

ACADIAN SETTLEMENT IN LOUISIANA: COLONIAL
POPULATIONS AND IMPERIAL POLICY

A Senior Honors Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Acadian Settlement in Louisiana: Colonial Populations and Imperial Policy
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This paper examines the influence of colonial policy and intercultural relations on the development of Acadian settlement in Louisiana between 1765 and 1785, spanning a portion of both French and Spanish colonial periods. Research has included an array of secondary sources, books, articles and maps, as well as a variety of primary sources, including published collections and archival material. Analysis of sources reveals two stages of Acadian settlement: the determination of physical location of settlements, and the characteristics, such as economic, demographic, and social, pertaining to the settlements. Political and social forces within colonial Louisiana affected the two stages of Acadian settlement differently. Colonial settlement and defense policies and Acadian culture influenced the location of settlements most strongly, while Acadian relations with other groups in Louisiana shaped the characteristics that the settlements developed

during the 1770s. Acadian settlement indicates the imperial policies of France and Spain and the effect of these policies on the colonial population of Louisiana.

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INTRODUCTION¹

The Acadians became a diaspora people in 1755 when the British forcibly expelled them from their homes in Nova Scotia. Between approximately 1765 and 1785 several thousand eventually immigrated to Louisiana in an attempt to settle together in a single colony. During Acadian immigration and settlement in Louisiana, the colony underwent diverse changes: the colony transferred from French to Spanish ownership; its function within empire shifted from a neglected French colony to a defensive Spanish buffer colony; and competing powers along the Mississippi, changed several times from solely French to a Spanish and British juxtaposition, and then to a Spanish and American one. In the development of their settlement, the Acadians, as settlers in the context of transition of both colony and people, experienced the formative impact of colonial policies, Acadian culture, and interaction among the colonial population of Louisiana.

Acadians carried with them to Louisiana their culture and experiences of both colonization and dispersal. The Acadians developed as an ethnic group out of an isolated frontier population in the French colony of Acadia, in present-day Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, over the course of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth. The most important tenets of Acadian culture and tradition included settlement in kinship groupings, religious practices developed in considerable isolation, and group interaction with colonial administrators usually by collective means of petition. When Britain gained possession of Nova Scotia, the Acadians became even more of a border population. Fearing Acadian disloyalty, the British expelled the Acadians at the onset of

¹ This thesis follows the style and format of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

the Seven Years War in an episode known as the Grand Dérangement, which dispersed the Acadians throughout the Atlantic World from 1755 onwards. Difficulty in assimilating into populations in North America, France, and the West Indies and war time hostilities caused many Acadians to become increasingly aware of their own ethnicity, enhancing their desire to re-establish Acadian communities. This quest eventually brought the Acadians to French colonial Louisiana.

From nearly the start of Acadian immigration to Louisiana and stretching into the 1780s, Acadian settlement played a role in the defensive strategies of colonial administrators. Louisiana, originally a French colony, became a Spanish possession in 1762; however, the first Spanish governor did not arrive until 1766. With the close of the Seven Years War, the Mississippi became an imperial boundary, separating British and Spanish North America. Throughout the period of Acadian immigration and settlement, the Spanish regarded Louisiana as a buffer colony first to protect against the British in the centuries-old battle for domination of North America, and later after the American Revolution to protect New Spain from the expanding American settlements that had begun to reach the interior of the continent. Because Acadian immigration coincided with the defensive role of Louisiana in the Spanish Empire, the Spanish easily incorporated the Acadian immigration and settlement into their defense policy for the empire, including the safeguard of the colony itself. Even as the final French governments awaited the transfer of power to Spain, they considered the future defensive assets that the Acadians might provide to the colony through their participation in the militia and the cattle industry. Under Governor Antonio de Ulloa, the Spanish colonial

government forced the incoming Acadians to settle at strategic points along the Mississippi to act as physical barriers to potential British aggression. Then, with the promulgation of Governor Alejandro O'Reilly's policies, the Acadians became soldier-settlers entrenched in their settlements, particularly along the Mississippi, to protect New Orleans from attack. Following the American Revolution, the Acadians became part of Spanish efforts to attract and settle colonists loyal to Spain to prevent the settlement of Americans within the colony.

Thus, because the Acadians played such a significant role in colonial and imperial defense, the policies of the French and Spanish colonial governments determined for the most part the locations of Acadian settlements. These locations existed in two major groupings, one along the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche, and one to the west of the Atchafalaya in the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts. Relations among the colonial populations, while they did not determine the location of settlements, stamped Acadian settlements with particular characteristics.

Overall, interaction and relations among the Acadians, Creoles,² and Native Americans of colonial Louisiana resulted in greater mounting of tension in the eastern settlements than in the western ones. Several factors contributed to such build up. Previous Acadian experiences in Acadia and post-dispersal wanderings contributed to Acadian relations with Native Americans and the development of the economy in the

² For the purposes of clarity within this paper, Creole refers to individuals of French and Spanish descent, living in the colonies and un-mixed with Negro or Native American blood, as opposed to slaves, Native Americans, free-men, and mulattoes, all terms used in colonial censuses. John Anthony Caruso, *The Mississippi Valley Frontier; the Age of French Exploration and Settlement* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), 358; Virginia R. Dominquez, *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 97.

areas where the Acadians settled. Those Acadians who settled in the districts to the east of the Atchafalaya had originated in areas of Acadia subject to raid by the local Native Americans and French and later spent time in Maryland and Pennsylvania, where they encountered the plantation economy and slave labor. In the eastern settlements in Louisiana, the Acadians became a part of an increasingly plantation-oriented economy, and the greater population density of the eastern districts and tensions of mounting colonial-Native alliances contributed to local strains among colonial populations. In contrast, those Acadians who settled west of the Atchafalaya River in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts were drawn mostly from an area of Acadia where the inhabitants had been accustomed to trading with the Native Americans and where they had raised cattle, which developed into an important industry in Louisiana. The movement of several tribes of Native Americans from formerly French claimed land transferred to Great Britain to the banks of the Mississippi and Lafourche, a result of the transfer of their alliance from France to Spain rather than to Great Britain, enlarged the population of Native Americans in the region. Other groups remained in British territory and, allied with Britain, threatened to raid riverside settlements. Thus the empires shifting about the Mississippi had ramifications for alliance systems and movement of people in the region. Other participants in settlement dynamics, the Creoles considered themselves New World aristocracy. After the Spanish integrated them into the colonial government, their social status and power rose within the colony. In addition, they did not always regard the arriving exiles with a kind eye, contributing to disputes ranging in topic from the destruction of property and trespassing to contests over religious etiquette. Acadian

colonial and exile experiences combined with contact of colonial populations to create the contrasting characteristics of the two areas of Acadian settlement: differences in interaction of colonial populations, economy, and roles in colonial defense.

Therefore, two stages existed in Acadian settlement in Louisiana: colonial policy influenced the physical location of settlements most strongly, while Acadian relations with other groups in Louisiana shaped the defining elements of their settlements. Empire struggle and shifts in power governed both colonial policy, movement of peoples in the New World, and the way these groups interacted. Consequently, Acadian settlement, while it represented the transition of a diaspora people to a new homeland and local adjustment of a colony enduring a period of transition, also indicates major concerns of the French, Spanish, and British Empires and highlights major differences between French and Spanish policy.

CHAPTER I: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADIAN IDENTITY: ACADIA AND THE GRAND DÉRANGEMENT

Acadian identity emerged firstly from the common experience of a colonial people in the French colony of Acadia where their sense of unity coalesced and secondly from their shared diaspora. The Acadians grew out of the early colonists of Acadia present day Nova Scotia, southern New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.³ Acadians' experiences during their early development as a people shaped Acadian identity and culture in ways that would impact Acadian settlement in Louisiana. Specifically, Acadians developed four key cultural elements: a society based upon kinship, economic self-sufficiency, a frontier Catholicism, and group relations with government through petition. In 1713, most of Acadia, that portion consisting of Nova Scotia where the Acadian population was under 3,000, became a British colony.⁴ Disputes over Acadian rights to neutrality and loyalty to Britain colored Acadian relations with the British colonial government. With the onset of the Seven Years War, fearing Acadian alliance with France, the British determined to expel the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755. Scattering the Acadians throughout the Atlantic from the British North American Colonies to France and the Caribbean, the expulsion only confirmed Acadian sense of identity and solidarity because the Acadians became minority groups

³ John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 6; Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (New York: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1973), 2.

⁴ Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 307.

forced to acknowledge their individuality in contrast to the peoples of the locations to which they had been dispersed.

Acadian cultural and ethnic identity developed from the first half of the seventeenth century onward, beginning with the colony's earliest settlers.⁵ While many of the Acadian forefathers could claim the French peasantry as their heritage, representing approximately forty-seven French provinces, settlers were also of Basque, Portuguese, Irish, and Scottish descent.⁶ Some of the Frenchmen married Micmac women living in the colony, linking the group to these Native Americans by blood.⁷ Because the colony attracted Protestants and Catholics alike, the settlers initially were not united in faith.⁸ Thus Acadian culture developed based upon a diverse background.⁹ Beginning in the 1630s, French peasants began arriving for the explicit purpose of settling, as opposed to engaging solely in the fur trade or fishing, as those who had preceded them to the colony.¹⁰ Dispersed small-scale communities about the Bay of Fundy and its connecting waterways were particular to the settlement of Acadia from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.¹¹ By 1755, the Acadians, approximately six to eight thousand in number, had emerged as a group of "French speaking Roman Catholic

⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶ James H. Dorman, *The People Called Cajuns: An Introduction to an Ethnohistory* (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwest Louisiana, 1983), 8-9; Griffiths, *The Acadians*, 3; Barry Jean Ancelet, Jay D. Edwards, and Glenn Pitre, *Cajun Country* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), xv.

⁷ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 46-7; Griffiths, "Acadian Identity: The Creation and Recreation of Community," *Dalhousie Review* 73, no. 3 (1993): 331.

⁸ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 20; Griffiths, *The Acadians*, xi.

⁹ Griffiths, "Acadian Identity," 331.

¹⁰ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 43-4.

¹¹ Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 9.

pastoralist/fishermen, trappers.”¹² Recognizing a common identity, the settlers of Acadia early in the eighteenth century began using the term “Acadian” to refer to themselves.¹³

Kinship was paramount to Acadian settlement and culture. Characteristics of Acadian culture include intricate, tight-knit, and well established kinship systems, and patriarchal families often in multi-generational homes.¹⁴ Colonists often lived in settlements of kin and relocated within the colony as groups of kin.¹⁵ Kinship ties spanned farther than a single village or town. By the late seventeenth century, the links Acadian towns and villages by kinship spawned “economic relationships, and legal, political, and religious customs” as well.¹⁶ Kinship then was a basic building block of the communities of Acadia and the way these communities related and interacted. All of these factors colored the Acadian cultural identity and consequently later influenced the group’s experience beyond Acadia.

The location of Acadian settlement in Acadia impacted the nature of Micmac-Acadian relations. In the 1740s and 1750s, Micmac and French raiding and foraging parties preyed upon British dominated Acadia.¹⁷ Consequently, Acadians, particularly those living in the Minas Basin, developed a fear and distrust of Native Americans.¹⁸

¹² Ibid., 7.

¹³ Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 329.

¹⁴ James H. Dorman, “The Cajuns: Ethnogenesis and the Shaping of Group Consciousness,” in *The Cajuns*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette, LA: U.S.L. History Series, 1983), 234.

¹⁵ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 64, 76.

¹⁶ Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 125.

¹⁷ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 218-220.

¹⁸ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 179-80; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, xxiv-xxvii, map.

When transplanted to Louisiana in settlements along the Mississippi, this group of Acadians continued to experience similar colonial-Native American tensions associated with North American colonial borders. Other Acadians, who had resided in French-held Acadia or settlements in close proximity to the border and were involved in the fur trade with the Micmac, contributed their background of good rapports with Native Americans to the more western parts of the Louisiana frontier.¹⁹ Thus, Acadian relations with the Micmac, in Acadia dependent upon settlement location, would shape Acadian-Native American experiences in Louisiana.

As colonists living by their own means on the Acadian frontier, the Acadians developed and became accustomed to an isolated frontier Roman Catholicism. The early founders and administrators of Acadia were Huguenots who banned the fervent Counter-Reformation Jesuits from the colony. The clergy who came to Acadia focused their efforts primarily on conversion of the Native Americans.²⁰ At most there were two priests in service to the Acadians, while the others acted as missionaries to the Micmac. During the fourteen years of the seventeenth century when Acadia belonged to Great Britain, the number of priests fell further. As a result of the scarcity of clergy, which grew out of the break in French control of Acadia, Acadian laymen participated in performing sacraments such as baptism and marriage.²¹ Despite the near absence of clergy in Acadian daily-life and practice, the mostly illiterate population relied strongly upon its ordained and literate religious leaders for record keeping.²² Consequently,

¹⁹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 185.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 150-1.

²¹ Griffiths, "Acadian Identity," 332.

²² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 155.

Acadians developed their own perception of the necessity and role of priests and religion. This perception, as well as Acadian frontier religious practices, would come into conflict particularly with officials, priests, and other colonists in Louisiana. Catholicism played an important role in Acadian cultural identity and certainly affected Acadian-British relations and later encouraged their immigration to Louisiana.

Isolation figured centrally into the development of Acadian self-reliance. Colonial officials, like the missionaries, neglected Acadia's settlers. The Acadians transformed this neglect to their benefit and created a system of interdependence within and among their settlements.²³ By the late seventeenth century, the ties linking Acadian towns and villages had developed out of "economic relationships, and legal, political, and religious customs."²⁴ Economically, the Acadians developed into a self-reliant and mostly self-sufficient population, save the contraband trade with New England for manufactured goods. Land represented an important asset throughout Acadian society because, as mostly subsistence farmers, Acadians relied on their land as their most essential resource, which retained its importance to Acadian culture and lifestyle through the relocation to Louisiana.²⁵ Although the Acadians tended to settle mostly along the coasts and thus also engaged in fishery and trade, they also cultivated grains, vegetables, such as potatoes and cabbage, as well as crops such as flax for producing cloth. They raised livestock, particularly pigs, sheep, and cattle, especially on the pasture-land of the Chignecto Isthmus, which connects Nova Scotia to the mainland of North America and which separated British Nova Scotia from New France by the Treaty of Utrecht in

²³ Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 9, 12.

²⁴ Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 125.

²⁵ Griffiths, *The Acadians*, 2.

1713.²⁶ By transferring Nova Scotia to British hands, the Treaty of Utrecht resulted in intensified friction between Acadians and their British rulers from 1713 onward.

In an effort to bargain with British colonial officials, the Acadians frequently employed petitions. In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht ceded Nova Scotia to Great Britain following the War of Spanish Succession. After the transfer of Nova Scotia, the Acadians petitioned officials in efforts to negotiate better terms, as in 1717 when they protested that they wanted to continue to practice Catholicism and to remain neutral. Neutrality was important because of the danger of Native American reprisal should Britain and France enter into another war.²⁷ The Acadians also requested that the British acknowledge that they shared a common history as a people.²⁸ The last of the requests reflected the development of the concept of a common identity among the Acadians. However, the colonial governor, Richard Philipps, whose term spanned 1717 to 1749, refused to grant the Acadians the option of a conditional oath of allegiance.²⁹ Nevertheless, the Acadians persisted in their requests of neutrality throughout the 1720s: by petition in 1720 and verbally in 1726.³⁰ In 1730, Philipps finally secured Acadian oaths of allegiance, but he had done so by verbally agreeing that they could continue as neutral, a condition that he did not record in writing.³¹ Because the Acadians believed that they had taken an oath that accepted their neutrality, for the next twenty years, they did not have cause to petition the government. However, when Governor Edward

²⁶ John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 71-2; Ancelet, Barry Jean, Jay D. Edwards, and Glenn Pitre, *Cajun Country*, 8.

²⁷ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 146-7.

²⁸ Griffiths, *The Acadians*, 23.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁰ Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 154, 168.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 176-8.

Cornwallis, 1749-1752, arrived with instructions to force the Acadians to submit to another oath of allegiance, the colonists continued to demand neutral status and free practice of Catholicism. The Acadians resumed their petitioning of the British colonial government in August of 1749, an episode followed by another letter to the officials in September, and another petition in 1753.³² Neutrality persisted in its importance because of the increasing tensions between Britain and France in the border-lands and the associated danger of French and Micmac raids, which the Acadians feared would increase.³³ Nevertheless, the British remained constant in their demands of an unconditional oath, and Charles Lawrence, lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia in 1753, began to promote the idea of deporting the Acadians.

The Seven Years War created an impetus for the British to enact the expulsion. With the advent of the Seven Years War in mid-1754, the matter of deportation began to appear more viable. When the British discovered that two hundred Acadian men had taken up arms in the defense of French Fort Beauséjour, a direct violation of their oaths of neutrality, Lawrence ordered that the Acadians turn over their firearms and take an unconditional oath of allegiance.³⁴ Although they accepted the former demand, the Acadians refused to submit to the latter.³⁵ On July 28, 1755, the Council of Nova Scotia decided to “send all the French Inhabitants out of the Province.”³⁶ At the time of the expulsion, about half of the approximately 16,000 Acadians lived in British dominated

³² Ibid., 252-254, 275.

³³ Ibid., 250-3; Griffiths, *The Acadians*, 40-44.

³⁴ Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 336; Oscar Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), 12-13; James H. Dormon, “America and the Americas: Louisiana’s Cajuns,” *History Today*, 1984, 39.

³⁵ Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, 13.

³⁶ Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 335.

land, 7,000 of whom the British expelled from the colony initially.³⁷ The pressure created by the British and French rivalry and the anticipated war gave British colonial officials cause to expel the Acadians from the colony they considered their homeland.

Contrary to the myth perpetuated by Longfellow's "Evangeline,"³⁸ nuclear families remained together, for the most part; however, the expulsion often dispersed extended families, thus disassembling the kinship network vital to Acadian community. Because the Acadian concept of family included a wide network of kin, Acadians perceived their separation from relatives akin to a separation from close family.³⁹ Nevertheless, close family did become separated in the dispersal. For example, while Basil Prejean and several of his brothers never left the New World and eventually settled in Louisiana, another brother went to Europe and then to Martinique.⁴⁰ Jean-Baptiste Semer remained first in Canada where he participated in Acadian resistance to the British, while his parents and siblings were sent to France.⁴¹ Whether family groups remained together or were separated by the Grand Dérangement, the expulsion scattered the Acadians throughout the Atlantic World.

The Grand Dérangement intrinsically changed Acadian identity into that of a dispersed and displaced people and began Acadian peregrinations. According to Naomi

³⁷ Robert LeBlanc, "Les Migrations Acadiennes," *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec* 23 (1979) : 102.

³⁸ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 26; "Evangeline" tells the story the separation of the two lovers Gabriel and Evangeline during the Grand Dérangement and popularized the idea that the dispersal separated immediate family.

³⁹ Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 15.

⁴⁰ Carl A. Brasseaux, "Footnote to the Acadian Migration: the Prejean Family," *Attakapas Gazette* 24 (1989): 17.

⁴¹ Jean Francois Mouhot, "Une Ultime Revenante? Lettre de Jean Baptiste Semer de La Nouvelle Orleans," *Acadiensis* 34 (2005) : 124.

Griffiths, “community identity is created, not inherited, a developing, not a static phenomenon.”⁴² The expulsion of the Acadians from their homeland produced the next stage of Acadian development. The emergence of Acadian status as a minority people, which perceived itself as a victim of injustice, differentiated this new phase of Acadians development.⁴³ As a French and Catholic colonial population transplanted initially to British North American colonies during the Seven Years War, a time of increased international suspicion, the recently uprooted minority found itself in the “perfect breeding ground for ethnic group solidarity.”⁴⁴ During their stay in the colonies, Acadian kinship groups were further separated because colonial governments divided them into groups and apportioned them out to various towns.⁴⁵ Differences in Acadian life and tradition from those in the British colonies, and later England, France, and the West Indies, set the Acadians apart as identifiable minority populations.⁴⁶ While one of the goals of the expulsion was to annihilate the Acadian identity by destroying community, the expulsion only served to heighten Acadian sense of identity.⁴⁷ Therefore, the expulsion failed in one of its goals and merely spurred the Acadians onto a new stage of development based upon a common traumatic dispersal experience.

Because they preserved their identity, the Acadians did not assimilate easily or readily, and they continued to petition British colonial officials even after dispersal. In

⁴² Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 329.

⁴³ Dormon, “The Cajuns: Ethnogenesis and the Shaping of Group Consciousness,” 235.

⁴⁴ Dormon, “America and the Americas: Louisiana’s Cajuns.” 39; Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 18-19.

⁴⁵ Arthur G. Doughty, *The Acadian Exiles: A Chronicle of the Land of Evangeline* (Toronto: Glasgow Books and Co., 1920), 139.

⁴⁶ Dormon, “The Cajuns: Ethnogenesis and the Shaping of Group Consciousness,” 235.

⁴⁷ Griffiths, “Acadian Identity,” 337; Dorman *The People called Cajuns: An Introduction to an Ethnohistory* 18.

Massachusetts, where the officials attempted to indenture the Acadians, the exiles petitioned the state on multiple occasions regarding aid and indenture. After the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, these 1,000 Acadians in Massachusetts unsuccessfully requested voyage to Sainte Domingue.⁴⁸ In Pennsylvania, Acadians also protested indenture and requested permission to leave the colony, and they petitioned the governor with a litany of grievances. The Acadians in both Pennsylvania and Connecticut went so far as to call upon France for transport to its shores.⁴⁹ Acadians in British North American petitioned and presented grievances to colonial governments collectively, signifying their unity.

Those Acadians who reached French speaking countries, such as Sainte Domingue and France, in hopes of a safe haven, found themselves without an economic niche. In Sainte Domingue, by an agreement with the French colonial government, Acadians became a source of labor. This arrangement promised the Acadians land in exchange for their toil. These Acadians hoped that the land grants would allow them to return to a semblance of their former lifestyle. However, grants of poor land, increasing Acadian immigration, high mortality rates, and desertion complicated the process.⁵⁰ Unaccustomed to the climate, the crops, and the island's way of life, the Acadian skill

⁴⁸ Proclamation of Governor Francis Bernard, 28 Nov. 1764, in "Le Grand Derangement: the Acadian Exile in Massachusetts, 1755-1766" www.secstate.ma.us/mus/exhibits/onlineexhibits/acadianonline/acaidx3.htm (accessed November 18, 2006).

⁴⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, *"Scattered to the Wind": Dispersal and Wanderings of the Acadians, 1755-1809* (Lafayette, LA: The Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1991), 21, 24.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 39-43.

set was not suited to the plantation economy.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Acadians in the British seaboard colonies continued to arrive in Sainte Domingue in hopes that they might receive grants of land and thereby return to an agrarian lifestyle, as did their counterparts in France.⁵² Acadians in France included those whom the British captured after the initial deportation as well as those sent to France after years of prisoner-of-war status in England. In France, they faced multiple although unsuccessful efforts to repatriate them and endured extreme poverty in the port cities in which they arrived.⁵³ Unable to establish a new center for their way of life, the Acadians displaced about the Atlantic were driven to seek a new homeland.

Louisiana, as a French North American colony, became the destination for many Acadians hoping to re-establish their community. Shortly after arriving in South Carolina and Georgia, dispersed Acadians began to immigrate overland in small groups to Louisiana. The South Carolina Gazette made a reference to such an overland crossing in May 1756.⁵⁴ These overland immigrants may have been the first Acadians to arrive in French Louisiana. Louisiana recommended itself for the very fact that it was a French colony where Acadians could expect to find other colonists who spoke their language and practiced their religion.⁵⁵ Providing the ensuing larger scale immigration ample land, Louisiana's mostly unsettled frontier further attracted the Acadians. Especially

⁵¹ Carl A. Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768* (Ruston LA: McGinty Publication Series, Louisiana Tech University, 1987), 43.

⁵² Brasseaux, *Scattered to the Wind*, 43.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 34-36

⁵⁴ Marie M. P. Campbell and Isobel French, *Research Notes on Acadian Cabahanoce-Verret, Jacques Cantrelle, Sr.* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Geneological and Historical Society, 1962), 2-3.

⁵⁵ Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 29.

following the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the Acadians purposely immigrated to Louisiana to establish a new homeland.⁵⁶

Acadians brought with them to Louisiana their re-enforced perception of group identity. Their sense of a distinct ethnic identity, at the time of their expulsion in 1755, including their own frontier form of Catholicism, a society based upon kinship networks, and group appeals to colonial officials. The wanderings of this dispersed people scattered them about the Atlantic, which only contributed to Acadian awareness of their identity as a people by adding a common scarring episode to colonists' repertoire of group experiences. Therefore, by the onset of Acadian immigration to Louisiana, the Acadians, as a people, were undergoing a period of transition.

⁵⁶ Jacqueline K. Voorhies, "The Acadians: The Search for the Promised Land," in *The Cajuns*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette, LA: U.S.L. History Series, 1983), 82.

CHAPTER II: ACADIAN SETTLEMENT IN FRENCH LOUISIANA: A PEOPLE AND A COLONY IN TRANSITION

French colonial policy's encounter with the peregrine Acadian population established precedents for settlement that grew out of the difficulties and interest of transitional French Louisiana. Colonial finances had implications for the settlement of the Acadians during the French period contributing to the location of Acadian settlements and encouraging the colonial government to welcome the Acadians as a future asset to the colony. Despite the dire conditions of the colony's finances, Aubry and Foucault, the two leaders of the colony, assured that the Acadians received assistance in settlement and promulgated a flexible settlement policy, which considered Acadian culture and preferences. The Acadians also successfully continued their traditions of settlements centered upon kinship. Acadian settlement under the French took place in two different areas, at Cabahannocé on the Mississippi, and the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts. In both locations relations with the Creole population and Acadian participation in colonial economy began to develop. Acadian adjustment and early difficulties in their settlement shed light on the powers enjoyed by colonial officials and the will of the Acadians to persist in their efforts to make Louisiana their new home. In their settlement, Acadians became part of the transitional period of French Louisiana during the 1760s.

In 1763, the Lower Mississippi Valley was home to approximately "four thousand whites, five thousand Negro slaves, two hundred mulatto slaves, one hundred Native American slaves, and one hundred free people of color," a population much

smaller than the local Native American population of approximately 32,000.⁵⁷ Creole merchants and Creole planters along the Mississippi represented the upper echelons of society.⁵⁸ In Louisiana, an economic system developed in which “native and colonial groups circulated goods and services.”⁵⁹ Settlers and slaves followed the examples of the Native Americans of the region in subsisting off of a combination of hunting, farming, fishing, and raising livestock.⁶⁰ Colonists even used fields previously cultivated by Native Americans in addition to the labor of Native Americans during the early years of Louisiana colonization.⁶¹ These fields and burial mounds provided colonists less flood-prone settlement sites.⁶² By the end of the French possession of Louisiana, the European population both struggled in attempting to order society and relied upon networks of colonial populations for survival.

The Native American tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley most relevant to the areas later settled by Acadian exiles included the Houmas, the Tunica, the Tensas, the Chetimacha, and the Attakapas. The latter tribe was located primarily west of the Atchafalaya Basin, while the others were in closer proximity to the Mississippi River. Over the course of colonization, Native American population declined as a result of disease, slavery, strife with the European newcomers, and intertribal warfare.⁶³ Nations such as those located near the Mississippi in this instance, which were smaller and

⁵⁷ Daniel H. Usner, Jr. *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 108 quotation, 279.

⁵⁸ Dorman, *The People called Cajuns*, 19.

⁵⁹ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 6-7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 149

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 156

⁶² Glenn Pitre, *The Chetimacha* (Louisiana: Cote Blanche Productions, 1995), videorecording.

⁶³ Glenn Pitre, *The Chetimacha* (Louisiana: Cote Blanche Productions, 1995), videorecording.

economically existed off of trade of goods and services with nearby European settlements, became known as *petites nations*.⁶⁴ Relations with larger tribes, such as the Choctaw, involved more complicated diplomacy to promote and continue an alliance with France. The *petites nations* were, because of their fewer numbers and greater integration into the economy of the French in Louisiana, adapted to colonial life by relocating near European settlements.⁶⁵ In providing services first to the French, and later to the Spanish and British after 1763, the *petites nations* better succeeded in maintaining their tribal identities than the Choctaw.⁶⁶ The Houmas lived along the Bayou Lafourche during the second half of the eighteenth century near the Chetimacha who were some of the earliest Native American slaves of Louisiana.⁶⁷ Hunter-gathers, the Chetimacha, a *petite nation* tribe, lived on good terms with their Attakapas neighbors to the west.⁶⁸ An example of colonial diplomatic efforts, during the French and Spanish colonial periods, the Chetimacha sent representatives to New Orleans to receive gifts.⁶⁹ The Tunica lived east of the Mississippi and immigrated to French Louisiana with the Biloxi after the transfer of West Florida to the British when they relocated with the

⁶⁴ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 45.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 130-131.

⁶⁷ Mayheart Darder "United Houma Nation History"

<http://www.unitedhoumanation.org/unitedhoumanationhistory.htm> (accessed December 15, 2006); Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 121-124; Donald A. Hesse, "Indians of Louisiana," (research paper, Department of Sociology, Southwestern Louisiana Institute, 1955), 11.

⁶⁸ Glenn Pitre, *The Chetimacha* (Louisiana: Cote Blanche Productions, 1995), videorecording; Betty Pourciau, "Indians," in *St Martin Parish History*, ed. Betty Pourciau (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Comité des Archives de la Louisiane, 1985), 2; Daniel H. Usner, "American Indians in Colonial New Orleans," in *The Spanish Presence in Louisiana, 1763-1803*, ed. Gilbert C. Din (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwest Louisiana), 298.

⁶⁹ Usner, "American Indians in Colonial New Orleans," 298.

permission of the French colonial governor D'Abaddie to Bayou Lafourche.⁷⁰ The Tensas followed a similar immigration path to the Tunica, relocating to the mouth of Bayou Lafourche.⁷¹ When the Acadians began to immigrate to Louisiana, the Native American population was also enduring shifts in alliance, a result of the same international struggle that had expelled the Acadians from Nova Scotia.

The Native American tribes of Louisiana were also a powerful force in frontier and border relations. Because of the large ratio of Native Americans to the colonial population of European and African origin and descent, coupled with the isolation of Louisiana and France's neglect of it, successful diplomatic relations with Native Americans were essential to the stability and survival of the colony. Politically, trade presented advantages because trade between frontier populations reflected cooperative relationships. The British traded corn with the Native American tribes in the Lower Mississippi Valley as a means to develop alliances, something that frightened the governor of French Louisiana.⁷² Native Americans remained attached to the French in order to obtain lead and alcohol, the trade of which caused the Native Americans to become dependent upon the French and encouraged the Native Americans to persist in their alliances with them.⁷³ As part of the colonial government's diplomacy and policy

⁷⁰ Hesse, "Indians of Louisiana," 13; Lillian C. Bourgeois, *Cabanocey: the History, Customs and Folklore of St. James Parish*, (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1957), 1.

⁷¹ William A. Read, *Louisiana Place Names of Indian Origin*, (Baton Rouge: The University Ten Times a Year, 1927), 64.

⁷² Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, in *Quest for the Promised Land: Official Correspondence Relating to the First Acadian Migration to Louisiana, 1764-1769*, ed. Carl A. Brasseaux, trans. Carl A. Brasseaux, Emilio Fabien Garcia, and Jacqueline K. Voorhies. Annotated by Jacqueline K. Voorhies. (Lafayette, Louisiana: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwest Louisiana, 1989), 49.

⁷³ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 98.

concerning Native Americans, it regularly extended gifts to the various tribes. The final French governor of Louisiana acknowledged the significance of positive relations with the Native Americans prior to Spanish possession of the colony: “[i]n order to establish Indian alliances and to make a good start in their new colony, they [the Spaniards] will have to bring along many presents for the Indians.”⁷⁴ His successor, Spanish Governor Ulloa, suggested that the Native Americans “tilt the scales in favor of their allies.”⁷⁵ The presence of Native American tribes and the efforts of European colonial powers to manipulate them contributed to the rising tension along the Mississippi River.

Because the French colonial government had trouble attracting and retaining colonists and in increasing colonial population, it tried to encourage settlement by instituting incentives, which established precedents for later immigrants such as the Acadians. France’s colonization methods included granting land to proprietors and to the Company of the Indies during the 1710s and 1720s, but few settlements actually resulted from these efforts.⁷⁶ One such settlement was called the German Coast, located in St. John Parish along the Mississippi River.⁷⁷ Contained mostly along the Mississippi between New Orleans and Point Coupée, the population increased very little between 1730 and 1760.⁷⁸ The high death and desertion rates that plagued the French military in the colonial Mississippi Valley made the transportation of replacements a continual necessity.⁷⁹ Contributing to the stagnated population growth, few soldiers stayed on in

⁷⁴ Aubry to Choiseul-Stanville, New Orleans, 24 April 1765, in *Quest for the Promised Land*, 41.

⁷⁵ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 69.

⁷⁶ Gertrude C. Taylor, “Colonial Land Grants in the Attakapas” *Attakapas Gazette* 15 (1980): 13; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 31-32.

⁷⁷ Taylor, “Colonial land Grants in the Attakapas,” 14.

⁷⁸ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 80, 279.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 222.

the colony as settlers.⁸⁰ In an attempt to bolster the population, France offered land grants in Louisiana to its military officials and soldiers. Some of the military officers to accept the proposed lands included Antoine Bernard Dauterive and Gabriel Fuselier de la Claire, two figures of later significance to Acadian settlement. To further entice soldiers to transition to the role of colonists, the French colonial government provided each settling family with livestock, food rations, gunpowder, and seed in addition to the land grant.⁸¹ By doing so, the colonial government set a precedent that contributed to the Acadian experience of both French and Spanish colonization. Not producing nearly the economic profit France had originally hoped for, Louisiana, as described by Jean Jacques D'Abbadie who became director general, a combination of governor and civil administrator, in 1763, included settlers three quarters of whom were bankrupt.⁸² By the time of D'Abbadie's arrival in Louisiana in 1763, not only had Louisiana's population stagnated, but so had the productivity of the population.

In November of 1762, France transferred Louisiana to Spain with the Treaty of Fontainebleau. The acquisition of French Louisiana was a tactical decision on the part of the Spanish.⁸³ Louisiana would serve as a buffer colony to protect New Spain from British infiltration.

With the close of the Seven Years War, the Treaty of Fontainebleau, and the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Louisiana embarked upon a transitional stage. By the Treaty of

⁸⁰ Ibid., 224.

⁸¹ Taylor, "Colonial land Grants in the Attakapas," 15.

⁸² Donald J. LeMieux, "Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlerc" in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 34; Carl A. Brasseaux, "Opelousas and the Alabama Immigrants, 1763-1766," *Attakapas Gazette* 14 (1979): 112.

⁸³ Gilbert C. Din, "Protected the "Barrera" Spain's Defenses in Louisiana, 1763-1779," *Louisiana History* 19 (1978): 184.

Paris in 1763, the Mississippi became the western border of Britain's North American holdings, thereby making British North America the new neighbor of Louisiana. Meanwhile, the years spanning 1763 to 1770 marked a time of transition within Louisiana from French to Spanish authority.⁸⁴

Precarious during its final years as a French colony, Louisiana participated in the readjustments of the Mississippi Valley. D'Abbadie's mission as governor of Louisiana encompassed the successful transfer of Louisiana to both Great Britain and Spain. France hoped to be rid of Louisiana as quickly as possible because of its drain on the imperial purse.⁸⁵ While the British hastened to take possession of the new lands between the Appalachians and Mississippi River, the Spanish did not assume control of Louisiana for several years. Following D'Abbadie's unexpected death in 1765, Charles Philippe Aubry, a French military man, became governor, with Denis Nicolas Foucault acting as commissaire-ordonateur, or civil administrator. Writing to the Secretary of the Navy, the Duke of Choiseul-Stainville, on February 25, 1765 Aubry declared the government "in most precarious circumstances. It is very difficult to please the French, the Indians, and the English all at the same time" in addition to preparing for the arrival of the Spanish.⁸⁶ By April, Aubry worried about defense against the British as supplies, including ammunition, dwindled, and with "no batteries along the river."⁸⁷ The British built Fort Bute at Manchac at the junction of the Mississippi and the Iberville River in

⁸⁴ Dorman *The People called Cajuns*, 20.

⁸⁵ Carl A. Brasseaux, "Jean-Jacques-Blaise d'Abbadie" in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 39.

⁸⁶ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 25 February 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 28, quotation 32.

⁸⁷ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 24 April 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 38.

1765.⁸⁸ With the delivery of West Florida to British hands, French settlers from the area immigrated to Spanish Louisiana where they received land grants in 1764 in Opelousas and the Attakapas.⁸⁹ Native Americans, such as the Biloxi, Tunica, and Tensas, who were allied with the French colonial government transferred their loyalties to the Spanish and consequently relocated to Louisiana.⁹⁰ In contrast to the British eager to take possession of their New World gains, Carlos III of Spain did not appoint Antonio Ulloa as first Spanish governor of Louisiana until May of 1765.

During the transitional period, 1763-1770, the first wave of Acadian exiles immigrated to Louisiana. Turning the tide of colonial population stagnation in Louisiana, from 1757 to 1770, approximately 1,000 Acadians immigrated to the colony.⁹¹ According to Ulloa, in 1766 the Acadians “exceeded the total number of established residents.”⁹² Although a few Acadians journeyed to Louisiana prior to the major influx of the second half of the 1760s, the arrival of twenty Acadians from New York began the first major wave of Acadian immigration to Louisiana. The Acadians who arrived between 1764 and 1770 immigrated mostly from New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Nova Scotia.⁹³ While the French were still in possession of Louisiana, the Acadians settled in two distinct areas: they settled at Cabahannocé along the Mississippi River, north of the German Coast and later called St. James; meanwhile,

⁸⁸ R.E. Chandler, “Fort St. Gabriel and Fort Bute: A Border Incident of 1768,” *Revue de Louisiane* 8.2 (1979): 174.

⁸⁹ Brasseaux, “Opelousas and the Alabama Immigrants, 1763-1766,” 112.

⁹⁰ Donald J. LeMieux, “Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlerc” in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 34.

⁹¹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 73.

⁹² Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 65.

⁹³ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 73.

others settled west of the Atchafalaya in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts. Because of Louisiana's topography, the Acadians selected sites along waterways, as they had settled about the Bay of Fundy and its connecting waterways in Acadia (see Figure 1). With their established ethnicity and growing awareness of their identity, they sought in Louisiana a settlement where they could re-establish Acadian culture and in which their families could re-unite, demonstrated by the coinciding naming of the eastern and western settlements "La Nouvelle Acadie."⁹⁴

The eastern settlement of the Acadians along the Mississippi began somewhat haphazardly. The Cabahannocé coast experienced a considerable population development during the second half of the 1760s. While France still held Louisiana, Native American tribes from territory transferred to Britain began to travel to the post in 1763. This elevated the Native American population, which wars and disease had depleted especially since the 1750s.⁹⁵ Early Acadian settlers, Salvador Mouton and his relatives, arrived at Cabahannocé possibly as early as 1756, after which other Acadians who found their way to Louisiana in small groups, settled along both banks of the Mississippi.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Barry Jean Ancelet, Jay D. Edwards, and Glenn Pitre, *Cajun Country*, xv; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 73, 77; 1765, "Copie d'un Vieux Régistre (1ère Partie) en Possession du Curé, M. Le Chanonine Peters, à St. Martinville, La," St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church, typescript Dupré Library, University of Louisiana Lafayette, 3.

⁹⁵ Bourgeois, *Cabanocey*, 1, 46.

⁹⁶ Bona Arsenault, *Histoire Des Acadiens* (St. Lawrence, Quebec: Fides, 1994), 301.

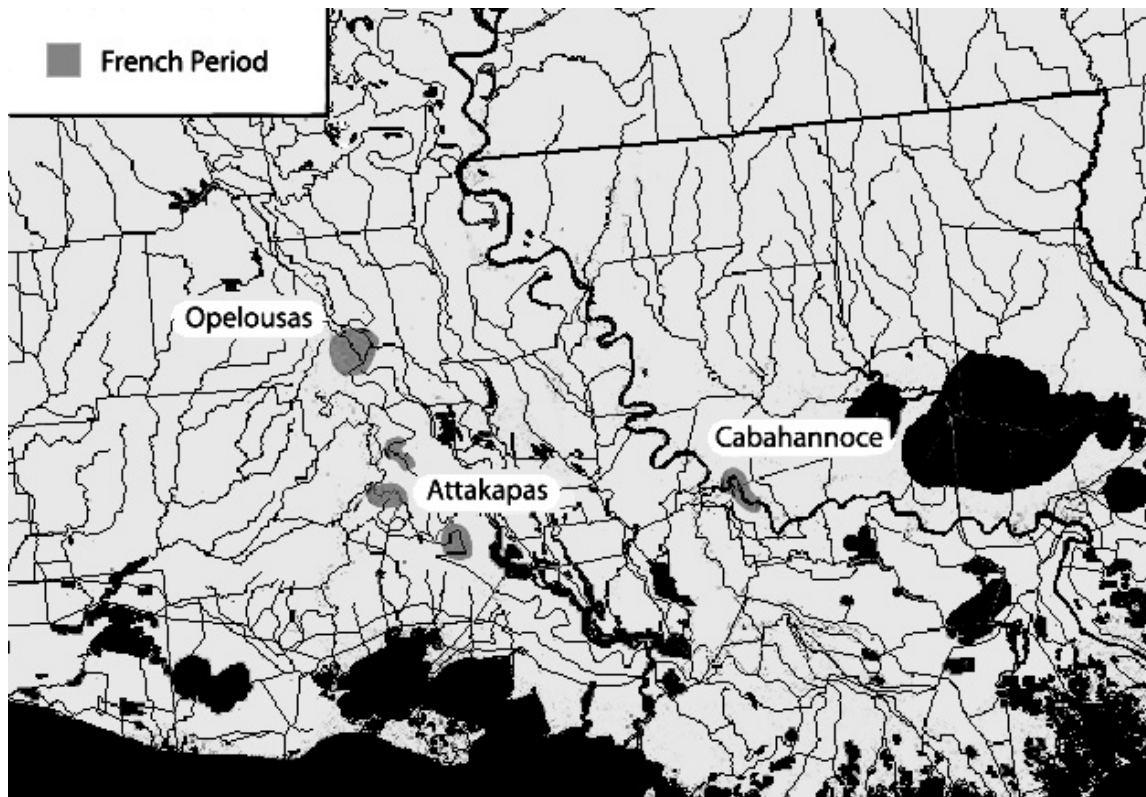


Figure 1. Acadian Settlement in French Louisiana, 1766

The shaded regions indicate the areas of Acadian settlement during the French colonial period. The two areas of settlement to the east and west of the Atchafalaya begin to emerge during this early stage of immigration and settlement.

France's long policy of neglect, desire to transfer Louisiana to Spanish control and to end the expenditure of any more resources on the colony directly impacted the settlement sites of the Acadians and the ability of the colonial officials to tend to the needs of the Acadians. Although orders from France instructed the colonial government to minimize spending and despite depleted supplies, the colonial administrators dispensed to the Acadian newcomers rations of food and supplies upon settlement. Such practice sprung from the existing colonial precedent for encouraging French military to settle in Louisiana. From the first, although in turmoil and in the midst of a flour

shortage when the group of Acadians arrived from New York in February of 1764, the colonial government offered the exiles aid in the form of rations of food “to maintain them until they were established,”⁹⁷ and even paid the cost of the journey. D’Abbadie sent these Acadians to Cabahannocé to settle.⁹⁸ In May 1765, both Aubry and Foucault were very much aware of the presence and ever growing number of Acadians “on the lower river,” where they waited for permission, instructions, and supplies for settlement; however, both officials lamented to their superior, the Duke of Choiseul-Stainville, that the strained colonial finances and shortages prevented them from settling the Acadians promptly.⁹⁹ Indeed, they faced a “dilemma,” for “never has the colony been so lacking in provisions as it is today.”¹⁰⁰ However, Aubry and Foucault informed the Secretary of the Navy that they were prepared to “give them only what is absolutely necessary for survival and ultimate self-sufficiency...provisions, tools, arms and ammunition.”¹⁰¹ The shortages of supplies suffered by the last colonial French government of Louisiana determined that some eighty Acadians who arrived in May 1765 would not go to the Attakapas District. Despite the fact that Foucault and Aubry preferred to send this group of Acadians from Halifax to join the first group of Acadians from Nova Scotia then in the western districts, shortage of funds and supplies hindered their intentions and forced the Acadians to settle on the east bank of the Mississippi at Cabahannocé instead.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ D’Abbadie to Choiseul-Stainville, 6 April 1764, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 16.

⁹⁸ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768*, 44; Brasseaux, *The Founding of NewAcadia*, 102.

⁹⁹ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, 49 quotation; Aubry and Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 30 April 1765; Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 13 May, 1765; Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land* 44-51.

¹⁰⁰ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 14 May 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 49.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁰² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 77, 102.

Therefore, the tightened colonial funds and limited resources resulted in increased settlement of Cabahannocé.

The settlement of an early group of Acadians-turned-Louisiana-settlers from Nova Scotia demonstrated the influence of colonial finances and economics on settlement location. Departing Nova Scotia in November 1764, a group of Acadians under the leadership of Joseph Broussard, “Beausoleil,” embarked on a journey to Sainte Domingue, which they quitted shortly thereafter.¹⁰³ These Acadians from Nova Scotia had hoped to reunite with those in Sainte Domingue so that they could travel together to Louisiana and up the Mississippi to Illinois where they hoped to create a substantial Acadian settlement. However, the Acadians in Sainte Domingue either could not afford the cost of travel, or they were too ill to join Beausoleil’s group.¹⁰⁴ Arriving in February of 1765, a year after the Acadians who had traveled from New York and the very month of D’Abbadie’s death, Beausoleil’s group found a colonial government willing to assist them in re-establishing themselves, although not in Illinois. Initially, Aubry intended to send them to Cabahannocé.¹⁰⁵ However, the land along the Mississippi had flooded, requiring the Acadians to build dikes, and “it would have necessitated feeding these people for several years.”¹⁰⁶ Consequently Aubry and Foucault looked westward to settle this group of exiles. By sending the Acadians to the Attakapas and Opelousas, the colonial government reduced the expenses it might undertake to supply and settle them, a major priority for the floundering colonial government, and, in doing so, Aubry and

¹⁰³ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 25 February 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 31, 33.

¹⁰⁴ Carl A. Brasseaux, “A New Acadia; Acadian Migration to South Louisiana 1764-1803,” *Acadiensis* 15.1 (1985): 125.

¹⁰⁵ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 25 February 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 31.

¹⁰⁶ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 24 April 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 40.

Foucault hoped to enable a hastier transition to self-sufficiency and productivity for the Acadians.¹⁰⁷ With good ranch land, the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts offered the opportunity for Acadian participation in the emerging cattle industry.

Aubry and Foucault did not decide to send the Acadians west without first consulting them, however. The colonial leaders met with eight Acadian representatives to determine the best site for settling the group and considered their background in animal husbandry as an asset for strengthening the western districts, which the officials hoped would develop a strong cattle industry.¹⁰⁸ Now that West Florida belonged to Britain, the Acadians in the Attakapas would fill a void that the transfer of the eastern lands had left in the economy of New Orleans.¹⁰⁹ Aubry and Foucault anticipated that the settlement would later supply New Orleans with beef, which Foucault had not overlooked as an advantage during wartime.¹¹⁰ The 1766 census of the Acadians residing in the Attakapas recorded that nineteen families came from Chignecto, where the Acadian colonists had raised livestock.¹¹¹ It follows that this particular group of Acadians, which originated from settlements tied strongly to raising cattle and livestock, should settle in an area that would allow them to resume similar kinds of husbandry. By agreeing to settle in the Attakapas, the Acadian leaders attempted to ensure the

¹⁰⁷ Jacqueline K. Voorhies, "The Attakapas Post: The First Acadian Settlement," *Louisiana History* 17 (1976): 91.

¹⁰⁸ Glenn R. Conrad "The Acadians: Myths and Realities," in *The Cajuns*, ed. Glen R. Conrad (Lafayette, LA: University of Southwest Louisiana, History Series, 1983), 11.

¹⁰⁹ Aubry to Choiseul-Stainville, 24 April 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 40.

¹¹⁰ Voorhies "The Attakapas Post," 92; Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768*, 45.

¹¹¹ Maureen Arceneaux, "Acadian to Cajun: Population, Family, and Wealth in Southwest Louisiana, 1765-1854" (Ph. D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1983), 78.

continuation of their way of life.¹¹² Partly because the Acadians valued communicating with officials by means of small groups of representatives, this group of exiles and other early groups of Acadian immigrants held the French colonial government of Louisiana in high esteem. Although colonial finances contributed to the decision to settle Beausoleil's group of Acadians in the Attakapas, the colonial officials may very well have considered the background of this group and their preferences for settlement site.

The Acadians, now 231 in number, set off for the Attakapas District from New Orleans with three months worth of supplies and accompanied by engineer Louis Andry.¹¹³ The provisions allotted the Acadians included bread, and flour (despite the shortage), rice, salted beef, axes, muskets, nails, old clothes, and an assortment of tools.¹¹⁴ Because the colonial government lacked adequate funds, Foucault himself bought "most of the necessities from individuals,"¹¹⁵ indicating the decision on the part of the colonial officials to aid the exiles in their establishment in Louisiana. That the colonial government only allocated supplies for an additional three months reflects its anticipation of Acadian self-sufficiency within the year.¹¹⁶ Self-sufficiency would relieve the colonial government from what it perceived as its charitable duty to assist the Acadians in providing for themselves until they were able to do so independently.

By sending the Beausoleil group to the Attakapas District to contribute to the development of the cattle industry, Aubry and Foucault were considering the needs of

¹¹² Conrad, "The Acadians," 11.

¹¹³ Ibid., 11; Voorhies "The Attakapas Post," 92.

¹¹⁴ Aubry and Foucault, New Orleans, 30 April 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 46-7.

¹¹⁵ Aubry and Foucault to Choiseul-Stainville, New Orleans, 30 September 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 53.

¹¹⁶ Voorhies, "The Attakapas Post," 91-2.

the future Spanish colony. The colonial government intended for the Acadians to settle on land previously owned by Antoine Dauterive and Edouard Masse, large land owners in the Attakapas and Opelousas, near what would become St. Martinville.¹¹⁷ Before leaving New Orleans, the Acadians under Beausoleil signed a contract with Dauterive on April 4, 1765.¹¹⁸ Dauterive had served as a military official and owned several land grants, such as another one he co-owned with Masse on the Prairie of Vermillion, west of the Teche.¹¹⁹ The Acadians agreed by this contract to tend cattle for Dauterive for six years, after which time they were to return the same number of cattle that they had received from him at the outset and to keep half of the remaining cattle. Eight Acadians, including Beausoleil accepted the contract, which Aubry and Foucault witnessed.¹²⁰ The cattle industry in the Attakapas and Opelousas was beginning to develop at this very time with the large vacheries of the four Frenchmen who received French land grants in those posts such as the Dauterive Masse grant of 1764, and the grant to Jean-Baptiste Grevemberg in July 1765.¹²¹ In 1760, Gabriel Fuselier de la Claire, who would later become commandant, purchased an Attakapas village from the Attakapas chief Kinemo and thus had an enormous land claim that reached from the Teche to the Vermillion River.¹²² Although the Acadians and Dauterive never fulfilled the terms of the contract,

¹¹⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 76; Voorhies, "The Attakapas Post," 93.

¹¹⁸ Grover Rees, trans, "The Dauterive Compact: the Foundation of the Acadian Cattle Industry," *Attakapas Gazette* 11 (1976): 91.

¹¹⁹ Laura Porteus, trans, "Index to the Spanish Judicial Records of Louisiana," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 8 (1925): 528-9; Jacqueline K. Voorhies, annotations, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 73n.

¹²⁰ Rees, "The Dauterive Compact," 91.

¹²¹ Glen R. Conrad, comp., *Land Records of the Attakapas, Volume I, The Attakapas Domesday Book* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwest Louisiana, 1990), 8.

¹²² Fontenot and Freeland, *Acadia Parish, Louisiana*, 11.

in part at least because of Dauterive's quarrelsome personality, the very fact that the signing of the agreement took place in Aubry's chambers and that he and Foucault signed it, as well, reflects the French colonial government's approval of and support for the instigation of the Acadian cattle industry west of the Atchafalaya.¹²³ It also demonstrates that these French colonial officials recognized an important role for the new Acadian settlers within the colony's economy and for future Spanish defense.

Aubry had provided Andry with detailed but flexible instructions dated April 16, 1765 for settling the Acadians. The French colonial government recognized Beausoleil as "leader of the settlement."¹²⁴ As such, the instructions stated that Andry should designate Beausoleil's parcel of land before those of the other settlers. The first paragraph instructed Andry: "With them [the Acadians] choose the most suitable site for the establishment of a village where these new colonists wish to be reunited." The French colonial officials clearly understood that the "new colonists" were seeking to re-establish their community. Appearing to take into consideration the important role of kinship to the Acadians, they ordered the distribution of land in proportion to family size, in such a way that "when the children marry they will have the satisfaction of being close to their father and mother." Aubry and Foucault specifically stated the necessity of locating the settlement "along a navigable river," absent of signs of flooding. Such an absence reduced future colonial costs and facilitated better communication routes within the colony. Unlike the later Spanish government, the French colonial government provided flexibility within its instructions. Aubry and Foucault "approve[d] all changes

¹²³ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 92; Rees, "The Dauterive Compact," 91.

¹²⁴ Aubry and Foucault to Louis Andry, 17 April 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 35.

he [Andry] is likely to make.” The instructions to Andry reveal the intent of the colonial officials to found a settlement in keeping with the layout of traditional European villages: while residing within the village, the Acadians should cultivate land outside of it. Aubry and Foucault directed that “each farmer will cultivate his land as closely as possible to the center of the village.” However, the Acadians instead attempted to recreate their former living patterns by selecting land grants along Bayou Teche, as opposed to settling or establishing a village.¹²⁵ Mindful of the vacheries already in place in the Attakapas, the officials provided instructions for “common grazing land” outside of the village for the cattle. Beausoleil, Andry, two other settlers, and the Acadian grantee were to sign a register as a part of record keeping and to prevent confusion.¹²⁶ Thus, Aubry and Foucault’s instructions to Andry not only allowed but advocated the participation of the Acadians and their leaders in decision making and record keeping of the settlement.

This Acadian settlement in the Attakapas incited early conflict over land with the local Creoles and Frenchmen. Although the Acadians initially intended to settle at Dauterive’s former vacherie, Dauterive’s neighbors viewed the Acadians as trespassers.¹²⁷ The Acadians selected their own parcels of land and settled in groups.¹²⁸ Instead they settled at Fausse Pointe, farther north on the Teche, and La Pointe de

¹²⁵ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 76.

¹²⁶ Aubry and Foucault to Louis Andry, 17 April 1765, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 34-6 quotations; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 76.

¹²⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 92

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

Repose, along a bend in the bayou, just south of present-day Breaux Bridge.¹²⁹ At Fausse Pointe, settling on either side of the Teche, they purchased cattle instead from Jean-Baptiste Grevemberg, who became irate when the Acadians petitioned for patents to their land. Considering himself the owner of a tract of land from the Teche to the Vermillion River, Grevemberg took his complaints before Aubry and Foucault, who decided in favor of the Acadians.¹³⁰ Acadian difficulties in transitioning to life in the Attakapas included trials beyond disputes over rights to land.

The epidemic that struck during the summer of 1765 forced the Acadians to re-disperse within Louisiana. An epidemic struck during the summer of 1765 lasting through the fall at La Pointe de Repose.¹³¹ The effects of the epidemic are realized in the parish register of St. Martin de Tours in St. Martinville: of those baptisms of children recorded in the register, only that of Marie Pellerin, whose mother was Acadian, on January 11, 1766, does not have a note with it, as all those preceding it do, indicating that the child died shortly after baptism.¹³² In November 1765, the parish register records thirty-nine deaths, including that of Beausoleil and two other “Acadian chiefs,” who had also signed the contract with Dauterive, Joseph Guilbeau “l’officier,” and Jean Dugas, both in September.¹³³ Thus, the epidemic deprived the Acadian settlers of leaders of the group, including their most important leader, whose status Fr. Valentin

¹²⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, “Acadian Settlement Patterns, 1765-1900,” in *Creoles and Cajuns: French Louisiana*, ed. Wolfgang Binder (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 19; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 94.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 92; Maurine Bergerie, *They Tasted Bayou Water: A Brief History of Iberia Parish* (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1962), 9.

¹³¹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 91-5; 27 July 1765, “Copie d’un Vieux Registre,” 5.

¹³² “Copie d’un Vieux Registre,” 3-11.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 3-11, 45; Rees, “The Dauterive Compact,” 91.

recognized when he recorded notice of his death and burial, calling him “capitaine commandant les Acadiens des Attakapas.”¹³⁴ The epidemic caused some Acadians to remove themselves to Opelousas, then along the Teche, and to establish two other settlements: Côte Gelée along Bayou Tortue’s west bank, on the other side of which was Dauterive’s grant, and La Manque, on the Teche upstream from Fausse Pointe.¹³⁵ Others traveled to Cabahannocé, including Pierre Arceneaux, Longfellow’s prototype for Gabriel.¹³⁶ Despite re-dispersal, the Acadians continued to settle according to kinship.¹³⁷ The Acadian families fit into two major family groupings, one the Broussard-Thibodeaux-Trahan-Martin family, and, the other, the Guilbeaux family, and they settled accordingly.¹³⁸ Faced with trials from the beginning of their settlement in the Attakapas, the Beausoleil group of Acadians epitomized Acadian will to establish themselves in Louisiana in settlements based upon kinship.

Besides the loss of their “leader,” the Acadians were subjected to the negligent treatment of the Opelousas commandant. Colonial politics and familial political power had ramifications for these early Attakapas and Opelousas settlers. The first commandant of those posts, a Creole, Louis Pellerin, made an advantageous marriage that allied him with the attorney general of Louisiana, Nicolas Chauvin de Lafrénière, whose influence raised Pellerin to the rank of commandant and also allowed Pellerin to feel free of legal constraints. Pellerin hoped to amass enough wealth to retire to France. As commandant, Pellerin entered into a feud with the post’s priest Fr. Valentin, which

¹³⁴ “Copie d’un Vieux Registre,” 45.

¹³⁵ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 94.

¹³⁶ Brasseaux, “Acadian Settlement Patters, 1765-1900,” 19.

¹³⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 94.

¹³⁸ Arceneaux, “Acadian to Cajun,” 76-77.

began with Valentin's opposition to Pellerin's cabaret. Pellerin also attempted to establish a monopoly at the trading post, where he inflated the prices of the goods, and he attempted to end the monopoly on the fur trade held by local military leader Courtableau. As part of his efforts to gain a trading monopoly, Pellerin forbade residents at the Opelousas post from trading with Native Americans. When the supplies and rations promised by the colonial government to the Acadians arrived, Pellerin seized them, and promptly left his post to accompany Spanish governor Ulloa through part of his tour of the lower Louisiana posts.¹³⁹ Not only, then, did Pellerin confiscate aid promised the Acadians, but he also deserted them after depriving them of their much needed supplies. Pellerin clearly failed to live up to his duties as commandant, described by Ulloa as to "aid [the Acadians] them with what is given to them for their basic sustenance, and minister justice."¹⁴⁰ Pellerin behaved in quite the opposite manner.

The Acadians under his jurisdiction applied their custom of petitioning officials in attempting to resolve the troubles caused by the commandant at their new settlement. By the end of August 1767, the non-Acadian settlers of Opelousas persuaded the Acadians to petition Governor Ulloa with their grievances, a list which included the Acadians' misappropriated supplies and Pellerin's abandonment of the post.¹⁴¹ Nine Acadians living at La Pointe, La Manque, and Côte Gelée proclaimed their support for Fr. Valentin to Ulloa and even asked for a new commandant.¹⁴² Grevemberg and two of

¹³⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, "Frontier Tyranny: the Case of Commandant Louis Pellerin, 1764-1767," *McNeese Review* 26 (1979/1980):15-17.

¹⁴⁰ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 25 June 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 75.

¹⁴¹ Brasseaux, "Frontier Tyranny," 19.

¹⁴² Jean-Baptiste Broussard, Olivier Thibodaux, Rene Breaux, Jean Trahan, Michel Trahan, Paul Thibodaux, Charles Dugas, Charles Guilbeau, and Armand Thibodaux to Ulloa, Attakapas District, 27 August 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 95-96.

his sons acted as witnesses to the letter, demonstrating their support for the appeal of the Acadians.¹⁴³ Such procedure followed traditional Acadian approach to dealings with colonial and governmental officials in Acadia and in the American colonies. Ulloa's response indicated his desire to retain the colonists. When the colonists at Opelousas suggested that they might leave Louisiana for British West Florida because they would be able to live there less harassed, Ulloa immediately informed Aubry that he must find a way to appease the settlers. In the end, Pellerin was court-martialed and discharged from his position as commandant, and the settlers were granted the right to select two co-commandants.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, his abuses as commandant serve as an example of the power and dangers of an unchecked colonial official, contributing to the dangers of instability which plagued the late French and early Spanish colonial governments.

Those Acadians living at Cabahannocé experienced a more dutiful commandant than their countrymen to the west. During the summer of 1766 when fevers spread among the Acadian settlers, also suffering from malnutrition, one of the commandants, Nicolas Verret, estimated that a fifth of the entire settlement was sick. The shortage of food, particularly of corn, was apparent, as the Acadians were "reduced to a diet of grits and boiled rice." Verret wrote to Ulloa addressing the illness of the Acadians and the system for obtaining their aid. Verret suggested building a hospital of sorts to consolidate the patients in one location so that the local doctor could better administer to them and an alteration in the system for fetching flour. The Acadians had been traveling to New Orleans, a round trip of "ten to twelve days," followed by a series of

¹⁴³ Ibid., 96.

¹⁴⁴ Brasseaux, "Frontier Tyranny," 20.

bureaucratic steps before they could obtain their flour. Verret proposed that he and his co-commandant, Louis Judice, be entrusted with the flour and granted permission to apportion it out, thus maximizing the time Acadians could spend tending “their small crops.” Verret and Judice, then, were willing to take on “a great deal of work...for the greater good of the colony,” as opposed to Pellerin, who focused solely advancing his own interests.¹⁴⁵ In the comparison of Pellerin with Verret and Judice, their response simply to the task of distributing rations and supplies to the Acadians reflects the influence of the power and will of the commandants on the Acadians.

Acadian kinship affected the settlement of Cabahannocé, settled mostly between 1765 and 1770. The Acadians settled along both sides of the Mississippi in family groups. For example, the Prejean-Richard-Duyon family settled as a group at Cabahannocé: brothers Basil and Amand Prejean on adjacent land grants, with Amand’s son Marin on the other side, bounded also by Joseph and Charles Prejean, brothers of Basil and Amand. On the other side of Charles Prejean lived relatives of his wife Marguerite Richard, on the other side of whom lived Marie Prejean, sister of the aforementioned Prejeans, and her husband Charles Duyon whose brother Claude Duyon was granted land on the other side of them.¹⁴⁶ The distribution of land also set aside land for

¹⁴⁵ Verret to Ulloa, Kabahanosse, 10 June 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 72-74.

¹⁴⁶ Jaqueline K. Voorhies, comp., *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians* (Lafayette, LA: University of Southwest Louisiana History Series, 1973), 116, 204, 205; Carl A. Brasseaux, “Footnote to the Acadian Migration: the Prejean Family,” *Attakapas Gazette* 24 (1989): 17; Wendy Pitre Roostan, “Family of Joseph Prejean and Marie Louise Comeau” <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/pitretrail/myline/paternal/JPrejeanMLC.htm> (accessed January 29, 2007); Steven A. Cormier, “Acadian Immigrants to Cabanoce/St.-Jacques, 1765,” <http://www.acadiansingray.com/Appendices-Acadians%20to%20Cabanoce.%201765.htm> (accessed January 29, 2007); RootsWeb.com, Inc., “Ancestors of Rev. Donald J. Hébert,” <http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=katheriot1&id=I10300> (accessed January 29, 2007).

anticipated Acadian families, such as the plot between Charles Bergeron's and the Widow Mellenson's grants on the right bank at Cabahannocé, and between the grants of Marcel LeBlanc and Michel Verret.¹⁴⁷ Early settlement of the Acadians then in the eastern settlements reflected the value Acadians placed upon settlement ordered by kinship.

Despite differences during this initial period of Acadian settlement of the First Acadian Coast, Acadians and Creoles served together as leaders in of the church of St. Jacques de Cabahannocé, named in honor of Jacques Cantrelle who donated land for its construction. The first church wardens for the settlement included prominent French planter Jacques Cantrelle, Acadians Simon LeBlanc and Ambroise Martin.¹⁴⁸

Construction of the church did not actually take place until 1770. However, missionaries traveled to Cabahannocé for religious ceremonies and to offer the sacraments. Acadians, who were accustomed to a scarcity of clergy but still required their assistance for record keeping and most sacraments, turned to the clergy to preside over marriage ceremonies. Because missionaries were the only priests available to them, the Acadians married in groups. For example, On November 8, 1767, five couples were married at the home of Co-Commandant Louis Judice before Fr. Barnabé, who visited from the German Coast. Between three and four hundred Acadians attempted to attend the mass, a reflection of the important role of the sacraments as a source of unity within the community.¹⁴⁹

Despite the hesitancy of the Acadians to contribute funding to the building of a church, Acadians donated a chalice, candlesticks, pews, and holy water font. Joseph Bourgeois

¹⁴⁷ Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians*. 202, 203.

¹⁴⁸ Bourgeois, *Cabanocey*, 17.

¹⁴⁹ Jacqueline K. Voorhies, "Kabahonosse," *Attakapas Gazette* 6 (1971) :150.

built a fence around the cemetery.¹⁵⁰ Although perhaps less willing than other colonists to contribute monetarily to the local churches, Acadians transported their frontier based concepts of the role and importance of religion to their communities to Louisiana.

Acadian settlement in Louisiana under the French established foundations for the future growth, as well as precedents to which Spanish policy would later be compared. Because French policy was cooperative with Acadian culture, the Acadians successfully re-implemented the traditional practice of settlement in kinship-based groups and continued the use of petition to address colonial governments. The overlap of Acadian settlement in Louisiana and French governance of the colony witnessed the emergence of two areas of Acadian settlement in the colony, as well as the beginnings of Acadian participation in the economy of the colony. By encouraging Acadian settlement and Acadian participation in the cattle industry, officials such as Aubry and Foucault sought to bolster future Spanish efforts in creating a successful colony. Nevertheless, colonial financial constraints, a result of French desire to be rid of the colony and its expenses, directly affected the locations in which Acadians settled during the French period. Consequently, Acadian settlement reflects French policy, a result of the priorities of the French desire to speedily transfer Louisiana to Spain.

¹⁵⁰ Bourgeois, *Cabanocey*, 17; Voorhies, "Kabahonosse," 151.

CHAPTER III: ULLOA, DEFENSE, AND ACADIAN RESISTANCE

The specific defense strategy of first Spanish governor Ulloa spurred Acadian resistance to the Spanish vision of settlement during his governorship. Spanish policies transformed the imperial role of Louisiana and Acadian settlement both into that of buffers, Louisiana for all of Spanish North America, and Acadian settlement for the colony of Louisiana. The settlements, situated near forts would serve to counteract British forts across the river, and possession of Louisiana would postpone any British interest or British colonial settlement in New Spain. Such policies resulted in the placement of Acadian settlements along the Mississippi, against the will of the newly arrived Acadian immigrants and in contrast to the precedents of settlement established by French policy. Consequently, Ulloa's particular defense strategy created and exacerbated friction between the Acadians and colonial officials. The disgruntled Acadians then became willing to participate in the Revolt of 1768, which overthrew Ulloa and forced the removal of Spanish authority from the colony.

The first Spanish governor of Louisiana, Antonio de Ulloa did not set out to impose major changes upon the colony. Ulloa arrived in New Orleans on March 5, 1766. Carlos III selected him for the position as first Spanish colonial governor of Louisiana in part because he had lived in France for a time, spoke French, and had also had administrative experience in Peru.¹⁵¹ In commissioning Ulloa as governor on May 21, 1765, the king ordered that "in this new acquisition, for the present, no change in the system of its government shall be undertaken and, consequently, that in no way shall it

¹⁵¹ Din, "Protecting the Barrera," 185; R.E. Chandler, "Ulloa and the Acadians," *Louisiana History* 21 (1980): 88.

be subject to laws and practices observed in my dominion of the Indies.”¹⁵² With regard to the Acadians, Ulloa received orders in 1767 to “give them for their settlement and subsistence the same aid and assistance that France has been giving them, as well as six hens and a rooster per family.”¹⁵³ These two orders indicate the intent of the Spanish to create continuity with the French colonial government that preceded them.

Nevertheless, Louisiana’s new role in defense changed colonial settlement policy.

Spain regarded its new colony as a substantial “buffer for the kingdoms of New Spain” against the British.¹⁵⁴ Because of the great length of its border with British territory and the lack of adequate soldiers to man it, Ulloa considered that “the inhabitants, as militiamen, must be considered soldiers settled in the territory.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, Ulloa suggested that all the British need do was to cross the Mississippi to take possession of Louisiana.¹⁵⁶ Concerned over the threat to Louisiana and hence to Texas and New Spain, Ulloa relayed to his superiors the urgency of “populat[ing] the banks as thickly as possible.”¹⁵⁷ Thus, the Acadians fit well into Spanish plans for Louisiana. In seeking a new homeland, they had already begun to immigrate to the colony and encourage their friends and relatives to do the same, thus helping to reverse the stagnation of the colony’s population. Therefore, as settlers, the Acadians could also fill

¹⁵² Lawrence Kinnaird, ed. and introduction, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-94: Translations from the Spanish Archives in the Bancroft Library*, vol 1., (Washington D.C.: American Historical Association, 1949), 1.

¹⁵³ Grimaldi to Ulloa, Aranjuez, 27 May 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 88.

¹⁵⁴ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 9 July 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 78 quotation; John Francis Bannon, “The Spaniards in the Mississippi Valley: An Introduction,” in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804*, ed., John Francis McDermott (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 12; Din, “Protecting the ‘Barrera,’” 183.

¹⁵⁵ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 65.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 67-8.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 67-9.

another role, that of settler-soldier, and act as buffers against potential British aggression.

Ulloa hoped to encourage immigration to Louisiana to increase the colonial population. This policy ran counter to Spain's standard stance on colonial immigration to its colonies, especially the immigration of non-Spaniards.¹⁵⁸ In this regard, in Louisiana, the Spanish exhibited uncharacteristic willingness to change nearly uniform colonial immigration standards.¹⁵⁹ As of May 19, 1766, Ulloa described the population as "nil due to the immense territories that it inhabits."¹⁶⁰ Promoting immigration and aiding the new settlers in establishing themselves would require funding.¹⁶¹ Spanish financial commitment reflected the gravity with which the Spanish approached their new colony, and this monetary commitment juxtaposed French neglect of the population and funding of Louisiana for decades. Louisiana "should be populated, and to do this, it is necessary to spend large sums and to do so immediately;"¹⁶² thus, Ulloa conveyed the urgency of the need. Accordingly, and upon Ulloa's request, the Spanish government allocated 252 pesos per annum "for the enlargement of the colonial population."¹⁶³ Indeed, over the course of Ulloa's governorship, the population did increase with the arrival of several hundred more Acadians. The project of augmenting the population of the colony also served to further Spanish defense policy.

¹⁵⁸ Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xix.

¹⁵⁹ Bannon, "The Spaniards in the Mississippi Valley," 12-13.

¹⁶⁰ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 65.

¹⁶¹ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 29 September 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 79.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁶³ Grimaldi to Ulloa, Aranjuez, 29 May 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 88.

Ulloa promoted the support of Spanish decision and policy makers by drawing on Acadian history, the success of Acadians already in Louisiana, and the economic asset they would become for the colony. As frontiersmen, they were “good marksmen” and had experience “waging war” against both the British and the Native Americans.¹⁶⁴ In addition, Ulloa suggested that British disdain for the Acadians might also benefit Spanish Louisiana. He reasoned that the British might then agree to the prospect of Acadian emigration from British colonies.¹⁶⁵ In his argument, Ulloa used the Acadians already in Louisiana as a positive example to promote the cause of expending considerable money on their settlement: “These people...have prospered in very little time. In only one year, a single man, having under his care a wife, children and, in some cases, a widow, sister, sister-in-law or mother living with his own family, has cleared the four arpents that have been given to him; has built a dyke to contain the river within its banks [and to keep it from] flooding the land; [and has cleared] a road over which a cart can travel. He has built a house, and cultivated land, and [built] wooden fences.”¹⁶⁶ Such development of infrastructure and motivation would surely be an asset to the building of population, economy, and infrastructure. By September 1766, Ulloa was explicit about the necessity of aiding the Acadians whose immigration was literally vital to the colony: “we must spend money on them, give them what they need, and continue doing so until they have a way to support themselves, which requires at least two years.”¹⁶⁷ He proposed that the prospect of land, paid passage to Louisiana, livestock,

¹⁶⁴ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 67.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁶⁷ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 29 September 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 78.

supplies, and rations would both attract the Acadians to the colony and assist them in becoming self-sufficient.¹⁶⁸ Ulloa's initial intent to assist the Acadians reflected very much that of his French predecessors Aubry and Foucault, the difference being that Ulloa believed it possible to supply the continuous influx of Acadians with provisions and aid. In addition to their settlements serving as a buffer against the British, should Spain want Louisiana to develop beyond a mere barrier, then Ulloa argued that the Acadians could be of service in planting cash crops.¹⁶⁹ Thus, early on, Ulloa argued fervently in favor of Acadian immigration and settlement in Louisiana. Nevertheless, Ulloa's favorable opinion of the Acadians as colonists later changed as a result of Acadian resistance to his defense strategy and the then strained Spanish colonial finances.

Ulloa planned to build forts accompanied by settlements at several strategic locations along the Mississippi: across from the British forts at Manchac and Natchez, at the mouth of the Mississippi River, and at the junction of the Mississippi and the Missouri. The Acadians became such an integral part of Ulloa's strategy that he considered sending thirty families to Illinois.¹⁷⁰ While Acadians did not in the end join the party sent to Illinois, theirs were the accompanying settlements of the forts across from Natchez and Manchac (see Figure 2). Ulloa intended to provide for the defense of Louisiana by juxtaposing British forts and by populating isolated sections of the

¹⁶⁸ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 19 May 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 66.

¹⁶⁹ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 29 September 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 79.

¹⁷⁰ Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 188-9.

Mississippi.¹⁷¹ With Ulloa's defense policy, the Acadians became a fundamental element of Spanish defense along the Mississippi River.¹⁷²

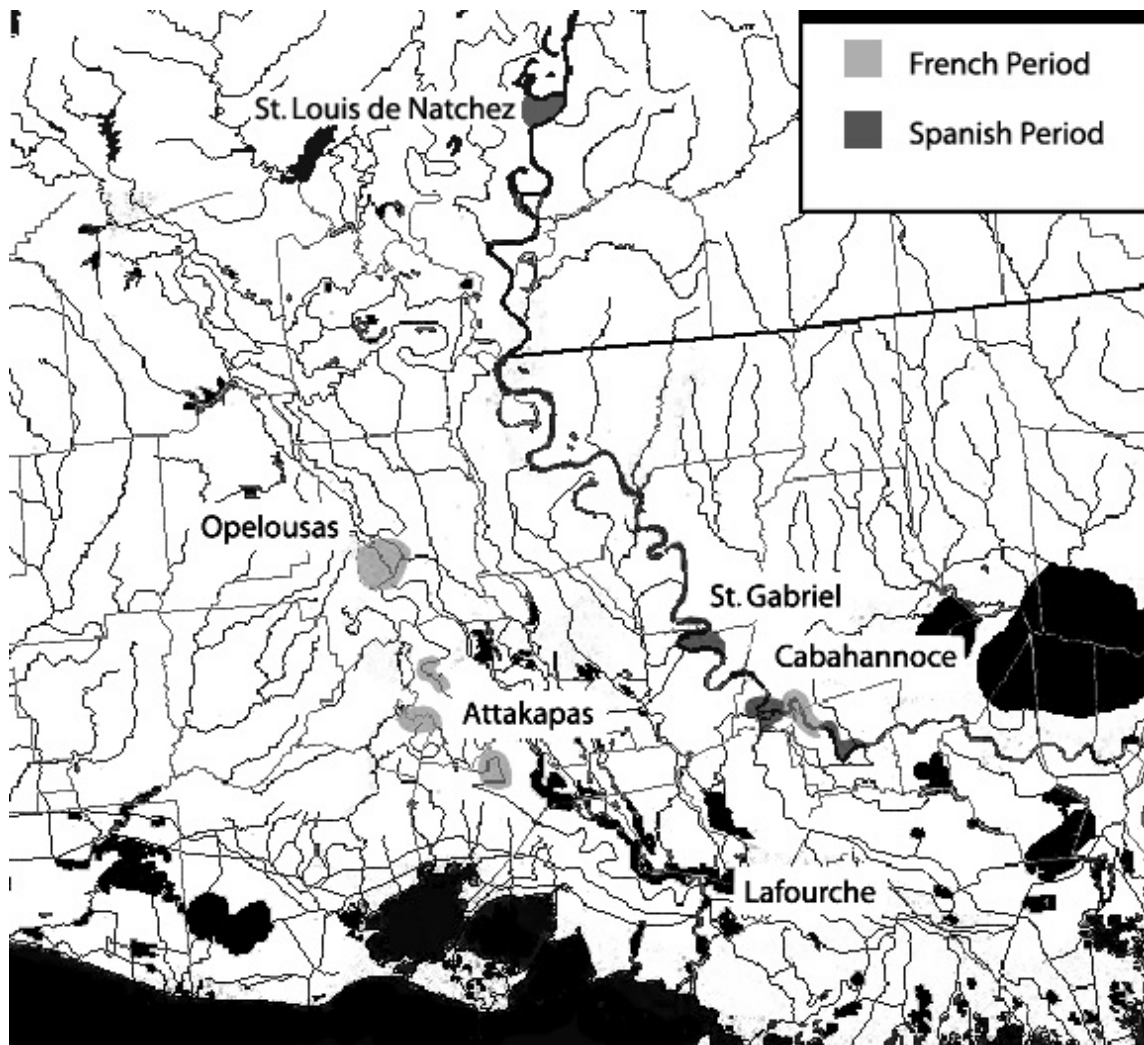


Figure 2. Acadian Settlement, 1768

¹⁷¹ Carl A. Brasseaux, "A New Acadia: the Acadian Migration to South Louisiana 1764-1803," *Acadiensis* 15 (1985): 128.

¹⁷² Voorhies, "The Acadians," 86.

Ulloa's continuation of French settlement policy and Acadian correspondence created a perspective of settlement under the Spanish among the Acadians that eventually clashed with the settlement policy that resulted from the implementation of Ulloa's defense plans. Acadians in Louisiana invited their relatives and fellow Acadians in France and in the British North American colonies to join them in Louisiana. The settlement practices of the French colonial government created an expectation among the Acadians that those arriving would settle with relatives and friends in locations of their own choice east or west of the Atchafalaya. Jean-Baptiste Semer, for example, wrote to his relatives in France of the abundance and opportunities Louisiana offered.¹⁷³ Semer's correspondence with his father at LeHavre represents and indicates the "steady flow of correspondence that crossed the Atlantic in the 1760s, 1770s, and 1780s."¹⁷⁴ Such correspondence demonstrates that the network of kinship among the Acadians persisted after the dispersal. Correspondence with Acadians in France would play a role some fifteen to twenty years later with the influx of about 1,600 Acadians from France to Louisiana. Like Semer, other members of the Beausoleil party and other early Acadian colonists wrote to their relatives, many of whom were in Maryland and Pennsylvania.¹⁷⁵ Acadian promotion of immigration was compelling enough that a contingency of Catholics from Maryland expressed interest in settling in Louisiana themselves, much encouraged by the "many letters from the Acadians to their Countrymen, praying them

¹⁷³ Mouhot, "Une Ultime Revenante?" 124-129.

¹⁷⁴ Brasseaux, "A New Acadia," 29.

¹⁷⁵ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 46.

to speed themselves to partake of their good fortune in that fruitful region.”¹⁷⁶ Indeed, prior to the completion of his defense strategy, Ulloa continued to allow the Acadians to settle alongside those already established. For this reason, one group of Acadians from Maryland, which arrived in late September 1766, was “given land next to those who are already settled, and it has been done this way with all [of the exiles].”¹⁷⁷ This practice created false hope among the Acadians for the settlement of their countrymen to arrive in the upcoming year. Because settlement “has been done this way with all [of the exiles],” however, Ulloa’s implemented defense project stood in opposition to the precedent that had already developed regarding Acadian settlement. Ulloa’s strict policies with regard to settlement contrasted severely with the flexibility of French policies.¹⁷⁸ According to his fort-settlement strategy, when Acadians arrived to join family along the Mississippi and in the western districts, they “were forcibly dispersed in conformity with Spanish defensive strategy.”¹⁷⁹ While Ulloa’s defense policy certainly encouraged Acadian immigration, he did not realize the extent to which Acadian desires to reunite with relatives and re-assemble communities affected their understanding of settlement within the colony. Indeed, the Acadians had good relations with the Spanish colonial government until 1767 and 1768, when tensions between the two developed, a direct result of Ulloa’s plans for settlement by force.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, although Acadians in

¹⁷⁶ Jerningham to Ulloa, St. Mary’s County, MD, 28 November 1767, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 36.

¹⁷⁷ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 29 September 1766; Ulloa to Grimaldi, Balise, 6 December 1766, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 81 quotation.

¹⁷⁸ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 73.

¹⁷⁹ Brasseaux, “A New Acadia,” 127.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 126-7.

Louisiana and Ulloa both hoped to encourage Acadian immigration to the colony, their purposes for promoting that immigration came into conflict.

The Acadians sent to Fort St. Gabriel, across from British Fort Bute at Manchac, and to Fort St. Louis de Natchez both attempted to reject the orders to settle near the isolated forts so far removed from their relatives. Arriving in July 1767 from Maryland, 210 Acadians expressed a desire to settle at Cabahannocé.¹⁸¹ As of August 5, 1767, Joseph de Loyola described the Acadian party assigned to go to St. Gabriel as mostly “women, widows, maidens, and children, as well as those who are ill... little disposed to seek their destiny.”¹⁸² Nevertheless, Ulloa promptly sent them on their way to St. Gabriel three days later.¹⁸³ The Spanish also experienced difficulty in convincing 149 Acadians, who had arrived from Maryland on February 4, 1768, to settle at Fort St. Louis de Natchez.¹⁸⁴ Ulloa sent out explicit instructions to commandants of other posts ordering them to “prevent any newly arrived Acadians from settling in your districts.”¹⁸⁵ Only the threat of expulsion from Louisiana compelled these two groups of Acadians to bend to the demands of the colonial officials.¹⁸⁶ En route to Natchez, “a few families tried to remain in Iberville,” but the commandant Pedro Piernas “even forced to return and continue the journey a family who, without my knowledge, had detached itself from

¹⁸¹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 80-81.

¹⁸² Loyola to Ulloa, New Orleans, August 5, 1767, trans. Angelita Garcia Alonzo, *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, legajo 109, reel 1, Center for Louisiana Studies, University Louisiana Lafayette.

¹⁸³ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 25 August 1767, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 94.

¹⁸⁴ R.E. Chandler, “Odyssey Continued: Acadians Arrive at Natchez,” *Louisiana History* 19 (1978): 447.

¹⁸⁵ Ulloa to the Commandants of the Opelousas, Attakapas, Pointe Coupée, Cabannoce, and Des Allemands Posts, New Orleans, 4 April 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 123-5.

¹⁸⁶ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 81.

us and was five leagues away in the home of a relative.”¹⁸⁷ Once they had arrived at Natchez, the Acadians continued in their efforts to reject the permanent settlement there.

The Acadians sent to settle near St. Gabriel and Natchez endured similar experiences, although that of the Acadians at Natchez proved more severe. Besides separation from family with whom the arriving Acadians believed they would be settling, they also encountered frontier life at posts at risk from British and Native American attack. The commandants of the posts, Ulloa, and other colonial officials were aware of the dangers existing at the two forts.

Correspondence between the commandants of the posts and Ulloa reflect the application of colonial policy at these posts and the importance of uniformity to the Spanish government. The instructions given for the settlement of the Acadians at St. Gabriel and St. Louis de Natchez were nearly identical.¹⁸⁸ The commandants Orieta and Piernas both sent reports to Ulloa of the happenings at their posts very regularly. Orieta updated Ulloa multiple times as to the progress of land distribution among the Acadians, and when he had completed that task, he sent Ulloa a detailed “[I]ist of the lands which have been assigned to chiefs or heads of Acadian families newly settled in the settlement of the Fort St. Gabriel.”¹⁸⁹ The format of this list is very similar to those censuses taken by Verret and Judice, who retained their posts under the Spanish, at Cabahannocé in that they list the Acadians in the order of their property, as Ulloa prescribed: “the lands that are to be distributed to the new Acadian settlers...in the order that the families hold in

¹⁸⁷ Piernas to Ulloa, Pointe Coupée, 8 March 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 114.

¹⁸⁸ Chandler, “Odyssey Continued,” 451.

¹⁸⁹ R.E. Chandler, “The St. Gabriel Acadians: the First Five Months,” *Louisiana History* 21 (1980): 292.

the list which accompanies this document, so that the first on the list will also be the first in the distribution of land.”¹⁹⁰ Consistency from one fort to another reflects Spanish preference for uniformity in their colonial dealings, from the precise lists of settlers in the order that they settled on their tracts of land to the desire on Ulloa’s part that the forts of St. Gabriel and St. Louis de Natchez be both built of cypress wood.¹⁹¹ Land distribution was also similar at both forts. In both cases, the fort was not located centrally between Acadian lands, rather the land granted the Acadians were completely to one side of the fort.¹⁹² Perhaps considering that Orieta himself bent the instructions in order “to place relatives alongside one another,”¹⁹³ the instructions for the Natchez group include a modification that “One should try, however, to locate them according to families and relatives.”¹⁹⁴ Attempting to reduce Acadian resistance to settling at St. Gabriel and Natchez, the Spanish, recognizing the importance of family to the Acadian identity and culture, modified their plans for the two forts. The instructions to the commandants of Fort St. Gabriel and Fort St. Louis de Natchez regarding the settlement of the Acadians at these forts reflect the precise planning of the Spanish defense policy that insisted upon conformity.

Friction between Spanish officials and the Acadians of the two forts continued to mount, especially at St. Louis de Natchez. The commandants of the forts consistently included complaints about the Acadians in their reports to Ulloa. Before the convoy of the Acadians headed by Piernas reached St. Louis de Natchez, he already described them

¹⁹⁰ Chandler, “Odyssey Continued,” 452.

¹⁹¹ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 28 April 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 131.

¹⁹² Chandler, “Odyssey Continued,” 451.

¹⁹³ Chandler, “The St. Gabriel Acadians,” 293.

¹⁹⁴ Chandler, “Odyssey Continued,” 453.

as “always pestering and begging as is their nature.”¹⁹⁵ From shortly after the arrival of the Acadians, Orieta cited a growing tension between himself and them. He accused the Acadians of being “lazy and always in disagreement with each other.”¹⁹⁶ In the instructions for the Acadians settling at Fort. St. Louis de Natches, Ulloa included “that the Acadians are very demanding, bothersome and difficult to please, to the point that they become boring with their repetitious requests in the manner of beggars.”¹⁹⁷ Thus, the Spanish officials had become prejudiced and predisposed to dismiss the complaints of the Acadians. Aware of the dangers that the Acadians faced at the post of St. Louis de Natchez, colonial officials nevertheless down-played Acadian concerns. Nicholas Verret, upon Ulloa’s request, journeyed to Natchez where he “took the Acadians on a surveying tour of the land.” While he reported to Ulloa that “the land [was] quite suitable for settlement,” the Acadians “either through prejudice or obstinacy, refuse to remain here. They all agree that the land is suitable, but too isolated. Their wives and their children would be exposed to Indian harassment, and they themselves would live in constant fear.” Verret argued with them that their “so-called fears were unwarranted.”¹⁹⁸ In keeping with Acadian tradition, the settlers at St. Louis de Natchez sent three representatives with a petition to Ulloa after their arrival at Natchez. Piernas listed the complaints of the Acadians, each followed by a rebuttal, thus compromising any opportunity for Acadians relocation.¹⁹⁹ The Acadians complained “that the land is bad for settlement,” “that thus settled some would be farther from the fort, and therefore

¹⁹⁵ Judice to Ulloa, Cabannocé, 14 February, 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 114.

¹⁹⁶ Chandler, “The St. Gabriel Acadians,” 292.

¹⁹⁷ Chandler, “Odyssey Continued,” 452.

¹⁹⁸ Verret to Ulloa, Cabannocé, 26 March 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 116.

¹⁹⁹ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 27 March 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 116-121.

deprived of its protection,” and that they feared raids by the Native Americans.²⁰⁰

Piernas refuted the threat posed by the Native Americans, although he admitted that “everyday they have seen Indians.” Although these had “come to provide the fort with meat, grease, lard, etc.,”²⁰¹ the Acadians could not question that the fort lay in an area populated predominantly by Native Americans. Acadian displeasure with the location of Ft. St. Louis de Natchez conflicted with the official opinions of commandants conforming to official Spanish defense policy.

Entangled in the Acadian-resistance to Ulloa’s plan to forcibly settle the group of approximately 150 at St. Louis de Natchez were the efforts of a family of Acadians, the Braud family, to settle together and in doing so to resist forced settlement at Natchez. Alexis and Honoré Braud led the group of approximately 150 Acadians from Maryland who immigrated to Louisiana with the intention of reuniting with family at Cabahannocé. However, the Braud brothers learned that Ulloa had ordered that their group settle at St. Louis de Natchez.²⁰² When the Acadians resisted the idea of settling at Natchez, Ulloa “discontinued the rations that the Acadians customarily received” and repeatedly threatened to force them from the colony in an effort to coerce the Brauds to conform.²⁰³ Ulloa hoped to squelch opposition to his plans that might encourage internal turmoil within the colony, which he already believed to sit precariously in danger of British and Native American attacks. After the group of Acadians agreed to travel to the fort at Natchez, the Brauds escaped the notice of Spanish officials, and Alexis went so

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 117.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 118.

²⁰² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 82-3.

²⁰³ Transcription of Honoré Braud’s Depositions before the Superior Council, New Orleans, 8-15 November 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 166.

far as to purchase a farm at Cabahannocé, while Honoré hid in the German Coast.²⁰⁴ After reaching St. Louis de Natchez, Piernas complained in late March 1767 that the Acadians forced to settle there used the success of the Brauds in remaining in the southern districts to argue for permission to settle along the Acadian Coast.²⁰⁵ One of the new leaders of this group of Acadians was Joseph Braud, a cousin of the two brothers, and he, according to Piernas, was “inciting the others to refuse to settle,” and led the Acadians who returned to New Orleans to petition Ulloa.²⁰⁶ Having left his family behind at St. Gabriel in the care of his sister and father-in-law, who had been members of a party of Acadians assigned to that settlement, in June he attempted to gain permission to settle permanently there himself on adjoining land.²⁰⁷ However, another threat of deportation on the part of Ulloa forced him to return to St. Louis de Natchez.²⁰⁸ Thus, Acadians motivated by desire to establish themselves alongside family previously established in Louisiana resisted forced settlement, and Ulloa responded with severe threats, demonstrating his desperation to squelch opposition to his policies and instability within the colony. However, his reaction only served to exacerbate the problem.

Ulloa responded definitively to the petition of the Acadians accompanied by Piernas’s commentary and the resistance of the various members of the Braud family to his decrees of settlement at the designated fort of St. Louis de Natchez. He sent a letter

²⁰⁴ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 83-5.

²⁰⁵ Piernas to Ulloa, San Luis de Natchez, 27 March 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 119.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 120; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 85-87.

²⁰⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 87; Transcription of Honoré Braud’s Depositions before the Superior Council, New Orleans, 8-15 November 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 168.

²⁰⁸ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 87.

to Orieta in April of 1768 and another to the other commandants forbidding them from allowing Acadians from the Natchez party to settle in their districts.²⁰⁹ He instructed Orieta to “convoke [a meeting of] all the heads of households of your post and let them know that no one should receive them regardless of the reason or the pretext of familial relationship, under pain of the following penalty: he who harbors them, contrary to my orders, will be expatriated from the colony with his family.”²¹⁰ In the circular letter, Ulloa specifically prohibited the Acadians from harboring “even relatives under any circumstances,” under penalty of “forfeiting their land grants.”²¹¹ Deprivation of their land would strip the Acadians of their ability to sustain themselves. Ulloa continued to threaten the Acadians with loss of “their lands and belongings, and...deportation” when a group of Acadians at Cabahannocé enabled Alexis Braud to escape to British Manchac.²¹² By such threats, Ulloa attempted to suppress Acadian opposition to forced settlement and by doing so to keep his defense policy intact. Ulloa hoped that diminishing opposition to his policies would reduce instability within the colony. The Braud incident reflects very well the clash between Acadian culture and the expectations and the defense policy of the Spanish governor and the heavy-handed administrative dealings of the Spanish colonial government.

²⁰⁹ Ulloa to Orieta, New Orleans, April 1768; Ulloa to the Commandants of the Opelousas, Attakapas, Pointe Coupée, Cabannoce, and Des Allemands Posts, New Orleans, 4 April 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 123-5.

²¹⁰ Ulloa to Orieta, New Orleans, April 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 123.

²¹¹ Ulloa to the Commandants of the Opelousas, Attakapas, Pointe Coupée, Cabannoce, and Des Allemands Posts, New Orleans, 4 April 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 123-5.

²¹² Judice to Ulloa, Cabannocé, 25 April 1768; 129, Ulloa to Judice, New Orleans, 6 June, 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 129, 141-2, 142 quotation; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 84-5.

Ulloa's apparent change of heart with regard to his opinion and level of generosity towards the Acadians coincided with increasing shortages and economic turmoil of the colony. Furthermore, the British presence so feared by Ulloa and other Spanish officials, decreased significantly in mid-1768 when the British withdrew from Natchez and Fort Bute, and reduced the number of troops stationed in West Florida.²¹³ With the reduction of this threat, Ulloa, now working with limited financial resources and awaiting the arrival of his requested funding, resented the expense that the forced settlement of the Acadians had consumed. In addition to supplies furnished the Acadians, because the settlement process was strategic and very deliberate, the colonial government also incurred costs such as that of paying Andres Balderrama 100 pesos "for two months assistance" to "conduct the recently arrived Acadians to the fort of Saint Louis de Natchez and other duties during the trip."²¹⁴ Ulloa's administration, like the French government before it, became "pressed for funds," in part because he was financing the expenses of both French and Spanish governments, establishment of new settlements, and supplying these new settlements. The king had increased the money allotted to Louisiana, but, because that money came through Mexico, Ulloa never saw his requested funds.²¹⁵ Unlike France, Spain was willing to invest in its newly acquired colony. The Spanish colonial government provided "guns, tools, and other instruments that of common use" to the Acadians sent to Natchez, along with "three months of foodstuffs and two payments of money so that they may be provided with

²¹³ Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 190-1; Duplessis to Ulloa, Pointe Coupée, 13 August 1768, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 151.

²¹⁴ Loyola to Ulloa, New Orleans, 8 February 1768, trans. Angelita Garcia Alonzo, *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, legajo 109, reel 1, Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana Lafayette.

²¹⁵ Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xvii.

necessities.”²¹⁶ However, because of the slow rate at which the Spanish bureaucracy functioned, instability surmounted the efforts of the first Spanish government. By early October 1767, Ulloa lamented to his superior Grimaldi of “the miserable conditions existing here on account of the scantiness of the funds” and argued that had the English withdrawn earlier, Spain might have avoided the costs of establishing settlements along the river. Instead, Spain now had to support them, “which are dependent upon them and must be protected from the attacks they might suffer from the Indians.”²¹⁷ Ulloa hoped to find the opportunity to cut costs of settling the Acadians by getting them to support “themselves with the aid of their own countrymen or otherwise without giving them anything more than lands when they ask for them.”²¹⁸ Although Ulloa had begun the settlement project of the Acadians at two of his strategic forts with much effort to detail and willingness to dispense necessary funds for the establishment of the immigrants so vital to his defense plans, when his colonial finances became strained, Ulloa reacted with frustration towards the need to continue to finance the Acadian settlements, which he had so deliberately ordained.

Ulloa’s policy of forced settlement of the Acadians, the Braud incident, and the governor’s diminished readiness to assist the Acadians in establishing themselves contributed to the readiness of the Acadians to participate in the revolt that overturned Ulloa in November of 1768. Merchants and planters reacting to Spanish economic policy and fearing of bankruptcy, a result of their own debt and shortage of money

²¹⁶ Loyola to Ulloa, New Orleans, 8 February 1768, trans. Angelita Garcia Alonzo, *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, legajo 109, reel 1, Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana Lafayette.

²¹⁷ Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, 6 October 1768, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 75.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

supply in Louisiana, instigated the revolt.²¹⁹ Those directing the plot against Ulloa's administration gained the support of Acadians at Cabahannocé by telling them that Ulloa had begun negotiations to sell them to the British as slaves because of the expense the crown had taken upon itself in establishing the Acadians.²²⁰ In reality, the British hoped to "indenture Acadian laborers for eighteen months."²²¹ The Acadians had resisted such indentures in the British North American colonies. While the claims of the revolt's leaders were not completely truthful, Ulloa had actually engaged in correspondence with British officials that might have resulted in the dreaded forced indenture that the Acadians believed they had escaped by journeying to Louisiana. Acadian acceptance of the claims of the said-leaders demonstrated the exiles' great suspicion of Ulloa and his administration, and Ulloa's correspondence with the British justifies their suspicion. In the end, approximately 200 Acadians participated in the Revolt of 1768.²²² According to the census of Cabahannocé in 1769, the men in the district numbered 163, so a vast majority as well as Acadians perhaps from other settlements must have participated in the revolt.²²³ Several Acadian families taking advantage of the mobility enabled by the absence of Spanish officials from November 1768 until August 1769, and they select lands of their preference. Seventeen Acadian families relocated to the western bank of the upper Lafourche. Such relocation may have been motivated by the opportunity that the sparsely settled Lafourche presented for providing families the ability to settle with

²¹⁹ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 116.

²²⁰ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768*, 72-3.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 72-3.

²²² Voorhies, annotations, *Quest for the Promised Land*, 116n.

²²³ Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians*, 468.

the knowledge that their children might settle nearby.²²⁴ Several other families left the eastern settlements of Cabahannocé and St. Gabriel for settlements in Opelousas and the Attakapas where they joined relatives.²²⁵ During the brief window when Louisiana lacked Spanish control in 1768 and 1769, the Acadians seized the opportunity to settle according to their choice and according to their tradition of kinship settlements.

While the revolt resulted mostly from a combination of economic fears of merchants and planters and the desire for power among former French officials, the leaders of the revolt recognized the distrust of the Acadians for Ulloa's government as a force great enough to incite the settlers to join the rebellion. Acadian response to Ulloa's defense project and participation in the Revolt of 1768 demonstrated the importance of settlement location, and fear of continued misuse of them by colonial governments, which harkened back to their experiences in both French and British empires. The settlement of the Acadians and their role in the colony as buffers under Ulloa highlights the function of Louisiana as a buffer and the priorities of Spanish policy-makers.

²²⁴ Carl A. Brasseaux, "Acadian Life in the Lafourche Country, 1766-1803," in *The Lafourche Country: The People and the Land*, ed. Philip D. Uzee (Thibodeaux, LA: Lafourche Heritage Society, Inc., 1985): 35.

²²⁵ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 104.

CHAPTER IV: THE 1770S AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADIAN SETTLEMENTS

Following the re-assertion of Spanish domination of Louisiana by O'Reilly, during the 1770s the Acadians became full participants in the society, economy, and defense of Louisiana. After Ulloa's ousting, Spain chose to affirm its authority. That "[Louisiana] is a valuable barrier and a means of protection for the provinces of New Spain and the Mexican Gulf" against the dangers of a British invasion encouraged the Spanish to retain the colony.²²⁶ The policies enacted by Alejandro O'Reilly included an overhaul of the defense system, land grant policy modifications, and colonial governmental alterations, which impacted Acadian settlement development. With regard to Acadian settlement under Ulloa at Fort St. Gabriel and Fort St. Louis de Natchez, O'Reilly allowed the Acadians to abandon the latter and relocate downriver near other Acadians, but those Acadians at St. Gabriel remained at that settlement. By the time of O'Reilly's departure from the colony in March 1770, the Acadians who had immigrated to Louisiana during Ulloa's governorship were settled mostly in the eastern districts of St. Gabriel, Cabahannocé, and Bayou Lafourche. The two areas of Acadian settlement in Louisiana, to the east and west of the Atchafalaya Basin, developed distinct characteristics.²²⁷ Acadian colonial and dispersal experience contributed to Acadian integration into Louisiana's economy and colonial defense. However, the eastern settlements experienced tension resulting from border relations and conflict among the Acadians, Creoles, and Native Americans. Meanwhile, Acadians to the west

²²⁶ Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 192.

²²⁷ For another interpretation of eastern and western Acadian settlement see Brasseaux's *The Founding of New Acadia*.

experienced more peaceful relations with the Native Americans and continued to develop the cattle industry. Acadian participation as militia as part of Governor Bernardo de Galvez's campaign against the British during the American Revolution indicated Spanish success in defense and in assuring Acadian loyalty. Thus, the 1770s represent the fruition of Acadian integration into the colony.

To reclaim authority over the rebels, O'Reilly arrived with two thousand Spanish soldiers on August 17, 1769, officially taking possession of the colony the next day.²²⁸ In arriving with such a large force, which outnumbered the white inhabitants of New Orleans at the time, O'Reilly also represented Spanish presence and authority to the Louisiana colonists and British on the opposite side of the Mississippi, a step forward in regaining Acadian acceptance of the Spanish regime.²²⁹ Although he had the instigators of the Revolt of 1768 tried, O'Reilly pardoned the Acadians at Cabahannocé for their participation in the Revolt on October 18, 1769.²³⁰ Shortly thereafter, he demanded that Louisiana's colonists take an oath of allegiance to Spain.²³¹ The Acadians took the oath, demonstrating their intention of making Louisiana their permanent home. For decades, they had refused to take such an oath to Great Britain.²³² Besides enforcing colonial loyalty to Spain, O'Reilly set out to reform the colony's political, economic, and social spheres.²³³ His policies re-shaped colonial Louisiana and influenced the development of the settlements in the colony.

²²⁸ Ibid., 193; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 88.

²²⁹ Din "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 195; Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xxi.

²³⁰ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 89.

²³¹ Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xxi.

²³² Chandler, "Ulloa and the Acadians," 89.

²³³ Jack D. L. Holmes "Alexander O'Reilly," in *Louisiana Governors*, ed., Joseph Dawson, 49.

After re-evaluating Ulloa's defense system, O'Reilly enacted a new strategy that reversed much of Ulloa's defensive work. Instead of Spanish troops along the Mississippi, he proposed a colonial militia. The establishment of such a militia would require the participation of former French officials and members of the military.²³⁴ With commandants taking on the role of local military leaders to an even greater extent, O'Reilly determined that each town and settlement should have its own militia.²³⁵ He examined Ulloa's new posts along the Mississippi. By the close of 1769, he had decided to withdraw Spanish military presence from Fort St. Gabriel and St. Louis de Natchez to better serve Spanish interests. St. Gabriel was "indefensible in case of any outbreak of war," and the "Choctaw would not stop coming" to the post from British territory.²³⁶ Confirming Acadian complaints of isolation "all agreed upon the uselessness" of the Natchez post because it was so far removed from New Orleans that it presented perfect breeding ground for borderland contraband trade.²³⁷ The elimination of these forts and new focus on local militia placed defense of New Orleans at the center of O'Reilly's policy.²³⁸ By acknowledging the British and Native American threat to the colony, O'Reilly recognized the validity of Acadian complaints of the risks of settling at St. Louis de Natchez.

In November, the final petition of the Acadians at Natchez requesting permission to relocate succeeded in gaining O'Reilly's support. As these Acadians had petitioned his predecessor with no success, they attempted once more with the new governor and in

²³⁴ Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xxii.

²³⁵ Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 192.

²³⁶ O'Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 December 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 146.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

²³⁸ Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 194.

keeping with their custom of collective petitioning. The Acadians argued that they were “continually in danger of being murdered by the various warring savage nations and moreover find themselves outside of reach to receive any help from the fort” and requested permission to relocate below St. Gabriel.²³⁹ This time, Aubry, engineer Guy Dufossat, and commandant Jean Delavillebeuvre attached an addendum to the Acadian plea: “we find that it [the plea] is very well founded in that they are effectively exposed to Indian insurrections...the fort which is far from the place of the first habitation,” that the land was infertile, “that the fort has become useless.”²⁴⁰ In his reasoning supporting his decision to discontinue St. Louis de Natchez as a military post and to allow the Acadians “to settle among the other Acadians,”²⁴¹ O’Reilly employed the arguments presented to him in the Acadian petition. By granting permission to the Natchez Acadians to settle elsewhere, O’Reilly enabled them to select their own settlement sites and officially recognized that such selection would be based on family ties. The Natchez Acadians mostly relocated to Cabahannocé and the developing Lafourche settlement.²⁴² The permission to relocate to these settlements granted by O’Reilly meshed with his policies for colonial defense, which like Ulloa’s relied upon the Acadian settlements.

O’Reilly’s Ordinance of 1770 promulgated reforms to land granting procedures, infrastructure, and regulations governing the cattle industry, all three of which affected the Acadians, particularly those settled in the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts. This constituted the first Spanish attempt to superimpose its land policy and legal system over

²³⁹ Petition of the Acadians at Natchez to O’Reilly, San Luis de Natchez, 18 October 1769, *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, Legajo 181.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ O’Reilly to Arriaga, New Orleans, 29 December 1769, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 146.

²⁴² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 104.

that established by France.²⁴³ The Spanish regime could not simply void French land grants of their legitimacy. O'Reilly began the ordinance acknowledging that it was in part a reaction to “divers complaints and petitions which have been addressed to us by the inhabitants of Opelousas, Attakapas, Natchitoches and other places of this province.”²⁴⁴ The ordinance standardized land grant dimensions: “six or eight arpents in front...by forty arpents in depth” for those grants along the rivers and waterways, and “[n]o grant in Opelousas, Attakapas, and Natchitoches shall exceed one league in front by one league in depth.”²⁴⁵ Because the law governing the Attakapas and Opelousas grants applied retroactively, those colonists with land grants exceeding the prescribed dimensions lost some of their lands. Gabriel Fuselier de la Claire, commandant of the Attakapas and Opelousas posts, was one such colonist. Significant to maintaining population and infrastructure to promote defense in the eastern settlements, the ordinance required that the settlers build and maintain levees, roads, and bridges, in addition to clearing “the whole front of their land to the depth of two arpents.”²⁴⁶ Regarding cattle, O'Reilly ordered the owners “to collect and to kill” the strayed cattle because of their hazardous effect on tamed cattle and thus to the development of the cattle industry in the western districts.²⁴⁷ He also required the owners to brand their cattle or lose claim to them, and in the event that between March 15th and November 1st when the cattle were no longer to be “at large,” the owner would become responsible for

²⁴³ Henry P. Dart, “Louisiana Land Titles Derived from Indian Tribes,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 4 (1921): 20.

²⁴⁴ Gustavus Schmidt, “O'Reilly's Ordinance of 1770,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 11 (1928): 237.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 240.

any damage committed by the cattle.²⁴⁸ By wording the ordinance in such a way as to promote the settlement of families, O'Reilly continued a policy established in the 1730s in Texas when the Spanish recruited Isleños families from the Canary Islands to settle, which differed from the more traditional Spanish approach that instead of a settlement included a mission and military presidio. He also instituted in Louisiana what had become royal decree in New Spain in 1754, namely that the governor possessed the authority to issue land grants.²⁴⁹ The specific regulations with regard to land grants was as follows:

All grants shall be made in the name of the King, by the governor General of the province, who will, at the same time appoint a surveyor to fix the bounds thereof, both in front and depth in presence of the ordinary judge of the district, and of two adjoining settlers, who shall be present at the survey. The above mentioned four persons shall sign the proces verbal which shall be made thereof, and the surveyor shall make three copies of the same; one of which shall be deposited in the office of the escribano of the Government and Cabildo, another shall be delivered to the governor general, and the third to the proprietor, to be annexed to the titles of his grants.²⁵⁰

By requiring improvement to the land before a colonist could receive a title to it, the Spanish attempted to encourage permanency in settlement and standardized

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 239.

²⁴⁹ Dart, "Louisiana Land Titles Derived from Indian Tribes," 20.

²⁵⁰ Schmidt, "O'Reilly's Ordinance of 1770," 240.

infrastructure.²⁵¹ In his ordinance, O'Reilly thus instituted regulations of land granting, the cattle industry, and the development of infrastructure.

With this show of administrative force, the Spanish were prepared to integrate Louisiana into the system with its other New World possessions. O'Reilly implemented the Spanish legal system in place of the French.²⁵² While Ulloa's instructions reflected a decision to maintain the French governmental structure in Louisiana, O'Reilly's superiors instructed him to restructure it according to Spanish colonial policy.²⁵³ He abolished the Superior Council, replacing it with the Cabildo, which placed a degree of government in the hands of the colony's Creole population.²⁵⁴ In imposing order, O'Reilly created eleven districts within Louisiana, each with a commandant.²⁵⁵ Opelousas became part of the Attakapas District until 1789, so a single commandant oversaw the two.²⁵⁶ The commandant's role was to execute and enforce Spanish laws.²⁵⁷ After Carlos III approved O'Reilly's recommendations for the colony, Louisiana became "a dependency of the captaincy general of Cuba and under supervision of the ministry of the Indies." Its position now was equivalent to those of other Spanish North American holdings.²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, as the Spanish governor to take possession of Louisiana after the Revolt of 1768, O'Reilly purposely allied the interests of the Creoles with the Spanish government to prevent future rebellions.

²⁵¹ Dart, "Louisiana Land Titles Derived from Indian Tribes," 20.

²⁵² Ibid., 19.

²⁵³ Holmes "Alexander O'Reilly," 50.

²⁵⁴ Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xxii.

²⁵⁵ Harry Lewis Griffin, *The Attakapas Country* (New Orleans, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1959), 21.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 215.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 27.

²⁵⁸ Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, xxiii.

Because of the intertwinement of Creoles with the Colonial government, Louisiana and New Orleans in particular still differed from other Spanish colonies.²⁵⁹ However, this policy was in keeping with the principles of the Bourbon monarchs of Spain, considered to be ‘enlightened,’ who hoped to encourage colonial respect for government by reducing the rigidity that traditionally characterized Spanish government.²⁶⁰ The Cabildo included a certain number of members who purchased their offices, and who made up committees. Thus, the newly established colonial government promoted cooperation between the Spanish and Louisiana’s Creole population.²⁶¹ In addition, O’Reilly developed the policy of selecting commandants from among the colony’s former French military officials and planters. The social distinctions then of the Creoles caused them to further view themselves as aristocrats, differentiating them from the Acadians, whom the Creoles considered peasants.²⁶² By elevating the Creoles to positions of authority and political clout and encouraging intermarriage between Spanish officials and Creoles, the Spanish unintentionally encouraged the development of a societal rift between the Creoles and Acadians.

During the 1770s, while Acadian immigration decreased substantially, the Acadian settlements in Louisiana continued to take shape. Very little is known about immigration of Acadians to Louisiana during the 1770s. Most historians agree that a group in 1770 from Maryland was the last large group to immigrate until the 1780s.²⁶³ Thus, immigration during the gap between major influxes was most likely characterized

²⁵⁹ Holmes, “Alexander O’Reilly,” 50.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁶² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 167.

²⁶³ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 104.

by a trickle, perhaps as it had been prior to 1765. The reason for the decline in immigration may have been because the Spanish regime had become suspicious of encouraging Acadian immigration to the colony after the Revolt of 1768. Perhaps this provides an explanation for O'Reilly's decision to settle the 1770 group of thirty Acadians initially at Natchitoches instead of alongside other Acadians.²⁶⁴ Acadian experiences as colonists and during the exile contributed to the development of different characteristics of the settlements east and west of the Atchafalaya.²⁶⁵ St. James de Cabahannocé, Lafourche des Chetimachas, and St. Gabriel d'Iberville were the primary eastern settlements, while the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts included the more western Acadian settlements. During the 1770s, the Acadians who had arrived during the previous decade received their land grants. Spanish and French colonial policies and Louisiana topography contributed to the development of the characteristics of the land grants in the two areas of settlement. With O'Reilly's ordinance, Spain introduced a more rigid, precise, and thorough method for granting land. The land grant process required five steps: the colonist made a request to the commandant for the granting of a particular parcel of land; the commandant then attached a certificate of approval to the first document and sent the two to the governor; the governor ordered a survey, after which some settlers did not continue the process because the survey granted possession of the land to the settler; the commandant then marked the land's boundaries before witnesses including neighbors of the person seeking the grant and sent a

²⁶⁴ Carl A. Brasseaux "The Long Road to Louisiana: Acadian Exiles and the *Britain Incident*," *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 1 (1985): 32.

²⁶⁵ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 146.

certificate to the governor; lastly, the governor issued the title to the land.²⁶⁶ For example, Amant Prejean began the process of seeking a land grant along the Vermilion River in late November 1776, followed by Galvez's granting an order of survey the first of January 1777. Approximately nine months later in September 1777, the commandant of the Attakapas post, DeClouet, confirmed the boundaries, and finally, March 5, 1778, Galvez completed the process by signing the title to the land.²⁶⁷ Indicative of the importance of land ownership to the Acadians, many requested land surveys and a high percentage of grantees completed the full long process.²⁶⁸ With land surveys taking place in 1771 and 1772, land grants became official four or five years later.²⁶⁹ The disputes over the land, such as those grants surveyed by Bellevue along the Mississippi, and over access to resources that promptly ensued further indicated the value of land to Acadians.²⁷⁰ Colonial policy also determined the physical shape of the land grants. Two patterns predominated: the ribbon and the checkerboard pattern.²⁷¹ The ribbon governed the grants along waterways. Those Acadians who settled along rivers and bayous received, as indicated in O'Reilly's ordinance, land four or six arpents of frontage by forty arpents in depth.²⁷² Land grants for prairie land often fell under the "checkerboard" pattern. The Attakapas and Opelousas Districts lent themselves more to this form of land grant than the districts along the Mississippi or Lafourche.²⁷³ Thus,

²⁶⁶ Conrad, *Land Records of the Attakapas District*, 6.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 34, 41-2.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁶⁹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 105.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

²⁷¹ Lauren C. Post, *Cajun Sketches* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), 25.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 25.

these western districts were comprised of both types of land grants. Less narrow rectangular grants best served the developing cattle industry.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, the settlements to the east and west of the Atchafalaya acquired different characteristics beyond the superficial types of land grants.

Tension, resulting from relationship among the colonial populations and the international border, marked the eastern settlements during the 1770s. The eastern settlements generally experienced greater and more frequent contact among Acadians, Creoles, and Native Americans.²⁷⁵ Over the course of the 1770s, Creoles began also to settle along the Lafourche, increasing interaction between the two groups, and in 1779 the Spanish placed an Isleños settlement further down stream at Valenzuela, a recently established military post.²⁷⁶ The censuses of 1770 and 1777 reveal an increased mixing among the Acadians and Creoles as neighbors along the Lafourche.²⁷⁷ By the close of the 1770s, the population of the Lafourche settlement included Acadians, German Creoles, Isleños, and members of the Chetimacha, and Houmas tribes.²⁷⁸ Population along the Mississippi and Lafourche became increasingly dense because of forced heirship laws, which required in the succession ownership by all of the landowner's children. Consequently, the size of the plots of land owned by individual settlers decreased over time. This population density was further exacerbated by efforts of Spanish colonial administrators to prevent emigration elsewhere.²⁷⁹ For example, the

²⁷⁴ Griffin, *The Attakapas Country*, 16.

²⁷⁵ Brasseaux, "A New Acadia," 132.

²⁷⁶ Henri J. Molaison, introduction to *Colonial Settlers along the Bayou Lafourche: Louisiana Census Records, 1770-1798*, by Albert J. Robichaux, Jr. (Harvey, LA: privately published, 1974), viii.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, viii.

²⁷⁸ Brasseaux, "A New Acadia," 131.

²⁷⁹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 106.

population at Lafourche increased from 267 in 1769 to 646 by 1785.²⁸⁰ The Acadians in the eastern districts petitioned Louisiana's governors during the 1770s through 1783 for permission to resettle along Bayou Teche. However, officials became increasingly concerned over potential British aggression particularly with the onset of the American Revolution and eventual Spanish entry into war with Britain. As a result, the Spanish officials and commandants feared that depopulation along the river would lead to a weakened defense system, endangering New Orleans.²⁸¹ Thus, those Acadians east of the Atchafalaya experienced less opportunity for relocation than those to the west.²⁸² By restricting relocation, Spanish defense policy continued to determine location of Acadian settlements, and this policy in turn fostered the development of tension among the Acadians, Creoles, and Native Americans in the eastern settlements.

The Acadian experiences pre-exile and while in the British colonies, particularly in Maryland, affected the economy of the eastern settlements. Many of the Acadians in the settlements at Cabahannocé, Lafourche, and St. Gabriel had emigrated from Maryland where they had come into contact with the plantation economy based upon slave labor.²⁸³ As the eastern settlements turned increasingly to cash crops and the plantation economy, slave ownership became more prevalent than in the more western settlements. Acadians acquired slaves predominantly during the 1770s and 1780s, purchased from New Orleans merchants and Creole planters.²⁸⁴ Approximately 20% of

²⁸⁰ Sidney A. Marchand, *Acadian Exiles in the Golden Coast of Louisiana* (Donaldsonville, La: Private, 1943), 42.

²⁸¹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 145.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 190.

²⁸⁴ Brasseaux, "A New Acadia," 191-3.

Acadians in the eastern districts owned slaves by 1775.²⁸⁵ Most Mississippi and Lafourche settlers lived on very fertile levee lands and produced corn, indigo, and tobacco.²⁸⁶ Ironically, the Spanish colonial government, mostly motivated by defense strategy, had situated the Acadians on very profitable land. Acadian experiences prior to their arrival in Louisiana conditioned their approach to the colonial economy.

Acadians participated in contraband trade with the British, particularly near British Manchac. The Acadians had engaged in contraband trade in Acadia with Boston merchants to obtain manufactured goods. Manchac provided the Acadians with a market for their excess grain, and Manchac English merchants paid better than those in New Orleans, where the Spanish suppressed prices.²⁸⁷ For this reason, Ulloa once wrote that “contraband [was] the lifeblood of Louisiana.”²⁸⁸ Attempting to prevent the alienation of colonists, Governor Luis de Unzaga permitted the illegal exchange to continue while attempting to balance it with Spanish economic policies.²⁸⁹ Correspondence between Nicholas Verret at Cabahannocé and Governor Unzaga also indicated concerns about Acadian contact with the British through contraband trade. Nevertheless, Unzaga noted that during the corn and rice shortage of 1770, New Orleans would have had a better supply if the Acadians had not been engaged in trade with the British.²⁹⁰ However, some

²⁸⁵ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 192.

²⁸⁶ Malcolm Comeaux, “Environmental Impact,” in *The Cajuns*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad, 111; Carl A. Brasseaux, trans. and ed. “Official Correspondence of Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1803,” *Louisiana Review* 7 (1978): 173; Margaret Fisher Dalrymple, *The Merchant of Manchac*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978)5-6.

²⁸⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 131.

²⁸⁸ J. Preston Moore, “Antonio de Ulloa,” in *Louisiana Governors*, ed. Joseph Dawson, 46.

²⁸⁹ Light Townsend Cummins, “Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga,” in *Louisiana Governors*, ed., Joseph Dawson, 54.

²⁹⁰ Brasseaux, “Correspondence of Spanish Louisiana,” 173.

commodities, such as butter, would not keep in transit down stream.²⁹¹ In return, the Acadians might trade for much needed manufactured goods, relatively scarce often in Spanish colonies. During the early part of the American Revolution, Governor Bernardo de Galvez (1777-1785) reversed Unzaga's lenient policy and attempted to squelch all contraband trade with the British. However, acknowledging the importance of contraband trade to the colonists in his district, the commandant of St. Gabriel, Raimundo DuBreuil, encouraged Galvez to allow the British to transport their slaves and sell them from Manchac because Louisiana settlers, such as the eastern Acadians, were purchasing them.²⁹² Acadians transported their skill at participating in border trade to Louisiana, identifying the significance of pre-dispersal Acadian life to the development of Acadian settlements in Louisiana.

Several factors impacted Acadian-Native American relations in the Mississippi and Lafourche settlements: the history of Acadian relations with the Native Americans, particularly during the 1740s and 1750s, and the readjustment of populations and policies with the transfer of former French lands to Britain and Spain. Many of the Acadians who settled in these eastern districts had experienced the French and Micmac raids on British Nova Scotia and during the 1740s and 1750s. They transferred their fear of Micmac raids to the Native Americans of the Lower Mississippi Valley, and thus considered the Native Americans in the region with suspicion.²⁹³ The international tensions mounting along the Mississippi instilled alarm among the settlers. Both British

²⁹¹ Dalrymple, *The Merchant of Manchac*, 166.

²⁹² Gilbert C. Din, *Spaniards, Plantars, and Slaves: the Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 80.

²⁹³ Faragher *A Great and Noble Scheme*, 220; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 179-180.

and Spanish colonial governments strove to assemble strong alliances with the Native American tribes along the border all the while attempting to undermine the other's efforts. Such building pressures placed river settlers at risk of attack and fear accompanied the knowledge of such a threat.²⁹⁴ In 1771, across the Iberville from St. Gabriel, the British were amassing an alliance with the Creek, putting the Acadians into a "perpetual state of fear."²⁹⁵ The Houmas at Lafourche built a palisade for self defense against tribes allied with the British, but their act of defense frightened the Acadians, who reacted by sending representatives to New Orleans to charter boats to leave Louisiana. Although nothing came of this effort, such a scenario indicates the perceived magnitude of the dangers amidst which the Acadians believed themselves to have settled.²⁹⁶ Judice complained to Galvez in 1778 that the Houmas had been raiding Acadian farms for food and livestock, some of which became part of their trade with the British. The Houmas had seized more than sixty corn-filled barrels belonging to Joseph Landry. Judice even threatened the destruction of the Houma village if the chief did not prevent further raids.²⁹⁷ For their part, the Native American tribes, such as the Tensas, feared that Acadian settlers would eventually displace them.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Spanish policy recognized the importance of strong alliances with the Native Americans. To cement a relationship of trade and services with the more versatile *petit nations*, such as the Houmas, Tunicas, and Taensas, O'Reilly held a meeting with chiefs of these tribes in

²⁹⁴ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 180.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 182.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

New Orleans in 1769.²⁹⁹ Trade between these tribes and the Acadian settlements was most likely an exchange of crops, labor, fish, and game.³⁰⁰ For example, the Houmas and Chitimacha hunted on behalf of the colonists near whom they lived.³⁰¹ The Native Americans also proved strong allies to the Spanish when they joined them in the Spanish offense against the British in 1779.³⁰² Therefore, cooperation among the Native American tribes and colonists persisted despite misgivings of both groups.

The 1770s also witnessed the development of tensions between the Creoles and the Acadians. O'Reilly had demanded that each Acadian settlement have its own church and requested more Spanish missionaries for the colony.³⁰³ However, the new priests sent to Louisiana became connected in social rank with the Creoles and looked down upon the Acadians for their lesser social status.³⁰⁴ Although Acadians contributed to the religious practices and building of settlement churches, in general, Creoles perceived the Acadians as disrespectful with regard to religion. Acadian culture had developed for over a hundred years without consistent contact with priests. Consequently, Acadians had doubled as religious leaders and had come to rely on priests for their more bureaucratic functions. Nevertheless, behavior of Acadians at St. James, such as smoking of pipes in the rectory and cursing before Fr. Valentin, contributed to their ill-repute among the Creoles.³⁰⁵ In Louisiana, where posts and settlement such as St.

²⁹⁹ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 131.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 168.

³⁰² Usner, Daniel H. "American Indians in Colonial New Orleans," 299; Din, "Protecting the 'Barrera,'" 209.

³⁰³ List of Officials Appointed by O'Reilly, 4 February 1770, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, 159; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 157.

³⁰⁴ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 157.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

Gabriel continued to endure a shortage of priests, Acadians continued the tradition of dry masses.³⁰⁶ In this sense little change took place between Acadia and Louisiana.³⁰⁷ The lack of understanding between the Acadians and Creoles regarding religious practices points to the religious development Catholic groups in different regions of colonial North America. The Acadians had adapted their own practices to fit the inattentiveness and scarcity of missionaries in their colony of origin, while the inhabitants of Louisiana did not so much alter the religious practices advocated by the Church in their response to the shortage of missionaries.

Acadians also recognized a double standard at their settlements. As O'Reilly's ordinance required settlers to both build and provide up-keep for the levee, the issue of absentee land owners, often Creoles in the east, caused trouble.³⁰⁸ The Spanish colonial government had pulled the colonial leaders from the ranks of the Creole population, giving them a certain degree of government-sanctioned authority. The commandant of Lafourche, Judice, himself did not obey the levee ordinance. By failing to maintain his levees, he caused flooding to his neighbors' property.³⁰⁹ Judice, in noting an incident in which Acadian leader Basil Prejean struck a Creole, referred to the Creoles as the "betters" of the Acadians.³¹⁰ With the increased contact among Acadians and Creoles and the disgruntlement caused by land surveys of the 1770s, the two groups found

³⁰⁶ Charles E. Nolan, *A Southern Catholic Heritage* (New Orleans: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1976), vol. 1, B8-1.

³⁰⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 156.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

³⁰⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux "Acadians, Creoles, and the 1787 Lafourche Smallpox Outbreak," *Revue de Louisiane* 8 (1979): 56.

³¹⁰ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 173.

themselves in arguments over land and access to resources, particularly cypress.³¹¹

Acadian relations with the Creoles then suffered as a result of the clash of Acadian culture, and Creole standards and societal stratification.

During the 1770s, the settlements to the east of the Atchafalaya were marked by a sense of friction, which grew out of complex relations among the Creoles, Acadians, and Native Americans, as well as the tension associated with the Mississippi acting as an international border. At the same time, those settlements in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts, partly because of their location and greater mobility of the population, did not experience such mounting restiveness. However, like the Acadians who settled along the Mississippi and Bayou Lafourche, many of the Acadians in the western districts settled along rivers and bayous. The Attakapas and Opelousas population included a mix of settlers, such as Creoles, Anglos, Irishmen, settlers who had immigrated to Louisiana from the Mobile area after the cession of French lands east of the Mississippi to Britain, as well as members of the Attakapas tribe.

The settlers of these more western districts were much more at liberty to disperse, with little regulation over selling lands and seeking new grants. The Acadians in the west often owned several grants of land, living on the grants of more forested land while using the prairie land for their cattle, making them absentee.³¹² For example, Silvain Sonnier probably operated a vacherie on one grant while living another grant at Prairie Bellevue near Opelousas.³¹³ Acadian grants in the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts produced additional income by serving as ranches for the grantees who left a

³¹¹ Ibid., 169.

³¹² Comeaux, "The Environmental Impact," 119.

³¹³ Fontenot and Freeland, *Acadia Parish, Louisiana*, 34.

slave or employee to tend the land in order to retain the title under the restrictions that O'Reilly set forth.³¹⁴ The Acadians began to cultivate cotton and corn on the more fertile lands, such as those along the Teche, while they used the prairie land for rice production and raising cattle.³¹⁵ The Kelly Nugent report of 1770, a survey of population, livestock, and agriculture of the various settlements in Louisiana, recorded that “corn, rice, and sweet potatoes...are their main staple.”³¹⁶ During these first few decades following their immigration to Louisiana, the Acadians in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts mostly combined subsistence farming with raising cattle and livestock.³¹⁷ The prairie and river land grants of the Acadians in these western districts promoted crops as well as livestock that differentiated the economy from that of the eastern settlements.

As Aubry and Foucault had hoped, the Attakapas continued to develop a cattle industry, which became an asset to the Spanish economy. Although Dauterive and the Beausoleil Acadians never fulfilled the agreement, the Acadians who settled in the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts became involved in the cattle industry from early in their settlement of both districts. Acadians along the Bayou Teche in the 1760s provided additional routes for livestock transportation, and the Attakapas and Opelousas offered markets for horses and cattle transported from San Antonio, and in many cases the Acadian ranchers participated as traders.³¹⁸ Commandant DeClouet sent Grevemberg to

³¹⁴ Conrad, *Land Records of the Attakapas*, 14.

³¹⁵ Comeaux, “The Environmental Impact,” 118.

³¹⁶ Paulette Guilbert Martin, “The Kelly Nugent Report on the Inhabitants and Livestock in the Attakapas, Natchitoches, Opelousas and Rapides Posts, 1770,” *Attakapas Gazette* 11 (1976): 191.

³¹⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 123-5.

³¹⁸ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 179.

San Antonio to purchase horses and mules.³¹⁹ From 1766 to the mid 1770s, the number of horses and cattle increased respectively from 700 and 2,000 to 2,000 and to more than 10,000, allowing these areas along Bayou Teche to become suppliers of livestock to other parts of Louisiana. Acadians in these western districts drove their cattle to the Mississippi as well as to New Orleans beginning in the early 1770s. When Spain entered the American Revolution, the importance of Acadian cattle increased and the Acadians began herding their cattle to New Orleans along with Creole owned cattle.³²⁰ In 1779 amidst the meat shortage in New Orleans, Governor Bernardo de Galvez requested that the Cabildo investigate possible ways of alleviating the problem.³²¹ More Acadian cattle from the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts was taken to market in New Orleans as one of the results.³²² In December of 1781, Creole rancher Joseph Collette, who had developed his own trail to New Orleans, sought and received permission to conduct his drives safe from the hindrance of other ranchers. Members of the Cabildo in August 9, 1782 “remarked about the advantages that might result to the public by the abundant supply of meats which may be brought from the markets of Attakapas and Opelousas by the new road lately discovered and made practical by the zeal and expense of Josef Colee (Collette)” and attempted to encourage the western vacherie owners to use New Orleans as their main market.³²³ The 1770s, therefore, was marked by the

³¹⁹ Post, *Cajun Sketches*, 56-7.

³²⁰ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 123-5; Usner *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 179-80.

³²¹ Gilbert C. Din and John E. Harkins, *The New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana's First City Government 1769-1803* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 192-3.

³²² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 124.

³²³ New Orleans Cabildo, *Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo, 1769-1803, transcripts in English* ed. and comp. WPA (1939) reel 1, p 163; Gilbert C. Din and John E. Harkins. *The New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana's First City Government 1769-1803*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1996, 192-3.

development of the cattle industry in the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts and increased interest on the part of colonial officials in the industry.

As in the eastern settlements, the Acadians and Creoles in the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts came into conflict; however, in the more western settlements, the Acadians were able to remove themselves to greater isolation and thus reduce contact with the Creoles, while the Acadians in the east were not. The widow of Jean-Baptiste Grevemberg, the former French military official who first supplied the Acadians with cattle and then accused them of trespassing, Anna Chenal like her husband invoked the law against the Acadian residents of the Opelousas post. In 1773, she accused the “residents of Opelousas” of “killing much of my live-stock at my dairy-farm giving as a reason that they are straying, which has caused a very considerable injury to me” and “the said inhabitants tame my live-stock...they appropriate them.”³²⁴ However, her son Louis Grevemberg, “administrator of the dairy farm...declared to us that the accusation brought by the Widow Grevemberg against the inhabitants of our jurisdiction is void of evidence.”³²⁵ He admitted the right of the residents of Opelousas to destroy stray cattle “in virtue of the ordinances...and public wellbeing,” legally grounded in O’Reilly’s ordinance.³²⁶ Similarly, Jacques Courtableau’s widow, also in the first half of the 1770s, accused the Acadians of trespassing when she declared boundaries to her property that included portions of Acadian land grants. Although the Acadians weathered the accusations with their property intact, following the completion of their

³²⁴ Laura Porteous, trans, “Petition of Widow Chenal,” *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 11 (1928): 233-234.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 233-236.

land grants in 1776 and 1778, they chose to select new home sites at the more remote Prairie Bellevue along the Bayou Bourbeaux.³²⁷ Such relocation within Louisiana as a result of conflict with Creole settlers exemplified a trend in the Attakapas and Opelousas. Acadians from Cote Gelée and Fausse Point settled the Vermilion River during the 1770s and 1780s. Land grants of 1776 in both the Prairie Bellevue and upper Vermilion Valley resulted from the resettlement of Acadians previously settled at La Manque, La Pointe, and Opelousas.³²⁸ Because titles to lands could take several years to be complete, the settlers probably began settling in the two areas several years prior to the grants.³²⁹ In response to clashes with local Creoles in the Attakapas and Opelousas, the Acadians took advantage of the opportunity to relocate within their districts, an opportunity permitted by the different function of the western districts in colonial defense. The variances in settlement regulation governing the eastern and western districts thereby allowed for Acadian desire to avoid conflict with the Creoles to impact the locations and degree of isolation of Acadian settlement in the Attakapas and Opelousas.

Because Acadian settlement west of the Atchafalaya was more dispersed than in the eastern districts, the Acadians had the ability to continue the practices of their frontier Catholicism. Acadian access to religious rites and the priests was less for those Acadians in the Attakapas and Opelousas than the Acadians living in the eastern districts. Elders presided over more than half of the baptisms in the two western districts

³²⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 98-99.

³²⁸ Brasseaux, "Acadian Settlement Patters," 20-1; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 95-98.

³²⁹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 98-9.

between 1765 and 1803, as well as a high percentage of the burials, indicating continuity with practices in isolated settlements of Acadia. Although missionaries often blessed the marriages of the Acadians instead of performing the sacrament of matrimony, the high percentage of Acadians seeking religious blessings for their marriages indicates the significance of family structure to the Acadians.³³⁰ All of these sacraments, officiated by a priest or not, indicate the important role of the Church as record-keeper and dispenser of sacraments. Nevertheless, Acadians sought access to churches for their communities. Acadians were generally reluctant to pay for the building or maintenance of churches. When Acadians along the Vermilion, far removed from the two churches at Opelousas and the Poste des Attakapas, hoped to establish a church closer to their settlement, the Creoles and the then commandant Delavillebeuvre opposed the idea. However, Governor Esteban Miro granted the Acadians' request.³³¹ This particular incident demonstrates the consistency of the Spanish colonial government in attempting to provide access to religious services, sacraments, and churches to the Acadian colonists.

Compared with the Acadians east of the Atchafalaya, those at the Opelousas and Attakapas posts experienced considerably less friction with the Native Americans in their settlements. Drawing on different experiences of Acadian-Micmac relations in Acadia and not living on the border with British lands, the Acadians in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts maintained peaceful economic relations with the Native Americans living in their districts. Governmental and administrative correspondence

³³⁰ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 161.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

lacks evidence of Acadian and Native American strife. As opposed to their counterparts in the east, these Acadians came from the part of the Chignecto Peninsula that the French occupied until the Seven Years War, where they experienced more positive dealings with the Micmac, with whom they traded particularly in furs. Similarly in the west, the Acadians engaged in trade with the Native Americans once again in furs, but also in livestock.³³² Through a network of trade that reached into Texas to San Antonio de Bexar, the various branches of the Attakapas provided the Acadian traders access to cattle, horses, and mules. The traders then brought them to the vacheries of the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts. This intercultural network of trade contributed significantly to the build up of the cattle population.³³³ During this period, the Attakapas lived and traded mostly in Acadia Parish, along Bayou Plaquemine Brulée, Bayou Queue de Tortue, Bayou Wikocc, the Mermentau River, and Bayou Nezpique, all in the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts.³³⁴ In the late eighteenth century some owned cattle, and had their own brands, evidence that they were not nomadic.³³⁵ The colonial government and early settlers purchased most of the land in the Attakapas. For example, John Lyon bought land along Bayou Tortue from another member of the Attakapas, Celestine.³³⁶ Such sales shed light on the colonial practices of recognizing the rights of Native Americans to land because the governor had to agree to the deed to the property after the transfer from a Native American to a settler.³³⁷ Land sales continued through

³³² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 185-6.

³³³ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 179-80.

³³⁴ Fontenot and Freeland, *Acadia Parish, Louisiana*, 10.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

³³⁶ Dart, "Louisiana Land Titles Derived from Indian Tribes," 140.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

the 1770s and 1780s. The Attakapas engaged in resettlement further west along the Mermentau after selling their lands to the settlers of the Attakapas and Opelousas Districts.³³⁸ Acadians and Native American trade and participation in the economy of the western districts reflected better working relations than those of the Acadians and Native Americans to the east, in part because of the absence of colonial border tension from the Attakapas and Opelousas and greater fluidity of movement and trade in the western districts.

Despite variations in the characteristics of their settlements, Acadian settlements to the east and west of the Atchafalaya contributed to Louisiana's participation in the American Revolution. Spain entered the conflict against Great Britain in part to regain Gibraltar and Florida.³³⁹ 600 militiamen from the German and Acadian Coasts, as well as militias from the western districts, joined Galvez's forces that seized British forts at Manchac, Baton Rouge, Natchez, and continued in their conquest to Pensacola.³⁴⁰ Indeed, François Broussard, son of the early Acadian leader at the Attakapas Beausoleil and a member of the Attakapas militia, participated in the campaign.³⁴¹ Acadian cattle became increasingly important to New Orleans during the offensive, as anticipated by Aubry and Foucault during the early immigration of the Acadians. Both French and Spanish colonial governments had long anticipated conflict

³³⁸ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 186.

³³⁹ Robert L. Gold, "Governor Bernardo de Galvez and Spanish Espionage in Pensacola, 1777," in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804* ed. John Francis McDermott, 87.

³⁴⁰ Robert H. Thonhoff, *The Texas Connection with the American Revolution* (Burnet, TX: Eakin Press, 1981), 28.s

³⁴¹ Daughters of the American Revolution, Texas Society, *The Roster of Texas Daughters Revolutionary Ancestors* vol 1 (Midland, TX: Texas Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1976), 287.

with the British in the Lower Mississippi Valley, and the colonial defense policies directed Acadian settlement according to the anticipated threat. While Galvez did not believe that the soldier-settlers prescribed by O'Reilly could successfully defend New Orleans, one of the reasons he chose to attack the British before they could attempt to seize the colony, Galvez accepted Acadian participation in Spain's military offensive against the British. Therefore, although perhaps not in the manner anticipated by earlier governors, Acadians did take part in the colonial defense of Spanish Louisiana during the war with Britain.

Louisiana's participation in the American Revolution demonstrated the success of Spanish planning and defense policy. Acadian participation in turn represented the immigrants' acceptance of Spanish Louisiana as their own land and the success of the Spanish in regaining the confidence of the Acadians after the revolt. O'Reilly's work in the colony reclaimed it for Spain, and the policies that he promulgated contributed to the development of Acadian settlements, particularly in allowing the Natchez Acadians to resettle, and determining specifics for land grants, and clarifying regulations of the cattle industry. Just as Spanish planning for Acadian participation in defense came to fruition, so too did Spanish hopes that the Acadians would integrate into the economy of the colony. Acadians brought their prior experiences both from Acadia and the dispersal to Louisiana, and these experiences in turn contributed to the development of the economy and relations with the Native Americans in both the eastern and western settlements. Acadian interaction with Creoles and Native Americans indicated tensions in the more eastern settlements and greater fluidity in settlement in the western ones, as well as the

participations of these groups in economy of the colony. Therefore, Acadian culture and traditions and relations among Creoles, Native Americans, and Acadians, had a profound effect on the development of the eastern and western Acadian settlements, shaping social, economic, and demographic characteristics of the settlements.

CHAPTER V: A MASS IMMIGRATION, 1785

The influx of Acadian immigrants to Louisiana in 1785 corresponded in timing with renewed Spanish interest in bolstering the numbers of its loyal colonists in Louisiana. After the American Revolution, Spanish defense policy shifted.³⁴² Instead of a military enemy across the Mississippi, Spain worried that the westward pushing Americans would spill onto their land. In response, Governor Esteban Miro encouraged the settlement of colonists loyal to Spain in Louisiana. The Acadians who had sought refuge in France after their expulsion from Nova Scotia had harbored an interest in immigrating to Louisiana since the 1760s. Through the collaboration of Spanish diplomats and colonial officials with Henri Peyroux de la Coudrenière, who conceived of the idea of this mass immigration, and Olivier Terriot, an Acadian representative, nearly 1,600 Acadians immigrated and settled in Spanish Louisiana by the close of 1786. Governor Miro and his administrator Martin Navarro, having witnessed the ultimate disaster of Ulloa's defense-settlement policy, organized a policy that provided flexibility with Acadian preference for settlement location. Acadian tradition of settlement with kin and the bonds of Acadian community resurfaced as the Acadians attempted once again to settle in family based groups, and the Acadians already established in Louisiana aided the newcomers during their transition to the role colonists.

The influx of nearly 1,600 Acadians to Louisiana in 1785 constituted a mass immigration from France organized by the Spanish government. These Acadians had lived in France for approximately twenty years during which time they had experienced

³⁴² Gilbert C. Din, "The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miro in Spanish Louisiana," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73 (1969-1970): 156.

the challenges of living in a country where they had no economic niche. In Louisiana they both settled and served as examples of settlers for other groups. Acadian culture not only propelled the desire of the Acadians to immigrate to Louisiana but once in Louisiana also impacted the locations of the new colonists' land grants, as it had during the first stream of Acadian immigration.

The Acadian exiles in France experienced a series of unfulfilled promises and unsuccessful settlement attempts. By 1765, more than 3,000 Acadians had taken refuge in France. Upon arriving in France and soon living in port cities, most Acadians did not fit into any economic or social niches, increasing their cultural isolation and sense of group identity. The French government hoped to integrate the Acadians into the French economy. Plans for assembling the Acadians in settlements at Belle-Ile-en-Mer, off the coast of Brittany, on estates in Poitou, and in Corsica, all failed.³⁴³ For the most part disillusioned, the Acadians became impoverished city-dwellers, many supported in part by a royal dole.³⁴⁴ Thus, when offered the opportunity to immigrate to Louisiana in 1785, approximately 1,600 participated in the endeavor.

Acadians in France had expressed interest in immigrating to Louisiana at least since 1766. In September of 1766, Germain Semer received a letter from his son Jean-Baptiste Semer inviting Germain to join him in Louisiana. Germain Semer contacted the Minister of Marine, Praslin, seeking "permission to go with his family to join his son," but the Minister of the Marine refused because France had transferred Louisiana to

³⁴³ Brasseaux, "Scattered to the Wind," 36-7; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 55-56.

³⁴⁴ Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, 88.

Spain.³⁴⁵ In 1772, Acadians began requesting permission to quit France for Louisiana, but again the French government rejected the idea for the same reason.³⁴⁶ In 1777, a small group of twenty-two Acadians received permission to go to Louisiana thanks in part to the assistance of Spanish Ambassador to France, the Count de Aranda.

The immigration of the 1,596 Acadians to Louisiana in 1785 was the result of the work of three men in particular: the Count de Aranda, who wanted to improve Spanish defenses, Henri Peyroux de la Coudrenière who hoped to gain prestige through an appointment, and Acadian cobbler Olivier Terriot. Peyroux contacted Aranda in 1783 with his plan to transport and settle in Louisiana those Acadians still in France. Carlos III accepted the idea and provided generous funding for the venture to increase the likelihood of its success. After royal approval of the project, Peyroux and Terriot began campaigning to enlist Acadians to immigrate to Louisiana. As an Acadian himself, Terriot played an important role because the other Acadians were more likely to trust and listen to him than to Peyroux. They recruited most zealously in the port cities, especially Nantes and in Brittany, because the Acadians, after the fruitless settlement plans hatched by French officials, had for the most part congregated at the ports. Although advised to keep Peyroux's plan a secret because Louis XVI had not yet approved of the project, the Acadians instead made the plan known to local officials, which created a stir among the creditors of debt-burdened Acadians. In March 1784, Louis XVI agreed to the immigration. The Acadians petitioned France's Finance and

³⁴⁵ Mouhot, "Une Ultime Revenante," 125 quotation; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 60.

³⁴⁶ Shelby McCloy, "French Charities to the Acadians," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 21 (1938): 661.

Foreign Affairs Minister for permission to go to Louisiana. They received a re-endorsement from the French king, who proposed even to finance Acadian debts. On August 1, 1784, Terriot began registering Acadians to immigrate to Louisiana. The Acadian volunteers comprised approximately 70% of the Acadians in France. Spanish generosity included the support of the Acadians once they reached the port of Nantes until their departure, the cost of transportation, and aid in Louisiana.³⁴⁷ Because they wanted to use their funding as efficiently as possible, the Spanish sought out detailed contracts with mercantile vessels including in the agreements rations of food, care for the sick, and the water and firewood the vessels would carry.³⁴⁸ Seven mercantile ships left France between May and October 1785 for Louisiana.³⁴⁹

Twenty years after Spain acquired Louisiana, it was still attempting to attract settlers to increase the colonial population as a mechanism for defense, by the 1780s against the Americans who had already begun to spread out across their own expanses of territory. By increasing its own colonial population, Spain could fill in settlement gaps to prevent American entry and settlement beyond the Mississippi.³⁵⁰ Spain's efforts included offers of land, tools, and aid until settlers might become self-sufficient.³⁵¹ Governor Esteban Miro of Louisiana was also more flexible than some previous governors, such as Ulloa. Miro, who had been in the New World since 1769 and participated on the Council of War in the American Revolution, became governor of

³⁴⁷ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 68-72, Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, 97-106.

³⁴⁸ Chandler, "A Shipping Contract," 75.

³⁴⁹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 72.

³⁵⁰ Gilbert C. Din, "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790," *Louisiana History* 11 (1970): 197.

³⁵¹ Caroline Maude Burson, *The Stewardship of Don Esteban Miro* (New Orleans: American Printing Company, LTD, 1940), 124.

Louisiana and West Florida in 1782.³⁵² James Kennedy and Maurice Nowland, who hoped to bring groups of Irish families and loyalists, respectively, to Louisiana, employed this later Acadian immigration as an example.³⁵³ Hopeful impresarios used the attentive Spanish aid of the 1785 Acadian immigration to Louisiana as an example of the assistance they expected for their prospective immigration projects. However, over the course of the next decade, the Spanish policy changed to permit the settlement of Americans because it was less expensive than such projects as the Acadian immigration.³⁵⁴ The expense of transporting and settling such a large number of people as the 1,596 Acadians encouraged such a shift in Spanish policy as to seek immigrants who were more self-sufficient and who would put less strain on colonial finances.³⁵⁵ However, this major influx of Acadians from France involved careful planning on the part of Spanish diplomats and colonial officials and the settlement of the Acadians fit with the defensive purposes of the colonial government.

Louisiana's management of the mass immigration of 1785 reflected lessons learned from Ulloa's experience with Acadian settlement. Navarro, intendant of Louisiana, remembered the earlier clash of Spanish policy and Acadian desire to settle among relatives. Consequently, he allowed the Acadians to choose their own settlements. The Spanish provided the Acadians with housing and hospital care, much needed as, like many of their predecessors, these seven shiploads of Acadians were stricken with smallpox in particular following the Atlantic crossing. Navarro selected

³⁵² Ibid., 3-4; Din "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790," 198.

³⁵³ Ibid., 201-2.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 197.

³⁵⁵ Din, "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790," 198.

Anselme Blanchard, an Acadian already established in Louisiana, to oversee the settlement of the Acadians from the first ship that arrived, *le Bon Papa*.³⁵⁶ The seven ships, *Le Bon Papa*, *La Bergère*, *Le Beaumont*, *Le Saint Rémi*, *La Amistage*, *La Villa de Arcangel*, and *La Caroline*, arrived at New Orleans from June through December of 1785.³⁵⁷ The new Acadian colonists reached the settlements of their choice between August 1785 and February 1786. In contrast to Ulloa's policies of forced settlement, which prevented families from reuniting in Louisiana, Navarro encouraged Acadians to settle near kin.³⁵⁸ Not only did Acadian cohesiveness affect this last influx of settlement, but also the Spanish government permitted it to influence its settlement policy.

Navarro's policies resembled more those of the French colonial government in that he allowed the Acadians to participate in choosing the settlements of which they would become a part, but unlike the French treatment of earlier Acadian colonists, his settlement plans had the benefits of Spanish organization and funding. Each group that arrived selected leaders to visit potential sites and to report back their findings to the larger group. While the vast majority, nearly 85%, followed the advice of their representatives, each Acadian family decided for itself.³⁵⁹ For example, thirty seven of the thirty-eight families who disembarked *Le Bon Papa* settled at St. Gabriel, and forty one families from *Le Beaumont* settled at Baton Rouge, and three of the remaining families at Lafourche and another five at the Attakapas.³⁶⁰ The newly arrived Acadians,

³⁵⁶ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 108.

³⁵⁷ Arsenault, *Histoire Des Acadiens*, 318-319.

³⁵⁸ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 109.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

³⁶⁰ Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians*, 520-523.

while they settled often in groups together, did establish themselves throughout the eastern and western districts (see Figure 3).

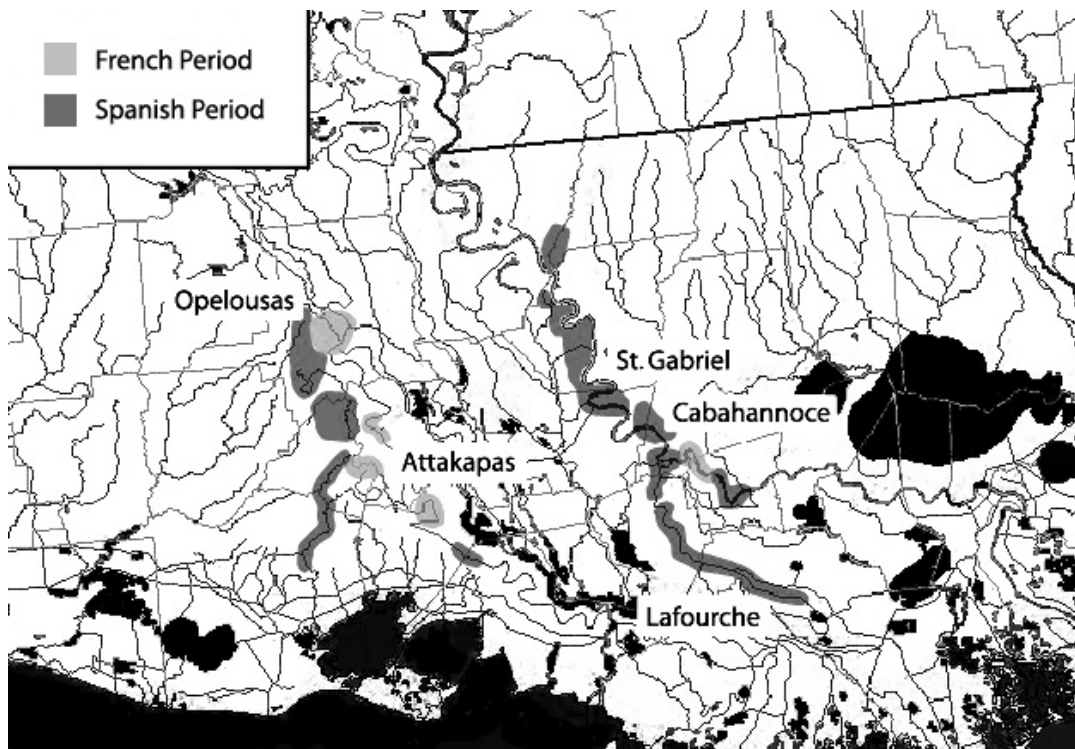


Figure 3. Acadian Settlement in Louisiana, 1786³⁶¹

According to Navarro’s plan, the Acadians belonging to this enormous influx of 1785 settled alongside already established Acadians. The Acadians traveled to their new settlements where other Acadian families took them in until they could build homes for

³⁶¹ Brasseaux, “Acadian Life in the Lafourche Country,” 35; Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 93, 97; Brasseaux, *Official Correspondence of Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1803*, 167; Elton Oubre “The European Settlement of the Lafourche Country” in *The Lafourche Country*, edited by Philip D. Uzee, 1; Gertrude C. Taylor, Carl A. Brasseaux, and Glenn R. Conrad, comp. “Land Grants, Land Claims, and Public Land Sales 1821-1856,” (Lafayette, LA: Attakapas Historical Association and the Center for Louisiana Studies, 1983); Gertrude C. Taylor “Land Grants Along the Teche,” (Lafayette, LA: Attakapas Historical Association and the Center for Louisiana Studies, 1979-1980).

themselves. The Acadians already living in the colony were then able to facilitate a quicker and more efficient transition for the incoming Acadians, with most well established by 1788.³⁶² Many Acadians from France, approximately 855, settled in the Lafourche district because it offered much opportunity to settle alongside other Acadians and was more removed from developing Anglo-American and Creole settlements.³⁶³ With the majority settling along Bayou Lafourche widely extending the existing settlements, a little over 300 settled along the Mississippi at Manchac and Baton Rouge.³⁶⁴ Assimilation of these new colonists into Louisiana resulted mostly from assistance of the Acadians already in Louisiana and Spanish provisions, supplies, and financial aid.³⁶⁵ Acadian reunification with family proved much easier in the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts, which encompassed more unoccupied land.³⁶⁶ Thus, the largest group of immigrants to Louisiana in the late eighteenth century successfully settled in Louisiana, and the policies which enabled them to do so reflected Spanish continued hope for increasing Louisiana's colonial population as part of the colonial defense policy, as well as the ability of the Spanish colonial government to develop its policy so as to avoid mistakes of the past, such as Ulloa's forced settlement strategy. At the same time, Acadian culture participated in the selection of the locations of the land grants to the new colonists because the Spanish settlement policy under Miro advocated such participation to avoid colonial destabilization, which also occurred under Ulloa.

³⁶² Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 111-112.

³⁶³ Ibid., 109; Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians*, 520-3.

³⁶⁴ Voorhies, *Some Late Eighteenth Century Louisianians*, 520-523.

³⁶⁵ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 112; Burson, *The Stewardship of Don Esteban Miro*, 125.

³⁶⁶ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 108.

Instead of clashing with the Acadians over settlement sites, Miro and Navarro's settlement policy successfully combined Spanish defense interests and Acadian settlement selection interests. To protect Louisiana from future inroads by Americans whose frontier settlement might expand into Spanish lands, Spain attempted to reinforce its colonial population by encouraging immigration and settlement of colonists loyal to Spain. Louisiana remained a buffer in Spanish imperial policy, and the Acadians continued to play a role in the defense policy of the colony. The long-suffering Acadian population stranded in France became interested in the colonization plan presented by Terriot and Peyroux de la Coudenière, and through organization of Spanish diplomats and colonial officials immigrated and settled in Louisiana both according to their wishes and the new defense-settlement policy of the Spanish. Miro's government therefore demonstrated organization consistent with Spanish administration as well as the benefit of having learned from the experiences of his predecessor Ulloa. The mass immigration and settlement of the 1,600 Acadians from France to Louisiana contributed to the affirmation of Louisiana as a new homeland for the dispersed Acadian communities, further assuring the survival of the group. Therefore, the major influx of Acadian immigrants to Louisiana in 1785 indicates the continuation of the intertwinement of Spanish defense policies and Acadian immigration.

CONCLUSION

Acadian settlement in colonial Louisiana nearly from its inception was closely connected with Spanish defense policy. In 1762, the Treaty of Fontainebleau transferred Louisiana to Spanish domain, and the Treaty of Paris in 1763 granted Great Britain possession of the remaining French North American holdings, turning the Mississippi River into an international boundary between rivals Great Britain and Spain. In anticipation of the transfer of Louisiana to Spain, the last French administrations considered future Spanish defenses in encouraging settlement to alleviate the stagnation of colonial population and introducing Acadians to the local cattle industry. Neither Britain nor Spain lost time attempting to develop defenses along this border. Indeed, Spain had acquired Louisiana to act as a buffer for its other North American lands. As willing immigrants, the Acadians became an integral part of Spanish defense strategy. First, Spanish governor Ulloa, who arrived in New Orleans in 1766, inaugurated the policy by determining to establish forts along the Mississippi with accompanying settlements, several comprised of Acadians. The Acadians arriving during Ulloa's governorship traveled to Louisiana expecting to encounter policies similar to those of the French colonial government, which had governed the settlement of their predecessors. French policy had permitted the Acadians to select their own settlement sites, thereby allowing them to settle in kinship groups according to Acadian tradition. The French had also granted a degree of flexibility with regard to the establishment of the settlements. The Spanish, however, more rigid in their approach to settlement policy, did not continue with such French precedents. Consequently, friction developed out of

Acadian resistance to Ulloa's plan of forced settlement. Such discord encouraged Acadian participation in the revolt of 1768. Ulloa's successor also viewed Acadian settlement as vital for the colony's success. Under O'Reilly's plans, which abandoned the forts, the Acadian role in colonial defense became that of militia to guard the colony against British attack. With mounting tension between Great Britain and Spain, Spanish colonial regulations during the 1770s enforced the maintenance of settlements in the eastern part of the colony particularly along the Mississippi and Bayou Lafourche. Easing their transition, the Acadians arriving in 1785 settled among Acadians already established in the colony. Spanish motivation for encouraging Acadian settlement had not changed. These Acadians also became part of a defense system, although not a military one. The Spanish hoped that with the immigration of settlers loyal to Spain and the colony, it could prevent the expansion of Anglo-American settlers into Spanish colonies from the United States.

Relations among the colony's Creoles, Acadians, and Native Americans contributed to the development of the characteristics of Acadian settlement to the east and west of the Atchafalaya. From the time of the first trickle of Acadians to Louisiana, two distinct areas of settlement emerged: one east of the Atchafalaya and one to the west of it. Cabahannocé, Lafourche, and St. Gabriel to the east developed tension because of their location on the international border and because of suspicion between the Acadians and Native Americans. Native Americans feared displacement by the Acadians, and the Acadians based their distrust of the Native Americans on negative relations with the Micmac in Acadia previous to the dispersal. Instead of dwindling because settlers

sought to relocate elsewhere within the colony, the eastern settlements then continued to grow. In contrast to the eastern settlements, the western districts of Opelousas and Attakapas did not experience such tension. Because the location of Acadian settlers within the district was not paramount to defense of the colony, they had the ability to relocate within the districts and to establish settlements isolated from the Creoles. The Acadians who settled in the western districts also had a history of positive dealings with the Micmac, which then influenced their experiences in western Louisiana where they participated in trade with the Attakapas. The cattle industry grew out of a trade network of the Native Americans of the region, which brought livestock to the area. Similar in that they represented the assumption of Spanish Louisiana as the new Acadian home, the Acadian settlements both east and west of the Atchafalaya witnessed the integration of the Acadians into the economy and defense of the colony and adherence to and development under Spanish colonial supervision.

Acadian settlement in Louisiana took place during a period of monumental change: change in ownership and government of the colony; change in imperial role of the colony from a neglected and chaotic French colony to a defensive border colony of Spain; change of the Mississippi into an international boundary between competing empires. The changes and shifts that affected the colonists and Native Americans, and their relationships in the colony of Louisiana resulted from the fallout of imperial strife and imperial strategy to guard and vie for territory in North America. Acadian settlement reflects the adjustments of the colony and the peoples who comprised it during this period of nearly continuous transitions. Thus, Acadian settlement by

illuminating differences in colonial policy of French and Spanish governments and the alteration in policy under the Spanish as it adapted to imperial realignments, indicated the imperial interests of the French and Spanish.

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