Ancient Louisianians: French Creole Culture in Territorial Louisiana, 1762-1812

Charles L. Cox Jr.

2200 Taxco Rd Unit 1411, Fort Worth, Texas, 76116

850-826-2656

charles.cox@tcu.edu

***Introduction***

Before British colonists became American citizens, Western expansion had been on their minds. Following the British defeat of the French in the Seven Years' War in 1763, many colonists believed that the lands West of the Appalachian Mountains would be opened for settlement. They were mistaken. The Proclamation Act of 1763 barred Americans from moving there. Thirteen years later, Americans declared independence, and after the war, citizens began moving West. No one wanted the nation to expand more than Thomas Jefferson. With a stroke of a quill on April 30, 1803, Jefferson doubled the size of the country and added the valuable port city of New Orleans with the Louisiana Purchase from France. Though the official transfer of the territory did not occur until December 30, Jefferson recognized the monumental nature of the moment. Writing to the soon-to-be Territorial Governor of Louisiana, William C.C. Claiborne, Jefferson stated, "I consider the acquisition of this country as one of the most fortunate events which have taken place since the establishment of our independence."[[1]](#footnote-2) While Jefferson had achieved his goal of expanding the United States, it would not be as easy to adapt those living in Louisiana to American culture, especially the residents of present-day Louisiana.

The story of French culture in Louisiana began over one hundred years before it became a state in the United States. The French had aspirations for success in North America, as attained by the Spanish and English. Before the French settled colonial Louisiana, their North American settlements were in Canada near the shores of the St. Lawrence River and along the Atlantic Coast. However, they had many things working against them: poor soil, lack of population, and intense winters freezing the harbor of Quebec with ice for three months a year.[[2]](#footnote-3) By the 1660s, French power had significantly expanded in relation to other European nations. The French expanded its empire to the East in India and in Flanders with several victories that ceded land in Europe. In America, with the lack of success in Canada, France saw an opportunity to explore the Mississippi River to gain a firm foothold in the center of North America. France believed they could challenge the revenues that Spain and England received from their North American colonies through precious metals, valuable crops, and with the Indigenous peoples.

On May 15, 1673, Louis Jolliet, a French trader, and Jacques Marquette, a French missionary, along with five other Frenchmen, left the beach of St. Legnace and floated down Lake Michigan, connected to the Illinois River and, eventually, the Mississippi River at the mouth of the Arkansas River. Under direct order from the Sun King, Louis XIV, Jolliet and Marquette led the expedition South. They discovered that the Mississippi River flowed into the Gulf of Mexico instead of the Pacific Ocean, as they had assumed.[[3]](#footnote-4) The connection could not be any more perfect for the French. They discovered a river route to connect New France (Canada) to the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi River could also act as a natural barrier between empires. It blocked the English from moving West and hemmed in the Spanish from invading from Mexico. Near the mouth of the Mississippi lay a small set of lands. These lands sat at the bottom edge of the Louisiana territory. The Mississippi River connected the French colony of New France to Louisiana and its central city, New Orleans, and opened up the interior continent for French expansion into the Ohio Country and Missouri River Valley

Louisiana had great potential, but the French could never tap into it, especially in the city of New Orleans. Founded in 1718 as part of Scottish gambler, banker, and investor John Law’s Mississippi Company (also referred to as the Company of the West), the original plan for New Orleans was to solve the French crisis of relying on English tobacco. The French envisioned an agricultural economy that rivaled that of the English. French officials begged the government to send over farmers and husbandmen, but it never happened. By 1731, after little success under the Mississippi Company, Law transferred Louisiana's governing rights back to France. The Mississippi River offered France a tremendous economic opportunity, but they could never figure out how to capitalize on it. With control over the Mississippi River, France could control trade and economic ventures that flowed up and down the river. The city of New Orleans itself was the original Wild West. From gold hunters to fur trappers and gamblers, the population of New Orleans included an array of undesirable characters. Still, in 1722, the city became the capital of colonial Louisiana.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Over the next thirty-two years, Louisiana never prospered under French rule. It was hard for the French to establish dominance in the Gulf South region with the Spanish to the east and west of them. Following the French defeat to the British in the Seven Years' War, the Treaty of Paris in 1763 ceded all French lands in North America to Great Britain, except for Louisiana, which they ceded to their Spanish ally for the latter’s forced cession of East Florida to Britain. Britain received Canada and the eastern half of French Louisiana, while the Spanish received the western half of Louisiana, including all the settlements in the Mississippi Valley. There was one problem with Great Britain receiving the eastern half of Louisiana: The French already had signed it over to the Spanish the year before in the Treaty of Fontainebleau. Spain took its time in taking over Louisiana. The first Spanish government led by Don Antonio de Ulloa arrived in 1766. The French colonial days in North America were over, but the French identity was far from dead.

From 1762-1812, French Creole citizens living in Louisiana experienced what life was like under the control of two foreign powers: Spain and the United States.[[5]](#footnote-6) Under immense pressure to adapt to the customs of both, French citizens retained their agency from the beginning of Spanish rule in 1762 until 1812, when Louisiana became the eighteenth state in the United States, but how was this possible? Over the first fifty years that Louisiana belonged to Spain and then the United States, the territory underwent many different political, cultural, and environmental events that shaped the region. Through it, one thing that remained was a strong sense of French identity that is unique to any other place where the French colonized the future United States.[[6]](#footnote-7) The question here is why. Why and how do the original French roots planted in Louisiana exist through the rule of two different foreign powers and still exist today, especially in New Orleans, unlike any other place that the French colonized in the future United States? By exploring different cultural events, political resistance, political policy, and religious beliefs, the answer to this question is revealed.

My work centers around New Orleans as a case study of French culture and heritage. Over the years, historians have focused on New Orleans in many aspects, such as race, class, politics, and economics. While these studies expand our understanding of how Louisiana and its port city of New Orleans came to play significant roles in defining the trajectory of the North American continent, no one has looked at how the French identity became so deeply rooted in the ground and soul of French citizens in the city. My work intends to uncover these answers.[[7]](#footnote-8)

***Spanish Louisiana, 1762 to 1800***

By the end of 1763, the Bourbon King, Charles III, had yet to select the first Spanish governor for Louisiana. There were two main aspects that made this decision difficult for Charles III: population and geography. When the Spanish officially took control of the territory in 1763, Louisiana consisted of a diverse population of Indigenous people, French, Spanish, Latin Americans, Anglos, Germans, and Africans. Frenchmen numbered around 5,700, with 1,700 (30 percent) residing in New Orleans.[[8]](#footnote-9) Outnumbering all European or Latin Americans were Indigenous peoples and communities spread throughout the territory in various tribes.[[9]](#footnote-10) Spain initially wanted Louisiana to be a border between the British American Colonies and the Spanish empire west of Louisiana. The territory stretched from New Orleans to the border of Canada. British colonists could not cross west without entering Spanish territory.

Charles III ultimately decided that the unexplored geography of Louisiana was more critical than the diverse population. Antonio de Ulloa y de la Torre-Giral was a Spanish scientist working as the superintendent of the Huancavelica mercury mine in Peru. In January 1762, Ulloa received orders to relinquish his post and depart for Havana, Cuba. While working on scientific projects in Cuba, in June 1765, Charles III selected Ulloa to serve as Louisiana's first Spanish governor and establish the Spanish Cabildo in New Orleans.[[10]](#footnote-11) What made Spanish Louisiana different from other Spanish colonial territories was that the Spanish did not try to set a precedence of political dominance right from the outset. They allowed French customs to stand and laws to exist. On the morning of March 5, 1766, Ulloa arrived on the *Volante,* a single, eighteen-cannon vessel. Very few French came to the port to greet him. Ulloa refused to take the French flag taken down and the Spanish flag raised. He wanted to show a sense of union between the two European powers.[[11]](#footnote-12)

From the moment of Ulloa’s arrival, he had trouble governing, especially the French. He believed the French would willingly join the army and help with the Spanish takeover of the territory. Ulloa did not realize that many French did not respect the Spanish and never wanted to be under their control. Short of soldiers, Ulloa did not take formal control until 1768.[[12]](#footnote-13) Ulloa informed the Governor of Cuba, Antonio Maria de Bucareli, that "it is virtually impossible to accomplish anything over here, or to handle this government with regularity without any troops to maintain respect and contain so much freedom."[[13]](#footnote-14) In retrospect, Spain should have chosen wiser for their first governor. New Orleans was the most important city in the territory. However, under French control, it had a long history as a port city full of corruption and disorder. Despite his presence, from 1763 to 1768, local French officials haphazardly governed Louisiana.

Besides the lack of soldiers, there were other reasons for the Spanish delay in taking control of Louisiana until 1768. During the Seven Years' War, Spain lost a considerable number of resources. Their army was spread thin throughout the globe. Spain had also been notorious for delaying its colonial takeover of ceded lands.[[14]](#footnote-15) In one of his last reports, Vincent Gaspard Pierre de Rochemore, a French territorial official, stated that New Orleans was "a chaos of iniquities."[[15]](#footnote-16) Crime was rampant, Indigenous communities threatened French power, and the region suffered economically. Had the crown realized how dysfunctional Louisiana and its biggest port city of New Orleans were, they would have put someone in charge who had military experience.

By 1768, Ulloa and the Spanish crown had yet to establish a strong foothold in Louisiana. Many issues plagued the Spanish government, but many came from the government itself. The preeminent issue was money. The Spanish government transitioned from the French livres to Spanish pesos. However, the conversion rate was 2:1, and there were more livres than pesos brought into New Orleans from trade ships and French merchants. Many Spanish officials worked without receiving a salary. Not until July 1768 did the city have a stable currency. From governmental support via Cuba, between 1766 to 1768, 600,000 pesos came into Louisiana. The government only used 280,940 of the 600,000 pesos between 1766-1768 to maintain the government. The government used the rest on other things, such as ship repairs, construction of defenses, and to pay soldiers.[[16]](#footnote-17)

While attempting to keep the economy afloat, the summer of 1768 presented the second issue: the Acadian migration. During the Seven Years' War, British troops occupied parts of Canada around Nova Scotia; they began a campaign of deporting Acadian people from the territory. Several thousand Acadians lost their lives during the campaign. By the summer of 1768, a few Acadians remained in Nova Scotia, but they saw New Orleans, even under Spanish control, as a chance to reunite with French citizens. Having sold all their land to pay for the journey, when they arrived in New Orleans, they were penniless. The struggling Spanish government had to support many of them. Ultimately, Ulloa sent them to Natchez. Ulloa wanted to establish a Spanish presence on the other side of the Mississippi River.[[17]](#footnote-18) The third issue, and maybe the most crucial, was that in March 1768, the Spanish government enforced stricter rules and regulations on trade. Merchants could no longer trade with the English, and trade with the French was tightly regulated. The French citizens saw this as an attack on their liberties. With the tightening of trade and commerce, the Spanish government reduced the mercantile economy of New Orleans. French merchants knew it would be difficult for them to sell goods at Spanish markets while also importing the goods they were accustomed to having from France.

By October 1768, French and Spanish officials were at odds with one another. The French citizens, especially merchants and landowners, did not respect Spanish authority. While it is hard to argue against the fact that the French citizens never wanted the Spanish to occupy Louisiana, it is equally hard to argue against that Ulloa and his government only prompted more hatred for the Spanish from his policies and territorial decisions. From the beginning of the Seven Years' War, New Orleans had a strong sense of independence: the French government left them to govern themselves.[[18]](#footnote-19) With Spanish assertions of power, many elite and middle-class French began talking about overthrowing the Spanish government. By the fall of 1768, after an economic crisis that existed since the onset of Spanish rule, after the migrations of the Acadians and their displacement on lands in Louisiana that they never intended to inhabit, and after the regulations on trade and commerce, conditions ripened and a storm brewed. The clouds of discontent were ready to burst open.

By October 21, Ulloa began hearing rumors from every corner of the territory of a possible *coup d'etat*. Ulloa refused to believe it until he received a report about the organization of German Citizens along the German Coast. The Germans supported the French because the laws and regulations implemented by Ulloa had caused havoc on their ways of life. Ulloa sent Spanish official Gilbert de St. Maxent to the German Coast to pay off some of the debts the Germans incurred because of Ulloa's policies. Upon arrival, St. Maxent was seized and imprisoned by the conspirators.

The ring leaders of the *coup d’etat* were Denis-Nicolas Foucault and Nicolas Cahuvin de La Frénière. Foucault had served as the French naval commander in Louisiana, while Frénière was the French Attorney General. Finding supporters for the overthrow was not hard. La Frénière gained five hundred and sixty signatures from some of the most influential French citizens in the territory for a petition to the Spanish Supreme Council that called for the removal of Ulloa and the entire Spanish government from the territory. The petition’s grievances included that the Spanish had forced the Acadians out of New Orleans and threatened to drive them "from the colony and have them sold as slaves," that vessels from France or America be permitted to enter the Mississippi River, Spanish officials or military officers in Louisiana had to board vessels to leave the territory immediately. The petition closed with French citizens passionately stating that "the preservation of their life, their obligations to their creditors, their honor emanating from patriotism and from their duty, and finally their fortunes attacked by said decree (the mercantile decree) induce them to offer their property and their blood to preserve forever the sweet and inviolable title of French citizen."[[19]](#footnote-20)

Foucault and La Frénière reached out to the British in West Florida for help. British Brigadier General Frederick Haldimand did not outright refuse but stated that, at this point, he did not think it would be good for the British to intervene in overthrowing the Spanish government. However, should the coup succeed, then they would be willing to protect them from a Spanish invasion. On the morning of October 28, 1768, units of French and German militias marched into New Orleans. For his safety, Ulloa retreated to the *Volante*, the same vessel that brought him to New Orleans just two and a half years prior. Meeting the army in the streets was a French legion that had sworn loyalty to Ulloa led by Charles Phillippe Aubry. Aubry begged Foucault and Frénière to end the coup, but they refused and again demanded that the Spanish depart. For Aubry, his hands were tied. If he engaged the militias, how would that look for him, who had planned to return to France? However, if he did not engage, he would forgo his loyalty and duty as a military officer. Aubry sent twenty men to protect the *Volante* while he sent thirty other troops to guard the city center.[[20]](#footnote-21) The marching in the streets turned into parades, eventually turning into drunkenness. Had Ulloa had the proper army in New Orleans, this would have been a chance to crush the rebellion. With no hope of Spanish reinforcements arriving in time, on November 1, 1768, Ulloa sailed out of New Orleans and never returned.

The rebel cause seemed victorious but was not; it simply postponed Spanish rule. Over the next year, Foucault, Frénière, and other French elites attempted to return the territory to the French. On November 22, the leaders of the coup drafted an eighteen-page letter to the king describing why they expelled the Spanish government. The main reasons they cited for their actions were the tyrant Ulloa's policies on commerce and agriculture. The leaders also addressed the unwarranted control of the slave trade and the treatment of the Acadians by the Spanish. Their greatest complaint was that they believed Ulloa tried to bring an end to the Superior Council, which had dominated the political landscape during the French regime. The letter's closing was a plea to reunite the territory with France stating that they beg "Sire, to receive in your loyal and paternal breast your children who have no other desire than to die your subjects."[[21]](#footnote-22)

Accompanying the letter was a less emotional appeal for reacceptance to the French crown by the citizens. The *Mémoire de habitants et négociants de la Louisiane sur l’evénement du 29 octobre, 1768*, aimed to convince the king that retrocession would economically benefit France. The *Mémoire* primarily condemned Spanish laws on mercantilism that placed Louisiana into a closed economic system. The French government resisted retrocession. France had made the cession voluntary and did not want to take ruining relations with Spain. Nor did the French populace favor restoring Louisiana as their colony. Lastly, the French crown knew that the English did not support the conspirators. The French government feared that if they backed them, England and Spain would join forces to overthrow the French in Louisiana.[[22]](#footnote-23)

After ten months of no Spanish presence in Louisiana, Spain sent Don Alexander O'Reilly from Cuba. O'Reilly arrived in the summer of 1769 with twenty-one ships, transporting twenty-six hundred men and 150,000 pesos.[[23]](#footnote-24) On October 26, 1769, almost a year after the rebellion, La Frénière, and four other French officials were either hung or executed by a firing squad. Foucault returned to Pairs, where he received a life sentence in prison. The Spanish officially reclaimed Louisiana, but it was clear that the French inhabitants would not give up their cultural, political, and economic ideas. To ensure that the denizens of Louisiana knew that Spain had absolute control of the territory, O'Reilly implemented the *Recopilacion de las Indias* (Compilation of Laws of the Indies), better known by Louisianians as the "O'Reilly Codes." It is referred to as the "O'Reilly Codes" because it was supposed to be a temporary law code based on the principles of the *Recopilacion de las Indias* until the citizens in Louisiana became accustomed to the Spanish structure. However, the O'Reilly Codes were the only laws the Spanish used during their time in Louisiana.

The Codes consisted of six sections, each dealing with matters of daily life, from criminal punishment to fees and fines for certain things and the treatment and rights of free and enslaved Africans. Adjusting to new punishment and fines was not an issue for many French. However, the treatment of free and enslaved people presented an issue. The French policy for years was one of creating a separate class power system. Enslavers did not want free or enslaved Africans to have any sense of freedom or rights unless they gave it to them. The French Code Noir was the French colonial slave code written in 1685 and became law in Louisiana in 1724. Once the Spanish took control of Louisiana in 1762, they decided to keep the French Code Noir in place.

The fact that the Spanish chose to keep the Code Noir in place instead of implementing their colonial codes for enslaved people is interesting. The French crown did little to make French citizens in Louisiana follow and enforce the Code Noir. Frenchmen had the freedom to practice any form of punishment they saw fit on their enslaved people. When O'Reilly arrived, the Spanish had a conundrum. On the one hand, they needed the help of French planters and other elites to help govern Louisiana, but on the other, they wanted to implement Spanish law, which none of these men wanted. It seems then that the Spanish decided to keep Code Noir as a compromise method with the French elite. What the Spanish did, however, was enforce the code. French planters believed that the enforcement was new Spanish regulations, but it was just the enforcement of laws that had been in place in Louisiana since 1724. Frenchmen believed they should have the right to punish their enslaved people how they saw fit and thought the Spanish were allowing the racial and class divide to weaken in Louisiana. The Spanish only made two changes to the code.[[24]](#footnote-25)

The first of these changes came in 1776. In February 1776, Jose de Galvez became the new Minister of the Indies in Spain. Wanting to learn more about Louisiana, Galvez instructed Capt. Francisco Bouligny to write a report on his time in the territory. Bouligny served in Cuba under O'Reilly before joining him in Louisiana in 1769. Bouligny married a French Creole woman and purchased a plantation and enslaved people near New Orleans. In his report, he described the conditions of slavery in Louisiana. Ignoring the actual conditions, Bouligny produced a report that made the conditions of slavery sound pleasant in Louisiana. The work days for enslaved workers lasted from dawn till 11 A.M. and 3 P.M. until nightfall in the summer and 7 or 8 A.M. to noon and 2 P.M. to dark in the winter. Bouligny also claimed that enslavers usually allowed their enslaved people one to two days off per week to attend to their chores. Galvez used Bouligny's report to inform the governor of Louisiana, Louis de Unzaga y Amezaga, of how to treat free and enslaved Africans under the law in Louisiana.[[25]](#footnote-26) Of the thirty-six new articles, three dealt with free and enslaved Africans.

Article twenty-two stated that enslavers needed to treat their enslaved people fairly and owed them humanity and justice. The article noted that some enslavers were harsh and cruel to the enslaved on a daily basis. The article also prohibited any punishment that would cause an uprising among the enslaved. Article twenty-three addressed the assembly of enslaved workers at night performing dances and assemblies. Planters did not want the enslaved to meet or gather, especially at night. However, social relations benefited their workers as it gave them a break from the brutality of slavery. The article also ordered African Catholics to marry within the church and encouraged enslavers to ensure they did so. The last articles dealt with free mulattoes and warned of the harm that free mulatto women were causing in Louisiana. The article stated that many mulatto women were living "dishonestly." If any mulatto women caused any harm or committed a scandal, they would be placed aboard the next ship heading to Saint-Domingue.[[26]](#footnote-27) While it does not state what it means by "dishonestly" or "committed a scandal," it is safe to assume that many of these women could pass as white women or were prostitutes. All these articles were implemented by Galvez when he became governor in 1776.

The second change came in 1789 under Governor Esteban Rodriguez Miro. Miro, like Galvez, issued a proclamation on enslaved people in Louisiana. Miro prohibited work on Sundays and holy days unless necessity demanded it. He also banned enslaved dances in New Orleans public squares on Sundays or holy days until after the evening religious services. However, they were allowed to have dances at any point on Saturdays. Miro did not allow free African women to wear feathers or jewelry. He did not want them to look the same as white women. Lastly, Miro forbade the entry of Creole Africans from the French and British Caribbean islands who lacked skills unless they were domestic workers.[[27]](#footnote-28)

The French believed that giving enslaved people too much freedom would lead them to rise up and overthrow the enslaver. French planters insisted that laws needed to be strict and impactful to make enslaved people follow them. They insisted that treatment revert to the old ways. What the French planters and other elites did not realize was that these laws had always been there. By not enforcing laws dealing with enslaved people, French enslavers were judges, juries, and executioners regarding punishment. It seems the Spanish decided to keep the French Code Noir because the Spanish slave code would have been at odds with the Anglo-Americans' ideas of slavery. The Spanish protections for slavery, such as marriages and protection against unnecessary harm, would not have been accepted by the planters of the United States, who saw slavery and their enslaved people as a commodity and property that they could do whatever they wanted with.

While the Spanish government implemented laws for the human treatment of enslaved people, they had yet influenced the design or look of the city. By the 1780s, most houses and buildings in New Orleans consisted of cypress wood that, once dried out, became highly flammable. By 1788, eleven hundred structures stood in New Orleans. None of them were lofts that the city has come to be known for today. Instead, they were wooden shacks at ground level. Citizens in New Orleans had a long history of dealing with floods and hurricanes. In 1776, New Orleans was struck by a hurricane causing massive amounts of damage to the city. Despite suffering a long history of water damage, New Orleans never experienced a fire.

The day was March 21, 1788. At the corner of Toulouse Street and Chartres Street (then Conde Street) sat the private chapel for Don Vicente Jose Nunez. Around mid-afternoon, a candle fell from his altar and engulfed the church in flames. The fire eventually spread from his church, torching every structure in its path. By eight o'clock that night, eight hundred and fifty-six of the eleven hundred structures in New Orleans had burnt to the ground. The day the fire occurred was not just a typical day; it was Good Friday. Hundreds of people were planning for the big weekend before everything they owned transformed into ashes.[[28]](#footnote-29) An account from the *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser* described the events of the fire, which burnt with "irresistible fury," destroying "the guard house and then the church . . . carrying ruin and devastation to all quarters of the town." In addition to the great despair of the inhabitants, the estimated fire damage was 2,595,561 pesos.[[29]](#footnote-30)

The Good Friday fire of 1788 is one of the lesser-known events of the Spanish era in Louisiana. Few historians have given it the attention it deserves. There are two reasons why it is essential in telling the story of French culture and heritage in Louisiana. The first is the Spanish response to the fire. The Spanish governor of Louisiana was Esteban Rodriguez Miro y Sabater. Miro deserves praise for his relief efforts. His first endeavor the following day was to provide tents and rations of rice to anyone in need. The first day alone saw seven hundred people line up for supplies. Not only did Miro distribute tents and rations, but over the following days, he gave out close to two thousand pesos of his own money. Soon the tents became overcrowded, and on April 4, Miro ordered the Cabildo government to build temporary wooden shacks for people to live in.[[30]](#footnote-31)

The most significant aid, though, came from the waterways. Miro had long favored allowing outside trade with foreign powers into Louisiana. Ever since the trade and commerce regulations of 1768, citizens inside territorial Louisiana could only *legally* trade with Spain. Miro saw the fire as an opportunity to open up the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Miro defied Spanish law and sent three vessels to New York and Philadelphia to acquire provisions for the people of Louisiana. The original act provided three years of unlimited trade with foreign nations, but in 1791, the act became permanent. There would never be any other shipping and trade restrictions on the city after Miro lifted these. The loosening of trade restrictions pleased the French colonists. Not only could they obtain goods from French islands in the Caribbean, such as Saint-Domingue, but they could also receive items from France itself, with the main port being Bordeaux.

The second thing that came from the fire's aftermath was the city's new architecture and design. Prior to the fire of 1788, small French creole houses in Louisiana were simple, wooden frame houses. They usually only had two rooms and were called *salle-et-chambre* (parlor and bedroom) cottages. They were often lifted a foot or more off the ground using cypress poles. An expanded three-room design was typical along the waterways in Louisiana. The rooms were always side by side. The front door opened to the living room, which connected to the kitchen and dining room. To the left and right would be the two bedrooms. The front porch consisted of one long covered porch with poles holding it up. The Norman based model was an asymmetrical house close to the geometric shape of farmhouses found in Northwestern France.[[31]](#footnote-32) Closer to the French Quarter, houses stood back ten to fifteen from the edge of the property. The interior spaces of each block contained gardens consisting of orchards and arbors. Behind the house stood the service buildings, such as the kitchens and stables.[[32]](#footnote-33)

After the fires of 1788 and 1794, the city transformed. The passage of laws prohibited the use of shingles or plain, wooden roofs unless a one-inch thick plaster protected them. The pattern and development of the city were set on a new course: a Spanish course. By 1795, the construction of new two-story townhomes began across the city. Stores and shops were placed on the ground level, while the second floor served as the living quarters. A balcony lined with iron guard rails came off the second or even the third floor. The balcony usually had two ways of accessing it. The roof was usually a single pitch that sloped to the patio. The rear of the house was surrounded by the kitchen, stable, and quarters for enslaved people. The structure of the houses has a lengthy Spanish historical background but not a background from Spain. The style of houses in New Orleans resembles those in the Spanish Caribbean. The houses have many open archways that allowed residents to view the street and behind the house to keep an eye on enslaved laborers.[[33]](#footnote-34) The interesting dynamic is that it does not seem that the French cared much about how their houses looked or the specific style of them; they just wanted them rebuilt.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Louisiana, and especially the city of New Orleans, had transformed. In November 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in France at the hands of a political coup. Part of Bonaparte's ambitions was to see sugar-producing colonies like Louisiana return to the French empire**.** He believed that some of France's economic challenges were because they lost control of Louisiana and their other sugar-producing colonies in the Caribbean. In October 1800, the French and Spanish signed the Third Treaty of San Ildefonso, in which Spain returned Louisiana to France. The Spanish period was over. France would not hold onto the territory for long. Due to the Haitian Revolution and the prospect of a new war with Great Britain, on July 4, 1803, France sold Louisiana to the United States. Once again, French citizens had to prepare for a change in Louisiana.

***The American Domination 1803-1812***

William C. C. Claiborne arrived in New Orleans in December 1803 as the first governor of Territorial Louisiana under the United States. Claiborne's six volumes of letter books describe his entire time in Louisiana. In one of his first entries after he arrives, Claiborne writes to Secretary of State James Madison stating that New Orleans is a foreign place to him and that he needs local knowledge.[[34]](#footnote-35) Claiborne was not the only one who felt foreign; so to did the French citizens in Louisiana. Many of them were unsure of what to expect from the government of the United States. It was not long before the United States dealt with political unrest from French citizens.

Just as the Spanish did in 1769 with the "O'Reilly Codes" that became the binding laws in Louisiana, on March 26, 1804, Congress introduced the Governance Act of 1804. This provided a set of laws and standards for the government and citizens of Louisiana. Much of the Act resembled the United States Constitution. Section two provided that the governor had executive power over the territory to ensure that the laws were faithfully executed. Section four created a thirteen-man legislative branch that had to power to alter or repeal colonial laws. The Superior Court held judicial power over the territory and had the final say over inferior courts.[[35]](#footnote-36) Section ten described the unlawful transportation of enslaved people into the United States. Anyone found guilty of transporting enslaved people into the United States was fined three hundred per enslaved person. Many planters had an issue with section fourteen. It stated that any land grants within the territory ceded by the French to the United States were null and void unless they had proof of purchase from the Spanish or French government.[[36]](#footnote-37)

In response to the act, French citizens wrote the "Remonstrance of the People of Louisiana against the Political System Adopted by Congress for Them." The authors of the address were prominent landowning French creoles; Pierre Derbigny, Jean Noel Destrehan, and Pierre Sauve. Derbigny later became governor of Louisiana in 1828. The opening of the address states that Louisianians believed that the first action of the United States government was the communication of all the blessings enjoyed by citizens of the United States. However, the remonstrate states that the American government never communicated with them about what they may want. They ruled that after hours of debates that only showed a minimum knowledge of their situation in Louisiana, the Governance Act of 1804 was adopted to become law in "our country."[[37]](#footnote-38)

Before exploring more of the Louisianans' response to the Governance Act, it is essential to understand why they believed they would be adopted into the United States and given the same privileges as American citizens. The majority of the remonstrance refers to Article III of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty of 1803 which stated, "The inhabitants of the ceded territory shall be incorporated in the Union of the United States and admitted as soon as possible according to the principles of the federal Constitution to the enjoyment of all these rights, advantages and immunities of citizens of the United States, and in the meantime, they shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property and the Religion which they profess." Louisianians saw this as a welcoming into the nation. They understood that statehood would not come immediately but believed they would be given a territorial government with representatives in Congress. [[38]](#footnote-39)

Towards the middle of the remonstrance, the authors address their issues, first pointing to the constitution. They argue that they should have been able to elect the governor of Louisiana instead of having one chosen for them who is "ignorant to our language, uninformed of our institutions, and who may have no connections with our country or interest in its welfare." The article addresses several issues and demands of the people. They objected to the split of Louisiana into two separate territories: the Mississippi Territory and the Orleans Territory. They preferred the region to remain whole as it had always been. They also demand that every governmental document is printed in English and French. The Louisianians bring up the problem of language again in their ninth demand when they suggest that money should be set aside for an English and French school in every county of the territory. The interesting dynamic is that they do not mention anything about the Spanish language. While it is hard to know for certain, it does not seem that learning Spanish mattered to the Louisianians or if it did, they only did so to communicate with Spanish-speaking citizens in Louisiana. The French language remained dominant throughout the time of the Spanish in Louisiana.[[39]](#footnote-40) The Remonstrance showed that the Louisianians did not feel as if they had been adequately represented in the takeover by the United States. The Louisianians did not convince the United States government to alter its policies. However, it showed that the French would not give up their beliefs, especially their French customs.

One of Claiborne's first letters as governor describes French anxiety in Louisiana, especially in New Orleans. On January 10, 1804, Claiborne wrote to Madison that he had grown accustomed to the people of Louisiana and believed they were "crude" and unfit "for a representative Government." Claiborne described a strong passion for the French style of government amongst the Louisianians. Claiborne feared that Bonaparte would incite New Orleans Frenchmen to insurrection and the eviction of the United States from the territory. Claiborne worried about insurrection until Louisiana became a state in 1812. Not only was he worried about the French, but the Spanish in Florida and Texas and the British coming down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.[[40]](#footnote-41)

Claiborne also described another cultural phenomenon that still exists in New Orleans to this day: balls and dances. He reported uproar amongst the French and American citizens attending a ball about the performances and style of specific dances. From Claiborne's letter, one can gauge how vital he thought this issue could be. "I believe this affair is at an end, but being desirous at the present juncture of communicating every circumstance which might have a political tendency, I have deemed it worthy of mentioning."[[41]](#footnote-42) Claiborne viewed the dispute over the preference of French or American dances as potentially having a great political impact. A few weeks later, Claiborne wrote to Mayor Étienne de Boré on his decision to place a small militia of fifteen men outside the city ballroom to "tend to the preservation of good order."[[42]](#footnote-43) Three days later, Claiborne drafted another letter to Madison describing the process of the balls. Usually, during the winter season, there were as many as two balls a week. Every white male paid fifty cents to enter. Women, who likely were not charged admittance, attended from “every Rank" The balls thus prompted a degree of socializing among different classes, including free and enslaved Africans. Claiborne thought it necessary to inform Madison because he needed to understand that the balls in New Orleans "occupy much of the Public mind."[[43]](#footnote-44)

It is unclear when balls first arrived in Louisiana. Balls, and particularly masked balls, were widely associated with Europe from the time of the Renaissance, especially in Italy and France. The most likely time would have been the reign of French Governor Pierre de Rigaud Marquis de Vaudreuil from 1743 to 1753. Vaudreuil was a man conscious of fashion and had a knack for introducing social entertainment into New Orleans.[[44]](#footnote-45) While regular balls took place, masked balls had been the tradition and standard in New Orleans. In 1781, the Spanish Cabildo debated the problem of free and enslaved Africans attending public balls. The Cabildo feared that wearing masks would entice free and enslaved Africans to commit crimes. By the mid-1790s, following the Haitian Revolution and the French Revolution, the Cabildo outlawed masked balls altogether, fearing that they presented an opportunity for both French and African insurrection against the Spanish government. Masked balls, which had become a staple of French culture in New Orleans, did not return until the 1820s.[[45]](#footnote-46)

Claiborne's attitude towards balls differed from most Americans. Most American did not see how dressing up, and dancing could be important to an individual. Claiborne saw them as a way of appeasing the French citizens in Louisiana. By examining Claiborne's letter books, one can see the anxiety in him governing a place and a people he knew nothing about nor could he speak their language. Claiborne’s fear of insurrection by French citizens guided much of his behavior and views of the French. He was aware, though, that Americans also attended these balls. After he personally experienced a brawl almost taking place, he and the New Orleans city council passed regulations requiring the presence of at least two police officers at every ball. No weapons were allowed into the venues. There was even a law passed on the style of dances and the format in which they were performed. The order of the dances was two French quadrilles, then an English quadrille, and lastly, a waltz before the sequence started over.[[46]](#footnote-47)

A new kind of ball came to New Orleans in 1805. Auguste Tessier began hosting quadroon balls at the St. Phillip Street Ballroom. Quadroon balls consisted of only white men and free African women. Tessier took out ads in the French newspaper, the *Moniteur* announcing the balls would be held twice a week. It was common for wealthy French whites to keep a free African mistress in the city. Population numbers almost demanded it. One-third of the city was free Africans, most of whom were free African women. Free African women also outnumbered white women in the city. Many French citizens became accustomed to being around free African women.[[47]](#footnote-48) One of Governor Ulloa's first acts in office was the allow Frenchmen to marry free African women. However, the 1808 Louisiana Civil Code banned the marriage of whites and Africans, free or enslaved. In addition to quadroon balls, subscription balls became popular in the early nineteenth century. Also called society balls, subscription balls allowed white males to purchase tickets for the three-month ball season, and they could bring a female guest free of charge. The first subscription balls took place during the 1810-1811 season. From 1810 onward, all major ballrooms held both subscription and public balls. What is unique about subscription balls is that, like public balls, they did not discriminate against class. The subscription was to keep dangerous and criminal activities out of the balls rather than a mechanism to make balls socially exclusive.[[48]](#footnote-49)

Another aspect of French culture that becomes important from examining Claiborne's letter books is the importance of the French language. The earliest moments of his letter book describe the importance of needing an interpreter. French citizens refused to let their French language die. Claiborne wrote to Madison of a meeting in New Orleans to decide who should represent Louisiana in Congress. The moderator of the meeting was John Watkins, an American doctor living in New Orleans who spoke both English and French. Most of Watkins' speech dealt with the French citizens’ concern of keeping the slave trade intact in Louisiana. Once Watkins finished his speech, a Frenchmen stood up, outraged that Watkins gave the speech in English instead of French, and demanded that he give it in the French language. Watkins stood up and repeated it.[[49]](#footnote-50)

Another example comes from Claiborne’s May 3, 1804, letter to Madison addressing statehood. Claiborne warned that many Louisianians would not be happy that Louisiana would not become a state and remain a territory. Claiborne did not think Louisiana was ready for statehood. When his speech was to be printed and circulated throughout Louisiana, he stated that it needed to be in both English and French.[[50]](#footnote-51) Again, in Claiborne's October 16, 1804, letter to Madison, language plays an important role. Claiborne describes the New Orleans government and how all members are "ancient Louisianians" who speak French. However, Americans ran the early court system in Louisiana, and they did not speak French. Claiborne notes that all of the decisions that the judge made (he does not list his name) were in English and that it would have been easier if the judge spoke French.[[51]](#footnote-52) The French language never faded in Louisiana, nor did the people’s original religious beliefs.

One thing that makes Louisiana unique is religion. The majority of French who arrived in the continental United States came across the Atlantic. Many were Protestants escaping religious persecution by Catholics. They settled heavily early in New York and South Carolina. These Huguenots followed the reformed or Calvinist tradition of Protestantism. Early attempts at settlement brought the Huguenots to the Southeast. In 1562 French Naval Officer Jean Ribault led an expedition that explored Florida before eventually settling on Parris Island on the coast of South Carolina. A second voyage launched in 1564 by René Goulaine de Laudonnière landed in present-day Jacksonville, Florida, and established Fort Caroline. However, in 1565, the Spanish enforced their claim to Florida and executed hundreds of Huguenots.[[52]](#footnote-53)

The most successful communities, though, were the ones in the Northeast. Many Huguenots migrated to New Netherlands (modern-day New York and New Jersey) as early as 1624. They settled in all parts of the area from Brooklyn to New Rochelle and further South on Stanton Island. By 1700, Huguenot refugees were also settling in Virginia. Though the French sought religious freedom from the subjugation of Catholicism, they eventually gave up their Huguenot traditions and faith and transitioned to other branches of Protestantism. Those who settled in the British colonies went from speaking French to English within decades. As early as 1730, Huguenots in New York spoke either English or Dutch. Though the Huguenots may have felt comfortable around other Protestant groups, they lost their French roots and culture relatively quickly. In Louisiana, the French retained much more of their heritage.

While some Huguenots did find their way into Northern Louisiana, Catholicism dominated most of Louisiana. During the time of both the French and Spanish in Louisiana, Catholicism was the dominant religion. In 1803 after the Louisiana Purchase, French citizens feared that they would have to convert to Anglo-Protestantism. As early as May 1804, we see a dispute take place in New Orleans. On May 20, 1804, a man by the name of Henry Hopkins wrote a letter to Claiborne describing an incident that took place in the Atakapa district, now present-day Houma, Louisiana. Though the letter does not appear in Claiborne's record books, Claiborne describes the incident in a letter to Madison. Claiborne states that Mr. Wealsh, the head of the Catholic Church in Louisiana, reported that rival priests and their different partisans appeared at the church demanding to practice their religion. Fearing for their safety, Mr. Wealsh ordered the church doors shut and did not allow anyone into the building.[[53]](#footnote-54) Claiborne instructed Hopkins that every citizen had the right to practice the religion of their choice. Claiborne observed that moderation should be practiced and "every thing done to conciliate the public mind and restore harmony to Society."[[54]](#footnote-55) The argument over Catholicism would not end there. Several of Claiborne's letters recount a dispute in New Orleans between Spanish and French Catholics about who was the rightful head of the Catholic Church in Louisiana. It all came to a head in June 1807. In writing to President Thomas Jefferson, Claiborne describes how a mob led by Bishop Carrol showed up at the Cathedral Church and was denied entrance. A mop ensued composed of "low Spanish, free Mulattos and negroes” in a "very riotous disposition." While government officials put down the mob and no one was injured, Claiborne feared that the church could split into two.[[55]](#footnote-56)

Unlike their Huguenot brothers, the French citizens of Louisiana were able to keep the French religious culture of Catholicism. The St. Louis Catholic Church in New Orleans stands behind the statue of the Protestant folklore savor of New Orleans, Andrew Jackson. Dr. Marcia Gaudet defines the religion in Louisiana as “Cultural Catholicism.” Many of the cultural events that have become prominent with Louisiana developed out of Catholic traditions, such as Mardi Gras and the celebration of All Saints Day. Gaudet states that Cultural Catholicism formed based on interactions of Cajuns, Creoles of color, and other European Catholic heritage people who shared culture and a common language.[[56]](#footnote-57)

***Conclusion***

Once the United States took over the territory in 1803, they divided Louisiana into several different territories. In 1812, the modern state of Louisiana became the eighteenth state of the United States. While other states that formed out of the territory, such as Missouri and Arkansas, lost their French culture rapidly and adapted to Americanization, the land of the bayous did not. To this day, French culture is at the core of many Louisianians who trace their family heritage to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What makes Louisiana unique is that unlike any other place in the United States that the French colonized, French culture remained after years of foreign rule. While many French citizens, such as the Huguenots in the Northeast, quickly adapted to Anglo traditions, the French in Louisiana refused to adapt to Spanish or American customs and cultures fully.

The last question we need to address is why. Why did French citizens, who saw the French struggle to succeed in Louisiana, hold onto their culture and heritage so passionately? The answer reverts back to the French. The French never cared about Louisiana. For the crown, it was a strategic territory to block Western expansion by the British and to control a river route from their colonies in New France down to the Gulf of Mexico. As long as French citizens paid their dues to the crown, they were basically free to govern and rule themselves. This allowed the French in Louisiana to establish a culture and identity based on issues of class and race. Fearful of change, the French fought the Spanish and were skeptical of what life would be like under the rule of the United States. By having a laissez-faire attitude towards Louisiana, the French crown allowed French culture to be planted deep into the ground of Louisiana and remains there to this day.

Bibliography

Balesi, Charles John. *The Time of the French in the Heart of North America, 1673-1818*. Chicago: Alliance Francaise Chicago, 1992. Internet Archive.

Carter, Clarence Edwin., ed. *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume IX: The Territory of Orleans, 1803-1812*. Washington D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1940. Google Books.

“Charlesfort: History of the French Settlement, Chasfort.” archive.org.

Couch, Randal. “The Public Masked Balls of Antebellum New Orleans: A Custom of Masque outside the Mardi Gras Tradition.” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 35, no. 4 (Autumn 1994): 403-431. JSTOR.

Din, Gilbert. *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999. EBSCOhost

Din, Gilbert. *The New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana’s First City Government, 1769-1803*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1996. Internet Archive.

*Dunlap and Claypoole’s American Daily Advertiser*, September 27, 1788. Newspapers.com.

Edwards, D. Jay. “Cultural Identifications in Architecture: The Case of the New Orleans Townhouse.” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlement Review* 5, no. 1 (Fall 1993): 17-32. JSTOR.

Edwards, D. Jay. “The Origins of Creole Architecture.” *Winterthur Portfolio* 29, no. 2 (Summer-Autumn, 1994): 155-189. JSTOR.

Ermuns, Cindy. “Reduced to Ashes: The Good Friday Fire of 1788 in Spanish Colonial New Orleans.” *Louisiana Historical Association* 54, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 292-331. JSTOR.

Fortier, Alcee. *A History of Louisiana, Volume One: Early Explorers and the Domination of the French, 1512-1768*. New York: Manzi, Joyant & Co., Successors, 1903. HathiTrust.

Gaudet, Marcia Gaudet. “Cultural; Catholicism in Cajun-Creole Louisiana.” Cultural Catholicism in Cajun-Creole Louisiana. https://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\_Essays/CulturalCatholicism.html

Gayarre, Charles. *The History of Louisiana: The French Domain*. New York: John Wiley Publishing, 1852. Google Books.

Lyon, Elijah Wilson. *Louisiana in French Diplomacy, 1759-1804.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934.

Moore, John Preston. *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766-1780*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976.

Munster, Jared. “Fire & Flood: How the Lessons of the Past Can Apply to the Present to Build the Future.” PhD diss., University of New Orleans, 2006. ProQuest.

Peters, Richard., ed. *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from the Organization of the Government in 1789, to March 3, 1845*. Boston: Charles S. Little and James Brown, 1845. Google Books.

“Remonstrance of the People of Louisiana against the Political System Adopted by Congress for Them,” https://www.angelfire.com/la3/gumbo\_ya\_ya/remonstrance.pdf.

Rodriguez, John Eugene. *Spanish New Orleans: An Imperial City on American Periphery, 1766-1803*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2021.

Rowland, Dunbar., ed. *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816* Vol. 1. Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1917. HathiTrust.

Rowland, Dunbar., ed. *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816* Vol. 2. Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1917. HathiTrust.

1. Thomas Jefferson to William C.C. Claiborne, July 17, 1803, in *The Territorial Papers of the United States, Volume IX: The Territory of Orleans, 1803-1812*, ed. Clarence Edwin Carter (Washington D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1940), 4. Hereafter cited as TPOO followed by the page number. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Charles John Balesi, *The Time of the French in the Heart of North America, 1673-1818* (Chicago: Alliance Francaise Chicago, 1992), 4. Internet Archive. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Charles John Balesi, *The Time of the French in the Heart of North America,* 12. The most prominent material of Jolliet and Marquette’s expedition comes from Francis Bogia-Steck. See *The Jolliet-Marquette Expedition 1673* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1927). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Joe Gray Taylor, *Louisiana* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976), 4-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. When I use the word Creole, I am not using it in its typical manner. The word Creole in Louisiana represents those people with French heritage or background, whether they were white, free Africans, or enslaved Africans. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. While Louisiana and its French citizens maintained a rich French culture that is still present today; it is not the most unique in North America. Quebec still speaks French and, as recently as twenty years ago, sought to secede from Canada, but it was voted down. What makes the two places unique is one was at the Northern part and the other in the Southern part of the colonial empire, where French culture remains prominent. The two cities deserve historical attention on how they are connected and why they maintained their French heritage all these years when everywhere else associated to either Canadian or United States customs and cultures. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. One of the earliest history written about Louisiana comes from Charles Gayarre. In the 1850s, Gayarre wrote a three-volume collection that traced Louisiana under the role of the French, Spanish, and the United States. New modern works look at several different aspects, times, and themes of Louisiana, see: Gilbert Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 19990, John Eugene Rodriguez, *Spanish New Orleans: An Imperial City on American Periphery, 1766-1803* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2021), Peter Kastor and Francois Weil, ed., *Empires of Imagination: Transatlantic Histories of the Louisiana Purchase* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), Kimberly S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), Gilbert Din and John Harkins, *New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana's First City Government, 1769-1803* (Baton Rogue: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), John Francis McDermott, *The French in the Mississippi Valley* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1965), Elijah Wilson Lyon, *Louisiana in French Diplomacy, 1759-1804* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), Peter Kastor, *The Nations Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) M. K. Beauchamp, *Instruments of Empire: Colonial Elites and U.S. Governance in Early National Louisiana, 1803-1815* (Baton Rogue: Louisiana State University Press, 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. John Eugene Rodriguez, *Spanish New Orleans: An Imperial City on American Periphery, 1766-1803* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2021), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. There is no true count of how many Indigenous people lived within the territory, but historians estimate more than a million. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Gilbert Din, *The New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana’s First City Government, 1769-1803* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1996), 40. Internet Archive. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. John Preston Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766-1780* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 1-2. America attempted this same policy once it took control of the territory in 1803. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Din, *New Orleans Cabildo*, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Antonio de Ulloa y de la Torre-Giral to Antonio Maria de Bucareli, August 31, 1766, as quoted in Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. E. Wilson Lyon, *Louisiana in French Diplomacy, 1759-1804* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Charles Gayarre, *The History of Louisiana: The French Domain* (New York: John Wiley Publishing, 1852), 105. Google Books. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. This idea of independent government is similar to the idea that Edmund Burke described as Salutary Neglect on the floor of the House of Commons on March 22, 1775. The American colonies, like French Louisiana, gained this sense of independence from the British government not enforcing laws, especially under the role of Robert Walpole and Thomas and Henry Pelham. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Alcee Fortier, *A History of Louisiana, Volume One: Early Explorers and the Domination of the French, 1512-1768* (New York: Manzi, Joyant & Co., Successors, 1903), 163-166. HathiTrust. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 152-154. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana,* 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana,* 169-176. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Charles Gayarre, *The History of Louisiana: The French Domain*, 296. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Gilbert Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 36-46. EBSCOhost. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Gilbert Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Gilbert Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 68-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Gilbert Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves*, 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Jared Munster, “Fire & Flood: How the Lessons of the Past Can Apply to the Present to Build the Future,” (PhD diss., University of New Orleans, 2006), 5. ProQuest. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Cindy Ermus, “Reduced to Ashes: The Good Friday Fire of 1788 in Spanish Colonial New Orleans,” *Louisiana Historical Association* 54, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 305. JSTOR. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Ermus, “Reduced to Ashes,” 305-306. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Jay D. Edwards, “The Origins of Creole Architecture,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 29, no. 2 (Summer-Autumn, 1994), 158-163. Pages 159-160 show designs of the houses. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Jay D. Edwards, “Cultural Identifications in Architecture: The Case of the New Orleans Townhouse,” *Traditional Dwellings and Settlement Review* 5, no. 1 (Fall 1993), 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Edwards, “Cultural Identifications in Architecture,” 22-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, December 27, 1803 in *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816* Vol. 1, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1917), 313. HathiTrust. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Richard Peters, ed., *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from the Organization of the Government in 1789, to March 3, 1845* (Boston: Charles S. Little and James Brown, 1845), 283-284. Google Books. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Richard Peters, ed., *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from the Organization of the Government in 1789, to March 3, 1845*, 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. “Remonstrance of the People of Louisiana against the Political System Adopted by Congress for Them,” https://www.angelfire.com/la3/gumbo\_ya\_ya/remonstrance.pdf. 1598. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. “The Louisiana Purchase Treaty; April 30, 1803,” https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\_century/louis1.asp. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. “Remonstrance of the People of Louisiana against the Political System Adopted by Congress for Them.” 1619-1620. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, January 10, 1804, in *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816* Vol. 1, ed. Dunbar Rowland. From here on out will be quoted as OLBWC followed by the volume number. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, January 10, 1804, OLBWC, Vol. 1, 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. William C. C. Claiborne to Étienne de Boré, January 28, 1804, OLBWC, Vol. 1, 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, January 31, 1804, OLBWC, Vol. 1, 354. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Charles Gayarre, *The History of Louisiana: The French Domain*, 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. Randal Couch, “The Public Masked Balls of Antebellum New Orleans: A Custom of Masque outside the Mardi Gras Tradition,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 35, no. 4 (Autumn. 1994), 406-407, 414. JSTOR. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Randal Couch, “The Public Masked Balls of Antebellum New Orleans: A Custom of Masque outside the Mardi Gras Tradition,” 408-409. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Randal Couch, “The Public Masked Balls of Antebellum New Orleans: A Custom of Masque outside the Mardi Gras Tradition,” 411-412. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Randal Couch, “The Public Masked Balls of Antebellum New Orleans: A Custom of Masque outside the Mardi Gras Tradition,” 412-413. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, March 16, 1804, *OLBWC*, Vol. 2, 42-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, May 3, 1804, OLBWC, Vol. 2, 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, October 16, 1804, OLBWC, Vol. 2, 352-358. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Charlesfort: History of the French Settlement, Chasfort (archive.org). Accessed November 27, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, May 29, 1804, OLBWC, Vol. 2, 170-171. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. William C. C. Claiborne to James Madison, May 29, 1804, OLBWC, Vol. 2, 169-170. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. William C. C. Claiborne to Thomas Jefferson, June 17, 1807, TPOO, 744. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Marcia Gaudet, “Cultural; Catholicism in Cajun-Creole Louisiana,” Cultural Catholicism in Cajun-Creole Louisiana (louisianafolklife.org), Accessed November 28, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)