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Notes and Documents

NATCHITOCHEs AND THE TRAIL TO THE RIO GRANDE: Two Early Eighteenth-Century Accounts By the Sieur Derbanne

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It is the elopement that is remembered when the name of Derbanne is mentioned. Though more than two centuries have passed since young Baptiste Derbanne carried off Victoria Gonzales from the Spanish outpost of Los Adaes against her father's wishes,¹ the story is still being told in Louisiana. But almost no one has heard the name of François Dion Deprez Derbanne, that bold young man's father. His contemporary, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, and his own son have completely overshadowed the elder Derbanne; perhaps the romance of their clandestine wooing of Spanish brides has kept their memories green. But François Dion Deprez Derbanne's very substantial claims to a place in the history of Louisiana and Texas have been all but forgotten.

Yet this Derbanne, though more prosaic, is more representative of the early settlers of Louisiana. He was an intrepid explorer, a shrewd businessman, and an energetic *habitant*. A marginal note on a 1713 memorandum on conditions in Louisiana sums up the quality of the man: "Sieur d'Herbanne, Keeper of the Warehouse of Fort Louis . . . is a man reliable, faithful and necessary for the trade in the things we need among the Indians."² His best claim to a place in history rests upon his plain and careful account of a trip across Texas to Mexico in 1716-1717 and his description of Louisiana's earliest settlement, Natchitoches, as it appeared in the first years of its existence. These no doubt will be read long after the bayou

¹José Antonio Pichardo, *Pichardo's Treatise on the Limits of Louisiana and Texas . . .*, edited by Charles W. Hackett (4 vols., Austin, Texas, 1931-1946), III, 484-85.

²Dunbar Rowland (ed.) and Albert G. Sanders (trans.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives . . .*, *French Dominion* (3 vols., Jackson, Mississippi, 1927-1929), II, 144.

which now bears his name has gone the way of the earlier Lake Derbanne and Rivière à Derbanne.³

Unfortunately, Derbanne's writings have not been widely read because English translations are not easily available. The "Relation par le Sieur Derbanne," which describes the journey of the Canadians, Derbanne, LaFrénière and DeBeaulieu, to the Rio Grande has, of course, long been available in French in Pierre Margry's *Explorations des Affluents du Mississippi et Découverte des Montagnes Rocheuses (1679-1754)*.⁴ But Derbanne's "Relation du poste de Natchitoches" is much less accessible. A transcription is in the Newberry Library: the account is a part of MS 293, a collection of memoirs concerning French possessions, 1702-1750.⁵ Photostats of the Newberry Library's copy of the documents are available in Louisiana in the libraries of Tulane and Northwestern State College. It is the purpose of this article to present both the "Relation par le Sieur Derbanne" and the "Relation du poste de Natchitoches" in English translation together with such facts about Derbanne himself as can be gleaned from the existing records.

Like his more famous contemporary, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, Derbanne was a Canadian.⁶ The Derbanne family of Canada, according to the account in the *Dictionnaire Généalogique des Familles Canadiennes* by the Abbe Tanguay, was allied with that of Guyon-

³Present-day maps of Natchitoches Parish show Bayou Derbonne issuing from Cane River near Derry, Louisiana. Louisiana's largest man-made lake, D'Arbonne Lake, in Union Parish, which was dedicated on September 26, 1963, seems to be only remotely connected with Derbonne. Lac à Derbanne was, according to D'Anville's "Carte de la Louisiana" (1732), located a few miles south of Natchitoches. "Rre à Derbane" was in the vicinity of Dauphin Island just west of present-day Fowl River, according to this same map.

⁴Pierre A. Margry (ed.), *Découvertes et Établissements des Français dans L'Ouest et dans le Sud de L'Amérique Septentrionale (1614-1754): Mémoires et Documents Originaux Recueillis et Publiés par Pierre Margry* (6 vols., Paris, 1877-1886), VI, 202-11. An English translation of this account is in the University of Chicago Library.

⁵This collection is "a series of five . . . richly bound volumes of unknown provenance containing much unpublished material on American history of the French period," according to Father Gilbert J. Garraghan in his *Chapters in Frontier History: Research Studies in the Making of the West* (Milwaukee, 1934), 63. A translation of Derbanne's account was available in the Newberry Library about thirty years ago, but has since disappeared.

⁶His Canadian origin is established beyond doubt by the reference to him in the marriage certificate of his son, Gaspard. There François Derbanne is called "natif de Canada eveche de Quebec." (Immaculate Conception [Natchitoches] Church Records. Marriages. September 28, 1746).

Desprez.⁷ Derbanne was born in Quebec, probably in the 1680's for he took a man's part in an exploration of the Missouri River in 1706—an expedition which he later called a disappointment because no mines were found in the upper Missouri country.⁸ By 1710 Derbanne had moved south to Dauphin Island. There he was in charge of the warehouse of the little French post on the Gulf of Mexico. When a raid was made on the island by an English privateer from Jamaica in 1710, he suffered ruinous losses.⁹ Six years later he took part in the first Natchez war. In late January 1716, in company with François du Tisne, he had left Dauphin Island for the Natchez country. They were the advance guards in charge of provisions for Bienville's expedition against the Natchez.¹⁰

A few months later Derbanne joined St. Denis in forming a commercial partnership with five other Canadians with the object of trading in the Spaniards' own country: ". . . they purchased from the stores of M. Crozat sixty thousand *livres* of merchandize to sell the Spaniards in the kingdom of New Leon."¹¹ Upon Derbanne's return from this dangerous trading journey, described in detail in his account given below, he went back to Dauphin Island. There he secured for himself the position of chief clerk and warehouse-keeper of the newly-established military post of Natchitoches.¹²

⁷Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire Généalogique des Familles Canadiennes depuis la Foundation de la Colonie jusqu'à nos Jours* (7 vols., Montreal, 1871-1890), IV, 429. The name is spelled variously: D'Herbaune; Derbaune; d'Herbanne; D'Arbonne.

⁸Derbanne makes brief mention of his disappointing journey up the Missouri in the "Relation du poste de Natchitoches," given in translation below.

⁹Marcel Giraud, *Histoire de la Louisiane Française . . .* (3 vols., Paris, 1953-1966), I, 195, 206-207. In a letter written by Diron d'Artaguet, dated January 10, 1711, he comments "that in the month of September of the preceding year, an English corsair had ravaged Dauphin Island, plundered and burned the houses and stores, wreaked unparalleled cruelties on the people to force them to tell where they had hidden their money, and that the damage done to the King and to individuals amounted to eighty thousand francs. . . ." Quoted in P. F. X. De Charlevoix's *History and General Description of New France* (6 vols., New York, 1872), VI, 16.

¹⁰Giraud, *Histoire*, II, 77.

¹¹October 1716 is given as the date by Bénard de la Harpe in his *Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana*, in Benjamin F. French, *Historical Collections of Louisiana . . .* (5 vols., New York, 1846-1853), III, 47.

¹²Bienville says that "it was in 1716 when I was still at the Natchez that I sent a detachment to make possession of the Red River and establish the Natchitoches." Rowland (ed.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, III, 515. The year 1714 as the date of the founding of the city of Natchitoches (as opposed to the military establishment) is widely accepted. A letter written by Father Francisco Hidalgo on October 6, 1716, sets the date in 1713. (Hidalgo and Castellanos

He arrived in Natchitoches in the first part of January 1717.¹³ By 1722 he was being paid a salary of twelve hundred *livres*.¹⁴

Although the practice was not approved by the Company of the West, Derbanne took up a concession and worked it in addition to attending to his duties as warehouse-keeper.¹⁵ He had begun to clear his land, which lay close by Fort St. Jean Baptiste and near a wood of holly trees, as early as January 29, 1722.¹⁶ However, his arduous work on his land did not keep him from serving also as business agent, or "subdelegate," during the next ten years.¹⁷ Truly, as he said himself, it was impossible for him to be idle.¹⁸ In spite of the rigors of the climate at the little Red River outpost, and the usual dangers of frontier life, the hardy Canadian had in his first nine years in Natchitoches managed to clear about forty acres of land. In this labor he had the assistance of his seventeen slaves, two of whom were Indians and the rest Negroes. Besides his slaves, his property in 1726 consisted of five head of cattle and sixteen horses. Next to the commandant, he was the richest man in the little settlement.¹⁹

When and where François Dion Deprez Derbanne married his wife, Jeanne de la Grand Terre, is not known. Their marriage may have occurred in 1715 or 1716 since the birth date of their son was 1716.²⁰ The census of 1722 credits Derbanne with three children,

to Fr. Pedro Mezquia, October 6, 1716. Provincias Internas Tom. 181. Archivo General. Photocopy supplied by Archives, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.) The date of the founding of the post is given as 1715 in a letter written on February 18, 1792, to the Baron de Carondelet by Louis De Blanc, the grandson of Louis Juchereau de St. Denis. Lawrence Kinnaird (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794: Problems of Frontier Defense, 1792-1794* (3 vols., Washington, 1946-1949), III, 9-11.

¹³"Relation du poste de Natchitoches."

¹⁴"Minutes of the Superior Council of Louisiana, May, 1722," Rowland (ed.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, II, 270.

¹⁵"Relation du poste de Natchitoches."

¹⁶Germaine Portré-Bobinski, *Natchitoches: Translations of Old French and Spanish Documents* [Rutland, Ill., c1928], p [1].

¹⁷Germaine Portré-Bobinski, *French Civilization and Culture in Natchitoches* (Nashville, Tenn., 1941), 92.

¹⁸"Relation du poste de Natchitoches."

¹⁹Katherine Bridges, "Natchitoches in 1726," (Louisiana) *Genealogical Register*, VIII (September, 1961), 37-39.

²⁰Jean Delanglez, S. J., *The French Jesuits in Lower Louisiana (1700-1763)* (Washington, 1935), 426.

but makes no mention of his wife.²¹ By 1726, four children had been born to them:²² Jean Baptiste Dion, Jeanne Dion, Jean Deprez, and Louise Marguerite. Later two other children were born, Gaspard and Pierre.²³

That these children were half-breeds seems reasonably certain.²⁴ No family name is given in the existing records for their mother; she is called simply "Jeanne de la Grand Terre." There is every reason to suppose that the "Grand Terre," which was her home, was the same Grand Terre mentioned in the "Mémoire sur les Natchitoches," that is, the high country rising to the west of Red River at Natchitoches.²⁵ A manuscript map, probably by Jean de Beaurain, which is found with the manuscript of La Harpe's *Journal* and entitled "Petite isle et fort des Natchitoches établie par les françois sur la Rivière rouge apportée de pistolet de la grande terre, elle a 600 toises de long sur 300 de large," also gives support to this hypothesis. The "Village des Natchitoches" is, moreover, shown on D'Anville's 1732 map in the same place where the "Grand-Terre Pinier" appears on a 1794 map.²⁶ It is probable that Jeanne de la Grand Terre was a Natchitoches Indian.

Derbanne seems to have won the confidence of these Indians, for he was able to explain their grievances to St. Denis in 1733 at

²¹William Beer (ed.), "Early Census Tables of Louisiana," *Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society*, V (1911), 83.

²²Bridges, "Natchitoches in 1726," 39.

²³The names of the children appear in Instrument 286, Book I, Conveyances, Natchitoches Parish records, dated June 1, 1734.

²⁴An entry in the Mobile Cathedral records dated July 26, 1710, suggests that the child baptised "Jean" may have been a son of Derbanne. The mother was an Indian slave belonging to Derbanne, and Father Alexandre Huvé, the priest, seems to have considered Derbanne the father.

²⁵A l'égard de la Grand Terre jusqu' aux Adayes, à 7 lieues d'icy, où est le premier poste espagnol, on ne la juge pas d'aussy bon rapport." ("As to the High Country up to the Adayes, 7 leagues from here, where the first Spanish post is, it is not considered so fertile.") "Mémoire sur les Natchitoches," in Margry (ed.), *Découvertes et Établissements des Français*, VI, 229. The "Gran Montaña" frequently mentioned in Spanish accounts as being halfway between French Natchitoches and Spanish Los Adaes would seem to be this same Grand Terre.

In the marriage contract of Joseph Le Duc and Marie Anne Gueydon (Instrument 66, unbound, Natchitoches Parish records, dated April 17, 1743), the mother of the bride is identified as Marie Anne Therese, and definitely described as an Indian of the village "de la grande terre."

²⁶Map entitled "Rivière des Natchitoches depuis le Bayoue Duplessis." The original is in Legajo 210, 1794, Archivo General de Indias. A photocopy is in Russell Library, Northwestern State College of Louisiana, Natchitoches.

a time when they held the Natchitoches fort in what was almost a state of siege for six months.²⁷

In 1734 Derbanne died in New Orleans²⁸ and presumably was buried there. His wife, Jeanne, died on October 29, 1736, and was buried in the cemetery in Natchitoches.²⁹ His heirs continued to wrangle over his considerable property for sixteen years after his death.³⁰ If any of them or their descendants valued his writings or preserved copies of them, that fact has not yet come to light. The two accounts which follow are in the nature of official reports, and personal references are only incidental. Nevertheless, these written remains constitute a worthy monument to the intrepid Derbanne.

JOURNEY OF THE CANADIANS, GRAVELINE,
DERBANNE, LaFRÉSNIÈRE AND DeBEAULIEU,
TO THE RIO GRANDE RIVER³¹
1716-1717

Account of Sieur Derbanne. Dauphin Island.
November 1, 1717.

I shall not speak here about the Red River because others have sent reports [about it]; I shall say only that this river floods during high water and one cannot find any ground to camp on. When it is down, navigation is impossible because of the lack of water; it is

²⁷Rowland (ed.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, I, 203.

²⁸According to the statement of his daughter, Jeanne Dion Derbanne, then the wife of François Manne, François Dion Despres Derbonne had died in New Orleans in 1734. (Instrument 13, Book I, Conveyances, Natchitoches Parish records, dated February 3, 1736).

²⁹Immaculate Conception Church [Natchitoches] Records. Burials. October 29, 1736.

³⁰The manuscript index to early Natchitoches Parish records indicates that family meetings and deliberations were being held in connection with Derbanne's succession as late as 1750.

³¹This English translation has been made from the French version printed in Margry's *Découvertes et Établissements des Français*, VI, 202-11. A greatly abridged account, which differs in numerous details from this one, appears in French's *Historical Collections of Louisiana*, III, 47-49. A rough memorandum in the handwriting of Thomas Jefferson, which is in the Department of State, records the stages of the journey in a very brief fashion. This memorandum is quoted in Justin Winsor (ed.), *Narrative and Critical History of America* (8 vols., Boston, 1884-1889), V, 30.

No attempt has been made to supply detailed biographical sketches of these

necessary to [navigate] when it has risen half way. Its air-line is West-North-West.

We left the Natchitoches³² on November 22, 1716, and we arrived on January 22 at the Assinai.³³ I reckon the distance from one village to the other as 55 leagues. The country is good enough; there are small mountains, mixed woods: pines, oaks, walnut trees and some whitewood trees [such] as [are] in Canada. The trail is very good, and its direction is West and Southwest.

We left the Assinai, where there are Spanish priests and a captain with twenty-five soldiers, on March 22, 1717 for the Rio Grande. We passed that day the last Spanish mission where there are two Recollect priests. We crossed two rivers, which are fairly large but cannot carry pirogues. That day's journey we made ten leagues to the South-West, which is the direction that is taken when leaving the Assinai for the Rio Grande. On the 23rd we caught up with the mules, which had left two days before us. These animals do not

companions of Derbanne who accompanied him on this expedition: Graveline, LaFrésnière and DeBeaulieu. For simple purposes of identification, it may be pointed out that LaFrésnière and DeBeaulieu were two of the brothers concerning whom the Spanish Governor Ulloa wrote: "Of the common people Bienville brought over with him were four brothers who afterwards assumed different surnames in Louisiana, one causing himself to be called LaFrésnière; the other Léry; the third Beaulieu; the fourth Chauvin. These four Canadians were so low in extraction and had so little education, that they could not write and had come with an axe on their shoulders to live by their manual labor." The family afterwards became wealthy and distinguished. Quoted in Grace King, *Creole Families of New Orleans* (New York, 1921), 169-70. Sieur de Beaulieu died in 1729 of pleurisy. Rowland (ed.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, II, 622. "Graveline" was the sobriquet of another Canadian, Jean-Baptiste Baudreau, whose enterprising commercial career is discussed at some length in Giraud's *Histoire de la Louisiane Française*, I, II. Graveline, who was one of the more prosperous and energetic of the Canadian settlers on Dauphin Island, had bought a small boat in France, and in 1712 tried unsuccessfully to promote a trading and exploring venture. *Ibid.*, I, 249.

³²A tribe of the Caddo Confederacy. Their villages were near the present town of Natchitoches. Frederick W. Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (2 vols., Washington, 1907-1910), II, 37.

³³The Hasinai Indians appear variously as Acinai, Acinays, Assinay, Assinays, Azinai, Azinay, Tejas, Texa, and Texas. The Hasinai Confederacy was located west of the Sabine River, on the Angelina and the Upper Neches rivers. "The Hasinai were a settled people, who apparently had been long in the place where they were found at the end of the seventeenth century, and where they remained with little geographical change throughout the eighteenth." Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Athanasie de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780* . . . (2 vols., Cleveland, 1914), I, 21.

make more than 6 or 7 leagues a day; and when they do more, it is because they need water and the mule-drivers drive them on until they find some. Their load is 300 *livres* per mule. They start off at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and they make camp at three o'clock in the afternoon. We made 9 leagues that day.

On the 24th we made 9 leagues; we crossed the river which the Spaniards call the Trinity. This river is very much spread out—150 paces wide. When we crossed it, it had little water, but there are times when it is very dangerous; it floods a wide area of bottom lands; its banks are beautiful prairies; the woods which border it are oak and walnut. This river falls into the sea between the Mississippi and the Bay of the Madelaine.

On the 25th we were stopped by the rain.

On the 26th we made 5 leagues; we began that day to find beautiful country, which was full of very fine woods. We made camp.

On the 27th we made 9 leagues; we passed this day some beautiful prairies.

On the 28th we made 10 leagues because we were compelled to by the need of water. We passed that day a number of beautiful smooth prairies; this day we began to see wild beeves. We killed one of them. We made camp on the bank of a large river which the Indians call the Irrupiens.³⁴ In fact, they had a small village there, which was set on the river bank. This river has two forks, one going to the West-North-West and the other going to the North. The forks join a little below where we crossed. This river flows into the Trinity; the trees with which it is bordered are the aspen, the ash and a few oak. When this river is high, it is very difficult to cross. It floods a great deal of low country.

On the 29th we made 2 leagues. We crossed the Irrupiens River. We made camp on the bank of a stream in order to kill some beeves for meat.

On the 30th we made 5 leagues. We crossed some very beautiful prairies that day. We made camp on the bank of a stream at the edge of a wood.

On the 31st we made 2 leagues. We passed through a very dense wood. We made camp on the edge of a prairie. We travelled that day North-North-West.

³⁴A branch of the Trinity River according to *Handbook of Texas* (2 vols., Austin, 1952), I, 896 ("Irrupien Village").

On the 1st of April 1717 we remained in camp because some of the horses had strayed.

On the 2nd we made 5 leagues. We passed through a very dense wood of oak trees. That kind of tree has branches almost to the ground; therefore, the mules had trouble in getting through. We travelled that day North-West and camped on the edge of a little prairie where there was water.

On the 3rd we crossed another wood five leagues wide and very dense and just as hard to go through as the first. We travelled that day North-West. We halted at noon in the prickly woods called by the Spaniards mesquite. This tree bears fruit like beans, which the Indians crush when it is ripe, and they make meal out of it that is very good. All the cattle eat the beans, and it is at that time they are the fattest. We made camp on the bank of a stream that is very deep.

On the 4th we made 9 leagues. We travelled all day in the prickly woods and over prairies; but it should be noted that the woods are very thin and are not at all troublesome to pack-mules. We travelled that day South-West; we camped on the bank of a little stream.

On the 5th we made 3 leagues; we halted to hunt. We made camp on the bank of a large stream, which is wooded on both sides. The Indians stole five horses that night.

On the 6th we made 3 leagues over prairies. We made camp on the bank of a stream, which was wooded on the right bank, in order to wait for the Spaniards, who were searching for their horses.

On the 7th we kept on waiting because the Spaniards had not arrived.

On the 8th we made 8 leagues; we crossed Red River³⁵ [or Colorado, says the Chevalier de Beaurain³⁶], which is very wide when it is high; and the woods on both sides are willows, ash and oak. This river flows into the bay of M. de La Salle. After crossing it, we were attacked by sixty Indians, all on horseback, whom the Span-

³⁵The present-day Brazos River. See *Diary of the Alarcón Expedition into Texas, 1718-1719*, by Fray Francisco Céliz, trans. by Fritz Leo Hoffmann (Los Angeles, 1935), 103.

³⁶"Jean de Beaurain, a geographical engineer was born in 1696 and died in 1772. He was appointed geographer to the King in 1721." Margry attributed the authorship of the anonymous *Journal historique de l'établissement des Français à la Louisiane* [generally called La Harpe's] to Beaurain. Winsor (ed.), *Narrative and Critical History*, V, 63.

iards call Apaches. All we could do was to dismount and defend ourselves. But when they saw that we would not run and that we would not hand over our goods, after they had shot many arrows at us, they decided to go and steal the mules* which were following behind us and were not loaded. They did not have any trouble stealing them because there was only one Spaniard to drive them. They carried him off with them and vanished with the twenty-three mules.

On the 9th we made 3 leagues, still over prairies. The Paillailles, a nation friendly to the Spaniards, came to us and led us to their village.³⁷

On the 10th we halted; the Spaniards traded there for some buffalo hides.

On the 11th we made 6 leagues; we crossed a river which the Spaniards call San Marcos.³⁸ It is a stream deep enough to carry a pirogue and the water the most beautiful that could be seen. It is wooded on both sides, oak, walnut and ash. This river runs into the Red River.

On the 12th we made 3 leagues; we crossed the River Guadeloupe, which is a stream which makes two forks. We crossed both. This river can carry a pirogue at all seasons, and it runs into the River San Marcos. These are the rivers where M. de La Salle established his settlement; it is a very beautiful place. It would be well for the French if the country around Mobile were like this.

On the 13th we made 5 leagues. That day we passed a great number of prickly trees.

On the 14th we made 8 leagues. We crossed two rivers; the first was the San Antonio and the other the Medina River. The San Antonio has a good deal more water than the other. The Spaniards are going to establish a settlement there; it is a very beautiful place. These two rivers join together near the sea and run into the bay of M. de La Salle.

On the 15th we halted because of rain.

On the 16th we made 6 leagues. We made camp on the bank of a stream which the Spaniards call the ditch of the Peitre.³⁹ We travelled South that day.

*He says: twenty-three mules, and adds that they carried off a Spanish mulatto woman.

³⁷These were the Payayas Indians (Paia, Paiaia, Paillailles, Payaguas or Payseyas). See *Diary of the Alarcón Expedition*, 34.

³⁸The present Colorado River.

³⁹Possibly the same as "Los Charcos de la Pita" of the *Diary of the Alarcón Expedition*, 92, which is literally translated as "The Pools of the Century Plant."

On the 17th we made 7 leagues. We passed through a great many prickly trees and prairies. We found also prickly pears. It is from these that the Spaniards make cochineal. We camped on a prairie where we found some water by accident.

On the 18th we made 8 leagues. We passed that day many prickly pears; we made camp on the edge of a little lake.⁴⁰

On the 19th we made 6 leagues. We crossed the Nueces River which runs into the Rio Grande. It should be pointed out that from this stream [the Nueces] to the Rio Grande the country is no longer beautiful. There are prickly trees, and the prickly pears are so thick that the horses find it hard to go through them. We camped on a prairie which the Spaniards call The Spring.⁴¹

On the 20th we made 7 leagues. We made camp near a stream which runs along the banks of the Rio Grande, which the Spaniards call The Crow.⁴²

On the 21st we made 4 leagues. We crossed the Rio Grande and came to the Presidio, where there is a captain and thirty soldiers and two missions. One is named San Juan Bautista and the other San Bernardo.⁴³ The soldiers serve only to protect the two missions from the threat of Indians. There is no silver in this place; their trade is in cattle, horses, sheep and goats. The Rio Grande is a fine river, deep enough for a pirogue at all seasons; it is not wooded except for little *fredoches*;⁴⁴ the bed is rocky; it is two hundred paces wide. Fifty leagues above where we crossed it, there is a

This place was probably in the vicinity of modern LaCoste or Macdona, Texas. The Espinosa diary mentions "the pond called Pita" at about this same location. *Ramón Expedition: Espinosa's Diary of 1716*, by Rev. Gabriel Tous, T.O.R., *Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society, IV* (April, 1930), 8.

⁴⁰The location of this camp corresponds closely to that of "La Resurreccion" of the Alarcón diary, which has tentatively been placed on "present Januey Creek" near the spot where today Zavalla, Frio, Dimmit, and La Salle countries meet. *Diary of the Alarcón Expedition*, 92.

⁴¹This appears to be the same as "El Carrizo" of the Alarcón diary, which may have been near either Byrds, Texas, or modern Carrizo Springs, Texas. *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴²The place received its name in 1689 when De León named the pools of water near the Rio Grande "El paraje de los Cuervos" because more than three thousand crows appeared at nightfall." Elizabeth Howard West, "De Leon's Expedition of 1689," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, VIII (January, 1905), 206.

⁴³The "Map of Espinosa-Ramon's Route in 1716, compiled by Fr. Gabriel Tous, T.O.R., 1929" (frontispiece of the *Ramón Expedition: Espinosa's Diary of 1716*) shows the location of these two missions.

⁴⁴Possibly "freluches," which may be translated "tufted plants."

post which is only 18 leagues from the Rio Grande called San Gregorio,⁴⁵ where there are ten soldiers stationed; mining is done in that place, where there are several mines now being worked; this place is at the 30th degree North.

It would be much easier to trade by this river than to undertake trading by way of the Natchitoches, which is almost impossible; the reason is that the Spaniards will not transport their silver 300 leagues by land, through enemy country in order to come to the [country] of the Natchitoches for merchandise. I do not say, [that] if there were mines in the [country] of the Assinaiis where the Spaniards now are, the Natchitoches [country] would not be a good place for a post; but the Spaniards will solve all that difficulty, for they are going to establish a post on the River of M. de La Salle, and that will be where they will obtain all their necessities. I know this from a Recollect priest who has been ordered to go inspect these lands and is to set out soon after our departure from the Rio Grande.⁴⁶

The Spaniards assured me that there were still some French families from the time M. de La Salle settled that place. These were the families whom the Indians had not destroyed and who are now living among the Indians.

It would have been preferable that the French, instead of settling at Mobile, had settled on this river. There are some very beautiful lands near the Spaniards where we could trade in silver and cattle. Wild beeves are there in abundance. A pirogue can go up that river to their mines with nothing to fear except the Indians. However, it is very easy to make peace with these nations because they are all enemies of the Spaniards.

⁴⁵The name San Gregorio Nanciaceno was given to one of the halting-places of the Bosque-Larios expedition, which penetrated into Texas as far as Edwards County in 1675. Vito Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas en la Epoca Colonial* (Mexico, D. L., 1938), 254. If Derbanne has confused the Rio Grande with the Pecos River, he may have had this San Gregorio in mind; however, so far as is known, no mining establishment existed there. The San Gregorio which was situated twenty-eight leagues east of Otatitlan does not fit Derbanne's location. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *North Mexican States and Texas* (2 vols., San Francisco, 1886-1889), I, 341.

⁴⁶Martín de Alarcón, accompanied by Father Espinosa, Father Fray Joseph Guerra and Father Fray Francisco de Celis, in September 1718, explored the coast of the Bay of Espíritu Santo. Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936* . . . (7 vols., Austin, 1936), II, 101-102. Derbanne may be referring here to Father Fray Antonio Olivares whose report of November 20, 1716, touched on the importance of occupying the Bay of Espíritu Santo as a port for supplying a mission on the San Antonio River. *Ibid.*, 75.

I see no other place suitable for trade than an establishment on the River M. de La Salle; the settlers within one year would have more opportunity in that place than they would have in twenty years at Mobile. The reason is that in six months they could have horses, beeves, cows, sheep and goats and they could arrange to live at ease and at the same time trade with the Spaniards. The mission which they are going to establish at San Antonio is only 80 leagues from the settlement of M. de La Salle. I have spoken with several Spaniards who were there when the French were killed by the Indians; it was only a week after the massacre had taken place. They brought from there the swivel-guns, the powder, the candles; the cannon were left. When I left from the Rio Grande, they were getting ready to go explore the place.

When I left the Rio Grande, a Governor-General had arrived in Caouhville (Cohahuila), who was preparing to go to the Assinais in the month of December.⁴⁷ I left the Rio Grande on the 1st of September and I arrived at Dauphin Island on the 26th of October.

All the Indian nations, who are in those parts, thoroughly hate the Spaniards because they abuse them badly; it would not be difficult to make them change to our side if we took the trouble.

The Spaniards are not at all fortified in all these lands; they are exposed on all sides; they do not even have a fort; they only have soldiers who have never heard a gun fired, They have only Indians to deal with, who have nothing except arrows, and they wear helmets that are arrow-proof; they have only their heads covered.

This reconnaissance has certainly made a disturbance in New Spain. The Spaniards talked to me many times about it, and they told me that their lands were lost because their Indians would be the first to trouble them if the French frequented their lands, and their mines were lost.

When I was at the Rio Grande, there came two Frenchmen who were from *La Boque*, who told me that they wanted to go to the Illinois to smelt ore and that they knew how to smelt silver; indeed, they showed me what they had smelted, about six piastres in a piece.

⁴⁷Father Agustín Patrón accompanied a detachment of forty men, commanded by Captain José Domingo Ramón, which the Marquis de Aguayo sent to occupy the Bay of Espíritu Santo. The party took formal possession of the bay on April 4, 1721. Father Patrón selected, as the site of the mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, a spot on the bank of Garcitas Creek, about two miles from the place where La Salle had originally established his Fort St. Louis. The ceremony of the founding of the mission was celebrated on April 10, 1722. *Ibid.*, 167-69.

I urged them as strongly as I could to come there, telling them that the mines of the Illinois were very rich and that I had to return there as soon as M. de Saint-Denis arrived at the Rio Grande; but, as they must have learned that M. de Saint-Denis is in prison and that we escaped by night, perhaps, that will put off their journey. They had four horses and four mules to carry the metal; these animals are absolutely necessary because usually they do not mine and smelt in the same place. I told them, in order to persuade them, that the road was very easy to travel, by way of the Cadodaquis; that that nation had taken a number of horses to the Illinois; in fact, they have taken them there in the last few years.

REPORT OF THE POST OF NATCHITOCHES⁴⁸

Sir:

I have the honor of writing to you concerning a letter which you wrote to M. Deflandre,⁴⁹ in which you gave evidence of wanting to know what is happening in the post of Natchitoches. As

⁴⁸This "Relation du poste des Natchitoches" is almost identical with the "Copie d'une lettre ou memoir de M. derbanne au sujet du canton des Natchitoches dattee ala nouvelle orleans le 22 8 bre 1723." Paris, Arch. Nat., Colonies c13 c4.

⁴⁹Sieur de Flandre was appointed assistant bookkeeper at Natchitoches in December, 1722. Nancy M. Surrey (ed.), *Calendar of Manuscripts in Paris Archives and Libraries Relating to the History of the Mississippi Valley to 1803* (2 vols., Washington, 1926-1928), I, 402.

"Sieur de Flandre, who came over with us on the *Galatée* is a bad fellow who does not know how to write. He is a professional gambler. He lost a great deal of money on the ship to the Swiss whom he had to pay when he arrived. In addition to that he has lost here twenty-five hundred livres to the son of the adjutant to whom he was obliged to give a note on a Canadian. He has sold all his clothes in order to gamble. Judge whether we can trust a young man who has such a strong inclination. He went up the Natchitoches and on the way did nothing but gamble and lose the rest of his clothes. He is going to draw as much as he can from the warehouse in order to pay his debts and to reestablish himself." This sorry account of De Flandre (which may explain why Derbanne wrote the Report for him) appears in Commissary de le Chaise's letter to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, March 8, 1724. Rowland (ed.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, II, 327.

In a report made by the Superior Council of Louisiana to the General Directors of the Company of the Indies, February 27, 1725, the following comment on De Flandre's subsequent activities appears: "Sieur de Flandres Monnezin has come down from the Natchitoches. We have done all that we could to keep him here not for merit or his capacity but because we know that you would have wished that he remain. He was unwilling to accept anything from you, told us that he could not subject himself to the exactness that offices demand and decided to return to France." *Ibid.*, 417.

it has been eight years since I first came here, I can speak to you with full knowledge of it.

The first journey I made here was when we brought merchandise with M. de St. Denis to bring in commerce with the Spaniards where we carried some goods as far as the Rio Grande,⁵⁰ which is situated at 250[?] leagues from this post, where [our goods] were confiscated, after which I was obliged to save myself because the Spaniards would have arrested us and have taken us to Mexico where M. St. Denis was in prison.⁵¹

In regard to Spanish trade, it should not be counted on around here on a large scale because they [the Spaniards] are too far from where they receive their money and, moreover, they obtain their merchandise in Mexico as cheap as they can at Natchitoches. Moreover, there comes to them a bilander by way of St. Bernard Bay every six months with merchandise which they bring from Vera Cruz,⁵² which they get cheaply [and] which they transport to all their established ports.⁵³ This St. Bernard Bay, where the Spanish

⁵⁰Derbanne wrote "*la Rivière du nord*" [the River of the North]. This has been rendered throughout by the more familiar "*Rio Grande*."

⁵¹For a full discussion of the journeys of St. Denis to Mexico see Charmion Clair Shelby, "*St. Denis' Second Expedition from Louisiana to the Rio Grande, 1716-1719*" (M.A. thesis, University of Texas, 1927), and her "*International Rivalry in Northeastern New Spain, 1700-1725*" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1935).

⁵²Derbanne wrote "*du la vella a crouche*," but from the context, it seems clear that Vera Cruz was meant.

⁵³The Marquis de Aguayo, whose expedition into Texas and Louisiana in 1721-1722 was made as the result of the French threat, initiated the scheme of supplying Spanish establishments by sea from Vera Cruz. The beginning of the plan is recounted by the diarist Peña as follows:

"On April 26, his Lordship, after having received this news from La Bahia, sent a dispatch to the Viceroy, acquainting him with these facts and informing him that he was ready to continue the journey. He also called to his Excellency's attention the fact that although the soldiers' wages were very good, they would not be sufficient for their support if the food supplied continued to be transported by land. He informed him also that there was danger of running out of supplies, because of the time lost in crossing the rivers and because of the distance of 400 leagues to Los Adaes from Saltillo and Parras, from where they were then being conducted. In view of all this, he begged of his Excellency permission to bring the supplies from Vera Cruz to La Bahia; and he offered, if this permission were granted, to purchase or charter a bilander in which to transport whatever supplies are at present necessary for the province, and stated that in this way an important maritime route would be discovered. He stated also that, presuming his Excellency would grant the request, he was then writing to his agent in Mexico City, instructing him to

are established, is the place where M. de la Salle once was, where the garrison was slaughtered by the Indians. The French for a while wanted to find it [La Salle's fort], but they were not able to do so. Nevertheless, it is a very easy thing [to do]. Those who were sent to make the discovery [did] not want to go to the trouble, for I, who was not one of these makers of memoirs,⁵⁴ I would have found it without so much expense to the Company. The trade with the Indians of this place is in bear grease traded at New Orleans, which cannot help but be of benefit to the country. This nation consists of about one hundred men.⁵⁵ They make very little corn.

They live off the hunt, the buffalo, the deer. Nevertheless, it is not that the land is bad—very much to the contrary, the land of Natchitoches produces everything we sow. The big drought does not hinder the growth of anything we sow. This is a quality that all the land of the Mississippi does not have. The big drought and high water kill everything we plant on the Mississippi, something that never happens here where the land is sandy and wholesome in contrast to the lowlands, but which are not flooded.

I have not seen land in Louisiana which can be worked with more certainty [of profit] than in this place.

The great fault which I find at this post is the river, which is very difficult during six months of the year. Not having water for navigation, this river from this post to the big rapid which is thirty five leagues from here drops by several boats⁵⁶ and when the water is low, it can only be navigated with small Indian pirogues, which are not good for transporting any merchandise. But during high water, all the channels fill and can be navigated with boats—which is in

purchase or charter a bilander and to ship him without delay a supply of flour, corn and other things." Juan Antonio de la Peña, *Peña's Diary of the Aguayo Expedition*, trans. by Rev. Peter P. Forrestal, *Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society*, II (January, 1935), 17-18.

⁵⁴This appears to be a disparaging reference to the "Memoir Sent in 1693, on the Discovery of the Mississippi and the neighboring nations By M. De La Salle, From the Year 1678 to the Time of His Death, And By the Sieur De Tonty to the Year 1691." In this his memoir Henry de Tonti gives an account of his failure to find and rescue La Salle's colony. French (ed.), *Historical Collection of Louisiana*, I, 54-78.

⁵⁵For a brief history of the Natchitoches Indians and their relations with the French, see the "Account of the Journey of Bénard de la Harpe: Discovery made by Him of Several Nations Situated in the West," trans. and annotated by Ralph A. Smith, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXII (July, 1958), 84.

⁵⁶"Boats" is used here as a unit of measure.

the months from January to July. But it is necessary to have Indian guides because the French do not know all the channels, [which] are not all navigable.

The garrison of Natchitoches is composed of forty-five soldiers, with one commandant and five officers.⁵⁷ There are always six of these soldiers detached at the Cadodaquiou [Indian village], which is a post one hundred fifty leagues from here on this river to the north-west of here, to guard this post because the Spaniards could lay hold of it, [they] having possessed it before during the time when M. de la Salle was at St. Bernard Bay.

This Cadodaquiou Nation is very small.⁵⁸ There is besides this one, the nation of the Assonittes, Nassitoches, Natcheas, which are not one league apart, which makes about four hundred men in all. These nations do not trade, raise very little corn, [and] live by hunting buffalo. They use horses for this hunt [in] which they kill [the buffaloes] with arrows. The land of the Cadodaquiou is very good, but the river is very difficult to ascend because of some obstructions of logs which are in this river. One cannot go by pirogue except during high water.

Below the Cadodaquiou there are other nations named Quichaisse, Tancasuille, which are on the same river, one hundred leagues from the Cadodaquiou, who are Indians who live by hunting buffalo; they raise no corn.

The fort of Natchitoches where the French are is situated on a very suitable small island. There are four bastions of stakes six feet [high] in the ground, with the house of the commandant and two barracks for housing soldiers, but another one will have to be built because [the present one] is rotten and beyond use.⁵⁹

⁵⁷The Census of Fort St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches for May 1, 1722, lists 14 men, 10 women, 10 children, 20 Negro slaves, 8 Indian slaves, 12 horned cattle, and 74 horses. Beer (ed.), "Early Census Tables of Louisiana," 83.

⁵⁸St. Louis de Caddodacho was on the Red River in present-day Bowie County, Texas. *Handbook of Texas*, II, 529. For a brief discussion of the Kadohadacho see Smith, "Account of the Journey of Bénard de la Harpe," 86.

⁵⁹The manuscript map shows this first fort St. Jean Baptiste. This map was probably drawn by Jean de Beaurain. It is found with the manuscript of the La Harpe *Journal* in the Library of Congress. The relation of this small island to the surrounding country is better shown on the 1732 map entitled "Carte des Natchitoches," by Ignace F. Broutin [frequently reproduced with the erroneous date 1722 and with Broutin given the initials J. F.]. In a letter from Salmon to Maurepas, the Minister of Marine and Colonies, dated February 7, 1733, the island is described as being 300 *toises* long by 200 or more *toises* wide. By 1733 the disadvantages of the island location were apparent and the

The church service is exactly performed. We have no church in this post, nor priest. It is a Spanish priest who comes to say Mass on Sundays.⁶⁰

The settlers of this post are few in number. I have only seen twelve, but several soldiers are established [here] and grow corn for themselves. There are about twenty Negroes in this post who are divided among the settlers. There are few cattle. We have trouble getting some from the Spaniards. They only wanted to sell six cows and two bulls, but it is to be hoped that there will be others eventually. There are in this post about fifty horned cattle.

The Spaniards have a post seven leagues from here which they call St. Michel.⁶¹ Up till now, they have not traded [except for a] few guns and little powder. The settlers sold them some corn this year because they were not able to make their provisions. This is where they made their biggest trade—because they were starving to death. They have a fort of stakes without bastions. They have six small [cast] iron cannon. They have about one hundred soldiers and some

military necessity for moving the fort to the higher ground, now occupied by the American Cemetery, clear. The fort which Broutin refurbished in 1733 with three new huts, appears to have been substantially the same as that described by Derbanne: a far from sturdy bulwark against either Indians or Spaniards and an inadequate protection from even the weather—it was in a chronic state of dilapidation. Diron in his report of May 1, 1722 wrote: "The fort of Natchitoches is situated on the shore of a small island surrounded on all sides by a river and by several other small islands. It is in need of repair." "Early Census Tables of Louisiana," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XIII (April, 1930), 212. Dumont de Montigny in his *Mémoires Historique sur la Louisiane* gives this description: "The fort is a square palasade, where a little garrison is kept as a barrier against the Spaniards, to prevent their entering Louisiana. . . . The ground of this post is not bad." "Fort Naquitoches" is the English translation published in French's *Historical Collections of Louisiana*, V, 33.

⁶⁰Father Fray Antonio Margil de Jesús, a Spanish Franciscan missionary, celebrated the first mass in Natchitoches in October, 1716. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, II, 66. The Governor of Texas, Don Fernando Pérez de Almazán, wrote from Los Adaes on March 24, 1724, that "as the French had no priests at Natchitoches, the missionaries were in the habit of visiting them to administer the Holy Sacraments and regularly went over to say Mass for them on feast days." *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶¹San Miguel de los Adaes Mission was founded in the fall of 1716 by the Domingo Ramón expedition. *Handbook of Texas*, II, 559. "It was abandoned in 1719, as a result of the French hostilities. Aguayo refounded the mission with the same name on October 12, 1721." Fray Juan Agustin Morfi, *History of Texas, 1673-1779*, trans. by Carlos Eduardo Castañeda (2 vols., Albuquerque, 1935), I, 75.

thirty women. The governor, two Recollect fathers,⁶² one officer and one storehouse-keeper.⁶³

The land where they are established is very beautiful and good. They cultivate it. They did not have the trouble of clearing the land. They found it all cleared. It is plains thirty leagues from this post; on the road to Mexico they have a post named *Les Ayeztes*⁶⁴ where there is a priest and four soldiers who have a mission; it is eight leagues from this mission to Nacogdoches,⁶⁵ where they have a mission with one Recollect father and four soldiers. From there to the Assinay is seven leagues where they have a post of twenty-five men with two Recollect fathers, who have a mission with the Assinay.⁶⁶ This nation is composed of eighty to one hundred men. It is a very beautiful country and good land. The Indians grow corn for them and hunt buffalo with their horses. This nation goes as far as one hundred leagues hunting buffalo.

The Assinay have no other post established except [at] St. Bernard Bay, where they have one hundred men and several women.⁶⁷ From one post to another is one hundred leagues. Sixty leagues from St. Bernard Bay they have a post named St. Antonio which is a very beautiful country where they make much corn. They have fifty men in the garrison, several women, two Recollect fathers. I passed by [the site of] this post when I went to the Rio Grande. It is one of

⁶²"Récollet" was the French name for Franciscan.

⁶³In his report on conditions at Los Adaes in 1727, Brigadier General Pedro de Rivera noted that he found there "a garrison of one hundred men, including the officers, all under the command of the governor who resided at this post. The soldiers were employed in guarding the presidio, which although built of timber, was well protected by a stockade; in watching the horses; in the cultivation of a few fields where grain and vegetables for their maintenance were raised; in improving their quarters, and in helping the three missions founded in the vicinity by the Franciscan missionaries from the College of Zacatecas." Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, II, 220.

⁶⁴For an account of the refounding of the mission of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Ais on a stream which has been identified with Ayish Bayou near the present town of San Augustine, Texas, see *ibid.*, 157-58.

⁶⁵Nacogdoches, Texas. Derbanne wrote it "Natchodoché."

⁶⁶This post seems to correspond in location and number of the garrison with the Presidio de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Tejas, near the Angelina River. Rivera's report on it is discussed in Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, II, 221.

⁶⁷The Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zuñiga was founded on April 10, 1722 about two miles from the place where La Salle's Fort St. Louis had been. It was on the banks of Garcitas Creek, near Matagorda Bay. *Ibid.*, 167-69.

the most beautiful countries which can be seen. It [the post] was not yet established at that time.⁶⁸

From St. Antonio to the Rio Grande is sixty leagues. They have a post two leagues from the Rio Grande, where there are thirty soldiers all married, with two missions well established, and a quantity of cattle. They raise very little corn, the land not being well suited for that. There are only these two missions which raise corn for them.⁶⁹ It is at this post where our merchandise was seized and taken one hundred leagues farther, to a small town named Saltillo.⁷⁰ It is there where we began to see silver and where we did business.

From this town to Mexico [City] is one hundred fifty leagues, but all the country is well settled. One advantageous thing, Sir, is that from Natchitoches where we are, a man can go on horseback all the way to Mexico [City] without fear of bogging down his horse. The [beds of the] rivers and stream are all hard.

As I see, Sir, that you do not wish to know of anything except that which concerns this post, that is why I do not tell you of other countries I have seen. I could gladly speak to you of the Missouri, which I entered nearly eighteen years ago where we ascended four hundred leagues from its mouth.

These were the first Frenchmen to go so far up,⁷¹ where we found signs of Spaniards, such as a silver altar cruet, pieces of a chasuble, a Spanish currycomb, horses and mules which came from New Mexico, which the Indians had taken among the Padoca. There were some who profited from our discovery. It is quite true that New Mexico is not far from the Missouri, but there is no silver in New Mexico, according to what the Spaniards say. I myself inquired [about this] when I was at the Rio Grande.

The trade of New Mexico is in cattle of which they have a large number, but we will know the truth on the return of M. de Bourmont⁷² who should not be long in coming down to New Orleans.

⁶⁸San Antonio de Béxar (the present city of San Antonio, Texas) was founded in May, 1718 by Martin de Alarcón. *Ibid.*, 91-94.

⁶⁹The two missions were San Bernardo and San Juan Bautista. Their locations are shown on the frontispiece map, compiled by Fr. Gabriel Tous, in *Ramón Expedition: Espinosa's Diary of 1716*.

⁷⁰Derbanne wrote it "Les Sartilles."

⁷¹Apparently there were earlier expeditions made up the Missouri; Father Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J., makes note of one formally recorded, as well as others, in "The Emergence of the Missouri Valley Into History," *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, IX (April, 1827), 315.

⁷²"Etienne Vényard de Bourgmont had a checkered though on the whole

After my return from the Spaniards to Natchitoches, I went down to Dauphin Island where I found M. Hubert,⁷³ *commissaire ordonnateur*, who put me on the road to this post again, as warehouse-keeper. I arrived the first [part] of January 1717, where I have continued to live until now. I built a small establishment for myself, but the Company does not want the employees to have concessions.⁷⁴ That is very hard, above all for me who likes to work the land. I will be obliged to quit the Company's service because it is impossible for me to be idle. M. Deflandre lives with me. We live together as brothers, and are with respect, Monsieur, your very humble and very obedient servant—signed Derbanne at Natchitoches, the 12th June 1724.

a very useful career in the service of France in America, principally in the Missouri country. He was a young ensign in the troops of Canada when Cadillac asked to have him sent to Detroit to take possession of that post in his name. In 1706 he succeeded Tonti in the command of Detroit. . . . [In August, 1720 he] was appointed to lead an expedition to take possession of the Missouri region. Just before his departure from France in June, 1722, he was made a Knight of the Order of St. Louis. On his arrival in Louisiana he found great difficulty in equipping his expedition and it was not until February, 1723, that he was able to obtain sufficient boats, provisions and ammunition to enable him to set out. He built Fort Orleans among the Missouri Indians in November and December of 1723, and during 1724 made a highly successful series of visits to the Osage, Kansas, Oto and Comanche tribes. . . . His expedition was recognized as one of the best conducted and most successful conducted by the French explorers and he was promised a title of nobility." Rowland (ed.), *Mississippi Provincial Archives*, II, 413.

Emile Lauvrière in his *Histoire de la Louisiane Française, 1673-1939* (University, La., 1940), 303, notes the variant spellings of the name: Bourmont or Bourgmont.

⁷³For identification of Marc-Antoine Hubert, Commissary General, see Giraud, *Histoire de la Louisiane Française*, II, 204.

⁷⁴This restrictive practice of the Company was made the subject of a special recommendation in the "Statement of the Condition of the Province of Louisiana on the 5th of March, 1721": "To encourage the inhabitants to work with more zeal and courage, it would be well for the Company to allow them to cultivate all kinds of vegetables for their food, even wine, which could be marvellously produced, but which is forbidden. It would be an inducement for the Spaniards to come trade and would open up a commerce that might become considerable." *Memoirs of Charles Le Gac, Director of the Company of the Indies in Louisiana, 1718-1721*, trans. from the French by Olivia Blanchard (Survey of Federal Archives, 1937-1938).