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EPICS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER: NARRATIVES OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT IN FRENCH LOUISIANA

by

Kat Spears

B.A., Southern Illinois University, 2017

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree

Department of History
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2020

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THESIS APPROVAL

EPICS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER: NARRATIVES OF ECONOMIC
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Kat Spears

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in the field of History

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Kat Spears, for the Master of Arts degree in History, presented on March 27, 2020, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: EPICS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER: NARRATIVES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN FRENCH LOUISIANA

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Ras Michael Brown

A use of narrative and biographical history to describe how economic creolization developed French Louisiana.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Europeans fought over the Mississippi River for an upper hand in the colonization of North America. The French realized they needed to blend their economic practices with the native economy through a process of creolization to produce a functional colony. Economic Creolization explains the process which France created its foothold in Louisiana. A selected group of men show what happened when they either compromise with native economic practice or remain stern in European ways. René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle did the first attempt at a colony on the Mississippi. However, factors involving his behavior towards other colonists and his not up-to-par preparations caused him to lose his colony and his life. Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville made his attempt with information from La Salle's expedition. He relied more on his expertise of surviving in the American wilderness he obtained from his childhood. Also, he used the wisdom of native relations he gained from constant warfare against England in the Hudson Bay. His try at colonizing Louisiana succeeded. He established a military base in the area which acted as the starting point for his brother Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne du Bienville. Bienville used his similar knowledge in warfare and North American survival to keep Louisiana alive. Others joined him but most came as a punishment. Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac ended up in charge of the colony as a punishment after his ambitions caused too much strife in Detroit. The interaction between Bienville and Cadillac showed how a colonizer who grew up in North America compared to one from France. Their time together resulted in an interesting narrative of contesting strategies and morals. The relationship became nasty outbursts against each other. The scenarios of La Salle's improvised expedition, Iberville's epic of conquest, and the frustrated conflict between Bienville and Cadillac showed how having previous knowledge of living in

North America gave certain colonists the advantage. However, it pitted them against others from Europe.

Louisiana's environment challenged every European sent to conquer it. In the beginning, the swamp and constant flooding of the river made capitalist cultivation aggravating. It took the colonists a lot of effort to convince France to allow them to settle and then participate in local trade. With European agriculture proving to be unreliable, domestic trade dominated the colony. Much of the official documents coming out of Louisiana involve reports on trade relationships with the many Native nations present. The three major nations colonists worried about were the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and the Natchez. All three spanned throughout the colony but one allied with the French most, the Choctaws. Still, their relationship had many rough patches. It took time, effort, and lots of resources in order to keep the alliance stable enough to be beneficial. However, France put priority to other issues. The trade competition with England and Spain stretched royal financing. Wars in Europe diverted funding away from Louisiana and caused more demand for domestic trade. This demand created stress in the economic environment when native nations fought over trade goods. The economies of Europe influenced the Americas. When conflict between England and France got hotter, then the conflict between Choctaws and Chickasaws reflected that.

Following what links everyone to Louisiana provides an opportunity to examine colonial development. Which stressor affected trade relationships? How would these conflicts resolve themselves if at all? These questions will set a timeline on the evolution of an important but expensive colony. The narrative of establishing the first forts and settlements exemplifies the struggles starting a colony with unstable funding. The constant diplomatic struggle of trade relationships with native nations lacked importance in the eyes of upper European officials.

Louisiana had this unique status of having strategic importance while also being economically unwanted. But this colony transformed from swamps to profitable plantations somehow. The colonists needed to change how they economically functioned.

Postcolonial theories provided a good base to expand on an explanation for the changes occurring in Louisiana. Economic Creolization has a focus on economics, it is not a mathematic or statistical theory. The theory derives on the idea that culture gets influenced by an economic process, be it focused on relationships like the native economies or focused on profit like capitalist economies. In Louisiana, Economic Creolization described how the colonizers manipulated relationship-based economies in native societies to benefit the capitalistic system of Europe. Postcolonial theories explore how when Africa, Asia, and parts of South America are colonized for profit. But this research shows how these theories can be expanded at least to the first settlement of Louisiana.

Robert Young influenced the development of Economic Creolization. He associated postcolonialism with diaspora, transnational migration and internationalism.¹ Louisianan culture grew because of a migration of multiple populations. The slaves and indentured servants of France had no choice, but the migration of cultures existed and influenced the colonial development. Postcolonialism presumes the history of European expansion marked a problematic process.² This became an interpretation of Ernst Gellner's colonialism, "... colonialism was merely the unfortunate accident of modernity, its only problem resulting from the fact that the west mistook technological advance and the power that it brought for cultural

¹ Robert J Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 2.

² Young, *Postcolonialism*, 5.

superiority.”³ The French saw themselves as superior throughout their global conquest. As a colonial population developed, the motherland saw them inferior. Young stated postcolonial critique focuses on the forces of oppression and domination in the contemporary world. While the intellectual commitment sought out new forms of theoretical work to introduce into the dynamic ideological and social transformation.⁴ With this commitment in mind, there should be some leeway for historians to use these ideas in the earliest forms of colonization rather than only the most modern forms. The original colonizers had economic goals and they had to interact with a foreign environment to achieve them. The European idea of expansion and glory changed little.

Edouard Glissant created a theory called Multi Level Creolization, “it is not merely an encounter, a shock, a metissage, but a new and original dimension allowing each person to be there and elsewhere, rotted and open, lost in the mountains and free beneath the seas, in harmony on in errantry.”⁵ Louisiana provided the environment to recreate oneself with personal profit earned from domestic trade. Colonists and the early slaves took advantage of this opportunity and created jobs and economies in Louisiana. Glissant wrote that relational identifications are the conscious and contradictory experiences of the contacts among cultures which are produced through chaos, circulating through errantry and totality.⁶ Chaos existed throughout Mississippi colonization. The multiple native nations already stressed over their economic conditions before

³ Ibid.

⁴ Young, *Postcolonialism*, 11.

⁵ Dianne Guenin-Lelle, *The Story of French New Orleans: History of a Creole City* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 77.

⁶ Ibid, 78.

Europeans fully immersed themselves. Adding European capitalism to the mix exploded the region with obsession over trade and profit. This emulsion of trade and profit evolved the region into a new unique economy. Edward Brathwaite stated creolization is a process, whether it be material, psychological, or spiritual, sourced from members of society reacting to their new environment and each other.⁷ Economies can behave in the same way and develop new forms as material demands changed over time.

Economic Creolization interacts with the idea of Hybridity, the development of new cultural forms in a contact zone created by creolization.⁸ Louisiana created the scene for unique interactions with Canadians, Frenchmen, natives, and slaves to develop a brand-new economy. The swamp became home to a unique place of culture and the economy that comes with it. Homi Bhabha wrote about the “third space of enunciation”, a place for identities to emerge in a contradictory space.⁹ France created Louisiana in order to make a profit. However, the colonists themselves to survive. Survival versus profit created a tense scenario where people either had to follow the French standard of living or change into a new social identity in order to live. Thus, providing the chaos needed to create a new culture.

Mary Louis Pratt used the concept of the contact zone in her theories about Transculturation, reciprocal influences of modes of representation and cultural practices of various kinds in colonies and metropolises.¹⁰ She stated that these contact zones are spaces where

⁷ Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths and Helens Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonialism Studies* (London, Routledge, 1998), 58.

⁸ Ibid, 118.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ashcraft, *Key Concepts*, 233.

“disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subjugation- like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today.”¹¹ France tried to control Louisiana by restricting the funding and imports of goods. This economic subjugation pushed the colony further into developing their own economy unique from France and the other colonies in the empire.

In the terms of Imperialism, Winfried Baumgart said it is “a hybrid term” that covers a wide range of dominate/dependent relationships characterized by history and theory.¹² Young characterized imperial as the exercise of power through either direct conquest or latterly through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a form of domination.¹³ France and French companies tried to dominate Louisiana with funding. If the colonists refused to behave as they wanted, funds acted as a hostage. Ideology drove Imperialism to the point it operated as much against purely economic interests.¹⁴ Imperialism behaved as a dynamic system never a static one. It reflected in its international basis the expansive process of production and consumption that mature capitalism had introduced into the world economic structure.¹⁵ Although it changed form, Louisiana’s economy did react to the inclusion of capitalism when the French began their settlement with Iberville in the early 16th century.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Young, *Postcolonialism*, 27.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Young, *Postcolonialism*, 31.

The idea of Empire always played a part of colonialism and the development of the North American colonies. A power across the ocean needed to find control over a mass of people creating their own identities in the wilderness. Dianne Guenin-Lelle explored this as she searched for the reason New Orleans stayed connected to France despite the mother country abandoning them twice throughout history. According to Guenin-Lelle, the city got connected to the French Empire through Quebec rather than the Caribbean due to France starting their colonies in Canada.¹⁶ The Canadians figured out how to blend into the American social and economic environment and established the beginnings of Louisiana. The Le Moyne family of Canada provided the explorers that established the first military bases and founded New Orleans.

This New World royalty established the standards of living and new social order in Louisiana. Shannon Dawdy wrote, “If they survived the long seasoning period of disease, hunger, and coerced labor, immigrants found themselves in a place where they could experience a great range of physical and social mobility. In their movement, they picked up nicknames like souvenirs. And enslaved immigrants used alternative names to facilitate psychological, if not physical, distance from their enslavers... Bienville is the first local resident known to have used the term creole.”¹⁷ Landing in Louisiana and being thrust into the colony gave people a chance to change themselves through economic means. Even if they wanted to reach the French standard of higher class, since they lived in an isolated colony, they ended up creating a Louisianan upper class after surviving the chaotic seasoning process.

¹⁶ Guenin-Lelle, *The Story of French New Orleans*, 4.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 7.

Others wrote on the growth of Louisiana or regions with similar developments. Richard White's *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* focused on a region outside Louisiana. Although his theory involved an economic relationship between the French and Algonquins, it can be applied to Louisiana. He described a setting where groups get thrown into a stressful situation and come up with alliances based on economic survival. Louisiana had the competition between the Choctaw and Chickasaw which became exacerbated by the French and English. The diplomatic chaos with the Natchez also stressed the local economy. Daniel H. Usner Jr.'s Frontier Exchange theory incorporated the factors of the French colonists, the multiple Native nations, and the African slaves in his book *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783*. His theory dictated an involvement of all three groups in creating the unique economic development of Louisiana. Moments of exchange only existed in this colony. Even the environment itself provided unique factors for its development. Christopher Morris wrote *The Big Muddy: An Environmental History of the Mississippi and Its Peoples from Hernando de Soto to Hurricane Katerina*. His wet to dry timeline included the economic and cultural reasons for colonists to change the flooding nature of the Mississippi River. But there needs to be more evaluation of the differences between colonizers from Canada and France. Canadians showed more use of native negotiation and willingness to blend their European practices with their new environment. Louisiana provided enough stress to test both types of colonizers and proved that the blended tactics of the Canadians succeed more in creating a new economy.

The Middle Ground by Richard White became a corner stone in Native American historical scholarship. The theory of an overlap of Old and New Worlds showed how the complex relationship with early colonists and Indians became a staple in writing the narrative of

colonial history. White's extensive research spans through multiple nations; French, English, Canadian, and American. He used theories from the historical field and from Anthropology to explain the transition from a mutual standing between European and Indian to a dominance of the Europeans.

White's theory focused on the *pays d'en haut*, the Great Lakes Region. With his theory of a middle ground between Indian villages and European settlements, he established a coexistence reliant on mediation. Creating a mediation between groups with different ways of life exposed White to stressful situations in the historical narrative. In these moments of stress, he focused on the American Indian perspective and their accounts of the changing economic and political environment as both the Europeans and natives fought over the ownership of the territory. For Louisiana, separating the colonist perspective between the French and Canadian gives a different understanding of how a colony gets established in the swamps of the Mississippi.

White explained major transformations in relationships between white governments and the Algonquin villages. Large European conflicts like the Seven Years War occurred across the ocean. Its ripples of conflict reached the Americas in the form of the French Indian War. White tapped into the destabilization of the Great Lakes a white conflict caused. This type of stressor made a demand for weapons trades, thus changing the economy. Outside conflict influenced the colony in Louisiana but with a different twist. The Spanish War of Succession caused France to cut off majority of Louisiana's funding. This caused the colonists to rely on domestic trade, proving the need to blend with the native economy. The domestic trade economy needed to support both the survival demand and the capitalistic demand.

White started with the French needing to establish a middle ground relationship in the *pays d'en haut*. A war with the Iroquois forced Algonquins to seek refuge in the Great Lakes

Region. The French also fought with the Iroquois, who had an alliance with the English. The first group of Frenchmen thought to use this displacement as an economic opportunity to expand further into the continent.¹⁸ A lot of motivations by colonizers came from a need to expand their economic reach. And so, a pattern of relationships based on convenience began. For the French to secure themselves in the *pays d'en haut*, they had to make an alliance based on mediation, a concept White points out did not match the previous narratives of the region.¹⁹ Louisiana followed this pattern. The Canadians, the Le Moynes, immediately began negotiations with the natives as they established their military bases and settlements. They started the process of joining the native economy. It helped that they had experience with blending into the domestic trade from their upbringing in Canada.

White wrote against the story of acculturation, a process in which one group becomes more like another by borrowing discrete cultural traits, with a narrative of accommodation.²⁰ The typical narrative of acculturation focused on the process of colonists either absorbing native nations into their culture and religion or forcing them out. With accommodation, there existed a type of mutual influence causing both parties to change along with economic, political, or environmental situations. There existed a multilayered development of motivations for a middle ground to exist. White's argument of a mutual inability of either the colonists or natives to gain

¹⁸ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Regions, 1650-1815 Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 23.

¹⁹ White, 34.

²⁰ White, xxvi.

their goals through force backed up the ideas of accommodation.²¹ An Algonquin based alliance developed where there existed a father-child relationship with Europeans. This political relationship provided products to advance Algonquins in their fight with other nations and the French get to have a strategic territory in the trade market.²² This kind of development existed in Louisiana. The French mediated with multiple native nations. Since European agriculture proved impossible in the beginning with the ever-changing river, the colonists needed to obtain food from imports or domestic trade. The native nations needed European goods to compete with their rivals and most of the colonists were happy to trade. But France sent new colonizers who refused to comply with the current mediation and created a new stressor. A shift in the trade developed during Cadillac and Bienville's conflict. Their fight affected the fur trade of the area.

The fur trade's capitalistic motivations needed to manipulate native economies in order to be successful. This competitive economy showed the amount of accommodation present in North America. Instead of the fur trade being solely an economic exchange, White exposed a symbolism of gift-exchange present from both the French and the Algonquins.²³ No major cultural change of the fur trade surfaced right away during the time the French were in the Great Lakes region. Cultural practices shifted slightly with new products that came into circulation. The process occurred gradually as the symbolism of goods changed to meet new demands.²⁴ Fur took over the French needs of the region, but they had to bring products to the table in order to

²¹ White, 52.

²² White, 143.

²³ White, 98.

²⁴ White, 104.

trade. The stress of providing product for the lesser amount of furs in Louisiana created another stressor as resources and funding became limited.

Over time, European powers tossed around the *pays d'en haut*, causing shifts in local power dynamics. Conflicts between European powers affected the locals of the Great Lakes with rapid change in policies, being economic or political. White connected these global conflicts into a more localized situation with competition between villages, native or white, influenced by new economic opportunities developed with each shift in power.²⁵ The French and the British broke out into war causing a large demand for new native alliances which would shift the middle ground to new accommodations. Consequences of these same European conflicts impacted Louisiana. The French and English made alliances with native nations rivaling with each other, the Choctaws with the French and the Chickasaws with the English. If the French and English conflict escalated, so did the conflict between the Choctaws and Chickasaws. However, other Native nations occupied the area. The Natchez added a factor that White didn't in his *pays d'en haut* where there existed a nation that both the French and English had difficulty negotiating with.

Europeans knew they would win control of the region by proxy of native nations.²⁶ With a new wave of negotiations, alliances fluctuated in response. Unfortunately for the French, war caused them to demand more goods to be produced while also suffering a shortage of trade goods to participate in the rate they wanted.²⁷ The narrative practiced new native history, placing

²⁵ White, 189.

²⁶ White, 223.

²⁷ White, 199.

Native peoples at the center of the story and seeks to comprehend their actions.²⁸ He wrote about the important role the Algonquins had in inventing the *pays d'en haut*. Something similar can be said about Louisiana. The Le Moyne brothers, Iberville and Bienville, believed it took an alliance with all the native nations to create Louisiana.

The pattern of change related to international conflict connected to Louisiana. The southern territory existed as a trade and military advantage even though the colony had little exports at the beginning. Europeans knew that if they owned Louisiana, they would have control of the only waterway leading into the North American continent from the Caribbean. The Great Lakes region had better access to the fur trade and to France's more established colonies in Canada. If the French had to cut costs to a profitable region such as the Great Lakes after multiple wars with England, then the Lower Mississippi Valley had a worse economy. They struggled as France relocated funding repeatedly. This created different stressors found in the Great Lakes.

White wrote about the crucial trade relationships between the Choctaws and the Europeans in an early book called *Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaw, Pawnees, and Navajos*. He used the idea created by Immanuel Wallerstein where peripheral regions are incorporated into the global capitalist system which creates a structural distortion.²⁹ This idea correlated the importance of the economy on cultural development. In the case of the Choctaws, the Europeans provided new economic opportunities

²⁸ White, xxvii.

²⁹ Richard White, *Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1988), xvi.

with the trading of food goods and furs which began the blurring of cultural borders.³⁰ Economic Creolization derived from this idea of trade causing societies to change their functions in order to survive the new economic situation.

Gwendoline Hall exposed a theory while looking into the savior food source of Louisiana, rice. The definition of culture Hall used comes from Eric R. Wolf, “a series of processes that construct, reconstruct, and dismantle cultural material, in response to identifiable determinants.”³¹ As with rice in Hall’s work, the French took the Louisianan environment, the swamp and economics, and worked with it till they could control it.

The work began with poorly equipped Frenchmen starting their settlement in Native villages.³² The beginning settlements functioned as military bases and missionaries but still worked like settlements. Corruption from the dominant military hierarchy took over the exportation, forcing the settlement to become reliant on native crops for food. The colony barely started on solid ground, literally as floods and storms hit the forts constantly. This matched the consensus from other historians like Usner and White who found the French making trade relationships in order to survive long enough to establish a real colony.

The Company of the Indies formed a close tie between the two colonies.³³ But it conflicted with the first colonists in Louisiana who were affiliated with the military rather than a

³⁰ White, *Roots of Dependency*, 34.

³¹ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), xiii.

³² Hall, 3.

³³ Hall, 31.

private company. But eventually the major crops that Louisiana developed were; rice, corn, tobacco, and indigo.³⁴ All that was needed was to get these products sent out to buyers.

Hall used Edward Brathwaite's definition of creolization to describe the development of Louisiana. Creolization is "a sociocultural continuum radiating outward from the slave community and affecting the entire culture in varying degrees."³⁵ But native communities also influenced the environment and behavior of colonists, especially the Canadian colonists who embraced native methods of survival.

Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange by Usner included a combination of contributions to express an economic transformation of the Louisiana territory. Usner explored the evolution of an economy based on the interaction between native villages throughout the Lower Mississippi Valley with Europeans and African slaves. He labeled these interactions as a part of the frontier exchange, intercultural relations that evolved within a geographic region with an emphasis on decisions made by various groups.³⁶ That kind of layering of groups created a narrative describing the complicity of Louisiana's economic development. But that meant multiple economies came together to create a new one.

A trade economy fueled by the military needs of both Europeans and natives pushed for mutual military assistance.³⁷ With the English and the Spanish surrounding the mouth of the Mississippi, alliance became crucial for the French to be able to establish themselves in the most

³⁴ Hall, 35.

³⁵ Hall, 158.

³⁶ Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 8.

³⁷ Usner, 16.

important location of North American trade. However, even though the importance was obvious, France neglected the isolated colony financially which stressed the need for native trade to provide resources.³⁸ This scenario gave Louisiana the image of an unwanted yet important colony.

Tensions grew as France tried to transport slaves as labor to financially stabilize the colony. Since there already existed a scarcity of food and resources, the inability in feeding slaves and disease prevention caused a high mortality rate.³⁹ But, the colony still managed to establish a European pattern of settlement. Plantation development helped relieve the tensions between *petits habitants*, common people, and concessionaires who demanded a tractable labor force.⁴⁰

Agriculture developed but it came with complications. The plantations being established conflicted with previously established colonial interests and the neighboring natives.⁴¹ Competition over labor and resources existed since the beginning but in different forms. The competition over military labor transformed into competition over colonial labor. The Company of the Indies wanted slave labor to take over skilled occupations taken by colonists.⁴² It conflicted with the colonists already establishing livelihoods. Tensions grew between the European locals and the company officials. Along with that, a competition between the Choctaw

³⁸ Usner, 31.

³⁹ Usner, 35.

⁴⁰ Usner, 43.

⁴¹ Usner, 44.

⁴² Usner, 55.

and Chickasaw for intercolonial trade grew.⁴³ This conflict impacted the colony for decades since the French and English pushed it farther. This made the military unstable along with the economic environment.

The inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi Valley fended for themselves in their chaotic setting. The colony's officials had to struggle to keep native alliances steady while the settlers pushed forward in agricultural development in tobacco and indigo.⁴⁴ The effects of the Seven Years' War reached Louisiana and changed the fluid dynamic of social and economic practices. Usner exposed the dense layering of different social groups transforming in response to the same factors. Acknowledging the different groupings of people in an area helped to break down the complicated historical narrative into different forms. But how did these interactions affect the natural environment?

Morris puts an emphasis on the transformation of the Mississippi River when it came to human actions in *The Big Muddy*. His theories on the expansion of the colony provided a different perspective. Focusing on nature gave opportunities to use a neutral point-of-view to historical events. This transition of a flooded environment, to the dry land the Europeans desired exposed how the manipulation of the environment fitted the cultural needs of the humans.

The wet environment before European manipulation had a mutual and spiritual relationship with the Native cultures.⁴⁵ Hunting, fishing, and foraging dominated over agriculture

⁴³ Usner, 65.

⁴⁴ Usner, 81.

⁴⁵ Christopher Morris, *The Big Muddy: An Environmental History of the Mississippi and Its Peoples from Hernando de Soto to Hurricane Katrina* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17.

since flooding of the river made the establishment of a constant crop cycle difficult. Corn grew occasionally but the temperamental river made it hard to keep it as a staple. Also, there did not exist a desire to dominate the land like the Europeans did. While corn made up 50 percent of the native North American diet, there still existed a reliance on fishing in Louisiana.⁴⁶ With the river and the ocean, fish sustained a steady food supply. However, when the French began settling, they strived to conquer nature by drying it so they could practice their agriculture.⁴⁷ In order to conquer the river, they used non-European techniques.

Morris put the incorporation of rice in the perspective of environmental alteration as the French began to construct levees which shifted the flow of the river.⁴⁸ The demand for the new crop allowed for a systematic development to take hold. Colonists finally got the steady agriculture schedule they were accustomed to. The French showed their desire for dominance in other areas. The French and the Canadians fought each other over the dominance of the colony. Especially the French who thought of themselves as superior to Canadians.

Usner published an article overviewing the historical techniques to combine the scholarships of French Louisiana and French Canadian. “Rescuing Early America from Nationalist Narratives: An Intra-Imperial Approach to Colonial Canada and Louisiana” hoped to take advantage of a transnational turn in American studies. Usner used Amy Kaplan’s explanation of how the transnational turn followed alternative spaces and modes of belonging

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 45.

⁴⁸ Morris, 59.

not restricted by a nation-state and reconfigures immigration into multidirectional movements.⁴⁹ This idea of transnationalism matched the idea of multiple layers in economic transformations as different perspectives interacted with the same timeframe.

To help further the development of comparative histories in French Louisiana, Usner recommended following a simple chronological and geographical framework.⁵⁰ With this idea in mind, the layers of economic transformation followed a timeline in order to keep them in a cohesive order. With the works of White, Hall, Morris, and Usner, there seemed to be a chronology following a European timeline.

The scholarship of colonial Louisiana could layer the multiple complex transformations in order to exemplify its unique cultural and economic environment. Thus, further extending the process of creolization beyond singular groups and geographies. This could discover more cultural evolutions and the potential for this scholarship to expand. For example, analyzing the economy as a factor of culture. Louisiana's economy became the most unique in North America. Its scenario of second-generation colonists knowing economic blending needs to occur but fought with colonists from Europe created a one-of-a-kind culture.

This conflict between French and Canadian colonists provided an interesting narrative. At a very early point, personality traits separated the French and the Canadians. It started with the first generation of Canadians, as shown with interactions made by the Le Moyne family. Frenchmen who came to the Americas had ambitions of making a legacy for themselves when they could not make one in Europe. Canadians also had the ambition for fame but had to pursued

⁴⁹ Daniel H. Usner, "Rescuing Early America from Nationalist Narratives: An Intra-Imperial Approach to Colonial Canada and Louisiana," *Historical Reflections* 40, no. 3 (2014): 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 8.

them differently since they were no longer considered French by the motherland. The Canadians used skill sets they developed while growing up in the North American wilderness that born-French colonizers had to learn later in their careers.

These differences between French and Canadians show themselves when examining the subjects in this research. Chapter 2 discusses La Salle's ambitions which drove him to convince multiple Europeans to finance his desire to become a famous adventurer. In the late 1600s, Europe still competed over who will conquer the Mississippi first. La Salle knew how to manipulate the French economy but failed to figure out how to control the North American environments. Iberville's determinacy to expand his military career beyond Canada covers Chapter 3. Iberville grew up in Canada, where he joined the military and proved to be a ruthless fighter. He sought to find his own colony after being denied the conquest of Hudson Bay in the 1690s. He knew how to maneuver between both European and North American economies thanks to his colonial upbringing and began trade relationships in the Mississippi. In Chapter 4, Bienville continued his brother's ambitions but started political and personal conflicts. He constantly fought for his leadership of Louisiana. A major conflict involved the Frenchman Cadillac who came to North America with the typical selfish ambitions of a colonizer. Like La Salle, Cadillac had a firm grasp of the European economy but caused a ruckus in North America when he butted heads with the native and white locals.

To help analyze each historical figure's role in Louisiana, telling their life reveals what pushed them to go to an environment unlike anything they dealt with. Going into their pasts also provided background into the personalities of these men which allows a different kind of explanation to the outcome of their scenarios. Each man possessed selfish reasons to go to Louisiana. La Salle craved adventure and fame. Iberville desired to conquer his own territory.

Bienville strived to keep the colony his brother created alive. Cadillac sought out his own fortune. The factor for success became the willingness to function in the unique economy of Louisiana.

CHAPTER 2

LA SALLE'S IMPROVISED EXPLORATIONS

René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle made an important impact in the expansion of French power in North America. He boldly proclaimed that Frenchmen should venture down the Mississippi and seize control of the Gulf of Mexico from both Spain and England. However, his journeys relied on his charisma to convince people for financing and allies for his expeditions. His charisma worked in cases that only involved the French economy. Also, it looked like he bit off more than he could chew as he found a habit of providing inaccurate vital information, whether it be his skills or settlement plans. Looking at his life and his full career in North America provided a perspective in his motivation and explanation to his strong desire to colonize Louisiana, or roughly that area. His behavior exhibited selfishness as he pursued profit over survival. That attitude worked in French settings but failed in the new North American environment where colonizers needed to participate in the domestic trade in Louisiana to survive. Throughout his adventures, he possessed strong desires for glory and riches he believed he can gain easily in the Americas. His charisma had limits as his colonists soon realized his plans focused on himself rather than the colony. His colony failed to change from the stress provided by La Salle's plans. While he went out to prove he landed by the Mississippi, his colonists lacked a proper leader to show them how to blend with the native economy and in the end, he died during his pursuits in Texas.

The scholarship for La Salle discussed his final journey to Louisiana and if he intentionally miscalculated his charting to land in Texas, closer to Spanish silver mines. Whether he intentionally landed in Texas or not still revealed how careless he was with his plans. If he intentionally landed, he put his own ambition to conquer silver mines over starting a colony like

he was ordered. If it was an accident, he overexaggerated his skills like in his previous expeditions in order to get the funding for his own colony. However, the historical debate over La Salle's attempt at colonization does not go into the tactics of how he tried to run the colony. From the source material of Joutel and biographers, La Salle's mind focused on personal monetary gain and reputation. He failed to establish his colony in the native economy by neglecting to establish native trade negotiations. This meant he failed to blend into the native environment with the process of creolization in order to financially stabilize his colony. In the end, he lost his colony and his life.

In the 19th century, historians focused on the personalities of great historical figures. Personalities are the first step to describing someone's behavior. These theories begin to explain La Salle's decisions in his career as a colonizer. One historian, George Bancroft, wrote about La Salle like a great fearless hero who thought he reached the mouth of the Mississippi during his last expedition.⁵¹ This portrayal of La Salle showed problems since the writing of a figure purely as a hero will warp the historical events of how and why his attempt at colonizing Louisiana failed. During further development of theories on La Salle's last expedition, the idea of the heroic explorer gets tested as the qualifications of La Salle get put under a microscope.

Justin Winsor wrote many works about La Salle and his motivations. He believed La Salle went on this expedition for personal gain. With a narrative and critical historical analysis, Winsor put La Salle's motivations as greedy for monetary and reputational gains.⁵² Although this contradicts Bancroft's perfect vision of La Salle, Winsor put La Salle's intent in landing in Texas

⁵¹ Gene Rhea Tucker, "La Salle Lands in Texas: La Salle and the Historians", *East Texas Historical Journal* 49, no. 1 (2011): 43.

⁵² *Ibid*, 44.

rather than the mouth of the Mississippi. He believed that La Salle's charts for the expedition were "confused", not forged.⁵³ His analysis focused on figuring out why the colony failed in a financial standpoint. La Salle's personal greed caused the colony to destabilize since he did not seek out trade for survival, only profit. Since the charts were not intentionally wrong. This meant his intent for the river came from personal greed. This idea of personal greed continues throughout the rest of the theories. Establishing the financial factor in the failing of the colony.

In the 20th century, historians developed another set of rivaling theories. One, La Salle intentionally went to Texas rather than believing he was at the Mississippi River. Two, he realized he landed in the wrong area and took advantage of the situation. Many believed that when he landed in Texas, it was by accident, but he took this as an advantage for himself and continued with his plans to fight the Spanish and take their silver mines. Carl A. Brasseaux mentioned historians from this time suffered a bias of presentism and a fascination with flaws to take historical figures down from their Victorian pedestals.⁵⁴ Historians before him focused on the fact La Salle's charting instruments were faulty, leading him to land in Texas accidentally. However, the theories can be evaluated to establish La Salle's qualifications to establish and run a colony on his own. In either situation, his reputation as an expert explorer and colonizer already took heavy blows. Missing the Mississippi River, when the river's characteristics were already documented during La Salle's previous expedition, tarnished La Salle's sailing capabilities. In the other case, violating the agreement to settle at the mouth of the river to instead settle in Spanish territory, exposes La Salle's true selfish intent for personal gain.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Tucker, p 46.

Henry Folmer's theories about La Salle revealed he failed in his expedition because of a botched attempt to accommodate and blend with the native economic environment. Although he seems more critical to the figure, Folmer believed La Salle's scheming and lies led to his downfall in Texas.⁵⁵ With the incorrect charts and patterns of self-determinacy in exploration, this theory dived deep into behavior patterns linked to economic decisions. La Salle showed patterns of selfishness when ordering people to fulfill his wishes. That gives reason to show his actions did not focus on survival but success.

To fully evaluate La Salle's behavior and decisions during his last expedition, we need to examine his life leading up to his demise. His biography reveals a pattern of greed in his decision making while he developed and ended his career as a Jesuit. Also, there existed a habit of overexaggerating his abilities as a frontiersman and colonizer. To understand his behavior at the end of his life, it needs an evaluation of his career development.

La Salle came from a wealthy family a part of the bourgeoisie of France. His namesake comes from the property his family owned in Rouen and his father worked as a successful wholesale merchant.⁵⁶ He became highly educated from the Jesuit college in his hometown up till 1658 and then joined the Society of Jesus in Paris to his father's wishes.⁵⁷ He spent his time in the order studying logic, physics, mathematics, and multiple languages including Spanish,

⁵⁵ Ibid, p 49.

⁵⁶ Paul Chesnel, and Andrée Chesnel Meany, *History of Cavalier De La Salle, 1643-1687: Explorations in the Valleys of the Ohio, Illinois and Mississippi, Taken From His Letters, Reports to King Louis XIV, Also the Reports of Several of His Associates, Official Acts and Contemporaneous Documents* (New York, London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1932), 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 4.

Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.⁵⁸ He taught at a secondary school in Alençon before teaching at Tours and Blois from 1664 to 1666.

La Salle clearly had skill for education and the scholarly lifestyle. But he possessed an unsteady personality. People described him as “Inquietus” as he grew bored of things quickly and lost interest in fields he excelled at. His superiors also took note of his fiery personality and proved to be a challenge to get under control. This personality would truly display itself during his future occupation as an explorer and colonist. But, in order to explore during his time as a Jesuit, he needed to be sent on a mission.

At the age of 22, he requested to be a part of a mission twice but gets denied. He hadn’t completed his theological training and his religious preparation needed much improvement. It was in 1667, sometime after requesting and being denied a mission in Portugal, he left his vows because of what he called “his moral frailties.”

He left the monastery in a difficult financial situation. He could not inherit from his father’s death while under his vow and he had no profession to give him a better income.⁵⁹ A tight situation for a man with such an energetic personality. Luckily his uncle worked at the Compagnie des Cent-Associés and a brother who was a Sulpician at Montreal. His adventurous personality refused to live the life of a bourgeois and so La Salle gained a strong pull towards

⁵⁸ Mark Walczynski, “1673-1679: The Black Robe Arrives at Kaskaskia (Kaaskaaskinki Waahpiiwa Mahkateehkoreya), in *The History of Starved Rock* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2020), 16.

⁵⁹ Chesnel, 4-5.

North America. He arrived in the New World the same year he left his academic life and the Sulpicians gave him a seigneurie on Montreal Island.⁶⁰

His adventurous personality grew even more after he received a large portion of land by the St. Lawrence which he named St. Sulpice.⁶¹ He controlled the area like a village of France. He allowed the settlers arriving to hunt and fish on the land and provided grazing fields for cattle.⁶² Even though his village succeeded, he craved the adventure to be expected in North America. He fantasized discovering the Ohio River to give France a route to the Southern Sea and to China. Such a feat would make his name famous and his pockets overflowing with money. The Sulpician Dollier de Casson came across La Salle during his preparations and was asked to accompany him during this upcoming mission.⁶³ However, the Sulpicians knew about La Salle's short attention span for projects and grew worried La Salle will leave the expedition out of the blue. Given La Salle's time with the Society of Jesus, they had a logical concern. With this concern in mind, the governor assigned the deacon Bréhant de Galinée, who had some expertise in astronomy and can put together some fashion of a map, to assist in keeping the project on track.⁶⁴

La Salle finally became a part of an adventure. He sold the remaining property he owned in Montreal, except his house which he used as a fur-trade factory, to two merchants, Jacques

⁶⁰ Ibid, 5.

⁶¹ Ibid, 16.

⁶² Ibid, 17.

⁶³ Ibid, 21.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 23.

Leber and Charles Le Moyne.⁶⁵ However, his first journey proved rough. La Salle and his company did not properly prepare to experience the North American wilderness. They had no guide, Galinée barely knew cartography even though he was hired to draw the expedition's maps. All the while La Salle knew little about astronomy, which he stated he did. To add to the growing list of problems, his party had no way of communicating with the Iroquois, whose territory they will have to cross in order to reach the Ohio River. La Salle greatly overexaggerated his communication skills in Iroquois and his Hollander translator did not know how to translate Iroquois to French.⁶⁶ It was Galinée who took note that La Salle knew nothing when it came to the Iroquois and went into this expedition completely blind. It seemed that La Salle had the spirit for an adventure, but he bit off more than he could chew. Already, it seems that La Salle knew nothing about how North America functioned and failed to understand why being able to communicate with native nations was vital in successful expeditions.

Eventually, this unfortunate crew arrived at Lake Ontario and entered Seneca country, a faction of the Iroquois nation. The party hoped to find a guide in the village. However, their village had no slaves to give to the French party and requested that they wait for more to arrive.⁶⁷ The French refused to wait past a month and went to a different Iroquois village. There the party obtained two native slaves to guide them.⁶⁸ In this case, the French already ran into a case where

⁶⁵ Ibid, 22.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 26.

⁶⁷ George Edward Milne, "Bondsmen, Servants, and Slaves: Social Hierarchies in the Heart of Seventeenth-Century North America" *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (2017), 115.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 119.

the native economic environment roadblocked their goals unless they worked inside it. They were able to work with the Iroquois nation and found guides to take them to their goals.

The group reached Tinaouataoua and met with Louis Joliet, they were informed about an unevangelized tribe, the Potawotomis, in Ottawa country. The missionaries saw the potential to send an apostolate there in order to reach the Ohio. It also helped that Dollier and Galinée spoke Ottawa. Once the French reached an environment they knew well, they knew how to work around the native economy and reach their own goal, finishing their quest for the Ohio River. However, La Salle contracted a fever and had to leave the mission.⁶⁹ He intended to return to Montreal in October of the same year the expedition started. La Salle said it was because of his health but his reputation of switching projects frantically put that excuse under suspicion. His reputation as unreliable began to blossom after this expedition.

The pattern of dictating his own path despite orders continued. La Salle never arrived in Montreal in the time he said. It seemed he continued to explore on his own. La Salle eventually popped back up in the official record when he traveled to France in the search for more money before he returned to North America.⁷⁰ During the time in Montreal, La Salle ended up in the middle of a political feud between major powers. La Salle chose to side with the new governor of New France, Frontenac, during this feud and it quickly paid off. With this new partnership, La Salle obtained the grant of Fort Cataracoui, which got renamed by La Salle to Frontenac, and gained nobility for him and his descendants.⁷¹ A stroke of luck that matched the rest of La Salle's

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Chesnel, 65.

life of big risks. He knew how to manipulate this French economic conflict and gained financially. But he wanted more.

La Salle pushed for authorization to build two establishments, one at the entrance of Lake Erie and one at the exit of Lake Michigan. He also wanted to become the seigneur of future lands he will discover and populate and to obtain ownership of all lands cleared of natives. Despite his superiors thinking of him as a crazy fool, La Salle's persuasion won him the king's approval to reconnoiter the western part of North America between New France, Florida, and Mexico. Preparation for the expedition began July of 1678. Dominique La Motte de Lucière and Chevalier Henri Tonty joined La Salle.⁷² Tonty had experience in the French military and became La Salle's confidential agent and lieutenant.⁷³ However, due to some mishaps, the expedition down the river did not start till August of 1679. Despite the setback, construction of La Salle's ship *The Griffon* finished and set sail to the strait between lakes Huron and Michigan.⁷⁴ When the party reached Baie des Puants (Green Bay), La Salle sent back the ship filled with furs and other merchandise for himself, even though the king expressed that La Salle should not trade with Natives on this journey.⁷⁵ Because of this impromptu trade, the party continued with canoes.

By November, La Salle's party reached the mouth of the Rivière de Miamis (Saint-Joseph). He ordered the construction of a fort but no sight of a bark, a new ship to replace the

⁷² Ibid, 98.

⁷³ Walczynski, 17.

⁷⁴ Chesnel, 102.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 105.

Griffon.⁷⁶ La Salle waited for *The Griffon* to return but after a while he grew impatient and set off on canoe again. After crossing the T  atiki (Kankakee) and reaching the Illinois, the expedition reached an Illinois village called Pimitoui, around the present city of Peoria. La Salle presented to the neighboring native villages his plan to build a fort and a bark and reassured this construction had good intentions.⁷⁷ It worked till a Mascouten chief convinced them otherwise. They now worried La Salle worked with the Iroquois and they tried to dissuade him from exploring the Mississippi any further. The expedition lost six workmen to desertion from the display since there was a failure to negotiate.

The party's troubles only continued. After sending Father Hennepin to the upper Mississippi, La Salle went out to find the *Griffon* after failing to build an adequate replacement in February of 1680.⁷⁸ This mission became disastrous as the river's constant freezing and thawing forced his group to travel on land. After 275 miles on foot with heavy equipment, they reached the fort at Riv  re Saint-Joseph. But La Salle found no information about the *Griffon* and continued his journey to Lake Erie.⁷⁹ The briars and thorns of the wilderness ripped the party's clothing to shreds and covered them in scratches and blood. Members of the party grew sick, most likely from their injuries.⁸⁰ After the turbulent journey, La Salle's group made it to Niagara, April of the same year, to be welcomed by the news of his property being seized and of a ship

⁷⁶ Ibid, 107.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 113.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 116.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 117.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 118.

being sunk that was bringing 20,000 francs worth of goods and men for La Salle.⁸¹ Even after those two blows to the spirit, La Salle continued to Fort Frontenac.

This was a case where La Salle failed to navigate native economics and lost his luck with French economics with the disappearance of the *Griffon*, which was carrying trade goods for La Salle to make a profit from. He treaded unknown territory. He started to falter and he needed to find a way to get his foothold back in his expedition. After his 500-league journey, La Salle went back to Montreal to deal with more financial issues. He traveled back to Cataracoui in greater debt than before this expedition because he lost the *Griffon*. July 22, 1680, La Salle got news from Tonty that the fort at Crèvecoeur got ransacked and abandoned.⁸² Another case of misfortune that commonly occurs in the New World. La Salle grew determined to capture the deserters who cost him even more money from this expedition and hunted them down by the beginning of August.

At the end of August, La Salle began his second expedition of the Illinois territory with the confirmation of his lost ship the *Griffon* sank to the bottom of Lake Michigan, losing La Salle 10,000 *écus*, 12,000 livres of cargo, and four thousand pounds of tools, ammunition, and supplies.⁸³ In hopes to prevent more bad news, La Salle went out to locate his lieutenant Tonty, who was left alone in Iroquois territory vulnerable to attack. December 1st, La Salle arrived at a destroyed Illinois village, the culprits being the Iroquois, where the inhabitants were

⁸¹ Ibid, 119.

⁸² Ibid, 120.

⁸³ Ibid, 123-125.

slaughtered.⁸⁴ La Salle did not find Tonty's body among the victims and debris. The search through slaughters to find Tonty continued as La Salle reached the Mississippi from the Illinois. With no sign of Tonty, La Salle backtracked to Fort Saint-Joseph around January of 1681. There, he received information that Tonty's canoe was spotted passing Michilimackinac.⁸⁵ La Salle sent two men to deliver a letter to Tonty. While the two men delivered his letter, La Salle negotiated an alliance between the Miamis and Illinois to fight against the Iroquois.⁸⁶ He hoped this alliance will help with defending future fortification being built in the area.

News of Tonty arrived at the beginning of March. Some members of the Outagamis (Foxes) relayed that Tony wintered with the Potawatomis. La Salle sent a message saying to rendezvous with him at Michilimackinac in May, which happened against the bad luck this expedition experienced. With this positive experience, La Salle tried again to reach the mouth of the Mississippi. January of 1682, a new party of 23 Frenchmen and 18 Natives began to travel for the Mississippi from Fort Crèvecoeur.⁸⁷ By February, the ice on the river broke up enough to canoe downwards. The journey went smoothly till around present-day Memphis where a party member got lost hunting. While waiting for the party member to be found, La Salle built a fort

⁸⁴ Ibid, 127.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 135.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 136.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 141.

and named it Prud'homme, after an unfortunate gunsmith found dead floating down the Mississippi.⁸⁸

On March 12th, the expedition arrived in Arkansas country. The Arkansas did not expect French canoes coming down the river and were suspicious. Nicolas de La Salle noted that an Arkansas canoe met them on the water and shot a warning arrow. The party did not shoot back thus giving the sign they came in peace.⁸⁹ After smoking and participating in the calumet with them, the French were welcomed.⁹⁰ The party restocked on supplies and La Salle declared the territory belonged to the King of France. Not very peaceful but La Salle made it clear years ago this was his intentions on his expeditions. Not long after, the expedition continued after taking two guides from the Arkansas.

They entered the bottom part of the Mississippi and met the Taensas and Koroas, who were neighbors of the Natchez. By April, the expedition made it to the sea.⁹¹ Around present-day Venice, La Salle claimed Louisiana for France by setting up the King's arms made from copper on a tree.⁹² However, the land fought hard. The Frenchmen ran low on food and had to rely on potatoes and crocodile for food.⁹³ This forced the party to trade with the Acolapissa

⁸⁸ Nicolas de La Salle, *Relation of the Discovery of the Mississippi River: Written from the Narrative of Nicolas de La Salle, otherwise known as the little M. de La Salle*, trans by Melville B. Anderson (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1898), 15.

⁸⁹ La Salle, 19.

⁹⁰ Chesnel, 145. La Salle, 19.

⁹¹ Chesnel, 147.

⁹² La Salle, 47.

⁹³ La Salle, 47.

nation, which they had plenty of negative feelings against. But their time in Louisiana lasted a couple days as they headed back to Canada the same month they arrived.⁹⁴ Negotiation with the Acolapissa went rocky but the French were able to get some supplies to start their trip back. It gave La Salle some anxiety when meeting with the Koroas, as there would be Acolapissa visiting the neighboring nation. But he pushed his party through and made it to the Taensas and got the rest of the supplies needed to push for Canada.

La Salle rushed the journey. He left part of the group behind with Tonty and pushed forward for Arkansas country. However, the rest of the group caught up when La Salle caught ill at Fort Prud'homme.⁹⁵ Tonty went off ahead of the party so he could write to the governor of the new territory. La Salle continued his journey June 15th. He reunited with Tonty in Michilimackinac in September of 1682. Still feeling unwell, La Salle stayed in the colony instead of heading to France to give his report on his journey. At the same time, a new governor of New France, Antoine Le Febvre de La Barre, came into the colony and would soon become another obstacle for La Salle.⁹⁶

La Salle returned to the Illinois in December to establish a Fort Saint-Louis. That month, the King gave instructions to stop explorations after La Salle's. However, La Salle faced attacks from the Iroquois and requested help from La Barre. La Barre ignored the requests.⁹⁷ He gathered merchants in Canada to plot against La Salle since he posed a threat to the fur trade. An

⁹⁴ Chesnel, 151.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 153.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 164.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 169.

officer, Chevalier Henri de Baugy, working for La Barre ran into La Salle and ordered him to be sent back to colony authorities.⁹⁸ They charged La Salle of disrupting the peace negotiations with the Iroquois by doing business without permission from the government.

The king's help could not be an option. He wrote to La Barre, "Sieur de La Salle's discovery is completely useless and that such undertakings must in future be prevented."⁹⁹ A statement like this foreshadows the future mentality higher-ups feel about the region. La Salle had to create a different plan like one given at court by a Jesuit priest, Bernou. He proposed an establishment on the Gulf of Mexico at the mouth of the Rio Grande. This establishment opened opportunities to conquer New Spain and gain the mines by Comte Diego de Peñalossa. His justification for being able to make a similar plan relied on the testimony the Mississippi's mouth was like the mouth of the Rio Grande.

La Salle provided inaccurate geography of the Mississippi when he defended his case for funding. According to his maps, the Mississippi deviated 250 leagues westward from its actual course and emptied near New Mexico. Later, d'Iberville commented on this intentional error, saying "M. de La Salle, although a man who passed for being clever, has marked the lower part of the Mississippi, on the map he has made, with 273 degrees... I believe that this comes from the strong desire he had to see himself near the mines of New Mexico, and thereby to induce the

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Céline Dupré, "CAVELIER DE LA SALLE, RENÉ-ROBERT," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 29, 2019, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cavelier_de_la_salle_rene_robert_1E.html.

court to set up in that country establishments which could not but be very profitable thereafter.”¹⁰⁰

Not only did La Salle falsify information about the river, he made outrageous claims involving harmonizing his plan with Bernou’s in Peñalossa colony. One of which being that ships can enter the mouth of the Mississippi and ascend 100 leagues inland with large ships and 500 leagues with small ships. The mouth of the Mississippi contained many sandbars that constantly shifted and hidden fossilized tree trunks below the water that could tear up the bottom of boats. Another dangerous lie involved La Salle promising to recruit 15,000 Natives to join the 4,000 he already had to attack the Spanish. Lastly, the planned area to establish a fort, the confluence of the Rivière Rouge and the Mississippi, turned out to be covered in marshes.

Miraculously, Seignelay agreed to this plan. King Louis XIV ordered the restoration of La Salle’s command of Fort Frontenac. Also, the king granted La Salle a commission to command all the territory between Fort Saint-Louis-des-Illinois and New Biscay. As for military needs, La Salle received 100 soldiers, commanded by 8 officers and non-commissioned officers, a warship with 36 cannons and a crew of 70, and a barque of 60 tons with 4 small cannons.¹⁰¹

Not surprisingly, the expedition started off with complications. La Salle and the captain of the warship, the *Joly*, started to fail in communication. Taneguy Le Gallois de Beaujeu came from a different background, a military man who came up in military status through his work in the navy while also being born a noble unlike La Salle.¹⁰² Beaujeu’s vast experience in naval

¹⁰⁰ Dupre.

¹⁰¹ Chesnel, 175.

¹⁰² Ibid, 176.

navigation clashed with La Salle's improvising style of exploration. Planning for the expedition contained many clashes between these two. They conflicted over the estimated duration of the voyage, the quality and quantity of the provisions, stowage, and how many passengers. The biggest conflict involved the amount of authority between these two men.

La Salle knew he had the supreme authority of the expedition since the King said so.¹⁰³ Beaujeu disagreed. He thought his role got diminished with that mentality. According to Beaujeu, La Salle created "a great commotion at Rochefort among the officers, each one saying that a passenger had never been known to lay claim to being in command on a ship" and "There are very few who do not believe he is crazy. I have spoken of it to people who have known him for 20 years. Everyone says that he has always been something of a visionary."¹⁰⁴ Visionary could describe La Salle's style of expedition so far. Lying about qualifications and plans match La Salle's pattern from the beginning. But Beaujeu's struggles with La Salle's style of exploration continued.

La Salle refused to tell Beaujeu the destination of his ships. Good for La Salle, who lied about the environment of the Mississippi. But for Beaujeu, it added to his stress since he could not fully put together a plan like any other military officer would. Not being able to choose his own crew also put stress on Beaujeu. Those in charge of hiring soldiers and retrieving indentured workers hired anyone willing to go on the ship. This mission contained so much uncertainty that Beaujeu commented, "I am going into an unknown country to seek something almost as difficult

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Dupre.

to find as the philosopher's stone, late in the season, laden above the water-line, and with an irritable man."¹⁰⁵ La Salle did not create a partnership but more stress for his new colony.

When the actual voyage started, La Salle's poor planning began to fully show itself. The *Joly* could only carry 125 passengers. La Salle put 240 people on board, along with all the supplies and goods forcing everyone to endure the journey on the upper deck.¹⁰⁶ After refusing to retrieve drinking water in Spain, passengers on the ship started to get ill from dehydration, overeating, and the overall stress of the voyage. By this point, a volunteer of the voyage named Henri Joutel wrote an intensive journal accounting this voyage and its mishaps. In response to La Salle's refusal to obtain water in Spain he noted the obvious differences between La Salle and Beaujeu. This situation of miscommunication on how to handle La Salle's decisions would make Joutel write,

“These misunderstandings, with some others which happened before, being no way advantageous to his Majesty's service, laid the Foundations of those tragical events, which afterwards put an unhappy end to Monsieur de la Salle's life and undertaking, an occasioned our ruin.”¹⁰⁷

This entry performed as a perfect teaser to La Salle's expedition. It even expressed the blame of this failure stemming from La Salle and his inability to communicate with the other commanders of the party.

Despite the illnesses, the voyage made it to the region of Saint Dominique, present-day Haiti. But the ketch *Saint-François*, which was carrying most of the provisions for the future

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Henri Joutel, *A Journal of La Salle's Last Voyage* (New York, Corinth Books, 1962), 24.

colony, got captured by the Spaniards.¹⁰⁸ La Salle knew how to gather money and provisions on the fly as he went around Saint Dominique looking to make a profit. To help make up for the loss of the *Saint-François*, the governor of the Île de la Tortue helped re-supply the voyage. On the 27th to the 28th of December, La Salle's voyage reached a part of the gulf where the seabed was made of greyish and muddy sand.¹⁰⁹ La Salle's spirits held up till his previous charting of the location failed him. He made a two-degree mistake when charting the latitude of the mouth of the Mississippi in 1682.

The voyage ran into a navigation error. When La Salle thought he hit the Gulf Stream, he concluded they drifted too far East and were around Apalachee Bay. When he neared the Mississippi, he thought he was not near Cap Escondito, where 17th-century maps marked as the mouth of the river. He conferred to some Spanish logbooks and felt more confident that his crew drifted east and decided to make the expedition head back west towards Texas. Joutel wrote about this situation,

“In that particular he committed an irretrievable error; for it is the opinion of judicious men, who, as well as I, saw the rest of that voyage, that the mouth of one of the branches of the Mississippi river, and the same whose latitude Monsieur de la Salle had taken, when he travelled to it from Canada, was not far from that place, and that he must of necessity be near the Bay of the Holy Ghost.”¹¹⁰

One foggy night in January, La Salle signaled the *Joly*, Beaujeu's ship, they were leaving. However, Beaujeu misunderstood the situation and the *Joly* left without the others. La Salle continued to sail for 19 hours before lowering anchor in areas the *Joly* could not follow. After

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 29.

¹⁰⁹ Dupre.

¹¹⁰ Joutel, 37.

sailing along the coast of modern-day Texas, La Salle concluded he is in fact not near the Mississippi Delta and turned around. This helped the *Joly* catch up and Beaujeu and La Salle confronted each other on who abandoned who. At the same time, they hunted and explored the area. The group tried to figure out where they landed but La Salle convinced himself that they were near an outlet for the Mississippi.

Near modern Matagorda Bay, La Salle decided to move head on land with the ships following. Isles and reefs surrounded the area, making ship movement along the shore difficult. La Salle examined the bay and found it to be safe for the ships *Aimable* and *Belle* to come ashore since he believed this was an inlet to the Mississippi. The *Belle* made it to shore but the *Aimable* ran ashore and spilled all the contents which consisted of foodstuff, munitions, materials, and goods. Two sailors, Pierre and Jean-Baptiste Talon were questioned after the tragic events soon to occur gave testimony and mentioned rumors the crash was due to a pilot's error.¹¹¹ The group saved little of the supplies. Due to La Salle's rashness or the pilot error, greatly impacted the establishment of the new colony. Also, the natives in the area took advantage of the wreck and looted some of the French supplies. In retaliation, the French stole canoes. This led to fighting which killed two and wounded two.

It did not help that in March of 1685, Beaujeu returned to France since his role for this mission finished. He took some of the voyagers who gave up on the mission. This impacted the morale and confidence of the settlers remaining. But they persevered for the time being. As a defense, the settlers built a fort out of what was left of the *Aimable*. La Salle then took 50 people

¹¹¹ "Voyage to the Mississippi through the Gulf of Mexico", trans by Ann Linda Bell, annotated by Robert S Weddle, in *La Salle, the Mississippi, and the Gulf*, ed by Robert S Weddle (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 226.

to reconnoiter the area, but to no surprise failed at finding the Mississippi. Due to sickness, low morale started to take over the first camp. La Salle ordered to set up a new one northwest of Matagorda Bay. In May 1685, construction of Fort Saint-Louis caused several casualties.

According to Joutel, he documented

“This excessive toil; the scant food of the workers, which was very frequently docked because they had not discharged their duty; M. de La Salle’s vexation at not managing to accomplish things as he had imagined, which led him to treat his people harshly, often at the wrong time: all this saddened many, whose spirits visibly declined.”¹¹²

To find the Mississippi, La Salle took a few men with him in canoes to go down the river back to Matagorda Bay. In January 1686, Joutel saw a single man come back from the party. Pierre Duhaut returned because while he was repairing his footwear, La Salle’s nephew Moranget left him behind. The rest of the party, minus a few men who died fighting Natives in the area, returned. The *Belle*, which was following his men, went missing. Losing the ship negatively impacted the survival rate of this colony greatly. To make up for this major loss, La Salle went on a land expedition at the end of April towards a Cenis Village inland.¹¹³ Days after La Salle left, Joutel received into the fort five survivors of the shipwreck of the *Belle*. It seemed the pilot of the vessel ran the ship aground while drunk.

Eventually, a couple of La Salle’s expedition party gave up and turned around to return to the fort. One of the returners, Dominique Duhaut, died on the way back. The Talon brothers remembered this greatly, “... most of those who had accompanied the said Sr. de la Salle, both

¹¹² Dupre.

¹¹³ “Voyage to the Mississippi”, 234.

on this journey and on others that he made into the country later, met the same fate.”¹¹⁴ Pierre, the older brother, now had another reason to be angry with La Salle’s catastrophe of a mission. The mission ended in failure as La Salle returned and his party had been reduced to an inoperable number of men.

The next departure focused on finding a route to the Illinois Territory. January of 1687, La Salle took 17 men to travel on foot. This left 25 people at the camp, the remainder of the 180 people at the start of this colony. The expedition party this time had a tough journey ahead. The paths became unusable due to torrential flooding of the countryside. The flooding also left finding shelter arduous. The men carried the supplies through tough terrain because La Salle and his brother monopolized the use of the horses. The priest also forced them to carry church ornaments and a dozen habits. Moral for the workers in this expedition lowered exponentially. When they reached the Trinity River, called the Rivière aux Canots by La Salle, he sent his servant and a Shawnee hunter named Nika with Pierre Duhaut, his surgeon, and a couple others to retrieve buried supplies La Salle left during the last expedition. A couple days later Moranget and two men went ahead to retrieve bison meat Nika was able to get. When he arrived, he lost his temper and claimed all the meat that the men smoked, and the marrowbones set aside. This along with Moranget’s previous behavior pushed the men past their limit. Duhaut and his surgeon prepared a plot. In the night, the surgeon and his accomplices murdered Moranget, Nika, and a servant of La Salle in their sleep.

La Salle heard about the assassination. He hastened to the scene despite warnings given to him. Duhaut disliked La Salle as much as the latter’s nephew since there existed blame for the

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

death of Dominique Duhaut during La Salle's desperate expeditions. When La Salle arrived on the scene, Duhaut ambushed him from the bushes with his musket. When La Salle discussed the fate of his nephew, Duhaut shot him in the head. The murderous gang stripped La Salle, stole his possessions, and left him to be eaten by wildlife. Joutel wrote this about La Salle's horrible death,

“Such was the unfortunate end of Monsieur de la Salle's life, at a time when he might entertain the greatest hopes, as the reward of his labors. He had a capacity and talent to make his enterprise successful; his constancy and courage and his extraordinary knowledge in arts and sciences, which rendered him fit for anything, together with an indefatigable body, which made him surmount all difficulties, have procured a glorious issue to his undertaking, had not all those excellent qualities been counterbalanced by too haughty a behavior, which sometimes made him insupportable, and by a rigidity towards those that were under his command, which at last drew on him an implacable hatred, and was the occasion of his death.”¹¹⁵

In the end, members of his own party pointed to La Salle's charisma being the source of his downfall and failure at establishing his own colony. To add insult to injury, the news of La Salle's death remained a secret by his brother Abbé, who wanted to collect furs owed to La Salle.

This epic of La Salle exposed how it took more than personal ambition to establish a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi. He survived his early expeditions, when he tried to find the end of the Illinois and his first expedition of the Mississippi. He had multiple people to rely on to fill in the blanks of his plans like Tonty. These expeditions did not result in a permanent settlement. He did not create new lasting trade relationships. The results were temporary. Not the grandiose ending for La Salle's ambitions. In his final expedition, he only had his nephew when Beaujeu left the colony after landing in Texas. Both La Salle and his nephew only focused on

¹¹⁵ Joutel, 103.

personal gain and reputation. Without focusing on survival and establishing solid trade relationships, his colonists grew mutinous and turned on La Salle and his nephew. The stressors in the area could not create a new economy for the settlers to survive in. They had no connection to the local economies and no established connections to their home economy. The stress grew too large for the colony and it broke. Even though La Salle exaggerated his own qualifications, he survived long enough to attempt one last adventure for glory which ended in him being left behind dead in his failed colony.

CHAPTER 3

IBERVILLE'S CAMPAIGN FOR GLORY

As an infamous Canadian, Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville conquered many English ports and established a military presence at the mouth of the Mississippi. He accomplished these large feats because he was able to maneuver and manipulate both European and Native environments. He grew up in North America and went on expeditions with his father. These expeditions exposed him to French-native alliances and warfare. He used the knowledge from these experiences in his career in the French military and in his leadership of military bases in the Lower Mississippi. His tactics labeled him ruthless and dominant by both the English and French. He ambushed and looted ports, settlements, and ships as he campaigned. It threw off many who were unfamiliar with this type of warfare. The different battles and expeditions he went through in his life give examples to how this Canadian colonized territory by blending French and Native American war tactics, politics, and economics. When Iberville set his sights on Louisiana, he saw it as his opportunity to build a colony of his own the way he wanted. Using the knowledge of native diplomacy and knowing not to neglect defenses, he successfully established a military base at the mouth of the river. One of his brothers joined him and continued developing the settlement after Iberville died of a fever in Havana. Comparing the epic of Iberville to La Salle reveals the difference between the French and Canadians in the goal of colonizing the Lower Mississippi. The emotional origin in their goals varied. Iberville blended his knowledge of France and Canada into Louisiana thus beginning Economic Creolization.

The scholarship for Iberville made him out to be a great Canadian hero. Which, given his accomplishments in warfare, has merit. However, opportunities to study his tactics and evaluate them as examples of cultural blending exist and should be explored further. Iberville presented a

pattern of mixing his French tactics with Native American in his warfare and leadership. A sign of creolization presented itself in his economic practices when he established his military base in Louisiana thus making him more successful than La Salle in colonization.

Charles B. Reed wrote a truly golden adaptation of Iberville back in 1910. While he tells the adventurous tale of Iberville's life, he also provides background and context to the possible reasons for Iberville's choices. Reed describes Iberville as a part of a generation of exploration that starts with his father Charles. They were called *coureurs de bois*.¹¹⁶ He still used a hero image often used for important political figures. However, Reed acknowledged the cruelty Iberville demonstrated in his military pursuits, but it begs the question if Reed played along with the stereotype that Canadians were monstrous and uncivilized which was the French opinion. He mentioned in multiple occasions how daring and ambitious Iberville grew to be and how he would obtain his goals no matter what. It fit the adventurer image but there could be more to it. Given that Iberville grew up in the environment of adventure in the New World but had the expectations from the Old World, he developed a personality that needed to manipulate both. In order to fully analyze the impact Iberville had in colonization, it is important to look at his brutal military tactics and his hardheadedness in doing things how he thought was correct in order to survive in a transitional world.

Nellis M Crouse, in 1954, wrote about Iberville as a great soldier who lived a dangerous life.¹¹⁷ He devoted himself to the church and to the French crown. He wrote about Iberville

¹¹⁶ Charles B. Reed, *The First Great Canadian: The Story of Pierre le Moyne Sieur D'Iberville* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1910), 18.

¹¹⁷ Nellis M. Crouse, *Lemoyne d'Iberville: Soldier of New France* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), 1-2.

because of how little was researched about him. Crouse acknowledged that Iberville accomplished many military feats for France in Canada. W. J. Eccles also mentioned Iberville as the scourge of the English in Hudson Bay.¹¹⁸

Iberville became the most famous child of Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil et de Chateauguay and Catherine Thierry. His parents migrated from France to Canada to make their own fortune as many did. Also, his eleven brothers reached high ranks in the military including Jean-Baptist Le Moyne du Bienville who would become the founder of New Orleans and be governor of Louisiana multiple times. In fact, when one Le Moyne went on an expedition, one or more came along. Governor General Denonville, when he began his commission, thought Canadians needed to exercise their adventurous traits when he said, “The Canadians are all big, well-built and firmly planted on their feet, accustomed whenever necessary to live on little, robust and vigorous, very obstinate and inclined to be dissolute, but quick witted and vivacious.”¹¹⁹

The Le Moyne legacy in New France started with Charles Le Moyne coming over from Dieppe in 1640.¹²⁰ Adventurers and merchants gathered in Dieppe often and told their tales in the inn Charles worked for.¹²¹ Those tales gave Charles the inspiration to search out his own destiny in the New World. He migrated over, entranced by the prospect of fame and fortune. He served

¹¹⁸ W. J. Eccles, *Canada Under Louis XIV 1663-1701* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 160.

¹¹⁹ Eccles, 143.

¹²⁰ Reed, 28.

¹²¹ Crouse, 2.

the Jesuits on Lake Huron for a salary of 20 écus.¹²² During those missions, he learned several dialects of the Huron and Iroquois language groups and became a reliable adventurer. By 1646 Charles settled in Ville-Marie where he dealt with skirmishes with the Iroquois.¹²³ But he also dealt with more peaceful affairs like serving as official interpreter and emissary for the natives. This work granted him land in the Montreal area and letters patent of nobility by 1668, giving him the title Sieur de Longueuil.¹²⁴ Later, he and his wife bore many children which qualified them for a pension given to settlers who produced 12 or more children. In total, there were 11 Le Moyne boys all of which gained a surname after the name of a village or landmark from Dieppe.¹²⁵

Iberville's upbringing led to little major events. His education focused on the basics as it seemed he wanted to be an adventurer at an early age. Tales of his father and seeing him coming back multiple times from missions into Iroquois territory made him believe that exploration and conquest was befitting of a Canadian gentleman. He and his brothers were educated by Sulpicians. His education shaped his negative opinions about the English and gave him more incentive to conquer more land for France. Being exposed to tales of his father's diplomatic missions so early in his life gave Iberville important knowledge of how the North American economy functioned. He learned the importance of working with native needs for French commerce to get a financial advantage.

¹²² Ibid, 3.

¹²³ Reed, 28.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 29.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 30.

Iberville explored the rivers and land of upper North America until he and his brothers went off to study in becoming naval officers. There they all learned mathematics, hydrography, artillery, and seamanship under the European standards.¹²⁶ This knowledge got blended with their experiences of growing up in Canada creating a family of powerful Canadian sailors. By 1683, he finished his education and training and returned to Canada where he and his father traveled together again till Charles died at the age of 60 in 1685.¹²⁷ This first generation of Canadian explorers prepared to roam North America.

Iberville's military career kicked off in 1686 with an expedition against English posts in the Hudson Bay area. France and England competed for ownership of this territory even before they established trade there. Lescarbot made the first claim by France in 1598 for the bay when he established the boundary lines of French territory in the New World. He claimed New France as the western boundaries of the Pacific Ocean, the southern the islands of the Atlantic towards Cuba and Hispaniola, the eastern as the North Sea, embracing the northern land called Unknown toward the Frozen Sea, up to the Arctic Pole.¹²⁸ He described the northern boundaries vague so when Henry Hudson explored and mapped his bay in 1610, the English laid the claim of discovery over Lescarbot's stretched claim. France fought back with a claim of discovery made by Radisson and Groseilliers who were rumored to have ventured into the bay. However, Radisson himself corrected the claim stating that he only heard of the area from the native

¹²⁶ Reed, 38.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 39-40.

¹²⁸ George Bryce, *The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company: Including That of the French Traders of North-western Canada and of the North-west, XY, and Astor Fur Companies*, 3rd ed (Toronto: William Briggs, 1910), 48.

nations around the Great Lakes and never explored the region.¹²⁹ In the end, both France and England signed a treaty of neutrality in the region in 1686.

Even though France and England were technically at peace in Europe, King Louis XIV allowed the French and Canadians to pursue English territory in hopes to expand the empire in North America.¹³⁰ The Compagnie du Nord was created. In this company, Iberville worked alongside two brothers, a signature with the Le Moyne family, to conquer English forts to take their furs and destabilize English trade. The pressure to set up the posts in the area came from French traders Médard Choutart, Des Groseilliers and Pierre-Esprit Raddisson. They firmly believed the best furs came from the upper north of North America. Pressure by the governor of New France to take down English ports and replace them with French ones became an important military matter that Iberville would soon later take advantage of.

Pierre de Troyes commanded the military expedition while being supported by the Le Moyne brothers and their expertise in survival and military tactics. The Le Moynes developed a military tactic that focused on surprise over everything else.¹³¹ Surprise worked well in the Canadian environment. Canada, especially near Hudson Bay, which comprised of thick forests, steep mountains, and rivers that freeze and thaw overnight, made the perfect environment for ambush methods. One Jesuit priest, Antoine Silvy, that accompanied the expedition wrote about

¹²⁹ Ibid, 49.

¹³⁰ Reed, 44.

¹³¹ Ibid, 46.

how the Le Moynes' unusual knowledge of the forests and expertise with canoes became invaluable for this expedition.¹³² It helped that they grew up playing in such an environment.

The party made it to the bay. The English had five posts established: Moose Factory (Fort Monsipi), Fort Rupert, Fort Kitchichouane (later known as Fort Albany), New Savanne (Fort St. Thérèse), and Fort Nelson.¹³³ These forts make up the foundation of the English fur trade making them the ultimate goal for the expedition. Their first target, Moose Factory. The attack began in June at dusk as a part of the surprise attack method as Moose Factory had no visible defenses to protect them from the inevitable French invasion.¹³⁴ When the French attacked, they screamed Iroquois war cries to confuse the English and Iberville led a group to ram down the gates.

Iberville gained credit for an act of bravery during the battle. He entered the fort ahead of his troops and got separated when they shut the gate on them.¹³⁵ He held off the English in time for his troops to break their way in. Unpredictable tactics like this would become Iberville's signature. After this, Troyes ordered attacks on three other forts along James Bay which consisted of Fort Charles, Fort Albany, and storage on Charlton Island. All three attacks succeeded and English trade in James Bay became disrupted. Iberville became a well-known name in the north.

Opinions of the famous Iberville varied as they do. Troyes and Denonville agreed that Iberville served as the perfect subordinate. Denonville even wrote, "He is a very wise man and

¹³² Ibid, 51-52.

¹³³ Reed, 53.

¹³⁴ Reed, 54-55.

¹³⁵ Reed, 56.

will do anything he says”¹³⁶ While others had a more critical opinion of Iberville. Frontenac, the successor to Denonville, did not give Iberville such high praise. He wrote, “He is a man who boasts a lot, who is bursting with presumption, and who has seen much more about his interests and his trade than the service of the King.”¹³⁷ Either of these observations about Iberville described him. He followed orders but took his own twist to them. He made sure he could also make a profit but still conquered forts and ships for the French. His skills as a sailor and his homegrown knowledge of the frontier made him an excellent asset to France and her conquest of Hudson Bay.

Troyes left and d'Iberville became in charge of the three forts starting August of 1686. After wintering at Moose Fort, he left in the summer of 1687 to Quebec and then to France in hopes of accomplishing two tasks. First, he pushed the advantages of a sea route to the fur trade in Hudson Bay. He told Seignelay, the Intendant de la Marine, that the use of canoes has become difficult since the water level in the rivers were getting low and also, the need for more trade goods grew exceptionally as the natives grew impatient and began trading with the English.¹³⁸ Second, to solicitate on the behalf of the Compagnie du Nord assistance to strengthen the newly acquired forts and to diverge native trade away from Fort Nelson. He convinced the officials and

¹³⁶ E. E. Rich, 1904-1979, *The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1958), 241. “un très sage garçon entreprenant et qui sait ce qu’il fait”

¹³⁷ Ibid. “C’est un homme qui se vante beaucoup, qui crève de presumption, et qui a beaucoup plus en vu eses intérêts et son commerce que le service du Roy”

¹³⁸ Ibid, 243

headed back to James Bay in 1688 with a shipment of furs prepared and the Royal naval ship, the *Soleil d'Afrique*.¹³⁹

In 1689, the English attacked to get their forts back. A shipment of furs for the French hit an English blockade. Winter hit and froze all ships involved. This began a stalemate that lasted till 1690 that showed how different Canadian war tactics were to European. Iberville became notorious for how he tactically prevented the English from hunting and foraging, which led them to contract scurvy induced by starvation. While starvation and scurvy decimated the English, Iberville allowed the English surgeon to go find food, only to capture him to let scurvy run its course.¹⁴⁰ Iberville prevented the English from regaining their forts but failed at pushing them out of Fort Nelson. He left for Quebec with the spoils of prisoners, loot, and furs.

When Iberville got back to Quebec, he left for another military campaign. A war between the league of Augsburg and France reached the colonies and turned into a hit-and-run tactic war. The Iroquois received supplies from the English and were encouraged to start attacking Canadian settlements again. Since Iberville grew up in the environment, he knew how to participate in hit-and-run raids and defend against them. But the news of the new war reached Canada after the Iroquois attacked the countryside of Lachine. The governor of the time, Frontenac, had to recruit Canadians and native allies to fight since France had to worry about conflict in Europe. Iberville became second in command to his brother Jacques Le Moyne de Sainte-Hélène and Nicolas

¹³⁹ Ibid, 244

¹⁴⁰ Rich, 247.

D'Ailleboust de Manthet.¹⁴¹ In the winter they set out to attack enemy forts, the main targets being Albany with a side mission for the Dutch settlement of Schenectady.¹⁴²

February of 1690, the force snuck up on Schenectady in the dead of night. With no guards noticing them, they positioned themselves at points to prevent escapes and waited. Right before dawn, the French attacked the fort while people still slept. They pillaged the settlement and burnt it to the ground.¹⁴³ This brutality became notorious for the Le Moyne family, especially so for Iberville. The Canadian techniques matched more to their experience with native raids and shocked European soldiers fresh from the sea. Even French officials remarked that the raid on Schenectady resembled native warfare than European.¹⁴⁴

Thanks to this expedition, Iberville received a grant of land on Baie des Chaleurs. He immediately sold it as he set his eyes out on more military exploits to take over the Hudson Bay. He resumed his command of the French ports and controlled two military ships: *St. Francis* and *St Anne*.¹⁴⁵ He received inadequate military support in the form of three small vessels carrying 30 guns and 80 men to help protect his forts. His first activity on his new ships involved spying at Fort Nelson. They spotted him and began attacking him with their superior firepower.¹⁴⁶ All the while, Iberville sent his lieutenant after an outpost, New Severn, 250 miles southeast. The

¹⁴¹ Reed, 72.

¹⁴² Ibid, 73.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 75-76.

¹⁴⁴ Reed, 78.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 78.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 79.

commander Thomas Walsh surrendered, blew up his post, and fled. Iberville, after losing to Fort Nelson, raided Fort Albany again. They looted this conquest and found a bounty of furs.

After visiting France, Iberville planned an attack on Fort Nelson. This time, he had two ships with eighteen and twelve guns respectively under his command.¹⁴⁷ However, the fort was more prepared with three ships, with one having forty guns. With this kind of unbalance, Iberville withdrew.

He showed his determined personality when he petitioned fiercely to the Crown how he needed to conquer Fort Nelson in order to take down the English fur trade.¹⁴⁸ They gave him permission and two ships. He also received orders to send his frigates to protect supply ships headed for Canada. This side-mission delayed his ships and he arrived at Quebec too late to sail ahead of the winter ice to York.

That gave Frontenac opportunity to give Iberville another side mission to patrol New England shores in hopes to harass the settlements there with explicit orders to attack the settlement of Pemaquid.¹⁴⁹ The English anticipated a move like this and prepared for Iberville's patrol. He took down three ships and acquired their merchandise.¹⁵⁰ He also refused to attack Pemaquid causing tension between him and Frontenac.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 81.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 83.

¹⁴⁹ Reed 84

¹⁵⁰ Bernard Pothier, "LE MOYNE D'IBERVILLE ET D'ARDILLIÈRES, PIERRE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 21, 2019, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_moyne_d_iberville_et_d_ardillieres_pierre_2E.html.

In 1694, Iberville's brother Serigny had orders to attack Fort Nelson and joined Iberville. They left Quebec with three ships: *Poli*, *Salamander*, and *Envieux*.¹⁵¹ They attempted to attack by surprise by wading from the ship in the slushy water. However, the English already knew of their presence and the weeks long battle began. Iberville lost a brother, Chateauguay, but so far, dying at war had become normal in the Le Moyne family.¹⁵² In October, Fort Nelson surrendered after Iberville prepared a heavy attack and gave the fort a summons to surrender.¹⁵³ After multiple failed attempts to conquer all of Hudson Bay, Iberville began to lose interest in taking over Hudson Bay as he continued to get assigned orders that diverged from the final goal. Even though these feelings began to show, Iberville received another order to head an expedition to York in 1694. This fourth attempt to take York ended worse than the others. The English recaptured Albany Fort and gained control of the north, a stressful situation for Iberville who saw his previous work gone.¹⁵⁴ After returning to Quebec, Iberville and others began planning for a 1694 campaign to take over Hudson Bay. This time, to help rekindle interest in the area, Iberville received the vessels and military stores needed by the crown under the condition he shared the loot from this campaign with his men. The crown also granted Iberville a monopoly of all trade as another treat to bribe him with. The directors of the Compagnie du Nord found this irritating since they accused Iberville of getting the monopoly "under false pretenses... and had used their

¹⁵¹ Reed, 86.

¹⁵² Ibid, 89.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 89-90.

¹⁵⁴ Pothier.

funds for the furthering of his own undertaking.”¹⁵⁵ In turn, Iberville blamed them for not providing the enough funds for any expedition including this one, which they only contributed 15,000 livres. Animosity between French and Canadian traders and colonists flared up frequently, especially when money is involved. The expedition started August 10th, 1694. Iberville, in command of the *Poli*, and his brother Joseph, commanding the *Salamandre*, arrived at the mouth of the Hayes River in September. There, the party began preparations for a winter siege of York Fort. By October, they summoned the English to surrender. Henry Kelsey went to settle terms. The next day after negotiations, the English governor Thomas Walsh surrendered given that he neglected to collect firewood for the winter before the French surrounded him.¹⁵⁶ Iberville finally gained Fort York. However, people accused him of violating terms of surrender. Evidence suggested that in order to relieve strain on food supplies, Iberville sent the English garrison, minus Walsh, into the harsh winter wilderness. Even without those men eating supplies, many died of scurvy waiting for the ice to melt. Iberville finally obtained York Fork. Unfortunately, in 1693, the English recaptured the fort and drove out the French from the south bay.

The next military project for Iberville became the conquest of Newfoundland. Newfoundland, being positioned at the crossroads of three ocean currents, provided a very diverse fish population that made England a large profit over the French in the fish market.¹⁵⁷ Iberville, who always looked for a profitable adventure, saw an opportunity. After returning from

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Reed, 97-98.

France in 1696, Iberville ordered preparations to attack English stations on the Atlantic Coast in Newfoundland with a garrison comprised of *coureurs de bois* and began to plot his expedition for September.¹⁵⁸

However, Frontenac grew worried of England's progress in Acadia and ordered an attack on the settlement of Pemaquid. Iberville went as ordered and conquered the fort. He won the naval fight between his ships against two English ships, *Newport* and *Sorling*.¹⁵⁹ Before he reached Pemaquid, Iberville held a feast with the Abenaki nations in order to recruit more men for the battle.¹⁶⁰ He conquered the fort and after fearing of losing it to the English after he left, he burned it to the ground after taking all things valuable. He of course, gave ammunition to the natives who fought with him as their share of the bounty.¹⁶¹

When it was time to begin the expedition on the fisheries, Jacques-François de Monbeton de Brouillon, governor of Placentia, commanded the overall campaign to expel the English. Iberville only commanded the *coureurs de bois* he recruited. These two commanders developed a quarreling relationship with each other. Brouillon did not meet Iberville at the scheduled gathering point at Placentia. Instead he set out ahead of Iberville in hopes of conquering St John on his own and take the bounty for himself.¹⁶² After failing to conquer the fort by sea, Brouillon

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 99.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 100.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 101.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 102.

¹⁶² Ibid, 102.

tried a land pursuit but came face to face with Iberville, who already knew a sea attack would fail and began a land march.¹⁶³

A report stated that the governor's activities during the raid and after ranged from monopolizing trade to confiscation of troops' wages, wine, and other provisions.¹⁶⁴ Even Iberville butted heads with Brouillan. After running into each other on the way to St John, Brouillan wanted to delay the expedition until after winter.¹⁶⁵ But Iberville preferred to fight in the winter since he knew of the advantages of being such a setting in Canada. Luckily, Brouillan allowed Iberville to continue if the Canadian troops were led by Captain des Muys.¹⁶⁶ But after many outcries from the troops who refused to march unless under Iberville, Brouillan gave the command back but remained a pest to Iberville over the bounty from the raids.

The official march against St John began in November. After the fighting the French took St John, gained 62 thousand quintals (100 pounds each) worth of cod, and then burned the city since Iberville saw no reason to keep it.¹⁶⁷ After the conquest Brouillan left. Iberville had no issue with that and continued his winter expedition.

By March of 1697, only two English fishing settlements remained, Bonavista and Carbonear all because Brouillan became a nuisance to Iberville once again.¹⁶⁸ 36 settlements in

¹⁶³ Ibid, 103.

¹⁶⁴ Pothier

¹⁶⁵ Reed, 103.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 104.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 107.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 111.

total were destroyed in this expedition, thus making it the most destructive campaign in Iberville's career. During this expedition, plans to reclaim Hudson Bay started and authorities look to Iberville again. After he left to start this expedition, the English took their fisheries back from the French.

Iberville's brother Serigny arrived from France with a fleet of ships for the expeditions against Hudson Bay: The *Pelican*, *Profound*, *Wasp*, *Palmier*, and the *Esquimaux*.¹⁶⁹ Iberville's ship, the *Pélican*, engaged in a rough battle with three English warships, the *Hampshire*, *Dering*, and *Hudson's Bay*.¹⁷⁰ The success of this mission depended on the survival of the *Pélican* and the ability to prevent English reinforcements from reaching York Fort. The two-and-a-half-hour battle ended with the *Pélican* sinking *Hampshire*, the capture of *Hudson's Bay*, and the retreat of the *Dering*.¹⁷¹ However, the *Pélican* sank from the damage received from *Hampshire's* guns. A dangerous situation as the cold of winter had begun in that early September. All on board abandoned the ship and camped slight south of York Fort. The other French ships arrived and the crew of the *Pélican* boarded the supply ship *Profond*. Five days of fighting later, governor of Hudson Bay, Henry Baley, surrendered to the French. After his swiftest campaign, Iberville left Serigny in charge of Hudson Bay. Thus, ending his career in the northern regions on a good note.

Iberville's exploits in the north showed his military capability to take on colonizing Louisiana. Unlike La Salle, Iberville received military training, grew up in an environment where standard European warfare had a disadvantage compared to the hit-and-run tactics Canadians

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 113.

¹⁷⁰ E. E. Rich, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Treaty of Utrecht", *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 11, no. 2 (1954), 188.

¹⁷¹ Reed, 117-118.

learned from the native nations. These expeditions, though reversed just as quick as they succeeded, makes Iberville look like a more than qualified commander for his next expedition to Louisiana.

King Louis XIV's government became openly expansionist in the 1690s and set its eyes farther south on the Atlantic coastline.¹⁷² A need to extend French interest down the Mississippi and into the Gulf of Mexico grew, especially when they wanted to contain English settlement in a narrow area along the Atlantic. Iberville learned about the pursuit of Louisiana and decided if he could not conquer Hudson Bay, he should spend his effort elsewhere.¹⁷³ Because of his many successful military campaigns in Canada, the minister saw Iberville had plenty of qualification to head this expedition. The orders were to "find the mouth of the Mississippi... select a good site which can be defended with few men, and... block entry to the river by other nations."¹⁷⁴ The plan involved Iberville sailing into the river from the Gulf of Mexico and establish a military base, not a colony, to control trade from the Atlantic up the Mississippi. This plan followed the same idea as La Salle's last expedition. However, this time, Iberville possessed naval knowledge to outmaneuver English and Spanish ships in the area.

Iberville prepared for the journey thoroughly. He acquired as much information about Louisiana as possible. He received information from Tonty and Joutel about their experiences of traveling with La Salle and had a conversation with La Salle himself about the characteristics of

¹⁷² Pothier

¹⁷³ Reed, 135.

¹⁷⁴ Pothier

the river.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately Iberville learned how unreliable this information would be to him. He complained outright how poor the geography looked and deemed the information fiction.¹⁷⁶

The plan so far became this, sailing to San Dominique to resupply and drop off any sick, explore the west of Florida then the rivers of the Gulf. There he will look for any Frenchmen left from La Salle's colonizing attempt to see if they learned any of the native language and then send ships back from there.¹⁷⁷ After contacting the minister about his plans, Iberville received official orders to find the mouth of the river and choose a place to establish a colony.¹⁷⁸

The expedition started late October of 1698. Iberville, his brother Jean-Baptist Le Moyné du Bienville, and 300 other colonists sailed to Saint Dominique, then north to Florida, then west along the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico till they reached the Mississippi like planned.¹⁷⁹ After being pushed by a storm in March of 1699, the expedition reached the Birdfoot sub-delta of the Mississippi. Iberville arrived and needed to make sure this was in fact the mouth of the Mississippi. The Spanish named the region as the Palisades and the natives called it the Malbancia.¹⁸⁰ Tonty, who went with the expedition in hopes to find La Salle or at least discover

¹⁷⁵ Reed, 137.

¹⁷⁶ Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 37.

¹⁷⁷ Reed, 138-139.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 139.

¹⁷⁹ Clark Robenstine, "French Colonial Policy and the Education of Women and Minorities: Louisiana in the Early Eighteenth Century", *History of Education Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (1992), 195.

¹⁸⁰ Reed, 160.

his fate, could not fully recognize the river since it was flooding more than when he visited it last.¹⁸¹

In order to make sure he found the Mississippi, Iberville sailed further into the river to search for more signs he succeeded in the first part of his mission.¹⁸² This also gave him the chance to experience the moody river himself with the abundance of logs and tree roots hidden in the rapid muddy waters. His little brother, Bienville, also went up the river to inspect the environment. The Lower Mississippi comprised of ever shifting sand bars, extensive foreign wildlife, and natives very different from Canada. Iberville even remarked on the substantial difference, mostly stating how they lacked in physique to the northern nations.¹⁸³ After many days of exploring the alien environment and meeting with many different native nations, the expedition party met with the Ouachas and the Mougoulachas who remembered Tonty and processed a letter written by him for La Salle.¹⁸⁴

The French established Fort Maurepas situated between the mouth of the Mississippi and the Spanish settlement of Pensacola in Biloxi Bay.¹⁸⁵ This mission went smoother thanks to Iberville's eye for detail in his planning and gathered as much information as he could about the

¹⁸¹ Reed, 161.

¹⁸² Ibid, 162.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 168.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 166.

¹⁸⁵ Richard Campanella, *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2008), 105.

region beforehand. May of 1699, Iberville left for France having 70 men, including his brother Bienville, stay behind.¹⁸⁶

In France, Iberville received the cross of the order of Saint-Louis, the first time a Canadian received this award.¹⁸⁷ Afterwards, he heavily pushed for official colonization of Louisiana. The main reason pertained to the important military advantage having control of the mouth of the Mississippi and hindering English expansion out of the Carolinas. Unfortunately for Iberville, financing for large projects as this became sparse. Also, the minister feared insulting the Spanish by making a colony in territory the Spaniards laid claim to. Luckily, Pontchartrain approved financing for another exploratory voyage in October to survey English intention in the area and covertly hinder their expansion. He also gave orders to Iberville to begin trade at Biloxi and experiment with silk production in the region.¹⁸⁸

Iberville knew that making alliances with the natives in this new swampland would determine life or death. Historian Patricia Dillon Woods came to this conclusion when she wrote *French-Indian Relations on the Southern Frontier*. Iberville and his expedition contacted the three important nations of the region, the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and the Natchez.

Iberville returned to Biloxi January of 1700 with women and supplies to start his own colony.¹⁸⁹ He began his mission of forming alliances with native nations in the area to fight

¹⁸⁶ Reed, 179.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 184.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Pothier

against the English in the Carolinas, one of the smaller nations being the Tensas.¹⁹⁰ By April, Iberville got a hand in Choctaw relations and learned their language which would be very important later in the colony when conflict instigated by France and England would arise between native groups.¹⁹¹ The Choctaw already encountered white men when Hernando de Soto rampaged through the area. However, the native population declined greatly after that first encounter. Scholars estimated that populations decreased by 80%.¹⁹² Even so, the Choctaws were by far the largest nation and Iberville saw them as important allies for the future of the colony. He sent M. de Sauvel that spring of 1700 to find representatives to meet with and start making negotiations.¹⁹³ He returned with two Choctaw natives who told Iberville of the war their nation had with ones being supplied muskets by the English. Tonty would later tell Iberville that the rival nation to the Choctaw was the Chickasaw.¹⁹⁴ Iberville sent the two back to their home with presents for their leader. Iberville knew providing a constant supply of European goods to natives ensured stability and even safety of the colony.

By the end of May, Iberville left Biloxi for France but not before stopping by New York where he supposedly unloaded 9,000 pelts that he bought from Canadian trappers who took them to Iberville in Louisiana instead of traveling to Montreal.¹⁹⁵ This of course started conflict with

¹⁹⁰ Reed, 192.

¹⁹¹ Patricia Dillon Woods, *French-Indian Relations on the Southern Frontier 1699-1762* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1980), 1.

¹⁹² Ibid, 2.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 5.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Pothier

traders in Canada who wanted to keep a monopoly in fur. But, thanks to a new colonial policy, *coureurs de bois* and natives were encouraged to trade in Louisiana so that English traders were pushed out of the area. Iberville spent August 1700 to September 1701 advocating for this plan with Pontchartrian back in France.

During this, Louis XIV's grandson Philippe d'Anjou became king of Spain. This made Iberville hopeful for a Franco-Spanish alliance and allow a joint use of Pensacola. But that plan failed. As a back-up, Iberville promoted a plan to make a naval base at Mobile to be the center of French influence in the Gulf of Mexico. The crown authorized a third expedition to make the fort at Mobile and approved an active native policy created by Iberville to protect the Mississippi from the threat of English expansion. Pontchartrain even granted him 24,774 livres for native goods and 8,000 livres to upgrade his forts.¹⁹⁶ He left La Rochelle with three vessels and established a fort at Mobile named Fort Saint-Louis.

Iberville began his plan to establish peace between the Choctaws and their rivals in January of 1701. He sent Tonty, who already experienced the region when he explored it with La Salle back in 1682. His mission succeeded quickly as by March he traveled back with seven Choctaw chiefs and three Chickasaw chiefs who Iberville showered with gifts and sent a boy back with the Chickasaw to learn their language and customs.¹⁹⁷ The goal became to ensure the French traded in a peaceful environment with as many native alliances as possible.

Unfortunately, while Iberville tried to make peace in Louisiana, France involved itself in the War of Spanish Succession. This war drew away funding from Louisiana. They desperately

¹⁹⁶ Woods, 6.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 7.

needed funding as trade goods were vital in any kind of negotiation in the native environment. But Iberville's report gave France the impression that they were doing just fine. He wrote that the natives along the Mobile River provided the colonists with plenty of corn.¹⁹⁸ Iberville still made trips to France despite his health beginning to deteriorate. His compromised health along with the delay of funding from France delayed important cargo ships, *Pelican* and *Renommé*, to Louisiana.¹⁹⁹

Luckily his brother Bienville remained in the area to deal with the growing hostility between the Choctaw and Chickasaw. When a French representative visited the Choctaw when they requested, they made the accusation that the boy Iberville sent was murdered by the Chickasaw.²⁰⁰ The other nation wanted to prove their innocence and offered to retrieve the child and give hostages of their own people in good faith.²⁰¹ They never returned and Bienville agreed to the killing of the Chickasaw hostages.²⁰²

Iberville and his brother Bienville proved to be valuable assets to the colony thanks to their expertise in native relations. However, despite their positive contributions, they eventually become part of a scandal. Iberville, along with Bienville, get accused of profiteering and theft by missionaries and Nicolas de La Salle, the commissaire in charge of all the king's warehouses.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 7-8

²⁰² Ibid, 8.

²⁰³ Ibid, 9.

Even Pontchartrain received word that Iberville participated in illegal activities with many merchants in the area.²⁰⁴ These accusations ceased to matter for Iberville when he dies of Yellow Fever in Havana in 1706.

Iberville's colony would remain rocky as conflict between colonizers would continue. The region lacked interested settlers, especially given the environment being humid, swampy, and constantly flooding. But as an unofficial base for missionaries, traders, and explorers, Louisiana had a consistent French presence. Native diplomacy became Iberville's major contribution to the development. In lines with this upbringing in beaver country, he believed that strong alliances with native nations helped the settlement more than strong military forts and armies. Thus, he aimed to make an alliance with all Native nations from the Appalachia to the Mississippi. It doubled as a set trading environment while also making a force against English expansion westward. Missionaries, who Iberville placed in key native villages, worked as representatives for the French than religious teachers for natives. Henri Tonty, La Salle's old lieutenant, assisted in the establishment of Iberville's native program.²⁰⁵ Along with his experience in the area, he used his influence on reconciling of the hostile nations in order to promote a common front against the English.

Iberville had many plans for this future colony. However, his deteriorating health, the restricted financing, the disarray of French shipping, and the War of the Spanish Succession thwarted his plans. Even while contracting malaria multiple times, Iberville maintained his interest. He kept a record of journals and revised them as he continued to finetune his plot for

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Pothier

French expansion in the Americas. His constant illness made his plans more fanciful than practical.

Despite his weakening health in 1705, Iberville began preparations for an important armament he did not anticipate receiving given the War of Spanish Succession taking up most of Europe's resources. He took 12 vessels to sail to the West Indies in order to harass the English in the area, a task Iberville knew very well.²⁰⁶ When he arrived at Martinique in March of 1706, the commander Comte de Chavagnac attacked the settlements of Nevis and Chavagnac. He destroyed them mercilessly which also put the other English settlements on high alert. This hindered Iberville's overall plan in the area. Especially his plans to attack Jamaica, who's defenses at this point only made a surprise attack feasible.

For Iberville's last campaign, he sailed from Martinique to Guadeloupe. He disposed his force of 2000, consisting of regular troops, colonial militia, Canadians, and West Indian buccaneers.²⁰⁷ April 1st, the campaign disembarked at Charlestown, the capital of Nevis. One battle ended with the French winning. Iberville's merciless streak kept strong as he took the entire population prisoner. He also captured 24 English vessels in the harbor and seized the plantations, merchandise, official papers, and buildings in the colony.²⁰⁸ By the time he left Nevis, Iberville's ruthless looting destroyed the garden of the Caribbean. This became his last campaign before his quick death somewhere near Havana.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Iberville's expedition gave him a military base and the beginnings of a colony. With his military training, Iberville commanded the soldiers and volunteers with more stable authority than La Salle. He also used his skills in conquering English ports in his strategizing of the settlement. The amount of looting he did in the Caribbean displayed the potential for personal gain in the area which encouraged others. He also showed the colonists how to establish trading relationships in the local economy. La Salle's inaccurate plans and maps convinced financiers to give him money for his expedition. While Iberville used those plans but thanks to his caution for detail, second-guessed them and arranged new strategies for his colony. His reliance on his military training and personal experience in surviving in the Americas proved to be more successful than La Salle's attempts at finding glory. His upbringing in Canada raised him to be flexible in a new economic environment and blend his knowledge of French and Canadian economies. He and his brother prepared to start trading which began the economic creolization and a new Louisianan economy blossomed.

CHAPTER 4

THE CLASH OF COLONISTS

Even with Iberville's success at getting the colony started with his skills in maneuvering in native economics, the French common folk found it difficult to call the swamps of the Lower Mississippi home. The humid climate, poor agriculture quality, dangerous wildlife, and disease deterred settlers from wanting to invest their money and the rest of their lives in Louisiana. There were many native groups in the area and relationships with them tipped the scale of success either direction depending on who ran the colony and their economic decisions. The most influential relationships in the matter of colonial stability were with the Choctaw and Natchez. The latter being the rockiest and most stressed of the two in the early stages of the colony. However, all the leaders of this settlement knew the military and financial importance in keeping this precious vantage point away from their English and Spanish enemies. Whoever controlled the mouth of the Mississippi had power over most trade entering North America from the Caribbean. But even with this important fact, colonists fought over how the colony should function and the most heated arguments occurred between Canadians and Frenchmen.

The Le Moyne brothers led an expedition to survey and settle the mouth of the river. Jean-Baptist le Moyne du Bienville along with his brother Iberville created the colony of Louisiana after La Salle's failed attempt. Bienville remained in the area, after Iberville left to find more funding. Iberville died in Havana, leaving Bienville to run the colony. Bienville worked hard to make alliances with native nations to give the French settlers the best chance with trade. It proved to be difficult since multiple conflicts already occupied the area. Mostly driven by the Chickasaw and their alliance with South Carolina, profits from the enslavement of

natives agitated the region into violence.²⁰⁹ The economic goals of Europe began to change the local economic environment. Bienville pushed further to make French economics blend into the economies of Louisiana in order to conquer the region. He fully participated in economic creolization, the mixing of economic practices which in turn creates a new economic environment all together. His financial tactics worked himself up the ranks to King's Lieutenant. Daniel Usner in his book *American Indians in Early New Orleans: from Calumet to Raquette* acknowledged the importance of trade with native groups in the area and how the survival and growth of France's empire in the region depended on native food.²¹⁰ The French needed to use the local food trade in order to stabilize themselves to begin their own economy.

However, in 1710, two people came to run the colony and caused a skirmish that showed differences between Canadians, who willingly blended into the native environment, and the French who remained stubborn to their European ways. Antoine Laumet de La Mothe Cadillac, founder of Detroit, arrived in Louisiana in 1713 as its new governor. Historian Shannon Lee Dawdy acknowledged Cadillac as one of the experimenters of colonialism that proved Louisiana to be a unique colony.²¹¹ The region became unique with its value in military strategy and the overall control of trade from the Caribbean into North America via Mississippi. However, the colony became expensive. Richard Campanella stated the French government had to privatize the region due to its drain on government energy.²¹² Cadillac's reputation of corruption made

²⁰⁹ Daniel H. Usner, *American Indians in Early Calumet to Raquette* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 3.

²¹⁰ Usner, 9.

²¹¹ Dawdy, 233.

²¹² Campanella, 108.

Louis Phélypeaux, comte de Pontchartrain who oversaw all of France's colonies, move him from Detroit to Louisiana. Pontchartrain sent a new Commissary General, Jean-Baptiste Du Bois Duclos. Duclos had a small part in the secondary sources but from further research, he seemed to have had a larger role than previous historians have acknowledged. Duclos oversaw everything financial in the colony, an important job and key to understanding the development of the economic environment Bienville created. Now Cadillac and Duclos needed to interact with this new economy. Duclos and Bienville had similar thoughts and plans about the colony. Duclos gave intense advice to his superiors to invest in gifts to natives just as Bienville would.²¹³ They were willing to work together to make a profitable and livable colony through diplomacy and budget planning. However, Cadillac's ideas went in his own direction. He arrived at the colony already with negative opinions of the territory.²¹⁴ Cadillac only concerned himself with making money his own special way, manipulating prices and hoarding fort supplies. In the three years Cadillac and Duclos were in Louisiana, evidence showed that tensions between the three men derived from their different priorities and how they handled the fragile infant economy of Louisiana.

Philomena Hauck wrote about this short part of Louisiana's history in *Bienville: Father of Louisiana*. Hauck wrote a biography that covered the life and history of Bienville from his childhood, to his death. There were multiple situations where Bienville had difficult times getting along with other officials. The relationship with Cadillac spanned through multiple chapters of Hauck's book. Hauck also found that Cadillac had an undesirable reputation since he

²¹³ Marcel Giraud, *A History of French Louisiana Volume Two: Years of Transitions, 1715-1717*, trans. By Brian Pearce (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 53.

²¹⁴. Giraud, 24.

concluded Cadillac had to be removed from Detroit or else, he would have destroyed a valuable trade port.²¹⁵ He mentioned how Cadillac and Bienville did not agree on how to handle native diplomacy. However, it still felt like something else needed to be mentioned about their relationship and what drove them to dislike each other. It proved important to check both sides if the feelings were mutual in the case of disagreements and if there were any other root causes.

Yves F. Zoltvany wrote a small biography of Cadillac for the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. All the entries for this collection were available online. Cadillac's entry had a short segment covering his time in Louisiana. But it did say that there were many quarrels where Cadillac intentionally hindered Bienville's job. Also, Zoltvany mentioned Duclos' opinion of Cadillac where he called him a blatant liar.²¹⁶ The short segment in this biography confirmed my curiosity of these men. However, the single paragraph covering Louisiana only gave me a glimpse into how troubling Cadillac's time was.

Henry D. Brown wrote a biography of Cadillac that included quotes from letters and journals. Cadillac had a hard time handling the affairs between the colony and the different native nations. He mainly came to the colony to make a profit as stated in his writing about Crozat's intentions, "M. Crozat is not alone in his Louisiana venture. Following your wishes, I have enthralled him and his colleagues with the commercial value of that region; I have regaled

²¹⁵ Philomena Hauck, *Bienville: Father of Louisiana* (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1998), 55.

²¹⁶ Yves F. Zoltvany, "LAUMET, de Lamothe Cadillac, ANTOINE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed May 8, 2018, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/laumet_antoine_2E.html.

him with stories of the immense riches of Louisiana with its gold and silver.”²¹⁷ Gold and silver lacked in the region as Louisiana’s primary trade at the time consisted of lumber and pelts. Cadillac convinced Crozat with faulty information. In the end, financing grew difficult because trade with Spain became more restricted due to the rivalry in Europe.

With the lack of further information about why they fought in the biographies, letters Bienville and Cadillac wrote during their time together provided the emotional information to analyze their conflict. *The Mississippi Provincial Archives* contained translated letters and reports about the Louisiana colony during French rule. Dunbar Rowland, LL.D. and A. G. Sanders, M.A. translated and sorted these documents in 1927. The translations read correctly, and their footnotes include any other writing found on the documents, i.e. any extra notes written in the margins of a document. If the French was hard to translate, they would write in the footnotes the original text just in case their translation seemed off. This archive provided the scenarios and dialogue to show how much Bienville, Cadillac, and Duclos fought for their vision of a successful Louisiana.

Out of all the three, Duclos wrote with the most professionalism in the letters provided by the archive. From his letters, his concerns had close ties to his duties as Commissary General. Duclos concerned himself with issues of trade and profit for the colony. His writings to Pontchartrain had a business formality. His opinions about Bienville and Cadillac did show up but always in the context of any transactions or status of the colony.

²¹⁷ Henry D. Brown, *Cadillac and the Founding of Detroit: Commemorating the Two Hundred and Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the City of Detroit By Antoine Laumet De Lamothe Cadillac On July 24, 1701* (Detroit: Published for the Detroit Historical Society by Wayne State University Press, 1976), 71.

In 1713, Duclos wrote about his first impressions of Cadillac and Louisiana. The letter discussed financial status and suggested a plan to improve it. Cadillac's behavior involved the profit of trade goods so Duclos had to report it to his superiors. Cadillac did not start off on the right foot with the Louisianan locals. According to this extensive first report of the colony from Duclos to Pontchartrain, Cadillac had personally interfered with the local trade, hindering a collective profit. An incident occurred of Cadillac manipulating the movement of exports to the point he determined the prices. Much of the trade profits came from selling planks and fur. However, when Cadillac arrived from his extended trip from Detroit, he fully restrained the trade strictly to the Company of the West, which was already law, but people kept trading outside the company in order to keep profits afloat. It was not enforced until Cadillac arrived, stopping the trade of planks to Pensacola.²¹⁸ Duclos went into detail describing how Cadillac lied to the inhabitants who went into the country for fur, about fur prices. Cadillac agreed with the prices of 3 livres per bear skin and 24 sous per deer skin, which was the price needed to make enough to live in the colony.²¹⁹ But Cadillac played around with information he received about previous trades. He learned that a trader sold his bear skins for 30 sous each because, according to Duclos, he was impatient and knew he was getting more furs later.²²⁰ But, Cadillac only listened to the price part of that encounter. He told the fur traders after this deal that the pelts he inspected were of poor quality and that they were lucky to get 40 sous when the previously

²¹⁸ Duclos to Pontchartrain, October 25, 1713, in Dunbar Rowland and Albert G. Sanders, eds. *Mississippi Provincial Archives, Vol.2, 1701-1719, French Dominion* (Jackson, Miss., 1927), 84. Hereinafter cited *MPA*.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

mentioned trader got 30.²²¹ This case showed how Cadillac manipulated situations, according to Duclos' interpretation, when he wanted to make his own profit. Duclos tried to show Cadillac this was wrong, but Cadillac got what he wanted since the traders were getting impatient and sold their goods anyway. Having an outsider swindling them, the fur trappers found Cadillac a poor fit for their economy.

With this incident in mind, Duclos wrote stern comments about Cadillac.

“as long as Mr. De La Mothe Cadillac is governor and consequently master of country and at the same time with interests and the head of company no matter what orders the court may give on this subject none will be executed, that he is too clever to oppose them openly but that he is cunning enough, while appearing absolutely to wish to have them executed, to cause in an underhanded manner so many difficulties for their execution that they will become impossible, and even to set secretly so many snares for those who are invested with the authority of the King to have charge of them that he will make it impossible to do so...”²²²

This passage was part of Duclos's assessment of the colony's financial future. Duclos believed there were many potentials available. However, as evident from the passage, Cadillac was an obvious obstacle. Duclos showed Cadillac had the reputation of manipulating the system to favor his own business while ignoring the delicate relationships between officials and fur trappers. Cadillac's conflict of interest with the company and personal gain became an obvious threat to the colony. Duclos had to acknowledge Cadillac's ability of trickery and manipulation. Duclos saw it as his duty to report that Cadillac can and will get in the way of the colony's growth. To have this kind of doubt in the first couple of months, Duclos' job became difficult from the start.

Duclos reported his lack of trust in Cadillac.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Duclos to Pontchartrain, Oct 25, 1713, *MPA* 2:94.

“But I shall declare here frankly a thing that I am very careful not to admit to any one and of which, however, I am only too well convinced, and that is that Mr. De La Mothe Cadillac is both the most selfish and the most cunning man in the world and that it would be in fact very difficult for a man upright enough not to bend to his wishes and at the same time clever enough not to be dominated by him, to remain long in the colony.”²²³

Duclos admitted to Pontchartrain anyone involved was going to have a difficult time working with Cadillac. Cadillac manipulated what he had access to, be it supply routes or even people working under him. Duclos had to mention that other people in the colony would not keep up with Cadillac’s cunning ideas. If Cadillac could manipulate enough people, he would be able to get away with almost anything in the colony, causing unproductive chaos. That kind of person would hinder the colony’s financial standing and would ruin what Duclos had planned to save the colony. With the incident of the fur prices being manipulated, Duclos and Cadillac’s relationship began with a rocky start.

Duclos’ relationship with Bienville was different. Duclos had a lot of trust in Bienville’s capabilities as a native diplomat for the colony.

“He (Bienville) possesses more than any person in the world the art of governing the Indians and doing what he wishes with them and because of the fact that he understands and speaks their language perfectly.”²²⁴

Duclos understood the importance of native relations when it concerned the success of the colony. He made sure to understand what it took to keep the trade routes safe for travel. He described how Bienville usually conducted his diplomatic missions with the natives. Bienville always sent a boy to live in the tribe.²²⁵ This tactic had been seen before in the case of

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid., 119.

²²⁵ Ibid., 126.

developing understandings of a native culture with Jesuit missions. Bienville was also one to work with a gift exchange relationship, the one preferred by the native nations. Overall, Duclos did agree with Bienville in a peaceful tactic first.

“...three things contribute to conciliating the Indians, to wit: the presents that are given them, the justice that is done them and even more the food that one must not let them lack when they come on visits, together with caresses and evidences of friendship to the extent to which it is necessary to give them to an Indian.”²²⁶

The tactics Duclos described match what Bienville had been doing over the years. Bienville had this job down to such a science that he was able to describe his process to Duclos, so he could consider it in his plans about the colony budget. This showed how the two cooperated with each other in cases of provisions specifically for trade with native nations. This passage showed that Duclos was serious in his analysis and critique of the processes in Louisiana.

At the end of Duclos' stay in Louisiana, 1716, he would write one last business report involving a situation with the Natchez instigated by Cadillac and resolved by Bienville. Duclos and many others reported upon agreed that Bienville did what was needed.

Before Duclos and Cadillac, Bienville had been in the colony for over a decade, working on native relations and making the land sustainable for the French lifestyle. To achieve his requirements of a successful colony, he stepped on a couple toes like Nicolas de La Salle, the first Commissary General of the colony who started an investigation of Bienville regarding relocation and pocketing of colony funds. Bienville disagreed with many financial and political ideas other people tried to do in Louisiana. Because of this reputation, Bienville was put on orders from Pontchartrain, both Bienville and Cadillac's superior in a letter from 1712, to try to follow Cadillac, give him any information, and to acquaint him with the colony and government.

²²⁶ Ibid., 128.

“I have explained his Majesty’s intention to him (Cadillac) about everything that is contained in your letter that has reference to the service I shall not repeat them to you and I shall content myself with recommending to you to give Mr. de Lamothe all the information that he may need, to make him acquainted with what concerns the government and the colony and to live in harmony and on good terms with him and Sieur Duclos, the commissary general. I am convinced that they will contribute to it on their part.”²²⁷

Pontchartrain seemed to predict that there would be tensions between Bienville and the new governor and commissary general. He was half correct. Over the years, Bienville would write extremely negative opinions about Cadillac. Bienville tried to restrain himself in the beginning since this letter from Pontchartrain sternly suggested cooperation with his new superior. This can be seen in letters from Bienville to Pontchartrain throughout 1713 to 1716 in which Bienville states he tried to follow Cadillac’s orders on time even though there were multiple difficulties.

But Bienville eventually wrote unforgiving critiques of the new governor that correlated to the defense of the colony. In the case of establishing a new fort called Fort Rosalie, there were tensions about if the fort should have been built. Cadillac’s feigned attempt at native diplomacy caused turbulence in the French-native relations on the Mississippi River. The first example was when Cadillac left Louisiana without word or instruction until a letter arrived stating that he was off looking for mines in the Illinois territory in 1715. Bienville saw this a chance to fix all the native alliances that had been ruined because of Cadillac. He wrote to Pontchartrain in a letter from 1715 that Cadillac made a bad reception with them and that the natives would not work with the French if he remained.

“I am convinced, my lord, that you will not disapprove at all of my having used my name for the success of this business which I did not only after having been well advised by all the officers, knowing that all the nations had received the English

²²⁷ Pontchartrain to Bienville, December 21, 1712, *MPA*, 3:173.

among them only because of the bad reception that Mr. de Lamothe had given them and that they had declared that they did not wish any longer to have anything to do with the French as long as Mr. de Lamothe was here and that they gave assurance that they were ready to drive the English away from among them if they still were to deal with me.”²²⁸

Bienville’s complaints that he was not getting the resources he needed for missions from Cadillac showed a source of frustration between the two. The English seemed to have taken advantage of the ruined relationships between the French and the native on the Mississippi River. Along with the English causing problems, Bienville believed that Cadillac was out to thwart him in his missions.²²⁹ Bienville’s entire career, which was most of his life since he started in his teenage years in Louisiana, had been involved with planning and moving around native relations to keep the colony running. Having someone arrive and ruin what he worked hard on would make for a strained relationship. A source of tension between the two originated from the quarrel over native relationships.

Evidence of Cadillac’s block of Bienville’s plans to reinforce forts with what he believed to be the right amount of staff, which were to keep the native relations under check, can be found in the case of establishing Fort in the Illinois area. It seemed the situation with Cadillac frustrated Bienville throughout the whole ordeal. In Bienville’s letter to Pontchartrain of January 2, 1716, he had a long list of reasons why his job became difficult when Cadillac arrived. With the situation of Fort Rosalie, Bienville wrote his frustrations with Cadillac.

“There is nobody here who thinks that I shall be able to succeed in building even the fort, but as I have great influence over the minds of the Indians and as I make them do what I wish I hope that I shall succeed in it; at least I shall take the liberty of assuring your Lordship that I shall do absolutely everything that is in my power, and although Mr., de Lamothe had a decision made by a council for the

²²⁸ Bienville to Pontchartrain, September 1, 1715, *MPA* 3:187.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 186.

establishment of the post Rosalie in preference to the two others and thereby one might judge that he has a real intention to establish it sooner than any others; nevertheless with the sole purpose of causing me trouble he has made in fact and taken all sorts of indirect measures to make it impossible for me to be able to succeed in it to the extent of giving verbal orders to the captains to furnish me with the worst soldiers as I have said above, and to try to persuade me and everybody that it was useless to build a fort there.”²³⁰

The reputation between the French and the Natives got worse with Cadillac around.

Cadillac would only finance for interpreters that worked for him, not anyone else. When Bienville requested soldiers, he got fewer than he requested, and they were undertrained as well. He also received no workers to help build forts. All of this made Bienville believe Cadillac had animosity for Bienville. Bienville wrote to Pontchartrain:

“...I am convinced that your intention was not, my lord, in sending Mr. de Lamothe here as governor to put him in a position to be able to insult with impunity all the honorable people who are so unfortunate as to serve under his government.”²³¹

The amount of anger towards Cadillac from Bienville was evident. Cadillac’s behavior was intrusive to Bienville’s job, native diplomacy, which even Cadillac said he was the best for. Since it directly involved his work, Bienville felt that he needed to complain to Pontchartrain about this behavior. The passage which best indicates Bienville’s insulted feelings involved name calling from Cadillac.

“I should be too tedious and I should fear that I should fatigue your Lordship if I reported all the conduct that he has observed in regard to me since he has been here and all the trouble and annoyance that he has caused me to the extent of sending me word recently by the adjutant major and on his behalf that I was a simpleton and a conceited fool in those very words. That is the sort of speech for which it is, as you know, my lord, disgraceful for a man of honor not to get vengeance.”²³²

²³⁰ Bienville to Pontchartrain, January 2, 1716, *MPA*, 3:195.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 196.

²³² *Ibid.*, 195.

Bienville was completely insulted by Cadillac. Bienville tolerating these insults meant he was trying his best to work with Cadillac, but Bienville had to report this behavior. A duel between the two should have happened but from the sources, there is no evidence that they did. Maybe the two had another heated discussion about these insults.

Either way, Bienville wrote more freely about his frustration with Cadillac in a letter to Antoine-Denis Raudot, which would find its way to the Navy Council in 1716. Bienville wrote to someone that did not give him a direct order to get along with Cadillac like Pontchartrain did. In the letter, it seemed that Cadillac continued to refuse Bienville the correct number of soldiers he deemed fit for missions. Bienville wrote that Cadillac wanted to arrest him for not leaving on time for a mission even though there were issues with pirogues and oars.²³³ This type of arrest correlated with previous behavior from Cadillac to impede progress in missions he did not want to succeed. This attempted at punishment to further delay departure angered Bienville more. Bienville believed that Cadillac had no right to punish him like a corporal. Bienville became tired of Cadillac ordering and punishing him beyond what was allowed. Bienville endured three years of Cadillac's behavior before Cadillac was ordered to leave the colony.

Cadillac, like Duclos, wrote a letter giving his first impressions of the colony and what he plans to do with it. He was not impressed with the colony when he arrived in June 1713.

“According to the proverb ‘Bad country, bad people’ one can say that they are a heap of the dregs of Canada, jailbirds without subordination for religion and for government, addicted to vice principally with the Indian women whom they prefer to French women.”²³⁴

²³³ Bienville to Raudot, January 20, 1716, *MPA*, 3:199.

²³⁴ Lamothe Cadillac to Pontchartrain, October 26, 1713, *MPA*, 2:167.

Cadillac's negative feelings about the colony are present in this single sentence. The phrase "bad country, bad people" refers to Cadillac's opinion of how disgusting Louisiana was to him. The humid climate and lack of resources was nothing like Detroit or France. Cadillac was not afraid to show how unhappy he was at being ordered to govern this colony. "Dregs of Canada" meant he had negative opinions about Canadians. He believed that the worse Canadians came to the colony and Bienville was Canadian. Cadillac involved Bienville in his opinions over religion in Louisiana. In the same letter Cadillac wrote about how the soldiers have not attended the sacraments for years even at Easter because of Bienville and other officers.²³⁵ Cadillac's blame of the officers for being bad influences adds more proof to his negative feelings about Louisiana. Especially when he mentioned the affairs with native women. Cadillac was a proper Frenchman, so he thought poorly of the natives. Seeing other Frenchmen have sexual relationships with natives repulsed him. Making this comment showed how he refused to associate with the colonists, that he was a proper Frenchman.

However, he did make plans involving native diplomacy since it could not be avoided. "My principal has never been to propose first a general peace to all nations that were making war on each other."²³⁶ This could be a jab at Bienville who practiced this tactic to make sure there is a sustainable trade system. Cadillac stated a critique of Bienville only following the demands of one native nation, leaving out the intention of several others who desire peace because they serve as a shield for those against it.²³⁷ This statement did

²³⁵ Ibid., 182.

²³⁶ Ibid., 173.

²³⁷ Ibid.

not get backed up with Duclos' observation since Bienville did work with other nations.

Along with this critique, Cadillac gave this vague statement.

“When one is 56 years old and has served for a certain number of years one considers things a little better than when one is only 30 years old and has served only in a port of on a ship where one has only to give orders without being troubled about the results and the outcome.”²³⁸

This comment had to be about Bienville. Bienville was 33 at the time Cadillac wrote this comment and Bienville mostly worked through the Navy. Since this sounds like an incriminating statement, Cadillac left it vague on purpose so that he couldn't instigate a challenge from Bienville. The letters could be accessed by anyone and reported back.

Cadillac made clear what he thought caused the moral decay of the colony. In his letter, he observed that “the majority (of the soldiers) have not attended the sacraments for seven or eight years. The soldiers have not taken sacrament at Easter at all following the example of Mr. De Bienville...”²³⁹ Cadillac was a proud civilized Frenchman and being a Frenchman meant that religion was an important part of life. Not properly participating in religion meant that they were not participating in the French lifestyle.

Regarding official business of the colony, Cadillac wrote “during my severe illness, having left the care of my government to Mr. De Bienville, during that time the Acolapissa who are on the bank of the Mississippi killed the Natchitoches which is a nation that had settled down among them...”²⁴⁰ Cadillac referred to this incident involving native affairs as a means to harm Bienville's reputation in that area. However, Cadillac states later in the

²³⁸ Ibid., 182.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 203.

same letter that Bienville needs to stay as commander of Biloxi because of his skills with native diplomacy and language. That the situation with the warring tribes could be a task suitable for Bienville.²⁴¹ Cadillac was willing to compliment Bienville if it meant sending him to do a job he did not want to do. It was Bienville's specialty in handling diplomacy but Cadillac as governor should also know how to handle these types of situations.

Cadillac continued to boast about his own success and plans. He had a habit of saying that if a plan failed, it was not his fault. He planned to make peace with the Alabamas nation in the autumn of 1713, but he wrote in the margins,

“Since my letter has been written the commissary has changed the destination of the funds assigned for the Indians without giving me any knowledge of it. I do not think that he can or that he ought to do so; thus I cannot make peace with our enemies or show consideration to our friends.”²⁴²

If it failed, it was because of Duclos' failed management of the funds of the colony, his job. Cadillac still wanted to portray himself as a successful governor in the eyes of Pontchartrain and putting the blame on others was an easy tactic to do so.

In another case, anger between Cadillac and Bienville got written down with dialogue. The document with the dialogue was a letter from Cadillac to Pontchartrain in 1714. Cadillac wanted to show how disobedient Bienville was. The two had been arguing about the details of a letter and Bienville contradicted and got arrested for it. Cadillac documented Bienville's mocking tone as he was being put under house arrest.

Bienville: “You told Mr. Le Bart (a man accused of writing a letter describing another quarrel Cadillac participated in) that I had told you that it was he who wrote the letter to Mr. Duclos which involved you in a quarrel with each other.”

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid., 172.

Cadillac: “Yes, you told me that.”
 B: “No, I did not tell you that.”
 C: “Yes, indeed you told me that and I am not inventing it.”
 B: “I did not tell you that at all.”
 C: “How are you speaking to me, Sir?”
 B: “I am speaking very well, but you are the one who is speaking badly.”
 C: “What, by gosh, I am speaking badly! You are an impertinent fellow and I order you to keep silence.”
 B: “I care very little and I am very little embarrassed that you should order me to keep silence.”
 C: “Go away under arrest immediately.”
 B: “Yes, under arrest I shall not go.”
 C: “We shall see about that.” Cadillac speaks to his son: “Go and tell the major to come.”
 While he went for him Bienville said: “Where do you wish me to go under arrest.”
 C: “To your house, sir.”
 B: “That is good enough.” Bienville in a bantering tone: “It is still too early.” In the meanwhile, the major having arrived.
 B: “There is the major, sir. What do you wish to do about it?” That was said in a mocking tone.
 C: “Sir, take Mr. De Bienville to his house under arrest.”
 B: “So much the better. That will refresh me if I am there long for we are now in the hot season.”²⁴³

This argument happened in the early stages of Cadillac’s governorship. The two were already quarreling with each other even though Pontchartrain made it clear that everyone was supposed to get along. What’s written here seemed like a petty argument that left Bienville looking like a disrespecting underling. Cadillac had the right to punish Bienville for speaking this this manner. However, Bienville was also in the right to not tolerate Cadillac saying he reported a letter written when he felt like he did not. It’s not sure to know who was right but the emotions were there. Bienville felt that Cadillac lied about him and he did not want to tolerate this type of behavior from a superior. Cadillac still had a righteous sense of superiority that Bienville was encroaching on. Cadillac might

²⁴³ Cadillac to Pontchartrain, May 16, 1714, *MPA*, 3:178-180.

have been overreaching with his powers as governor, but he was still governor. This argument was an excellent example to show how both parties struggled against each other when it came to who could do what. Being separated from any other larger authority left them with the only option of reporting incidents like these after they happen. It did seem that this argument over who said what in another's report showed that both parties were worried about Pontchartrain. Cadillac was mad that someone reported a fight involving him. And Cadillac was more than willing to report a case of Bienville being the instigator in this scene.

The relationship of Bienville, Cadillac, and Duclos was short. Cadillac was governor of Louisiana till 1716 when he was removed by Pontchartrain for the stagnation of the colony's progress and replaced with Jean-Michel De l'Epinay. Three years these men fought with each other enough that their professional letters couldn't hide it. But, shortly after, l'Epinay transferred the post to Bienville in 1717. In a sense, Bienville ended up on top in the colony earning the position of Governor. Cadillac, in 1717, ended up in the Bastille with his eldest son for slander against France and her colonies.²⁴⁴

A fight between three men impacted the financial stability of Louisiana. It made the economy hiccup, frustrating superiors who expected financial stability. Trade practically halted with Cadillac's low prices for fur. Native diplomacy was almost annihilated with Cadillac's poor etiquette with neighboring nations. However, according to the multiple letters and reports, some things did get accomplished with no help from the governor. Cadillac only focused on his goals of finding precious metals and protecting his money. The other projects were neglected and

²⁴⁴ Yves F. Zoltvany, "LAUMET, de Lamothe Cadillac, ANTOINE".

made difficult with low supplies and poorly trained staff. Duclos and Bienville had to work around Cadillac's decisions to work for their goals of proper diplomacy and financial stability. In three years, three men who represented the difference between colonists who willingly participated in the creolization and those that sought to only participate in the French contribution of the environment. Cadillac functioned best in the French economy and caused confusion in Louisiana. Bienville and Duclos both understood how this newly formed economy functioned and conflicted with Cadillac. In the end, Cadillac left the colony, leaving Bienville to continue his supervising of an economy he helped forge.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Louisiana's unique economic environment came to fruition because of a process called Economic Creolization. Looking at the most influential figures of the formative years displayed the French and Canadians interacting with the alien environment and respond to the new economies they needed to maneuver. Historians already knew colonists needed to work with native groups to get established. But sources show that these actions caused the French and native economies to blend. Three scenarios showcased what kind of stress provided the catalyst to start creolization. La Salle failed to kickstart creolization because he lacked the skills to begin permanent trade relationships domestically. Iberville succeed because his upbringing in Canada gave him the skills to start a new economy in Louisiana. His brother Bienville fought Cadillac over how to maintain the new Louisianan economy and won.

La Salle showed how tough the region fought back against the French. La Salle traveled to the region multiple times but could not establish a colony. He knew how to manipulate the French economy to get his funding for the expeditions. In his last expedition, he landed in Texas instead of Louisiana. Even if he landed in Texas intentionally or not, he struggled in blending with the native economy and failed to make trade relationships in order to provide food and supplies to his colonists. The French knew nothing about cultivating the area and the stress of starvation caused enough tension to lead to La Salle's assassination. The factors failed to create a new economy for a colony.

Iberville, one of the first-generation French Canadians, took on the Louisiana challenge after his long military career in the Canadian frontier. Thanks to his upbringing in Canada, he already knew the importance of native trade. His father taught him to embrace the wilderness.

His military training gave him the expertise to navigate French politics and economics. Iberville became the prime example of the French adapting in North America in order to conquer it for their Empire. He established military bases in Louisiana and began the process of trade relationships with the many native nations. He died before he could see his colony fully begin to develop but his brother Bienville continued the mission.

Bienville made great progress but soon faced a scenario where a Frenchman came into the region unwilling to conform to the economic environment. Cadillac possessed the same entrepreneur personality as La Salle when he arrived in Louisiana. However, Cadillac arrived in the colony with negative opinions of the land and the people. His negative feelings towards the colony pushed him further to work for his own needs rather than adjust to Louisianan ways. This caused conflict which provided an example of why blending into the local economic environment proved crucial in succeeding in Louisiana.

All three of these historical scenarios became examples of economic creolization in the formation of a new Louisianan economy. Economic practices come from cultural roots. When two different economies need to work together for survival, they end up blending together and create a new one. In Louisiana, the French needed an area for a military advantage in the global economics of Europe. The native groups already knew Europeans needed fur and slaves and were willing to make alliances. Canadians raised themselves to blend into domestic trade naturally. It made them different from the colonizers who came from Europe. Their differences showed themselves when they interacted with each other and in the end, the Canadians knew better and raised the colony.

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