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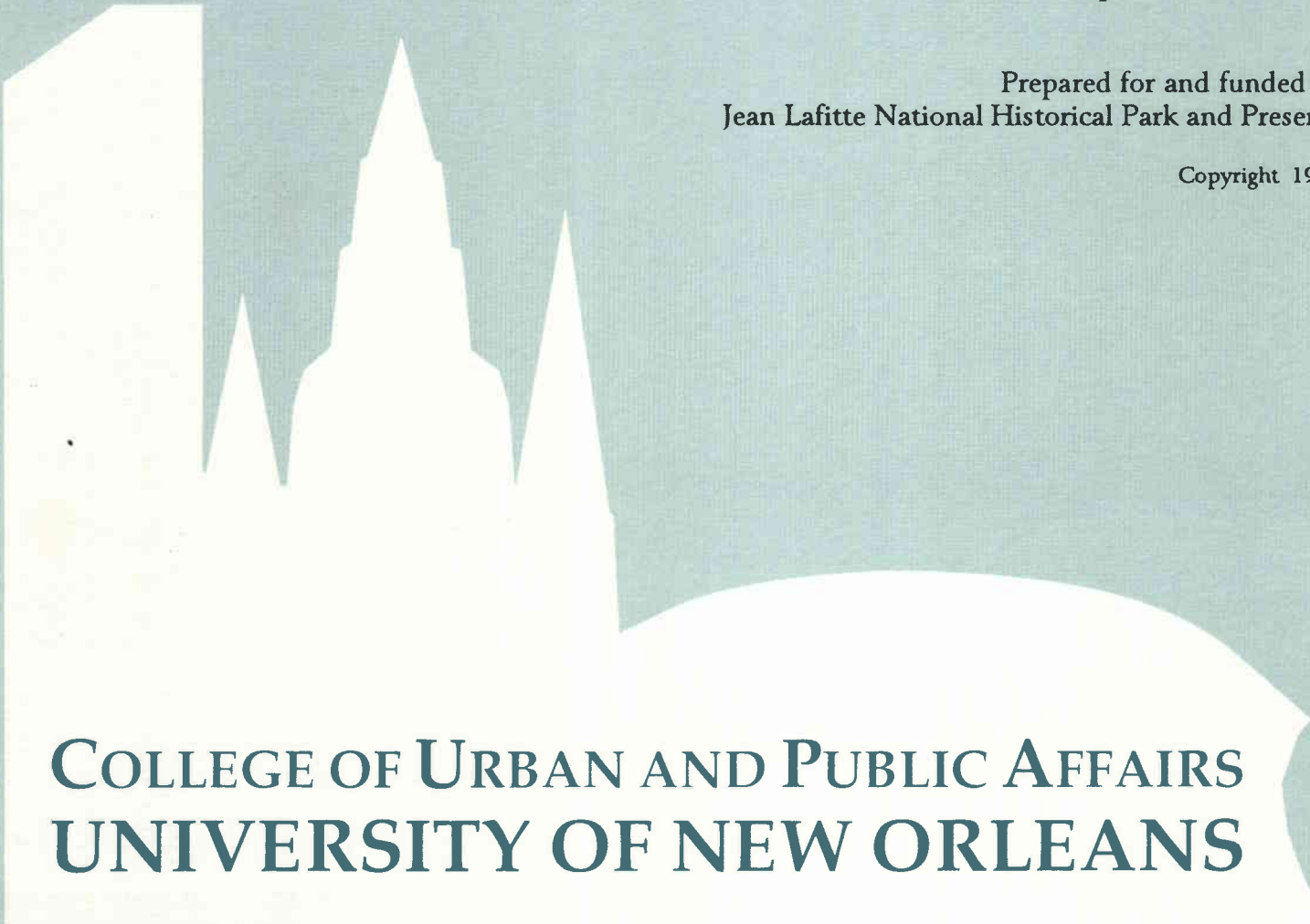
College of Urban and Public Affairs

African Americans in New Orleans Before the Civil War

Raphael Cassimere, Jr.

Prepared for and funded by
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COLLEGE OF URBAN AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

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NEW ORLEANS
BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR**

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A Guide to Using African Americans in New Orleans Before the Civil War

African Americans in New Orleans Before the Civil War can be used as an important database on the early history of New Orleans in general, and the New Orleans African American community in particular. It utilizes standard older works, as well as some of the most recent research in the field of Louisiana history. First, it obviously touches on the early founding and development of New Orleans in the eighteenth century. Second, it shows the importance of African Americans to the city's founding. Additionally, it shows the early interaction among Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans in creating a new "Creole" culture, separate from, yet reflective of the three cultures which contributed to the new amalgam. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this work is its illustration of the important role that the early presence of a large number of Africans in New Orleans made to the creation of a very different French settlement. In other words, it was the large African presence which made New Orleans so different from other French settlements in the new world such as, Montreal, Detroit, Mobile or Biloxi. One can readily experience the unique culture of New Orleans as illustrated in its architecture, cemeteries, churches, cuisine, festivals, and historic battlegrounds.

This work can serve as an important source on the early migration of Europeans and Africans to the lower Mississippi River valley and their interaction with Native Americans. Prior to the founding of New Orleans, Frenchmen had already settled in the upper regions of the Mississippi, and subsequently, they acquired an interest in the lower valley as well. After the founding of New Orleans in 1718, the migration of both Europeans and Africans came by way of New Orleans and continued for more than a century, which reinforced New Orleans' image as an exotic place within the United States.

This document provides some insights into the African slave trade into Louisiana. Most of Louisiana's earliest slaves came into New Orleans during the 1720s. Most of them came from the Senegambia region of Africa, they not only brought with them, but retained, much of their native culture. As a result African cultural survivals are more widespread in Louisiana, than in most other slave states. It also explains why 18th century Louisiana slavery developed so differently from slavery in the British North American colonies during the same period of time.

Equally important to serving as a database on migration and the slave trade is the role of African Americans in the creation of a new culture, often referred to as "Creole," which it was, but not necessarily "French," as most people perceived it to be. This monograph illustrates in a number of ways the contributions of Africans to this new Creole culture, which in some cases, reflect more African, rather than French antecedents.

The African American imprint is further illustrated in the role of early Africans in settling in the swamps. The many swamps which surround New Orleans serve as a rich source

of folktale and half-truths and legends, as well as fact. For example, long before the fabled Jean Lafitte carved out his privateering base from the Barataria area, slaves and free blacks had mastered the intricacies of the swamps and connecting arteries, and not only freely navigated its maze, but also learned to make a profit from the rich cypress forests which abound there. Any tour of these areas would be incomplete without explaining the role of the swamps in providing a haven or home for runaway slaves or newly emancipated free men of color.

African Americans in New Orleans Prior to the Civil War amply demonstrates the changes in Louisiana slavery during the transition from Spanish to French rule. In the chapter, "Spanish Ambivalence," it documents the number of legal changes that occurred in the status of both the slaves and the free persons of color. It also explains the role that Spain played in creating a large class of free persons of color, even as it greatly expanded the slave population. And despite suggestions to the contrary, this work provides concrete evidence of the strong bonds of cooperation between slaves and free men of color, as evidenced by their cooperation in several slave rebellions. These bonds of cooperation continued throughout the pre-Civil War period.

One is also able to discover the military tradition of Louisiana's African American community. They fought with the French in the Natchez War, alongside of the Spanish during the Revolutionary War, for Spain against maroons in the swamps, and with the Americans during the War of 1812, where a number of them distinguished themselves during the battle of New Orleans. Some of those including the "drummer boy" Jordan Noble are buried in historic cemeteries which surround the original city.

This work offers some important insights into the economic, educational, and religious opportunities for both slaves and free persons of color during the antebellum period. Some of the educational and religious institutions which they built still stand as testimony to their ability to achieve even during adversity.

Some of their contributions to the city's distinctive cuisine is included within the pages of this project. And of course their artistic efforts are chronicled in the last chapter titled, "Americanization."

Perhaps one of the best ways to utilize this work is to use it as a source for a real or imaginary tour of old New Orleans to get a feel of what Africans Americans would have experienced during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The tour begins with a visit upriver. To get a sense of the exhilaration that Bienville must have experienced when he first saw the crescent-shaped bend along the river in 1699, one can board almost any vessel which travels the Mississippi. Next try to imagine what Bienville observed when he viewed the area from the river to the lake. Of course his view was not obstructed by man-made buildings. Still, one can get a sense of his experience by standing on top of the flood protection levee which envelops the north end of the campus of the University

of New Orleans. Here one can view the area from Lake Pontchartrain to the Mississippi River, or more accurately, one can see the tallest buildings in downtown New Orleans, near the river.

To get a sense of the New Orleans to which slaves came during the first decade of its existence, one can stand on the top of the levee behind the French Quarter and look directly across the river at Algiers Point where the old company plantation was located. Here the French housed newly arrived slaves to acclimate them to their new surroundings. Many of these slaves eventually came to the east bank to be baptized in St. Louis church, or to work inside of the little town which was wholly enclosed within walls. Some of the slaves helped to build the city's levee, unloaded ships, and worked to clear more land to provide home for new settlers. Behind some of those homes stood slave cabins where slaves were quartered. Africans frequented the many taverns of the city during the French period. Later second and third generation black New Orleans artists designed some of the wrought iron balconies and fences which still adorn homes and public buildings in the French Quarter. Those who lived outside the city often came in to sell their wares, at a place that came to be known as "Congo Square," which now fronts the city's municipal auditorium, the temporary home of the state's land-based casino.

The French Quarter abounds with all types of eating establishments, from those that serve "four star" fare to those that offer a poor boy sandwich. Most include on their menu, a very popular dish with strong African origins, gumbo.

Immediately, adjacent to Congo Square are several important African American landmarks such as St. Augustine Catholic Church, the city's first predominantly African American parish. It is located in the old Faubourg Tremé, in the heart of New Orleans' antebellum free black community. Just southwest of St. Augustine Church is located St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church which is one of the oldest black Protestant churches in the city. It was closed a few years before the Civil War because its free and unfree parishioners worshipped together. The state's first African American lieutenant-governor, Oscar Dunn, was one of its parishioner. In between both of these churches is St. Louis Cemetery Number Two. Located in its third square are the graves of some of the most prominent persons of color who lived during the antebellum and postbellum period, including: Jordan Noble, the colored drummer boy during the War of 1812, Marie C. Couvent, benefactor of one of the first colored schools and Jean B. Roudanez, publisher of the first black newspaper in New Orleans, as well as Marie Laveau, the famed voodoo queen, long mistakenly, believed buried in St. Louis Cemetery Number One.

Downriver from the city in adjacent St. Bernard Parish one can find in the Chalmette National Cemetery, the burial sites of a number of black Civil War veterans, some of them members, or the sons of members, of Louisiana's free colored militia. This author remembers as a child, accompanying his grandmother to visit the grave of his great-great-grandfather, a civil War veteran. St. Bernard Parish is also the home of some of the swamps which housed maroons, who proved so troublesome to the Spanish. Adjacent to St. Bernard Parish is Plaquemines Parish where Jackson made land grants to free men of color who fought for the United States during the War of 1812. Thereafter, they, and their descendants have been known as "Free Jacks."

Away from the center of the city, one can visit neighboring plantations in surrounding parishes where slaves labored to produce sugar, cotton and tobacco crops. A large section of Audubon Park was once a part of Etienne de Boré's plantation, where slaves helped to produce the first marketable sugar in Louisiana. If one ventures upriver toward Baton Rouge, one finds still standing a number of antebellum plantations worked by slaves. About thirty miles north of the capital city is located Port Hudson. In the national Civil War cemetery located there, one can find the burial sites of many black Civil War soldiers. A large number of them were killed in this first battle which involved colored troops.

Farther north, going west toward Opelousas, or east toward Natchez, one can still find antebellum plantations where slaves worked on cotton plantations, where, correspondingly, their own ancestors had planned one of the largest slave conspiracies in the history of the United States in 1795, near the Poydras plantation in the old Pointe Coupee District.

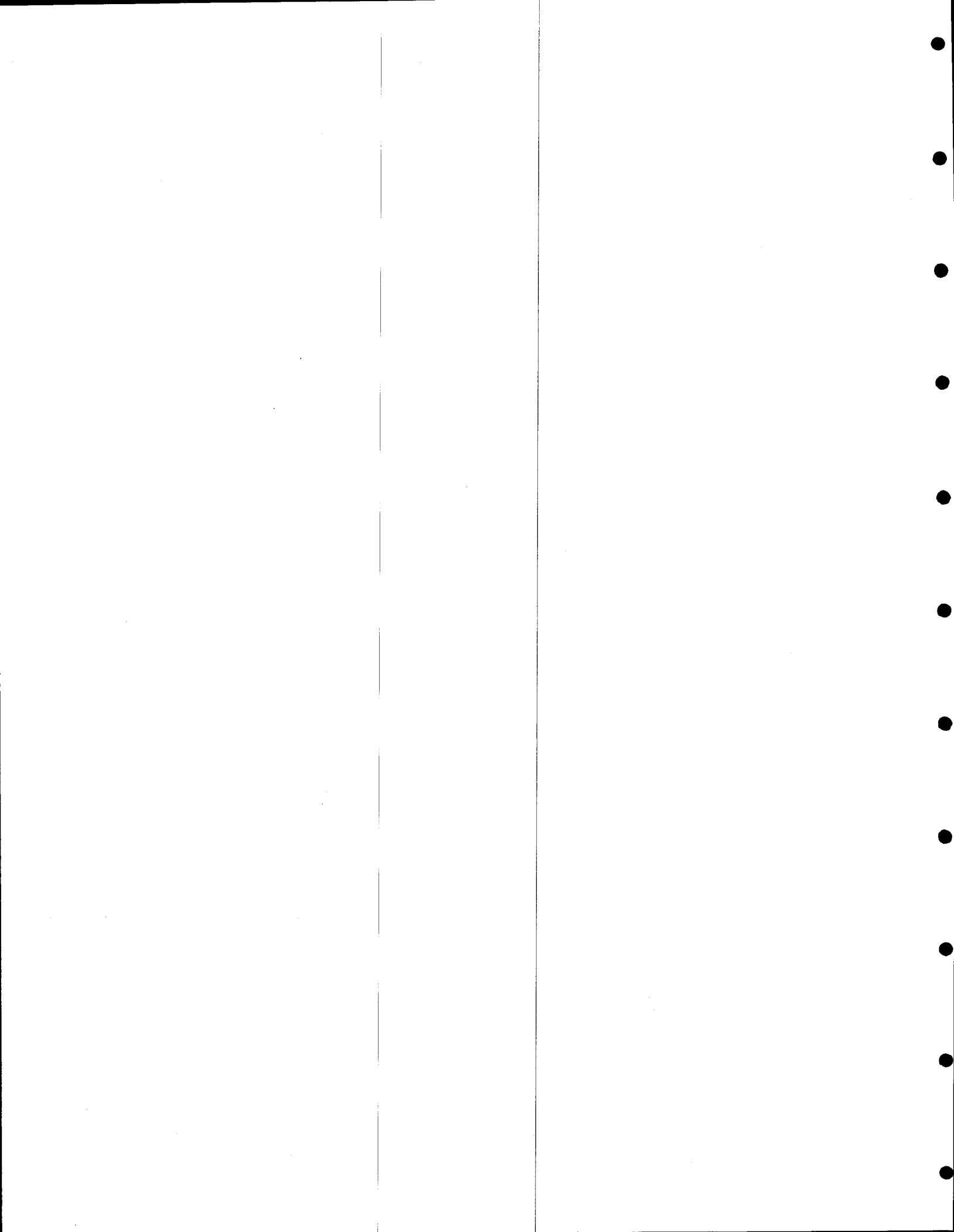
During the course of the tour one would encounter schools and places with names such as Macarty, Ricard, Couvent and Noble over public schools. All of these were named for free persons of color who achieved some prominence during this period.

Finally, no trip would be complete without a visit to New Orleans' world-famous French Market. One can still shop from the produce-stalls, just like slaves and free persons did on a daily basis. One can not only sample much of the local fare, to which African Americans have contributed so much, but one can see, on almost any day, a continuation of the festive tradition of street vendors selling arts and crafts, itinerant street entertainers, dancers or jazz musicians performing for tips. One can still find both natives and tourists engaged in spontaneous celebrations of drinking, singing and letting "les bons temps rouler," as could happen only in New Orleans, a city made unique by its strong African origins.

While this work makes no claim to be a comprehensive or exhaustive study of African American history of New Orleans during the pre-Civil War period, it provides a significant database of the various contributors who helped to create this "city that care forgot."

Raphael Cassimere, Jr.
December, 1995

AFRICAN AMERICANS
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INTRODUCTION

The African presence in New Orleans has been continuous and pronounced from the founding of the city in 1718. For most of the first century of its existence the population of New Orleans was predominantly African. Although most of the Africans came to New Orleans as slaves, few had been slaves in their own homelands. They came to, indeed, participated in building this new French provincial city, and stamped much of its new culture with their own imprints. They came early. Most of the original Africans came during the period, 1719-31, and most of them came from the Senegambia region of Africa.

While the French designed the city, named its streets, and governed it, the new African migrants helped to transform this settlement from a mere French outpost into a heterogenous mixture of French, African and Indian, and thus, a new culture, "Creole," which reflected its three cultural antecedents. Indeed, before too long, even the "French" spoken in New Orleans reflected words and phrases of Bambara, Fulbe, or Wolof origin.

Initially the French did not plan to employ large numbers of Africans in their new city. Instead, they expected to utilize large numbers of African laborers on the new tobacco plantations they began to create upriver from New Orleans. The Company of the West, originally under the leadership of the enterprising, John Law, envisioned an important, but limited role for its African slaves. They would work to enrich their masters, who in turn would enrich the company. The slaves, however, went first, not to French planters, but to Governor

Bienville's Indian allies who lived in close proximity to New Orleans, which became Louisiana's capital city in 1722. The Indians, at worse, treated the Africans more like hired servants, than slaves. Indeed, in many respects, Indian slavery closely resembled traditional African slavery. Neither relegated their slaves to the level of beasts. Additionally, soon after arriving, the largely African male population began to intermarry with their Indian hosts which strengthened the bonds between both, a bond which lasted a very long time. It was ironic, then, that the initial acculturation of the Africans to Louisiana resulted not from Franco-African relationships, but Indian-Africans.

Indians and Africans shared a common reverence for the land. They lived in harmony with it and took from the land only what they needed. Neither fenced in, or closed off their land. Ownership of the land implied one's right to use it for its benefits. Long before environmentalists raised concerns about conservation and ecological balance, Africans learned to make the swamps around New Orleans profitable. They utilized it for foods, used its products to craft market goods, and in time of trouble it provided them with refuge. Unlike Europeans, they did not envision someone permanently alienating vast stretches of land to the exclusion of everyone else. Africans, however, unlike Indians, already knew how to cultivate land with metal hoes, or plows. They also had extensive knowledge of many crops that the Europeans would cultivate in the New World, such as corn, potatoes, melons, wheat and rice. Many of the slaves had raised domesticated fowls, beef, sheep and swine. Neither individual Indians nor Africans accumulated much personal goods, but held most wealth in common. While they lived in organized societies, and recognized legitimate authorities, they arrived at most of their decisions by consensus, rather than formal vote.

The strong Indian-African alliance was tested in the Natchez War from 1729-31. The destruction of the proud Natchez civilization was paradoxically beneficial to the Africans. While the French subdued the Indians, they remained apprehensive about future deadly coalitions of Africans and Indians. To forestall that possibility, they surrendered some control over their slaves and transformed what had begun as a barbarous slavery into moderate servitude. Thereafter most masters allowed their slaves to control their off-hours. Many slaves who lived in remote plantations found themselves in New Orleans at night or on the weekends. The French allowed the slaves to develop their own market economy. The slaves provided much of the town's fish, game, drift woods, or garden produce. This slave market remained an important part of the city's economy for more than a century. Even after France turned over Louisiana to Spain, the Spanish could not completely restore the old discipline. The Spanish introduced the practice of self-purchase and expanded the possibility of emancipation. This greatly increased the number of free persons of color, which in part, gave New Orleans the largest free black community in the deep South during the antebellum period.

When masters imposed too much control and inflicted too much punishment, slaves either fought back or ran away, often into the swamps which they mastered long before the Europeans. Neither the rigors of a horrid slave trade, nor the trauma of family separation could vanquish completely the strong communal ties of their ancient homelands. And it was these communal ties which enabled them to survive. They worked together, fought together, ate together, danced and often ran away together to organize new maroon societies in the wilderness.

For a long time Africans were the largest racial group in the society. While there was not complete safety in those numbers, the ever present fear that those numbers could conspire

against them forced whites to recognize at least some of their basic rights. While these fears never lessened, after the American cession, when the white population finally outstripped the black population, it became easier to control the large black population. The Americans also reduced the Indian population, which had often allied themselves with the black community.

The Americans brought with them a different conception of slave ownership, and practically reduced the slave to a level of an inanimate possession. They also reduced the rights of the growing free black population which helped to strengthen the bond between free and unfree blacks.

Despite these new challenges, the black population, slave and free, grew even larger under American domination. While life for most slaves, and even free Negroes, did not improve during the antebellum period, many black individuals became wealthier, better educated and gained a greater degree of acceptance by the white community than in many other parts of the United States.

Black New Orleanians fought for the French against the Indians in the eighteenth century, black soldiers served in military campaigns for the Spanish. They fought bravely along side of Andrew Jackson in the War of 1812. Others would later fight for the United States during the Civil War. Some became military heroes and are buried in prominent places in various cemeteries around the state.

Despite the many contributions of African Americans to the city of New Orleans, although their contributions were reflected in practically every aspect of the city's culture, they remained an anomaly, apart from, rather than a part of, the greater community. But they were too numerous to be hidden, and it would not be too long after emancipation before they asserted

themselves, and boldly demanded recognition of their rights to be what their ancestors had always been - New Orleanians!



CHAPTER ONE - THE BEGINNINGS

Early Royal Efforts

The early history of African Americans¹ in New Orleans is intertwined with that of the city itself since some of them resided there from the beginning. A few black slaves assisted Governor Jean Baptiste, Sieur de Bienville, in laying out the first site in 1718. Although the early French explorer, Robert de la Salle, had first sighted the area on his initial voyage in 1682, the French did not establish a settlement in this vicinity for nearly forty years. Instead, la Salle's successor, Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, laid out settlements on the Gulf Coast rather than on the Mississippi River.²

During the first two decades of its existence, while the Louisiana colony expanded geographically, its population remained minuscule, certainly by comparison with its British neighbors along the Atlantic coast, and even its French antecedents in Quebec. On the other hand, by 1718, if Louisiana had not become a thriving success attracting thousands, at least colonial officials had developed a string of small settlements stretching from Mobile in the east to Natchitoches in the west and Natchez the north. These early settlements encompassed hundreds of miles, and certified France's claim to the area.

Louis XIV tried a number of schemes to increase the population and to stimulate Louisiana's economy, but to no avail. The government issued unrealistic instructions for the earliest settlers: to begin a silk industry, although there were no silk worms, and to search for

non existent precious metals. Because those who made decisions resided in France, they often lacked real knowledge of the New World environment. In response to complaints of a scarcity of beef, the government encouraged the settlers to tame buffalo calves, although few buffaloes roamed this far south, and even to this day, buffaloes are virtually impossible to tame. Louisiana had additional problems. Because it was so far from France, Louisiana was always vulnerable to foreign attack, especially from the British, and during its earliest years from the Spanish, prior to the accession of a Bourbon king to the Spanish throne. For much of the French period its scattered settlements were tiny and isolated. Additionally, extremes in weather and climate made it unattractive for most potential migrants.

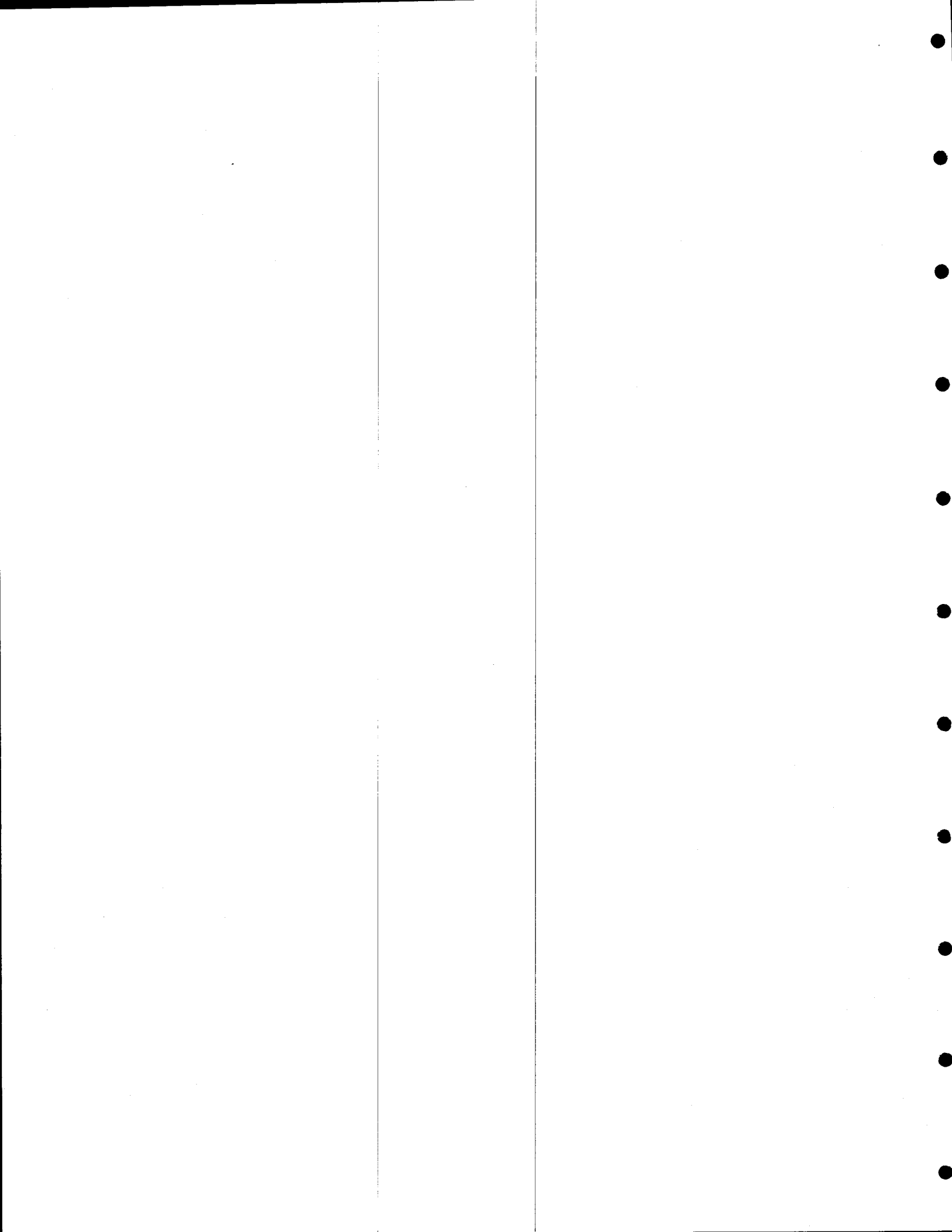
In 1702 when The War of the Spanish Succession (Queen Anne's War) broke out, just three years after Iberville had established the first settlement, Fort Maurepas, near Biloxi, Mississippi, a British naval blockade made it almost impossible for supply ships to get to Louisiana. Consequently, within two years nearly half of the population died from starvation or untreated disease. By 1704 the population at Fort Maurepas fell to 85 before a relief ship carrying food and new settlers temporarily increased it to 200. By the time the war ended in 1713, despite the fact that more than 1200 migrants had come, the total population stood barely above 400.³

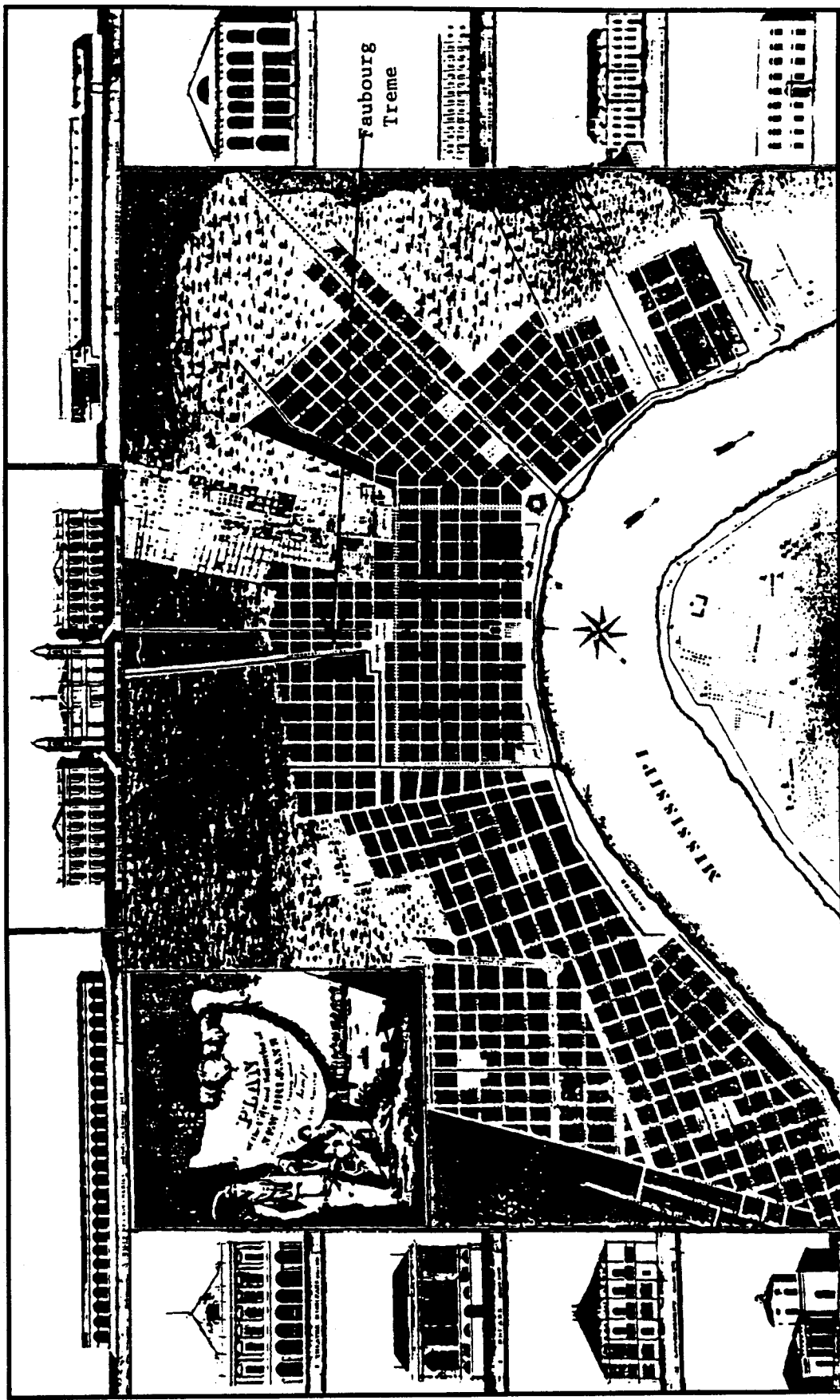
Proprietary Louisiana

Finally, in 1712, the almost continual drain on the crown's finances caused Louis XIV to turn Louisiana into a proprietary, under the control of Antoine Crozat, Marquis de Chatel.

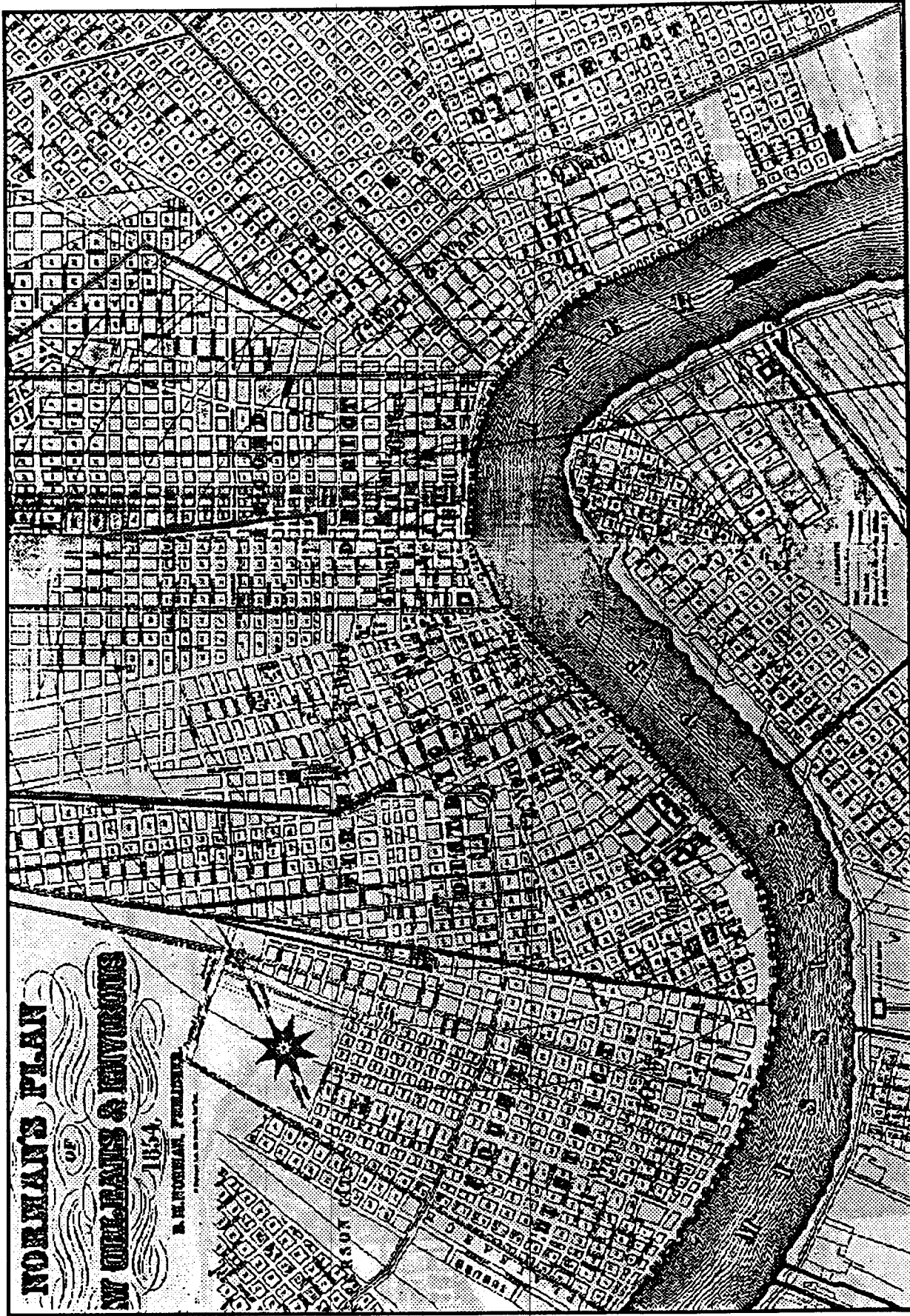
Louis hoped that Louisiana would become a successful proprietary such as the British had developed in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Crozat, however, enjoyed no such success. Because his charter gave him a monopoly on all trade, he sold high, but bought low. Crozat never invested enough of his own money to improve conditions significantly. By 1717, he conceded failure and begged Philip of Orleans, regent for the new five-year-old King Louis XV, to release him from his charter. By that time Louisiana's population had inched from 400 to about 550, including twenty slaves, mostly Indians.⁴

In September, 1717, Philip turned Louisiana over to an ambitious Scotsman, John Law, the founding director-general of crown finances and the Company of the West, which eventually took over all French colonies. Law, a Parisian *bon vivant* proposed a novel financial scheme based on a state chartered bank and the issuance of paper money. At first the company enjoyed tremendous success as it attracted investors from all sectors of the French society. Within two years one share of stock increased sixteen times its original price. Law's company proved so successful that it merged with most other overseas trading companies and formed a huge conglomerate called, the Company of the Indies. He envisioned a bright future for Louisiana, which he believed was the key to the success of his new financial empire. For Louisiana to succeed, however, its population had to increase, and quickly. In October, 1717, Law reappointed Bienville governor of Louisiana and authorized him to relocate the capital on the bank of the Mississippi.⁵ Law not only named the new capital New Orleans, in honor of the regent, he also personally designed and named the first streets, all for important investors or supporters of his company.⁶ Bienville and about fifty workers arrived from Mobile the following Spring. He selected a site that he first saw in 1699, when he, along with his brother, Iberville,





New Orleans 1817



Faubourg Tremé

made their maiden voyage up the river.⁷ He chose the area on one of the crescent shaped bends in the river, a little more than a hundred miles from the mouth of the river. Bienville observed that local Indians congregated in this area on trading days, and he also noticed that, at that particular point, the Mississippi was practically joined to Lake Pontchartrain by way of a bayou, later called the Bayou St. John. This bayou would enable ships to save time and avoid potential dangerous sandbars in the river by going to and from the Gulf by way of the bayou and the lakes.⁸

The Founding of New Orleans

A few of the workers who accompanied Bienville were African slaves, who helped construct the Vieux Carré or the modern day French Quarter of New Orleans. From this modest beginning African Americans now trace a continuous presence within the city.

This initial small group of African residents was quickly followed by thousands more who came to Louisiana during the decade of the twenties.⁹ The French government required Law's company to send at least three thousand African slaves to Louisiana within ten years. In order to achieve that goal, Law developed a plan to procure slaves directly from Africa. Early instructions specified that traders import only "well-made and healthy Negroes...not more than thirty years of age."¹⁰

Because the Company of the West joined an already crowded field of slave traders, organized largely along national lines, the new French traders had to compete for limited trading space. One of the few remaining sites on the slave coast of Africa was in the area at the mouth

of the Senegal River. Here the French found slaves who already possessed desirable skills in cultivating rice, maize, and tobacco. In 1718, the company sent out its first ships, the *St. Louis*, led by a Captain du Colombier, and the *Aurore*, under the leadership of Captain Herpin. Captain Herpin received specific instructions to bring back three or four hogsheads of rice to be used for planting and slaves skilled in its cultivation. Because swamp lands surrounded so much of the Louisiana area, Law believed that rice represented a major potential for the colony's fledgling economy.¹¹

Establishing A Tobacco Economy

Law wanted most of the slaves to work on the new tobacco plantations that he began to carve out of the huge Louisiana territory, which stretched from east of Mobile, as far west as Spanish Texas, and as far north as the Great Lakes area, connecting it with Quebec. In order to induce wealthy migrants to Louisiana, he made huge land grants called concessions. He reserved Arkansas, named for local Indians, as his personal concession. Law located most of the early plantation grants well north of New Orleans around present day Natchez, Mississippi, and north of the Baton Rouge area, not far from present day Opelousas and Natchez¹² He did not want to keep many slaves in New Orleans, which had a limited need for domestic or urban slaves. He was convinced that Louisiana could never become self sufficient unless it developed at least one cash crop to stabilize its economy. Other French colonies such as Saint Domingue and Martinique developed their economy almost wholly around sugar. British colonies, such as Maryland and Virginia, had earlier created tobacco-based economies.¹³

Law instructed company agents to send most of the slaves upriver from New Orleans to the Natchez and Arkansas regions. Initially, he expected Africans to work along side Indian slaves and French **engagés** (indentured servants) in order to learn the plantation routine. Eventually, Africans would replace most, if not all, of the Indians and **engagés** in the fields.¹⁴

Early Louisiana Servitude

Like their Canadian counterparts, some early Louisiana colonists had demanded African slave laborers almost from the beginning of the founding of the colony. But Louis XIV had opposed using slaves. Instead he preferred to settle his North American colonies with free peasants and **engagés** who would become free after three years of service. Louis also lacked the financial resources necessary for a successful slave trade, one that would have been even more costly because Louisiana lay well beyond the normal slave trading routes, already well established by the beginning of the 18th century. As an inducement to wealthy migrants, the government promised large land grants, but expected them to transport and maintain servants and slaves at their own expense. Most of the early Louisiana residents came directly from France, while a few came from Quebec, including the brothers Le Moyne and their longtime companion, Henri de Tonti, the first district commandant at Mobile.¹⁵ Because most masters and servants had no prior experience living in the New World, both found it difficult to adjust to the major climatic changes they faced.

Most of the early Louisiana colonists were unmarried soldiers, royal officials, or **coureurs de bois**. Only a small number of French women came to Louisiana during the early

years. The great imbalance between the sexes here was not unlike the earlier settlement in Quebec. Because there were few available white women, French men began consorting with Indian women. In Quebec, the government and the church initially took an ambivalent attitude toward these casual interracial unions between French and Indians. At first they tolerated the informal arrangements, mostly between Indian women and French men. Eventually, church officials demanded that such unions take place only according to the matrimonial rules of the church. Later, both church and state officials actively pursued a policy of assimilating Indians into the French community through intermarriage.

Early French Colonial Settlers

This assimilation policy developed under the administration of longtime governor, Count Frontenac, resulted from the inability of the government to encourage enough of its own people to migrate to its overseas colonies. Actually, Louis XIV was partly responsible for this problem. Unlike his British counterpart, Louis restricted his New World colonies to loyal Roman Catholics. Therefore while political, religious and social dissenters found refuge among the British colonies, including some from France, and thereby helped to increase the population, neither Quebec, nor Louisiana welcomed dissenters, whether political or religious. Some distinguished French Huguenot families managed to escape France and found a new life in the British colonies. Paul Revere, of revolutionary fame, and John Jay, the nation's first Supreme Court Chief Justice, both descended from Huguenot families. As a result of Louis's strict

migration policy, neither Quebec nor Louisiana had much more than a fraction of the population found in any of the British colonies.¹⁶

The government's assimilation policy included dowries for French men who married Indian women, and also for French women who married Indian men, though few of the latter matches occurred. The plan worked well, but not as originally expected. The French expected the Indians to become French speaking Catholics, and of course their children would be French. Church officials supported it because they expected it to lessen, if not completely end, adulterous matches. But soon both crown and clerical officials lost much of their initial enthusiasm, citing the following:

It is not because they (Indians) have become Gallicized... but because those who have married them have themselves become almost Indian, residing among them and living in their manner so that their women have changed nothing or at least very little in the manner of living.¹⁷

Apparently, both religious and civil leaders expected a one way road of assimilation leading to a common French culture; that is, Indians would quickly become French, but Frenchmen would never become Indians. Subsequently, they believed, over a period of years, the Indian culture would be absorbed into an enlarged French culture.

Bienville, also a French Canadian, shared some of the assimilationist views of Frontenac. He, however, preferred to culturally assimilate some Indians, but not all. He proposed to bring into the French community those Indians who lived closest to the French, through direct trade and informal cohabitation. French men could purchase Indian slave women who doubled as "wives" and laborers. Those Indians who lived farthest away from the French settlements, Bienville planned to tie to the French militarily through alliances against the British. Unless

specifically licensed, Frenchmen could not go into these lands, and there would be little interaction between French and Indians there, except for trade, and that very closely controlled by the governor.¹⁸

Bienville's Role in the Origins of the Slave Trade

Bienville, an early proponent of Indian labor, eventually became a chief supporter of African slavery to replace white servants, who he believed were unstable and unreliable. He thought that the government's policy of promoting white servitude was contradictory in that it never succeeded in sending over enough servants to stabilize the society, nor did it export enough women, certainly, not enough virtuous and industrious women, who were willing to hazard their health, or even their lives, to come to the New World. As a result, the men continued to cohabit with Indian women, by whom they fathered children. Their children almost always remained with their Indian mothers, which of course did nothing to increase the "French" population. Not only did the imbalance of the sexes force French men into the arms of Indian women, but many of them preferred casual relationships to formal marriages because such arrangements involved fewer paternal responsibilities.¹⁹ The men often shunned even the few available white women because of their questionable virtue. Governor Antoine Cadillac who served between 1713-1716, reported that soldiers and sailors routinely raped single women on the voyage to America.²⁰

Bienville complained continually about the white servants exported to Louisiana, especially the *engagés*, most who had been forced to immigrate or face prison. Because Law's charter required him to send over at least 6000 Europeans during the first ten year period, he sent out agents all across France. They rounded up prisoners, vagabonds, prostitutes, pick pockets, and other petty criminals. The victims were given a choice: stay in prison or migrate to Louisiana. Some actually chose to remain in prison, but many of them did not get to choose, for they were simply forced to immigrate.²¹

Bienville also questioned the wisdom of sending so many skilled workers and bureaucrats instead of farmers:

If instead of sending over so many white men unsuited to the work of the country, if instead of filling the concessions with so many managers, comptrollers, warehouse keepers, bookkeepers, foremen, etc. whose wages and food consume the funds of the concession, they had been satisfied with an overseer and a few necessary workmen, and if the salaries of so many useless people and the cost of food supplies to maintain large families with which the concessions were filled had been employed in obtaining Negroes, we should now be deriving large interest from this money, likewise the company with three-fourth less expense would have brought into the country four to five times as many Negroes as there are.²²

Bienville's unflattering but accurate description of conditions in Louisiana during its years under company rule was not disputed by officials. They agreed that African slaves could solve the labor problems. Lower-class whites and Indians had borne most of the burden of servitude in the past, but that system had at least two major flaws. First, many of the white servants did not have sufficient agricultural backgrounds before coming to Louisiana. In fact most of the first colonists settled by Iberville at Biloxi in 1699, came from La Rochelle, a fishing community.²³

Frequently those *engagés* who did come rebelled at the rigorous discipline their masters exercised and created another problem when they ran away to escape work or punishment.

Early Louisiana Farm Life

Under the best of circumstances, the early settlers had difficulty trying to work the land. Much of the coastal soil was either too swampy or too marshy to support agriculture. Additionally, many masters forced their servants to work in extreme temperatures, but did not adequately feed, shelter, or compensate them. The French, long accustomed to eating wheat bread, found Indian cornmeal too coarse, and most servants grumbled over this new fare their masters fed them. Some retaliated by stealing or by "leading a riotous life, pillaging stores and warehouses for the food and supplies" they believed rightfully belonged to them. The second problem caused by white servants was their proclivity for running away and the relative facility with which they could accomplish it.²⁴ Gradually, most masters came to the conclusion that the best solution was to replace term servitude with lifetime slavery.

While Bienville and the Company officials both agreed on the desirability of importing African slaves, they differed over the best method of employing them. Basically, Bienville wanted to tie the Indians closely to the Europeans. Indians would continue to play a major role in this society. They would supply the French with meats, corns, garden vegetables, pelts and furs. They would also assist the French in their struggles against other European colonizers, such as the British and the Spanish. Thus Bienville wanted to distribute African slaves among the Indians to assist them in providing the colony with more of its food. This plan envisioned

a relatively small French population, mostly government officials and soldiers and, a few large planters and company agents.²⁵ But this plan would benefit only the small ruling clique. Because Bienville served as governor about thirty years of fifty years of the colony's existence, he and his cohorts monopolized much of the colony's wealth. Local settlers complained frequently to both the crown and the company about Bienville's excesses²⁶

Early African Slavery

Company directors, domiciled in France, had little concern for creating and maintaining a harmonious society in which whites, reds, and blacks lived together. The company's first responsibility was to its stockholders, who expected immediate returns on their investment. Therefore corporate officials were anxious to put Louisiana on a profitable footing and planned to do so by quickly developing tobacco as the colony's principal staple. Accordingly, the directors continually instructed Bienville to make the new African slaves available immediately to the larger new plantations upriver from New Orleans. In other words, few, if any slaves should be retained in New Orleans, the bulk of them had to go to the new plantations around Natchez and points north.

At first the company offered slaves to planters at less than generous prices. For example all males between 17 and 30, and females between 20 and 30 sold for 660 pieces d'Inde. On the other hand, it took three boys or three girls between eight and ten to merit 660 pieces d'Inde.²⁷ Planters had to pay in hard currency. Since hard money was always scarce in the colony, the company sold no slaves during the first few months. It subsequently modified its

price schedule to meet the concerns of the planters. Old planters, those who had resided in the colony for two or more years, could now purchase slaves by paying only half of the purchase price in cash and the balance within one year; presumably after they had sold their first crop. The change in policy gave new residents two years to repay the fifty percent balance. In 1721, because many planters found even these prices too high, the Company lowered the prices and allowed planters to make three equal payments over a three year period.²⁸

The price of new slaves fluctuated almost as greatly as the price of stock in the company. It ranged from a low of 560 livres in 1719 to a high of 1500 livres by the end of the twenties. In 1721, the company attempted to stabilize prices when it decreed that slaves be sold at an average of 660 livres. Planters had to pay at least one third of the cost in cash and the balance in tobacco or rice. If a planter fell behind by as much as two payments, the company could reclaim the slave, and force the debtor into servitude. Presumably a master might end up working side by side with his former slaves. But before it could develop an institution of slavery, the company had to procure the slaves.²⁹

The Early Slave Trade to Louisiana

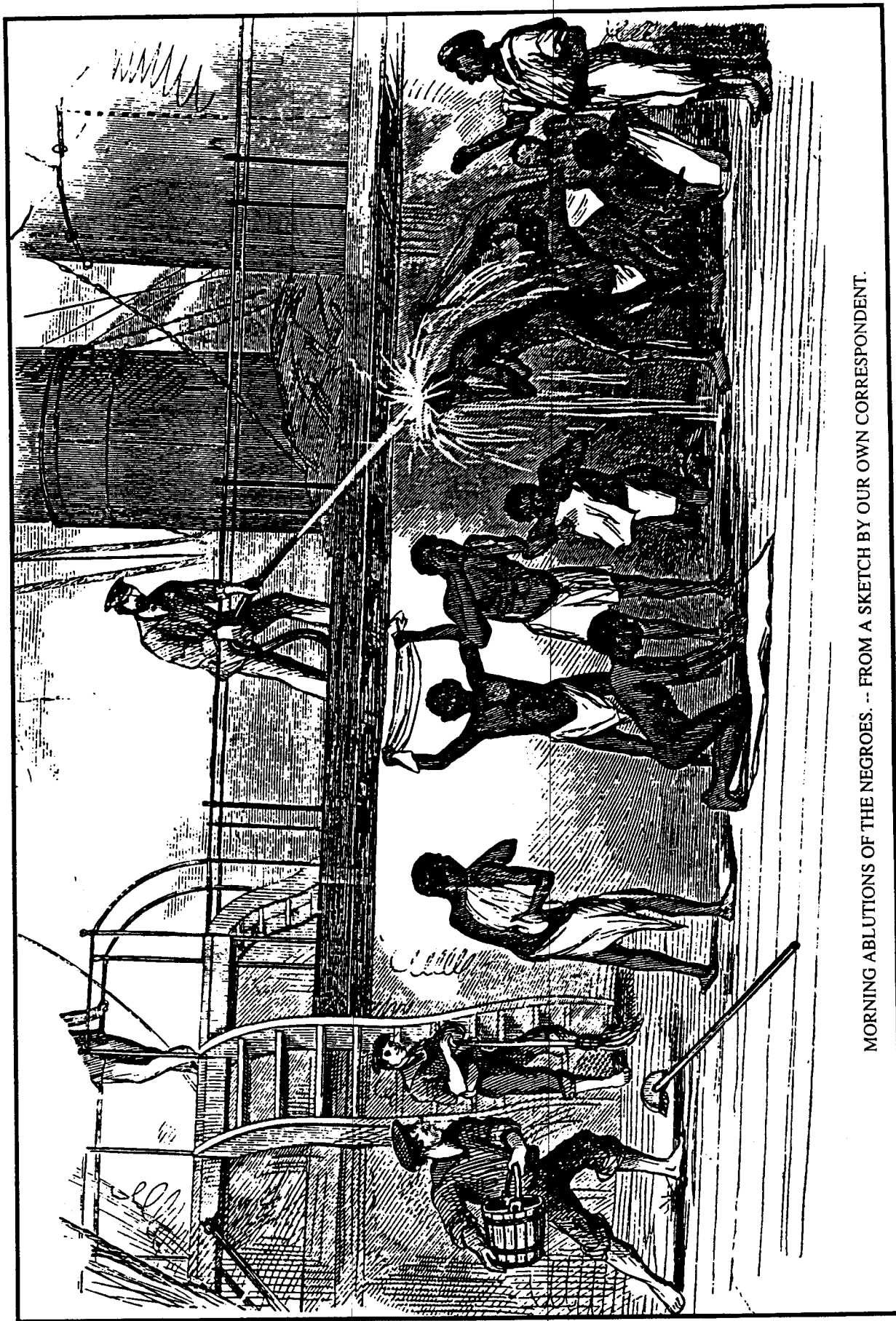
The peopling of Louisiana with African slaves was not without enduring consequences for either Frenchmen or Africans. Beginning with the *Aurore* and the *St. Louis* in 1718, slave ships began a regular trek back and forth across the Atlantic and the Gulf. While the horrors of the African slave trade is a familiar story, recounted much better and with much more details in description elsewhere, it is helpful to recall a few key features of the trade and its attendant

impact on the development of Louisiana slavery. Ironically, what makes Louisiana slavery so unique is that most of its earliest slaves came from the same general area of Africa. Moreover, most of them came directly to Louisiana and during a short period of time, the twelve years between 1719 and 1731. Whereas most European slave traders deliberately selected slaves from different parts of Africa, and deliberately scattered tribal members in order to prevent concerted action, most of Louisiana's earliest slaves shared a common background and heritage.³⁰

Professor Gwendolyn Midlo-Hall traced the earliest Louisiana slave trade back to its roots in Africa. She concluded that about two-thirds of all of Louisiana's slaves came from the Senegambian region, an area geographically between the Senegal and Gambian Rivers. In 1721 the Company secured its first trading concession from the king of the Fulbe to establish a trading station within his territory. His support did not come cheaply, and he and his family and favorites received lavished goods valued at more than 4200 livres. In 1725, the Company also secured permission from the king of Dahomey to establish a station in his territory.³¹

The Trade in Human Cargo

The trading post the company established was Fort St. Joseph, where they tapped most of the available slaves brought down the Senegal River, in effect preventing them from being sold to the nearby British agents at the mouth of the Gambia river, farther south. With the merger of practically all the major trading companies into one by 1720, the Company of the Indies became a major force in the slave trade in the Senegambian region. Frenchmen described the Senegal Valley as an especially fertile area and its inhabitants as experienced and successful



MORNING ABLUTIONS OF THE NEGROES. -- FROM A SKETCH BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection

farmers. In fact, practically all of the major crops grown in Louisiana during the eighteenth century were found in this area. Rice grew extensively in this region, as did corn, peas, melons, cotton, indigo, and tobacco. Senegalese prairies provided grazing lands for beef, sheep, and goats. In the cities one found merchants of every kind and wares produced by artisans skilled in metallurgy. Many Senegalese were master craftsmen: blacksmiths, silversmiths, goldsmiths, and coppersmiths. Delicately crafted iron hatches, axes, and knives demonstrated a long tradition of skilled workmanship. Various types of cloth, dyed in exquisite patterns could also be found at any of the local bazaars.³²

The French made early contact with the Fulbe, an indigenous people racially mixed with Arabs, unlike the Wolofs who the Europeans described as pure blooded Africans. French men had a great attraction for Wolof women because of their beautiful, lustrous black skin. The Fulbe, however, had a browner complexion than did the Wolof. Le Page du Pratz who served for many years as resident director of the Company in New Orleans, claimed that the Fulbe had a foul body odor, but he never detected a bad odor among the Wolofs. Du Pratz also commented that the Wolofs made more faithful servants, "their minds are more penetrating than others and are apt at learning a skill."³³ Fulbes and Wolofs did not usually sell their own people. Both, however, did sell Bambara, who inhabited the northern regions of the Senegal River.

The Peoples and Cultures of Senegambia

Geographically, the Senegambia region includes the area between the Senegal and the Gambia Rivers. The Wolofs were located at the northwest corner of the Senegal River which

runs from the Atlantic Ocean southeastward. East of the Wolofs were the Fulbe. The Bambara people were sandwiched between the southern end of the Senegal River and the Niger River which flowed almost due south. The Gambia River formed the southern boundary of the Senegambia region. The Mandingo were found in the southwest corner, as the Gambia flowed from the Atlantic Ocean into the interior.³⁴ The largest number of slaves sent to Louisiana during the twenties were Bambara. Many of them were sold by their Moslem neighbors, the Mandingo. The French described the Bambara as "robust, good natured and intelligent" and considered them good slaves because "the labor attached to servitude does not bother them at all. They love their masters, are obedient, and are never subject to flight, revolt, or to despair." The Bambara later disproved this description when they played a prominent role in the Natchez revolt in 1729. In Africa company agents often employed Bambara as domestics and interpreters at their forts.³⁵

The Bambara had a strong sense of community. They possessed a long oral history tradition and traced their origin to the great Mali empire of the thirteenth century. A griot, an oral historian, passed on tribal history from one generation to another. Because they consistently resisted conversion to Islam, they almost always found themselves at war with their perennial enemies, the Mandingo, who were devout Moslems. The Bambara practiced native religions, which emphasized strong moral values. Unlike Christians, they did not believe heaven and hell as places for eternal reward or damnation. They believed in transmigration of souls after death. The souls of the deceased were never lost, since a newborn family member replaced a deceased one. They provided charms and gris-gris to protect themselves from evil spirits. And because

they believed that the souls of deceased relatives always stayed neared, they venerated their dead, and offered sacrifices in their honor.³⁶

Traditional African Slavery

The slavery found among practically all African societies, carried few of the Western connotations of social and political impotence. Obviously it did not involve the European traits of racial superiority or inferiority. One became a slave, but not an outcast or pariah. Africans never developed a permanent class of "untouchables." Circumstances might force prominent or lowly persons into enslavement through capture or punishment for crimes. While most European societies did not allow slaves to serve in the military, Africans slaves often fought alongside freemen. In some parts of Africa, slavery was a transitional experience; a tribe used slavery to assimilate aliens and captives into its society. If a slave woman bore children to a freeman, she and her children became free.³¹ Though African slavery offered more opportunities for the enslaved to become free, it also included a greater chance that a free person could become a slave.

When population expanded too rapidly, creating a need for more space, a portion of the population would move into unoccupied territory. The first person to settle a new unoccupied territory became the leader of the new community, and newcomers needed his permission to settle there, though that was usually little more than a formality. The villagers held the land in common. An official called the master of the land, distributed property on the basis of family

size. As one family expanded, it secured more land. On the other hand, as another family got smaller, some of its land reverted back to the village in common.³⁷

Local African Societies

Most of the local people of the Senegambia region lived in small villages and practiced agriculture. In rural villages textiles, metals, pottery, baskets, etc. were brought in and exchanged for food stuffs grown by the community. This experience with a market economy would form the basis for the primitive market economy that Africans would help develop in Louisiana. The typical West African society was small and compact. Most villages consisted of a cluster of family clans, each member related through some common ancestor. Ancestry usually followed patrilineal lines. Decisions made by consensus, as opposed to representative or democratic government was the norm. Adult males, sworn to uphold the traditions of their ancestors, served on a tribal council which provided leadership for the whole society. The arrival and intervention of Europeans in these traditional African societies accelerated warfare with traditional enemies and former neighbors as well. Soon warfare raged almost incessantly. For nearly three centuries, African people made war with each other for the privilege of supplying European traders with slaves, usually their enemies, but sometimes their friends.

Euro-African Partnerships

Most African rulers forbade Europeans to go into the interior to capture their own slaves. They did this in order to control supply and demand, and also to prevent traders from attacking their allies. Usually, local coastal rulers allied themselves with rulers in the interior. Some African rulers refused to deal directly with white traders, for this was considered beneath their dignity. That task they left to subordinates. Since gold was so plentiful on the west coast of Africa, local rulers usually exchanged slaves for pots, basins, firearms, rum, textiles, etc. Often they established prices in terms of bars of copper or iron. For example, they valued a prime male at thirteen bars of iron, a prime female, at only ten. White slavers usually presented local rulers gifts before the sale began. In return the African hosts provided their white guests with food, drink, women, and entertainment.³⁸

Once buyers and sellers agreed on the price, the agents received permission to inspect the merchandise. Each side understood the tricks of the trade. So both parties were represented by skilled agents during the inspections. A company surgeon carefully and minutely examined each slave. Buyers rejected out of hand those with obvious defects or abnormalities, such as those who had suffered crippling injuries during their capture. Sometimes white traders noted real or imaginary defects in an attempt to bring down the price. Conversely, African traders pointed out special qualities of certain slaves in an attempt to increase their value.³⁹

The Slave Bazaar

The European traders stripped slaves of all their clothing and subjected them to complete searches of their person, including the inspection of their genital areas. The aged and seriously infirmed were set aside. Traders selected only those deemed fit enough to survive the transatlantic voyage. Generally, they did not select young children, although they often sold nursing mothers with their babies. Those selected were collared or tagged with the company's name, just as manufacturers place labels on their products today. In some cases they branded the company's mark on the slaves' breasts or backs, but "in this particular case, care is taken that the women, as tenderest be not burnt too hard."⁴⁰ Once selected, each slave received a loin cloth and was returned to a holding pen to await shipment to the New World.

That Middle Passage

Once purchased, slaves remained on the island of Gorée (on the coast of Senegal) in the main "warehouse" to await transport to Louisiana. While still in Africa, the French called their slaves, *captifs*. Not until they reached America did they officially call them, *esclavages*. The usual waiting period lasted ten to fifteen days, but if an unusually small number of slaves had been deemed fit, they waited until there were enough slaves to make a profitable voyage.⁴¹ By the eighteenth century, experienced captains expected a certain number of slaves to die during the trip. The number of casualties normally ranged from a modest losses of 15% to an excessively high rate of 75%, although on rare occasions, the whole cargo might perish.

Consequently, in order to maximize profits, unscrupulous captains packed as many slaves as possible into the holds of ships. Between 1729-1731, 4000 captifs left for Louisiana, 3353 esclavages landed. This represented a mortality rate of 16.2 percent.⁴²

Not only did traders fear the loss of an exorbitant number of their cargo, but their crew, as well. The life of a sailor was hard. Most worked double shifts, received low pay. Ship captains exercised Spartan discipline for the slightest discipline. The sailors often drank the same brackish water, ate the same salted and dried food they fed the slaves. As a result they suffered some of the same maladies, especially, scurvy. Since hot weather compounded the problems, slave ships captains tried, without much success, to convince company officials to suspend transports between May 15 and September 15 of each year.⁴³

Overcrowded, filthy and ill-ventilated quarters aggravated by lack of nutritious food and physical exercise claimed large numbers. While actual suicides were rarely effected, frequent attempts were made. Many of the Africans, especially those who came from deep within the interior, who had never seen whites prior to their capture, believed that whites were cannibals who preyed on black people. Rough weather added another form of terror, sea sickness. An especially bad storm could sink a vessel, at once condemning the captives and enslaving their captors in the same watery grave.

Sometimes, if there was sufficient security aboard, the crew allowed slaves to come up from the hot holds of the ship for exercise on the deck. This also served as an opportunity to provide superficial cleaning of the slave quarters, removing vomit, excrement, and even dead bodies of those who perished enroute. This was a potentially dangerous time, for the most desperate slaves often made attempts to escape, if only to the depths of the ocean.⁴⁴

Arrival in the Caribbean

Slave ships reached the midpoint of their journey in the Caribbean. Usually they stopped at one of the French islands, often, Saint Domingue, to take on wood, water, fresh food, and other supplies. Sometimes they exchanged a few slaves for these goods. Since most of the European powers had colonies in this area, there was always the possibility that pirates or slave traders sailing under another flag might attack and confiscate the entire cargo.⁴⁵

The Journey Ends

Final arrival in America did not always assure physical safety. Many slaves quickly succumbed to scurvy, cholera, smallpox or malaria. And, if they escaped those odds, other tragedies might await the new arrivals, as was the fate of half of the crew and the entire cargo of slaves who perished in a fire only 150 miles off the coast of Biloxi in 1721. Since all the slaves had been chained together, the crew could not save any of them.⁴⁶

Initial Acculturation

Slaves began to pour into Louisiana during the 1720s. At first no one gave much concern to their physical comfort. The new arrivals, including many who were in an enfeebled physical or, not infrequently, mental condition caused by the trauma of their enslavement, were put to work almost immediately. Bienville usually sent them across the river from the city to the

"Company's Plantation," which in reality served as a slave depot which provided temporary quarters in which the slaves to begin their acclimation to their new environments.⁴⁷

Bienville's Contradictory Policy

The Company directed Bienville to assign the bulk of the slaves to the tobacco planters. Instead, Bienville sent most of them to neighboring Indians in order to bolster the colony's agricultural system which depended largely on Indian farms. While this contributed to an increase in home-grown food, it ran counter to company directives. Company officials accused Bienville of taking the best slaves for himself or for his family and friends. Moreover, because Bienville placed the Africans with the Indians on consignment, it deprived the company of much need revenue. As late as 1722, Bienville had yet to deliver a single African to the upland district where the Company wanted him to send them.⁴⁸

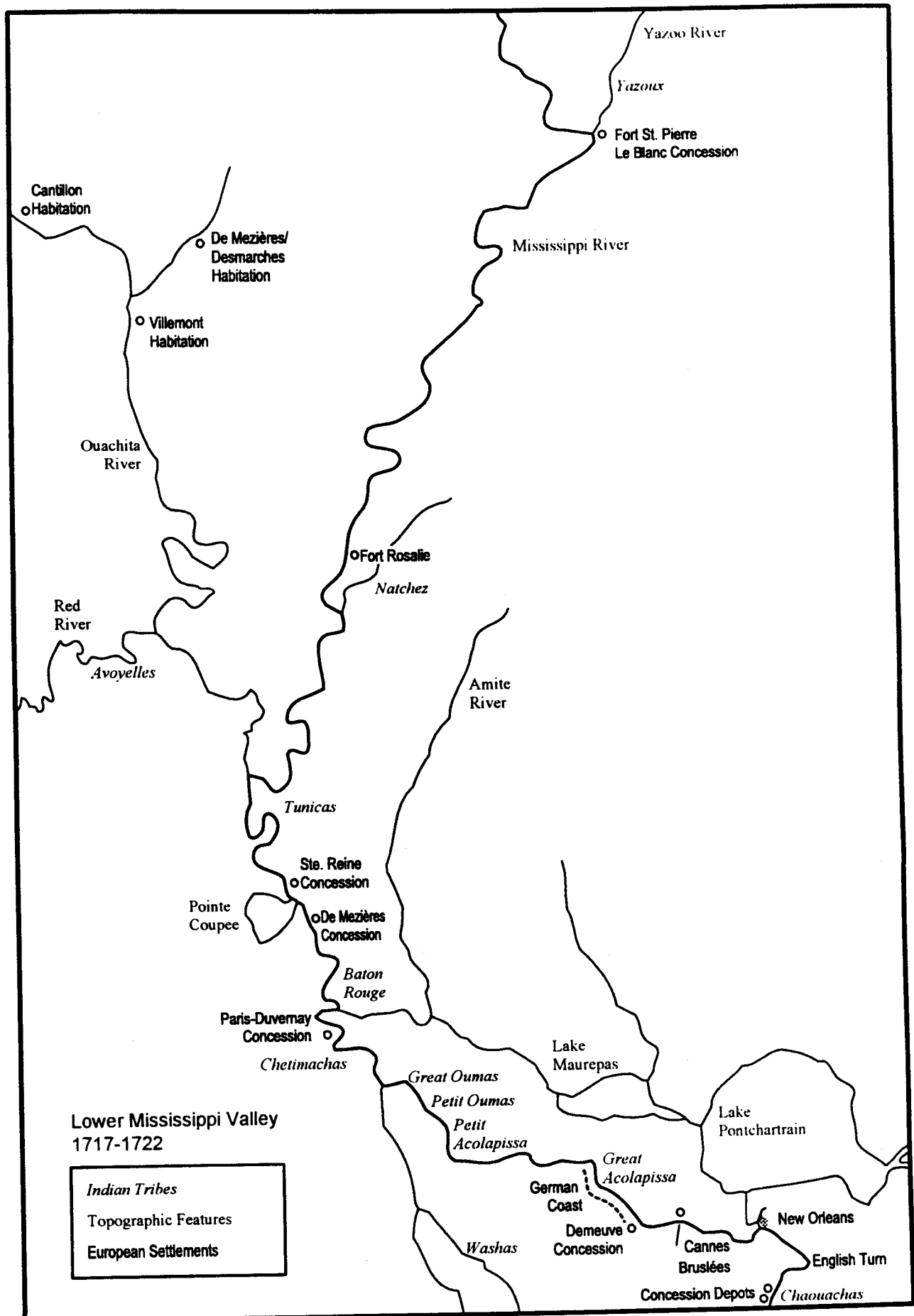
As a result of Bienville's policy, the Indians, not the French, oversaw the acculturation of the majority of Africans. Many of the earliest African slaves worked and lived among Indians, slave and free, without having much direct contact with whites. They learned Indian dialect, and perhaps a little Indian "French." Although technically slaves, Africans found many similarities between Indian slavery with that of Africa, with which they were familiar. Pretty quickly, African men began consorting with Indian women, by whom they produced African children. Since Indians never adopted the European method of intensive agriculture, they did not force their slaves to work beyond endurance. Surviving evidence suggests that Indian masters, for the most part, allowed their slaves to determine their own level of work. Just as in Africa,

Indian slaves never sank to the level of chattel, but simply occupied an inferior social status within society. Indians and Africans shared a common respect, almost a reverence, for the land and all it produced, both plants and animals. They did not exploit the land, using only as much as they needed for their immediate use.⁴⁹

The Slave Population Increases

Each year, slaves came in increasing numbers, so that by 1722, when Bienville switched the capital to New Orleans, the African population almost equalled the combined population of Indian slaves and white servants. Two years later, Bienville promulgated the Code Noir, the official slave code, which evidenced the presence of so many slaves that a special code to govern their conduct was needed. By 1730, only a dozen years after the founding of New Orleans, the African population exceeded the total population of Indian slaves and white servants by more than a thousand.⁵⁰

Bienville's refusal to distribute slaves as the Company wished did not go unchallenged. In 1723, the directors sent over Jacques de la Chaise, as the new *intendant* to force the governor's compliance. While Bienville relented somewhat, he continued to distribute most of the African slaves to plantations near New Orleans. Soon he and de la Chaise began to quarrel, which in turn, split the superior council, the local governing body into pro-Bienville and pro-de la Chaise factions. Finally in 1726, the company directors removed Bienville and replaced him with Etienne Boucher de la Périer, who reversed Bienville's policy and began to carry out the company's plans in earnest.⁵¹



French-American-Native Americans in 18th Century French Colonial Louisiana
 Courtesy Joseph Zitomersky

The Tobacco Craze

Périer and de la Chaise worked together to carry out the company's plans for large tobacco plantations worked by African slaves. But this had dire consequences for both Indians and Africans. The new governor practically ended the use of Indian slaves, for he discouraged planters from buying any more Indian slaves. This obviously crippled the trade of those Indian tribes who had been exchanging Indian slaves for European goods. Périer not only began sending new African slaves to the plantations, farther from New Orleans, but he also began to recall those Africans earlier consigned by Bienville to neighboring Indians. On the one hand, he undermined Bienville's Indian policy, and on the other hand, he destroyed the relationship between Africans and Indians. In effect, Périer viewed the Indians as little more than a nuisance. Since a colony of German farmers settled by Bienville on the German coast about 25 miles upriver from New Orleans, provided an increasing amount of the food, Périer did not value Indian farming as much as Bienville had. He proposed to push them farther away, and if they refused, to move, they faced grave consequences.⁵²

Périer's change in policy also had dire consequences for the Africans. Their new masters, anxious to begin growing tobacco, combined brutality with austerity to maximize profits. They wanted to take advantage of the company's offer to buy all of their tobacco at guaranteed prices, often above the actual market value. Although slave imports increased, the demand exceeded the supply, and planters often bought slaves sick with scurvy or dysentery. Well or sick, in good weather or bad, masters required slaves to work. And many did not provide their slaves with adequate clothing. While the spring and summer in coastal Louisiana resembled that of Africa,

fall and winter was quite different. The scant clothing on which slaves survived in the tropics proved inadequate here. Slaves needed shirts and cloak to protect them from the cold.

Slaves also had to accommodate a change in diet. While Africans ate many of the same foods that both the Indians and the French did, they often prepared them differently. Some Africans raised cattle, but did not drink their milk. The French not only drank milk, but used it in a variety of dishes. Because they had not used cow's milk in the past, most slaves had no bodily tolerance for it or for its various by products. Hence milk made even healthy slave sick. Traditionally, native Africans also consumed more starches, in the form of yams, plantains, corn and millet, than did Europeans. They also fried more of these starches than did the French. They brought with them a taste for "gombo," an African fish stew, which the French adopted, and to which they added their own, and some Indian herbs to produce the modern creole gumbo.⁵³

Demand Exceeds Supply

By 1728, Louisiana tobacco, although inferior in quality to that produced in other colonies, sold for top price, mainly because of the company's very generous price supports. As long as the company paid high prices, local planters had little incentive to improve the quality or stabilize production. On the contrary, they tried to increase it. Increased production required either more slaves or more production from the current slave labor force, or both. Since there was a practical limit to the number of slave that could be imported each year, planters exacted more from those slaves already here, which in turn caused more and more slaves to rebel or run away.⁵⁴ Indian and African slaves often ran away together, sometimes carrying with them much

of their owners' goods. By 1728 the problem of runaways had escalated to alarming proportions, and Governor Périer imposed a special tax of 30 pounds (presumably in tobacco) to create a fund to reward those who returned runaways.⁵⁵

The company tried to keep pace with the increasing demand for more slaves. Sometimes, its ships left Africa with less than capacity in order to stay on schedule. In May, 1729, while *l'Annibal* awaited high tide at the mouth of the Gambia River, some captifs revolted. By the time the crew regained control, forty five blacks had escaped, four had been killed, and another forty seven had been wounded. The revolt cost the lives of four crew members, while five others received various wounds. The revolt leaders suffered summary hanging. Later the crew learned from a British captain that he had suffered similar revolt in the same area, and he had knew of the slaughter of the crews of five other ships at this same spot. The crew returned 23 slaves who had been too seriously wounded, to complete the voyage, but took on 20 new slaves, and resumed its journey across the ocean.⁵⁶

It was seldom easy to maintain regular schedules, even under the most favorable circumstances. A good trip, uninterrupted by rebellion, bad weather, or sickness, lasted between six and eight weeks. Once ships arrived, there were others problems to face. Because the voyage up the Mississippi River was arduous and uncertain, some captains unloaded their cargo at gulf coast settlements such as Biloxi and Mobile, and sent the slaves overland to New Orleans, which lengthened the trip and increased the cost considerably. Those ships which attempted to come up river had to wait until the tide was favorable, yet another delay.⁵⁷

Practically all the slaves who arrived, whether sick or well, sold quickly. The slaves originally valued for his labor, took on a new value, for he now constituted a peculiar wealth

Slave Runaway Notices and Auction Notices

\$250 Reward.
FOR the apprehension and delivery to the undersigned, or any of the city jail, of the **BOY DAN**, who ran away on Monday, the 11th inst. Age 40 years; 5 feet 6 inches high, stout build, thick lips, dark color, walks at a slow gait and slightly drooped, and acts polite and beautiful when spoken to. Captain of steamboats and other trading vessels will please have a look-out on his way across the Lake.
HENRY MOULIN
agent of Julia street, corner Magnolia and Basin.

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD—Let my presence on the 26th of June last, my fellow woman **FRANCES** who is about 34 years old, 5 feet 6 inches high, stout build, and has quite a round face. Her two front teeth are missing. I will give \$100 for the delivery at any of the city or Louisiana, and \$50 for each information as will convict the party who has harbored her, if a white woman or free negro, or if will give \$100 for the recovery of the girl who I take out of the State.
HENRY KENNAW, 94 Camp st.

TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber, on the 11th inst, a mulatto boy by the name of **LEWIS**, also **WINTON**, about 20 years of age, stout build, speaks French and English; he is about 5 feet 6 inches high. Said boy is a good cook and steward; he says he got employment as a cook in that capacity. The above reward will be paid to any person who will arrest him and bring him to jail.
THAYER & CO. 74 Poydras street.

TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from membership **Blanco**, a light mulatto boy named **GREEN**, about 24 years old and about 5 feet 6 inches high. The above reward will be paid for his apprehension and delivery to
LUKE & CO. 30 Poydras st.

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD—Will be paid for the apprehension and delivery to the subscriber of the slave named **ROBERT REED**, who ran away on Tuesday, the 24th instant. Robert is a light mulatto, between 20 and 24 years old, about 5 feet 6 inches high, weighing about 140 lbs, and has a cross and domelike head. He is supposed to be still in the city.
F. FARR & CO. 90 Magazine st.

TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD—Will be paid for the delivery of the yellow woman **FANNY**, who ran away from the subscriber on the 26th of last April. She is about 20 years of age, rather stout build, about 5 feet 6 inches high, very active when about her business, both very treacher and somewhat doped. She has a black fellow for a husband called **ALICE**, who, it is believed, knows all about her, or who have lately been seen together. He may be seen about the markets of Common and Tiber streets. They were both residents once of Baton Rouge, Miss. All persons are cautioned against harboring said slave Fanny, as they will be prosecuted to the extent of the law.
WILLIAM DUNCAN, agent of J. corner Jackson and Poydras sts., Lafayette.

TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber on Sunday, the 24th instant, the boy **JOHN**, aged 20 years. Said boy was formerly from Maryland and recently belonged to Mr. Nathan Rogers, corner of 3rd and 4th streets, and in the Port Market, Third Municipal. Said boy attended the stand. He is about 5 feet 6 inches high, is very light colored, and as a short distance might be mistaken for a white man. He has long, dark, wavy hair, grey eyes, a downy nose, speaks clearly and distinctly. His wife is living at the above named place, near the French market, Third Municipal, and it is thought that he may be lurking in that vicinity.
WILLIAM DUNCAN, agent of J. corner Jackson and Poydras sts., Lafayette.

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber on the 11th inst, a light mulatto boy named **REED**, aged about 20 years, medium size, long nose, pop eyes, upper front teeth out of joint one; nervous quick when spoken to. The above reward will be paid for his apprehension and delivery to
CHAS. PRIDE.

September 11, 1851

Runaway Apprehended.
There is a mulatto boy in all in this place, who says he ran away from a man by the name of **Capitaine** in Louisiana. Said boy is of light color, says he will be twenty one years old next March, has light eyes and kinky hair, is about 40 pounds. He had a scar on the upper part of the right shoulder, about an inch and a half long, and one on the outside of the left thigh, about the size of a dollar. Said boy calls himself **TRIGG**, and says he was raised in Louisville, Va., and was sold to a man named **Capitaine**, in Louisiana, somewhere below Vicksburg. The owner is requested to have him taken away.
Wm. S. HUBBARD, Sheriff of White county, Missa. Caret, Ill., August 24, 1854.

October 14, 1855

THIRTY DOLLARS REWARD—Will be paid for the apprehension of slave **ELIEN**, belonging to M. H. Myers. She absconded a few days since from No. 47 Poydras street, is about 25 years of age, and about 5 feet 6 inches high, and is mostly of grade for
JULIA STREET

TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber, the mulatto girl **JANE**, about 16 years of age, about 5 feet 6 inches high, she has a scar on the inside of one of her hands; she is rather stupid in her manner. She is perhaps somewhere in the Third Municipal. The above reward will be paid for her apprehension and delivery to any jail at the city.
J. R. DUFFEL

TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber on Sunday, the 24th instant, the boy **JUNN**, aged 20 years. Said boy was formerly from Maryland and recently belonged to Mr. Nathan Rogers, corner of 3rd and 4th streets, and in the Port Market, Third Municipal. Said boy attended the stand. He is about 5 feet 6 inches high, is very light colored, and as a short distance might be mistaken for a white man. He has long, dark, wavy hair, grey eyes, a downy nose, speaks clearly and distinctly. His wife is living at the above named place, near the French market, Third Municipal, and it is thought that he may be lurking in that vicinity.
J. R. DUFFEL

FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber, boy **AGUSTOS**, about 16 years old, about 5 feet 6 inches high, yellow skin, slender figure and rather sprightly disposition; recently belonged to Mr. Nathan Rogers, corner of 3rd and 4th streets, and in the Port Market, Third Municipal. Said boy attended the stand. He is about 5 feet 6 inches high, is very light colored, and as a short distance might be mistaken for a white man. He has long, dark, wavy hair, grey eyes, a downy nose, speaks clearly and distinctly. His wife is living at the above named place, near the French market, Third Municipal, and it is thought that he may be lurking in that vicinity.
J. R. DUFFEL

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber on the 11th inst, a light mulatto boy named **REED**, aged about 20 years, medium size, long nose, pop eyes, upper front teeth out of joint one; nervous quick when spoken to. The above reward will be paid for his apprehension and delivery to
CHAS. PRIDE

SIXTY DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber on the 24th inst, the negro man **ROBERT**, a light mulatto, about 20 years old, 5 feet 6 inches high, bright features, rather stout man; and dark about 20 years of age, very black, round-headed and stout frame, white and black teeth, large eyes, white, very prominent; has a married look when spoken to. The above reward will be paid for his apprehension and delivery to the city, and is probably harbored by white persons. The above reward will be paid for the apprehension and delivery of the over her in the city.
ROBT. H. BOWLER, 1 Royal st.

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the subscriber, the black boy **GILBERT**, said boy is about 16 years old, 5 feet 6 inches high, high forehead, black hair, yellow complexion, and a smart, shrewd fellow; is a good looking boy, and can read and write; he has been in the habit of wearing a gold watch; he had money when he was left. He is no doubt somewhere in the city, and is probably harbored by white persons. The above reward will be paid for the apprehension and delivery of the over her in the city.
ROBT. H. BOWLER, 1 Royal st.

TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from my plantation in the parish of Carroll, on the 24th of May last, **SANDY**, a young black, male, about 5 feet 6 inches high, 20 or 22 years old, and from 20 to 25 years old, has formerly belonged to Mr. Nathan Rogers, corner of 3rd and 4th streets, and in the Port Market, Third Municipal. Said boy attended the stand. He is about 5 feet 6 inches high, is very light colored, and as a short distance might be mistaken for a white man. He has long, dark, wavy hair, grey eyes, a downy nose, speaks clearly and distinctly. His wife is living at the above named place, near the French market, Third Municipal, and it is thought that he may be lurking in that vicinity.
WILLIAM DUNCAN, agent of J. corner Jackson and Poydras sts., Lafayette.

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD—Run away from the plantation of Nathan Rogers, on the 24th of May last, the yellow man **ROB**. He is about 5 feet 6 inches high, stout build, light complexion, full face, and has an impediment in his voice, a scar on one of his arms, made with ink ink; aged about 20 years.
Also, the black boy **CHARLES**, rather spare built, quick spoken and intelligent, speaks English and French, is about 5 feet 6 inches high, and about 16 years of age.
It is believed that these two boys have been dropped off by a man who ran a trading tent up and down the coast, who went by the name of **John**. It has been ascertained that he offered to run these negroes off to a free State for \$100 each, and as the negroes show a considerable amount of money they might try to get, and as this man has not since been seen, it is thought that he has the negroes in charge, endeavoring to reach some of the free States, and we have reason to believe they are in the State of Ohio. The above reward will be paid for the recovery of the negroes, or \$500 for either of them.
J. R. DUFFEL

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J. R. DUFFEL

BY M. BARNETT, Sr.
WILL be sold on Monday 4th of April, at Haw-
lett's Exchange.
The negro woman **Betsy**, aged about 38 years in the country since her infamy, speaks French and English, she is a good cook, washer and ironer, fully guaranteed.
Terms—6 and 12 months credit, for satisfactorily endorsed notes and mortgage.
Act of sale before Wm. Boswell, notary public, at the expense of the purchaser.
FANNY, a mulattress, aged about 18 years, since her infamy in the country. She is a good cook, washer and ironer, fully guaranteed against the vices and maladies prescribed by law.
Terms—One half cash, the balance payable in six months credit, for an approved endorsed note with mortgage.
Act of sale before Wm. Y. Lewis, notary public, at the expense of the purchaser.
The above slaves are sold on account of departure.
a 1-2

April 4, 1836

Negroes for Sale.
ARRIVED on 14th inst. and may be seen on
St. Philip street, Eighty Virginia Slaves, among them two or three mulattresses. Application can be made where the slaves are, at
Gibson's Hotel, Canal street
ABNER ROBINSON
at 41 1/2

February 8, 1827

SLAVER FOR SALE.
Planters and citizens of the city wishing to purchase Slaves will find it to their interest to call at Nos. 200 and 202 Common street, corner of Tremé.
ANDREWS & HATCHER.
B. LITTLE.
N. R. Persons wishing to sell slaves may find it to their advantage to call at above.
Dec 31 4m
A. & H.

SLAVES FOR SALE.
Citizens wishing to purchase will find it to their interest to call at 152 Camp street, where they may find some valuable house servants and young negroes.
[10-1-2m]
M. GARRISON.

March 12, 1836

Succession of the late J. F. Felts.
SALE ON ACCOUNT OF A FORMER PURCHASER
BY N. VIGNIE, Auctioneer.
BY virtue of an order from the Honorable the Second District Court of New Orleans, will be sold at public auction in the Rotunda of the St. Louis Hotel, on SATURDAY, 18th February, 1851, at 12 o'clock, M., for account of Matilda Runney, who has not complied with the conditions of the adjudication made to her through Mr. Kendall, on the 11th December last, of the following described slave:
ADAM, a field hand, aged about 35 years.
Terms: One-fourth cash, and the balance on a credit of 6 and 12 months, for approved endorsed notes, on the slaves, and secured by mortgage on said slave.
Act of sale before A. C. Rivarola, Esq., notary public.
Jan 17

February 2, 1854

BY WEATHERS & WATERMAN
SALE OF NEGROES.
AT the City Exchange, St. Louis st. on Tuesday 4th June, at 12 o'clock
Negro Beth, aged about 25 years, a good hand, and fully guaranteed except having alienated himself.
Negroes **Eliza**, aged 10 years, house servant, fully guaranteed and a good subject.
Negro man **John**, aged 24 years, corn field hand and has worked several years at the turnpike trade—fully guaranteed.
Negro man **Samuel**, aged 26 years, field hand, and has worked with the bullocks making mow. &c—fully guaranteed.
Terms of sale.
14

June 4, 1838

in his person. A slave was property, recognized as such by the **Code Noir**. Masters could mortgage slaves, and creditors could seize them in default of payments. As long as slaves continued to come, and as long as they cultivated enough tobacco to pay for their purchase, both planters and company agents were satisfied.

Economic Disaster

In 1729, however, local planters and company directors were affected by two seemingly non-related incidents that changed slavery in Louisiana forever. Fighting broke out at Gorée when Frenchmen at the fort went twenty leagues into the interior to avenge the killing of the white commander of the fort. But on the return march to the fort, they ran into an ambush. Blacks killed several Frenchmen and imprisoned several others. The king of Joul demanded a large ransom from the Company for the return of the captives. At the same time, British interlopers challenged French control over the trade along the Senegal river. Hence no slave ship arrived in Louisiana at all in 1730. This cost the company lost revenues, and deprived the planters of additional slaves.⁵⁸

Rebellion!

Louisiana also experienced a major internal convulsion caused largely by Périér's new Indian policy. The governor's policy which forced Indians to move farther away from the French settlers eventually provoked open warfare with the Natchez Indians.

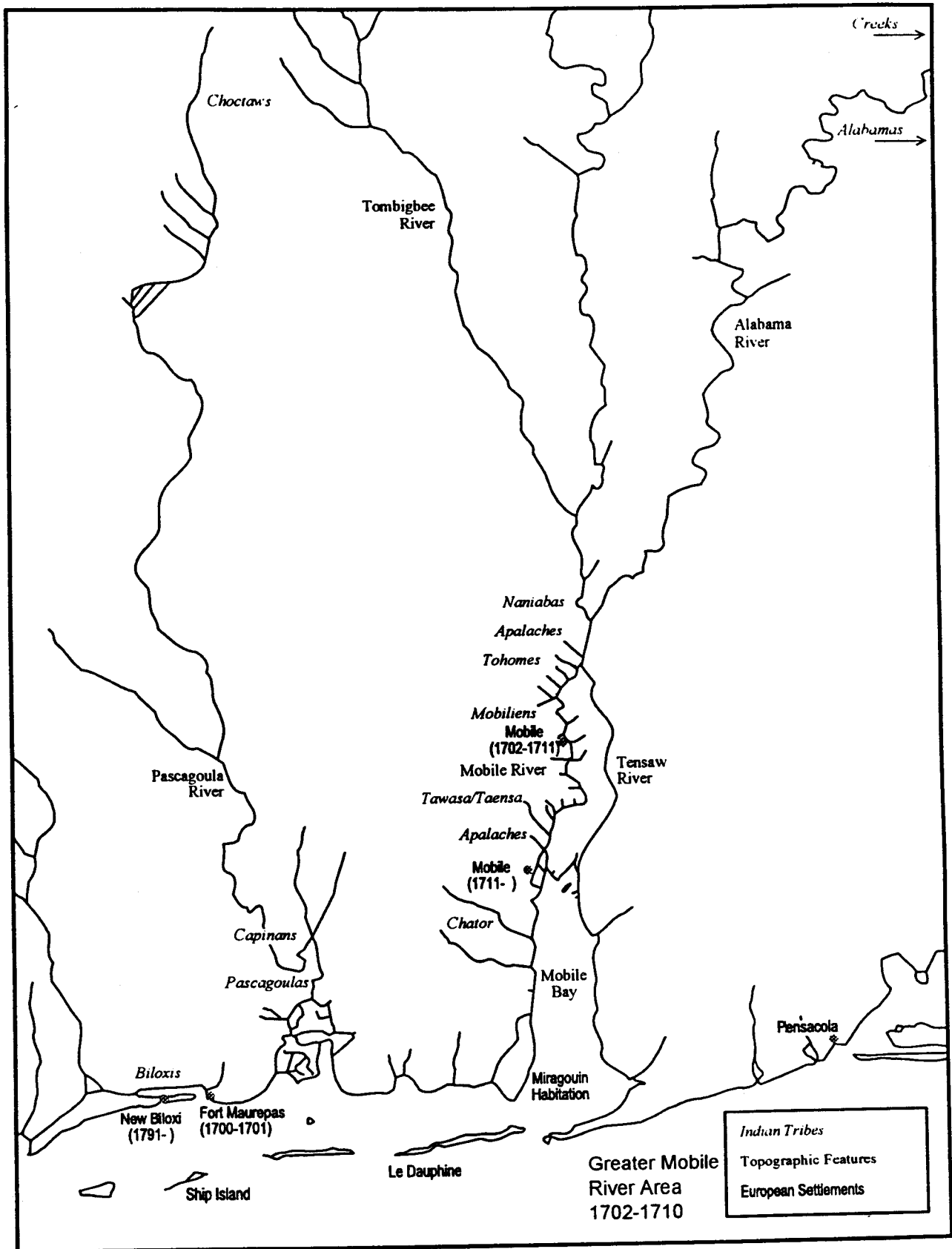
The proud Natchez, perhaps the most sophisticated of all the Indians in the Louisiana area, had earlier suffered humiliation at the hands of the French. Upon his arrival in 1713, Governor Cadillac had refused to smoke the calumet of the Great Sun, the ruler of the Natchez. Since the Great Sun only extended this honor to worthy guests, he greatly resented Cadillac's breach of etiquette. On another occasion, when two Natchez tribesmen killed two Frenchmen, Cadillac threatened to attack the whole tribe. Bienville, however, persuaded him to limit his actions. Bienville invited the leaders to dinner, and after afterwards arrested and held them hostage, until they turned over the guilty parties to him. These he executed, but he also demanded that the Indians cut down 2500 trees, with which he built Fort Rosalie on the site of modern Natchez, Mississippi.⁵⁹ The Natchez did not forget those humiliations and they later got even.

In 1729, Captain Pierre Chepart, commandant at Fort Rosalie, informed the Natchez that they must leave the immediate vicinity once they harvested their crops in the fall of that year. The Natchez had no intention of leaving, but gave no clue of their intended action. Instead they feigned continual friendship and goodwill. They planned to kill the French men and enslave the French women and children, whom they would sell to the Chickasaws. The Indians secured pledges of support from most of the African slaves, for they threatened to sell to the Chickasaws any who refused to join the cause. Incredibly, they succeeded in peaceably disarming the French in the Natchez district by borrowing their guns, ostensibly to hunt. They promised to share their corn, venison and fowl with the French. Many French willingly lent their weapons, and in so doing, found themselves totally defenseless when the attack occurred.⁶⁰

The Natchez launched their attack on November 26, 1729. Initially, they killed more than 230 French, including, 36 women and 56 children. Among the dead was the black **commandeur** at the White Earth plantation who had refused to join the revolt. The Indians spared the lives of the majority of French women and children, as well as their black slaves. Three loyal slaves, however, escaped and arrived in New Orleans on December 3. They informed Périer of the carnage. Panic-stricken settlers who lived upriver from New Orleans began to flee to the capital for protection. Périer, fearing that most of the Africans and other Indian tribes might join the attack, devised a strategy to isolate the Natchez. His strategy called for dividing and conquering the enemy.⁶¹

Divide and Conquer

Governor Périer offered freedom to any African slave who fought for the French. He first employed a group of armed blacks against a group of thirty, heretofore peaceful, Chaouacha Indians, who lived just south of the city. The Africans carried out this assignment without a hitch.⁶² Périer now armed most of the French men in New Orleans, but the Indians still far outnumbered them. After he made an alliance with the Choctaws, on January 27, 1730, his combined Indian-African-French force attacked the Natchez and recaptured 100 blacks and 54 French women. By now, however, the Natchez had already distributed some of their captives among the Chickasaws. Périer and his Choctaw allies failed to capture the fort because the African allies of the Natchez prevented the Choctaws from taking Fort Rosalie. The leaders of the African insurgents were Bambara. They showed the Indians how to fire the cannon inside



French-Americans-Native Americans in 18th Century French Colonial Louisiana
 Courtesy Joseph Zitomersky

the fort. Périer castigated his French soldiers for their lackadaisical effort, "as if they were going to a fair, not war," but he heaped praise on his African volunteers for their surprising valor. In all, fifteen of them received immediate freedom.⁶³ He subsequently proposed creating a black militia company to fight against the Indians.⁶⁴

Périer now promised amnesty to all Africans who neither fought for nor against the French. But he made no concessions to the Natchez, whom he saw as traitors. After he received reinforcements, he led another attack against the Natchez in early 1731. Juchureau de St. Denis, commandant at Natchitoches, led an attack against a smaller force in the west. The Natchez finally acknowledged defeat, but the French did not allow them to surrender until they returned all of their captives. They subsequently returned 19 black men and one black woman. Most of the blacks returned to the French reluctantly, which prompted Périer to suggest deportation of all slaves tainted by their association with the Natchez.⁶⁵

The End of the Natchez

The governor also tried to break the alliance between the Natchez and the Chickasaws, but with little success. The Natchez survivors, however, received the full wrath of the French. The French burned several leaders at the stake, and humiliated the rest of this once great nation with deportation to West Indies. A few Natchez found refuge among the Chickasaw or other tribes, but the Natchez ceased to exist as an organized society after 1731.⁶⁶

Black Insurgency

Périer also had to deal with rumors of a pending African slave uprising. The details were sketchy, but after intense interrogation, including breaking several alleged leaders on the wheel, he had enough information to require action. The attack would begin in New Orleans, and slaves would burn the city while whites attended church. The plan called for the massacre of all the whites from as far south as Balize, near the mouth of the river, up to Pointe Coupee, the rich tobacco growing area just north of Baton Rouge. The Bambara had threatened the other Africans with continued enslavement under Bambara rule, if they did not cooperate. Allegedly, one of the leading conspirators was Samba, one of the **commandeurs** on a plantation owned by Le Page du Pratz. Samba, a former African king, had participated in the attack of the French Fort d'Arguin. When the French took the fort they captured Samba and brought him to Louisiana as a slave. Even on board ship, Samba continued to resist and to conspire with other slaves to revolt against the crew. But the whites uncovered the plot before it could begin.⁶⁷

When Samba first arrived in New Orleans, they placed him on the King's plantation, then under the control of du Pratz. Before too long he had ingratiated himself with du Pratz, who soon made him a **commandeur**. When the Natchez conflict erupted, Samba and his comrades saw an opportunity for freedom. While Governor Périer awaited military reinforcements from France, the blacks planned their own uprising which was to coincide with the harvest season of 1730. Samba counted on the support of hundreds of slaves who would be returning from seasonal work in the Illinois Country. Supposedly, the black conspirators planned to kill the

whites, create a black kingdom in which Bambara and Mandingoes would be the ruling classes, and dominate the slaves from other nations.⁶⁸

Just prior to the proposed outbreak, A French soldier ordered a slave woman to bring him some firewood. When she refused his second order, he struck her, and she cried out angrily: "Hey soldier! You strike me now! but you Frenchmen won't beat the Negroes long--no. You hear me, don't you?" The woman was arrested and brought before the governor. Officials interrogated her, but she revealed nothing. They decided to watch the other Negroes on the King's plantations. Before too long they arrested eight alleged leaders, who they confined to jail. The slaves confessed after they had been tortured. The authorities ordered the slave woman hanged in the presence of the eight male conspirators, after which each was broken on the wheel.⁶⁹

Plots and Rumors of Plots

The authorities uncovered another alleged conspiracy targeted for Christmas, 1731. They interrogated a number of slaves, and after several confessed, hanged one woman and sentenced four males to be broken on the wheel. Apparently, in order to intimidate others, they cut off the heads of the condemned slaves and impaled them on poles, which they displayed on the highway leading to New Orleans. There were other rumored uprisings, but most believed that these rumors resulted from the excitement caused by the recent Natchez war. This widespread fear was based on the belief that in the future, blacks very well might revolt against their white masters. It caused great anxiety for a long time.⁷⁰

The Aftermath

The Natchez uprising, and the role of the Africans in it, forced the French into recognizing that Africans made not only good workers, but good warriors. While the bulk of the slaves had remained neutral during the conflict, there was no assurance that they would do so in the future. In order to lessen the possibility of a slave revolt, the French had to provide the slave with incentives to remain loyal.

One of the strongest advocates of a more lenient policy towards Africans was du Pratz. He encouraged the cultural assimilation of blacks into the French society. It was dangerous, he said for blacks to remain apart from the general society. They had to feel that they had a stake in it. Rather than remaining apart from the society, they needed to feel a part of it. He reminded his countrymen that most Africans had not been slaves in their homeland, and it would be just as traumatic for Frenchmen to lose their liberty. Hence, the French, could best assimilate the Africans, not by intermarrying with them, but by granting and respecting basic human rights. Once the Africans received respect as a persons, they would accept more readily accept their servitude.⁷¹

The governor and his advisors accepted some of du Pratz's suggestions, particularly those that were already called for in the **Code Noir**, formerly ignored by planters. But how to harmonize masters' property rights with slave's personal rights was easier to say than to do. But until, and unless, they did it, du Pratz warned, whites would always live under the threat of rebellion. He insisted that assimilation and respect for the basic rights of the slaves, while not necessarily desirable, was essential.

1. The terms "black," "Negro," and "Black" will be used interchangeably with "African American" which has most recently been used to designate persons of African and American ancestry. Historically, "Negro," or "black," although not always a precise description was applied to slaves and free persons of color of obvious, if not pure African ancestry. Mulatto, *gens de couleurs* or sometimes quadroon or octoroon, was used to describe someone of mixed African and European ancestry.
2. Basic accounts of the founding of Louisiana can be found in any standard work on Louisiana history. Such works include: François-Xavier Martin, **History of Louisiana**. New Orleans, 1837; Charles Gayarre, **History of Louisiana**, 4 vols. New Orleans, 1854-66; Edwin A. Davis, **Louisiana: A Narrative History**. Baton Rouge, 1961; and Bennett H. Wall et al., **Louisiana: A History**. Arlington Heights, Ill, 1990.
3. For an excellent summary of the early years of French Louisiana and its relationship within the French colonial empire, see Jerah Johnson, "Colonial New Orleans: A Fragment of the Eighteenth Century French Ethos," in Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, eds., **Creole New Orleans**. Baton Rouge, 1992 and Joseph Zitomersky, **French Americans-Native Americans in Eighteenth Century French Colonial Louisiana**. Lund, Sweden, 1994.
4. Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, pp. 33-34.
5. John Chase, **Frenchmen, Desire, Goodchildren and Other Streets of New Orleans**, hereafter cited as Chase, **Frenchmen**, (New Orleans, 1960), pp.38-40
6. Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, p. 34.
7. Chase, **Frenchmen**, p. 14.
8. Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, p. 31.
9. **Creole New Orleans**, p. 34
10. See James McGowan, "The Creation of a Slave Society: Louisiana Plantations in the Eighteenth Century," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (University of Rochester, 1976).
11. See Marcus B. Christian's **History of the Negro in Louisiana**, unpublished manuscript, hereafter cited as Christian, (Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans).
12. McGowan, pp. 44-49.
13. See Winthrop Jordan, **White Over Black**, (Chapel Hill, 1968) and Jeffrey R. Brackett, **The Negro in Maryland**, (Baltimore, 1889).
14. McGowan, pp. 46-47.

15. **Creole New Orleans**, p. 29.
16. **Ibid.**, pp. 26-29.
17. McGowan, p. 17.
18. **Creole New Orleans**, pp. 35-36.
19. McGowan, pp 28-29, 36.
20. **Ibid.**, p. 36.
21. **Creole New Orleans**, p. 33.
22. McGowan, p. 36.
23. Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, p. 19.
24. **Creole New Orleans**, pp. 56-57.
25. **Creole New Orleans**, p. 34.
26. **Ibid.**, p. 37.
27. In 1672 Louis XIV decreed that one **piece d'Inde** would equal 20 sols which would equal one livre. See "The Story of Canada's Currency," (Ottawa, 1990), p. 7.
28. Christian, pp. 3-5.
29. **Ibid.**, p. 5.
30. **Creole New Orleans**, pp. 59-61.
31. See Gwendolyn Midlo-Hall, **Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century**, (Baton Rouge, 1992). Professor Midlo-Hall has conducted an exhaustive study of African slavery in the eighteenth century. She focused on the places of origin and the cultural impact that Afro-Creoles made to the common culture of early Louisiana. She also showed the strong early interaction between native Americans and Africans.
32. **Ibid.**, pp. 33-34.
33. **Ibid.**, p. 38.
34. **Ibid.**, pp. 31-32.
35. **Ibid.**, pp. 40-41.
36. **Ibid.**, p. 51.

37. **Ibid.**, p. 35.
38. For a detailed discussion of the intricacies of the African slave trade to the New World, see Basil Davidson, **Black Mother, the Years of the African Slave Trade**, (London, 1961) and Daniel R. Mannix, **Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518-1865**, (New York, 1962).
39. **Black Mother**, p. 92.
40. **Ibid.**
41. Midlo-Hall, pp. 41-43.
42. **Ibid.**, p. 35.
43. Midlo-Hall, p. 83.
44. **Black Mother**, pp. 94-96.
45. Midlo-Hall, p. 58.
46. Christian, p. 3.
47. McGowan, p. 28.
48. **Creole New Orleans**, p. 37.
49. McGowan, pp. 43-44.
50. **Ibid.**, p. 43.
51. **Creole New Orleans**, p. 37.
52. McGowan, p. 52.
53. Christian, "Slave Fare and Cuisine," p. 1.
54. McGowan, pp. 56-67.
55. **Ibid.**, pp. 54-58.
56. Midlo-Hall, pp. 88-89.
57. McGowan, p. 86.
58. Midlo-Hall, pp. 100-102.
59. Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, pp. 30-31.

60. Midlo-Hall, p. 101.
61. Ibid., 102; McGowan, pp. 97-99.
62. Midlo-Hall, p. 102.
63. Ibid., pp. 102-103.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., pp. 105-106.
66. Creole New Orleans, p. 37.
67. Ibid., p. 109.
68. Ibid., pp. 108-110.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., pp. 110-111.
71. McGowan, p. 44.

CHAPTER TWO - ASSIMILATION

The end of the Natchez War in 1731 brought to a close the rule of the Company of the West, and also its plans to expand Louisiana's economy through widespread tobacco cultivation as well. In 1731, Intendant Edmonde Gatien de Salmon formally took control of Louisiana in the king's name. Thus proprietary rule ended, and Louisiana again reverted to the direct rule of the crown. This abrupt end to company rule practically ended widespread tobacco growing for a long time. Although a few planters continued to raise tobacco, most either abandoned it altogether, or sharply curtailed productions since they no longer enjoyed the generous price support formerly guaranteed by the company.

The decline in tobacco cultivation correspondingly became a major catalyst for relocating Africans in the New Orleans area. Prior to this time, except for a few household and domestic slaves, whites used most Africans in early New Orleans to clear land, build levees, and otherwise assist in constructing the city's first buildings. Since most of the early white inhabitants were either company or crown employees, few of them owned slaves. Therefore the bulk of the original city slaves were company-owned. A large majority of them were males who could be clothed, fed, and housed cheaply.¹ They worked under supervision of white officials who expected and exacted strict discipline.

Initially, the French did not consider Africans a part of the French community, but merely laborers for it. Since they did not import slaves to work in skilled crafts, and the demand for even white craftsmen was low, they did not need a large permanent class of slaves other than those employed by company or royal officials. White inhabitants who utilized Africans as

domestic servants selected those who had already become familiar with European ways. Whereas only a few years earlier many planters had clamored for more slaves, most now had a surplus of practically idle bondsmen. And, although slaves worked less than before, their masters still had to feed, clothe and house them.² Theretofore most planters now viewed their slaves as a burden. Moreover, because of peculiar circumstances masters now had to treat slaves more like persons. Some Africans who fought with the Natchez suffered a fate similar to their Indian allies, death by execution, but for most of them, reenslavement, for the most part, outside of Louisiana. Although the French sold a few of them outside the colony, the officials rationalized that the Indians had seduced most of the blacks into rebellion.³ From a practical standpoint, they also realized that wholesale execution, or even deportation would result in serious economic losses. However, the vast majority of Africans neither fought for, nor against the French. They had remained neutral, although some had been sympathetic to the Natchez cause. While they would remain in bondage, they now experienced a new type of servitude, one vastly different from that which had been previously characterized by barbarity and severity. Of course they remained slaves legally, but the new system involved considerably fewer restrictions. Many of the changes in the slave system resulted less from formal changes in the **Code Noir** than from a different application of the slave code.⁴ In any case, whether free, or bound, life for most Africans improved. But that was not the case for those heavily involved with the Indians, who were by far the biggest losers in the war.⁵

From Slavery to Servitude

In a roundabout way the French military victory over the Natchez and their African allies shaped the emergence of a new class of free Negroes in Louisiana. Fear of Indians, the scarcity of manpower among the white population, and the necessity of resorting to a divide and conquer policy all contributed to the making of a free Negro community, albeit a small one.

Just prior to the war, most slaves had been concentrated on plantations at least a hundred miles upriver from New Orleans. In most places slaves outnumbered whites by at least two to one. For example, in Natchitoches the 200 blacks outnumbered the sixty whites by more than three to one. At Pointe Coupee, blacks outnumbered whites by 400 to 200. This same ratio held at the German Coast settlement. In some of the inland settlements in the Arkansas and Illinois districts, the sparse white population was often augmented by seasonal imports of slaves rented for the earlier harvest season.⁶

The realization that slaves constituted a potential source of insurrection caused whites to make some concessions in order to lessen the possibility of rebellion. Most agreed that a workable solution had to include freedom as a real possibility for the exceptional, if not the ordinary, slave. While very few slaves ever actually gained freedom under the French, there was always hope that one could become free. The small free Negro population served as an example to which other slaves could aspire, though few actually achieved it. In 1736 Joseph Meunier granted freedom to a twelve year old girl.⁷ That same year Captain Coustillos freed his slave, Louis Conrad.⁸ While the occasional slave received freedom for some exceptional act of service, or from an exceptionally kind-hearted master, manumissions were infrequent. For example when

the French transferred Louisiana to Spain in 1766, less than 100 **negrés libres** lived in the colony.⁹ Although the number remained small throughout the French period, by the eve of the American Civil War a century later, New Orleans now had the largest free Negro population of any Southern city except Baltimore, Maryland. After the Natchez War, the government began to enforce those provisions of the **Code Noir** which provided rights for the slave. The code, first promulgated by Bienville in 1724, had been implemented only insofar as it spelled out the extent of authority of masters.¹⁰ While initially Périer had been a staunch supporter of strict discipline of slaves, the emergency forced him to change to a more lenient policy. Périer had begun the new policy of accommodating and assimilating the slaves when he was replaced as governor by Bienville in 1733. Bienville continued the process.¹¹

Bienville returned to New Orleans in 1733 and quickly extended his old maxim of live-and-let-live to Africans and Indians, at least those Indians who had remained friendly to the French during the war. Bienville, on the one hand, waged war against the Chickasaw Indians in what proved to be a costly attempt to force them to return the Natchez refugees. Bienville pushed even further Périer's reforms recognizing the African as a person with some rights, rights that even their own masters could not deny or infringe.¹²

Cultural Assimilation

Bienville embraced the advice of Le Page du Pratz who had strongly urged the French to create a mutual dependency between blacks and whites, based to a large extent, on a voluntary, though regulated association, between slave and master. Du Pratz stressed continually

the need to create a bond of community between slaves and masters in order to induce the Negroes to accommodate, if not enjoy their status as slaves. Some of them, like his own Samba, had owned slaves in their African homelands prior to their own capture and enslavement. After all, he cautioned, slaves are men and women, with normal human aspirations, including the strongest of all, a desire to retain the most cherished of all human rights, freedom. Du Pratz also pointed out that although Frenchmen had an unflattering and inaccurate perception of Africans, based largely on superficially different physical and cultural features, they must realize that Africans viewed them in much the same way. He reported that one of the enduring myths among native Africans was that whites were cannibals who kidnapped blacks in order to eat them. In order to counteract and lessen their misapprehensions and fears, seasoned blacks who had already become acculturated should be used as translators, communicators, so to speak, of New World ways to their newly enslaved fellows.¹³

Jacques de la Chaise, the company's agent, who was, like P  rier, a reluctant convert to the new policy, had proposed the creation of a free Negro caste based on rewards for service with freedom as the ultimate goal. Thus, assimilation and accommodation became the cornerstone of the new policy to legitimate the relationship between master and slave, while brute force had produced only limited success. Hence, according to de la Chaise, the French had to attempt to bind their African workers to them through a sense of mutual dependence. Africans were not automatically born to be slaves, but if masters applied the correct techniques, they could transform even the most recalcitrant ones into effective and obedient slaves. Like, P  rier, however, la Chaise was removed from office and left New Orleans for the last time in 1733, and his proposals for assimilating and accommodating the slaves had to be carried out by others.

Generally speaking this new policy only involved cultural assimilation and did not include attempts at racial amalgamation as had been tried earlier in Quebec with Indians. But that did not prevent occasional liaisons between blacks and whites, especially between white men and black women. In many ways the slave's status improved as he became more of a servant and less a chattel slave. As such he learned to communicate more in French, to dress, at least partly, in European clothes, to adopt a different diet, and to submit to governance by French laws which provided him some legal rights. And he would be afforded the opportunity to enter the French church which would also accelerate the assimilation process.

The Slave Comes to Church

In the initial years of Louisiana slavery, the Roman Catholic Church had played a negligible role in the lives of the slaves. At first, uncooperative planters, as well as local officials, prevented the clergy from playing any role in the lives of the slaves. Moreover, in an attempt to prevent the several religious orders from fighting among themselves for territorial control, as had happened earlier in Quebec, John Law had divided Louisiana into three huge religious parishes and assigned geographic areas to specific religious orders. Paradoxically, Law assigned to the Jesuits, by far the most aggressive and most successful missionaries, the least populated area, the northern most territory, called the Illinois country. The southern most area he assigned to the Capuchins, whom, both laymen and other clergymen often chided for their lax efforts among whites as well as among blacks and reds. After the French government ceded Louisiana to Spain, Spanish Capuchins censured their French brethren for their inactivity among

whites as well as among blacks and Indians. One could only describe early missionary activities among the slaves as luke warm.¹⁴ But in the early 1730's, the church emerged from its lethargy and began an active policy of catechizing the slaves, which not only put its stamp of approval on the assimilation policy but it also helped to assure that slaves would be treated more like humans than beasts of burden. The church held that, at least in things spiritual, a slave had certain basic dignities including the right to receive the sacraments of baptism and matrimony. In this respect the church became an important catalyst in helping to develop a social consciousness premised upon cultural and religious assimilation of the African into the larger society. The Code required any slaves going to church had to attend the first mass of the morning. Those who lived in New Orleans could attend church alone; those who came in from the countryside had to be accompanied by their master or overseer.¹⁵

While he was certainly not now a full-fledged member of society, the slave did possess a few basic rights which placed limits on his subjugation. Like it or not, planters must now permit, if not encourage, monogamous marriage and allow the offsprings of their slaves to be officially baptized.¹⁶ Some Senegambians had embraced Islam and there had been a sprinkling of Jewish converts. Most slaves accepted Christian conversion, at least in and around New Orleans. In the interior, however, many retained allegiance to African deities.¹⁷ The Catholic sacrament of baptism was similar to African cleansing rituals, which were used to rid one of evil spirits or spells. The religious medals and relics that the Catholic church were also similar to the amulets and charms used in Africa. Catholic teachings about the intervention of saints and angels could be associated with African beliefs about deceased ancestors who lived in spirit realms and provided protection to their bereaved loved ones. Perhaps they did not fully

understand the meaning of their new religion, which for many was little more than surface conversion, but there were some immediate results.¹⁸ A total of 425 Africans were baptized at St. Louis Church in New Orleans alone, between 1731 and 1733. In many cases, masters or mistresses served as godparents for their slaves.¹⁹ Some of these new Catholic converts discarded their African names and took new Christian names. Additionally, an increasing number of slaves solemnized their marriages in the church and attempted to live a monogamous life.²⁰ The Roman Catholic church showed some flexibility with regard to African culture. The Church at least tolerated African dances, often characterized by frenetic motion. Drums, which native African people used extensively as a form of communication and in all types of communal activities, had been quickly banned in the English Protestant colonies as "heathen dances and desecration of the sabbath."²¹ Louisiana church officials, however, allowed slave drum beating and dancing as readily as they sanctioned dances and balls among whites.²²

Slave Families

Generally slaves selected their own spouses. Because there were almost always more male than female slaves, slaves sometimes had to choose mates from other plantations. The Code Noir specifically prohibited forced mating of slaves, and while available evidence is sketchy it seems that most masters respected the choice of their slaves. In cases where slave spouses were owned by different masters, consent from both was necessary before marriage could be contracted. Each master retained control over his own slave and continued to provide for him or her.²³ The French code followed the ancient Roman practice of *partus sequitur*

ventrem, the fruit of the womb belongs to its owner. Therefore, the master of the slave woman had ownership of her children, regardless of the legal status of her husband.²⁴ In an attempt to prevent forced concubinage, the Code placed heavy fines on white masters who fathered children by their slave women. If a slave woman bore children from her master, the law provided for a fine of 300 livres and he was deprived of both the woman and her children, who now were assigned to the hospital of the locality. Unfortunately, however, the children and her children were now forever incapable of being free. If a free man of color lived in concubinage with one of his own slaves, he could escape the penalties of the law by marrying her. She and the child automatically became free thereafter.²⁴

The official recognition of slave marriages gave Louisiana slaves an important advantage over their counterparts in the British colonies. In such colonies such as Virginia, Maryland or the Carolinas, where slaves were considered chattel property officials maintained no records of their births, marriages, or deaths.²⁵ But in Louisiana, church officials maintained individual records of those slaves who received the sacraments of baptisms, marriage, and burial. In that sense, at least before the law, the Louisiana slave was a person, his British counterpart, legally a thing, occupying the same level as a horse, landed property, etc. While slaves in Louisiana and the British colonies could be mortgaged, in Louisiana the slave could not be seized as easily to satisfy any debts. Once Louisiana became an American state, however, it soon adopted the common law practice of treating slaves no differently from any other property.

Generally, masters permitted conjugal visits to slave spouses who lived on neighboring plantations, often at night, or on weekends, as long as the slave returned in time to perform his regular chores. Sometimes masters could maintain discipline over recalcitrant slaves by a threat

to withhold permission to visit or receive a visit from a spouse.²⁶ The law required masters to feed and clothe all their slaves, including slave children. During infancy and early childhood, slave children were under the supervision of their own mother. As time passed and a few planters acquired more slaves, older, semi-retired slave women took charge of young slaves in order to free their mothers for work. Even when the father lived on the same plantation with his wife, he exercised only a limited authority over his wife and children, though more in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth century. It is ironic that the French insisted on the monogamous western marriage custom, but did not allow the father to perform the traditional role of head and master of the household.²⁷

Perhaps the most immediate impact of the new assimilation policy was the institutionalization of the slave family. The family, the most cherished of all African institutions began to take root, but also in a new form. While many African societies practiced polygamy, in early Louisiana this practice was not only opposed by the church, but was also impractical, because of the imbalance between male and female slaves, the former greatly outnumbering the latter.²⁸ On the other hand, the monogamous model of one man, one wife, meant that many men had no wives. Some black men had already entered into informal relationships with Indian women.²⁹ However, the law prohibited intermarriage between Indians and Africans, although officials did not strictly enforce it.

We must not assume that planters promoted slave marriage and families solely because of their desire to prevent adulterous relations. Just as Bienville earlier promoted marriage for his men as the best way to maintain stability, early Louisiana officials also realized that slave families would lessen unrest among slaves. A planter could exercise more control over

individuals by withholding or granting permission for marriage, or visits to a neighboring plantations to see a spouse. And especially, later on, the threat to sell one's spouse could prove effective in curtailing or curing slave misconduct.

Slave Housing

Some masters permitted slaves to build simple houses and to raise gardens and keep a small number of domestic animals for themselves. Usually these houses stood at least several hundred feet from the master's home, according to du Pratz "so that the winds might not blow any offensive odors from the slave quarters in that direction."³⁰ As more and more slaves began to marry, individual slave cabins were much more preferable than the old barracks where dozens of slaves had been housed together. Now, at least, the slave had something that he could call his own, a home into which he could retire, and at least for part of the time, escape the watchful eye of his master or overseer. Here he might enjoy privacy that would have been impossible to obtain in large barracks. Some planters, who owned more than a few slaves, built palisades around the slave quarters, each with a lock and a key to prevent escape at night.³¹

On large plantations, the slave quarters resembled small villages. While most slaves labored in agriculture, some plantations required the services of skilled craftsmen. During the 1730's, on the Chauachas plantation, about seven leagues south of the city, four slaves were listed as craftsmen: Thomas, a blacksmith, Jean, a harness maker, and Nea Bambara and François, both bricklayers.³²

Slave cabins were certainly no works of beauty. They were rough, shoddily constructed building designed almost solely for shelter, and to house the few meager personal belongings that the slave owned. Many cabins were roofed with palmetto leaves, which served well during the warm dry season, but caused considerable discomfort during the cold damp season. One can safely assume that slaves spent little time in the cabins except for sleeping.³³ Slave gardens were often located behind their huts. On some plantations, masters distributed small plots of land to each slave family or adult slave. Sometimes groups of slaves worked together in cultivating their gardens. Most of the time, individuals preferred to work their own land, which assured them all the profits from it.³⁴

Slave Laborers

Some slaves had learned to hunt with guns and received permission from their masters to hunt wild game, such as birds, squirrels, rabbits, and deer. Generally, planters required their slave hunters to share some of the game with them, the rest they could keep for their personal use, or for sale at the district markets.³⁵ In addition to hunting, some slaves salvaged driftwood or learned to cut and cure timber, which they sold for cash or for other goods.³⁶

Slaves who remained unmarried, especially men, could prove troublesome. The fact that many of the Negro males now worked less than before, added to the new liberties now enjoyed, and contributed to an increase in unrest. Many, particularly the unmarried ones, now began to frequent town in search of social diversion and relaxation.³⁷

At first the most frequent visitors from the plantations were the **commandeurs**. After the Natchez War, the planters began replacing white overseer with black ones, although not entirely so. Gradually, skilled slaves began to replace white craftsmen on the plantation, as the planters tried to hold down costs. Soon the skilled craftsmen joined the trek of **commandeurs** into towns for relaxation.³⁸ Initially, most of these craftsmen were slaves, but over a period of time most gained their freedom and thereafter jealously guarded their monopoly against intrusion from either slaves or whites.³⁹ While most of the free black craftsmen resided permanently in the city, more and more slaves became weekend and nocturnal visitors. These visits weakened the master's control, but there was no longer a need to keep the slave confined on the plantations twenty-four hours a day. Most planters found that growing tobacco without price supports, too unprofitable to continue, certainly without supplementary cash crops such as corn, indigo, rice or sugar cane. While a minority of them around the Pointe Coupee and Natchez districts continued to produce tobacco, most planters, for much of the 1730's and 1740's, experimented with indigo, sugar, or rice, but with only limited success.⁴⁰

The use of slave **commandeurs** solved one problem, but created another one. First, it allowed planters an opportunity to cut expenses as they replaced white overseers with blacks. It also created a hierarchy among the slaves, a position to which slaves who demonstrated their reliability and fidelity might aspire. On the other hand, **commandeurs** sometimes faced resistance from other slaves who resented their authority, especially, if the **commandeur** came from one African nation that his subordinates had considered inferior to them in the old homelands. In some cases, **commandeurs** extorted favors, especially, sexual ones, from female slaves. Many of the **commandeurs** had been selected for leadership positions because of their

knowledge of rice and millet, or as was in the case of Samba, they clearly exhibited leadership skills.⁴¹ Neither sugar nor rice cultivation was immediately successful however. It would not be until near the end of the 18th century, under the Spanish, that sugar became the major cash crop that Louisiana had sought for so long.⁴² Successful commercial rice production would take nearly two centuries to catch on.⁴³ As a result, the bulk of Louisiana's plantations were now over staffed and most found it difficult to break even. Planters therefore resorted to cost-cutting. The workday was reduced by hours and the workweek cut by at least one whole day. Correspondingly, rations were reduced and slaves were encouraged to supplement their own diet by raising their own gardens and selling the surplus in order to purchase personal items.

The Slave Market

The Sunday or weekend slave bazaar incorporated many African features into the local market. Often the slaves would while away time between customers with song and dance, which added to the festivity of the market. While the dancing and singing was always secondary to selling, they became regular attractions for both blacks and whites, and also Indians who sometimes joined in these activities. Well into the antebellum period many visitors to New Orleans commented on the slave dances, which they erroneously perceived to be the primary reason for slave gatherings.⁴⁴

Slave Diet

Since much of their weekly food ration consisted of corn, slaves began to prepare corn dishes in different ways. One of the most colorful dishes they created was called **couche-couche**, a simple preparation made by mixing cornmeal with water and then salting it to taste. The **couche-couche** was then fried until it became very dry and brown. It made a good breakfast or a light supper. "The word **couche-couche** probably comes from the Arabian **kuskus**, itself a derivative of the Arabic **kaskasa**, meaning to 'pound small.'" ⁴⁵ Africans probably gave it this name because the corn meal used had been ground very fine. Later generations of slaves would make hoe cakes, or ashcakes, from corn meal or corn flour.⁴⁶

Perhaps the most famous of the African dishes was gumbo, which derived from an African stew, made variously from meats or fish. In Louisiana, slaves began to add local ingredients to this stew, such as seafood, okra, tomatoes, and **filé**, a spice made by using finely ground powder made from dried sassafras leaves. Very quickly, gumbo became a favorite among whites and reds, as well as blacks. This new creole fare was soon found on the tables of the "best" people. During the next century, many wealthy citizens sought as cooks only those slaves who had mastered the secrets of these dishes.⁴⁷

In a sense, because of economic necessities, the planters were forced to surrender more control over their slaves, and there developed a corresponding **quid quo pro** between slave and master. In order for the masters to lessen their contributions to the slaves' upkeep, the slaves were provided more opportunities and more freedom to support themselves.

Slave Leisure

At least half-day Saturday and usually every Sunday, slaves were pretty much free to come and go as they pleased. If planters did not encourage their slaves to fend for themselves on their free time, they at least gave tacit approval to it by making it attractive, if not necessary, for them to do so. A mid century official complained that:

it is because the slaves are not clothed that they are left free from all work on Sunday, because the half feasts are for their masters. On such days some of them go to the neighbors' plantations who hire them to cut moss and to gather crops. This is done with the tacit consent of their masters who do not know the whereabouts of their slaves on the said day, nor do they question them, nor do they worry themselves about them and are always satisfied that the negroes will appear again on the following Monday for work.⁴⁸

Usually, slaves enjoyed enough independence to choose their weekend employers. Most people who hired slaves as day laborers, usually owned only a few or no slaves at all, probably because it was cheaper to hire laborers when they were needed, rather than trying to maintain large numbers of them on a permanent basis. In the 19th century, even large planters would rent out slaves during slack periods, but of course retained the money produced from such services. In the 18th century, however, whatever the slave earned off the plantation on his own time belonged to him.⁴⁹

The slave with an independent, though limited, source of income became both a producer and a consumer. While some of his extra money was used to buy necessities, soon, a disproportionate amount of it was used to buy liquor. Not unlike American Indians, the slaves developed a strong taste for European drink, especially rum and Louisiana's Creole version, tafia. Tafia was a cheap inferior type of rum made primarily for local consumption. It would

have fared badly in competition with rum produced in the Caribbean. It is probably no exaggeration to state that Louisiana's later brewing industry owed its existence, to a large extent, to the large slave consumer class. At first, money earned from legitimate sources was used to purchase tafia.⁵⁰ Whenever work was scarce, or money could not be earned legally, some slaves began stealing goods from fellow slaves, their masters, and than from other whites. To some extent slaves' theft was at least tacitly tolerated, that is, until it got out of hand. The slaves's desire for tafia created a sub-economy, for many free Negroes and poor whites made a living off the slaves' demand for liquor--never of course, asking any questions about the source of the money.

Many of the liberties that slaves gained came about during the last term of Bienville, who became preoccupied with pacification of the Chickasaw Indians. Because the governor was frequently absent from the capital on these campaigns, perhaps he did not spend as much time enforcing discipline as he should have. Bienville, who also recruited from among slaves to serve against the Indians, and consequently made concessions to individual slaves and to the slave population in general. When Bienville left Louisiana for the last time in 1743, he turned over the reins of government to the young Canadian, Pierre François Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil. The new governor took a census of the inhabitants of the province and it listed 300 slaves in New Orleans in 1744.⁵¹ But this figure only included the permanent slave residents. It did not include the large number of slaves who daily came to town to sell their ware or frequent the taverns each night. He was informed that "the negroes of the town are so licentious as to come out, at night, of the houses of their masters, which they leave abandoned and open, and thereby exposed to all sorts of casualties, in order to assemble with those of the country, who come

prowling through the town, to commit every kind of malfeasance, and to be drinking at the taverns, to the amount of what they can obtain for what objects they have stolen from their public and from their masters."⁵²

A Return to Order

Vaudreuil expressed surprise and shock at the unusual display of independence exhibited by the slaves. What concerned Vaudreuil most was the virtual absence of discipline within the slave system. And he was right. It was not simply that many slaves had almost complete license to come and go as they pleased, but they often also did so in a manner that showed contempt for the social and legal system of which they were a part. The slaves often caused problems in towns. They got involved in fights with other blacks and whites and resisted attempts to force them into subordinate positions. While they were still legally enslaved, their new social mobility and their equal access to the market places made it difficult to force them to remain servile. To keep them in complete subordination, it would have been necessary to keep them in rural isolation, free of contact with the outside world. However, that would have required their masters to keep them employed full time and to provide a hundred percent of their necessities, which was virtually impossible for most planters to do. Making slaves economic producers and consumers lessened their dependence on their masters. And slaves who feel and act independent of their masters do not long remain in slavery. Vaudreuil complained of "certain individuals, instead of improving their lands by cultivation, have come to the town of New Orleans, or have removed to certain localities in rural districts of this province in order to establish pot houses

therein, by which means they do not only tempt the fidelity of the slaves, but also induce them to rob their masters by giving them intoxicating liquors in exchange for the produce of their pilfering."⁵³ The governor identified many of the white offenders as former German Coast residents who had abandoned their farms and had come to New Orleans to participate in the brewing industry. He decreed that all the inhabitants of the German Coast who had abandoned their farms must return to their former places of residence or face stiff penalties. Governor Vaudreuil accused slaves of haughty behavior. Some had gone about "carrying canes and sticks and riding horses on the highways elevated above their pedestrian white superiors." Others, he complained, "elbowed their way past travelers on the narrow roads and levees." Vaudreuil tried to restore some semblance of order. Whites were authorized to shoot any slave on sight who was mounted and refused to halt on command. He authorized fifty lashes and branding if a slave failed to show respectful submission. In a formal order, he said:

we exhort and even order all citizens carefully to watch these nocturnal excesses, to which our police shall be actively alive; and if, through our combined efforts we can discover the authors of such iniquities, the severe justice which shall be administered to them shall intimidate all others who may be disposed to produce such scandalous disorders.⁵⁴

He further forbade anyone from selling liquor to slaves outside their home plantation. Henceforth slaves could not sell any item without the written permission of their own master.

The police arrested a free black woman named Jeannette, in September, 1746, and charged her with "holding assemblies of slaves and servants, at night." Jeannette insisted that she had only invited them in for supper.⁵⁵ The Superior Council dismissed the charge but reprimanded and warned her not to repeat this offense in the future. The governor further required all owners to enforce stricter discipline among their slaves and also to curtail, if not

end, the spirit of independence among them. More corporal punishment was to be exacted. The governor ordered planters to give slaves fifty lashes for fighting or for not giving proper respect to any white person.⁵⁶

New Orleans slaves were restricted in their use of public establishments. Vaudreuil required them to buy special licenses in order to sell at the public market in the capital. And while there were few law enforcement officials, every white was given power to punish a slave for disrespect or for social infractions, minor or serious. In a sense, Vaudreuil tried to use a new divide-and-conquer strategy--create a sense of community among all whites as a means of controlling all blacks. For much of the remainder of the 1740's this new policy enjoyed at least moderate success.

Brief Economic Recovery

To the extent that Vaudreuil's new policy was successful, it was so, as much because of a short-lived economic upswing, as it was because of the new emphasis on enforcement. Indigo planters enjoyed new prosperity as French policies at home finally began to improve Louisiana's economy.⁵⁷ Vaudreuil, who had inherited some of Bienville's Indian problems finally forced the pesky Chickasaws to agree to a new treaty. As a result of a return to peace, many of the German farmers who had abandoned their upriver farmland and fled to New Orleans for protection returned home and again began to grow corn in large enough amounts that the surplus could be sold cheaply to plantations. Planters now tried to reduce or end private farms among

their slaves. Many also stopped their slaves from working off the plantations without specific approval.

Slave Resistance

Many slaves, now accustomed to their freedoms, continued to insist on exercising their privileges. This clash of interests caused many slaves to retaliate by running away. Some of them began to band together to form communities of maroons. The larger the number of maroons, the greater problems they caused for whites. Maroons often stole from neighboring plantations and retreated into swamp hideouts. Vaudreuil responded to the problem by instituting what was called a "reign of terror" among slaves. He insisted that slaves be returned to a level of complete subordination and subservience. If necessary, he sanctioned the use of torture and mutilation.⁵⁸ Vaudreuil's change in policy was an admission that the policy of assimilation had failed or, at least, had gone too far. As he saw it, slave control was a constant reminder that the slave was *ipso facto* inferior not only to his master, but to the entire master class. Stated differently, it meant that slavery would again be based on its original premise that all whites had the absolute right to control all blacks. While many masters complied, at least in part, with the new get-tough policy, they did not succeed completely in vanquishing the spirit of resistance. It was almost as if things had revolved a hundred eighty degrees again as attempts were made to return the institution of slavery to its former status before the Natchez War. Within little more than a decade the French had forgotten the advice offered by du Pratz, treat the slaves as persons, not things, in order to create a bond of community between them and their

masters. Vaudreuil's new policy was not much different from that of P rier a few years earlier. And while it lessened some of the problems that slaves had created, it produced more. Those who had been treated more humanely and with some levels of personal dignity did not surrender those rights easily. As a result, they fought back, figuratively and literally. Since the white populace had the upper hand it usually succeeded in quelling rebellions, but only by resorting to terror.

A Maturing Institution

The plantation, which had taken on the characteristics of an old world village, now began to develop characteristics usually found in penal institutions. Punishment became a frequent instrument of control, not just to compel slave labor, but also to generate fear among slaves in order to make them completely subordinate. The master, also fearful that laxity could ultimately cause him his life, now expressed that fear with a whip. Punishment now became a form of socialization as it communicated to both slave and master who was in charge. Many masters inflicted severe beatings, often in excess of that allowed by law. One planter defended the use of violence:

Unless there is order and subordination kept among Negroes they would soon be masters instead of slaves. For though they are black, they have as great a propensity to command and be tyrants as white people generally have. It is now for us to say who shall be the tyrants, you or us, and as the choice is with us, we say we will be the masters, and the negroes shall remain our slaves. We cannot live on an equal footing, for if the negroes were free, the whites would soon be slaves, or their throats would soon be cut.⁵⁹

The whites had a strong supporter in Governor Vaudreuil who not only wished to create an orderly slave society, but an ordered one as well. The ambitious French Canadian who arrived in New Orleans in 1743 made no secret of his desire to return to Quebec--as governor. He found the New Orleans society primitive and coarse, but attempted to refine it. Vaudreuil organized a miniature "court" and began employing rigid French etiquette at the many social functions he sponsored. He flattered and was flattered in return by those he deemed worthy to receive the governor's favor. But while he wined and dined the social elites, he did little for the underclasses. Therefore it is not surprising that he showed little concern for the treatment of slaves. Indeed, of the many reports of excessive violence heaped on recalcitrant slaves, most fell on deaf ears. Planters, after all, had a right to use as much violence as was necessary to make slaves work, as well as to fear.

It should be remembered that slaves had experienced harsh treatment upon their introduction into Louisiana. This legal violence had ended only as a consequence of the Natchez War. It is ironic that the new policy of terror only ended as the result of another war, the Seven Years', or French and Indian War.

The Last Years of French Rule

The Marquis de Vaudreuil received his coveted promotion to the governorship at Quebec and was succeeded in 1753 by Captain Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlerec. Vaudreuil realized his ambition to become Quebec's governor; but it was bittersweet, for his ineptness contributed to Britain's capture of Quebec. Ironically, Vaudreuil was its last French governor.

Kerlerec, likewise became Louisiana's last regularly appointed French governor. Although he was a strict disciplinarian and resorted to harsh punishment of civilian and military personnel alike, Vaudreuil's tenuous ordered society fell apart. The brief economic recovery, based largely on new indigo markets was shattered by the Seven Years' War. British naval superiority again made it difficult for French ships to sail back and forth to Louisiana. Indigo planters had difficulty getting their products to French ports, and as a result many of them were forced to curtail operations and correspondingly reduce work time for their slaves. British colonists in the southeast, who had always outnumbered the French, were even more numerous now, and they began to provoke Indian attacks along the common frontier with the French and Spanish in northern Florida and southern Alabama. The fragile economy was shattered again, producing economic stress for whites as well as blacks. The British naval blockade across the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, caused a severe shortage of necessities.⁶⁰ Many of the poor whites, especially the soldiers suffered as a result. Soldiers at the French garrison on Cat Island complained of systematic exploitation by their local commandant, who they accused of practically enslaving them by forcing them to work in his private gardens while he was selling their food to neighboring Indians. They mutinied and killed him, but in return faced harsh retribution from Governor Kerlerec, who broke several of them on the wheel and placed one in a coffin and had him sawed him in half.⁶¹

Economic collapse also revived the practice of slaves' working for themselves on their free days in order to provide for their own personal needs. Although officials in New Orleans were supposed to require slaves to present a pass upon entering or leaving the city, many without papers came and went without interference. Some of them moved into the city on a

permanent basis, and by 1765 there were about 2000 slaves living there.⁶² When the Seven Years' War had ended by 1762, France, which long since had abandoned hope of making Louisiana a thriving success, transferred the colony to Spain in the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau.⁶² By the time the Spanish arrived in 1766, slavery in Louisiana was permanent. Both blacks and whites had made accommodation to slavery. The transition to Spanish rule would further define that accommodation.

1. James T. McGowan, "The Creation of A Slave Society: Louisiana Plantations in the Eighteenth Century", Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Rochester, 1976), p. 44.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
3. Midlo-Hall, p. 111.
4. McGowan, p. 97.
5. Bennett H. Wall et al, **Louisiana: A History** (Arlington, Ill., 1990), p. 41.
6. Midlo-Hall, p. 174.
7. McGowan, p. 108.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, eds., **Creole New Orleans** (Baton Rouge, 1992), p. 45 (fn. 60).
10. See Hans W. Baade, "The Law of Slavery in Spanish Louisiana," pp. 48-49 in Edward F. Haas, ed., **Louisiana's Legal Heritage** (Pensacola, 1983).
11. McGowan, pp. 109-110.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-113.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Midlo-Hall, p. 163.
18. *Ibid.*
19. McGowan, p. 121.
20. *Ibid.*
21. See Winthrop Jordan, "The Souls of Men," in **White Over Black** (Chapel Hill, 1968).
22. Midlo-Hall, pp. 162-163; McGowan, pp. 274-275.

23. McGowan, p. 134.
24. Baade, p. 45.
25. **Creole New Orleans**, p. 41.
26. See Marcus B. Christian, **History of the Negro in Louisiana**, Unpublished manuscript (Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans), "Regulations and Punishment of Slaves and Free Colored," pp. 1-2.
27. McGowan, p. 134.
28. **Ibid.**, p. 117.
29. **Ibid.**, pp. 175-176.
30. Midlo-Hall, pp. 115-116.
31. Christian, "Slave Housing," p. 1.
32. **Ibid.**, pp. 2-3.
33. **Ibid.**
34. **Ibid.**
35. See Jerah Johnson, "New Orleans's Congo Square: An Urban Setting for Early Afro-American Culture Formation," in **Louisiana History**, vol. XXXII, Number 2 (Spring, 1991).
36. **Ibid.**
37. McGowan, pp. 134-135.
38. **Ibid.**, p. 137.
39. Marcus B. Christian, **Negro Ironworkers in Louisiana, 1718-1900** (Gretna, 1972), pp. 16-17.
40. McGowan, p. 151; Midlo-Hall, pp. 124, 128.
41. **Ibid.**, p. 114.
42. Louisiana did not begin to produce an exportable sugar until the late Spanish period. See Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, p. 74.
43. A few local residents harvested small amounts of rice, but it did not become a major export until near the end of the 19th century. See Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, p. 237.
44. McGowan, p. 144; Johnson, "New Orleans's Congo Square," p. 141.

45. Christian, "Slave Fare and Cuisine," p. 6.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. McGowan, pp. 191-192.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
50. McGowan, p. 146.
51. McGowan, pp. 145-147.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
53. Christian, "Regulations and Punishment of Slaves and Free Colored," pp. 1-2.
54. *Ibid.*
55. McGowan, pp. 150-151.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-148
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
60. Edwin A. Davis, **Louisiana: A Narrative History** (Baton Rouge, 1961), pp. 67-68.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

CHAPTER THREE - SPANISH AMBIVALENCE

Two Communities

The black community of New Orleans, by the middle of the eighteenth century, was gradually dividing into two communities: free persons of color and slaves. By the end of the century, there would be three distinct groups of black Louisianians: **gens de couleurs**, **negres libres**, and slaves.¹ The transfer of Louisiana from France to Spain in 1766 served as an important catalyst for developing those classes.

"La Louisiane" Becomes "Luisiana"

France's decision to transfer Louisiana to Spain was not really a difficult one. For much of its history, French Louisiana had drained needed resources from the mother country. And while there had been brief periods of economic expansion, for the most part, Louisiana had survived on little more than a barter economy. No matter how one measured success, Louisiana's had been minimal. To royal officials, usually hard pressed to balance the budget at home, Louisiana was little more than a financial sink hole. This province had proved to be a financial morass for both king and proprietors. Only its strategic location at the confluence of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico made it important for the government to keep it in order to prevent British westward expansion. France's continued presence also helped to provide strategic protection to its more successful colony in New France. In other words, as long

as France maintained control of Quebec, it made practical sense, if not dollars and cents, to retain Louisiana.

In 1759 Louisiana's usefulness to France diminished after Quebec fell to the British during the Seven Years' War. Fighting dragged on for more than two years before diplomats from both countries began talks over the ultimate disposition of territories. Which territories would the victorious British demand, which would France retain? If the British refused to return Quebec, the French government had to reassess its interest in Louisiana. At first, French ministers tried to minimize the potential loss of Canada by redrawing the boundaries of Louisiana to include much of the territory south of Quebec. In other words, even if France had to give up Canada perhaps it could still maintain the lucrative Canadian fur trade by extending Louisiana's boundaries further north and east. The British, however, refused to accept such a devious scheme. When the parties finally agreed to settle their differences at a peace conference in Paris, Louis XV's ministers realized that the British would deal from a position of strength. After all they had defeated the French and France's Spanish allies all over the globe, in Europe, in India, in North America and in the Caribbean. Not only would the British probably keep Quebec, they might demand all, or a significant part, of Louisiana, as well.²

Prior to the peace conference Louis had instructed his ministers to contact the government of his cousin, Charles III of Spain, about accepting Louisiana as partial compensation for Spain's losses in the war, which Spain wanted to prolong in hopes of winning back some territories she had lost. Spain's gain of Louisiana would allow Louis to rid himself of unprofitable Louisiana, and also prevent the hated British from acquiring it. It would also encourage the Spanish to agree to give up the war effort and go to the peace conference table. Dumping unprofitable

Louisiana into his cousin's hands proved to be more difficult than Louis imagined. While Spain had lost heavily in the war, including Cuba and Florida, Louisiana would hardly begin to compensate Spain for those losses. Consequently, before Louis could rid France of any further responsibility for Louisiana, he had to convince Charles that Spain would benefit by taking Louisiana. In order to do this, France exaggerated Louisiana's benefits, both real and potential. At the very least, Spain would benefit from ownership of Louisiana, by using it as a buffer between the British colonies east of the Mississippi River and Spain's lucrative colony of Mexico. Finally, the two countries concluded the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau on November 3, 1762³ which provided for the cession of Louisiana to Spain.

Louisiana and West Florida

The following year England, France, and Spain concluded the Treaty of Paris of 1763.⁴ As Louis XV had feared, the British insisted on retaining ownership of Quebec and demanded all of the Louisiana territory which lay east of the Mississippi, which of course would have included New Orleans. In an effort to keep New Orleans in Louisiana, French negotiators insisted that New Orleans was not east of the Mississippi but on the "Isle of Orleans." They persuaded the British to settle for all of Louisiana east of the Mississippi except the Isle of Orleans. The British renamed that portion of Louisiana, both north of Lake Pontchartrain, and east of the Mississippi River, "West Florida," which they distinguished from former Spanish Florida, now called, "East Florida."⁵

After the British took possession of West Florida, life would change for the blacks living there because of an influx of British planters who brought in their own slaves, most of whom had been Anglicized and spoke English. Moreover, in the French colonies, Britain had no single imperial slave code for all its colonies. Each British colony developed its own code, almost totally free of interference from England. Nevertheless, the one constant in the slave code of all English colonies was the conception of chattel slavery.⁶ Unlike the **Code Noir**, the English common law did not consider the slave primarily a person, with basic civil rights, but primarily as real property to be used at the discretion of the owner. For example, the **Code Noir** provided protection to slave marriages, but the common law did not recognize such marriages. Additionally, the **Code Noir** prohibited separation of slave spouses or of children from their parents before age of fourteen.⁷ The common law did not offer these protections. Each British colony had been free to deal with the rights of slaves as each saw fit. As a result, many of the "rights" that Louisiana slaves had gained after the Natchez war would no longer be recognized after the transfer to British rule.

Life in the rest of the vast Louisiana territory which lay west of the Mississippi and was now Spanish, for the most part, continued as usual. The Spanish did not take formal possession of Louisiana until early 1766. During the interim, a number of well-to-do planters and merchants sent a petition to France in opposition to the proposed transfer, but it was to no avail. Even the aged Bienville, who accompanied the Louisiana emissary to see the French Prime minister could not persuade him to reverse his decision.⁸ The first communication local residents received from Spain arrived in August, 1765, from Havana. The communique announced the appointment of

a new Spanish governor whose arrival was said to be imminent. Actually he did not arrive until March 5, 1766.⁹

Spanish Rulers in Creole Louisiana

The first Spanish governor, Don Antonio de Ulloa, attempted to inaugurate Spanish rule without too many changes. He retained the services of the acting French governor, Captain Charles Philippe Aubry, who served as Ulloa's intermediary. Ulloa also continued the services of the superior council. He even allowed the French flag to fly along side of the Spanish flag in New Orleans. The new Spanish authorities first addressed themselves to improving the colony's economy. Ulloa encouraged local planters to grow as much tobacco as possible, and he promised them that the Spanish would find a market for it. Spain also encouraged the importation of large numbers of slaves, the first significant numbers since the collapse of the Company of the West in 1731.¹⁰

Governor Ulloa did not immediately attempt to change the slave code. For the time being most provisions of the **Code Noir** remained intact. The governor did, however, prohibit corporal punishment of slaves within the confines of New Orleans, supposedly, "in order to please his wife, whose humanity was shocked by their cries."¹¹ Additionally, Ulloa instituted a number of controversial changes in the trading policies of Louisiana which ultimately triggered a rebellion against him. He became so unpopular that he was forced, in the face of rebellion, to flee New Orleans in early November, 1768. When the rebellious inhabitants sought to defend

themselves for their actions, they drew up a list of charges against Ulloa, among which was one that he had forced them "to go six miles out of the town to have their slaves punished."¹²

Spain was not impressed, but sent in Captain-General Don Alejandro O'Reilly from Havana, who crushed the rebellion and punished about a dozen of the Creole rebel leaders. Because much of the leadership of the rebellion had been centered in the local militia and the superior council, O'Reilly disbanded both.¹³ Thereafter, because of their lack of trust of the Creole leadership, Spanish authorities never again allowed the organization of a permanent militia in New Orleans. Instead, the Spanish relied heavily on regular soldiers, about one-third of whom were free men of color.¹⁴ Because the Spanish paid their soldiers so poorly, they had difficulty keeping local whites in service, and relied on free men of color to make up the difference. O'Reilly also replaced the superior council with a new governing body, the *cabildo*.¹⁵

Spanish Slave Control

O'Reilly remained in New Orleans from August, 1769 until March, 1770. Before O'Reilly departed, he instituted a number of significant changes which had a profound effect on the status of both slaves and free persons of color. Ostensibly, O'Reilly kept in force most provisions of the **Code Noir**, but with at least three key modifications. First, he introduced the law of **Castille and of the Indies** in November, 1769.¹⁶ This greatly increased the opportunities for slaves to receive freedom. Title 21 of the fourth **Partida** declared slavery to be contrary to reason. "It is a rule of law that all judges should aid liberty for the reason that

it is a friend of nature, because not only men, but all animals love it."¹⁷ Thus, while Spanish law recognized the legality of the institution of slavery, it afforded individual slaves greater opportunities to legally emancipate themselves. Unlike French law, Spanish law allowed a slaveholder to manumit his own slaves without official approval. Additionally, the law allowed a slave, if treated cruelly, to file complaints with the proper authorities, and as a last resort, petition for sale from a cruel master to another one.¹⁸ Spanish law also contained a major exception to French law in that it recognized the right of the slave to contract natural obligations. Although in practice the French allowed their slaves to earn and keep monies derived from their own labor during their off hours, it was contrary to the letter of the French Code Noir, but not Spanish law, which recognized such.¹⁹

Freedom-Purchases

O'Reilly also introduced the *coartacion*, the practice of freedom-purchase. Now, a slave could force his master to sell him his freedom, or that of another slave, at the legally appraised market value.²⁰ When O'Reilly abolished the superior council, he thereby changed a key provision of the French slave code, which, in the past, had permitted masters to manumit slaves only after they had received the expressed permission of the superior council. Although O'Reilly replaced the superior council with the *cabildo*, he did not confer the exact same powers on this new body as the one it replaced.²¹ Thereafter, a slave could be manumitted before a notary public, without any action of the *cabildo*. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of voluntary manumissions.²²

O'Reilly had not come to Louisiana to govern permanently, but primarily to reestablish law and order and to punish those persons who had led the rebellion against Ulloa. When he completed his task, he did not restore Ulloa to his former position, but had brought with him Don Luis Unzaga as the new governor. Not until O'Reilly departed New Orleans in March, 1770, however, did Unzaga begin to rule in his own right.

Both Unzaga (1770-77) and his successor Don Bernardo de Galvez (1777-85), increased the size of land grants and offered attractive inducements to new settlers, especially those with sufficient capital to invest in slaves. Prior to the arrival of many new slaves, some small planters had relied on the service of poor whites and free Negroes who served as day laborers during the planting and harvest season. During slack periods, some planters had rented out their slaves. But because of an increasing demand for Louisiana tobacco, more planters preferred to keep their slaves home. So the demand for laborers continued to exceed the supply. As a result, the volume of slave imports quickened. A census completed by Unzaga in December, 1769, listed more than 7000 slaves out of a total population of 13,500.²³ The total increased to 9,000 slaves out of a total population of nearly 18,000 by May, 1777 when Galvez completed his first census in May 1777.²⁴

A New Wave Of Slaves

Between 1766 and 1777, the total population of Louisiana more than doubled, and the black population more than trebled. The number of slaves not only outnumbered the white population, but the number of new slaves now outnumbered the Creole slaves population as well.

And the new in diversity produced problems. Many of the so-called "savage Negroes" brought directly from Africa frequently rebelled against enslavement, just as their antecedents had done half a century earlier. Many of them ran away, or at least attempted to run away. Some of them succeeded and formed maroon encampments in the swamps around New Orleans which became increasingly threatening to the white society. Many maroons frequented taverns in the city and spent money which they had earned from trapping, fishing, or raising crops. Although the law required both slaves and free blacks to carry passes at all time, most blacks, slave, free or runaways, entered and left the city without any problem.²⁵

An Expanding Free Black Community

The great increase in the number of free persons of color after the introduction of the Spanish **coartacion** was not eagerly received by the French-speaking majority. This new policy which allowed a slave to purchase his own freedom, or that of another slave, provided he could raise the money, ran counter to the masters' views of the institution of slavery. Many of them believed that, legally, the slave owned nothing and could not own anything. Indeed the whole fruit of his labor belonged to his master. In practice, however, a slaveholder allowed his slave to earn extra money, and many planters even paid their own slaves for work performed during their "off" hours. This, they contended, was not an absolute right, but a privilege, which each planter could grant, or revoke, as he saw fit. Whether legally a privilege or right, this practice, which had first emerged during the 1730's, had existed too long to be changed unilaterally by planters. As a consequence, the number of freedom-purchases increased throughout the

remainder of the Spanish period as both slaves and free persons of color took advantage of this new right with money they earned from their own labor.

Purchasing Freedom

A slave who wished to purchase his freedom would first approach his master with a request that the master set a price for his freedom. If the two parties disagreed, a hired appraiser determined the price. In case the master refused the slave's request, the slave had the right to petition the *cabildo* which could authorize the slave to hire an appraiser, at his own expense, to determine his value. If the master disagreed, he could choose his own appraiser, and, if the two appraisers disagreed, the *cabildo* made the final determination. Instead of purchasing their own freedom, some slaves preferred to purchase the freedom of their spouses or children.²⁶ Since Negro or mulatto children took the same legal status as their mothers, it was important for a slave-father to have children by a free woman, at least assuring the freedom of his children, if not himself. If the wife was a slave, the husband's purchase of his slave-wife's freedom did not affect the status of slave children born before the emancipation of the mother. Some parents preferred to purchase their children's freedom, even if it meant that they would remain slaves themselves. At least their emancipated children would now make it possible for future generations to become and remain free. Surviving records reveal a variety of freedom purchases. For example in 1773, Governor Unzaga ordered the appointment of Santiago Beauregard as the official appraiser for petitioner, Catalina, a 36 year old mulatto mother who sought freedom for herself and her five year old daughter from the estate of J. B. Destrehan. Beauregard made a

valuation of 320 pesos which was accepted by Estevan Boré, executor of the estate. Both Catalina and her daughter received their freedom.²⁷

In 1780, Elena, a free woman of color, sought to purchase the freedom of her son, Magloir, whom she bore while she had been a slave. Magloir's father, also free, had sent sufficient money to purchase his son's freedom. Magloir, however, had been sold to another master. Elena submitted a petition to one of the *alcaldes* (Mayor), Piernas, who ordered both Elena and the master to appoint their respective appraisers. As was so often the case, the two appraisers came in with widely different prices. Piernas, subsequently, appointed a third appraiser, who placed the value at 600 pesos. Piernas ordered the master to draw up the letter of emancipation, but the master and Elena still could not agree, so another appraiser was named, who valued Magloir at 800 pesos. Elena protested that the appointment of a fourth appraiser was contrary to law; besides, Magloir had just recently been sold for only 500 pesos at public auction, payable within one year's time, and that had he been sold for cash, the price would have been 400 pesos instead. Further, she argued, 800 pesos was too high to pay for a slave who had no trade and "was a drunkard and a thief." She noted that recently a master carpenter had been valued at only 800 pesos. Despite her protest, Piernas ordered her to pay the 800 pesos. But she paid it and Magloir was freed.²⁸

In 1789, Governor Estevan Miró received a petition from a slave woman, Josefa. Josefa wished to purchase her freedom from her master's widow, Madame Brazeau. The widow objected to the low valuation of 350 pesos in the inventory of her husband's will. She hired her own appraiser who took into consideration Josefa's various assets including her abilities as a "good cook, washerwoman, ironer and pastry maker." Madame Brazeau's

appraiser came in with a figure of 1,000 pesos, but Josefa's appraiser's was 600 pesos. Governor Miró appointed an official appraiser who placed the value at 700 pesos, exactly twice as much as the original valuation, but 300 pesos less than Madame Brazeau's appraiser. Governor Miró ordered Madame Brazeau to accept that figure and issue Josefa a letter of manumission.²⁹

Once an emancipated slave received freedom, whether by act of manumission or by freedom-purchase, he was required to secure a **carta de libertad**, or freedom certificate, from a notary public. The certificate spelled out the circumstances by which the individual had gained his freedom, from whom, when, etc. It also contained a physical description of the freed slave, e.g., mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, or black.³⁰ The detailed physical description recorded on the certificate was an attempt to control the easy coming and going of both slaves and free Negroes, who constituted more than half of the population. However, despite these efforts, white officials never succeeded completely in exercising the type of control they believe was necessary to maintain the security of the slave institution.

The arrival of the Spanish also had a major impact on the bulk of the black population, the slaves, most of course, who never became free. While Spanish laws provided more legal protection to slaves, they also protected the master's property rights. Moreover, while the French had often ignored both the letter and the spirit of the **Code Noir**, the Spanish attempted to rigorously enforce both. For example both French and Spanish law required slaves to marry within the church, but many French planters ignored this requirement and permitted their slaves to live in concubinage without the benefit of clergy. The Spanish authorities, greatly alarmed

by the cavalier attitude that many Frenchmen displayed to the teachings of the church, attempted to force slaveholders to provide for the spiritual welfare of their slaves.

Slaves and the Spanish Clergy

In 1776 Charles III issued instructions to Governor Unzaga to assist the church authorities in their efforts to establish control over the sexual practices of masters, slaves, and free Negroes.³¹ Periodically, the home government repeated its demands for curtailment of sexual license in the colony and for establishment of the Catholic family as the only legitimate means of sexual fulfillment. Joaquim Portillo charged that some Creole parents actually celebrated their sons' arrival at puberty by giving them Negro and mulatto women to introduce them to the pleasure of adulthood.³² Galvez, Unzaga's successor, also received royal instructions to "use civil and church officials to establish order, proper standards of morality, and humane treatment for slaves." Most of Galvez's term coincided with Spain's involvement in the American Revolution, and as a result, he did not pay a great deal of attention to this order.³³

In their zeal to force planters to allow their slaves to receive the basic sacraments of the church, the new Spanish clergy actually created new problems for the bondsmen. The clerics denied legitimacy of slave families unless they had been sanctified by a Catholic marriage. Unfortunately, this left slave families at risk of separation if they could not prove that they had been married before a Catholic clergyman, and thus entitled to the protection of their whole family. As a consequence, such unofficial spouses and their bastard children would be treated as unrelated, and hence subject to separation for purpose of sale.³⁴

In order to prevent these unfortunate circumstances from arising, priests were sent out into the country side to offer baptism and marriage. Some agreed to waive the customary fees. Many creole planters, however, resented what they considered unwarranted intrusion and refused to even allow the priests on their land. Some priests complained that a large number of slave children as well as many white children had not been baptized or confirmed. In neighboring West Florida, which the Spanish conquered during the American Revolutionary War, some planters, particularly Protestants, routinely baptized their own slaves contrary to Catholic church policy.³⁵

Interracial Sexual Unions

Governor Miró also declared his intentions to proceed with severity against all persons living in concubinage, free and unfree, white, black, or mulatto.³⁶ As the slave and free African population increased, it became a source of continual concern. White sailors from long voyages, lonesome for the company of women, often sought out mulatto women, especially those who were free. Occasionally, they arranged to buy slave women, who became their concubines. Sometimes, these slave mistresses received their freedom as a gift from their lovers.³⁷

Many of those who chose mulatto concubines were high ranking provincial officials. The **Partidas** expressly forbade governors from marrying colonial women without official permission, but allowed them to have concubines. Many officials did not seek concubinage from among white women, but free women of color.³⁸ Governor Miró attempted to solve this "problem" by denouncing the women. He admonished the women for their dependence for a

livelihood on incontinence and libertinage, which he declared would no longer be tolerated. Those found guilty of continued misconduct were subject to banishment from the colony. In the future he vowed to judge their conduct by their "excessive attention to dress." The order reminded free women of color that they were required to bind their hair with tignons, and under no circumstances should they wear plumes or jewelry in their hair because such accessories were reserved for free white women.³⁹ In an attempt to curtail prostitution, Miró prohibited anyone from renting a house or an apartment to a slave. Women were to be punished for their own sins as well as those of their male clients.⁴⁰

The Limited Rights of Free Persons of Color

Under French law, at least in theory, free persons of color enjoyed all of the rights of white Frenchmen, except they could not accept gifts, *inter vivos* (gifts made during the lifetime of both the donor and donee) or *mortis causa* (gift made in contemplation of, and after the donor's death) from white persons.⁴¹ Practically speaking, however, free persons of color never enjoyed all the rights of white persons. For example, they could not hold public office. On the other hand, despite legal prohibitions, they did receive gifts from whites. However, as the number of free persons of color increased, the provincial authorities felt compelled to pass regulations to keep them in subordination to the whites.

Generally, the laws limited social interaction between whites and blacks, whether the latter was free or unfree. Any Negro, free or slave, either on foot or on horseback, whether in the streets of New Orleans or on the public roads, could be stopped by any white person who

met him and asked to show his written pass. If the Negro attempted to escape, the white person was to inform the authorities. If he carried a stick, cane, or rod, he could be chastised with the very instrument found in his possession.⁴² If he attempted to resist, he was to be reported to the authorities for harsher punishment. Further, the law provided that "any Negro or other slave who failed in respect and submission to white people to the point where he became so insolent as to elbow them on the high road or public ways, or so forget his status in the community as to offend them in any way whatsoever, is to be punished with fifty lashes on his back with the fleur de lys in order to make known, in case of need, the nature of his crime." The law did, however, provide that no "private person, soldier, or any other individual, has the right to ill-treatment of a negro who is guilty of no offence towards him. While a Negro suspected of misconduct could be apprehended "in certain cases," he was "subject only to the police regulations of the country and the tribunal of his own master."⁴³

The Limited Freedoms of Slaves

Since practically all of the Negroes in Louisiana were slaves during French rule, there was little need for special laws governing the conduct for the few free persons of color. However, once the Spanish arrived and the number of free persons of color increased dramatically, the Spanish realized the need for a special set of laws governing free black persons. In effect, the Spanish tried to create more of a sense of community between white officials and free persons of color than between free and unfree Negroes. The privileges that the free Negroes enjoyed stemmed from their special relationship with the Spanish. As a

consequence, free blacks were expected to serve as the eyes and ears of the Spanish community among all Negroes. The Spanish tried to fortify their position by recruiting free black men to become soldiers.⁴⁴ While the pay was meager, military service provided these black men with an elevated social standing, at least in the eyes of their enslaved black fellows. And from the Spanish perspective, it assured the primary allegiance of these free blacks to Spain.

Resentful Masters

Paradoxically, as the Spanish forged closer bonds with the free men of color, they never succeeded in creating stronger ties with the French-speaking white majority, who tolerated Spanish presence, but retained their attachment to France and their preference for French rule. Often the Creole planters perceived new Spanish regulations as little more than arbitrary or unwarranted intrusion into their personal affairs. For example, they especially resented efforts of the Spanish clerics to force them to baptize or have priests marry their slaves.⁴⁵ They resented clerical admonition against work on the sabbath, which church officials believed was a hindrance to the slaves' right to attend church. Their resentment against the Spanish priests caused many to virtually withdraw from the Spanish church. The Creole planters' withdrawal from active participation in what many perceived was the Spanish church, created a vacuum which was filled by slaves and free people of color, who now assumed the responsibility of bringing unbaptized slaves, both creole and those newly arrived from Africa, into the church. Hence, many new slaves received the rite of baptism and other sacraments because of the efforts of free persons of color. Moreover, the slaves' increased identification with the Spanish church,

with its perceived right to intervene on behalf of slaves, further alienated planters who saw this as an attack against their claim of absolute authority over their slaves.⁴⁶

Creole planters also resented efforts of the Spanish to interfere with their right to discipline their slaves. As stated earlier, one of their grievances against Ulloa had been his prohibition against whipping slaves inside New Orleans. Many thought it unwise for the government to interfere with the daily relationship between slave and master. They saw the plantation as more than a work place. In addition to being home for both slaves and slaveholders, the "plantations constituted the basic form of government in the colony for the subjugation of a forcibly transplanted agricultural population. Slaves became the masters subjects as well as their instruments of labor and this political relationship lay at the core of the system of slavery." Most planters believed that their slaves remained subordinate only as long as they feared retaliation for acts of insubordination.⁴⁷

The Spanish authorities were not unsympathetic to the Creole masters. In fact while they expressed concern for slaves who suffered unjustly at the hands of their masters, they did not hesitate to approve harsh punishment of errant slaves. Generally speaking, they showed more zeal for punishing errant slaves than protecting slave victims from their barbarous masters. For example, Governor Miró banished a Spanish priest who had intervened on behalf of a slave who complained about his master's insistence that his slaves work on Sunday.⁴⁸ Despite legal limitations on punishment, such as forbidding planters from using the rack and fire or administering one hundred or more lashes for ordinary plantations infractions, Spanish law authorized colonial administrators to use any of these forms of punishment to correct recalcitrant slaves.⁴⁹ In general, planters preferred to impose lesser punishment for non-criminal infractions

because they were reluctant to turn in their slaves for more severe official punishment. Consequently, they either tolerated some breach of discipline or administered milder forms of punishment themselves, even when the law required them to turn over errant slaves to the civil authorities.⁵⁰

Redefining Slave-Master Relationship

The key to slave behavior, the authorities warned, was not barbarity or even rigorous punishment, but complete and continual vigilance. Miró and his successor, the Baron de Carondelet, believed that the planters weakened their control over slaves by allowing them to leave their home plantation and by allowing them to earn and to dispose of their earnings without the master's approval.

In order to regain control, both governors insisted that each planter feed, clothe, and house his own slaves, instead of relying on them to supplement their necessities. The authorities believed that the slave had no right to social, religious, or cultural autonomy. Thus they proposed that slaves be kept on their home plantations twenty-four hours every day. By denying the slave the right to leave the plantation on Sunday, it also assured that he remained home to receive religious instructions and the sacraments. Further, it denied the opportunity of the slave to earn money that he could dispose of at his discretion. Hence a slave would be totally dependent on his master for food and clothing, which supposedly would guarantee his submissiveness to his master.⁵¹ Near the end of the century Spanish authorities expressed the same concern earlier cited by the Marquis de Vaudreuil over the easy access that slaves had

going to and from town. Slaves visiting town, especially at night, caused problems for their own masters and local officials. Some slaves stole from their masters to purchase personal items or liquor. Local vendors not only did not ask questions, but seem to encourage a traffic in liquor supported by stolen goods.⁵²

Many complained that indiscriminate slave license also weakened respect for the general white society. Stealing food, clothing or other personal items, drinking alcohol to the excess, and visiting neighboring plantation subverted the Spanish sense of good order. This was seen as especially detrimental to the acculturation of negroes recently imported from Africa. Many of these resisted all authority and normal attempts to subordinate them to the general society. During the 1770s and 1780s, many planters responded to the perception of a general break down of law and order with renewed harshness in the administration of discipline. Some slaves appealed to clerical or civil officials for intervention; others simply ran away, or at least attempted to do so.⁵³

Slave Resistance

Because so many of the plantations bordered swamps, it afforded slaves ample opportunities to hide out for lengthy periods of time and at the same time remain close to family or friends. Sometimes whole families, or at least several members of the same family, ran away together. The swamps provided ample resources for survival. Escapees gathered berries, moss, sassafras roots, caught fish, trapped birds and hunted small game. Some raised their own corn, squash, and rice all of which were suited to swampland cultivation.⁵⁴ Often bands of runaways

formed maroon colonies. In swampland located close to towns, some slaves built huts or cabins and formed little communities which became almost self-sustaining. Generally, until they became too numerous, they encountered little difficulty trading for a few necessities in the local markets. In a major recent study, Gwendolyn Midlo-Hall discussed the symbiotic relationship between maroons and planters who lived near the fringe of the swampland. Some planters were involved in an illegal cypress lumber industry. Cypress trees thrived in the humid climate of the swamps. Because cypress does not rot, and was both light and durable, it was an excellent building material. Some maroons cut down cypress trees, then cut and shaped the logs into squares. These they sold to sawmills. Some slave artisans fashioned baskets from reeds and willows. These products were always welcomed in the markets in New Orleans and other towns.

The Maroons

There were continual complaints that certain whites encouraged and supported maroons in their illegal activities. With the money they received, some of the maroons purchased guns and ammunition to hunt animals, but also to protect themselves from colonial authorities.⁵⁵ Most of the maroon settlements existed near outlying plantations. Nonetheless, while they may not have been many linear miles from settled areas, the maze of woodlands and swamps proved effective barriers. Most planters did not pursue their slaves, even when they rightly suspected that they were nearby. In some cases runaways returned voluntarily after a few weeks, or even months. It was not unheard of for runaways to remain at large for years without being detected or apprehended. Some slaves ran away temporarily to escape punishment or in some cases to

protest undue or severe punishment. Some slaves insisted that they had not actually run away because they had remained on their master's land. In a sense, then, a large number of runaways resorted to what we would call today, a strike against unjust grievances. They saw themselves as laborers, their masters, as employers, and whenever the employer breached the line between rights of employers and employees, they exercised their right to withhold their labor.⁵⁶

The planter, Macarty, who owned a large plantation near the southern outskirts of the city, complained that fourteen of his slaves had run away at different times during the 1760s.⁵⁷ However, the number of runaways increased greatly during the American Revolutionary War, when many of the provincial soldiers were out of the colony. The *cabildo* imposed a tax on planters to create a fund to provide rewards for the recapture of fugitives, dead or alive, but generally there was never sufficient money to pay more than a few rewards. In 1779, many of the planters agreed to pay a special tax to finance a military expedition against the maroons, but because Governor Galvez employed most of his regular troops against the British in West Florida, despite the extra funds, they could not raise a sufficient fighting force.⁵⁸ The Spanish still remembered the participation of key leaders of the local militia in the earlier revolt against Ulloa, and they continually refused the request of the creole leaders to raise a local volunteer force.

Periodically, when maroons became too numerous in one area and their conduct proved too menacing, the authorities had to take action. Usually they had success in locating runaways near the fringe of the swamps, but if they attempted to go farther into the interior, they needed guides. Sometimes, in return for clemency or leniency, captured maroons would provide information on the size, location, and strength of inland camps. In 1781, authorities succeeded

in rounding up more than three dozen runaways in swamps just southeast of New Orleans. They penetrated several miles into the woods and found a number of blacks preparing wood for a lumber mill. Upon interrogation, the maroons confessed that they sold their lumber to a local dealer named Bonne. Bonne had earlier denied any involvement with this illicit trade, and, although there was circumstantial evidence to support the charge, Captain Juan Bienvenu, head of the urban militia, declined arrest or even to make disparaging comments about "the conduct of a good and reputable man."⁵⁹

Governor Galvez returned to Havana briefly in 1780, after capturing West Florida. A number of planters petitioned him to return to Louisiana to "check the savage negroes that may alter the order and peace of the citizens." During the Carnival season that year, many feared that slave and free negroes disguised in masks at the dances and cabarets might cause trouble. The governor authorized his lieutenant, Estevan Miró, to take action. At first Miró attempted to use a regiment of free black soldiers. The lack of success of the black soldiers caused the Creole planters to ridicule and criticize the whole effort. Some believed that the common bonds between blacks, free and unfree, lessened the enthusiasm for the Negro soldiers to succeed against their own people; others believed that only a concerted action by seasoned veteran white soldiers could succeed. Since the fighting in the Revolutionary War had now ended, Miró could rely on the services of regular troops to augment, if not supplant entirely, the black companies.⁶⁰

St. Maló

The problem continued throughout 1782-83 and actually worsened. This resulted in part from the establishment of a new larger settlement called Ville Gaillarde located in the swamps between the Mississippi and Lake Borgne in what is now St. Bernard Parish.⁶¹ This settlement was one of several controlled by Juan Maló, otherwise known as St. Maló, a slave who once belonged to a German Coast planter d'Arensbourg. Spanish authorities described him as daring, bold, and audacious, but also ruthless and bloodthirsty. Supposedly, he had killed several persons, including a woman he had once taken as his wife, when she attempted to return to her master. St. Maló was a carpenter by trade. He and his followers built a networks of cabins in the **Bas du Fleuve**. They cultivated indigo and traded it to free Negroes and slaves in exchange for guns and ammunition. They manufactured tubs and troughs which they exchanged for guns and ammunition. They hunted and fished, but received food such as rice, corn, and flour from slaves on neighboring plantations. There were many reports of slaves driving their masters' cattle to the edge of the swamps where they were slaughtered and shared with St. Maló 's maroons.⁶²

In addition to Ville Gaillarde, St. Maló and his followers controlled two other maroon camps. One was located in what is now eastern New Orleans, along the Chef Menteur, another in the area of Bayou Bienvenu where Orleans and St. Bernard parishes meet.⁶³ In addition to maroon slaves and free blacks who lived there on a semi-permanent basis, there were free blacks and slaves who either travelled there occasionally or had contact with the camps through a network of trade. St. Maló, Juan Pedro and his wife Maria, and their son, Joli Coeur, were

principal leaders in the community. Their support extended far beyond the swamps and included contacts in New Orleans and neighboring plantations. On one occasion, these four had ventured as far away as Bay St. Louis in present day Mississippi. Four Americans pretended to befriend them, but wounded Juan Pedro and subsequently captured him, Maria, and Joli Coeur and prepared to take all of them to New Orleans in order to collect a reward. St. Maló, who had not been captured, slipped in and released them.⁶⁴ Joli split the head of one of their captors with a hatchet. Thereafter the slaves referred to him admiringly as "El Caballero de la Hacha."⁶⁵ The four maroons returned to one of their cabins in Chef Menteur where they remained for three months until Juan Pedro's wounds healed.

In the Spring of 1783, Chacala, a Mandeville plantation slave, offered to lead the authorities to St. Maló's camp in return for 200 pesos and his freedom. Don Guido Dufossat headed a small company of blacks and free mulattoes. They first entered the Lake Borgne settlement and found a number of blacks in the woods, who tried to escape, but one was killed and twelve maroons were captured. Next Chacala led them to another maroon camp at Ville Gaillarde where they captured eight more. The captives were bound and placed in pirogues for transport to New Orleans. Along the way, St. Maló and three others attacked one of the pirogues. The soldiers killed one of the attackers and captured two others, Carlos and Jasmin, but St. Maló managed to swim to safety.⁶⁶ The authorities gained some information about St. Maló and his followers from their prisoners. Both Carlos and Jasmin were slaves of the Widow St. Amant. Carlos was a native of Guinea. After he ran away he had lived in the swamps behind the neighboring Chabert plantation. Jasmin confirmed what many had believed for a long time that the maroons survived because they received assistance from outsiders, including whites. He

indicated that he squared timber for a neighboring sawmill. He had lived in the swamps behind the Bienvenu plantation. In fact, St. Maló had warned them the previous night that an expedition of free mulattoes was coming to search for them and that they should move their camp. When captured, they were heading for Gaillarde to look for their wives. They informed the authorities that they possessed guns and ammunition, some which they bought, others they had stolen from their masters, or obtained from other slaves.⁶⁷

The Widow St. Amant asked that Carlos and Jasmin be freed from the criminal charges. However, the court ordered each to receive three hundred lashes and be banished at least thirty-three leagues from New Orleans. DeReggio, master of the slave slain during the attack, received two thousand pesos compensation. Chacala received two hundred pesos and his freedom.⁶⁸

The Capture of St. Maló

Perhaps the most significant information that the authorities received came from Juan Pedro, one of those who knew St. Maló best. Juan had been a fugitive for more than three years before his capture in March, 1783. He had been with St. Maló for more than half that time, and he had accompanied St. Maló to Bay St. Louis. Juan Pedro identified several other slaves who had sold munitions to St. Maló and identified several slave families that had escaped to the swamps. Most wives and children hid out at Ville Gaillarde. Most slaves, he insisted, such as himself, fled to escape undeserved punishment. Some stayed for days, weeks, or months before returning to their masters. While they supplied some of their own food from the swamps, they received help from slaves who lived on plantations which bordered the swamps. Juan Pedro's

flight had been precipitated by the punishment of his wife, Maria. As a result, he, Maria, Joli Coeur and a three year old daughter, Pelagie, all ran away. Occasionally, they sold fish, firewood, or baskets in New Orleans.⁶⁹ With the money they received they bought powder and shot. Juan Pedro described the relationship between maroons, slaves, and some whites, who often asked no questions about the legal status of a black vendor or laborer. For example, during the last year, he had actually worked on the Mandeville plantation for a slave, named Colas. Apparently, his presence went unnoticed, or, at least, it occasioned no concern. However, because Colas was Chacala's son, it may have proved Juan Pedro's undoing. Perhaps he unwittingly revealed the location of Gaillarde to Colas, who in turn, informed his father, Chacala.⁷⁰ Although forty-three maroons had been captured in the first raid in 1783, St. Maló remained free and Governor Miró increased efforts to capture St. Maló and put an end to his rule. The revelation about the complex relationship between maroons, slaves and free blacks caused Miró to alter his strategy. Initially, he had relied heavily on the use of black troops. While Chacala had been helpful, he had not been as fortunate in finding other reliable spies. He had sent a black spy to join St. Maló; the information the spy supplied was either wrong or the maroons had moved from their location by the time the expedition arrived.⁷¹ The information on the support that slaves and free blacks had given St. Maló was equally disturbing. As a consequence, Miró decided on a policy designed to cut off St. Maló's support from sympathetic free blacks or slaves. He demanded that all free persons of color and slaves with information on the location of St. Maló and other maroons come forward.⁷² He threatened to hold them responsible for any damage caused by the maroons if they failed to assist him. Additionally, Miró ordered planters to keep their own slaves home twenty-four hours a day for the months of

May and June, 1784. He banned all trade with slaves, especially liquor, powder, and ammunition. Only slave hunters, with guns marked with their masters' names, would he permit to hunt during the prescribed period. The governor ordered masters to check slave cabins daily to prevent them from harboring food or guns which they might provide to maroons. Miró authorized any white settler to stop any black who travelled outside his home plantation. Free blacks and mulattoes had to carry their freedom certificates at all time, and slaves who had authorization to travel beyond their home plantations had to carry written passes. He also authorized white settlers to bring to prison any suspected maroon who lacked proper identification. The suspect was liable to twenty-five lashes.⁷³

St. Maló's end resulted not so much from governmental action, but from a dispute that he had with former allies. A disagreement between St. Maló's band and slaves on the neighboring Prévost plantation proved fatal. The conflict supposedly resulted from an attempt by St. Maló to prevent the return of a slave woman to her master's home. In the past, St. Maló had received considerable support from the Prévost slaves. After this incident, on May 19, 1784 the Prévost slaves decided to turn in a maroon to Acting Governor Francisco Bouligny. At first Bouligny expressed his gratitude, but the following day some of the Dufossat slaves turned in a maroon who was a Prévost slave. During interrogation the Prévost slave revealed the cozy relationship between St. Maló and the Prévost plantation slaves. Before too long, Bouligny had the name of other maroons and, more importantly, the hiding places which led to Ville Gaillarde.⁷⁴

This rupture in relationship between St. Maló and the Prévost slaves not only ended valuable support, but also made it difficult for him to secure cooperation from other slaves. Hit

and run raiding parties could hardly provide enough food to feed a large number of people. And since the authorities had placed restrictions on slaves in town, it would be difficult for them to buy supplies in New Orleans, even if they succeeded in eluding detection. St. Maló returned to Gaillarde and advised any maroon who wished to return home to do so; some did, but about twenty-five men and five women remained with him.

With the information provided by the Prévost slaves, Bouligny made plans for an all-out effort against the maroons. He led a force of about fifty in search of St. Maló at Gaillarde. He deployed another forty men at the entrance into Lake Borgne to cut off that avenue of escape. Smaller details patrolled various entrances leading from the bayous into the lake. Although the special fund which the *cabildo* had created to support this effort had been depleted by the earlier campaign, the leading planters who served on the *cabildo* influenced the government to provide the necessary financial support to complete this mission. A former maroon, Bastien, a slave of Don Carlos Honorato Olivier, provided precise information on the location of the maroons; Bouligny led an attack on June 11. Olivier seriously wounded St. Maló, who was captured, along with sixteen others who were brought quickly to New Orleans for trial. About ten maroons remained in the swamps.⁷⁵

Trial and Punishment

The *cabildo* supported swift and summary punishments for the captured maroons and all who may have supported them. The local *alcalde* (Mayor), De Reggio, assumed the role of interrogator, judge, and prosecutor. Although he claimed that St. Maló confessed and revealed

names, there is considerable doubt that it was voluntary or that he confessed at all. One of the blacks who was later implicated was Baptiste, allegedly a trusted slave who belonged to the Capuchin order. Cirilo de Barcelona, the auxiliary bishop-elect of Cuba, wrote a strong letter of protest to Governor Miró, who was still in Pensacola. Barcelona complained of the tyrannical one-man show of De Reggio, with the apparent support of Bouligny.⁷⁶ Miró, in response to Barcelona's complaint, apparently, in an attempt to halt further proceedings, sent a dispatch to Bouligny indicating that he would personally take charge of the trial when he returned.⁷⁷ By the time Miró returned, however, the executions had taken place, although over the strong protest of the clergy.

The Death of St. Maló

DeReggio condemned to death St. Maló and his wife, Cecilia Canuet, along with Joli Coeur and two others. From the top of the gallows, St. Maló stated that Baptiste and another maroon were innocent. However, De Reggio ordered both of them to receive two hundred lashes from the public executioner. St. Maló and his two companions died on the gallows, but his wife feigned pregnancy and received a reprieve. Several months later she received another stay because she still claimed to be pregnant.⁷⁸

The Capuchins protested the illegal executions as contrary to law. They even refused to give the last rites to the condemned.⁷⁹ De Reggio was undaunted and convicted several other maroons. Four more received the death sentence, three received three hundred lashes each and then were exiled. Seventeen received two hundred lashes each. Punishments included women.

Six received two hundred lashes each and were ordered branded with an M branded on the right cheek. Ten other women each received three hundred lashes and ordered shackled with ten pound balls for three months. Two maroons who had turned traitors and helped the officials received pardons. Five slaves were convicted of trading with the maroons. They escaped the death sentence, "which they merit because the principal leaders no longer exist and that would perhaps ruin an innocent and poor master." The authorities branded them with an M and returned them to their "innocent and poor master."⁸⁰ Despite ample circumstantial evidence that some whites had illegally traded with the maroons, the authorities failed to implicate a single white person. Bishop Barcelona sent a bitter protest to the king, but the king apparently felt the same sense of satisfaction that former Governor Galvez did.⁸¹ In 1785, Galvez, now viceroy of Mexico, and hence, Miró's superior officer, wrote Miró to express his gratitude and complete approval of the capture and punishment of the maroons.⁸²

De Reggio defended his action in a report to the *cabildo*. Despite the complaint of the clergy, he believed that his actions enjoyed almost universal approval of the general populace, both black and white. While whites openly expressed their approval, understandably, blacks did not say or do anything that would jeopardize their own precarious status. However, St. Maló's deeds became legendary and were preserved in an old black Creole song, which lamented St. Maló's hanging.⁸³ The words of the song provide lyrics to a brave man who refused to betray his own comrades, even under torture. Even after his body lay rotting in the hot sun, many sought his bones to make special charms, since some believed that the bones contain the soul of the deceased. Apparently, some believed that wearing charms made from St. Maló's bones provided them with special protection against their enemies.⁸⁴

Population Explosion

The suppression of the maroons occurred during a period when Louisiana's population experienced unprecedented growth. The increase in population also involved an increased in ethnic diversity, which proved to be both a blessing and a curse. As more different types of settlers arrived, and especially as they moved farther away from the more settled areas of the colony, it would be more difficult for the government to exercise control. Spain's involvement in the American Revolution paid handsome, if short term, dividends. Spain captured both East and West Florida from the British. After the signing of the peace treaty in 1783, the British formally surrendered both of the Floridas to Spain.⁸⁵ In 1785 Miró received his commission as governor, although he had already acted in that capacity for several years. A few months later he completed a census which showed that there were now 25,000 persons living in Louisiana, including, free blacks and slaves.⁸⁶ During the next three years the total population increased almost fifty per-cent. Most of the new slaves imported into Louisiana after the Revolution came directly from Africa. The largest number came from the Senegambian area, as had been the case before 1731.⁸⁷ The slave population, which had been distributed mostly in the lower part of the province, would be settled more evenly, throughout the rest of Louisiana and the Floridas. This was especially true of the new slaves brought in from Africa. The authorities also began to settle more whites in the swamps, which in the past had been almost the exclusive domain of the blacks. New migrants from the Canary Islands settled in the area of present day St. Bernard and Lafourche parishes. These were the ancestors of the modern Isleños who still live in those parishes.⁸⁸ The hard cypress which flourished in great abundance became a source of export

to other parts of the Spanish empire.⁸⁹ Imperial officials gave Louisiana a monopoly to provide wooden boxes for all the sugar produced in the Spanish empire. Additionally, many planters employed their slaves in producing tobacco which became profitable again after the government guaranteed to purchase all Creole tobacco. When the guarantee ended in 1792, however, many planters had to seek alternative cash crops.⁹⁰

Continuing Disciplinary Problems

The increase in slave populations, along with a corresponding increase in the number of free persons of color, created some of the same disciplinary problems which had plagued the French during the forties, and had preceded the capture of St. Maló. Miró relaxed the emergency measures which he issued in 1784. Within a year or two, both slaves and free blacks had regained most of the rights those measures had suspended. In his reports to his superiors, Miró continually complained about the refusal of many planters to maintain their slaves on their own plantations at all times. He informed authorities in both Havana and Madrid that many of the slaves he interrogated, when charged with misconduct such as violating curfews, selling without license, or travelling without passes, insisted that they were forced to work during their off hours out of necessity because their masters did not provide them with sufficient food, clothing and personal items. Some also continued to defend themselves against the charge of running away by claiming they were escaping physical abuse. Miró issued his detailed "proclamation of good government"⁹¹ in 1785 which spelled out masters' responsibilities toward slaves. The order required each master to provide his slaves with sufficient food and drink and

enough time to consume it; one-half hour for lunch and two hours for dinner. It also prohibited work on the sabbath and warned masters to take proper steps to prevent their slaves from stealing goods in order to buy liquor. Each master had to provide each slave at least two changes of clothing annually, and provide them with adequate quarters which would protect them from the elements.⁹²

A New Slave Code

Both planters and slaves continued to ignore those parts of the order which imposed restrictions on their rights, just as they had in the past. However, in 1789, Charles III issued a royal decree which was to be the basis of governing relations between slaves and masters in the future. This was the first detailed slave code issued by Spanish authorities. It had the enthusiastic support of the Church, and local clerics pushed for absolute prohibition of work on the sabbath, official slave marriages performed and sanctioned only by the church, and the end of miscegenation between the races. The clerics also wanted mandatory religious instruction, which would be facilitated by a ban on Sunday labor. The proposed measure also prohibited slave drinking and dancing on the sabbath. Those slaves who lived in illegal concubinage would be denied protection against the break-up of slave families. If the slaves were unmarried, then, they, as well as their children, could be sold separately as unrelated pieces of property. While the religious authorities obviously sought to assure the slaves' salvation in the world to come, they seriously threatened their security as a family unit in the present world. On the one hand, they proposed sanctions on masters for non-compliance with matrimonial rules of the church,

and on the other hand, they denied the slave any control over his own life, physical or spiritual. While the slave had the right to receive all of the church's sacraments, it was his master's responsibility to see that he received them.⁹³

By denying the slave the right to work on Sundays and during his free time it effectively nullified any opportunity to earn extra money to purchase personal items or to take advantage of the coartacion. In fact, the new code made no specific mention of manumission, either by freedom-purchase or by voluntary action of the masters. Since the law required all masters to provide their slaves with basic food and clothing, it would be unnecessary for them to leave their plantation to earn extra money.⁹⁴ Since their masters could no longer employ them on Sundays, it was no longer necessary to compensate them for "overtime." In short, the law would render them completely subservient and dependent to their masters who could exercise continual control over them twenty-four hours everyday. The code authorized punishment for errant masters who did not enforce all of the provisions of the code, or who injured their slaves through excessive punishment, or those who failed to adequately provide sufficient food or clothing.⁹⁵

The New Code is Rejected

The new slave code proved to be too unpopular with both slaves and their masters. Planters attacked the code as impractical and undesirable, both for themselves and their slaves. It interfered in the proper relationship between slave and master in too many different instances. Some planters argued that the work ban created a hardship on them, because they could not afford to provide for all of their slaves' needs. Further, to deny the slaves the opportunity to

work for their own benefit denied them a source of pleasure as well as the exercise of what many believed to be no longer a privilege, but a right, and this would undoubtedly lead to resentment and resistance. They criticized the proposal to separate slaves according to marital status and the removal of women slaves from the field. Both, they believed, were unwise and unnecessary.⁹⁶

Planters who obviously knew their own slaves best, separated them according to their skills, strength, and experience. Many slaveholders also objected to the proposal to discourage importation of female slaves. This, they believed, greatly increased the imbalance of the sexes, and the attempts to discourage concubinage among slaves left too many male slaves without mates, or even the possibility of acquiring them, thus increasing, not reducing their restlessness. Miró made no serious efforts to enforce the code for the balance of his term which ended December 30, 1791. The slaveholders' almost total opposition to the new slave code doomed its enforcement and Miró was forced to report to royal authorities that the planters had rejected it, which rendered it practically null and void.⁹⁷

False Expectations of Freedom

Although the influx of new slaves and the routine problems attendant to slavery continued, the governor had to solve two more serious problems that affected the whole colony for some years to come. The first resulted from the great fire of 1788, which destroyed most of the inhabited part of New Orleans. Miró spent the better part of the next two years supervising the reconstruction of the city. While the fire had been limited to New Orleans, it

affected outlying areas, which were tied to the capital city trade and governance. By the end of 1790, when the city had been sufficiently rebuilt, New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana was now caught up in the politics of the French Revolution.⁹⁸ At first the government responded with caution to the revolutionary literature and music which flooded the colony, but most of the French-speaking majority did not hesitate to express their support for the revolutionary ideology of *liberté, fraternité and égalité*.⁹⁹ Soon local political clubs, complete with tri-colored ribbons and cockades, sprang up. The strong support cut across all social classes. Small farmers, soldiers, merchants and planters cheered the revolutionary principles, particularly, since they believed that France would soon reacquire Louisiana. Free blacks and slaves also enthusiastically embraced the revolution, for both had heard that France might abolish slavery and extended full citizenship to all its subjects without regard to race or color.¹⁰⁰ Miró left Louisiana at the end of 1791 and the new governor, the Baron de Carondelet, took over on December 31, 1791. At first Carondelet pursued a cautious approach to the revolutionary fervor. He tried to maintain Spanish control by consciously pursuing a policy which courted the majority black population. Especially useful to him would be the growing free black population. On the one hand he would tie them to the Spanish by protecting their rights against the encroachments of the planter-dominated *cabildo*, which watched with anxiety the growth of the free black class, especially as it became more assertive of its "rights." On the other hand, Carondelet expected the free blacks, particularly the black soldiers, to serve as his "eyes and ears" within the slave community. He wanted the free blacks to spread the word that the new governor was the white father who listened with a sympathetic ear to the concerns of the slaves.¹⁰¹

Almost immediately thereafter, slaves besieged Carondelet with complaints against their masters. Free blacks also informed Indian slaves that they remained in slavery contrary to Spanish law and should petition the governor for freedom.¹⁰² Carondelet's new policy, including hearing complaints from recalcitrant slaves, reminded many of the older Creole planters of the policies pursued by the first Spanish governor, Ulloa, who had attempted to ban slave beating within five miles of the capital city. The new governor, however, enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the Spanish clergy who saw the free black class as a means of converting the new slaves.

France's Revolution

After 1792, however, the French Revolution began to divide members of the society. The masses continued to support the French radicals as they moved further and further toward republican government. The slaves, imbued by rumors that the French were ordering an end to slavery throughout their empire, sided with those who openly called for a return of Louisiana to French rule, although not necessarily for the same reasons as did the whites.¹⁰³ The conservative whites, increasingly influenced by the French emigres and Saint Domingan refugees, openly condemned the revolution, especially after the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette in 1793.¹⁰⁴ The conservatives were greatly alarmed by the decision of the French National Convention to abolish slavery on February 4, 1794.¹⁰⁵ This new law declared that "all men, without distinction of color living in the colonies are French citizens enjoying all rights assured by the Constitution."¹⁰⁶ Most of the slaveholders in the French

colonies became ardent royalists and opponents of the revolution. By the mid-nineties, so many of them had migrated to Louisiana that they helped to reinforce the conservative coalition of creole planters.¹⁰⁷ After warfare broke out between Spain and France, the breach between large slaveholders and France was practically complete.

A Restless People

For the first time there developed a strong alliance between the large wealthy planter class and the Spanish officials. The Spanish government found itself increasingly in the middle between two extremes of the white society, neither which had been strongly attached to Spain. In 1793 the radical-controlled government executed both Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette. In March of that year, France declared war against its former ally, Spain.¹⁰⁸ Eventually rupture between France and Spain affected Louisiana, especially its French-speaking majority. Many lower class and small land-owning whites, as well as many free blacks and slaves openly proclaimed their allegiance to France and their willingness to fight for her against Spain.¹⁰⁹ Ironically, many of the slave dissidents included some recent migrants who had been brought in by their masters from the islands. A large number of them were involved in a major slave conspiracy which could have been as violent as the Natchez uprising.¹¹⁰

The Pointe Coupee Conspiracy

The slave conspiracy centered on the plantation of Julian Poydras in Pointe Coupee and began to take root in late 1794 and early 1795. Poydras was one of the wealthiest and most influential planters in the province. He owned large numbers of slaves just recently imported from Africa. Many of them had contacts with fellow slaves from the same part of Africa, the Bight of Benin,¹¹¹ who lived on neighboring plantations. Apparently, this plantation served as an ideal incubator for a widespread conspiracy. Rumors spread freely that the new Spanish king Charles IV had abolished slavery but that the local Spanish authorities had refused to inform the slaves. It is now apparent that a considerable number of slaves, free persons of color, small white artisans, and *engagés* were involved. At one meeting held in the cabin of Antoine Sarrasin, slaves from several neighboring plantations were present, as well as three or four whites. They discussed the possibility of presenting freedom petitions to the district commandant. No matter how erroneous, the rumors of the king's decision to free slaves emanated from several quarters, including free blacks as well as whites. Some slaves refused to perform their usual chores, such as planting corn, because they believed that they would soon be free. Some responded to rumors that some masters had forced their own slaves to sign petition renouncing freedom.¹¹² Not all slaves were convinced of the alleged royal proclamation of freedom. One local *commandeur*, Bara, later testified that he urged his slaves to await his return from New Orleans where he would ascertain the truth about the freedom proclamation, and if true, they could fight for their freedom within the law.¹¹³

Two of the Poydras **commanderus**, Sarrasin and Jean Baptiste, were the alleged leaders of the uprising. While most of the slaves who were condemned to death blamed Sarrasin, he in turn accused Jean Baptiste. Several prisoners testified that Sarrasin had recruited them into the conspiracy. Slaves in the Natchez and Opelousas districts pointed an accusing finger at Sarrasin who apparently recruited many during the night hours. Since most of the slaves in these districts spoke only English, there had to be a connection with an English speaking leader. Supposedly, Captain, a sixty year old Mande French-speaking slave was the link to the bi-lingual slaves in the area. The slaves in the Pointe Coupee district had most of the arms, and presumably the revolt would start there, on or very near Poydras's plantation.¹¹⁴

The Objectives

While it is never possible to determine absolutely what slave conspirators had in mind, it seems that the slaves on the Poydras plantation planned to ignite the rebellion. They would burn the plantation and hide themselves until whites from neighboring plantations came to help put out the fire, then they would kill them. The insurgents intended to move toward New Orleans where they, in concert with some members of the company of colored soldiers, would take over the capital. The last major recruiting occurred on Easter Sunday. Evidently some slaves expressed skepticism about the likelihood of success. Rebel leaders threatened them with the same fate that whites would get if they refused to join the revolt.

Similar to other slave conspiracies, secrecy and loyalty proved difficult to maintain. On April 9, prior to a meeting that Sarrasin had called for slaves of the Vignes estate in the Pointe

Coupee district, two local planters, Charles Duflour and Martin Bourgeat, informed Alejandro de Blanc, the militia officer of Pointe Coupee, about the plot. Duflour verified the first slaves's allegation with another slave's, which convinced him of its veracity. They both insisted that Jean Baptiste had informed them that they were all free, but that whites refused to release them, therefore they must take their freedom. By taking their freedom Jean Baptiste insisted that they must kill all of the whites. Pierre, insisted that he replied, "I do not want that kind of freedom." Jean Baptiste also failed in efforts to involve the slaves of the Goudeau plantation, which was not far from the Poydras plantation.¹¹⁵

The Plan Falls Apart

Before Sarrasin could meet with the Vignes slaves, he was arrested, along with several other slaves, and taken to New Orleans. Their arrival in the capital city, which was predominately black, caused great alarm among most of the whites. New Orleans was in the process of recovering from another major fire, in which over two hundred buildings burned down.¹¹⁶ Three or four attempts were made to help the prisoners escape, but the prisoners were shipped for Havana. However, the captain-general of Cuba accepted them with reluctance, for "if they were prejudicial in Louisiana, they could be even more harmful in Cuba."¹¹⁷

After sending Sarrasin and the others to Cuba, trials began on May 4, 1795, for more than a hundred persons had been implicated. Altogether, fifty-seven slaves and three whites were convicted. Within a month, twenty-three slaves were hanged, beheaded, and their heads impaled at intervals along the Mississippi between New Orleans and Pointe Coupee. They flogged thirty-

one slaves and sentenced them to hard labor outside Louisiana. They also sentenced three whites to six years of hard labor in Havana. Prior to their executions, both Sarrasin and Jean Baptiste stated that they had "acted out of bad advice."¹¹⁸

No free blacks were convicted, but a number of them had been interrogated but released because of a lack of solid evidence against them. Carondelet asked for permission to expel all the freed blacks from the Pointe Coupee district. The presence of whites confirmed a belief that the conspiracy was more than a slave revolt, but also part of a much larger plot involving French and American agents, in the so-called Genêt-Clark invasion.¹¹⁹ Many suspected Citizen Edmond Genêt, French minister to the United States of involvement with American revolutionary leader, George Roger Clark, in fermenting rebellion against Spain whereby France would regain Louisiana with American support in return for lucrative cessions to the United States. Genêt's conduct, however, had become so embarrassing to the Washington administration, that the president ordered his expulsion from the country. Almost simultaneously, Genêt's political faction in the National Convention fell from power, he lost his influence, and was forced to seek political asylum in the United States.¹²⁰

The execution of the rebel leaders did not completely end the matter. Some slaves and free blacks defiantly celebrated festivals for their convicted fellows, similar to what they had done for St. Maló. The next year authorities "discovered" several other conspiracies, and in March, 1796, Carondelet sent forty troops to suppress an alleged slave revolt on the German Coast. Individuals and small groups continued to run away and form new maroon settlements. Despite an offer of amnesty in 1797, few returned and the number of maroons increased.¹²¹

A Change in Policy

The 1795 events in Louisiana forced Carondelet to change priorities. The governor had started his administration by showing great concern for the welfare of the slaves but also distrust of their masters. He had tried to strengthen Spanish authority by seeking greater ties with the free black community. Indeed, when they first uncovered the slave conspiracy Carondelet believed that the white Creole planters were behind a plot to kill him because of his close ties to slaves. He also accused the New Orleans *cabildo* of trying to take advantage of the situation by exerting their control beyond the city and into other aspects of government because, the members claimed, the governor had sided with the black insurgents. In fact, however, the *cabildo* expressed confidence in the way the governor handled the conspiracy.¹²²

During the trial of the rebels there was cooperation between the *cabildo* and governor, and both quickly came to the realization that the number one priority in the future would not be to maintain support of the Creole planters and merchants, but the black community, slave and free. Captain-General Las Casas reinforced this position. He urged Carondelet to be more concerned about unrest from the people of African descent than among the whites. The greatest danger lay with the free and unfree blacks who believed that they had more to gain under French control than Spanish. The masses of small farmers and poor whites were overwhelming in their support for France, so the governor had no choice but to seek support from the large planter-merchant class to maintain Spanish power. The support that he received had a high price. The planters demanded that he discontinue interfering in their relationship with their slaves. For the most part, for the remainder of Spanish rule, except in the most extreme cases, Spanish officials

pursued a "hands off" policy toward slave-master relationship. Planters used the slave conspiracy in Pointe Coupee to force the governor to abdicate practically all control over slaves or their masters.¹²³

A new wave of repression on both slaves and free blacks ensued, which reinforced the bonds of solidarity among the two communities. "The free men of color participate in the (same assemblages) of slaves, as the slaves are admitted to theirs. Thus, free or slave, black or mulatto, they seem to form a single family united in their abjection... To the best of their ability they try to do each other as much as good as they can."¹²⁴ While the two communities never became completely one, they cooperated frequently on matters of mutual concern. And with the coming of the Americans, there would be many matters of mutual concern, all too often matters which would affect both negatively.

1. Kimberly S. Hanger, "Avenues to Freedom Open to New Orleans' Black Population, 1769-1779," in **Louisiana History**, vol., 1., XXXI, Number 3 (Summer, 1990)
2. For a detailed discussion on the Franco-Spanish diplomacy with the British, see E. Wilson Lyon, **Louisiana in French Diplomacy** (Norman, Oklahoma, 1974).
3. **Ibid.**, p. 34.
4. **Ibid.**, p. 35.
5. **Ibid.**, p. 33
6. See Winthrop Jordan, **Black Over White** (Chapel Hill, 1968), p. 98.
7. See James T. McGowan, "The Creation of a Slave Society: Louisiana Plantations in the Eighteenth Century," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (University of Rochester, 1976), pp. 122-123.
8. Bennett H. Wall et al, **Louisiana: A History** (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1990), p. 53.
9. **Ibid.**, p. 55.
10. See Gwendolyn Midlo-Hall, **Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century** (Baton Rouge, 1992), pp. 276-277.
11. See Marcus B. Christian, **History of the Negro in Louisiana**, Unpublished manuscript, hereafter cited as Christian (Earl K. Long Library, University), "Regulations and Punishments of Slaves and Freed Colored," p. 20.
12. **Ibid.**
13. See Hans W. Baade, "The Law of Slavery in Spanish Louisiana," in Edward F. Haas, ed., **Louisiana's Legal Heritage** (Pensacola, 1983), p. 43.
14. McGowan, p. 227.
15. Baade, pp. 56-58
16. **Ibid.**
17. **Ibid.**, p. 51.
18. **Ibid.**
19. **Ibid.**
20. **Ibid.**, pp. 67-69.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
- 22.2 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
23. Wall, *Louisiana: A History*, p. 61.
24. Midlo-Hall, p. 264.
25. McGowan, pp. 229-230.
26. Baade, pp. 67-70.
27. McGowan, p. 123.
28. Baade, pp. 67-70.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
31. McGowan, p. 219.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
37. Christian, "The Free Colored Class of Louisiana," pp. 7-9.
38. H. E. Sterkx, *The Free Negro in Antebellum Louisiana* (Cranbury, N.J., 1972), p. 62.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Baade, pp. 49-50.
42. McGowan, p. 150.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, p. 227

45. **Ibid.**
46. **Ibid.**, p. 222.
47. **Ibid.**, p. 224.
48. **Ibid.**, p. 223.
49. **Ibid.**, p. 241.
50. **Ibid.**, p. 228.
51. **Ibid.**, pp. 275-277.
52. **Ibid.**
53. **Ibid.**, p.287.
54. **Ibid.**, p. 269.
55. Midlo-Hall, pp. 202-204.
56. **Ibid.**
57. **Ibid.**
58. **Ibid.**
59. McGowan, p. 229.
60. **Ibid.**; Midlo-Hall, p. 211.
61. McGowan, p. 234.
62. Midlo-Hall, p. 202.
63. McGowan, p. 234, Midlo-Hall, p. 202.
64. Midlo-Hall, p. 203.
65. Midlo-Hall provides an excellent detailed account of the St. Maló incident in her chapter, "Bas Fleuve."
66. McGowan, p. 237.
67. Midlo-Hall, pp. 215-219.
68. **Ibid.**, p. 216.

69. **Ibid.**, p. 217.
70. **Ibid.**, p. 216.
71. **Ibid.**
72. **Ibid.**, p. 213.
73. McGowan, p. 240.
74. Midlo-Hall, pp. 221-224.
75. **Ibid.**, pp. 222-234.
76. **Ibid.**, pp. 226-229, 231-234.
77. **Ibid.**, p. 233.
78. **Ibid.**, p. 232.
79. **Ibid.**
80. **Ibid.**, p. 234.
81. **Ibid.**
82. **Ibid.**
83. **Ibid.**, pp. 234-235.
84. **Ibid.**
85. Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, p. 67.
86. **Ibid.**, p. 71.
87. Midlo-Hall, p. 279.
88. **Ibid.**, p. 236.
89. **Ibid.**, p. 277.
90. **Ibid.**, p. 318.
91. Christian, "Regulations and Punishments of Slaves and Free Colored," p. 20-21.
92. **Ibid.**

93. McGowan, p. 262.
94. **Ibid.**, pp. 278-279.
95. **Ibid.**, pp. 280, 284.
96. **Ibid.**, p. 285.
97. **Ibid.**, p. 281.
98. Wall, **Louisiana: A History**, p. 76.
99. **Ibid.**, p. 80.
100. Midlo-Hall, pp. 317-319.
101. **Ibid.**, pp. 296, 323; McGowan, p. 299.
102. McGowan, p. 299.
103. **Ibid.**, pp. 300-301.
104. Midlo-Hall, p. 340.
105. Midlo-Hall, pp. 341-345.
106. **Ibid.**, p. 346.
107. **Ibid.**
108. See Leo Gershey, **The French Revolution and Napoleon**, (New York, 1933), p. 244.
109. **Ibid.**, p. 343.
110. **Ibid.**, p. 347.
111. **Ibid.**, p. 319.
112. **Ibid.**, p. 351.
113. **Ibid.**, p. 353.
114. **Ibid.**, pp. 353-356.
115. **Ibid.**, p. 354.
116. **Ibid.**, p. 371.

117. **Ibid.**, pp. 369-372.

118. E. Wilson Lyon, **Louisiana in French Diplomacy** (Norman, Oklahoma, 1974), p. 73.

119. **Ibid.**

120. **Ibid.**

121. Midlo-Hall, p. 372.

122. **Ibid.**, p. 377.

123. **Ibid.**

124. **Ibid.**, p. 380.

CHAPTER FOUR - AMERICANIZATION

The Transfer

On December 20, 1803, France transferred Louisiana to the United States in a ceremony which practically reenacted the ceremony transferring Louisiana from Spain to France just three weeks earlier.¹ The transfer had major consequences for all Louisiana residents, especially, those inhabitants "Creolized" over the past century. While it is true that Spain made some significant changes in the way it governed its largely French-speaking population during the last decade, the transition from Spanish to American rule was far-reaching for both the white and non-white population. Thomas Jefferson, the American president, although an ardent Francophile, believed that the largely Catholic French-speaking population was not ready for immediate self government. The president believed that the French-speaking majority, unlike their English-speaking counterparts, lacked a long tradition of self government. Therefore he initially pursued a go-slow approach toward statehood until the society became sufficiently "Americanized."² Before too long, however, events within Louisiana forced Jefferson to permit more self-rule, much sooner than he had initially considered. Congress gave all white male property owners the right to vote and indirectly, the right to hold public offices.³ To the contrary, both free and unfree black Louisianians, suffered a loss of rights. Prior to the American takeover, neither free blacks or whites, voted, and only a few white men held public office. In the past, the vast Louisiana territory, relatively sparsely settled, did not need a large

bureaucracy to administer it. However, as more migrants entered the territory, the need, indeed the demand, for more government services increased.

Most of the new territory's population lay in lower Louisiana, approximately the present state of Louisiana minus the Florida Parishes which were added in 1812. More than half of Louisiana's population was non-white, almost half of it slave. In New Orleans, proper, the non-white racial composition was even greater, as more than two of every three of the city's inhabitants were black, of which nearly a third were free persons of color.⁴ This large concentration of black people, free and unfree, was a source of continual concern for the new American governor, William Charles Cole Claiborne.

The New American Rulers

Prior to coming to Louisiana, Claiborne, a Virginian by birth, migrated to the new state of Tennessee which he represented in the House of Representatives. In 1801 Claiborne cast Tennessee's lone vote for Jefferson when the House chose the president because the election of 1800 resulted in a tie between Jefferson and his erstwhile running mate, Aaron Burr.⁵ The new president rewarded Claiborne with the governorship of the Mississippi Territory, basically the present states of Mississippi and Alabama. Jefferson subsequently, designated Claiborne as acting governor for civil affairs when the United States took formal possession of Louisiana.⁶ Claiborne experienced a culture shock when he came to Louisiana. First, he had to deal with a large "foreign" white population which did not speak English, nor understand basic English traditions. And, of course, he did not speak French, nor did he understand many French

traditions.⁷ Second, nothing in his prior experiences in Virginia or Tennessee prepared him for dealing with a large and assertive free black population, such as the group he encountered here in Louisiana.

The new governor found himself in a political quandary. The English-speaking American minority accused him of favoring the large creole majority. The French-speaking Creole majority said he gave a disproportionate share of public offices to the English-speaking minority. They also believed that President Jefferson violated the implied, if not expressed, provisions of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty, which they believed entitled them to immediate statehood, and thus, self government. In 1804 they sent Jefferson a petition, "The Louisiana Remonstrance," which demanded immediate statehood.⁸ The president quietly ignored the protest and shortly thereafter named Claiborne governor of the new territory of Orleans, as Congress officially designated lower Louisiana in October, 1804. While the organic act authorized a territorial legislature, the president appointed all thirteen of its members. The next year, however, Congress conferred voting status on all free white male inhabitants who owned at least 200 acres of land. They could vote for members of the lower house of the territorial legislature, but the president chose the members of the upper house.⁹

Demands of the Free Men of Color

The free black class also attempted to assert its "rights." These men of color insisted that the treaty guaranteed that all of "the inhabitants of Louisiana would be incorporated into the federal union with all of the rights" enjoyed by citizens of the existing states. Just seven days

after taking possession of Louisiana, Governor Claiborne expressed his concern to Secretary of State James Madison about the assertive Creoles of color. His especial concern related to the two Negro companies which had been an integral part of the Spanish militia.¹⁰ While his immediate predecessor, Prefect Pierre Clement Laussat had maintained these in their former positions, Claiborne hesitated to do likewise. He informed Madison:

...My principal difficulty arise (sic) from two large companies of people of Colour, who are attached to the service, and were esteemed a very serviceable corps under the Spanish government. On this particular Corps I have reflected with much anxiety. To recommission them might be considered as an outrage on the feelings of a part of the union and as opposed to those principles of policy which the safety of the Southern States has necessarily established. On the other hand, not to recommission them would disgust them, and might be productive of future mischief. To disband them would be to raise an armed enemy in the very heart of the Country, and to disarm them would savour too strongly of that desperate system of Government which seldom succeeds. Should no necessity urge me to a hasty decision on this point, I shall await some opinion and instructions from the Department of State, and have therefore to beg that I may be favored with them as soon as possible.¹¹

While awaiting instructions from Washington, Claiborne received a petition from some fifty-five members of the Negro companies. While the petitioners "humbly" offered their services to the United States, and professed their sincere attachment to their new country, they also expressed their belief that "not only the great truths upon which this country was founded, but specifically Article III of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty entitled them to full citizenship rights." Article III of the treaty of cession stated:

The inhabitants of the ceded territory shall be incorporated in the union of the United States and admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the Federal Constitution to the enjoyment of all rights, advantages, and immunities, of citizens of the United States; and, in the meantime, they shall be maintained

and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and the religion which they profess.¹²

The petitioners also recited their past acts of bravery and loyalty to the Spanish. They offered to continue such exemplary service to their new nation in the future, but they wanted all of the basic citizenship rights in return.

Not So Free Men of Color

When disgruntled whites met to draft their "Louisiana Remonstrance," they invited no persons of color. However, one indignant free man of color, described as an "influential character" among the free colored group, submitted an address to the whites, inviting them to a meeting with free coloreds "in order that they might consult **together** as to **their** rights, and the propriety on their part of drafting a memorial to Congress." A local printer refused to print the address, but instead informed Claiborne, who, in a dispatch to Secretary Madison, stated that he had been on excellent terms with the free colored people since his arrival. He insisted that heretofore he had established and maintained open communication between them and himself. "It is believed that the Free People of Colour are well attached to the present Government and that it will only be necessary to have recourse to advice, to induce them to decline a **general assemblage** or publicly manifesting any disquietude, but if any other means should be necessary, I shall **use them**." Claiborne further explained to Madison that he would try diplomatic means first. He said that he believed the free colored class was simply following the lead of the whites. He concluded he also regretted that whites decided to hold public protest meetings.¹³

A Gentle Rebuke

Once members of the white populace learned of the proposed address, they demanded that the governor identify the author of the letter. The white leaders made it clear that they opposed expanded rights for colored men. To the contrary, the municipal authorities of New Orleans asked the governor to reveal the author's identity, and also to punish him with the greatest severity that such action deserved. At the very least, Claiborne should banish the malcontent from the province. The governor, however, decided on a different tactic:

I thought a different Conduct the most wise and prudent. It seemed to me that in a Country where the negro population was so great, the less noise that was made about the occurrence the better; I therefore determined to send for a few of the most influential free men of Colour and to express in pointed terms my disapprobation of the letter to the printer and of their contemplated meeting. I accordingly had an interview (in the presence of the Mayor of the city) with nine of the most discreet and influential men of Colour;-they seemed convinced of their error, declared their intention to abandon the suggested project, gave the most unqualified assurances, of their friendly pacific disposition, and their devoted attachment to the present Government and to good order, I did not make an exertion to discover the Author of the Letter. I thought it best he should not (for the present) be known, for the indignation of the white inhabitants was so roused, that the probability is, violent outrages on his person, would be offered. I remembered that events which have Spread blood and desolation in St. Domingo, originated in a dispute between the white and Mulatto inhabitants, and that a too rigid treatment of the former, induced the Latter to seek the support and assistance of the Negroes.¹⁴

Mutual Conciliation

Claiborne considered it prudent to treat the free colored population gingerly, as large as it was. While it was impossible to extend to the free people of color all of the rights enjoyed by whites, he believed it imprudent to treat them no differently from slaves. To do the latter would assure a strong commonalty between both groups of non-whites, and that could prove destructive for whites. Obviously, the governor very quickly learned the same lesson that the Spanish earlier learned of the importance of creating and maintaining some distance between slaves and free people of color in order to assure the safety of whites.

On the other hand, the free men of color also realized the precarious nature of their position and did not protest further. However, for some time Claiborne continued his vacillation regarding the two companies of colored soldiers. The legislative council, moreover, did not include them in reorganizing the territorial militia in early 1805.¹⁵ While the legislature did not disband them, it made no specific reference to them, undoubtedly bowing to the white opposition which came from both American and Creole settlers. In a sense these companies received *de facto*, but not legal status. Claiborne tried to explain the peculiar nature of these companies to Madison:

With respect to the Mulatto corps in this city, ... I am, indeed, at a loss to know what policy is best to pursue. Their organization during the late temporary government was not liked by the ancient Louisianians, nor were there wanting Americans, who, with a view to my injury, reprobated the proceeding, both by speaking and writing. Indeed, so much was said on that subject, that the late Legislative Council thought it prudent to take no notice of the Mulatto corps in the General Militia Law. This neglect has soured them considerably with the American Government, and it is questionable how far they would, in time of danger, prove faithful

to the American standard. I shall, however, procure a census of the free people of color who reside in and near this city. Those capable of bearing arms may probably amount to about five hundred, and, while proper exertions shall be made to conciliate the good will of all, I have little doubt but that those among them who possess property and a fair reputation, will, in any event, prove faithful in their allegiance.¹⁶

Claiborne alluded to the "neglect" by the legislature. It did not include the Negro companies in the general militia law and this effectively soured some of these soldiers toward the American government.

The Threat of Foreign Seduction

Claiborne had reason for concern because some of the former Spanish officials merely transferred from New Orleans to the upper Louisiana territory or into neighboring Spanish Florida or Texas, after the transfer. When Congress in 1804 formally divided Louisiana it placed the governance of the Territory of Orleans under Claiborne, and the District of Louisiana, the bulk of the territory though sparsely populated, under control of the governor of the far-away Indiana Territory.¹⁷ While Claiborne vacillated over the use of Negro troops, former Spanish Governor Casa Calvo continually tried to influence the Negro troops to remain in the services of the king of Spain. Casa Calvo, remained in Louisiana until Claiborne expelled him from Louisiana, because of his involvement in the alleged Burr conspiracy.¹⁸ However, the former governor simply moved to an adjacent Spanish territory. The so-called Burr conspiracy, had a profound impact on Louisiana's political future. In fact, as a result of this scare, Jefferson finally

agreed to quicker statehood for Orleans. This, he promised, as soon as the total population reached sixty thousand, but not verifiable until after the census of 1810.¹⁹

In 1806 General James Wilkinson arrested and charged former Vice President Aaron Burr with treason against the United States, but the grand jury in Natchez refused to indict him. Shortly thereafter, Alabama officials arrested and sent him to Richmond for trial, but Chief Justice John Marshall ordered Burr's acquittal because the national government could not support the charges. Although, Burr's true intentions remain a mystery, the popular belief at the time centered around a plot to create a western confederacy of trans-mountain states and territories with Spanish assistance. Supposedly, in return for Spanish support, Spain would regain possession of Louisiana. Many expected Spain to use its former black troops. In return, the blacks would receive full citizenship rights from a new Spanish government.²⁰

While no one proved Burr's role in this alleged conspiracy, the following year, however, a free colored man, Stephen, swore under oath "that the free people of color were falling under the sway of influential Spaniards and that many of them seemed sincerely devoted to Spanish interests." Although Claiborne did not wholly credit Stephen's testimony, he confided to Secretary Madison, "I have however no doubt but that the free people of colour have been tamper'd with, and that some of them are devoted to the Spanish interest." Subsequently, he placed one company of regular soldiers on duty every night to guard against any potential uprising by the black troops.²¹

Decline in Status of Free Persons of Color

Claiborne could have added that the free persons of color had reasons for their discontent. Almost annually, they watched with envy as the white population gained new rights, while their status remained in political limbo. For example, in 1806, the new territorial legislature reduced the acreage of land necessary to vote from 200 to 50, but still limited voting privileges to free **white** men. Beginning that same year, the legislature created many new local offices, such as sheriffs, police jurymen, coroners, and judges, all limited to qualified white property holders.²² In part to allay the fears of the free people of color that they faced a reduced legal status, Claiborne called on the legislature to provide the free men of color some reason to continue supporting the American government, and thereby reject dubious overtures from a foreign power such as Spain. In 1807 he included the following recommendations to the territorial house of representatives:

While on this subject, permit me to suggest for your consideration, the expediency of recognizing the Free men of Colour, who reside in New Orleans and its vicinity as part of the regular Militia: Under the Government of Spain, they formed a separate Battalion, and were then esteemed (as I am informed) a highly useful Corps. During the temporary Government of Louisiana, I continued them on the same footing, in which I found them, and it is but justice to say, that their conduct was such, as to convince, that the measure was a proper one. The present Militia law having taken no notice of this former Battalion, it has necessarily been neglected: but the officers who were attached to it, and it is believed, the Privates are still desirous to compose a separate Militia Corps. An address upon the subject which has been made to me by some of their ancient officers, shall be laid before you.²³

On January 26, 1807, the House of Representatives responded favorably to the governor's request. It advised the governor to "give to the Battalion of free men of Color the activity which their zeal solicits." The legislature authorized two companies of free colored soldiers, but their commanding officers would be white. The highest ranks authorized for colored officers were second lieutenants. Later several attained the rank of captain.²⁴ A few years later, during the War of 1812, Governor Claiborne published the following proclamation with respect to the colored battalion:

...The Battalion compassed of free men of colour, will hereafter muster for exercise and inspection, twice in each and every month, at suchtime (sic) and place as the lieutenant colonel commanding shall designate. The most punctual attendance is required, and it is expressly ordered that absentees of every grade be proceeded against in such a manner as the laws and regulations prescribe. Monthly returns of the strength of the battalion, and which the number and condition of the arms shall be particularly stated, to be made to the adjutant general.²⁵

Free Colored Soldiers in the War of 1812

The War of 1812 provided the free colored soldiers a real opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to defend their country against a foreign foe. Earlier in 1811 they had demonstrated their willingness to fight against their rebellious slave brethren.²⁶ Because Louisiana was so far away from most of the rest of the American states, and also because of its strategic location at the mouth of the river, it had to provide much of its own defense. Nearly everyone realized it would play a key role in the outcome of the war. Therefore, while many whites at first opposed, using black troops in the state's defense, Claiborne not only realized that

he needed as many experienced fighters as he could find, but he also knew that the British might try to recruit both free blacks and slaves in their attempt to defeat the Americans. During the American Revolution the British encouraged slaves to flee their masters and subsequently freed and repatriated thousands of slaves outside the United States.²⁷

In September 1814 Claiborne wrote to General Andrew Jackson, prior to the latter's arrival in New Orleans. He informed Jackson that he already had one battalion of free colored men in the militia in New Orleans. In the past, he said "they always served faithfully in time of difficulties, and on several occasions they evinced the greatest courage and firmness." He told Jackson he recently held a meeting with both white and black officers of the battalion:

I informed them that in the coming hour of peril I would rely on their valor and fidelity to the United States. In return, they expressed their devotion to their country and their readiness to defend it. They added their desire that all free men of color in New Orleans and its vicinity, whom they represented to be about six hundred, might be organized and received as part of the militia, giving me to understand that such a measure would afford much satisfaction, and excite their greatest zeal in the cause of the United States.

Claiborne concluded:

These men, Sir, for the most part sustain good characters. Many of them have extensive connections and much property to defend, and all seem attached to arms. The mode of acting towards them in the present crisis is an inquiry of importance. If we give them not our confidence, the enemy will be encouraged to intrigue and corrupt them. Inured to the climate of Louisiana, and with constitutions and habits adapted to its changes the men of color are well calculated to render service in this quarter, and in the event of invasion might be made particularly useful. I think a corps of three or four hundred might easily be raised, who would willingly enter the service of the United States for six months, provided they be employed in Louisiana...²⁸

Jackson's Invitation to Service

Jackson responded enthusiastically to Claiborne's proposal. On September 24, 1814 before departing for New Orleans to take part in what would become his greatest military victory, he issued two proclamations, one to white troops, another to the free men of color. He addressed the black soldiers as "sons of freedom," implored them to defend "our most inestimable blessing." He further extolled them as Americans to whom "our country looks with confidence to her adopted children for valorous support." He was not calling upon them to make unrequited sacrifices. To the contrary, Jackson promised "to every noble-hearted, generous freeman---men of color, who volunteered to serve only during the war, the same bounty in money and lands now received by the white soldiers of the United States, viz: one hundred and twenty-four acres of land." Jackson promised to pay the non-commissioned officers and privates the same monthly pay and rations furnished to any other American soldier. "Due regard will be paid to the feelings of freemen and soldiers. You will not, by being associated with white men in the same corps, be exposed to improper comparisons, or unjust sarcasm. As a distinct, independent battalion, or regiment pursuing the path of glory, you will, undivided, receive the applause and gratitude of your countrymen."

Recruiting Negro troops did not proceed as smoothly as Jackson expected. In fact he later rebuked an officious paymaster who questioned Jackson's authority to recruit non-white troops. Jackson reminded this functionary to limit his concerns to his official responsibility, that is, "pay the troops--without inquiry whether they are white, black or tea."²⁹

Claiborne's Ambivalence

Despite his earlier enthusiasm, Governor Claiborne failed to immediately publish Jackson's proclamation to the men of color. On October 17, he informed Jackson that he encountered several objections from many excellent citizens who opposed the proposed policy of arming the free people of color. His Committee of Defense also expressed fears of the potential consequence of this proposal. The governor insisted he had no change of mind and still favored using colored troops. After all, he opined, he favored "having these men as positive friends rather than potential enemies," but he also informed Jackson, a large segment of the population remained skeptical of the wisdom of that action. "They think that, in putting arms in the hands of men of color, we only add to the force of the enemy, and that nothing short of placing them in every respect upon a footing of equality with white citizens (which our Constitution forbids) could conciliate their affections."

In fact, the governor had his own personal misgivings about the propriety or usefulness of employing black troops during the war. He was not sure that "such as are natives... would not enlist during the war, but such as have emigrated from Santo Domingo and Cuba may be desirous to join the army." It is not clear why Claiborne seemingly expressed a preference for "foreign" free coloreds, as opposed to the "natives," especially since he had earlier described some of those migrants from Santo Domingo as the most desperate characters, no worse than their white associates. Perhaps, since many of the Santo Domingan migrants lived outside of New Orleans, a good number at Barataria, closely associated with the notorious Lafitte brothers, Claiborne believed that he "could bring them into the city somewhat as mercenaries, and then,

after victory is won, pay them off and then let them shoulder rifles and muskets and march away to Barataria or Attakapas or any other place far removed from New Orleans" without any further compensation to them." In other words, Claiborne could simply make these tangible payments for the military services rendered by the "foreign" elements, but the "natives," as had earlier been observed, might exact nothing short of full citizenship for their support.³⁰

The Role of Colored Troops in the Deslondes Slave Rebellion

Ironically, earlier in 1811, the "native" Negro troops, in their the first opportunity for service proved their trustworthiness, during the so-called Deslondes slave rebellion of January, 1811. Following that effort, Claiborne informed the legislature that he received "an instrument of writing, signed by several Respectable Inhabitants bearing testimony to the good conduct of certain free men of color during the late Insurrection, and recommending them to the favorable attention of the Legislature."³¹ Within only a few years, however, the tide seemed turned decidedly against using free colored troops during the war with Britain. Curiously, some whites apparently believed that free black men had less sympathy toward their enslaved brothers than they had for the British. Time would soon prove otherwise.

While the anti-Negro sentiment was not universal, it was considerable. When Claiborne finally published Jackson's proclamation inviting the free colored to serve, a number of prominent citizens found it "exceedingly objectionable, on the ground of it putting colored men too much on a footing of equality with the whites...It was still more strenuously denied that they could, whether, 'natives' or 'adopted Americans,' be properly designated as 'Americans'." Some

especially objected to Jackson's use of terminology, insomuch as he referred to the colored soldiers as, "fellow citizens" and "fellow countrymen."³²

The Enthusiasm of the Colored Troops

Notwithstanding this opposition Claiborne received some white support for his plan to recruit Negro troops. One prominent white citizen indicated his readiness and willingness to quickly raise a company of a hundred men, provided he received a captain's commission in the free colored unit. This gentleman claimed he had heard similar favorable sentiments expressed from two other persons. These sentiments convinced the governor that he should proceed as planned.³³

When Jackson finally arrived in New Orleans on December 1, 1814, he learned that only a few whites had volunteered to defend their city. In fact, when he reviewed the available volunteer troops on December 18, he found the largest numbers among the free colored unit, since the bulk of his regulars had not yet arrived. Colonel Michel Fortier, a wealthy planter on whose plantation the captured slave rebels had been tried in 1811, served as commander of one of the Negro battalions. Colonel Fortier organized the first battalion at his own expense. He also assisted in forming a second battalion composed almost exclusively of "fugitives" from Santo Domingo. One of the colored officers of this battalion was Captain Joseph Savary. Savary a second major often referred to himself as "colonel," although there is no evidence to support that exalted claim.³⁴

Black Troops in Battle

The free colored troops played an important role during the early stages of the battle for New Orleans, thanks in part to British overconfidence and mismanagement. The British, who initially enjoyed overwhelming superiority in manpower, arms and ammunition frittered away their advantages by delaying execution of their plans.³⁵ Originally, they planned to use their naval superiority by sailing upriver, although they expected token opposition from Fort St. Philip, a fort located near the mouth of the river. Their numerical superiority and fighting experience made them overconfident. They did not expect the Americans to fight, except perhaps to make a token effort for the sake of their "honor." Their spies informed them that New Orleans lay virtually indefensible prior to Jackson's arrival, and even two weeks later morale remained so low in anticipation of a British victory, that some inhabitants even suggested that Jackson seek a negotiated settlement. The British undoubtedly expected Jackson to withdraw his forces close to the city's limit in a feeble attempt to prevent the enemy from entering the city. Jackson, however, decided that his best defense was an offensive strategy. If he stopped the British from entering the city, he had a greater chance of success. Therefore, he did the unexpected, he took the fight to the British which allowed the Americans to keep them as far away from the more heavily populated sections as possible.

Old Hickory gave a major assignment to his two colored battalions. He positioned the first, under Major Lacoste in Gentilly, at the confluence of Bayou Sauvage and the Chef Menteur River. The second, under Savary, he stationed on Bayou St. John. On December 23, Jackson learned that the British had already landed at Chalmette. He quickly moved his own

forces south of the city where he launched a surprise attack against the Redcoats who expected to delay their own offensive until after the Christmas holidays.³⁶

Courage Under Fire

The free colored forces included a fourteen year mulatto drummer boy, Jordan Noble. "When the fog became particularly heavy, it was young Jordan's drum, rattling away in the thick of battle, 'in the hottest hell of fire,' that helped to serve as one of the guideposts for the fierce-battling American troops." Many soldiers later claimed that they heard Captain Savary continually crying out "March on! March on, my countrymen, march on against the enemies of the country." Apparently, the Negro troops not only fought bravely, but suffered no casualties during this opening battle of the war. In his post battle report, Jackson lavished praise on his colored recruits. Especially, he observed, "Savary's volunteers manifested great bravery."³⁷

During the decisive and last battle of January 8, 1815, Jackson placed the bulk of the Negro troops under his personal command. In this most spectacular victory of the whole war, where Americans suffered only seventy-one casualties, including six killed in battle, as compared to nearly two thousand British casualties, it was rumored, though never conclusively proved, that one of the free men of color fatally wounded the British commander, General Sir Edward Pakenham.³⁸

"For Service Well Done"

Shortly after the war, the legislature lavished praise on the colored troops and extolled their loyalty and devotion to their country. The government granted land to each soldier who served honorably. A number of the free blacks received land in Plaquemines Parish. Some of their descendants became known as "Free Jacks." Over the years many of them intermarried into other races, and as time passed quietly slipped into the white race.³⁹ The two colored battalions remained in service throughout the antebellum period, but their activities were largely ceremonial. The drummer boy, Jordan Noble, continued to play his drum for commemorative services, especially on January 8th of each year. Noble, and a number of his comrades were later buried in St. Louis cemetery Number 2.⁴⁰ Ironically, two companies of colored soldiers, many of them descendants of the veterans of the War of 1812, offered their services to their "new" country, the Confederacy in 1861. However, the Confederate officials could not bring themselves to accept the services of black soldiers in their cause. While they formally accepted their offer, they never again assigned them to duty. Subsequently, these same troops offered to serve the union and fought against their Confederate neighbors.⁴¹

Apart From, Rarely, Apart of the Larger Society

While part of the free colored population, particularly those who formed a part of the territory's defense, eventually gained some official recognition to their status, the majority of the free colored population served as a continual source of concern for the new American

government. They were continually reminded of their inferior status, which was not based solely on law, but their race as well. In the **Code Noir** of 1806, it stated that "free people of colour ought never to insult or strike white people, nor presume to conceive themselves equal to the white; but on the contrary that they ought to yield to them in every occasion, and never speak or answer to them but with respect under the penalty of imprisonment according to the nature of the offence."⁴² This was certainly a far departure from the French **Code Noir** of 1685 which rendered free persons of color incapable of receiving donations *inter vivos* or *mortis causae* from whites, but in every other respect, granted them the same rights as French subjects of the white race.⁴³

There was an irrational fear of the free black population as their numbers increased steadily. For example, when the United States formally took possession of Louisiana, the first American census listed some 1566 free persons of color, mostly so-called ancient free persons of color.⁴⁴ The new territorial government tried continually to control the free black population by prohibiting the migration of free Negroes, first from Santo Domingo, then from the French West Indies, except for women and children under the age of fifteen. Apparently, there were two motivating factors behind these actions. First, many white residents who knew of the involvement of so many Caribbean slaves in the earlier Santo Domingan revolt, feared similar actions here in Louisiana. Also, because many of the older residents remembered that many of those slaves convicted of involvement in the Pointe Coupee conspiracy came from those islands, they also feared that their domestic slaves might be enticed into a rebellion. Consequently, when Congress imposed a ban on foreign slave importation to Louisiana, many whites insisted that the

ban should include free Negroes as well, especially because they suspected some of these free Negroes had earlier been involved in the revolution in the islands.⁴⁵

Restrictions on Free Colored Immigration

Despite the national government restrictions on free Negro migrants into Louisiana, it neither ended, nor did it slow down the migration. In fact by 1806, the free black population had more than doubled to 3350. And it more than doubled again by 1810 when the total number now exceeded 7500.⁴⁶ Much of the last increase resulted from the arrival of more than 3400 free black migrants in 1809 alone.⁴⁷ Many of these new black migrants settled in New Orleans proper, or its environs. Governor Claiborne, so disturbed by the flood of black immigrants, urged all American consular officials in the West Indies to inform would-be black migrants of the territorial laws which restricted the migration of free persons of color into the territory of Orleans. New Orleans officials passed an ordinance which required all free blacks who entered the city to register with municipal authorities, or face fines or even expulsion from the city. Despite the efforts of Claiborne and city officials, the exodus of free blacks into Louisiana did not subside until well after 1830.⁴⁸

A Flourishing Community

Most contemporary historians generally agree that the territorial period represented a significant epoch in the history of free black people in the half-century before the Civil war.

Many free blacks who entered the area between 1803 and 1810, had either wealth, education, or possessed skilled crafts. Moreover, in 1810 these recent migrants accounted for approximately forty-five percent of New Orleans' entire free population, and when included with the 5,951 slaves, free and unfree blacks outnumbered white New Orleanians by almost two to one.⁴⁹ Indeed, according to census figures, the white population did not exceed the black population of New Orleans until 1840, when authorities had finally succeeded in curtailing free black migration, while at the same time New Orleans received a large influx of European immigrants.

The number of free black persons also increased as a result of the migration of free blacks from other American states. However, over a period of time, Louisiana, and New Orleans, surprisingly, which, in the past, had shown more tolerance for free blacks than most other Southern communities, began to place more and more restrictions on the free black community. The most adverse impact on the free black population occurred during the so-called "Age of Jackson," the period which brought in increased rights for poor white, especially immigrants. Society became less restrictive for whites as most states, Louisiana included, adopted universal white male suffrage and removed all property qualifications for voting and office-holding, provided support for public education, and abolished imprisonment for debt for whites. At the same time, officials passed laws which suggested that free persons of color could not even be considered members of the civil community. Gradually, the state restricted their ability to travel freely, enter certain professions, and for black Protestant Christians to conduct religious services which included slaves in attendance.⁵⁰

Tightening the Noose

By the 1850s the legislature banned all further migration of free blacks, and ordered those who did not have specific authorization to be in the city, either to leave, or face possible re-enslavement. In 1857, the state passed a law which banned any further emancipation of slaves,⁵¹ and in 1859, authorized free blacks to voluntarily reenslave themselves, with an option to select their new masters! According to a local newspaper account in March, 1860, one free black man, Clifton Green, voluntarily chose Green L. Bumpass to be his new master.⁵² The newspaper did not indicate why Green made this unusual choice. In 1859 the legislature also abolished the pass law for free black seamen who entered the port of New Orleans. Thereafter, any black seamen who entered the state would be lodged in the parish jail until his ship left. Violators would be given five days to leave or face up to twelve months imprisonment.⁵³

The free black population peaked in 1840 when the census of that year listed 25,502 free black residents of the state. Of that number, 19,226 lived within New Orleans. During the next decade however, the state's free black population declined by nearly thirty-five percent, down to 17,462.⁵⁴ New Orleans' free black population, however was practically cut in half, and now numbered only 9961. Many left for France or other European or Caribbean countries or American cities in the North. Between 1850-1860, the free black population barely grew to 18,647.⁵⁵ Apparently, all of the new migrants stayed in New Orleans. We can probably conclude that this slight gain resulted largely from natural increase.

Achieving Amidst Adversity

Despite these hardships and obstacles, the free black community made significant advancements and achievements amidst these adversities. In the economic arena free blacks made good use of their quasi-free status. They pursued a variety of occupations, often competing successfully against white workers in both agriculture and industry. Since the need for skilled workers remained substantial in an increasingly expanding New Orleans, free black males supplied a large share of craftsmen such as cigar makers, masons, carpenters, clerks, merchants, tailors, mechanics, barbers, blacksmiths, and cabinet makers. The employment opportunities for free black women reflected the overall status of nineteenth century American women. Some free black women found employment as nurses, hairdressers, midwives, cooks and seamstresses.⁵⁶ A sizeable number of them worked as peddlers, domestics, boarding-housekeepers, and washwomen. A number of free black women, as well as their slave counterparts, plied their trade in the "world's oldest profession," prostitution. Police records revealed frequent arrests at "houses of ill repute" in a neighborhood which later formed the heart of "Storyville" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁵⁷

Free Colored Slaveholders

A large number of free black people owned slaves. The census of 1830 listed 965 colored slaveholders, of which 753 lived in New Orleans, the largest, Cecée McCarty, who owned 32 slaves.⁵⁸ Like most white slaveholders, most black slaveholders only owned one or two slaves,

and in some cases, they owned their blood relatives. It was not unusual for husbands to own their slave-wives, or fathers to own their slave children. Because the state continually made manumission more difficult, many black slaveholders could not, even if they wished, free their own relatives.⁵⁹ This always placed such bondsmen in peculiar positions because, a slave was always, first and last, chattel, and could be seized by creditors to satisfy debts. Because the slave was property and could be used in any manner that the master desired, not all black slaveholders freed their relatives, nor treated their slaves any differently from other slaveholders. It is not unreasonable to presume that some non-white slaveholders treated their slaves harshly. The majority of the free colored population did not own slaves, and probably could not afford them even if they desired. As a group, however, the free colored New Orleanians were wealthier than their black counterparts in other parts of the country. For example, in 1850, they possessed an aggregate of nearly two and one-quarter million dollars of property. In that same year the free colored citizens of New York City owned property valued at only a little more than one hundred thousand dollars. The free black residents of Charleston, South Carolina amassed no more than about fifty thousand dollars in property.⁶⁰

Black Bourgeoisie

While many black New Orleanians barely scratched out a living, one could actually find a black leisure class in the city which cultivated and supported the arts in literature, music, dance, theater, education, medicine and fencing. For example, Bazille Crocker, a skilled mathematician, was also an accomplished fencing master who trained many members of the best

families of New Orleans at his fencing academy. Constantin Deberque became the conductor of a black philharmonic orchestra. Joanni Questy was one of the most celebrated and accomplished black writers of the antebellum period. Oscar Dunn, who later became the state's first black lieutenant governor, was an aspiring actor, renowned for his oratorical skills.⁶¹

In 1845 seventeen free men of color published, *Les Cenelles*, the first anthology by men of color in the western hemisphere. This slim volume of poetry perhaps had a hidden meaning, as it was named for a very delicate fruit, the mayhaw, which grows in a harsh environment, but produces a very delectable fruit. Perhaps these men described their own achievements amidst increasing adversities. One of the contributors, Victor Séjour, later became a famous playwright and dramatist in France.⁶²

Despite these accomplishments life became more, rather than less restrictive during the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1845 the new state constitution which, among other things, removed all property requirements for voting and office holding for white men, provided no more civil rights for black men.⁶³

Educating A People

In 1845 the state finally made provision for a public school system, but frequently turned down requests to support public education for free persons of color, although black property holders were taxed to support schools for whites. During the antebellum period many free blacks (especially those considered "Creole") received formal education which sometimes equalled, if not exceeded their white counterparts. Since a large number of the free colored class remained

communicants of the Roman Catholic faith, many received educational instructions from schools operated by Catholic religious. During the 1830s the Ursulines nuns operated a school for free black children. Madame Marie Couvent, a native African, left her estate to establish, L'Ecole des Orphelins Indigents, a school for colored orphans. Later it began to accept other students. The school also received support from Thomy Lafon, who became perhaps the wealthiest free man of color in New Orleans. Some of the wealthier free colored families sent their children abroad to receive formal education. A number of men who had white fathers, received extensive training in France. Norbert Rillieux, whose father was white received a degree in engineering from a French institute. He later returned to Louisiana and developed an improved method for granulating sugar.⁶⁴ During the next century an international organization of sugar growers hailed him as the "father of the modern sugar industry." Louis Charles Roudanez received a medical degree with honors from the University of Paris in 1853. When he returned to New Orleans, however, he was refused a medical license. He was subsequently licensed only after receiving a second medical degree from Dartmouth College. During the Reconstruction period, he and his brother, Jean Baptiste Roudanez, published the very militant, **La Tribune de la Nouvelle Orleans**, which espoused full citizenship for all, without regards to race or color. Eugène Warbourg, the emancipated son of a white father and his once-slave wife, received advanced training in sculpture in Paris.⁶⁵ Eugène remained in Europe and produced notable pieces of sculpture that are now preserved in various European museums. Eugène's brother, Daniel, remained in New Orleans and executed many works of marble, especially in burial tombstones and funeral ornaments.⁶⁶ The signature, "Warbourg," dots the plaques of many tombs of the rich and famous in New Orleans.⁶⁷

Restrictive Freedom of Worship

During the antebellum many black residents moved to the Faubourg Tremé, the area, just across from the former rampart, later appropriately, named, "Rampart" street, and adjacent to the relocated cemetery, commonly referred to as St. Louis Cemetery, Number One.⁶⁸ A number of the older black churches were organized in this vicinity. Although the state did not place any formal restrictions on the religious liberties of free Negroes prior to 1850, nevertheless, free persons of color did not enjoy complete liberty of conscience. While the Roman Catholic Church did not officially segregate its communicants by race, traditionally slaves and free blacks attended different masses from the majority of white Catholics. Gradually a number of older black Catholic families began attending a new parish church, St. Augustine, conveniently, located in Tremé. Eventually, it became known as the church of the best colored people, but many city slaves also attended.⁶⁹

Black Protestants, however, occasionally encountered problems. Periodically, civil authorities arrested black worshippers, who they suspected might be guilty of subversion, especially, if slaves were in attendance.⁷⁰ In 1850 the legislature prohibited blacks from forming any religious corporation or secret associations such as lodges or clubs. It retroactively nullified all previous associations, even those that had earlier legislative approval. In 1858 the New Orleans city council passed an ordinance which required all Negro churches to function in a patron-client relationship with white churches of that same denomination. St. James African Methodist Church, which had organized in 1844 under the corporate laws of the state, was ordered closed because it allowed slaves to worship along with its free members. When the

membership contested the decision in court, the state supreme court ruled, "since the African race are strangers to our Constitution, they are subject of special exceptional legislation."⁷¹ St. James reopened during the Civil War and played a major role during the Reconstruction period. A number of its members played prominent roles in supporting Union activities. Lt. Governor Oscar Dunn was a member of the congregation. In 1871 his funeral was held there and he was buried in the cemetery square, practically reserved for blacks only two blocks away from his home.⁷²

In 1854 a new black church, St. Mark Fourth Baptist Church, was organized in uptown New Orleans. Its early history illustrates some of the contradictions inherent in slavery. While many slaveholders considered their slaves chattel property, they also considered them persons with souls in need of salvation. Most of the original members of this new congregation were slaves of the Shepherd family, which had recently moved to New Orleans from Virginia. At first the Shepherds and their slaves worshipped at the Coliseum Place Baptist Church. One of the slaves, Robert Henry Steptoe, showed great interest in religion and was subsequently freed, educated, and in 1854, ordained into the ministry. Rev. Steptoe and his little flock were organized as a client of the parent church, Coliseum Place Baptist Church. In 1867 the congregation received its own charter. During the early part of the twentieth century, several of its members played a leading role in the formation of the New Orleans Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.⁷³

Responding to Abolitionism

As the abolitionist movement began to fuel the controversy between the North and South over slavery, free black New Orleanians found themselves increasingly in the cross fire. Virulently racist propaganda called for their total removal from the state, or a return to slavery. As late as 1859, the legislature narrowly defeated a total exclusion bill.⁷⁴

Much of the anti Negro sentiment came from the nativist movement, which was both anti-Catholic and anti-foreign. Despite its anti-Catholic stance, there was surprising support for the nativist movement in heavily Catholic New Orleans. Much of the support came from the French-speaking community which was, at times, more anti Irish or anti German, than anti black. There was strong antagonism shown toward these new immigrant groups which began coming into the city in increasingly larger numbers during the two decades before the Civil War.⁷⁵

Antebellum Negrophobia

The New Orleans Bee, the unofficial organ of the local nativists, considered free Negroes a most dangerous and anomalous group within the slaveholding society. It portrayed all Negroes, but free blacks, especially, as the very dregs of society. They were insolent, vicious, indolent and inveterate drunkards. Further, **The Bee**, claimed, free blacks debauched and corrupted the morals of the slaves, but worse of all, they were involved in antislavery activities injurious to the interest of the white people in the state⁷⁶ **The Bee** spoke for an increasing number of whites, who considered free Negroes alien to the society. No matter that

many of New Orleans' free black community were natives, and indeed had ancestry which stretched back more than a century earlier, the prevailing view among many whites was that only white persons could be real members of the community. While an occasional sympathetic voice was raised in their behalf, the general sentiment during the late antebellum period reflected an increasingly vocal and violently anti free Negro sentiment.⁷⁷

Passing for White

Over a period of years a few extremely light colored Negroes quietly passed into the white race in order to avoid the repression they faced. For most free Negroes, however, no matter how "white" they appeared, it was difficult to succeed, since most people in particular neighborhoods knew who was "white," and correspondingly, who was not. And practically all whites very jealously guarded this racial privilege. "Passing," was an infrequent occurrence and must have involved the silent approval of darker Negro relatives, and sympathetic whites, who did not betray those Negroes they knew were passing for white.⁷⁸ To be sure there was some anti slavery sentiment within the black community, but it was too dangerous to voice that support publicly. Those who did, could find themselves in quick and serious trouble. For the moment there was at least one small consolation for the free black community, at least they were free, certainly not as free as the white members of the community, but at least they were not slaves.

Declining Status of the Slaves

While the American cession did not bring the much-expected improvement in the legal status of free persons of color, it was even less cause for celebration for the slave population. At the time of the cession in 1803, the Pointe Coupee conspiracy was still fresh in the minds of the longtime residents, and they, along with many newcomers, viewed the slave population with great apprehension. During that first decade of American rule, there was always an especial concern for the newest slave migrants, which not only included new slaves direct from Africa, but also black migrants from the troubled Caribbean islands, especially Saint Domingue. On the other hand, while there was great concern about the importation of slaves from the West Indian islands, it did not extend to all slave importation, and when in March 1804, Congress banned all foreign slave imports, most planters quickly condemned the ban and especially their new governor, Claiborne, whom many believed was the person primarily responsible for it.⁷⁹

A Brief Ban on Foreign Slave Importation

In 1804 briefly Congress prohibited the importation into Louisiana of all foreign slaves, as well as slaves brought from foreign shores to the United States after May 1, 1798. The law only permitted the legal importation of slaves into Orleans from other American states or territories, and only those who accompanied masters who planned to settle within the newly ceded territory⁸⁰

Both Creole and American residents decried the alleged unconstitutionality of this prohibition. On the one hand, they argued that it specifically violated Article I, Section 9 of the federal constitution, which denied Congress the power to pass such a ban prior to 1808. They also insisted that the ban clearly violated the letter and spirit of the treaty of cession since it denied Orleans citizens the same privileges and rights which were enjoyed by inhabitants of the other states. Their complaints did not go unnoticed and the prohibition did not last long because Congress included a declaratory section to a new enabling act for the territory in 1805. It extended to the Territory of Orleans all of the rights, privileges and advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of the adjacent Mississippi territory which included not only the right to own slaves, but to import others as well.⁸¹

Slavery: American Style

The new territorial legislature which demonstrated ambivalence toward the free black community exhibited no uncertainty about the legal status of the slave community. In 1808 it specifically exempted slaves from coverage of its "Act for Punishment of Crimes and Misdemeanors." Slaves would continue to be governed under provisions of the laws of Spain, provided no cruel and unusual punishment was inflicted. Given a literal interpretation, presumably, this meant the coartacion would continue under the Americans as it had operated under the Spanish, and actually might accelerate the growth of the free black community.⁸² However, that would not be the case. To the contrary, once Louisiana became an American possession it became increasingly more difficult for slaves to gain freedom, either through self-

purchase or acts of emancipations. During the last years of territorial governance and the first years of statehood, the legislature gradually transformed Louisiana slavery into an institution which closely resembled in many respects, the system found in other slave states. It obliterated most of the peculiarities of Franco-Spanish slavery which had made it different from slavery in the eastern states. An important catalyst for the transformation was greater use of the English common law and its application to slave property. For example, in 1807 the territorial legislature passed "an act to regulate the conditions and forms of the emancipation of slaves." The new law specifically prohibited slaves from owning property without the consent of their master. Additionally, the law provided, "no person shall be compelled either directly or indirectly to emancipate his slaves." Arguably, this practically repealed the coartacion. However, it did provide for self-purchase if the master consented to the proposed sale, but only after the emancipation received judicial approval, which was conditioned upon the applicant's minimum age of thirty, and four years of previous good conduct. Obviously, the master held the upper hand. Not only must he consent to emancipation, he also set the price, which was not subject to outside adjustment, and more importantly, he had to certify the slave's good conduct.⁸³

The Dissolution of Legal Slave Families

Another provision of the territorial act of 1807 designated slaves as real estate, which made them subject to mortgage like other real estate. Thus husbands and wives could be separated and children could now be sold apart from their parents at age ten.⁸⁴ In the future even this minimal protection was not always observed as children were often sold from their

parents at much earlier ages. Since slaves were not considered primarily persons, but legally possessions, slave marriages had no validity. And while it is true many slave marriages of the previous century did not conform to Spanish law or Catholic rites, at least they had been considered permanent.

The act further provided that no slave could be a witness against white persons, nor could they be parties in civil suits. The following year the legislature denied slaves the capacity to make any civil contracts.⁸⁵

The Deslondes Slave Rebellion of 1811

Another catalyst for the change in slave status was the 1811 Deslondes slave revolt which occurred only a few years after the cession. The Deslondes revolt was perhaps the largest domestic slave uprising in the history of the United States. The number of participants ranged from a low of one hundred and fifty to perhaps as many as five hundred. As is often the case in most so-called slave rebellions, it is difficult to say with any degree of accuracy, what were the causes, who were the participants and what were their specific objectives. It seems that there were at least three underlying causes of this rebellion. First, there undoubtedly remained many slaves whose hopes for freedom had been raised prior to the Pointe Coupee conspiracy, only fifteen years earlier. While the majority of slaves had not been actively involved, many undoubtedly sympathized with those objectives. In 1803 their hopes were revived when they learned that Louisiana had been returned to France. Those hopes, unfortunately, were quickly dashed with France's transfer of Louisiana to the Americans. Second, in 1811, just as in 1795,

it appears that a majority of those slaves convicted for their alleged involvement had lived in the French West Indies prior to their migration to Louisiana. Charles Deslondes, a mulatto from Saint Domingue, and the leader of the 1811 rebellion, was a **commandeur** on the Andry plantation. A third factor for the timing of the uprising was the belief that New Orleans was virtually indefensible at the time of the rebellion.⁸⁶

The Uprising

The rebellion began in St Charles Parish, near the modern town of Norco, about twenty miles from the capital. Most of the slaves who participated came from areas east of St. Charles, going north toward Baton Rouge. It was in this area that American security was weakest because many of the territorial militiamen, as well as American regulars, were enroute to Pensacola to engage the Spanish who prepared for war against the United states in retaliation for American annexation of the rebellious Spanish colony of West Florida.⁸⁷

The uprising began on a plantation owned by Colonel Andry, Claiborne's second father-in-law. It commenced on the cold rainy afternoon of January 8, 1811. It appears that Deslondes's plans were tenuous at best, and that he recruited as the rebellion unfolded. Most of the original rebels were fellow Andry slaves under his supervision. They broke into Master Andry's quarter, wounded him with an axe and killed his son, then seized the few weapons and gunpowder. Some of the weapons had been stashed away since the fear caused by the alleged Burr conspiracy only a few years earlier. Deslondes tried as best he could to impose order; he divided his men into "companies," appointed officers, flagmen and drummers and armed as

many of them as he had available weapons. Some only had swords or farm implements. After looting the Andry plantation and taking as much as they could use, including food, horses and liquor, they set off for New Orleans.⁸⁸

"On to Orleans," was their battle cry, but they did not get too far, because they stopped too often along the way. They recruited other slaves as well as some maroons. As they approached neighboring plantations, panic-stricken whites began to flee, most without their slaves. Deslondes either impressed or persuaded other slaves to join their ranks. Those who steadfastly refused were tortured or killed on the spot. About four o'clock in the afternoon, the "army" stopped at the Fortier plantation, now deserted by whites. They raided it, but instead of continuing, they stopped to cook. The "rebellion" now became a party, almost an orgy. As the food and drink was consumed, their passion for fighting began to wane.⁸⁹

The Counterattack

In the meantime, neighboring white inhabitants had been warned of the slaves' approach and all escaped harm. Except for the burning of three plantation houses, there was no further destruction. Had Deslondes and his followers moved with dispatch they could have reached New Orleans, which was virtually undefended. When news reached the city, officials fired alarm guns and beat drums to warn the inhabitants of the coming danger. Because the majority of the city's inhabitants were either slaves or free persons of color, many believed that the slave rebels in concert with these other blacks, meant certain doom for the city. The authorities, city and state, called for volunteers to provide a counterattack to prevent the insurgents from reaching the city.

They emptied the city's arsenal of swords and muskets and handed these over to about thirty volunteers. These were later reinforced by about sixty men from surrounding parishes as white men rode upriver to head off the rebels. Claiborne also called on the free colored militia. Apparently, the governor had no misgivings about their sense of loyalty. During the emergency they served with distinction and the governor later declared, "the free men of color also on this occasion manifested the greatest zeal for the public safety. Their services were tendered and one Company placed by my orders... performed with great exactitude and propriety..."⁹⁰

Fortunately, for the white populace, the rebels' "party" on the Fortier plantation had halted all further progress of the Deslondes forces, who had either been deluded into a sense of false security by their drink, or because of their lack of a sense of reality did not operate as if they knew that time was of the essence. They soon found themselves caught between two different forces which cut them to pieces and turned what might have been a reasonable chance of success, into a complete rout.⁹¹

Between eight and nine that evening, Major John Derrington led one group of volunteers to the outskirts of the Fortier plantation. Derrington decided to postpone an attack until the next morning when they would benefit from better lighting, and also when expected reinforcements would have arrived. Unbeknown to Derrington, however, about fifteen of the volunteers decided to attack at once. They caught the rebels off guard. Apparently, so disorganized were the Deslondes forces, they had not posted sufficient guards and the volunteer militiamen attacked them while they were feasting in the plantation kitchen. About twelve or fourteen of them were captured, although a large number of them escaped and sought refuge in the sugar house, which proved to be inadequate protection from the assault which followed the next day.⁹²

Major-General Wade Hampton led another force down river and they reached the Fortier plantation around the same time that the mavericks from Derrington's forces were storming the plantation house. He agreed with Derrington's assessment that little would be lost by waiting until the next morning. In the meantime, the slaves who finally realized their precarious position as reinforcements began to increase the militia's forces, attempted to escape into a wooded area along the levee. About four o'clock on the morning of the 10th, they began leaving the sugar house. A bright moonlight made an undetected escape impossible. In the meantime, Colonel Andry who now headed another force had crossed the Mississippi to prevent slaves on the west bank from joining the rebel forces. Once he was assured that everything was in order, he recrossed the river to cut off the rebels in case they attempted to escape in that direction. The trap was now complete and in Andry's words as they approached the sugar house, "the slaughter" began.⁹³

Overkill

It did not take long, because most of the slaves did not have adequate weapons. Many of those who were armed, had only fowl shots for small game such as duck and partridge. The table had quickly turned as the hunter now became the hunted. When the "battle " ended sixty-six slaves lay dead, seventeen had escaped for the moment and sixteen were taken captives. In addition to these included in the official reports, there were numerous uncounted bodies, possibly of innocent victims, scattered throughout the woods. To prevent the escape of even one rebel, local planters hired Indian mercenaries to search out and capture or even kill any blacks who

were found hiding in the woods, including, unfortunately, some who sought refuge from the rebels. Surprisingly, Deslondes escaped death for the moment, but not capture, he, along with about seventy-five other captives, were held for trial. After cursory examinations, those slaves determined uninvolved, were released to their masters.⁹⁴

Legal Vengeance

While the uprising had been treated as a potential danger to the whole lower region of the territory, the territorial authorities now abdicated responsibility to the local officials. The St. Charles Parish district court assumed control over the investigations which took place at the Destrehan plantation. They questioned those militiamen who arrested slaves as to the time, place, and if possible, their captives' specific role in the conspiracy. They particularly wanted to know which slaves had weapons, or stolen goods on their persons at the time of their arrest. After a brief hearing they found sufficient evidence to hold twenty-seven of the seventy-five captives for trial. On January 13, only two days after the outbreak, Judge Pierre Bauchet Saint Martin began the proceedings. In response to questions about the alarming rate of speed with which the trial began, Saint Martin claimed that it was necessary to begin immediately because emotions were running so high they might "take on a ferocious character if the chiefs and principal accomplices are not destroyed. "Quite possibly, the judge voiced the sentiment of the vast majority of whites, the trials would be merely a formality, prior to the swift punishment of the accused.⁹⁵

Judge Saint Martin appointed a five man tribunal to examine the evidence and affixed the penalty. It mattered to no one that several of the planters appointed to the tribunal had suffered

The territorial legislature tried to strengthen the security of the institution. A few weeks following the uprising it reorganized the militia. It gave more authority to militia officers, who could now arrest subordinates for disciplinary infractions or failure to pay the twenty dollar fines imposed for missing inspections. The act gave the militia control of all public roads for its maneuvers. It only exempted from service ferryboat captains, doctors, ministers, and men over fifty. Planters were admonished to maintain continuous vigil and to exercise rigorous discipline over their slaves. Only those slaves deemed absolutely trustworthy should be allowed off the plantation at any time. Those slaves found illegally absent from their homes would receive the full measure of the law. At the minimum, this would include a flogging. The legislature formally requested the President to station permanently near New Orleans a regiment of regular army troops. It justified the request by listing a number of pertinent factors: a scattered population along the Mississippi River, a poorly prepared militia, few city defenses and a continual fear of internal and external hostilities. Legislators also approved compensation in the amount of three hundred dollars for each slave killed or executed plus one third the value of any other property lost or damaged.⁹⁹ The New Orleans City Council made it illegal for slaves not owned or temporarily hired by city residents, to remain in town. A suspect could be searched, jailed, whipped and fined. It also restricted the actions of slaves legally living there. They could not publicly congregate except for funerals and for authorized dances, which could be held on Sundays only. The ordinance prohibited slaves from gathering in streets, public squares, meat markets, or tavern houses. Property owners who rented houses for these illegal meeting were subject to fines. No slave, unless blind, was permitted to carry a cane. Violators were subject to twenty-five lashes.¹⁰⁰

property damages during the uprising. Apparently, their objectivity would not be compromised, or in any case, the lack of objectivity was immaterial since it was a foregone conclusion that the principal leaders were guilty. After a day of interrogations, the panel convicted eighteen including Deslondes, and condemned each of them to death.

Each was taken to his own master's place, shot, then beheaded. Their severed heads were mounted on poles and placed at intervals along the levees. The authorities hoped this public display of the severed heads would serve as a deterrent to other slaves in the future. To be sure, there was not another slave uprising in Louisiana thereafter.⁹⁶ A few days after these execution, the panel condemned an additional three slaves to death in the same manner. It released three others, but surviving records do not indicate the fate of the remaining accused.⁹⁷

Reaction to the Rebellion

News of the revolt spread rapidly to other states and was carried by more than ninety percent of the newspapers then in existence. Surprisingly, there were different accounts which appeared in non slave states before the news was carried in slaveholding states. Perhaps officials in slaveholding states suppressed the news, or as was the case in some part of the mostly rural South, there were not yet many newspapers in that region.

Some Northerners insisted that the uprising was evidence that slavery was a dangerous institution to both slave and master. Many Southerners insisted that slaveholders must be ever vigilant, and the institution must be maintained by sufficient discipline, or they faced continual threats of rebellions.⁹⁸

After the Deslondes rebellion, there were no further uprisings of this magnitude, although authorities uncovered several other alleged conspiracies, but took action before they could begin. In April, 1830 New Orleans officials hanged two slaves who were implicated in a conspiracy.¹⁰¹ In October of that same year, authorities estimated "at least one hundred Negroes," free and slave were involved in an insurrection in Plaquemines Parish. Their efforts were crushed by the local militia.¹⁰² In 1837, Lew Cheney recruited a group of runaways in the area of Bayou Boeuf. The slaves would fight their way from the swamps to Mexico, where they hoped to gain freedom. They had already stockpiled a large amount of food before their hiding place was discovered. Because Cheney realized the futility of going forward, he betrayed his fellows to local planters. "The fugitives were surrounded and taken prisoners, carried in chains to Alexandria" where they were hanged. Despite these executions, indiscriminate arrests and hangings took place before a regiment of soldiers were dispatched to restore order. The legislature subsequently appropriated \$1500 to purchase Chaney's freedom, who afterwards was given \$500 as his reward. Solomon Northup, who spent nearly twelve years in illegal slavery in this area a few years later, reported that Chaney was "still living, but his name is despised and execrated by all his race throughout the parishes of Rapides and Avoyelles."¹⁰³

Over the next forty years, in order to make the institution more secure, both the legislature and city council amended the slave codes to meet specific circumstances. During the thirty years prior to the civil war, both passed a wave of restrictive laws against both free blacks and slaves. However, the enforcement was uneven.

The Complexities of Urban Slavery

Urban slavery always proved difficult to secure. Most urban slaves enjoyed considerable mobility while going to and from work and generally went unmolested, especially in familiar neighborhood. Some kidnapping occurred, but probably less frequently than once supposed. The law required both slaves and free colored people to carry a pass or freedom certificate. In most cases, slaves known to a particular area moved about freely without challenge.¹⁰⁴ And as Professor Jerah Johnson showed in his "New Orleans' Congo Square," even those slaves who lived outside the city had relatively easy access to the city as they came and went from the slave markets.¹⁰⁵

The slave market became a favorite meeting place for city and rural slaves, and often for free black relations. Additionally slaves employed on the railroads, as stevedores, or on the levees often congregated in the many taverns and bars around the city. Sometime the public dances served as a conduit to meet new friends and possibly spouses.

Creole Slaves

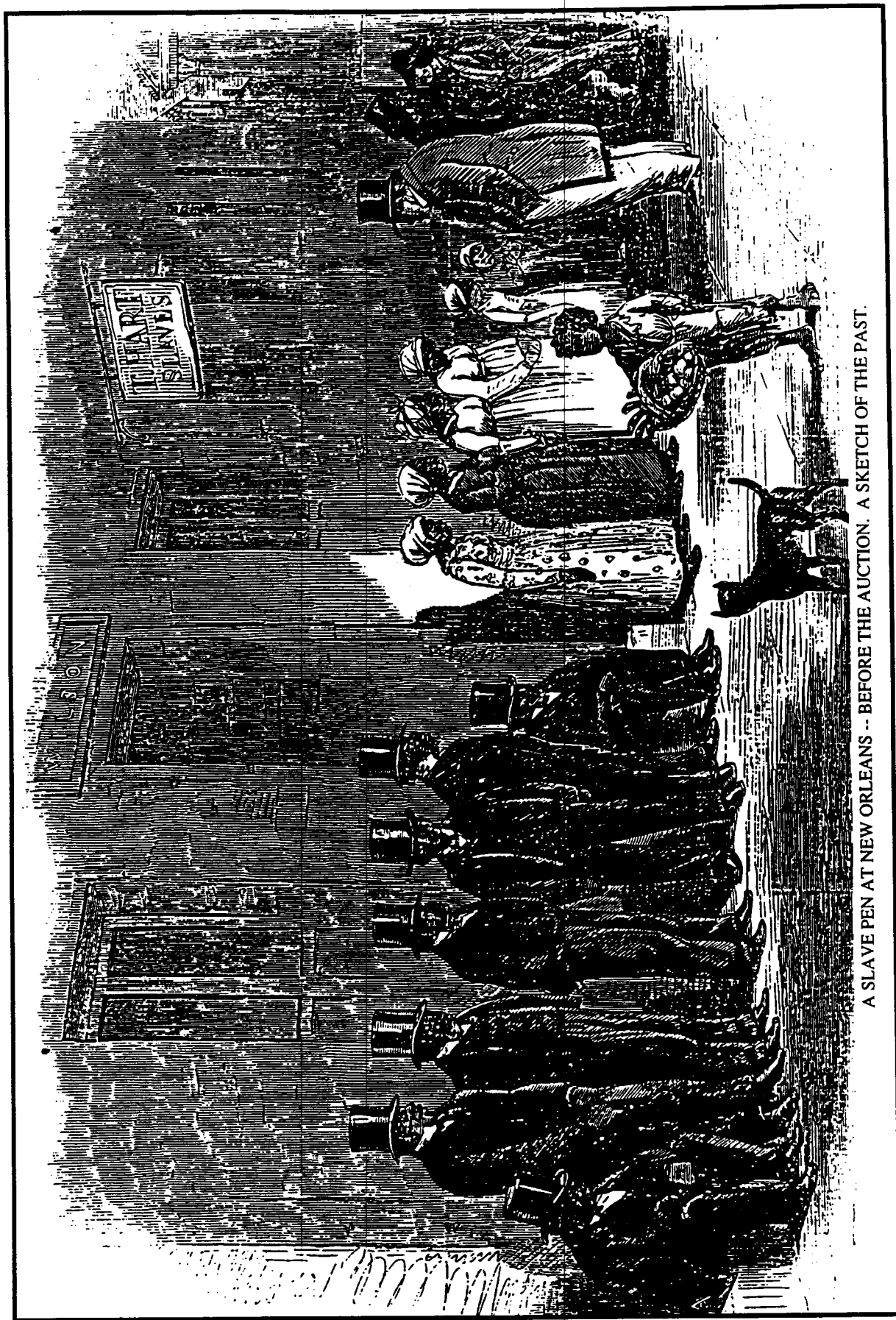
After the American cession a large number of English-speaking slaves came into Louisiana, but the French-speaking slave population remained predominant in New Orleans for a long time. Many Creole whites, who spoke only French preferred Creole slaves. Creole slaves were also highly prized because of their resistance to yellow fever, an almost annual uninvited visitor to the Crescent City. Yellow fever was especially deadly to newcomers of all

racess, but had almost no effect on those who survived long enough to become acclimatized.¹⁰⁶ Over a period of time many of the earlier barriers between Creole and Anglo blacks began to disappear. After all, both groups realized that they shared a common foe, racial prejudice which restricted them both. They learned to cooperate in areas of mutual concern.

State law made it illegal to teach slaves to read or right, although some masters taught their own. This was another departure from Franco-Spanish slavery. Despite the law a few acquired some literacy. Some secretly attended schools for free Negroes or learned in Protestant church schools.¹⁰⁷ Some slaves gained skills in the crafts, particularly those practiced by their masters, but generally the city's slaves were excluded from all but the most menial and lowest paying jobs in the city. Some industrial companies owned and employed gangs of slaves. A number of prominent families had their staff of domestic servants. Many slaves, however, hired out their time. Usually, they arranged with their masters to perform some type of work which would allow them to house and feed themselves. Their wages legally belonged to their masters who determined how much the slave could keep for himself.

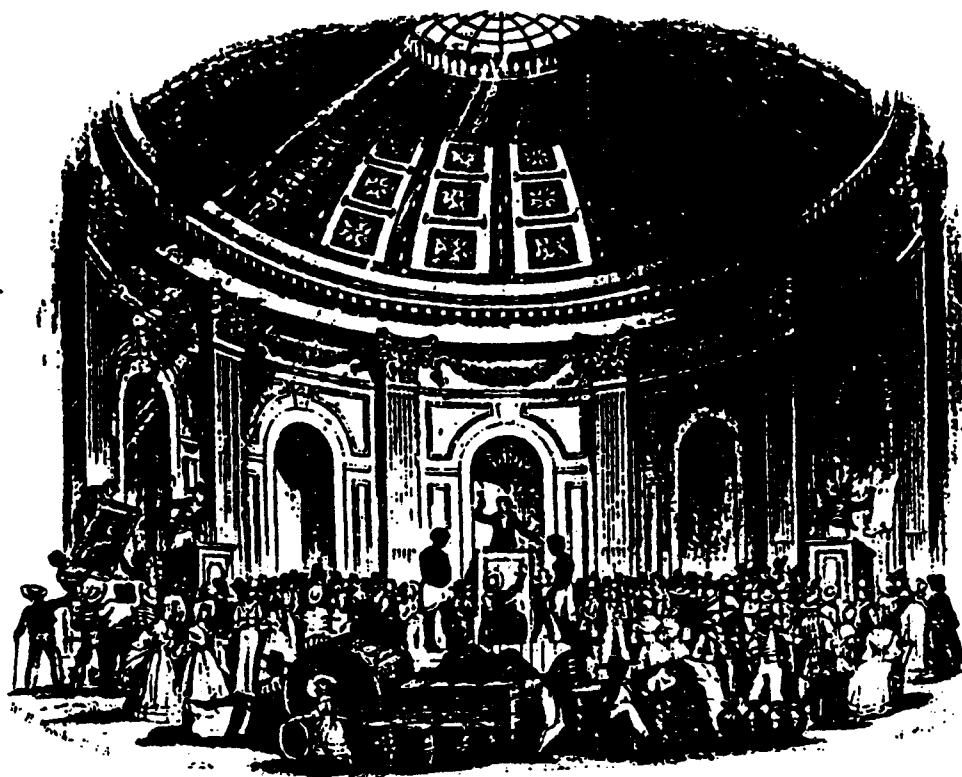
The Profitability of Slavery

The price of slaves varied during the antebellum period. Prior to statehood, a healthy young male attracted top dollar, generally under five hundred dollars, women sold for no more than three hundred fifty dollars. However by 1818, the top price for males had doubled and women only a little less. Following the panic of 1819, prices fell, and by the mid twenties, men



A SLAVE PEN AT NEW ORLEANS -- BEFORE THE AUCTION. A SKETCH OF THE PAST.

Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection



(A Slave Auction)

Courtesy New Orleans Historic Collection

sold for about six hundred dollars and women, about a hundred dollars less. By the fifties, it was not uncommon for prime slaves to sell for two thousand dollars or more.¹⁰⁸

The profitability of a city slave was not quite as great as a plantation slave. The latter produced more and consumed less. On a rural isolated plantation, the slave either worked in the field producing cotton, sugar or another staple. He received poorly built and sparsely furnished housing and shoddy clothing. His food rations were adequate, but primarily basic cheap starches and fats, often what whites called "throw-away cuts." On the other hand, an urban slave usually lived in better housing, dressed better, because most whites considered a slave's appearance was a reflection of his master. If one's slaves did not appear, at least outwardly, well-groomed and well-fed, his master's neighbors considered him an unfit master.¹⁰⁹

Slave Workers

While the plantation slave toiled day after day in the field, his urban counterpart worked in a variety of jobs. Male slaves worked as street cleaners and chimney sweeps, garbage collectors and bootblacks. Many female slave sold flowers, pastries, sandwiches, and candy, especially a local favorite, pralines, made from two local products which were in great abundance, sugar and pecans. Other women slaves served as wet nurses for well-to-do ladies, some slave women cooks and cleaned for religious, educational and business institutions. Some of these institutions owned the slaves who performed these chores.¹¹⁰



(A Brick Carrier)

Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection

Slave Leisure

Most slaves were freed of their arduous chores on Sunday. This one day in seven, was not really a sabbath, it was much more like a weekly holiday. Many slaves and free blacks congregated in Congo Square, an integral part of the Faubourg Tremé. It was here that blacks representing all hues and colors congregated for their most cherished activity, the dance, not the traditional European dance, but the traditional African dance, now sufficiently Americanized with contributions from the various Indian tribes that had once populated this area. Casual onlookers described the dancers as "dressed in a variety of wild and savage fashions... ornamented with a number of tails of the smaller wild beasts...with fringes, ribbons, little bells, and shells and balls, jingling and flirting about the performers' legs and arms." Males decked themselves in oriental and Indian dress, and were sometime practically naked from the waist down, except a sash wrapped around the body. Females wore the newest fashions in silk, gauze, muslin, and percale dresses. The dance, which one writer observed, began with a "slow repetitious , and grimly deliberate opening phase" and ultimately reached a crescendo of frenzy characterized by "fantastic leaps" which continued until the dancers finally dropped from exhaustion, then he is replaced by another, and another, the music continuing without interruption.¹¹¹

These dances were often performed at the slave markets. The dancers were usually vendors who used this lull between sales to entertain themselves. Later in the day many slaves and free blacks attended the regular Sunday night dance which remained a fixture in New Orleans for many generations. Contemporaries described these dances as equally dangerous as

THE DANCE IN PLACE CONGO



A MARCHANDE DES CALAS.

(A Seller of Rice Cakes)

Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection

they were exciting. On any given Sunday night, one found a microcosm of the black community at these dances, except for the cream of the black community which shunned these public dances in favor of their own private balls and receptions, which often rivalled their white counterparts in ostentatious taste and lavish tables.¹¹²

Among some black Protestants, just like their white counterparts, these were sinful activities which should be avoided. Those dissidents, however, represented a decided minority, because many of the Anglo slaves very quickly adapted to this new culture, and within a generation, had become "Creolized." The many shared activities in which both free black people and slaves participated helped to strengthen the bonds of affinity between both, even as white officials tried to weaken them. Just as the Spanish had tried in the previous century, Americans learned that to a large extent, bond or free, black New Orleanians were basically one people.

Conclusion

During the last two decades before the American Civil War began, most black New Orleanians, free and unfree, lived in a community which unmistakably reflected so much of their own ancestral culture. It was everywhere reflected in the community's spoken and written language, its diet, festivals, music, and even its churches had become significantly Africanized. However, the more Negroes tried to embrace the larger community, the more it tried to ostracize them. Unlike a century earlier, there was no effort made to culturally embrace the sons and daughters of Africa. There was no 19th century Le Page du Pratz urging white New Orleanians to make the slaves feel a part of the society, or face the possibility of slave resistance



THE VODOO DANCE

and rebellion. Now, many believed that the black population could only be held in subjection by limiting its contact with the larger community. But total exclusion was impossible. The community's politics was now dominated by continual discussions about these people who the dominant racial group perceived to be apart from, not really a part of the larger community. The city's newspapers discussed almost daily some aspects of the increasingly divisive slavery question. Some of the national churches had already divided into southern and northern wings.¹¹³ It was almost as if black people, among the city's oldest residents, remained its unseen, unwelcome guests. Some whites grudgingly acknowledged their presence, others pretended that they did not exist, none accepted them as equals. And yet, they were there, almost precisely where they, and the city had begun more than one and a quarter-century earlier, downtown, near the river, always near the center of the community's activities. They were at once its poor, its outcast, but also some of its wealthiest and best educated. They brawled in its bawdy taverns and bars, committed their share of its urban crimes, but they also contributed to its arts in music, and sculpture, tended its sick, often with folk medicinal treatments their ancestors brought from their homelands. They danced, oh! how they danced - at work, in the markets, in the streets, in spontaneous parades, and at funerals, but they also built a community within the community. They reflected in their actions, what others must have known to be true, they were at least as much, if not more, New Orleans. From the small numbers who had come in during the first decade of New Orleans' founding, they now represented more than a quarter of the city's population.

When the Civil War came and Union forces occupied New Orleans, their political fortunes changed. Union officials, for the most part ostracized by the white populace, turned to

the free colored community for support. General Nathaniel Banks recruited both officers and men from this community for the Native Guard regiments.¹¹⁴ He heeded their request for public support of black education. While the particulars of their role in Louisiana's Reconstruction's government is much better chronicled elsewhere, we can safely conclude that after emancipation, the African American community, now composed of former slaves as well as the free persons of color, asserted themselves, audaciously and boldly and demanded recognition of their rights to be what their ancestors had always been, black, though they were - New Orleanians!

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2. George Dargo, **Jefferson's Louisiana** (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 2-4.
3. Wall, p. 103.
4. Marcus B. Christian, "Demands By Men of Color in Orleans Territory," in **Negro History Bulletin**, Number 3 (March, 1973), pp. 54-57.
5. **Ibid.**, p. 91.
6. **Ibid.**, p. 92.
7. **Ibid.**, pp. 95-96.
8. Dargo, p. 3.
9. Wall, p. 96.
10. Christian, "Demands," pp. 56-57.
11. **Ibid.**
12. Marcus B. Christian, **Negro Soldiers in the Battle of New Orleans** (New Orleans, 1965), p. 6.
13. Christian, "Demands," p. 54.
14. **Ibid.**
15. **Ibid.**, p. 55.
16. Christian, **Negro Soldiers**, p. 8.
17. Edwin A. Davis, **Louisiana: A Narrative History**, (Baton Rouge, 1961), p. 167.
18. Christian, **Negro Soldiers**, p. 8.
19. Wall, pp. 95-96.
20. Christian, **Negro Soldiers**, p. 10.
21. **Ibid.**, p. 10.
22. Wall, p. 96.

23. Christian, **Negro Soldiers**, p. 11.
24. **Ibid.**, pp. 12-13.
25. **Ibid.**
26. **Ibid.**, p. 11.
27. Wall, p. 111.
28. Christian, **Negro Soldiers**, pp. 14-15.
29. **Ibid.**, pp. 17-18.
30. **Ibid.**, p. 20.
31. **Ibid.**
32. **Ibid.**, p. 12.
33. **Ibid.**, p. 22.
34. **Ibid.**, p. 23.
35. **Ibid.**, pp. 26-27.
36. Wall, p. 111.
37. Christian, **Negro Soldiers**, pp. 32-33.
38. **Ibid.**, p. 39.
39. Many of these so-called "Free-Jacks" were later accorded quasi-separate status, when the Plaquemines Parish school system organized separate schools for them along with "colored" and "white" schools.
40. Raphael Cassimere, Jr. et al., "New Orleans Black History tour of St. Louis II Cemetery, Square 3, 1980 (Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans)
41. Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, eds., **Creole New Orleans** (Baton Rouge, 1992), p. 271.
42. Hans W. Baade, "The Law of Slavery in Spanish Louisiana, 1769-1803," in Edward F. Haas, ed., **Louisiana's Legal Heritage** (Pensacola, 1983), p. 75.
43. **Ibid.**, p. 49.
44. H.E. Sterkx, **The Free Negro in Antebellum Louisiana** (Cranbury, N.J., 1972), p. 95.

45. Christian, "Demands," p. 48
46. Sterkx, p. 154.
47. Christian, "Demands," p. 56.
48. Sterkx, pp. 98-100.
49. Christian, "Demands," p. 57.
50. Sterkx, pp. 49-50.
51. **Ibid.**, p. 148.
52. **Ibid.**, pp. 115, 159
53. **Ibid.**, p. 154.
54. **Ibid.**, p. 228.
55. **ibid.**
56. **Ibid.**, p. 237.
57. **Ibid.**
58. **Ibid.**
59. **Ibid.**
60. **Ibid.**
61. **Ibid.**, p. 269.
62. **Ibid.**, p. 227.
63. Patricia Brady, "Footnote to History," **The Historic New Orleans Collection Quartely**, vol. XII, Number 3. (Summer, 1994).
64. Cassimere, "Black History tour."
65. **Ibid.**
66. Jerah Johnson, "New Orleans's Congo Square: An Urban Setting for Early Afro-American Culture Formation," **Louisiana History**, vol. XXXII, Number 2. (Spring, 1991), pp. 117-156.
67. Sterkx, p. 267.

68. **Ibid.**

69. **Ibid.**

70. **Ibid.**

71. "A Brief History of St. James A.M.E. Church," published on the occasion of its 150th anniversary,"

72. Sterkx, pp. 308-09.

73. Included in church's history, reprinted in New Orleans Branch NAACP's 80th Anniversary Program, April, 1995.

74. Sterkx, pp. 308-309.

75. **Ibid.**

76. **Ibid.**

77. Sterkx, pp. 311-314.

78. **Ibid.**

79. Christian, "Demands," p. 57.

80. **Ibid.**

81. Baade, p. 78.

82. **Ibid.**, p. 78.

83. **Ibid.**

84. Joe Gray Taylor, **Negro Slavery in Louisiana** (N.Y., 1963), p. 40.

85. Baade, p. 75.

86. For a detailed discussion on the Deslondes incident, see, Thomas M. Thompson, "National Newspaper and Legislative Reactions to Louisiana's Deslondes' Slave Revolt," **Louisiana History**, vol. XXXIII, Number 1. (Winter, 1992), pp. 5-29.

87. Notes 87-100 are documented in Thompson.

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100. **Ibid.**

101. See, Christian's History of Black Louisiana, "Insurrection, Abolition, and the Underground Railroad," p. 10.

102. **Ibid.**

103. See Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon, eds., **Twelve Years A Slave** by Solomon Northup, (Baton Rouge, 1968), pp. 188-190.

104. Sterkx, p. 268.

105. Johnson.

106. Taylor, pp. 51-52.

107. **Ibid.**; Sterkx, pp. 269-271.

108. Taylor, p. 52.

109. Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon, eds., **Twelve Years A Slave**, (Baton Rouge, 1968).

110. Taylor, p. 60.

111. Johnson, pp. 143-149.

112. Christian, "Free Colored," pp. 16-17.

113. John H. Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., **From Slavery to Freedom**, 7th. ed. (New York, 1994), p. 190.

114. Wall, p. 185.

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