

NATIVE, EUROPEAN, AND
AFRICAN CULTURES IN MISSISSIPPI,
1500-1800



Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Jackson, Mississippi

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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

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African and Atlantic Background to Early Mississippi History
Dr. Joseph C. Miller

Indians of Mississippi: 1540-1700
Dr. Marvin T. Smith

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Dr. Patricia Galloway

African Slavery in Provincial Mississippi
Ulysses S. Ricard, Jr.

A Brief History of Mississippi, 1540-1817
Dr. William S. Coker

Contributions by scholars to the Mississippi State Historical Museum exhibition in progress.
Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Front cover: Representative images of European, Native American, and African are drawn from a portrait of John Law engraved by Leon Schenck, Paris, 1720; a drawing of a Natchez Warrior in winter dress by Alexandre de Batz, ca. 1735; and an engraving of a Loango hunter by Olfert Dapper, 1668.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction <i>Patti Carr Black</i>	3
The Scholars	5
African and Atlantic Background to Early Mississippi History <i>Joseph C. Miller</i>	7
Indians of Mississippi: 1540-1700 <i>Marvin T. Smith</i>	31
Nature and Sequence of the Spanish Borderlands <i>Paul Hoffman</i>	43
Formation of Historic Tribes and the French Colonial Period <i>Patricia Galloway</i>	57
African Slavery in Provincial Mississippi <i>Ulysses S. Ricard, Jr.</i>	77
A Brief History of Mississippi, 1540-1817 <i>William S. Coker</i>	91

NATIVE, EUROPEAN, AND AFRICAN CULTURES IN MISSISSIPPI, 1500-1800

Introduction

Patti Carr Black
Director
State Historical Museum

In 1990 the Mississippi State Historical Museum successfully sought funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to plan a series of new permanent exhibits exploring the initial meeting of Native American, European, and African cultures in the area that would become Mississippi. In order to obtain the latest scholarship on the various subjects to be covered in the exhibits, the State Historical Museum brought in scholars chosen for their knowledge of the history of this area and their ability to synthesize interpretations of events and cultures.

The scholars were asked to contribute essays and bibliographies on their assigned subjects. We offer these essays to the teachers of American and Mississippi history with the hope that they will provide helpful new interpretations of the social, political, economic and cultural history of our state.

Permanent exhibits on these subjects will be installed in the State Historical Museum, with a projected opening date of 1993. We hope you will bring your classes to the Museum to view these and other recently completed permanent exhibits of the chronological history of Mississippi.

The Scholars

Dr. William S. Coker, chairman of the Department of History at the University of West Florida, has specialized in the colonial history of the Gulf region, with particular emphasis on the contest between Briton and Spaniard for possession of the lower half of the southeastern region. His pioneering work on the papers of Panton, Leslie and Company interpreted and made available an extraordinary collection of materials on the interaction between Indians, Spaniards, and Englishmen in the region. He advised on the English and Spanish occupations at the end of the colonial period.

Dr. Patricia Galloway, Special Projects Officer with the Department of Archives and History, is an authority on the ethnohistory of the Choctaw and on the French colonial period in Mississippi and is responsible for the protohistoric portion of Mississippi's State Plan for Archaeology. She has edited several volumes of documents and essays on the French colonial period and was recipient of the 1984 Chinard Prize for French history for this work. She is presently carrying out grant-funded work on the long-term relationship between the Choctaw people and their land and is completing a book on the early history of the tribe. Dr. Galloway advised on the French colonial period and the history of the historic tribes.

Dr. Paul Hoffman, of Louisiana State University, is a Spanish colonial historian specializing in the early exploration period in the Southeast. He has extensive experience in securing and annotating documentary materials from Spain and has just completed a book on the sixteenth-century southeast that was awarded a prize by the Spanish government. Dr. Hoffman took primary responsibility for the Spanish side of the earliest contact period and for contextualizing the period with European attitudes toward the "Discovery."

Dr. Joseph C. Miller, of the Department of History, University of Virginia, is a noted historian on African studies and has written extensively on West African history and the slave trade. In 1989 he was the recipient of a prize from the African Studies Association for the best English language publication in African studies. Dr. Miller provided the Museum team a background for understanding the culture of 16th and 17th century Africa and the beginnings of the slave trade.

Ulysses Ricard, assistant archivist, Amistad Research Center, guided the exploration of black culture during the colonial era: the cultural adaptations made by Africans to existence under slave law; the development of skills and crafts in the course of labor; the population of slaves and free blacks under French, Spanish, and British rule; and black/Indian relations. Mr. Ricard is knowledgeable in the available research and sources for these relatively unexplored areas.

Dr. Marvin Smith, of the University of Georgia, has carried out archaeological research focused on the protohistoric period across the Southeast as well as in Mississippi, and his recent book has made an important contribution to our understanding of the disruption and drastic changes during the protohistoric period. Dr. Smith provided information on the probable effects of disease and population movements on the native peoples of the interior southeast during the 16th and 17th centuries.

African and Atlantic Background to Early Mississippi History

Joseph C. Miller

The Africans who arrived in the lower Mississippi valley and surrounding regions before about 1800, free and slave, represented only a tiny fraction of a vast forced trans-Atlantic migration of people linking, directly or indirectly, every continent from Asia to the Americas. All those who came to any part of North America together constituted no more than 6 per cent of this total. Most black Mississippians today descend from later immigrants, mostly black Americans (though also a few of African birth) raised as slaves in Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas and then sent “down the river” to open the new cotton-growing frontier that swept through the region in the first third of the nineteenth century. The early trickle of Africans, some captive, others freed, were sent north toward Mississippi as a kind of overflow from demographic and economic currents centered on the French and English sugar-exporting islands of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Caribbean.

ATLANTIC AFRICA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Africans hardly noticed the European sailors and traders who began to probe hesitantly along the Atlantic coasts of their continent early in the fifteenth (Christian) century (Brooks 1985, Saunders 1982, Fage 1987).¹ Most of far north-western Africa, the “Maghreb” (or “far west”) in the Arabic terminology of its geographers, merchants, and rulers (Levtzion and Hopkins 1981), then lay firmly under the authority of Muslim powers, some of them direct heirs of the richest and most sophisticated polities anywhere in the world in that era. Indeed, the Almoravids (hence “Moors”), from their origins in Morocco two centuries before, had controlled most of Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal), and their successors, from their Alhambra citadel at Granada, still held the southern parts of the peninsula (UNESCO 1981, vol. 4).

Farther south, in the vast sands and steppes of the Sahara, hard-riding, devoutly Muslim Berber horsemen prized their control over desert oases lush with date palm plantations and guarded barren

¹ Authors' names in parentheses refer to works recommended (with annotations) for the particulars of points emphasized in the sentence or paragraph where they occur. See page 21 for a list of general readings and page 23 for the further recommendations cited in the text.



Map of Africa, 1570, by Abraham Ortelius.

deposits of hard rock salt sometimes literally worth its weight in gold in sodium-starved African farmlands south of the desert. Both of these valuable resources they worked with slaves, whom they marched laboriously north in caravans from the populous sub-Saharan regions beyond the desert. The aristocratic Berber lineages of the Sahara, some priding themselves on military skills that enabled them to patrol—and tax—merchant caravans moving through their Saharan wastes from Maghrebian towns, others allied with wealthy mercantile families in Morocco and other parts of the Maghreb, and still others devout clerical families renowned far and wide for their literacy and for their knowledge of Islamic theology and science, maintained regular contact among themselves and sometimes formed federations able to regulate human movements through hundreds of thousands of square miles of desert. Individuals regularly traveled abroad as far east as Mecca in Arabia and south as far as the bustling towns and royal cities in the agricultural “lands of the blacks,” the *bilad es-Sudan*.

The “Sudan,” both its thornbrush desert edge, known as the “sahel,” and the grassy and cultivated latitudes beyond, lay under the protection—and yoke—of two or three extensive cavalry empires in the fifteenth century. These imperial systems, Mali and Songhai in particular, whose names gave most foreigners their general terms for the area, were greater in extent at their peaks than any European monarchy of the time and larger, too, than the United States east of the Mississippi today. The aristocracy of Mali descended from families originating in the fertile grainlands of the upper Niger River, who supplied gold from the hills at the sources of that great river and had long since converted to the Islamic religion of the desert merchants with whom they traded. Mali had passed its era of greatest military robustness by the fifteenth century. Songhai (or Songrai), centered farther east on the old trading city of Gao on the middle Niger, was also Muslim in religion but was a warlike state then on the rise. Other not dissimilar Muslim polities—Kanem, or Bornu, and Sennar—dominated the more easterly populations of the Sudan centered on Lake Chad and living in the valley of the Upper Nile (UNESCO 1981, vols. 3 and 4).

The inhabitants of these states managed complex and thriving commercial and agricultural economies in constant and intricate interaction with the livestock-raising Berber populations of the desert and with other peoples of the forest and maritime regions to the south and west. Muslim cavalry warriors from Mali and Songhai, protected by mailed and cushioned armor and no less zealous than their contemporaries, the Christian knights of Europe, supported themselves by raiding farmers and other humble devotees of local ancestor cults, of rain kings and priests, of guardian spirits of the land, and of other spiritual embodiments of the human female and agricultural fertility on which life for the great majority utterly depended. Most of the unbelievers whom the Muslim knights seized in their raids they kept for themselves as retainers serving at their compounds or put to work in their own fields of sorghum, millet, and other grains. However, some they sold as slaves to the merchants from the desert. These slaves entered into commercial networks, leading through the desert mines and oases into the intercontinental commerce of the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and Asia (Meillassoux 1981)—the same trade flows that the Christian merchants of the Italian Renaissance tapped from the north.

In the towns that thrived on the desert borders of these African empires, Jenne, Timbuktu, Gao, and many others, members of Sudanic urban guilds of traders and artisans comparable to those in the towns of Europe at that time expressed their occupational distinctiveness in ethnic and religious terms, again not unlike the “families” dominating specific trades and commercial networks in Europe—though they are described also as almost caste-like, in the nature of similar specialized communities in comparably poly-ethnic India. Some, Muslims like their Saharan suppliers and financiers, handled regional trade in

areas to the south where the pack animals of the desert could not survive, trans-shipping the commodities of the trade—grains, salt, livestock products, kola nuts, and much else—by head-porterage. Others smelted and worked metals—copper, iron, gold—to high degrees of beauty and utility, wove and tie-dyed textiles from locally grown cotton fibers, worked leather elaborately, or processed and packaged the produce of field, forest, and oasis that passed through the towns (McIntosh and McIntosh 1982). Marketplaces there vibrated with the many languages of country people hawking the surplus from their hunt and harvests, imperial Mande languages of trade, taxation, and administration, and Arabic in the muezzins' reverberating calls to prayer to the Islamic faithful, in murmurings of disciples sitting circled around Muslim holy men memorizing the Quran, and in the learned disputation of clerics at the fine university in Timbuktu. War, slavery, learning, and trade there—as everywhere in world history, Florence as well as Bombay and Tenochtitlan—thrive together, frequently to the cost of the ordinary peasant and refugee.

South of Cape Verde (the “Green Cape,” where the Portuguese first encountered the far-western variants of these general trade and political patterns of the agricultural Sudan), a similar range of activities occupied the population, with emphasis on maritime resources, salt production, fishing, and canoe-trade, agriculture based on a local species of rice, and—as one neared the wet equatorial latitudes—exploitation of the forest vegetation that covered the land there. This meant both harvesting valuable nuts and fibers from trees for distribution through the Sudan and also cultivating yams for food in clearings cut out among the trees. In the forests west of the Volta River, deposits of gold had attracted Muslim traders from the Sudan and were starting to enrich and embolden local Akan-speaking politicians—and, by the 1460s, also to attract passing Portuguese to the nearby coast, who termed the area their African “mine” (the Mina Coast, or as the English later translated the idea, the Gold Coast) (Vogt 1979). Behind the west-east-running beaches beyond Cape Palmas, which the Europeans knew as “Lower Guinea,” a series of salt-water lagoons supported populations of fishers and traders using canoes capable of carrying dozens of paddlers and tons of cargo. In the east, this series of coastal villages culminated in the maze of mangrove-locked waterways seeping through the delta of the Niger River. The maritime people there anchored trade routes that carried salt back north toward the middle Niger and Songhai (Alagoa 1976, Law 1983).

The horsemen of the Sudanic empires could not penetrate the forests of these humid and thickly vegetated regions, and so few of the towns near the coast had fallen subject to the exactions of haughty rulers at distant courts. Rather, local and small-scale political institutions thrived. Nearly all these farmers and fisherpeople organized their public lives through ties of descent and common residence or, where trade or shortages of land forced strangers of various origins to cooperate within the confines of a single village, through secretive associations of the well-connected and wealthy. These lodges, like the “Masons” or urban guilds or local chambers of commerce in Christian Europe, coordinated otherwise divisive village affairs in this region of strongly communal ethics and achieved unified leadership through elaborate and costly initiations of ambitious younger men and exercise of their authority from behind the anonymity of masks, negating the parochial loyalties of the individuals who wore them (Horton 1976).

Only along the trading route from the Niger Delta to the Sudan had commercial activity become sufficiently intense and concentrated to yield taxes capable of supporting an enduring state system. There, rulers of a kingdom at Benin had by 1500 or so constructed a capital city so large, well laid-out, and clean that it brought the most prosperous towns of the Netherlands to the minds of European visitors. To the north along the same commercial axis, at the frontier where refugees from the cavalry raiders of the Sudan gathered under warleaders able to muster effective resistance, another state emerged among the northern



Cast copper alloy plaque by a Benin artisan dating to the mid-16th-17th century. The small figures in the upper right and left are Europeans as viewed by the African artist. From the collections of the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Yoruba-speaking peoples at Ife in Oyo (Smith 1988). Rulers at both Benin and Ife unknowingly matched the Medici and other counterparts in Venice and Florence in patronizing the plastic arts. The bronze-cast sculpture and other aesthetic achievements of their courts rank, as with the monuments of the European Renaissance, as high points in the history of African cultural refinement (Eyo and Willett 1980, Bassani and Fagg 1988).

On beyond the Niger Delta, at the point where the coast swung south, lay inlets at the foot of the volcanic Cameroons Mountains, filled with the small crustaceans that led the Portuguese to name the region after them (*camarFes* = shrimp). Where the coast turned south past the deep forests near the equator itself, relatively few people lived, but Bantu-speaking maritime fishing communities and workers in tidal salt pans, like the lagoon-dwellers of Lower Guinea in West Africa, inhabited a long series of bays and river mouths just north of the strong current of fresh water that swept into the ocean from the Congo, or Zaire ("great"), River. There trade between coast and interior had allowed a modest institutionalization of political authority at Loango, a monarchy that gave that part of the coast the name by which Europeans came to know it (Martin 1972, Vansina 1983).

Just south of the mouth of the Zaire River was a larger and incipiently more centralized kingdom, that of the *mani* (or "lord") Kongo, whose title gave the Europeans the name by which they called the nearby great river, the coast immediately to the south, and—much later—colonies laid out on both its banks, Belgian and French. Beyond the Zaire River a north-flowing cold antarctic current brought a tendency to aridity near the coast, and the dryness intensified to make agriculture difficult as one advanced south past a large sheltered bay at Luanda Island. Still farther to the south, beyond another, open, bay the Portuguese named Benguela, farming became impossible in all but the deepest river valleys. Population densities declined accordingly.

On the inland reaches of the Zaire, Bantu-speaking fishers and farmers above the great rapids and pool at Malebo conducted an intense and commercialized river trade, not at all unlike that of the bays of the West African coast and the Niger Delta. Maritime branches of the riverine networks reached the coast through Loango and along the lower Zaire, where, joined with distribution systems for copper from mines just north of the river and with monetized seashells (*nzimbo*) fished at Luanda, they supported political centralization and monarchy at Loango and Kongo (Vansina 1969, 1983). These central African kings, and a few others much farther inland, ruled in much less militaristic fashion than the mounted slave raiders in power in the western Sudan. They lacked the horses, dense populations, and sharp ecological gradients that intensified trade between forest, farmlands, and desert and made empire feasible there (Hilton 1985, Thornton 1982 and 1983, Miller 1983). Central African kings exercised their limited powers over the rains rather than directly over people and ruled through subtle manipulations of confederative political systems. The knack of calling the rains mattered especially on the dry southwestern margins of Central Africa, because they failed and threw the region's farming populations into turmoil with disturbing regularity (Miller 1982).

THE ATLANTIC ECONOMY

The Mediterranean Sea supported one of the great transportation and communications networks of the world in the fifteenth century, as also did the Indian Ocean. Italian commerce dominated the first, at least on its northern, Christian shores, and Muslim merchants, Indian, Persian, and Arab, had the trade

of the latter firmly in their hands. The Atlantic was then hardly more than a stormy passage endured by coast-hugging Mediterranean shipping heading to and from the English Channel. But by 1800, northern Europeans swarmed over the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, and the wealth that built great nations and financed mighty armies came from the Atlantic: from sugars grown on islands in the Caribbean, from gold and diamonds in Brazil, from fabulous riches in silver in Spain's colonial possessions in Central and South America. North America lay on the periphery of this system. Chesapeake tobacco added to the prosperity of European ports, though mostly as an afterthought for towns without access to greater New World wealth. Carolina rice and naval stores, and small amounts of exports from the Gulf coasts west to the delta of the Mississippi River, barely registered on this grand oceanic scale.

Portuguese and Spaniards had divided their respective claims to Atlantic empires in the sixteenth century, the Spaniards to the west and the Portuguese to the east. Dutch sailors had intruded on these preserves early in the seventeenth century, and the English had raided and traded their way to dominance in the later 1600s. By then, the French, too, were mounting a serious challenge, and they became major players by the middle of the eighteenth century. In the process, northern Europe had gathered momentum toward what, in the nineteenth century, became the Industrial Revolution, powered in some significant part by her imports from the New World and by export markets she found in Africa and among the millions of slaves taken from there to the West Indies, Brazil, and elsewhere in the Americas (Solow 1987).

This Atlantic commerce, of which the trade in slaves formed only one—but an essential—link, united the vast lands of the New World—largely emptied of human population by waves of Old World diseases that by 1700 had reduced Native American numbers by as much as 90%—with the population resources of Africa—arguably sufficiently dense that recurrent drought produced famine, warfare, and enslavable captives and refugees—and the growing financial resources of Italian banks, Dutch commercial firms, early English capitalists, and other European capitalist institutions. These latter institutions multiplied specie brought back from the New World—Brazilian gold and Spanish silver—into shipping ventures, plantations, mines, and government regulatory agencies able to integrate the four continents surrounding the Atlantic into a single vast economic system.

This unprecedentedly large and fertile combination of land, labor, and capital emerged, ironically, from the peripheralness of the Atlantic to the main currents of Renaissance European trade to the Levant, within the continent, around the Mediterranean. Marginal European merchants unable to compete in the main continental commercial networks took on the risks of sailing out into the empty, open oceanic frontier. Portugal, where a Christian dynasty had recently driven back Moorish rulers to create a small and isolated kingdom looking out over the ocean, led the way early in the fifteenth century in search of sea routes to the sub-Saharan sources of the gold that the Italians dominant in the Mediterranean were buying along the shores of North Africa. Africa, too, was marginal to the main currents of world trade, and so large numbers of potential consumers across the Sahara awaited the economic stimulus to purchase imported goods—mostly textiles, secondarily shells and other items monetized in African economies, thirdly metalwares and intoxicants, and finally also limited quantities of firearms and gunpowder (Eltis and Jennings 1988)—that European merchant capital eventually provided. The Portuguese in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were too few and too poor to dislodge the thriving Muslim trading systems of mainland West Africa. Only in the less commercialized environment of Central Africa did they catch the attention of kings. There, in Kongo, once commercial exchanges were established, the monarchs—like their Muslim counterparts at the heads of the Sudanic empires—converted to the religion of their foreign

commercial sponsors (in 1506) and created a new, Christian kingdom of Kongo that lasted into the late seventeenth century.

Nor did the Portuguese have any need to take on the cavalry forces of the western Sudan or to confront the massed bowmen of the Guinea Coast. The traders of the mainland supplied most of their wants, leaving the Portuguese confined to maritime activity. They mostly bought and sold the staples of the African regional trade—horses, kola nuts, cotton cloth, and the like—and concentrated their shipments back to Lisbon in the gold they acquired along the Mina (Gold) Coast. They even found themselves expelled violently from Kongo in the 1560s. In this last case, however, they responded by moving inland just to the south, lured by (false) rumors of mountains of silver like the already-legendary precious metals found in Spain's American conquests. By joining their own weak forces with local allies, they were able to establish a beach-head at Luanda Bay and, aided by disruptions from drought among the African powers of the region—the most powerful of them holding the title of Ngola—and by the first epidemics of smallpox introduced from abroad, they slowly seized control over a small area along the lower Kwanza River. The Portuguese colony of Angola had been born, and its name became the common European designation for much of the central African coast.

The droughts, with the refugees they created and the discredit they heaped on kings held accountable for the regularity of the rains, and the wars, with their captives, destroyed the old state system of the Ngola and left the region near the coast unable to provide commodities in exchange for imports that hundreds, then tens and hundreds of thousands, of Africans were increasingly coming to take as necessities of life. They also made thousands of helpless people available to Portuguese adventurers, at a loss to cover their investment in seeking illusory mines of silver, at prices so distressed that even the ill-financed Europeans of the time managed to buy them in quantity. Central Africans' early commodity trade with the Portuguese south of Kongo thus collapsed in the 1570s and 1580s into a torrent of enslaved captives and refugees. Elsewhere, in western Africa and north of the mouth of the Zaire River, although human beings entered the exchanges between Africans and Europeans in small numbers, commodities remained at the heart of trade for another century. High domestic African labor costs, supported by river trade, imperial demand, and Saharan exports, meant that the Portuguese could not compete for slaves except in temporary conditions of climatic distress or political disruption.

The New World value of labor rose simultaneously with the collapse of the coastal economy of Central Africa. The number of Native Americans available for impressment in Brazil, the West Indies, and lowland Spanish mainland territories was in sharp decline. Demand for unskilled field hands rose dramatically after 1570, as the Portuguese opened up the rich black clays of northeastern Brazil to sugar cultivation (Schwartz 1985). Sugar had earlier absorbed smaller numbers of enslaved Africans as workers on the Atlantic islands just off shore (Madeira and S. Tomé in particular—see Garfield 1991), but after 1600 the African trade became driven by demand for labor on New World sugar plantations that fed a seemingly insatiable European taste for sweetness and filled the bellies of often-hungry American slaves and of Africans with strong rums distilled from the molasses boiled off the cane juice as it crystallized into muscovado (Phillips 1985, J.H. Galloway 1989, Mintz 1985).

Brazil's sugar industry grew rapidly with injections of Dutch capital after 1600, and in the 1620s the Dutch West India Company seized the Portuguese colony and sent slaving captains after the labor that its American plantations craved by mounting assaults on Portugal's African installations at Mina and Angola. However, in the 1640s, the Portuguese drove the Company out of Brazil and efforts in Africa failed to draw significant quantities of slaves away from the local labor markets. The Dutch then

transferred their financial attentions to English islands in the Caribbean, principally Barbados. There their backing touched off a new sugar frontier that spread by 1700 through Jamaica and then, fuelled by British and French capital in the eighteenth century, over all other suitable islands. Large and geographically favored French Saint Domingue (now Haiti) was the boom sugar colony of the 1700s. The sugar islands of the West Indies accounted for 35 to 40 per cent of all the slaves landed in the Americas. All sugar colonies together, including Brazil, probably absorbed 65 per cent of the total. Clearly, sugar powered the Atlantic trade in slaves before the turn of the nineteenth century.

In the Caribbean, only Spanish Cuba remained outside the expanding sphere of slave-worked plantations. The island remained little more than a way-station for ships carrying silver bars from mainland mines back to Europe, protected by a wall of Spanish imperial restrictions on trade meant to keep foreigners away from the Mexican and Peruvian silver that, for Spain, removed the necessity of resorting to such laborious methods of acquiring wealth as the cultivation of sugar to buy the manufactured products of the growing economies of northern Europe.

The only American labor market able to compete for slaves with the parade of booming Caribbean sugar islands was south-central Brazil. There, after about 1700, Portuguese prospectors opened up the largest gold and diamond strikes ever discovered up to that time. But the gold dust from these "General Mines" (Minas Gerais) seeped steadily through the leaky membrane of Lisbon's commercial restrictions to finance English suppliers of textiles and other manufactures to Portugal, the Bank of England, and ultimately nascent manufacturers in Britain. Portuguese and Brazilian merchants were left to cash in on the flows of Brazilian gold largely by sending low-cost goods to Africa to buy slaves, whom they then sent to Brazil to sell for the specie they could not otherwise obtain. The Minas gold boom dissipated after about the middle of the eighteenth century, leaving Caribbean and Brazilian sugar (and secondarily cotton and other Brazilian agricultural sectors) once again the main engine behind the Atlantic trade in slaves. Brazilian gold had taken only about 20 per cent of the Africans sent as slaves to the Americas.

The British, supplying and financing much Portuguese trading in the Atlantic through intermediaries in Lisbon, thus expanded beyond their own colonial markets in the Caribbean and added to their extensive stake in American slavery. British slavers in search of the silver pieces of eight in which Spanish buyers eagerly paid also smuggled African labor directly to mainland Spanish ports from Cartagena to Buenos Aires. They, and earlier *asiento*-holding legal suppliers, delivered less than 10 per cent of the total slaves to the Spanish Main.

North America figured as hardly more than an afterthought in these pan-Atlantic patterns of forced migration from Africa. Ships delivering slaves to the sugar islands of the Caribbean found their way back to Europe by following the Gulf Stream north along the English colonies of the mainland, and some carried slaves they had not sold in the West Indies to sell there. The first Africans dropped off at Jamestown as slaves in 1619 very likely were left under these circumstances. Later, tobacco from the Chesapeake seldom offered profits comparable to those available from selling slaves for sugar in the West Indies, nor did rice from South Carolina. British slavers proved unreliable suppliers of labor under these circumstances, thus leaving a share of the eighteenth-century North American market to Rhode Islanders, who carved out a marginal, highly specialized niche for themselves by selling rum on West African coasts otherwise dominated by the giant slaving fleets of Britain and France.

Even the Atlantic centers of slave imports at Charleston and in the rivers feeding Chesapeake Bay received only relatively small and intermittent shipments of captive labor. Gulf Coast ports like Mobile and New Orleans competed even less successfully with the alternative destinations within the Spanish

or French colonial spheres, the silver-yielding ports in Central America and the burgeoning sugar plantations of Saint Domingue. In the end, not many more than 600,000 Africans were set ashore in all of North America.

Those few hundred thousand captive Africans, in the aggregate, possessed distinctive characteristics compared to the larger slave populations of Brazil and the Caribbean, owing to the small size and marginality of the mainland colonies where they ended up. In all probability—allowing for the absence of sustained research concentrated on aspects of the trade relevant to these commercial issues—the slaves of the Chesapeake included more women than the usual one-to-two minority of females sent from Africa. The uncertainty of receiving, or paying for, replacements encouraged planters to favor strategies of reproduction among the slaves they held, very likely including purchase of women not similarly sought on Caribbean sugar plantations early in the eighteenth century.

In the Gulf colonies, one would expect unusually large proportions of skilled, perhaps even Caribbean-born, domestic servants and artisans, that is, slaves able to command a price high enough to pay merchants to bring them on to mainland backwaters rather than selling them in the more prosperous sugar islands. These skilled and culturally assimilated individuals would have won, or purchased, their own manumission at rates higher than raw recruits from Africa could have managed elsewhere. Such a pattern would have resembled the slave populations found in the first days of the Spanish conquests, concentrated in the towns and sometimes able to attain freedom while Native Americans still supplied most unskilled field labor. At moments of temporary oversupply in the Caribbean, North America would also have served as a secondary market for unskilled slaves unsaleable there.

The high proportion of females among the slaves in the Chesapeake enabled that population, uniquely among all others in the New World, to multiply its own numbers, so that by the early nineteenth century—when Chesapeake tobacco fell on hard times, when the cotton areas of Alabama and Mississippi started to take shape, and when the new United States banned further imports of Africans as slaves—slave-owners in Virginia and the Carolinas found themselves with surplus labor on their hands and could send a portion of their slaves off to satisfy the enormous demands for hands among would-be planters then erecting a Cotton Kingdom in the Mississippi woods.

Overall, the number of people sucked from Africa into American fields, pits and placers, and sugar-boiling houses rose from hundreds and thousands each year in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to tens of thousands each year throughout most of the eighteenth century—almost surely around ten to twelve million in all (Curtin 1969, Lovejoy 1989). As prices rose in Africa, as well as in the Americas, and as the British (and also the French) applied to the African trade even a small percentage of the huge commercial capital resources available to them by the eighteenth century, European slavers competed successfully in West Africa with even domestic African markets for agricultural and other labor. After about 1670, slaving spread along the coast of Lower Guinea from the Gold Coast east past the Niger Delta to the Cameroons—with the core of this region (modern Togo and Benin) acquiring its accurate, if sinister, label as the “Slave Coast” (Kea 1982). During times of drought and economic distress inland, slaves even figured prominently among the usually diversified commodity exports of “Senegambia,” the coast of the Sudanic lands east of Cape Verde. In Angola, the Central African trade spread north beyond the Zaire to the Loango Coast from its original center at Luanda and south past the bay at Benguela to the deserted wastes of the Kalahari Desert margins (Miller 1988a).

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS

Inland in Africa, the increased intensity of the Atlantic trade involved only a small percentage of the total production of the African agricultural and pastoral economies (Manning 1982, Lovejoy 1983). However, even on this marginal scale these imports and exports allowed ambitious warlords and, later, merchant princes to build new political systems out of the profits of their raiding and trading—for people as well as for commodities—and then to turn to profitable brokering of the spoils of their successors' violence elsewhere, usually farther into the interior of the continent. In the forested regions of West Africa, the spectacular examples of successful warrior kingdoms were Asante (behind the Gold Coast), Dahomey (modern Benin), and Oyo, the Yoruba state heir to the political institutions of Ife (Wilks 1982, Manning 1982, Law 1977). Over time, all tended to fall under the control of merchant factions among their complex political groupings. Similar African warlords thriving on slaving emerged inland from Portuguese Angola—particularly the Ovimbundu kingdoms and, in the very heart of central Africa, the empire of the Lunda (Miller 1988a).

These powerful Africans derived key advantages from Atlantic imports and exports: first, their conquests brought large numbers of adult male captives who were difficult and dangerous to try to assimilate at home, and the Europeans bought these low-cost gains of their violent seizures in seemingly unlimited quantities. Second, they made effective use of the trade goods that capitalist merchants “advanced” on credit, even to upstarts in African terms—unscrupulous men willing to do the dirty work of slaving. In African economies fundamentally short of financial capital, such loans made a key difference in stimulating growth. Imported guns, like liberal consumption and distribution of the alcoholic drink landed at the coast, supported these nouveau-riche pretensions in generating noisy and spectacular displays of power, but, although not irrelevant to violence and raiding, they added little real military power to the horses, guerrilla tactics, and other older components of African military strategies (Thornton 1988, *contra* Inikori 1977). Of greater impact was the ability these imports gave their owners to finance purchases of slaves and to attract other followers. In this sense, of building political retinues and other followings, the Atlantic commerce enabled its African beneficiaries to tip the balance of political force and social prestige in the parts of the continent closest to the coast from old African authorities, and their local roots of power, to new princes and merchants indirectly owing their prominence to their access to European capital, men surrounded by slaves from other parts of Africa rather than by wives, children, or subjects born closer to home.

The millions of Africans taken abroad as slaves by the Europeans, when distributed, as they were, over four centuries (roughly 1440 to 1860), counted for less in the demography of the continent than did similar millions of people kept in Africa as enslaved followers of the new regimes (Manning 1983, but also Inikori 1981). Nor did the number of people exiled approach the multitudes left behind, intermittently afflicted by smallpox and other diseases associated with the trade, many starving or dispersed by droughts that repeatedly seared vast areas in the Sudan and in the drier regions of Central Africa. Droughts, not coincidentally, coincided with significant upswings in exports of slaves at the end of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although many historians have seen the Atlantic slave trade as a debilitating drain on African population levels, and although violence certainly devastated local regions in the short run, to the enormous suffering of many victims, most of them blameless, losses to European slaving were, in aggregate and in the long run, a demographically bearable “cost” of obtaining imported capital (in the form of monetized trade commodities) that enabled the new African political powers to retain, and

relocate, more followers than they sent off. African slavers shifted this tragic trade-off further in the direction of keeping people, rather than disposing of them, by selling to the Europeans twice as many males, increasingly young boys, as they gave up females, thus keeping women they captured to bear their children at home, in Africa (Geggus 1989, Eltis 1986).

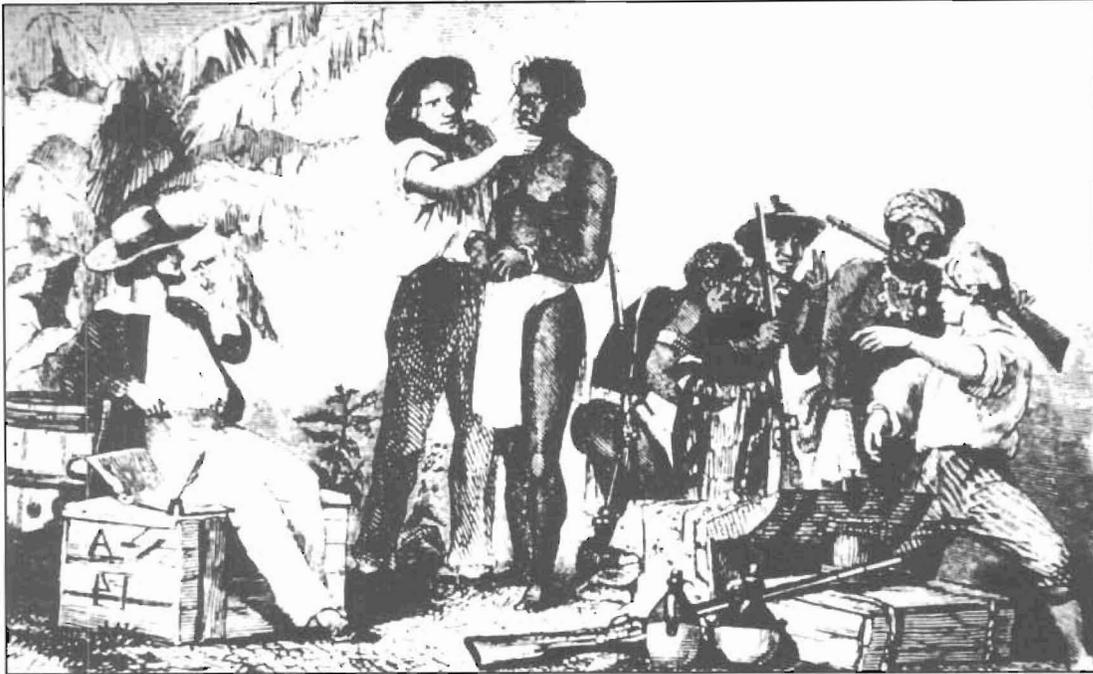
Historians have frequently emphasized the destructive aspects of the Atlantic trade in economic terms as well, seeing the foreign imports as substitutes for the products of domestic artisans, thus ruinous of African domestic cottage industry. But population losses at worst only leveled off demographic growth rates that already generated populations larger than could survive recurrent periods of drought, and European goods came on economically stimulating terms of credit. The trade therefore instead would have provided badly needed capital, would have pressured laboring populations—including greater proportions of vulnerable slaves—to produce commodities as well as offspring, and would thus broadly have “developed” Africa—if primarily to the benefit of the minority who thus increased their power. These changes, like the parallel transformations gathering momentum in Europe at the same time, worked to the considerable expense of the majority whose efforts supported them, and particularly also to the enormous personal cost of the unfortunates who died in war or along the path to the coast or who survived to set out to the Americas.

Structurally, these tendencies replaced old African production and distribution systems with new commercialized economic sectors, in which circulated the Atlantic commodities that Africans monetized—shells, copper, iron rods, and even textiles. The gradual emergence of merchant princes at the head of the former warrior states confirms the general picture of African economies that moved along lines parallel to the contemporaneous rise of commercial bourgeoisies in Europe. Africa, in short, participated in the profound movement toward modern capitalism along with every other part of the Atlantic basin in the eighteenth century. The slave export trade, from the perspectives of most Africans, slavers or enslaved, was only part of other trends, much more complex and not more than ambiguously destructive. No true tragedy ever arises from straightforward circumstances.

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

For those enslaved, however, the experience of being seized, marched under extreme physical duress toward the coast, shoved and chained in crude pens near the ocean beaches, herded into unstable and dangerous canoes tossing on heavy breakers, and finally locked in shocking squalor in the hold of a rolling ship, was the entire show, often one with only a single, final scene. No one knows how many died before ever reaching the hands of European shippers, but 50 per cent could easily represent a conservative estimate.

Early in the history of slaving, and even later among merchants who entered the African trade only as an occasional sideline, captains rigged crude planking over the deep holds of general merchantmen, reserving the lower reaches for water and other provisions for their human cargoes. In the main centers of slaving—Liverpool in western England, Nantes in France, and Brazilian ports like Salvador (da Bahia) and Rio de Janeiro—some traders built specialized vessels equipped for carrying slaves by the high-volume years of the eighteenth century—virtual floating prisons, complete with heavy bolted hatch covers and other security features intended to protect the officers and crew from the rage of the people they imprisoned below decks.



Inspection of a slave in Africa before purchase from his African captors. Early nineteenth-century engraving.

Slaving vessels ranged in size from small sloops holding only eighty or a hundred captives upward to giant brigs and ships carrying 500 or 600, and more. Most captains found capacities of 300 a viable compromise between economies of scale and the diseconomies of remaining too long in African waters trying to fill a larger hold, while the captives already on hand began to fall ill and die. The analogy that struck the Portuguese as expressive of the horrors of these ships was the phrase “floating tombs” (*tumbeiros*). The specter of mortality among the slaves, feared as a business risk more than arising out of any sense of humane compassion for the victims of the trade, hovered over the organization of slaving at sea. Depending on where along the African coast a ship filled its hold with slaves and on its destination in the Americas, the trans-Atlantic crossing—the famous “middle passage”—could take anywhere from thirty to 120 days, or more. Greater numbers of slaves succumbed on longer voyages, if only because they then remained on board for longer periods of time. If storms or calms delayed landfall beyond the point where the water and food stored in the hold could sustain the cargo, the slaves could perish in numbers that alarmed even hardened veterans of the trade and caused occasional major financial reverses for their backers. The symptoms of illness, and by extension those underlying largely unknown direct causes of death, that struck the slaves’ captors most forcefully were revolting dysenteries and a lethargy approaching stupor, both consistent with near-terminal dehydration, contaminated water, spoiled provisions, and the spread of contagious pathogens within the cramped confines of the space below decks left to the slaves (Miller 1988b).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before the trade had become the serious business of merchants aiming to protect investments in human flesh and while many captives boarded the ships already grossly debilitated from war and famine in Africa, an average of 25 per cent of the living bodies

jammed into the holds were lifted lifelessly out of them at sea and dumped over the gunwales of the ships before making landfall in America. Percentages of those who died before arrival in the New World fell throughout the eighteenth century toward 10 per cent, as slavers carried less inadequate provisions, occasionally inoculated against smallpox, and introduced other sanitary measures. Privileged modern Americans can scarcely imagine the resilience and sufferings of the slaves who survived. Those who reached North America made one of the lengthiest crossings in regular use, though many may have regained some strength from stops along the way for provisions and fresh water at one or another of the islands in the Caribbean.

A VIEW FROM MISSISSIPPI, BEFORE 1800

From the perspectives of Spain and France, in control of the North American Gulf Coast in the eighteenth century, and from the viewpoints of British and colonial shippers and slave-owners in the Atlantic colonies, the scattered trading settlements along the Mississippi mattered little. African slaves were expensive, and merchants who traded in them undertook the substantial physical and financial risks of getting them through the middle passage only when they anticipated selling their captives for a high return in specie. The ideal exchange therefore involved selling slaves directly to the gold mines of Minas Gerais in Brazil or delivering them to one of the silver-exporting ports of the Spaniards. The latter was an opportunity so prized that a succession of foreign merchants—Portuguese, Dutch, French, and finally English—vied with one another for royal license, the famous Spanish *asiento*, to bring slaves to Spain's New World domains. Sugar, the seemingly limitless economic frontier of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was almost as advantageous, so long as muscovado brought high prices in the bullion-based hard-currency economies of Europe. The North American slavers from Rhode Island took their rum to Africa because the slaves they bought there earned sterling credits in the West Indies in the form of sugar-backed bills drawn on England, with which they covered persistent unfavorable balances of direct trade with the mother country. Few of those with slaves to sell therefore sought buyers in Mississippi, so long as the region remained valuable primarily for strategic advantage or for trade with Native Americans, who paid for what they bought mostly in deerskins.

The concentrations of Africans nearest to Mississippi labored in faraway South Carolina, where plantations produced rice for markets in southern Europe and the Caribbean, thus attracting greater, but still far from large, numbers of slaves. Otherwise, blacks in New Orleans and other Mississippi towns arrived to practice crafts or to provide domestic service—including higher proportions of freepeople and American-born slaves than normally witnessed in plantation zones filled with raw survivors of the long Atlantic passage. Even later, the slaves who came from the Chesapeake to hack clearings and plant cotton contained few individuals born in Africa. Rather, they were black Americans, children of the women held in bondage in Virginia and Carolina.

The small numbers of early arrivals would have had little opportunity to draw on African cultural resources to survive in Mississippi, as culture is something shared and exists only in its practice. Living alone amidst Spaniards or French, sometimes finding a narrow space to advance within the limits of their *métier*, and coming from a wide range of radically differing African cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the preferred cultural options of blacks in colonial Mississippi ran toward assimilation into the practices of their masters and employers, merging into the mixed lower *castas* in the towns, as Spanish aristocrats

haughtily termed the similarly heterogeneous mobs of the towns and cities of Central and South America. Those who fled to surrounding nations of Native Americans, too, assimilated. What was “African,” what was merely poor, and what was local frontier regionalism in their thought and behavior would have been hard to distinguish and probably of little concern to them. Blacks—slave and free—thus probably had less distinctive about themselves than what each of them shared with the non-blacks among whom they lived.

Similarly, the plantation life that emerged later in the slave quarters of the nineteenth century owed little directly to Africa, although African parents had passed on many widespread motifs and characters from their homelands to their children born in the tobacco regions of the Chesapeake, and their children in turn to the young men and women who came to Mississippi as slaves (Raboteau 1987, Blassingame 1979, Genovese 1974, Stuckey 1987). By the nineteenth century, however, slaves clustered in numbers easily adequate to sustain a distinctive cultural milieu, but one as much Christian, Anglophone, and American as specifically African.

The cultural creativity and spontaneity of the slaves in America easily matched the rapidity and diversity of change among their lost relatives and countrymen and -women in Africa. There, merchants in the Sudan developed their own distinctive versions of the Islamic faith they learned from merchants from beyond the Sahara, politicians invested wealth derived from taxing their trade in inventing refined state cultures, warlords forcibly redefined the meanings of ethnicity among people they subjected to their rule, and vast numbers of slaves, retained in Africa far from their native villages, learned the languages and habits of their masters. More and more deeply involved in the dynamic pan-Atlantic conjunction of financial stimulus, labor mobilization, and expanding frontiers—trading, slaving, settlement, mining, and planting—people in Africa, Africans in the Americas, and the Native Americans in Mississippi and elsewhere resembled one another more in their common experience of capitalist growth and transformation than they differed in language or appearance. In Mississippi, as in Asante, the Atlantic world was already becoming one, even as all paradoxically asserted their distinctiveness in cultural terms—Carolina, Choctaw, Kongo, Jamaican, or Mississippian.

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The major authority on Asante reflects on a generation of scholarship, hence good for bibliography on a subject lacking a single major synthesis for the period of the slave trade.

Indians of Mississippi: 1540-1700

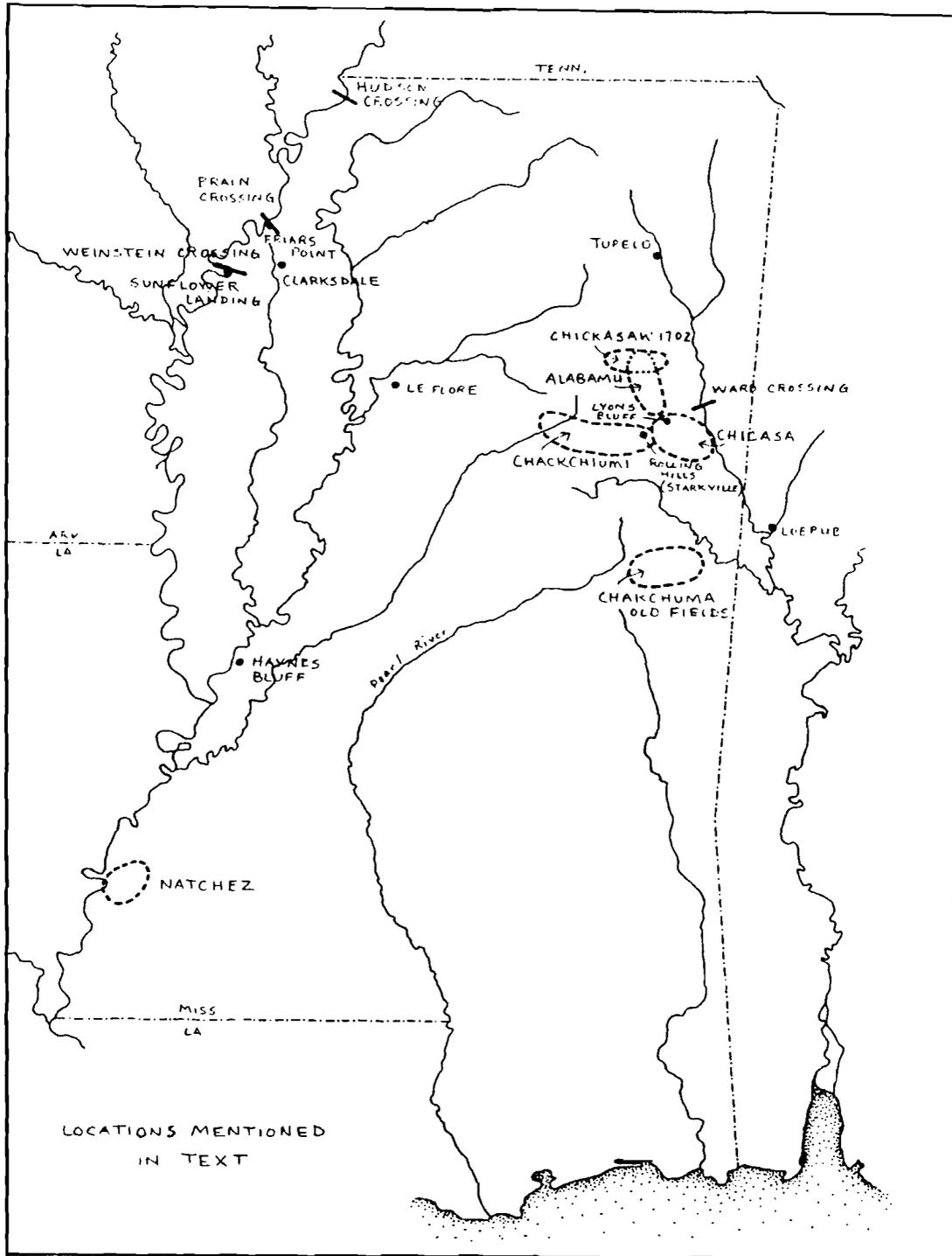
Marvin T. Smith

The historic period for Mississippi's Indians dawned in the fall of 1540 when Hernando de Soto and his expedition crossed the Tombigbee River. The chroniclers of the Soto expedition left a tantalizing, but brief, glimpse of the local native peoples, and for several hundred years (beginning with Guillaume De Lisle in 1718), scholars have puzzled over the route (Swanton 1985). Today we are closer to understanding where Soto traversed the state of Mississippi, but we are only beginning to understand the subsequent changes in aboriginal lifestyles.

Many scholars have wrestled with the route of Soto in the course of the last couple of decades, as the 450th anniversary of the expedition nears. The first major synthesis in this era which relied on historical *and* archaeological data was that proposed by Jeffrey Brain, Alan Toth, and Antonio Rodriguez-Buckingham (1974). Building on the important contribution of Phillips, Ford, and Griffin (1951), Brain and his colleagues carefully analyzed the information from the Soto narratives and used recent data about the locations of Indian archaeological sites which were occupied at the Soto dateline. They also had information from European artifacts, believed to have been left from the expedition. Brain and his colleagues favored a location of Chicaça (Chickasaw) near their eighteenth-century location around present Tupelo, Mississippi. From here, they thought that Soto travelled northwest to Alabamu, and leaving Alabamu, they travelled seven to nine days through an uninhabited area. They finally arrived at the first town of Quizquiz, which Brain *et al.* placed at Clarksdale, Mississippi. Other towns of Quizquiz included the Rufus Davis and Montgomery sites, and the authors noted that the Humber, Parchman, Craig, Dickerson, and Saloman sites in the immediate area also appear to have been occupied at the Soto dateline (Brain *et al.* 1974:258-262). According to their reconstruction, Soto crossed the Mississippi River near Friar's Point in Coahoma County.

Richard Weinstein (1985) proposed a route from Chicaça near Tupelo westward along the Skuna River to pick up a historic Indian trail, Charley's Trace, to the Sunflower River area. He suggested that the Oliver site, an archaeological site which has produced early Spanish Clarksdale bells, was the first town of Quizquiz. Other towns of Quizquiz would include Alligator and Sunflower Landing, although Weinstein noted some problems with the spacing of these sites and the distances noted in the narratives (Weinstein 1985:19). Weinstein would have Soto cross the Mississippi at Sunflower Landing.

In 1987, James Atkinson presented a number of new arguments about the route of Soto. Atkinson proposed a more southerly location for the Chickasaw, after years of intensive study by various archaeologists in northeastern Mississippi. Atkinson suggested that Chicaça was located along the lower



reaches of Tibbee Creek in an area between present Columbus and Starkville. He placed the closely related Alabamu along Chuquatonchee and Houlika creeks to the northwest, and suggested that the Chackchiuma were located near present Starkville and westward, especially corresponding with the Rolling Hills archaeological complex (Atkinson 1979; see also Galloway 1982). It is clear from the narratives that Alabamu was northwest of Chicaça, but the location of the Chackchiuma is not specified in the documents. Atkinson placed the Chackchiuma near Starkville, based on eighteenth-century documents and the presence of contact period archaeological sites.

From Alabamu, Atkinson suggested that Soto travelled northwest along Houlika Creek to a point near present Houston, Mississippi. From this area, they followed the Yalobusha drainage into the Yazoo Basin, picking up an historic Indian trail, Charley's Trace, which led northwest to the Mississippi River in the vicinity of Sunflower Bend in Coahoma County.

Charles Hudson, Marvin Smith, and Chester DePratter (1990) have produced the most recent effort at tracing Soto through Mississippi. Following Rufus Ward (1986), they suggest a crossing of the Tombigbee at Barton Ferry, although they do not rule out a more southerly crossing near Columbus. Although the site of Chicaça is not known, they suggest that Chicaça was clearly a paramount chiefdom, and they note that most paramount chiefs of the sixteenth century lived in mound centers. However, they also note that the general area of Chicaça had a dispersed settlement pattern according to Elvas, a participant in the entrada. Hudson *et al.* are drawn to Atkinson's location of Chicaça on Tibbee Creek, but caution that more research is necessary. They suggest locations for the tributaries: Chackchiuma was located at the Lubbub Creek area (perhaps even including the Lubbub Creek site) and Alabamu was located at the Line Creek area (perhaps even including the Lyon's Bluff site). From Chicaça, Soto travelled northwest through Alabamu and continued on to near present Houston, Mississippi. From here Hudson *et al.* argue that the expedition attempted to avoid the swampy Yazoo Basin, and travelled north toward New Albany, then northwest through Holly Springs and west to the Mississippi River, reaching the first town of Quizquiz at the Irby archaeological site in De Soto County. Other Quizquiz towns include the Lake Cormorant site and the Norfolk site. Thus by this scenario, Soto crossed the Mississippi in present De Soto County, and Hudson and his colleagues argue that this more northerly crossing is consistent with a route through Arkansas which enjoys a good consensus among archaeologists (Morse and Morse 1983; Hudson 1985). Hudson and his colleagues explain the presence of Clarksdale bells and other artifacts further south in Coahoma County by the fact that this area is immediately across the river from the place where Soto's army spent the fourth winter and later disembarked for Mexico via the Mississippi River. Before disembarking, they simply discarded everything that they did not need at this location.

What sort of societies did Soto encounter? It is clear that the people on the Mississippi River were mound-building chiefdoms, but the nature of Indian societies in eastern Mississippi has been hotly debated in recent years. Hudson *et al.* favor the presence of a paramount chiefdom of Chicaça, with known subjects Alabamu and Chackchiuma. They suggest that such complex political organization was usually accompanied by mound building elsewhere on the route, and expect that Chicaça of the sixteenth century should have been located at a mound center.

The other argument has been proposed by Jay Johnson and other colleagues (Johnson and Sparks 1986; Johnson and Lehmann 1990). They argue that there had already been a change in settlement organization prior to the Soto entrada, and that Indians in northeastern Mississippi were living in dispersed hamlets and farmsteads, instead of in palisaded villages (some with mounds). They contrast what they

term Protohistoric settlement with earlier Mississippian settlement, and believe that the “protohistoric” began prior to Soto based on two radiocarbon dates (*ca.* A.D. 1490) and a lack of European artifacts from their small sites. The historical data from the Soto expedition suggests that many people did live in dispersed settlements, but that the main town of Chicaça was a palisaded village of 20 houses. Furthermore, the use of palisaded towns with mounds can also be demonstrated by radiocarbon dates. Richard A. Marshall reports a date of 1556 from a Sorrels phase house in the palisaded, mound village area of the Lyons Bluff site (there is another, more dispersed village adjacent to the palisaded village which he assigns to the subsequent Mhoon phase) (Marshall 1986). Thus we have a palisaded town with a mound apparently in use at the Soto period, but we also have dispersed settlement prior to Soto. Can we resolve this seeming contradiction?

Without arguing the problems of relying on too few radiocarbon dates, let us assume that the dates are correct. Recent analysis of excavated material from Lyon’s Bluff has turned up several European artifacts, tentatively identified by Kathleen Deagan of the Florida Museum of Natural History as possible early sixteenth-century Spanish ceramics and glass (Richard Marshall, personal communication). If this identification is upheld, then Lyon’s Bluff is virtually the only location in the interior where Spanish domestic refuse has been found outside of Florida. This would imply the presence of Spaniards, strongly suggesting that Lyon’s Bluff may be the main town of Chicaça, the location of the Soto winter camp of 1540-1541. The find of another probably early Spanish artifact, a perforated metal pendant, about one mile away near Harmon Lake, Line Creek, Clay County, would help support this interpretation (Marshall 1978, personal communication). Thus the capital *was* a mound center in Soto’s day, validating Atkinson’s general location and Hudson *et al.*’s thesis of mound use. But what about Johnson and his colleagues? They were also partially correct. Many of the Indians lived in dispersed hamlets or farmsteads, just as the Soto narratives described, but I also suspect that many of the sites which they have located are post-Soto.

But what about Indians in the Yazoo Basin and along the Mississippi at the Soto dateline? Here there were powerful chiefdoms consisting of several large towns with many mounds. Recently, David Hally (Hally, Smith, and Langford 1990) has noted that many sixteenth-century Mississippian Indian polities in northwestern Georgia consisted of 6-8 towns clustered in an area approximately 40 km in diameter, with unoccupied buffer zones in between. There may be some hint of a similar settlement pattern in Mississippi in the Mississippi/Yazoo basin. Brain (1978, 1988; see also Phillips 1970) suggests that the Walls, Hushpuckena II, Wasp Lake, and Emerald phases date to the sixteenth-century era. The distribution of sites of these phases suggests several clusters, which may reflect aboriginal polities. Thus there is a cluster of sites of the Walls phase in De Soto County (Irby, Lake Cormorant, Norfolk), a cluster of sites of the Hushpuckena II Phase around Coahoma County (Clarksdale, Oliver, Dickerson, Humber, Davis, etc.), a cluster of sites south of Greenville (Law, Magee, Silver City, Arcola, Leland, Refuge, Rolling Fork), a cluster near Vicksburg (Haynes Bluff, Glass, Aden), and finally a cluster near Natchez—the Emerald Phase (Foster, Emerald, Fatherland sites). Brain groups these clusters differently, combining Haynes Bluff, and Law, Magee, Russell, Deasonville, and others into his Wasp Lake I phase, and certainly he has a thorough knowledge of the local Indian ceramics, but most of these sites have never been excavated, and they are thus relatively unknown. Clearly more chronological control is needed, but there is little doubt of populous, multi-town polities in existence in this region at the Soto dateline.

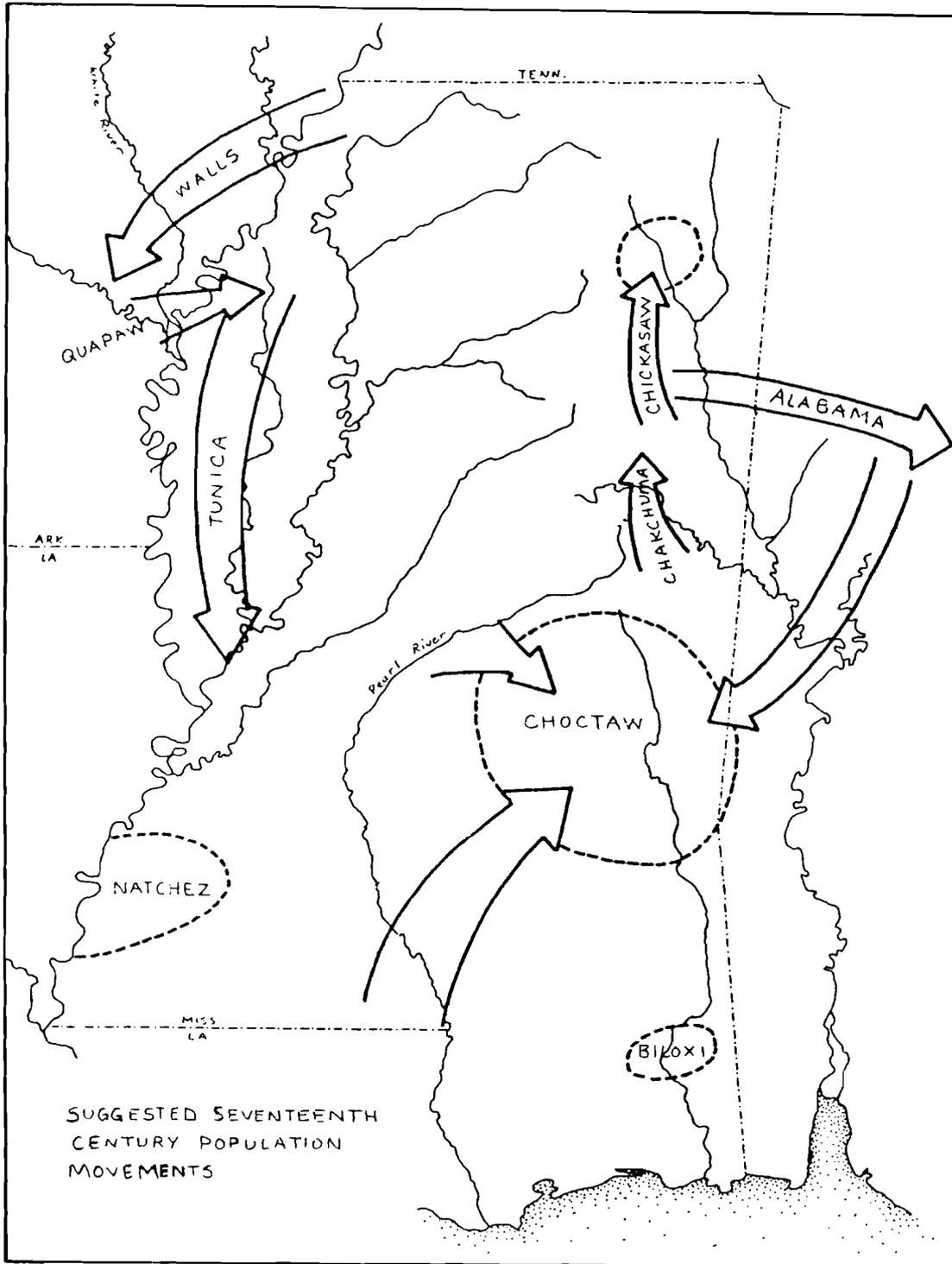
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The “seventeenth century” (actually 1543-1682) remains the dark age of southeastern archaeology and history. It is a period when there were no Europeans in the interior to leave historical records of the Indians, and it is a time which has received little archaeological research in Mississippi and many other areas of the South. If we can generalize from areas of Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia further east, then this was a time of great change (Smith 1987). Following European contact, Native Americans greatly declined in population since they had no natural immunity to the newly arrived diseases of the Old World (Dobyns 1983; Ramenofsky 1987; Smith 1987). As their population declined, their political organization crumbled, and the once powerful chiefdoms were recast into less organized groups. In Mississippi, the Natchez appear to be an exception to the general rule of political decline, but the Chickasaw are a good example. The Yazoo Basin was almost totally depopulated during this period (Ramenofsky 1987; Brain 1988). In many areas of the Southeast, great population movements were set in motion, as Indians fled diseased areas or as aboriginal balances of power shifted when groups were differentially affected by disease (Smith 1987).

What can we say about Mississippi’s seventeenth-century inhabitants? At this time, almost nothing is known but a few tantalizing bits of information. In eastern Mississippi, research by Johnson, Marshall, Atkinson, and others has demonstrated a dense concentration of poorly dated sites in the Black Prairie region of the state (Johnson and Sparks 1986; Johnson and Lehmann 1990; Atkinson 1979, 1987). If we assume that Soto’s Chicaça was located at or near the Lyon’s Bluff site, and we know from both historical and archaeological sources of information that eighteenth-century Chickasaw sites were located in and around present Tupelo, Mississippi (Jennings 1941), then we can suggest a gradual movement to the north during the seventeenth century. The Chickasaw seem to have followed the western edge of the Black Prairie in their move north. Further excavations in this area may eventually demonstrate a slow movement northward. There is no reason to doubt that European materials were reaching the Chickasaw during the seventeenth century (cf. Smith 1987 for eastern Alabama; see also Waselkov 1989), but such artifacts will be found primarily as burial accompaniments and will not be seen in surface survey. Typical seventeenth-century artifacts have not been reported in the Tupelo area. I have had the opportunity to view several large private collections of hundreds of grave lots from this area, and it is clear from that evidence that the Chickasaw were not in the Tupelo area prior to the beginning of the eighteenth century or terminal seventeenth century.

From historical records we know that the Alabamu moved to present Alabama to settle near the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers by 1686 (Boyd 1937), and Galloway (1991) suggests that they were probably in that location in 1675 when Bishop Calderón enumerates towns in the area. Although Calderón does not specifically mention the Alabamu, he does list the related Muklasha, Pacana, and Tawasa. It is an interesting twist of fate that the state and river name, Alabama, came from a Mississippi Indian tribe. This movement suggests that some of the native groups in Mississippi were participating in the Spanish trade out of Florida, and it clearly documents long distance movements in the seventeenth century in our study area.

Atkinson (1979) has argued that the Chackchiuma remained virtually in place from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, and he attributes the Rolling Hills complex of the Starkville region to them. It is clear that the European artifacts found in these sites date to the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries; the location of the eighteenth-century Chackchiuma remains to be determined. Historical



documents do clearly place the Chackchiuma between the Chickasaw and the Choctaw in the eighteenth century, so a location near Starkville cannot be too far amiss (Galloway 1982). Galloway (1982) believes that Chackchiuma Old Fields were located in northern Noxubee County, according to her analysis of early French accounts.

To date, few seventeenth-century European artifacts (see Smith 1987; Waselkov 1989) have been found in Mississippi to help document occupied areas. There are at least two exceptions in addition to the Rolling Hills material: some glass beads, bells, brass animal effigy pendants, and an axe from the LeFlore site in Grenada County (Grenada Museum and Cottonlandia Museum collections) which date to the late seventeenth century, and some glass beads of the early seventeenth century from a site near Natchez (Logan Sewell collection). Ian Brown (1985) describes material from the O'Quinn site near Natchez which appears to date to the seventeenth century, and O'Quinn may be the site which produced the Sewell collection. The Logan Sewell beads particularly point out the fact that Mississippi was not isolated from the Spanish trade out of Florida, and other sites should be expected to yield similar materials upon excavation. Indeed, I have examined such material from the Little Rock, Arkansas airport site (Goldsmith-Oliver site) excavated by Marvin Jeter. Seventeenth-century Spanish materials were traded into Mississippi; we only have to find and recognize them.

The Mississippi/Yazoo valley was an arena of great change during the seventeenth century. I have already mentioned the finding of early seventeenth-century Spanish trade material in a site near Natchez. It is clear that there was a continuity of aboriginal population in this area (the Emerald Phase) from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Soto never directly visited this area, although the remains of his expedition passed by it on the Mississippi River as they headed back to Mexico. This lack of direct contact may have saved the inhabitants of the area from destructive disease contacts. When the French contacted the Natchez in 1682, they were still a viable polity. Brain (1982) argues that the 1682 encounter may have taken place at the Foster or Emerald sites, as well as near the Grand Village area to the south, but by the beginning of the eighteenth century power had definitely shifted to the south. Eighteenth-century Natchez Indians were made up of several refugee tribes, such as the Tioux and Grigra (see Brain 1982), and the Natchez themselves quickly became refugees following the revolt of 1729.

In the Yazoo Basin, the people of the Parchman phase lived in a large area around Coahoma County (Brain 1988:272), but the more northerly Walls Phase area appears to have been abandoned (David Dye, personal communication). Morse and Morse (1983) suggest that the Walls Phase people may have moved into Arkansas to become one constituent of the Quapaw phase. In the lower Yazoo Basin, the Wasp Lake II phase appears to be a continuity of earlier peoples (Brain 1988:272). Brain sees the Parchman phase as being ancestral to the Tunica, and it is thus apparent that the Tunica moved south around the middle of the seventeenth century to be located at the Haynes Bluff site when La Salle arrived in the area (Brain 1988). Only a few Oliver phase (probably ethnically Quapaw) peoples were still found in the upper Yazoo Basin by the end of the century, and they were clearly non-Tunica newcomers, probably from Arkansas (Brain 1988).

What of the origins of Mississippi's largest and best known tribe, the Choctaw? While much is known about the location of the Choctaw in the eighteenth century (Blitz 1985; Carleton 1989), relatively little is known of their prehistory. It has been suggested that the people called Paffallaya or Apafalaya contacted by Soto were Choctaw (Swanton 1985:218) on linguistic grounds. Hudson and his colleagues place Paffallaya province on the Black Warrior River at a cluster of sites which includes Snow's Bend and Moundville. If these people were part or even all of the people later called Choctaw, then a movement

to the west is suggested. The Choctaw have their own origin traditions, claiming to come from the Nanih Waiyah mound. This tradition would suggest that some or all of the Choctaw had lived in the North Central Plateau of Mississippi for hundreds of years. It is quite possible that both interpretations are correct. The eighteenth-century Choctaw were, in all probability, an amalgamation of several prehistoric groups, much as the eighteenth-century Creek Confederacy. This is the theme of a recent paper by Patricia Galloway (1989). Galloway argues that the Choctaw of the eighteenth century were a multi-ethnic confederacy of remnants of the Moundville chiefdom of western Alabama and Plaquemine culture groups from west of the Pearl River or along the lower Pearl. They came together in a previously unoccupied area of central Mississippi.

Other areas of Mississippi were occupied when the French returned at the end of the seventeenth century. The Biloxi were located on the Pascagoula River some sixteen leagues inland, and other villages were scattered downstream (Shellberg 1975), and we have no way of knowing if they were recent arrivals or if they had lived in his area for centuries. Little is known of their neighbors the Pascagoula, but Giardino (1984:238) places the Colapissa near the mouth of the Pearl River between 1705-1712. More research is needed in southern and coastal Mississippi.

During the seventeenth century, the way of life of Mississippi's Indians was severely changed. It was during this period that they obtained many European goods and their economy was severely altered as they rapidly became pawns in a European power struggle. By the early eighteenth century, the aboriginal economy had shifted from horticulture supplemented by hunting, to a new emphasis on hunting for the deerskin trade. Prompted by Englishmen, a trade in Indian slaves pitted tribe against tribe, especially Chickasaw against Choctaw. Indians in the area below the mouth of the Ohio River on the Mississippi already had firearms, axes, hoes, knives, beads, and glass bottles when Marquette and Jolliet descended the Mississippi in 1673 (Sauer 1980:141), and such goods soon reached Mississippi if they were not in fact already there.

There were other subsistence changes taking place as new plants and animals were introduced. Marquette and Jolliet found watermelons among the Arkansas in 1673, La Salle found chickens and peaches in an Arkansas Indian village near the mouth of the Arkansas River in 1682 (Sauer 1980:141, 153), and it is probable that natives of Mississippi had also obtained these food sources by this time. It is suspected that pigs may have been added to the diet prior to 1700, but evidence is lacking.

The period 1541-1700 saw dramatic changes take place in Mississippi. Powerful chiefdoms were decimated by disease; the survivors regrouped and became the tribes which are familiar to us today. People moved around on the landscape as they fled diseased areas, and sought safety in numbers as new confederacies were formed. The entire way of life changed dramatically as increasing European influences were felt.

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Nature and Sequence of the Borderlands

Paul E. Hoffman

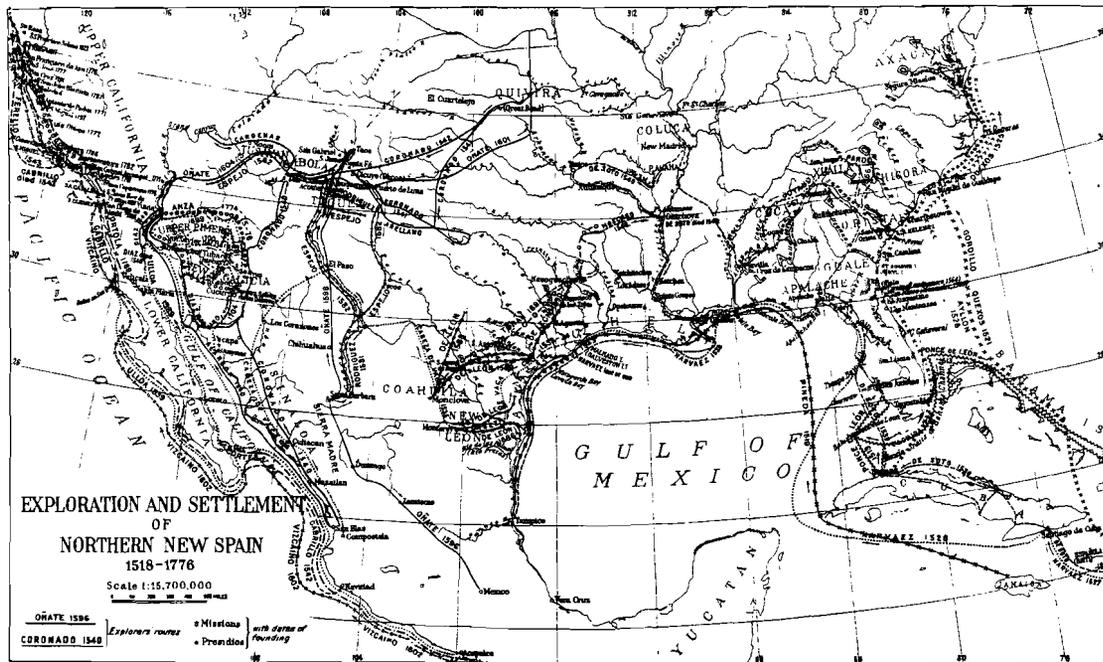
DEFINITION AND SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION

In 1921, an editor at Yale University Press coined the term “Spanish Borderlands” as part of the title for a book that Herbert Eugene Bolton was writing for the press’s series on United States history. Bolton’s book stressed what he considered to be the characteristic institutions of the Spanish Frontier, much as Frederick Jackson Turner had done in his study of the westward expansion of the U.S. Apparently wishing to avoid confusion and possible copyright problems, the editor evaded using the word “frontier” by using “borderland.” Thus a term entered scholarly discourse, and has remained ever since.

The “Spanish Borderlands” embrace all those areas once claimed by or occupied by the Spaniards, including the Louisiana Purchase territory and West Florida (however defined). Although generally thought of as embracing the “Sun Belt” from Florida to California, in fact the borderlands reached as far north as Chesapeake Bay on the east coast (*ca.* 1570), the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley at mid-continent (to *ca.* 1798), and Nootka Sound on the west coast (to *ca.* 1790). If some Spaniards of the 1780s had had their way, it would have embraced all of North America west of the “Proclamation Line” fixed by the British (1763) as marking the beginning of Indian territory and the western boundaries of the 13 colonies. The “Line” ran along the top of the Appalachian Mountains.

This great “W” of land included perhaps as much as two thirds of the land area of the modern United States, although only a very small fraction of that area was actually occupied with any degree of effectiveness at any given moment in history. The greatest extent of occupation—and claim, if the original claim to the entire hemisphere is excluded—was following 1783, when Spain controlled or claimed Florida south of the St. Mary’s River, the entire Mississippi River basin, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California as far north as San Francisco, and the coast north of that to Nootka Sound if not Alaska.

The modern historiography of the Spanish Borderlands has interpreted them in five ways: as chronicle, as conquest, as defensive barrier, as places sought out by at least some Spaniards for the positive purposes of settlement or the conversion of souls, and as examples of cultural contact and change (that is, of a process). All of these interpretations except the last, but especially the first, second, and fourth, were used by writers contemporary with the events as well as throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The third interpretation has received more stress in the 20th century and in writings by or influenced by Herbert Eugene Bolton. The fifth is unique to modern scholarship, especially in anthropology and its allied fields such as ethnohistory and archaeology.



Bolton's original map of the Spanish Borderlands.

When interpreted as chronicle, the story is told as a sequence of events, frequently as part of the early history of one of the states that came afterwards. Woodbury Lowery's account of the *Spanish Settlements Within the Present Limits of the United States [to 1574]* (1901-1911) is an example of a work that takes this approach across the width of the borderlands, although for only a part of their history. While not free from moralizing and position taking on particular historiographical problems (e.g., dating, locations), this school follows the idea of letting the facts, and sequences of events, more or less speak for themselves. Not surprisingly, the core of such narratives is often taken from Spanish chronicles.

When interpreted as conquest, stress is usually placed on either the military or religious aspects of Spanish activities in the borderlands and on the lives of the men who were the principal actors in the drama. Thus this essentially romantic approach concentrates on the great captains such as Hernando de Soto and Pedro Menéndez de Avilés or, in a variant peculiar to historians of the religious orders and Herbert Eugene Bolton and some of his students, great missionaries such as Fr. Junipero Serra. Other aspects of the borderlands' story are relegated to secondary place or the author limits his work to the episode involving the "great man" of interest to him.

Bolton's work, while involving elements of the romantic "conquest" interpretation, also offered another: the borderlands as defensive barrier (Bolton 1928). This interpretation is essentially true for the years after about 1670, at least in so far as it describes the value that officials in Madrid and Mexico City attached to the borderlands and to new ventures such as the occupation of Texas (1700-1721) and California (after 1760) However, it is not an accurate description of Spanish intentions before 1559 in Florida nor before the 1670s in New Mexico, much of northern Mexico, and with respect to the "Georgia"

and north Florida missions (to the 1680s). On the other hand, the garrison of St. Augustine and the Florida and Georgia missions were often justified in military terms from 1570 to 1670. Still, it seems to me that due attention to date is important when advancing this interpretation of the borderlands. Moreover, it, like the others, should never stand alone, since Spanish expansion had complex motives.

Fourth, recent historiography on the sixteenth-century history of the borderlands, and to a lesser degree for later periods, has tended to stress settlement and the development of a European society as an important motive for and ingredient in Spanish expansion in the borderlands. This school, of which Eugene Lyon's *The Enterprise of Florida, 1565-1568* (Gainesville, 1976) and Amy Bushnell's *The King's Coffers: Proprietors of the Spanish Florida Treasury 1565-1702* (Gainesville, 1981) are examples, is a broad reaction to the view that the Spaniards were only interested in subjugating Native Americans (as in Mexico) and did not have the same colonizing motives as are ascribed to the English in North America. Works such as Gilbert Din's introduction to the Bouligny account of Louisiana (Gilbert Din, *Louisiana in 1776: A Memoria of Francisco Bouligny* [New Orleans, 1977]) and Din's various articles on Spanish immigration policy fit this general pattern of stressing the "positive" (non military and not directly exploitative of Native Americans) aspects of Spanish activities in the Borderlands. Some of David J. Weber's writing on the Southwest also fits this interpretive theme.

The fifth approach to the borderlands is to stress cultural process, primarily as it affected the Native Americans but also as it affected the Spaniards who had to adapt to a new environment, most often by using native foods. Bolton was one of the pioneers of this approach with respect to the Spaniards. Following the ideas of Turner, who believed that U.S. national character and institutions had been shaped by the experience of the frontier, Bolton suggested that the mission and presidio were the institutions through which the Spaniards subjugated the Native Americans and through which both were shaped into the peculiar societies of the U.S. Southwest. Although I have not found explicit reference to it in his work, it seems to me that Bolton was attempting to explain not only the Catholic religiosity but also the tendency to hierarchy and superordination-subordination (patron-client relationships) that made the "Hispanic" so unlike his individualistic, "don't tread on me" Protestant contemporary.

Most recent scholarship in archaeology and ethnohistory has focused on the process of cultural destruction and reformulation that followed in the wake of alleged demographic collapse due to the introduction of Old World diseases by the various Spanish (and other European) colonies and trading contacts. Charles Hudson, well known for his work on the Soto route, says that he is really interested in this process of transformation that changed the chiefdoms that he believes that Soto and (to a lesser degree) Juan Pardo met into the decentralized societies of the eighteenth century. Other scholars such as James Knight and Chester DePratter are actively exploring the nature and extent of that transformation.

On the other side of the coin, Kathleen Deagan and her students have examined the adaptation of Native American foodways to Spanish tastes in St. Augustine (as elsewhere in the Americas) and the use by poorer households of Native American ceramics for cooking (also documented from Santa Elena town).

It is my impression that "cultural adaptation," whether by Indians of European goods and ways or by Europeans of Indian ways, is much discussed but little understood both because we lack good data and because there is no "theory" of how the process worked (or still does, since it continues even today). Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency; Subsistence, Environment and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, 1983), and Patricia Galloway, "Choctaw Factionalism and

Civil War, 1746-1750," *Journal of Mississippi History*, 44 (1982), 289-327, on the Choctaw seem better than most recent work on this problem of adaptation.

SUGGESTIONS ON INTERPRETATION

A proper appreciation of the complex history of the borderlands involves elements drawn from all five interpretative traditions, although current writing by historians tends to downplay the "conquest" or "great man" emphasis even when such a person is center stage as the organizer of some venture into new territory. Perhaps the best way to state this is to note that the initial phase of expansion into most of the borderlands tends to involve unusual individuals pursuing some "positive" goal (settlement, saving souls, commercial advantage).

The reason(s) for the Spanish government's sanction of this activity varies with time and can provide an interpretive coloring to modern accounts. Prior to 1559 in La Florida and until the late seventeenth century in northern Mexico, including Texas, the sanction was "speculative" in that the government invested little or nothing and saw no particular concern of state as being at issue. Private individuals wishing to follow up on discoveries or rumors of riches (and souls to be saved) were allowed to do so subject to certain contractual provisions that guaranteed the Crown's long-term control if the enterprise were successful.

After 1559 in La Florida, and the late seventeenth century in Northern Mexico, state concern for the security of its existing possessions (including areas claimed but not occupied) or their commerce played the dominant role in state sanction, *when it was finally granted*. That concern usually carried with it some investment of royal funds and a commitment to the long-term support of missions and garrisons (presidios). Even so, many of the persons involved in the new expansion held positive motives of their own, and the colonies that were created, or acquired in the case of Louisiana, took on lives of their own in which the original state motive was often submerged by the day to day business of making a living and coping with the need to expand population as a way of maintaining control against some future imperial threat from the English or their Anglo-American successors, or from the Russians, in the case of upper California. New ventures under this second sanction often also (as under the first sanction) involved "heroic" figures such as Father Junipero Serra or Bernardo de Gálvez but are more properly understood as actions of the state in which the personality of the leader and his personal resources were less important than the determination of the state and the quantity of resources that it put into the venture.

I should note that the one complication with this periodization of "sanctions" is the situation in northern Mexico in the late sixteenth and on into the seventeenth century. There the "pacification" of the areas along the roads to the mines was the work not only of ranchers and the founders of towns but also involved government support of missions and troops, but not yet presidios (according to Thomas S. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer [comp. and ed.], *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain. A Documentary History* [Tucson, 1986], I, 19). Still, with regard to the "Spanish Borderlands" in what is now the United States, the periodization holds. Whether northern Mexico constituted a "borderland" in the late sixteenth century is in fact a matter of definition, since the frontier was almost at the Rio Grande (mines of Santa Barbara).

THE GULF COAST IN THE EARLY BORDERLANDS

Robert S. Weddle has argued (1985) that the Gulf of Mexico constituted a principal, if not the principal line of Spanish approach to North America prior to the 1560s. He traces the westward movement of Spanish “conquest” in the Antilles, the voyages to explore the Gulf and then Mexico, and then shifts to Pánfilo de Narváez, Soto, Father Luís Cancer, and finally the Tristan de Luna expedition, with later side bars on Menéndez de Avilés and Hernando Escalante Fontaneda and some of the interest in expanding northeastward from Nuevo León.

I do not find his thesis persuasive primarily because he fails to give proper weight to the intention of Garay and Narváez to take control of the northern part of modern Mexico—the so-called province of Amichel—nor does he adequately discuss the Atlantic coastal activities that I have found far more important to the story of Spanish (and other European) approaches to North America. Too, Weddle wrote in a semi-popular manner and does not fully explain why he chose certain ideas from existing scholarship over others (e.g. the landing of Narváez at Sarasota Bay, when near Tampa is more likely). He is right that the Luna expedition was an important and neglected approach to the continent, and certainly one of interest to Mississippi.

As I reconstruct the sequences, they look as follows:

1. Columbian Vision

From 1492 until perhaps 1503, the Spaniards were following Columbus’ general theory of what he had found, even though Amerigo Vespucci and Peter Martyr had, by 1503, concluded that what Columbus had found was a “new world.” According to Columbus, he had found islands lying off the coast of Asia. Hence further exploration of them and efforts to find the mainland south and west of them were the order of the day. His hope was to find his way to both China and India—or the source of spices if not India. This pattern of activity, whether carried forward by Columbus or others, resulted in the discovery of more islands with gold and Native Americans, the great pearl fishery off northern Venezuela, and the “gold coast” of southern Panama (later extended northward into Nicaragua). Contemporary explorations on the coast of Brazil tied Columbus’ mainland (which consisted of only Venezuela at first) to a large southward trending mainland. Thus this general search for the Straits of Malacca came up empty, as we would expect but as Columbus did not. While some of this exploration was based on European ports, much of it used Hispaniola as a base. Although not without problems, Samuel E. Morison’s *The European Discovery of America, the Southern Voyages* is a good overview of these developments.

2. Conquest of the Caribbean

Subjugation of islands near that American base (the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Cuba, later Jamaica) and then of the “Main” (Panama, coastal Columbia, Venezuela, the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua and Costa Rica) for their labor and, where it existed, gold was contemporary with the first period of exploration but extended to the mid 1510s. This exploitation of the outlying islands in turn set the stage for North American exploration and exploitation. Carl Sauer’s *Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley, 1966) is the best account of these developments. The Spaniards learned important lessons about how to live in the New World during these years, and adopted an approach to fighting and exploiting Indians that did not change for the rest of the century. In essence, they became dependent on the presence of numbers of Indians both for food and for labor, especially in mines.

3. Approaches to North America and the Gulf Coast

We do not know when North America was first sighted by Spaniards sailing from their Caribbean bases. Some scholars argue that the Cantino Map's alleged date of 1503 shows that an unknown but possibly Portuguese explorer had coasted both sides of the Florida peninsula by that date. This seems unlikely since we have printed versions of a similar map in Waldseemüller's editions of Claudius Ptolemy (*ca.* 1511) that clearly show that the land area shown NW of Cuba on the Cantino Map should be (and would be except for the trimming of the left margin of the map) connected to what is clearly a Central American coastline derived from Columbus' fourth voyage. (I do not believe the argument of David O. True and some others that John Cabot reached south Florida before 1500, or of Jorge Espinosa that he had reached Nicaragua before 1500 when the Cosa Map was supposed to have been drawn.)

We do know that Bermuda was discovered in 1505, which suggests the possibility that Spaniards were beginning to run north from the Bahamas rather than northeast from the Mona Passage. By that date as well, Cuba's insular nature was well appreciated. There are also vague references that can be interpreted as evidence of slaving on the mainland, especially peninsular Florida. But prior to Juan Ponce de León's application for a contract to discover "Bimini" there is no really concrete evidence of Spanish knowledge of land north and northwest of Cuba and the Bahamas. It may be that except for the one-way trips of a few shipwrecked persons, no Spaniard got across the Gulf Stream to the Florida side until the 1510s.

By 1516, Captain Pedro de Salazar had landed on and taken slaves from one of the barrier islands on the Atlantic coast south of Cape Hatteras. If Barcia's confused tale is to be accepted, which is doubtful, by that date as well a Diego de Miruelo had visited the Gulf Coast north of any area visited by Ponce de León on his voyage of 1512-13.

With 1517 and the Francisco Hernández de Cordoba expedition to Yucatan we enter into the period of history where firm sequences can be established. Hernández de Cordoba and then Juan de Grijalva and Pedro de Alvarado carried the exploration of the western Gulf coast to about Cabo Rojo, well north of modern Veracruz. Following up, Hernán Cortés began the conquest of Mexico.

This new activity west of Cuba arose because Central America's Caribbean face was well known from Honduras south and because there were few opportunities for entrepreneurial exploration in that direction. Panama, the most interesting part of that coast because of the gold jewelry of its native residents, was already under Spanish control, as were many other parts of the southern Caribbean. Moreover, any exploration in the southwestern direction from the Antilles entangled the explorer in the jurisdictional disputes of Diego Colón, the Discoverer's son and heir, and the Crown. Colón claimed it all as an area first explored by his father. The Crown denied the extent of that claim and had, by 1512, successfully limited Colón's authority to the Antilles, although Colón continued to assert his rights by authorizing explorations such as those of Cristobal de Tapía to Honduras.

Although it is not clear, it appears that the jurisdictional dispute had a role to play in the decision of Governor Diego Velázquez to send out explorers to seek land west of Cuba. Operating under permission from the Heironymite Friars, not Colón, he established a new area of exploitation that Colón could not claim on the basis of his father's voyages or on the basis that he had authorized the new ventures, even though Velázquez was supposed to be his appointee! Not to be outdone, in early 1519, Colón's governor of Jamaica, Francisco de Garay, (who had also been appointed King Ferdinand's administrator of the royal estates on that island) sent out an exploring party to scout the Gulf of Mexico between the limits of Ponce de León's and Velázquez' discoveries. He hoped to find a strait, he claimed. Weddle suggests

that this project had been planned since as early as 1514, although perhaps not with the Gulf as its objective (1985:98-99).

4. Alonso Alvarez de Pineda

Garay's agent was Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, evidently an experienced pilot. He had four ships. The only account of his voyage that is generally known is the summary given in Garay's contract of 1521. It indicates a landfall "near the western end of the present State of Florida. He then turned east along the coast, expecting to find the passage believed to separate the mainland from the 'island' discovered by Juan Ponce de León. When the expected channel failed to appear, he followed the coast to the Florida cape, where 'the land left him by the prow in the direction of the sunrise.' . . . The ships therefore turned west again and ran along the coast 'until they encountered Hernando Cortés and the Spaniards who were with him on the same coast.'" (Weddle 1985:99-100; he added the details about the first leg of the voyage, although they can be inferred from the document).

In fact, Alonso de Chaves' manuscript *rutter* (recently published for the first time) contains the report that Alvarez de Pineda gave to Garay and that he in turn forwarded to Spain. Unlike some of Chaves' materials, this set of coastal directions presents problems of interpretation that I have not yet solved. The key point for the various series is the Bay of Miruelo, apparently Appalachee Bay. From there south to Cape Florida there are two series of coastal directions and distances, one going south, the other north from the Cape, and thus corresponding with the general account of that part of Alvarez de Pineda's voyage.

West from Miruelo's Bay there is a set of points running west to the River of the "Matas del Salvador." The final point on this set of points is the River of the Holy Spirit, whence a distance is given east to the "Matas del Salvador" and another to the Río del Cañaverl. A third set of eastward references begins at the Río de Flores and runs to the Cabo Bajo via the Río de Nieves.

The difficulty in laying these distances down on a map is that the location of the Bay of Miruelo is uncertain, and plots to different places from the Cape of Florida. Evidently Chaves' sources included more than just the Alvarez de Pineda materials, or perhaps his pilots identified the place called Miruelo's Bay as two different spots when making their first and second visits.

Recognizing these difficulties, I nonetheless suggest that Cabo Bajo, the first point west of the Bay of Miruelo, was probably Port St. Joe or its cape, the Río de Nieves (River of Fogs) was likely Pensacola, and the Río de Flores (River of Flowers) was the Mississippi. This plot then puts the Matas del Salvador at Terrebone Bay and the Río del Espiritu Santo at Vermillion Bay. The so-called Pineda map agrees with this reading. Weddle and many other historians, on the other hand, are influenced by the later cartography and Soto's use of the term "Río del Espiritu Santo" for the Mississippi to claim that the "Rio del Espiritu Santo" was the "Father of Waters." (Weddle 1985:100). If the River of the Holy Spirit was named for the festival date, it was discovered on June 2.

From the Río del Espiritu Santo, the party sailed fairly directly to the Mexican coast, apparently stopping at the Pánuco River before proceeding to the area of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, Cortés' base on the Mexican Gulf Coast (north of modern Veracruz). There Cortés' lieutenant Juan de Escalante (in command at Vera Cruz) and then Cortés himself confronted members of the expedition. Taking prisoners, Cortés learned of the visit to the Pánuco and of Alvarez de Pineda's intention of settling there. As Weddle suggests, the Pánuco was the "very large and very copious" river near whose entrance a large native town

provided food during a forty day period when the ships were careened. Forty other towns were found within six leagues (about 20 miles) of the entrance to the river (Weddle 1985:100).

The reason that Alvarez de Pineda showed no interest in the upper Gulf coast is clear from Garay's contract. It refers to the "low [or possibly "shallow," in reference to the coast], sterile land" that was discovered, including Ponce de León's Florida. But after noting the river north of Vera Cruz, the contract says that land was a mainland (*tierra firme*) that was "very good, peaceful, healthy and with many foods and fruits and other things to eat. Fine gold is in many of its rivers, according to the Indians' signs . . ." (From Navarrete, *Colección de los Viajes que hicieron los Españoles*, III, 160-61). In short, the coast from the Río del Espíritu Santo east was low and sterile (lacking extensive or numerous Indian settlements as evidence of food?) but the coast around the Pánuco River was well populated, yielded foods in abundance, and had gold in placers.

The subsequent history of Garay's effort is simply told. His claim to the northern half of the Gulf coast of modern Mexico—called Amichel—had to be fitted with Velázquez–Cortés' claim. Cristobal de Tapía, an official at Santo Domingo, was delegated to investigate on the ground and fix the limit. But by the time these orders were cut in June 1521, Garay had already attempted to found a colony on the Pánuco (January 1520?). This colony was soon attacked by the Huasteca Indians; the survivors fled to Vera Cruz. Those who did not die from wounds or starvation eventually joined in the conquest of Mexico, as did men from two other ships that Garay sent with supplies and reinforcements during 1521. Garay himself sailed for the Pánuco in June 1523. Once ashore, his men began to desert to join Cortés; Garay himself was eventually arrested and died in Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) a few days after Christmas, 1523. Cortés had made good his claim that the province of Pánuco belonged to New Spain. The royal government continued that association, effectively moving the frontier further north along the coast.

In sum, the Pineda exploration suggested that the upper Gulf coast was not worthy of Spanish attention. The Mississippi River was apparently not appreciated, perhaps because only one of its mouths was observed. In any case, the fateful terms "low" and "sterile" had been applied to the area.

5. Pánfilo de Narváez

The man who tried to follow up Garay's grant and, by 1528, attempt to jump a part of Cortés' claim was Pánfilo de Narváez, Cortés' would-be jailor of 1520. Returned to Cuba in 1523 after Garay had asked Cortés to let him go, he had gone to Spain, where he petitioned for the right to follow up at Amichel (or in Vázquez de Ayllón's discovery of 1521 on the Atlantic coast). His contract for that purpose was issued on December 11, 1526.

The Narváez expedition is famous because Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, one of its four survivors, wrote its account. It is also famous because bad luck (if not poor leadership) caused Narváez to put ashore on the west coast of Florida, probably at Johns Pass just north of the entrance to Tampa Bay. Going overland to near the Aucilla River and then to the coast at either Ochlockonee Bay or Appalachee Bay to build barges in which they sailed west, Cabeza de Vaca's account indicates that they landed near Mobile Bay and encountered one of the mouths of the Mississippi before a storm dispersed the fleet and eventually drove the ships to wreck on the Texas coast either at Galveston Island, the Velasco Peninsula or Matagorda Island (depending on which author you read!).

Nothing in Cabeza de Vaca's account of the Gulf coast would have excited the cupidity of his generation of explorers, although his party did see some Indian communities, which Alvarez de Pineda may not have. On the other hand, his information about the interior of peninsular Florida was probably

of some help to Hernando de Soto. The important point, usually overlooked, is that the Narváez expedition was on both the Florida and upper Gulf coasts by accident, not intention. Amichel, not those areas, was the original goal.

Narváez' failure to land in Amichel marked the end of all challenges to the incorporation of Pánuco into Mexico until Pedro Menéndez de Avilés briefly (1572-74) had all of the land from the Río Pánuco eastward added to his contract area. His death canceled that concession, to which the Mexicans had objected.

AYLLÓN AND THE ATLANTIC COAST

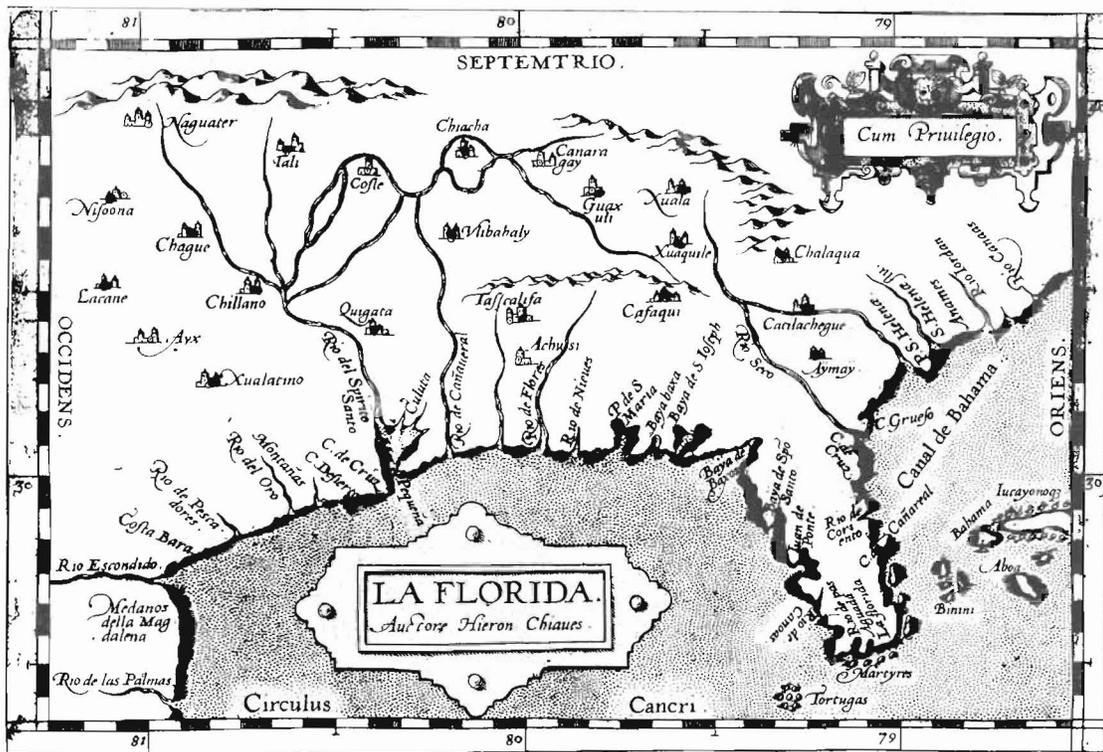
My recently published book (*A New Andalusia and a Way to the Orient*, 1990) explores Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's "Chicora Legend" and its influence in detail. For the moment it is enough to know that he used Ptolemy's idea of similar plants and animals at the same latitude, the reports of a pilot he sent to explore the Atlantic coast in 1521, and the testimony of a Native American captured on that voyage and named Francisco, nicknamed "El Chicorano," to construct a tale of agricultural, sylvan, and mineral possibilities at the latitude of the old Andalusia, in southern Spain.

Granted a contract for that area, Ayllón instead returned in 1525 to the site of the discovery of 1521 (Santee River–Winyah Bay, South Carolina) and then moved south, probably to the area of St. Catherine's Island and Sapelo Sound, Georgia. There his colony broke up following his death in October 1526. Reports from the survivors divided into highly unfavorable ones—probably the majority view—and ones suggesting that with proper adaptation, the Spaniards might find the southeastern coast better than the Antilles. The unfavorable views predominated, and the "official" view became that the coast was "useless" and a "desert"—that is, unoccupied by humans in any numbers. On the other hand, the promise of gems and a large native polity in the interior had not been checked out by Ayllón.

Non-Spaniards eventually learned of Ayllón's claims—but little of his fate or actual colonial sites—from Francisco Lopez de Gómara's *Historia General*, 1552. The French in particular seem to have been taken with "Chicora." Since Gómara gave a latitude for Ayllón's discovery (32 degrees North) the way was open for the French explorations of Jean Ribault, the construction of Charles Fort (1562) and a round of Franco-Spanish hostility over control of the "Point of Santa Elena." This emerging French design on the Point, and Philip II's concern about it, helps to account for some of Luna's plans as well as the shift of Spanish interest to the Atlantic Coast after the initial beginning at Pensacola.

SOTO AND LUNA: SPAIN'S LAST HURRAH ON THE GULF COAST UNTIL 1699

Hernando de Soto was heir to all previous contracts for the exploration of the U.S. Southeast (from north of the Pánuco River to at least Delaware Bay) and of the residue of the hopes and wishes of their holders, the residue left after each had encountered the reality of the land and its peoples. Thus he still hoped to find the "terrestrial gems" of Ayllón's Chicora Legend in an inland province. To these hopes he added his own experiences in Peru and Central America and the wish that precious metals and densely populated polities would be found in the interior of the continent. He knew that none of the coastal areas held much promise.



Map of "La Florida" by Hieronymus Chaves, dated 1545. This map drew upon new information about the interior supplied by the Soto expedition.

As is well known, Soto's discovery of "Coosa" was a key element in the later Tristan de Luna y Arellano expedition. As the last really lush and welcoming place the Soto pilgrims visited, Coosa took on a sort of Garden of Eden quality in the telling of the story of the expedition. Some persons in Mexico entertained great hopes for the North American Southeast in the 1550s. Those hopes got mixed up with a missionary push for work in northern Mexico, secular interest in being able to rescue shipwreck victims, and the king's determination to guard his claim to the "Point of Santa Elena" by effective occupation (especially after 1559). The way in which all of these agendas were to be resolved was the Luna expedition.

I think that the Mexicans who designed and largely ran the Luna venture were really not interested in the Atlantic coast end of the plan—as is shown by its vagueness and by Angel de Villafañe's later deliberate effort to find the area of the "Point of Santa Elena" unsuitable for settlement. Thus the Luna expedition really is the only genuine Spanish effort to settle on and inland from the upper Gulf coast.

The idea that an interior colony in Alabama might be a supplier of Andalusia's products to Mexico—and possibly even a route to Europe—has a nice general similarity with the hopes that some proponents of the French colony in Louisiana held, except that they wanted to use the colony to ship European manufactures into Mexico. But both they and the would-be colonists of Luna's time would have expected Mexican payment in the same coin: silver. (In the eighteenth century, dyes, hides, and some other products were probably as desired.)

Ethnohistorians have often used the difference between the Soto chronicles' reports of Coosa and those of the Luna visitors to suggest the rapidity with which disease was undoing the Mississippian

chiefdoms after Soto's passage. I caution that what we may have is simply the difference between "explorers'" rhetoric and that of "settlers," to borrow from Wayne Franklin. The former tend to see the land as it might become, the latter exaggerate its defects and realities. Given the central role of Coosa in the legendary memory of the times, caution for this double exaggeration seems especially appropriate.

AFTER LUNA

The failure of Polanco (Luna's settlement at Pensacola) and its abandonment in 1562 effectively ended any known Spanish interest in the upper Gulf coast until the threat of La Salle caused new detailed explorations that resulted in the occupation of Pensacola Bay in 1699, with the aim of protecting Spanish trade in the Gulf. The Spanish trade route from Vera Cruz to Havana ran north by northeast up the coast of Mexico to perhaps 28 degrees, then east to about the longitude of the mouth of the Mississippi River, and then southeast to Matanzas, Cuba. A variant involved a long reach from Vera Cruz to near the mouth of the Mississippi and then the southeastward run to Havana. This pattern took maximum advantage of currents within the Gulf and of the wind pattern, especially during the spring of the year. The chief danger lay in meeting a tropical storm in the northwest Gulf early in the hurricane season, or at any point later in the summer. Winter sailing—seldom done except by small ships—could encounter contrary winds off the upper Gulf coast.

Once the French interest in the region started to grow, however, the French—and their connection with Caribbean bucaniers—constituted an additional danger, one that was realized in a different way when they used Mobile and then the Balize as centers for exchanges with Mexican shipping (1740s especially).

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 - Hudson, Charles. "The Hernando de Soto Expedition, 1539-43"
 - Smith, Marvin T. "Aboriginal Depopulation in the Postcontact Southeast"
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The name, Georgia, is an 18th century invention. The Spaniards knew it as part of their "La Florida," which extended into South Carolina if not to Chesapeake Bay.

Formation of Historic Tribes and French Colonial Period

Patricia Galloway

MARGINAL CONTACT PERIOD (1541-1699)

Formation of Historic Tribes

Human occupation of the lands of Mississippi goes back at least ten thousand years before Europeans ever reached the shores of the Americas, so the historic Indians we know represent people caught by surprise in the midst of their own social and political development, which had included migrations, struggles for territory, long-distance trade, and all the other complex cultural connections of any human society at a similar population density on a similarly diverse landscape. Thus the lands of Mississippi had once been populated only by animals, before the arrival of humans from Asia. Thus of the tribes known to us at the time of first contact some were newcomers, some had developed in Mississippi for thousands of years, some had been regular visitors to the region for centuries. And the distribution of the tribes' control over and claims to that land changed during the historic period itself. It is worth remembering at the outset that *effective control over the majority of the land of Mississippi rested with Indian tribes until they were Removed west of the Mississippi in the 1830s*; only by actually removing the Indians did whites open the way to taking control themselves of the land.

Most archaeologists will now agree that the historic tribes known to us were much changed from those first met by Europeans, and that even these contacts revealed less than pristine conditions. The effects of epidemic European diseases, which were capable of spreading inland from coastal contacts before actual European entry into the land, may have made many of the "first" observations suspect. In any case, it is argued, disease certainly played a major role throughout the historic period in both reducing Indian populations and altering Indian social organization.

My research has suggested that many of the late prehistoric peoples initially contacted by Europeans had recently undergone culture changes, but not all because of European disease (see Galloway 1991). I think it likely that European disease had affected groups along the Gulf coast and around Mobile Bay by the middle of the sixteenth century, but that groups in the interior remained little affected until the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To explain why this was the case, it is necessary to consider briefly what kinds of diseases were involved and what kinds of populations they could develop among.

Native culture change did not have to be precipitated by "outside" influences; native cultures had been changing for millennia—at least ten of them in North America—before Europeans ever came on

the scene, and had taken the native population through adaptations to different environmental conditions and a growing population, leading east of the Mississippi to a sequence of development from megafauna hunters, through highly efficient hunter-gatherers, through minor horticulturists depending on some hunting and gathering, and finally to agriculturists only marginally dependent upon hunting. But this was not a uniform evolutionary trajectory, and some environmental settings never permitted the development of agriculture.

Clearly, however, it was the floodplain agriculturists who also supported the largest populations in the most nucleated settlement patterns, and clearly also it was these groups that suffered most seriously from the “diseases of civilization” brought by Europeans—diseases like smallpox, typhus, plague, and cholera that had themselves developed to thrive among dense populations. Nucleated chiefdom populations like the forerunners of the Natchez or Tunica would indeed suffer badly, while the more dispersed populations of the precontact Chickasaws and the proto-Choctaw western Alabamas would not be so badly affected.

This position is contradicted by Hudson *et al.*, who for some reason not adequately explained do not accept the archaeological evidence developed in the past five years by Atkinson and Johnson that indicates a distinctly precontact dispersion of the simple chiefdoms on the upper Tombigbee that had been remotely clients of some kind to Moundville, evidence that fits very well with the authentic documentary descriptions of the Chicaça people in the Soto narratives. Systematically ignoring the large body of recent work at the Moundville site reported by Peebles and his colleagues, they also argue for a functioning Moundville chiefdom of which the Pafalaya province was a part, when clear evidence for late prehistoric devolution from the Moundville III phase to the Alabama River phase—implying population dispersion and decentralization—is available for the Black Warrior valley proper; and when there is no evidence for a centralized chiefdom in the documents either.

Thus there will be arguments against the scenario for the formation of historic tribes in Mississippi that I am about to outline, but I think they are flimsy and spring from a very cavalier use of the documents, which I have treated at length in several recent papers, as well as very selective use of the archaeological evidence.

Tombigbee Watershed Tribes

Clearly the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Chakchiumas, and Alabamas were related somehow in prehistory—they all belonged to the Western Muskogean language family and spoke closely related languages, they all lived in the Mississippi-Alabama area, and they supported intertribal alliances from the time of their first appearances in European history. Their hypothesized relationship in prehistory is a bit complex, however, and it hinges very importantly on the Moundville chiefdom of the Black Warrior river valley.

While Moundville was functioning as a great multileveled chiefdom—during the Moundville III phase—the Alabamas were Moundvillians, while the Chickasaws and Chakchiumas were at most simple chiefdoms independent of Moundville politically but connected to it by serving as its conduit to trade with the large chiefdoms of the middle Mississippi Valley. Meanwhile, a core of what would become the Choctaws occupied a very modest chiefdom centered on Nanih Waiyah on the upper reaches of the Pearl, and these people were even more distant country cousins who perhaps provided connections with the Natchezan people who occupied a large mound site lower down the Pearl and perhaps with those who could be found further down the Big Black river and on the lower Mississippi.

The Moundville chiefdom began to collapse around the middle of the fifteenth century and had devolved into the autonomous agricultural villages of the Alabama River phase by the end of it (Peebles 1987). The reasons Peebles has argued for this may all apply in different degrees: collapse of trading partners on the Mississippi; population growth beyond the carrying capacity of the Black Warrior; crop failures due to possible global cooling of the Little Ice Age, which began in the fourteenth century and ended in the seventeenth. Petty chiefdoms that were Moundville's independent partners also decentralized, and it was during this period that the proto-Chickasaws and proto-Chakchiumas moved away from the floodplains and out onto the Black Prairie to take advantage of better hunting conditions as they altered their subsistence pattern to the mixed farming/hunting-gathering one practiced by the historic tribes. Alabama River phase people dispersed too, some moving down the Warrior and onto the middle Tombigbee, some moving onto the Alabama River (where they became the people of the "Black Warrior," Tascaluça, met by Soto), a single band perhaps moving to live among former "Chickasaw" and "Chakchiuma" allies (so the "Alibamu" met by Soto were *not* the main body of the later historic group). The proto-Choctaw nucleation of Nanih Waiyah probably also dispersed in the general upper Pearl area.

At the time of the contact with the Soto expedition, the situation just described is what the Spaniards saw. As it stood this situation did not have to have been affected in the slightest by European disease, and indeed Henry Dobyns himself has not only always claimed that inland people not on a major waterway were probably not reached by the most serious waves of European disease (1983), but more recently (1990) he has backed off his argument for drastic population loss at a very early date (ca. 1524) in North America, whose losses he now terms "marginal" when compared with the hecatombs of Mexico and Central America.

Lower Mississippi Valley Tribes

It is less easy to paint a unified picture for the origin of Mississippi Valley tribes, partly because they were not so closely related as those just described. If Jeffrey Brain is right about the developmental trajectory of the Mississippian culture Tunicas (1979, 1988), they had been pushed out of a settlement region on the Arkansas River by 1541 and were settled around Coahoma County, where the Spaniards saw them as the chiefdom of Quizquiz. Whether the Tunicas were Quizquiz or not is not particularly relevant to the developmental argument, since the archaeology shows that they were still a nucleated group. More important is their possible relationship with the Coroas, who were closely connected with the prehistoric circulation of salt from springs west of the Mississippi and who clearly had a later connection with the Tunicas. In addition, there is the question of their reception by the people in the area into which they moved. It is not clear whether they in turn pushed out earlier settlers in the region or the region was for some reason vacant when they moved into it.

Meanwhile the Natchezans further down the valley were developing from the Mississippian-influenced Plaquemine culture. If Hudson is right in arguing that the major chiefdom of the Natchez Bluffs region at the time of Soto (probably centered on Foster and Emerald at this time) was not the magnificent and widely feared Quigualtam but a far less powerful group inferior to the population concentration in the lower Yazoo Basin (Hudson, *et al.* 1990), then the time of Natchez depopulation would have to be accounted to late prehistory, and the archaeology does not seem to support this very well; if Brain is right and Emerald is Quigualtam, dominating the regional settlements east of the river and having far-flung influence to the west, then Aminoya, Guachoya, or Anilco may represent the Taensas and the historical cultural continuity between Natchez and Taensa is more easily explained. I am inclined to accept a good

part of Brain's scenario for the Soto expedition's "return to the river," knowing full well that the archaeology in Louisiana is inadequate to support it at present, but it makes more sense for the cultures of the region to have been attacked by European diseases *after* this opening of the Mississippi to Europeans than before, and there is little else that can explain the state of affairs observed in 1682.

Under this assumption, the Natchezan people of the Natchez Bluffs region, having successfully disdained Spanish overtures and driven the Spanish boats downriver with maximum Spanish loss of life, then may have fallen prey to endemic European diseases carried by the Indian slaves left behind (tuberculosis, the common cold) or the pigs and horses that escaped disposal efforts or were given as gifts (many nonspecific upper respiratory diseases that can lead to pneumonia). Whenever this happened, it apparently led by the last quarter of the seventeenth century to a classic pattern of assimilation, by which non-Natchezan populations were adopted into the tribe and assimilated by means of what looked to early observers like a very strange marriage rule discussed by Brain as the "Natchez Paradox." These populations seem to have included mostly Tunicans (Grigras, Tioux, Coroas), indicating perhaps an expression of the long-term relationship between the Mississippian culture, of which Tunicans were indisputably one of the bearers, and the Plaquemine, which is represented by the Natchezans; perhaps such a relationship even suggests the means by which the Mississippian culture influenced the Plaquemine culture in prehistory.

Gulf Coast and Mobile Delta Tribes

The Gulf Coast and Mobile Delta regions began to blend during the late prehistoric period as the Bottle Creek chiefdom of the Mobile Delta, probably a peer of Moundville, extended its maximal influence in both directions along the Gulf Coast (Knight 1984). To the west of the coastal area along the lower reaches of the Mississippi it is clear that the Natchezan influence was strong, but the archaeology of the region is not complete enough to tell us precisely where the two cultural streams met. Further inland we do know that there was a large Natchezan chiefdom situated on the Pearl River south of Monticello, and perhaps this influence extended further south as well. To the east the influence of the Pensacola culture extended from the region of Pensacola in the east to at least the Pascagoula River delta in the west. Scanty ceramic evidence from Biloxi Bay suggests that the Pensacola tradition may have dominated even further west, but it is not adequate for any specific suggestions. We know that the Biloxis encountered by the French in 1699 were Siouans, far away from their nearest relatives the Quapaw, but when or how they got to the Mississippi Gulf coast we do not yet know.

Native groups in this region were contacted several times by Spaniards during the protohistoric period (see Hoffman, this volume). The coast was first officially reconnoitred in 1519 by Pineda, although no lengthy stop was made. In 1528 the Narvaez expedition struggled along the coast and encountered Indians occupied with harvesting marine resources, Indians who already knew to be wary of Europeans and may already have suffered from European contagion. Although the Soto expedition itself did not reach the central Gulf coast overland, its supply ships reconnoitred the Mobile Bay area several times and certainly waited in vain for Soto at Pensacola Bay for some time. The evidence of early exploration documents, therefore, informs us very little of coastal Indian settlement, telling us only what would not have been hard to guess.

The situation is somewhat different with the population settled in the Mobile delta, because not only was this population at least marginally affected by the passage of the Soto expedition, but it was directly contacted by the Tristan de Luna expedition of 1559-61. The archaeology suggests that this region was

closely allied with the Moundville polity in prehistory, probably providing it with the salt supplies necessary to a maize-based diet and available from springs on the lower Tombigbee, as well as marine foodstuffs from the Gulf and the Mobile Bay estuary (Walthall 1980). The inhabitants of the delta region were, however, primarily farmers.

It was to this delta region that a part of the Alabama River population coming off the Black Warrior was probably assimilated, bringing with them a tradition of urn burial that had developed in the latter years of Moundville and that their cousins took with them to the Coosa-Talapoosa forks and the upper Tombigbee (Sheldon 1974).

Although only Curren now argues seriously that the battle of Mabila occurred in the region of the Mobile delta, it is evident that the Indian population assembled to give the Spaniards battle had included warriors from the whole region, and doubtless the deaths or at least woundings and maimings of several thousands of Indians at that battle had an impact on both the population and the social organization of settlements throughout the region. When observed by Luna's expedition, the population of the delta proper was still large but seemed to demonstrate less nucleation of settlement and centralization of decision-making capability than one would expect of the multileveled chiefdom that Bottle Creek doubtless represents, so it is possible that the impact of disease and warfare from the passage of Soto is thus demonstrated. The people of the delta, the Mobilians, Naniabas, and Tohomes, were later considered Choctaws, but their protohistoric pottery demonstrates clear continuity with the Pensacola tradition.

After the passage of the several Spanish exploration parties and the abortive settlement effort of Luna, Indian groups of the region were then not directly contacted by Europeans until late in the seventeenth century. In the interim, however, indirect contacts continued, as the establishment of a permanent Spanish mission settlement at Apalachee in 1633 fostered trade for hides and meat to the west and attracted shipping which doubtless stopped elsewhere along the coast at least for wood and water (Hann 1988). In 1675 the bishop of Cuba, Calderón, visited the mission settlement and made note of Indian information to the effect that redoubtable Mobilian and Choctaw tribes were to be found to the west.

In the meantime the British, newly established in Charleston, were already sending agents out into the hinterland around the southern end of the Appalachians to suborn the "Spanish" Indians and to scout further west for trade; we know these agents reached Upper Creek tribes that are thus established as being in place on the Coosa-Talapoosa drainage in the late seventeenth century, and they in turn told of contacts with Chickasaws. Thus we reach the historic period proper, when sustained contact with Europeans began.

Although as we enter the historic period the view of Indian tribes begins to be lost in what the European settlers considered their own more important activities, it must be remembered that in spite of the documentary conventionalization of the image of the Indian, the story of each individual tribe is different. Each tribe considered itself a separate entity, and each worked out its own arrangements with its neighbors, both Indian and white. It is interesting to note that while Europeans worked out means of dealing with tribes that placed the Indians systematically upon an inferior footing, Indian tribes adapted existing methods of intertribal diplomacy for dealing with Europeans, viewing the strange-looking intruders as simply another tribe from especially far away (cf. Galloway 1989). Both assumptions were tested and often strained in practice, and from the point of view of intercultural political history, the process by which this happened is important to observe.

European Entry into the Interior

The official French colonizing mission in North America first concentrated itself along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes beginning in 1535 with Cartier's expeditions. Although an abortive French Huguenot settlement was attempted near the present Charleston by Laudonnère, its members were put to the sword in 1565 by the Spaniards under Pedro Menendez de Avilés who established St. Augustine, and no further French efforts were made along the southern part of the Atlantic coast.

Yet clearly the French were aware—through their regular clergy if no other way—of Spanish settlement efforts in the land they designated “Florida” (most of what is now considered the Deep South) and of their improved geographic knowledge of the region. But European geographers remained confused about the existence and location of the Mississippi and the location of the Appalachians and the Smokies, and the early French explorations in the region served to open up to Europeans for the first time knowledge of the enormous Mississippi Valley.

Although unnamed *coureurs de bois* may have gone almost anywhere, officially the first such explorers were the trader Jolliet and the Jesuit Father Marquette, who descended the Mississippi as far as the Quapaw settlements on the Arkansas River in 1673. They thereby verified that the Mississippi went southward and did not empty into the Pacific, and news from the Indians of other Europeans to be found further south (probably a rumor of the Spanish settlements in Apalachee and/or the New Mexico region) was their ostensible reason for turning back. They also found a large population of Indians in that region who seemed receptive to the efforts of both traders and missionaries. Having planted a cross and made friends with the people, the two returned to report their findings in Quebec.

The initiative of Marquette and Jolliet was not followed up immediately. The French colonial period in the Old Southwest can thus be considered to have seen its immediate prelude in the exploits set in motion by the ambitions of René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, whose grand scheme to open up the Mississippi valley as a source and potential frost-free port outlet for the fur trade eventually focused the attention of the French government on the region and its importance for colonial efforts in North America (Galloway 1982; Weddle, Morkovsky, and Galloway 1987). Because there was no immediate follow-up to the explorations of Marquette and Jolliet, La Salle was able to build his fur-trading base among the Great Lakes before asking permission to explore for the Crown and gain for himself the right to exploit certain fur resources in such lands as he should discover. Once such a grant had been secured in France, he was ready to undertake his historic exploration of the Mississippi in the winter of 1681-82.

La Salle and his party, which consisted of 23 Frenchmen, among them a priest, and 31 Indians, had to wait for the ice to break up on the upper Mississippi before starting their trip down the river in February of 1682. La Salle and his deputy, Henri de Tonti, made a special effort not only to avoid conflict with the Indians but to go beyond that to lay the groundwork for favorable trading alliances, and in fact they were quite successful in this. Already acquainted with the Illinois tribes, the expedition simply renewed acquaintance and exchanged gifts with them. Proceeding down the river, the expedition stopped to hunt for food, as had by then become routine, at the Chickasaw Bluffs near Memphis. There one of their number, Prudhomme, was lost in the woods, and the expedition was obliged to throw up a rude fortification and camp several days there, sending parties into the woods to seek him. In the course of this process a party of two Chickasaws was met with and captured. They invited La Salle to visit their villages. After an overland trip of two days, however, La Salle realized that he had been deceived by the Indians' representation (or his own misunderstanding) that their villages were not far. Although he

abandoned this effort to meet with the Chickasaws, one of them traveled with the expedition for some time.

A more immediately important contact with a new group was with the Quapaws that Marquette and Jolliet had encountered. The Quapaws heaped La Salle with gifts and probably adopted him in an extended and impressive calumet ceremony, expressing their eagerness to receive trade and a missionary. La Salle executed a formal act of possession for the French Crown here on March 13. He denied a Quapaw request to help them attack the Tunicas of the lower Yazoo Basin, using the excuse that it would take the expedition out of its way, but actually leaving open the possibility for later negotiations with the Tunicas. Thus in descending from the Arkansas River alongside the Yazoo Basin, the party met with no identifiable Indian groups, suggesting that at least there were no groups whose settlement focused on the river.

The next important group encountered was thus also west of the river: the Taensas, located on Lake St. Joseph opposite the mouth of the Big Black River. Here the Frenchmen observed the classic floodplain adaptation of the period: cornfields surrounding a village containing a temple dedicated to sun worship, moated by a cut-off lake stocked with fish. Tonti was formally received here on both downstream and upstream trips, and on the former he was given a young slave as a present. On both occasions the Taensas treated the French with grave ceremony, presenting them with both domestic and gathered foods for their trip.

La Salle's meeting with the Natchez group in the present Natchez Bluffs region, which began with a touchy sudden encounter with a group of fishermen as the convoy of canoes followed some Indians, has raised a number of important questions. These "Natchez" consisted of two groups, one Natchez and one called Coroa, living along the Mississippi at some distance from one another. According to Brain, who has most recently (1982) addressed this issue, The "Natchez" proper represented the older protohistoric settlements at the Emerald and Foster sites, one of which La Salle (but unfortunately not one expedition chronicler) apparently visited, while the downstream location identified as Coroa was probably a satellite of the Fatherland site later to be known as the Grand Village, and this division may have reflected what still amounted to domination by the inhabitants of the older settlements over both new Natchez settlements and the villages of assimilated groups. These first meetings with the Natchez chiefdom were cordial, and the Natchez willingly provided the expedition with a large supply of maize.

La Salle and his men had already witnessed the presence of Indian "slaves" in the villages they had visited; as the expedition proceeded on southward to the mouth of the Mississippi, some additional evidence of native warfare was seen. A village of the Tangipahoa was encountered by the riverside where dead bodies lay strewn about and burnt houses were still smoldering. Later on, desperate for food, the Frenchmen tried some smoked ribs they found in an abandoned canoe but handed them over to the Indians when they discovered them to be human.

When the expedition reached the delta of the river on April 6, several parties were sent to explore the three mouths and camp was made. On April 9 La Salle ceremoniously claimed the entire Mississippi watershed for France and erected a metal plaque with the royal arms of Louis XIV.

The return upriver did not reveal much that was new, apart from casting some further light on the Natchez group and its alliances in the region. The French had been involved in a skirmish with a group of Indians on the lower Mississippi, and they made the mistake of presenting a scalp taken by one of their Indians to the Natchez chief. These people were at least claimed by the Natchez as allies, but because the French had already been received into the village and were eating a meal, the angered warriors did not attack, and the French were able to withdraw without incident.

On the return journey La Salle fell ill and had to stay at the Prudhomme Bluffs for some weeks, nursed by the loyal Father Membré. When he was able to travel he returned to Canada and thence to France, where he lobbied for a second expedition via the Gulf of Mexico to establish a settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi. La Salle was in luck this time: a renegade Spaniard, Peñalosa, had been trying to convince the French king that the conquest of the Spanish mines would be simple from the Gulf and the Mississippi, and La Salle now brought the argument of the usefulness of his Mississippi Valley Indian alliances to bear. Whether Louis XIV actually intended to attack the Spanish mines or not, he surely must have been influenced by the intimations of British interest in the Mississippi Valley, for he decided to fund La Salle's expedition, and in 1685 it started for the New World with four ships and a small colony's worth of people.

I will not go into detail about this expedition, because La Salle of course missed the mouth of the Mississippi and ended up on the Texas coast; after the loss of two ships, the departure of the main ship, and several attempts to find the Mississippi overland, he was killed by two dissident expedition members, and the remains of the colony were wiped out by the Karankawa Indians in 1689. What is important about this effort, however, is that it did indirectly lead to the first European settlement in the lower Mississippi Valley in the shape of a trading post set up by Henri de Tonti among the Quapaw Indians in 1686.

Tonti had not sat idle while La Salle was in France. A partner in the enterprise, he had begun to make additional trading post establishments in the Illinois country to support the empire the partners were developing. When he heard that La Salle was actually on his way, he made a journey himself to the mouth of the Mississippi in 1686, leaving behind with the "Quinipissa" a letter for La Salle when he did not find him at the river's mouth. On his way back up the river Tonti established the "Akansa" post among the Quapaws, assuming seigneurial rights for himself based on La Salle's promises and subgranting land to the men who would man the post. The immediate significance of the post was that it was there to succour the last exploration party sent out by La Salle's dying Texas settlement and led by Joutel. This party passed through the post in 1688 and returned to Canada to report the failure of the expedition.

The post had another significance: it brought Jean Couture to the Mississippi Valley. Couture, who had worked for La Salle's rivals in the Great Lakes region, had later signed on with Tonti and was the leader of the post settlement. For reasons that are still not fully explained, however, he "deserted" to the British around 1690 and led a British reconnaissance party to the Mississippi River and his friends the Quapaws via the Tennessee and Ohio in 1699, missing an encounter with his former boss literally by weeks. Although Couture's motives remain murky, the increased presence of the British in the region that it represented certainly must have weighed with French decision-makers who would recommend permanent occupation of the Mississippi Valley to the king (see Galloway 1991a).

That this British interest was beginning to amount to a significant danger is indicated by the 1698 journey of Col. Welch, who pushed the Upper Trade Path from the Upper Creeks on the Coosa-Talapoosa drainage through the Chickasaw nation on the upper Tombigbee all the way to the Mississippi River. At least as far as the Chickasaws, this path would never go out of use during the colonial period.

SUSTAINED CONTACT PERIOD: FRENCH (1699-1763)

Iberville and the Establishment of the Colony

The next expedition sent to the region by the French Crown, finally ready to turn to colonial concerns with the end of the War of the League of Augsburg, was led not by La Salle's second-in-command, the peerless Indian diplomatist Henri de Tonti, but by a Canadian naval officer with an excellent record in fighting the British during the late war: Pierre Le Moyne, sieur d'Iberville. Iberville, as was customary, brought with him a panoply of brothers and cousins when he was sent to the Gulf Coast by the king in 1699 to establish definitively the location of the mouth of La Salle's Mississippi and to study the feasibility of establishing a colony (McWilliams 1980, Giraud 1974).

Iberville had initially planned to make Pensacola Bay his base of operations, but the Spaniards had heard of his journey and had hastily established an outpost there. Because the two nations were formally allied, the Spanish officer was courteous to Iberville, but he denied the ships entry to the bay and Iberville passed on westward. Because the entry to Mobile Bay looked tricky (a pile of human bones on Dauphin Island did not look too promising, either, prompting the name "Massacre Island") and Mississippi Sound was too shallow for his ships, Iberville initially anchored in February of 1699 off Ship Island, which he named. It is an understatement to say that public sentiment in the coastal counties of Mississippi is divided on where Iberville first set foot on the Mississippi coast, but scholars are not divided at all: legally, Ship Island IS part of the Mississippi coast, and the problem is thus resolved. Where he first set foot on the actual littoral is also fairly clear, and it was west of the entrance to Biloxi Bay.

The aim of Iberville's first trip was to reconnoitre, and that he took care to do. He and other detachments first explored the Mississippi coast, making friends with all the Indians he could meet, and then undertook to ascend the Mississippi and verify that it was the same river La Salle had claimed for France. On this trip Iberville first saw the "Baton Rouge" that marked the border between Houma and Bayougoula hunting land, a post reddened with animal blood and decorated with trophies of the hunt. To return to the sea he investigated Bayou Manchac as a passage direct from the Mississippi through lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain to the Mississippi Sound, but the canoes had to be portaged around a mass of logs that clogged the bayou. When Iberville returned to France to make his report he left behind a small garrison to build a fort near the eastern side of the entrance to Biloxi Bay, headed up by Sauvole.

Meanwhile, after years of pressure from Tonti and worried that the mission to the Mississippi might be lost to the Jesuits, the Recollect seminary in Quebec had sent several missionaries to take up posts on the Mississippi River in 1698, establishing missions among the Yazoo/Tunica, Natchez, and Taensas. Hearing of the new establishment on the Gulf coast, Father de Montigny descended all the way to the coast to make contact with the French there and find out what was afoot.

The French government was unwilling to make a formal commitment to a colony until Iberville provided more information from a second voyage, but on that voyage Iberville carried additional men to form a garrison. Continuing explorations accompanied by the Jesuit Father Du Ru, he renewed the Natchez alliance and went as far as the Taensas. Using a Taensa guide, he was able to obtain information on most of the tribes as far as the lower Yazoo delta, although he went no further than the Red River. His young brother Bienville was assigned the task of making further explorations and explored the Red River and Mobile Bay and delta, apparently devoting most of his spare time to mastering the Choctaw-like Mobilian trade language that was in wide use throughout the region. Tonti came down to meet with Iberville, in the hope of being assigned some important task, but was disappointed to be sent back upriver

to thwart a British trader whom the missionary to the Tunicas had seen at the Chickasaws. But it was the British threat that most impressed Paris and sealed the decision to create a colony.

From the time of Iberville's second voyage an effort was made to explore the lands to the west of the Mississippi in search of mines for substances of value—this goal sent Bienville and Louis Juchereau de Saint-Denis far to the west on the Red River and Le Sueur up the Mississippi and the Green River, where his exploitation of possible copper mines included the efforts of the carpenter Penicaut who left a useful memoir on the early days of the colony (McWilliams 1988). But although various observations of mineral deposits east of the Mississippi would be made over the years, it seemed obvious from the outset that mineral wealth would not make the fortune of Louisiana.

When Iberville returned the last time to make the definitive establishment of a colony, in late 1701, his first concern was to choose a site for the colony's capital, which he did in the Mobile delta—this is the site now known as Old Mobile—and laid out its squares and granted house lots to the first settlers of the colony, who included Canadian voyageurs as well as the military men of the garrison. Then he was finally ready to take proper advantage of Henri de Tonti's talents to establish an alliance with the most important tribes of the region, the Chickasaws and Choctaws. Tonti traveled from Mobile through the Choctaw nation and Chakchiuma settlements to the Chickasaw nation, where he found the Chickasaws engaged in slave raids on the Choctaws at the direction of an English trader whom Tonti confronted. Tonti was able to convince several Chickasaw chiefs to accompany him to Mobile and was even able to free one Choctaw slave to serve as their safe-conduct through the Choctaw villages, where three representatives of that tribe joined the party. At the new Mobile site the meeting took place, and the Choctaws and Chickasaws agreed to peace and trade with the French, accepting young cabin boys as trainee interpreters to live among them. Meanwhile Father St. Cosme had replaced Montigny among the Natchez, while Foucault, who had finally established a mission among the Quapaws, would soon be murdered by the Coroas.

Iberville returned to France just in time for the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, leaving his brother Bienville in charge. Although Iberville had many proposals to make for the peopling and management of the colony, central to which was the alliance and conversion of the major Indian tribes, he would never again see Louisiana, as he died of yellow fever in Havana on the return trip in 1706.

His brother Bienville was left to govern the nascent colony. Bienville's first tenure as acting governor, begun in his early twenties, was not a very promising one. He was already on the bad side of Nicolas de la Salle, a participant in La Salle's expeditions now back in Louisiana with his family as acting commissary of the colony, and the Quebec Seminary priest La Vente, pastor to the Mobile colony, and his other missionary confreres. Bienville had offended them by his boldness in keeping decisions of Indian diplomacy to himself and his preference for Jesuits, which he had demonstrated by appointing Father Gravier to the chaplaincy of the fort in Mobile (O'Neill 1966). Probably due to the squabble, both La Vente and Bienville were to have had their conduct reviewed with the appointment of a new governor, De Muy, and commissary, Martin Dartaquette. When De Muy died enroute to the colony, Dartaquette proceeded to hold hearings on Bienville's conduct and to observe the colony, but he did not complete his final report until 1712, and by that time La Vente had left the colony and Nicolas de La Salle was dead. Meanwhile, no satisfactory action had been taken toward dealing with Iberville's and then Bienville's recommendations that attractive girls be sent to marry the Canadians and turn them into settlers—a small contingent of Frenchwomen sent in 1703 had not filled the existing demand—and the men were universally resorting to concubinage with Indian women, much to the disgust of the clergy, who went to

the length of recommending that legal marriage with Indian women ought to be allowed. It should be noted that it was in 1710 that the patriarch-to-be of the Graveline family, a Canadian friend of the Le Moynes, came to the colony and founded what would become a permanent settlement on the Pascagoula River, and Graveline's wife was a Protestant.

The English of Carolina, now alerted to the circumscription of their westward trade by the new French colony, determined on several ventures with their Indian allies to try to drive the French out, intensifying slave raids on the Choctaws and the Mississippi tribes by their Upper Creek and Chickasaw allies. Attacks were launched with regularity, but in 1708 the Indian agent Thomas Nairne was sent into the hinterland to organize the Talapoosas and Chickasaws to make massive attacks on the Choctaws (Nairne 1988, Crane 1928). A similar concentrated attack was also made in 1712, and one or the other or both of these was responsible for pushing a final contingent of Choctaws out of the Mobile River delta and into the orbit of the Chickasawhay villages.

Crozat and the First Commercial Development

These early efforts could easily have come to nothing, for the Crown, impoverished by war expenses, was clearly hesitant to commit to large expenditures to establish a full-fledged colony at this time. The financier Crozat, however, was willing to purchase a fifteen-year monopoly on the trade of the colony in 1712 in return for the commitment to send two ships to Louisiana each year, one filled with supplies and one filled with young men and women destined to marry and settle in the colony. In theory, the ships would return to France filled with goods that could be sold for a profit. In practice, the mercantilist policies that meant only raw materials could be received in France from the colonies almost guaranteed the failure of the project. From 1712 to 1716 only four ships in all were sent with merchandise and settlers to Louisiana, and nothing but deerskin was sent back in return, since the hugely inflated prices demanded for French goods by Crozat's agents pushed the colonists into contraband trade with Spanish and English merchants.

Worse, perhaps, was the choice of Antoine de La Mothe Cadillac as governor. Initially chosen to replace Bienville by Pontchartrain in 1710, it had been Cadillac, in France to see to his financial dealings before going out to Louisiana, who convinced Crozat to undertake the monopoly, and he stood to gain a 3.5% commission on profits. But Cadillac was not only not prepared to put in the serious work of diplomacy with the Indians and encouragement of settlers that a successful colony required, but his coercive attitude toward both were doomed to failure. Indeed his clumsy treatment of the Natchez, whose customs he did not deign to respect, was probably as responsible for their unrest in 1716 as anything. In that same year Cadillac was replaced by L'Epiney at Crozat's request, but nothing could rescue Crozat's profits.

John Law, the Mississippi Bubble, and the Natchez Revolt

The most important effort at the peopling of the colony came under a scheme initiated by the Scottish finance minister of France, John Law, and known in infamy as the Mississippi Bubble (Heinrich 1988, Giraud 1966). The Louisiana monopoly was handed over to the Company of the West, a creation of Law's state bank, when Crozat relinquished it in 1717. With the idea that private enterprise would be successful in forming a colony if it were only tried on a large enough scale, Law planned to populate the colony and finance its development through the sale of stock in the Company, whereby large investors would receive a large concession (land grant) in the Louisiana colony, which they would agree to develop and populate



Encampment of newly-landed settlers at New Biloxi, 1720. From the collections of the Newberry Library, Chicago.

with colonists, who would initially be indentured workers. The profits from the output of the workers' labors on the concessions would go to the stockholders, and the workers would earn the right to a small piece of land on the concession after some years of work.

The problems with the implementation of Law's scheme on the Mississippi were many. Although there was a rage for investment in the companies in France, colonist candidates were not easy to find. When they could be found and transported to Louisiana, logistic arrangements were so poor that many died of disease, hunger, and exposure before they could be taken from the initial landing place at Biloxi to the concessions, and the equipment and seed stocks provided for their use were insufficient, unsuitable, and sometimes just plain missing. The famous engraving of the sprawling campsite on the coast indicates bark-covered lean-tos in the foreground being used as a hospital.

Another problem with the Law scheme was the siting of concessions. The developers planned to harvest several specific cash crops—tobacco, indigo, sugar—and there were few places suited to these crops that were not susceptible to flooding or heavily forested. Sites along the lower Mississippi River, on the Natchez Bluffs, and on the Arkansas and Yazoo rivers were chosen, as well as a few along the Gulf Coast, where the intention was to profit from forest products in the preparation of naval stores. The problem with almost all of them was that they were ready for use because they had been cleared by the Indians, and although initially the Indians were willing to share their lands (the French usually carried out formal purchase of lands for trade goods, but it is doubtful that the Indians understood this as anything more than perhaps the purchase of usufruct rights), misunderstandings and conflicts were inevitable as large numbers of Frenchmen began to live in close proximity with Indians for the first time.

The only positive note was in the appointment of Bienville as governor in 1718. His preparations for the influx of settlers under Law's scheme were extensive, and they affected the infrastructure of the colony. Aware that the major settlement would be focused on the Mississippi, his first concern was to move the capital of the colony from Mobile to a site on the river, which he laid out in 1718 and called

Nouvelle Orleans. More importantly, perhaps, and taking advantage of other events in the region at the time, several forts were built: Fort Rosalie on the bluffs at Natchez; Fort Toulouse at the junction of the Coosa and Talapoosa among the Alabama Indians; Fort St. Pierre near the mouth of the Yazoo River among the Yazoo Indians.

In 1715 the Yamassee Indians had revolted in South Carolina, killing many settlers and bringing large numbers of Indians from other tribes into a serious attack on the English colony. Where previously the French had been played off against the English by the Indians to the advantage of the latter, all at once the French became the southeastern Indians' sole supplier of trade goods, especially guns and ammunition. This gave the French the economic leverage to make demands that would not have been accepted under other circumstances, and doubtless it was the real reason the Natchez were willing to help build Rosalie in 1716, not because they were remorseful for the killing of a Frenchman or were daunted by the tiny force Bienville led to take punitive action against them. Economic factors seem also to have been at work in the willingness of the Yazoos to have a fort constructed in 1718, that and a measure of protection that they hoped to obtain by its presence. The Indians were not informed that they would soon see an influx of settlers, and as the concessions became established and absorbed more land, friction inevitably arose.

The Company of the West merged with the Company of the Indies in 1719, and the latter company's existing slave trade in Africa was used to bring large numbers of black slaves to Louisiana for the first time. The first shipment in 1721 contained 1312 blacks, and ships thereafter brought several hundreds every year, bringing over a total of some 6000 in ten years. Mortality was great, however, since by 1731 there were only 3395 black slaves in the colony, and in spite of continued imports on a smaller scale the number had only increased to 4730 by 1746 and some 6000 by 1763. Under the Company and afterwards, slaves were allotted to settlers who could both pay and provide for them. As numbers of black slaves increased, it became necessary to regulate their treatment, and the famous Black Code forbidding gross mistreatment of slaves and granting them specific legal rights was promulgated in 1724.

The commitments of the Company of the West were seriously discouraged by the Natchez Revolt of 1729. The commandant of Fort Rosalie, a man named Chepart or Chopart, was apparently not only a drunkard but also stupid enough to ignore the sentiments of the Natchez Indians among whom the colonists lived. Perhaps in partnership with the governor, Périer, he demanded of the Natchez that they vacate a mound village so that he could take it over for his own plantation. The Natchez asked for a little time to make arrangements, and in the interim they presented themselves at the French habitations on the morning of November 28, asking to borrow guns to undertake contract hunting for the French. Once they had those guns in hand, Chepart was shot first, and that was the signal for an attempt on the lives of all remaining white men, which came close to being a complete success, as only two escaped. The uprising was allegedly assisted by some disaffected male slaves, probably field hands newly imported from Africa, who had been promised their freedom. The Natchez then took the women, children, and black slaves prisoner, intending to sell the slaves to the English traders at the Chickasaw villages and presumably to ransom the French women and children.

The Natchez Revolt did not just involve the Natchez tribe. Everyone, French and Indian, agreed that the Natchez had colluded with other tribes to arrange a simultaneous uprising in several places on the target day, with the intention of driving the French out of the country. When it came to the performance, however, it was only the Yazoo coalition, which was also the only other group that had been as substantially inconvenienced as the Natchez, that did so revolt, killing the Fort St. Pierre garrison.

It is not entirely obvious what the Natchez thought to gain by their revolt or how unanimous the decision was. If they really thought such an uprising would expel the French, they had clearly misapprehended the functions of a European empire, but it would have been hard for them to envision the power of a Continental army, never having seen one. The uprising, however, seems to me to reflect a different conception altogether. Sometime between 1682 and 1699, the Bayougoulas invited the Acolapisas to live with them—and then massacred them a few years later. Similarly, the Taensas were invited to move in with the Houmas; this time the newcomers killed their hosts. In both cases the evidence suggests that the killings were not complete massacres, and women and children were spared to be incorporated into the conquering tribe. This native pattern might be what we see in the Natchez Revolt, which is of course only a “revolt” from the point of view of Europeans who thought they were in charge.

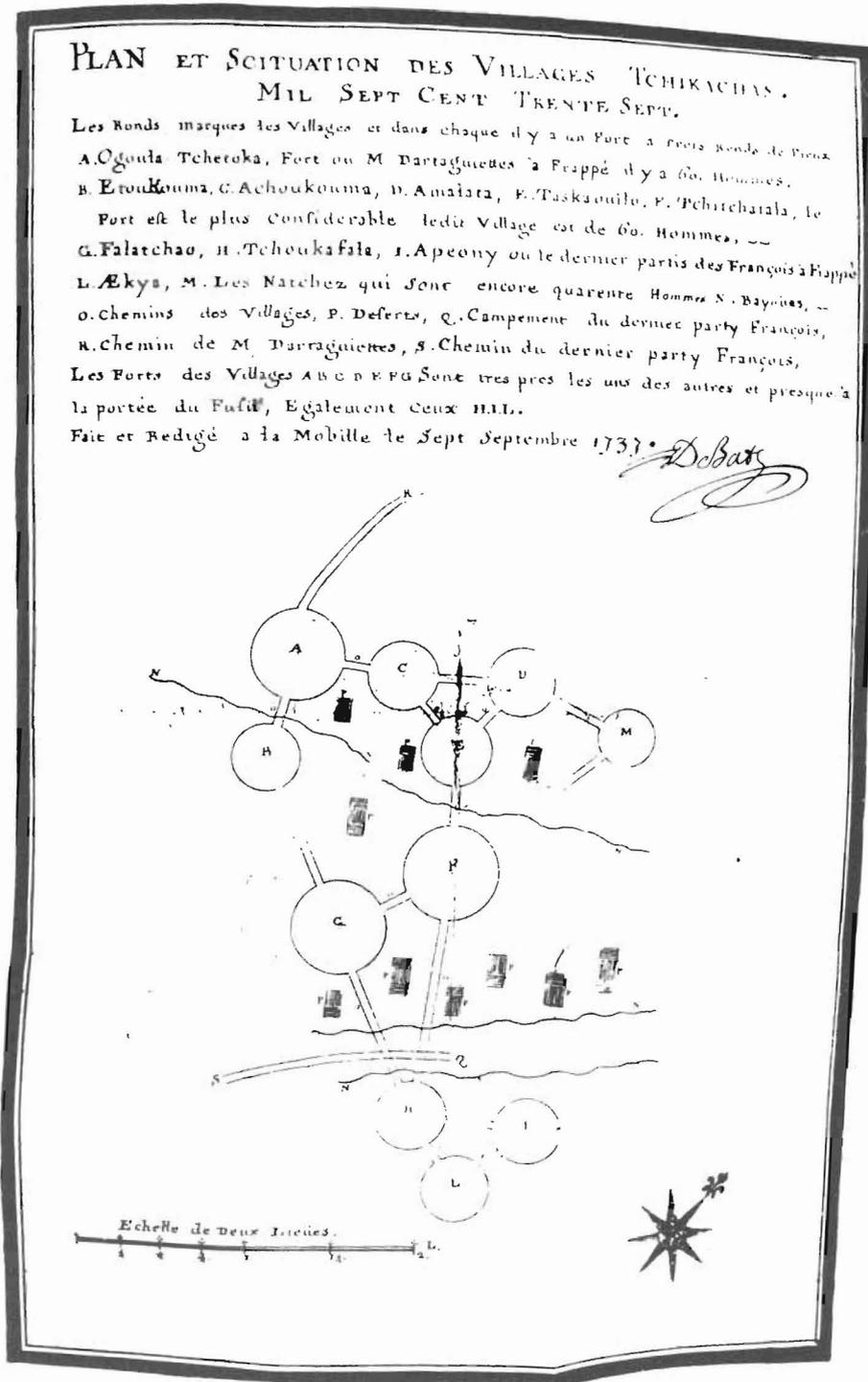
The Natchez revolt effectively ended the governorship of Périer, whose efforts to send out parties against the Natchez and retrieve the hostages, not to mention his panicked and abortive project to fortify New Orleans, did not prevent his recall in 1733, after the Company retroceded the colony to the Crown. He was replaced by the man the colony had been clamoring for, the man it was sure was the only one who could handle the Indians: Bienville.

Reestablishment of the Crown Colony: Bienville's Wars

Long-standing relations of alliance between the Chickasaws and the Natchez were apparently the reason why the Chickasaws took in the remnants of the Natchez tribe after their departure from the fortified site on the Red River where they made their last stand against Périer's second punitive expeditions. But Bienville had been sent to put the colony in order again and to restore morale after the Natchez revolt, and he had to demand that the Chickasaws hand the Natchez over to the French for punishment, totally disregarding the possible existence of traditions of alliance and hospitality that would make it impossible for them to do so. When the Chickasaws refused, Bienville resolved to mount an expedition against them, and in 1736 he gathered soldiers and militia from New Orleans—including a free black militia company—to join with the garrison at Mobile and with Choctaw allies in marching north to wage war on the Chickasaws.

This was not a simple operation. The plan was to set up a pincers attack, utilizing a force of Illinois Indians and the Fort de Chartres garrison of French soldiers led by Pierre Dartaguet, the brother both of the current Mobile commandant and of Bienville's old friend. Because of the impatience of his Indian allies, Dartaguet was forced to attack before Bienville's forces had even arrived. The party attacked the somewhat isolated village of Ougoula Tchetoka, but fortunately for the Chickasaws the attack was heard by hunters, and other villagers soon came to their rescue, capturing most of the French contingent. Romantic pictures have been conceived of the Frenchmen bravely singing hymns, led by Father Sénat, as they went to death at the stake, but they were apparently tomahawked and then burned. Not, however, before the resident English traders could find in the pocket of their leader the battle plans sent to him by Bienville (Delanglez 1935).

The governor had meanwhile been occupied in constructing a new fort, Tombecbé, on the Tombigbee to serve as his resupply depot, and then had come along with his forces according to the previously-agreed schedule. The Chickasaws were prepared when Bienville's party advanced upon the southernmost of the Chickasaw towns, Ackia, Apeony, and Chukafalaya. Again it was the impatience of Indian allies that led to the attack, which fell upon Ackia. In the battle the black militiamen were sent forward carrying padded shield constructions against the arrows fired by the Indians, while infantry followed them to the attack.



Map of the Chickasaw villages as drawn from the information of an Alabama Indian diplomat by Alexandre de Batz, 1737. The names of the villages are listed by letter in the text; Ekya (Ackia), Apeony, and Tchoukafala are the three at the bottom of the picture.

The Indian forts, built by the advice of the English traders, were on a prominence, and the French casualties were serious; a majority of the officers were killed or mortally wounded very quickly, and the army had to withdraw.

The first Chickasaw war was clearly seen as a defeat in France, and Bienville was expected to redeem himself. Bienville complained that the failure was due to lack of men and materiel within the colony for mounting such an expedition, and he requested—and got—special reinforcements from France to mount a second expedition. The planning here was at least intended to be meticulous, and we are indebted to it for some excellent mapping of the region. Bienville assigned the chief engineer, Broutin, the task of mapping the entire region between the Mississippi and the Tombigbee as far north as the Chickasaw Bluffs and south as the coast, with a view to making the decision as to what route to take to attack the Chickasaws. This time he would use an auxiliary force from Canada, too, that would include Huron allies feared by the Chickasaws.

Broutin took his task very seriously, and he sent François Saucier out to reconnoitre and map the trails in the southern part of the region, while he personally investigated the Mississippi River and upper Yazoo Basin region. Broutin later claimed to have been pessimistic about the potential for negotiating the swamps of the upper Yazoo with horses, cattle on the hoof, and gun carriages, but he must not have been very assertive before the fact, for Bienville decided to abandon the overland eastern route he had used previously for a northern route that would require the transport to the Chickasaw Bluffs region of men and materiel by river. He felt, however, that this route offered the advantage that the Arkansas Post could be used as a staging point, while arrangements could more easily be made to meet with the northern contingent before the attack.

It was also necessary for Bienville to mend fences with his Indian allies, the Choctaws, for in 1738 a Choctaw couple doing contract hunting for settlers on the Pascagoula had been murdered by two young brothers who were ostensibly giving them a lift to Mobile. The Choctaws demanded blood, and Bienville sent the young men to New Orleans together with their black slave, who was the only witness, to face trial. The Superior Council returned a verdict of guilty, but mitigated the sentence from hanging, which would have meant dire disgrace, to firing squad. The condemned prisoners were brought back to Mobile and executed in front of Choctaw witnesses, satisfying the claims of Choctaw justice for blood revenge.

Troop ships from France arrived in time for the expedition to make its way up the Mississippi River in the late winter of 1739-1740, but the expedition was a disaster from the start. The troops sent from France, unaccustomed to the heat and miasmatic fevers of Louisiana, succumbed in droves, both in New Orleans and on the way up the river. Cattle being herded from the Natchitoches region overland drowned in high waters of the St. Francis River. Once the expedition was assembled on the Chickasaw Bluffs and began its trek inland, its guns soon bogged down in the swamps of the upper Yazoo Basin and had to be abandoned. The more mobile Canadian contingent, led by Celoron, was able to advance on the Chickasaws and extract from at least a faction of them a half-hearted offer of peace. With his expedition in disarray, Bienville was glad to accept this opportunity to save face, and the army dragged its way back to New Orleans.

Echoes of European Empire-Building

After the failure of Bienville's efforts to secure a military victory against the Chickasaws, he was recalled to France and replaced by Vaudreuil, the son of a former governor of Canada. Vaudreuil was concerned to put the operation of the colony upon a more businesslike footing and thus to increase his

reputation and his value to the French crown; but he was also concerned—like all his predecessors—to line his pockets amply, and for this reason he again played out the governor vs. commissary duel.

It was during Vaudreuil's administration that French and English competition for the trade and loyalties of the Indians of Louisiana peaked in a civil war among the Choctaws that reflected tensions in Europe (Galloway 1982b). During the early 1740s a British blockade of the French colony made trade goods for Indian allies nearly impossible for the French to obtain, and during this time a Choctaw war chief, Red Shoe, was alienated from the French by a 1746 incident, involving a young French subaltern and one of Red Shoe's wives, that led to the killing of the subaltern and two French traders who operated among the Western Choctaw villages under Red Shoe's control. When the French demanded his execution and cut him off from all trade goods, Red Shoe built upon contacts he had already made with English traders in the late thirties to bring English goods into his villages. In a large conference of all the Choctaw villages called by the major of Mobile, Beauchamp, in 1746, it became obvious both that Red Shoe's influence was considerable and that the Choctaws would be reluctant to incur the blood guilt of executing one of their own, no matter what the French had been willing to do in the same line.

The French made demands on their allies to bring the heads of the guilty parties, but for some time all that happened was that pro-French Choctaws killed English traders and pro-English Choctaws attacked French settlements. Eventually the French were able to persuade a young warrior to murder Red Shoe, but that had the effect of causing the outbreak of actual civil war between the ethnic factions of the Choctaws. A smallpox epidemic going on concurrently claimed more lives than the hostilities, but hundreds of Choctaws died in the conflict. Alibamon Mingo, leader of the Eastern Choctaws, emerged as the preeminent leader of the tribe and with the participation of the French secured a treaty in 1750 ending the civil war.

The last effective governor of the Louisiana colony was Kerlérec, a Breton naval officer (Villiers du Terrage 1982). Kerlérec was a very active governor who saw Indian diplomacy as his most important tool: one of the earliest reports he sent back to France was a report on the Indian tribes of Louisiana, and he took great pride in the ceremonial Choctaw name he was given at his first Indian congress in Mobile. It is hard to judge how skilful Kerlérec really was in Indian diplomacy, but he certainly took it seriously, moving not only to cement the loyalties of the Choctaws and the tribes of the Mississippi region, but lobbying for French goods to seal alliances with the Upper Creeks and the Cherokees.

The End of the French Regime

The Treaty of Paris of 1763 granted all the land east of the Mississippi excluding the "Isle of Orleans" to England, while France had made a private deal to hand over all the remaining lands of Louisiana to her Bourbon ally Spain. The British were not slow to take over their new lands, and according to Aubry, the last French governor, they were pretty insufferably arrogant about it. One especially hated stricture was that not only were French garrisons obliged to vacate Forts Condé, Toulouse, Tombecbé, and Rosalie, but French settlers on now-English land had to take an oath of allegiance and be forbidden Catholic worship or sell their lands at any price they would fetch and remove west of the Mississippi. Some chose not to swallow their Gallic pride, and moved west of the river. But many of those who had cast their lot and founded their families in the colony chose to accede to the charade and calmly turned their coats.

Among these were Montault de Monberaut, former commandant of Fort Toulouse and architect of Kerlérec's "English Indian" policy that had been such a threat to the southern English colonies, and Simon Favré, senior interpreter to the Choctaws. Monberaut served Major Farnar, the new military commander

of the region, and John Stuart, the new Indian agent, in setting up Indian congresses held in 1765. Favré served as interpreter for those congresses and later carved out for himself a sizeable empire on the Pearl River.

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African Slavery in Provincial Mississippi

Ulysses S. Ricard, Jr.

Most of the slaves font des deserts, that is to say, they clear lands which they cultivate to their own profit; they grow cotton, tobacco, and other products which they sell. There are settlers who give their Negroes Saturday and Sunday for their own; and during this time the master is relieved of care for their nourishment; they work then for other Frenchmen who do not have slaves, and who pay them. Those who live in the capital or its environs take advantage, ordinarily, of the two hours rest given them at noon to go cut wood that they afterward sell in the city; others sell ashes, or the fruits of the country when one is in season. Some of the Negroes do so well that they have earned the wherewithal to buy their liberty, and have built their habitations in this province in imitation of the French.¹

When one thinks of the Mississippi, one usually thinks of English-speaking Mississippi. It is, however, important to remember that the region was first explored by the Spanish and first settled by the French. Its earliest citizens were more likely to speak French than English, as the region was a province of Louisiana. This paper will look at the development of slavery in Mississippi during the 18th century, when the region belonged at different times to France, Spain and Great Britain. It will include a brief discussion of the history of slavery in the Caribbean and how this affected the region. The early history of Mississippi is in large part the history of Louisiana, and much of what is known about the region comes to us in the form of French colonial documents found in Louisiana, Mississippi, and France.

The French slave trade in the New World began in the Caribbean in 1643 when sixty Africans were delivered to the French island of Guadeloupe. The development of an agricultural economy, particularly the cultivation of sugar in late seventeenth-century Jamaica and early eighteenth-century Saint Domingue (present day Haiti), was the reason for the development of the French slave trade. The demand for sugar in Europe and the resultant high prices it commanded in the marketplace were instrumental in the development of the slave trade in the French islands. The cultivation was highly labor intensive, and this, too, made it necessary to import an ever increasing number of Africans to the New World.

As would occur later in Louisiana, Indian slaves and white indentured servants were first used. However, church and lay reaction to the use of Indian slave labor was so negative that the practice was restricted. As regards the use of white workers, it was felt that they were ill-equipped and ill-suited to

¹ Dumont de Montigny, Louis F.B., *Mémoires historiques sur la Louisiane* (Paris, C.J.B. Buache, 1753). This was quoted by Joe Gray Taylor in *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*.

work in the heat of the tropics. It should also be noted that the whites who were being sent to the colonies during the period were not of good character. More will be mentioned about this later.

By 1650, 10,000 slaves a year were being imported into the islands. From 1741 to 1810 the average number of slaves arriving in the Caribbean each year had increased to 60,000, the majority of whom were being sent to Saint Domingue. To increase the number of slaves for the region, the French founded the Company of Senegal in 1673 to foster the slave trade. The Company had control of the slave trade between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers and was quite successful in obtaining slaves for the colonies. They were so successful, in fact, that by 1724 the French islands accounted for 60% of France's foreign trade. Saint Domingue became the richest and most important colony in the New World.²

The history of slavery in colonial Louisiana and, consequently, provincial Mississippi certainly parallels the French slave experience in the Caribbean. Early Louisiana suffered from a chronic lack of laborers, and the governors, other officials, and inhabitants of Louisiana wrote to the various companies and government officials in France which controlled the colony stating that slaves were needed and asking that they be sent. Laborers and craftsmen were always in constant demand in the early days of the colony. At times, Indian slaves were used. These Indian slaves were often obtained from the Indian allies of the French, who had captured them in battle or had taken them from the English. However, the officials and colonists complained that Indian slaves were not suitable to the hard work of clearing and draining the land and building levees. They also thought that the Indian slaves were more prone to running away. Hubert de St. Malo, the Commissary General, thought that the "Indian slaves . . . desert when they are hard pressed."³

Another reason for the importance of the slaves was the type of individuals who were being sent to the New World by the French government. Their character and morals were criticized often by officials. Governor Vaudreuil wrote a letter to Rouillé, the Minister of the Marine, in which he described the recruits who had been sent to the colony. He described a group "composed of men [who have been] scraped together and very often of bandits, [this] has occasioned many desertions, many legal executions, [and many] homicides among them . . . The diseases occasioned by the licentious life that they have led and by the excess of drink have caused many to perish . . . They have satisfied themselves with sending here every year a certain number of recruits, most of them bandits and vagabonds."⁴ Also, officials thought that the whites were unsuitable for the work. Périer thought that it was "impossible for whites to do work in the fields, especially during the summer."⁵

The government thought that Black slaves were the answer to the region's economic problems. As early as 1706 Bienville wrote to Pontchartrain, Minister of the Marine, requesting that Black slaves be sent to the colony. He wrote Pontchartrain that the colonists were eager to obtain Black slaves, and that they would be willing to pay cash for them. He added, however, that he hoped that they could obtain the

² James A. Rawley. *The Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981); Daniel H. Usner, Jr. "From African Captivity to American Slavery: The Introduction of Black Laborers to Colonial Louisiana," *Louisiana History*, Vol. XX (Winter 1979), 25-48.

³ Hubert de St. Malo to the Council of Louisiana, Oct. 22, 1717. Dunbar Rowland *et al.*, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion* [hereinafter MPA:FD] Volume I, 247.

⁴ Vaudreuil and Michel to Rouillé, May 20, 1751. MPA:FD V, 82.

⁵ Périer and Salmon to Maurepas, Dec. 5, 1731. MPA:FD IV, 86.

slaves at a reduced price.⁶ The government and colonists were certain that the Black slaves were necessary to ensure the success of the colony. In particular, slaves were needed, they felt, for the cultivation and preparation of tobacco at Natchez.⁷ The Council of Louisiana even stated in a letter to the directors of the Company of the Indies that the inhabitants were asking to return to France if slaves could not be obtained.⁸

Various proposals were made to obtain these Black slaves for the colony. Bienville thought that the Indian slaves that the French obtained from their Indian allies could be traded to the English for Black slaves. This idea was disputed by a colonist, Robert, who wrote Pontchartrain that he thought that the colonists needed to obtain slaves in the English fashion. He wrote in 1708 that, "If the English colonists of Carolina and Pennsylvania have negroes it is by means of the English ships that go and trade for them on the coast of Guinea." He thought that if the inhabitants of Louisiana wanted to obtain Black slaves, "... it will be necessary for French ships to carry negroes . . . and for the colonists to be in a position to pay for them either in produce or in money."⁹ Two years later, Pontchartrain responded negatively to Bienville's idea of trading slaves with the English. He concurred with the colonist Robert, stating that the English

trade for them [Africans] on the coast of Guinea by means of salt meats, flour, and other merchandise, and they sell them for merchandise of the country or for cash; so unless the inhabitants of Louisiana are in a position to buy them in the same way as the English, it will not be possible to introduce any there.¹⁰

However, the ability of the inhabitants to cultivate the land to obtain this money and merchandise was still severely limited due to the lack of slaves. Their complaints continued about the lack of Black slaves.

When Nicolas de La Salle, first Commissary of the colony, conducted a census in 1708, he found that there were eighty Indian slaves—men and women belonging to different tribes. There were no Black slaves enumerated.¹¹ By the 1720s, however, Black slaves began to arrive in the colony on a more or less regular basis. In October 1723, ninety-five Blacks arrived on the frigate *Expédition*. The slaves were described as being "fine negroes, large, well made." A later voyage in 1729 did not have such a "fine" group of Blacks. The slaving vessel *Vénus* had taken 450 Africans on board at Gorée—men, women and children. However, by the time the ship arrived to the colony, this number was greatly reduced. Eighty-seven captives had died on route. Another 43 died after the ship was inspected. Thus, only 320 slaves actually arrived in the colony. The misfortune which had fallen upon these Africans did not end there. Governor Périer wrote that "more than two-thirds of those who were sold at auction into the hands of the inhabitants have died. We have scarcely been able to retain about thirty of them for the Natchez." If what Périer relates is fact, only approximately twenty percent of the Africans survived their forced removal from Africa. Périer attributed this mortality rate to the harsh conditions at Gorée, where the

⁶ Abstract of Letters from Bienville to Pontchartrain, July 1706. MPA:FD I, 28.

⁷ Council of Louisiana to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, August 28, 1725, in MPA:FD I, 492.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Robert to Ponchartrain, November 26, 1708. MPA:FD I, 45-46.

¹⁰ Pontchartrain to Bienville, May 10, 1710. MPA:FD I, 141.

¹¹ Messrs. Perier and de La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, Aug. 26, 1729. MPA:FD I, 668.

Africans were “kept too long . . . in the slave prisons, where they suffer greatly, have only one meal a day and drink nothing but brackish water.”¹² He apparently paid little attention to the fact that 450 men, women, and children were transported on a single vessel. As a consequence, some of the white inhabitants were financially ruined after buying slaves that were ill. However, the Black slaves were so needed and so greatly desired that the inhabitants were overbidding for the slaves. This overbidding prompted the governor to suggest that the price of ill slaves be set at a lower level than that of slaves who were in good health.¹³ Recent research has shown that the majority of the slaves imported into early Louisiana came from Senegambia. Later during the Spanish period there was a “reaffricanization” of the slave population. Most of these new slaves came from Senegambia and the Bight of Benin. Among these later arrivals were Fonds, Minas, Ado, Chambas, and Nagos.¹⁴

Other slaves came to the colony from Saint Domingue. In a letter to Rouillé, the Minister of the Marine, Michel, the colony’s Commisary General, relates that he has received money from some inhabitants to buy slaves in Saint Domingue. In that same letter, he requests that settlers and their slaves from the islands and Martinique be allowed to come to the colony to live.¹⁵ However, very few slaves came into the region from the Caribbean.¹⁶

During the period of British West Florida, many settlers moved into the region with their slaves and white indentured servants. Hundreds of requests for land grants, most of which were granted, were made during the period 1763-1769. For example, large land grants were given to three individuals, and their sizes were based on the number of individuals who were going to reside on the land, including slaves and indentured servants. In February 1768, a colonist named Walter Hood petitioned the crown to give him 2,000 acres of land. Hood stated that he was expecting his brother to bring him slaves from Jamaica. In that same month, Peter Legrantis requested 5,000 acres—he owned 20 slaves and was expecting 30 more. White indentured servants were also counted in these petitions. For example, in 1768 William Marshall requested 4,000 acres of land on the Mississippi. Marshall owned 20 slaves and had 20 indentured servants. (It is interesting that the slaves and indentured servants were counted as family members. In at least one case, an ex-indentured servant requested a land grant. His petition was denied on the grounds that he had been included in his former master’s grant.)¹⁷

In 1708, there were no Black slaves listed in the de La Salle census. By 1726, there were slightly fewer than 900 Black slaves in the colony. They were being used in clearing the land, building levees, and digging ditches. There were only fifteen colonists who owned more than twenty of them. Only two individuals at Natchez, Mr. Le Blanc and Mr. Kolly, owned more than twenty slaves each.¹⁸ Even with so few slaves, the inhabitants found it difficult to provide for them. In 1729, the Directors of the Company

¹² Messrs. Périer and de La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, March 25, 1729. MPA:FD I, 638.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 668.

¹⁴ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *The Afro-Creole Culture of Louisiana: Formation During the Eighteenth Century* (Manuscript to be published by Louisiana State University Press, 1991, xiv-xv).

¹⁵ Michel to Rouillé, Sept. 23, 1752. MPA:FD V, 116.

¹⁶ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, xvi.

¹⁷ Clinton N. Howard, *The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947), 32, 33, 89.

¹⁸ Memoir on Louisiana [by Bienville], 1726. MPA:FD III, 523-424.

sent cloth to the colony for clothing for the slaves. However, the amount sent, 2657 ells [1 ell = 45 inches], was sufficient only for one third of the slaves. Food was also in short supply, and the French were forced in 1724 to obtain three to four hundred barrels of corn from the Tunicas and the Natchez. Another factor which contributed to the scarcity of food was the planned arrival of five hundred more Black slaves later in the year.¹⁹

Though most of the slaves were field hands, others learned trades that were necessary for the well being and survival of the colony. Some of them served as apprentices to the colony's workmen. The governor thought that this was a good practice because the colony would not then have to hire white men to perform those tasks. He realized, however, that the whites were not training the Black slaves very well, fearing that the Blacks might cause them economic problems by competing with them at some point in the future. They feared the competition of the slaves.²⁰ Their fears were not unfounded. By 1743, almost all of the workers employed by Sieur Dubreuil, the King's contractor, were Black slaves. Very few of his employees were Frenchmen.²¹ By the 1750s, however, slaves of African descent were performing many important tasks in the colony. Male slaves worked as day laborers—on and off the plantations—warehousemen, and carpenters. They also did caulking, unloaded vessels, and worked on the boats. Slave women unloaded vessels and cleaned the warehouses. The women also pulled weeds and made gardens in which they cultivated rice and garden produce.²² There was still a desire on the part of the inhabitants to obtain more Black slaves.

Blacks, both slave and free, also served in the military. The years 1729 and 1730 proved to be a very difficult time for the French in their relations with the Indians and the Black slaves. In those years, Fort Rosalie at Natchez and Fort St. Pierre near the mouth of the Yazoo River (and the fort at Natchitoches in Louisiana) were attacked by Indians who were aided by Black slaves desirous of gaining their freedom. When the Natchez attacked the French Fort Rosalie at Natchez in 1729, they killed over 200 settlers, including women and children, destroyed the settlement, and burned over 200,000 pounds of tobacco. When the French sent forces to attack the Natchez, slaves and free Blacks were included among the troops. After the battle Governor Périer praised these Black soldiers, stating that they had "performed prodigies of valor."²³ Because of the valor of the Black soldiers against the Natchez, the Superior Council "took under consideration the emancipation of those slaves who had sided with the colony in its struggle against the Indian menace."²⁴ Jacques de la Chaise, president of the Superior Council, lauded the bravery of several slaves who died with their masters. One slave in particular, belonging to the Jesuit priest at Yazoo, was burned at the stake with his master.

The Indian unrest and the fact that Blacks were aiding them preoccupied the government and the inhabitants. There was much concern in the capital at New Orleans that the Indians and Black slaves might join together to attack the French. Governor Périer requested Black slave volunteers to attack the small Chaouacha tribe near New Orleans. The Indians were massacred, most of them killed by slaves

¹⁹ Minutes of the Superior Council of Louisiana, Sept. 18, 1724. MPA:FD I, 423.

²⁰ Périer and de La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, November 3, 1728. MPA:FD I, 599.

²¹ Bienville to Maurepas, Feb. 4, 1743. MPA:FD I, 779.

²² Vaudreuil and Michel to Rouillé, May 19, 1751, MPA:FD V, 79.

²³ Charles Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, Volume I (New Orleans: F.F. Hansell, 1903), 422-423.

²⁴ Roland McConnell, *Negro Troops of Antebellum Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 6.

armed with knives and swords. This served not only as a warning to the Indians, but as a means of increasing tension and distrust between the Indians and the slaves. One historian has written that this created “bad blood between black and red men which he [Périer] hoped would discourage further alliances between the two groups against the French.”²⁵

Later, in 1736, Bienville sent troops to fight the Chickasaws. Included among these troops were 140 slaves and free Blacks. They did not, however, perform so valiantly this time, some having run off in the heat of the battle. Nevertheless, one of them, a soldier named Simon, to show the valor of the Black soldier, went singly into battle. Simon captured one of the Indian horses and rode it back under fire to the French encampment. His valor was acclaimed by the French soldiers.²⁶

In 1779, war broke out between the Spanish in Louisiana and the British in West Florida. The Spanish governor Galvez put together a large contingent of men to attack the British. This army, composed of regulars, militiamen, free Blacks, and slaves, was able to capture Baton Rouge and Manchac in Louisiana within three weeks. Fort Panmure at Natchez, the most British community in the region, surrendered soon after the fall of Baton Rouge.

The slave population of early Mississippi was never very large. As stated previously, the 1708 French census of Nicolas de La Salle listed no Black slaves. In 1746, there were, not counting soldiers, only 18 settlers and 75 slaves living at Natchez and at Pascagoulas. By 1784, the population of the region was 2,117, of which 498 or 24% were slaves. In 1798, that number had increased greatly. In that year, there were almost seven thousand inhabitants in Mississippi. Of that number, 2,400 or 35% of the total population were slaves.

It is interesting to note that there were still first generation African slaves in the Natchez region at the end of the 18th century. Judicial records from Natchez indicate the tribal origins of slaves enumerated in sales and estate inventories. In the inventory of the recently deceased Elizabeth Alston in 1781, slaves from Guinea and Senegal are listed. In 1787, a sale of a slave couple was recorded—the husband and the wife were both “natives of Africa.” John Bolls sold in 1796 a slave from Guinea. This indicates that slaves were still being imported into the region. It is interesting to note that one historian remarks on the importation of African slaves and on the encouragement of the slave trade in British West Florida in the 1760s, adding that this was contrary to the “humanitarian protest in the mother country against the slave trade.”²⁷

The control of the slave population was very important. The *Code Noir* or Black Code was devised by the French to regulate slavery in the colonies. It contained regulations which governed the conduct and duties of the slaves as well as the responsibilities of the slave owners to their slaves. The Code was quite complete and covered all aspects of the lives of the slaves, including religious instruction, marriages, and death—the slaves had to be buried in consecrated ground. The Code also prohibited the slaves from bearing arms and listed their property rights. It even went so far as to state that the slaves could appeal to government officials if they had not been fed or clothed properly by their masters. Slave owners’

²⁵ McConnell, 6-7; Périer to Maurepas, March 18, 1730, MPA:FD I, 64.

²⁶ McConnell, 11; H.E. Sterkx, *The Free Negro in Antebellum Louisiana, 1724-1860* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975), 27-28.

²⁷ May Wilson McBee, *Natchez Court Records, 1781-1798* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1979) 1, 43, 121; Howard, *The British Development of West Florida*, 46.



12

LE CODE NOIR
OU
EDIT DU ROY,
SERVANT DE REGLEMENT
POUR

*Le Gouvernement & l'Administration de la Justice, Police,
Discipline & le Commerce des Esclaves Negres, dans
la Province & Colonie de la Louïsianne.*

Donné à Versailles au mois de Mars 1724.



LOUIS PAR LA GRACE DE DIEU, ROY DE
FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE: A tous presens &
à venir, SALUT. Les Directeurs de la Compagnie
des Indes Nous ayant representé que la Province
& Colonie de la Louïsianne est considerablement
establie par un grand nombre de nos Sujets, lesquels se servent
d'Esclaves Negres pour la culture des terres; Nous avons jugé
qu'il estoit de nostre autorité & de nostre Justice, pour la
conservation de cette Colonie, d'y establir une loy & des regles
certaines, pour y maintenir la discipline de l'Eglise Catholique,

A

Title page of the Code Noir regulating the legal status of black slaves, as published in 1724.

responsibilities included the care of sick slaves. If such a slave had been abandoned by his/her owner, the government would take care of the sick slave and then charge the owner for the care given.

The fear of slave runaways and slave insurrections was constant. Throughout most of the eighteenth century, Louisiana's slave population had exceeded the population of free inhabitants; and the whites and free blacks, being almost always outnumbered, were always on guard. The control of the slave population, whether to prevent *marronage* or insurrection, was of the utmost importance to the inhabitants. Their concerns would be validated by the numbers of runaways and the slave conspiracies which would occur during the eighteenth century.²⁸ In 1731, for example, the Bambara slaves attempted to rise up against the whites and kill all of them. However, the plot was uncovered, "otherwise all of the whites would have been massacred . . . Ten or twelve of the most guilty have been broken on the wheel and hanged. All the Bambaras [*sic*] were in league to make themselves free possessor of the country by this revolt. The other negroes who are in the colony and who do not belong to that nation would have served them as slaves."²⁹

The *Code Noir* listed the punishments that the slaves would receive for running away. Article 32 of the Code outlined the punishment that would be incurred by a runaway slave:

L'esclave qui aura été en fuite pendant un mois, à compter du jour que son maître l'aura dénoncé à la justice, aura les oreilles coupées, et sera marqué d'une fleur de lys sur une épaule; et s'il récidive pendant un autre mois, à compter pareillement du jour de la dénonciation, il aura le jarret coupé, et sera marqué d'une fleur de lys sur l'autre épaule; la troisième fois, il sera puni de mort.

The slave who has been a runaway for one month, starting from the day on which his master informs the authorities, will have his ears cut off and will be branded with a fleur-de-lis on his shoulder; and if he repeats it for another month he will be hamstrung and a fleur-de-lis will be branded upon his other shoulder; for a third offense, he will be punished by death.³⁰

Dumont de Montigny describes the punishment of a maroon slave quite graphically, stating that the slave received between one to two hundred lashes until his flesh was shredded. The slave was then anointed with a "stinging ointment."³¹

These regulations were not, of course, followed strictly to the letter. The pioneer conditions of the colony and the far-flung settlements and outposts did not make it easy for the authorities to keep close watch over strict compliance with the Code. Slaves were mistreated; slaves bought, sold and bore arms; and slaves ran away all too frequently. Under such conditions the governors and other officials could do little to control the slaves and to assure that the Code Noir was being followed.

²⁸ "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana, LXVIII," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 1936), 768-770: François, a runaway slave belonging to Mr. Boisclair reported that there were three other runaway slaves in the woods, all from Pointe Coupée. He stated that they were living well and were armed with guns and hatchets. They were killing animals and were well-fed. The runaways had a "provision of a horn and a half of powder and some balls and two pistols."

²⁹ Beauchamp to Maurepas, Nov. 5, 1731. MPA:FD IV, 82.

³⁰ Réginald Hamel, *La Louisiane créole littéraire, politique et social, 1762-1900* (Ottawa: Les Editions Leméac, Inc., 1984).

³¹ Dumont de Montigny, *Mémoires historiques sur la Louisiane* (Paris: Buache, 1753), II, 243-44.

The Records of the Superior Council contain an interesting judicial investigation into the attack on a soldier at Natchez by a Sango slave named Jasmin in 1742. Jasmin, who was twenty-five years old, baptized, and spoke French, belonged to Madame L'Epine. He attacked a soldier "ill treating him so badly that he almost killed him, having broken his jaw, his teeth and almost blinded him, and having repeated his blows, intending to be rid of him." When Jasmin was interrogated, he stated that he had run away because his previous owner's wife was mean to him and the soldiers of the fort had "ill-treated hiim." After assaulting the soldier with a piece of iron, Jasmin went into the woods near Natchez to hide, staying there one month with "nothing more to eat, though he had a gun loaded with lead, powder and balls given to him by Mr. Fabry." He got food from other slaves, who gave him corn to eat. For the crime of striking a white, Jasmin should have been condemned to death. The Superior Council at first sentenced Jasmin to death; however, possibly taking into account the value of the slave, the Council decided later that he should be flogged every day and on Sundays. His right ear was cut off and he was required to wear a chain weighing 6 pounds around his foot for the rest of his life. Madame L'Epine was also ordered to pay the sum of 100 livres to the soldier for the injuries that her slave had caused.³²

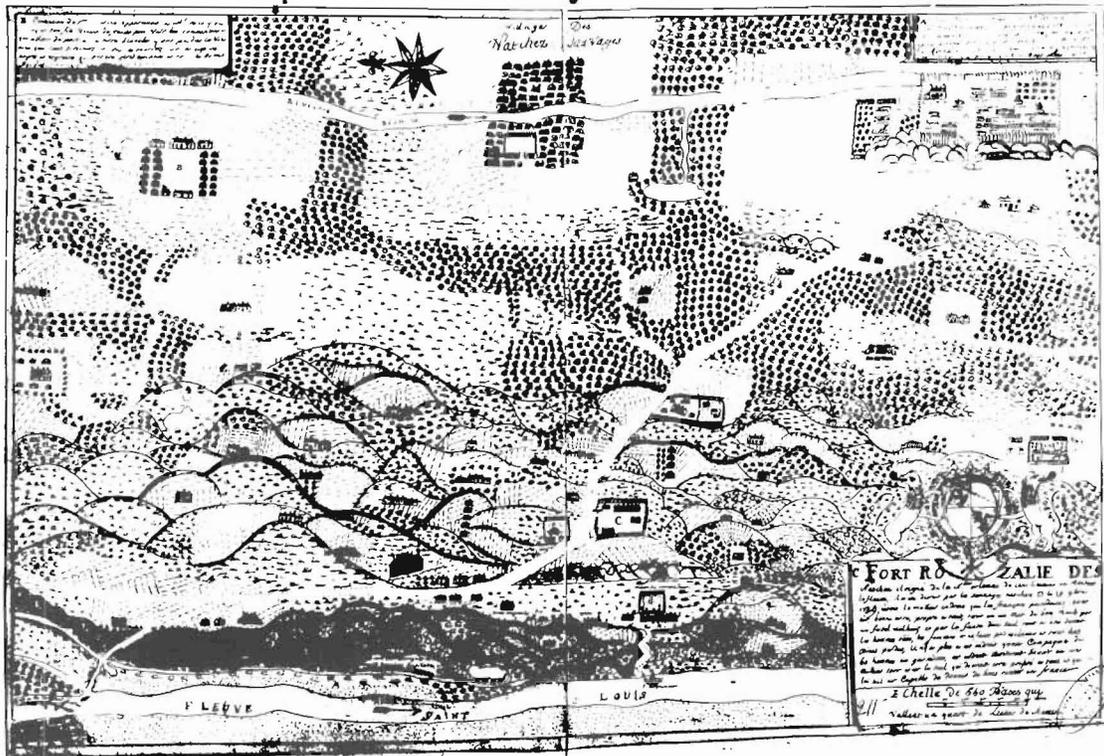
Three important conclusions can be drawn from this case: 1) slaves were capable of expressing their discontent with their slave condition by resorting to violence; 2) slaves were so valuable during the period that the government could overlook compliance with the Code Noir; and 3) slaves were not reluctant to aid other slaves who had run away or who had committed some crime.

The society which developed in Louisiana and provincial Mississippi during the eighteenth century can certainly be described as Creole. This term is used by many anthropologists, ethnographers, linguists, and historians to describe what happens when different cultures, languages, and race come into contact with one another. This process of creolization results in the blending together of the different cultures and languages to produce a "new" culture or language composed of features from the different groups which had come into contact with one another. This process certainly took place in eighteenth-century Louisiana and Mississippi. Europeans—French, Spanish, British—came into contact with the Native Americans who lived in the region. The Europeans imported African slaves, and these, too, entered into the creolization process. The three groups lived together, were friends with one another—and also enemies—and often intermarried. One historian has stated that slaves in the region during the period were as likely to be descendants of Europeans and Native Americans as of Africans. The slaves were certainly conscious of their multi-ethnic, multi-racial backgrounds during this period. This is verifiable in the many court cases in which slaves testified that they were descendants of Native Americans or of white colonists. At times, whites also acknowledged publicly their non-white offspring.

The relationship between the Black slaves and the Indians in provincial Mississippi was a complicated one. They were friends at certain times and enemies at others. Their relationship to the dominant Europeans was certainly parallel in that the Indians were also used as slaves in the early days of the colony. Early maps of the region around Natchez certainly show the close proximity of the three groups to each other. A map by Dumont de Montigny shows Fort Rosalie, the *Village Sauvage* (the Indian Village), and the *Cases des Negres* (the slave quarters) of the White Earth and St. Catherine concessions

³² "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana, XXXVIII," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (April 1928), 288-292.

within riding, if not walking, distance of one another. (It is interesting to note that the fort of the Natchez Indians is also shown.)³³



View of Natchez drawn by Dumont de Montigny. A Natchez village is shown at center top; the Terre Blanche concession is upper left and the St. Catherine concession upper right, rows of small houses being slave cabins; Fort Rosalie is marked "C" at lower center. Original in the Paris Archives.

Some of the tribes in the regions were allies of the French; other tribes were their enemies. Indian slaves were most often obtained through tribes which were friendly to the French. Indian slaves were captured in battle and were either given or sold to the French by their Indian friends. As stated before, government officials and colonists complained of the inability of the Indians to do the work. They were, according to the French, either unable or unwilling. Not only did the Indians capture other Indians to be used as slaves, they often attacked the European settlements and kidnapped settlers and Black slaves. For example, in September 1741, seven Natchez Indians went to the region around Pointe Coupée (present day Pointe Coupée Parish, Louisiana) and kidnapped a slave woman and her two children. In that same year a white child and two young Black slaves were kidnapped by the Indians. In 1731, it was reported that there were thirty-two Blacks living with the Choctaws and that seven others had died.³⁴ That the Indians and the Black slaves could work to their mutual benefit can be seen in the Natchez attack on Fort

³³ John A. Green, "Governor Périer's Expedition Against the Natchez Indians," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1936), 548.

³⁴ Régis du Roulet to Périer, March 16, 1731. MPA:FD IV, 66-67.

Rosalie when several slaves joined the Natchez. These slaves were promised their freedom by the Natchez.

There were, of course, free Blacks in the region during the 18th century. Slaves could obtain their freedom in many ways during the colonial period. The *Code Noir* regulated the terms and conditions under which slaves could be freed. As can be seen from the military actions taken during the period, slaves could, of course, gain their freedom by acts of valor or loyalty to their masters. Another common method of acquiring one's freedom was by self-purchase, since the Code permitted slaves to own property. Slaves often hired themselves out or raised vegetables for sale in order to earn the necessary funds to purchase themselves. Slaves could be freed by their masters for a number of reasons, including automatic manumission if the slave had been the teacher of his/her master's children. Often, children born of liaisons between white masters and female slaves were given their freedom by their fathers. Though the *Code Noir* prohibited the cohabitation of whites and blacks, very few paid attention to this regulation. On many occasions, priests who visited the region complained about the many whites who had slave concubines and who had fathered children with these slaves. No matter how much the clerics protested, no matter how many letters were written to ecclesiastical authorities complaining of this practice, these protestations and letters did nothing to halt it. By all of these means the numbers of free Blacks increased in the Louisiana colony, and by 1769 there were 165 in the colony. Of these 165 free Blacks, 66 lived in rural areas, including some who undoubtedly lived in the Natchez area or along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.³⁵

The process of creolization affected all aspects of the colony's life. For example, the development of the Creole French language certainly took place during the eighteenth century, and there is ample documentary evidence from that period which proves that its development predated the arrival of the refugees from Saint Domingue in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This goes contrary to the commonly held belief by many linguists that the Creole spoken in Louisiana was brought over by the Haitian refugees and the Creole slaves. Eighteenth-century officials even reproduced the Creole French spoken by the slaves during the period—several examples can be found in trial testimony. Also, officials described the language being spoken in terms that would not contradict modern definitions of a Creole language. This creolization also occurred when English-speaking colonists and their slaves came into the region. The English spoken by many African Americans in the region certainly reflects that blending of the Old World with the New. Many linguists, in fact, have described contemporary Black English as a Creole language. We should not forget, however, that the Creole language coexisted with European languages, Native American languages, and African languages. The vocabulary of contemporary Louisiana and Mississippi gives us many examples of the linguistic contact that took place. Words from all of the above groups can be encountered, including gumbo (African), bayou (Native American), okra (African), etc. There was always a need for interpreters because of the linguistic hodgepodge that existed.

This has been a brief attempt to describe the role of Blacks in provincial Mississippi and their relationship to the dominant Europeans (French, Spanish, and British) and to the region's Native Americans. Blacks were at times slaves, allies, and enemies to all of the above mentioned groups. Whether as field hands, craftsmen, or soldiers, Blacks played an important role in all aspects of the region's history, economy, and culture.

The intrusive European and African population of provincial Mississippi was never very large. In 1746 there were only 18 European settlers and 75 slaves at two settlements in Mississippi, Natchez and

³⁵ H.E. Sterk, *The Free Negro in Antebellum Louisiana*, 33.

Pascagoulas.³⁶ By 1798, the population numbered slightly less than 7,000, of which 2,400 were slaves. Thus during the eighteenth century, Blacks formed a relatively small part of the region's population. The only sizeable community in provincial Mississippi could be found at Natchez, Fort Rosalie, and it would remain the most important and most populous region during that period.

Blacks played important roles in the development of the agricultural economy in the region. The survival and economic wellbeing of the region was due in large part to the work performed by slaves. Blacks helped to build the levees; Blacks helped to clear the land; and Blacks harvested the crops. Their importance to the region cannot be overlooked. It was certainly not overlooked by provincial officials and inhabitants, who realized that the survival of the colony depended on the acquisition of African slaves.

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A Brief History of Mississippi, 1763-1817

William S. Coker

The essay which follows is divided into three parts. The first part includes the geographical, political and military history of the Natchez area, with a heavy emphasis upon the late colonial period. The second part deals with the economy of that region and era. Part three provides an overview of the people who lived there. The information is drawn primarily from secondary sources which are noted in the bibliography.

PART I

The first known Europeans to visit the area now included in the State of Mississippi accompanied Hernando de Soto on his epic trek in 1540-1542. They called the great river which they discovered the *Río Grande*, also referred to as the *Río Grande de la Florida*, which we know today as the Mississippi. In this river Soto's companions buried their leader in 1542. The next persons of note who contacted the Mississippi natives were the members of the Jolliet-Marquette party in 1673, who reached the mouth of the Arkansas River. Then in 1682, the Sieur de La Salle visited the Mississippi area on his way downriver. The subsequent advent of the French at Ocean Springs in 1699 and at Natchez in 1714 marked the beginning of frequent contact between Europeans and the Mississippi natives. The French built Fort Rosalie des Natchez in 1716, although the Natchez Indians provided the lumber and labor and gave their name to the site. It was more a fort in name than in fact.

The French claimed the present-day area of Mississippi as a part of French Louisiana until 1763. Then, as a result of its defeat by the British in the French and Indian War, France ceded all of Louisiana east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain in the Treaty of Paris. In the Proclamation of 1763, the British created two new colonies, East and West Florida. The boundaries of West Florida in 1763 were: the Mississippi River on the west, the lakes (Borgne, Ponchartrain and Maurepas), the Iberville River, and the Gulf of Mexico on the south, the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers on the east and the thirty-first parallel to the north. The next year, 1764, the British extended the boundary north to a line drawn from the mouth of the Yazoo River to the Chattahoochee which is 32 degrees 28 minutes N. Lat. The document actually states that the line would be drawn due east from the mouth of the Yazoo to the Apalachicola River. Obviously this was an error. British West Florida now included the Natchez district.

The British made no concerted effort to settle the Natchez area for several years. They changed the name of Fort Rosalie to Fort Panmure, and, in 1766, Scottish Fusiliers occupied the fort. Two years later,

in 1768, the British abandoned the fort. In the same year, the acting Governor of West Florida, Montfort Browne, visited Natchez. Upon his return to Pensacola, the capital of British West Florida, Browne proposed that Natchez be made into a separate colony, that a town be built there and connected to Mobile by road, and that he be appointed governor. But the Board of Trade declined to approve Browne's plans for Natchez. British settlers soon began to arrive in the area, and a few locations, such as the "Jersey Settlement" on the Homochitto River, developed into reasonably successful enterprises. In 1770, several reports recommended that Natchez should be developed into a major colony. But the remoteness of the area among other things seems to have had a negative effect upon its development at the time. The American Revolution, however, brought Natchez into the colonial limelight.

James Willing, a Natchez resident for a few years, 1774-1777, who had failed as a merchant there, joined the rebellious Americans and received a commission as a Navy captain. Willing then led a force of some one hundred men down the Mississippi River in 1778. Exactly what he planned to do is not certain, but he plundered plantations in the Natchez area, cast fear into the hearts of the residents along the river, and finally reached New Orleans. There he and his party received protection from the Spanish governor, Bernardo de Gálvez. They also disposed of their plunder, including a number of slaves, in Louisiana. Willing's raid prompted Governor Peter Chester at Pensacola to provide some troops and protection for Natchez, but the harm had already been done. Unfortunately, even the British troops sent to Natchez provoked the local residents to mutiny. The removal of the commandant of Fort Panmure, Captain Michael Jackson, finally ended the chaos there. The Natchez citizens probably felt properly rewarded when the British captured Willing on his way east a few months later.

The entry of Spain into the war against the British in 1779 had a very important impact upon Natchez. In August, Gálvez led a force out of New Orleans against the British outposts on the Mississippi. He quickly captured the little fort at Manchac and then lay siege to Baton Rouge. Surprised by Spanish strategy, the British commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Dickson, soon surrendered to Gálvez. Dickson's defeat directly affected Natchez because he was forced to include the surrender of Fort Panmure when he capitulated. Gálvez appointed the Frenchman Captain Pierre-Joseph [Pedro José] Favrot as commandant at Baton Rouge as a reward for the role he had played in the Spanish victory there. Favrot was only one of many French settlers of Louisiana who continued to live there and serve the Spanish Crown. In September, Gálvez sent another French officer, Captain Juan de la Villebeuvre, with fifty men to occupy the fort at Natchez, much to the consternation of the British there, who had never had the opportunity of defending their fort against Spanish troops. Villebeuvre, on October 10, 1780, issued his good government decree by which he hoped to maintain order. The decree regulated such things as Negro slavery, vagrancy, vagabonds, etc.

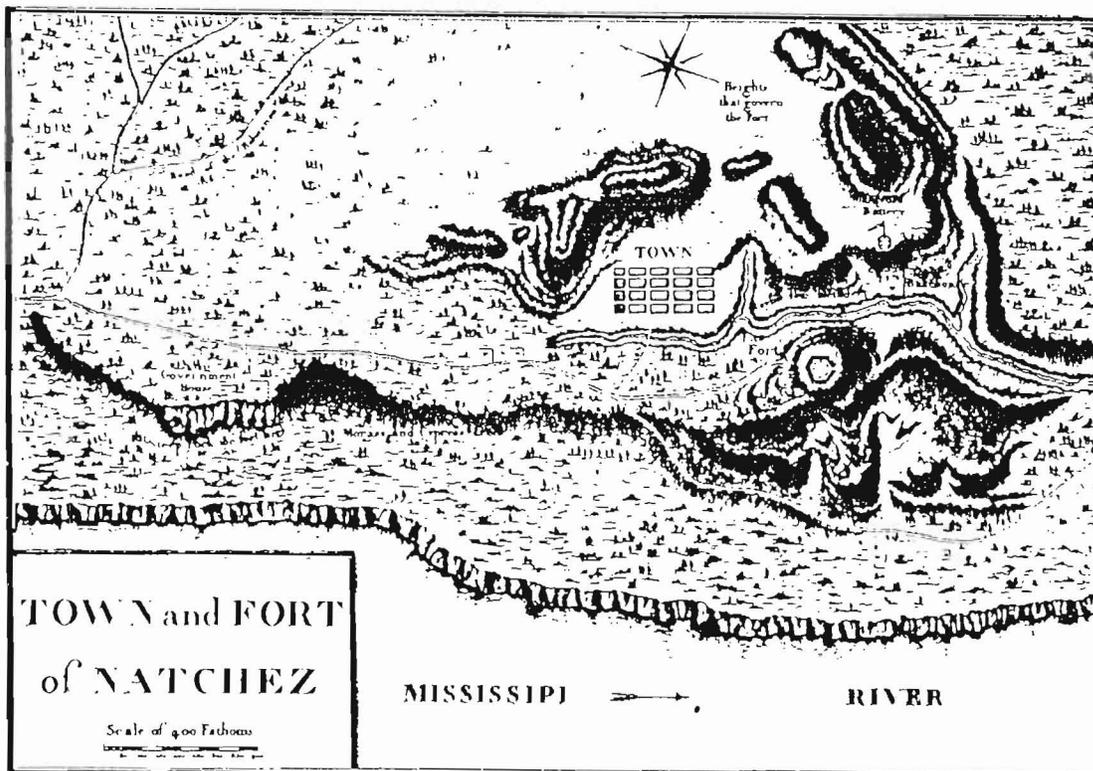
In 1780, Gálvez led a force out of New Orleans against Mobile, which he captured after an intense bombardment of Fort Charlotte. The following year, Gálvez lay siege to Pensacola, which General John Campbell surrendered on May 10, 1781. During the siege of Pensacola, on April 22, 1781, Captain John Blommart, a Natchez mill owner, encouraged by General Campbell and supported by other Natchez loyalists, successfully rebelled against the Spanish garrison at Natchez. But Blommart's victory was short-lived. In July, soon after the surrender of Pensacola, the garrison was led by two Frenchmen, militia officer Etienne Robert de la Morandier of Opelousas and Captain Charles de Grand-Pré, the commanding officer at Pointe Coupee, in bringing the Natchez fort back under Spanish control.

In anticipation of the return of Spanish rule to Natchez and mindful of the harsh treatment extended the French mutineers at New Orleans in 1768, a number of those who had participated in the Natchez

revolt fled the area. Anthony Hutchins, a latecomer to the revolt, led a party overland to Charleston, a long and very unpleasant journey, which Frank Slaughter memorialized in his fictional account, *The Flight from Natchez*, published in 1955. Several of those who remained behind, including Blommart, were arrested and sent to New Orleans. But General Gálvez did not exact retribution from the rebels as his counterpart, General Alejandro O'Reilly, had done earlier. Within a few years the Spaniards released the rebels and they were able to return to their homes.

Under both France and Great Britain the Natchez area had suffered from certain liabilities: official indifference, geographic isolation, and the lack of an export staple. Perhaps under Spanish rule that situation might improve.

Spanish military officers called commandants ruled the Natchez area from 1779 to 1798. They governed the largely Anglo-American population quite leniently under the Code O'Reilly, a compilation of Spanish laws. One Spanish officer, Stephen Minor, a native of Pennsylvania, became post adjutant in 1781. He remained there throughout the Spanish occupation and became governor of the district in 1797. Minor served as the last Spanish governor of Natchez and evacuated the site on March 30, 1798. The Minor family became one of the best known and wealthiest families in the Natchez area.



Victor Collot's map of Natchez, 1794. Note the rectangular grid of streets in the new town, which was laid out under the Spanish regime.

Of all the Spanish officers who served as governor at Natchez, perhaps the one best remembered was Manuel Gayoso de Lemos. Gayoso officially took command at Natchez in June, 1789, and served there until he departed for New Orleans as Governor-General of Louisiana and West Florida on July 29, 1797. In order more effectively to govern the district, Gayoso divided it into fifteen sub-districts. He appointed a supervisor for each such area and directed them to maintain arteries of communication.

To guard the Natchez area, which was created as a separate district in 1787 and placed directly under the command of the Governor-General of Louisiana, the Spaniards rebuilt Fort Panmure de Natchez time and time again. Between 1784 and 1792, they spent over \$32,000 on the fort, with \$15,000 of that amount spent in 1792 alone. The fort was located in an unfavorable location and heavy rains often caused severe damage. Fortifications upriver, such as Fort Nogales at the confluence of the Yazoo and Mississippi Rivers at present-day Vicksburg, and Fort San Fernando de las Barrancas at present-day Memphis, provided some defense against possible American encroachment from that direction.

More important for control of the Mississippi River and for protection of Spanish possessions along that river was the "Squadron of the Mississippi." Army Captain Pierre George Rousseau commanded the flotilla of vessels which cruised from the river's mouth to St. Louis and beyond. This squadron helped keep many potential trouble-makers in check: Frenchmen, Americans, and Indians.

By 1791, the first and second battalions of the Louisiana Infantry Regiment were stationed in the Natchez district. Colonel Charles de Grand-Pré generally served as commandant of the troops. Even some soldiers from Mexico were stationed at Natchez in 1795. In addition, several other military units assisted in maintaining law and order in the district. One, the Monteros de Natchez, has been referred to as a type of "Texas Ranger" company. It consisted of thirty men under the command of Natchez resident Richard King. Gayoso himself commanded a stylishly uniformed elite guard called the "Real Carlos." Colonel Peter Bryan Bruin of Bayou Pierre, a veteran Virginia military officer during the American Revolution, commanded the Natchez militia consisting of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Bruin and his militia unit helped protect the area from hostile Indians, and, in 1793, Bruin led them to New Orleans to defend that city from an anticipated French attack during the G enet-Clark conspiracy. Bruin also used the so-called "Molino del Bayou Pierre," located near his home on the bayou, to protect the area from the possibility of marauding Indian war parties. This combination of military units and fortifications provided nominal protection for the Natchez area during the Spanish years.

In spite of Spanish efforts to safeguard and protect the area, all was not peaceful at Natchez during the Spanish reign. Perhaps the most persistent pressure came from the State of Georgia and its claims to lands in and around the Natchez District, which Georgia based upon its colonial charter of 1732. Of particular note was Natchez resident Thomas Green, who with his companions became commissioners for Bourbon County, created by Georgia in 1785. This county included the Natchez area, and the commissioners and their friends intrigued with and against the Spaniards and each other in their efforts to acquire the district. The South Carolina Yazoo Company and its chief agent, James O'Fallon, had its eyes on Walnut Hills, now Vicksburg, where he hoped to establish a United States port of entry and a commercial trading post to compete with Natchez. Other intrigues kept the pressure on Spanish officials.

Others who plotted and conspired in one way or another were: Thomas Power, James White, William Blount and Philip Nolan. James Wilkinson, a secret Spanish agent, who later served as a general in the U.S. Army while continuing his Spanish connection, kept the Spaniards informed of various trading activities and separatist ventures. Obviously, space does not permit a discussion of all of these plots and counterplots.

Spain endeavored to increase the population in the Natchez area, but found it difficult to secure Spanish immigrants. Thus Governor-General Esteban Miró at New Orleans with approval from his government encouraged Anglo-Americans to come there. Offers of free land and seemingly excellent financial incentives for tobacco growers lured a number of people from the United States. Among others, Peter Bryan Bruin brought his family and a number of slaves from Virginia to Natchez in 1788. He might be classified as somewhat typical of the American immigrants attracted to Spanish Mississippi. He received a grant of 800 arpents of land, about 680 acres, on Bayou Pierre. He called his home, located near the Mississippi River, "Castle Bruin," also known as Bruinsburg. It became a mecca for travelers on the great river. As a good Catholic, Bruin did not suffer from the Spanish prohibition of public worship for Protestants. He held a number of positions while under Spanish rule, including that of alcalde and syndic, both minor judicial posts. As previously noted, Bruin also served as colonel of the Natchez militia. After the American occupation, Bruin became one of the territorial judges, a position he held until 1808. He then moved across the river to Louisiana and spent most of his remaining years there on his plantation located on Lake Bruin. Bruin died in 1826 or 1827 and is buried on a mound near his home at Bruinsburg.



Governor Esteban Miró. Photo from a painting courtesy the Historic New Orleans Collection.

Diplomatic problems between the United States and Spain marred the last years of Spanish rule. One such problem, which dated from 1783, concerned the northern boundary between the United States and Spanish West Florida. In the treaty between Great Britain and the United States, the two countries set the boundary at 31 degrees North latitude. Surprisingly, Spain, which had completed its conquest of West Florida from the British by 1781, made no formal objection at the peace conference to this agreement. Later, they argued that Britain could not cede lands over which it had no control. In fact, after the American Revolution, Spain claimed all of the land between the Mississippi and the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers and from the Gulf of Mexico north to the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers. Thus the area in dispute between the United States and Spain between 1783 and 1795 included the vast area of the trans-Appalachian west. But trouble in Europe between 1793 and 1795 forced Spain to give up its claim to the area north of the 31st parallel. Thus in the Treaty of 1795, Pinckney's Treaty, the United States acquired the disputed lands which included the Mississippi area north of the treaty line. Other benefits

acquired in the same treaty included navigation of the Mississippi River and the right of deposit at New Orleans. But for several reasons Spain delayed evacuation of this area until 1798. The United States pressed Spain to give up its posts on the Mississippi: San Fernando de las Barrancas (Memphis), Nogales (Vicksburg), and Natchez. But Spain moved slowly, too slowly for some Americans.

During the stalemate, in February, 1797, Andrew Ellicott, the newly appointed U.S. boundary commissioner, arrived in Natchez. In June, Ellicott and his companions led a quasi-revolt against the remaining Spaniards which narrowly avoided bloodshed. It was nearly a year later, however, March 30, 1798, before Minor, the last Spanish governor of Natchez, and his men quietly departed. The boundary commission, with members from both countries, met the following year and surveyed the thirty-first parallel, although some Indians who did not look forward to U.S. control created problems for the survey parties along part of the route.

Fixing the treaty line did not long resolve American greed for additional lands. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803, by which the United States acquired that vast area west of the Mississippi including the Isle of Orleans, created problems for Spanish West Florida. For one thing, the U.S. claimed that its purchase included the lands east of the Mississippi to the Perdido River. Since France had surrendered that area to Great Britain in 1763, there was absolutely no legal basis for such a claim, but that did not stop the march of Manifest Destiny. Filibusterers from Mississippi, Louisiana, and elsewhere harassed the Spaniards in both Baton Rouge and Mobile during the next seven years. Conditions reached a crisis when in 1810 a band of some eighty men captured the Spanish fort at Baton Rouge. Two days later, on September 25, 1810, a convention declared independence for the area and chose a flag of blue with a white star in its center. Thus was born the short-lived Republic of West Florida. On October 27, 1810, President James Madison issued a proclamation incorporating all of the territory between the Perdido and Mississippi Rivers as a part of the United States and authorized the governors of Louisiana and Mississippi to occupy the area. In part, because of problems at Mobile, only that area west of the Pearl to the Mississippi was actually occupied. Two years later, that region, familiarly known as the Florida parishes, was included in the Territory of Orleans and became a part of the State of Louisiana. As a result, the area east of the Pearl to the Perdido River became a part of Mississippi Territory. But the Spaniards still had control of the city of Mobile, and it was April 15, 1813, before General James Wilkinson took Mobile without firing a shot. Wilkinson quickly established an outpost on the Perdido and authorized construction of a fort on Mobile Point, Fort Bowyer, to protect the bay and city. Four years later, in 1817, this area was divided in two. The western portion became a part of the State of Mississippi and the eastern part was incorporated into the Territory of Alabama. Mississippi and Alabama now each had their own locations on the Gulf of Mexico.

PART II

Under French, British and Spanish rule, Natchez had its fleeting moments of economic progress, but unfortunately they were never long-lived. Since no gold or silver mines could be found in the area, Natchez's income came largely from agriculture and livestock. D. Clayton James, one of the historians of the Natchez area, asked why it did not develop commercially during the colonial era. He offered the following reasons: 1. Mercantilism. Natchez did not have the needed products and population to become a profitable consumer market for the home governments. It was a constant economic drain on the mother

country. 2. A lack of concern, for the most part, by New Orleans officials. They faced enormous economic problems of their own and were constantly beset by internal dissension. Thus distant outposts such as Natchez rarely received adequate attention. 3. An isolated area. Natchez was some 300 miles from the Gulf of Mexico via the Mississippi River and was far removed from other centers of population. 4. Lack of a viable staple crop. Although Natchez had various agricultural crops, none produced the required export needed for substantial economic growth. 5. The population. With the exception of the natives, the French and British ruled a small population of their own citizens. The Spaniards, on the other hand, were faced with a non-Hispanic population, or an alien foreign population as James described it. And, while Spanish rule was usually quite mild, the many schemes and plots which abounded during Spain's years there made intrigue the name of the game. Keeping these points in mind, let us examine the Natchez economy.

The French had difficulty in attracting immigrants to Louisiana, which included Natchez and the Mississippi area until 1763, precisely because of a lack of economic opportunities. The early French governors sent parties out to look for silver and gold, which, of course, were never found. But the Company of the Indies, with profit as its main motivation, decided to develop tobacco cultivation at Natchez. The Company encouraged the development of the tobacco industry there through such means as the distribution of slaves, bounties for new areas of cultivation, and quality control. Natchez tobacco soon enjoyed an excellent reputation. By 1721, a population of some 350 soldiers and concessionaires lived there, with tobacco as their major money crop. Growth was slow, however, because of a scarcity of labor and difficulties in packaging and shipping the crop. They cured this problem to some extent with the construction of a tobacco factory at Natchez in 1724. The factory built hogsheads and employed a machine to press the tobacco for shipment. The French have also been labeled the first "cattle barons" of the district, but details of this business are lacking. The massacre of the settlers by the Natchez Indians in 1729 ended French efforts to make Natchez a commercial success. In fact, Natchez did not recover from the 1729 massacre until after the cession of the area to Great Britain in 1763.

After the British acquired Natchez, it was several years—the 1770s—before a substantial number of settlers arrived. Many of them were war veterans who received land grants in the area. Their major problem was a market for their produce. Efforts to shorten the route to Mobile and Pensacola by digging a canal from the Mississippi River to Lake Maurepas via the Iberville River never succeeded. Louisiana with its capital at New Orleans belonged to Spain after 1763, and the traditional mercantile policy of that country prohibited commerce with the British. In spite of Spain's determination to enforce this policy, the British planters and merchants carried on a lucrative trade with Spanish Louisiana, although occasionally Spanish officials cracked down on such illegal activities, to the temporary distress and frustration of British merchants and traders. Nevertheless, the Natchez area continued to grow and became a major source of staples for New Orleans. Some British planters grew tobacco which reportedly was better than the Virginia variety. Herds of cattle, horses, and hogs increased significantly during the British years. Anthony Hutchins, a prominent Natchez resident, claimed that during Willing's raid in 1778 he lost 500 head of cattle, 100 horses, and 200 hogs. The livestock industry during the British years may have been more important than any of their agricultural crops. But the boom in tobacco and livestock production at Natchez awaited the Spanish era.

From 1779 to 1798, with the brief exception of the British revolt of 1781, Spain controlled the Natchez area. Some of the British settlers remained, but the area was still population-poor. Thus Spain encouraged the immigration of Anglo-Americans to Natchez. In particular, Spanish officials attracted them through

a liberal land policy and offers to purchase their tobacco crops at a generous price. This especially appealed to persons who owned slaves and who wanted to leave the United States because of the depression there in the 1780s, which had left many of them deeply in debt. Those who immigrated, such as Peter Bryan Bruin of Virginia, received generous land grants which they soon fashioned into large plantations. The plantations—some carryovers from the British era—became the basic economic unit of Natchez.

The tobacco boom reached its peak in the 1780s. By 1789, 263 tobacco planters could be counted in the Natchez district. The crop that year exceeded 1,400,000 pounds. But Spain, which had offered to buy two million pounds at \$10.00 per hundredweight, discovered that the tobacco market was glutted, and it curtailed its purchases to 40,000 lbs. This threw the planters into a serious economic crisis which remained throughout the Spanish era. The planters were left with an unmarketable product, serious debts for land and slaves, and no apparent remedy. Governor Gayoso elected to place a moratorium on the payment of debts to help relieve the financial plight of the planters. This touched off a bitter feud between the merchant-creditors and the planter-debtors which lasted into the American era.

The solution to the planters' problems, or so it seemed, was the switch to the production of indigo in the early 1790s. Indigo produced a blue dye much needed by cloth manufacturers abroad. It sold for \$2.50 per pound in a good year. The production of the dye, however, created physical problems for some of the slaves working the vats. Further, when the refuse from the vats was dumped into the creeks and streams, it polluted the water. Cattle would not drink the water, nor could those living downstream use it for domestic needs. This problem prompted Gayoso to issue the 1793 antipollution law for the district, the earliest such law in Mississippi history. The law prohibited the dumping of indigo waste into the streams. But if sickness and pollution were not enough, a worm soon appeared which devastated the indigo crop.

Livestock thrived in the Natchez area. Many reports attest to the ideal conditions which existed there for raising livestock. Bruin was one of those who brought some horses and sheep with him in 1788. Even the size of Spanish land grants depended not only on the number of persons in the family and their slaves, but to some extent upon the number of animals accompanying them. Philip Nolan, who was later killed on an expedition to Spanish Texas, was noted for his ability to break wild horses. In fact, his trip to Texas was in some way connected with securing wild horses for Louisiana and Natchez. The price of beef at Natchez was approximately twice as much as the price in Tennessee in the mid-1790s. At the time, this made cattle-raising a profitable business. Natchez cattle even found their way into the Royal Butcher Stalls in New Orleans. And, as might be anticipated, rustling and stealing of livestock was not unknown at Natchez. It may be recalled that as early as 1778, Anthony Hutchins complained bitterly about his livestock losses during the Willing raid. But such were the problems of Natchez residents in safeguarding their livestock against man, beast, and the elements, that Gayoso, in 1793, issued an ordinance for their care and protection. Another business at Natchez, the tanning of leather, was a direct by-product of the livestock industry. The significant increase in livestock during the middle years of the Spanish dominion at Natchez can be seen from the following table.

Year	Cattle	Horses	Pigs	Sheep
1784	3,000	1,153	7,111	117
1794	14,672	5,541	20,106	5,538

The introduction of the cotton gin in 1795 and local improvements soon made cotton "King in Natchez." The time was ideal for Natchez planters because the revolution in French Santo Domingo in the early 1790s had curtailed exports from there to European markets. Natchez planters were able to step into the breach and to secure good prices for their cotton. Between 1795 and 1801 all of the former slave-worked tobacco plantations converted to growing cotton. Cotton production increased dramatically during the period from 1794 to 1801: approximately 36,000 lbs. in 1794, 750,000 lbs. in 1796, 1,200,000 lbs. in 1798 and 3,000,000 lbs. in 1801. Measured in 250 lb. bales, that meant 145 bales, 3,000 bales, 4,800 bales and 12,000 bales respectively in those years. In 1801, Territorial Governor W.C.C. Claiborne estimated the value of the Mississippi cotton crop at \$700,000. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 cleared up the problems concerning navigation of the Mississippi River and the right of deposit at New Orleans and guaranteed the exportation of cotton. Of course, the embargo on cotton exports in 1809 and the War of 1812 had a direct impact upon cotton prices. After the war, cotton hit a high of 18 cents a pound, double the price for the preceding five years. One of the principal reasons for the British decision to try to capture New Orleans in 1814 was the tremendous stock of cotton and other products on the wharves there, which had an estimated value of 4 million pounds sterling. No wonder they called cotton "White Gold." Cotton production in Mississippi continued to escalate until the late 1830s, when about 50,000 bales of cotton were exported annually from Natchez.

While agriculture was of paramount importance to the economy of the Natchez district, other businesses and professions existed there too. Natchez served as the major supplier of lumber, staves, and naval products for New Orleans. William Dunbar engaged in lumbering and stave-making. In 1771, he had 100,000 staves ready for delivery. Cypress logging was a valuable activity, as were sawmills: three sawmills were cutting timber there in 1781. Bruin also built and operated a sawmill near his home on Bayou Pierre. And in 1795 Peter Smith built another sawmill in the district. Natchez could also claim a brick kiln by the 1790s.

Stores, taverns, and warehouses lined the Natchez waterfront. Richard King, leader of the Monteros de Natchez, operated a tavern there. Trading companies constituted another business. Such Natchez notables as Alexander McIntosh, the Monsanto brothers, the Jones brothers, Capt. James Colbert and his half-breed son, Richard Carpenter, and William Lum were all traders. Other professions included: coopers, builders and carpenters, blacksmiths, and even a silversmith. Several factories sprang up to meet the needs of the area, including one for hemp cordage (rope-making) and cottonseed oil.

The Mississippi River served as the major transportation artery, and boats carried the produce from Natchez and other towns near and along its banks to and from New Orleans and elsewhere. Although western Americans did not always benefit from it during the Spanish years, river traffic was a very lucrative business and blossomed during the antebellum years.

PART III

Permit me to close this essay with a few words about the people who lived in the Natchez area during the period under review. The figures assigned to the Indians living within or near the limits of the present-day State of Mississippi vary greatly. The Chickasaw, who occupied the northern part of Mississippi, may have had a population of as many as 10,000 at the time of original contact with the Europeans. Several centuries later, the number of Chickasaw warriors numbered only 800, indicating a

population of 3,200-4,000. The Choctaw, living in the central and southern part of Mississippi, numbered some 20,000. In 1700, an estimated 1,200 Natchez warriors with their families lived in the general area of present-day Natchez. But these large Indian populations contracted greatly due to the diseases brought by the Europeans, the so-called Columbian Exchange. At least thirteen or more other Indian tribes lived in Mississippi too.

The Natchez, who gave their name to that site on the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi, have received both criticism and praise. Some French priests called them "barbarous" and "vicious," but one historian noted that they "were further advanced in their form of government and an organized society than any other tribe of Indians who dwelt within the boundaries of the United States."¹ While that may be overstating their level of organization, at least they received notable recognition from one source. French reprisals for the 1729 Natchez massacre virtually eliminated that nation. Those who managed to escape took refuge among the Chickasaw. This merely provoked the French assisted by their Choctaw allies into a long war with the Chickasaw. Thus the Chickasaw and Choctaw with their related tribesmen were the Indians most likely to meet any Europeans in the area. Farther to the east, the Creek Nation interacted with these Mississippi Indians; sometimes peacefully, sometimes not so peacefully. During the subsequent Anglo-American occupation, these new arrivals experienced occasional attacks from roving Indian bands.

When the British occupied the Natchez area after 1763, few Frenchmen remained. Many of these Britons had been residents of the east coast colonies. After the French and Indian War, 1756-1763, the British veterans came in increasing numbers, especially between 1770 and 1779. Although Spain occupied and controlled the Natchez area from 1779 until 1798, few Spaniards or Frenchmen lived there. Spanish immigration policy favored the Anglo-Americans, who continued to dominate the area until the United States officially took control in 1798. The Americans living there counted a number of British loyalists as their neighbors. As the population expanded from Natchez into areas normally occupied only by Indians, the pressure became so great that the Indians occasionally attacked the livestock of encroaching Anglo-Americans. In spite of the considerable assistance of the Choctaws in the War of 1812 and of the Chickasaws in the Creek War, the United States began to pressure Southeastern Indians, including those of Mississippi, into a series of treaties for land. Conditions for the Indians continued to deteriorate until removal was finally forced upon them. Then the white man with his Negro slaves dominated Mississippi.

This essay provides an overview of the original heartland of Mississippi, the Natchez area: its politics, geographical limits, military composition, economy, and people. It is not definitive by any means. Every topic discussed has had numerous articles and books written about it. It is hoped, however, that this account will prove useful especially for those who might want a brief reminder about this era and area.

¹ Malone, *The Chickasaw*, 11-12.

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Some years ago several of my colleagues and I prepared three articles dealing with the bibliography of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands which included many references to material about Mississippi. The emphasis on all three of these articles was the colonial era: William S. Coker and Jack D.L. Holmes, "Sources for the History of the Spanish Borderlands." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 49(April 1971)4:380-93; William S. Coker, "Research Possibilities and Resources for a Study of Spanish Mississippi." *Journal of Mississippi History*, 34(May 1972)2:117-28; and William S. Coker, et al., "Research in the Spanish Borderlands," *Latin American Research Review*, 7(Summer 1972)2:1-94. The latter contains my article on "Spanish Mississippi, 1779-1798," and an article on "Alabama" by Jack D.L. Holmes for the colonial period. The fifty-four page bibliography (55-94) which follows our articles is a very thorough survey of published materials to the date of publication, 1972. I consulted the following studies in the preparation of the foregoing essay. It should be emphasized that the footnotes and bibliographies in these articles and books will give the reader a very thorough list of references for the subjects under consideration.

Particularly useful were two sources: Richard Aubrey McLemore (ed.), *A History of Mississippi*. 2 vols. Hattiesburg: University & College Press of Mississippi, 1973; and D.Clayton James *Antebellum Natchez*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968.

One of my former students at the University of West Florida, Ethan Grant, who is currently working on his Ph.D. at Auburn, kindly gave me a copy of a paper which he recently wrote: "They Stayed On: The Continuing Presence of Those at Natchez Who Remained After 1781," Winter 1990. His paper is based to a great extent upon the documents in Great Britain, Public Record Office, Colonial Office 5:590, 594, 630, and especially volume 608. He is restudying the migration and settlement of the Anglo-Americans in the Natchez area. I predict his dissertation will add considerably to our knowledge of this subject.

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