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 31 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 504-6, “San regle et san discipline.”

⁹⁶ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 9 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 700-1, “voila ce qu’occasion l’imprudence due Mr. Wlimes[Willing] qui l’usage immodéré dearm, porte a des exes inexcusable.”

⁹⁷ Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 25 Mar 1778, WFLP, reel 9: fo 341-9. It is difficult to tell from the records which parties of men belonging to Willing’s larger expedition committed which actions as they are usually written about under the blanket of being “Willing’s Men,” and the episode as “Willing’s raid,” but it does appear that adventurers belonging to the party proper took to pillaging in its wake and participated in the attacks on the Mississippi.

⁹⁸ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 9 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 700-1.

⁹⁹ Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 48; William Dunbar, *Accadian Country*, 1 May 1778, in Rowland ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar*, 60-63.

declared Grand Pré.¹⁰⁰ Twice a refugee, Isaac Monsanto fled to Pointe Coupée where his sister Eleanora and her husband André Tessiers, as well as his former business partner Isaac Fastio lived. After operating a small store at Pointe Coupée for about a year, Isaac Monsanto died there.¹⁰¹ John Fitzpatrick and his wife fled to Spanish Galveztown.¹⁰² Many British families abandoned their homes on the Amite and made haste with their animals to Spanish Manchac where Delavillebeuvre offered refuge and granted permission to store their indigo and pelts. Soon Delavillebeuvre described friction between the “*Royalistes*” and “*Ameriquains*” who both sought shelter at his fort.¹⁰³

British subjects did not always secure protection for their property in Spanish Louisiana. In their disregard for the international boundary, Americans seized British property on Spanish soil. William Marshall of Manchac had removed with his property to the Spanish side where he stayed at the house of Jean Baptiste Bienville “until a party of the said self-called United States came and forcibly made him and his property their prisoners in open violation and contempt of the general law of nations.”¹⁰⁴ On March 11, 1778, George Ross sent a slave to the river to report to him on Willing’s raid. The slave soon joined other slaves captured by Willing’s men,

¹⁰⁰ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 9 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 700-1, “toute la coste anglaise est maintenant abandoné.”

¹⁰¹ Isaac Monsanto, Pointe Coupée, 17 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191 : fo 726-7; Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 13 May 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 733-4; Grand Pré to Piernas, Pointe Coupée, 8 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 572; Korn, *Early Jews of New Orleans*, 39-40. See also “Leonor Monsanto claiming her dower property against her husband's estate,” 6 Nov 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 17 (1934): 391-4. The latter is possibly the first example of judicial separation of property of spouses in the Spanish period in Louisiana. Eleanora and Tessiers were married in 1773 at Cap Français. In 1781, André Tessiers was in prison and by that time had spent Eleanora’s dowry. She was left without enough funds to satisfy creditors. The separation protected Eleanora and her children from Tessiers’s creditors. Official permission to separate was highly unusual in Spanish Louisiana. The result of this particular case may have been because it passed through the judicial system in New Orleans and on to Cuba, whereas other cases may have only gone before the governor. Both Gálvez and Miró appeared unwilling to authorize separations. See chapter 5, footnote 88 for more on this topic.

¹⁰² Dalrymple, “introduction,” *Merchant of Manchac*, 30.

¹⁰³ Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 12 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 48-9; Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 23 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 497-8.

¹⁰⁴ William Marshall petition, March 1778, PPC, legajo 19: fo 144-5.

such as those of Francis Poussett and William Marshall.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, William Livingston had removed his brother's twenty nine slaves from the Amite to Spanish Louisiana where Willing's party captured some of them.¹⁰⁶ Stephen Shakespeare fled Manchac in a bateau manned by an African slave and an engagé and took his papers, promissory notes, and merchandise seven leagues below Manchac to Spanish territory where he stayed with the Acadian Simon Richard. Joseph Calvert, who had joined up with Willing's men, seized the bateau, the slave, the engagé, and the cargo while the vessel rested on the Spanish shore.¹⁰⁷

Still, British subjects turned to Spanish authorities to seek redress of grievances. Marshall, Shakespeare, Campbell, and Ross all petitioned Bernardo de Gálvez for the return of their property. Arguing that their property was illegally seized required them to rely upon the Mississippi as an international border, although they had often disregarded it in their contraband trade practices. Willing was forced to respect Spanish neutrality, and he returned the slaves captured on the Spanish side of the river. However, he refused to return any of the vessels or their cargo, arguing that one vessel in particular, the *Neptune* owned by Stephen Shakespeare, was already too far below New Orleans for the Spanish to exert their authority and that Shakespeare was in British West Florida at the time that it was seized.¹⁰⁸

From West Florida, even British subjects who had remained on British soil petitioned Gálvez for assistance. Some were slave-owners trying to secure their slaves who had probably been taken to Pollock in New Orleans. Thomas, a former slave who had gained his freedom in New Orleans in 1772 and then taken up residence above British Manchac, petitioned Gálvez

¹⁰⁵ List of what Willing Captured, New Orleans, 16 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 51; George Ross to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans, 12 March 1778, PPC, legajo 81: fo 132.

¹⁰⁶ Petition of William Alexander Livingston, 13 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 153-4.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Shakespeare Petition, New Orleans, 12 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 139-40.

¹⁰⁸ List of what Willing Captured, New Orleans, 16 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 51; Stephen Shakespeare Petition, New Orleans, 12 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 139-40. William Marshall petition, March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 144-5.

after the patriot party took his livestock and belongings as plunder. He lost his gun, three gingham shirts, a pig, a cow and her calf, and a bull, along with thirty chickens.¹⁰⁹

Delavillebeuvre wrote to Gálvez on behalf of a British woman of Bayou Ecores Black who had lost sixty animals to the Americans.¹¹⁰ Perhaps they were among those that Captain McIntosh herded to Pollock's home near a Houma village at LaFourche where some of the slaves seized from David Ross' ship were also rumored to be.¹¹¹ William Dutton invoked his Irish heritage and Catholic identity in his complaint to Gálvez that Willing had attacked his property, taken his eleven slaves, and disregarded his pledge of neutrality.¹¹² Similarly the loyalist Anthony Hutchins petitioned Gálvez after Willing had taken him to New Orleans as a prisoner of war. He suggested that Willing would surely deliver his slaves and those of his relatives Thomas and Elizabeth Hutchins to Oliver Pollock to sell in the city.¹¹³

The actions of Indian groups in the Lower Mississippi revealed the varied interests of different groups and even of towns within the same nation. *Petites nations* Indians and Spanish officials alike saw mutual alliance as favorable in the wake of the uncertainty prompted by American-British conflict along the river. Throughout 1776 and 1777, gifts had been designated to the Indians of Spanish Louisiana including to the three Attakapas chiefs Pimangdas, Quepache, and Cahouche and to their respective villages, as well as to the Pascagoulas at Pointe Coupée, and to the Houmas at LaFourche. The Biloxi chief Mathao traveled to New Orleans to

¹⁰⁹ Thomas négre libre to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans, 27 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 173; Thomas' Enumerated Effects, 27 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 174; Certificate of Freedom, New Orleans, 12 Jan 1772, PPC, legajo 191: fo 175.

¹¹⁰ Jean Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 11 Oct 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 569.

¹¹¹ Jean Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 3 April 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 509-10; Census of LaFourche de Chitimacha, Louis Judice, 23 Apr 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 187-191; David Ross to Bernardo de Gálvez, 11 April 1778, WFLP, reel 9: fo 558-9.

¹¹² Dutton Petition, 14 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 162-3.

¹¹³ Petition of Anthony Hutchins, New Orleans, 14 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 164.

sing the calumet to Bernardo de Gálvez.¹¹⁴ After the arrival of Willing and his men on the river, along the border, colonists and officials alike worried that the Choctaws might begin raiding Spanish settlements too. Meanwhile, *petites nations* chiefs, such as the Biloxi Falya-Mingo, solicited Spanish medals from post commandants.¹¹⁵ The Tunicas crossed the river once again to ask Grand Pré for land, which he gave them before promptly writing Gálvez for more gifts to secure their loyalty.¹¹⁶ With the spread of wartime conflict to the Mississippi River, the Tunicas crossed the border to negotiate for the safety of their community. They chose to settle near Pointe Coupée, a settlement with which they had an enduring relationship.

Meanwhile, some Choctaws aided British colonists at Natchez while others attacked British property near Baton Rouge. Soon after Willing's party had left Natchez, a party of Western Division Choctaws under the leadership of Franchimastabé of West Yazoo arrived to help the scant British force secure the fort once again.¹¹⁷ Retaining greater loyalty to the memory of the French and to the French traders among them than either the Eastern or Western Division Choctaws, Choctaws of the Six Towns had attacked British property before.¹¹⁸ Some now attacked the lands of British settlers near Baton Rouge. George Proffit, who had escaped across the Mississippi to Pointe Coupée, petitioned Gálvez for permission to make his home

¹¹⁴ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 7 April 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 378; Villiers to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 5 Aug 1776, PPC, legajo 190: Fo 377-8; Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 7 July 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 387; Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez, Lafourche, 21 July 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 284-6.

¹¹⁵ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 14 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 711; Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 14 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 710-11.

¹¹⁶ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 28 April 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 730-31.

¹¹⁷ O'Brien, "Chapter 6: The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," in ed. O'Brien, *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, 125. Franchimastabé was a leader of the town of West Yazoo in the Western Division. During the years of partition, he was decidedly pro-British. His connection with British traders and his status as a warrior made him a leader who "provided a transitional step from an older culture imbued with pre-contact concepts of power to one caught up in an emerging American market system," O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 2.

¹¹⁸ Haldimand to Gage, Pensacola, 25 Feb 1768, Haldimand Papers, reel 2: fo 190-2.

permanently in Louisiana after the Choctaws raided his lands.¹¹⁹ Delavillebeuvre reported that the Choctaws “are doing a lot of bad things on the coast of Baton Rouge” to the inhabitants there. The Indians had removed to the prairie, and reportedly they had whites among them. In response, Gálvez sent supplies to Manchac for Delavillebeuvre to use as gifts for the Indians. Delavillebeuvre continued to serve the Spanish administration as an important representative in negotiations with the region’s diverse Indian groups. The importance of supplying the Indians to maintain friendship and non-aggression was not lost on Gálvez, and the Indians would prove central to the military conflict of the Revolution on the Gulf Coast.¹²⁰

Gálvez embraced Spain’s neutrality as a means to navigate the challenges Willing’s raid posed to the region of the Lower Mississippi. Many parties descended upon New Orleans over the course of 1778. Willing arrived with triumphalist rhetoric and with plans to sell the booty and slaves at New Orleans. He also anticipated using some of the profits to purchase ammunition on behalf of the Continental Congress. Meanwhile, representatives of Governor Chester met with Gálvez to demand redress of grievances for the patriot attacks. Gálvez secured the return of the slaves taken on Spanish land to the British residents of the Mississippi, including slaves belonging to Chester and Stephen Shakespeare. Guy, one of Shakespeare’s slaves, was captured in a canoe above Natchez by Willing and his men in their descent of the river. With other slaves, Guy had been taken to New Orleans.¹²¹ Willing sold the slaves taken on British soil or on the river along with the remainder of his plunder through Oliver Pollock.

¹¹⁹ Petition of George Proffit, PPC, legajo 191: fo 178. The year before, Proffit had been in New Orleans over business involving his ship the *Renowned*. He had a trade with Jamaica and Guarico and the Mississippi. “Marine protest against seizure of ship by an English frigate,” 5 June 1777, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 8 (1925): 737-8. George Proffit’s daughter Elizabeth married David Ross in 1782. Albert Tate, “Spanish Census of the Baton Rouge District for 1786,” *LH* 24.1 (1983): 81.

¹²⁰ Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 12 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 48-9, quotation “Les Sauvages chaktas faissent Bocoup de mal du cotte du Baton Rouge.”

¹²¹ “Oliver Polloc (Pollock) vs. Mr. Shaspere (Shakespeare) for the delivery of a negro belonging to the American Congress,” 22 April 1780, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 14 (1931):473-4.

With the permission of Gálvez, and much to the chagrin of West Floridian planters, Pollock sponsored the auctioning of the captured slaves, many of whom were purchased by leading residents of New Orleans.¹²² Guy may have been an exception, at least initially. A suit filed by Pollock in 1780 resulted in the forced return of Guy to Pollock. Shakespeare found him in Pollock's possession in New Orleans in 1778, and Guy agreed to accompany his former master. Guy testified that he had willingly agreed to return with Shakespeare to Pensacola.¹²³

As tensions rose, Gálvez ordered the settlements along the river to prepare for military conflict and found the colonists willing to support the effort but supplies and infrastructure wanting. In stark contrast to the revolt of 1768, the colonial militia proved willing to serve the Spanish governor. Gálvez asked the commandants to prepare but not alarm their militias and Indian allies. He included special requests to Bellisle at the German Coast to reinforce the guard at the Tigouyou and Chambert at Lake Borgne. These two commandants were also to ready pirogues to bring word to Gálvez swiftly of anything newsworthy.¹²⁴ Within days, Gálvez received reports of the state of militia, dwindling ammunition, and bad roads. The German Coast militia were being rotated as guards to the water passages of concern. However, the German Coast lacked everything but a few pirogues.¹²⁵ By May 29, the area had received supplies of munitions, which Bellisle vowed to guard for occasions of absolute necessity. He also sent

¹²² Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 89-91; John Campbell to Bernardo de Gálvez, 12 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 133-4; John Priest to Bernardo de Gálvez, 11 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 135.

¹²³ "Oliver Polloc (Pollock) vs. Mr. Shaspere (Shakespeare) for the delivery of a negro belonging to the American Congress," 22 April 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 473-4.

¹²⁴ Bernardo de Gálvez, Orders given to Monsieur Robin, Judice, Dustiné, Cantrelle, Bellisle, and Chambert, 20 May 1778, PPC, legajo 191: 22. "Tigouyou" was the name used by the Bayougoulas in the early eighteenth century for the bayou above Bayou St. John that entered Lake Pontchartrain near New Orleans. It later came to be called "Indian Bayou." William Alexander Read, *Louisiana Place-Names of Indian Origin* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1927). Michel Cantrelle became commandant of Acadian Coast, also called Cabahannocé or St. James, after the death of his brother-in-law Nicolas Verret who had succeeded Michel's father Jacques Cantrelle to that post. For more on Michel Cantrelle see Bradley, "Michel Cantrelle," in *Interim Appointment*, 564-6.

¹²⁵ Brunnet to Bernardo de Gálvez, German Coast (2nd German Coast Chez Mr. Bossier), 26 May 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 386-388; Announcement by Brunnet, St. John the Baptist, 2nd German Coast, 26 May 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 388; Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, Allemand, 25 May 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 389-90.

reports of the rice and corn available to be sold and the number of slaves able to march, eighty one in total, wherever Gálvez might order them in the event of a conflict.¹²⁶ Similarly, at Manchac, Delavillebeuvre called upon young Acadian men to be on guard in case conflict spread to Spanish territory.¹²⁷ By mid-July, Bellisle reported that the colonists of the German Coast were still prepared for attack day and night and reported seeing dead bodies of white people on the river.¹²⁸ Militia from the German Coast were sent as reinforcements for Fort St. Bernard during July, but early in August 1778, Gálvez ordered them home for the “most important time for their harvest.”¹²⁹ Again, according to the orders of Gálvez, Bellisle sent grain to New Orleans to sell “in case of need,” along with slaves requested by Gálvez to labor in public works.¹³⁰ Slaves contributed to the defense efforts of the Mississippi River districts. Colonists of the German Coast voluntarily called together fifty slaves and were prepared to pay the owner of each 12 ½ piastres per month and in case of the accidental death of his or her slave. When news of this development reached New Orleans, Gálvez commended the settlement for the zeal of the colonists but stated that there was no such need at the time.¹³¹ The preparations for conflict revealed the willingness of Louisiana colonists to defend the colony, they also highlighted the weakness of colonial infrastructure. Although preparation for conflict with West Florida proved premature, the cooperation of colonists, slaves, and Indians in the effort foreshadowed similar cooperation during the war years to come.

¹²⁶ Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, Allemand, 29 May 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 393-4; Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, Allemand, 28 May 1778, legajo 191: fo 394-6.

¹²⁷ Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 31 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 504-6.

¹²⁸ Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, Allemands, 17 July 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 419-21; Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, Allemands, 13 June 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 408-9.

¹²⁹ Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, Allemands, 17 July 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 419-21, quotation “instant le plus précieux pour leur recolte.” Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, Allemands, 9 Aug 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 437-8.

¹³⁰ Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, 21 July 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 427-8, quotation “En cas de Besoins.”

¹³¹ Bellisle to Bernardo de Gálvez, 25 Oct 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 440-1.

Willing's raid disrupted trade along the river and brought terror to British colonists. The trade typified British Atlantic ties to the Lower Mississippi during the 1770s. With his old business partner Oliver Pollock, Willing outfitted Joseph Calvert who captured the *Dispatch*. The vessel belonged to Robert and David Ross and was en route to New Orleans carrying fifty slaves and one hundred barrels of flour from Jamaica for David Ross & Company.¹³² Willing's raid also seized slaves in possession of Kingston merchant Thomas Dicas at his land grant near Manchac. Dicas had plans to sell these slaves to pay off his debts, but they were auctioned at New Orleans probably by Pollock.¹³³ Stephen Shakespeare, like John Fitzpatrick and other residents of Manchac, suffered significant material loss from Willing's attack at that settlement. Having settled there with his family and four slaves, Shakespeare lost the *Rebecca* to Willing's men as well as property and trade goods estimated at \$8,000 worth of damage.¹³⁴ John Campbell wrote Gálvez regarding his brig the *Neptune*, which had been in transit to Jamaica with lumber when it suffered damage, forcing Campbell to come ashore on the Spanish side below New Orleans. Campbell complained that "this happened perfectly in the security in the territory of His Catholic Majesty and under the protection of your Excellency." However, the captain and crew were taken "prisoner of the United States" and conducted to New Orleans, and the *Neptune* was treated as "a prize for the said United States."¹³⁵ Campbell had lost a sloop in April 1777 when Gálvez swept the Mississippi of British vessels. He was also among a number of British

¹³² David Ross to Bernardo de Gálvez, 11 Apr 1778, WFLP, reel 9: fo 555-8; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 31, 33, 66.

¹³³ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 66.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹³⁵ John Campbell to Gálvez, 12 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 133-4, quotation; Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 63; Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 25 Mar 1778, WFLP, reel 9: fo 341-9.

loyalists who sought refuge and protection for their property in Spanish Louisiana.¹³⁶ Because the *Neptune* was taken on the Spanish side of the river, Gálvez returned it to Campbell.¹³⁷

Rebel-loyalist conflict continued along the Mississippi and its tributaries during 1778. To British officials in West Florida like Governor Chester, it seemed that Spanish neutrality provided the rebels with a base from which to launch attacks against West Florida. And to some degree, he was correct. As Gálvez attempted to prevent a military conflict before he had authority to engage the British in battle, Willing dispatched several expeditions toward Mobile from New Orleans both through inland waterways and along the gulf. Willing hoped to stir up French-speaking inhabitants to come to the aid of the Americans much as they had for George Rogers Clark at Illinois. One rebel expedition to Mobile captured the brig *Chance* in Mobile Bay.¹³⁸ Some British citizens living at New Orleans joined Willing's company, including Joseph Calvert and Oliver Pollock's nephew Thomas.¹³⁹ For weeks, bands of Americans continued to wreak havoc on plantations of British West Florida, burning property and killing livestock at Baton Rouge.¹⁴⁰ At Spanish Manchac, the British refugees lived in "so great a terror" of returning to their lands.¹⁴¹

British colonists in New Orleans with wealth and property to protect or business interests in the city recognized the benefit of remaining in the Spanish colony. In October 1778, Dunbar even purchased "a Plantation nearly opposite my own, six acres front 100 Dollars value" on "the Spanish side." Because of the "strong reports being circulated of the coming down of the Americans," he "thought it advisable to send the Negroes over the river to my new

¹³⁶ John Campbell to Gálvez, New Orleans Jail, 23 June 1778, PPC, legajo, 190: fo 58-9.

¹³⁷ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 100.

¹³⁸ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 63; Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 115.

¹³⁹ Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 88-9.

¹⁴⁰ Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Manchac, 31 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 504-6.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, quotation "une terreur si forte."

Plantation.”¹⁴² On March 12, the *Sylph*, a vessel of the British Royal Navy, anchored at New Orleans after arriving from Pensacola. The vessel had been dispatched upon the request of the Council of West Florida to provide protective transport to West Florida for all British residents of Spanish Louisiana. The *Sylph*’s master, John Ferguson, presented Gálvez with a letter accusing the Spanish governor of engaging in acts of war by harboring the Americans and by permitting them to launch attacks on British vessels and territory from the Spanish colony. Gálvez argued repeatedly that Spanish neutrality granted him the right to extend hospitality equally to all travelers and refugees. He also granted Ferguson military protection for the *Sylph* against any American threat to the vessel. Only a small number of Britons in Louisiana took advantage of Ferguson’s offer of protection. Fourteen merchants and slave owners complained that they needed more time and did not want to suffer further financial loss by abandoning their property in Louisiana. They also expressed doubt in Britain’s ability to protect them from the American menace given the recent attacks on the Mississippi settlements. They held greater confidence in the protection of officials and legal processes in Spanish Louisiana.¹⁴³

In contrast, the few British subjects in Spanish New Orleans who took advantage of transport to Pensacola via the *Sylph* had less to lose in leaving. They included some like Hannah Ogilby, a vocal loyalist who suffered poor fortune in the wake of the Willing raid. Originally from South Carolina, Hannah Ogilby had arrived at Pensacola in 1775, and soon after journeyed to New Orleans where she opened a boarding house for Britons. Women, many of them widowed or perhaps separated from their husbands as Hannah appeared to be, owned and

¹⁴² Dunbar, New Richmond, October 1778, in Rowland ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar*, 64.

¹⁴³ Captain John Ferguson to Bernardo de Gálvez, on the Mississippi River aboard the *Sylph*, 12 Mar 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 78-9; Bernardo de Gálvez to Ferguson, New Orleans, 14 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 85-6; Ferguson to Bernardo de Gálvez, Mississippi River, 15 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 87-90; Bernardo de Gálvez to Ferguson, New Orleans, 18 March 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 91-3; Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 25 Mar 1778, WFLP, reel 9: fo 341-9.

operated taverns and boarding houses in New Orleans during the Spanish period. Hannah Ogilby does not appear to have had a license to act as a tavern-keeper, so most likely hers was a boarding house that operated as a place for British travelers to congregate in New Orleans. She complained to the Council of West Florida that after Willing's arrival in New Orleans, she had been imprisoned for twenty four days "by the Tyrannical Mandate of Don Gálvez," but "upon her being released she took refuge on Board of his Majesty's sloop of war the *Sylph* and by the Captain's Humanity was allowed a Passage hither [to Pensacola]." She begged supplemental aid to pay passage for her and her daughter to Jamaica after the first vessel she boarded was shipwrecked. The Council refused her request on the grounds that "she has a husband."¹⁴⁴ Slaves of British colonists also boarded the *Sylph*.¹⁴⁵ In these instances, royal protection attempted to confine those with slim or no political voice to West Florida. In April, Captain Joseph Nunn anchored the *Hound*, another British war vessel, at New Orleans, causing Gálvez further distress.¹⁴⁶ He was not prepared to enter a military conflict at this juncture. Both the *Sylph* and the *Hound* left New Orleans for Pensacola in early May.¹⁴⁷

In response to British claims that he had engaged in an act of war by harboring rebels, Gálvez began to demand that British subjects on Spanish soil take oaths of loyalty. On April 16, 1778, providing them with a half of an hour to make their decision, Gálvez demanded that the British residents of New Orleans take an oath of loyalty to Spain. This demand carried with it an

¹⁴⁴ Hannah Ogilby, testimony before the Council of West Florida, 17 Nov 1778, WFLP, reel 10: fo 763. For a list of licensed tavern keepers in New Orleans and a discussion of Spanish regulation of sale of alcohol and of taverns see Jack D.L. Holmes, "Spanish Regulation of Taverns and the Liquor Trade in the Mississippi Valley," in John Francis McDermott, SJ, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 149-182; Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 132-4. Stephen Shakespeare referred to "Mrs. Ogilvies tavern" in his testimony. Shakespeare, Pensacola, 6 May 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 275.

¹⁴⁵ Fabel, *West Florida*, 99; Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 92-7; Captain John Ferguson to Bernardo de Gálvez, on the Mississippi River, 3 April 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 106.

¹⁴⁶ Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 98-9; Captain Joseph Nunn to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans, 13 April 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 109.

¹⁴⁷ Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 101.

oath to share with Spanish authorities any knowledge of enemy threats or schemes directed against Spanish territory. Robert Ross, John Campbell, and David Ross were among those who took the oath and remained at New Orleans, though it would seem from other evidence that this act was more to secure their economic and business interests than a reflection of any allegiance to Spain. Nor would they prove to be loyal Spanish subjects, as time revealed.¹⁴⁸

Spanish New Orleans also became a place where loyalists attempted to thwart Willing's activities—often in violation of their oaths of loyalty to the Spanish Crown. Much like the political boundary of the Mississippi, the bounds of the oath of loyalty were easily transgressed. In May 1778, Alexander Graiden, a carpenter living in the New Orleans home of Oliver Pollock, was arrested when found carrying letters from Robert Ross and John Campbell. Their correspondence was meant to inform Colonel Hutchins at Natchez of the bateau manned by French and Spanish-speaking crew, flying the Spanish flag, and laden with “a considerable number of muskets in New cases gun powder and ball and bales of Dry Goods taken out of the Stores of the said Oliver Pollock under his Dwelling House and put on Board a large Illinois Batteau... which said Batteau had the Figure of a woman head at her stern.”¹⁴⁹ Graiden himself had crafted some of the wooden cases for the muskets. Although the letters did not reach their intended recipients, Graiden managed to convey the message to William Dunbar. Ross and Campbell were imprisoned in the New Orleans jail from May 15 through July for their crimes against the oath they had taken in April and for participation in conspiracy. Spanish authorities fined Ross and Campbell and permanently banished them from Louisiana while Graiden found

¹⁴⁸ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 100-4.

¹⁴⁹ Deposition of Little Page Robertson, Pensacola, 24 Sept 1778, WFLP, reel 10: fo 39-45; Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 103; Memorial of Robert Ross and John Campbell, 1778, WFLP, reel 10: fo 31-5.

himself in a Cuban prison.¹⁵⁰ Campbell and Ross's interference had cost the Americans time and forced them to postpone their return. Anthony Hutchins also impeded the patriot cause. While in New Orleans where he was taken as a prisoner by Willing, Hutchins made contact with some of Willing's party and later claimed that he had attempted to convince them to turn over both Pollock and Willing. Before he could see to this transaction, Hutchins decided to travel speedily to Natchez. At Natchez, Hutchins, backed by local leader Thaddeus Lyman who had led a large party of colonists to settle in the area, convinced settlers to attack Willing's men as they ascended to Natchez. These British colonists forced Willing's men to surrender near Natchez April 16, 1778.¹⁵¹ By providing safe haven to loyalists in New Orleans, Spanish neutrality enabled an environment that complicated the goals of Spanish-American cooperation. In turn, these complications threatened Spanish neutrality at this extremity of empire.

Gálvez was not sorry to see Willing leave for Philadelphia aboard the *Morris* in November 1778, nor was Pollock.¹⁵² The previous May, Pollock had implored Gálvez to have patience with the Americans after they had returned to New Orleans from their first failed adventure up the river:

I am highly sensible notwithstanding, that their tarry here, must be disagreeable to your Excellency, and the Inhabitants of this Province; as well on account of the critical situation of publick Affairs, as that of the present scarcity of all kind of provisions...Yet we are (in this situation) unfortunately surrounded by our Enemies, and should we attempt to proceed up the River, we have nothing to expect but the inhuman Barbarity

¹⁵⁰ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 102; --, New Orleans, 1778, PPC, legajo 190: 62; John Campbell to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans Jail, 5 June 1778, PPC, legajo 190: 54; John Campbell to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans Jail, 23 June 1778, PPC, legajo 190:58-9; Campbell, Ross, and Pinhorn to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans, PPC, 9 July 1779, legajo 190: 67; Memorial of Robert Ross and John Campbell, 1778, WFLP, reel 10: fo 31-5.

¹⁵¹ Fabel, *Economy of British West Florida*, 188; Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 110-111; Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 7 May 1778, WFLP, reel 9: fo 499-507. Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 52; Deposition of Hutchins in print: Kathryn Trimmer Abbey, "The Intrigue of a British Refugee Against the Willing Raid, 1778," *The WMQ*, 1.4 (1944): 397-404; Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 111.

¹⁵² Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 49; Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 117. The *Morris* was captured by the British navy and taken to New York where Willing was imprisoned until 1781.

which is generally committed by those Savages whom Britain is basely reduced to employ against us.¹⁵³

Pollock had reason to be grateful for Willing's departure as the costs of the expedition had seriously strained his supply store and credit. In April 1779, he reported to Franklin

that I have this day drawn on Messrs. Saml. & J. H. Delap Sundry Bills of Exchange Viz for p.4000 in favour of Monsr. Jacque Toutant Beaugaud p.1000 in favour of Michael Poupart p.3500 in favour of Cadet Jardin & 2397 in favour of Monsr. F Detmaters the whole amounting to 10897 Dollars all at 90 Days sight being for Sundries Receiv'd from those Gentlemen for the use of the United states to excute the orders I received from Congress.¹⁵⁴

Under the leadership of Captain Robert George, the remainder of the Americans traveled through the western posts, first to Pointe Coupée then to the Attakapas and Opelousas Posts and then to Natchitoches, which they reached October 19, 1778. Apparently, some of the men were happy to remain in Louisiana. Three Germans deserted the party at Pointe Coupée and asked to serve the Spanish Crown. This action suggests that they joined the expedition to New Orleans more for adventure than political loyalty to the independent United States. Gálvez instructed DeClouet at the Attakapas Post and Bormé at Natchitoches to sell the Americans provisions. Colonists at Natchitoches sold the travelers horses and mules before their departure on November 2, 1778. George paid in bills of exchange drawn on Pollock.¹⁵⁵ On March 15, 1778, the forty Americans reached Kaskaskia.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Pollock to Gálvez, New Orleans, 16 June 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 287-88.

¹⁵⁴ Pollock to Franklin, New Orleans, 10 April 1779, Papers of Benjamin Franklin.

¹⁵⁵ Bormé to Bernardo de Gálvez, Natchitoches, 26 Nov 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 647-8; Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 5 Nov 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 794; a number of Willing's men deserted over the course of his expedition. He admitted as much to Pollock, Willing to Pollock, New Orleans, 30 May 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 282-3. Also, American deserters appear in a census of "étrangers" at Iberville. Dustiné notes three American deserters at Iberville in 1777, Pierre Caulain, an Irishman named Jean Morice, and another Irishman named David Donse, Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 4 Aug 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 441.

¹⁵⁶ 15 March 1779, Major Bowman's Journal, 12 Jan 1779-20 March 1779, in *Col. George Rogers Clark's Sketch of his Campaign in the Illinois, In 1778-9*. (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co, 1869), LCP.

With regard to promoting the American cause on the Gulf Coast and especially along the Mississippi River, Willing's raid was more detrimental than helpful. As elsewhere in British North America, colonists settled along the Mississippi in British West Florida were a divided group.¹⁵⁷ A few adamant loyalists like Anthony Hutchins, William Dunbar, and others employed by the Indian department like Henry Stuart lived alongside settlers sympathetic to the revolutionary cause. After the disruption and terror that Willing's raid caused in the Lower Mississippi, most living along the river cooperated as loyalists acting to protect the security of their lands, families, property, and trade interests. Willing's raid provided the impetus for cementing the allegiance of the vast majority of British West Florida colonists to the British Crown.

Americans continued to trade at New Orleans even after the Spanish declared war on Britain in 1779. As Pollock carried out the trade, his role as agent to the United States and to Virginia resulted in his financial ruin. In 1780, a party of Americans headed by a man named Gilesby, "courier for Mr Pollock to Illinois," traveled through Opelousas and then Natchitoches. A circular letter went out to post commandants to provide aid to the Americans. At this time, colonists such as Madame Lambre of Natchitoches were already complaining that Pollock had not reimbursed them for their cooperation in supplying other Americans en route to Illinois.¹⁵⁸ Pollock's finances were in shambles. Both the sale of his plantation and slaves at Chapitoulas in 1779 and the sale of his plantation near the Houmas in 1782 were not enough to cover the debts. Neither the Continental Congress nor the State of Virginia was in a position to reimburse him,

¹⁵⁷ Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 118-20. For another discussion of political allegiance of settlers in British West Florida, see Henry O. Robertson, "Tories or Patriots? The Mississippi River Planters during the American Revolution," *LH* 40.4 (1999): 445-462.

¹⁵⁸ Bormé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 23 Apr 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 553-5, quotation, "courier pour M. Pollock aux Illinois." Vauginé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 21 Jan 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 625-6.

although financial constraints did not prevent either party from demanding further assistance.¹⁵⁹

In 1781, Pollock implored the Spanish government to advance him five thousand dollars to cover the bills for supplies coming due that he had no way of paying.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile, creditors of the United States began to take Pollock to court to protest the bills of exchange he had drawn upon Penet Dacosta Brothers & Co. of Bordeaux on behalf of the United States.¹⁶¹ Still, in April 1782, a vessel traveled the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans. The ship typified the Spanish-American exchange as it transported American flour to New Orleans, and the ship's captain was known to work with Pollock in supplying Fort Pitt with gunpowder.¹⁶²

Conclusions

In spite of official neutrality from 1776 to 1779, Spain recognized that the war presented an opportunity to undermine the interests of its age-old rival Great Britain by secretly trading with the Americans. Spain provided access to arms and supplies that especially aided the war in the west. This trade legalized formerly illicit trade and built upon contact with American merchant houses that had provided flour to Spanish Havana and New Orleans.

¹⁵⁹ Kinnaird, "The Western Fringe of Revolution," 265-66; Jefferson to Gálvez, Williamsburg, 8 Nov 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 362-64; Gálvez to Jefferson, New Orleans, 1780, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 375-6; "Salomon Mallines vs. Francisco Pascalis de la Barre," 14 July 1781, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR*, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 527. Pollock sold a tract of land 6 arpents frontage and stretching from the Mississippi to Lake Pontchartrain at Chapitoulas to Francisco de la Barre and his lien to Salomon Mallines who paid him in merchandise, which Pollock probably tried to sell. In 1782, Pollock sold another tract of land that he owned near the Houma village and fifty slaves belonging to the property of Willing & Morris, which he managed. "Permit in favor of Oliver Pollock to sell a plantation and slaves," 22 Feb 1782, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR*, *LHQ* 17 (1934): 598-9. For a disagreement between Pollock and the Alexander Henderson who managed the properties of Willing & Morris in Louisiana and West Florida, see "Oliver Pollock et al. petitions to name arbitrators," 27 April 1782, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR*, in *LHQ* 18 (1935): 476-8.

¹⁶⁰ Pollock, New Orleans, 9 July 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 24; "Oliver Pollock petitions to compare signatures on bills of exchange," 3 Feb 1781, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR*, *LHQ* 15 (1932): 557.

¹⁶¹ "Santiago Monlon vs. Oliver Pollock," 20 April 1782, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR*, *LHQ* 18 (1935): 471-2.

¹⁶² Light T. Cummins, "Her Weary Pilgrimage: the Remarkable Mississippi River Adventures of Anne McMeans, 1778-1782," *LH* 47.4 (2006): 389-90.

Willing's raid and its aftermath revealed that neutrality offered opportunity for trade with the Americans at New Orleans but that it also left the region of the Lower Mississippi vulnerable to the British-American conflict. At the local level, inhabitants were aware of developments in the revolution, and they personally encountered and participated in conflict amongst patriots and loyalists. In keeping with the history of divisions among Indian nations and within them, the response of Indians in the Lower Mississippi to the conflict was not uniform. Some groups of British and Spanish colonists and Indians directed violence against one another, but others cooperated during this first taste of the American Revolution in the region. Slaves on both sides of the Mississippi were threatened with capture and re-sale. Trade was challenged by the tumult and by American, British, and Spanish seizure of vessels on the Mississippi and Gulf Coast. Finally, the actions of Louisiana colonists in response to the threat of conflict on the Mississippi indicated that a drastic change in their attitude towards cooperating with the Spanish colonial government had taken place in a single decade.

The disturbances surrounding the Willing episode prompted many colonists living in British West Florida to cross the international boundary of the Mississippi to seek physical safety and protection for their families and property. They also turned to the Spanish governor and Spanish law as they sought return of their plundered property. The paths of flight and petitions of offended British subjects suggested some of the personal networks that transcended the imperial border at the time and also pointed to the persistence of Atlantic trade networks in the Lower Mississippi during the early years of the American Revolution.

Nevertheless, if anything, the Willing raid reinforced the imperial border. It precipitated loyalty to Spain among inhabitants of Louisiana and loyalty to Britain among those of West Florida even as they recognized the Spanish colonial government as the stronger of the two

colonial governments in the Lower Mississippi Valley. The chaos of 1778 provided an opportunity for the Spanish colonial government to test Louisiana's preparedness for conflict. Colonists, slaves, and Indians collaborated to prepare for a British attack. Their alliance would prove central to the experiences of the Lower Mississippi River in the ensuing wartime years.

Spanish investment in Louisiana and Louisiana's integration into empire were tried during the American Revolution. The Spanish conquest of the Floridas drew strength from the realities that grew out of both the implementation of policy and the resistance that the policy was met with in the form of borderland practices. Spanish policy and colonial practices together shaped Louisiana. Alliances with Indians, increased settler population near the border, the development of the inexpensive local militia, and trade practices on-the-ground proved especially valuable. Some policies produced their desired result, such as the colonial militia and the settler-soldier, but others implemented, negotiated at the local level, or never fully applied—such as the commercial policy—also helped to shape Louisiana at the outset of conflict in 1779.

Chapter 4

Spanish Louisiana and the American Revolution, 1779-1783

Introduction

Spanish involvement in the American Revolution demonstrated that, in the short-term at least, Louisiana served the Spanish Empire as a defensive border colony. The years of conflict on the Gulf Coast during the American Revolution revealed a brief moment during which the practical interests of Louisiana's inhabitants coincided with and forwarded the interests of the empire. Additionally, the centrality of Indian power and agency came to the fore as a force with which anyone wanting to vie for the American Southeast must engage on Indian terms and negotiate. At this time, the borderlands alliances and networks of trade and communication that inhabitants used to navigate the uncertainties of their world served the interests of empire and continued to offer stability to Indians, settlers, and slaves in the region.

During the war, a unique moment, Louisiana functioned within the empire in an integrated way. The Gulf Coast was part of the Caribbean theater of the war as Spain staked its pride on regaining the Floridas, Gibraltar, and Minorca. Louisiana's diverse inhabitants joined an almost equally diverse imperial force in the military campaigns against the British forts on the Mississippi, and at Mobile and Pensacola. Meanwhile, Louisiana posts and trade routes that stretched into Texas provided New Orleans and the Spanish troops with cattle and food—traditionally illicit trade paths once again served Spanish interest during the American Revolution. The militia, Indians, and slaves of Louisiana participated in the conquest of British West Florida in cooperation with imperial designs and planning. They also came together with

little imperial assistance to defend the colony when it was threatened during the war, especially in response to the Natchez Rebellion in 1781 when British colonists rose up against Spain.

Colonists and Indians sought to manage this most recent threat to their homelands through mutual alliance. The cooperation of these groups proved indispensable to Louisiana during the war. More so than officials outside of the colony, Indians, settlers, and slaves remained the most connected to the uncertainty of the war years and susceptible to rumors. The dangers circulated by rumor strengthened local bonds of alliance that produced vigilant local defense. At the very moment these groups of colonial militia, slaves, and Indians cooperated for the sake of self-defense, they also furthered Spain's territorial goals by protecting the colony and retaking Natchez. Ten years after, Louisiana inhabitants had expelled the first Spanish governor, many of those same inhabitants and their relatives joined others from across the colony to fight with Spain in the Gulf Coast campaigns and to protect the Lower Mississippi from wartime threats.

The Revolution in the Lower Mississippi had as much to do with Indian alliances as with European empires. Although the conflict on the Gulf Coast was a part of the imperial conflict involving Britain, Spain, France and the rebel colonies, Indian groups were significant actors in the negotiation of war. As they sought the best place for themselves after the war, Indians participated on both the sides of Britain and Spain. The siege of Pensacola revealed the importance of colonial-Indian relations and highlighted the significance of Indian military force to the contest for the Southeast. Meanwhile, Indian allies in Louisiana provided officials with intelligence and military support and cooperated to help maintain order. Bands of Indians and their British allies represented the single greatest threat in the minds of Spanish officials and Louisiana inhabitants alike. The war spurred a realization among colonial leaders of the

importance of maintaining strong alliances through trade with the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks and of the challenges connected with maintaining such cross-cultural alliances.

Revolutionary Conflict on the Lower Mississippi

Following the ordeal of Willing's raid, both Spanish and British colonial governments and colonists turned their attention to fortifying their positions on the Mississippi. At the imperial level, British leaders reconsidered Indian policy and defense strategies in order to better guard West Florida. In spite of some Choctaw assistance against Willing at Natchez, Lord George Germain, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, was displeased that, given the expenses incurred by the Indian department, Indian allies of Britain had not been on hand to stop the rebel raid.¹ When John Stuart died in March 1779, Chester appointed a commission of five men to fill his shoes. Meanwhile, Brigadier General John Campbell had arrived with reinforcements to supplement the scant 500 regulars already in West Florida.² Reinforcements included companies of Maryland and Pennsylvania loyalists and Waldeck mercenaries totaling over 1,000 men. West Florida colonists began to train as militia, and Campbell and Chester worked together to strengthen defenses of Mobile, Pensacola, Baton Rouge, and Natchez. Col. Alexander Dickson chose to build a fort at Baton Rouge instead of expending resources to repair the rotting Fort Bute, the location of which was subject to flooding.³

Both Spain and Britain had long spoken of, investigated the possibility of, and planned attacks against the other's holdings on the Gulf Coast. However, Spain had the advantage of greater mobility of troops at the time of the actual conflict because of British commitments in the

¹ Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 47-8.

² Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 23 Mar 1779, WFLP, reel 10: fo 673.

³ Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 50, 76; for a detailed description of British deliberations and efforts to protect West Florida see Star, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 105-141.

rebellious American colonies and because West Florida was a low priority in the Caribbean theater, certainly a lesser concern than Jamaica. A full-scale British defense of the Floridas would have required directing resources away from Jamaica. In light of their precarious defensive situation, once Spain declared war on Britain, Lord Germain instructed Campbell to prepare a campaign against New Orleans to pre-empt any Spanish attack. However, Campbell knew that if begun, the endeavor would fail because of the poor health of his troops, inadequate supplies, and very limited access to naval vessels.⁴

Bernardo de Gálvez and his uncle, the Minister of the Indies José de Gálvez, were of one mind when it came to the military conflict itself. In July 1779, Bernardo de Gálvez called a *junta de guerra* at New Orleans to evaluate the city's defense and the danger of a British attack. Because he anticipated the outbreak of war based on correspondence with his superiors, Gálvez considered himself acting in synchronization with their sentiments and engaging his duties as governor. José de Gálvez wrote that "Mobile and Pensacola are the keys to the Gulf of Mexico," and Louisiana "should be considered the bulwark or barrier protecting the vast empire of New Spain."⁵ In August, the Minister of the Indies informed his nephew that "The king has determined that the principal object of his arms in America during the present war will be to drive [the English] from the Mexican Gulf and the neighborhood of Louisiana."⁶

Bernardo de Gálvez had been preparing for this conflict since he arrived in Louisiana. While interim governor, Gálvez oversaw the warehousing of supplies of gunpowder and provisions arriving from Havana and Cádiz. During 1778 and 1779, about five hundred soldiers

⁴ For Germaine's strategy and instructions to Campbell, see Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 142-8.

⁵ Gálvez to Martín de Mayorga, No. 122, 29 Aug 1779, as cited in Jack D. L. Holmes "French and Spanish Military Units in the 1781 Pensacola Campaign" in Coker and Rea, eds., *Anglo Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast During the American Revolution* Pensacola, Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1982, 145-6.

⁶ José de Gálvez to Bernardo de Gálvez, Madrid, 29 Aug 1779, as quoted in Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 236.

arrived in New Orleans from Havana and Mexico. Gálvez fully intended to create a second battalion in Louisiana, but with fewer recruits from the Canaries fit for duty, he was unable to do so. Nevertheless, Louisiana's militia now numbered approximately 1,500. The ten companies of Louisiana militia that participated in the offensive against the British forts on the Mississippi River were the same companies established under Alejandro O'Reilly. Men in Louisiana had participated in training in these militias since 1769. The Spanish-British conflict on the Gulf Coast was their first full-fledged military engagement. Many served in the campaigns against Fort Bute, Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola.⁷

The war was the first test of the post Seven Years War militia system, and on the Gulf Coast, it proved effective but only because the colonists and their Indian allies recognized Spain's cause as their own. Defense of Louisiana was as much in the interests of the preservation of Louisiana life, society, and trade for these groups as it was in the strategic interests of Spain. Though dogged by volatile weather and challenged by Indian-British alliances and squabbling among officials in Cuba, together Louisiana militia, Indians, and Spanish soldiers secured the strategic and symbolic victories first at Baton Rouge, then at Mobile, and eventually at Pensacola. In doing so, they recovered Florida for Spain and eliminated for the Americans the British threat from the Gulf Coast.

The announcement of war reached New Orleans just as a hurricane struck the city. When Bernardo de Gálvez received word on August 17, 1779, a public ceremony was held to show that "the independency of America was publickly recognized by beat of drum at New Orleans on the 19th day of August."⁸ This occasion provided Gálvez with the opportunity to unite his call for

⁷ Bernardo de Gálvez to Jose de Gálvez, New Orleans, 3 July 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 345-6; Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 202, 207- 208; Jack D. L. Holmes "French and Spanish Military Units," 148-49.

⁸ Campbell to Germain, Pensacola, 15 Dec 1779, in "The Capture of Baton Rouge by Gálvez, September 21st 1779," *LHQ* 12 (1929): 256-7, quote. Jack D. L. Holmes "French and Spanish Military," 145— Holmes says the date is

support of a Spanish offensive against the British with the solidarity among the colonists who had all recently suffered from a destructive hurricane that had hit on August 18. In keeping with Spain's attempts at secrecy during the period of neutrality, Gálvez had succeeded in keeping most of his preparations for the war hidden from the colonists of Louisiana until the recent storm. At the ceremony, he took the opportunity to announce his official appointment as governor, for he had only been acting governor up to this point, and vowed to accept this appointment only if the inhabitants of the colony would agree to help him defend New Orleans.⁹

When Gálvez left New Orleans, the troops he assembled represented a diverse local and imperial force, as they would for the entirety of the Gulf Coast campaigns. Gálvez left New Orleans with approximately 150 white, free black, and mulatto militia and 500 Spanish, Mexican, and Isleño soldiers.¹⁰ Oliver Pollock joined seven Americans as part of the campaign, and he personally acted as the aide-de-camp to Gálvez. During the eleven day march to Manchac, 600 militia from the German and Acadian Coast and 160 Indian allies joined them. Supplies and artillery were transported up the river to meet the men at Manchac. Meanwhile, the militia from the Attakapas traveled by boat to LaFourche and joined Gálvez at St. Gabriel.¹¹ These men were representatives of the peoples living in the district. They included many Acadians, possibly several Isleños, large land owners such as the Grevemberg brothers, as well

contested but this is the one that seems to matter the most for Bernardo de Gálvez; Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 77. For more on the debate about the actual day of the declaration of war, Starr suggests June 16, 21, or 25, see Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 142, 149.

⁹ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 150-1; Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 31.

¹⁰ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 151. The numbers of those who fought in the campaigns are uncertain. Starr says: "his army consisted of 170 veteran soldiers, 330 recruits recently arrived from Mexico and the Canary Islands 20 carabineers, 60 militiamen, and 80 free blacks and mulattoes." Hanger: "In attacks on several English forts on the Mississippi River in the fall of 1779, Governor Bernardo de Gálvez led 1,427 men, including 80 of the free morenos and pardos from New Orleans. The number of free black troops embarking from New Orleans rose to 107 for the Mobile campaign and to 143 free pardos (5 officers, 24 noncoms, and 114 soldiers) joined by 128 free morenos (5 officers, 22 noncoms, and 101 soldiers) in the Pensacola attack." Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 114.

¹¹ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 5 Sept 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 951; Navarro, 7 Nov 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 71-2.

as several libres who served alongside the other militiamen from their districts, such as Baptiste who received emancipation at the death of his master Edouard Massé more than ten years previous.¹² Anselm Blanchard, now about forty years old, and Joseph Richard led the militia at Manchac.¹³ On September 1, 1779, awaiting orders to join the forces traveling from New Orleans, the militia at Pointe Coupée received the Opelousas militia and their boats from the west.¹⁴ Mostly consisting of Isleños and Spaniards, the militia of Galveztown also organized.¹⁵

Indians of the *petites nations* and those living to the west of the Atchafalaya joined the campaign. About 100 Houmas in addition to Alibamons and Pacanas participated in the conquest.¹⁶ Sequenemouk, an Attakapas chief, led his men from their village on Vermillion Bayou, and another Attakapas chief Nementeau led warriors from the village on the Mermenteau. Still others from the village on the Calcasieu travelled to the Mississippi River. In total, roughly 180 Attakapas warriors participated.¹⁷

Other Indian groups chose not to participate in the war. Some groups living on the Mississippi River who had tried to engage both the British and the Spanish diplomatically, such

¹² Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 4 Sept 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 555-6; Attakapas Militia, 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 260-1.

¹³ Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 17 July 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 260; Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez, LaFourche, 26 Sept 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 300-301; Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 257-8. Blanchard also operated one of the licensed cabarets at Spanish Manchac and was one of many of the colonists there who agreed to try their hands at planting tobacco in 1777.

¹⁴ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 1 Sept 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 950-1.

¹⁵ Collell, Galveztown Militia, June 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 342-3.

¹⁶ Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 4 Sept 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 558-9; Piernas to DeClouet, New Orleans, 8 Aug 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 82; DeClouet to --, Opelousas, 15 Oct 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 745.

¹⁷ DeClouet to Piernas, Opelousas, 24 June 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 72; DeClouet to Piernas, Opelousas, 27 July 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 74. The Attakapas Indians requested payment of their gifts for participating in the campaign at Baton Rouge at least through 1782, DeClouet, Attakapas, 20 Sept 1782, PPC, legajo 195: 334. Post, "Some Notes on the Attakapas Indians of Southwest Louisiana," 229-32. DeClouet to Miró, Opelousas, 1 Nov 1782, PPC, legajo: fo 746. Sequenemouk is also referred to as Skenemo. His village may have relocated to Louisiana from the Sabine River. The Mermenteau River is named after Nementeau the Attakapas chief of the village on that river. The third main Attakapas village was on the Calcasieu River. Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 7 July 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 386-7. The relative absence of the Attakapas Indians from the records of the Attakapas and Opelousas posts aside from property transactions suggests relatively peaceful relations amongst these groups and other inhabitants of the posts, colonists and other Indian groups alike.

as the Tunicas, avoided participation in the conflict that took place in such close proximity to their homes. They had relocated to the Spanish side of the river in 1777, again to the British side in 1778, and to the Spanish side again in 1778. Although formerly known for their willingness to fight on behalf of France, in the years of partition and now in war Tunica desire to preserve its society perhaps superseded any inclination to fight in the conflict.¹⁸ Although consistently loyal to the Spanish, the Chitimacha chief Champagne worried over the presence of some traveling Quapaws at the time of the Spanish campaign in 1779. His village's sixty warriors were too distracted to participate in the war.¹⁹ Larger Indian entities also opted out of participating in the conflict. Much as the Choctaws and Chickasaws refused to stop Willing and his men, Paya Mataha and other Chickasaw leaders could and did refuse to send warriors to aid the British at various points during the war.²⁰ While most of these nations had aided the French as allies for the duration of French presence in the Lower Mississippi Valley during the years of the

¹⁸ The Tunicas relocated to the Spanish side of the Mississippi in 1777. Grand Pré said that the chief Mingo Falaya (also called Falaz) was concerned that the British would not be able to protect them if the Revolutionary conflict came to the Mississippi. Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 19 Nov 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 405-6; Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 4 Sept 1777, PPC, legajo 190: fo 401-4; Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 16 Apr 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 728-30. The Tunicas relocated to the British side once again after the Willing raid, Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 8 July 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 750-2. By 1780, they were on the Red River perhaps trying to avoid the war altogether. Piernas told the commandant there, Valentin Layssard, that the group could not be counted upon for loyalty to Spain or for any assistance in the event of further conflict. Piernas to Valentin Layssard, père, New Orleans, 19 June 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 643. By 1780, the settlement at Pointe Coupée and the British settlement on the opposite side of the river had grown significantly since the original Tunica settlement there in 1765, and settlers and their livestock may have been encroaching on Tunica lands near Pointe Coupée. The Red River was a natural choice for the Tunicas because its confluence with the Mississippi was so close to their former settlement. Unlike many other Indian nations who relocated to the Red River during the Spanish period, some Tunicas have remained in Avoyelles Parish since the 1790s, with some Tunica speakers living well into the middle of the twentieth century. Now the Tunicas are federally recognized with the Biloxis as the Tunica-Biloxi nation. Their settlement at the end of the French period, Portage de la Croix, is now the site of the Louisiana penitentiary Angola. Tunica disinterest in participating in the Spanish-British conflict on the Mississippi is very interesting when considered in light of the important value that the French had ascribed to Tunica warriors. Brain, *Tunica Archaeology*, 1, 42, 56, 152, 302.

¹⁹ Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 16 Aug 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 442-3; Dustiné to Bernardo de Gálvez, Iberville, 21 Aug 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 445-6; Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez or Piernas, Lafourche, late in 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 584-6. The Quapaws appear to have visited New Orleans, attacked the Chitimachas and possibly the Houmas and then returned to New Orleans again in October 1779.

²⁰ Wendy St. Jean, "The Chickasaw-Quapaw Alliance in the Revolutionary Era Author," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 68.3 (2009), 276.

revolutionary campaigns on the Gulf Coast, Indian groups sought to negotiate a place of strength for themselves.

Spanish forces took Fort Bute on September 7, 1779. The terms of surrender included the surrender of Natchez. After the capitulation at Baton Rouge, Jean Delavillebeuvre led a party of fifty that included infantrymen from Majorca to take possession of Fort Panmure at Natchez. Surrender of these forts represented symbolic success for this first phase of Spanish offensive; however, the real significance of the capture was strategic.²¹

Holding Manchac and Baton Rouge assured Spain greater control of the Mississippi and better access to waterways that stretched to Pensacola. American privateer William Pickles contributed to the effort to secure the waterways when in command of the *Morris*, a vessel once called the *Rebecca* that had been captured by Willing and outfitted for war after its capture. In September, Pickles succeeded in taking the British vessel the *West Florida* on Lake Pontchartrain, which had been patrolling the lake and its vicinity for two years.²² Additionally, Galveztown proved its worth as a strategic settlement when a Spanish privateer was able to capture four British vessels laden with supplies in mid-September. The fort had been completed just in time for Gálvez's attack on West Florida, and its location gave it import for guarding the lakes. Other vessels captured bore Waldecker reinforcements, rum for the Indian trade, and

²¹ Jack D. L. Holmes, "French and Spanish," 152: "the Mallorca Infantry Regiment was known as 'The Invincible,'... The Mallorca Regiment had seen action at Baton Rouge, and members accompanied Capt. Juan de la Villebeuvre to raise the Spanish colors over Fort Panmure de Natchez in Oct 1779..." also at Pensacola in 1781. Articles of Capitulation between Gálvez and Dickson, Baton Rouge, WFLP, reel 10: fo 833-839; Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 77-8; Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States*, 169-71; Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 12 Sept 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 558-9. The taking of Baton Rouge also inspired a work by one of Louisiana's first poets. Julien Poydras of Pointe Coupée composed "La Prise du Fort de Baton Rouge," *Favrot Papers*, vol II, document 113.

²² Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 88, 152: the *Rebecca* had just arrived from London when Willing's men captured it on 23 February 1778.

ammunition also destined for the British forts along the river.²³ The conquest of the British lands along the Mississippi and the securing of the nearby waterways granted New Orleans greater security from a British attack and enabled it to become a staging ground complementary to that of Havana for the remainder of the Spanish campaign along the Gulf Coast.

In early 1780, another hurricane postponed the next expedition against British Florida. While Gálvez and his 750 men, including Spanish regulars, white, libres militiamen, and twenty-four slaves, were preparing an attack against Mobile, a storm ran seven of their twelve vessels aground.²⁴ Gálvez relied upon Indian allies to assist him, this time including the Taensas and Ofogoulas who were living on the Mississippi at the time.²⁵ In spite of the interference of the forces of nature, Gálvez's forces joined 1400 reinforcements from Havana in late February and succeeded in taking Mobile on March 18, 1780, after a month's siege.²⁶ Storms from the Gulf challenged Spanish efforts to execute expeditions against West Florida three times. The final time was in the fall of 1780, when another hurricane struck New Orleans, leaving the city physically reduced and depriving it of its flour supplies.²⁷

²³ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 152; Collell to Gálvez, Galveztown, 26 Sept 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 358-9; Campbell to Germain, Pensacola, 15 Dec 1779, in "The Capture of Baton Rouge by Gálvez, September 21st 1779," *LHQ* 12 (1929): 256-7.

²⁴ Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez, LaFourche, 16 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 324; Anselm Blanchard, Iberville, 28 Nov 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 453. At least 20 Isleños also took part in the 1780 preparations.

²⁵ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 3 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193a: fo 568; Bernardo de Gálvez to Grand Pré, Pointe Coupée, 19 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 569. Thomas Hutchins identified several locations of Ofogoula villages on the British side of the Mississippi on his map in 1774. In 1779, Grand Pré assisted in relocating a group of Ofogoulas to the former property of James Willing. "Old Tunica" was considered abandoned by this time. Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 10 Dec 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 962. In December of 1779, Grand Pré had settled the Ofogoulas "at the place called, the Old Tonica, which had belonged to Mr. Willing." Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 10 Dec 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 962: "à l'endroit appelé, le vieux tonika, elle apartiene au Sr Willing qui y à une assez jolie Maison, quoique abandonné ; mais les dt sauvages à qui j'en ai parlé paraissent ne plus sen soucier."

²⁶ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 168; Navarro to Mayorga, 7 Feb 1780, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 368-70. For more on the Bourbon navy, see Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 81. For more on the siege see also Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States*, 188-94.

²⁷ Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 32: "the government estimated losses is the city at six hundred thousand pesos." An example of the destruction, Pierre Blaise sought to sell his property in New Orleans because of the damage his house sustained there, Porteous, trans., "Useful information given for Pedro Blaise to obtain permission to sell a house threatened with ruin from the effects of the hurricane," *LHQ* 15 (1932): 157; [This record may be

Louisiana also served the Spanish war effort by supplying cattle and grain to New Orleans and the Spanish troops during the conquest of West Florida. In this way, the goals of Spanish policy that Louisiana settlements should provide for the city of New Orleans and for Spanish troops during war time were also realized. However, policy alone hardly produced this realization on its own. Rather, borderlands trade practices that ignored political borders contributed largely to the dreams of policy. The overland routes employed to herd cattle from Texas, proved essential to supplying of cattle during the war. The development of Louisiana's own vacheries had long benefited from access to cattle and livestock from Texas. Additionally, Louisiana Indians, Indian traders, merchants, and habitants who raised livestock and grain participated in the war effort during the years of the Spanish campaign against West Florida.

During the American Revolution, grain was in demand in New Orleans and Louisiana, as ever. Bernardo de Gálvez issued a request to the settlements for another count of grain available to be sold in the city. Judice made an inventory of corn and rice at Lafourche in March 1778.²⁸ In April 1779, 200 barrels of rice from Cabahannocé were shipped to New Orleans.²⁹ In early 1779, Gálvez wrote again to the post commandants requesting another inventory of their grain, reminding them of its importance in a year of famine and scarcity of flour, and at a time when new families, the Isleños, were arriving to the colony.³⁰ Judice sent barrels of corn at least once in the fall of 1779 to New Orleans, escorted by the Houma Calabée, a trusted courier.³¹

misdated and should read 1780 because of the reference to the Hurricane of August 24, which was the one in 1780], "Alexo Raux petitions to make clear the amount of damage he has suffered in the hurricane of Aug 24, by the loss of 'Styles' Coiffures for hair combing sent from Cap Francaise by Mr. Griomas," 30 Aug 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPIR, *LHQ* 17 (1934): 211. Damage from the hurricane reached as far up the river at least as Baton Rouge. Dunbar, September 1780, in Rowland ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar*, 74.

²⁸ Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez, LaFourche des Chitimachas, 2 Mar 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 475-6; Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez, LaFourche, 7 Mar 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 477.

²⁹ Bernardo de Gálvez to Michel Cantrelle, 6 Apr 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 338-339.

³⁰ Bernardo de Gálvez to the Commandants of the various posts, New Orleans, 19 Feb 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 924-5. The Canary Islanders continued to arrive in Louisiana during the war.

³¹ Judice to Bernardo de Gálvez or Piernas, Lafourche, 7 Oct 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 571.

The outposts of Louisiana worked together to bring cattle to New Orleans. Louisiana cattle became increasingly important to New Orleans during the offensive.³² In 1779, amidst a meat shortage in New Orleans, Gálvez requested that the *cabildo* investigate possible ways of alleviating the problem. Several butcheries already operated in New Orleans. At times certain butchers were granted monopolies, as Alexandre Latil had been in 1771.³³ After exploring solutions in a *cabildo abierto*, the *cabildo* turned first to the German and Acadian coasts to supply the city with meat.³⁴ The free mulatto Jean Paquet conducted cattle from the German Coast to market.³⁵ In October a convoy transported cattle from the Attakapas district to New Orleans, and in December, Pierre Broussard, Joseph Provost dit Collette, and a party of nine other militiamen, mostly Acadians, conducted one hundred head of cattle belonging to Louis Boisdoré from the Attakapas to market in New Orleans in December.³⁶ Animals from Opelousas arrived at the Mississippi shortly after the conquest of Baton Rouge.³⁷ In December 1779, a request for more cattle arrived at Attakapas from Piernas, who acted as governor to the colony during the war. By the end of the month two convoys of a total of 200 head of cattle were sent to the city.³⁸ In April 1780, cattle from Opelousas were at Pointe Coupée for the consumption of

³² Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 123-5; Usner *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 179-80.

³³ 2 Aug 1771, Acts of the *Cabildo*, volume 1, page 53-4. For more on the public market for meat see also Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 186-190.

³⁴ Din and Harkins, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 192-3.

³⁵ Bellisle to Piernas, Allemands, 7 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 179; “Renato Huchet de Kernion vs Jean Pacquet,” 9 Dec 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 15 (1932): 174-5. This suit is with regard to a debt that Pacquette still owed Kernion for the property Pacquette purchased from him in 1778.

³⁶ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 124; DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez, Attakapas, 3 Oct 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 238-9; DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez, Attakapas, 29 Dec 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 254; DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez or Piernas, Attakapas, 29 Dec 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 255; DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez or Piernas, Attakapas, 29 Dec 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 256. Louis Boisdoré was a doctor who lived mostly in New Orleans. He married Marie Marthe Bordat, an Acadian widow known to have provided a home for the prototype for Longfellow’s “Evangeline,” Emmeline Labiche.

³⁷ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, at the home of Mr. Proffit, 14 Sept 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 953.

³⁸ DeClouet to Piernas, Attakapas, 31 Dec 1779, PPC, legajo 193B: fo 43; DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez or Piernas, Attakapas, 29 Dec 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 255; DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez or Piernas, 29 Dec 1779, Attakapas, PPC, legajo 192: fo 256.

the Spanish force at Baton Rouge and to feed the detachment of Pointe Coupée.³⁹ In December of 1781, Collette, who had developed his own trail to New Orleans, sought and received permission to conduct his drives safe from the hindrance of other ranchers. Members of the Cabildo in August 9, 1782 “remarked about the advantages that might result to the public by the abundant supply of meats which may be brought from the markets of Attakapas and Opelousas by the new road lately discovered and made practical by the zeal and expense of Josef Colee (Collette)” and attempted to encourage the western vacherie owners to use New Orleans as their main market.⁴⁰

Formerly clandestine trade routes proved useful during the Revolution in the form of cattle drives from Texas. Bernardo de Gálvez wrote Texas Governor Domingo Cabello asking that 1500 to 2000 head of cattle be sent to Louisiana in 1779.⁴¹ Officials met with trouble in securing the requested cattle.⁴² That same year, Sieur de LaMotte returned to the Trinity River and Brazos River in Texas with nineteen men to transport animals back to Louisiana when they were attacked by Indians living in the area.⁴³ In 1780, Comanches attacked a party leading 1000 head of cattle to Louisiana.⁴⁴ Consisting of 1250 head of horned cattle, the largest drive reached

³⁹ Grand Pré to Piernas, Pointe Coupée, 20 April 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 602-3. Hunters of the area killed two of the cattle.

⁴⁰ New Orleans Cabildo, *Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo, 1769-1803, transcripts in English* ed. and comp. WPA (1939) reel 1, 163; Din and Harkins, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 192-3.

⁴¹ Croix to Cabello, Chihuahua, 16 Aug 1779, Dolph Briscoe Center, Bexar Archive, box 2C35, vol. 85, frame 112-14, <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar>.

⁴² Cabello to Croix, Béxar, 20 Sept 1779, Bexar Archive, box 2C36, vol. 87, 86-90, <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar>.

⁴³ DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez, Opelousas, 7 June 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 213.

⁴⁴ Cabello to Croix, La Bahía, 10 July 1780, Bexar Archive, box 2C41, vol. 100, 16-20, <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar>.

Natchitoches with a passport from Texas governor.⁴⁵ Later that year, LaMotte sought another cattle drive to Louisiana.⁴⁶ By the war's end about 9,000 head of cattle had reached Louisiana.⁴⁷

The cattle industry in Louisiana had been fostered for over a decade with a military conflict with the British in mind. Raising cattle had become a significant part of the livelihood of settlers at Attakapas and Opelousas. The knowledge of those who had participated in contraband trade with Texas proved useful to bringing cattle to the Mississippi for food during the war. And, in sharp contrast to the grain shortage during the early 1770s, colonists complied with the demand that their produce be transported to the capital. In this instance, the interests of those living in the borderland of Louisiana coincided with imperial interests, and illicit practices that had provided stability to the Lower Mississippi but that had so oft been maligned by officials contributed to the war effort.

Libre and Slave Participation in the Campaigns

Libres formed two companies of militia from New Orleans and participated in militia of the various outposts of the colony. Like other colonists, libres had been militia members in Louisiana for about a decade. Perhaps more so than other free colonists, libres had a vested interest in supporting the Spanish colonial government, for, although they encountered social prejudice, libres enjoyed broader rights, legal protection, and opportunity in the Spanish world than they did in the British. Louisiana's white colonists, especially at New Orleans, initially

⁴⁵ Bormé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 9 Aug 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 575-6; Proceedings Concerning Mario Hernández' Petition to Export Stock to Louisiana, 30 May 1780, Bexar Archive, Box 2C40, vol. 96, frames 49-62; Domingo Cabello to Croix, LaBahía, 11 June 1780, Briscoe Center, Bexar Archives, Box 2C41, vol. 98, frames 69-73; Proceedings Concerning Antonio Blac's Petition to Export Cattle to Louisiana, Béxar, 4 May 1782, Bexar Archives, Box 2C47, vol. 112, frame 7-17, <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar>.

⁴⁶ Cabello to Croix, 20 Dec 1780, Bexar Archive, box 2C44, vol. 106, frames 61-8, <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar>.

⁴⁷ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 266-7.

resisted the idea of arming and training libres, although free and enslaved blacks had long served the colony as hunters and for the sake of defense. The prospect of war prompted Bernardo de Gálvez to impose the practice, which was an imperial norm already long practiced throughout the Caribbean.⁴⁸ Participation in the militia brought with it the privilege of electing its own officers and the benefits of the *fuero militar* in the Spanish world and bolstered group identity of libres at New Orleans especially.⁴⁹ Libres from outposts outside of New Orleans also served in the militia and in the war. They were fewer in number at each settlement than at New Orleans, and they did not have their own companies as libres did at New Orleans. Slaves were often compelled to serve the war effort. In the Spanish world, however, war brought opportunity to transcend the boundary between bondage and freedom to slaves who demonstrated valor.

The free black and free mulatto militias were particular to the Spanish Caribbean during the colonial period and grew in strategic importance for the empire following the Seven Years War. For Spain, they provided military support from the free populace, which ideally fostered loyalty to the Spanish crown and reinforced the *casta* of free pardos and morenos. Although O'Reilly had brought free black and mulatto militiamen with him to New Orleans in 1769, most returned to Cuba with him. While some notarial records reveal the existence of a 'ghost' black

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the free black militia in Florida, see Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 22-3, and especially Chapter 9, "Black Military Service," 202-228. For recent literature on free black and their service in the militia in the Iberian World, see also, Herman Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); Herman Bennett, *Colonial Blackness: a History of Afro-Mexico* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (1999); Landers, "Black Community and Culture in the Southeastern Borderlands," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18.1 (1998): 117-134; Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution* (2010); Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas*, The African Experience in Early Spanish America, 57.2 (2000): 171-205; Ben Vinson, "Articulating Space: The Free-Colored Military Establishment in Colonial Mexico from the Conquest to Independence," *Callaloo*, 27.1 (2004): 150-171. For earlier studies on free black militia see also Christon I. Archer, *The Army of Bourbon Mexico, 1760-1810* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977); Leon Campbell, "The Changing Racial and Administrative Structure of the Peruvian Military under the Late Bourbons," *The Americas* 32 (1975): 117-33; Allan J. Kuethe, *Military Reform and Society in New Granada, 1773-1808* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1978).

⁴⁹ For more on the *fuero militar*, see Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 300; Landers, *Black Society*, 203; Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 111-2.

and mulatto militia and community during the 1770s, it was not until Spanish entry in the American Revolutionary conflict that actual rolls of free black and mulatto militia appeared in Spanish Louisiana.⁵⁰ The prospect of military engagement with British West Florida prompted Bernardo de Gálvez to push Louisiana closer to conforming with the post Seven Years War Spanish Caribbean in forming a free black militia proper. This development stood in contrast to the administrations of O'Reilly and Unzaga that had permitted local prejudice against arming blacks in New Orleans to prevent the establishment of such militia.

Libres living in Louisiana's settlements also participated in the war, although their experience of militia differed from those living in New Orleans. New Orleans militia reflected the racial divisions of the castas of the Spanish world, and the New Orleans elite supported the division as a means of social control. Additionally, the libre population of New Orleans was large enough to establish a separate free black militia; whereas, although listed separately on the militia rolls, free blacks and mulattoes of the other districts of Louisiana appear to have served alongside the larger militia in each district.⁵¹ At times, these free black militiamen were called upon in advance of the rest of the militia. For example, in October 1780, they were called to travel to New Orleans: those from the Opelousas and Attakapas posts responded to the call as did the few free blacks in St. Charles Parish on the German Coast, Jean Paquet, Pierre Pains, and Valentin, and those from LaFourche.⁵² In preparation for the campaign against Mobile, the black

⁵⁰ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 111, 114, 119.

⁵¹ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 112; Attakapas Militia, 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 260-1. The free black population of New Orleans was only 109 persons in 1778 and the free population of mixed ancestry was 248, in comparison with the free white population, 1,552, and the slave population, 1,145, New Orleans Census, June 1778, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 290. Attakapas Militia, 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 260-1, Opelousas free blacks and mulattoes George, Grand Louis, Charles, Louis Ricard, and La Rouille were listed separately from the fifty-six white militia of that district; Opelousas Militia, 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 258-9. The free black militia of Attakapas were Baptiste Masse, Gregoire, Paul, Hiokio, La nuit, Pedre, Dominique, Seme, Cupidon, and Guillaume.

⁵² They included George Mulatre, La Rouille idem, Guillaume idem- de la poste Pointe Coupe, Dominique Idem-Ydem, Camme Idem, resta en los Atakapas, Cupidon Idem, Pedre Idem, Stix Negre, Charles Idem, Baptiste Idem. Etat Des Genns de Couleur Libres qui Se Rendent aux ordres de Mr. De Piernas, Gouverneur Par Interim,

and mulatto militiamen of Pointe Coupée left for New Orleans in January 1780.⁵³ The free black militia of Louisiana were assembled also for the campaign against Pensacola. Participation in the Spanish campaigns on the Gulf Coast demonstrated loyalty of the free black and mulatto militia and benefited some who served with valor. A number of the free blacks who took part in the Baton Rouge campaign of 1779 received special medals for their service, such as Simón Calpha, Jean Baptiste Hubón, François Dorville, Felipe Rueben, Manuel Noel Carrière, Nicolás Bacus, and Louis La Nuit.⁵⁴

Slaves also served during the Gulf Coast campaigns. Some may have served willingly because of the promise of emancipation. Gálvez promised emancipation in the case of severe injury or for valiant service as was traditional in the Spanish Empire. During the campaign on the Mississippi, slaves rowed the vessels that carried equipment and supplies on the river.⁵⁵ Gálvez also called upon slaves to serve at Mobile and at Pensacola.⁵⁶ Several slaves were among the fatalities suffered by the Spanish at Pensacola.⁵⁷ With their militia rolls, post commandants also submitted lists of slaves who could be armed and trusted to serve the crown. At Opelousas and Attakapas, these slaves were the same men who served the district as hunters.⁵⁸

Opelousas, 22 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193: fo 117; Piernas to DeClouet, New Orleans, 12 Nov 1780, PPC, legajo 193: fo 118; Bellisle to Piernas, Allemands, 7 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193: fo 180; Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 9 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 363-4; DeClouet, Opelousas, 28 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 11.

⁵³ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 7 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 570; Piernas to Grand Pré, New Orleans, 19 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193: 571.

⁵⁴ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 62, 114, 119-20. Calpha received his medal for his leadership during his command of the free pardo and moreno militia at Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola. Dorville received one for bravery.

⁵⁵ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 82-3.

⁵⁶ Pedro Piernas to the Post Commandants, Circular Letter, New Orleans, 16 Feb 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 1-4.

⁵⁷ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 41

⁵⁸ Opelousas Militia, Opelousas, 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 258-9: “Negres et Mulatres Chasseurs Sur Lesquels on Peut Conter: Francois a Mr LeMelle, Baptiste a Mr Boidoré, Gagny a Mr LaSonde, Thomas a Mr Bailly, Louis a Mr Manne, Negre a Mme Chatelrau.” Attakapas Militia, 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 260-1, “Louis a Mr LeDee, Sénon a Mr DeGruy, Jean a Mr DeClouet, Christophe a Mr DeClouet, Hector a madame Delahoussay, Joseph a Messieurs Grevembert, Philippe au Sr Colette, Allerte au Sr Boutté, Guetou au Sr. Borel, Cesar au Sr Borel.” Interestingly, these were all slaves of the landed-elite of these districts who had land from the French periods rather than of the Acadians or Isleños who by the American Revolution owned only a few if any slaves.

Both slaves and libres were assigned tasks during the campaign according to their skill. For example, an enslaved blacksmith named Antonio served with the craftsmen that Gálvez assembled. Such was the case for some free blacks. Among the craftsmen Gálvez included in his military expeditions was the free black carpenter Carlos and the free mulatto gunsmith Francisco Fortière.⁵⁹ At the age of about sixty, Alexis, a creole black slave from the plantation of Jean Barat, participated in the Mobile campaign. Instead of returning to Pointe Coupée with the other slaves, he remained near Mobile as a shepherd.⁶⁰ In 1780, Gálvez ordered the emancipation of three slaves for their service in the Mobile campaign: Petit Jean for his service in finding cattle for the troops; Honor for his fidelity; and a slave whose name has escaped the historical record for the severe wound he suffered when working on the Spanish trenches at Mobile.⁶¹

Although slaves were promised rewards or freedom for their service, such promises were not always immediately fulfilled. For example, Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent, now a colonel in the colonial militia, freed his slave Juan for his bravery at the siege of Pensacola. Sadly, Juan did not enjoy the freedom promised by St. Maxent's act of benevolence until he brought suit against his former owner's widow in 1799. By Spanish tradition and law, valiance in battle, as well as other acts that demonstrated loyalty to the king of Spain, was recognized as a potential avenue to freedom in which case the state acted as a third-party purchaser of the enslaved individual. St. Maxent invoked this precedent in declaring Juan free. Further, Juan indicated an understanding of his legal rights within Spanish society, which enabled him to bring a case against a family of considerable status in the colony and eventually to win this case and secure his freedom.⁶²

⁵⁹ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 119.

⁶⁰ Jean Barat, Pointe Coupée, 9 Aug 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 616.

⁶¹ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 40.

⁶² Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 38-9, 48-9.

The free black militia and slaves contributed to the entirety of the Gulf Coast campaigns. Participation in the militia was technically compulsory for the free black population of Spanish Louisiana as it was for other colonists. Militia in Louisiana had not always necessarily been loyal to the colonial government, as the revolt in New Orleans in 1768 had demonstrated. Participation in the militia offered free blacks and mulattos the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the Spanish Crown. Slaves experienced compulsion to serve in the war, but the prospect of war also offered them an opportunity to negotiate for their freedom. Free black and slave alike lent particular skills of craftsmanship, hunting, and shepherding to the Spanish conquest of West Florida. Taken together, these aspects of the service of Louisiana's free black and enslaved population during the war highlight Louisiana's incorporation into the Spanish Empire and the meaning that that belonging had for these groups.

Indian Affairs in the Taking of Pensacola

Indian participation either on behalf of Britain or Spain at Pensacola remained questionable leading up to the siege itself as Indians attempted to navigate the shifting political dynamics of the Southeast and to cast their bid for what might be the most promising situation for themselves in the post-war world. Their decisions were complicated by allegiances built up through trade and kinship and especially by rocky relationships with colonial officials, some of whom failed to recognize the importance of cross-cultural diplomacy. Decisions were made at the town-level rather than by Choctaws, Chickasaws, or Creeks at a larger group level. This arrangement presented a challenge to Spain and Britain as they sought to win allies.

Preparations for the siege of Pensacola included British and Spanish efforts to strengthen these alliances. Spain attempted to meet the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks through

diplomacy, but wartime interactions often failed to meet Indian expectations. Meanwhile, although they had the stronger foothold in alliance and friendship with Indians, British officials undermined alliances with the single most powerful military force in the Southeast. Failures in cross-cultural communication played a significant role in the deterioration of British-Indian relations. Successful cooperation among the British and the Indians of the Southeast might have been able to repel the conquest of Pensacola. Such was not the case.

After the Spanish capture of Mobile, both Indians and Spanish officials recognized the growing importance of their relations with one another. All along, Spain and the officials in Louisiana had paid heed to Indian relations. The war did produce a shift in so much as Spanish official presence east of the Mississippi necessitated persistent and direct relationships with Indians of the Southeast. Success in the Mississippi campaign also granted Spanish officials closer geographic proximity to the Choctaw Indians, especially to the Six Towns.

As Spanish officials sought to woo Southeastern Indians from aiding the British, they employed ceremony and trade but found consistently supplying Indian groups with goods to be a persistent problem for alliance building. Creeks and Choctaws had helped the British during the siege of Mobile.⁶³ Yet, even before the fall of Mobile, Choctaw loyalty to the British was questionable, and, indeed, General Campbell feared that the Choctaws were “undoubtedly much infected to Prejudice by Spanish Presents and Emissaries.”⁶⁴ And in November 1779, Gálvez noted the necessity for the Spanish “to give *viveres* to all of the Indians who come to this Capital.”⁶⁵ In April 1780, after the Spanish took Mobile, Choctaws from the Six Towns, Lower

⁶³ Campbell to Germain, Pensacola, 24 Mar 1780, WFLP, reel 11: fo 331-9; Germain to Campbell, White Hall, 4 Apr 1780, WFLP, reel 11: fo 295-307.

⁶⁴ Campbell to Clinton, Headquarters, Pensacola, 10 Feb 1780, WFLP, reel 11: fo 315-25.

⁶⁵ Bernardo de Gálvez to Pedro Favrot, New Orleans, 10 Nov 1779, *Favrot Papers*, vol II, document number 120, “En la segunda me representa Vm. Que viéndose obligado a dar viveres à todos los Yndios que vajan a esta Capital....”

Creeks and about twenty Upper Creeks(Tallapoosa) visited José de Ezpeleta, the new governor there. Four hundred Creeks returned in June. Both times the Indian parties requested gifts and ammunition, and both times Spanish supplies ran too low to satisfy their demand. Displeased that they could not acquire sufficient gifts at Mobile, the Choctaws returned their Spanish medals to de Ezpeleta. In May, de Ezpeleta sent the Creeks to New Orleans, where Gálvez entertained them in customary ceremonies, but the group remained unsatisfied.⁶⁶ Now, with Mobile securely in Spanish hands, New Orleans hosted nearly 500 Choctaws in a conference there as well. Here, Choctaws from the Six Towns turned over their British medals and received Spanish ones. In the meantime, a party of at least 1,235 Creeks, 236 Choctaws, and 31 Chickasaws, arrived at Pensacola in March 1780 to support the British there.⁶⁷ These wartime interactions among Spanish officials and potential Indian allies revealed the necessity of access to trade goods to lasting relationships between Spain and Indian nations.

With the outbreak of the Revolution, Indian alliances took on new importance for the British throughout North America. The Indian trade in the British colonial southeast underwent a significant geographic shift as Pensacola and St. Augustine instead of Charleston and Augusta became the new hubs for the trade and the places of departure for the packhorse trains. John Stuart made Pensacola his new home after he was forced to flee Charleston. Stuart instructed his brother Henry and cousin Charles to promote peace among the Creeks and Choctaws and to smooth over the disagreements that had perpetuated their recent conflict.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Kathryn Holland, "The Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Gulf Coast as Viewed from the Townsquare" in Coker and Rea, eds., *Anglo Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast During the American Revolution* Pensacola, Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1982, 93-4.

⁶⁷ O'Brien, "Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 124, 128.

⁶⁸ Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 24, 28; Charles Stuart, Mobile, 10 May 1776, PPC, legajo 189B: 718-719. Stuart died in 1779.

Although identified all as Choctaw, the villages of the Six Towns, the Western Division, and the Eastern Division did not share a central political and diplomatic structure. Instead, political decisions ultimately rested at the village level and only sometimes at the division level. This made it possible that, though all villages identified themselves as Choctaw, most Western Division and Eastern Division might and did chose to support the British while many but not all Six Towns villages supported the Spanish once the American Revolutionary conflict had spread to the Mississippi Valley. Much the same can be said for the Creeks. Another village of Choctaws had relocated to the Red River near the Biloxis. Most likely they were a group of Choctaws that had hunted, fished, traded, and intermarried with the Biloxis. During the Revolution, they maintained their friendship with the Spanish. Choctaws did not engage Americans in a political way directly until after the Revolution at Hopewell in 1785.⁶⁹

For the Choctaws and culturally similar groups, the American Revolution presented opportunity and concern for the future. War provided a space for young warriors to prove themselves, to become men in the eyes of Choctaw society and to acquire prestige through prowess displayed in battle, much the same as they had been able to do in the Choctaw-Creek war. Indeed, the Choctaws and Creeks had only two years of peace between their conflict with one another and their participation in the Spanish-British conflict on the Gulf Coast. War also allowed Choctaw spiritual leaders, or *Ishtahullos*, to assert their roles by “granting of spiritual protection” from the dangers of war. Additionally, war brought opportunity for Indian leaders like Franchimastabé to gain access to trade goods and demonstrate his continued power and authority within Choctaw society by distributing those material goods.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ O'Brien, “The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution,” 126-27.

⁷⁰ O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 27-8, 36, 38, 48.

During the years of the Revolution, British Indian agents and traders were not able to engage the Indians as effectively as either group might have hoped in part at least because officials became sidetracked by the expense of gifts and failed to realize the cultural significance of trade. John Stuart died in Pensacola in March 1779.⁷¹ And the Spanish held Charles Stuart, David Taitt, and other agents and traders at Mobile after its capture.⁷² Additionally, authority and funding that had rested in the Indian Department since the Seven Years War, and for the southern colonies through John Stuart, came under scrutiny after his death. Displeased with what he perceived as mismanagement of funds and wasteful spending, Lord Germain used Stuart's death as an opportunity to check the money and power funneled through the Indian Department. Consequently, in the final years of the American Revolution, leadership in that department south of the Ohio was not centralized through a single leader as it had been under John Stuart. In the reorganization of the Indian Department, Germain appointed the Scot and former deputy to the Cherokee Alexander Cameron as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Mississippi in 1779. He was to serve the Choctaws and Chickasaws for the rest of the war.⁷³ Instead of having the Indians visit Cameron at Mobile or Pensacola, the superintendent was supposed to travel among the Indian towns where "he will there be at hand to receive Intelligence of the Intrigues of the Enemy, and counteract and oppose their designs." Such an arrangement would ideally, in Germain's mind, reduce the expense of gifts to the Indians. For as much as he wanted the "friendship" of Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees, Germain

⁷¹ Peter Chester to Germain, Pensacola, 23 March 1779, WFLP, reel 10: fo 673.

⁷² Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 87-88.

⁷³ James H. O'Donnell, III "Hamstrung by Penury: Alexander Cameron's Failure at Pensacola," in Coker and Rea, eds., *Anglo Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast During the American Revolution* Pensacola, Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1982, 79-80. For a more detailed account of administrative confusion with regard to leadership in the Indian department see Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 137-38. For more on Cameron as an agent to the Cherokees, see also John L. Nichols, "Alexander Cameron, British Agent among the Cherokee, 1764-1781," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 97.2 (1996): 94-114.

wanted to avoid “a Pretense for a continual Succession of Indian Visitors, who must all be supplied while they stay and furnished with Provisions for the Journey and Presents to take home.”⁷⁴ Imperial authorities often overlooked or misunderstood the significance of such interactions to the cross-cultural relations that so buoyed imperial strength and survival in the colonial world. In their efforts to limit expenses, Britain jeopardized the relations with Indians that rested on gift-giving and trade perhaps most vital to any effort to retain the Floridas.

Those directly connected to the trade and to Indian-colonial relations understood matters differently. Alexander Cameron was the main British voice advocating for Indian trade and diplomacy to Governor Chester and General Campbell at Pensacola before and during the preparation for the Spanish attack. Like John Stuart, Cameron had fled to Pensacola after the outbreak of the American Revolution. Traveling among the Cherokee, Cameron arrived in Pensacola in 1777 where he attended that year’s congress and where he remained for most of the rest of the war. Cameron, Campbell, and Chester engaged in a power struggle from 1779 until Spanish capture of Pensacola in 1781. The major disagreement stemmed from differing ideas about how best to dispense gifts to the Indians: like Stuart, Cameron thought that Indian parties should receive gifts regularly and that thus with the British in consistent good diplomatic standing on Indian terms the respective Indian parties would be disposed to aid their allies the British when called upon, but Campbell thought only to give the Indians gifts at the moment when the British needed their help. Chester for his part was even stingier than Campbell, refusing to disburse much of the L1000 designated for entertaining the Indians. The Creeks were offended when they were not properly received at Pensacola, and as a result of his failure to

⁷⁴ Germain to Campbell, White Hall, 4 Apr 1780, WFLP, reel 11: fo 295-307.

entertain this group of Indians, Chester offended important allies.⁷⁵ Perhaps the Creeks' sense of urgency for supplies was exacerbated by the famine from which they suffered in the years following the Creek-Choctaw war. Nevertheless, Cameron managed to scrape together supplies to send to Indian towns and villages to try to encourage their support for the British. Even in time of war, British supplies of trade goods remained strong enough to tempt Choctaws of the Six Towns. Following the British Indian Congress at Mobile in April and May 1779 that preceded the Spanish conquest, agent Farquhar Bethune brought gifts to the Choctaws. Robert Taitt also distributed gifts to Western Division Choctaws at West Yazoo in 1779. When he brought gifts to the Eastern Division and Western Division Choctaws, Bethune asked the Indians to prove their allegiance to the British by attacking Spanish forces at Mobile. In November of 1779, James Colbert tried to woo the Six Towns Choctaws on behalf of the British cause but failed. Cameron dispatched Bethune to the Six Towns again in August 1780 with supplies. Those Choctaws of the Six Towns were split, with some favoring the Spanish and others the British. Pousahouma was one medal chief who turned to the British because of anticipated supply of trade goods, while others held on to the officer's coats, flags, and medals they had received from the Spanish in earlier meetings. Bethune requested more trade goods for the Six Towns, but Pensacola was silent on the matter.⁷⁶

Many Indian towns considered supporting Britain as a viable opportunity to negotiate for their future. In spite of British failures at Pensacola to meet Indian trade, numerous Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks continued to aid the British. The Chickasaws were perhaps most consistent in their loyalty to the British, their allies from the first half of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁵ O'Donnell, "Hamstrung by Penury," 76-82; O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 128.

⁷⁶ Holland, "The Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Gulf Coast as Viewed from the Townsquare," 94-5; O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 125, 129-31.

While they did not come in large numbers to the aid of Pensacola, many Chickasaws engaged the American forces in the Ohio Valley and along the Upper Mississippi in an attempt to disturb their successes.⁷⁷ The Chickasaw great medal chief Paya Mataha threatened neighboring Choctaws if they did not support the British. Instead of meeting Gálvez to receive gifts and medals, he and his war party attacked and killed several Spanish soldiers near Mobile.⁷⁸

British representatives tried to convince Indian allies to aid them in the impending defense of Pensacola, but inconsistent demands from General Campbell at Pensacola, his refusal to provide the Indians with gifts and ammunition, and misunderstandings about war-time practices among Euro-Americans and Indians damaged British-Indian relations. In spite of his experiences on the fringe of empire and in such close proximity to powerful Indian peoples, Campbell failed to understand that it was vital to defer to Indian customs.⁷⁹

Choctaw Indians patrolled the Gulf Coast between Mobile and Pensacola for Spanish soldiers and participated in and sustained attacks against Spanish strongholds, but they came into conflict with British leaders over their wartime practices. In scouting around Mobile, Choctaws occasionally killed Spanish soldiers. In one case, several Choctaw warriors mistakenly killed three Mobile civilians instead, a man named Trouillet, an Indian woman who was enslaved, and a free black. The warriors brought fourteen captives to Pensacola nearly naked after three days journey much to the horror of British officials there, who also condemned the killing of the inhabitants and their slaves. Choctaw Indians aided by several West Florida Royal Forresters attacked Spanish soldiers stationed at Mobile Village, a post across Mobile Bay from Mobile itself. Mobile Village would serve as a place from which to launch an overland offensive against

⁷⁷ Gilbert C. Din, "Loyalist Resistance after Pensacola: the Case of James Colbert," in Coker and Rea, eds., *Anglo Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast During the American*, 158-9.

⁷⁸ Holland, "The Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Gulf Coast as Viewed from the Townsquare," 94-5.

⁷⁹ O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 135.

Pensacola. Choctaws returned to Pensacola complaining that they had run out of ammunition before they could take Mobile Village but presented a horrified Campbell with several Spanish scalps to demonstrate their loyalty. The incident highlighted the problems that cultural differences presented British-Indian relations during the war. Campbell viewed the Indians as cruel and barbarous peoples.⁸⁰ To the Choctaws, display of war trophies enabled men to take the title of warrior, and the Choctaws argued with the British that they should not deny them this wartime right.⁸¹ The British demanded that their Indian allies prove their loyalty by attacking the Spanish at Mobile. The Choctaws anticipated provisions of ammunition and gifts for their actions. Instead, however, and in spite of Cameron's pleas, Campbell withheld ammunition and gifts and rebuked the Indians for the way that they executed the war.

The failure of British representatives to act according to Indian diplomatic demands and traditions did not preclude Indian association with the British; some Indian towns overlooked the British breach of the diplomatic relationship as they considered their own strategic position in the Southeast. Although Choctaw Indians from the Eastern and Western Districts expressed their willingness to join British forces in fighting the Spanish, General Campbell remained insistent that gifts to the Indians were a waste of financial resources and refused to provide these potential warrior-allies with adequate arms and ammunition. Repeatedly over the course of 1780 and 1781, Campbell requested the Choctaws and the Creeks to come to his defense at Pensacola when he feared Spanish attack but asked them to leave when he perceived the threat to have passed.⁸² In October of 1780, Choctaws complained that they needed gunpowder and noted that

⁸⁰ Ibid., 135-7.

⁸¹ O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 43.

⁸² Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 88-9; Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 178.

the fort was well stocked, but Campbell would release no powder to them.⁸³ When in January 1781, Campbell requested Indian assistance at Pensacola in preparation for the Spanish attack, approximately 800 Indians responded to the request. 744 of these were Choctaws who hailed from twenty different villages. These Indians would have comprised between one third and one half of the forces defending Pensacola if the Spanish had attacked in February. After dismissing about half of the Choctaws again when he believed there to be no threat, Campbell received word that the Spanish were in fact near Pensacola, so he dispatched Cameron to find the Choctaws. Cameron overtook them on March 7. After expressing disappointment in British demands that Indians serve British interests on British terms, the great medal chief Franchimastabé agreed to return to Pensacola with some of his warriors though he told his fellow Choctaws that they were under no obligation to return to Pensacola. Franchimastabé's 150 Choctaws joined the 400 who had remained at Pensacola. In spite of the important role he would assign them in the defense of Pensacola, Campbell released no gunpowder to the Choctaws. With 100 British troops, these Choctaw warriors met the Spanish as they entered the harbor. Throughout the siege, Campbell continued to refuse to supply his Indian allies with ammunition. It is not surprising that when they realized the magnitude of Spanish force that was about to envelope Pensacola, many of these Choctaws fled. Franchimastabé did not let the insults endured by Indians who had been friends to the British go without address. He took Cameron, Bethune, McIntosh, and James Colbert to task for their diplomatic failure.⁸⁴

Negotiations with and among Indian towns continued throughout the war as every party vied for allies and military support. During the siege of Pensacola in 1781, different parties of

⁸³ Holland, "The Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Gulf Coast as Viewed from the Townsquare," 94-96; O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 124.

⁸⁴ Holland, "The Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Gulf Coast as Viewed from the Townsquare," 96-100; O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 124-5, 138.

Choctaws and Creeks supported each side. Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks in varying numbers came and left Pensacola. Interestingly, several parties of Indians accompanied by traders of Indian and Scottish mixed heritage arrived to aid the British during the siege. Benjamin James and Alexander Frazer brought ninety Choctaws, the eighty Creeks who arrived with McGillivray, the fifty-four Chickasaws led by one of James Colbert's sons all engaged in the fight against the Spanish.⁸⁵ These men were able to straddle both societies. Within Indian society their access to British trade goods brought them a degree of political power. Meanwhile, Choctaw and Creek allies of Spain, Six Towns Choctaws, and Tallapoosa Creeks, attempted to encourage their fellow Choctaws and Creeks to defect from their service to the British, but without much success.⁸⁶ Although they supported opposing sides in the siege of Pensacola, Choctaws did not fight one another and had not since the Choctaw civil war, 1746-50.⁸⁷

Gálvez's superiors had intended that the troops outfitted at Havana in February 1781 reinforce New Orleans, Mobile, and the Mississippi, but Gálvez had other plans. He dispatched his brother-in-law Maximilien de St. Maxent to New Orleans to embark with the troops gathered there for Pensacola. Similarly, he sent orders to de Ezpeleta at Mobile to march on Pensacola. Out of concern that British reinforcements were being sent to Pensacola from Jamaica, Spanish leaders at Havana sent Gálvez another 1,600 Spanish and French troops aboard 23 vessels in April. Now that his forces outnumbered the British and their Indian allies, Gálvez determined to engage in a siege of Pensacola. His forces included troops from the Mallorca, Soria, Hibernia, Navarro, and Guadalajara Regiments. Gálvez's force and that of the British including their Indian allies probably each numbered under 2,000. Black slaves also participated in the defense

⁸⁵ Holland, "The Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Gulf Coast as Viewed from the Townsquare," 100-1; O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 125, 142-3.

⁸⁶ Holland, "The Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Gulf Coast as Viewed from the Townsquare," 101.

⁸⁷ O'Brien, "The Choctaw Defense of Pensacola in the American Revolution," 127.

of Pensacola as did many colonists themselves. The Indian presence contributed significantly to British viability in Pensacola during the siege, especially since the British did not receive reinforcements after the conflict began. Gálvez credited Indians with firing upon the Spanish troops as they attempted to advance through the woods to reach Pensacola. Disenchanted with Campbell, two Tallapoosa chiefs agreed to provide de Gálvez's men with fresh meat. The British surrender of West Florida took place on May 10, 1781.⁸⁸

The refusal of the highest ranking British officials to acquiesce to the demands of Indian allies to cement the alliances with trade goods and for supplies for battle hampered Indian-British relations during the Spanish campaigns against British West Florida. Although Indians of the Southeast looked upon aiding the British as a way to negotiate for their future, their decision not to aid the British with their full military support undermined British presence in West Florida. This failure suggests the centrality of Indian relations to the British claim to the Gulf Coast. The capitulation at Pensacola brought a wave of relief to Spain, although the war continued. For the rebel colonies, the Spanish Gulf Coast campaigns eliminated the British threat in the Southeast.

The Natchez Rebellion and Wartime Upheaval on the Mississippi River

For posts on the Mississippi River, conquest was not merely a matter of a flag change. The seemingly simple victory at Baton Rouge sharply contrasted the Gulf Coast and Mississippi

⁸⁸ Starr, *Tories, Dons and Rebels*, 175-215; Montemayor, trans., *Yo Solo*, 14-19, 30. For the account of Bernardo de Gálvez see A. Montemayor, trans, *Yo Solo: The Battle Journal of Bernardo de Gálvez During the American Revolution* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1978) and for the account in Spanish, see Bernardo de Gálvez, *Diario de las Operaciones de la Expedición Contra la Plaza de Panzacola* in the Ayer Collection, Newberry Library. For Bernardo de Gálvez, the victory at Pensacola earned him the right to include "Yo Solo," in his coat of arms. Indeed, de Gálvez's personal persistent effort to lay siege to Pensacola in spite of many setbacks and in the face of doubts of leaders in Cuba reveals the importance of his leadership. However, often the Spanish victory at Pensacola and on the Gulf Coast is unjustly credited only to Bernardo de Gálvez. This dissertation relies on primary evidence and the works of Greg O'Brien, Kimberly Hanger, Jack D. L. Holmes, and others to argue that Spanish victory on the Gulf Coast during the American Revolution was the work of a concerted effort of peoples across the spectra of race and class in the Spanish Empire.

River conflicts that followed. While the Spanish empire focused on the campaign against West Florida, keeping a watchful eye on Jamaica, and preparing for action in Guatemala, Louisiana colonists and officials occupied themselves with local concerns, the immediate threat of alliance between Indians of the Mississippi Valley and British settlers and traders who might attack the settlements and *petites nations* of Louisiana. Rumors spread of the designs of Indians and British settlers to lay waste to Louisiana's settlements and *petites nations*. A rebellion of British Loyalists broke out at Natchez only to be suppressed by the coalition of Louisiana militia and Indian allies. The aftermath of the rebellion pointed to ties between the British settlers of Natchez and Indian towns. Suppressing the tumult that followed the rebellion proved a lesson for Spanish officials in the primacy of alliances among Indian groups. The trials that Louisiana faced in dealing with this threat revealed the enduring ties between local militia and Louisiana's smaller Indian nations to the colony's security. A common enemy further united the groups. Their years of engaging in borderland practices offered a shared background upon which to build a response to the dangers of the war. This shared background thus contributed to their ability to defend Louisiana for their own sakes, a response from which the Spanish Empire benefited during the American Revolution.

Almost immediately after the conquest of Mobile in 1780, rumor began to sweep through Louisiana of Indian-British bands that planned to attack settlements and Indians in Louisiana. In April 1780, Grand Pré wrote Gálvez from Pointe Coupée begging for more ammunition. Delavillebeuvre had just reported from Natchez of an impending attack of British loyalists and Chickasaws. Rumor of such an attack to “*ravage*” the “*établissements*” from Pointe Coupée to Manchac had rumbled through the Lower Mississippi for some time. With his free and mulatto

militia away, Grand Pré was left with a militia of only forty three men.⁸⁹ Piernas could only spare twenty men as reinforcements, and sent 600 livres of powder and ball and 500 piastres for the detachment from New Orleans.⁹⁰ By May and June, commandants of the posts at Attakapas, Natchitoches, and Rapides passed word to one another of parties of Chickasaws and Cherokees headed by “*Brigands anglois*” who intended to prey upon settlers of these districts.⁹¹

Relationships knit together in the borderlands were very much a part of the disturbances at the edge of empire. Other borderlands ties were a source for security of Louisiana during the war. Communication often followed upon paths of trade. The circulation of rumor strengthened the cooperation of *petites nations* Indians and colonial settlements in the face of a shared threat.

Rapides epitomized the ways that borderland practices furthered the local interests of security and Spanish territorial interests. The post at Rapides on the Red River was itself in a significant location for gathering rumors and intelligence. Like the other western districts, talk of Indian-British attacks also spread among the habitants, hunters, and Indians of this post. The post commandant and principal Indian diplomat Valentin Layssard, père, used his position to secure intelligence of the rumored bands of Indians and British traveling between the Yazoo, Natchez, and the Red River. During the Revolution, numerous Indian nations made their home near Rapides. Layssard described the Indians assembled at his post in 1780 as “a *republique* of Chahtos, Biloxis, Pascagoulas, Apalaches, Mobilians, Alibamons, and a band of Chactas.” The Tunicas had begun considering migrating to the Red River in 1778 and appear to have done so by the time Gálvez invaded West Florida. By 1780, they had relocated their main town to Avoyelles where the Alibamons, Pacanas, and Taensas had lived before moving farther upriver

⁸⁹ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 3 April 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 593-4.

⁹⁰ Grand Pré to Piernas, Pointe Coupée, 2 April 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 607-8.

⁹¹ DeClouet to Bormé, Attakapas, 8 May 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 63; Bormé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 16 June 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 565-6; Layssard to Piernas, Rapides, 7 June 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 641-2.

to Rapides.⁹² By and large, the Indians of this post were loyal to the Spanish who recognized that these peoples could gather intelligence of British or Indian plans against Louisiana and its inhabitants and that it was in Spanish interest to keep these Indians at peace with one another.⁹³ Some of this “republique” had already participated in the campaign against Baton Rouge. In June of 1780, Layssard reported that there was considerable concern that a group of “Anglois vagabonds” and Chickasaws planned to attack Natchitoches and Opelousas. He wrote immediately to Piernas at New Orleans and turned to the Indians of his district for help. Layssard sent one of his sons with twelve Indians to visit the Ouachita to expel anyone without a passport because he was convinced that, if Indian-British enemies were to enter the Red River, they would first pass through the Ouachita and Catahoula Bayou. In terms of defense, Rapides was not well positioned. The Indians at the post did not number 200. Indians and habitants alike lacked ammunition. In contrast, the bands of Indians and British were often reported to number more than five hundred persons.⁹⁴ Piernas responded with ball and powder. Like Layssard, he too recognized the importance of the friendship with the many Indian groups living on the Red River. About fifty Choctaws responded to Layssard’s pleas for help in the summer of 1780.⁹⁵ Reliance on borderlands relationships and alliances for local and imperial security highlights the momentary intersection of local and imperial interests during the war.

⁹² Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 5 June 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 741-6, quotation: “une Republique de Chatos, Biloxis, Pascagoulas, Apalaches, Mobilians, Alibamons, et une Bande de Chactas.” Brain, *Tunica Archaeology*, 304.

⁹³ Layssard to Piernas, Rapides, 4 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 652; Layssard to Piernas, Rapides, 20 Dec 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 654-6. As time went on these villages migrated farther and farther up the Red River, and some groups were eventually assimilated into the Caddos. Layssard(père)’s father was Stephan Mandfret Layssard who was commandant at Rapides in 1773. “Henrique Vois vs. Esteban Mandfret Laissard,” 4 Aug 1773, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 9 (1926): 763.

⁹⁴ Layssard to Piernas, Rapides, 7 June 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 641-2. Catahoula in this case probably refers to what is now called the “Little River,” which is a tributary of the Ouachita but was called Catahoula bayou. Jean Filhiol, “Description of the Ouachita in 1786” in J. Fair Hardin, “Don Juan Filhiol and the Founding of Fort Miró,” *LHQ* 20 (1937): 478.

⁹⁵ Piernas to Layssard, New Orleans, 19 June 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 643.

By the year's end, reports abounded of Choctaw-British plans to attack the Lower River. This episode reveals the extent to which British settlers and merchants had become enmeshed in the world of the Lower Mississippi Valley.

The precautions taken by Piernas revealed that these reports were taken seriously. In October 1780, Piernas wrote the German Coast, asking that the men guard Tigouyou because of reports that Choctaws and “*Anglais*” had plans to attack Galveztown and the lakes.⁹⁶ At LaFourche, a Houma Indian told Judice that a Choctaw visited him to warn him to get “below the left bank of the river” because of impending attack by Choctaws.⁹⁷ In February 1781, Pedro Favrot reported from Baton Rouge where he was commandant of rumors of bands composed of Choctaws, Chickasaws, and British on the Mississippi planning attacks against Spanish held land, including his fort.⁹⁸

The ties between the British settlements and Indian allies, relationships of geopolitical interest for Indian nations and Britain, were forged through trade and kinship relationships in the southeastern borderlands. The threat that an alliance of these groups posed for Louisiana frightened officials, colonists, and *petites nations* Indians alike. As rumor spread of impending invasion, Louisiana officials and inhabitants employed their networks of trade and communication to share and to gather intelligence and to prepare to respond to an attack.

⁹⁶ Piernas to Bellisle, 18 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 181.

⁹⁷ Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 20 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 365, quotation “dessus la rive gauche du fleuve.”

⁹⁸ Favrot to Piernas, Baton Rouge, 20 Feb 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 201-3; Favrot, Statement of Accounts, Baton Rouge, 10 July 1781, in *Favrot Papers*, vol. 2, document 155. Born in New Orleans in 1749, Favrot had served in the French military. In 1777 he decided to return to Louisiana, and in November 1778, he received a commission as captain of a company of the 2nd Battalion of the Louisiana Regiment, Infantry. 20 Nov 1778, “Military Commission” in *Favrot Papers*, vol II, document number 104. The *Favrot Papers* contain the correspondence and family papers of Charles de Favrot (volume I), and of his son Pedro Favrot (volumes II-V). They contain information pertaining to French military ventures in Louisiana and the Caribbean, and later, the Spanish period in Louisiana. Although christened Pierre Joseph Favrot at St. Louis Cathedral in 1749, once he entered Spanish service in 1779, the former French officer signed his name Pedro.

Natchez in particular was implicated in reports, true and false, of a collaboration between loyalists and Indians. Indeed there was precedent for such interaction, and it served the military interests of Britain before the surrender of Pensacola. A rebellion at Natchez in 1781 gave substance to the persistent rumors running rampant throughout the Lower Mississippi.

In 1780, the area around Natchez had been subject to unsettling reports and visitors. Mingo Houmas, “one of the eldest chiefs of the Choctaw nation” with eighteen of his warriors came to Delavillebeuvre with a report of conspiracies of Choctaws, Chickasaws, and British traders gathering at the Yazoo who had plans to attack Natchez and who collaborated with British authorities at Pensacola.⁹⁹ British merchants and settlers at Natchez easily considered going to the Chickasaws because of their longstanding ties and loyalty to the British.¹⁰⁰ Supposedly, Campbell had authorized a man named Hooper to raise men in the Creek Country near Tombeché for the purpose of attacking Spanish-held Natchez.¹⁰¹ James Colbert worked to influence the settlers at Natchez to rise up against the Spanish, as had Robert Ross who “had left furtively for Pensacola after having attempted to bring the spirits of the inhabitants to rebel by his seditious proposals against the government.” After receiving reports from Delavillebeuvre, Favrot investigated Ross and his property but received little cooperation from the suspect’s brother George.¹⁰² Delavillebeuvre also wrote de Gálvez with concerns that Robert Ross and General Campbell plotted to take back Natchez.¹⁰³ His concern was well founded, for Ross noted that “when I passed thro’ their settlement [in the winter of 1779] in my way to Pensacola,

⁹⁹ Delavillebeuvre to--, Natchez, 16 Aug 1780, PPC, legajo 193: fo 427-9, quotation, “un des plus ancient chef de la nacion Chaktas.”

¹⁰⁰ Delavillebeuvre to Miró, Natchez, 25 Apr 1780, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 376.

¹⁰¹ Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Natchez, 24 June 1780, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 378-9.

¹⁰² Delavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, Natchez, 12 Dec 1779, in Holmes, “Juan de la Villebeuvre,” 119; Favrot, Baton Rouge, 8 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: 200-3; Favrot, 14 Jan 1780, PPC, legajo 193A: 204.

¹⁰³ Holmes, “Jean de la Villebeuvre: Spain’s Commandant of Natchez during the American Revolution,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 37 (1975): 106.

the principal Inhabitants commissioned me to inform General Campbell, that provided he would send them a small provision of Gun Powder and ball, with an officer to assume the command, they would retake the fort,” and then attack Pointe Coupée.¹⁰⁴ At Baton Rouge, Ross behaved suspiciously and “spoke badly” of Spain for which offense Gálvez had demanded that Favrot confiscate Ross’ property and send Ross to New Orleans if he continued in his ways.¹⁰⁵

In an attempt to un-nerve Spain, Campbell wanted the uprising at Natchez to appear as an orchestrated military action. Although Campbell’s endorsement and influence contributed to the momentum of the insurrection, it was in fact planned and carried out by loyalists and their Indian allies at Natchez itself. The uprising at Natchez occurred simultaneous to the siege of Pensacola. Campbell sent commissions to settlers at Natchez. He asked that “under your command are directed and required to act in arms against the Spaniards,” and invoked the “Constitution of Great Britain.”¹⁰⁶ Among those who received these commissions was long-time resident merchant and loyalist John Blommart. The commission were distributed in an effort to encourage the loyalist rebels and in hopes that a rebellion at Natchez might divert Spanish attention and resources away from Pensacola. Campbell was mistaken.¹⁰⁷ The response to the

¹⁰⁴ Robert Ross to the Earl of Dunmore, Charlestown, South Carolina, 8 Mar 1782, in Holmes, “Juan de la Villebeuvre,” 126.

¹⁰⁵ Bernardo de Gálvez to Favrot, New Orleans, 14 Dec 1779, and Bernardo de Gálvez to Favrot, 13 Jan 1780, *Favrot Papers*, vol II, document number 28, quotation, and number 134: “Si Mr. Robert Ros Continue comme il fait jusques apresent a se faire Soupçonner et mal parler dela Nation, vous le ferez arreter et vous vous en assurerez ainsi que Ses biens, et me lenverez a Cette Capital.”

¹⁰⁶ Commission to Jacob Winfree, Pensacola, 17 March 1781, PPC, legajo 114, in Photostat Reproductions, Newberry, vol. 1, document number 63; Piernas to Favrot, New Orleans, 17 May 1781, in *Favrot Papers*, vol. 2, document number 148.

¹⁰⁷ Commissions may also have been sent to John Alston, Philip Alston, and Jacob Winfree. Jacob Winfree’s Commission, 17 Mar 1781, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 424. Ethan A. Grant, “Anthony Hutchins: A Pioneer of the Old Southwest,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 74.4 (1996): 440-41; Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 91. John Alston arrived in West Florida in 1776 “with a large family and a number of negroes,” John Alston, Petition for Land Grant, 10 Dec 1776, WFLP, reel 8: fo 159. Philip Alston lived at Petit Gulf on land he bought from Philip Barbour. McBee, *Natchez Court Records*, 592, Jacob Winfree petitioned for a land grant in 1773, 6 June 1773, WFL reel 7: fo 282; Holmes, “Jean de la Villebeuvre,” 107. It has also been argued that the Alstons were patriots masquerading as loyalists who hoped that the rebellion would put Natchez in American hands. This suggestion is problematic. Anthony Hutchins said that these men had succeeded in convincing him to join the rebellion. However, Hutchins was a vehement loyalist. Unless their common migration from North Carolina to Natchez held

Natchez Rebellion was largely undertaken from New Orleans and relied upon militia and Indian allies in Louisiana who were not taking part in the attack against Pensacola.

On April 22, 1781, a party of more than two hundred fifty British settlers, traders, and Indians attacked Fort Panmure. They outnumbered the seventy six men garrisoned at the fort. Informed of the attack the day before, Jean Delavillebeuvre was prepared. After thirteen exhausting days of monitoring the rebels from the fort, keeping apprised of their location, sending couriers to attempt to reach Pointe Coupée, Delavillebeuvre surrendered on May 4, 1781, when he received word that the rebels intended to blow up the fort.¹⁰⁸

Leadership included a coalition of loyalists of all social groups, but fissures appeared among them when it came time to decide the fate of Delavillebeuvre and his men. John Blommart, a native of Switzerland, was in West Florida as a merchant as early as 1769 where he traded with Fitzpatrick and angered British officials by selling rum to the Indians. He had served as justice of the peace and captain of the militia at Natchez.¹⁰⁹ A deserter of the rebellion, John Allen, noted that Anthony Hutchins was only a “spectator” during the attack, although rumors propagated later suggested that he played a larger role. Gálvez thought Hutchins of “an *inquiet* spirit, capable of carrying out a cabal against some [Spanish] projects.”¹¹⁰ Allen also confirmed that Blommart had intentions of moving against Pointe Coupée. Other leaders included Folsom father and son, John Holston, William Eason, and Joseph Holmes. In the argument over what to do with the Spanish soldiers, the factions among the rebels splintered. Blommart informed

sway over him, it is difficult to believe that someone who only a few years earlier had been involved in thwarting patriot interests on the river should turn to their aid at this time. See Caughey, “The Natchez Rebellion of 1781,” 58-9.

¹⁰⁸ Jean Delavillebeuvre, “Journal of What Happened between April 21, 1781 and my arrival at New Orleans,” New Orleans, 18 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 567-576.

¹⁰⁹ Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 83n.

¹¹⁰ Gálvez to Favrot, New Orleans, 26 May 1780, in *Favrot Papers*, vol. 2, document number 138: “Je ne doute nullement que le Colonel Okchins soit un esprit inquiet, capable de Cabaler quelques projects...”

Delavillebeuvre that he was “not the master of these people,” but Blommart also negotiated with the more violent rebels for the lives of the Spanish soldiers. Released, the Spanish party left thirty five men with Grand Pré at Pointe Coupée and reached the capital on May 13.¹¹¹

News of the rebellion reached New Orleans quickly, and the insurrection at Natchez fueled another wave of rumors in Louisiana of imminent attacks on the colony itself.¹¹² Favrot begged Piernas to send reinforcements as he was concerned about his ability to defend Baton Rouge.¹¹³ He also issued orders at his post demanding that colonists turn over all arms and ammunition in excess of their own necessity, forbidding colonists from congregating, requiring all boats and pirogues to be tied up at the fort, and decreeing that all colonists must report any news of enemy plans for attack.¹¹⁴ To the west, DeClouet reported that Blommart was said to be with a large party and to be heading for the Ouachita and Rapides.¹¹⁵ DeClouet promptly took a census of “étrangers” a few days later at Attakapas, Opelousas, and New Iberia¹¹⁶ At Rapides, rumor of attack reached a high point. Layssard provided officials in New Orleans with a perfect example of the uncertainty of the sources that circulated reports throughout Louisiana: with one stroke of his pen, Layssard wrote that he had received a letter by a Tunica courier that appeared to have been written on the Mississippi River by an Acadian hand with which he was unfamiliar

¹¹¹ Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 5 June 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 741-6; Rea, “Redcoats and Redskins,” 21. DeClouet to Piernas, 23 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 165-7; Jean Delavillebeuvre, “Journal of What Happened between April 21, 1781 and my arrival at New Orleans,” New Orleans, 18 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: 567-576, quotation “il n’etoit pas maître de ses gens;” Holmes, “Jean de la Villebeuvre,” 97, 108; Caughey, “The Natchez Rebellion of 1781 and Its Aftermath,” *LHQ* 16 (1935), 60.

¹¹² Favrot to Piernas, Baton Rouge, 26 Apr 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 229-30.

¹¹³ Favrot to Piernas, Baton Rouge, 26 Apr 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 229-30.

¹¹⁴ Orders Issued to the Inhabitants of Baton Rouge, 2 May 1782, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 425.

¹¹⁵ DeClouet to Piernas, Attakapas, 3 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 147-8.

¹¹⁶ Census of Strangers at Attakapas, Opelousas, and New Iberia, 15 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 152-4: There were a good many “étrangers” too: 14 heads of house not counting women, children, slaves or servants, at New Iberia, and 115 between Opelousas and Attakapas. Some of these have German surnames, but most appear to be of British extraction. They included Edward Murphy, Philip Barbour and a John Fitzpatrick, who may have been the same person as the merchant who formerly lived at Manchac. The Ellis, Coles, Collins, Wells, and Fairchild families appear to have come from Natchez.

and arrived without an envelope and that an Apalache had learned that 1400 men were on their way to attack Opelousas.¹¹⁷ Responding to the threats of Indian-British attacks was made more difficult by the exaggerated rumors after the Natchez Rebellion of 1781. On May 20, Vauginé reported from Natchitoches that news of the Natchez rebellion had reached as far as San Antonio.¹¹⁸

The insurrection at Natchez produced cooperation among Louisiana's militia and Indian allies to defend the colony and eventually to suppress the rebellion, especially as the empire was not capable at the moment of the rebellion of directing attention to this disturbance at the edge of empire. The defense of Louisiana at this point of the war was completely the effort of leaders, Indians, and militia living in the colony. At LaFourche, Judice responded to a report that the British planned an attack on that post by contacting the Houmas who lived in his district. They agreed to gather intelligence for him and prepared to defend the post. Four Houmas travelled to New Orleans to obtain more ammunition, and four others received powder and ball at Baton Rouge from the store there, where Champagne and a party of eighteen Chitimachas also received arms and ammunition.¹¹⁹ Near the Mississippi, three Apalaches killed ten Englishmen and captured five black slaves and delivered their horses to Pointe Coupée.¹²⁰ Dustiné wrote from Manchac asking Cantrell and Judice to send reinforcements of twenty men each from their respective posts, St. James and LaFourche.¹²¹ Grand Pré at Pointe Coupée made special cry for assistance to his fellow commandants. Accordingly, thirty men from St. James made haste to

¹¹⁷ Layssard to Piernas, Rapides, May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 828-30.

¹¹⁸ Vauginé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 20 May 1781, PPC, legajo 192: fo 914-16.

¹¹⁹ Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 1 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 422-3; Piernas to Judice, New Orleans, 12 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 434; Favrot, Statement of Accounts, Baton Rouge, 10 July 1781, in *Favrot Papers*, vol. 2, document 155.

¹²⁰ Vauginé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 31 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 678-9.

¹²¹ Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 2 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 425-6.

Pointe Coupée, as did militiamen from the Attakapas and Opelousas.¹²² The immediate threat on the Mississippi River was recognized as real enough that Piernas instructed DeClouet to send 200 men to Pointe Coupée.¹²³ DeClouet sent reinforcements to Grand Pré twice.¹²⁴ Vauginé called together the militia at Natchitoches and dispatched several parties to patrol areas susceptible to incursions by the enemy. The Natchitoches and Yatassee Indians agreed to take on an intelligence gathering mission to await the British and Indians. Meanwhile, Vauginé readied couriers for the settlement at nearby Cane River, Rapides, Opelousas, and other posts.¹²⁵

By early June, local plans to re-take Natchez had coalesced. Although Gálvez arrived in New Orleans on June 4, 1781, with a mind to suppress the rebellion at Natchez himself, a coalition of militia and Indians retook the fort before Gálvez had the opportunity. Robert de la Morandière, the captain of the Attakapas and Opelousas militia, led the militia and forty three Indians to Natchez and ultimately became the primary leader in the re-conquest of the fort.¹²⁶ Vauginé of Natchitoches spent two months with two companies of his men at Natchez suppressing the revolt.¹²⁷ Valentin Layssard, fils, traveled with about fifty Choctaws, Pascagoulas, Apalaches, and Alibamons to Natchez.¹²⁸ A party of forty Houmas accompanied by two Americans and a party from Pointe Coupée met up with those from the western districts at Roche à Davion.¹²⁹ In the absence of some of the Pointe Coupée militia, Favrot sent thirty of

¹²² Michel Cantrell to Piernas, Cabahannocé, 3 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 311-2; DeClouet to Piernas, Attakapas, 3 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 147-8.

¹²³ Piernas to DeClouet, New Orleans, 11 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 149.

¹²⁴ DeClouet to Piernas, Opelousas, 10 June 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 177.

¹²⁵ Ordre de Service, Natchitoches, Vauginé, signed 20 May 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 668; Vauginé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 20 May 1781, PPC, legajo 192: fo 914-16.

¹²⁶ Holmes, "Juan de la Villvebeuvre," 11 ; Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion of 1781," 61-2.

¹²⁷ Vauginé to Piernas or Bouligny, Natchitoches, 20 March 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 583

¹²⁸ Layssard to Piernas, Rapides, 15 Aug 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 831-4; Piernas to Layssard, 28 Aug 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 835.

¹²⁹ Favrot to Miró, Baton Rouge, 10 June 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 235; Favrot to Piernas, Iberville, 8 May 1781, PPC, legajo 198: 322-3. The place was named for the Jesuit Père Davion, missionary to the Tunicas.

his men under a Mr. Landry to help Grand Pré at that post.¹³⁰ That same day Judice sent fifty men to Pointe Coupée.¹³¹ Although Blommart reportedly had 300 men at Natchez, having received word of the surrender of Pensacola, the rebels agreed to negotiate with the Spanish. De la Morandière with his force of militia and Indians secured Natchez for Spain for a final time during the American Revolution.¹³² The fort had been taken five times since 1778.

Although the rumors circulating throughout the Lower Mississippi presented an exaggeration of the British-Indian cooperation developing near Natchez and Indian country, many British settlers of West Florida remained loyal to Britain and attempted to effect imperial belonging in the contested borderlands. They were met by a coalition of other borderlanders who recognized the Natchez Rebellion as a threat to security of the region.

The suppression of the Natchez Rebellion did not end resistance among British settlers and Indians. The capture of leaders of the rebellion served as a cause that resonated through Natchez and among bands of Indians and settlers, especially those connected with the Chickasaws linked to Natchez. These groups tried to manipulate the Spanish government in New Orleans for the release of prisoners. The turmoil that they perpetuated necessitated that Indian nations and Spain cooperate to end the trouble.

De la Morandière sent the leaders of the rebellion to New Orleans, where they were held prisoner, and bounties were put out for others including the Alston brothers, Jacob Winfree and Joseph Holmes. Other leaders John Smith and Parker Caradine were also apprehended and sent to New Orleans.¹³³ The aftermath of the rebellion produced even more confusion at Natchez as

¹³⁰ Favrot to Miró, Baton Rouge, 26 June 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 258.

¹³¹ Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 26 June 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 475.

¹³² Holmes, "Juan de la Villebeuvre," 110 ; Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion of 1781," 61-4. For a more detailed account of Blommart's surrender, see Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion of 1781," 63-5.

¹³³ Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion 1781," 66-9.

rebels took flight, many to the Chickasaws. James Colbert and a band of loyalists and Chickasaws posed problems to Spanish shipping on the Mississippi as they attempted to bully the Spanish at New Orleans into releasing the leaders of the rebellion. The loyalist cause was alive among the Indian nations. The geographic situation and contested nature of the borderlands provided rebels the opportunity to flee and also proved a challenge for Spain as its officials attempted to enforce its post-war boundaries east of the Mississippi River. In this instance, officials recognized that their best chance of success was to engage the Indians living in the borderlands. The Indians used the moment to enhance their own power in the region.

Flight from justice produced short and long-term migration from Natchez. Some rebels traveled east, others settled among the Indians, and still others made new homes in American trans-Appalachian settlements. Some rebels succeeded in escaping the Natchez area altogether, some leaving their families behind on their lands. Those who had participated in the rebellion came together from across the social spectrum, but participation in the rebellion made them all traitors to the Spanish Crown. A good many fled to Indian villages or to settlements far off. Brothers John and Philip Alston, who had migrated to the Mississippi with Anthony Hutchins in 1773, parted ways. All three men held considerable property, besides large land grants owning considerable livestock, in addition to slaves. John fled to the Chickasaws with his son Louis, some of his cattle, livestock, and slaves, leaving his wife Elizabeth and six younger children with the remainder at Natchez. John Alston was eventually caught and sent to New Orleans. Philip and his family settled on the Cumberland.¹³⁴ Anthony Hutchins went east for a time while his wife Ann and their nine children remained at Natchez.¹³⁵ Like Hutchins, Philip Mulkey returned

¹³⁴ McBee, *Natchez Court Records*, 1, 592; Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion 1781," 68.

¹³⁵ For more on Ann White Hutchins see, Jack D. L. Holmes, "Ann White Hutchins," *Journal of Mississippi History* 37.2 (1975): 203-8.

east to South Carolina.¹³⁶ Some of the Lymans also absconded. Thaddeus and Thompson Lyman must have feared for their role in the rebellion because they both abandoned the settlement that they had been so instrumental in settling several years before.¹³⁷

Numerous “banditti” associated with the less civil factions among the rebels seemingly disappeared into the woods.¹³⁸ Some of the insurrectionists were considered frontier riff-raff. Campbell had not been below employing them to secure his ends. Indeed, the man who carried the commissions from Pensacola to Natchez, Christopher Marr, was called “a noted vagabond of bad character and abandoned principles.”¹³⁹ The frontier banditti had been lurking about the Natchez fort and settlement at the time Delavillebeuvre assumed control in 1779. In 1780, the commandant had issued orders following a gruesome murder in an effort to expel from Natchez “vagabonds,” “vagrants,” and “rogues,” those “idle, loose, disorderly or unlawful persons.”¹⁴⁰ Suspected murderer, Absalom Hooper, was another actor in the rebellion.¹⁴¹

The Chickasaws, and James Colbert in particular, received a good number of the rebels. Single men fleeing what they anticipated as cruel Spanish justice were joined by entire families. Stephen Holston and his wife Judith and his brother John were one such family. Thomas Holmes and his wife also fled to the Chickasaws.¹⁴² A Spanish official intercepted the following letter from James Steelman to his friends:

I Desire to be Rememberd. To you and your Family and I desire you would not go to any Parts but Meet at the first Blufs the first day of September If you Possibly can for I am Bound now for the Chickasaw Nation If you do not come by that time I shall come for

¹³⁶ McBee, *Natchez Court Records*, 291, 599.

¹³⁷ McBee, *Natchez Court Records*, 238, 298.

¹³⁸ A brief discussion of this migration also appears in Din, “Arkansas Post in the American Revolution,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 40.1 (1981): 9.

¹³⁹ Hutchins to Miró, July 10, 1785, as cited in Caughey, “Natchez Rebellion of 1781,” 59.

¹⁴⁰ Delavillebeuvre, Orders at Natchez, 8 Oct 1780 in Holmes, in “Juan de la Villebeuvre,” 123.

¹⁴¹ Notes of the Council of West Florida, Pensacola, 21 July 1773, WFLP, reel 7:83; Chester to Unzaga, Pensacola, 30 July 1773, WFLP, reel 7: 245-53; Hutchins to Haldimand, Pensacola, 7 May 1774, Haldimand Papers, reel 28: 135-6.

¹⁴² Holston to Holston, Chickasaw Bluff, 11 May 1782, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 220-1.

you for the Country is so Confused that it is not Possible for any Body to live in it best part of the District will go of, my Old father in law and Mother in law is going along with me William Jenkins and Samuel Reiner is going the same way if so be you think proper to let your People know of it and come along with you I and my family desires to be rememberd. To you and your family.¹⁴³

Steelman's extended family left the uncertainty of settler society at Natchez to live with the Chickasaws, and his letter hints at a stream of others who opted to do the same. Others who fled to the Chickasaws included John Choitt and George Gefferess, who estimated over forty other refugees still living among the Chickasaws in 1782. While some traders planned to continue their life among the Chickasaws, others intended to join the settlements on the Cumberland or to live with the Cherokees.¹⁴⁴ A life among the Indians appeared more stable to many settlers than the prospect that they imagined of remaining under Spanish jurisdiction. Living with the Indians was not a new concept for many of the families in the Lower Mississippi who had migrated from the British colonies. Before settling in West Florida, William Miller, his wife, and their seven children took refuge among the Cherokees because of their loyalty to the British Crown.¹⁴⁵ William Woodward noted that he had been in South Carolina and then in the Cherokee Nation before relocating to West Florida.¹⁴⁶ Thomas Temple claimed as his original home "the town of Joqua in the Cherokee nation," which he abandoned because of the revolutionary war.¹⁴⁷ James Peterkin and Charles Duncan also hailed from the Cherokees.¹⁴⁸

James Colbert and Farquhar Bethune tried to manoeuver the weight that their ties to the Chickasaws gave them to force the Spanish at New Orleans to release the prisoners taken after

¹⁴³ James Steelman, Boyopeu, 17 June 1781, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 428, quotation. William Jenkins arrived at Natchez in 1777 from South Carolina with his wife, six children, and three slaves. William Jenkins Petition for Land Grant, 16 Nov 1778, WFLP, reel 10: fo 733.

¹⁴⁴ Declaration of Jean Sohat and George Gefferess, Chickasaw Nation, 16 Oct 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 532-9.

¹⁴⁵ William Miller, petition for Land Grant, 6 Mar 1777, WFLP, reel 8: fo 418.

¹⁴⁶ William Woodward, Petition for Land Grant, 29 Aug 1777, WFLP, reel 9: fo 91.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Temple, Petition for Land Grant, 1 Sept 1777, WFLP, reel 9: fo 107.

¹⁴⁸ James Peterkin, 1 Sept 1777, WFLP, reel 9: fo 110; Charles Duncan, 1 Sept 1777, WFLP, reel 9: fo 113.

the Natchez rebellion. Bethune did not turn himself in to the Spanish authorities after the taking of Pensacola. By marriage, he was a Chickasaw, and his allegiance was still to Britain. He threatened a bloody attack on the Mississippi if the leaders of the rebellion were not released. For his part, Colbert led a band of Chickasaws and British refugees from Natchez, Georgia, and the Carolinas and their black slaves in attacks on Spanish vessels traveling the Mississippi above Natchez. Having migrated to Natchez in 1777 from South Carolina, John Turner, possibly with his family and slaves, fled to Colbert and led an attack on a vessel traveling from Natchez to Illinois in early 1782.¹⁴⁹ The most famous act of piracy committed against the Spanish on the Mississippi by this group occurred at Chickasaw Bluffs in May 1782. Colbert and his comrades seized a vessel carrying Anicanora Ramos and her children to Illinois, where they were to join her husband Francisco Cruzat the Spanish governor there. Colbert hoped to exchange these hostages for the prisoners at New Orleans. Colbert specifically demanded the release of John Blommart, John Alston, Joseph Holmes, Jacob Winfree, John Turner, John Green, William Eason, Parker Caridine, and John Smith.¹⁵⁰ Among those whom Colbert released to carry the message to the governor at New Orleans were Doña Anicanora Ramos and her sons and the captain of the vessel, L'Abbadie. Once at New Orleans, she gave testimony of their experiences as prisoners.¹⁵¹ Colbert was in communication with the Creeks and with British inhabitants of Spanish West Florida. During the weeks when Doña Anicanora Ramos and her party were held by Colbert, Alexander McGillivray visited the Chickasaw leader with messages from Georgia

¹⁴⁹ Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion 1781," 69-71; John Turner petition for Land Grant, 17 Nov 1778, WFLP, reel 10: fo 777; Miró to Gálvez, New Orleans, 4 May 1782, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 213. Declaration of L'Abbadie, St. Louis of Illinois, 5 July 1782, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 21-33.

¹⁵⁰ Prisoners to Gálvez, 15 May 1782, Chickasaw Bluffs and Miró to Gálvez, New Orleans, 5 June 1782, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 214-18, 220; Colbert to Bernardo de Gálvez, Chickasaw, 15 May 1782, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 219.

¹⁵¹ Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion of 1781," 74; Miró to Gálvez, 30 May 1782, New Orleans, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 221-31.

and a letter from David Ross then living at Baton Rouge. L'Abbadie reported encountering Benjamin Fooy.¹⁵² Colbert and a party of about 150 attacked the fort at Arkansas in 1783 in a continued effort to force the release of the prisoners.¹⁵³

Colbert and his associates tried to leverage the power of their alliances and kinship ties to force the hands of Spanish officials. The Indian-loyalist alliance was unsuccessful in this project, but their efforts suggest cross cultural coalitions on the Mississippi that resisted the changes indicated by the shifting international borders following the American Revolution.

When Spanish representatives sought to squelch the threat posed by Colbert and his band, they considered the strength of the Chickasaws they thought to be allied with the group. Spanish governor of Louisiana, Esteban Miró, decided not to use a military expedition against Colbert because of his followers' ability to elusively transcend boundaries and because of their connection to the Chickasaws. Not constrained by the limits imposed by international boundaries, Colbert and his followers were seen by the Spanish authorities as a "Band" who lived "without domicile," and who took advantage of "the forests of the interior of the lands...close by and there they may easily hide themselves." The history of French failure in war to subjugate the Chickasaws served as a warning to Miró, who feared that a military expedition against the Chickasaws would be futile and only damage the Spanish.¹⁵⁴ He traveled to Natchez himself with 400 men "to establish good order."¹⁵⁵ He suggested the garrisoning of

¹⁵² Miró to Gálvez, New Orleans, 30 May 1782, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 221-31.

¹⁵³ Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion 1781," 81-82; DuVal, *Native Ground*, 155-157. For a discussion of the Arkansas Post during the American Revolution, see also Gilbert C. Din, "Arkansas Post in the American Revolution," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 40.1 (1981): 3-30. For another incident involving Colbert and acts of piracy on the Mississippi, see also, "Marine Protest. Proceedings brought by Bartholome Tardiveau and Company because of the robbery committed by the Pirate Santiago Corbert[Colbert], an English Royalist," 2 June 1783, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 21 (1938): 325-8.

¹⁵⁴ Miró to Gálvez, New Orleans, 5 June 1782, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 214-18, quotation; Duval, *Native Ground*, 154.

¹⁵⁵ Vauginé to Miró, New Orleans, 29 July 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 60-1: "pour y Etablir Le Bon Ordre."

300 troops there. He also released John Smith and Parker Caradine because he believed them to have been unduly charged with conspiring with fugitive rebels. Miró even agreed to an exchange of prisoners proposed by Colbert. Colbert asked for the release of an elderly woman, Mrs. Tudah Holston, who was being held for harboring rebels in exchange for five men. Miró hoped that this demonstration of leniency would help calm the inhabitants of Natchez.¹⁵⁶ After the signing of the Treaty of Paris, Gálvez agreed to release the other prisoners.¹⁵⁷ As in the New Orleans revolt of 1768, Spanish authorities chose to punish the ring-leaders and offer clemency to the other participants if they took the oath of allegiance to the Spanish Crown.¹⁵⁸

Miró and other Spanish officials recognized the importance of Indian diplomacy to the cooperation of the Chickasaws against the likes of those who thought to malign the Spanish throughout Mississippi Valley. Accordingly, Cruzat's only recourse was to employ Indian allies Kickapoos, Mascoutons, and Peorias to threaten the Chickasaws from the north. At the same time, Choctaws carried messages of peace from the Spanish at Mobile to Chickasaw leaders, such as Payamataha.¹⁵⁹ Miró asked the Quapaw chiefs so powerful in the Arkansas River Valley to invite the Chickasaws into an alliance and to use this influence to end Colbert's piracy on the Mississippi. Although the Chickasaws did not recognize Colbert as a primary leader, the Spanish considered that he might be because of his association with them.¹⁶⁰ Colbert's death in 1784 curbed the actions of his followers considerably.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Caughey begins to make some of this analysis, "Natchez Rebellion of 1781," 75-6; Miró to Gálvez New, Orleans, 5 June 1782, and Colbert to Bernardo de Gálvez, 1782, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 214-18, 220.

¹⁵⁷ Caughey, "Natchez Rebellion of 1781," 78-81.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 65-6.

¹⁵⁹ Kinnaird, "Introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 2. xi-xiii; Grimarest to Payemataha, Mobile, 11 June 1782, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 20.

¹⁶⁰ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 153-8..

¹⁶¹ McGillivray to O'Neil, Little Tallasie, Jan 1784, Papers of Panton, Leslie & Company (hereafter cited PL&C), reel 1: 1139-40.

Meanwhile, in Spanish Louisiana, the turmoil perpetuated by the Natchez Rebellion and its aftermath fostered fear of attack by bands of loyalists and Indians. On the margins of the colony, for their very ability to cross cultural boundaries, Indian allies and cultural brokers remained significant to the way peoples living in the western districts navigated rumors of Indian-loyalist raids. A common enemy facilitated collaboration among Indian nations, settlers, and officials in the outposts of colonial Louisiana. Choctaws brought word to Rapides that some rebels, Creeks and Choctaws intended to join the Chickasaws and planned to “kill everyone” on the Red River and in the nations on the river.¹⁶² Piernas instructed Layssard to calm everyone because the Spanish victory at Pensacola cut the access of the traders and vagabonds to merchandise or ammunition.¹⁶³ Concerned that ill-intentioned British traders among the Caddos in communication with roaming British and Indian bands on the Mississippi River, Vauginé sent DeVilliers and Francois Grappé to go among the Caddos and to assemble intruding English and disarm them.¹⁶⁴ Three un-licensed English traders were apprehended and sent to Pointe Coupée where two of them had families.¹⁶⁵ According to Vauginé, the third was “a bad subject, taken without a passport among the Caddos Nation where he held proposals to the Indians against the order and tranquility desired.”¹⁶⁶ In October and November of 1781, Indians and militia in the western posts prepared for an attack by Indians and loyalist, whom DeClouet spotted near Catahoula Bayou, almost equidistant between Natchez and Natchitoches.¹⁶⁷ He responded by purging “all of the bayous and rivers of my area of such brigands.” Indian allies of the smaller

¹⁶² Layssard to Piernas, Rapides, 15 Aug 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 831-4: “tué le monde.”

¹⁶³ Piernas to Layssard, 28 Aug 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 835.

¹⁶⁴ Vauginé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 20 Sept 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 703-4.

¹⁶⁵ DeClouet to Piernas, Attakapas, 12 Nov 1781, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 150-1.

¹⁶⁶ Vauginé to Piernas, Natchitoches, 20 Sept 1781, PPC, legajo 194 : fo 703-4: “un mauvais sujet, pris sans passeport dans la Nation Cadaux ou il tenait des propos aux Sauvages contre ordre et la tranquillité si desire...”

¹⁶⁷ Valentin Layssard fils to Valentin Layssard père, Rapides, 2 Oct 1781, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 145-6; DeClouet to Piernas, Attakapas, 6 Oct 1781, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 142-5; Valentin Laissard, fils, 3 Nov, 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 751; DeClouet to Piernas, Attakapas, 6 Nov 1781, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 147-8.

nations in Spanish Louisiana were rewarded for their loyalty. The chief of the Alibamons was made a Great Medal Chief. He and the Pascagoula Stopa du Soulouchemastabé received “hausse cols” at New Orleans in August 1781.¹⁶⁸

The aftermath of the Natchez Rebellion highlighted the dominance of Indians in the Mississippi Valley and in the Southeast after the American Revolution. Spanish officials must work with this reality if they intended to have peace in their newly acquired territory east of the Mississippi as well as in Louisiana. As instability rippled out from the Natchez Rebellion and fact and fiction merged amidst rumor, colonists and *petites nations* Indians continued to cooperate against a common enemy. But, their world was changing.

The conflict and confusion that reigned in the Lower Mississippi during the American Revolution had its effects on the settlements. The crops of the colonists suffered when the militia were called away repeatedly from their lands. This disruption exacerbated the natural damage already sustained in Louisiana from the turbulent weather of the wartime years. In July 1781, the habitants of Pointe Coupée complained that their harvest was under 3 or 4 feet of water. This was the third year that their crops had suffered.¹⁶⁹ Although Bernardo de Gálvez had worried that Louisiana militiamen would be unreliable during the war because of their concern for their families and their lands, those very militiamen proved to be quite the contrary during the war.¹⁷⁰

Migration to and within the Lower Mississippi produced permanent relocation of new colonists to Louisiana. Sixty Irish men and women traveled from Fort Pitt and made their way to Opelousas where they employed their Catholic identity to beg for asylum. DeClouet tried to get

¹⁶⁸ Piernas to Layssard, 28 Aug 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 835.

¹⁶⁹ Representations des Habitants of Pointe Coupée to Bernardo de Gálvez, Pointe Coupée, 31 July 1781, PPC, legajo 193A: fo 613.

¹⁷⁰ Bernardo de Gálvez to Jose de Gálvez, New Orleans, 3 July 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 345-6.

the men positions as engagés at the post.¹⁷¹ British prisoners of war, many Waldecks, elected to remain in Spanish Louisiana, some becoming engagés along the German Coast.¹⁷² Interestingly, in 1779, numerous English deserters looked to Louisiana.¹⁷³ A Waldeck with passport for the German Coast sought work at the Baton Rouge fort. Favrot denied him any work and returned him to New Orleans. Perhaps he did not need to supplement the work of slaves from nearby plantations who served as carpenters doing repair work at the fort.¹⁷⁴ Migration of English speakers fostered suspicion about their loyalty. DeClouet wrote Piernas over his concern that some of the new settlers were “royalists in spirit.”¹⁷⁵

Conclusions

During the American Revolution, wartime conflict broke out in the Mississippi Valley and along the Gulf Coast as part of the rivalry of Spain and Britain. Louisiana’s strategic location gave the colony significance for the conflict. Spain launched its attack on British West Florida from Louisiana. In approximately ten short years, Louisiana’s inhabitants had turned from ousting the first Spanish governor to full-fledged participation in the military campaigns in West Florida. Although loyalty in the borderlands was often in flux, at this moment, Louisiana militia, libres, slaves, and Indian groups actively participated on behalf of Spain. They also fought for their own sake and for the safety of the colony against the threats of war.

¹⁷¹ DeClouet to Piernas, Opelousas, 24 June 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 72.

¹⁷² Cabaret to Piernas, Allemands, 24 Feb 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 167; Cabaret to Piernas, Allemands, 9 March 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 168; Piernas to Cabaret, New Orleans, 6 March 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 169. In 1782, the commandant of Natchitoches even enquired whether Waldecks might be sent to Natchitoches as reinforcements. Vauginé to Miró, New Orleans, 13 Nov 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 74-6. For a brief account of the Waldecks in Louisiana see Deiler, *Settlement of the German Coast*, 131-36.

¹⁷³ Bernardo de Gálvez to Louis Dustiné, New Orleans, 10 July 1779, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 190.

¹⁷⁴ Favrot to Piernas, Baton Rouge, 11 Mar 1781, PPC, legajo 194: fo 206-7; Pedro Favrot, Accounts Concerning Repairs at Fort Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge, 15 Jan 1781, in *Favrot Papers* vol. 2, document 147.

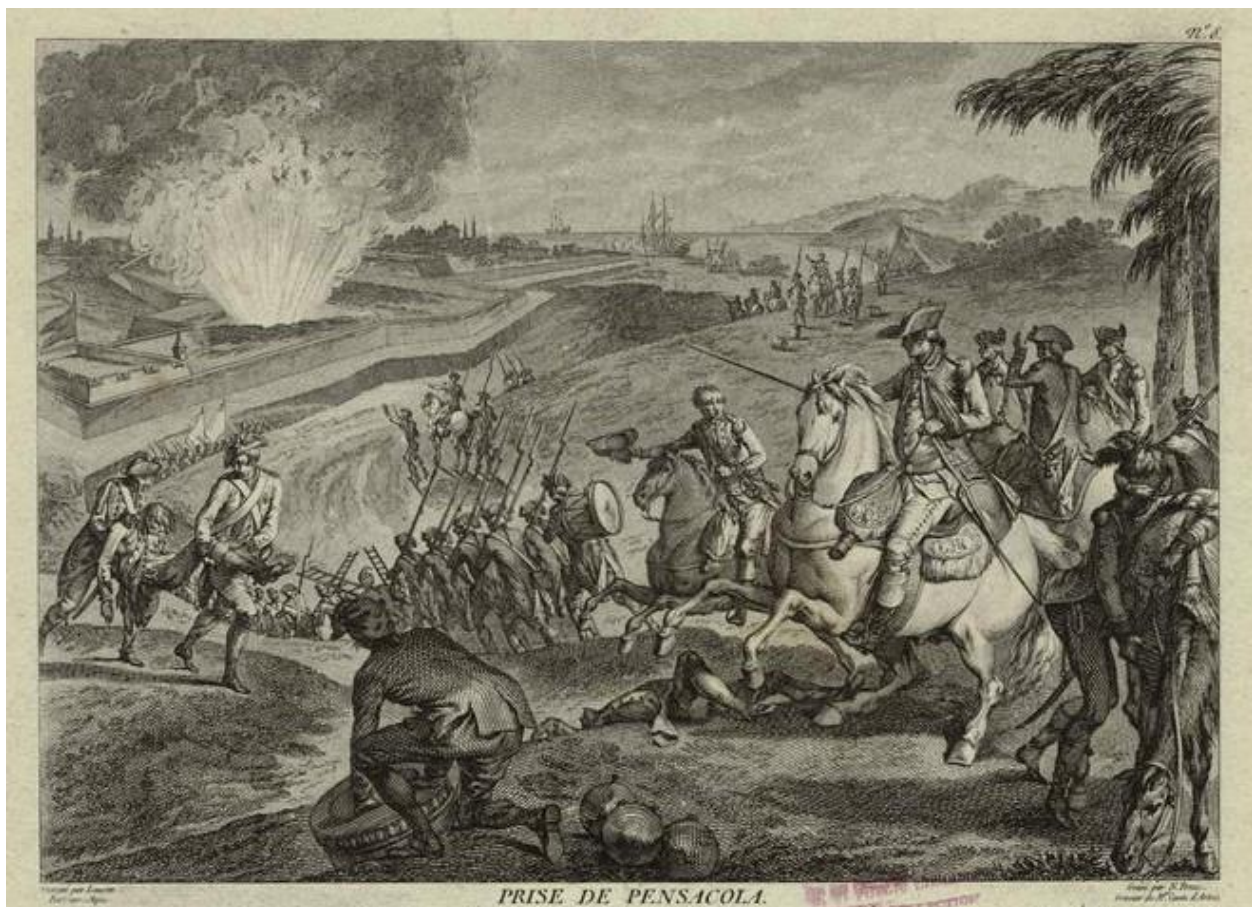
¹⁷⁵ DeClouet, Attakapas, 26 Feb 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 49-51; Piernas to DeClouet, New Orleans, 11 March 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 51-2, “royalists dans l’ame.”

Louisiana inhabitants employed the alliances and networks of communication and trade characteristic to the borderlands to navigate the wartime moment, and in this instance, therefore, borderland practices served Spanish border interests well. Engaging British contraband trade networks had provided Spanish Louisiana some economic stability and had consequently reduced the terror of financial ruin among the colonists. During the war, normally illicit channels of trade that stretched into Texas funneled livestock into Louisiana both for New Orleans and for the use of the Spanish military. The experiences of Indians, settlers, and slaves in allying with one another also benefited Spain. These groups were thoroughly integrated into the imperial project of taking West Florida. As the focus of the war moved east, alliances among *petites nations* and settlers stood as Louisiana's only real defense in the chaos of war. This reality became particularly evident in the Natchez Rebellion when a competing alliance of loyalists and Chickasaws retook the fort. Settlers and smaller Indian groups of Louisiana relied upon their own cooperation with one another and sharing of intelligence and rumor gained through communication networks that stretched throughout the Lower Mississippi Valley. Ultimately, this alliance brought the fall of loyalist-held Natchez.

The war also pointed to the importance of engaging Indian alliances and trade networks in the Southeast for Spain or anyone seeking to gain a foothold there. The challenges of cross-cultural communication were evident in the British-Indian wartime interactions. The aftermath of the Natchez Rebellion and the troubles caused by Colbert and his band prompted Miró to recognize the strength Indian alliances and cooperation at the heart of the continent. Spanish officials would have to learn how to interact with Indians of the Southeast on their own terms.

The American Revolution and its aftermath changed the Lower Mississippi Valley. It produced upheaval in settlements that experienced wartime uncertainties such as scarcity,

migration, and threat of attack. Loyalists living among the Indians became an important component of the politics, society, and economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley in the years that followed. The political allegiances of loyalists and Americans had ramifications for the Indian trade, for Spanish efforts to manage the Southeast, and for Louisiana's role in the empire as a bulwark against Anglo expansion. Finally, as subsequent chapters will show, the changes in commercial policy and practice, the expansion of the slave trade, and fallout from the revolutionary age that had just been ignited directed Louisiana's course away from the frontier exchange economy that had provided stability to those living in the Lower Mississippi Valley for several generations.



Lausan, Bertaux, and Ponce, 1781, *The Battle of Pensacola*. 1783. Engraving Public Domain

Chapter 5

Accommodating and Resisting the Imposition of Imperial Order

Introduction

After the American Revolution, the United States became Spain's new territorial enemy in North America. To build up its border colonies, Spain attempted to gain Indian allies east of the Mississippi and to grow and govern Louisiana with particular attention to developing an export economy, increasing the settler population, and regulating trade, travel, migration, and illicit communities. Spain enjoyed a degree of success in gaining the cooperation of Indian groups interested in trade and of Louisiana merchants and colonists aiming to expand the slave trade and develop tobacco as an export crop. Spain even experienced cooperation from the Atlantic network of dispersed Acadians in the project that transported Acadians from France to Louisiana. However, when Spanish policy attempted to interfere with older and emerging borderland practices, specifically maroon communities and un-monitored trade, colonial officials glimpsed the overwhelming odds against which empire had pitted itself.

At the end of the revolutionary war, Spain closed the Mississippi to the United States and embraced a decidedly anti-American approach to diplomacy that only began to ebb in 1787. This stance shaped policies related to migration and commerce as American groups claimed lands on the Mississippi River. Tensions heated up in the Bourbon County Crisis. This incident proved the first material test of the border disagreement between the United States and Spain.

Spain considered how best to contend for the newly won Southeast. The networks of the Indian trade so closely associated with alliances became central to the Spanish project. Closely

tied to these networks was the task of supplying the trade, which eventually made Spain dependent on networks of British loyalist merchants. To secure this contested borderland, Spain turned to avenues of trade it had considered adversarial up to this point.

As was often the case in Spanish Louisiana, Spanish imperial projects had the greatest chance for success when they overlapped with the goals or interests of the colony's inhabitants and so gained the cooperation of at least some segments of colonial society. Such was the case with its efforts to introduce new colonists prior to 1787, to expand the slave population and slave trade through New Orleans, and to promote the cultivation of tobacco as an export crop. Still interested in re-establishing community, dispersed Acadians agreed to the Spanish project to settle approximately 1500 Acadians from France in Louisiana. The project benefited from detailed planning that considered the earlier lessons of the Ulloa administration and the cooperation of Acadians already living in the colony. While Acadians willingly moved to the colonial borderland to ameliorate the situation of their diaspora, African slaves were caught in the throes of their own diaspora. In the years following the war, merchants at New Orleans were eager to renew their connections to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and Spain considered the expansion of the slave population significant to the economic development of Louisiana. Finally, Louisiana colonists had complained for nearly two decades that their crops had no natural outlet within the Spanish Empire. During the 1780s, Spain decided to open avenues within the empire for Louisiana to provide tobacco.

An examination of the story of a band of maroons led by the libre Philippe in 1785 reveals the ways that inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley continued to employ traditional borderland practices to contest empire's grip on the region. The revolution had provided a window for certain groups to band together and cooperate with empire, but it had also provided a

moment of fluidity that many slaves used to escape to growing maroon communities. Destroying these communities became a primary goal of local officials after the war. An examination of the struggle of maroon communities for survival and the efforts of officials to suppress those communities also reveals the ways that many sectors of society in Lower Louisiana negotiated cooperation with the Spanish regime and resistance toward that same regime. While some benefited from cooperation, maroons and *petites nations* especially struggled to maintain borderland ways in the face of mounting odds. Meanwhile, officials struggled to tighten control around borderland trade networks and new practices like peddling.

Many Claims to the Southeast and the Significance of the Indian Trade

As concern over westward migrating Americans emerged, Spanish officials saw no reason to perpetuate trade between American and Spanish ports. The wartime trade had after all been an exception to traditional Spanish policy, the goals of which had been accomplished.¹ With the negotiations of the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, American-Spanish relations became further complicated. In an agreement with Britain, the United States understood a right to free-navigation of the Mississippi River. However, according to Spain, such navigation rights were not solely Britain's to grant. Spain did not recognize the American right to free navigation. Additionally, the treaty did not achieve an agreement between the United States and Spain on the border between their North American lands. From the signing of the treaty in 1783 until the Treaty of San Lorenzo in 1795, much of the southeast remained in an ambiguous status. At this time, the government of the new nation was not fully established. The degree of uncertainty that

¹ Jesus Lorente Miguel, "Commercial Relations between New Orleans and the United States, 1783-1803," in *The North American Role in the Spanish Imperial Economy, 1760-1819*. eds. Jacques A. Barbier and Allan J. Kuethe (Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1984), 177.

loomed over the United States inhibited the ability of its leaders to promote sovereignty in the independent states, let alone in the trans-Appalachian West.

The interior waterways of the continent were of growing interest to Americans now settling west of the Appalachians. Americans hoped to continue to navigate the Mississippi and to trade freely at New Orleans. With war debt looming, the United States also sought trade with Spanish ports to gain access to specie.² The developing demographic and economic pressure of the Americans forced Spain to reconfigure its policies, both at the imperial and at the local level in the turbulent borderlands. In 1784, Spain closed the Mississippi to the United States.³

Americans expected access to the Mississippi River. Early, correspondence between leaders, such as Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, and Bernardo de Gálvez, revealed the connection of geopolitical with commercial interests. In 1779, Jefferson argued that “the direct Channel of commerce by the river Mississippi, the nature of those Commodities with which we can reciprocally furnish each other, point out the advantages which may result from a close connection and correspondence.” Surely ominous to Spanish ears, Jefferson stated that:

Notwithstanding the pressure of the present War on our people they are lately beginning to extend their Settlements rapidly on the waters of the Mississippi...with it there will in the course of another year be such a number of Settlers as to render their Commerce an object worth your notice from New Orleans alone can they be tolerably supplied with necessaries of European manufacture, and thither they will send in exchange, Staves & peltry immediately & flour, pork and Beef.⁴

Fellow Virginian Richard Henry Lee wrote to John Adams with a sense of urgency in 1780 that “without this free Navigation our vast back country will be so distressed as to lay the foundation of future wars and dissention from the necessity of having an outlet to market... we have great

² Miguel “Commercial Relations,” 177; see also Malcolm Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontiers: People, Societies, and Institutions 1775-1850* 3rd edition (New York : Oxford University Press, 2008), 22-49.

³ Gilbert C. Din, “The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró in Spanish Louisiana,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73 (1969-1970): 161.

⁴ Jefferson to Gálvez, Williamsburg, 8 Nov 1779, in *SPMV*, vol. 1, 362.

numbers of people settled on the Ohio...all these places being within our Charter limits.” Clearly the economic implications of the navigation of the Mississippi and the related social and political ramifications of access to it were not lost on leaders such as Lee. His perspective further indicates Virginian plans to extend its sovereignty and settlement westward.⁵

Spain attempted to keep a close eye on American expansion and the political tempests brewing in the west. Francisco Rendón remained in Philadelphia after the Revolution and the reports that he funneled regarding American trans-Appalachian settlement only exacerbated Spain’s concern for its North American holdings.⁶ In 1785, Spanish agent Louis Chacheré reported on the conditions of American settlements along the Cumberland and Ohio and on the plans of a party by James Robertson to plant a settlement at Chickasaw Bluffs. He took care to note the population and military capacity of the settlement, as well as the economic interests—the fur trade, tobacco, and corn—of the settlers and their persistent conflict with the Indians of the region. Including with his report maps of the Ohio River and American newspapers, Chacheré informed Boulogny that Americans’ plans to cultivate tobacco in Kentucky and Tennessee “causes them to have a very strong desire to have control of the river, which they believe they are sure to have, since they feel that they will soon be the possessors of Natchez. They are expecting this spring a hundred or a hundred and fifty families.”⁷

As the conflict over free navigation emerged, the contest for the Indian trade indicated just how many parties vied for the Lower Mississippi and the Southeast.

Spain recognized that it must prevent the extension of American commerce and the establishment of settlements in the contested territory. In the absence of a border, Spain must

⁵ Richard Henry Lee to John Adams, Virginia, 7 May 1780, *The Adams Papers*.

⁶ Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 179.

⁷ Chacheré to Boulogny, Natchez, 7 Nov 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2., 151-2; Boulogny to Miró, Natchez, 13 November 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2., 154-5; -- to Boulogny, Natchez, 7 Nov 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2., 152-3.

enforce its presence and claim to the Mississippi Valley and to the southeast. To do this, Spain had to contend with Indian politics as Indians of the southeast stood at the center of the contest. Integral if not nearly synonymous with realizing this goal was winning and keeping Indian allies through the Indian trade. The Indians of the portion of the southeast un-circumscribed by official international boundaries, particularly the Creeks, the Choctaws, and the Chickasaws, shared the concerns of the Spanish with regard to their American neighbors as their own systems of alliance were complicated by the shifting geopolitical contexts and pressures of post-revolution migration. Spanish officials soon turned to their former enemies, British loyalist merchants, to supply the trade. Formerly, the activities of these merchants challenged Spain's efforts to enforce an imperial border, but now they became closely linked to Spanish effort to vie for territory. Securing alliances with Indians proved more challenging than Spanish officials anticipated, in part because of the trouble of finding a source for trade goods, and in part because decision-making occurred at the town level for all major Southeastern Indian groups. It was in Indian interest to engage as many parties in trade and negotiations as possible and to perpetuate the borderlands status of the Southeast.

After the conquest of the Floridas, Spain set about trying to define the Indians of the Southeast as solely Spanish allies. In 1784, the Spanish held treaty congresses to negotiate alliances and trade terms. The first meeting was with the Creeks at Pensacola at the end of May. At this time, Alexander McGillivray became a salaried Spanish agent to the Creeks. Miró hoped that such a position would guarantee a more permanent allegiance of the Creeks. Chickasaws

and Choctaws gathered in June for another conference at Mobile. Both treaties made the Spanish protectors of the respective Indian parties and exclusive suppliers in trade.⁸

Spanish officials needed a source of trade goods to maintain relations with these groups. Bernardo de Gálvez had granted a monopoly to his father-in-law Gilbert de St. Maxent to supply the Indian trade. Besides the motivations of nepotism or rewarding loyalty to the Spanish Crown, granting the monopoly to St. Maxent opened the Indian trade to the French Atlantic rather than to the British. However, St. Maxent lost his first shipment of trade goods to the British, and later when he was accused of smuggling, his monopoly was revoked. Because it was known that he had held a monopoly over the trade, most merchants at New Orleans, Mobile, and Pensacola were unprepared in 1784 to take on the demands of the trade with short notice.⁹

At this time, Spain turned to British trade networks to access goods for the Indian trade. Success in engaging the trade required Atlantic networks that could serve as channels for trade goods in demand among the Indians and required connections on the ground in the Southeast to carry out the actual trade itself. Thus, Spain found itself reliant upon the very borderland trade networks that so often undermined its abilities to enforce political boundaries.

The firm of Pantón, Leslie and Company, comprised of British loyalists, lobbied to supply the Spanish-Indian trade for the Floridas.¹⁰ The role that William Pantón proposed to play required the expansion of his own operations from East Florida to the Gulf Coast. In his

⁸ Kinnaird, "Introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xvi-xvii; Coker, *Indian Traders*, 58-9; Gibson, *The Chickasaws*, 77; Duval, *Native Ground*, 158. However, Spain was not bound to defend the Choctaws and Chickasaws against American aggression as Spain was bound to defend the Creeks.

⁹ Miró to Jose de Gálvez, New Orleans, 15 April 1784, PL&C, reel 1: fo 1201-10, David Library of the American Revolution; Miró to Jose de Gálvez, 1 Aug 1784, New Orleans, PL&C, reel 1: fo 1510-22; Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, 12-4. See also, Thomas D. Watson, "A Scheme Gone Awry: Bernardo de Gálvez, Gilberto Antonio de Maxent, and the Southern Indian Trade," *LH* 17.1 (1976): 5-17; Kinnaird, "introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xiv.

¹⁰ Coker, *Indian Traders*, ix-x; J. Leitch Wright, Jr "The Queen's Redoubt Explosion in the Lives of William A. Bowles, John Miller and William Pantón," in Coker and Robert Rea, eds., *Anglo-Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast during the American Revolution* (Pensacola FL: Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1982), 54, 186.

appeal to the governor of East Florida Vicente Zéspedes, Pantón identified the concerns and problems that negotiating the border in the American Southeast posed for Spain.¹¹ Pantón's friend Alexander McGillivray told Miró of the need to "Secure a Poerfull barrier in these parts against the ambitious & encroaching Americans," and suggested that "to frustrate the American schemes one principel consideration should be a plentiful supply of Goods should be carried to trade in the Nation on the following that the English used to do for Indians will attach themselves to and serve them best who Supply their Necessities."¹² Pantón suggested that "our capital and credit, together with that of our connections in England, are fully adequate for the purpose and object proposed."¹³ To Spain, Pantón, Leslie & Company's existing relations with Indians made the firm a good option for supplying the goods.

Miró also negotiated with the New Orleans firm of Mather and Strother. Both James Mather and Arthur Strother had been operating in the Mississippi Valley since the 1770s. Miró had turned to this firm to furnish supplies for the congresses in the summer of 1784. That year, Miró also authorized the firm to supply the Indians with goods it obtained from its suppliers in London. And, at least for a time, Mather was on friendly terms with McGillivray.¹⁴

While Spain formed alliances for only as long as those alliances proved useful, in their efforts to maneuver and manipulate the post-revolutionary territorial contest, many groups of Choctaws and Chickasaws employed the strategy of engaging as many parties in trade as possible. In so doing, they complicated Spain's efforts to establish a bulwark against American

¹¹ Memorial from Pantón, Leslie and Co, Pantón to Zéspedes, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 114. Spain regained East Florida also with the treaties of 1783, for a brief discussion of this see Landers, *Black Society*, 68-9, and Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 271-4.

¹² McGillivray to Miró, Little Tallassie, 1 Jan 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 736-8. Probably through his father, a Scottish Indian trader, McGillivray came into contact with Pantón perhaps as early as the 1760s or 1770s. He later became associated with Pantón, Leslie, and Company.

¹³ Memorial from Pantón, Leslie and Co, Pantón to Zéspedes, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 115.

¹⁴ Miró to Jose de Gálvez, New Orleans, 15 April 1784, PL&C, reel 1: fo 1201-10; Miró to Jose de Gálvez, New Orleans, 1 Aug 1784, PL&C, reel 1: fo 1510-22.

influence. It served Indian interests well to have many trade partners. By doing this, Indian leaders hedged their own power within their communities through their personal association with the trade. It also secured the continuous flow of trade goods to which Indian societies had grown accustomed. Such a strategy enabled Indian nations to remain in negotiations with both Spain and the United States.¹⁵ Although Miró heralded the congresses as great diplomatic successes, the Indians did not understand their agreement with Spain to preclude bargaining with Americans. The drawing of new political boundaries did not consider the peoples already operating in the region and their alliances or trade and kinship connections with one another. Spanish officials promoted the idea that Indians ally with one nation, Spain or the United States.

In 1785, matters came to a head both on the Mississippi and at the negotiating table when the state of Georgia attempted to found Bourbon County at Natchez. In so doing, Georgia stirred up all parties with claim to the southeast: the Indians, Spain, and the United States. The incident brought to the fore the disagreement of Spain and the United States over their shared boundary. It also pointed once again to anti-Spanish networks of Anglos that stretched into the southeast.

In 1785, the state of Georgia asserted what it perceived as its borders when land speculators and the state assembly initiated the establishment of “Bourbon County,” claiming Spanish Natchez as a part of the state’s own territory. This incident revealed the willingness of some Chickasaw and Choctaw factions to trade with Americans, while it fostered a greater concern over American expansion among Indians and Spanish officials alike.¹⁶

¹⁵ O’Brien, “The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier,” in O’Brien ed., *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, 150-2.

¹⁶ Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, 77-8; Whitaker, *Spanish-American Frontier*, 55-57; Green, Long, Davenport, and Christmas to Miró, 8 Feb 1785, PPC, legajo 6: fo 49-50; Long and Christmas to Bouligny, 29 Aug 1785, PPC, legajo 2360: fo 153; Bouligny to Miró, 28 August 1785, Natchez, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 143-145; Long, Davenport, Christmas to Miró, 2 Sept 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 145-156; Long, Davenport, Christmas to Miró, 13 Oct 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 149-150; see also Edmund C. Burnett, “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786,” *AHR* 15.1 (Oct, 1909): 66-111, and 15.2(Jan, 1910): 297-353.

Supposedly at the request of English-speaking Natchez residents, Col. Thomas Green instigated the project in 1784. Green had served in the Continental Army under Washington before removing his family and slaves to the Natchez district in 1782 where he promptly distributed medals to nearby Indians, earning the wrath of Spanish officials. Green escaped to Georgia before he could be prosecuted. On February 3, 1785, the Georgia legislature established “Bourbon County,” which stretched from the Yazoo River to the thirty-first parallel and from the Chattahoochee to the Mississippi and thus included the entire Natchez District. Four commissioners traveled to Natchez to establish a county government there.¹⁷ Georgia’s actions challenged Spanish claim to the territory, asserted demands for free navigation of the Mississippi, ignored Choctaw and Chickasaw dominance in the area, and presented a crisis of authority for the young United States, which was not more than a confederacy by 1785. Green and the legislature anticipated that their actions would force Spain to relinquish the Natchez District, but they were mistaken. Both Miró and the United States government opposed this land grab.¹⁸ In contrast, some Indian towns welcomed the representatives of Georgia as potential trade partners.¹⁹ Spanish representatives and the new nation struggled to impose borders and sovereignty as Indians struggled to perpetuate the borderlands status of the Southeast.

¹⁷ Charles A. Weeks, *Paths to a Middle Ground: The Diplomacy of Natchez, Boukfourka, Nogales, and San Fernando de las Barrancas, 1791-1795* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 48; Din, “War Clouds on the Mississippi: Spain’s 1785 Crisis in West Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 60.1 (1981): 52; “Act Organizing Bourbon County, February 7, 1785” and “Instructions to the Justices of Bourbon County,” in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786” *AHR* 15.1 (1909):70-1, 71-3. The legislature also appointed men living in Natchez as justices of the peace, many of whom were related to Green by blood or marriage: Tacitus Galliard, Sutton Banks, William McIntosh, jr., Benjamin Farrar, Cato West, Thomas Marston Green, William Anderson, Adam Bingahman, and John Ellis.

¹⁸ Robert V. Haynes, *The Mississippi Territory and the Southwest Frontier, 1795-1817* (Lexington KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2010), 11. Interestingly, Green stayed at Natchez even after the failure of Bourbon County. This situation opens questions of loyalty to the new United States, the independence for which Green had fought.

¹⁹ O’Brien, “The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier,” in O’Brien ed., *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, 152.

Green's presence at Natchez in June of 1785 highlighted the jurisdictional problems and questions of sovereignty associated with multiple claims to the southeastern borderlands. Green and the other commissioners arrived at Natchez and demanded that Felipe Treviño, then commandant, surrender the fort, for "the garrison and the district of Natchez are within the limits of the said County of Bourbon." Green spread rumors that George Rogers Clark planned to lead an army from Kentucky against Louisiana if officials did not comply.²⁰ Green also dispatched William Davenport to Choctaw and Chickasaw towns to win Indians to the project.

In the meantime, Natchez residents took matters into their own hands, once again, as several men refused the commissions that Green offered them and as others led by Tacitus Gaillard, Richard Ellis, and Sutton Banks urged the Natchez populace to reject Georgia's claim to the district and also to advocate for independence from Spain:

The proceedings of Thomas Green in the state of Georgia are so alarming to the good people of this country that we think it necessary for the inhabitants to assemble in order to consider what means can be taken to prevent the ruin and destruction of this country if it should fall under the government of Georgia, which, we are ready to show, would result if this should occur. At the same time we declare our opinion to be, and it is founded upon reason and justice, that by exerting ourselves in time we may be able to completely undo this and become a separate state.²¹

Such a proposal for independence resonated among officials as another in a long string of threats to Spanish rule in the district. Earlier in 1785, the boisterous George Rapalje migrated to the district from New York and spoke publicly of his certainty that there would be a revolution in the district, that Tacitus Gaillard, Parker Caradine, Cato West, and Thomas Green would participate along with over forty others, that they had powder that had come to them through Indian country,

²⁰ Weeks, *Paths*, 48-9; Green to Treviño, Natchez, June 1785, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., "Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786" *AHR*, 5.1 (1909): 76, quotation.

²¹ Ellis, Gaillard, and Banks to the Citizens of Natchez, Natchez, June 1785, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., "Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786" *AHR*, 15.1 (1909): 77, quotation; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 54. Gaillard sold tobacco from Fausse Rivière to William Strother in the early 1780s before Strother returned to London. "Tacitus Gaillard vs. Guillermo Strother for a liquidation of accounts," 1 May 1782, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 18 (1935): 195-99.

and that they even had help from Indian towns. Allegedly, two loyal Choctaw messengers were prepared to alert Choctaw and Chickasaw towns associated with Alexander and James Fraser to come to their assistance. Rapalje confessed that he based his understanding of the impending revolution on the presence of a man named Elliot who had come to the district as a member of James Willing's party of raiders, whom he was certain had plans for such an event.²²

Miró recognized Indian networks as the best means to eradicate the challenge posed by Georgia representatives. After hearing of the scheme, Miró quickly contacted McGillivray to act as a diplomat to the Chickasaws with the goal of removing Davenport and any other Americans from Chickasaw towns. Thus, Miró attempted to limit the traders living and traveling among the Indians to those connected with the official Spanish-Indian trade. Miró also sent to Natchez gifts for the Indians, ammunition, and Spanish troops to bring its garrison to number 100 men.²³

The crisis unleashed competition for Indian allies; meanwhile, Miró sought assistance from the Caribbean theatre. On June 3, 1785, Pierre Favrot wrote Miró from Mobile that the Indian interpreter Simon Favre had arrived from the Choctaw nation to confirm that a large party of Virginians prepared to descend the Mississippi to Natchez. Paya Mataha also sent word to Mobile of American deputies distributing trade goods among his people: "This rumor is public; in all the nations[,] the Alibamons have already given some of their land to the insurgents who send merchandise to all parts."²⁴ Further, "he had refused to concede lands that had been asked of him by American deputies, without having wanted to admit the gifts that these men gave him,

²² "Juan Jordan vs. the Negress Venus," 14 Feb 1785, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ* 27 (1942): 855-927.

²³ Charles A. Weeks, "The Politics of Trade: Delavillebeuvre's 1787 Mission to the Choctaws and His Journal," *Journal of Mississippi History* 65.1 (2003): 49; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 54-6.

²⁴ Favrot to Miró, Mobile, 3 June 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 1038-40, quotation: "le Roy des Chikachas arrive depuis trois jours me fait la meme raport. Ce Bruit Est Publique; Dans toute les Naciones Les Alibamons ont Déjà accordée de leur terres aux insurgent que envoie des marchandises de toute Parte."

because he saw well that if he gave them lands...later they would impose their law.”²⁵ The details of the reports were false, but not unfathomable, for although the state of Virginia negotiated with Chickasaws resulting in a treaty with them at French Lick in 1783, numerous Virginians had begun streaming into the backcountry.²⁶ McGillivray wrote Miró with similar reports.²⁷ In response, Miró appealed to Bernardo de Gálvez, now viceroy of New Spain, asking for 1,000 men from Mexico and supplies. Lieutenant Vicente Folche, Miró’s nephew, traveled to Veracruz with the requests, and another request was made to Havana. Besides calling upon 100 men at Pensacola, readying gun-boats and galleys, Miró also demonstrated his taste for the tools of espionage by dispatching men as hunters to travel from New Orleans to St. Louis who would report on the sentiments of colonists, Indians, and Americans. The men and supplies he sent under Boulogny to Natchez in late June 1785 with orders that besides considering Green as a fugitive, Boulogny was also to arrest those calling for independence at Natchez. Miró awaited more reinforcements and supplies.²⁸

By July, Favrot reported that Choctaws were cooperating with the Americans. Two Georgia representatives Nicholas Long and Nathaniel Christmas negotiating with Chickasaws and Choctaws to gain their consent to the expansion of Georgia to the banks of the Mississippi. The commissioners made their way to Natchez with “the value of three thousand pesos of trade

²⁵ Favrot to Miró, Mobile, 3 June 1785, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786,” *AHR* 15.1 (1909): 75, quotation: “El mismo Gefe afiadio qe. havia rehusado conceder tierras que le han sido pedidas por Diputados Americanos, sin haber querido admitir los regalos que estos le presentaron, por que bien veia q que si les concedia tierras se fortificarian en ellas y depues les haian la ley.”

²⁶ Gibson, *The Chickasaws*, 73-6; Duval, *Native Ground*, 153-8; Robert S. Cotterill, “The Virginia-Chickasaw Treaty of 1783,” *Journal of Southern History* 8.4 (1942): 483-496; Kinnaird, “introduction,” in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xi-xiii.

²⁷ McGillivray to Miró, Pensacola, 16 May 1785, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786,” 73-4; Din, “War Clouds on the Mississippi,” 53.

²⁸ Din, “War Clouds on the Mississippi,” 54-8; Miró to Gálvez, 14 June 1785, and Miró to Bernardo de Gálvez, 20 June 1785, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786,” *AHR* 15.1 (1909):78-82, 91-5.

goods.”²⁹ The commissioners likely traveled through the Eastern Division Choctaws, but it was Western Division Choctaws who presented them with a noteworthy welcome. Franchimastabé of West Yazoo gladly worked with enemies of Spain. Because they had not actually engaged the Americans in war, “Franchimastabé and other chiefs viewed the new U.S. Government as a source of economic, political, and even spiritual aggrandizement, not as a former enemy confronted on the field of battle.”³⁰ According to Spanish reports, when Davenport reached Natchez from his expedition in Indian country, he was aboard a Choctaw boat.³¹ However, Choctaw government and decision making, much like Chickasaw and Creek, was town-based. While Choctaws at West Yazoo might agree to cooperate with the Americans, others might not.³²

Word from the disguised hunters reached New Orleans in July: there was no planned invasion of Natchez, good news for Miró on many counts. Gálvez had largely ignored Miró’s pleas for help. Refusing to send sizeable reinforcements from Mexico because of the summer’s heat and the dangers of hurricane season, which had proven deadly during the war, Gálvez only saw fit to send fifty soldiers, supplies, and 200,000 pesos. As Miró knew, Diego de Gardoqui at New York was trying to negotiate with the United States regarding the supposed shared border and the issue of free navigation of the Mississippi. Gálvez perceived that Gardoqui’s presence might be enough to suppress any American threat to the Natchez District.³³

To combat the threats represented in the Bourbon County crisis, Spanish officials employed networks of British loyalists, now allies, as spies and as informants. Miró turned to

²⁹ Burnett, ed., “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786,” *AHR*, 15.2 (Jan, 1910): 301, quotation “valor de tres mil pesos de Mercaderias finas de trato.”

³⁰ O’Brien, “The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered,” 152.

³¹ Bouligny to Miró, 24 July 1785, and Miró to O’Neil, 2 Aug 1785, in Burnett, ed., “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786,” *AHR* 15. 2 (1910): 301, quotation, 318; Din, “War Clouds on the Mississippi,” 52; O’Brien, “The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered,” 44-5.

³² Favrot to Miró, Mobile, 6 July 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 1059-60.

³³ Din, “War Clouds on the Mississippi,” 57-9.

the old trouble-maker Anthony Hutchins to gather intelligence on the plans of the Bourbon County commissioners and of the Natchez residents who supported breaking from Spain. Similarly, Treviño sent another loyalist, Stephen Hayward, to ascertain the truthfulness of reports of armed Americans preparing to descend upon Natchez. By the end of July, Ellis, Gaillard, and Banks were in Bouligny's custody. Bouligny also dispatched Hayward and Chacheré to gather intelligence on American settlements and military strength west of the Appalachians.³⁴

In August, Green fled to the Chickasaws, perhaps fearful of prosecution, and Christmas and Long finally reached Natchez from their journey through Indian towns. Together with Davenport, they wrote Miró of American claim to the lands south of the Ohio to the thirty-first parallel. Miró countered that the territory belonged to Spain. Meanwhile, the arrival of supplies from Mexico and reinforcements from Cuba projected Spanish strength—comparatively in the absence of real American force—in the Lower Mississippi and demonstrated Spanish willingness to defend the territory that it claimed. Although hesitant earlier to send reinforcements, Gálvez wrote Miró in August that the Georgia commissioners must be dealt with harshly and instructed him to prosecute Green in particular. Long, Christmas, and Davenport left Natchez by the close of 1785 after several heated exchanges with Miró.³⁵ Although the issue was not resolved in the Bourbon County dispute, Spain and its agents in Louisiana overcame the threat posed by Georgia in this early crisis. The conflict to lay political boundaries over the Southeast and the lands stretching to the banks of the Mississippi would continue for another decade.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60-62; Bouligny to Miró, 13 Nov 1785, in Burnett, "Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786," *AHR* 15. 2 (1910): 347-48; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 66.

³⁵ Miró to Bernardo de Gálvez, Sept 1785, Green to Bledsoe, 10 Sept 1785, and Bernardo de Gálvez to Miró, 22 Sept 1785, Long, Davenport, and Christmas to Miró, Oct 13 1785, Amity Hall [Natchez], and Miró to Long, Davenport, and Christmas, 10 Nov 1785, in Burnett, ed., "Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786," *AHR* 15.2 (1910): 333-4, 334-5, 337-9, 339-40, 342-3; Miró to Long, Davenport, and Christmas, New Orleans, 7 Sept 1785, Briscoe Center, Parsons Collection, Box 3E481: folder 35; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 67-74.

News of the Bourbon County crisis only reached New York in September of 1785. Although Congress denounced Green's actions and the attempt of the state of Georgia to establish Bourbon County John Jay and Diego de Gardoqui recognized that they had reached a diplomatic impasse. Congress held that the Treaty of Versailles in 1783 had guaranteed its rights to the lands south of the Ohio all the way to the thirty-first parallel, but Gardoqui argued that by virtue of Gálvez's conquests much of the land was actually under Spanish domain.³⁶ The Bourbon County crisis brought to the surface arguments over the Spanish-American southeastern boundary and forced Gardoqui and Jay to realize that they could not resolve the border dispute. The Southeast was a veritable borderlands, a territory claimed by multiple nations.

In spite of Spanish success in retaining Natchez in this instance, the incident revealed that networks linking the district to Choctaw and Chickasaw towns remained and that these ties might prove challenging for Spain to sever. In a moment reminiscent of the Natchez Rebellion, those involved with the scheme took advantage of the borderlands conditions at Natchez by crossing back and forth between the Spanish settlements and Indian towns, even as they proposed implementing a fixed political border. From Chickasaw and Choctaw towns, many maintained personal connections with Natchez and continued to spread rumors of a coming American invasion of Natchez. Ellis, Gaillard, and Banks received mild sentences: Ellis and Banks were fined, Banks was to serve three months in prison, but Gaillard was banished. Gaillard disappeared before he could be sent to Pointe Coupée where Miró intended to hold him until Gálvez agreed to his banishment from Louisiana. Like Green and like many of the participants in the Natchez Rebellion only a few years earlier, Gaillard fled the settlement, and with his son

³⁶ Bernardo de Gálvez wrote Gardoqui in July, but the letter went first to Philadelphia before being redirected to New York where the United State Congress had moved. Gálvez to Gardoqui, 24 July 1785, in Burnett, ed., "Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786," *AHR* 15.1 (1909): 110-1; Burnett, "Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786," *AHR* 15.2 (1910): 298-9; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 70-1.

and a few slaves lived on the outskirts of Natchez, eluding Bouligny's search parties. When they left Natchez, Long, Christmas, and Davenport went first to the Choctaws. Soon, Davenport became an American agent to the Chickasaws and to the Choctaws. Although Congress repudiated the Georgia commissioners, it did not shy from employing those experienced in Southeastern Indian affairs in the contest for the Southeast.³⁷ According to one rumor, Davenport would lead a party of Indians to take Natchez in the summer of 1786 where a few at least hoped "to see the American Collors flying in Natchez fort."³⁸ Davenport's wife continued to live at Natchez and obtained a Spanish land grant there. Green's sons and extended family also remained at Natchez where Green eventually returned in 1789 after some years interfering in Cherokee and Creek relations. One of the traders who traveled with Davenport to Natchez was a man by the name of John Woods who had already established his family at Natchez. He was considered a "fugitive" by Spanish officials in late 1784 perhaps while he was collaborating on the Bourbon County scheme. His wife Margaret remained in Natchez for most of the next few years where she was caught helping runaway slave families. Bouligny briefly held Wood under arrest before he managed to escape and become a fugitive.³⁹ Try as they might, Spanish officials from the time of Delavillebeuvre in 1781 to the end of the Spanish period could not extinguish the flow of persons and communication between Natchez society and the Indian towns.⁴⁰

³⁷ Davenport to the Governor of Georgia, 27 March 1786, and Davenport to the Governor of Georgia, Chickasaw Nation, 22 May 1786, in Burnett, ed., "Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786," *AHR* 15.2 (1910): 350-1, 351-2; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 73-5.

³⁸ D. Smith to Col. Gillyard, Natchez, 25 July 1786, Natchez Trace Collection Provincial and Territorial Records, 1759-1813, Box 2E985, Natchez 1786; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 73, 75.

³⁹ Treviño, Passport for the Wife of John Woods, Natchez, 13 Nov 1784, Natchez Trace Collection Provincial and Territorial Records, 1759-1813, Box 2E985, Natchez 1783-1785, quotation; Stephen Minor to Grand Pré, Natchez, 3 June 1786, Natchez Trace Collection, Box 2E985, Natchez 1786; Abraham Mayes to Grand Pré, Coles Creek, 7 July 1786, Natchez Trace Collection, Box 2E985, Natchez 1786; Din, *Bouligny*, 148; Weeks, *Paths*, 49.

⁴⁰ Din, *Bouligny*, 147-149. D. Smith to Col. Gillyard, Natchez, 25 July 1786, Natchez Trace Collection Provincial and Territorial Records, 1759-1813, Box 2E985, Natchez 1786; Din, "War Clouds on the Mississippi," 73, 75.

Although the Bourbon County disturbance settled peacefully, the incident revealed that the Spanish claim to the Southeast remained precarious and that it would be more difficult to maintain reliable Indian alliances than Spain initially anticipated. Achieving support from all of the Chickasaw and Choctaw towns was more complicated than securing the signature of a single European nation. Additionally, Spanish officials clearly recognized a pan-Anglo-American threat to their borderlands territory—and the Georgia commissioners built up the idea of such a threat when they spread rumors of George Rogers Clark’s impending attack with a force of Kentuckians.⁴¹ Although this incident revealed the willingness of some Chickasaw and Choctaw factions to trade with Americans, it also highlighted divisions within Indian nations.⁴²

Alliances signified by trade relations offered Choctaws and Chickasaws the opportunity to negotiate among opposing powers and to solidify for themselves greater power and stability within each Indian town through access to trade goods.⁴³ After evading Spanish officials, John Wood lived among the Western Division Choctaws, from whom he claimed he received a sizeable tract of land. Wood represented the American government among the Choctaws and extended to them the invitation to travel to a meeting at Hopewell in South Carolina.⁴⁴ In 1785, Taboca, who had been one of the Choctaw representatives in Mobile the previous year, traveled with representatives from all three Choctaw divisions to the meeting with Americans at Hopewell. Similarly, Chickasaw leaders also journeyed to Hopewell the following year. Securing trade goods and negotiating nearly simultaneously with the Americans—be they

⁴¹ Long, Davenport, and Christmas to Governor Elbert, Natchez, 13 Sept 1785, in Burnett, ed., “Papers Relating to Bourbon County, Georgia, 1785-1786,” *AHR* 15.2 (1910): 335-7, quotation; Din, *Boulogny*, 155.

⁴² Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, 77-8; Whitaker, *Spanish-American Frontier*, 55-57; Green, Long, Davenport, and Christmas to Miró, 8 Feb 1785, PPC, legajo 6: folio 49-50; Long and Christmas to Boulogny, 29 Aug 1785, PPC, legajo 2360: fo 153; Boulogny to Miró, Natchez, 28 August 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 143-145; Long, Davenport, Christmas to Miró, 2 Sept 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 145-156; Long, Davenport, Christmas to Miró, 13 Oct 1785, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 149-150.

⁴³ Greg O'Brien, “The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered,” 45.

⁴⁴ Weeks, *Paths to a Middle Ground*, 49.

representatives of individual states or of the United States—and with the Spanish went hand in hand for many Indians. Franchimastabé reported multiple envoys to West Yazoo during the summer of 1786. Unlike the Spanish who intended that alliances with the different Indian nations would be exclusive of the United States, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks all recognized that they might reap advantage by trading with both the United States and Spain.⁴⁵

With the Bourbon County crisis, the degree to which the Southeast was a contested territory became apparent at the international as well as the local level. The incident forced Jay and Gardoqui to recognize the diplomatic impasse in which the United States and Spain found themselves. It also highlighted for Miró just how easy it was for Americans associated with state governments or otherwise to infiltrate territory and settlements that Spain claimed. The incident also revealed some of the challenges facing the early United States, such as sovereignty and divisions between a government in New York and state governments far off. Indians figured at the center of conflict. Miró recognized this, and he turned first to them in his efforts to route the Georgian trouble-makers. For Indians of the Southeast, the incident suggested a multiplicity of diplomatic and trade partners and pointed out to some the eagerness of Americans for territorial expansion and encroachment on Indian lands.

To Grow the Colony

As it hoped to counter American westward migration and demands for navigation of the Mississippi River, Spain tried strengthening its presence in Louisiana and the Floridas. Many of Louisiana's colonists cooperated with Spanish projects directed toward growing the colony,

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the Choctaw meeting at Hopewell, see Greg O'Brien, "The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered," 39-72; Parolle Ditte aux Yazoux le 19 Mars 1787, PPC, legajo 200: fo 1030-1.

especially as they related to the expansion of the slave trade and the expansion of tobacco production. With the cooperation of colonists, such projects easily took hold in Louisiana.

In the years immediately following the war, three of the ways that Spain attempted to develop Louisiana were Atlantic in scope. Spain was still trying to populate Louisiana with loyal colonists. In 1785, this goal took the form of a project to settle 1,600 Acadians from France in Louisiana. The migration of the Acadians from France proved one of the happier chapters in their experience of diaspora. Spain also set about trying to tie Louisiana to its empire once again through promoting the cultivation of tobacco. Finally, to bolster the slave population, Spain encouraged the renewal of the Atlantic slave-trade to Louisiana. These calculated imperial projects all had unanticipated results that Spain would have to contend with in the future.

The transportation and settlement of the Acadians was financed by the Crown and grew out of the overlapping interests of Spain in expanding the population of loyal colonists and of the Acadians who largely wanted to join others already living in Louisiana. By 1765, more than 3,000 of the Acadians dispersed in the Grand Dérangement had taken refuge in the port cities of France where most were unable to fit into any economic or social niche.⁴⁶ Acadians in France had been interested in migrating to Louisiana at least since 1766.⁴⁷ The removal of the 1,596 Acadians to Louisiana in 1785 was the result of the work of three men in particular: the Count de Aranda who wanted to improve Spanish defenses, Henri Peyroux de la Coudrenière who hoped

⁴⁶ Brasseaux, "Scattered to the Wind," 36-7; Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 55-56; Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, 88. Such circumstances increased Acadian cultural isolation and intensified a sense of group identity. The French government hoped to integrate the Acadians into the French economy. Plans for assembling the Acadians in settlements off the coast of Brittany, on estates in Poitou, and in Corsica all failed. Largely disillusioned, many Acadians became impoverished city-dwellers, supported at least in part by the royal dole.

⁴⁷ Mouhot, "Une Ultime Revenante," 125 quotation; Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 60. In September 1766, Jean-Baptiste Semer, one of the Acadians who settled in the Attakapas District, wrote his father in France, Germain Semer, with a description of the bounty of the land and proposed that the family reunite in Louisiana. Germain Semer contacted the Minister of Marine, Praslin, seeking "permission to go with his family to join his son," but he refused because France had transferred Louisiana to Spain.

to gain prestige through an appointment, and Acadian cobbler Olivier Terriot. Spain supported the Acadians from the time that they reached the port of Nantes and paid for the cost of transportation, and aid in Louisiana until they were self-sufficient.⁴⁸ Seven mercantile vessels contracted by Spain left France between May and October 1785.⁴⁹

Acadians in Louisiana awaited the arrival of their compatriots after receiving letters from their families in France. At LaFourche, Judice saw “these letters that the Acadians have received from France, from their friends.” One such letter survived laundering, and at least another reached the Attakapas District.⁵⁰

Spanish management of the mass migration of 1785 demonstrated that officials had learned from Ulloa’s experience with Acadian settlement. Navarro remembered the opposition of the Acadians to earlier Spanish settlement policy. In 1785, he allowed the Acadians to choose their own home-sites. The Spanish provided the Acadians with housing and hospital care, much needed as, like many of their predecessors, these seven shiploads of Acadians were stricken with smallpox following the Atlantic crossing. According to Navarro’s plan, the Acadians belonging to this enormous influx of 1785 settled alongside already established Acadians. The Acadians traveled to their new settlements where other Acadian families took them in until they could build homes for themselves. Those already living in the colony facilitated speedier and more

⁴⁸ Although advised to keep Peyroux’s plan a secret because Louis XVI had not yet approved of the project, the Acadians instead made the plan known to local officials, which created a stir among the creditors of debt-burdened Acadians. In March 1784, Louis XVI agreed to the project. The Acadians petitioned France’s Finance and Foreign Affairs Minister for permission to go to Louisiana. They received a second endorsement from the French king, who proposed even to pay off Acadian debts. Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 68-72; Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, 97-106. As an Acadian himself, Terriot had an important role. On August 1, 1784, he began registering Acadians to migrate to Louisiana. The volunteers comprised approximately 70% of the Acadians in France.

⁴⁹ Richard E. Chandler, “A Shipping Contract: Spain Brings Acadians to Louisiana,” *Louisiana Review*, 8(1979), 75. Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 72; Miró, New Orleans, 7 Feb 1786, PPC, legajo 2360: fo 142. *Le Bon Papa*, *La Bergère*, *Le Beaumont*, *Le Saint Rémi*, *La Amistage*, *La Villa de Arcangel*, and *La Caroline* were the ships.

⁵⁰ Judice to Miró, 19 Dec 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 359-60, quotation: “des lettres que les acadiens on Recûe de France, de leurs amies.”

efficient transition for the incoming Acadians, with most well established by 1788.⁵¹ Not only did the endurance of Acadian culture and kinship ties affect this last influx of settlement, but it also informed Spanish policy at the imperial level and at the level of implementation.

Although the settlement of the Acadians ran fairly smoothly, it took the new colonists longer to become self-sufficient than administrators would have liked. Many Acadians from France, approximately 855, settled in the Lafourche district because it offered much opportunity to settle among other Acadians. Over 300 settled along the Mississippi at Manchac and Baton Rouge.⁵² Meanwhile, in keeping with the idea that farming families furthered stability, the commandant of Rapides, Gaignard, suggested his post as an excellent place to settle the Acadians.⁵³ Anselm Blanchard reported in August that he had distributed land to eight Acadian families at Bayougula where ten to twelve families were housed in Mr. Monsanto's home.⁵⁴ Blanchard was still distributing land and supplies to Acadians the following February at Thompson Creek.⁵⁵ From the Attakapas, DeClouet wrote, "the new Acadians arrive daily."⁵⁶ Acadian reunification with family proved much easier in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts where more land was available to be granted.⁵⁷ Besides the initial toll of smallpox on the migrating Acadians, once dispersed to the various Louisiana outposts, the Acadians continued to suffer from disease and from the effects of flooding in those outposts, both of which challenges delayed the achievement of self-sufficiency in the colony.⁵⁸

⁵¹ Brasseaux, *New Acadia*, 111-112.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 109; Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians*, 520-523; New Orleans, Miró, 7 Feb 1786, PPC, legajo 2360: fo 140-1.

⁵³ Gaignard to Miró, Rapides, 15 Sept 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 290-1.

⁵⁴ Anselm Blanchard to Miró, 28 Aug 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 938-9.

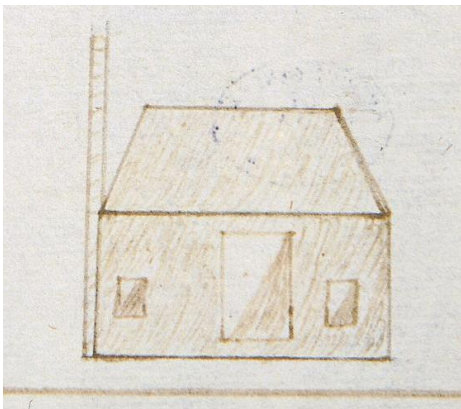
⁵⁵ Anselm Blanchard to Miró, Thompson Creek "Bayou Tomson," 20 Feb 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 741-2.

⁵⁶ DeClouet to Miró, 16 Jan 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 112, quotation: "Les acadiens nouveau arrivat journallement."

⁵⁷ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 108.

⁵⁸ Anselm Blanchard to Miró, 28 Aug 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 938-9; Blanchard to Miró, Thompson Creek, 29 June 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 746-7; Blanchard to Miró, Thompson Creek, 4 Nov 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 753-4;

Miró and Navarro's settlement policy successfully combined Spanish defense interests and Acadian settlement selection interests. Such expenditure on assisting a group of colonists migrate to Louisiana set a precedent that colonists and schemers invoked afterwards as they sought to take advantage of Spain's eagerness for loyal colonists to populate its border colonies. Although the project was expensive, it did also reflect the willingness of Louisiana inhabitants to cooperate with this particular settlement plan as orchestrated by the Spanish government, likely because Navarro and others took earlier experiences and Acadian interests into consideration.



A 1782 depiction of a home at Manchac likely inhabited by an Acadian or Isleño family. "Plano de un terreno con tres casas entre el Mississippi y el Manchac," 23 Jan 1782, Pares, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Florida_Louisiana, 93.

The slave trade to the Lower Mississippi dwindled during the American Revolution, but merchants in the crescent city renewed ties to the Atlantic slave trade. An outgrowth of more favorable conditions for shipping in the Circum-Caribbean, the number of ships entering New Orleans with human chattel jumped dramatically during the 1780s.⁵⁹ Spanish imperial policy encouraged this escalation. French and especially British slave trade networks converged at New Orleans. In 1782, Spain tried to grow Louisiana by opening trade once again between New Orleans and French ports. Additionally, Spain once again indicated its plans to increase the slave population of the Lower Mississippi when, also in 1782, a royal cedula authorized the

Miró to DeClouet, New Orleans, 27 Jan 1787, PPC, legajo 200: fo 141; Francisco Rivas and Anselmo Blanchard, New Orleans, 3 Jan 1787, PPC, legajo 4B, reel 2: fo 81.

⁵⁹ LeGlaunec, "A Directory of Ships with Slave Cargoes, Louisiana, 1772-1808," *LH* 46.2 (2005):216.

import of slaves duty-free to the port of New Orleans.⁶⁰ Louisiana continued to see a growth of its slave population, a goal shared by Spanish policy-makers, local merchants, and aspiring planters. The re-Africanization of the slave population was also underway, an un-imagined consequence of the forced migration.

British slave trade networks were the primary source for slaves from 1782 to 1788, with over 2,700 slaves reaching Louisiana from Jamaica alone. Well over half of the slave-ships that reached New Orleans from 1783 to 1787 came from Jamaica, with fewer ships having cleared from Saint Domingue and Martinique. Jamaica was a free port and primary entrepôt for negros bozales transported by the British Atlantic slave trade. During this time, Louisiana was a destination of consequence for slave traders in Jamaica, with one-fifth re-exported slaves from Kingston bound for Louisiana in 1785, one fourth in 1786, and greater than one half in 1787.⁶¹ In 1786, Daniel Clark, Jr. received a cargo of 156 persons aboard the *Nueva Orleans* from Jamaica. He received at least one slave ship that had stopped at Saint Domingue and Jamaica in both 1787 and 1788.⁶² The burst of slave trading at New Orleans and from there to its

⁶⁰ Chambers, "Slave Trade Merchants of Spanish New Orleans, 1763-1803," 337; Chambers notes that "Compared to the Carolina Low country (150,000 landed) and the Chesapeake (85,000 landed), the transatlantic slave trade to Spanish Louisiana was relatively small (perhaps 50,000). Indeed, before 1810, the slave population of Louisiana (35,000) remained relatively small compared to Virginia (392,500) and South Carolina (196,000). However, like the other two in the eighteenth century, the overall small slave population in Spanish Louisiana meant that in the era of the slave trade waves of new Africans had a disproportionate influence on the cultural geography of the region."(341)

⁶¹ LeGlaunec, "A Directory of Ships with Slave Cargoes, Louisiana, 1772-1808," 216-219; LeGlaunec, "Slave Migrations in Spanish and Early American Louisiana: New Sources and New Estimates," *LH* 46.2 (2005):188-92. For a comparative discussion of the inter-colonial migration of slaves from the Caribbean, see also Gregory E. O'Malley, "Beyond the Middle Passage: Slave Migration from the Caribbean to North America, 1619-1807," *WMQ*, 66.1 (2009): 125-172. See also, Sheridan, "Slave trade to Jamaica, 1702-1808," in Higman, ed., *Trade, Government and Society in Caribbean History 1700-1808* (1983). For a discussion of the British slave trade to Jamaica in the late eighteenth century with an emphasis on statistical data, see also Herbert Klein, "The English Slave Trade to Jamaica, 1782-1808," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 31.1 (1978): 25-45.

⁶² Chambers, "Slave Trade Merchants of Spanish New Orleans," 339-40. Chambers considers Clark among "The first tier of principal merchants" who were "significant importers, who sold 100 or more slaves and probably dominated the import market."

hinterlands during the 1780s exposed continuity with the pre-war years when British trade networks bore slaves to the Lower Mississippi Valley.

The slave trade at Pointe Coupée reflected the networks involved in the slave trade, the re-Africanization of the slave population, and the renewal of the trade during the 1780s. Although the post's official records do not reflect the vibrant contraband of the region, before 1783, they suggest that trade at the post consisted of small sales of slaves by one habitant to another, retrocessions, successions, and the like. In 1783, there was a marked shift in the records towards sales through sanctioned slave-trading merchant firms at New Orleans. For example, after the revolution, David Ross went into business with George Proffit and sold slaves at Pointe Coupée. By 1784, Francis Poussett traded slaves on the river from New Orleans. In 1784, he acted on behalf of the Kingston firm of Thompson & Campbell to collect debts owed to them by the New Orleans firm of Marmillion & Mercier for slaves they had sent to Louisiana.⁶³ Evan Jones and Benjamin Monsanto, the youngest of the Monsanto brothers, also resumed trading in human cargo.⁶⁴

New Orleans merchants dealing in the slave trade fell into three categories, and the market in slaves in Spanish Louisiana in the 1780s and 1790s was probably “a diversified or decentralized market, or, perhaps one with a clear distinction between importers, wholesalers, and retailers.” Importers, wholesalers, and retailers each transacted approximately one third of recorded slave sales in New Orleans during these decades. Importers included Daniel Clark, Jr.,

⁶³ “Francisco Pousset vs. Francisco Marmillon,” 3 March 1784, Laura Porteous trans., *SPJR, LHQ 23* (1938): 297-304. Chambers counted Proffitt and Ross among the “second tier” of slave merchants in New Orleans: “The second tier, basically wholesalers, were major merchants who invested significantly in the trade (selling between 40 and 99 slaves recorded in these years), but who also bought slaves to sell. There were 19 such wholesalers who also account for 34% of the sample, and include four trading firms (Dejean & Lastrapes, Proffit & Ross, Vienne & Hamelin, and Vivant & Company).” Chambers, “Slave Trade Merchants of Spanish New Orleans,” 340.

⁶⁴ Chambers, “Slave Trade Merchants of Spanish New Orleans,” 338; DeVille, *Slaves and Masters of Pointe Coupee: A calendar of Civil Records, 1762-1803* (Ville Platte, LA, 1988), 9-14. The Ross brothers had been operating trade in slave and merchandise out of Jamaica since the 1760s. See Chapter 1.

the Beauregard family, and Oliver Pollock after his return to New Orleans in 1788. The venture of Ross & Proffit fell among wholesalers.⁶⁵

The slaves transported to Pointe Coupée were also more frequently described as “negros bozales” or “negres brutes” than slaves sold in earlier years. Charles LaChappelle sold negros bozales who landed in New Orleans during the summer of 1783. Multiple times that year planter Guillaume André purchased bozales slaves from LaChappelle, three on June 17, 1783, another on August 16, and two others on September 14. At the same time, slaves with Christian names and without the bozales designation were also sold by LaChappelle at Pointe Coupée, Cesar to Joseph Patin, Marie to Pierre Laborde, and William to Baptiste Porche. Ross and Proffit also sold negros bozales at Pointe Coupée, forty to Claude Trenonay in October of 1785. Interestingly, and perhaps indicative of the re-exporting of slaves from Jamaica during the eighteenth century, most of the slaves whose names are recorded as being sold during the 1780s had English names, Charles, Toby, Ned, Charlotte. And in 1788, the *Catherine* arrived at New Orleans bearing slaves from Africa, whose nationalities were recorded as Congo and Thiamba. From the vessel *La Lousianne*, which landed at New Orleans also in 1788, slaves identified as Nago. Other slaves probably of Senegambian origins sold by LaChappelle that December were described as Bambara, Chianba, Poulard, and Maninga. Although the names of most negros bozales were not recorded, some do remain, such as the Congo woman Nanci sold to Pointe Coupée planter Decoux in 1788. The nationalities of the slaves sold at posts along the Mississippi were diverse, representing many African nations, as well as Creoles.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Chambers, “Slave Trade Merchants of Spanish New Orleans,” 340.

⁶⁶ LeGlaunec, “A Directory of Ships with Slave Cargoes, Louisiana, 1772-1808,” 216-219; LeGlaunec, “Slave Migrations,” 188-90; DeVille, *Slaves and Masters of Pointe Coupee, Louisiana*, 9-14.

The slave population of the Lower Mississippi grew significantly during the 1780s, in part fostered by Spanish policy. The renewal of connections with New Orleans of British slave traders and merchants contributed significantly to the escalation of the slave trade in the region. Although earlier considered a force to be stamped out because of the challenge they represented, British trade networks became part of Spain's efforts to solidify its hold on the Lower Mississippi in the years immediately following the American Revolution.

In Louisiana, Spain continued to concern itself with creating an economy based on slave labor. Spanish officials had dabbled in promoting tobacco production in Louisiana for some time. The implementation of Spanish commercial policy under Ulloa and O'Reilly had first indicated that Louisiana tobacco would have no market in the Iberian Atlantic. Then, under Unzaga, a premature gesture had been made for Louisiana to supply the *renta* in Mexico. In 1777, Bernardo de Gálvez raised the hopes of Louisiana colonists when he announced that Charles III had agreed again to purchase Louisiana tobacco for the *renta*.⁶⁷

During the 1780s, the tobacco industry finally boomed in Louisiana. After being assigned the task of promoting the tobacco industry in 1781, Navarro heralded the newly conquered Natchez District as capable of producing 40,000 pounds annually. He corresponded with the commandants of Louisiana's posts, telling them to announce the royal decision to buy Louisiana tobacco. And by 1786, a snuff factory was to be opened in Seville, providing another market. Encouraged by Navarro and remembering the promise of Gálvez, Louisiana colonists and planters took on considerable debt in order to expand the cultivation of tobacco. That year, Louisiana produced one million pounds of tobacco. This was up from 138,808 pounds in 1779.

⁶⁷ Coutts, "Boom and Bust," 289-91; Holmes, "Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors of Louisiana," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 42.4 (1962), 530.

In 1787, Louisiana produced 810,684 pounds and 998, 117 in 1788. Much of which was grown at the Attakapas, Opelousas, Pointe Coupée, Natchitoches, and Natchez.⁶⁸

However, complications soon developed between imperial standards and local practices in the shipping of tobacco that would eventually compromise the market for Louisiana tobacco in the empire. Complaints emerged in Veracruz over Louisiana's many methods for shipping tobacco because most of these methods limited the tobacco's use at the factory. While the *renta* preferred that it be bundled with palm cords, as it was in New Spain for the tobacco factories, Louisiana and Natchez tobacco arrived in Mexico rolled into andullos, packed loose, pressed, and formed into large hogsheads, often depending on which post it had been grown. In 1783 attempt to bring Louisiana into conformity with other tobacco producing locales, the *renta* sent natives of Córdoba and Orizaba, Manuel Hernandez, José Antonio Castillo, José Arzava and Ysidro Guzman, to New Orleans to instruct Louisiana inhabitants on the proper storing and shipping of tobacco. Navarro dispersed these men throughout the colony and offered additional monetary incentive to colonists who conformed to the standards. The effort ineffective except at Opelousas. The barrels and cases that the *renta* desired the tobacco to be shipped in were not conducive to the frontier opportunities for storage, and modes of transportation. Navarro's correspondents in New Spain finally conceded that Louisiana tobacco might be shipped in rolls or loose. More challenges emerged with Seville, however. While the rolls used at Natchitoches were found to store the tobacco well enough, tobacco shipped in the form of hogsheads particular to Natchez and the other methods of Louisiana packaging of tobacco had decomposed before reaching Spain. When Seville sent instructions for the preferred mode of processing and shipping of tobacco, colonists were resistant to conforming to these standards as well.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Coutts, "Boom and Bust," 291-93; Holmes, "Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors of Louisiana," 531.

⁶⁹ Coutts, "Boom and Bust," 293-306; Holmes, *Gayoso*, 90-97.

Matters came to a head in 1790-1791. The arrival of 2.5 million pounds of tobacco exported out of New Orleans created a surplus at Seville in 1789. As tobacco planters of the Lower Mississippi Valley looked eagerly to the Iberian market and plunged farther into debt, a special *junta* was convoked to address the surplus. It decided that the amount of Louisiana tobacco purchased would fall, first to 2 million pounds for 1790 and then to a mere 40,000 in 1791. By this time, the *renta* had decided not to purchase any more tobacco out of New Orleans. The economic ramifications of these decisions echoed into the 1790s.⁷⁰

As Spain worked to increase the population of Louisiana and to find a viable export crop for the colony, it also set into motion far-reaching and unanticipated side-effects of the specific projects it implemented during the 1780s. The migration of Acadians proved expensive. The forced migration of slaves during this decade had unforeseen consequences in the beginning of the re-Africanization of the slave population. In Spain's attempt to bring Louisiana more fully into the Iberian Atlantic economy, inhabitants of Louisiana and West Florida drastically expanded the production of tobacco. For a few brief years, they supplied factories in Mexico and at Seville, but they soon deemed their investment in tobacco production stymied once again by imperial regulations. The destruction of the market for tobacco in the Iberian Atlantic embittered colonists who had fallen far into debt.

The Case of Philippe

On June 12, 1785, Philippe, a free black man, disappeared from his home at LaFourche. Originally from Guinea, Philippe was now about thirty and unmarried. He had lived at LaFourche after obtaining his freedom from the Capuchin Father Archange Rogosso. In February 1785,

⁷⁰ Coutts, "Boom and Bust," 306-8. Natchez alone produced over 1.4 million pounds of tobacco in 1789 and Pointe Coupée neared 80,000 pounds.

Philippe had been convicted of theft in New Orleans and sentenced to a year of work at the fort. He managed to evade his sentence and return to Lafourche. After his disappearance in June, the post commandant Louis Judice sold Philippe's belongings, as was customary after a colonist absconded.⁷¹ The story of Philippe illuminates the conflicts between those sustaining and adapting borderland practices and agents of empire attempting to impose "le bon ordre" on the colony. Local, personal and trade networks posed great challenges for policy designed to eradicate maroon communities and to monitor the movement of peoples and goods, even as some groups cooperated with the regime because of shared interests in regulating the slave society.

By November, Philippe returned to the LaFourche District as a fugitive from justice and leader of a band of maroons mostly from the German Coast and the LaFourche District rumored to be en route to the Chickasaws. Now one of the more prominent landowners at LaFourche, Evan Jones complained that a "band of thieves having at their head the said Philippe" was plaguing the countryside. Judice described the community as "a fairly large troop of maroons."⁷²

Living in cabins and huts behind the farms and plantations of the LaFourche District, the maroons killed livestock and stole from the habitants. The night of November 12, 1785, Paul Melanson lost two guns, powder, and a good horse to them.⁷³ They killed cattle and hid away

⁷¹ "Certified Copy of the Proceedings prosecuted by Miguel Hero against the free negro, Felipe, for having forced the door of his room, broken open his chests and robbed him of some of his clothes," 8 feb 1785, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 26 (1943): 868-73; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 23 june 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 402-3. It was customary for priests in Louisiana from French times forward to own slaves. The Capuchins at New Orleans owned slaves. Père Louis Grummeau who served on and off again at the Attakapas post where he was often in conflict with Acadian and Creole colonists alike. Similarly, Father Archangel Roggoso who served at the German Coast and at Ascension in Lafourche owned slaves. At his death, he freed his slaves, including a black slave named Philippe. DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez, Attakapas, 3 oct 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 238-9; Fr. Louis Grummeau to Miró, Attakapas, 29 jan 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 161-2; DeClouet, "Inventory of Deceased Rev. Father Louis Marie Grumeau, Curé of the Post," Attakapas, 1 aug 1783, John Mills Collection, Collection 6, Louisiana Room, UL-L, folder 3.

⁷² Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 12 nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 455-58: quotation, "bande de voleur ayant a leurs teste le dit Philippe... une assez grande troupe de marrons;" Bradley, "Evan Jones," in *Interim Appointment*, 374-388. Jones purchased land at LaFourche during the American Revolution in 1780.

⁷³ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 12 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 455-58; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 14 and 15 november 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 459-62.

the meat.⁷⁴ Some of the more valuable loot they buried at night below the Church of the Ascension and below the tombs of Antoine Dauterive and a deceased Acadian named LeBlanc.⁷⁵ The goods had been stolen from colonists regardless of skin color. Simon, another free black of the LaFourche, claimed a gun, clothing, and other goods found in the cache to be his own.⁷⁶

Judice initiated a local response. To counteract Philipe and his followers, habitants were instructed to arm themselves and stop Philipe. He offered a reward for Philipe taken “dead or alive, promising to the whites, [Indians], or blacks 30 piastres for the head of Philipe and 20 for each of the others, if they are not taken alive.”⁷⁷ Colonists formed search parties. A captain in the militia and cabaret owner, Paul Forest with three men found Philipe with three maroons and a black slave woman, but Philipe and a maroon named Pirame managed to escape. They eluded authorities for several days, “today in one place, tomorrow in another.”⁷⁸ Within the next two days, Judice called together two detachments of militia to search for the cabins of Philipe’s community situated at the periphery of the settlement’s farms, behind the slave cabins, near the cypress swamps. Judice issued an alarm to St. Maxent, now commandant at Galveztown, distressed that “Philipe has formed a very numerous company of blacks.”⁷⁹ And by November 15, Judice’s detachment “*blanc, rouge, et noir*” combed the settlement for signs of Philipe. But Philipe and his band made their way to the lower part of the settlement, near the property of

⁷⁴ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 22 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 469-70.

⁷⁵ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 22 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 469-70. For more on Dauterive, see chapter 1. He was a former French military officer who received several large tracts of land throughout the colony. He worked with the first Acadians in Louisiana to help them set up farms and herd cattle.

⁷⁶ Miró to Judice, New Orleans, 23 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 475.

⁷⁷ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 12 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 455-58, quotation: “mort ou vif, promettant aux Blancs, Rouge, ou noir 30 piastre pour la Teste de Philipe et 20 pour chacun des autres, sy on ne pouvant les prendre vivant.”

⁷⁸ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 14 and 15 nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 459-62, quotation: “aujoudhui Dans un androis et Demains Dans un autre.”

⁷⁹ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 14 and 15 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 459-62, quotation “Philipe avois de formée une compagnie de Negre assez Nombreuse.”

Maurice Conway and the site of a Houma village. At this moment, Judice increased the reward money offered to the Houmas to 100 piastres for the head of Philipe, and he sent his diverse detachment to pursue Philipe.⁸⁰ A party of twelve Houmas caught Philipe and two of his followers behind Pierre Landry's farm. They brought to Judice the head and the hand of a runaway of Pierre de Marigny, but Philipe eluded his pursuers once again. Finally, one night soon after, Esther, a slave woman living on the other side of the LaFourche, alerted her master Nicholas Daublin around 3:00 in the morning that Philipe was hiding in the slave cabins. Daublin shot and killed Philipe.⁸¹ Although Judice asked the Houmas, they refused to sever Philipe's head since Philipe was not killed at their own hands.⁸²

An investigation into Philipe's success ensued. Interviews soon revealed the web of people who had helped the maroons and the ease with which slaves and maroons interacted. Fear of the collaboration of Philipe and maroons with slaves was well founded. Searchers found at least one abandoned encampment and soon realized that Philipe and his band had contacts among the district's slaves who also provided refuge and supplies to parties of maroons. Judice observed that "Philipe expected many blacks would join him at LaFourche."⁸³ The slaves of at least three different colonists had sheltered or directly aided Philipe and his followers. One party of maroons was found in the slave cabins of the Widow Landry where a black slave named Jacques served as Philipe's most important contact. He arranged for shelter for Philipe and his band and aided them in hiding stolen goods. Jacques kept meat from a cow that Philipe had

⁸⁰ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 14 and 15 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 459-62.

⁸¹ Judice to Miró, LaFourche 19 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 465-69. Daublin's wife was a free Indian woman. See Judice, Census of Acadians at Kabahannosé 1777, Rive Droit, PPC, legajo 190, 186-188. Pierre de Marigny was a Frenchman and served as a commandant at Isleño settlements from the 1770s through the 1790s. He was also an *alcalde* in the New Orleans Cabildo. Din, "The Canary Islanders' Settlements," 359-60.

⁸² Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 19 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 465-69.

⁸³ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 14 and 15 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 459-62, quotation: "Philipe attendois plusieurs Negre qui devoit le joindre a la fourche, et preussement sur la terre que je suis occupé."

killed near Conway's plantation.⁸⁴ And the night that Philipe was caught, the leader went first to the slave cabin on Silvain LeBlanc's land around 9 p.m. before stopping at the slave quarters on Daublin's property.⁸⁵ The task of finding all of those slaves complicit in collaborating with Philipe was practically impossible for Judice, whose investigation also revealed that habitants also helped Philipe: Jean Baptiste Chauvin "received Philipe in his home and who gave him bread and other provisions."⁸⁶ Judice attributed Chauvin's choice to aid Philipe on the domestic discord that was plaguing Chauvin. Among the property targeted by Philipe was that of Laurent Diepe who had been engaged in an illicit relationship with Chauvin's wife Anna Hernandez.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 22 Nov 1785, PPC legajo 198: fo 469-70; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 12 Nov 1785, legajo 198: fo 455-58.

⁸⁵ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 19 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 465-69.

⁸⁶ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 14 and 15 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 459-62, quotation : "Il y at Ycy Monsieur Beaucoup de Negre Complisse, que Je ferois tout arreter quant Je pouris et aussy le Sieur Chauvin habitant de ce District; qui a Recû Philipe chez luy et qui lui a Donner du pain et autre Provision."

⁸⁷ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 30 Nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 477-9; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 23 June 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 417-9. Sidney A. Marchand, *The Golden Coast of Louisiana: Ascension and Saint James Parishes* (Donaldsonville, LA: Marchand, 1943), 73-5. It appears that Chauvin and his wife Anna Hernandez had a son named Louis in November of 1780. His first wife was an Acadian woman, Marguerite Braud. Their child Marie Baptiste was born in November 1773. The case of Jean Baptiste Chauvin and his wife in the LaFourche district reveals interference in the personal affairs of colonists by governors and commandants alike. On June 23, 1785, the very day that Judice reported selling off Philipe's property, he also wrote Miró of the "sad" domestic problems of Chauvin. Chauvin had found his wife three times with another habitant of the district, Laurent Diepe. As of June 23, Diepe had threatened Chauvin's life. Judice was himself invested in the family life of the Chauvins, having served as the godfather of Chauvin's daughter who went to live with Judice amidst the family conflict. After Diepe threatened Chauvin, the latter left for the Attakapas district, and his wife said she would return to her father at Valenzuela because she feared for her life. Before leaving, Chauvin told Judice that he wanted to divorce his wife. Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 23 June 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 417-9. By the end of July, Chauvin returned to the LaFourche district but purposely avoided Judice who informed Miró that the wronged husband was hiding in the woods. Perhaps it was here that he encountered maroons living in the district. Judice attempted to find Chauvin, employing the assistance of Firmin Babin, Chauvin's brother-in-law from his first marriage. Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 16 July 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 441-3. Although the testimony of the Chauvin slaves and slaves of neighboring farms confirmed that Chauvin had provided Philipe with food and shelter and had probably even encouraged him to steal from Diepe, Judice's mercy spared Chauvin prosecution. Interestingly, the infidelity of Chauvin's wife was not cause enough to permit a divorce, Miró argued. Judice vowed to attempt to reunite the couple, also an example of colonial governmental interference in the lives of colonists. Mme. Chauvin seemed averse to returning to her husband, for Judice stated that he was prepared to send a detachment to get her, and that if husband and wife were not cooperative, he proposed a strategy that had produced success for him in the past: he would imprison them for a few days in the same place to change their minds. Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 23 Jan 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 251-2. Soon the dispute ended. Jean Baptiste Chauvin died in late February 1786. Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 28 Feb 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 256. In most cases during the 1770s and 1780s when couples expressed to the commandant a desire to separate or to divorce, the governor opposed separation, the commandants and at times even the priests expressed greater gradation in their responses to the troubled domestic situations that they encountered. Perhaps this was a reflection of the personal biases of the commandant and of the priest, or of the

The endeavor to stop Philipe and his followers was initiated as a local effort and reflected the continued cooperation of alliance among Indians, colonists, and slaves with Spanish officials in the face of the threat posed to their settlement. In this instance, that threat took the form of the nebulous association of Philipe, his followers, and their allies. Such collaboration followed a long trajectory of official attempts to isolate maroons from other groups in the colony. It also reflected the benefits that the Spanish colonial government reaped from the broad coalitions built out of the various segments of colonial society. Although Spanish officials employed these coalitions to reinforce order and security in the colony, the various groups that participated in these coalitions were united also by their common interest in sustaining some functional semblance of borderland relationships. The cooperation of Indians and colonists of all colors was in continuum with similar cooperation during the war. Still, more fluid, unofficial, local networks contributed to the persistence of maroon communities and thus undercut Spanish goals. At times, often for the sake of security, defense of property, and local stability, it benefited colonists, libres, *petites nations* Indians, and slaves to cooperate with colonial officials because of common interest, but at other times it did not. Most inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi

sway held by powerful families within different settlements, but it also likely reflects results of testimony that these local officials collected and their own personal knowledge of the communities in which they served. In 1782, the governor, Père Louis Grummeau, and commandant of the Attakapas Louis DeClouet agreed to try and reunite estranged spouses Mr. And Mme. Tauriac, DeClouet, Opelousas, 1 sept 1782, PPC legajo 195: fo 730. The following year, DeClouet sided with Gabriel Fuselier de la Claire, former commandant of Attakapas, and agreed that de la Claire's daughter Ludivine should not be forced to return to her abusive and unfaithful husband Auguste Soileau. The new curé Gessolin concurred with DeClouet. DeClouet to Miró, Opelousas, 21 July 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 201-3; DeClouet, 23 July 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 229; DeClouet to Miró, Attakapas, 21 sept 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 228-9; Auguste Soileau to DeClouet, Attakapas, 12 Aug 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 209; Miró to DeClouet, New Orleans, 2 nov 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 185-6; DeClouet to Miró, Attakapas, 24 Jan 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 135; Gessolin Curé to Miró, Attakapas, 16 fib 1784, legajo 197: fo 142-3; Gessolin Curé to Miró, Attakapas, 16 fib 1784, legajo 197: fo 142-3. The correspondence above was most likely generated by the extension of the *Pragmatica sanción de matrimonios* to the Spanish colonies in 1778. For a full discussion of the development and implementation of these regulations see Steinar A. Saether, "Bourbon Absolutism and Marriage Reform in Late Colonial Spanish America," *The Americas* 59.4 (2003): 475-509. See also, Gary M. Miller, "Bourbon Social Engineering: Women and Conditions of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela," *The Americas* 46.3 (1990): 261-290.

continued to resist imperial measures as they continued to move relatively freely and to engage personal and trade networks that subverted the order envisioned by empire.

The concerted effort to eliminate the threat of Philipe and his followers at LaFourche lasted only a few short weeks in late 1785, but this particular incident sheds light on the many areas of life in Spanish Louisiana where the ideas of order promoted by officials in Louisiana met with resistance in the common practices of inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi. While many inhabitants of Louisiana participated in practices that promoted borderlands fluidity, others cooperated with the Spanish regime when doing so furthered their interests. Repeatedly during the years following the war, Miró and his subordinates wrote to one another of “*le bon ordre*,” as they sought to attain this ideal by suppressing maroon communities, in diplomacy with Indians, and in restricting peddling and marketing in new ways. Full success in establishing the *bon ordre* was nearly impossible given the topography and borderland practices officials had to contend with. Imperial attempts to curtail the borderlands nature of the region were ever driven by the desire to impose and defend a political border. New Spanish regulations or the new enforcement of them departed from the traditional absence of oversight inhabitants had experience in the personal lives, especially beyond the city of New Orleans. Across the society from the enslaved to the free, a web of inhabitants subverted Spanish designs and policies by their way of life. They also began to adopt new borderland practices or adapt their old ones as they struggled to maintain the flexibility that characterized the Lower Mississippi Valley.

During the war, maroon communities expanded, but the 1780s brought a new emphasis on the destruction of illicit communities and the privileging of official settlements. Maroon communities became the most prominent target for the mission to suppress illicit communities. However, as the Spanish colonial government attempted to destroy these communities, and

succeeded in large part, they found determined resistance among maroon groups and the network that entangled these unsanctioned communities with settlers and slaves throughout the colony.

For the *petites nations* “le bon ordre” meant a period of increased marginalization exacerbated by challenges internal to Indian societies. Although *petites nations* Indians strove to sustain alliance with colonial settlements and the colonial government, appreciation for the integration of these groups in the Lower Mississippi was disappearing rapidly among officials at New Orleans. With the question of the Spanish border now shifted from the Mississippi eastward to the interior country, the Spanish government began to privilege diplomacy with larger Indian groups important to the border dispute.

In the years following the revolution, the Spanish colonial government looked in greater earnest to regulating small scale trade and marketing. At once, it created officially sanctioned spaces, such as the market in New Orleans, and turned greater attention to monitoring and suppressing unofficial trade and barter, especially among libres and slaves and especially the illicit sale of alcohol to slaves and Indians. Peddling was a relatively new occupation to the region, but like older practices it benefited from the looseness of a borderlands society as it engaged persons across the social spectrum of the colony without regard.

Spain continued to orient its goals for Louisiana around transforming the borderlands relationships of the region into a colony with borders, political borders and boundaries for spaces and practices of the colony’s inhabitants. It sought to control and manage the border colonies and the practices of the inhabitants who in turn struggled to maintain borderlands in the face of mounting odds. Many still prioritized participation in local networks over cooperation with empire.

In Louisiana, maroon communities offered both fluid movement and fluid belonging, as did the networks that engaged these communities. The example of Philippe's band illustrates the intensified aggression of maroons and of their communities towards the farms and outposts. In the years following the American Revolution, maroon communities in the American Southeast proliferated, prompting slave-owners and local leaders to try to eliminate these groups. Often the effort to destroy maroon communities in North America included the cooperation of Indians and militias.⁸⁸ Large scale efforts to eliminate maroon communities, return slaves to their masters, and punish offenders to the official order had risen before. However, the official project to suppress marronage that developed during the 1780s was part of a larger effort to regulate the borderlands livelihood of the peoples in the Lower Mississippi Valley and to prevent crossings between licit and illicit settlements and spaces. Slave owners often gladly cooperated with officials.⁸⁹ The maroons were personally known and identifiable to slaves and masters alike—it was still a small and personal world.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of this phenomenon and the political choices of runaway slaves see also Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*, 95-137. In contrast to the maroon communities of Lower Louisiana with which this paper concerns itself, other communities throughout the Southeast drew from among black slaves who had served the Loyalist cause during the war, especially with Lord Dunmore for example. For a general discussion of marronage in the Spanish world, where maroon communities were often called *palenques*, see also Landers, "Africans in the Spanish Colonies," *Historical Archaeology* 31.1(1997): 84-103. James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizera-Esquerria consider grand marronage in the context of ethnogenesis of African-descended peoples in the Americas: "Runaway slaves came together in communities of different sizes throughout the Americas. Many were so small or fleeting that they left only traces in the documentary record. A few, like those that began in seventeenth-century Brazil, Jamaica, and New Spain and the eighteenth-century communities that coalesced in the region surrounding Suriname, became powerful enough and persisted long enough to stimulate major military expeditions against them. Some of these wars ended with colonial governments recognizing the maroon communities' right to exist," see Sidbury and Cañizera-Esquerria, "Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic," *WMQ* 86.2 (2011): 190. For a comparative approach to maroon communities in North America, see Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 67, 122, 157, 170, 328.

⁸⁹ Contemporary description of maroon communities and scholars often note an increase in violence radiating from and within maroon communities during the 1780s. For protection and subsistence, maroons were often well armed. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 140. In 1782, with regard to the maroons living in the German Coast, Bellisle noted that their number was growing in 1782, and that they were becoming bold, not only taking the livestock of their masters, and engaging in the "miserable detruise de leurs Bestiaux," but also kidnapping slaves, as was the case when a party of maroons "enlever de force une negresse a Mr. Trepagnier." Bellisle to Miró, Allemans, 13 may 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 133-4. St. Malo perhaps had the greatest reputation for violence among the maroon leaders. When he attempted to help the maroons captured in 1783, he was in possession of a gun, a large knife, and a hatchet. He also tried to keep his men well-armed.

Destroying maroon communities provided an opportunity for other groups to demonstrate loyalty to the Spanish regime from which they might benefit. It granted Indians the opportunity to demonstrate the strategic importance of their loyalty to the colonial government, a reminder to officials of the long term debt they owed *petites nations* Indians for their service to the security of the colony especially in a time when official interest was more directed towards Indians east of the Mississippi. It also granted libres the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty and to reinforce their group identity as both free and loyal through their service to Spain. Finally, cooperating with authorities granted slaves and maroons potential pardon for crimes or reward.

Networks of kinship and trade held maroon communities together, tethered them outward to the slave and settler populations, and offered flexibility of joining and leaving the maroon community. The efforts in the 1780s to stamp out maroon communities also sheds light on the ties among these illicit communities, their mobility, the centrality of leadership to holding maroons together, and the diverse Atlantic experiences of maroons. Although officials rounded up maroon leaders and damaged the many communities of the Lower River, these communities, though weakened, persisted as a means that slaves employed to resist bondage.

Beginning in the early 1780s, the effort to enumerate and fight maroons was managed increasingly from New Orleans. In 1779, after the assembly of an extraordinary meeting of the Cabildo, Bernardo de Gálvez issued a circular letter to the commandants of the posts on the Mississippi River regarding “the number of maroon slaves that grows considerably every day.” Colonial elite cooperated with officials in the effort to impose social order by reducing marronage. “A party of the credible habitants of this jurisdiction” had collaborated with the members of the Cabildo regarding the best way to remedy the growing number of maroons, who they feared would produce a revolt of their own on the eve war in 1779. The hearing resulted in

the formation of detachments specifically for the purpose of catching maroons and an attempt to collect a tax from slave owners of 5 sols per slave.⁹⁰ In 1782, commandants and habitants sent lists of maroons from each district to New Orleans.⁹¹ In March of 1783, Miró sent out a circular letter to the posts throughout Lower Louisiana requesting that their patrols conform to those carried out in New Orleans, and he dispatched two detachments to chase maroons near the city.⁹²

In 1783, acting as governor in Miró's absence from New Orleans, Boulogny linked the trouble of order among the slaves and maroons with the movement of libres about the colony without papers and passports. Suspicion of libre collaboration with maroons continued to grow.⁹³ The detachments that patrolled for maroons began to patrol on Sundays in New Orleans and along the roads near the city where they stopped blacks and mulattoes in the attempt to catch maroons. Without proper papers, anyone traveling to New Orleans including slaves or free blacks could encounter trouble. In 1784, in hardly a singular incident, a colonist on the German Coast, Pierre Rillieux, detained and whipped a libre, suspecting that his papers were false.⁹⁴

In 1784 the government of New Orleans opened a full-fledged war against the maroons of the colony. A special target was the maroon community centered around the infamous leader Jean St. Malo. Complaints to the Cabildo of aggressive maroon bands on the Lower River were followed by a meeting of the Cabildo with elite planters, and that followed by a *cabildo abierto*.

⁹⁰ Bellisle, Robin, Cantrelle, Judice, Dustiné and Grand Pré to Bernardo de Gálvez, New Orleans, 23 Apr 1779, PPC, legajo 192: fo 10-11, quotation: "Une partie des habitants croyables de cette jurisdiction;" Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 162-3.

⁹¹ Bellisle to Miró, Allemands, 25 June 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 143; Verbois to Piernas or Boulogny, Iberville, 3 July 1782 PPC, legajo 194: fo 420-1; Judice to Piernas or Boulogny, LaFourche, 8 July 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 467-8; Ignace Delonoooin do Piernas, Baton Rouge, 16 July 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 383; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 90-1.

⁹² Boulogny to Masicot, New Orleans, 7 march 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 86-7.

⁹³ Masicot, Allemands, 12 June 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 85-6.

⁹⁴ Masicot to Boulogny, Allemands, 15 may 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 88; Masicot to Boulogny, Allemands, 16 may 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 90-1. For a detailed account of the official deliberations in New Orleans and efforts to clamp down on maroons during this time see Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 89-115.

The invitation Miró extended to planters to meet with him invited them “to make all the possible efforts to stop the progress of the disorders occasioned by the maroons” and extended to the colonists of Chapitoulas and the Bas de Fleuve.⁹⁵

At the urging of the Cabildo where planters spoke of slave insurrection in May, Bouigny, then acting military governor of the colony while Miró and Navarro were at the Indian congresses in Mobile and Pensacola, assembled a considerable force of men that numbered more than one hundred “to fight against the maroons” living on the lakes and waterways near New Orleans. He assembled local colonists, militia, libres, and Indians from Rapides. In particular, he sought the assistance of individuals who were familiar with topography near the city.⁹⁶ In preparation for his operation and in an attempt to eliminate the movement and communication of slaves, Bouigny instructed Jacques Livaudais at the Bas de Fleuve to forbid his habitants from giving passports to their slaves for travel at night and that the colonists should be prepared every night with pirogues well secured in front of their homes. In preparation for the expedition against St. Malo, the *Síndico Procurador General*, Leonardo Mazange, argued before the other members of the Cabildo that a military expedition was necessary to uproot the violent St. Malo whose followers by their absence from plantations were hurting the economy of the colony. On June 1, a party of maroons attacked and killed a slave watching the storehouse of Mme. Mandeville before they stole grain. Days later, the expedition began against St. Malo and the

⁹⁵ Miró to the habitants de la cote d'en bas de fleuve, 24 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 10-11, quotation, “Voulant faire tous les efforts possibles pour arrêter le progress des desordres occasionés par le marronage des Negres;” Miró to the habitants at Chapitoulas, 24 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 12-13; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 93; Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 166.

⁹⁶ Bouigny to Delaissard, New Orleans, 7 may 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 13-14; Bouigny to Monsieur Matata frère de Monsieur Milon, New Orleans, 7 may 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 15-6, quotation: “d’agir contre les Nègres Marrons.” Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 98-9. In his chapter discussion the official Spanish effort to suppress maroons during the 1780s, Din neglects the continued role played by *petites nations* allies of the colonial regime although he does succeed in countering Hall’s argument that Spanish officials avoided using blacks and mulattoes to pursue maroons. Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 166.

maroons living outside of New Orleans along the Mississippi, bayous, and lakes of its environs. Participants in the expedition were diverse in a way characteristic of Bourbon Era Spanish America and particular to Louisiana, including white, free black and mulatto militia, Isleño militia, *petites nations* Indians, slaves, and hunters from New Orleans.⁹⁷ Officials recognized as a sign of loyalty the participation of these many groups in the efforts to suppress maroon communities. However, these same groups also undercut Spanish policy at other turns.

The objective of the 1784 attack on the maroon communities focused on rooting out St. Malo and his followers. By the year's end, numerous maroons from across the colony who had gathered in communities near New Orleans were captured. Others turned themselves in. On June 7, the colonial forces brought in St. Malo and a good many of his band. St. Malo was condemned and hanged on June 19 at the Plaza de Armas, although he lived on in the lore of Louisiana. Those known to have associated with St. Malo were condemned to two hundred lashes and to branding on the right cheek with the letter 'M.' Some such maroons were slaves of prominent officials, planters, and merchants: Juaneton the slave of Pedro Piernas who had run away in 1782 and Venus the slave of Oliver Pollock.⁹⁸

Although Bouligny's mission to capture St. Malo and to reduce his band succeeded, and although he heralded the success as restoring calm to Louisiana, marronage continued to be a viable mode of resistance for slaves throughout the colony, as was the case in the greater Southeast after the destruction of one targeted maroon community.⁹⁹ Commandants throughout

⁹⁷ Bouligny to Livaudais, New Orleans, 8 May 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 17-18; Bouligny, 2 June 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 24-5; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 99.

⁹⁸ Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 March 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, "LHQ 20 (1937): 841-65; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 100. For a detailed account of the expedition that captured St. Malo, see Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 100-1. Hall uses the ballad of St. Malo as a primary source, whereas Usner noted that the longevity of the ballad suggested that "the legend of San Malo, however, lasted for a long time among Louisiana slaves" (141). Pollock at this time was in the United States attempting to recover debts owed to him for his work during the war.

⁹⁹ Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*, 98-99.

Louisiana continued to recognize bands of maroons as threatening to law and order within their settlements, as was the case with Philipe and his followers at LaFourche. The death of Philipe and capture of some of his comrades did not destroy the maroon community. Maroons sought to join Philipe there into 1786, perhaps an indication that the group maintained some unity in the name of its leader even after his death.¹⁰⁰ Numerous maroons continued to live at Lafourche.¹⁰¹ Other groups of maroons persisted, for example, in Baratavia, Gaillard Land, and Natchitoches.

As in the case of Philipe, local response often materialized to the threats posed by maroons. In 1782, after a slave woman was carried off by the maroons of the German Coast, the commandant Bellisle and his militia tried to give chase, but the maroons disappeared before the search party could track them. The topography of the region facilitated movement and travel, and, as in the Philipe incident at LaFourche, the local leaders used a diverse coalition of white and free black and mulatto colonists and Indians.¹⁰²

Many informants on maroon communities included slaves. Their actions demonstrated loyalty to the Spanish regime and at times an effort to negotiate more favorable positions for themselves. Their decisions also pointed to the web of knowledge often withheld from official ears that accompanied local, personal ties. In 1781, after missing a cow from his plantation in the St. Bernard district near New Orleans, Jean Baptiste Bienvenu sent three slaves into the woods near his plantation to look for it. They found camping nearby behind the King's arsenal two maroons, Juan Baptista and Pedro St. Martin, whom the three turned over to Bienvenu. In turn, protesting their innocence, Juan Baptista and Pedro St. Martin offered to lead authorities to the maroon camp located near the swamps and the lake to which they thought Bienvenu's slaves

¹⁰⁰ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 30 Jan 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 252-3.

¹⁰¹ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 28 feb 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 256.

¹⁰² Bellisle to Miró, Allemands, 13 may 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 133-4.

had fled with the cow. This proposal was accepted. Pedro and Juan Baptista led a party of four white men and six armed slaves to a maroon camp behind Mr. Raguet's plantation on Cane Bayou on May 27, 1781. In giving testimony, Pedro also identified a number of other maroons whom he had encountered. In 1783, a slave of Mme. Mandeville named Chacales led the New Orleans militia detachments to the settlement at Gaillard Land, an act for which the Cabildo awarded him 200 pesos.¹⁰³ In 1784, amidst the many sentences being meted out to captured maroons, Antonio Delery and Juan Luis Chabert were pardoned because of their part in leading the expedition to that captured many of their fellow maroons.¹⁰⁴

Maroon communities coalesced around their own leaders. In spite of official concentration on St. Malo, the networks of maroon communities boasted other leaders as well. After escaping slavery on Darensbourg's estate on the German Coast in 1781, St. Malo and some of his followers killed several Americans at Bay St. Louis and later killed other whites near the Mississippi, and St. Malo gained a reputation as a bloodthirsty and violent leader.¹⁰⁵ By 1783, he was recognized as a leader among the maroons near Lake Borgne at a place called Chef Menteur from which he frequently visited the maroons at Gaillard Land and from which he launched attacks against travelers. The Gaillard Land settlement grew out of the community of the marshes at Chef Menteur. The leaders of one of the group of maroons at Gaillard Land were Juan Pedro and his son Jolie Coeur, who had settled with St. Malo before forming their own community nearby. Both communities relied on the cover of the swamps for protection. The

¹⁰³ [no title], may 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, 26 *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 92, 99. This Cane Bayou was near New Orleans, not to be confused with Cane River in the Natchitoches District.

¹⁰⁴ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

¹⁰⁵ Bellisle to Miró, Allemands, 25 June 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 143. Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 103; "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

attack against maroon communities in 1784 revealed a band living at Metairie in Chapitoulas led by a man of Senegambian heritage named Jamba. In 1783 after the attack on Gaillard Land, St. Malo evaded authorities and stayed briefly with Jamba. As the leader, Jamba with one or two other maroons stole and foraged for food that they brought back to their camp. Similarly, in his role as leader at Gaillard Land, Juan Pedro exhibited daring to provide for his followers, venturing into New Orleans at night to sell fish, the proceeds of which he used to acquire ammunition.¹⁰⁶ Unlike most other leaders of maroon bands and communities, Philippe himself was not a maroon. He was a free man.¹⁰⁷ Cooperation among maroon leaders reveals that the various maroon communities were in contact with one another.

The landscape of the Lower Mississippi Valley made it especially difficult to enforce political boundaries or to eradicate unsanctioned communities and trade. It was difficult to eliminate maroon settlements and to monitor flight to them. The greatest concentration of maroons was near the city of New Orleans and below it, although numerous maroons lived and subsisted in the swamps behind farms and plantations throughout the Lower Mississippi Valley. Gaillard land was itself a settlement of maroons, perhaps the largest semi-permanent one of its type in the region, with old and new cabins as of 1783 that were shared in common among the refugees. Maroons travelled from throughout the Lower Mississippi to join the settlement. As with Philippe's band of maroons, it is difficult to ascertain the demographic makeup. Most of those maroons caught were men, although a few black women were identified as either helping maroons or as members of the band. Some of the maroons had been engaging in "le grand

¹⁰⁶ Masicot to Boulogny, Allemands, 15 May 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 86-7; [no title], 26 May 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20; "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 March 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65. Samba or Jamba reflected Senegambian origins present in naming patterns. It was customarily the name of the second son for Senegambians

¹⁰⁷ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 28 Feb 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 256.

marronage” well before joining with Philippe. By the time he joined Philippe, Pirame had been a maroon for three years during which St. Maxent reported seeing him in a Chickasaw village.¹⁰⁸

Groups of maroons were composed of men and women with an array of Atlantic experiences. When still living behind plantations on the east bank, Jamba’s camp was almost evenly composed of men and women and representative of the variety of Atlantic experiences present among people of African heritage in the Lower Mississippi: Juan Baptista, Mr. Bienvenu’s slave; Tham and Marguerita both slaves of Mr. St. Amant; Samba or perhaps Jamba belonging to Duparc; Maria Juana who had fled from Mrs. Noguez; and Mr. DeKernion’s slave Nancy, who was English-speaking. It is also clear that the maroons who joined the group did not all initially run away together but joined an already existing nucleus of maroons. Jamba’s community numbered over fifteen in 1781.¹⁰⁹ In 1782, a list of maroons from the German Coast and from Lafourche was composed of an almost equal proportion of men and women. Interestingly, the five maroons from St. Charles Parish had begun their marronage in 1781 and 1782, years of particular uncertainty among the settlements on the river because of the war.¹¹⁰

Maroons often ran away in kinship groups, or with other slaves living nearby.¹¹¹ For example, the Widow Landry at LaFourche reported that an entire family of her slaves ran away on July 7, 1782: Joseph, his wife Nanette, and their child Marie Louise. Two slave women of the Widow Charleville, also of LaFourche, disappeared together. Marie had been sold to Mme. Charleville by an English-speaking slave merchant, perhaps by way of some of the floating warehouses that had dotted the Mississippi during the years of partition, and Nanette reached

¹⁰⁸ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 12 Nov 1785, legajo 198: fo 455-58.

¹⁰⁹ [no title], 26 May 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20.

¹¹⁰ Bellisle to Miró, Allemands, 25 June 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 143; Verbois to Piernas or Bouligny, Iberville, 3 July 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 420-1.

¹¹¹ For a recent discussion of slave families in the Atlantic World inclusive of maroons see James H. Sweet, “Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World,” *WMQ* 70.2 (2013): 251-272.

LaFourche through a sale of a colonist named Dépreve. Although they reached Mme. Charleville by two separate channels, Marie and Nanette sought avenues to freedom together in early 1781.¹¹² The slave woman Goton ran away in early 1783 because of the severe punishment she suffered at the hand of her master.¹¹³ She did not run alone, but together with her husband, and with slaves from the neighboring plantation of Henrique Desprez including Cupidon, a woman named Catiche and her daughter, a small black slave boy, and a woman named Bautista and her children. Cupidon's wife Theresa testified that she had run away so that she could be with her husband. Like Theresa, Catiche indicated that family unity was her main motivation for running away. She and her daughter joined her mother and step-father in running away. Like many maroons, they did not travel far, instead living behind the plantations of the masters from whom they had fled. Meeting up with at least three slave men of other neighbors, the group left for Gaillard Land from the bayou where they were hiding. En route, the party came across another small band of maroons trying to reach Gaillard Land. These were four slaves from Mme. St. Amant's plantation and one from Mr. Deverger's plantation, Maria, Margarita, La Violette, and Deverger's Dota. Juan Pedro had become the leader of a band at Gaillard Land since his family's escape from their master Desmazilliere in 1780. His wife, Maria, testified that harsh punishments she received from her master motivated the couple to flee together with their daughter Pelagie, their son Jolie Coeur and his wife Carlota.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Judice to Bouligny, 8 July 1782, LaFourche, PPC, legajo 195: fo 469-70. For another discussion of kinship and marronage see also Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 218-20.

¹¹³ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

¹¹⁴ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65. Desprez was involved in the Brazillier succession. As a land owner, he also supplied lumber through Jean Baptiste DeGruis's mill. In at least one instance, he was initially uncooperative in an attempt of free parents to purchase the freedom of their child. For more on Desprez, see also "Andres Roche to appoint Enrique Despres as his curator at lites to demand from his father Enrique Roche his right which he contests," 4 Sept 1771, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 8 (1925): 704-7; "Santiago Ramon vs. Enrique Desprez," 21 Feb 1774, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 10 (1927): 298-9; "Henrique Desprez vs. Francisco de la Barre," 11 April 1774, SPJR, *LHQ* 10

Ties of communities and kinship and of the shared experiences of bondage and marronage prompted maroons to protect one another. In 1780 or 1781, Juan Pedro and his family were traveling with St. Malo and several others towards Mobile when they were captured by eight Americans who bound them and began to take them to New Orleans. When the party went ashore to rest, St. Malo untied the other maroons. Together, they took the guns, a hatchet, and a carabine belonging to the Americans and fled aboard the pirogues with the possessions of their American captors.¹¹⁵ In March 1783, maroons fought back again. After Patrick Macnamara and his associates captured several maroons and were returning to New Orleans, they were fired upon by another party of four maroons in a pirogue giving chase to free the captives. The leader of the four, St. Malo, was the only one who succeeded in escaping.¹¹⁶ In May 1784, a mulatto from Chapitoulas visited Jamba's band at Metairie, trying to retrieve a young black woman named Jacques belonging to Deslonde. She had been with the band for several months. Upon entering the encampment, the mulatto met Jamba who agreed to return her, but in that moment others from the band emerged to chase off the intruder.¹¹⁷

Theft was a means of support for maroons and yet another challenge with which officials and settlers contended. Given the topography that facilitated the survival of maroon

(1927): 538; "Henrique Depre (Desprez) vs Pedro Stophan for the return of a house," 22 May 1779, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 13 (1930): 697; "Elena, a free negress petitions for the freedom of her son, a slave of Henrique Desprez at the price of his appraisalment," 12 Aug 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 619-21; "Proceedings brought by Enrique Desprez to make a copy of a letter," 1 Oct 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 17 (1934): 222-3; "Henrique Depre (Desprez) vs. Santiago Tarascon, to make him deliver to the plaintiff what should come to him from the late Juan B. Brazilier's estate," 29 Apr 1782, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 18 (1935): 478-85; "Executory Process Captain Enrique Desprez vs. Juan Bautista Sezant called Anstive," 30 April 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 1173-5; "Proceedings brought by Enrique Desprez against Juan Bautista DeGruis, for Breach of Contract, through delay in delivering wood to the plaintiff's mill," 10 mar 1785, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 26 (1943): 1213.

¹¹⁵ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

¹¹⁶ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

¹¹⁷ Masicot to Bouligny, Allemands, 15 May 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 86-7.

communities and their evasion of total elimination for decades, it is not surprising that maroons were known to steal pirogues. In 1778, Alexis Braud reported that five maroons had stolen his pirogue, and, although he did not perhaps know their names, he knew that four were slaves of Francois Croizet, fils, and the fifth a runaway of Jean Duhon.¹¹⁸ Perhaps one was Gui, a native of Senegal who had fled from Croizet in September of 1770.¹¹⁹ In 1781, Jean Baptiste Bienvenu, a captain in the New Orleans militia, reported that runaways had stolen a cow from his plantation. The camp to which these five fled yielded to a search party an axe, a hatchet, a knife, a file, and a bayonet that had been used by the Waldeck soldiers in the American Revolution, in addition to the skin of the cow in question. Members of this slave community that lived on Lake Pontchartrain in small cabins stole goods and livestock that they then shared with their fellow maroons. Jamba's maroons also stole sugar, salt, wine, and lard in addition to livestock.¹²⁰ When slaves fled from Desprez's plantation in 1783, they took rice with them and traded with other maroons for meat in the woods.¹²¹ In May 1784, a party of maroons on the German Coast forced open the door of a store and stole corn and rice, which they loaded onto a large pirogue.¹²² A few weeks later, an elderly maroon stole a small pirogue and was delivered to the commandant Jacques Masicot by Jacob a free black for his crime.¹²³ Also in 1784, at Barataria, maroons Antonio, Colin, and an unnamed third attacked the home of the small farmer Antonio Suarez from whom they stole men and women's clothing, money, blankets, fabric, rice, salt, meat,

¹¹⁸ Michel Cantrell to Bernardo de Gálvez, 18 Jan 1778, PPC, legajo 191: fo 362-3; Michel Cantrell to Bernardo de Gálvez, Cabahanocé, 2 Sept 1777, PPC, legajo 191: fo 325-6.

¹¹⁹ Michel Cantrell, Cabahannocé, 27 may 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 304.

¹²⁰ [no title], 26 May 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20.

¹²¹ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 March 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

¹²² Bouligny to Masicot, New Orleans, 19 May 784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 93.

¹²³ Masicot to Bouligny, Allemands, 8 June 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 95-6.

cheese, and corn.¹²⁴ Further west, maroons arrived at Natchitoches from Opelousas with stolen horses. When Vauginé's men gave chase, the maroons escaped across the Sabine into Texas.¹²⁵

Maroon connections to the outside world indicated that colonists were also complicit in helping sustain maroon communities and in subverting the official order that demanded the return of runaways to their masters. Maroons also subsisted by farming, fishing, and hiring out their labor. Within Jamba's circle, the men ventured away from the settlement to work for Bonne and to go to the 'plantations of the whites' to steal or to obtain grain from slaves living there, while the women of the group remained closer to their cabins. Bonne who operated a sawmill outside of New Orleans frequently employed maroons.¹²⁶ It was during their one month living with Jamba that Pedro St. Martin and Juan Baptista began their work with Bonne. They worked in the swamp where they squared logs and floated them down a canal to carts that hauled the timber to Bonne's mill. Neither they nor the other maroons worked at the mill itself, for that put them in danger of being caught. Once a week, the "boldest and most daring of the runaways" did venture to meet with Bonne to receive wages for the group. In the case of Jamba's men, this job fell to Tham who met with Bonne under the cover of night. Pedro and Juan Baptista separated from Jamba's group after living with them for only a month. They reported that they left in response to the violence and theft that they encountered amongst that circle of maroons. Bonne permitted Jamba's group to farm a plot of his land where they grew vegetables and corn.¹²⁷ Juan Pedro worked a plot of land for a slave name Colas belonging to Mme.

¹²⁴ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

¹²⁵ Vauginé to Bouligny, Natchitoches, 10 Aug 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 498-100.

¹²⁶ [no title], 26 May 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20.

¹²⁷ [no title], 26 May 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20.

Mandeville.¹²⁸ Maroons like Juan Pedro and St. Malo, who had carpentry skills, made troughs used for processing indigo. These they bartered and sold.¹²⁹

Conflict with maroon communities produced a realization among officials that some libres and slaves assisted these communities and had knowledge of their location.¹³⁰ The relationships of maroons with slaves on plantations and the close proximity of maroon communities to settlements were characteristic of marronage in the Lower Mississippi.¹³¹ Jamba's party of maroons, for example, remained in the environs of New Orleans for several years, first behind plantations on the east bank outside of the city in 1781, and in 1784 they were on the west bank.¹³² Masicot wrote that "there are a great number of rascal free black who know where the maroons are, and who have correspondence with them."¹³³ Men like Bonne employed and assisted maroons in their subsistence. Bonne acknowledged and permitted contact between his own slaves and Jamba's maroons. His slaves transported wares made out of willow by the maroons, such as baskets, to New Orleans where they sold the goods and returned the profits to Jamba. At times, Bonne's slaves made purchases for the maroon community in the city. It was one of Bonne's slaves who alerted Jamba's maroons that Macarty was leading a search party for them.¹³⁴ In 1784, Big Peter Prevot, Martin Prevot, Little Peter Prevot, Luis Prevot, and Santiago, who were all slaves of Bienvenu, were condemned for aiding and trading with St. Malo's maroons. They were branded with the 'M' at the gallows in New Orleans. Even if they did not

¹²⁸ "Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes," 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65.

¹²⁹ James Thomas McGowan, *Creation of a Slave Society: Louisiana Plantations in the Eighteenth Century*. University of Rochester, Ph.D., 1976 History, United States, Facsimile, 236.

¹³⁰ Masicot to Bouligny, Allemands, 15 may 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 86-7.

¹³¹ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 328. In contrast, runaways in the Chesapeake and Low Country put distance between themselves and the plantations they fled.

¹³² [no title], 26 May 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, quotation : "il y a une grande cantité de coquen de Negre Libre qui conaisse on il y a des negre Marron, et qui ont des corespondence avecq Eux."

¹³⁴ [no title], 26 May 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 16 (1933): 516-20.

collaborate with maroons, libres could at times identify them. For example, in 1783, of the testimony given after the attack on the maroon communities at Lake Borgne, it was the free mulattos Pedro Langlishe and Luis who identified St. Malo.¹³⁵

Maroons engaged entire networks of people. Together they made up the fabric of the society of the Lower Mississippi Valley even as that society experienced challenges that undermined the viability of older borderlands relationships. If official attention to eradicating the colony of maroon communities in the years following the revolution dealt a blow to the life of unsanctioned communities, the project to suppress maroon communities also highlighted how entrenched those communities were through their networks of contacts and trading partners.

Although Lower Louisiana still relied upon the *petites nations* for their role in marketing and as allies, after the Gulf Coast campaigns, these Indians became increasingly marginalized. Rather than a result of policy against ‘illicit’ communities such as maroons, this development grew partly out of shifting international borders. With a border dispute removed from the Mississippi River itself to the greater Southeast, the *petites nations* no longer had multiple European nations to broker power among nor was the colony as dependent upon them as allies for its own security and survival as it had been until the American Revolution. Now relocating farther and farther west into Spanish Louisiana, many began to suffer from encroachment and the afflictions of disease and alcohol. For their part, *petites nations* cooperated with colonial militia and continued to travel to New Orleans for traditional meetings with the governor and to obtain medals and approval for new leaders. In doing so, they tried to maintain their long held alliances with settlements and with the colonial government. All the while, colonial officials seemed

¹³⁵ “Criminal Prosecution of Two Fugitive Negroes,” 1 march 1783, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 20 (1937): 841-65. It is possible that Bernardo and Scipion did in fact witness St. Malo fire that first shot, but it is also possible that they ascribed the deed to the well-known maroon leader either out of knowledge of his reputation as a fierce leader or out of a desire to frighten authorities.

largely indifferent to these once indispensable groups. As they were pushed geographically farther from the colonial center at New Orleans to the periphery, borderland practices remained the best means of survival and preservation of custom and identity among the *petites nations*.

With few exceptions, Louisiana's *petites nations* Indian allies had proven their loyalty to the Spanish by their participation in the war; however, Spain fell short of its promises to reward them. Indian leaders used the Spanish failure to fulfill promises as leverage in negotiations, repeatedly requesting the payment of their reward for their service. Preoccupied with securing the loyalty of the larger Indian nations of the southeast, Spanish officials in New Orleans focused much less time and fewer resources on their relations with the *petites nations*. The Attakapas chief Cahoché traveled from his village on the Calcasieu to New Orleans in 1782 to receive the presents promised him for his participation in the campaign on the river.¹³⁶ That same year, L'Oeil du Carpe, a chief of the Alibamons, and Derneville, the representative of the Pacanas, traveled from Opelousas to New Orleans to seek the presents due them for the Baton Rouge campaign.¹³⁷ In 1788, Actayathy, then chief of the Alibamons who had been living with his wife and sons at Rapides since at least 1773, still sought recompense for helping to suppress the Natchez Rebellion. He asked Miró for a red *capon*, a shirt, a hat, and culottes.¹³⁸ In 1789, the Choctaws living at Rapides reminded Miró that in 1779 Bernardo de Gálvez had promised a commission to Chacto Mingo that he still had not received.¹³⁹ Though they identified themselves as Choctaws, the group at Rapides was less significant to Spanish officials because they had removed themselves west of the Mississippi and away from the new border conflict.

¹³⁶ DeClouet to Miró, Opelousas, 1 Nov 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 746.

¹³⁷ DeClouet, Opelousas, 15 Oct 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 745.

¹³⁸ Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 15 Feb 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 825; DeVille, *Rapides Post on Red River; Census and Military Documents for Central Louisiana, 1769-1800*, (1985): 20.

¹³⁹ Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 27 July 1789, PPC, legajo 202: fo 526-7.

Some Spanish officials still valued the knowledge and skill of these smaller Indian groups especially with regard to the topography of the Lower Mississippi. In 1784, Francisco Boulogny wrote to request thirty Indians, ten Choctaws, ten Biloxis, and ten Pascagoulas to help his men suppress the maroons gathered near Lake Borgne. In particular, Boulogny asked for men who had knowledge of Lake Borgne and the land and waterways around it. Some remembered that these Indians now living at Rapides had formerly made their life in the region now inhabited by the maroons and for that reason Boulogny singled out the Indian nations known to have expertise navigating the watery region. The Biloxis had been known as the “people of the pirogue” so integrated was their lifestyle to the environment of the Lower Mississippi, and the Choctaws had hunted and marketed their game and produce in New Orleans.¹⁴⁰ Boulogny noted that the “the Biloxis are those who understand best these places. It is necessary that the brother of the chief Fanimingo descend [to New Orleans] and that all ten Biloxis be the most experienced in these places.” Boulogny also requested an interpreter. The commandant at Rapides, Valentin Layssard, most likely sent his son Valentin Layssard, fils, who acted as the post’s primary diplomat among the Indians. The warriors left Rapides for Pointe Coupée where they met a man adept in Mobilian Jargon named Mayeux. Boulogny had requested his presence so that he could head up the party of Indians. Mayeux brought two other men skilled in Indian language to the Lower River for the campaign against the maroons because Boulogny wanted to assure that each party of Indians had an interpreter.¹⁴¹

During the 1780s, encroachment on Indian lands became particularly acute with the granting of more land to settlers. Here the regime and settlers cooperated much to the detriment

¹⁴⁰ Boulogny to Layssard, New Orleans, 7 may 1784, PPC, legajo 197: 679-81.

¹⁴¹ Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 15 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 677-78. Boulogny to Layssard, New Orleans, 7 May 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 679-81, quotation: “les biloxis sont ceux qui connoissent le mieux ces endroits. Il faudra descendre le frère du chef Fanimingo et que tout les dix Biloxis soyent les plus pratiques de ces endroits.”

of smaller Indian groups. After the Revolution, the government at New Orleans favored settlers in disputes more than it had prior to the war and the regulations governing land grants, inclusive of the lands acknowledged as Indian lands, demanded the upkeep of levees. In the LaFourche district, the Houmas struggled to maintain their lands and villages there. New Orleans officials failed to recognize the significance of the group to the interests of Louisiana and were willing to see the group marginalized. In contrast, although also a colonial official, Judice, who served as commandant at the LaFourche from the 1770s until his death in 1796, had lived and worked among the Houmas for many years. During the early struggle between the Houmas and New Orleans, Judice favored the Houmas and negotiated with his superiors on their behalf. He saw the Houmas as integral to the settlement on the Lafourche. When he wrote to Miró, Judice cited their significance to official purposes, such as their loyalty to the settlement and in imposing order by assisting in catching maroons and in their service during the campaigns of the war.

As the settlement at LaFourche grew and as men such as O'Reilly's nephews Maurice and Patrick Conway obtained grants in the vicinity, the Houmas suffered intrusion onto their village lands. The farms of Acadian colonists had come to nearly engulf the village closer to the junction of the Mississippi and the LaFourche. The Houmas living on the Lower Lafourche had agreed to sell their village and lands to the Conways, Pollock, Antoine Boisdore, Andry, and Alexandre Latil.¹⁴² However, the lands near Conway where the Houmas had agreed to resettle and to farm flooded frequently and badly. The Indians asked Gálvez to reconsider the grant to Conway in 1780 because they wanted to live at the site of their former village.¹⁴³ Like Willing's grant at Old Tunica during the 1770s, this situation serves as an example of the appropriation of

¹⁴² Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 21 Nov 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 373-5. Antoine Boisdoré was a French doctor and merchant who owned land also in the Attakapas District and participated in the slave trade. Also a Frenchman, Alexandre Latil operated a butchery and tannery in New Orleans.

¹⁴³ Judice to Piernas, LaFourche, 20 Oct 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 365.

the sites of Indian villages and farmlands by Euro-Americans as advantageous property for trade, agriculture, and settlement. In 1782, Judice noted that the Houmas still claimed one piece of land probably belonging to Conway that was 15 arpents of frontage, and another piece of land 64 arpents of frontage above it, where they agreed to keep the levee and the roads in repair.¹⁴⁴ However, maintaining the levee and roads proved a great challenge for the Houmas.

At times, local officials were more aware of the significance of these borderland networks. Judice had a more nuanced understanding of the integration of colonial-Indian relations in settlements of the Lower Mississippi than did his superiors. In 1784, the Houma men, women, and children of the village in question welcomed Judice at the home of the colonist Mr. Mollere. Led by the chiefs Mingo Mastabée and Judice's trusted friend Calabée, the Houmas pleaded for a new concession as they sang, danced, and cried beckoning Judice, Mollere, and other colonists to join in. The Indians expected that Judice and the colonists of LaFourche would engage the Indian ceremony, and, as was customary, they did. The Houmas told Judice that they risked "that their wives and children would die from hunger" because their harvest was ruined. Judice proposed to Miró that the Houma village settle on a portion of his own concession and live alongside him, offering 50 arpents of frontage of the large concession he enjoyed. Judice recognized the Houmas as an asset to the settlement of LaFourche: "my intention in this is to retain them [the Houmas] on the banks of the river where they can be useful to the good of the service of His Majesty."¹⁴⁵ The Houmas wanted their entire village to go to New Orleans where they could plead their cause before Miró. Instead, Judice thought it more

¹⁴⁴ Judice to Boulogny, LaFourche, 26 Dec 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 477-8. Note, this is before the mass settlement of Acadians at Lafourche between 1785 and 1788.

¹⁴⁵ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 26 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 304-6, quotation: "il courois risque eux leurs femme et leurs enfant de mourir de fain, il mon priés de leurs permestre de faire Recolte." Mollere is probably either the doctor living on the coast, François Mollere, or his son Joseph who would be about twenty in 1784. Judice, Census of Acadians at Kabahannosé 1777, Rive Droit, PPC, legajo 190: fo 186-188.

prudent to select three representatives, including Houlbatchée, who was recognized as the primary chief of the Houmas, and Calabée's adopted son Hounnoua. They traveled to New Orleans with their interpreter Charles Tarascon. To soothe the Houmas, Judice saw fit to award them eight bottles of drink that he obtained from Paul Forrest's cabaret.¹⁴⁶

Wanting to contain the Houmas on the grant near Conway's land, Miró initially asked Judice to attempt to force the Houmas to remain on the land so prone to flooding. The Houmas protested, and Judice repeatedly informed the governor that he doubted that the Houmas would comply.¹⁴⁷ In July, Judice reported that "The Houmas are below the land they sold to Conway but I do not think that they will really leave the land except by force."¹⁴⁸ During the conflict over the location of the Houma village, Calabée died. Calabée and Judice had relied upon one another as allies for many years, and Calabée participated in the Baton Rouge campaign with his men. Before his death in February 1785, Calabée assured that Hounnoua would succeed him as the medal chief. Judice's wife, Marie Jeanne Cantrell, went with Hounnoua to New Orleans to meet with Miró and to receive his medal.¹⁴⁹ Finally, in early November 1785, Judice, Miró, and the Houmas reached a settlement. The Indians had recently removed from Conway's lands to the land that Judice had offered them a year earlier. There they erected twelve cabins "around my lands where they are very tranquil." This arrangement developed only a few weeks before

¹⁴⁶ DeClouet to Miró, 20 Jan 1785, PPC, legajo 198, 188-9; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 26 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 304-6, quotation: "mon intention en cela est de les retenir sur les bord du fleuve ou il peuvent etre util au bien et Service de la Majestée." It is also interesting to note that several of the individuals who served as interpreters to various Indian nations of Lower Louisiana were well established planters, respected members of society in New Orleans, and incorporated in to influential family networks. Antoine Boisdoré, a sergion in New Orleans who owned land at LaFouche and at the Attakapas district and who was also a merchant and engaged in the slave trade, was a recognized interpreter for the Attakapas Indians with whom he also traded.

¹⁴⁷ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 26 march 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 407-8; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 26 June 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 420.

¹⁴⁸ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 25 July 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 443-3.

¹⁴⁹ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 13 fib 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 394-6; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 20 fib 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 398-9; Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 26 march 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 407-8.

Philippe's descent upon the LaFourche settlement. The Houmas, therefore, like the Biloxis, Pascagoulas, and Choctaws whom Bouligny called upon in 1784, were very familiar with the land and the waterways that Judice asked them to search for maroons in 1785. Judice reported to Miró on November 19, 1785 that the Houma chiefs Hounnoua and HoulBatchcée who traveled to New Orleans had earned a reward: "He served me in the occasion relating to the *negres marrons* with as much zeal as the *Blancs* themselves."¹⁵⁰

Alcohol, violence, and disease continued to wreak havoc on the *petites nations*. In 1787-8 struck the *petites nations* communities severely. Smallpox spread among the Houmas of the LaFourche District.¹⁵¹ At Rapides in February, at least twenty six Indians, men, women, and children lost their lives to the epidemic. At the first sign of smallpox in August of 1787, the Pascagoulas withdrew into the woods, but they must have been infected before their hasty departure or perhaps by traders or hunters they met after leaving Rapides, for more than half of the Pascagoulas died while taking refuge near Catahoula Lake. The Pascagoulas who survived returned to Rapides in 1788 with their leader Olitopa.¹⁵² Again in 1791, the Pascagoulas attempted to avert the threat of disease when they refused to travel to New Orleans which was suffering an outbreak of yellow fever.¹⁵³ Disease contributed to the decline in population among the *petites nations*, weakening the power of the individual groups.

The consumption of alcohol perpetuated violence among these communities, further undermining their strength. In 1789, a Choctaw killed a Biloxi in New Orleans after the two had

¹⁵⁰ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 19 nov 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 463-5, quotation: "a l'autour de mon etablissement, ou il sont fort tranquil" and "Il mon servis Dans cet occasion des Negres marrons avec autant de zelle que les Blancs mesme."

¹⁵¹ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 4 may 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 599-600; Judice to Miró, 2 Dec 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 659.

¹⁵² Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 6 fib 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 823; Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 29 April 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 830.

¹⁵³ Layssard to Miró, Ouachita, 18 April 1792, PPC, legajo 204: fo 685.

drunk to excess. True to the colonial sense of order, Miró recommended that his commandants try to enforce the prohibition against illegal peddling of alcohol among the Indians. In July, Layssard complained that a Choctaw named Constiné, who had received a commission as captain from Miró March 26, 1782, had become intoxicated and killed one of his nation and then returned to his village where he spoke against the harms caused by drink and killed himself. These were the same Choctaws who had been loyal to the Spanish, led by Gaspar and then by his son Chacto Mingo. Constiné's brother Houan received Constiné's medal.¹⁵⁴ In 1785, a Houma named Pistolet killed his wife. One night eight years later, intoxicated, he fell asleep on the road beside Valenzuela where a Choctaw Indian gouged out his eyes with a cane. Pistolet managed to reach the home of his brother Tilliac near Judice's home. In 1793, the Houmas living near Judice requested permission from the Governor to replace their chief, Nattiabée, whom Judice characterized as "a bad man" and given to drink.¹⁵⁵

During the 1780s, numerous Indian nations in Louisiana suffered crises of leadership. These crises reflected shifting alliances among groups as they tried to navigate the changes in the Lower Mississippi. The Pacanas experienced frequent turn-over in leadership of their small group. After Faspouca, chief since 1780, died in 1782, the Pacanas did not have a chief of their own.¹⁵⁶ This group had been living with the Alibamons at Opelousas and had participated together with them in the Baton Rouge campaigns although they maintained separate identities.¹⁵⁷ Instead of a new chief, the Pacanas selected a representative named Derneville who worked with the Alibamon chief. Derneville had asked Bernardo de Gálvez to recognize him as

¹⁵⁴ Miró to Noel Soileau, New Orleans, 10 June 1789, PPC, legajo 202: fo 192; Miró to Layssard, New Orleans, PPC, 31 July 1787, legajo 202: fo 532.

¹⁵⁵ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 25 May 1793, PPC, legajo 204: fo 426-7, quotation: "mechante home que me doit la vie que fait acheter a pris d'argent et force de Boisson."

¹⁵⁶ Piernas to DeClouet, New Orleans, 8 Aug 1780, PPC, legajo 193b: fo 82.

¹⁵⁷ DeClouet, Opelousas, 15 Oct 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 745.

the leader of the Pacanas in 1778.¹⁵⁸ Though still living, he was later replaced by a new medal chief Tascahaitabé who died on the German Coast in the home of habitant Alexandre Chenette after only a short time as leader.¹⁵⁹ In 1784, the Pascagoula chief Capina was killed at Opelousas. The two remaining leaders were the elderly Mantenu and the other Mingo Emita, who shook visibly. Layssard noted that “the chiefs are two men who have no authority.” Soon, the Pascagoula village presented itself to Layssard to recommend a leader named Olitopa as the new medal chief for their village. Olitopa held greater respect among the Pascagoulas than either of the chiefs, and Layssard was pleased that he had greater success in controlling the behavior of the young men.¹⁶⁰ By 1788, Mingo Emita was a recognized first chief and Capina Mingo the second chief of an Indian village near Rapides, probably that of the Pascagoulas and any other groups living with them.¹⁶¹ The dwindling Apalaches received another blow to their nation at the death of their chief Pascoye in early 1784. With his death, the medal that the Spanish had awarded him was given to the Choctaw chief Chapeau Canya instead of to another Apalache.¹⁶² Chapeau Canya and his band of Choctaws lived with the Biloxis at Avoyelles in 1785. Together they numbered 102 persons and held eighty seven cattle and ninety eight horses. Presumably, the Choctaw Chief Choctaw Mingo and Chapeau Canya cooperated with the Biloxi leaders Chief Mathau and the second chief Faney Mingo.¹⁶³ In 1789, a party of Attakapas Indians met with

¹⁵⁸ DeClouet to Bernardo de Gálvez, Opelousas, 4 July 1778, PPC, legajo 203: fo 429; Bernardo de Gálvez to DeClouet, New Orleans, 15 July 1778, PPC, legajo 203: fo 430.

¹⁵⁹ Maurice O’Conor, St. Jean des Allemands, 23 march 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 68.

¹⁶⁰ Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 15 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 675.

¹⁶¹ Miró to Layssard, New Orleans, 7 Jan 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 821; Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 29 April 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 830.

¹⁶² Miró to Layssard, New Orleans, 17 Feb 1784, PPC, legajo 198: fo 899.

¹⁶³ Recensement des Sauvage Demeurant aux Avoyelles, 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 185. For a discussion of the fanimingo, or “squirrel king,” as “diplomatic technique [that] united the Choctaws and a foreign group” see O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 63. There are multiple occasions of individuals in petits nations referred to as fanimingo or some iteration of the title in Spanish records. In another example, “Le Nommé Fanimingo Chef des Biloxi” traveled to New Orleans to express his loyalty to the Spanish Crown in 1796. Delamorandiere to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 8 April 1796, PPC, legajo 212: fo 403. He had lived or hunted at Avoyelles in 1785, Recensement des Sauvage Demeurant aux Avoyelles, 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 185.

Delavillebeuvre, who was serving a year as temporary commandant at the Attakapas post, to nominate a single leader, Pitolch. Only a few years earlier, they had had four chiefs, but Pitolch was the only one who remained in 1790. The great leader Nementeau had died in 1785.¹⁶⁴

Although Indian society was recognized as separate, Spanish officials sometimes attempted to incorporate it according to Spanish norms. In 1784, violence between Choctaws and Chitimachas broke out in New Orleans and resulted in the death of a Choctaw. The Chitimacha village on Bayou Plaquemine in the LaFourche district made certain that their innocence was known when the two Choctaw leaders of the Rapides district Choctaws sought retribution for the murder. Judice wrote to DeClouet that the murderers were among the Chitimachas living in the Attakapas district governed by the Chief Souliers Rouges and that DeClouet must speak with the Choctaw chiefs and with Souliers Rouges regarding the crime.¹⁶⁵ Referring to the death of two Choctaws at Ouachita in 1785, the commandant Filhiol preferred not to interfere and wrote that “no one can ignore that vengeance is a law observed among these Indians.”¹⁶⁶ In contrast, in 1787, Judice expressed a desire to intervene in Houma society. In September a Houma woman gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, in the woods near the Houma village beside Judice’s home. In the middle of the night, two of Judice’s slave women alerted their mistress to tell her that they had heard the cries of children and had learned that the mother and another Houma woman had buried the infants alive. Marie Jeanne Cantrell followed the slave women to the woods. Although they tried to revive the children, the women were too late. Miró instructed Judice to speak harshly to the Indians, but he also reminded Judice that the

¹⁶⁴ DeClouet to Miró, 18 April 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 201; Delavillebeuvre to Miró, Attakapas, 21 May 1790, PPC, legajo 203: fo 101. This is the first mention of the Attakapas Indians in several years of records.

¹⁶⁵ DeClouet to Miró, Attakapas, 10 Aug 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 181-2; Judice to DeClouet, New Orleans, 28 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 307.

¹⁶⁶ Filhiol to Miró, Ouachita, 21 Dec 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 854-6.

Houmas were “not subject to be constrained by the same [laws] as the whites.”¹⁶⁷ Shortly after, the Houmas went to Opelousas and Attakapas to sing the calumet with the Indians there. Then they returned to LaFourche, where Judice wrote for permission to tell them “that they will be chased from your presence for all time if they destroy their children.” Judice spoke with the Houmas and his wife with the women who had buried the infants.¹⁶⁸

In the years following the American Revolution, the *petites nations* began to suffer marginalization that resulted in large part from the shift in the international border from the Mississippi River between British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana. The colonial government began to favor encroaching settlers over the *petites nations*. By increasing their hunting in Louisiana and Texas, some Choctaw groups also created new pressures for the Indians settled on the Red River. Additionally, the smaller Indian groups of Louisiana began to experience challenges in their societies that grew out of disease, crises of leadership, and drink and violence. In the new frictions that developed between the *petites nations*, local officials sometimes negotiated on behalf of the Indians whom they realized had been integral to life in the Lower Mississippi, but in general, the colonial government at New Orleans saw little purpose in maintaining consistent diplomatic relations with the *petites nations*. Relationships mattered most for the viability of *petites nations* Indians as they struggled to maintain their identities and communities. The Houmas benefited from their relationship with individuals like Judice who advocated on their behalf. Having lost the political power that the proximity of the pre-war

¹⁶⁷ Miró to Judice, New Orleans, 1787, PPC, legajo 200: fo 573, quotation: “J’ai appris Par la votre de 22 dernier la triste et barbare Cathastrophe arrive dans l’accaidement de cette sauvagesse denature qui a permis qu’on enterre vivants les deux enfants qui elle engit de mettre au Jour: Je suis d’auttan plus chagrin que je ne peux ni remedier ni chatier un crime pareil parce que les sauvages ne peuvent pas être contraints par les mêmes lorsque les blancs. Cependant si vous avis que cele puisse se commodement, et sans exposer l’acouchée et celle qui enterrá les enfants vous les fairés conoitre avec les plus fortes expressions q[u]e vous pourrez combien j’ai été fáché de leur conduite, leur faissant voir que parmi les blancs, elles auroient été punie par les dernier supplice. ”

¹⁶⁸ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 25 Oct 1787, PPC, legajo 200: fo 578-9.

international border granted them and with wartime unrest now settled, the pursuit of maroons continued as the primary way that these smaller Indian nations could demonstrate their significance to the colonial government.

Philippe had traveled from time to time to New Orleans. Early in 1785, he had traveled there in time for the festivities of carnival. The night before carnival, he had broken into a room off of the courtyard of Guido Dufossat's house. The room was rented to Miguel Hero, a fisherman by trade. The clothes that Philippe stole he quickly sold on the levee before travelling to the Prevost plantation where he celebrated carnival the next day.¹⁶⁹ The levee served as a principal site for the buying and selling of goods for free blacks, slaves, Indians, and others who did not want their transactions monitored by officials. It had been the site of such borderland practices since the French period. Traditionally, residents of the Lower Mississippi Valley, licensed and unlicensed alike, traveled the river and connecting waterways. In New Orleans as well as throughout the Lower Mississippi, petit-trade engaged nearly every segment of the population: slaves selling produce or items they had crafted, *petites nations* Indians with game, farmers with excess produce. For most people, trading was not so much a profession as part of a way of life. During the 1780s, personal relationships of those trading with one another continued to bear import, but the colonial government made much effort to designate marketing activity to specific spaces. As colonial officials attempted to suppress contraband anew, they directed their attentions particularly towards eliminating unlicensed peddlers, or *caboteurs*.

As Spanish officials and the cabildo worked to enforce tariffs and to inspect, goods traded around New Orleans, they also designated a specific space for marketing. In 1779, the

¹⁶⁹ "Certified Copy of the Proceedings prosecuted by Miguel Hero against the free negro, Felipe, for having forced the door of his room, broken open his chests and robbed him of some of his clothes," 8 feb 1785, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 26 (1943): 868-73.

Cabildo established a market that was used mostly by butchers. In 1782, that wooden structure was replaced by a building complete with brick and plaster walls and a gallery. Within two years, the 1782 structure was designated for the meat market and another market was constructed nearby where ideally officials could assure the quality of food and its price. In 1784, the Cabildo demanded that peddlers, hunters, and fishermen cease selling their goods as itinerant marketers and employ the newly designated public space where anyone selling food must rent a stall in order to conduct business. Under such watch, it became more difficult for slaves or maroons or anyone traveling without a passport to subsist through modes of marketing traditional to the borderlands, now considered illicit.¹⁷⁰

Caboteurs were a diverse lot who often peddled along the waterways of the Lower Mississippi River Valley to gain supplementary income. They included free blacks, slaves, Isleños, landowners, and inhabitants of European descent who took part in this emerging segment of middlemen traders in New Orleans “professional peddlers, or *marchands*, who bought foodstuffs from producers and resold them to consumers.” One such petit marchand was an Isleño named Espinosa who was also a carpenter living in New Orleans. His wife Juana Maria Martes helped him purchase merchandise in New Orleans through licit and informal networks. Espinosa travelled by pirogue with several rowers through the posts of the lower river with merchandise that in 1780 included “two barrels of brandy, four packages of salt, an iron collar for negroes, seven tin plates, two pairs of buckles for the bottom of trousers, a buckle for a boy, all silver, four silver forks and two silver spoons, and two pounds of nails.” He also sold cotton napkins and fishing lines. Although their profession developed during the Spanish period, peddlers developed as a group oriented towards taking advantage of the topography and

¹⁷⁰ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 215; Din and Harkin, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 186-9.

borderlands trade practices. For the most part, their actions took place outside of official spaces and away from watchful eyes. Officials, such as the members of the cabildo, saw the business conducted by peddlers like Espinosa as a threat to the tariffs and inspections that the Spanish regime attempted to impose. The peddlers connected individuals now driven from marketing in the city to the market itself and willingly bartered with their smaller trade partners. By trading with peddlers, slaves and maroons were able to circumvent their masters' authority.¹⁷¹

The source of the goods that Espinosa peddled was not always legal. In 1780, he was accused of obtaining and selling stolen property, including silver spoons and forks.¹⁷² For decades, goods and clothing that circulated through informal channels of trade had been stolen and sometimes re-made or disguised. Selling or trading pilfered items on the levee was one way that slaves and maroons subsisted and turned a profit.¹⁷³ In 1782, Juan, a runaway slave, stole a pirogue, crossed Lake Pontchartrain, and travelled to New Orleans where on the levee he and a black woman named Maturina sold stolen hens, turkeys, and goods stolen from a city home of one named Guerin. Among the stolen goods were clothes of slaves living in New Orleans.¹⁷⁴

The levee was a place to sell goods, obtained licitly and illicitly.

¹⁷¹ "Criminal Proceedings against Pedro Espinosa," 15 Aug 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 622-6; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 215-6, quotation.

¹⁷² "Criminal Proceedings against Pedro Espinosa," 15 Aug 1780, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 14 (1931): 622-6.

¹⁷³ For a discussion of the networks of Indians, Africans, and Europeans that introduced and circulated stolen goods and foodstuffs in Louisiana during the French period, see Sophie White, "Geographies of Slave Consumption" *Winterthur Portfolio* 45 (Summer/Autumn 2011): 229-248. See also, Sophie White, "'A Baser Commerce': Retailing, Class, and Gender in French Colonial New Orleans," *WMQ* 63.3 (2006): 517-50. In her article, White discusses the role of women in the marketplace particularly in retail and as suppliers in French colonial New Orleans. In her analysis, she notes that "The ineffectiveness of the imperial framework for transatlantic trade intensified the potential for widespread commercial activity among colonists who had no formal trade affiliation. No guild regulations were in place in Louisiana; thus unhindered, a range of colonists outside the merchant ranks resorted to unorthodox means of supplying the colony, driven as much by the need for goods as the need for revenue"(521). Access to goods had certainly opened up in the years after 1763, but the "unorthodox" practices of local suppliers continued.

¹⁷⁴ "Criminal Prosecution of a negro slave, Juan, belonging to Vincent Rillieux," 3 June 1782, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 18 (1935): 1004-11, Juan was a slave originally from Guinea who was transport first to Saint Domingue before he was sold by a French merchant to a Mr. Suto, a merchant of the Illinois country. He was a known flight risk, having run away three times while in Illinois with Suto before being sold at public auction to Vincent Rillieux.

In its attempt to enforce oversight and to restrict marketing to official spaces, the colonial government began to crack down on peddling, marketing, and general movement of colonists without passports. In doing so, the colonial government attempted to restrict the networks engaged in trading and marketing throughout the colony. In particular, the concern over libres and enslaved peoples peddling along the Mississippi and its tributaries grew dramatically. Like other residents of the Lower Mississippi Valley, libres continued to engage in petit trade as a means of livelihood. For example, Pierre Bauré, a free mulatto, was known to “peddle the length of the coast” at the German Coast, where from his pirogue he sold ammunition, clothes such as culottes made of cotton, and many other goods.¹⁷⁵ Slave-owners also sent their slaves to do marketing in New Orleans, and still others authorized their slaves to peddle along the river. In 1786, Marie travelled the Mississippi with a permit from her master Rebuquy of New Orleans: “permit my *negresse* to go along the coasts to sell various merchandise and effects, this the 12 of April 1786.”¹⁷⁶ Marie travelled with another slave, a man who belonged to the Widow Andry. As they ascended the river, they stopped at the German Coast. They deposited the merchandise and some tafia in the cabin of a slave on the Widow Edelmair’s property before being caught one night exchanging tafia with slaves for corn, rice, and poultry. Identified as a peddler of second hand goods, Marie was held with the other slave, the boat, and the merchandise. An inventory included a black, round hat, a sac of Tobacco in packets, sugar, coffee, ribbon, large and small white buttons, buckles, a black culotte, five waistcoats, a long white culotte, a short white

¹⁷⁵ Masicot to Miró, Allemands, 21 Nov 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 72-3, quotation: “gabotte le long de la cote”; List of the Contents of the Boat of Pierre Bauré, PPC, legajo 199: fo 74.

¹⁷⁶ Permit, PPC, legajo 199: fo 40 : “permy a ma negresse daller dans les costs vendre divers merchandise et effets ce 12 Avril 1786.”

culotte, four white shirts, clothes made from cotton and gingham, four cotton blue handkerchiefs, a sack of cotton, and an axe.¹⁷⁷

Concern over the widespread practice of selling alcohol by un-licensed persons also grew. In 1782, the libre Laurent was caught selling alcohol at night and without a license near the land of his former master Sieur Lorio.¹⁷⁸ That same year at the German Coast, the complaints of cruelty that a slave woman leveled against her master Louis Blondeau revealed that Blondeau sold alcohol “indiscriminately to blacks and to Indians.”¹⁷⁹ In 1783, a merchant traveled the LaFourche district selling “all kinds of drink in pot and pint” undercutting the sale of alcohol through cabarets like that belonging to Pierre Forrest at Lafourche. The taxes on alcohol collected at the cabaret were used for the upkeep of the local church. As long as a license was in hand, the Spanish colonial government consented to libres and to women operating taverns in New Orleans and in the settlements. The 1780s witnessed an increase in the number of licenses granted in New Orleans probably in an effort to reduce illicit trade. In 1784, the cabildo condemned the sale of alcohol to slaves, and in 1786 Miró issued a prohibition of sales to slaves without written permission from their masters.¹⁸⁰ In 1784, Masicot caught two blacks, whom he identified as “*Anglais*,” selling alcohol to the slaves in his district.¹⁸¹ Miró wrote in response to

¹⁷⁷ Statement, 8 April 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 44-5.

¹⁷⁸ Bellisle, Allemands, 22 Oct 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 166-7.

¹⁷⁹ Robin, Allemands, 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 171-3; Robin, Allemands, 22 Oct 1782, PPC, legajo 195: fo 169, quotation: “indistinctement aux negres et sauvages.” This incident illustrates several interesting aspects of slaves at the colonial periphery complaining against their masters. This slave woman, who is nameless in the record, complained that Blondeau beaten her and killed her child who was ill. She filed her complaint with the post commandant Bellisle, who wrote the governor about the case and then opened an investigation in which he interviewed Blondeau’s neighbors—both men and women—regarding Blondeau’s treatment of his slaves and the veracity of the story. Nearly all concurred that Blondeau was a cruel master and thought that the woman’s story was true. The record ends there.

¹⁸⁰ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, 29 June 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 349-50, quotation: “de toute sorte de Boison a pot et a pinte.” See also, Jack D.L. Holmes, “Spanish Regulation of Taverns and the Liquor Trade,” in McDermott, ed., *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley*: 149-82. Carondelet wrote Masicot in 1792 that he must allow the free mulatto Astir to open and operate a cabaret on the German Coast. Carondelet to Masicot, New Orleans, 2 July 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 49.

¹⁸¹ Masicot to Miró, 27 March 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 69-70.

the news that “It is indubitable that the only means of stopping the *désordre* of the *Caboteurs* on this coast is that of confiscating drink.” Miró asked his commandants to be more proactive about distributing passports to travelers.¹⁸² In 1785, the commandant at Iberville, Deverbois attributed disorder at his own post when slaves committed acts of robbery on the sale of drink by “petit” merchants peddling tafia through his district.¹⁸³ In November 1786, Pierre Bauré was apprehended for selling tafia out of his boat on the German Coast.¹⁸⁴ That same year, Masicot confiscated tafia being sold by the mulatto Louis Olivier.¹⁸⁵ In the same letter that included the inventory of the merchandise confiscated from Marie, Masicot also complained about the free griffe Nanette Chabert’s selling alcohol to blacks in his district.¹⁸⁶ The Isleño carpenter-peddler Espinosa was accused of obtaining goods through illegal avenues again in 1785. He was found innocent of the crime, but the investigation revealed that he too had been selling brandy illegally to slaves in New Orleans.¹⁸⁷

Spanish officials succeeded in limiting practices of barter and trade lingering from the frontier exchange economy, but, like their efforts to eliminate maroon communities, officials did

¹⁸² Miró to Masicot, New Orleans, 30 March 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 71-2, quotation: “Il est indubitable que le seul moien d’arrêter le désordre des Caboteurs dans les Côtes est celui de la confiscation des Boisons.”

¹⁸³ Deverbois, Iberville, 28 May 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 371.

¹⁸⁴ Masicot to Miró, Allemands, 21 Nov 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 72-3.

¹⁸⁵ Masicot to Miró, Allemands, 18 April 1786, PPC, legajo 199: fo 40-1.

¹⁸⁶ Masicot, New Orleans, 2 May 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 76; Masicot, New Orleans, 22 May 1783, PPC, legajo 196: fo 77; Masicot to Miró, Allemands, 6 July 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 132-3, quotation: “Cette Nannete est un fameuse coquina et affront. Je luy mis a la man pour avoir vendre de la boisson aux Negre, et il y a un mois et demy que je luy est fort payé un vole DeVollaille quel a prés nocternement á Mr Lacaze”; Miró to Masicot, 16 July 1785, New Orleans, PPC, legajo 198: fo 136. Nanette Chabert sued Thomas Cumins in New Orleans in 1781 for the debt he owed her of 900 pesos. “Naneta, called Chabert, a free mulattress vs. Thomas Comins,” 8 fib 1781, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 15 (1934): 558. Nanette was a free griffe who lived on the German Coast. Clearly Masicot did not hold her in high esteem. He described her as “Cette Nannete est un fameuse coquina et affront. Je luy mis a la man pour avoir vendre de la boisson aux Negre, et il y a un mois et demy que je luy est fort payé un vole DeVollaille quel a prés nocternement á Mr Lacaze.” At least twice her neighbors and the commandant sided with her slave Noël when he complained that she mistreated him for not wanting to participate in her “mauvais commerce.”

¹⁸⁷ “Criminal proceedings Guillermo Parbaus vs Juan Espinosa, for robbery,” 16 fib 1785, Laura Porteous trans., SPJR, *LHQ* 26 (1943): 1192-7.

not succeed in entirely suppressing borderlands trade practices.¹⁸⁸ It was in nearly everyone's interest to continue the more fluid practices of peddling, trade, and exchange. Such activities provided a way for peddlers to make a profit and a way for those excluded from official spaces to trade. The topography of the region made peddling an easy mode of trade. Spain faced a great challenge reigning in the individuals who participated in these various networks of trade.

The Ouachita Post: Bringing 'le Bon Ordre' to the Periphery?

An experiment in the ability of Spain to impose order on the borderlands took place in the Ouachita Valley in the 1780s where the newly appointed commandant Jean Filhiol arrived with instructions to impose 'Le bon ordre.' At best, the project succeeded at inserting the presence of an official in an area characterized by persistent borderland practices.

In 1783, after participating in the Gulf Coast campaigns, the French born Jean Filhiol received a commission from Miró as the first commandant of Ouachita.¹⁸⁹ The post at Ouachita was meant to bring the unruly inhabitants under the purview of the colonial government. After the chaos and rumor spurred by the Natchez Rebellion, some semblance of a settlement and a commandant to oversee Indian affairs and the regulation of trade might turn the lands of the Ouachita Valley into a branch of the ideal bulwark against encroaching Americans or interference of Indians such as the Chickasaws.

Miró's instructions to Filhiol reflect the purpose the governor saw in the establishment of the new post: Indian relations, intelligence gathering, and monitoring the movement of peoples through the district. In 1784, Filhiol noted that Miró had sent him out of "the desire...to

¹⁸⁸ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves* 216-7.

¹⁸⁹ The first post was located at modern Camden, AR, but was very quickly relocated to the site of present day Monroe, LA. Fair Harden, "Don Juan Filhiol and the Founding of Fort Miró, the Modern Monroe Louisiana," *LHQ* 20 (1937):463-466.

establish good order in all parts of this province.”¹⁹⁰ The first order of business for the commandant was as follows: “He will have arrested and handed over immediately deserters and all other subjects who present themselves who come within his jurisdiction without passports.” Like the other districts of Lower Louisiana, the commandant at Ouachita post was to keep a close eye on the movement of colonists, and as in other districts, Filhiol was to track down and send to New Orleans any criminals passing through his area of jurisdiction. As the population of the district, which numbered about two hundred in 1783, included ‘vagabonds’ and petit traders who interfered at times in Indian relations, Filhiol’s role also included negotiating among Indian and colonist. The Ouachita Post would fit into the arch of Spanish posts and settlements from Natchitoches, Attakapas, Opelousas, and Pointe Coupée, with which Filhiol was to keep in close contact. In contrast to the monopolies established at Mobile and Pensacola at about this time, the trade to the Indians through Ouachita would remain open to the “traders and traffickers” of the post. Nevertheless, Spanish official presence in the person of Filhiol and in the establishment of a post was also meant to limit any actions by unlicensed factors who might undercut peaceful relations with the Caddos and Quapaws. Borderlands trading practices involved an expansive network of participants and effected the empire’s ability to establish borders, achieve its goals, and to relate to the multiplicity of parties in a given region. Spain recognized that the trade of small merchants and vagabonds had political ramifications. Miró wanted to assure that the Indians recognized that their relationship was with Spain “who furnish[es] them with their needs.”¹⁹¹ Perhaps Miró hoped to begin to develop the Indian trade through this post, but in

¹⁹⁰ Filhiol, Ouachita, 1 Sept 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 640-7: “Le Desir que vous avés d’Etablir le bon ordre dans toutes les parties de cette Province.”

¹⁹¹ “Original Instructions of Esteban Miró to Juan Filhiol, 1783, New Orleans, 1 Feb 1783” as translate in Fair Harden, “Don Juan Filhiol and the Founding of Fort Miró, the Modern Monroe Louisiana,” *LHQ* 20 (1937):473-5.

1788, Filhiol described commerce at his post as “annually six to seven thousand pots of bear oil, two thousand deer skins, 2000 pounds of suet, 500 beaver pelts and 100 otters.”¹⁹²

The tensions between policy and practice were well represented in the issue of hunting at Ouachita. Hunters from the Natchitoches post immediately complained that the regulations Filhiol was instituting interrupted their customary winter hunting in the Ouachita Valley.¹⁹³ In his evaluation of the hunters traveling about the Ouachita in May of 1784, Filhiol stated that “the evil that they create in the province is evident.” They “live without religion and without moeurs and have given vice to everyone.”¹⁹⁴ Later that year, Filhiol complained that the hunters were the root of immorality and disorder: “These men hunt and are living worse than the Indians, most are refugees here because of their debts and because of *libertinage* and in order to escape from all subordination.”¹⁹⁵ Many of those living in the Ouachita or passing through it as hunters or traders were men and women attempting to avoid the rule of law. The edges of empire offered opportunities to such individuals. The unregulated lifestyle of these habitants proved an immense challenge to the success of Filhiol’s project.

Although Miró prescribed the establishment of a village for the inhabitants of the Ouachita, Filhiol was met with resistance. Those living in the district were not inclined to take up agriculture, which Miró saw as “being the old method to make vagabonds conform to their duty.”¹⁹⁶ In 1788, Filhiol described the inhabitants:

¹⁹² “The Description of the Ouachita in [1788], Filhiol, Ouachita, 27 July, [1788],” Fair Harden, “Don Juan Filhiol and the Founding of Fort Miró, the Modern Monroe Louisiana,” *LHQ* 20 (1937): 476-85.

¹⁹³ Habitants to Miró, Natchitoches, 6 Aug 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 488-90.

¹⁹⁴ Filhiol, Ouachita, 25 May 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 625-30, quotation: “Le mal qu’ils font á la Provence est Evident.” And “Vit sans religion et sans mœurs & est a donné á tous les vices.”

¹⁹⁵ Filhiol, Ouachita, 1 Sept 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 640-7, quotation: “Ces hommes font le mettier de la chasse et vivoient pire que les Sauvages la plupart y étoient refuiés pour dêttes ou pour cause de Libertinage et pour se soustraire á toute subordination.”

¹⁹⁶ “Original Instructions of Esteban Miró to Juan Filhiol, 1783, New Orleans, 1 Feb 1783,” as translate in Fair Harden, “Don Juan Filhiol and the Founding of Fort Miró, the Modern Monroe Louisiana,” *LHQ* 20 (1937):473-5.

These men are composed of the scum of all sorts of nations, several fugitives from their native countries and who, as well as the others have become fixed there through their attachment to their idleness and their independence, perhaps even to escape from the pursuit of justice before there was a Command... Their customs correspond to their origin. Hardly do they know whether they are Christians. They excel in all the vices and their kind of like is a veritable scandal. The savages, though savages, who have occasion to see them, hold them in contempt, they are always ready to raise their feet provided things are not going according to their ideas,...the women are as vicious as the men, and are the worthy companions of their husbands. What models for their posterity!!

They had refused to congregate in a village, and, in the six years that Filhiol had lived there, only twenty-five had attempted farming, and most of these hastily abandoned it.¹⁹⁷

In one successful plan for order at the Ouachita, the district did develop, with time, into a post from which Filhiol could report on Indian relations. In 1788, after Caddos had come hunting along the Ouachita, he continued to hold onto his ideal: “The Indians see themselves as independent, but I have experienced that they taste that which one calls the good order.”¹⁹⁸ In 1789, Choctaws began to pass the winter at Ouachita. Filhiol reported that three hundred had spent the previous winter at his post and that there were no incidences of violence, which he attributed to the absence of alcohol. He noted once again that the Indians behaved better than the colonists: the Choctaws were “much better than the habitants and hunters of my district.”¹⁹⁹ The following winter, the Osages hunted on the Ouachita.²⁰⁰

The establishment of a new post at the Ouachita signified both the extension of the periphery of Louisiana settlement and an interest on the part of the colonial government to use the post to access intelligence in a district that had been so highly featured in the rumors in the wake of the Natchez Rebellion, and Filhiol’s role as an informant on Indian activities and rumors

¹⁹⁷ “The Description of the Ouachita in [1788], Filhiol, Ouachita, 27 July, [1788],” Fair Harden, “Don Juan Filhiol and the Founding of Fort Miró, the Modern Monroe Louisiana,” *LHQ* 20 (1937):476-85.

¹⁹⁸ Filhiol to Miró, Ouachita, 19 March 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 782-3, quotation: “Les Suavages se regardent indépendans, mais j’ai expérimenté qu’ils goutent ce qu’on peut appeler bon ordre.”

¹⁹⁹ Filhiol to Miró, Ouachita, 5 April 1789, PPC, legajo 202 : fo 469-71, quotation: “beaucoup mieux que les habitants et chasseurs de mon district.”

²⁰⁰ Filhiol to Miró, Ouachita, 7 June 1790, PPC, legajo 203: fo 542-3.

achieved some success. Otherwise, the inhabitants thwarted Miró's hope to extend any concept of order to the edges of empire as they refused to cooperate with the mandates from New Orleans. Borderland practices were usually more difficult to uproot than officials from the outside world wanted to acknowledge.

Conclusions

Spain looked to strengthen its claim on the Southeast and the Lower Mississippi Valley through diplomacy with the region's Indian groups and by developing the population and economy of its colonies. In each of these efforts, Spain cultivated cooperation among and worked with the inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley. Indians of the Southeast recognized opportunity in trading with many competing parties. British merchant networks also looked eagerly to undermining the young United States. Merchants at New Orleans engaged the slave-trade again after the American Revolution. Acadians dispersed across the Atlantic seized the opportunity offered by the expensive Spanish project in 1785 that transported nearly 1,600 Acadians to Louisiana. Finally, colonists throughout the Lower Mississippi eagerly turned to tobacco as an export crop as they had long sought one. These projects were all meant to build the muscle of Spanish presence in the Lower Mississippi and develop the strength of the empire where it met with the new North American territorial enemy, the United States.

The revolution had provided a window for certain groups to band together and cooperate with the empire, but it had also provided a moment of increased fluidity for those living in the borderlands. Many slaves took advantage of the opportunity, and growing maroon communities resulted. Destroying these communities became a primary goal of local officials during the years following the war. An examination of the struggle of maroon communities for survival and the

efforts of officials to suppress those communities also reveals the ways that many sectors of society in Lower Louisiana negotiated cooperation with the Spanish regime and resistance to what they understood of that same regime. Cooperation offered benefits to some, while maroons and *petites nations* especially experienced the changes that grew out of such cooperation. Borderlands contraband trade practices continued to involve many colonists and to plague officials as they attempted to restrict the spaces where trade might take place. In the post-revolutionary moment, the contest intensified between Spanish idea of “bon ordre” and borderland practices, between an imperial visions of order built on defined political, spatial, and social boundaries and borderlands order based on flexible networks of commercial and personal association. At this time, neither competitor enjoyed a complete victory.

Chapter 6

Conflicting Policies and the Making of the Trans-Appalachian West, 1787-1793

Introduction

In 1787, Spain began to favor the United States over Britain once again. At the same time, Spanish border colonies were meant to protect the empire from American expansion. Consequently, the shift complicated strategies for managing migration, trade, and Indian alliances so intricately linked to the Spanish effort to bolster its claim to Louisiana and to stake its claim on the larger borderlands of the Southeast.

Spain began to encourage American settlement within Spanish border colonies to build up the population of its borderland colonies. Traditionally, Spain required that its colonists accept the Catholic faith. Enlightened thought, however, accepted a correlation between a population of loyal colonists and the defensive strength of a given colony. Thus, when Spain opened migration to American Protestants, it hoped to harness the population engaged in the westward migration and its economic productivity to further Spain's own bid for the trans-Appalachian West. In doing so, it also adopted another place-specific policy for its North American border colonies. Further, Spanish officials also hoped to benefit from the political uncertainty that dogged the American experiment in its early years and turned to collaborating with westerners of questionable loyalty to the United States.

A friendlier relationship with the United States opened the Mississippi and the port of New Orleans to American traffic. This shift fit within a broader liberalization of commercial policy and regulation within the empire and bolstered American merchant ascent as suppliers of

flour to ports in Spanish America. Opening trade to the United States was also meant to strengthen the economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley and enrich the empire through the taxes imposed upon such trade. It also helped the trade networks already established between New Orleans and the American backcountry and American Atlantic ports to thrive.

In turning its back on the short-lived licit trade with the British Empire, Spain introduced a further complication for Indian-Spanish alliances in the Southeast. The Indian trade depended upon British loyalists merchants like Panton, Leslie, and Company and Mather and Strother. Thus, a policy that banned British trade jeopardized Spain's effort to engage the Indians of the region in diplomacy, a project so essential to any claim on the region.

Indian politics and decision-making stood at the center of potential alliances with Spanish colonies and the United States. Decision making and power was located at the town level for Indians of the Southeast like the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks. Spanish policy-makers and officials also often underestimated or misunderstood Indian agency and power. Thus, they were often caught at the crossroads of Indian politics and the tugs of international affairs. As Spanish resources for Louisiana focused on Indian relations and the border dispute to the east, Spain afforded less attention to the western extremities of Louisiana where the warlike Osages threatened Indian allies who had long been trade partners of France and then Spain.

From approximately 1787 to 1792, shifting geopolitics produced policy changes that favored the United States and introduced new tensions between Spain's diplomatic concerns and its territorial contest with the new nation. These tensions manifested themselves in the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Southeast where migration, commerce, and Indian politics were so integral to the competition for those borderlands, both at the levels of policy and practice.

Pro-American (Anti-British) Policy Shift

In 1787, anticipating a possible war with Britain, Spanish policymakers began to favor the Americans, again: Spain opened the Mississippi to the United States and significantly reduced the taxes it imposed upon Americans for use of that port. Additionally, Spanish migration policy began to actively promote American settlement in Louisiana and the Floridas. A dispute between Britain and Spain over territory in the Pacific Northwest, the Nootka Sound crisis of 1789, propelled this shift in Spanish further. Miró promulgated a more relaxed Spanish commercial policy in 1787 and an even more liberal migration and settlement policy in 1789.¹

During the late 1780s, policy came to embrace the incorporation of Anglo-American settlers as Spanish subjects. Floridablanca and his successor Godoy, José de Gálvez and his successor Antonio Valdés, the Crown, and the court received and considered reports from Louisiana governor Miró and intendant Navarro, as well as from Gardoqui, and immigration agents wishing to direct new colonists to Louisiana. Although his official role in the American capital was to resolve the disputed border, Gardoqui also had explicit instructions to promote friction for the United States in the west. After the death of José de Gálvez in 1787 and that of Charles III and succession of the less competent Charles IV in 1788, Spain continued to develop place specific policies for the border colonies. Meanwhile the observations of Gardoqui gained influence with Floridablanca and encouraged him to turn his back on an earlier policy that reflected imperial dreams to eradicate American trade at New Orleans. Rather than fighting the

¹ Gould, "Entangled Empires," 781; Gilbert C. Din, "The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró in Spanish Louisiana," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73 (1969-1970): 161-2; Din "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790," *LH* 11 (1970): 197; David J. Weber, "Conflicts and Accommodations: Hispanic and Anglo-American Borders in Historical Perspective, 1670-1853," *Journal of the Southwest* 39.1 (1997), 9; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 280-82. Weber acknowledges the place specific nature of this policy shift, calling it "an innovative immigration policy for [Spain's] most endangered border provinces, with similar unfortunate results" (280). For a comprehensive treatment of the Nootka Sound Crisis, see Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1973).

continuous flow of Americans to the trans-Appalachian West and the flow of their produce to New Orleans, Spanish officials in North America and policy-makers in Spain attempted to harness the migration and economic productivity for the benefit of Spain and to enforce the empire's claim to Louisiana and the Southeast. Not wanting to undertake the expense incurred by the recent Acadian immigration or that of a 1786 project to introduce Canary Islanders to East Florida, Spain looked to expand the colonial population with settlers willing to pay for their own settlement in Louisiana. Considerations over changes to the migration policy took place in an Enlightened context in the Bourbon court of Spain at a time when policy-makers, as Sylvia Hilton has written, "contemplated migration as a rational, more or less planned undertaking," and were thus amenable to "opening up the prospect of being able to engage in a negotiation in which the colonist, the promoters, and the Spanish government could attain some of their respective goals for a price."²

From 1787 to 1790, migration policy pertaining to Spanish Louisiana drifted more and more towards encouraging American settlers of means to venture to Louisiana where, theoretically, given land these new settlers would respond with loyalty to the Spanish crown. And so, Spanish flexibility with regard to migration policy, to which borderlands competition and international balance of power contributed, resulted in a policy that embraced Anglo-American Protestant settlers as colonists to populate Spanish Louisiana all for the sake of defense, expansion, and development of the colonial economy.³ Welcoming settlers from its own territorial rival to develop a border colony the very purpose of which within the empire was

² Sylvia Hilton, "Loyalty and Patriotism on North American Frontiers: Being and Becoming Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1776-1803," in Hilton and Gene Smith, eds., *Nexus of Empire: Negotiating Loyalty and Identity in the Revolutionary Borderlands, 1760s-1820s* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2010), 9-10, quotation 10; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 224, 274-5, 278-80; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 120, 148-9.

³ Hilton, "Loyalty and Patriotism on North American Frontiers," 9-10.

to protect against the incursion of those same settlers seemed a policy wrought with contradictions. However, it reflected the times in which it was conceived. Not only was Spain trying to balance American and British foes, but the trans-Appalachian West was tumultuous as the young United States moved from war to the stage of confederacy to the Constitution. Challenges to the new nation included a trans-Appalachian West ripe for schemers.

Miró's proposal to alter migration policy governing Louisiana developed out of his several years as governor there. In 1785, he suggested that Anglo-American colonists then living in West Florida remain in the colony and that others, including Protestants, be allowed to settle there. Their oaths of loyalty would be coupled with the influences of Irish missionaries who would mold them into loyal Spanish subjects. Spain accepted the proposal in March 1786. Meanwhile, officials in North America became painfully aware of the burgeoning population of Anglo-American settlers in Kentucky and on the Cumberland. In 1787, Miró noted Americans who descended to New Orleans where they took an oath of allegiance to Spain and received lands in Lower Louisiana. In 1787, Miró and Navarro composed a letter to the court in which they described American migration into Spanish territory as inevitable and argued again that American Protestants must be incorporated into the Spanish defense plan as settlers.⁴ In this way, realities of migration patterns might benefit from the 'bon ordre' afforded by policy.

The possibility of a new pool of settlers prompted policy-makers to reconsider the place of religious orthodoxy in settlement and migration policy for the Southeast and the Lower Mississippi Valley. A Frenchman who had served in the American Revolution before living for

⁴ Miró to Grand Pré, New Orleans, 4 April 1787, PPC, legajo 4B, reel 2: fo 169-70; Din, "Proposals and Plans," 203; Din "Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro," 157, 163; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 274. For more on the Irish missionaries sent to minister to English speaking colonists, see also Din, "The Irish Mission to West Florida, *LH* 12.4 (1971): 315-334. By 1788, the population of Kentucky was between 50,000 and 73,000 and the population of Tennessee was 25,000. Migration to these settlements was only growing in the post-revolution years, see Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier*, 30.

several years in Kentucky, Pierre Wouves d'Argès passed through New Orleans and brought word that more than 1500 German families in Kentucky desired to come to Louisiana so long as they were promised free exercise of religion. Although Miró could not grant such permission, d'Argès acted on Miró's encouragement and made his requests to the Conde de Aranda at Paris. The Spaniard took the idea to Floridablanca and suggested liberalizing Spanish immigration standards in order to promote settlement of farmers willing to take up arms for Spain. The court and ministers responded well to d'Argès proposal and appointed the Frenchman an immigration agent for the crown in Kentucky. Four Irish priests reached New Orleans in August of 1787 by which time Miró had designated parishes for the Natchez District. By October, Fr. Michel Lamport had reached Mobile where officials hoped English-speakers would come to seek marriage and baptism.⁵ Finally, the Conde de Aranda endorsed stepping away from traditional Spanish emphasis on religious orthodoxy for the sake of preservation of the empire. Additionally, The Spanish policy of closing the Mississippi had failed as a means of discouraging the growth of American trans-Appalachian settlement. Better to incorporate the Americans into Spain's own defense and to adopt a new policy that might better serve Spain's bid for the borderlands. The collaboration of Floridablanca and Jose de Gálvez and his successor José de Valdés produced a policy change.⁶

On August 23, 1787, Spain granted d'Argès permission to bring the families into the colony. Spain also opened the Mississippi to American westerners in the same breath and imposed a duty of 25% for use of the port of New Orleans.⁷ Diego de Gardoqui reported from

⁵ Folch, Mobile, 1 Oct 1787, PPC: legajo 200: fo 871; Kinnaird, introduction, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xix.

⁶ Din, "Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro," 157-62, 166.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 163; Din, "Proposals and Plans," 203. Din argues that the liberalization of trade regulations undercut the goal of the immigration reform—that by allowing Americans to use the port of New Orleans, Spain reduced American interest in migrating to Spanish border colonies.

New York, as did officials in Louisiana and the Floridas, of frequent requests of American citizens to migrate to Louisiana and the Floridas. Gardoqui in particular penned proposals to the Crown strategizing ways that Spain might grow the population of those colonies. Spanish policy-makers and officials widely accepted the idea that an increased population in these buffer colonies was nearly synonymous with improved defense. And Miró reminded his superiors, most importantly José de Gálvez now the Marquis de Sonora, that turning to Americans as settlers was far less expensive to the crown than the immigration policies that had hosted the migration of settlement of the Acadians in 1785 and their Isleño and Malagueño predecessors.⁸

Although Miró and Gardoqui shared a similar perspective with regard to Spanish immigration policy for Louisiana, Gardoqui's issuing of passports to Americans wishing to settle in Louisiana appeared undiscerning at times to Miró and reflected a divergence in the understanding of the type of colonist who should be recruited for Louisiana. At least in part because of his specific mission, Gardoqui became an ear for western schemers and land speculators, and he granted passports to impoverished Americans to travel to Louisiana.⁹ For example, in 1788, he granted passports to John Leamy and 130 settlers to travel aboard the *Lydia* from Philadelphia to New Orleans. As a group, the party was not of great means and required assistance that Gardoqui assured them Miró would be able to provide: land, livestock, rations, and tools. Similarly, within a few months the *Concepción* arrived in Louisiana with 173 colonists, most in want of assistance. These new colonists settled with Miró's assistance at New

⁸ Din, "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790," *LH* (1970): 197-9; Coker, "The Bruins and the Formulation of Spanish Immigration Policy in the Old Southwest, 1787-88," in ed. John Francis McDermott, *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 65; John Carl Parish, "The Intrigues of Doctor James O'Fallon," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17. 2 (1930), 236-8. For a discussion of George Morgan and the founding of New Madrid in light of negotiations with Miró and Gardoqui, see also Max Savelle, "The Founding of New Madrid, Missouri," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 19.1 (1932): 30-56.

⁹ Din, "Proposals and Plans," 199-200; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 120.

Feliciano. Miró expressed impatience that Gardoqui should send colonists needing financial assistance to the colony as the new policy sought to promote expanded settlement within the colony without much expense to the crown and without setting any further precedent for such assistance. The recent fire at New Orleans that destroyed most stores and merchandise in the capital probably contributed to Miró's distress at the arrival of this group.¹⁰

Especially during the late 1780s, early migration proposals centered on bringing Catholic or Irish families to Louisiana thought more likely than Protestants to be loyal to Spain in the long term. The result was imperial support of projects that included settlers capable of arranging for their own transportation and settlement. After travelling to Louisiana in 1786 to collect a debt from Luke Collins then living in Opelousas, Bryan Bruin petitioned Miró to allow him to transport Catholics living in Virginia to Louisiana where he suggested that they could more openly practice their faith. They would bring with them slaves. Bruin had already tried his hand at land speculation in Virginia. Meanwhile, his son Peter Bruin, a Revolutionary War veteran, sent a similar proposal to Gardoqui. Perhaps pleasing to Miró because it cost Spain nothing, the proposal took him only three weeks to approve. He agreed to grant tracts of 20 by 40 arpents to each family with the potential of securing additional lands after settling these first grants. And by 1789, over one hundred arrived at Natchez.¹¹

¹⁰ A List of Passengers on board the Ship *Lydia* Commanded by Capt. Joseph Zenzy bound to New Orleans upon the King's Acct, Philadelphia, 13 June 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 739; Miró to Anselme Blanchard, New Orleans, 23 Dec 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 757; List of American Families, 1788, PPC, legajo 201: 758; Din, "Proposals and Plans," 205-6.

¹¹ Miró to Grand Pre, New Orleans, August 13, 1788, PPC, legajo 5A, reel 2: fo 1012-1013; Coker, "The Bruins," 61-71; Din, "Proposals and Plans," 203-4. See also Kinnaird, "American Penetration into Spanish Louisiana," in Hammond, ed., *New Spain and the Anglo-American West: Historical Contributions Presented to Herbert Eugene Bolton* (2 vols., Lancaster, Pa., 1932), I, 230-1. See also, Mattie Austin Hatcher, "The Louisiana Background of the Colonization of Texas, 1763-1803," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 24.3 (1921): 173-4. For more on the Collins Family, see Coker, "Luke Collins Senior and Family: An Overview," *LH* 14.2 (1973), 137-155.

The flood of other petitions to bring colonists to Louisiana included those of William Fitzgerald, Agustin Macarty, James Kennedy, and Mauricio Nowland. Like Bruin, Fitzgerald offered to bring 800 Catholics from the United States, this time from St. Mary's County, Maryland, to Louisiana. Fitzgerald petitioned Gardoqui in 1787 on the group's behalf. Catholics in Maryland had expressed interest in removal to Louisiana since the 1760s after letters reached Acadians living in Maryland telling of the land and liberal grants of colonial officials in Louisiana. Like Bruin, they proposed immigrating with their slaves. Like Bruin's proposal, Fitzgerald's was also met with approval. However, destructive weather conditions hindered this effort, and Miró lost the 1000 pounds he had lent Fitzgerald for travel expenses. Other proposals to bring self-sufficient colonists to Louisiana were also approved. Nowland traveled to New Orleans on behalf of loyalists living in the United States. Miró approved thirty of these families. Similarly in 1788, Miró agreed to permit James Kennedy, then a merchant living in New Orleans, to bring from Ireland families of means enough that they had only need of land, but the governor denied Kennedy's request to bring colonists who would require assistance. However, in 1789 Spain denied both of Kennedy's proposals in its efforts not to anger Britain by removing any of its subjects to Spanish land in the wake of the Nootka Sound Crisis.¹²

Petitions to transport colonists needing financial assistance to Louisiana were often rejected. Agustin Macarty proposed directing two or three thousand of his fellow Irishmen living in the United States, many as indentured servants, to Spanish territory. In contrast to Bruin's proposal, Macarty's turned to the precedents established by Spanish governments in the settlement of the Acadians and Isleños, asking that the Crown provide land, provisions, and tools. Although Miró approved this proposal, two years later it was rejected by the Spanish court

¹² Din, "Proposals and Plans," 201-3; Hilton, "Loyalty and Patriotism on North American Frontiers," 13, 16; Hatcher, "The Louisiana Background of the Colonization of Texas," 174-5.

because of the expense it would incur. Similarly, Mauricio Nowland proposed bringing impoverished Irish Catholic families to Louisiana so long as they received the precedented assistance. Miró rejected this proposition.¹³

Leaders of the Early Republic recognized tensions between the east and the west as serious challenges for the unity of the early nation.¹⁴ The post-revolutionary political climate of the trans-Appalachian west fostered the rise of schemers and men of questionable loyalty. They too engaged Spain through petitions regarding settlement and trade and approached officials like Gardoqui and Miró. The crafty James Wilkinson was the most well-known of these. Like many other speculators and schemers, he had direct ties to eastern merchant firms. Wilkinson's brother-in-law Clement Biddle was a successful Philadelphia merchant. Having migrated to Kentucky in 1784, Wilkinson arrived in New Orleans in July of 1787 with a proposal for Miró. It suggested a legalized trade with a Kentucky separated from the United States and a monopoly for Wilkinson as the Crown's agent there. In a memorial to the Spanish government, Wilkinson also proposed a mass migration of Kentucky settlers to Louisiana:

It will be more useful to the court of Spain to lay aside the idea of receiving the people of Kentucky under the dominion of His Majesty, and to employ all indirect means to cause the separation of this section of country from the United States, which would likely be followed by a connection with Spain to the exclusion of any other power, Kentucky enjoying the right of local self-government; and at the same time to promote emigration to Louisiana.¹⁵

Perhaps it was during this visit that Wilkinson became connected to Daniel Clark, Jr. Miró and Navarro sent Wilkinson's proposals to Spain. Miró favored working through Wilkinson to

¹³ Din, "Proposals and Plans," 201-3; Hilton, "Loyalty and Patriotism on North American Frontiers," 13, 16; Hatcher, "The Louisiana Background of the Colonization of Texas," 175.

¹⁴ James E. Lewis, Jr., *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998), 14-5.

¹⁵ Memorial of James Wilkinson, New Orleans, 17 Sept 1789, in "Papers Bearing on James Wilkinson's Relations with Spain, 1787-1816" *AHR* 9.4 (1904), 751 quotation; Miró to Grand Pre, New Orleans, 3 July 1787, PPC, legajo 4B, reel 2: fo 344. See also Arthur P. Whitaker, "James Wilkinson's First Descent to New Orleans in 1787," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 8.1(1928), 82-97; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 118-20.

dealing with d'Argès. While Miró was negotiating with Wilkinson, Gardoqui was also conversing with a North Carolinian who endorsed western separation from the United States, one James White. When first Gardoqui and then Miró received d'Argès, each official stalled for time as he tried to protect collaboration with western separatists. Indeed, Miró appeared to have great faith in Wilkinson's promise to direct settlers to Spanish soil. Miró so supported the idea of incorporating Americans into the settling Louisiana that he asked that the import duty be reduced from 25% to 6%. During his visit to New Orleans in 1787, Wilkinson became a Spanish agent for which he received pay into the 1790s. In 1788, the court and Supreme Council in Spain dismissed any potential dealings with separate entities in the trans-Appalachian west until those states had in fact separated from the United States, but it whole heartedly endorsed Wilkinson's role as a Spanish agent in Kentucky and Miró's migration scheme. However, Wilkinson, who operated ever in his own interests, never delivered on his proposal. Wilkinson and Miró corresponded with regard to the project until Miró's retirement in 1792. That same year, Kentucky became a state.¹⁶

What became known as 'Spanish Intrigue' was rooted in a developing migration policy for the borderlands that was part and parcel of the imperial bid for its border colonies. As it had

¹⁶ Miró to Grand Pre, New Orleans, April 20, 1789, PPC, legajo 6: fo 494; Din, "Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró," 164-73; DuVal, *Native Ground*, 176-7; Hilton, "Loyalty and Patriotism on North American Frontiers," 13-17; Kinnaird, "introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xx-xxi; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 120. This dissertation does not endeavor to untangle the many schemes of James Wilkinson. The mysterious Wilkinson has been the interest of much historical intrigue. For an example of early perspectives on Wilkinson, see William Shepherd, "Wilkinson and the Beginnings of the Spanish Conspiracy," *AHR* 9.3 (1904): 490-506; "Papers Bearing on James Wilkinson's Relations with Spain, 1787-1816," *AHR* 9.4 (1904):748-766; Isaac Joslin Cox, "General Wilkinson and His Later Intrigues with the Spaniards," *AHR* 19.4 (1914), 794-812. See also, Thomas Robson Hay, "Some Reflections on the Career of General James Wilkinson," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 21.4 (1935): 471-494. For a recent discussion of Wilkinson's role in the Trans-Appalachian West and in the larger challenge to Spanish north American presence in his complications with schemes that stretched into Texas, see also David E. Narrett, "Geopolitics and Intrigue: James Wilkinson, the Spanish Borderlands, and Mexican Independence," *WMQ* 69.1 (2012): 101-46. For a discussion of Wilkinson's wife, Ann Biddle Wilkinson, see also Ann Biddle Wilkinson, N. Wilkinson and Thomas Robson Hay, "Letters of Mrs. Ann Biddle Wilkinson from Kentucky, 1788-1789: With an Introduction and Notes," *PMHB* 56.1 (1932):33-55.

done with Great Britain, Spain happily accepted the opportunity to undermine its territorial enemy. As with the clandestine trade to the rebel colonies during the war, Spanish policy also sought to skirt overt aid to western separatist movements. John Sevier turned to Gardoqui also for alliance and protection for the State of Franklin in 1788. Gardoqui initially authorized a relationship with the State of Franklin before Spain made his act null. Cumberland settlers looked to Spanish New Orleans in their frequent skirmishes with the Creeks because of Spain's connection with Alexander McGillivray. At the time of his 1789 trip to New Orleans, Wilkinson provided Miró with a list of Americans he might contact to forward the separatist interests and who might also serve as agents for Spain.¹⁷

The American Constitution complicated Spanish interaction with western schemers. The Constitution was written and ratified in a context that well understood the challenges posed by the Mississippi question and the growing interest of westerners in separatist schemes that might secure access to the port of New Orleans and thus the export of their agricultural products. James Madison was acutely aware of the inadequacies of the Articles of Confederation of affecting a single American domain and of the place of the clamoring of Americans migrating to the west for access to markets for their produce. The issue of slavery and its expansion continued to exacerbate regional differences in the new nation.¹⁸ Wilkinson repeatedly stated his

¹⁷ Memorial of James Wilkinson, New Orleans, 17 Sept 1789, in "Papers Bearing on James Wilkinson's Relations with Spain, 1787-1816" *AHR* 9.4 (1904): 751-64; Kinnaird, "introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xxii; William S. Coker, "Research in the Spanish Borderlands: Introduction," *Latin American Research Review* 7.2 (1972): 3-5. By mid-1787, there were already rumors of an army being formed in Kentucky or on the Cumberland to wrestle Louisiana and the Floridas from Spain, Miró to O'Neill, New Orleans, 20 February 1788, PPC, legajo 5A, reel 1: fo 360-4. For an early discussion of Spanish Intrigue, see also, A.P. Whitaker, "Spanish Intrigue in the Old Southwest: An Episode, 1788-89" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 12.2 (1925): 155-176; and see also Samuel Bemis, *Pinckney's Treaty: A Study of America's Advantage from Europe's Distress, 1783-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins press, 1926), 109-48; Caroline Maude Burson, *The Stewardship of Don Esteban Miró: 1781-1792; a study of Louisiana based largely on the documents in New Orleans* (New Orleans: American Printing Company, 1904), 144-87. See also, Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier*, 35-6.

¹⁸ Ted L. Gragson and Paul V. Bolstad, "A Local Analysis of Early-Eighteenth-Century Cherokee Settlement," *Social Science History*, 31.3 (2007), 435-468. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the issue of free navigation of the Mississippi. Gragson and Bolstad suggest that "A picture of the Mississippi dominated by Spain loomed large in the

devotion to the interests of the Spanish colony. “I have determined to come down to this city because I want to further the interests of Louisiana” he stated in a memorial written when he visited New Orleans in September 1789. Further, he argued that his failure to encourage migration from Kentucky was the result of news of the new United States Constitution:

Permit me, therefore, to call your attention to the circumstances of the American Union at the period when I wrote my memorial, and you will observe that its government was weak, confused, and divided, powerless to manage or to regulate the propensities of the smallest district; but the present [form of government] set up by the recent Federal Convention, although untried and of doubtful success, has inspired the people in general with the loftiest hopes, because, without taking into consideration the innumerable causes that are likely to afford extreme hindrance to the beginnings of this government as well as to its progress, they allow themselves heedlessly to be carried away by the novelty, and ascribe to it all the strength of the most powerful monarchy.¹⁹

Spain denied Wilkinson and White the protection that they wanted.

American settlements in the west still recognized ties to Spain as useful. Robertson corresponded with Miró from the Cumberland. In 1789, he wrote: “we are to be obedient to the New Congress of the United States... The United States afford us no protection. The District of Miró is daily plundered and its inhabitants murdered by the Creeks, and Cherokees... For my own part, I conceive highly of the advantages of your immediate Government.”²⁰ Further, once states began to ratify the Constitution and to cede western lands to the federal government, the

minds of many delegates as the constitutional drama began to unfold in Philadelphia. The Mississippi controversy was a stage-set, a drop cloth of the Philadelphia Convention”(119). Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 369-71; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 118-9. It is important to note that while the southern states were especially concerned about the undetermined border of the Southeast, and, while the American settlers in the area south of the Ohio had territorial associations with Southern states to the east, the economic interests of the web of merchants, land speculators, and politicians that spanned out of American port cities stretched to include significantly Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. Thus, securing stability in the Southeast was a national matter, not solely a regional one. Investors in business and speculation included Washington, Franklin, Robert Morris, Hamilton, Patrick Henry, and many others. Interestingly, neither Jefferson nor Adams were directly connected to this western interest.

¹⁹ Memorial of James Wilkinson, New Orleans, 17 Sept 1789, in “Papers Bearing on James Wilkinson's Relations with Spain, 1787-1816” *AHR* 9.4 (1904): 751-2; Jack D.L. Holmes, “Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors of Louisiana,” *LH* 42.4(1962): 533.

²⁰ Robertson to Miró, Nashville, 2 Sept 1789, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 279-80. Tennessee settlers adopted the name “Miró District” for their county to show a good relationship with New Orleans. Ted L. Gragson and Paul V. Bolstad, “A Local Analysis of Early-Eighteenth-Century Cherokee Settlement,” *Social Science History* 31.3 (2007): 119.

United States then succeeded in incorporating many of these schemers into official positions in the west: Wilkinson was re-commissioned in the army; Sevier and James Robertson of the Cumberland settlement who had corresponded with Miró both became brigadier generals.²¹

After several years of reports and proposals, makeshift decisions regarding various immigration schemes, the Crown implemented a new policy in December 1788. The Spanish court had awaited Navarro's words before issuing any policy. Navarro retired in 1788 and returned to Spain, where he met with officials. Several years earlier, Navarro had advocated the closing of the Mississippi as a viable policy for stemming American expansion. By the time he returned to Spain, however, Navarro was humming a different tune. He recognized the policy as ineffective and even embraced American westerners as worthy settlers of the Spanish borderlands.²² Policy-makers took Navarro's words to hear. On April 20, 1789, Miró promulgated the new immigration policy governing Louisiana:

It will be permitted to every good Inhabitant to come down & settle in the Province of Louisiana either at Natches or any other place of both Mississippi's shores... His most gracious Majesty generously grants the inhabitants of these Districts the trade with this town, & so they will be able to bring down Pelletry, tobacco, flower, provision, & every other produce of their country. They will not be molested on religious matters, although no other publick worship will be permitted to be publickly exercised than that of Roman Catholic Church.²³

Thus, with an oath of allegiance to the Spanish Crown, American migrants settled in Spanish border colonies where they received large tracts of land without being compelled to convert to Catholicism. This policy of 1788 had a dual purpose: to populate the borderlands and to capture some of the economic productivity of the westward migrating Americans.²⁴ The policy

²¹ Kinnaird, "introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xxiii; see also, Arthur P. Whitaker, "Letters of James Robertson and Daniel Smith," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 12.3 (1925): 409-412; and Gould, "Entangled Empires," 782.

²² Din, "Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró," 167-8.

²³ Miró, New Orleans, 20 April 1789, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 269-271.

²⁴ Cummins, "The Governors of Spanish Colonial Louisiana," 34; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 281.

incorporated potential invaders, illicit migrants, into a legal immigration and into a legal place in the colony where they were beholden to Spain for their land and good treatment. Embarking on such a policy represented flexibility in Spanish imperial policy as it was applied to a specific region or colony. While Miró recognized the risk of including Americans as new settlers, he also argued in 1792 that “once they have emigrated and sworn vassalage, anyone who takes part in a revolution will risk a great deal, and far from gaining glory will stain his reputation with the ugly epithet of traitor.”²⁵ Louisiana’s colonial population grew by 25,000 during Miró’s governorship, expanding the population from approximately 20,000 in 1782 to 45,000 in 1792. The population of Lower Louisiana in 1800 was above 50,000.²⁶

Perhaps because of its already sizeable English speaking population, the Natchez District in particular attracted a large number of American settlers. The growth of this population prompted the installation of a governor just for the Natchez District. At the specifications of Carlos III before his death, the governor must be proficient in English. Accordingly, Manuel Gayoso de Lemos received appointment to the post of Governor of the Natchez District in 1788, a post in which he served until 1797. Gayoso reached Natchez in 1789.²⁷

The policy of 1789 revealed a certain flexibility in developing policy for borderlands on the part of the empire in hopes of ever shaping the colonies towards their imperial role. Developing from knowledge of officials in Louisiana, the policy reflected Enlightened imperial preferences and understandings of migration. Although the policy opened settlement to Anglo-

²⁵ Miró to Campo de Alange, ‘Descripción de la Luisiana,’ Madrid, 11 Aug 1792, as cited Hilton “Loyalty and Patriotism on North American Frontiers,” 10.

²⁶ Din, “Proposals and Plans,” 211-2: in contrast Kentucky’s population in 1790 was over 73,000 and Tennessee over 35,000; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 274. This is a population estimate of colonists and slaves, not inclusive of most Indians living in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

²⁷ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 281; Din, “Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro,” 163; Holmes, *Gayoso*, 87. For a comprehensive discussion of Gayoso’s administration at Natchez and then as governor of Louisiana, see Holmes, *Gayoso: The Life of a Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1965).

Americans and to Protestants, the Crown hoped first for colonists who would be loyal subjects, preferably Catholic, and preferably of means so that they would not strain the imperial purse and so as to avoid the populace considered frontier riff-raff. Policymakers and officials viewed their new immigration policy as both rational and practical.

Trade and the Mississippi

Spanish policy could not stop Americans from sending flour and produce down the Mississippi, whether the trade was legal or not. Spain's agent Rendón reported from Philadelphia on the persistence of such trade.²⁸ Nor could Spain prevent American merchants from expanding their businesses in the west. During the late 1780's, Spanish policy concerning trade relations with the Americans shifted once more. Out of necessity, officials at the local and imperial level began looking to the Americans as licit trading partners once again. At this time, the opening of the Mississippi trade to Americans and the use of the port of New Orleans for licit trade allowed for earlier Atlantic and North American trade networks to thrive anew. The trade often relied upon American merchants operating in Spanish Louisiana on behalf of American firms. This growing trade became entangled with the fortunes of war and imperial strife. The re-opening of licit trade with American ports tied closely with Spain's self-perceived "liberalization" of its commercial policies. Louisiana and the Floridas benefited economically from this instance of liberalization that fostered economic growth throughout the Indies during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. With regard to the Lower Mississippi Valley, the economic benefits of the expansion of trade remained greater for the local economy and for the

²⁸ Cummins, *Spanish Observers*, 179; Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier*, 51.

merchants directly involved in the trade. In a sense, this trade, therefore, like the contraband trade with British merchants before it, strengthened the economy of Louisiana.²⁹

In the years immediately following the American Revolution contraband trade between New Orleans and American ports, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, continued as a trickle, often filtering in through the Caribbean. During that time, trade with Caribbean islands provided the Lower Mississippi access to manufactured goods.³⁰ In the last years of the American Revolution, merchants like Jean Baptiste Macarty tried to secure cargoes of flour from American ports through contacts in Havana and Cap Français. Macarty had his eye on a contract to supply the Spanish troops, but his proposed project to carry out trade with William Smith & Co. of Baltimore never came to fruition.³¹ Wartime uncertainty also clouded the prospects of trade from the west. Macarty wrote a correspondent in Philadelphia who did business at Havana: “a Batteau coming from the Illinois was attacked near the Ohio by a party of Renegadoes, it will therefore be necessary that you should arm & man your boat sufficiently to oppose them when you come down, taking such other precautions as you shall think necessary.”³² Further, uncertainty regarding the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1783 also reduced trade between American Ports and New Orleans.³³ American merchants used the West Indies as a means of accessing New Orleans. The royal cedula that Charles III issued in 1782 had expanded trading

²⁹ Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 371-2. For a discussion of American perceptions of trade with the Iberian World, see Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 105-112.

³⁰ Clark, *New Orleans*, 230-1.

³¹ Receipt by Robert Smith for monies received from J.B. Macarty, January 17, 1781, Nicholas Low & Company Papers, folder 1, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University; Macarty to Robert Smith, New Orleans, 26 Aug 1782, Nicholas Low & Company Papers, folder 2; J.B. Macarty to William Smith in Baltimore, New Orleans, 25 September 1782, Nicholas Low & Company Papers, folder 3.

³² J.B. Macarty to Thomas McIntire at Havana, New Orleans, 24 Jan 1784, Nicholas Low & Company Papers, folder 6.

³³ J.B. Macarty to Thomas McIntire at Philadelphia, New Orleans, 23 Aug 1783, Nicholas Low & Company Papers, folder 6; J.B. Macarty to Nicholas Low, New Orleans, 26 Nov 1783, Nicholas Low & Company, folder 9; J.B. Macarty to Nicholas Low, New Orleans, 5 July 1784, Nicholas Low & Company Papers, folder 13.

privileges to French ports.³⁴ Trade with the French in the West Indies was vital to the New Orleans economy following the American Revolution.³⁵ New Orleans merchants like Evan Jones and Daniel Clark, Sr., traded via Saint Domingue with American ports, especially with Philadelphia.³⁶ The firm Reed and Forde, for example, shipped to New Orleans under cover of business through Saint Domingue. In 1789, David Hodge reminded Reed and Forde, to “enclos[e] Invoice and Bill of lading to me for the same and to my address (observing however to make ‘em all in French and as if shipt from the cape.)”³⁷ Once New Orleans began accepting American vessels more regularly, merchants in New Orleans and in American ports renewed their business connections.

A crisis propelled Governor Miró to seek flour from Philadelphia. The afternoon of Good Friday, March 21, 1788, a devastating fire swept the city of New Orleans. Along with the destruction of most of the city, merchants like Macarty, LaChiapelle, brothers Evan and James Jones, and Benjamin, Jacob, and Manuel Monsanto lost their homes, stores, kitchens, furniture, and merchandise. The Jones brothers reported total losses amounting to 5000 piastres, the Monsantos 7,500 piastres, Macarty 3,5000 piastres, and LaChiapelle 8000 piastres.³⁸ Unlike most with property in New Orleans, merchant David Hodge escaped with only a “small” loss.³⁹

³⁴ Clark, *New Orleans*, 224.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 230; The Spanish contracted with the firm Pantón, Leslie, and Company to supply the trade goods for the Southeastern Indians. This firm made up mostly of British loyalists outfitted its business with the Spanish from its bases in the West Indies and Bahamas. Mather and Strother also obtained trade goods for the Indians from the West Indies by exporting lumber and tobacco. Clark, *New Orleans*, 231; for a comprehensive treatment of Pantón, Leslie, and Company in the American Southeast, see Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands*.

³⁶ Elizabeth Urban Alexander, “Daniel Clark: Merchant Prince of New Orleans,” in *Nexus of Empire*, 243.

³⁷ David Hodge to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 1 Oct 1789, HSP, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1786-1790, Folder 16, Reed and Forde, 1789, October, 1-12, Correspondence.

³⁸ Evan and James Jones, New Orleans, Apr 1788, PPC, legajo 201: 54; Benjamin Monsanto and Manuel Monsanto, and Jacob Monsanto, New Orleans, 2 April 1788, PPC, legajo 201: 67; J.B. Macarty, New Orleans, 10 Apr 1788, PPC, legajo 201: 92; Geronimo LaChiapella, New Orleans, 10 Sept 1788, PPC, legajo 201: 121.

³⁹ John Reed to David Hodges, Philadelphia, 10 May 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790.

To obtain relief for the city, Governor Miró dispatched three ships to Philadelphia where Gardoqui granted permission to purchase three thousand barrels of flour for 192,000 reales.⁴⁰ Lower Louisiana was incapable of providing grain to New Orleans as the city rebuilt itself.⁴¹ In October of 1788, a New Orleans bound ship left Baltimore carrying 4,000 barrels of flour.⁴² Several months after the fire, Oliver Pollock returned to New Orleans and took advantage of the opportunities that rebuilding the city offered. He soon asked permission to import flour and was trading on behalf of Philadelphia merchants such as Reed and Forde and Robert Morris.⁴³ Nephew of Daniel Clark, Sr., Daniel Clark, Jr., arrived in New Orleans at about this time also.⁴⁴ Besides selling materials for the construction of the city, in 1789, he imported fire pumps from Philadelphia after persuading the Cabildo of the necessity of the purchase.⁴⁵

The timing of the fire coincided with international pressures and together they produced a friendlier policy regarding trade with the Americans. In 1787, the fear of war with Britain forced the hand of Spanish policy makers to permit the Spanish borderlands of the Southeast to trade with American merchants. Shortly after the fire, beginning in 1788, trade to New Orleans was opened to the Americans and the tax they were subject to was reduced considerably, from 15% to 6%.⁴⁶ And Spanish authorities accepted American navigation of the Mississippi. The result of the New Orleans fire was to open a locally sanctioned trade with American ports, much as had

⁴⁰ Din, *Francisco Bouligny*, 161; "Philadelphia," 28 May, 17898, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; Miguel, "Commercial Relations" 179; Cummins, "Oliver Pollock," 43-4; Alexander, "Daniel Clark," 245.

⁴¹ Judice to Miró, LaFourche, July or Aug 1788, PPC, legajo 201: fo 625; Masicot to Miró, Allemands, 3 July 1788, PPC, legajo, 201: fo 245-6.

⁴² "Philadelphia," 20 Aug 1788, *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

⁴³ "Philadelphia," 17 Dec 1788, *Pennsylvania Gazette*; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 119-20.

⁴⁴ Alexander, "Daniel Clark," 241-2, 245. Daniel Clark, Jr., migrated from Sligo in Ireland to join his uncle in New Orleans where Daniel Clark, Sr's business had thrived since the 1770s. Upon reaching New Orleans, Daniel Clark, Jr., was able to attain a place of favor because of his skill with languages; he became a translator of English, Spanish, and French in Governor Miró's office.

⁴⁵ Cummins, "Oliver Pollock," 44.

⁴⁶ Clark, *New Orleans*, 213.

been the case during the war years. The commerce that took root at this time grew out of networks that had expanded into the Lower Mississippi Valley during the years of partition. Though stymied by war, now renewed, this trade would continue for the duration of the Spanish period, although local and imperial policies would change many times.

Trade with the ports of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore prospered in particular. After 1788, the merchant networks connecting American commercial firms to New Orleans became more entrenched in the Lower Mississippi Valley as an increased number of them employed Spanish citizens as agents in New Orleans and conducted their trade on vessels under Spanish colors. The Philadelphia firm of Thomas and John Cliffords entered into business with Evan Jones. Stephen Girard also of Philadelphia found a willing representative for his trade at New Orleans in Michel Fortier and later in Gerome LaChiapelle. Nicholas Low and Company of New York employed Michael Conner as their agent in New Orleans. In their efforts to gain more consistent access to the flour market of the Lower Mississippi Valley, these American merchants sought out Jean Baptiste Macarty in particular because of his connections with Spanish officials, much as they had Pollock in earlier years.⁴⁷

The business of Reed and Forde of Philadelphia sheds light on the ways that trade at New Orleans was connected with the hinterlands of the Mississippi Valley, with American Atlantic ports, and with the Caribbean. Reed and Forde continued to engage the Ohio River Valley in a complicated circuit whereby they traded excess manufactured goods with the settlers for tobacco and flour, and transported the tobacco and flour in turn to New Orleans via the Mississippi. They owned their own ships, engaged in land speculation, served as financiers on the frontier—not an uncommon function for merchants in the region—and owned flour mills. Their business

⁴⁷ Clark, *New Orleans*, 234-5; Arena, “Philadelphia-Spanish New Orleans Trade in the 1790’s” *LH* 2.4 (1961): 432-4. Macarty’s daughter Celeste Macarty was married to Esteban Miró.

connections included Edmund Randolph, Robert Morris, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Diego de Gardoqui, James Wilkinson, Philip Nolan, and Moses Austin. Free navigation of the Mississippi was certainly in the interest of firms such as Reed and Forde, which were also concerned with paying off their own considerable war debt.⁴⁸

Like their competitors, Reed and Forde engaged a representative in New Orleans, David Hodges, whom they contacted first through Ross and Vaughan of Philadelphia. They also connected the Lower Mississippi Valley to their efforts to pay off debt to British creditors.⁴⁹ Reed and Forde also did business through Evan and James Jones at New Orleans. Awaiting a brig from New Orleans in late 1789, Standish Forde asked Jones to send beaver from New Orleans, allspice from Campeche, and indigo.⁵⁰ One of the great challenges for Reed and Forde, as it was for their creditors during the 1780s, was collecting debts. Debt was a chief matter of concern for the new nation, its creditors, and its commercial class. As Cruger, Ledyard, and Mullett of London sought payment of their debt, which Reed and Forde endeavored to meet through partly through shipments of tobacco and staves, so too did Reed and Forde pursue its debtors.⁵¹ Representatives such as Hodges acted on behalf of the firm as it sought to track down

⁴⁸ Whitaker, "Reed and Forde," 247-9; Doerflinger, Thomas A. *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1986), 294-5; Reed and Forde to Lushington and Kirk of Charleston, SC, Philadelphia, 24 March 1787, Reed and Forde Papers, 1787 Letterbook; John Vaughan to Diego Gardoqui of New York, [no date but because of where it is in the book 8/1788], Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Standish Forde to John Lewis, Philadelphia, 4 Sept 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Forde to Reed, undated, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790. Austin, his son Stephen F. Austin, Wilkinson, and Nolan would be involved in immigration and land speculation in American and Spanish borderlands for the next several decades.

⁴⁹ Reed and Forde to David Hodges at New Orleans, Philadelphia, 4 June 1787, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1787; Reed and Forde to David Hodges, Philadelphia, 21 March 1788, Letterbook 1788-1790.

⁵⁰ Forde to James Jones, 9 Oct 1789, Cape Francois Reed and Forde Papers, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Reed and Forde to James Jones, Philadelphia, 25 Nov 1789, Letter Book 1788-1790; Reed & Forde to David Hodges at New Orleans, Philadelphia, 10 May 1788, Letter Book 1790.

⁵¹ Cruger, Ledyard, and Mullett to Reed and Forde, 1 Feb 1786, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence, 1786-1790, Folder 1: Reed and Forde, 1786, February-June Correspondence; Cruger, Ledyard, and Mullett to Reed and Forde, 5 July 1786, London, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence, 1786-1790, Folder 2: Reed and Forde, 1786, July-September Correspondence; Cruger, Ledyard, and Mullett to Reed and Forde, 6 July 1786, London, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence, 1786-1790, Folder 2: Reed and Forde, 1786, July-September, Correspondence.

its debtors from New Orleans, to South Carolina, to Virginia, and St. Eustatia.⁵² In 1788, Hodges received extensive correspondence regarding the debt of approximately \$1200 of one Athenasius Forde, a Catholic known to have re-settled in Spanish territory with his extended family and slaves after leaving Maryland.⁵³ Wilkinson eluded Reed and Forde for years, never paying on the L1000 that he owed them. Collecting debt from Wilkinson and another debtor was “Mr. Forde’s main object down the Mississippi...one of them the largest debtor could not be found.”⁵⁴ Through its connection to Gardoqui, the firm also arranged for one of its employees, John Lewis, to migrate to Louisiana.⁵⁵ Forde ended his letter to Lewis “M Reed and myself may probably go to Kentuckey and New Orleans if the adventure is concluded on with the best wishes for the prosperity of your good family.”⁵⁶ Lewis continued to work with Reed and Forde, traveling to and from Philadelphia in the years to come.⁵⁷ And in 1790, Reed and Forde also engaged the market at Natchez through their representative there David Ferguson.⁵⁸

⁵² Reed and Forde to David Hodge at New Orleans, Philadelphia, 4 June 1787, Reed and Forde Papers, 1787 Letterbook; Reed and Forde to Cruger, Philadelphia, 14 June 1787, Reed and Forde Papers, 1787 Letterbook.

⁵³ John Reed to David Hodges, Philadelphia, 10 May 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Reed and Forde to David Hodges, 2 July 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; David Hodges to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 29 May 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1786-1790, Folder 9: Reed and Forde, 1789, May. Athanasius Forde actually relocated to East Florida. Accordingly, Hodges wrote “my Friends Mrs. Panton, Leslie, and Co who has a House at that place for the management of the Indian Trade.”

⁵⁴ Forde to John Lewis, Philadelphia, 11 Sept 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Reed and Forde to Mullett, 23 Sept 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790, quotation; Forde to James Wilkinson, 3 Nov 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; John Lewis to Reed and Forde, Fredericksberg, 12 May 1790, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence, 1786-1790, folder 23: Reed and Forde, 1790, May, Correspondence.

⁵⁵ Standish Forde to John Lewis, Philadelphia, 4 Sept 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790, quotation; Diego Gardoqui to John Lewis, New York, 8 Oct 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790, passport.

⁵⁶ Standish Forde to John Lewis, Philadelphia, 4 Sept 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790.

⁵⁷ Reed and Forde to David Hodges, 25 Nov 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790, J Lewis to Reed and Forde, 8 Feb 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1786-1790, folder 6: Reed and Forde, 1789, February, Correspondence.

⁵⁸ David Ferguson to David Hodge of New Orleans, Natchez, 10 June 1790, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1786-1790, folder 24: Reed and Forde, 1790, June Correspondence; David Ferguson to Reed and Forde, Natchez, 4 July 1790, Reed and Forde Papers, folder 25: Reed and Forde, 1790, July, Correspondence.

Standish Forde and John Reed, alternated making trips through the Ohio River Valley and Kentucky to New Orleans and from there to Philadelphia. During the summer of 1789, Forde travelled to Lexington, Kentucky, from there to New Orleans, and reached his home in Philadelphia by September.⁵⁹ As they did this, they sought payment of debts and directed cargo to New Orleans. In May of 1789, Forde traveled the Ohio to bring “the first boat load of flour” to New Orleans with another close behind: “the whole of the cargo amounted to two hundred barrels.”⁶⁰ The year 1789 was good to Americans selling goods at New Orleans. Hodges reported that “Numbers of the Kentucky settlers come down here with tobacco and provisions for which they meet a pretty good sale.”⁶¹ The Cliffords conducted a similar trade approximately ten years later.⁶²

By 1790, a sustained flow of American goods and settlers began to further transform the Mississippi Valley. News reached the Atlantic seaboard of the “general and uninterrupted trade has taken place between the inhabitants of that country [Kentucky] and those of the Spanish settlement at New Orleans.”⁶³ By the close of 1790, reports reached New Orleans of boatload after boatload of goods and settlers coming down the Mississippi River. Mostly flatboats, these vessels carried tobacco, meat, furs, bearskins, lime, tallow, lard, candles, saddles, whiskey, and

⁵⁹ Standish Forde to John Lewis, Philadelphia, 4 Sept 1788, Reed and Forde Papers, Letterbook 1788-1790; Reed to Forde, 6 July 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Reed and Forde to Mullett, 23 Sept 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Forde to James Wilkinson, 3 Nov 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; Reed and Forde to James Jones, Philadelphia, 25 Nov 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book 1788-1790; To Adv. to New Orleans, Philadelphia, 2 Sept 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Daybook 1785-1791.

⁶⁰ Caleb Coupland to Reed and Forde, TenMile, 3 May 1789, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1786-1790, Folder 9: Reed and Forde, 1789, May.

⁶¹ David Hodges to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 29 May 1789, Reed and Forde, Correspondence 1786-1790, Folder 9: Reed and Forde, 1789, May.

⁶² Arena, “Philadelphia-Spanish New Orleans Trade in the 1790's,” 443-4. The business records of the Cliffords are housed at the Historic Society of Pennsylvania as the Pemberton Papers, Clifford Correspondence.

⁶³ “Winchester, March 18,” 1 Jan 1789, *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

of course flour.⁶⁴ For Reed and Forde, trade at Natchez fit into the schedule of its North

American transactions. John Reed advised William Shannon at Natchez:

The flatt loaded with flour of which you have the direction I would wish you disposed of at New Orleans the whole cargo if posable for which purpose you will make it particularly your business to stop at every settlement that is likely to want any, if mony cannot be obtained at some places and you can get Indigo of the best quality at one dollar p pound it may answer or of inferior quality in proportion, of the qualities you must endeavor to become a judge likeways try to get the opinion of some person that is acquainted with it the price ought to be 8 dollars p barrel for the flour and particularly if paid for in Indigo.⁶⁵

Reed and Forde, the backcountry farmers, and the Lower Mississippi profited from the trade. By 1792, at Natchez, Reed and Forde sold flour, or exchanged it for tobacco, which it exported from New Orleans. Through its representatives, Reed and Forde managed to serve as financiers to colonists living in the Natchez district. Francis Poussett and Elias Beauregard both received credit through Reed and Forde.⁶⁶

The New Orleans firm of Coxe and Clark enjoyed the benefits of connections to the Spanish regime and to the Philadelphia merchant community; they negotiated their place between these groups by taking advantage of opportunities for contracts to the colonial government and to foster connections that might allow them to perpetuate contraband trade. In early 1793, the newly established partnership of Daniel Coxe and Daniel Clark, Jr., at New Orleans offered its services to Reed and Forde.⁶⁷ Daniel Coxe enjoyed connections to prominent

⁶⁴ Grand Pre to Miró, Natchez, 12 March 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 313; Grand Pre to Miró, 14 April 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 323-4; Grand Pre to Miró, 22 April 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 326-327; Grand Pre to Miró, 24 April 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 328-9; Grand Pre to Miró, 16 May 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 342-4; Grand Pre to Miró, 25 May 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 345-348; Act of Sale Israel Dodge to Don Joseph Vasquez, 1789, and Power of Attorney of Israel Dodge to Seth Lewis, *WFLP*, reel 1: fo 416-419.

⁶⁵ Reed to William Shannon, Natchez, 22 Jan 1792, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, folder 2: Reed and Forde, 1792, January-February, Correspondence.

⁶⁶ Ferguson to Reed, Natchez, 17 April 1792, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, folder 4: Reed and Forde, 1792, April, Correspondence; Coxe and Clark to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 17 March 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, folder 8: Reed and Forde, 1793, March, Correspondence.

⁶⁷ Coxe and Clark to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 6 March 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, folder 8: Reed and Forde, 1793, March, Correspondence.

Philadelphia citizenry and to the American government especially through his brother Tench Coxe who served as assistant treasurer to Hamilton. Like Daniel Clark, Sr., Daniel Clark, Jr., respected by the Spanish administration in New Orleans for which he served as a translator of documents in English, Spanish and French. He was able to garner connections with officials in the customs house, who with the governors helped privilege Clark's business.⁶⁸ Coxe and Clark sent skins, indigo, logwood, and Kentucky tobacco from New Orleans to Philadelphia for Reed and Forde and for another Philadelphia firm, Plumsted and McCall.⁶⁹ The firm also traded at Cadiz and Veracruz.⁷⁰ Writing Coxe who was in Philadelphia in the fall of 1793, Clark asked for satins, silks, and feathers for the ladies and that they be sent "before the carnival." Other items in demand for the Spanish regiment included "patterns of course & fine blue cloths coars & fine...Camblet threat stockings platille soldiers hats Russian sheeting buttons buckles corkades & such other articles as they want with the price you will contract to deliver them at." The Spanish Governor was willing to award a contract to Coxe and Clark to supply the battalions stationed in Louisiana: "as he wishes to give us the contract for their cloathing which will amount to 60,000 dollars."⁷¹ Clark and Coxe benefited from negotiating both American and Spanish contexts. Clark helped his American clients by smuggling specie out of New Orleans to Philadelphia, and he also used bribery to secure permits for American ships at New Orleans.⁷² The escaping specie was part of the *situado*. The flow of specie from Spanish ports, especially New Orleans, posed larger economic problems for Louisiana and West Florida.⁷³

⁶⁸ Alexander, "Daniel Clark," 245-6; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 119.

⁶⁹ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 15 Aug 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, HSP, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Box 1, Folder 1: Correspondence, 1793, January to September.

⁷⁰ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 16 Oct 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1793, October to December.

⁷¹ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 22 Oct 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1793, October to December.

⁷² Alexander, "Daniel Clark," 245-6; Holmes, "Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors of Louisiana," 534.

⁷³ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 280.

Spanish demands for flour during the 1790s were met at New Orleans by American trade even as trade with the United States became more precarious once again. Anticipating a war between France and Britain, Coxe and Clark expected trade to New Orleans to escalate and noted that “The secret avenues also by which considerable quantities of Goods are introduced from this place into the other Spanish possessions are additional reasons for supposing that this trade must daily become of more importance,” and, “as the articles generally imported are of a necessary nature, Government will doubtless continue to wink at the mode in which the business is carried on.”⁷⁴ Cox and Clark disposed of flour and freight in New Orleans, even when the market was glutted by “the fall ships from Europe and particularly two from England.” They noted that flour arriving aboard the *Betsy* was “not of good quality.” Not to worry,

it is however disposed of to the Baker who supplies the troops with whom we have a contract to furnish what he may want at the rate of 8 ½ Dr p ble at which rate this goes; he is to make monthly payments and commences his contract the first of next month. He will take annually about 1500 bals and we will as long as you ship give a preference to yours while it does not command a greater Price in market.

And so at least for a time, the flour funneled through Reed and Forde’s operations fed the Spanish troops at New Orleans.⁷⁵ In addition to a contract to supply the Spanish troops with flour, Clark and Coxe also “contracted with the regiment to furnish in the course of the ensuing year 4000 pair of shoes.”⁷⁶ In 1793, Governor Carondelet prepared for war, soliciting flour for New Orleans: “He has chartered two large vessels carrying near 7000 Barrels which you will shortly see in Philadelphia which go to load on the kings account so careful is he that the city

⁷⁴ Coxe and Clark to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 6 March 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, Folder 8: Reed and Forde, 1793, March, Correspondence.

⁷⁵ Coxe and Clark to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 17 March 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, Folder 8: Reed and Forde, 1793, March, Correspondence.

⁷⁶ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 22 Oct 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1793, October to December.

shall not be unprovided in case of war.”⁷⁷ Michel Fortier persuaded Stephen Girard to send flour to New Orleans also. Because of the general need for specie in the United States, Girard agreed to send flour to New Orleans, pelts, furs and indigo from New Orleans to Bordeaux, and then to receive goods and specie in Philadelphia. Girard used his connections with a Mr. Riviere of New Orleans to access the permits necessary for Girard’s vessels to come and go from New Orleans. In 1793 and 1794, because they did not have access to adequate specie with which to purchase flour to send Spanish ports such as Louisiana, Spanish representatives in Philadelphia, Josef de Jáudenes and Josef Ignacio de Viar, instead issued passports to American vessels to transport the commodity with other goods to the Mississippi.⁷⁸

With the latest European conflict, the United States became the only neutral carrier left to service New Orleans. Because the United States was not technically allied with Spain, American vessels were still subject to taxes that allies were exempted from in 1793. Nevertheless, American trade networks advanced greatly because of their neutral status and continued to ship flour to South America as well.⁷⁹ Clarke wrote to Coxe of strategies to sidestep the policy:

In a former Letter I mentioned the arrival of a new Cedula of commerce which would materially affect the trade of this Country and hinted in what manner we might for the present escape its ill effects. As the Molly returns no doubt endeavor to bring out a Cargo which will defray our Expences & leave us at the same time some profit. This can only be done by venturing largely & procuring a greater assortment than we have hitherto been accustomed to import I would advise you to go as far as your credit will allow for us we shall be obliged to sell or exchange the Molly for another Vessel in order to avoid the new duty of 15 pct on Cargo it will not be worth while doing that without the object is of some magnitude if it is not ship nothing by the Molly for sales at the present moment will not allow the extra duty.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Coxe and Clark to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 26 May 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, Folder 8: Reed and Forde, 1793, March, Correspondence.

⁷⁸ Arena, “Philadelphia-Spanish New Orleans Trade in the 1790’s” *LH* 2.4 (1961): 433-5, 440-2.

⁷⁹ Alexander, “Daniel Clark,” 246-7; Holmes, “Some Economic Problems,” 536; Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 112-3.

⁸⁰ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 3 Oct 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1793, Oct-Dec.

Like their competitors, Coxe and Clark set about avoiding the higher import taxes, now at 15%, “the means of doing which I am fully persuaded have occurred to none but ourselves.”⁸¹

But during the 1790s, the poor quality of the goods Reed and Forde sent to New Orleans damaged their business there and threatened their representatives in Louisiana. Cox and Clark complained in 1793 of bad flour and bad pepper and also that “The Bale of Muslins...containing 70 pieces are still worse as they bear on their face the Marks of having been sold in lots at vendue as damaged. The words dmaged and lot no23...7 of 16 yds ea being marked in red letters on every one of them. This bale we would not take out of the custom House as it would be of irreparable injury to our future sales were it known that we had imported damaged Goods.”⁸² In 1796, William Porter wrote Reed and Forde from New Orleans that the shoes they had sent to New Orleans would not sell because they were made of sheepskin “by no means suitable for the country and badly assorted” and further “the pocket handkfs I cannot get any profit on account of their being so much soiled and smoked and from appearance having been laying years in a retail shop.” And so Porter declined to do any future business for the Philadelphia firm.⁸³ By this time Coxe and Clark had tired of the poor quality of the goods they received from Reed and Forde, and they feared that Reed and Forde would not pay their creditor Patrick Morgan in London: “The shoes and starch were totally unsaleable the window glass entirely broken Raisins part spoiled and at any rate the quantity much too great to sell at a time in this country where no other use is made of them than to serve a few at a desert.”⁸⁴

⁸¹ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 6 Nov 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1793, Oct-Dec.

⁸² Coxe and Clark to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 10 Aug 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, Folder 11: Reed and Forde, 1793, August, Correspondence.

⁸³ William Porter to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 1 Feb 1796, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1796, Folder 2: Reed and Forde, 1796, February 1-12, Correspondence.

⁸⁴ Clark to Reed and Forde, 12 Feb 1796, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1796, Folder 2: Reed and Forde, 1796, February 1-12, Correspondence, quotation; Daniel Clark Jr to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 20 April 1796, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1796, Folder 6: Reed and Forde, 1796, April, Correspondence. Reed and

Natural disaster and danger on the high seas also threatened the trade and the fortunes of Reed and Forde. War between Spain and France affected trade. On August 18, 1793, a “fatal” Hurricane struck New Orleans, destroying in the vessels on the Mississippi in its path. Reed and Forde’s *Betsy and Hannah* was two days up from the mouth of the river at the time.⁸⁵ Coxe and Clark’s vessel the *Molly*, “yellow sided with a woman head” was also damaged in the storm.⁸⁶ That same month, Reed and Forde wrote to Clark that their brig the *Gayoso* while en route from Philadelphia to New Orleans was “captured by the Brig *Little Democrat* under the expectation that she had Spanish property on board...the Decree of the convention of France declaring that all property belonging to their enemies altho captured on board of Neutral vessels, should be lawfull prize has since been altered as to American vessels.”⁸⁷ And in 1794, the *Betsey* was taken.⁸⁸ Instead of trading at Cap Francais, Reed and Forde now sent vessels bound for New Orleans first to Havana and at other times to Charleston or to Georgia.⁸⁹ And later that year, “we are advised that the Barque John an American vessel loaded at Bourdeau by M DanW Coxe a

Forde did pay Morgan: Clark to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 26 May 1796, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1796, Folder 7: Reed and Forde, 1796, May, Correspondence.

⁸⁵ Reboul to Reed and Forde, New Orleans, 18 Sept 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Correspondence 1791-1794, Folder 12: Reed and Forde, 1793, September-October, Correspondence.

⁸⁶ Reed and Forde to Leffingwell and Pierpont of New York, 22 April 1794, Reed and Forde Papers, Letterbook, 1793-1794.

⁸⁷ Reed and Forde to Clark, 23 Aug 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794.

⁸⁸ Reed and Forde to James and Wm Perot, 18 Aug 1794, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794.

⁸⁹ Reed and Forde to Captain John Wheelan, 5 Sept 1793, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794; Reed and Forde to William Lamb, 29 Jan 1794, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794. Reed and Forde to Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, 28 Feb 1794, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794: “In august last the Brig *Gayoso* belonging to our house was taken possession of by the crew of the Brig *Little Democrat* and sent into this port after having been plundered of a variety of articles—we made an immediate application to Mr Dupont then Consul for this port and exhibiting our claim for loss and damages with which he was satisfied and promised payment as soon as MR Genet returned to Philada—Mr Genet refered us to the late Consul Mr who tells us that he was not of opinion with MR Dupont would not pay the ZBrig *Democrat* being one of the illegal Privateers pointing out by the president for whose depridations Mr Jefferson informed Mr Genet that the United States would pay and charge the same to the French Republic, titles us thro you to apply to the United States for payment of our demand—we inclose the papers for your insertion(?) and trust that such order will be taken....”

citizen of the United States on joint account of himself and our house and bound to this port has also been captured by the Experiment privateer and carried into Bermuda.”⁹⁰

Both American and New Orleans based firms directed business to Havana as revolution engulfed Saint Domingue. In 1793, the *Sally* belonging to Steward and Plunket of Baltimore was forced to stop at Havana instead of Cap Français before New Orleans.⁹¹ Wikoff and Garland of New Orleans traded with Havana in 1796 and did business with Philadelphia.⁹²

Permitting trade with the United States at New Orleans and agreeing to American navigation of the Mississippi opened trade channels that provided New Orleans with access to flour and manufactured goods and tied it to networks of trade stretching from American port cities into the heart of the continent and to the West Indies. These channels of trade would be difficult to close in the upcoming years when Spain resumed anti-American policies. Like all other channels of trade, those connecting New Orleans to the United States and to the Atlantic World were subject to the instabilities of international warfare and debts. Nevertheless, Spanish Louisiana reaped the benefits of expanded trade with American ports and saw its own merchant networks thrive. However, the expansion of American commerce and the drain of specie from Spanish ports also produced a balance of trade that favored the United States.⁹³ The question remained: did such trade help or hinder the Spanish place in the contest for the Lower Mississippi Valley and the greater trans-Appalachian West?

⁹⁰ Reed and Forde to Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, 23 Sept 1794, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794. Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794.

⁹¹ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 15 Aug 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Box 1, Folder 1: Correspondence, 1793, January to September.

⁹² George Morgan to Thomas Morgan, New Orleans, 23 May 1796, Pile Family Papers, HSP, Box 1: Folder 20.

⁹³ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 280.

The Indian Trade in the Southeast

While favoring Americans in settlement and trade policies, Spain's main objective in securing Louisiana and the Floridas during the border dispute from 1783 to 1795 was to claim the entire Southeast through successful alliances with the region's Indians. Spain relied upon British merchants to supply the trade. The project relied upon Atlantic trade networks and networks that stretched throughout the Southeast. The new policies favoring the United States complicated the Indian trade. Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees continued to negotiate with both American and Spanish representatives as they persisted in their efforts to assert their own autonomy. The character of the Indian trade entering the 1790s revealed the success of many of these Indian groups in doing just that, as Spanish and American trading posts became located in closer proximity to Indian centers and as Indian groups expressed their preferences over which merchant houses would supply them. Thus, Indian politics and preferences together with international affairs shaped the Spanish endeavor to claim and protect the borderlands. At this time, trade monopolies granted by Spanish governors were particularly important to maintaining diplomatic relations between Indians and the Spanish colonial government.

Competition for the Indian trade was strongly influenced both by international warfare and the dominance of the Indian diplomacy in the contest for the Southeast. In 1789, as Britain and Spain found themselves on the brink of war over a dispute of territory in the Pacific Northwest, Spain began to enforce the prohibition on trade from British ports.⁹⁴ Limiting trade in this way undermined Spanish-Indian trade relations in the borderlands for the trade was supplied by British merchants who relied upon trade with ports of the British Atlantic.

⁹⁴ Din, "Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro in Spanish Louisiana," 161-2; Din "Proposals and Plans," 197.

By the mid-1780s, Mather and Strother and Panton, Leslie, and Company recognized one another as chief rivals in supplying the Indian trade. To alleviate the mounting tension between the two firms, in 1786, Miró suggested that it was possible to grant trade with the Creeks based out of Pensacola to Panton and trade with the Choctaws and Chickasaws out of Mobile to Mather and Strother. Nonetheless, each firm sought to make incursions into the trade of its competitor.⁹⁵

The Indians of the Southeast voiced their own preferences with regard to the trade. It had not helped matters for the Spanish Indian trade that Mather and Strother had angered the Chickasaws and Choctaws alike. In 1786, Choctaws and Chickasaws complained at Mobile that Panton sold his goods at lower prices than did Mather and Strother.⁹⁶ In 1787, the Indians demanded a regular price list from Mather and Strother. Responding to the complaints of the Choctaws and Chickasaws, Miró asked Panton for price lists as well and found that Mather and Strother had strayed from the original tariffs that Miró had issued.⁹⁷

Miró and Navarro recognized the problems for the Indian trade and for local stability that the shift in imperial policy beginning in 1787 would cause even as they encouraged that shift as far as migration policy was concerned. Of particular concern was permission for the vessels carrying goods to Pensacola and Mobile to enter those ports in spite of previous stops at British ports. It was at these British ports where Panton, Leslie, and Company and Mather and Strother were able to obtain the goods necessary for trade with the Creeks, Chickasaws and Choctaws. Miró and Navarro noted that Panton and Mather had both reported that they would be able to

⁹⁵ Clark, *New Orleans*, 198; Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, 59-61, 86; Miró and Navarro to Marquis del Campo, New Orleans, 14 March 1787, PPC, legajo 4, reel 2: fo 112-4; Mather and Strother to Navarro and Miró, New Orleans, 26 April 1787, PPC, legajo 4, reel 2: fo 114-116; Miró to Vizente Folche, New Orleans, 24 Feb 1789, PPC, legajo 6: fo 279; José de Gálvez to Navarro, San Lorenzo, 11 Oct 1785, PL&C, reel 2: fo 710; Panton to Thomas Forbes, 21 May 1785, PL&C, reel 2: fo 344-7; Miró to Panton, New Orleans, 5 Sept 1786, PL&C, reel 2: fo 1394-5.

⁹⁶ Navarro to William Panton, New Orleans, 5 Feb 1786, PL&C, reel 2: fo 898-9.

⁹⁷ Miró to O'Neill, New Orleans, 18 May 1787, PL&C, reel 3: fo 429-31; Miró to Panton, New Orleans, 19 May 1787, PL&C, reel 3: fo 434-40; Folch to Miró, Mobile, 26 June 1787, PL&C, reel 3: fo 564-6.

continue their supply of the trade only through the obligations they had that year and they begged that Del Campo, Spain's ambassador to Britain, provide protection for both Panton's and Mather's vessels for they feared that should the trade fail, the Indians would turn completely to the Americans to supply them.⁹⁸ In 1788, Mather and Strother sent the *Condesa de Galvez* to London. Miró and Navarro expressed concern that the vessel would not receive the appropriate permit to return with the much needed supplies.⁹⁹

The growing hostility between Britain and Spain compromised both companies' ability to ship across empires. By 1789, Mather and Strother found itself deeply in debt. The deerskins received the previous year through the trade were ruined because of the delay in the return of their ships to the Gulf Coast. Meanwhile, their creditors in London were growing unwilling to risk their security in the precarious trade. The firm wrote Miró that "in the embarrassed situation we find ourselves in...we are obliged with the utmost regret to acquaint you that unless we can be favored with the loan we dare not undertake to continue the trade."¹⁰⁰ Denied loans and requests for subsidies for its inventory at Mobile, Mather and Strother was forced out of the competition with Panton, Leslie, and Company for the Chickasaw-Choctaw concession, although the firm did continue to operate out of New Orleans.¹⁰¹ The shift in Spanish policy in 1787 also hampered Panton's efforts to supply the Indian trade through avenues accepted legally by the Spanish and strained the permanence of his relations with the Creeks. With Mather and Strother mostly removed from the trade, Panton attempted to bargain for lower duties on his imports by

⁹⁸ Miró and Navarro to del Campo, 14 March 1787, PPC, legajo 4, reel 2: fo 112-4. Miró and Navarro to Sonora, New Orleans, 24 March 1787, PL&C, reel 2: fo 219-32

⁹⁹ Miró and Navarro to Valdes, New Orleans, 1788, PL&C, reel 3: fo 1633-4

¹⁰⁰ Mather and Strother to Miró and Navarro, 1789, New Orleans, PL&C, reel 4: fo 1420-3, quotation; Mather and Strother to Carlos IV, New Orleans, 1 April 1788, PL&C, reel 3: fo 1607-10.

¹⁰¹ Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, 73, 80, 90, 103-4; Zéspedes to Galvez, St. Augustine, 16 August 1784, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 111; Mather and Strother to Navarro and Miró, New Orleans, 26 April 1787, PPC, legajo 4, reel 2: fo 114-116; Miró to Vizente Folche, New Orleans, 24 Feb 1789, PPC, legajo 6: fo 279; Miró and Navarro to Marquis del Campo, New Orleans, 14 March 1787, PPC, legajo 4, reel 2: fo 112-4.

complaining that he would be unable to take up the trade at Mobile in 1789 because Spain had already been over a year in granting permission for his vessels to trade with Pensacola.¹⁰²

However, by the year's end, Panton happily transported a good many Choctaw and Chickasaw deerskins to London.¹⁰³ In spite of all of these difficulties, by about 1790, Panton, Leslie, and Company had more or less a de facto monopoly on the Southeast Indian trade.¹⁰⁴

Panton, Leslie, and Company had long established ties with merchant houses throughout the British Atlantic with whom it continued to do business. Even company warehouses were not restricted to continental North America, for the most important warehouse was at Nassau, as was the company headquarters. Navarro agreed that Panton might import goods and export furs to neutral ports. However, Panton, Leslie, and Company also continued to engage its established commercial relationships. And when demand for British muskets grew among the Creeks, Miró granted Panton permission to import the muskets from the West Indies. In 1788, Panton exported pelts directly to London with Spanish permission. After Mather and Strother's exit from the trade at Mobile, Miró offered the Choctaw-Chickasaw concession to Panton.¹⁰⁵

Panton, Leslie, and Company and McGillivray faced challenges outside of the contest for legal monopoly of the Indian trade. As the Spanish increasingly favored Panton, Leslie, and Company, John Miller, previously a merchant associated with Mather and Strother at Mobile, attempted to challenge the dominance of the firm by engaging in contraband trade off of the Gulf Coast from his base at Nassau.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Nassau had become something of a refuge for

¹⁰² Panton to Miró, Pensacola, 7 April 1789, PL&C, reel 5: fo 88-90.

¹⁰³ John Leslie to Strachan and MacKenzie, St. Augustine, 4 Aug 1789, PL&C, reel 5: fo 453-4.

¹⁰⁴ Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, xi.

¹⁰⁵ Wright, "The Queen's Redoubt Explosion," 187; other warehouses were located at St. Marks at Apalache, on the St. John's River, and on the Mississippi; Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, 71, 104, 124, 126; Gail Saunders, *Bahamian Loyalists and their Slaves* (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers, 1983), 37.

¹⁰⁶ Coker and Watson, *Indian Traders*, xi, 115; Wright, "The Queen's Redoubt Explosion," 187-8: In 1786, Lord Dunmore became governor of Nassau and began collaborating with Miller and Bowles in schemes to remove the Spanish from the Floridas and at the very least to profit from the Indian trade.

loyalists, including Panton, but also men such as William Augustus Bowles and John Miller, both enemies and rivals of Panton. John Miller perceived Panton as a usurper of the lucrative Indian Trade, in which he had formerly participated. In 1786, Lord Dunmore became governor of Nassau and began collaborating with Miller and Bowles in schemes to remove the Spanish from the Floridas and at the very least for the trio to profit from the Indian trade themselves. Bowles, for his part, had been a trader living among the Lower Creek on the Chattahoochee for a time during the American Revolution. Miller employed Bowles during the 1780s to trade with the Indians in goods supplied by Miller, Bonamy, and Company out of Nassau. For Bowles, this venture improved his chances of creating a confederacy of sorts among the Southeastern Indians and achieving a place of power for himself. Miller and Bowles persisted in their efforts to ally with the Creek and with the Chickamauga and to trade in the Southeast into the 1790s. In 1792, Bowles devised and led an attack against Panton's store at St. Mark's on the Apalache.¹⁰⁷

Competition among British merchant networks for the Indian trade coupled with the anti-British foreign policy of Spain to create serious challenges for the supply of the Indian trade for Spain in the Southeast. These tensions reflect the convergence of international alliances and local rivalries in such a way that challenged Spain's effort to enforce its presence through strong Indian alliances in the Southeast.

Indians of the Southeast actively contested American encroachment and attempted to find a balanced position for themselves in the region. This balancing act included demands that American and Spanish representatives meet Indians on Indian terms. With regard to the transactions of the trade and the location of diplomatic engagement, the Choctaws, Chickasaws,

¹⁰⁷ Wright, "The Queen's Redoubt Explosion," 182, 188-190; For more on Bowles and his operations in the American Southeast, see Jane Landers, *Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 100-109 and Din, *War on the Gulf Coast: The Spanish Fight against William Augustus Bowles* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).

and Creeks set the terms and held Spanish and American representatives to them. Different towns and factions of Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Cherokee nations varied in their decisions about whether or not to establish friendship and trade with Spain or the United States. Kinship relationships among Indian towns and traders also complicated politics in the region. Following the Seven Years War, pan-Indian movements like Pontiac's Rebellion had unnerved colonial officials, and those officials in the Southeast had feared such a pan-Indian alliance in that region. Arguing that it would be in the interests of every party's mutual defense, Spain began to further the idea of a pan-Indian alliance in the Southeast among Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees. However, Indian politics with Spain and among the groups themselves proved too complicated for the idea to coalesce into a reality. Power in Indian society of the southeast across national or ethnic identity continued to be strongest at the local or town level.

Creeks and Cherokees found the United States hostile to those groups remaining on their lands. Unlike Spain, which immediately turned to trading with Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks regardless of whether they had supported Britain or Spain in the American Revolution, the United States initiated conflict with many Indian groups when it determined that groups who had been loyal to Britain forfeited their right to their lands when the colonies defeated Britain. Through the Indian trade, Spain furnished Cherokees and Creeks arms and ammunition that they used in their recurring conflict with American settlements.¹⁰⁸ American settlements on the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers engaged in a series of attacks and counter-attacks with the

¹⁰⁸ Weeks, *Paths*, 22-4. For more on Cherokees west of the Mississippi River, see also Robert A. Myers, "Cherokee Pioneers in Arkansas: The St. Francis Years, 1785-1813," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 56.2 (1997): 127-157. Myers suggests that "The true story of the Cherokee Indian pioneers in Arkansas provides an excellent example of how historic Native Americans settled, altered the landscape, and were continually encroached upon by American settlers. Cherokees began trickling across the Mississippi River to Spanish Louisiana in 1785, where they sought asylum from a brutal guerrilla warfare with the Americans" (128-9). It is interesting to note that numerous loyalists lived with the Cherokees after the American Revolution and became incorporated into Cherokee society (131). Their presence fostered a continued Cherokee nostalgia for Britain.

Alabamas and Creeks. When Loyalists agreed to settle as Spanish subjects on the Tombigbee, Creeks responded to the encroachment by setting fire to the farms and killing livestock. In response, Miró agreed to the establishment of Fort St. Stephen on that river in 1789.¹⁰⁹

Another American scheme to plant a settlement on the Mississippi emerged in 1790 in the projects of the Yazoo Land Company of South Carolina. John Wood turned over to Thomas Washington the grant of two to three million acres that he had received from the Choctaws in 1786. In 1789, Washington and three fellow land speculators from South Carolina formed the Yazoo Land Company and made plans to establish settlements on the Mississippi—this large grant was concurrent with those of Georgia to two other land companies. Soon the partners purchased trade goods for the Choctaws and made plans for a trading post and settlement at Walnut Hills at the confluence of the Yazoo and Mississippi and made James O’Fallon the company’s agent there. Further, with the backing of the speculators, William Davenport became Georgia’s commissioner to the Choctaws and Chickasaws. His role was to win the Indians to the Yazoo project. In March 1787, Davenport met with Choctaws and Chickasaws at West Yazoo. Others in attendance included trader for the Spanish Benjamin James and Spanish commissioner at Mobile Pedro Juzan. James acted as a Georgia agent and was integrated into Choctaw society because of his marriage to a Choctaw woman. James Wilkinson had offered his services to the Yazoo Land Company, which turned him down in favor of O’Fallon. In retaliation, Wilkinson delivered intelligence and maps of the grants issued by the Yazoo Company.¹¹⁰

Indian groups responded to the latest American land grab. McGillivray sent a band of Coushatta Creeks to the Yazoo, where they killed Davenport and three others. Taboca traveled

¹⁰⁹ Weeks, *Paths*, 47-8

¹¹⁰ Thomas Washington’s real name may have been Thomas Walsh. Arthur P. Whitaker, “The South Carolina Yazoo Company,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 16.3 (1929): 383-394; Weeks, *Paths*, 49-55, 58.

with his wife and a delegation of Choctaws to meet Congress at Philadelphia in 1787. There he attempted to hold the United States to the standards set at Hopewell. Piomingo expressed his discontent to the American commissioner Joseph Martin.¹¹¹

Miró and the Spanish administration responded by engaging the Choctaws and Chickasaws in diplomacy and by erecting a new fort. Miró's immediate response to the claims of the Yazoo Company was to counter the American meeting at West Yazoo by dispatching Jean Delavillebeuvre to meet with Indian leaders in that very town in 1787.¹¹² Choctaw leaders did not welcome Miró's decision to establish a fort at the mouth of the Yazoo in response to the latest American territorial threat. The conflict that arose revealed the significance of kinship relationships among Indian groups and traders and highlights access to trade goods as a source of power within Indian society. The conflict also indicated misunderstanding or underestimation among officials of the importance of those kinship relationships within Indian society.

Connections of merchant firms supplying the Indian trade to Indian communities proved an important factor. Miró's successor, Carondelet, granted John Trumbull permission to open a store at Mobile in 1792. In contrast to the contest Pantón engaged in with his earlier competitors, Turnbull's point of competition was not access to credit in London, but rather his connection with the Chickasaws, for he was married to a Chickasaw woman and this granted him, as it did many traders, standing in Indian society. New Orleans merchants had complained of Pantón's monopoly, and Carondelet even supported the idea of opening up free trade at New Orleans as his concern over British meddling in Indian affairs grew. Unlike the years of the

¹¹¹ Weeks, *Paths*, 54.

¹¹² Weeks, *Paths*, 54-6; Holmes, "Juan de la Villebeuvre and Spanish Indian Policy in West Florida, 1784-1797," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58.4 (1980): 392-3.

Panton-Mather competition, in 1793 war with France produced an alliance between Spain and Britain, which facilitated rather than hampered Panton's business.¹¹³

In April 1791, Gayoso and Elias Beaugard led an expedition to a site just below the mouth of the Yazoo, eighty-five miles north of Natchez. Here, Spain constructed Fort Nogales where Beaugard was to be commandant. Turnbull quickly established a trading post immediately outside the fort. Initially constructed in response to the schemes of the Yazoo Land Company, Miró and Gayoso also anticipated its usefulness in the Indian trade, but it was "the most serious single threat to peace between Spain and its Indian allies." Trade at this location proved initially more complicated for Taboca and Franchimastabé were related by marriage to traders who worked with Panton. Taboca's daughter had married Turner Brashears, one of Panton's traders. The Choctaws challenged Spain's right to construct the fort at that location. Spanish officials claimed their right to the site by the conquest of British West Florida because the land was in possession of the British colonial government after it had been purchased from the Choctaws. Further, Spanish officials attempted to argue that the location of a fort at Nogales so close to Indian towns and on the Mississippi would be a perfect location for a trading post because it would be easily accessible for Choctaws who now frequently crossed the Mississippi to hunt to trade their skins. Indians were justified in their suspicion of the new Spanish outpost. Instructions for Beaugard were modeled on the instructions that had been drawn up for the recently established settlement of New Madrid. Spanish officials did not see that good relations with Choctaws and Chickasaws might preclude settling 'loyal' American colonists at the very

¹¹³ Carondelet to Panton, New Orleans, 13 Dec 1792, PL&C, reel 8: fo 186-7; Panton to Carondelet, Pensacola, 1 Jan 1793, reel 8: fo 343-6; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, 17 May 1792, PL&C, reel 7: fo 653; Weeks, *Paths*, 76, 96-7; Gould, "Entangled Empires," 778; Peggy Liss, *Atlantic Empires*, 160-4.

post where Indians and traders were to engage in trade. Thus, the encroachment of settlers upon Indian lands was built into the instructions for establishing Fort Nogales.¹¹⁴

Choctaw leaders responded quickly. No sooner had Gayoso returned to Natchez, than Choctaw chief Itelegana of the village of Boukfouka handed Beauregard a terse letter asserting Choctaw and Chickasaw disapproval of Spanish presence at Nogales. Spanish officials hastened to reach an accord with the Indians, but officials differed in their understanding of the significance of Indian traditions and understanding to diplomatic negotiations. For his part, Gayoso fully accepted ceremony, talks, and gifts as a means of negotiating with Indian parties. He responded to the Choctaw letter by preparing gifts for the Choctaws. In contrast, in December Itelegana arrived in Natchez with eight warriors and six women as Spanish and Indian leaders attempted to arrange a meeting to settle the dispute. Stephen Minor, then acting on behalf of the Spanish regime, angered the Choctaws when he did not provide them with appropriate gifts and blankets. Yet again, cultural misunderstandings hampered Indian-Spanish diplomatic relations. Additionally, the Indian interpreter Ebenezer Folsom, who was also married to a Choctaw woman, was away ‘ahunting,’ so it proved very difficult for Minor to communicate with Itelegana. These cultural-brokers capable of bringing European and Indian worlds together were essential to the negotiating table.¹¹⁵ After this interaction, Gayoso provided Minor with more detailed instructions for engaging the Choctaws according to Indian custom. In his two missions to Choctaw country, Minor did just that. In March 1792, he traveled to meet Franchimastabé with white beads and a letter from Gayoso, which Minor, according to Gayoso’s

¹¹⁴ Usner, “Remapping Boundaries in the Old Southwest,” in Tamara Harvey and Greg O’Brien, eds., *George Washington’s South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2004), 32, 36; Weeks, *Paths*, 2. “Nogales” is the Spanish word for “walnuts.”

¹¹⁵ Weeks, *Paths*, 2-3, 32; Minor to Governor, Natchez, 12 Dec 1791, PPC, legajo 204: fo 433-4; Usner, “Remapping Boundaries in the Old Southwest,” 36. Ebenezer Folsom’s two brothers Elmore and Nathaniel were also married to Choctaw women.

instructions, read aloud to the Choctaws, thus paying respect to the tradition of oral communication and negotiation of Indian diplomacy.¹¹⁶ Franchimastabé “recei’d Major Minor with friendship,” and wrote Gayoso that he was sending a man “to see that you stop the trade with the Indians in that district of the Natchez. Major Minor has promised me it shall be stopt and you in your letter to me tells me whatever he says shall be so, and I expect that you are a man of your word &c and remain your friend & loving son.”¹¹⁷

In 1792, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Spanish representatives met at Natchez to sort out the dispute over the construction of the fort at Nogales and Turnbull’s presence there. By the treaty that resulted on May 14, 1792, Spain agreed to pay the Choctaws for the land, and Choctaws and Chickasaws agreed to recognize Spanish possession of the fort and the lands nearby. Jean Delavillebeuvre, who had long been recognized as adept in Indian language and diplomacy, took on the role as commissary to the Choctaws and Chickasaws. Carondelet described him as “a sagacious and prudent man with knowledge of the Choctaw language.” Gayoso reminded Carondelet that Delavillebeuvre must work with and employ the skills of such men as Brashears who held standing in Choctaw society because of their kinship ties.¹¹⁸

From 1792 forward, Spanish effort to encourage Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Creeks to cooperate with one another against American expansion went to the heart of Southeast Indian country. These attempts built upon an idea already introduced to the Choctaws by Cherokees and Creeks. Shortly after the Treaty of Natchez in 1792, Choctaws, Chickasaws,

¹¹⁶ Weeks, *Paths*, 35, 71-2.

¹¹⁷ Franchimastabé to Gayoso, Choctaw Nation, 29 March 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 831.

¹¹⁸ Usner, “Remapping Boundaries in the Old Southwest,” 32; Weeks, *Paths*, 63-80, quotation as quoted by Weeks, 76, 83. Delavillebeuvre may have welcomed the move to his new post as commissioner to the Choctaws and Chickasaws after having served for about a year as interim-commandant at the Attakapas Post where he and the colonists entered into a conflict over proper respect for the local church and the local priest. Delavillebeuvre to Miró, Attakapas, May 1791, PPC, legajo 204: fo 72; Habitants of Attakapas to Miró, Attakapas, 18 June 1791, PPC, legajo 204: fo 166-7. This type of conflict was common in colonial Louisiana, where colonists frequently resented having to provide for the support of the church building and presbyter and of the priest.

Creeks and Cherokees traveled to New Orleans for a meeting with the new governor Carondelet. Spanish leaders hoped that a confederacy of these Indian groups of the Southeast might protect Spanish territory from American expansion.¹¹⁹ In September 1792, Jean Delavillebeuvre told a party of Choctaws, “Finally, I recommend to you my dear children union with the Chickasaw, Creek, and Cherokee nations” and to work together to prevent armed “*etrangers*” from bothering their neighbors or the Spanish.¹²⁰

Inter and intra-nation relations were more complicated than was ideal for the success of such Spanish goals. Chickasaws and Creeks had been fighting one another since 1789. Different factions of the various nations continued to be pro-American or pro-Spanish. And even those that were commonly pro-Spanish had kinship ties to different merchant houses. For example, Chickasaw chief Piomingo frequently traded with Americans at the Cumberland and refused the offers of Spanish traders. In 1792, he agreed to allow American agents to use Chickasaw land to trade, and soon Delavillebeuvre was reporting that the Americans thought to establish their own post to supply the Indians at the Cumberland. In contrast, Ugulayacabé and Taskietoka, referred to by the Spanish as the “Chickasaw King,” embraced friendship and trade with the Spanish. When tempted by American traders who had already formed an alliance with Piomingo, Ugulayacabé refused the American gifts, replying that his “father” in New Orleans already supplied him with gifts. Some Cherokees entered into a treaty with the Americans at Hopewell and in 1791 at Holsten by which they ceded land for a second time to the Americas. Others such as Bloody Fellow and the Chickamauga Cherokees pursued alliance with the Spanish and rejected cooperation with American encroachment. Spanish initiation of the treaty

¹¹⁹ Delavillebeuvre to Carondelet, Boukfouka, 12 Oct 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 749-752, quotation; Weeks, *Paths*, 3.

¹²⁰ Jean Delavillebeuvre, 3 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 747-8, quotation: “Enfin je vous recomande L’union Mes Cher Enfant avec les nations chis, talapouche et Charaquis.”

at Boukfouka in May 1793 focused on encouraging different Indian groups to work together. Some Indian leaders recognized the merit of an Indian confederation. Bloody Fellow, Taskietoka, and Ugulayacabé were among them.¹²¹

A meeting of Indians at Boukfouka indicated that many Indian towns and nations considered some sort of common association with one another as a means to counteracting American expansion. In October 1792, Taskietoka led representatives from numerous Indian nations to Boukfouka. Here for a month, he promoted a pan-Indian alliance among Choctaws and Chickasaws, as well as “*talapouches, havanon, Cheraquis, abenaqui, toni, ouayathanon, machcouten, otauas, chipouia, sacki, chikapou, Thcaky, Papuate et Chykas.*” The degree of communication and organization required for the talk taken by Taskietoka to the Choctaws required an expansive network of the willing among Indian towns and nations at the heart of the continent who recognized that the expansion of the United States threatened Indians at large regardless of town or nation. Those at the October 1792 meeting included “the great medal chiefs Mingopoutouche of Conch, Iltapina-akis of Ebita, Bogoulaouche Nanhoulío Masabe of Ancha Oula and Oupa Oulo of Yanabe.” These chiefs agreed that it was for the best “*prosperite*” of all the nations to “unite with one another under the protection of Spain.” Representatives sent to numerous Indian villages and towns brought word of future talks at Boukfouka to be held after the return of Franchimastabé from his mission to New Orleans where he hoped to get more ammunition. Although the Spanish representative Delavillebeuvre served as an observer rather than a facilitator of the meeting at his station at Boukfouka, he noted that the Indians gathered there recognized a common aim with one another and with the Spain.¹²²

¹²¹ Delavillebeuvre to Carondelet, Boukfouka, 18 Dec 1792, PPC, legajo: fo 784-7; Weeks, *Paths*, 4-6, 21-3, 84-5.

¹²² Delavillebeuvre to Carondelet, Boukfouka, 12 Oct 1792, PPC, legajo 205: Fo 749-752, quotation: “les chefs a grandes medaille mingopoutouche des Conch il tapina akis des ebita bogoulaouche nanhoulio mastabe de ancha oula et oupa oulo des Yanabe.”

At that same meeting, Indians took the opportunity to address the trade itself. They requested that trading posts be established deeper within their nations. In particular, they asked that a trading post be established near the old French fort at Tombecbé “near all the villages.” Delavillebeuvre recognized such a step as prudent for promoting trade and for pleasing Indian allies. Diplomacy and trade in Indian lands and on Indian terms continued to be central to Spanish-Indian relations, politics in the borderlands, and even to Spanish efforts to enforce a “line.” Spanish policy that recognized the Indians as central to ideas of defense attempted to harness Indian discontent with American expansion into Spanish efforts to establish a border.¹²³

As Spain and the United States encroached upon Indian lands and vied for Indian loyalty, Choctaws and Chickasaws continued to meet with representatives of both nations. In 1792, delegations of Choctaws and Chickasaws met Americans William Blount and Andrew Pickens at Nashville. Besides hoping to secure assistance in American conflicts with the Cherokees and Indians of the Northwest Territory, Americans recognized that trade with the Choctaws and Chickasaws was essential to strong alliances and proposed opening trading posts among their towns. In the summer of 1792, the United States opened a trading post at Chickasaw Bluffs on the Mississippi. Choctaws and Chickasaws who attended the meeting at Nashville used the gifts they received from the Americans as leverage to demand better gifts and trade from Spain. Spanish efforts to solidify friendly relations with the Choctaws and Chickasaws proved at the very least influential and at the most fully successful in some towns. McGillivray suggested that “the talk directed by General Washington to the Choctaw Nation you will see how the United States are afraid that the Indians our Allies should unite together with those of the North to make War against them, you will likewise take notice of the --- they put to them that they should

¹²³ Delavillebeuvre to Carondelet, Boukfouka, 12 Oct 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 749-752, quotation: “proche de tous les vilages.”

engage in a War each against other to banish away our projects.”¹²⁴ Choctaws remained divided in their willingness to work American representatives and traders, and influential leaders such as Taboca and Franchimastabé supported Spanish trading posts at Nogales and near Indian towns. Additionally, most traders living among the Choctaws received their trade goods through merchant houses operating in Spanish colonies. And although the Chickasaws continued as a group to look upon Americans more favorably than they did the Spanish, Spanish-Indian diplomacy secured the support of the important Chickasaw leader Taskietoka.¹²⁵

Additionally, those Indians in favor of developing a pan-Indian confederation in the Southeast, such as Taskietoka and Bloody Fellow, viewed Spanish forts as part of a means to those ends. Assemblies to promote confederation and to discuss the location of new Spanish forts occurred in late 1792 and throughout 1793. However, factionalism and friction between Creeks and Chickasaws during these years undermined any hope for achieving a confederation. Because of the political significance of each individual town, a confederation of all Chickasaws, or of all Choctaws, for example, would have been difficult to achieve even without difficulties between the Chickasaws and the Creeks.¹²⁶

In 1793, Choctaws and Chickasaws met at Nogales for another treaty. Gayoso and Carondelet recognized that confederation among the Indians and alliance with the Spanish were Spain’s best hope for retaining any claim to the southeast. Unlike Gayoso who better recognized the complexities of Indian societies and politics, Carondelet hoped that this June 1793 meeting would produce the much desired confederation.

¹²⁴ McGillivray, New Orleans, 18 July 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 707.

¹²⁵ McGillivray to Carondelet, Pensacola, 3 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 717-18; Usner, “Remapping Boundaries in the Old Southwest,” 31, 34; Weeks, *Paths*, 80, 81-102.

¹²⁶ Weeks, *Paths*, 102-117.

Spanish representatives encouraged the Creeks and Chickasaws to make peace, but the Chickasaws and Creeks alike continued attempting to juggle their alliances among Indians, Spain, and the United States. The many party dealings undermined peace among the Creeks and Chickasaws, unity within Indian nations, the project of a confederation, and Spanish hopes for single-minded Indian allies. Gayoso made a special effort to encourage Bloody Fellow and the Cherokees to travel to the assembly. He recognized the Creek-Chickasaw conflict as a major threat to any potential success for the June 1793 meeting at the ball court at Nogales. He did not miss the centrality of Indian leaders or of traders to influencing decisions among Indian towns and nations to accept the invitation to the assembly or to promoting peace. To try to encourage the Creeks and Chickasaws to make peace, Gayoso communicated with three of the more powerful Chickasaw leaders, Taskietoka, Piomingo, and Ugulayacabé as well as with traders John Turnbull, Benjamin Fooy, and Hardy Perry who lived in Chickasaw towns. Creeks and Chickasaws agreed that the Choctaws might act as intermediaries in brokering peace, and in early June Taboca delivered wampum from the Creeks to the Chickasaws at a gathering in Piomingo's town Tchoukafala(Long Town). In one breath Piomingo accepted the wampum, and thus expressed his desire for peace also, and praised the Americans for their trade. And in spite of the gestures on the part of the Creeks and the Chickasaws, violence between the two continued. To complicate matters, Creek leaders opposed the location of the proposed meeting because of its proximity to Chickasaw and Choctaw rather than Creek villages, nor did they approve the timing because it coincided with their corn festival and ball game. Ultimately, Gayoso's proposed meeting at the ball court at the end of June fell through, but undeterred, the Spanish pushed for an assembly, at the suggestion of the Creeks, this time at Tombigbee in September. Nevertheless, the war between the Chickasaws and the Creeks continued both

encouraged by the Americans who recognized that it was in their interest that the Indians of the Southeast should be divided, and by the cycle of retribution among Chickasaws and Creeks for the loss of kin. Meanwhile, Piomingo benefited from access to trade goods from the Americans and from Spain, including corn and cloth that Gayoso sent by the Mississippi and corn and more arms distributed by American traders at Chickasaw Bluffs.¹²⁷

The assembly of October 1793 at Nogales and reflected the continued division within Indian nations and suggested the ultimate failure of a confederation. Gayoso's conduct at the assembly revealed that he recognized the necessity of employing Indian language and ceremony in diplomacy. Leaders smoked the calumet. Ceremony also included presentations of beads and the smoking of a tobacco pipe. Though Gayoso attempted to limit the number of those attending to the principal leaders of larger towns and villages, the assembly attracted over two thousand Indians, the majority of whom were Choctaws. Piomingo did not attend in spite of his promise, but Ugualayacabé and a large party of Chickasaws did. Ugualayacabé consulted John Turnbull throughout the assembly as both an interpreter and as a valued adviser. The Cherokees did not make the journey to the site on the Mississippi in time for the assembly. Ninety Cherokees with two chiefs, one of whom was Little Turkey, arrived tardily to Nogales, then journeyed to Natchez where their negotiations with Gayoso resulted in an alliance with Spain whereby both parties agreed to reciprocal defense. The agreement pleased Gayoso because it added another group of Indians to keep watch over Franco-American raising of troops in the west. Two additional outcomes of the assembly were the cession of land for a Spanish fort on the Tombigbee and the agreement of Chickasaws to receive their annual gifts at Chickasaw Bluffs, which advanced Spanish hopes to establish a fort and trading post at that site also. The

¹²⁷ McGillivray to Carondelet, Pensacola, 3 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 203: fo 717-18; Delavillebeuvre Talk, 3 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 747-8; Weeks, *Paths*, 105-17.

connection between Turnbull and Ugulayacabé represented a force among the Chickasaws to try to take on greater power than Piomingo and to detract from the influence of American trade with the nation. As for the confederation, Ugulayacabé himself told Gayoso that reaching a unanimous decision was impossible among the many chiefs even in attendance at the assembly for a regular congress that would represent a confederation. The centers of power within Indian nations were too plentiful.¹²⁸

Spanish officials like Delavillebeuvre may have been correct. Confederation among the Indians of the Southeast certainly would have proved a stronger boundary against American incursion in the Southeast. Such a boundary would certainly have forwarded Spanish interests in the region. However, the realities of political life for Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Cherokee towns made such a confederacy nearly impossible to achieve. Further, Indians recognized their ability to negotiate with Spanish and American representatives as a source of power because it allowed access to trade goods that bolstered authority within Indian society. Spanish officials found themselves caught between the pulls and pushes of Indian power and dominance in diplomatic relations in the Southeast and of shifting international alliances that created challenges for consistent supply of the Indian trade through British loyalist trade networks.

Indian Relations West of the Mississippi

As Spanish officials turned their attention to the uncertain border with the United States, relations with Indians west of the Mississippi River suffered. Part of the fallout of the emphasis on the eastern boundary was the neglect or disregard for Indian allies living west of the Mississippi. As Indian groups migrated west of the Mississippi, they came into conflict with

¹²⁸ Weeks, *Paths*, 115-125.

Indians already living in Spanish territory. The Osages proved the most belligerent of these Indians already living west of the Mississippi. Osage hostility towards newly migrating groups and towards Indians living along the Red River spread to the outposts of Natchitoches and Ouachita. Meanwhile, illicit trade with Texas Indians that filtered west from Natchitoches thrived. Spain and its Indian allies failed to subdue the Osage threat, and the Indian nations suffered. Spain also failed to provide these Indians west of the Mississippi with adequate supplies of trade goods, quite the contrast to the Indians of the Southeast. Louisiana officials' focus on the American Southeast and the Indian trade there diverted attention from Indian allies west of the Mississippi River and indicated that the pre-eminence of larger and war-like Indian groups west of the Mississippi were not an element that the Spanish colonial government intended to seriously contest.

Following the American Revolution, American expansion pressured Indian groups living in the Ohio River Valley and in the Illinois Country. Some of these groups began to migrate further west where they entered into conflict and strain with Indian groups already in the Arkansas Valley, especially the Osages. Over the course of the 1780s, groups that hunted and migrated westward included Chickasaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Delawares, and Shawnees.¹²⁹

For many years, the Osages had conducted their diplomacy and power through acts of violence and aggression. Osages in particular attacked new groups migrating and hunting farther west. Osage aggression had pushed the Caddos and Wichitas to settle south on the Red River. Additionally, the Osages began to travel south themselves. In 1788, reports from Natchitoches reached New Orleans that the Osage had relocated closer to the village of the Kichai, which was near the Natchitoches settlement. The smaller nation chose to relocate rather than to remain near

¹²⁹ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 160-3, quotation; Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 825-6.

its war-making neighbor. Natchitoches colonists complained that the Osages had stolen “many horses,” and that the decision of the Kichai to relocate “leaves the road free to those enemy Indians to reach in a short time the cattle ranches.”¹³⁰ The Grand Caddos complained that the Osages “their cruel enemies, were always in their villages.”¹³¹ In 1790, DeBlanc renewed the complaint of settlers near Natchitoches that the Osages threatened to steal their livestock. He complained that “if it had not been for the Osage, we should have had a quantity of tongues, skins of different sorts, bear oil, tallow, and salted buffalo meat” to send to the capital. Similarly, Filhiol reported from the Ouachita that a party of Osages had passed the winter in his district.¹³² By this time, the Grand Caddos had relocated near the Petit Caddos after the Osages killed several Caddos and scalped the trader Baptiste LeDuc.¹³³ The actions of the Osages and the migration of new groups west of the Mississippi, produced disturbance and new migration for groups already located in Lower Louisiana.

Violence resulting from conflict among these Indian groups also reached Lower Louisiana. At the Ouachita in 1790, Chickasaws attacked and killed a small party of Illinois Indians who had recently arrived in the district. Although not permitted by Quapaws and Spanish officials, Miamis had also expressed interest in migrating to the Ouachita. Later the Miamis also asked for permission to go to Natchitoches. They were refused both requests.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 17 June 1788, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 256; F. Todd Smith, “A Native Response to the Transfer of Louisiana: The Red River Caddos and Spain, 1762-1800,” *LH* 37.3 (1996): 171.

¹³¹ DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 5 Aug 1788, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 259

¹³² Filhiol to Miró, Ouachita, 7 June 1790, PPC, legajo 203: 542-3.

¹³³ DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 20 Jan 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 295-7. The Grand Caddos had threatened to do just this in 1778, but, upon the advice of DeMézères regarding the importance of the Caddos as a barrier to protect Natchitoches from the Osages, Gálvez had encouraged the Grand Caddos to remain where they were. Smith, “A Native Response,” 179.

¹³⁴ Valliere to Miró, Arkansas, 12 Jan 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 292-4; DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 4 May 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 335; DuVal, *Native Ground*, 161-2, 167.

Posts near the Red River continued to be significant for their trade with the Caddos and other groups. By 1787, merchants such as Robert Mignon and Louis Lepinet at Ouachita had begun to trade illegally with the Caddos who had a history of trading with merchants out of Natchitoches. The Caddo chief Teniouan reached an agreement with Lepinet that the merchant should supply the nation. Such merchants increased the competition for trade among the Caddos. They also challenged the dominance of Natchitoches merchants. The Natchitoches post commandant Louis DeBlanc complained that all who customarily engaged the trade were suffering because newcomers to the trade were siphoning off some of their business and thus hindering their ability to pay off their debts.¹³⁵

Meanwhile, the governor of Texas complained of the reach of Louisiana traders among Indians living in Texas. In 1778, Nacogdoches had been founded at the site of the former Franciscan Mission of Los Adaes. Colonial officials imagined that Nacogdoches would become the primary settlement that engaged Indians of the area. However, from its early years, Natchitoches had sustained an Indian trade that reached far into Texas, although it had declined during the Spanish period, and trade goods still came through Natchitoches.¹³⁶ Merchants traded arms and ammunition to Texas Indians that then passed to the aggressive Lipan Apaches. From 1785 forward, Spanish officials united with Norteño Indians to destroy the Lipan Apaches.¹³⁷

In June 1788, special orders were issued at Natchitoches prohibiting trade with Texas: “we are expressly forbidden to give any passport to the province of Texas or to allow the entry of any merchandise whatsoever into the kingdom of New Spain since it is contraband.”¹³⁸ In 1790,

¹³⁵ Peña to Miró, Natchitoches, 17 Aug 1787, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 232-3; DeBlanc to Miró, 5 Aug 1788, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 260; DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 30 March 1791, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 407.

¹³⁶ Smith and Burton, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 113.

¹³⁷ Kinnaird, “introduction,” in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xxx. See F. Todd Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance, The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 33, for a discussion of the defeat of the Lipan Apaches see 40-46.

¹³⁸ Prohibition of Trade with Texas, Natchitoches, 24 June 1788, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 256.

the Wichitas and Hasinai of the Louisiana-Texas borderland asked DeBlanc at Natchitoches for trade goods and to send traders among them. And soon the Tawakonis and Hasinai returned to implore DeBlanc for traders for their villages.¹³⁹ Although he instructed the Indians to turn to the governor in San Antonio, DeBlanc wrote Miró that it would behoove Louisiana, Texas, and their Indian allies to supply these Indian nations for the sake of peace and so that they would not attack the tiny outposts of Texas.¹⁴⁰ And indeed, trade goods filtered into Texas from Natchitoches. For example, the Tonkawas traded with Louis Diard. Additionally, the only licit supplier to these groups was Joseph Armant, the purveyor general for the supplying of the Texas Indians who was himself a resident of Natchitoches.¹⁴¹ Even after 1790, when the new Texas governor Manuel Muñoz realized that the supply from Armant was insufficient and instituted a new system of trade by licensing Spanish traders, few trade goods and gifts reached the Indians of Texas. As with other networks of trade that the Spanish colonial government attempted to stem, the trade to Texas through Natchitoches merchants continued.¹⁴²

Although geographically removed from the contest for the Southeast among Spain, the United States, and large Indian nations, the *petites nations* experienced pressures in the heart of Lower Louisiana that were extensions of the competition for the Southeast. Growing numbers of Choctaws migrated to Rapides where they competed with the Pascagoulas, Biloxis, Alibamons, and Apalaches for game and for resources. Apeatchée led a number of Choctaws to the area in 1783. A good number of the Choctaws removing to Rapides probably came from the Six Towns Division because they were said to have knowledge of the lands and waterways near New

¹³⁹ Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance*, 38-9. For a full discussion of the Indian trade through Natchitoches, see Smith and Burton, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 105-126.

¹⁴⁰ DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 20 Jan 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 295-7; DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 2 Sept 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 377.

¹⁴¹ DeBlanc to Miró, Natchitoches, 28 Feb 1790, in *SPMV*, vol. 2, 301-5; Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 113; Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance*, 37.

¹⁴² Kinnaird, "introduction," in *SPMV*, vol. 2, xxx.

Orleans.¹⁴³ In 1785, Tounabé, a Chickasaw who had been raised among the Choctaws on the Yazoo River, presented a talk to the Indian nations of Rapides. He informed them that the Chickasaws believed these nations to be afraid of them and that the nations refused to speak with the Chickasaws because they allowed the Choctaws to live among them. Chickasaws threatened to attack the Choctaws of Rapides, propelling the *petites nations* into great distress.¹⁴⁴ The migration of the Choctaws then perpetuated strife between the *petites nations* and their old enemies the Chickasaws. Choctaws also began hunting farther west. In August 1785, the medal chief Chapeau Canya and a dozen of his men received permission to hunt along the Louisiana-Texas border near Natchitoches.¹⁴⁵

Conflict proliferated among Indian nations allied with Spain and traditionally supplied through Natchitoches as westward migrating Indians crossed the Mississippi. Osage attacks on Indians near Natchitoches and Ouachita brought the conflict to the edges of Lower Louisiana. Unable to counter the Osage aggression, Spanish officials were also unable to either supply Indian allies through Natchitoches or to prevent the flow of arms to Indians in Texas through contraband trade. Spain was unable to manage either the contraband trade of the Texas-Louisiana borderland or to supply its Indian allies west of the Mississippi River.

Conclusions

During the late 1780s and early 1790s, Spain began to favor the United States as international relations prevented ties with Great Britain. Approving American trade at New

¹⁴³ Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 15 April 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 677-78; Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 5 Dec 1784, PPC, legajo 197: fo 688; Boulogny to Layssard, New Orleans, 7 May 1784, PPC, legajo 197: 679-81.

¹⁴⁴ Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 2 June 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 896-8.

¹⁴⁵ Layssard to Miró, Rapides, 29 Aug 1785, PPC, legajo 198: fo 898; Miró to Layssard, New Orleans, 17 Feb 1784, PPC, legajo 198: fo 899.

Orleans and incorporating American settlers into Spanish borderlands defense policy seemed to contradict the overall goal of protecting the Southeast from American expansion. However, the actions and reports generated by officials in Louisiana supported the shift that favored Americans. This shift promoted trade networks that had already begun to connect New Orleans to the interior of North America and to North American Atlantic ports. Meanwhile, Spanish-Indian relations and diplomacy hinged upon access to trade goods provided by British trade networks. The supplying of the trade was complicated by the challenge of trading with British ports and Indian kinship networks and diplomatic customs. The Indians of Lower Louisiana received less attention from officials and British merchant houses than Indians of the Southeast because they did not live on a border that Spain contested with non-Indian nations.

Chapter 7

Louisiana in the Revolutionary Atlantic

Introduction

During the 1790s, the contest for the Lower Mississippi River Valley took on a new dynamic as revolutions gained momentum and spread throughout the Atlantic and Circum-Caribbean. The revolutionary age spilled into the Lower Mississippi River Valley. As elsewhere, the challenges that came for the Spanish regime included both external threats often linked to imperial rivalry and internal challenges to authority and policy. While external threats like the Genêt-Clark affair precipitated a response that focused on defense and involved Indian politics in the Southeast, internal threats reflected the spread of revolutionary ideas and rhetoric among the inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi. In the Lower Mississippi River Valley, officials continued to attempt to implement borders and regulate society, but they now recognized all borderlands activity as subversive and capable of contributing to the spread of revolutionary “contagion.” In some cases, they were correct. In others, they were not. Fear among Spanish officials prompted closer monitoring of borderlands activities and harsher characterization of the meaning of those activities, especially of trade and travel. And, the ideas circulating during the revolutionary age did influence the ways that borderlands peoples resisted borders.

The territorial threats to Spanish dominion in the Mississippi Valley proliferated during the revolutionary age, both before and after the Treaty of San Lorenzo of 1795. The most significant scheme was the Genêt-Clark affair for this scheme both challenged Spanish colonial border and employed trade networks and the circulation of pamphlets to grow revolutionary

sentiment within Louisiana. In this sense, currents of revolution intersected some of the networks stretching into the Lower Mississippi Valley. Like other schemes, this one anticipated uniting European resources and the manpower of Americans in the trans-Appalachian West. It also strove to draw strength from trade networks among French-speaking merchants in Louisiana. Territorial threats became interwoven with the American challenge to the Southeast and in turn challenged Indian relations anew. Spanish officials recognized the threat of these projects. They also feared the influences of revolutionary fervor over Louisiana's French-speaking inhabitants.¹

The Genêt-Clark affair provided the catalyst for Spanish agents of empire, especially Governor Carondelet, to respond to the perceived threats of the revolutionary age. To defend Spanish territory, he looked to strengthening existing Indian alliances in the Southeast and to expanding the number of Spanish forts and personnel in the zone contested with the United States. Additionally, he called upon libres militia and English-speaking loyalists and Catholics throughout the colony to travel to New Orleans to bolster defenses there. As for dealing with the dangers of revolutionary ideas in the colony itself, Carondelet attempted to monitor trade and communication especially at New Orleans, to clamp down on the circulations of "dangerous" individuals and ideas throughout the lower colony, and to spread propaganda. Once again, the networks of trade and communication in the Lower Mississippi were targets of the Spanish administration. This time, in the context of the revolutionary age, such channels and connections were deemed more subversive than in earlier times. As Carondelet focused on building a coalition of supporters among Indian allies, libres, and English-Speakers, he also strove to draw French-speakers away from any inclinations towards conspiracy that built upon their French

¹ Whitaker acknowledges that "it would have been difficult to find a position in North America more exposed to armed attack and economic penetration" than Louisiana. Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 27.

heritage. Here the networks among the Indians of the Southeast and among libres and English-speaking militia strengthened the Spanish project to remain in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

Several incidents at outposts in Louisiana revealed the interests among officials to squelch rebellion and to promote loyalty among French-Speaking colonists. They also suggest some of the changing manifestations of resistance during the revolutionary age. In 1793, the commandant at Avoyelles wielded accusations against colonists there of rebellion against the king. Investigation into the incident pointed rather to continuity of borderland practices at this outpost and also suggested that the Spanish governor worked through individuals familiar with such borderlands spaces to achieving peaceable relations with those living at this outpost.

In contrast, in 1795, Natchitoches colonists actively revolted. Disgruntled colonists borrowed rhetoric from the French Revolution to voice their quarrel with Spain over the destruction of the tobacco industry. The Natchitoches Revolt also exhibited fault lines related to local lines of kinship and political and trade alliances. In this situation, Spanish officials dealt leniently with the perpetrators of months of unrest at this outpost.

In advice directed at containing the spread of Yellow Fever in New Orleans in 1795, Pierre Favrot suggested that leaders “take up the means to stop the contagion.”² This concept as aptly applied to Spanish outlook on preventing the contagion of revolution during the 1790s. Fear of revolution informed Spain’s approach to imposing imperial boundaries. If the Lower Mississippi Valley faced both external and internal threats connected with the revolutionary age, Spanish response looked both to affirm Spanish territorial boundaries and to reduce what it deemed as subversive practices of borderlanders.

² Favrot, New Orleans, June 1795, *Favrot Papers*, vol. 4: document 305.

Territorial Threats and the Spanish Response

From 1792 to 1795, a threat to Spanish territory brewed among schemers living in the trans-Appalachian West and the Girondist government of France. This plan aimed to redefine the borders of the west and to employ French speaking residents of Louisiana in the project to wrestle Louisiana from Spanish hands. Besides a two pronged attack on Louisiana by an army of westerners descending the Mississippi and French naval vessels on the Gulf Coast, conspirators also turned to inciting rebellion among Louisiana colonists by appealing to their French heritage. When discovered, the conspiracy prompted Spanish officials in Louisiana, especially Governor Carondelet, to attempt to enforce Spanish borders and loyalty to the crown. Carondelet suggested projecting Spanish interest in defending its claimed borders in the southeast through patrol of the Mississippi River and especially through the establishment of forts with trading posts to accompany them. The expansion of the forts and trading posts would bring with it opportunity to gain intelligence, stamp the Southeast with a Spanish presence, and most importantly further strategic Indian alliances. He succeeded in raising new forts, but Carondelet met with challenges in the forms of complicated diplomacy among Indian towns.

Clark and Genêt

The Genêt-Clark affair was only the latest in a series of French schemes tossed about to seize Spanish holdings since early 1792. Of all the schemes, it came the closest to being carried out. In the end, it succeeded mostly in producing outcry from both American and Spanish governments against the French minister Edmond Genêt and illustrating the volatile nature of the trans-Appalachian West. Those involved in the Genêt-Clark affair sought to capitalize on the discontent of Americans living in the west. Although Kentucky became a state in 1792, Americans living in Kentucky remained disgruntled with the national government over four

primary concerns: free navigation of the Mississippi River, access to the port of New Orleans, ongoing conflict with Indians of the Southeast, and the issuing of land titles. The currents of this particular plot intersected with and used trade networks that stretched to Louisiana. By these networks, revolutionary rhetoric and ideas spilled into New Orleans.³

In late 1792, George Rogers Clark penned letters to members of the National Assembly in Paris, including with his packet a letter from his brother-in-law, the crafty James O'Fallon. The Irishman-turned American patriot-turned land speculator had married Clark's sister Frances. The alliance linked O'Fallon with the influential Clark family. Both he and George Rogers Clark were agents of the South Carolina Yazoo Company. O'Fallon's first attempt at accessing western lands was thus through the land company and the legislation of the state of Georgia. When Spanish opposition to the proposal materialized, O'Fallon denounced the United States and tried to convince Governor Miró to permit him to proceed with his scheme, but O'Fallon still continued to challenge Spanish presence in the Mississippi Valley. Here, his interests coincided with those of his brother-in-law George Rogers Clark. After Frances Clark left O'Fallon, his relationship with her brother and large family was irreparably damaged.⁴ However, in reply to

³ Carstens, "George Rogers Clark," 238; Wesley J. Campbell, "The Origin of Citizen Genet's Projected Attack on Spanish Louisiana: A Case Study in Girondin Politics," *French Historical Studies* 33. 4 (2010): 515. For earlier contributions to the study of the Genêt affair, see also Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Origin of Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas," *AHR* 3.4 (1898): 650-671. See also the documents published by Turner in "Documents on the Relations of France to Louisiana, 1792-1795," *AHR* 3.3 (1898): 490-516. Turner pays particular attention to the discontent of Americans in the west and of France's awareness of that discontent. He also discusses Jefferson's interactions and correspondence with Genêt. Campbell's article revisits some of Turner's conclusions about French diplomacy and revolution as they related to the development of Genêt's mission.

⁴ Louise Phelps Kellog, ed., "Letter of Thomas Paine, 1793," *AHR* 29 (1924): 501-5; Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Origin of Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas," *AHR* 3.4(1898): 652. For more on O'Fallon, see also John Carol Parish, "The Intrigues of Doctor James O'Fallon," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 17.2 (1930): 230-263; Nester, *George Rogers Clark*, 288-89, 99; Nancy Son Carstens, "George Rogers Clark and the French Conspiracy, 1793-1801," in Kenneth Carstens and Nancy Son Carstens eds., *The Life of George Rogers Clark, 1752-1818: Triumph and Tragedies* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2004): 232-41. Clark was widely considered a hero of the American Revolution, but his fortunes shifted in 1782 with the defeat of Americans at the Battle of Blue Licks by Indians loyal to Britain. Clark was held responsible for this defeat. After the war, he resigned from the military and continued his work as a surveyor in the West. Clark had fallen into debt during the war because he used his own resources to finance his western expeditions. Like Oliver Pollock, he never received reimbursement from Virginia. Clark was also involved in Indian affairs in the Northwest Territories and

Clark's proposal "for an expedition against Louisiana," Tom Paine, now a member of the National Assembly, wrote O'Fallon, who passed on to George Rogers Clark the news that his plans "were recd. by the Provisionary executive Council of the Republic with satisfaction."

Paine was deliberate in addressing the claims of Georgia:

In the hoped for contingency, that the arms of the Republic shall prove victorious in this expedition, and dislodge the Spaniard from all the posts which he holds within the three Grants of Georgia; the lands, in the first instance, will be considered, by the Republic, as the conquest of a Spanish territory. In such case, I make not the least doubt, but that the Georgia Grants, the lowest down at least, will be confirmed to the companies that shall have been assistants in the expedition, by themselves or their Agents.

O'Fallon's role as agent for the South Carolina Yazoo Company provided reason enough for Paine to correspond with him. Paine asked of O'Fallon: "Give me every intelligence, and write often. Please to direct under cover of the Ambassador, Mr. Genets address. He is my sincere friend, and yr. name is already made known to him by me. He is to set out for America speedily."⁵ Thus, when Genêt left France for Philadelphia, he knew fully of both Clark's proposal, the conflicts surrounding the South Carolina Yazoo Land Company, and how these projects fit with the French republic's plans for spreading revolution to Spanish America.⁶

Genêt arrived in the United States as a linchpin in a two-fold plan: to take Louisiana from Spain and to secure free navigation of the Mississippi for Americans living in the west. Diplomats in Spain, France, and Britain were aware of the desire for free-navigation of the Mississippi in the west. Opportunists looked eagerly to seizing Spanish colonies.⁷

Kentucky during the 1780s. Clark's participation in this scheme came only after Spain had failed to grant him permission to bring settlers into Spanish territory.

⁵ Thomas Paine to Dr. James O'Fallon, Passy near Paris, 17 Feb 1793, as cited in Louise Phelps Kellog, ed., "Letter of Thomas Paine, 1793," *AHR* 29 (1924): 501-5.

⁶ Louise Phelps Kellog, ed., "Letter of Thomas Paine, 1793," *AHR* 29(1924): 501-5.

⁷ Wesley J. Campbell, "The Origin of Citizen Genet's Projected Attack on Spanish Louisiana: A Case Study in Girondin Politics," *French Historical Studies* 33. 4 (2010): 515. See also, Campbell, "The French Intrigue of James Cole Mountflorencia," *WMQ* 65.4 (2008):779-796. For a discussion of the Genêt affair with relation to Florida, see also, Landers, "Rebellion and Royalism in Spanish Florida," in Geggus and Gaspar, eds., *A Turbulent Time*, 158-9.

In May 1793, Genêt arrived in Philadelphia with 250 blank commissions for officers to carry out the projected attack on Louisiana and blank commissions also for privateers. By the following spring, the Genêt-Clark conspiracy was widely known. Reed and Forde advised Peter Davis, who traded for them, that “The acct that Genl Clarke and others from Kentucky were about to raise Troops for an expedition to New Orleans will probably make such a change in the trade down the River that we think it most prudent to suspend further adventures to the Westward until we have advices from New Orleans.”⁸ From Philadelphia, Reed and Forde perceived viability in the collaboration of Genêt and Clark.

In Philadelphia, in an effort to develop connections with merchants of Louisiana, Genêt met with conspirators expelled from New Orleans such as merchant Charles DePauw and Auguste de la Chaise. Spanish officials might have seen someone like DePauw as particularly dangerous because his trade connections extended throughout the Mississippi Valley as far north as St. Genevieve. Genêt employed DePauw and de la Chaise in the scheme. The operation for taking Louisiana would begin at New Madrid, where there were only twenty-four Spanish soldiers. Next, westerners anticipated sweeping the Mississippi Valley with relative ease.⁹

Genêt was also to incite revolution in Louisiana itself by appealing to the French heritage of many colonists. To that end, Genêt published a pamphlet entitled “Liberté, Egalité,” under the pseudonym “The Freemen of France to their brothers in Louisiana.” It spoke of Louisiana colonists’ sentiment towards their French heritage: “Frenchmen of Louisiana, you still love your mother country...The French nation, knowing your sentiments, and indignant at seeing you the

⁸ Reed and Forde to Peter Davis, Philadelphia, 4 March 1794, Reed and Forde Papers, Letter Book, 1793-1794,

⁹ Liljegren, “Jacobinism in Spanish Louisiana, 1792-1797,” *LHQ* 22 (1939): 52-3; Pedro Rousseau to Carondelet, Ecors à Margot, 13 April 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 864-5; Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Origin of Genet’s Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas,” *AHR* 3.4 (1898): 666-7; George Rogers Clark to Genet, 1794, *AHR* 18.4 (1913): 780-783.

victims of the tyrants by whom you have been so long oppressed, can and will avenge your wrongs.” The pamphlet used the traditional trope of the Black Legend, referring to “Spanish despotism” that “surpassed in atrocity and stupidity all the other despotisms that have ever been known” and likening Louisiana colonists to “slaves.” Finally, it assured the inhabitants of Louisiana that “the republicans of the western portion of the United States are ready to come down the Ohio and Mississippi in company with a considerable number of French republicans, and to rush to your assistance under the banners of France and liberty.” It implored “inhabitants of Louisiana” to rise up in “revolution” against the Spanish government.¹⁰ France became Louisiana’s liberator, and Louisiana’s French heritage cause to rise up against Spain.

Louisiana’s colonists of French descent and even some officials were amenable to idea of a new attachment to France. In a letter addressed to Citoyen Gè, or more properly Citoyen Genêt, Pierre Favrot, then a Captain of the Infantry in New Orleans long employed in the Spanish military, turned to anonymity when he described enthusiasm among those of French descent for the projected invasion:

You arrive in a colony populated with French people like you. The same blood flows in their veins. The same spirit animates them. Having been separated for a longtime from the motherland, they moan in secret about their neglect, they have always had their eyes fixed on [France], even though she seems to have rejected them. They followed in her footsteps, shared in silence her victories, and against all appearances dared to flatter themselves with the idea of a happy return. This day they have longed for has finally arrived, we have become children of the French nation again; if we have not shared her dangers, we have enjoyed her prosperity; and that which will compensate for being deprived of the happiness of participating in the Glory... The law will no longer be an arbitrary will which arranges the life, honor and goods of its citizens. It is in similar circumstances, that you come to organize this colony, you reunited the spirits that the Spanish politics though they had divided, and if any of our compatriots were able to forget for a moment that they were French, he is filled with remorse. He is punished enough by his error. We will be, like we were before we came under the power of a foreign power, all relatives and friends. Those of Europe, those of America equally

¹⁰ Liljegren, “Jacobinism,” 53-6.

glorify themselves with the name French, and sense the obligation such a beautiful title imposes upon them.¹¹

News of Genêt's arrival and of Jacobin clubs in Philadelphia and Charleston reached New Orleans through correspondence and travels of Louisiana colonists, their relatives, and trade partners. "Citizen" Pelletier, a Louisiana merchant, travelled to Charleston and then returned from New Orleans in 1793 and brought word of Genêt's mission. Soon, French-speakers in New Orleans had founded their own Jacobin club and were singing the *Marseillaise* in the streets and word spread that in private some held re-enactments of the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Such fervor persisted in the capital on and off again at least through 1795.¹²

Genêt's project met its end through the combination of politics in France and pressure Spain placed on the United States. In August 1793, Spanish agents in Philadelphia became aware that Genêt had in fact both penned the offensive pamphlet and planned to incite war. Upon learning of this, Washington instructed Isaac Shelby, then governor of Kentucky, to suppress any projects directed at raising of men to move against Spanish Louisiana. Such a project endangered American neutrality and threatened negotiations between Spain and the United

¹¹ Vous arrive dans une Colonie peuplé de francais comme vous, Le même sang circule dans leurs veines, Le même Esprit les anime. Longtems separés de la mère patrie, ils gemissaient En secret de leur abandon, ils avaient Toujours les yeux fixés sur Elle, quoi qu'elle semblat les avoir rejettés. Ils la suivaient dans ses marches, partageaient en silence ses victoires, Et contre Toute apparence osaient se flatter d'un retour heureux. Ce jour si désiré est enfin arrivé, nous sommes redévenus les enfans de la France Patrie ; si nous n'avons point Partagés ses dangers, nous jouirons de sa prospérité ; et cequi serons dédomagés d'avoir été privés du bonheur de participer a sa Gloire Nous dédommagera de la necessite où nous nous trouvions de ne pouvoir de lui être utiles. Nous ne verrons plus l'intérêt Dictier les arrêts dans les Tribunaux de justice, nous verrons se rétablir une police, dont il ne reste pas même l'ombre par L'apathie l'insouciance d'un Gouvernement, qui ne Prête attention qu'aux objets lucratifs, nous ne verrons--- Plus le crime impuni, l'innocence opprimée, et un peuple victime des Caprices d'un chefs. La Loui ne sera plus une volonté arbitraire qui disposera de la vie, de l'honneur et des biens des Citoyens. C'est dans de pareilles circonstances Citoyens Général, que vous venez organiser cette Colonie, vous réunirés les esprits que la Politique Espanòle à cru devoir diviser, Et si quelqu'un de nos compatriotes, à pu oublier un moment qu'il Etoit francais, le remord. Le punira assés de son erreur. Nous serons, comme nous Etions avant de passer sous une puissance Etrangère, Tous parens et amis. Ceux D Europe, ceux d'amerique se glorifierons—Egalement du nom de francais, et sentiront l'obligation que leur impose un si beau Titre. Anonymous Letter in the handwriting of Don Pedro Favrot, Captain of Infantry, to "Citizen Gè"[Edmond Charles Genet], 1794, trans. April Stevens, Favrot Papers, vol. 4, doc 301.

¹² Liljegren, "Jacobinism," 56-7, 62-3. Other French-speaking colonists like Jean Baptiste Macarty wrote the governor to express loyalty to Spain. Jean Baptiste Macarty to Carondelet, 28 June 1793 PPC, legajo 208B: fo 563.

States with regard to the navigation of the Mississippi and their still un-determined boundary. Washington also issued a proclamation against the activities of Clark and Genêt. Arthur St. Clair governor of the Northwest Territory issued a proclamation against “the designs of certain Frenchmen, by the names of La-Chaisse, Charles Delpeau, Mathurin and Signeux, to excite and engage as many[men] as they could, whether of our citizens or others, to undertake an expedition against the Spanish settlements, within our neighbourhood.”¹³ James Wilkinson still corresponded with New Orleans, now with Carondelet since Miró’s departure. His intelligence may have influenced Spanish decisions in 1793 to liberalize, at least for the moment, American access to the port of New Orleans in an effort to undermine motivation among American westerners to take-up arms against Spanish territory. Additionally, the demise of the Girondin government in France, which had authorized the plan, and its replacement with the Jacobin government dealt a final blow to the project and resulted in the recalling of Genêt to France. However, Clark’s dreams of a French-American invasion of Louisiana persisted, and he wrote to Genêt in April 1794 vowing that he could still raise troops.¹⁴ Clark and his cohorts continued to seek monetary aid from France for their project through 1796.¹⁵

¹³ For more on Shelby see also Archibald Henderson, “Isaac Shelby and the Genet Mission,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 6.4 (1920): 451-469. Henderson emphasizes the strain of discontent with the Early Republic in Kentucky. “A Proclamation,” February 19, 1794, *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

¹⁴ Campbell, “The Origin of Citizen Genet’s Projected Attack on Spanish Louisiana,” 542-3. Genêt did not actually return to France. Recognizing that the fall of the Girondins from power most probably had compromised his future there, Genêt requested and received asylum in the United States and promptly married Cornelia Clinton, the daughter of Governor Clinton of New York, and settled on the Hudson River. Alderson, “Entangled Borderlands: The 1794 Projected French Invasion of Spanish East Florida and Atlantic History,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88.1 (2009): 62; George Rogers Clark to Genet, 1794, *AHR* 18.4 (1913): 780-783, quotation.

¹⁵ Bradley, “Samuel Fulton,” in *Interim Appointment*, 484-483; See also Nester, *George Rogers Clark*, “Chapter 19: Conspiracies” pertains to Clark’s participation in many conspiracies over the course of the 1780s and 1790s. Nester, 227: “For nearly fifteen years, from the mid-1780s through the late 1790s, George Rogers Clark engaged in a series of conspiracies with the governments of first Spain and then France. Although each plot was unique, three characteristics underlay his role in them. One was his ambition to grab land, riches, and power in parts of the Mississippi valley. Another was the ease with which he was prepared not just to immigrate to a foreign land but actually to renounce his own American citizenship. Finally and most astonishing of all was Clark’s determination to defy and at times even betray the United States government.”

The Genêt-Clark affair strikingly revealed to Spain and the United States alike the weakness of ties between Americans living in the trans-Appalachian West and the government to the east. In trying to harness channels of communication with French-speakers in Louisiana, schemers spread revolutionary ideas in Louisiana.

The discovery of the Clark-Genêt affair motivated Carondelet to attempt to strengthen Spanish presence and monitor channels of trade and the circulation of ideas and by dispersing propaganda. Carondelet recognized Indians of the Southeast as Spain's most essential allies. He also turned to militias he deemed loyal to strengthen defenses at New Orleans. He begged his superiors to expand defenses. In the confusion of the times and of the seemingly deaf ears upon which fell his pleas for resources, Carondelet sought to convince superior and subject alike of the threats facing Louisiana and the measures necessary to securing Spanish territorial claims.

Carondelet developed a two-fold response to the Clark-Genêt threat: first he strengthened New Orleans by calling upon militia he believed to be particularly loyal, the libre militia of New Orleans and English speakers of Natchez many of whom were loyalists or Catholics; and he also called for Spanish military vessels to patrol the Mississippi. In his earlier reorganization and expansion of the colonial militia, Carondelet had created a second company of free pardos at New Orleans. Free black militia were sent to Fort San Felipe at Plaquemines, which was situated to guard the colony against invasion by the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi.¹⁶

Spanish vessels travelling the Mississippi demonstrated that Spain intended to defend its borders. They interviewed the many flatboats travelling the Mississippi and supply Indian allies. Carondelet wrote his superiors: "the squadron of galleys will remain in Nuevo Madrid, where,

¹⁶ Bryan Bruin to Carondelet, Pecan Point, 14 Nov 1793, PPC, legajo 207B: fo 429; Carondelet to Bryan Bruin, Nov 1793, PPC, legajo 207B: fo 430; Carondelet to Commandants, 31 Oct 1793, PPC, legajo 207B: fo 567; Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 124-25.

according to the information which I have received from their commander, Don Pedro Rousseau, it will arrive at the end of this month, ready to attack the enemy as they leave the Ohio.”¹⁷

After the French Revolution, a pro-French faction developed easily in Spanish New Orleans. Disenchanted with Spanish economic policy, numerous merchants and planters turned their attention to their French brothers. As rumor of attack on New Orleans proliferated, Carondelet’s concern over the disloyalty of the New Orleans populace in 1792 was so great that he chose to divert forces and supplies to the capital. He also begged his superiors to send at least two hundred reinforcements from Havana.¹⁸ By February 1793, “The principal characters among the french inhabitants of Louisiana” petitioned the French National Assembly “for the reduction of that country from the vile servitude under which it actually groans.”¹⁹ Interest in the French Revolution among Louisiana habitants had now moved beyond mere sympathy.

Carondelet focused especially on monitoring channels of communication and the movement of individuals deemed dangerous. The conspiracies and revolts that unfolded in the subsequent years only confirmed his suspicions that revolutionary ideas and rhetoric did in fact travel by these illicit channels. On June 20, 1793, Carondelet demanded reports from across the colony of recently arrived French-speakers. Although the outposts did not identify many dangerous individuals, the regional metropole was home to plenty.²⁰

Carondelet expelled offenders fervently. In June 1793, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that “The ship *Victoria* in 17 days from *New Orleans* has brought 40 passengers,

¹⁷ Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, 7 April 1794, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1909), vol. 2, 23-5.

¹⁸ Liljergren, “Jacobinism,” 50.

¹⁹ Thomas Paine to Dr. James O’Fallon, Passy near Paris, 17 Feb 1793, as cited in Louise Phelps Kellog, ed., “Letter of Thomas Paine, 1793,” *AHR* 29(1926): 501-5.

²⁰ Verret, LaFourche, 18 July 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 344; Verret to Carondelet, LaFourche, 22 July 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 347; Forstall to Carondelet, Opelousas, 22 July 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 424; Anselme Blanchard to Carondelet, New Feliciana, 1 Sept 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 380.

Frenchmen and Kentucky Americans,” and that “the brig Molly has likewise brought 16 passengers from *New Orleans*, and is the 4th vessel that has arrived from that place within two days.”²¹ In July 1793, Daniel Clark, Jr., wrote his business partner Daniel Coxe who was away in Philadelphia. He described the expulsion of individuals unwilling to take the oath of loyalty: “The domestic [news] are that *Prospero* sailed a few days since for Philadelphia crowded with Passengers who would not take the oath of allegiance to Government.”²² At least sixty-eight individuals suspected of sedition were expelled in mid-July.²³ More dangerous political suspects gained passage to Havana: “Messrs Segonde and Bougaud were yesterday freed under arrest and are to be embarked to day for the Havana. It is supposed that some imprudent conversation on Politics is the cause of it.”²⁴ In October, Clark identified some of those expelled, “Twelve or thirteen of the principal merchants are ordered out of the country in 8 days, among them are: Merrieult, Lafones, Landier, Girodeau, Bandin, etc.” He warned Coxe against any connection with them, “as these people are well acquainted with every circumstance respecting the trade of the place & might wish to take revenge no matter at whose cost.”²⁵

Carondelet also increased censorship and government propaganda. Daniel Clark, Jr., warned his business partner Coxe that “p.s. this letter goes by way of the Havana.”²⁶ In a letter dated October 1793, Clark told Coxe to take care what he chose to write and whose letters he agreed to enclose because officials checked vessels for seditious correspondence to see:

²¹ “PHILADELPHIA, June 19,” 19 June 1793, *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

²² Daniel Clark to Daniel Coxe, New Orleans, 15 July 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815 Box 1, Folder 1: Correspondence, 1793, January to September.

²³ Liljergen, “Jacobinism,” 51.

²⁴ Daniel Clark to Daniel Coxe, New Orleans, 15 July 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815 Box 1, Folder 1: Correspondence, 1793, January to September.

²⁵ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 16 Oct 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815 Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1793, Oct-Dec.

²⁶ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 15 July 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815, Box 1, Folder 1: Correspondence, 1793, January to September.

whether any thing was concealed in it. Let all your correspondents know that you wish them not to write on political subjects, but if a publication which interests this country should appear to forward it under cover to the governor informing him in a short letter it was done at an request—he has been particularly attentive to forward my interest when it depended on him & I would wish to prove gratified by the only means in our power as his Chaructor prevents a return being made in any other manner. Another [suggestion] to be made is that when it is necessary to touch upon the tune of remittances, a certain article may be always ruled Bills of Exchange in order to avoid the danger of having our correspondence intercepted....²⁷

New Orleans merchants proved as adept as ever in circumvent the Spanish colonial government.

Taking its place amongst the modes of propaganda and rumor, *Le Moniteur de la Louisiane* became the first newspaper published in Louisiana, likely in February 1794. A reflection of its audience, it was published at New Orleans in English and French. Besides the local advertisements and publications of decrees and announcements, news included in this periodical contained considerable error in its reports. Gayoso complained to Carondelet of the inaccuracies: “This morning Rousseau showed me the newspaper of New Orleans, No. 57, for my perusal, telling me you had sent it. He showed me the column dealing with the taking of this post, upon reading of which I found circumstances that have never happened.”²⁸

Carondelet attempted to supplant any sentimental affections for France or the French Revolution with terror for the projected spread of revolution to Louisiana. In February 1794, Carondelet sent a circular letter that he asked commandants to read to habitants. Carondelet began “Habitants of Louisiana, know the danger that threatens you, ready to fall into the trap that the infamous seducers spread among you, they persist among you for a year; finally open your eyes to the most evident truth, and instructed by the murders, the fires, the devastation of France,

²⁷ Clark to Coxe, New Orleans, 16 Oct 1793, Daniel W. Coxe Papers, Correspondence, 1793-1815 Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1793, Oct-Dec.

²⁸ Gayoso to Carondelet, San Fernando de las Barrancas, 10 Aug 1795, as cited in Holmes, “Louisiana in 1795,” 134; Holmes, “Louisiana in 1795 the Earliest Extant Issue of the ‘Moniteur De La Louisiane,’” *LH* 7.2(1966):133-51; Samuel J. Marino, “Early French-Language Newspapers in New Orleans,” *LH* 7.4 (1966): 309-11.

and of her colonies.” He also pointed to an actual threat to Louisiana posed by the army on the Ohio, declaring that it existed “to repeat the same scenes of horror among you.”²⁹ Did Louisiana colonists want their colony to become “a theatre of massacres and horror” as France had become? This would mean “the pillage and loss of your property; the massacre of your families; the repetition of all the calamities that devastated St. Domingue; *voilà* that which the monsters escaped from the Cap prepare for you.”³⁰ Here Carondelet built upon fears that the revolution of St. Domingue had begun to spread as he insisted that the same forces, alarming to the ears of most land owners and slave owners, had begun to take shape on the Ohio.

In June 1794, the Spanish Secretary of State Godoy asked Carondelet for an assessment of the defense of Louisiana. Carondelet’s letter on December 1, 1794 provided a lengthy and detailed reply that most exaggerated the sad state of Louisiana’s defenses in an effort to convince his superiors of the dire necessity of investing in reinforcements, supplies, and funding. He reminded his superiors of the type of thinking that had encouraged Spanish diplomats over thirty years earlier to agree to take on Louisiana: “It would suffice to glance at the map to be convinced of its importance for the preservation of the interior provinces of New Spain and of the kingdom of Mexico, which the Mississippi and Missouri rivers enclose from the Gulf almost to the South Sea.”³¹ Besides reminding them of the role of Louisiana in the empire, Carondelet also described the problems that dogged the early United States government: “All the power of the

²⁹ Carondelet, Circular Letter, New Orleans, 12 Feb 1794, PPC, legajo 209: fo 801-3, quotation: “Habitans de la Louisiane, connoissez le danger qui vous menace, prêt à tomber dans le piège que d’infames séducteurs repandus parmi vous, vous tendent depuis un an ; ouvrez enfin les yeux à la vérité la plus évidente, et instruits par les meutres, les Incendies, la devastation de la France, et de ses Colonies.” He reminded them of the army on the Ohio, “pour renouvet les mêmes scènes d’horreur parmi vous.”

³⁰ Ibid., quotation “la France entière divisée en partis contraires, n’est plus qu’un Théâtre de Massacres, et d’horreurs;” and “Le pillage, la perte de vos propriétés ; le massacre de vos familles ; le renouvellement de toutes les calamités qui ont dévastées St. Domingue ; voilà ce que vous préparent les Monstres échapés du Cap, et qui se rassemblent sur L’Ohio”

³¹ Carondelet to Alcudia(Secretary of State), New Orleans, 1 Dec 1794, in Turner, “Carondelet on the Defence of Louisiana, 1794,” *AHR* 2.3 (1897): 474-505.

Atlantic states is insufficient to restrain those of the west who are resolved to secure by force of arms the navigation of the Mississippi and to separate themselves from the former...by declaring themselves independent or by uniting with Canada.” Further, he linked this problem to this issue of defense strategy for the Mississippi Valley: “If such men come to occupy the banks of the Mississippi and Missouri, or secure their navigation, there is no doubt that nothing will prevent them from crossing and penetrating into our provinces on the other side, which being to a great extent deserted cannot oppose any resistance.” To Carondelet, maintaining a Spanish foothold in the Southeast was imperative to preserving Spanish presence in the Mississippi Valley and in the western hemisphere. Carondelet’s arguments also suggested that he understood that the Mississippi River itself was not a useful political boundary.³²

Carondelet suggested that the best hopes in defending border colonies were Spain’s Indian allies and Spanish military presence. He wrote that “at the proper time I have proposed the means of protecting Louisiana from their projects and of devastating all their possessions, by means of our allies the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees.” Rightly, Carondelet recognized that the prospect of the common enemies of the United States and western settlers fostered alliances among Spain and Indians. Carondelet wanted to secure Louisiana:

With two Spanish regiments complete in addition to the fixed force of the province, 150 gunners, the six galleys and two galiots already existing, well-manned, and an addition of a hundred thousand dollars annually to the Indian budget for the purchase of arms, ammunition and presents necessary in order to employ the tribes effectually, I answer for Louisiana and for the exclusive possession of the Mississippi river by Spain, against all the power and all the forces of the American states, whether united or separated from the Atlantic states...³³

³² Carondelet to Alcudia(Secretary of State), New Orleans, 1 Dec 1794, in Turner, “Carondelet on the Defence of Louisiana, 1794,” *AHR* 2.3 (1897): 474-505.

³³ *Ibid.*, 475-505.

Perhaps more than any other Spanish official in the Caribbean, Carondelet advocated for the enforcement of Spanish claims to boundaries in the Mississippi Valley and the Southeast. He looked to traditional Spanish modes of marking territory, forts and soldiers, and he also included the borderlands trade practices in his plans to develop a bulwark against American expansion.

As Spain wished, Carondelet's response to the Clark-Genêt threat was quite public. As reported in Philadelphia, "We hear by a schooner just arrived from New Orleans that the Government of Louisiana has made all the military preparations to impede the progress of the French army, that is supposed to be collecting on or near the confluence of the rivers Ohio and Mississippi, under the command of Gen. Clark."³⁴ The *Pennsylvania Gazette* did not recognize the significance of the Indians of the Southeast to the struggle.

During the 1790s, Spanish efforts to establish military presence in the form of forts and vessels on the Mississippi were inherently connected to Indian relations, Indian trade, and the acquisition of intelligence. In 1793 Spanish-Indian relations shifted again as Carondelet initiated the establishment of more forts and attempted to militarize the Southeast. For the most part, Indian towns welcomed the presence of the forts because they provided greater access to trade goods and power for Indian leaders. Existing trade relationships and kinship influenced the location of forts and warehouses. As in other crises, local Spanish officials hoped that if Spain indicated it was willing to defend its territory, the threat would fade. Carondelet and Gayoso ordered Spanish galleys to strategic locations on the Mississippi such as Chickasaw Bluffs. The vessels could supply gifts to Indian allies, demonstrating Spanish loyalty and commitment, and gather intelligence. At this time, Spanish agents doubled their efforts to secure the assistance of

³⁴ "PHILADELPHIA, April 16." 16 April 1794, *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

the Choctaws and the Chickasaws. The politics of trade and alliance with Indian leaders were complex negotiations at the heart of the struggle on-the-ground for the Southeast.

The locations of Spanish forts grew out of two primary factors: the preference of Indians for the locations of trading posts and the pressures of American frontiersmen and schemers. Forts and trading posts sprang up in the context of the feared invasion of Clark and his frontiersmen. Americans had already begun to meddle with settlements at Chickasaw Bluffs and at Muscle Shoals. The site at Chickasaw Bluffs was already of strategic interest, but its significance grew in the wake of the new threats of a frontier army preparing to descend upon the Mississippi. Choctaws and Chickasaws in October 1792 proposed New Tombigbee as a place for trade.³⁵ It took little time for the construction of the Spanish fort to accompany the trading post there. The Indian trade and Spanish forts were an inter-related way to attempt to enforce the boundary Spain claimed. As an added benefit, these forts and trading posts were also spaces significant for gathering intelligence in the tumultuous Southeast.

Indian allies aided Spain by supplying intelligence significant for Carondelet's response to the threatened invasion. Chickasaws allied with Spain and interested in a pan-Indian alliance to disrupt American expansion desired to maintain the presence of their Spanish allies and to the access to trade goods that such allies provided. In February 1794, Ugulayacabé warned Gayoso:

I would desire that Your Grace place yourself in a good condition of defense, since Your Grace has cannons, ammunition, and other implements of war, etc. These men are not far from here, as I have heard from some Indians who have escaped being killed in those settlements below Cumberland, who saw them gathering and constructing boats to carry the artillery which they had there and which had just arrived. They told those Indians that they were first going to take Ylinoa and that some of them were about to go by horse overland in order that all of them might afterward descend to capture l'Ance a La Grasse and prepare there to descend the river as far as New Orleans.³⁶

³⁵ Delavillebeuvre to Carondelet, Boukfouka, 12 Oct 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 749-52.

³⁶ Chickasaw Chief Ugulayacabe, 23 Feb 1794, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, vol. 2, 27.

Networks of communication among Indians fed rumor as well. Even when the threat of the Franco-American invasion had dissipated in March 1794, Gayoso still asked the Dutch-born interpreter to the Choctaws Benjamin Fooy to listen for news for “it is prudent not to be surprised.”³⁷ Indeed, the French-western collaboration had underestimated the willingness of many Indians to assist Spain. Spanish officials rightly recognized that Indian suspicion of the United States and settlers could serve Spain advantageously. Indians were motivated by their desire to strengthen their own political power and the security of their communities. Prolonging competition among nations seeking to establish political borders was one way to do this.

Spain also looked to its Indian allies for military assistance and sought to dissuade them from allowing conspirators to pass through their lands. Spain counted on its Indian allies to fight off Clark’s invasion should it materialize. Gayoso told Ugulayacabé as much,

I repeat to you again to be in readiness with a good number of Warriors to go where I may direct in case the French should come into the Province...that they will be beat every where for we have been making preparations all the way from New Orleans to the Illinois, take care not to let pass any French Man through your Country not even hearken to what they say if they go there, sir it is their intention to go into every Indian Country and ...that they are coming to protect every man, but when they have succeeded, you can’t expect to be treated otherwise.³⁸

Spanish officials and agents living among the Indians attempted to counteract any promises those associated with the Clark-Genêt affair may have spread among allies. Much as Carondelet warned Louisiana colonists of embracing the solicitations of France, so too did Gayoso warn Indian allies against turning to those hiding behind French nationality:

how dangerous it would be to have any communication with these turbulent people who under the Cloak of protection wish to involve all mankind in the same confusion and bloody disorder with themselves—they pretend to tell the red people that they come to establish the reign of their ancient French Father the French King, but yourself are conscious of the atrocious falsity of that ascertainment when they themselves have wantonly

³⁷ Gayoso to Benjamin Fooy, Nogales, 7 March 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 382-3, quotation. For more on Benjamin Fooy or Fooyey, see also Bradley, “Vicente Folch y Juan,” in *Interim Appointment*, 508.

³⁸ Gayoso to Ougulayacabé, Nogales, 7 March 1794 PPC, legajo 210: fo 378-81.

murdered that same king, which they pretend to establish, [and] they have lately most cruelly killed the queen also and about a million[others].³⁹

Intelligence gathering, the demonstration of military presence, and Indian relations converged during the response to the Clark-Genêt affair. Pierre Rousseau, the commander of the Spanish fleet on the Mississippi, sent valuable reports to Gayoso and to Carondelet. As ever, rumor mixed with fact in the relaying of intelligence. Rousseau had already been traveling the Mississippi when news of the Genêt affair reached New Orleans. His earlier trip had been in response to a 1792 projected American attack on New Madrid. That voyage provided Rousseau the opportunity to survey Chickasaw Bluffs, which he dubbed a very suitable location for a Spanish fort. In January 1794, Rousseau left New Orleans to make another trip to New Madrid, again with reinforcements, but also with a stop at Chickasaw Bluffs to deliver gifts to the Chickasaws. As he made his way up the river, Rousseau intercepted other vessels. Upon reaching Chickasaw Bluffs on April 8, he dispatched two of his men with an interpreter to the Chickasaw village with a letter for the chief, presumably Ugulayacabé. Only Ugulayacabé and his son returned to greet Rousseau and to receive the gifts even though Gayoso had written Benjamin Fooy to “dispose matters so as to be there [at the Bluffs] with Ougoulayackabé and a sufficient number of People of the nation to receive the said Presents.” The Genêt-Clark threat had subsided by this time, and Rousseau reported that de la Chaisse and DePauw had earned the distrust of Kentucky settlers. Rousseau made the trip again in 1795, and when he stopped at Chickasaw Bluffs, he discussed the building of a Spanish fort with Ugulayacabé⁴⁰

³⁹ Gayoso to Benjamin Fooy, Nogales, 7 March 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 382-3, quotation.

⁴⁰ Weeks, *Paths*, 133-141; Gayoso to Benjamin Fooy, Nogales, 7 March 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 382-3, quotation; Pierre Rousseau to Gayoso, New Madrid, June 1794, PPC, legajo 209: fo 701-2; Pedro Rousseau to Carondelet, Ecors à Margo, April 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 683; Pierre Rousseau to Gayoso, New Madrid, June 1794, PPC, legajo 209: fo 701-2.

Internal power among the Chickasaws remained an important factor in the Spanish-Chickasaw alliance, and Spanish officials recognized that the future of their efforts to expand forts in the Southeast was at the mercy of Indian politics. Gayoso sought to aid Ugulayacabé by helping to strengthen his position among the Chickasaws. Gayoso expected that amassing power for Ugulayacabé would diminish the significance of the pro-American faction. Gayoso wrote Benjamin Fooy: “it is absolutely necessary that [Ugulayacabé] should go to the Bluffs to give the presents himself to his Nation, which will establish his reputation for ever by shewing that without having the trouble of going far they get their presents in their own Land and that by the same means we can give them assistance when they are in want of it”⁴¹ Gayoso recognized the power ascribed to the leaders who distributed gifts to their people. This transaction at Chickasaw Bluffs was also, then, to assure the pro-Spanish faction and convince the wavering or pro-American factions among the Chickasaws of the constancy of Spanish trade. To suggest that Spain had been a faithful ally, Gayoso also wrote to Ugulayacabé directly, noting “You see how punctually I comply with what I promised, we agreed at the Treaty in this place that the annual present should be sent to the Bluffs before the month of May and there you have it.”⁴²

In spite of Panton, Leslie & Co.’s monopoly on the trade with the Chickasaws and the Choctaws, Carondelet turned to merchant John Turnbull because of his influential kinship ties. Carondelet hoped that Turnbull might secure permission from the Chickasaws to build a store at Chickasaw Bluffs, but that effort failed when the Chickasaws initially preferred a site on the Yazoo River. By May 1795, Ugulayacabé and a council of chiefs approved the cession of the spot of land to Spain for the building of a fort, but Piomingo and others in the pro-American faction among the Chickasaws expressly asked Gayoso to abandon the site, another example of

⁴¹ Gayoso to Benjamin Fooy, Nogales, 11 March 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 384-5.

⁴² Gayoso to Ougulayacabé, Nogales, 7 March 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 378-81.

the deep divisions that burdened Chickasaw diplomacy during this period. By early June 1795, work had begun at Fort San Fernando de las Barrancas at Chickasaw Bluffs.⁴³

Carondelet planned that trade and warehouses be built near forts at Nogales, Natchez, and New Tombigbee. In 1795, when considering the strategic purposes of San Fernando de las Barrancas he recommended to both Panton and Turnbull that they both establish warehouses there. The Chickasaws favored such an arrangement for they anticipated that the competition would promote better terms of trade for them. Carondelet intended the use of the posts in the contested territory to demonstrate to Indian and American alike Spanish commitment to protect its land and to honor trade and diplomacy with its Indian allies.⁴⁴

Through the network of traders working for Panton and Turnbull, Spanish officials attempted to meet the Indian requests for gifts and access to trade goods on Indian terms. Indian towns were the centers of trade and of power in Indian society. Indian leaders benefited from the presence of traders with whom they could establish kinship relationships.⁴⁵ Turnbull was involved in diplomacy at Nogales in 1793 and remained a contact with the pro-Spanish faction of Chickasaws, who asked him to trade with them at Nogales and Chickasaw Bluffs.⁴⁶

The Clark-Genêt affair alerted Spanish officials to the many dangers posed to their North American border colonies. Carondelet responded by attempting to bolster support in Louisiana through propaganda and support among his superiors through exaggerated accounts of defenses in the colony. At this time, he and other Spanish officials worked to further the expansion of the

⁴³ Week, *Paths*, 129-133.

⁴⁴ Gayoso to Carondelet, Walnut Hills, 18 Oct 1793, PL&C, reel 9: 103-5, Carondelet, New Orleans, 11 June 1793, PL&C, reel 8: 1186-93. ; Gayoso to Carondelet, 23 Oct 1793, PL&C, reel 9: fo 103-4; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, 1 Oct 1792, PL&C, reel 7: fo 1554; Carondelet to Panton, New Orleans, 21 Nov 1792, PL&C, reel 8: fo 79-80; Forbes to McGillivray, Mobile, 30 Jan 1793, PL&C, reel 8: fo 457-8, Holmes, "Juan de la Villebeuvre," 395-8.

⁴⁵ Usner, "Remapping Boundaries in the Old Southwest," in Tamara Harvey and Greg O'Brien, eds., *George Washington's South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2004), 32.

⁴⁶ Weeks, *Paths to a Middle Ground*, 112-3, 120-1, 131-2.

forts and trading posts that would ideally strengthen Spanish claim on the Southeast and the Mississippi Valley at large. To fend off a potential attack, Spain combined the building of forts with Indian politics. The Indians of the region wielded power and influence, and together with Spanish agents they continued to employ diplomacy and trade to negotiate the region's future. A few months before the signing of the Treaty of San Lorenzo, Carondelet stated that "The sustaining of our allied [Indians] in the possession of their lands is an indispensable object both for the conservation of Louisiana under the power of Spain, and to prevent the Americans from securing the navigation of the Mississippi."⁴⁷

Interest in the French Revolution and its maxims surfaced among Louisiana colonists in the forms of petitions, correspondence, a Jacobin club, and in song. Carondelet prescribed counting and identifying dangerous individuals, the expulsion of seditious individuals, and the reorganization of the militia as way to control the spread of ideas, rumors, and revolutionary ideas. Carondelet's bend to responding to the threat posed by revolution characterized his response to most forms of disturbance throughout the colony whether or not they were related to the threat. They also revealed some of the ways that officials had begun to perceive traditional borderlands behavior as avenues for sedition and revolution.

Revolution in Louisiana?

The influences of the revolutionary age changed the mindset of agents of empire and of borderlanders. Fear among Spanish officials prompted closer monitoring of borderlands activities and harsher characterization of the meaning of those activities, especially of trade and travel. Inhabitants of Louisiana continued to seek continuity and to negotiate their borderland

⁴⁷ Carondelet to Luis de las Casas, 13 June 1795, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, vol. 2: 111-13.

through the flexible networks that they had always maneuvered. They became aware that these activities might be deemed more subversive than in earlier eras as they incorporated some of the ideas and rhetoric of the era into their resistance. At Avoyelles in 1793, Spain investigated a false accusations of revolution fabricated by the post's commandant, but at Natchitoches a real revolt materialized in 1795, one manifestation of borderlanders's disenchantment with empire during the revolutionary age.

In February 1793, Carondelet gave a seemingly unimportant post to Domingo de Assereto, the husband of his daughter's music teacher. The post at Avoyelles appeared of low significance. However, this move proved such a mistake that within months Assereto was under investigation after alienating colonists and Indians, dubbing them "*rebels au roy*." The investigation into the disturbance at Avoyelles revealed no such immediate danger there. Carondelet employed the backdrop of the Age of Revolutions to deal with Assereto.⁴⁸

Carondelet relied upon an individual familiar with the borderland post to investigate. A former trader on the Red River, Julien Poydras found no ties between the disturbance and the revolutionary age. Assereto had charged the habitants with insubordination, Indians with disorder, and the traders Hébrard, Villars, and Popoulos with causing disrupting the post, but, "above all, he had declared war against the merchants." Poydras described Assereto and his

⁴⁸ Din, "Domingo de Assereto: An Adventurer in Carondelet's Louisiana," *LH* 34.1(1993): 70-73, 84, 70n; Poydras to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 26 June 1793, PPC, legajo 208B: fo 212-18. Assereto proved himself an opportunist with a difficult personality. He arrived in Louisiana in 1787 claiming noble Genoese birth and experience in the French and Dutch militaries. He also reported that the Captain General of Cuba José de Ezpeleta had agreed that he should travel to Louisiana for his health. Almost immediately, Assereto garnered a friendship with the influential Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent before settling with his wife and child near Galveztown in about 1788. Perhaps with St. Maxent's assistance, Assereto secured the shipment of a vessel laden with 250,000 pesos worth of goods from Marseilles to New Orleans duty free. During his stay at Galveztown, Assereto found himself in conflict with individuals in a variety of stations at that outpost: with the priest Fr. Junipero, with his hired hand James McDonald, with the commandant DeVilliers, with the physician Franz Rausman, and with the militia captain José Pauly. By 1792, Assereto's wife, Barbe Moreau, had left Galveztown and was living in the New Orleans home of St. Maxent. In the city, the Flemish actress turned harp teacher gave lessons to Carondelet's daughter among others.

“secretaire” Choiser as “pernicious...the seed of all the vices” that plagued the oft ignored outpost. Poydras assessed that “I do not find crime in all the *procès* that were not the fruits of his diabolic imagination.”⁴⁹

Perhaps in an effort to calm Carondelet, Poydras emphasized the loyalty and simplicity of the habitants of Avoyelles; too much attention to their participation in illicit trade might incur suspicion. Poydras argued that Assereto had greatly wronged the habitants, for they were “poor and honest people.” Poydras suggested that “They do not have any idea of the difference of governments...I do not think that they have the least understanding of what is happening in Europe, at least they do not take the least interest.” Poydras likely spoke in hyperbole. Poydras concluded his July letter to Carondelet, assuring him that “peace is established.”⁵⁰

What of Assereto? Assereto tried again to endear himself to Carondelet. This time he did so by publically decrying revolutionary sentiment while he stood wrapped in the Spanish flag. Fearful that Assereto might stir up real revolution in New Orleans, Carondelet deported the trouble-maker with his family to Havana, bypassing legal process in the name of preventing revolution.⁵¹ The situation at Avoyelles was a conflict between a difficult official and local inhabitants who recognized him as a threat to their way of life. The international revolutionary environment, provided fuel that Assereto used against his enemies at Avoyelles, and a setting that Carondelet employed to expel the troublesome commandant.

⁴⁹ Poydras to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 28 July 1793, PPC, legajo 208B: fo 267-72, quotation: “pernicieux...et les germes de tous les vices.” “Il avoit sur tout déclaré La guerre aux marchands;” and “Je ne trouve point de crimes dans tous les procès qui ne sont que Les fruits de Son imagination diabolique.” Villars may have been the overseer of Poydras property at Avoyelles, Saucier, *History of Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana*, 469 fn2.

⁵⁰ Poydras to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 28 July 1793, PPC, legajo 208B: fo 267-72, quotation: “les pauvres et honnêtes gens;” and “Ils n’ont aucune idée de la différence du gouvernements...Je ne crois pas qu’ils ayant la moindre connaissance de ce qui se passer en Europe, de moins ils n’a prennent pas le moindre intérêt;” and “la paix est établie.”

⁵¹ Din, “Assereto,” 74-5.

In 1795, trouble broke out for colonial officials at Natchitoches. After having taken on great debt to expand their tobacco production, colonists were irate that the legal market for their cash crop had all but dissolved in the Spanish world. When their former pastor, Fr. Jean Delvaux, returned to the district speaking zealously of Jacobin ideals, disconcerted colonists gathered around him. After news that Delvaux had been called back to New Orleans reached Natchitoches, colonists chose to rise up in support for the priest and to seize the moment to express their dissatisfaction with the Spanish Empire through acts of banditry and by harassing colonial officials and English-speaking colonists. Delvaux's followers drew upon local conflict and factionalism. By taking advantage of the setting of the Louisiana-Texas borderland, the rebels eluded the arm of the law. They donned masks and took up Jacobin rhetoric as they challenged Spanish authorities. The revolutionary age directly influenced the manifestation of this local campaign against the Spanish regime, and Spanish and church officials moved to suppress carriers of revolutionary rhetoric and disturbance. Carondelet's interest in gaining the loyalty of French-speaking colonists also prompted him to handle the rebels with leniency.

In late 1794, Fr. Jean Delvaux traveled the Red River to Natchitoches. He had served the post as pastor from 1786 to 1793 and then received a transfer to the German Coast. When he heard that Fr. Pedro Velez then at Natchitoches had died, Delvaux determined to return to his former post. There, his arrival spurred wide local response to the economic challenges facing the colony. The revolt that followed drew upon the rhetoric of the French Revolution.⁵²

En route to Natchitoches, Delvaux stopped at Avoyelles where Spanish officials first recognized him as a sympathizer of the French Revolution willing to challenge authority. The priest involved himself in a local dispute between commandant Etienne dela Morandière and the

⁵² Din, "Father Jean Delvaux and the Natchitoches Revolt of 1795," *LH* 40.1 (1999): 9-10.

trader Badins. De la Morandière had placed Badins under house arrest for espousing Jacobin idioms and for spreading rumors suggesting that France would take possession of Louisiana. Although what happened at Avoyelles remains a mystery, the incident retains its significance in identifying Delvaux as a troublemaker. Delvaux later claimed that he found Badins in a pitiable situation, under house arrest with an ailing wife and daughter, and that he advocated before dela Morandière for clemency on behalf of Badins, that the commandant agreed, and that in the end dela Morandière reneged publically on his promises.⁵³ For his part, dela Morandière, insisted that an intoxicated Delvaux had encouraged Badins to defy the commandant's orders, that Badins had escaped and could not be found, and that Delvaux also spoke seditious Jacobin language in public.⁵⁴ This incident demonstrates knowledge of Jacobin and rhetoric in the Avoyelles district, something Poydras had denied a year earlier. Not long after Delvaux reached Natchitoches, Commandant Louis DeBlanc received orders from Carondelet to investigate Delvaux's troubling actions at Avoyelles.⁵⁵

Together Carondelet and Vicar General Patrick Walsh issued orders designed to squelch the influence of Delvaux's Jacobinism. They ordered him to remove to Mobile in an effort to separate Jacobin influence from French-speakers.⁵⁶

Both Delvaux's appearance at Natchitoches and the orders from Carondelet and Walsh provided the impetus for colonists to express their resentment over Spain's economic and commercial policy and over the decline of the local economy. With the destruction of the market for Louisiana tobacco and as the Indian trade at Natchitoches continued to plummet, colonists

⁵³ Delvaux to Carondelet, Havana, 9 Dec 1795, Notre Dame Archive, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, hereafter cited Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

⁵⁴ DelaMorandière to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 10 December 1794, and 23 Dec 1794, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

⁵⁵ Din, "Father Jean Delvaux," 10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 11. By 1795, a much larger proportion of Mobile's population was non-French than elsewhere.

blamed the Spanish regime for their economic woes. The animosity of the colonists towards the Spanish Empire coalesced with Delvaux's Jacobinism and manifested itself in several months-worth-of disturbances collectively called the Natchitoches Revolt.⁵⁷

Natchitoches colonists rallied around the priest and began calling themselves the "Revenants" or "ghosts." *Revenants* leaders joined Delvaux in penning two petitions asking Carondelet to reconsider removing the priest from Natchitoches. The syndic Bossier and the acting-commandant D'Ortolans refused to support the petitions, and after the *Revenants* threatened them, D'Ortolans imprisoned five leaders. The very day of their release, four attacked those going and coming from a ball at DeBlanc's home. They beat the musician Ramin and broke his violin. Then, they harassed the pregnant wife of the merchant Fauzin.⁵⁸

Local factionalism influenced the disturbances at Natchitoches as well. The three main groupings of colonists reflected kinship relationships, socio-economic divisions, and cultural heritage: the extended family of the former commandant Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, which included the commandant Louis DeBlanc and was as a group thus largely associated with the Spanish administration; the DeMézières family and its allies who had fallen from power at the death of the family's patriarch in 1779; and the growing number of English-speaking settlers drawn from Britain, Ireland, and North America. The *Revenants* drew primarily from the DeMézières faction, including several of DeMézières's sons and officers of the local militia. The involvement of militiamen made it difficult for DeBlanc and D'Ortolans to respond to the *Revenants*. Besides the DeMézières clan, other family networks were involved, most notably the Prudhomme-Bousquier-Lambres family alliance from whom François Bousquier, and his brothers-in-law Manuel Prudhomme, Antoine Prudhomme, and Dominic Prudhomme, and

⁵⁷ Coutts, "Boom and Bust," 306-8; Holmes, *Gayoso*, 94-5; Burton and Todd, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 127-140.

⁵⁸ Piernas before Ximenes, Notary Public, 16 March 1796, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

another brother-in-law Remis Lambres.⁵⁹ Because of its association with the Spanish regime, the St. Denis faction was a natural target for Delvaux and his followers. The Anglo-faction also became a target of Delvaux's revolt. For the most part, this last group had not signed Delvaux's petition, and when the *Revenants* targeted their property, some formed night patrols. John O'Reilly was beaten by masked *Revenants* for his participation in the patrols, and Thomas O'Reilly, advised a friend not to travel to his home.⁶⁰

Delvaux capitalized on existing conflicts as he fanned the flames of discontent. Joseph Capuron, a leader of the *Revenants*, and Pierre Bouet Lafitte, a land owner, merchant, and trader, had a history of conflict with DeBlanc. Monginet held a grudge against Spanish officials after he was denied the position of surgeon in the district.⁶¹ *Revenant* mischief stretched through the summer of 1795 and reached new heights in August when Carondelet demanded that Delvaux leave Natchitoches. In the interim, Delvaux encouraged his followers not to attend the masses of the newly appointed priest, Fr. Pierre Pavié.⁶²

As they embraced French Revolutionary rhetoric and song, *Revenants* frequently crossed the colonial border with Texas in their antics just as they did in their regular hunting and trading practices. The *Revenants* included colonists from Nacogdoches and Natchitoches. They crossed from post to post, visiting each other's homes where they played cards, drank, spoke against DeBlanc and Carondelet, and sang songs offensive to Spanish ears. The comedian Dessessard,

⁵⁹ Din, "Father Jean Delvaux," 23.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 9, 11-12; Mora before Ximenes, Notary Public, 31 Mar 1796, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; David La Vere, "Edward Murphy: Irish Entrepreneur in Spanish Natchitoches," *LH* 32.4 (1991): 378.

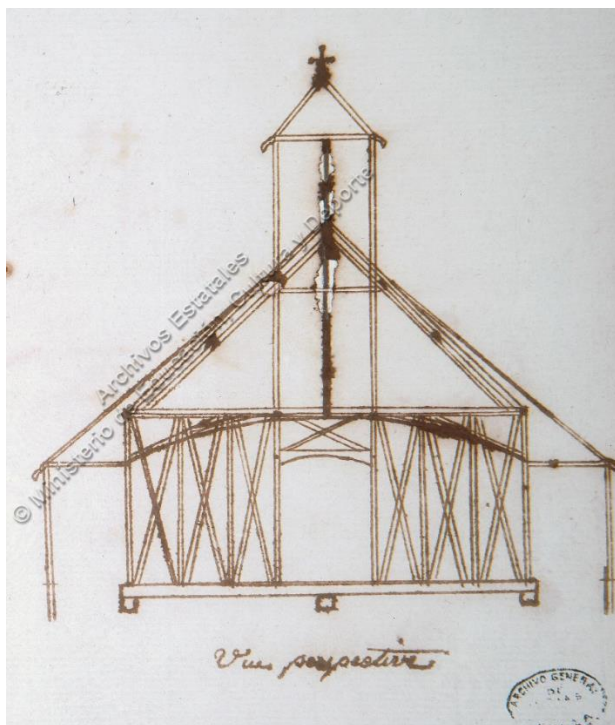
⁶¹ Din, "Father Jean Delvaux," 25n. Lt. José Piernas was the son of Pedro Piernas. For More on José Piernas see Jack D. L. Holmes and Joseph Piernas, "The Calcasieu Promoter: Joseph Piernas and His 1799 Proposal," *LH* 9.2 (1968): 163-67; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Joseph Piernas and a Proposed Settlement on the Calcasieu River, 1795," *McNeese Review* 13 (1962): 59-80; Jack D.L. Holmes, "Joseph Piernas and the Nascent Cattle Industry of Southwest Louisiana," *McNeese Review* 17 (1966): 13-26; Din, "For Defense of Country and the Glory of Arms: Army Officers in Spanish Louisiana, 1766-1803," *LH* 43.1 (2002): 10-11.

⁶² Jose Vasquez Baamonde to Carondelet, Baton Rouge, 21 Oct 1795, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Din, "Father Jean Delvaux," 13-15.

the surgeon Monginot, and a Nacogdoches colonist Chabuse composed a song that celebrated the actions of the *Revenants* the night of DeBlanc's party. Opposition to Spanish officials appeared in lyrics and speeches of the *Revenants* along with references to the French Revolution.

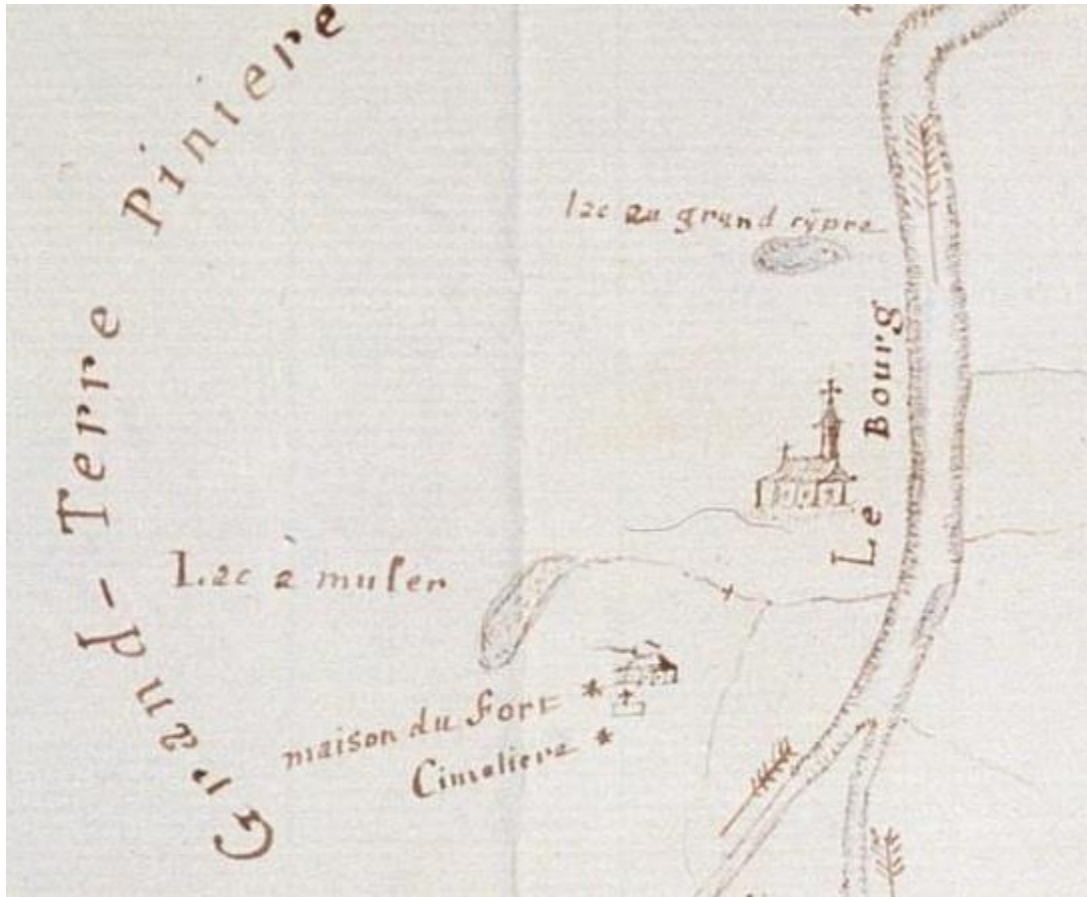
Revenants also reportedly sang the Hymn of Paris and the Marseilles.⁶³

The *Revenants* targeted representatives of the official Spanish regime and those loyal to it. Over the course of 1795 and early 1796, they went so far as to threaten the lives of the primary Spanish officials at Natchitoches, DeBlanc and D'Ortolans, those who supported them, and those who traveled to their homes. After DeBlanc arrested several perpetrators in early 1796, *Revenants* threatened José Piernas who was to conduct the prisoners to New Orleans.



View of the parish church at Natchitoches from the presbyter, Pares, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Florida Luisiana, 160, 18 April 1786.

⁶³ Piernas before Ximenes, Notary Public, 16 March 1796, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Mora before Ximenes, Notary Public, 31 Mar 1796, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Din, "Father Jean Delvaux," 12-3, 16n.



A 1794 depiction of the Natchitoches District, Pares, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Florida Luisiana, 160, 1794.

Carondelet employed similar tactics to those he had used against Assereto. Delvaux eventually travelled to New Orleans of his own volition in October 1795. By November 2, 1795, Carondelet proposed to Bishop Peñalver y Cárdenas that they send Delvaux to Cuba.⁶⁴ Peñalver agreed.⁶⁵ Delvaux continued to declare his own innocence for the next several years.⁶⁶

Although for a few months Carondelet was content to let DeBlanc handle affairs, by December 1795, the governor decided that it was time to re-establishing “*tranquilité.*” He

⁶⁴ Carondelet to Penalver, New Orleans, 2 Nov 1795, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

⁶⁵ Penalver to Carondelet, New Orleans, 3 Nov 1795, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

⁶⁶ Delvaux to Penalver, aboard the *Borja*, 19 Nov 1795, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Delvaux to Penalver, Havana, 20 Dec 1795, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Delvaux to Carondelet, Havana, 20 Dec 1795, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Delvaux to Penalver, Havana, 16 Jan 1796, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Delvaux to Juan Procopio Bassecourt (governor of Cuba), 1 July 1797, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

demanded that DeBlanc arrest the leaders of the revolt: Ramis Lambres, Emmanuel Prudhomme, Antoine Prudhomme, Dominique Prudhomee, François Roquier, fils; Josine de Mézières, Jacques de Mézières, and the Spanish soldier Corporal Pedro Ramis. Carondelet also dispatched Antoine Argote to investigate. Eventually, the *Revenant* leaders were arrested and sent to New Orleans. The arrests of the ringleaders coincided with the announcement of peace between France and Spain, which assured the colonists that Louisiana was in fact still part of the Spanish Empire if any doubt remained.⁶⁷ In September 1796, Grand Pré reported that all was quiet in Natchitoches: “Although confidences not yet completely restored, there is communication, decency, and good order among all.”⁶⁸

The revolt at Natchitoches instigated by Fr. Delvaux granted disgruntled colonists an opportunity to unleash their resentment against the Spanish Empire. They recognized Spanish economic policy as the author of the demise of the post, especially with regard to the tobacco market. The district suffered severely from the decline of the fur trade through that post as well and from Indian conflicts growing during the 1790s as well. Delvaux’s Jacobin rhetoric fell upon receptive ears, and the revolt took up the language of revolution as the Revenants harassed officials and those known to be loyal to the Spanish regime. The response of officials to the revolt at Natchitoches reflected both the desire for “bon ordre” and distress at the influence of Jacobin rhetoric at this extremity of empire. Additionally, as had been the case with Assereto, Carondelet bypassed standard legal procedure in favor of expelling Delvaux from the colony. However, the desire to return to *tranquilité* and to garner support for the Spanish regime among

⁶⁷ La Vere, “Edward Murphy,” 16-18.

⁶⁸ Grand Pré to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 27 Sept 1796, as quoted in Lawrence Kinnaid and Lucia B. Kinnaid, “Red River Valley in 1796,” *LH* 24.2 (1983): 189.

French-speaking colonists fostered a lenient response to the disturbances at Natchitoches from colonial officials.

Conclusions

Disillusionment with Spain over commercial regulations and economic policies was nothing new to Louisiana colonists and would continue. The revolutionary age offered new possibilities for the expression of that disillusionment. French-speaking Louisiana merchants and planters contacted France. Others were expelled from Louisiana for their seditious words, which took on a new layer of threatening meaning in the revolutionary times. A Jacobin club began in New Orleans, evidence of the ties of the port city to the networks of commerce by which revolutionary ideas also traveled. At Natchitoches, revolutionary rhetoric provided local colonists another mode for expressing discontent with the Spanish regime.

The Clark-Genêt affair demonstrated the interweaving of the contest for territory in the Mississippi Valley and the ‘contagion’ of the revolutionary age during the final decade of Spanish rule in Louisiana. The collaboration among representatives of the French Girondist government and Anglo-Americans interested in separating from the United States evidenced a real external threat to Spanish political borders in the Mississippi Valley. They also suggested continued fragility of loyalty of American westerners during the early years of the Republic. Significantly, the episode provided a catalyst for Carondelet to assess alliances and strategies for defending Spanish colonial borders and claims to contested territories. As Carondelet looked to strengthen defenses in the Southeast, Indian alliances and Indian politics naturally continued to take center stage as the nexus of the contest for the region. Spanish officials recognized that they

must work within the networks of alliance, kinship, and trade on Indian terms if they were to have a chance at success.

The context of the revolutionary age influenced the ways that Carondelet and other officials responded to the external and internal threats to empire facing Louisiana. Threat to Spanish rule of law and to Spanish claim on the Lower Mississippi Valley and American Southeast were real dangers during the revolutionary age. As some French-speaking Louisianians eyed the revolutionary events on the other side of the Atlantic and began to espouse revolutionary ideas, the Spanish government in Louisiana took steps to prevent the propagation of such ideas by increasing the monitoring of communication networks and the spread of ideas that often followed upon trade and migration routes. Carondelet turned to expulsion of subjects deemed suspicious or seditious, and officials throughout the colony were instructed to watch, count, and report on the caboteurs and any other travelers milling about the colony from post to post. Fear that radical behavior might spark disturbances in New Orleans prompted Carondelet to expel Assereto without adhering to proper legal proceedings. Although the governor was warned against such actions in the future, he was able to claim the dangers of the times as his reasoning for bypassing standards.

In spite of its efforts to monitor the movement of peoples and of ideas, the Spanish government was ineffective in cutting Louisiana off from news, rumors, and ideas of the times. Meanwhile, various groups living in the Lower Mississippi Valley began putting revolutionary currents to local use. Such currents contributed to the rise in conspiracies among slaves who sought their freedom in Louisiana. The context of the revolution sweeping the Atlantic influenced both the ways that officials attempted to impose borders and perceived borderlanders and the ways that the resistance of borderlands inhabitants was made manifest.

Chapter 8

Slave Conspiracies and Resistance in Spanish Louisiana, 1790-1800

Introduction

As elsewhere, slaves in Louisiana had a long history of resisting bondage and pursuing freedom. Traditional practices like marronage continued, and many slaves still appealed to licit avenues to freedom provided by Spanish legal code. But in the revolutionary age, slave resistance took on new meaning. Now, officials, colonists, and slaves alike had a changed perception of some traditional practices. Revolutionary rumors and ideas rumbled through the Lower Mississippi Valley as they did throughout the Caribbean. During the 1790s, slaves turned more often to crossing the boundary from slavery to freedom by entering into conspiracies to revolt. As they did so, they employed networks of ethnicity, communication, travel, and kinship that spanned across habitations in a single district and that connected the districts throughout the region. Conspirators used the accessible topography and borderland practices to their advantage. With the discovery of multiple conspiracies in the 1790s, all of those who employed the waterways of the Lower Mississippi and who employed borderland forms of trade and travel fell under suspicion of authorities. The connections between libres and slaves also attracted new suspicions. The most famous of the slave conspiracies, the Pointe Coupée conspiracy of 1795, was hardly an isolated incident. Rather, it was a moment in a larger arch of resistance both at Pointe Coupée and in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Understanding the Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy of 1795 in this way illuminates the tensions that existed within the slave society, including tensions among slaves, libres, colonists at various outposts, and the colonial

government; such a perspective also brings forward the networks and individuals complicit in conspiracy and those complicit in enforcing the boundary between slavery and freedom.

During the 1790s, the influences of the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution reverberated throughout the Atlantic World and Circum-Caribbean, encouraging rebellions among slaves, free blacks, and colonists alike and inciting fear among governing authorities. As it underwent multiple cycles of revolt and reformulation, the upheaval of the French Revolution also spread the maxims of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* in a way that challenged empire and existing social order. This upheaval became especially evident when the ideas of racial equality officially merged with the radicalism of the French Revolution in the form of decrees, which were themselves responses to events in Saint Domingue. On April 4, 1792, the National Assembly decreed equality among free blacks and white colonists, and in February 1794 the National Convention issued a decree emancipating the slaves living in French colonies. Revolution spread to the Caribbean first in the form of the most successful slave revolt of all time, the revolt in Saint Domingue in 1791. The outbreak of revolutions in the Atlantic World did not end slavery, which remained entrenched throughout the Americas for decades to come. In fact, slavery continued to expand in many places including North America. As Haiti fell from its place as the greatest sugar producer of the Atlantic, other locales took up this form of plantation agriculture and slavery. Further, the early stages of the abolition and anti-slavery movements that emerged in the 1780s coupled with reforms in British, French, and Spanish empires to stimulate the circulation of near constant rumor of emancipation throughout the Caribbean. In their varying forms, rumors shaped the ways that slaves resisted and rebelled. Rumor had an important place in fostering rebellion and fear of revolution during this period. In Louisiana, every sector of society experienced and participated in the circulation of

inflammatory rumors—including rumors of French invasion and rumors of emancipation. Conspiracy and rumor thrived on and fostered an atmosphere of uncertainty in Louisiana.¹

The Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy of 1795 was certainly influenced by the rumors and stories of slave insurrection in the Caribbean and was part of a larger story of slave resistance in Louisiana. The conspiracy of 1795 was predated by a conspiracy in 1791 at the same post. This earlier conspiracy was held together largely along lines of African ethnicity among Mina slaves of the district. Investigation into this plot, however, suggested a broader web of connection of Mina slaves with one another and with libres of Mina heritage that stretched throughout the colony. After their plot was discovered, Mina slaves were taken to New Orleans for a second trial. Because of complications in the trial the Mina slaves were returned to Pointe Coupée but only after being exposed to stories of the Haitian Revolution spreading in New Orleans. At Pointe Coupée, as slaves awaited the fate of the Mina slaves, their complaints for redress of grievances against their masters proliferated. The Pointe Coupée conspiracy of 1795 surprised colonists and officials at the outpost. In this much larger conspiracy, slaves from across the district plotted to kill the slave owners and other whites and to seize their freedom. The conspiracies took place within the context of a re-Africanized slave population. While this dimension is important to consider, it is also necessary to recognize that the leadership of the slave conspiracies in Louisiana during this decade always came from among the Creole slave population of Louisiana, not the recently arrived Africans.²

¹ David Geggus, “Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815,” in Geggus and Gaspar, eds., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1997), 1-50; Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: 2004), 130-1. See Dubois for a recent comprehensive treatment of the Haitian Revolution that takes into consideration the relationship between the ongoing French Revolution and Haitian Revolution over the course of the 1790s. Sugar was not a significant crop in Louisiana until the very end of the Spanish era, the late 1790s.

² David Geggus, “Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815,” in Gaspar and Geggus eds., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 2-5. In her discussion of rebellion in Louisiana, central to Hall’s argument is the claim that rebellion was

A sense of alarm swept Louisiana as news of the Pointe Coupée revolt spread. Fear initially united colonial officials and colonists. An examination of the response of colonial leaders and colonial inhabitants reveals some of the borderland practices still strong in the Lower Mississippi, especially the employment of the region's waterways to avoid the monitoring of officials. It also suggests ways that the Spanish colonial government attempted to garner support from among French-speaking colonists in the face of the fears of slave conspiracy.

As the investigation and aftermath of the conspiracy of 1795 unfolded, colonial officials and colonists found themselves daunted by persistent and elusive borderland practices. The conspiracy of 1795 stood in stark contrast to a conspiracy among Mina slaves of that post only a few years earlier. This earlier conspiracy did not create intense fear of revolution in Louisiana even though it was discovered at nearly the same moment that the revolution began in Saint Domingue. As for the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée in 1795, for the moment, searches of spaces thought to breed conspiracy, such as slave cabins, waterways, and roads became more frequent. Additionally, authorities temporarily clamped down on groups that often took advantage of the easy mobility of the Lower Mississippi Valley, especially slaves, maroons, deserters, and caboteurs. Officials tied unauthorized movement to the spread of revolutionary ideas and a general threat to the colony. The investigation at Pointe Coupée revealed broad knowledge of the conspiracy and connections to it that stretched throughout the colony. This knowledge was accessed through the networks of conspiring slaves and their confidants. The prosecution of those involved in the conspiracy did not deter slaves throughout the colony from conspiring to rebel in the months and years afterwards. Negotiations among officials, slave holders of New Orleans, and slaveholders outside the metropole revealed different attitudes with regard to

African grown rebellion. She argues that African origins of slave revolt in the colony far outweighed the contribution of Creole slaves.

changing the slave code and the way to go about enforcing the boundary between slavery and freedom. Conspiracy in Louisiana did not end at Pointe Coupée in 1795. Slaves continued to enter into conspiracy and to engage in other forms of resistance through the end of the Spanish period.

Resistance in the Revolutionary Age

Continuity characterized the efforts of many slaves to resist the slave system or to gain freedom. During the Spanish period, slaves continued to defy the bounds of slavery by practicing marronage, and officials continued to rely upon militia and Indians to serve as slave catchers as they had since the French period. Many slaves turned to the *Siete Partidas* to try to mitigate harsh treatment and to secure freedom for themselves or for their relatives. Crossing the boundary from slavery to freedom remained an important interest, and kinship continued to play a significant role in these border crossings.

Slaves persisted in practicing *grand* and *petit* marronage. Besides those accustomed to the practice, Africans who had recently undergone the middle passage also took advantage of the opportunity to escape. Such was the case in 1791 when a group of ten bozales slaves from Mozambique took flight from the magasin of Mr. Martureng, each with a *coulotte*, a *chemise*, and a hat.³ Another group of maroons cut wood near Judice's home at LaFourche, bearing witness to the persistent tendency of some maroons to remain in proximity to settlement in the years after the Philipe episode.⁴ At about this time, only two or three slaves numbered in the official count of maroons for the Attakapas and Opelousas posts, although the marronage of

³ Miró to Masicot, New Orleans, June 1791, PPC, legajo 204: fo 74.

⁴ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 4 Dec 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 338.

others may have gone unreported.⁵ In October, a man who had escaped from his master Josef Hévia, was thought to be near the Lafourche or the German Coast. Josef Michel was “from the Carabaly nation, about thirty three years of age, having a face marked with many *raies*, speaking Spanish and French well enough, wearing a green *veste*.”⁶ In 1793, maroons moved about the Opelousas district armed. There, at least one colonist, Jacques Roman, asked permission to chase maroons near his property.⁷ Other maroons fled the New Orleans area and traveled through settlements like the LaFourche seeking long-term escape from bondage.⁸ In early 1795, three maroons were caught on the German Coast and returned to New Orleans aboard the boat of the caboteur Jean Luc.⁹ In 1798, slaves at Opelousas continued to turn to marronage.¹⁰ In many cases throughout the Spanish period, slaves who turned to marronage and took advantage of the topography of the Lower Mississippi succeeded in eluding officials and search parties.

Indians continued to act as slave catchers through the 1790s. In 1792, the Houmas once again assisted Judice in tracking down maroons.¹¹ That same year, Forstall commented from Opelousas that Carondelet had promised the Indians of that post four piasters per maroon whom they “will kill with firearms.”¹² At Pointe Coupée, the Tunica chief Panaroye and some of his men were called in to search for a slave who had murdered his master.¹³

⁵ Forstall to Carondelet, Attakapas, 4 Dec 1792, PPC, legajo 207B: fo 210-11.

⁶ Carondelet to Verret, Judice, Masicot, New Orleans, 23 Oct 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 360, quotation: “de nation Carabaly agé d’environ trente trois ans, aient le visage marquée de plusieurs raies, parlant Espagnol et assés bien francais, portant une veste verte.”

⁷ Forstall to Roman, Opelousas, 25 Feb 1793, PPC, legajo 209: fo 471.

⁸ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 29 May 1796, PPC, legajo 212: fo 452; Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 26 August 1796, PPC, legajo 212: fo 466.

⁹ Louis Andry to Carondelet, Allemands, 11 Feb 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 335.

¹⁰ Forstall, Opelousas, 23 Aug 1798, PPC, legajo 209: fo 369.

¹¹ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 4 Dec 1792, PPC, legajo 205: fo 338.

¹² Forstall to Carondelet, Opelousas, 28 Nov 1792, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 401, quotation: “tueront avec les armes a feu.”

¹³ “Procès en conséquence de Lassassinat Commis en la Personne de feu Claude Trenonay habitant de la Pointe Coupée,” PPC, legajo 25A: fo 848; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 254.

Many appealed to the *Siete Partidas* to secure freedom for those in bondage during this final decade of Spanish rule. In his old age, Anthony Hutchins appealed to the governor from Natchez. He described that in 1772 or 1773 when he migrated to Natchez with “two children Bethy and Jude I brength from North Carolina” after he “bought their time of a Mr. Richard Farr, which children ... expressing in the said indenture that they were born of the Body of a free Mulatto woman.” Now over twenty years later:

And I do further say and declare that my sole motive in making this Declaration is in point of conscience to ease my mind from a distress that it has long been tortured...and assured that they were born free, and that they are as free by birth as my own children notwithstanding their unjust mancipation. And I greatly lament that my having brought them from the Country where they were born & bound apprentices should enslave them and their offspring. And I do further say and declare that they were with force & arms taken from my Plantation among many of my negroe slaves in the year 1778 or 1779 by a party of American Plunderers conducted by a Capt Willing & a McIntyre who also took from me the --- indenture with my other papers.

And I do further declare that the said Bethy and Jude by some means or other by way of Mr. Navarro the former Intendant so is reported fell into the hands of a Madm Lesuse an Acquaintance of his, in whose possession I saw them about three years ago and that they were claimed by the said Madame Lesuse as her property.

I further declare that it is nigh or about five years since one of them (namely Jude in my presence did exhibit a memorial for Getting before Governor Miro through the hands of Don Andre the secretaire but am still a stranger to the event only that They are yet in slavery.¹⁴

Through the 1790s, slaves accessed freedom through self-purchase and manumission both in the region’s metropole and throughout the outposts of the Lower Mississippi River. In New Orleans both the number of manumissions and the total libre population of the city were on the rise. In a growing number of New Orleans manumissions, slaves or a third party, often a relative, purchased the slave’s freedom from his or her master; whereas, fewer manumissions were gratis during this decade, reduced to approximately one third of all manumissions, a decline from

¹⁴ Anthony Hutchins to Carondelet, Natchez, 20 Feb 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 327-8.

approximately one half of manumissions two decades earlier.¹⁵ Both in New Orleans and outside of it, free fathers of enslaved children acknowledged paternity and freed their offspring and purchased that of the mother. Such was the case in New Orleans when in 1793 Carlos Begin freed his eight month old son Carlos and the child's mother Maria.¹⁶ At Pointe Coupée a year earlier, Frederic Riché and his wife Marianne Porche freed a fifteen month old mulatto slave named Julien, and the civil records note that Baptiste Breza dit LaFleur was the child's father.¹⁷

The largest libre community continued to grow at New Orleans where natural increase and migration added to new manumissions grew the libre population; but other smaller communities had begun to develop elsewhere in the colony, such as at Cane River in the Natchitoches district.¹⁸ Here, the matriarch of the community, Marie Thérèse dit CoinCoin was freed by her owner Pierre Metoyer, who also fathered ten of her fourteen children. It was their relationship that Father Quintanilla had protested so vocally during his time ministering to Natchitoches in the 1770s. In 1787, Marie Thérèse received title to her first tract of land, 68 acres on the Cane River given to her by donation of Metoyer. Over the course of the next decade, she worked to gain the freedom of her children. In the process, she also began to develop her tract of land and to acquire others. In 1792, the hard work of her family yielded enough tobacco to warrant a barge of its own to send it to New Orleans, along with three

¹⁵ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 20-1. For a more complete discussion of manumission in New Orleans, see Hanger's "Chapter 1: Avenues of Freedom," 17-54.

¹⁶ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 36-7.

¹⁷ Deville, *Masters and Slaves*, 20-5. Other examples of manumission at this post are dated as follows: 22 Aug 1792, the manumission of Raimond aged two by Marguerite Mayeux at the payment of 100 pesos by Hypolite Porche, the father of the child; 30 June 1795, freedom of the mulatto Gui by his owner Hubert, which interestingly occurs in close proximity to the discovery of the conspiracy at the same post; 9 Dec 1795, Colin LaCour filed letters of freedom for the mulatto slaves Achile and Pauline; 15 Jan 1796, freedom of Marie Louise by the Sieur and Dame Colin LaCour; 5 Feb 1795, freedom of the mulatto slave Methior by François Allain; 29 Feb 1796, the freedom of Athanasse from Charles LaChapelle; 2 Jan 1797 the slave woman Augustine by Vincent Ternant; 4 Jan 1797, the mulatress woman Pelagie by François Allain.

¹⁸ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 51. For a full discussion of the Cane River settlement, see Gary B. Mills, *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color*.

hundred hides, and two barrels of grease. The homestead became the nucleus of a libre settlement that rose to prominence during the nineteenth century.¹⁹

Although Spanish law forbade the enslavement of Indians and their descendants, many such persons remained enslaved in Louisiana, and some invoked the law in their pursuit of freedom. Kinship was often tied to such proceedings. In all, seven appeals from slaves claiming Indian heritage came before Carondelet. In each case, the governor found in favor of the slaves. Like so many other efforts to secure emancipation, kinship played an important role in these cases. In one of the more famous cases, the slave Cecile sued her master Manuel Monsanto for her freedom based upon her mother's Indian heritage. Monsanto accepted the verdict that declared Cecile a free woman, but Julien Poydras, master to Cecile's two children whom their mother sought also to have freed, refused to comply with Carondelet's decision. Besides his own legal efforts, Poydras convinced twenty-six other planters living at Pointe Coupée and the German Coast to petition Charles IV to end the manumission of Indians and their descendants.²⁰

At least two other slaves of Indian descent lived on the Poydras plantation, Marie and Antoine Sarrasin. Their grandmother Thérèse had been an Indian slave. Formerly a slave of another Monsanto brother, Benjamin, their mother Marie Jeanne established her own freedom based upon her mother Thérèse's Indian identity in 1793. However, her attempts to have Marie and Antoine Sarrasin freed were fruitless. By that time, the petition endorsed by Poydras had reached Carondelet. The governor hoped to garner the loyalty of francophone slaveholders by cooperating with them on the issue of slavery. Another free Indian woman named Cecile, who had obtained her freedom in 1782 and subsequently set about gaining the manumission of her

¹⁹ Mills, *Forgotten People*, 26-60. By the time of the transfer of Louisiana to the United States, the free Metoyer family claimed 19 land claims, 12 of which were found valid. Like many colonial Louisianians, the Metoyer's may have used and laid claim to lands for which they held no title (60).

²⁰ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 148.

family members, sought to establish the Indian heritage of her sister, coincidentally also named Marie Jeanne. Freedom for Marie Jeanne and her descendants included slaves at Opelousas and at Pointe Coupée. Marie Jeanne's daughter Nanette was mother to Antoine Sarrasin's three children Antoine, Lazarie, and Colatique. In 1798, Cecile purchased her niece Nanette's freedom.²¹ While Indian heritage continued to be an accepted avenue to freedom during the 1790s, in the moment when loyalty of French-speaking slaveholders seemed more important to Carondelet than applying the law, the governor willingly compromised the execution of slave codes and customs.

Although many slaves turned to the recourse of the Spanish Law in their efforts to escape slavery, the 1790s witnessed a growing willingness among slaves of Louisiana to plan rebellions in order to achieve more extensive crossings from slavery to freedom. This shift was in synchronization with the spread of slave rebellions throughout the Atlantic World.

In a slave conspiracy that was discovered in August 1791, just prior to the start of the revolution in Saint Domingue, a relatively small number of slaves at Pointe Coupée plotted to murder their masters and to claim their freedom. The revolution in Saint Domingue was ultimately the impetus for a growing fear of slave uprisings among free persons in Louisiana. It also contributed to rumors of emancipation and revolution that circulated throughout the Circum-Caribbean at the time. The 1791 slave conspiracy at Pointe Coupée proved the possibility of an uprising in Louisiana. The proceedings after the conspiracy's discovery also pointed to networks of ethnicity and ties between enslaved persons and libres as loci of fomentation of such conspiracy. Nevertheless, in this instance slaveholders were more distracted with the loss of labor of the imprisoned slaves, and officials perceived the incident as difficult to prosecute

²¹ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 148, 321, 336-342.

because of obstacles of language in the testimonies of the slaves. In spite of its uncanny timing, the 1791 slave conspiracy did not produce widespread panic or fear in the Lower Mississippi. The trial did put Mina slaves from Pointe Coupée in New Orleans at the same time that rumors of emancipation and revolution flooded Atlantic port cities.

On the night of Saturday, June 25, 1791, at Pointe Coupée, Mina men enslaved in the district gathered with their friends in the slave cabin of Jean Louis on the property of the Widow Provillar. Mina slaves often met for festivals and social gatherings on Saturday nights. These gatherings reinforced their ethnic identity and language to a degree that was not possible in daily life because Mina slaves were often mixed with slaves of other ethnicities on the habitations at the posts of Pointe Coupée and Fausse Rivière. At this particular gathering, the Mina Jacó was crowned ‘king,’ and Cesar, a Jamaican Creole slave in attendance, instigated a conspiracy in which many Minas agreed to take part. They would rise up, and they first would kill Jean Baptiste Tournoir, the merchant, to gain access to the weapons in the storehouse. Then, they would claim their freedom.²² The date of the insurrection was set for Thursday, July 7.

Stormy weather intervened. The water made the roads in the settlement of the Pointe Coupée district perilous to travel and communication among the conspirators difficult. They chose to postpone the insurrection until the night of Saturday, July 9.²³

But, on July 8, 1791, the conspiracy came to light through a different web of African ethnicity and a network of fictive kinship. Digue, a twenty seven year old Ado slave of Vincent Ternant, paid a visit to a fellow Ado named Venus, a slave of George Olivo, père. While Digue was at Venus’s cabin, Jacó who lived at the neighboring plantation of Jacques Fabre arrived armed with three knives. Digue left with Jacó. Then, they returned to Venus’s cabin, where

²² Ricard, “Pointe Coupée Slave Conspiracy of 1791,” 119-21, 128.

²³ *Ibid.*, 121.

Digue told the twenty-eight year old woman of the specific designs of the conspirators. Together with her godmother Françoise, Françoise's father George Creole, and another slave named Pedro Chamba, Venus went to their master George Olivo, père. Olivo sent word to the post commandant Valentin LeBlanc that the “negros of the Mina and Bambara nations” had plans to rise up against “all the *blancos* of the district.”²⁴ The uprising would encompass neighboring Fausse Rivière and Pointe Coupée.

LeBlanc authorized patrols of the post, especially of the roads and slave cabins the following day. The patrols uncovered Mina slaves visiting one another at night as well as stashes of arms and ammunition. Cofi struggled with the militia when they caught him travelling from the property of Hyacinthe Chistes.²⁵

The conspiracy uncovered in 1791 bore witness to the re-Africanization of the slave population of the Lower Mississippi Valley and to the persistence of national or ethnic identities among African groups in Louisiana; however, two non-Mina slaves played the significant roles of leader and messenger. Although Venus suggested that Bambara slaves and Mina slaves were the principal actors involved, closer examination revealed a plot hatched among Mina slaves but led by the Jamaican slave named Cesar. Besides Cesar, the remainder of the men identified as conspirators were Mina with the exception of the nineteen year old Pierre. Although a Chamba himself, Pierre was reared by Mina slaves, and his youth and ability to communicate in multiple languages made him a reasonable choice to serve the group as messenger and cultural broker. The second tier of leadership in the group involved Jacó and Jean Louis, whose cabin served as

²⁴ 1792, Testimonies del Proceso Criminales de Los Negros Rebeltos de Este Puesto Contra los Blancos de Otro Puesto 9 Junio 1792, Pointe Coupée Original Acts, Parish Court Records, Center for Louisiana Studies, UL-L, quotation: “negros de las nacione Mina y Bambara devian Labansarse contra todos los blancos de este distrito.”

²⁵ Ibid; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 319, 322, 330; Ricard, “Pointe Coupée Slave Conspiracy of 1791,” *Proceedings from the Meeting of the French Historical society* 15(1992): 121-5.

an important meeting place. Although Mina support was broad, it does not appear that support for the conspiracy among any one owner's slaves was considerable. In all sixteen Mina men were interrogated, and they were from fourteen different slaveholders in the area. A seventeenth Mina slave dove into the Mississippi trying either to escape or to commit suicide. He drowned. Thus, the center of the conspiracy rested in the leadership of a Creole while the movement was otherwise primarily confined to the Mina community.²⁶

The French-speaking slaveholders of Pointe Coupée by and large sought the return of their slaves who had been taken to New Orleans to stand trial. Several slaveholders, such as Gabriel Rufat and George Bergeron, argued that their slaves were innocent, while other slaveholders pleaded that they depended on their slaves for their own financial well-being or that they could surely care for their slaves who were languishing in prison better and with less expense should the slaves be returned to Pointe Coupée.²⁷ In November 1792, several Pointe Coupée slaveholders, including Poydras, continued to pay for the upkeep of their slaves at the New Orleans prison. Others included Jean Paul Decuir for his slave Cofy and Gabriel Rufat for Pierre.²⁸ Even after the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution, slaveholders were more interested in recovering their slaves than in the conspirators receiving harsh punishment.

²⁶ Deville, *Masters and Slaves*, 19; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 319-333; Ricard, "Pointe Coupée Slave Revolt of 1791," 124-5. The slaveholders included the Widow Provillar, Jacques Fabre, George Bergeron, Mayeux, Jean Paul Decuir, Jean Baptiste Tournoir, the Widow Leblond, the Widow Latendresse, Petit George, Francisco Porch, Miguel LeJeune, Aimable Couvillon, Julien Poydras, and George Rufat. Hall emphasizes the importance of African origins in all slave uprisings of the 1790s but neglects the role of Creoles. In this case, the role of the Creole slaves was very important, though their numbers were few: leader and courier were principal roles in the conspiracy. The conspiracy uncovered four years later, in contrast, involved a much higher percentage of Creoles among its participants.

²⁷ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 325-327.

²⁸ Duparc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 12 Nov 1792, PPC, legajo 25B: fo 498. Gabriel Rufat was still identified as a peddler in 1789 in the Pointe Coupée records. During the 1790s, he traded on the Red River in attempt to free himself from the debts he owed Gerome LaChiapella for slaves purchased through the LaChiapella brothers. In 1791, he listed Pierre along with other slaves Jacob and Thiamba as security for the money he owed LaChiapella. Deville, *Masters and Slaves*, 17 (13 January 1789: Gabriel Roffat [Rossat?] peddler, to Ternand, Negresse brute, Chianba, about 12, for 300 pounds of good indigo) and 19 (27 April 1791: Obligation, Gabriel Roufat to Jerome

The Mina trial sheds light on the sense of priorities among Spanish officials at the time of the outbreak of the revolution in Saint Domingue. Mina slaves arrived at New Orleans at the close of August 1791, the same moment that slave revolt engulfed Sainte Domingue. At this time, Governor Miró was distracted by the persistence of arson in New Orleans, which he attributed to escaped slaves and prisoners who gathered at night to conspire in cabarets and elsewhere against 'bon ordre' in the colony.²⁹ Further, Miró doubted that the case against the Mina slaves could succeed because of challenges that arose at Pointe Coupée in taking testimony and because the conspirators had plenty of opportunity to collaborate with one another even after their arrest.³⁰

Carondelet initially paid greater attention to the trial, conducted during his first year as governor of Louisiana, but he suspended it in 1793. In January 1793 after the execution of Louis XVI, Spain, Britain, and Holland went to war with France. Wartime defenses, including the increased militarization of the borderland with the United States, consumed the attention of New Orleans officials, especially of the governor.³¹ The trial was not a priority.

The Mina conspirators bridged the New Orleans underworld and the New Orleans African libre communities with the outpost of Pointe Coupée. New Orleans was itself home to a Mina community. One of the major concerns with regard to LeBlanc's initial interrogation of the slaves was the language barrier. LeBlanc argued that the imprisoned conspirators spoke Louisiana French Creole more than adequately. Although they responded to the interrogations at Pointe Coupée, by the time they reached New Orleans, the conspirators, who had not been kept

LaChiapella, represented by his brother Charles LaChiapella, for 700 piastres on three notes. Security: negro Jacob, Thiamba, about 30; Negro Pierre, Minan, about 17).

²⁹ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 322-3.

³⁰ Ricard, "Pointe Coupée Slave Revolt of 1791," 125-6.

³¹ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 330-40.

in isolation from one another, claimed poor understanding of Creole French. Their efforts to throw off the trial combined with international events produced a suspended trial and no final prosecution. In all, the trial at New Orleans included Mina, Louisiana French Creole, French, and Spanish languages. Attempting to ensure more accurate communication with the slaves, who may have pretended ignorance of Louisiana French Creole in order to negotiate the Spanish legal process in their own favor, Carondelet appointed as interpreters two New Orleans libres who were also of Mina origins, Antoine Cofi Mina and Juan Bautista Cupidon. After gaining his freedom in 1778 from Don Andres Almonaster y Rojas, Antoine Cofi Mina appeared to be an average free black of New Orleans where he self-identified as a Catholic, participated in the militia, and practiced the trade of shoemaker. However, this same man represented an important link between the slave community and the libre community of Louisiana. Personally, like many libres, he remained intimately tied to enslaved Louisianians. His three sons lived as slaves of Almonaster. Additionally, the Mina of Louisiana recognized Antoine Cofi Mina as their general leader or “captain.” Besides placing the Pointe Coupée Mina slave conspirators in direct and personal contact with the Mina leader recognized colony-wide, the New Orleans trial also exposed the Mina slaves to the rumors and rhetoric of the revolutionary age, which burgeoned with enthusiasm from 1792 to 1794 among the “Louisiana's multinational, multiracial underclass of deported convict laborers (*presidarios*) and soldiers” who cohabited the New Orleans prison and worked alongside the Mina slaves.³²

It is possible, therefore, that when some of the Mina slaves did return to their masters in Pointe Coupée in 1794 they also transmitted to other slaves rumors of an impending French invasion that might also be accompanied by broad edicts of emancipation, or rumors that

³² Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 324-5, 331-5; Ricard, “Pointe Coupée Slave Revolt of 1791,” 125-7.

Carondelet had agreed to emancipate Louisiana slaves but was then pressured into silence by the slaveholding members of the New Orleans Cabildo, or news of the success of slaves in Sainte Domingue in throwing off the chains of bondage. The famed slave conspiracy of 1795 in Pointe Coupée was in continuum with events and ideas already part of the experience of inhabitants of the Pointe Coupée post.

The conspiracy of 1791 barely predated the Haitian Revolution. By the time conspirators returned to Pointe Coupée, new political and international circumstances had altered the implications of slave resistance and conspiracy throughout the Atlantic World. Rumors of the times merged with the desire of many slaves for freedom over the next several years. Slaves often gained solidarity through the webs of association within districts and across them.

While the Mina slaves were imprisoned in New Orleans, slaves at Pointe Coupée brought a multitude of complaints against their masters. As at other posts, slaves at Pointe Coupée took advantage of Spanish laws and customs whereby they had the right to file complaints against the abuses of their masters. The slave testimonies bear witness to the violence inherent in the slave society of the Lower Mississippi Valley. As the case with other forms of resistance, these complaints began to take on new meaning. Given their timing, the traditional registering of grievances also may have represented renewed resistance among the slaves of Pointe Coupée as the Mina slaves awaited trial in New Orleans. Altogether, many of those slaves who risked registering grievances with the post commandant lived on slaveholding habitations from which the revolt would draw followers three years later.

Colin LaCour's slaves accused him of mistreatment in 1792. André fled Pointe Coupée for New Orleans to complain against LaCour. In the investigation, the commandeur, or overseer, Grand Joseph testified that the bozales slaves "Les negres nommés Cezar, Nassi, Francois, and

Paul” together had asked for more food. The Creole André “for the same reason” went to LaCour’s door. When he realized that LaCour had already beaten the other four, he tried to run, but he too received lashes. This incident also speaks to the hierarchy within the slave system at Pointe Coupée: Creole slaves were to serve as examples for African slaves, older slaves for newer slaves. This hierarchy was reflected even in the order in which slaves were to receive their rations. André was scolded by his fellow slave Josef Quétou, the second commandeur for LaCour, for allowing the bozales slaves go before him to ask for food.³³

At about this time, Claude Trénonay flogged an Ibo slave named LaTulipe before placing him in the stocks for stealing. Three weeks later, as the investigation into the accusations against LaCour closed, LaTulipe killed his master on July 10, 1792. Shot through the dining room window, Trénonay’s body remained there until after the doctor Joseph Etienne, the Commandant Valentin LeBlanc, and the witnesses François and Auguste Allain began the investigation.³⁴

Over the preceding decades slaves of the Widow Bara dit LeBlond lodged complaints of brutality against their mistress. In 1780, the slave Geneviève took her grievances for cruel treatment to New Orleans. Grand Pré noted that by this time the governor had already instructed the Dame LeBlond “a thousand times...to moderate the furors that agitated her night and day against her domestic slaves.” Grand Pré also noted that he possessed information “that incontestably will prove the inhumane character of this woman, on whom *est intervenu* a decree of Monsieur le Gouverneur...which orders the said dame LeBlond, to contain herself with regard to her slaves, additionally that he will order her to sell the Negresse [now] after the death of her

³³ Procès entre Colin LaCour et Son Negre André, 5 July 1792, Point Coupée Court Records, Center for Louisiana Studies, UL-L, quotations: “pour le même motif.”

³⁴ Procès criminel au sujet de l’Assassinat commis en la Personne de Sieur Claude Trénonay, 10 July 1792, Pointe Coupée Court Records; “Procès en conséquence de l’Assassinat Commis en la Personne de feu Claude Trénonay habitant de la Pointe Coupée,” PPC, legajo 25A: fo 848; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 252-4.

child."³⁵ Time and again, the Bara dit LeBlonds were found to have abused their slaves through excessive beating, chaining, and denying proper rations of food. In July 1792, another case surfaced against the Widow LeBlond when her slave Saya complained to Carondelet of the mistreatment the slaves on the estate received.³⁶

In early September, Narcisse fled for safety to the fort at Pointe Coupée when his incited master Simon Croizet began to chase the Créole slave with a loaded gun. After Narcisse had secured momentary safety at the post's fort, Héléne, a mulatto woman and mother to Narcisse's three children, refused to follow her mistress's orders to clean the *armoire* and *office*. For her disobedience, Croizet whipped Héléne. She reported to the commandant that she had received 50 lashes unjustly. The investigation concluded that "she had only received thirty blows of the whip that she had well merited." Two days after Narcisse arrived at the fort, concerned that their cries were falling on deaf ears, Narcisse, Héléne, and their three children left for New Orleans.³⁷

A brief profile of the slaves of the merchant Jean Baptiste Tournoir and of their relationship with their master provides insight into the composition of the slave population on larger plantations at Pointe Coupée and of the tumultuous and violent nature of the relations

³⁵ Grand Pré to Pedro Piernas, 9 Feb 1780, PPC, legajo 293: fo 583-5, quotation: "mille fois...de modérer les fureurs, qui l'agitent, nuit et jour, envers ses domestiques de Maison...à la même Epoque, je fit une information juridique qui prouva incontestablement, le caractere inhumain de Cette femme, surquoy est intervenu un décret de Monsieur le Gouverneur avec la dictamen de Monsieur Lasseuseur (qui est dans les archives de ce poste) qui ordonne à la ditte dame leBlond, de ce contenir envers ses esclaves, autrement qu'il en sera ordonné la vente après avoir fait perir l'enfant de cette Negresse et en utile la mère, sans qu n'y son mary et autres personnes ayait pu rieu gagner sur elle, la dite Negresse a saisir un tems favorable pour se rendre chez moi."

³⁶ DeVille, *Masters and Slaves*, 20; Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 137; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 311-2.

³⁷ "Dilligence en Comprobaton des Plaintes Portés par le négre Narcisse Envers on maître Dn Simon Croizet," 3 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 25B: fo 81-88; "Diligence en Comporobation des plaints portées par la mulatresse Héléne envers Son maître Dn Simon Croizet," 5 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 25B: fo 70-84, quotation: The complaint "n'est nullement fondée vû qu'elle n'a recue que trente coups de fouet qu'elle avoit bien merité;" Croizet to DeBlanc, Pointe Coupée, 7 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 25B: fo 89; Croizet to DeBlanc, Pointe Coupée, 7 Sept 1792, PPC, legajo 25B: fo 91. Héléne was a Creole woman from British America whom Benjamin Monsanto had sold to Croizet on December 6, 1786. Héléne was one of a number of slaves Monsanto sold at Pointe Coupée that December. Deville, *Masters and Slaves*, 13.

among slaves, owners, and overseers that pervaded the society. According to the testimony of the slaves involved in the Mina conspiracy of 1791, they planned to kill Tournoir before any other master. By doing this, they would gain access to arms. Perhaps they were also motivated by brutality experienced on his property. Indeed, his slave Joseph was the only slave from a large estate implicated in the 1791 conspiracy. As of 1790, Tournoir owned forty five slaves and had a history of strife-ridden relations with his slaves. In 1794, several of them accused him of excessive beating. The slaves who complained represented a cross-section of slaves living at Pointe Coupée who lived and worked together on the larger plantations. They included Creoles, Africans, and Indians. Joseph was a Mina slave, George and Becca both “Nago,” Sama a “Poulard,” Cayot an Ado, and Louis Zephir a Congo. Zephir, George, and Becca were all maroons at various times. Zephir and George, frequent maroons at that. Besides these, the niece of the free Indian woman Cecile, Nanette, and her son Lazarie complained of abuse. Cecile argued that Tournoir had also denied Nanette and Lazarie proper clothing. Tournoir’s neighbors shared conflicting observations. While Charles Beauvais painted a portrait of Tournoir as a just master who obeyed the slave laws of Spain, Etienne Broyard noted that at least one of the maroons had been whipped, that Tournoir did indeed work his slaves on Sundays and on feast days, and that he failed to provide adequate clothing for them.³⁸

The complaints of slaves against their masters at the Pointe Coupée post reveals the diversity among peoples enduring enslavement as a shared experience. It also revealed that slaves appealed to Spanish legal customs, though at this peripheral location those customs rarely mitigated the effects of enslavement. Bonds of family and fictive kin also marked experiences of slavery. By 1795, those held in slavery at Pointe Coupée cooperated in another conspiracy to

³⁸ Tournoir, Pointe Coupée, 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 466-73;--, Pointe Coupée, 2 Aug 1794, PPC, legajo 210: fo 474; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 319, 329, 326, 338-40.

revolt. This time, it was wide spread and crossed the boundaries of African nations more broadly than the conspiracy of 1791. It also hinted at communication among slave communities of the different outposts of the Lower Mississippi.

Conspiracy in 1795

The conspiracy of slaves in 1795 at Pointe Coupée was led primarily by Creole slaves. Some of the leaders also had positions of leadership on the plantations in the local hierarchy among the slaves. The plot grew up across the habitations and plantations of the district and drew followers from among its Creole and African slaves, some with kinship connections to one another. Though not instigated by free persons, several free individuals living in or passing through the area contributed to the circulation of ideas and rumors related to the ongoing revolutions in France and in Haiti. When discovered, this conspiracy was suppressed quickly and forcefully, a response that united colonial officials and many colonists. The investigation into it revealed that conspirators made easy use of the opportunities for travel and communication offered by the topography of the area. Slaves communicated with one another within the district and with slaves and free persons outside of it as they sought to defy the bonds of slavery by means of a violent revolt.

In early April 1795, rumors of another local conspiracy circulated among the slaves of Pointe Coupée and neighboring Fausse Rivière. When he learned of it on April 9, habitant Charles Dufour alerted militia captain Alexandre LeBlanc. Slaves of the district planned to gather behind the property of Jacques Vignes to determine the day when they would “*frapper* their masters.”³⁹ The commandant DuParc dispatched militiamen to investigate, but the patrol

³⁹ Proceedings, Pointe Coupée, 29 April 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 780-7, quotation: “*frapper sur leurs maitres.*”

returned with little news.⁴⁰ The next day, April 10, while in the *ciprière*, the Tunica women Madeleine and Françoise listened to slaves of the Widow Leonore LaCour discussing the plot. The women hurried to the home of habitant Frederick Riché where they shared what they had learned. Frederick and his brother Louis Riché brought the intelligence to officials anew.⁴¹

Rumors circulated among the slave population of Louisiana that either the crown or Carondelet had proclaimed their emancipation but some other group in authority—the *cabildo*, DuParc, or the planters—prevented the execution of the order. Louis Riché had overheard several slaves on the road near his home discussing the plot. They said that “the habitants do not wish to give us our *liberté*.” According to Madeleine and Françoise, the slaves whom they had overheard believed that the commandant had granted them freedom but that the order had been suppressed. The revolutionary age propelled similar rumors about emancipation throughout the Atlantic World.⁴²

The lead shared by the Tunica women proved essential to identifying leaders and participants in this latest conspiracy. The continued association of Tunica society with the settlement of Pointe Coupée gave these women a natural point of entry to credibly voice themselves. Many other slaves gathered besides those of the Widow Lacour. The insurrection was to begin with a fire in a slave cabin on the Poydras plantation. While colonists responded to the act of arson, the conspirators would take arms, powder, and ball from the *magazin* before

⁴⁰ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt at Pointe Coupée, Louisiana, 1795,” *LH* 11.4 (1970): 341; DuParc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 14 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 808-9, quotation: “Les habitants ne veulent pas nous donner notre *liberté*.”

⁴¹ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 341; DuParc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 14 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 808-9.

⁴² Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 341; DuParc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 14 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 808-9.

murdering the white slaveholders and seizing their freedom. By this time, arson had already been associated with disorder and the spread of revolution in New Orleans for several years.⁴³

The principal leaders of the conspiracy were creole slaves often in positions of authority among the slave population of the outpost. Antoine Sarrasin, a creole, mulatto slave and commandeur on the Poydras plantation, was the primary leader of the conspirators. Earlier, he had unsuccessfully sued the estate of his former master Deshotel for his freedom, arguing that Deshotel had promised to manumit him. Over the ensuing years, his extended family secured their freedom, but the case for his was suspended. The other four leaders of the conspiracy included Grand Joseph, the commandeur on Colin LaCour's plantation, and Antoine, Philippe, and Baptiste, all slaves of the Widow Leonore LaCour.⁴⁴ Like Antoine Sarrasin, Grand Joseph was a commandeur. He had given testimony in 1792 when slaves complained against Colin LaCour and was nearly 70 in 1795. All of these men were creole, not African, and some of them had earlier appealed to the Spanish legal system as they tried to gain freedom or to lessen the brutal conditions of slavery. Such conditions were more often technically against the Spanish law and customs governing slavery, but as elsewhere in Spanish America, a gap existed between policy and practice, and colonial officials collaborated with slaveholders at Pointe Coupée in a way that perpetuated illicit practices.⁴⁵

The Poydras plantation was central to the conspiracy. In particular, slave cabins served as a central place for plotting. Antoine Sarrasin used his own cabin as a gathering place for the conspirators. As the plans for the revolt developed, Sarrasin visited the slave cabins of co-

⁴³ Holmes, "Abortive Slave Revolt," 341; DuParc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 14 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 808-9.

⁴⁴ Holmes, "Abortive Slave Revolt," 346. She was the widow of Jean Baptiste Lacour. Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 297.

⁴⁵ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 368.

conspirators and of slaves he tried to win to the cause. Poydras had a reputation as a lenient master—contrasting harsh reputations of others like Tournoir. Poydras, himself, was actually in Philadelphia attempting to recover his health when the events of 1795 took place. Besides Sarrasin, other Poydras slaves were instrumental in expanding the network of slaves participating in the conspiracy. A native of New Orleans, Jean Baptiste, also a commandeur at the Poydras plantation, was another principal conspirator. In the weeks leading up to Easter 1795, an indicator that they anticipated a future free from the plantation, Jean Baptiste forbade the Poydras slaves to plant corn, a primary source of their own subsistence. The week of Easter, Sarrasin lead meetings to finalize plans for the revolt. The insurrection had already been postponed at least once as conspirators waited for Poydras' slaves Noel, Cossi, Charles, and Baptiste to bring arms from New Orleans. As they had in the past, the conspirators continued to plot in the protection of the ciprière and in the slave cabins. They planned a meeting for April 9 behind Jacques Vignes's property near the New Roads bridge, a location more accessible to slaves of both Pointe Coupée and Fausse Rivière. Word of the conspiracy reached official ears before the meeting could take place.⁴⁶

Were the slaves being unrealistic? Did they have ideas of revolution that developed from outside influences? The uncertainty of Louisiana's political future and uncertainty surrounding the question of emancipation were significant factors in the moment that the conspiracy crystalized. Clearly, the slaves of Pointe Coupée were not isolated from the outside world. Rumors were spreading that Carondelet had freed Louisiana slaves but that the influence of the Cabildo had silenced the promulgation of emancipation.⁴⁷ In the months leading up to April 1795, Pointe Coupée slaves who traveled to New Orleans sought to uncover the veracity of such

⁴⁶ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 351-3, 357-9, 371; Holmes, "Abortive Slave Revolt," 347.

⁴⁷ Din, "Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves: Louisiana in 1795," *LH* 38.1 (1997), 15.

rumors.⁴⁸ Slaves in the Mississippi Valley were not alone in their perception that France might recover Louisiana, and no doubt news of the successful slave revolt at Saint Domingue as it had to the rest of the colony.

Colonists also contributed other connections to the ideas of the revolutionary age. A Walloon teacher by the name of Joseph Bouyavel lived at the home of Goudreau where he read to the slaves from works such as “The Declaration of the Rights of Man” and told them of the revolutions in France and in Saint Domingue. Besides the slaves, the tailor from Philadelphia George Rockenbourg was also known to visit the cabin of Antoine Sarrasin. Like Bouyavel, Rockenbourg encouraged slaves at Pointe Coupée with the rumors that slavery either was or would soon be abolished in Louisiana. Within days of the conspiracy’s discovery, numerous colonists of Fausse Rivière denounced Bouyavel as “a *perterbatuer* of the public peace,” and stated that he “gave bad advice to the *nègres*.”⁴⁹ Individuals like Rockenbourg and Bouyavel were hints of the contagion that the Spanish feared most.

Once the plot was uncovered, Duparc and LeBlanc imprisoned many of the Creole leaders and hastily communicated news of the conspiracy to New Orleans. Among those first arrested were Antoine Sarrasin, Michel LaMothe a slave of Charles Dufour, Honoré a slave of Simon Croizet, and Julien a slave of Ville Sarpy, all Creoles.⁵⁰ Within the week, with the arrests of the principal actors, Duparc expressed confidence that the situation at Pointe Coupée was under control.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 365.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 349-51; DuParc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 13 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 806-7, quotation: “Bouyavel étoit un perturbateur du repos public, et son come de donner de mauvais conseils aux nègres; je l’ay envoyé chercher par des milliciens qui l’ont conduit au fort avec tous ses petits effets.”

⁵⁰ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 345-6.

⁵¹ Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 155.

Following the betrayal of their plans for insurrection, however, un-imprisoned conspirators instigated a second plot by which they planned to free their leaders and carry out the general revolt. The second conspiracy included plans to free the slaves, to attack the patrols and slaves who had refused to join in, and to murder Duparc. Again, Poydras slaves were at the center of this plan—this time the primary leaders were Jean Baptiste and Joseph Mina, Sarrasin's eighteen-year-old Creole godson. Possibly at Jean-Baptiste's request, Joseph Mina pressured other slaves to join in.⁵²

Apparently, Bouyavel's revolutionary rhetoric had not been enough to motivate collaboration of the Goudreau slaves in the larger conspiracy after the arrest of the leaders.⁵³ Pierre Goudreau, fils, arrived at Duparc's at 3 A.M. the night of April 21 with news that a second plot brewed among the district's slaves, this time to attack the patrols. Conspirators intended to gather the next day at noon at the invitation of Joseph Mina. His visit to Lucas, Antoine, and Hector, slaves of Goudreau, père, prompted the three to alert their master, who in turn called upon his son. Duparc responded with more patrols, each composed of six men to monitor the roads and to check the slave cabins. Duparc described the decision to arrest more slaves:

Seeing that the *négres* are not abandoning their horrible project, in spite of the number of patrols which were on foot; which put alarm in all of the families. I took the part to have arrested and put in irons the [following] names: Henri, Yoyo, Joseph, and André, slaves of Sr. Tournoir; François, Baptiste, et Coffi, slaves of Sr. Augustin Allain; Louis, Lucus, and François, slaves of Goudreau; François of Sr. Poydras; Jaco, Roclore, and Magloire of the Widow LaCour; Jaco of the Sr. François Allain; André of Sr. Charles Dufour, and Thom dit Capitaine of Sr. Farar... The habitants of the district are overcome with fatigues from the continuous night patrols and from the work of the harvest, which they will be forced to abandon if they are obligated to continue [the patrols].⁵⁴

⁵² Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 360-1.

⁵³ Holmes, "Abortive Slave revolt," 346; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 359-61.

⁵⁴ Duparc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 22 April 1795, PPC, legajo 3: fo 812-4, punctuation my own.

When Joseph Mina learned of the betrayal of the second plot, he proposed running to the Choctaws. Together with another Creole Poydras slave, Louis Bordelon, Joseph Mina fled under the cover of night. They were only a short distance from Pointe Coupée when Frederick Riché apprehended them.⁵⁵ Soon the number of arrests reached about sixty.

The topography of the Lower Mississippi and the facility with which slaves used it to their advantage continued to plague officials and slaveholders who wanted greater oversight of slave life in this tense moment. The woods most likely provided cover for the stash of arms and ammunitions that the conspirators had collected for the searches of slave cabins yielded little evidence of arms and ammunition. Such was the conclusion of Duparc. Slaves hid their arms so well that patrols only recovered “one old gun in very bad state” in their search of slave cabins at Fausse Rivière. At Pointe Coupée, one stash included “a good rifle...a bag of shot and a horn with a little powder and a knife attached to the sack” in the cabin of the slave woman Victoire on the estate of the Widow Vincent Porche. Victoire said the gun belonged to the libre Jimmy. Other small findings at Pointe Coupée included a gun in the cabin of Tetenne on Tournoir’s plantation. Like Victoire, Tetenne claimed that the gun belonged to another. Some masters still felt that their slaves were innocent of participation in the plot. Such was the case with the Widow LaCour in spite of a plethora of evidence to the contrary. Even though several of her slaves had already been arrested, she had the “imprudence” to let the mulatto slave Timothée go out with two guns. He immediately went maroon in the woods.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 360-1.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 258-61; Duparc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 1 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 829, quotation: “un vieux fusil en très mauvais état et dans cette côté on a découvert dans la cabane de la negresse nommé Victoire de la Veuve Vincent Porche, un bon canon de fusil avec 10/le quanutre, que cette negresse a dit appartenés au nommé Jimi nègre libre ainsi qu’un sac a plomb et une corne avec un peut de poudre et un couteau attache au sac...Il y a tout lieu de presimes que ce nègre libre d’ailleur très mauvais sujet, etoit du complot des nègres de ce district.”

On April 22 and April 28, Duparc met with the leading habitants of Pointe Coupée. They wanted him to speedily identify the leaders of the conspiracy and to exact harsh punishment. They also requested that Captain Alexandre LeBlanc and the syndic François Mayeux travel to New Orleans to present their requests to Carondelet.⁵⁷

With the leaders and some conspirators imprisoned, prompt investigation and prosecution was meant to impose order in the shaken district and fear in the hearts of any tempted to rebel in the future. On May 5, 1795, at the request of the governor and of the attorney general Nicolás Maria Vidal, Baton Rouge commandant José Bahamonde reached Pointe Coupée to conduct the investigation and to prosecute the perpetrators of the conspiracy. LeBlanc and Mayeux reached Pointe Coupée from New Orleans May 7, 1795 with the *asesor* Manuel Serrano. That same day one of the Spanish vessels traveling the Mississippi, the *Victoire*, arrived at the post with additional troops. Officials conducted the case swiftly, from May 8 to May 19. On May 28, twenty three slaves mounted the scaffold at Pointe Coupée. The heads of four were placed on pikes at Pointe Coupée. Those hanged included Antoine Sarrasin, Stanislaio Anis of Baras, Joseph Mina, André of Colin LaCour, Grand Charles of Poydras, and Jean Baptiste of Poydras. Others convicted boarded the *Victoire*. As the *Victoire* made its way to New Orleans, others were executed at the settlements along the Mississippi and their heads placed on pikes. Of the remainder of those connected with the conspiracy, twenty-two men were condemned to ten years at Spanish presidios and forts where they would labor, nine to five years, Boyavel and Rockenborgh to six years, and three others including Antoine Cofi Mina banished from Louisiana.⁵⁸ (see table below for the names and sentences of those sent aboard the *Victoria*.)⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Holmes, "Abortive Slave Revolt," 347.

⁵⁸ Holmes, "Abortive Slave revolt," 347, 349, 351-2.

⁵⁹ DuParc and Vahamonde to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 29 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 844.

<i>Pour être pendu S en differans postes et a La Capitale</i>	Grand François Baptiste mulatre Coffi	Au Sr Poidras
	Tam François	A La V Baron
	Petit Pierre Magloir Roclor	A La Ve Lacour
<i>Dix Ans Preside</i>	Cezar	Au Sr Frederic Leonard
	Brise fer Tham André Jean Louis	Au Sr. Poidras
	Antoine	A la Ve Lacour
	Jean Louis	A la Ve Baron
	Honoré	Au Sr. Simon Croiset
	Ysidor	Au Sr. Bergeron
	Pierre	Au Sr. Patin
	Louis Lucas François	Au Sr. Goudreau
	Grand Joseph	Au Sr. Colin Lacour
	Jacco	A la Ve Lacour
	Philipe	A la Ve Lacour
	Jacco	Au Sr. Fois Allain
	Philipe	A la Ve Porche
	Yorck	Au Sr Beauvais
	Julien	Au Sr Sarpy
	Baptiste	A Ve Decuir
	Baptiste	Au Sr Augustin Allain
<i>Pour cinq ans de preside</i>	Michel	Au Sr. Charles Dufour
	Martin	A la Ve Baron
	Francisco	Au Sr. Augustin Allain
	Capitaine	Au Sr. Farar
	Alexis	A la Ve Leblond
	Etienne	Au Sr. Porche
	Jacco	Au Sr. Patin
	Henri	Au Sr. Tounoir
	Jean	Au Sr Poidras
<i>Pour six ans de preside</i>	Boyaval George Rockenborgh	
<i>Chassé de la Colonnie</i>	Jean Sorgo	
<i>Chassé de la colonnie</i>	Nicolas	Au Sr Sigur

A few days later, on June 1, 1795, Duparc proclaimed that the “*tranquilité*” of the post had returned.⁶⁰ Once the *Victoria* reached New Orleans, there was no disembarking for its prisoners. Carondelet feared that the opportunity to liberate the conspirators of Pointe Coupée might provide an impetus for unrest, arson, and revolt in New Orleans. Fear of rhetoric and public reaction to event continued to motivate the governor in an environment where the local population might identify with or empathize with the conspirators. Those banished or bound for hard labor left New Orleans aboard the *Misisipi*.⁶¹ For the moment, the wheels of Spanish justice subjugated the threat of revolution. However, it did not destroy the channels of communication and association among slaves and their collaborators that fostered conspiracy.

Creoles were the predominant leaders of the network of conspiracy that stretched throughout Pointe Coupée in 1795 and possibly well beyond the post. Those who conspired with them included broad bases of both Creole and African slaves, unlike the conspiracy of 1791 where nearly all of the conspirators were African, save the primary leader and courier.⁶²

Customs of that post even among the slaves bolstered the Creole position in the slave hierarchy. Slaves and slaveholders alike expected Creole slaves to set example and to teach the more recently arrived African slaves the way of life in the Pointe Coupée district. According to the structure of most estates, Creoles were accorded leadership among the slaves, often serving

⁶⁰ Duparc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 1 June 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 849.

⁶¹ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 353.

⁶² See Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 362-4. Hall argues throughout this chapter for the primacy of African origins and African leadership. As this section points out, the evidence brought forth by Hall herself might be used in an argument to counter her own. Leaders of this conspiracy were Creoles, and the other participants, much like the estates on which they were enslaved, were both Creoles and Africans, with neither group overwhelmingly outnumbering the other. She asserts that “Estates with the largest numbers of slaves and with imbalanced sex ratios were most deeply involved in the conspiracy. Most of the slaves convicted were from large, heavily Africanized estates.” She bases her argument on the sole example of the Colin LaCour estate, which “was heavily Senegambian” (362). Colin LaCour’s estate had a large Senegambian contingency, but, like many estates in the area, it was not primarily African. Enough evidence to support or counter Hall’s argument has yet to be unearthed with regard to the Bara dit LeBlond, Goudreau, and Tournoir estates. The LaCour and the Poydras estate information is not enough to support such extreme claims.

in the role of commandeur. Sarrasin and Jean-Baptiste were both Creole commandeurs on the Poydras estate, and a slave who had predated them as commandeur, Pierre, was also a Creole.⁶³

The members of the estate convicted in the proceedings in May of 1795 point to the importance of Creole involvement as much if not more than African involvement. In all, the break-down of the slaves from the Poydras estate convicted was as follows: 7 Africans comprised of 3 Fulbe/Poulard, 2 Chamba, 1 Ibo, 1 Mina; and 8 Creole made up of 1 from Jamaica, 2 New Orleans Creoles, and 5 local Creoles. Of the fifteen slaves convicted from the Poydras plantation, one third were local Creoles. Further, Creoles were overwhelmingly represented in leadership roles in 1795. Antoine Sarrasin, Joseph Mina, Jean Baptiste, Grand Charles, André, and Grand Joseph were all Creoles. Additionally, many leaders of the conspiracy held the position of commandeur on their respective estates. These included Antoine Sarrasin and Jean Baptiste, both on the Poydras estate, Grand Joseph on the Colin LaCour estate, and Stanisla0 Anis on the Bara dit LeBlond estate. Their leadership roles on the Poydras, Colin LaCour, and Bara dit LeBlond estates may have fostered the participation of Creole and African slaves in the conspiracy. Arguably, connections with libre families and disappointment in their own suits for freedom may have motivated some such as Antoine Sarrasin and André.⁶⁴

⁶³ See also, Procés Entre Colin LaCour et Son Negre André, 5 July 1792, Pointe Coupée Court Records; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 318-9, 334-5; DeVille, *Slaves and Masters*, 19. Evidence, including some brought forth by Hall, suggests Creole leadership and joint Creole and African cooperation in the conspiracy rather than a conspiracy driven solely by Africans. Although the Colin LaCour plantation included Senegambian slaves, those convicted from that estate included Grand Joseph, the commandeur who was a Creole. Arguably, his position in the hierarchy of the plantation and his status as an elder likely encouraged other slaves to take part in the conspiracy. Hall uses the information from the LaCour estate to found her argument about the importance of Senegambian slaves. However, LaCour's estate was not one from which the largest numbers of conspirators hailed. Plantations with the largest number of slaves participating were as follows: Poydras (15+); Widow LaCour (9+); Widow Bara dit LeBlond (6+); Goudreau (5+); Tournoir (5+); and from 17 estates 1 or 2 slaves per estate. As the case with the Mina conspiracy, all of those convicted were men.

⁶⁴ Hall, *African in Colonial Louisiana*, 353, 335.

If anything, the conspiracy points to the ability of the shared experience of slavery to bring different networks of ethnicity and kinship together. It also suggests that the local experiences, leadership, and ties of Creoles from in and around the Pointe Coupée district set those slaves apart as leaders of the conspiracy. Additionally, kinship connections among and within estates likely influenced slaves in their decision to participate in the conspiracy. Africans certainly participated in the first and second conspiracies of 1795, but they were not the primary leaders who devised either plot at Pointe Coupée, nor the predominant participants.

As the plot was uncovered, fears abounded that this impending slave revolt was the local manifestation of revolutionary fever sweeping France and Haiti. Duparc understood the events at Pointe Coupée in the context of the times. Almost immediately, he related the conspiracy among the slaves to the revolutionary age.⁶⁵ Moreover, fears rightly intensified that Pointe Coupée was part of a plan for broader slave revolts across Louisiana. Officials were particularly concerned about the loyalty of French-speakers in general, and of the interactions of free persons with conspirators. These concerns were in keeping with the growing realization that the revolutions of the time appealed to free and enslaved persons alike. Official response followed upon these fears and prescribed steps for halting unauthorized movement through the colony and containing slaves until the danger had passed.

Officials and colonists recognized the threat of insurrection as a danger for the colony. On April 18, when Carondelet received word of the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée, he immediately sent a circular letter to the commandants of the other Louisiana posts instructing them to disarm slaves and to instruct everyone that slaves might only travel with written permission of their masters.⁶⁶ After the second conspiracy was discovered, at the same time that Bahamonde

⁶⁵ Holmes, "Abortive Slave revolt," 348; Hanger, "Conflicting Loyalties," 8.

⁶⁶ Din, "Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves," 15.

reached Pointe Coupée, Carondelet issued a letter to commandants across Lower Louisiana demanding that they dispatch their local militias to inspect the slave cabins in their respective districts at five o'clock on the morning of April 30. Further, he thought it necessary for the time to ban slaves from hunting and from traveling.⁶⁷

Carondelet also demonstrated concern about the disloyalty of French-speaking Louisianians as well as slaves; in contrast, he esteemed English-speaking militia whom he presumed to be loyal. Spanish officials continued to look upon former British loyalists as individuals more likely to support the crown than revolutionary ideals. Carondelet's instructions to Grand Pré said as much. 400 or 500 English-speaking colonists and Spanish-speaking soldiers from Natchez were to go first to Pointe Coupée and then move on New Orleans if they received word of an uprising of French-speaking people there.⁶⁸ The militia under Bruin should travel with fifteen Indians and their war chief. Their mission at Pointe Coupée was to suppress any revolt that might arise—of slaves or of colonists.⁶⁹ Francis Poussett now lived at Bayou Sara and served the district as a syndic. Now, he was a loyal Spanish subject as well as property owner, slaveholder, and merchant. Poussett and his company were to monitor the area near the river at Natchez for unrest. Grand Pré reported that Poussett was an asset to the Spanish government not only because he was full of “*zèle*,” but also because he had known everyone in the Natchez district for some years. Additionally, the Spanish galleys, the *Luisiana* from Natchez and the *Victoria* from New Orleans arrived at Pointe Coupée with troops.⁷⁰

Conveniently, the *Luisiana* had been on the river to show Spanish muscle to the Americans.

⁶⁷ Holmes, “Abortive Slave revolt,” 348; Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 158.

⁶⁸ Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves,” 14.

⁶⁹ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 349-50; Grand Pré to Carondelet, Natchez, 26 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: FO 644-5.

⁷⁰ Grand Pré to Carondelet, Natchez, 3 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 646; Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 349-50; Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 155.

The involvement of non-slaves once again disturbed authorities, as did the ease with which agents of revolution navigated the region. Still, the topography worked more to the benefit of those seeking to perpetuate borderland fluidity than those trying to manage borders. The libre black Louis Benoit, a native of Saint Domingue, was banished for his involvement, as were Marcos Liche and his crew for spreading ideas of rebellion among the colony's slaves.⁷¹ No direct Jacobin connection is evident in the conspiracy. The actions of men such as Bouyavel and Rochenborgh were enough to scare Spanish officials, but otherwise the argument that the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée grew out of a direct line of Jacobin influence is unfounded.⁷² The Mina slaves sent to New Orleans and back might have brought information that they gained from access to other prisoners, especially Spanish deserters; but many men and women traveled to and from New Orleans and had access to the waterways of the region still unconstrained by Spanish dictates. They might as easily have circulated the rumors. The danger of contagion was ever present, and other 'carriers' could have been guilty also. Pointe Coupée was as susceptible as most settlements in Lower Louisiana.

Perhaps more disturbing to officials was the connection of Antoine Cofi Mina of New Orleans to the conspirators of Pointe Coupée. Antoine Cofi Mina had served as an interpreter for the Mina slaves in 1792. His knowledge of his native Mina tongue made him a resource for officials who sought the testimony of African slaves and perhaps his association with his former master, notary, *alferez mayor*, and *regidor perpetuo* Don Andres Almonaster y Rojas produced the opportunity. Africans in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana recognized Antoine Cofi Mina as a leader of sorts. Slave testimony suggested that at the very least Pointe Coupée slaves

⁷¹ Holmes, "Abortive Slave Revolt," 353.

⁷² Hall also suggests that "There were military as well as ideological links with international Jacobinism," *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 344.

had consulted him about the truthfulness of rumors that the slaves of Louisiana had been freed, and that representatives of the conspirators had possibly approached Antoine Cofi Mina with a request that he collaborate with them to direct New Orleans slaves to revolt after the revolt at Pointe Coupée had broken out. Although he protested any knowledge of the conspiracy and attempted to distance himself from the Pointe Coupée slaves, Antoine Cofi Mina knew several of Colin LaCour's slaves, including André. A search of the libre's home uncovered a supply of arms including "A carbine, a musket, six hunting muskets, two lances, a sword, and a large arched pistol." His connection with the conspirators of 1795 earned him banishment from Louisiana.⁷³ Links to individuals such as Antoine Cofi Mina were particularly un-nerving for officials because such men were relied upon as official interpreters.

While there was perhaps no direct Jacobin tie nor a direct link to the revolution in Haiti, the Pointe Coupée conspiracy of 1795 was influenced by the rumors of emancipation and revolt related to the waves of revolutionary fervor that crashed about the Caribbean. Slaves, free persons who stoked the fire of conspiracy, slave owners, and officials recognized the events of 1795 as part of an era of revolutionary volatility. Officials rightly recognized that the era's revolutions attracted many sectors of society, not only the enslaved.

Discussion about the institution of slave funds and the expulsion of 'dangerous' slaves brought to the surface divisions between Carondelet and the Cabildo and differences between slaveholders of the metropole and those of the periphery. Slaveholders of New Orleans were proponents of slave regulations that provided harsher measures against slave disobedience. They also supported the creation of a 'slave fund' to pay owners of slaves executed for committing crimes. These stances put slaveholders of the New Orleans at odds with the governor and with

⁷³ Holmes, "Abortive Slave Revolt," 353; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 331-2, 64-5, quotations.

slaveholders in the districts outside of the city.⁷⁴ In spite of the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée, officials and slaveholders throughout the colony continued to negotiate the exact terms that came out of debates that followed the revolt. Louisiana colonists of every status and nearly every geographic location continued to hold on to local control of the slave system. For those living outside the city, that meant resisting the ideas of the Cabildo.

As soon as word reached New Orleans of the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée, the power-struggle between Carondelet and the Cabildo escalated. On April 25, at an extraordinary-meeting of the Cabildo, the city government passed a resolution expressing its wish to Carondelet to send four of its own representatives to participate in the investigation at Pointe Coupée. Further, the Cabildo asserted that because the colony was in danger of revolt, stricter regulations must be imposed on slaves and libres alike. In September 1795, a proclamation from Carondelet offered slaves 300 pesos in addition to freedom for informing officials of potential slave insurrections.⁷⁵

On June 1, Carondelet issued a decree “A Regulation concerning the General Police; The Keeping Bridges, Roads and Causeys in Repair, and the Government of Slaves,” reminding colonists to treat their slaves humanely. Carondelet opened his decree by invoking the destruction of the French Revolution and by contrasting it to the much preferred good order:

The astonishing success, with which some disaffected, restless enthusiasts, have promulgated injurious reports, tending to induce distrust, and Jealousy, between Government and the Inhabitants, that would inevitably expose the Province to all the Horrors, that have ruined the French Colonies, has engaged us to form Regulations, calculated to re-establish throughout this Province good order, Police and Public tranquility

⁷⁴ Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves,” 10-11.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 13-4; Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 356.

While the decree dealt with the upkeep of levees and roads, the single most important thing that it did was to provide for the election of syndics “at the distance of every three Leagues.” Their role included a plethora of responsibilities: “The Police, and Security of the District, the repairing of Bridges, Roads, Causeys, the general inspection over Pedlars, and Travellers, the Provisions, maintenance, subordination and Police of the [slave] Camps, the security of the Stock &c.” To meet these many purposes for monitoring traveling routes, infrastructure, and local “disorders” and crimes, Carondelet appealed to local authority. He asked that the Syndics be elected from “amongst the most notable & respectable Inhabitants of the District.” By tying in the local “notable & respectable inhabitants” the Spanish colonial government hoped these individuals might set an example and be drawn themselves away from promoting borderland practices that now meshed with revolution and towards enforcing the regulations that would contain them. To bolster loyalty to the Spanish crown in Louisiana, Carondelet set up a system whereby democratically elected local officials became instruments of police for the colony.

Carondelet’s June 1, 1795 decree enumerated some of the rights of slaves, the responsibilities of masters to slaves, and the prohibitions governing enslaved persons. The items in the decree were concerned with the movement and congregating of slaves. The decree suggested that free time in conjunction with socialization among slaves and across the lines of race and class bred rebellion. It argued that “The intrigues, [plots] for running away, and excesses of other kinds committed by slaves generally take rise at their public meetings, and the intermixing of those belonging to different quarters,” so a colonist should not “allow upon his Plantation, any Dances, or meetings whatsoever of slaves belonging to other places, the Dances, and amusements of their own slaves, which shall take place upon Sunday only, shall always cease before night.” Further, the decree suggested that slaveholders should encourage their

slaves to cultivate their own fields to “advantageously employ the time they might otherwise spend in riot, and debauchery.” In attempt to keep firearms away from slaves, Carondelet suggested limiting the number of hunters to two men per habitation. Finally, the governor addressed illicit marketing and bartering: “Any white person, free negroe, or mulatto, who shall enter the negroe Camps or quarters, without permission of the Proprietor, or sell anything to slaves at the River side, shall be taken up by the Proprietor of the Plantation, and sent with all his effects, to the Syndic....” Although certainly prohibitive to the movement of slaves, the decree did not enact the sweeping, severe reforms for which the Cabildo clamored. Rather, it was more in line with broader Spanish efforts to reduce the brutality of the slave system in hopes that better treatment would counteract any impulse for rebellion among slaves.⁷⁶

The question of taxes to provide for the slave fund indicated the persistence of a sharp division between slaveholders of New Orleans and those of other districts of Lower Louisiana. Carondelet, like the Cabildo members and slaveholders of the capital, supported the creation of a fund that all slaveholders would be obligated to pay into with an annual tax on each slave. In 1792 after the cabildo complained of the growing number of maroons, Carondelet proposed the institution of the slave fund according to the model drawn up in 1778 that was never successfully implemented. However, slaveholders across the colony resisted the measure.⁷⁷ Division in opinion between colonists of New Orleans and those of other districts continued even after the Pointe Coupée conspiracy.

On May 4, Carondelet instructed the commandants of Louisiana to take a census of the slaves in their respective districts and to consult colonists with regard to the question of a slave

⁷⁶ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 355-6. For an English version of the proclamation see James A. Padgett (comp.), “A Decree for Louisiana, Issued by the Baron de Carondelet, June 1, 1795,” *LHQ* 20 (1937): 590-605; Hanger, “Conflicting Loyalties,” 7.

⁷⁷ Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves,” 9-10.

fund and their willingness to expel ‘bad’ slaves.⁷⁸ While the posts of Louisiana agreed to contribute to the fund to reimburse the planters of Pointe Coupée for the loss of nearly sixty slaves in that district, they expressed reluctance to participate in a general slave fund for the colony, nor were they interested in expelling any slaves.

Responses from Louisiana outposts varied. After assuring the governor that “We wish to have no French rules and we wish to leave Justice in the hands of Your Excellency,” German Coast residents of St. John the Baptist Parish expressed a preference that their “rascals” or “slaves who should be [found] guilty” be executed rather than expelled, “for we are very willing to be rid of our rascals.” Further, they were unwilling to pay the expenses for building a prison in their district, writing Carondelet that:

We German inhabitants request Your Excellency to support us and come to our aid, so that we might not lose our reputations. It is said, of our parish or German [Coast] that a prison is to be built in the [Coast]. Our poor people are dismayed by this, for it would cause great expense, and we did not know whether or not it was a command of Your Excellency. If it is not your command, then the prison in New Orleans was always good, and we find it good for the future.⁷⁹

Penned in German, the petition was signed by seventy six colonists. At the Attakapas and at Natchitoches, colonists sent word to New Orleans that the post had no “esclaves mauvais” to expel.⁸⁰ Attakapas residents did support the expulsion of ‘dangerous’ slaves, but at Pointe Coupée, slaveholders surprisingly did not, fearing that the potential for expulsion might be seen by some slaves as an avenue to freedom.⁸¹ Although considered a remote outpost, Avoyelles post residents agreed to pay the 6 escalin tax to fund the loss of slaves at Pointe Coupée,

⁷⁸ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 354; District of Attakapas, 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 366, quotation: “mauvais.”

⁷⁹ Colonists of St. John the Baptist Parish to Carondelet, 10 June 1795, as reprinted in German and English in Anne A. Baade, “Slave Indemnities: A German Coast Response, 1795,” *LH* 20.1 (1979): 102-9.

⁸⁰ Olivier Hevezin to Carondelet, Attakapas, 8 June 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 356-7.

⁸¹ Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves,” 18.

although they too refused to have any of their own slaves expelled.⁸² Colonists at Natchitoches and at Iberville agreed to pay into a fund for their respective districts but not to a colony-wide fund. At Iberville, no “plurality of voices” denounced any one slave as a “bad subject.” At LaFourche, colonists opposed even a local fund, suggesting instead that slaveholders bear the cost of lost slaves on their own.⁸³ Colonists rejected the idea that they should turn over and expel their “bad” slaves or pay taxes to fund the loss of slaves. Shared by slaveholders throughout the colony, this reaction revealed that colonists continued to resent taxes, feared the economic loss represented by the expulsion of their own slaves, and perceived that slaves might view expulsion as a path to freedom.⁸⁴ Although some districts and some slaveholders paid into the fund to reimburse the Pointe Coupée owners who lost slaves in the conspiracy, the fund never amassed enough money to repay the Pointe Coupée slaveholders in full. The greatest reason for this was local resistance at other posts to paying the tax. The colony-wide fund was also a failure for the same reason.⁸⁵

Negotiating policy response to the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée highlighted tensions in Lower Louisiana. While Carondelet and the Cabildo attempted to institute taxes and policies directed at the expulsion of slaves deemed threatening to the peace of the colony, colonists throughout Louisiana rejected these ideas. The Cabildo clamored for its own direct involvement in investigation and for harsh slave codes while Carondelet rejected both of these. Practically speaking, the Pointe Coupée investigation and trial as well as the decisions with regard to the

⁸² Testament, Avoyelles, 27 July 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 399-400.

⁸³ Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves,” 17-18; Bossier, Syndic, to Carondelet, Natchitoches, 1 June 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 847; Verbois to Carondelet, Iberville, 25 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 550, quotations.

⁸⁴ For another perspective see Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves,” 18; Unlike Din, I do not think that this is a sign that slaveholders were unafraid of insurrection—the quick response to other threats and the existence of other threats proves quite the contrary to be true.

⁸⁵ Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves,” 20-22.

slave fund were ultimately decided at the local level. Even in the aftermath of the conspiracy, colonists at the periphery resisted metropolitan control—either from New Orleans or Spain.

Local officials enforced each iteration of Carondelet's orders over the course of the Pointe Coupée crisis. For a brief time, they monitored more closely movement and trade and the activities of slaves in attempt to avert future revolts. Carondelet exhibited his particular concern over the illicit movement of individuals as a locus of troublemaking in his June 1 decree, which ordered that "All Travelers, Peddlers, and others passing, shall upon being required, produce their pass...All the Horses of the Travelers, and the Goods carried by the Peddlers, for sale, shall be inserted in their passes, as also the number of hirelings, who shall always be persons known, and for whose conduct, they shall answer." This short-lived crack-down provided a glimpse at the types of people and ideas illicitly moving about the region.

Officials of the different districts put into action the orders of the circular letter of April 18. Judice reported that he publicized the contents of Carondelet's letter the same day that he received it, April 21.⁸⁶ By May 6, Duralde at the Opelousas Post assured the governor that the same measures had been taken and that the slaves had been disarmed.⁸⁷ On April 26, Grand Pré assured Carondelet that "*tranquilité*" reigned at Natchez.⁸⁸

The discovery of the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée did not deter slaves at other posts from engaging in acts of resistance and smaller scale rebellion. Whether prompted by or associated with the conspiracy or not, these acts took on new meaning not only in light of the Haitian Revolution but also in light of the conspiracy discovered in Louisiana itself. Slaves at Cabahannocé committed acts of theft.⁸⁹ Joseph Borque lost rice to thieves, and a Cabahannocé

⁸⁶ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 21 April 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 552.

⁸⁷ Duralde to Carondelet, Opelousas, 6 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 771.

⁸⁸ Grand Pré to Carondelet, Natchez, 26 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 644-5.

⁸⁹ Michel Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, 23 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 462.

woman lost considerable poultry.⁹⁰ Although they rejected the controls proposed by Carondelet and the Cabildo, districts outside of New Orleans admitted to troubles with slaves who were “bad subjects.” At the German Coast, one such “very bad subject,” was the slave Baptiste, known as a troublemaker and a drinker and reputed to consult with his “comrades” behind habitations, such as that of the Veuve Kerne. Further, Baptiste was widely known to seek revenge against his previous masters and to consider killing his current ones. The habitants requested that an example be made of Baptiste as a deterrent. Andry reminded Carondelet that “an example of this nature could only have a very good effect on maintaining order and public security.”⁹¹ Although Andry thought Baptiste’s spoken designs to kill his master warranted death, Baptiste received a sentence of ten years of presidio duty in Havana.⁹² This incident at the German Coast occurred in the month after the prosecution of the slaves at Pointe Coupée and after the spectacle made of the executed slaves along the river.

For a short while in the wake of the conspiracy, officials turned to policing spaces where slaves often congregated outside of the purview of authority and where they might foment resistance and revolt: slave cabins and the often unpoliced waterways that connected the districts. Local leaders responded vigorously to the plan for a coordinated search of slave cabins on the night of April 30. The militia at Iberville patrolled through the night of April 30. DeVerbois reported the findings of the search of the slave cabins: “ten guns, some large knives, and very little munitions. He also recommended masters to lock up all work tools overnight.”⁹³ Similarly,

⁹⁰ Pierre Richard, Cabahannocé, 22 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 463.

⁹¹ Andry to Carondelet, Allemands, 12 June 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 335-7, quotation: “que quele que Exemple de Cette Nature ne pourroit que faire un très bon Effect et Mintenir L’ordre et la Surretés public.”

⁹² Andry to Carondelet, Allemands, 15 June 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 340; Andry to Carondelet, Allemands, 18 June 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 345.

⁹³ DeVerbois to Carondelet, Iberville, 31 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 547, quotation: “Il ne se trouvé que Dix fusils, quelque Grands couteaux, très peut de Munitions et ait aussi recommandé á leur maitres de mettre sous clef tous les soix, les haches et autres outils desquels ils se servent dans la journée.”

Judice reported from LaFourche that sixteen militiamen patrolled the district at night “to maintain *Bon Ordre*.”⁹⁴ Judice’s men found very little ammunition.⁹⁵ At Cabahannocé, only six guns were found, and slaves had permission to use these for hunting.⁹⁶ Like Pointe Coupée, any suspicious materials were already hidden behind in the woods or swamps.

Slaves from Pointe Coupée seized the tumult of the discovery of the conspiracy as an opportunity to run. Indeed, some fled south, some pretending to be libres. Others had not even a forged passport. On April 30, 1795, Judice sent five such fugitives from the plantation of Etienne Pedesclaux to New Orleans.⁹⁷ At nearby Cabahannocé, Judice’s brother-in-law Michel Cantrell stopped another fugitive.⁹⁸ Still another fugitive of Pointe Coupée, Baptiste, fled the Poydras property and was caught at Iberville.⁹⁹ This moment of intensified searching made it more difficult than usual for maroons to traverse the Lower Mississippi.

Further, reports from the various districts of the colony revealed that maroons were not the only people moving illicitly through the colony. Nearly simultaneous to the discovery of the Pointe Coupée conspiracy in early April 1795 Spanish deserters were found hiding at outposts along the Mississippi, often incognito and finding refuge in slave cabins. Militia and officials discovered them in their hunts through the slave cabins looking for runaways and stock piles of arms in April, May, and June 1795. The diligence of local authorities in searching slave cabins provides an indication that interactions of slaves, deserters, and caboteurs were customary and frequent in the Lower Mississippi during this final decade of Spanish rule.

⁹⁴ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 1 May 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 565, quotation: “pour le maintenir du Bon Ordre.”

⁹⁵ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 30 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 251-2.

⁹⁶ Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, 5 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 468.

⁹⁷ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 30 April 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 562-3; Carondelet to Judice, New Orleans, 8 May 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 567-8.

⁹⁸ Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, 18 May 1795: PPC, legajo 31: fo 472.

⁹⁹ Verbois to Carondelet, Iberville, 1 June 1795, PPC: legajo 31: fo 560.

Just before the discovery of the conspiracy, on April 4, 1795, three deserters making their way through the Iberville district were discovered in the woods: Mateo Garcia from the Archdiocese of Toledo, Pedro Morales from Santa Cruz in the Canary Islands, and Mariano Esquivel of New Spain. The three escaped from a convoy of soldiers of a Mexican regiment. These men were prisoners possibly being sent to New Orleans. Unlike maroons who might try to go to New Orleans to disappear, deserters might try to find refuge away from the city. Esquivel was dead when the group was discovered.¹⁰⁰ That same day, two habitants of the Baton Rouge district brought to the Iberville prison either “*un mulâtre ou un sauvage*” named Silvestre Sosa who had deserted the royal vessel *Le Borgne*.¹⁰¹ In early May, when patrols searched the slave quarters at Cabahannocé for weapons, they also uncovered a deserter, whom Cantrell directed immediately to New Orleans.¹⁰² On June 2, two other deserters of the Mexican regiment who had fled a galley were also found in slave cabins at Cabahannocé.¹⁰³ Suspicion and scrutiny at Iberville discovered the true identities of two men living in the settlement. They were deserters from the presidio in New Orleans trying to gain a fresh start. The first the habitants knew as “Jean Solis.” Residing in the district for at least six months, Jean Solis, whose real name was Martin Muños originally from Carpio in the kingdom of Cordova, served as a sacristan for the parish priest, Father Buenaventura de Castro. At some point while Muños was living at Iberville, Andres Sanchez, who hailed from Málaga, joined him, and the two even farmed a small patch of land. Verbois ordered their arrest in the priest’s home. Their service to

¹⁰⁰ Verbois to Carondelet, Iberville, 4 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 538-9; Verbois to Carondelet, Iberville, 4 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 541.

¹⁰¹ Verbois to Carondelet, Iberville, 4 April 95, PPC, legajo 31: fo 543.

¹⁰² Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, 5 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 468.

¹⁰³ Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, 3 June 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 474.

the local church did not prevent Verbois from putting the two deserters on the *Victoire* as she bore those convicted in the trial at Pointe Coupée to New Orleans.¹⁰⁴

Other characters traveled the districts near the river illicitly. At the end of April, patrols at LaFourche also stopped an “*anglais*.” Judice suggested that the man “insulted many girls and women.”¹⁰⁵ At Cabahannocé on May 19 a petit merchant named Jean Réquest, probably traveling without a passport, was sent to New Orleans.¹⁰⁶ Like his predecessor, Carondelet continued to perceive the ease with which caboteurs navigated district after district of the colony as a hazard. Instructions to Duparc on May 2, 1795 indicated that Carondelet considered caboteurs potentially culpable in the spread of revolutionary ideas and in aiding the slaves in their conspiracy: “It will not be permitted to any caboteur to trade goods or to buy in all the expanse of the command of Pointe Coupée.”¹⁰⁷ At LaFourche, travels and trading of the caboteur Antonio Pereira who was selling tafia along the coast of the post were foiled, and Verret sent him to New Orleans.¹⁰⁸ Cantrell complained in May of 1795 that a libre caboteur of Cabahannocé traveled “everywhere” through the night “singing for all to see the success of general Jean François of St. Domingue.”¹⁰⁹ The reporting of the actions of these individuals pointed to the ease with which they navigated the world of Lower Mississippi Valley.

Many groups and individuals took advantage of the easy access to travel away from the detection of officials granted by the topography of Louisiana. The moment of the discovery of

¹⁰⁴ Verbois to Carondelet, Iberville, 30 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 557.

¹⁰⁵ Judice to Carondelet, LaFourche, 30 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 251-2, quotation: “qui a insulté a plusieurs filles ou femmes.”

¹⁰⁶ Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, 19 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 473.

¹⁰⁷ Carondelet to Duparc of Pointe Coupée, New Orleans, 2 May 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 28, quotation: “qu’il ne sera permit a aucun gaboteur de commercer vendu ou acheter dans toute l’etendu du commandement de la pointe coupé.”

¹⁰⁸ Auguste Verret to Carondelet, LaFourche, 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 535.

¹⁰⁹ Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, May 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 420-1, quotations: “partout,” and “chantant à toute voire les succès du general Jean Francois de St. Domingue.”

the Pointe Coupée conspiracy revealed that slaves and deserters still turn to the porousness of the Lower Mississippi Valley in their efforts to escape official oversight and punishments, and sometimes did so together. Possibly because of the searches and the vigilance of most settlements near the Mississippi River, for many the age-old fluidity offered by the topography and society of the region did not fulfill its promise. Slaves continued their resistance, increasing it in some areas after the plot was uncovered. Their actions fostered fear among slave-owning and land-owning colonists, who now heard murmurs of plans for a colony-wide revolt.

Some implicated in the conspiracy were libres. The fears of slave insurrection that accompanied news of the events and ideas of the revolutionary age intensified racial tensions in Louisiana as libres found themselves suspect in New Orleans as well as in the outposts of the colony. Fears easily built upon the connections of libres and slaves, kinship and otherwise, but libre kinship also often included *blancos* as well. Meanwhile, in New Orleans especially, a distinct group-identity continued to solidify as libres attempted to demonstrate their loyalty to Spain and, as elsewhere throughout the Caribbean, Spain looked to its free black militia as a source of loyal support in the tumultuous age.¹¹⁰ The libre population found itself caught between its role as loyal subjects of Spain and the revolutionary ideals of the time.

Only a handful of libres lived at Pointe Coupée. As of December 1795, there were eleven libre men, twenty two women, fifteen boys under the age of fifteen, and seventeen girls under the age of fifteen.¹¹¹ One such libre was Jimmy, or “Jimme” or “Gime” as he appeared in the letters of French speaking officials, who had left his gun supposedly with the slave Victoire. This

¹¹⁰ For a full discussion of libre group identity, see also Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, Chapter 4. For a discussion of libre militia in the Floridas at this time, see also, Landers, “Rebellion and Royalism in Spanish Florida,” in Geggus and Gaspar eds., *A Turbulent Time*, 156-77.

¹¹¹ Fr. Bernardo de Limpach to Bishop Penalver y Cardenas, Pointe Coupée, 9 Dec 1795, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

action confirmed local suspicion of slave-libre connections. Duparc described Jimmy as “a very bad subject” and consented that it was not difficult to believe that he had been in cooperation with the slaves. Jimmy had lived in the district since at least 1792.¹¹² Duparc believed that the libres knew full well of the plot of the slaves.¹¹³

In the wake of the 1795 conspiracies, colonial officials expressed suspicion of libres within their respective jurisdiction. Andry, commandant of the German Coast, banned libres in his district from bearing arms.¹¹⁴ He claimed to Carondelet that habitants complained libres were “insolent” and refused to answer questions posed by the *blancs* and that when questioned about their freedom they responded by “putting the hand...on their sabre.” Without disarming them, surely “their insolence” would produce a “catastrophe.”¹¹⁵ On April 23, the libre Antoine Forget received thirty lashes at Cabahannocé. The patrols had found him in a slave cabin of Armant Babin traveling without a passport and without papers that proved he was a free person. Cantrell described him as a “bad subject.”¹¹⁶ Further, Cantrell found it suspicious in light of the recent near revolt at Pointe Coupée that Forget should run from the patrols, who searched for him for three hours before they dragged him to Cantrell.¹¹⁷ Libres often stayed in slave cabins as they traveled through Lower Louisiana, and family relations often extended across the boundary of slave and free. Nevertheless, it was known that Antoine Forget was indeed a free person, not

¹¹² Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 258-9; Duparc to Carondelet, Pointe Coupée, 1 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 829.

¹¹³ Duparc to Carondelet, 20 June 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 866.

¹¹⁴ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 356-7.

¹¹⁵ Louis Andry to Carondelet, Allemands, 25 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 334, quotation: “Plusieurs habitants de cette juridictoire Maçant représenter que quelque nègre et mulatres Libre ou sedisant telle qui se trouvoit dans cette cotte ou aux Environs ne sortoit plus quarmé dun Sabre a Leur cotté et paroissoit d’une insolence outré a Leur egard ne répondait aux question que l’on etoit dans le cas de leurs faire pour sassurer de Leur Libertés quand mettant la main sur leur cocade ou sur leur sabre—m’ayant solliciter pour eviter quleque catastrophe qui pourroit arriver par leur insolence de leur deffendre le porter des armes sustout Lorsquil ne sont point de service.”

¹¹⁶ Michel Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, 23 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 462; Pierre Richard, Cabahannocé, 22 April 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 463; Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, May 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 420-1, quotation “mauvais sujets.”

¹¹⁷ Cantrell to Carondelet, Cabahannocé, May 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 420-1.

a slave, and known to the Cabahannocé post since at least 1792. In the census of libres at the Cabahannocé post, the very same Michel Cantrell had identified Alexandre Lange, “Mulatre libre,” and Antoine Forget, “negre libre.”¹¹⁸

The suspicion of libres that manifested itself in official correspondence after the episode at Pointe Coupée correlated with greater tensions in New Orleans as well. The colonial capital witnessed greater suspicion of the libres in the city that was closely tied with fears that a revolution similar to the one that had struck Saint Domingue could unfold in Louisiana. Suspicion of libre associations with the enslaved also grew. The interaction of libres with *blancs* and with slaves in cabarets and billiard halls exacerbated already nervous parties even though such interactions had a long history in those spaces and elsewhere throughout the city. Public spaces, including sacred spaces such as St. Louis Cathedral, included Louisianians from all *castas*. The predominance of Afro-Creoles, especially of women, in the religious life of New Orleans and among the Catholics practicing their faiths at St. Louis Cathedral was noteworthy.¹¹⁹

During the revolutionary age, libres were tugged between the revolutionary promises of equality of citizenship and the stability of their place within the Spanish Empire. By and large, libre men in New Orleans continued to demonstrate their loyalty through their service in the colonial militia. In contrast to many colonists, Carondelet largely recognized the libres as an important, loyal constituency among the inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi. When he reorganized the colonial militia, he expanded the libre militia of New Orleans. Libre militia were called upon to patrol the streets of New Orleans, to serve at the fortifications near New Orleans, and to reinforce Fort San Felipe at Plaquemines during the height of the fear of a

¹¹⁸ Michel Cantrell to Carondelet, 28 May 1792, PPC, legajo 25A: fo 530.

¹¹⁹ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 124, 148.

revolt.¹²⁰ Other libres considered the advantages that embracing ideas of the revolutionary age might offer them. In the case of Pedro Bailly who spoke seditiously against the Spanish government and who advocated resisting the racial stratification that limited the freedoms that libres enjoyed, he was tried in a military tribunal for his offense and sentenced to time in prison in Cuba. Libres like Bailly did not look to put an end to the slave society, but rather to elevate their own free status. Bailly recognized that the maxims of the French Revolution offered equality to all free people without distinguishing *castas* or estates. In spite of increased fears of fomentation of revolution among libres by whites in New Orleans, overall Carondelet expelled more free whites than libres during the 1790s.¹²¹

Thoughts of insurrection were not isolated at Pointe Coupée. The proceedings of the trial uncovered hints that the plot extended to Natchez, Opelousas, and the districts on the Mississippi.¹²² Similarly, the conspiracy at Pointe Coupée was in continuum with insurrection plots before and after April 1795. Just as the Mina Conspiracy had preceded and possibly fed into the plot of 1795, so too did the Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy of 1795 have successor conspiracies that stretched into the nineteenth century. As had been the case for the course of the history of slavery, slaves continued to seek freedom and to resist their oppressors. The influences of the revolutionary age, the growing challenges to marronage, and the re-Africanization of the slave population provided the setting for an increase in frequency of slave conspiracies.¹²³

¹²⁰ Hanger, "Conflicting Loyalties," 9, 31.

¹²¹ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 124-5, 136, 150-1. For a full treatment of the Pedro Bailly case see also Hanger, "Conflicting Loyalties," 5-33.

¹²² Holmes, "Abortive Slave Revolt," 352.

¹²³ I disagree here with Din, who says that after the 1795 incident at Pointe Coupée the entire colony was calm. This may have been what the commandants said to try to calm Carondelet or to project that they had matters under control in their respective districts, but this was not the case as evidenced in this section of Chapter 7. Din, "Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves," 22. For a discussion of revolts and conspiracies stretching into the U.S. territorial period, see Robert L. Pacquette, "Revolutionary Saint Domingue in the Making of Territorial Louisiana," in Gaspar and Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time*, 204-25.

While there was no outright revolt in Opelousas, at least seven armed maroons roamed the district trying to incite rebellion. They linked their actions and speech to the Pointe Coupée conspiracy. In early May, colonists at Opelousas reported the seven as they traveled through the slave cabins of the district. Around April 27, they informed the slaves at the home of Theophile Collins that:

they were but three days from Pointe Coupée, where the Slaves were all in arms against the Whites, that their business in this place was to make head, and if possible to drive the whites out of the Country then all would be their own and they should be free, they asked if there was any ammunition in the House, and particularly where it was kept, what numbers of Fuses I had, the Latter said they, we are well furnished with, but want powder & Balls, when they went away, promised to call before Long & see their new acquaintances.

On May 5, the party was reportedly still at large in the district, and an Indian reported seeing them near the home of the habitant Augustin Belair. Reportedly, the group was headed for Natchitoches. These men may have been armed slaves who had fled Pointe Coupée before the second plot was discovered or perhaps slaves simply aware of the conspiracy.¹²⁴

In 1796, news of a slave conspiracy on the German Coast emerged. Rumors had circulated for some time that the slaves might rebel. As with the Pointe Coupée conspiracy the year before, this incident was also to take place at Easter. On Holy Saturday, March 26, 1796, “a *Négresse* had told one or two *blancs* that the *Négres* would revolt against the habitants tomorrow, Easter day.”¹²⁵ The slave woman came forward after three slaves resisted work at the crevasse of the estate of Mademoiselle Thomason on the German Coast. Although the commandant St. Amant assured Carondelet that the colonists had all been warned of the plot and that all was quiet, he did note the plan “to slit the throat of all *Blancs*.” St. Amant had his men

¹²⁴ Theophile Collins to Duralde, Opelousas, 5 May 1795, PPC, legajo 31: fo 772.

¹²⁵ St. Martin, German Coast, 26 March 1796, PPC, legajo 212A: fo 22, quotation: “qu’une *Négresse* avoit prevenu un ou deux Blanc que les *Négres* devez se revolté contre la habitants Demain Jour de Pâques.”

patrol the district.¹²⁶ The particulars of the plot remained obscure, but the existence of a conspiracy “*premedité*” was undeniable.¹²⁷ Further, the episode incited panic among the slave-owners of the German Coast, prompting some to flee to New Orleans. Besides the patrols of militia, Carondelet dispatched two galleys to the district and sent thirty dragoons over land to the German Coast and ordered an investigation. More adeptly than in earlier years, the slaves questioned provided little conclusive information to officials conducting interrogation.¹²⁸

The 1795 conspiracy at Pointe Coupée was a pivotal moment for slave revolt and resistance in Spanish Louisiana. The 1791 conspiracy that predated it revealed the willingness of slaves to revolt but also suggested that officials outside of Pointe Coupée saw the incident as a low priority. The conspiracy of 1795 caught everyone’s attention. It was wider spread among the slaves. Both revolts were led by Creole slaves. By this time news and rumor of revolution in France and Haiti and ideas of emancipation had begun to stir the colony. Their influences on the conspirators indicated that revolutionary ideas merged with slave resistance. Not only did revolt take on new meaning, but all forms of resistance did as well. Officials and colonists also developed a heightened fear of slave revolt. Carondelet issued orders to restrict and monitor suspicious movement and spaces throughout the colony.

The revolt also identified aspects of the borderland that officials continued to recognize as a challenge. The findings of officials revealed a topography and borderland society that readily promoted fluidity of movement, trade, and spread of ideas. Further, borderland practices continued to provide relative safe haven to maroons, deserters, and caboteurs who made their way illicitly through the colony. In this moment of heightened alert and fear, official efforts

¹²⁶ St. Amant, German Coast, 27 March 1796, PPC, legajo 212A: fo 323-4, quotation: “il devoit tout egorger les Blancs.”

¹²⁷ Carondelet to St. Amant, New Orleans, 29 March 1796, PPC, legajo 212A: fo 330.

¹²⁸ Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 358; Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 189-90.

contested this customary movement and lifestyle and attempted specifically to manage waterways and patrol slave cabins. Additionally, colonists continued to resist taxation and stricter controls from New Orleans, even as the cabildo sought to dictate harsh slave codes. The events surrounding the conspiracy of 1795 also spoke to other continuities of the Spanish period, such as the frequent appeal to Spanish slave codes and the continued role of Indians in allying with slaveholders and officials. While the momentarily strict policies were short-lived, the Pointe Coupée conspiracy influenced other shifts and encouraged both resistance and revolt.

Conclusions

The revolutionary age influenced the ways the inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley expressed their resistance and the ways that authorities interpreted that resistance. The traditional practices of the borderland became entangled with and transformed by ideas and rhetoric of the era, indicating another iteration of the flexibility of borderlanders. Meanwhile, officials at every level expressed a greater sense of instability and insecurity as they attempted to enforce measures meant to counteract the spread of revolutionary ideas and to secure empire.

In Louisiana, the contest of the revolutionary age was made manifest in slave conspiracy that thrived on borderland networks. Conspirators built upon existing forms of local resistance as they were exposed to the news of the Haitian Revolution and rumors of emancipation. Slave networks based on ethnicity and kinship and webs of communication that stretched throughout Louisiana facilitate the cooperation of slaves in conspiracy and of shared knowledge of developing plots. Carondelet looked to the groups he had identified as loyal, English-speakers and libres, even though the French-speaking colonists, who still made up the majority of the free population of the lower river, considered these groups with varying degrees of suspicion. The

colonial government also employed the infrastructure put in place to handle the Genêt-Clark affair, the reinforcements and the Spanish galleys on the Mississippi.

As they attempted to regulate the movement of persons and the circulation of ideas, officials became aware once again of the difficulties of restricting borderland relationships in the environment of the Lower Mississippi Valley. The conspiracies and revolts that developed over the course of the 1790s pointed to spaces, gatherings, traveling, and the circulation of ideas that had now been touched in some way by the revolutionary age. In New Orleans, popular spaces like cabarets and levees were deemed dangerous. In the case of Pointe Coupée, slave cabins, roads, and waterways figured as highways for the transport of illicit persons, ideas, and trade. Spanish fear of revolution centered on maroons, deserters, libres, and caboteurs for their illicit travel. These traditional meeting places and modes of travel, though illicit previously, had taken on dangerous revolutionary meaning, especially after the slave conspiracy of 1795.

In the wake of the Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy of 1795 and its aftermath, tensions came to the fore between the coalition of those interested in conserving the slave system and borderland network of individuals interested in revolting against that system. Even within and among these networks there was friction. Carondelet and the cabildo entered into a power struggle. The colonial government and colonists of New Orleans found themselves at odds with colonists of outposts removed from the city over the question of how to handle the enduring threat of resistance and conspiracy. Even among slaves there were divisions, those who collaborated with conspirators and those who cooperated with authorities. Meanwhile, the atmosphere of the revolutionary age and the threat of slave insurrection that pressed on the minds of officials and colonists contributed to growing suspicion of slaves and libres. In spite of division, the spread of slave conspiracy and the fear of insurrection did inspire loyalty to the

Spanish administration among most French-speaking colonists, a goal Carondelet had been striving to achieve since 1793.

Chapter 9

National Borders in the Revolutionary Borderlands, 1795-1803

Introduction

In 1795, Louisiana's place in the Spanish empire shifted drastically. As Spain grappled with shifting alliances amongst France, Britain, and the United States, its North American borderlands became bargaining chips on the negotiating table. In a bid to win American friendship, Spain conceded a boundary with the United States at the thirty first parallel At the Treaty of San Lorenzo in 1795. At this time, Spain reconsidered how Louisiana might serve the empire to contain American expansion. The Spanish Secretary of State Manuel de Godoy determined that Spain would fare better if Louisiana were retroceded to France. France would take on the costs of maintaining the colony, and Spain's more valuable holdings would benefit from the buffer colony without cost to the Spanish purse. Ultimately, these treaties gained Spain very little. In the end, Spain, not the peoples living in the borderlands, undermined long-held imperial projects. The borderland practices of the inhabitants would outlast Spanish authority in the Lower Mississippi Valley, as would the economic and social shifts that began to take root at the end of the Spanish period.

Configuring national borders in the Lower Mississippi was, however, more complicated than the signing of a treaty. The Treaty of San Lorenzo set another conflict into motion over the implementation of the new boundary. Strangely enough, at this time, colonial officials looked to extending the life of the ambiguity of the borderlands as they hoped the terms of San Lorenzo would not be carried out. In this moment, officials recognized that although borderland practices

might at times subvert Spanish efforts to enforce boundaries, often they also might work to perpetuate the Spanish presence. As Spanish officials tried to stall, colonists at Natchez took the opportunity presented by the border dispute to revolt. Colonists and southeastern Indians attempted to negotiate their place in the borderlands as international conditions shifted and as nations planned to survey an official boundary.

Borderland practices west of the Mississippi experienced disruption because of the fallout of the Treaty of San Lorenzo, but they also proved adaptable to changing circumstances once again. The imposition of new national boundaries in the Southeast prompted greater migration and trade of Indian groups west of the Mississippi River. Related pressures among Indian groups continued to mount west of the Mississippi especially in the Red River Valley and in the Louisiana-Texas borderlands. Meanwhile, the contraband trade in horses from Texas escalated and connected Americans and Indians to the trade in new ways. Spain continued to have little control over its colonial borders in the Lower Mississippi.

In the final years of Spanish rule, several changes took root that began to alter the society and economy of Louisiana. The opening of the Mississippi River and the establishment of a deposit for Americans was coupled with licit trading privileges. Together these measures expanded the trade between New Orleans and American ports, just as sugar and cotton production began to take hold in Lower Mississippi River Valley.

San Lorenzo and Retrocession

Spain's experience of the revolutionary age led to a shift in the long-term policy directed at Louisiana. Shifting alliances and new dangers of war with Britain prompted Spain to yield to the United States in negotiations over the disputed boundary. From 1793 through 1795 Spain

and France were at war. After French revolutionary forces invaded Spain, Spain agreed to peace with the French Republic on July 22, 1795 in the Treaty of Basel. Now allied once again with France, and having abandoned its alliance with Britain by negotiating a separate peace with France, Spain feared renewed conflict with Britain. Negotiating the boundary with the United States might assist in securing an alliance with the United States and in luring the United States away from ties with Britain.

By the Treaty of San Lorenzo, signed on October 27, 1795, the thirty first parallel became the official boundary between the Floridas and the United States. Importantly, the United States also gained free navigation of the Mississippi River. While the treaty clearly granted territorial advantage to the United States, the Spanish Secretary of State Manuel de Godoy initially praised the agreement for securing the friendship of the United States, and for thus preventing an American alliance with Britain. This seeming victory was short lived. On the one hand, by December 1795, Godoy had entered into discussions with France over retroceding Louisiana. He reasoned that with Louisiana in the possession of France, the burden of the costs of defending the colony would fall upon France. In French hands, Louisiana would serve as a buffer to contain American expansion. Godoy signed a treaty with France to enact a retrocession on June 22, 1796 only to have the treaty rejected by the Directory. Now distrustful of the directory, Godoy deemed it more prudent to postpone further discussion of retrocession. On the other hand, the Treaty of San Lorenzo did not stop the United States from negotiating with Britain. By October 1796, Godoy recognized his miscalculation. The Treaty of San Lorenzo had not resulted in any enduring alliance between the United States and Spain. Further, Spain and Britain were now at war, and the United States, or certainly the federalist leaders, appeared to be warming to Britain. Finally, the United States still appeared an experiment with an

uncertain future. Would the union last? These circumstances influenced Godoy to write Carondelet on October 29, 1796 to halt the execution of the terms of the Treaty of San Lorenzo.¹

Soon after his ascent in 1799, Napoleon began to pressure Spain to cede Louisiana and the Floridas to France. The Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800 transferred Louisiana at a time when Spain hoped to keep the Floridas. Although Spain had stipulated that it would only retrocede Louisiana if France agreed not to transfer the colony to another party, Napoleon was soon in negotiations with the United States. As in the Treaty of San Lorenzo, the loss of borderlands territory did not fully serve the intended goals of empire.²

Napoleon planned that Louisiana would serve as a bread basket for his Caribbean Empire, but Louisiana lost its utility to France when French forces were unable to retake Saint Domingue. Meanwhile, France anticipated the outbreak of war with Britain. These circumstances prompted French and American diplomats to meet at the negotiating table. In the Louisiana Purchase of April 30, 1803, the United States gained the vast territory known as Louisiana for a mere three cents an acre. At last the United States secured free navigation of the Mississippi River and access to the port of New Orleans. Theoretically, this development would secure greater loyalty to the United States among Americans living in the West.³

¹ Peter J. Kastor, *William Clark's World: Describing America in an Age of Unknowns* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 60; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 289-91. For a discussion of the efforts and challenges of the early United States government to "establish "clear and indisputable boundaries" see Kastor, 62-73. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803: A Study in Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934): v, 51-60, 101-115, 176-86. Whitaker sets out to "show how Spain lost its hold on Louisiana and how the United States fell heir to the province," and in the same vein as Frederick Jackson Turner, he considers the Louisiana Purchase "the inevitable consequence of the growth of American interests (and interest) in Louisiana" (vi). By the Treaty of Greenville, Britain agreed to evacuate the posts within the borders of the United States. This step adversely affected the resistance among Indian in the Northwest Territory to American expansion. This treaty was signed after the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, which marked a decisive defeat of the Indians of the Northwest against "mad" General Anthony Wayne.

² J.C.A. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1776-1821* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 39-40; Kastor, *Nation's Crucible*, 37-41; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 290-1.

³ Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands*, 39-40; Kastor, *Nation's Crucible*, 37-41; Rothman, *Slave Country*, 16-18.

Delays in Demarcating the Boundary

After Spain began to doubt its decisions at San Lorenzo in 1795, Spanish officials stalled the execution of the terms of the treaty. They employed the uncertainty of the geopolitical future of North America as an excuse. During this time, several schemes surfaced to take Louisiana from Spain. France continued to look to recovering Louisiana and even dreamed of some lands east of the Mississippi. By the intrigues of the Frenchman Victor Collot, France gained first-hand accounts of the terrain and spirits of the peoples of the trans-Appalachian west. As this French spy traveled the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, he became aware of a scheme in which British agents were involved.⁴ Collot alerted Spanish officials to the plot, which was spearheaded by a discontented western leader named William Blount.⁵ Even after the ratification of

⁴ General Victor Collot was one of the best known agents of France sent to the Mississippi Valley to ascertain the Spanish defenses, the topography, and the economic and political climate. After serving as the governor of Guadeloupe, Collot surrendered the island to British forces who imprisoned him. He landed in Philadelphia in 1796 where he was put on parole. There he became associated with Pierre Adet, the new French minister to the United States, who was looking for someone to take on the mission of reconnaissance and survey in the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. As a military man, an experienced topographer and cartographer, and an English-speaker, Collot was the right man for the job. Adet anticipated that Franco-Spanish diplomatic relations would soon prompt the retrocession of Louisiana. If not, Adet recognized American westerners as a potential source of manpower that might be used in the conquest of Louisiana. Though Spain since the time of Miró had promoted western schemes for separation from the United States, Adet thought it more plausible that westerners would cooperate with French leadership rather than Spanish, especially after the French Revolution. Collot then travelled the Ohio River and Mississippi taking detailed notes and making drawings of Spanish defenses in place. Kyte, "A Spy on the Western Waters: The Military Intelligence Mission of General Collot in 1796," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 34.3 (1947): 429-31; Victor Collot, trans. Durand Echeverria, "General Collot's Plan for a Reconnaissance of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, 1796," *WMQ*, Third Series, 9.4 (1952): 512-520. Echeverria's publication in the *WMQ* includes Collot's own "Plan for the Reconnaissance of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys."

⁵ Weeks, "Of Rattlesnakes, Wolves, and Tigers; A Harangue at the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1796," *WMQ* 67.3 (July 2010): 499; France was not the only enemy of Spain looking to employ westerners against Louisiana and the Floridas. Eager to redeem itself after the disaster of the American Revolution, Britain employed agents to stir up trouble for the United States and to try to expand its North American foothold through the trans-Appalachian West and Mississippi Valley. Not surprisingly as these lands were all a part of the Mississippi Basin, the port of New Orleans was a place of interest to. Further, Britain had an advantage over France, its connection with the Indians of North America, many of whom remembered the British crown with a fondness greater than they regarded either Spain or the United States. Additionally, loyalists had fled to Indian country and were included in the ranks of many Indian traders. Their influence could also be a British advantage. Frontiersmen initiated the project, but British diplomats conceded to collaborate. From 1796 to 1797, British agents conspired with William Blount, then senator of Tennessee. Like the Genêt-Clark project, this scheme was two pronged: Blount asked that Britain provide warships to the Mississippi, and he promised an army of frontiersmen and Indians to descend the river. For an overview of British prospects of 'retaking' the Southeast see J. Leitch Wright Jr., "British Designs on the Old Southwest: Foreign Intrigue on the Florida Frontier, 1783-1803," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 44.4 (1966): 265-84. For a full discussion of the Blount Conspiracy, see also Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 104-15. Whitaker

the Constitution, the American west continued to be a theater for intrigue and conspiracy against the republic. The timing of the discovery of the Blount Conspiracy proved useful to Carondelet and Gayoso. The conspiracy served as the perfect reason to postpone relinquishing the Southeast. The boundary dispute ultimately played out at Natchez amongst the colonists, Gayoso, and the American boundary commissioner Andrew Ellicott.⁶

In March 1797, preparations were underway for Spain to withdraw from the forts of the lands that the treaty had designated as American two years earlier. At nearly the same moment that American representatives arrived at the doorstep of Natchez, Carondelet received orders from Godoy to delay turning over the lands to the United States. In the two years since the treaty, Spain had learned that cooperating with the United States at San Lorenzo had not succeeded in breaking the republic from alliance with Great Britain. Spain now tried to extend the borderland status of the Southeast as long as possible.⁷

As Spanish officials promoted the ambiguity of the borderlands by postponing the execution of the terms of the treaty, colonists and Indians alike continued to contest the demarcation of the border. Resolution on the ground emerged out of a revolt of the colonists at Natchez, which was affirmed by imperial command in 1798.

The presence of American surveyor Andrew Ellicott and a party of American soldiers complicated affairs at Natchez where discontented colonists seized the moment of uncertainty to revolt. As in the Natchitoches Revolt of 1795, colonists at Natchez were troubled by the debt crisis that grew out of the fall of the market for Louisiana tobacco. Factionalized colonists at

conjectures that “it seems more than likely that the turmoil at Natchez in 1797 was intimately connected with the Blount conspiracy and that this conspiracy was in turn related to the notorious Yazoo land speculation,” although “full documentary proof is lacking”(104). He like more recent scholars recognizes the discontent of land speculators in the Southeast as the most significant factor in the Blount Conspiracy.

⁶ Robert V. Haynes, *The Mississippi Territory and the Southwest Frontier, 1795-1817* (Lexington KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2010), 15.

⁷ *Ibid.* 14-15; Holmes, *Gayoso*, 186; Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 56-7.

Natchez saw the conflict between Ellicott and Gayoso as an opportune moment to negotiate a better place for themselves. Meanwhile, Indians of the Southeast rejected the Treaty. Like the Natchez colonists, they recognized the conflict over the demarcation of the boundary as an opportunity to express discontent, theirs being an alarm at Spain's betrayal of their alliance.⁸

On February 27, 1797, Andrew Ellicott and a small detachment of United States soldiers arrived at Natchez. He wrote Gayoso: "It is with pleasure that I embrace this opportunity of informing you of my arrival at this place, as commissioner on behalf of the United States for ascertaining the boundaries between the Territory of his most Catholic Majesty and that of the said United States."⁹ Ellicott already anticipated a delay in demarcating the border but nonetheless raised the American flag at his camp located across from Fort Panmure.¹⁰ His introduction to Natchez provided a window into the interests, concerns, and divisions in the district. He reached the Natchez District with the assistance of James Wilkinson and Philip Nolan, where he turned to Bryan Bruin, Nolan's business associate, for intelligence on the nature of the settlers.¹¹ At the time, the Natchez District was home to former loyalists such as Dunbar and Hutchins, to others who had fought as patriots in the war, and to some, such as Thomas Green, who had first fled Spanish authorities for their involvement in rebellion and revolt. Additionally, the district included Anglo-Catholics such as the Bruin clan, and a majority of Protestants, whose religious practice for the most part remained private.¹²

⁸ Usner, "American Indians on the Cotton Frontier: Changing Economic Relations with Citizens and Slaves in the Mississippi Territory," *Journal of American History* 72.2 (Sept., 1985), 298.

⁹ Ellicott to Carondelet, Natchez, 27 Feb 1797, PPC, legajo 35: fo 371

¹⁰ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 183-4.

¹¹ Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 10, 13-4; Ellicott, *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 40.

¹² Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 10-11. According to the liberalized offers of land to Americans in 1788, Spanish Louisiana and the Floridas welcomed Protestants with a policy of toleration. No longer did Spain officially require their conversion. Their presence and faith was tolerated and the practice of that faith was to remain private. Over the course of the next decade in Natchez, residents of the Natchez District challenged this schema of toleration.

Many colonists living in the Natchez District faced economic ruin and had cause to resent Spain's economic policies. Anticipating much profit and at the encouragement of the Spanish government, during the 1780s many Natchez residents had plunged into debt to purchase land, slaves, and equipment. The decision of Mexico and Seville to reduce purchase of Louisiana tobacco hurt the economy of the region significantly, much as it had struck that of Natchitoches. At Natchez, Governor Gayoso rightly feared that the decision that drastically reduced legal export of tobacco from the district would be detrimental to the loyalty of colonists there. Indeed, the decision spelled demise for many colonists and creditors at Natchez. Tobacco production plummeted over the course of the next several years, from over 1,000,000 pounds at Natchez in 1791 to an amount so small by 1796 that the district reported no export of it. Although colonists began slowly to turn to cotton, the initial profits were not enough to make up for the debt that they had taken on in earlier years. However, the district's debt crisis remained.¹³ In 1791, Gayoso and Miró agreed to institute a moratorium on debts in hopes of preventing the ruin of creditor and debtor in Natchez by extending debtors time to find an income outside of tobacco. The moratorium extended until 1795. Between 1791 and 1795, creditors and debtors wrote and petitioned officials begging for assistance in their conflict with one another. Gayoso renewed the moratorium again in 1795 for another five years.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the conflict between debtors and creditors continued. It peaked in 1797 when the debtors revolted against the Spanish government. The extension of the moratorium had

¹³ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 89-100; Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 11-12. For a full discussion of the changes in the tobacco market, see Brian E. Coutts, "Boom and Bust: The Rise and Fall of the Tobacco Industry in Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1790," *The Americas* 42.3 (Jan., 1986): 289-309. For a discussion of attempts to design and build efficient cotton gins in French Louisiana, see also, Daniel H. Thomas, "Pre-Whitney Cotton Gins in French Louisiana," *Journal of Southern History* 31.2 (May, 1965): 135-148.

¹⁴ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 96-7. Lines of credit involved merchants of Natchez and of New Orleans and their own creditors throughout the Atlantic, including Reed and Forde and other Philadelphia merchants.

not been enough to purchase their loyalty. Disgruntled colonists used disruption occasioned by Ellicott's arrival to express discontent over multiple issues.

Gayoso had already notified Ellicott on May 1 that the danger of British attack on Spanish Upper Louisiana meant that Spain must ready the Mississippi defenses, including reinforcing Nogales to protect Lower Louisiana. Gayoso wrote that "this is a powerful reason, in addition to those that I have offered to suspend the evacuation of the posts, and of running the line, as our attention is entirely drawn to the defense of the province."¹⁵ And indeed, on May 16, "a company of grenadiers arrived at Natchez, from New Orleans...proceeded up the river to the Walnut Hills."¹⁶ Gayoso had already instructed colonists that Spain awaited resolution on issues concerning their titles to land, Indian relations, and the moratorium on debts.¹⁷

Spain's decision to postpone transferring the Natchez district became public. On May 31, 1797, Carondelet wrote Gayoso telling him to publish a broadside informing colonists of the development. It cited the Blount conspiracy and conflicts between Jay's Treaty and the Treaty of San Lorenzo as the grounds for the decision.¹⁸ Ellicott wrote that "After the appearance of the Baron's proclamation, the public mind might be compared to inflammable [gas]; it wanted but a spark to produce an explosion."¹⁹

As Gayoso stalled, Ellicott remained determined to carry out his mission, even if that meant encouraging revolt at Natchez. Meanwhile, American Lieutenant Piercy Pope rode the Natchez district in search of men who had deserted the American army, and when he found

¹⁵ Gayoso to Ellicott, Natchez, 1 May 1797, in Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 80-2.

¹⁶ Andrew Ellicott, 16 May 1797, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 84.

¹⁷ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 188-9; Photostatic Reproductions from the Archives of the Indies, Seville made by Roscoe Hill, 1910, Ayer Collection, volume 3, page 152, legajo 24, Carondelet, New Orleans, 31 May 1797, Newberry Library.

¹⁸ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 188-9; Photostatic Reproductions from the Archives of the Indies, Seville made by Roscoe Hill, 1910, Ayer Collection, volume 3, page 152, legajo 24, Carondelet, New Orleans, 31 May 1797, Newberry Library.

¹⁹ Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 96.

them, he disregarded Gayoso's orders and placed them under arrest, refusing to release them. Pope technically had no jurisdiction in Natchez.²⁰

Emboldened by the presence of Ellicott and the American soldiers accompanying him, Natchez debtors revolted against the Spanish government. Among those resentful of the Spanish government were Anthony Hutchins and Thomas Green, whom Gayoso had permitted to return to the district. According to Daniel Clark, "low characters, inured to the practice of murdering and plundering, during the revolutionary war" joined the discontented debtors who hoped that free from the bounds of Spanish law they would not be forced to repay their debts. As Gayoso exchanged heated letters with Ellicott, Protestant ministers came forward in Natchez voicing their grievances over the religious toleration that existed in the district, clamoring instead for broader freedoms. Their goal was to supplant the religious toleration that existed in the district with free exercise of religion whereby they might conduct religious practices publically.²¹

On June 8, the imprisonment of a drunken Baptist minister and shoemaker by the name of Barton Hannon sparked the crisis. In early June, Hannon was seeking signatures on a petition against the Spanish government. Because he had earlier received a thrashing from a group of Catholics in the district, Hannon also sought revenge and threatened to burn the fort. In an irate and intoxicated state, Hannon accosted Gayoso, who responded by sending Hannon to the stocks at Fort Panmure. As Domingo Bouligny conducted Hannon to the fort, the minister spied a group of Americans and cried out to them "Help me, fellow Americans." Conspiracy broke out in Natchez. While Anthony Hutchins proposed capturing Gayoso and bearing him to the Chickasaws, others suggested holding the governor until the release of Hannon. On June 9, there

²⁰ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 188-9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 187-9. This was not the first time that Protestants in Natchez protested the religious regulations of the colony. Ebenezer Dayton, Natchez, 20 April 1795, PPC, legajo 202: fo 390.

were only eighteen men at Fort Panmure to defend it as the coalition of the discontented took to the roads in revolt and plotted to take the fort.²²

Spanish and American representatives attempted to encourage Natchez colonists to act in ways that furthered the respective Spanish and American goals for the boundary. Over the next several days, Gayoso wrote Carondelet pleading for reinforcements and readied the fort as best he could. Meanwhile, Gayoso's show of resolve dissuaded a group of three hundred rebels gathered on the Natchez Trace at a place called Belk's Tavern eight miles from Natchez from actually attacking the fort. Gayoso also contacted Ellicott about reducing "disturbance in the country."²³ He complained to Ellicott that "insurgents were riding through the country" trying to get colonists to "declar[e] themselves citizens of the United States of America, though they are actually under oath of allegiance to his Majesty." Ellicott knew the veracity of the accusation for he had concocted the plan in hopes that declarations in the form of a petition would force a transfer of the Natchez district. He thought that with a declaration of allegiance to the United States, the United States government would have legitimacy in the district and that hence United States official support of the revolt would be easily garnered once it had broken out.²⁴ He wrote Gayoso, "The people conceived themselves citizens of the United States, they had a right to conceive themselves so, and they have lately individually come forward to express their wishes and intentions...on what principle do you still retain the idea, that the citizens of this country are subjects of his Catholic Majesty?" Ellicott blamed Gayoso, "The delay on your part, in carrying the treaty into effect, added to the invariable nature of the human heart, have produced the evils of which you complain." He went on to complain of Spain's actions at Nogales: "I do now on

²² Holmes, *Gayoso*, 190-2, 191 quotation; Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 16-17; Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 73-4. Domingo Bouligny was one of the sons of Francisco Bouligny.

²³ Gayoso to Ellicott, 12 or 13 June 1797, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 105, 110.

²⁴ Gayoso to Ellicott, 13 June 1797, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 106.

the part of the said United States, (as their commissioner,) solemnly protest against the officers of his Catholic Majesty, landing any troops, or repairing any fortifications in the territory before mentioned,” for “I shall consider such conduct a violation of the treaty, and an immediate attack upon the interest, honour, and dignity of my country.”²⁵

In spite of his words with regard to the international implications of Spanish action at Nogales and refusal to carry out the terms of the treaty, when the militia at Fort Panmure fired on rebels trying to secure the high ground nearby, Ellicott withdrew his support of revolt, the fires of which he had stoked. On June 19, Choctaws arrived at Natchez from forays among the Caddos. The rebels interpreted their arrival to mean that Gayoso had called upon Spain’s Indian allies for assistance. Finally on June 21, Gayoso left the fort for the Government House where negotiations between the Spanish and American factions took place. The revolt was at an end.²⁶

Resolution of the revolt guaranteed the neutrality of the Natchez District once again and provided another example of relatively mild treatment of rebels by Spanish officials at this locale. Gayoso promised that rebels would not be prosecuted, and the rebels agreed to abide by Spanish Law until an official transfer of the district had taken place. Ellicott and Pope met with rebels at Belk’s Tavern the day before, on June 20. First, they elected a committee of representatives that included Anthony Hutchins, Thomas Green’s son-in-law Cato West, Isaac Gaillard, Bernard Lintot, William Ratcliff, Joseph Bernard, and Gabriel Benoist. The committee then appointed Ellicott and Pope to the committee. Together they drafted requests that they then offered to Gayoso in the negotiations. Many of the men included on this committee had a long history of inconsistency in their adherence to Spanish law.²⁷ Shortly after the revolt, Gayoso

²⁵ Ellicott to Gayoso, 13 June 1797, in *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 107-9.

²⁶ Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 16; Holmes, *Gayoso*, 192-4; Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 113.

²⁷ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 194-5; Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 17; Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 114; Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 63-5.

learned that he was to succeed Carondelet as governor of Louisiana. He left Natchez at the end of July for New Orleans and relinquished local government to Stephen Minor.²⁸

After the revolt and anticipating the demarcation of the border, Natchez continued in tumult as conflicting factions took advantage of the moment to attempt to forward their own personal and political interests. The disturbance had more or less continued even after Gayoso accepted the resolutions of Ellicott and the committee. On July 13, after Gayoso and Ellicott had agreed that there should be a “Permanent Committee” in the district. Ellicott described the position of the committee:

The committee was no sooner organized, than it was evident its measures would be directed to the attainment of two objects: *first*, the securing the country to the United States, and, *secondly*, the preservation of peace and good order in the settlement. The *first*, was contrary to the wishes of the officers of his Catholic Majesty, and the *second* to those attached to the British interest, to which may be added another class, who had nothing to lose, but hoped to gain by the tumult and disorder.²⁹

The enduring loyalty to Britain and the ‘banditti’ posed difficulties for the imposition of American jurisdiction. Largely composed of creditors, such as Bryan Bruin and others, the body meant to promote “peace and good order,” by its very existence in the turbulent debt ridden district perpetuated resistance to law and order.

Anthony Hutchins received permission from Stephen Minor to hold a popular election for another committee. This permission was only granted after Hutchins had disrupted a meeting of the Permanent Committee in late July or early August where he informed them “you are no committee! You are dissolved.” He insisted that he would have another election conducted. Hutchins addressed his efforts to the planter-debtors of the district. However, the election of his “Committee of Safety” was so discouraged by Minor and Ellicott that only four of the ten

²⁸ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 198-99.

²⁹ Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 139.

districts within Natchez held the elections. The drafting of a petition to congress by Hutchins's Committee of Safety opened a feud between this body and Ellicott and his followers over the question of Ellicott and Pope's involvement in the insurrection the previous summer. Into September, Hutchins stirred up colonists against the Permanent Committee. On September 12, approximately forty Natchez men were said to be armed and making their way to the Committee. In this altercation, Ellicott went to great lengths to prove Hutchins's continued loyalty to Britain, charting his politics from his loyalism during the Revolution to accusing him of connections to the Blount Conspiracy. Violent feuding lasted through the end of 1797, culminating with Hutchins's son-in-law Vousdan warning that if Hutchins were assassinated, Ellicott would be next. When word reached Natchez that Grand Pré had been appointed to replace Minor, rumors erupted anew and the pro-American faction decried a breach of the district's neutrality by Spain. Finally, in late November, American Capt. Isaac Guion and his troops arrived at Natchez from Chickasaw Bluffs. Their presence quieted both parties momentarily.³⁰

The complications surrounding the latest revolt at Natchez did reflect the challenges that the transfer of the Natchez District to the United States would pose. To gain the loyalty of the predominantly English-speaking Natchez District, the United States had to contend with the 'banditti' who had continued to plague the outpost since the American Revolution. As Gayoso had anticipated, the United States must be able to protect property and to resolve the issues surrounding land titles in a district that had passed from French to British to Spanish hands since 1763. The United States also must contend with Southeastern Indians who were concerned about the ongoing encroachment of settlers in the west.³¹

³⁰ Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 140-61; Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 18-22. To complicate matters, Guion now reported to General James Wilkinson who had recently been appointed the American commander in the West.

³¹ John Craig Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 15. For thorough and recent discussion of the politics of slavery in the early United States,

Only on January 10, 1798 did Gayoso receive word that he was indeed to abandon the forts above the thirty first parallel.³² Accordingly, on March 23, Spain evacuated Nogales and on March 30, Natchez.³³ That same month Fort Confederación and Fort San Fernando de las Barrancas were also evacuated.³⁴ And on April 9, Gayoso met Ellicott and the Spanish and American survey parties to begin officially the running of the line.³⁵ As for the demarcation of the boundary, Stephen Minor served as commissioner and William Dunbar as astronomer. Together they joined Ellicott and American and Spanish crews for the long awaited journey to set the line that would officially separate the Spanish Floridas from the United States. The experience was more harrowing than either party anticipated for no sooner had it begun than Choctaws and Creeks alike began to threaten the Americans, warning the Spanish representatives to make a separate camp.³⁶

The Treaty of San Lorenzo profoundly disillusioned Indian allies of Spain. Indians who had worked to forward Spanish alliances and to forward the pan-Indian cooperation were sorely embittered. They had perceived such endeavors as in their own interests and recognized the Treaty of San Lorenzo as a betrayal of friendship, as well as a blow to power in Indian society and to their leverage in negotiations with the United States.

In 1796, as the Spanish prepared to evacuate, Chickasaws under the leadership of Ugulayacabé and Pusehuma arrived at San Fernando de las Barrancas to voice concerns. Ugulayacabé expressed Chickasaw sense of betrayal in Spain's failure in the alliance. He declared, "We see that our Father not only abandons us like small animals to the claws of tigers

see also Hammond and Matthew Mason, eds., *Contesting Slavery: the Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

³² Gayoso, 10 Jan 1798, New Orleans, Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 167.

³³ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 232.

³⁴ Holmes, "Jean De La Villebeuvre," 398.

³⁵ Haynes, *Mississippi Territory*, 22.

³⁶ Holmes, *Gayoso*, 233-6.

and the jaws of wolves.” After Gayoso had broken the news of the treaty, Chickasaw leaders reportedly tore apart the Spanish flag and decried the Spanish alliance. Carondelet attempted to assure Ugulayacabé that the treaty did not affect Indian lands.³⁷ However, the Indians rightly recognized that treaty between Spain and the United States severely compromised their ability to negotiate power in the Southeast. To this point, the policies of the United States and the encroachment of settlers did not bode well for Indians living within the nation’s borders.

The party charged with running the boundary at the thirty first parallel was a perfect target for displeased Choctaws. As early as April 1796, Indian leaders voiced their plans for harassing the surveying party. Not long before his death, Jean Delavillebeuvre reported from Fort Confederación that the Choctaws were threatening to kill anyone passing through their lands connected with the mission of demarcating the boundary:

Ever since the chiefs left their villages to go to Natchez, to represent that they are unwilling to have the Americans extend their [boundary] lines (as I have informed the Governor and Your Lordship, by the same) their warriors have been very restive, much more so when lately some of those from the village Auclabula set out to kill two habitants of Natches and a woman, thinking that they were Americans. Fortunately for them, the two habitants had gone away...but they are threatening to kill all persons who may pass through their lands, unless these go provided with a passport from the governors or the commandants of the posts.³⁸

Some Choctaws rejected the presence of Americans, attempted to affirm relations with Spain, and tried to resist an end to the ambiguous border. If they did not kill the surveyors, Delavillebeuvre was convinced that at the very least the Choctaws would steal their supplies and horses. Choctaws were so distressed at the news of the boundary line that reportedly some thought to kill Franchimastabé and others whom they held responsible for ceding certain tracts to

³⁷ Weeks, “Of Rattlesnakes, Wolves, and Tigers; A Harangue at the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1796,” 487-8, 500, 505, quotation Ugulayacabé, Chickasaw Bluffs, 1796, as quoted 488.

³⁸ Delavillebeuvre to Gayoso, Confederación, 1796, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, vol. 2, 138-9; Weeks, “Of Rattlesnakes, Wolves, and Tigers; A Harangue at the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1796,” 501.

Spain for the purpose of building forts and trading posts.³⁹ And indeed at the appearance of the American flag, hoisted by Ellicott and his party near Natchez in late February 1797, Choctaws threatened to attack. Much to Ellicott's dismay: "We had been but a few days at Natchez, before the Indians became very insolent, insulted a number of our men, walked about the camp with drawn knives, and one night we were informed that they intended attacking us."⁴⁰ Additionally, the boundary commissioners ran into the greatest trouble near the Chatahoochee.⁴¹

Meanwhile, the United States exhibited greater resolve to win the support of the Chickasaws and Choctaws, especially by supplying the trade. Beginning in 1797, the United States officially commenced regular gift giving to Chickasaws and Choctaws. In 1797, James Wilkinson met with Ugulayacabé to try to win his alliance. Ugulayacabé and several others agreed to travel to Philadelphia, though nothing came of their journey. Americans distributed gifts and traded at Knoxville, Nashville, and Chickasaw Bluffs.⁴²

In the delay of the boundary demarcation, many parties took advantage of the prolonged borderlands period. Spain and its agents sought more time in hopes of a possible reversal of the territorial concessions of the treaty. Natchez colonists looked to relieve their debt crisis and voice their local divisions. Indians of the Southeast decried the treaty's betrayal of alliances.

Red River Valley, an Assessment

After receiving word of the Treaty of San Lorenzo, Carondelet turned his gaze to the Red River. With the loss of much of the Southeast, he perceived the Red River Valley as having

³⁹ Gayoso to Carondelet, Natchez, 14 Nov 1796, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, vol. 2, 139; Delavillebeuvre to Gayoso, Confederación, 1796, in Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, vol. 2, 138-9

⁴⁰ Weeks, "Of Rattlesnakes, Wolves, and Tigers; A Harangue at the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1796," 502; Ellicott, *Journal of Andrew Ellicott*, 45-6.

⁴¹ For a full discussion of this conflict, see Jack D.L. Holmes, "The Southern Boundary Commission, the Chattahoochee River, and the Florida Seminoles, 1799," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 44.4 (1966): 312-41.

⁴² Weeks, "Of Rattlesnakes, Wolves, and Tigers; A Harangue at the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1796," 508-9.

taken on new significance for the defense of Lower Louisiana. Grand Pré received an appointment that moved him from Natchez to Avoyelles where he served briefly as Lieutenant Governor of the area. In his short time there, he traveled the Red River and wrote a report to Carondelet assessing settlements, Indian relations, commerce, and defense. Dated September 26, 1796, his writings from that journey reflect Spanish priorities and perceptions of the *petites nations*, the changes in the livestock industry and smuggling, and the changes in Indian relations west of the Mississippi. Further, the writings suggest the persistently stark contrast between perceptions of border-designers and borderlanders. Borderland inhabitants adapted their practices as they strove to find semblance of continuity and opportunity in the new challenges that grew out the Treaty of San Lorenzo.⁴³

Grand Pré's low regard for the *petites nations* corresponded with their decline as a priority for the Spanish colonial government at New Orleans. Meanwhile, *petites nations* Indians continued to seek out alliance with Spain and to re-adapt the configuration of their communities in their quest for survival. As he described their settlement on the Red River, Grand Pré considered that the colony might be better served if the valuable lands of these Indian groups were in the hands of settlers:

Between the post of Natchitoches and that of Rapido, the small nations of the Pascagoulas, Apalaches, and Tinsas are settled on both banks of the Red River. Scattered in groups of three, four, and five families, they occupy an excellent and large territory where many good farmers could be advantageously placed. Consequently, such a situation existing in the midst of the inhabitants is very unpleasant for them in every way. These Indians attract the Choctaws who remain for some months consuming all their food and finally abusing them. This greatly disturbs the inhabitants and I have spoken to the chiefs of each nation in the presence of the people, endeavoring to persuade them to unite in villages. I proposed to establish them near those of the Chacteaux, Biloxis, and Tonicas in the territory occupied by these Indians on the Bayou de los Bueyes. I explained to them that thus they would form a respectable body to oppose the other nations and no longer be exposed to attack or injury. At present, on the contrary, they can not be considered a nation because they are so scattered. They have all promised to leave

⁴³ Kinnaird and Kinnaird, "Red River Valley in 1796," 184.

those lands and retire to the place indicated, but it is difficult to be certain they will do so promptly. In all, these six small nations have one hundred and sixty-eight warriors.

He considered the location of these smaller groups along the Red River troublesome because it attracted Choctaws to the area. Additionally, he evaluated the legitimacy and viability of each group based on their settlement pattern, which he deemed too scattered.⁴⁴ As Spain looked to rid herself of Louisiana, the expense of defenses, including gifts to the *petites nations*, seemed hardly worth the trouble. Spanish leaders had forgotten the value of the knowledge and skill of these groups still prized in the 1780s.

The *petites nations* began to live together more and more, eventually combining into larger groupings than any single nation could enjoy itself. Shortly after Etienne Layssard took the census at Rapides in January 1793, the Apalaches, Alibamons and Taensas came together to form a single village. They continued to live as such, and in 1796, their combined numbers totaled 135. It is likely that another group or groups had joined them by this time, possibly including the Chahtos.⁴⁵

	1789 ⁴⁶	1793 ⁴⁷	1796 ⁴⁸
<i>Apalaches</i>	34	45	135 (Apalaches, Alibamons, Taensas)
<i>Taensas</i>	25	44	
<i>Biloxis</i>			144
<i>Alibamons</i>	30	27	
<i>Choctaws</i>	61		
<i>Tunicas</i>			111
<i>Pascagoulas</i>	144	168	138

⁴⁴ Grand Pré to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 27 Sept 1796, as quoted in Kinnaird and Kinnaird, “Red River Valley in 1796,” 192

⁴⁵ Etienne Layssard, Rapides, 23 Jan 1793 PPC, legajo 207A: fo 498; Etienne Layssard to Carondelet, Rapides, 27 April 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 499-500; Census, Avoyelles, 21 Nov 1796, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA; Valentin Layssard to Carondelet, Rapides, 28 May 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 796.

⁴⁶ 1789 Census of Rapides, PPC, legajo 202: fo 519

⁴⁷ Etienne Layssard, Rapides, 23 Jan 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 492.

⁴⁸ Census, Avoyelles, 21 Nov 1796, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, NDA.

Indians living along the Red River had already taken initiative to preserve their identities and nations by experimenting with combining settlements, of their own accord.⁴⁹ After the Ofogoulas and the Tunicas combined into one community, the Biloxis living at Avoyelles developed connections with the Tunica-Ofogoulas. And in 1793, the Choctaws asked Etienne Layssard at Rapides if the Biloxis and the Tunicas could join them at La Rivière au Boeufs at Rapides. This indicates continued alliance and personal association among the Choctaws and the Biloxis over the course of the Spanish period.⁵⁰ As they struggled with marginalization and declining population, *petites nations* Indians allied with one another and attempted creative ways of perpetuating their settlements on the Red River.

Grand Pré looked toward that phantom dream that dogged the Spanish for the totality of their time in the Lower Mississippi of a colony or border more densely settled with colonists. To his eye, the *petites nations* were nearly disposable. Meanwhile, the *petites nations* vied for recognition by the Spanish colonial government and recognized one another, by and large, as allies in the project of survival in the shifting borderlands.

News of the Treaty of San Lorenzo prompted many Indians to migrate to Spanish Louisiana, or at the very least to increase the frequency of their hunting west of the Mississippi. Beginning in 1796, Cherokees, especially the Chickamaugas, began to cross the Mississippi.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Delamorandière to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 22 Oct 1794, PPC, legajo 209: fo 128. The Indians living at Avoyelles were primarily Biloxis and Tunicas. Likely, the Indians of the district actually included Ofogoulas also. The Ofogoulas and the Tunicas accompanied DelaMorandiere to the Natchez post in 1781 and remained with him after the other Indian groups had returned home. The Tunicas combined into a single village with the Ofogoulas during or after the American Revolution at Avoyelles. Though they lived together, they did maintain separate Ofo and Tunica identities and lines of leadership. In 1794, Panaroy was identified as the Ofogoula chief, and Carondelet gave him a Grande Medaille. He had been considered a joint chief of Ofo and Tunicas for approximately ten years. In 1794, Thomas, the son of the deceased Tunica chief asserted his right to a medal also. Carondelet also granted him a medal. In Oct 1794, Thomas was ill and staying at the post at Avoyelles.

⁵⁰ Etienne Layssard to Carondelet, Rapides, 26 Jan 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 495a; Etienne Layssard to Carondelet, Rapides, 27 April 1793, PPC, legajo 207A: fo 499-500.

⁵¹ For a full discussion of this migration, see also Robert A. Myers, "Cherokee Pioneers in Arkansas: The St. Francis Years, 1785-1813," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 56.2 (1997): 127-157.

In 1797, approximately four hundred Alabama Indians removed themselves to the Opelousas district. Spanish authorities welcomed these allies, signified, for example, by gifts of provisions at New Orleans for the Alabamas.⁵² With the migration of other groups such as Shawnees, Miamis, Abenakis, Inninois, Kaskaskias, and Peorias to the St. Francis River, the number of groups contending for settlement and resources there escalated dramatically. Newly arrived Indians were met with the peoples and politics that already existed there among the Quapaws, Osages, and Caddos. New pressures that grew out of migration of Indian groups west of the Mississippi contributed to growing conflict to the west and revealed that Spain remained unable to supply these groups through networks most accessible and useful to them. Conflict developed in particular among the Caddos, Choctaws, and Osages. The conflict especially as it related to the Osages and Caddos touched the northernmost posts of Lower Louisiana.⁵³

West of the Mississippi, Choctaws began to participate in the channeling of livestock from Texas and also began to complicate already unsteady Indian dynamics. In all of this, the Indians operated independent of the Spanish regime, which attempted to monitor them. Choctaws continued to travel farther and farther west on their hunts. In 1794, Carondelet expressed concern about their movements through the Ouachita. There, Choctaws often slaughtered animals and stole horses. By keeping distance between themselves and official check points—in this case Fort Miró—they made it difficult for Spanish officials to observe their actions.⁵⁴ At Natchitoches, DeBlanc worried of conflict between Choctaws and the Caddos.⁵⁵

In mid-1796, violence materialized amongst the Choctaws, Osages, and Caddos. The Caddos went to Spanish officials at Nacogdoches and Natchitoches to report the interaction and

⁵² Weeks, "Of Rattlesnakes, Wolves, and Tigers; A Harangue at the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1796," 502.

⁵³ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 160-3.

⁵⁴ Filhiol to Carondelet, Fort Miró Ouachita, 1 March 1794, PPC, legajo 209: fo 528-30.

⁵⁵ DeBlanc to Carondelet, Natchitoches, 7 Dec 1795, PPC, legajo 211A: fo 705-6.

to ask for help. The lack of Indian unity perplexed Spanish officials. The Caddos complained bitterly that Spain managed to provide arms and ammunition to the Choctaws but not to the Caddos. Although Spanish officials attempted to persuade the Caddos to make peace with the Osages, the Caddos protested. The commandant at Natchitoches, Trudeau, wrote traders to tell them to encourage peace, considering that it would be good for the settlements at Natchitoches, Ouachita, and Nacogdoches as well as for the Caddos and the Osages. Soon after, Caddos killed two Choctaws in their village.⁵⁶ The Caddos received cooperation from some Indian allies. In October 1796, three Caddos and a group of Nacogdoches Indians killed several Choctaws, wounded another, and sent two others flying to the Nacogdoches fort for refuge. At about this time, Choctaws killed a Tonkawa man and his wife.⁵⁷ Like the Caddos, the Norteños complained to Spanish officials that peace and friendship with Spain brought with it little benefit. Cooperating with Spanish regulations and designated traders meant deprivation of access to trade goods and arms and ammunition with which to fight their enemies, and Spanish settlements and soldiers provided little if any assistance to their supposed friends.⁵⁸

Spain failed to supply successfully Indian allies through either Natchitoches or from Texas. Nor did Red River Indians receive much assistance from the colonial administration when they suffered Osage or Choctaw attacks.⁵⁹ As Texas Indians, the Taovayas, Tawakonis, Guichitas, and Iscanis, expressed their understanding of the situation to DeBlanc in 1791, “in

⁵⁶ Felix Trudeau to Carondelet, Natchitoches, 17 May 1796, PPC, legajo 212: fo 534-9. Felix Trudeau arrived at Natchitoches in April 1796. Carondelet chose to move DeBlanc to the Attakapas District to serve as commandant there after his questionable handling of the Delvaux debacle. DeBlanc to Carondelet, Natchitoches, 24 April 1796, PPC, legajo 212: fo 530-1. For a discussion of the decline of trade out of Natchitoches, see Smith and Burton, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 113-119.

⁵⁷ Trudeau to Carondelet, Natchitoches, 3 Oct 1796, PPC, legajo 212b: fo 421-2

⁵⁸ Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance*, 38.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

every way the Spaniards were deceiving them, and that at the time when they were at war with us[Spain] they were better off.”⁶⁰

In 1798, in an effort to solve the issue of supplying the Indians of this region, Spain turned to William Barr, Samuel Davenport, and Edward Murphy.⁶¹ Trade through this firm finally brought some consistency to the Indian trade of the Louisiana-Texas borderland. Additionally, chiefs of Indian towns and villages struggled to pay the firm back in full for its goods. Illegal trading proliferated as more Americans settled in the Mississippi Valley and began to participate in the trade of horses out of Texas. Trade with Americans and with other Indians such as the Wichitas already trading with Americans enabled Indians of the Louisiana-Texas borderland to bypass officially designated traders.⁶²

As conflict among Caddos, Choctaws, and Osages intensified in the Red River Valley and as broader inter-group violence became connected to these conflicts, Spanish officials were helpless to assist Indian allies. Spanish policy banned access to trade networks that could offer legitimate sources of arms and ammunition and thus allies of Spain found themselves at a disadvantage. Spanish officials also expressed willingness to grant concessions to Choctaws and Osages, the most powerful Indian groups in the Arkansas Valley and Louisiana-Texas borderland.

The earlier cattle herding and trade from Texas had changed since the American Revolution, and as the turn of the century approached, corralling horses overtook cattle herding. With the introduction of new Indian groups and American adventurer-traders, the character of the trade also shifted. Grand Pré described the problems of cattle and horse rustling:

⁶⁰ DeBlanc, Natchitoches, 30 March 1791, as quoted in Smith, *Wichitas*, 72.

⁶¹ Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance*, 38.

⁶² Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance*, 39-40.

I inform Your Lordship also that I have taken measures for the security of cattle and horses belonging to the inhabitants of Natchitoches from whom they are very often stolen. For this purpose I have commissioned a man named Bautista Brevel, former interpreter for the Caddo Indians and other nations. At present he is stationed at the intersection of roads from Ouachita, Arkansas, and others that lead to Indian villages by which both whites and Indians pass. He is ordered to arrest white men who may be found without a required passport from the commandant and a list of what they are carrying and the animals they are leading. Brevel is also there to recover from the Indians any animals bearing brands known to be those of inhabitants. Any American traders or vagabonds who have entered the area shall be arrested. I hope that Your Lordship will deign to approve this measure.⁶³

Besides acknowledging the illicit nature of the trade, Grand Pré gestured to some of the newcomers to it. Although he proposed employing cultural brokers, like the métis Jean Baptiste Brevel, to help monitor the illicit trade, this mode of contraband trade proved to be just as difficult to control as that carried out along the waterways, especially now that Anglo-Americans of the west were becoming part of the illicit trade networks.⁶⁴

The trade included Indians from a growing number of nations and stretched from Texas through many outposts to the Mississippi and then into the American west. At Ouachita, Choctaws stole horses to take “to the other side of the river where they find people of *bons accordes* who encourage them there.” Horses seized at the Ouachita and further west were funneled east through key locations. The merchant to the Indians east of the Mississippi John Turnbull encouraged the trade that then passed through his trading post on the Yazoo. Filhiol reported that Turnbull “encourages them[the Choctaws] very much to bring him some horses

⁶³ Grand Pré to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 27 Sept 1796, as quoted in Kinnaird and Kinnaird, “Red River Valley in 1796,” 194.

⁶⁴ For more on Jean Baptiste Brevel, see also Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, 30-1, 120.

from this side here, which he has sent to New England.”⁶⁵ By 1796, officials complained Choctaws stole horses in Texas, at Natchitoches, and at the Ouachita.⁶⁶

Anglo-American traders became invested in corralling horses also, and it was through this trade that they first gained access to Spanish Texas. Texas Indians stole horses from San Antonio and La Bahía and traded these with the newly arrived American traders. Wild horses living near the Wichita villages also lured American traders. One such trader was Philip Nolan, a young Irishman associated with Wilkinson who had valuable knowledge of travel between Kentucky and New Orleans. In 1791, he made his first foray into Texas through Louisiana. He entered legally with a passport from Miró. Recognizing the potential market for trade goods among the Wichita, Nolan returned in 1794 to exchange goods for horses. From Nacogdoches, Nolan’s party went to La Bahía with otter skins, then to San Antonio, and then returned to La Bahía and obtained horses. There, they proposed funneling guns to Texas from Louisiana for the Indians. Nolan brought New Orleans trade goods as part of this project in 1794. He traveled with a proper Spanish passport. Other American traders, in contrast, lived and traded illegally among the Indians of Texas. Some passed through the Attakapas and Opelousas districts to access Indians living closer to the Gulf Coast. The inroads of such Americans would remain a feature of the borderland in coming years.⁶⁷

Grand Pré’s recommendations contrasted the fluid realities of the Red River Valley.

Grand Pré proposed the construction of buildings for defense at Avoyelles and the stationing of

⁶⁵ Filhiol to Carondelet, Fort Miró Ouachita, 1 March 1794, PPC, legajo 209: fo 528-30, quotation “de l’autre bord du fleuve ou ils trouvent des gens de bon accordés qui les y encouragent.”

⁶⁶ DeBlanc to Forstall, Natchitoches, 19 May 1794, PPC, legajo 209: fo 419-20, quotation, “tant Alibamon que Talapouches, qui ont passés deux nuit à danser avec Aycher et que leurs ont dit qu’ils alloient voler des Chevaux aux Atancaguer.”

⁶⁷ Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance*, 39-40. Maurine T. Wilson and Jack Jackson, *Philip Nolan and Texas: Expeditions to the Unknown Land, 1791-1801* (Waco: Texian Press, 1987), 7-16. La Bahía was the presidio at present day Goliad, Texas.

reinforcements.⁶⁸ As for Indian conflict, Grand Pré suggested that “by compelling the Choctaws and Osages to confine themselves to the former limits of their original hunting grounds, trade could be carried on with security and advantage. Thus the continuous dissensions which have disturbed it up to now could be terminated.”⁶⁹ Spanish officials continued to misunderstand and underestimate their abilities to dictate the migration of Indian peoples in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Additionally, understanding the flow of trade and the web of contraband that characterized so much of life in the Lower Mississippi Valley was lost on Spanish officials even in this final decade of Spanish rule. Meanwhile, the Red River Valley became more volatile, *petites nations* began to identify with one another in their plight for survival, and Americans made lasting inroads in the illicit horse trade with Texas. Inhabitants of the borderland continued to turn to their flexible networks of trade and alliance to negotiate stability and advantage for themselves. They would do so well beyond the turn of the nineteenth century.

From Retrocession to Louisiana Purchase

For the United States, among the great victories at San Lorenzo were the free navigation of the Mississippi River and the opening of New Orleans as a cite for deposit. Such developments would undercut much of the discontent directed at the federal government brewing in the West. Indeed, the United States did enjoy these privileges as established by the treaty, claiming the right to free navigation in December 1796 and establishing the deposit in April 1798. The treaty only guaranteed the privilege of deposit to the United States for three years, and it left open the possibility that Spain might remove the deposit to another location at the

⁶⁸ Kinnaird and Kinnaird, “Red River Valley in 1796,” 188-91.

⁶⁹ Grand Pré to Carondelet, Avoyelles, 27 Sept 1796, as quoted in Kinnaird and Kinnaird, “Red River Valley in 1796,” 190.

discretion of the king or even put an end it at the end of the three years. The closing of the deposit on October 18, 1802 prompted outcry from Americans living in the trans-Appalachian west and for anyone involved in shipping at New Orleans. The outcry of Americans coupled with the fear of disunion encouraged American diplomats to pursue the Louisiana Purchase.⁷⁰

Trade on the Mississippi expanded dramatically from 1799 to 1802. Besides the establishment of the American deposit in April 1798, the opening of Havana to neutrals in 1797 further encouraged licit Spanish-American trade. Merchants at New Orleans and with contacts throughout Lower Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley took advantage of the expanse of the legal avenues of trade from the port. Merchants like Daniel Clark, Jr., and Evan Jones continued to enjoy shipping to the United States. Daniel Clark, Jr., was in fact the most frequent user of the deposit during its first year, shipping cotton to Virginia, and other such exports as tobacco and flour besides to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston.⁷¹

The readier access to American shipping and trade at New Orleans benefited Spanish colonists in Louisiana. As Louisiana entered the nineteenth century, its society and economy were already in transition in large part because of the rise of cotton and sugar production in the colony. Many areas, like the Natchez District, that had invested heavily in expanding tobacco production in earlier years became cotton producers. William Dunbar and Julian Poydras were among those who turned early on to producing cotton along the Mississippi River and exporting it from New Orleans.⁷² The decline of sugar production in the French Caribbean left a void in the market that Louisiana sugar began to fill. Etienne Boré was credited with the first success in processing Louisiana sugar cane, a different variety than that grown in Haiti. Former indigo

⁷⁰ Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 79-97, 189-217.

⁷¹ Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 79-97, 130-54.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 130-54, Rothman, *Slave Country*, 46-54.

plantations easily transitioned to sugar because of the levees in place and because of the already sizeable slave populations living on them.⁷³

As sugar and cotton cultures took root in the Lower Mississippi Valley, the transition to a plantation economy also gained strength. Part and parcel to this transition was the dramatic expansion of the market for slave labor. By 1803, New Orleans had become “one of the principal slave markets in North America.”⁷⁴ While the plantation economy meant wealth for some, it was accompanied by increased social stratification. The lines of stratification of the slave society were becoming more difficult to cross. The transition to a more racially stratified society strengthened group consciousness among Louisiana’s libres population, which strove to set itself apart from the slave population. It also meant increased marginalization of smaller Indian groups.⁷⁵ The economic transitions also produced change in the society of the Lower Mississippi Valley that were in process as the region passed into American hands.

News of the retrocession reached Louisiana in the summer of 1803. The only French prefect to set foot in Louisiana after the retrocession, Pierre Clément Laussat, arrived in New Orleans in March 1803, approximated thirty-seven years after Ulloa had landed. Spanish officials turned Louisiana over to Laussat on November 30 of that year. On December 30, 1803, New Orleans militia and American soldiers joined together in a ceremony at New Orleans that transferred Louisiana to American hands.⁷⁶

⁷³ Rothman, *Slave Country*, 73-76; Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 131-32; Heloise Hulse Cruzat, ed. and trans., “General Collot’s Reconnoitering Trip Down the Mississippi,” *LHQ* 1.4 (1918): 329 quotation.

⁷⁴ Rothman, *Slave Country*, 83-4.

⁷⁵ Hanger, *Bounded Lives*, 163-70; Rothan, *Slave Country*, 18, 41. See also, Usner, “American Indians on the Cotton Frontier: Changing Economic Relations with Citizens and Slaves in the Mississippi Territory,” *Journal of American History* 72.2 (Sept., 1985): 297-317.

⁷⁶ Kastor, *Nation’s Crucible*, 19, 56; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, 290-91.

Conclusions

Spain's retreat from the Lower Mississippi grew out of the empire's experience of the revolutionary era and shifting geopolitics. Godoy tried to use the borderlands of the Southeast and Louisiana as bargaining chips for Spain's diplomatic and territorial advantage with Britain, France, and the United States. However, the new borderlines established by the treaties of San Lorenzo and San Ildefonso hardly achieved his goals. Although these treaties meant a diminished role for Spain in the Mississippi Valley, borderlanders and the reaches of their networks and practices would stretch into the nineteenth century.

Inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi responded in a variety of ways to the effects of the treaties. Natchez colonists revolted against Spain, an outgrowth of the troubles they perceived the Iberian tobacco market had wreaked on that district. Indians of the Southeast were disgusted by the betrayal to alliances on the ground and the years of hard work struggling to perpetuate contest in the Southeast. Indians west of the Mississippi experienced new tumult and responded with migration and flexibility in their trading practices. Colonists throughout the Lower Mississippi seized onto new and changing opportunities for trade both out of New Orleans and in the Louisiana-Texas borderland.

Changes already taking place in the Lower Mississippi would be significant in the years to come. Perhaps most significantly for the society and economy of the region was the expansion of sugar and cotton production. Meanwhile, the precedents set by the contraband trade into Texas and the relationships that Spain fostered among schemers would haunt Spanish officials in Texas as Anglo-Americans looked to contest Spain's hold there. As had been the case during the 1760s, treaties and flag changes did not mean an immediate transfer of loyalty, nor did they necessarily mean an end to the contest among rival powers and local inhabitants

over the Lower Mississippi Valley. Borderland practices remained a way to navigate the new uncertainties facing the region after 1803.

Epilogue

In 1841, a free black man named Solomon Northup was kidnapped in Washington D.C., enslaved, and eventually sold at the slave auction in New Orleans. Soon, he found himself in the Red River Valley where he worked on cotton and sugar plantations as well as at a timber mill. In his memoir, *Twelve Years a Slave*, Northup provides a glimpse at how borderland practices and adaptations from the Spanish period continued to echo into the mid-nineteenth century.

Although the socio-economic and political changes since the Louisiana Purchase had limited the fluidity and border-crossings of earlier eras, as Northup's narrative reveals, remnants of borderland practices persisted well into the American period. Two episodes in Northup's account shed particular light on fluidity that continued to defy border imposers: first, his encounter with a group of runaway slaves; second, Northup's observation of a dance at Indian Castle. These moments suggest some of the ways that Indians and slaves retained older practices in their strategies for resistance and survival even as the society around them considered these strategies less significant than it had in previous decades.

For a time, Northup worked at a timber mill on Indian Creek, located south of the old settlement of Rapides that had been renamed Alexandria. When he worked at the mill, Northup was sent at times for provisions. On one such occasion, while he was traveling back to the mill, Northup encountered a group of runaway slaves:

About ten o'clock of a beautiful moonlight night, while walking along the Texas road, returning to the mills, carrying a dressed pig in a bag swung over my shoulder, I heard footsteps behind me, and turning round, beheld two black men in the dress of slaves approaching at a rapid pace. When within a short distance, one of them raised a club, as if intending to strike me; the other snatched at the bag. I managed to dodge them both, and seizing a pine knot, hurled it with such force against the head of one of them that he was prostrated apparently senseless to the ground. Just then two more made their appearance from one side of the road. Before they could grapple me, however, I succeeded in passing

them, and taking to my heels, fled, much affrighted, towards the mills. When Adam was informed of the adventure, he hastened straightway to the Indian village, and arousing Cascalla[the chief] and several of his tribe, started in pursuit of the highwaymen.⁷⁷

Northup's account provides a window into the antebellum conflict between the slave society and runaways who still turned to borderland practices in their resistance, even as the opportunities for employing such practices narrowed dramatically. Northup's account especially illuminates the reduced chance of success that marronage offered slaves in contrast to the colonial period.

The practices of the runaways that Northup encountered shared similarities with those who several decades prior had practiced marronage. The slaves who attacked Northup on that ill-fated night had run away as a group from a single plantation. The cover of the woods had harbored their camp for three weeks. Much as in earlier times, slaves employed the natural environment when seeking short- or long-term escape from bondage. "The whole distance" of the road that Northup travelled to obtain the provisions, in this case the dressed pig, "was then a thick pine forest." Besides the woods, slaves continued to "escape into the swamps" as another refuge.⁷⁸ Although the physical environment remained accessible and hospitable to runaways, the prospect of sustaining more permanent freedom in these settings had diminished significantly.

As Northup's narrative reveals, the wedge between Indians and runaway slaves fostered the century before by colonial officials stood the test of time. Even as they faced encroachment and dispossession, Choctaws and Biloxis at Rapides responded immediately to the summons to chase the runaway slaves. Their familiarity with the landscape aided them still in their hunt.

Northup wrote:

⁷⁷ Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, eds., Sue Eakins and Joseph Logsdon, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1996): 184-85.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 184-85.

I accompanied them to the scene of attack, when we discovered a puddle of blood in the road, where the man whom I had smitten with the pine knot had fallen. After searching carefully through the woods a long time, one of Cascalla's men discovered a smoke curling up through the branches of several prostrate pines, whose tops had fallen together. The rendezvous was cautiously surrounded, and all of them taken prisoners.⁷⁹

As in the decades after the American Revolution, when officials questioned their utility to the Spanish colonial government, Indians of Louisiana continued to act as slave catchers and in doing so aided the slave regime.

The prospects associated with running away had become increasingly grim over time, and yet many slaves continued to transgress the boundary of slavery even if only for a short time. Northup remembered that "Notwithstanding the certainty of being capture, the woods and swamps are nevertheless, continually filled with runaways." For many the harshness of their conditions and the rigorous work in the cotton and sugar fields presented plenty reason to seek refuge in the swamps and woods: "Many of them, when sick, or so worn out as to be unable to perform their tasks, escape into the swamps, willing to suffer the punishment inflicted for such offences, in order to obtain a day or two of rest." For others, perhaps like the group that Northup encountered on the Texas road, the slim chance of freedom itself was enough to warrant the risk of running away, but "Not unfrequently the runaway loses his life in the attempt to escape."⁸⁰

Northup, himself, although he "was unwittingly the means of disclosing the hiding-place of six or eight" runaways, also included his own perspective on the group. Indeed, he was more sensitive to the plight of the runaways: "They had no evil design upon me, except to frighten me out of my pig...they had been pinched for food, and were driven to this extremity by necessity."⁸¹ The odds mounted against slaves did not deter many from attempting to resist the

⁷⁹ Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, 184-85.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 184-85.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 184-85.

boundaries of the slave society of antebellum Louisiana, and often they took advantage of the landscape of the Lower Mississippi in their efforts to run away, much as their predecessors had. The Indians encountered by Northup also continued to employ mobility and custom reminiscent of borderland practices in the face of marginalization.

When he was working at the timber mill on Indian Creek, Northup and other slaves often visited the Choctaw and Biloxi Indians who lived nearby at a village then called Indian Castle.

Northup remembered:

On one occasion I was present at a dance, when a roving herd[of Indians] from Texas had encamped in their village. The entire carcass of a deer was roasting before a large fire, which threw its light a long distance among the trees under which they were assembled. When they had formed a ring, men and squaws alternately, a sort of Indian fiddle set up an indescribable tune. It was a continuous, melancholy kind of wavy sound, with the slightest possible variation. At the first note, if indeed there was more than one note in the whole tune, they circled around, trotting after each other, and giving utterance to a guttural, sing-song noise, equally as nondescript as the music of the fiddle. At the end of the third circuit, they would stop suddenly, whoop as if their lungs would crack, then break from the ring, forming in couples, man and squaw, each jumping backwards as far as possible from the other, then forwards—which graceful feat having been twice or thrice accomplished, they would form in a ring, and go trotting round again. The best dancer appeared to be considered the one who could whoop the loudest, jump the farthest, and utter the most excruciating noise. At intervals, one or more would leave the dancing circle, and going to the fire, cut from the roasting carcass a slice of venison.⁸²

Although moments like this one were becoming less and less frequent, this story points to the continued social mixing of peoples in the Red River Valley: Choctaws and Biloxis with Indians from Texas and with slaves. The plight of the Indian groups that Northup interacted with suggest some of the ways that Indians living in Louisiana were struggling against dispossession and retaining their way of life. They did so especially by employing their traditional mobility across the landscape of the Lower Mississippi.

⁸² Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, 71-2.

Choctaws and Biloxis visited by Northup at Indian Creek were descendants of Indians who migrated and adapted in response to marginalization they experienced during the final two decades of the Spanish period. During the twilight of Spain's presence in the Lower Mississippi, imperial officials like Grand Pré, who were invested in imposing borders, underestimated the will and ability of small Indian communities to remain viable in Louisiana, and particularly in the Red River Valley. Through kinship, Indian groups had forged alliances that had assisted them in maintaining villages at locations they had inhabited since the Spanish period. The Choctaws and Biloxis had a long history of cooperation and kinship relationships and lived in two villages in Rapides Parish, but this was hardly the only example of persistent Indian presence in Louisiana. Like the Choctaws and Biloxis, a sister community based on kinship, the Tunica-Biloxis still lived at Avoyelles, the very same place to which the Tunicas had fled during the American Revolution.

The dance or "Indian ball" that Northup observed at Indian Castle was only one of at least several ceremonies and forms of Indian diplomacy that Indians continued to practice in antebellum Louisiana. Observing the dance as an outsider, Northup likened it to "a carnival."⁸³ The dance might just as easily have been described by a commandant at Rapides such as one of the Layssards as it had been by Northup. In earlier days, Indians employed ceremonies that included dance and song in diplomacy with colonial officials. In 1784, for example, Louis Judice of LaFourche wrote that he and other colonists joined the Houmas in a ceremony of dance and song. In that case, the Houmas had used the performance as part of their efforts to fight against encroachment and dispossession and the colonists understood that they must

⁸³ Northup, *Twelve Years*, 71-2.

participate.⁸⁴ By Northup's time, the significance of dance and song political relations had waned significantly, but their social value endured. In 1840, a group of Choctaws and Biloxis spending part of the winter near New Orleans welcomed visitors by smoking the calumet.⁸⁵

Indian forms of diplomacy and ceremony retained their greatest significance amongst the Indian communities where they reinforced cultural continuity. The Choctaws and Biloxis of Rapides and their kinsmen the Tunica-Biloxis of Avoyelles still travelled annually "to join in a great ball play" in the old Opelousas District, now called St. Landry Parish.⁸⁶ And as Northup observed, ceremony and dance continued to serve a method for engaging other Indian groups in friendship and diplomacy and preserving heritage. The Tunica-Biloxis at Avoyelles celebrated the Corn Festival of their ancestors with dancing and "screams during the dancing." One neighboring observer, Sister Mary Hyacinth LeConniat, noted that "[i]t is the only season of the year that they let the neighbors hear their voices." Perhaps not coincidentally, she also described the Corn Festival as their "most solemn holiday." More than officials overseeing responsible for Indian affairs, she also perceived the strength of ceremonies and customs in Indian society, from their language, to their burial practices, and to the Corn Festival: "I think they will live years and years practicing these customs."⁸⁷

Trade and exchange with other groups remained important to the economy of Indian society even as the larger society of Louisiana deemed such trade less significant than in earlier decades. In his description of the Choctaws and Biloxis, Northup wrote that "They subsist

⁸⁴ Judice to Miró, 26 April 1784, LaFourche, PPC legajo 197, fo 304-6. See also Chapter 5 for more in depth discussion of this particular scenario.

⁸⁵ Victor Tixier, *Tixier's Travels on the Osage Prairies*, ed. John Francis McDermott, trans. Alver J. Salvan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940), 55-59.

⁸⁶ J.W. Dorr, 1869, Rapides Parish, in Prichard, ed., "A Tourist's Description of Louisiana in 1860," *LHQ* 21 (October 1938), 1160.

⁸⁷ Sister Mary Hyacinth LeConniat to her brother, Yves Marie, 25 Aug 1856, Presentation Convent, Hydropolis [p.d. Cocoville LA], in Dorothea Olga McCants, trans. and ed., *They Came to Louisiana: Letters of a Catholic Mission, 1854-1882* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1970), 43-44.

principally on the flesh of the deer, the coon, and opossum, all of which are plenty in these woods,” and “[s]ometimes they exchange venison for a little corn and whiskey with the planters on the bayous.”⁸⁸ Like many Louisianians, Indians turned to the hunting and fishing available around them as a mode of subsistence. As they had during colonial times, Indians also continued to supply meat to settlements and especially to the city of New Orleans.⁸⁹ They also continued to trade and sell their handiwork. In 1840, one traveler noted that the Choctaws sold “a large number of rabbits and stags...in the settlements or in New Orleans” and that “the women sell baskets.”⁹⁰ The production of baskets by Indian women for trade in non-Indian markets continued well into the twentieth century.⁹¹ Some Choctaws and Biloxis still traveled when they were “being employed by the planters in picking cotton and in other light labor,” not dissimilar to their travel as engagés during the colonial era.⁹² However, reliance upon Indian society and esteem for trade with Indians had diminished considerably. Sister Mary Hyacinth wrote that the Tunica-Biloxis “are not accepted as citizens in the town,” and “they have no exchange of business with the rest of the population here.” Unlike earlier eras, Tunica-Biloxis sold “deer or large fish for money sometimes.”⁹³ Exchange of goods and services had taken on different

⁸⁸ Northup, *Twelve Years*, 71-2.

⁸⁹ Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 95-127.

⁹⁰ Tixier, *Tixier's Travels*, 55-59.

⁹¹ Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indian Work: Language and Livelihood in Native American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 93-116. For the Chitimachas, basket production eventually became part of their bid for federal recognition. Usner, “Weaving Material Objects and Political Alliances: The Chitimacha Indian Pursuit of Federal Recognition,” *Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association*, 1.1 (Spring 2014): 25-48. See also, Usner, “From Bayou Teche to Fifth Avenue: Crafting a New Market for Chitimacha Indian Baskets,” *The Journal of Southern History*, 79.2 (May 2013): 339-374.

⁹² Letter from Orlando Brown to Hon. R.W. Johnson (Chairman Committee Indian Affairs, House of Representatives), Office of Indian Affairs, 15 Feb 1850.

⁹³ Sister Mary Hyacinth LeConniat to her brother, Yves Marie, 25 Aug 1856, Presentation Convent, Hydropolis [p.d. Cocoville LA], in Dorothea Olga McCants, trans. and ed., *They Came to Louisiana: Letters of a Catholic Mission, 1854-1882* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1970), 43-44.

dimensions by this time, but Indians still relied upon them for subsistence and to negotiate for their own interests.

The dance featured in Northup's narrative also bears witness to the continued mobility of Indians across Louisiana. By the end of the Spanish period, the Choctaws living at Rapides were traveling westward to Texas to hunt. In spite of tension among the many Indian groups living in the Louisiana-Texas borderland, they ultimately forged alliances with some of the groups living in Texas. As evidenced in Northup's account, Indians from Texas visited the Choctaws and Biloxis of Rapides during the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, Northup noted of the Choctaws and Biloxis that "their village was on Indian Creek...but their range extended to the Sabine River." In fact, the range of their travels for hunting and fishing still extended to the Gulf Coast and the Mississippi River. Reminiscent of the era when borderlanders were true and active contestants for the Lower Mississippi Valley, their adeptness at traversing the waterways and the landscape continued to be a source of strength for Indians living in Louisiana both in terms of the perseverance of their customs and their communities.⁹⁴

At the time of Northup's visits to the Choctaws and Biloxis, their future in the Red River Valley was still being contested. A new effort to remove the Choctaws and Biloxis emerged in 1850, only a few years after the occasion of the Indian dance that Northup described. Settlers of Rapides Parish petitioned congress for the removal of the group, but the Office of Indian Affairs determined otherwise. For the Office of Indian Affairs, the issue was decided for the time by the question of whether "those complained of belong to that portion of the Choctaws that have been removed...if they do, the report of the emigrating agent, who has been written to, will disclose the fact, and measures will be taken to compel their return to their own country." However, the

⁹⁴ Northup, *Twelve Years*, 71-2; Letter from Orlando Brown to Hon. R. W. Johnson (Chairman Committee Indian Affairs, House of Representatives), Office of Indian Affairs, February 15, 1850.

Choctaws and Biloxis were not among the Choctaw bands that had suffered removal, and the decision of the Office of Indian Affairs judged that instead “they are citizens of the States, and the general government has no right to interfere with them, though the agent has been instructed to effect their removal if they can be persuaded to go.”⁹⁵ Further, with regard to Choctaws and Biloxis, “being employed by the planters in picking cotton and in other light labor,” the Office of Indian Affairs determined that “[t]heir being so employed is one of the obstacles in the way of effecting their emigration to the country of their brethren west of the Mississippi.”⁹⁶ Together their methods of subsistence, mobility, and history as a distinct band aided the Choctaws and Biloxis in their struggle against dispossession and removal.

Remnants of borderland practices in these modes of interaction remained integrated into daily life and resistance among many living in Louisiana. Even on the eve of the Civil War, many slaves turned to the woods and swamps in order to evade their enslavers. And as in earlier times, Indians continued to pursue runaways. Participating in this long held practice did not protect Indians in Louisiana from the ill-intentions of those who sought to dispossess them of their valuable land. As many small Indian groups like the Choctaws and Biloxis held on to their traditional ceremonies, they also continued to live with a degree of mobility and to exchange game, labor, and handiwork with neighbors, at settlements, and in New Orleans. These ceremonies and practices remained highly important to Indian society. Moments like the Indian dance and slaves seeking refuge and respite from bondage had become more constrained with the expansion of plantation agriculture and the simultaneous thicker settlement of Louisiana. While

⁹⁵ 31st Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives Report N. 276. Citizens of Louisiana—To Remove Indians. 24 April 1850; Letter from Orlando Brown to Hon. R.W. Johnson(Chairman Committee Indian Affairs, House of Representatives), Office of Indian Affairs, 15 Feb 1850, quotation.

⁹⁶ Letter from Orlando Brown to Hon. R.W. Johnson(Chairman Committee Indian Affairs, House of Representatives), Office of Indian Affairs, 15 Feb 1850, quotation.

Northup's experiences reflected the changes that the decades had wrought, they were also a testament to the continued mixing of peoples and the perseverance of fluid interactions among them.

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