

THE FRENCH AND THE CHOCTAW INDIANS, 1700-1763

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship of the French government of the colony of Louisiana with the Indians, and particularly the Choctaws, in the period between 1700 and 1763. The study is concerned with the colonial regime in Louisiana and its attempts to utilize the Choctaw tribe to maintain control over the territory claimed by France along the gulf coast region and northward into the interior of North America. Indirectly, the study deals with the relationship of the British of South Carolina with the Chickasaw tribe and the effort of South Carolina leaders to use the Chickasaw tribe to weaken the Choctaws and detach them from their French alliance. The countermeasures adopted by the French to prevent the British from achieving success are also a part of this study.

It was inevitable that the French and the British colonies of North America would come into conflict with one another. During the eighteenth century, France and Britain were continental adversaries who also engaged in colonial struggles. Each of the wars that occurred between the two nations in the period from 1700 to 1763 had colonial as well as continental phases. In North America the War of the Spanish Succession was known as Queen Anne's War, the War of the Austrian Succession was called King George's War, and the Seven Years' War was entitled the French and Indian War.

The French colonies of North America--Acadia (Nova Scotia), Canada (New France), and Louisiana--were geographically situated so that they prevented the growth of Britain's colonies and confined the

British colonists to the territory along the Atlantic coast. France claimed the territory from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico, while the charters granted to British colonies were from sea to sea. Britain first successfully challenged the French encirclement during the War of the Spanish Succession when, by the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht, she gained Acadia, which was renamed Nova Scotia. The French, for their part, attempted to curtail British encroachments by constructing forts in the trans-Appalachian region.

In Louisiana the French regime believed that an alliance with the Choctaw tribe would be invaluable in retaining the territory under French control. Economically, the Choctaws were considered to be important because of the number of furs they could bring to the merchants of Louisiana. Their basic importance, however, was in the military strength they could add to the colony. Because the home government of France, during the wars of the eighteenth century, concentrated primarily on continental strategy, the number of troops available for colonial service was limited.<sup>1</sup> The Choctaws, who numbered approximately 8,000

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<sup>1</sup>Although France had a large army, about 100,000 men, Louis XIV never sent many of them to serve in the French North American colonies. According to one author, the number of French troops in North America never exceeded two thousand. When Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville was ordered to establish a French colony in Louisiana, he was accompanied by only two hundred troops. Two hundred troops were believed to be sufficient to hold the territory against any attack by either the British or the Spanish. A list of the population of Louisiana for the year 1721 indicates that the number of troops in Louisiana was only nine hundred seventy-seven. The deficiency in troops was partially made up by the militia, which was composed of all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty. The importance of the militia, however, appears to have been nominal. Jean-Baptiste Bénard de la Harpe, The Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana, trans. by Joan Cain and Virginia Koenig (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1971), pp. 10-11. Howard H. Peckham, The Colonial Wars, 1689-1762 (Chicago:

warriors could fill the void and thus came to be viewed as necessary for French success in Louisiana.<sup>2</sup>

In order to obtain the support of the Choctaws, the French regime utilized every medium to influence the tribe. These included Jesuit missionaries, trade, and constant reminders to the Choctaws that the French were the true friends of the Indians, while the English only desired to take away their land.

To ascertain the degree of success the French achieved in maintaining their relationship with the Choctaws, this study will be divided into three topics. The first area of investigation will deal with governmental policy toward the Choctaws during the period 1700-1763. The second area of investigation will deal with the impact of the Jesuit missionaries on French-Choctaw relations. The role of the Jesuit as a servant of God, dedicated to converting the Choctaws to Christianity, will be contrasted with the Jesuit as a servant of the state. In the latter role, his relationship with the Choctaws to reinforce their loyalty to the French colonial government will be examined. Finally, the study will deal with the impact of trade and Indian presents on French-Choctaw relations and the effect of these economic factors on the ability of the French to maintain harmonious relations with the Choctaw tribe. Comparisons between the French and the British will be made

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University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 14. Charles Le Gac, Immigration and War: Louisiana, 1718-1721, trans. by Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1970), p. 42. William J. Eccles, France in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 69-70.

<sup>2</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Série C 13c, volume 1: folios 362-374. Memoir of Bienville (1725).

in the three areas included in the study. This will make possible an evaluation of the impact of the French on the Choctaw Indians, the successes and failures.

## CHAPTER I

### FRENCH COLONIALISM IN NORTH AMERICA, 1600-1700

For approximately one hundred years after Christopher Columbus's voyages to the new world, Spain was the dominating force in the Europeanization of North America. The ascendancy of Spain rested partially on the power of the Catholic Church which, through papal bulls, sanctioned and supported Spain's claims.<sup>1</sup> Initially, the only serious challenge to Spain's position came from Portugal. However, potential conflict between the two was avoided by the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494. By the terms of the treaty the non-Christian areas of the new world were divided between the two nations, and North America was recognized as being in the Spanish sphere.<sup>2</sup>

Another factor that allowed Spain to dominate North America in the sixteenth century was that France was not in a position where she could effectively challenge the Spanish claims. Early in the century, France engaged in a series of wars with the Holy Roman Emperor for domination in Italy. The difficulties between France and the Emperor were

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<sup>1</sup>Francis G. Davenport, and C. O. Paullin, eds. and trans., European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies, 3 vols. (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917-1937), I: 57-63, 71-78. Papal support for the Spanish claims was in the bull Inter caetera of 1493 by which Pope Alexander VI supported Spanish claims to any territory not in the possession of any other Christian ruler.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., I: 84-100. "According to this treaty all the lands lying east of a meridian located 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, and discovered by Portugal, were to pertain to that country and all lands west of the line, discovered by Spain, were to pertain to Spain." See also, Herbert Folmer, Franco-Spanish Rivalry in North America: 1524-1763 (Glendale, CA.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1953), p. 20.

followed, later in the century, by an internal controversy over religion. The French wars of religion prevented the French monarchs from actively engaging in colonial enterprises.

Although there was little activity on the part of France in colonialism during the 1500s, it does not necessarily follow that she was uninterested in overseas expansion. Francis I, for example, took exception to the claims of Spain and Portugal that their division of the world should be honored by other European nations. He contended that the possession of colonies should be based on settlement, not simply discovery. Concerning the Treaty of Tordesillas, Francis held that the possession of lands should be based on three factors—"discovery, conquest and occupation."--not treaties or papal pronouncements.<sup>3</sup> In 1524, giving credence to his interpretation, Francis funded a voyage to the new world by Giovanni de Verrazano, who explored the area around Newfoundland and thereby provided the basis for French claims in North America. At the same time, Francis expressed his pique at the pretensions of Spain and Portugal by stating that he desired "to see the testament of Adam in order to see how he had partitioned the world."<sup>4</sup>

Following the voyage of Verrazano, Francis sent Jacques Cartier on three voyages to the area of the new world that was ultimately to become New France. Spanning a period between 1534 and 1541, Cartier's voyages took him to the future site of Quebec, from which he traversed the St. Lawrence River, and visited Labrador and Newfoundland. On his

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<sup>3</sup>Herbert E. Bolton and Thomas M. Marshall, The Colonization of North America, 1492-1783 (New York: Macmillan, 1925), pp. 80-81.

<sup>4</sup>Folmer, Franco-Spanish Rivalry, p. 43.

last voyage, in 1541, Cartier attempted to establish a settlement at what was later to become Quebec.<sup>5</sup> Although the voyages of Cartier failed to establish a permanent settlement in North America, they at least indicated a continuing French interest in the new world.

French interest was revitalized in the early seventeenth century by the activities of Samuel de Champlain. Through Champlain's leadership the French were able to establish permanent colonies in North America. An indefatigable explorer, Champlain established a settlement at Quebec, journeyed to the lake that bears his name, and explored the interior of Canada.<sup>6</sup> From these beginnings, the French were to establish an empire in North America that stretched from northern Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and into the islands of the Caribbean Sea.

The territorial growth of the French colonial empire corresponded to the establishment of relative internal peace in France. With the acceptance of Henry of Navarre as King Henry IV, the internal and external problems which had beset France in the sixteenth century became less pressing. The result was a stability that allowed the French monarchs to undertake overseas expansion and, at home, to undertake the creation of a strong centralized government. Henry IV's government was "in every sense personal. . . . commands issued in the King's name were the only effective political authority in the land."<sup>7</sup> This system of personal rule which was best exemplified in the reign of Louis XIV,

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<sup>5</sup>Bolton, The Colonization of North America, pp. 80-81.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-87.

<sup>7</sup>G.R.R. Treasure, Seventeenth Century France (London: Rivington Ltd., 1966), pp. 40-41.

enabled the French monarchy to devote time and energy to the creation of French colonies in the new world.

French interest in what was to be called Louisiana surfaced in the middle of the sixteenth century when Admiral Gaspard de Coligny convinced King Henry II that it would be possible for the French to establish a colony in North America south of Canada. The French had attempted to plant a colony in Brazil but the attempt ended in failure between 1558 and 1560 when the Portuguese destroyed the outpost. In 1562, Coligny sponsored Jean Ribaut's venture to set the French flag in what is now South Carolina. Ribaut was successful and named his colony Charlesfort. He then returned to France to spread the word of the beauty of the land that had been left behind. Because of affairs in France, Ribaut was unable quickly to return to Charlesfort; and those who were left behind became discouraged and attempted to build a ship and sail back to France.<sup>9</sup>

Undaunted, Coligny sent another expedition in 1564 under the command of René de Laudonnière. Laudonnière, who had been with Ribaut in 1562, set out with two hundred fifty colonists. Once more their destination was the South Carolina coast, where, upon their arrival, they built Fort Caroline. Among the colonists a division occurred and one group began to attack Spanish shipping. Its attacks were in violation of their orders not to molest the Spanish.<sup>10</sup> Because of these acts of piracy and

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<sup>8</sup> Francis Parkman, Pioneers of France in the New World (1865. Centenary Ed. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1927), pp. 20-32. See also, Folmer, Franco-Spanish Rivalry, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup>Folmer, Franco-Spanish Rivalry, pp. 78-79.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

because the colonists were Huguenots guilty of encroaching on territory claimed by Spain, the Spanish decided to eliminate the French colony. Under the command of Pedro Menéndez, a Spanish fleet set out to accomplish the destruction of the French outpost. Menendez was also ordered to found a Spanish colony in Florida. To implement his orders Menendez was provided with fifteen hundred colonists, including women and children.

Establishing St. Augustine as a base of operations, Menendez marched on Fort Caroline where he surprised the French and killed "A hundred and forty-two persons" sparing only women, children, and boys under the age of fifteen.<sup>11</sup> Subsequent attacks resulted in the deaths of about eight hundred French colonists.<sup>12</sup> Although the French authorities protested the harsh treatment accorded the French colonists they did not break relations with Spain, nor did they attempt to send any other colonizing expeditions to the area during the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

French interest revived in the first half of the seventeenth century, when under the administration of Cardinal Armand Jean du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, France established control over some of the islands of the West Indies.<sup>14</sup> Then, under Jean Baptiste Colbert and Louis XIV, French explorers began to move southward from Canada in search of the

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<sup>11</sup>Parkman, Pioneers of France, pp. 126-127.

<sup>12</sup>Folmer, Franco-Spanish Rivalry, p. 100.

<sup>13</sup>A French soldier of fortune, Dominique de Gourgues, did avenge the massacre by destroying the Spanish forts that had been built on the ruins of Fort Caroline. Ibid., pp. 117-121.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

mouth of the Mississippi River. France now began seriously to challenge Spanish control of the gulf coast region.

In 1682 Robert Chevalier de La Salle (1643-1687) descended the Mississippi River, unfurled the French flag and claimed the territory, which he named Louisiana, for France. Two years later, with the support of the monarch, La Salle left France with an expedition of approximately three hundred men. He was ordered to establish a French colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Instead, La Salle went to Matagorda Bay, in present Texas, where he organized a settlement. According to one author, La Salle did this because he hoped to use the settlement to conquer Spain's colonies in Mexico. To place the colony on the Mississippi would have meant the distances required to conquer Mexico would have been too great.<sup>15</sup> The colony was soon beset by internal problems and La Salle attempted to lead the survivors overland to Canada. On the journey to Canada, La Salle was murdered by one of the party.<sup>16</sup>

After La Salle's death French interest in establishing a colony in Louisiana waned. The Spanish, on the other hand, to forestall any future attempt by the French, began to consider the establishment of a colony at Pensacola. The outpost was founded in 1698.<sup>17</sup> At the conclusion of the War of the League of Augsburg, Louis XIV commissioned Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville to go to Louisiana and establish a French colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 145-154.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 155-165.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>18</sup>Jean-Baptiste Bénard de la Harpe, The Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana, trans. by Joan Cain and Virginia Koenig (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1971), pp. 10-11.

In support of their claims to Louisiana the French utilized the argument first put forth by Francis I: for territory to be recognized as the possession of a nation, settlement as well as discovery was necessary. France rejected the Spanish claim to Louisiana because the Spanish had not settled it. In the words of one Frenchman:

The Spaniards, in order to destroy the French claims to Louisiana, report that Ponce de Leon in 1512, Vasquez in 1510, Panfilo de Narvaez in 1528 and Hernando De Soto in 1538, took possession of Louisiana in the name of His Catholic Majesty. What is certain is that these discoverers did not establish a settlement there. They could not, therefore, have any claim different from that of the French who first constructed forts and established regular settlements in Florida, of which Louisiana is a part.

In 1562, François Ribault built the fortress of Charlesfort at the command of Charles IX. It was at the entrance of the Saint-Esprit River, now called Des Chateaux or Cahouitas, located to the east of Bay Saint Joseph, that Ribault settled several families in 1564. According to the report of Escarbot, René Laudonnière formed another settlement at Pensacola Bay and took possession of it in the name of the same king. He built Fort Caroline there. . . .<sup>19</sup>

When France embarked upon the colonization of Louisiana, she based her claim to the territory on the fact that Spain had not settled it. This she did, despite the fact that Spain had placed a settlement at Pensacola. While the French might argue that the Spanish settlement predated theirs by only a month, the real basis for the French ability to hold Louisiana rested upon the inability of Spain to dislodge them. The legality of France in Louisiana was French power, not the logic of international law.

In the establishment of French colonies, the monarchy, until 1663, utilized privately organized companies. This was done because it was believed that the founding of colonies could be achieved at a lesser economic cost if it were done by private investors. In general, the company was granted a monopoly of trade for a particular area in return for

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-5. Emphasis added.

agreeing to send a set number of settlers per year to the colony.<sup>20</sup>

This system did not always prove successful.

In 1627 Cardinal Richelieu, advisor to Louis XIII, in an attempt to develop more fully the French hold on North America created the Company of One Hundred Associates.<sup>21</sup> This company, also known as the Company of New France, was given title to the territory France claimed in North America that stretched from Florida to the Arctic. By the terms of the agreement, the company was for fifteen years given a monopoly of the fur trade and exempted from paying import and export taxes levied by the French government on commercial activities. While Richelieu and other French officials were investors in the company, they invested as private individuals, not as representatives of the government of France. The influence of the government was limited to confirming the appointment of colonial officials and issuing them official letters by which they exercised their authority.<sup>22</sup> It was understood that the governor general of the colony represented both the king and the company and that he exercised his authority under a grant from both the company and the monarch.<sup>23</sup>

Cardinal Richelieu, however, seems not to have been greatly interested in the profitability of either the companies or the colonies. Under Richelieu, the acquisition of colonies seemingly was more a matter

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<sup>20</sup>Gustave Lanctot, A History of Canada, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), I: 279.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., I: 129.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., I: 130-131.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., I: 276.

of pride than a key factor in the French economy. Little attention was given to economic development within the colonies. For example, by the Régime de l'Exclusif of 1626, French colonies were not allowed to compete with French merchants nor were foreign merchants allowed to trade in the French colonies.<sup>24</sup> Such limitations retarded Canada's economic development. In 1663, when Louis XIV rescinded the charter of the Company of One Hundred Associates and substituted royal control over Canada, the population totaled only two thousand five hundred.

The reasons for the monarchy's action were two fold. First, Jean Baptiste Colbert, Controller General of Finance under Louis XIV, was convinced that considerable financial wealth could be derived from the French colonies. Canada, in particular, would be a source of furs and timber; the latter could be put to good use in the construction of the French fleet that Colbert was contemplating. The navy, in turn, would be necessary to protect the revitalized French commerce that Colbert believed would come about through royal control of the French colonies.<sup>25</sup> The second reason was that under the One Hundred Associates the development of Canada had languished. The company had not received significant profits through its control of the colony.<sup>26</sup> Because of these financial difficulties, the company was not greatly disappointed when its charter was revoked and the colony was placed under the control of the monarchy.

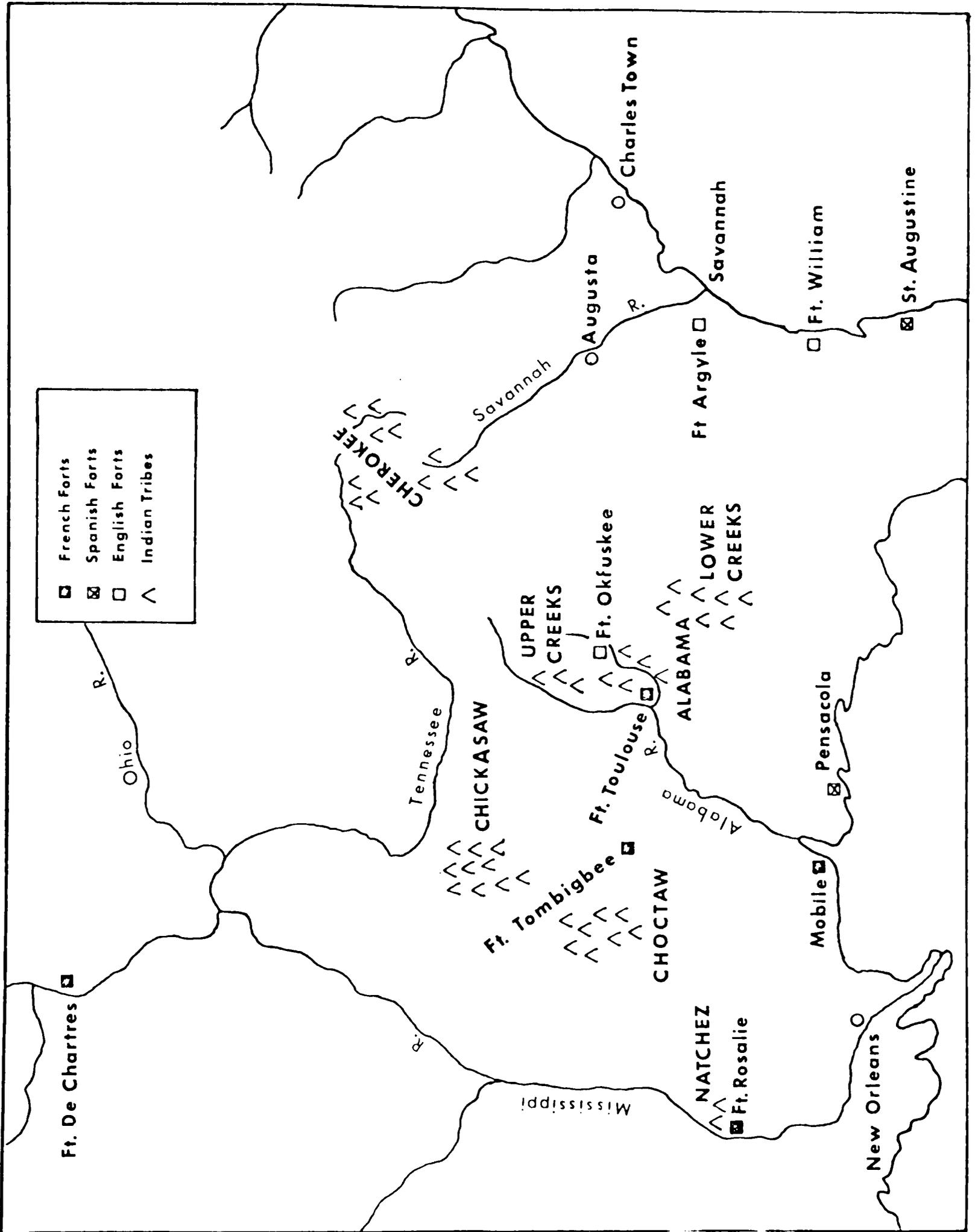
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<sup>24</sup>Herbert I. Priestley, France Overseas Through the Old Regime: A Study of European Expansion (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1939), p. 128.

<sup>25</sup>Paul W. Bamford, Forests and French Sea Power (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), pp. 4-6.

<sup>26</sup>Lanctot, History of Canada, I: 267-268, 311.





Colbert, believing that the time would come when France could successfully challenge England as a trading nation, moved to make this belief a reality by advocating royal control of the colonies of France. A successful colonial empire would also reflect upon the power and glory of Louis XIV, the "Sun King."<sup>27</sup>

Under Colbert's administration, the French navy was increased; and an attempt was made to make France a naval as well as a land power. Colbert's emphasis on the French navy was the second time in the seventeenth century that such emphasis had been placed on the naval forces of France. The first endeavor had been undertaken by Richelieu in the 1620s, when the Cardinal had assumed the position of surintendant général de la navigation et commerce de France and set about creating a navy which ultimately numbered about 60 vessels. Under Richelieu's administration, each French port was obligated "to build one ship for royal service."<sup>28</sup> This requirement was not maintained by Richelieu's successors. When Colbert began to emphasize the navy, France possessed only 20 ships; however, by the time Colbert died, in 1683, the French fleet numbered 250 ships.<sup>29</sup>

Both Richelieu and Colbert had assumed the post of Minister of Marine and Colonies. Through this position they had supervision over the French colonial empire.<sup>30</sup> Their goals were, however, quite different:

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<sup>27</sup>Bamford, Forests and French Sea Power, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Treasure, Seventeenth Century France, p. 167. See also, Jacques Boulenger, The Seventeenth Century (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.), pp. 98-99.

<sup>29</sup>Treasure, Seventeenth Century France, p. 244.

<sup>30</sup>Priestley, France Overseas, pp. 303-304.

Richelieu sought conquest and did not emphasize economic development: Colbert encouraged agricultural and commercial development.<sup>31</sup>

There was a limited similarity in the economic philosophy of the two men. The colonies in Colbert's administration, as in 1626, were to send their products to France and allow only French merchants to trade within the boundaries of the colony.<sup>32</sup> Colbert also made use of the private trading companies, but, unlike Richelieu, he placed greater emphasis on government participation in the companies. Colbert believed that significant economic wealth could be obtained from the colonies but this could not be accomplished if the government of France assumed the role of an active economic partner in the colonial undertakings.

Colbert, therefore, in an attempt to make France economically independent of her European neighbors, committed the French government to considerable expenditures in an effort to achieve colonial success. He believed that the lack of success of the previous commercial companies was partially due to the failure of government support.<sup>33</sup> The East India Company, which received its charter in 1664, obtained a loan from the government in the amount of 4,200,000 livres. Colbert served as "chief and president of this company."<sup>34</sup> In 1664 the Company of the West Indies was also chartered by the government. As in the case of

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 127-128.

<sup>32</sup> Treasure, Seventeenth Century France, p. 316.

<sup>33</sup> Charles W. Cole, Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), I: 475.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., I: 500, 504-505.

the East India Company, the French government was the major source of funds.<sup>35</sup>

Colbert realized that a strong navy was imperative if his colonial plans were to be successful. The budget of the navy, which was 300,000 livres in 1660, was increased to an average yearly expenditure of ten million livres during Colbert's administration.<sup>36</sup> A strong navy would be necessary to protect the commerce that would flow between France and her colonies.

There also existed some similarities in the system of government for the colonies that both Richelieu and Colbert developed. Under both men, the companies played a role in the selection of the high ranking colonial officials. It was understood that the governors represented both the company and the monarchy. However, in the case of Canada, the French government under Colbert played a greater role in the colonial government than it did under Richelieu. The West Indies Company had been granted "all French possessions in America."<sup>37</sup> But the company was more interested in the islands of the West Indies than in Canada. Though technically under the control of the company, Canada was in reality almost literally under the direct political and economic control of the monarch. The king appointed the high ranking officials and reserved for himself the right to confirm the appointment of lower ranking officials. In selecting the officials for Canada the monarch usually

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., II: 5-6. During the first five years of its existence the monarch provided 54 percent of the company's funds.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., I, 451-452.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., II, 3.

acted upon the advice of the Minister of Marine, to whom was given the day-to-day direction of French colonial affairs subject to review by the monarch.<sup>38</sup>

Another agency of the French government that the monarch no doubt listened to, and sought the advice of, in the selection of governors for the French colonies was the conseil d'état. The conseil d'état consisted of four or five Ministers of State, almost always the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, for the Army, and for the Navy, and the Controller General. While the Council of State could deal with any subject, it concentrated primarily on foreign affairs.<sup>39</sup>

Usually the men selected by the monarch for the position of governor of a French colony were military men primarily from a naval background. The second ranking government official appointed by the monarch for service in Canada was the Intendant, or Ordonnateur. The third member in the colonial regime was the Superior of the Jesuit order in Canada. Finally, the settlers of the colony were given a voice in the governing of the colony; allowed to select five of their members who would meet with the governor, intendant and bishop. The governor and the bishop, acting in concert, had the right to approve or disapprove the five representatives to the Sovereign Council selected by the French settlers.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., II, 47. See also, Lanctot, History of Canada, II, 4. Also, Priestley, France Overseas, pp. 303-304. Also, Eccles, France in America, p. 68. Under Louis XIV it was not uncommon for individuals to hold more than one position in the government. Colbert served as both Minister of Marine and Controller General. Boulenger, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 98-99.

<sup>39</sup>Treasure, Seventeenth Century France, pp. 285-287. See also Boulenger, The Seventeenth Century, pp. 320-321.

<sup>40</sup>Eccles, France in America, pp. 67-72. The five representatives

The government of Louisiana was patterned after that of Canada. Technically, the Governor of Louisiana was under the authority of the Governor of Canada; however, because of the slowness and difficulty of communication between the two areas, the governors of Louisiana were responsible directly to the Minister of Marine and received their orders from him.<sup>41</sup>

As indicated above, the administration of the colony lay in the hands of the Governor and the ordonnateur. Both officers had specific functions and areas of activity for which they were responsible. There also existed some areas in which their authority overlapped. When this occurred, it was usually detrimental to the colony's well being.

The governor held the highest position in the colonial hierarchy and was given responsibility for the general well-being of the colony. Specifically, he was in charge of the military and everything deemed to be military in nature. He was to make sure the troops were well disciplined and that they received their pay. The governor was charged with maintaining the forts and seeing that they were kept in good repair. He was also given the right to approve plans for new forts and was responsible for their construction.<sup>42</sup> The ordonnateur, however, was charged with estimating the cost of construction and was to make recommendations

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from the French inhabited areas of Canada were two from Montreal, two from Quebec and one from Trois Rivières.

<sup>41</sup>Norman W. Caldwell, The French in the Mississippi Valley, 1740-1750 (1941. Reprint. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), p. 9.

<sup>42</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Série B, volume 95: folio 343. Memoir of the King to M. Michel la Rouillièrre (October 20, 1752).

to the king on the feasibility of the project. The governor was given control of the artillery and was responsible for its distribution among the various forts; the ordonnateur, however, shared with the governor the obligation to keep the artillery pieces in working order--this apparently was limited to making funds available for the upkeep of the artillery. Finally, the governor was given the specific charge of maintaining relations with the Indians. It was his duty to see that the Indian allies of France remained loyal, which was usually achieved through the judicious granting of presents.<sup>43</sup>

The ordonnateur was given charge over "the food, the ammunition, and generally everything having to do with stores and the money . . . ." He was tax collector and chief judicial officer of the colony. If the governor found it necessary to make an extraordinary expenditure for the good of the colony it had to be approved by the ordonnateur, who might or might not agree to the expenditure. The ordonnateur, who was also the chief judicial officer of the colony, therefore had the right to call upon the governor to provide aid, if needed, to implement the decisions that he had reached.<sup>44</sup>

In such a duality of responsibility it is understandable that conflicts would arise between the two office holders. In such cases, both men were to write to the king--in reality the Minister of Marine--setting forth their positions, and await his decision. However, if the conflict demanded a quick solution, the position of the governor was to

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

be followed, subject, of course, to review by the Minister of Marine or monarch.<sup>45</sup>

The duality of administration existed on the district level as well. In the 1720s, the colony was divided into nine districts to provide better administration. The districts were Biloxi, Mobile, Alibamon, Yazoo, Natchez, Natchitoches, Arkansas, Illinois, and Nouvelle Orléans, the last retaining its position as capital of the colony. In each of the districts, the commander of the fort served in the capacity of the governor's representative and exercised, on a limited scale, the same prerogatives as did the governor in New Orleans. There was also a deputy ordonnateur in each of the districts.<sup>46</sup>

As in Canada, the government of Louisiana consisted of a Sovereign Council, though in Louisiana this body was known as the Superior Council. Established in 1712, when the Crozat Company was given a monopoly of trade in Louisiana, the council was initially composed of the Governor, ordonnateur, the King's representative, and two colonists who were selected by the three officials.<sup>47</sup> Prior to establishing the Superior Council, Louisiana was governed under the Ordinance of the Marine which had been set forth by Colbert in 1681. The Ordinance embraced more than rules for regulating the French navy and merchant marine. It regulated the conduct

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Norman W. Caldwell, The French in the Mississippi Valley, 1740-1750 (1941. Reprint. Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), p. 12. See also, Bolton, The Colonization of North America, pp. 279-280.

<sup>47</sup>Henry P. Dart, "Decision Day in the Superior Council of Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXI (1938), 998. See also, Jerry A. Micelle, "From Law Court to Local Government: Metamorphosis of the Superior Council of French Louisiana," Louisiana History, IX (1968), 90.

of ship officers, but it also had application to those French colonies which had not been granted an administrative system. Under the Ordinance the ranking naval officer in Louisiana became the governor and was charged with administering justice, sending reports to the Minister of Marine, controlling the distribution of trade goods, settling disputes arising from contractual misunderstanding, and served as the military commander of the colony's armed forces.<sup>48</sup>

The change in status of the colony brought about when the Crozat Company received its monopoly required that the colony be provided with a system of administration that would protect the rights of the colonists while allowing the company to exploit its monopoly. Thus, the Superior Council was created. The decisions of the Council could be vetoed by the Minister of Marine, but the colonists did achieve some voice in the internal administration of the colony. According to the royal directive establishing the Council it was "to judge all cases both civil and criminal. . . ." <sup>49</sup> Civil matters could be determined by three of the five members, but all five had to concur in criminal cases.<sup>50</sup>

The Superior Council concerned itself primarily with local problems. The type of problems that the Council settled included: refusing to allow saloon keepers to collect accounts owed them by soldiers, sailors, and workmen to whom they had extended credit; intervening in the

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<sup>48</sup>Cole, Colbert, I: 313, 396, 472. See also, Micelle, "From Law Court to Local Government," 91.

<sup>49</sup>"Supplementary Memoir from the King to Lamothe Cadillac" quoted in Micelle, "From Law Court to Local Government," 92. It appears that the Church was not given representation on the Council because it was considered to be under the control of the Superior in Quebec.

<sup>50</sup>John F. McDermott, ed., Frenchmen and French Ways in the

sale of a negro slave; and ordering that all guns and swords in the possession of slaves be confiscated.<sup>51</sup> The Council did not have much to say about the general directions that the colonial government pursued. As a result, within a short period of time the governor stopped attending the meetings of the Council.<sup>52</sup>

There was also a similarity between Canada and Louisiana in their Indian policies. In practice the Indian policy developed in Louisiana was modeled after the example of Canada. In both of the French colonies Indian policy had two goals--economic and military. From a military standpoint the Indian warrior was utilized as a supplement to the meager French forces stationed in the colonies. The Indians offered a means of protecting the territory claimed by France, and, at the same time, afforded the French an opportunity to extend their influence into territory not clearly under French control. Economically the Indians were the main source of the furs that were primary in the early economic life of both colonies. Conversely, the Indians were a market for European goods manufactured in France. In Canada, for example, the annual fur trade was valued at between 200,000 and 300,000 livres.<sup>53</sup>

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Mississippi Valley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 88.

<sup>51</sup>The order denying the saloon keepers the right to collect debts owed them was apparently designed to cut down on the amount of alcohol consumed by the above mentioned groups. It would also seem to indicate that the colony had a problem with excessive drinking. Surprisingly, the order to confiscate weapons in the hands of slaves was not issued out of fear of a slave rebellion, but because numerous cattle had been killed. Slaves could still possess weapons, but only if they had written permission from their masters. Henry P. Dart, "Cabildo Archives," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, III (1920), 70-99.

<sup>52</sup>Dart, "Decision Day in the Superior Council," 999-1000.

<sup>53</sup>Eccles, France in North America, p. 57. See also, Samuel E.

As the well being of the French North American colonies rested upon strong Indian alliances a system of retaining the loyalty of the Indian allies of France was quickly developed. First utilized in Canada, the system included granting medals to important chiefs, annual meetings with the tribes during which presents were distributed, and aiding their Indian allies in wars against their enemies.

Early in the seventeenth century the French regime of Canada established the practice of granting favored chiefs, whom it desired to impress, medals which signified the Indians' special relationship with the French.<sup>54</sup> A Jesuit priest, Father Jean Loyard, even suggested that the government create a medal to be given to an entire village. Loyard contended that this would serve as "a constant and indubitable promise, by which will ever tell them that the King continues to honor them by his Royal Protection."<sup>55</sup> While Loyard's suggestion appears not to have been implemented, his evaluation of the importance of the medal for French-Indian relations is, as we shall see, supported by the documentary evidence.

The French Canadians also made use of presents to reaffirm the relationship that had been established with their Indian allies. Annually, at Quebec and Montreal, the French gathered their Indian allies for the

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Morison, Samuel de Champlain: Father of New France (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1972), p. 172, 183.

<sup>54</sup>Frederick W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1912), Part I, p. 380.

<sup>55</sup>Ruben G. Thwaites, The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents. 73 volumes. (1904. Reprint. New York: Pagent Book Co., 1959), 67: 125. Undated Memorial of Father Jean Loyard, Missionary among the Abnakis tribe.

purpose of distributing presents, which amounted to thousands of livres in value. In Louisiana the distribution of presents was also practiced.<sup>56</sup> In both colonies presents were used to retain the loyalty of Indian allies necessary for the preservation of the colonies for France.

As in the case of Louisiana, the French Canadians early interjected themselves into the intertribal affairs of the Indians. In Canada the French supported the Huron Confederacy against the Iroquois Confederacy which, in turn, was supported by the British. The French association with the Hurons began in 1610, when Samuel de Champlain aided the Hurons in an attack on the Iroquois. Thus was inaugurated an alliance which lasted until the takeover of Canada by the British during the French and Indian War.<sup>57</sup>

As we shall see in succeeding chapters of this study, the French, soon after the establishment of Louisiana, formed an alliance with the Choctaw tribe. This alliance formed the basis of the French ability to hold their southern colony, and was similar to the Canadian-Huron alliance. For example, in both the north and the south, the French made use of their Indian allies to attempt to bring about the destruction of tribes that threatened the safety of the French colonies.<sup>58</sup>

The Indian policy utilized in Louisiana was patterned after the earlier French relationship with the Indian tribes of the north. In

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<sup>56</sup>Caldwell, The French in the Mississippi Valley, p. 27, 43.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Wilbur R. Jacobs, Dispossessing the American Indian: Indians and Whites on the Colonial Frontier (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), pp. 51-54.

their Indian policy the French made use of all means at their disposal--  
trade, presents, diplomacy and missionaries.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COLONIAL GOVERNORS POLICY TOWARD THE WESTERNMOST LOUISIANA INDIANS, 1700-1732

There were two primary goals behind the establishment of a French colony in Louisiana: to discover riches and to protect Canada, France's richest and most important colony in North America. The threat that the English settlements south of Canada along the Atlantic coast posed was brought home during the course of the War of the League of Augsburg (1689-1698). During that war, the English had captured Port Royal and mounted an attack on Quebec. Even though Port Royal was returned to France by the terms of the Treaty of Ryswick, it was clear that French control of Canada was in a precarious state.

The incorporation of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, as well as the establishment of the English settlements along the Atlantic, indicated that French Canada was in danger of being encircled. The danger would be heightened if English settlements spread beyond the Appalachian Mountains. To blunt the danger, Louis XIV was receptive to the establishment of a French settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Such a settlement would create a barrier to further westward expansion by the English and thus protect the southern flank of French Canada.<sup>1</sup> With this in mind, on July 23, 1698, Louis XIV authorized Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville to establish a settlement at the mouth of

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<sup>1</sup>Ruben G. Thwaites, France in America 1497-1763 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1905), p. 72.

the Mississippi River and to deny other nations entry into the river basin.<sup>2</sup>

The choice of Iberville was an excellent one. He was born in Canada--his father, Charles Le Moyne, had immigrated to the colony in 1640--and had a great deal of naval experience. Iberville joined the French navy in 1676 and by the mid 1680s had a reputation for being able "to get things done." During the period 1680-1700, Iberville participated in virtually every naval conflict that occurred between the French and the English in their efforts to settle the questions of which nation controlled Hudson Bay and Newfoundland. It was in this connection that Iberville's most memorable exploit took place. In 1697, with one ship, Iberville successfully captured three English ships in Hudson Bay, forced the English governor to surrender, and occupied the English fort. His reputation and ability made him the logical choice to carry out the king's order to establish a permanent French colony in Louisiana.<sup>3</sup>

Once in Louisiana, Iberville quickly recognized the possibilities of the colony as a barrier to English expansion. Upon his return to France in 1700, he informed Jerome Phelypeaux de Maurepas, Comte de Pontchartrain, who was Minister of Marine, that:

It seems to me absolutely necessary to plant a colony on the Mississippi near the Mobile River and to join up with the Indians

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<sup>2</sup>Charles E. O'Neill, Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana: Policy and Politics to 1732 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Biographies of Iberville include: Guy Frégault, Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville (Montreal: Edition Fides, 1968); and Nellis M. Crouse, Lemoyne d'Iberville: Soldier of New France (Ithaca: Cornell University

who are quite numerous there in separate villages and nations. We must arm and support them so that they may defend themselves against those who side with the English and force the latter back beyond the mountains, which is easy at present since they are not yet powerful to the west of them.<sup>4</sup>

Iberville believed that when the English became powerful enough they would attempt to destroy both the French and the Spanish settlements along the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>5</sup>

France was in a better position than was Spain to act as a hindrance to the growth of English territory in North America. Because of this Iberville urged that Spain's settlement at Pensacola be turned over to French control; however, nothing came of this proposal. Iberville was also critical of the Spanish because of the way they treated the Indians of Florida and predicted that the English of Carolina, along with their Indian allies, could attack the Spanish settlements of St. Augustine and Pensacola with five hundred men and successfully take over these settlements. He reported that Spain had only between two and three hundred men at St. Augustine and less than that number at Pensacola.<sup>6</sup>

The French position was not much better. Only two hundred men had embarked with Iberville for Louisiana in 1698. Therefore, to secure

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Press, 1954). A short biographical sketch is in Le Grande Encyclopédie, vol. 31.

<sup>4</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Série B2, vol. 148: Folio 390. Hereafter cited as AC, B, etc.

<sup>5</sup>Pierre Margry, Découvertes et Etablissements des Française 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: D. Jouaust, 1880), 4: 546. Hereafter cited as Margry, Découvertes.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 4: 551-552.

the French colony from English aggression, Iberville proposed that alliances be made with the Indian tribes of Louisiana and that France serve as the arbitrator between the tribes, thus preventing warfare between the Indians, and, hopefully, tying the tribes to France through her role as peacemaker. The first Governor of Louisiana, Sieur de Dauvolle de la Villantry, warned the French colonists to be careful in their relations with the Indians so as not to "do them the slightest wrong, so they are well pleased with us."<sup>7</sup> To succeed with the new colony, it was necessary to make alliances with the Indian tribes of the region.

French alliances with the Indians were necessary because the English had already made a tentative advance to the Chickasaw Indians. Perhaps the earliest English contact with the Chickasaws occurred in 1698, when Thomas Welch, an English trader, visited several Chickasaw villages.<sup>8</sup> While the purposes of Welch's visit are unclear, it presumably was concerned with the establishment of trade between the English and the Chickasaws.

In order to achieve a dominant role in Indian affairs of Louisiana and to prevent the growth of English influence, Iberville and his brother, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, held meetings with the chiefs of the

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<sup>7</sup>Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Saunders (eds.), Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion 1701-1743, 3 vols., (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932), vol. 2, French Dominion 1701-1729, 9-10. Hereafter cited as Rowland, French Dominion.

<sup>8</sup>Marcel Giraud, A History of French Louisiana, 3 vols., (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1974), 1: 12. Though firm evidence does exist it is likely that the Chickasaws had been previously visited by English traders.

Bayagoula and Houma tribes in February and March 1700. These discussions led to peace between the two tribes.<sup>9</sup> Iberville, in March 1702, also met with seven chiefs of the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The purpose of the meeting was to attempt to get the two tribes to settle their differences. Though Iberville was initially successful in accomplishing his goal, peace between these two tribes was very tenuous.<sup>10</sup>

The relationship between the Choctaws and Chickasaws had been one of strain even before the arrival of the Europeans. The arrival of the French and English, however, had served to exacerbate the relationship between the two tribes. Iberville, through his attempts to tie the Indian tribes of Louisiana to French interests soon discovered that the English were dealing with the Chickasaws in order to gain their support.

Iberville interpreted the English association with the Chickasaws as a potential threat to French interests. His interpretation was correct. The instructions given to Phillip Ludwell, governor of Carolina, by the Lords Proprietors in 1692 indicated this concern. The Lords Proprietors "thought fitt to take all the Indyans resideing within ffour hundred miles of Charles Towne into our Protection as Subjects to the Monarchy of England[.] You are not to Suffer any of them to be sent

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<sup>9</sup>Jean-Baptiste Bénéard de La Harpe, The Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana, trans. by Jean Cain and Virginia Koenig, (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1971), p. 33; Frederick W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin No. 30 (Washington, D. C., 1912), p. 137, 577. Hodge lists both of these tribes as being a part of the Choctaw tribe.

<sup>10</sup>La Harpe, Historical Journal, pp. 59-60. See also Verner Crane, "The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne's War," American Historical Review, (24), 385.

away from Carolina."<sup>11</sup> Among the Indian tribes to be considered under the protection of Carolina were the Chickasaws whose land, according to Edmond Atkin, was about "the middle of the Mississippi, and from that River to the backs of our Colonies; . . ."<sup>12</sup> Therein lay the importance of the Chickasaw for the English. Their geographic position, if under English control, would enable the English to interrupt the commerce and communications between Canada and Louisiana.

Because the Chickasaws were warlike, the trade relationship that was established with the English revolved around the exchange of slaves for the English goods they desired. This was, according to Nathaniel Johnson, Governor of Carolina, because the Chickasaws lived so far from Charleston that carrying pelts from their land would be too costly. Also, the furs that the Chickasaws were able to obtain were minimal, thus making fur trade with the tribe unprofitable for the English. The prisoners whom they captured in warfare, however, could be profitable for the English slave traders.<sup>13</sup> According to Bienville, the English urged

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<sup>11</sup>A. S. Salley, Jr., (ed.), Commissions and Instructions from the Lords Proprietors of Carolina to Public Officials of South Carolina, 1685-1715 (Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1916), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Wilbur R. Jacobs, (ed.), Indians of the Southern Colonial Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1954), p. 67. I have left the English quotations as they appear in the original except where changes have been necessary for clarification purposes.

<sup>13</sup>Edward McCrady, The History of South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1897), p. 481. See also, Arrell M. Gibson, The Chickasaws (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 40-41. See also, Chapman J. Milling, ed., Colonial South Carolina: Two Contemporary Descriptions by Governor James Glen and Doctor George Milligen-Johnston (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), p. 251.

the Chickasaws to capture their enemies rather than kill them. The captives would be exchanged in Charleston for black slaves at a ratio of two Indian slaves for one negro slave.<sup>14</sup>

The Chickasaw tribe was small in number but had a reputation for producing fierce warriors. The tribe's ability to withstand the two expeditions sent against them by Governor Bienville, in 1736 and 1739, and the failure of his successor, Governor Vaudreuil, in the 1740s and early 1750s to bring them to terms with the French attest to their ability. The English tended to hold them in high esteem.<sup>15</sup>

Like the French, the English were aware that the friendship of the Indian tribes would be important in their struggle with the French for control of North America. For example, in 1703 the Lords Proprietors instructed Governor Nathaniel Knight of Carolina in the following manner: "You are to take Great Care That the Indians be not abused and that all means may be used to Civilize them and that you Endeavour your utmost to Create a Firme Friendship with them & to bring them over to your part for [your] better Protection & defense against [the] Enemy the neighbouring French and spanyards against whome you are to Protect our ...Province and we assure you of our utmost Assistance for [your] security."<sup>16</sup> The English

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<sup>14</sup> AC, C13a, 2: 5. Bienville to Pontchartrain (February 20, 1707). The role of slavery in Louisiana's economic development will be discussed in chapter five.

<sup>15</sup> Richard P. Sonderegger, "The Southern Frontier From the Founding of Georgia to the End of King George's War" (Unpub. Ph.D. Diss. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1964), pp. 19-20.

<sup>16</sup> Salley, Commissions and Instructions, p. 169.

seemed to be aware that French policy was directed toward prohibiting the English colonies from expanding into the interior of North America.<sup>17</sup>

Basically, the English evaluation of French policy was correct. Iberville and his successors in Louisiana were attempting to contain the English along the Atlantic coast. While Iberville and his brother, Bienville, recognized the economic potential of Louisiana, their view was not always shared by the Ministry of Marine which tended to view Louisiana more for its role as a protector of Canadian economic development and territory.

Despite the nonsupport forthcoming from France, Iberville worked valiantly to assure French control over the interior of North America. Because of the inability to encourage large-scale French immigration to the colony and the secondary attention the enterprise received in France, Iberville and his successors were forced to rely upon gaining the friendship of the Indians, particularly along the Gulf coast. Basically, his policy consisted of obtaining promises from the tribal leaders that they would not trade with the English. If the tribes would agree to this, the French would endeavor to supply them with their trade needs. The approach adopted by Iberville was to contrast the Indian policy of England with that of France. The English, he contended, desired that the Indians fight among themselves and in the process weaken themselves. In their weakened condition, they would not be able to prevent the English settlers from taking over their land. In contrast, Iberville claimed, the French hoped to forge lasting peace among the various tribes so that they, with

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Larry E. Ivers, British Drums on the Southern Frontier: The Military Colonization of Georgia, 1733-1749 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 7.

French help, would be able to resist the English encroachments on their territory.<sup>18</sup>

Iberville interpreted English Indian policy as being one designed to encourage the Indians to make war upon each other. While Iberville would naturally desire that in any comparison between the Indian policies of France and England, the French policy would appear to be more enlightened, there does exist some evidence that his evaluation of the English policy had merit.<sup>19</sup>

While logical, and potentially effective, the implementation of the policy Iberville advocated proved to be difficult. The inability to create a permanent peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws coupled with the lack of sufficient trade goods and the recurring European wars between France and England worked against the French ability to maintain control of Louisiana.

The factors limiting French options in Louisiana, of course, were not immediately apparent. Iberville had concluded treaties with some of the tribes of Louisiana and he was working with the Spanish encouraging them to strengthen their forces in Florida. It was in connection with

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<sup>18</sup>Verner W. Crane, The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1929), pp. 69-70.

At least one English observer supported Iberville's evaluation of the difference between the French and English colonists. Father Francis Le Jau, Anglican missionary in South Carolina, contended that the Indians distrusted the English because the English set up plantations and farms. Frank J. Klingberg (ed.), The Carolina Chronicle of Dr. Francis Le Jau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p. 7. It should be pointed out that the English colonists were more numerous and were usually to be found in family units. The French, on the other hand, may be classified as transients--traders, missionaries, and soldiers: those who did not attempt to establish farms and raise families, activities that would encroach on Indian land.

<sup>19</sup>In the 1750s, two Indian tribes whom the English considered to

this latter endeavor that Iberville contracted malaria and died in 1706. He had planned, in conjunction with the Spanish, to attack the British holdings in the West Indies and had gone to Cuba to transport 1,000 Spanish troops to Florida. The Spanish troops were to be used against the English colony of Carolina. However, Iberville's death ended the project.<sup>20</sup> Bienville, Iberville's younger brother, then became Governor of Louisiana. As Governor he continued his brother's policy toward the Indians.

Bienville's association with the fortunes of the French in Louisiana began even prior to his elevation to the governorship. He had participated in the establishment of the colony with his brother and had been instrumental in preventing the English from establishing a hold in the area in 1699. After the establishment of Biloxi, the French began to explore the region and Bienville participated in this activity. His explorations carried him to numerous rivers that emptied into the Gulf and while on the Mississippi he happened upon an English ship from Carolina. According to La Harpe, the English captain had been ordered to explore the river in preparation for the establishment of an English settlement. Bienville was able to convince the English commander that the river he

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be allies went to war with one another. These were the Creek and Cherokee tribes and both appealed to the British for aid. Governor Glen, of South Carolina, apparently attempted to intervene in the conflict in order to bring the two tribes a peaceable settlement. His intervention did not go unnoticed. The Board of Indian Affairs questioned the desirability of Glen's action contending that Indian traders were treated better by the Indians when conditions were unsettled among the tribes. Allen Candler, ed., Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, 26 vols., (Atlanta: 1904-1916), 6: 342.

<sup>20</sup>La Harpe, Historical Journal, pp. 75-76.

was exploring was not the Mississippi and that the French had claim to the river. The English captain accepted Bienville's word and left.<sup>21</sup>

From 1701 to 1743, except for the years 1725-1732, Bienville served either as governor or lieutenant-governor of the colony. As the leader of the colony, he pursued an Indian policy designed to obtain the support of the native American tribes of Louisiana for the French. In this policy Bienville was generally successful, the major exception being the Chickasaw tribe. Even though Bienville was relieved of his command in 1743, he continued to have an interest in the affairs of Louisiana, and when Louisiana was ceded to Spain in 1764, he protested the French government's decision to divest itself of the colony.<sup>22</sup>

Initially, Bienville was optimistic about the relationships of the Indians with the French. He believed that peaceful relations could be established with all tribes in Louisiana. In July 1706, he wrote Pontchartrain that "All the Indians like the French much better than they do the English. . . ." He further proposed that the Indian allies of the French be given one gun for each scalp that they brought in so that they would have arms and be "in a position to make war on the English." Finally, he was of the opinion that the best way to cement the Indian alliance was to provide them with guns and to leave their women alone.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>22</sup>Details of Bienville's career are to be found in La Harpe, Historical Journal, and Grace King, Jean Baptiste Lemoyne, Sieur de Bienville. A biographical sketch may be found in Le Grande Encyclopédie, vol. 6.

<sup>23</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 2: 23-25.

However, the year that Bienville became Governor of Louisiana also marked the end of the peace that Iberville had forged between the Choctaws and the Chickasaws. The English had been working among the latter, giving them presents and guns to encourage them to make attacks upon the French and their Indian allies in the southeast.<sup>24</sup> The peace Iberville had concluded with the Chickasaws in 1702 had been predicated on the French supplying the tribe with presents and lowering the price of their goods so they would be competitive with English prices.<sup>25</sup> The difficulty that the French had in maintaining the economic aspects of the agreement made it possible for the English to work for the disruption of the treaty. At the same time, it proved to be difficult to lessen the enmity that existed between the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The French, if forced to choose between the two tribes, would decide to maintain the support of the numerically superior Choctaw tribe.

While Bienville strove to maintain harmonious relations with the Chickasaws, he was aware, as his reports to Pontchartrain indicate, that the English were "sparing nothing to attract" the tribe to their side.<sup>26</sup> The English were also attempting to dissuade the Choctaws from their loyalty to the French interests. Thomas Welch, an English trader who had connections with the Chickasaws, and Thomas Naire, Indian agent of South Carolina, were in communication with the eastern Choctaws, in those villages closest to Carolina, and had convinced some of the chiefs that they should trade with the English. Welch and Naire, however, were

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<sup>24</sup>Crane, "The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne's War," 389.

<sup>25</sup>Giraud, History of French Louisiana, 1: 85.

<sup>26</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 2: 37.

unsuccessful in attempts to get them to attack the French settlement at Mobile.<sup>27</sup>

As a result of the intrigues of both nations and the enmity between the two Indian tribes, war broke out between the two tribes in 1706. A factor that may have had a bearing on the resumption of the hostilities between the Choctaws and the Chickasaws was Bienville's proposal that Indian prisoners be traded for negro slaves. Bienville had informed the Minister of Marine that the English had adopted this practice and he suggested it to the Minister as a possible solution to the problem Louisiana faced in not having enough agricultural workers to enable the colony to produce abundant food supplies for its internal consumption, or to develop significant products that could be used in trade with other French colonies. Indian prisoners had been utilized on farms owned by the French; but they had proven unacceptable, primarily because it was easy for them to flee into the forests and return to their homelands. Black slaves would not have this advantage, and it would be more difficult for them to hide in the Indian population if they were to run away.<sup>28</sup>

The easiest way to obtain slaves was to get them from prisoners that tribes in alliance with the European powers had captured. However, if the tribes were at peace with one another, the number of prisoners available for the slave trade would be limited. Therefore, it appeared

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<sup>27</sup> Crane, "The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne's War," 390-391.

<sup>28</sup> AC, B, 29: 258-262. Pontchartrain to De Mury (July 30, 1707). The problem associated with the development of an agricultural economy in Louisiana will be discussed in chapter five.

that two goals could be achieved through the Choctaw-Chickasaw war: a supply of slaves could be obtained; and the Chickasaws would be weakened. This would ultimately result in the lessening of the English threat to Louisiana.

It would be difficult to ascertain whether the French or the English must bear responsibility for the beginning of the Choctaw-Chickasaw War. It is probable that both nations must share equally the onus for the war. It is likely, however, that the war did have an impact on Bienville's career. In 1707, he was supposed to be replaced as Governor of Louisiana by Nicholas Daneau de Muy.<sup>29</sup> De Muy's appointment came about because Bienville had been accused of selling the King's stores for his own benefit—stores that were supposed to be utilized to maintain the friendship of the Indians. The King had also instructed de Muy to obtain from Bienville an account of the "Indians who are allies of the French and those who are allies of the English and the measures that he [Bienville] has taken to attract the latter to the side of the French."<sup>30</sup> As it happened, de Muy died prior to reaching Louisiana, and thus was unable to investigate the charges. Out of necessity Bienville continued to hold the office of the governor.

His actions during the course of the Choctaw-Chickasaw war were duly recorded by Diron d'Artaugette, who was to have accompanied de Muy to Louisiana and to become paymaster for the colony. D'Artaugette carried out the investigation that had been ordered by the King and found

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<sup>29</sup>AC, B, 29: 263.

<sup>30</sup>AC, B, 29: 266-272. Also, see Rowland, French Dominion, 3: 51.

Bienville innocent of any wrong doing. He even praised Bienville's actions during the war. It would appear that D'Artauguettes' evaluation of and support for Bienville came at an opportune time. Bienville, faced with removal from office, received a reprieve and was able to continue to function as Governor of Louisiana. D'Artauguettes also sent to the Minister of Marine an evaluation of the situation that existed between the Choctaw and the Chickasaw tribes and the importance, for France, of maintaining peace between the two.

D'Artauguettes<sup>31</sup> praised Bienville for attempting to maintain peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws but pointed out that it would be difficult to accomplish because the French were not strong enough to force compliance with any treaty concluded between the two nations.<sup>32</sup> Further complicating the situation was the continual incursions of Englishmen who invaded the Choctaw villages loyal to France in search of prisoners who could be traded for slaves.<sup>33</sup>

In an attempt to prevent the decimation of both tribes by constant warfare among themselves, Bienville, according to d'Artauguettes, adopted a policy of giving one gun for each scalp or slave of the Indian allies of the English. The gun would be given only for those who had actually

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<sup>31</sup>Diron d'Artauguettes is also spelled D'iron D'Artauguettes.

<sup>32</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Série C13a, vol. 2: Folio 313. D'Artauguettes to the Minister of Marine. Hereafter cited as AC, C13a.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.* "Il y a plusieurs Villages de Tchacquetas entr'eux et nous qui sont a nous les anglois y sont journalment chez as derniers a faire des Esclaves qu'ils negociant contre des Negres de la Caroline, ou vendent comme Esclaves. . . ."

The quotations follow the original in spelling, capitalization and punctuation; therefore, they will not always conform to modern French.

been guilty of attacks on Frenchmen, and not for those who had killed an enemy to settle a private quarrel.<sup>34</sup>

Bienville summarized the measures he had taken to limit the influence of the British in the following statement: " [I] devote myself to nothing more than to attracting to myself the friendship of the Indians and to showing them every kindness, which is necessary."<sup>35</sup> The Governor concluded that his policy was successful, stating that the Choctaws, "our most faithful allies, had received presents from the Queen of Great Britain, the motive of this liberality being to obtain from these Indians a free passage over their territory for the English troops, to induce the other nations to remain neutral or destroy them in case of refusal." However, despite this policy the Choctaws refused to grant the British unimpeded passage through their lands and remained loyal to France.<sup>36</sup>

Minister of Marine Pontchartrain informed Bienville that his activities were not going unnoticed in Paris and that he should continue to oppose the English approaches to the French Indian allies. The

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 314. In 1721, the rate of pay for a scalp was a gun, one pound of powder, and two pounds of bullets. For each slave, the payment was to be eighty livres of merchandise. It would appear that the method used to determine if an enemy was killed to settle a private quarrel or not rested upon an investigation conducted by either a representative of the Church or the local commander of the French troops in the region that the attack took place. Presumably, such individuals would have direct knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the obtaining of the scalp that was being presented for payment. Rowland, French Dominion, 1: 236, 3: 375.

<sup>35</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 3: 113.

<sup>36</sup>P.F.X. Charlevoix, S. J., History and General Description of New France, 6 vols. Trans. by John Gilmary Shea (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), 5: 211.

minister also cautioned Bienville to maintain "a sort of friendship with those who are accustomed to trade with the English."<sup>37</sup> Pontchartrain's advice to the Governor was not really necessary. Bienville was attempting to make peace with the Chickasaws and he would continue to do so until the 1730s when he became convinced that peace with the tribe was impossible. Peace was impossible because of the inability of his government to supply the Chickasaws with the trade goods that would allow the French to replace the English as the trade partners of the tribe.

At the same time, Bienville reported that the English, failing to convince the Choctaws and other Indian allies of the French to adopt a policy of neutrality, were encouraging their Indian allies to attack the tribes that were under French influence. The French governor believed that the English activity was in preparation for an attack on Louisiana.<sup>38</sup>

In August 1709, Bienville sent Pontchartrain a detailed report on the situation in Louisiana and of the efforts he was instituting to preserve the colony for France. The Governor reported that the British were preparing an army of 2,500 Indians led by four Englishmen. This army, he believed, was going to attack Louisiana in the fall of 1709. The attacking force would also be outfitted with three cannons, a matter of special concern for Bienville. He further reported that while the Indian allies of France were loyal, they were engaged in fighting among themselves. Therefore, to safeguard the colony, Governor Bienville proposed that the number of French soldiers in Louisiana be increased by two

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<sup>37</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 3: 128-129.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 3: 103.

companies. There were, he said, only fifty soldiers in Louisiana, and one-fourth of them were youths. In a note found on the side of Bienville's report, Pontchartrain indicated that the plan seemed to be too ambitious. The number of troops in the colony was not increased.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the fact that Bienville did not receive any additional troops for Louisiana, he was able to maintain the colony against the threats posed by the British during the course of Queen Anne's War. Jean-Baptiste du Bois Duclos, who arrived in Mobile in May 1713, and had the official position of ordonnateur--paymaster--of the colony, sent to France glowing reports of Bienville's activities. In one such report to Pontchartrain, Duclos described the Governor's effectiveness in maintaining the Indians' loyalty. When the British attempted to entice the French Indian allies to their side, Bienville would meet with the chiefs and "show them great friendship, regale them and very often succeeded by this means with the assistance of the Indian language which he speaks perfectly. . . . [He] would assure their people that the French nation

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<sup>39</sup>AC, C13a, 2: 418-424. Bienville to Pontchartrain (August 12, 1709).

"Les Anglois de la Caroline n'épargnent rien pour engager leurs Sauvages à détruire ceux qui tout alliez des francois qu'il engage aussy de son coste à se vaugir ét les prisoniers qu'ilsont fait depuis peu rapportent que les anglois font des preparatifs pour venir cette Automme au nombre de 40 et de 2,500 Sauvages attaquer cette Colonie. Il y a aussy peu de tems qu'un irlandois deserteur de la Caroline à confirmé cette nouvelle en assurant avoir veu les anglois amener par les Terres 3 pièces de canon de foute jusqu' aux Alibamons ou'il avoit aussy veu deux batteux prests à mettre à il' Eau; Il prend les mesures necessaires pour se preparer à une bonne diffense avec l' ay de des Sauvages alliez des francois qui paroissent leur estre fort attachez. Ils se font cependant la guerre les uns aux autres, et il prend le soire de les remettre en paix.

Il est absolument ne'de fortifier le port Massacre et d' envoyer deux Compagnies d'augmentaon pour bies garder cette Colonie, les deux Compagnies de cette garrison ont besoin d'une recrue de 25 hommes, n'y ayant a la Louisiane que par 50 soldats dont le quart ne sont que de Jeunes Enfants."

was the best nation in the world and that they must not quarrel with it or consequently destroy its allies."<sup>40</sup>

If such blandishments did not work, Bienville would turn to more covert actions, particularly that of providing guns and ammunition to a tribe and encouraging it to make war on those tribes that had been swayed to the English side by British presents. He would also ask that his allies "bring him many prisoners from that nation. . . . He would send these prisoners back home free, sending word to their chiefs that he had done all that he was able to do to prevent the others from making war on them, but that not being able to accomplish it he had at least rescued their men who [sic] he was sending back to them to show them that the French nation was a friend of theirs. . . ."41

Bienville was making the best use of the options that were available to him. Because of Queen Anne's War, the ability of French merchants to supply Louisiana with trade goods or troops was frequently impaired. Bienville, therefore, used diplomacy, and, if that did not work, resorted to subterfuge. While raison d'état was the major basis of Bienville's Indian policy, it should be pointed out that he was very careful to keep his word to the Indians and to foster a feeling of trust in them. Bienville was also careful to ensure that Frenchmen among the Indians acted in a manner that would not destroy the friendship he had so carefully cultivated.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 2: 126-127.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 2: 128.

Bienville's response to the intrigues of the British was to encourage the Indian tribes of Louisiana to live in peace with one another and to unite "to obtain vengeance for the enterprises that those who are allied with the English undertake against them."<sup>43</sup> This policy was severely strained when Antoine Laumet de la Cadillac was sent to Louisiana as Governor in 1712. Cadillac, who had arrived in Canada in 1683, had an interesting career. Soon after his arrival in Canada, he was granted a land concession in Acadia which was destroyed by the English, forcing him to move to Quebec, where he entered the colonial army and rose to the rank of Captain. In 1693, he was placed in command of Fort Michilmackinac, and in 1700 Cadillac established a French fort at Detroit. Soon after this Cadillac became embroiled in controversy with the Governor of Canada which resulted in charges of mismanagement being brought against him. Although he was not found guilty of any wrong doing, it was recommended that he be removed from his position of authority. According to one authority, Pontchartrain, who had supported Cadillac up to this time, rather than admit that he had made an error, appointed Cadillac Governor of Louisiana.<sup>44</sup>

As Governor, Cadillac was pretentious and difficult to get along with; this was particularly true concerning his dealings with the Indians, whom he did not try to understand. In 1713, a council was held with the

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 2: 139.

<sup>44</sup>For Cadillac's career, see Agnes Laut, Cadillac, Knight Errant of the Wilderness, Founder of Detroit, Governor of Louisiana From the Great Lakes to the Gulf (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1931). See also, La Harpe, Historical Journal, pp. 85-86. See also, Yves Zoltvany, Dictionnaire Biographique, II, 366-372.

Choctaws; Cadillac refused to participate in the calumet because, according to one observer, he feared that he would "contaminate his patriotic lips. . . ." <sup>45</sup> Despite Cadillac's behavior, most of the Choctaw representatives at the council pledged their loyalty to France. <sup>46</sup> This is somewhat surprising, as the British were continuing their efforts to detach the tribe from their French alliance. By 1714, the British efforts seemed to be paying off. Bienville, who had remained in the colony as second-in-command, began a flurry of activity in response to the English policy. The responsibility fell to the former governor, because Cadillac had gone to the Illinois country in search of mineral wealth, which he had been led to believe existed in that territory. Bienville later complained that Cadillac had undertaken the journey without informing his second-in-command or leaving him any instructions. <sup>47</sup>

Recognizing the necessity for quick action, Bienville's first step was to hold a meeting with the principal Choctaw chiefs at Mobile. At the meeting, he emphasized the following points: the Choctaws were closer, geographically, to the French settlements; France had traditionally provided the tribe with its needs; and the English had been guilty of stirring up the Chickasaws against the Choctaws. <sup>48</sup> In addition to using

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Gayarée, Louisiana, its Colonial History and Romance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1851), p. 165. See also, AC, B, 38: 312. In this document, the King made note that Bienville had informed him of this incident and cautioned M. l'Épinay, Governor of Louisiana 1716-1717, not to make the same mistake.

<sup>46</sup> La Harpe, Historical Journal, p. 88.

<sup>47</sup> Later a letter of instruction was found.

<sup>48</sup> La Harpe, Historical Journal, pp. 90-91.

the power of persuasion, Bienville instituted direct action by sending a party of French and Indians to

rob the trader who was among our allies. I had an English trader who was among the Choctaws arrested and brought here. . . . I also had raided a store containing large supplies of goods; it belonged to the governor of Carolina and was intended for presents to all our tribes on the St. Louis river [Mississippi]. Scouts also brought me the king's lieutenant of Carolina, named M. Yous [Hughes] who was caught sixty leagues upstream on the St. Louis river with another Englishman as an interpreter. I questioned this officer as to why he had come to spread unrest among our savages and sway their alliance with presents. He answered that this whole region was theirs, that they had more rights to it than we do, that if we wished to dispute their rights they would know what they had to do. He boasted that the Queen of England was sending 500 families in the fall to settle on the St. Louis river, with food to last three years.<sup>49</sup>

While the boasting of Hughes seems to have been just that, his point about settlers was disturbing. Bienville recognized that it was well within the realm of possibility that the British could, through increases in population, make the French ability to hold Louisiana untenable. Bienville was aware that the French population of Louisiana was not growing as fast as the English population of Carolina. As a result, the French believed that to hold on to Louisiana it was necessary to rely

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<sup>49</sup>AC, C13a, 3: 827-832. Bienville to the Council of Marine (June 15, 1715).

"Je fit mon possible pur faire piller les traiteurs anglois, qui estoient chez nos allies. Sur cela j ay fait arrester, et amener ici un anglois traiteur qui estoit aux chactat, et layt fait piller par les sauvages, aussi bien qu'un magazin dun lequel il y avait beaucoup de marchandise qui appartesient au Gouverneur de la Carolline distineés pour faire des presents a toutes nos Nations de fleuve St. Louis, Les Voiegeurs m'out aussy amené, le Lieutenant de Roi de la Carolline nome M. Yous, qu'ils avaient pris a soixante lieües dans la fleuve St. Louis, avec un autre anglis interprete, quand j'ai interrogé cet officier. Sur ce qu'il venoit ainsé sous lever tous nos sauvages par des presents, il ma repondu que tous cepaÿs ici estoit a eux et qu'ils y avoient plus de pretention que nous, que s'y nous lurs [?] bouillions disputer qu'ils sauroient ce qu'ils auroient a faire il ne leis pas gaché de dire que la Reine d'angleterre devoit [unintelligible] cinq cent familles cet automne pour establir le fleuve St. Louis, et des vivres pour trois ans."

heavily on the friendship of their Indian allies. This necessity would not have been as great if more Frenchmen resided in the colony.<sup>50</sup>

Numerous appeals were sent to France requesting that more colonists be sent to Louisiana, but, in general, these appeals fell on deaf ears. The Ministry of Marine seemed to adopt a policy that the Indian allies of France could offset any advantages that the British might have because of their larger population in North America.<sup>51</sup> Bienville, therefore, actively cultivated the friendship of the Choctaw tribe, the largest tribe under French influence, out of a desire to hold Louisiana for France.

Evidence of this is to be found in a memoir Bienville wrote in 1725 dealing with the subject of Indians. He described the importance of the Choctaws in the following terms: "[It] seems to me very important that they not be put in the position of trading with the English. They are, in my opinion, the only tribe that we have any reason to cultivate the friendship of because otherwise they might cause us trouble." He also estimated that the tribe could raise an army of about 8,000 warriors.<sup>52</sup> The conclusion was that if the French could be assured of the loyalty of the Choctaws, they would continue control of Louisiana.

In the same memoir, Bienville also spoke of the Chickasaw tribe, whose warriors he said were "uncontestably the most brave of the

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<sup>50</sup>AC, C13a, 4: 923. Unsigned Memoir (October 8, 1716).

<sup>51</sup>AC, C13a, 5: 127-128. Debate of the Council Marine (June 21, 1718).

<sup>52</sup>AC, C13c, 1: 362-374.

". . . il me paroist de tres grande consequence de faire ensorte qu'ils ne soient pas dans la necessite de traiter avec les Anglois et c'est a mon avis le seule nation qu'it y ait a bien manager, parce qu'elle peut nous inquiter."

continent." This tribe, which was small in numbers, was to play an important role in Bienville's career and in the history of French Louisiana.<sup>53</sup>

Initially, Bienville hoped to bring the Chickasaws under French influence. Bienville believed that the tribe would prefer the French to the English, "once they are assured of finding what they need in our stores."<sup>54</sup> However, the inability of the French to supply them with the quantity of trade goods that they desired led to the Chickasaws' acceptance of the English. In 1720, with the promise of aid from the English, the Chickasaws began a series of wars with the French. The English also reintensified their efforts to sway the Choctaws to their side.

Father Charlevoix, referring to the British attempts to open trade with the Choctaws, stated: "If this nation, the most numerous in all Louisiana, had been gained by the bait of the proffered advantage, all our other allies would have followed their example. . . ."<sup>55</sup> If the British had succeeded in their efforts, the position of the French colony would have become untenable. The colonial government of Louisiana interpreted the British attempts as having the goal of getting the Indians to fight among themselves, ending in the Indian population being decimated and thus enabling the British to become "the masters of their country."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France, 1: 68.

<sup>56</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 2: 573-574.

In reaction to the perceived British policy, Bienville encouraged the Choctaws to attack the Chickasaws. This was designed to force the Chickasaws to come to terms with the French and nullify the British attempts among the Choctaws.<sup>57</sup>

In 1726, Étienne Boucher de Périer de Salvert became Governor of Louisiana, and Bienville returned to France. Like Bienville, Périer was a French naval officer and after he left Louisiana in 1733, after a brief sojourn in France, he was appointed to the governorship of Saint Domingue. As Governor of Louisiana, Périer continued Bienville's policy of friendship with the Indians, although he was uncomfortable with the policy because, he believed, it necessitated putting up with the capriciousness and inconsistency of the Indians. It was, he believed, taking too great a chance to rely on Indians as the mainstay of the colony.

There appear to have been two factors that caused Périer to doubt the value of reliance on Indian allies in Louisiana. The first was the success of Great Britain in encouraging her Indian allies to attack the Spanish in Florida; and Périer's subsequent inability to aid the Spanish. The second factor that may have had an impact on Périer's attitude was the third Natchez war, which began during his administration. The fact that the Natchez had attempted to remove the French from Louisiana, and in the process killed over two hundred Frenchmen, may have convinced Périer that France's Indian allies were no longer trustworthy and that too much reliance had been placed on them. Périer would have preferred more French troops in Louisiana as the means of insuring the Indian

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<sup>57</sup>AC, C13c, 1: 362-374.

loyalty.<sup>58</sup> It would be better for the colony if it were strong enough to be self-reliant.

Soon after assuming the governorship of Louisiana, Périer gave vent to his frustrations, frustrations caused by a lack of troops. In a letter to Pontchartrain, the Governor informed the Minister that the British had sent a military expedition numbering 160 soldiers to the Spanish frontier. The purpose of the expedition was to encourage the Indian tribes along the border to make war on the Spanish and eventually the French. Because he lacked troops and even goods to supply those available, all Périer could do was "wait patiently for the outcome of their expedition."<sup>59</sup> If the British were successful, they would take Spanish Florida and eventually move against the Spanish colonies in Mexico. At that point, the encirclement of the English colonies would be broken and Louisiana would now become the encircled colony, and her ability to withstand British encroachments would be questionable.

To counter the British plan, Périer requested that Louisiana be sent 200 additional troops and "goods for trade with the savages." While waiting for the decision, Périer sent emissaries to the Indian tribes to firm up their support for France. He convinced the Casuita and Talapoosa tribes to refuse the enticements of the English and laid plans to go among the Alabama tribe and convince them that they should attack the English.<sup>60</sup> Though the English attack on Florida ended in

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<sup>58</sup>AC, C13a, 12: 300-305. Périer to Maurepas (April 10, 1730).

<sup>59</sup>AC, C13a, 11: 9-11. Périer to Pontchartrain (August 14, 1728).

<sup>60</sup>AC, C13a, 11: 14-17. Périer to Louis XV (August 15, 1728). The Alabama, Casuita and Talapoosa were tribes belonging to the Creek

failure, Périer had been made aware of the vulnerable position that Louisiana occupied.

The following year, when Périer heard a rumor that the eastern Choctaws had welcomed English traders in their villages, he sent Régis du Roullet to them with presents and instructions to counter the effect of the British movement into the tribe. Du Roullet was to inform the Choctaw chiefs that the Governor would like for them to send a chief "every year to New Orleans for the purpose of informing me of what they wish me to do on their behalf since I look upon them as the most faithful and the closest friends we have." Du Roullet was also to emphasize the difference between the French and the English; the English, he was to convey to the Choctaws, only wished to harm the tribe while the French "were incapable of treason as they have found out during the 30 years they have been in the country."

If any Chickasaws were discovered to be among the Choctaws, du Roullet was ordered to attempt to entice them from their English alliance by offering them superior French goods at the same price the English charged for their goods. To receive the superior French goods, all the Chickasaws had to do was send the English away and refuse to trade with them. Périer was attempting to do among the Chickasaws the same thing the English were attempting among the Choctaws.<sup>61</sup>

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Confederacy which was centered in modern Alabama. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Part 1, p. 43; Part 2, p. 677.

<sup>61</sup>AC, C13a, 12: 65-66. Périer to Régis du Roullet (August 21, 1729). The French, when talking to the Indians, claimed that their trade goods were superior in quality to those of the British. They were more expensive, but the claim of superiority would appear to be more of an expression of ethnocentricity than actual fact.

In attempting to create bonds of peace between the French and the Chickasaws, Périer was adhering to the basic Indian policy as it had been established by Iberville at the foundation of the colony. However, with another tribe, the Natchez, Périer made no attempt to maintain peaceful relations. Indeed, since 1716 the relationship between the French and the Natchez had been deteriorating.

Between 1716 and 1729, the French were embroiled in three wars with the Natchez tribe. The first two wars hardly warrant being called wars, and might better be thought of as skirmishes. In 1716, the first of the altercations between the French and Natchez took place. The apparent reason for the trouble was the refusal of Governor Cadillac to participate in the smoking of the calumet with the tribe while he passed through their villages on his way to the Illinois territory. His refusal apparently convinced the tribe that the French were preparing to attack their villages. Instead of waiting to see if their fears were justified, the Natchez, or at least one village, decided to attack the French. The attack consisted of killing four French voyaguers who were on their way to the Illinois territory to trade for furs.<sup>62</sup>

Bienville, commandant of the colony, reacted to the news of the attack by requesting that Cadillac provide him with eighty soldiers whom he would send against the offending Natchez village. Cadillac, however, provided only thirty-four soldiers, whom Bienville supplemented with fifteen sailors. As the force moved toward the Natchez village, it was met by three representatives of the village, who requested that the French

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<sup>62</sup>AC, C13a, 4: 683-684. Duclos to Pontchartrain (June 7, 1716).

join them in smoking the calumet signifying peace between the two. Bienville rejected the proposal and demanded that the Natchez kill the chief of the Natchez village that was responsible for the death of the four Frenchmen, return all merchandise taken from the French, and allow the French to build a fort in their territory.<sup>63</sup> This the Natchez agreed to, sending the head of the offending chief to Bienville.

It would appear that the French had not developed any plans to attack the Natchez and that Cadillac's affront to the tribe was simply due to his unwillingness to understand the Indian. It also appears that the Natchez village responsible for the attack on the French simply availed themselves of an opportunity to rob French traders who were traveling the Mississippi River.<sup>64</sup>

In 1722, the second altercation between the French and the Natchez took place. As in 1716, there does not appear to have been any premeditation on the part of either the French or the Natchez. The cause of the second war was succinctly described by Le Page du Pratz, a French colonist at St. Catherine's located near Ft. Rosalie:

A young soldier of Fort Rosalie had given some credit to an old warrior of a village of the Natchez; . . . the warrior in return, was to give him some corn. Towards the beginning of the winter of 1723 [October 1722], this soldier lodging near the fort, the old warrior

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<sup>63</sup>AC, C13a, 4: 316-320. Bienville to Cadillac (June 23, 1716). See also, Margry, Découvertes, 5: 516-520. Also, John R. Swanton, Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 43, 1911), pp. 193-204. See also, H. B. Cushman, History of the Indians (1899. Reprint. Stillwater, OK: Redlands Press, 1962), pp. 447-448.

<sup>64</sup>In 1715, six Canadian voyaguers, canoes loaded with pelts obtained in trade with the northern plains Indians, were robbed by the Natchez while on their way to New Orleans to sell their furs. Although the six Canadians escaped, they lost all of their goods.

came to see him; the soldier insisted on his corn; the native answered calmly, that the corn was not yet dry enough to shake out the grain; that besides his wife had been ill, and that he would pay him as soon as possible. The young man, little satisfied with this answer, threatened to cudgel the old man: upon which, this last, who was in the soldier's hut, affronted at this threat, told him, he should turn out, and try who was the best man. On this challenge, the soldier calling out murder, brings the guard to his assistance. This guard being come, the young fellow pressed them to fire upon the warrior, . . . a soldier was imprudent enough to fire: the old man dropt down.

The soldier who was responsible, according to du Pratz, received only a reprimand for his action and this caused the Natchez to take up arms against the French. In the skirmish, three French and one negro slave were killed.<sup>65</sup> In retaliation, the French killed six Natchez. At this point, the Natchez offered to smoke the calumet with the French. The French agreed to peace if the Natchez would kill six Natchez whom they believed to be the ones responsible for the deaths of the three Frenchmen and, in the future, deliver to the commander of Ft. Rosalie the heads of any Natchez guilty of stealing the livestock of the French settlers in the area.<sup>66</sup> Again the Natchez gave in to the demands of the French.

The final war against the Natchez broke out in 1729. As in the previous wars, it was the action of a Frenchman that precipitated the conflict. The commander of Ft. Rosalie, de Chepart, demanded that the Natchez village closest to the fort be abandoned so he could make the area into a farm. Having experienced French justice on two previous

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<sup>65</sup> Le Page du Pratz, The History of Louisiana, or of the Western Parts of Virginia and Carolina (1774. Reprint. Baton Rouge, LA: Claitor's Publishing, 1972), pp. 33. See also, AC, C13a, 7: 129. Memorandum of Bienville, (August 23, 1723).

<sup>66</sup> AC, C13a, 7: 173-175. Minutes of the Council of War (November 23, 1723).

occasions, the Natchez decided that their only course of action lay in removing the French from their territory. To accomplish their goal, the Natchez came to the fort and indicated that the entire tribe was going on a big hunting expedition and desired to trade for supplies, including guns and ammunition. Once they had obtained the firearms, the tribe turned on the French, killing 237.<sup>67</sup> On hearing of the massacre, Governor Périer, fearing a general Indian uprising against the French, sent warnings to the other French forts and dug a ditch around the city of New Orleans. He also sent 150 French soldiers, supplemented by 700 Indian allies, against the Natchez.<sup>68</sup>

The French and the Indian force surrounded the Natchez, who had taken refuge in Ft. Rosalie and at St. Catherine's. During the night, the Natchez attempted to escape, but most were thwarted in the attempt. Those who did escape went to live with the Chickasaws, the remainder were forced to surrender. Those who surrendered were forced into slavery and ultimately were sent to St. Domingue in exchange for Negro slaves. Because the survivors of the siege fled to the Chickasaws, the French became convinced that the Chickasaws were the main factor behind the Natchez war of 1729.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Du Pratz, The History of Louisiana, pp. 86, 87. See also, Mathurin Le Petit, S. J., The Natchez Massacre: A Full and Authoritative Relation Derived from Eye-Witnesses, trans., by Richard H. Hart, (New Orleans: Poor Rich Press, 1950), pp. 17-21. See also, AC, C13a, 12: 371-372. Diron d'Artaguetto to Maurepas (March 20, 1730). Of the 237 killed, 36 were women and 56 were children.

<sup>68</sup>Du Pratz, The History of Louisiana, p. 86.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 87. See also, AC, C13a, 12: 300. Périer to Maurepas (April 10, 1730).

At the same time, the Natchez wars indicate that the French could be unmerciful in their relations with the Indians. This attitude may be accounted for by the realization of the French that their hold on Louisiana was dependent on alliances with the Indian tribes of the region. It may not be wrong to surmise that the French believed the alliances could best be maintained by appearing to be invincible in the eyes of the Indians. Thus, the harshness and ultimate destruction of the Natchez may be viewed as a warning to the other tribes of Louisiana to remain loyal to France.

At the beginning of 1731, Governor Périer was told by the Ministry that the policy of establishing peaceful relations among the Indian tribes of French Louisiana was to be changed. Now, he was informed, French policy would be to create mistrust among the Indian tribes:

. . . or at least among some preventing them from depending upon each other, it is likely that all of them would never form an alliance against us. Thus, we would be assured of a source of supplies and we could even tip the balance in favor of the side we support.<sup>70</sup>

He was also informed that the monarchy was establishing complete control of trade in Louisiana by canceling the charter granted to the West India Company. This action, the French government believed, would "make the savages more cautious and submissive."<sup>71</sup>

There were several reasons for the government's decision. The West India Company had found it impossible to make a profit from its monopoly of trade with the colony, and for economic reasons, desired that it be relieved of its burden. The government experienced great difficulty in

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<sup>70</sup>AC, B, 55: 583. Ministry of Marine to Périer (January 30, 1731).

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

successfully encouraging French merchants willingly to undertake the hazards of colonial trade.

Secondly, by assuming control over trade with the Indians, the government would be able to remove the profit motive that was the underlying basis of the independent trader. The extension or denial of trade to a tribe could be considered primarily upon the merits accruing to France and her attempts to hold Louisiana. Diplomatic instead of economic goals would now be supreme, although the government was not giving the governor a blank check. Such a policy would be effective, however, only if the Louisiana regime were provided with the trade goods required to implement it.

A third factor that may account for the change in policy was that Bienville, who had return to France in 1725, may have had some impact on the decision reached by the Ministry of Marine. Prior to leaving the colony, Bienville had been increasingly aware of the British relationship with the Chickasaw tribe and had taken steps to correct the situation. He had encouraged the Choctaws to attack the Chickasaws in an effort to bring home to them the inadvisability of dealing with the English. While no documents were found that deal with Bienville's residency in France, it would be logical to assume that he was called upon to provide the benefit of his knowledge when questions dealing with Louisiana were discussed in the Ministry of Marine. As will be seen in the next chapter, when Bienville resumed the governorship of Louisiana in 1732, he adopted a very strong anti-Chickasaw policy. Therefore, it may not be erroneous to speculate that the order sent to Périer in 1731 was influenced by Bienville.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>One document, AC, C13a, 8: 233-234, was found. This is a letter

Périer, however, was faced with a more immediate problem--the state of affairs between the Choctaws and Chickasaws. In February 1731, Régis du Roullet had sent a trusted Indian to the two tribes on a fact-finding mission. The informant reported that an illness was affecting both nations and that the Choctaws were blaming the outbreak of the disease on Limbourg cloth, a woolen cloth, which they had received from the English through the Chickasaws. According to the report, the English were making a medicine with sugar cane seed and putting it on the cloth. Roullet's informant reported that some who bought the cloth immediately became ill and died on the spot.<sup>73</sup>

Several Choctaw chiefs desired to go to war with the Chickasaws in retaliation for their supposed connection with the outbreak of the illness. Such an action would have fit in well with the new orders Perier had received. However, Soulier Rouge, Red Shoe, the chief of the eastern Choctaws, counseled against taking any quick action. Red Shoe's attitude, according to du Roullet, was based on a desire to await the outcome of the third Natchez war. Du Roullet also believed that Red Shoe was in communication with the English of Carolina.<sup>74</sup> Red Shoe's action, at this and subsequent times, lent support to du Roullet's evaluation of his sentiments.<sup>75</sup>

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from Bienville to the Duke of Orleans. In it Bienville tells the Duke that he is looking forward to giving him a personal report about his activities as governor of the colony and his impressions of Louisiana.

<sup>73</sup>AC, C13a, 13: 173.

<sup>74</sup>Red Shoe's loyalty to the French cause was constantly questioned by the governors of Louisiana. Vaudreuil, then governor of the colony, in 1747 sanctioned Red Shoe's murder. The elimination of Red Shoe precipitated the Choctaw Rebellion which lasted until 1750.

<sup>75</sup>Red Shoe's attitude may be rendered understandable in light of

Credit for the rumor about the illness among the Choctaws was claimed by Diron d'Artaguette, at this time commander of Mobile, who, in a letter to Maurepas, stated that: "The relations of the English with our Choctaws are strongly affected by a rumor which I initiated and which has spread throughout the nation, to the effect that the English are responsible for their illness by mixing germs with the merchandise they sell."<sup>76</sup> This proved to be an effective means of counteracting the growing amount of trade that was being carried on between the Choctaws and the English.

The effectiveness of the rumors was seen on March 14, 1731, when Red Shoe came to Mobile to see du Roullet. Upon being told that the Chickasaws had given refuge to what remained of the Natchez nation, Red Shoe informed du Roullet that he was now convinced that the Chickasaws had an evil heart. Then in a speech to the assembled Choctaws, Red Shoe stated: "It is true I have been fooled by the Chickasaws. I even prevented the warriors from attacking them. Today, as they have led the Natchez to their land, I declare that I am in favor of attacking them and I invite you to declare the same thing." Du Roullet, to encourage the Choctaws, promised to purchase any scalps that the Choctaws brought back from their attack on the Chickasaws.<sup>77</sup>

Périer in January 1732, reported to Maurepas, the Minister of Marine, that the Choctaws had carried out an attack on the Chickasaws

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the proximity of the eastern Choctaws to Carolina.

<sup>76</sup>AC, C13a, 13: 143-144. (March 24, 1731).

<sup>77</sup>AC, C13a, 13: 193-194.

who were escorting a party of the Natchez to Chickasaw territory. While he did not comment on the success of the venture, he did indicate that the Choctaws also waylaid six Chickasaws who were returning from a visit to Carolina.<sup>78</sup> In another report to Maurepas, a year later, Périer reported that the Choctaws had ambushed an English pack-train loaded with trade goods and killed three English traders. The merchandise was on its way to the Chickasaw tribe. He concluded his report with the contention that the Choctaws had been conducting themselves well against the Chickasaws.<sup>79</sup> Périer did not, however, offer any substantial proof for his evaluation and it would appear that in reality the Choctaws were content with making inconsequential raids against the Chickasaws. This conclusion seems to be supported by an observation made by Bienville in August 1733. Bienville stated that the Choctaws did not appear to be much inclined to attack the Chickasaws and criticized Périer for not doing more to encourage them to make attacks against that tribe.<sup>80</sup>

Périer was particularly upset by the influence of the British on the Chickasaws. Therefore, he requested more troops and the establishment

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<sup>78</sup>AC, C13a, 14: 51-65. (January 31, 1732).

<sup>79</sup>AC, C13a, 16: 178-188. (January 25, 1733). It would seem logical that if the Choctaws were vigorously attacking the Chickasaws Périer would have made note of their activities. The French had recently concluded a war against the Natchez tribe and a number of Natchez had fled to the Chickasaws for protection. It would seem that the French would have encouraged their Indian allies to continue to punish the Natchez at every opportunity and, as will be brought out in the discussion of Bienville's campaigns against the Chickasaws, the French were concerned about the Natchez that were living under the protection of the Chickasaws. Therefore, if the Choctaws had made any significant attacks against the Chickasaws or the Natchez, one would expect Périer to record the event. Périer appears not to have recorded any account of a significant Choctaw attack.

<sup>80</sup>AC, C13a, 16: 206-217. (August 25, 1733).

of a permanent naval presence--two galleys--in Louisiana to safeguard French interests.<sup>81</sup> Further actions taken by Périer to combat English influences included the supplying of the Indian allies of France with guns, so they could fight, and presents, to maintain their loyalty.<sup>82</sup> The giving of presents, however, generated problems in that the Indians, particularly the Choctaws, came to rely on them to a great degree and became angry when they were not forthcoming.

Périer apparently made injudicious use of the presents to maintain the loyalty of France's Indian allies, giving presents to virtually any and all who demanded them. It would take, according to one observer, a large number of troops stationed among the Indian nations to maintain their loyalty or the continuation of the gifts at an unprecedented rate.<sup>83</sup>

Although the granting of arms and presents maintained the loyalty of the majority of the Choctaws for France, the English were enjoying like success among the Chickasaws. Because of this, Périer, in April 1732, proposed that the Chickasaws be destroyed as a nation and that the survivors be removed from their homeland. The proposal was made because the English were continually inciting them to make war on the Indian allies of France. Périer emphasized that the proposed attack would be successful only if Indian allies were persuaded to fight by abundant trade goods.<sup>84</sup>

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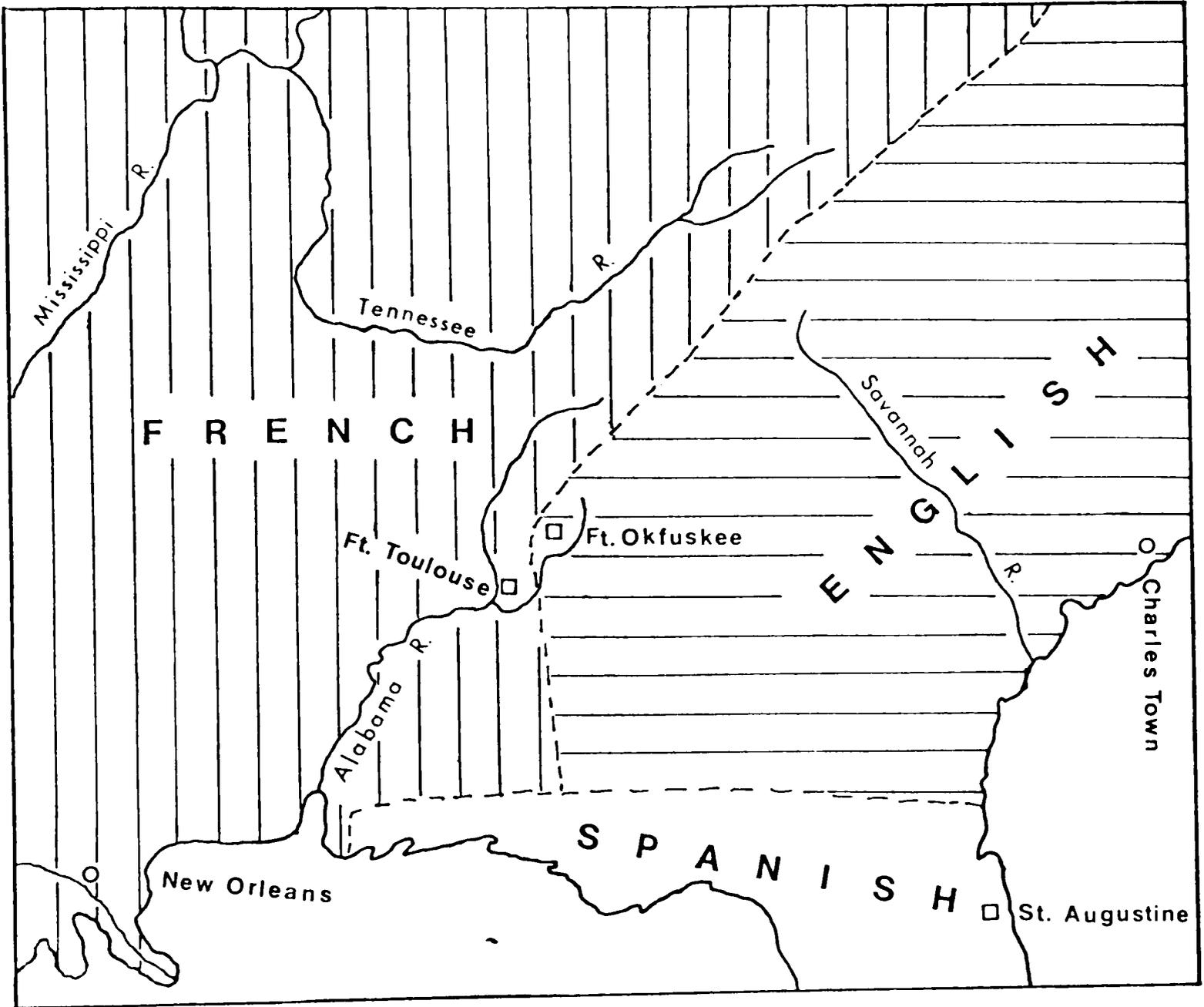
<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> AC, C13a, 15: 44-52. Salmon to Ministry of Marine. (March 24, 1732). Edmé-Gatien Salmon was ordonnateur of Louisiana (1731-1744).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> AC, C13a, 14: 56-63. Périer to Maurepas. (April 6, 1732).





Even when informed that the Chickasaws had proposed peace with the Choctaws, Périer continued to advocate their eradication or removal. It was his belief that the continuation of his plan would serve as an example to all the nations of the region of the power of France and result in general tranquility.<sup>85</sup> Périer, however, was not allowed to follow through with his plans. A change in administration took place, and Bienville once more became Governor of Louisiana.

Bienville's first problem was to correct the situation Périer had allowed to develop.<sup>86</sup> This was an enormous task. Among the Choctaws a formal split had developed. Red Shoe had joined the British, or was at least greatly influenced by them, and this same attitude was shared by other eastern Choctaws.<sup>87</sup> Bienville reported to the Minister of Marine that when he assumed the governorship of Louisiana in 1733, Red Shoe was advocating that the Choctaws trade with the English. Red Shoe advocated this policy because the English were offering to sell goods to the Indians at a cheaper price than the French sold their goods for. Red Shoe could see no valid reason to reject the offer of English goods and believed that trade relations could be established with the English traders without offending the French.<sup>88</sup> Under Bienville's previous administration,

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<sup>85</sup>AC, C13a, 14: 66-67. Périer to Maurepas. (May 20, 1732).

<sup>86</sup>The West India Company, failing to make a profit through its control of trade in Louisiana, had given its charter up. With the resumption of full royal control of the colony, there also occurred a change in governors.

<sup>87</sup>H. B. Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez Indians, Angie Debo, ed. (1899. Reprinted Stillwater, OK: Redlands Press, 1962), p. 368.

<sup>88</sup>AC, C13a, 18: 177-187. Bienville to Maurepas, (August 26, 1734).

it had been only a few chiefs who had received gifts which they would distribute to their followers. Périer's policy created a great demand for presents that could not always be met. This in turn led to a decline in the influence of the French among the Choctaws some of whom, dissatisfied with the parsimonious attitude of the French, threatened to accept English trade goods.

Périer's policy of granting to virtually any Choctaw chieftan who demanded them had resulted in a decline in the importance of the Medal Chiefs. Traditionally, for administrative purposes, the French had designated certain chiefs among the Choctaws as "Medal" Chiefs. A Medal Chief was recognized as being head of a district, usually composed of from eight to ten villages. Among the Indians, this was a prestigious position that also carried with it economic benefits. The Medal Chief received the bulk of the presents that were annually given out which, in turn, he distributed among the warriors in his district. Also his presents were usually of greater value than those granted to a common warrior. Late in 1731, or early in 1732, Red Shoe had been elevated to the status of Medal Chief by the French.

By 1732, it had become obvious to the French that the success of their colony was dependent on maintaining excellent relations with the Choctaw tribe. They had found that their ability to hold the loyalty of the Choctaws was proportionate to their ability to supply them with trade goods. It was also apparent that the British were willing to support the Chickasaw Indians because of their ability to disrupt the lines of communication between Louisiana and Canada, and because the Chickasaws provided a means for the British to gain an influential position among some

of the Choctaw villages. Throughout the remainder of French control over Louisiana these problems continued to exist.

With the establishment of French Louisiana, the basic Indian policy had been one of friendship with the Indian tribes of the region. Iberville and Bienville had been the primary advocates of this policy, but it had been followed by other governors as well. The key to the policy was the ability to supply the tribes with trade goods, something that the French were not always able to do. As it became apparent that the policy was not going to be successfully implemented, there gradually evolved a policy designed to destroy the Chickasaw tribe, the tribe that was viewed as the main threat to the maintenance of the French alliance with the Choctaws.

### CHAPTER III

#### MANEUVERINGS OF THE FRENCH AND BRITISH AND THEIR INDIAN ALLIES VIS À VIS LOUISIANA, 1733-1763

As Governor of Louisiana Étienne Boucher de Périer had embarked upon a policy designed to bring about the destruction of the Chickasaw tribe. Périer's policy toward the Chickasaws was based on two factors: first, the fact that the Natchez tribe had been granted sanctuary by the Chickasaws; and, second, the growing association between the Chickasaws and the British. The latter factor was ultimately to be more important than the first in the relationship between the French and the Chickasaws. To accomplish the destruction of the Chickasaws, Périer recognized the necessity of maintaining the support of the Choctaw tribe.

To gain the aid of the Choctaws, Périer, as his predecessors had done, extended presents to the Choctaws but with a major difference. Presents were no longer given only to the Medal Chiefs, but granted to all chiefs at a cost of approximately \$150 each. Périer was attempting to gain the aid of the Choctaws through the liberal giving of gifts. The action did not achieve the goal that the Governor desired and, indeed, was detrimental to the relationship that existed between the French and the Choctaws.

The system of giving presents, as it had been implemented in previous administrations, had created a chain of command within the Choctaw tribe that the French could easily influence. Périer's action threatened

that chain of command and, because of the reliance of the French on the Choctaws, the survival of the colony. It was also expensive.<sup>1</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, who returned as replacement for P rier as Governor of Louisiana in 1732, agreed with P rier's evaluation of the Chickasaws and his decision to seek the destruction of that tribe. He also recognized that it would be necessary to gain the active aid of the Choctaws in order to achieve the success of the policy. Bienville did not, however, agree with P rier's method of gaining the Choctaws' military support. On assuming command of the colony, Bienville discovered that the Choctaws were not as willing to go to war with the Chickasaws as P rier had indicated.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Bienville, in an attempt to salvage something from P rier's policy, encouraged the Choctaws to attack the Chickasaws. In a memoir dated March 15, 1734, Bienville recounted the success of his attempt.

According to the memoir, Bienville made plans for 1,000 Choctaw warriors, accompanied by 10 French soldiers, to march against the Chickasaws in 1733. Prior to the attack, a Choctaw chief was to meet with the Chickasaws and propose that peace be established between the two tribes; then, having lulled the unsuspecting Chickasaws into a false sense of security, the military expedition would attack. However, the emissary sent

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<sup>1</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, S rie C13a, vol. 16: folios 206-207. Hereafter cited as AC, C13a, etc.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. This was not the first time in French-Indian relations that the French had attempted to destroy a tribe it could not control through diplomacy or trade. In Canada, under Governor Jacques-Ren  de Brisay, Marquis de Denonville, in the 1680s, the colonial regime adopted plans to destroy the Iroquois Confederacy. See William J. Eccles, France in North America (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 66-67, 87, 91-95. Also, see Howard H. Peckham, The Colonial Wars, 1689-1762 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 21.

to the Chickasaws, impressed by the number of presents he received from British traders who happened to be in the village, divulged the plan and returned with his presents to his fellow warriors. Further, the British traders had proposed that the Choctaws accept British traders in their villages and informed the emissary that the British could provide the needs of the tribe at cheaper prices than the French charged.

As a result, Bienville was able to convince only 500 Choctaws to continue with the plan. Of the 500 who set out, however, only half remained by the time the force was within a day's march of the Chickasaw villages. The other half had disappeared into the forest. Lacking enough men to be successful against a forewarned enemy, the French commander was obliged to retreat.

Bienville considered the results of the abortive expedition as proof of the failure of Périer's policy and strengthened his desire to reestablish effective control over the Choctaws. To accomplish this, Bienville reported that he had held a series of meetings with the important chiefs at Mobile. Through these meetings, Bienville hoped to recapture the authority that had been lost during Périer's administration.<sup>3</sup> He extended presents only to those chiefs who were able to convince him of their loyalty to France. He also informed them that the presents would

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<sup>3</sup>AC, C13a, 18: 130-137.

Je Remis aux chiefs les presents destines pour les Guerriers dont ils firent eux mêmes la distribution a leur volonté, et par la je Commencay a retablir l'authorité qu'ils avoient perdue par une conduite opposée, et je les Renvovay beaucoup plus contents que je ne l'avois Esperé, après les avoir prevenus que ceux qui dans la suite ne se distingueroient pas par des actions d'eclat contre nos ennemis ne devoient rien pretendre aux presents, et que leur part seroit donnée à ceux dont j'aurois lieu d'estre Content.

not be given the following year unless they had performed an act of bravery, i.e. attacked the Chickasaws.<sup>4</sup>

Bienville was especially concerned with the activities of the unpredictable Red Shoe who had, in the 1730s, established communications with the British in South Carolina. Most of the British intrigues revolved around Red Shoe's activities. Red Shoe, whose affection for the British was based primarily on economics, had traveled to the British trading post of Kaapa, only five days march from his village, in 1734.<sup>5</sup> Although he received few gifts, his journey encouraged William Bull, Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina, to propose to the Board of Trade that British traders be sent to the Choctaw villages. Such action, Bull contended, would be in Britain's best interest for two reasons: first, the Choctaws were the only Indian allies of France powerful enough to be feared; and second, if they could be brought over to the British side,

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<sup>4</sup>AC, C13a, 16: 206-207. Margin notes at the side of the document, perhaps placed as comment to be forwarded to Bienville, indicate that it was the hope of Maurepas that the governor would successfully reinstate the former granting of presents only to a few chiefs who would, in turn, distribute them among their followers.

<sup>5</sup>As the following quote indicates, Red Shoe did not have much respect for the military abilities of the French. No doubt his evaluation of the French military style had some bearing on his willingness to accept the English. "This chief told me that the French did not know at all the way to carry on war; we [the french] had been able to take only a little village of thirty or forty men; that on the contrary we had lost many men without being able to say that we had killed a single one; that our troops heavily clad marched with too slow a step and so close together that it was impossible for the Chickasaws to fire without killing some of them and wounding several; . . ." Dunbar Rowland, ed., Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, 3 vols. (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927), 2: 339. Hereafter cited as Rowland, French Dominion.

it would be possible to "cut off all communications between Canada and Louisiana."<sup>6</sup>

Red Shoe returned to the Choctaw territory and attempted to convince the tribe to accept the British offer, primarily because the prices that the British offered were better. While the French gave five quarters of limbourg cloth "for five large or ten medium-sized skins,"<sup>7</sup> the British proposed to give "7 quarters of limbourg cloth for five large deer skins or 7 of average size. . . ." The British traders whom Red Shoe met had also emphasized that they could supply the Choctaws with all their needs, while the French could not.<sup>8</sup>

The French were aware of the British attempts, but Bienville did not believe they could succeed. They would fail, he contended, because the British were willing to purchase only the "large skins, weighing at least two pounds." The French bought all the skins, no matter what the size.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, Bienville instructed Father Michael Beaudouin, the long term Jesuit missionary among the Choctaws, to investigate the truth of the reports he was receiving concerning Red Shoe's activities.

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<sup>6</sup>Allen D. Candler, ed., The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, 26 vols. (Atlanta: 1904-1916), 5: 56-57.

<sup>7</sup>Nellis M. Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana During the French Regime (1916; reprinted., New York: Ams Press, 1968), p. 352.

<sup>8</sup>AC, C13a, 19: 95-96. Salmon to Maurepas (November 4, 1734). Edme-Gatien Salmon, who held the position of ordonnateur in Louisiana, reported that the English carried on their trade with the Choctaws through the Chickasaws. This tactic was used because the Choctaws who were loyal to France had the habit of attacking English traders and stealing their goods.

<sup>9</sup>AC, C13a, 20: 33-46. Bienville to Maurepas (April 14, 1735).

If they were true, Beaudouin was to do everything in his power to dissuade the Choctaws from following Red Shoe. Beaudouin informed Bienville that all the chiefs with whom he talked either denied that they were willing to accept the English, or expressed sorrow that they had entertained thoughts of allowing British traders into their villages. They also promised to end all communications with the British.<sup>10</sup> The promise was kept. At a meeting held at Mobile in October 1734, the chiefs repudiated Red Shoe's activities.<sup>11</sup>

Red Shoe, however, continued his flirtation with the British. In September 1735, Bienville wrote Maurepas that Red Shoe had escorted four British traders, with twelve pack-horses of goods, into Choctaw territory. Further, the Chief was proposing that the Choctaws trade with both the French and the British--trading their large pelts to the British for cloth and their small to the French for guns and ammunition.<sup>12</sup> The British traders also offered to serve as intermediaries in arranging peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws.

The British proposal to arrange peace convinced Bienville that Red Shoe's activities posed a threat to continued French control over Louisiana. Despite the fact that French trade goods were often in short supply and that French goods were more expensive than British goods, Bienville's respect for and treatment of the Choctaws had enabled him to maintain their loyalty and friendship. The governor's judicious use of

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<sup>10</sup>AC, C13a, 20: 185-191. Bienville to Maurepas (September 9, 1735).

<sup>11</sup>AC, C13a, 19: 95-98. Salmon to Maurepas (November 4, 1734).

<sup>12</sup>AC, C13a, 20: 185-191.

diplomacy had successfully tied the chiefs of the western Choctaw villages to France. Now all of this was threatened by the British proposal.

If the British successfully implemented their plan, as urged by Red Shoe, the Louisiana regime would be forced to share their influence over the Choctaws. The loss of Choctaw loyalty would seriously weaken the military position of France in the southeast and the monarchy would be forced to increase the number of French troops in the colony. It was unlikely that the monarchy would do this. Furthermore, if British traders gained acceptance among the Choctaws, it was possible that they would be followed by British settlers. At the least, French territory would be contained, and some possibility existed that the colony would be lost through war or attrition. Perhaps with these considerations in mind, Bienville developed a plan to counter the British success.

The first step in Bienville's plan was to start the construction of Fort Tombigbee, in western Alabama. This would enable the French to keep closer watch over the activities of Red Shoe, enable them more easily to interrupt the trade of the Chickasaws and the British, and extend their influence, possibly, to the Creek Confederacy. Bienville also planned to lower the price of French trade goods, making them competitive with British prices. By lowering the prices of French trade goods, Bienville made it less likely that the Choctaws would be willing to accept British traders.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 353.

Because the Chickasaws were generally used by the British in approaching the Choctaws, Bienville also decided that the Chickasaw tribe would have to be destroyed, or at least reduced to a position where it would cease being a benefit to Great Britain. In February 1736, although he had only 370 French troops at his disposal, Bienville laid plans for an attack directed against the Chickasaws.<sup>14</sup> In France, Maurepas supported Bienville's decision, urging him to do everything in his power to prevent the British from attaining any success among the Indian allies of France.<sup>15</sup>

Bienville's campaign plan called for an attack from two directions. One army, the southern, was commanded by the governor himself and would be supported by Choctaw warriors. Bienville's force was to coordinate its attack with that of the northern force, commanded by Pierre d'Artaguet, the Lieutenant Governor of Illinois. The southern force was made up of 370 regular French troops 2 militia companies, and 1 company of volunteers. There was also a company of Negroes in the expedition. Altogether, Bienville's force numbered approximately 600.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>AC, C13a, 20: 185-191. Bienville to Maurepas (September 9, 1735).

"La proposition que les anglois ont fait aux Tchaktas de faire la paix avec les Tchikachas me fait sentir la nécessité de faire marcher contre eux pour rompre cette partie avant qu'elle soit mieux liée.

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Je vais donc travailler sérieusement aux préparatifs de cette campagne qui ne se fera que vers le mois de février."

<sup>15</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Série B, volume 63: folios 610-612. Maurepas to Bienville (October 5, 1735). Hereafter cited as AC, B, etc.

<sup>16</sup>AC, C13a, 21: 164-167. This document is neither signed nor dated. The way it is written, however, indicates that the author was a participant in the campaign.

The expedition gathered at Mobile early in April 1736, and from there moved up the Mobile River to Fort Tombigbee arriving on April 23, 1736. At Tombigbee, the army camped for several weeks while Bienville held meetings with various Choctaw chiefs upon whom he was counting to provide warriors to supplement the French force. The Governor arranged for the Choctaw warriors to join the French at a point about forty leagues north of the fort, bordering on Chickasaw territory. This was apparently done because Bienville did not want to provide the Choctaws with munitions until the time of the attack. The Governor may also have feared that if the Choctaws were given powder and bullets, they would fail to participate in the attack against the Chickasaws.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, the northern force, which was much smaller than Bienville's, was to attack the Chickasaw villages located in the northern portion of the Chickasaw territory. D'Artaugette's force consisted of 30 regular troops, 100 volunteers and numerous Indian warriors from the northern tribes who were allied with France.<sup>18</sup> D'Artaugette did not supply his troops with much food, as he expected to obtain provisions from Bienville (this was another reason for Bienville not to wish to have the Choctaws join his force until the actual time of the attack). Late in

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<sup>17</sup>AC, C13a, 21: 188-203. Bienville to Maurepas (June 28, 1736). Bienville estimated that no more than 600 Choctaw warriors participated in the campaign.

<sup>18</sup>AC, C13a, 21: 207-212. Bienville to Maurepas (June 28, 1736). The account of d'Artaugette's fate was compiled by Bienville from sketchy reports gathered upon the return to New Orleans. Bienville absolved himself from all blame in the debacle claiming that the soldier left in charge of the Illinois post had forwarded the message by a group of Indians who failed to deliver it. The Governor reported that d'Artaugette had attempted to blow up his munition supply but was killed before he could accomplish this.

February 1736, the northern force set out for the Chickasaw Bluffs—near Memphis—and waited for news of the arrival of Bienville's troops. While Bienville had initially planned the combined expedition for late February, he had been forced to delay his departure until the arrival of supplies from France. Bienville sent d'Artaguettes orders informing the northern commander to delay his departure, but the orders arrived after d'Artaguettes had departed and were not forwarded to him. His food supplies running low, and unable to find Bienville's force, d'Artaguettes decided to attack a small Chickasaw village in an effort to obtain enough provisions to allow him to await the arrival of Bienville. As the battle progressed, the French were attacked by 400 or 500 Chickasaw warriors and d'Artaguettes and 40 of his troops were killed. The Chickasaws also captured the munition supply of the northern force.<sup>19</sup>

Bienville, unaware of what had befallen the northern force, arrived at the southern boundary of the Chickasaws on about May 26, 1736. He apparently did not make any attempt to locate the northern force, nor did he seemingly wonder about the failure of d'Artaguettes to make contact with his army. Bienville made plans to carry out the attack. His first objective was a small Chickasaw village against which he sent a contingent of about 200 French troops supported by the Choctaw warriors. The French captured several houses and burned several more, but in the process they suffered significant casualties. During the course of the battle, Bienville received word that a large number of Chickasaw warriors were marching from the north to participate in the battle against the French.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

It is likely that these were the same warriors that had defeated d'Artaguette. The Governor at this point decided to retreat.<sup>20</sup> In a report to the home government, Bienville contended that the reason for the retreat was the strong Chickasaw fortifications, which could be breeched only with cannon, which Bienville's army did not possess.<sup>21</sup>

Bienville immediately began to plan for another expedition against the Chickasaws, and his decision to destroy the Chickasaws continued as the essential guiding element of French policy toward that tribe. At times, as in the early part of the Marquis de Vaudreuil's administration later, attempts were made to negotiate peace with the Chickasaws, but these attempts were not successful and not very actively pursued.

At the same time, Bienville's abortive attack caused the British administration in South Carolina to become aware of the need to grant more aid to the Chickasaw tribe. South Carolina's interests could best

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<sup>20</sup>After the retreat of the French force, a delegation of Chickasaw chiefs arrived in Georgia to talk with General James Oglethorpe. After bragging about their victory over the French, and assuring Oglethorpe of their loyalty to the English, the delegation requested that the tribe be supplied with bullets and powder. Robert G. McPherson, ed., The Journal of the Earl of Egmont, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1962), pp. 179-180.

<sup>21</sup>AC, C13a, 21: 188-203. A detailed description of the Chickasaw fortifications is to be found in a letter by Diron d'Artaguette, Pierre's brother, written in 1737.

"In each village there is a fort with three rows of piles and with no earth between them. As I said they are piles of triple thickness that have a diameter of about one foot, leaning outward, with loopholes for firing at a man's height and others for firing at the surface of the ground. The forts are not at all hollowed out inside and there is no hole to hide in or terrace in the three rows of piles. The first row within the forts is at the height of the chin and the other about two feet higher. The third is about twelve feet in height.

"All the houses in which they dwell are built of posts driven into the ground, most of them of double and triple thickness with loopholes like the forts." Rowland, French Dominion, 1: 307-308.

be served if the Chickasaws were maintained, even if it were at considerable economic cost.<sup>22</sup> As Bienville's plans for a second expedition developed, British concern for the Chickasaws increased. Having received word from Britain that Bienville had requested additional troops for the campaign, the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly proposed that the Chickasaws be given warning so "that they may take the most proper and speedy Precautions for their own safety as well as that of our Traders who reside among them."<sup>23</sup> It was also proposed that, if French pressure became too great, the tribe be moved to the "north side of the Savanna River."<sup>24</sup> The government of South Carolina considered the Chickasaws to be "under the Care of the British," who would endeavor "to keep them together as a People that they may not be destroyed."<sup>25</sup>

The South Carolinians had reason to be concerned. Because of the humiliation suffered in 1736, Bienville made very careful preparations for his second expedition. Part of the preparations included the constant harassment of the Chickasaws by the Choctaws. Diron d'Artaguette, who was commander of the Mobile garrison, sent small raiding parties against the Chickasaws. The raiders were told to attack small groups of Chickasaws wherever they might be encountered and to set fire to the Chickasaw crops.

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<sup>22</sup>McPherson, The Journal of the Earl of Egmont, p. 214. Also, see J. H. Easterby, ed., The Colonial Records of South Carolina: The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 10 vols. (Columbia: The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1951-1974), 7: 214, 223-224. Hereafter cited as Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina.

<sup>23</sup>Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 1: 285.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 1: 476.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1: 560.

By destroying their crops, if the Chickasaws took refuge in their fortified villages, as they had done in 1736, they could be starved into submission. In May 1737, d'Artaguette reported that the Choctaw raiders had brought him twenty Chickasaw scalps.<sup>26</sup>

Also in preparation for the attack, Bienville sent a personal representative to the Choctaws--M. de Lery--whom he described as a disabled lieutenant. De Lery's instructions called for him to organize a group of Indians who were to go into Chickasaw territory and burn their grain fields.

De Lery's mission was a success. On October 10, 1737, he led 500 western Choctaw warriors against the Chickasaws and reported that 10 Chickasaws were killed and one woman prisoner taken. The success of the expedition encouraged the eastern Choctaws, those influenced by Red Shoe, to participate in a second expedition. On November 23, 1737, de Lery led another expedition against the Chickasaws. This one was also successful; de Lery reported that twelve Chickasaw warriors had been killed and twenty-two horses captured. Grain fields had been fired and, perhaps more importantly, only one Choctaw had been killed and nineteen wounded. As a result of their light casualties, de Lery reported that the Choctaws were no longer awed by the warrior reputation of the Chickasaws.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, Bienville, in a decision supported by the Ministry of Marine, decided to strip most Louisiana garrisons of their troops. He

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<sup>26</sup>AC, C13a, 22: 223-232. D'Artaguette to Maurepas (May 8, 1737).

<sup>27</sup>AC, C13a, 22: 111-119. Bienville to Maurepas (December 20, 1737). Maurepas congratulated Bienville on the success of de Lery's mission. AC, B, 66: 317. Maurepas to Bienville (March 24, 1738).

developed plans to utilize the local militia and Negroes to strengthen the expedition.<sup>28</sup> The proposed army was to consist of "about six hundred men." This would leave approximately one hundred soldiers to protect the colony against any unforeseen event. Bienville believed that the greatest danger to the colony would come from the British, who might be tempted to attack Louisiana while the bulk of the colony's military force was engaged in the Chickasaw campaign. To protect the colony from this eventuality, Bienville left the French troops stationed at Fort Tombigbee and Mobile at their posts.<sup>29</sup> If the British were to attack Louisiana, their attack would most likely come at one of these places.

While the government of South Carolina did not intervene militarily in the events taking place, it did help the Chickasaws withstand the onslaught of the French by providing the Chickasaws with "500 lbs. weight of Powder, 800 lb. weight of Bullets, 200 lb. weight of Swan Shot, 1,000 Flints, and 200 Guns. . . ."<sup>30</sup> The government of South Carolina was willing to make such massive outlays because it interpreted Bienville's activities as a prelude to an attack on South Carolina.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile the French King, disturbed over the losses suffered during the campaign of 1736, informed Bienville that seven hundred

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<sup>28</sup>AC, B, 63: 630-633. Minister of Marine to Bienville (December 27, 1737).

"Le Roy approuve donc le parti que vous avés pris de faire marcher contr'eux un detachemens de françois au mois de février prochain et puisque vous jugés necessaire de joindre de habitans et des negres aux troupes que vous pourrés tirer des garnisons pour composer ce detachemens, S. [a] M. [ajeste] s'en raporte a vous sur cela."

<sup>29</sup>AC, C13a, 24: 104-113. Report to the King (January 1, 1739).

<sup>30</sup>Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 2: 24.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 2: 366-367.

additional troops would be sent to Louisiana, plus all the food, guns, and ammunition necessary to prosecute the war against the Chickasaws. Though the monarch did not appreciate the expenditures required of the government, he was willing to make them to insure the success of the campaign.<sup>32</sup> A Royal Memoir, dated December 16, 1738, urged Bienville to hasten the attack and expressed disappointment that the Governor had not already acted.

The King expressed his determination for success by emphasizing that only quality troops were being sent to Louisiana as reinforcements. In addition to the munitions already in Louisiana, the monarchy was sending four eight-caliber cannons, two nine-caliber cast-iron mortars, sixty thousand bullets, and six bomb experts. Bienville was informed that the expedition was going to cost about thirty million livres in addition to the fifty million annually spent on the colony. Finally, the King expressed disappointment that Bienville had not kept the monarchy informed of his plans.<sup>33</sup> The same message was sent to Salmon, the

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<sup>32</sup>AC, C13a, 23: 54-57. Royal Memoir to Bienville (1738).

"Tous ces envoys consistent dans l'artillerie, armes, munitions, vivres et march [and] ises qui ont ete demandes tant pour la guerre que pour la traite, Et au lieu de 550 hommes que le S. de Bienville avoient demandes tant pour le secours que pour recruter les troupes de la Colonie il en recevra 700 y compris les Recrues envoyees par les Vaisseaux la Perle et la Raudot. Sa M. [ajeste] est persuadee qu'elle auroit pu se dispenser d'envoyer un secours aussy considerabl [e]; mais Elle a este bien aise d'assurer de plus en plus le succez de l' Expedition; Et Elle ne doute point que le S. de Bienville ne parvienne a la destruction des Sauvages Chicachas, Elle compee beaucoup sur les mesurer qu'il aura prises d'avance, sur sa capacite et sur son Zele."

<sup>33</sup>AC, B, 66: 361. Royal Memoir to Bienville (December 16, 1738).

ordonnateur of the colony, who was instructed to provide the expedition with any and all aid at his disposal.<sup>34</sup>

In June 1739, Bienville was ready. His preparations had been well planned--French troops and supplies had arrived. The Choctaws had been harassing the Chickasaws for two years, and the ability of the Chickasaws to wait out a siege was greatly weakened by the destruction of their crops. The plan of attack was the same as that which had been tried in 1726. Two forces, Canadian and Louisiana, were to converge on the Chickasaw villages from the south and north. As in 1736, communications proved to be the undoing of the plan. Bienville's force, arriving at the debarkation point first, had to wait for the Canadian contingent. When it did not show up, and after his supplies had been exhausted, Bienville reluctantly began to retreat in March 1740,<sup>35</sup> without firing a shot against the enemy. Bienville claimed that a retreat was the only alternative he had, since he had no way of transporting the arms, particularly the cannon, to the Chickasaw villages. He discovered the road to the Chickasaw villages in poor condition and the pack-horses and oxen he had purchased to transport the cannon had been lost in a flood while crossing the Red River near Natchitoches.<sup>36</sup> Bienville, rather than take a chance on defeat, decided to retreat.

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<sup>34</sup>AC, B, 68: 409. Maurepas to Salmon (May 4, 1739). In a letter of the same date, Bienville was cautioned to maintain good relations with the Indian allies of France. AC, B, 68: 407.

<sup>35</sup>AC, C13a, 25: 84-116. Bienville to Maurepas (May 6, 1740).

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

It was at this time, according to Bienville, that the Canadian contingent of the army arrived. Led by Captain Pierre Joseph de Céloron, this force consisted of 180 French volunteers and 400 Indians. Although Bienville had made the decision to retreat, he did not deny the northern force an opportunity to attack the Chickasaws. Permission was granted so that they could return "home . . . with some sort of glory." The Canadians and Indians did not, however, greatly distinguish themselves; only a minor skirmish took place during which two Canadians were wounded and two Chickasaw warriors were killed. The Chickasaws, unaware that Bienville was preparing to retreat, and believing that Bienville's force was poised to initiate a major attack on their villages, sought peace with the French.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the military failure of the expedition, Bienville was able to claim that the expedition was a success. He had arranged a peace with the Chickasaws; and he asserted that this was in compliance with the orders he had received from the King, who had told him that peace might be agreed to if the Chickasaws were not in a position to injure the colony. Bienville agreed to peace with the Chickasaws if they would return French prisoners and kill the Natchez to whom the tribe had given sanctuary in 1732.<sup>38</sup>

Bienville, when he was requested to include the Choctaws in the proposed peace settlement, refused to pressure the Choctaws to make peace with the Chickasaws, contending that they would have to settle their own differences. To the Chickasaws the Governor implied that his policy would

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

be one of neutrality between the two tribes.<sup>39</sup> In reality, Bienville continued to encourage the Choctaws to make raids on the Chickasaws. Bienville's apparent lack of honesty in dealing with the Chickasaws at this juncture is traceable to the actions of the Chickasaws themselves. While the chiefs of the tribe had agreed to destroy the remnant of the Natchez, they, instead, had allowed them to flee to the Choctaw tribe. This breach apparently convinced Bienville that he had no moral obligation to pursue settlement to its conclusion. The settlement had not required the Chickasaws to forego trade relations with the English, and Bienville was concerned that they would continue to serve as a means for the English to extend their influence among the Choctaw allies of France. Finally, the continuation of Choctaw raids against the Chickasaws would weaken the tribe.<sup>40</sup>

The expedition of 1739-1740 had another effect on the Chickasaws besides the abortive peace that Bienville had arranged. The English had offered to secure land close to the settlements of South Carolina for the Chickasaw tribe. The pressure of the war and the continuation of Choctaw attacks on their villages caused a group of the Chickasaws, led by a chief the British called Squirrel King, to accept the offer that had been made. Bienville reported this development to Maurepas in 1742 and emphasized, in a later letter, that he was continuing in his endeavors to have the Choctaws maintain their efforts against the Chickasaws.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>AC, C13a, 26: 97-106. Bienville to Maurepas (September 30, 1741).

<sup>41</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 3: 769

Because of his zeal in pursuing the Chickasaws and the success his policy was enjoying, Bienville claimed that the colony was tranquil.<sup>42</sup>

The failure of Bienville's campaign of 1739, despite the fact that he had attempted to portray it as being within the guidelines set down by the monarch, had a great effect on his career. On June 18, 1740, citing health problems, Bienville requested that he be relieved of command and be allowed to return to France as a private citizen.<sup>43</sup> There is no evidence that Bienville was actually having health problems; and it is likely that, had he not asked to be relieved, his resignation would have been demanded by the home government.

The expedition's expense, which the King had specifically pointed out in his memoir to Bienville, and the return on the investment were not great enough to allow Bienville to continue in his position. On April 27, 1742, Maurepas announced that Pierre-François de Rigaud, the Marquis de Vaudreuil-Cavagnal, would replace Bienville as Governor. Vaudreuil did not, however, assume his duties until May 1743; thus, Bienville continued as Governor for over a year after his replacement had been announced.<sup>44</sup>

While waiting for Vaudreuil to take over as Governor, Bienville continued to work to strengthen the position of France in Louisiana. As

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 3: 781.

<sup>43</sup>AC, C13a, 25: 112-113. Bienville to Maurepas (June 18, 1740).

<sup>44</sup>Vaudreuil served as Governor of Louisiana until 1755 when he became Governor of Canada. After the fall of Canada, he returned to France, where he was accused of and tried for maladministration. He was acquitted of the charges but retired from public life. Bill Barron, The Vaudreuil Papers, (New Orleans: Polyanthes, 1975), xxxiii.

it had become apparent that the "peace" established with the Chickasaws was not working, Bienville continued in his efforts to encourage the Choctaws to attack the Chickasaws. Bienville believed that peace with the Chickasaws would not be in the best interest of France because of their association with the English.<sup>45</sup> In February 1742, Bienville reported to Maurepas that in the past year the Choctaws had killed fifty-four Chickasaws; and he was planning to send out another party against them in April 1742.<sup>46</sup>

On March 18, 1742, Bienville wrote Maurepas explaining why it would not be beneficial for France to secure peace with the Chickasaws; he claimed that

the uncertain state of European affairs with reference to the English; the character of all the Indians in general who require always to be occupied in some war and who perhaps would make us uneasy if they were too tranquil; finally the mutual enfeebling of the belligerent nations, which is the greatest advantage that we can derive from the expenditures that these wars occasion.<sup>47</sup>

Bienville's advice was not, however, heeded. Vaudreuil, even before he assumed the position of Governor of Louisiana, had received from Maurepas advice concerning what his relationship with the Choctaws should be. As Bienville had constantly pointed out, it was the relationship of the Chickasaws with the British that enabled the latter to gain influence among the Choctaw allies of France. Twice Bienville had attempted to correct the situation through military action and twice he had failed. For

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<sup>45</sup>AC, C13a, 26: 55-65. Bienville to Maurepas (March 7, 1741).

<sup>46</sup>AC, C13a, 27: 38-42. Bienville to Maurepas (February 18, 1742).

<sup>47</sup>Rowland, French Dominion, 3: 767.

the future well-being of Louisiana, Maurepas, therefore, advised Vaudreuil to seek a diplomatic solution to the problem of the Chickasaws.

Fortunately, there was a possibility of achieving a diplomatic settlement. The Chickasaws, hearing that the new Governor of Louisiana had arrived, sent a delegation to the French at Fort Alabama to discuss the possibility of peace. This overture was followed by the arrival in New Orleans, on August 27, 1743, of an emissary from the tribe, who desired to talk directly to the Governor. The emissary, M. Carignan, a Frenchman who had been captured by the Chickasaws the previous year, brought a letter addressed to Vaudreuil from the Chickasaw chief. The letter requested that peace be established and that the French begin to supply the Chickasaws with their trade necessities. If this were not done, the letter went on, the Chickasaws would intensify their attacks on both the French and the Choctaws.<sup>48</sup>

As Vaudreuil investigated the proposal, he discovered that the chief who had made it represented only a portion of the Chickasaw tribe. This in itself would not mean that the opportunity should be rejected. If peace would be made with a fraction of the tribe, it would result in the tribe being split, and this should make it easier to deal with the Chickasaws. Furthermore, by bringing a portion of the tribe under French influence, the British would be forced to reevaluate their relationship with the Chickasaws. The British would no longer be able automatically to count on the Chickasaws in their relationship with the French of

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<sup>48</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, *The Letter Books*, 3 vols., (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, microfilm) 1: 15. Vaudreuil to Maurepas (September 24, 1742).

Louisiana. There did, however, exist a potential danger in the pursuit of the peace overture.

Vaudreuil had to consider the impact the peace would have on the Choctaws, the staunchest Indian allies of France in Louisiana. The enmity between the two tribes was of long standing and the French had encouraged the Choctaws particularly in the last years of Bienville's administration to seek out and destroy the Chickasaws at every opportunity. If Vaudreuil arbitrarily were to establish peace with the Chickasaws, it might result in an adverse sentiment among the Choctaw allies of France. Assuming, at the worst, that the Choctaws became disenchanted with the French, they would turn to the English. This would undercut any benefits derived from peace with the Chickasaws.

Vaudreuil solved the dilemma by proposing peace terms that took into consideration the feelings of the Choctaws and, in effect, appeared to give the tribe a veto power over the establishment of peace. Peace would be established on the following terms: First, all British traders must be expelled from Chickasaw territory. Second, the Chickasaws must make restitution for damages that they had inflicted on the Choctaws. Third, the Choctaws must agree to peace between the two tribes before Vaudreuil would support the opening of peace negotiations.<sup>49</sup> Vaudreuil was not specific about the form of the restitution that the Chickasaws were to make to the Choctaws; he may have had in mind only the cessation of Chickasaw attacks on the Choctaws.

Five months later, no substantive steps had been taken by the Chickasaws to establish peace with the French. Vaudreuil, however, continued

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

to emphasize in his letters that the peace would have significant benefit for France. He even made plans to solidify the peace and make it general throughout Louisiana territory once the British had been expelled.

In February 1744, Vaudreuil informed Maurepas that once the Chickasaws had expelled the British traders, he would convene a general peace conference of all the tribes of Louisiana at Mobile.<sup>50</sup> For permanent peace to be established, additional supplies for Indian trade and presents would be needed. Vaudreuil estimated the additional cost at 100,000 livres per year. The increased cost, he contended, would be offset by two things: France would gain control of all the fur trade of Louisiana, and the English would be limited to the Carolinas and would no longer be in a position to threaten the French control of the lower Mississippi River.<sup>51</sup>

Partially because of the outbreak of war in Europe between France and Britain, Vaudreuil's grand plan was never implemented. The War of the Austrian Succession, called King George's War in American history, made it difficult for France to supply Louisiana with the necessary trade goods on which Vaudreuil's plan was based. More importantly, one may question the desire of the Chickasaws to live up to the peace proposal that was initially made to Vaudreuil in 1743. The Chickasaw chief who made the proposal was not the spokesman of the entire tribe; he was taking the initiative for peace entirely on his own. Also one may question Vaudreuil's desire to establish peace with the Chickasaws.

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 1: 17. Vaudreuil to Maurepas (February 12, 1744).

Vaudreuil recognized, as his later relationship with the Chickasaws indicated, that peace with the tribe depended on the ability of the French to supply them with trade goods. It soon became apparent to the Governor that the French lacked the economic ability to supply both the Choctaws and the Chickasaws; Vaudreuil may have had an understanding of the economic situation in the colony in 1743. Vaudreuil's correspondence with the Ministry of Marine, as we will see, demonstrates that, by the end of 1744, the lack of trade goods caused him to abandon any thought of making peace with the Chickasaws.

The government of South Carolina, while aware that the proposal had been made, apparently did not view it with a great deal of fear. British traders among the Chickasaws informed their government that the desire for peace was exhibited by only one chief and that the other chiefs of the tribe remained loyal in their devotion to the British. Lachlan McGillivray, a British trader among the Chickasaws, in a letter to the Governor of South Carolina, reported that the Chickasaws had rejected the French terms for peace because the French had demanded that they be allowed to build a fort "within 2 days Journey of the Chickasaws . . ." and because acceptance of the French demands "would infallibly throw us into French Arms."<sup>52</sup>

Vaudreuil believed that if France could supply Louisiana with those trade goods which were necessary to purchase the devotion of the Indians, he could guarantee the colony success; if, however, the trade goods were not supplied, the future of the colony was questionable. He

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<sup>52</sup>South Carolina, Journals of his Majesty's Honorable Council, W. S. Jenkins, ed., (Washington: Library of Congress, microfilm) "Letter of Lachlan McGillivray, January 23, 1744", pp. 40-42.

also pointed out in his correspondence that the British were able to use the poor economic position of the French colony to their own advantage when dealing with the Indians.<sup>53</sup> Louisiana's poor economic condition during King George's War was due to two factors: the colony had not fully recovered from the expenses associated with Bienville's Chickasaw campaigns, and the declaration of war in Europe made it difficult for the home government to supply Louisiana. During the war, on the average, two French ships per year made their way to Louisiana. Supplies from these ships, along with trade goods that the colonial government was able to obtain from other sources, enabled Vaudreuil to supply his Indian allies with enough goods so that the majority remained loyal to France.<sup>54</sup>

The outbreak of war also caused Vaudreuil to reexamine the desirability of peace with the Chickasaws; he concluded that peace with the tribe would not be in the best interest of France. His conclusion was based primarily on the fact that he had received information that the Chickasaws were divided over the question of peace. Because of the division, Vaudreuil informed Maurepas that he no longer believed that it would be possible to achieve peace with the tribe; therefore, he was going to encourage the Choctaws to resume their attacks.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers: The Letter Books, 1: 17. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (February 12, 1744).

<sup>54</sup>The colony was even able to maintain some export trade. According to Vaudreuil, between 1743 and 1746, furs valued at 82,000 livres were exported from the colony. In 1749, 62,000 livres in presents were given to the Indians. AC, C13a, 29: 109-111.

<sup>55</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, The Letter Books, 1: 28. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (August 30, 1744). Same letter was written to Father Beaudouin with instructions that the priest use his influence among the Choctaws to encourage them to attack the Chickasaws. 3: 67, (March 30, 1744).

For their part, the Chickasaws were having second thoughts about peace with Louisiana. As indicated previously, British traders among the tribe had reported that they had rejected the proffered peace because the French had demanded the right to build a fort near their territory. It is probable that the British traders helped to shape the negative attitude of the Chickasaws by emphasizing the inability of the French to supply them with trade goods. This seems to be supported by a report given to Vaudreuil by Captain Charles La Houssaye, commander of Fort Alabama. La Houssaye had sent an expedition to the Chickasaws early in 1744 to discover why they had not appeared to conclude the peace that had been discussed. La Houssaye reported that the tribal leaders claimed to be unaware that the prerequisite for peace was the expulsion of British traders from their villages. They also questioned the ability of the French to supply them with goods. The captain, in turn, made it clear to the chiefs that peace would be concluded only if the Chickasaws prohibited British traders from coming into their villages.<sup>56</sup>

Thus both the French and the Chickasaws were entertaining second thoughts about the desirability of peace. In attempting to account for Vaudreuil's change in attitude, it is probable that he had in mind the small benefits that peace would have brought to the colony and the position that the colony was in once war had been declared. Perhaps Vaudreuil concluded that at best the main benefit from peace would be that a former enemy would be neutralized. It would be too much to expect the Chickasaws to take up arms against the British, who had so long supplied the

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 3: 95. Vaudreuil described La Houssaye's report in a letter to Father Beaudouin, (July 30, 1744).

tribe. More importantly, Vaudreuil would have to consider the ability of the French to supply the Chickasaws with their needs. Traditionally, in time of war, Louisiana had experienced great difficulty in obtaining supplies and there was no reason to expect that this war would be any different. Peace with the Chickasaws would necessitate that available supplies be shared between them and the Choctaws, and even then there was no assurance that the tribe would forego its association with the British. A significant reduction in the amount of supplies that the Choctaws received might encourage them also to look toward the British. One Choctaw chief, Red Shoe, already was leaning in that direction. Therefore, Vaudreuil concluded that peace with the Chickasaws would be more costly than continuation of the harassment tactics that had been developed.

The change in Vaudreuil's policy was quickly instituted. The commander at Fort Tombigbee, Captain Dereneville, was ordered to encourage the Choctaws to attack the Chickasaws and, presumably, any British traders that their raiding parties might encounter.<sup>57</sup> The Governor also composed a speech which was to be delivered to the Choctaws. The speech emphasized that the British were the cause of all inter-tribal problems; the French were the loyal friends of the Choctaws; and the French would supply the Choctaws with all their needs.<sup>58</sup> The speech was to be a pattern for the use of military commanders and others, such as Jesuit missionaries, who were in contact with the Choctaws. Although the record

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 3: 121. Vaudreuil to Dereneville, (September 10, 1744).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 3: 128. Speech to be delivered to the Choctaws (September 26, 1744).

is unclear, no doubt Vaudreuil first delivered the speech to the Choctaws when they gathered for the annual distribution of presents at Mobile in 1744.

Vaudreuil's decision came none too soon. The British were increasing their connection with the Chickasaws, having provided the tribe with powder and bullets early in 1744, in an effort to discourage them from accepting the French offer of peace.<sup>59</sup> The British were also successful in their efforts to win Red Shoe over to their side. As early as 1743, Red Shoe had indicated that he was willing to accept British traders and was actively promoting English trade among the Choctaws. Red Shoe's activities, while initially minor, convinced Vaudreuil to act before it was too late.<sup>60</sup>

As Red Shoe's position among the Choctaws was greater than that of a mere warrior, Vaudreuil decided to undermine his influence. At Mobile, the Governor threatened to strip Red Shoe of his medal. Although the Governor did not carry through with the threat, he indicated his displeasure by not granting Red Shoe the increase in presents that was extended to the other Medal Chiefs.<sup>61</sup> Vaudreuil hoped that his action would cause Red Shoe to forego his flirtation with the British, and for awhile, it appeared to have succeeded.<sup>62</sup> Red Shoe promised to lead his warriors against the Chickasaws and British.

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<sup>59</sup>Journals of the Council, July 7, 1744, p. 397. The Chickasaws were given fifty pounds of powder, one hundred pounds of bullets, and two hundred pounds of flints.

<sup>60</sup>Norman W. Caldwell, "The Southern Frontier During King George's War," Journal of Southern History, VII (1941), 40.

<sup>61</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, The Letter Books, 1: 37. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (October 28, 1744).

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

Vaudreuil, however, did not place much store in the promise. In a report to Maurepas, Vaudreuil detailed Red Shoe's actions and his own attempts to bring the chief under control. He concluded his report by stating that he did not expect Red Shoe to keep the promise he had made.<sup>63</sup> Vaudreuil's skepticism was justified. Instead of attacking the Chickasaws, Red Shoe attempted to make peace.

The reason for Red Shoe's failure to carry out his promise was basically economic. The declaration of war, as previously stated, made it difficult for Louisiana to obtain supplies. Also the government of South Carolina realized that the French would have difficulty in encouraging the Choctaws to attack their colony if a split could be created within the tribe. Vaudreuil would have to deal with the split, thus reducing the attention he could give to South Carolina. As a result, there were two influences acting on Red Shoe: the inability of the French to supply goods and the willingness of the British to step into the vacuum.

The problem of the lack of trade goods was compounded by an obstinate bureaucrat, with whom Vaudreuil was forced to work. Sébastien-François Ange Le Normant de Mézy held the position of ordonnateur in the colony. He divided the goods among the traders, the military posts--to be used in the Indian trade--and the town merchants, who would sell to the French settlers. It was Le Normant's control and distribution of the trade goods that Vaudreuil found objectionable. The Governor recognized that the key to successful Indian relations was an adequate supply of trade goods. Harmonious Indian relations in turn would help insure

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 1: 47. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (December 28, 1744).

the continued control of Louisiana by France. According to Vaudreuil, Le Normant did not recognize the relationship that existed between the ability of France to maintain the colony and trade goods. His report on the activities of the ordonnateur bears out this assessment.

During time of war, the arrival of a supply ship in Louisiana was an important event, as was the distribution of the goods that it carried. Vaudreuil reported that when a ship arrived from France, Le Normant sold most of the goods to merchants with whom he was friendly. As a result, the Governor contended, only half of what was needed for the Choctaw trade was available. Le Normant's reason for taking this action was that the price of Indian trade goods was regulated, while the price which merchants could charge was not. His action thus resulted in a substantial profit for the monarchy.<sup>64</sup> It was Vaudreuil's opinion that the desire for profit was, in the long run, detrimental to French control of Louisiana. Failure to keep the Choctaws supplied would cause them to turn to the British;<sup>65</sup> and if they became dependent on the British, the Choctaws would no longer be of use to the French as allies.<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, Louisiana, stripped of its Indian allies, would fall to Great Britain. Without Indian allies, Louisiana could not be maintained against superior British forces.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 1: 71. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (January 6, 1746).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 1: 74. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (January 28, 1746).

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Caldwell, "The Southern Frontier," 38.

"At the beginning of hostilities in 1744, the English in Georgia and South Carolina probably outnumbered the French in Louisiana four to one. Georgia alone had as many people as all Louisiana."

Vaudreuil's estimation of the importance of the Indians was correct. Their importance was also recognized by the British; and the government of South Carolina, after war was declared, established a goal of separating the Choctaws from their French alliance. For example, Governor James Glen, of South Carolina, in a speech delivered to the House Assembly, stated: "The Fate of this Country is so interwoven and inseparably connected with Indian Affairs that we must always be attentive to everything that concerns them. . . ." <sup>68</sup> The Assembly itself was cognizant of the importance of the Indians as may be seen by its vote, in 1746, to invite three Chickasaw chiefs to travel to Britain, where, presumably, they would be impressed with the power and wealth of the mother country and strengthened in their devotion to the British. <sup>69</sup>

In attempts to detach the Choctaws from their French alliance, the government of South Carolina initially made use of James Adair, who had been granted a license to trade with the Chickasaws in 1744. In 1746, Adair was granted permission to extend his trade activities to the Choctaws. <sup>70</sup> In his endeavor, Adair came to have a fairly close relationship with Red Shoe who, as his past activities had indicated, was willing to trade with the British. Adair's activity was viewed as simply the first step in gaining the entire tribe for the British.

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<sup>68</sup>Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 6: 234, (June 13, 1746).

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 6: 190-191. (April 16, 1746).

<sup>70</sup>James Adair, Adair's History of the American Indians, ed., Samuel C. Williams, (1920: reprint ed., New York: Promontory Press, n.d.), x.

Adair claimed that his association with Red Shoe was made possible because "one of the French of Tumbikpe-fort (Tombigbee being guided by Venus instead of Apollo, was detected in violating the law of marriage with the favourite wife of" Red Shoe.<sup>71</sup> Red Shoe, in retaliation, killed three Frenchmen, thus ending any relationship with the French. Adair's account of the reason for Red Shoe's defection from the French differs considerably from that given by Vaudreuil. While both accounts agree that three Frenchmen were killed by Red Shoe, the reasons offered for their death are quite different. Vaudreuil contended that Red Shoe took the action in retaliation for a western Choctaw attack on a group of Chickasaws who had been negotiating with Red Shoe in the hope of establishing peace between the two tribes.<sup>72</sup> Both accounts agree that the scalps of the three dead men were sent to the Chickasaws.

While Adair's account is more romantic, it appears that Vaudreuil's account is the more accurate. Vaudreuil emphasized that Red Shoe had failed to appear at Mobile for the annual distribution of presents because of his negotiations with the Chickasaws. The Governor, aware that this was going on, encouraged the chiefs who were at Mobile to attack the Chickasaws in an effort to put an end to the negotiations. The chiefs did; and in retaliation, Red Shoe took the action that sealed his break with the French.<sup>73</sup> If Adair's account is correct, why did Red

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>72</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, The Letter Books. 1: 88. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (November 20, 1746).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

Shoe send the scalps of the three to the Chickasaws? Surely the Chickasaws would not be particularly interested in having the scalps of the three Frenchmen unless it could be interpreted as a sign of Red Shoe's desire to arrange peace with their tribe. If this was the case, and Vaudreuil contended it was, then the sending of the scalps to the Chickasaws made sense.

In April 1747, Red Shoe traveled to Charleston, apparently at the suggestion of John Campbell, Adair's trading partner, to meet with Governor Glen. Glen reported to the Assembly that Red Shoe proposed "to take the French Fort in the Path to their Nation, and to join the Creeks in taking the Alabama Fort also, giving me Leave, at the same Time, to build a Fort in their Nation whenever I please."<sup>74</sup> Glen requested that three hundred British troops be sent to aid in the attack on Fort Alabama for if the attack were successful the Creeks and the Chickasaws:

would be so confirmed in our Interest, as we need never have anything more to apprehend from that Quarter. The Choctaws would thereby be animated to drive the French out of their Country, which would open, and forever secure that advantageious Trade to this Province.<sup>75</sup>

Because of lack of funds, Glen's proposal was not immediately enacted. The Assembly did not even agree to send traders to the Choctaws at this time, although "several had offered to go , provided the Public would Insure them against the French. . . ." However, "The Council were of Opinion that as there is none of the Public money at present

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<sup>74</sup>Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 7: 215.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 7: 223-224.

in the hands of the Governor and Council nor no Fund that can be applied to that Purpose and as the meeting of the General Assembly draws near, the doing of anything in that affair must be deferred until they meet."<sup>76</sup>

For the British, this proved to be an unfortunate decision. The failure to follow up Red Shoe's visit by sending traders to the Choctaws gave the French an opportunity to say, with some degree of validity, that the British were not serious in their desire to trade with them, although Adair, by his own admission claimed to have given the Choctaws all the ammunition that he could spare from his private stores. Adair estimated that he could have sold what he gave to the Choctaws for approximately "fifteen hundred buck-skins."<sup>77</sup>

Later in 1747, Glen helped to create a trading company, which Adair called the Sphynx Company, to trade with the Choctaws. Glen was a silent partner in the venture which included his brother and two others. The company brought together three-hundred-sixty pack horses and began the journey to the eastern Choctaw villages. The leaders of the expedition exhibited a lackadaisical attitude, which resulted in the failure of the goods to arrive at the appointed meeting place with the Choctaws. The Choctaws returned to their villages without the needed goods.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Journal of the Council, pp. 253-254, (March 18, 1748).

<sup>77</sup>Adair's History, p. 354.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., pp. 345-353.

It was primarily through trade goods that both the French and the British maintained the loyalty of the Indians. Because of the lack of leadership exhibited by the founders of the Sphynx Company, the British missed a golden opportunity to gain a strong following among the Choctaws. While Red Shoe cast his fortunes with the British, one can only speculate that if the expedition of the Sphynx Company had been successful, the split that developed among the followers of Red Shoe and those Choctaws who remained loyal to the French would have been deeper and the French position in Louisiana more threatened than it actually was.

While the Red Shoe influenced Choctaws were dealing with the British, Vaudreuil was attempting to ensure the loyalty of the western villages for France. In his attempts, he was greatly aided by the inability of the British to provide the villages influenced by Red Shoe with the goods that had been offered. To counter the impact of Red Shoe, Vaudreuil sent Vadart de Beauchamps, second-in-command at Mobile, among the Choctaws in 1746 with orders to convince the Choctaws that the British were not trustworthy. To give added impact to de Beauchamp's endeavor, Vaudreuil had previously made available a portion of the goods stored at Mobile. This was in an effort to convince the Choctaws that France would be able to supply them their needs.<sup>79</sup>

Vaudreuil was able to obtain enough trade goods to prevent the western Choctaw villages from joining Red Shoe in his war against the French. At the same time, because Red Shoe's activities had become

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<sup>79</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, Manuscript LO 4036. (April 23, 1744).  
Vaudreuil to Father Beaudouin.

seriously troublesome, the decision was reached to bring about the elimination of the eastern chief. It was believed that the death of Red Shoe would make it possible to heal the breach that had developed in the Choctaw tribe. Thus, Vaudreuil promised presents to the loyal Choctaws if they would bring him the scalp of Red Shoe.<sup>80</sup>

On June 23, 1747, Red Shoe was killed while returning to his village with a load of British trade goods.<sup>81</sup> Although Adair is mistaken in stating that the death occurred in 1748, his description is more complete than that found in French documents.<sup>82</sup> According to Adair, it occurred while Red Shoe was escorting John Campbell, a trader, from the Chickasaws to Red Shoe's village. On the journey, "He had the misfortune to be taken very sick on the path, and to lye apart from the camp, according to their usual custom: a Judas, tempted by the high reward of the French for killing him, officiously pretended to take great care of him. While Red Shoes kept his face toward him, the barbarian had such feelings of awe and pity, that he had not power to perpetrate his wicked design; but when he turned his back, then he gave the fatal shot."<sup>83</sup>

The death of Red Shoe, however, did not end the troubles with the Choctaws. Those villages that had been influenced by Red Shoe took up

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<sup>80</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, Manuscript LO 147. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (November 5, 1748).

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Adair wrote his book in 1755, and this probably accounts for the discrepancy in dates.

<sup>83</sup>Adair's History, pp. 352-353.

arms against their brethren of the western villages and even made attacks upon French settlements in an effort to avenge the death of their leader. The raids against the French resulted in little loss of French life, but did cause consternation among the French settlers in the eastern portion of the colony. For example, one settlement, called the German Coast,<sup>84</sup> was attacked by Red Shoe's followers in November 1747. In the attack, one settler was killed and a woman was taken captive. The survivors of the attack fled to New Orleans where they resided for about six months, until it was safe to return to their homes. On their return, however, the settlers rebuilt their homes on the western side of the river, presumably because this would be safer in the event of any future raids.<sup>85</sup> On October 11, 1747, the rebels attacked the French fort at Natchez, killing one soldier, and three days later attacked a work party from the fort, apparently killing no one. Concurrent with the minor attacks in the north, the rebels were attacking outlying settlers in the vicinity of Mobile, giving rise to fears that Mobile itself might be the object of a major attack. While no major attacks were made against French settlements, the fear persisted that such attacks might occur. The French reaction to the raids consisted of increasing the number of

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<sup>84</sup>In 1720, as a part of John Law's effort to increase the number of colonists in Louisiana, a number of German Catholics were transported to the colony. In Bienville's administration, the Germans were assigned to an area north of New Orleans. Jean Bernard Bossu, Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751-1762, trans. and ed. by Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), pp. 29-30.

<sup>85</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, LO 137. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (June 21, 1748). See also, Ibid., LO 165. D'Arensbourg to Vaudreuil, (February 8, 1749). D'Arensbourg was apparently the leader of the German settlers.

French troops in the garrisons and utilizing Indians who were loyal to the French as guards to the approaches to the French settlements.<sup>86</sup>

This resulted in a Choctaw civil war that lasted until 1750.

In a long letter in The Letter Books, Vaudreuil described the impact and direction of the Choctaw civil war. From his account, it is apparent that he encouraged the western villages to attack those of the east and was able to induce them in this undertaking by promising them double the amount of presents for 1749. His ploy worked, for he reported that one hundred rebel scalps had been delivered to him as well as the skulls of three chiefs of the eastern villages who had been in league with Red Shoe.<sup>87</sup>

On November 15, 1750, Vaudreuil made peace with the remnant of the eastern villages, bringing to an end the Choctaw rebellion. The terms of the peace were harsh and included the following points: First, if any Choctaw killed a Frenchman, he was to be killed; second, if any Choctaw allowed an Englishman to come to his village, he and the Englishman were to be killed; third, the Choctaws were to make war on the Chickasaws as long as the Chickasaws existed as a tribe; and fourth, the Choctaw rebels were to destroy all forts they had constructed and exchange all prisoners they had taken during the course of the civil war.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., LO 147. Vaudreuil to Maurepas, (November 5, 1748).

<sup>87</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, The Letter Books, 2: 55. Vaudreuil to the Court, (March 6, 1749).

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 2: 92. Vaudreuil to the Court, (February 12, 1751).

Vaudreuil believed that the major reason for the Choctaw rebellion was the influence of the Chickasaws. Because of their association with the British, the Chickasaws were in a position to introduce the British traders to the Choctaws. Therefore, the Chickasaws would have to be destroyed if the British were to be kept from interfering with the Choctaws. Vaudreuil, perhaps remembering what had happened to Bienville in his two expeditions, initially reverted back to the policy of encouraging the Choctaws to make raids against the Chickasaws, a policy he had not abandoned even during the Choctaw Rebellion. For example, he reported in June 1750 that the Choctaws had killed twelve Chickasaw warriors and three British traders.<sup>89</sup> While Vaudreuil apparently made plans for a major expedition against the Chickasaws, they were never carried out. Instead, in 1752, he was appointed Governor of Canada.

Despite the fact that the Choctaw Rebellion had been settled and that the loyalty of the tribe had been retained for France, Vaudreuil was unable to prevent the British from continuing their trade relationship with the Choctaws. Before and after the peace arrangement negotiated with the rebellious eastern villages, British traders, with the support of the government of South Carolina, maintained their efforts to continue to trade with the Choctaws.

In 1748, for example, the South Carolina government ordered that a "Public Notice [be given] that a treaty of Peace and Friendship hath been concluded between the Government and the Choctaw people and that all Persons properly Qualified to carry on Trade to that Nation may obtain

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 2: 80. Vaudreuil to the Court, (June 24, 1750).

licenses to trade there . . . there is very good Information that there are great quantities of Skins and Furs in the Choctaw Nation. . . ."90

The following year, the South Carolina Assembly voted to pay up to £1,000 for expenses to send presents to the Choctaws "provided it be sent up with a considerable cargo of Goods for that Trade and . . . it be delivered in Reasonable time."91

The traders from South Carolina, who had been instrumental in supplying the Choctaws during the rebellion, did not stop their activities when Vaudreuil made peace with the rebels in 1750. Because Vaudreuil had neither the supplies nor the military power to enforce compliance with the terms of the settlement, the British were able to continue their trade with the Choctaws with little hindrance.

For example, John Buckles, a trader among the Chickasaws, reported in 1754, that the "Choctaws have been in the Chickasaws this winter trading with white people here, and that all the Six Towns besides several of the Frontier towns [say] their Hearts are still good toward the English."92 Buckles encouraged the Chickasaws to welcome the Choctaws to their villages so the tribe would be able to discover the plans of the French for their tribe, and be in a position to defend themselves against the French.93

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<sup>90</sup>Journal of the Minutes of the Council, January 12, 1748, p. 25.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., January 1, 1749, p. 463.

<sup>92</sup>South Carolina, Book of Indian Affairs, 1753-1765, W. S. Jenkins, ed., (Washington: Library of Congress, microfilm), Letter of John Buckles, March 15, 1754, pp. 50-51.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., Journal of John Buckles: December 1753-April 1754, p. 69.

For their part, the French as usual were unable to prevent the British from continuing their activities. To a large extent, however, this did not matter. The future of the French in Louisiana was to be determined, not in the southeast, but before the gates of Montreal and Quebec.

As previously brought out, Vaudreuil was elevated to the governorship of Canada in 1752. His replacement in Louisiana was Louis Billouart de Kérlerec de Kervasegan.<sup>94</sup> During Kérlerec's administration, the French and Indian War began; and while his orders were to maintain peace with the Indians and concentrate on the economic development of the colony, the war made it impossible for him to achieve the goals.<sup>95</sup>

Surprisingly, in Kérlerec's correspondence, there is little mention of Indian affairs. Indeed in the research there was found to be substantially fewer documents dealing with French Louisiana for this period than in previous periods. A possible reason for this may be that the number of French ships that arrived in Louisiana during the war was fewer, thus limiting communications with France. Those

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<sup>94</sup>Louis Billouart de Kérlerec was born in 1704 and, like his predecessors had a naval background. He served, with distinction, against the English in the naval war of 1745-1748 and by 1751, was captain of his own ship. In 1752, he was named Governor of Louisiana. As Governor, Kérlerec was faced with problems caused by the French and Indian War. Unable to obtain supplies for the colony, Kérlerec nevertheless, was able to prevent the British from making substantial territorial gains at the expense of Louisiana. Despite his activities, France, by the terms of the Treaty of Paris, gave Louisiana to Spain; and Kérlerec returned to France in disgrace. He died in 1770. Le Grande Encyclopédie, vol. 21.

<sup>95</sup>AC, B, 95: 343. Memoir of the King to Kérlerec, (October 20, 1752).

documents that were uncovered were written, primarily, in France and so do not shed light on the activities of the Louisiana colonial administration and its relationship with the Choctaws. By that time, the main concern was ultimately to use Louisiana as a means of retaining Canada, and later, as a bribe to convince Spain to join in the war against Great Britain.<sup>96</sup>

Nevertheless, the documentary evidence that was found indicates that Kérlerrec and his relationship with the Choctaws was not significantly different than that of previous administrations. For example, Kérlerrec reported to the Ministry of Marine that he was encouraging the Choctaws to attack the Chickasaws. This was because the Chickasaws were disrupting French commerce on the Mississippi River.<sup>97</sup>

As it was so often in the past, the main problem facing the Governor of Louisiana continued to be the inability to supply the Choctaws with the goods that would maintain their loyalty to the French and encourage them to pursue the Indian allies of the British vigorously. The situation of supplies was so bad that in 1759, Kérlerrec was forced to place the French soldiers in the colony on half rations; and he reported to Vaudreuil, in Canada, that he had not been able to give presents to the Indians for two and a half years.<sup>98</sup> Even the loyal Choctaws, he said,

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<sup>96</sup>The role of Louisiana in French diplomacy during the Seven Years War is discussed in Arthur S. Aiton, "The Diplomacy of the Louisiana Cession," American Historical Review, 36 (1931), 701-720. Also see, E. Wilson Lyon, Louisiana in French Diplomacy, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), pp. 13-35.

<sup>97</sup>AC, C13a, 27: 66. Kérlerrec to Ministry (August 20, 1735).

<sup>98</sup>AC, C11a, 104: 43. Vaudreuil to Berryer (March 30, 1759). See also, Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 219.

while they continued to "behave well," were being forced to seek out the British. Kérlerrec expressed fear that an Indian revolt would take place if the supply situation in Louisiana did not soon improve.<sup>99</sup>

Kérlerrec was in no position to undertake any offensive operations during the course of the war and did well just to maintain the status quo in the southeast. His attempts to maintain Louisiana for France was not successful. By the terms of the Treaty of Paris, Spain, which had joined the war against Great Britain in January 1762, received as compensation for the loss of Florida to England, western Louisiana, including the city of New Orleans.<sup>100</sup> England received Canada and all of Louisiana east of the Mississippi River.<sup>101</sup>

In January 1763, Kérlerrec was replaced as Governor of Louisiana by Jean-Jacques, Blaise d'Abbadie who was to serve as administrator of the colony until the Spanish were able to assume direct administration of the

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<sup>99</sup>AC, C11a, 104: 43.

<sup>100</sup>Lyon, Louisiana in French Diplomacy, pp. 13-35. Also, see Aiton, "The Diplomacy of the Louisiana Cession," 701-720.

<sup>101</sup>European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies, 1716-1815, Charles O. Paullin, ed., (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1937), p. 94.

Afin de retablir la paix sur des fondemens solides et durables et escarter pour jamais tout sujet de dispute par rapport aux limites des territoires François et Britanniques sur le continent de l'Amérique, il est convenu qu'à l'avenir les confins entre les états de sa Majesté Très Chrétienne et ceux de sa Majesté Britannique en cette partie du monde seront irrévocablement fixés par une ligne tirée au milieu du fleuve Mississippi depuis sa naissance jusqu'à la rivières d'Iberville, et de là par une ligne tirée au milieu de cette rivière est des lacs Maurepas et Pontchartrain jusqu'à la mer; et à cette fin le Roi Très Chrétien cède, en toute propriété et garantit à sa Majesté Britannique la rivière et le port de la Mobile et tout ce qu'il possède ou à dû posséder du côté gauche de fleuve Mississippi, à l'exception de la ville de la Nouvelle Orleans at de l'isle dans laquelle elle est située, qui demeureront à la France; bien entendu que la navigation du fleuve Mississippi sera également libre, . . .

territory.<sup>102</sup> In order to aid the Spanish in the administration of their acquisition, the French government offered to leave two hundred fifty French troops in New Orleans to police the territory and to provide the Spanish with "useful information on how to handle the settlers and the savage tribes. . . ." <sup>103</sup> Abbadie was ordered to carry out these instructions.

The government of France had failed to maintain enough interest in Louisiana or to recognize its potential importance. Louisiana was viewed as a poor relation, suitable only to protect the southern approach to Canada and to be used as a pawn to entice the Spanish into the war with Britain. As a result, little effort was made to provide the colony with the supplies needed to make the colony a paying proposition.

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<sup>102</sup>AC, B, 116: 574. Letter from the King to Abbadie (February 10, 1763).

<sup>103</sup>AC, B, 126: 213. Versailles to the Marquis d'Ossun (April 25, 1761). The Marquis d'Ossun was the French ambassador to Spain.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROLE OF THE FRENCH MISSIONARIES WITH THE CHOCTAWS, 1700-1763, TOGETHER WITH SOME DATA ON CHOCTAW LIFE

The outstanding historian of the Jesuits, Ruben G. Thwaites, in the introduction to his multi-volume work, The Jesuit Relations, offered five reasons why France became involved in colonization. These were: territorial growth, conversion of the Indian population to Catholicism, the fur trade, the hope of discovering mineral wealth as the Spanish had done in Mexico and Peru and a desire for adventure.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this chapter to show that the French regime in Louisiana utilized the missionary primarily as a means of maintaining the loyalty of the Indians to France. Another purpose will be to investigate the impact of the missionary on particularly the Choctaw Indian way of life.

Religion played a significant role in French colonial policy in the eighteenth century and, indeed, had been of major consideration from the outset of French colonial endeavors in North America. Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, a leader of the French Huguenots, had attempted, between 1562-1568, to establish a haven for French Protestants in Florida. This attempt failed.<sup>2</sup> After Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of

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<sup>1</sup>Ruben G. Thwaites, The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents. Travel and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 73 vols. (1896-1901; reprint. ed. New York: Pagent Book Company, 1959), 1: 4-5. Hereafter cited as Thwaites, Jesuit Relations.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Another factor in the establishment of the colony was to provide a base to make attacks against Spanish settlements. As a result,

Nantes in 1685, by which the Huguenots were denied legal status in French society, in the home country or overseas, religious policy in the colonies related only to conversion of the Indians. This fitted in with the Catholic Church's emphasis on missionary endeavors. In the Church's efforts, the Jesuits played a particular role, as witnessed by the activities of such missionaries as Fathers Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci, both of whom were missionaries in the Far East.

Writers of American colonial history have been well aware of the impact of the missionary on the colonial fortunes of France but have not gone into the subject in any detail. John Fiske, in New France and New England, commented on the missionary activity of French priests around Port Royal and concluded that it was of considerable importance in giving France control of the area.<sup>3</sup> Missionary activity was important to the colonial fortunes of France, for by converting the Indians to Roman Catholicism, the Indians were being made "into vassals of France,"<sup>4</sup> and thus, presumably could be counted on as a means of strengthening the French position in New France, thereby creating a barrier to English colonial growth.<sup>5</sup>

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the Spanish annihilated the colony. See also, Henry R. Schoolcraft, History of the Indian Tribes of the United States: Their Present Condition and Prospects, and a Sketch of Their Ancient Status, 6 vols., (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1857), 1: 72-77.

<sup>3</sup>John Fiske, New France and New England (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1902), p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Francis Parkman, The Old Regime in Canada: France and England in North America (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1929), p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>The role of the Jesuit missionary as an agent of French colonization has been touched upon by Charles E. O'Neill, The Church and State in

From the onset of French colonial activity, French Indian policy had been one of gaining the friendship of the Indian tribes with whom they came into contact. This attitude, however, had not always been accepted by the Europeans. The attempted conversion of the Indians to Christianity was initially brought about through force. Indeed, in the sixteenth century, it was questioned if the Indians were men, capable of attaining the benefits of Christianity. In the early 1500s, Spanish theologians, led by Juan Gines de Sepúlveda, contended that the Indians were barbarians and that the only way they could be converted to Christianity was by enslaving them. He justified the harsh treatment of the Indians because of their uncivilized way of life and, as proof, pointed out that they practiced cannibalism and were constantly fighting among themselves.<sup>6</sup>

The opposite viewpoint was offered by Bartolomé de Las Casas, who contended that wars against the Indians were unjustified--unless conducted for self-preservation--because the Indians were "harmless, ignorant, gentle, temperate, unarmed, and destitute of every human defense." Further, the unjustified wars would make it more difficult to bring the Indians to Christianity for "when children see themselves

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French Colonial Louisiana (1966) and Cornelius J. Jaenen, Friend and Foe (1976). Older works would include John G. Shea's, History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States (1855) and A History of the Catholic Church in the United States From the First Attempted Colonization to the Present Time (1886-1892) by the same author.

<sup>6</sup>Cornelius J. Jaenen, Friend and Foe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 14-18. See also, Bartolomé de Las Casas, In Defense of the Indians, trans. Stafford Poole (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), pp. 11-16.

deprived of parents, wives or husbands, and fathers of children and friends . . . Who is there who would want the gospel preached to himself in such a fashion?"<sup>7</sup> Las Casas concluded that "The Indians are our brothers, and Christ has given his life for them." Through the activities of the missionaries, the Indians could be won to Christianity.<sup>8</sup>

French Indian policy was therefore based on two principles: to win the Indians to Christianity and to use the Indians as allies to curtail the territorial growth of the North American colonies of England. Both principles were present in the colonial activities of France in Louisiana. In fact, the Jesuit missionaries in Louisiana enjoyed greater success in helping the French retain the loyalty of the Choctaws than they had in converting the tribe to Christianity.

From the beginning of the colonial efforts of France in North America, the twofold function of the missionary was recognized by the French government. For example, in the Royal Charter granted to the Company of the West Indies in May 1664, the first article stated:

Since in the founding of colonies we look principally to the glory of God, in procuring the salvation of Indians and savages . . . to whom we desire to make known the true religion . . . the said company . . . will send missionaries . . . to preach the gospel and instruct these people in the belief of Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion. . .

The desire to carry out a "holy mission" suggested by such phrases should not be regarded as blatant hypocrisy, but the intent was difficult in

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<sup>7</sup>Las Casas, In Defense of the Indians, pp. 25-27.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

<sup>9</sup>Charles E. O'Neill, Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana: Policy and Politics to 1732 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 7-8.

actual practice to realize. A further consideration was that the necessarily close relationship between missionaries and government officials resulted in the former often serving functions that were not primarily religious.

The role of the missionary may be seen in the instructions of Jean Baptiste Colbert, French Controller-General of Finances (1662-1683), to Jean Iefebvre de la Barre, Governor of New France. In his orders to the Governor, Colbert instructed de la Barre to "favor religion in the colony." Colbert expected de la Barre to "work toward spreading the faith, especially among the Iroquois; at the same time he was to bring them under the obedience of the French king and thus wean them from the sphere of English influence."<sup>10</sup> The Jesuit missionary was expected to perform a dual function. For the Church, the missionary hoped to save the immortal soul of the Indian. The state, while it supported the missionaries activity, also recognized that the conversion of the Indians could serve a secular purpose.

As French interest in the area that was to become French Louisiana increased, particularly as the result of the voyages of Pierre le Moyne d'Iberville, the conversion of the Indians and the role they would play in containing the colonial growth of Britain were of the utmost consideration. Iberville justified the establishment of a French colony at Mobile, in part, on the grounds of the religious needs of the Indians.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

The reasons which prompt us to maintain this settlement are in the first place the instruction of these savages and the knowledge to be given them in the Christian faith,--this the Spaniards are unable to do,--and to spare them the misfortune of falling into the hands of the English or of French Huguenot refugees.<sup>11</sup>

On May 30, 1699, Louis XIV instructed Phillipe de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil and Governor of Montreal,<sup>12</sup> to facilitate the sending of Jesuit missionaries to Louisiana.<sup>13</sup> A desire to bring about the salvation of the souls of the Indians was not the only reason to send missionaries among the tribes of the southeast. Pierre François Xavier Charlevoix, of the Society of Jesus, was sent in 1720 by the French government to inspect the missions in New France.<sup>14</sup> Father Charlevoix recognized that part of the missionaries' responsibility was to influence the Indians to remain steadfast in their loyalty to France.

It [is] no less important to have missionaries among the Indians amid whom we are settled. We have seen that the salvation of these tribes [is] always the main object which our kings kept in view before all else, and the experience of nearly two centuries [has] taught us that the surest means of binding the natives of the country to us [is] to gain them to Christ.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 23, 29.

<sup>12</sup>David P. Henige, Colonial Governors from the Fifteenth Century to the Present (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 47. Montreal was to remain under separate governorship until its capture by the British in the French and Indian War.

<sup>13</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Serie B, vol. 20: Folio 251 (May 30, 1699).

<sup>14</sup>J. F. Bannon in his introduction to Shea's translation of Charlevoix's History and General Description of New France, states that Charlevoix was using the inspection of the missions as a cover for his real purpose for being in Louisiana, which was to report to the king on the prospects of discovering a passageway to the Pacific.

<sup>15</sup>P.F.X. Charlevoix, S. J., History and General Description of New France, trans. by John Gilmary Shea, 6 vols. (1866-1873; reprint ed. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), 6: 75-76.

Charlevoix further concluded that a single missionary might be more important than a garrison of soldiers. This was because the missionary would be expected to speak the Indians' language. His position, as a man of God, would be held in esteem by the Indians, and he would undoubtedly gain the confidence of whatever tribe to which he was assigned. The missionary would, in many ways, be in the best position to know of the tribe's attitude toward France.<sup>16</sup> Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, at the time he served as Governor of Louisiana (1712 to 1716), supported the establishment of missions among the Indians for the same reasons: to convert them to Christianity and to make them good subjects of the French Crown.<sup>17</sup>

In their attempts to convert the Indians to Christianity, the missionaries were also hoping to assimilate the Indians into French civilization, that is to induce them to accept Gallic institutions. An integral aspect of the policy was Catholicism; it would, in fact, be difficult to separate the French and Catholicism during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The policy of assimilation was limited primarily to Canada and seems not to have been practiced in Louisiana once the French were established on the Gulf coast. In Canada assimilation consisted

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> O'Neill, Church and State in French Louisiana, pp. 80-81. The English were also aware of the importance of the missionary as a means of maintaining close French ties with the Indians. ". . . the great share the French missionaries have in influencing the Indians, by means of their superstition; whose service is such, that they have been esteemed almost of as much Consequence [sic] as Garrison [sic]. They have been the means of gaining much respect from the Indians to the French . . ." William R. Jacobs, ed., Indians of the Southern Colonial Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 12-13.

mainly of education. Attempts to educate the Indian children began in 1620 when a school was established near Quebec. The primary purpose of the institution was to train Indian boys for the priesthood.<sup>18</sup> This attempt was unsuccessful. The first, and apparently only class, consisted of six Indian youths and three young French boys. One of those involved in the experiment described its failure in the following terms.

We had made a beginning of teaching them their letters, but as they are all for freedom and only want to play and give themselves a good time, as I said, they forget in three days what we have taken four to teach, for lack of perseverance and for neglect of coming back to us at the hours appointed them; and if they told us that they had been prevented because of a game, they were clear. Besides, it was not yet advisable to be severe with them or reprove them otherwise than gently, and we could only in a complaisant manner urge them to be thorough in gaining knowledge which would be such an advantage to them and bring them satisfaction in time to come.<sup>19</sup>

Concurrent with the Canadian educational attempts, the missionaries in Canada also urged that Indians be sent to France for their education and, presumably, to gain a taste of the grandeur of European civilization and the power of the French monarchy. It was hoped that when those sent to France returned they would be of great aid to the missionary in converting the Indians to Christianity and would help to break down the cultural barriers that made it difficult to assimilate the Indians into the French concept of civilization. Sending young Indians to France appears not to have had the desired effect. The Jesuit

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<sup>18</sup>Samuel E. Morison, Samuel de Champlain: Father of New France (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), pp. 216-217. See also Jaenen, Friend and Foe, pp. 166-167.

<sup>19</sup>Father Gabriel Sagard quoted in Jaenen, Friend and Foe, pp. 166-167.

missionaries commonly complained that when Indians educated in France returned to Canada they quickly reverted to their former way of life, retaining little of their French experience. Father Paul Le Jeune, Jesuit missionary and superior of the Jesuits in Canada until 1639, described one of the French-educated Indians in the following terms: "This wretched young man, who was so well instructed in France, has become an apostate, renegade, excommunicate, atheist, and a servant to a Sorcerer. . . ." <sup>20</sup>

Another problem associated with sending representatives of the Indians to France was that a large number of them never returned. They often died while on the journey or once they arrived in France. Their deaths led to speculation among the Indians that the French were deliberately killing the Indians. At the same time there was a tendency for deaths to occur among those Indians who attended French schools in Canada. <sup>21</sup> Combined with the significant cultural differences, the deaths that took place kept the number of Indian youths who attended French schools small.

Despite the seeming importance of the role of the missionary, in retrospect it appears that the number of missionaries actually involved in going among the tribes of southeastern colonial America was not very significant. Only three missionaries were assigned specifically to the Choctaws between 1699 and 1748. One of the three, Father Geoffery T. Erborie, was among the Choctaws only for the year of 1699; and Father

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<sup>20</sup>Edna Kenton, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), p. 48.

<sup>21</sup>Jaenen, Friend and Foe, pp. 174-175.

le Petit served as missionary only three years--from 1727 to 1730. Father Michael Beaudouin, on the other hand, served as missionary among the Choctaws from 1730 to 1748.<sup>22</sup> An enumeration of Jesuits in New France for the year of 1749 lists a total of fifty-one persons attached to the Society. Of this number, only thirty-four were priests; and of these, only one, Father Nicholas le Febvre, is listed as a missionary to the Choctaws.<sup>23</sup>

In 1756 Father Beaudouin, who had become superior-general of the Jesuits in New Orleans, had only nine missionaries to send among the various tribes of the Louisiana territory.<sup>24</sup> At least thirty Choctaw villages were under his jurisdiction.<sup>25</sup>

Despite being few in number, the missionaries claimed to have been instrumental in keeping the Choctaws loyal to France. Francois Philibert Watrin, a missionary in the Illinois territory, evaluated the importance of the missionary to the Choctaws as able "by his conduct," to show that he came to the Indians not "to make a fortune."<sup>26</sup> "This disinterestness [sic] in material well-being established his credit,

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<sup>22</sup>John Gilmary Shea, Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States (1855 reprinted ed. New York: Arno Press, 1969), p. 502.

<sup>23</sup>Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 69: 79.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 70: 87-89.

<sup>25</sup>Le Baron Marc de Villiers, "Notes sur les Chactas d'après les Journaux de Voyage de Régis du Roullet (1729-1732)," Journal de la Société de Américanistes de Paris (n.s.), Vol. 15 (1923), 223-250. Roullet described each of the villages, but he lists only thirty. According to most French accounts there were forty-two villages.

<sup>26</sup>Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 70: 239.

and through that he became useful -- we dare to say, even necessary, -- to the colony."<sup>27</sup> A material factor in maintaining Choctaw loyalty was the giving of gifts, which was usually done yearly. When the presents were given out, customarily at Mobile, it was the missionary who guided the governor in determining who was the most influential among the Choctaws and those who were the most trustworthy. Father Watrin claimed that even when the presents were not forthcoming, such as in time of war, the missionary was able to hold the loyalty of the Choctaws for France.<sup>28</sup>

The documentary material often portrays the missionary as an extension of the government of France;<sup>29</sup> a diplomatic emissary to the Indians whose function was to keep the governor in New Orleans informed of conditions among the Choctaws, to carry messages to the Choctaws from the governor, and to influence the Choctaws in remaining loyal to the French. Father Michael Beaudouin, because of his long association with the Choctaws, played a particularly prominent role in French-Choctaw relations and fulfilled the above-mentioned functions well.

Father Beaudouin was born in March of 1691, or 1692, at Quebec. In 1713 his family sent him to France where he entered the Jesuit order. After successfully completing his probationary period, Beaudouin

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 70: 239-241.

<sup>29</sup>The French government subsidized the activities of the missionaries. According to Norman Caldwell the "missionaries among the Indians were allowed 600 livres yearly by the king." In return for the subsidy the king expected the missionary to support the aspirations of France in the new world. Their activities, particularly those of Father Beaudouin

embarked for Louisiana where he was to spend the rest of his life. In 1749 Father Beaudouin became the head of the Jesuit missionary activity in Louisiana and in the following year was elevated to the position of superior general of the Jesuit order in the colony. As administrator of the Jesuit order he became embroiled in a controversy with the Capuchin order over the control of the Church in Louisiana. The Capuchins contended that the Jesuits should be limited only to serving as missionaries to the Indians, while their order should be given control over those churches that ministered to the French settlers. The controversy was finally settled on July 9, 1762, when the Superior Council of New Orleans issued an order banishing the Jesuits from the colony. Father Beaudouin, because of his age, was allowed to remain in Louisiana although he apparently was not allowed to carry out any religious functions. He died in 1766 or 1768.<sup>30</sup>

Some instances of the nature of Father Beaudouin's service to the crown will help. In 1738, he notified Governor Bienville that the aforementioned Red Shoe was complaining that the French were attempting to create a situation in which the Indian tribes would weaken one another through incessant warfare. Red Shoe stated that he was not taken in by the French and was going to make peace with the Chickasaws and accept English traders as a foil to the French plans. Father Beaudouin, however, informed Bienville that many other Choctaw chiefs had privately

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among the Choctaws, indicate that the missionaries accepted the role that the government expected of them. Norman W. Caldwell, The French in the Mississippi Valley, 1740-1750 (1941, reprint ed., Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), pp. 19-20.

<sup>30</sup>Le Grande Encyclopedie, vol. 5.

told him that they did not agree with Red Shoe and continued to place their faith in the French. He recounted that when Red Shoe's uncle heard that some Chickasaws were in his nephew's village he would not enter it and refused to live with a people who accepted Chickasaws in their midst. Father Beaudouin concluded his report to Bienville with an evaluation of the French position among the Choctaws. It was his belief that the French could keep the loyalty of the western Choctaws because of their closeness to French centers of trade and the distance of their villages from the English in Carolina.<sup>31</sup>

The Choctaws were aware of the relationship between the missionary and the governor and realized that Father Beaudouin was informing the governor of their attitudes and tendencies. At one time, Father Beaudouin was asked by the Choctaws to inform Bienville that they were going to bring Bienville some Chickasaw scalps, as they realized that this would please Bienville very much.<sup>32</sup>

As a carrier of messages for the French government, Father Beaudouin also served well. Louis XV, in the instructions to Bienville on the latter's resumption of the position of Governor of Louisiana, recounted the errors of Périer as governor but also indicated how Périer utilized Father Beaudouin in diplomatic maneuvers. When Périer, according to the instructions, heard that the Choctaws were contemplating

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<sup>31</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Série C13a, Vol. 23: folios 58-60. Bienville to Maurepas (April 28, 1738). Bienville reported that this information was contained in letters sent to him by Father Beaudouin. Hereafter cited as AC, C13a.

<sup>32</sup>AC, C13a, 21: 117-118. Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas (September 13, 1736).

peace with the Chickasaws, he wrote Father Beaudouin and told him to investigate the rumor and to convince the Choctaws not to reach a peace agreement with the Chickasaws until the Chickasaws agreed to give up the Natchez who had fled to the Chickasaws for protection after their defeat at the hands of the French in 1731.<sup>33</sup>

Father Beaudouin also did his best to influence the Choctaws into remaining loyal to France. Bienville recounts the activities that Father Beaudouin undertook when he heard of Red Shoe's overtures to the English in 1734-1735. Father Beaudouin traveled to most of the Choctaw villages, at which time he upbraided the Choctaws for their willingness to accept English trade and traders. All the chiefs with whom he talked either denied that they were willing to trade with the English, or expressed sorrow that they had thought of accepting English trade and pledged to end all relations with the English.<sup>34</sup>

When French policy seemed to threaten the maintenance of Indian loyalty, Father Beaudouin voiced his concern, as in the case of Governor Périer's policy of granting presents to Choctaw chiefs in order to keep them loyal to France. Father Beaudouin contended that Périer's policy was destroying the position of the Great Chief, a position that had been designated by the French. This chief, whose position among the Choctaws had been enhanced because he was the main recipient of

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<sup>33</sup>AC, B, 57: 796-806. "Memoir of the King to Serve as Instructions for de Bienville, the Governor of the Province of Louisiana," (February 2, 1732).

<sup>34</sup>AC, C13a, 20: 185-191. Bienville to Maurepas (September 9, 1735).

French gifts, was severely weakened.<sup>35</sup> This would indirectly weaken the position of the French, who would find it more difficult to influence the Choctaw chiefs who were receiving gifts. A few influential chiefs were easier to control than many, and Father Beaudouin believed that Périer's policy was potentially destructive to the best interests of France in Louisiana.<sup>36</sup>

When, in 1733, Bienville heard that the eastern Choctaws were willing to give satisfaction to the British for the murder of two English traders in 1732 by killing the four chiefs responsible for the act, he asked Father Beaudouin to obtain verification. Father Beaudouin did and reported to Bienville that the Choctaws were not going to kill the four chiefs, that they would not accept English traders, and that they held the French in high esteem for the aid they had provided against the Chickasaws.<sup>37</sup>

Under Governor Vaudreuil, Father Beaudouin continued to serve the colonial government in the capacity of a diplomat. In 1744, Vaudreuil, after receiving information that the Chickasaws were seeking peace with the French and after he had apparently set in motion a Choctaw attack upon the Chickasaws, requested that Father Beaudouin convince the Choctaws to delay their proposed aggression until after it was determined if the Chickasaw peace proposal was in earnest or not.<sup>38</sup> Father

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<sup>35</sup>AC, C13a, 14: 182-196. Father Beaudouin to Salmon (November 23, 1732).

<sup>36</sup>See Chapter five for more information about Périer's activities.

<sup>37</sup>AC, C13a, 16: 277-289. Bienville to Maurepas (July 26, 1733).

<sup>38</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers (San Marino, California: The Huntington

Beaudouin was apparently successful, for the Choctaws did not, at this point, take up arms against the Chickasaws.

In Vaudreuil's correspondence with Father Beaudouin, two points became clear. One is that the Governor considered the Jesuit to be a cardinal factor in maintaining the loyalty of the Choctaws for France. Continually, Vaudreuil told Father Beaudouin to inform the Choctaws of the willingness and ability of France to supply the Choctaws with their needs. He also implored the priest to convince the Choctaws that the English were their enemy, and not to accept any English or Chickasaws in their villages. The second point in Vaudreuil's correspondence is that he was totally unconcerned with the missionaries' successes or failures in converting the Indians to Christianity. No mention of this aspect of the missionaries' duty is to be found in his correspondence.<sup>39</sup> One may conclude, therefore, that despite such statements as in the Royal Charter of 1664 previously quoted,<sup>40</sup> a conversion of the Indians in fact was not a major consideration of the French colonial government of Louisiana.

Indeed, it was in the political-diplomatic area that the missionary was most successful. His impact on the Indians' way of life was, to a large degree, limited, although Father Nau contended that the missionaries did have a civilizing effect on the Indians with whom they had contact.

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Library, Manuscripts Division), L09, The Letter Books, Vol. III, p. 81 (May 13, 1744). Vaudreuil was Governor of Louisiana from 1743 to 1752.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 117, 126, 135.

<sup>40</sup>O'Neill, Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana, pp. 7-8.

The Chicachias [Chickasaws] continue to burn all the french who fall into their hands. The English, who are settled among them, incite them to this barbarous practice, and often take part in tormenting the french [sic] more curelly. Our savages are always at war with the chicachias [Chickasaws], and from time to time they bring in a large number of slaves; but instead of retaliating by burning them at the stake, they adopt them in the village, instruct them in our mysteries, and by Holy Baptism place them in the way of reaching heaven.<sup>41</sup>

As another instance of the missionary's viewpoint, this one with reference to French relations with one of the northern Indian tribes, the Abnakis, one Father Rale claimed:

The whole . . . nation is Christian and is very zealous in preserving its Religion. . . . their faith is . . . dear to them, and they believe that if they were to break off their connection with us they would very soon be without a missionary, without Sacrements, without the Sacrifice, almost without any service of Religion, and in manifest danger of being plunged back into their former unbelief. This is the bond that unites them to the French.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of these assertions as to the Christian convictions of the Indians and their devotion to the missionary, many missionaries reported that their success in gaining converts was limited. Father Charlevoix, for example, stated that while a number of Indians attended the religious services held by the missionary, this was sometimes done because the missionary often had no one with whom to pray and the Indian was taking pity on him because of this situation. An anecdote by Father Charlevoix illustrates the point (an Indian speaking) "Thou

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<sup>41</sup>Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 69: 57-59. Father Nau to Madame Aulneau (April 23, 1742). Father Francois Nau was a Jesuit priest who arrived in Canada in 1734. Most of his missionary activity was with the Iroquois tribe.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 67: 95. Father Rale to his Nephew (October 15, 1722). The Abnakis were originally located in the modern state of Maine and had a close relationship with the French. Frederick W. Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians of North of Mexico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), pp. 3-4.

hadst no one to pray with thee. I took pity on thy loneliness, and wished to keep thee company: now that others are inclined to render thee the same service, I retire."<sup>43</sup> Another example is found in an unsigned memoir entitled "Memoir on the English Trading Centers in New Georgia"; the suggestion was very strong that the missionaries were forcing conversions among the Indians and that this would not create a truly faithful following for the Church. The author of the memoir stated that "it was impossible to convert the savages"; that those Indians who were converted made poor Christians who abused the sacraments and resented French attempts to impose religion on them.<sup>44</sup>

Compounding the problem of converting the Indians to Roman Catholicism were the French, other than missionaries, with whom the Indians often came into contact. Settlers were not interested in converting the Indians; and Indian contacts with French soldiers and cour-  
eurs de bois rarely resulted in the type of example, as to life-style, that the missionary was attempting to instill among the Indians. For example, while Iberville's settlement at Mobile in 1699 made peace with the surrounding Indian tribes, little effort was made to enlighten them in the ways of Christianity.<sup>45</sup> It was Father Charlevoix's belief that the best way to convert the Indians was to keep Indian-French contacts to a minimum--" . . . if their favor is no more, as it was so long, the

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<sup>43</sup>Charlevoix, Historical and General Description of New France, 2: 78.

<sup>44</sup>AC, C13a, 22: 289-295 (April 22, 1737).

<sup>45</sup>Charlevoix, Historical and General Description of New France, 6: 15.

edification and admiration of New France, it is because they have had too much intercourse with us."<sup>46</sup>

In Louisiana the French regime relied extensively on the Choctaw tribe to retain their control over the territory, and, thus, there existed a great deal of contact between the two people. The Choctaws, according to their traditions, had not always resided in the territory claimed by the French and, in fact, had once been part of a larger tribe that had included the Chickasaws. Prior to the coming of the white man the tribe had lived in the west (presumably Mexico), but they had been forced to leave their original homeland when they had been defeated by a stronger tribe.<sup>47</sup> Led by two brothers--Chahtah and Chickasah--and guided by the Great Spirit, the tribe made its journey across southwestern North America and the Mississippi River to modern day Mississippi and Alabama. According to the Choctaw tradition, the Great Spirit led the people by causing a ceremonial pole, called a fabussa, to lean in an easterly direction until they had reached their journey's end. Set up straight each night, the fabussa was found to be leaning to the east each morning. Finally, after crossing the Mississippi River, the pole remained in the upright position; the journey was complete.

Also according to the tradition the two tribes remained one for several years until an argument developed between the two brothers. It

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 4: 198.

<sup>47</sup>James Adair, Adair's History of the American Indians, Samuel C. Williams, ed., (1930 reprint ed. New York: Promontory Press, n.d.), p. 337. See also, H. B. Cushman, History of the Choctaws, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians (Greenville, Texas: Headlight Printing House, 1899), pp. 18-19.

was decided that the tribe would split. In Cushman's account:

They [the two brothers] stood facing each other, one to the east and the other to the west, holding a straight pole, ten or fifteen feet in length, in an erect position between them with one end resting on the ground; and both were to let go of the pole at the same instant by a pre-arranged signal, and the direction in which it fell was to decide the direction in which Chickasah was to take. If it fell to the north, Chickasah and his adherents were to occupy the northern portion of the country, and Chahtah and his adherents, the southern, but if it fell to the south, then Chikasah, with his followers, was to possess the southern portion of the country, and Chahtah with his, the northern. The game was played, and the pole decreed that Chikasah should take the northern part of their vast and magnificent territory. Thus they were divided and became two separate and distinct tribes, each of whom assumed and ever afterwards retained the name of their respective chiefs, Chahtah and Chickasah.<sup>48</sup>

The earliest account of the Choctaws meeting with Europeans is to be found in the account of Hernando de Soto's exploration of the southwest between 1539 and 1543. De Soto's exploration carried the Spaniard through Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Carolina, Mississippi and touched on Tennessee, Arkansas and Oklahoma.<sup>49</sup> While in what became the state of Mississippi, de Soto encountered an Indian tribe that lived in the "province called Pafallaya,"<sup>50</sup> which was described as a land of "rich soil, and well inhabited: some towns were very large, and picketed about. The people were numerous everywhere, the dwellings standing a crossbow-shot or two apart." The Gentleman of Elvas, the chronicler of de Soto's journey, later described another portion of the Choctaw land. He described

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>49</sup>John F. Bannon, The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821 (New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1970), pp. 22-25.

<sup>50</sup>According to John R. Swanton, Pansfalaya--Long Hairs--was a term applied to the Choctaws by neighboring Indian tribes. Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians (1931. Reprint. Spiro Council of Choctaws, 1973), p. 4.

it as a "land [that] was thickly inhabited, the people living about over it as they do in Mavilla [Mobile Indians who were a branch of the Choctaw tribe]; and as it was fertile, the greater part being under cultivation, there was plenty of maize. So much grain was brought together as was needed for getting through with the season."<sup>51</sup>

Although the Spanish description of the Choctaws is brief it would appear that in the 1540s the Choctaws were living a sedentary existence, with permanent towns and practicing agricultural pursuits. With the coming of the French in 1699 one would expect that there would be more complete accounts of the Choctaws and the conditions that existed in the tribe. This, however, is not the case. Seemingly the French had little interest in describing the Choctaws. The sketchy accounts that do exist support the implications of the Spanish account of one hundred fifty years earlier.<sup>52</sup> The Choctaws lived in villages that were apparently permanent settlements, and the women were charged with carrying out the agricultural activities of the tribe.<sup>53</sup> Their way of life had not, apparently, undergone any significant changes since de Soto had traveled through their lands.

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<sup>51</sup>J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Original Narratives of Early American History: Spanish Explorers in the Southern United States, 1528-1543 (New York: Barnes Noble, 1907), pp. 194-195.

<sup>52</sup>John R. Swanton accounts for this seeming disinterest in the Choctaw way of life by contending that there was "nothing peculiar or striking either in the social organization or the customs of these people, as was the case for instance with the Natchez, and partly to the common knowledge regarding them which soon came to be shared by the greater part of the French settlers of Louisiana." An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians, Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, vol. 5, no. 2 (1918), p. 53.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 57, 59.

The religious beliefs of the Choctaws were similar to those of other tribes of the southeast. They believed in a life after death at least for warriors, in supernatural phenomena, and in a creation.<sup>54</sup> Le Page du Pratz, in The History of Louisiana, recounts a Choctaw tradition which held that the Choctaws had come up from the bowels of the earth and that because of their great numbers they were unmolested by their neighbors.<sup>55</sup> H. B. Cushman, a hundred forty-one years later, describes the Choctaw creation myth as a union between the Great Spirit and mother earth.<sup>56</sup> Like their neighbors, the Choctaws believed in animism, reading into the sounds of nature portents of things to come. They believed, for example, that the barking of a fox at night was a

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<sup>54</sup>The most elaborate concept among the Indians of the southeast was to be found among the Natchez, a tribe located near the site of the city in Mississippi that bears their name. This tribe believed that their chiefs, who were called Suns, were descended from the sun. The position of Sun was hereditary through the matriarchal line; and although usually a Sun was male, it was not unknown for a woman to hold the position. Unlike other tribes, the "Great Sun" was an absolute ruler. The Natchez also put to death the wife and slaves of the "Great Sun" at his death; this was done so that in the hereafter he could be attended as he was in this life. See P. A. Kunkel, "Indians of Louisiana about 1700," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, Vol. 34 (1951), 180-181. Also, Newton D. Mereness, Travels in American Colonies (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 48.

<sup>55</sup>Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, The History of Louisiana (1774 reprint ed., Baton Rouge, LA: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1972), p. 295. Also spelled Dupratz. Du Pratz was in Louisiana from 1718 to 1734 where he served in various capacities.

<sup>56</sup>Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez Indians, pp. 198-199. Cushman's parents were missionaries to the Mississippi Choctaws; and for this reason, he had a long association with the tribe. After the Choctaws were moved to Indian territory, he began to write their history, traveling over their new homeland and renewing acquaintances between 1884 and 1890. Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez, Angie Debo, ed., (Stillwater, OK: Redlands Press, 1962), p. 7.

sign which foretold the death of a member of the village. However, if the fox could be driven off, the death could be averted.<sup>57</sup> The Choctaws also believed in the existence of ghosts which they contended were the souls of those who were unhappy with the afterlife.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the Choctaws did not have a ceremonial form of worship, although they believed in the Great Spirit and placed great faith in omens--good and bad--to guide their lives.<sup>59</sup>

One aspect of the religion of the Choctaws was different from the religions of the other tribes of the southeast; this was their burial custom. Despite the uniqueness of the burial custom it was not widely reported by the French. There are two accounts: one by Jean-Bernard Bossu, a career naval officer, who wrote two accounts of his travels in Louisiana; the other by an unknown French author, apparently written in the 1750s.

Bossu, in Travels Through Louisiana, described the burial custom but did not ascribe to it any religious significance. Rather, he viewed it simply as an act of veneration of the dead. In his account, the most striking feature was the practice of picking clean the bones

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<sup>57</sup> John R. Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin no. 103 (Washington, D. C.: 1931), p. 217. Swanton spent his entire academic career with the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution. He is considered by some to be one of the forerunners in the development of ethnohistory.

<sup>58</sup> John R. Swanton, Aboriginal Culture of the Southeast, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Report no. 43 (Washington, D. C.: 1928), p. 710.

<sup>59</sup> Cushman, History of the Indians, pp. 296, 300-302.

of the dead. This was followed by the storage of the bones in a chest, carrying the chest to "the common burying grounds," and a "feast of the dead," which in the case described by Bossu, was held in early November.<sup>60</sup>

In the "Relation de la Louisiane," by the unknown French writer, the burial custom of the Choctaws is described in great detail.<sup>61</sup> According to his description, when death is near the dying person is dressed in his finest clothes and a great emotional scene takes place. His wife asked if he was dying because she "did not love him enough," or because he "was not well respected in his village." Before and after death, professional criers gathered to "weep and howl" around the body, which was then placed in a "coffin, directly opposite his door six feet from the ground on six stakes, surrounded by a mud wall, and covered with bark. . . ." With the body was placed food, drink, change of shoes, gun, powder, and bullets. This was because the deceased was going to "another country, and it is right he have everything he needs in his journey."

After five or six months, the relatives of the deceased and the bone-picker, the femme de valieur, "comes to take off the flesh from

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<sup>60</sup>Jean-Bernard Bossu, Travels in the Interior of North America 1751-1762, Seymour Feiler, trans. and ed., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), pp. 166-167. (Letter XVIII, September 30, 1759). The practice is also described by Ed Davis, "Early Life Among the Five Civilized Tribes," Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. 15, 80-81. Also see H. D. Yarrow, Mortuary Customs of North American Indians, Bureau of Ethnology, First Report (1879), p. 120.

<sup>61</sup>John R. Swanton has translated this document which he found in the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago. Entitled "Relation de la Louisiane" the portion dealing with the Choctaws is found in "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians," Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, Vol. V, (1918), pp. 53-72.

the body, cleans the bones well, and places them in a very clean cane hamper, which they enclose in linen or cloth." The bone-picker then served a meal to the gathered assembly, after which the hamper was ceremonially taken to a central house where it was placed with other remains.<sup>62</sup>

H. C. Yarrow, an early American ethnologist, quoting an American traveler among the Choctaws in 1791, tells us that the bones were ultimately carried to a central place for burial where they were "piled one upon another in the form of a pyramid, and the conical hill of earth heaped above."<sup>63</sup> The burial mound, however, is mentioned by neither Bossu nor the unknown writer. The two French accounts do serve as an indication of the awareness of the French regarding the Choctaw concept of life after death.

When one begins to investigate the French view of the Indians, it becomes apparent that there were two divergent ways of assessing the native Americans as a people. One view, espoused primarily by the missionaries, was romantic in nature and held the Indian in high regard. This was definitely a minority viewpoint. The other view, put forth by government officials and others who came into contact with the Indians, was often extremely critical, seeing little of the "Noble Savage" in the Indians' daily conduct or ethical outlook.

An example of the missionaries' outlook is provided by Claude Chauchetière, who described the Indians in the following manner:

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 64-65.

<sup>63</sup>Yarrow, Mortuary Customs, p. 120. Yarrow is quoting from Bartrams' Travels (1791), p. 513.

We see in these savages the fine remains of human nature which are entirely corrupted in civilized nations. Of all the 11 passions they experience two only; anger is the chief one, but they are not away to excess by it, even in war. Living in common, without disputes, content with little, guiltless of avarice, and assiduous at work, it is impossible to find people more patient, more liberal, more moderate in their language. In fine, all our fathers and the french who have lived with the savages consider that life flows on more gently among them than with us.<sup>64</sup>

Chauchetière further maintained that the Indian way of life would "shame the old Christians of Europe. . . ." <sup>65</sup> This attitude toward the Indians is supported, in part, by a description of them provided by Marc-Antoine Hubert, an employee of the Compagnie de l'Ouest, who stated that: "The Indians are savages only in name. They have as much discernment and shrewdness as can be expected from people without education. They talk little, but very much to the point. They have a regular government among themselves after their own fashion, no injuries, no quarrels, very exact subordination and great respect for their chiefs, whom they obey spiritedly."<sup>66</sup>

The more prevalent view of the Indian, and specifically of the Choctaw people, was quite different from those given by Chauchetière and Hubert. British as well as French writers who commented on the character of the Indian were oftentimes critical. Charlevoix, for example, held that ". . . to secure the esteem of these barbarians, it is good

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<sup>64</sup>Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 64: 131. Claude Chauchetière to Jean Chauchetière (August 7, 1694). Claude Chauchetière was a Jesuit missionary in Canada. He spent most of his time at Sault St. Louis.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>66</sup>Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Saunders, eds., Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion 1701-1729, Vol. 7 (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929), p. 249. Letter from Hubert to the Council of Louisiana, c. 1706.

not to allow them to despise us with impunity. You must even, outwardly, give contempt for contempt, if you would repress their insolence. They do not understand acting otherwise from virtuous motives--I mean such as are not enlightened by the truths of the gospel. As they often see Europeans act solely from interest or still more censurable motives, it seldom occurs to them that any consideration can be entertained for them from more noble views."<sup>67</sup>

Father le Petit, missionary to the Choctaws from 1727 to 1730, was even more critical. He described the Choctaws as "insolent, ferocious, disgusting, importunate and insatiable." They were friendly toward the French, he continued, only because the French gave them gifts: ". . . they do not love us, and do not find us the same spirit as themselves, except when we are giving them something."<sup>68</sup> Petit further believed that the Choctaws were egotistic and easily convinced of their own importance. This attitude was due to the role the Choctaws played in the defeat of the Natchez in 1729. "We have always had a great distrust of these Savages, even at the time when they were making war for us upon the Natchez. Now they have become so inflated with their pretended victory, that we have much more need of troops to repress their insolence, and to keep them in their duty, than to finish the destruction of our open enemies."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France, 2: 27.

<sup>68</sup>Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 68: 195-197. Le Petit to D'Avaugour (July 12, 1730).

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 68: 219. Le Petit even accused the Choctaws of saving the powder given them by the French for use against the Natchez for hunting. Ibid., 68: 193.

James Adair,<sup>70</sup> an English trader, echoed the harsh evaluation of the Choctaws. However, of the Indians in general, he was able to discern some admirable qualities.

They are ingenious, witty, cunning and deceitful; very faithful indeed to their own tribes, but privately dishonest, and mischeivous to the Europeans and christians.

They are very close, and retentive of their secrets; never forget injuries; revengeful of blood, to a degree of distraction. They are timorous, and consequently, cautious; very jealous of encroachments from their christian neighbors; and likewise, content with freedom, in every turn of fortune. They are of a strong comprehensive judgment,--can form surprisingly crafty schemes, and conduct them with equal caution, silence and address; they admit none but distinguished warriors, and old beloved men, into their councils. They are slow but very persevering in their undertakings--commonly temperate in eating, but excessively immoderate in drinking.-- They often transform themselves by liquor into the likeness of mad foaming bears. The women, in general, are of a mild, amiable, soft disposition: exceedingly modest in their behaviour, and very seldom noisy, either in the single, or married state.<sup>71</sup>

Adair's overall views were critical. The Choctaws, he contended were "the craftiest, and most ready-witted, of any of the red nations I am acquainted with. It is surprising to hear the wily turns they use, in persuading a person to grant them the favour they have in view. Other nations generally behave with modesty and civility, without ever lessening themselves by asking any man favours. But the Choktah [sic], at every season, are on the begging lay."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>In 1775 Adair published The History of the American Indians. In part, his publication was to be used to convey his belief that the Indian tribes could be used to further England's colonial aspirations in North America. A great portion of the volume also deals with the question of the origin of the American Indian, whom many believed to be from the ten lost tribes of Israel.

<sup>71</sup>Adair, History of the American Indians, pp. 5-6. Differences in eighteenth century and modern English may be significant in spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Despite this I have decided to produce the quotations as they appear in the original.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

Adair continued his uncomplimentary description of the Choctaws, saying of them:

that they are in the highest degree, of a base, ungrateful, and thievish disposition--fickle and treacherous--ready-witted and endowed with a surprizing flow of smooth artful language on every subject, within reach of their ideas; in each of these qualities, they far exceed any society of people I ever saw. They are such great proficientes in the art of stealing, that in our storehouses, they often thieve while they are speaking to, and looking the owner in the face.<sup>73</sup>

It should be taken into consideration in evaluating Adair's description of the Choctaws that he was an Englishman and that the Choctaws were the strongest of France's Indian allies in the southeast. Further, Adair had been one of several English traders who had attempted to trade with the tribes of the southeast and to detach them from their loyalty to the French. This had been unsuccessful.

One of the problems in dealing with the Choctaws was that the tribe had no central governmental organization that could be said to have been followed by all villages. The majority of the Choctaw people were to be found in the area between the Tombigbee and Pearl Rivers. Estimates as to the number of villages ranged from thirty to 158, and the French tended to refer to them as either eastern or western Choctaws.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>74</sup>Jean-Baptiste Bénard de La Harpe, The Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana, trans., by Joan Cain and Virginia Koenig (Lafayette, Louisiana: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1971), pp. 39-40. La Harpe gives the following account of the number of Choctaws: "September 16, 1701. A group of Choctaws, accompanied by some Indians from Mobile, arrived at the fort to ask the French to join them in a war against the Chickasaws. The Choctaw nation numbered at the time forty villages with five thousand warriors. These Indians were located eighty leagues north of Biloxi in a beautiful land of

The Choctaws had a head chief, but his power was anything but absolute. Obedience was determined primarily by the chief's status among the people and their willingness to follow his leadership. Lacking a concept of national unity, each village often viewed itself as independent. Jean-Baptiste B nard de La Harpe provides an excellent example of this. In April 1714, a group of fifteen English traders convinced twenty-eight villages of Choctaws to refuse to trade with the French. Two villages refused to go along with the decision and removed themselves to the vicinity of Mobile. Bienville refused to trade with the twenty-eight villages until they had allowed the two villages to return to their homes and had sent Bienville the head of the brother of the principal chief. The chiefs agreed to this, for "They immediately beheaded the brother of the great chief. . . ."75

John R. Swanton, in his description of the Choctaw government, stated that at the village level there existed a chief and a war chief, each of whom had a subordinate. Their powers were limited; and decisions to a large degree, were reached by unanimous consent.<sup>76</sup> There was also, as indicated by La Harpe, a principal chief who was over a particular geographic area. None of these positions was hereditary.

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plains and small hills." Swanton, on the other hand, puts the number of villages at 158. The area La Harpe is describing would be in northern Mississippi. De la Harpe was employed by the Company of the West. Among his duties was the establishment of trade with the Spanish of Mexico and modern Texas. One of the areas he explored was the Red River region.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-92.

<sup>76</sup>Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, pp. 90-91. See also, Swanton, "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians," 54-55. Also, Kunkel, "Indians of Louisiana--1700," 181-182.

The men of the village devoted themselves primarily to hunting, war, and the construction of houses and canoes. The women did the more domestic chores such as cooking, weaving, and bringing in the game once it had been killed.<sup>77</sup> Among the Choctaws, men were considered to be superior and dominant over the women.<sup>78</sup>

When it came to their wives, the Choctaw men were strong moralists who punished infidelity in a harsh manner. Choctaw women were described as being "fairly passable as to looks for Americans, and are all precocious in matters of love. One sees among them very few girls, twelve years old, who have not several loves, all of whom they make happy. They blacken their teeth with a certain root, a practice which is greatly esteemed among them. This, together with their tawny color, renders them rather disagreeable to those who are not prejudiced in their favor. Nevertheless, they have rather regular features, . . ." The Choctaw women "generally like all Frenchmen, to whom they refuse none of their favors, in return for a few glass beads or other trifles; . . ."<sup>79</sup> However, it was not prudent to dally with the women because of "the malign influences of Venus. . . ."<sup>80</sup>

Sexual abstinence was not considered to be very important among the unmarried young, both male and female. Once married, however, a woman caught in adultery was treated badly. She could escape punishment only

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<sup>77</sup>Swanton, Aboriginal Culture of the Southeast, p. 700.

<sup>78</sup>Kunkel, "Indians of Louisiana--1700," 183.

<sup>79</sup>Mereness, Travels in American Colonies, p. 48. Quote is from Journal of Diron D'Artaguiette.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

if her family had greater standing, or was more numerous within the village than was that of her husband.<sup>81</sup> Punishment for adultery was a public affair during which the offender was:

carnally known by all who choose to be present, young and old; thus the poor wretch after defending herself and struggling hard with the first three or four, at last suffers motionless the brutality of perhaps an hundred or a hundred and fifty of these barbarians; the same treatment is undergone by a girl or woman who belonging to another town or quarter of the nation comes to a place where she is a stranger and can not give a very good account of herself and her business, or the reason for her coming there; this they call running through the meadow, and if a white man happens to be in the town, they send him an offer of invitation to take the first heat; they plead in excuse for so barbarous a custom, that the only way to disgust lewd women<sup>82</sup> is to give them at once what they so constantly and eagerly pursue.

Another account of the treatment of adultery which seems to be more logical than the foregoing and was probably more commonplace was for the woman to have her hair cut off and to be divorced from her husband. In this instance, the woman had two options. The first was to become a prostitute going "along the streams in the dusk of the evening singing songs belonging to their usage and in a particular tone of voice, hearing which if any young person has use for her he goes to find her, leading her away under the shelter of his blanket in order to let it be seen she is under his protection. He keeps her as long as he wishes and feeds her; but when he is tired of her, she is obliged to begin her wanderings again in order to live."<sup>83</sup> The second option was to go with a man from another village and become his wife.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Swanton, "An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians," 60-61. See also, Swanton, Aboriginal Cultures, p. 697; and Bossu, Travels Through Louisiana, pp. 308-309

<sup>84</sup>Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, p. 127.

Despite the harsh treatment for infidelity, the act of marriage itself was not a formal affair; and almost always was between people of the same village. A young man picked out a young lady and then presented her mother with a string of beads and her father with a breech clout. If the gifts were accepted, the young man simply took the woman to his home; and they were considered to be married.<sup>85</sup>

When the wife became pregnant, her husband ate no salt or pork in the belief that these foods would harm the unborn child. At the time of delivery, the woman went out into the forest to have her child. This was, according to Bossu, accomplished without any assistance.<sup>86</sup> The French called the Choctaws "Flat heads" because "As soon as they are delivered, they wash their infants. The mothers apply a mass of earth to the foreheads of their children, to make them have flat heads, and as they get more strength they increase the bulk, it being a beauty among these people to have a flat head."<sup>87</sup>

Women were not allowed to participate in the education of male children. Education was left to the father, an uncle, or an elder within the village. If a boy disobeyed his mother, he was punished by "an old man, who inflicts a punishment on him, and then throws some fresh water over his body."<sup>88</sup> If perchance a mother should strike her son, she

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Bossu, Travels Through Louisiana, p. 307.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 308.

in turn would receive a sharp reprimand. She had authority only over girls.<sup>89</sup>

French government officials took a dim view of French-Indian marriages. As there was a lack of eligible French women for marriage, it was inevitable that French-Indian marriages would take place. This practice, however, was frowned upon by the French government for several reasons: such marriages would result in the colony being populated by half-breeds who "were lazy"; Indian wives often left their French husbands; the French men, more often than not, became more like the Indian; and children of such marriages were difficult for the missionary to instruct in religion because the missionary often did not know the Indian language.<sup>90</sup>

In conclusion, the French government, despite original high-minded intentions, utilized the missionary as a mere extension of its policy and program to maintain a strong position in southern colonial North America. The missionary, as a holy man, had wider acceptance and thus found more doors open to him than would a soldier or government official. It was in the capacity as a supporter of government policy that the missionary served best.

To the French a part of the civilizing process would be the acceptance of Christianity. The missionary's success in this area, however,

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<sup>89</sup>Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians, p. 124.

<sup>90</sup>AC, C13a, 4: 255-256. Council of the Marine to M. de la Mothe and M. Duclos (February 18, 1716). The Council promised to send marriageable women to the colony, but not enough were interested in going to Louisiana to alleviate the problems of bachelorhood completely.

seemed less than great. No definitive figures were discovered as to the number of converts gained to the Church, and what was left unsaid speaks loudly. Evidently, there was little success in this area.<sup>91</sup> The Indian seemed to accept and respect the Jesuit missionaries primarily because of the influence the missionary had with French government officials, but not out of a desire to know the white man's God. No doubt the Indians respected the missionary as a holy person, but his respect did not necessarily mean acceptance of Christianity.

One must also take into consideration the number of missionaries that were sent among the Choctaws. The conclusion which is drawn is that the number was not sufficient to accomplish the job. Furthermore, those who were sent often did not spend enough time in the area to be truly effective. Also, success in making converts was limited by the language barrier. Some missionaries, such as Father Beaudouin, were among the Choctaws long enough to become proficient in the language, but this was the exception rather than the rule.

While in this study the relationship between the French and the Choctaws is a matter of some special emphasis, to understand this it is also necessary to evaluate briefly the impact of the English and their Chickasaw allies. Religion played a role in English colonization efforts as well as the French. However, if we set the French intentions

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<sup>91</sup>Schoolcraft, History of the Indian Tribes, I: 735. In Table III, Statistical Data, No. 1, Schoolcraft gives a figure of seventeen clerics among the Louisiana mission. In the column for number of converts no figure is given. It should be noted that Schoolcraft's figure as to the number of clerics does not agree with Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 69: 79.

and practices alongside those of the English, we see that the French were a little more successful in utilizing the missionary.

Early English colonial documents indicate a desire to impart the message of Christianity to the Indians. For example, article three of the Charter for Virginia, dated 1606, states that a goal of the colonization process should be "the propopagating of Christian religion to such people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God." Also the Patent of Council for New England, 1620, called for "the conversion of such savages as remain wandering in desolation and distress to civil society and Christian religion."<sup>92</sup> And one of the goals of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts--the missionary arm of the Anglican Church--established in 1701, was to convert the Indians to Christianity.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, it would appear that the English colonists accepted as one of their duties the conversion of the Indians.

In some ways there were striking similarities between the French and English missionaries. They both tended to complain about the same things. English missionaries, just as French, complained about the conduct of traders among the Indians, who by their scandalous way of living were making it difficult to make conversions among the Indians. While the French complained about the traders debauching the Indians,

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<sup>92</sup>Quotation in J. Holland Rose, The Cambridge History of the British Empire, vol. 1, The Old Empire from the Beginnings to 1783 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 193.

<sup>93</sup>H. F. Thompson, Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1950 (London: Billing and Sons, 1951), p. 19.

the English, at least in South Carolina, were more concerned about the traders' penchant to encourage wars between the Indian tribes so that they could gain slaves.<sup>94</sup>

The most significant difference between the French and English missionary in the southeast was that the English missionary did not go among the Indian tribes and live among them as did Jesuit missionaries, although a few did express a desire to do so. In going through the records of the Society activities in South Carolina only two missionaries, in the period 1701 to 1763, expressed any desire or concern for the conversion of the Indians to Christianity. One of the two, Reverend Dr. Francis Le Jau, proposed that young English boys be sent to live with the Indians in order to learn their language and, presumably, facilitate their conversion to Christianity.<sup>95</sup> Apparently, Le Jau's suggestion was not acted on, for no record was found in the South Carolina documents suggesting it was implemented.

The Reverend Francis Varnod made a proposal similar to that of Dr. Le Jau in 1723:

But there is a thing that seems to be more practicable [and] that is the conversion of our Indians. If some of our Nobility [and] Gentry would be imitation of [that] Apostolic zeal of the Hon [orable] Society be at the charge of sending a descrete [sic] young

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<sup>94</sup> Frank J. Klingberg, The Chronicle of Le Jau, pp. 41, 53, 61, 116, 132. The following is a typical Le Jau complaint:

"I am told that if anything opposes the publishing of the Gospel among the Indians it shall be the manner how our Indian trade is carried on, chiefly the fomenting of War among them for our people to get Slaves. I am so told in general but know no particulars; but it is true interest has a great power here sic and dos [sic] occasion injustices too visibly to my great sorrow, and thro' misfortune I see no remedy but to be patient and pray and labour.  
 . . . "

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

man in Deacons order, to go with our traders to some of our most considerable Indian Nations [and] to settle amongst them, it would be not too difficult to convert them or at least their Children, as has been hitherto imagined.<sup>96</sup>

In 1724, Reverend Varnod, apparently somewhat wistfully, stated: "If the income of my salary was sufficient to bear my expenses I wou'd willingly undertake (in case I was countenanced by the hon [orable] Society) to go among the Creeks and live with them for twelve months in order to learn their language, & inform the world what steps may be taken hereafter for the conversion of them."<sup>97</sup>

Varnod appears to have been the only South Carolina missionary to attempt seriously to convert the Indians. Apparently, on his own time he conducted some interviews with the Creek Indians and contemplated talking some of the Creek chiefs into allowing him to bring some of their children into the English settlements and instruct them in religious matters.<sup>98</sup> Varnod's and Le Jau's activities were, however, the exception rather than the rule for Anglican missionaries in South Carolina.

In two hundred eighty-seven manuscripts covering the years between 1715 and 1765 only forty-two references were made to the Indians. These are usually one word references and consist of the number of Indian slaves in a particular parish. A typical example is found in a report of the Reverend Gideon Jones: "I have not been wanting in my

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<sup>96</sup>Great Britain, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, vol. 4, B, Mss. 132. Reverend Francis Varnod, Dorchester Parish, January 13, 1723.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., Mss. 183. Reverend Francis Varnod (July 21, 1724).

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

duty in respect to the conversion of the Heathen slaves, (I have no free Indians in my parrish) . . . ."99 Other missionaries also reported that they were attempting to instruct the Indian slaves in their parishes.

There are, perhaps, two major reasons for the English missionaries to have failed to develop a comprehensive plan to convert the Indians to Christianity. First of all, unlike their French Catholic counterparts, most of the English missionaries were married and had children. Because of their marital status they would tend to be hesitant about exposing their families to the uncertainties of frontier life among the native population of North America. The second consideration that may help account for this failure was that the white population of the English colonies was greater than that of the French colonies. Because of this there were more settlements that desired, and could afford to support, a parish clergyman. For example, the Reverend Samuel Thomas, the first missionary that the Society sent to South Carolina, was originally ordered to go among the Yammasse Indians; however, upon his arrival in South Carolina in 1702, the governor of the colony assigned him to minister to the English families rather than the Indians. The Reverend Thomas did not protest this change in assignment.<sup>100</sup> Another example of this is found in a letter by the Reverend Benjamin Dennis who, in 1715, wrote the

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., Mss. 75. Reverend Gideon Jones (November 6, 1716).

<sup>100</sup>B. R. Carroll (ed.), Historical Collections of South Carolina; Embracing Many Rare and Valuable Pamphlets, and Other Documents Relating to the History of that State from Its First Discovery to Its Independence in the Year 1776, vol. 2 "An Account of Missionaries Sent to South Carolina. The Places to Which They Were Appointed, Their Labours and Success, &c" (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836), p. 538.

Society that he would be of better service in Charleston than in the parish he had been assigned.<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, one may conclude that while some of the Anglican missionaries expressed some interest in the conversion of the Indians, most were content to minister to the white colonial population and were generally unwilling to undertake the ardors of frontier living. The English missionary was not a vital part of the British relationship with the Indian tribes of the southeast. This may be partially accounted for by the fact that there was a significantly larger English population in North America. This made it less necessary for the British to rely upon Indians to hold their colonial claims.

On the other hand, French officials were fully aware of their limited population and of the value of the Choctaws as a bulwark against the growth of English power and territorial acquisitions. They, therefore, utilized all measures that were available to them in their effort to maintain French control of Louisiana. The missionary was a vital part of French policy toward the Indians, as also were trade and diplomatic relations.

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<sup>101</sup>Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, vol. 4, B, Mss. 24  
Reverend Benjamin Dennis (September 2, 1715).

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROLE OF TRADE IN FRENCH-

### INDIAN RELATIONS

The economic philosophy underlying the establishment of the French and British colonies in North America was the theory of mercantilism, which held that a positive balance of trade was the chief means of increasing national wealth.<sup>1</sup> Partially because of the larger British colonial population, it was easier for Britain to approach realization of this aspect of mercantilist theory. Greater population made it more likely that the British colonists would be able to develop either the exportable natural resources or agricultural products of North America.

As has already been emphasized the French relied heavily upon their Indian allies, particularly the Choctaws, to offset the advantages the British enjoyed because of the greater population of the British colonies. The lack of a sufficient French population in Louisiana made it difficult for the French to exploit effectively the agricultural and natural resources of the colony. The French government attempted to encourage emigration to Louisiana, but failed to have much success. At various times the government attempted to send criminals, soldiers and sailors guilty of desertion, the unemployed of Paris,

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<sup>1</sup>J. Holland Rose, ed., The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. 1, (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 561-562.

prostitutes and engagés to Louisiana as colonists. When the colony was a proprietary one, from 1712 to 1731, the government required that the proprietors send a set number of colonists to Louisiana each year.<sup>2</sup>

As may be surmised from the above list, the type of individual forced to emigrate to Louisiana was not of the highest quality. The major exception to this were the engagés--indentured servants, who usually had a skill and hoped to raise their economic position by emigrating. Indeed, the French government made no attempt to hide the fact that being sent to Louisiana was a form of punishment. "We believe that We can do nothing better for the good of our State than to condemn these men . . . to the punishment of being transported to our colonies. . . ." <sup>3</sup> To make the forced expulsion more palatable, the convicts would be exempted from certain taxes and duties on imported goods. It was also hoped that they would become good workers.<sup>4</sup>

The proffered economic advantages were not significant enough to outweigh the disadvantages that were encountered in Louisiana. Most of those forced to go to Louisiana objected strenuously to their deportation and were escorted to the ships in chains.<sup>5</sup> There were also

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<sup>2</sup>Marcel Giraud, Historie de la Louisiana français, III, L'Epoque de John Law (1717-1720) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), p. 26. In 1712 the Crozat Company controlled the colony. This Company was replaced by John Law's Company of the West which was merged with the Company of the Indies in 1721.

<sup>3</sup>"Déclaration concernant les condamnés aux galères, bannis, et vagabonds" quoted in James D. Hardy, Jr., "The Transportation of Convicts to Colonial Louisiana," Louisiana History, 7 (1966), 207.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 209. The major tax was a 4 percent tax on imported goods.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 213.

accounts of the deportees attacking their guards and attempting to escape rather than being forced to go to Louisiana. The attempt to use convicts as colonists was of fairly short duration; they were sent to Louisiana primarily during the control of Louisiana by John Law's Company of the West, although apparently in the 1740s it was still common to punish smugglers by sending them there.<sup>6</sup>

Although the record is unclear as to how many convicts were sent to Louisiana in the period under consideration, it would not be remiss to estimate that they numbered into the thousands. Of the number only a relative few survived the journey and the first few years in the colony. In 1721 ordannateur Diron d'Artaguette conducted a census in which it was brought out that at the time fewer than one hundred of those forced to come could be accounted for or were still living.<sup>7</sup>

While initially only men were sent to Louisiana as punishment for vagrancy or crime, the potential use of the colony as a repository for all who were unwanted in France soon led to the decision to send also women guilty of prostitution, theft and vagrancy.<sup>8</sup> For example, in 1719 one ship arrived from France carrying 189 colonists; of the number 36 were prostitutes.<sup>9</sup> Jean-Baptiste Bénard de La Harpe recounts that in 1720 and 1721 convoys from France transported several women to

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<sup>6</sup>France, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, Série B, vol. 73: folio 125. Hereafter cited as AC, B, etc.

<sup>7</sup>Hardy, "The Transportation of Convicts," 220. Apparently many ran away.

<sup>8</sup>Giraud, Historie de la Louisiane, III, p. 252.

<sup>9</sup>Edwin A. Davis, Louisiana: A Narrative History (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1965), p. 57.

the colony who had formerly resided in detention houses in Paris.<sup>10</sup> These types of colonists, both men and women, who were misfits in French society were also unfit to undergo the rigors of colonial life. The metropolitan government made little provision for them once they reached Louisiana and expected the struggling colony to provide for their needs and well-being. They were not generally trained in any skill that the colony needed; as a result they were more a burden than benefit.<sup>11</sup>

The engagés, on the other hand, were usually skilled workers. In return for their passage to Louisiana they agreed to work for the Company of the West, and later the Company of the Indies, or individual land-owners for a certain number of years.<sup>12</sup> Usually married, they tended to be more stable than the vagabonds rounded up on the streets of Paris. Engagés were sent to Louisiana in great numbers during the period corresponding to the control of the colony by Law's Company of the West. An integral aspect of Law's system was the economic development of Louisiana, which could be strengthened by increasing the population of the colony. When the Company of the West assumed control over the development of Louisiana, the colony had a white population of between 350 and

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<sup>10</sup>Jean-Baptiste Bénard de La Harpe, The Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana, trans. by Joan Cain and Virginia Koenig (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1971), pp. 151-163.

<sup>11</sup>Charles Le Gac, Immigration and War Louisiana 1718-1721, from the Memoir of Charles Le Gac, trans. Glen R. Conrad, (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana Press, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>12</sup>When the period of servitude, usually three years, was completed the engagé was given a small tract of land and some livestock. Skills represented included silversmiths, blacksmiths and brickmakers. Giraud, Histoire de la Louisiane, III, pp. 246-248.

400. By 1721, when Law's plan was declared a failure, the total white population of Louisiana was 7,020 and of this number 2,462 were engagés. In 1766, however, the population of Louisiana was only 5,562.<sup>13</sup> Most of the colonists prior to 1717 lived in two areas--Dauphine Island and Mobile.<sup>14</sup>

Apparently most of the engagés were unskilled in agricultural occupations. In fact two of the earliest groups to arrive were ordered to establish themselves along the Red River and to engage in mining activities.<sup>15</sup> By emphasizing mining, the Company of the West hoped to establish very quickly the ability of the colony to be profitable. A quick profit would serve two purposes: encourage colonization and encourage more investment in the Company. The development of agriculture would

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<sup>13</sup>The following population figures for Louisiana indicated the lack of a growing French population.

Louisiana Population

1717	350-400	(white French males)
1721	7,020	(including men, women, children and soldiers. Does not include slave population)
1726	2,228	(only white French males)
1737	2,451	(only white French males)
1746	4,000	(includes women and children)
1766	5,562	(includes women and children)

Sources: Le Gac, Immigration and War, p. 1, 42. Glen R. Conrad, The First Families of Louisiana, 2 vols. (Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1970), II, 25-34. Charles R. Maduell, The Census Tables for the French Colony of Louisiana from 1699 through 1723 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 123-135. General Census of Louisiana, 1766, Archive General de Indias Audiencia de Santo Domingo, Legajo 2592 (copy on file Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana).

<sup>14</sup>Le Gac, Immigration and War, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

require more time to clear the land and plant and harvest crops. In the long term, agricultural development would have been of greater importance, but Law's scheme demanded immediate results which, it was believed, could be realized through the discovery and exploitation of mineral wealth. As a result, agricultural development was slighted, to the detriment of the settlers. The state of agriculture at about 1720 is aptly described by Charles Le Gac, who stated that there was:

an absolute need for the food and supplies supposedly being sent from France. We were forced to give the troops and others the seed wheat that we had received at Dauphin Island in . . . 1718. It was not fit to be used by humans, for it was of bad quality and full of weevils.<sup>16</sup>

Internal agricultural and commercial activity in Louisiana did not develop to the extent that the colony could provide maintenance for the newly arrived settlers. It was necessary that France provide aid, but it was often not forthcoming.

Economic development never did advance very far, although attempts were made to alleviate the situation by encouraging agricultural and commercial growth. The most successful attempt in agriculture involved the growth of tobacco. It was hoped that this product would be sufficiently lucrative to entice French merchants to make Louisiana an integral part of the colonial trade of France.<sup>17</sup>

It was not until the colony was placed in the hands of the Company of the West that serious thought was directed toward agricultural

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9. When food supplies arrived, Le Gac complained that it was not enough to meet the demands of the population. Le Gac, an official of the Company, was in Louisiana between 1718 and 1721.

<sup>17</sup>Though Louisiana did have other exports--indigo, tar, pitch, rice, cotton, and sugar--they were relatively unimportant. Davis, Louisiana, pp. 72-73.

development, although, as previously stated, initial emphasis was placed on mining. The attempt to develop the tobacco industry was based upon the success that the British were having with the crop in their colonies of Virginia and the Carolinas. For the industry to be successful, however, certain elements were necessary. These were quality tobacco, a market with reasonable price for the crop, and labor.

One of the first problems encountered in the establishment of the tobacco industry was the regulations governing French colonial trade. Colonial trade was restricted to selected ports, and ships from these ports were allowed to trade only with certain of the colonies of France. For example, a ship from La Rochelle going to New Orleans could not on its return voyage stop at any other port.<sup>18</sup> Since Louisiana commerce was in its infancy, these regulations discouraged French merchants from undertaking trade with the colony.

In an attempt to encourage the development of Louisiana's commercial potential, the French government attempted to make trade with the colony more attractive. In 1732 all French ports were granted permission to send vessels to Louisiana,<sup>19</sup> and the Ministry of Marine agreed to subsidize the home merchants who undertook trade with the colony.<sup>20</sup> The subsidies were offered for two reasons. First, since goods destined

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<sup>18</sup>John G. Clark, New Orleans 1718-1812: An Economic History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 63.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>20</sup>The subsidies were: 40 livres per ton on merchandise sent to Louisiana; 50 livres per hundredweight on tobacco; and 60 livres for the passage of soldiers transported to the colony. Later the first two subsidies were lowered to 20 livres apiece. Ibid., pp. 69-72.

for Louisiana could only be sold in the colony, it might be necessary for the merchant to leave a part of his cargo there unsold. The subsidy thus served as a hedge against the inability to sell quickly the cargo. Second, though trade to Louisiana was more profitable than trade from the colony, the cost of sending a vessel was the same for the return trip as the voyage there, making it necessary to offer a subsidy to help defray the losses incurred on the return. According to one author: "A vessel of two hundred tons carried goods worth about 100,000 livres to Louisiana. A full cargo of tobacco weighing some one hundred tons brought 25,000 livres in France."<sup>21</sup>

The best tobacco growing areas of Louisiana were those around Natchez and Pointe Coupée, but the quality of Louisiana's best tobacco was inferior to that grown in the British colony of Virginia.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the amount of tobacco grown never exceeded 200,000 pounds.<sup>23</sup> As a result, one French merchant ship could transport the entire production of Louisiana tobacco; this would further discourage French merchants from getting involved in the Louisiana trade.

The French government recognized the problem created by the limited amount of marketable goods within Louisiana and sought to solve it by limiting the number of vessels trading with Louisiana at any one time. To accomplish this goal, the Minister of Marine required that every ship

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>22</sup>Nellis M. Surrey, "The Development of Industries in Louisiana During the French Regime 1673-1763," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IX (1922), 233.

<sup>23</sup>Nellis M. Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana During the French Regime (1916. reprint ed. New York: Ams Press, 1968), p. 210.

obtain permission from the Ministry prior to sailing for Louisiana. Bearing in mind the number of ships on their way to the colony the Minister of Marine would often delay granting permission to sail in order to prevent too many vessels arriving in the colony at the same time.<sup>24</sup> Maurepas believed that this practice would result in the colony receiving a steady supply of goods and prevent competition for the limited goods that Louisiana exported to France.

Eventually, the French government allowed French merchants to trade with the French West Indies colonies, encouraged the growth of trade between the West Indies and Louisiana, and also allowed French merchants to trade with the Spanish colonies. While designed to encourage the development of Louisiana's economy, these concessions had little appreciable impact. The basic reasons for the failure of these attempts were the dearth of Louisiana products and the regulations which Spanish officials placed on foreign trade to the Spanish colonies.<sup>25</sup> Also, Louisiana had little that the West Indies or the Spanish colonies desired.

Within Louisiana, the French colonists blamed the failure to develop the economy on the lack of a dependable labor supply, which, they contended, could be solved by the introduction of Negro slaves.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>AC, B, 62: 83. See also, Clark, New Orleans 1718-1812, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup>Clark, New Orleans 1718-1812, pp. 84-85. It should also be brought out that the French government did not like the practice of French vessels visiting foreign ports. This was viewed as a means whereby foreign goods could be introduced into France.

<sup>26</sup>France, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies, Série C 13a, vol. 1: folio 449. Hereafter cited as AC, C 13a, etc. As early as 1704, Bienville reported to Pontchartrain that Negroes were desired in the colony.

Slaves it was believed, would make it possible to clear the land and develop agriculture. It was not until the direction of the colony was assumed by the Company of the West in 1717 that serious attempts were made to import a large number of slaves. The first shipment, numbering 450, arrived in Louisiana in 1719.<sup>27</sup> For the next eighteen years the number of slaves conveyed to Louisiana was large, with the bulk of Negroes being imported in the 1720s.<sup>28</sup> By 1737 the slave population stood at 4,581; in contrast, the white male population for the same year was 2,451.<sup>29</sup> After 1737, the importation of slaves to Louisiana declined.

The reasons for the decline in slave importation seems to have been threefold. First, despite the importation, Louisiana's economic condition had not improved. The planter class discovered that it could not afford the cost of slaves because the profits derived from their labor were not great enough. As was pointed out, the most successful money crop, tobacco, was not economically successful, although planters continued to have great hope for it. As a result Louisiana's agricultural laborers were not used extensively to develop the food crops of the colony. A common complaint during the 1720s and 1730s was the need to import food to feed the population.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Le Gac, Immigration and War, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup>La Harpe, Historical Journal, pp. 167-168.

<sup>29</sup>AC, C13c, 4: 197. Recapitulation of the General Census of Louisiana, 1737. Copy located at Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana.

<sup>30</sup>AC, C13a, 9: 51. The Superior Council of Louisiana to the Directors of the Company of the Indies (February 17, 1725). See also, AC, C13a, 18: 33 Bienville to Maurepas (April 1, 1734). Also, La Harpe, Historical Journal, p. 167.

The second factor would appear to be the wars against the Chickasaw tribe, which Bienville became involved in during the 1730s. As previously brought out, these wars involved a large number of men at great expense with little to show for the effort that was expended.<sup>31</sup> The metropolitan government may have concluded that the expenses of the colony did not equal the benefits derived therefrom. The third factor, closely associated with the second, was that France, during the period, became embroiled in colonial wars with Great Britain which prevented France from devoting the necessary time and expenditures to Louisiana that were necessary for its economic growth.

Here, then, is the economic side to the colonial government, which was forced to turn to her Indian allies, particularly the Choctaws, to maintain its territory for France. Also, alliances with the Indian tribes could be of economic benefit to the colony. In addition to protection, the Indians were necessary in the conduct of the fur trade. Initially it was the development of the fur trade that provided the newly established colony with an economic base. The fur trade, however, did not serve to help populate Louisiana with French colonists as comparatively few Frenchmen were needed to carry on the trade.

The furs, gathered by the Indians, were exchanged for French goods and the trade served to make the Indians dependent upon the French for European goods that the Indians came to desire. There was one aspect of the Indian trade that was not profitable, in an economic sense-- the practice of giving the Indians presents. The struggle between France

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<sup>31</sup>See Chapter III.

and Britain for mastery in North America partially revolved around the ability to gain dominance over the Indian tribes. One way in which the loyalty of the Indians could be obtained was by giving gifts.

As was emphasized at the beginning of this chapter the failure to develop the economy of Louisiana and increase its French population was an important reason for the establishment of alliances with the Indian tribes. From the beginning of the French effort in Louisiana, alliances with the Indian tribes were sought.<sup>32</sup> Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, the founder of the colony, recognized the potential benefits of Indian alliances and maintained that they could be created through the establishment of trade between France and the tribes. There were two benefits that France would receive from the establishment of trade relations with the Indians; first, the trade in pelts was a profitable business; and second, the Indians, when trading with the French, would be less likely to accept English traders. Any weakening of the position of England in North America would be a plus for France.<sup>33</sup>

The English were also aware of the potential benefits that could be derived from alliances with the Indian tribes of the region from Louisiana to Carolina. In May 1696, the Committee for Trade and Plantations was created to insure the development of the mercantilistic concept in England's colonial territories. The Lords Commissioners, sometimes referred to as the Board of Trade, did not limit itself solely to the

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<sup>32</sup>Charles E. O'Neill, Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana: Policy and Politics to 1732 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 22.

<sup>33</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, pp. 335-336.

maintenance of a profitable balance of trade. It studied all aspects of colonial administration and made recommendations that would increase the profitability of the trade.<sup>34</sup>

The failure to establish firm boundaries between the French and English territorial claims in the area between Louisiana and Carolina led to the continual outbreak of hostilities. For example, the Treaty of Utrecht (1713-1714) was deliberately vague on this matter. Neither France nor Britain could agree as to what its respective sphere of influence in the area was to be. The acceptance of territorial limitations was to be determined by the military defeat of one or the other; but before this happened both nations made valiant efforts to win the support of the Indian tribes on the Louisiana-Carolina frontier. Both French and English traders claimed the right to go among the Indian tribes of the area.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the potential economic benefits of Indian trade, French control of the Indian tribes would place France in a position where she would be able to limit English influence to the Atlantic seaboard. Conversely, English control of the same Indians would enable her effectively to split the French colonies of Louisiana and Canada. England would then potentially be in a position to march against either of the two French colonies, which would be weakened because of their

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<sup>34</sup>Rose, Cambridge History of the British Empire, 1: 413, 568-569. See also, Arthur H. Basye, The Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations Commonly Known as the Board of Trade, 1748-1782 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 1-5.

<sup>35</sup>Marcel Giraud, A History of French Louisiana, 3 vols., The Reign of Louis XIV, 1698-1715 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 1: 324.

reduced ability to provide aid and comfort to one another. Foremost in the effort to control and influence the Indian tribes of the region were the French and English traders. The French even went so far as to purchase from the Indians furs that were not really needed. This practice was viewed as a means whereby the Choctaws could be kept from trading with the English.<sup>36</sup>

Traders from both nations possessed material goods that the Indians desired. While glass beads, no doubt, had their place in Indian trade, the Indians also desired "cloaks, blankets, nightcaps, hats, shirts, sheets, hatchets, iron arrowheads, bodkins, swords, picks . . . knives, . . ." as well as guns and ammunition.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it was possible for France and England to gain influence among the Indian tribes by providing them with goods that would appreciably affect their way of life.

One of the most popular goods that was utilized in Indian trade by both countries was liquor. The Brandy Trade, as the French called it, was lucrative, but it also caused problems. Temperate imbibing was not a characteristic of the Indians.

The Jesuit missionaries among the Indians were acutely aware of the effect liquor had on the Indians and worked for the control or abolition of the Brandy Trade. The Jesuits considered alcohol "an . . .

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<sup>36</sup>AC, C13a, 15: 102-108. Salmon to the Ministry (May 12, 1732).

<sup>37</sup>Ruben G. Thwaites, The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791, 73 vols., (New York: Pagent Book Co., 1959), 4: 207. Hereafter cited as Thwaites, Jesuit Relations.

inevitable evil, . . . which ordinarily cause [sic] the greatest sin of the Savages."<sup>38</sup> The Jesuit campaign against the liquor trade resulted in the calling of the "Brandy Parliament" at Quebec in 1678. In the Parliament, two viewpoints were presented: one group held that "if the trade of liquor is prohibited, disorders will disappear, the Indians will live in tranquility. . . . and the French will apply themselves to cultivating the land, which will cause the country to flourish, . . . ." Those who advocated continuing the trade based their arguments on trade necessity: "brandy trade is absolutely necessary to attract the Indians to the French colonies and to prevent them from taking their pelts to foreigners."<sup>39</sup> The Parliament decided to continue the Brandy Trade because denying it would cause the Indians to trade with the English. The decision was approved by Louis XIV's government headed by Jean Baptiste Colbert.<sup>40</sup>

Although the decision had been made, the Jesuits rarely missed an opportunity to decry the impact of liquor on the Indians. For example, Father Davaugour, writing in 1740, contended that if the trade was not ended, Catholicism, which he believed was responsible for the loyalty of the Indians to France, would be overthrown; and this would be followed

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 37: 201.

<sup>39</sup>Quoted in Yves F. Zoltvany (ed), The French Tradition in America (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1965), pp. 78-80.

<sup>40</sup>George M. Wrong, The Rise and Fall of New France, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1928), pp. 462-263. It was also suggested that French brandy was better for the Indian than English rum and that the Indian, by trading with the English, would become infected with heretical religious beliefs.

by the loss of the French North American colonies.<sup>41</sup> A memoir of Father Lafitau deplored the liquor trade on four grounds: the Indians would do anything to obtain it; colonists often left their families and farms to engage in the trade; merchants were harmed economically because the Indians were often too drunk to gather furs; and drink destroyed tribes who were potential or current allies of France.<sup>42</sup>

While trade in liquor was important, the French still hoped to make the Louisiana colony economically viable. Since, as we have seen, agriculture was not developed into a paying proposition and mineral deposits were insufficient to be lucrative, the fur trade was utilized as the means of keeping the colony afloat.<sup>43</sup>

Iberville estimated that within a few years, the value of the fur trade would be in excess of 2,500,000 livres annually.<sup>44</sup> For several reasons Iberville's estimate was never realized. The French were

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<sup>41</sup>Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 66: 173. Father Davaugour held the position of Procurator of the Missions in North America.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 67: 39-47; 69: 33, 201-203; 65: 195-199.

<sup>43</sup>Marcel Giraud, "France and Louisiana in the Early Eighteenth Century," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 36, 670-671. Pontchartrain proposed in 1704 that Louisiana begin an agricultural program. This was because "France paid to Portugal 1,200,000 livres for tobacco and sugar, . . ." in 1700.

In 1698 Pierre-Charles Le Sueur received a grant from Louis XIV to search for mines along the upper Mississippi River. While he was unsuccessful in discovering significant mineral wealth, he did trade with the Sioux Indians for beaver pelts, giving them tobacco and firearms in exchange. Margry, Découvertes 7: 417-419. See also, La Harpe, The Historical Journal, pp. 27-29. See also, E. B. O'Callaghan (ed), Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York Procured in Holland, England and France: Paris Documents, vol. 6, (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co., 1855), p. 735. See also, Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 336. See also Giraud, History of French Louisiana, 1: 47.

<sup>44</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 336.

unable to maintain a steady and sufficient supply of goods to Louisiana and during time of war were unable to ship the pelts from their Louisiana ports.<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, for the English in South Carolina, and later Georgia, the fur trade proved to be reasonably profitable. According to one source, "The first fortunes in Carolina were made in the Indian trade, a trade which the Proprietors jealously endeavored to appropriate to themselves. . . ." The furs and skins obtained from the Indians continued to be the most valuable commodity in the colonial trade as late as 1747.<sup>46</sup> Because of the profit potential of fur trade, the Proprietary Government of South Carolina in 1716 made the Indian trade a state monopoly.<sup>47</sup> From that time on, the Indian trade was to remain under the control of the government.

At the same time, France attempted to establish that her trade with the Indians would be conducted primarily by the government, as represented by French soldiers stationed at the various outposts constructed in French Louisiana. While both France and England adopted basically the same attitude toward the conduct of fur trade, their results were entirely different. The English prospered, the French did not. There were two factors behind the French failure to develop the trade fully. First was the attitude of the Paris government, which

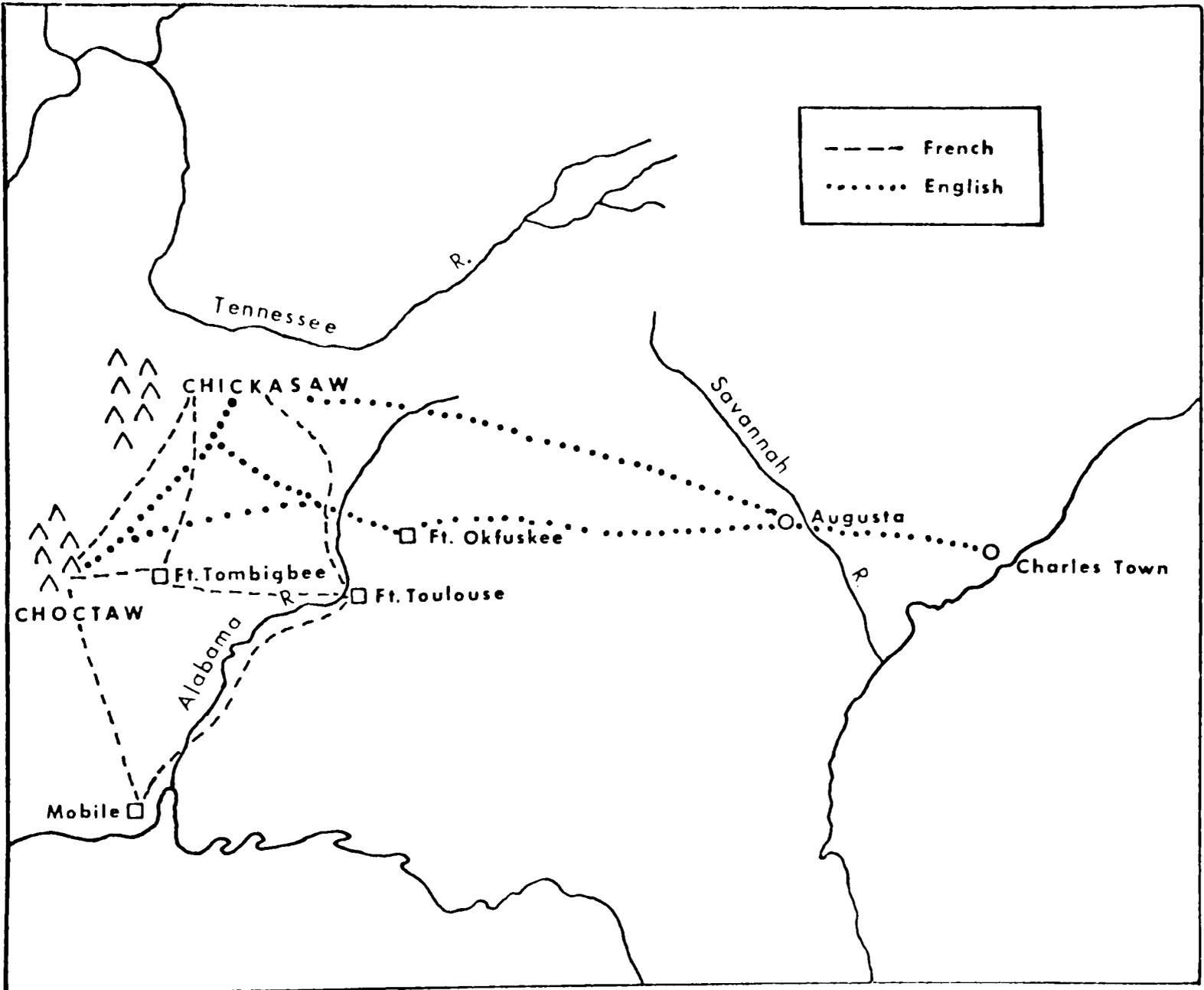
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<sup>45</sup>Giraud, History of French Louisiana, 1: 171.

<sup>46</sup>Edward McCrady, The History of South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1897; reissued, 1969), pp. 345-346. The only exception of this was the development of the rice industry.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 298.





held that the fur trade must be conducted primarily through Canada. It would not allow beaver skins in particular to be exported from any colony save Canada.<sup>48</sup> Second, there existed neither enough people nor enough trade possibilities to encourage the development of strong trade ties between France and Louisiana. Louisiana was in effect a mere back-up colony and thus was not in a position to obtain the necessary ships to maintain an effective commerce with the mother country.

A good example of the French attitude may be seen in the activity surrounding the Crozat Company, which was given a monopoly of trade in the colony in 1708. The French government announced that trade goods would be supplied to the Indians at a low price in order "to prevent them from going to the English. . . [so that the] Indians will side with the French and make war against the English."<sup>49</sup> It was believed that the traders among the Indians would be able to purchase their goods at a low price and thus be enabled to give the Indians more for their pelts, resulting in maintaining their loyalty to France. Crozat, however, paid only twenty sols for a deer skin, for which apparently the Indian could get thirty sols from an English trader.<sup>50</sup> At the same time the prices that the Crozat Company paid to the traders for the pelts they had obtained were low: "fifty sols for bear skins and fifteen for deer skins, . . ." Beaver skins were bought for three livres a skin.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Giraud, History of French Louisiana, 1: 171.

<sup>49</sup>O'Callaghan, Documents, 6: 812.

<sup>50</sup>Giraud, History of French Louisiana, 1: 325. See also, Thwaites, Jesuit Relations, 67: 29-37.

<sup>51</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 342.

Because of the low prices to both the Indians and the traders it appears that the company was not willing to go to any great lengths to encourage the development of the fur trade. The company appears to have been seeking maximum short-term profits to the detriment of long-term trade development.

Both France and Britain recognized that the fur trade was too important to be left uncontrolled. The trader, as the individual with whom the Indians had the most contact, was in a position either to help or to harm his respective country's relationship with the Indians.<sup>52</sup> Since in Louisiana most of the trade was conducted by military personnel at the various outposts, the control over the individual trader was not as difficult for the regime in Louisiana as it was for the government of South Carolina.

There were relatively few independent traders among the French-- although there were exceptions such as the coureurs de bois and voyageurs who were mainly from Canada. Like their English counterparts, they were difficult to control and were to be licensed.<sup>53</sup> The French regime in Louisiana used forts to control the Indian trade. This offered some advantages over the English system in that the trade was conducted on a site outside the native village. This placed some control over Indian-French intercourse. The presence of Jesuit missionaries undoubtedly had

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<sup>52</sup>Marc Le Baron de Villiers, "Notes sur Les Chactas c'après les Journaux de Voyage de Regis du Roullet," Journal de la Société des Américanistes des Paris (1923), 228.

<sup>53</sup>Wrong, The Rise and Fall of New France, pp. 459-460. See also, Ruben G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels 1748-1846: A Series of Annotated Reprints of Some of the Best and Rarest Contemporary Volumes of Travel During the Period of Early American Settlement, vol. II: John

some impact, as did the fact that the French traders were in the army, and therefore, presumably, easier to control. South Carolina used a licensing system to control its traders. This was done to reduce conflicts between the traders and the Indians.

In 1714, Bienville authorized the construction of Fort Toulouse, on the Alabama River at its confluence with the Coosa River, near the present site of Montgomery, Alabama. The primary purpose of the fort was to encourage the Indians of the region, mainly the Chickasaws, to trade with the French and to force the English traders out of the region.<sup>54</sup> At least for a period of time, the fort served the purpose for which it had been constructed. The English, however, redoubled their efforts to supply the Chickasaws and as early as 1716 were sending traders to the Choctaws.<sup>55</sup> The inability of the French to supply their Indian allies with sufficient trade goods made it extremely difficult to counter the British attempts to subvert the French position among the Choctaws. Lack of trade goods also made it impossible for the French to enjoy significant success in their attempts to gain a position among the Chickasaws.

It was not uncommon for traders to be among the Indians for periods of time ranging from twelve to eighteen months. Because of their

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Long's Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader (London: 1791), p. 15. See also, Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Sanders, Mississippi Provincial Archives, vol. 11 (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929), p. 293.

<sup>54</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 343.

<sup>55</sup>La Harpe, Historical Journal, p. 90.

long absence from civilization and the long periods of association with the Indians, it was, perhaps, inevitable that conflicts with the natives would take place. For example, the trader might make an improper advance or suggestion to an Indian woman, attempt to cheat the Indian in trade matters, or generally exhibit an attitude that his Indian host found to be abrasive. This type of activity could be particularly detrimental to England's association with the Chickasaws, if for no other reason than that the French were continually making overtures to them, and therefore, could serve as an easily developed alternative source of the goods that the Chickasaws desired.

Perhaps among the reasons that Britain found Indian trade more lucrative than did the French was that Britain was more industrialized than was France and therefore could provide a greater variety of trade goods. One way in which this may be seen is by comparing the figures for foreign trade increases in both countries during this period. French foreign trade was 215 million livres in 1715; by 1750 her foreign trade had increased to over 600 million livres.<sup>56</sup> Assuming that a livre was worth about 20 cents, French foreign trade would be estimated at \$12 million in 1740.<sup>57</sup> British foreign trade, on the other hand, increased from \$32 million to \$61 million between 1701 and 1775.<sup>58</sup> While the

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<sup>56</sup>Henri Sée, Economic and Social Conditions in France During the Eighteenth Century, trans. by Edwin H. Zeydel (New York: F. S. Crofts, 1931), pp. 152-153.

<sup>57</sup>The value for the livre was determined from figures found in Leo Gershoy, The French Revolution and Napoleon (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 23, f.n. 8. See also, Cameron Nish, The French Regime (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1965), p. 160.

<sup>58</sup>Clive Day, A History of Commerce (New York: Longmans, Green

French rate of growth was faster, she started from a lower base than did Britain. The above figures indicate that Britain was able either to produce or to obtain the materials necessary to carry on trade with her colonial possessions, whereas France was faced with difficulties in accomplishing the same thing.

Also to be considered is the fact that Britain was a stronger naval power than was France and thus in a better position to protect her trade lanes to the New World during time of war. Finally, the French government was reluctant to allow the colonists in Louisiana to engage in fur trade in the belief that such activity would be economically detrimental to the development of Canada which was considered to be the most important of France's North American colonies.

In order to make Louisiana more lucrative to French traders, it was suggested, apparently by a government official in Louisiana, that trade to and from Louisiana be exempted from taxes for a period of time. The failure to increase trade would result in a shortage of goods for Indian trade, not to mention supplies for the French colonists. The fear existed that the English would exploit this state of affairs for their own advantage, and the colony would be lost to France.<sup>59</sup>

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and Co., 1925), p. 205.

<sup>59</sup>AC, B, 86: 62. (July 2, 1713?) The exact date of this unsigned document is uncertain; however, it is clear by references within the document that it had to have been written in the period 1730-1732. All quotes from the French Archives are given as they appear in the document which does not always correspond to modern French.

"Pour ces considerations, ne jugerieés vous pas convenable de descharger les denrées et marchandises provenant de la Louisianne des droits du Domaine d'occident au moins poun quelques années, l'objes quoy-que peu considerable povrra exciter les négocians a ce commerce, et procurer

Apparently the government in France did attempt to increase the amount of trade conducted between France and Louisiana. However, this encouragement had little appreciable effect because of the inability to develop any industry in Louisiana that would attract French commercial interests. Therefore, it became even more important that the French maintain a good relationship with the Indians, particularly the Choctaws, as a means to continue to hold the southern colony. To prevent its loss, the government of France was willing to underwrite the cost of the Indian trade.<sup>60</sup>

The government's underwriting of the Indian trade was basically in the form of annual presents. According to one source, the granting of presents had always been an aspect of the French relationship with the Indians of Louisiana, averaging between 4,000 and 6,000 livres per year.<sup>61</sup> During Bienville's administrations (1706-1712, 1717-1726, and 1732-1743), presents were annually given to the most important Choctaw chiefs at meetings held at Mobile.<sup>62</sup> The French presents usually consisted of some extra supplies, usually guns and ammunition, although

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au [Louisianne] et aux Sauvages les secours dont ils ne peuvent se passer et que les derniers tireront des Anglois si la France ne les fournit pas, ce qui par une suite nécessaire, les detachera totalement des Français les Anglois mettent tout en usage pour y parvenir, et c'est le seul moyen pour faire perdre cette Colonie à France."

<sup>60</sup>Rowland, French Domain, 2: 549-550. In 1727 d'Artaquette complained that he was forced to sell his goods at a loss to keep the English from making inroads among the Choctaws. See also, P.F.X. Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France, vol. 6 (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), pp. 77-79.

<sup>61</sup>Giraud, History of French Louisiana, 1: 145. See also, Rowland, French Domain, 2: 580. In 1728 Diron d'Artaquette supported spending 19,000 livres on presents for the Indians.

<sup>62</sup>AC, C13a, 18: 130-137.

the gifts might be something personal for the particular chief who received it, such as a brightly colored coat. The granting of gifts could at times be expensive, particularly if the person responsible for the annual largess was unfamiliar with the way the practice should be conducted. This was the case with Governor Étienne Boucher de Périer de Salvert. Périer gave annual presents to 111 different Choctaw chiefs. And it was estimated that each chief received presents valued at 150.<sup>63</sup> While the total amount may not have exceeded the usual French annual expenditure for gifts, Périer's practice did have an impact on the ability of the French to control the Choctaws in their interests. During the administrations of Iberville and Bienville it was customary to give gifts to only the great chiefs, or Mingos, a practice that allowed these chiefs to distribute the gifts among their followers and thus strengthen their voices in the councils of the tribes. At the same time the practice allowed the French to concern themselves with only a few chiefs.<sup>64</sup> Périer's practice threatened to destroy the position of the Mingos upon whom French influence among the Choctaws was based.

When Bienville resumed the direction of French Louisiana in 1732, he quickly moved to correct the danger that Périer had allowed to develop and was eventually successful.<sup>65</sup> Until the very end of French control, the annual gifts were maintained. In fact, during the course of the

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<sup>63</sup>AC, C13a, 16: 206-207.

<sup>64</sup>AC, C13a, 16: 206-207.

<sup>65</sup>See Chapter III for a more detailed account of Périer's activities.

French and Indian War, according to one source, the cost of presents was 62,000 livres just for 1754.<sup>66</sup>

While the gifts were expensive, the result they produced for the French made them worth while. Throughout the period of French control, they could generally count on the devotion of the Choctaws. The loyalty of the Choctaws waned only when gifts were in short supply but never to the point where all the Choctaw villages combined to accept English traders and expel the French from their territory.

The English, as did the French, utilized presents to maintain loyalty of the Indian tribes they considered to be actual or potential allies in their struggle against France in North America. Like the French, the English considered the gifts to be an addition to regular trade with the Indians. Also like the French, they believed the practice necessary to maintain the loyalty of the Indians.<sup>67</sup> However, the English were more inclined to give the presents during time of war and then primarily because the French were attempting to entice their Indian allies into switching their loyalties.<sup>68</sup>

For example, in 1702, Iberville met with representatives of the Chickasaws and gave them presents in an attempt to get them to accept French traders and protection and discontinue trading with the English. The Chickasaws agreed to Iberville's proposals because the British traders had gone up on their prices. However, because of the inability of

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<sup>66</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 210.

<sup>67</sup>Easterby, Col. Rec. of S.C., 1: 590.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 5: 237.

the French to supply them with their trade necessities, the English were quickly welcomed back to the Chickasaw villages and continued to dominate trade with that tribe.<sup>69</sup>

The English traders of South Carolina as well as the government of that colony continued to be concerned about the possibility of losing the Chickasaw tribe to French influence. The Chickasaws were located in a strategic position--one that placed the tribe in a position more threatening to French Louisiana than South Carolina. Located near the Mississippi River in what is now western Tennessee, the Chickasaw could easily disrupt the commerce and communications between Louisiana and Canada. On the other hand the location of the tribe was far enough removed from Carolina so that if it were to fall under the influence of the French it would pose little threat to English control of the southern Atlantic seaboard.

Despite this, the Chickasaws were important in the ultimate aspirations of the government of South Carolina. Though a small tribe, the Chickasaws had a reputation for being very warlike.<sup>70</sup> Further, their geographic location held the key to the control of the potentially vast fur trade opportunities of the upper Mississippi Valley. The Mississippi River and its tributaries could serve as the highway by which trade

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<sup>69</sup>Arrell M. Gibson, The Chickasaws (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 35-36.

<sup>70</sup>James Adair reported the number of Chickasaw warriors to be 450, the same figure that Governor Glen, of South Carolina reported. Iberville estimated the number of warriors as 800 in 1702. Later Bienville stated that there were 600 warriors. As Adair and Glen were reporting in the mid-1700s, it appears that the number of Chickasaw warriors was declining. Despite this they were able to hold their on against the Choctaws and French.

into the interior of North America could be developed. Further, the control of the Mississippi Valley would open the possibility of a greater British role in the exploitation of the riches of Spain's colonies in North America.

Therefore, the English of South Carolina believed it in their best interests to support the Chickasaws in their troubles with the French and Choctaws. This support was shown in the amount of presents given to them. For example, for the year 1739, The Colonial Records of South Carolina indicate that £2,258, 15 shillings and 10-1/2 pence were expended for Chickasaw presents.<sup>71</sup> Most often the funds for the presents were not spent directly by the government of South Carolina. Further, the Governor recommended, and the Assembly agreed, to pay claims submitted to the government by traders for gifts they gave to the Indians. The claims submitted were accompanied by a list of what was given and the price the trader placed on each item. It was not unusual for the Assembly to reduce the amount of the claim on the assumption that the traders' stated value of an item was inflated.<sup>72</sup> However, at times, direct government expenditures for presents were made. This usually occurred when Indians visited Charleston to talk with the Governor. On such visits the Indians were, in effect, on an expense account because

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<sup>71</sup>Easterby, Col. Rec. of S. C., 2: 342. This figure may be misleading for it represents the cost in South Carolina currency. According to Governor Glen, 700 pounds in South Carolina currency would equal 100 Sterling. The cost of the Chickasaw gifts would then be approximately £321 Sterling.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 3: 313, 420.

the Governor requested that the Assembly pay the cost of entertaining them.<sup>73</sup>

The cost of providing gifts to the Indians was considered burdensome, and during wartime the expense was even greater. Because of the expense, the Assembly petitioned the monarchy, in 1748, for relief, requesting that the cost of Indian presents be directly assumed by the crown. In the petition, the Assembly put the cost at "about fifteen hundred pounds Sterling per annum, . . ."<sup>74</sup> Surprisingly, the monarchy agreed to the petition and even went further than the petitioners had requested. In April 1748, the Duke of Bedford, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, informed Governor Glen that the government was going to appropriate 3,000 Sterling per year to provide gifts to the Indians "contiguous to, and in Alliance [sic] with, the Province of South Carolina and Georgia. . . ." The Duke also added that since it would be cheaper, the goods would be purchased in England and shipped to the colonies.<sup>75</sup>

Although the Assembly was happy to be relieved of the financial burden caused by providing the Indians with presents, it nevertheless objected to the plan the London government was initiating. The South

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 5: 237. Apparently the government of South Carolina also placed in the category of gifts the claims of individuals who lost livestock to the Indians. It was common, on their journeys to Charleston, for the Indians to help themselves to a calf or heifer that belonged to a settler. The settler would lodge a claim with the Assembly which usually honored the claims.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 8: 44. See also, Corkran, The Creek Frontier, p. 131.

<sup>75</sup>Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 9: 203-204.

Carolínians objected to having Georgia included, claiming that it would be difficult to determine a fair distribution of the gifts. Further, the Assembly claimed that South Carolina's need was greater than that of Georgia because the major tribe that Georgia was concerned with was the Creeks, with whom there were relatively few problems. South Carolina, on the other hand, was forced to give support to the Chickasaws, who were almost continually at war with the French and Choctaws. The final argument offered by the Assembly against the monarchy's plan was the danger that a shipload of gifts might be lost at sea or captured by the French. Without the presents, the argument went, the ability to maintain the Indians' loyalty to England would be greatly diminished.<sup>76</sup>

While not mentioned, it appears that there may have been another argument against the purchase of the presents in England--perhaps the most important. It may well have been that the economic impact of the government's decision to supply the Indians with presents purchased in England would have been detrimental to the merchants of South Carolina. The business the merchants had formerly conducted with the traders was in danger of being lost, and the loss meant a reduction of profits that the merchants had enjoyed. They would not want to see this take place.

For the French the problem was not the means by which the Indians under their influence would be supplied with presents, but, whether they could be supplied. As mentioned at the beginning, under the French system of colonial administration in Louisiana, there existed a division of authority between the governor and the ordonnateur. The governor

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 9: 231-232.

controlled the external relations of the colony, enforced the laws, maintained relations with the Indians and directed the general development of the colony. The ordonnateur had the responsibility for the economic development of the colony. As a result, the distribution of trade goods to the military posts and local merchants came under his authority. This led to problems, as quite often there were not enough goods for both the French colonists and the Indians.

Under the direction of the ordonnateur, such goods as were available were to be distributed to the military posts to be used for Indian trade and presents and a portion was to be sold to town merchants who in turn would sell the goods to French colonists. As the price that the ordonnateur could charge for the goods sold to the merchants was not regulated, it was understandable that this officer of the king was more inclined to sell the goods to the merchants. Such action would result in a substantial profit for the monarchy;<sup>77</sup> but at the same time it would reduce the amount of goods for the Indians.

Diron d'Artaguette when Commandant of Mobile, suggested in 1733 a possible solution to this problem. He proposed that a fort be built in the territory of the Choctaws and that English traders be allowed to trade with the French at Mobile. The fort would "insure the faithfulness" of the Choctaws and by allowing the English to begin commercial activity at Mobile, would release a larger portion of French trade goods for the Indians.

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<sup>77</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, L09, The Letter Books, 1: 71 (January 6, 1746).

Bienville, however, objected strenuously to the proposal, effectively arguing that it would not be in the best interest of the colony to allow the English free access to Mobile, since it might make the French colonists dependent on English goods. He also argued that a fort was not needed among the Choctaws because their territory encompassed one hundred leagues, and no encampment could be placed so as to prevent English traders from entering Choctaw territory. Furthermore, if the French among the Choctaws treated the Indians fairly and honestly, there would be no need for a fort. Bienville maintained that it was necessary only to keep six soldiers and one officer among the Choctaws, and that their main duty would be to protect the Indians from the unscrupulous Frenchman.

To maintain the friendship of the Choctaws, Bienville thought that all the French needed was "a well regulated trade with them, one that will satisfy all their needs on a regular basis, that will secure their friendship." The Choctaws, he believed, were naturally drawn to the French and were able to discern the differences in quality that existed between French and English goods.<sup>78</sup> Bienville's arguments prevailed, and the fort was not built.

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<sup>78</sup>AC, C13a, 18: 138-141. Bienville to the Minister of Marine (April 20, 1734).

L'ors que M. Diron a avancé que le Seul moyed d'Empescher la Concurrence des Anglois avec nous chez les Tchactas, Etoit d'Etablir chez ces Sauvages un Postè que nous assurerait de leur fidelité; et qu'etant Tranquilles a cet Egard. Il n'y avoit aucum Inconvenient de permettre a ces anglois le Commerce avec nos habitants de la Mobile: l'ors dis-je qu'il a avancé cette proposition il na pas bien Connu les Veritables interést de la Colonie, ou plus tost il a trop Ecouté des Interest particuliers qui souvent nous aveuglent, quand nous avons du faible pour Eux; Je Condamne donc son sisteme comme Votre Grandeur,

William Bull, Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina, in a report to the Board of Trade dated July 1738 requested permission to send traders among the Choctaws. This action, Bull contended, would be beneficial to the English for two reasons: The Choctaws were the only tribe under French influence powerful enough to be feared and if they could be brought under English influence it would be possible "to cut off all communications between Canada & [sic] Louisiana." The reason for Bull's inquiry was that a group of Choctaws, led by Red Shoe, was reportedly on its way to Charleston to request the opening of trade relations with South Carolina.<sup>79</sup>

Apparently the English had also gone among the Choctaws making the claim that the prices they offered were better than those offered by the French. This charge, Bienville claimed, was false because the English took only the "large skins weighing at least two pounds. . . ." The French, on the other hand, took all pelts no matter what they

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parait le faire, par sa depesche en datte [18th September] Et je le Combas par cen raisonnements.

La nation Tchiactas est composée de Trente deux villages qui occupent Cent Lieues de Circonference, or dans quel endroit M. Diron Establirait-il son Poste, pour qu'il puisse Empescher la Communication des Anglois avec les villages Eloignes qui voudront les recevoir Il faut donc d'autres liens pour les attacher a nous, c'est par une Traitte reglee et fidellement Executée qui leur fournira Tous leurs besoins, . . .

Je pense donc que le Poste qu'on propose d'establir chez les Tchiactas serait inutile pour nous assurer la fidelité de Cette nation et si j'y tiens six soldats avec un officier, ce n' est que pour y maintenir le bon ordre parmy les Traitteurs et la bonne foy dans la Traitte, que est le point essentiel, et le plus fort lien avec lequel nous puissions les attacher a notre party.

<sup>79</sup> Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, Allen D. Chandler (ed.), vol. 5, Journal of the Earl of Egmont, 1738-1744, pp. 56-57. It is quite possible that Red Shoe had been in Charleston in 1734.

weighed. Bienville believed that, despite Red Shoe's activities, the English would have little success in drawing the Choctaws away from the French.<sup>80</sup>

However, by September 1735, Bienville was displaying a different attitude. Now, he claimed, the Choctaws were willing to trade with the English because of the cheap prices they promised. While Bienville continued to express the belief that the English would be unable to make significant inroads among the Choctaws, he did report that Red Shoe had escorted four English traders with twelve pack horses of goods into Choctaw territory. Further, Red Shoe was proposing that the Choctaws carry on trade with both the French and English--trading their large pelts to the English and their small ones to the French.<sup>81</sup> In effect, Red Shoe was suggesting to his people that they adopt a neutral position between the two European powers.

Further, to insure that Red Shoe's activities would have little impact, Bienville, as we have seen, began the construction of Fort Tombigbee, in what is now western Alabama, along the Tombigbee River.<sup>82</sup> At about the same time Minister of Marine, Count de Maurepas, informed Bienville that he should keep his trade prices low so the Indians would not trade with the English and retain their loyalty to France.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>AC, C13a, 20: 33-46.

<sup>81</sup>AC, C13a, 20: 185-191. Bienville to the Minister of Marine (September 9, 1735).

<sup>82</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 353.

<sup>83</sup>AC, B, 363: 610-612. The Minister of Marine to Bienville (October 4, 1735).

Apparently, Bienville's actions had some impact: the colony requested that seven thousand ells--lengths between 28 and 45 inches--of Limbourg cloth be supplied to the colony for Indian trade. Also, in 1739, the French shipped approximately fifty thousand pelts from Louisiana.<sup>84</sup>

The resurgence of interest in the Louisiana colony was apparently short lived; for the insufficiency of trade goods continued to be a problem. Bienville complained about the lack of trade goods as did d'Artaguette, who reported that the lack of goods was so severe that the Choctaws did not even have spades with which to prepare the soil for planting. If the situation were not soon rectified, the Choctaws would be forced to trade with the English. "There is no way to keep the English from settling in their tribe if we do not have the foresight to supply them with trading goods."<sup>85</sup>

The acute shortage of supplies was apparent during time of war between France and England. One of the major topics in the correspondence of the Marquis de Vaudreuil was the lack of trade goods. Soon after Vaudreuil assumed his post, war broke out between France and England--King George's War (1744). Governor Vaudreuil informed Maurepas that the lack of supplies was causing the Indians to believe that France was poor, but that if enough merchandise was made available French control of Louisiana would be assured.<sup>86</sup> The English, he contended, were using the

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<sup>84</sup>AC, C13a, 21: 111-113. Also, see Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 357.

<sup>85</sup>AC, C13a, 22: 223-312. Diron d'Artaguette to Maurepas (May 8, 1737). See also, Rowland, French Domain, 2: 542. Périer had also complained about the lack of trade goods in 1727.

<sup>86</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers, The Letter Books, 1: 17 (February 12, 1744).

poor position of the French to their own advantage, thus threatening the continuation of French control of Louisiana.<sup>87</sup>

Vaudreuil's evaluation of the English proved to be correct. Soon after the outbreak of King George's War, the English trader Lachlan McGillivray proposed that a merchant be sent to the Choctaws, for this would be the "best means to prevent the French employing them against us as they have often done, and particularly by waylaying the Path and destroying our Chickasaw [sic] Traders, . . ."<sup>88</sup> By 1746 James Adair had opened trade with Red Shoe.<sup>89</sup> Vaudreuil's fears were becoming a reality.

The French government in Paris was aware of the problem of trade that came about with the outbreak of war. In a letter dated April 30, 1744, Maurepas told Vaudreuil that the monarchy would attempt to encourage French merchants to send supplies to Louisiana, but that he doubted that they would send many shiploads. To rectify the situation Maurepas informed the Governor that if any foreign ship happened to come to Louisiana it should be allowed to sell its cargo. Vaudreuil was, however, to be careful that the ship members were not spies who would report to the English the situation that existed in the colony.<sup>90</sup>

Despite the problem of supplying trade goods to Louisiana during time of war, it is evident that some trade was maintained with France.

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 23 (May 10, 1744).

<sup>88</sup>Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 6: 309.

<sup>89</sup>James Adair, History of the American Indians, ed. S. C. Williams (1930; New York: Promontory Press, n.d.), x.

<sup>90</sup>AC, B, 78: 473. Maurepas to Vaudreuil.

During the years between 1743 and 1746, the value of fur trade with Louisiana was 82,500 livres. In 1749, the value of French presents to the Indians was 62,000 livres.<sup>91</sup> The maintenance of trade, however restricted, and the continuation of giving presents to the Indians proved to be fruitful. Although the English continued to attempt to persuade the Choctaws to switch their loyalty, they remained fairly loyal to the French throughout the war.

Vaudreuil even attempted to turn the tables on the English during the course of King George's War by weakening the loyalty of the Chickasaws to the English. Chanstabe Mingo, a Chickasaw chief of the western villages, proposed that peace be established between the Chickasaws and the French. Vaudreuil was receptive to this idea; however, he realized that success in this venture depended upon the old problem of supplying the Chickasaws with trade goods. The Governor attempted to convince Maurepas that supplying the necessary amount of trade goods would eventually result in the economic growth of Louisiana. If the Chickasaws could be won over, the entire fur trade of the Mississippi Valley would be opened to France. In Vaudreuil's view, if this were accomplished French merchants would be encouraged to engage in the trade; and the monarchy would no longer be required to underwrite the cost of Indian trade.<sup>92</sup>

The French government, however, did not have the ability to provide Louisiana with the supplies needed to implement Vaudreuil's program.

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<sup>91</sup>AC, C13a, 29: 109-111. See also, Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, pp. 210, 360.

<sup>92</sup>The Vaudreuil Papers: The Letter Books, 1: 86 (April 12, 1746).

At the time the war began, France had six hundred ships engaged in colonial trade; but by the end of 1745, half of these ships had been captured by the English. As a result, between 1744 and 1750, only two French ships a year, on the average, were able to get to Louisiana.<sup>93</sup> While these ships did bring goods for the Indian trade, the amount was not enough to allow Vaudreuil to carry out his policy. A further hindrance to Vaudreuil's plan was that Chanstabe Mingo did not represent the majority of the Chickasaws--he spoke only for those villages that were bearing the brunt of French pressure. The inability to supply the needs not only of the Chickasaws, but even the Choctaws, allowed the English to enjoy some success among the Indians allied with France.

Despite the assassination of Red Shoe in 1747, the English continued to encourage at least a portion of the tribe to give up their French alliance. In 1749, an English trader by the name of John Highrider reported to Governor Glen of South Carolina that he had been warmly received by the western Choctaws, who gladly accepted the gifts that Glen had sent them and were willing to pledge their devotion to the English.<sup>94</sup> The French, however, quickly countered Highrider's attempt at subversion by supplying the western Choctaws with arms and ammunition. At the same time Vaudreuil encouraged the Choctaws to attack any English traders whom they might encounter.<sup>95</sup> So successful were the French countermeasures

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<sup>93</sup>Surrey, The Commerce of Louisiana, p. 202.

<sup>94</sup>W. L. McDowell (ed.), Colonial Records of South Carolina Relating to Indian Affairs (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), p. 38.

<sup>95</sup>AC, B, 89: 352. Maurepas to Vaudreuil (February 14, 1749). Maurepas commended Vaudreuil for maintaining the loyalty of the western

that Highrider reported that "it is not in the power of us that trade there to support them any longer, for most ous [of us?] have had very great losses by the French Party, who take our Horses and Goods wherever they can find them, so that they have almost ruined us."<sup>96</sup>

Again in 1751, the British attempted to send presents to the Choctaws in an effort to increase their influence among them. The English traders, however, failed to arrive at the place where they were to meet their Choctaw escort, thus enabling the French to convince the Choctaws that the English were not serious in their desire to provide the tribe with trade goods.<sup>97</sup> By 1752 English traders were reporting that opportunity to detach the Choctaws from the French appeared to be very dismal.<sup>98</sup>

The French were not always simply reacting to British attempts to subvert their Indian allies. For example, at the beginning of the French and Indian War, Vaudreuil attempted to create an alliance with the Creeks and Chickasaws, along with the Choctaws, against the English of South Carolina and Georgia. According to an English source, a French emissary appeared before a meeting of Creek chiefs in the winter of 1754 and informed them of the existence of an English plot to use the Cherokee tribe to destroy the Creeks. According to the French emissary, the

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Choctaws by increasing the presents in light of Red Shoe's recent activities. He also said he would like to examine the accounts of these expenditures.

<sup>96</sup>Col. Rec. of S. C. Relating to Indian Affairs, p. 39.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 365.

Cherokees were going to make peace with the Creeks and then while the Creek warriors were hunting, fall on their villages and destroy the tribe. The emissary also told the Creeks that the British desired to take away their homeland while the French had no such designs.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, it would be in the best interests of the Creeks to side with the French against their common enemy.

In March 1755 some Creek chiefs journeyed to Mobile to meet with Governor Kérlerrec. Kérlerrec repeated the message the chiefs had heard the previous winter and provided the Creeks with presents in an effort to persuade them to join the French. The Creek chiefs, however, refused to make a commitment and returned to their villages.<sup>100</sup>

Undaunted, the French continued to attempt to enhance their standing among the uncommitted Creeks. In May 1755 the French agreed to sell their goods at the same price the English were charging. This greatly distressed the English, who feared that if the French were able to "supply them with sufficient quantities of goods; in all human probability and without immediate Intposition [sic] of Providence it will be attended with the most fatal Consequences to the British interests in the Creek Nations."<sup>101</sup> For a period of time, it appeared that the French were going to be successful in gaining the Creeks to their side. An English trader reported that the French, backing their previous story of an imminent Cherokee attack with substantial presents, had "kept the Indians in a kind of a stir all winter." The English trader continued stating:

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., pp. 59-60.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

"I took all opportunities to confute what they [the French] were pleased to advance in private and public, but the French have got presents to dispose of and knows [sic] very well how to apply them which is more prevailing with the Indians than all the Rhetorick of Aristotle and makes my discourse lost in the air very often; for presents well applied and better timed can do a great many things."<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately for French prospects, the problem that had beset the colony throughout its existence once more appeared--the insufficiency of trade goods. By 1762 Governor Kérlerrec was repeating the complaint of his predecessors and predicting the loss of the Indians to the English. While the prediction that the Indians would be lost to the English did not come true, France, nevertheless, lost Louisiana.<sup>103</sup>

In 1763 the Treaty of Paris brought an end to the French and Indian War and the removal of France as a colonial power in North America. The lack of trade goods was partially responsible for the French failure. On the other hand, it was trade and the French trader that deserve credit for such success as the French had enjoyed among the Indian tribes of the southeast. Throughout the period 1700-1763, the French were numerically inferior to the English in North America. It was difficult for the French government to encourage colonists to go to Louisiana and also difficult to get them to stay in the colony. In one way, this may have helped French-Indian relations. There were relatively few French homesteaders, and so the French did not encroach as much on Indian land as

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp. 60, 62.

<sup>103</sup> Charles Gayarré, Louisiana: Its Colonial History and Romance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1851), p. 91.

did the English. As there were few Frenchmen present, it was difficult for the Indians to conceive that their land was "owned" by France. Also the French Governors of Louisiana generally cautioned those under their command to treat the Indian fairly and to keep their word with them.

Generally, the Indians liked the French better than they did the English. A few French learned their languages and usually left their women alone, though it was common for a Frenchman to take an Indian maiden for his wife and to begin to live with the Indians. Perhaps another aspect in this appreciation was the attitude that the French displayed toward the Indian's gun--his most prized possession. The rifle had a meaning far greater than a mere tool to kill animals or an enemy. When a rifle was broken, the French would repair it rather than give the Indian a replacement. This the Indian appreciated.<sup>104</sup>

Finally, the French often got more mileage out of their trade goods with the Indians than did the British. With the exception of Perier's administration, the French gave the presents to the more highly respected chiefs of the Choctaws who in turn gave them out to their followers.<sup>105</sup> This practice allowed an older group of leaders, a group that had a long association with the French, to retain their positions of power. The French gained a great deal of influence over a large number of Indians by holding the affection of a few.

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<sup>104</sup>It might be argued that the French did this because of the lack of trade goods. This may be true. However, it does not negate the fact that the warrior viewed his weapon in a special light and appreciated the French when they repaired it.

<sup>105</sup>Edmond Atkin, Indians of the Southern Colonial Frontier: the Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755, W. R. Jacobs (ed.), (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 9-10.

After the defeat of the French forces in 1763, the English moved quickly to supplant French influence among the Indians in what had been French Louisiana. The only exception was the area around New Orleans which France had ceded to Spain. Despite the appearance of Indian traders from South Carolina and Georgia among the former Indian allies of France, some of the Indian tribes, particularly the Choctaws, displayed a tendency to remember, with fondness, their former association with the French. Further complicating the situation for the English was the presence of Frenchmen in New Orleans, Frenchmen who continued to carry on trade with the Indian tribes.

Some Englishmen professed to believe that the continuation of French activity among the Indian tribes was done on orders from the French government;<sup>106</sup> implying, perhaps, that the French government had not fully accepted the loss of its North American territories. A better interpretation of the continuing French interest may be that first of all the Indian tribes were more familiar with the French traders and felt more at ease with them. Second, it would be illogical to assume that French trade with the Indians would automatically cease with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Third, it would take time for English traders to establish themselves in sufficient numbers to supply the needs of the Indians in their newly acquired territory.

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<sup>106</sup>London Public Record Office (Colonial Office), Correspondence between John Stuart, Superintendent for Indian Affairs for the Southern District of North America; and the Cherokees; and Miscellaneous Indian Documents Relating to Indian Affairs in the South. vol. 1, p. 20. Copied by Grant Foreman in London. Foreman Manuscripts. "Letter of Sir Willaim Johnson to Stuart" (September 17, 1765).

There is some evidence to support the above suggestions. The English, after the removal of the French, apparently saw little reason to maintain the practice of granting the annual presents as the French had done. England was, after all, now supreme in North America and Indian gifts cost money. The relationship that the English desired to establish with the Indians could now be solely a business one. The Choctaws, however, had grown accustomed to the annual presents and, while they accepted the English, they desired that the practice of providing gifts be continued. Furthermore, the French in New Orleans were continuing to send traders among the Choctaws.<sup>107</sup> It is doubtful that these traders could refrain from making uncomplimentary comparisons between the way the French had treated the Indians and the way the English were treating them.

While the Treaty of Paris transferred the ownership of eastern Louisiana to Great Britain, the British realized that if they were to possess the territory with a minimum of trouble, the Indian tribes formerly allied with France would have to accept the transfer. To accomplish the goal the government of Britain developed a plan to obtain the loyalty of the former French allies for Britain. The British called for a meeting of all tribes to take place at Augusta, Georgia. At the meeting the British spokesmen were to emphasize to the tribes that Britain desired the friendship of the Indians. To accomplish the friendship, trade would be maintained and the forts which existed in the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, Stuart to Lords Commissioners for Trade & Plantations (December 2, 1766), pp. 92-93. Stuart to Lords Commissioners for Trade & Plantations (July 10, 1766), pp. 77-78.

southeast would not be manned by large numbers of British troops: only enough troops to insure that the traders among the Indians would be regulated and unable to take advantage of the Indians. If the matter was brought up, the British spokesmen were to agree not to staff any fort with soldiers.<sup>108</sup> The proposed meeting at Augusta became more important when news reached the British of Pontiac's conspiracy, which began in the northwest in May 1763.

Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, led a number of northwestern tribes against the British during 1763 and 1764. The apparent reasons behind Pontiac's action was a fear of British encroachments, the high prices the British traders demanded for trade goods, and the unwillingness of the British to provide the Indians with presents as the French had done.<sup>109</sup> Before he was finally put down, Pontiac's forces had captured every British frontier outpost with the exception of Detroit.<sup>110</sup> Although the rebellion had not succeeded, the British wished to forestall the possibility of having to pacify the south through military actions. As a result the meeting with the southeastern tribes at Augusta took on added importance.

In November 1763 the Congress of Augusta formally opened. At the meeting were representatives from the Creeks, the Cherokees, the Catawbas, the Chickasaws, and the Choctaws. The British, aware of the relationship

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<sup>108</sup>John R. Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1944), p. 181.

<sup>109</sup>Francis Parkman, The Conspiracy of Pontiac (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 146-158.

<sup>110</sup>Howard H. Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), pp. 130-228.

that existed between the Choctaws and the French, agreed to maintain Mobile as the source of trade with the Choctaws. They also informed the Choctaws that there would be no lack of trade goods and that the prices would be well regulated.<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, Jean Jacques d'Abbadie, who replaced Kérlerrec as Governor of Louisiana,<sup>112</sup> was holding a meeting with the Choctaws at Mobile. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the tribe of the transfer of eastern Louisiana to Great Britain and to distribute presents to the tribe.<sup>113</sup> During the course of Abbadie's meeting Major Robert Farmar, who was sent by the British to assume command of Mobile, arrived and he also participated in the meeting. In his speeches to the tribal leaders, Farmar emphasized that the British would maintain the practice of the annual distribution of presents.<sup>114</sup>

In April 1764 John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern District, arrived at Mobile for a meeting with the Choctaws and the Chickasaws. The purpose of the meeting was to conclude a treaty with the Choctaws and to obtain the help of the tribe in the acceptance of the smaller tribes of the region of British occupation of eastern Louisiana. At the meeting Stuart gave presents to the leaders of the tribe, exchanged their French medals for British medals, established prices

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<sup>111</sup> Alden, John Stuart, pp. 182-183.

<sup>112</sup> D'Abbadie's title was Director-General. The title was used to indicate the change in status of Louisiana-French relations.

<sup>113</sup> AC, C13a, 43: 284-285. The Historical Journal of Director-General d'Abbadie (November 14, 1763).

<sup>114</sup> Alden, John Stuart, p. 195.

for trade goods, and obtained promises from the tribal leadership that the tribe would live in peace with the British.<sup>115</sup>

The British had replaced the French as the European nation with whom the Choctaws would trade for European goods. Although the French had been removed from North America and the Spanish posed little threat to British interests in the southeast, the British found it necessary to continue the practices that had been established by the French during their long association with the Choctaws. Evidence of this may be seen in the estimate of the cost of establishing the British government in the newly acquired territory. In the proposed budget, an item entitled "an Allowance for Purchase of a proper assortment of goods for presents to the Indians" was budgeted for 1,000. The entire budget was 4,700.<sup>116</sup> It would appear that the British, as they assumed command of eastern Louisiana, adopted the same policy toward the Choctaws as the French had utilized in their long association with the tribe.

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., pp. 201-203.

<sup>116</sup>Foreman Manuscripts, III, p. 319. Estimate of the Civil Establishment of His Majesty's Province of East Florida, and other incidental expenses attending the same from the 24th of June, 1766, to the 24th of June, 1767.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

In both its government and Indian policy the French regime in Louisiana was patterned after that which existed in Canada. The main difference in the two colonies was that Louisiana did not enjoy as good an economic climate nor have as large a population as did Canada. Louisiana, established some one hundred years after Canada, was about one hundred years behind the northern colony in economic development and population growth. These problems and the lack of a significant military presence were partially offset by the Choctaw alliance. The failure of France to hold Louisiana after 1762 was not due to any significant weakness inherent in the colony's Indian policy which successfully maintained the majority of the Choctaws in the interest of France.

The colonial government in its efforts to achieve Choctaw loyalty utilized all means at its disposal. The methods employed at the close of the period under consideration, however, were not sufficient to counteract events in France—events over which the colonial government had no control. By 1762 the French government viewed Louisiana primarily in terms of the colony's potential use in gaining for France either a loan from Spain or a Spanish alliance directed against Great Britain.

While numerous memoirs were written describing the potential for economic development in Louisiana, the population was too small to engage in significant agricultural activities. Also, lucrative mineral discoveries were not forthcoming as had been anticipated. Even when the

monarchy advised the colony to develop trade relations with other French colonies, such as the West Indies, it proved to be impractical because Louisiana had little it could trade. Louisiana simply possessed few of the economic criteria that were necessary for the growth of trade. For example, although the population of the colony was small, it was difficult to feed its limited population. At times the colonial administration was forced to cut the rations of the soldiers and even, apparently, carry on clandestine trade with the enemies of France in order to feed the population.

The unconcern which France exhibited for its Louisiana colony evidently was shared by Britain, for during the French and Indian War the British directed no military expeditions against Louisiana. Instead they concentrated on Canada, the French West Indies, and, after Spain joined the war, Cuba. Britain concentrated on these areas because of their economic importance for her enemies; or, in the case of Canada, because of the threat it posed toward English colonial possessions. Louisiana, on the other hand, was not important enough--either economically or militarily--to warrant a British military expedition.

In their relations with the Choctaws, the French governors of Louisiana used the tribe for their own ends. The record indicates that they viewed the Choctaws primarily as a force that could be utilized against the English and their Chickasaw allies. The utilization of the Choctaw tribe in this manner was necessary because of the economic and military position of Louisiana when compared to that of South Carolina. South Carolina's association with the Chickasaws was of particular concern to the leaders of the French colony. The geographic position

of the Chickasaws enabled the tribe to disrupt the lines of communication between Louisiana and Canada, and the English used the tribe to gain influence among the Choctaws.

To counteract the Chickasaws, the French encouraged their Choctaw allies to attack and otherwise harass them at every opportunity. In bringing this about the French adopted what appeared, at first, to be harsh tactics such as paying for Chickasaw scalps and seeking the total annihilation of the tribe. The French even used these tactics against some of their Choctaw allies when they became too friendly with the Chickasaws.

At the same time the French pointed out to the Choctaws that they were their loyal friends, and that they respected the Indians. They also claimed that the goal of their colonial undertaking was to accomplish the Christianization and civilization of the native population of North America. The French government subsidized Jesuit missionaries among the Indians, but, like the British, the missionaries were unable to claim that they had been successful in converting large numbers of Indians to the Christian faith. In practice, the missionary was utilized as an extension of the efforts of the colonial governments to retain the loyalty of the Choctaws. Father Michael Beaudouin, for example, was expected to inform the colonial administration of the attitude of the Choctaws toward the French, and of any intercourse between the tribe and the English. When the Governor desired to make a message known to the Choctaws, the missionary was called upon to deliver it. Father Philip Watrin, when evaluating the importance of the missionary, dwelt on the missionaries' ability to maintain the loyalty of the Indians for France, not on the number of converts they had made for the Church.

Thus, it would appear that while the missionary may have initially intended to convert the Indians to Christianity, and the government may originally have entertained such a hope, this goal was soon submerged in exigencies of the reality of the colonial situation in Louisiana. In the realm of French-Indian relations, a single missionary was as important as a company of French troops.

The French were also able to maintain a sufficient amount of trade goods enabling them to retain the loyalty of the majority of the Choctaw tribe. They were, however, unable to increase their trade supplies to a point where they could utilize trade as a means to sway Indian tribes who were loyal to the English over to the French side. Assuming that the Chickasaws were sincere in their willingness to reach a peace agreement with the French, it is evident that the French were unable to pursue this because they could not meet the trade needs of the tribe--needs that could be fulfilled by the British. It is also clear that the British possessed more trade goods, and were able to sell them at a cheaper price than were the French. This enabled the British to achieve some success among the Choctaws while the French were unable to record corresponding success among the Chickasaws. For this state of affairs, the French government must bear the blame. While the French monarchy endeavored to send goods to Louisiana and did send several ships per year, it was significantly unsuccessful in encouraging French merchants to undertake any extensive effort to supply the colony with an abundance of goods. The potential for private profit simply had not been developed, as is seen in the failure of the Crozat Company.

The lack of trade goods had an impact on the French relations with the Choctaws. It was the underlying reason for Red Shoe to be, at first, amenable to English overtures and then to break completely with the French. The inability to supply the trade goods that the Choctaw allies of France desired also opened the way for British influence among them. In the case of the Choctaws, it was usually through the Chickasaws that the English attempted to subvert the tribe to their interest. In order to hold the loyalty of the Choctaws, France was required to modify the Indian policy envisioned by Iberville in 1700.

Iberville had apparently hoped to create a system of French-Indian alliances that would contain the English settlements along the Atlantic coast. After his untimely death, his brother, Bienville, continued the policy that was based upon friendly relations with all the tribes of the lower Mississippi basin. Bienville, however, was forced to change the policy when it became apparent that the British were in a better position to limit French territorial growth than the French were to limit British growth. Bienville thus opted for the extermination of the Chickasaws whom he believed to be the main hindrance to peaceful relations with the Choctaws. Bienville's failure to control the Chickasaws may be traced primarily to a lack of trade goods. The English were able, on the other hand, to maintain their close association with the Chickasaws and make serious inroads among the Choctaws because they had an abundance of trade goods. To counter British success, the French utilized missionaries and propaganda, and when these tactics failed, finally turned to force.

Even so, the evidence indicates that the Choctaws considered the French to be their friends. The French adopted customs of the tribe, as

is indicated by Bienville's sponsorship of a plan to send young boys to live with the tribe and learn their language. More of the French lived among the Indians, exhibited few social biases, and endeavored to make sure that French trade was carried on in an honest basis. Since Indian trade among the French was usually carried on as a government sponsored activity, it was easier for the French to prevent abuses. All of these activities, however, were done with one goal in mind--to make sure the Choctaws remained loyal to the French.

To further insure their control over the Choctaws, the French continued a policy originally devised in Canada, the practice of designating certain chiefs in the tribe as "Medal Chiefs." Although this practice was used by the English also, it was of more importance to the French; it allowed the most judicious use of presents and at the same time placed French-Indian relations on a level similar to that which existed among the nations of Europe in their relations with one another. Through the system, the Indians began to develop a sense of authority which the French, since they controlled the authoritative figures, were able to use for their goals.

However, the influence of the French on the Choctaws appears to have been primarily one way. When the civilizing effect of the French on the Choctaws is evaluated, it appears to have been minimal. A number of historians have stated that the French had a better understanding and a better relationship with the Indians than did the English. This evaluation seems to be true. But upon what basis did this understanding rest? Rather than civilizing the Indians, it appears, at least among the French of Louisiana, that the French more often fell to the level

of Indian civilization rather than bringing the Indians up to the level of French civilization. Because Louisiana was a frontier colony, it attracted the type of individual usually associated with the frontier--generally those from the lower social classes, individuals who were dissatisfied, those who were forced to become colonists as a form of punishment or because they were poor. The colonists adopted Indian customs and manners, intermarried with the Indians and relied upon the Indians to a much greater degree than did English colonists of the same time period. Because of this reliance, they became close students of the Indian and his way of life.

The colonial regime was also constantly encouraging the Choctaws to attack the enemies of the colony. They paid for scalps that were brought into the forts and supplied the Choctaws with arms and ammunition to carry on their attacks. They could be as savage in their conduct as the Indians tended to be. Bienville, for example, required that the Chickasaws deliver the Natchez, who had fled to the tribe for protection, to the French prior to agreeing to peace with the Chickasaws. Vaudreuil seemingly took pride in the fact that the loyal Choctaws brought him one hundred scalps and three skulls taken from the eastern villages during the course of the Choctaw rebellion.

While it certainly would not be correct to say that the French were less civilized than were the English, it might be correct to conclude that the circumstances in French Louisiana were such as to require that the French adopt some of the attributes of the Indians. Being fewer in number and weaker militarily, the French of Louisiana were placed in a position of having to rely more on their Choctaw allies than the

British of South Carolina had to rely on their Indian allies. Because of this reliance, they became more like their allies than their allies became like them. Louisiana began as a frontier colony and remained such throughout its association with the French.

In general it appears that the French in their relationship with the Choctaws ever more steadily focused this connection on one main goal, that is, to use the Choctaws as a means to counterbalance the advantages that the British enjoyed because of their greater population and wealth in the southeast. Louisiana, lacking these attributes, could hope to remain a French colony only through military power. Because French military personnel were not numerous in the colony, it was imperative that they be supplemented by other forces. The Choctaws, as the largest tribe in the area under French influence, provided the necessary supplement.

It is also apparent that the South Carolina government was relatively unconcerned with the French colony. While the government of South Carolina supplied its Chickasaw allies with the military means to withstand French pressure, it did not engage in major military expeditions, involving either colonial or regular troops, against Louisiana. Instead, South Carolina relied on her Indian allies and the greater amount of British trade goods to prevent the French from making significant territorial gains in the region.

The French government had not shown itself willing to undertake the commitment--economic and military--necessary to provide for the well-being of Louisiana. Although the governors of Louisiana requested that the colony receive greater economic help from France and pointed out the potential consequences of the failure to provide more aid, their plans

fell on deaf ears. In Paris the primary concern seems to have been on the retention of the French West Indies which was of economic benefit to France. Louisiana, on the other hand, had cost the French treasury more than had been derived from the colony in either an economic sense or in prestige. From the view of the home government it did not seem worthwhile to make a great effort to retain a colony that had provided so little for France.

In the final analysis, Louisiana appears not to have been regarded as of first-ranking importance in the colonization efforts of the French government in the eighteenth century. Using the resources of Louisiana itself, there was little hope of developing the colony past the point of a frontier settlement. If France was to control successfully the territory, a close association with the Choctaws was imperative; and the governors of Louisiana were able to achieve such an association through the use of the missionary, judicious use of available trade goods, and a diplomacy involving the acceptance of the Indian way of life. But, the relationship between the French and the Choctaws was not based primarily on humanitarianism; for the French, it was a relationship of necessity.

In the aftermath of the French rule, the practice of annually distributing gifts to the Choctaws was retained by the British, as they took over eastern Louisiana. Presumably the British maintained the practice for their own reasons--to ensure that the French would not be able to use any discontent that might be caused by stopping the annual gifts as a means of interjecting themselves once more into the affairs of the southeast. Although some Indians complained about the tardiness of the British in assuming their obligations; i.e. gifts, the Choctaws did not

find it difficult to accept the British nor did they cause the British any great problems. Thus we can conclude by saying that the Choctaws were willing to support any European power that was willing, and able, to meet their desire for European goods.

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