

BORDERLANDS IN TRANSITION: ACADIAN IMMIGRATION AND BRITISH
MERCHANT NETWORKS IN LOUISIANA, 1765-1790

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CHAPTER I

AN UNLIKELY BORDER COLONY: HOW ACADIANS AND COLONIAL LOUISIANA SHAPED SPANISH IMPERIAL DEFENSE, 1765-1770

From the close of the Seven Years War in 1763 until about 1770, the colony of Louisiana began a transitional period between French and Spanish dominion at the same time as approximately 1000 Acadians immigrated to the colony. In 1763, the Treaty of Paris divided French North American holdings between the British and the Spanish Empires. It reaffirmed the cession established by the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1762 of all lands west of the Mississippi and the Isle of Orleans to Spain. Other than the Isle of Orleans, all French territory east of the Mississippi was transferred to British dominion. Thus, the Mississippi became an international border, and the newly inherited Spanish lands became the Spanish colony of Louisiana.

From 1765 until 1770, the Spanish colonial authorities attempted to implement defense policy, to shape Louisiana as a buffer, and to integrate Louisiana into the Spanish imperial system. All the while, Acadian experiences in their borderland homeland of Acadia and of their diaspora contributed to their approach to settlement in Louisiana. Their response to Spanish policy was reflected in their economic role in the colony, their participation in trade networks, and their interaction with colonial officials, local Indians, and colonists. The Acadian experience of settlement in early Spanish colonial Louisiana and of contact with officials and groups within the colony, therefore, illuminates local ability to impact the development and realization of imperial plans for the colony.

The Acadians were a New World people who had developed over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Acadia, a colony located about the Bay of Fundy. Between 1755 and 1763, the British expelled them from their colonial homeland in an event known as the Grand Dérangement. Acadian allegiance to their own distinct community developed as a result of their shared colonial borderland experience.¹ The Acadians had emerged from groups of settlers, fishermen, traders, trappers, and adventurers predominantly of French, but also of Basque, Portuguese, Irish, and Scottish origins who had also intermarried during the early years with the local Micmac Indians.² The first French settlers arrived during the 1630s, and by the early eighteenth century the colonists were identifying themselves as “Acadian.”³

Acadian shared sense of identity encompassed several practices: including settlement based upon kinship; the use of petition as a means to collectively negotiate with officials; Catholicism practiced without consistent contact with clergy; and political neutrality.⁴ Neglected by colonial officials, the Acadians became self-reliant and interdependent.⁵ Rather than serving as agents of empire, the Acadians acted chiefly out

¹ Naomi Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 125, 184, 238, 254.

² Barry Jean Ancelet, Jay D. Edwards, and Glenn Pitre, *Cajun Country* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), xv; James H. Dorman, *The People Called Cajuns: An Introduction to an Ethnohistory* (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwest Louisiana, 1983), 8-9; 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), 46-7, 63; Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (New York: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1973), 3; Naomi E.S. Griffiths, “Acadian Identity: The Creation and Recreation of Community,” *Dalhousie Review* 73, no. 3 (1993): 331.

³ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 43-4; Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 329.

⁴ 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), 3, 153; Dorman, *The People Called Cajuns*, 11; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 154, 168, 252-254, 275; Griffiths, *The Acadians*, 23; Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 331-2; Naomi E.S. Griffiths, “Acadians in Exile: The Experiences of the Acadians in the British Seaports,” *Acadiensis* 4 (1974), 118-9; Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 184.

⁵ Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 9, 12.

of concern for their own community and existence.⁶ Settlements were centered upon kinship and trade extended through the colony along networks of kin.⁷ Mostly agrarian in their subsistence, the Acadians nevertheless participated in trade for manufactured goods with the merchants of New England.⁸

The French and British vied for control of Acadia, transferring it from one empire to the other by treaty or conquest ten times before 1710.⁹ In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht placed the colony under British dominion. A contested borderland, Acadia was never securely in the hands of either imperial power, and its inhabitants were unsure of which power would maintain hold of the colony.¹⁰

Consequently, the Acadians operated for themselves as “French neutrals” rather than for the French or the British within this constantly shifting imperial context. In addition, those living in British territory believed that their neutrality protected them from Indian and French reprisal in the event of another war.¹¹ Indeed, the Acadians, viewing themselves primarily as a people with a shared history rather than members of an empire, attempted to negotiate the tense border zone of the French and English in the northeast in order to protect themselves from violence inflicted by either empire.¹² Acadian neutrality precluded them from submitting to oaths of loyalty to Great Britain. Acadians came into

⁶ Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 333.

⁷ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 64, 76; Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 125.

⁸ Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 10; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 95.

⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, “*Scattered to the Wind*”: *Dispersion and Wanderings of the Acadians, 1755-1809* (Lafayette, La: the Center for Louisiana Studies, USL, 1991), 1.

¹⁰ John G. Reid, “An International Region of the Northeast,” in *Atlantic Canada before Confederation*, ed. P.A. Buckner, Gail G. Campbell, and David Frank (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1985), 38; Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 184.

¹¹ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 146-7.

¹² Reid, “An International Region of the Northeast,” 33; Griffiths, *The Acadians*, 23; Griffiths, Naomi “Acadians in Exile,” 118.

conflict with British officials because the officials perceived Acadian neutrality to be inconsistent with loyalty to Great Britain.¹³

As the British officials in the New World began to anticipate the outbreak of the Seven Years War, they regarded the Acadians as suspicious subjects who might ally with the French. Without consulting their superiors in England, British colonial officials born in the New World and holding positions in Acadia and New England designed, promoted, and enacted a plan to disperse the Acadians.¹⁴ Begun in 1755, the Grand Dérangement eventually expelled between 6,000 and 7,000 Acadians from Acadia.¹⁵

The Acadians became a diaspora people. First, they were shipped to the British North American colonies and were dispersed throughout the Atlantic World to England, France, and the West Indies. Rather than destroy Acadian ethnicity, however, the Grand Dérangement only reinforced the sense of common identity among the exiles. Within the British colonies engaged in the French and Indian War, the exiles stood apart as a French and Catholic colonial people, unwelcome, and resistant to assimilation. In Europe, this frontier population accustomed to subsistence farming, fishing, and hunting did not fit into any existing social or economic niche. Throughout their dispersal then, the Acadians remained a distinct minority population, which only served to reinforce group identity.¹⁶ As they immigrated to colonial Louisiana, the Acadians sought specifically to re-establish their communities.¹⁷

¹³ Griffiths, *The Acadians*, 23, 27; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 154, 168, 252-254, 275.

¹⁴ For a detailed description of the events leading up to the expulsion see Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*.

¹⁵ Brasseaux, *Scattered to the Wind*, 7.

¹⁶ Dormon, "The Cajuns: Ethnogenesis and the Shaping of Group Consciousness," in *The Cajuns: Essays on their History and Culture*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette, La: USL, 1983), 235; Dormon, "America and the Americas: Louisiana's Cajuns," *History Today*, June 1984, 39; Griffiths, "Acadian Identity," 337; Dormon *The People called Cajuns*, 18; Griffiths, "Acadian Identity," 337.

¹⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 73.

Although hesitant at first, encouraged by his ministers, Spanish monarch Carlos III acquired colonial Louisiana west of the Mississippi and the Isle of Orleans to prevent British encroachments into Spain's more valuable New World holdings and trade routes. The defeat of the French in the Seven Years War guaranteed their exit from North America. Spain's concern over British expansion naturally increased. Unlike the French, who had also held on to Louisiana for strategic purposes to protect Canada and its Caribbean colonies from expansion of other empires, the Spanish intended to militarize its newly acquired colony. Thus, Spain intended that the Mississippi would serve as an imperial border, a "barrier," against the British.¹⁸

Following the Seven Years War, during the final years of French rule, colonial officials in Louisiana focused their efforts on the partition and 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.¹⁹ After D'Abbadie's death in early 1765, Governor Charles-Philippe Aubry and Commissaire-Ordonnateur 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.

French officials struggled to maintain peaceful relations with the newly arrived British and with Indian tribes. British officials took possession of West Florida in the fall

¹⁸ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1992), 198-9; Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 9 July 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land Official Correspondence Relating to the First Acadian Migration to Louisiana, 1764-1769*, ed. Carl A. Brasseaux, 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), 78 quotation; 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), 12; Gilbert C. Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera.' Spain's Defenses in Louisiana, 1763-1779," *Louisiana History* 19(1978):183.

¹⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, "Jean-Jacques-Blaise d'Abbadie," in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 39.

of 1763 and began immediately to institute forts and to further their alliances with the region's Indians.²⁰ 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."²¹ Despite joint meetings of French and English officials with Indian chiefs, the Indians formerly allied with the French continued to harass the English in their attempts to journey the Mississippi to the Illinois Country, also newly acquired.²²

Colonial officials also attempted to monitor the shifting populations of the Lower Mississippi Valley. In 1763, the 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 32,000.²³ Following the Treaty of Paris, colonists and Indians east of the Mississippi began to relocate to what would become Spanish Louisiana.²⁴ *Petites nations* tribes allied with the French particularly by "providing essential goods and services" such as the Taensas, Mobilians, Biloxis, and Alibamons were among the Indian tribes that relocated to the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche, already home to the Houmas

²⁰ Major Farmar to the Secretary at War, Mobile, 24 Jan 1764, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion, 1763-1766*, 1 vol., ed Dunbar Rowland (Nashville: 1911), 9-10; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 25 Feb 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 29-30.

²¹ 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.

²² Minutes of Council with Choctaw, 14 Nov 1763, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 298; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 25 Feb 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 29-30.

²³ 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 the University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 108 quotation, 279; Jaqueline K. Voorhies, comp. and trans., *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians* (Lafayette, LA: University of Southwest Louisiana History Series, 1973), 103-4.

²⁴ 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.

and Chetimachas.²⁵ To complicate matters, many French settlers in West Florida chose to relocate rather than to remain in British territory, in particular the ranchers of Alabama who attempted resettlement first at Pointe Coupee and shortly thereafter again in the Opelousas District.²⁶ At the same time, the Acadians began to immigrate to Louisiana with the first substantial group arriving from New York in 1764.²⁷

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.”²⁸ French officials hoped that the Spanish would alleviate these problems and quickly take the colony out of their hands.

Antonio de Ulloa, the first Spanish governor of the colony, arrived in March 1766. Approximately ninety Spanish soldiers accompanied him. With this relatively small force, Ulloa felt unprepared to take full possession of the colony, which resulted in an ambiguous joint gubernatorial authority for Ulloa and Aubry.²⁹

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ Brasseaux, “Opelousas and the Alabama Immigrants,” 112-5.

²⁷ Dabbadie to Choiseul-Stainville, 6 April 1764, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 16; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 46, 102.

²⁸ 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, and Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans 13 May 1765, and Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 45, 48, 49-50.

²⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, introduction to *Quest for the Promised Land*, xiii.

The French and Spanish governors expressed agreement over the colony's deficiencies in the area of defense. Aubry had written in 1765 that because of Louisiana's lack of defensive infrastructure along the Mississippi, now that the river had become an international border, "In order to match the opposing forces, the Spaniards will be compelled to construct several forts."³⁰ Aubry also acknowledged that the Spanish would need to garrison troops in the colony to keep the British in check.³¹ In the spring of 1766, Ulloa toured Lower Louisiana. Communicated in correspondence with his superiors, Ulloa's observations reflected Aubry's earlier assessment of the colony.³² British Indian agents were already active attempting to amass Indian allies.³³ The Indians were also a significant, perhaps the most significant, element in colonial defense. Ulloa commented that "it is they who tilt the scales in favor of their allies."³⁴

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 crucial role.³⁵ He proposed establishing forts along the Mississippi at key locations: at Isla Real Católica at the mouth of the Mississippi; at Manchac; at Natchez; and at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi.³⁶ The fort Ulloa proposed at Manchac was to be directly across the Iberville from British Fort Bute, and the fort at Natchez would be located across the Mississippi from Fort Panmure.³⁷ Ulloa

³⁰ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 24 April 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 41.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

³² Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 64-70.

³³ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 78; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 27 April 1765, and Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May, 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 41, 49.

³⁴ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 69.

³⁵ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 29 Sept 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 77-79

³⁶ Din, "Protecting the 'Barerra,'" 188, 190.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 188; "Government Expenses," 1767 in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-94: Translations from the Spanish Archives in the Bancroft Library*, vol 1, ed. and trans., Lawrence Kinnaird, (Washington D.C.: American Historical Association, 1949), 16-17.

intended settlements to accompany these forts, concluding that “the inhabitants, as militiamen, must be considered soldiers settled in the territory.”³⁸ Thus, they could provide militia and a physical buffer along the river against British aggression.³⁹

However, Ulloa faced a problem: whom could he settle along the Mississippi? Thus, the Acadians, still arriving in large numbers, provided the perfect solution, or so Ulloa thought. Ulloa proposed settling ten thousand Acadian families yet to immigrate to Louisiana along the Mississippi, and so “to populate the banks as thickly as possible.”⁴⁰ They would become his buffer settlers. In the end, while the Acadians constituted the majority of settlers near the Spanish forts at Manchac and Natchez, they were not sent to the Missouri, although Ulloa had considered the possibility.⁴¹ Thus the Acadians became an integral ingredient in Ulloa’s defense policy.

Accordingly, Ulloa fostered Acadian immigration to the colony. His superior Grimaldi supported the idea, and he and Aubry granted permission to Acadians in 1766 to invite their relatives and friends to immigrate to Louisiana.⁴² Indeed, in the years following the dispersal, the Acadians had successfully remained in contact with their families and communities dispersed throughout the Atlantic World, as indicated by their networks of correspondence.⁴³ Responding to encouragement from Acadians settled in

³⁸ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 65.

³⁹ Din, “Protecting the ‘Barerra,’” 188-9.

⁴⁰ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 64-70; “Government Expenses,” 1767, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 17.

⁴¹ Din, “Protecting the ‘Barrera,’” 188-9.

⁴² Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 67; Grimaldi to Ulloa Aranjuez, 27 May 1867, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 88; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 3, June 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 90.

⁴³ Jerningham to Ulloa, St. Mary’s County, MD, 28 November 1767, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 36; Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 3 June 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 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

Louisiana, several hundred Acadians arrived from Pennsylvania and Maryland from the fall of 1766 through 1770.⁴⁴ 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 the Spanish were willing to foster non-Spanish immigration to the colony.⁴⁵

In 1766, Ulloa permitted the first Acadians to arrive under his watch to settle with kin at St. James.⁴⁶ However, Spanish officials directed the subsequent batches of immigrants, who reached the colony after Ulloa had fully developed his defense plan, to Spanish Fort St. Gabriel d'Iberville at Manchac in July 1767 and Fort St. Louis de Natchez in February 1768.⁴⁷

In March 1768, Ulloa promulgated the Royal Decree regulating Louisiana's commerce. By this decree, Louisiana was granted permission to trade with Spanish peninsular ports, but all other trade was prohibited. This decree signified an end to traditional trade with France and its colonies. To the Spanish, the regulations that governed commerce in Louisiana appeared liberal; the colonists did not have to pay a series of duties and taxes on imports and exports required in other colonies.⁴⁸

On October 28, 1768, a revolt of a conglomeration of colonists led by French colonial elite expelled Ulloa, ending the first Spanish regime.⁴⁹ However, within a year,

"steady flow of correspondence that crossed the Atlantic in the 1760s, 1770s, and 1780s." Mouhot has found some such correspondence in the French Archives.

⁴⁴ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 104.

⁴⁵ Lawrence Kinnaird, introduction to *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1., xix; Bannon, "The Spaniards in the Mississippi Valley," 12-13.

⁴⁶ Ulloa to Grimaldi, Balise, 6 December 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 81.

⁴⁷ Ulloa to Grimaldi, 23 July 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 92; Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 78, 81.

⁴⁸ "Regulation of Louisiana Commerce," 23 March 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 45-50.

⁴⁹ Reinhart Kondert "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768" *Louisiana History* 26 (1985), 394.

Spain re-asserted its authority when Alejandro O'Reilly arrived on August 17, 1769 with two thousand soldiers.

Although brief, O'Reilly's administration more fully incorporated Louisiana into the Spanish Empire. He restructured the colonial government, eliminating the vestige of French rule that was the Superior Council, which he replaced with the Cabildo. The successful functioning of a *cabildo*, or town council, in New Orleans differentiated Louisiana from other Spanish colonies, where these councils had lost their prominence in governing.⁵⁰ Although he punished the leaders of the Revolt, O'Reilly pardoned most participants including the Acadians.⁵¹ He also demanded that Louisiana colonists take an oath of loyalty to the Spanish crown, a request to which the Acadians adhered.

O'Reilly began by reassessing Ulloa's defense policy. He chose to dismantle Ulloa's system of forts: in doing so, he 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.⁵² In place of Ulloa's plan, O'Reilly suggested simply a standing colonial militia.⁵³

Ulloa had initiated Spanish relations with the Indians, and under the subsequent governors, the Spanish persisted in their attempts to maintain peaceful alliances with the Indians in their domain. In meetings with the Indian chiefs, O'Reilly reaffirmed Spanish friendship and promised "punctuality of the annual presents."⁵⁴ Indeed, O'Reilly

⁵⁰ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 324-5.

⁵¹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 89.

⁵² O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 Dec 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 144-8.

⁵³ Kinnaird, introduction, and O'Reilly to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 10 Dec 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xxii, 29.

⁵⁴ O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 98, 101-103.

promptly saw to the distribution of 1,270 pesos worth of gifts to the Indians, many of which were years overdue.⁵⁵

One of O'Reilly's chief objectives was to implement the economic policies Ulloa had decreed in 1768 on behalf of the Spanish Crown, which meant the elimination of trade between Louisiana and its British neighbor and the French West Indies.⁵⁶ Within a few weeks of arriving in New Orleans, O'Reilly expelled British merchants and traders from the colony. These merchants only needed to remove to British West Florida, which only served to exacerbate the forbidden trade.⁵⁷

Leaving the colony in the hands of Governor Luis de Unzaga, O'Reilly's departure for Cuba in March 1770 marked the transition of Louisiana into the jurisdiction of the Captaincy General of Cuba, and its integration into the Spanish Empire. Havana had served as Spain's main base in the struggle for the North American Southeast, Gulf Coast, and Caribbean and would continue to do so.

Spain accepted Louisiana from the defeated French Empire in 1763 solely for strategic purposes. In September of 1770, O'Reilly noted: "I consider Louisiana very useful and desirable for the king to have, for the reason that it assures his realms on that side indisputable boundaries."⁵⁸ The policies implemented by the early Spanish governors of the colony reflect this perspective.

Spanish policies also oftentimes reflected the failure of officials and policy makers to consider the realities of life in the colony or the concerns of the colonists involved. Consequently, this failure created tensions between local interests and imperial

⁵⁵ O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 Dec 1769, and "Statement of Payment for Indian Presents," New Orleans, 9 Jan 1770, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 147-8, 154-5.

⁵⁶ John G. Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812: An Economic History* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1970) 172-173

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 171-73.

⁵⁸ O'Reilly to Grimaldi, Madrid, 30 Sept 1770, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 183-186.

designs. Circumstances on the ground in Louisiana, including Acadian settlement and integration into the colony, conflicted with Spanish plans for the colony.

In Louisiana, imperial-local tensions produced a departure from the specific dictates of Spanish policies for the colony and its inhabitants. Several factors contributed to this development. Despite the insistent nature of Spanish policy and the sometimes unbending attitude of officials, the failure of the Spanish Empire to provide financing to the colony inhibited the realization of policy goals. In addition, Spanish plans were further hampered by Acadian interests and expectations, particularly an anticipation of settling in kinship groups, the interaction of the immigrants with other colonists, with Indians, and with officials, and the trade networks in which the colonists engaged for survival and profit. Along with other inhabitants of the colony, the Acadians through their active resistance, the pursuit of their own interests, and the process of relative integration into the colony prevented Spanish policy from being realized in the way intended by officials and policy makers. At the stage of policy implementation, local realities and interests were able to divert the realization of policy from its intended course.

During the final years of French possession of Louisiana and throughout the Ulloa administration, financial constraints limited the ability of officials to seek the defense interests of the Spanish Empire. Initially, both the French and the Spanish administrators sought to provide supplies to assist the Acadians in establishing themselves. However, Ulloa's attitude towards the Acadians underwent a major shift as he became increasingly pressed for funds. Interestingly, the French officials were more willing to alter their plans than to blame the immigrant Acadians for the deficiencies of the administration.

Although the French attempted to consider both the Spanish strategic and local interests, shortages of supplies forced them to reconsider their plans on occasion. In February of 1765, Aubry settled approximately 230 Acadians in the western district of the Attakapas in large part because of the shortages the colony was facing at the time. Under the leadership of Joseph Broussard “Beausoleil,” these Acadians had traveled from Nova Scotia via Saint Domingue.⁵⁹ Aubry’s initial intention was to settle them along the Mississippi River where “their presence will be essential to the Spaniards.”⁶⁰ However, because of floods along the Mississippi, he realized that it would be less costly to the colony to send the Acadians west. Consequently, he and Foucault assisted them with supplies and sent them to the Attakapas District. Although forced to abandon their original settlement plans for this party of exiles, Aubry and Foucault hoped that the Acadians would nevertheless serve Spanish interests in the western districts by contributing to the development of ranching.⁶¹ In May 1765, while Aubry and Foucault had intended to settle eighty Acadians in the western districts with the Beausoleil party, the restrictively low supplies in New Orleans forced them to settle these Acadians along the Mississippi with earlier groups of Acadian immigrants instead.⁶²

During Ulloa’s administration, funding for Louisiana was supposed to come through Mexico. However, it never materialized.⁶³ The French colonial government was already in debt when Ulloa arrived. In addition to assuming French debt, Ulloa began to institute the costly defense plan and the accompanying settlement plan for the Acadians,

⁵⁹ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 34, 74.

⁶⁰ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 25 Feb 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 31.

⁶¹ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 24 April 1765, and Foucault to Choiseul, New Orleans, 13 May 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 40, 48; Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 74; Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 44.

⁶² Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 13 May, 1765; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land* 44-51. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 77.

⁶³ Kinnaird, introduction to *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xvii.

which included the building of forts, settlement expeditions, and supplies for the impoverished immigrants. At the same time, the governor attempted to provide for the general costs of governing, to pay for Spanish civil and military officials in Louisiana.

Because of the scarcity of resources available for the French colonial administration by the end of the Seven Years War, by the time Ulloa arrived in Louisiana, the colony was several years in debt to the powerful Choctaws. Ulloa noted that the Choctaw, now living in British territory, began demanding their gifts for the years 1761 and 1762, “threatening war if denied.”⁶⁴ In comparison to the 25,000 pesos he suggested to finance aid to the Acadians at this time, Ulloa requested an 8,000 peso allotment for the gifts to the Indians.⁶⁵ Indeed maintaining payments of gifts to the Indians was key to maintaining peaceful alliances with them, otherwise the Indians, particularly the Choctaw, might resort to aggression, as the French officials advised the early Spanish administration. However, by 1767, Ulloa’s financial constraints, like those of the French colonial government that had preceded him, prevented him from repaying the gifts for the years of 1761 and 1762. Just as they had previously with the French, the Choctaw responded with threats of waging war against the Spanish if they did not receive their backpayment of gifts.⁶⁶

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 the colony, and noting that improvements in colonial

⁶⁴ Governmental Expenses, New Orleans, 1767, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, quotation 18; Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 9 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 58.

⁶⁵ Governmental Expenses, New Orleans, 1767, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 18-9.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 18; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 24 April 1765, and Ulloa to Grimaldi, 9 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 41, 58.

defense and infrastructure required greater expenditure.⁶⁷ Ulloa received several allotments from Cuba in response to his pleas, but never enough to stabilize the colony.⁶⁸

During August and September 1768, the British withdrew from Fort Panmure and Fort Bute.⁶⁹ Ulloa had based his entire defense strategy around British presence on the Mississippi River. He had expended increasingly precious resources implementing his plans.

These British actions caused Ulloa both relief and consternation. On one hand the proximity of the British threat had been removed. However, on the other hand, Ulloa worried that “our cares will be increased by the Indians dependent upon the two English forts and who are on their side, as it is probable that they will come to our side, or even here, to beg as is their custom.”⁷⁰ Thus, the financial burden on Spanish settlements would increase. Ulloa had been suspicious of the British, but shortly after their withdrawal, 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...”⁷¹ Such a policy would significantly reduce Spanish expenses.

The financial constraints that Ulloa faced continued to worsen and influenced shifts in his attitude toward the Acadians and policy of colonial Louisiana. Indeed, Ulloa extended his frustration to the Acadians. Previously he had lauded the Acadians for their

⁶⁷ Ulloa to Bucareli, 17 June 1767, 28 Aug 1767, 21 Sept 1767, 25 Dec 1767, 20 Feb 1768, 22 June 1768, 20 Jul 1768, 10 Aug 1768, 6 Oct 1768, and Ulloa to Grimaldi 6 Oct 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 31, 32, 35, 38, 40, 42, 52-3, 55, 62-3, 75.

⁶⁸ Ulloa to Bucareli, 28 Aug 1767, 21 Sept 1767, 2 Dec 1767, 20 July 1768, 20 Aug 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 32, 35, 38, 55, 62.

⁶⁹ Duplessis to Ulloa, Pointe Coupée, 13 Aug 1768, and Delavillebeuvre to Duplessis, San Luis, 18 Sept 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 151, 160; Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 23 Aug 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 69.

⁷⁰ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 23 Aug 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 69-70.

⁷¹ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 6 Oct 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 73.

industry, now he lamented the expenditure they had cost him.⁷² In October of 1768, Ulloa lamented 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."⁷³

The financial crisis that engulfed the colony during the French years extended into the first years of Spanish rule. While the shortages in supplies altered French plans for Acadian settlement, the failure of the Spanish to provide funding to Ulloa undermined his authority within the colony and made the realization of his defense policy untenable.

Two key factors contributing to the Revolt of 1768 were the overwhelming state of bankruptcy of the colony and its inhabitants, and the restrictive Spanish commercial policies Ulloa issued in March 1768.

The Revolt of 1768 represented collective colonial resistance to the Spanish policies during Ulloa's regime. Colonists of Louisiana, including a large number of Acadians took part in the revolt. Acadians joined colonial planters, merchants, and German Coast residents in opposing the Spanish administration. In conjunction with his defense policy, Ulloa's refusal to take official possession of Louisiana, his lack of funding, and Spanish commercial policy, all motivated Louisiana's colonists to unite in the Revolt of 1768 that ended Ulloa's term in Louisiana.

Led by leading merchants and planters, the Revolt of October 1768 was primarily the response of colonists to Spanish commercial policies promulgated by Ulloa. These instigators lamented that the products of Louisiana had no economic niche in the Spanish Empire as they did within the French Empire and the French Caribbean. In addition,

⁷² Ibid., 75-6; Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 66.

⁷³ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 6 Oct 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 74.

many merchants and planters were precariously in debt.⁷⁴ Conspirators built on German Coast residents' displeasure with Ulloa's commercial regulations, which dictated the markets to which German Coast settlers could export their tobacco, cotton, and indigo. In addition, the conspirators circulated rumors among the Germans and Acadians that the colonial government would not reimburse the colonists for the grain it had confiscated to feed the incoming Acadians.⁷⁵

Acadian suspicion of the Spanish colonial government had been mounting during 1767 and 1768 as they increasingly came into conflict over Ulloa's defense-settlement plans. In the fall of 1768, 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 inaccurate, Ulloa had corresponded with the British in West Florida about indenturing the Acadians, justifying Acadian suspicion.⁷⁶ While most free peoples rebel against loss of freedom, for the Acadians, the threat built upon particular predisposition to fear abuse and misuse at the hands of imperial colonial authorities. The rumors may have touched upon a fear of indentured servitude among the Acadians. One of their grievances while under British rule in the thirteen colonies was the intention of the British to separate parents and children by means of indenturing Acadians.⁷⁷ Further, Acadian suspicion of colonial governments in general is likely given their experiences of abuse in Acadia and after the expulsion. The Acadians were possibly wary of abuse at the hands of the Spanish, who had already separated kinship groups in their settlement plan. Acadian distrust of the Spanish must have been noted enough for leaders of the

⁷⁴ Clark, New Orleans. 167-8; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 116.

⁷⁵ Kondert "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768," 384, 388-90; Kinnaird, introduction, and Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 26 Oct 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xx, 78-9.

⁷⁶ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 72-3.

⁷⁷ Brasseaux, *Scattered to the Wind*, 21, 24.

revolt to take advantage of it. Approximately two hundred Acadians from the First and Second Acadian Coast participated in the Revolt of 1768.⁷⁸ Given that the census of Cabahannocé of 1769 listed 163 “men bearing arms” in the district, a high percentage of Acadian men from the district most likely participated in the Revolt, which underlines their displeasure with the Spanish regime.⁷⁹ In the end, Ulloa’s policy of forced settlement backfired. His intention of defending colonial Louisiana from attack with a system of forts and settlements actually incited disloyalty and suspicion among the Acadian colonists. Acadian participation in the Revolt of 1768 revealed the extent to which they opposed Ulloa as a group and sheds light on other points of contention between provincial concerns and the policies implemented by Ulloa.

Despite conflict between the Acadians and other colonists of Louisiana, Acadian participation in the Revolt of 1768 indicates a certain level of integration and cohesion of the immigrants with the colony. The challenges that the Spanish regime appeared to pose to the colonists served as a uniting force against Spanish defense and commercial policy that the colonists believed contradicted their own interests. The extreme debt in which the colony found itself, the inadequate funds from Cuba and the promulgation of Spanish commercial policy contributed to instability in the colony and fostered the Revolt of 1768.⁸⁰ Instead of bringing Louisiana into the Spanish Empire, the commercial policy spurred the colonists on to Revolt against Spain altogether, and some even to petition France to take back the colony.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 25 June 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 116n.

⁷⁹ Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians*, 468.

⁸⁰ Kinnaird, introduction to *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xviii.

⁸¹ John Preston Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766-1770* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 167-8.

Relations between the colony and the Indians of the Lower Mississippi Valley and between the Acadians and the Indians further complicated Spanish aspirations for the colony. The British and Spanish both hoped to sustain significant networks of Indian alliances, a situation that only served to exacerbate tensions along the Mississippi River where Ulloa intended to settle the Acadians in 1767 and 1768. Ulloa had anticipated that immigrant Acadians, eager for land grants, would simply settle according to the dictate of his defense plan in return for Spanish 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 dangerous frontier posts exposed to Indian raids.

The experiences of the Acadians whom Ulloa settled at St. Gabriel and St. Louis de Natchez made them wary of Indians in general. These Acadians originated from the Minas Basin in Acadia, which had been an area particularly subject to French and Micmac raids from the 1740s onward.⁸² In New England, the French and English had a long history of striking at one another's colonies by promoting their Indian allies to wage war and conduct raids against their enemies.⁸³ Having previously been victims of inter-colonial violence, the Acadians who settled at St. Gabriel and St. Louis sought to avoid settlements that might replicate such hazardous conditions.⁸⁴

Nor were the Acadians at St. Louis de Natchez and St. Gabriel unjustified in their fear of Indian attack. Prior to their arrival at Fort St. Gabriel, the commandant José de Orieta noted that Indians of various tribes, such as the Biloxi and Choctaw, frequented the post for gifts, food, and cloth, and further he indicated that the Indians told him that

⁸² Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, xxiv-xxvii, 218-220; Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 179-80.

⁸³ *Atlantic World* 297.

⁸⁴ Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian, 184*; Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia* 179-80.

the fort was their land.⁸⁵ The Alabama and Houma were also in close proximity.⁸⁶ The British traded with these Indians, providing them brandy in particular, after the consumption of which they arrived at the St. Gabriel post intoxicated.⁸⁷ St. Gabriel was situated enough among local Indians that Ulloa and Aubry were compelled to find an interpreter who could speak several Indian languages.⁸⁸ Ulloa's instructions to Pedro Piernas for the settlement of the Acadians at Natchez included a provision that the settlers learn how to defend themselves against an Indian attack. Indian raids were a strong enough possibility that the settlements along the Mississippi River were provided canons, which they could use to signal danger of such an attack.⁸⁹ 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 from the fort, where to go "in the event of an Indian raid," and how to conduct themselves with the Indians "to insure their own security."⁹⁰ Colonial officials were aware of the dangers that the frontier posed to colonists.

Tensions between Acadians and the Indians also emerged at St. James and Ascension. The Houmas and the Tensas, became concerned that expansion of Acadian settlements would jeopardize their own villages and displace them.⁹¹ The Tensas complained to Ulloa of conflict with the commandant Nicolas Verret and the Acadians at Cabahannocé, causing Ulloa to beseech Verret "not to harass them in any way and on the

⁸⁵ R.E. Chandler, "The St. Gabriel Acadians: the First Five Months," *Louisiana History* 21 (1980): 128.

⁸⁶ Clark, *New Orleans*, 164.

⁸⁷ Chandler, "The St. Gabriel Acadians," 288.

⁸⁸ Aubry to Ulloa, 9 March 1767, New Orleans, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 84.

⁸⁹ R.E. Chandler, "Odyssey Continued: Acadians Arrive at Natchez," *Louisiana History* 19 (1978): 449; Judice to Ulloa, Cabannocé, 18 Nov 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 106.

⁹⁰ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 29 May 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 140.

⁹¹ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 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 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 106.

contrary, to be well disposed toward them”⁹² By late 1767, Judice and Verret were prepared to use cannons to signal alarm, “if the Indian tribes should decide to raid the residents in the settlement.”⁹³

The close proximity of the British enemy across the river and the competition among the British and Spanish for Indian alliances served to reinforce Acadian anxieties along the emerging militarized border. As the Spanish and British Indian agents vied for Indian loyalty in the region, relations among the colonists and Indians became increasingly tense.⁹⁴ Indeed, the British at Fort Panmure were building an alliance with both the Choctaw and Chickasaw, the most powerful and populous Indians of the region.⁹⁵ Ulloa recognized the power that the Choctaws wielded: “this is a tribe which could destroy various settlements of the colony.”⁹⁶ He also recognized that the British settlement could not “control the Indians” without military presence.⁹⁷ At St. James and Ascension, both Indians and settlers of Louisiana lived in trepidation of the Creek, also allies of the British.⁹⁸ Thus, the Acadians feared the Indians both in Louisiana and across the Mississippi.

Indeed, the Acadians settled along the Mississippi do not appear to have joined the Spanish in cementing alliances with Indians in Louisiana proper, nor did they express a particular willingness to prove themselves “good marksmen...capable of effectively waging war against the Indians.”⁹⁹ Instead, the Acadians of St. James and Ascension and

⁹² Ulloa to Judice, New Orleans, 19 Nov 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 106.

⁹³ Judice to Ulloa, Cabannocé, 12 Sept 1767, and Ulloa to Judice, New Orleans, 19 Nov 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 98, 106; Chandler, “Odyssey Continued,” 449.

⁹⁴ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 181-2; Brasseaux, “Acadian Life in the Lafourche Country,” 37.

⁹⁵ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 181.

⁹⁶ Governmental Expenses, New Orleans, 1767, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 18.

⁹⁷ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 23 Aug 1768, and 6 Oct 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 70, 71.

⁹⁸ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 182.

⁹⁹ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 67.

the neighboring Indians came into conflict, and the Acadians of Fort St. Louis de Natchez and Fort St. Gabriel expressed apprehension over their exposure to potential Indian attack and argued that it was reason enough for the Spanish to allow them to relocate. Thus, along the Mississippi River, Acadian-Indian relations undermined colonial-Indian alliances, which the Spanish viewed as crucial to any plan of defensive success. In addition, exposure to Indian aggression gave the Acadians reason to protest Ulloa's settlement plan.

Acadians actively resisted Ulloa's defense policy. As they had in Acadia and throughout the diaspora, the Acadians in Louisiana employed petitions as their means to express grievances to colonial officials. Fear of exposure to the Indian attack continued to motivate them. In addition, many arrived in Louisiana anticipating settlement in kin-based communities of their choosing.

The Acadian immigrants who disembarked in 1767 and 1768 arrived unaware of their role in Ulloa's defense plan. They believed that they would be allowed to settle with relatives already established in the colony. Ulloa may have unwittingly bolstered the false hopes of many of these Acadians when during 1766 he granted lands to incoming Acadians "next to those who are already settled," in keeping with precedents set by the outgoing French colonial government.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, maintaining French settlement precedents was not Ulloa's interest, especially not after he fixed his sights on buttressing Louisiana's defense by settling the exiles as buffers along the Mississippi. Ulloa overlooked Acadian intent to reestablish their communities, kinship based

¹⁰⁰ Ulloa to Grimaldi, Balise, 6 Dec 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 81.

settlements as had been their tradition in Acadia before the expulsion. As a result, conflict between Acadians and colonial officials ensued.¹⁰¹

Spanish officials resorted to coercion in response to Acadian resistance to settlement near Manchac. With regard to the 210 Acadians who 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 at St. James.¹⁰² According to Ulloa, it was only by threat of deportation that he could persuade these Acadians to accept settlement at Fort St. Gabriel.¹⁰³

Acadian resistance to travel to St. Louis de Natchez appears to have been even greater. This group of about 150 Acadians, also sailing from Maryland, arrived in New Orleans in February 4, 1768 and like the Acadians who preceded them were promptly granted rations and assistance by Spanish colonial officials.¹⁰⁴ They began to demonstrate opposition to the plan after stopping at Cabahannocé on their way to St. Louis de Natchez, where perhaps they became better informed about the proposed settlement site and of the coercion experienced by the Acadians sent to St. Gabriel. The Acadians en route to St. Louis de Natchez were themselves a kin-based community hoping to re-congregate with extended family already separated between the Cabahannocé and St. Gabriel posts.¹⁰⁵ Pedro Piernas indicates in correspondence from 1768 that he also threatened this group of Acadians with deportation should they

¹⁰¹ Carl A. Brasseaux, “A New Acadia; Acadian Migration to South Louisiana 1764-1803,” *Acadiensis* 15.1 (1985): 126-7.

¹⁰² Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 78, 81; Piernas to Ulloa, St. Louis, 6 June 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 91; Chandler “The St. Gabriel Acadians,” 287.

¹⁰³ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 81.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 78, 81; Chandler, “Odyssey Continued,” 447; Loyola to Ulloa, New Orleans, 8 February 1768, trans. Angelita Garcia Alonzo, *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, legajo 109, reel 1, Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana Lafayette.

¹⁰⁵ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 81-2, 87.

challenge the settlement plans for them.¹⁰⁶ Over the course of the Mississippi River voyage to their destination, they protested, and several families attempted to leave the expedition at St. Gabriel.¹⁰⁷ In an attempt to counteract Acadian attitude towards the prescribed 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 their complaints about the hazards of the frontier where they were stationed.¹⁰⁸

Acadians at St. Louis de Natchez revealed their perception of the Indians as a threat through their petitions and complaints to officials, a continuation of their traditional practice for conducting negotiations with colonial officials. Immediately upon reaching St. Louis, the Acadians expressed to Verret and Piernas their concerns about the isolation of the site and that they “would live in constant fear” because of the threat of Indian attack.¹⁰⁹ After settlement sites had been determined, the Acadians argued that some of their number were too far from the fort for it to provide them any protection in case of attack or danger from the British and the Indians.¹¹⁰

Once O’Reilly reached Louisiana in 1769, the Acadians at Natchez lost little time in petitioning him regarding their “desire to abandon” the settlement. The litany of reasons for their request beginning “that they find themselves continually in danger of being killed by the divers Savage Nations who make war.” The commandant of the post Jean Delavillebeuvre and the engineer Gui Dufossat corroborated the legitimacy of this

¹⁰⁶ Piernas to Ulloa, St Louis, 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 110.

¹⁰⁷ Piernas to Ulloa, Pointe Coupée, 8 March 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 114.

¹⁰⁸ Verret to Ulloa, Cabannocé, 26 March 1768, and Piernas to Ulloa, St Louis, 27 March 1768, and Land Distribution at San Luis de Natchez, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 110, quotation 116, 116-120, 134.

¹⁰⁹ Verret to Ulloa, Cabannocé, 26 March 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 116.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 117; Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 181.

fear and coupled it with concern for the quality of the land on which the Acadians had been settled and the great distance between the fort and New Orleans.¹¹¹ After consulting Aubry, O'Reilly decided to honor the request of the Acadians, justifying his decision on economic grounds as well as because "the inhabitants settled at Natchez could in no way contribute to the defense or support of the colony." He argued the fort and settlement were an unnecessary cost for the crown and that they "served as a pretext for continual expenditures for the Indians who came there." Paramount to O'Reilly's concern for the fort was that its removal from the capital would encourage contraband trade.¹¹²

Through their persistence, the Acadians exhibited that they would not subjugate their own practices and concerns to conforming with Ulloa's defense-settlement plans but quite the contrary. Ulloa had overlooked the possibility that his new colonists might oppose the dangerous and removed locations of their settlements at Iberville and Natchez, but particularly Natchez. O'Reilly's decision to allow the Acadians at Natchez to relocate was based in part upon the "indefensible" nature of St. Louis de Natchez and St. Gabriel.¹¹³ His primary objective remained integrating Louisiana into the Spanish system and enabling it to function as an effective barrier. Consequently, he concerned himself with securing the loyalty of Louisiana's colonists, promoting defense, and eliminating contraband trade. Certainly allowing the Acadians to relocate promoted their loyalty to the new Spanish administration. However, the networks of trade in which Acadians engaged did not appear to the Spanish to bespeak of loyalty.

¹¹¹ Petition of the Acadians at Natchez to O'Reilly, San Luis de Natchez, 18 October 1769, *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, Legajo 181.

¹¹² O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 Dec 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 146.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 144-8.

Trade networks tied the inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley together, but not necessarily in alliances that conformed to Spanish commercial decree. In reality, trade that best served the interests of colonists, whether those of survival or profit, often contradicted official commercial policy and appeared to also undermine Spanish defense interests.

Ulloa believed that the Acadians were an ideal population to place alongside the expansion-minded British of 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 pursuing their own interests, which encouraged them to interact with the British across the river and the Indians, who provided them access to “meat, grease, lard, etc.”¹¹⁵

Contraband trade and trade with British merchants were not new to the Acadians. In Acadia, they had traded with the British of Massachusetts; in Louisiana, with the British of West Florida.¹¹⁶ Thus, the Acadians, a people who had developed in a borderland, began to operate adeptly in the new emerging borderland of colonial Louisiana, undermining Spanish defense interests in turn. While Ulloa did respond with instructions to the commandants of the various posts that trade between Spain and England was not sanctioned, official efforts were to little avail.¹¹⁷

Unintentionally then, the Spanish undermined their own intentions for establishing Louisiana as a barrier by providing the opportunity and need for illicit trade between Louisiana and West Florida. The Spanish suffered chronically from the inability

¹¹⁴ Ulloa to Grimaldi, 19 May 1766, New Orleans, , *Quest for the Promised Land*, 67.

¹¹⁵ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 27 March 1768, , *Quest for the Promised Land*, 118.

¹¹⁶ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 131; Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 99, 312, 337; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 53-5.

¹¹⁷ Piernas to Ulloa, San Louis, 3 Sept 1768, , *Quest for the Promised Land*, 153.

to supply their New World colonies with the manufactured goods that they demanded. Governor George Johnstone of West Florida anticipated that the inadequacy of the Spanish supply to Louisiana would encourage the Spanish subjects to turn to West Florida to trade.¹¹⁸

Upon his arrival, O'Reilly was greatly distressed at the entrenchment of British merchants within the colony and at the illicit trade occurring along the Mississippi River. He lamented that he "found the English entirely in possession of the commerce of this colony."¹¹⁹ Indeed, out of necessity, Ulloa had tolerated the presence of British merchants in New Orleans to alleviate the shortage of necessary supplies, such as flour, with which Spain was unable to provide the colony, and to purchase Louisiana's agricultural commodities and furs and skins from their trade with the Indians.¹²⁰

In addition, because the Treaty of Paris in 1763 had granted the British the right to navigate the Mississippi, their presence on the river could not be uprooted, allowing colonists of Spanish Louisiana continual easy access to the goods that they peddled on their floating warehouses.¹²¹ Indeed, to the chagrin of the Spanish, contraband trade continued to be the "lifeblood of Louisiana."¹²² Although O'Reilly attempted to define Louisiana more exactly as a barrier through stricter implementation of Spanish policy, his efforts were unable to prevent the vibrant contraband trade in the colony from continuing.

Recognizing that the only means of survival for the settlers at Natchez was "illegal trade," O'Reilly argued that removing the Acadians from Natchez furthered the

¹¹⁸ Governor Johnstone to John Pownall, 4 May 1765, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion*, 279; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 174-5.

¹¹⁹ O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 104-5.

¹²⁰ Clark, *New Orleans*, 161-166.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹²² John Preston Moore, "Antonio de Ulloa," in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson, 46.

interests of the colony.¹²³ The illegal trade between St. Louis de Natchez and the British across the Mississippi was of international concern. Therefore, he hoped that abandoning the Natchez post would eliminate the problem.

Settled along or near the Mississippi River as they were, the Acadians continued to take advantage of these opportunities for trade, prohibited though they may have been. Particularly well situated, were the British at Manchac. Some commodities such as butter were perishable, so trade with the British was feasible whereas sending such goods to New Orleans was not.¹²⁴ Because the Spanish had set price controls for grain in New Orleans, the Acadians fared better trading with the British.¹²⁵ Later, Governor Luis de Unzaga lamented during the corn and rice shortage of 1770 that “the farmers do not wish to descend to sell them”¹²⁶ Although Verret protested that the residents of his post at Cabahannocé had not in fact traded the precious grain to the enemy across the river, Unzaga would not be convinced, and he instructed Verret to inventory the grain on the farms in his district and send excess grain to New Orleans.¹²⁷

In addition to the grain shortage, Louisiana continued to suffer economically from the implications of Spain’s commercial policies. Although, at O’Reilly’s suggestion, Spain had granted Louisiana trading rights with Havana, the markets and needs of the two ports did not coincide adequately to provide for the needs of Louisiana.¹²⁸ In addition, again at O’Reilly’s suggestion, export of tobacco from Louisiana to Havana was

¹²³ O’Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 Dec 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 146.

¹²⁴ Margaret Fisher Dalrymple, ed. *The Merchant of Manchac*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 166.

¹²⁵ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 131.

¹²⁶ 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.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 173-4.

¹²⁸ Clark, New Orleans, 177.

forbidden.¹²⁹ Louisiana's colonists, such as those at Pointe Coupée, turned then to the British to sell this cash crop.¹³⁰ Thus, the contraband trade between the British and Spanish subjects actually grew during Unzaga's governorship.¹³¹

Similarly, defiance of Spanish trade policies in the western districts also contributed to the strengthening of colonial Louisiana. Indeed, although O'Reilly attempted to crack down on smuggling between Texas and Louisiana, after his departure the trade resumed and increased. Because of the friendly relations between colonists and the Indians of these western districts, trade with the Attakapas and Opelousas Indians particularly in furs, cattle, and horses developed across the colonies of Texas and Louisiana. Indeed, in all probability, the cattle and horses traded in these western districts were stolen from Texas. 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.¹³² O'Reilly had hoped to foster the development of vacheries in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts, particularly as a source of provisions in case of war.¹³³ Already in 1770, Juan Kelly and Eduardo Nugent, sent by O'Reilly to survey the colony and administer loyalty oaths, 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."¹³⁴ This trade, particularly in livestock, enabled Acadians and other colonists settled at the Attakapas

¹²⁹ Clark, *New Orleans*, 176.

¹³⁰ Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 122.

¹³¹ Light Townsend Cummins, "Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga," in *Louisiana Governors*, ed., Joseph Dawson, 54; Clark, *New Orleans*, 178.

¹³² Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 186; Clark *New Orleans*, 175; Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*, 179-80. Usner 179.

¹³³ O'Reilly to Grimaldi, Madrid, 30 Sept 1770, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 185.

¹³⁴ 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.

and Opelousas posts to develop their own vacheries, which became an important source of beef for the colony during the American Revolution.¹³⁵ Thus, at the start of the 1770s, the Acadians in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts through their illegal trade network were posed to participate in supporting the colony in time of war with beef and livestock.

The vibrant contraband trade of the Lower Mississippi Valley was indeed the “lifeblood” of the colony, but it undercut Spanish commercial policy outright. Further, a considerable portion of the trade took place between Louisiana’s colonists and the enemy across the Mississippi. The nature of the illegal trade in which the Acadians participated thwarted the Spanish efforts to establish a barrier colony. Ironically, the persistence of the illicit trade contributed to the survival and strengthening of the colony such that it enabled Louisiana in the following decade, upon Spain’s entry into the American Revolution to go beyond its intended defensive role and to conquer British West Florida.¹³⁶

Clearly, the reality of life in colonial Louisiana and Acadian resistance prevented the realization of specific Spanish prescriptions for the colony. The financial strains endured by the French and Spanish colonial administrations of the 1760s prevented successful enactment of settlement policy and, in the case of the Spanish, significantly undermined the authority of the colonial government. Louisiana’s colonists expressed their outright opposition to Spanish commercial and defense policy in the Revolt of 1768 that removed Governor Antonio de Ulloa from the colony. While Spanish officials recognized a successful Indian policy as key to success in defending the colony, the

¹³⁵ Brasseaux, *Founding of New Acadia*, 123-5; Usner *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 179-80; 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), 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.

¹³⁶ Clark, *New Orleans*, 179.

proximity of Acadian settlements to neighboring Indian villages and the fear of Indians harbored by Acadians along the Mississippi River complicated alliances. Indeed, the Acadians repeatedly resisted settlement at Ulloa's strategically placed forts at Manchac and Natchez, so critical to his defense strategy for the colony. Nevertheless, their proximity to the British along the Mississippi fostered an illegal trade that undercut both Spanish defense and commercial policies and the notion that the Mississippi served as a veritable boundary between British North America and the barrier colony of Louisiana.

In attempting to define Louisiana as a barrier, integrate it into the Spanish imperial system, and establish effective defense, Spanish policy did not permit local interests and imperial interests to inform one another. Rather, officials mandated policy that ignored local interests. Consequently, the divergent interests of the Spanish and the inhabitants of Louisiana produced friction. While Spanish officials might dictate policy and attempt to enforce it, the realities of life and survival, combined with the interests of colonists, including the Acadians, inhibited the implementation of the Spanish blueprint for commercial and defense policy. Through the agency of their own persistence and resistance to Spanish imperial plans, the Acadians effected their own settlement and participation in the economy of the colony. The local influence on the implementation of the policy speaks to the strength of Acadian agency and local response to shape the realization of Spanish policy.

In spite of the pervasive contraband trade, O'Reilly's governorship initiated better relations between the Spanish regime and the Acadian colonists. Rather than accuse the Acadians at Natchez of disobedience and ungratefulness as Ulloa and his subordinates had, O'Reilly acknowledged the legitimacy of the Acadians' objection to the settlement.

He recognized Acadian willingness to relocate at their own expense after having worked the land for two years as proof of their honesty.¹³⁷ The Acadians for their part chose to take the oath of loyalty to Spain, which indicated a major shift in the Acadians' traditional perception of themselves.¹³⁸ They had been self-proclaimed French neutrals whose persistent refusal to take an oath of loyalty to the British had in large part led to their expulsion from Acadia. While Louisiana and its inhabitants underwent an initial shift from French empire to a transitional French and Spanish joint rule to greater incorporation into the Spanish imperial system, the Acadians endured their own transition as a diaspora people setting roots in Louisiana where they continued to develop with the colony. The Acadians in no small part were integrated into the fabric of the colony by 1770. Although they maintained their own identity, they had become and remained critical to the colony's development.

¹³⁷ O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 December 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 146.

¹³⁸ Kinnaird, introduction to *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xxi; R. E. Chandler, "Ulloa and the Acadians," *Louisiana History* 21 (1980): 89.

CHAPTER II

BRITISH AND AMERICAN MERCHANTS AND EXPANDING TRADE NETWORKS IN THE BORDERLANDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

Spain acquired Louisiana in 1762 to serve as a buffer to protect its more valuable New World holdings from British expansion. When Spain regained East and West Florida after the American Revolution, Spain intended them to serve as buffer colonies as well.¹³⁹ While it was perhaps understood to a point that colonists in a borderland might engage in contraband trade with the British, it was also essential to the Spanish Empire that the region remain a buffer zone. British and American trade in the Mississippi Valley and the inability of Spanish officials to prevent or to control it would prove to be the undoing of this Spanish imperial strategy. Between 1765 and 1790, British and American commercial networks expanded throughout the region, both strengthening the Spanish colonies by fitting within the existing frontier exchange network, and challenging Spanish attempts to use Louisiana and later East and West Florida as an imperial border.

British trade practices presented a policy problem for Spanish colonial officials. Following the Seven Years War, the British were able to take control of the former French forts east of the Mississippi. Further, the Treaty of Paris permitted free access to the Mississippi to both Britain and Spain, providing a locus for the opportunistic expansion of British networks of merchants. During these early years of Spanish rule, Spanish officials attempted simultaneously to develop Louisiana as a military buffer and

¹³⁹ For a study on the economic system of the Lower Mississippi Valley during the French period and during this transitional period, see Usner, *Indians, Settlers and Slaves*. Usner has termed this network of exchanging “goods and services” a “frontier exchange economy”(6-7).

to balance the persistent contraband trade between Louisiana colonists and British merchants, traders, and planters. With the coming of the American Revolution, Spain provided aid to the rebelling American colonies and entered the war in an attempt to recover the Floridas and Gibraltar. This pro-American policy, strengthened ties between Spanish North American colonies and the emerging United States. However, following the war, the spread of American settlements through the Ohio River Valley and later along the Cumberland posed a threat to Spanish sense of security. Spanish immigration, defense, and commercial policy reflected this fear both in imperial and local contexts. The sheer numbers of British and Americans involved in trade and settlement throughout the Mississippi Valley increased dramatically between 1765 and 1790 to a level such that it forced the Spanish both to constantly re-evaluate Spanish policies concerning trade, the maintenance of Indian alliances, and immigration as Spain struggled to effectively create a protective “‘barrera,’” and to eventually acknowledge the presence of the unwanted commerce.¹⁴⁰

In short, Spanish commercial policy forbade trade outside of the Spanish Empire and restricted trade among its colonies to certain Spanish ports.¹⁴¹ On March 23, 1768, Antonio de Ulloa, the first Spanish governor of Louisiana, promulgated Spanish commercial regulations for the first time in the colony.¹⁴² While from a Spanish perspective it seemed a liberal measure to permit Louisiana to trade with nine Spanish peninsular ports, residents of colonial Louisiana perceived these regulations as a threat to

¹⁴⁰ Gilbert C. Din, “Protecting the ‘Barrera:’ Spain’s Defenses in Louisiana, 1763-1779,” *Louisiana History* 19(1978).

¹⁴¹ During the 1760s when the Council of the Indies was re-evaluating its governance of the New World, the body granted permission first to Cuba and later Louisiana to trade with nine Spanish peninsular ports. John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 303-4.

¹⁴²“Government Expenses,” 1767 and “Regulation of Louisiana Commerce,” 23 March 1768, in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-94: Translations from the Spanish Archives in the Bancroft Library*, vol 1, ed. and trans., Lawrence Kinnaird, (Washington D.C.: American Historical Association, 1949), 45-50.

their own survival.¹⁴³ Rejection of Spanish commercial policy was chief among the complaints of the colonists who expelled Ulloa from New Orleans in late October of 1768.¹⁴⁴ In August 1769, General Alejandro O'Reilly arrived in Louisiana prepared to take the colony firmly into the Spanish realm. He intended to enforce Spanish commercial dominance, expelling the British merchants from New Orleans and issuing new regulations that opened up trade with Cuba.¹⁴⁵ O'Reilly left Louisiana in 1770, leaving his successor, the new governor Luis de Unzaga, to enforce Spanish policy.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the reality of life in colonial Louisiana reveals that decree policy as they might, Spanish governors and officials could not control trade in the Lower Mississippi Valley. And while Spanish officials looked to Louisiana mostly for strategic value, British merchants and officials almost immediately recognized the region as a potentially fertile economic frontier because of the dearth of manufactured goods, because of restrictive Spanish commercial policy, and because the Mississippi River was a key artery in the deerskin and fur trade.

It was widely accepted that West Florida would benefit the British Empire economically as a base for illicit trade with Spanish colonies.¹⁴⁷ British manufacturers,

¹⁴³ John G. Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812: An Economic History* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1970), 167.

¹⁴⁴ "Mémoire des habitans & négocians de la Louysiane, sur l'événement," 29 Oct. 1768, Early American Imprints, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/> (Accessed Nov. 30, 2009), 12-14, 17, 54, 77, 81; Clark, *New Orleans*, 167-8; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 116; Reinhart Kondert "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768" *Louisiana History* 26 (1985), 384, 388-90; Kinnaid, introduction, and Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 26 Oct 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xx, 78-9. For two perspectives on the Revolt of 1768 see John Preston Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766-1770* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), and Carl A. Brasseur, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768* (Ruston, La: McGinty Publications, 1987).

¹⁴⁵ Gilbert C. Din, *Francisco Bouligny: A Bourbon Soldier in Spanish Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1993), 55-6; Clark, *New Orleans*, 173; A few years earlier, O'Reilly had been part of the project to refortify Havana after Spain recovered it following the Seven Years War. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 303.

¹⁴⁶ O'Reilly to Unzaga, April 3, 1770, Havana, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol1, 165-6.

¹⁴⁷ Robin F. A. Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida, 1763-1783* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1988), 75.

including some merchants based in the West Indies, expressed their wish that parliament sanction trade between Spanish colonies and West Florida.¹⁴⁸ 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 adequately supply the colony.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, British 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.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, the British had a head start, for they took possession of West Florida in 1763, and settlers began almost immediately to arrive; whereas, the Spanish did not arrive until 1766, and the issue of enlarging and maintaining a colonial population would always be problematic for them.

Because of the confusion following the partition, British merchants gained an early foothold in commerce in the Lower Mississippi Valley. After the Seven Years War, colonial Louisiana underwent a shortage of basic goods such as flour, “arms and ammunition,” and specie.¹⁵¹ France was unwilling to pour additional resources into this colony only to transfer it to Spain, but the Spanish did not take official possession of the colony until 1769, leaving the colonists to negotiate access to goods by their own means in a moment of political uncertainty. The opportunity that trade with the British along the Mississippi provided for access to goods such as “flour, wine, oil, tools, arms,

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁴⁹ Johnstone to John Pownall, 4 May 1765, , *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, 279-80; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 174-5.

¹⁵⁰ “Charles Town, in South Carolina, January 5,” March 5, 1767, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, <http://www.accessible.com/accessible/preLog> (Accessed Oct. 9, 2009); Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 77.

¹⁵¹ Clark, *New Orleans*, 160; Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 44; Aubry and Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 13 May 1765, and Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans 13 May 1765, and Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land Official Correspondence Relating to the First Acadian Migration to Louisiana, 1764-1769*, ed. Carl A. Brasseaux, 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), 45, 48, 49-50.

ammunition, [and] all kinds of clothing” through the existing system of barter and exchange actually provided some stability to Spanish Louisiana.¹⁵²

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.¹⁵³ Johnstone identified Manchac as a future commercial center through which the fur trade from the Illinois country might funnel.¹⁵⁴ 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.¹⁵⁵

And during the early 1770s, as the Spanish struggled to establish themselves and to stabilize colonial Louisiana, British fur traders captured most of this fur trade.¹⁵⁶

For their part, colonists of Louisiana were able to provide the British of West Florida, and the merchants plying the River with raw goods and services. The produce of

¹⁵² Clark, *New Orleans*, 125, 160; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 108; quotation O’Reilly to Unzaga, Havana, 3 April 1770, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 165. 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.

¹⁵³ 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.”

¹⁵⁴ 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.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas Hutchins, *An Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and West-Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1968), 43,

¹⁵⁶ Clark, *New Orleans*, 177.

Louisiana exported to British markets included “lumber, indigo, cotton, furs, and some corn and rice.”¹⁵⁷ At Manchac, colonists, such as those from the nearby Acadian settlements, were able to trade goods such as butter that would spoil long before reaching New Orleans.¹⁵⁸ Ulloa had settled groups of Acadians at St. Gabriel and at St. Louis de Natchez initially by force as part of his defense strategy to place forts and settlements at strategic locations along the Mississippi River.¹⁵⁹ Ironically, Ulloa had created the opportunity for these frontiersmen to engage in contraband trade, and because these outposts were far removed from New Orleans, the colonists turned to the British at the very least out of sheer necessity.

Spanish officials were aware of the increasing 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 west into Texas and even New Mexico. O’Reilly had attempted to squelch the contraband trade on the western frontier of Louisiana, but as with his efforts to eliminate the contraband along the Mississippi, he could not stem the long existent trade between Louisiana and Texas.¹⁶⁰ British infiltration into these more western trade networks, particularly the Indian 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

¹⁵⁷ O’Reilly to Unzaga, Havana, 3 April 1770, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 165.

¹⁵⁸ Margaret Dalrymple, ed. *The Merchant of Manchac*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 166.

¹⁵⁹ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 65; Din, “Protecting the ‘Barerra,’” 188-9.

¹⁶⁰ 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* 1998 64(2): 197-218.

for houses” at the mouth of a river along the Gulf of Mexico. Such activity would have paralleled British activity in other Spanish territories about the Caribbean.¹⁶¹

Spanish governors could not deny that the contraband trade had an influence on their interests in the New World. In Louisiana, each Spanish governor had to strike a balance between imperial policy and colonial realities. Recognizing that he simply could not suppress the exchange, Ulloa acknowledged the value of the contraband trade to the colony, describing it as “the lifeblood of the colony.”¹⁶² His successor was not so lenient. Soon after his arrival in New Orleans, O’Reilly became distressed at the entrenchment of British merchants, lamenting that he “found the English entirely in possession of the commerce of this colony.”¹⁶³ Shortly thereafter, he expelled the British merchants from New Orleans.¹⁶⁴ In his re-evaluation of Ulloa’s defense policy, O’Reilly disestablished Fort St. Louis de Natchez, arguing that “that post, far from stopping illegal trade, would be the best and only means of carrying it on...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.”¹⁶⁵ Like Ulloa before him, O’Reilly realized that it was often in the colonists’ best interest to participate in the contraband trade to negotiate their own survival and profit. In a letter to his successor, Unzaga, O’Reilly observed “that the provisions and goods needed by the people of

¹⁶¹ Ripperda to Unzaga, San Antonio de Bexar, 9 Sept 1772, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 209; Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (New York: M.E. Sharp Inc, 1998), 125.

¹⁶² Clark, *New Orleans*, 166; quote, John Preston Moore, “Antonio de Ulloa,” in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 46.

¹⁶³ O’Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 17 Oct 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 104-5.

¹⁶⁴ “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.

¹⁶⁵ O’Reilly to Arriaga, 29 Dec 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 146.

Louisiana, can be obtained only in exchange for products of that province.”¹⁶⁶ Unzaga permitted the contraband to continue because he could not stop it and because the colony depended upon it.¹⁶⁷

Trade in flour best illustrates the tension between imperial policy and compromise at the local level. From the time of the Seven Years War, Louisiana suffered from a scarcity of flour, a staple that British trade networks could readily provide.¹⁶⁸ The last French governor Charles Phillippe Aubry, and Spanish governors Ulloa and O’Reilly all relied upon the English to supply the colony.¹⁶⁹ In 1767, Aubry had made the case to Ulloa that “An English vessel coming from Marseille and another from Amsterdam,” even though Spanish regulations did not permit it, 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.”¹⁷⁰

To complicate matters, colonists often traded their surplus grain to British West Florida merchants. For example, Acadian colonists in the LaFourche District, such as a Mr. Arceneaux, “sold [grain] to the English of Manchac.”¹⁷¹ Because the Spanish had set price controls for grain in New Orleans, the Acadians fared better economically by trading their surplus with the British.¹⁷² During the corn and rice shortage of 1770 Governor Luis de Unzaga bemoaned the fact that “the farmers do not wish to descend to

¹⁶⁶ O’Reilly to Unzaga, April 4, 1770, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 165.

¹⁶⁷ 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.

¹⁶⁸ “Philadelphia, March 19,” 19 March 1767, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (accessed 9 Oct 2009).

¹⁶⁹ Clark, New Orleans, 164-5, 174-5.

¹⁷⁰ Aubry to Ulloa, New Orleans, 16 December 1767, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba legajo 187, reel A[12].

¹⁷¹ Judice to Unzaga, Lafourch, 23 Jan 1773, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Legajo 189A, Folio 470-1.

¹⁷² 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), 131.

sell them.”¹⁷³ Although Nicolas Verret, the commandant at St. James along the Mississippi River, 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.¹⁷⁴ In the ensuing decades, colonists continued to engage in their own networks of trade—most of them officially impermissible—as the Spanish authorities continued in their attempts to prevent the activity.

The need for flour created economic ties to the British Atlantic seaboard and to the Upper Mississippi Valley. An unpredictable trade in flour between Illinois and New Orleans had persisted prior to the outbreak of the Seven Years War.¹⁷⁵ From the 1760s on, British trade networks began to fill the void left by loss of trade with France and the diminution of trade with Illinois. Denis-Nicolas Foucault, the exiting French financial director of Louisiana, turned to Livingston, Randel, and Simpson of New York to import 1,200 barrels of flour in 1767.¹⁷⁶ During the Spanish period, trade with British merchants expanded to firms in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York.¹⁷⁷ A Northern Irishman who had immigrated to Philadelphia and later traded in the West Indies on behalf of several Philadelphia firms, Pollock became a merchant in his own right while in New

¹⁷³ 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.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 173-4.

¹⁷⁵ Carl Ekberg, "The Flour Trade in French Colonial Louisiana," *Louisiana History* 37.3(1996): 261-282.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 280; 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 Scoundres' and 'Libertisme of Trade': Freedom and Regulation in Colonial New York's Fur and Grain Trades," *William and Mary Quarterly* 51.3(1994): 389-418.

¹⁷⁷ Clark, *New Orleans*, 164; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 87; "New York, July 23" 30 July 1767, and "Philadelphia, April 7" 7 April, 1768, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Accessed 9 Oct 2009); For an interpretation of this era in the context of business history, see Thomas Doerflinger "Commercial Specialization in Philadelphia's Merchant Community, 1750-1791," *The Business History Review* 57.1 (1983): 20-49.

Orleans. During O'Reilly's governorship, Oliver Pollock gained entrance to New Orleans and permission to trade in Louisiana when he offered a supply of flour from Baltimore.¹⁷⁸ Thereafter, Pollock continued to supply flour through trade with Philadelphia merchants Willing and Morris. Pollock obtained two land grants on the Mississippi for Thomas Willing and Robert Morris, which he developed as rice plantations. Willing's brother James immigrated to West Florida at Pollock's suggestion to enter a venture with Pollock, an indigo plantation on the Mississippi.¹⁷⁹ Pollock's connections also included Matthew Mather and John Stuart in London.¹⁸⁰ In the 1770s, trade in flour from the Illinois country began to be renewed after the post war turbulence. However, volatile colonial-Indian relations might have resulted in attacks on shipments.¹⁸¹

In the years between the partition and the American Revolution, British trade networks extended into the Lower Mississippi Valley and thrived by the mid 1770s. No longer a neglected region, the entire Mississippi Valley became increasingly contested territory, truly making Louisiana a borderland.¹⁸² As the Upper and Lower Mississippi Valley became increasingly economically intertwined, the significance of New Orleans as a port city also grew.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Clark, *New Orleans*, 174; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 36; Richard Harrison to Oliver Pollock, New Orleans, 7 July 1778, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 294-5 —In 1778, by then an agent for the Continental Congress, Pollock received a letter complaining about a scheme to divert American flour meant for sale in New Orleans to British West Florida. James Alton, "Oliver Pollock, Financier of the Revolution in the West" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 1929 16(1): 69.

¹⁷⁹ Alton, "Oliver Pollock," 68-9; Light T. Cummins, "Oliver Pollock: An Early Anglo Landowner on the Lower Mississippi, 1769-1824," *Louisiana History* 29.1(1988): 38-41.

¹⁸⁰ Clark, *New Orleans*, 178.

¹⁸¹ Judice to Unzaga, Lafourche, 23 Jan 1773, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Legajo 189A, Folio 470-1.

¹⁸² David J. Weber, *Spanish Bourbons and Wild Indians* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 8, n19; Adelman and Aron, 'From Borderlands to Borders,' *American Historical Review*, 104 (1999), 815: "We reserve the designation of borderlands for the contested boundaries between colonial domains."

¹⁸³ Peggy W. Liss and Franklin Knight "Introduction," in Liss and Knight eds., *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 3:

With the coming of the American Revolution, Spanish officials reconsidered their policies and strategies for securing Louisiana as a border. In doing so, they altered Spanish imperial commercial and economic policies and began to aid the rebel colonies on the Atlantic. Long before directing military campaigns, the Spanish officials also opened up trade in Louisiana to the French and to additional Spanish ports, hoping to strengthen the colony and divert trade from the British.¹⁸⁴ At the same time, residents of Spanish Louisiana continued to engage British merchants and planters in trade, continuing to undermine Spanish imperial plans.

The appointment of Bernardo de Galvez signified a period of cooperation with the rebel British colonies.¹⁸⁵ Louisiana's profile was elevated somewhat within the Spanish Empire as the colony became a likely base for a strike against British territory in North America.¹⁸⁶

This war-time contact officially opened New Orleans to distinctly American merchant networks.¹⁸⁷ Captain George Gibson made several trips to New Orleans for gunpowder, which he then transported to Philadelphia, acting in conjunction with the Philadelphia merchants Willing and Morris.¹⁸⁸ Oliver Pollock became an agent for the American Continental Congress and for Virginia and established a trade in gunpowder

"With that commerce [between Euro and Am and up sig of port cities], ports and towns had come into their own, connecting their political, economic, and ideational systems to vast if often ill-defined hinterlands."

¹⁸⁴ "Proclamation concerning Louisiana commerce," 21 Nov 1777, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 243; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 31.

¹⁸⁵ For a study of the American Revolution on the Gulf Coast, see J. Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976).

¹⁸⁶ Light Townsend Cummins "The Galvez Family and Spanish Participation in the Independence of the United States of America," *Revista Complutense de Historia de America* 32(2006): 182.

¹⁸⁷ 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.

¹⁸⁸ Unzaga to Navarro, New Orleans, 20 Sept 1776, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 234; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 97.

with the Spanish as well as trafficking supplies to the Americans at posts in Illinois.¹⁸⁹ Indeed because of the war, merchants such as the Philadelphia based Reed and Forde turned to North American interior waterways to trade with New Orleans. With his operations based in New Orleans, Pollock was able to incorporate trade with British West Floridians such as James Mather, Daniel Clark, Jr., and Benjamin Morgan.¹⁹⁰ Morgan and Mather had a partnership from 1776 until 1783 based out of New Orleans.¹⁹¹ Planter Daniel Clark, Jr., sometimes of West Florida and sometimes of New Orleans also acted agent for Reed and Forde. Evan Jones, a successful British merchant in New Orleans, for another Philadelphia firm, that of Thomas and John Clifford, which had done business for years with Liverpool, London, Bristol, Antigua, and Barbados.¹⁹² The New York firm of Nicholas Low and Co also sent an agent, Michael O'Conner, to New Orleans, where the latter developed business relations with the influential New Orleans merchant Jean Baptiste Macarty.¹⁹³ Clearly, American merchants had also begun to establish their business networks in the Lower Mississippi.

At the same time, colonists of Louisiana continued to engage the British in trade. Two particular incidents shed light on the cargo of British vessels still plying the Mississippi. On April 17, 1777, Galvez ordered the Lower Mississippi swept clear of

¹⁸⁹ Pollock to Piernas, New Orleans, 5 Sept 1780, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol1, 385; Clark, *New Orleans*, 204-5.

¹⁹⁰ Clark, *New Orleans*, 204.

¹⁹¹ Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 240n.

¹⁹² Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, n121; Clark, *New Orleans*, 234; "Just imported in the last Vessels from London and Liverpool," 7 May 1761; "Just Imported to be Sold by Thomas Clifford" 20 May 1762; "The Ship Betsy, Seymour Hood Master, Is taking in for Bristol" 31 Oct 1771; "Just Imported to be Sold by Thomas Clifford and Sons," 30 April 1772; "For Bristol, the Ship Betsey" 12 May 1773; "For Bristol, the Ship Sally, A New Vessel," 4 May 1774; and "For Barbados," 24 Jan 1776, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Accessed 30 Nov 2009).

¹⁹³ Clark, *New Orleans*, 234; for more on Nicholas Low and Co, see Robert Ernst, "Nicholas Low: Merchant and Speculator in Post-Revolutionary New York," *New York History* 75.4(1994): 356-372.

British vessels.¹⁹⁴ Then, in early 1778, in descending the Mississippi to New Orleans, James Willing and a party of patriots raided British West Florida plantations and attacked British vessels.¹⁹⁵ These captured ‘floating warehouses’ and the like carried skins, manufactured goods, and slaves.¹⁹⁶

Both the 1777 and 1778 incidents uncovered British slave-traders operating along the Mississippi. Galvez turned up at least four slave trading vessels: a ship belonging to Morgan and Mather; the *Hercules* and *Camille* belonging to the firm of George and Robert Ross; and the *Sally* belonging to David Ross. Willing’s capture of cargo belonging to both Ross firms implicated them again in the slave trade the following year.

The British had begun importing slaves to the Lower Mississippi Valley as early as 1766, and nearly a ship per month in 1776 entered the mouth of the Mississippi carrying slaves, including two ships that Mather owned, the *Beggar’s Bennison* and the *Swallow*.¹⁹⁷ Louisiana colonists turned to British merchants to supply them with slaves as there existed virtually no legal avenue within the Spanish system for them to obtain slaves from outside of the colony until the war years. Most, if not all of these vessels taken in the 1770s, had obtained slaves in Jamaica before setting sail for the Mississippi.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 97.

¹⁹⁵ Galvez to Villiers, 5 March 1778, and Willing to Galvez, 24 March 1778, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 256, and 260-4; John Campbell to Galvez, 12 March 1778, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Legajo 191, Folio 133-4.

¹⁹⁶ “Declaration of Stephen Shakespeare, his ship Rebecca” and Willing to Galvez, 24 March 1778, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 276 and 263; Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 31, 97, 108.

¹⁹⁷ Jean Pierre LeGlaunec, “Slave Migrations in Spanish and Early American Louisiana: New Sources and New Estimates,” *Louisiana History* 46.2 (2005): 190; *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, ship id numbers 75123, 78194, <http://www.slavevoyages.com>, (Accessed 23 Nov 2009); Gilbert C. Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: the Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803*, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 40. For a study of the slave trade to the Lower Mississippi, see also Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1992).

¹⁹⁸ Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 97-8, 107.

Jamaica had been a key port for British slave-traffickers to the Lower Mississippi Valley from the 1760s forward. The Rosses had long participated in this contraband in human cargo. As early as April of 1767, Robert Ross wrote Antonio de Ulloa offering his services: “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...expressing at the same time a desire to contract for the supply of them.”¹⁹⁹ Ross did business with the Bristol—Kingston merchants Lewbridge Bright and David Duncomb.²⁰⁰ Some West Florida planter merchants 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. London merchant Edward Codrington sent slaves to the gulf coast and Mississippi from Jamaica over the course of the 1770s. Bradley and Harrison was another slave-trading firm engaged in the traffic between Jamaica and the Mississippi.²⁰¹ Through the 1790s, Jamaica remained a key “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 1776.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Robert Ross to Ulloa, 29 April 1767, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Legajo 187A, Reel 1 [9]; for more on Robert Ross see Jack D.L.Holmes “Robert Ross’ Plan for an English Invasion of Louisiana in 1782,” *Louisiana History* 5.2(1964):161-77.

²⁰⁰ 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).

²⁰¹ Fabel, *The Economy of British West Florida*, 32, 33, 105.

²⁰² LeGlaunec, “Slave Migrations” 188, 190; *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, voyage number 24791 (accessed 23 Nov 2009).

Many of these merchants had direct ties to West Florida. John Bradley owned land at Natchez, where he was a local trader beginning in 1767.²⁰³ George Harrison, Bradley's partner, was himself a merchant at Manchac.²⁰⁴ The Scottish brothers and merchants Robert, George, and David Ross all had land grants in West Florida and traded slaves throughout the region, at posts such as Pensacola, Natchez, Point Coupée, and New Orleans.²⁰⁵ Merchant John Fitzpatrick and Planter William Dunbar were smaller-scale, West Florida resident slave traders, middlemen in the larger trade for firms those of the Ross brothers.²⁰⁶

Spain officially entered the American Revolution in 1779. Led by Bernardo de Galvez, Spanish troops, including Louisiana militia, secured East and West Florida for the crown.²⁰⁷ Despite their economic ties to British merchants, traders, and planters, Louisiana colonists participated in the Gulf Coast campaigns that ended the British regime in the region.²⁰⁸ The colonists had relied upon British goods for survival and upon the British slave trade to bolster the labor force and thus the economy of Louisiana, all illegal activities in the eyes of Spanish policy-makers. However, ironically, the contraband trade that had inserted itself into the frontier exchange economy of the region

²⁰³ Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 47n; Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, October 6, 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 71.

²⁰⁴ Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 106n.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 216, 221, 295; 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, Act of Sale John Fitzpatrick to Hubert Rowell, 14 July 1787, and Inventory of Jacob Nash, 23 Dec 1789, *West Florida Papers*, reel 1, 142, 218, 462;

²⁰⁶ Dalrymple, *Merchant of Manchac*, 215, 216; William Dunbar, *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar* (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Historical Society, 1930), 9 Feb 1777, 44; 4 Sept 1777, 50; 12 Dec 1777, 55; 21 Dec 1777, 56; 4 Jan 1778, 57; Act of Sale, David Ross to James Smith, *Pintado Papers*, reel 4, container 5.

²⁰⁷ See Cummins, "The Galvez Family," 188-191.

²⁰⁸ For more on the Spanish regiments involved in the campaigns see King Robinson, "Sustaining the Glory: Spain's Melting Pot Army in the Lower Mississippi Valley, 1779-1781," *Southeast Louisiana Review* 1(Fall 2008):5-23.

may very well have enabled the Louisiana militia and leaders to succeed in their defeat of the British during the military campaigns.

With these latest geopolitical shifts, the Americans, Spanish officials, and residents of the Spanish borderlands grappled with ways to negotiate a new balance of power in North America. Two central problems arose for the Spanish in their continued and persistent attempt to create a barrier out of Louisiana and the Floridas. Firstly, Spanish officials recognized that the borderlands Indians, such as the Creek, were their most essential allies in acting as a buffer against American expansion. Secondly, the Americans had begun during the war to request free navigation of the Mississippi.

Alliance with the Creek required a trade in manufacture goods that the Spanish Empire simply could not provide. The British firm of Panton, Leslie and Co lobbied to fill the void. William Panton, like other British loyalists, had fled South Carolina and Georgia for safe haven in Florida.²⁰⁹ The role that Panton proposed to play required the expansion of his own operations from East Florida to the Gulf Coast. Panton argued that his firm could aid the Spanish in “supplying of the wants and needs of the Indians” because “our capital and credit, together with that of our connections in England, are fully adequate for the purpose and object proposed.”²¹⁰ In his letter to Jose de Galvez, East Florida Governor Zespedes argued that the business connection between Panton and

²⁰⁹ Panton’s partners included John Leslie, Thomas Forbes, Charles McLatchy, and William Alexander. William S. Coker, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1986), ix-x; see also Wilbur Henry Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774 to 1785; the Most Important Documents pertaining thereto* (Deland: Florida State Historical Society, 1929) 2 vols. For the exodus of loyalists to the Bahamas and West Indies, see vol 1, 182-210.

²¹⁰ Panton to Zespedes, attached to Zespedes to Galvez, St. Augustine, 16 Aug 1784, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 2, 114-5.

the Creek leader Alexander McGillivray would also serve Spanish interests.²¹¹ Panton and McGillivray's hostility toward the Americans further cemented their alliance and commitment to preventing the Americans from tapping into the fur trade.

Over the course of the 1780s, Panton, Leslie and Company secured a de facto monopoly that strengthened economic ties between the Spanish borderlands and the British Atlantic. Panton, Leslie and Co had long established ties with merchant houses throughout the British Atlantic with whom they continued to do business after the American Revolution.²¹² Even company warehouses were not restricted to continental North America, for the most important warehouse was at Nassau, as was the company headquarters.²¹³ At first, the West Floridian firm Mather and Strother also competed for the Indian trade but withdrew after the initial enforcement of the 1787 Commercial Regulations.²¹⁴ As the Spanish increasingly favored Panton, Leslie and Co, John Miller, previously a merchant at Manchac and associated with Mather and Strother, attempted to challenge the dominance of the firm by engaging in contraband himself off the Gulf Coast from his base in Nassau.²¹⁵ Indeed, Nassau was an important port for the trade with the Indians. It had become something of a refuge for loyalists, including Panton, as

²¹¹ Zespedes to Galvez, 16 Aug 1784, St Augustine, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 2, 108-9; Coker, *Indian Traders*, 24; McGillivray probably met Panton through his father John McGillivray father, himself a Scottish Indian trader, perhaps as early as the 1760s.

²¹² Coker, *Indian Traders*, 71.

²¹³ J. Leitch Wright, Jr "The Queen's Redoubt Explosion in the Lives of William A. Bowles, John Miller and William Panton," in William S. Coker and Robert Rea, eds., *Anglo-Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast during the American Revolution* (Pensacola: Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1982), 187; other warehouses were located at St. Marks at Apalachee, on the St. John's River, and on the Mississippi; Coker, *Indian Traders*, 124, 126; Gail Saunders, *Bahamian Loyalists and their Slaves* (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers, 1983), 37.

²¹⁴ Coker, *Indian Traders*, 73, 80; Zespedes to Galvez, 16 August 1784, St Augustine, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 2, 111.

²¹⁵ Coker, *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. For a connection between Dunmore and Robert Ross, see Holmes, "Robert Ross' Plan," 164.

well as men such as William Augustus Bowles and John Miller, enemies and rivals of Panton. Miller employed Bowles to trade with the Indians. For Bowles, who had lived among the Lower Creek, this improved his chances of creating a confederacy of sorts among the Southeastern Indians.²¹⁶ However, the Spanish authorities turned increasingly to Panton, Leslie and Co to handle the Indian trade.²¹⁷ Thus, British loyalist merchants became officially integrated into the Spanish system. No longer did they solely have to resort to contraband, although the rivals of Panton, Leslie and Co did just that.

Meanwhile, American pressure to open the Mississippi persisted. During the Revolution, correspondence between Revolutionary leaders, such as Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, and Bernardo de Galvez, revealed the intertwinement of alliances and commercial interests.²¹⁸ The magnitude of American westward expansion, especially along waterways such as the Ohio and Cumberland, began to escalate dramatically. While Britain had sought after the Seven Years War to contain its colonists and to prevent their settlement beyond the line decreed by the Proclamation of 1763, the United States supported such development. Rogue states, adventurers, and filibusterers also entered the mix, challenging the sovereignty of the Spanish holdings and of the United States. The developing and constantly growing demographic and economic pressure forced the Spanish to reconfigure their policies, both at the imperial and at the local level in the potentially turbulent borderlands. In 1784, Spain closed the Mississippi to the Americans, for Spain's policy toward the United States had taken a more hostile turn

²¹⁶ Wright, "The Queen's Redoubt Explosion," 182, 189; For more on Bowles and his operationis in the American Southeast, see Jane Landers, *Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 100-109.

²¹⁷ Coker, *Indian Traders*, xi.

²¹⁸ Quotes, Henry to the Governor of Louisiana, Williamsburg, 20 Oct 1777; Henry to the Governor of Louisiana, Williamsburg, 14 Jan 1778; Rutledge to Galvez, Charles Town, 23 Jan, 1778; Jefferson to Galvez, Williamsburg, 8 Nov 1779; *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 1, 241-2, 248-250, 250, 362.

after the Treaty of Versailles as the United States became the new territorial enemy to the North and East.²¹⁹

In 1787, anticipating a possible war with Britain, Spanish policy makers began to favor the Americans again. They allowed American shipments to come to New Orleans and incorporated American settlers into defense designs.²²⁰ Indeed, on April 20, 1790 Miro officially “permitted to every good Inhabitant to come down & settle ... 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.”²²¹ In short, Spain also hoped to profit from the expanding American economy. 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.”²²² By the close of 1790, reports reached New Orleans of boatload after boatload of goods and settlers coming down the Mississippi River. Mostly flatboats, often from Kentucky and Pennsylvania, these vessels carried tobacco, meat, furs, bearskins, lime, tallow, lard, candles, saddles, whiskey, and of course flour.²²³

By 1790, therefore, Spanish East Florida, West Florida, and Louisiana employed British loyalists to supply their Indian trade, attempting to hold the Americans at bay, at

²¹⁹ Gilbert C. Din, “The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro in Spanish Louisiana,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73(1969-1970): 161.

²²⁰ Ibid., 162; Din “Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790,” *Louisiana History* 11(1970): 197.

²²¹ “Miro’s Offer to Western Americans,” 20 April 1789, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 2, 270; this again could arguably fit with the Bourbon aim for maximizing imperial profit.

²²² “Winchester, March 18,” 1 Jan 1789, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, (Accessed 9 Oct 2009).

²²³ See the following documents in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, vol 2: Grand Pre to Miro, Natchez, 12 March 1790, (313); Grand Pre to Miro, 14 April 1790, 323-4; Grand Pre to Miro, 22 April 1790, 326-327; Grand Pre to Miro, 24 April 1790, 328-9; Grand Pre to Miro, 16 May 1790, 342-4; Grand Pre to Miro, 25 May 1790, 345-348; Act of Sale Israel Dodge to Don Joseph Vasquez, 1789, and Power of Attorney of Israel Dodge to Seth Lewis, *West Florida Papers*, Reel 1, 416-419, Fo 51, and p 514.

the same time as these Spanish colonies incorporated Americans into trade, immigration, and defense strategy.

Between 1765 and 1790, the frequent geopolitical shifts affecting the Lower Mississippi Valley forced nearly constant re-evaluation of Spanish commercial and defense policies at the same time as these shifts created a very fluid moment for residents of the region to negotiate their own balance of power. The conflict between expanding British and American trade networks and Spanish imperial policy reveals the tension between imperial defense, colonial interests, and commerce, as well as the disconnect between imperial policies and realities of negotiating survival and alliances at the local colonial level. During the second half of the eighteenth century, these trade networks increasingly linked the Gulf Coast and New Orleans and their hinterlands to the British Atlantic at the same time as American networks of trade strengthened commercial connections through the waterways of the interior North America. While the trade included such basic commodities as flour and ammunition and the traffic of African slaves, because of the export of furs and the ever mounting American interest in bringing frontier surplus to market, Spanish officials and American settlers, merchants, and politicians became increasingly aware of the strategic importance of the port of New Orleans. The previously neglected Mississippi Valley had become a borderland with internationally recognized strategic and economic value.

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