REMEMBERING THE KING ON THE CRESCENT: LOUIS XIV’S
CULTURAL ORDER AND THE FOUNDING OF
NEW ORLEANS, 1699-1743

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: REVISITING THE FRENCH IN LOUISIANA

In this dissertation, I argue that many of Louisiana’s founding administrative and military elite relied on French social norms to ground their own social authority in the New World. For these colonists, France represented the height of intellectual and cultural achievement in the world and they wanted this greatness to assure their status in colonial America. They used French court standards to organize and stabilize their New World lives as they asserted elite privilege and status in America. Consequently, even though many—if not most—of these individuals were not born aristocrats, they recreated themselves in America as representatives of crown authority and adherents to the standards of French high society. This loyalty maintained elite ties to the French court and provided them authority to discipline French Louisiana, particularly New Orleans. They employed the urban planning and engineering developed under Louis XIV to design New Orleans. They also used his Parisian laws to discipline the marketplace and morals of the colony’s majority. They promoted these standards even when they did not seem practical or reasonable in the bayous of the lower Mississippi or in Louisiana’s precarious placement among Native and European enemies. Remaining focused on French standards hampered elites’ abilities to understand or engage with the vast majority of European, Native, and African inhabitants who comprised Louisiana’s productive population. Consequently, when Louis XV severed their ties to France by dismantling pre-existing
patronage networks, Louisiana’s elites found themselves a frustrated minority amongst a creative and adaptive majority.

By the founding of Biloxi in 1699, Louis XIV’s rule in France was hegemonic: his policies influenced the public and private lives of his subjects, affected how they understood their place in the world, and prejudiced their individual latitude to change their condition. Hegemonic rhetoric pervades the journals of the first French explorations of the Mississippi Valley. Missionaries like Jesuit Jacques Marquette and explorers like Robert Cavelier sieur de LaSalle demonstrated a commitment to enacting the king’s power in America. The strength of Louis XIV’s court lay partially in the process of inhabiting, mastering, and claiming the symbols and protocols of competing societies. Jesuit missionaries had engaged this practice by learning native languages, living among people and converting them to Catholicism through translated catechisms. While priests actively drew natives into the French Catholic faith, the French crown encouraged French subjects to marry baptized natives. Historian Mathé Allain argues that during the majority of Louis XIV’s reign, French subjects of both sexes were encouraged to marry Catholic natives in all of the Louis’s colonial domains.ii The goal was clearly to draw these natives in and grow Louis’s cultural power in these distant colonial realms. Louis XIV sought to extend his empire to the far corners of the earth through religious conversion and marriage just as surely as he sought to militarily conquer territory.

Thus, colonizing under Louis XIV’s rule meant domesticating newly encountered areas. This process of rendering colonial landscape docile was necessary to maintain the Crown as the preeminent presence in the lives of its subjects. This was not an easy process. The European imagination projected the meaning of exploration ahead of the
ships to the New World. From ancient times and through stories as old as Beowulf, Homer’s Odyssey and al-Jahshiyari’s Thousand and One Nights, exploration meant entering the world of fantastic monsters, exotic human societies, and fabulous riches while pagan gods and demons were manifest upon the landscape.iii

Early reports from the Mississippi confirmed the possibility of fantastic creatures on its waters. Louis Joliet and Jesuit missionary Jacques Marquette set out in 1673 to explore the upper Mississippi. Father Marquette’s account was one of the earliest describing the upper river and provides accounts of the natives’ perceptions of the cosmological forces at work on the Mississippi and its tributaries.iv Native Americans marked these boundaries along the river with symbols. As they reached the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi, Marquette recorded “we passed by a place dreaded by the Indians, because they think there is a Manitou there, that is, a demon who devours all who pass.”v As they approached this part of the river, the Menomonee warned them to proceed no further.

The people of the Wild Oats…did their best to dissuade me…They told me…the Great River is very dangerous, unless the difficult parts are known; that it was full of frightful monsters who swallowed up men and canoes together; that there is even a demon there who can be heard from afar, who stops the passage and engulfs all who dare approach; lastly, that the heat is so excessive in those countries, that it would infallibly cause our death.vi

The pair of explorers continued on their trek despite these warnings. As Christians and subjects of the French crown, they were bound to trust that their sovereign’s power was greater than whatever monsters or potential threats they encountered on the river. Yet, what they experienced on the lower river was impressive. Marquette recorded the awe and trepidation he felt when he gazed first hand on the Paintings of the Piasa monsters further down the river:
As we coasted along the rocks frightful for their height and length, we saw two monsters painted on one of these rocks, which startled us at first, and on which the boldest Indian dare not gaze long. They were as large as a calf, with horns on the head like a deer, a fearful look, red eyes, bearded like a tiger, the face somewhat like a man’s, the body covered with scales, and the tail so long that it twice makes the turn of the body, passing over the head and down between the legs, and ending in a fish’s tail. Green red, and a kind of black are the colors employed.

Marquette then makes a bold assessment of the paintings as comparable to ones in France and then suggests that the paintings may not, indeed, be painted by humans: “On the whole, these two monsters are so well painted, that we could not believe any Indian to have been the designer, as good painters in France would find it hard to do as well; besides this, they are so high upon the rock that it is hard to get conveniently at them to paint them.” Joliet and Marquette would have taken these tales with them down the river and used them to navigate their experiences with the mysterious and frightful events along the Mississippi. Yet, their goal was to render the river benign, to demonstrate that no force in America was greater than that of the crown of France or the Catholic religion. Their report contained more than a hint of the fantastic along the river. It also contained passages indicating the power of the Catholic crown. As Marquette sat down to converse with one sachem, the man said

‘I thank thee, Blackgown, and thee Frenchmen,’ addressing M. Jollyet [sic], ‘for taking so much pains to come and visit us; never has the earth been so beautiful, nor the sun so bright, as to-day; never has our river been so calm, nor so free from rocks, which your canoes have removed as they passed…Thou knowest the Great Spirit who has made us all…ask him to give me life and health and come and dwell with us, that we may know him’

Marquette’s journal narrated a spectacular battle along the river. The explorers engaged not just with the stories from the Native Americans, but experienced the power of the
river, the sight of the cliff paintings, and the Sachem’s evocation of the supernatural within the environment. The explorers did not create any of the awesome forces during their voyage. Rather, they proceeded as loyal Christian subjects of the French crown and faithfully maintained those roles as they participated in dramatic multisensory scenes that unfold. Their faithful service impressed the Sachem enough that he requested Catholic training. In Marquette’s narrative, loyalty to Louis XIV and the Catholic faith prove triumphant as the most powerful force on the Mississippi River.

After Joliet and Marquette’s journey, René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de LaSalle traveled down the Mississippi in 1682. He distributed medals with the king’s image and coat of arms to the Native Americans he met. Aboard this trip, Father Zénobe Membré recorded the “ceremonies of possession” as LaSalle simultaneously claimed the territory for France and the Church. While LaSalle “took possession of the country with great ceremony” as he “planted the cross, and set up the king’s arms,” Membré “took the occasion to explain something of the truth of God, and the mysteries of our redemption.” As they approached the coast, they marked their journey with the symbols that made France great: symbols of Louis XIV.

When Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville returned to the Gulf Coast in February 1700, his narrative repeats these ceremonies as he retraced LaSalle’s efforts to find the mouth of the Mississippi: “On Tuesday, the 3d, mass was performed and a Te Deum sung in gratitude for our discovery of the entrance of the Mississippi.” He continues, “On the 4th, being Ash Wednesday, religious ceremonies were performed by everyone, then Mass was said, and after the cross was planted, we breakfasted.” On the fifth he writes, “We planted a cross and made several marks upon the trees.” On Monday the ninth, “after having
erected a cross, as usual, we embarked.” Crosses were only part of the process. He also writes of presenting a Calumet pipe to a Bayagoula chief “about four feet long, made of steel with the arms of France engraved upon the bowl.” Finally, when they ventured downriver with the Chief of the Oumas and several of his men, he is careful to mention that “we shouted three times, Vive Le Roi, and they responded in their fashion” before they began their journey. These narratives demonstrate the constancy of ritual and the loyal observance of protocols upholding Louis XIV and the Catholic faith together as they traveled through Louisiana. At least in the narratives, these explorers are careful to include Louis XIV as a transcendent symbol of strength along the Mississippi.

Yet, in the subsequent decades in France, Louis XIV’s hegemonic hold cracked in significant areas allowing critics to find their voice. As Thomas Kaiser argues, by Louis XIV’s death in 1715, “A rising chorus of public disaffection enhanced the crown’s difficulties. Noblemen resentful of their loss of power, clerics of various persuasions angered by Louis’s definition and enforcement of religious orthodoxy, and merchants chafing under mercantilist restrictions of trade would all perceive in the policies of the state some important measure of failure.” As Louis XIV, the so-called Sun King, became less formidable, the aristocracy he had dominated at the height of his reign began to assert their authority and agitate for more influence. At his death, and with the restoration of remonstrance in 1715, the parlements asserted their right to publish protests against crown policies. Jansensists united with the aristocracy to challenge the Gallican Church. With these assaults on crown authority, the time seemed ripe for change within the nobility.
John Law’s financial plans culminated out of these changes wrought after Louis XIV’s death and Louisiana seemed fertile ground for the essence of these protests to percolate. In 1717, Louisiana became an element of the Scottish economist’s novel financial “System” and attracted some of the most influential families in France. He sought to promote trading in paper money and elevate the value of movable wealth through colonial enterprise. The new capital of New Orleans was founded during the Regency when the Crown’s power was divided among individuals, not monopolized under one person. Economic opportunity attracted colonists and investors. Louisiana as a whole presented a chance for the protestors of Louis XIV’s hegemonic rule to form new coalitions and policies.

Yet, despite these distinctive conditions, the founding of Louisiana and the development of the colony were premised on the military and cultural cachet of French domination. Even John Law’s financial plans depended on a strong monarchy and its ability to maintain the “System” regardless of public support. Moreover, while aristocrats and merchants wanted more autonomy and declaratory authority, they depended on French military and diplomatic power to keep them secure in Louisiana. As members of Louis XIV’s extensive family (legitimate, illegitimate, and recently legitimated) argued over the succession to the throne in 1715, they sought to maintain the monarchy and the continuity of the French empire in the wake of the War of Spanish Succession. Stabilizing the monarchy and restoring public faith in the Crown became a national concern. Even the popular critic of Louis XIV, Charles Irénée Castel, abbé de Saint-Pierre argued that financial stability of the country was premised on the integrity of the Crown’s moral authority. Long after his death, Louis XIV’s successes remained
synonymous with French strength. Evoking the French Crown inside and outside Europe meant invoking the sort of authority Louis XIV wielded at the height of his reign. The nobility, the aristocracy, and even John Law created a protective buffer for launching new financial initiatives that muffled the power struggles within the Regency. As historian Colin Jones concludes, “Aristocratic critics sought to replace the royal mythic present with a kind of nostalgic pluperfect.” In the economic, political, and diplomatic tumult of the Regency, there were considerable incentives to invigorate the rhetoric of strong monarchy and French supremacy developed by Louis XIV.

The protective buffer of French cultural supremacy and Crown sovereignty was present in the travel narratives of the Ursuline nuns who left France for Louisiana in 1727. Nearly fifty years after Marquette and Joliet’s voyage, the narratives record how constancy and loyalty also triumphed over adversity as the nuns crossed the Atlantic. In her letter describing the journey, Reverend Mother Marie Tranchepain de St. Augustin was careful to note the ways in which the sisters maintained their faithful observance and did not compromise their social standards. When the Ursuline nuns left Rouen in 1727, the sisters endeavored to maintain the discipline of their order despite the close confines of the ship. They chose not to alight on Madére Island when the ship stopped to take on supplies. The sisters were invited to a convent of the Order of Saint Claire, but the Reverend Mother reported that the abbess was a Portuguese princess, and these nuns were “freer” than secular women with “easy” manners. They did however disembark at Bay St. Louis despite the absence of a religious house at the port. Instead, they accepted invitations from two “polite” and “worthy” gentlemen directors of the Company of the West who provided them abundant food. The governor also insisted that the sisters dine
with him. The reverend mother referred to him as a gentleman from Paris who provided
dinners of “French magnificence.” The sisters took advantage of hospitality with their
secular countrymen rather than expose themselves to a foreign sisterhood. Maintaining
their cultural norms meant seeking out environments and individuals who would succor
and support this behavior.

Father Marquette, d’Iberville and Mother Tranchepain share narratives of
constancy and self-discipline. In the face of diversity, none chose imaginative creation or
novel adaptation. Their faithful adherence to established protocol proved effective in
even surprising New World situations. They assumed they would tame the exotic and
avoid danger through active iteration of French protocols. This approach to the world
inside and outside France was accessible in the pages of the Parisian-based magazine, Le
Mercure Galant. The periodical included articles on grammar, reviews of recent
literature, and commentary on theatre, history, and philosophy as well as original poetry.
Parisian society news was presented along with, and sometimes synonymous with,
treatises on manners and morals. The contents often brought the writings of the world and
about the world within the grasp of its French readership. For example, in November
1718 the magazine included an article on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s Principles of
Metaphysics founded in Reason and a journal of a voyage around the world by an Italian
Jean Francis Gemeilli. The magazine also included reports from battlefronts,
associated obituaries, and travel accounts from places in East Asia, Africa, and America.
In this way, the magazine provided a monthly synopsis of world events, Parisian society,
and a brief summary of the reach of French authority. The pages of Le Mercure Galant
demonstrated French influence over European society and continued interest in
expanding its influence throughout the world. Colonization in these venues was not separate from the rest of French society, but an expression of it.

Like the example of Le Mercure Galant, Louisiana’s elite used French political and cultural authority to establish their approach to colonial rule and structure the nexus of power and privilege for colonial society. Power indicates who or what ultimately rules over the expression, and privilege indicates whose expression is preferentially heard and promoted by the governing powers. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu demonstrates that the process of naming human experience, or giving language “specifically symbolic efficacy in the construction of reality” is a means of ordering and privileging experience: “By structuring the perception which social agents have of the social world, the act of naming helps to establish the structure of the world, and does so all the more significantly the more widely it is recognized, i.e. authorized.” This “authorization” takes on a double meaning in Bourdieu’s work. It not only signifies how language is privileged—authorized by the ruling powers, but how experience is authored—how experience is named and legitimated. Controlling language and access to mastery of that language, to some degree, is controlling human reality: “Speakers lacking the legitimate competence are de facto excluded from the social domains in which the competence is required, or are condemned to silence.” Yet, this becomes the suppression and silencing of experience in the space where official language is expressed. Thus, when Canadian-born, French officer De Sauvole de LaVillantray refers to the “unruliness,” “inconstancy,” “disobedience,” and “independent air” of Canadian soldiers in 1701 Mobile, these descriptions must be contextualized by de Sauvole’s privileged voice as a commander in the navy writing to cosmopolitan authorities. He has the power over the language that
defines colonial reality.

Bourdieu also demonstrates that written and spoken language is just a part of how individuals communicate their relationship to the world. A significant aspect of language is written on and communicated through the physical body. This communication becomes the means to identify groups and demonstrate their affiliation with social institutions: “All groups entrust the body, treated like a kind of memory, with their most precious possessions” xxix The body displays the individual’s “class tastes which, being the principle behind ‘choice’ of outward signs expressing social position, like clothes, but also bodily hexis or language, make all social agents the carriers of distinctive signs.” It is the “productive force” of expression where individuals use their experience in the world. Bourdieu demonstrates that individual experience becomes a communication within the larger society: how individual’s separate and distinguish their experience of the world from others: these signs are “capable of uniting and separating people as surely as explicit prohibitions and barriers.”xxx Bourdieu describes how this communication represents itself as a means of creating distinctions among groups of people

More convincingly than the external signs which adorn the body (like decorations, uniforms, army stripes, insignia, etc.), the incorporated signs (such as manners, ways of speaking—accents—, ways of walking or standing—gait, posture, bearing—, table manners, etc. and taste) which underlie the production of all practices aimed, intentionally or not, both at signifying and at signifying social position through the interplay of distinctive differences, are destined to function as so many calls to order, by virtue of which those who might have forgotten (or forgotten themselves) are reminded of the position assigned to them by the institution.xxxi

Key to Bourdieu’s analysis is the individual investment in these institutional allegiances and the acknowledgement that “incorporated signs” communicates experience. Essential
to understanding how experience was privileged in New Orleans is understanding how “external” and “incorporated signs” were disciplined in the colony.

Louis XIV’s policies imposed a great deal on the public and private lives of his subjects. He spent most of his reign at war, marshalling individuals and resources to fight his battles that left few in his realm unaffected by his actions. He began a campaign for moral reform that influenced the urban renewal of Paris and empowered religious orders and a civic police force to discipline his subjects. Through court patronage, Louis sought to control French society by privileging certain storytellers and artists and scrutinizing their productions. The court at Versailles became an active representation of the king’s will through choreographed spectacles that included the participation of the nobility. Decorated with emblems of patronage, nobles were walking advertisements for their position in society because the monarch ultimately silenced or dominated their public voices. Louis successfully inhabited his court rituals and effectively turned his nobles into symbols of his power. He did this by convincing the nobility that his favor and acceptance was contingent on conformity to his whims: he insisted that they internalize his ideals and embody his aesthetic: discipline in thought, word, and deed. Consequently, France under Louis XIV was affected by this culture of active and disciplined representation of authority. Visual representations were vital to defining group identity and representing protest. Understanding how individuals saw themselves, their place in society, and their relationship to the king is essential to understanding how they worked to define themselves in the New World and determine their behavior in America.
French elites approached colonization of Louisiana as ambassadors of a French society they considered the most sophisticated and powerful in the World. Anthropologist Martin Sökefeld describes this as a process of deploying self: “this conceptualization of the self has to be developed from heightened attention to the human capacity and necessity for action. An inevitable premise means that there is no culture (or identity) acting for them or uncontradictably prescribing which mode of behavior must be chosen in any situation.”xxxiv Thus, as part of the moving into the novel environment of the Gulf Coast, colonists had to create themselves through language. The language colonial elites used promoted France’s supremacy. They projected their mastery of French norms and values into their colonization plans while relying on past military and diplomatic successes to secure Louisiana. Like the structure of Le Mercure and the narratives of explorers, elites assumed that their mastery of the French social norms would facilitate their mastery of any novel or foreign experiences in America.

However, Bourdieu argues symbolic power is strengthened by reception as well as production. Therefore, French society remained a vital symbol of power as long as its subjects remained committed to France as a great symbol of power. Conversely, its power lessened when its audience no longer acknowledged its influence. These points are important because the evidence indicates that the French court’s protocols were vital to anchoring their identities of many newly arrived French in Louisiana from 1699 to 1722. However, in significant ways, rigid adherence to French norms was anachronistic in Louisiana by 1743. Moreover, Native Americans and Africans, in particular, were unimpressed by the French court’s symbolic presence: they had no ready-to-hand experience with the Court’s rule or the majesty of Louis XIV’s hegemony. Many of the
Europeans forced to America’s shores had little to lose by releasing their loyalty to France entirely in favor of New World allegiances and cultural productions.

Yet, for the elite to release their investment in French society and actually claim New World authority for themselves would have unmoored these individuals from the rest of their social investments. In New Orleans they sought to equate themselves with naturalized aristocrats and social superiors. Their social standing was predicated on the vitality of French political and social ascendance. Therefore, their loyalty to the court of France was necessary to maintain the structure of their colonial lives. Maintaining this structure in colonial Louisiana was a constant and vigorous proposition. Colonial elites not only had to discipline themselves and dress, eat, walk, entertain, live, and marry in very prescribed ways, but they also had to discipline those below them through laws governing how other people dressed, ate, walked, entertained, lived, and married.

Colonial elites also had to transport themselves and the culture of discipline across the Atlantic to the New World.

Recent historiography demonstrates that colonizing was not just a matter of communicating between home country and colony: center and periphery. The Atlantic World was a society of its own. The term Atlantic World is often used to describe trans-Atlantic diplomacy and the demography of conquest, colonization and settlement. Leslie Choquette and Kenneth Banks are two historians who have analyzed the plans and processes of French overseas empires. Choquette demonstrates how France’s approach to empire and funding colonies developed and affected colonization on the ground. In a recent work she analyzes how France’s colonial governing policies changed over time: "By the beginning of the seventeenth century, a viable organization had developed, which
prevailed until Louis XIV chose to increase the level of state intervention in this, as in so many other, spheres of French life. \textsuperscript{xxxv} Kenneth Banks provides assessment of how French trade relations adapted to local circumstances:

In France, financiers close to the Court prized the tax-farming or customs-reducing rights that each company enjoyed, while in West Africa, pressure from local rulers and long-standing trade traditions forced company directors-general to adopt the kind of governance usually accorded to proprietary companies, including full autonomy in negotiating local treaties, raising armies, holding land titles, and legislating new social orders. \textsuperscript{xxxvi}

Together, Choquette and Banks reveal how administrators and colonists translated the French crown’s pretensions in their negotiations. Both historians provide vital analysis of how colonial diplomats adapted, or were forced to adapt, metropolitan policies to local circumstances during Louis XIV’s long reign.

Yet, the Atlantic World was also a place where individuals interacted with one another in the environment of the Atlantic waterways. Bernard Bailyn’s work, particularly his 2005, \textit{Atlantic History: Concept and Contours}, reveals how the Atlantic World became a place of networks and economic negotiation among several groups who would have fewer opportunities on land, particularly Jews and Huguenots, Quakers and Puritans. \textsuperscript{xxxvii} Analysis of pirates by historians such as Marcus Rediker and Kenneth Kinkor reveals how sea travel provided a sense of possibility and freedom for disenfranchised individuals, including Africans. \textsuperscript{xxxviii} Published diaries have also detailed life on the seas. These include Robert Durand’s 1731 trip on the \textit{Diligent} published by Robert Harms in 2002, and Diana and Michael Preston’s \textit{A Pirate of Exquisite Mind: Explorer, Naturalist, and Buccaneer: The Life of William Dampier}. \textsuperscript{xxix} Together, these authors demonstrate that the Atlantic World was not just a means to achieving ports of call, but was an end in itself: a political, social and an economic milieu all its own. From
this perspective, the vitality of the Atlantic World becomes another challenge to transplanting France’s cultural cachet to America.

The development of Atlantic World historiography adds another dimension to how American colonization affected European society. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra’s *How to Write a History of the New World* investigates, in part, how the accounts of the New World were critiqued and essentially re-written by European intellectuals to conform to the expectations of those who had not traveled or experienced trans-Atlantic contact. For example, Cañizares-Esguerra argues that Cornelius de Pauw (1734-1799) “set out to prove that peoples who lived under extreme climatic conditions were degenerate beings. De Pauw was convinced that Laplanders, African blacks, and Native Americans lived in regions of the world that had caused dramatic changes in their bodies and souls, making them unfit for civilization.” He rewrote first-hand accounts from America to conform to these presumptions. De Pauw and others assumed they could master the experience vicariously. Yet, the very process by which intellectuals, like De Pauw, engaged with these journals, appropriated the text, and transformed them into narratives that conformed with their understanding of the world is similar to the magazine *Le Mercure*’s organization. These individuals chose to remain opaque to the possibility of new and unfamiliar phenomena reported in these journals. Instead, they excised the novel descriptions so the narratives conformed to European aesthetic and intellectual standards making them a part of rather than foreign to their experience.

Through the questioning of the long-held assumptions of historical interpretation, as Cañizares-Esguerra has done, well-used sources can be re-read using new questions. In *Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, David Eltis challenges the long held conclusion
that American slavery was a novel condition developed and propelled by the economics of the sugar trade. He demonstrates how African slavery was not, in fact, an invention or innovation of the Atlantic World, but a re-imagining of European slavery for the Americas that had real and tangible effects on the meaning of slavery and freedom for populations on both sides of the Atlantic. Furthermore, he demonstrates the complexity of the slave trade in Africa. Europeans never broke open, infiltrated, or dominated trade networks in Africa. Successful or lucrative trade along the circum-Atlantic was never guaranteed, but carefully negotiated by involved parties throughout the colonial era.

Reassessing sources in light of new analytical tools has changed the historiography of Louis XIV as well. Historians like Colin Jones have rejected earlier trends to focus on the weaknesses of the eighteenth century to explain the causal chain toward revolution. Instead, Jones proceeds on the assumption that although the causes of 1789 constitute an important historical question, there are other issues about eighteenth-century France which also deserve to be taken seriously and given due attention. Many of these (the continuing power of the state, for example, France's cultural and intellectual hegemony, its economic force, the roots of national identity) were grounded in France's acknowledged strengths over this period--rather than those weaknesses that directly influenced the outbreak of the Revolution.

Central to this theoretical analysis is examining the effect of the French crown and its diplomacy on the lives of its subjects. Revising earlier Annaliste claims that the Crown had little influence on the majority of his subjects, historians like Thomas Keiser demonstrate that Louis XIV was interested in his public perception and that the public was likewise conscious and attentive to the effects of the Crown’s activities on their lives. Historians like Ronald Mousnier, Jay Smith, Sharon Kettering, and Sara Chapman have demonstrated that much of Louis XIV’s cultural power rested in the
negotiations within complex and far-reaching networks of patronage. These networks were essential in implementing his policies, but even more so in retrieving information about the realm outside his immediate purview, or as Sara Chapman argues, “In the essence of a truly efficient state bureaucracy, these informal patron-client networks served as the primary conduit for political power.”xliii Thus, Louis XIV was a powerful monarch who, nonetheless, garnered support through a careful balancing of rights and privileges with the aristocracy. Similar to Bourdieu, these historians recognize that Louis XIV’s authority depended on the investment of the governed.

Colonial history is a particularly controversial era of reexamination because so many Americans continue to base much of their public discourse on the stability of our national origins. As discourse analyst Livia Polanyi demonstrates, many if not most of our “American Stories” are grounded in the principles outlined in the first lines of The Declaration of Independence: All men are created equal. “The Story of America is, very largely a prolonged, complex, and sometimes tragic exegesis of those few lines.” xliv I understand these “American Stories” as an aspect of how historical narratives are conceived and constructed. By arguing for the relevance of French culture in America’s development, I am critiquing ‘American Stories’ in three significant ways. First, I argue that French precedents were not just a pretext for Louisiana society, but an aspect of its foundation and persistent presence in its formative years. This theoretical choice follows trends of the internationalization of American history that challenges the exceptionalism of America and places it instead within a global context.xlv Second, internationalizing American history means understanding African slavery in America as part of African Diaspora studies following historians like Robin D.G Kelley and Tiffany Ruby Patterson.
They write “racial capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism—the processes that created the current African Diaspora—shaped African culture(s) while transforming Western culture itself.” xlvi This means in part, challenging ideas of skin color as the primary racial categorization. Unlike most Caribbean, Central American and South American cultures, North American narratives on race have traditionally broken skin color into white and black. xlvii Therefore, particular attention has to be paid to how terms such as race and ideas of skin color are employed in sources from colonial Louisiana. Moreover, I take seriously French ideas of race as important to understanding the definition of power and privilege in colonial New Orleans. Finally, Bourdieu argues that cultural power becomes manifest because of individual investment: “the language of authority never governs without the collaboration of those it governs.” xlviii Thus, the role of the individual is essential in understanding how cultural power is created, sustained and challenged. Roger Chartier summarizes this position in changes to historiography in the 1990s as historians “worked to restore the role of individuals in the construction of social bonds. This move led to several fundamental shifts: from structures to networks, from systems to positions to lived situations, from collective norms to individual strategies.” xlix Moreover, Chartier goes on to argue that, “individuals use alliances and confrontations to produce a social world through the ties of dependency that link them and set them apart.” l The networks in New Orleans and Louisiana provide a particularly vital means of understanding colonial society. This is a critical course of inquiry for Louisiana where French networks of patronage and kinship regulated much of the power in society. In America, Native Americans also relied on kinship networks to regulate trade and diplomacy throughout
the Americas. Including these aspects of Louisiana’s culture in America’s development adds new depth to ‘American Stories.’

American history has treated Louisiana as marginal to the United States’ development: an aberration in the American Story. As Daniel Usner argues "Simplistic notions about the region's past, however, persist in American popular and literary culture, still threatening to marginalize the history of early Louisiana and minimize its importance in American history." By challenging the tenets of the American Story, Louisiana’s settlement becomes an important contribution to North American development under colonial rule. By arguing for the vitality of French social norms in the cultural foundations of Louisiana, I am arguing that the region’s development had international not just local implications. French and Canadian immigrants did not think they were just local explorers, but assumed they were ambassadors of the most powerful nation on earth. They inserted that assumption in nearly every aspect of their colonial plans. New Orleans’s street design, the **Coutume de Paris** legal statutes enforced on its streets, and the efforts to maintain the symbols of social privilege are a few of the ways Louis XIV’s social norms were present on the Mississippi. Furthermore, looking closely at the importance of networks as the primary diplomatic, social, and political vehicle in Louisiana creates a more complex but revealing picture of how cultural power was developed and deployed in the colony—a picture that is not white versus black, or French versus Canadian, or even Native American versus European. It demonstrates how individuals navigated the changing colonial reality within their understanding of friends, neighbors and allies that rarely fit into neat social categories. The French had particularly complex and nuanced ideas about race and social hierarchy that conflict with standard
American racial categories of black and white. Understanding how French cultural definitions interacted with Native Americans and Africans in Louisiana changes how power, privilege and race relations were defined in colonial America.

All recent studies of colonial Louisiana are indebted to two pivotal works published in 1992: Daniel Usner’s 1992 *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall’s *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. While historian Marcel Giraud wrote valuable histories of Louisiana, and others have detailed particular aspects of the colony’s history, Usner and Hall were the first to bring the previously marginalized voices of Native Americans and African Americans into the mainstream narrative of colonial Louisiana’s development. Usner demonstrates that French colonists neither imposed an economy on the lower Mississippi nor mandated the terms of Louisiana’s economic survival. He demonstrates how metropolitan planning efforts were forced to adapt to colonial realities largely dependent on Native Americans and Africans. “Indians, slaves, and settlers forged a network of cross-cultural interaction that routinely brought individuals into small-scale, face-to-face episodes of exchange,” where “inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley pieced subsistence and commercial endeavors together into a patchwork of farming, herding, hunting, gathering, trade and transportation activities.” He establishes that the economy of the lower Mississippi Valley was deeply invested in trade with Native Americans and dependent on the skills of indigenous allies and slaves. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall also demonstrates the active and vital role of African knowledge in the development and success of Louisiana’s colonial culture. Rice and indigo production would not have been
possible without the knowledge of slaves from Juda [Whydah] and Senegambia.\textsuperscript{lv}

Furthermore, she argues that West African culture facilitated the development of an Afro-Creole culture among the colonial slaves that stabilized and strengthened identity among the Louisiana’s African population. Hall concludes that Afro-Creole culture created the kinship ties that provided the basis for slave resistance, negotiated alliances with Native-Americans, and the “unusually cohesive and heavily Africanized culture in lower Louisiana.”\textsuperscript{lv} Together, Usner and Hall established that no history of colonial Louisiana could ignore the pivotal role Africans and Native Americans played in the region’s development.

Subsequent studies of colonial Louisiana have sought to broaden and deepen the implications of Louisiana’s diffuse and variegated power structure on various aspects of the colony’s society. Guillaume Aubert argues that “racial conceptualizations” over cultural difference “crystallized in the peculiar frontier context of eighteenth century Louisiana.”\textsuperscript{lvii} Jennifer Spear also addresses this process of legally codifying racial categories through marriage and reproduction.\textsuperscript{lvii} Emily Clark demonstrates how the Ursuline Nuns exerted considerable power over public policy through private lives of early New Orleans’s wives and influenced gender and race relations throughout the city’s history.\textsuperscript{lviii} Finally, Shannon Lee Dawdy analyzes and contextualizes the historical characterization of New Orleans and Louisiana as “disorderly.”\textsuperscript{lix} These historians seek to demonstrate how Louisiana’s “peculiar” and deceptive culture contributed to the development of colonial America.

Jennifer Spear’s work argues that bodies became the locus of colonial power: the preeminent site of discipline and rebellion. While I argue that elites sought to maintain
their own social status by attempting to discipline the diverse underclass in the first few decades of settlement, she looks at a much longer interval to argue that a “colonial hegemony” became tenable only after racial codification in America. By focusing on marriage and reproduction, Spear argues that Louisiana’s governing elites engaged in “a process of racial formation” in order to assign individuals to particular “social roles.” The process of assigning “social roles” became synonymous with policing sexuality. Colonial officials “relied upon sexuality both to mark racialized identities and to police the boundaries of those identities.” The production of interracial children is proof that colonists defied legal prohibitions. These “mixed-race” colonists also necessitated continuing and evolving strategies to control and contain such liaisons. Spear further argues for a culture of covert racial mixing over Louisiana’s colonial history that undermined the development of any hegemony.

Guillaume Aubert analyzes French cultural precedents for an understanding of racialized slavery’s development in Louisiana. With careful examination of French sources and Caribbean antecedents, Aubert argues that economic and political needs accelerated the “crystallization” of racialized society in Louisiana. He argues that French authorities made Louisiana social policy along racial lines that clearly delineated among European, African and Native Americans. I read much more ambiguity in how relations manifested on the ground. I assert that the lower order Europeans were often less valued than Africans, and were treated accordingly by employers. Favoring African skills often played against criticism and accelerated attrition of European workers from New Orleans and Louisiana. Consequently, for Africans and Native Americans to occupy the lowest order in Louisiana’s culture, Europeans had to have some intrinsic social superiority. No
such culture of white privilege—preferences based solely on European birth—developed in the colony in its first four decades.

Emily Clark’s work on the Ursuline nuns argues for the considerable Ursuline influence on gender and race relations in early New Orleans. Religious and social networking brought the nuns and the women of New Orleans into contact with one another, creating opportunities for personal and spiritual succor. Clark argues that through nuns’ educational efforts, African, and Native American women of New Orleans were provided tools to establish and assert more independence and equality within colonial society. All of these activities were incubated within the Ursuline cloister largely hidden from male oversight and interference. My emphasis on kinship and patronage networks among elite families conflicts with Clark’s claims of Ursuline autonomy. I argue that many of the Ursuline nuns were too dependent on preserving patronage outside the convent to truly insulate them within. Arriving in Louisiana with family stipends, these women were invested in social status and the networks necessary to sustain their standard of living in America. They needed monetary and social patrons in New Orleans that necessarily intertwined them with the larger community. Their success necessarily mediated public responsibilities and cloistered security.

Shannon Lee Dawdy’s dissertation argues that contemporaries perceived and described Louisiana as chaotic and disorderly because it was a society of invention and self-fashioning that belied European design. She concludes that the culture of New Orleans was “prone to rule-breakers or undomesticated travelers, independent minded and imaginative in their strategies for survival.” I argue that the discursive use of “disorder” by colonial elites must be read in the context of French precedents. “Disorder”
refers to activities that intentionally and unintentionally defied French social norms. Thus, disorder is in fact a very telling description of how colonial society was ordered in opposition to or within tension with the French Crown’s very specific iteration of cultural discipline.

In general, my dissertation reassesses the French cultural influence on the colony using recent studies of France and the Atlantic World. I seek to move past descriptions of French leadership in Louisiana as “chaos” and Louisiana as “deprived and isolated” and understand how these individuals did organize their world and understand their place in the colonization of North America. I study a relatively short period compared with these other authors because these pivotal decades reveal how the French norms became the preexisting condition on which colonization was premised. These precedents remained a powerful force organizing how many colonists understood their place both in Louisiana’s developing society and in relationship to French society on the continent.

I approached well-known and oft-used sources with this new perspective. These sources include the Mississippi Provincial Archives (MPA), the microfilmed G-1 and C-13 series of colonial correspondence from the Archives Nationales, Paris, and the translated and transcribed records of the Louisiana Historical Quarterly and the Proceedings of the meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society. Additionally, I accessed the microfilmed records of the Ursuline convent available at the Historic New Orleans Collection along with its extensive collection of diplomatic correspondence relating to the Company of the West and the Company of the Indies. I also used the published travel accounts from Louisiana colonists. As correspondence, I read these documents as communicating needs and expectations in a political atmosphere that
discouraged candid and forthright disclosure. Bourdieu refers to this as the “imposition of form” in official discourse. He cautions that this is formal, but not official: “The metaphor of censorship should not mislead: it is the structure of the field itself which governs expression by governing both access to expression and the form or expression, and not some legal proceeding which has been specially adopted to designate and repress the transgression of a kind of linguistic code.” Ibrahima Seck faced a similar concern when assessing the content of ‘official’ records of the slave trade: “It should be remembered that official records of purchases and accounts are misleading because India Company officials obscured their records to hide graft. Moreover, the eighteenth-century slave was considered a strategic product whose volume was not to be revealed because of the maritime warfare waged to control the source of valuable slaves.” Similarly, descriptions of Louisiana, census records, ships’ manifests and correspondence have to be read as political tools to affect a response from the recipient rather than an accurate account of reality. As discourse, however, these documents provide valuable insight into the Crown’s and colonists’ expectations of Louisiana and each other. Understanding the political context of these documents illuminates the strong and persistent attachment of the colony’s elite members and to French cultural authority.

The original notarial acts of colonial New Orleans reveal how the mundane legal proceedings compare to the expectations of the political correspondence. They allow an analysis of daily reality in Louisiana. While the Louisiana Cabidilo Judicial Records (LCJR) provide a wealth of notarial acts, the Notarial Archives Research Center (NARC) has many colonial documents that have been underutilized by historians. While the Cabadilo records often include the wills of prominent Louisiana residents, the NARC has
many acts pertaining to the transfer of property in and around New Orleans. These acts provide physical descriptions of the property and lot locations that provide a more candid glimpse of who lived in the city and how the Superior Council managed building codes in the nascent capital. Moreover, the NARC houses several acts describing wills and property transfers of lesser-known residents and provides detail of death, succession, property management, and family relations. These documents demonstrate that average residents in New Orleans relied on and sought out the consistent rule of law to buy and sell, contract and pay debts, and otherwise use public documents to manage their affairs. The notarial documents include contracts by free Africans, literate and illiterate men and women, and a nun, as well as Superior Council members, military officers, and members of New Orleans’s elite. While these records alone cannot mitigate accusations of chaos and disorder in Louisiana, they indicate aspects of Louisiana’s social structure that were predictable, stable, and accessible to the majority of its residents even in the earliest years of settlement.

Carl Brasseaux and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall’s census databases have greatly enhanced researchers’ ability to track information about individuals in Louisiana’s history. Collating census data, baptismal records, and in many cases, genealogical data, these CDs contain valuable information from various archives in a format that is easy to use and search. They also provide another means of cross-checking spelling variations, family relationships, and individual occupations with archival materials and the earlier compiled translations by Glenn Conrad, Winston DeVille, and Charles Maduell. The preponderance of spelling variations, along with aliases (dit: called, or
known as) in colonial Louisiana’s archival sources—particularly the notarial documents—is mitigated by Hall, Brasseaux and their predecessors.

The individual chapters in this dissertation demonstrate how French precedents influenced the formation of Louisiana society. I assert that many of the colony’s elite used French court precedent to structure their lives and enforce discipline on many aspects of the colony’s society. In the first chapter I examine French and Canadian family networks in Louisiana and how they used their family connections to secure their lives in New Orleans. In the second and third chapters, I argue that French precedents structured the geography of New Orleans and provided the moral laws enforced on its streets. In these respects, the Crown’s policies facilitated elite Louisiana colonists’ control over much of the financial and political resources in the colony. Remaining dedicated to reproducing French social standards also had unintended consequences. As the fourth and fifth chapters demonstrate, elites focused on reproducing French standards rather than adapting to the colonial realities of Louisiana. In general, these Euro-centric activities isolated the elite from the rest of colonial society and engendered cooperation among the colony’s majority of lower-order Europeans, Africans and Native Americans. In sum, France’s social norms were influential in forming Louisiana’s society. In significant areas, French precedent grounded elite social and financial influence in the colony, and in other areas, it unintentionally facilitated the cultural productivity of a heterogeneous underclass.

The first chapter argues that Louisiana developed under particular diplomatic circumstances that heightened the importance of patronage networks to its founding elites. Before his death, Louis XIV worked diligently to garner support and dispense
patronage to heighten loyalty to his increasingly unpopular mandates. Even after his death, the men and women who arrived in Louisiana from France and Canada were deeply invested and dependent on social networks that shared collective expression of language, ritual, and symbolic power. These networks and the conservation of resources within them was perhaps the most effective colonizing asset the French possessed in America.

The second and third chapters examine how Crown authority laid the foundations for colonial society through urban planning and moral policing in New Orleans. This was not just about claiming the land for the Crown, building forts, and planting flags. It was about recreating a French social discipline. The second chapter examines the founding of New Orleans in light of urban planning techniques initiated under Louis XIV and his efforts to equate urban renewal and moral reform in the streets of Paris. The layout of the town’s neighborhoods and government buildings also reflects cultural investment in symbols of power. Chapter Three demonstrates that maintaining the moral authority of Louis XIV’s France was essential to affirming elite status in Louisiana. Through establishing and maintaining the morals of the city, elites could both define power and privilege over the public and private lives of the colonists and use that authority to bolster their own status.

Chapter Four argues that the French did not consider skin color a determining factor in an individual’s social status and based their treatment of Africans on established norms for peasants and other lower-order Europeans. Landholders, employers and military officers sought to add Africans to the productive but dependant order of society to secure elite status and its associated wealth and success in Louisiana. As Africans
joined nearly every productive part of the colony—skilled and unskilled labor, the military, merchant negotiation, river navigation, and others—they shared abominable living and working conditions with Europeans and Native Americans.

Chapter Five concludes by examining how the multicultural majority developed cooperative and creative marketplace of exchange and engagement. Beginning with the Atlantic crossing and their first encounters in the New World, the lower orders had irrepressible productive power over the health of elite status. As the years progressed, adherence to French court standards were challenged by competing displays—often mocking French court standards—by an increasingly heterogeneous majority that eschewed European culture in favor of American-generated alternatives. These novel creations eventually overshadowed French precedents in America.

Revisiting the role of French social norms in Louisiana history is one means of understanding how colonial Louisiana began as a society where Old World symbols of power and privilege were obviously displayed, but over time the source of that power and privilege was increasingly invested in New World resources. The French court protocols helped ground Louisiana in a French tradition, but it also facilitated the development of an American society. As the elite appeared loyal to a strictly defined French monarchical structure, they sought out economic and social opportunities in America that would be unthinkable in France. In the process of relying on European standards, they created a new world of opportunity that eventually cut them free from their Old World anchors.

By 1699, the military power of Louis XIV was on the wane, but the cultural cachet of his rule was still transcendent in Europe. When the majority of Louisiana’s colonists arrived on the Gulf Coast after 1718, John Law and the Regency maintained much of the
monarchical and social superiority to maintain their security overseas. This dissertation ends in 1743 when Louis XV dismantled the patronage networks which had been largely untouched since Louis XIV’s death. Yet, by the 1740s, France’s cultural ascendance was giving way to the English Enlightenment. As Frédéric Ogée writes, in 1734, "Voltaire was one of the first continental intellectuals to register and publicize the progress of enlightenment (or vice versa) across the Channel, and to reveal the amazing strides forward which England and already made ahead of the rest of its neighbors." By the middle of the century, the terms of cultural discourse were irrevocably changing. The standards set by the French court were eclipsed. By the 1740s, classic society gave way to modernity. As Jeffrey Hopes summarizes: "The whole issue of taste is bound up with the debate between the ancients and the moderns which began in the late seventeenth century but which had lost its virulence by the 1740s.” He also writes, “The modernists' successors would be more inclined to highlight the cultural, national, even individual specificity of artistic evaluation, to stress the impact of historical contingency or subjective interpretation." By the 1740s, it was not just New World experience that eclipsed the French Crown in Louisiana; as Louisiana’s residual ties to French political and cultural sovereignty were challenged by the vitality of Native American, African, and lower-order European alternatives, the power of the French Crown was no longer vital enough to sustain its colonists in Louisiana.
Endnotes


ii Mathé Allain, "Not Worth a Straw": French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1988), 28: "There was one way in which Colbert deliberately strove to create a new society, and that was in urging the intermarriage of French and natives. This policy was pursued in all settlement colonies. The charter of the East India Company specified that in Madagascar the children born to a French subject, male or female, and a native convert would be French citizens. Richelieu had formulated the doctrine that baptized natives would be French citizens."

iii M. Cary and E.H. Warmington, Ancient Explorers, (Baltimore: Pelican Books 1963 [1929]), 233-245; Jerry Brotton, Trading Territories, Mapping in the Early Modern World (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 87; http://www.al-bab.com/arab/literature/nights.htm : "The first written compilation of the stories was made in Iraq in the 10th century by al-Jahshiyari who added tales from local storytellers to an old Persian work, Hazar Afsana ("thousand tales"), which in turn contained some stories of Indian origin. The "frame" story, in which Sharazad saves herself from execution at the hands of King Shahrayar with her endless supply of tales was borrowed from the Persian Afsana but probably originated in India. A similar device, which may also come ultimately from India, is found in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and Boccaccio's Decameron."


v Marquette, “Narrative of Father Marquette,” 44.

vi Marquette, “Narrative of Father Marquette,” 11: Charles Balesi describes the meaning of petroglyphs Marquette and Joliet encountered on cliffs near present-day Alton, Illinois: They were “the “Piasa monsters. The Piasa (or Piesa), an Illinois word meaning man-devouring bird: ‘a fabulous animal of the Indian mythology which is supposed to be the Thunderbird,’ the guardian of the passage to the South.” The paintings clearly marked the beginning of the Piasa’s domain.

vii Marquette, “Narrative of Father Marquette,” 41-42.

viii Marquette, “Narrative of Father Marquette,” 42.

ix Marquette, “Narrative of Father Marquette,” 25.


xi Membrè, 173-174.

xii French, B.F. ed., trans., "Historical journal; or, Narrative of the expeditions made by order of His Majesty Louis XIV, king of France, to colonize Louisiana, under the command of M. Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville, governor general; including an account of his explorations of the Col bert or Mississippi River, from its mouth to the Natchez nation; of the physical features of the country; and of the manners and customs of the numerous Indian tribes he visited. Tr., and printed for the first time, from a copy of the original manuscript deposited in the office of the "Ministère de Lamarine et des colonies," in Historical collections of Louisiana and Florida, including translations of original manuscripts relating to their discovery and settlement, with numerous historical and biographical notes, Second Series: Historical Memoirs and Narratives, 1527-1702 (New York: Albert Mason, 1875), 57-71, 98. This was almost certainly not penned by d’Iberville himself but likely one of his crew, possibly Jesuit Paul Du Ru.


The alliance between Jansenism and the parlement of Paris, facilitated enormously by Unigenitus’s violence to the parlement’s Gallican susceptibilities, resulted in the pooling of their respective grievances and the reinforcement of both. The Jansensists, for their part, placed themselves in the service of the robe and its causes, such as whittling away at the clergy’s ‘spiritual’ jurisdiction, and several among them, especially Adrien Le Paige, significantly developed the parlement’s conception of the French constitution, which pitted them, the depositaries of the fundamental laws of the realm, against the menace of royal despotism.


"Journal depuis 1726 jusqu'en 1853" Archive of the Ursuline Nuns of the Parish of New Orleans in Reel 15 of 19 HNOC.

I use the *Mercure* as a means of understanding French popular culture because most authors agree it was a significant and widely read periodical. However, whether the periodical reflected Crown protocols or was a product of public opinion and dissent from the Crown is up for debate. Joan De Jean argues that the periodical was at the center of the “culture wars” at the end of the eighteenth century. François Moureau argues that the first editor Donneau de Visé was a propagandist for the Louis XIV and used *Le Mercure* as mouth piece of his court aesthetic. Charles Riviére Dufresny, editor from 1710-1714 was closely tied to Louis XIV’s court patronage. Thus, I argue that it may or may not have become a vehicle for dissent, or a public venue for debate; however, it certainly was an important publication allied closely to the culture of Louis XIV’s court. Joan DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin De Siècle* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 12: “Then, as now, these new readers moved from issues of culture to issues of judgment. Thus, by producing communities of readers who feel empowered to judge together, Culture Wars in effect generate a public sphere. In late-seventeenth century France, this process was centered around early periodicals such as *Le Mercure Galant.*” François Moureau, *Le Mercure Galant De Dufresny (1710-1714) Ou Le Journalisme À LaMode*, ed. Haydn Mason, vol. 206, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, at the Taylor Institution, 1982), 7: The century of Louis XIV was reflected there with compliance; and Donneau de Visé was one of the most efficacious make-up artists of the monarchy.” Édouard Fanniè, "Charles Riviére Dufresny," *The Modern Language Review* 6, no. 3 (1911), 335: "The young DuFresny was presented to the court by the marquis de Nangis, and was immediately named a manservant of Louis XIV. He shared this honor with Molière. The duties attached to the title often put the two cousins in contact with the king who took a liking to him…The king was quickly charmed by the spirit and promptness of his young relative. Dufresny entered the path of fortune.”

*Le Mercure Galant* was available throughout France and Germany

N/A, *Le Nouveau Mercure*, November 1718.

"Roland Barthes: From Sign to Text," in *Reading Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Tilley (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 198.: "As we have learnt from Nietzsche and Foucault, truth had always been in the service of power. Power appears in the discourse as knowledge as 'rules of exclusion'; rules which distinguish the true from the untrue, reason from unreason, and determines who has the right to speak on a given subject.”


Jones, *The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon 1715-99*, xv, xvii, xv: “The renewal of cultural and intellectual history, now emphasizing more systematically the linkages with political expression. The development has sometimes been influenced by the 'Cambridge School' of political ideas. It has also shed into cultural psychology and into an analysis of discourse, which owes much to the influence of Michel Foucault.
The development of the notion of 'political culture'. Francois Furet and Keith Michael Baker have been most influential exponents in this domain, which has drawn copiously on a mixture of cultural and intellectual approaches. Political cultural is conceived of as the ensemble of political practices and languages within which politics was transacted.

Analysis of the Enlightenment in terms of a 'bourgeois' (or not) developed into one of the most influential organizing concepts from the late 1980s. It designates the socio-cultural institutional matrix within which a political culture oppositional to that of the monarchy developed over the eighteenth-century.


Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, 113.


Chartier, On the Edge of the Cliff, 15.


Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 35: "Indigo grew wild all along the rivers of Senegambia" and 59: “L'Aurore and Le Duc du Maine left St. Malo together during the summer of 1718 and picked up their ‘cargo’ at Juda...The captains were instructed to try to purchase
several blacks who knew how to cultivate rice and three or four barrels of rice for seeding.” Juda is also known as Whydah and Ouidah, west of Benin.


v Guillaume Aubert, “”Français, Nègres Et Sauvages”: Constructing Race in Colonial Louisiana” (PhD, Tulane, 2002), abstract.

vi Jennifer Spear, “”Whiteness and the Purity of Blood”: Race, Sexuality, and Social Order in Colonial Louisiana” (PhD, University of Minnesota, 1999), abstract.


ix Spear, ""Whiteness and the Purity of Blood": Race, Sexuality, and Social Order in Colonial Louisiana", v.

x Spear, ""Whiteness and the Purity of Blood", 250.


xiii Timothy Murray, "Theatrical Legitimation: Forms of Patronage and Portraiture," *PMLA* 98, no. 2 (1983). Assessing correspondence as coded political discourse. See Murray writes about patrons of the theater in seventeenth-century France and how theater critics often critiqued the patron of a production through an assessment of the stage performance,170: “Especially during the early formation of French neoclassical theater, the distinction between theater’s literary legitimation and a patron’s legalistic legitimation was often indiscernible. The endorsement of a dramatic project by a person recognized as powerful sufficed as the rationale for literary and artistic merit.”


xvii Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 113: Bourdieu’s discussion of liturgical conditions: “the set of prescriptions which govern the form of the public manifestation of authority, like ceremonial etiquette, the code of gestures and officially prescribed rites, are clearly only an element, albeit the most visible one, in a system of conditions of which the most important and indispensable are those which produce the disposition towards recognition in the sense of misrecognition and belief that is, the delegation of authority which confers its authority on authorized discourse.”

xviii Frédéric Ogée, “”Amicable Collision’: Some Thoughts on the Reality of Intellectual Exchange between Britain and France in the Enlightenment,” in *Better in France? The Circulation of Ideas across the Channel in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Frédéric Ogée, *The Bucknell Studies in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2005),19: "His 1734 *Lettres Philosophiques* (published in English a year before under the title of Lettres concerning the English Nation) is nothing less than a an apology for the Glorious Revolution of 1688, in which he identifies and praises, page after page, all the values which the Enlightenment was to cherish: religious toleration and relativity, the development of commerce, the encouragement of science and of the arts."

xix Daniel Brewer, "Language and Grammar: Diderot and the Discourse of Encyclopedism," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 13, no. 1 (1979), 7: "The necessary corollary of conflating the definitions of words and of things is that as words change so too must the ideas to which they refer. In addition, that language exists in a state of perhaps inevitable flux is a motif to which Diderot constantly returns. He sees the French
language of 1750 growing increasingly different from that of one hundred, fifty, or even ten years previous. New techniques and discoveries in the arts and sciences call for new words, which gain common acceptance slowly, and end up by changing the language completely."

CHAPTER II

ELITE SOCIAL NETWORKS IN LOUISIANA

Introduction

Family networks structured and stabilized Louisiana’s colonial enterprise in its first four decades. Relying on information and loyalty from individuals and families formed the basis of much of political life in France during Louis XIV’s reign and continued to facilitate communication and cooperation under the duc d’Orleans’s regency. Powerful colonial families also relied on their family networks to preserve and protect assets and social prestige as Louisiana faced political and economic turmoil. Understanding the significance of Louisiana’s networks is to study how Louis XIV’s changing diplomatic needs affected the founding of Louisiana in 1699 and how in the subsequent four and a half decades of colonization a complex network of social relationships depended on patronage linking Louisiana to the Crown.

Part 1: Politics of Empire

The Gulf Coast in Louis XIV’s diplomacy

Understanding the strength and efficacy of exchange networks reveals why Louisiana was founded and how it developed as a colony from 1699 to the end of Louis XIV’s patronage networks in 1743. Until that year, André-Hercule Cardinal de Fleury, Bishop of Fréjus, tutor to Louis XV and “unofficial prime minister” had done little to
change Louis XIV’s organization of the government. Consequently, until the 1740s, the networks moving information and facilitating diplomatic, economic, and social transactions inside and outside France remained largely intact. After 1743, however, Louis XV asserted his own designs on the government by exorcising many of the individuals and families who made up the administrative posts connected to the colonies. As part of this process, in July of 1743 Canadian Pierre de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil became Louisiana’s new governor. His arrival ended the extensive Le Moyne family’s tenure shaping Louisiana’s relationship with the Crown. Until their dismantling, exchange networks carried out crown desires in local areas. In turn, these individuals gained access to the seat of royal authority through favors, profitable appointments, and awarded titles. More importantly, perhaps, the networks provided the action and accountability that the government’s nascent bureaucracy could not. This guaranteed the Crown revenue, justice, and information from locations far from the halls of Versailles. The symbiotic vitality of these networks also indicates how colonists maintained communication about court culture over great distances and maintained its protocols even in remote regions.

Louis XIV relied on complex webs of personal relationships that worked nearly invisibly within his court of Versailles, stretched out into the countryside and into his protectorates throughout Europe (see Figure 2). These channels became increasingly important as the seventeenth century came to an end. The Nine Years War/League of Augsburg (1688/9-97) was a turning point in Louis’s leadership. Standing against an English throne now allied with the Dutch, Louis began a war in Europe that would extend across the North Sea to Canada and south to the Caribbean and the edges of South
America. Over the course of the war, Louis XIV turned from decisive military victories to slow battles of attrition that cost France dearly in munitions, supplies and men. Stymied and struggling on the battlefield, Louis relied increasingly on diplomatic negotiations to end the war. By 1689, it was the negotiators who secured peace, not the generals. This reality made Louis XIV’s already vital networks even more important. He needed men and women who would report to him and in return implement his goals in strategic areas. In 1689, the North American continent became more important in diplomatic relations.

In particular, Louis XIV needed more control over the activities of his American colonists. Corralling the behavior of his New World subjects would be no easy task, however. Before 1689, the culture of these sixteenth and seventeenth centuries overseas settlements was diverse and had survived by developing local networks of exchange that did not rely on contact with Europe. Individuals from distinct regional cultures within France brought a variety of languages, legal practices, religious beliefs, and economic relationships to their lives in Canada, Newfoundland, Carolina, and the islands of the Circum-Caribbean. The Crown’s chronic inattention pushed settlers into adaptive and inventive circumstances. Canadian fur traders were scattered across the Great Lakes region. Sugar and tobacco plantations existed on the northern edge of South America, and individual islands in the Lesser and Greater Antilles. The fur trade was controlled at the local level, the military was based in militias organized in individual communities, and administration was nominally given to crown appointees while actual authority was taken by private investors or individuals with the temerity and resources to secure control.
Beginning in 1670, war changed these demographics. Successive waves of attacks from Dutch and then the English ravaged the isolated French settlers on Sainte-Croix, St. Christopher, St. Martin, and Saint-Barthélémy. By 1700, the majority of French settlers were concentrated at Martinique. In the North, war with the Iroquois in the 1690s had likewise threatened independent fur traders around the Great Lakes. By 1700, colonists in New France had to reassess their definitions of friends and neighbors and strategically choose new settlement patterns.

At the dawn of the eighteenth century, Louis XIV’s authority was still peripatetic in the lives of his New World colonists. The majority of his New World subjects served their own interests rather than those of the Crown. While both ground and naval forces were supplemented from France, the Canadians enjoyed many victories largely through individual initiatives and local strategies. Local Canadian troops had certainly done their part on behalf of the French crown during the Nine Years War. Canadians provided local militias and privateering vessels commissioned to plunder English ships. These victories on land were demonstrably more impressive than at sea. Privateers, largely financed by French nobles, cared more for their personal gain than military success for the Crown. Hence, the privateers generally remained an undisciplined, uncoordinated, and ineffective force.

Unfortunately, the loss of life in the Caribbean demonstrated the vulnerability of island settlements in the absence of a reliable military presence. By 1700, the French crown sent Canadian troops south along the Gulf Coast to build and fortify a military presence facing the Caribbean at Mobile Bay. They were also ordered to position
themselves to draw fur traders south and circumvent Native American aggressors in the north.\textsuperscript{x}

The settlement at Mobile Bay coincided with the end of the Nine Years War and a change in the French crown’s approach to its American colonies. Louis XIV’s successes had come largely at the hands of shrewd diplomats and local military leaders. His failures had cost his country dearly, no more so than at the hands of profiteering investors with no sense of culpability for their gains at the Crown’s strategic expense. The War for Spanish Succession that began in 1701 heightened the need for keen eyes and ears to report news and respond to bellicose behaviors in the Americas. As part of Philippe of Anjou’s succession to the Spanish throne, Louis XIV secured French merchants a monopoly to supply slaves to the Spanish colonies. This alone angered English merchants and started war anew between the English and French and heightened the importance of the Gulf Coast and the Caribbean.

All of the elements were there to design Mobile as the last in a line of defenses along contested French and English boundaries of the Atlantic Seaboard and stretching into the Gulf Coast and the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{xi} These plans were aggressive, suggesting in 1703 that the French should burn Charleston.\textsuperscript{xii} However, the cost of war also heightened Louis XIV’s need for income as well as defensive forts. So, while soldiers were the primary inhabitants of the forts of Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, Saint-Domingue on Hispaniola, and Mobile Bay, the Crown was equally interested in nurturing the peltry trade and other potential sources of revenue in and around the Gulf region. Thus, even as Mobile came into being, its inhabitants were expected to defend the realm and fortify its coffers. The settlement of Mobile Bay reflects a bifurcated colonial policy that inserted a
belligerent military presence into a contested and volatile region while managing the emerging policy of defensive restraint and diplomatic reconnaissance in service of intensified and lucrative trade.

From 1700 to 1715, Mobile Bay managed these dicey diplomatic and economic negotiations within the context of the French empire. By 1718, the Regency reinvigorated plans for Louisiana. In many ways invoking Louis XIV’s bellicose rhetoric of the late seventeenth century, the duc de Bourbon asserted that the French should claim all of North America through its Louisiana holdings, and suggested a naval depot on Ship Island along with fortifications stretching from “from Pensacola to Bay St. Bernard.” Along with its strategic importance, he promoted the economic significance of the Mississippi River and its access to other important waterways. He wrote that the tributary Missouri River had a secondary branch that “empties itself into the South Seas. The Canadians invited in those parts would soon create establishments for a commerce with Japan and China. Such would be the importance of such a trade that the truth of these reports is worthy the attention of the government.” In addition to promised trade with New Mexico, the connection to the Far East promoted Louisiana’s financial possibilities. New Orleans became the center of these trade plans.

These promotions were similar to the promotional material promulgated by the Company of the West as it sought both investors and settlers for Louisiana. In September 1717, Le Mercure magazine published the first of three articles on Louisiana. The articles describe the land and the Native Americans along the Mississippi. The articles were detailed providing, for example, the names and purported numbers of native inhabitants in Louisiana. Yet, the articles also promoted Louisiana as fallow, fecund, and docile—
an ideal environment for habitation and investment.¹⁵ These plans were predicated on productive trade and cooperation that could expand in a contested American continent. Thus, the Regency, like Louis XIV, depended on far-reaching and efficient exchange networks facilitating the French Crown’s success in Louisiana. All parties involved in the colonizing plans for Louisiana were sensitive to the political changes and how rapidly they affected those living on the periphery of French influence.

They had precedents for managing provinces far from the center of government and assumed they could use those same tools to manage Louisiana. Governors honed the ability to maintain effective lines of communication over great distance during Louis XIV’s reign. He famously “forbade governors to reside in their provinces or to visit them without permission.”²⁶ While this alienated the governors from some aspects of provincial affairs, historian Beth Nachison argues that “family alliances, economic ties, and networks of patronage” maintained communication between provincial governors at Versailles and their localities.²⁷ Far from eclipsing the role of the aristocracy however, the network structure allowed governors “to occupy a critical space between the royal court and the local elites and could be essential linchpins in the royal administration regardless of where they resided.”²⁸ Louisiana was a greater distance from Versailles and Paris than the provinces, but the mechanisms to maintain networks of contact were already in place. Information did travel efficiently. When Jacques de La Chaise attempted to conceal his reasons for traveling to New Orleans as auditor for the Company, he found that fellow passengers discovered his secret and disseminated it before he left France: "On the eight of last April we arrived at Ship Island where in spite of the precautions that we had taken to render our arrival at New Orleans secret we saw that several passengers
who were with us knew the reason for it, some saying that they had learned them at Paris, others that they had learned them from the clerks of the Directors' office at Lorient."xix

Networks of communication were designed to facilitate just this sort of information transfer.

Transplanting the social networks was not easy however. They not only included family members, but were intertwined with cultural institutions as well as political offices and administrators. They all interacted in prescribed meetings that ordered their calendars and activities. Consequently, not only were government and military officials required but so were clerics favored by the Louis XIV’s particular definition of the counter-reformation church.xx Networks involved men and women, children and servants. Women were essential to organizing and maintaining social bonds, and children were strategic pawns for cementing kinship networks as inheritors and marriage partners. Servants were also essential to maintaining and displaying status.

Politics of Social Prestige

Patronage networks were not only a diplomatic tool and social necessity in Louisiana, but many investors in the Company of the West in 1717 relied on them to manage their land concessions. Some of the wealthiest and most influential families in France invested in Louisiana. They also transplanted employees and family members from urban France to the lower Mississippi.xx The Le Blancs, de Koli, Hubert, Benard de La Harpe, de Mouse, de St. Relno, Diron d'Artaguette, Paris Duvernay, de Muys, Marquis d'Artagnac, de Villemont, Madame de Cheautpont, Madame de Mézleros, M. de a Houssayo, and Marquis d'Anconis, invested Old World money in Louisiana. Jean-
Baptiste de Chavannes, Alexandre Viel, Claude Joseph Dubreuil moved from France to Louisiana. Likewise, administrators like de La Chaise, Bruslé, Périer, Fleuriau, and d‘Ausseville brought family members to live in and around New Orleans.xxii

From Canada came the Le Moynes, the de Mandevilles, the Chauvins, du Manoirs, du Tisnes, and many others. The majority of these families tied together through military connections and marriages to the Le Moynes. The men of these networks generally remained active military officers after their arrival in Louisiana. However, most also invested in trade or agricultural production once they arrived on the coast. By the mid-1720s, these families came together in New Orleans to stage their exchange networks.xxiii

The Crown and investors needed networks to manage affairs in Louisiana. Yet, the individuals who landed in Louisiana also needed the Crown. Their desire to maintain patronage in America influenced their decisions and dictated their actions. More than economic success, they sought to maintain or improve their social positions. This enterprise meant they not only had to fill their coffers, but maintain a public image and reputation to reassure themselves that their loyalty, creditability, and birthrights were intact despite the distance from Versailles.

Immigration by French elites exposed them to what the perceived as the chaos of Atlantic and New World societies. Yet, they mitigated the separation anxiety caused by immigration with investment opportunities offered in the New World. While France’s economy worsened by the early eighteenth century, several families had achieved relative affluence and respectability in the American fur and sugar trade respectively.xxiv While the economies in France suffered in the seventeenth century, circum-Atlantic trade remained an alluring investment.xxv The New World seemed to have the economic
opportunities France lacked. Moreover, while aristocratic families clamored for the scraps of court-appointed positions and offices within France, the Gulf Coast settlements opened new opportunities to fill nominally prestigious seats and titles. Thus, individuals and families undoubtedly weighed the risk of remaining in the ever-tightening and increasingly competitive social networks in urban France against the real and perceived perils of life in the New World.

Many colonists held on dearly to their social protocols and worked diligently to recreate the institutions they considered essential to civilized life. First and foremost, as Jay Smith, Christine Daniels, Sara Chapman, Sharon Kettering and others have argued, social structure in urban trade centers of Old Regime France was precarious. Moving up was increasingly difficult and losing status was perilously latent. As Christine Adams argues, in eighteenth-century French culture, individuals defined their social position, or état “through a variety of modes, both internal and external, personal and professional, private and public, and one's état was not easily changed.” She notes, "In a society as stratified as that of eighteenth-century France, in which social mobility was difficult, risky, and even psychologically threatening, maintenance of état would have been a more realistic goal for the majority of the population than attempting to change it." This circumscribed attitude toward class maintenance of place and position within French society had a biological element as well. French culture in the early seventeenth century arguably equated race with blood: heredity genealogy not skin color. Jay M. Smith argues that the French equated race with breeding during the Ancient Regime: “the concepts of race and sang [blood], which clearly signified pedigree, implied at the same time a set of behavioral expectations.” While blood pedigree was innate, exemplifying the status
associated with superior breeding required constant attention to French aesthetic standards. Pedigree was an ingredient of status, but certainly not a guarantor of privilege.

Within these social classifications, there was dissention. Ongoing debates within Louis XIV’s government about the exact definition of nobility and the nature of noble liberties, rights, and privileges bestowed on the noblesse d’épée versus the noblesse de robe heightened anxieties of race, class, and social behavior. At the heart of this debate was the difference between the épée’s insistence that heredity and military service were the birthright of the Second Estate. Members of the noblesse de robe argued that they held inherited offices appointed by the king; however, they rarely had military experience and many purchased their offices with profits off commercial ventures in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. xxx Thus, the argument came down to blood versus work: the right to live securely in one’s birthright versus the desire to gain acceptance and privilege. The noblesse d’épée had reasons to be anxious. Not only were many of these Second Estate families facing economic ruin, but members of the noblesse de robe often headed lucrative patron-client networks at the local level that gave them de facto influence and prestige. xxx These debates continued as warfare impoverished France, the rural mobilized in their search for relief, and monetary security became harder to obtain for anyone within Louis XIV’s mainland. No estate was secure and all had to face the reality of clamoring for fewer resources. They wanted to protect their condition without risking their status.

Louis XIV understood these anxieties and used them to create and maintain ties with family networks in France. He also provided many of the symbols that transcended his personal reign and allowed for aristocratic ascendance after his death. Louis
understood the growing popular discontent and by 1680s was aware of waning public support. Just as his prelates sought to regain God’s favor, “the central thrust of the monarchy’s strategy henceforth had to be aimed at winning over public opinion, not crushing it under.”xxx The Crown sought favor beyond the aristocracy. He aided and abetted the desire for elite status in the non-noble classes through a number of popular but relatively innocuous symbols. The Order of St. Louis was an example of such a title created by Louis XIV in the 1693. Louis himself was the head of this order, making it a rather prestigious link to the Sun King. Yet, it was also the first title available to families outside of the traditional houses of the nobility. The Order thanked the recipient for ongoing fealty and useful service to the king and the Catholic faith. xxxii However, it was a nominal title, granting no land or monetary reward for service. Instead, the recipient displayed the Order’s medal and added Louis XIV’s name to their own. The Order of St. Louis became an important symbol of social ascendance within Louisiana’s founding population. This addition of Knight of St. Louis became a marker of elite status in New Orleans and tied the families together in a network of patronage. While one of the officers who settled Mobile, Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville, became the first Canadian to receive the Cross of St. Louis in 1699, his brothers Bienville and Villantry soon followed. The first generation of engineers who came to Louisiana were also awarded the title.xxxiii After that, the members of the Order increased through applications arguing loyalty and service to king and crown.xxxiv The Order of St. Louis was an illustrative symbol of how Louis XIV’s need for popularity met the colonists need for security through prestige. The Order of St. Louis facilitated social definition in New Orleans even though Louis XIV designed the order to reward non-elite families. xxxv
The importance of patronage of and identification with the French court for Louisiana’s elite was an important aspect of colonial society. While the region was named after Louis XIV, after his death the new capital was named New Orleans after the Regent. The vital lake to the north of the city was named Pontchartrain after Minister of Marine Louis Phélypeaux, Comte de Pontchartrain, while another lake in the region was named Maurepas after his successor and son Jérôme Phélypeaux, comte de Maurepas. Louisiana colonists created these namesakes as links between America and the living officials who had influence over the colony’s fate. Officials in Louisiana also sought to cement the colony’s strategic importance in the France’s diplomatic and economic plans. As the Company of the West faltered and John Law’s plans failed, letters to the Court from Louisiana’s colonists alternated between promoting the colony’s importance and accusing the French court of neglect. In 1723, Purry wrote to the duc d’ Orleans asking to print memoirs on Louisiana “to prove that there is no country in France or Europe equal [to Louisiana] and that none but the ignorant and traitorous can have a different opinion.” In 1731, Canadian officer Juchereau St. Denis accused the Crown of abandoning the colony. In 1734, another memorial sent to the Court promoted the necessity of colonizing Louisiana. Thus, as the years progressed, the desire to maintain Louisiana a vital presence at the French court promoted the need for information and patronage to flow from Europe to America.
Part 2: Louisiana Networks

The Le Moyne Family Network

The Le Moyne family created an extensive network intertwined with the success of Louisiana. Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville co-founded Mobile and Biloxi with his brother de Sauvole. He was a Canadian by birth and an ideal combination of military leader, perceptive trader and ambitious social climber. His family had no elite lineage, but achieved noblesse de robe status in seventeenth-century France. After their move to Canada from Dieppe in 1641, they continued their ascent through shipping and trading businesses. His father maintained his ties to France partially by sending his sons into the French Navy and seeing at least one daughter married into French nobility. While nearly all of the Le Moyne brothers achieved military success, d’Iberville had particular ties to the French Court initiated when the Canadian governor Le Febvre de La Barre sent d’Iberville with messages to the Crown in 1683. D’Iberville maintained connections to the Court until his death. After his pivotal role securing the Treaty of Ryswick and exploring the Gulf Coast, d’Iberville reported in person to King Louis XIV in 1699. While there, he received the Cross of St. Louis and confidently pushed further and asked the king to make him a count. Louis XIV denied him the title. However, d’Iberville’s request indicates how elite Canadian families understood and pursued French markers of status regardless of their New World success. Entering the Order of St. Louis did tie him personally and immediately to the King “in faithful and useful service.” While d’Iberville died of yellow fever while visiting Havana in 1706, his brother de Bienville
became the de facto manager of Mobile’s settlement and the eventual governor of the colony. In the six years between founding Mobile and his 1706 death, d’Iberville managed to bring three of his eleven brothers and one of his two sisters to the Gulf Coast and, despite their lack of traditional status, the Le Moynes were exactly the patrons Louis XIV desired. They were loyal and effective military leaders. They were also socially ambitious.\textsuperscript{xli}

The Canadian Le Moynes maintained kinship networks within France and Canada and expanded their ties within Louisiana. Pierre Sidrac Dugué de Boisbriant served under his cousin d’Iberville in Newfoundland and York Fort before he too made his way to the Gulf Coast. There he remained an advocate for the Le Moynes in various political and military capacities.\textsuperscript{xlvii} Madame d’Iberville’s uncle, Juchereau St. Denis, also Canadian, arrived with d’Iberville in 1700 and remained a valuable ally to all the Le Moyne family.\textsuperscript{xlviii} D’Iberville’s sister, Catherine-Jeanne married French Pierre-Jacques Payen de Noyan, seigneur de Chavoy.\textsuperscript{xlix} The family also followed the Le Moynes to New Orleans where the de Noyan children remained loyal to the Le Moynes and made advantageous marriages in the colony. The Payen de Noyan sons, Pierre Benoit and Gilles Augustin married sisters, Marie and Jeanne Françoise Faucon Dumanoir, daughter of Canadian Jean-Baptiste Faucon Du Manoir and demonstrated loyalty to their uncle de Bienville after their father’s death.\textsuperscript{l} Their daughter Marie Payen de Noyan eventually married Claude Joseph Dubreuil Villars, arguably the wealthiest landowner in early New Orleans. Nicolas Chauvin de La Frenier served under St. Denis and married de Bienville’s second cousin, Marguerite Le Sueur. La Frenier became a member of the Superior Council and remained a political ally of de Bienville along with his brothers Joseph Chauvin de Lery
and Louis Chauvin de Beaulieu. After d’Iberville’s death, de Bienville would continue the Le Moyne relationship with the French Crown, though he had deep and far-reaching connections throughout Louisiana.

The French De La Chaise family

The Crown sent French Jacques de La Chaise to Louisiana in 1722. He was “deputed by the King with extraordinary power to investigate the affairs of the [West Indian] Company in Louisiana.” Rather than an instrument of the Company, de La Chaise reported directly to the Court. De La Chaise was in fact a member of the noblesse de robe, and claimed this heritage dated to the thirteenth century. Yet, before de La Chaise’s arrival in Louisiana, historian Marcel Giraud writes, “he had served at a very modest salary, as principal clerk in the Company’s maritime equipment store in Lorient.” His family, from Cusset France may have been noble, but was impoverished by the time of de La Chaise’s birth. In Louisiana, he not only held an important administrative role but also became a key player in the governing of the colony. Entering into this community, de La Chaise rather quickly allied himself with other French-born Louisianans, including the Capuchin fathers, and developed his own social network. His daughters married into New Orleans families. Marie Louise de La Chaise married the surgeon Louis Prat, Felicite de La Chaise married Parisian Joseph Dubreuil Villars, Alexandrine de La Chaise married concessionaire Jean Pradel and Marie Marguerite de La Chaise married the son of one the King’s Councilor’s to Louis XIV, officer Louis Joseph de St. Martin. While his name remained noble but embattled in France, Jacques
de La Chaise sought economic mobility and quickly integrated his family into the social networks of Louisiana within ten years of his arrival.

The Importance of patronage, networks and elite identity in New Orleans

John Law’s financial plans for Louisiana failed soon after New Orleans’s founding. The bursting of the so-called “Mississippi Bubble” left colonists searching for new financial footing and ways to invigorate their political power with the French court. De La Chaise and de Bienville represent opposing political families in these pivotal years. De La Chaise challenged the loyalty of the Le Moyne family and de Bienville’s credentials in particular. Many of the preexisting New Orleans’s elite met de La Chaise’s arrival in New Orleans with antagonism. In his correspondence, he asserted his French birth to create proximity with the Crown and difference from all Canadians. Soon after he arrived in 1723, de La Chaise noted that the Canadians already had a trading network that excluded the French: "All the French are mistreated. They are refused everything from the warehouses even though they offer to pay, and it is only the Canadians, who do nothing here, to whom goods are given to go and trade at the Illinois.” He called their profits, “stealing.” He also claimed that “none of those voyageurs clear any ground or make any settlements.” From his arrival to his death, de La Chaise worked diligently to dislocate de Bienville and his allies from the center of Louisiana’s government. In 1726, he successfully parleyed accusations against de Bienville into French Étienne Périer’s bid for governor of Louisiana. Before de Bienville’s successful return to office in 1733, he spent considerable time in France pleading his case before the Court.
However heated the political rivalry between Canadians and French-born colonists, marriages intertwined the de Bienville and de La Chaise families soon after de La Chaise’s arrival. The Dubreuil Villars son married one of de La Chaise’s daughters.\textsuperscript{lvii} Jacques de La Chaise Jr. married Marie Rosa Juchereau de St. Denis in 1733, providing another link between the rival families.\textsuperscript{lviii} Within a very few years political rivalries became less important than social ties in the choice of marriage partners (see table 2). Louisiana would develop its own definitions of prestige and social worthiness that had at times liberally interpreted the debates within France between \textit{noblesse d’épée} and \textit{noblesse de robe} to form kinship ties that bound a significant number of military officers, Superior Council members, and concessionnaires to one another regardless of country of origin or local political positions. Their desire to conserve wealth, status, and prestige overshadowed the need to draw strict political lines in their marriage ties (see Figure 1)

While Jacques de La Chaise and de Bienville headed rival networks, there were several other family networks in the region. One notarial succession reveals not only the kinship connections within networks, but also how they functioned in legal matters. In 1734, surgeon Alexandre Viel wished to call a family meeting to discuss his plans to sell his plantation at Chaouaches. This process was complicated because Viel was a widower twice over. The children from both marriages had family representatives to oversee their inheritance claims. Viel appears as tutor and father of Francois Alexander Viel [jr. or \textit{fils minor}], child of himself and Servanne LeBlanc his late first wife; and for minors Bernard Alexander Viel and Francoise Viel, children of his late second wife Marie Ann Trepagnier. The family meeting included Viel’s cousins Jacques Fazende and Francois Fleuriau, both members of the Superior Council (the latter was also King's Procureur
Another cousin Labro attended along with Mr. LaSur de Marsilly, godfather of Viel’s deceased second wife, Marie Trepagnier who attended to act on behalf of his wife who was the grandmother of the last minor. The cousin of the last minor, Estienne de La Lande Dalcourt also attended. They all agreed to Viel’s proposed sale. While several people are involved in this transaction, it is vital to note that Viel was able to surround himself with considerable extended family in a part of Louisiana that was just sixteen years old when this was sale was proposed. Viel’s document also reveals that it was not enough to have family connections, but the individuals in those networks performed important tasks representing family members and overseeing financial decisions that affecting those individuals. Creating and strengthening networks was an important aspect of maintaining wealth and security in New Orleans.

From 1701 on, the letters back to France detail how these families attempted to create their networks and uphold their social ranks. As early as 1706, the protocols of social status were paramount. In a letter to the king, de Bienville writes, “Sieur [Nicolas] de La Salle, who is performing the functions of Commissary has no servant. He waits on himself and cultivates the ground, which is not in keeping with the dignity of his office.” Men like Nicolas de La Salle expected to land in Mobile and live comfortably. In 1701, he arrived to take over the office of clerk at Fort Maurepas. Nicholas de La Salle seemed the lesser of four brothers. One, Robert Rene Cavalier de La Salle, had claimed the Mississippi River basin for France, another served as a commissary-general of Mediterranean galleys, and the third was commissaire-ordonnateur of Siam. By coming to Mobile, this brother hoped to gain a better and more lucrative position than his former station as purser at Toulon’s naval station. Consequently, when he arrived to find that
he had no household staff and would have to perform menial tasks himself, he complained that he degraded his office by farming and caring for his household without help. De La Salle had ongoing feuds with de Bienville over several public and private matters before he died in 1710.

Upholding an individual’s status in America was sometimes more a matter of financial solvency than a desire for dignity. In 1723, de La Chaise wrote on behalf of a man named Blanchard, the “Son of a lawyer at the Parliament of Paris,” who was sent to Louisiana “as a convict.” De La Chaise wrote in September 1723 that Blanchard had “learned two months ago that his relatives at Paris were providing an allowance for him and that they were remitting the funds for it to the cashier of the Company of Paris.” The problem, de La Chaise explained, was “that it has been three years since some one came here to pay him half of this sum every six months and in advance and to send the receipt for it to France.” De La Chaise looked into the matter and found Blanchard’s name included with a series of orders for several individuals granted stipends from France. However, next to Blanchard’s name “Sieur Delorme had written there these words 'He is not known.' Proving his status became vital to Blanchard’s ability to live in the city. Finding an advocate like de La Chaise to speak on his behalf was essential. De La Chaise helped Blanchard even though the man was a convict. His status was more important than his behavior. Individuals and families asserted their perceived social privileges and fought challenges to their stations in very public ways.

Religious Networks
Along with these first families, Catholic clerics faced certain challenges to their religious calling within French society as well as in their transfer to the New World. Arguably, the men and the women of the Church found themselves under increasing crown scrutiny throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Continuing counter-Reformation activities in France, the ascendance of Cardinal Richelieu in the early seventeenth century, and the suppression of the Jansenists and Molinists as well as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 all indicate the efforts to discipline religious belief and expression. Furthermore, the Crown increasingly turned to religious orders to serve as agents of moral reform through ministries that often included teaching, feeding, housing, and generally policing the morals of France’s burgeoning poor. From the reign of Louis XIV on, clerics increasingly relied on the patronage system for funding. Thus, like the rest of French society, the various religious orders found themselves working to maintain their status in society with increasing intensity. This competition would become apparent in the New World as Capuchins, Jesuits, Discalced Carmelites, and Ursuline nuns faced the daunting task of performing their social responsibilities to European colonists, converting Native and African souls to Catholicism as well as winning back errant protestants to the Church. For the members of clerical orders, the New World offered any number of opportunities to fulfill their religious calling and advance their positions within their respective orders. In the seventeenth century, Jesuits and Ursuline nuns were sent to Canada to secure a counter-Reformation foothold in the New World. Moving west and south from those initial Acadian settlements, Catholic missionaries established themselves among the native communities and accompanied
successive explorers further into North America and eventually down the Mississippi to the Gulf Coast.

Almost more important than the actual movements of these missionaries were the tales of their activities that made it back to France. By 1700, missionary diaries were popular in France. These laudatory tales detailed not only the success of these endeavors, but promoted the religious ecstasy of New World clerics fulfilling their missionary calling.\textsuperscript{lxvi} These tales certainly provided invaluable advertisement for the efficacy of a particular order’s ministry in an era when garnering a patron’s interest and monetary support was crucial to the health of a religious community. Hence, a good demonstration of faith abroad would certainly benefit continuing efforts in France. Missionaries, therefore, also had good reason to risk success in the New World to affect their continued health and well being in the Old. America then, was a risk, but a potentially lucrative one.

Upon her arrival in New Orleans, the Reverend Mother Tranchepain set about securing her social network as quickly as she sought accommodations for the sisters and their servants. She was approached by Madame de La Chaise—whose daughter traveled with the nuns from France—and soon the Reverend Mother began a list of women in New Orleans who would support the convent, provide students for the school, and create some social succor in the nascent colonial capital.\textsuperscript{lxvii} Far from an impoverished sisterhood, the Ursulines arrived with European servants and individual stipends from their families in France.\textsuperscript{lxviii} When they arrived at their temporary accommodations in 1727, New Orleans’s residents participated in a \textit{te deum} ceremony as the nuns walked in a celebratory parade to their rented house amidst a public spectacle. Far from cutting ties
to the secular world when they entered the sisterhood, the Ursulines were very dependant on the social networks outside their convent to secure their lives within the cloister.

Internal Functions of Networks

The family was a vital institution for safeguarding community resources in France and became equally important in Louisiana. Vaughn B. Baker argues that women were considered central to settling Louisiana: “even self-reliant colonial adventurers believed women indispensable to the establishment of enduring settlements.” French law supported strong families through its inheritance laws. Historian of colonial Illinois settlement, Ste. Genevieve, Susan C. Boyle notes that the Coutume de Paris divided inheritance equally among siblings, regardless of sex, and “by giving all children a share of the patrimony, it encouraged them to remain close to the paternal home.” It also “served especially in times of high mortality as an important element in organizing the relationship between generations by providing guidelines for property transfer and by ensuring some measure of financial security for descendants.” As colonists encountered high mortality in Louisiana that made tight family networks and inheritance laws important to building and establishing wealth and continuity of property in the colony.

Stable families, therefore, were a valuable means of marshaling resources in New Orleans. Women held a particularly powerful role in New Orleans’s society. Marriages created and strengthened networks among families and women were often their vital negotiators. As Sara Chapman explains, noble women throughout late seventeenth- and early-eighteenth century France “acted as crucial players in a family-based economy of informal political power.” In her analysis of Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain’s kinship
network, “The women of this family of royal ministers-wives, mothers, sisters—furthered the clan's interests by working in partnership with their male relatives to build and maintain power of their patron-client network.”\textsuperscript{nlxxi} The women studied by Chapman shared another significant goal. In France, the ability to maintain social position was increasingly difficult. To combat these realities, Chapman notes, “the choices that family members made in their personal and public lives created hierarchies of power and authority that provided a grassroots foundation for the patterns of urban political culture.”\textsuperscript{nlxxii} In Louisiana, family networks were just as important to maintaining status. It is not surprising therefore, that de La Chaise and de Bienville would marry into one another’s family and preserve social status rather than risk marriages outside an accomplished elite network.

Elite families also preyed on weak or fractured families and the Superior Council’s imposition of French law made that easier. One of the real problems in the city was the transitory nature of the majority of its residents from 1718 to 1740. Soldiers, sailors, voyageurs and craftsmen often stayed in the city for short periods and then left as their work required. Like its New World counterparts in Canada and the Caribbean, New Orleans’s residents suffered from a high death rate. While disease was an ever-present force in Louisiana, the number of military men and traveling merchant traders in the city also raised the possibility of death through violent conflicts with Native American and European enemies. Either way, death hit men particularly hard, left many women widowed, children without fathers, and households in the hands of the court.

The Superior Council in New Orleans publicly settled estates. The Council acted to distribute assets within family networks and provided the means to parcel out those
resources to other networks. Death required a formal public inquiry to settle an estate. In 1735 New Orleans, wagon maker Antoine Bunel died three days from a Choctaw Village.

The Choctaws he was traveling with buried his body. These men continued upstream, but came across members of the Biloxi tribe heading downstream and asked them to send word to New Orleans of Bunel’s death. The chief of the Biloxi’s—Chief Le Page—came to New Orleans to relate this story. His death left Bunel’s wife Heliene Hourard with two children, ages eleven and six. Bunel’s assets, including a house, his share in the trading boat the St. Anne, and five African slaves (three adults and two babies at breast) were sold at public auction and his debts paid, leaving little for his wife and children. After the proceedings, Hourard requests assistance for her older son and the Council agreed to find a guardian for him. Antoine Bunel’s unexpected death changed the lives of at least eight people as the Council sold slaves into new households and Bunel’s wife and children lost their home, their source of income, and their status as a family.

Helene Hourard’s case establishes what many of the documents reveal about power and autonomy in New Orleans’s society. Through her husband’s death, Hourard’s life was made public and the Crown’s authority’s acted as executor for Bunel’s estate. Susan Boyle notes that "A wife had the option of renouncing the community property if, upon the death of her husband, their estate was burdened with debts." However, the record in this case does not indicate that Helene Hourard renounced Bunel’s debts. Not only does the Superior Council take-on the legal responsibility of guarding Bunel and Hourard’s children’s well being, among the creditors who present themselves for repayment from his estate are Antoine Bruslé, member of the Superior Council and already a substantial property owner in and around New Orleans. He not only gained
money from the estate, but also purchased at least one of the slaves and several head of cattle.\textsuperscript{lxxvii} It was highly probable that at least one or more of the Africans was an apprentice wagon-maker.\textsuperscript{lxxviii} If true, then whoever purchased the slave also claimed access to an important skill.\textsuperscript{lxxix} Thus, the dissolution of this household provided valuable assets for others in the community.

The elite in New Orleans took an interest in acquiring land and assets while often extending credit to those in the community. This was one aspect of intertwining themselves into the financial relationships in the city and providing cause to interfere in these lives over time. Even though Helene Hourard lost many assets and had to turn to the Counsel for aid, she was able to pay her husband’s debts. This was not always true. In 1725, the Council complained to the directors of the Company that there were many women detained in the colony because they were unable to pay their husband’s debts. These men had either died or had defaulted on loans and were “libertines” who would never make good on these debts.\textsuperscript{lxxx} Abandoned by husbands and unable to either remarry or seek new opportunities outside the colony, these women were left in a social and financial limbo that kept them dependent on the Council. Thus, while the Council may have taken on these women in hopes they could extract debt from their husbands, their power to do so seems rather weak and local. After the Natchez Massacre of 1729, a number of women and children descended on New Orleans. The Superior Council provided support for the women and the New Orleans families who adopted orphans. This event further burdened the government with dependents. Legally, the governing elite could assert control over the lives of these women and children, providing another avenue of social control over the colony’s majority. However, as in the case of the abandoned
wives and some of the widows and orphans from Natchez, the price of social control was an open-ended commitment to providing resources for dependents. Networks were only as strong as their ability to secure patronage from its weakest members. Thus, in a colony where many of the inhabitants were poor and had little opportunity to change their situation, the elite had little incentive to build relationships in the larger community.

Wives and the Public Role of Networks

Asserting authority over the public and private behaviors of New Orleans’s residents allowed members of the Superior Council to secure their public authority. It also allowed them to strengthen their own family networks and protect their own interests. The continuity of the family was central to French social structure long before Louis XIV came to power. However, the famine, disease, and warfare during Louis’s reign severely weakened the security of family networks. Widowed men and women, illegitimacy, and questions of succession not only weakened and diluted inheritance, but also created households that had little chance of economic productivity. Illegitimacy could also produce children of mixed noble and common blood, which elites perceived as diluting and muddying class distinctions. Thus, members of the same estate marrying and creating productive, secure households were important goals for elite social security.

Widows faced an uncertain future but the Coutume de Paris allowed women certain control of property after her husband’s death. Even if she remarried, she retained control over any property from previous marriages. Between 1727, and 1732, New Orleans’s census records indicate many widows owned homes in New Orleans and, as Vaughn Baker notes, several women controlled large tracts of farmland outside the
Thus, widows could offer considerable resources to prospective husbands and
did not always have to remarry for financial security. Whether marrying for the first time
or remarrying, brides often provided certain assets to their grooms in Louisiana. French
precedents provided particular cultural power for women in New Orleans. Circumstances
of mortality and economic conservation in New Orleans heightened their social and
economic import in Louisiana.

Wives were an essential element in strong households in France and Louisiana.
They anchored families, homes and social networks in New Orleans. The majority of
administrators, members of the military, traders, and merchants traveled away from the
city for extended periods. Wives, therefore, managed the household activities in the
city. The Ursuline nuns actively promoted elite women’s role as moral agents in the
community as well. As Emily Clark and Virginia Gould point out, New Orleans’s elite
women were actively engaged in an “aggressive program of female catechesis” which
extended beyond the family and into the city’s majority population. These
circumstances gave women a vital social role as private managers of elite networks,
public representatives of their families’ status, and secular moral authorities for the
community at large.

Church services provided a vital venue for elite women to perform all of these
duties. The colonial Church was a mechanism of colonial government as well as a house
of worship. The central church was on the public square in New Orleans and
administered by the Capuchin fathers. Legal notices were posted on the church doors and
royal decrees read from the pulpit. After de La Chaise arrived to audit the colony’s books
in 1723, the Crown “enjoined the congregations, on pain of ecclesiastical censure, to
reveal to the priests everything they knew,” about who was defrauding the Crown. Thus, church services were a political venue used the social and political tensions were enacted in its weekly services.

In 1723, seating in the church became a venue for debating social hierarchy in the city. The first issue developed around auctioning pews to raise money for priests. The Capuchins were forbidden to own property or engage in trade or selling services. To ameliorate their financial condition, they rented pews to the highest bidders. When this auction took place, Madame Trudeau, “wife of the carpenter and mother-in-law of the cashier,” found that she had missed the sale and had lost the opportunity to have a closed pew where the rest of the city’s elite would sit. When she publicly protested this situation, she found few advocates on the Council. In his assessment of the situation, de La Chaise argued that Mde. Trudeau “wished to distinguish herself,” and was distressed that the Council took her protest seriously, arguing that in this case “a woman here had more influence than an honest man.” When her son-in-law Councilor Paul Perry took up her cause, arguing that the Capuchins should have presented this plan to the Superior Council before auctioning pews, Father Raphaël protested, “that he had no ground to complain, that the first pew had been reserved for his wife and his family.” In other words, Father Raphaël understood that church pews were as much a matter of displaying social status, as they were a matter of raising money. Perry, on the other hand, seemed to be protesting the pew auction on his mother-in-law’s behalf rather than any duty as a Superior Council member. Yet, the issue of auctioning church pews was about the tension between wealth and traditional status. It was an auction for the most prestigious
pews in the sanctuary. Trudeau’s objection made these tensions public and called on her family network to bolster her claim to exclusive seating.

Issues of church seating and social hierarchy came up again in 1725. In April of that year, de La Chaise wrote to the Directors of the Company, “The officers pick quarrels with the Councilors on all occasions. They have claimed that the first seats in the church ought to belong to their wives. They have launched out into abuse on this subject, Sieurs de Blanc, Coustilhas, Thierry, and de Roches making the greatest commotion.”

In a marginal note in the original, an official in France had written, “Send a regulation. Women have no rank.” Yet, this was not an argument about women’s rank, but an issue of social hierarchy in New Orleans that was enacted by women over their seating in church. They resolved the issue and “by patience an agreement was reached. The officers obtained the seat on the Epistle Side and the Councilors that on the Gospel Side.” Three of these four men were born in and served the military in France. Sieur Coustillas was in the Royal bodyguard (Gardes du Corps). Their insistence on reification of rank in church seating may well have been a continuing public assertion of their French pedigrees in America.

Political protests continued in August 1725. A long bitter political battle between de La Chaise and de Bienville resulted in the latter resigning his post as governor. Councilors Jean Perault and Fleuriau chose to resign their seats rather than submit to de La Chaise’s authority. De La Chaise had won few admirers, but Father Raphaël was among the men who supported and aided de La Chaise’s activities in the city. Women enacted many of these tensions in church services.

On November 7, 1725, a few short months after de Bienville’s resignation, the
Council passed a decree prohibiting talking during church service. The following Sunday, the first to be censored under this edict were the wives of de Bienville’s supporters and de La Chaise’s detractors. Father Raphaël described the situation

On the tenth of last November Mesdames Fleuriau, Bruslé, and Perry, having laughed and talked very immodestly at the beginning of the parochial mass, were first warned by the master of the school to remember the sanctity of the place and then by Father Hyacinthe, seeing that they were continuing, told them to leave the church or that he would not say mass. One of them, a cousin of Mde. Fleuriau and a sister of Mde. Bruslé replied aloud 'The devil! I am not going out like that.' [Diable je ne sorts pas comme cela] When Father Hyacinthe criticized this as an impiety at the foot of the altar Mr. Fleuriau rose and imposed silence upon the officiating priest, telling him that that was affected and that he ought to continue his duties without commenting further.xcii

Fleuriau, as Attorney General of the colony, wrote up a report blaming the incident on Father Hyacinthe. A conclusion Father Raphaël condemned in his own assessment of the encounter

If Father Hyacinthe was mistaken in anything it was in having said mass in the presence of these ladies who were rendered unworthy to attend it by their irreverence and impiety. I intend to send it to you or to bring it to you and myself in order to obtain justice in France, a thing that I dare not hope for here among the troubles and the tumults that agitate the colony. xciii

The city was in turmoil because of the political struggle between de Bienville and de La Chaise. After de Bienville stepped down, the interim governor was de Boisbriant, cousin of Bienville and brother of Father Beaubois, a Jesuit father and rival of Father Raphaël in Louisiana. The exchange in church is the women’s protest of Capuchin authority, de La Chaise’s political maneuvering: a public declaration against the shift in authority in New Orleans. These women expressed in Church what their husbands, brothers and fathers expressed in Superior Council proceedings and diplomatic correspondence.
Conclusion

Elite families were certainly in the minority in New Orleans just as the French were generally a minority in the land they held in America. James Pritchard’s research demonstrates Native Americans and Africans outnumbered French and Canadians in Louisiana. They remained an island within a diverse and dynamic colonial population. Yet, they utilized their networking skills to conserve resources and garner support to form powerful families and political allies. The ability to exchange information and assets within even far-reaching but well-regulated networks were well honed in France during Louis XIV’s time and ingrained in families like the Le Moynes and the de La Chaises even before they reached Louisiana. Conserving social status and economic solvency was important enough to these families that even these arch rivals chose to marry into each other’s family. Members of the Superior Council, the Governors, and the members of the colony’s military and political elite worked diligently to conserve their status and protested threats to that status in public forums. Their ability to conserve resources within elite networks allowed them to assert political and legal authority over the majority of Louisiana’s settlers from 1700 to 1743. In the process, they reveal how individuals define their place in society and manage social action to affect their public and private identities.
Figure 1 Connections among select New Orleans’s families from France and Canada
Figure 2. Connections between Louis XIV, his successor the duc d’Orleans, and three pivotal elites in Louisiana.
Endnotes

i Banks, Kenneth J. *Chasing Empire across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763*, (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), xi: “within the French popular mind, no French empire existed until 1802. Before then were the vieilles [before]colonies.” Banks counters this assertion with a description of France’s pre-1802 holdings as a “collection of territories, which stretched from the rich entrepôts of India to the vast claims in the North American interior and today comprises about a quarter of Canada and half of the continental United States.”

ii Karen S. Cook, et al., “The Distribution of Power in Exchange Networks: Theory and Experimental Results,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Sep., 1983), 276-77: The definition for exchange networks is inclusive of family and patronage networks according to Cook et al.: “Many of the social networks of interest to social scientists can be analyzed fruitfully as exchange networks, provided that the specific content of the social relations in the network involves the transfer of valued items (i.e. the provision of information, affection, or approval, advice, or more tangible things like goods and direct services).” Colin Jones, *The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon 1715-99* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).


viii Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730*.


x N/A, “Letters patent pertaining to the establishment of a trading company under the name of the Company of the West: 56 articles are lites, giving the Company of the West exclusive trading rights in Louisiana for 25 years from the date. Also provides for rights to land and harbors in Louisiana and beaver trade in Canada.” in *Acts of Royal French Administration Concerning the Company of the Indies in Louisiana 1717-1771*” MSS 268 of The Historic New Orleans Collection (subsequently abbreviated as HNOC), folder 1 of 2.

xi Mathé Allain, "Not Worth a Straw": French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1988),57: "The loss of Acadia made imperative French development of new lines of defense. Their response, the erection of a chain of forts from Louisbourg to Mobile, produced constant friction between the French and English Fur colonies for the next half-century.", Alan F. Williams, *Father Baudoin's War: D'Iberville's Campaigns Figure in Acadia and Newfoundland 1696,1697* (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1987), 7-9.


Nachison, "Absentee Government and Provincial Governors in Early Modern France,” 266.


De La Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723," in Mississippi Provincial Archives French Dominion (subsequently abbreviated as MPA. FD) V.II 1704-1743, 5v, ed., Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1984), 294.


For secondary sources on the value of family ties and the role of family members in establishing society in Louisiana, see Allain, "Not Worth a Straw".


Clark, John G. La Rochelle and the Atlantic Economy During the Eighteenth Century, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1981), 17.


editor and translator. Wilson, Bienville's New Orleans, 11: photo of original.

After his service in the Natchez Wars and leadership in a battle against the Chickamauga, Bienville requested that Gilles-Augustin de Noyan receive a knighthood through the Order of Saint Louis. By 1738 de Noyan had received his medal and had joined the ranks of Knights of Saint Louis populating the first few blocks along the riverside in New Orleans.
Mr. Purry most likely Superior Council Member Paul Perry

Paul Perry, “517th document of Portfolio IX,” in B.F. French, Historical Documents of Louisiana and Florida, New Series, Part II, 84

St. Denis, “506th document of Portfolio IX,” in B.F. French, Historical Documents of Louisiana and Florida, New Series, Part II, 84


Williams, Father Baudoin's War: D'Iberville's Campaigns in Acadia and Newfoundland 1696,1697, 153.

B.F. French, ed. Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida including translations of original manuscripts relating to the discovery and settlement, with numerous historical and biographical notes, second series, Historical Memoirs and Narratives, 1527-1702 (New York: Albert Mason, 1875), 32.


Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion: Governors.

B.F. French, Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida, New Series, (New York: J. Sabin and Sons, 1869), 84.


Tanguay, Dictionnaire Genealogique Des Families Canadiennes Depuis La Fondation De La Colonie Jusqu'a Nos Jours, 7 vols., vol. 1.

Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion: Administrators, Superior Council Members.

B.F. French, Historical Collection of Louisiana, New Series, part 2, (Philadelphia: Daniels and Smith, 1850), 67: Quoted in document 272d of Portfolio III.


Grace King, Creole Families of New Orleans, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921), 159: "[Charles]Gayarré, evidently speaking from intimate knowledge, calls him, 'one of the worthiest men of the colony ever possessed," giving the following description of him: 'He was of patrician birth, a nephew of the confessor of Louis XIV. The Chatâteau d'Aix, the feudal castle of the family, was situated in the province of Forez. His father was the son of George d'Aix, Seigneur de La Chaise, who married Rénée de Rochefort, daughter of one of the noblest houses of France. Members of the family distinguished themselves in the army of France. In the time of the Regency one of them died, a Lieutenant-General, leaving a reputation for uncompromising integrity and unflinching attachment of duty."


de La Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723," in MPA, FD, V.II., 306-308; Father Raphael, "Father Raphael to the Abbe Raguet New Orleans September 15, 1725," in MPA, FD,V.II, 551: "There are only a few Canadians who are prosperous
because at all times they have been the only ones favored and because advances have been made to them which have put them in a position to establish themselves solidly."


[lx] Bienville, "Bienville to Pontchartrain 10 April 1706," in *Mississippi Provincial Archives French Dominion* (subsequently abbreviated as *MPA, FD*) V.III, 1704-1743, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932 [1706]), 35. Nicholas de La Salle was a nephew of the great exploer, Robert Cavelier de La Salle, and accompanied his uncle on his exploration of the Mississippi in 1682. Early in January, 1702, he came with his family to Dauphine Island.

[lxi] de Sauvole de La Villantray, "Sauvole to [Pontchartrain] August 4, 1701, Biloxi, Louisiana," in *MPA, FD*, V. II.; Brasseaux, *France's Forgotten Legion: Military Officers, Q-W*: “Enseigne de vaisseaux (ship’s ensign) and lieutenant in Bellecour’s company of marines during Iberville’s first voyage to Louisiana, 1699 Later proposed a site along Bayou Saint John. ...Died at Fort Maurepas, August 22, 1701.”


[lxv] Diefendorf, Barbara B. "Contradictions of the Century of Saints: Aristocratic Patronage and the Convents of Counter-Reformation Paris." *French Historical Studies* 24, no. 2 (2001), 498-99: "Just as the theory of royal absolutism veiled a monarchy whose authority was still highly dependent on informal ties of patronage and clientage, so the authoritarian facade of the Counter-Reformation church veiled an institution that depended heavily on the give and take of mutual accommodation without which no patronage system can work. The simple fact is that it was not the church but rather individual donors who built the convents of the Catholic revival. The process was less centralized, less coherent than it is often made to seem. The watchdogs set over the system--the bishops and heads of monastic orders--were limited in power by this need for accommodation but also by their own participation in the patronage system. In the case of Paris, moreover, they were preoccupied with other matters and showed little inclination to exercise worth any consistence the authority they did possess/ The results of this lack of oversight were both good and bad. Convents could and did get into trouble, but they also proliferated with more freedom and in more varieties than is usually imagined. And the women who headed these convents had, as a consequence, more room for initiative, more formal and informal authority, and more responsibility as a result...adapted creatively to changing times."

“Premier Registre de La Congregation des Dames Enfants de Marie: Archive of the Ursuline Nuns of the Parish of New Orleans,” in *Reel 3 of 19 HNOC: Carriere, Mde, Rivard, Mde Fabre, Mde, Bonvite, Mde Tromclain, Mde morte Bourbon, Mde morte Taneret, Mde Monie, Mde, Sautier, Mde henri fonder, Mde Bartélemy, Mde Vendome, Mde Celltes que l'on a receu d' epris Rivard La Jeune, Mde Liveaudets, Mde tiferan, Mde Dubreuil, Mde Carrier Joseph, Mde Deux, Mde St. Martin, Mde morte St. Louis, mde Besson, Mde Silassier, mde Bequet, mde D[Bar]bonne, mde Boilon, mde Etienne, mde David, mde Barbau, mde Judis, mde Mille, mde Montigny, mde Bontan, mde Le Duc, mde Filar, mde Soison, mde Denis, mde Demonbrun, mmes Bertot, mmes Pisolet, mme Gillet Le Bourg, mme Francoise Brazot, mme Delasoure, mde Rivard, Mlles de Villemen, mles Brulle, Milles Felicitee de La chaise, mle Pinot, mle Bauno, mle, Duval, Mlle Vison, mle Drian, mle Delernte, mle Baunille, mle Marie Therese Les Deux Couilliune anne Dimanche Suzanne Marchand Marthe Magdelaine Manon Barthelemi morte Catherine Henri Francoise Disié M.anne avignon, mde Catherine Dursi, mde Maran, mde aufrere, mde Etienne, mde Guillaume Fauché Guillaume Fauché, mde Sandré en Franie, mde Le Duc, mde Mentinguer, mde Olivier, mde Milé, mde Chancelier, mde Flaçon, mde Blondin, mde La violette, mde La prérie, mde Rossart, mde St. Joseph, mde Caron, mde morte

“Procuration and Apriori Quittance,” in *French 2 (New Orleans: 03/11/1748) NARC, 31158-31161: Charolotte Ursule Hébert dite Ste Marie Sister St. Xavier assisted by Marie Boulander Mère St. Angelique and Marguerite François Bernard (sister St. Pierre, Mother superior of Ursuline Convent, requisitor] To unnamed notary or notaries of Bayeux, France. The document indicates that the family notary in charge of Ste Marie’s family allowance had died, leaving no way for Ste Marie to access the money. The document requests that a notary in Bayeux take her case, forward her allowance. In the even that Ste Marie died before the money arrived, the act stipulates that the money go to the Ursuline convent; The Historic New Orleans Collection, in *Reel 18 of 19 (Lettres Circulaires Despuis 1727 jusqu’en 1835: Archive of the Ursuline Nuns of the Parish of Orleans).: Le14th of Aout 1731 est décédée notre chére Mére Marguerite Judde de St. Jean l’évangéliste, 2nd letter: pages 4 and 5. Notes that Marguerite Judde was generous with her stipend.


Susan C. Boyle, "Did She Generally Decide? Women in Ste. Genevieve, 1750-1805," *William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series, 44, no. 4 (1987), 779 :’Couples of mixed ethnic background, particularly when the wife was an Indian, were less likely to resort to this formality. Contracts were also rare among persons who had not lived long in the community.”


Maduell, *The Census Tables for the Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1732*. Antoine Bunel found in Census of 1732. Bunel had 6 slaves, 1 child and one adopted orphan; Collection, "G1."

“Succession” of Antoine Bunel, *French 2 (New Orleans, 9/13/1735) NARC, 10143-10187: He owned one third interest in the boat the St. Anne along with Louis Cheval and Michel Brosset.

“Succession” of Antoine Bunel.

Boyle, "Women in Ste. Genevieve.",&781

“Succession” of Antoine Bunel

Faucond Mr. Du Manoir and Heloise H. Cruzat, trans., "Concession of Ste Catherine at the Natchez," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1919 [1721]),168: "When I ask you for laborers it is partly to begin our work and at the same time to teach their trade to the negroes, for if we succeed in training and perfecting them, they will, in the course of time, bring you large profits; if necessary, they will be sold at four times their cost and in case of need, their labor would bring more than what we gain on our culture. You must not feel astonished at the considerable sums, which must be advanced at the beginning of these establishments. You know you must sow before you reap, and those who have been led to imagine that in three years they would recover their principal have been grossly deceived."); For the use of skilled African labor, see Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992),.136-137
Shannon Lee Dawdy, "La Ville Sauvage: 'Enlightened' Colonialism and Creole Improvisation in New Orleans, 1699-1769," (PhD, University of Michigan, 2003), 127, 144: Shannon Lee Dawdy writes that the pirate Michael Fitzgerald purchased the St. Anne in 1736.

"Superior Council of Louisiana to Directors of the Company of the West, 28 August 1725, MPA, FD V.II, 502.

MacLeod, Spanish Central America; a Socioeconomic History, 1520-1720, 350.


Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769, Administrators, Superior Council. Either he is cashier, or he was also responsible for promoting manufacturing, which may have tied Mde. Trudeau 's husband to Perry; de La Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, 18 October 1723," in MPA, FD, V.II, 387.

Bibliothèque nationale de France, France's Forgotten Legion Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769. Military officers, D: César Deblanc. Native of Marseilles, Provence, France. Son of Charles DeBlanc, a captain in the Régiement de Champagne and Margueritee d'Espanner…Granted a leave of absence without pay, December 6, 1724. While acting as major of New Orleans, De Banc ‘refused to execute an order from Mr. De La Chaise [an order] which would could only have come from Mr. De Boisbriant, the commander [of the Louisiana Garrison]….at the time of his dismissal, De Blanc’s detractors also maintained that he should not hold such an important position as the majority of New Orleans because of his advanced age."


Chaise and the Four Councilors of Louisiana, "De La Chaise and the Four Councilors of Louisiana to the Council of the Company of the Indies 26 April 1725," 463.

Chaise and the Four Councilors of Louisiana, "De La Chaise and the Four Councilors of Louisiana to the Council of the Company of the Indies 26 April 1725," 463.

Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769, Administrators, M-V: Jean Perault. “Commissioned comptroller of Louisiana, replacing Sauvoy, September 12, 1724. “Royal commissioner for this colony,”


Father Raphael, "Father Raphael to the Abbe Raguet," in MPA, FD, V.II, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929 [1726]), 530.

Father Raphael, "Father Raphael to the Abbe Raguet," 531.

CHAPTER III

URBAN DESIGN AND DISCIPLINE IN NEW ORLEANS

Introduction

“…suffice it to say that a song is publicly sung in which it is said that this city has as fine an appearance as the City of Paris, thus, this tells you all…It is in fact, very beautiful; but I do not have the eloquence to persuade you of the beauty which is claimed in the song, I find some difference between this city and Paris.”

Sister Mary Magdeleine Hachard discussed this comparison between New Orleans and Paris in a letter eight months after she, her twelve sisters, their servants, and their belongings arrived in the nascent community of New Orleans in August 1727. She goes on to explain that she found New Orleans beautiful, but could not yet compare the new town with any of the major cities of France. What is significant about this comparison is not only that New Orleans is equated with Paris in a popular song, but also that there were possible similarities between the ancient urban center of France and this new American settlement on the shores of the Mississippi. A city which, by the time of Mary Magdeleine’s letter home, had suffered annual flooding since its 1718 founding and had been destroyed by two hurricanes, one in 1719 and another 1722. The oldest building in the city was likely to be less than five years old when the Ursulines arrived.

Yet, the state of perpetual construction and reconstruction may have prompted the bards of New Orleans to compare the American settlement with Paris. It may have also been the history of flooding in both cities. In 1710, “the harshness of the winter became
legendary, and in the subsequent thaw much of Paris suffered flooding. "Aside from shared devastation, by 1728 Paris had experienced nearly fifty years of urban renewal to widen and straighten streets, replace wood structures with stone or brick, and bring policemen and streetlights to the darkest neighborhoods in the city. " New Orleans faced similar discipline. The proposed site for New Orleans was a well-known clearing in a swampy Cypress grove when Engineers Le Blond de La Tour and Adrien de Pauger designed and laid out the grid of regular streets fronting the river. Over more than ten years they continued to reestablish and enforce this street design regardless of the natural disasters that plagued the site and the slow process of clearing the land for building. Despite the lack of stone and slate in the delta of the Mississippi, New Orleans’s administrators enforced Parisian-like codes to minimize exposed wood and thatched roofs. " Both cities were under the enforcement of crown authorities determined to impose design and structure over what they understood as the chaos that came before.

Previous studies of New Orleans have underappreciated the importance of ongoing efforts of New Orleans’s administrators to invoke Parisian standards in the city’s street plan, building design, and code enforcement. Likewise, there are reasons to pay closer attention to the plans for New Orleans even if they were incompletely realized on the banks of the Mississippi. As Michel Foucault argues, urban planning is a long-term commitment where planners necessarily work, not in the present, but in the future: “That is to say, the town will not be conceived or planned according to a static perception that would ensure the perfection of the function there and then, but will open onto a future that is not exactly controllable, not precisely measured or measurable and a good town plan takes into account precisely what might happen."
The first few decades of New Orleans’s development reflects many aspects of French urban planning. Whatever the lyrics that Sister Mary Magdeleine heard sung comparing New Orleans and Paris, it is likely they included the comparison of two cities energetically realizing their potential as planned urban space and manifestations of the French crown at work.

Part 1: Planning the Capital

The Narrative of “Chaos” at Mobile Bay

New Orleans was deliberately designed to counteract and correct the reported problems with the preexisting French settlements in and around Mobile Bay on the Gulf Coast. While a solid and important settlement, the language used in letters, reports, and personal accounts of this earlier capital created a picture of an infested, swampy ruin overrun by Spanish, Native American, and immoral influences. From 1699 to 1718, these descriptions affected crown administrators and individuals invested in the success of the Louisiana colony. Consequently, when the engineers, administrators, and workmen arrived to start the new capital, they were already preparing to fix what they perceived as the existing problems with the Gulf Coast settlements.

The Mobile Bay area was actually a series of settlements and fortifications in an area roughly encompassing the region stretching from modern-day Biloxi, Mississippi, to Mobile, Alabama, and Pensacola, Florida. This area also included Dauphin, Cat, and Ship Islands off the Coast. While d’Iberville intended to create and occupy one fortification in the area, he instead initiated a series of settlements along the coast. In 1699, d’Iberville
intended to settle at Pensacola, but found the Spanish already building a fort there. He settled at Biloxi, but moved the settlement three years later to the mouth of Mobile Bay. In 1709, the settlement was moved to higher ground further inland. In early 1711, the river rose and flooded the settlement, prompting Fort Mobile to move back down the bay with the name New Mobile.ix By 1720, chief engineer Le Blond de La Tour found an “elevated, dry and healthy site” at New Biloxi, though his proposed fort and artificial docking jetty were never realized. Fortifying and occupying the Gulf Coast was difficult because of the constant relocation. These elements resulted in a fragmented settlement scattered from tiny off-shore islands to a seaside fort and settlement around the bay of Mobile.

Aside from actually settling and fortifying the Mobile Bay, the French were precariously placed at the edge of English and Spanish territory. Mobile was strategically vulnerable to the Spanish in nearby Pensacola and the English to the northeast. Numerous Native American tribes lived in the area of Mobile and many more passed through using the Pearl, Pascagoula, Tombigbee, Alabama Rivers and their tributaries to move around the Gulf Coast region.xi After Philippe of Anjou’s succession to the Spanish throne, the governor of Pensacola took advantage of their alliance with the French by asking de Bienville for provisions and money loans throughout the first ten years of settlement: items and wealth Mobile could hardly afford to provide.xii Disgruntled soldiers and sailors also took advantage of Mobile’s proximity to Native American villages and Pensacola. If living in Mobile proved too difficult, they sought relationships with Native American settlements or defected to Spanish settlements on the Florida coast or English settlements farther north.xiii
Mobile’s proximity and vulnerability to Native Americans and the Spanish added to the unpredictable Caribbean ocean traffic that brought allies and enemies alike to Mobile Bay. Lacking a deep-water port, the area relied on ships docking off shore at Dauphin/Massacre Island. The warehouses on the island were hard to manage from the mainland and vulnerable to attack. In 1719, the soldiers on Dauphin Island were accused of fomenting a rebellion in order to plunder the warehouse.xiv

The Gulf Coast was a difficult location to strategically secure a military post or contain a settlement. It was also a difficult climate in which to live and work. Derogatory descriptions of Mobile’s location emphasize its swampy, forested, and volatile environment.xv Englishman Philip Pittman’s latter day description summarizes earlier sentiments of the environment:

Mobile is situated on the banks of the river of that name, just at the place where the fresh and salt waters mix; when the tide goes out it leaves an abundance of small fishes on the marshes which lie opposite the town, and the heat of the sun in summer kills the fish; and the stench of them, of the stagnated water in the neighboring swamps, and the slimy mud, render the air putrid. To this may be added, that the water of the wells is brackish and there is none to be found wholesome within less than one mile and a half of the place.xvi

The stagnant water was only one problem. De Bienville also mentioned the problems of cultivating the land adjacent to the salt-water marsh around Mobile Bay when he wrote Minister Pontchartrain in 1706: "The lands suitable for settling and for putting a large number of settlers on them are nearly twenty leagues higher up on this river."xvii The humid salinity became an active enemy, compromising the wooden fortifications of Fort Louis so quickly that the fort itself had to be replaced within a few years of its completion.xviii
As early as 1710, Mobile Bay was condemned as helplessly lost. It was described as a dark, infested swamp. As early as summer 1701, d’Iberville’s brother de Sauvole wrote that the Canadians suffered from the rain. If work needed to be done, he “had to go and get them out of their beds and not leave them until what I had for them to do was finished.” By 1717, Duclos’s replacement as *commissaire-ordonnateur*, Marc-Antoine Hubert, wrote of Mobile inhabitants that “Men of all sorts have an interest in living in the darkness, the light hurts them.” Moreover, the Native Americans and Spanish exerted considerable control over the goods available in Mobile and dominated French trade relations. This situation was punctuated by the attack on and looting of the warehouses at Dauphin/Massacre Island by pirates in the winter of 1710. Vulnerable to enemies, abused by allies, and unpopular with inhabitants, the settlement at Mobile Bay had many flaws. By 1712, even commissary Jean-Baptiste Martin d’Artaguiette Diron—sent to unify the settlement in 1707—contemplated allowing pirates to use Mobile as a base of operations: “they can in the first place only be very rich since they levy at sea on all the human race. Their entrance into this colony would therefore bring into it much wealth.” He considered this plan even though he found them “a band of scoundrels of all nations utterly unprincipled.” It would seem that Mobile was in desperate straits if such men were considered potential settlers for the colony by 1712.

Indeed, within the year of d’Artaguiette’s suggestion, Governor Cadillac arrived and with alacrity condemned Mobile as “bad land, bad people.” This statement marks a significant turning point in Louisiana history. Over the next four years much would change in France and Louisiana. Antoine Crozat became sole proprietor of Louisiana in 1712 and sought out the reasons for the financial miasma of the colony. Three years later,
the death of the Sun King and the ascendance of his nephew Philippe d’ Orleans contributed to tensions between France and compromised the Spanish-French alliance in the New World. xxvii In 1717 Crozat’s control was replaced by John Law’s Company of the West. A significant aspect of Law’s plan was to stabilize France’s poor economy by selling shares in Louisiana’s colonial enterprise. xxviii Selling company shares, organizing trade and stabilizing the capital was essential to funneling earnings back to France. These events promoted a search for a new capital the Company could argue fixed the perceived problems with Mobile. They sought a location away from Spanish holdings where colonial profits were more secure from marauding Caribbean pirates. Over these years, the location and design of New Orleans was proposed as the answer to Mobile.

Planning a New Capital

While accounts chronicled the bad land at Mobile, reports about the lower Mississippi River concentrated on the fertility of the riparian environs and the strategic value of the river’s traffic. Not only was the peltry trade mentioned as one of the only lucrative resources in Louisiana, but the Mississippi also provided access to land further west. xxix Beginning in 1713, the reports sent to Pontchartrain reiterated the problems of Mobile, but spoke encouragingly about the lands around the lower Mississippi. In 1713, Jean-Baptiste Dubois Duclos was reassigned from commissaire-ordonnateur in Saint-Domingue to the same position in Louisiana. xxx Despite continually seeking reassignment to France, his distrust of Cadillac, and dislike of Mobile, he wrote generously about the potential of Louisiana, particularly the overland trade with New Mexico. xxxi Similarly, several letters emphasized the fertility of the land along the
Mississippi. Cadillac also promoted the lower Mississippi as an access point to mineral wealth in Illinois and New Mexico.\textsuperscript{xxxii} It would seem that moving to the Mississippi River was a promotional choice to highlight trade and agricultural possibilities with the interior of America along with access to the sea traffic.\textsuperscript{xxxiii}

The Mississippi River was similar to the Canadian waterways familiar to de Bienville and fellow Canadians. Like the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Mississippi could provide riverfront access for landholders to transport goods, animals and people down to the Gulf, up to Illinois, and points in between. New Orleans, like Montreal and Quebec City, could serve as the administrative, economic, social, and manufacturing center. Similar to Montreal in particular, the location for New Orleans provided access to other navigable waterways to facilitate trade with the hinterlands. Thus, even though the Gulf Coast allowed ready access to the circum-Caribbean trade, the Mississippi provided a navigable course potentially conducive to trade and agriculture, as well as its strategic military placement.

Navigable water-routes were essential attributes for any replacement for Mobile. De Bienville chose the location for New Orleans as early as 1708.\textsuperscript{xxxiv} The land was a sort of land bridge between Lake Pontchartrain on the north and a horseshoe bend in the Mississippi on the South.\textsuperscript{xxxv} While the Mississippi was an obvious draw, it was neither the most useful nor used waterway in the area. The land had the greatest elevation on the riverside and sloped toward the lake, bisected by a navigable bayou—named Bayou St. Jean by the colonists--creating easy boat access from either side of the crescent-shaped land. Furthermore, two other bayous—Metairie and Gentilly—were within easy reach of
this location. Watercraft was not only the primary means for moving people along the lower river, but was essential to the efficient transfer of goods.

Individuals and groups moving along these waterways often used the crescent of dry ground in the area. Forested by Cypress trees, the crescent had been occupied by several groups including the Tchoupitoulas, the Ouma, and Canadian *coureurs de bois* as well as villages of the Acolapissa and Quinipissa. On one of Le Blond de La Tour’s maps, dating from 1723, he references clearings made at the edge of the crescent, referring to “old clearings made by several private individuals,” as distinct from clearing made by Company workmen. From the banks of the Mississippi, the traffic on the river was visible for several miles east and west with the Lake Pontchartrain providing access to the north. It was a strategic, accessible, and time-tested location for a settlement.

The Patrons of the New Capital

However, the plans for New Orleans indicate that the investors in the Company of the West were not going to rely merely on the established site between the river and lake Pontchartrain to assure a stable settlement. A few of France’s most influential administrators brought their expertise to bear on the plans for New Orleans. Several of the investors were actively involved in fortifying and protecting cities in France: investor Marquis d’Asfeld was director-general of fortifications for France and the comte de Belle Isle was lieutenant general of the king’s armies. The French minister of state, Claude Le Blanc also invested money in Louisiana. While these men provided considerable capital for the Louisiana enterprise, they were equally invested in maintaining and
promoting the institutions of the French crown. From the very beginning, New Orleans was a city planned and built to facilitate these institutions in Louisiana. New Orleans was designed to replicate the best of French urban engineering and facilitate French living and working space on the banks of the Mississippi. With their concessions placed along the river outside the city, Le Blanc, d’Asfeld, de Belle Isle and others hoped to create a cityscape to structure, discipline, and redeem its inhabitants. Thus, with this plan New Orleans would not just draw French investors, but could assure them that the institutions of France would secure the colony as their fortunes grew along the banks of the Mississippi.

Le Blond de La Tour designed New Orleans but the plan clearly demonstrates the changes in urban planning underway in France. Primarily, New Orleans reflects the military architecture of Sébastien Louvre Prêstre de Vauban, Director General of fortifications beginning in 1674. His six fortified cities sat at the edge of Louis XIV’s European holdings and would have been a good model for a New World city surrounded by English, Spanish, Dutch, and Native American rivals.xl His plans centered on an open square, surrounded by a church, the governor’s house, major administrators’ houses, and town hall, with streets and square blocks radiating from that place d’armes to fortified walls enclosing the town.xli While Mobile was a fort surrounded by a town, New Orleans was designed to enclose both the military and the civilian inhabitants in the de Vauban style. This plan also reflected the philosophy of urban planning suggested by general engineer of the Elector of Bandenberg Alexandre Le Maître.xlii According to Roger Chartier, Le Maître argued that “the city became a central regulator where all flowed and from which all proceeded; moreover, it acts as the social fabric, the role of the
head in the human body, at one part it concentrates, spreads and redistributes, at the other, it supervises and commands.” xliii Michel Foucault noted that Le Maître also understood the placement of the capital as significant: “It must be a geometrical relationship in the sense that a good country is one that, in short, must have the form of a circle, and the capital must be at the center of this circle.” New Orleans would have fit this definition better than Mobile: “A capital at the end of an elongated and irregular territory would not be able to exercise all its necessary functions.”xliv New Orleans’s design reflected this French engineering expertise and urban design to protect, organize and command the new center in Louisiana.

Louisiana was at the heart of John Law’s plan to pay France’s debts from colonial profits and depended on just such careful organization and control.xlv Colin Jones notes that Law depended on the absolutism of the French state: “Yet as though, strangely, he were a latter-day believer in the propaganda of the Sun King, Law massively overestimated the extent to which absolutism could deliver the required obedience in this as in any sphere.”xlvi Nevertheless, New Orleans was designed to bring the Crown’s active presence to the Louisiana capital. To initiate this commitment to loyalty, the regent Philippe, duc d’Orleans, awarded de Bienville the Cross of Saint Louis when he made him commandant-general of Louisiana in 1717. He also extended this knighthood to all of the engineers who arrived to build New Orleans.xlvi This honor not only rewarded the men’s commitment to the new establishment, but also demonstrated their loyalty to the Crown before they even broke ground at New Orleans.

More personal and immediate connections linked the Crown and the men who arrived to build New Orleans.xlviii While the first engineer-in-chief died in route, the
second, Pierre Le Blond de La Tour,\textsuperscript{xlix} served under the duc d’Orleans during the War for Spanish Succession.\textsuperscript{I} De La Tour was second in command after de Bienville, and given dominion over the private concessions planned for the area outside of New Orleans. It was in the same war that Ignace François Broutin gained experience making maps, drawing battle lines, and constructing the fortifications of L’Auterbourg.\textsuperscript{il} These men had proven themselves in wartime, had experience building strategic fortifications, and demonstrated loyalty, in de La Tour’s case, to the duc d’Orleans personally. Moreover, de La Tour was manager of the Le Blanc concession: a land grant in which Secretary of State Le Blanc and Marquis d’Asfeld (de Vauban’s replacement) had invested their private money.\textsuperscript{ili} De La Tour was also placed in charge of distributing the concessions as well as establishing New Orleans. Thus, there was planned continuity between the regulations of the city and its adjacent plantations. This connection to the Regent, the immediate power over the private concessions, and his engineering expertise gave de La Tour considerable power over the shape of the Louisiana settlement.\textsuperscript{iii} These ties between the engineers and the Crown further demonstrate how patronage networks connected Louisiana and France.

While Law may have envisioned the Sun King’s absolutism disciplining the colony, the engineers and administrators clearly had the shifting political climate of Paris in mind as they named New Orleans’s streets. Few historians have analyzed the significance of New Orleans’s street names and it is important to note the limitations of pinpointing their origins. No extant documentation explains the genesis of the names. The names are also predictable and unexceptional within the context of French culture and history. There are sixteen street names in the census of 1726: Quay, Chartres, de Condé,
Philippines, Arsenal, Royalle, Bourbon, Bienville, St. Louis, Comte Toulouse, St. Pierre, St. Adrien, Comte Clermont, DuMaine, St. Anne, and D'Orleans (see Image 3). These were all common names of people, places, and saints popular in French culture. Like many in Paris, some streets in New Orleans remained unnamed for a time while some names changed over time in the ebb and flow of fame and fashion. Street names may have also shifted from one location to another. All of these unremarkable attributes, however, place the street names within the context of French norms and demonstrate a connection between New Orleans and French urban planning.

The provenance of the street names is worth considering. The founding of the city coincided with the struggle for power within the Regency of the young Louis XV. While officially the Regent of the Crown, the duc d'Orleans found that Louis XIV’s will stipulated a Regency Council consisting of both his legitimate and illegitimate sons; moreover, Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, duc de Maine was given considerable power over Louis XV’s upbringing. What is significant about this political power struggle is its reflection in the naming of New Orleans’s streets. The duc d’Orleans not only graced the name of the town but his former title as duc de Chartres became a street name in New Orleans. The Regency was well represented: The royal house of Bourbon-Condé, The duc du Main, comte de Toulouse, and the comte de Clermont were all street names in 1726 New Orleans.

Other street names reflected the geography of Parisian neighborhoods. The Place-Royalle in Paris housed the duc d’Orleans and was the center of royal authority in France for a brief tenure before his death in 1723. Rue Royalle in New Orleans reflects this simultaneous return of prestige of the Regent’s Parisian neighborhood. Under Henry IV
at the beginning of the seventeenth century, “smart private residences” graced the Rue Bourbon in Paris while the Places Dauphine and Sainte-Anne became the home to merchants and financiers. lvii The exclusive neighborhoods associated with the islands of Saint Louis and Notre Dame were also reflected in the street names in New Orleans.

Rue Phillipes, Saint-Pierre and Rue Saint Adrien are less obvious in their origins, though all three names are prevalent in French popular culture. In the 1726 census, the street name is spelled Philippes indicating a plural that may have referred to the Christian names of the duc d’Orleans and the king of Spain, a grandson of Louis XIV, Philippe d’Anjou. The seventeenth-century Capuchin renovations in the Parisian chapel Saint-Pierre (on Montmartre) may explain the relationship between this street behind the Capuchin-dominated St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans. lviii It is possible that the street was named after Charles Irénée Castel, abbé de Saint-Pierre, champion of the Bourbon claimants, critic of Louis XIV’s policies, and proponent of a strong monarchy.lix He held such political “notoriety” for his attacks on Louis XIV that he was expelled from the Académie Française in 1718. lx The name Saint Adrien may have been engineer Adrien de Pauger’s attempt to immortalize himself in his new-world street plan. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that the street name Saint Adrien only had one resident in 1726, and did not remain long after de Pauger’s death in 1726. lxi Regardless of their exact origin, the street names are significant testimony to the diplomacy and political attentiveness of the planners.
Part 2: Implementing the Plans for New Orleans

Administering the Street and Building Plan

These august plans and attentive designers faced many challenges. In 1718, concessionaires began arriving at Biloxi. The death of Perrier en route detained the settlers as they waited for a replacement to survey and lay out the streets and lots of the new capital. They established temporary concessions and built shallow boats in anticipation of their move. While they waited, de Bienville was building houses and warehouses at New Orleans. These were destroyed in a hurricane in 1719. Le Blond de La Tour and Adrien Pauger arrived in New Orleans to find the few buildings that had been replaced since the hurricane. They tore them down in favor of Pauger’s strict grid of streets and uniformly sized lots.\textsuperscript{lxii} On the grid a church, hospital, and around thirty houses were erected before a hurricane again swept the city and destroyed the settlement. Unlike the settlements of Mobile Bay, however, the site was not abandoned. To the contrary, the grid was reestablished and the building began again.

The plans survived not only natural disasters, but also a succession of engineers and surveyors. The street plan for New Orleans outlasted de La Tour who died in 1723 and his successor de Pauger who died in 1726. Their successor François Broutin was dismissed from the position in 1728. Even when the administrative post was vacant, the rampant political intrigues and fights among engineers and surveyors did not derail the
original plans. Amidst these disruptions, New Orleans grew out from its center at the waterfront and the Place d’Armes around an orderly design: Pauger’s strict street plans and Broutin’s building codes. By the time the Ursulines arrived in 1727, Sister Marie wrote that it was a beautiful, well-constructed and regularly built city with wide, straight streets. She described the houses as wood-faced with mortar and finished with whitewash and wainscoting. The plans for the city may have been implemented from the highest levels of military intelligence in France, but its colonial residents enabled its progress on the ground.

The street plan and building codes survived in no small part because they reflected a culture of urban discipline imported from Paris. This is demonstrated in part by the lack of fortress walls enclosing the city. Planned and discussed, but never realized, New Orleans was never fortified. While there were practical reasons why the city’s walls remained unrealized—levees to protect the city from flooding took considerable material and labor—it is significant that more attention was paid to the interior structure of the settlement and the individual buildings than to the safety of its perimeter. New Orleans may have been designed to look and act like a de Vauban border fortress, but the emphasis on completing houses according to plan and building codes reflects more Parisian-style urban design.

By 1674, Paris itself was becoming less of a fortified city. Many of its city ramparts were turned into boulevards and movement through the city was improved. While Paris opened to the outside, it was also becoming more accessible on the inside. This was not only true of Paris because many cities throughout France chose accessibility over fortification in the eighteenth century. Historian Bernard Lepetite cites the
justifications of the municipal authorities of Nîmes when they demolished city walls in 1776:

‘The city is enclosed by walls and gates which not only lack any real purpose but hamper intercourse between inhabitants of the interior and those of the faubourgs, which nowadays are larger than the centre itself...The wish for citizens from city and faubourgs alike has long been to communicate freely at all times of day and night, not so much for their personal convenience as for the beneficial effect on their industry.’\textsuperscript{lxviii}

The engineers in New Orleans, like many French city planners, chose accessibility over walled security.

These changes created wide, straight streets with easier access to all areas of the city and building codes to keep the houses safer from fire; however, they also affirmed government regulation over how private space was built and maintained. New Orleans’s street plan also provided long, straight, and wide city streets. Like the planned Parisian boulevards, de La Tour designed the streets of New Orleans to be slightly raised, with gutters on either side to move water and waste out of the city.\textsuperscript{lxix} While New Orleans was most certainly on the border of France’s empire, it was emerging as a city designed to look like it was at its center.

New Orleans design and architectural development reflects changes in urban planning in Paris, France, and Western Europe in the seventeenth century. Many European urban centers were overcrowded and unhealthy and many neighborhoods became hotbeds of disease, debauchery and dissent.\textsuperscript{lx}x The London fire in 1666 brought such problems to the attention of Europe. In Paris, opening streets, managing the use of public squares, and creating and enforcing building codes became a practical necessity by the time Louis XIV took the throne, especially since his grandfather was murdered while stuck in traffic on a congested Parisian street in 1610.\textsuperscript{lxxi} The French crown learned much
from the London fire. Consequently, Louis XIV encouraged building codes to replace thatched roofs with uniformly colored slate, eliminated buildings that overhung the street, and forbid exposed wood or waddle and daub exteriors. Staircases were moved to the outside of buildings. The Crown created and enforced more detailed codes while the fortifications around the city were removed.

Like Paris, crown engineers and administrators maintained building codes and oversaw the construction of private dwellings in New Orleans. While stone was unavailable in the Mississippi Delta, Broutin established a brick-works on the outskirts of town and continued to enforce the use of brick in the city’s buildings. Slate too was unavailable, so wooden roofing tiles were painted to look like slate. Certainly not as fireproof as stone, these tiles were still less combustible than thatching. In addition, while wattle and dab, or bark-sided buildings were described in the early decades of settlement, as buildings endured multiple incarnations, the adherence to codes increased over time. Many of the houses sold in New Orleans after 1730 were described in notarial acts as faced brick with white plaster. As in Paris, stairways remained on the exterior of most buildings throughout the eighteenth century. Contrary to the image of New Orleans as a haphazard settlement, the city of New Orleans demonstrated significant examples of architectural discipline from its earliest manifestations.

Urban design, Crown Discipline

Just as the buildings reflected many aspects of urban design trends in France so did the open space in New Orleans. The city’s main square, the Place d’Armes faced the river surrounded by the church, prison, guardhouse, and government, and company
administrative buildings—a veritable border of crown authority. Like many royal squares in Paris, the Place d’Armes was designed and used primarily for events and activities sanctioned, controlled, and regulated by crown authorities: military exercise, public fêtes, public announcements, and criminal executions. It lacked the requisite royal statue, a symbolic presence of the ruling monarch nearly ubiquitous in Paris; however, since the city came into existence when the head of the government was in fact, several heads of state, it is no wonder the Place d’Armes never committed to any one figure.

Unlike many, if not most, town squares across rural Europe and America, New Orleans’s Place d’Armes did not serve as the marketplace for local vendors or local fêtes (weddings, baptisms, etc). Instead, the Place d’Armes in New Orleans remained a space where Crown authorities carried out its quotidian activities and displayed its power over the city, its residents, and the colony. Even though the marketplace was not in the Place d’Armes, as early as 1719, the Crown authorities installed an official retail market between the Intendant’s house and the Company warehouse close to the anchorage of vessels on the riverside. This market was ostensibly controlled by the Company authorities and items at set prices. The market’s proximity to the vessels coming from France and the Company warehouses on the riverside were meant to assure the regulation of retail prices for basic goods. Thus, even outside of the Place d’Armes, the official market was still overseen by the Crown’s authorities on the city’s riverside.

In France, royal squares also served as gateways to fashionable neighborhoods and elite homes. In late seventeenth-century Paris, stylish neighborhoods often began at the edge of Louis XIV’s open squares. The Place des Victoires on Paris’s right bank, for example, was surrounded by the wealthy families who supported Louis’s
The families maintaining the greatest investment in Louisiana claimed the neighborhood adjacent to the Place d’Armes in the capital. Moreover, this neighborhood was surrounded by the Crown’s administration buildings, the prison, and the church, was a space where the French crown’s presence could be seen, heard and felt. Colonial elites located their private space within easy reach of the Place d’Armes. Like the Place des Victories, the families on Quay, Chartres, and St. Louis, could call a heterogeneous city home, while positioning themselves to keep its influence at a safe distance. Instead, they kept their private space protected by public authority.

Along with establishing Parisian building codes and maintaining the robust martial presence of the Crown in the royal square, domesticating the natural space in New Orleans was another way colonists implemented French aristocratic discipline in the city. Like the ordered, sculpted gardens of Versailles, and the public gardens in fashionable districts of Paris, ornate flowerbeds, arranged in geometric patterns, were established in early New Orleans. The Marquis d’ Asfield, de Bienville, de La Chaise, and the Capuchin monastery all maintained elaborate gardens. Like the gardens at Versailles, these spaces of meticulously shaped and maintained plots of land demonstrated novel scientific gardening innovations imported from the heart of France to the New World. Gardens also and perhaps more poignantly, demonstrated ongoing and developing techniques to control and order nature. These gardens were another means of ruling New Orleans through actively controlling the space of the city.

Ornamental gardens in New Orleans were part of the Crown’s mandate to observe and record information useful to French scientists. As historian James E. McClellan III argues, “French science was institutionally and intellectually the strongest of any
nation…French physicians and the instrumentalities of French medicine came with the first wave of formal colonization in the early seventeenth century. A symbol of Louis XIV’s reign and of Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s tenure as Secretary of State in particular, academies of science, navigation, hydrography and engineering were instituted throughout urban centers in France. As historian Marcel Giraud explains, the Regent, Philippe d’Orleans continued this process in the colonies: he “promoted cultural influences abroad, rewarded with jobs in the administration those who were learned in the sciences, gave active support to the academies, and took an interest in all forms of learning.” Soon after his arrival in 1724, physician Jean Louis Prat established a garden for medicinal plants near his house on rue Chartres. Other gardens of pharmacological interest developed near the hospital and the Ursuline convent over the next several years. On the corner of Dumaine and Chartres, King’s Engineer Pierre Baron also built an observatory designed by Alexandre de Batz. A relatively new innovation in France, the observatory was another institution supported by Colbert and a symbol of the French crown’s ongoing interest in mastering the natural world. This scientific building, like the medicinal gardens, enabled Europeans to place the natural world within a context that could be understood and mastered. Scientific discipline in New Orleans was yet another indication that the city would be a space ordered by the best of French ideas.

Attracting Residents to the City

These designs made a difference and attracted settlers. Many of the individual residents invested in New Orleans even though the majority of them had more valuable assets in concessions of land outside the city. The most influential individuals built
and invested in land holdings along the river and many concessionaires brought the people and materials to build nearly autonomous communities outside of the city: laborers, servants, carpenters, millers, edge-tool makers, coopers, bakers and others. Like Le Maitre suggested, “the city became a central regulator where all flowed and from which all proceeded.” New Orleans developed as a relatively stable colonial center where administrative bureaucrats and law courts regulated trade in their favor and kept law and justice in their proper place. The French crown refused these concessionaires’ requests to establish feudal landholdings in Louisiana. The soldiers sent to guard the concessions were part of the King’s forces, not the concessionaires. This meant that the ultimate landholder remained the king of France and subject to the Crown’s oversight. Moreover, the success of the concessions remained at least intertwined with the success of the Company of the West and the Crown trade authorities. As these concessions attempted to establish cash crops, they were certainly dependent on information on market prices, shipping costs, and access to cheap labor—including African slaves—that would help maximize their profits. The Company also loaned at least some of the concessionaires’ money and goods. New Orleans was the center for this information along with the warehouse and company offices.

New Orleans, however, did not just develop simply because of the centripetal force of the Crown authority invested in its institutions. Concessionaires were also propelled to the safety of New Orleans by external threats. After the failure of John Law’s financial scheme, much changed in the economic prospects for Louisiana and the political realities for France’s colonies. John Law’s plan to repay France’s debts from the profits from colonial holdings was a failure. Law’s paper money scheme left Louisiana
with rampant inflation. Workers’ wages and export prices were low and often paid in capriciously valued promissory notes and paper money. Thus, little legitimate money came in to the colony while money paid by colonists was very high. The attempts of de Bienville to attract trade with Saint-Domingue and the other French islands in the Caribbean faltered because Louisiana had few goods to entice the Island’s trade. With few friendly stopping points in the Caribbean, getting goods safely from France to Louisiana had become very difficult. Moreover, the mortality rate for new immigrants was very high. Malaria and Yellow Fever among others claimed the lives of many of Louisiana’s early residents. From 1718 to 1726 a great number of people had staked their money, lives, families, and futures on the success of Louisiana. As colonial reality threatened these prospects, New Orleans became the place many individuals entrenched to conserve resources, tighten the bonds of social networks, and exert as much influence on the institutions to assure their success in the colony.

Diplomatic and military entanglements also threatened Louisiana’s security. French attempts to take Pensacola in 1722 ended in disaster, leaving Mobile more vulnerable to the Spanish and the English than before. The influx of French settlers into Native American land beginning in 1718 created tension between the French and the Chickasaws on the Tombigbee River and the Natchez upriver of New Orleans. The Chickasaws attacked the family of a sergeant attached to Fort St. Peter’s. In 1723, members of the Natchez tribe sacked the St. Catherine Concession and killed a soldier named La Rochelle. In 1724, the Chickasaws expedited their aggressions toward the French by enticing the Choctaws away from their alliance with the French.
These smaller skirmishes culminated in the late fall 1729 when the Natchez attacked the French settlers at the town of Natchez, reportedly killing 144 men, 35 women, and 56 children as well as taking hostage 51 French women and children, 2 men, and 150 African slaves of both sexes.\textsuperscript{cviii} Most of the survivors descended on New Orleans, either to find temporary aid or permanent relocation. Within ten years of its founding, New Orleans had gone from a ramshackle settlement barely surviving hurricane devastation to the central location in Louisiana for individuals seeking work, refuge, and opportunity.

Disciplining the Demographics of Early New Orleans

Individuals and families sought to consolidate their control of the capital’s private space as the safety and security of the larger colony decreased. In the general census of 1721, taken by Inspector General of Troops Bernard Diron d’Artaguiette, New Orleans was a scattered settlement peopled primarily by soldiers, craftsmen, their families, and a scattering of laborers sent by the John Law Company to build the city and work for its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{cix} By the 1726 census, the city was established on Pauger’s grid and the lots were assigned to discrete owners. While the majority of the inhabitants remained craftsmen or soldiers, by 1726 nearly every concessionaire had a house or piece of land in New Orleans.\textsuperscript{cx} A few bought property and rented houses to high-profile residents. Monsieur de Kolly, Swiss by nationality, seignior of the estate of Livry near Paris rented property to the Ursuline nuns and the commissioner de La Chaise.\textsuperscript{cxi} Many other concessionaires initially kept empty houses or lots of land scattered throughout the city blocks.
Understanding the demographic development of New Orleans is complicated by the number of extant maps that contradict one another in the number and placement of city lots and names of city streets. Two maps exist with the lots in the city numbered and legends providing the names of each lot’s owner.\textsuperscript{cxii} The cadastral map available from the Library of Congress has numbered lots, but not street names. I have chosen to use this map because its numbering corresponds most reliably to the descriptions in extant Notarial documents. These documents usually indicate a lot number and a description of the position of the property.\textsuperscript{cxiii} This map is undated, but the assigned lots have dates ranging from 1724 to 1734.

This map reveals that, in many respects, New Orleans began as a socially integrated city. On rue Chartres, for example, Concessionaires, military officers, tailors, voyageurs, notaries, day laborers, and craftsmen lived side by side in 1726.\textsuperscript{cxiv} Over the next ten years, as the colony reacted to financial crises and the Natchez War violence among other external threats, these demographics shifted. From 1721 to 1734, more of the outlying concessionaires bought land in the city, or built houses on the land that they already owned. Moreover, military officers and company administrators became strategic in their location of residence. These choices resulted in neighborhoods where the colony’s self-selected elite made their homes in the city. De Bienville had acquired a substantial tract of land on the western side of the city. The most desirable lots were on the riverbank of the city, adjacent to the Place d’ Armes.\textsuperscript{cxv} These blocks were on the highest ground in the region and were the first to be cleared of trees in 1718. Even from the earliest days of settlement these few blocks of houses had the households with largest concentration of slaves and a number of the Company’s and colony’s engineers,
administrators, military officers and concessionaires. However, this area also had a relatively heterogeneous population until the 1730s. By then the property on Quay, Chartres, Condé, Royal and the southern sections of Conty and St. Louis were dominated by members of the colony’s elite.

The formation of a New Orleans’s elite neighborhoods began as early as 1724. In this year, crown engineer Valentin Devin, noted that Mobile’s place as the social as well as the administrative center of Louisiana was eclipsed by New Orleans: "Living at Mobile is beginning to be more disagreeable than ever. There is, so to speak, no more society. Madame de Mandeville, who constituted its ornament is going to reside at New Orleans." Madame de Mandeville was the wife of Mandeville de St. Lambert, Canadian officer promoted to major of New Orleans in 1727. In 1726, their new home was on Rue Chartres, a block off the Quay. At the time of their move, their neighbors were not only Superior Council members Bruslé and Perry, but also a tailor, Canadian voyagers, and day laborers. The block also had an empty lot belonging to the d'Artagnan concession and an empty house belonging to the Jesuits.

By the 1730s however, the street was filled with the officer and administrators of the colony. Gone were the voyagers, craftsmen and empty lots. The widowed de Mandeville was surrounded the households of Louis Trixerand, the warehouse manager, Étienne de Pauger, concessionaire and member of the Superior Council, Canadian concessionaire Chauvin de La Fresniere, Simarre, Comte de Belle Isle, lieutenant-general of the king, Chauvin de Lery, militia captain, Pierre Dreux, military officer, and Raymond Amyault d’Ausseville, second councilor of the Superior Council. While her move from Mobile initiated the social ascendance of New Orleans, de Mandeville was
just one of the residents who, by the 1730s, represented the families of military officers claiming prestige and asserting financial power in the colony. They also represented the individuals and families who had the biggest stake in the success of the colony (see figure 4).

Individuals chose homes not only for their social cachet, but also for their proximity to family networks. Homes near the Quay also became anchors for the individual administrators and officers who were frequently absent from New Orleans. By 1718, most of governor Le Moyne de Bienville’s brothers were dead: de Sauvole, d’Iberville, de Chateaugué and his brother-in-law de Noyan; yet, de Bienville maintained a close and trusted relationship with his sister Catherine-Jeane Le Moyne’s two sons: Gilles Augustin Payen Chevalier de Noyan and Pierre Benoît Payen de Noyan. These nephews remained loyal to de Bienville through military campaigns and political intrigues. Gilles-Augustin de Noyan also served as de Bienville’s legal proxy in Louisiana while the latter was in Paris. Both de Noyans had homes on the Quay of New Orleans less than a block from Bienville’s home. By 1738, Chevalier de Noyan purchased a two-story house across the street from de Bienville on the corner of Chartres and Bienville. He also owned land close to de Bienville’s north of the city. Serving the king in France and America, the extended Le Moyne family nevertheless looked after one another’s economic holdings around New Orleans despite their frequent absenteeism from the colonial capital.

Buying primary residences in strategic neighborhoods was a significant aspect for elites to establish themselves in New Orleans. Elites bought additional property as another way of controlling the demographic development of the city. Several individuals
consolidated control over city blocks: Jacques Judice, Michel Gaspart, d’Auberville, Sr. Voysin, Medard Ratel, Joseph Chaperonne, and Antoine Philippe Bruslé took an interest in acquiring entire blocks or the majority of a block. Bruslé, in particular, serves as an example of how, as he became more invested in the success of the colony, he was simultaneously becoming a landlord to New Orleans’s residents. A native of Saint Eustache parish, Paris, the Company of the Indies appointed him as member of the King’s Council in New Orleans in 1722 and he was variously in charge of public finances and administration of the colonial treasury. He was to function as the chief paymaster and as the purchasing agent for Native American presents. By 1730, he had replaced de La Chaise as general director of Company of the Indies’s affairs in Louisiana.

In 1727 he owned one home on Chartres. By 1732 he owned six lots on another block of Chartres and five additional lots at the back of the city (between modern-day Dumaine and St. Peters on Burgandy). As his influence in the governance of Louisiana increased, so did his power over who lived near his primary home on Chartres as well as who lived in houses outside his neighborhood.

Buying land and houses was only one way elites influenced who lived where in New Orleans. The Superior Council exerted considerable control over the building codes in the city. While many residents of the city were transitory, and many landholders were absent from the city, laws stipulated that lots had to be cleared with ditches dug around their perimeter. Over time, the Council sold and condemned lots because they did not meet building and property codes. The legend of the 1722 map indicates several of these occasions. Lot 166 on rue Bourbon was granted to Michele Roger in 1728 after Claude Vachon and Robert Le Clerc had “not done anything” to improve the space.
Likewise, a block west on Bourbon Jean Cossine’s lot was granted to Nicholas Touzé in 1732 because the latter had “built and fenced.” In 1725, Binard known as La Forge petitioned to sell his house on Bourbon “to prevent the decay of the same.” The phrase *vu, visité et examiné* was a formulaic phrase in several of the documents publicizing these abandoned or condemned properties. While the earlier property deeds simply name the seller and the buyer’s names, the rate of turnover in property in the first decades of settlement resulted in notarial acts stipulating that “[the buyer] agrees to settle all mortgages, evictions, substitutions, [and] alienations” associated with the property. While these records indicate the problems of maintaining integrity of property in transitory New Orleans, the enforcement of building codes and continuity of property titles reveal how colonial officials sought to control the urban space.

These efforts to control the city’s development extended to architectural symbols of prestige in the colony. In France and Canada, seigneurial privilege allowed landowners to raise, hunt, and consume pigeons, rabbits, and doves (with some regional variations) and exclude that privilege from their peasants. As John Markoff writes, the members of the French aristocracy “could take pleasures forbidden the peasants—hunting, raising rabbits or pigeons.” Despite the lack of seigniorial rights in Louisiana, the Superior Council sought to regulate who could build and display these objects as the city took shape in 1723. In July of that year, the Superior Council forbid “the building in the future of any pigeon-houses, dovecotes, hutches or warrens in the limits of the city without express permission from the Council.” Outside of the city, the Council prohibited “them also to build any without having obtained permission to do so, which will be given them only after they have informed the Council of the amount of cultivated land that they
possess about their residences. \textsuperscript{cxxxvii} Pigeon houses and dovecotes—*Pigeonniers* and *colombiers*—were the entitlement of the elite in France and the Superior Council sought to control that privilege in Louisiana.

Regulating both the development of city and the concessions was necessary because of the constant communication between New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana. As noted earlier, like many eighteenth-century French cities, New Orleans remained unfortified. As it became an essential center of commerce, colonial government and society, its governors needed to move with ease from the city to their concessions as well as other destinations in the colony and beyond. Moreover, many landholders in the city also maintained their moneymaking concessions outside of the city. \textsuperscript{cxxxviii} The need to move easily in and out of the city may well have been another reason the city remained unfortified. As Colin Jones notes about Paris, “one lesson of the Wars of Religion and the Fronde was that city walls allowed cities to hold out against rather than for the king.” \textsuperscript{cxxxix} Thus, as officers, bureaucrats, and concessionaires crowded to the front of the Quay and sought control over the real estate in the city, they may have increasingly realized that they needed to leave the city and assure themselves that they would not return to a locked city with disgruntled soldiers, paroled convicts, or rebelling slaves holding the keys. Thus, the Superior Council and colonial elites sought control of real estate, building codes, and influence over who lived where, but they were still a small minority and their actual control was balanced precariously inside and outside the city.

Social Diversity in the City
Beyond the river’s quay, government buildings, public square, church buildings, and fashionable neighborhoods, the city quickly gave way to a less orderly border of houses as it merged with the forest and bayous. The city housed many persons employed in the business of the city. At the edge of the elite neighborhood lived those most likely to be in the employ of the Company or the concessionaires. The 1732 census indicates that a master baker, a tobacco curer, a butcher, a tailor, a turner and a gardener lived in proximity to the councilors and military officers. The churchwarden, La Coste and the bailiff Pierre Dargaray also lived in this area. Craftsmen, concession workmen, ex-soldiers, ex-sailors, merchants, and their family members spread out through the eastern and northern streets of the city. Many were masons and carpenters, but there was a gunsmith, wheelwright, an innkeeper, a coppersmith, a metalsmith, a barber, a cutler, a wagon maker, a founder, and a sail maker.

The census records reveal some patterns of settlement, and property regulation indicates how the administrators sought to control New Orleans. Yet, beyond the waterfront, the population of New Orleans defies simple categorization. There were no distinct African, Canadian, German, French, or Swiss enclaves in the city. Furthermore, neighborhoods did not obviously coalesce around inhabitants from similar social categories or job descriptions. Freed Africans did not always live in close proximity to one another (see figure 5). Free Africans lived throughout the city. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall records that in 1722, “Jean Baptiste Marly, a free black, agreed to serve an infantry officer at Pointe Coupee for three years as a cook in return for the freedom of Marly’s wife Venus.” In that same year he is listed as the owner of six and a half lots (a block usually held 12 lots) on what became rue Burgandy between rue Conti and St. Louis.
He was still owner of at least one of these lots through 1745. Free African Marie Rose Lange acquired property in the same area on rue Toulouse in 1747. It was at the back of the city facing the forest, on the northeastern sections of rue Bourbon that a free black named Xavier also owned a lot. Yet, at the western end of rue Bourbon, two other free Africans occupied lots. Scipion, a “free black” owned three lots on a block of Bourbon bordered by St. Philip and Arsenal. Another lot on the block was occupied by “Jacquet, Negro who has a free wife.” Jacquet sold that lot to Jean-Baptiste de Chavannes, Secretary of the Council of Régie, and secretary of the Council for excises, who owned another lot and a half on the block. Freed Africans were as likely to have French or Canadian neighbors as they were fellow Africans (See figure 6).

At times the demographics of a city block were mixed socially and racially. Sieur de Chavannes provides an illustrative exception to elite French colonists settling at the Quayside. Championed by de La Chaise, but reviled by de Bienville, de Chavannes was accused of killing a man in a duel. He in fact sold his desirable lot on Chartres to the son of de La Chaise and moved to a block in the northern corner of the city. De Chavannes is also listed as the man who freed “Marie Angelique known as Isabelle” who went on to own “a desirable lot on Royal.” Scipion, Jacquet, and de Chavannes shared the majority of this city block with Canadian sieur Langlois, who was initially the warehouse bookkeeper for the Company. Langlois and de Chavannes both owned land outside the city worked by several African slaves. Yet, de Chavannes and Langois maintained residences far from the elite enclave on a block shared by free blacks.

Just as the river brought ships to the quayside, the Bayou St. John toward Lake Pontchartrain was even more essential to moving goods and people from the north and
west, including Mobile. In 1721, Bayou St. John had more traffic than the riverside
docks. Thus, just as the lots on the quayside were desirable for their elevation and
proximity to the government buildings, the lots near the bayou were desirable for their
access to Lake Pontchartrain and the bayou concessions. Native Americans had
traditionally used the bayou to bring goods to the Mississippi, and this practice continued
after New Orleans settlement. It was also home to several voyageurs and merchant
negotiators. One of those was free African Marie Rose Lange, who continued to acquire
land in these blocks through 1750s. The bayou-side of the city may have been furthest
from the elite enclave near the river. However, the bayou provided access to several
concessions outside the city as well as gateways to trade networks and travel possibilities.

The bayous and cypress groves surrounding Lake Pontchartrain also served as
hideouts for those living outside the law. In 1739, chevalier Henry de Louboëy wrote
about the difficulties of tracking eight fugitives in the lake’s bayous. His men “followed
them without finding the least little trace of the route that they had taken.” He
continues, “our rogues in their fright had taken the first bayou that had offered itself and
that they simply cannot get out of it inasmuch as the land is marshy and submerged and
one must be extremely experienced to find a way out of it.” Far from a rigid grid of the
city center, the liquid landscape of the Bayou and the lake beyond provided cover for
those living outside of the Crown’s authority. The last few blocks in New Orleans
allowed its residents to live within proximity of both the city’s structure and the traffic on
the bayou: relatively safety and risky possibility.
Conclusion

New Orleans grew and developed as a city by balancing the need for a militarily secure capital with the importance of its residents moving in and out of the city with ease. The lack of enclosing ramparts and access to the bayou belies the image of a de Vauban-style border fortress with strategic defenses around an orderly urban design. Yet, even in its permeability the city was part of Louis XIV’s active plans for urban discipline. Rather than static defenses, the stability of New Orleans was maintained by ongoing efforts to make its streets resemble Paris and empower its institutions to discipline its inhabitants. Responding directly to the perceived weakness emphasized in the descriptions of Mobile, John Law’s investors in the Company of the West sought to bring the best of French design to establish New Orleans as a structured center of their enterprise. Like Louis XIV’s active renovation and policing of Paris’s derelict neighborhoods, New Orleans’s public and private spaces were disciplined with building codes and officials empowered to enforce them. Through street plans, building codes, and defined public spaces, New Orleans was designed to look and feel like Paris. When concessionaires bought into Law’s plans and invested money, people, and even family members in the land above and below the city. The Company used engineers loyal to the Crown and the Regent, trained in de Vauban’s street plans and Louis XIV’s approach to public squares. New Orleans was designed to emphasize order and maintain a carefully defined identity emphasizing the Crown’s presence on the Mississippi.
These efforts were redoubled, not abandoned, when the John Law’s plans failed and the so-called “Mississippi Bubble” burst. For the families who had poured capital into or moved from France’s center to one of its colonial outposts, the desire for stability became even stronger. New Orleans responded to the Natchez and Chickasaw aggression by structuring the city’s interior rather than building walls around it. Thus, it was not enough to create street plans and building codes, but they had to be constantly enforced even through hurricanes, John Law’s failure, and constant changes in administration. By the mid 1730s, New Orleans was structured by design and function. For the New Orleans elite, the city was good land peopled with good people and the antidote to Mobile’s darkness, chaos, and savagery.

This design for New Orleans brought the French crown’s presence to the Mississippi in very active and public ways. Pushing away the forest and establishing a city grid was just the beginning of disciplining the city of New Orleans. Enforcing social hierarchies through strategic buying, and code enforcement, the Superior Council pushed the least valuable population to the bayou-side of the city. This simultaneously created an area of the city where individuals could access trade networks along the waterways of the lower Mississippi beyond the active control of Crown authorities.
Figure 3: Possible placement of streets named in the 1726 census. Figure 4, 5, 6 are details of this map.

Distribution of lots on rue Chartres and Quay side in 1722-1743 New Orleans

Figure 4: Quayside and rue Chartres lots demonstrating the majority of lots owned by concessionaires, military officers, and engineers.
Figure 5: Distribution of lots owned by Free Africans from 1722-1749
Figure 6: Block of lots shared by Free Africans, a Swiss officer, an elite-born Frenchman.

FA: Lots owned by free Africans
Endnotes

i [Marie] Madeleine Hachard de Saint Stanislas, Relation Du Voyage Des Dames Religieuses Ursulines De Rouen a La Nouvelle-Orléans Avec Une Introduction Et Des Notes Par Gabriel Gravier, ed. Gabriel Gravier (Paris: Maisonneuve et C, 1872 [1728]), 89: “…il suffit de vous dire qu’il fe chante ici pubiquement une chanson, dans laquelle il y a que cette Ville a autant d’apparence que La Ville de Paris, ainsi c’est tout dire…En effet elle est très-belle, mais outre que je n’ai pas assez d’éloquence pour pouvoir vous persuader toute La beauté qu’en dit La chanson,c’est que je trouve de La difference entre cette Ville and celle de Paris”


iii Mary Cable, Lost New Orleans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1980), Baron Marc deVilliers and trans. Warrington Dawson, “A History of the Foundation of New Orleans, (1717-1722),” The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 3, no. 2 (1920), Samuel Jr. Wilson, Bienville's New Orleans: A French Colonial Capital 1718-1768 (New Orleans: Friends of the Cabildo, 1968), 5: "The first crude log houses were not very successful. They either rotted or were blown down in the hurricanes that swept the town in 1719 and 1722 or they titled and cracked and collapsed because they had no adequate foundations. Water seeping into the streets, which often looked more like canals, made construction even more difficult. Prototypes of the typical New Orleans raised cottage--a house elevated on brick pilings six to ten or more feet off the ground--appeared very early."


v Alistair Horne, Seven Ages of Paris (Oxford, UK: Macmillan, 2002), 139-40: "Under [François] Blondel, reinforced by the King's patronage and the new wealth of the era, an unprecedented classical harmony prevailed, offering uniformity and even standardization. Strict rules were laid down: private dwellings had to be built of stone, instead of the fire-prone timber frames and lath and plaster of earlier ages. (ala 1666 London fire) they were forbidden by law to have first floors bulging out over the street, where carriages might collide with them; frontages could be no more than eight toises (15.6 metres) high; staircases were moved from the centre to the side, and kitchens transplanted from the wings to separate structures in the courtyard. Straight lines became the norm, irregular tiles roofs being replaced by a single roof of grey slate or lead. More ornate interiors were counter pointed by sober simplicity in exterior design; "Philip F. Riley, A Lust for Virtue: Louis XIV's Attack on Sin in Seventeenth-Century France, vol. 88, Contributions to the Study of World History (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 19.

vi Shannon Lee Dawdy, “La Ville Sauvage: ‘Enlightened’ Colonialism and Creole Improvisation in New Orleans, 1699-1769.” (PhD, University of Michigan, 2003) 40: She includes Pierre Charlevoix’s disparaging account of the town in 1722 as evidence of the town’s “disappointment in its humble beginnings.” Yet, his visit came in the aftermath of the 1722 hurricane that leveled the town. Whatever he encountered there would have been the very first attempts to rebuild amid detritus.


Banks, Kenneth J. *Chasing Empire across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 92: "In Louisiana, rivers also served as major highways. Early colonists, many of whom were Canadians, tapped into a long-standing tradition of river transport, from both neighboring Native peoples and the couriers de bois. They began bringing furs to d'Iberville's initial settlement at Fort Condé (near Mobile) as soon as workmen erected its palisade in 1701.


D’Artaguette, "D’artaguette to Pontchartrain, Louisiana, 20 June 1710," 56: "The majority of the soldiers are clad in skins and this gives the Native Americans a miserable idea of us. There is nothing in the warehouses for the Native Americans. They are as impatient as we are about the long waiting for the vessels."


St. Malo Hubert, "Hubert to the Council 26 October 1717," in *MPA, FD*, V. II, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929 [1717]), 227.

D’Artaguette. "D'artaguette to Pontchartrain, Louisana, 20 June 1710." In *MPA, FD*, V. II, (Jackson, MS: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929), 56."The majority of the soldiers are clad in skins and this gives the Native Americans a miserable idea of us. There is nothing in the warehouses for the Native Americans. They are as impatient as we are about the long waiting for the vessels," 57: "We are beginning to take notice of the rigid orders that are [in force] in the Spanish ports of this gulf not to permit under penalty of confiscation any French vessel or any vessel from the islands to unload anything there."


Diron D'Artaguette, "Memoir of D'artaguette to Pontchartrain, 8 September 1712," in *Mississippi Provincial Archives, French Domination 1701-1729*, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929 [1712]), 73.
"During the war years, Franco-Spanish relations remained amiable enough....But with the death of the Sun King the situation changed. Utrecht had guaranteed that the French and Spanish crowns would never be united, but Philip, a Frenchmen at heart, looked longingly across the Pyrenees at the throne occupied by a five-year-old nephew." 59: These years of policy vacillation took a heavy toll on the infant colony at the mouth of the Mississippi. With the death of Iberville it had lost its strongest advocate, the one who had the ear of Versailles. Moreover, the scandal which followed Iberville's death, when Pontchartrain ordered an investigation of the discoverer's financial shenanigans, discredited the Le Moyne family and the colony itself. A colony established as a strategic outpost changed naturally in importance as European alliances shifted. During and after the War of the Spanish Succession, though its strategic value was recognized, the colony was not only neglected but downright denigrated and found itself the butt of doubts in Paris, antagonism in Madrid, constant harassment by English colonists and their Native American allies and frank hostility in Quebec;" 60: "In the meanwhile, the Louisiana colony languished. Entirely dependent on France for their food supply, the colonists came close to starvation (at least by French standards which did not acknowledge corn as food).

New Orleans could be seen as another fort in France's plans to construct anti-English fortifications from Louisbourg in Cape Breton on down.
The first act of his administration was to make arrangements to remove the head-quarters of the colonial government from the sterile lands of Biloxi, Mobile, and St. Louis Bays, to the rich country bordering on the Mississippi, the site for which he had selected, and sent workmen and laborers there the year before, to lay the foundation of the future capital of Louisiana.

Marquis d'Artagnan was most likely Pierre de Montesquiou, comte d'Artagnan (1640–1725) comte de Montesquiou.

Company of the Indies on November 18, 1719, to Monseigneur Claude La Blanc, French minister of state, and his associates, the Marquis d'Asfeld, marshal of France and successor to the Marshal de Vauban as director-general of fortifications. The head of the corps of military engineers; the comte de Belle Isle, lieutenant-general of the king's armies; and Gerard Michel de La Jonchère, treasurer-general of the military order of Saint Louis. These distinguished personages raised a sum of 400,000 livres for their establishments on the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers.

Huntingue, Sarrelouis, Longwy, Montlouis, Montdauphin, and Heufbriasch.


Foucault, Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78, 13: "Alexandre Le Maître was a protestant who left France before the Edict of Nantes and who became, and the term is significant, general engineer of the Elector of Bandenburg (in 1682)."

Chartier et al., Le Ville Classique De La Renaissance Aux Révolutions, 19-20: "va plus loin; il offer un interpétation nouvelle qui ouvre La voi aux meditations du XVIIIe siécle. La ville devient ici un centre régulateur où tout afflue et don’t tout procède; mieux, elle joue pour Le tissu social Le role de La tête dans Le corps humain; d’une part, elle concentre, diffuse et redistribute, de l’autre, elle dirige et comande.”


Colin Jones, The Great Nation, 68.

Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769: Engineers.

Rejection of Blondel, who Bienville sent to establish New Orleans in 1718. Blondel was loyal to Bienville and his brother, Chateaugué, but had was unknown in the French court. Pontchartrain, "Pontchartrain to Bienville, Marly, 10 May 1710," in Mississippi Provincial Archives 1704-1743 French

VICTORIN DEJAN and trans. Helene H. Cruzat, "Manon Fescaut, the Real Versus Ideal," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 2, no. 3 (1919).


Also a guilded engineer: engineer-in-chief, corps du Génie.


For example, a reproduction of a 1725 map housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France appears in Wilson Jr.'s Vieux Carre: Historic District Demonstration Study, 19 map 16 indicates that there were existing streets named rue de Vandome, and rue D’auguin. De Vendôme probably referring to Louis Joseph de Bourbon, duc de Vendôme (1654-1712), a commander during several of Louis XIV’s wars and husband to Marie Anne de Condé (1678-1718), one of Henry III Jules de Bourbon, prince de Condé’s daughters; D’Anguin may refer to Le Grande Conde, Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (1621 –1686): Maurice Cauchie, “La Pratique de La musicologie: Comment orthographier les noms propres?” in Revue de musicologie, T. 3e, No. 3e (Sep., 1922), 121: Le grande Condé, dans sa jeunesse, est appelé d’Anguien, ou d’Anguyen, ou d’anguin”.

Louis de Bourbon-Condé, Comte de Clermont (15 June 1709-16 June 1771)[1], was a member of the cadet Bourbon-Condé branch of the French royal house. He was the third and youngest son of Louis III de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (1668-1710) and Louise-Françoise de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Nantes (1673-1743), an illegitimate daughter of King Louis XIV of France. He was also the great-grandson of Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, the Great Condé, who died in 1687.; Beth Nachison, "Absentee Government and Provincial Governors in Early Modern France: The Princes of Conde and Burgundy, 1660-1720," French Historical Studies 21, no. 2 (1998), 268: Rue Burgandy was most likely named for the Province ruled over by the Princes Condé; N/A, Relation de La Louisiane, Edward Ayer Collection, MS 530, Newberry Library, Chicago, 5: It is worth noting that the majority of the engineers of New Orleans arrived in Louisiana on the boat named comte de Toulonze.

Colin Jones, Paris, Biography of a City (New York: Viking, 2004), 140-41,143; Joan DeJean, Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin De Siécle, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 140: also refers to the rue Dauphine in 1690s Paris as the address of famous coffee house Café Laurent and 93: rue Saint-Anne as the home of the famous Louis XIV-era shoe shop, Des Noyers.

Jones, Paris, Biography of a City, 37.


Hachard de Saint Stanislas, Relation Du Voyage Des Dames Religieuses Ursulines De Rouen a La Nouvelle-Orléans Avec Une Introduction Et Des Notes Par Gabriel Gravier, 89: “Notre Ville est fort belle, bien construite, & régulièrement bâtie, autant que je m’y peux conoître, &que j’en ai vu Le jour de notre arrivée en ce pays, car depuis ce jour-là, nous avons toujours resté dans notre clôture, quoi qu’avant notre arrivée l’on nous en ait donné une très-mauvaise idée, il est vrai que ceux qui nous parloient ainsi n’y étoient pas venues depuis quelques années, qu’on a travaillé &qu’on travaille encor actuellement àla perfectionner. Les rues y sont tres-larges &tirées au cordeau, La grande rue a prés d’une lieuë de longueur, les Maisons fort bien bâties en collombage & mortier blanchies en chaud, lambrissés & percées toutes à jour, les deffus de Maisons sont couvertes de Bordeaux, qui sont de petites planches taillées en forme d’ardoise, il faut Le sçavoir pour Le croire, car cette couverture a toute l’asarence & La beauté de l’ardoise.”

Bienville, and Salmon, "Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas May 12, 1733." In Mississippi Provincial Archives French Dominion 1704-1743, edited by Dunbar Rowland, (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932 [1733]) 594: “Sieurs de Bienville and Salmon do not think that the ditches that Sieur Périer had had begun un order to surround New Orleans are of sufficiently urgent necessity for it to be necessary to think of finishing them. They believe on the contrary that Sieur Périer undertook this work only to assure the citizens of this city who were extremely alarmed by the bold enterprises of the Natchez. In fact these ditches the width of which were to be sixty feet, and which were never more than two feet deep.”

Using Parisian measurements: Notarial Archives Research Center (NARC), Arpent Http://Eogen/Arpent(Last modified December 27, 2004 2005): ‘There are some variations. For example, in urban Louisiana the arpent measures are the same as those above, but in rural Louisiana the arpent is slightly larger (191.944 feet or 58.504 meters). Sometimes called arpen. In France, 16th-18th centuries, two units: one of length, and the other of land area. Arpent commune: before the 19th century, a unit of land area=100 square perches du commun, about 4221 square meters. The perche du commun was 20 pied du roi. Arpent du Paris. In France, 16th-18th centuries, two units based on the perche de Paris (approximately 5.847 meters) each perche=18 pied du roi.

Jones, Paris, Biography of a City, 163.

Bernard Lepetit, The Pre-Industrial Urban System; France, 1740-1840, ed. Peter Clark and David eeder, trans. Godfrey Rogers, Themes in International Urban History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 54, 55: Once security was no longer a problem, then the wall began to be perceived as an obstacle, and eventually it made way in the face of architectural, economic, and fiscal imperatives. Rioting had broken out at Marseille in 1666 when the Intendant of the hulks opened the city walls to satisfy the military. A hundred years later, the transfer of cemeteries outside of city walls could still encounter popular resistance, but the fate of walls themselves was no longer something to be fought over;” 55: “Thus even when the wall itself survived, the image of the walled city was fading [by 1700 in reference to Poitiers]. For the present discussion it is relevant to note that the traditional walls had afforded more than physical security; they also afforded a degree of conceptual security. The wall delineated the physical profile of the town but equally, and perhaps even more importantly, it defined the town itself. Without a wall, how exactly was the town to be identified? Arguably that question is still waiting for an answer.”

Dumont, "History of Louisiana Translated from the Historical Memoirs of M. Dumont," 24; Penicaut, M. "Annals of Louisiana from 1698 to 1722." In Historical Collections of Louisiana and Florida Including Translations of Original Manuscripts Relating to Their Discovery and Settlement, with Numerous Historical and Biographical Notes, edited by B. F. French, 35-162. New York: J. Sabin and Sons, 1869 [1721], 138-139: “the site for which he had selected, and sent workmen and laborers there the year before, to lay the foundation of the future capital of Louisiana. They removed the trees and bushes, traced the streets and squares, and dug drains around each, to carry off the waste water from the overflows of the river in high water; also threw up an embankment in front and around the city, to protect it from inundation.”

Superior Council of Louisiana, "Abstracts from Old Papers." The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 1, no. 1 (1922), 103-15: Count D’Artagnan allowed site # 66 and refers them for boundary details
to Mr. Chaville, Royal Engineer. Lot must be cleared and staked and stumps cut away to half the width of the street within two months.

Superior Council, "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana VII," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1919), 329.


"Paris était sans doute La ville La pus peuplée d' Europe. En 1630, Rome compte 113 000 habitants; Naples, en 1606 280 000 environ, et en 1656 300 000; Venise, 150 000 en 1630, puis, après La peste, 120 000 en 1643; Londres, en 1636, 270 000 habitants."

"La moyenne de 20 habitants par maison est-elle vraisemblable? Oui, sans doute, car Pierre Petit nous montre La quantité de maisons à cinq ou six étages, toutes pleines jusqu'aux tuiles de diverses maisons et professions. Mais les estampes confirment l'existence de très hautes maisons en divers endroits. Là où les maisons n'ont pas dépassé deux ou trois étages, bien des bâtiments annexes ont ât été construits sur La cour et jardins intérieurs, et finalement La moyenne de 20 habitants par immeuble ne paraît pas exagérée."


Horne, *Seven Ages of Paris*, 139-40: "Under [François] Blondel, reinforced by the King's patronage and the new wealth of the era, an unprecedented classical harmony prevailed, offering uniformity and even standardization. Strict rules were laid down: private dwellings had to be built of stone, instead of the fire-prone timber frames and lath and plaster of earlier ages. (ala 1666 London fire) they were forbidden by law to have first floors bulging out over the street, where carriages might collide with them; frontages could be no more than eight toises (15.6 metres) high; staircases were moved from the centre to the side, and kitchens transplanted from the wings to separate structures in the courtyard. Straight lines became the norm, irregular tiles roofs being replaced by a single roof of grey slate or lead. More ornate interiors were counterpointed by sober simplicity in exterior design."

Annual flooding resulted in the adaptation of the building designs to favor houses from rural Southern France where the main floors of houses were raised six feet above the ground.


It is significant that no extant notarial act describes a house within New Orleans with a thatched roof. It is possible they existed, but had to be removed when the property was sold. It is also possible that the formulæ: *vu, visité et examiné* consider, visit and examine was the warning that the property was not up to code.

Council, "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana VII.", 329: example of resident selling house because he is unable to keep house at code.

Reverend Father Beaudouin, "Beaudouin to Salmon 23 November 1732," in *MPA, FD*, V. IV, 162: "It is true that if an establishment should be made at [Choctaw village] Boucfooua and if the Pearl River should be used, the goods could be forwarded directly from New Orleans to which the Choctaws would have more easy access. That very fact would be very pernicious for the colony, and if the Choctaws had not been invited to come to New Orleans three years ago, we should have been spared many fears and alarms. It is not necessary that a nation as powerful as that of the Choctaws should be acquainted with the attractions of a capital such as New Orleans especially in the present circumstances"; "Sale of Property," *French 2* (New Orleans: 02/28/1768), NARC, 66811-66814, example of formulæ: "une maison folle en colomage briqueter entre apoteaint [?] entonné au jolousheé; galeria sur trois faces, couverted en bardeaux á cheminée Le brique planachée haut et l ad portre en fenestred ferred et feruesient [?] de --clefe; en l'etat que Le toui de pourbuit [?] et comporte...."


"Declaration," *French 2*, (New Orleans: 1735/April/9), NARC, 10905: "Monsieur de Salmon du règlement pour La pr"eséance dans l'église pour La signer[,] il [sic] auroit passé dans son cabinet à cet effet."
"On the levee, to the left, a little above the intendant’s, is the market, and opposite the place, beside the storehouses, is the anchorage for vessels, and beside it the guardhouse."; Chartier et al., *Le Ville Classique De La Renaissance Aux Révolutions*, 138-9; Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT press, 1965), Steven Laurence Kaplan, *Provisioning Paris: Merchants and Millers in the Grain and Flour Trade During the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 28-9: "The marketplace, as I construe it, was the consecrated space of neither capitalism nor carnival...unlike Bakhtin's 'free place,' the marketplace of the police was a preeminently official venue, structured, organized, regulated (at least in theory)...The marketplace of the police was devised precisely to refuse extraterritorial privilege and to enshrine the official world view. Yet the official spirit of the marketplace was no less 'with the people' than the unofficial marketplace that Bakhtin so brilliantly evoked."..."The police intended the marketplace not to throttle commerce but to domesticate it and moralize it, not to obliterate the market principal but to correct it.

"If the marketplace was erected to contain the burgeoning tide of the market principle, its adversaries scorned it because that tide was irresistible. Goods tended to flee the marketplace as the market principle attempted to assert itself."


The Place Royale, the Place Dauphin, and Pont Neuf in Paris were not only meant to organize public space, but affect private building as well.


Quinn, *The French Overseas Empire*, 43.


Brasseaux, *France's Forgotten Legion*, Administrators (from Languiole/Laquiole)

James E. McClellan III, François Regourd, “The Colonial Machine,” 31-32: "Beginning in the seventeenth century, France carved out small settlement and exploitation colonies in wild, peripheral sites in the Americas (Quebec, Louisiana, the West Indies, and Guyana); along the slave coasts of Africa; and in the Native American ocean (Ile de France, Ile Bourbon--today's Mauritius and Réunion--Madagascar, and trading posts on the subcontinent). With its fantastically productive sugar islands--notably Saint Domingue (Haiti)--eighteenth-century France rivaled England as the world's most economically potent colonial power. Concurrently, French science was institutionally and intellectually the strongest of any nation...French physicians and the instrumentalities of French medicine came with the first wave of formal colonization in..."
the early seventeenth century. In addition to the church, the army, and the navy, medicine was instrumental in establishing and maintaining overseas colonies."


xcvi Several of the plans survive to indicate that de Batz and other architects appreciated the changing nature of private space. Urban houses in Paris, Rouen, and other cities were increasingly built with more elaborate floor plans that carefully delineated rooms for particular uses: bedrooms were separated from sitting rooms and couloirs from antechambers. Chartier et al., *Le Ville Classique De La Renaissance Aux Révolutions*, 451. Wilson, *Bienville's New Orleans: A French Colonial Capital 1718-1768*.

xcvii Glenn R. Conrad, *The First Families of Louisiana*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad, II vols., vol. I (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1970). 50-60: “chevalier de Tourneville from, Monsieur de Villemont from, Monsieur François Chantreau de Beaumont from, Monsieur Bail de Beaupre from, and Monsieur.” Conrad, *The First Families of Louisiana*. 105: “Furthermore, these concessionaires were designed to increase their family’s wealth by investing in America: Marquis D’Artagnan at Cannes Brulees, the Marquis d’Asfield and Monsieur Le Blanc and John Law’s concession at English Turn and Les Chaouachas, and Monsieur Meziers and Desmarches near Pointe Coupée. Others, like governor Bienville’s had a concession adjacent to New Orleans. The Brothers de Laires des Ursins from Paris, Brossard/Brossart brothers from Lyon Le Page from Paris Monsieur de La Houssaye from Picardy, Claude Joseph Dubreuil from Paris or Dijon were among these. Yet, from its founding, New Orleans increasingly became the vital center for the colony’s activities in spite of the need for success in its outlying concessions. Vanessa Herold Arnaud, "Gossip as a Social Force in Seventeenth-Century French Culture" (PhD, University of California Los Angeles, 2001), 173: “Louis XIVs self-transformation into the sun King was contingent upon his subjects accepting his magnificence. At the beginning of his personal rule, history was designed entirely to glorifying the king. In the 1660s and 1670s, Louis XIV and Colbert engaged a group of writers called La petite académie to create a narrative devoted to the glorious moments of the monarch,” and 177: "One of the ways in which Louis XIV aspired to transcend his subjects and ordinary humanity in general, was through court festivals and amusements. He invited the principal members of the aristocracy to his chateau and offered them entertainments that none of them could afford themselves without financial ruin. By bedazzling his guests and precluding any sort of reciprocity, the monarch emphasized his distance from them." These fêtes, as Louis Marin argues, were magical counterparts to political realities, in which the king constructed a mythical relationship with his subjects based on a deification of himself. While the festivals placed Louis above men, they also transformed the nobility into mere courtiers. The traditional pastimes of the nobles became part of the spectacle. The tournament, for example, turned into a carousel, and the military review, a parade of theatrical costumes. As Louis turned the nobles into a swirling and glittering show, he gradually divested the, of effective political power." Paul du Poisson, "Letter from Father Du Poisson, Missionary to the Akensas, to Father***." In *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, by Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed, (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers, 1900), 317: at the Yazoo: “Here was Monsieur Le Blanc’s concession which has come to ruin like so many others. The ground is rolling; it has been slightly explored, and the air is said to be unhealthy.”

Paul du Poisson, "Letter from Father Du Poisson, Missionary to the Akensas, to Father***." In *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, by Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed, (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers, 1900), 317: at the Yazoo: “Here was Monsieur Le Blanc’s concession which has come to ruin like so many others. The ground is rolling; it has been slightly explored, and the air is said to be unhealthy.”

Also lists a De La Lande des Ursins in Superior Council Records; Conrad, *The First Families of Louisiana*. I, 8; Penicaut, "Annals of Louisiana from 1698 to 1722," 140; Penicaut, "Annals of Louisiana from 1698 to 1722." 141: "M. de Chantous, M.M Le Page, Du Pratz, and Legras, also brought over eight persons each, to settle on the site of the old Choupitoulas village."


xcix  Poisson, “Letter from Paul Poisson” 172: “The Company of the Indies had conceded to Mr. Law sixteen square leagues which, I believe, amount to 100 leagues in circumference. His intention was to build a city here, to establish manufactures, to keep on hand a great number of vessels and troops and to found a duchy.

f F2-22 (1016-1018), F2-36 (10613-23), and Archives Notarial, in 10613-10623 (Viel to Mayeux: French 2), Jean Baptiste de Bienville, "Bienville to the Navy Council, Fort Louis, 12 June 1718," in *Mississippi Provincial Archives 1704-1743 French Dominion*, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932 [1718]).


j Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People: The Chickasaw Indians to Removal* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 11: By the turn of the eighteenth century the Chickasaw villages appear to have been scattered over a large area of the extreme northern part of the Black Prairie which terminated just north of present day Tupelo."

k Dumont, "History of Louisiana Translated from the Historical Memoirs of M. Dumont," 43.


m Council, "Minutes of the Superior Council of Louisiana,"457.

n Diron D'Artaguette, "From Diron D'artaguette to Maurepas 20 March 1730," in *MPA, FD, V. IV*, 78.


cxxv Maduell, *The Census Tables*, 65; 1726 Census, Part I: Censuses, in G1, Part I. Censuses, Part II. Passenger Lists of Ships, Part III. General Correspondence Co. of the Indies (ca. 1706-1736), *Reel 464*, (Microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City, Filmed at Versailles on 7 November 1974), 25-37; deVilliers and Warrington Dawson, "A History of the Foundation of New Orleans, (1717-1722), "285-86: "When announcing their departure, the Company added, 'If possible, they must be compelled to dwell within the limits of New Orleans, having only gardens there, as may be decreed, and receiving grants or lands as near as may be, in proportion to their strength. The managers furthermore directed that two soldiers from each of the eight companies should be released on condition they went to live in New Orleans; they were to receive a year's pay, besides tools and seeds."

cxxvi Poisson, "Letter from Father Du Poisson, Missionary to the Akensas, to Father***." 281.

cxxvii Plan de La Nouvelle Orleans, (with a list of property owners), original by Gonichon in The Historic New Orleans Collection: photostat, "1974.25.28.133-34." In 133-34, French.

cxxviii This map has a 36 page translated and transcribed legend attached to it. According to the Library of Congress the original is lost. Despite this, the numbers and placement of the lots corresponds to the Notarial acts and arguably adheres to the descriptions and placements of houses on the lots before 1745.

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Plan de La Nouvelle Orleans, HNOC

Council, "Minutes of the Council, French Dominion 1701-1729," in *MPA, FD*, V. II, 418-19: March 20, 1725 Regulations for the Orders for Goods "The Council being informed beyond the possibility of doubt that there are a number of little inhabitants who carry on no other business here than of trading in the orders that are given to them either under their own names or those of their neighbors which they use, and annoy the Council daily in order to obtain some for the purposes of reselling them, which brings it about that not one inhabitant can find a servant of a workman to work in the fields that are in cultivation, it has been resolved that in the future no orders shall be delivered to the little inhabitants except once a month, to wit: To those on Royal Street on Tuesday, To those on Bourbon Street on Wednesday, To those on Bienville, St. Louis, and Toulouse Streets on Thursdays. To those on St. Peter, Orleans, and St. Anne Streets on Friday, To those of Dumain, Clermont, and St. Adrien on Saturday of the first week of each month [Clermont and St. Adrien Street are not listed in the city directory if New Orleans. Other names have no doubt been given them. Several of the streets in the original city bear names of obviously later origin, for example, Decatur and Madison Streets.] By means of this arrangement the Council will not be overwhelmed daily as it is. As for those who will come down to get merchandise and goods from the warehouses, the Council will wait on them promptly every time they present themselves, with the understanding of course that they will come only once a month; and the present ordannance shall be read, published and posted everywhere necessary with the injunction to the inhabitants who present memoranda to put at the top of the name of the street on which they live."

Graph here? Summary here? This is also ongoing research as no two sources agree on the exact ownership/occupation of lots.

Devin, "Devin to Pauger 29 August 1724," in *MPA, FD*, V. II, 395: "Living at Mobile is beginning to be more disagreeable than ever. There is, so to speak, no more society. Madame de Mandeville who constituted its ornament is going to reside at New Orleans and is departing with Mr. de Mandeville, who had been so kind as to take charge of this letter, by the Pierre D'Aumale's launch."; Brasseaux, *France's Forgotten Legion Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769*, Support Personnel.


Brasseaux, *France's Forgotten Legion*, Military officers, both men were married in New Orleans and had sons.

Jacques Judice, a native of Thiancourt, France, and Marie
Jeantry, a native of Theree Bishopric and La Rochelle, was born in New Orleans in 1733. He married Jeanne Marie Cantrelle (born 1733), daughter of Jacques Cantrelle, who came from Picardie, France; Michel Gaspard, Maduell, The Census Tables for the Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1732, 118. Gaspard also listed as having property near the German villages; Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion. Officers: Perhaps Jacques Fernan Voison, “native of Saint Servant, Brittany, son of Pierre Voison, a Louisiana militia officer, married to Hélène Moseste Piednoir”; Name cited in Guide to the Louisiana Miscellany Collection, 1724-1837, by Judy Riffel available at http://www.sos.louisiana.gov/ARCHIVES/texts/comite/Miscellany_Collection_Index.txt accessed 21 Feb 07; Maduell, The Census Tables for the Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1732. Perhaps Sr. Chapron, the concessionnaire.


cxxvi 1726 Census, Part I: Censuses, in G1, Part I. Censuses, Part II. Passanger Lists of Ships, Part III. General Correspondence Co. of the Indies (ca. 1706-1736), Reel 464. (Microfilmed by the Geneological Society of Salt Lake City, Filmed at Versailles on 7 November 1974): Bruslé is listed as the owner of a block of lots—534 to 538—which are listed as “for the barracks”. I am not listing those as his personal possessions because he was in charge of King’s finances at the time and may have been officially in charge of acquiring them for the barracks. It is also possible that he speculated on those lots: buying them in order to sell them at a profit to the Crown. However, there is no evidence of how or why his name appears on these lots.


cxxix Superior Council, "Abstracts from Old Papers," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 1, no. 1 (1922): 230.: Count D’Artagnan allowed site # 66 and refers them for boundary details to Mr. Chaville, Royal Engineer. Lot must be cleared and staked and stumps cut away to half the width of the street within two months.

cxxx New Orleans map legend, LC

cxxxii New Orleans map legend, LC

cxxxiii Superior Council, "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana VII," 329; “Sale of Property,” French 2 (New Orleans: 02/08/1762), NARC, 66811-66814; Superior Council, "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana Vii, " 328: Petition over unfinished house: May 23, 1725 Gedeon Frenay de La Bouillonnerie, tenant, living at Natchez, rented a house from Sieur Faussier at 200 francs a year, on condition that F. should put it in shape for occupancy, as it lacks doors, doors and windows. Tenant has paid 100 francs in advance; either let the owner supply the requisite appurtenances within 8 days or else refund 100 francs. Action granted.”

cxxxiv For example: “Sale of Property” in French 5, (New Orleans: 03/24/1759), NARC, 64514-64516. Translated as seen, visited, and examined, but used by notaries to connote a visit to the property, examination of the property, and consideration of the condition before agreeing to the purchase as evidenced by its use in the pre-sale, sale, and finalized sale documents.

cxxxv For example: “Sale of Property,” in French 5, (New Orleans 03/24/1759), NARC, 56840-56845

cxxxvi John Markoff, "Violence, Emancipation, and Democracy: The Countryside and the French Revolution," The American Historical Review 100, no. 2 (1995): 363; EM Sait, "The Manorial System and the French Revolution." Political Science Quarterly 23, no. 4 (1908), 698: "The peasants were irritated by champart and corvée, but far more by the monopolies, fruitful source of abuse and petty oppression. Ancient tolls were collected where the road was no longer repaired and were the bridge was falling into decay. From the dovecotes hundreds of pigeons invaded fields of grain; from the warrens came innumerable rabbits; and the peasant could not lift a hand against them."

cxxxvii Superior Council, "Decrees of the Superior Council " in Mississippi Provincial Archives, French Dominion 1701-1729, ed. Dunbar Rowland, Mississippi Provincial Archives (Jackson, MS: Mississippi State Department of Archives and History, 1929 [1723]), 292.
This not only applies to the concessionaires, but smaller landowners like Chavannes and Langlois who had holdings inside and outside the city. See Maduell, *The Census Tables for the Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1732*, for the colony’s Early French History.


“Succession,” *French 2* (New Orleans: 9/13/1735), NARC, 10143-10187; Many were carpenters, but there was Poire the gunsmith, Brouet the wheelwright, LeMaire the Innkeeper, Bary the coppersmith, Becquet the metalsmith, La Pierre the Barber, Commercy the Cutler, Mate the wagon maker (possibly free black?) Botson the Founder, and Marquet the sail maker.


New Orleans map legend, LC


Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 130: “A New Orleans free black named Scipion signed a contract with François Trudeau for one year, hiring himself to go to Illinois in Madame Labuissoniere’s boat as rower, or in any other capacity as needed. On return from this trip he was to serve Trudeau until the year had expired....Three years later, Scipion contracted to take charge of Rene Petit’s barge going to Illinois and to unload the cargo there.”

"De La Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723." In *MPA, FD*, V.II, 348: " There happened to him in 1719 the misfortune of killing one of his friends in self-defense. They were both in love with the same woman and as rivals they could not agree. It was the dead man who attacked him, and his family in order to remove him from the arms of justice which doubtless would have seized him obtained a special order from the King to send him here. He has been here since that time. He has had the misfortune to displease Mr. De Bienville without knowing the reason for it. He has always persecuted him, having had the ration taken from him at a time when he did not know where to lay his head. I even talked to Mr. De Bienville about it and he told me that he had on his mind was that he had been told that he had circulated verses against him, which was found to be false." Asks the council to make him Secretary of Council or a worker in the cashiers office. Notes that he has finished his schooling and can draws plans perfectly well. He has him working in his office because his clerk Pichot is good, but can't do everything.

Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723," 129.

Maduell, *The Census Tables for the Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1732*, 32: “Civilian Officials of the Company 1722”, 78: “Louis Langlois” of New Orleans requests “negroes” from the Company in 26.100: Listed as Canadian. 121: Concession opposite Chapitoulas with man capable of

Conrad, The First Families of Louisiana.,68-75; Plan de La Nouvelle Orleans, HNOC;


"Sale of Property," in French 4, (New Orleans: 02/13/1748), NARC, 30704-05; Amalia D. Kessler, "Enforcing Virtue; Social Norms and Self-Interest in an Eighteenth-Century Merchant Court." Law and History Review 22, no. 1 (2004), 78: Marie Lange’s status as a merchant négotiant indicates she dealt in wholesale and retail activities: "Négotiant a term used to designate wholesale merchants engaged in international trade and banking activities."

Brasseaux, France’s Forgotten Legion Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769.; Military officers

Chevalier Louboey (Loubois), "From Louboey to Maurepas 12 October 1739 New Orleans," in MPA, FD, V. I 1729-1740, 405-06: “Two weeks ago I was informed that four soldiers who were stationed on the lower part of the bayou had the preceding night carried away the boat of this post with the chest of the corporal who is in command there and whom they had left asleep; that they had done that at the instigation of a man named Quimper, who operated a boat of Aufrére, a settler, who transported the pitch that he manufactures on the other side of Lake Pontchartrain; that he had not only induced them to desert but also to seize four negroes and two negresses and the boat belonging to his master with which they ran away. As soon as I was informed of this fine prank I instantly had orders given to six soldiers and four or five settlers who volunteered to go in pursuit of our thieves, who unfortunately had a start of twenty hours....The detachment followed them without finding the least little trace of the route that they had taken after they had abandoned the large boat in which they were, and which they left so hastily that they left two bottles of brandy, two buckets of old clothes, an army gun and their pipes still quite warm, together with traces indicating some quarrel that had taken place among these brigands, the fore-stay sail and the fore-part of that boat covered with blood and the cable pierced with a bullet. A pirogue that was coming from Biloxi found on the following day one league from the Shells [note: Shell Island (L’il aux coquilles) at the mouth of the Pearl River]. a man who had been drowned and half eaten by the alligators. He had apparently been thrown into the sea by those who had killed him...This makes all who are acquainted with those places believe that our rogues in their fright had taken the first bayou that had offered itself and that they simply cannot get out of it inasmuch as the land is marshy and submerged and one must be extremely experienced to find a way out of it. This last circumstance had made me decide, my lord, to make another attempt and to send men acquainted with the region, who know all these windings and turnings because they have long hunted there, in order to try to find them so as to make as severe an example of them as the case deserves."

Penicaut, "Annals of Louisiana from 1698 to 1722," 159.
CHAPTER IV

PARISIAN LAWS FOR NEW ORLEANS

Introduction
The city of New Orleans developed out of urban planning techniques developed under Louis XIV’s reign, employed by John Law’s Company, and enforced by the Regency. The laws and standards governing the capital’s inhabitants also came from the Sun King’s precedents. During his reign, the Crown undertook projects to contain what he understood as “disorder” throughout France and develop a moral code that would curtail the vice in the country and moralize its marketplaces. These activities established that the French Crown had authority over the public and the private lives of its subjects. In Louisiana, Crown administrators like de La Chaise used these legal precedents to assert authority over New Orleans’s residents and bolster their status as arbiters of the colony’s social order.

Part 1: The Culture of Moral Discipline

Paris Laws for New Orleans’s Streets
The 1664 Coutume de Paris was part of Louis XIV's efforts to create a legal code in Paris that would serve as a model for the rest of France. Historian Philip Riley argues that Louis’s plans went beyond managing a civic system, it was also designed as a moral code for the city. Louis XIV knew "he had been chosen by God to rule and that as a
Christian King he had a special responsibility to safe guard the souls of his subjects.iii While Louis XIV focused particular attention on Paris, he also sought to extend his control into towns, ports, and provinces that had rarely felt the Crown’s presence before the Superior Council of Louisiana used similar tactics to administer discipline in New Orleans.ii Historian Khalil Saadani argues that the Superior Council of Louisiana followed the Canadian’s precedent for adhering to the Coutume de Paris in Louisiana’s criminal and civic cases rather than the looser, more interpretive application in its Caribbean neighbors on Guadeloupe or in Saint-Domingue.iii There were reasons for this practice. Certainly, the number of Canadians and French émigrés on the Council influenced the use of the Coutume de Paris. Saadani also argues that enforcing the Coutume was an aspect of the power struggle among elites in New Orleans.iv Both de Bienville’s and de La Chaise’s allies wanted to demonstrate loyalty to the Crown and their ability to manage the dynamic population of the colony. They used the Crown’s Parisian precedents in particular to justify their actions.v Enforcing the Coutume de Paris in New Orleans was an effective vehicle for members of the Superior Council to practically and symbolically discipline Louisiana.

The History of Market Discipline

Disciplining the majority of the Crown’s subjects was essential for the members of urban French and Canadian social elites. They had to engage with the alien and exotic possibilities of the Gulf Coast, assert their authority, take what they needed, and come away more secure in their status. This meant engaging with the lucrative opportunities in Louisiana while resisting and excising experiences that would prove damaging to their
fortunes and reputations. They had to demonstrate considerable self-discipline in and authority over the marketplace opportunities. Traveling to America was not the first place this kind of gamble occurred. In fact, by 1700 France had several generations of negotiating the tantalizing possibilities offered by contact with the exotic at its coastal and port cities. The histories of these portals of contact demonstrate the dangers and the possibilities of risky exchange.

International trade lapped the shores of France’s port cities and made certain marks on the people who lived there. Trade with Africa, the Americas, and the rest of Europe transformed the economies of La Rochelle, Nantes, Marseilles, and even inland Rouen by the middle of the sixteenth century. Merchants moved raw materials and finished goods as well as provided docking and shipping services that often encouraged healthy bureaucratic offices in admiralty courts, taxation, and labor guilds. Yet, the wealth in these areas increased by nefarious means as well. By the mid sixteenth century, piracy based in these port towns was lucrative. Far from the realm of the poor and disfranchised, raiding mostly Spanish ships was often undertaken by members of families wealthy enough to own or purchase a **corsaire**. The **corsaire** was designed for agility. It was a derivative of a barque, “a vessel with one deck which has three masts; the main, the fore, and the mizzen” which was rarely over one hundred tons. It had the bow shape of the Corvette, a sleeker, more agile ship developed under Colbert. On their **corsaires**, many sons of minor nobility used piracy as a means of attaining the wealth their families could not provide. Several families in port towns were also able to buy titles and enter the ranks of minor nobility by the middle of the seventeenth century.
Along with the demonstrable economic benefits, ships also brought tangible exoticism in trade goods to France. Dye woods, feathers, pelts, plants, spices, cloth, and jewels brought pieces of novel environments to the markets of these cities. In the case of Jean Ango (c.1480-1557), “one of the most powerful ship owners in France in the second quarter of the sixteenth century,” he not only lived off the wealth of these transactions, but also decorated his home with images from the far reaches of his trade. According to historian Jean Michel Massing, “Ango and his crew sailed the seas from the Canadian coast to Sumatra, taking their share of the spice trade by defying the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)” before “returning to Dieppe with rich spoils.” In his residence outside Dieppe, at Verengeville Massing describes the large frieze found in the open logia on the façade of the home. It “boasts a large frieze, which includes medallions with heads of Africans. Still more remarkable, however, is the large frieze in Ango's private oratory…from right to left, it shows native Americans, Guineans, South and East Africans, and the triumphal procession of the Indian King of Cochin.” Ango’s contact with the larger world became part of his domestic environment: travel experience represented in architectural details. Ango was one example of how legally and illegally procured economic trade came into these ports and symbolized the opportunities available through international commerce.

These port cities also incubated social and religious opportunities that created a unique culture of international communication. Protestantism flourished in these commercial centers and eventually infiltrated major shipping and trading networks across Europe and America. Along with religious ideas, the ports of France also brought sailors of all colors and creeds, changed by travel and carrying the experience in their material
possessions and appearance as well as their physical and mental health. They also brought stories about the rest of Europe as well as about Africa, the East Indies, North and South America. Sailors brought personal testimonies, popular ballads, and trade in an international travel literature that provided the written accounts of the world through memoirs of missionaries, pirates, and adventurers. These stories included ballads told of female pirates who dressed as men, tales of cannibalistic natives in the Caribbean, fearsome and demanding African, Indian, and Native American rulers, along with the fantastic new geography of exotic birds, beasts, deserts and rainforests.\textsuperscript{xii} By the middle of the seventeenth century, the rest of the world not only lived in the imaginations of the inhabitants of these port cities, but also fed their markets and economic wellbeing.

The international culture of these cities in the sixteenth century is important to the attitudes of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Louisiana émigrés. First, there were fortunes made and families elevated into the ranks of the \textit{noblesse de robe} through trade and conquest. They had gambled on the economic prospects of contact with the larger world and won. Many families understood that they could secure their place in French society by entering the world beyond its borders. These port communities also grew impressive local industries and lucrative trade guilds. City bureaucracies had grown and towns flourished. It was through these ports that the economic and social possibilities of Atlantic trade were a long-standing economic draw for individuals in France. \textsuperscript{xiii}

Just as significant, however, these coastal ports had to negotiate the effect of Atlantic World commerce on their relationship with the Crown. Areas like Marseilles, Nantes, and La Rochelle exposed themselves to retribution from the Crown’s authorities by resisting Louis XIV’s desire for control of the port towns. Incubating a distinct local
identity became perilous. Through travelers, returning sailors, goods, and language as well as written, spoken, and sung stories, these cities were the permeable membrane where the discourse of the rest of the world found its way into the heart of France. From Versailles in the 1780s, these cities looked tainted by, not enriched by this contact.

Ministers like Colbert, who began to centralize the government’s bureaucracy and enforce crown policies in local communities, enhanced the centripetal force of Louis’s court. The once independent port towns found themselves under increasing interference from the Crown. Beginning in 1664, Colbert directed the remodeling of hospitals in major port towns, set about building costal fortifications, and oversaw the restructuring of naval and commercial vessels. He also administered the opening of schools of marine engineering and hydrology. While the Crown increased its presence at the coast and inserted itself in the sea traffic, increasing levels of taxation also emphasized the Crown’s presence in the lives its subjects. At least seven major uprisings during Louis XIV’s reign indicate that these disciplinary attempts were neither universally embraced nor feared by his subjects. William Beik argues that several of these uprisings, including Marseille’s 1651 street battles, were instigated by powerful patrons fighting to preserve their local authority and autonomy. Along with these economic and bureaucratic assertions, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the subsequent suppression of Huguenots hit protestant strongholds in these coastal cities particularly hard. By 1700, the international trade and independent spirit of France’s port cities was a liability to their fiscal health and their social expression. For at least a generation before they traveled to Louisiana, families in France had experienced or heard about the perils of Atlantic travel and the New World through the commerce of these portals to the exotic.
The history of France’s costal cities indicate that settlements in the Gulf Coast needed to tread lightly between vital trade possibilities and social discipline. Louisiana would need to resemble Paris more than Marseilles if its residents were going to remain within the Crown’s favor. Imposing a strict moral code in Louisiana demonstrated that the Superior Council was loyal to and identified with the Crown rather than incubating an independent society. Employing the *Coutume de Paris* rather than provincial French or Caribbean derived statutes emphasized this desire to emulate Crown discipline. Just as significant, however, the *Coutume* in France and New Orleans provided considerable administrative authority over the public and private behaviors of the colony’s majority.

The symbolic reasons for establishing moral order in New Orleans

The rhetoric of disorder and chaos that characterize the letters from Louisiana to the French court take on particular significance when read within the context of the French Crown’s disciplinary efforts in France. De La Chaise was the author of the majority of letters decrying the moral laxity in New Orleans. He and other elites used the social problems of the city to demonstrate particular leadership, administrative skill, and moral authority. In 1729, Governor Périer and de La Chaise sent the following to the Company of the Indies:

> We no longer see in New Orleans the thefts and the debauchery that were so frequent there. The punishment that has been inflicted on the guilty has restrained those who had an evil inclination, I think, and I am acting differently from these who were accustomed to send those who were good for nothing into the interior. On the contrary I write to all the posts to send here to me the worst or the most scandalous. Thereby they reform in the remote posts, and those who are sent to me change or are hanged when they commit some deed that deserves it. That is why it is necessary that there should always be some one at New Orleans who is feared and respected there, otherwise not a day would pass without there being some new scene. This never fails when I am obliged to absent myself for only
twenty-four hours. If some one should not be sent to me, I should be obliged to be always sedentary. xviii

In this statement to the Company of the Indies, Périer and de La Chaise equate control over Louisiana with effectively policing its morality. They argue that New Orleans is the center of these disciplinary activities. They present themselves as the primary protectors of the health of moral law in Louisiana and therefore keepers of Crown standards. Their language evokes French precedents and earlier disciplining projects in France.

New Orleans’s population certainly faced many problems, but the troubling human factor may have been unremarkable compared with Europe and other American settlements. Death, disease, and violence were common on both sides of the Atlantic. Paris in particular and France in general had arguably some of the highest mortality in eighteenth-century Europe. xix Public executions were familiar scenes on both sides of the Atlantic. Historian Marcel Giraud mentions New Orleans’s brutal executions of burning Natchez Indians and insurgent blacks after the Natchez Massacre in 1729. xx Yet, Paris was no stranger to violent public executions, particularly when the accused were heretics. In the 1680s, Alistair Horne describes the “long procession,” of women accused of witchcraft burned at the stake in Paris. xxi Beyond the reality of capital punishment, mortality from natural causes was high in New Orleans, but not significantly different from Canada or the Caribbean in the early eighteenth century. xxii So, while historians have noted the brutal executions and persistence of death by disease in New Orleans, it would have been difficult to find a settlement in America or Europe where such mortal causes were not a part of daily life.

Louisiana became the home to many convicted criminals, but de La Chaise may have also overstated the social turbulence caused by these émigrés. When recruitment
plans for Louisiana fell short, John Law’s answer was to populate the lower Mississippi with convicted criminals from the overflowing prisons of France. Thus, several shiploads of convicted criminals arrived between 1718 and 1721.\textsuperscript{xiii} These colonists were generally accused of petty crimes and had their sentences commuted in order to serve as laborers for the Company of the West and impressed soldiers for the military. By 1728 many of New Orleans’s residents were described as “salt smugglers, vagabonds, beggars, 'libertines,' thieves, murderers, [and] prostitutes drawn from jails and hospitals” mostly in and around Paris.\textsuperscript{xxiv} Their arrival in New Orleans did not always succeed in providing the colony with added labor. Often sick, almost unanimously destitute, and generally unskilled, these immigrants arrived poorly equipped to enhance the productivity of the King’s settlement on the Mississippi.\textsuperscript{xxv} While many found legitimate positions in New Orleans or in the surrounding concessions, most either arrived too sick and malnourished to work in their assigned positions or were simply unable to find jobs in a region with so little capital. Those who joined the military often went without pay or resources for extended periods and lived in generally wretched conditions.\textsuperscript{xxvi}

When they did turn to illegal activities, these forced émigrés provided justification for the Council’s disciplining efforts. Because legitimate options remained unforthcoming or inadequate, the individuals who survived had illegal alternatives: prostitution, smuggling, illegal gambling, and illicit trade. As early as 1724, Deputy Attorney General Raquet went before the Superior Council to argue “the demoralizing influence of the robbers and scoundrels who have been sent to this country. Far from reforming in exile, they used it but for aggravation of their criminal excesses, besides corrupting the French servants, Indians and negroes.” He then petitioned to have them
“transported to parts remote and there live by their own labor; being pensioned in advanced for the first year.” The presence of a lawless underclass in New Orleans became another reason to mobilize law enforcement in the city’s first years of existence.

It is doubtful this lawless class actually threatened those individuals determined to recreate French culture on the banks of the Mississippi. Urban France was home to many desperate individuals by 1700. Certainly any immigrant—rich or poor—from Paris was used to defensively built elite neighborhoods. Even moderately wealthy Parisians kept their private lives secure behind shuttered doors and windows. Thus, the de La Chaises, Le Moynes, Périers, and Villars Dubreuils, among the others familiar with Paris would have found little unusual about building palisades around their urban New Orleans homes, accepting the immediate presence of destitution as normal, and managing the threat of desperate populations just beyond their doorsteps. A certain level of public disorder would have been normal for the members of the governing counsel and their neighbors in New Orleans. Enforcing a moral code was not necessarily a response to the problems in New Orleans, but a symbolic move by the elite to identify themselves as an extension of crown disciplinary efforts in France.

Promoting a culture of symbolic discipline remained important even in actual physical want and environmental devastation. Beginning in 1718, the residents of the new settlement of New Orleans suffered yearly seasons of flooding, starvation, disease and general need. Managing the crisis of basic needs was a priority for the Superior Council. Yet, in these same years, the governing body of New Orleans also chose to hold its residents to a moral code that governed not just gambling and prostitution, but also set prohibitions against slander and the carrying of weapons by non-nobles. Enforcing
prohibitions against non-violent crimes occurred along with efforts to address safety, sanitation, and material needs in the city because all were seen as deleterious to the health of the community. Vice crimes bled money and power away from families and government coffers. Prostitution and gambling created money transfers between individuals involved in idle pleasures. Dueling and slander undermined the Crown’s authority as arbiter of justice and social prestige. Punishing these crimes was a means of establishing that the health of New Orleans was not just a physical matter, but a moral one as well.

Elite authority and public compliance

The Superior Council punished immoral acts defined by Louis XIV’s code. While adultery, prostitution, and gambling were some of the projects of special concern in Paris, the King also took on dueling, blasphemy, and verbal insults. According to Philip Riley, this project had a practical result as well. Penalties for these transgressions often included a monetary fine. These fines were an increasingly useful source of revenue. The governors of Louisiana enforced Louis XIV’s vice laws for similar reasons.

Louis XIV effectively outlawed verbal insults “so that by 1704 even the uttering of such epithets as ‘idiot,’ ‘coward,’ or ‘traitor’ could result in a two-month jail term.” Courts in Canada also enforced laws against personal insults. In Louisiana, the Superior Council issued a decree in 1724, “prohibiting the circulation of defamatory reports and the singing of songs derogatory to the honor of eminent persons.” In a 1725 defamation suit, Nicholas de La Canot was fined 20 francs payable to the Church for “circulating damaging reports at the expense of Madame Rousseau of Natchez.”
In 1724, Paul Cadot was fined and sentenced to one month in prison for publishing libelous matter and “written verses against the honor of the ladies of New Orleans.”

This case was brought by Louis Tixerant who claimed his family name was made the “butt of waggish wit.” Cadot “admitted writing some satiric verses, but denied those of scurrilous nature.” Councilor Bruslé testified against him along with Reffault employed on fortifications, Pistache, employee of the Company, and his wife Dame Pistache. Prosecuted in the wake of disease outbreaks, two city-leveling hurricanes and annual floods, it would seem that defamation suits would be considered petty in the face of such serious material want and physical tribulation. Yet these cases were as much about establishing discipline and hierarchy in the city as they were about personal insults. The Superior Council was laying claim to its authority over public expression in New Orleans.

Paul Cadot’s sentence was not the only public retribution for his libelous speech. A few months after his trial, a free African named Raphael won his suit for repayment on a loan to Cadot. A few months after that a lien was placed on Cadot’s house because he would not pay his debt to Julien Binard. By the end of 1724, Cadot had abandoned his house, his debts, and the colony. Thus, his sentence weakened his ability to pay his debts, or spurred his creditors to demand payment. Either way, the sentence was the beginning of the end of Cadot’s tenure in the city.

Personal defamation suits were one example of the courts managing the politics of personal identities. Some cases were made public record without a court case ensuing. In a letter to the Council of the Company of the Indies, de La Chaise included a grievance against Sieur Dalcourt who insulted him “about a pair of women's shoes that he wished
to obtain in addition to the one that had been granted to him." xli In 1735, Jacques de La Chaise’s daughter notarized a declaration against her husband Sieur St. Martin that claimed St. Martin called her “big in the mouth [de gros dans La bouche].” xlii Another case, brought to the court, but not ruled on was a 1725 “Petition in Remonstrances.” In his petition de Verteuil, director of the Paris Duverney concession wrote that he was “surprised at a ruling of the [Superior] Council’s in prejudice to his official authority which he shows to be above that of a mere employee, Sieur Dubuisson. Mr. Dubuisson serves subject to Mr. de Verteuil’s orders, irrespectively of any contentions between Paris Duverney and Dubuisson.” xliii Yet, the Superior Council was asserting its authority as above that of de Verteuil and second only to the King’s authority in all matters, regardless of private or public context. In these cases, men and women were publicly airing slights against their names, titles, and family honor.

Such cases of libel and slander persist in the court records and diplomatic correspondence; yet some insults involved deeds as well as words. Riley argues that Paris also presented certain obstacles to total moral discipline: "Paris was a passionate city of vice and prayer. The deeply etched traces of the French Catholic Reformation mixed uncomfortably with the lusty appetites of a city." xlv New Orleans would provide a similar venue where some behaviors were difficult to manage. Dueling was an issue of private honor that Louis XIV made a matter of public censure. By 1708, Riley argues that dueling had been effectively eliminated from France. xlv In New Orleans a case is described in a letter to the French Minister of Marine from Chevalier Henri Lobouëy in 1740. The case involved ensign Marc Antoine Emmanuel Morin, a “little Provençal” who on his trip to Louisiana “had a rather sharp quarrel,” with a man named Detreans” whom
Morin slapped in the face. They grappled, they were separated, and the voyage was continued and reconciliation made on condition that no mention at all should be made of this occurrence.” Morin eventually came to New Orleans where his personality remained “haughty and turbulent” and prone to “quarreling and…ill-placed arrogance.” News of his reputation reached de Bienville who subsequently replaced Morin on an important military mission. Angry, Morin went to New Orleans to clear his name. He found Detreans and challenged him to a duel. Detreans obliged and drew a sword. Morin retreated, claiming that swords put Detreans at an advantage because he had been Parisian fencing-master’s assistant. “Detreans confident because of the weakness of this wretch provoked him beyond endurance by insults and harsh treatment that a gentlemen would be sorry to inflict upon the lowest of human beings.” That night Morin loaded two pistols and took them to Detreans’s bedchamber before daybreak. They struggled and the gun discharged without hitting anyone. Afterward Detrean successfully prosecuted Morin’s attack in court. What is interesting in this case is that New Orleans was peopled by soldiers in a region where an active military engaged with enemies on a regular basis. Yet de Bienville condemned Morin for aggressive volatility. Morin was censured for personally seeking redress through a duel. Detreans was protected under the law because he sought redress through the courts.

Personal protection often meant controlling personal violence and swords and guns were social as well as martial symbols in New Orleans. Morin protested fighting with swords because Detreans was known as a skilled fencer. Guns, on the other hand, were considered a more egalitarian weapon. The Crown sought to maintain and empower the elite to retain their sanctioned monopoly over symbols of personal violence in a 1720
proclamation

By the Order of the King, the King being informed of disorders arising in his colonies from persons carrying a sword who have no right to do so, and desiring to stop this abuse, His majesty advised by the Regent, His Highness the Duke of Orleans, forbids all traders, merchants, and commoners who are not officers of merchant ships to carry any offensive or defensive weapon in the towns and villages of his colonies under penalty of three months imprisonment. Permission is given by His Majesty to captains, lieutenants and ensigns of the said ships to carry a sword.\textsuperscript{xlviii}

This order provides valuable information about the relationship of social status to violence. First, the order specifically mentions that members of non-noble social groups were forbidden from displaying swords on their person. Yet, it goes on to mention that members of these social groups were forbidden to carry “any offensive or defensive weapon” which would clearly refer to guns and most knives as well as swords. This proclamation, a mere two years into New Orleans’s existence, asserts that in this city on the edges of the French empire, close to English enemies, surrounded by Native groups, and populated with members of the military, only a very few of the town’s residents would be allowed to arm themselves.

There were other areas where it was difficult to police New Orleans’s morals. The Superior Council records and official correspondence demonstrate that New Orleans featured what Philip Riley describes as Louis XIV’s special targets in his war on Parisian sin: prostitution and gambling. These vice crimes flourished where transient populations, like soldiers and sailors sought entertainments to fill their evenings. Gambling was a constant source of irritation to the Superior Council. At times, these cases were easy to settle. In 1724, Canadian-born infantry officer Charles Petit de Levilliers sued Louis Quentin Jacques Larcheveque for repayment of a gambling debt.\textsuperscript{xlix} The court ruled that the debt was null-and-void because it was based on an illegal game. Their ruling
demanded court costs from the defendant and fined the plaintiff 100 francs in favor of hospital. They went on to post a public notice that “future transgressors of the law against gambling are liable to 300 francs fine.” Despite his gambling acumen, Petit de Levilliers found himself fined and reprimanded. In 1725, Petit de Levilliers was cited again in a gambling case. This time a man called Sainton had gambled away money he had loaned from the Company and cows he had purchased with that money.” Petit de Levilliers, who had won the cows and the money, found that he had to return his winnings. In these cases, the Council was able to turn these illegal games to their advantage. Not only would they profit from the fines and court costs imposed, but the hospital also benefited from these ill-gotten gains.

The problem with gambling was that it created illegal transfers of wealth and often enriched those of the lower orders. In a 1723 letter to the Directors of the Company, de La Chaise complained about men in charge of the warehouses were poor when they arrived [baton blanc a La main], but were able through gambling and other illegal trade to act as “great lords who keep good tables, and have good houses with good furniture.” While catching and fining these individuals may have reversed the flow of capital in some instances, it certainly did not deter gambling writ large. Petit de Levilliers, for example, continued to gamble after his first infraction and proceeded to garner a successful military career even after settling both cases. Thus, gambling suits may have been a way to regain some of this plunder for the Crown but, unlike Paul Cadot, Petit de Levilliers seems to have faced no public shunning for his activities or professional sanction—as the dueling Morin did—for his defiance of authority.

Another problem with policing gambling was that it appealed to the wealthy as
well as the poor. Consequently, there was a cross-section of society that would support hiding the practice from the authorities. Prostitution was difficult to eradicate for the same reason. For Louis XIV, prostitution was a sin that “corrupted the soul” of humanity and was a deleterious force in the fabric of society. According to Riley, “Louis XIV's France followed a stern, tight-fisted code of morality, blinking at sexual promiscuity only when masked by marriage.” He targeted houses of prostitution in Paris; but was particularly concerned with the refugees fleeing famine in the provinces. Many of these women sought work in the city, and found prostitution one of the few means of survival. These women flooded into Paris in the last two decades of Louis XIV's reign, which resulted in the overflowing of prostitutes in Salpetrière and other prisons and reform houses in the city. When John Law formulated his plan to people New Orleans by unburdening these institutions, these women were on the list of émigrés. Soon after New Orleans founding, it not only inherited Paris’s problems with prostitution, it likely inherited some of the very women who traded their bodies on its streets.

Though the record does not often follow the lives of these women once they arrived in Louisiana, the correspondence back to France indicates many women engaged in prostitution soon after the city’s founding. In a 1722 letter to his French superior Father Bobe, Father Chassin claimed that eligible men rejected many of the women who were sent from France: “The Company has already sent four or five hundred girls, but officers and those who hold any rank cannot make up their minds to marry each such girls who in addition to the bad reputation that they bring from France give reason to fear that some also bring remnants of infirmities of which they have been imperfectly healed. De La Chaise wrote in 1723, "There are here, Gentlemen, a number of women
to whom rations are given as well as to children, who are useless and who do nothing but cause disorder. The majority of these women are ruined with pox and ruin the sailors.”lviii

In 1725, the Superior Council considered the existence of prostitutes serious enough to suggest “purging the colony“ of “a number of women of bad life who are entirely lost.”lix When prosecuted, these women faced public retribution. Sister Mary Magdeleine wrote that convicted prostitutes were “punished severely by putting them on a wooden horse and having them whipped by all the soldiers of the regiment that guards our city.”lx This practice not only publicly exposed the women but also kept the identities of their clients private.

Men were more likely to be named publicly if they maintained ongoing relationships with mistresses or concubines. Capuchin Father Raphaël was one public critic of such liaisons. In 1726 he wrote to the Abbe Raguet in Paris about “De Louboëy, a captain, Knight of St. Louis, formerly commandant at Biloxi and at Mobile….For several years he has been maintaining a woman named Madame Garnier, whom her husband has left. She has already had a child by Mr. De Louboëy and she is pregnant with the second. Both of them take a sort of pride in their concubinage, walk about together as live as family in the sight of everybody as if they were living in a legitimate marriage.”lxi De La Chaise also wrote about de Louboëy and Garnier’s relationship. He noted it was scandalous. “There are many other women of the same kind who have no husbands and who are ruining the colony.”lxii Assignations created relationships outside of marriage that were liabilities for the institution of the family, the Church and the Crown. De La Chaise’s comment that mistresses like Garnier were influencing the colony indicates that, like gambling, coupling outside of marriage bled resources away from
Crown-sanctioned institutions and into privately negotiated agreements.

These legal cases demonstrate that the Superior Council asserted legal governance over public and private transactions in Louisiana. These were not essentially practical laws, but statutes governing social hierarchy and the elite’s rights to enforce Old World mores on the New. If only noblemen could arm themselves in a city populated by soldiers, trappers, and traders who relied on weapons in their livelihoods, then the authorities are intentionally handicapping the majority in preference to an elite minority. New Orleans’s society in general was designed to support the minority, channeling both social power and financial resources to the community’s few.

Gambling, prostitution and extra-marital liaisons bled resources from families. Duels and slander were prosecuted because they gave individuals influence over reputations at a time the administrators of the colony wanted to enforce their definition of social hierarchy and control over social standing. All of these crimes created relationships and obligations outside of government oversight. The members of the Superior Council, their families, and administrators like de La Chaise sought to minimize these extra-legal influences to consolidate their own administrative authority as well as limit the competition for social power in the city. During the first two decades of New Orleans, the city faced true hardships of famine, disease, natural disaster and a rush of needy refugees from Natchez in 1729. Yet, the administrators policed the city’s morals in order to establish their authority over the public and private behavior of its residents. The determination to enforce Louis XIV’s moral code in New Orleans was easily matched by certain members of the de La Chaise, de Bienville, Bruslé, and Fleuriaus’ desire to secure their identities as elite patrons by publicly promoting their loyalty to the Crown, and
creating opportunities to garner monetary and social power within the colony.

**Part 2: Elite Self-discipline and the Marketplace**

**Elite Self-Discipline**

Elites did not just seek to discipline the majority of New Orleans’s non-elite residents. They also held themselves to French cultural standards for dress, food, and public behavior.

At the height of Louis XIV’s reign, he enforced an aesthetic on France that defined standards for art, music, and theatre as well as food, clothing, housing, and architecture. In each category, he set standards and prohibitions. As Joan De Jean writes, "Louis XIV seems to have known exactly the image he wanted conveyed when anyone thought of Paris or of France, an image of graceful elegance and tasteful opulence." As a means of enforcing these standards, Louis XIV also disciplined the marketplace. He enforced laws on all aspects of the market and established the means to enforce these standards.

For example, Steven Kaplan argues that the marketplace of Louis’s reign was regulated by royal authority and far different from its medieval equivalent: "The marketplace of the police was a preeminently official venue, structured, organized, regulated (at least in theory)...the marketplace of the police was devised precisely to refuse extraterritorial privilege and to enshrine the official world view." Kaplan goes on to demonstrate that their regulation of the marketplace was given moral overtones: "The police entered the marketplace not to throttle commerce but to domesticate it and moralize it, not to obliterate the market principal but to correct it." Thus, the Crown justified infiltration
of the market as a moral crusade that would benefit everyone. Yet, the process also
infused the market with the Crown’s presence—Crown presence through police force.
The marketplace became yet another venue where elite power was displayed.

Properly Clothing the Body

The rhetoric of conformity and discipline often focused on clothing. As Sophie
White and others demonstrate, clothing the body became a principle site of political and
cultural representation in the colonial world. Appropriate clothing was often a
metaphor for health and moral integrity. Colonists accused the Crown of neglect when
individuals were lacking proper clothing. In 1712, d’Artaguette wrote to Pontchartrain
that soldiers were deserting to the Indians to find provisions. “It is pitiful also to see them
as they are all naked…there are due them two suits of clothes and four sets of
accessories.” He then adds that clothes had arrived shredded in a shipment on the ship
Renommée. They “were packed into barrels of nails.” When de La Chaise sought to
accuse the Canadian warehouse keepers of fraud, he wrote that they support themselves
and leave the workers without food and clothes.” Likewise, missionaries who were
not receiving adequate stipends from their superiors were reportedly left “with no clothes
nor cloth to cover them.” Councilor Périer reprimanded the Directors of the Company
of the West when the supply of cloth for slaves was inadequate

We have noticed in the bill for the Durance that you are sending only 2657 ells of
cloth for negroes. How do you expect us to be able to supply some to all the
inhabitants who have some [negroes]? You know the number of negroes
approximately that there are in the colony. There is no cloth for a third of them…in
addition to the fact that the Beauvais cloth that you have already sent is worthless
and does not last two or three months as we have written.

The accusations over the lack of clothing had a practical basis: soldiers, missionaries and
workers required clothing; however, de La Chaise couples calls for clothing with accusations of neglect and abuse by responsible authorities.

The proper dressing of the body was a matter of social status and belonging. When de La Chaise accused the Canadians of abusing the French colonists, he commented, “Canadians are the only ones able to clothe and support themselves. The warehouses will not sell to workers who go without food, shoes and clothes.” This denial of proper attire was an assault on the sensibilities of de La Chaise and his French compatriots. When individuals lacked proper clothes in Louisiana, the Crown often received the blame for undermining the core of how individuals defined and disciplined themselves through their physical appearance.

Dressing the body was not just an artificial sign of respectability and social standing, it was an outward sign of moral and aesthetic superiority associated with proximity to the Crown and royal standards of taste: a means of evoking Crown authority and French aesthetic superiority. Swords, sashes, and medals were only a few ways in which colonists in New Orleans denoted their status and proximity to the Sovereign. They legally guarded these accoutrements within New Orleans and tried to manage the spectacle of status in its streets. Sister Madeleine Hachard de Saint Stanislas wrote that in New Orleans “There is here as much refinements and magnificence as in France. Gold and velvet goods are common, though three times dearer than at Rouen.” She also wrote that the women of the city possessed certain “vanity” over their appearance and exclaimed over “the luxury which prevails in this city.” The women “dressed in stuffs of damask full of ribbons, notwithstanding their dearness, for these stuffs usually cost in this country three times more than in France. Women here, as
elsewhere, paint white and red to hide the wrinkles in their faces, on which they wear
beauty spots.” While the nun criticizes these women for vanity, she also reveals an
adherence to standards of dress that links them with the French fashion culture on the
other side of the Atlantic.

They could not guarantee that the marketplace would provide the cloth, footwear or
haberdashery required to maintain their public respectability. Cloth was a dear
commodity throughout Caribbean and Gulf colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries. Requests for sturdy, multipurpose fabric and clothing were nearly constant in
the correspondence to the Crown and the Company. Colonists also requested fine linens.
Fabric was also a desirable commodity in the estate sales in New Orleans.

Expensive and prone to rot and wear, cottons and linens were in high demand by
colonists; the even finer satins, silks, and decorative notions fashionable on the continent
were particularly dear. Lace, satin, and luxury clothing seems to have come to New
Orleans through the Spanish and illegal traffic. In 1724, the clerk of the ship
“Chameau” was accused of bringing in illegal “hats and satin.” The assumption was that
the clerk was trading against Company of the West policies. The Superior Council
dropped the case against him when he argued that he had purchased them for friends and
simply delivered them to New Orleans. The Council, however, noted that the public was
eager for such items and they discouraged people from rushing down to the docks “to
meet incoming vessels” carrying contraband goods. Yet the trade was common. When
Antoine Bunel died in 1735 and his share in the trading boat St. Anne was inventoried,
heavy weight "Gingas" and fabric for buttons were found as part of its precious cargo.

When the captain of the St. Anne died in 1738, George Amelot’s succession included a
great deal of fabric, including a piece of blue and white muslin sold at auction for 40 livres, a piece of cotton for 8 livres, and another piece of striped muslin 41 livres. These prices were dear when compared with wages. In 1735, de Bienville was advertising 50 livres a month wages for skilled boat builders and 67 livres a month for boat pilots. Thus fabric, even “a piece of cloth,” was a commodity. Over time, either by choice or necessity, New Orleans’s residents circumvented crown policies and engaged in illegal trade to obtain the goods necessary to maintain their social standards. Thus, any spectacle of fashion and proper dress eventually became a spectacle of spoils. These were also spectacles involving considerable creative invention. Colonists sought to demonstrate their allegiance to the Crown, but did so by defying its basic trading laws.

A Disciplined Table

Food and a discerning palette were also significant cultural symbols associated with evoking French social norms. Selecting, making, and consuming food were simultaneously occasions for exhibiting elite status. As with fashion, the self-selected elite exhibited their taste for the finest food and wine as a symbol of status. Feasting with a group of like-minded and similarly elite individuals demonstrated superiority. As Michael Moriarty wrote, epicurean fare “thus fosters the possibility of a collective euphoria that excludes the inferior subject along with the inferior object from the charmed circle of those who find their own perfect taste mirrored in the fare before them.” Food was, under Louis XIV, a way of evoking these inherent and timeless tastes. In an article entitled “Eloquence of the Table” in the 1712 Le Mercure, the author mentions Plutarch and Homer as authors who understood the importance of good food.
The article describes Homer’s heroes eating in reverential silence. These culinary tastes were not *a priori* by any means. Louis XIV fostered a culture of culinary fashions; yet, like so much of his imposed cultural norms, he did so by evoking taste as inherent.

The history of bread production is a good example of how food fashion became food law. Marie de Médicis, wife of Henri IV, brought Italian bakers and their recipe for light, white-floured bread that replaced the heavier, course grained French breads. These bakers, as Bernard Dupaigne writes, “launched the fashion of *pain á La reine*, a luxury bread made of fine flour, which became *pain mollet* (or soft bread) in 1665, when of the bakers prepared it with brewer's yeast.” In 1670, the Parlement decreed that brewer's yeast “must always be used fresh and in conjunction with salt-rising yeast.” And thus the fashionable bread became a matter of legal regulation.

Food was a certain sign of society and culture in Louisiana and colonists evoked the French food aesthetic when describing meals in Louisiana. Paul Du Ru wrote in his journal: “With what little I have, I make better cheer than all our squeamish persons of France who are always satiated and to whom the most exquisite food has become insipid.” Like Reverend Mother Tranchepain’s recollections of the food at Bay St. Louis, many travelers included praise for the quality of food and hospitality of the French in America. In the 1750s, Jean-Bernard Bossu wrote: "As for the inhabitants of the French islands in America, I can assure you that they are very generous to strangers. One can even travel in the interior of these countries without any expense. All that you have to do is look frank, decent, and honest to be received favorably on all the plantations." After their arrival in New Orleans, Sister Mary Magdeleine Hachard wrote that meat was so abundant in the colony that “during Lent, meat is allowed on Saturday as in the Island
of Saint-Domingue. We accustom ourselves wonderfully well to the wild food of this country.” She went on to describe the fruits, vegetables, and chocolate available in abundance. Like clothing, eating well was a means of evoking French norms and demonstrating a cultured palette.

Consistently stocking the tables in America was no easy matter, however. Many people arrived in 1718 and 1719 no doubt expecting the fecund environment promulgated by the Company of the West’s propaganda featured in Le Mercure. Instead, the settlers found the coast less than forthcoming. Trade with natives became a necessity for the French to survive: a market where access depended on currency that many New Orleans residents did not have. Meat was most likely the most plentiful foodstuff for much of the year. The open market provided fowl, small game, deer, beef, and even buffalo. However, the prices for meat and eggs were often exorbitant. Meat was not difficult to get on the Gulf Coast; however, almost from the beginning of settlement, eating meat and providing a well-stocked table and its French cultural associations, meant relying on trade and ongoing negotiations with Native Americans.

The colonial government soon intervened. In 1722, the Superior Council fixed prices on buffalo, beef, deer and meat as well as eggs. The ordinance cautioned that individuals of “all ranks” would suffer physical punishment if they did not abide by the fixed prices. By 1735, an ordinance required “all persons to have game inspected before it could be sold upon the streets of New Orleans.” Disciplining the marketplace and regulating what was available at prescribed prices was an established tradition in France. Louis XIV’s “1698 ordinance specifically forbade merchants and fruitiers from selling or displaying eggs during Lent.” More significantly, "The police were expected to
enforce of the Lenten regulations of fasting and abstinence irrespective of the rank of the sinner."xciii Thus, this was not just an economic matter, but also a matter of regulating morality through the marketplace.

Crimes against the public health were also sentenced to communal condemnation. In 1723 a man named Villeneuve was found guilty of selling dog and cat meat to patients at the hospital.xciv The Council sentenced him to being “paraded and then set for two hours on the ‘wooden horse’, bearing a ‘sandwich’ placard inscribed in large letters, ‘Eater of dogs and cats’. Councilor Fleurieau also recommended that Villeneuve wear “a cat about his neck if one can be found.”xcv Clandestine bakers were also charged for using poor quality flour or charging exorbitant prices for their products. In 1723 an individual described as the “Big Flemish Woman” was jailed and fined for selling “black bread” at extremely high prices. xcvi De La Chaise wrote that Sieur de La Marque had a baker in Biloxi “put in irons” for preparing bread for Spanish bilanders and selling it for three reals a pound.xcvii Ostensibly, these individuals were punished for selling foodstuffs that would endanger or take advantage of the public health. Trial records indicate that the food did not make anyone sick. Furthermore, they were selling these items in years when New Orleans was experiencing famine. In this situation, individuals—entrepreneurs—were chastened for meeting a need with creative adaptation; because their products did not meet French standards for bread and meat, they were forbidden. Not only did the Superior Council enforce French food laws on Louisiana victuals, but enforced public punishments demonstrating the Crown’s power over colonists.

The Discourse on Bread
Like clothing metaphors, the quality and abundance of food developed into rhetoric of Crown nurture in the colony. Specifically, the lack of white flour in Louisiana became a metaphor for Crown desertion. White bread was a potent symbol in France because it was the epicurean equivalent of the King’s body. As Steven Kaplan argues, "The abandoning of inferior grain for the grain of the Host, the grain of cleanliness as well as holiness, of opulence as well as nourishment." Furthermore, white bread was also a symbol of urbanization, specifically of Paris: "Parisians took wheat for granted, though for the half of the population comprised of migrants from the provinces the practice of eating wheaten and white must have been at first quite jarring." The need for flour was constant, but as with meat, several vendors appeared ready to fill the need. In 1733 de Bienville wrote that Illinois could supply more than enough flour for Louisiana. Spanish ships also supplied flour when French vessels did not. Rice flour was abundant, and de Bienville wrote “three-fourths of the inhabitants live on it and have forgotten wheat bread.” Corn, barley, rye, oats, and flax, were all produced successfully in Louisiana, yet only wheat flour was considered healthful for consumption. In correspondence from Louisiana in general, and New Orleans in particular, the availability of processed wheat flour became a means of discussing civilization and urbanity in the colony. The discursive use of bread was also a metaphor for Crown’s care of its colonists.

Like a lack of clothing, lacking bread was a metaphor for dishonor, destitution, and affliction. In 1722, Hubert St. Malo’s wife wrote in defense of her husband’s actions while in Louisiana. She demonstrates that he has “ruined his business affairs” because the result was “his family has no bread.” Likewise, when de La Chaise wrote in defense of Father Raphael, he wrote “I declare to you that they are to pitied for at the present time
In 1729 bread was the marker of sustenance provided to orphan children: "The Council of Louisiana having provided for the subsistence and support of the orphan children by placing the boys among the inhabitants to whom a ration of bread is given for each." French flour was considered essential to good health and proper baking was indispensable to making into proper loaves. The hospital was in constant need of bread, the lack of which was cited in 1739 as the cause of death to several patients: "The poor quality of the flour which is almost all rotten has caused a large part of them to perish and will prevent the others from recovering until some better flour comes from France." In 1723 de La Chaise complained to the company at length on the subject:

I do not know, Gentlemen, who they are who are charged with making your purchases of flour; but I can tell you that you are being greatly deceived. All the flour that came on the Galatée as well as that that has come on the other vessels is old and all has such a bad taste to it that it is not possible to eat any of it, in addition to the fact that it is very brown and that the quarts do not by any means weigh the weights indicated on them although it appears that they ought to weigh only one hundred and sixty-three pounds net. That is certain because I have several of them weighed.

Bread was carefully controlled, even in nascent New Orleans. In Louisiana, as in Paris, master bakers regulated the recipe and oversaw the production of bread in the city from as early as 1719. The dearth of flour in Louisiana remained a familiar lament in diplomatic correspondence. While properly baked French loaves were a matter of providing healthful bread in Louisiana, it was also an important mark of civilization in the colony: the vital presence of the Crown in Louisiana. Far from accepting darker grains familiar outside the capital of France, men like de La Chaise held Louisiana and the Crown to the standards of Paris. The act of disciplining the production and consumption of bread in New Orleans was a means of evoking Crown discipline in New

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Orleans.

The colonists in Louisiana came to rely on distinctly non-European sources to feed themselves and maintain their individual health. Just as France enjoyed the lucrative trade of the Atlantic World, Louisiana relied on access to Native American markets, African knowledge, and clandestine trade to feed and clothe its inhabitants. Like in France, Louisiana’s authorities sought to discipline the market and force its products and producers to conform to French crown standards. In these disciplinary attempts, authorities failed to enforce the culinary aesthetic expected by the Crown. Sister Mary Magdeleine Hachard wrote in 1727 that the city’s bread was either made of corn or “we eat bread which is half rice and half flour.” The evidence indicates that bread was available in New Orleans using alternative grains: native corn or African rice. The rice bread may have been favored because it was white in appearance and became plentiful after Africans successfully cultivated the crop along the river. These loaves of alternative bread became a substitute for “healthy” wheat bread symbolic of an omnipresent Crown. Like the trade in illegal clothing, clandestine bread undermined its symbolic import. Rather than evoking the French sovereign’s body, or adhering to aesthetic and moral decrees, rice and wheat alternatives were a simulacrum of the host. It corrupted the metaphorical meaning of healthy bread. This was a new bread, invested with novel grains.

Conclusion

Maintaining French aesthetic standards and disciplining colonial subjects was the means by which Louisiana’s elite asserted and maintained their social status as natural
leaders and representatives of the Crown’s authority in America. Through the course of
the first decades of settlement, the elite fought to maintain Crown patronage and support
for their efforts in Louisiana. Their most effective disciplining practices were imported
from the French Crown, They provided the Superior Council considerable leverage over
the activities of the marketplace and the moral behavior of its inhabitants. However, like
Jean Ango’s trading success in the Atlantic World, contact with African and Native
American resources was increasingly essential for New Orleans’s elites to maintain their
French cultural standards.
Endnotes


2 Donald Jile Lemieux, "The Office of ‘Commissaire Ordonnateur’ In French Louisiana, 1731-1763: A Study in French Colonial Administration." PhD, The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1972, 93.


5 Saadani, "Le Gouvernement De La Louisiane Française, 1731-43: Essai D'Histoire Comparatif," 122. The first is the date of the settlements. Staring with St. Christoph in 1626, French settlement in the Caribbean islands predated the founding of New Orleans by nearly a century. Large landowners had established themselves as the governors of the island. Like many provinces in France, they had adapted French legal tradition to local situations. Their legal issues focused more particularly on the power struggles between long-established large landowners and incoming rivals, or petit Blanches. This reality was distinctly different from New Orleans where French subjects arrived in a relatively short time.


7i Brunelle, *The New World Merchants of Rouen*,11-12: “Rouen possessed numerous law courts, including a parlement, a cour des aides, an admirality court, a vicomte and a vicomte de l'eau, a bailliage, and an eaux et forêts. In the second half of the century, the city was further endowed with a chambre des comptes and a siége presidal. Such a plethora of courts was possible only because new administrative bodies in the sixteenth century were frequently layers upon older jurisdictions that had never been eliminated. The law courts in this one of the most litigious of centuries provided the livelihood for legions of lawyers, procurators, and clerks”; Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 6.


xxiv Mathé Allain, "Not Worth a Straw": *French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana* (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1988), 79.

xxv Donald Jile (1736-) Lemieux, "The Office Of "Commissaire Ordonnateur" In French Louisiana, 1731-1763: A Study in French Colonial Administration" (PhD, The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1972): "On the whole the morale and discipline of the troops were deplorable. Although there were many reasons underlying this problem, the main one rested in the type and source of the men sent to Louisiana as recruits. One must conclude from reading the letters of the governors and 'commissaires ordonnateurs' from 1731 to 1763 that Versailles sent convicts and rejects from France and her other colonies to Louisiana. Bienville was critical of the troops sent to serve under his command: "troops? Instead of soldiers we have deplorable recruits. dwarfs, thieves, useless mouths dependent on the care of the colony who will render nothing in return." [From Fregault, Vaudreuil, 140; Bienville to Maurepas, New Orleans, June 28, 1736, AC Moreau de Saint Mery, F3 24.]

xxvi Bienville and Salmon, "Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas May 12, 1733," in *MPA*, *FD*, V.III (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932 [1733]), 605.

xxviii Dumont, "History of Louisiana Translated from the Historical Memoirs of M. Dumont." 24: “each square was fifty fathoms front, it gave twelve plots in each, the two middle ones being ten front by twenty-five deep. It was ordained that those who obtained these plots should be bound to enclose them with palisades, and leave all around a strip three feet wide, at the foot of which a ditch was to be dug, to serve as a drain for the river water in time of inundation.”; Horne, *Seven Ages of Paris*, 140: "External modesty was also a feature of the grand hôtels particuliers of the epoch (and indeed of later ones), where extensive private gardens and displays of conspicuous consumption within lay concealed from public gaze behind sombre porte-cochère which gave on to the street.


xxxvii Raphael, Father Raphael to the Abbe Raguet 15 May 1725.; "Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723."
xl Vanessa Herold Arnaud, "Gossip as a Social Force in Seventeenth-Century French Culture" (PhD, University of California Los Angeles, 2001), 194: "When the King himself commented on Bussy's propensity for hurtful gossip in strong terms, he rang a death knell over Bussy's intentions to rejoin court society after his exile. Bussy's ill fortune highlights the instability of the doctrines regulating the elite social structure."
xl De La Chaise and Four Councillors of Louisiana, "De La Chaise and the Four Councillors of Louisiana to the Council of the Company of the Indies 26 April 1725," in MPA, FD, V. II, 463.
xxiii Superior Council, "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana vii," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 2, no. 3 (1919), 331.
xxiv Riley, Lust for Virtue,15.
xxv Riley, Lust for Virtue,15.
xxviii N/A, "Sidelights on Louisiana History," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 1, no. 3 (1918),125.
liii Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723" 327.
lix Superior Council, "From the Council of Louisiana to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723" 327.
lii Father Raphael, "Father Raphael, to the Abbe Raguet," in MPA, FD, V.II, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929 [1726]), 520.
lxii Chaise and Louisiana, "De La Chaise and the Four Councillors of Louisiana to the Council of the Company of the Indies 26 April 1725", 462.


lxvi Sophie White, “‘Wearing three or four handkerchiefs around his collar, and elsewhere about him’: Slaves’ Constructions of Masculinity and Ethnicity in French Colonial New Orleans,” Gender & History, Vol. 15 No. 3 (Nov, 2003), 530: “Thus, it is my contention that dress was the primary tool for slaves precisely because it was one of the few arenas in which they could exert ultimate control over material goods. Hence dress must take centre stage in any analysis of the meanings of goods for slaves. This is not to discount the place of individual masters and other instruments of the colonial order in handing out dress and dictating its broad parameters; nor is it to ignore the potential for control deriving from other cultural outlets. Yet I wish to emphasize that dress – even supplied dress – was open to manipulation and interpretation, and that this process was played out with greater immediacy and on a wider stage than other forms of material culture. As detected in the actions of other marginalized groups as well as in the vested consumer interests of wider swathes of the population, the deployment of clothing thus constituted a rich, perhaps unique medium for complex cultural elaboration.”


lxix N/A, "Sidelights on Louisiana History," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 1, no. 3 (1918), 89.


lxxi de La Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723," 308.


lxxiv Hachard de Saint Stanislas, Relation Du Voyage Des Dames Religieuses Ursulines , 226.


lxxvi Perier and de La Chaise, "Perier and De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies," in MPA, FD, V. II, 597-99: Lille Cloth, Holland Linens: "We have paid careful attention to your letter of the twenty-seventh of July 1725, on the subject of the decrease in price of Lille cloth, but when Mr. De La Chaise proposed to the Council to reduce the price of these goods and of the Holland linens the Council would not take it upon itself to make this reduction that you write to us about of a difference in price of twenty per cent between the time that they were [p.140] bought and that of the present." Brittany Linen of the Year 1724: "We have likewise reduced the price of the Brittany linen of 1724. We have none of that left. We have put it on the basis of the previous linen of the same quality."

Reduction in the Price of Goods: "When we asked you for an order to diminish the price of the goods we did so only because the Council would not undertake to do so. Mr. De La Chaise knew perfectly well that you had written to him to propose it to the Council and put a common price [p.140 v.] [on it], but it will not give its opinion. We asked you for an order to authorize both of us to do it."

Royal Linen You have sent to us some royal linen of different prices by the Baleine. Mr. De La Chaise was of the opinion that we should adopt one common price. The Council was unwilling. It is necessary to sell it by numbers. That consumes time [and] makes the inhabitants lose time because they must go to the warehouse to see the linen and take the numbers of that which they wish to get and then come and obtain the order in order to pay at the cashier's office. Neither in that nor in many other similar articles us the
difference ever to the loss of the Company." Carcassonne Cloth... "We are very glad that you have approved our having reduced the price of Carcassonne cloth to fifteen livres. It was that that came to us from the La Caye that made us decide to do so without the consent of the Council. We do not fail to [p.142 v.] sell it now that winter is here. We shall send some to the Illinois and to the posts; after that scarcely any will be left... Cloth for Negroes.... You cannot, Gentlemen, send too much cloth for negroes. At least fifteen thousand ells of it are needed every year and two to three thousand coarse blankets [literally 'dog's hair blankets.'] blankets of course, cheap wool somewhat like the horse blankets used at the present time


Perier and de La Chaise, "Perier and De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies," 597-99: “Laces- We shall do the same regard to the laces when some Spaniard comes to us because we do not see that the inhabitants are looking for them." Translation of dentelle not lacet, lacer. Council, "Minutes of the Council, French Dominion 1701-1729," in Mississippi Provincial Archives, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson, MS: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929 [1725-26]), 452: On the Said Day To Determine whether Merchandise Shall Be Sent to the Spanish Merchants by Lake Pontchartrain at Biloxi or whether the Said Spaniards Shall Be Made to Come to New Orleans by way of the Lower Part of the River. "The Council, having received this day a letter from Sieur de La Salle, keeper of the warehouse at Biloxi, dated the 22d of the month, which informs it of the arrival of the Spanish bilander with six merchants from Havana who are loaded with six thousand piastres and ask to buy fine linen and Brittany linen but on condition that they be carried to Biloxi because they are absolutely unwilling to go to New Orleans or by way of Lake Pontchartrain inasmuch as they have no time to remain and their permission has expired, the question was discussed in the Council to determine whether merchandise should be sent by Lake Pontchartrain or whether they should oblige the Spaniards to come to the Balize, because from there they would come to New Orleans and would ascend the river in two or three days and they could be furnished with other merchandise than fine lined and Brittany linen. This causes it to be ordered that each should put his opinion in writing."


"Succession," in French 2 (New Orleans: 09/21/1735) NARC, 10162-10187, 10166-73, 101626J, 10174-87+compilation and computation

De La Harpe, "Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana.": 111: Served as captain on several vessels--circa 1722 and l'Alexandre arrived, commanded by M.M. Chenot, Butelaine and Amelot, laden with provisions and merchandise to the value of 900-000 livres.

Bienville and Salmon, "Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas," in Mississippi Provincial Archives French Dominion, 1704-1743, ed. Dunbar Rowland, Mississippi Provincial Archives (Jackson, MS: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1735 [1929])679-81.


N/A, "Eloquence De Table," Mercure de France, September 1966 [1712], 24-25: "Plutarque compare notre Esprit et notre Ame, à une mere nourrice á l'egard du corps et dit que de même qu'elle ne prend ses plaisirs et ne fait bonne chere qu'apres avoir allaité son nourrisson et l'avoir fait dormir, notre esprit pareillement ne doit songer à s'exercer qu'apres avoir bien traité son poupon. Il ne peut etre tranquille ni content que l'autre n'ait ce qu'il lui faut et ne soit en bon etat. Homere fait manger ses Heroes en silence, après quoi Le plus digne soit par son rang soit par son esprit entretient La compagnie Athenée se mocque avec raison du pedantesque banquet d'Epicure; où l'on ne voyoiiy que des éplucheurs d'atômes à l'entrée de Table, quels entremers! Les Sophites croyent bien mieux célébrer l'entrée de Table, parce qu'ils s'empressent dès Le potage à debiter leurs vains argumens. On les voit, dit un Grec, sussosquez par Le potage qui veut entrer, et Le vanité qui veut sortit dans Le même tems. Le Grammairien et Le Rhétoricien, ont raison de direm qu'ils ne sont rein lors qu'ils ne parlent point; Le silence qu aontraire ne coûtre rien au Philosophe et à l'homme de bon-sens, parce qu'il est persuade qu'on n'est aimable et estimable qu'on a
d'attention pour les autres et peu pour foi. Il est persuadé que l'homme se montre tel par silence encore mieux que par La parole.”


D'Artaguette, "D'artaguette to Pontchartrain 12 February 1710," in *MPA, FD*, V. II, 52-53: "I received the letter that you did me the honor to write me in July twelfth of last year, 1709. I do not know who had been bold enough to inform your lordship so incorrectly that wild beasts are so common in this country."

"The Indians who hunt around the fort bring ten deer for one gun. It takes them two of three months to earn them. They go so very far to hunt them. Game is common there but it is from the month of November until in February. Also, they must go eight to nine leagues on the lower part of the river top hunt it. I also had the privilege of writing you that when there is an abundance of cows meat will be cheap.”


Hachard de Saint Stanislas, Relation Du Voyage Des Dames Religieuses Ursulines, Second letter
CHAPTER V

RACE, PRODUCTION, AND LABOR PROTEST IN NEW ORLEANS

Introduction

Elite efforts to create an ordered capital, discipline the behavior of its residents and control the market activities of Louisiana’s inhabitants were important for establishing colonial society’s structure. Finding and managing a productive labor force was necessary for the colony’s success. The events along the Gulf Coast from 1700 to 1740 demonstrate that the colonial elite took for granted that peasant laborers and skilled craftsmen would be available and plentiful in America. Few European immigrants, however, were willing to volunteer for life in Louisiana and did not provide a stable supply of military soldiers, skilled craftsmen or unskilled workers. Increasingly, Company investors and colony administrators turned to Native American and ultimately African slavery as a replacement for productive laborers in society. This was a practical matter of finding workers for the colony. It was also a socially symbolic process of creating and establishing a subordinate social group to anchor elite claims to social superiority. In Europe, there was an established culture of treating social subordinates as racially inferior based on a model of blood transmission. Consequently, when Louisiana’s elite enslaved Africans and Native Americans, they did not have to create a concept of racial inferiority to subordinate Native Americans and Africans to elite Europeans. Biologically defined inferiority already existed in Europe. Consequently, the introduction of African and Native American slavery did not necessarily elevate the lower-order
Europeans. Rather than engendering a society based on white supremacy and black captivity, Louisiana’s elite attempted to subordinate all productive workers to their need for economic productivity and social dominance.

Part 1: European Preconceptions

Race, Slavery and Social Ambiguity in Colonial America

In Gwendolyn Midlo Hall’s *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, she states that in the early years of New Orleans “being black did not necessarily mean being a slave. Nor was whiteness associated with prestige and power.” Recent scholarship by Juliana Barr and others also challenge established definitions for Native American captives and slaves. These scholars are sympathetic with a body of literature recognizing colonial slavery as a definition of human bondage undergoing adaptation and mutation within the economic, social, and diplomatic developments of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Atlantic World. As Winthrop Jordan argued in *White over Black*, African slavery did not “pop up full-grown overnight.” Correlating slavery with blackness and whiteness with freedom is part of our American story even though, as David Eltis demonstrates, the experience of slavery was very much a part of Europe’s history and the existence of compulsory labor was intrinsic to prison sentences and traditions of serfdom. As David Roediger asserts, “The many gradations of unfreedom among whites made it difficult to draw fast lines between any idealized free white worker and a pitied or scorned servile Black worker.” Thus, slavery in colonial America was a mutable and ambiguous condition. Historians’
ability to understand the nature of this condition is also under revision. Consequently, to understand how power and privilege were defined, understood, and deployed in colonial Louisiana is to consciously set aside the presumptions about skin color and forced servitude and examine how African, Native American and Europeans interacted in Louisiana’s early society and how forced servitude affected social conditions in the colony.

Blood, Race and Social Ambiguity in Europe

Examples from sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe indicate that blood purity determined an individual’s character and influenced social status. The significance of blood as marker of status has a long history in Europe. Guillaume Aubert argues, “Hierarchical and segregationist notions pervaded the early modern French ethos. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French metropolitan discourses of social order exacerbated the belief in the inherent superiority of certain groups of individuals or "races" by consistently emphasizing the transmissibility of physical characteristics and moral virtues through "blood" (sang) from one generation to the next.”vi David Berkeley and Donald Keesee interpret potential relationships in Shakespeare’s All’s Well That Ends Well. For them, blood becomes a defining barrier between the noble Bertram and common Helena. Bertram “abominates the thought of mingling his rich blood with her poor blood in the production of offspring.”vii Blood, not skin color, characterized an individual’s place in European society.

Blood was more significant than skin color in at least one public political battle in the sixteenth century. In 1529, when Alessandro de’ Medici became ruler of Florence,
John Brackett argues that Alessandro de’ Medici was mocked in Florence for his inferior peasant blood. This is particularly relevant because his mother, as Bracket argues, was most likely a freed African slave. He was mocked for his mother’s status, not her African heritage: “it was his mother's peasant status, rather than her Moorish or slave birth, which seems to have stoked the contempt of his critics.” Thus, lineage, and blood purity had an established history in Europe that predated skin color as the primary marker of status.

This habit of relating blood to character follows the concept of humors, or the idea that bodies are filled with four elements: black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. These humors mixed to create and affect individual temperaments. Ambroise Paré (1510-1590), surgeon for Henry II, François II, Charles IX and Henry III wrote extensive medical texts reproduced in multiple languages into the late seventeenth century. He defined temperaments as a mixture of the humors: “A Temperment is defined as a proportionable mixture of hot, cold, moist and drie.” Paré argued for two temperaments. The “first qualities, (so called, because they are primarily and naturally in the source first bodies).” Then other mutable elements mix: “which are therefore called the second qualities: as of many these, Heauinesse, Lightnesse, variously distributed by the foure Elements; as the Heat of the Coldnesse, Moistnesse, or Drinesse, have more power over them.” The first quality of temperament was intrinsic. The second qualities could change depending on diet, environment, and activity.

Blood also proscribed social interaction between elite members of society and the lower orders. A “wet nurse,” in France for example, was carefully chosen because, as historian Mark Motley notes

Much anxiety surrounded the choice of a nurse, because medical opinion held that character followed the ‘humor’ of the body and that ‘a child might come to
resemble the nurse through the nourishment he takes from her, for feeding at her breast he will suck the vices from her body and mind along with her milk.’ Given the strong belief that nobles were physically different from commoners. xi

The elite saw themselves as a people apart within their own culture— islands within a biologically inferior population of the common and poor. Jay M. Smith argues the French equated race with breeding: “the concepts of race and sang [blood], which clearly signified pedigree, implied at the same time a set of behavioral expectations.”xii The actions and behavioral traits of an individual were very important to his or her place in society. In addition, since breeding and status were supposedly innate, and therefore accessible only through their outward behavior, then skin color was a less significant means of defining an individual’s place in society.

The concern extended to Louisiana. In his memoirs of Louisiana, concessionaire Simon le Page Du Pratz argued against using certain Africans as wet nurses: “From what I have said, I conclude that a French father and his wife are great enemies to their posterity when they give their children such nurses. For the milk being the purest blood of the woman, one must be a step-mother indeed to give her child to a negro nurse in such a country as Louisiana.” Thus, Du Pratz reiterates cultural anxieties over “purity of blood” and the choice of wet-nurse. Some Africans are cataloged with their lower-order European counterparts. Yet, he does not disqualify all Africans:

I shall only say, that for any kind of service whatever about the house, I would advise no other kind of negroes, either young or old, but Senegals, called among themselves, [Wolofs] Dioluafs, because of all the negroes I have known, these have the purest blood; they have more fidelity and a better understanding than the rest and are consequently fitter for learning a trade, or for menial services. It is true they are not so strong as the others for the labours of the field, and for the bearing of great heats.

It is also significant that he notes, “Senegals however are the blackest” of the Africans
and have the “purest blood.” He considers them “good commanders over other negroes, both on account of their fidelity and their gratitude, and because they seem born for commanding. As they are high-minded, they may be easily encouraged to learn a trade, or to serve in the house, but the distinction they will thereby acquire over the other negroes, and the neatness of dress which that condition entitles them to.” Blood, not skin color designates the Senegalese as superior to other Africans. A relationship between skin color and servitude existed in Europe, but color and character did not. Du Pratz’s assessment of Africans exempts the Senegalese among Africans and considered blood purity, character, and natural affinity more important attributes than skin color.

Du Pratz at no point indicates any sort of cultural egalitarianism among Louisiana’s colonists because no such condition existed in French culture. While blood purity was a marker of status and French social norms presumed a stability within social ranking, this was an artifice masking a much more complex reality. Ellery Schalk argues that through the mid-seventeenth century “nobility was largely an hereditary status. At the same time, the evidence shows that almost without exception, people continued to believe differently. Thus there is a big gap between social and political realities and conceptions and attitudes.” Moreover, Aubert argues, as non-noble families achieved status and rank, an “ethos” of hereditary status became more prevalent within the traditional nobility. Paré indicates that the blood has two qualities, the second of which can change depending on diet, climate, and exercise. Aubert and others acknowledge that education and discipline can also change the character of a person with inferior blood. Therefore, the ethos of blood becomes rhetoric of status: one means rather than the ultimate means of defining power and privilege.
Far from creating a leveling effect, this concept of race denoted not only a specific lineage, but also a shared set of characteristics. Louisiana’s colonial culture developed under a shifting definition of French social structure that affected how elite colonists structured society in the early decades of settlement. In the seventeenth century, French society was predicated on a strict ordering of social estates. While this ideal was not universally accepted, as Sarah Maza argues, many prominent writers continued “to produce updated visions of France as a constellation of vertically ordered estates binding each subject to the sovereign and through him to God.” At Louis XIV’s death, the nobility in France re-asserted its own supremacy and sought to subordinate the monarchy to the aristocracy; yet, they hardly challenged the concept of “vertically ordered estates”. Arguably, aristocratic self-definition became even more important during the Regency as individuals distinguished themselves and defended their place at the pinnacle of society.

Africans entered a culture in French America where a carefully cultivated, subtle, and—most significantly—mutable bigotry existed that had yet to consider skin color as the most obvious or insidious marker of status within French society. Louisiana, moreover, was a colony where elites from often ambiguous backgrounds sought to play the environment in their favor by promoting their own cultivated nobility in order to create a clear, but artificial, social barrier between themselves and lower-order Europeans.

The Code Noir and Social Status

In the French culture of highly ordered vertical estates, the Crown sought to define the place for African slaves. The Crown incorporated African slaves into the realm of
France in an ongoing effort to maintain colonies as extensions of, not exceptions from, French society. To do this, French authorities formulated a new definition of slavery. Africans arrived to perform the work of a productive labor force rather as a penitent group of galley slaves, or forced prison labor that had been traditionally defined as “slave labor” in Europe. The *Code Noir*, introduced in 1685 provided a rubric for French treatment of this new category of slave. This code, as Allain explains, “followed well-established French precedents regulating vagabonds, beggars, apprentices, children, and wives, in other words, members of the lower orders or persons unfit to act for themselves.” While this relegates Africans to the most dependent in French society, the Crown needed to emphasize to slave owners that Africans should not be treated as enemies of the Crown, or punished as convicts were traditionally treated. As Mathé Allain argues "Neither humanitarianism nor racist, the Code [Noir] reflected the French monarchy preoccupation with order, centralization and unity, as well as its belief that the American colonies should be 'New Frances' in Pigeonneau's words, 'a transatlantic France closely united to the fatherland with a population enjoying all the rights of Frenchmen." As laborers, they became a dependent but essential element in French society: agricultural workers who engaged directly with husbanding the land and nurtured knowledge of how the land provided for the rest of society. This was also important because the *Code Noir* came in the same year that the revocation of the Edict of Nantes banished practicing Huguenots from France and Jews and Huguenots from France’s New World colonies. At least on paper, the *Code Noir* was providing the means to incorporate enslaved Africans into colonial French society just as the Crown expelled Jews and protestants.
Skin color, blood, and social status were significant markers of identity in colonial Louisiana and each came with its own European history. This history indicates that in Louisiana’s founding decades, blood was still a defining aspect of social status. Du Pratz wrote about Africans in terms of blood purity when describing their temperaments and recommending work assignments. Elites used these arguments in Europe to subordinate the majority of society to the blood purity of the nobility. Moreover, religious affiliation in the colonies became more significant than skin color in determining access to French society. Consequently, skin color was one, but not the only or even the most significant marker of status in Louisiana.

To argue then, that white supremacy did not exist in Louisiana’s founding decades is to demonstrate that no culture existed where skin color alone provided social and economic opportunities denied individuals with black skin. White supremacy also presumes a natural affiliation among those with white skin that precludes affiliation with those with black skin. White supremacy did not exist in the French colony because the strictly defined cultural hierarchy in Louis XIV’s France considered a large part of their own population racially inferior. Elite French colonists considered lower-order Europeans biologically subordinate. While legally discriminating policies like the Code Noir asserted a difference between earlier definitions of white slaves punished for crimes and black slaves purchased for production, it did not elevate the status of the servile white worker. When Africans and Native American knowledge and labor were available in Louisiana, elites added them to the productive class, sometimes even supplanting Europeans. As a result, the most vulnerable and most necessary workers in Louisiana were European, African, and Native American, enslaved, contracted, and free. ** They
suffered the economic, environmental and social vagaries of colonial Louisiana together and had many incentives to create networks to protect themselves when elites were unable or unwilling to extend resources for their support.xxvi

Peasants and Social Order in Louisiana

A colonial peasantry was just what the Crown and founding concessionaires wanted in Louisiana. They desired a peasantry to husband the land and anchor colonial society along the Gulf Coast. In 1709, early in the years of settlement at Mobile Bay, Canadian born François de Hautmesnil de Marigny, sieur de Mandeville wrote that the itinerant population of Canadian trappers on the coast needed the example of farmers: “It would be advisable to send several peasants there to show them how to work since they have more experience and knowledge.”xxvii Volunteers were unwilling to make the journey, but securing the individuals proved relatively easy. They landed in Mobile and later New Orleans from the lowest orders of French society. Many were prisoners whose sentences the Crown commuted in exchange for their work in Louisiana. Beginning in 1719, Germans escaping starvation and occupation also arrived to settle and husband the land. xxviii The economic success of Louisiana was pinned on cash crops and raw materials, but their plans did not preclude a culture based in subsistence agriculture, domestic animal husbandry, and garden produce. Landholders needed peasant workers to ground even a successful commercial or military enterprise through their labor in the soil.

De Mandeville had reasons to be optimistic about peasants successfully anchoring Louisiana society and providing an underlying structure for the colony.xxix He was from
the landholding class of Canada who had benefited from a seigniorial system of productive farmers. This system prevailed in the majority of French holdings in America including Illinois country. De Mandeville also spent time in France. His travels to Paris would have brought him in contact with the crush of poverty that drove people off the land and into the cities during the latter seventeenth century. Rather than uproot the farmers of Canada, it seemed logical to move idle hands from France to the Gulf Coast. In the beginning of the settlement, there was no sense that workers would be difficult to procure or set to work.

Initially the call for workers—peasants—did not discriminate. Along with de Mandeville’s call for Europeans, in 1706 de Bienville requested “Negro slaves” for clearing the land. In 1712, Commissary Jean-Baptiste Martin d’Artaguette Diron recommended that the labor of African slaves could be used to civilize itinerant pirates if the latter were allowed to settle in Mobile: “We could however procure Negroes for them and they would perhaps turn them to account.” De Bienville mentions the Native American slaves who were currently at work in and around the Mobile settlement. The concessionaires and officers were accustomed to getting a lot of work from knowledgeable people for very little investment or maintenance. De Mandeville suggested that these peasants would stabilize themselves once they were married: "they would first get married and being married they would work to support their families in mutual rivalry." He suggests that individuals would settle themselves with little support. Elites like de Mandeville were likewise expecting the Gulf Coast to foster the culture of social deference that structured society and facilitated access to goods and services. They seem unconcerned that they were forcing these individuals to Louisiana.
European laborers and African slaves joined Native American slaves along the Gulf Coast. Enslaving Native Americans was problematic for the French because diplomatic entanglements developed between the French and the various tribal groups in the south and southwest. \textsuperscript{xxxvi} The French began acquiring Native American labor long before the settlement at Mobile. \textsuperscript{xxxvii} Not only did Native American slavery in Canada predate Louisiana, but historians also argue that Native American slavery continued in the Nuevo Le\'on of northeast Mexico into the eighteenth century. \textsuperscript{xxxviii} Mathé Allain writes that French voyageurs and missionaries came across Native Americans held as Spanish slaves in their travels to the West in the later seventeenth century. \textsuperscript{xxxix} Historian Juliana Barr writes that as late as 1706, “the Apaches continued to busily sell Wichita women and children to the Spaniards of New Mexico.” \textsuperscript{x}xl As early as the 1701 Mobile settlement, de Sauvole described Native Americans as slaves in 1701: "I have four of them here together with an Illinois who seems to have traveled about a great deal." \textsuperscript{xli} De Bienville reported in 1708 that he could trade two Native American slaves for one African from Saint-Domingue. \textsuperscript{xlii}

However, Native American labor came at a particular diplomatic price for the French. Many were acquired as prisoners of war, cementing French alliances with particular tribes in the Gulf region. Others, as Barr argues, were female, and "French traders and officials bought the women for their own domestic, intimate and reproductive needs. In the process, French and Native American people in the Southern Plains and along the Texas-Louisiana border created not only economic ties but long-lasting diplomatic alliance." \textsuperscript{xliii} Thus, to have and hold a Native American in bondage was to initiate a connection to that individual’s tribe or kinship network. Trappers and \textit{voyageurs}
had long since used this practice to cultivate trading alliances throughout North America and it remained an important diplomatic exercise in Louisiana. However, these alliances created networks of rights and obligations that did not always fill the overwhelming need for laborers within the colony.

While the French Crown desired slaves as a source of labor and production, many Native American tribes claimed slaves through warfare in order to torture and kill them in public spectacles. In 1730, Captain Joseph Christophe de Lusser reported that a member of the Yanabé tribe had “arrived from the direction of the Natchez who had reported that near the great river they had found two Natchez women and a young boy whom they had burnt.”xliv In 1733, Regis du Roullet reported that Chickasaws had Frenchmen captured as slaves for the purpose of public burning.\textsuperscript{xlv} Whether as war hostages, or as symbolic negotiators in trade alliances, Native American definitions of bondage were distinctly different then the French ideas for bonded workers and laborers. Peasant workers were supposed to anchor European society on American soil, not entangle the French and Native Americans in diplomatic intrigue. These differences created a dicey diplomatic problem for the French as they sought Native American allies. They also enhanced the desirability of European and ultimately African laborers. xlvi

While Native American slavery enmeshed Europeans in alliances along the river, the Europeans who understood the relationship between cultivating the land and social stability balked at working in Louisiana. De Mandeville’s great plan for settling the coast with peasants seemed to fail even before there was time for success. He wrote in 1709 “The married and settled people live in the same slothfulness, alleging as their excuse that they see nothing permanent and that when they see the King bring troops and
colonists they will work; that it would be a pity for them to clear the land and do the work and after all to abandon the country.\textsuperscript{xlvii} De Mandeville is alluding to a social contract of rights and obligations: They will not clear the land if the Crown does not provide support for Louisiana communities. Social stability was nearly impossible in these early years in Louisiana. Instead of guaranteeing the success of its settlers, the Crown largely sought to protect its sovereignty at their expense. The Crown allowed no seigniorial rights to its concessionaires. Thus, no man or woman could settle individuals as feudal tenants on their land and assume responsibility for their health or produce. Yet, it is possible that such a system could have developed informally if landowners had been able to sustain the influx of immigrants or rent them parcels of arable land. However, European cereal crops were difficult to grow in the marshy Gulf Coast and grazing land was at a premium. The basic materials for cultivation, not to mention home building, clothing, and domestic habitation were wanting throughout the Gulf settlements. Because the majority of the individuals who arrived were destitute, and largely paroled prisoners, they did not bring any of the goods necessary to initiate or sustain a productive existence.

The Germans and Alsatians were the exception. They began arriving in October 1719 as part of John Law’s large concessions west of New Orleans.\textsuperscript{xlviii} It was his plan to claim the profits from the labor of these Germans without actually setting foot on his American holding. They became a relatively stable and productive settlement aided substantially by the tools and supplies they brought with them.\textsuperscript{xlix} As Jean Francois Dumont de Montigny records, they arrived “loaded with every kind of merchandize and implements of agriculture, which were removed to New Biloxi.”\textsuperscript{xl} John Law’s investment scheme failed soon after the Germans’ arrival.\textsuperscript{li} The Superior Council appointed Sieur Du
Fresne as overseer in 1721. Yet, the records indicate that Sieur Du Fresne’s role extended little beyond collecting his salary of “2000 livres a year.” Their unofficial advocate was a Swede “commissioned Lieutenant in the French service,” Charles-Frederick D’Arensbourg. He became their leader. D’Arensbourg distributed supplies from the Company warehouses and kept accounts for the community. Meanwhile, the German settlement developed the capacity to supply both grain and meat to New Orleans’s residents.

What the German colonists learned early on and other workers and laborers would come to understand was that their fate in America was largely in their own hands. Under these circumstances, they had little reason to affiliate with French concessionaires, defer to elites for traditional social reasons, or expect the Crown to provide any sort of leadership or protection. There were few incentives to choose their European social superiors over Native American and African laborers in either social or economic alliances. They may have arrived to sustain traditional French social structure, but soon sought out and secured relationships with those along the river and coast whom would best serve their interests in America.

Part 2: Race, Labor and Production in Louisiana

The 1724 Louisiana Labor Crisis

By 1724, the colony of Louisiana faced a labor crisis. John Law’s Company of the West was bankrupt and its contracted workers had served their time and were ready to go to France, Saint-Domingue, the Illinois, or one of the French islands in the circum-
Caribbean. Many of these workers had to sue for back wages before leaving while their employers fought to become or remain economically solvent along the Gulf Coast. They required laborers and individuals with expertise in tobacco, rice, and indigo cultivation as well as levee construction and riparian management. European and Native American laborers remained inadequate and skilled experts could not be held in Louisiana. As Hall has established, Louisiana’s landholders and governors increasingly looked to African slaves to supply these essential skills.

Along with agricultural workers, skilled craftsmen arrived to build the infrastructure for Louisiana. Stone-fitters, brewers, shoemakers, coopers, gunsmiths, tailors and many other individuals with specialized skills arrived under contracts to the Company. Their skills were vital to the success of the colony, yet keeping them interested in Louisiana was difficult. By 1724, many of the labor contracts initiated by the Company of the West ended. A series of cases concerning skilled labor appeared in the Superior Council records. In November, engineer and Superior Council member Adrien de Pauger petitioned the Council to retain several of these workmen through higher wages and increased rations

On the petition presented by Mr. Pauger that being warned that several workmen of The Balize wish to leave the company's service to return to France, the terms of their contracts being ended, but that since the majority are acquainted with the work that is being executed there it would be difficult to succeed in replacing them, as for example, John Chaline, a master locksmith and blacksmith who has wages of five hundred livres per year asks for six hundred livres. He is a good workman and deserves it…. a carpenter at two hundred and fifty livres per year, ordinary ration, asks for three hundred and fifty and a ration and a half as all the other carpenters have. He is a very good workman whom Mr. Pinault cannot do without.

Some of the men did not want to stay at all: “the man named Le Bas, a carpenter at five hundred livres per year, a ration and a half and an ordinary ration for his wife, the time of
his contract being ended, wishes to leave the Company's service...[It has been decided] to grant passage to the man named Valette, a blacksmith, on the Bellone, his contract having long been ended. It is very necessary to replace him.\textsuperscript{lvii} The Superior Council sought to retain these individuals by granting higher wages and even trying to entice Le Bas to change his mind: "Mr. de Pauger will do all that is possible for him to do to hold that man named Le Bas, a carpenter [and] a good workman who wished to return to France, and on condition that he will serve the Company for at least one year the Council grants him an increase of one hundred livres in addition to the five hundred livres that he receives.\textsuperscript{lviii}

Records indicate that many individuals were not paid for the work performed. Several came before the Superior Council suing for payment on labor rendered to concessionaires. For example, in April, gardener Claude Le Roux sued Sr. Morands for payment of work completed.\textsuperscript{lix} Antoine Le Vouf also sued Mr. Ceard director of the St. Catherine concession for back wages.\textsuperscript{lx} In the same month de Pauger sought money to retain his workers, Henry Gaspalliere sued the St. Catherine concession for payment of wages in specie rather than tobacco.\textsuperscript{lxi} The Council ordered Robert Mottet, “director of certain land grants” to pay back-wages to a François Bougeaut and Bougeaut’s passage back to France.\textsuperscript{lxxii} Along with several similar suits, these cases indicate that by 1724 the Superior Council had to manage a dissatisfied population of workers and concessionaire-employers with insufficient resources to pay them. Like the laborers, skilled workers soon discovered they had little reason to remain loyal to employers who could not fulfill their promises.

As the workers became disenchanted with Louisiana, many landowners also faced financial ruin and prepared to abandon the colony. Rather than face up to their inability to
sustain laborers and workers, the Superior Council blamed their failures on the
Company’s unwillingness to provide African laborers to the concessionaires. In 1725, the
Council wrote to the directors of the Company of the West that concessionaires would
not have left if more Africans had arrived in Louisiana. lxiii The idea of African labor
ameliorated both the diplomatic problems of Native American slavery and the mobility
and autonomy of European workers. Yet by 1725, many individuals had arrived in
Louisiana to find the colony unbearable. Thus, the Council and concessionaires
continually requested the Crown for Africans to fill a need for workers in an environment
where no one flourished.

Diplomacy, Slavery, and Crown Patronage

Acquiring African slaves was officially tangled within diplomacy and issues of
Crown patronage. The French Crown demanded oversight of acquiring and disseminating
African slaves in America, but it also sought to administer the nature of their treatment in
the New World. The price of African labor was too dear for most Louisiana colonists.
Slaves were an investment the colony simply could not afford through legitimate
channels in the early decades of settlement. lxiv De Bienville suggested in 1707 “The
colonists are very earnestly asking for negroes to cultivate their fields. They will pay cash
for them. They hope, however, that they will be sold to them at a low price in
consideration of the hardships that they have suffered since the beginning of the
establishment of the colony.” lxv In 1708 Mr. Robert, a settler in Mobile, wrote to Minister
of Marine Pontchartrain and argued that the French could be as successful as the English
at using African labor to produce cash crops for export. He also indicated that the Crown
should send slaves to Louisiana in advance of payment as they did in Saint-Domingue: "When we began to establish the French colonies of America the companies who had charge of it advanced negroes to the colonists in order to give them the means of cultivating the land, and without such assistance it is very difficult for a colony to be established." The minister’s answer was definitive: “unless the inhabitants of Louisiana are in a position to buy them [African slaves] in the same way as the English it will not be possible to introduce any there. It will be possible in the future to induce French vessels to bring some there, but that is a plan of which the execution must be postponed until peace.”

Peace and opportunity came in 1712 with the Treaty of Utrecht and a condition of the peace that the Companie de Guinée would export slaves to the Americas. The treaty in part read

It was likewise agreed, that Negroes which will enter the Ports of the Windward Islands Sainte Marthe [Columbia], Cumana [Venezuela], and Maracaybo [Maracaibo, Venezuela], could not be sold by the aforementioned Company each one more than three hundred Piastres, and that it will even provide them cheaper if possible in order to give average Habitants of the aforesaid places the ability to buy and pay. But with regard to all the other Ports of the New Spain and Terre Firma, it will be permissible with the aforementioned Company sell them as expensively and most advantageously as possible.

Louisiana was not on the list of places to receive “subsidized” prices for slaves in 1712 and, according to Donald Jile Lemieux, the Crown continued to privilege the sugar-producing colonies in the Antilles with slave shipments at the expense of Louisiana’s needs. Despite the requests for Africans, the Crown deprived French subjects along the Gulf Coast of subsidized labor in favor of colonies on the opposite side of the Caribbean. African labor was supposed to strengthen the French society but crown policies made this difficult for concessionaires in Louisiana.
Louisiana would have to wait until 1719 for the Company of the West to send African slaves to Louisiana. While the Crown expected its colonists in Louisiana to maintain deference and loyalty to the Crown, the French authorities demonstrated a willingness to abjure loyalty to these subjects in favor of economic and diplomatic expediency. Louisiana’s settlers faced this reality and often chose to defy the Crown and access slave labor through the trade networks in the Caribbean. As Gwendolyn Midlo Hall records, de Bienville clandestinely traded for slaves in Havana as early as 1709. In 1723, de la Chaise claimed that many of the slaves in Louisiana were obtained illegally and kept off official roles: "Mr. Delorme has at present at his house a Negress and an Indian hunter belonging to the Company. I discovered this Indian only a few days ago without his having spoken to me about him and without his having put him down on the list of the slaves or Negroes.” He likewise noted that de Bienville “has two plantations on which it is alleged that he has more than fifty Negroes and he appears to have obtained only thirty-seven from the Company. If I ask him where they come from, he will tell me that he bought some from private individuals.” In addition, while the numbers may not have been significant, illegal trade in slaves most likely continued throughout the French tenure. This group of elite colonists, determined to maintain crown discipline and demonstrate loyalty, brought slaves into Louisiana illegally. This was both a matter of economic and social defiance. Illegal slaves circumvented trading policies and demonstrated that slave owners preferred to disregard Crown policies when it was economically expedient.
The rhetoric that developed around the desire for African slaves invoked cultural contempt for “low-born” populations. French born Jean-Baptiste Martin D’Artaguette Diron wrote in 1712 that Canadians were “naturally lazy; they fled from Canada only for the lawlessness and idleness” they found along the Gulf Coast. In his latter day account of the history of Louisiana, Chevalier de Champigny wrote that the European settlers were known to have flawed characters. The Company “gathered up the poor, mendicants and prostitutes, and embarked them by force on transports, In arriving at Louisiana they were married, and had lands assigned them to cultivate; but the idle life of three fourths of these folks rendered them unfitted for farming.” Company clerks came under criticism in a 1726 letter: “The indulgences that we show to the clerks comes from the necessity in which we find ourselves of keeping the least bad for want of persons to replace them.” As Lemieux records in a letter from de Bienville, he too was critical of the men sent to serve under him: "troops? Instead of soldiers we have deplorable recruits. Dwarfs, thieves, useless mouths dependent on the care of the colony who will render nothing in return.” These descriptions not only accused European workers of actively draining the resources of the colony, but also condemned them as naturally unfit for productivity.

Some soldiers showed little deference or loyalty to their superiors and desertions plagued the military. Like the laborers and craftsmen, soldiers sought better situations for themselves when they were mistreated. In 1713, Cadillac reported that six sailors deserted to the Spanish Havana. In 1714, seventeen soldiers left Mobile and joined the English. In 1722 a “vessel” commandeered by some Swiss troops arrived in Havana. Despite the governor’s refusal to accept the men, some successfully left the ship
before the rest sailed on to Carolina. Desertions continued and became an ongoing protest of social and economic conditions in Louisiana. In 1725, the Superior Council claimed that the number of desertions in Louisiana were not the result of “bad treatment given to the troops” but because the individuals were “convicts” and “debauched.” Abjuring responsibility for a few irrecoverable soldiers was logical. Yet, these were hardly a few isolated incidents. The number of protesting soldiers, laborers, and craftsmen developed into a discontented population of necessary workers.

African Slavery and White Revolt

Individual protest, retaliation and desertion soon fomented into organized resistance in other French colonies. In 1723, French authorities arrived in Saint-Domingue to confront growing animosity among the smaller landowners angry at the economic and political privileges of the large plantation owners. North of Louisiana, in November of 1725, "By the news from the Illinois it appears that there has been some sort of revolt on the part of the inhabitants." Defiance and rebellion within the European community created an atmosphere of contempt and distrust between laborers and landowners, craftsmen and employers, the Crown and its colonists.

Organized resistance among European colonists developed at the same time diplomatic rhetoric increasingly singled out African labor as the repair for European failings. The Superior Council wrote in 1724 that Mr. Delorme praised a slave named Margot for doing the “heavy work of his kitchen in view of the fact that it is impossible to use white men or women both because of their laziness and because of their bad character.” In 1726, de Bienville wrote that the success of the colony lay with the
number of Africans imported:

True I have every reason to state with assurance here that the colony would now be very prosperous and that it would be producing large returns for France if the number of negroes that had been promised had been successfully brought to Louisiana and if the funds that were so uselessly consumed in transporting and feeding so many convicts and idlers had been employed for that purpose.\textsuperscript{1xxv}

Thus, Africans were the palliative for the detrimental effect of lower-order whites.

African knowledge and skills were essential to the colony’s success. This meant that they threatened the status and employment of Europeans already in Louisiana. As Gwendolyn Midlo Hall reports, Africans were responsible for the successful cultivation of the cash crops of tobacco and indigo as well as rice in Louisiana.\textsuperscript{1xxvi} Colonists would have also been interested in their levee building knowledge and African artisans skilled in metal, wood, and weaving in the Senegambia region.\textsuperscript{1xxvii} In 1729, Perier and De La Chaise wrote that they were “placing negroes as apprentices with all the workmen who we think are good and honest men.”\textsuperscript{1xxviii} These artisans understood the effect of enslaved apprentices, as de la Chaise wrote: “workmen do not seek to perfect the negroes in their trades because they feel distinctly that they will harm them in the future.”\textsuperscript{1xxvix} While this could have developed into an issue that prejudiced European workers against these African apprentices, there was an established resentment against Crown policies that excepted foreign craftsmen from guild fees in Paris.

Since 1607, guild monopolies on specialized trade knowledge were challenged by foreign craftsmen working in areas such as faubourg Saint-Antoine outside of Paris.\textsuperscript{1xc} These areas of “sanctuary” protected free-trade artisans from guild rule. Louis XIV himself pardoned his favored artisans from guild oversight.\textsuperscript{1xci} African apprentices created a similar situation. They learned and trained at the privilege of their owners, not guild
masters. Thus, their owner, like the King, was the ultimate and singular benefactor of the talent. Moreover, like faubourg Saint-Antoine, the Company of the West established no provisions for guild monopoly in Louisiana.\textsuperscript{xcii} Sophie White also notes that the “prevalence of these informal trades- and craftsmen,” indicates a lack of guild oversight in Louisiana.\textsuperscript{xciii} Monopolizing African labor was yet another way concessionaires undermined the success of craftsmen and further frustrated cohesion and loyalty among European colonists.

In 1743, de Bienville wrote the Secretary of the Navy Maurepas a letter revealing much of how this plan played out in Louisiana. In the letter, de Bienville is apologizing for allowing two masons to leave Louisiana to seek work in Saint-Domingue without the Crown’s permission. He argues that they are no real loss to Louisiana, because

Sieur Dubreuil, the contractor of all the King's works, has trained negroes in all kinds of trades he employs only very few French workmen and since materials have become excessively dear because of the discredit of the paper private persons are no longer having any work done so that the two masons in question, who had no other talents than their trade, were languishing in poverty.\textsuperscript{xciv}

Skilled African labor also cost less. As economic historian N.M. Miller Surrey demonstrates, “The royal government's bakers at New Orleans and Mobile were receiving 400 livres a month for their services, while a negro at the Balise was doing the same work quite well for his clothes and soldier's rations.”\textsuperscript{xcv} African skills were replacing European craftsmen with quality work that cost their employers less.

As African skills replaced European, slaves parleyed their usefulness into bids for improved conditions. Many individuals of African descent lived and worked in New Orleans as freed persons.\textsuperscript{xcvi} As Hall and others have recorded, several individuals of African descent bought or negotiated their freedom within a few years of New Orleans’s
founding. In 1724, Antoine Beauvois, “a free mulatto,” went before the Superior Council to request a transfer from his trade as a cooper to that of a sailor in service of the Company of the West because of his failing eyesight. Rose Marie Lange was a “woman of color” who owned property in New Orleans and worked as a “merchant negotiator.” A freed slave named Jean-Baptiste Marly owned substantial property in New Orleans after securing his freedom. Likewise, Scipion, a free African, owned property in New Orleans and land across the river from the city as he worked on various river barges. Most famously, Louis Congo negotiated freedom for himself and his wife in return for becoming the Crown’s executioner in the colony. After several Africans served meritoriously as soldiers in the Natchez war, the Superior Council granted their freedom. These cases indicate that a forum existed in colonial Louisiana where enslaved Africans could argue their merits and find admission to free society. These individuals made a place for themselves within colonial society as free persons of color who managed Africans as both freed and enslaved members of the same community.

In the Caribbean and Gulf Coast settlements, however, French colonial settlements were hardly peaceful forums supportive of freedom and bids for access to society. These areas needed a stable and subordinate supply of productive workers. In 1724, the year of the exodus of European skilled labor from Louisiana and continuing unrest within a multi-racial underclass threatened Saint-Domingue’s elite, a revised Code Noir sought to curtail African mobility and interracial cooperation in Louisiana. The revised code forbid interracial marriages and gifts of property from master to slave. It also made it more difficult for slaves to buy their freedom. Reading the 1724 code in relation to the problems between elites and European workers demonstrates how Africans
were becoming more valuable to Louisiana’s success. The *Code Noir* still brought Africans into French society, but attempted to retain them there and arrest their ability to exercise self-determination and thwart opportunities for legal collaboration with Europeans.

Securing labor and maintaining a slave population was the goal of Louisiana concessionaires. The 1724 *Code Noir* was a part of this plan. By explicitly forbidding interracial marriage, the Code created a legal barrier between the workforce of the colony and its privileged colonists. Africans would work to provide wealth, not receive wealth through marriage or concubinage with Europeans. In 1725, Father Raphael wrote that the Code was not yet enforced: “although the number of those who maintain young Indian women or negresses to satisfy their intemperance is considerably diminished, there still remain enough to scandalize the church and to require an effective remedy.” However, it did provide a way to protect estates from claims by children of interracial liaisons. The *Code Noir* was one more way that the Crown and Louisiana’s governors could assign individuals to a specific place in the social order and take what they needed from the “lowest orders” without accruing any obligations in return.

By 1724, the *Code Noir* was part of the French Crown’s growing, but somewhat haphazard reliance on slavery as a distinct condition for Africans. As Samuel Chatman argues, regardless of official proclamations claiming that slavery was not allowed in France, as the eighteenth century progressed, French courts had to manage the reality more often: "need for the lawsuits suggested that slavery did indeed exist in France, and slaves were not automatically freed the moment that they stepped their feet on French soil."

In 1738, the French crown permitted slaves to enter France for religious or
vocational training; however, the law allowed the Crown to confiscate the slave if the slave stayed more than three years. Thus, inside France, the Crown neither encouraged nor facilitated freedom and autonomy for slaves. Rather, laws sought to regulate who would be responsible for and benefit from the labor of these individuals. With legal intention, African labor was meant to create a broad productive base for colonial society that would enrich Louisiana’s concessionaires and the Crown. By replacing European peasants and artisans with a captive body of Africans, Louisiana’s governors sought to stabilize and secure the colony’s economic base.

The Ambiguity of Slavery and Bondage in Louisiana

The language of the 1724 Code Noir indicates a step toward modern slavery in Louisiana. Yet, the Crown based the Code Noir on the premise that a structured, hierarchical, and stable society existed in its colonies and that Europeans and Africans could be defined as slave or free, black or white, and elites could be considered law abiding colonial subjects. Slave owners in Louisiana demonstrated a willingness to circumvent Crown policies to buy and sell slaves. Little evidence suggests that slaveholders treated the details of the Code Noir with due diligence. Furthermore, the Code presumed a society structured to effectively repress the social mobility of its members. When Mathé Allain assessed the Code as part of the “well-established French precedents regulating vagabonds, beggars, apprentices, children, and wives” the Crown assumed these individuals were still dependents. Often, “vagabonds, beggars, apprentices, children, and wives,” in Louisiana chose or were forced to assert their right to self-determination in a colonial society where the Crown had little to offer the
Europeans they brought over, much less the Africans they forced to the shores. Consequently, the 1724 *Code Noir* was an anachronistic presumption in a colonial world that had changed beyond a place where the code’s precepts were tenable.

Europeans and Africans experienced bondage in France and the colonies. The reality of this bondage often belied legal prescriptions. As Mathé Allain demonstrates, "Legal commentators agreed that 'France, the mother of liberty, knows not slavery.' Yet, household slaves were sold and bought in southern France as late as the fifteenth century, and until the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, French consuls in the Near East routinely purchased slaves for the Mediterranean galleys." Many Europeans continued to arrive in America as convict slave labor on galleys. They were either forced to Louisiana, or they traded imposed prison sentences for colonial labor contracts. Native Americans certainly understood slavery as applied to war captives and were increasingly aware of the European ideas of forced labor. Among these other states of captive labor, African slavery was another iteration of imposed bondage. Moreover, the atmosphere of jurisprudence within the colony did not seem to discriminate. As Sister Mary Madeline Hachard wrote about New Orleans, “the trial of a thief is made in two days. He is either hung or flogged, be he white, red or black; there is no distinction or mercy.” Thus, on the surface, Louisiana policies neither protected nor singled out individuals from bondage or discipline based on their skin color or country of origin. The exact terms of bondage and the individual’s ability to affect their status depended on an ever-evolving set of social, economic, and political changes in the unstable colony.

While the definition of slavery and forced bondage adapted to individual situations, Europeans, Africans and Native Americans nevertheless understood the
difference between slavery and freedom. In 1714, Duclos wrote, "As nothing flatters all men so much as liberty and as they even prefer a liberty that is onerous to them to a constraint that might be advantageous to them." Free Africans successfully sought legal redress in the courts, bought and sold property, and made contracts. At least once a Native American’s testimony was used as evidence in a property succession. Furthermore, colonial authorities used the difference between slavery and freedom in their diplomatic negotiations with Native groups. De Lusser juxtaposed French diplomacy and English chicanery when speaking with a Choctaw chief in 1730. He argued to the chief that the English only sought to incite wars among Native American groups so the English could enslave the Choctaw and send them to the Caribbean, where “in the majority of these islands the red men who are there were Choctaws.” He argued that the French sought trade alliances not slaves; yet, at the time of this discussion, de Lusser was negotiating the return of African slaves captured at Natchez. Thus, when it was diplomatically convenient, colonial authorities could distinguish slavery as a state of bondage appropriate for Africans, but not for Native American allies. Therefore, while the terms of bondage remained somewhat arbitrary and circumstantial, there was still a clear difference—especially for the enslaved—between liberty and slavery.

Europeans were not the only cultural force defining the nature and terms of slavery in colonial Louisiana. A number of colonists experienced this condition first hand after the Natchez massacre in 1729. Indeed, after the majority of the European male settlers were killed, European women and children, along with African men and women, found themselves captives of the Natchez and their allies. Many were returned within a few months, but many others were given by the Natchez to other tribes. The chief Paymingo
of the Choctaws related the diplomatic aftermath of the massacre: "[the chief of the
Natchez] he made him a present of a little French boy of nine or ten years old, a negro
and three horses as well as several articles of clothing." This Choctaw chief related what
happened when he arrived at Natchez shortly after the massacre: "They [Natchez] gave
him some more booty, pointing out to him three young French women whom they
promised to give him after his expedition." In spring 1730, Henri chevalier de
Louboëy found the “negro,” a young European boy and a European woman living among
the Choctaw:

I noticed a negro whom I called [and] whom I asked who was his master. He told
me that he belonged to a man named Poulain. I told the chief that it was advisable
to return this negro as well as a little French boy whom I knew he had. He replied
to me that we should talk about that to-morrow at Caffetalaya where we are to go
together to see there the Frenchwoman who had been captured from the
Yazoo. In fact, when he met the woman, “She began to cry at once when she saw us” and related
that another French woman lived at the Chakchiumas. When Lusser followed up after
de Louboëy’s trip, he found many Africans among the Yellow Canes and the young
French boy still enslaved by a band of Chickasawhays:

I called him and asked him who he was. He told me that he was the son of a man
named Levesque, a locksmith. I inquired how it happened that he had no gone to
New Orleans with the other Frenchmen. He told me that Mr. De Louboey had been
willing to give only one linburg blanket for him and that the Native American to
whom he belonged had preferred to bring him back rather than surrender him for so
little, saying that he would adopt him as his nephew.

As with this young man, the fate of European women, Africans, and other captured
individuals remains unrecorded. What is clear is that various Native American tribes
traded in European and African slaves and that the French were unable to reclaim all
captured individuals either by force or negotiation. More importantly, the French crown
and its colonial government had over one hundred of its subjects taken by force and held in bondage by the Natchez. In the 1730s, many individuals from several countries of origin shared the experience of slavery in French Louisiana.\textsuperscript{cxxi}

Under bondage to the Natchez, the Europeans from a cross section of society experienced the sudden and violent curtailment of their freedom at the hands of an enemy force. Father Le Petit wrote that the women, suffered:

…every sort of indignity during the two or three months that they were their masters…But two things, above all, aggravated the shame and rigor of their slavery; it was, in the first place, to have their masters those persons whom they had seen dipping their cruel hands in the blood of their husbands; and, in the second place, to hear them continuously saying that the Frenchmen had been treated in the same manner at all the other posts, and that the country was now entirely delivered to them.\textsuperscript{cxxii}

Le Petit indicates that these women were never under the impression that they were captives in an ongoing negotiation for their freedom. To the contrary, he indicates that the Natchez told them that their countrymen were dead, and their freedom was gone. They were forced to acquire survival skills and rapidly adapt to their circumstances. Once released, they faced radically altered social situations. Most of the women were widowed and many children were orphaned. While New Orleans families took in some of the boys but according to Le Petit, “The little girls, whom none of the inhabitants wished to adopt” were assigned to the Ursuline nuns.\textsuperscript{cxxiii} Many of the children became vagabonds on the streets of the city. Thus, their experience of Natchez captivity subsequently changed and even limited their options within New Orleans society.\textsuperscript{cxxiv}

African Forced Labor and Slave Revolt

By the time of the Natchez uprising in November 1729, Louisiana had already
sustained protests against the policies and practices of the Company of the West, the
Crown of France, and the Superior Council. Most individuals protested the working
conditions in the colony by leaving during the 1724 exodus after work contracts expired.
Africans and Native Americans continued to steal themselves into maroon colonies or
tribal networks along the river. cxxv Enslaved Africans found themselves forced to endure
what others had refused to accept. It is little wonder that within a year of the Natchez
uprising, Africans planned their own armed rebellion. In the spring of 1731, a "A female
negro receiving a violent blow from a French soldier for refusing to obey him, said in her
passion, that the French should not long insult the negroes." cxxvi Enslaved Africans were
no more willing to work under conditions of depravity than Europeans and Native
Americans. Choosing the end of the Natchez war, when the French were exhausted from
the fight and their defenses were weak, African slaves, under the leadership of a Samba
Bambara organized a rebellion. cxxvii Samba was in fact a trusted slave of Antoine le Page
du Pratz. Du Pratz was stunned that his trusted companion was the leader of this elaborate
plan. cxxviii The rebellion was thwarted, but its organizers demonstrated an ability to
communicate and mobilize a large number of individuals without raising the suspicion of
even well-connected and multilingual men like Du Pratz.

In the wake of slave uprisings, Winthrop Jordon argues that slave-owners generally
clampd down on free Africans: "Because the colonists dreaded slave insurrections they
were quick to excoriate persons they conceived to be potential fomenters of revolt. A
chief source of danger, the colonists sometimes felt, was the Negro who was not a slave."
This idea was based on the presumption "that free Negroes were essentially more Negro
than free, that in any contest between oppressed and oppressors free Negroes would side
not with their brethren in legal status but with their brethren in color." In Louisiana, the authorities did not clamp down on free Africans after the 1731 revolt. In fact, the government went on to free a number of Africans who fought against the Chickasaws during the 1730s. Africans continued to live and work free amongst their enslaved countrymen throughout the colony’s history. Successful bids for freedom did not end in the 1730s. As Daniel Usner argues, "Occupational and personal proximity of the Negroes with white inhabitants invited interracial mixture and emancipation. Well into the nineteenth century a growing class of free blacks, mulattoes and an expanding group of black artisans contributed profoundly to the economic welfare as well as cultural wealth, of New Orleans." Thus, despite the 1724 revisions to the Code Noir and the colony’s need to retain laborers in Louisiana, the Superior Council still allowed a means for Africans to enter colonial society as free men.

Conclusion

The thwarted slave rebellion was an event within a larger context of popular protest and rebellion in French held lands from Illinois to Saint-Domingue. The French leadership, from the Crown to the Company to the colonial governors, consistently neglected and abused its colonial workers. The elite landowners expected both a loyalty and productivity from the lower orders that was hardly possible in France, much less the new world of Louisiana. The elite were unprepared for the mobility of workers who would take their trade where the market demanded with little or no deference to the social class of their employers. Forced labor became the only way to keep individuals in Louisiana. From its earliest days through the 1730s, the inability to retain European workers necessitated the increasing reliance on African slave labor and knowledge.
labor and knowledge was increasingly retained only through the imposition of slavery.

Yet, a culture that supported and sustained slavery as a life-long condition for Africans was not yet fully developed in Louisiana. The elite clearly saw themselves as superior, and sought to insulate themselves socially, legally, and culturally from interference from the vast majority of Louisiana’s “inferior population”; however, elite society neither treated other Europeans as superior to Africans and Native Americans nor universally treated Africans as inferior to Europeans. Free Africans lived with their European neighbors in Louisiana with a regularity that indicates that French colonial authorities were able to assess Africans by more than their skin color or slave status. The history of blood consciousness in Europe was a powerful cultural pretext for subordinating all of Louisiana’s producers regardless of their country of origin. Hall assesses the situation unequivocally,

> Before the French Revolution, the slogan of French rulers, both at home and abroad, could well have been equality of brutality to all poor people, regardless of race, creed, or color. Horrible public tortures and executions were inflicted upon poor whites as well as upon blacks in French Louisiana. Although they tried hard, French officials did not succeed very well in dividing and controlling Louisiana's unruly population.\textsuperscript{cxxxiii}

Meanwhile, Europeans below the elite had no reason to identify with their social superiors and many reasons to seek alliances among Native Americans and Africans within the colony. Consequently, the legacy of colonial society in Louisiana created a vast heterogeneous underclass that shared the experience of bondage, forced labor, and neglect by its colonial and metropolitan rulers. Far from engendering French hierarchy within Louisiana’s majority, the elite became increasingly insular, retreating to a self-referential clique that became increasingly defensive in response to the increasingly dynamic “pan-Atlantic mosaic” of the colony.\textsuperscript{cxxxiv}
Endnotes


vi Guillaume Aubert, "'the Blood of France': Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2004), 4; Paul H. D. Kaplan, “Isabella D'este and Black African Women,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, ed. T.F. Earle and K.J.P Lowe (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 134-135: There are precedents for European nobles desiring particularly dark-skinned slaves. Paul Kaplan argues that during the Italian Renaissance, Isabella d'Este frequently sought particularly dark-skinned Africans for her household: “On 1 May 1491 Isabella asked Giorgio Brognolo, her agent in Venice, to procure a young black girl ('una moreta') between the ages of one-and-a-half and four, and twice in early June reminded him of the request, emphasizing that the girl should be 'as black as possible.'”


xi Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility 1580-1715* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 26-27: “Much anxiety surrounded the choice of a nurse, because medical opinion held that character followed the ‘humor’ of the body and that ‘a child might come to resemble the nurse through the nourishment he takes from her, for feeding at her breast he will suck the vices from her body and mind along with her milk.’ Given the strong belief that nobles were physically different from commoners.”; Several scholars trace the negotiated nature of race as slavery developed in colonial America: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); David Bryon Davis, *Challenging the Boundaries of Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial south Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1974).

xii Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France*, ed. Marvin B. Becker, *Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Civilization* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 63: "by following the trail of implied meanings, one finds that the word naissance did more than establish a biological fact. The term sometimes evoked 'moral' inclinations. For illustration, one need only look again at the definition of naissance as given by the Académie Française--this time substituting the definition of qualité where the word qualité itself appears: Nassaince 'is also used with respect to the good or bad [inclinations, habits] with which one is born...'He has a great soul and noble inclinations.' The same nuances are found in related terms. For example, the concepts of race and sang [blood], which clearly signified pedigree, implied at the same time a set of behavioral expectations. Race referred to 'lineage, extraction, all those who come from the same family.' But, the work can also be taken in the figurative sense: 'one says that 'Good dogs are hunters due to their race,' as a
way of saying that children have good morals [moeurs] and inclinations of their fathers. In the same sense, one can say that ‘A man hunts due to his race.’ Furetiére explained sang in much the same way. After giving all the literal definitions of the term, he added that ‘one says proverbially, ‘Good blood never lies,’ as a way of explaining that children ordinarily have the good qualities of their mothers and fathers.’ L.A. de Bourbon and Marshall D’Estrées, "Minutes of Council 1 September 1716," in MPA, FD V. II, 218: "Sieur de LaVente, formerly curate of Louisiana, having proposed in 1714 in order to populate the colony to permit the marriages between Frenchmen and Catholic Indian women and to prefer those of the north who are the Arkansas, Tunicas, Chickasaws, Chacchoumas, Kaskaskias, Tamaroas, Illinois and all those of the Missouri because the women of these nations are whiter, more laborious, cleverer, neater in the household work and more docile than those of the south, letters were written to Messrs. De Lamothe and Duclos to obtain their opinions, and they were informed that although the Superior of the Foreign Missions who had been consulted about it had no objection to it there was still a fear of mingling by these marriages of good blood with bad and of producing in the colony only children of a hard and idle character."

xiii Antoine Simon Le Page DuPratz, The History of Louisiana or of the Western Parts of Virginia and Carolina: Containing a Description of the Countries That Lie on Both Sides of the River Mississippi: An Account of the Settlements, Inhabitants, Soil, Climate, and Products, trans. N/A (New Orleans: Pelican Press, 1947 [1774]), 362-63. Du Pratz wrote these lines in the 1750s, nearly twenty years after returning to France. Thus, his language is in keeping with European concepts of blood purity.

xiv Paré, The Collected Works of Ambroise Paré. Way to Chirugery Chapter 7, 19: Of the Practice of the Aforementioned rules of Temperaments: His language reflects the description of Africans provided by Paré’s text: “The Southerne people [ consisting of Æthiopians, Egyptians, Africans, Jewes, Phænicians, Persians, Assyrians, and Native Americans], are borne and fit for the studies of learning.”


xix Aubert, "'the Blood of France': Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World." This challenges Guillaume Aubert’s assertions that the French authorities discouraged interracial liaisons in the colonies based on the presumption that “good blood” existed throughout “all segments of French colonial society.” I argue that blood purity had little to do with race and much more to do with privilege.


xxi Mathé Allain, "Not Worth a Straw": French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1988), 79.


xxiii Maza, "Luxury, Morality, and Social Change: Why There Was No Middle-Class Consciousness in Prerevolutionary France," 204.


xxv Peter H. Wood, Black Majority Negores in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974). Taking seriously the contention of Wood and others that Native American and African knowledge was absolutely necessary for European success in America.

xxvi Donna Goldstein, "'Interracial' Sex and Racial Democracy in Brazil: Twin Concepts?," American Anthropologist 101, no. New Series: 3 (1999), 563-64: "How Brazilians perceive themselves and others in racial terms and how interracial relations work in Brazil have been great topics of interest. Indeed, Brazilians have often prided themselves on being a nonracist society because of the reputed historical
blending and mixture of indigenous American, Iberian, and African peoples into a single national identity. Brazil never developed legal supports to racism, thereby enabling it to avoid the legalized segregating practices that grew and were later challenged in other contexts (such as the North American case)."

"Brazilians evaluate race primarily according to phenotype, offering a plethora of fluid and ambiguous categories, whereas North Americans have until relatively recently tended to follow a 'one-drop' (of blood) rule and comparatively bipolarized (black and white) vision of race. In Brazil, where one can place oneself or be placed by others along a color spectrum that shifts in relation to who is speaking and to whom one is speaking, as well as other aspects of context, this has never been so. Everyday discourse is often about 'color,' which suggests a continuum of features, encompassing skin color, hair type, and facial morphology without positing separate racial types, whereas in the United States race is often used to suggest utterly separate human types, despite the fact that an inherently meaningful category."

"A person's race/color is determined not just by phenotype, but also by context, most importantly the real and exterior signs of class, including, among other factors, clothing, footwear, and the use of language and literacy. Marvin Harris's (1964a) classic article on race in Brazil, in which he suggested that the attribution of a racial category may be influenced by a person's class and argued for the appropriateness of the old Brazilian adage 'money whitens,' may still be relevant."
compulsory labor entailing permanent and hereditary status) to explore bondage and unfreedom in America. In fact, the very heterogeneity of Indian bondage suggests comparisons with the range of slave practices in Africa, Asia, the Mediterranean, and other parts of the world where at different times and places persons, primarily women, were held and used as not only economic but also social and political capital—comparisons that resonate with growing scholarly discussions of slavery in a global perspectives.”

José Cuello, “The Persistence of Indian Slavery and Encomienda in the Northeast of Colonial Mexico, 1577-1723,” in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 21, No.4, (Summer 1988), 696: In Nuevo León the brutality of *encomienda* and Indian slavery produced endemic violence that stunted the development of a stable and peaceful society until the middle of the eighteenth century.”

José Cuello, “The Persistence of Indian Slavery and Encomienda in the Northeast of Colonial Mexico, 1577-1723,” in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 21, No.4, (Summer 1988), 696: In Nuevo León the brutality of *encomienda* and Indian slavery produced endemic violence that stunted the development of a stable and peaceful society until the middle of the eighteenth century.”


Giving Details of Indian Customs and of John Law's Concession," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 2, no. 2 (1919), 172.
xix Chevalier de Champigny, "Memoir of the Present State of Louisiana by Chevalier De Champigny," in Historical Memoirs of Louisiana, ed. B. F. French (New York: Lamport, Blakemen, and Law, 1853 [n/d post 1769]), 132: “The most frightful accounts of the Mississippi soon began to spread among the public, at a time when German colonists were planting new and most successful establishments on its banks, within five or seven leagues of New-Orleans.
1 M. Dumont, "History of Louisiana Translated from the Historical Memoirs of M. Dumont," in Historical Memoirs of Louisiana from First Settlement of the Colony to the Departure of Governor O'reilly in 1770 with Historical and Biographical Notes, ed. Benjamin Franklin French, Historical Collections of Louisiana (New York: Lamport, Blakeman and Law, 1853 [no original date]), 151; Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion. Military Officers, D
ii Champigny, "Memoir of the Present State of Louisiana by Chevalier De Champigny," 108: "On the 21st [April 1722] he embarked on board of his pirogue to return to the settlement of M. Law, which he found had been abandoned by his people, who had gone to New Orleans.
iii Jean Baptiste de Bienville, Duvergier, and Delorme, "Minutes of the Council of Commerce 20 July 1721," in MPA, FD, V.II, 256-66: "The Twelfth of December, 1721, Since it is necessary to provide Mr. Law's plantation at the Arkansas with an overseer to manage it, the Council has this day appointed Sieur Dufresne to fill this post, to whom it has sent his commission; and that at the salary of two thousand livres per year, and he shall live with the other employees at the expense of said concession, as he also shall follow exactly the instruments that we have given him."; Winston De Ville, The French Military in the Mississippi Valley and on the Gulf Coast: 1692-1776 (Ville Platte, LA: The Editor's Desk: Provincial Press, 2000 [1965]), 34: Most likely a son: DuFresne, Jean Oliver, Discharged October 1, 1764, roll of January 1, 1763. Folio 44; Charles R. Jr. Maduell, The Census Tables for the Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1732, trans. Charles R. Jr. Maduell (Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Co., 1972), 3: 1721 Census, DuFresne listed as a boat owner with a wife.
vi Chevalier Louboey (Loubois), "From Louboey to Maurepas 20 May 1733," in MPA, FD, V. I, 221-22: “About ten days ago there departed twenty-eight or thirty laborers, colonists and voyageurs who took the road to Pensacola. It would be regrettable if the desertions should begin again as they did ten years ago”
viii Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion.
ix Superior Council, "Minutes of the Superior Council of Louisiana, 6 November 1724": 441-443.
ixi Louisiana Cabidilo Judicial Records Jan 7, 1714, Case 1 to July 21, 1724, case 1, folder, 17240404014 April 1724.
ixii N/A, "Abstracts of French and Spanish Documents Concerning the Early History of Louisiana," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 1, no. 3 (1918), 237.
ixiii N/A, "Abstracts of French and Spanish Documents, 246.
ixiv N/A, "Abstracts of French and Spanish Documents, 251.
ixviii Broisbriant et al., "The Superior Council of Louisiana to the General Directors of the Company of the Indies 27 February 1725," in MPA, FD, V. II, 402: "It is certain that if it had been possible to furnish some sooner there were several to whom we could not refuse passage to France who would not have left the colony."
ixix 660 livres per African male in 1719 when laborers contracts were 500 livres a year. William Renwick Riddell, "Le Code Noir," The Journal of Negro History X, no. 3 (1925), 322.
lixvi Robert, "Robert to Ponchartrain 26 November 1708," in MPA, FD, V. II, 46.; Robert is the only designation for this individual. Note in the MPA indicates Robert was an “inhabitant” of the colony. Brasseaux’s index lists three Roberts as noncommissioned officers, but none indicate individuals who would have been living or serving along the coast in 1708 Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion.
Pontchartrain, "Pontchartrain to Bienville, Marly, 10 May 1710," in MPA, FD, V. III, 140.

Matthew Nathan, "Historical Chart of the Gold Coast and Ashanti," Journal of the Royal African Society 4, no. 13 (1904), 38; Du Casse, "Traité Fait Entre Les Deux Rois, Catholique Et Très Chrétien, Avec La Compagnie Royale De Guinée, Etablie En France; Concernant l'introduction Des Nègres Dans L'amérique, Pendant Le Tems De Dix Années, Qui Commenceront Le Premier Jour De Mai Prochain Mil Sept Cent Deux, Et Finiront À Un Pareil Jour De L'année Mil Sept Cent Douze (Treaty Made between Two Kings, Catholic and Très Chrétien, with Company Royal of Guinea, Etablie in France Concerning the Introduction of Nègres into America, During the Ten Years Tems, Which Will Begin the First Day of Next May Millet Seven Hundred and Two, and at a Similar Day of Anée the Millet Seven Hundred and Twelve Will Finish)," Mercure de France, October 1955 [1712]; Riddell, "Le Code Noir," 322: "A Company called La Compagnie de Guinée was formed by arrêt of January, 1685, with the exclusive right of the trade in Negroes and all other merchandise on the Coast of African from the river of Sierra Leone to the Cape of Good Hope. The company was given the exclusive privilege of transporting Negroes to the French Islands of America, except in the Sénégal, Cape Verde and the neighboring country, as far as the River Sierra Leone exclusively."

Du Casse, "Traité Fait Entre Les Deux Rois, Catholique Et Très Chrétien, Avec La Compagnie Royale De Guinée, Etablie En France; Concernant l'introduction Des Nègres Dans L'amérique, 251-52."

Donald Jile Lemieux, "The Office Of "Commissaire Ordonnateur" In French Louisiana, 1731-1763: A Study in French Colonial Administration" (PhD, The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1972), 37: "By far the most prized French colonies were in the Antilles. Sugar was one of the most profitable products of the French colonies in the New World. To transport the sugar to Europe, France employed five to six hundred ships a year. According to a 'mémoire' of 1733, sugar was more profitable to France than all the mines of Peru were to Spain. Sugar plantations multiplied in Saint Domingue with the clearing of the forests. It was hoped that Negro slaves would permit the full exploitation of Saint Domingue. Accordingly, France concentrated her attention in the Antilles. And to protect her interests in America and Europe, France faced England in seven major conflicts from 1688 to 1815 totaling sixty years of war."

Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, 57.


Lemieux, "The Office Of "Commissaire Ordonnateur" In French Louisiana, 1731-1763: A Study in French Colonial Administration," 90: Bienville was critical of the troops sent to serve under his command: "troops? Instead of soldiers we have deplorable recruits. dwarfs, thieves, useless mouths dependent on the care of the colony who will render nothing in return." [From Fregault, Vaudreuil, 140; Bienville to Maurepas, New Orleans, June 28, 1736, AC Moreau de Saint Mery, F3 24."

LaMothe Cadillac, "Lamothe Cadillac to Pontchartrain, 26 October 1713 Fort Louis," in MPA, FD, V.II,190: Sieur de Bienville sent to Havana on his own account and on that of his brother Mr. De Chateaugué a boat called the Bienvenu on which there were six soldiers who deserted at Havana.

Bienville, "Abstract of Letters from Bienville to Pontchartrain,"183: I think that Mr. de Lamothe has had the honor of rendering your Lordship before his departure an account of everything that has happened in this country and especially that seventeen soldiers had deserted to the English last year and that there were now only forty here in the two companies of whom there are ten who are in no condition for service. An additional force of at least seventy is needed here to make the two companies complete."

A French delegation, arrival with Santo-Domingo, August 1723, to negotiate the restitution of a hundred négres maroon, failed to be massacred by the rabble of this port and had to embark them precipitately empty hands. Under these conditions, the prolongation of the disorders was likely to cause an extension of the maronnage such as 'one day or the other one would be vis-a-vis with a true insurrection of the slaves. This prospect pushed certainly the majority of growers to accept without too many regrets the restoration of the authority royal.'


Robert, "Robert to Ponchartrain 26 November 1708," 45: In his 1708 letter, Robert wrote "These Native Americans are much cheaper than the negroes because the colonists do not get nearly as much service from them as the negroes."


Bienville, "Memoir on Louisiana [by Bienville]," i, 524-25.

Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, 59, 124, 126.

Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, 37.

Perier and de La Chaise, "Perier and De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies," 595.

Perier and de La Chaise, "Perier and De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies," in MPA, FD, V. II, 595; Du Manoir and Cruzat, "Concession of Ste Catherine at the Natchez.," 168: "When I ask you for laborers it is partly to begin our work and at the same time to teach their trade to the negroes, for if we succeed in training and perfecting them, they will, in the course of time, bring you large profits; if necessary, they will be sold at four times their cost and in case of need, their labor would bring more than what we gain on our culture. You must not feel astonished at the considerable sums which must be advanced at the beginning of these establishments. You know you must sow before you reap, and those who have been led to imagine that in three years they would recover their principal have been grossly deceived as well as those who persuade themselves that they can support themselves without aid from Europe, at least during the first three years..."; Superior Council, "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana xxxiv," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 10, no. 2 (1927 [1740]), 279: François Brunet, blacksmith agrees to teach his trade to a negro belonging to Messrs. Assaily and Daunous. Term of four years prescribed at 150 livres by way of fee. Proviso in case apprentice fails to prove adapted in the first 18 months."


"Arrest Du Counseil D'Estat Du Roy Concernant les Soldats, Ouvriers, Et autres gens Engagez au Service de la Comagnie d'Occident, & des Habitans qui passent à la Louisianne pour s'y Establir," 8 Novembre 1718 in MSS 268 and The Historic New Orleans Collection, in 1, ed. 1of 2 (Letters patent pertaining to the establishment of a trading company under the name of the Company of the West: 56 articles are lites, giving the Company of the West exclusive trading rights in Louisiana for 25 years from the date. Also provides for rights to land and harbors in Louisiana and beaver trade in Canada.; Acts of Royal French Administration Concerning the Company of the Indies in Louisiana 1717-1771}); Joan DeJean, The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour (New York: Free Press, 2005), 183: importance of Faubourg Saint-Antoine mentioned.


A free population of African descent emerged quite early in New Orleans. The earliest record encountered of a free black in New Orleans dates from 1722. Laroze was sentenced to flogging and incarceration for six years for stealing from the warehouse of the Company of the Indies. He was not re-enslaved. But Jean Baptiste, a free black, was re-enslaved for stealing shirts. There are several cases of free black men who married black women slaves and paid for their freedom through years of labor. John Mingo, an English free black from Carolina, married Thérèse, a slave on an estate managed by Darby. The marriage license was issued with Darby’s permission. Mingo contracted to pay as much as he could manage toward her price of 1,500 livres. Darby was to supply her rice, corn, beans, and sweet potatoes, as well as her clothing. Any children born to the couple would be free. When her total price was paid, she would also be free. Two years later, in 1729, Mingo and Thérèse signed a contract for him to oversee slaves in the cultivation of tobacco, cotton, and other crops...François Tioucou, a free black of the Senegal (Wolof) nation who had been emancipated for his services in the Natchez War, agreed in 1737 to work for Charity Hospital for six years in return for the freedom of his wife, Marie Aran, a slave belonging to the hospital.

“Jean Baptiste Marly, a free black, agreed to serve an infantry officer at Pointe Coupee for three years as a cook in return for the freedom of Marly’s wife Venus.”

“The Superior Council confirmed freedom granted by Cazeneuve and his wife to two of their slaves, provided they served Roussin and his wife for two years. Bienville freed his black slaves Jorge and Marie, Jorge’s wife, in recognition of their good and faithful service for twenty-six years. They were evidently among the first group of slaves that Bienville brought to Louisiana from Havana. Jorge died shortly after Bienville agreed to free them. In 1739, a family of six slaves--husband, wife and four children--were freed under the will of their master. Their emancipation was confirmed by governor Bienville. A New Orleans free black named Scipion signed a contract with François Trudeau for one year, hiring himself to go to Illinois in Madame Labuissoniere’s boat as rower, or in any other capacity as needed. On return from this trip he was to serve Trudeau until the year had expired...Three years later, Scipion contracted to take charge of Rene Petit’s barge going to Illinois and to unload the cargo there.


Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, 130 for Marly’s work situation; n/d New Orleans map, [c.1722], Library of Congress, Relief shown pictorially, cadastral map, pen-and-ink, mounted on cloth backing, oriented with northwest at top, Copy annotated in pencil at bottom: 142566, Accompanied by: a list of residents keyed by letter includes list of points of interest. Reference: LC Luso-Hispanic world, 960 Scale [ca.1:27500], 1 ms. Map; 41X55 cm. Call number G4014.45 1722. P51 Vault (from Library of Congress--manuscripts division Louisiana--Miscellaneous manuscripts) Legend pages are not numbered, but the lots are listed in order

Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, 130 for Scipion’s work situation; n/d New Orleans map, [c.1722], Library of Congress. Scipion listed as the owner of lots 323, 324, 341, and 342; Maduell, The Census Tables for the Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1732.”

de La Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723," in MPA, FD, V. II, 350: "I was omitting to tell you, Gentlemen, that having had a list of the negroes who were here given me by Sieur Delorme, I found in this list that he indicated nineteen intended and employed for the [public] works of New Orleans, together with sixteen negresses; that not seeing by any means all these negroes, I wished to hold a review of them on the twelfth of last July and thereby I found fifteen instead of sixteen set down in the same list. There was one [negress] of them who seemed to me to be a child, and that induced me to say to the commandant that she was a piccaninny [une Negritte]. He admitted to me that that was true but [said] that she had been exchanged by Mr. De Bienville for a fine negress belonging to the Company who was the wife of the man who has been made executioner."

N/A, "Sidelights on Louisiana History," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 1, no. 3 (1918), 132-33: "Proposal to Free Negroes. Memorial to Mr. de la Chaise. To the Councilors of the Superior Council of the Province of Louisiana: 'Exposed to a disaster like that which happened at Natchez, where all the inhabitants
were inhumanely massacred, obliged to have recourse to all sorts of means to baffle these barbarians, the most pressing need was to speedily advise the distant posts to be on the alert. Mr. Perrier found men of good will who offered to undertake the perilous journey. They were accompanied by a few negroes chosen among the boldest, and they were promised freedom if they inviolably kept their word. There were also several other negroes who at the time of the Natchez siege, gave proof of valor and attachment to the French nation, and exposed themselves to peril with intrepidity. Some were even wounded and as this is a very important affair, and that it is a question of holding the negroes and attaching them, so that we may rely on them on such occasions, the question is to find means best calculated to attain that end. We believe we cannot reward them otherwise than by granting them freedom. That will give others a great desire to deserve similar favors by material services, and besides a company may be formed of free negroes that can be placed in the posts which the commander will judge proper, which company is to be always ready to march on short notice...”

Allain, "Not Worth a Straw", 82.


Judith K. Schafer, "Open and Notorious Concubinage: The Emancipation of Slave Mistresses by Will And the Supreme Court in Antebellum Louisiana," Louisiana History XXVIII, no. 2 (1987), 171: "plâcage: long-standing relationships between white men and women of color in New Orleans in particular." 182: "Laws protected the legitimate family of both partners in the illegal relationship to insure that they would not be deprived of their inheritance. Of course, slaves had no legitimate families under law, could not own property, and were in fact property themselves.


Allain, "Not Worth a Straw," 79.


"Succession" in French 2 (New Orleans: 09/21/1735) NARC, 10162-10187, 10166-73, 101626J 10174-87+compilation and computation: Choctaw Chief Le Page (Bitony) used as testimonial witness in the death of Antoine Bunel.

Lusser, " From Lusser to Maurepas," 92.

Chevalier Louboey (Lobaois), "From Louboey to Maurepas 8 May 1733," in MPA, FD V. I, 54: “The Natchez, pretending to be going hunting, fell upon the settlement of this post on the 28th of the past month between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, and massacred not only all the men who were at the fort in our village, but in addition attacked the concessions from which no one was able to escape. They kept the women, children, and the negroes. They captured the galleys that had sent there with goods and which was to bring the tobacco that I had gathered there."; Dumont, "History of Louisiana Translated from the Historical Memoirs of M. Dumont," 76: "All the French women who survived the massacre were made slaves by the Native Americans. They killed some, such as the wife of Sieur Papin, the interpreter, and Mme. Macé, the wife of the sub-lieutenant, who was killed coming out of the guardhouse. The other French women became the property of those who had taken them; the great majority, however passed to the service of the great chief and the white woman, who ,as we have seen in the previous portion of these memoirs, is a kind of empress in the nation, and the stock from which all who govern must spring. Among those thus disposed of was my wife who had been taken like the rest, and from some of those who escaped..."
I learned the details of the massacre."); Périer, "From Perier to Maurepas 18 March 1730," in MPA, FD, V. I, 63; Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion, Governors, “Born in Le Harve, France, CA 1690.

cxvii Lusser, “From Lusser to Maurepas,” 98.

cxviii Brasseaux, France's Forgotten Legion, Officers, Henri chevalier de Louboëy in L; Fazende, "Remonstrance of Mr. Fazende on the Subject of an Overseer, and That the Coopers of the Company Are Not Doing Their Duty 7 April 1725," in MPA, FD, V. II, 81: "I am very sorry, my lord, to confirm to you again by this letter the destruction of the French at the Yazoos and of the two pirogues which were descending from the Illinois to New Orleans, as well as the conspiracy on the river."); Lusser, “From Lusser to Maurepas,” 97.

I am arguing that all individuals forced into bondage can be included under the term slave. Regardless of Native American traditions of adoption through kidnapping, and other forms of social incorporation, there is no benign slavery. As Tommy Lott argues: American slaves frequently included references to benign instances [of slavery] in their testimonies. Black abolitionists such as Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass presented their inside accounts of such benign instances as part of their inside accounts of such benign instances as part of a general conception of slavery as fundamentally evil institution. From their perspective, so-called ‘benign’ slavery is always relative within the context of harsher forms." Tommy L. Lott, "Early Enlightenment Conceptions of the Rights of Slaves," in Subjugation and Bondage: Critical Essays on Slavery and Social Philosophy, ed. Tommy L. Lott (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1998). While the majority of the individuals taken and held against their will after the massacre can be considered prisoners of war, I am asserting that their experience of bondage affected European social condition after they were released.


cxxi Jennifer Spear writes of the young children placed with Native families in order for them to learn languages and acquire negotiation skills. I argue that this practice is markedly different from this experience because of the context of the Natchez massacre. Jennifer Spear, ""Whiteness and the Purity of Blood": Race, Sexuality, and Social Order in Colonial Louisiana" (PhD, University of Minnesota, 1999).

cxxii Paul Du Ru, Journal of Paul Du Ru: Missionary Priest to Louisiana, trans. Ruth Lapham Butler (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1934 [1700]), 71: We have all heard in all the villages here that quite a large group of negroes and of mulattoes, men and women, have deserted and are established in a separate district where they persist in their revolt.”


cxxiv Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana,108-110.


cxxx Daniel H. Jr. Usner, "From African Captivity to American Slavery: The Introduction of Black Laborers to Colonial Louisiana," Louisiana History 20, no. 1 (1979), 46: After Natchez a free black militia was subsequently formed and actively participated in the war against the Chickasaws during the 1730s.

William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution*, vol. Cambridge University Press (New York, 1997), 183: Marseille and Aix offer the ultimate examples of factional conflict, with the difference that here there was a greater emphasis on permanent rivalries between powerful patrons. Whereas other cities developed loosely fluctuating interest-groups which combined personal rivalries with practical issues like fiscal mismanagement, these cities were animated by rivalries between clans led by 'godfather' like figures who seemed to view everything—even popular uprisings—as an expression of the struggle between clientèles.”


The term used by Bernard Bailyn and quoted by Ian K. Steele’s review essay “Bernard Bailyn’s American Atlantic,” *History and Theory* 46 (February, 2007), 54.
CHAPTER VI

OLD WORLD CONFLICTS AND NEW WORLD CULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

Introduction

Colonial authorities effectively used the social disciplining techniques developed under Louis XIV to structure the cityscape of New Orleans and implemented many Parisian laws to govern its inhabitants. These activities benefited the minority by giving elite colonists preferential housing in the city and control over the symbols of power and privilege in the colony. While they may have secured their place at the pinnacle of colonial society, they did little to engender respect, loyalty, or patronage from the colony’s Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans who made up the productive population in Louisiana. They assumed that the French diplomatic power and social structure would reign supreme in Louisiana as it has in earliest narratives of conquest and colonization. By 1743, when Louis XV severed the patronage networks that had connected Louisiana to Europe, New Orleans’s elite found themselves cut off from the culture on which they based their identities. Their efforts to remain constant to Court protocols and French cultural norms were meant to structure and control colonial society. Instead, they effectively isolated elites in self-referential networks that remained Court-centered, not colony determined. As elites molded their behavior according to French standards, the majority in Louisiana produced a rich, dynamic and responsive culture that challenged elite definition of power and privilege.
Part 1: Competing Identities

* Baptème des Tropiques *

Atlantic World and American spectacles and rituals vied with French precedents for authenticity and cultural authority. Competing spectacles challenged the Crown’s supremacy even on the initial journey from Europe. When ships reached the tropic of Cancer, a presiding member of the crew dressed as Poseidon and held court. For those who were crossing the line for the first time, they could either pay Poseidon or endure a drenching with seawater. When Father Jean-Baptiste Labat related the ceremony around 1700, he describes Poseidon’s grotesque dress and wooden sword. “Poseidon” forced Labat to place his hand on a sea chart and swear to support the ceremony with all his power. He then baptized Labat with a new, but unremarkable name of “The preacher”. This ceremony challenged French supremacy by forcing colonists to pledge allegiance to a Greek god on a map of the ocean and receive new names as if their European identities had to give way to new American force. The ceremony is a carnival, as literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin argues, “All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with the pathos of change and renewal, with the sense of gay relativity of prevailing truths and authority.” When Reverend Mother Tranchepain described her own experience of the ceremony she noted they paid to avoid the ceremony: “As one may not be excused except by paying, and as we were more than twenty, including the servants of the Fathers and also ours, they had from us a goodly little sum.” Thus, even in avoiding
the humiliation to their bodies and the allegiance to a false god, the nuns contributed to
the sailors. The baptism symbolized the change from Europe to America. It also
reminded passengers how dependent they were on the captain and crew to shepherd them
safely to the New World.

The baptism at the Tropic of Cancer was a means of publicly humiliating the
body. The passengers protected their body from ridicule and humiliation by enriching the
very people undermining their honor and dignity. The baptism at the Tropic of Cancer
was a carnival inversion of royal authority, not an attempt to supplant the Crown’s
authority once the ceremony ended. Even an inversion of the King’s authority still
acknowledges the power of the sovereign. Moreover, it was an oft-repeated ceremony
sharing ritual and symbolism from ship to ship.

Pirates

Much less predictable were the encounters with pirates. While pirates menaced
the Atlantic since shortly after 1492, both the number of pirates in the Atlantic and
attacks by pirates on its waters peaked between 1692 and 1725. These entities were
perhaps the ultimate threat to French travelers on the seas. Beyond the perils of
shipwreck, starvation, poor piloting, and encounters with ships on the opposite side of
Louis XIV’s latest war, pirates threatened both the physical health and the social status of
French émigrés.

Pirates were lawless, nationless individuals who not only pillaged ships and
coastal towns, but raped and murdered their victims on both sides of the Atlantic. They
also practiced a particular brutality to build reputations to proleptically intimidate
adversaries. They traded on tales of their exploits as weapons as surely as they relied on their cannons and cutlasses. In addition, the tales were horrifying. When Henry Morgan took Panama City in 1671, he supposedly “suspended unfortunate Spaniards by their testicles, to make the citizens reveal their treasure.” Victims often accused pirates of rape when they sacked a town or took over a ship with women passengers. In late 1683, the English pirate William Dampier wrote in his journal about taking “a forty-gun Danish ship…carrying sixty female African slaves. The buccaneers renamed her the Bachelor's Delight.” Tales of such exploits reached the shores of France through both the talk of sailors and the published accounts by men like Dampier. Pirates raided Mobile itself in 1710. Travelers most likely heard or read these stories before they departed, but most also experienced some encounter with pirates first hand.

In some cases, pirates circled or chased ships without actually attempting to board or sink the vessel. This was the case for Jacques de la Chaise as he approached the Mississippi river in 1724: “As we departed from Port Francais we encountered a pirate who was coming from the island of Cuba, who chased us all day. After he had examined us carefully and had seen our strength he thought it well to take leave with two cannon shots loaded with balls which he fired at us.” Pirates twice chased the ship carrying the Ursuline nuns before it ascended the Mississippi. These encounters demonstrated the real physical danger of pirates and emphasized the precarious nature of leaving the structure of French society for American life.

Pirates also offered a dangerous antithesis to elite French identity and a powerful alternative to French culture. First and foremost, piracy appealed to individuals who had nothing to lose in European society. As Kenneth Kinkor explains, the symbol of the skull
and crossbones flag was not only “defiantly flown to demonstrate 'that those who had turned pirates were, being dead in law, serving under the Banner of King Death,’ but was also a symbol of resurrection and rebirth. Together with certain ritualistic and initiatory features of pirate society, this choice of banner implies that turning pirate may have been seen as a transformation or 'rebirth' from slave to freeman.”xii While evidence indicates that pirate crews sometimes coalesced around a shared language or country of origin, they just as often included men and (occasionally) women from a variety of backgrounds. Thus, along with the rebirth of pirate initiation, the rites erased previous social distinctions. Pirate ships became home to escaped and freed African slaves, indentured servants, and French galley slaves, along with fugitive protestants, and individuals who found freedom in the oceans that they could not find on land. Thus, a pirate culture existed that eschewed European social norms in favor of a rough shipboard egalitarianism.

It is significant that this pirate culture, nearly the exact opposite of Louis XIV’s designs for France, reached its height in the same decades that Louis XIV’s power culminated at Versailles.xiii From the 1680s to his death in 1715, Both Louis XIV and pirates relied on a public discourse promoting their power and influence and both infiltrated the lives of those sailing the oceans under French flags. For those crossing the Atlantic, the power of piracy would become immediate and tangible just as the bonds and influence of social networks from France became attenuated and distant. The presence of nationless pirates helped spur elite colonists to strengthen social networks and French hierarchy in the New World. Moreover, the presence of pirates did not recede with the safe arrival of French émigrés in Louisiana. Pirate ships and clandestine trade remained a
vital source of staples and merchandise throughout the colonial period. Therefore, many Louisiana residents had periodic relationships with these ambiguous social actors.

Canadian Habitans, Voyageurs, and Coureurs de bois

Having survived the Atlantic crossing, the recent arrivals stepped off the boats in the New World with military and administrative authority from France prepared to encounter the foreign landscape and the exotic Native American tribes written about by so many explorers. What they had not anticipated upon their arrival in the Gulf Coast was the unexpected menace from the majority of Canadian settlers they presumed to be allies and savvy social actors versed in the protocols of French society. Much to the contrary, the majority of Canadians were a breed apart. They looked different—taller and heavier—and were “strong, quick and alert” by early French accounts. These Canadians had developed social networks that often included Native Americans and interpretations of their French heritage which were completely foreign to the European arrivals. More insidious than the pirates, these Canadians showed no intentions of relinquishing their American habits in favor of the newly arrived French alternatives. Moreover, they showed little deference to French ideas of status; instead, they often maintained and even strengthened the alliances that challenged the authority of the new arrivals. Consequently, reestablishing or transplanting French culture in the New World had to overcome the last generation of émigrés.

The majority of Canadians along the Gulf Coast were not the assimilated French military officers like the le Moynes. They were generally soldiers and traders who had only a tangential knowledge of and relationship with the French Crown. The soldiers
arrived in the Gulf Coast to occupy and fortify Mobile against the English in 1700.\textsuperscript{xvi} Given few resources and ordered to secure a stretch of marshy coast, these soldiers were vulnerable to the Spanish to the east, the English from the northeast and native groups all around them.\textsuperscript{xvii} In general, these Canadian soldiers were members of local militias. The captains of these militias were generally \textit{habitants}, or farmers, rather than landowners, \textit{seigneurs}, who lived off renting their land.\textsuperscript{xviii} Instead of pay, these captains received an elevated social status within their communities and they served as officers to the Minister of the Navy in Paris, not the Minister of War who oversaw military authority in France. Thus, the military captains in Canada held a more prestigious place in colonial society than they would in France and answered to a different hierarchy. These troops most likely came from nearly a decade of warfare with the English and the Iroquois between the Great Lakes and Acadia before they landed on the Gulf Coast with de Sauvole and d’Iberville in 1699.\textsuperscript{xix}

The Canadians needed help to hold this area, however, and reinforcements arrived from France beginning in 1701. From this point on, regular Canadian soldiers clashed at different points with arriving French soldiers and commanders. At times, these ships brought poorly trained or equipped reinforcements from France, still other vessels arrived carrying plagues and sick passengers who could not aid the beleaguered settlements in any way. At other times, arriving vessels bore disheartening orders from the Minister of the Colonies, Pontchartrain. In 1704, the minister dismissed over two hundred Canadians without pay, but offered them land to settle on and a chance at one of twenty French women sent specifically to marry the dismissed men. Neither promise was compensation for the loss of pay.\textsuperscript{xx} While Pontchartrain rescinded this order several months later, these
events established an ambivalent atmosphere between the French émigrés and Canadian soldiers. The atmosphere had not changed markedly when Jean Michiele de l'Epinay arrived to replace Cadillac as governor in 1717. While he worked under Louis XV, his inability to manage Native American relations and his continual clash with Canadians led to his recall a year later. The authority of the French crown rarely brought anything beneficial to the non-elite Canadians on the Gulf Coast.

Aside from the newly arrived soldiers, many of the Canadians were established traders. Generally active in the peltry trade, these men had already become adept at understanding and negotiating contentious diplomatic relationships along the rivers of North America. These negotiations were necessary because European powers and native groups fought vigorously for control of the peltry trade. By 1650, the defeat of the Huron nation by the Iroquois Confederation loosened the former monopoly of fur-trading middlemen. This event encouraged independent Canadian trappers and traders, voyageurs—officially licensed traders—or coureurs de bois—itinerant or extra legal traders—to work down from Canada, ingratiate themselves with Native and other European networks ranging from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast. They made their living not only from feeding the peltry market in Europe, but in the intercontinental market for European goods as well. These men often married Native American women to reinforce trading alliances and form kinship ties within their trading area. Clever diplomats and generally shrewd businessmen, they enjoyed trading relations with a diversity of individuals by working around the conflicts that permeated the region.

Beginning with his administration of Canada in 1663, however, Colbert—while praising the intermarriage of the coureurs de bois—wanted greater control over these
traders and sought to license and manage their economic activities. The coureurs de bois needed to remain loyal to and vigilant over their local trading network protocols and had therefore had good reasons for avoiding crown regulations that could work against them. Because these crown policies were difficult to enforce, the traders continued their activities and moved deeper into the continent.

The arrival of the Canadian and French troops on the Gulf Coast was not necessarily a beneficial development for the traders. Not only did de Sauvole and d’Iberville bring a military presence into the region, but they also chose to build Fort Saint Louis at Mobile in an area close to Alabamas, Koroas, Natchez, Houmas, Chickasaws, Attakapas, and other native groups. Worse still, d’Iberville almost immediately sent an order to the these traders on the upper Mississippi and Missouri Rivers that they must stop trading in beaver pelts and descend the Mississippi. Simultaneously, d’Iberville and the military force began a war with the Alabama Indians.

D’Iberville’s actions placed traders in a complex position: they were expected to demonstrate loyalty to the French authorities by abandoning the agreements they had made with their trading partners and associates along the rivers and convening at a military settlement where the commander had begun aggressive maneuvers toward native tribes in the area. D’Iberville was essentially demanding that the coureurs de bois break their preexisting relationships to demonstrate loyalty to crown authority. What he offered, however, was a market for beaver that would avoid the complicated political climate of Great Lakes Region. Caught between their preexisting trading networks—many of which had become kinship networks through marriage—the trading possibilities in the south, and the assumption by crown authorities that the coureurs de bois belonged to them, the
traders had to negotiate carefully to maintain their livelihood without compromising their reputations.

D’Iberville did his best to fulfill the needs of the traders who did answer his call. They came with beaver pelts that he sold illegally to the English in New York during a return trip to France. To some he offered land that was difficult to cultivate, and did not provide enough willing and attractive French women for wives. Within a few years these men brought native wives to live with them in Mobile, continued trading against proscribed policies, and generally did not become the community members d’Iberville needed. There were also repercussions for removing these men from their upper Mississippi and Missouri networks. In 1707, de Bienville wrote to Pontchartrain “The Indians of the Illinois and others established on the Mississippi River are no longer receiving the assistance that they used to receive from these backwoodsmen. The complain about it very much.” In fact, the missionaries who wrote to inform de Bienville of these problems also wrote that these nations were determined to “kill, they say, and plunder the Frenchmen whom they meet.” These Canadian traders had been vital diplomatic buffers for the French crown as long as the Crown did not dictate their actions. Now, and for the rest of the French tenure on the lower Mississippi, the coureurs de bois would be troubling entities for the colonial governors. At their best, these men aided the Crown’s diplomatic relations with Indians tribes. However, they did so by eschewing many requests of French authorities and the habits of French culture.
The pretending of men like Cadillac and Sajan indicates that French social status was important enough to these men to risk exposure. Yet, their ambitions and inventions also exposed such social climbing desires in the newly arrived Europeans. From disgruntled soldiers and traders, to ambitious and sometimes fallacious pretenders, the Canadians proved unnerving to the newly arrived French.
Jesuits

The final element of their Canadian forerunners that threatened French culture were the Jesuit missionaries who had lived among Native Americans for nearly a century before immigration to the Gulf Coast began in earnest. Like the traders and the soldiers, the Jesuit missionaries on the Mississippi had long developed relationships with native groups by carefully negotiating among the political, social, and diplomatic dramas in seventeenth-century North America. They had also learned native languages, written extensive catechisms and maintained considerable correspondence about their activities with authorities in France collected as the multivolume *Relations*.

The *Relations* reveal how the Jesuits had adapted to their lives among Native Americans. However, Jesuit descriptions of their missionary activities often alarmed French elites and clerics. Their brand of Christianity came to look almost savage itself. For example, Father François de Crepieul, a Jesuit missionary at the Tadoussak Mission wrote that his life was “an almost continual practice of patience and mortification.” which included eating from an “ouragan” (dish) that is very seldom clean, and in most cases is wiped with a greasy piece of skin, or is licked by dogs. He explained that vermin infested his cassock because “they swarm on the savages, especially the children.” Hardly indicative of the reforming and socially ameliorating activities praised in France, these stories indicated a descent, not an elevation of the clerical behavior in America. Furthermore, their trading activities and the scandals had contaminated their European breeding. In an era becoming less tolerant of variations within the definition of French Catholicism, the Jesuit missionaries no longer seemed like clerics fit to serve the French.
In 1708, Father Jacques Gravier wrote from Fort St. Louis [Mobile] (ostensibly to Tamburini, general of the order of Jesuits), that he was not allowed to minister to the French at the post: “Monsieur Bergier claims 1st that we have the powers of vicar-general merely with regard to the savages of our missions, and not to the French who are settled in them.” As more French arrived in the Gulf Coast after 1700, this claim that the Jesuits in America are fit solely for work among Native Americans, but no are longer qualified to support the French in their religious exercises, was repeated and emphasized by church and colonial authorities. Despite years of service to the Church as missionaries and the Crown as diplomats, the Jesuits spent many of their remaining years along the Mississippi defending their identities as representatives of either.

While Monsieur Bergier put Father Gravier on the defensive by questioning his rank of vicar-general and role as Catholic cleric, Father Gravier represented a threat to the identities of arriving elite French émigrés. Carrying their embattled social ranks, gambling with their families’ finances, and risking the limits of their social networks, individuals arrived in the New World after dodging the anarchistic opportunism of Atlantic and Caribbean pirates only to find often hostile and nearly always troubling Canadians. Upwardly mobile or invented aristocrats belied European hierarchy while Jesuit missionaries, seemingly rendered savage by association with Native Americans, displayed little trace of European culture, much less urbane refinement. Together they defined the troubling possibilities of leaving Europe for America and they all threatened the sanctity of French social rank.

The social amalgam would only worsen from 1700 to 1743 as these elite families came to terms with new colonial investors, like John Law, who chose to use Louisiana as
a convenient depository for outlaws, vagrants, and prostitutes. Part of the mass of the lower orders considered racially inferior by elites, these men and women had nothing to lose by dropping deferential social norms and finding allies among Canadians as well as Native and African populations of the area. Along with pirate culture and the *coureurs des bois*, they created new identities and networks within the variegated culture of the Coast that left the elites even more embattled and determined to isolate themselves in tight social circles.

Part 2: Cultural Exchange

Elite undermining of Crown Authority

De Bienville, unlike his brother d’Iberville, did not narrate or exemplify the consistent application of French protocols to manage New World situations. Instead, he managed Native American diplomacy with creative adaptation. As early as 1704, the descriptions from Mobile indicated that the French were hardly prevailing as a cultural force among the natives. Minister Pontchartrain requested martial force to organize Native Americans into large villages and to “protect the missionaries from the insults of the most brutal” groups.\textsuperscript{xxxv} In his return letter, de Bienville described an unsuccessful expedition against the Alabamas. He requested the help of the Choctaws, Pascagoulas, Tahomas, and Mobile people. De Bienville related the pre-battle gathering at Mobile

Big fires, big rejoicing, celebrations everywhere both on the part of the Indians and of the French. One would have said that they were only one and the same nation, their sentiments were apparently so similar. When the count was made we were two hundred and twenty warriors without counting the young men who were coming to carry the provisions of the French. It was necessary to give them several days for them to medicine themselves in keeping with their custom.\textsuperscript{xxxvi}
In his description, de Bienville does not mention any reference to French festival customs or church protocols. He does, however, mention the time given for the native allies “to medicine themselves.” In his answer to this letter, Pontchartrain does not refer to this festival, but he is careful to suggest that de Bienville’s time might be better spent aiding the Apalachees:

He [Louis XIV] has also approved of what you have done to assist those of Fort St. Augustine and of the colony of the Apalachees. The rumor here is that this colony has been almost destroyed by the English and that part of these Indians have taken refuge near the fort of Mobile. His Majesty desires that you assist them to establish themselves solidly there. As they are Christians and Catholics they can be more easily become accustomed to us than the others. xxxvii

The message from the Crown indicates that Native allies are encouraged, but the suggestion is that the French have an obligation to draw those who will have an affinity for French culture, beginning with Catholicism. De Bienville was not demonstrating an ability to draw Indians into French society in America.

After the death of Louis XIV in 1715 and the ascendance of the Regency, the Navy Council wrote de Bienville in 1716 to acknowledge all he had accomplished in the colony despite little help from France. He is lauded for “preserving” and protecting Louisiana; however, the letter also argues that he should no longer “go wandering through the woods and among the Indians.” Instead, the letter urges him to avoid the “infinite hardships and fatigues and expenses” of these expeditions by remaining stationary at the Mobile settlement. xxxviii When the Crown sanctioned the Company of the West a year later and it assumed responsibility for Louisiana, the Crown redoubled the desire to curtail de Bienville’s creative diplomacy.
While de Bienville was distrusted for his overly accommodating interactions with
Native Americans, several French colonists were accused of abusing their positions as
social superiors, Cadillac wrote that “The soldiers strike their officers,” adding that the
officers “get drunk with them.” In 1725, the Superior Council argued that they could
not stop the stolen schooners and desertions when the individuals involved “have never
been anything but convicts and deserting soldiers who have debauched with
themselves.” Yet, around 1717, Marc-Antoine Hubert, concessionaire and commissaire-
ordonnateur of Louisiana wrote of a social disorder caused by self-serving individuals
with no leadership

The source of this disorder lies only on the officer who has been accustomed to
obtain arrogantly what ought to have been refused him firmly, in the undisciplined
soldier who had asked seditiously for what is granted him weakly and in the
colonist who has been left undisturbed in a free and licentious course of life;
nothing of all that having been checked by the good example, by the counsels and
the punishments that they deserved.

They indicate lack of leadership by those who should be naturally in charge created the
social disorder.

At times, the lack of leadership turned humiliating and even deadly for the
colonists. The nineteenth century historian Charles Gayarré wrote of commander Drouot
de Valdeterre who was constantly horrified that his soldiers behaved as if they were “free
from the allegiance due to a lawful sovereign.” Yet, as commander of Dauphine Island
and Biloxi, Drouot chose arbitrary violence over regimented discipline to punish these
men. Bossu related a popular tale about the commander

As soon as Monsieur Duroux arrived on [Dauphine Island] he began to act like a
sovereign. He had the soldiers of the garrison make him a garden, as though it were
his right to do so, and he used them to make lime out of sea shells and charcoal
without paying them. Those who refused to submit to these indignities were tied
naked to trees and exposed to the unbearable stings of mosquitoes. The type of
punishment meted out by this officer to the soldiers of the garrison is beneath the dignity of savages.\textsuperscript{xlii}

Rather than demonstrating the constancy of crown authority, Drouot comes across as a self-serving tyrant abusing power that renders him and these soldiers unprotected by the tenets of French society.

In the summer of 1725, a Sieur Goujou allegedly refused the sacraments on his deathbed only to repent before he died. The Capuchin Father Hyacinthe refused to inter the man so the Attorney General had the body “carried to the door of the parsonage” on the Place d’Armes in New Orleans and left in the summer heat.\textsuperscript{xliii} As gruesome protest, the presence of a decaying corpse at the church doors demonstrates colonists’ frustration at the priest’s refusal to serve the colonial community. Colonists brought a civil suit against the Church for ignoring the entreaties of Goujou’s friends to perform the sacrament.\textsuperscript{xliv} Rather than church fathers disciplining the Crown’s subjects, in this case the people called Father Hyacinthe to public account. In the cases of Drouot and Father Hyacinthe, authorities demonstrated an arbitrary violence toward individual subjects that reflected on the stability of society. In the case of de Bienville, he chose to allow competing Native American festivals to take precedent over French ritual. Together they indicate how the very individuals sent to Louisiana to uphold and symbolize French authority undermined that authority by threatening social norms and civic accord.

Mocking Crown Authority

Many French and Canadian immigrants mocked the Crown’s standards. At times, they held ceremonies that took on a carnivalesque quality. In the 1750s, Jean-Baptiste Bossu recorded that during a trip on the Mississippi, a Gascon soldier decided that he
could improve his New Year’s bonus if he and his fellow soldiers made Bossu governor of the island where they were camping. They had a mock ceremony crowning Bossu. At other times, the colony’s non-elite majority mimicked elite standards of dress. When Sister Mary Magdeleine wrote about the luxurious clothes available in New Orleans, she noted that many people in the city were dressing beyond their station: “The luxury which prevails in this city is the reason that nobody can here be distinguished. All is of equal magnificence.” She went on to note that many of these people chose to spend their money on clothing rather than food: “The generality are obliged to live with their families on sagamité, which is a sort of pap. And are dressed in stuffs of damask full of ribbons, notwithstanding their dearness.” As Michael Moriarty explains, society saw such pretenders as outside of the “charmed circle” of superior taste, instead they were the “inferior subject” eating their inferior food while pretending in their costume clothes. Sister Mary Magdalene reveals the anxieties of a society where creative adaptation was necessary for survival, but fostered a culture where many individuals had the skills to invent and reinvent themselves as necessary. In many cases, they used the outward symbols of elite identity to mock the privileges of elite status.

Creating New Cultural Expressions across Cultural Divides

While many of these inventions came from French precedents, colonists also collaborated with Native American and Africans, developing a culture that did not necessarily privilege French social norms. Beyond diplomatic relationships with natives were the daily interactions among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans along the lower Mississippi. In May 1733, de Louboëy wrote on behalf of a young orphan, son of
Sieur Massé killed at the Natchez massacre. After the Natchez freed young Massé in 1730, de Louboëy found the boy wandering the streets and had him placed as an eleven-year-old cadet in the company of Sieur Pradel. Because de Bienville had recently dismissed the boy, de Louboëy was writing the minister of Marine to ask for reinstatement, because, “In addition to the fact that he is my godson he has a very good aptitude for the Mobile language.”xlviii After release from captivity, the orphaned Massé had to fend for himself in New Orleans. He did so, in part, through a language that would provide him access to a broad cross-cultural marketplace of Native American, European, and African participants.

Mobilian was a trade language, as described by ethnologist Emanuel J. Drechsel, it “functioned as a true contact language among Native Americans speaking mutually unintelligible languages as well as between Native Americans and non-Native Americans, both black and white.”xlix The Europeans who spoke Mobilian were primarily traders or diplomats. While it is more than likely that many of the Canadian trappers and soldiers spoke Mobilian, de Bienville was the only Louisiana governor known to speak the language. Habitant and slave manager Antonie Simon Le Page du Pratz wrote about learning Mobilian from his Chitimacha slave as a means of communicating with the Native Americans who surrounded his land near Natchez.¹ de Bienville, du Pratz, and young Massé’s acquisition of Mobilian indicates that it was a language of survival for individuals invested in Louisiana’s heterogeneous cultural marketplace.

Mobilian was a trade language used specifically in public negotiation among individuals from many language groups. It was the de facto language used among many native groups along the Mississippi and Gulf Coast.² Whether Africans learned Mobilian
is still debated. Thomas Ingersoll and Peter Caron both argue that the West Africans in Louisiana likely spoke several languages and John David Wheat argues Mobilian was likely a common language shared by many African Louisianans. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall argues that West Africans largely shared Bambara and Mande languages and heavily influenced “a Louisiana Creole,” which could have existed alongside Mobilian. However, Mobilian was likely the language of choice for Canadian traders moving among Native tribes in Louisiana and was likely a means for Africans and Native Americans to communicate. It is significant that de Bienville’s successors did not speak Mobilian because it indicates that these men did not value the access it provided or they did not consider their ability to speak the language noteworthy to their recorded history. It is also significant that New Orleans was known as a city where “the French that is spoken is correct.” Consequently, it is likely the colonial elite did not consider Mobilian a cultural or a political asset.

Mobilian shared a commonality with the marketplace language of France and the docks and port cities of the Atlantic World. Mikhail M. Bakhtin refers to the language of the marketplace as an “unofficial folk culture,” ruled by a special type of relationship, a free, familiar, marketplace relationship. Moreover, he writes, “prohibitions of an established idiom, become themselves a peculiar argot (jargon or slang of a particular group or class) and create a special collectivity, a group of people initiated in familiar intercourse, who are frank and free in expressing themselves verbally.” Marcus Rediker argues that a pidgin developed among Atlantic maritime travelers. This “Pidgin became an instrument, like the drum or the fiddle, of communication among the oppressed. It was scorned and not easily understood by polite society.” Thus, while
Mobilian Jargon may have been new to Africans and Europeans arriving in Louisiana, they would have been familiar with the importance of a marketplace language and its ability to facilitate networks across cultural, linguistic, and ethnic divides. Its reach was nearly co-terminus with that of French trade networks along the coast and “covered present-day Louisiana, eastern Texas, a neck extending along the Mississippi River as far north as southern or even central Illinois, and probably Alabama and the northwestern Gulf coast of Florida.” The number of languages included in its lexicon, and its malleability indicates that many of Louisiana’s inhabitants participated in this marketplace of exchange, and developed networks without a specific ethnic or linguistic core. Young Massé was wittingly or unwittingly initiated into this marketplace and, like other individuals forced to fend for themselves in Louisiana, developed skills of access and mobility within a multiethnic marketplace along the Gulf Coast.

While Mobilian was a means for and evidence that multiethnic communication developed along the Gulf Coast, there is also evidence that individuals sought out and sustained relationships regardless of ethnic origins. As mentioned before, Canadian trappers had a long history of intermarrying with Native American tribes along their trading route. As early as 1709, de Bienville wrote that laws against interracial marriage were openly flaunted in Mobile: d'Artaguette "was a witness that sieur de La Vente recently stubbornly insisted on marrying a good inhabitant [who was a carpenter], to a public Native American woman after [I] warned him several times that your lordship forbade marriages of that sort." Interracial relationships had developed in the Caribbean islands and were present soon after Africans arrived in Louisiana. In 1723, the Superior Council mentions “Le Roy, a locksmith and his wife, a negress” By 1725, Father
Raphael complained that d’Arensbourg at the German settlement “maintains a concubine by whom he has already had two or three children.” lxiii What all of these relationships’s share is an indication that interracial relationships developed soon after arriving and in some cases, made them a matter of public record with relative ease.

Just as they created couples and children together, Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans found reason to defy authorities together. D’Artaguette reported early on that soldiers were finding allies with Native Americans considered “enemies and from there are going to Carolina.” lxiv Sophie White’s research reveals prosecutions of Africans in New Orleans from 1723-1767 occasionally involved, “one or more black transgressors, and occasionally their white and Indian accomplices.” lxv Gwendolyn Midlo Hall and Daniel Usner have detailed the existence of maroon colonies of escaped slaves and Native Americans living together in the bayous and marshes along the Gulf Coast. lxvi These maroon colonies existed through exchange with individuals and markets all along the Gulf Coast. lxvii In 1739, Chevalier de Louboëy reported that four soldiers seized six African slaves and disappeared into the bayou in a stolen boat. While they came across the remains of one of their crew partially eaten by alligators, the other nine were away into the backwoods. While it is possible the soldiers intended to sell their captured slaves, with a ratio of six Africans to three Europeans, it is also possible that the nine were seeking freedom together. lxviii Far from finding allegiance with their fellow countrymen, or seeking to conserve French social norms, these individuals developed relationships that provided access to resources within the reality of Louisiana.

By 1743, elite French colonists had most likely experienced many challenges to their identity as loyal subjects to the French Crown. Mocking ceremonies of inversion
and the developing society that mixed Native, African, and European norms, language, and festival. Yet, displays of Native American power were an obvious indication that the French crown was not the awesome empirical force that the Crown, or the elite colonists had depended on when they arrived in Louisiana.

Overpowering Old World Precedents

The narratives of experience in Louisiana indicate that Native Americans continued to present a powerful cultural presence on the Mississippi. In 1700, Paul Du Ru wrote of witnessing the unexpected spectacle of a Bayogoula killing an alligator on the river. After acknowledging frightening power of an alligator’s jaws and efficient killing ability, his description of the feat further complicated the possibility that the French had domesticated Louisiana:

> There was a huge crocodile [sic] there sunning himself with only his head out of the water. One of the Savages who saw that our men were preparing to shoot it, prevented them with a gesture and immediately dived into the water. Reaching the crocodile by swimming he slipped one hand under his throat and seized its back with the other. Clutching it to his breast he brought it to the foot of a tree and there killed it. He suffered no more than some scratches.\textsuperscript{lxix}

Compared with Marquette and Joliet’s descriptions of the travails they overcame, the description of a native calmly killing an alligator with his bare hands provides no sense of European mastery over the Mississippi or the supremacy of French power in America.

In the wake of the 1729 Natchez uprising—where over 400 French and African men, women, and children were either killed or captured by the Natchez—officer Joseph Christophe de Lusser was sent among the Choctaw to recover captured people and stolen items. In his journal, he recorded the details of a feast with the Choctaw in March 1730.
The Choctaw were French allies. After a feast, as ceremonial dancing began, Lusser noted that “the Indian who was leading had a paten hanging about his neck, another a sacred ciborium at his side, this one with a maniple on his arm,” while other dancers “were adorned with the clothes of the French that they had won at the defeat of the Yazoos.” Father Beaudouin was with Lusser in order to retrieve sacred vessels and other items taken from sacked churches. After watching the sacred vessels and stolen goods displayed in Choctaw ceremony, “the chief told the Reverend Father Beaudouin that he had a coat like his and at once he went and got a front cloth of a funeral altar”—another sacred object profaned. Through his negotiations, Father Beaudouin recovered the cloth and “recovered all the sacred vessels by means of some goods that were given them as presents.” These items, sacred to the French Catholic church, adorned these Native Americans in ceremony that neither celebrated nor honored the French Crown and its association with the Christian faith. Quite the opposite was true. These were spoils of war taken by Indians and worn as symbols of that triumph.

An even more horrifying spectacle was presented to the Europeans after the Natchez massacre. The chief of the Natchez decapitated their victims and mounted the heads on pikes for display. As Diron D’Artaguette reported, "when the massacre ended, after which the Indians had all the heads of the French brought to the public square with the booty that they had taken in order to divide it among themselves." The public square of the French settlement was turned into a macabre spectacle of conquer.

Native American spectacle was brought to the capital as well. In New Orleans after the massacre, members of the Tunica tribe brought a Natchez woman to New Orleans where
they accordingly resolved to show the French, in the treatment of this slave, how the Indians treat their prisoners of war. A frame was raised on an elevated spot near the river, between the city and the government house, and here the poor wretch was tied and burnt with their ceremonies, before the whole city, who flocked to witness the spectacle. She was burnt first on one side, then on the other, all down the body.\textsuperscript{lxxiv}

Both the Choctaw and the Tunica were French allies, yet like the Natchez spectacle of French heads, these actions after the massacre neither reaffirmed French authority nor demonstrated that the French were bringing these Indians into the French society. These spectacles challenged the French Crown’s authority with a competing display in the center of French social and political space. These spectacles evoked what literary historian Piero Camporesi describes as “the image of hell's kitchen, a city in shambles, where everyone, men, women, and children (boys in particular) shared in the cruel fun of the mass sadism.”\textsuperscript{lxv} These events laid bare the absence of Crown sovereignty and the rupture in French supremacy.

Conclusion

By 1743, the challenges to French social norms presented a powerful American alternative to the Crown’s sovereignty in Louisiana. That year, Louis XV dismantled the existing patronage networks linking the Louisiana elite to the French Court and replaced governor de Bienville with Pierre François de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil-Cavagnal. With these changes, Louisiana’s elite was effectively cut off from the information and Court access that the networks had provided. Meanwhile, elite colonists faced a larger colonial society thriving through innovation and cooperation. Examples of abuse by French leaders challenged the very premise of French claims to authority in Louisiana. Innovative cooperation among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans belied the
power of French culture. Finally, Native prowess, spectacular scenes of carnage, and their rituals of triumph demonstrated a considerable and powerful alternative to the French crown in America.

Likewise, in France the Crown faced more and more challenges to its absolute claims over society in France. As Sarah Maza argues, "the monarch's position as linchpin of society and his credibility as ultimate arbiter were undermined by an array of political and ideological developments." These events resulted in the “desacralization” of the monarchy. In Louisiana, this “desacralization” often took the form of spectacles either directly or indirectly abrogating the French crown’s supremacy.

The Bourbon monarchy reached a zenith at Louis XIV’s court. The absolutist culture of elevating, stylizing, and performing obedience to the Crown became unsustainable in eighteenth-century France. The French were never able to successfully recreate the hegemonic culture emblematic of Louis XIV’s brand of absolutism in Louisiana despite the number of individuals dedicated to embodying and performing their loyalty. Rather than truly understanding and engaging with the realities of the Gulf Coast, the French crown assumed that its authorities would domesticate America, retain their European subjects, and subjugate Native Americans and Africans through a tradition of discipline. Instead, they faced an environment and individuals just as capable of exerting force and creating spectacle that both devalued and humbled the Crown’s authority on the coast. French sovereignty may have provided the means for elites to structure their own lives, but they failed to impress its vitality on the rest of the colony.
Endnotes


"On la fit le samedi après midi. Notre premier pilote, grotesquement habillé avec grane épée de bois à la main et une carte marine devant lui, environné de douze ou quinze de ses officiers, ajustés comme lui, nous envoya sommer de comparative devant son tribunal. Après bien des cérémonies, entre le Père Holley et moi, à qui passerait le premier, il demanda que ce soit lui. Il eut pour parrain M. de Héronniére. Après qu'il fut de retour on me vint chercher. Le capitaine voulut encore être mon parrain. Je trouvai le pilote avec son cortégee assis sur une espèce de trône couvert de peaux de mouton; il avait ses officiers à ses côtés, et particulièrement son secrétaire, qui enregistrait les présents que l'on faisait après avoir été baptisé. Il y avait devant lui une grande cuve pleine d'eau de mer avec une pince de fer appuyée sur les bords: ce fut sur cette pince qu'on me fit asseoir; et après m'avoir fait mettre la main sur la carte marine que le pilote tenait, on me fit promettre de faire exécuter cette cérémonie de tout mon pouvoir à ceux qui passeraient le tropique une autre fois avec moi. Quand j'eus fait la promesse, le pilote se leva gravement, et demanda à mon parrain quel nom il voulait me donner. Je fut nommé le Prêcheur. C'est un rocher qui représente un prédicateur en chaire, qui en a donné le nom à un quartier considérable de la Martinique. Alors le pilote s'approcha de moi, il prit de l'eau dans une tasse d'argent, et m'en mit au front avec le bout du doigt, après quoi, s'étant remis sur son trône, il me demanda ce que je donnerais à la compagnie. Je donnai trois écus pour mon compagnon et pour moi, avec un barillet d'environ six pots d'eau-de-vie dont je m'étais pourvu à La Rochelle pour cette occasion. On me ramena en cérémonie sur le gaillard. Mon compagnon fut conduit ensuite, le lieutenant lui servait de parrain, on le traita comme on m'avait traité, et on le ramena avec la même civilité..."


"On September 9,1710, an English pirate ship from Jamaica appeared off the island. By trickery the buccaneers captured all the villagers without firing a shot. For the next two days they looted the dwellings and the colony's warehouse, then burned most of the settlement. The fortuitous appearance of a Canadian voyageur, who shot one of the pirates, led the rest of the buccaneers to reboard their vessel, but it lingered nearby. The settlers, armed with a few hidden weapons, repulsed a second landing by the pirates intent on absconding with Baudreau de Graveline's cattle herd. Destruction of the Dauphin Island settlement was a severe blow to the colony, which had not received supplies from France for three years. Furthermore, the inability of the garrison at Old Mobile to protect the port, or even learn of the attack until after the fact, was one consideration in the eventual decision to relocate Mobile near the head of the bay, 25 miles closer to the Gulf."
xi De la Chaise, "De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies New Orleans September 6 and 10, 1723." In MPA, FD, V. II, 294-95.


xiii Klaits, Printed Propoganda, 17.

xiv Shannon Lee Dawdy, " La Ville Sauvage: 'Enlightened' Colonialism and Creole Improvisation in New Orleans, 1699-1769." (PhD, University of Michigan, 2003), 108-109: "Most of these exchanges involved the acquisition of coin, flour, and livestock from the Spanish and the delivery of French wine, fine goods, and foodstuffs considered contraband by Spanish mercantile law. This trade, which extended fron nearby Pensacola to the coast of Cartagena, had its romantic side. A military officer named St. Denis became a legendary figure in eighteenth-century Louisiana for his smuggling escapades in New Mexico, smooth-talking his way out of jail and wooing away a governor’s daughter as his wife. Nationless pirates and smugglers such as Michel Fitzgerald and Jacques se Meyère found New Orleans a useful base of operations from which to reach Veracruz, Havana, Jamaica, and Portobello. Their visits had become routine in New Orleans by the late 1730s."


xvi Williams, Father Baudoin's War: D'iberville's Campaigns in Acadia and Newfoundland 1696,1697.Includes names of Iberville’s troops and their biographies


xviii Winstanley Briggs, "Le Pays Des Illinois," William and Mary Third Series, 47, no. 1 (1990), 31: "In addition, they had to cope with the new and threatening activities of the strong, active central government established by Louis XIV, which penetrated even to the village level. Such things as free-market pricing for grain, a barrier-free internal French market, and the existence of a (sometimes) effective rural police, the maréchausée, were not viewed as improvements but as exasperating novelties invented to bedevil the poor countryman." And 12: "Another escape hatch was the ability to ignore the nonmonetary pretensions of the seigneur--once his dues had been paid, however--particularly since private seigneurs rarely had installed the basic infrastructure they owed as the quid pro quo for the grant of a seigneurie. Thus habitants were subject to all the pecuniary dues but gained few of the advantages of Canadian feudal tenure: no road, no cleared area, and no assistance in securing these things. Often the seigneur did not even erect the grinding mill that the law required his habitants to use exclusively (as a stiff fee to the seigneur). Combined with the general isolation of the private seigneuries, this frequent lack of facilities and the heavy dues made farms of only thirty arpents unappealing for settlement." W.J Eccles, Essays on New France (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), 112.


xx Pontchartrain, "Pontchartrain to Bienvaille 30 January 1704," in MPA, FD, Vol. III, 16; de Sauvole de La Villantray. "Sauvole to [Pontchartrain] August 4, 1701, Biloxi, Louisiana." In MPA, FD, VIII, 12: "The Canadians are those who suffer most from it [rain]. Mr D'Iberville will doubtless agree about their unruliness and their inconstancy on his arrival when his brother and the other Canadian officers will assure him of their disobedience and of the independent air that they would like to assume. Why do they leave their country and why do we see them wandering about this one and elsewhere unless it is only in order not to work at all and not to be dependent on any one whomsoever? After that can once count on a garrison composed of so many unstable men? I can give assurance that for the least work I have had to go and get them out of their beds and not leave them until what I had for them to do was finished."13: "I would agree, however, that the Canadians are strong, quick and alert for journeys but it is necessary that the game please them. They take up the ways of the Indians, but the surest way among them is to have something to give them."


xxiv Bienville, "Bienville to Pontchartrain 6 September 1704," in *MPA, FD*, V. III.

xxv Brasseaux, *France's Forgotten Legion*. Governors: May 1700: "en route [to France from Mobile] he reportedly stopped at New York and illegally sold nine thousand pelts that he had acquired in Louisiana from coureurs de bois."


xxviii Brasseaux, *France's Forgotten Legion.* Governors


xxx Jacques Chartier’s first expedition in 1543 and the beginnings of missionary activity 1634.

xxxi *Ouragan* is hurricane in French and defined in Larousse 1939 ed. as Caraïbe in origin. The text does not explain why this is translated as "dish"


xxxiii De Crepieul, "The Life of a Montagnaix Missionary," 45.


xxxvi *Ouragan* is hurricane in French and defined in Larousse 1939 ed. as Caraïbe in origin. The text does not explain why this is translated as "dish"


xii Hubert, "[Hubert] to the Council," in *MPA, FD*, V. II 227; Faucond Mr. Du Manoir and Heloise H. Cruzat, trans., "Concession of Ste Catherine at the Natchez," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1919 [1721]), 167.

xiii Bossu, *Jean-Bernard Bossu's Travels in the Interior of North America 1751-1762*, 178; Brasseaux, *France's Forgotten Legion*: "The man Bossu refers to was most like Drouot de Valdetermin. Brasseaux notes him as “infantry captain and commandant of Biloxi in 1720. Responding to a complaint by the entire Biloxi garrison, as well as reports from Serigny indicating that he was ‘always drunk and…making speeches against the entire government’; Charles Gayarré, *History of Louisiana* (New York: William J. Widdleton, 1867), 376: “The new governor, Périer, had, when accepting his office, undertaken a task which, to be performed with credit to himself and to the India Company, required capacities of mind and soul of no inferior order; for, he had to contend with difficulties, for which mediocrity was no match. To appreciate his position, it is sufficient to read the description which Drouot de Valdetermin, who had commanded at Dauphine Island and Biloxi, gives of the colony in 1726…The inhabitants of this country," said he, "whose establishment in it is of such recent date, not being governed in the name of his majesty, but in that of the company, have become republicans in their thoughts, feelings, and manners, and they consider themselves
as free from the allegiance due to a lawful sovereign. The troops are without discipline and subordination, without arms and ammunition, most of the time, without clothing, and they are frequently obliged to seek for their food among the Indian tribes. There are no forts for their protection; no places of refuge for them in cases of attack. The guns and other implements of war are buried in sand and abandoned; the warehouses are unroofed; the merchandise, goods, and provisions are damaged or completely spoiled; the company as well as the colonists are plundered without mercy and restraint; revolts and desertions among the troops are authorized and sanctioned; incendiaries who, for the purpose of pillage, commit to the flames whole camps, posts, settlements, and warehouses, remain unpunished; prisoners of war are forced to become sailors in the service of the company, and by culpable negligence or connivance they are allowed to run away with ships loaded with merchandise; other vessels are willfully stranded or wrecked, and their cargoes are lost to their owners; forgers, robbers, and murderers are secure of impunity. In short, this is a country which, to the shame of France be it said, is without religion, without justice, without discipline, without order, and without police." What a picture! It wants no finishing stroke. In this energetic enumeration of the imperfections of the colony at the time, there is one thing which is deserving of notice. It is the innate spirit of republicanism which stuck to it from its origin: a spirit, of which Governor Cadillac complained so bitterly in 1717, and which, in 1726, was not much more to the taste of Drouet de Valdeterre."


xiv O'Neill, Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana, 177-78.

xv Bossu, Jean-Bernard Bossu's Travels in the Interior of North America 1751-1762, 117: a Gascon soldier decides that their New Years bonuses would be improved if they made Bossu governor of the island they were camping on. They had a mock ceremony.

xvi Hachard de Saint Stanislas, Relation Du Voyage Des Dames Religieuses Ursulines De Rouen a La Nouvelle-Orléans Avec Une Introduction Et Des Notes Par Gabriel Gravier, 226.


xix Emanuel J. Drechsel, "Towards an Ethnohistory of Speaking: The Case of Mobilian Jargon, an American Indian Pidgin of the Lower Mississippi Valley," Ethnohistory 30, no. 3 (1983), 167-68: Mobilian Jargon functioned as a true contact between language among Native Americans speaking mutually unintelligible languages as well as between Native Americans and non-Native Americans, both black and white.


4 Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, 189, 196.

5 Jacques M. Henry and Carl L. Bankston III, "Propositions for a Structural Analysis of Creolism," Current Anthropology 39, no. 4 (1998), 564: “Culture as a pole made up the opposition between a dominant language and dominated language; the dominant languages are successively French Spanish and English; the dominated ones are African languages, Creole, and French.” Authors doubt that there is enough factual basis on which to define “creole”: “The basis for the pattern or relations between race, ancestry, and language must be established. There is little debate about the existence of a string correlation between these traits and the social reality and about the well-documented fact that they greatly influence life chances, for instance, early 19th-century New Orleans white creoles valued and claimed the highest level of racial purity, the highest level of pristine French or Spanish ancestry, and the highest level of cultural accomplishment in the form of the French language, whether they actually possessed these traits or not, they were elite.”
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iv William Kernan Dart, "Early Episodes in Louisiana History," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1918), 193.


lvii Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 188.


lvi Dreichel, "Towards an Ethnohistory of Speaking: The Case of Mobilian Jargon, an American Indian Pidgin of the Lower Mississippi Valley," 167.

lvi LeMothe, "Minutes of the Council 2 & 23 January 1716," 212: The priests accuses their masters of it because their children are half-breeds and the masters throw the blame on the Native American men."


lvi Allain, "Not Worth a Straw," 83; Superior Council, "Abstracts from Old Papers," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1922), 111.


lxiii Sophie White, "Wearing Three or Four Handkerchiefs around His Collar, and Elsewhere About Him: Slaves' Constructions of Masculinity and Ethnicity in French Colonial New Orleans," *Gender and History* 15, no. 3 (2003), 531.


lxviii A shallow metal plate, often made of gold or silver, used to carry the bread at the celebration of the Christian ceremony of Communion; a small container with a lid, used to hold the consecrated wafers for Holy Communion; and a former ecclesiographical adornment worn in the Christian church, a silk band or folded napkin formerly worn on the left arm of somebody administering Communion.

lxix Lusser, "From Lusser to Maurepas," in *MPA FD*, V. I, 98: "[the chief of the Natchez] He showed him all the heads of the chiefs and other Frenchmen drawn up in two lines, saying that it was advisable to do the same everywhere and that the Choctaws must not take the side of the French. For this purpose he made him a present of a little French boy of nine or ten years old, a negro and three horses as well as several articles of clothing." [This Choctaw chief relates what happened when he arrived at Natchez shortly after the massacre] They [Natchez] gave him some more booty, pointing out to him three young French women whom they promised to give him after his expedition..." Périer, "From Perier to Maurepas 18 March 1730," in *MPA, FD*, V. I, 66: "Joseph Christophe de Lusser was a Swiss captain of infantry of the garrison of Mobile. He was killed in the attack on the Chickasaw villages in 1736."

lxxi Lusser, "From Lusser to Maurepas," 98.


lxvii Lusser, "From Lusser to Maurepas," 98.

lxxiii diron D'Artaguette, "From Diron D'artaguette to Maurepas," in *MPA, FD*, V. I, 58.


In 1748, Sister Ste Francis Xavier (dite Charlotte Ursule Herbert) notarized a letter indicating that she had been receiving a regular pension from her family’s notary in Bayeux. She stated that the man had recently died and she had no other contact in the city. She addressed the letter to “any notary in Bayeaux,” willing to help reestablish access to her family pension. In case the stipend should arrive after her death, she bequeathed the money to the “established nuns” in New Orleans, or if they had left the city, she entrusted the money to the Church for the “establishment of like houses.” She co-signed the document with Mère St. Angelique (dite Marie Boulanger) and sister St. Pierre, Mother superior of Ursuline Convent, (dite Marguérite François Bernard) who signed as the “requisitoire” of the document. There is no document indicating the results of the request and Sister Francis Xavier lived another fourteen years with or without funds from Bayeux. While the majority of impoverished and enslaved immigrants to Louisiana had no ties or were forced to cut their ties to their home ports, Sister Francis Xavier is one of the colonists who depended on their connections in France and the stability of French institutions to secure their lives in Louisiana. Her ties to France and her belief that her open letter would reach a receptive reading were vital enough to enlist her mother superior, another nun and a New Orleans’s notary in her efforts to reclaim her secular pension.

This Bayeux-born nun was not the only resident of Louisiana who maintained an
investment in France. The Canadian d’Iberville and de Bienville also nurtured their European connections. They were two brothers from a successful, accomplished, and extensive family in Canada. Yet, the majority of the Le Moyne siblings left Canada for investments in Louisiana and France. Along with a cocoa plantation on Saint Domingue, d’Iberville purchased the French seigneuries of Ardillières, one near Rochefort and one near Duplessis. His Canadian-born wife, Marie-Thérèse Pollet, remained at their home near Rochefort rather than travel to Louisiana. She also remarried in France after d’Iberville’s death. Moreover, de Bienville achieved considerable success in Louisiana but retired to Paris. Despite New World success, both de Bienville and d’Iberville betray French-centric ambitions and an Old World payoff for their Louisiana investments.

Individual colonists were not alone in assuming that an investment in Louisiana would pay off in France. John Law had based his financial plans to benefit French investors on the strength and reach of the French Crown authority: “Law’s System had tested to the limit the proposition that money, credit, and ‘public opinion’ itself could be freely manipulated by the Crown as part of its ‘despotic authority,’ but that proposition had failed.” While such power may have been possible during the pinnacle of Louis XIV’s reign, the resources that fed such plans were curtailed by the time of his death. Yet, what was left after Louis XIV’s death and what colonists continued to trade on was the momentum of France’s reputation as the most powerful nation in Europe.

An extension of France’s great reputation was the assumption that crown authorities and elite settlers could domesticate Louisiana. Like the tales of conquest by Marquette and Joliet and the successful adherence to Crown protocols in La Salle and d’Iberville’s journals, the Crown, Law’s Company, and Louisiana’s elite investors
assumed that Louisiana could be rendered docile and forthcoming with produce. Louisiana was supposed to be the kind of empty conduit, funneling wealth from swamp to individual and crown coffers. Instead of preparing for the reality of the Gulf Coast, the Company assumed that the Crown’s disciplining power was greater than whatever forces existed on the ground of Louisiana.

The era of Louisiana settlement, which included the founding of New Orleans, was a time of tremendous flux for the French crown and the inhabitants who lived under the Crown’s colonial holdings in North America. In the north, the Iroquois had chastened the French in the Great Lakes, causing a power grab in the peltry trade that made the Gulf Coast an attractive area to draw trade down the rivers. In the same era, sea warfare and pirate trafficking in the Caribbean shifted the demographics of French planters as they sought the concentrated safety of Sainte-Domingue and Grenada over dispersed habitants on small islands. During these years, power within France was concentrated within social circles at Versailles. Louis XIV’s earlier military successes were faltering and the stakes were high for the diplomatic and strategic success of settling the Gulf Coast. To administer the colony’s development, Louis XIV and his successors depended on families who could risk travel to Louisiana. He depended on their loyalty as well as their social ambitions to develop a disciplined colonial society that adhered to Crown standards.

The Crown depended on men like d’ Iberville who had a proven military record, social ambitions, and an established relationship with the French court. The other Le Moyne siblings, along with the Chauvins, de Mandevilles and other elite Canadian families arrived with money and experience from Canada, but also sought the marks of prestige and connections to Versailles. Likewise, elite individuals and families
symbolized by the aristocratic but impoverished de La Chaises, hoped their New World experience would provide options to secure their status that were no longer possible in the Old World. French-born Nicholas de La Salle and Jean-Baptiste de Chavannes came to improve their lives and escape Old World inadequacies as well. Together elite colonists sought something in Louisiana that they had not been able to achieve in their homelands. They significantly shaped the character of Louisiana’s government and the development of New Orleans’s society. They took on the guise of aristocratic privilege and assumed that through French diplomacy, military strength, and social power, they would discipline Louisiana and take what they needed from the colony at little personal cost or investment.

The families who came to Louisiana, therefore, were unwilling to risk tainted association with the lower classes or the exotic exchange characteristic of France’s port-city cultures. They set about recreating a Parisian-based society, in all its hierarchy, institutions, and familiar zones where networking could meet rigorous expectations of social norms developed and promoted during Louis XIV’s long rule. These standards provided vital stability for elite individuals in Louisiana. The exchange networks that moved information relatively quickly from courtiers at Versailles to distant provinces were essential precursors to the lines of communication that linked Louisiana to France. Building and strengthening exchange networks through marriage and patronage in Louisiana also created a means of marshaling and conserving resources against the economic tumult that increasingly characterized Louisiana after John Law’s failure. At the center of these networks was a culture of prestige and status cultivated by Louis XIV and his successors. The standards of this court culture required the active participation of
his subjects and adherence to the protocols, discourse, and fashions established at
Versailles. These practices were apparent in New Orleans and deployed by men, women,
and their children to demonstrate their status. The governors, administrators, and officers
of Louisiana grew up under Louis’s reign, inculcated these rituals, and reproduced them
as an essential part of settling Louisiana and establishing their dominion over colonial
society. vii

John Law designed the financial plan for the Company of the West and sought to
use crown authority to enforce the social discipline necessary for its success. In this
process, Law and his investors abandoned the capital of Mobile and promoted a new
capital on the Mississippi River. “Baptized” with the feminized version of the regent’s
name New Orleans planned according to the best of French designs. viii In 1718, the
Bishop of Quebec gained authority over Louisiana and became the only minister whose
authority extended to all of the French holdings in North America. ix After this time, the
missionary landscape would begin to give way to parish boundaries. x These changes
indicate that the Company of the West expected a domesticated landscape, not a space
still undergoing conquest and exploration. They employed Louis XIV’s urban planning
and moral policing to great effect to create New Orleans in the image of an urban French
culture they considered the most sophisticated and powerful in the World.

Elite colonists built their houses, displayed their awarded titles, dressed themselves,
made, and entertained according to the rules established and maintained by the French
court. The elite complimented this highly symbolic self-discipline by policing the morals
of the city’s majority. Enforcing prohibitions against slander, dueling, gambling and
prostitution were important in New Orleans because disciplining the colony established
elite authority over the public and private lives of Louisiana’s residents. These policies also followed Parisian precedents and demonstrated that New Orleans was an extension of Crown authority and French society. The elite became adept at ignoring and excising experiences from their correspondence that threatened their status just as they were rigorously enforcing the behaviors that defined them. These families desperately needed to maintain these social protocols in order to secure their status as exemplars of French cultural authority and Crown patrons of a still powerful empirical force.

The failure of John Law’s plans for Louisiana complicated these demonstrations of loyalty and worthiness to the Regency. The lack of produce forthcoming from Louisiana’s environs compounded the Company’s failure. The colony suffered from a lack of capital, but it also suffered from a lack of productive labor. The labor problem stemmed from elite and Crown assumptions vital agricultural production and productivity would underwrite their social order. As Sarah Maza argues, in eighteenth-century France “wealth alone could not be imagined as a basis for explaining society, let alone running it; everyone knew that the effects of money were disjunctive rather than conjunctive, and a community would need some other principle to give it meaning.”\textsuperscript{xii} Instead, intellectuals in mid-eighteenth century France reflected a deeply engrained culture of hierarchical society in France: “At the top of society would be the agriculturalists, its strongest and most useful members; second would come the warriors, who deserve support on account of their sacrifices for the nation; and in last place would be those who engage in commerce and craft—they are the least deserving, as they face neither hard labor nor danger and give their fellow men neither sweat nor blood.”\textsuperscript{xii} The aristocracy in France traditionally despised merchants. As Warren Scoville argues, even the King’s deputies of
trade "deplored the fact that the average Frenchman was scornful of trade and held merchants in little esteem....Neither judge nor public servant accorded them any respect."xxxiii New Orleans’s elite colonists were deeply invested in this ordering of traditional privilege. Their failure to secure a productive peasantry indicates their failure to adapt these Old World ideals in the face of New World economic pressures. Their haphazard approach to slavery indicates that these elites were unable and unwilling to understand the economics to sustain wage-labor or comprehend that caring for a captive underclass would require a substantial monetary investment. By the slave-uprising of 1730, elites were forced to consider that the cost of colonization could not be paid with markers of status and that a subservient peasantry could not be enforced with social prestige.

The environment of the Gulf Coast was not receptive to these carefully imported French social norms. Yet, elite French immigrants persisted in a self-deception that they would discipline any challenges to French cultural superiority. Before they reached Louisiana, the first article in Le Mercure described the Natchez as the most civilized natives on the Mississippi. The author states that Natchez are ruled by a woman—une Femme—said to be descended from the Sun. They have an ancient temple housing a perpetual flame that is likened with the Temple of Vesta in Rome: goddess of bakers and hearth.xiv This description renders the Natchez familiar to readers in France by placing them within the tradition of their own history and equates their ruler as a domestic virgin.xv The rest of the articles treat the physical landscape and wildlife with similar metaphors.xvi These descriptions provide the backdrop for advertising Louisiana as a familiar place to live and, more importantly, invest. Yet, they were meant to deflect
scrutiny from the reality of Louisiana.

These presumptions were challenged soon after they left the ports of Europe. At times, colonists faced mock inversions of the Crown’s authority performed by other Europeans dramatizing the transition to the New World. Over time, the power and frequency of these challenges began to undermine assumptions of French superiority particularly when the spectacles demonstrated the weakness of the French Crown in the face of New World productions. Events along the Gulf Coast often belied the articles in *Le Mercure* describing Louisiana as docile and inviting. The Navy Council praised de Bienville’s relations with Native groups and stated that the tribes of Louisiana “have complete confidence in him and they obey him in everything.”\(^{xvii}\) De Bienville wrote that he feared the power of the Natchez in particular. In 1716, de Bienville wrote to Pontchartrain that the Natchez “was a nation that I distrusted more than any other.”\(^{xviii}\) After the 1729 massacre in particular, the Natchez along with the multiplicity of Native Americans along the Mississippi provided spectacles of their cultural strength in bloody and carnal spectacles of France’s inability to protect its colonial subjects.

France was a great nation under Louis XIV and his authority was widely admired inside and outside France. His long personal rule established a magisterial French culture that many French colonists desired to reproduce in Louisiana. By Louis XIV’s death in 1715, the aristocracy regained their rights of remonstrance, their sovereign courts, and a public political voice. Colin Jones underscores how the Sun King’s death emboldened these breaks: “Magistrates who had exemplified dumb obedience in the latter decades of Louis XVI’s reign now turned dangerously truculent—and remained so for the rest of the century.” While they wanted to be free from Louis XIV, they desired his authority and
magisterial opportunities. The aristocracy sought to establish itself as an independent and sovereign entity disassociated from Louis XIV the man, but meant to adapt and inhabit the culture of monarchy he had established and utilized so effectively during his reign. They adopted many of the key symbols of power from the Sun King’s reign: “Parlement utilized one of the key political languages of the regime, namely ceremony. For the processions celebrating the festival of the Assumption, on 15 August 1716, the magistrates laid claim to a place superior to the Regent himself on the grounds that their corporative body represented monarchy.”xix Louisiana developed under the aristocracy’s assumption that they could maintain Louis XIV’s power and authority.

These elites were already living in the twilight of aristocratic privilege and French cultural ascendance. A society structured on inherited status, vitality of Crown patronage, and the privileges of landed titles were on the decline in the 1720s and 30s and chimerical by the 1750s in France. Louis XIV devalued the potency of aristocratic titles as he increased the number of awarded titles—like the Military Order of St. Louis—which allowed more individuals to claim access to the ranks of the nobility. With new titles, men like the Le Moynes arrived in Louisiana ready to strengthen their social status along with their military and diplomatic prowess. Clearly the Crown sought to use these enticements to maintain loyalty from their colonial administrators in Louisiana. They also used the symbolism of prestige because loyalty was one of the only resource Louis XIV and the Regency had left to employ.

Versailles and Paris were the center of intellectual and cultural prestige during Louis XIV’s reign. His personal rule was known for his unprecedented attention to detail and his desire to personally oversee the majority of the works undertaken by his
As Joan de Jean argues, "Louis XIV thought of everything,' remarked one of his great admirers, Voltaire; 'not only did great things happen during his reign, but he made them happen.' In almost all cases, he not only succeeded in achieving his goals; those goals, once achieved, have since become synonymous with what we not think of both as a quintessentially French look and as the essence of style."xxi More than high art, Louis XIV had invested in science and technology, universities and institutes. His desire to maintain France’s preeminence benefited a culture of creativity and intellectual dynamism. Louis XIV’s culture, however, was not focused on adapting to the future. It was grounded in ancient symbols—like Apollo—and referenced a classical ethos that was on its wane by 1715. Moreover, he heavily mortgaged France to his international affairs and indebted his subjects to an overextended military. These financial investments bled money away from the infrastructure necessary to sustain a healthy and productive population much less a vibrant and interesting intellectual environment. Yet the Regency and Louis XV arguably gambled on France’s greatness even when its reputation for strength and greatness became an increasingly hollow accord masking a bankrupt and socially devastated country.

While many depended on their ties to France to mitigate the challenges of colonial Louisiana, from 1700 to 1743, France provided very little stability for Louisiana’s residents. Very early on in the settlement of Louisiana, colonists realized that the Crown was no longer able or willing to support even its most loyal adherents. Awarding nominal titles of prestige were in fact tokens of patronage from a monarchy increasingly focused on areas like its Caribbean sugar plantations where it found much needed revenue.
Economic productivity took precedent over aristocratic posturing. Jean Bochart chevalier de Champigny noted this tension when he wrote of New Orleans in the late 1730s. He wrote that assertions of “pride” by John Law’s Company ruined the economic productivity of this fertile area. He added,

If the company, instead of building forts at excessive prices, keeping up considerable bodies of troops, raising buildings which served only to gratify vanity and give a vain idea of its greatness and power, and furnishing its agents every means of increasing the expenditure, had confined itself to encouraging the culture of articles of which they knew the importance, we should not now see all good citizens of France sighing over the failure of the attempts to establish a colony, whose fertility is admired and importance felt.\textsuperscript{xxii}

De Champigny’s requiem blames Louisiana’s failure on its adherence to symbols of power rather than investment in economic infrastructure. He condemns well-ordered urban buildings and the troops to protect them as vane and artificial. Yet, de Champigny was perhaps more modern than the majority of Louisiana’s settlers.

By 1743, Louisiana’s colonists were forced to consider that their traditional reliance on deference, social hierarchy, and Crown loyalty were no longer predictors of social welfare.

Instead, the Crown needed revenue, a kind of transfusion that loyalty and quality of service could no longer provide. These realizations continued to build potency as the Crown’s demands on the colony increased while its investments in Louisiana dwindled. Its symbolic presence became less effective in maintaining order. New World challenges to the Crown increased the distance between French social order and colonial reality. French and Canadian born elites were faced with the consequences of Crown abandonment in their lives.
Endnotes

i Hébert (dite Ste Marie), Charlotte-Ursule, “Procuration and Apriori Quittance.” In French 2, (4500) (31158-61). New Orleans, 3/11/1749. The Ursuline archives list her name as Sister St. Francis Xavier, with no mention of Marie in her name. Both the notarial document and the register list her secular birth name as Charlotte-Ursule Hébert.

ii HNOC, “Noms de toutes les Religieuses Professes et Novices de notre Monastère, et toutes celles des autres Monastère qui sont _____ à son Secours,” In Reel 17 of 19, French/English. Private Archives IV, Archive of the Ursuline Nuns of the Parish of Orleans.


vii Mark Bannister, Condé in Context: Ideological Change in Seventeenth-Century France (Oxford: Legenda: European Humanities Research Center University of Oxford, 2000), 7: "during the first half of the seventeenth century, the efforts of the Crown to bring the workings of the administrative structures in France more directly under its own immediate political control were beginning to be markedly effective. To a large extent, that corresponded to a recognition in the national psyche that a strong monarchy was necessary to prevent the kind of internecine strife that had been seen in the later sixteenth century. However, any move towards centralized control was perceived in some quarters as a restriction on the moral liberties of the individual (though it was usually expressed in terms of the inalienable rights of a group within society). Certain ideological currents supported this resistance towards a more bureaucratized state: the neo-stoci elevation of the will as the dominant faculty provided the basis for an ethic of heroic individualism as the mistrust of the passions, another central tenet of neostoicsm, faded; an eclectic interest in philosophies of nature and religious heterodoxies during the first twenty years of the century seemed to open new axiological possibilities; an emergent mood of national confidence confirmed the new, more optimistic outlook.

viiiBaron Marc deVilliers and trans. Warrington Dawson, "A History of the Foundation of New Orleans, (1717-1722)," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 3, no. 2 (1920)176: “A town baptized in honor of H.R.H. the Regent could not but make a favorable impression upon emigrants. Such august patronage inspired confidence to Le Page du Pratz and twenty other colonists, who decided to embark for the new city, at the beginning of 1718. When starting forth, these worthy people, and the two functionaries already appointed to New Orleans, cannot have had a very clear idea on the location of their future residence. Many opinions were expressed in Paris. Some claimed that the new counter must be at the English Turn, others on Lake Pontchartrain, others at the mouth of Bayou St. John; or again, somewhere along the Iberville River.”

ix Balesi, The Time of the French, 216

x Balesi, The Time of the French, 217: “The 1718 charter gave the Bishop of Quebec authority over Louisiana...in 1722, Louisiana was subdivided into three ecclesiastical sections.”


xiii Ibid.: 204: She traces the public emergence of this to a debate in 1756 when” Abbé Gabriel Coyer with the publication of his pamphlet, La noblesse commerçante. Coyer's provocatively utilitarian argument for allowing French nobles to engage in commerce like their English counterparts (the law of dérogeance forbade them most forms of trade) prompted a number of heated responses, the most famous of which was penned by an aristocratic officer, the chevalier d’Arc. In La noblesse militaire, d’Arcq seized upon the political implications of Coyer's suggestion, reminding his readers of the demonstrable link between

xiv N/A, "Nouvelle Relation De La Louisiane,"138

 xv Vesta was also pursued by Apollo, but faithful to her father.

xvi William Kernan Dart, "Early Episodes in Louisiana History," *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1918), 193: “Its pure and delicious waters (M. Normant de Mesi, while he was Intendant of the Marine at Rochefort served it on his table; this water has the virtue of contributing to the fecundity of women),”


xix Jones, *The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon 1715-99*, 44.

xx Vaughn L. Glasgow, Pierre Lemoine, Steven G. Reinhardt, eds., *The Sun King: Louis XIV and the New World: an exhibition organized by the Louisiana State Museum*, (New Orleans, LA: The Louisiana Museum Foundation, 1984), 197: “[Louis XIV] often spent several hours daily in his office, annotating reports and correspondence that were given to his secretary and ministers for necessary follow-up work. This legendary attention to detail kep his staff on its toes.”


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