European Empires in West Florida and Louisiana

by

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Introduction:
Identities and Allegiances: The Trial of Ross, Campbell, and Graiden

Standing in the visitor’s hall of the New Orleans public prison on May 23, 1778, Robert Ross contended one last time that he had not violated his allegiance to the Province of Louisiana and the Spanish Crown, nor had he disturbed the “publick tranquility.”1 Moments later, despite Ross’s pleas, Bernardo de Gálvez, governor of the Province, delivered the sentence to Ross and John Campbell and Alexander Graiden, two men tried for the same cause. The three men were condemned with “perpetual banishment” from the Spanish colony of Louisiana, never to return again. They also would have to pay fees for the cost of conducting the trial. But Ross, Campbell, and Graiden were not able to understand the fates delivered to them in Spanish. They had to wait for the sentence to be properly recorded before Jacinto Panis, one of the interpreters involved in the trial, could individually tell each man the court’s decision.2

The sentencing was the final scene of the trial of the residents of the British colony, West Florida, regarding their actions against American raiders in Louisiana territory. The verdict, however, did not represent the end of conflict between settlers of West Florida and Louisiana; nor did it resolve the issue of identity among the members of the mixed populations found in the colonies along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico between 1763 and 1781. But the trial and its treatment of identity and

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1 Petition to Peter Chester, 11 September 1778, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, Special Collections and Archives, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
2 Translation of Spanish Proceedings, 14 May 1778, New Orleans, translated by Jacinto Panis or one of the cabildo’s other translators, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, Special Collections and Archives, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
allegiance are an example that can be used to examine the identities of West Florida and Louisiana colonists. The events that led to the trial were extraordinary, but they are the result of interactions that regularly occurred among settlers.

Ross, Campbell, and Graiden must have been surprised, angered, or overwhelmed by the sentence because they asked for a copy of the transcript of the trial. They were quickly denied that privilege, and instead, Gálvez took their request as an opportunity to reprimand them once more. He said that

as persons culpable of the enterprises they had formed from which Consequences prejudicial to this Government and to the State might result and that thro [sic] the mere impulse of Individuals who were sollicitors to acquire merit but upon false supposition. That he could not give them an Official Copy seeing that they ought not to be Admitted to a hearing the matter being proved upon them. He has not don [sic] them any prejudice by banishing them seeing that they are Strangers.

Gálvez did allow, however, that Ross, Campbell, and Graiden receive a “simple Copy of the proceedings,” including an English translation, so that they “might see and reflect on the Crimes which they had entered on from Ignorance or from Malice.”

But rather than reflect, Ross and Campbell sent the Spanish and English copies of the trial as an appendage to a petition to Peter Chester, the governor of West Florida. On September 11, 1778, Ross and Campbell wrote in the hopes of receiving “publick Vindication” after the sentence they received in what they thought was an unfair trial. They disagreed with Gálvez’s claim to impartiality and thought they were subjected to the “Arbitrary and despotick conduct of Governor Gálvez.” The petition includes their account of the events between March and May 1778 and is helpful in reconstructing the narrative and understanding the accusations against Ross, Campbell, and Graiden.

3 Ibid.
Ross, Campbell, and Graiden first appeared in a New Orleans court on May 19, only four days before the sentence was delivered. The men, all British subjects, were accused of conspiring against the Spanish Crown. The trial was quick, but it was important to the governors of Spanish Louisiana. Many of the city’s administrators participated in the trial. At the end of each testimony or presentation of evidence, the transcript shows the signatures of the men who were part of the New Orleans cabildo, the town council found in cities throughout the Spanish empire. Gálvez directed the trial—what evidence was presented, who was allowed to speak—while Jacinto Panis and Miguel Antonio Edwards translated. Andre Almonastire y Roxas, the city notary whose signature can be found on nearly all records of the New Orleans government from 1769 to the 1780s, took notes. Eugenio Alvarez, Sergeant of the Battallion of the fort at New Orleans and the man who put Ross and Campbell in prison, and Francisco Munos Goaler, “of the Kings [sic] Prison of this City,” also were present. Each of these men was a Spanish subject, and at the very beginning of the trial, each appeared before Almonastire y Roxas and “before [him] Sworn by God and the Cross under the Oath promised to declare the truth.”

The trial continued with the presentation of a number of letters that Gálvez believed contained the plot of a British insurrection in Spanish Louisiana. In the weeks before the trial, Graiden had been acting as a messenger for Ross and Campbell, carrying letters from New Orleans to British administrators, traders, and military leaders. The letters include important names in the history of West Florida such as William Dunbar, a trader and surveyor, Colonel Hutchins, a British general stationed in the British town of Natchez, John Blommart, also a soldier in Britain’s

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4 Ibid.
army, a trader, and perhaps a land speculator as well, and John Fitzpatrick, a trader based in the British town of Manchac. The letters were seized from the houses of Dunbar and Hutchins, and one was even found in the waistband of Campbell’s pants, “at the knee of his Breeches next to his Skin.”

The evidence consists of nineteen letters that give a general idea of the relationships between the people involved, how the letters circulated, who might have been involved in the suspected plan, and what Ross, Campbell, and Graiden knew about a shipment of goods to American revolutionaries at Fort Pitt departing from New Orleans. Of these nineteen letters, Gálvez was particularly concerned with four letters sent to Hutchins and Dunbar. Gálvez believed that these four letters contained clear intentions of rebellion.

On May 20th, after a lengthy presentation of letters A through S, Campbell was finally called before Gálvez to testify. He was the first of the three accused men to do so. First, though, he had to promise to tell the truth, and “being of the Protestant Religion,” he was not administered the same oath as the Spanish and Catholic administrators before him. Instead, Campbell “took Oath by God our Lord and that which he believes of the Bible and Holy Evangelists under which Oath he promises to declare the truth.” Ross and Graiden, also Protestants, began their questioning periods with the same oath. The different oaths show how religion contributed to identity formation and perhaps even fostered distrust. After each man swore to tell the truth, he was asked a number of questions and it is from this information that the

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
events of the American raids and the men’s actions in Louisiana in 1778 begin to unfold.

Ross and Campbell were subjects of His Britannic Majesty and lived in the British colony of West Florida until March of 1778. The two men were natives of Scotland who immigrated to the New World. In West Florida, Ross worked as a merchant, while Campbell served as a commander of the British army and a merchant. Graiden also had British origins. He was originally from Pennsylvania “in English America,” but in March of 1778, where our story begins, he lived in Spanish New Orleans.7

In his first period of questioning, Gálvez asked Campbell if he was “in friendship with Robert Ross,” and Campbell responded that he was. In letter C of the evidence, a card Ross sent to Campbell, Ross asks, “Can you come and dine with Me.” In the same string of questions, Gálvez asked if Campbell knew Graiden, and again, Campbell replied, “Yes.” When Ross was asked “whether he knows Graiden to be a Good Man” Ross responded that he knew nothing about Graiden except that he was a faithful subject of the British Crown.8 Unlike the friendship that Ross and Campbell had, Graiden seemed to be more of an acquaintance. Campbell and Ross mainly knew Graiden through a working relationship. Graiden carried letters for Campbell and Ross containing information that became the controversial topic of this trial.

In March 1778, Ross, Campbell, and other British residents of West Florida were forced to leave their plantations along the Mississippi River when a group of

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
American raiders ransacked and pillaged the settlements. The displaced Britons placed high value on their land, but after the attacks, they felt they had to leave. They complained that the British government did not provide much protection, and as a result, they took up residence in New Orleans.9

Upon their arrival in New Orleans, Ross, Campbell, and other British subjects wrote to Governor Gálvez asking for personal protection and the protection of their property. Gálvez responded with a letter on April 11 agreeing to provide protection. But on April 16, the British subjects in New Orleans received another letter from Gálvez, this time requiring that they sign an oath of allegiance. The taking of oaths of allegiance was a common practice in Louisiana and West Florida, and throughout the records of these colonies, there are numerous references to oaths of allegiance.10

Gálvez personally wrote this oath which required the group of West Floridians to obey Spanish laws and demanded their loyalty to the Spanish Crown for as long as they resided in Louisiana. Gálvez reassured them that the oath of allegiance was only a confirmation of the protection that Gálvez would provide. According to Ross and Campbell, Gálvez made it clear that the British refugees would not have to forfeit their allegiance to Great Britain or their identity as subjects of the British majesty. He did, however, ask that they remain neutral. If they refused these conditions, they would have to leave within twenty-four hours. Although the British settlers identified as Royalists, they pledged allegiance to the Spanish Crown and remained in Louisiana.11

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9 Petition to Peter Chester.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
Also residing in New Orleans in the spring of 1778 was a group of American patriots. Many of these Americans worked for Oliver Pollock, a New Orleans based trader who supplied Americans with money and weapons during the American Revolution. Pollock, like Ross and Campbell, was originally from Great Britain and lived in North America as a result of the geographic mobility that empires made possible. Graiden, a carpenter, built the cases for the guns and goods being sent up the Mississippi by Pollock’s traders. The Americans trusted him, and Graiden soon learned about Pollock’s plan to send “800 riales” worth of weapons and supplies to American revolutionaries at Fort Pitt.12

Graiden in turn shared with Ross and Campbell the news of the aid to American rebels. Ross and Campbell, ever loyal to His Britannic Majesty and better yet, angry that the Americans were “permitted to bring to Orleans the Negroes and other plunder they had taken from his Majestys loyal Subjects” thought they had to defend their homeland.13

Soon after, Ross and Campbell enlisted Graiden as a messenger to carry letters to Colonel Hutchins of the British army, stationed at Natchez, a town located about one hundred and seventy miles north of New Orleans along the Mississippi River. At the time, Natchez was a British town surrounded by Spanish Louisiana territory. On May 15, while in transit, Graiden was seized by an Acadian while riding on Ross’s horse and saddle. That same day, in New Orleans, Ross and Campbell were

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
seized as well. The three men were put in jail in New Orleans and it is here that the trial begins.¹⁴

Perhaps the most informative letter of the collection of evidence is letter B by an anonymous author, probably Campbell or Ross, to Colonel Hutchins. The author expressed the same concerns about American shipping along the Mississippi that Ross and Campbell had. The letter is dated May 11, 1778, and it was sent from New Orleans. It begins by stating the plans of Mr. Willing, an American trader, to bring cargo on the Red River to Naketoches (probably a misspelling of the town Natchitoches), then to Arkansas to set out on the Ohio River to Fort Pitt. It adds that “Mr. Pollock and he have Concerted and are Actually putting in Execution a Plan of transporting thither the proceeds of the plunder taken from the English Plantations in several Illinois Batteaus.”¹⁵

The author thought it was an outrage “To expect this Batteaux laden with Supply to the Rebels and that to the knowledge of All the world should be permitted on any pretence whatever to pass unmolested the Forts and Forces of His Majesty is a Mockery more cruel than all that Individuals have suffered. It is believed that the Frenchmen who row in these Batteaux are to quit them at the Arkansas and that they will be replaced by American soldiers.”¹⁶

The author was sure that many people knew of the plan and that Gálvez was aiding Pollock, Willing, and the American rebels to the north. The Frenchmen the author mentioned would have been Spanish citizens. In 1762, Spain took control of Louisiana from the French, but a number of Frenchmen remained. Under Spanish

¹⁴ Translation of Spanish Proceedings.
¹⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶ Ibid.
imperial control, they maintained many of their customs, particularly their language, and continued to be recognized as French. The use of *bateaux*, the French word for boat, in a trial principally involving Britons and Spaniards suggests the prominence and enduring presence of French in Spanish Louisiana.

The author hoped that the British settlers at Natchez would prevent the shipment from passing once they learned of the shipment’s destination. Here, we see the first reference to a possible insurrection, and to an extent, the author recognized that the letter could be interpreted as treason. At the end of the letter, the author worried that the information in the letter might become public and that an innocent person might suffer. He denied any personal interest in the developing plot by claiming he “is totally unconnected in this Country and has no property in it.” Along with this letter, Graiden carried verbal instructions of how to identify the ship, *Rebecca*, as it made its way up the Mississippi past Natchez. In his testimony, Graiden denied being an accomplice in the suspected plot. Ross and Campbell believed that the ship was traveling illegally because the Americans did not have a passport granting them permission.17 The Spanish regulated travel on the Mississippi carefully, and the men assumed that Gálvez would have purposefully overlooked the boat’s path.

In his examination of Graiden, Gálvez harangued Graiden for possibly believing that the *Rebecca* did not have permission to sail. Gálvez told Graiden that “he knew the said Conand to be an Inhabitant of this City that he carried a Passport from this Government and a flag which declared him to be Spanish.”18 Graiden only

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
replied that the boat did not look Spanish and that he heard it was American. Gálvez retorted, saying that Graiden knew Conand, the ship’s captain, was a Spanish citizen. Graiden replied that he well knew that Conand was a Spanish citizen, but he also knew that the cargo of the ship was American. When asked why he did not leave the question of the ship’s allegiance or cargo up to the good and competent government of New Orleans, Graiden stated that he did not know the law. He added that “he had done nothing deserving punishment especially on the present occasion when the Royalists and Americans are at War.”

The trial continued in this matter for quite a while. Gálvez asked the three men why they had disobeyed their oath of allegiance to Spanish Louisiana and why they planned to resolve any problems without the assistance of the government. Ross, Campbell, and Graiden continued to respond that they had not broken their allegiance nor violated the laws of Louisiana. The trial is one word against another, and it is nearly impossible to tell if the Britons were truly innocent, if they had broken their oaths, or if the Spanish aided the Americans.

But more than a display of the colonial judicial process or a game of who is right and who is wrong, the trial illustrates a number of themes about the identity of the settlers of West Florida and Louisiana and the development of the two colonies, both locally and within their respective empires. Ross, Campbell, and Graiden fiercely maintained their status as British subjects, but one must wonder why. Gálvez was concerned with the stability and order of Spanish Louisiana, and throughout the examinations, Gálvez asked questions that show the importance of loyalty and political and social stability in the regionally and religiously diverse populations of

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19 Ibid.
Louisiana and West Florida. Gálvez is concerned with the “publick tranquillity” and “the Order of Good Government,” phrases that continually appear in his interrogation of Ross, Campbell, and Graiden. Ross and Campbell, however, are preoccupied with their loyalty to the British crown. Clearly, government support and involvement in the development of the colonies and settlers’ well-being is closely linked to the stability of a province and the allegiance of its settlers.

In this regard, the trial can be viewed as a result of settlers’ interactions with each other and their governments. As Rhys Isaac explains in “A Discourse on Method: Action, Structure, and Meaning,” a methodological appendix in his *The Transformation of Virginia*, societies can best be understood by examining specific historical moments as “knots of dramatic encounter suspended in nets of continuing relationships.” The “nets” take certain shapes based on how individuals interact with one another. The series of events that led to the trial and the trial itself can be thought of as knots in the net that was colonial West Florida and Louisiana. These encounters and others like it brought people of the two colonies into continued interaction. Considering Isaac’s model of interconnected webs of relationships, West Florida and Louisiana should be thought of not only as geographic regions that were part of empires but also as colonies filled with people who worked to provide for themselves and their families, were concerned with their safety, suffered from disease, drank and danced at taverns, and fought with each other.

These actions and others help to define the identities of the people who lived in West Florida and Louisiana from 1763 to 1781. In *Imagined Communities*,

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Benedict Anderson describes how repeated, simultaneous actions unite a group to form a nation, or an “imagined political community.”\textsuperscript{21} The group is “imagined” because an individual does not know each member of his or her nation, but he or she recognizes a common point between all members of the nation. Anderson claims that in early modern times, religion served as common point, and in the development of the nation-state, language and printed word created a shared identity.\textsuperscript{22}

Anderson uses newspapers to show how printed language can unite a group in the minds of its members. When one person reads the newspaper in the morning, he does not know who else in his community is reading the paper, but he assumes that at the same time, someone else is reading it. Regularly performed activities, such as reading a newspaper, create an assumed, shared identity among participants.\textsuperscript{23}

In the same way that Anderson believes that Communist-based wars in Southeast Asia began because of a group’s image of their nation and their allegiance to the nation, complaints about the use of the Mississippi River and the exchange of letters in Louisiana can be seen as manifestations of loyalty to a local community and to an imperial homeland. The term nation cannot be applied to this study since the nation as Anderson defines it did not exist in the eighteenth century, but Anderson is more concerned with the processes that bind people together to form a nation rather than the concept of the nation as we understand it today. He explains that nationalism works in similar ways as “religion” and “kinship,” and in these ways, Anderson’s explanations of nationalism are incredibly useful in understanding how Ross,

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 32-36.
Campbell, Graiden, Gálvez and other Gulf Coast settlers saw themselves as part of their respective colonies and empires.

Anderson’s examples of how communities and identities are formed are based on shared actions that unite individuals. He focuses on the actions of one community and does not consider how these people define themselves in relation to those who do not belong to their group. Anderson’s analysis of community applies to the actions and identities of Ross, Graiden, and Campbell, but it is also important to consider that these men defined themselves in opposition to the religion, language, and politics of Spanish subjects in Louisiana.

The examination of identity and allegiance of the diverse Gulf Coast populations in the face of political changes begins with Chapter 1 and a brief history of the early explorations and settlements of Florida and Louisiana from 1513 to the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Chapter 2 uses the Treaty of Paris as a milestone to mark a period of transition in the histories of Florida and Louisiana in which Florida became a British colony and Louisiana became a Spanish possession. This section describes the initial developmental periods of both colonies under their new local governments. Chapter 3 contrasts the settlement policies of Spanish Louisiana and British Florida and explains how these processes contributed to settlers’ allegiances and identities. The conclusion explains the broader issues linking settlement techniques with manifestations of individual or communal expression. British merchants living along the Mississippi River in British West Florida serve as case studies for examining individual and communal expression and finally, explaining the end of this period of transition that began in 1763.
Chapter 1:

“The finest jewel possessed by His Majesty:” An Early Colonial History of the Gulf Coast Region

The trial of Ross, Campbell, and Graiden was just one episode in a long history of Europeans in the Gulf of Mexico. The raids, allegiances, and trial of 1778 existed in a particular context, and to understand them fully, we must consider the region’s colonial history from its beginnings. Europeans first entered the Gulf Coast region in the early 1500s and continued to assert their presence through the 1800s as explorers and settlers. Spaniards were the first to enter the region by traveling north from the Caribbean Sea, and not long after, the French were exploring the area via the Mississippi River while Britain was located slightly more inland in the Carolinas. The three empires competed for land in the area and settlers often engaged in small battles. As a result, the early period of European presence along the Gulf Coast was marked by constant border changes, shifts in imperial power, and the creation and abandonment of settlements.

Ross, Campbell, and Graiden lived in and in-between the colonies of West Florida and Louisiana. By the time of the 1778 trial, these colonies had developed for about two hundred years; through various political arrangements, the two colonies had formal, physical boundaries. In 1778, West Florida was a British colony with clearly defined boundaries. As established in the Treaty of Paris, Florida consisted of land “to the East or to the South East of the River Mississippi.” 24 The British

24 Article XX of The definitive treaty of peace and friendship, between His Britannick Majesty, the Most Christian King, and the King of Spain. Concluded at Paris, the 10th Day of February, 1763. To which, The King of Portugal acceded on the same Day. Published by Authority, London, 1763. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale. Wesleyan University. 1 Apr. 2010.
government later specified that West Florida was the land bound by the Apalachiola River to the east, the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain to the west, the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to the south, and the Choctaw and Creek nations to the north. In 1778, Louisiana, a Spanish colony, lay to the west of the Mississippi River and included New Orleans. The history of shifting borders and changing political governance of these two colonies reflects the similar shifting identities of the settlers.

But before the Spanish, French, and British empires and settlers established themselves in the region, Florida and Louisiana were unexplored and unknown to Europeans. In the early years of settlement, as Europeans continued to establish themselves in the area, boundaries between empires were not set and often changed. Early Spanish explorers quickly proclaimed the land near present-day Texas to present-day Delaware to be Spanish territory, La Florida. In the process of colonization, however, La Florida decreased to the size of what is roughly known as Florida today.

In the early Spanish period of colonization, Florida was one unit. In 1763, when Florida became a British possession, the British Crown divided the colony in two for administrative purposes. As a result, there were two separate colonies, West Florida and East Florida, with two separate administrations and governors. The Spanish maintained this separation when they regained Florida in 1783. St.

25 "And Be it likewise Enacted by the Authority aforesaid…" Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
Augustine, the center of Spain’s, and later Britain’s, settlement in eastern Florida, developed differently from Pensacola, and although it is important to recognize St. Augustine as an important city in colonial Florida, it did not play a role in the history of European empires along the Gulf of Mexico.29

Europeans first entered the region in 1513 when Juan Ponce de León arrived in what he called La Florida to lead an exploration on behalf of the Spanish crown. His expedition began on the eastern coast of the peninsula and followed the coast around to the western side.30 In 1519, the Spanish returned to the area once again when Alonso Alvarez de Pineda received permission to lead an expedition. Pineda and his men landed near the Bay of Apalachee and continued westward along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, possibly going as far west as the present-day Vermillion Bay in Louisiana.31

The Spanish Crown endorsed subsequent Spanish expeditions to the present-day southeastern United States, but the monarchy was not deeply interested in the area along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico. A number of explorers wrote that La Florida did not have much to offer: the peninsula was densely wooded in some areas while swampy in others.32 These unfavorable environmental conditions would have complicated colonial settlement and development. In addition, colonial efforts seemed inauspicious and unnecessary after the discovery of gold and silver in Mexico and Peru. As a result of these two factors, Florida was relegated to a borderland colony of secondary importance.

29 Meinig, The Shaping of America, 280.
30 Hoffman, Florida’s Frontiers, 22.
31 Ibid., 22-23.
32 Ibid., 36-38.
In the 1550s, as rumors about French interest in the area began to circulate, Spain turned its attention to Florida once again, despite the colony’s early status as an undesirable area of settlement. In 1556, a Venetian publisher compiled details about previous expeditions, including information that Giovanni da Verrazzano had discovered and claimed parts of the southeastern United States for the French Crown. Around the same time that the pamphlet was being distributed throughout Europe, the Spanish heard about French plans for a colonial settlement in La Florida.33

In response to the encroaching threat of French settlement, the Council of the Indies, which directed the colonization of the Spanish empire, decided that the Spanish should settle at Ochuse, the land surrounding the bay that they would soon call Pensacola. From the first settlement at Ochuse, the Council of the Indies wanted to develop a string of towns connecting the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. The first settlement at Ochuse would serve as a base for expeditions and as a refuge for storm-damaged ships. The Council of Indies hoped that the settlements would be large producers of wine and olive oil, and that the settlers would convert Native Americans who would later be assigned to encomiendas.34

In 1559, Tristán de Luna set out from Veracruz, Mexico with a group of settlers that included five hundred soldiers, nine hundred civilians, one hundred Mexican natives, and six Dominican priests. Luna and his contingent founded Santa María Filipina in what would become Pensacola, but very quickly, the settlement devolved into a disaster. That September, a hurricane destroyed the settlement, and it

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33 Ibid., 39.
34 Ibid., 39. According to Mark Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson’s *Colonial Latin America*, an encomienda was a grant of authority that gave a landholder a group of Indians and the responsibility to convert them in exchange for their labor. Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University, 1998), 352.
was difficult for the population to reestablish Santa María Filipina. Disease was spreading, food was in short supply, and settlers were tired of living in a precarious frontier town. In 1561, the settlers abandoned Pensacola and moved back to Veracruz. For roughly the next century, exploration of Florida was limited and settlement was nonexistent.

The physical environment would continue to play an important role in the development of colonial settlements along the Gulf of Mexico, a region marked by a subtropical environment that can be very hot and humid. Hurricanes were a continuous threat to already fragile settlements, as was the case with the first Pensacola. The land varied greatly, from deep red, iron rich soil to barren pine forests. In fact, the fertility and potential of Florida were the topics of debate in a number of early reports from the area. Some explorers said the land was rich and perfect for growing crops and raising cattle while others argued that the land had little to offer.35 In Louisiana, swamps and marshes made settlement difficult.

The colonies’ location along the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River also defined their existence and settlement processes. Along the Gulf of Mexico, there are a number of barrier islands, bays, and inlets. Pensacola is situated along a bay, protected by a barrier island, and for these reasons, it was a desirable post. Yet, the most defining and important characteristic of the region was the Mississippi River, which permitted the French to come into the area from the northernmost reaches of the river. Once there was a European presence in the area, the river played a large role in the settlement and development of European colonies. In later history, the

35 Hoffman, Florida’s Frontiers, 35-36.
Mississippi was viewed as an extremely valuable means of travel and trade, and it was a point of contention on which episodes about allegiance and identity occurred. European empires were in competition with each other throughout the New World, and around the same time that the Spanish were exploring Florida, the French were establishing themselves on another edge of the North American continent. In 1534, Jacques Cartier, claimed present-day Canada and called it New France.36 French explorers quickly established a fort at what is now Québec, and from this position, moved westward in subsequent expeditions. Using the St. Lawrence River, French Jesuits went as far west as Lake Superior.37 These expeditions occurred with increasing regularity as French explorers set out to find sites to establish fur trading posts.

Through these expeditions, the French learned the geography of the region to the west of New France, and explorers passed through the Great Lakes many times on a variety of routes. Despite their frequent travels, French explorers did not fully realize the incredible length of the Mississippi River, the land mass it traversed, or where the river ended; explorers and cartographers were familiar with waterfront areas, but knew little about the geography of the interior of the continent.38 Eventually, the French reached the interior when Robert de La Salle became the first European to sail the length of the Mississippi River into the Gulf of Mexico. Once La

38 Ibid., 194.
Salle successfully traversed the length of the Mississippi River, King Louis XIV claimed the entire Mississippi Valley for France, calling it La Louisiane.39

Once the French Crown had come into the southern region of North America and gained geographic knowledge of the area, it quickly realized that the mouth of the Mississippi was not far from their Caribbean colonies. Suddenly, the Gulf Coast was a fairly accessible region, and French attempts at colonization of the Mississippi River area came from the north, down the river, and from the south, from Caribbean settlements like St. Domingue. In 1684, LaSalle established the short-lived post at Matagorda Bay in what is now Texas.40

After LaSalle’s failed experiment, the French Crown did not want to establish another colony along the Gulf of Mexico, but Pierre LeMoyne d’Iberville, an explorer and entrepreneur originally from Canada, convinced the court otherwise. In 1699, d’Iberville and a group of settlers arrived in the Gulf region, but they did not immediately found a permanent settlement. The group remained at a small post while they traveled around the area looking for an ideal spot for permanent settlement. Iberville’s brother, Jean-Baptiste LeMoyne de Bienville led the group along the Gulf of Mexico’s northern coast, landing in Biloxi, Dauphin Island, and Mobile.41

These settlements were becoming part of a larger French empire, but they did not exist only in relation to other settlements throughout New France. An intense rivalry was brewing among the Spanish, French, and British empires, and competition among the empires was particularly apparent in the Gulf of Mexico region. In 1698,

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41 Ibid., 194.
as the French were establishing and developing their settlements, the English considered making Pensacola a haven for Protestants, but the French quickly discouraged these plans. A few Englishmen sent ahead to survey and plan the proposed Pensacola settlement met d’Iberville, who asserted French claims to the Mississippi region. The English changed their plans and relocated their colony to North Carolina.42

As the original European power to enter and explore the Gulf Coast, the Spanish Crown was protective of the land it thought was Spain’s and only Spain’s. Spaniards sent a number of expeditions along the Gulf of Mexico in an effort to find and to uproot LaSalle’s colony. They were unable to do so, but they did rediscover the site of Luna’s failed settlement. One explorer, Juan Jordán de Reina, named the site Panzacola for the Native Americans who lived there, and it is from this name that Pensacola is derived.43

In 1689, a Spanish surveying expedition led by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora left from Veracruz to explore the Gulf Coast in the hopes of resettling Pensacola Bay.44 The expedition was organized at the suggestion of Andrés de Pez, an official from Veracruz who had led previous expeditions around the Gulf of Mexico. In a memorial he wrote to the Spanish Crown, Pez strongly urged the Spanish to settle Pensacola Bay, describing Pensacola as a strategic naval base from which the Spanish could protect their possessions from the French and British empires. Pez realized that

42 Ibid., 194-195.
if the French or English settled at Pensacola, the settlement could disrupt communications between Spain and its American colonies. Pensacola would be particularly important in the defense of the colonies that formed a ring around the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, including Mexico and Cuba, two of the Spanish empires most important colonies.45

This map shows Pensacola and Florida’s central location in the Caribbean region. (Map by D.W. Meinig in The Shaping of America, page 169.)

In April 1689, Sigüenza’s expedition entered Pensacola Bay, identifying the bay as the place where Tristán de Luna had settled once before. Sigüenza and his crew explored the entire area—the land, barrier islands, bays, rivers, and streams—and decided that Pensacola’s bay “[was] the finest jewel possessed by His Majesty—may God protect him!—not only here in America but in all his kingdom.”46 The land seemed fertile and there were forests that could supply lumber for building ships. The rivers seemed swift enough for heavier ships to pass through, and some surveyors guessed that one of the rivers might connect to the Mississippi River. Almost everyone agreed that the bay would be a proper place for settlement, and in 1694, the Crown announced its plans for the settlement of Pensacola.47

Yet, despite Sigüenza’s positive reports and Pez’s excitement, the Spanish did not occupy Pensacola until 1698. In 1689, the Spanish Crown did not have much money to invest in founding a settlement at Pensacola. At that time, Spain was establishing posts in frontier regions in the western part of North America, such as present-day Texas and New Mexico.48 Pensacola also posed difficulties because its creation would have required a reorganization of Florida’s already existing presidios and administration. In his memorial, Pez suggested that the Spaniards abandon St. Augustine, Florida’s most established presidio, to settle Pensacola.49 In addition, the Crown was distracted by its involvement in King William’s War (1689-97), another endeavor requiring a good deal of money and attention.50 The project to settle

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50 Clune, “Historical Context and Overview,” 19.
Pensacola fell to the wayside, and it was not until the French showed serious interest in settling on the Gulf Coast that the Spanish established themselves at Pensacola in 1698.

As in 1559, three hundred and fifty-seven men set off from Veracruz to land at and to settle Pensacola in three ships. The group was met by Juan Jordán de Reina who had come from Cádiz, a southern Spanish port city, with two ships of sixty soldiers.\(^5\) But these Spaniards were not the only ones making their way towards Pensacola. In January 1699, d’Iberville and a small fleet arrived at Pensacola Bay. Iberville quickly realized that the site was already occupied, and the Spaniards at Pensacola realized that there was an intruder anchored off the coast of their recent settlement. The two parties exchanged a few rounds of cannon shots, but soon stopped. Iberville recognized Pensacola as a Spanish settlement and sailed westward, back to Biloxi.\(^5\) From this point on, the colonies of Florida and Louisiana developed side by side.

Life at the second Pensacola settlement revolved around Presidio Santa María de Galve, an enlarged fort that contained many of the buildings and activities of the settlement. The presidio was located on the western end of Pensacola Bay, sheltered by the barrier island, Santa Rosa. Pensacola was originally founded as a military post and a penal colony, but Pensacola’s population grew significantly over the years, and there was a mix of men, women, Native Americans, and foreigners. Most of the original settlers were from Mexico and the majority of them were of Spanish descent, though there were a number of slaves and a few Europeans who were not of Spanish

\(^5\) Ibid., 20.
descent. Most of the women at the presidio were the wives of soldiers, but there were some single women who worked as laborers. There were many Native Americans in the region, but they did not live in the presidio. Instead, Pensacola’s governors created settlements near the presidio specifically for Native Americans.53

The population at Pensacola received situados—money, supplies, food, and goods—from Mexico and other wealthy colonies elsewhere in the Spanish empire, to sustain itself economically.54 The presidio also relied heavily on support from the French in Mobile and other parts of Louisiana. Although they often were rivals, the two colonies were neighbors and maintained peaceful relations at times.55 Even after a few years and generous aid, Pensacola had trouble supporting itself.

A governor and other officials presided over the settlement, but these positions were part of the military.56 As John Jay TePaske states in his discussion of the governorship of the entire colony of Florida, the governors all had military experience. In Florida, military experience was valued more highly than a legal background because as the colony on the edge of the empire, Florida served as the first line of defense for Spain’s other New World possessions.57 A small group of priests cared for the settlement spiritually and medically, but the Pensacola population often suffered from diseases like yellow fever, berberi, and scurvy.58

54 Ibid., 32; 68.
55 Ibid., 65.
56 Ibid., 25.
Imperial conflicts, like the War of Spanish Succession or Queen Anne’s War as it was called in North America, which originated in Europe also affected Pensacola’s local development. In Europe, the war began in 1702 when Spain’s Hapsburg king died without a successor. The English, Dutch, and Austrians formed an alliance against the Spanish and French. In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht ended the war, and Louis XIV’s grandson, Philip, was placed on the Spanish throne, thereby establishing the Borbón dynasty in Spain. Along the Gulf Coast, these hostilities and alliances manifested themselves in a similar manner. The Spanish and French of Florida and Louisiana joined together to fight the English in the Carolinas and their allies, the Creeks, in a series of skirmishes and raids that occurred throughout the decade. 59

After Queen Anne’s War, Spaniards and Frenchmen became enemies as colonists engaged in the War of Quadruple Alliance (1718-20), another European conflict that took its own form in North America. This time, the English, Dutch, Austrians, and French fought against Spain. In May 1719, Bienville captured Pensacola, and the presidio was a French territory until 1722.

On November 26, 1722 Alejandro Wauchope, the recently appointed Spanish governor, entered Pensacola Bay to reclaim and rebuild the site as a Spanish settlement. The details of this period are not clearly documented, but from archaeological remains, we know that the Spaniards built a new presidio on Santa Rosa Island called Presidio Isla de Santa Rosa. Later, the colonists constructed a new settlement at Presidio San Miguel de Panzacola on the site of current-day downtown Pensacola. Life in Pensacola’s period of Spanish settlement was marked by

development and obstacles and revolved around the successes and failures of its colonists.  

To the west in Louisiana, the French were undergoing a similar process of settlement and development. Since 1699, the French expansion of Louisiana continued with varying degrees of intensity and varying degrees of success. In 1701, the French leaders moved their headquarters from Biloxi to Mobile, but Mobile was still just a fortified trading post rather than a permanent settlement. The barely established post at Mobile reflected the nature of Louisiana as a colony. There were very few settlers and few people besides the Crown were concerned with the colony’s success. Louisiana could barely support itself and it received supplies and goods from French settlements in Illinois located north along the Mississippi River.  

After Louis XIV died in 1715, his successor’s regent, the Duc d’Orleans, successfully directed the development of the colony, which Louis XIV had been unable to do. The Duc d’Orleans established power over the French nobility in La Louisiane and also created a more stable system of production and trade that would not deplete France’s treasuries.  

The Duc d’Orleans was successful in part because of his decision to give de facto control of Louisiana to John Law, a Scottish entrepreneur, in 1717. Law formed a joint stock company called the Mississippi Company. Under Law and the Mississippi Company, Louisiana underwent a period of significant, steady development. The Company established three frontier trade posts at Natchitoches,
Fort Tolouse, and Natchez, at the borders of the colony, that also served as barriers of defense. Natchez, situated along the Mississippi River on high bluffs with fertile land, grew quickly.64

During this period, the Mississippi Company granted tracts of land to the many immigrants who were settling in Louisiana. Immigrants came from a variety of places, including France, Canada, the West Indies, and the German states of Alsace and the Rhineland. In addition, the settlers brought a large number of African slaves to the region. Although slaves were not viewed as Europeans’ equals, many settlers had children with slaves, and within a generation, the population quickly became one of mixed descent and previous categories of origin did not hold for long.65

In 1718, the Company founded New Orleans, and unlike other Louisiana settlements, New Orleans was more of a developed town than a post at the edges of empire. New Orleans was laid out on a grid along the banks of the Mississippi River with a central place d’armes surrounded by governmental and religious buildings. Although the French settlers were no longer in France, they imported much of its culture, as it was apparent in the ballrooms, cafés, and gambling halls throughout New Orleans. As in France, a large contingent of Catholic orders administered the religious life of the town’s settlers.66 In 1731, when the Mississippi Company no longer governed Louisiana and the Crown resumed direct control of the colony, New Orleans became the colony’s capital.67

64 Meinig, *The Shaping of America*, 196-197. Natchez was an important site in Louisiana, and as we will see in later chapters, it played a large role in defining the history and identity of settlers.
65 Ibid., 195, 197.
66 Ibid., 195; 198-200.
67 Ibid., 197.
Despite Louisiana’s growth, it was still a minor colony that required substantial upkeep and financial support. Louisiana was a narrow strip of land that hugged the Gulf Coast, and its settlement mainly was motivated by France’s desire to maintain a presence in the area. In the 1720s, speculation, an expected product of Law’s stock-based financing, ruined the colony’s economic stability. Louisiana had to receive shipments of food because the colony was not self-sufficient—though not before hundreds of people died from starvation and disease. From an early point in its history, Louisiana gained a widespread reputation, both in North America and in Europe, as a failure and a wild, frontier colony.

The British are better known for their settlements along the Atlantic coast in what is often referred to as the Thirteen Colonies. During this period, England did not have settlements along the Gulf Coast but their presence just to the north loomed large in the minds of Spanish and French settlers. The British mainly came into the Gulf region as traders with Native Americans in the area. Spanish administrators of Florida complained that Britons dominated trade with natives, and as a result, Spaniards established a number of military posts in the interior regions where Native Americans lived. Occasional British movement into the Gulf Coast also was a reason that the French founded Louisiana. Iberville wanted to prevent the English colonies from expanding across the North American continent, and he envisioned Louisiana as a barrier colony. Conflicts over trade and wars being waged in Europe

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68 Ibid., 198.
70 Ibid., 2-5.
72 Ibid., 175.
were the main causes of English raids and smaller battles between the Spanish, French, and English settlers in the area.

Throughout this early period, settlers of the three empires came into contact with each other, through trade, chance encounters, and often times, war. The largest and most significant war of the period, the Seven Years War, is an important reminder that these local histories existed within a global, imperial context. The War also marked the end of this early period of colonial settlement along the Gulf Coast.

Throughout this thesis, it is important to keep in mind that the Gulf Coast colonies, West Florida and Louisiana, were part of global empires. The Spanish were the first of the three European powers to establish an empire. By the time the second attempt at settlement in Pensacola was underway, the Spanish empire was in decline. But at its height, it included present day Latin America, the Philippines, parts of Italy, and other possessions. In addition, in 1713, the Hapsburg dynasty was replaced by the Borbones. The French empire, the smallest of the three empires, had the majority of its holdings in North America, and the empire was largely based in economic enterprises, particularly the fur trade. The British empire was the last empire involved in overseas settlement and only began growing as an empire after its success in the Seven Years War. In fact, Great Britain did not exist until 1707 when the signing of the Act of Union joined England, Scotland, and Wales.

These three empires took an interest in the area along the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico. They were drawn to the region not just for its natural attributes or

75 Ibid., 1.
potential but also because each empire wanted to settle the area before the other could. Competition was a major impetus in the expansion of European empires, prompting the Spanish, French, and British Crowns to spend incredible amounts of money and resources. Furthermore, rivalry was the reason that the Spanish, French, and British invested so much in West Florida and Louisiana.

Since Pensacola’s beginnings, the officials of the Spanish empire wanted to settle the area so that competing empires could not claim the territory. The idea seems simplistic, but considering Florida’s geographic location, it makes sense. Florida juts out into the Caribbean and ends a short distance from Cuba. If Spaniards were able to occupy Florida, they also could protect Cuba. Pensacola, too, had a number of strategic advantages in protecting and maintaining other American colonies: Pensacola is the top vertex of a triangle formed between Veracruz and Havana, two important centers of the Spanish empire. In addition, occupying land as a defensive strategy was implicit in the Spanish concept of empire. In many ways, the creation of the Spanish empire was an outgrowth of the reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula. The Spanish were able to defeat their enemy and return territory and vassals to the Crown by regaining the land in southern Spain that was previously controlled by Muslims.76 As a result, the ownership and occupation of land were important in creating and maintaining the Spanish empire.

The Spanish empire was the first empire of its time, and when the French and British crowns decided to build their own empires, they looked to the Spanish empire

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as a model. The French and British definitions of empire suggested that the administrators wanted to create an empire like the Spanish one, and possibly wanted the same possessions. As a result, these early definitions and goals of empire fostered competition along the Gulf Coast and elsewhere.

The Seven Years War is one of the prime examples of competition among these three empires. The conflict took place across the globe in the various places where each of the three empires had colonial possessions. In 1763, the Treaty of Paris ended the War, and through its distribution of colonial territories, it sparked a reorganization of imperial control in North America. The last few articles of the Treaty of Paris dealing with territorial transfers covered the Gulf Coast region and Caribbean. In 1762, at the end of the Seven Years War, Great Britain captured Havana, Cuba, an important colonial city. The Treaty originally had the British Crown keeping Havana and the island of Cuba, but because of its importance, the Spanish Crown negotiated to regain Cuba. Article XIX affirms this transaction and in exchange for Cuba, Spain forfeited all of Florida “with Fort St. Augustin, and the Bay of Pensacola, as well as all that Spain possesses on the Continent of North America, to the East or to the South East of the River Mississippi.” In addition, prior to the signing of the Treaty of Paris, France and Spain secretly had signed a treaty of their own. On November 30, 1762, the two countries finalized the Treaty of Fontainebleau

77 Pagden, Lords of All the World, 67.
78 Articles XIX and XX of The definitive treaty of peace and friendship, between His Britannick Majesty, the Most Christian King, and the King of Spain. Concluded at Paris, the 10th Day of February, 1763. To which, The King of Portugal acceded on the same Day. Published by Authority.
and the transfer of Louisiana, making it a Spanish possession. The Spanish, however, would not occupy the colony until 1769.79

The Treaty of Paris primarily dealt with imperial land transfers, but since most land was exchanged between the British Anglican monarchy and Spain’s Catholic sovereign, the authors of the Treaty also considered the religion of those who inhabited the lands. Article XX of the Treaty of Paris stated that

His Britannick Majesty agrees, on His Side, to grant to the Inhabitants of the Countries, above ceded, the Liberty of the Catholick Religion: He will consequently give the most express and the most effectual Orders that His new Roman Catholick Subjects may profess the Worship of their Religion, according to the Rites of the Romish Church, as far as the Laws of Great Britain permit.80

The Treaty of Paris in 1763 marks the first significant political change that the settlers of Florida and Louisiana faced. By the end of 1763, the British had control of Florida and the Spanish had control of Louisiana, while there was a significant French population distributed throughout. The Treaty created changes in the political landscape of the Gulf Coast that would initiate a new period of development in Florida and Louisiana. These changes set the stage for a rethinking of settlers’ identities in regards to new programs of development that were occurring within local communities and the relationships settlers had with their imperial homelands.

80 Article XX of The definitive treaty of peace and friendship, between His Britannick Majesty, the Most Christian King, and the King of Spain. Concluded at Paris, the 10th Day of February, 1763. To which, The King of Portugal acceded on the same Day. Published by Authority.
Chapter 2:

“Establishment of an Infant Colony:” Initial Periods of Development in West Florida and Louisiana

In 1763, the borders, political systems, and populations of the Gulf Coast began to take on the characteristics of the societies and conditions in which Ross, Campbell, and Graiden found themselves in 1778. Following the Treaty of Paris, the newly appointed governments of West Florida and Louisiana began implementing policies that fostered the development of the barely settled frontier zones into more populous and settled colonies. Yet despite clear policies and boundaries, settlers did not always follow imperial and local laws; nor did colonial administrators always implement these regulations with the utmost severity. As a result, the early years of British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana can be characterized as a series of experiments riddled with failures and successes.

In addition, as the two colonies were struggling to establish themselves and gain a foothold in the area, inhabitants of West Florida and Louisiana were moving and settling across borders throughout the region and, as a result, sharing cultures and blurring the divisions between the different Gulf Coast populations. At the same time, interactions also contributed to competing allegiances and rivalries among settlers of the two colonies; although colonists experienced the variety of languages, cultures, and religions in the area, government-administered development fostered a growing sense of allegiance to West Florida or Louisiana.

The years after the Treaty of Paris were a period of transition in the histories of West Florida and Louisiana when the military posts and sparse settlements were transformed into more established and populated towns. Immediately after 1763,
West Florida and Louisiana were marked by moments of encounter, fluidity, and movement. Changes in government in the two colonies created societies in which it was easier for inhabitants to migrate and relocate in other areas of the Gulf Coast. Settlers moved within their respective colonies or into the neighboring one as people from a variety of regional, religious, and cultural backgrounds interacted with each other.

The Treaty of Paris reordered imperial control in North America, and as a result, some colonial administrators left the area as others arrived. Outgoing governments often left a number of documents and information for incoming governments, such as instructions as to how to govern the colony and censuses of the province’s population. Incoming governments produced a large volume of documents as local authorities tried to establish themselves among populations and legitimate their control. These collections of censuses, laws, and instructions document the experience of changing political control and populations. People of different populations and identities within the region were interacting more frequently than in years before, evoking comparisons of similarities and differences. The period after 1763 and the increased encounters allow us to examine the identities of the populations of West Florida and Louisiana.

Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron’s “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between North American History” suggests a framework for analyzing this period of transition, rife with moments of contact. In their essay, Adelman and Aron consider imperial struggles and Europeans’ interactions with Native Americans in the Great Lakes region, Missouri River Valley,
and Rio Grande Basin and analyze the effect of these dynamics on the development of these three regions. The authors describe “borderlands” as undefined territories and “borderedlands” as clearly defined territories with boundaries established by treaties. This terminology means that “borderlands” and “borderedlands” represent the two extremes of a process of transformation that colonies such as West Florida and Louisiana experienced. The term “borderlands,” however, does not just refer to the loosely defined physical characteristics of a territory. Rather, “borderland” also implies a place where people of different origins and cultures lived together and often exchanged practices and ideas. Adelman and Aron explain that the process of development between these terms is a transition from “borderless” lands to “bordered” lands. Over time, treaties placed firm and rigid boundaries between territories and separated empires, their lands, and their people. In the shift towards the formations of “borderedlands,” territories lost many of the amorphous or ambiguous qualities of “borderlands.”

But as the authors briefly explain, change was not a simple process; nor did it occur in a straightforward or linear manner. West Florida and Louisiana in the post-Treaty of Paris period show characteristics of both “borderlands” and “borderedlands”. The Treaty of Paris signifies an effort to create coexistence among empires and clearly delineated boundaries typical of borderedlands, but after 1763, North American fringe colonies were still fluid, loosely defined places of exchange. The Treaty of Paris represents the first step in the process of defining and ordering West Florida and Louisiana, but the two colonies retained many of the characteristics

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of “borderlands.” In fact, the imposition of boundaries increased the opportunities for encounter and exchange. Before local authorities were able to implement infrastructure and maintain strict boundaries, colonists could move easily between the two provinces.

Adelman and Aron’s essay also draws our attention to the importance of local history within empires, particularly when studying colonies that began their histories as borderlands. Adelman and Aron provide a brief history of the use of the terms frontier and borderland and explain that borderlands are regions at the edge of empire or areas of imperial expansion.\textsuperscript{82} To an extent, all colonies are experiments that involve a degree of fluidity, but the amorphous nature of “borderlands” allowed for even greater autonomy. The colonies of West Florida and Louisiana were part of larger empires, but also existed as their own entities. The Spanish and British Crowns created plans and laws for the development of the two colonies and appointed administrators to execute their policies, but what happened in these distant lands is not always what the architects of empires anticipated.\textsuperscript{83}

The disconnect between administrators’ expectations and colonists’ actions meant that individuals were able to shape their own surroundings and identities. In \textit{Building the Devil’s Empire}, Shannon Lee Dawdy examines the development of French Louisiana through the lens of Louisiana as a “rogue colony” that deviated from the capital’s official policies. Borderlands’ fluid nature and individual agency are central to her argument, and she explains that “counter-colonial impulses, syndicates, and pockets of resistance were as much part of the messy colonial story as

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 814-6.
metropolitan blueprints.” As a result, we begin to see complicated, multi-dimensional spaces of interactions similar to the ones that Rhys Isaac describes in “A Discourse on Method,” if not larger and more entangled. An extended version of Isaac’s model for relationships and interactions reflects the complexity, energy, and fluidity of borderland communities such as West Florida and Louisiana.

The descriptions of borderland colonies become even more complex when we consider that many settlers left their own communities and ventured into neighboring ones, as the settlers of West Florida and Louisiana often did. The possibilities for interactions increased tremendously. Ideas and goods could be transferred on a multitude of occasions and transmitted along an endless number of pathways. Confrontations could occur at a number of places and times and as a result, West Florida and Louisiana lay side by side in a fragile, tense, yet somewhat interdependent coexistence. The colonies did not just belong to their own communities or imperial systems: British West Florida also was connected to the Spanish empire and Spanish Louisiana was linked to the British empire.

It can be difficult to envision such nebulous societies, especially since Louisiana and Florida are now strictly divided states. Today, we exist at the far end of the border-borderedlands spectrum that Adelman and Aron describe, and we most easily understand and visualize distinctly separate territories. After a number of wars and treaties, the geographic expanse of the North American continent has been shaped into the United States, Mexico, and Canada, each with its own states and provinces. For some time, the United States has existed as an independent political

84 Dawdy, Building the Devil's Empire, 20.
85 Ibid., 6.
86 Ibid., 20.
entity without contested borders, and it is easy to forget that regions like Florida and Louisiana once were sites of imperial rivalry and cultural melding and interaction.

British colonial settlements defeated other imperial presences and as a result, an Anglo tradition dominates the United States’s popular narrative and historiography. Few of the original Spanish or French settlements, forts, or churches still exist and too few historians write about these subjects for them to form part of a common history.87 Louisiana has a unique character that is in some ways proof of its multiple pasts, but we cannot stress enough the diversity and complexity of the entire Gulf Coast region, particularly from 1763 to 1781. During this time period, settlers from a variety of regions in Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean lived in the same area as a variety of Native American peoples. They spread across a geographic region in which their boundaries and interactions were often shifting and contested.

**Great Britain Acquires West Florida**

The Treaty of Paris and its aftermath represent the peak of these collisions and complex webs of interaction. The Treaty was a political arrangement that enacted a number of transfers of governments, and also brought about a number of social changes. Once British West Florida’s administration, led by Governor George Johnstone, was in place it planned to develop a substantial, self-sufficient settlement. Increasing the local population was viewed as an essential first step in creating a stable colony with a prosperous economy. Florida under Spanish rule had been a collection of military posts that had trouble meeting its own expenses. When Britain

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acquired West Florida, it also acquired a large debt and budget required to keep the
colony functioning, so sustained development was important.\textsuperscript{88}

The transfer of land and government was a fairly smooth process. The British
army and administration first began arriving in West Florida in September of 1763.
The Spanish governments and armies had departed, leaving the land to be occupied
by the British. A number of British military officials, including John Campbell, who
was in charge of occupying Natchez and negotiating with officials in New Orleans,
orchestrated the takeover. Many of the forts were in disrepair, and it was the
incoming government’s responsibility to reconstruct forts, towns, and policies in
West Florida.\textsuperscript{89}

The first strategy was to maintain the population of Spaniards and Frenchmen
that already lived in West Florida before it was a British colony. This factor posed a
problem since Spaniards and Frenchmen previously lived under the governments of
their home countries. Differences among settlers, however, were deeper than
homeland allegiances. Religion also was an important factor in determining
citizenship and identity. Spaniards and Frenchmen practiced Catholicism while the
incoming administration and population practiced Anglicanism or other variations of
Protestantism. The twentieth article of the Treaty of Paris ensured that Spanish and
French residents of British West Florida would be allowed to practice Catholicism
even though Britain’s official religion was Anglicanism. Spaniards and Frenchmen
also would be able to keep their land, unless they wanted to leave, in which case they
would have to sell it to Britons. The newly installed British government allowed

\textsuperscript{88} Hoffman, \textit{Florida’s Frontiers}, 202.
\textsuperscript{89} Sir Farmar to Secretary of War, Mobile, January 1764, Mississippi Provincial Archives English
Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
Spaniards and Frenchmen eighteen months to evacuate the area, and despite the lenient treatment and efforts to keep Spaniards in the region, the entire Spanish population except for one man left for Havana, Cuba and Campeche, Mexico.\textsuperscript{90}

Unlike the Spaniards in the region, a sizeable portion of the French population remained in the colony. The majority of the French population was concentrated around Mobile, a port of French Louisiana that was ceded to West Florida in the Treaty of Paris.\textsuperscript{91} Frenchmen also stayed in Natchez, a French Louisiana settlement along the eastern bank of the Mississippi River that had become part of British West Florida, which boasted a population of about five thousand Frenchmen and five hundred slaves at the beginning of Britain’s colonial period.\textsuperscript{92}

One of West Florida’s first challenges was integrating the Catholic French population. All French inhabitants took oaths of allegiance, swearing their loyalty to the British Crown, but this act was not sufficient enough to cement the French inhabitants’ allegiances or sense of community. The twentieth article of the Treaty of Paris was a preliminary method for integration, but further measures were necessary, as this process did not occur without friction. On December 12, 1764, Governor Johnstone and other members of West Florida’s government held a special council in Mobile at which a petition from Frenchmen in the city and surrounding area was read and discussed. The French residents believed that they were not allowed to practice their religion as the Treaty of Paris stipulated. The beginning of the minutes of the

\textsuperscript{90} Gold, \textit{Borderland Empires in Transition}, 19-20.
\textsuperscript{91} Account of the Produce of His Majesty’s Province of Louisiana this at present known, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
special council quotes a substantial portion of the twentieth article, and from there, the council members discuss the legitimacy of the Frenchmen’s complaints.

The twentieth article of the Treaty of Paris did provide Catholics with the freedom to practice their religion, but only “as far as the Laws of Great Britain permit.” The clause was vague and Frenchmen living in West Florida were confused by what exactly was allowed under British law. Yet, the council placed emphasis on “as far as the Laws of Great Britain permit” and clarified that “the said Inhabitants be permitted to enjoy the essential parts in the Exercise of the Religion till His Majesty’s further pleasure is known.”93 The council also gave the French permission to build a chapel using their own money, to install bells in the chapel and to use them, but the population could only hold processions at funerals. The council decided to grant these rights as a way of retaining the French population, which the council feared might leave West Florida for Catholic Louisiana. The council members reasoned that “His Majesty certainly meant by that article to Grant some indulgence to his new Subjects. That it would be highly conducive to the Good of this Province.”94

Although religion was the focus of the petition, the topic had implications of what it meant to be a British subject living in West Florida, particularly a resident of non-British descent. As the summary of the council’s meeting demonstrates, a person’s religion was closely linked to his or her legal status. The Treaty of Paris’s concession to allow Spaniards and Frenchmen to practice Catholicism was an exception to British law. The council expands on the term and states that the French Catholics at Mobile could only practice their religion according to the King’s

93 Council Held at Mobille 12 December 1764, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
94 Ibid.
judgment, and in effect, allowed King George III to regulate the practice of Catholicism. The council, however, did not explain what was permissible, subjecting residents’ religious practices to the whim of King George’s decisions. The French at Mobile wrote the petition because they were concerned that their religious freedoms, and by extension, rights to property would be threatened.

In addition to integrating the population already living in the province of West Florida, Great Britain made concerted efforts to recruit settlers and establish towns throughout the province. The Board of Trade, a branch of the British government that was responsible for the planning and development of British colonies and that was similar to Spain’s Council of the Indies, initially discussed who should be allowed to settle in West Florida: could settlers only be British? Could they only be Protestant? Ultimately, though, the Board of Trade decided to allow a variety of people to enter the colony, including a particularly large number of Swiss and German immigrants.

The Board of Trade used a number of methods to attract settlers, such as publishing advertisements in European newspapers like the London Gazette and distributing announcements about available land to British consulates in the German states, Holland, France, and Switzerland. Ship captains who brought immigrants to West Florida via the port at Pensacola received rewards depending on whom they brought. Captains were awarded ten pounds for European Protestants older than sixteen, eight pounds for North American Protestants older than sixteen, four pounds for Jamaicans, two pounds for slaves from Jamaica, twenty pounds for British carpenters, shipwrights, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, sawyers, indigo makers,

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96 Ibid., 26.
97 Ibid., 13, 15.
bricklayers, sail makers, millwrights, or masons, and ten pounds for every free black man or mulatto of a similar trade as the ones listed above.\textsuperscript{98} Furthermore, Governor Johnstone wanted to give every immigrant the tools needed to practice a trade, a year’s worth of food, a musket, and six month’s worth of bullets and gun powder.\textsuperscript{99} The prices for these rewards show that the Board of Trade placed an emphasis on recruiting people it thought could best develop West Florida.

The British government also generously distributed land grants according to a “head right” system in which each head of a family received one hundred acres and an additional fifty acres for each dependent, including slaves. At the governor’s discretion, the governor and council could grant as much as one thousand acres of land to a person they thought “capable of improving it.”\textsuperscript{100} This generous allocation of land to households, whose definition included slaves, shows that the Board of Trade hoped to develop an agricultural economy that partially depended on slavery.

In one instance, West Florida’s government created Campbell Town, a new settlement for a group of French immigrants. The administration created a special council to create rules and regulations for the settlement and to monitor its progress. These rules provide a more specific understanding of settlement practices and the development of the colony. The four main rules provided in one of the council’s report were:

1. Residents had to promise to repair, cultivate, and improve the land. They could not abandon it within the first four years of settlement or they would face a penalty of total forfeiture.
2. If a resident left the land to work for more than two weeks, it would be

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 8-10.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 8-10.
\textsuperscript{100} Letter, 8 June 1767, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida
Considered abandoned.

3. Residents would have to continue cutting down trees until one of the colony’s Engineers deemed the removal complete. Widows were exempt from this rule.

4. The residents of Campbell Town could use the nearby high ground for gardens if the government decided this was acceptable.¹⁰¹

In these documents about land distribution and settlement, West Florida’s government stressed improvements to the land and permanent residency. The emphasis on improving land further illustrates that the Board of Trade advocated an agrarian economy that could sustain itself. The administration penalized those who left their land and charged them with quit rents.

Once settled in West Florida, inhabitants had to take oaths of allegiance to the British Crown in order to keep their land and stay in the colony. The oaths often were conducted in public places, especially churches.¹⁰² A number of records relating to West Florida contain scattered references to people who had taken oaths, but not the text of the oath itself. The act of administering the oath is better documented than the actual oath, proving that oaths of allegiance entailed public events. Many West Floridians could have been illiterate, and for this reason, it would not have been necessary to publish the text of the oath. But more likely, the performance aspect of the oath was more than, or as important as, what the oath actually said. Taking the oath signified that a person was a loyal subject to the King of Great Britain and that the person would reside within the colony, thereby proclaiming himself a member of the West Florida community. The recitation before a town confirmed a person’s

¹⁰¹ Report of the Committee of the Council appointed to draw up Certain Rules and Regulations to be entered into and Signed by the French Emigrants Established in the Township of Campbell, 9 March 1767, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Memorial Library.
¹⁰² Long, "Immigration to British West Florida," 18.
status as a resident of West Florida because the ceremonies were a way of bringing a community together and identifying its members.

The Board of Trade’s efforts were fairly successful, and Britons and other immigrants settled in West Florida. Many of West Florida’s new inhabitants moved westward towards Natchez and the Mississippi River, where officials and settlers believed the land to have “the most intrinsic value” in all of West Florida. As a result, settlements in that area developed quickly. The Board of Trade aided in this process and helped to improve the area. Mobile also was a desirable area of settlement because it had been more heavily developed under French rule than other locations in West Florida. Throughout the region, Great Britain was effective in populating and settling the province of West Florida.

**Spain Acquires Louisiana**

In Louisiana, however, the transition of government was not as smooth as in West Florida. In 1762, through the Treaty of Fontainebleau, France and Spain decided that Louisiana would become a Spanish colony, but the Spanish Crown did not effectively place a local government in Louisiana until 1769. In the intervening years, Louisianans grew impatient and frustrated with Spain’s slow assumption of political power.

The Spanish Crown first began making plans to occupy Louisiana in January 1764. Jerónimo Grimaldi, one of the authors of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, was in

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103 At the Court at St. James the 22th of January 1779 Board with Representations from the Lord Commissi. for Trade and Plantations, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
charge of the transition with the help of Duc Etienne Francois de Choiseul, another
author of the Treaty of the Fontainebleau and Grimaldi’s equivalent on the French
side. As an extension of this shared responsibility, the French Crown offered
assistance in the governmental transition in Louisiana. Grimaldi and Choiseul decided
that in the initial phases, Spaniards would rule jointly with the French Crown. One
of the first actions that occurred as part of the transition was that French soldiers
occupied New Orleans and other major posts.

About a year later, the Spanish Crown appointed Antonio Ulloa the governor
of Louisiana. As a colleague and friend of Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes, Carlos
III’s adviser, Ulloa had experience with the theories and administration of the Spanish
empire. Before being appointed, he was the governor of Huancavelica, Peru, but he
resigned because he thought he had failed as an administrator. Ulloa was upset that he
did not successfully enact political reforms, and the Spanish Crown was disappointed
that Ulloa did not increase the output of silver. Ulloa had many of the qualities
considered ideal for an administrator in the Spanish empire. He was intelligent, loyal,
and educated, but he was a stickler for rules, to the point of being brusque and cold.
He did not engage in many of the courtly balls or dinners that were common among
the empire’s administrators, and as a result, he often did not receive the public’s
approval or warm reception.

106 Ibid., 17.
109 Ibid., 9-11.
Despite Ulloa’s failures and difficulties, on February 3, 1765, the Spanish Crown brought Ulloa to Havana in preparation for him to take his post in Louisiana. But the transition was delayed, and Ulloa remained in Havana. Before the Spanish Crown could add Louisiana to its colonial possessions, the Crown had to deal with the damages done to its own colonies and the decrease in resources and revenue suffered during the Seven Years War. In the interim, Frenchman Jean Jacques Blaise d’Abbadie was appointed Louisiana’s governor while Frenchman Charles Philippe Aubrey was put in charge of the French soldiers in the province.

Finally, in 1766, Ulloa arrived in New Orleans. In May of that year, Ulloa and other administrators developed a set of laws for the entire colony. The law code was a mix of French laws already in place in Louisiana and laws commonly used throughout the Spanish empire. However, the laws and institutions of Louisiana more closely resembled those of the French empire than the Spanish empire. The Spanish administration of Louisiana slowly began more thoroughly integrating Spanish laws into the government, but Louisiana’s Spanish administration was weak.

The new laws, written in French since they were intended for a French-speaking audience, consisted of five sections: Religion, Manners, Provisions, Public Health, and Public Safety. Religion was the first and most important section because lawmakers at the time viewed religion as an ideal system of law and morals. More importantly, religion was an important factor in justifying a monarch’s rule and defining a country’s subjects. Provisions, the longest section of the five, dealt with the regulation of everyday life like the use of food, economic activity, shops, cabarets,

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110 Ibid., 8.
111 Ibid., 38.
112 Ibid., 42.
and gambling.\textsuperscript{113} These two sections, particularly Provisions, highlight important concerns of Louisiana’s governors and inhabitants because these texts established the administration’s role in some of the inhabitants’ most basic activities. In effect, the sections defined the population’s relationship with its local government and provided guidelines as to how the population would function on a daily basis.

On January 20, 1767, recognizing the need for the symbolic display of Spanish power, Ulloa traveled to the military post at La Baliza, the southernmost point of Louisiana where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico. At La Baliza, Ulloa participated in a ceremony that signified a transfer of power, and Ulloa and Aubrey entered into joint rule. Spanish flags were raised in place of French ones, but Spain still could not assume complete control because Spanish troops had not yet arrived in the colony.\textsuperscript{114}

While the Spanish government was struggling to establish its authority in Louisiana, the inhabitants, especially in New Orleans, were growing restless and upset. Louisianans were displeased when it was first announced that Spain would take over the colony, and this disaffection only grew with time.\textsuperscript{115} The first rejections of Spanish governance came from French soldiers. At first, they did not want to serve the Spanish Crown; later, they were angry that Spanish soldiers were not coming to replace them. As a result of this delay, French soldiers felt endangered and embarrassed.\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 54-59.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 48-49.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 39-40.
\item \textsuperscript{116} 1765-1768 in Catalogue to the French Archives, ed. William S. Coker, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
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Ulloa was unpopular: Pierre Carresse, a leading merchant, complained that Ulloa was “rude and austere, arbitrary and inflexible.” Residents of New Orleans found his rule harsh, and went so far as to call themselves a “pueblo oprimido” under Ulloa. While part of the French empire, Louisianans had enjoyed considerate autonomy, and its inhabitants were unaccustomed to a governor who enforced rules as strictly as Ulloa. Another complaint was that the transfer of Louisiana and Ulloa’s acceptance of the post as governor were not legitimate or legally confirmed. Inhabitants argued that when Ulloa first arrived, he was not officially sworn in as a governor. His position and titles “no han sido…ni verificados, ni registrados, ni siquiera presentados.”

But the most important complaint was economic. Louisiana’s economy was struggling somewhat while still under French rule, and the colony’s upkeep required a substantial amount of money from imperial coffers. While Ulloa was governor, the economy only worsened, particularly because of two decrees he put into effect. In 1766 and 1768, Ulloa and his administration ushered in two reforms that were supposed to integrate Louisiana into the Spanish imperial economy while also regulating foreign and illegal trade. The reforms were meant to help Louisiana’s economy, but they only worsened the situation. The laws outlawed illegal commerce, such as trade with West Florida and other foreign-controlled colonies, which was a major source of revenue for Louisiana and for individual traders. In addition, as a part

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118 Memorial of the Inhabitants and Merchants re: events of the 29th of October, 1768 [after ca. 11/8], Kuntz Collection, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University.
119 Ibid.
120 Moore, Revolt in Louisiana, 104-105, 110-113.
of the Spanish empire’s economy and trade networks, Louisiana had trouble competing with the goods of other Spanish colonies and did not garner the same profits it did as when it was part of the French empire.\textsuperscript{121}

With limited markets and trade restrictions against Santo Domingo and Martinica, two common trade destinations when Louisiana was still part of the French empire, merchants complained that they could not sell enough of their wood, indigo, furs, tobacco, cotton, and sugar to support themselves, and there often was a surplus of these goods. Louisiana’s integration into the Spanish imperial economy also affected traders’ ability to make a profit. When forced to sell goods in the same market as products from Peru, Guatemala, and Havana, Louisiana’s goods did not retain the same value as they had when traded under the regulations of French Louisiana—“las pieles tienen tanto menos valor en España…La Havana y el Perón [sic] la abastesen de azucares y maderas muy superiores de nuestras, Guatemala da un Indigo superior y con más abundancia…”\textsuperscript{122} The traders blamed Spain for not helping Louisiana traders in the competitive market, particularly when it came to their valuable wood, and claimed that “el comercio de nuestra madera fuera nunca adaptado en España era meter poco a poco el puñal y el grande golpe ha sido dado por el decreto.”\textsuperscript{123}

Ulloa was aware of Louisianan’s complaints, and although he did not allow events to develop unimpeded, his efforts had little impact. A major problem was that Ulloa and the Crown’s advisors had different opinions about Louisiana’s role in the empire and how it would be governed. Ulloa wanted to take a defensive approach that

\footnotetext{121}{Ibid., 144-148.}
\footnotetext{122}{Memorial of the Inhabitants and Merchants re: events of the 29\textsuperscript{th} of October.}
\footnotetext{123}{Ibid.}
would rely on the military as a way of maintaining the colony. He did not, however, receive military support from the Crown, which was more interested in developing the population and its economy.\textsuperscript{124}

In October 1768, La Freniere, Foucault, and Pierre Caresse, French merchants and traders, began plotting to depose Ulloa. The men were popular with Louisianans and they distributed propaganda urging that Ulloa be removed from his position. Ulloa and Aubrey knew that the inhabitants were forming an opposition, but Ulloa wanted to wait until Spanish soldiers arrived in the city before taking any action. In the meantime, Ulloa asked Aubrey to talk with the French population.\textsuperscript{125}

On October 29\textsuperscript{th}, however, the situation became serious, threatening the stability of the colony and Ulloa’s governorship. For days before, inhabitants from throughout the colony, including Acadian and German settlers, had been streaming into the capital. With a critical mass, Foucault convened the Superior Council and had its members write a petition that rejected Ulloa’s authority and included many of the merchant’s complaints about their economic problems.\textsuperscript{126} Lacking both popular and official support, Ulloa left Louisiana on November 1.\textsuperscript{127}

In April, Carlos III appointed Alejandro O’Reilly as Louisiana’s new governor. O’Reilly was Irish by birth but had served in the Spanish army since he was a teenager and had spent most of his life within Spain and Spanish institutions.\textsuperscript{128} Nevertheless, his involvement in the Spanish empire, especially Louisiana, raises an

\textsuperscript{124} Paquette, \textit{Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and Its Empire}, 122-123.
\textsuperscript{125} Moore, \textit{Revolt in Louisiana}, 144.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 155-157.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 163.
interesting question in the context of imperial rivalry and empire building. As Louisiana’s new governor, it was implied that O’Reilly’s enemy would be his homeland Great Britain, specifically as it was represented a short distance away in West Florida. This situation seems like another complicating factor in the patchwork of populations and identities along the Gulf Coast, but O’Reilly’s possibly conflicting allegiances were not as strange as they might seem. Richard Wall, Spain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, was another important Irishman in the country’s administration and empire. O’Reilly might have come to Spain through Wall or similar circumstances that brought Wall to Spain.

In the history of the Spanish empire, Spaniards relied on Irish soldiers and priests, and the connection between the two countries was not as far-fetched as we might expect since they were bound together by their common Catholic religion. Boundaries and nationalities in Europe were not firm at this point, making nationality a complicated and boundless concept. In this case, religion was a stronger unifying point than national identity. Furthermore, the relationship between Spain and Ireland illustrates the wide spread draw and effect of empires. The creation and maintenance of an empire were not simple tasks and they required a huge amount of resources and manpower. As a result, Spain recruited administrators and settlers from Ireland, as well as from other countries.

O’Reilly arrived in Louisiana in late July and in New Orleans on August 17. Unlike Ulloa, O’Reilly immediately took control of the colony and established himself as its legitimate governor. On August 18, O’Reilly was confirmed governor in a large ceremony before the city’s Cathedral in New Orleans’s Plaza de Armas.
Aubrey resigned as governor and surrendered Louisiana to the Spanish Crown. Spanish flags went up around the Plaza and a Te Deum, a hymn commonly recited during Catholic services, was performed. After the ceremony, Spanish soldiers stationed themselves at posts throughout the city.¹²⁹

O’Reilly cemented his position through a number of legal measures that were meant to demonstrate his authority, which was important in the aftermath of the revolt. He consulted Aubrey and other witnesses about the revolt in October and arrested twelve of its leaders. The rest of the inhabitants were given pardons and asked to take oaths of allegiance. The twelve men were charged with treason and sedition in a public trial. Lafrêniere, Marquis, Jean Baptiste de Noyan, Pierre Caresse, and Milhet, all received the death sentence, and were promptly executed by firing squad.¹³⁰

After dealing with possible instability among inhabitants, O’Reilly established a governing body. The Spanish Crown allowed O’Reilly to choose the type of government he would use in Louisiana, and he chose a cabildo, a municipal government that was commonly used throughout cities in the Spanish empire.¹³¹ In the first few meetings, O’Reilly confirmed the cabildo’s role as New Orleans’s municipal government and established many of its functions. The first entry in the records of the cabildo describes the transfer of the colony to the Spanish Crown, and the next two entries list the men O’Reilly chose to serve on the cabildo: Francisco Maria de Reggio, Pedro Francisco Olivier, Carlos Fleurian, Antonio Bienvenu, Moore, Revolt in Louisiana, 48-49.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 47.
¹³⁰ Moore, Revolt in Louisiana, 48-49.
¹³¹ Din, The New Orleans Cabildo, 49.
Joseph Ducros, Dionicio Braud, and Juan Bautista Garic. O’Reilly further asserted his power and that of the cabildo in a set of rules called the O’Reilly Code. The Code was published on November 25, 1769 and it was distributed in both Spanish and French.

The end of 1769 with O’Reilly’s cabildo in place roughly marks the end of the early phases of development for West Florida and Louisiana. Once the two colonies had established themselves, each of the administrations was faced with integrating its diverse populations and providing for the colony’s inhabitants. Although colonial administrations were in place, each colony still struggled to maintain itself and hold a firm presence. During this period, the major issues for each colony included settlement and development, trade, relations with Indian nations, and border issues and inter-colonial rivalry.

**British Development of West Florida**

Immigrants continued to arrive in West Florida after 1769, and settlement continued in similar patterns as it had before, but to a lesser extent. The exact number of immigrants and intensity of recruitment, however, are difficult to determine because there are fewer documents from this period, in contrast to the years immediately following the Treaty of Paris. The little documentation that does exist, however, focuses on issues of development, so it is likely that West Florida’s administration concentrated on improving settlements that were established before 1769. There was, however, one definite population influx that took place in the years

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132 First three entries of the Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).

133 Din, *The New Orleans Cabildo*, 50.
surrounding the American Revolution when British subjects loyal to the Crown fled the rebellious colonies for one of the few British colonies that did not participate in the revolution, taking refuge and maintaining their allegiances.

Rather than focusing on enlarging its population, West Florida’s government worked to improve agriculture, the main way of obtaining food and sustaining a population. Settlers produced potatoes, rice, various fruits, and pumpkins, which could grow even in poor soils, in addition to a variety of other vegetables and wheat. Among the long list of crops that grew in West Florida, many were described as “in speculation.” These select crops could have been “in speculation” because of nutrient deficient soil or because settlers were experimenting with new crops. Experimentation implies that West Floridians were in contact with other areas of the world and importing seeds from them.

Agriculture, however, could only support West Florida’s population to a certain extent, and this is why trade was important in the colony. The land and quality of soil varied greatly, with the best land laying along the eastern bank of the Mississippi River and around the rivers that came to a head at Pensacola. Timber, one of the few crops of which there was an abundance, was a staple of trade and bargaining power in West Florida. Merchants developed an extensive lumber industry and also traded timber with colonies in North America and the West Indies.

West Florida’s administrators did not solely think about their European subjects, and also dedicated a good deal of attention and money to native peoples who

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135 Ibid., 92-93.
136 Ibid., 123-124, 142.
lived in the general area. When the British government first moved into West Florida, administrators were displeased with the French practice of giving gifts to surrounding native people like the Choctaws and Creeks, but officials quickly realized that garnering favor with natives was necessary to maintain the order and peace that were so crucial for a struggling colony. In 1767, Governor Johnstone received a letter from Lord Shelburne, the minister of the southern colonies at the time, reminding him of the importance of maintaining good relations with natives, stating that that “want of Harmony so necessary for the Establishment of an Infant Colony, which hitherto prevented its increase and Cultivation could not but be very displeasing to His Majesty.” In later years, positive relations with natives were a way of maintaining borders, particularly since the northern boundary of British West Florida was formally defined as the Chactaw and Creek nations. In addition, natives were used as a method of creating buffer zones between the rival colonies of British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana.

In order to achieve such relations with natives, the British government created a Bureau of Indian relations in West Florida and elsewhere throughout the British North American colonies. Traders also became heavily involved in West Floridians’ interactions with surrounding natives because the government commissioned traders to deliver gifts to Indians. As a result of this initial introduction, many trade companies established posts within Indian territory, lived with natives, married native

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137 Sir Farmar to Secretary of War, January 1764.
138 Shelburne to Governor Johnstone, Whitehall, 19 February 1767, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
139 Sir Farmar to Secretary of War, Mobile, January 1764; Ramo de Poblacion y Amistad de los Indios Cuenta de Cargo y Data de Caudales, Ano de 1779, Legajo 576, Papeles procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de las Indias (microfilm, Williams Research Center).
women, and conducted local councils on behalf of British West Florida’s administration. In effect, traders were the intermediary between West Florida’s governors and Indian nations.

**Spanish Development of Louisiana**

In New Orleans, development was an obvious and urgent concern of the cabildo, considering Louisiana’s dire situation. Administrators gave precedence to the welfare of Louisiana’s subjects, making settlement a secondary issue in those initial years, and large-scale, government-supported efforts at settlement did not occur in Louisiana until later. Unlike in West Florida, Louisiana’s government did not make efforts to recruit settlers in the early period, but this is not to say that immigrants did not come to Louisiana. The Spanish empire was beginning to think seriously about settlement in 1767 when King Carlos III issued the decree, Nuevas Poblaciones, that began a process of recruitment and settlement within Spain. Pablo de Olavide supervised the project as Catholics from German states and Flanders established towns in Sierra Morena, an unsettled region of Andalucía.\(^{140}\)

However, Spain did not initiate large-scale, government-supported settlement projects in Louisiana until 1778. During the developmental period immediately after 1769, the cabildo did not participate in such recruitment because it was more concerned with stabilizing and maintaining Louisiana’s current conditions before further developing the colony. The cabildo was preoccupied by the colony’s declining

\(^{140}\) Paquette, *Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and Its Empire*, 87-88.
population and wanted to keep the free population in proportion with that of slaves, but for the moment, there was little that the cabildo could do.\textsuperscript{141}

The New Orleans cabildo was charged with even more tasks, considering that it governed during a period of transition in a colony that was not well maintained by its previous ruler. The cabildo’s diputados and other officials often used words like poor, sad, and deplorable to describe Louisiana and its inhabitants. After creating themselves as a governing body and appointing its members, the cabildo quickly had to stabilize conditions in the colony and provide for its inhabitants if it was going to succeed as a municipal government. One of the cabildo’s initial projects was to monitor and improve the conditions of roads, bridges, levees and other structures in the city. These were early projects for the cabildo because surveyors and engineers, common figures in the developing colonies of Louisiana and West Florida, would have been asked to report on the city’s constructions. The cabildo probably tackled this problem first because it would have been relatively easy to assess and repair rotting bridges and flooding streets.

These early evaluations, however, did not mean that the city’s roads and levees were repaired quickly. In December of 1769, the cabildo required all people who drove carts to fill in the eroding city roads and prohibited cart drivers from passing over the levies along the banks of the river, unless they were picking up shipments.\textsuperscript{142} In 1774, the levees and roads still were in disrepair, and the diputados required that all subjects pay taxes that would be specifically used to fill in roads.

\textsuperscript{141} 5 June 1770, 5 October 1771, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
\textsuperscript{142} 9 December 1769, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
When colonists ignored the cabildo, the diputados agreed to pay for repairs to the roads using their own funds.  

While working on initial, emergency projects, the cabildo was still informing itself about what needed most attention in the colony and how to best solve those issues. On June 28, 1770, the cabildo asked Luis Ranson, the Sindico Procurador General, to present the observations and conclusions of a special report that its members had asked him to prepare. Ranson began his report by saying that Louisiana’s inhabitants would bring the cabildo and the Crown’s rule to their ruin. He claimed that the inhabitants did not work, instead “preferiendo los unos, la mendiguez, y los otros la ociosidad.” According to Ranson, the population’s laziness was a threat to Louisiana’s existence and also was counter to “una Republica virtuosa” that the colony’s governors hoped to create. Ranson created a metaphor between the government and the residents to further explain the dangers that the colonists posed, stating that

con la reflexion de que ellos, son la madre y seno de los vicios, y que una Republica virtuosa, que ha savido, siempre, con el trabajo y la industria, secudirles, desalexando la miseria, se hallara condenada a admitir, con esta a aquellos que perturban su reposo.

The only way to remedy the situation and successfully create “una Republica virtuosa” would be to “dicte la subordinacion y el acertable respecto a la Soberania.”

143 22 April 1774, 27 May 1774, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
144 28 June 1770, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
Ranson even provided suggestions as to how Louisiana could be a successful colony, citing that increased agricultural output would be important in achieving this goal. At the moment, settlers only grew enough food for their own consumption, but they should increase production and sell crops outside of the colony. Ranson especially encouraged increasing the growth and trade of tobacco, and also suggested the use of slave labor.147

Louisiana’s inhabitants, however, were not the only ones causing the colony’s troubles. Despite Ranson’s suggestions and the cabildo’s continuous work and meetings, the cabildo faltered as well as it was still growing accustomed to its new responsibilities, as is shown by the debate on its November 16, 1770 meeting. On that day, the cabildo’s members unanimously decided “that it was necessary to dress them [the building’s porters] as is customary in all cities of the Kingdom, said expenses to paid out of the City funds.”148 At the next meeting, however, the diputados realized that the “said expenses were considered excessive in consideration of the small amount of funds being in the City Treasury; that the previous resolution be suspended until sufficient funds are on hand.”149

The language of the entry is abrupt and even startling. It is as if the members of the cabildo suddenly came to their senses about what was necessary for the colony’s well-being and survival. This original proposal, however, should not just be considered frivolous or short-sighted. The members of the cabildo wanted to show that Louisiana was a part of the Spanish empire and would conform to its customs

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147 Ibid.
148 16 November 1770, English translation, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
149 Ibid.
and practices; the debate over the uniforms was another way in which local authorities were trying to integrate Louisiana into the empire.

On October 4, 1771, the cabildo convened with the particular purpose of discussing previous reports about Louisiana’s “triste situacion,” especially “la salud publica…la decadencia de la Provincia, su depopulacion, y las causas que la motivan.” The meeting had a serious tone, and the diputados recognized the gravity of the situation in the entry for the meeting; they not only addressed problems and set goals but for the first time, recognized that their actions and decisions had consequences for the city’s inhabitants. During the meeting, the diputados informed the King of their “intenciones de conservarla, y hazerla feliz, a cuyo designios, como ventajosas a sus Reales intereses.”

The October 4 meeting also is noteworthy because of its discussion of Louisiana’s settlers and their identities. At the beginning of the meeting, before discussion of the proposed topics, the cabildo’s members decided that they would conduct the meeting in French, rather than in Spanish because not all the diputados spoke or understood Spanish very well. They all agreed that the use of French was acceptable in this case because “tan leve circunstancia, no debe impedir los fines tan importantes.”

Towards the end of the meeting, after thinking about the ways that the cabildo could assist its population and improve conditions, the diputados asked the King of Spain to accept French as a commonly spoken language rather than forcing French-

150 4 October 1771, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
speaking inhabitants to learn Spanish. In their request to the King, “que se representara a sus Reales pies,” the diputados assured him that though many Louisianans spoke French

quedan los corazones Espanoles, y por su Real Gracia, naturalizados y unidos al cuerpo de nacion tan Ilustre, a la que desean defender, y por cuya gloria esperan, morir, estos vecinos, sin ahorrar sus bienes, y la ultima gota de sangre como lo han prometido, y no se arrepienten, y que si han salido algunos de la Provincia, han sido forzados de su necesidades.153

Both passages from this session of the cabildo show that language was an important factor in determining citizenship, allegiance, and identity. Meetings of the local government were conducted in Spanish and the King wanted his subjects to speak Spanish; both are signs that Spanish was the officially sanctioned language. That the local government, a representative of the King’s authority, did not conduct its meetings in the King’s official language would have been a serious exception to Spanish imperial policies and perhaps an offense. As a result, the diputados had to assure the King that Louisianans were truly Spanish and willing to sacrifice their lives and property for the Spanish Crown. The diputados used flowery language to assure the King of the population’s allegiance. They created a metaphor of the body with references to the heart and blood, as if citizenship was something deeply ingrained in a person. This metaphor and the cabildo’s reassurances to the King provided an understanding of the local administration’s expectations of its subjects in Louisiana and the relationship the cabildo had with its inhabitants.

In addition to having symbolic significance, language was a cultural barrier that separated sectors of the population because of the inability to communicate. The majority of the French-speaking population must have had trouble integrating

153 Ibid.
themselves with incoming Spaniards because Frenchmen could not speak with Louisiana’s newest settlers. Even some of the diputados could not speak or understand Spanish to the point that a meeting of a Spanish city’s local government had to be conducted in a foreign language. Furthermore, language might have directly influenced allegiance to a monarch and identity because a person could only understand the government, traditions, and culture of a country that spoke the same language that he or she did.

The cabildo assured the King that all of Louisiana’s citizens “quedan los corazones Espanoles,” but this strongly worded plea can only be interpreted as the cabildo overcompensating for the lack of allegiance to the Spanish Crown. One person or council cannot speak for the sentiments of a whole population, and we can assume that not all Louisianans identified as Spaniards, especially given past opposition to the Crown.

Despite the cabildo’s various resolutions to create a self-sufficient colony, Louisiana’s inhabitants still had to face the harsh environment of the Gulf Coast and other conditions typical of a developing colony, and the cabildo often had to act to ameliorate these conditions. In 1772, there was a scarcity of flour; in 1778 and 1779, the cabildo and population panicked as disease swept throughout the colony.\footnote{154 18 September 1772, 17 June 1774, 8 May 1778, 8 February 1779, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).} To make up for difficulties like these, the cabildo greatly aided its citizens in a long list of what the cabildo called “asuntos precizos bien publico.”\footnote{155 Various entries of Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).} On September 6, 1771, the cabildo decided to fix the price of meat at five hundred pesos, considering the
poor economic conditions of the colony and its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{156} In October of the following year, the cabildo implemented a practice of buying surplus flour using money from its own budget to sell to bakers at the same price that the cabildo bought the flour. All bakers who bought flour from the cabildo were then required to sell three pounds of bread at the fair price of one real “en beneficio del bien publico.”\textsuperscript{157} These rules would be carefully monitored, and bakers who violated them would have to give their bread to hospitals and the poor for free.\textsuperscript{158}

Trade was closely linked to development because in a city on the Mississippi River, trade was essential in developing a badly needed economy. In a letter dated January 27, 1770 from Governor O’Reilly to Miguel de Altarriba, O’Reilly advocates free trade within the Spanish empire, saying “Que los Navios de la Provincia sean Recibidos en los Puertos de españa, y en la Hava, como tales Navios Españoles.”\textsuperscript{159} O’Reilly stated that free trade within the empire would be essential for Louisiana’s development. He recognized that Louisiana’s population needed a long list of materials and supplies—flour, oil, tools, guns, ammunition, and clothing—and proposed that the colony obtain these items through trade with another Spanish colony. In addition, O’Reilly noted that free trade also would benefit Louisiana by creating “un comercio capaz de sobstenerla y aun fomentarla.”\textsuperscript{160}

Many of the complaints that Louisianans expressed in the October 1769 revolt continued into O’Reilly’s regime, and although O’Reilly promoted free trade, his

\textsuperscript{156} 6 September 1771, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
\textsuperscript{157} 30 October 1772, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} Alexandro O’Reilly to Miguel de Altarriba, 27 January 1770, Panton, Leslie & Company Collection, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
concept of free trade excluded the trade with foreign countries and their colonies that Louisianans had demanded in the October 1769 revolt.\textsuperscript{161} Even though O’Reilly suppressed the revolt and restored order to the colony, Louisianans still complained about their inability to trade with neighboring, Caribbean French colonies, and the cabildo repeatedly debated this issue.

In December 1769, the cabildo prohibited the sale of goods from Santo Domingo, unless they were deemed absolutely necessary by official review.\textsuperscript{162} In a June 1770 report, Luis Ranson suggested that the governor allow for the exportation of tobacco to French colonies in exchange for slaves; and after hearing Ranson’s report, the cabildo enlisted Carlos Fleurian and Dionicio Braud to research and to comment on his proposals.\textsuperscript{163} In a letter to Carlos III that also was presented to the cabildo, the two men concluded that Louisiana would benefit “si la Real clemencia de Vuestra Majestad se inclina a conceder a estos habitants, el comercio libre del Tabaco al Cabo Frances, o Isla de Santo Domingo a cambio de negros.”\textsuperscript{164} Fleurian and Braud agreed that slaves were more valuable than Louisiana’s tobacco, and that slavery was an old practice that Louisianans could administer well.\textsuperscript{165}

The discussion about free trade continued over the years, and over time the cabildo’s general consensus changed from staunch opposition to acceptance in 1778 when Carlos III permitted unrestricted trade among all Spanish colonies. This shift could have been the result of continual protests by inhabitants, and this might have

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} 9 December 1769, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
\textsuperscript{163} 30 June 1770, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
\textsuperscript{164} 6 July 1770, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
been the case, but more likely, Louisiana officials slowly realized the necessity of illegal trade for the colony’s subsistence. In a cabildo meeting on August 18, 1770, the diputados directly linked “la grande devastacion de la Colonia” to decreased trade and the declining number of merchants who were leaving the colony to seek business elsewhere.\footnote{166 16 August 1771, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).} In 1778, Carlos III forfeited his concept of a unified, uncontaminated Spanish empire in order to provide for his subjects and to support colonial economies.

Another issue related to trade was the use of the Mississippi River. The Spanish government had legal control of the river and could decide who was allowed to sail and conduct trade along its banks. Louisiana’s control over the river contributed to rivalries among imperial powers because the Mississippi was a lifeline of trade and settlement that cut across the vast North American continent. In 1774, Spain allowed British traders limited use of the river, but it was an issue that the two imperial powers frequently returned to, causing friction between them.\footnote{167 Ibid.}

After 1769, competition between British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana increased, but before then, competition was virtually nonexistent. Administrators of the two colonies were so focused on internal issues and problems that they could not put much effort into wars and competition.\footnote{168 John Preston Moore, “Anglo-Spanish Rivalry on the Louisiana Frontier, 1763-68” in The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804, ed. John Francis McDermott (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974).} While animosities were at a low in these initial years, administrators still exchanged snippy letters whenever possible, and they certainly were aware of the other colony’s government and actions. Rivalries mounted after 1769 and Bernardo de Gálvez’s appointment as Louisiana’s governor...
in 1776 well represents these escalations. Bernardo de Gálvez’s uncle was José de Gálvez, an incredibly prominent administrator and adviser within the Spanish empire. But more importantly, at least for the histories of West Florida and Louisiana, Bernardo de Gálvez was an egotistical and aggressive governor who sparked many controversies and competitions between the two colonies in the years to come in addition to inaugurating a comprehensive plan of settlement in Spanish Louisiana.
Chapter 3:

“Self-interested and without Publick Spirit:” Settlement Techniques and Community Formation in Louisiana and West Florida

By 1778, British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana had diverged considerably, especially in their settlement policies and techniques. Spanish Louisiana had a policy of settlement that entailed high government involvement in settlers’ lives. The government chose who would immigrate and provided guidelines for settlement, shaping how a community and loyalty would be formed. The communal process contributed to a sense of allegiance to Louisiana. British West Florida’s government, however, did not have the same presence in colonists’ lives; nor did it have the same concerted efforts of recruitment and settlement. British imperial officials created a number of incentives for immigration after Britain gained control of West Florida, but these efforts had largely disappeared by 1778. More importantly, settlement that did occur was based around the individual rather than groups, as in Louisiana. This approach to settlement did not create an allegiance to land, and a year later, while engaged in war with Louisiana, Campbell accused the British population of being “Self-interested and without Publick Spirit.”

Spanish Settlement of Louisiana

The Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios, a branch of Louisiana’s government that was formally created around 1778, administered settlement in Spanish Louisiana, and Francisco Bouligny, a Spanish official, was largely

169 General Campbell to Lord George Germain, 14 September 1779, Pensacola, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
responsible for creating the organization. Bouligny was originally from Alicante, a Spanish port city on the Mediterranean Sea, but his family traced its origins back to France and then Italy.\textsuperscript{170} Like most of his brothers, Bouligny joined the Spanish military and traveled throughout the empire.\textsuperscript{171} He first moved to the New World in 1762, when he was stationed in Cuba during the Seven Years War.\textsuperscript{172} Bouligny then relocated to Louisiana in 1769 as one of O’Reilly’s assistants when he became governor of the colony after the insurrection against Ulloa.\textsuperscript{173} After O’Reilly ended his responsibilities as governor, Bouligny remained in Louisiana with the military and established himself economically and socially.

Bouligny was afforded yet another opportunity in 1776 when José de Gálvez appointed Bernardo de Gálvez Louisiana’s next governor. Upon Bernardo de Gálvez’s installation, José de Gálvez asked Bouligny to write a report about Louisiana’s current state. In response to this request, Bouligny wrote a memoria that described the conditions of the colony in addition to offering suggestions for improving it. These suggestions included the construction of new forts and other means of protection, an increase in slave labor, the implementation of new taxes, a more open trade policy, better relations with Indians, and the creation of new settlements. Furthermore, Bouligny suggested that a superintendent’s position be created to oversee settlement and Indian affairs. As part of this responsibility, Bouligny wanted the superintendent to conduct land surveys and yearly censuses.\textsuperscript{174}

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 4-5.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 66-70, 72.
Until this point, Louisiana had not received much attention from the Spanish imperial administration, and the proposal to collect information suggests that Louisiana’s improvement was closely linked to government involvement.

José de Gálvez accepted many of the ideas proposed in the memoria and thought that commerce, slavery, and a larger population were important for Louisiana’s improvement. An increased population was particularly significant and Gálvez quickly began working to recruit colonists. The Spanish Crown decided to allow all Spanish subjects and Catholics from countries other than Spain’s enemies to settle in Louisiana with the promise that they would be treated as equals. Gálvez also created the position of lieutenant governor, responsible for settlement, commerce, and Indian friendship, and asked Bouligny to fill the role.175

The process of settlement began in Europe, and Louisiana’s government used contracts to recruit and secure the colony’s new residents. The process of recruitment is documented on two levels: the contracts that individuals and their families received and the records that the government kept of families that immigrated. The individual contracts were written and signed in Europe. They all followed the same format, and the contract for Juan Lopez Rivero and his family, or any other family for that matter, is representative of the larger collection.

All contracts had a “Sello Quarto,” a seal with a coat of arms, and a printed date at the top of the paper. Most documents pertaining to Louisiana are hand-written; printed letters are rare. The use of seals and prints, which can be used many times and always are the same regardless of where they are produced, demonstrates the collective, state-mandated efforts of recruitment and settlement. All contracts also

175 Ibid., 75-76.
contained the same introductory section in which an official who was responsible for recruitment within a Spanish province swore to the accuracy of the document and claimed that the business he was conducting was on behalf of the King. In this contract, Joseph de Ortega y Monrroy is the oficial “Comicionado por S.M., q. c. Dios Que, p. a. el alustram. de Familias de la Costa del Reino de Gran. d. a. las Poblaciones de la Luisiana.” Even though this contract was for one family, the standardized format of the document shows that it belongs to a larger phenomenon.

Lopez and his family—his wife Maria Ruiz, his children, Felis, Rafael, Ja[sic], Pepa, and his mother-in-law—were from the province of Málaga, as were many immigrants who settled in Louisiana. After the contract presents the members of the family, they agreed that “establecemos en dhas Poblaciones, a que vamos todos conformes libre y voluntariamente, sin otra fuerza, violencia ni promesa, que la de los Partidos.” The Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios had to make sure that the families immigrated at their own will, and that the Spanish Crown was not forcibly moving its subjects. It is also interesting that the contract is worded in the nosotros form, meaning that every member of the family agreed to move to Louisiana. This shows that the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios preferred families as the basic unit of its immigrants. The emphasis on families also would have helped to reinforce a group mentality. Families also probably were more reliable for settlement because the survival and well-being of their families would have been settlers’ motivation to succeed in Louisiana.

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176 Contrato de la familia de Juan Lopez Rivero, Legajo 576, Papeles procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de las Indias (microfilm, Williams Research Center).
177 Ibid.
The next part of the contract detailed what the Lopez family would receive from the Spanish government and explained the family’s responsibilities as settlers. From the moment the Lopezes left their house till the first harvest in Louisiana, the Spanish Crown would provide for the family. The government would pay for their passage to the New World and, once there, assign the family their land, help them construct their house, and give them the livestock and tools necessary for the cultivation of their land. In short, until that first harvest, the government would “assist[irles] con todo lo necesario a [su] subsistencia.” Afterwards, the Lopezes would have to provide for themselves, but they still would receive rations from the government. The family could keep their land and the other possessions that the government gave them.

The Lopez family left from Málaga, and immigrants came in “remesas.” Spaniards left from a number of port cities in Spain, and the account books of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios report that as many as eight waves of settlers came to one town in Louisiana. Immigrants most likely arrived in New Orleans, particularly since it was the region’s largest port and was most accessible from Europe. Notations like “las familias Malagueñas que devian subir a dicho Establecimiento” in the accounts of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios also support this idea. Immigrants would have arrived in New Orleans and would have had to travel north along the Mississippi River to arrive at their new homes.

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178 Ibid.
179 Ramo de Poblacion y Amistad delos Indios Cuenta de Cargo y Data de Caudales, Ano de 1779, Legajo 576, Papeles procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de las Indias (microfilm, Williams Research Center).
180 Ibid.
181 Ibid.
Colonists recruited through the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios settled in newly created towns, and the account book for the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios from 1778 to 1779 is divided into the expenses for each of these new populations: Galeztown, which is spelled as Villa de Galvez in some places in the account; Nueva Iberia; Natenzuela, spelled at least four different ways in the same document; Baxataria; Tierra de Bueyes; Bayagoulas; and la Costa de Iberville. A government official oversaw the settlement and needs of colonists in each of these towns. The Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios as a larger administrative body also had a number of government appointed officials. As the head of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios, Francisco Bouligny had the title of “Fon.° Gov.° de las nuevas poblaciones.” Gilberto Antonio Maxent was responsible for buying supplies and other items for the settlements. Juan Buenaventura Morales was the branch’s secretary and treasurer, and Carlos Trudeau was the colony’s surveyor. Enrique Ataide y Portugal most likely was responsible for settlements’ defense since he is often cited as being paid for “haver vencido,” suggesting that he secured the land for the establishment of new populations throughout Louisiana. 

Once in Louisiana, the government distributed immigrants to one of the newly created towns, and even moved already settled families. In 1778, Bouligny was reimbursed “por el Valor deum Bato y otros efectos q.° proveytó…quando subio a los Atakapas con fam.° Malagueñas.” The Atakapas was much farther up the
Mississippi River than other Louisiana settlements, and was not one of the towns where immigrants lived immediately after arriving. These colonists probably were relocated as part of a new experiment or attempt at settlement farther north in Louisiana territory. That Bouligny, the highest official of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios, led the expedition further supports the idea that this settlement was a new project for the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios. As the branch’s highest official, he would have wanted to oversee and lead the expedition.

In a similar situation that year, the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios “distribuí a dos Viudas y tres Yndiv. de las familias Malagueñas q. binieron a ella con destino a ser Pobladores.” In this case, the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios separated single family members from the rest of their larger families. Like the situation before, the widows and individuals were uprooted from the established surroundings of their family to go where the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios thought they were better needed. The division of the extended family highlights again the importance of the nuclear family in settlement. The Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios would not divide immediate families, but they would take individuals who were not part of such a group and place them where the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios thought they were most needed.

The placement process was carefully organized with an emphasis on group formation, and such planning can be seen in the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios’s receipts for the contracts that were signed in Europe. Unlike the individual contract that the Lopez family received, these receipts exist in large groups. These particular receipts exist together because they were the papers of Nicolas Forstall,

186 Ibid.
“Regidor Perpetual de la N.ª Orleans y encargado de la Población de la N.ª Iberia,” one of the many officials who administered and oversaw the development of new towns throughout the colony.\textsuperscript{187} As the official responsible for Nueva Iberia, Forstall compiled many of these receipts for residents of the town. All of the receipts for Nueva Iberia have the same format, suggesting that Forstall’s papers are the same as other documents of this type in other settlements throughout Louisiana.

The contract receipts exist as a packet of information, and preceding the contracts, there is a list of accounts for the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios in Nueva Iberia. In the list of accounts, Forstall received his salary in the line, “D.ª F.ª Bouligni Q.ª me hago ha entregado D.ª F.ª Bouligni remitiendome la D.ª Poblacion las Cantidades de mil quarenta y Ocho Reales un Dinero Segun mi Recivo.”\textsuperscript{188} The record of finances also shows that the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios paid for the supplies to be kept in the “Almahecen” of Nueva Iberia as well as corn, rice, and repairs that the inhabitants would complete.\textsuperscript{189}

Following the invoices, we have the receipts of contracts. The receipts are kept together, and we begin to obtain a sense of a community; contracts represented one family, but each family did not exist alone. There are brick layers and bakers and there are Spaniards and other settlers with French or Anglo sounding names. Gonsalo Prados and his family were one unit of this population, and their contract is representative of other families’ contracts.

The Prados contract begins with a list of the family members that reads as follows:

\textsuperscript{187} Forstall (Nicholás) Document, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
Contrado Gonsalo Prados y Su familia Compuesta de los Yndividuos siguientes

Saver

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<td>Manuel Prados, su hijo de</td>
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<td>Mujeres</td>
<td>Theresa Gusman su Muger de</td>
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<td>Salvador Prados su hija de</td>
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This list is a kind of census, and within it, we can see how the family structure influenced the development of Nueva Iberia. Gonsalo Prados is called the “gefe” of the family, and this title is significant in thinking about the formation of a community and allegiance. A jefe, as it is spelled in current-day Spanish, refers to the person with the most authority or control within a group. The word can be applied to a number of situations, most of which relate to a state, government, or administration. In this sense of the word, we can interpret the family as a smaller unit of the settlement and governance of Louisiana. Much as a governor did for his state and its population, the father was expected to regulate and care for his family. This metaphor helps us to understand the importance of families in the settlement of Louisiana and its contribution to a collective identity and allegiance.

After listing the members of the Prados family, the contract describes the basic conditions of settlement. The section begins with

Deven por lo q. e han recibido de el Rey desde el Primero de Diciembre de 1779 hasta el ultimos de el mismo mes de 1782 por Su Subsistencia entretenimiento Y esteblecimiento Subministrado Pr. Mi Dn N.as Forstall.192

190 Ibid.
191 *Diccionario de la lengua Española*, s.v. “jefe”
192 Forstall Document.
This quotation explains the who, when, and what of the contracts given to immigrants and the practical aspects of how the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios functioned. The wording of the passage emphasizes that Carlos III paid for the support that settlers received. The text reminds colonists whom they should thank for their immigration and possessions, and the use of the King’s name would have been important in forming an allegiance.

The other name mentioned is Nicolas Forstall, the person who directly assisted the Prados family and other settlers in Nueva Iberia. He is the King’s representative in Nueva Iberia, and the use of the words “Pr. Mi” indicates that he wrote this section of the contract. The excerpt, “lo q. e han recibido,” establishes a relationship between the government, as it is represented by Carlos III and Forstall, and the population because of what they have received from their authorities.

The quotation states that the contract is effective between the months of December 1779 and December 1782. All the contracts from Forstall’s collection also pertain to these exact dates. The consistent repetition of these dates suggests that the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios issued contracts on a definitive timetable. Contracts, and the support they provided, lasted for a period of three years, and in Nueva Iberia, this three-year span began in December 1779. Forstall’s papers also include contracts from a later period that began in 1782, after the first contracts were no longer viable. The later contracts began a new cycle of immigration and settlement, showing that the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios’s work extended beyond 1782.
Finally, the excerpt broadly explains that the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios would provide the Pradoses with “Subsistencia entretenimiento Y establecimiento.” Subsistencia includes everything that allows for everyday life, and more specifically, the permanence and stability of a person’s existence.\(^{193}\) Establecimiento, as it is spelled in Spanish today, is a person’s ability to place himself in a specific site and permanently reside there.\(^{194}\) These two categories allude to the importance of creating sustainable settlements, and it is interesting that entretenimiento, or entertainment, is grouped together with subsistence and establishment. Although it is unclear what entertainment includes, it suggests that Spanish Louisiana’s government was concerned for its population’s well-being and happiness.

After the section quoted above, a figure lists the amounts allotted to the Prados family for these three categories; following these numbers, the contract changes to the perspective of the family. Gonsalo Prados confirmed that he received the provisions for his family’s subsistence, entertainment, and establishment in the same amounts within the same time period that Forstall outlined in the first part of the document. This section begins,

\[
\text{Yo Abajo Firmado he recibido de el S.r D.n N.as Forstall...Ocho Mil, Nueve Cientos veinte dos reales y Diez y Siete Maravedises por mi Subsistencia desde el Primero de Diciembre de 1779 hasta el ultimo de el Mismo Mes de 1782; siete Cientos treinta nueve reales y Diez y Siete maravedis por mi entretenimiento durante el Dho tiempo Y Seis Mil quinientos y cinquenta reales por mi establecimiento Completo.}^{195}
\]

\(^{193}\) *Diccionario de la lengua Española*, s.v. “subsistencia”

\(^{194}\) *Diccionario de la lengua Española*, s.v. “establecimiento”

\(^{195}\) Forstall Document.
The text surely already was written for Prados, leaving him only to sign the document, but the repetition of the language and conditions of the contract confirm that he and his family had received support in these amounts.

This section of the document also explains in greater detail what exactly the Prados family would receive. It states that for Prados’s establishment, he would receive “Casa Ganados y todos los utiles Propios a el trabajo de la tierra.” The provisions have a strong emphasis on the family’s permanent residence and how it could sustain itself. In addition, the language is nearly identical to the language of the contract issued to the Lopez family in Málaga.

After the Prados family’s contract and many others like that it, Forstall provided a list of names of those who settled in Nueva Iberia. The first part of the list is composed of only Spaniards, while the end of the list contains non-Spaniards. Some names from the bottom half include Luis Pellerin, Luc Faulk, who is noted as an “Americano,” Jesse Ker, Mathurin Renan, Francois Jacques, Juan Clarke, and Thomas Greifath. The list, especially its separation into Spaniards and others, offers interesting information about the integration of non-Spaniards into Louisiana. As the founding creed of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios and this list show, non-Spaniards were welcomed in the colony, but the division reflects the clear distinctions that actually existed between Spaniards and foreigners. Normally, non-Spaniards were not allowed to settle in any of the empire’s colonies, but Spanish Louisiana was an exception to this rule.

196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
Within the list of French, British, and American settlers, the government did not make an attempt to separate the people of these three backgrounds. Many of these individuals apparently had adopted or been assigned a Spanish version of their names. Juan Clarke, for example, probably was John Clarke. The French names, as far as the reader can determine, have not been converted to Spanish, possibly because Spain inherited a French population when Louisiana became a Spanish colony. By 1782, Spaniards had lived alongside Frenchmen for many years, and they might not have attempted to alter French names and other titles that represented French language and culture. Britons and Americans, however, were not always present on the Gulf Coast, and these name changes can be viewed as a way of dealing with an influx of a foreign population.

The accounts of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios for the year 1778, which outline where, when, and why the Branch spent its money, contain many of the same phrases that the contracts did. However, the accounts provide even greater detail about what the government supplied its newest inhabitants and how officials created towns. Before settlers arrived, towns were measured and divided into plots to be given to immigrants. As the colony’s surveyor, Carlos Trudeau would have participated in this process, but Muftun Gui “havintante de la Poblac.” de Galveston” also was paid for “el trabajo q. c tubo en medir y deslindar las tierras de dho establecim.”

Once the immigrants arrived, the government paid “por los gastos que suplio en la Avilitacion.” This common phrase, in exchange for the costs of habilitation,
was used in the expense section of every new town of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios, and in many cases, the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios also covered “el importe de los vales, y efectos que ha comprador para la formacion en Almacen de dha Poblacion.”\textsuperscript{200} The government wanted a well-stocked warehouse for many of the towns before the population even arrived so that the town would have a strong start.

In addition to all the other items and services already promised in immigrants’ contracts, the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios provided each town with medicine, defense, and additional means for the construction, development, and everyday needs of a town. Most towns had a “cirujano,” or surgeon, who frequently received payment “p.\textsuperscript{r} el importe de las medicinas y asistencia de enfermos que ha dada a los de dha Poblacion.”\textsuperscript{201} Tierra de Bueyes also had a royal hospital and Robert Dow, most likely an Irishman, was the cirujano in charge of it.\textsuperscript{202} Spain also stationed troops in the colony and frequently paid Anselmo Blanchard for his work as the “Ayud.\textsuperscript{r} de las Milic.\textsuperscript{s} de la Costa de Yberville y Asentista de los trabajadores de dha Poblacion.”\textsuperscript{203}

A large portion of expenses was dedicated to the everyday needs of settlers and the growth of their towns. The government hired “Carpinteros Blancos y Negros” and gave them the tools and supplies necessary to build. The carpenters constructed mills, factories, houses, and warehouses. The Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios gave out “setecientas y dos honas de coleta, ciento treinta y una Mantas y dos

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
Nergones que se compraron p. a. invertir los en las atenciones q. e. ocurren en las 
familias q. e. suben a dha Pob. ²⁰⁴ In this quotation, the Ramo de Población y 
Amistad de los Indios provided the colonists with an oddly precise number of goods, 
but also focused on the future, supplying them with “Nergones” that would support 
would support the town’s agriculture. The Ramo de Población y Amistad de los 
Indios gave another town “quatro hayuntas de Bueyes y quarenta y ocho lib. ⁵ Cordaje 
que compn p. a hav. ⁰ de ochos Labradoreres.”²⁰⁵

**British Settlement of West Florida**

The settlement techniques of British West Florida, however, were very 
different from those of Spanish Louisiana. British policies did not involve the same 
planning or forethought that emphasized community and communal sentiments. 
Compared to the settlement policies of Spanish Louisiana, British West Florida’s 
seemed haphazard. Immediately after Britain acquired West Florida, there were a 
number of incentives for settlement, but there was not a comprehensive, organized 
plan. In addition, the government did not provide expectations of how or where 
colonists would settle. An individual and his family could settle anywhere in the 
colony with the only condition being that he improve the land; unlike in Spanish 
Louisiana, the British government did not require that colonists settle in a specific 
place or as a group. Furthermore, these incentives mainly were offered at the 
beginning of British West Florida’s existence.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. ²⁰⁵ Ibid.
Settlement did exist after an initial period of development, but the process was mostly based around the individual. Throughout British West Florida’s early years, the colony was thought of as a good place for commercial investment and land speculation, and many London merchants and wealthy individuals bought properties in the province. The westernmost region of West Florida was most valuable and many traders, investors, and land speculators bought land in the area for commercial purposes. Many owners were not permanent residents. Some owners never even visited their holdings; others did not focus much on developing the land. As a result, there were not many patterns of settlement or established towns. Instead, individual gain was a driving force in the distribution of land.

West Florida’s government distributed land to individuals through land grants, the equivalents of Spanish Louisiana’s contracts. The land grants are short entries on a registry and have five columns: date of council meeting, name, lands petitioned, reasons cited, and council’s decision. For the most part, the names listed are British. The “lands petitioned” column does not give many details of the location of the property and rarely identifies land as being near or adjacent to another person’s holding. Entries for this section often read like “100 acres, being N.N.E. about 2 miles from Pensacola” or “Dauphin Island.” Some are even as inconclusive as “Lot 234,” which probably was a tract of land within Pensacola, indicating that there might

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209 Ibid.
have been some attempt at organizing settlement in West Florida’s capital city.\textsuperscript{210}

Occasionally, entries recognize neighboring lands or geographic landmarks, like John Blommart’s “tract supposed to contain 200 acres on East River between land” and William Walton’s “300 acres at the Natches adjoining land of Henry Fairchild.”\textsuperscript{211}

Many of the lands petitioned are described as being “near Natches” or “on the Mississippi,” but these clusters were not the result of government efforts to concentrate settlements in either of those locations.\textsuperscript{212} Rather, land in these areas was valuable because of its location along the Mississippi River and its fertile soil, and in 1768, men who were known as established traders flocked to the area to claim their piece of land. John Blommart snatched another plot of “2,000 acres on River Mississippi where vacant” and nearby, Alexander McIntosh and John Campbell received “500 acres on River Mississippi where vacant” and “1,000 acres on River Mississippi where vacant, as near Natches as possible,” respectively.\textsuperscript{213} The phrase, “where vacant,” highlights the unplanned free-for-all that characterized settlement in West Florida.

In \textit{The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769}, Clinton Newton Howard includes a map he created of lands granted. The map shows dots scattered across West Florida. There are a few clusters around Pensacola and Mobile, but otherwise, there is little cohesion or pattern to the plots settled. With approval from West Florida’s governing council, colonists could settle more or less wherever they

\textsuperscript{210} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid. We might even assume that the 1,000 acres on the Mississippi River are the lands from which Campbell fled in 1778.
wanted; as a result, West Florida did not have the same carefully formed communities that existed in Spanish Louisiana.

Howard’s map showing land distribution in British West Florida. (Map by Clinton Newton Howard in *The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769*, facing page 16.)

This method of settlement placed a focus on the individual rather than the colony, privileging individual subjects over the colony. In 1779, while West Florida was engaged in war with Spanish Louisiana, officials exchanged letters expressing their disappointment in West Floridians’ unwillingness to fight for their colony. In a letter to Lord George Germain, John Campbell stated that “there was [sic] no
Militia Laws in the Province, and the Inhabitants have publicly declaring they would not be compelled to quit their Homes, nor subject themselves to Military Law.”

This passage shows that West Florida’s inhabitants prioritized personal property over the colony’s defense and existence. In a frustrated tone, Campbell went on to explain,

I cannot help making known to your Lordship that I find the Inhabitants in general Self-interested and without Publick Spirit, whose minds are only attached to gain and their private Concerns. In short, Nothing can be gained from them, even on this Emergency, but an enormous extravagant Price and Personal service on general Principles of Natural Defense is too generous and exalted for their Conceptions. I have to Except from this General Reflection only two Person as yet in this Place; a M’ Chrystie Speaker of the Assembly and a Doctor Dallas have offered their Personal services whenever required.

The differences between these two techniques contributed to the tightly-knit and loosely-formed colonies of Spanish Louisiana and British West Florida. As Benedict Anderson explains in *Imagined Communities*, members of a nation or subjects of a colony, like those of Louisiana and West Florida, can think of themselves as forming a community because of “a deep, horizontal comradeship.”

This sense of comradeship or connection to others helps individuals to imagine or be aware of fellow inhabitants and their everyday actions, even though that individual may never personally know each of his compatriots. Nonetheless, the ability to do so is essential in creating a community in the minds of a colony’s population.

A sense of comradeship and empathy existed among Louisiana’s settlers because of the way that the government dictated towns’ formations. As a result, colonists were able to form a community rather than a loose collective of people.

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214 General Campbell to Lord George Germain, 14 September 1779, Pensacola, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
living in the same geographic area, as occurred in British West Florida. The most prominent characteristic uniting people living in British West Florida was the label, West Floridians. A shared space and given identity, however, were insufficient and superficial in forming a cohesive community within British West Florida.

Spanish Louisiana, however, more successfully formed a community because settlement policies implemented through the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios gave a certain regularity to life in Louisiana. All immigrants received contracts with the same framework and provisions. As inhabitants of newly formed towns, immigrants of each of the settlements had to perform many of the same tasks to ensure that their town would succeed. They were supplied with the same tools and assistance, and all of these processes contributed to an understanding of community. Families were emphasized as a unit of settlement and also provided stability. Furthermore, immigrants looked to the government as the source of land, rations, medicine, protections, and various other supplies. This support formed a bond among settlers in addition to forging an allegiance to Spanish Louisiana’s government.
Conclusion:

“Fuera de mi Jurisdiccion:” Allegiances and Exceptions in West Florida and Louisiana

These different imperial settlement techniques and their manifestations of individual or communal expression can be seen as one of the causes of Ross, Campbell, and Graiden’s trial in 1778. West Floridians like Ross, Campbell, and Graiden are prime examples of how West Florida’s system of settlement fostered a sense of self-importance and autonomy. These men, and many other Britons living along the Mississippi River, moved throughout the colony and sometimes crossed the river into the neighboring province of Spanish Louisiana. Residents of West Florida had this kind of mobility because the colony’s settlement practices did not fix colonists to the land—they did not have strong affiliations with a certain township or a strong sense of community. Their heightened mobility combined with the travel necessary to be a trader caused many West Floridians to move from one location to another and from one colony to the next. There were, of course other reasons that West Floridians frequently left their homes. Land speculators with multiple properties probably would have spent time in each of their locales throughout the year, and in the case of Ross and Campbell, settlers moved into Louisiana because they felt that they did not receive adequate protection from the British government.

British West Florida’s land policies and loose formation of settlement are exemplified by traders who lived along the Mississippi River. Many of these men held land in West Florida and Louisiana and took oaths to the Crowns of both colonies when being a resident of one or the other was more convenient for their business. From the letters of William Fitzpatrick, a prominent West Floridian trader,
we can envision a network of traders that existed throughout West Florida and in New Orleans. Fitzpatrick was stationed at Manchac, a town close to the Mississippi River on one of its tributaries, and sent letters to other merchants in Pensacola, Baton Rouge, Mobile, Natchez, Concord, and New Orleans. A number of the names of his recipients repeat frequently, and through the letters, we become familiar with traders like David Ross, John Campbell, Oliver Pollock, Anthony Hutchins, and John Blommart. In the letters, Fitzpatrick often wrote about what he owed other merchants, what credit they would receive, and what items he was expecting them to send to him. He also told his correspondences when and where he would be trading.216 The repetition of these names and the locations to which the letters are sent reveal a network of traders and patterns of interactions.

Regardless of the reason for traveling, British movement along the Mississippi River, the physical boundary between the two colonies and a major point of contention and competition, was viewed as reckless and unnecessary by Spanish Louisiana’s government. Louisiana’s wariness of and defense against itinerant West Floridians probably encouraged Bernardo de Gálvez to try Ross, Campell, and Graiden in May 1778, and to launch a war against British West Florida just a year later.

By 1776, British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana were rivals, but the borders between the two colonies were not always strictly enforced. Governors Gálvez and Peter Chester had open lines of communication and shared “la mutual

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Spanish Louisiana’s government even allowed residents of West Florida to live within Louisiana’s borders, guaranteeing them the same rights that Spanish subjects enjoyed. In a letter to Chester, Gálvez promised

sin quebrantar nunca los derechos que gozan antes bien ofrecerles todos los socorros y hospitalidad que pudiesen necesitar a imitacion de la que continuadamente estoy dispensando yo a los subditos de S.M.B. en esta Provincia como le consta a V.E. ²¹⁸

Spanish Louisiana’s government also allowed Britons certain uses of the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, incredibly valuable waterways controlled by Louisiana. British subjects could sail up and down the Mississippi as long as they were on a Spanish ship and had a few Spanish crew members. Britons also were allowed on Lake Pontchartrain, but only to fish.²¹⁹

The borders of both colonies were particularly flexible when a slave owned by a resident of either colony ran away into the neighboring province. In this situation, both West Florida and Louisiana benefited. The condition was not just a mandate that Gálvez issued in order to limit West Floridians’ activity in his province. Rather, the governors of the two colonies agreed to this condition to prevent economic losses suffered as a result of losing a slave. If the situation arose that a slave fled into the other colony,

los Yngleses tengan la libertad de solicitar sus negros que se hayen pasado a esta Provincia como lo tendrán los Españoles que tengan que Buscar los suyos en los Dominios Yngles.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Gálvez to Chester in Report, 1778, Mississippi Provincial Archive Spanish Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
²¹⁸ Ibid.
²¹⁹ Ibid.
²²⁰ Ibid.
In coming to such an agreement, the governors were clear that residents of either colony could only cross the border to look for their slaves. The emphasis in this clause suggests that casually moving between the two banks of the Mississippi River was not tolerated. The British subjects that Gálvez agreed to protect and extend rights to had to receive permission to reside in Louisiana for a longer period of time. They probably also had to recite an oath, swearing loyalty to the Spanish Crown.

As the examples above show, West Florida and Louisiana maintained friendly relations, and the boundaries between the two colonies were not completely rigid. But already in 1776, while Gálvez and Chester were exchanging the letters in which many of these agreements were formalized, there was an underlying tone of tension and hostility. While Gálvez wanted open communication between the governors and was willing to provide British subjects with certain rights, “Los renovados insultos que cada día experimentan los vasallos de mi soberano por los de S.M.B” threatened communications and privileges for Britons residing in Louisiana.221

Tensions escalated around this period because of Britons who passed into Louisiana without permission—these actions were “los renovados insultos.” The supposed offenses occurred on and along the highly coveted Mississippi River, which separated the two colonies and their inhabitants and also represented a common interest and desire. For the most part, British traders were responsible for these actions.

In a letter to Chester, Gálvez complained that British superintendents living with Native Americans along the coast of Prudhome and Margo, territories farther north along the Mississippi River, “han obligado con violencia a los Basteana que

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221 Ibid.
baxan de Ilinoeses a de cualquier otro parage de la Colonia para su Capital.”222 Indian superintendents often also were traders because superintendents were responsible for delivering gifts to natives. The word, “Basteana,” that Gálvez uses is most likely a misspelling of bateaux, the French word for boat. Boats are continually called by their French name in nearly all documents of the time period, regardless of the speaker or author’s native language. Gálvez, a Spaniard, badly bungled the word here and probably spelled it as he heard and best understood the word. Although the word is somewhat unclear, we can be sure that Gálvez was talking about boats traveling down the Mississippi in this instance, considering the larger discussion and problems that occurred between the governors and residents of the two colonies

Gálvez asserted that these men and their attacks were “infractores por su naturaleza de todo derecho de gentes; contrarios a la Buena armonia que reyna entre ambas coronas.” In response, he threatened to cut ties between the two governments.223 As hostilities increased, borders hardened.

Gálvez also protested the entrance of British merchants into Louisiana, vehemently stating that “Por leyes establecidos en todos los Reinos y en particular en los de mi Soberano, esta prohibido a todo estrangero el que pueda introducirse a tartar y comerciar en ellos sin expreso permiso que le authorize.”224 West Floridian traders violated this law since, “Nada de esto observan los vasallos ingleses en los dominios de la Luisiana.”225

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222 Ibid. Also “En mi primer oficio he demostrado a V.E. los violencias y ofensas cometidas contra los Batteues de mi Soberano por los soldados nombrados Rangers que se hallan a la cabesa de las partidas de Yndios apostados en la orilla del Misisipi.”
223 Ibid.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
The coming and going of British traders represented a major threat to the peace and economy of Louisiana. Most obviously, merchants were attacking Spanish ships on the Mississippi, hurling “el fuego que se les hacia si rehusaban pararse” but traders’ involvement with native populations also was viewed as a form of revolt or disorderly conduct. Louisiana’s government kept Indian populations at the fringes of the colony so that they would “separaron del Territorio Yngles al nuestro.” By inserting themselves into Louisiana’s native tribes, British traders were threatening the stability of the colony’s borders.

In addition, as the title of Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios suggests, natives were considered to be part of Louisiana’s population. They had a different status than Europeans, but natives still received support and supplies from the Spanish government. Part of the yearly budget of the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios was dedicated to Indians residing within Louisiana territory so that the Spaniards could present them with gifts. Gálvez did not trust the West Floridian merchants who were infiltrating these tribes, accusing their friendship of being “maliciosamente persistir.” By preventing traders from entering into native territories, Gálvez was protecting the native population as well as Louisiana’s interior.

Perhaps an even greater, or more realistic, form of aggression along the Mississippi River was potential damage to Louisiana’s economy. The sustainability

226 Chester to Gálvez, in Report, 1778, Mississippi Provincial Archive Spanish Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
227 Ramo de Poblacion y Amistad de los Indios Cuenta de Cargo y Data de Caudales, Ano de 1779, Legajo 576, Papeles procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de las Indias (microfilm, Williams Research Center).
228 Gálvez to Chester, 1778.
of the colony’s economy had long been an issue, particularly after 1762, when Spain first took charge. Poor trade and a weak economy were the two foremost causes of the 1769 uprising, and Gálvez probably had this event in mind when dealing with the British traders in 1778. In his letter to Chester, Gálvez stressed that foreigners could not trade in Louisiana without permission from the Spanish government. He also went on to explain that any trade activity conducted with natives would “inund[ar] las Naciones Yndias con su trato, abrograndose la libertad de casar.”229 While this might have been the case, Gálvez probably also was concerned that natives would prefer the British goods that traders sold and might begin receiving gifts from British traders, forging an alliance with British West Florida.

Gálvez was particularly angered by these events and, in a letter to Chester, harangued the traders for illegally entering Louisiana. Gálvez believed that he treated Britons fairly in his province and had given them many opportunities to settle in Louisiana through legal means. He praised himself, stating that

La afabilidad delicada del trato y la hospitalidad que ha usado hasta oy con los Yngleses de Exmo Señor Don Bernardo de Galvez como propio de su corazon generoso acreditan toda gratitud y toda correspondencia.230

Gálvez had a strong personality, and this laudatory self-evaluation shows that his ego was a part of the problem of the rivalries between Louisiana and West Florida. In response to the illegal border crossings, Gálvez closed the boundary between the two colonies, “negando sin distincion la entrada a todo vasallo ingles.”231 Finally, the borders formally closed in response to hostilities instigated by British traders.

229 Ibid.
230 Ibid.
231 Ibid.
In a letter responding to Gálvez’s complaints and accusations, Chester attempted to defend his subjects and explain their activities. His efforts, however, were insufficient and it is here that we see the British government’s loose hold on its subjects. In his letter, Chester wrote

vuestra merced me representa los Comisarios Yngleses postados con los Yndios cerca de los Ecorodo-Prudomo y Margor han obligado con violencia a los vatoes que bajan de Ilinueses ó de otra qualquiera parte de su colonia ha atrabesar el Rio Misisp y o a sufrir el fuego que se la hacía si rehusaban pararse. A esta queja respondo que aun esto Ecors de Prudomo y Margor se hallan bajo la Soberania del Rey mio no obstante estan lejos de ser comprendidos bajo la Jurisdicion de mi Provincia cuyos limites no se estienden mas sobre el Rio Misisipy que a la emboca dura del Rio Rasur [sic]. Sin embargo de ello puede vuestra merced creer que estas paradas no han obrado por mi orden pues estan fuera de mi Jurisdicion y por consiguiente no puedo ser responsable de su conducta.232

The clause in this passage, “fuera de mi Jurisdicion,” is crucial to our understanding of how West Florida’s policies did not help to foster community formation or a sense of allegiance.

Although Chester stated that he could not be responsible for his residents’ conduct outside of the borders of West Florida, he apparently also had little control over his population even within the colony. The settlement techniques employed by West Florida’s administrators did not foster an allegiance to local government; as a result, inhabitants acted recklessly on their own accord, with little regard to how their behavior would impact West Florida’s reputation and relations with Louisiana. West Floridians, especially traders, were fueled by their own motives and had little concern for a collective identity or colonial allegiance. In response to his settlers’ actions, Chester could only say “no puedo ser responsable de su conducta.”

232 Chester to Gálvez, 1778.
The trial of Ross, Campbell, and Graiden can be characterized as a situation that Governor Chester might have described as “fuera de mi Jurisdicion.” The three men explained that they and their neighbors initially left West Florida for Louisiana because they did not receive proper protection from the British government. Once in Louisiana, these displaced West Floridians wrote to Chester, updating him about their situation and hopes of returning to their homes. They were incredibly distressed as they wrote to Chester, stating that

In this Critical and Calamitous Situation We look once more to you, for that protection we have a right to claim as British Subjects. ‘Tis of you alone we can ask it and tis from you we expect a Sufficient Military Force to enable us to return with our respective homes, and to restore us to that full allegiance and Fidelity we owe to our King and Country.²³³

But considering that these subjects were still in Louisiana and did not feel comfortable returning home, it seems that Chester and his administration did not provide the protection that West Floridians expected as his inhabitants. As Ross, Campbell, and Graiden did in their own trial, these subjects wholeheartedly asserted their loyalty to the British king and empire. They called themselves “His Britanick Majesty’s Subjects” and expressed their desire to be loyal to the British Crown, but explained that they could not fully express their fidelity because of the oath they had to respect while living in Spanish Louisiana. Their expectations of the local government, however, fell short. There was a significant difference in how West Florida’s government envisioned its responsibilities to its inhabitants and what inhabitants expected from its government. As demonstrated by the colony’s

²³³ To His Excellency Peter Chester Esquire Captain General and Commander in Chief in and over Province of West Florida &c &c. Copy of Memorial of the Loyal British Inhabitants of the Mississippi to Governor Chester of May 7th 1778/9, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
settlement policies and the population’s attitude, West Florida’s population was marked by an emphasis on the individual and private property. As a result, Governor Chester might have been moved to say that the defense of residents’ property was “fuera de mi Jursidicion.”

In this way, the trial can be thought of as a final confrontation between British West Florida’s individual-based society and Spanish Louisiana’s community-focused population. Louisiana and its residents suffered a number of raids and gun firings from British traders who straddled the border between the two colonies. Even after Ross, Campbell, and Graiden had taken oaths of allegiance to the Spanish Crown, Gálvez could not risk their presence and possible destructive behavior while in his colony. Throughout the records of the trial, Gálvez mentioned the “publick tranquillity” and “the Order of Good Government,” two conditions that he had cultivated during his tenure. The Ramo de Población y Amistad de los Indios exemplifies policies and institutions that contributed to a peaceful public and faith in the government.

After repeated skirmishes and events like the 1778 trial in New Orleans, the cabildo declared war “contra su Magestad Britanica” on May 18, 1779. At the time, Spain and France already were involved in a war with Great Britain, but it was very clear that Louisiana was declaring war against West Florida. Gálvez left his role as Louisiana’s governor to Pedro Piernas so that he could lead the Spanish army in war.

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234 8 September 1779, Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo 1769 to 1803, New Orleans Public Library (microfilm, University of West Florida).
Gálvez launched his first attack at Manchac, the epicenter of hostilities between British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana.\textsuperscript{235}

By 1781, Gálvez had conquered all of West Florida, making it a Spanish colony. Manchac and Baton Rouge, two Mississippi-borderland towns, fell first, and Natchez, just up the River, fell not long after in November 1779.\textsuperscript{236} Then, Gálvez and his troops moved eastward to Mobile. The final stage of the war was an attack on Pensacola, British West Florida’s capital city. The Spanish army surrounded Pensacola on March 9, 1781, and the war ended exactly two months later on May 9\textsuperscript{th} when British forces surrendered, making British West Florida a Spanish colony and effectively ending its existence.\textsuperscript{237} It is ironic, yet fitting, that the British traders with personal motives, partially caused the war that brought about their colony’s demise, an event which signals the end of yet another period of transition in the histories of Louisiana and West Florida.

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After 1781, the Gulf Coast territories of West Florida and Louisiana were completely under Spanish control. Although, for the first time, there was one government, the population still was incredibly diverse. Once West Florida became a

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{236} Articles of Capitulation agreed upon & Stipulated Between his Excellency, Don Bernardo De Galvez Governor and Commander in chief for his Catholick Majesty of the Provinces and Forces of Louisiana And M.r Alexander Dickson Lieut. Colonel of the 16\textsuperscript{th} Regiment of Foot and Commanding his Brittannick Majestys Forces on the Mississippi for the Garrison and District of Baton Rouge in West Florida, 15 November, 1779, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.

\textsuperscript{237} Governor Chester to Lord Germain, 2 July 1781, Charlestown, Mississippi Provincial Archive English Dominion, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.
Spanish colony, the majority of the province’s inhabitants remained, unlike in 1763, when Spaniards left West Florida after it was announced that the colony would become a British possession.238

Local Spanish governments were aware of their residents’ varied identities and needs and adopted a number of policies to serve this mixed population, even though non-Spaniards were not even allowed to settle in other part of the empire. In 1781, shortly after conquering Natchez and other Mississippi River settlements, the Spanish government recruited Irish Catholic priests to serve Natchez’s residents. West Florida’s newly Spanish government hoped to convert British Anglicans to Catholicism, and officials reasoned that Britons would be more likely to convert if a person of a similar nationality or language administered their new faith. The experiment was successful and officials in Mobile and Pensacola also asked Spain’s government to send Irish Catholic priests.239 In 1793, Louisiana’s governor, the Baron de Carondolet, introduced the royal order that allowed Protestants and Catholics in the province to marry, citing that now people of the two religions could marry “inviolablemente, y hagan observan[sic] y cumplir a sus feligreses.”240 Thirty, or even ten, years before, such an order would have been unheard of.

These policies and their efforts to integrate West Florida and Louisiana’s many settlers are remarkable considering the region’s early history and the European empires’ initial interests in the area. Spain originally founded Pensacola as a barrier

240 Real Orden é Instrucciones p.9 lo que deben observar los Parrocos sobre los Matrimonios entre los Protestantes entre estos, y Católicos, domiciliados en esta Prov.a de la Luisiana, Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, University of Notre Dame (microfilm, University of West Florida).
presidio to prevent competing European empires from encroaching on Spain’s valuable possessions to the south; France and England, later Great Britain, flocked to the area shortly after Spain arrived in order to compete with their rival. Spanish, French, and British kings and officials saw the region as unclaimed land that could help to build their empires. In comparison to later periods, the people who resided within these provinces were of little importance. In the beginning, La Florida and La Louisiane were neglected, barely populated outposts of vast and expanding empires, but in the late eighteenth century, faced with numerous political changes, a variety of settlers’ identities, and an unpredictable environment, officials of the two colonies and the three empires turned their attention to West Florida and Louisiana.

Over time, with a number of imperial transitions and population influxes, these colonies grew. West Florida experienced a transformation after 1763 under the direction of Britain’s government. Although local British officials did not effectively create a communal atmosphere or sense of allegiance among the colony’s residents, they were able to create viable towns and settlements that were a far step from the sparse forts and presidios of Spanish West Florida. As a royal colony, West Florida’s development was the product of the Crown’s directions and not the colonists’ own plans.241 Britain’s government did not give West Floridians much opportunity to become involved in their colony’s growth, and this exclusion might have contributed to inhabitants’ disinterest in the province.

Louisiana also underwent a significant period of development after 1763. Once Spain lost Florida, Louisiana became the protective colony that guarded Spain’s lucrative silver mines in Mexico. In large part, the Spanish Crown decided to improve

the province, implementing institutions like the Ramo de Población y Amistad de los
Indios, as a way of making Louisiana a self-sustaining colony. Silver and gold mined
in Mexico and Peru paid Louisiana’s expenses, but it was a huge drain on the
empire’s resources. Around 1763, the Spanish empire was entering into a period of
decline, which was partially caused by decreasing capital.242 The Spanish Crown
needed to maintain Louisiana to protect the most valuable regions of its empire, but
had to fund Louisiana in a cost-effective way. The most logical solution was to create
a colony that could provide for its own population, rather than depending on the
Crown.

Furthermore, the two colonies were shaped by their proximity to each other.
At times, British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana were staunch rivals, but at other
moments, the governments of the two colonies aided one another. On a larger scale,
the British and Spanish empires were in competition with each other, but also
imitated one another. The provinces of British West Florida and Spanish Louisiana
lay side by side and vacillated between these strange moments of friendship and hate.
The interactions between the British and Spanish empires intensified in this region
and also contributed to the unique and unparalleled histories of West Florida and
Louisiana.

Deviations from imperials norms and the give and take between British West
Florida and Spanish Louisiana were incredibly important in the history and
development of each colony. Britain’s Board of Trade allowed immigrants from
German states, France, and Holland to settle in West Florida in order to build a

242 Henry Kamen, Spain’s Road to Empire: The Making of a World Power, 1492-1763 (London:
significant population. Diputados of the New Orleans cabildo begged Spain’s King Carlos III to allow them to conduct their meetings in French so that they could effectively deal with Louisiana’s problems. British West Florida’s government permitted its French residents to practice Catholicism so that they would not leave the colony. In 1778, Carlos III created an open trade policy so that Louisiana and other struggling colonies could sustain themselves economically. Around the same time, he and Bernardo de Gálvez welcomed, tolerated, and integrated foreigners into Louisiana’s society. If it were not for these exceptions, West Florida and Louisiana would not have been the same colonies that they were in 1781.

Inhabitants of the region also witnessed a number of political changes that complicated relationships between the two colonies and also created differences between West Florida and Louisiana and the rest of their empires. In the time period between 1763 and 1781, people residing on the Gulf Coast experienced incredible mobility while the Spanish and British governments were still working on implementing local government and fully exercising their powers.

This transitional period in which West Florida and Louisiana experienced greater fluidity than before also is an exception: an exception to previous understandings of colonial development that calls for a revision of Adelman and Aron’s model of borderland histories. The histories of these two colonies are characterized by their diversity and brief periods of loose political control and increased encounters, both of which Adelman and Aron do not include in their model of borderland communities and their transformation to borderedlands. Instead, the authors argue that during the transition to borderedland states, colonies experienced
increasingly formal and strict governments and that “to the peoples for whom contested borderlands afforded room to maneuver and preserve elements of autonomy, this transition narrowed the scope for political independence.”

But as we have seen in Spanish Louisiana and British West Florida, the Treaty of Paris, which Adelman and Aron would interpret as a step towards borderedlands, did not inaugurate a period of stricter political control. Rather, the transition in local and imperial governments temporarily disrupted and reordered previous borders, patterns of settlement, relations among colonists, and residents’ identities and allegiances. From 1763 to 1769, under their new governments, settlers of West Florida and Louisiana were not confined to their land and could move fairly easily throughout the Gulf Coast region.

Even after 1769, once Spain and Great Britain had firm control of their new colonies, local governments tried to integrate the many sectors of their populations and fostered the cultural melding typical of borderlands, even as the two colonies’ boundaries began to harden and take on the physical characteristics of borderedlands. Although the intricacies and fluctuations of West Florida and Louisiana are often overlooked in the histories of empires and the formation of the United States, these colonial narratives provide an enriching and interesting glimpse of what it meant to live in a strange land and environment amidst shifting identities, allegiances, and political systems. As men caught in between the two colonies of West Florida and Louisiana, Ross, Campbell, and Graiden exemplified the contested nature of life as a settler along the Gulf Coast.

Note on Spelling and Names

The spelling of all words in quotations has been faithfully copied from their original sources. Many of the words in cited passages do not have the same spelling as they do today, especially those in Spanish. The Spanish language was not completely uniform during the eighteenth century, and as a result, many words have a variety of spellings. Often times, words that carry accents today did not in the time period covered in this thesis. There also are many shortened versions of Spanish words. For example, it is helpful to know that “dhos” means dichos, or said. Quoted passages maintain the original language, but elsewhere in the text, this thesis uses modern-day versions of words.

Places have a number of different names because of the different languages of the different settlers and empires that occupied the Gulf Coast. For example, Mobile also appears as Mobille and Móvila in this thesis. Louisiana can be read as La Louisiane and La Luisana while Florida also appears as La Florida. The text of this thesis occasionally uses the Spanish and French versions of places names, but mainly refers to cities and towns using the English version.
Note on Sources

The primary sources used in this thesis come from several archives: the Special Collections at the University of West Florida; the Williams Research Center, a research branch of the Louisiana State Museum in New Orleans; the Special Collections at Tulane University; and the Special Collections at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. This thesis relies on a variety of sources, but for the most part, they fall into two groups: local sources, like the records of the New Orleans cabildo, and imperial sources that include communications between government officials in Florida and London. The division reflects my attempts to analyze West Florida and Louisiana’s histories from both local and global perspectives.

The local sources often were not part of coherent, deliberate collections, but were miscellaneous wills, pages from account books, or individual letters. The scattered collections and occurrences of these documents reflect the difficulty in finding primary sources written by or for individuals who were part of the communities of West Florida and Louisiana. When I first began research for this thesis, I was hoping to rely mainly on primary sources that revealed the daily life of settlers, particularly since I would be examining the identities of the residents of these two colonies. I quickly found, however, that for the most part these documents do not exist. The question became, did these documents ever exist or do they no longer exist? Both are valid questions and reflect the nature of the two colonies. Many settlers of West Florida and Louisiana probably were illiterate, but even if colonists were able to write letters, daily, local documents would not exist because of the environment of the region. Many documents that remained in the area were destroyed
because of the difficulty of preserving paper in an area that is as hot, humid, and wet as the Gulf Coast.

A number of records of local governments, however, do exist and are the exceptions to this rule. The records of the New Orleans cabildo are an important source for obtaining a sense of everyday life, local government’s responsibilities, and its relationship with its inhabitants. The records of the cabildo survived because the council made a point of archiving the minutes of their meetings, and at the end of many entries, the record says “dicha copia, qual leida por el presente Escribaron mandaron dichos Senores que se archive en los Archivos de este Muy Ilustre Cabildo.” As a result of the cabildo’s concerted effort to preserve its documents, the records exist in one, cohesive collection called the Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo.

In addition, a number of documents originally from European archives can be found as microfilms in the United States. Many of the sources used in this thesis are originally from the Archivo General de Las Indias in Sevilla, Spain and the Public Record Office in London, England. As the original locations of these documents suggest, the documents mainly deal with the administration of the colonies and are written by governors and other officials installed by the imperial government.

The Archivo General de las Indias, Spain’s principal archive for documents relating to its colonies, contains thousands of papers relating to West Florida and Louisiana. These documents exist in packets or bundles called legajos. The legajos pertaining to West Florida and Louisiana are part of a section, Los papeles
procedentes de Cuba.\textsuperscript{244} When Louisiana became part of the United States, many of the administrative papers were brought to Pensacola. In 1819, when it became clear that West Florida would become part of the United States, all of the papers were moved to Cuba, the historic administrative center of the Caribbean sector of Spain’s empire. These documents were first organized into legajos when they were being prepared to move to Cuba. The documents from Louisiana and West Florida stayed in the Archivo General de Cuba until 1883 when a royal order required that the documents be moved to Spain. By 1889, after thirteen shipments, the documents were all in Spain. They were brought to the Archivo General de las Indias and doused in benzine. They remained in the basement of the archives for some time.\textsuperscript{245}

Some American archives have reproductions of the legajos themselves, but some archivists have created artificial collections. One such archivist, Dunbar Rowland, created a series of collections about West Florida and Louisiana called the Mississippi Provincial Archives. There is a French Dominion, Spanish Dominion, and British Dominion, each for the three European empires who had political control of the region at one time. Documents from the Spanish Dominion and British Dominion sections of the series are often used in this thesis. In his introduction to the first volume of the English Dominion, the only records besides those pertaining to the French period to be published, Rowland writes that the documents come from the Public Record Office, but that they do not have the same organization as they do in

\textsuperscript{244} Henry Putney Beers, \textit{French and Spanish Records of Louisiana} (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1989), 40.
\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., 39.
the archives of the Public Record Office.\textsuperscript{246} As a result, Rowland’s collection might lose context or meaning. This thesis, however, only uses sources from the Public Record Office as they are found in the Mississippi Provincial Archives English Dominion. Since there is no introduction to the Spanish Dominion, we can only assume that the documents from the Archivo General de las Indias were treated similarly and also might have lost some intrinsic meaning.

Even though Rowland created these compilations, his documents, and most others pertaining to this time and place, are barely catalogued and largely unused. This is particularly true of the legajos from the Archivo General de las Indias. It is difficult to look for a specific document or to narrow a search based on the information provided in a catalogue. Individual documents within a legajo do not always relate to one another, and their organization is not apparent. There was so much to weed through, that often times, finding a relevant document was pure luck. Constructing arguments from the wide variety of dispersed documents required a substantial amount of time and careful analysis, particularly when trying to represent colonists’ lives and experiences with care and respect.

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