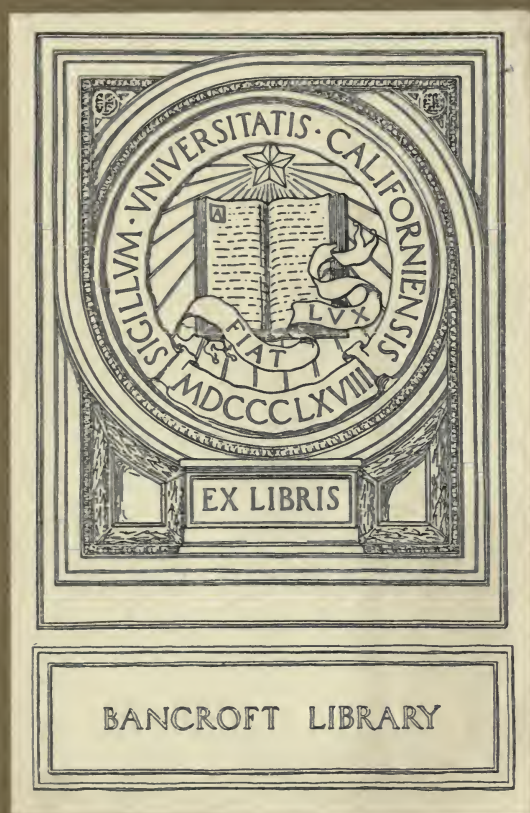


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# THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Vol. 3, No. 2.

April, 1920

## *A History of the Foundation of New Orleans (1717-1722)*

*By Baron Marc de Villiers*

*Translated from the French by Warrington Dawson*

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### FOREWORD



ATTITUDE must be allowed in the use of the term foundation, when speaking of New Orleans. According to the interpretation given, the date may be made to vary by six years, or even much more.

Since time immemorial, the present site of Louisiana's capital had been a camping-ground for Indians going from the Mississippi to the mouth of the Mobile River. As soon as the French had settled on Massacre Island, that site became the

customary landing-place for travellers on the Father of Waters. Wherefore the history of New Orleans might be said to date from the winter of 1715-1716, when Crozat demanded that a post be founded where the city now stands; or even from 1702, in which year M. de Remonville proposed the creation of an establishment "at the Mississippi Portage."

And yet, a lapse of fifteen years, which might be almost qualified as proto-historic, put a check upon the Colony's development. Then Bienville revived Remonville's project. The Marine Board at last harkened to reason, and, in concert with the Company of the West, appointed, on the 1st of October, 1717, a cashier in New Orleans.

Land was not broken, however, until the end of March, 1718. Even then, work progressed slowly, owing to the hostility of settlers along the coast. A year later, the new post consisted but of a few sheds built of boughs surrounding a "hut thatched with palm-leaves." The great Mississippi flood followed in 1719, and then came the war with Spain. New Orleans was all but abandoned. At Paris, Rue Quincampoix, marvellous drawings were displayed. But in January, 1720, Bienville could count, within the circumference of a league, "only four houses under way."

News of the flood had been considerably exaggerated by partisans of Mobile or of Biloxi. The Directors of the Company of the Indies stopped work on the new counter. There was even talk of transferring it to the Manchac Plain, about a dozen leagues farther north.

Thanks to Bienville's tenacity, New Orleans was never completely abandoned, and so managed to exist until the decision of the 23rd of December, 1721, reached Louisiana, raising the town to the rank of capital.

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So the date for the foundation of New Orleans may be fixed at pleasure anywhere between the spring of 1717 and the month of June, 1722, when Le Blond de La Tour, the Engineer-in-Chief, compelled to go and visit the site of the capital, had no choice but to ratify purely and simply the plan drawn up a year before by Adrien de Pauger.

In 1720, Le Maire, one of the Colony's best geographers, still obstinately refused to mark the place on his map. Franquet de Chaville, the engineer, one of the founders of the town, declares, categorically in favor of the year 1722. According to Pénicaut, Father Charlevoix gives 1717. Even by eliminating 1722 and 1721

—and 1719, when the great flood occurred—the years 1717, 1718, and 1720 remain. Stoddart rejects historical subtleties and chooses 1720. (*Sketches Historical and Descriptive of Louisiana*, 1812.) More circumspect, the Chevalier de Champigny asserts in 1776, in his *Etat present de la Louisiane*: “New Orleans was founded by Bienville in 1718, 1719, and 1720.”

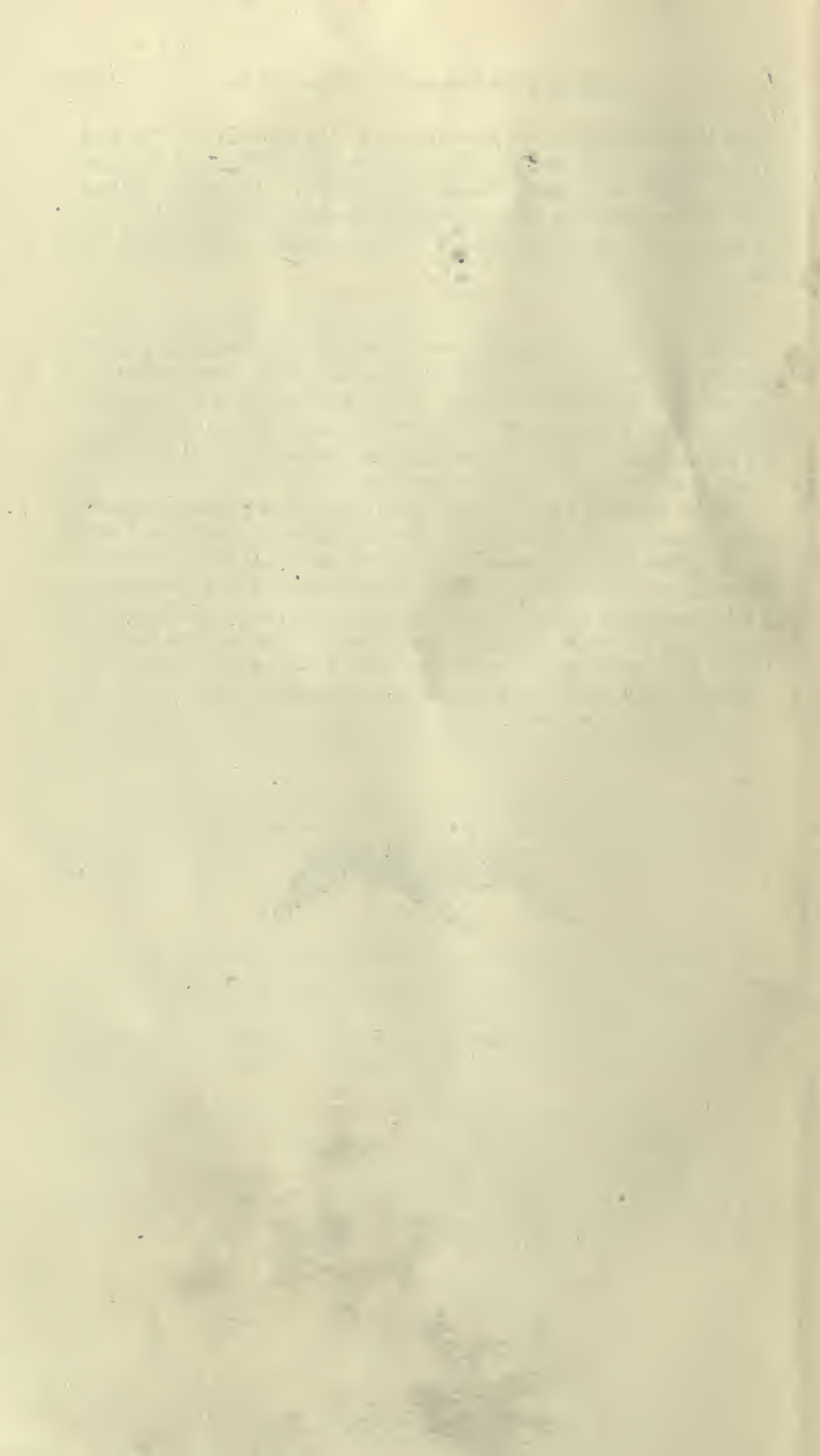
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The surest date would appear to be 1718. Nevertheless, 1717, recalling the official foundation of New Orleans in Paris, might be adopted, for with towns as with men, a christening is a species of consecration. Furthermore, in French territory, where administrative formalities thrive to excess, can it be alleged that a town which boasts a cashier and a major does not exist? MAYOR ?

In its prolonged uncertainty, the fate of New Orleans suggests that of a seed cast hap-hazard on uncultivated soil. At the end of a year it might begin to sprout, but, unable to thrust its roots firmly down, might remain latently alive, always exposed to chance gusts of wind seeking to blow it away. Luckily, the germ of the future capital took to the water as naturally as did its soil. The inundation of 1719, after very nearly drowning New Orleans, ended by settling it firmly upon the fine crescent of the Mississippi.











# HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF NEW ORLEANS (1717-1722)

## CHAPTER I.

### The Mississippi Portage.



EXPLORING the region in 1682, Robert Cavalier de La Salle, Henri de Tonty, the Sieur de Boisrondet, La Métairie, the notary, Father Zènobe, and their eighteen companions, beheld the site on which Louisiana's capital was destined to prosper.

On the 31st of March, they "passed the Houmas' village without knowing it, because of the fog and because it was rather far away." After a slight skirmish against the Quinipissas, they discovered, at the end of three days, the Tangibaho village, recently destroyed by the Houmas, and they "huttet on the left bank, two leagues below."

It is difficult to locate with any degree of precision the village mentioned by La Salle, or by Tonty a few years later. Complications arise from the fact that, soon after the Europeans had passed, several Indian tribes of the region, notably the Tinsas, the Bayougoulas, and the Colapissas, emigrated northward, or else disappeared more or less completely, like the Mahouelas, who seemed to have denizenized the Tangibaho village. Furthermore, Louisiana Indians observed the primitive custom of abandoning their huts when the chief died.

Nevertheless, an attentive comparison of the letters and narratives of Cavalier de La Salle, of La Métairie, of Nicolas de La Salle, of Tonty, of Iberville, and of Le Sueur, leads to the conclusion that the Tangibaho village, situated in the Quinipissas' territory, and whose portage passed through its centre, must have lain very near the present site of New Orleans.

Three years had passed when Tonty learned at Fort St. Louis in Illinois that "M. de La Salle had made a descent upon the Florida

coast, that he was fighting the savages and lacked provisions." The valiant pioneer went down the Mississippi, and on the 8th of April, 1686, reached the Quinipissa village. Being unable, however, to gather any information about the expedition of his former chief, he was soon compelled to turn back towards Illinois.

Shortly after, the Quinipissas (Tonty writes indifferently *Quinipissas* or *Quinépicas* dispersed, and a certain number from among them fused with the Mougoulachas, a tribe related to the Bayagoulas. Launay, one of Tonty's companions, makes a formal statement to this effect. So we may explain how Bienville found the Mougoulachas in possession of the letter for La Salle which Tonty had left with the Quinipissas. And yet, the last named tribe had not totally disappeared, since Tonty wrote, on the 28th of February, 1700: "The Quinipissas, the Bayagoulas, and the Mougoulachas number about one hundred and eighty men." (Sauvolle wrote *Maugoulachos*.)

The first explorers of Louisiana, knowing little about the usages and being imperfectly acquainted with the tongue of local Indians, mistook for distinct tribal denominations all the proper names they heard. In 1701, Sauvolle still reckoned thirty-six in a territory occupied by only five or six separate tribes. Le Maire was among the earliest to avoid this error. He wrote in 1718: "The names with which old maps bristle are not so much those of different nations, as distinctions of those who, within one nation, to secure lands for themselves have parted from the main village and have chosen titles to serve as identification.<sup>1</sup> Between the Tonicas and the Houmas were the Tchetimatchas, who formerly extended as far as the sea. This nation was driven away after having murdered a missionary (Father St. Come) and they are now wanderers. Another nation, formerly connected with this one, separated from it to avoid being implicated in the war waged against the Tchetimatchas, and four years ago settled down with the Houmas." (Archives Nationales, *Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>c,2,f<sup>o</sup> 164.) Le Maire refers to the Indians established near English Turn, numbering sixty men, as Cuzaouachas.

---

Luckier than the ill-fated Cavelier de La Salle, who had been miserably murdered before reaching the St. Louis River, Le Moyne d'Iberville succeeded after many difficulties in approaching by sea and so discovered the mouths of the Mississippi, in 1699.

---

<sup>1</sup>Three years later, in enumerating the Indians in the Mobile region, Diron grouped the twenty eight villages into three nations.



Owing to this circumstance, the name of Malbanchia would seemingly have been more appropriate for the great river. The name Mississippi, by which the Illinois knew it, was totally unknown to tribes living south of Arkansas. If the river had been originally discovered from the mouth, it would probably have been Malbanchia. According to Pellerin, the savages near Natchez called the Mississippi, in 1720, the Barbanca or else the Missouri.

"Mississippi, or River Everywhere," says an anonymous memoir in the National Archives, "comes from the Ontoubas word *Missi* or the Illinois *Minoui*, everywhere, and *Sipy*, river, because this river, when it overflows, extends its channels over all the lands, which are flooded and become rivers everywhere. It is also called Michisipy, Great River; and the Illinois call it Metchagamoui, or more commonly Messesipy or Missi-Sipy, All-River, because all the rivers, that is to say very many, empty into it, from its source to its mouth." (Arch. Nat., *Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>c,4,f<sup>o</sup> 164.)

On the 9th of March, 1699, Iberville observed the site where New Orleans was eventually to rise.

"The savage I had with me," he writes on that date, "showed me the place which the savages have as their portage, from the end of the bay where our ships are anchored,<sup>1</sup> to reach this river. They dragged their canoes over a fairly good path; we found there several pieces of baggage belonging to people going one way or the other. He pointed out to me that the total distance was very short."

Next year, Iberville profited by information he had received, and passed through Lake Pontchartrain to reach the Mississippi:

"18th January—I have been to the portage," he writes. "I found it to be about half a league long; half the way full of woods and of water reaching well up on the leg, and the other half good enough, a country of cane-brakes and woods. I visited one spot, a league beneath the portage, where the Bayagoulas (this word has been crossed out and replaced by *Quinipissas*) formerly had a village, which I found to be full of canes, and where the soil is but slightly flooded. I have had a small desert made, where I planted sugar-canes brought by me from Martinique; I don't know if they will take, for the exhalations are strong." (Arch. Hydrog. 115x,N<sup>o</sup>5,f<sup>o</sup> 16.)

A month later, Le Sueur, starting out on his exploration of the upper Mississippi, and Tonty, who had come to put himself at the disposal of his compatriots, met here. At this period, the portage-way could not have been broken, since Le Sueur's porters were sev-

<sup>1</sup>Iberville had left his boats opposite Ship Island where he was to found Biloxi, and had gone away in a canoe, on a voyage of discovery, hugging the shore.

eral times lost in the cypress swamps. Two of the men even had their feet frozen from spending a night under such conditions; in consequence of which accident the way was occasionally referred to, and for a considerable while, as "The portage of the Lost." A map dated 1735 gives it this name.

Pénicaut, one of Le Sueur's companions, camped on the site of New Orleans and slept under enormous cypresses which served at night as perches for innumerable "Indian fowls weighing nearly thirty pounds, and all ready for the spit." Gunshots did not frighten them.

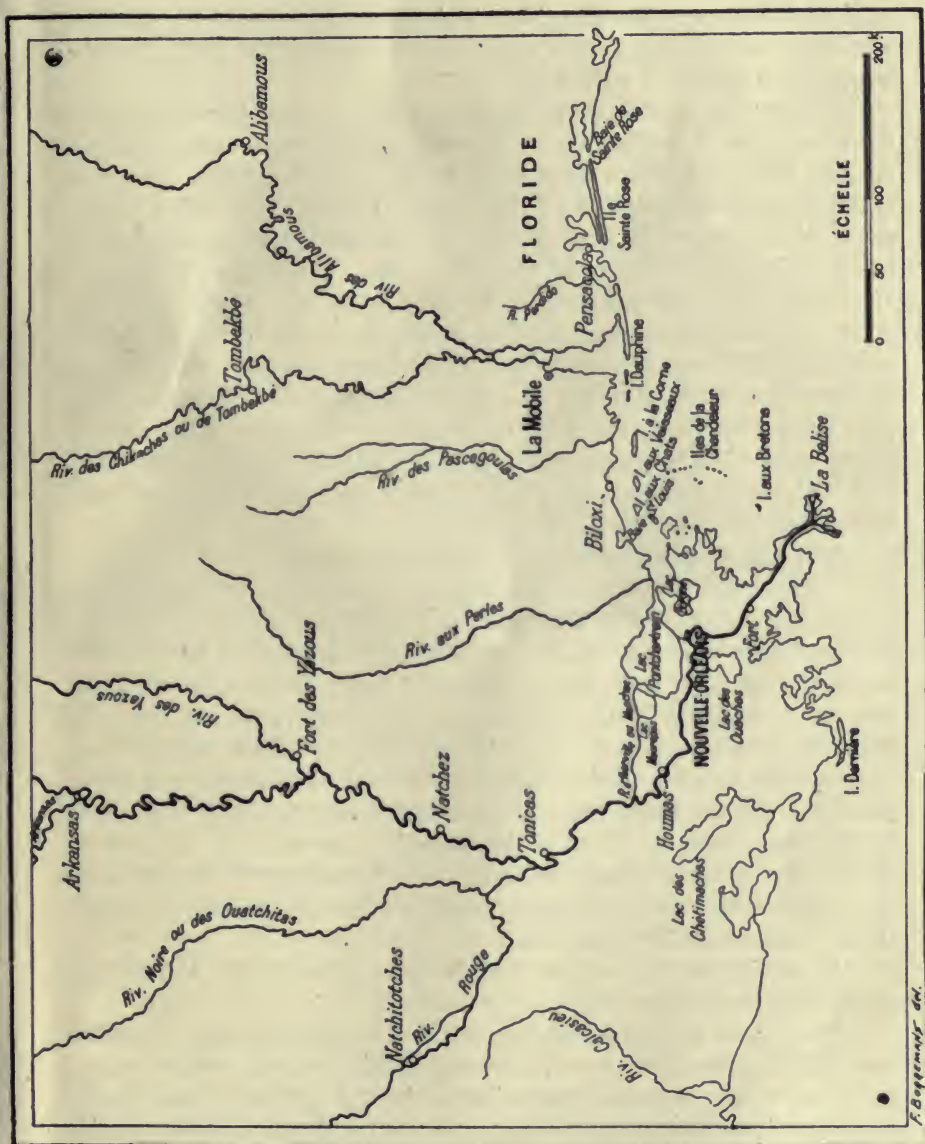
New Orleans is situated just below the thirtieth degree of North latitude. Iberville and Le Sueur both took the bearings of the portage; their calculation, verified by Delisle, indicated 29°58' and 30°3'. In 1729, Brown, the astronomer, profiting by an eclipse, found 29°57'. This portage, before becoming definitely that of Bayou St. John, or of New Orleans, was endowed with the most varied names. It is called indifferently the Portage of the Lost; of Billochy (original spelling of Biloxi); of Lake Pontchartrain; of the Fish River (probably a mistake, for a memoir on the navigation of Lake Pontchartrain mentions the Fish River as lying half-way between Bayou St. John and Manchac); and finally, Bayou Tchoupic of Tchoupicatcha.

At all events, and in spite of generally accepted beliefs, it must not be confounded with the Houmas' portage, discovered by Le Sueur and lying six leagues farther north. In our opinion, the Houmas did not live near the site of New Orleans, even when the French arrived there. The village of these Indians was not on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain, but "two good leagues and a half away from the river," according to a letter of Tonty's; two leagues, according to Iberville; one league and a half from the river and on the crest of a hill, according to Father Gravier. Some little time later, the Houmas emigrated northward and a certain number among them settled not far from the Iberville River, a new portage responsible for additional confusion. In 1718, Bienville wrote: "There are mulberry-trees at New Orleans; the Houma nation, six leagues beyond, can supply some." (C<sup>12</sup>c, IV-14.)

---

As early as 1697, M. de Remonville, returning from a trip to Illinois, had planned with Le Sueur to found a Mississippi Company. He seems to have been the first to think of building a post near the site of New Orleans, to replace the fort established by Iberville in 1700, twenty-five leagues from the river's mouth, as a protection





LOUISIANA IN 1722.

against a return of the English. This post, surrounded by marshes, was soon neglected and was completely evacuated in 1707, "lacking launches to supply it with food."

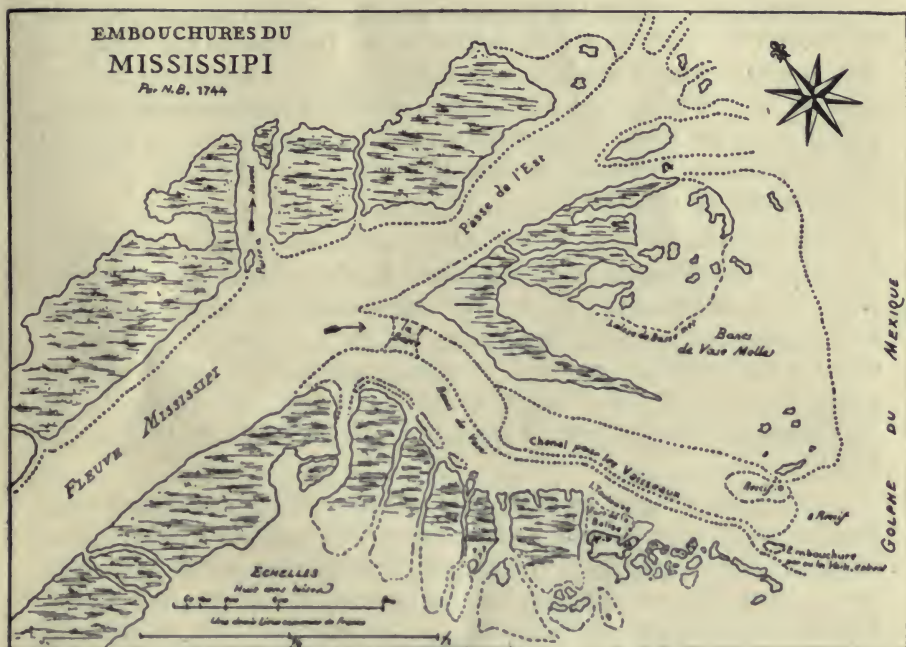
Remonville writes, 6th August, 1702, in his *Historical Letter Concerning the Mississippi*: "The fort which was in (sic) the Mississippi River, eighteen leagues from the mouth on the west side, and which is commanded by M. de St. Denis, a Canadian officer, since the death of M. de Sauvolle (whose place has been taken by M. de Bienville, brother of M. d'Iberville), must also be changed. It should be transferred eleven leagues higher, to the eastward, in a space of land twelve leagues long and two leagues wide (at barely a quarter of a league from the Mississippi, which is very fine) beyond the insulting reach of floods and near a small river. The latter flows into Lake Pontchartrain and, by means of the canal where M. le Sueur passed, joins the sea about a dozen leagues from Mobile. This will make communications much shorter and easier than by sea." (Bibl. Nat. Mss. Fr. 9097, fol. 127.)

In 1708, Remonville drew up another memoir:

"The first and principal establishment ought to be built on high ground dominating Lake Pontchartrain, and in the neighborhood of the spot where the late M. d'Iberville built the original fort. A fort consisting of four buildings is required here, the largest of which can be constructed in the manner of the country, that is, with big trees, turf, and palisades. This fort must be provided with artillery and armed; its area must be sufficient to enclose warehouses for merchandise drawn from the different establishments up the river. In this same fort, rooms must be built for silk-work to be done by people the company may employ. The Mississippi Fort will need thirty-five workmen, Canadians or sailors, for navigating the brigantines." (*Colonies* C<sup>13</sup>a,2,fo. 366.)

Reverting to the subject in his *Description of the Mississippi*, 1715, Remonville wrote:

"Le Sueur relates in his journal that, eleven leagues above the fort built by Iberville, there is a stretch of high ground twelve leagues long and a league and a half wide beginning a quarter of a league from the river; that it can never be flooded, and that a savage nation called the Billocki have transported their village thither, on the banks of a river named the St. John River, which flows into Lake Pontchartrain. A post at this point would not be without utility as warehouse for the projected establishment at Natchez. Twelve leagues higher, there is also the portage of the Le Sueur Ravine." (*Colonies*, F<sup>3</sup>, 24, fol. 81.)



When a party of Alsatian colonists arrived, a few years later, they settled opposite to the last named point.

Ever believing firmly in the future of Louisiana, Remonville crossed to the colony several times. He had secured permission to accompany Iberville in 1699, but it is doubtful if he went on that first expedition. Eventually he built on Dauphin Island a "fine and commodius" house, one room of which long did service as a chapel. In 1711, he fitted out *La Renommée* and took personal charge of her as "Commander during the campaign," although he was said to know nothing about navigation.

Unfortunately, all his commercial ventures failed. The last of them effected a few captures; one among these, which, according to Remonville himself, had been "pillaged in an almost unprecedented way" was released at Martinique, and the captain was paid an indemnity of fifteen thousand *livres* or francs; another was lost within sight of Louisiana. The deficit was more than forty thousand *livres*. Upon his return, creditors seized all his goods and even obtained against him several writs of arrest, from which he escaped, thanks only to a special safe-conduct, granted him by the Council of Regency.



Completely ruined, Remonville asked, and in vain, on the 21st of December, 1717, for a post in Louisiana "because he had been the only one to sacrifice himself to help the colony." Though the valiant colonist may have proven a mediocre tradesman, he was enterprising, and the services he rendered were very real. But he was not heeded; and in Paris, as in Louisiana, the Mississippi rested under the spell of a detestable reputation.

Mandeville wrote in 1709: "It is easy to go from Fort Mobile to Lake Pontchartrain, and from that lake a portage of one league leads to the Mississippi (sic). By this means, the river is reached without passing through the mouth, which lies twenty-five leagues down a very difficult country, because often flooded and filled with alligators, serpents, and other venomous beasts. Furthermore, at the deepest of the passes there are only seven feet of water." (*Colonies* F<sup>3</sup>,24,fol. 55.)

Another memoir, slightly later says: "The Mississippi does nothing but twist; it goes the rounds of the compass every three leagues. For six months it is a torrent, and for six months the waters are so slow that at many place pirogues can scarcely get past." Duclos, the Ordinator, declared that to navigate the Mississippi one had to be born a Canadian and a *Coureur de Bois*.

Finally, La Mothe-Cadillac, who described himself as "a savage born a Frenchman, or rather a Gascon," wrote on the 20th of February, 1714: "Trying to take barges up the St. Louis River as far as the Wabash and the Missouri is like trying to catch the moon with your teeth." (C<sup>13</sup>a,4.424.)

La Mothe-Cadillac, as is known, had rapidly conceived a prejudice against Louisiana; he used to say, "Bad country, bad people." "I saw," he related in 1713, "three seedling pear-trees; three apple trees, the same; and a little plum-tree three feet high with seven sorry plums upon it; about thirty vine-plants bearing nine bunches of grapes, each bunch being rotted or dried up. There you have the earthly paradise of M. d'Artaguet, the Pomona of M. de Remonville, and M. de Mandeville's Islands of the Blest!"

Nevertheless, those responsible in France understood that they could not rest eternally contented with occupying a few sterile sand-banks along the coast. There was no choice but to settle in the Mississippi Valley and connect with Canada. On the 18th of May, 1715, an order was signed directing Bienville to create a post "at the Natkes" (sic) and at Richebourg, and to found another "at the Wabash which shall henceforth be called the St. Jerome River."



According to Father Marest, the Indians called this river Akansca-Scipui.

These decisions followed close upon the return of Baron, Captain of the *Atalante*, who wrote on the 20th of January, 1715: "The right place for an establishment is the entire length of the river, starting with the Natchez village a hundred leagues from the sea-coast, whither M. de La Loire and his brother were sent in April, 1714, and thence as far as the Illinois country. I have always heard that it is at the said Natchez that the soil begins to be good, which can be judged according to appearances." (Arch. Hydrog. 67<sup>2</sup>, No. 5.)

At about the same period—the paper is undated—Crozat presented a memoir in which he said:

"The new posts which have been proposed to His Excellency for occupation are, first of all, Biloxi, on the Mississippi, eighteen or twenty leagues from the sea. It is the spot where M. d'Iberville made his first establishment; it is also the spot by which the Mississippi River is reached from Lake Pontchartrain, through a small stream. Furthermore, it is not right that there should be no post on the Mississippi River towards the sea, that of Natchez being sixty leagues away. Twenty men should be put there."

How little was known of Louisiana geographically in Paris, is shown by this singular document, where three very different posts are confused and located in one same spot; Iberville's original Biloxi; the Portage of the Mississippi—or of the Biloxi, a nation which, according to Le Maire, had then dwindled to five or six families—and the abandoned Mississippi Fort.

The post demanded by Crozat would necessarily be established on the site of New Orleans. But the project was not ratified; the instructions given to L'Epinay on the 29th of August, 1716, do not mention any post to be created beneath Natchez:

"\* \* \* It would seem absolutely necessary to found a post on the Mississippi and to send thither two companies with M. de Bienville, King's Lieutenant, to take command, he being much loved by the savages and knowing how to govern them. From this post, detachments may be made according to necessities for the post to be established on the Red River and the Wabash. There is every reason to believe that this post will be the most important in the colony, owing to the mines which lie not far distant, to the trade overland with Mexico, to the beauty of the climate, and to the excellence of the soil which will induce residents to stay there. This post was ordered to be at Natchez; nevertheless Major de Boishbriant thinks

wiser to place it among the Yazoos, on the banks of the Mississippi, thirty leagues beneath Natchez." (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a,4, fol. 225.)

Three years of experiments had amply sufficed to disgust Crozat with his commercial monopoly in Louisiana. He had counted on two main sources of revenue, mining and a more or less illicit trade with the rich provinces of New Mexico; both had brought in nothing save bitter disappointment.

The Mississippi Valley yielded neither gold nor silver; and, at his first attempt to develop commercial relations, the Spaniards closed their ports to French ships and kept strict watch upon their Texas frontier. Juchereau de St. Denis succeeded, by an adventurous exploring expedition, in going up the Red River and reaching Rio Grande del Norte; but the sole result was the creation of a Spanish post at Assinai, for the special surveyance of trade with our establishment at Natchitoches.

Crozat, perceiving that his privilege cost him at least two hundred and fifty thousand *livres* a year, took ever less interest in the future of Louisiana; and when January, 1716 came, the Colony's position appeared desperate. The troops had dwindled to some hundred and twenty men; and if we are to believe Cadillac, there were not more than sixty colonists and officials. Such a handful of Frenchmen could not have defended Louisiana against encroachments of the English, who had already settled as masters among the Choctaws and even among the Natchez. It was well for France that the Carolina traders should, by their exactions, have driven the Indians to an uprising in 1716. The Council of Regency, acquainted with the situation, made the melancholy remark, on the 11th of February, 1716, that "if Louisiana has held her own, it is rather by a sort of miracle than by the care of men; the first inhabitants having been abandoned for several years without receiving any assistance."

When the Justice Chamber imposed a very heavy tax upon Crozat (it was said to exceed six million *livres*), the great financier asked permission to retrocede his privilege; and on the 13th of January, 1717, the Council recognized "that the improvement of Louisiana was too great an undertaking for one private individual to be left in charge; that the King could not properly take charge himself, since His Majesty could not enter into all the commercial details inseparable from it; and so the best thing is to choose a company powerful enough for this enterprise." (*Marine*, B<sup>1</sup>, 19, fol. 46.)

Six months later, Law founded the Company of the West, and Crozat eventually received an indemnity of two million *livres*. The



letters patent of the Company were signed in August, and its Directors appointed on the 12th of September, 1717. The Board was composed as follows: Law, Director General of the Bank; Diron d'Artaguet, Collector General at Auch; Duche, Honourary Senior Clerk of the Treasury at La Rochelle; Moreau, Commercial Deputy for St. Malo; Castagniere, Merchant; Piou and Mouchard, Commercial Deputies from Nantes. On the 5th of January, 1718, Raudot, Marine Intendent, and Boivin d'Hardencourt and Gilly de Montaud, Merchants, completed the Board.

One of the first acts of the Directors was to decide that New Orleans should be founded.

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*Le Nouveau Mercure* for September, 1717, published a letter from Louisiana, dated the previous May, whose author, a naval officer, recommends the building of a counter at English Turn:

“\* \* \* The largest ships can easily enter the St. Louis River. Its mouth can readily be cleaned, the depth of water is eleven or twelve feet. This obstacle being done away with, the river, whose bed is very good, flows quite straight for twenty-five leagues, and then forms a cove where an excellent port can be made.”

Although this solution recommended itself from a naval point of view, it had the drawback of not improving the connections with Lake Pontchartrain. Wherefore Bienville, after a careful study of the question, preferred to select the present site of New Orleans “on one of the finest crescents of the river.” This expression, found in a memoir drawn up in 1725 or thereabouts, shows that the crescent, which was later to give New Orleans her nickname, had been observed almost from the start. Other references to it are found: “The very fine crescent of the port of New Orleans.” (C<sup>13</sup>c,1,fol.135). “Her port, which is her richest ornament, describes a very fine crescent.” (C<sup>13</sup>a,42,fol.295).

In spite of the rather swampy soil, exposed to floods when the river rose, the choice of a site was good, since it lay sufficiently near the sea and less than a league from Bayou St. John, whence all the coast establishments could be reached by boat. The vision of Bienville had been clear, and the nascent colony would have been spared many calamities if stores had been built at New Orleans early in 1718 and colonists had been enabled to land.

But rancorous jealousies, on the part of inhabitants of Mobile and of Biloxi, acted for four years as a check on the new Mississippi counter. In consequence, the growth of Louisiana was arrested.







## CHAPTER II.

### The Naming and the Foundation of New Orleans



DESIRING to greet M. de L'Epinay, the new Governor, Bienville came down the river in the spring of 1717. Although appointed the year before, L'Epinay had not hurried to leave France; one of the reasons given for his delays was that he would not sail until a twelvemonth's emoluments had been paid him in advance.

According to Father Charlevoix, this event serves to determine the period when the site for New Orleans was definitely chosen. "In that year," he writes, "the foundation of Louisiana's capital was laid. M. de Bienville, having come from Natchez to greet the new Governor, told him that he had noticed, on the river-banks, a very favourable site for a new post." (*Histoire et description de la Nouvelle France*, Vol. IV, p. 196.)

This version may pass all the more readily, at least in substance, since Bienville wrote on the 10th of May, 1717: "I have handed to M. de L'Epinay a memoir on all the establishments which must be built in this country. He asked me for it in order that he might send it to the Board. I take the liberty of assuming that I said in this memoir all there was to be said, very sincerely and in accordance with the knowledge I have acquired during nearly twenty years." (Arch. Nat., *Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a,4, fol. 63.) Unfortunately, we have not been able to find this document.

It is an incontestible fact that on the 1st of October, 1717, the Marine Board appointed Bonnaud store-keeper and cashier, with a salary of nine hundred *livres*, at the counter which is to be established at New Orleans, on the St. Louis River." *Colonies*, B42bis.fol. 180.)

On the 31st of December following, M. d'Avril, former captain of the *Royal Bavière*, was named Major at the new post. "Be it further understood," his nomination reads, "that in the absence of the Commandant of the said city, you shall command as well the inhabitants thereof as the warriors who are there and may later be garrisoned there; and shall give them such orders as you may judge necessary and appropriate for the glory of His Majesty's name, the welfare of the Company's service, and the maintenance and development of its trade in the said country." (*Colonies*, B 42bis, 475, and f<sup>3</sup>24, fol. 241.) Three months later, d'Avril was promoted Major-General with a salary of seven hundred *livres*. At the end of three years, he was recalled, and left Louisiana on the 8th of January, 1721.

The appointment of Bonnaud, signed on the 1st of October, only three days after that of Bienville as "Commander General of the Louisiana Company," shows the haste of the Directors to found the New Orleans post, at least theoretically. Hopes of promoting the sale of the Company's paper, then representing sixty-six million *livres*, as issued on the 19th of September, certainly played a part in this precipitation. Within three months, the Company's capital was raised to one hundred million *livres*.

A register which must have belonged to a Director of the Company of the Indies contains copies of "orders and expenses of the Company of the West, from the time of its foundation until this day." It is to be regretted that in this manuscript, which ends with the year 1721, many of the entries are left undated.

"\* \* \* 8th. Resolved to establish a port and a store at Ship Island to unload and warehouse merchandise coming from Europe, because this island is within reach of Biloxi, the naval centre of the Colony.

"9th. Resolved to establish, thirty leagues up the river, a burg which *should be called* New Orleans, where landing would be possible from either the river or Lake Pontchartrain."

The decrees which follow prescribe the establishing of a burg at Natchez, and of forts in Illinois and among the Natchitoches.

Since the conditional mood was used in alluding to New Orleans, it might appear that this was the first decree relative to the projected town. And yet, in the chapter on increases of expenses proposed for 1717, the following entries are to be noted:

Since this Lieutenant "To the King's Lieutenant who will have gets only 1,200 *livres* and the chief command of the post on the



is to have the chief command of an important post, this gratuity seems justified. Mississippi River, as a gratuity.....600 *liv.*

Having only 900 *liv.* a year, this increase seems justified. To the Major, as an increase in pay 300 *liv.*

A chirurgien is necessary in this important post. To a chirurgien serving the post on the Mississippi River.....500 *liv.*

Idem. To an armourer who may also be a blacksmith for the said post.....360 *liv.*  
(*Colonies*, F<sup>1</sup>19, 281.)

The Louisiana Budget passed, in 1717, from 114,382 *livres* to 262,427 *livres*; 65,545 *l.* were entered as permanent increases, and 82,500 *l.* as "expenses made once and for all."

When this statement of expenses was drawn up, the Mississippi post was still unbaptised, in spite of its recognised importance. The name of New Orleans was certainly known in Paris at the end of September, 1717; and we have reason to believe it must have been current in Louisiana at the same period. On the 1st of September, L'Epinay and Hubert announce "the early foundation of two posts," and a memoir drawn up by Hubert, preserved at the Ministry of Foreign affairs, declares: "New Orleans, which is to be the naval centre, must be properly fortified." Nevertheless, it makes a reference to another memoir, of the month of October, which it compliments and in which we read "the establishments are too far from the Mississippi, a river supplying an excellent base." There cannot be much difference in date between the two, and we even believe they went by the same mail. Hubert, who had asked to be appointed manager of the Missouri post, changed his mind as soon as he had secured a concession in the Natchez country.

Considering the slowness of communications at that period, we are of the opinion that New Orleans must have been given its name not by the Marine Board, nor by the directors of the Company of the West, but by Bienville and L'Epinay, in their report of May, 1717, on the new posts to be established.

The names chosen for many previous posts in Louisiana had been scarcely attractive. Mobile appeared to cast reflections on its own stability; the still widely-used name of Massacre Island was

calculated to alarm timid souls; while Biloxi and Natchitoches struck Parisian ears as being very exotic. Bienville had perceived this. In 1711 he wrote that he had, together with D'Artaguet, "called the fort Immobile, and changed Massacre Island to Dauphin Island." On the margin of their despatch is noted: "Fort St. Louis as it was called—instead of Castel Dauphin or Mount Dauphin; the island is on a mountain (sic). " In July, 1717, the Marine Board considered the names of Maurice Island, or Orleans Island.

A town baptised in honour of H. R. H. the Regent could not but make a favourable 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 English Turn, others on Lake Pontchartrain, others at the mouth of Bayou St. John; or again, somewhere along the Iberville River.

For a considerable time these geographical questions remained unsettled, so far as France was concerned. Harmony did not reign even for the spelling of recognised names. The strange orthography "L'Allouisiane" is found fairly often, notably in an admirably penned memoir preserved at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In other official records we find "Louisianne" and "Louizianne." A despatch of D'Artaguet's is annotated: "Investigate whether this River of the Maubilians is not the Colbert River." As we have said, Biloxi was frequently confused with the portage of Bayou St. John, at first known as the Portage of the Billochis; another frequent error was to place the Mississippi Islands at the river's mouth.

The Mississippi Counter had been baptised, and this was a point of crucial importance to bureaucratic eyes. But, as has been remarked, the title is half the whole book; and so the Directors of the Company, after approving the name, rested for four years.

Purists found objections to raise. "Those who coined the name *Nouvelle Orleans*," Father Charlevoix observes, "must have thought that Orleans was of the feminine gender. But what does it matter? The custom is established, and custom rises above grammar."

His remark is just. The general rule, in French, is for names of towns to be masculine when they are derived from a foreign masculine or neuter names, or, more simply, when the last syllable is masculine according to the rules of versification. Yet there are exceptions; thus *Londres* is masculine and *Moscou* feminine.



If both custom and derivation were strictly respected, Orleans (*Aurelianum*) would incontestibly be masculine, although Casimir Delavigne has written:

*Chante, heureuse Orléans, les vengeurs de la France.*

The reason for the feminising of New Orleans was probably euphonic. *Nouveau-Orléans* would have been too offensive to the ear. It is true that *Nouvel-Orléans* might have passed. Perhaps *Nouvelle-Orléans* was adopted by analogy with *Nouvelle-France*, *Nouvelle-York*, etc.

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A more delicate question is that of determining the exact period when work on New Orleans was begun. According to Father Charlevoix, it started as early as 1717.

"M. de L'Epinaï," he says, "commissioned M. de Bienville for this establishment, and gave him eighty illicit salt-makers, recently arrived from France,<sup>1</sup> with carpenters to build a few houses. He also sent M. Blondel to replace Pailloux at Natchez, and the latter was ordered to rejoin M. de Bienville and second him in his enterprise, which was not carried very far. M. de Pailloux was appointed Governor to the nascent town." On the Statement of Expenses for 1718, Pailloux is entered as Major-General with a salary of nine hundred *livres*. (*Colonies*, B. 42 bis, fol. 299.)

The evidence of the historian of New France would merit serious consideration, if he had not copied this passage textually, with one correction, from a very unreliable manuscript entitled *Relation ou annale de ce qui s'est passé en Louisiane* (Bibl. Nat., Mss. Fr. 14613), for which André Pénicaut supplied the information.

This work on the foundation of New Orleans is filled with errors so gross that they would be incomprehensible, if they were not evidently deliberate. In 1723, the unhappy carpenter had gone blind, and his *Relation* is really but an explanatory memoir to justify his request for a pension. Under these conditions, the author would have blundered if he had described the true state of the future capital when he left it in 1721. Governor La Mothe-Cadillac was sent to sojourn in the Bastille with his son, for having written: "This Colony is a beast without either head or tail. \* \* \* \* The Arkansas mines are a dream, and the country's fertile lands an illusion."

Consequently, Pénicaut cannot be blamed if some of his descriptions are so fanciful as to be worthy of a Rue Quincampoix

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<sup>1</sup>The *Journal historique de l'Etablissement des Français en Louisiane* reduces this number to fifty. We shall see, further on, that even this figure seems exaggerated.



*JEAN-BAPTISTE LE MOYNE DE BIENVILLE*  
(1680-1765)



circular. The author's motive in advancing by a year the foundation of New Orleans is less easily explained. According to the sequence of events as given in the *Relation*, and notably the arrival of the *Neptune*, Pénicaut would appear to have confused the choice of a site for New Orleans with the building of the first huts. But most of his dates are inaccurate, his work having been compiled from memory.

Bénard de La Harpe, in his *Journal de voyage de la Louisiane et des découvertes qu'il a faites*, gives the date of March, 1718; nevertheless, the author had not reached Louisiana, so his opinion has not the weight of direct evidence. The work entitled *Journal historique de l'Etablissement des Français en Louisiane*, wrongly attributed to La Harpe and very probably written by the Chevalier de Beaurain, King's Geographer, gives February as the approximate period.

La Harpe writes: "In the month of March, 1718, the New Orleans establishment was begun. It is situated at 29°50', in flat and swampy ground fit only for growing rice; river water filters through under the soil, and crayfish abound, so that tobacco and vegetables are hard to raise. There are frequent fogs, and the land being thickly wooded and covered with canebrakes, the air is fever-laden and an infinity of mosquitoes cause further inconvenience in summer. The Company's project was, it seems, to build the town between the Mississippi and the St. John river which empties into Lake Pontchartrain; the ground there is higher than on the banks of the Mississippi. This river is at a distance of one league from Bayou St. John, and the latter brook is a league and half from the Lake. A canal joining the Mississippi with the Lake has been planned which would be very useful even though this place served only as warehouse and the principal establishment were made at Natchez. The advantage of this port is that ships of . . . (left blank) tons can easily reach it." (P. 81.)

If the building of New Orleans did not begin in March, it was certainly put under way the following month. Bienville writes, 10th of June, 1718: "We are working on New Orleans with such diligence as the dearth of workmen will allow. I myself went to the spot, to choose the best site. I remained for ten days, to hurry on the work, and was grieved to see so few people engaged on a task which required at least a hundred times the number. . . . All the ground of the site, except the borders which are drowned by floods, is very good, and everything will grow there." (Archives des Aff. Etrang., *Mém. et Docum.* (Amérique) Vol. I; p. 200.)

Four days previously, in a despatch of which the summary alone remains, Bienville had proposed the digging of a canal between the Mississippi and Lake Pontchartrain, for purposes of sanitation, but had added: "It is more convenient to pass through the mouth than through the Lake." (Arch. Nat., *Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>c, 4, fol. 14.) In the preceding January, Chateaugué had reported that "the sea is often dangerous on Lake Pontchartrain, and the squalls are violent."

The date for the first work done on New Orleans lies, then, between the 15th of March and the 15th of April, 1718. But in spite of Bienville's efforts, and owing to hostility from "the Maubilians," the buildings made but slow progress. Le Gac was justified in writing in his *Mémoire sur la situation de la Louisiane le 25 août* 1718: "New Orleans is being scarcely more than shaped." (Bibl. de l'Institut, Mss. 487, fol. 509.)

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For a long while, adversaries of the Mississippi Counter adopted the tactics of refusing to recognize its existence.

François Le Maire, the geographer-missionary, particularly distinguished himself by his obstinacy. He felt able to write, as late as the 13th of May, 1718: "Since the last ships came, there is talk of the establishment to be made at New Orleans. That is the name recently given to the space enclosed between the Mississippi, the Fish River, and Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas. My map shows distinctly this big spot on the coast, and the lay of the land. I should have liked to mark the place where the fort is planned, but the place is not yet decided upon. This establishment will be excellent, provided the Mississippi is made to empty into Lake Pontchartrain. Otherwise an infinity of people will die from lack of water fit for drinking most of the year." (Arch. Hydrog. 67, No. 15.) Six months later, however, Le Maire repeats in his *Mémoire sur la Louisiane*: "At the end of this year (1718) orders came to transfer the principal establishment to the banks of the Mississippi. If the spot is decided upon before the ships leave, I shall not fail to mark it on my map." (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>c, 4, fol. 155.) One might seek to explain this by an error in dates, if the Grand Vicar of the Bishop of Quebec had not supplied further evidence, on the 19th of May, 1719: "The precise bearings of New Orleans, in relation to Lake Pontchartrain, are still unknown to me." (Arch. Hydrog., 115, 23.)

Le Maire's ill-will is only the more evident because he constantly betrays the hope that New Orleans may be created on Lake Pont-



chartrain, so that its counter may be tributary to Biloxi. In another very detailed memoir, while acknowledging that "the Mississippi is the key to the entire country, thanks to the communications it offers with the lakes leading to Canada," he nevertheless asserts that no port exists between St. Bernards' Bay and Ship Island. (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>c, 2, fol. 161.)

We have not been able to ascertain the period at which Delisle added the name of New Orleans to his map dated 1718. The vivid *Relation du voyage des dames Ursulines de Rouen à la Nouvelle Orléans*, informs us that in 1727 most maps of America still failed to give the site of Louisiana's capital.

"You note, dear Father," Madeleine Hachard writes, "that you have bought two big maps of the State of Mississippi and that you do not find New Orleans on them. They are apparently old, for this town, capital of the country, should not have been omitted. I regret that you spent one hundred and ten *sols* without finding our place of residence. I believe new maps are to be made, on which the establishment will be marked."

The good nun's father was veritably unlucky; he bought a third map "on which New Orleans is represented upon the shores of Lake Pontchartrain, at a distance of six leagues from the Mississippi."

A map still preserved at the Archives Hydrographiques, dated 1721, indicates the mouth of Bayou St. John as the site for the future capital. (Arch. Hydrog., portfolio 138 bis, I, 9.)

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Let us now return to the foundation of New Orleans, quoting from worthy Pénicaut. After declaring that "the first year only a few lodgings, and two big stores for war supplies and general provisions, were built," and adding, more truthfully, that "the *Neptune* (arrived in 1718) was brought into the river, laden with munitions sent by M. de L'Epinay," he or his editor yields to astonishing freaks of fancy:

"M. the Commissary Hubert also went at the same time to New Orleans, through Lake Pontchartrain, into which flows a little river since called the Orleans River. It may be followed from the Lake to this place. within three quarters of a league. A few days after his arrival, M. Hubert selected a spot situated at a distance of two gunshots from the limits of New Orleans, near the little river of the same name, where he built a very fine house.<sup>1</sup> Several families

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<sup>1</sup>It should not be forgotten that Pénicaut was seeking Hubert's protection in Paris.

living on Dauphin Island also came to settle in New Orleans. M. de L'Epinay and de Bienville sent many soldiers and workmen thither to hurry on the building. They despatched to M. de Pailloux an order to erect two barracks large enough to hold one thousand soldiers apiece (!) because many were expected from France that year, in addition to a number of families from neighboring concessions. All this came about, as stated."

The plain truth, alas! was less attractive. In March, 1719, one year after work commenced, there were still, according to Bienville, "only four houses under way." (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a, 5, fol. 209.) When Hubert, appointed on the 14th of March, 1718, as "Director General of the New Orleans Counter," with a salary of five thousand *livres*, rejoined his post in the autumn, far from "building a very fine house," his first care, as soon as a few colonists came, was to induce them to settle at Natchez, where he had just obtained a very large concession.

And yet, Hubert was forced to countersign, on the 28th of November, 1718, Bienville's decision, confirmed on the 12th of September, 1719, by Le Gac and Villardeau, "granting to the Sieurs Delaire, Chastaing, and Delaroue<sup>1</sup> in addition to their concession in the Taensas' country \* \* \* four places within the enclosure of the new town of Orleans, as their exclusive freehold property \* \* \* it being stipulated that they shall execute all the clauses and conditions prescribed for inhabitants of the new town." (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>c, 4, fol. 216.)

If Bienville and Pailloux were the first residents in New Orleans, the honour of being the first landowners reverts to the Delaire Brothers, Chastaing, and Delaroue. A map preserved at the Archives Hydrographiques, *Carte nouvelle très exacte d'une partie de la Louisiane*, 1718, indeed bears the mention: "New Orleans, founded in 1718 by the Sieur Pradel." (Arch. Hydrog., Bibl. 4040, C. II, fol. 6.) But this is evidently a mistake attributable to the confusion of New Orleans with Fort Orleans on the Missouri, to whose establishment Pradel contributed in 1724, under Bourgmont's orders.

We have not yet described the arrival of the *Neptune* and of the *Vigilante* at New Orleans, because there is reason to ask whether these ships did not really unload at English Turn, where, according to the seemingly reliable document which we reproduce (see p.....), a large store had been built at this time.

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<sup>1</sup>Appointed Notary of the Colony, 14th March, 1718.







to Chief Engineer Perrier, on the 14th of April, 1718, allowed him utmost latitude for the choice of a site:

"Ascending the river to the point which Messrs. the Directors-General may judge proper for laying the first foundations of New Orleans, he must take the best map he can of the river's course. . . . We do not know what place will be selected, but since the said Sieur Perrier is to be present at the council held for this purpose, he must be made to understand the leading considerations.

"The chief among these is to find the most convenient place for trading with Mobile, whether by sea or by Lake Pontchartrain, which place must be in the least danger from inundation when floods occur, and as near as possible to the best agricultural lands.

"These various considerations convince us, as far as we can judge, that the most convenient site is on the Manchac brook; the town limits should stretch from the river-banks to the edge of the brook. This spot must be examined to see if the land is suitable, before any definite choice is made. If it is suitable, then New Orleans will be better there than elsewhere, because of the convenience for communications with Mobile by the brook, which is reported as navigable at all times and at slight expense, and because it is within reach of the entrance to Red River. Thence communication may be had with the plantations to be formed in the Yazoo's country, where we expect wheat to be first planted—it may even thrive there, eventually. Furthermore, the spot mentioned is well inland; and then, hunting affords abundant means for subsistence, and the healthiness of the air can be relied upon.

"The sole difficulty remaining before New Orleans can be built on the Manchac brook, is its distance from the sea, sixty-five leagues. If, however, ships can readily sail up so far, and it is only a question of a few days more or less, this is not an obstacle to outweigh other advantages. Ships do not come every day, and the other conveniences are enjoyed the year round. But, at the same time, care must be taken, in going up the river, to choose the most suitable place, perhaps English Turn, for establishing a battery<sup>1</sup> in a small fort which may prevent hostile ships from ascending.

"\* \* \* When the site for New Orleans has been determined, we presume the said Sieur Perrier will begin by marking out the limits of a fort which may later become a citadel, but which at first need simply to shut in with stockade, after the manner of the country. Here the Company's stores shall be situated and lodgings for

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<sup>1</sup>The Company prescribed that twelve eight-pounders should be put here, reserving only two six-pounders for New Orleans.

the Directors-General, commanding officers, officers, and soldiers forming the New Orleans garrison. This being done, the Sieur Perrier shall trace out the town limits and the alignment of streets, with the size of lots suitable for each resident of the town, Messrs. the Directors-General having the privilege to allow them near-by lands for cultivation. Once the men are lodged, the most pressing need is for storehouses. We can make no prescriptions as to the extent of these or the manner of their building, questions which Messrs. the Directors-General must settle with M. Perrier. We merely recommend to his attention that during his stay at Dauphin Island and in Mobile, he must collect whatever he can find in the way of planks, boarding, and scantling, so that he may use them upon reaching New Orleans.

"There is a project to start work by throwing up rough shelters for both men and goods. But this should not prevent the said Sieur Perrier from seeking at the same time the best means to obtain materials for permanent building. To this end, he shall erect, as soon as possible, a brick manufactory, if the soil in or near New Orleans is suitable. Soldiers or illicit salt-makers who understand brick-making could be employed; or else we shall send over a brick-maker by the first ships. In the case we are unable to find others to sail with him, we are sending bricks in the three ships with which he sails; he shall have a care to save them for building the first kiln.

"These first measures being taken, he must go himself to seek, in the neighbourhood of New Orleans, places where stone may be had for purposes of both building and chalk-making. It is not impossible some may be discovered. He must particularly exert himself to find it on the river-banks, as he goes up, so that transportation may cost less; and as promptly as possible, so that the buildings may be stone and brick, which is best \* \* \*" (*Colonies*, B. 42 bis, fol. 219.)

On the 23rd of April, the Company appointed Bivard surgeon to New Orleans, with a salary of six hundred *livres*; and on the 28th, concessions near the new establishment were granted to twelve persons. Among these pioneer citizens were: Le Page du Pratz, the future historian of Louisiana, Le Goy, Pigeon, Rouge, Richard Duhamel, Beignot, Dufour, Marlot de Trouille, Legras, Couturier, Pierre Robert, the three Drissant brothers, Bivard the surgeon, and Mircou the perruquier. With their families and retainers, they formed a band of sixty-eight people. (*Colonies*, B. 42 bis, fol. 252.)

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.

Perrier's death, which occurred in Havana, allowed Hubert to interpret these instructions at will; he sent off the colonists as far as he could from the new post, and all the workmen who had not deserted were soon called back to Biloxi on one pretext or another.

When Le Page du Pratz landed in January, 1719, he perceived "on the spot where the capital was to have been founded, only a place marked by a palmetto-thatched hut, which M. de Bienville had built for himself and where his successor, M. de Pailloux, lived." (*Histoire de la Louisiane*, Vol. I, p. 83.)

All of Bienville's efforts had been paralysed by the ill-will which the other members of the Board displayed. With his exception alone, they were interested in ventures at the old-trading posts, they would tolerate no word about New Orleans, and they encouraged the coalition of Mobile colonists, of Biloxi tradesmen, and of Lake Pontchartrain boatmen whose business was threatened by rivalry from the Mississippi.

As has been said, Hubert owned a large plantation at Natchez, near St. Catherine's; in 1820, he had eighty slaves there, and twenty head of horned cattle. The year following, he sold it to Dumanoir. But meanwhile, he asked for the concession of Cat Island, between Biloxi and the entrance to Lake Borgne, "for the raising of rabbits"; and he proposed to found the Mississippi Counter at Natchez and to drag the Iberville River, so that residents in Biloxi might retain their rich monopoly for trans-shipping and warehousing all merchandise from Europe. Nevertheless, Hubert had at first been a partisan of New Orleans: we have seen how he had declared it "must be properly fortified"; in October, 1719, he wrote: "The reason for making a colony of Louisiana was doubtless to become masters of the Mississippi and to occupy it \* \* \* And yet the contrary was done, that great river has been abandoned for the Mobile River." But as soon as he had secured his concession at Natchez, his opinions underwent a radical change, and a year later he stated: "The difficulties of the lower river will prevent New Orleans from ever being a safe post."

Duclos judged that "instead of thinking of the Mississippi, all efforts should be directed towards the Mobile River," which, Du



Gac added, must remain "the master-key to the colony." An earlier memoir, drawn up by M. de Granville, Captain of *La Renommée*, even urged that the chief establishment be built at "Fort Esquinoque" (probably Tombigbee) among the "Jatas" (Choctaws) sixty leagues from Mobile. As for Larcebault, he considered New Orleans "a submerged country, all chopped with cypress swamps"; and Villardeau shared his opinion.

After Hubert, Le Gac seems to have been the most inveterate adversary of New Orleans. "This post," he wrote in 1721, "is flooded when the waters rise, and is fit only for rice, silk, maize, and all sorts of vegetables and fruit-trees. Tobacco may also be grown." In spite of which fertility, he concludes that, although a company may be supported there, a counter must not be established at any price.

Profiting by the fact that Boisbriant had left in a very bad season, Le Gac hastened to write to Paris: "M. de Boisbriant, with his company of settlers, employés, and convicts, took more than six months to reach Illinois, because they had to winter in Arkansas. Ice on the Wabash delayed them and they could not do more than four or five hours of rowing from sunrise to sunset, owing to the swift current. Towing is impossible, because the river twists all the way. \* \* \* The banks are covered with impenetrable woods and canebrakes \* \* \* whereas Canadians have gone overland from Illinois to Mobile in *less than a month*. These assert that the distance was not more than seventy leagues (in reality, two hundred and fifty) whereas it is nearly five hundred by the river and takes five or six months. Trees should be blazed on both sides so that a way may be made and recognized, and establishments should be built from place to place, to serve as retreats; the inhabitants could grow crops and raise animals to supply travellers with food \* \* \* Only causeways and bridges would have to be built, here and there \* \* \*"

In spite of its extravagance, this project was adopted for some time by the Company of the Indies; but the Chickasaws soon closed the way to the most intrepid *coureurs de bois*.

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New Orleans had none the less demonstrated its utility, from the very start; Boisbriant, with the several hundred soldiers and more or less voluntary colonists he was taking to Illinois, had found shelter there while waiting for ships to be got ready. Bienville and Hubert spent the autumn in New Orleans, to supervise the outfitting of this expedition.

Bénard de La Harpe, accompanied by a non-commissioned officer and six men, came on the 7th of November, 1718, to complete his preparations for a voyage to the Cododakis Indians on the Red River. Finding at Dauphin Island no means of transportation for his trading goods as far as New Orleans, he had been forced to build a boat at his own expense and go through the mouth of the Mississippi. La Harpe finally arrived safe and sound; nevertheless, his pilot being entirely inexperienced, he ran considerable dangers in the passes of the river, and took a month for the journey.

"As soon as I reached New Orleans," he states in his *Journal de voyage de la Louisiane*, "I urged M. de Bienville to get me started off again. He represented to me that he had no provisions in the stores, and that the Company was in no present condition to make good its obligations to convey me at its expense, with my people and my goods to the place where I was to choose my concession on the Red River."

La Harpe, who had already done much travelling in South America, where he had even found a wife, managed to leave on the 12th of December, in spite of the Mississippi's strong current.

At about the same period, Dubuisson landed with his silk-growers; but, as Le Gac did not fail to observe, "he settled twenty-five leagues up the river (at Bayagoula)." Le Page du Pratz was among the few to elect a residence, though transitorily, on the banks of Bayou St. John.







### CHAPTER III.

#### The Mississippi Flood in 1719. Consequences of the Capture of Pensacola. The Year 1720.



LUCK still did not favour New Orleans; the year 1719 brought no improvement in the state of stagnation which had become peculiar to the town. An altogether abnormal rise of the Mississippi—the Indians did not remember having ever seen its like—submerged the site, which remained swampy until a

dike was built.

Coast residents made the best of this misfortune, exaggerating it to their own advantage. We may note in this connection that the 1721 flood of the Mobile River, which devastated all the plantations of that region and caused far graver material damage than had been noted in New Orleans two years before, passed almost unperceived at Paris, because there were no interested parties to exploit it against Mobile.

Bienville himself seems to have allowed his faith to be shaken, for a while. On the 15th of April, 1719, he countersigned a despatch of Larcebault's stating: "It may be difficult to maintain a town at New Orleans; the site is drowned under half a foot of water. The sole remedy will be to build levees and dig the projected canal from the Mississippi to Lake Pontchartrain. There would be half a league of cutting to do."

Certainly a flood was a disagreeable event, whether the depth of water were really "half a foot" or only three or four inches, as stated in the census of the 24th of November, 1721, signed by Bienville, Diron d'Artaguet, La Tour, De Lorme, and Duvergier. (*Colonies*, G., 464.) But this bore very slight resemblance to the



catastrophe over which the members of the Colonial Board wept crocodile tears. Nor does it appear likely that the flood persisted for "six months."

Hubert promptly turned the situation to his advantage, by transferring to Natchéz most of the stores warehoused at New Orleans. "The flood," he wrote, "compelled all the residents to go to Natchez, where the land lies higher and the heat is less severe." But since the garrison and several clerks remained at their posts, this picture of a general exodus is overdrawn, to say the least.

Le Page du Pratz, who had settled half a league from New Orleans, does not even mention this terrible flood. He observes that "the country being decidedly aquatic, the air cannot have been of the best," but adds: "The soil was very good, and I was happy on my plantation." Du Pratz acknowledges that he had no particular motives in moving to Natchez, unless that his surgeon was going, that his Indian maid wished to be near her family, and that he complied with Hubert's advice and acted "from friendship for him."

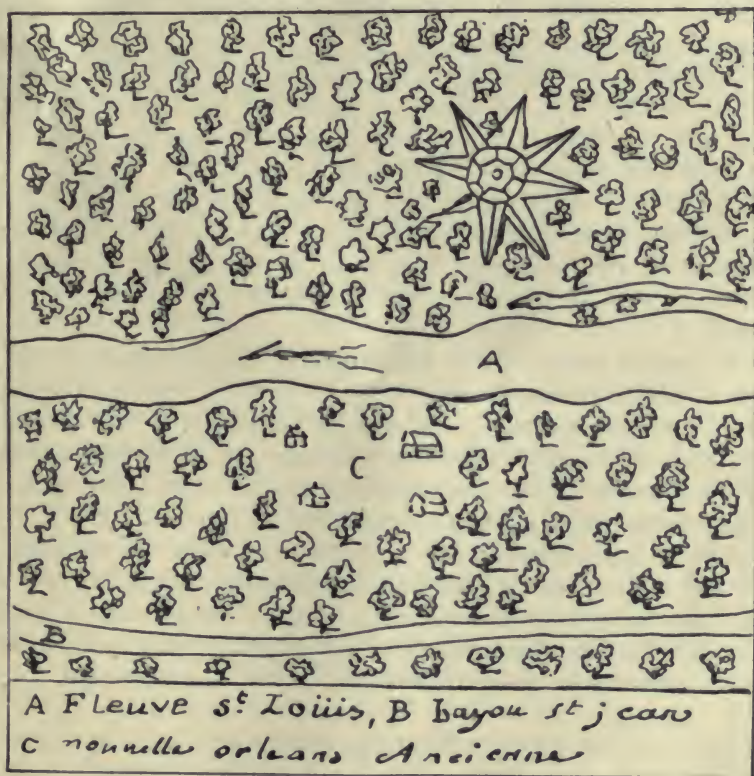
Pellerin, one of the most enterprising among the colonists, wished to settle near New Orleans, in spite of the flood; he camped on the banks of Bayou St. John in April, 1719. As soon as he had found a good site, he asked for a concession. But Hubert put so many obstacles in his way that he, too, ended by settling at Natchez. He wrote: "There are in New Orleans three Canadian houses and a store belonging to the Company, where we stopped." (*Arsenal*, Mss. 4497, fol. 54.) This confirms the figures given by Bienville, who mentioned four dwellings. To get to Natchez, Pellerin passed through the lakes, reaching the Mississippi after thirteen days.

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Even when flooded, New Orleans was so far from being uninhabitable that on the 23rd of April, 1719, the Board decided to send thither a clerk "to sell wine at four *reals* per pint." A few days before, the Company had fixed as follows the salaries for officials at the new counter: Hubert, Director, five thousand *livres*. A store-keeper, nine hundred *livres*. An accountant six hundred *livres*. A clerk, four hundred *livres*. These last had under their orders "two men-of-all-work, to be chosen among the illicit salt-makers or tobacco-smugglers, without wages but supplied with rations." The salary of "the missionary to be sent to New Orleans" was fixed first at four hundred *livres*, afterwards raised to five hundred. The gunner received three hundred and sixty *livres*.

M. de Bannez, appointed Lieutenant on the 28th of October, 1717, embarked in May 1719 on the *Marie*, with Dumont de Montigny Louisiana's poet-historian. According to certain records, Bannez started out with the rank of Major-General of New Orleans; according to others, he was named to this post only on the 23rd of March, 1720.

The flood having subsided, public attention was deflected from the Mississippi posts. Pensacola was taken, lost, and recaptured.



New Orleans in 1719. (After Dumont de Montigny.)

The certainty that the famous Illinois mines did not exist, or could never be worked, caused keen disappointment. It is worth noting that a memoir preserved at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommends using "for the discovery of these mines, wands fitted with electron, mercury, and marcasites on which the heat of the air acts." (*Mém. et Doc. Amér.* Vol. I, fol. 433.)



Even the most blindly prejudiced among the colonists should have understood the urgent need for organising their chief warehouse at a sufficient distance from the sea to protect it against sudden attacks. Dauphin Island had been sacked, and other establishments too near the coast had run similar risks; these examples should have sufficed as lessons. Yet the adversaries of New Orleans brought contrary influence to bear. The Company, while changing its name to Company of the Indies, had kept the Mississippi on its arms; but had decided to make Pensacola the main port of Louisiana, regardless of the facts that this town, whose strategic importance was unquestionable, yet suffered extreme disadvantages for trade with the Mississippi, the recognized centre of the Colony. Taking no heed for the expense incidental to trans-shipments of goods, the residents of Biloxi wished to keep ships out of the river and so retain their profits from the unseaworthy sloops of Lake Pontchartrain. If Pensacola had not been restored to the Spanish, merchandise from Illinois would have had not one single trans-shipment at New Orleans, but four: at Pensacola, at Biloxi, at Bayou St. John or Manchac, and finally on the banks of the Mississippi.

A further drawback to Pensacola as chief stronghold for the Colony was its position on the easternmost frontier of France's possessions. To assure the defence of Louisiana, it was decided in Paris to build another establishment near the indeterminate limits of New Mexico. Two expeditions went forth in 1720 and 1721, having as mission to occupy mysterious "St. Bernard's Bay." Both failed for sundry reasons, foremost among which was certainly the disfavour with which the Colonial Board, now supported by Bienville, viewed settlements along the coast. Saujon complained, on the 23rd of June, 1720, that Bienville and his brother Sérigny had prevented him from seizing St. Joseph's Bay, in Florida. (*Marine*, B<sup>4</sup>, 37, fol. 405.)

News of the 1719 flood contributed to the decision reached by the Company of the Indies that work on New Orleans should be suspended. Nevertheless, the occupation of Pensacola, and then hope of occupying the vast Texan territories, discovered by La Salle in the previous century, must have been the leading motives for the incomprehensible desertion of New Orleans during nearly three years.

The illusion that Pensacola might be retained was long cherished in Paris; Engineer-in-Chief LaTour was ordered to settle at that post, according to the first instructions drawn up for him. (B,



42 bis, 308.) But when, on the 20th of August, 1720, the order was signed for restoring the place to the Spanish, the Company, forced to fall back upon the Mississippi, at least acted promptly. Four months later, New Orleans became the capital of Louisiana.

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For a few weeks thereafter New Orleans succeeded in meriting the name of "burg," but this prosperity seems to have been short-lived.... During most of the year 1721, the town cannot be said to have done more than manage to exist.

Such were the difficulties incidental to navigating the Iberville River, practically dry for half the year, that all boats passed through Bayou St. John.

"This river," says an anonymous memoir, "has three feet and a half of water; boats can go up for two leagues, where there are several French planters and a store. Merchandise is landed here and must be conveyed by truck to New Orleans, three quarters of a league distance." (C<sup>13</sup>c, 2, fol. 170.)

And yet, no one dared settle at New Orleans, for fear of Hubert and Le Gac. The few who came, left rapidly, like Le Page du Pratz and Pellerin, or withdrew to a respectful distance from the forbidden centre, like du Breuil, du Hamel, the Chauvins, etc.

The National Library preserves a singular aquarelle purporting to picture New Orleans at the end of January, 1720; it was done on a corner of the map entitled "*Carte nouvelle de la partie occidentale de la province de Louisiane*," according to "observations and discoveries made by the Sieur Bénard de La Harpe, Commandant on Red River," by the "Sieur de Beauvilliers, gentleman serving the King and his engineer in Ordinary, of the Royal Academy of Sciences, at Paris, in November, 1720." (Bibl. Nat., *Cartes*, Inv. Gen. 1073.) This sketch is reproduced at the head of the present chapter.

La Harpe was an excellent observer, M. de Beauvilliers an able geographer, and their map seems remarkably accurate, for the period. If their view of New Orleans contains many errors, it is because they represented not reality but a mere project. The drawing shows the Mississippi Crescent, beyond which Lake Pontchartrain is seen in the distance, as if the canal planned by La Harpe to connect the river with the lake had existed already. Later in the year, on the 20th of December, La Harpe wrote: "Communications may be made between the Mississippi and Lake Pontchartrain; there will be only half a league of cutting to do." Bienville appears to have been a

partisan of this, for a while, but doubtless only to conciliate the inhabitants of Biloxi.

This view, whose perspective placed the lake very near the river, could not but encourage the Company to continue work at Biloxi which La Harpe strongly championed. The fact that three large stores or barracks, which existed then only in the imagination of Pénicaut and of La Harpe, were represented as actually completed, served as further inducement for the Directors to neglect New Orleans.

In April, the Colonial Board, seeing no necessity for the maintenance of a major and a captain at that almost deserted post, withdrew the appointments of d'Avril and of Valterre, replacing them by M. de Noyan, a mere lieutenant. Somewhat later, M. de Richebourg was nevertheless named as *Major*, but refused to serve under the orders of Pailloux who, according to his adversary La Mothe-Cadillac, was "a choleric ex-sergeant addicted to maltreating his men." Richebourg also was reputed as violent; on the 8th of April, 1719, the Company had ordered that "having insulted Mme. Hubert, he must give suitable satisfaction." Richebourg had served two years as volunteer in the King's Household, four years in the Limoges Regiment, eleven years as captain, then as major, in the Chatillon dragons, and had gone to Louisiana in 1712.

An *Etat de la Louisiane* for June, 1720 says: "The burg of New Orleans is situated thirty leagues above the mouth of the Mississippi, on the eastern side, There are stores for the Company, a hospital, lodgings for the governor and the Director. About fifty soldiers, seventy clerks, hired men and convicts drawing wages and rations from the Company. Two hundred and fifty concession-holders, including their people, are waiting for flat-boats to take them up to their concessions."

"There are, on that side, forty plantations begun by invalids (!) who, to judge by appearances, will not make good. Of these forty concessions, only two will be able to produce crops this year: one belongs to the Sieur Lery (the surname of Joseph Chauvin) who, in March, had already sowed two casks of rice; the other, to the Sieurs Massy and Guénot, who have sowed as much. These forty plantations have among them about thirty head of horned cattle and eighty slaves, savages as well as blacks.

"M. de Bienville, commander of Louisiana, also has a plantation there (Bel Air) in which he has put twenty slaves, blacks and savages, and six head of horned cattle. He has sowed half a cask of rice. The river, which overflows almost every year, is a cause of



inconvenience and damage to many houses built too close to the waters. The burg should naturally be placed where the Sieur Hubert chose his plantation. The ground is always dry there, and the public would be all the better off, since it is accessible from both sides, the Mississippi and the Bayou."

Fearing lest caprice might prompt a few colonists in distress to settle near New Orleans, the Councillors passed a stringent measure: "The hundred and fifty persons who had been sent to New Orleans are now *all* at Biloxi," Le Gac writes. "It was considered more appropriate to provide for them here than in New Orleans. They could not be conveyed by river, because the flatboats were all away and not expected back soon." And yet, game was far more abundant on the shores of the Mississippi than near Biloxi.

Save for a few pirogues and flat-boats, the entire fleet kept by the Company at New Orleans was limited, even at the close of 1720, to a "sunken brigantine." "But," adds Le Gac, "she could be raised, for there are no worms in the river." Here was an additional point in favour of New Orleans, whereas at Biloxi a ship's hull rapidly became a sieve. To obviate the shortness of bottoms, and to avoid a fresh return of colonists, Bienville caused du Tisné to pass through the mouths of the Mississippi, in October, 1720, with a flotilla of seven flat-boats.

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Pénicaut has little to say about New Orleans during the year 1720; he rests content with observing: "They worked the rest of the year, and made considerable progress." Valette de Laudun, who wrote only from hearsay, he himself having never gone beyond Biloxi, declares in his *Journal d'un voyage fait à la Louisiane en 1720*: "New Orleans is the first and most important of the posts we have here." Nevertheless, the site of the capital must have borne closer affinities to a virgin forest than to a town, since in March, 1721 Pauget the engineer complained that he "could not make the alignments" because there were too many bushes and cane-brakes.

Work on the dikes continued, meanwhile. Pellerin wrote in 1720 (probably on the 1st of August): "The Mississippi, overflowing more or less for six months of the year, renders New Orleans unpleasant as a place of sojourn. But at present, a great many slaves or negroes from Guinea are labouring to make it habitable. This may be effected by a sound dike on the river-bank; or by a causeway three or four toises from the edge and running back a quarter of a league where the land rises above inundation; or else by digging a small bayou to act as drain in winter. Pirogues from the Mississippi on the one hand, and from Lake Pontchartrain on the other, could



then anchor beside the town. \* \* \* Ships drawing not more than thirteen or fourteen feet can come up to New Orleans."

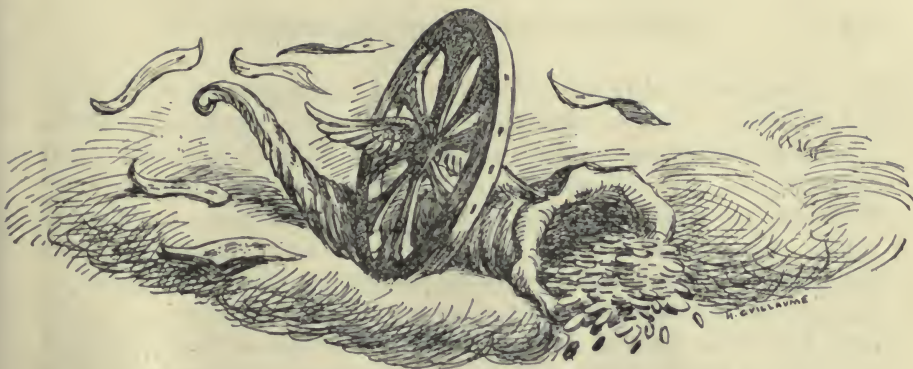
Having settled in Natchez, Pellerin was a warm partisan of that post, and rejoiced because Hubert had "filled the Natchez stores, which caused much discontent at New Orleans, as if dwellers in Natchez were less sons of the Colony than those in New Orleans. By so doing, M. the Commissary will have Natchez established within two years, whereas down the river it cannot be done in six. Yet the good things brought by boat are consumed down the river, and we don't taste them except when they are no longer wanted there, or when travellers bring them to us." (*Arsenal*, Mss. 4497, fol. 54.)

The year 1720 brings to a close the first period of the foundation of New Orleans. The town's history from 1718 to 1721 might almost be expressed in a few words, saying that, helped by the choice of a good site and by Bienville's tenacity, the capital of Louisiana concentrated its efforts on remaining rooted where it was, otherwise passively biding the time when its very enemies should understand the brilliancy of the future awaiting it. During three years, adversaries succeeded in completely checking the development of New Orleans but failed in their endeavour to transfer it to the banks of Lake Pontchartrain. Bienville's name will always remain deservedly associated with the creation of the great seaport of the Mississippi, which he founded in spite of everybody.

If New Orleans owes its existence to Bienville, the first colonists have to thank him for preserving their lives. But for the marvellous ability which the "Father of Louisiana" showed in winning the friendship of Indian tribes, the French who came as pioneers to settle along the Mississippi would all have been massacred. But Indians adored Bienville while fearing him, because they knew him to be always just, though often stern.

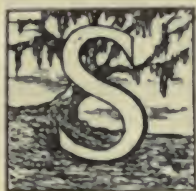
Bienville's character was unquestionably authoritative; but for thirty-five years he displayed in Louisiana all the energy required for the government of a new colony ceaselessly torn by rivalries of men or of interests.





## CHAPTER IV.

### The New Orleans Bluff--The Real Manon--Transported and Exiled--"Princess Charlotte"--Mademoiselle Baron.



SEEN on the banks of the Mississippi, New Orleans was still nothing more than a modest hamlet. But the town thrived amazingly in reports spread among frequenters of the Rue Quincampoix. Speculators were even treated to an ingenious interpretation of the fourth quatrain in Nostredamus's fourteenth Century; so that the honour of predicting a brilliant future for Louisiana reverted to a contemporary of de Soto, nearly one hundred and fifty years before Rémonville:

"Par cinquante à cinq cinq, Lauge sera prospère

L A V V

Gaule

Depuis paroisse Cinq—jusqu'à pays lointain

rue Quinquempoix

Louisiane

à cheval sur cinq paroisses.

Commençant Peuple et Roy, sans craindre la misère,

Se payeront l'un et l'autre et ne devront plus rien."

After the collapse of Law's "System," buyers and sellers, ruined to an equal degree, must have reflected with bitterness on the nature of the prophecy conveyed in the closing verse.

In March, 1719, the *Nouveau Mercure*, which a year before had declared Louisiana might become "the French Peru," published an enthusiastic letter from one Fr. Duval, the author having gone over with the intention of making starch "from roots," found it more profitable to gather and sell medicinal herbs.



"I arrived on the 25th of last August," he writes, \* \* \* "This is a charming country, where people are already beginning to settle. I have withdrawn to the spot where the capital is being built, called New Orleans. It will have a circumference of one league. \* \* \* The land is rich with gold, silver, copper, and lead mines in different places. I wished to identify myself with what will be the capital of the province because of its future population, and its position as trading centre and meeting-place for the heads of affairs. \* \* \* My land will have a front of three *arpents*<sup>1</sup> on a depth of forty, and will be given to me outright. \* \* \* The houses are built plainly, as in country districts at home, and are covered with large pieces of tree-bark and big canes. You dress as you please, but everything very simple, as with furniture. Tapestries and handsome beds are unknown. \* \* \* Health is generally good, and specimens of fine old age are seen."

Eleven months later, the same paper announced that each family of colonists would receive two hundred and twenty acres of land: "They shall be given gratis utensils for each family, all sorts of tools for their work, and provisions for one year. These new planters shall be exempt from all payments during the first three years, after which they shall give to their lord, whose ffeoff shall be built in their midst, one tenth of the produce of their lands. In each village or hamlet there shall be twenty families at a distance of a league from one another."

At the close of 1720, the *Nouveau Mercure* printed a letter from Illinois, dated July 8th: "\* \* \* It can be said without exaggeration that we trample treasures underfoot, since we walk over rich gold mines." Describing Kaskaskias, the writer adds: "In spite of continual remonstrances from the good Fathers, young people here are doing all they can to increase the population. \* \* \* They are accomplishing their duty just as we are, for the Company must be highly pleased to see the number of its subjects grow daily."

The work entitled *Relation de la Louisiane ou Mississipy*, "written to a Lady by a Naval Officer," appeared that year. The author, an officer of the *Paon*, proposed that the capital be built at English Turn: "The river's course flows straight as far as this point," he writes, "and the depth is sufficient for a ship with eighty guns." We should not even mention this work, whose interest is but mediocre, if it had not given rise to an imitation or rather a forgery. The

<sup>1</sup>At this period, the Parisian *arpent* or acre was equivalent to 34 *ares*, the *are* being equivalent to 119 square yards. The "woods and forest *arpent* was equivalent to 51 *ares*, the common *arpent* 42 *ares*. A decree dated 12th October, 1716 granted to each colonist a concession of 2 to 4 *arpents* front, on 40 or 60 in depth, as a maximum."



latter is a sort of circular whose extravagance proves it to have been printed in Rouen at the expense of an unscrupulous speculator or perhaps even of the Company; its title is "*Description du Mississipy: le nombre des villes établies, les îles, les rivières*, etc. by "the Chevalier de Bonrepos, written from Mississippi to France, to Mademoiselle D. \* \* \*"

"Already," this veritable hand-book asserts, "the town named New Orléans, which is to be the capital of the Colony, has nearly eight hundred houses, all very convenient and comfortable; a hundred and twenty acres of land has been attached to each, for the support of the family. This town is one league in circumference and is situated on the Mississippi, some leagues from the sea. The Governor and the principal officers of the Company reside here. Large stores have been built for merchandise from France and for native products to be sent to France as soon as the Company's ships return."

This author appears to have borrowed also, with further exaggerations, from the *Relation concernant l'étendue des îles du Mississipy et de leurs propriétés, avec une explication des villes que les Français y ont établies*, the original of which, or a contemporaneous copy, is preserved at the Arsenal Library (Mss. 6650, fol. 54.)

"The Kingdom of Louisiana is vaster than that of France," he says. "The Mississippi River, which flows through its entire length, has a course of more than 860 leagues. \* \* \* All sorts of fruits, whose savour is better than in France, grow on the land, though the trees are neither grafted nor cultivated. \* \* \* Along the upper Mississippi, the mountains are full of gold, silver, copper, lead, and quick-silver mines. Since the savages ignore their value, they sell, or, to speak more correctly, barter away, golden metals which in their tongue they call copper, against a wood-hatchet, or often for a mirror or a pint of brandy.


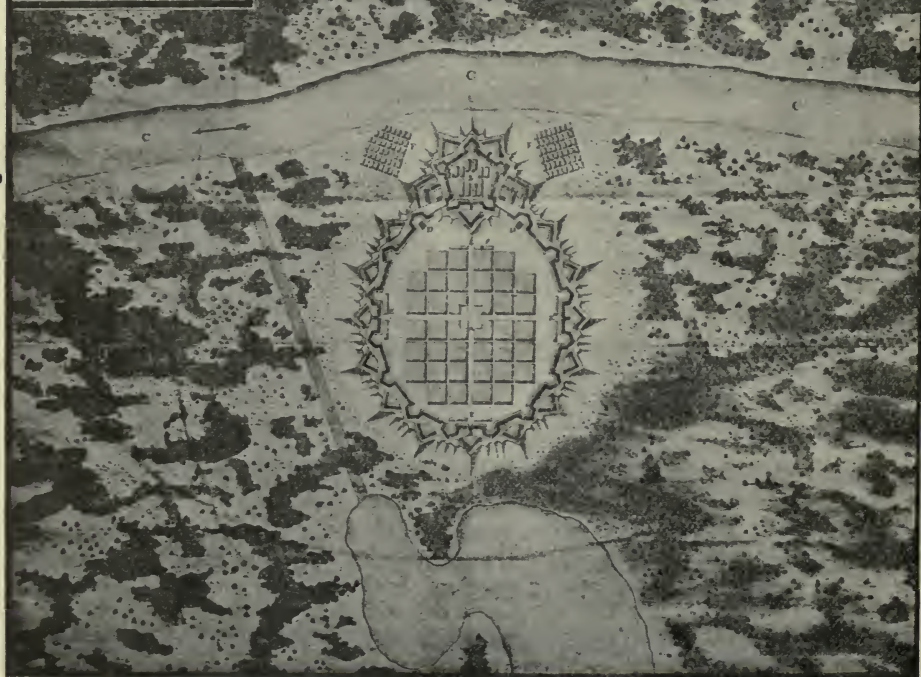
"Of late, a new town has been formed which is to be the capital of Louisiana, called New Orléans. More than six hundred houses have already been built there for residents, each house having one hundred and twenty acres of ground attached as a free gift which they can cultivate on their own account. According to the plan traced for the town, the circumference will be one league; it is situated on the bank of the Mississippi River. Since it is not far from the sea, this will be the commercial centre and the seat of the Company's chief officers."

The map which we reproduce shows the methods adopted by the Company of the Indies for selling its stock and recruiting new Colonists. Mobile and Pensacola are here seen to the west of the

**PLAN**  
DE LA  
**NOUVELLE ORLEANS**

A La Ville.  
B La Citadelle.  
C Riviere de St Louis sur le bord de  
laquelle la Ville sera placee a trois  
lieues de son embouchure.  
D Trois Moynes à Poidre.  
E Huit Corps de Casernes.  
F Habitations que l'on permettra de  
faire aux habitants en attendant que  
la Ville soit bnie pour loger en  
surs leuvre.  
G Canal que l'on peut faire pour communi-  
quer à la

L'Echelle de mil toises

*New Orleans as seen from Quincampoix*



Mississippi. Later, the engraving was reversed, New Orleans and Florida passed over to the east, but the Espiritu Santu River followed them.

Carpers were, however, singing lustily:

*Le Pays n'est pas habité;  
Il sera bientôt fréquenté,  
Peut-être dans cent ans d'ici!  
Les mines l'on y fouillera,  
Car sans doute on en trouvera,  
Si la nature en a mis!*

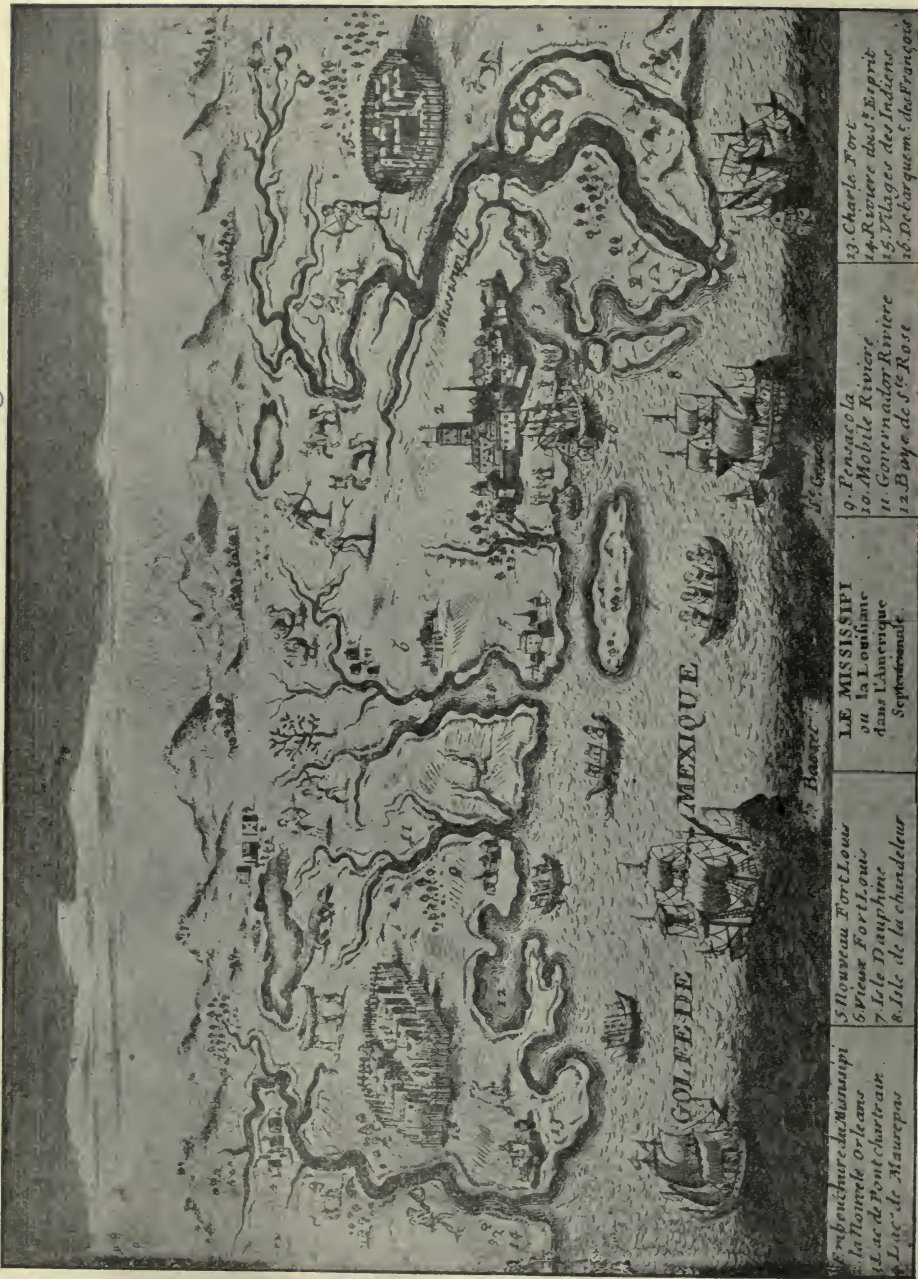
Of all the descriptions of New Orleans written from a distance, the most accurate appears to be that of Abbé Prévost, even though the town is not "hidden behind a small hill \* \* \* What had so far been vaunted as a goodly city was only a group of a few poor cabins. Five or six hundred people lived there; the governor's house seemed to be rather distinguished by its height and its location. It is defended by a few earthworks, round which a broad ditch runs."

The *History of Manon Lescaut* is divided into two parts. The first, relating Manon's gallant adventures, is laid in France; the second telling of her moral regeneration, takes place in New Orleans; the work as a whole will remain not only as a masterpiece of literature, but as a faithful picture of the sort of women transported to Louisiana. (See M. Pierre Heinrich's study, *l'Abbé Prévost et la Louisiane*.)

A number of girls, reading the first part in 1731, may have thought themselves the heroine, provided they, too, were unencumbered by principles; but the resemblance could not have been mistaken for an identity beyond a few pages: Manon the sinner is a perfect type of the Regency courtesan, and can have no distinct individuality. The case is different, however, with Manon dreaming of marriage; and here an episode which occurred on one of the Mississippi Islands, the genuine experience of a more or less repentant and very vaguely married Magdalen, supplied the theme for Manon's mock marriage with Des Grieux. Thereby a difficult literary problem was solved; for if Des Grieux had been allowed to abandon Manon, he would have become hopelessly odious, and if he had blindly married her he must have regretted, sooner or later, an alliance so offensive to accepted morals.

Since Prévost was not yet eighteen and happened to be at the Jesuit Novitiate in Paris when the real Manon, expelled from Angers, embarked at Nantes, the hypothesis maintained by Arsène Houssaye,





1. Embouchure du Mississipi  
 2. la Nouvelle Orleans  
 3. Lac de Pontchartrain  
 4. Lac de Maurepas

5. Nouveau Fort Louis  
 6. Vieux Fort Louis  
 7. Isle Dauphine  
 8. Isle de la chaudière

LE MISSISSIPPI  
 ou la Louisiane  
 dans l'Amérique  
 Septentrionale

9. Pensacola  
 10. Mobile Riviere  
 11. Gouvernador Riviere  
 12. Baye de St. Rost

13. Charles Fort  
 14. Riviere des Esprits  
 15. Villages des Indiens  
 16. Debarquement des Français

Henry Harrisse, and various authors, that the Abbé had confessed a love-story of his youth, must be definitely set aside. Even if his heroine had managed to return to France as she intended, in 1715, it is doubtful if he could have met her.

*Manon Lescaut* having been first printed in Amsterdam in 1731, the name may have been suggested to Prévost by his stay in the Low countries. But, strangely enough, the names which constantly recur in *Manon* are taken from life, although the characters do not correspond to the originals. This would seem to indicate that Tiberge and the Chevalier Des Grieux were the ones to tell Abbé Prévost the misfortunes of Avril de La Varenne and his companion, the "Demoiselle" Froget. Indeed, worthy Tiberge can with much likelihood be identified as Louis Tiberge, Abbé of Andrès, Director of the Foreign Missions Seminary; he died on the 9th of October, 1730, a very short time after Prévost had begun his seventh volume. The *Nouveau Dictionnaire - Historique*, the first edition of which appeared in 1765 and the sixth in 1786, says under the name Tiberge: "It is this pious priest who plays so touching a part in the story of the love of the Chevalier Des Grieux" Anatole de Montaiglon has reached the same conclusion. (*Manon Lescaut*, Paris, 1875.) We may add that Abbé Tiberge, having often had to deal with ecclesiastical matters in Louisiana, must certainly have known of the differences which brought Manon and her curé into conflict, prompting their reciprocal complaints before the Marine Board.

Could it, however, be by a second coincidence that Des Grieux should bear the same name as the Captain of the *Comte de Toulouse*, a ship which made several voyages to Louisiana and notably conveyed, in 1718, a considerable number of deported girls to Biloxi? We think not. Even though Captain Des Grieux may not have met Manon, he had certainly heard of her adventures.

Several unpublished documents, found in the archives of the Ministry of Marine, enable us to identify, for the first time, four other characters in *Manon Lescaut*.

The "Chaplain of New Orléans" was none other than the missionary Le Maire, Curé of Dauphin Island; Manon's alleged husband, ex-captain of the Champagne Regiment, was known in America as Avril de la Varenne; the celebrated courtesan herself was called Froget, and surnamed Quantin; and the "Governor of Louisiana" was La Mothe-Cadillac.

The character of Synnelet, and the part attributed to his uncle in the novel, seem to be inventions. We had no reasons to believe



that Cadillac had a nephew with him. His son, the Lieutenant, was hot-tempered, and one day, together with Ensign Terrisse de Ternin, gave six sword thrusts to Benoist de Sainte-Clair. But there is no evidence that young Cadillac ever loved Manon; and the Governor's relentless pursuit of the coquette cannot be advanced in support of the theory. Judging by his letters, La Mothe-Cadillac had never tolerated loose morals, and pitilessly denounced all women who misbehaved in the absence of their husbands.

Nevertheless, the idea of Des Grieux's duel may have been suggested to Abbé Prévost by the challenge which Raujon, champion of Manon's honour, purposed to send to Mandeville who had cast aspersions on her. But although Raujon played so far the part attributed later to Synnelet, Raujon was far from seeking to kill the original Des Grieux; he wished, on the contrary, to defend the good name of his friend's wife, who had become his faithful accountant.

The name of Avril de La Varenne is not mentioned in any of the armorial lists of Anjou. Hence a mystery subsisted until we discovered that Pierre du Tremblier, Sieur de La Varenne, Counsellor of the Angers Presidial, had married Mademoiselle Avril de Louzil. Another Tremblier de La Varenne, Charles Claude, had married Marie Renée Avril in 1697; but this branch does not appear to have lived in Angers. When Manon's brother broke with his family, he evidently chose a new name by combining those of his father and mother. We know that his father died in 1704. To judge by the age which Avril de la Varenne gave himself in 1715, and by the researches which M. Benoit, head clerk of the Archives of Maine-et-Loire, kindly made on our behalf in the parish registers of Angers, we may conclude that Abbé Prévost's hero was born at Angers in November, 1685, and was christened René. A commune of Maine-et-Loire bears his name today, St.-Rémy-La-Varenne. We may add that the La Varenne Manor was situated in the parish of St. Rémy.

Here is his baptismal record, from the parish of St. Maùrille:

"The eleventh of November, one thousand six hundred and eighty-five, was baptised René, son of Mons Mre Pierre du Tremblier, esquire, Seigneur de La Varenne, King's Counsellor, Judge Magistrate at the Preal Seat of Angers, and of Dame Magdelaine Avril, his wife. Was Godfather, Monsieur Maistre René Trochon, King's Counsellor, civil and criminal Provost Judge of that town. God-mother, Dame Renée Tremblier, wife of François Avril, Esquire, Seigneur of Pignerolles.

"Trochon, Renée du Tremblier, P. du Tremblier, de Pignerolle Avril."



La Varenne and his companion embarked at Nantes on the *Dauphine*, commanded by Captain Béranger. She was a flute of so modest tonnage, that only part of her cargo could be taken aboard; she had arrived from Holland on the 8th of December, 1714; but ice, and then a succession of adverse winds, detained her for three months on the Loire, so that many soldiers and men enlisted in the Company's service deserted. Finally she sailed on the 6th of March, 1715, for Biloxi, stopping at La Rochelle and at the Canaries to take on wine.

The voluminous correspondence of M. de Luzançay, Ordinator of Nantes, makes no reference to the lovers, although he mentions all sorts of incidents which occurred among the passengers on the *Dauphine*. Here are two typical examples:

There was a young architect who wished to go and make his fortune in America; but his family purchased his release from Captain Mandeville, whereupon Manon's enemy immediately forced this "excellent and clever subject" to land, in spite of his own protests and those of Luzançay.

Lieutenant La Tour, a cousin of Bienville, operated with even greater success. He began by receiving six hundred *livres* from a Counsellor of the Tours Presidial for enlisting the said counsellor's son, who had been interned for four years at St. Lazare; then he sold a full release to the hardened young libertine, in exchange for a good round sum. The Counsellor had made the mistake of giving his son too much money to begin with, as an inducement for leaving; the Minister would not allow him to be embarked "unless he consented with good will". The end of it was that the libertine, who is described as being "very well-mannered, but according to several worthy people, capable of dishonouring his family," consented to embark on the *Dauphine* after the family had guaranteed him "an honest pension" and paid four thousand *livres* of "mad expenses" he had incurred during six weeks at Nantes. As for Lieutenant La Tour himself, we may add that he had no sooner landed than he was married, in spite of Cadillac's remonstrances. We learn, from the Governor's remarks, that "one cow, six barrels of sweet potatoes, six barrels of maize, and one hundred and fifty pumpkins" was then considered a tempting dower on Dauphin Island, even for a disgraced widow.

Luzançay's discretion concerning Avril de La Varenne and his companion may be explained either by the Ordinator's wish not to displease Raujon, Crozat's representative and Manon's protector, or by the fact that he lived on very bad terms with the Nantes clergy, who forbade reporting on deserters.

Raujon states that his mother and Manon came from the same town, but unfortunately he neglects to mention the name. So nothing can now furnish us with a clue to the birth records of the pretty girl whose pictured death has caused so many tears to be shed. Was Froget her family name, and Quantin an assumed name or else the patronymic of some lover rather more constant than the rest? We are reduced to mere hypotheses. Given a little imagination, we may fancy, as we shall see further on, that traces of Manon are to be found after her return to France. But we hold no clue to her youthful adventures, we do not even know whether La Varenne met her at Angers or in some garrison town. It is, however, noteworthy that in 1711 the Champagne Regiment went into winter quarters at Amiens, the town chosen by Abbé Prévost for Des Grieux's meeting with Manon.

In his sequel to Manon's story (*Suite de l'histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*), Courcelle mentions Dijon as Manon's birthplace. But the author of that insipid novel certainly did not know Manon had lived. The details given about the Des Grieux family do not apply to the Trembliers, and the information he pretends to convey on the subject of Manon's relations is absolutely incredible. Manon, buried alive, comes to life again, manages to escape, returns to France with the love-sick chaplain, who discovers, luckily in good time, that he is her uncle. About to take the veil at Marseilles, Manon finds Des Grieux once more, after thinking him unfaithful; and marries him as conclusion to many further adventures.

The *Dauphine* must have reached Dauphin Island in May, 1715, and the "scandal" broke out in August.

"I have the honour to inform you, Monseigneur, that a young man of good position, called Avril de La Varenne, from Angers, is here," La Mothe-Cadillac wrote in his despatch of the 2nd of January, 1716, which date indicates, as usual, the day when the mail was to leave. "He brought with him in the flute *La Dauphine* a woman who is said to have been married, and who may still be married, having left three children in France. At first she bore the name of Froget, and now she calls herself Quantin, and claims to have married the Sieur de La Varenne, which is confirmed by M. Raujon, manager for M. Crozat.

"Nevertheless it is known from divers sources that this is false, that she is a woman of irregular morals, who having been driven from Angers, withdrew to Nantes; learning which, the Bishop of Angers wrote to the Curé of St. Nicholas in Nantes, who went with



two priests to get the said woman and have her locked up. Then it was that the said *Sieur Raujon* caused her to escape aboard the flute *La Dauphine*. The *Curé*, knowing this, appealed to the *Sieur de Mandeville*, the senior officer of the ship, begging him to write to your Greatness, and handed him, in the presence of the *Sieur La Tour*, a certificate testifying that this was a scandalous woman, who had seduced the *Sieur de La Varenne*, provoking much displeasure among his relations.

"It must be admitted that, as soon as the flute had arrived, the said *Sieur Raujon*, fitted out a pirogue with goods and sent off the said *Sieur de La Varenne*<sup>1</sup>, on a trading expedition, while he lodged the woman at fifteen paces from his store, making over to her all the detail sales in the said store, with a commission of five per cent. This woman is ignorant of arithmetic and can scarcely write; so that each night, when doors and windows are closed, it is asserted the *Sieur Raujon* questions her about the sales and gives her lessons in addition. I believe the public scandal, which *Raujon* is alleged to have caused, is based upon this, beyond his other attentions. It is furthermore true that, owing to a custom whose origin I ignore, the said woman is now called *Mme. Raujon*.<sup>2</sup> The apparent reason is the absence of the *Sieur de La Varenne*.

"Messrs. the priests assure me that they have often privately admonished the *Sieur Raujon* and the *Quantin Woman*, but perceiving that they continue to frequent each other, as before, the *Curé* of *Dauphin Island* wrote to both individually. Upon this the *Sieur Raujon* answered very sharply and, to my thinking, very passionately, taking up the defence of this woman. It is true that he appears to have charitable sentiments towards her, for he states in the said letter that if he has come to her assistance, it is because his mother knew the family of the said *Quantin*, and came from the same town.

"I cannot approve his conduct in making several copies of his letter and sending them in different directions to be read publicly. This did not produce the effect on which he had counted. The woman afterwards sent me a petition against the *Curé* of *Dauphin Island*, to retrieve her honour; I sent a copy to your Greatness. She declares herself to be the wife of the said *Sieur de la Varenne*, and yet she almost acknowledges in her text that they came to this country expecting to be married, which establishes clearly that no ceremony had been performed between herself and the *Sieur*

<sup>1</sup>La Varenne left for Illinois with the two La Loire brothers, and *Raujon's* son.

<sup>2</sup>*Raujon* was married, but his wife had remained in France. On the last of October, 1717, the Company of the West instructed *Bonnaud* to dismiss him as soon as he landed. A year later, *Larcebault* was ordered to "hold the *Sieur Raujon* in prison until his accounts were handed in and audited."



de La Varenne. But none came forward to plead for her; furthermore, the Board could not act, the affair being in the jurisdiction of the Bishop and his ecclesiastical judge.

"On the other hand, the smartest people in the Colony cry aloud that the marriage was valid, and encourage this belief in the woman and in the *Sieur Raujon*. The said *Curé* has written me a letter on the subject, a copy of which I also sent to Your Greatness. The *Sieur Raujon*, in his letter to the said *Curé* which was made public, as I have stated, heaps insults upon the *Sieur de Mandeville*; but having foreseen what might occur, I forbade the latter to use violence. Since he submitted, I consented to receive his complaint, the original of which I have the honour to send you, together with a copy of the *Sieur de La Tour's* certificate.

"I have not been able to do justice to the said *Sieur de Mandeville*, without imperilling *M. Crozat's* interests, owing to the position held by the *Sieur Raujon*. Last of all, *Monseigneur*, I consider it intolerable that the said *Sieur Raujon* should call an officer, in writing, a knave and a scoundrel, for having spoken here about this young woman's conduct, but without saying a single word of the *Sieur Raujon*. I have promised him I would write to you, so that he might receive suitable satisfaction." (*Colonies*, C. 13 a, 4, fol. 527.)

A month later, *Cadillac* renews his lament: "I learn today, *Monseigneur*, from the residents, that the *Sieur Raujon*, visiting *M. Duclos* (the *Ordinator*), sent notes among them to take their statement against *M. Le Maire*, *Curé* of *Dauphin Island*, concerning the scandal he has raised with the alleged dame *La Varenne*. Some of the residents told me that they had signed as he asked them to do, not wishing to vex him because they need him and he would send them packing when they came to ask for anything they needed. Such conduct on the part of the *Sieur Raujon* is unquestionable proof, *Monseigneur*, of his passion for this woman and of his blindness; he is aware that the *Curé* attacked the dame *La Varenne* as being a concubine, since she was not married by her *curé*, nor by any other priest having a dispensation from her Bishop, nor by consent of the said *Sieur de La Varenne's* family, and since the certificate which she shows bears an unknown and apparently fictitious name. At all events, the *Curé* and I are forced to this conclusion since, by their own admission they were not married with proper formalities. Can it be that a woman who has led an evil life in France should continue in the same way over here?" (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a, 5, fol., 578.)

The Archives of the Ministry of Colonies contain no further reference to this dispute. But in a register of Extracts from the

Deliberations of the Marine Board (*Marine*, B., 9, fol., 287) the following annotations are appended, under date of the 29th of August, 1716, to a summary of La Mothe-Cadillac's complaint.

"\* \* \* This has given rise to divers complaints in writing, herewith appended, against the *Sieur Raujon*, that woman and the *Sieur de Mandeville*; the last asks for justice because the *Sieur Raujon* called him a knave and a scoundrel, in his reply to the said *Curé*, for having produced a certificate which the *curé* of *St. Nicholas* in *Nantes* had given to prevent that woman from taking ship, not being married to the said *Sieur de La Varenne* as she pretended:

"The *Sieur de La Varenne* complains that during a voyage he made to *Illinois*, *M. de La Mothe* arranged with a missionary to write letters both libelling his wife and insulting him. He is a gentleman and his wife is a lady; he was a captain in the *Champagne Regiment*, with which he served twelve years; he went to that country only to avoid the annoyances his family could cause him for being clandestinely married before reaching his majority<sup>1</sup>, which he will attain in two months, and intends then to be married again according to the regulations in that country. But the missionaries being warned against him, he wished to return to *France*, and asked that the governor should not refuse permission.

"*M. Raujon* complains against *M. de la Mothe*, *Mandeville*, and *Le Maire* the Missionary, because of calumnies they have spread and written concerning the *Dame de La Varenne* and himself.

"He sends a satirical fable which the said *Le Maire* has written against him, and thinks it deserves a reprimand."

On the margin, the following decision is noted: "This man cannot be prevented from returning to *France* with his wife; as for the quarrel between *Raujon* and *Mandeville*, send to *M. de l'Epinay*, so he may settle it when he is on the spot." Two months later the new Governor accordingly received instructions: "The *Sieur Raujon*, business agent for *M. Crozat*, has had several dissensions with the *Sieur Mandeville*, Captain. Have a care, when you come on the spot, to receive an account of their differences and to settle them."

Though we find records of very energetic attacks upon *Manon*, the memoirs presented in her defence are either lost or else condensed in a few lines. We must therefore pause before condemning her; and to remain impartial, we should remember that all three of her

<sup>1</sup>This was the thirty-year majority. According to the *Commentaires sur les coutumes de Maine et d'Anjou*, "the ordinances forbidding children of good family to marry without the consent of their father and mother before the age of thirty, merely pronounce the pain of disinheritance and do not declare such marriage to be null." From the ecclesiastical point of view, everything depended upon the powers of the priest supposed to have married them.



chief enemies were afflicted with violent tempers. Abbé Fay, who accompanied Manon on her voyage, complained to the Marine Board about Mandeville's brutalities, and states that it caused "half the sailors and troops to desert" at San Domingo. (*Marine*, B', 9, fol., 385). As for the virtuous understanding between the Governor and the Missionary, it was not of long duration; on the 1st of March, 1717, Le Maire wrote: "The small being led on by the example of the great, and the great being unable to repress the disorders of the small when they themselves have shared in them, this entire Colony is a veritable Babylon." Then, after volubly denouncing "the crying injustice of Sieur de La Mothe," he adds, "This man without faith, without scruple, without religion, without honour, without conscience, is capable of devising the blackest calumnies against those who do not partake of his passions." (*Bibli., Nat., Mss. Fr. 12, 105.*)

The portrait here sketched is very unfair, but is a regrettably typical specimen of the sort of literature once prevalent in the French Colonies. It goes simply to prove that the "Parisian Missionary," as he called himself, felt the sun's heat as well as Cadillac the Gascon.

Perhaps one day a seeker may be fortunate enough to discover Le Maire's "satirical fable." Did the author have any presentiment that the romance of his too attractive parishioner would one day spread abroad the fame of New Orleans, a place which he hated before it was even founded?

The La Varennes may have turned to advantage the hostility felt in Paris against La Mothe-Cadillac, who had been revoked. La Tour, arrested by Cadillac's order, had not merely broken his sword rather than yield it up, but had threatened the Governor with a caning; he was finally upheld by the Marine Board. One thing is certain in connection with Manon: the Board considered her to be a married woman.

We may now wonder what became of La Varenne and his companion, since they do not appear to have remained in Louisiana. Did they perish on the unhealthy and inhospitable shores of the Islands? Or did they make up their minds to return to France?

At that period the name of La Varenne was quite common; and Manon cannot be definitely identified with any of the four or five La Varennes imprisoned between 1719 and 1740, for lax morals, or for keeping houses of ill repute. Nevertheless, some singular coincidences may be observed.

In 1719, two women calling themselves La Varenne and Du Plessis lived in the rue de la Clé; the second occasionally played



the part of mother or aunt to the first. According to police reports, "their lives were a veritable mystery." Public rumour, and the clergy of St. Médard, agreed to reproach them with leading a "very suspicious and equivocal existence," in a house having two exits, "where young people of both sexes were debauched. \* \* \* During the whole of Lent, they held daily carnivals."

Their unusual cleverness in securing all sorts of goods on credit was, however, the true reason for the denunciations filed against them. The righteous indignation of half a dozen tradesmen protesting against "such infamous practices" seemed to be so interesting that M. De Machault was content, on the 2nd of September, with instructing Inspector de l'Anglade "to bring the two women before him, some morning, in his office."

Both of them categorically refused to go, and vanished upon learning that an order for their arrest had been signed on the 19th of October. Five weeks later, they were apprehended and taken to the Salpêtrière.

All the records of the case (*Arsenal*, 10, 658) suffered severely in the sacking of the Bastille, and still bear stains from the drinking-bouts of the heroes of July. The interrogatory of the La Varenne woman is missing, but that of Du Plessis replaces it in part. After declaring her real name to be Anique de Bejamen, and acknowledging that she was only the "mother in friendship" of her companion, Du Plessis stated that her friend, whose real name was Marie Anne Domisy, "had had three children and been married to a gentleman who had deceived her, having another wife, but her marriage was clandestine."

So that Marie Anne Domisy, born at *St. Quentin*, where her mother was still a linen-merchant, had *three* children and had been *secretly married*, like Manon, surnamed *Quantin*, or *la Quentin*."

Ten years later, a certain Marie Anne de La Varenne, "who kept a house of debauch," was incarcerated on the petition of the same l'Anglade. But the Inspector soon recognized that he had made a mistake, for the prisoner was not "the very dangerous Jeanneton Chopin" whom he had sought. As an apology, he explained that "this sort of woman takes on thirty names." (*Arsenal*, II, 056.)

In 1722, Marie Dosarbre, passing as the daughter of a Councillor at the Thiers Presidial, and married to one André de La Varenne, *ex-Captain of Infantry*, was likewise arrested for having served meals with meat and provided for gambling in Holy Week, besides creating a scandal during the Corpus Christi procession. Although she lived with an ex-officer, M. de St. Paul, her husband demanded and prompt-

ly obtained her release. (*Arsenal*, 10, 763). According to police reports, she had been driven away from Lyon, because of ill-conduct, and exiled in Thiers. Since the police themselves were unable to disentangle the facts among all these women called La Varenne, we can scarcely hope for better success at this late day.

Nor are such archives exactly pleasing. Let us rather feel with Alexandre Dumas fils, "Manon, you must die in all your beauty, at the height of your love, if we are to sing your praises. When you persist in living, you become a nuisance!" At least, no enemy has been able to dim your glory as a lover regenerated by a tender passion; no dust-covered paper shall prevent us from believing that you died at your appointed time, and now lie in your last sleep among the cypresses of Louisiana.

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Speaking of American Manons, here are some unpublished records which throw an interesting light on Louisiana's first French nuns and the young girls they brought over with them. Alas! the opinion seems long to have been held in Paris that the uglier these orphans were, the better they would behave.

In a memoir sent by Hubert, in June 1718, we read:

"Extract from the Memoir of Marie Françoise de Boisrenaud, who makes known that the King having sent, in 1703, twenty-three girls to start the Louisiana establishment, she was selected and accordingly withdrawn from the Convent of the Annunciation. Mme de Montespan, who had brought her from the Abbaye de Fontevrault, had placed her for a long while in her Convent of St. Joseph to direct it and become its Superior. To carry out the King's instructions and govern the girls entrusted to her, she risked her reputation, and her fatigue was great during the six months they all spent in Rochefort at the Orphan's Hospital. Since then, all these girls having been married in Louisiana, she has devoted herself to teaching savage women, attending to their baptism and to settling them in life; and she continues to give lessons to planters' daughters, showing them what they are capable of learning.

"Being overwhelmed by infirmities and unable to assure her care any longer, she implores the Board to provide for her retreat in France, where she may more quietly await death."

On the margin is written: "Verify if this girl is paid or receiving any retribution for the work she does in this colony, and make mention of it for the first time." (*Marine*, B', 30, fol. 429). During several years the Marine Board discussed, without finding a solution,



the question as to whether women should still be sent to Louisiana, or whether it might not be simpler to authorise the marriage of Frenchmen with Indians, as Curé La Vente proposed. In 1716, after consulting the Superior of the Foreign Missions, who replied that, while not opposing the measure, he had apprehensions as to this mixture of good and bad blood," the Board adopted Duclos's conclusions that savage women "being too dissolute and very bad Christians, the children would be too dark-skinned, very dissolute, and even more dishonest." Accordingly, such marriages were prohibited, and the decision followed that wives should be sent to the Mississippi colonists.

But in spite of the excellent decree dated the 12th of June, 1720, the Company of the Indies did not always exercise sufficient care in its selection of housewives for Louisiana. From a letter dated the 25th of April, 1721, signed by Bienville and Delorme, we learn:

"Eighty-eight girls arrived by "*La Baleine*." Since the 4th of March, nineteen have been married off. From those who came by "*Le Chameau*" and "*La Mutine*"<sup>1</sup> ten have died. So that fifty-nine are still to be provided for. This will be difficult, as these girls were not well selected. Could they possibly, in so short a time, have changed to such an extent? Whatever the vigilance exercised upon them, they could not be restrained. Among the three Directresses responsible for their conduct, two have occasioned complaints. Sister Gertrude is ill-natured, she rules sourly and capriciously, and has been guilty of a prank, which has cost her the respect of the girls themselves. Sister Marie has none of the talents required for such responsibilities. Sister Saint-Louis has been retained, having a very good character, but the others were sent away."

Sister Gertrude had been instructed by the Company to "watch over the behaviour of the young girls reared at the General hospital and having gone voluntarily to Louisiana; to inspire them in retaining the sentiments of piety and good conduct which they had been taught; and to do generally everything she may judge needful and appropriate for preserving the said girls in the purity of their honour and for making them attentive to those duties which lead towards salvation." (*Colonies*, B, 42 bis. fol., 376). Simultaneously, the Company despatched to Louisiana a head midwife, Mme. Doville, with a salary of four hundred *livres*. The first matron sent to Biloxi was nicknamed *La Sans-Regret*.

<sup>1</sup>On the 20th of December, 1719, the Sieur de Martonne, Captain of *La Mutine*, received orders: "To watch carefully over the girls entrusted to him, and prevent any disorder among them owing to his crew." (Col. B., 42 bis. fol. 207.)



On the 25th of June, 1721, Bienville wrote again: "Thirty-one girls have been married off between the 24th of April and the 25th of June. All were from those sent from *La Baleine*. Several were given to sailors who asked insistantly for them. These could scarcely have been married off to good residents. Nevertheless they were granted to the sailors only on the express condition that they should settle in the Colony, to which they agreed. These sailors will supply practical navigators to the special conditions of the region, and this was much needed."

Pénicaud approved of all these arrivals:

"A little flute, named *La Baleine*, anchored at Ship Island on the 8th of January, 1721. Sister Gertrude, one of the officers of the Salpetrière General Hospital, in Paris, had come over on this ship with ninety-eight girls from that Hospital, all reared there since childhood, and put under the Sister's guidance to be married off in Louisiana. Each one has a dower for the supposed marriage, two pairs of coats, two shirts and undershirts, six-head dresses, and other furnishings with which they were amply provided so that they might marry with all possible despatch. This merchandise was soon disposed of, so great was the want of the country. If Sister Gertrude had brought ten times as many girls, she would have found no difficulty in placing them."

But if, at certain times, little discernment was shown in the choice of female colonists, the lists were often drawn up with utmost care. One bears a note beside the word Louisiana, which was crossed out: "For Cayenne, the only spot to which such goods could be sent."

From 1716 to 1722, vagabonds, deserters, and smugglers were exported to Louisiana, as an administrative measure; but the Regency furthermore deported a number of persons of quality. Their names are not mentioned in the general correspondence of the Colony, and many records concerning them seem to have been purposely destroyed. Particular interest therefore attaches to a letter written on the subject by Bienville in June, 1721:

"The King's exiles now in the Colony have no independent means of subsistence; several among them are people of distinction, incapable of doing the public labour which supplies others with a livelihood. Something must be done for them. Henceforth, letters written by these unfortunates to their families—who turn a deaf ear and do not answer—shall be addressed to the Company, so that the latter may compel their relations to send necessary relief."

Many of these *filz de famille* had asked to go to Louisiana, so as to escape incarceration at the Bastille or at Fort L'Évêque. Others

had been sent at the demand of relations, or because no one consented to serve them with pensions. On lists of the deported, this note occurs often: "His family wishes him to go to the Mississippi Islands," or else a phrase to some such purpose as: "Mme. la Duchesse de Lorraine has requested this."

To have slain one's adversary in a duel, to be recognised as an "inveterate libertine," or to be considered "outrageously impious," were other frequent motives for exile. Prior to 1720, most of these "gens de force," as they were dubbed, were smugglers or libertines (a very elastic term); a few were petty thieves, and some were "undesirables" for whom no form of usefulness could be devised at home. A dishonest man-servant of the Bishop of Beauvais crossed over in company with a revoked executioner. Several lists bear traces of strict supervision; from one, the names of some accomplices of Cartouche have been stricken off, together with a few unbalanced and even a few completely discredited individuals. Nevertheless, certain of the allowed motives for transportation strike us as curious: "Made such a rebellion that a coach had to be taken to conduct him to the hospital." "Went poaching." "Attacked the guard at the Comedy with drawn sword." "Picked up wounded, and refused to state how or by whom." "Took a girl from the archer's hands." This second Des Grieux may have saved his Manon, but was sent in her stead to Louisiana.

We now pass from reality to legend. A capital must have its traditions from the outset; and one especially has attached itself to New Orleans, and been discussed and repeated, in spite of its extreme unlikelihood, by such men as Duclos, Grimm, Gayarré, and Voltaire himself.

History informs us that Princess Charlotte of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, married to the Czarevitch Alexis, died on the 27th of October, 1715. But it is alleged that she merely feigned death; that, unable to endure any longer the ill-treatment to which her husband subjected her, the unhappy woman contrived to escape to America. A blow is dealt to the story by the fact that Grimm learned from the lips of Catherine II that the body of the Czarevitch's spouse was embalmed and publicly exposed for several days.

On the banks of the Mississippi, the Princess is supposed to have met accidentally—or else to have rejoined by a concerted arrangement—a mysterious Chevalier d'Aubant, whom she had known, according to the version told, either at the Court of Brunswick or in Russia. She married him upon hearing of her husband's tragic end. After spending several years in New Orleans, where she planted



elm trees still shown in Gayarré's time, Mme. d'Aubant returned to France and was recognized by Marshal de Saxe (who by the way had never before had an opportunity for seeing her). The Princess then went to the Ile-de-France, where Urbain de Maldaque, her second, or, as some authors state, third husband, had just been appointed a Major.

In 1770, Bossu investigated this legend, in Louisiana. The Chevalier d'Arensbourg could only tell him that "a German lady, believed to be a princess, came over when the establishment was started." Our researches have led to no more positive result, nor have we found, among the archives of the Ministry of War and of Colonies, any trace of an officer named d'Aubant or Daubant. According to Gayarré, Captain d'Aubant died in 1754.

This negative result is easy to explain. The death certificate of the mysterious unknown woman buried on the 2nd of June, 1771, in the church at Vitry-sur-Seine, "opposite the Lord's bench," bears the names "Dortie Marie Elisabeth Danielson, widow of Messire Maldaque, Captain-Major at the Iles-de-France." According to this record, she was born in 1693, five years before Princess Charlotte. Grimm informs us that "many curious-minded persons went to the sale after her death."

Did no one in our Indian Ocean possessions then suspect an illustrious origin for Mme. Moldack, de Moldack, or de Maldaque? The *Journal de Paris* of the 15th of February, 1781, is affirmative on the subject; and the manner in which Jacques Arago speaks of "the Czar's daughter-in-law" (*Voyage autour du Monde*, I, p. 149.) proves that in 1817, residents of Bourbon Island still believed Mme. Maldaque to be a Princess by birth, and attached importance to the swift promotion of her husband, who "having been a simple sergeant-major in a regiment sent to the Ile-de-France, was promoted soon after his arrival, by order of the Court, to the rank of Major. The husband appeared to be aware of his wife's rank, and never spoke of her but with respect. M. de la Bourdonnais and all his officers held her in equally high consideration. It was only after the death of her second husband, that the wife of Petrowitz acknowledged her birth."

When Mlle. Danielson was young, did she live in Louisiana? There is nothing to prove it, old though the New Orleans elms may be.

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At the same period, Louisiana was visited by a beautiful woman, who entered the Comédie-Française somewhat later, possibly aided by her name. The *Journal Historique* informs us that Mlle. Des-

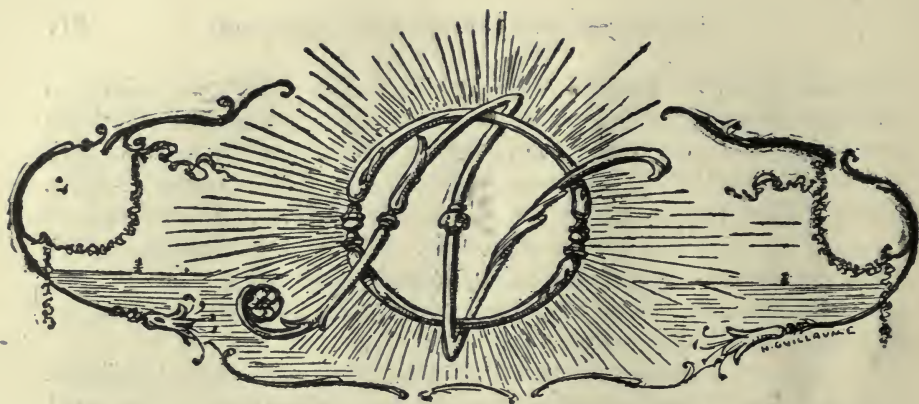


brosses sailed for France on the 7th of January, 1722, but gives no details concerning the reasons for her voyage to America. We have not even been able to ascertain whether she went of her own free will. Born on the 18th of February, 1701, she does not appear to have been called Desbrosses at the time. (The *Journal Historique* was drawn up after the events narrated). At an undetermined period, she married an obscure comedian, Jean de Brye, whose family name was Desbrosses; one of his sisters, nicknamed *La Traverse*, belonged to the Comédie-Française.

She was, indeed, none other than the daughter of Etienne Michel Baron, and consequently the grand-daughter of the great actor Michel Boyron or Baron, Molière's pupil "Louise Charlotte Catherine Baron, wife of Desbrosses," says M. Henry Lionnet, (*Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, 20th of April, 1914,) "made her début at the Comédie-Française, on the 19th of October, 1729, and was received on the 31st of December following, nine days after the death of her illustrious grandsire. Having retired on the 3rd of May, 1730, she returned on the 12th of December, 1736, and died in Paris, Rue des Fossés St. Germain, on the 16th of December, 1742."

A new hypothesis thereby suggests itself. May not the recollection of her charms have caused tradition to transform this queen of the footlights into a Princess of the blood?





## CHAPTER V.

### Adrien de Pauger Traces the Plan of New Orleans.



PAINTING all the beauties of New Orleans in vivid colours at Paris so as to encourage emigration, the Company of the Indies was still considering sites for the town, and hesitating over all solutions suggested.

Manchac seemed definitely adopted in 1720, and on the 15th of September, the following instructions were handed to Duvergier:

“\* \* \* The Ordinator shall proceed to Biloxi, which he is to consider as the Company's first counter and his business-centre. Colonists bound for the interior shall take boats at Biloxi, and go as far as the upper end of Lake Maurepas and the mouth of the Manchac brook which flows into the Mississippi. At this entrance to the brook, the Ordinator shall build an establishment, on the side which he may judge suitable. A sufficient number of light boats must be kept there, to meet colonists arriving by sea and take them upstream to their destination. Like Biloxi, this post will need a store-keeper for rigging and boats, and a boatswain. There must be a poultry-yard and a kitchen garden, to provide refreshments. The brook must be cleaned and its course freed from Manchac to the Mississippi, the floods having upset trees from one bank to the other.<sup>1</sup> New Orleans or Manchac must consequently serve as general warehouse for the interior of the Colony; a book-keeper shall also be put there,

<sup>1</sup>D'Artaguet having written to the Company that it would cost only seven hundred *livres* to put the Iberville River in order (C<sup>1</sup>a, 2, fol. 805.) the Directors thought the operation would be simple. But when the Spaniards attempted it sixty years later, they spent vast sums without success.



and a head clerk who must be a very intelligent man. One clerk will suffice for the other Mississippi establishments, especially since there will not be much activity in naval matters. An overland route from Biloxi to Illinois should be built, communication with the interior being interrupted annually by the Mississippi floods." (*Colonies*, B 42 bis, fol. 365.)

We should judge these instructions had been prepared long in advance, since they were completed before news of Perrier's death reached Paris. Partisans of Biloxi managed to extract the text from the Company's pigeon-holes, and renewed with increased vigour their attacks upon *old* New Orleans, whose name Manchac bade fair to usurp.

Such a solution as establishing the capital on the Iberville River could not satisfy coast inhabitants, whose ambition was to see the rival counter completely abandoned, so that ships should not enter the river. They knew that Manchac could never compete with a post like New Orleans. So long, therefore, as the fact that all ships could readily thread the passes of the Mississippi was not proved or at least generally allowed, partisans of Biloxi, of Ship Island, or of the Chandeleur Islands offing, waged their war upon New Orleans.

Bénard de La Harpe wrote, on the 25th of December, 1720: "The Company had apparently decided to build its principal establishment at New Orleans, thirty-two leagues up the Mississippi; but we are led to believe their information about this situation was erroneous. The land is flooded, unhealthy, impracticable; fit for nothing save growing rice. Communications from the Mississippi to Lake Pontchartrain could be created; only one half league need be cut. This country is flat, so the expense would not be heavy, and such a connection would have considerable utility." Manchac is then pompously praised, and La Harpe adds: "There is no more favourable spot for founding a capital." As a port, he recommends Ship Island.

Drouot de Valdeterre insists similarly on the urgent necessity for "changing and transporting New Orleans to the Manchac Plain, on the little river between the stream and Lake Maurepas, to establish the principal seat there \* \* \* and to found a second principal post for the management \* \* \* New Orleans is built on miry soil deposited by the river's overflow twice a year. \* \* \* For two or three months, the waters remain, rendering the air very unhealthy. The only houses are wooden huts, absolutely unfit for use unless repaired after each flood." (*Colonies* C<sup>13</sup>a, 10, fol. 13.)



Another memoir, handed in by M. de Beauvais, declares: "The capital city must be at Manchac, where the high lands begin and whence one may go on horseback to the sources of the Mobile, the Alibamon, and even the Oyo (sic). All that is needed for farming a town will be found there, and all the pleasures of life. The government will be better placed for receiving news and for transmitting its orders promptly to the posts throughout the country. New Orleans will serve as warehouse for the river-trade near the sea." (Arch. Hydrog., 115, N. 29.)

Faced by so many positive opinions, the Company adopted Manchac, but soon reversed this decision, or rather, reverted to indecision, knowing considerable expenses would be incidental to the creation of a new establishment. Engineer-in-Chief Le Blond de La Tour was merely ordered, on the 8th of November, 1720: "\* \* \* The assistant engineer going to New Orleans shall examine the site of that town and shall alter it if he judges necessary, transferring it to a more favourable spot at least with regard to floods." These instructions reached Louisiana two months later; nevertheless Bienville had to wait until March, 1721, before he could send Adrien de Pauger, the engineer, to trace on the spot the plan of New Orleans. The Board had maintained that "it was very unnecessary to seek a place for the principal seat of the Colony, and Biloxi was the best." (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a, 38, fol. 208.)

The first citizens of New Orleans had settled down as they pleased. Dumont de Montigny's drawing, (Arch. Hydrog., 4044c, 62,) which we reproduce, shows the town's primitive appearance in 1721. Pauger, when he arrived in the future metropolis, was surprised to find only "a few cabins among bushes and clumps of trees so that alignments were impossible." Undaunted by difficulties, he resolutely set to work.

"Immediately upon landing," he writes, "I asked the Sieur Freboul, head clerk, for workmen to clear the ground. He sent for my inspection a few convicts, employed right and left as servants and drawing rations from the Company. I tried to make them work; he wrote about it to M. De Lorme who answered that he ought not to have allowed the inspection. The said convicts, being informed of it, all left. This compelled me to ask M. de Pailloux, the Commandant, for a few soldiers, to which he kindly consented. He ordered out ten with an officer at their head who worked so swiftly for twelve days that they made sufficient clearings for tracing all the streets on the river front; and they would have continued if the clerk had not insulted the officers as they came back from work,





with M. Pailloux; and shortly after, this town could have taken shape, without costing a single *sou* to the Company. \* \* \* I am regarded today in New Orleans as a revoked employé!" (*Colonies*, C1<sup>3</sup>a, 6, fol. 137.)

La Tour next summoned Pauger to Biloxi. The disagreement was finally settled thanks to the intervention of Bienville and Pailloux; later, De Lorme pretended that he had "only wanted to bring matters to a head." One of the few original concessions which were not eventually confirmed was that belonging to Pauger himself.

Jacques Barbazon de Pailloux, who might be called the first citizen of New Orleans, having lived there since 1718, was given the title of Director while remaining military commander of the counter. The Board deemed such an appointment a sufficient effort in behalf of New Orleans; they then despatched Pauger to trace the course of the Mississippi up to Natchez, so that he might not continue his work on the capital.

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Pauger's plans, after running amok somewhere between New Orleans and Biloxi, got buried in the pigeon-holes of the Engineer-in-Chief. It is possible, though we judge unlikely, that Le Blond De La Tour sent them to Paris in December, as he stated. De Lorme rested content with writing on the 25th of April that they would be sent "At the earliest opportunity." Whatever the means adopted, the adversaries of New Orleans saw to it that the plans should not reach Paris; and La Tour started off with Boispinel, in January, 1722, to sketch the plan of Ship Island. While finishing on the spot magnificent projects for a port and a citadel, the Engineer-in-Chief little suspected that a copy of Pauger's plans was already in Paris, sent over by a mysterious hand.

We find an unsigned paper bearing the words: "This induced him to secure a surreptitious copy of the Sieur Pauger's plans, this engineer having been unwilling to give them without an order from M. Le Blond." On the margin is written: "Just acknowledge receipt and approve the attention." Pauger had given to Bienville copies of his sketches; the *Journal historique* comments, "M. de La Tour was very displeased at this, and expressed his discontent to M. Pauger;" hence it appears beyond doubt that Bienville himself sent the plans, in connivance with Pauger. Probably this unofficial action had weight in the Company's final decision, since the regent, god-father to the new capital, was necessarily flattered to see the project put



into effect. A few months before, these plans could have been displayed to great advantage, Rue Quincampoix.

A last word about the wanderings of the ill-starred plans. La Tour received orders to send them to Paris, as if they had not already gone thither. He thought it wise to entrust them to M. de Noyan, Bienville's nephew, as a guarantee against mishaps. One of the plans is still preserved at the *Dépot des Cartes* of the Ministry of War, under the number 7c, 213.

Not content with knowing that his project was in Paris, Pauger despatched a veritable memoir on the 23rd of June, 1721; purporting to be a letter to an Oratorian father, it was intended for the eyes of the Comte de Toulouse. This interesting paper, too long for textual insertion here, was published by the *Annales encyclopédiques* in October, 1818.

Pauger begins by relating his journey over, and the way in which his enemy, Director Rigby, forced workmen at Port Louis "and even three unshod Carmelites, missionary chaplains, to embark hedged in by fusiliers, like criminals. \* \* \* I was then detached," he continues, "to go to New Orleans and sketch the project for a regular town which is to be the capital of the country. Much progress towards establishing it would already have been made, if the Company had provided the place with supplies and with intelligent managers capable of seeing for themselves or even of profiting by the good advice given them. They have shown me how their stubbornness and their arrogance have caused ships from France to be stopped at Biloxi, rather than enter the Mississippi, which is the subject and the keystone of the country's establishment. There they could immediately have landed goods and workmen for concession-holders, upon fertile ground; and so fine plantations could have been made and supplies produced. Instead of which, all were landed at Biloxi on a sandy shore, where provisions were eaten and goods deteriorated, and many of the best workmen died. As a consequence, establishments in this country are languishing, and unless much help comes from France, all must unquestionably fail; I repeat, the fault lies in ignorance that the mouth of the Mississippi is very safe and easily navigable, even for ships drawing fifteen or sixteen feet, or more, after being lightened at the Balise Island. Many former settlers come all directions to make plantations along the Mississippi, near New Orleans."

Notwithstanding his confidence in the town's future, Pauger wonders whether the difficulties encountered by ships at English Turn may not lead some day "to the necessity for building stores

below the bend, and perhaps even for transporting thither the principal seat of the Colony." La Tour claims, in a letter dated 9th December, 1721, the merit of having drawn up the plan of New Orleans. But he saw the Mississippi for the first time some six months later; and his pretention seems all the more exaggerated, since his general instructions were such that they could not be followed:

"You will observe," Pauger wrote to him, 24th April, 1721, "the modifications I was compelled to make, because the land lies higher along the river-banks. I brought the town-square closer, and also the allotments for prominent citizens, to profit by landing facilities and by ventilation from river breezes. \* \* \* Thus each one will have his garden, which is the half of life." (Arch. Hydrog., 67<sup>2</sup>, 6.)

La Tour<sup>1</sup> may have traced in advance, on paper, a certain number of little squares, but had evidently located them far from the river, very probably on the banks of Bayou St. John.

Hubert, Father Charlevoix, and the *Journal Historique* all mention Pauger as the real author of the plan; and De Lorme, though he wasted no love on the engineer, yet writes at the end of 1721; "Pauger, after having sketched the plan of New Orleans, traced the alignments, and distributed the sites, came down the river with the *Santo-Christo* and built a beacon sixty-two feet high."

Nevertheless, most Louisiana historians have attributed to La Tour the honour of creating New Orleans. This is both an error and an injustice. In truth, the engineer-in-chief, before receiving any formal instructions, had thought of building a big town at Biloxi, whose position he considered "advantageous, the air excellent, and the water good." Besides which, he had merely planned to erect a citadel and make a large port at Ship Island, and finally to drag "the Manchac Brook in which the Mississippi flows during the floods; if dug out, it would shorten the way for going up the river." These quotations show that he did not care particularly about his plan of New Orleans, which was dated the 23rd of April, 1722, and indicated the positions of Bienville's house, the Directors' residence, etc. When no choice was left him, he simply put into execution the project of his subordinate.

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While La Tour remained peacefully at Biloxi, or else went to take soundings round Ship Island, unhappy Pauger was exposed to

<sup>1</sup>Sent as draftsman to Portugal (1702), appointed engineer in 1703; accompanied the army to Spain, 1704-1708. (Taken prisoner at Alcantara in 1705, and exchanged the following year.) Was at the siege of Marchienne, and as non-commissioned officer at those of Douai, Quesnoy, Bouchain, and Fribourg (1713). La Tour received the Cross of St. Louis in 1715, was named reserve Captain of the Piedmont Regiment, and then corporal of His Majesty's Engineers.



all conceivable persecutions in New Orleans. Biloxians, not daring to attack Bienville, turned their enmity against the engineer, denouncing him at Paris as a plunderer of the Colony's funds, and then charging him with having granted to his friends all the good sites in the town. Coast settlers began to regret their protracted disdain for the best land.

La Tour, when ordered to transfer the capital, energetically defended his subordinate; but Pauger accuses him with much likelihood of having done him very ill service. Hubert himself acknowledged later that "Pauger had deserved La Tour's confidence, rather than disgrace."

Pauger had reached the Colony on the 11th of October, 1720; his official papers said of him only that he had been "appointed engineer on the 1st of April, 1707, and Chevalier of St. Louis, in 1720." He had been captain of the Navarre Regiment, and was evidently a man of great energy who often declined to be embarrassed by points of strict legality. For instance, on the 8th of May, 1720, the Marine Board had had to resort to a decree "ordering him to release four ranking sailors" whom he had enticed away from a ship belonging to the Company of the Indies and had enrolled as workmen, in Louisiana. But his integrity cannot be questioned.

And yet, the Company, after recording the melancholy observation that "Louisiana cannot at present be considered as a profitable object for trade," (Ministry of Colonies, C<sup>2</sup>, 15, fol. 12.) made capital of a denunciation by one of the Directors, Rigby; and protested, on the 14th of August, 1721, against the expenses to which Pauger had agreed. "The Company," says this text, "is highly displeased with the Sieur Pauger's account of the workmen he pressed into service. Do not instruct him to run up any expenses, and be reserved in supplying him with money he may ask for. He is importunate and does not husband the Company's interests; so you must hold strictly within his prerogatives."

Wherefore the "importunate" one was out of favour in the Company's offices, and the adversaries of New Orleans were already assured of complaisance, when fresh complaints were lodged against him. Freboul, who together with his clerk Duval had been accused by Pauger of malversations, brought against Pauger himself a charge of favouritism, and alleged that D   Lorme had abandoned a post without the Board's consent. The Directors accepted these denunciations without a question, and even deliberated as to whether Pauger should not be put under arrest. On the 29th of October, they wrote: "We are informed that the Sieur Pauger has attempted



to exercise authority in New Orleans, and he has displayed resentment when we have rightly objected. We must now come to an understanding on the subject. You are undoubtedly aware that no property belonging to the Company can be disposed of without an order of the Director holding a power of Attorney. Hence the *Sieur Pauger* had no legal right for distributing lands in New Orleans and ordering expenses there on his own initiative. \* \* \* We are surprised that this engineer should have taken upon himself to stop work on New Orleans, under the sole pretext that he was not obeyed. Such conduct reflects discreditably on his state of mind, and gives rise to the belief that discipline has grown very lax in the Colony, because this officer should have been arrested at Biloxi for leaving his post without order or authority. \* \* \* We are willing, this once, to abstain from proceedings against the *Sieur Pauger*." (Ministry of Colonies, C<sup>2</sup>, 16, fol. 25.)

For answer, the engineer simply sent to Paris the letter by which La Tour had summoned him to Biloxi, and added to it a copy of the Colonial Board's deliberation ratifying all concessions as proposed.

But the people of New Orleans failed to understand that having to deal with so many powerful and inveterate enemies, their interest demanded that they should rally round their ardent champion. Instead, they too began to find fault with his plan.

Dubuisson categorically refused to follow it. The year after, La Tour said of him: "This settler wanted to build as he pleased, without regularity or fixed plan, along the city quays. He would have constructed a veritable gewgaw in the axis of the Avenue where M. de Bienville lives." Next, Mme. Bonnaud, wife of Diron d'Artaguet's secretary and sister of Dubuisson, grew furious because a street nicked a corner from her ground. She would have "jumped" on Pauger, if Pailloux had not prevented her. "She would even have struck me in the face, if I had not warded off her hand," the engineer writes. "The devil often enters into woman's malice. She afterwards called me a rogue." Pauger pronounced her a "gueuse" and only Pailloux's intervention prevented a duel between him and Bonnaud.

A year later, Pauger was uncompromising with the recalcitrant, when his plans had been definitely approved. D'Artaguet writes in his *Journal*, under date of 6th September, 1722: "One Traverse, a resident of New Orleans, was released from prison today. Here is the cause for his being sent there: he had built a house in New Orleans, out of the street alignment, before the plan was proposed.

M. Pauger had it torn down. This man, not being well off, presented a petition to the Board, begging for an indemnity and for means to build another house. M. Pauger sent for him, and after treating him to a shower of blows from a stick, cast him into prison, with shackles on his ankles, and the man came out today, almost blind."

We must add, however, that Diron d'Artaguet cordially detested the engineer.

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On the 15th of April, 1721, the Council of Regency reached a decision for founding in New Orleans a convent of Capucins from Champagne. Completing this, a further order was signed on the 16th of May, 1722, prescribing that the Company should "build in New Orleans a parish church of suitable size and an adjacent house for fourteen monks, with grounds for a garden and a poultry-yard." Fathers Bruno, of Langres, Eusebius, of Vaudes, and Christophe and Philibert, both from Chaumont, were selected for rejoining the three Capucins already in Louisiana.

Each monk was to be supplied yearly, by the Company, with a cask of claret, two "Quarts," or about four hundred pounds, of flour, half a "Quart," or about one hundred pounds, of bacon, the same amount of beef half an *ancre*, or about thirty-six pints, of brandy, twenty-five pounds of large beans, the same quantity of peas and kidney beans, eight pounds of Dutch or Gruyère cheese, twelve pounds of olive oil, twenty-four pounds of candles, half a pound of pepper, twenty-five pounds of salt, twenty pots of vinegar, and the needful household utensils. An order dated the 19th of October, 1722, instructed the Superior to reside always at New Orleans; a chaplain was to serve the post at the Balise.

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In 1721, various private citizens constructed huts in the capital, but the Company's store, somewhat enlarged, remained the only public building. From the hundred and eight free workmen kept in the Colony by the Company of the Indies, only *four* were at Pauger's disposal on the 9th of November, 1721: a lock-smith, two carpenters, and a mason's son.

Le Gac, who had become Second Councillor, wrote in March: "There are in New Orleans, with one hundred soldiers, the Colonial Major, named Monsieur Pailloux, his subordinate officers, a head clerk, a store-keeper, and other employes for distributing both food and merchandise. Some thirty-five or forty houses were there,



belonging either to the Company or to residents. There were in all two hundred or two hundred and fifty people." So that the free civilian population did not exceed about sixty souls. "All the concession holders," Bienville and De Lorme report on the 25th of April, 1721, "are agitating to obtain provisions, or rather, all have petitioned for a little plot of six acres' frontage to go with each concession near New Orleans. They have sent thither part of their people and of their goods, so as to start sowing and to profit by the next crop."

At last, an impetus had been given, and the number of inhabitants soon increased. From a census dated the 24th of November, 1721, we quote the following figures:

	Men	Women	Children	White Servants	Negroes	Indian Slaves
Residents.....	59	34	27	28	171	21
People in the Company's service.....	44	18	11	--	--	--
Force—Labourers.....	42	13	--	1	1	--
	145	65	38	29	172	21
	277					

This makes a total of four hundred and seventy inhabitants, of whom two hundred and seventy-seven were Europeans. In the list of residents, we find: Bienville, Governor; Pailloux, Commandant; Bannez, Major; de Gannerin, Captain; Pauger, Descoublanc, de La Tour, Bassée, Coustillar, officers;<sup>1</sup> Rossard, notary; Le Blanc and Sarazin, storekeepers; Bonneau, secretary to Diron d'Artaguet; Bérard, surgeon-major; Bonneau, captain of the *Neptune*. We note also the commandant of negroes, a house outfitter, a turner, a barge-maker, a carpenter, two joiners, two armourers, an edge-tool maker, a black-smith, a harness-maker, a tobacco-curer, a carter, sixteen ship's captains, some sailors, etc. Thirty-six head of horned cattle, nine horses, and "zero hog" complete the census.

If we add to the population of New Orleans that of the neighbourhood (Bayou St. John, old and new Colapissas, Gentilly, Cannes-Brûlées, Petit-Désert, English Turn, and Tchachouas), we find six hundred and eighty-four Europeans, (293 residents, or planters, 140 women, 96 children, 155 servants); five hundred and thirty-three

<sup>1</sup>In August, 1721, the garrison comprised forty-nine soldiers.

negroes or negresses, fifty-one Indians or squaws as slaves, two hundred and thirty head of horned cattle, and thirty-four horses.

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The year 1721 had been generally favourable to New Orleans. From a military post, a sales-counter, and a camping-ground for travellers, it had become, in November, a small town, and the number of its irreconcilable enemies began to decrease. An *Etat de la Louisiane pour le mois de Juin, 1721*, says: "The store which serves as warehouse for New Orleans at the St. John brook, is indispensable. It could be done away with only after the Manchac brook has been cleaned. This operation is unfortunately very difficult." The poor counter, so long considered absolutely useless, had now become a necessary evil!

On the 5th of September, 1721, three months before the New Orleans counter was definitely chosen as capital, the Company of the Indies began by defining its "quartier," the other districts being those of Biloxi, Mobile, Alabama, Natchez, Yazoo, Red River, Arkansas, and Illinois.

"The first district shall be that of New Orleans, which the Commandant General shall make his ordinary residence; this shall not prevent him from proceeding withersoever he may judge necessary. This district shall comprise all that lies on both banks of the St. Louis River, as far as the shores of Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas to the east, and going up as far as, and including, the Tonicas; and, to the west, as far as Red River. The Company's privy clerk shall be established by the Superior Council as Judge over the New Orleans district."

Bienville had especial charge of the districts of New Orleans, Natchez, Yazoo, and Red River.







## CHAPTER VI.

### New Orleans the Capital of Louisiana--Work is Hurried On--The Cyclone of the 12th of September, 1722--D'Artaguette's Chronicle



LEAVING Canada and visiting the upper Louisiana posts as he came down the Mississippi, Father Charlevoix reached New Orleans at the beginning of 1722, a memorable year for the Colony.

In his *Journal d'un voyage fait par l'ordre du Roi dans l'Amérique*, (31st letter), Father Charlevoix writes:

"Here I am in this famous town called New Orleans. \* \* \* The eight hundred fine houses, the five parishes attributed to it by the *Mercure*<sup>1</sup> two years ago, are now shrunk to perhaps a hundred scattered huts, a big wooden store, two houses which would not be considered decorative in a French village, and half a wretched store which was graciously lent to the Lord, but no sooner had he taken possession than an attempt was made to drive him out to go and dwell in a tent."

Charlevoix adds: "This wild and desert spot, still almost entirely covered by trees and cane-brakes, will become some day, and perhaps very soon, a prosperous town, the metropolis of a great and rich Colony." Though the prophecy was sound, this passage, certainly a later addition, seems to have been prompted by a reading of the *Relation du voyage des religieuses Ursulines* (see p. ).

The letter which follows (32nd) appears to have suffered less from retouches:

<sup>1</sup>We have not been able to find this article. Charlevoix may have had in mind some such opuscle as that of the Chevalier de Bonrepos.

"I have not found this town to be so well placed as I had been told. \* \* \* To form a just idea of New Orleans, picture to yourself two hundred people sent to build a town, who have camped along a great river with no thought save to seek protection against violent weather, and who wait thus for a plan to be sketched and for houses to be erected. M. Pauger has just shown me a plan according to his ideas; it is quite fine and very regular, but will not be so easy to carry out as it was to put on paper." Some unjustified criticisms of the site follow, which do not harmonise with the prophecy just quoted.

Father Charlevoix had intended to return to Canada by the Mississippi, but had to renounce this project because of hostility shown by Indian tribes, and "going up, the banks must be hugged." After a short voyage to Biloxi, he went back to New Orleans and embarked on a ship which was wrecked off the Florida coast.

On the 4th of January, the Colonial Board resolved to send to New Orleans the flute *Adour*, laden with merchandise; the Directory had at last recognised that "this post must always be well provided for the sake of the concessions and of the upper posts." The cargo vanished most mysteriously, however, immediately upon arrival; later, La Chaise, the Ordinator, held De Lorme responsible for this and had him revoked.

In April, Marlot was head clerk, Drillan assistant store-keeper, Le Blanc, store-keeper for foodstuffs, and Brossard a clerk.

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Bienville continued untiringly to advertise the utility of New Orleans. He wrote from that post in March: "All ships of the third class can without difficulty enter the river," and he complains bitterly that La Tour "will bother about nothing save the old posts." The "Father of Louisiana" (and of New Orleans) little suspected that while he was in the very act of getting this mail ready, his persistent efforts had, at least, been crowned with success.

Compelled, as we have said, to renounce all hope of keeping Pensacola, the Board of the Company of the Indies had finally reached a decision, and signed, on the 23rd of December, 1721, an order to build a fort and a store at the Balise, and to transfer the general management to New Orleans. (Extract from a repertory. *Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a, II, fol. 366). Detailed instructions sent simultaneously by the directors, for building a large warehouse at the entrance of the river, show that they had adopted the conclusions of Serigny's report. This had been drawn up the 19th of October preceding,



when Serigny returned from the mission to Louisiana on which the Company had sent him.

Bienville's brother stated, at La Rochelle, that Louisiana's port ought to be on the Mississippi. But since he had never been able to find more than eleven feet of water in the passes, and since it seemed impossible to drag the channel "owing to the quantity of tree-trunks, grown very hard, which were there," he suggested that a large warehouse be built at the Balise. He said: "The Company might have two or three boats drawing only ten feet of water, remaining always in the river, and receiving their loads either from newly arrived ships, or from the warehouse, for transportation to New Orleans."

From which we see that if New Orleans had become the Capital of Louisiana, it was not yet recognized in France as fit to be the Company's port!

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Brought over by the *Aventurier*, the Company's decision reached Biloxi on the 26th of May, 1722. A formal order being now given to transfer the seat of government, Bienville met with no further resistance; and from one day to the next, New Orleans had just as many warm partisans as it had theretofore had inveterate enemies.

Le Blond de La Tour had affected to stand aside from the quarrel dividing the colonists, although Duvergier had written of him on the 21st of August, 1721: "M. de La Tour is at the head of the malcontent concession-holders." He now hastened to change opinions retrospectively.

His despatches until April had spoken almost exclusively of the great hospital at Biloxi, or of the fortress and the port about to be built at Ship Island. So it would appear certain that his voluminous correspondence bearing the date of the 28th of April, and even his despatch of the 23rd, must have been written after the *Aventurier* had arrived. Only, the prudent engineer took the useful precaution of dating all his letters a month earlier, to cover himself if need were.

"I see with pleasure," he says, "the change which His Royal Highness had made in transferring the management of the Board to New Orleans." And he adds that but for the unreasoning opposition of Le Gac (recalled in March, 1721) he would, immediately upon arriving, have brought all ships into the river: "Much expense would have been spared to the Company, people would not have died of want, and the land would already have been broken."

Hubert, relentless towards New Orleans, was ordered back to France. Upon reaching Paris, in April, 1723, with marvellous as-

surance he presented a "*Mémoire sur la Louisiane*" in which he pronounced the transfer of the capital to be "an excellent measure. \* \* \* It was a mistake to land goods at Biloxi, where they were uselessly consumed. \* \* \* All those changes prevented colonists from taking root anywhere. \* \* \* They were pernicious to the welfare of the growth of the Colony, and have too long held the colonists fatally inactive \* \* \* This has been effected by false and influential persons, who prevail against the real friends of uprightness. The Sieur Pauger deserved M. de La Tour's confidence, rather than disgrace. \* \* \*"

Very cleverly, La Tour prepared a transition for his correspondence with the anticipated dates. On the 23rd of April, he wrote: "Regarding the site of New Orleans, although it lies low, I think this town could not be put elsewhere, because of its proximity to the lakes, a great convenience for travellers in boats or pirogues, which have barely a league to go, whereas if the town were at any other place, everything would have to go by sea. There would be less trade, for there are no large boats; voyages would be longer and more expensive. For those up the river coming down here, it would be the same. \* \* \* To protect the town against river floods; the ground might be raised above high-water level by making a good earthen dike on the city-front by the river; this has already begun, but is neither high enough nor wide enough. \* \* \* Ships entering the river could take sand in passing, and bring it here; for New Orleans soil is so light that as soon as rain falls, one sinks up to one's knees."

Adopting Pauger's plans, La Tour added that two jetties, easy to build at the river's mouth, would narrow down the latter and force the passes free of all existing obstacles.

His letters once finished, La Tour took the New Orleans plans out of his pigeon-holes, and instructed Pauger to call immediately together as many workmen as possible. Next he requisitioned the *Aventurier*, went on board with his new engineer, and on the 10th of June had set sail for the new capital, without heeding the Captain's protests to the effect that his ship could never enter the Mississippi. And yet, this Captain's orders, dated the 7th of January, said: "After taking to Biloxi the packages he bears, he will advise that he must unload at New Orleans and receive on board those who may wish to pass." (*Colonies*, B, 43, fol. 97.)

La Tour was unable to carry out his scheme for a sensational entrance into New Orleans, owing to the incapacity and the unwillingness of Captain Fouquet. Further complications were added in the way of adverse winds, dead calms, and tempests. Then the ship



went aground at the Balise. Béranger, who had explored the Texas coast in 1720 and 1721, was aboard, and knew the passes well, since he had already piloted several ships through the Mississippi. Only Béranger was the author of a project for making the Colony's chief port to the west of the Chandeleur Islands "where forty large ships, according to Duvergier, can find shelter at all times." The year before, acting on the instances of Le Gac, he had, it was asserted, delivered to the captain of the *Dromadaire* a certificate declaring that "it would be easier for an elephant to pass through the eye of a needle, than for the *Dromadaire* to ascend the Mississippi passes with all sails set, and at low water."

The *Aventurier* was less fortunate, and had to be partly unloaded at the Balise, finally taking almost a month to reach New Orleans. A year earlier, such a series of mishaps, deftly exploited by Mobilians, would have set back for several more years the choice of the city's site. But the engineers reached New Orleans on the 7th of July. They profited by their leisure, while the ship remained grounded, to make careful soundings of the passes, finding a depth of fourteen feet and a mud bottom harmless for a ship's keel.

Proportionately as the future of New Orleans took on more favourable hues, the river's mouth developed greater depth, so that in four years it sank from ten to fourteen feet. Pauger himself had reported only ten and a half feet in 1721; but when he came for his second visit, he found he had been mistaken, and so rectified the error. The transmutation of the "rock bottom" into mud was still more surprising; and very clever observers even bethought them that since a tide was still perceptible at the Balise, it could be turned to advantage. Later, Duvergier wrote: "There have always been thirteen feet of water, but this was concealed from the Company's knowledge."

Although the future of New Orleans was now assured, La Tour does not appear to have finished making up his mind about the town until he landed there. Owing to the difficulties encountered by ships in doubling English Turn, the latter spot still commanded a certain number of partisans. The entrance of the Mississippi ceased to present serious difficulties, once the passes were thoroughly known. Only, when the current was rapid and the wind contrary, ships sometimes took a month to work upstream, and irksome manoeuvres were constantly required.

The love for regulations, always so fatal to French colonies, had prompted the Company's Directors to determine, in their Paris offices, how many workmen from each trade should be employed in

New Orleans. On the 19th of May, the engineers were graciously allowed six carpenters, twelve joiners, seven locksmiths, three edge-tool makers, two smiths, two nail-makers, five brick-makers, nine masons, a cooper, a wheel-wright, a pit-sawyer, an armourer, two brewers, two gardeners, a baker, two ploughmen, and eight hodmen.

We must give La Tour credit for not bothering about these minute orders; and, as soon as he landed, he began to atone for lost time. Pauger had brought from Biloxi thirty-eight workmen, and he found sixty-three more on the spot. But in August, the total number was reduced to seventy, and at the beginning of September, only fifty-two remained. Nor did workmen merely find their tasks severe, but they complained of the high cost of living. To remedy this, La Tour strictly applied the Board's decree, dated the 17th of the preceding July, which forbade, under pain of two hundred *livres* fine, the selling of "French beef" in New Orleans at more than twenty *sols* per pound; native beef was reckoned at ten *sols*, a quarter of buck two *livres*, a capon forty *sols*, a small fowl twenty *sols*, and eggs, fifty *sols*, a dozen. La Tour furthermore reduced the price of beans from twenty-five to five *sols* a pound, "considering that they cost merchants only eighteen *deniers*." These praiseworthy efforts did not bear much fruit, and on the 9th of September, La Tour deplores the scarcity of labour. "At this rate," he writes, "the buildings will not be finished under eighteen months."

The sequel proved these delays to have been fortunate since a cyclone swept down upon the city, in the night of the 11th of September; Diron d'Artaguette compares it to the hurricane which laid waste Massacre Island in 1715. The wind raged for fifteen hours, and destroyed the huts serving as church and rectory; at the hospital, a few patients were injured.

Dumont de Montigny has described the catastrophe in a manuscript poem: *L'Etablissement de la Province de la Louisiane* (Voir the *Journal des Américanistes*, 1914, p. 47.)

*La Grêle se mettant d'une telle manière  
Qu'elle fit craindre à tous en ce triste moment  
Que l'on allait avoir le dernier jugement!  
Et même les oiseaux tombaient sur le rivage.*

Bayou St. John rose three feet, the Mississippi rose nearly eight feet, and the powder was just saved in time by being transferred to a dove-cote "which M. le Commandant had built so as to afford himself a few luxuries."



This "disaster," which appears to have been considerably exaggerated, did not disturb La Tour to any great degree. "All these buildings," he says, "were temporary and old, not a single one was in the alignment of the new town, and they were to have been pulled down. Little harm would have been done, if only we had had shelters for everybody." After the Chicago fire and the San Francisco earthquake, modern American engineers spoke in very similar terms.

The damage caused by the hurricane—thirty-four huts destroyed, according to D'Artaguette—was soon repaired; and since the salary of most workmen rarely exceeded eight *sols* and six *deniers* per day, the Company had to disburse only the trifle of four hundred and eighty-two *livres* in addition to two hundred and sixty-six *livres*, ten *sols*, in supplies.

At first, La Tour employed sixty men to repair the buildings intended for his own use, "before even God was under cover or the sick were provided for," Pauger indignantly exclaims. Next, came an altercation between the two engineers, which Bienville settled in his own way by claiming for his personal enjoyment the house under dispute. Diron d'Artaguette writes, on the 20th of October: "The store which M. de La Tour was remodeling to make a house for himself, will not serve for that purpose, M. de Bienville having haughtily opposed it. He has quite broken with M. de La Tour, because of this and certain other jealousies. The wood has been taken to build the Director's house."

Nevertheless, the hurricane had some disastrous consequences. The entire flotilla of the capital was put out of commission; the *Santo-Christo* and the *Neptune*, ships of twelve cannon each, went aground; the passage-boat *Abeille*, which had arrived in August, 1721, and *Le Cher* foundered in the Mississippi, the *Aventurier* was more fortunate; it had raised anchor a few hours before the cyclone bore down, and was able to resume its voyage after getting some repairs. This ship was bearing back to France Hubert, whose recall coincided with the decisive leap into life of the post which he had so grievously calumniated.

Many flatboats, notably the *Postillon*, belonging to the Sieur Dumanoir, and a number of pirogues, sank with their loads of grain and fowls and other produce. Then a month of torrential rainfalls destroyed the last crops and reduced the new city to a state of famine. Next year, the price of eggs rose to sixteen *sols* each, a handful of peas brought three *livres*, a piece of smoked beef, twenty-five *livres*.

Scarcely had the ravages of the storm been repaired, when,

without loss of time, the Board ordered, on the 19th of October, all inhabitants to "enclose their land in palissades before two months had passed, under penalty of forfeiting all claim."

De Lorme came to settle at New Orleans in the first days of November.

From the first of July to the 31st of December, 1722, the engineers expended the sum of twenty-thousand, one hundred and fifty-two *livres*, ten *sols*, six *deniers*. If Louisiana's budget often seems to have been unjustified, we may at least note that official accounts were kept with extreme care. One thousand, one hundred and forty-three *livres*, were approximated for the Director's house, five hundred and forty-four *livres* for the hospital, nine hundred and thirty-three *livres* for four guard-houses covered with bark, etc. (*Colonies C<sup>13</sup>a*, 7, fol. 178.)

As part of this chapter, which has dealt with the work done at New Orleans in 1722, let us quote the story of its foundation as given in the very interesting *Relation de Voyage en Louisiane*, by Assistant Engineer Franquet de Chaville) *Journal de la Société des Américanites*, Vol. IV, 1st Series, p. 132):

"Orders being given to abandon all we had already done, we talked of going to a suitable spot where the town named New Orleans might be built. The first step was to give it air by breaking the ground and cutting the trees, thick as the hair on a man's head. We lost no time about it, exposing ourselves to the ardour of the sun and the onslaught of insects from daybreak until nightfall. In less than three months, we had cleared a square representing a good quarter of a league of forest. After which, that the town might take shape, we urged the inhabitants to erect houses on the sites we marked for them. Each one vied with the rest to finish his house first; so that in a very short time everybody had shelter, and the Company's goods were under cover in two fine stores, the frame-work for one of which had been brought from Biloxi.

"The plan as arranged is handsome; the streets are perfectly aligned, and of convenient width. In the centre of the town, facing the square, are all the public buildings; at the end is the church, with the Directors' house on one side and the stores on the other. The architecture of all the buildings is of the same model, very simple. There is only one storey, raised a foot above the level of the ground, resting on carefully placed foundations and covered with bark or boards.<sup>1</sup> Each block or *ile* is divided into five parts, so that each

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<sup>1</sup>Soon after, all New Orleans houses, or at least all deserving the name, were "half-timbered."



private citizen may be comfortably lodged and may have a yard or a garden. This city was founded by the Company of the Indies in 1722."

The new capital had hardly sprung from the earth, when its gazetteer arose. After the 1st of September, 1722, Diron d'Artaguet kept a diary wherein, during his entire stay in New Orleans, he noted down day by day the most minute occurrences. (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>c, 2, fol. 190.)

On the evening of the 14th of September, Bienville, learning that several soldiers had conspired to escape in canoes and seize pilot Kerlasiou's passage-boat at the Balise, "ordered patrol-beats throughout the night."

19th September, two thieves were tortured at the rack, and hanged five days later. Unexpected developments followed:

"19th October. The men Marlot and Le Boutteux, the first a store-keeper for the Company and the second a former store-keeper of Mr. Law's concession, are, it is alleged, tormented nightly by spirits appearing to them and maltreating them, making noises in their rooms. Ignorant people believe that these are the spirits of the two men hanged last month, because Marlot was filling the place of King's Prosecutor, and Le Boutteux was their accuser. More probably it is someone from among their enemies. Messrs. the clerks make for themselves more enemies than they should."

18th October, the youthful metropolis was for the first time treated as a capital; the *Loire* and the *Deux Frères* saluted the town—if, d'Artaguet prudently adds, it can be called by that name—with a salvo of sixteen guns. New Orleans did not expect so much honour, apparently, and was able to give only one shot in reply.

29th October, du Tisné, his wife, and Father Boulanger arrived from Canada.

16th November, M. de Pontual, assistant clerk of the *Deux Frères*, killed, by a sword-thrust in a duel, Laborde assistant clerk of the *Dromadaire*.

22nd November. "We have learned," d'Artaguet writes, "that it is miserably difficult to get anything from the stores. Many worthy people can get nothing, not even *eau-de-vie*, or wine. Only friends are served, although there is a plenty for the citizens. As an instance, Rossard, a notary, gave recently a meal where a cask of the best wine was drunk."

At this period, the sanitary condition of New Orleans was deplorable; there were ninety cases of sickness. Bienville, who had been ill, was convalescent.

On the 26th, a sailor was "ducked" for insulting Drilhan, distributing clerk.

5th December, the *Alexandra* reached New Orleans; and on the 10th, Guilhet, one of the Directors of the Company, died.

The almost simultaneous arrival of the *Dromadaire*, the *Loire* and the *Deux Frères*, far from furthering the captain's development, came near depopulating it. So many persons claimed to have pressing engagements in France, that Bienville judged it prudent to decide "that he would allow no one to take passage."

At that period, shortness of food and desertions in all forms were the Colony's two great afflictions. Bienville's Aide-de-Camp set the example "by passing to the west after pilfering a few bills." New Orleans had been so systematically assailed by its detractors that it had become a veritable scare-crow. A company of Swiss workmen under the command of Brandt, a Sergeant-Major, promoted second Captain and replacing Merveilleux-Wonwunderlick, had been embarked at Biloxi for the Capital; but rather than go there, they rose up, led by their chiefs, and forced the Captain of the *Elisabeth* to set sail for Havana.

"Only two officers from among them remained in Louisiana, a sergeant and a few women whose clothes had been taken by the others," Bienville wrote on the 21st of August, 1721. "The Swiss, reduced to eating beans and salted beef, believe that the Company is ruined and that they are about to die of starvation."

At Mobile, three soldiers and twelve sailors, in a canoe, had just put their officer, M. d'Harcourt, ashore, and had gone to Pensacola; the New Orleans garrison—most of whose soldiers were either "gens de force" or else farmer deserters—were rationed on dry bread, and only wanted a pretext for going to Pensacola too. The following year a ship on which Boispinel, the engineer, had embarked to go to Mobile, raised anchor while he was away at Mass, and left with his baggage for Carolina.

In January, 1724, the Balise garrison also fled to Havana. Pauger, without seeking to excuse them, mentions that they were dying of hunger and that they returned the ship with all her cargo, after drawing up a detailed list of the provisions they had had to consume.

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To describe the progressive growth of New Orleans would be going beyond the limits of the present study. Let us merely say that the big store was finished in 1723 and the officer's pavilion in April,

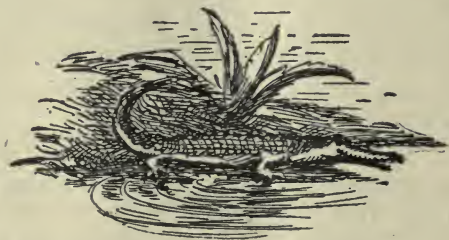


1724. This building served for more than a year as temporary church. Pauger asked for a tabernacle to be sent, as well as a crucifix five feet and a half high, and two marble statues representing the Virgin and Saint Louis.

Here is the total of expenses made in the Capital from the 1st of January, 1723, to the 1st of May, 1724:

Workmen's salaries.....	23.868 L 12 s 3 d
Materials.....	2.667 L 15 s 2 d
Levee.....	391 L 8 s 6 d
	<hr/>
	26.927 L 15 s 11 d

In 1724, work on the church and on the barracks was begun, and the Capucin Convent was almost finished. Finally, next year Father Raphael founded the first New Orleans College, whose need was felt all the more because, according to the expression of the Bishop of Quebec, "hearts at New Orleans were ill disposed." The first head of the New College was a former Capucin, Brother Saint Julien, "put out because of a fault in his youth," a worthy man, well grounded in Latin, mathematics, music, and drawing, but who laboured under the misfortune of very bad penmanship.





## CHAPTER VII.

### The Vieux Carre and the First Engineers of New Orleans.



LONG years of custom have consecrated the name *Vieux Carré* still given to Eighteenth Century New Orleans, although its shape is rectangular rather than square. In length, the old town measures six hundred and twenty toises by the river side, on a depth of three hundred and sixty toises. All the blocks measured fifty toises in each direction, and were surrounded by gutters. (See Dumont de Montigny's plan, page —). Theoretically, some were divided into five lots and others into twelve; but many citizens threw several lots into one.

The streets had not yet been named on the 1st of January, 1723, date of the plan drawn up by La Tour.<sup>1</sup> Names appear for the first time on the plan dated the 23rd of April following.<sup>2</sup> After La Tour's death, Pauger completed the nomenclature, called a street after St. Adrien, his patron, and introduced various modifications of which scarcely any was maintained by his successor, Broutin.

We give, below, a list of the old streets of the Vieux Carré, going from north to south; several have retained their primitive names. Those from La Tour's plan are printed in capitals, Pauger's are given in *italics*, and later denominations are put in parenthesis.

*Rue d'Anguin*, for Enghien (Bienville); RUE BIENVILLE, (Conti); RUE SAINT-LOUIS; RUE DE TOULOUSE; RUE

<sup>1</sup>Ministry of War, 7c, 217.

<sup>2</sup>Arch. Hydrogr., Bibl., 4044 C., No. 63.



SAINT-PIERRE; RUE D'ORLEANS or Grande-Rue; RUE SAINTE-ANNE; RUE DUMAINE; RUE SAINT-PHILIPPE, *de Clermont* (Saint-Philippe); RUE DE L'ARSENAL, *Saint-Adrien* (de l'Arsenal, Sainte-Ursule,<sup>1</sup> later des Ursulines); *Rue de l'Arsenal* (de l'Hôpital); (Barracks); (Esplanade).

Running perpendicularly: RUE DU QUAI, *Quai* (Old Levee); RUE DE CHARTRES;<sup>2</sup> RUE ROYALLE, *Royalle-Bourbon* (Royale, Royal); RUE DE BOURBON, *Conty* (Bourbon); *Rue de Vendôme* (Dauphine); (Rue de Bourgogne, Burgundy); (Rampart).

New Orleans proved fatal to the first three engineers put in charge of the work there. Boispinel, who had arrived in January, 1723, replacing in the capital Pauger, sent to the Balise, died on the 18th of September, 1723; he had been appointed engineer on the 1st of April, 1715, Knight of Saint-Louis, Lieutenant, then reserve Captain of the Champagne Regiment in 1719; a note kept at the Ministry of War states that he was "buried under a mine at the siege of Landau, and wounded before Fribourg." La Tour died on the 14th of October, 1723, just as the Company was calling him to Paris so that he might make known the facts about Louisiana. Pauger died on the 9th of June, 1726. According to this last, "Messieurs La Tour and Boispinel died of nothing but chagrin at the mortifications heaped upon us all."<sup>3</sup>

It should be said, however, that the New Orleans climate was extremely unhealthy at that period, and that the doctors there left much to be desired. Bienville wrote: "Bérard, the physician, though less of a rogue than his predecessor, is quite as ignorant." The Board, learning that Prévost, a surgeon, "wanted to sell himself rather too dear, straightened the matter out and now he can get no medicine unless the head clerk gives him an order for it." Meanwhile the patient waited if necessary.

Assistant Engineer Franquet de Chaville, having perceived in time that "services in this country are not good for the complexion," as he expressed it, prudently left Louisiana in the spring of 1724. The Company had annoyed him shortly before, reducing his salary by five hundred *livres*. At the same period, Devin, an excellent draftsman, saw his living allowance cut down, and "disgusted with the country," sought to return to France.

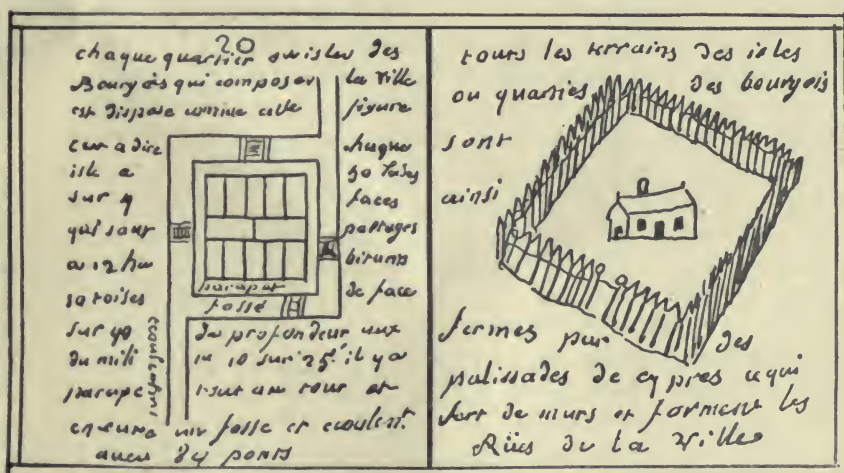
<sup>1</sup>This note appears on a plan kept at the Archives Nationales (*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a, fol. 139.) Several blocks are joined together on this plan: "The two blocks, or old government," cut off Chartres Street at Bienville Street, and the "hospital for troops and nuns" filled a group of four blocks south of St. Ursula Street, between the Levee and Royal Streets.

<sup>2</sup>La Tour gave the name of Conty, and Pauger of Rue de Condé, to the portion of this Street prolonged south of the Place d'Armes.

<sup>3</sup>*Colonies*, C<sup>13</sup>a, 8, fol. 8.

Bienville had not liked Chaville: "He will never amount to much, he does nothing but draw!" Which did not prevent him from becoming Engineer-in-Chief, and later Director of the Engineer Corps at La Rochelle. Pauger wrote of him on the 3rd of January, 1724: "Chaville has finished the big store \* \* \* erected buildings \* \* \* completed the big levee five hundred toises long, so that New Orléans is growing very rapidly and will undoubtedly become one of the largest of towns."<sup>1</sup> It may be observed that this prophecy was made four years previous to that of Madeleine Hachard. Bancroft Lib

To the necrology of the founders of New Orleans we must add the name of Kerlasiou, who died on the 3rd of September, 1723. A



a Small Island of New Orleans. (After Dumont of Montigny.)

very able pilot, it was he who demonstrated the practical possibility of bringing all ships up the Mississippi.

As compensation for the many obstacles he had overcome, and as indemnity for a sum of four thousand *livres* he had advanced in payments, of various sorts, Pauger asked, on the 22nd of March, 1722, that his concession of a tract opposite New Orleans be confirmed. He had already broken ten acres of this land, built a house costing more than a thousand *livres*, a barn and four cabins, and had settled there with his possessions, eleven negroes and negresses, a young Indian, four head of horned cattle, and four hogs. Yet Bienville contested his claim, so Pauger informs us, because he himself had

<sup>1</sup>Colonies, C<sup>13</sup>a, fol. 13.



secured a concession in free-hold on the 6th of March, 1720. Pauger writes: "The Governor already owns, just beyond the town, a fine plantation, Bel-Air, which he can extend at will—and elsewhere, so many concessions does the Sieur de Bienville hold and so extraordinary is the immensity of the lands he owns!"

The truth is that Bienville, already master of Horn Island and various other concessions, granted to himself, as we see by maps of the period, a considerable quantity of lands all round New Orleans, and two blocks within the city itself.

Although the worthy engineer had been in possession for three years, the Board definitely rejected his claim on the 29th of May, 1724. According to a letter by Asfeld, "the ground which he had started to cultivate was taken back from him without indemnity." But since later plans mark this site as the dwelling of the King's negroes, Bienville could not have appropriated it.

As for the site on which Pauger had built his New Orléans house, his claim for the concession was definitely confirmed only in September 1725—so great was the hostility shown him by the members of the Colonial Board. His correspondence was frequently tampered with; so many letters were indeed lost, by others as well as by him, that on the 21st of May, 1724, the Marine Board threatened a fine of five hundred *livres* and either dismissal or the pillory for any one caught intercepting letters in Louisiana.

Pauger's tribulations continued as long as he lived. Boisbriant, acting commandant in Bienville's absence, writes on the 4th of October, 1725, that he "had to put a humble colonist in the guard-house, for having uttered defamatory remarks about M. de Pauger in a conversation." The members of the Board, and Father Raphaël, curé of New Orléans, all adversaries of Boisbriant and of the officers, took the part of this colonist, one Barbaut. According to them, he had merely written to the Company drawing attention to a heavy rebate granted by Pauger on a supply of building-wood.

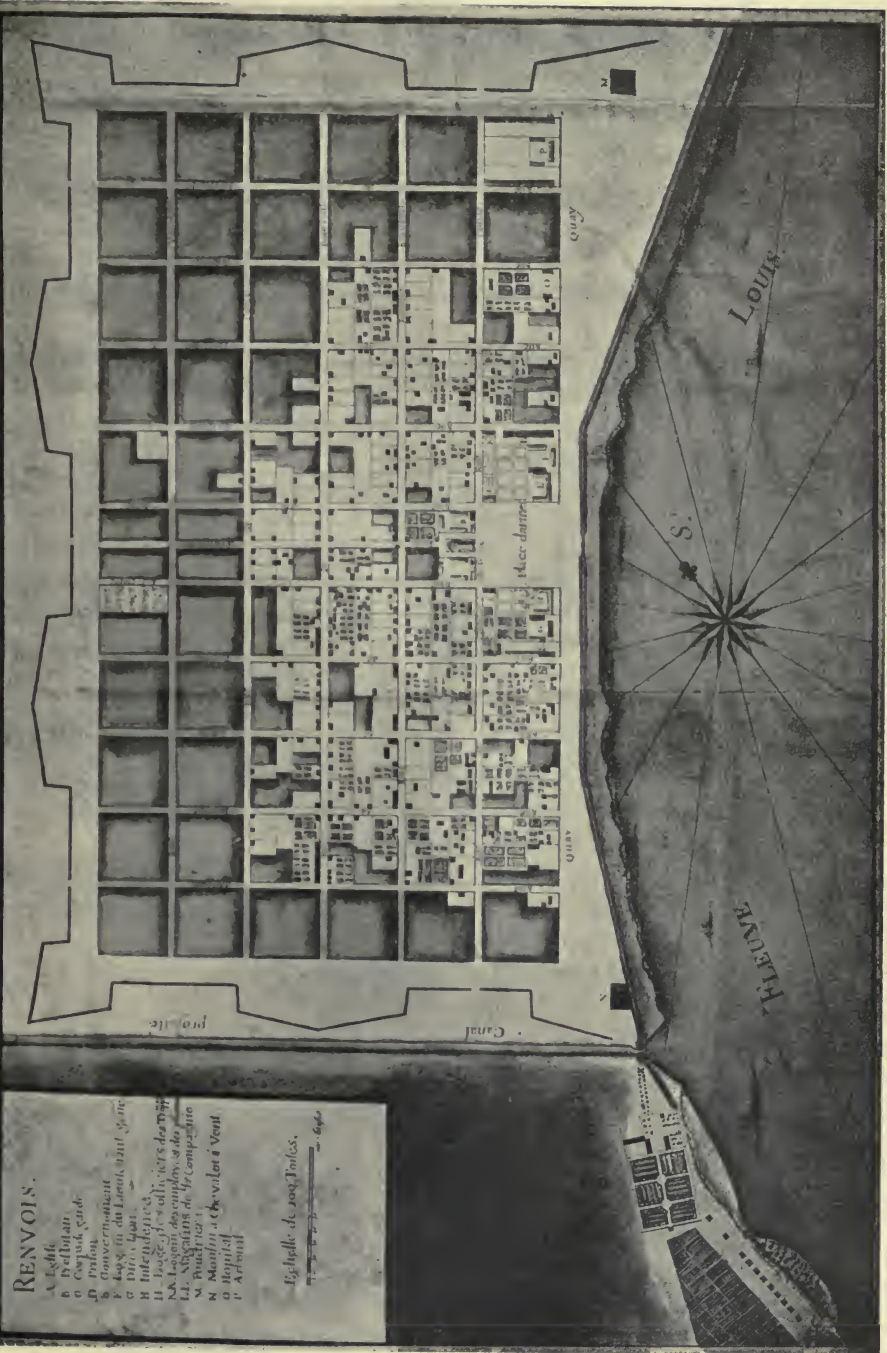
Having passed Major General and Engineer-in-Chief after La Tour's death, Pauger asked to sit on the Colonial Board, a privilege to which his agreement entitled him, as the Company gave orders to this effect on the 27th of May, 1724. Nevertheless, his many enemies long prevented him from taking his seat there, save for matters directly concerning his work.

Asfeld mentions a report current in New Orleans, in 1726, according to which the Company intended, from economical motives, to replace Pauger by Broutin, "who was content with more mediocre salaries." The Engineer-in-Chief received at that time eight thous-

RENOIS.

- A Echelle
- B Esplanade
- C Carrousel
- D Palais National
- E Logis du Lieutenant
- F Logis du Lieutenant
- G Logis du Lieutenant
- H Logis du Lieutenant
- I Logis du Lieutenant
- J Logis du Lieutenant
- K Logis du Lieutenant
- L Logis du Lieutenant
- M Logis du Lieutenant
- N Logis du Lieutenant
- O Logis du Lieutenant
- P Logis du Lieutenant
- Q Logis du Lieutenant
- R Logis du Lieutenant
- S Logis du Lieutenant
- T Logis du Lieutenant
- U Logis du Lieutenant
- V Logis du Lieutenant
- W Logis du Lieutenant
- X Logis du Lieutenant
- Y Logis du Lieutenant
- Z Logis du Lieutenant

Echelle de 100 Toises.





and *livres*; engineers, five thousand; the assistant engineer, two thousand four hundred; Devin the draftsman, six hundred. Soon after, the salaries of the engineers were cut down considerably. As for Pauger, he was so disheartened that he asked no better than to return home. On the 6th of November, 1725, he wrote to his brother: "Everything here is ablaze, each man yells and behaves according to his wont, and never has the country rushed along such an incline towards total loss. \* \* \* My mind is made up, I have been twice driven to extremity, and now I am going back to France by the first boat."

But he was not allowed time to do this. Feeling his end draw near, he made his will on the 5th of June, 1726, "After recommending his soul to all the saints in Paradise, and especially to St. Adrien his patron, to obtain the remission of his sins. \* \* \* He gives his soul to God and his body to the earth, wishing to be buried in the church at New Orleans, if possible. \* \* \* He desires and intends that in the said church three solemn services be held for the repose of his soul, and an anniversary; that three hundred low masses be also celebrated, and that every Monday each week a *De Profundis* be said by the officiating priest at the close of the mass; for which shall be paid, once and for all, the sum of one thousand livres."

Pauger left his plantation at Point St. Antoine to the Sieur Dreux; made many legacies to his servants; bequeathed his books and instruments to Devin; his Moreri dictionary to Prat, his doctor; his religious books to the Capucins; and finally, as a burying of the hatchet, his gun and pistols to Bienville.

He died four days after signing his will: "of an intermittent fever which became a slow fever," says the certificate signed by Prat or Duprat, "physician-botanist, Doctor of the Montpellier Faculty," who had been in Louisiana since 1724.

If we have dealt rather lengthily with Pauger, it is because he was the keystone for the foundation of New Orleans. He wrote on the 23rd of September, 1723: "If I had not taken upon myself all that could be done to overcome ill-will, things would not yet have got beyond the stage of sending ships into the river, and the principal seat would have remained at Biloxi, where the country could not provide sufficient food, as it does here."

Pauger never boasted, and the town owes as much gratitude to him as to Bienville. On Broutin's big plan (See plate No. IV) the exact site of the house in which he died can readily be located. It

was known as "Terrain No. 8," along the river, almost in the centre of the block lying between St. Louis et Bienville (now Conti) streets.

New Orleans would honour not only him, but herself, by putting there, or in the Cathedral where he lies buried, an inscription to commemorate him who worked so untiringly to assure her creation, and who died of his labours. It is unjust that there should be a La Tour Street, while none bears the name of Pauger.







## CHAPTER VIII.

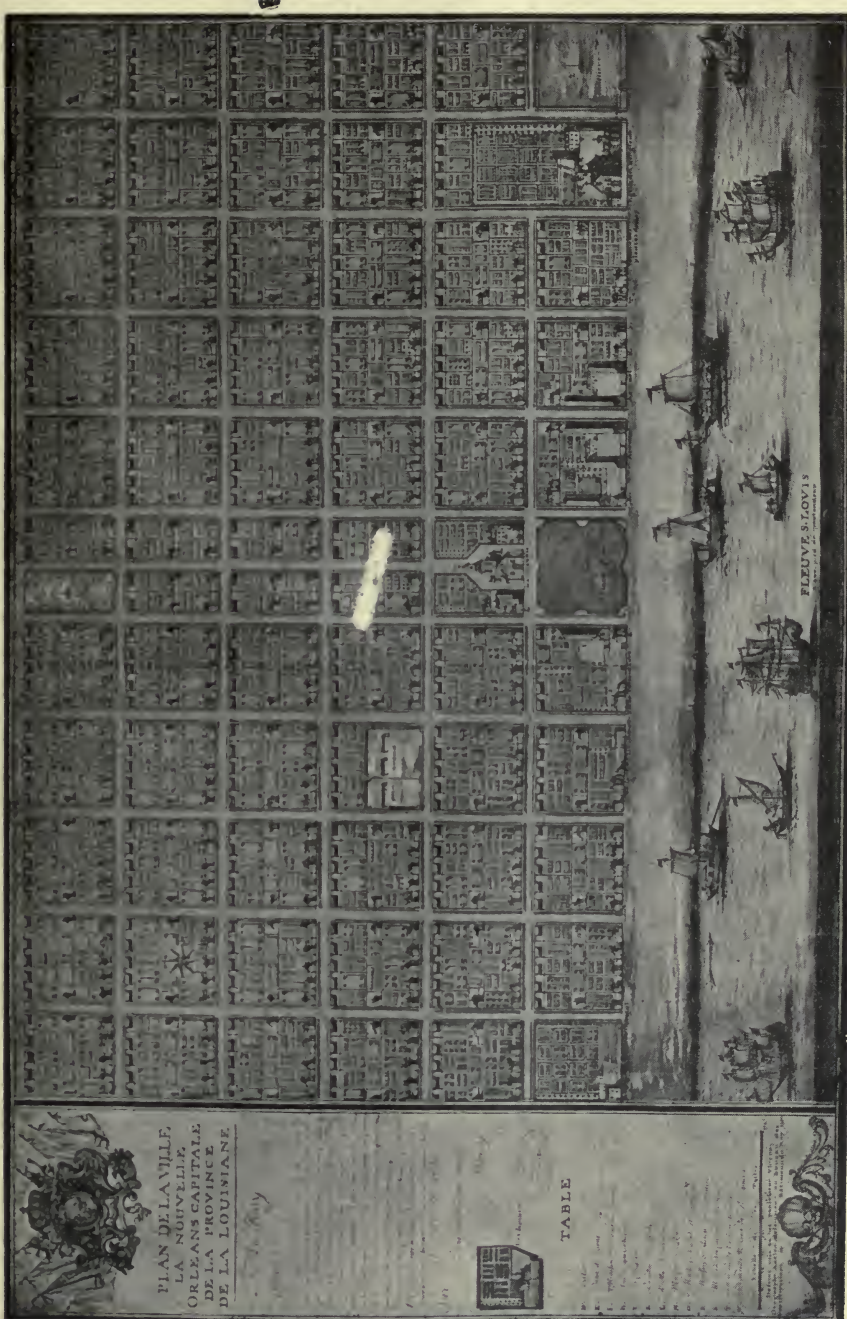
### Briefly Statistical.



ARTICULARLY unhealthy at this period, the climate of New Orleans encouraged epidemics which on several occasions decimated the population. If we are to believe D'Artaguet, "eight or nine people per day," or one-sixtieth of its inhabitants, were dying in the capital, when he came down from Illinois in September, 1723. Two years before, one thousand had died at Biloxi. A new epidemic raged in the summer of 1725; Father Raphael wrote: "There are not two people who have not been ill." The population in 1727 was still only nine hundred and thirty eight souls (729 masters, 65 enlisted men, 127 negroes, and 17 Indian slaves), owning ten horses and thirty-one head of horned cattle. The population of the surrounding country was six hundred masters, one thousand four hundred and thirty-four negroes, and fifty-six Indians; there were one thousand four hundred and sixteen head of cattle, one hundred and seventy-one horses, and eight hundred and forty-three hogs.

Nevertheless, the Creoles were already proud of their capital. Madeleine Hachard tells us, in her *Relation du voyage des Dames religieuses Ursulines*<sup>1</sup> that early in 1728, a song was currently sung, in which they say "this town has as fine an appearance as the City of Paris!" After a few prudent restrictions, the good nun adds: "It is true that the town grows daily, and can eventually become as

<sup>1</sup>The contract with the Ursulines for establishing, in New Orleans, Marie Tranchepain de Saint-Augustin and Mariane Le Boulanger Angélique, accompanied by ten nuns, had been ratified on the 18th of September, 1726.



PLAN DE LA VILLE  
LA NOUVELLE  
ORLEANS CAPITALE  
DE LA PROVINCE  
DE LA LOUISIANE

TABLE

1.	Le Port de la Nouvelle-Orléans
2.	Le Port de la Louisiane
3.	Le Port de la Virginie
4.	Le Port de la Caroline
5.	Le Port de la Géorgie
6.	Le Port de la Floride
7.	Le Port de la Louisiane
8.	Le Port de la Virginie
9.	Le Port de la Caroline
10.	Le Port de la Géorgie
11.	Le Port de la Floride
12.	Le Port de la Louisiane
13.	Le Port de la Virginie
14.	Le Port de la Caroline
15.	Le Port de la Géorgie
16.	Le Port de la Floride
17.	Le Port de la Louisiane
18.	Le Port de la Virginie
19.	Le Port de la Caroline
20.	Le Port de la Géorgie
21.	Le Port de la Floride
22.	Le Port de la Louisiane
23.	Le Port de la Virginie
24.	Le Port de la Caroline
25.	Le Port de la Géorgie
26.	Le Port de la Floride
27.	Le Port de la Louisiane
28.	Le Port de la Virginie
29.	Le Port de la Caroline
30.	Le Port de la Géorgie
31.	Le Port de la Floride
32.	Le Port de la Louisiane
33.	Le Port de la Virginie
34.	Le Port de la Caroline
35.	Le Port de la Géorgie
36.	Le Port de la Floride
37.	Le Port de la Louisiane
38.	Le Port de la Virginie
39.	Le Port de la Caroline
40.	Le Port de la Géorgie
41.	Le Port de la Floride
42.	Le Port de la Louisiane
43.	Le Port de la Virginie
44.	Le Port de la Caroline
45.	Le Port de la Géorgie
46.	Le Port de la Floride
47.	Le Port de la Louisiane
48.	Le Port de la Virginie
49.	Le Port de la Caroline
50.	Le Port de la Géorgie
51.	Le Port de la Floride
52.	Le Port de la Louisiane
53.	Le Port de la Virginie
54.	Le Port de la Caroline
55.	Le Port de la Géorgie
56.	Le Port de la Floride
57.	Le Port de la Louisiane
58.	Le Port de la Virginie
59.	Le Port de la Caroline
60.	Le Port de la Géorgie
61.	Le Port de la Floride
62.	Le Port de la Louisiane
63.	Le Port de la Virginie
64.	Le Port de la Caroline
65.	Le Port de la Géorgie
66.	Le Port de la Floride
67.	Le Port de la Louisiane
68.	Le Port de la Virginie
69.	Le Port de la Caroline
70.	Le Port de la Géorgie
71.	Le Port de la Floride
72.	Le Port de la Louisiane
73.	Le Port de la Virginie
74.	Le Port de la Caroline
75.	Le Port de la Géorgie
76.	Le Port de la Floride
77.	Le Port de la Louisiane
78.	Le Port de la Virginie
79.	Le Port de la Caroline
80.	Le Port de la Géorgie
81.	Le Port de la Floride
82.	Le Port de la Louisiane
83.	Le Port de la Virginie
84.	Le Port de la Caroline
85.	Le Port de la Géorgie
86.	Le Port de la Floride
87.	Le Port de la Louisiane
88.	Le Port de la Virginie
89.	Le Port de la Caroline
90.	Le Port de la Géorgie
91.	Le Port de la Floride
92.	Le Port de la Louisiane
93.	Le Port de la Virginie
94.	Le Port de la Caroline
95.	Le Port de la Géorgie
96.	Le Port de la Floride
97.	Le Port de la Louisiane
98.	Le Port de la Virginie
99.	Le Port de la Caroline
100.	Le Port de la Géorgie

FLUVE S. LOUIS

Plan of New Orleans in 1756.



fine and as big as the principal towns of France, provided workmen come and it can be populated in proportion to its size." Incontestably, this appreciation suggested to Father Charlevoix, who both read and copied much, the idea for the celebrated prophecy about New Orleans.

In spite of which, the number of inhabitants had dwindled, five years later, because certain agriculturists had moved farther away from the city. The 1732 census put the population at eight hundred and ninety-three, of whom six hundred and twenty-six Europeans (229 men, 169 women, 183 children, 45 orphans), three Indians, six squaws, one hundred and two negroes, seventy-four negresses, seventy-six negro boys and girls, three mulattoes. The number of horses had increased by four, but the heads of cattle had decreased by one hundred and fifty-three.

In 1737, the population rose to one thousand seven hundred and forty-eight, thanks especially to a multiplication of negroes. As for Europeans, there were only about one hundred more than before: seven hundred and fifty-nine Europeans (220 men, 181 women, 158 boys and 200 girls); three hundred and seventy-four negroes, two hundred and fifty-three negresses, one hundred and sixty-seven negro boys, one hundred and sixty-nine negro girls, ten Indians, and sixteen squaws.

From that period onward, the population of New Orleans grew steadily; and in 1756, already numbered four thousand.

On the 19th of March, 1788, a fierce fire destroyed, in five hours nine hundred and fifty houses out of eleven hundred. Yet this did not prove to be more than an incident in the life of the town, retarding its growth by only a few years.

Chicago, on whose present site the Marine Board decided to build a fort, 30th March, 1716, has one million, eight hundred thousand inhabitants; but of all the towns which deserved the name at the time when France lost her American possessions, New Orleans is by far the largest today: Montreal has not more than two hundred and seventy-five thousand residents, and Quebec seventy thousand.

One century after its foundation, the Crescent City's inhabitants numbered twenty-six thousand; in 1847, one hundred thousand; in 1868, one hundred and eighty-five thousand; this figure rises to four hundred thousand for the second centennial, and the opening

of the Panama Canal cannot but promote still further the development and the prosperity of New Orleans.





## CORRECTIONS

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Dr. Milton Dunn of Natchitoches, the author of the article on that oldest of Louisiana cities, Natchitoches, which appeared in our issue of January, 1920, calls our attention to a number of printers' errors, chiefly in names, that occur on the article as printed, viz:

The word Caston in the first line on the page should be Castor. On page 29, 2nd line Poissat should be Poisson, 5th line Groppe should be Grappe. On page 32, line 3, Morthé should be Mothe, line 31, Lavoy should be Larry. On page 34, line 21, should read "Colonel Cushing with three companies and four pieces of artillery." On page 36, line 33, Ferre Noir should be Terre Noir. On page 37, line 40, De Rusez should be De Rusey. On page 40, line 9, Doc Vennett should be Doc Bennett. On page 44, line 14 Tanzier should be Tauzin. On page 46, line 24, Ludwick should be Lodwick. On page 47 line 1, Texas should be Shreveport. On page 48, line 40, Suffords Creek should be Swoffords Creek. On page 49, line 31, General Many should be Colonel Many. On page 54, line 21, Laltier should be Lattier. On page 55, line 15, Listan should be Lestan.

## THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

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As every Louisianian should be, and is generally interested in all that relates to Louisiana, the publication of a good translation of Baron Marc de Villiers's new book on the Foundation of New Orleans gives us an opportunity to lead our own people as well as the world generally, up to a higher appreciation of the earnest, difficult, hazardous and brilliantly successful work done by those pioneers who opened the way for us, doing it some two centuries ago. So in this issue we publish in full a good translation of Baron Marc de Villiers's excellent work deferring all other matters to later issues.



Statement of Ownership, Management, Circulation, etc., required by Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of the LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, published quarterly at New Orleans, La., for April 1, 1920. State of Louisiana, Parish of Orleans. Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and Parish aforesaid, personally appeared John Dymond, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912. Publisher, Louisiana Historical Society. Editor, Managing Editor, Business Manager, John Dymond, New Orleans, La. 2. That the owners are: The Historical Society and issues no stock; officers are G. Cusachs, President; John Dymond, First Vice-President; William Kernan Dart, Second Vice-President; Henry Renshaw, Third Vice-President; W. O. Hart, Treasurer, and Bussiere Rouen, Corresponding Secretary, all of New Orleans, La. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. Signed John Dymond, Editor. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of March, 1920. (Seal). Augustus Williams, Notary Public. (My commission is for life-time.)



















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