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The poisonous wine from Catalonia: rebellion in Spanish Louisiana during the Ulloa, O'Reilly, and Carondelet administrations

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THE POISONOUS WINE FROM CATALONIA:
REBELLION IN SPANISH LOUISIANA DURING THE ULLOA, O'REILLY, AND
CARONDELET ADMINISTRATIONS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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In

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By

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For my father-
I wish you were here

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ABSTRACT

Spanish rule in Louisiana was bracketed by periods of unrest. Using the criteria for rebellion developed by political scientist Claude E. Welch Jr., in *Anatomy of Rebellion* to compare the 1768 rebellion under Governor Antonio de Ulloa, and demonstrations of discontent in the 1790's under Baron Francisco Luis Carondelet, one is able to draw out similarities, contrasts, and continuities in factors causal to political unrest. The most powerful of these causal factors were the economic troubles, geographic marginality, ethnic tensions, weak authority, and unsuccessful attempts to reform the colony's commercial system. Methods employed by the Spanish administrations to contain or mitigate the discontent largely failed, leading to episodes of violent popular political contention.

The roots of Louisiana's problems ran deep. By the arrival of the Spaniards, the colony had been largely neglected by the French crown. Suffering shortages of food, and economic strife, the colonial elite formed their own alternate, and often illegal, structures of power and support. The 1766 imposition of Spanish rule threatened those structures. In 1768, discontented members of the Louisiana Superior Council staged a coup, driving Spanish governor Antonio de Ulloa out of the colony. Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly restored order to the colony in 1769. O'Reilly demonstrated effective means of control over a discontented populace, which stood in stark relief to the weaknesses, neglect and disorder of the previous Spanish administration.

In the early 1790's a number of factors sparked new fears of rebellion in Louisiana. Disruptions of trade caused by war with France, attempts to integrate Louisiana into the Spanish mercantile system, shifts in agriculture and a shortage of specie backed currency once again agitated the colonial elite. At the same time an influx of revolutionary propaganda from the

French Republic threatened to spark old ethnic tensions while tales of the Haitian revolution brought fears of slave revolt in the colony. Baron Carondelet utilized an increased military presence, information control, incorporation of colonial leaders into his administrative structure, and the fear of slave revolt to contain demonstrations of popular discontent. While his administration saw an increase in political violence, Carondelet prevented widespread rebellion.

INTRODUCTION

Spanish rule provided the Louisiana territory with a period of organization and orderly development that sparked colonial growth in a way the previous French administrations never had. Yet, the period of Spanish rule over the Louisiana territory was contentious and bracketed by rebellion. In 1768, three years into the Spanish occupation, French ‘habitants’ challenged the rule of Antonio de Ulloa y de la Torre-Guiral, the first Spanish Governor of Louisiana.¹ French and German settlers rose up and ousted Ulloa from power. Their interim government sought to restore the colony to French control but Spanish reinforcements, led by Alejandro O’Reilly, restored Spanish rule. Toward the end of the Spanish period of Louisiana’s history, the colony saw tumults involving French agents, American speculators, colonial planters, merchants and rebellious slaves inspired by the French and Haitian Revolutions. However unlike Ulloa before him, Governor Baron Francisco Luis Hector De Carondelet managed to retain power throughout the length of his administration, though there were periods when his control was limited.

This thesis was written to explore several questions related to rebellion during the Spanish regime in Louisiana. Why should one governor seem to fail so thoroughly in maintaining order, while another succeeded? Is there continuity between the rebellions? And were these rebellions purely derived from the peasant revolt tradition, or were they more revolutionary in nature? The hope is that the answers to these questions may inform us about the changing character of the colony throughout the Spanish regime. In doing so they may also highlight changes in Spanish methods of colonial control, and perhaps give some insight into pre-industrial rebellion.

¹ The term ‘habitant’ was used by the Spanish to denote a citizen of the Louisiana territory who had French heritage. Additionally ‘Creole’ is often used to describe Frenchmen, born in Louisiana. During the eighteenth century the appellation ‘Acadian’ was used primarily to refer to French colonists from Acadia, who had been forced out by the English.

Initial inquiries into the two revolts revealed several related causes for the unrest: racial and ethnic tensions, economic distress, food and supply shortages, geographic isolation, revolutionary zeal, manipulation by outside forces, and the disruption of entrenched cultural norms and mores. Both also showed signs of economic motivation, social strain from a shift in commercial practice, and ethnic tension between the French and Spanish. These economic and social factors suggested a connection to the ‘peasant revolt’ or ‘popular revolt’ tradition. To a degree, the rebellions conform to the basic peasant revolt model: a people at the bottom of the social order participating in unrest to assert rights considered traditionally theirs, or to protect a basic standard of living.

The author of this thesis obtained unusable results from reading histories of medieval rebellions for the purpose of creating a kind of platonic model of peasant revolts to use as a “lens” to examine the 1768 revolt and the 1790’s turmoil. Many of those texts focused on specific religious, legal and agricultural innovations which seemed too contextually bound to medieval Europe to be of much use. A broader approach to the subject of rebellion was needed. Fortunately, while searching political science texts for insight the author stumbled upon Claude E. Welch Jr.’s *Anatomy of a Rebellion*, which provided a suitable framework.²

Welch’s model mines the physical, economic, and social setting of a series of revolts for indicators of popular political violence. These indicators included physical setting, the social and cultural bases for political action, situational conditions, and actions taken by the dominant or ruling authorities which might have had influences on the likelihood of rebellion – for example: the imposition of a minority or alien rule over an indigenous people.

² Claude E. Welch, Jr., *Anatomy of a Rebellion*, (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1980), 1. Welch analyzes the Taiping Rebellion in China (1850-1864), the Telengana Rebellion in India (1946-1951), the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya (1952-1956) and the Kwilu Rebellion in Zaire (1963-1965).

Physical settings conducive to unrest, rebellion and even revolution include remoteness from central power, a borderland situation, the nature of “frontier” societies, the impact that repeated natural disasters can have on popular perception of government, and changes in agricultural systems. Authorities find it difficult to control geographically marginal areas. The primary reason for this is often the physical distance, difficulty of travel, or contested zones of control which limits the government’s ability to easily reach the people in question. The limited interaction with the central authority often engenders a sense of separation.

Borderlands prove problematic for the central authority because it is often not able to exert its full power there because of an unwillingness to risk conflict with a neighbor state.

Traits useful to coping with the isolation of frontier life also are likely to foster a sense of autonomy, if not hostility to the central authority. Members of the rural frontier are often independent, mobile, resistant to outside influence, and prize self sufficiency. The result of these factors is an area of weak and confused government, conditions that are favorable to the fomenting of dissent.

Experiencing repeated natural disasters that cause repeated large scale losses of life and property make populations more prone to rebellion, according to Welch. Disasters, like any other crisis situation, stress the resources available, exacerbating existing tensions and creating new ones. These disasters, when repeated often enough, can encourage a kind of “millenarian thinking” – the expectations of large scale, wide spread change, which can broaden the view of the populace to accept other radical changes.³ Another large problem with disaster prone areas, perhaps one even larger than the strained resources, is that they highlight inefficiencies in the government and create the perception of a lack of support for the population. The government

³ Ibid., 26.

often either becomes a scapegoat or is shown in the worst possible light. This is greatly compounded when combined with changes in social values and commerce.⁴

Another potential precondition for rebellion in pre-modern societies, especially in geographically marginal areas, according to Welch, are changes in their agricultural bases. He identified land scarcity, inequitable land ownership, and disruptions in social structures caused by a change away from subsistence farming to a commercial model as potential sources of unrest. Too, social problems, including organized unrest, also have a tendency to occur when population growth outpaces agricultural development.⁵

The social and cultural bases for political action and the situational conditions that foster discontent and rebellion are complex. Some have already been indicated under the heading of geographical marginality. Others arise from the conditions needed for collective action.

Individual complaints, however valid they may be, Welch contends, are not an adequate basis for collective action. The reasoning behind this seems obvious, if not semantic; individual action is individual and by definition collective action requires a group. In order to successfully launch a campaign of collective action, the complaints of inequity or inequality of the individual must be generalized and applied to a group. Often some piece of the existing social structure can be used as a means for this generalization. Welch describes four major means of group self ascription, or the establishing of a communal identity, that he found in his studies. The first is through ascribing cultural ties based on ethnicity or language. Religious beliefs and millenarianism are also means for linking individuals. Economic ties between members of the rural poor can also foster solidarity through class awareness and action. Finally political

⁴ Ibid., 26-27; Guy Fourquin, *The Anatomy of Popular Rebellion in the Middle Ages*, (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1978), 130.

⁵ Welch, 27.

boundaries can provide unity at the same time that they set the scope of the action. Distance between individuals can limit the ability of the discontented to act collectively, while at the same time strengthening bonds amongst those within close reach of each other.⁶

Both discontented agitators and ineffective action by the incumbent governors will have a hand in the politicization of discontent. The most common factor in rebellion, Welch asserts, is the perception of relative deprivation - a view the rebels have that they are being denied basic rights and/or opportunities that they are entitled to. Perceived weakness or ineffectual use of force by the incumbents can be another force pushing discontented subjects toward politicization. A strong indigenous leadership and strong organization on the side of the discontented are both contributing factors as well. One final major consideration that Welch takes account of is the inclusion of justifications for mobilization in the belief structure of the indigenous populace. Such a structure makes political action far likelier.⁷

Welch's model for politicization of discontent loosely follows the following formula. Discontent gives rise to a sense of relative deprivation in members of rural communities. Self ascription of like traits begins to allow those discontented to consider themselves part of a larger group, or deprived class. Members of the now more consolidated disaffected groups begin to seek meaningful reform to the sources of discontent. The incumbent government reacts to the requests for reform in a way that exacerbates the discontent of the groups – often through unnecessary or ineffective force. The groups then seek an ideological foundation of generalized beliefs for their movement, using them to both define their movement and to outline their plan for a better society.⁸

⁶ Welch, 36.

⁷ Ibid., 123-124.

⁸ Ibid., 124-125.

Because one of the key differences between rebellion and revolution is success, the actions of the rulers in attempting to prevent or quiet unrest are also critical. Welch cites four maxims for the successful leader to live by. Firstly, the leader must keep the population from gaining political savvy, and keep members of the populace divided. At the same time the impact of the government must be felt as little as possible so as to not give cause to uprising; minimal government involvement also lessens the expectations of the people toward the government. This maxim is supported by the frequently observed links between rebellion and the imposition of new or raised taxes. The second maxim states that the leader must maintain a system of values justifying the stratification of power, and inculcate those values in the populace. The third maxim states the need for the leader to create a means for the indigenous people – in the case of empires – to be incorporated into the system. In doing so the system becomes legitimized to the social structure through those who enter into it. Finally, the leader must be able to employ coercion successfully. However the maxim also cautions that a leader should not overuse political and physical force. Doing so strains relations with the locals and risks exposing the minority rulers to a larger force than can be controlled.⁹

Ultimately collective political violence is a result of bad governance. The ignoring or misreading of discontent sets the stage for the growth and development of that discontent into political action. What keeps that political action from becoming revolution instead of rebellion? Welch suggests four major conditions that need to be met for a revolution. There needs to be a clear social polarization. The government needs to be inept to a certain degree in recognizing and responding to the needs of the populace as well as inept in its ability to control the political action. The insurrection needs to come from a combination of urban and rural dissatisfaction,

⁹ Ibid., 79-81, 86, 89.

and reach across both sections of the society. Finally the goals of the political action need to be incompatible with the existing legal and political means to meet them. Without these conditions the collective political action is not likely to evolve into a large scale, radical, lasting change.¹⁰

A factor that Welch overlooks but that is important for understanding the events of 1768 and the 1790s in Spanish Louisiana is the personalities of the Spanish governors.. His new subjects perceived the very first governor of Spanish Louisiana, Antonio de Ulloa, as aloof and uninterested in their welfare. After Ulloa's failure to control the colony, Alejandro O'Reilly was sent by Spain to restore Spanish control. O'Reilly was forceful but also engaged with the local population. His changes in policies and reshaping of colonial law changed and set the colony's Francophone population's perception of the Spaniards for some time. Baron Francisco Luis Hector De Carondelet, the seventh Spanish governor of the colony, who administered Louisiana during the unrest of the 1790's presented his subjects with a mixture of the traits of Ulloa and O'Reilly as well as what seems at this remove to have been a touch of paranoia about the revolutionary potential of the population during the most radical phase of the French Revolution of 1789-1814. The importance of the personalities of these men will become evident in the discussion that follows.

The thesis is divided into three chapters bracketed by this introduction, which includes a brief historiography of topics related to unrest in Spanish Louisiana, and a conclusion. The first chapter is a recounting of the revolt of 1768. Emphasis is placed on the geographical, social and economic strains that sat at the core of the colonists' discontents. Care is also taken to study the motives, resources and ideologies of the more important of the principal plotters in the Superior Council. Ultimately Governor Ulloa's failure to hold the colony represents a strong example of

¹⁰ Ibid., 314-315, 328-329, 333 -334.

poor colonial governance. Governmental policy that either encouraged discontent or acted to pacify the revolt is presented. Finally, the days of “rebel rule” are studied with an eye toward efforts made by the interim regime to ease discontent, its implementation of ideology and attempts it made to satisfy promises made by the coup leaders.

The return of Spanish order signaled by the arrival of Lieutenant General Alejandro O’Reilly is the subject of the second chapter. O’Reilly’s return was met with little resistance and the restoration of Spanish rule occurred with almost no bloodshed. What violence did occur was almost entirely the result of orderly trials, and despite the appellation “Bloody O’Reilly”, only six lives were taken. Chapter three is mostly a study of effective means of counter-rebellion as practiced by the Lieutenant General. The measures introduced by O’Reilly to restore order, as well as their effectiveness is presented and compared against Welch’s model as a means to contrast them with those employed by Governor Ulloa, and compare them with the more successful policies of Carondelet.

The third chapter of this thesis is an exploration of the turmoil that gripped Louisiana under the administration of Baron Carondelet. A number of important local and international events occurred during Carondelet’s time as governor. These events, such as the French Revolution and subsequent slave revolt in St. Domingue (Haiti), as well as speculators and adventurers movements to expand outside of the United States’ borders, serve to show the international scope of problems that gripped the colony as well as the fluidity of the region’s many borders. Local issues such as inhospitable terrain, ethnic tensions, lack of specie and natural disaster are also treated, as they were in chapter two. Baron Carondelet’s effectiveness in maintaining order in these circumstances is also explored with emphasis on the social and political efforts of the Baron.

The conclusion is a comparison of those factors summarized in the previous three chapters. It follows the order of Welch's criteria for rebellion. Thus, the conclusion considers the physical setting for the rebellions, the bases for collective political action and the steps taken to politicize the residents' discontents. Incumbent responses as well as an analysis of the rebel leadership are presented. Following that is a summary comparison of the incumbent powers' steps to pacify the subjects.

There are a number of documentary collections that serve as great resources for transcribed letters. Principle among these is the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1945 in Four Volumes: Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, edited by Lawrence Kinnaird. Kinnaird's four volume series of translated materials covers a wide range of subjects and chronology. Kinnaird adds insightful introductions to each part and the translations themselves contain a reasonable amount of annotation through judicious footnotes. Of particular use to this study were *Part I, The Revolutionary Period, 1765-1781*, and *Part III, Problems of Frontier Defense, 1792-1794*. Louis Houck's two volumes of *The Spanish Regime in Missouri: A collection of papers and documents relating to upper Louisiana principally within the present limits of Missouri during the dominion of Spain, from the Archives of the Indies at Seville, etc., translated from the original Spanish into English, and including also some papers concerning the supposed grant to Col. George Morgan at the mouth of the Ohio, found in the Congressional Library*, carries on in a vein similar to Kinnaird's work, though smaller in scope. Other lengthy translations are presented in journal publications, most notably issues of the *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* published by the Louisiana Historical Society, and bound essay collections like John Francis McDermott's *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804*.

Perhaps the best collection of essays and articles on colonial Louisiana can be found in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History Volume I, The French Experience in Louisiana*, edited by Glenn R. Conrad and *Volume II, The Spanish Presence in Louisiana*, edited by Gilbert C. Din. These essays, taken from a variety of authors, are arranged by theme and create a kind of patchwork map to social, economic and political development throughout the colonial period.

This thesis was greatly informed by works of Carl Brasseaux. Particularly useful were his works on the Acadian experience in Louisiana. Brasseaux's *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana*, and his *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* were useful in delineating the differences among the unique groups of French-speaking colonists that lived in Louisiana during the Spanish regime. *The Founding of New Acadia* was also useful because of its thoughtful examination of the relationship between the Acadians and the French Creoles of the colony, and how each group related to the Spanish administration. Together these works greatly expand the dualistic view of Franco-Spanish relations.

Many early histories, like Charles Gayarré's *History of Louisiana*, take a "soup to nuts" approach to the history of Louisiana (at least after European settlement). They begin with the French settlement of the territory and progress through early statehood. This approach lends them a "long view" approach which helps contextualize the independent chapters of the state's history in terms of a greater narrative – often told in the progressive terms of advanced reform lifting the territory out of a relative social and economic morass. These earlier histories also tend to contain much transcribed and translated material from the French and Spanish archives, respectively.

With regard to the rebellion of 1768, the early historians of Spanish Louisiana fall into one of two camps. The first set of historians wrote their works based primarily on French sources. Historiography in this camp is usually biased toward the French Creoles and critical of the Spaniards. Such histories as Alcée Fortier's *A History of Louisiana* and François Xavier Martin's *The History of Louisiana, From the Earliest Period* treat the French and Creole subjects as martyr heroes. They also typically demonize the Spaniards – particularly those in command of the colony during the periods of French unrest, in often striking, if not purple, prose such as Fortier's description of Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly as "lack[ing] tact,...[and] act[ing] with unpardonable duplicity and cruelty in 1769."¹¹ Later historians, focusing on the extensive Spanish records, were kinder to the first two Spanish administrations. Perhaps the most notable of these scholars was Charles Gayarré, whose *History of Louisiana* presents the Spaniards as reformers bogged down by recalcitrant, prejudiced, and, perhaps most importantly, fiercely independent French colonists.

On the whole the bias of these works is easy to work around; one has to look for the obvious vituperations and take characterizations with due consideration of the source. If the biases can be looked past, these sources provide a wealth of factual information, and were written with a definite sense of closeness to the events described – as in some cases the authors (e.g. Martin) are only a generation or two removed.

Brasseaux's works are the most in-depth source to date for study of the life of one of the principle conspirators in the 1768 revolt: Denis-Nicolas Foucault. Brasseaux's contribution to the first volume of the *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History*, "*Plus ça change: Acte Second*" briefly explores struggles for status between Foucault and the French

¹¹ Alcée Fortier, *A History of Louisiana Vol. II: The Spanish Domination and the Cession to the United States, 1769-1803*, (New York: Manzi, Joyant & Co., 1904), 10.

governor Charles Philippe Aubry, which Brasseur argues were contributing factors to Foucault's participation in the 1768 revolt. Much more detail is given on Foucault's role before and during the rebellion in Brasseur's *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768*.

Shannon Lee Dawdy presents a nuanced look at the city of New Orleans under the French colonial system in *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans*. It is invaluable for understanding the city as it was inherited by the Spaniards. Her emphasis on how the lax control of the French crown led to an alternate authority developing in New Orleans amongst the city's elite, and how the city drifted toward ever more violent methods of conflict resolution reinforces notions of how dangerous Governor Ulloa's reluctance to completely establish Spanish authority upon arrival was. *Building the Devil's Empire* also contains, as a final chapter, an analysis of the revolt of 1768. Dawdy's analysis places emphasis on the enlightenment, a developed aversion to regulation on the part of the creole oligarchy and the influence of "rogue agents" in the making of the revolution.¹² Dawdy seems to show a slight sympathy toward the French "martyrs", and echoes sentiments more strongly voiced by Arthur Preston Whitaker in *The Spanish-American Frontier: 1783-1795* that the Spanish regime was doomed to fail in Louisiana due to the impossibility of projecting a strong authoritarian monarchy across the Atlantic.

James E. Winston's "The Cause and Results of the Revolution of 1768 in Louisiana", published in *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, (1932) presents a view on the revolt with more emphasis on economic factors and the ambition of the members of the Superior Council coup. The most in-depth study of the October rebellion remains John Preston Moore's *Revolt in Louisiana: the Spanish occupation, 1766-1770*. Moore's balanced approach to French and

¹² Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 220.

Spanish sources and careful scrutiny for bias produced an unbiased detailed recounting of the conditions of the colony that contributed to the revolt, and the Spanish reaction to the revolt. Moore's account stands as one of the major sources for this thesis. Reinhart Kondert examines the German settlers' involvement in the revolt in "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768", published in *Louisiana History* (1985). Similarly the role of the Acadians is explored by R. E. Chandler in "Ulloa and the Acadians", *Louisiana History* (1980). Ulloa's own account of the revolt was translated by R. E. Chandler and presented with an introduction and annotations in *Louisiana History* (1986).

Hilda S. Krousel's biography of Governor Antonio de Ulloa y de la Torre-Guiral, appropriately entitled *Don Antonio De Ulloa: First Spanish Governor to Louisiana*, was a useful introduction to the governor, his achievements and aspects of his personality that both aided and hindered his effectiveness in Louisiana. Krousel's biography served both to update and expound upon information presented by John Preston Moore, and Arthur P. Whitaker in their biographical articles on Ulloa – presented in *The Hispanic American Historical Review* (1935), and *Louisiana History*, (1967), respectively.

Similarly David Ker Texada's *Alejandro O'Reilly and the New Orleans Rebels* serves as an excellent resource for the restoration of Spanish rule and trial of the Superior Council members who rebelled. Texada outlines O'Reilly's overwhelming force as well as his cagey nature and unwillingness to use that force when it was not necessary. Details of the trial and colonial reorganization were also recorded in the letter O'Reilly sent to Count Arriaga, translated by R. E. Chandler in , "O'Reilly and the Rebels: Report to Arriaga", *Louisiana History* (1982).

Alejandro O'Reilly introduced Louisiana to the Spanish system of local governance, the *cabildo* system. The history and significance of that institution is the subject of Gilbert C. Din

and John E. Harkins' *New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana's First City Government, 1769–1803*. Their treatment of the cabildo reveals the role the institution played in bringing the colony closer to the Spanish legal and cultural systems through reform of government functions, legal systems, economy, trade and the slave system. It serves as an excellent exploration of how those changes impacted the colony and had a lasting effect on the development of institutions native to Louisiana.

Din's article "Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves: Louisiana in 1795", published in *Louisiana History* (1997) examines the use of slave reform as a method of keeping the slave population pacified, including disagreement over the same between Baron Carondelet and the important planter members of the cabildo.

Race and the slave system in Spanish Louisiana is a focus of another of Din's books: *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves: The Spanish regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803*. *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves* treats the divisions among white colonists over how to handle slaves, with respect to the French system of harsh treatment and the Spanish system which was relatively more lax. Among other things Din's work is useful for its keen insights into the interplay between the planter's position of ultimate authority on the plantation and his position as subordinate to colonial authority – particularly how those two positions occasionally conflicted. It also treats the divisions among and between slaves and free people of color in Louisiana. In this respect, and with regard to the Spanish attitudes and policies toward slavery, the work is thought to be somewhat more nuanced than another recent treatment of slaves in Louisiana - Gwendolyn Hall's *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. However Halls's coverage of the Point Coupee rebellions (1793,1795) is quite useful. Printed only in Spanish, Juan José Andreu Ocariz' *Movimientos rebeldes de los*

esclavos negros durante el dominio español en Luisiana is another well thought of, though remarkably hard to find, source for information on rebellious slaves and maroonage in the colony.

There are a couple of works that deal with rebellion and control directly, usually as it applies to native or slave populations. *Choice, Persuasion and Coercion: Social Control on Spain's North American Frontier*, edited by Jesús F. de la Teja and Ross Frank, delivers a series of essays which deal with various aspects of social control in the New World. The touchy relationship between Spaniard and French Creoles is discussed, as are slave relations. A good number of the essays deal with issues of controlling native tribes. For Native American relations there are a number of other works available. *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: the Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, by Daniel H. Usner, Jr., is a valuable look at cultural, social and economic exchange between groups often thought of in adversarial terms, but mostly covers the years before 1768.

There are surprisingly few studies dedicated solely to the impact of the French Revolution in colonial Louisiana, though the subject is quite frequently mentioned in histories of Louisiana and the Spanish colonial efforts in America. This is particularly true regarding the series of small revolts that occurred in New Orleans and the rural countryside of the colony. The most complete single study to date remains Ernst Liljegren's "Jacobinism in Spanish Louisiana, 1792-1797", published in *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, (1939). Carondelet's administration as a whole is the subject of Thomas Marc Fiehrer's Ph.D. dissertation from Tulane: "The Baron of Carondelet as Agent of Bourbon Reform: A Study of Spanish Colonial Administration in the Years of the French Revolution," (1977).

A major exception to this lack of dedicated coverage would be the Point Coupee slave revolt which receives periodic attention. In addition to the following books below, which treat the slave revolt in more depth, an updated interpretation of Carondelet's relationship to the revolt can be found in Gilbert C. Din's "Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves: Louisiana in 1795", published in *Louisiana History*: (1997).

The impact of the Haitian revolution on African slaves is the subject of *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana 1718-1868*, by Caryn Cossé Bell. The first few chapters deal with the French and Spanish regimes in Louisiana, though the work has been criticized for over emphasizing the role that religion played in regulating slave masters as well as the role of free people of color in New Orleans as a supporting element of the Spanish administrations. A far broader treatment of the impact of the Haitian revolt on slaves in America, is David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus' *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*. The treatment Louisiana receives highlights the split nature of both white and slave society, and the two-way nature of (actual and rumored) slave reform as influence on slave revolt, as well as the impact slave revolts had on slave reform in the colony.

In Gwendolyn Midlo Hall's *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, she places a great deal of influence on the French Revolution as a contributing factor in slave revolts. Hall goes so far as to place the 1795 slave revolt as a vanguard action for the invasion of Spanish Louisiana. She also asserts that there were abolitionist Spanish soldiers who were sympathetic to the African slaves.¹³ Gilbert C. Din, in *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves: The Spanish regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803*,

¹³ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 372-374.

challenges Hall's conclusions on these points. Din argues that there is little evidence to support either the slave revolts as part of a French invasion, or the notion that there was much of an abolitionist movement in Louisiana at the time.¹⁴

The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic, by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, displays the radicalizing and liberalizing influence found in many of the circumstances that accompanied colonial life. The distance from European power centers allowed "discreetly free" trade and encouraged cultural exchange to the detriment of proto-national hegemony. The rise of capitalism disrupted traditional social structures, and created an economic discontent which helped fuel the push for natural rights associated with the Enlightenment. Linebaugh and Rediker discuss in detail how trade routes acted as avenues for the dissemination of revolutionary sentiment – thus allowing a traceable "vector" for the spread of revolutionary zeal from France and Haiti.

Colonial Louisiana was almost never profitable for the major powers that she served. The economics of the colony under the Spaniards, as well as the role that economics played in the colonial development under the French and Spanish is covered to great depth, and with great sensitivity in John G. Clark's *New Orleans, 1718-1812: An Economic History*. Noted Louisiana historian Jack D. L. Holmes covers some of the same ground in his study of the colonial economy during the Spanish period "Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors of Louisiana" published in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, (1962). Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr. takes another approach to the colonial economy with his more recent look in "Spanish Commercial Policy in Louisiana, 1763-1803" published in *Louisiana History* (2003).

¹⁴ Gilbert C. Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 175-176.

The two most recent movements to shape the study of Spanish colonial Louisiana are borderlands studies and Atlantic studies. A series of impressive works have come out of both areas of study recently, which improve upon the early models of understanding the relationship between Spain, Britain and US in America. The borderland studies should be understood in part as reactions to frontier studies that came before them. Arthur Preston Whitaker's early work dealing with the border, *The Spanish-American Frontier, 1783 -1795: The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley*, has an unapologetically American-"Frontier Thesis"-inspired view of the relationship between Spain and America across the shared border. To Whitaker the Spanish model of colonialism was doomed, as the British model had been for the thirteen colonies. With John Francis Bannon's *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier 1523-1821* the nature of the relationship between Spain and the US is presented very differently. Bannon deals with the Spanish advance across America in terms of malleable and porous borders, open to cultural exchange and adaptation – not hard frontiers which pitted closed "state-systems" in competition for space. More recent treatments of the same subject include David Weber's work, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. Weber uses the idea of frontier exchange to explore the myriad of views and influences that shaped the Spanish colonial holdings in North America, and which continue to influence America in those regions. Most recently, J. C. A. Stagg's *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1766-1821* takes a more diplomatically and politically informed approach to the borderlands. Stagg reveals how policy at national and local levels played a role in the eventual US ascendancy over Spain in North America.

The Atlantic Studies movement is important to re-contextualizing the American experience as one wholly related to events in Europe and the Caribbean. There are a number of

great recent works that have come out of the Atlantic movement recently. J. H. Elliott just released a new synthesis text on the competition between the Spanish and English empires in the New World. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* is a wonderful overview of the tensions, contrasts and similarities between the two Atlantic super powers of the eighteenth-century that somewhat blurs the lines between borderland history and Atlantic history. Andrew McMichael's *Atlantic Loyalties: Americans in Spanish West Florida, 1785-1810*, outlines exactly the kind of trans-Atlantic trade and influence that helped shape reality in the Spanish American colonies. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, explores merchant routes as avenues for cultural exchange and the spread of revolutionary sentiment across the Atlantic.

Theory, and modeling borrowed from the discipline of political science played an important role in the creation of this thesis. A few texts stand out as particularly useful. Claude E. Welch Jr.'s *Anatomy of a Rebellion* was an incredible resource for this thesis and informs both the questions it asks and to a lesser degree its structure. Welch's methodology and conclusions will be examined in chapter one. The works of Charles Tilly, particularly *The Politics of Collective Violence*, and *The Dynamics of Contention*, co-written with Doug McAdam and Sidney Tarrow, help to define political science terminology and present both abstract theories of violence and classification systems useful for categorizing societies and societal change. George Rudé's *Ideology and Popular Protest* helped delineate the role and place of ideology in rebellion. Guy Fourquin's *The Anatomy of Popular Rebellion in the Middle Ages* provided a series of medieval examples of rebellion, useful for seeking out long established European trends

in the Louisiana revolts. The author of this thesis found Michael Mollat and Philippe Wolff's *The Popular Revolutions of the Late Middle Ages* to be useful for much the same reasons.

CHAPTER I

ULLOA AND THE LOSS OF SPANISH CONTROL

In late October of 1768, a small cabal of prominent Louisianans led a coup against the incumbent government and ousted the Spanish governor, Antonio de Ulloa y de la Torre-Guiral. These men, many of whom were members of the Superior Council, which acted as the main legislative and administrative body in the colony, held positions of influence in the Spanish/French administration of the colony – though with time, and the advancement of Spanish interest in the colony that influence was likely to diminish. The conspirators used their high position in colonial society to harness popular discontent with the Spanish regime and rally a combined group of French, Creole, Acadian and German militias to storm the colonial capital of New Orleans. The coup was bloodless, and Governor Ulloa fled New Orleans within three days of the gathering. The Rebels’ goal was to then hold the colony under the administration of the Superior Council alone, until such a time as they could convince his most Christian Majesty, King Louis XV of France, to take control of the colony. The methods the rebels used as well as the extent and underlying reasons for popular support of this rebellion present recurring themes, important throughout the Spanish experience in the Louisiana colony.

Far from the centers of European power and control, colonial Louisiana, from its inception under French rule, proved itself a troublesome and “disorderly” place – particularly the city of New Orleans.¹⁵ The French government lacked a strong presence in the colony, due in large part to geographic factors such as distance, porous borders, and difficult travel. This lack of control (and support) led to a large amount of independence for French Louisianans.¹⁶ When

¹⁵ For a discussion on how New Orleans in particular was viewed in tropes of “disorder” due largely to the failure of the colony to conform to the desires of the mother country, see: Dawdy, 28-31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

challenged by metropolitan authority, that independence would often lead the French settlers to rebellious action. Often rebellion manifested itself as smuggling, however occasionally it did manifest as conflict. Such was the case in 1760, when French *commissaire-ordonnateur* (the official in charge of finances in the colony) Vincent de Rochemore took retribution on Governor Louis Billouart de Kerlerec for the reform minded Governor's having blocked a profiteering scam Rochemore was involved with. Rochemore hampered Kerlerec by refusing the Governor needed funds (for paying soldiers, among other things), and refusing to follow the Governors' orders regarding price fixing – thus sowing discontent and casting dispersion on the Governor's effectiveness and authority.¹⁷ Rochemore also accused Kerlerec of “violations of the king's orders”, by permitting smuggling, – a charge which led to a formal investigation of the Governor (which eventually found him innocent).¹⁸

Likewise, during the rebellion of 1768, the geography, and geographic marginality, of Louisiana played a definite role in the ability of the rebel faction to organize without threat of discovery, and in forming their sense of collective self-ascription. The geography also negatively impacted Governor Ulloa's ability to maintain control. The land of lower Louisiana was swampy, crossed with bayous, and could be difficult to traverse, lending slightly remote settlements an increased isolation and autonomy.¹⁹ The Mississippi river and its tributaries flowed through the colony, providing conduits of rapid transport down-river. However transport

¹⁷ Carl A. Brasseaux, “Confusion, Conflict, and Currency: An Introduction to the Rebellion of 1768?”, *Louisiana History* 18, no. 2 (Spring, 1977): 161-162; Carl A. Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault and the New Orleans Rebellion of 1768*, (Ruston, LA: McGinty Publications, 1987), 15-16.

¹⁸ Walter G. Cowan & Jack B. McGuire, *Louisiana Governors: Rulers, Rascals, and Reformers*, (Jackson : University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 31-32.

¹⁹ N. M. Miller Surrey, “The Development of Industries in Louisiana During the French Regime, 1673-1763” in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History, Vol. I: The French Experience in Louisiana*, ed. by Glenn R. Conrad, (Lafayette: USL Center for Louisiana Studies, 1995), 539; Carl A. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 110.

upriver was considerably slower and the center of Spanish control was in the southern tip of the colony. Up or down river, the trip was fraught with danger from eddies, snags, submerged trees, and sand bars.²⁰ Furthermore the relative size of the area he had to maintain was itself a problem. Ulloa simply did not have enough men to adequately project his influence too far from his location: be that New Orleans or the fort at Balize. Governor Ulloa planned a defensive fort on an island, near Balize, at the mouth of the Mississippi river and at times he grew engrossed with the fort's planning (as well as scientific experiments that he conducted there).²¹

The geographic marginality of the Louisiana colony played a part in the Spanish regime's susceptibility to revolt. It should be noted however, that the members of the 1768 conspiracy met near New Orleans, either at the home of Denis-Nicolas Foucault, the French *Commissaire-ordonnateur* and one of the principal plotters, or the house of Balthazar Masan, a retired captain of the French infantry.²² Upon occasion they met outside the city, but nearby, at the residence of Foucault's neighbor, friend, and, for a time after the death of her husband the Chevalier Jean-Baptiste de Pradel, his romantic interest, Mme. Alexandrine de Pradel.²³ From these locations the rebels were certainly near enough to provide influence and affect change in the behaviors of the citizenry of New Orleans, which means that they were also near enough that they could not rely upon distance for their safety. They could rely on secrecy, which the cabal maintained until days before they put the plot into action.

²⁰ Surrey, 539.

²¹ John Preston Moore, "Antonio de Ulloa: A Profile of the First Spanish Governor of Louisiana", *Louisiana History* 8, no. 3 (Summer, 1967): 205-206.

²² The role of *Commissaire-ordonnateur* was a kind of administrative head, commissary and treasurer of funds for the French colonial government. Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 10.

²³ Charles Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, Vol. II, (New York: William J. Widdleton, 1867), 187-188; John Preston Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana: The Spanish Occupation, 1766-1770*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 146-147; Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 28, 48.

The ease of access that Ulloa should have had to the major conspirators should not overshadow the role geographic marginality played as a precondition for the rebellion of 1768. Within the colony, the relative isolation of the German Coast and Acadian settlements reinforced their independence and self-ascription. Indeed the distance at which Ulloa wished to settle Acadians from their “relations” at Point Coupee was a continuing source of friction between the Acadians and the Spanish regime.²⁴ Such distance kept them from forming large communal ties. Governor Ulloa was conscious of this, and Carl A. Brasseaux suggests in *The Founding of New Acadia: The Beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* that Ulloa wished to settle the Acadians at Natchez to prevent the formation of a large Francophile power bloc so close to the administrative center at New Orleans as well as for the defense they would provide against the British and native tribes.²⁵

Ulloa's opponents used another distance against him. Ulloa's seeming retreat to Balize was used to geographically inform and reinforce the already present perception of Spanish Castillian "snobbery".²⁶ The plotters insinuated that Ulloa felt himself too good to mix with the French Creoles, and so had removed himself from their presence.

Distance between settlements and terrain that impeded travel were not the only elements of the Louisiana geography contributing to the colony's geographic marginality. The wilderness of the colony was also dangerous. Violent weather in the late summer could be devastating to crops, buildings, and colonists alike. Disease outbreaks, particularly yellow fever, threatened the colonists yearly, and occasionally acted to prohibit travel and the visitation of relatives or

²⁴ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 73, 78, 80-81, 83, 86.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 73, 78, 80-81, 83, 86.

²⁶ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 70.

friends.²⁷ Colonists also frequently felt themselves at risk of attack by wild animals, (at times) British raiders, or native tribes. This threat of attack constituted a much larger and seemingly real threat to settlers living too far apart to rely on each other for aid. This self reliance, a necessity of isolation, contributed to the development of an independent spirit and indifference to Spanish authority.

Louisiana was a borderland, and suffered the limitations on authority normally associated with them. A number of factors contributed to this border-land status. The British in West Florida constituted a national border with all of the legal vagaries and governmental niceties that one entailed. Fear of British involvement did somewhat limit Ulloa's range of action when dealing with smugglers, many of which were British. On the other hand, the fear that his subjects might desert to the British forts across the Mississippi river was one of the reasons Ulloa was relatively reluctant to use force to establish his authority. Throughout 1766 and 1768 Governor Ulloa settled Acadian newcomers in strategic military locations to form a counter to the threat of possible British encroachment.²⁸ That decision was wildly unpopular to the Acadians, who wished to settle near earlier Acadian settlements on the Acadian coast, Attakapas and Opelousas. The New Orleans French were quick to play on that discontent and spread rumors of Governor Ulloa's cruelty and barbarity.²⁹ These rumors, such as Governor Ulloa's intending to sell the Acadians into slavery, undermined the loyalty that Ulloa may have otherwise developed through his relatively generous support of the Acadian settlers by linking Spanish rule with unreasoning despotism. Ulloa's inability to enforce the settlement of Acadians into strategic positions provided a display of weakened strength that threatened his authority.

²⁷ Charles Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, Vol. II, (New York: William J. Widdleton, 1867), 133.

²⁸ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 78-81, 83, 86.

²⁹ R. E. Chandler, "Ulloa and the Acadians", *Louisiana History* 21, no. 1 (Winter, 1980): 88-90.

The Acadians were also less than pleased with the prospect of sharing borders with Spain's other neighbors: tribes of Native Americans including the Natchez, Houma, Creek, Choctaw, Caddo, Osage, Tensas and Chickasaw.³⁰ The Acadians and Native tribes had a troubled relationship from the start. The Natives were fearful that they were going to be displaced by the new settlers both in terms of territory, and as allies of the Spaniards. For their part, the Acadians Ulloa settled near the border feared that the Natives, encouraged by the British, would engage in raids on their farms and settlements.³¹ The Acadian settlements were far enough from Spanish forts that they had little hope of finding refuge there in the face of such an attack.

The Acadians were not the only ones fearful of native raiding sorties. Governor Ulloa was convinced of the need to continue gift giving to the local native tribes to prevent them from allying with the British, though he wished to limit the drain such gifts placed on the colony's treasury by limiting gift giving to prescribed special occasions.³² These gifts were an expensive drain on colonial resources that could have been used to shore up food supplies or assuage the hardships of the government or colonists in a myriad of other ways. Occasionally Ulloa lost more than money. Some settlers would periodically "go native", and run off to spend time with local tribes. Even if those colonists returned, they often did so with less appreciation for colonial authority and community norms. In this way the borderlands shared with the native tribes acted

³⁰ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 78-79; Carl A. Brasseaux, French, *Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 121-123.

³¹ Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, 181.

³² F. Todd Smith, "A Native Response to the Transfer of Louisiana: The Red River Caddos and Spain, 1762-1803", *Louisiana History* 37, no. 2 (1996): 170-171; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 132.

as both an economic depressor, cultural dilutant and cause of anxiety. All three of these sources of discontent played a role in colonial restlessness.

However, the most important border to consider did not lie on any map. The dual Spanish/French government presented a kind of internal borderland, especially in the colonial hinterlands beyond New Orleans. The confusion of law, obligation, and loyalty that this created in the citizenry is a constantly recurring theme in many histories of this period and one of the leading contributing factors to the revolt. Due in large part to the confusion generated by a government that had in effect two administrative heads, the citizens of Louisiana were not sure if the Spanish government had really taken control, and, if it had, whether the Spaniards would retain control for a long period of time.³³ The reluctance Ulloa showed in replacing the French Superior Council with a Spanish administrative body further confused the issue, and gave the French creoles cause to hope for a return to French control.

Perhaps the key concern for many of the French subjects of Spanish Louisiana was the colony's economy. Uncertainty in the new Spanish government and the tenacity with which some French creoles held on to the belief that France would retrocede the colony, led many French creoles to doubt the Spanish economic system and the colony's place in it.³⁴ This doubt compounded the fear many French creoles held that the new Spanish government would not be able to, or willing to, honor their depreciated paper currency.³⁵ The net effect was that the citizens retained their attachments to France and the French system, while at the same time the

³³ James E. Winston, "The Cause and Results of the Revolution of 1768 in Louisiana", *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (April, 1932): 204-205.

³⁴ John G. Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812: An Economic History*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 160.

³⁵ Vera Lee Brown, "Spain in America, 1763-1770", *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 5, no. 3 (Aug., 1922): 346.

confusion of law allowed for a justification of illegal or quasi-legal activities. As will be seen, this is particularly true for violation of unpopular trade restrictions that were eventually introduced by Ulloa's new regime in an effort to stabilize the colonial economy, and bring her more fully into the Spanish mercantile system.³⁶ Perhaps if Ulloa had been more direct, ostentatious, and immediate with displays of Spanish control, instead of relying on the former French governor Aubry's aid, there would have been less "grey area" which allowed the rebellious subjects "room" to maneuver.

But geographic marginality must not be thought of solely in "intra-colony" terms. In the larger context, the distance of Louisiana from Spain and, perhaps even more importantly, Spain's closer and more established colonial holdings played a huge role not only in Ulloa's inability to support the colony, but also in his inability to control her. The distance from New Orleans to Havana is nearly 700 miles, which meant that the flow of information and support both in terms of money and military assistance from Spain and Mexico (typically through Cuba) was slow and subject to dangerous storms. The difficulty and risk involved in the long sea voyage had a chilling effect on Spanish support of the colony. It was rendered less frequently than it perhaps could have been. Specie and money were slow to travel to the colony, leading to an increased feeling of marginality and weak Spanish authority; as well as allowing the already dismal economic situation to further decline into outright depression and inflation. Frequently such support arrived much later than anticipated, leading Ulloa to begin asking for money with which to build a "buffer" against continued late arrivals.³⁷ It was in part the distance of the colony and

³⁶ Jack D.L. Holmes, "Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors of Louisiana", *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 42, no. 4 (Nov., 1962): 521-524.

³⁷ Governor Ulloa, "Ulloa to Buccareli, March 5, 1767, No. 15", Translated and reprinted in Louisiana, Office of the Governor, Survey of Federal Archives in Louisiana, *Despatches of the Spanish Governors of Louisiana 1766-1792*, (New Orleans:Survey of Federal Archives in Louisiana, 1937-1941) , 17.

danger in sailing to her that delayed the deployment of the Fixed Louisiana Battalion of troops for over two years thereby weakening the perceived strength of Spanish rule in French creole eyes.

Changes in the social order and economy constitute an important component of the setting for rebellion. The arrival of Ulloa heralded the possibility of dangerous changes for many of the French creoles. On the economic front, established colonists were fearful that the devalued currency they held would not be honored by the Spaniards at face value. Ulloa intended to allow the paper currency to be redeemed at a rate of sixty-five percent of its face value. This was a better rate than the colonists had any right to expect. The value of the notes were worth about twenty-five percent of par, and ultimately the rate that Ulloa offered was a better rate than the sixty percent that later Governor O'Reilly eventually established. However many colonists, particularly those who had purchased notes on speculation that their value would increase, felt cheated by the rate and chose not to redeem.³⁸ By failing to resolve the glut of devalued paper currency, Ulloa allowed the colony to remain mired in an economic depression. What little specie entered the colony hemorrhaged outward to satisfy debts to outsiders who were loathe to accept the nearly worthless paper notes.³⁹ This depressed economy exacerbated other social problems, as well as created quite a bit of discontent in and of itself. Another source of this exacerbation, particularly among the "better sort" in the colony, was the threat of social displacement by the Spaniards as well as the potential and real imposition of Spanish cultural norms to replace those of the French.

³⁸ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 160-161; Holmes, "Some Economic Problems", 523.

³⁹ Ulloa, "Ulloa to Buccareli, February 2, 1768, No. 46", *Despatches*, 52-53. In this letter Ulloa calls for more specie to be shipped to the colony for, among other things, but listed first the payment of debts to foreign merchants.

Under the French regime, the merchants of New Orleans developed an alternate economy to the rigid mercantile system. This alternate economy relied on smuggling and internal trade.⁴⁰ The alternate economy also relied on (and in turn fueled) the relative independence that Louisianans enjoyed. The colony relied increasingly on such smuggling since the period shortly before the Seven Years War (1756-1763), after British privateers inflicted severe losses on the French merchant marine in 1755. England's decisive naval victory over France cut the colony off from French supply and all but ensured that New Orleans would not be able to receive necessary goods without resorting to illicit imports – often from British ships.⁴¹ In time such smuggling became so ingrained in the colonial system of French Louisiana that it is now hard to draw concrete distinctions between what was legal and illegal trade at the time.⁴² As the reality of Spanish control began to “sink in”, many colonists also feared that Spain would fold Louisiana into Spain's established mercantile system, a move which would potentially damage Louisiana trade by cutting off traditional trade partners- the English, the French and the French Caribbean Islands. With regard to imports, the English in particular were valuable trade partners for the colony, and supplied many colonial staples, the most important of which was flour.

During the period of French rule, the merchants of New Orleans enjoyed trade with the American British colonies, the French island colonies and even the Spanish holdings in the Caribbean and South America. The colony never prospered tremendously from the trade. It was the case, as John G. Clark said that “Silver flowed *through* New Orleans, not *to* New Orleans.”⁴³ However that is not to say that the trade was not valued; one could go so far as to say that

⁴⁰ Dawdy, 102-103, 115-117.

⁴¹ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 150-151.

⁴² Dawdy, 115.

⁴³ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 146.

external trade was necessary to the existence of the Louisiana colony. New Orleans was a commercial center into which goods and trade flowed - not only locally, but along the rivers and native trails through the Mississippi valley, the Caribbean and Gulf Coast colonies, from Africa and Europe.⁴⁴ This commercial shipping provided access to necessary goods and materials, as well as provided a livelihood for a merchant “class” of some power.

Governor Ulloa’s attempts to eliminate, or at least reduce, smuggling brought trepidation to many local traders and merchants who relied on smugglers to receive and ship goods, including the British flour which was nearly always in short supply.⁴⁵ In the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years War (French and Indian War), the British won navigation rights to the Mississippi river; however, they did not have rights to make landing on or utilize either bank of the river in Spanish territory. Traditionally a “blind eye” was turned to British trade, as the goods offered were necessary to the success of the colony and generally unavailable from other sources. By attempting to restrict that trade, and failing, Ulloa not only was seen as responsible for limiting the colonists’ access to necessary, and customary goods, he was shown to be incapable of enforcing the law – again revealing the limits of his authority.⁴⁶ The importance of British trade increased dramatically in 1765 alongside the arrival of the Acadians.⁴⁷ The need for food and other staples in short supply spiked just prior to the arrival of Governor Ulloa - at a moment when the colony was undergoing a period of significant change.⁴⁸ The shortages greatly aggravated the stresses produced by the change of colonial governments.

⁴⁴ Dawdy, 104-106.

⁴⁵ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 161-164.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁴⁸ Brasseaux, “Confusion, Conflict, and Currency”, 166.

Governor Ulloa recognized the role that supply shortages and economic depression played in the willingness of “these people [to] start insurrections, even without any cause, as it has happened many times before.”⁴⁹ But the colony drained resources faster than Spain would (or perhaps even could) supply them.

In a letter to Spanish Foreign Minister Pablo Jerónimo de Grimaldi y Pallavicini, Marquis de Grimaldi, dated October 10, 1768, Governor Ulloa complained of British ships violating the terms of the 1763 Treaty of Paris by utilizing the Mississippi river banks. In this letter Ulloa outlined his need to have had the *Volante* fire on British ships bringing “flour, meat, and other provisions for this city [New Orleans]”, which had tied up “on the opposite bank without first presenting permission in writing” from him.⁵⁰ Contrary to popular fears, Ulloa did not object to the import of supplies that were direly needed out of malice or indifference. In fact Ulloa complained frequently to his immediate superior, the Spanish Captain General of Cuba, Senor Don Antonio Buccareli, of the impoverished conditions in the colony, and pleaded for money with which to rejuvenate the economy and improve the colonial infrastructure.⁵¹ Ulloa wished to inspect foreign vessels before granting them permission to dock so that he would be able to properly assess and collect taxes on imports, and make certain that the ships were not harboring deserters. Nonetheless Ulloa’s slight restriction on British trade, trade which included valuable foodstuffs, angered and worried the merchants of New Orleans who both needed the food, and wished to keep prices as low as possible.

⁴⁹ Ulloa, “Ulloa to Buccareli, January 23, 1767, No. 12”, *Despatches*, 14.

⁵⁰ Governor Ulloa, “Ulloa to Grimaldi, October 10, 1768, No. 7”, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, 86-6-6, Bancroft Library Transcript, University of California, Translated and reprinted in: American Historical Association, *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1945, Vol. II: Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794, Pt. I*, (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1949), ed. Lawrence Kinnaird, Hereafter AHA, *Annual Report*, 76-77.

⁵¹ Ulloa, “Ulloa to Buccareli, December 12, 1766, No. 8”, *Despatches*, 10.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of such British trade and merchants to New Orleans, and the colony as a whole. Louisianans consumed imported British foods like flour and pork, which supplemented their own home grown edibles. These British imports also allowed planters and merchants to build a surplus of food with which to feed slaves and thus increase the means of production on the plantations. Imported foodstuffs were also an important component of the colonial export economy. Spanish merchants resold imported British food as an export to Spanish gulf colonies like Havana, and other Atlantic and Caribbean coastal colonies. As a trade good, the exported food provided a means of communication and “brought with them credit, shipping, and contacts with New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.”⁵²

The British merchants did not limit their contribution to the economy of Louisiana to just food and staple goods. British merchants also brought the first large shipments of slaves to New Orleans since 1743. In doing so they were incredibly important to the plantations which relied on that slave labor.⁵³

John G. Clark argues that for these reasons, in the early years of the Spanish reign, this British trade made England far more important than France or even Spain to the growth and stability of the colony.⁵⁴ This made the restriction (much less rejection) of British trade a dangerous and almost impossible position for Governor Ulloa to maintain. Governor Ulloa was aware of this, and proceeded with caution and concern over the commercial well-being of his subjects as much as he could. While cognizant of corruption and disapproving of smuggling, Ulloa moved slowly to reform. But ultimately, Louisiana was a Spanish colony, and from the Spanish perspective needed to pay its way. The colony would contribute to the wealth of the

⁵² Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 163-164.

⁵³ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 165.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Spanish empire by entering more fully into the mercantile system. Given the importance of non-Spanish trade to the colony, it is no surprise that citizens, particularly merchants and planters, were greatly concerned and discontented over what many believed to be inevitable and harmful Spanish trade restrictions.

These economic concerns came to a head over the adoption of the *Royal Decree of March 23, 1768*, which while greatly liberalizing trade, also brought Louisiana more completely “in line” with the economic system of the Spaniards.⁵⁵ The decree imposed seventeen regulations on trade in Louisiana. As they are important to understanding the nature of the complaint that the citizens had against the Spanish government, they will be summarized individually here. The first of these regulations limited trade in the colony to nine Spanish ports: Cadiz, Sevilla, Alicante, Cartagena, Málaga, Barcelona, Santander, Coruña, and Gijón (I). Certain taxes and duties were not levied on ships, however the shipping of foreign wine was prohibited (II). Ships must be of Spanish construction and belong to Spaniards as well as have a crew consisting two-thirds of Spaniards, which Ulloa noticed caused considerable consternation even after he declared the citizens of Louisiana to be naturalized Spanish citizens, thus qualifying them (III).⁵⁶ Ships sailing to Louisiana had to sail directly from the approved ports above to Louisiana with no prior stops in America or the adjacent islands, unless forced to stop due to weather or other uncontrollable circumstance (IV). The administrators of the customhouses were to establish a record of items carried to Louisiana and their values (V). No duty was to be collected on goods shipped to Louisiana, be they of foreign or Spanish origin (VI). Goods shipped from the above mentioned ports must have been shipped into them, and

⁵⁵ Ibid., 167.

⁵⁶ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 112-113.

thus had their duties paid (VII). Ship captains must keep sealed registers of goods loaded for shipment to Louisiana, and put forth a bond of ten percent of their value that they would ship the recorded goods to the colony (VIII). If by accident a captain should need to arrive at another port en route to Louisiana, he might sell his goods there if necessary, provided he showed proof that he was forced to that port. He would forfeit the bond on his goods to fulfill export duties (IX). Receipts must be tendered to the customhouse at departure, that the value of the bond might be cancelled (X). Upon arrival to Louisiana, the captain must present the ship's register to the minister of the royal treasury; who would then permit unloading of goods without import duty, or any other charge save anchorage in the river or other municipal duty (XI). After unloading cargo, the minister of the treasury would present the captain with a receipt of goods (XII). Goods taken on in Louisiana must originate from Louisiana (XIII). A list of goods and money taken on in Louisiana must be presented to the minister of the royal treasury (XIV). That same list must be presented to the customhouse of his next port in order that his bond for these goods might be cancelled (XV). Goods taken from Louisiana must pay the four percent import duty (XVI). And finally, if the goods shipped from Louisiana to the approved ports of Spain could not be sold at those ports, the captain might then take them freely to another country for sale without export duties (XVII).⁵⁷

Although through setting relatively minor taxation and import fees, and the increase of available Spanish ports, the Royal Decree of March 23, 1768 greatly improved the colony's legal trade position, it was seen as repressive and a signal that the colony was subject to Spanish

⁵⁷ King Carlos III of Spain, "Regulation of Louisiana Commerce, March 23, 1768", AHA, *Annual Report*, Vol. 2, Pt. 1, 45-50.

“tyranny”.⁵⁸ So much so, that the Superior Council cited fear of integration into the Spanish mercantile system as one of their primary concerns and a major cause of their actions to remove the Spanish authority during the coup of October 28th, 1768. New Orleans relied on relatively free trade as its “greatest economic advantage”, and many merchants feared ruin would follow entry into the restrictive Spanish mercantile system.⁵⁹ Nicolas-Chauvin Lafrénière, one of the principal leaders of the rebellion, couched his speech to the Superior Council in the terms of bringing to the (ostensibly French) citizens a “return of ancient liberties and rights”, specifically with regard to freedom of trade with traditional trade partners, which had been abrogated by the Spaniards.⁶⁰ The text of the Superior Council’s justification of the revolt leaves little doubt that economics were a major factor.

The council justified the rebellion with a list of concerns over the new regulations and infringements that they felt they had to redress. Many of these concerns relate directly to the constraints on trade outlined in the Royal Decree of March 23, 1768. The council listed as the first of the issues they wished to bring before French court the restoration of the commercial liberties enjoyed by the colony since the cession without the introduction of “innovations” which might “interrupt their course and disturb the security of the citizens.”⁶¹ The second request the council made was that passports be granted to captains travelling to France or America. The council requested that all ships sailing from any port in France or America be given free

⁵⁸ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 167-168; The fears of the French merchants are expounded upon in: Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., “Spanish Commercial Policy in Louisiana, 1763-1803”, *Louisiana History* 44, no. 2 (Spring, 2003): 143-144.

⁵⁹ Dawdy, 117, 224-225.

⁶⁰ Hilda S. Krousel, *Don Antonio De Ulloa: First Spanish Governor To Louisiana*, (Baton Rouge: VAAPR, Inc., 1983), 58.

⁶¹ Louisiana Superior Council, *Decree of the Louisiana Superior Council, October, 1768*, translated and reprinted in its entirety in: Gayarré, 374.

entrance, regardless of whether or not they sailed directly into the colony, or came from another port. The fourth request was that freedom of trade be extended to all nations “under the government of his most Christian Majesty.”⁶² These requests show that the Superior Council, and ostensibly the more influential colonists (merchants and large planters) who would have been able to have made their opinions felt by the council, desired a return to the less restrictive “laissez-faire” trade, as it was carried out under the last years of the French regime. The increased discontent caused by the removal of this free trade was a motivating factor in the decision made to move toward rebellion.

The fifth point of the Superior Council’s Decree was a general airing of grievances against Governor Ulloa. The overall theme to these grievances is that Governor Ulloa acted without legitimate authority in the colony. In the eyes of the Superior Council, the last legitimate laws were those in place under French Governor Jean-Jacques Blaise D’Abbadie.⁶³ With regard to trade, the Superior Council specifically charged that Ulloa, “of his own accord, by his own private authority, insisted upon captains being detained with their ships in the port without any cause”.⁶⁴ Those charges generally support the theory that confusion over the legitimacy of Spanish rule played a large role in the ideology of the revolt.

The sixth and final request made by the council was that all Spanish officials and soldiers be ordered to quit their posts and leave the colony, and that copies of the decree to that effect be printed and disbursed to the various posts of the colony.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., 374.

⁶³ To the conspirators, the last legitimate governor would have been French Governor Jean-Jacques Blaise D’Abbadie. Governor Charles Philippe Aubry who oversaw the transition to Spanish reign therefore was not completely without scrutiny or at the least tarnished reputation from association with the Spanish regime.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 375.

There were three large groups of colonists that comprised the bulk of the rioters who participated in the rebellion, and provided the force which convinced Governors Ulloa and Aubry that it was not safe for Ulloa to remain: French creoles from New Orleans, colonists from the German Coast and disgruntled Acadian immigrants. The members of these groups had legitimate cause for discontent with the Spanish regime, however as will be seen, without the manipulation of members of the conspiracy the Germans and Acadians would probably not have marched on New Orleans. The interests of those communities and how they were manipulated into action by members of the conspiracy are important points to consider when examining the rebellion. Recurring themes of discontent, both those which occurred “organically” and those manufactured by agents of the conspiracy, need to be identified should they be useful in revealing a correlation, or continuity of perceived discontent tying the 1768 rebellion with the discontent of the 1790’s.

Although the controls of the Spanish commercial system would ultimately benefit the German Coast residents, the trade restrictions imposed by Governor Ulloa also had an immediate negative impact on the perceived financial security of the Louisianans of the German Coast. The German Coast settlers had come to count on the export of indigo, tobacco, cotton and cypress timber to French, English and Spanish holdings.⁶⁶ By restricting trade to select Spanish ports, the decree of March 23, 1768 made much of this established German coastal trade illegal. This gave the Louisianans of the German Coast cause to fear the loss of trade that supplemented their (in some cases subsistence) farming. As Commandant of the German Coast, Charles Frederick D’Arensbourg would have been receptive to the complaints and financial interests of those settlers. It would have been a matter of honor and prestige for those under him to prosper. No

⁶⁶ Reinhart Kondert, "The German Involvement in the Rebellion of 1768", *Louisiana History* 26, no. 4 (Autumn, 1985): 389-392.

doubt his personal standing and financial well being would have also been impacted by the new trade regulation and restrictions that Ulloa implemented.

Commandant D'Arensbourg, had other personal reasons for fearing the commercial policies of the Spaniards. D'Arensbourg was a close family friend of the Attorney General, Nicolas Chauvin de Lafrénière, and grandfather of Lafrénière's wife. Lafrénière's son-in-law, Jean-Baptiste Noyen, had been making rumblings that his dissatisfaction with the Spanish economic policies was so great that he was selling his estate and "moving with his family and slaves to Cayenne (French Guiana)." In fact, Noyen had begun to make preparations to do just that.⁶⁷ D'Arensbourg was worried that the departure of the Attorney General's son-in-law would cause a great deal of tumult in his own family and personal dealings.⁶⁸ This belief led D'Arensbourg to support the rebel cause with little hesitation, lending the rebels an influential presence on the German Coast.

D'Arensbourg's support was important to what short term success the rebellion enjoyed. D'Arensbourg gave the order allowing Captain Josephe Villeré, head of the German Coast militia of as many as 400 men to march on New Orleans with some pretense of legitimacy.⁶⁹ D'Arensbourg also played a key role in preventing Ulloa from mollifying German Coast discontent. On October 25th, 1768 Governor Ulloa, after having learned of the mounting dissention amongst the German coast settlers, sent Antoine Gilbert de St. Maxent to the German Coast with fifteen hundred pesos with which to pay D'Arensbourg for grain which had been appropriated to feed a recent wave of Acadian immigrants, and by doing so pacify the German

⁶⁷ Ibid., 389.

⁶⁸ Ibid; in his report on the rebellion to Grimaldi Ulloa relays a belief that Lafrénière's own motives for rebellion may have derived in part from this development as well, Ibid; "Ulloa to Grimaldi", New Orleans, October 26, 1768, AHA, *Annual Report*, Vol. 2, Pt. 1, 80.

⁶⁹ Kondert, 394.

farmers and merchants. Commandant D'Arensbourg, upon meeting with St. Maxent, not only refused to accept payment for the grain but also refused to accept any apology or "gesture of good will from the Spanish authorities."⁷⁰

D'Arensbourg then had Villeré arrest St. Maxent, either at D'Arensbourg's home or on the route back, and hold him at the Cantrelle Plantation. Villeré then took the money sent with St. Maxent for the German goods and dispersed most of it himself through the German Coast settlement.⁷¹ By taking this decisive step against the interests of Governor Ulloa, D'Arensbourg, drove the discontent and financial uncertainty of the German Coast settlers to the point where they were willing to enter into collective political action. D'Arensbourg not only robbed Ulloa of a method to reconcile himself with the German Coast; he later lent his good name and the esteem that he had built as Commandant and judge to the settlers of the area to the rebellious faction and in doing so was instrumental in the decision of the German Coast Militia to march on New Orleans.

On October, 28th 1768, around four hundred members of the German Coast militia joined forces with a larger force comprised of some six hundred of the French and other militias at the house of François Chauvin de Lery.⁷² There, plied with wine and armed with muskets, they reassured each other of the justness of their cause and the courage they possessed. The total force of the rebels measured around a thousand men. There were only one hundred Spanish and

⁷⁰ Ulloa, "Ulloa to Grimaldi, New Orleans, October 26, 1768", AHA, *Annual Report*, Vol. 2, Pt. 1. 79; Kondert, 393-394; Gayarré, 235.

⁷¹ Kondert, 393-394. There is debate about whether or not St. Maxent was arrested at the home of D'Arensbourg. Kondert addresses this in a footnote in *Ibid.*, 394. According to Kondert, Villiers du Terrage put forth the argument that St. Maxent was arrested at D'Arensbourg in *The Last Years of French Louisiana*, p. 290. Rodriguez Casado argues the St. Maxent was arrested after leaving D'Arensbourg in his *Primeros Años*, p. 155.

⁷² Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 153.

loyal French guards in the city to check them.⁷³ At ten to one odds, it must have seemed that the Spanish forces would not have stood long against the gathered militias had the potentially riotous mobs turned violent. But, aside from a few street patrols and the spiking of the New Orleans cannons (on the previous evening), that first night the primary aim of the militias seemed to be that of arming themselves and drinking “the good wine of Bordeaux”.⁷⁴ For the conspirators the presence of a large element of popular support was all that was necessary at the moment. Such a sufficient display of potential force was enough to roust the Spanish presence before reinforcements could be sent for from Havana.

The next morning the combined militias received orders to marshal near Governor Ulloa’s residence. That first night was important to the rebels as it served to build camaraderie and shared ascription as enemies of the Spanish regime. It allowed a symbolic connection to develop in the disparate groups of colonists, prompted by the shared experience of dissatisfaction with Ulloa; fear of the coming Spanish mercantile system; longing for the *laissez-faire* of the French government; and finally, one can imagine, heady talk bolstered by wine and a sense of courage stemming from the company of armed like-minded men. That first night at the home of François Chauvin de Lery was a bonding experience that channeled the various economic and social interests of Acadians, Germans and French of New Orleans to a desire to fulfill the goal of the conspirators. It was perhaps the moment that allowed distinct situations of unrest and discontent to ferment together into a single instance of collective political action.

The relative non-violence of the gathering is important to understanding the character of the revolt. At this stage it seems more like a demonstration of dissatisfaction and concern;

⁷³ Ibid., 150.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 151-154.

almost something more akin to a workers' strike than a rebellion. There must have been either exemplary control on the part of the mob "leaders", or a general lack of will to do violence on the part of the mob. This lack of violence speaks to the ends that the rebels wished to attain. The rebels wanted a rejection of the "innovations" of Spanish regime in favor of a return to the traditional ways of the French. Their rejection was, to a degree, orderly. That orderliness suggests that (with the possible exception of Pierre Marquis – who favored the formation of an independent republic) the rebels wanted more of a reformation than a revolution - a return to comfortable French tradition, rather than any radical or revolutionary change in governmental systems.⁷⁵ To a degree the relative quietness of the mob speaks to the level of manipulation that the cabal leaders held over them. This was not a mob twisted to murderous outrage over the Spanish rule. Members most certainly held strong feelings – many worried about Spanish trade restrictions or motivated by ethnic tension - but their primary motivation was the collection of debt and redemption of paper currency. It took the charismatic leaders of the conspiracy to turn those economic desires into rebellion.

The principal conspirators, as listed by Charles Gayarré, were: "[Nicholas Chauvin de] Lafrénière, the king's Attorney-General; [Denis-Nicolas] Foucault, the Intendant Commissary; [Balthazar de] Masan [alternately Mason], a retired captain of infantry, a wealthy planter, and a knight of St. Louis; [Pierre] Marquis, a captain in the Swiss troops enlisted in the service of France; [Jean Baptiste de] Noyan, a retired captain of cavalry; and Bienville Noyan, a lieutenant in the navy, both the nephews of Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, the founder and a repeated governor, of the colony; [Julien Jerome] Doucet, a distinguished lawyer; Jean and Joseph Milhet; [Pierre] Caresse; [Joseph] Petit; and [Pierre] Poupet, who were among the

⁷⁵ Ibid., 144-145, 171-172.

principal merchants; [Pierre] Hardy [alternately Hardi] de Boisblanc, a former member of the Superior Council; and a planter of note, [Joseph] Villeré, the commander of the German Coast.”⁷⁶ Of these notable members of society, Governor Ulloa believed that the principle, as well as most important and influential of the conspirators were the Attorney General Nicholas Chauvin de Lafrénière, and Denis-Nicolas Foucault, the French *commissaire-ordonateur*, or commissary.⁷⁷

Most historiography of the revolt holds that Denis-Nicolas Foucault’s motives for rebellion were largely personal and financial. Like most of the French colonists, Foucault had some reservations about working with Ulloa and the changes that the new Spanish regime would bring. Also like many of his peers he found Ulloa to be standoffish and impersonal. It would be fair to say that by the time of the rebellion Foucault also bore considerable reservations about, if not ill will toward, acting French governor Charles Philippe Aubry, perhaps fueled by the sharp contrasts in their lifestyles and personalities. While Aubry maintained a position of power in the colony, he was at a lack for funds in part due to Foucault’s refusal to augment his funding, and was forced to live in a style he felt beneath his station as governor. By contrast, Foucault was able to live quite comfortably and maintained appearances perhaps above his station. Carl Brasseaux suggests that the disparity between the lifestyles and status of the two gentlemen as well as a particular blend of political reliance on each other to effectively run the colony and competition with each other for status within the colony bred enmity between them.⁷⁸ Years of struggle with officials of the prior French administration, many of whom felt Foucault to be low-

⁷⁶ Gayarré, 187.

⁷⁷ Governor Ulloa, “Ulloa to Grimaldi, Havana, December 4, 1769”, Translated in: R. E. Chandler, “Ulloa's Account of the 1768 Revolt”, *Louisiana History* 27, no. 4 (Autumn, 1986): 410-437.

⁷⁸ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault* , 42, 49, 55.

class, may very well have prepared Foucault to be more sensitive to perceived slights. Likewise, rapid shifts in the political system and turns of political alliance that took place in the 1760's may have caused Foucault to be considerably more focused on self-preservation and personal advancement. In any event, the enmity between Foucault and both governors of Louisiana intensified as the Spanish economic regulations were put in place.⁷⁹

Regardless of any speculation as to the source of his discontentment with the joint Spanish/French regime, there is no doubt that Denis-Nicolas Foucault disagreed strongly with the Spanish government on its policies of redeeming French paper currency at seventy-five percent of face value. Historians have not reached a firm consensus as to a specific dominant cause of this disagreement. A number of contributing causes have emerged. Some historians like, John Preston Moore, feel that Foucault was speculating in the paper currency, and needed the Spaniards to redeem the notes at a higher value in order to secure his personal fortune.⁸⁰ Carl Brasseaux is quite a bit more sympathetic to Foucault when ascertaining his motives. In Brasseaux's estimation, while Foucault certainly stood to lose money by the exchange, and other Spanish regulatory policies, his disparagement of the Spanish system was not based on personal matters alone. Brasseaux asserts that Foucault was understandably concerned about the impact of a less than total face-value revaluation of the paper currency on the cash flow of the government, and ability to procure supplies for incoming Acadian settlers, for which and whom he was in part responsible.⁸¹ Lack of funds provided by the Spaniards forced Foucault to take loans from local merchants – putting him in the delicate position of owing money to those over

⁷⁹ Brasseaux, "Confusion, Conflict, and Currency", 163-165.

⁸⁰ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 145-146.

⁸¹ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 45-47.

whom he had political authority. Furthermore if neither the Spanish nor French governments reimbursed Foucault, he could be liable for debt he could not repay.⁸²

Ultimately, irrespective of whether Foucault's motives were being driven by personal enmity and desire to profit, or concern over the well-being of the colony and his ability to minister to its economic good, Foucault did play a role in the Superior Council's conspiracy against Governor Ulloa. Foucault became a sympathizer and supporter of the rebellion. Brasseaux characterizes this support as mostly passive. However by refusing to perform, or slowly performing, certain routine administrative duties, Foucault was able to engender dissatisfaction with the government in many colonists, particularly those of prominence who would have had business dealings that Foucault's obstructionist actions would have impacted.⁸³ During the rebellion, Foucault "was negligent in allowing the printing of anti-Spanish literature in New Orleans, failed to notify the acting governor of the circulation of the petition [to remove Ulloa from the colony], and entertained his fellow councilors after they had approved the illegal petition during the special session."⁸⁴

Carl Brasseaux also places an indirect responsibility for the revolt on the disagreements and quarreling between the French offices of governor, which was held by Charles Philippe Aubry (jointly with Governor Ulloa), and the offices of *commissaire-ordonnateur*, held by Denis-Nicolas Foucault. In the "build-up" to the rebellion, this quarreling effectively "paralyzed the provincial administration, creating a leadership vacuum which the New Orleans rebels would

⁸² Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 122-123, 126-127; 166-168; Brasseaux, "Confusion, Conflict, and Currency", 166-168; Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 68.

⁸³ Carl A. Brasseaux, "Plus ça change: Acte Second: The Aubry-Foucault Clash and The New Orleans Rebellion of 1768", in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History, Volume I: The French Experience in Louisiana*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad, (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 606-607; Brasseaux, "Confusion, Conflict, and Currency", 165-166.

⁸⁴ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 81.

ultimately fill.”⁸⁵ Perhaps Foucault’s most important contribution to the rebellion was his consistent deferral to the will of Attorney General Nicholas Chauvin de Lafrénière.⁸⁶ With these consistent deferrals of legal opinion Foucault removed himself as a check on Lafrénière, and greatly increased Lafrénière’s prestige and political power, thus allowing Lafrénière to more completely fill the role of opposition leader.

Popular, powerful, imposing, and charming, Attorney General Nicholas Chauvin de Lafrénière played the role of charismatic leader in the rebellion - swaying the Superior Council and those others among the colonists who felt the malaise of dissatisfaction with the Spaniards to actively participate in the cause of the rebellion.⁸⁷ In terms of physical and social presence, Lafrénière was everything that Governor Ulloa was not – dashing, eloquent, energetic, and masculine. So commanding was Lafrénière that R. E. Chandler, in his notes to “Ulloa's Account of the 1768 Revolt”, suggests that Lafrénière was able to use his “spell-binding oratory” not only to seduce officials and prominent citizens to the rebel’s cause, but also to verbally dominate and over-rule the wishes of acting governor Aubry.⁸⁸

His powerful presence, positive reputation and political status as Attorney General and member of the Superior Council enabled Lafrénière to spread discontent amongst the “common” citizenry using the tools of gossip and slander. The Attorney General also played a role in undermining the Spanish authority by exerting political pressure on the French members of the dual colonial government against the Spanish interests, and projecting himself forward into the minds of the citizenry by “assuming leadership at assemblies called to discuss the most

⁸⁵ Brasseaux, “Plus ça change”, 603-604.

⁸⁶ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 57-61.

⁸⁷ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 40; Chandler, “Ulloa's Account”, 410.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

momentous decisions of the day” - often at the political expense of the Spanish regime.⁸⁹

Lafrénière also acted as a galvanizing presence behind which the dispossessed French could rally. His orations before the Superior Council neatly address the complaints of merchants and traders, and combined them with the complaints and anxieties (exaggerated by the conspirators) of the Acadian settlers and German coast farmers. Lafrénière, possibly through his legal training, correspondence or visitation with European thinkers, developed skill with expressing the language of enlightenment philosophy which would have provided a method of initial indoctrination.⁹⁰

Perhaps the most important aspect of his role as ring-leader was the attorney general’s recruiting of influential men who could provide popular support from disparate groups. It was Lafrénière who persuaded Commandant Roget de Villeré to convince the settlers on the German coast that they needed to march on New Orleans in order to force Governor Ulloa to pay for the goods, fruits, and vegetables that were purchased from them throughout the year (primarily to feed the Acadians).⁹¹ Likewise, Lafrénière was instrumental in convincing militia captains Judice and André Veret to rally Acadian immigrants to New Orleans under the pretense that Governor Ulloa held a store of silver which he could be pressured into using to back the worthless paper notes that many of the Acadians had carried with them from Canada.⁹²

In contrast to Brasseaux’s characterization of Foucault, Jo Ann Carrigan characterizes Nicholas Chauvin de Lafrénière’s motives as personal ambition and, to a degree, the quest for visible status, tempered by an opposition to a Spanish system Lafrénière believed to be “arbitrary

⁸⁹ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 60-61, 70-71.

⁹⁰ Dawdy, 219-220; Winston, 208-209.

⁹¹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 150-151.

⁹² *Ibid.*

government and mercantilism.”⁹³ Lafrénière is another figure that the historiography has viewed through lenses biased toward either the French or Spanish point of view, and with correspondingly heroic or villainous overtones. Some historians, such as John Preston Moore James E. Winston, and Shannon Lee Dawdy, speculate that because of Lafrénière’s European travels, there may have been some Enlightenment ideology behind his decision to enter into revolt against the Spaniards.⁹⁴ Winston maintains a high regard for the impact of philosophy on Lafrénière, however Moore ultimately concludes that Lafrénière’s motives were likely driven more by the threat to his personal status and influence, which a more completely implemented Spanish regime represented, than by idealism.⁹⁵

Lafrénière’s character, and presence were sharply contrasted by those of Governor Ulloa. Ulloa, fifty years old by the time he was made governor, was a man of diverse interests and accomplishments. While serving Spain as a colonial administrator and naval officer Ulloa was also an explorer, engineer, author of several manuscripts, and a scientist noted in the disciplines of astronomy, mathematics, biology and chemistry.⁹⁶ Although Ulloa’s many scientific accomplishments cemented his status as an intellectual giant, he was not physically imposing. Described as small, stooped, thin and pale; it is noted that Ulloa was hardly the physical presence needed to inspire the lax and fearful French colonists, who worried that they had been forgotten

⁹³ Jo Ann Carrigan, “Old and New interpretations of the Rebellion of 1768”, in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History, Volume I: The French Experience in Louisiana*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad, (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 613.

⁹⁴ Dawdy, 219-220.

⁹⁵ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 107; Lafrénière and the other conspirator’s sentiments on natural rights and the public compact which presaged those of Adam Smith and Thomas Smith are considered in slightly more detail in Winston, 201-203, 208-209.

⁹⁶ Moore, “Antonio de Ulloa”, 194-195.

or cast aside.⁹⁷ Ulloa's physical appearance and bookish demeanor complicated his relationship with the French subjects.

Ulloa possessed a number of qualifications for the position, not the least of which was experience in the climate of the new world and an understanding of the French language. He was also keenly intelligent, an experienced colonial administrator, a scientific genius, a naval officer, and fiercely loyal to the crown.⁹⁸ Ulloa also possessed a host of other character traits which made him less than ideally suited for his post. John Preston Moore lists a number of these. Ulloa was overly concerned with regulation, matters of honor and the minutiae of political niceties. He could be brusque and short with those he was trying to communicate with. At times he was too quick to discount the opinions of others.⁹⁹ The French governor Aubry said that Ulloa was "sometimes too punctilious and often makes problems out of things that are scarcely worth the trouble to bother with."¹⁰⁰ Least kind (and bearing an obvious bias against the Spanish regime), Jean Bochart Champigny characterized Ulloa as "Obstinate... violent... imperious... arrogant... timid... inconsiderate... and destitute of dignity."¹⁰¹ But physical appearance and somewhat odious character traits were not the largest factors at play in Ulloa's failure to maintain control of the Louisiana colony.

Nor was the manner of Ulloa's arrival, though it also proved to be detrimental to his success as governor in the colony. Stormy weather both prevented large crowds from gathering

⁹⁷ Ibid., 197; Jean Bochart Champigny, *Memoir of the Present State of Louisiana*, in B. F. French (ed.) *Historical Collections of Louisiana Embracing Transactions of Many Rare and Valuable Documents Relating to the Natural, Civil, and Political History of that State. Compiled with Historical and Biographical Notes* (New York, 1846-1853), V, 151-153.

⁹⁸ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 9.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.; translated from letters reprinted in Gayarré, 157, 158, 163.

¹⁰¹ Champigny, 152.

to witness Ulloa's arrival and played a part in Ulloa's decision to sail into the harbor in a small packet ship – the *Volante*, rather than a larger, more impressive vessel.¹⁰² Likewise the small force of ninety Spanish soldiers that arrived with Ulloa was hardly a force suited to strike an impression of force and control. Ulloa made a critical misstep during his arrival – he did not raise the Spanish flag. What he interpreted from his orders to be a necessary step to ease the colony from French to Spanish control only served to confuse the citizenry, and give the conspirators a powerful visual icon to use as a foothold from which to launch accusations of the invalidity of the Spanish regime.¹⁰³ While Ulloa continued to allow the French flag to fly instead of the Spanish, the situation continued to deteriorate.

Ulloa's reliance on French troops for support during his administration added to the perception that the Spanish regime was weak and lessened his authority. However, despite repeated requests to Viceroy Buccarrelí for Spanish officers and soldiers, Ulloa had to use the French troops still garrisoned in Louisiana, as well as local militias.¹⁰⁴ This was problematic for a few reasons. Not only was this a sign of Spanish impermanence or possibly even illegitimacy, it was also draining on the French troops who believed themselves likely to be recalled at any time to France, with their terms of service in the colony over.¹⁰⁵ Ulloa also believed those French troops to be extremely unreliable and lazy. He complained in a letter to Viceroy Buccarrelí that they “refused to do anything that is for the service of his Royal Majesty, asking

¹⁰² Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 1-2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Antonio de Bucareli (alternately Buccarrelí or Bucareli) was promoted to Viceroy of New Spain (Mexico) in 1771. 2009. "Bucareli y Ursúa, Antonio María." *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th Edition 1. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed March 30, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

for extra wages for everything they do.”¹⁰⁶ The net effect was that Ulloa failed to make a suitable impression of Spanish rule.

This was compounded by Ulloa’s dislike of public display.¹⁰⁷ That dislike prevented him from establishing the Spanish presence in the grand way expected by the French colonists. This not only served to rob the Spanish regime of legitimacy by stripping it of what would have been viewed as the trappings of legitimacy, it also served to engender hostility from the entrenched “better classes” in the colony, who viewed Ulloa as snobbish or stand-offish. That perception of Ulloa was strengthened by his frequent trips from the social center of New Orleans to the site which would become the newly constructed southern fort at Balize. Ulloa visited Balize in order to shore up defenses there against a possible invasion from the British, which he viewed as an urgent if not imminent threat (and to conduct scientific experiments).¹⁰⁸ However his visits were interpreted by the French colonists as a desire to supplant or circumvent New Orleans society by moving the capital of government to a new location.¹⁰⁹ This seeming disregard for traditional French social structures and mores both lent credence to some aspects of the “Black Legend” related to supposed Spanish aloofness and cruelty, but also fostered the kind of social disconnect that facilitates rebellion – the weakening of inherited norms and traditions that act to reinforce stability in society.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Ulloa, “Ulloa to Buccareli, March 25, 1767, No. 20”, *Despatches*, 23-25.

¹⁰⁷ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 1-2.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 65-67.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹¹⁰ The “Black Legend” held that the Spanish were capable of inhuman cruelty, particularly toward those that fell under them in conquest. Benjamin Keen, “The Black Legend Revisited: Assumptions and Realities”, *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 49, no. 4 (1969): 703-719.

In June of 1767 Governor Ulloa married Doña Francisca Ramirez de Larada y Encalda. This union only complicated matters in Louisiana for the governor.¹¹¹ Ulloa chose to take the young, well connected and wealthy Chilean lady as his bride, possibly angering many of the local Louisiana elite who would have preferred the governor to marry from within the colony, thus solidifying political alliances there. Additionally, Ulloa chose to have his marriage ceremony away from New Orleans, in Balize, which caused the colonial elite, who by and large resided in New Orleans, to feel snubbed all over again.¹¹² In a similar manner the pregnancy of Lady Ulloa led to more social misunderstandings. The customary feting by visitors and well wishers of the mother-to-be was not to the liking of Ulloa or his bride, nor was worshipping in public, primarily because of health concerns.¹¹³

Ulloa also simply did not communicate well with the colonists, a failing that contributed greatly to the accumulation of problems leading to rebellion. In part this was a function of the conspirators residing in the government at a level between Ulloa and the populace. They were able to put negative interpretation and/or connotation to Ulloa's policies, and effectively control perception of Ulloa through uncontested rumor and misinformation. Practically since Spain gained control of the colony, rumors regarding potential Spanish reforms played a role in the popular dissatisfaction with the regime.¹¹⁴ Had Ulloa managed to create a direct channel of official information, he would have avoided a lot of ill will from the colonists who were genuinely uninformed or misinformed of the governor's problems and plans. However, Ulloa

¹¹¹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 139.

¹¹² Gayarré, 220; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 140.

¹¹³ Krousel, 32, 35-38.

¹¹⁴ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 53-54.

did not create such a channel of information and as a result he and his policies were susceptible to the machinations of those who would slander them.

The involvement of French officials in the process of governing often caused announcements contradictory or mitigating to Spanish intent to be made alongside official proclamations. This was the case in 1766, when Governor Aubry speculated that the Spaniards would not enforce the trade restrictions passed earlier that year.¹¹⁵ Such speculation acted to cast a cloud of weakness or incompetence on Governor Ulloa, and one of illegitimacy on the Spanish government. In a similar vein, the involvement of the French Superior Council in the governing process perpetuated a sense of doubt in the Spanish government. It is entirely possible that the relationship that powerful merchants and planters had with the members of the Superior Council gave them avenues of information outside of those which the Spanish government controlled. Through these channels the conspirators in the council were able to challenge Spanish legitimacy.

A lack of information was another of Ulloa's principle problems. Ulloa lacked a reliable source of information. The information he received was often from French soldiers, many of whom were disgruntled over not being allowed to return to France, had loyalties and connections to their regional commandants, or were sympathetic to the conspirators. The conspirators were able to organize themselves, grow their ranks, and even sign petitions for Ulloa's removal – all seemingly with Ulloa none the wiser.¹¹⁶ Ulloa also overlooked good intelligence when it was presented to him, often because he believed the information to be unsubstantiated or from a biased source. This was the case on the twenty-first of October, 1768, when a colonist, angered

¹¹⁵ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 105-107.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

by a Superior Council decision, brought to Ulloa allegations that members of the council were fomenting discontent along the German Coast. The allegations were true, but Ulloa disregarded them as they came from a source which he considered to be biased and therefore untrustworthy – his sense of honor, a product of his upper class Andalusian upbringing, and well honed during his time in the Spanish navy, ruled his behavior when a suspicious nature would have been more prudent.¹¹⁷

By contrast the conspirators were in positions to know much about Governor Ulloa, as well as his plans for governance, and they were able to selectively release and color that information in ways that cast the governor in the poorest light possible. The conspirators also held great influence over the colony through appointment, relationship, reputation and status. The conspirators used their positions, through societal status, inter-relationships, and governmental appointment to control to a great degree how the governor was perceived by the populace. Foucault was able to slow down official business, creating an air of incompetence or snobbish disdain with affairs of state. He was also able to put leverage through the Association of Merchants on potential members of the coup plot.¹¹⁸ Lafrénière was able to use his considerable charm and connections to circumvent Spanish efforts to maintain calm in the colony, and generate resentment against the alien government.

Relationships played a remarkably strong role in the organization of the rebellion. Lafrénière alone was related to nearly half of the other main conspirators through blood or marriage. Governor Ulloa made a listing of several familial connections in his account of the revolt. Joseph Villeré, the Captain of the German coast, was Lafrénière's brother in law.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 149-150.

¹¹⁸ Chandler, "Ulloa's Account", 414.

Captain François La Barre, a militia captain at English Turn and member of the Superior Council, was a cousin by marriage. François Chauvin de Lery, the Commandant of Tchapitoulas, was Lafrénière's cousin. Piere Marquis, was attached to Lafrénière through an unspecified relation to Lafrénière's wife.¹¹⁹ The prominent businessman and planter Jean-Baptiste Noyan was Lafrénière's son-in-law. Finally, as previously mentioned, Commandant Charles Fredereick D'Arensbourg was the grandfather of Lafrénière's wife.¹²⁰ D'Arensbourg himself acted as a sort of social "spoke" in connecting the conspirators. Through his descendants a number of prominent families were connected, including "Lafrénière, Noyan, Bienville, Massan, Villeré, and de Lery."¹²¹

These bonds served to allow for a very tight-knit cabal, contributing to the lack of information the Spanish Governor was able to obtain. Those relationships also provided reasonable cover for meetings and ready access to the exchange of information, propaganda, and mobilization without fear of internal betrayal. As previously shown, Lafrénière convinced Judice and Andre Veret to gather the Acadians in New Orleans under the pretense that they were to have their worthless Canadian paper currency redeemed by Ulloa who maintained a secret horde of Spanish coin.¹²² Lafrénière was also able to convince Commandant D'Arensbourg and Captain Joseph de Villiere to create rumor that Ulloa would not honor debts for foodstuffs, then engineer a shortfall of that payment to garner the support of the German Coast settlers. Though

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Kondert, 389.

¹²¹ Vicente Rodriguez Cassado, *Primeros años de dominación española en la Luisiana*, (Madrid, 1942), 140-141, 147, quoted in: Kondert, 389.

¹²² Chandler, "Ulloa's Account", 420-421.

the elder Baltasar Villeré refused to join with the conspiracy, he was not in a position to reveal the conspiracy to Ulloa.¹²³

If there is one recurring theme in the events that led up to the revolt of 1768, it is instability. Among the contributing elements were the financial disruptions of inflation, lack of specie along with the concomitant variety of greatly depressed paper monies, irregularity of aid from Europe, changes in commercial policy, potential changes in the governing body, political infighting, confusion over the legitimacy of Spanish rule, the composite French and Spanish government, and a weak central government attempting to enforce unpopular regulations.¹²⁴ This instability exacerbated ethnic tensions, and gave the conspirators a “cause célèbre” they could draw upon for an almost instant credibility: the “poisonous wine from Catalonia.”¹²⁵ The conspirators used this credibility, ethnic tension, and an almost ever present unease over the worsening economic circumstances to build a powerful coalition against the new Spanish government out of the disparate interests and factions.

The overriding themes that presented themselves after the coup had been launched were confusion, and delay. As just mentioned, Governor Ulloa was slow to react to rumors that there was a mounting conspiracy against him. The governor’s lax control over the colony allowed the conspirators to easily not only circumvent his measures to contain the problem, by preventing the payment of owed money to the German Coast farmers, but they also were able to turn those efforts to their own ends, by utilizing the money sent. Upon hearing of the detained St. Maxent, and the loss of the money meant to pay the German Coast farmers, Ulloa held a conference with Governor Aubry to determine the best course of action. Aubry advised that Governor Ulloa do

¹²³ Ibid., 414.

¹²⁴ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 35.

¹²⁵ Chandler, “Ulloa's Account”, 413.

nothing, which was the approach that Ulloa initially took. Aubry's reason for this was that he felt that the situation was far less harmful than it turned out to be. He thought that a formal protest was all that would come of the gathering force against the Spanish governor.¹²⁶ Had Ulloa acted with force, Aubry believed, he might have provided the spark which would have turned the protest into revolt.

On October twenty-seventh, Governor Aubry approached Foucault and Lafrénière with a polite request that they cease agitating the public against Ulloa. The conspirators refused. This proved the wrong approach to take, and Aubry's overture for a peaceful resolution, and his lack of willingness to project force to maintain the Spanish regime were seen as signs of weakness by the conspirators.¹²⁷ Lafrénière and Foucault informed Governor Aubry that it was their intention to have Ulloa removed from the colony within three days "with the least possible disturbance because things had gone so far that it was impossible to draw back."¹²⁸ Pierre Marquis, recently appointed Colonel by the Superior Council, maintained a militia five companies strong and loyal to the conspirators. The number of the rebels roughly doubled as a force of some five hundred Germans and Acadians led by Villeré and Noyan respectively marched into New Orleans and gathered for the first night of the rebellion at the home of François Chauvin de Lery.¹²⁹ By the morning of the twenty-eighth of October, roughly one

¹²⁶ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 150.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹²⁸ Rodriguez Cassado, *Primeros años*, 159; later quoted with some explanation in: Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 152.

¹²⁹ Gayarré, 188; Emilie Leumas, "Ties That Bind: The Family, Social, and Business Associations of the Insurrectionists of 1768", *Louisiana History* 47, no. 2 (Spring, 2006): 185.

thousand insurgents under the command of Pierre Marquis patrolled the streets of New Orleans unopposed.¹³⁰

On the eve of the rebellion Ulloa felt that he did not have the men to handle the situation. With only one hundred or so men at his disposal against a crowd which is estimated to have numbered in the hundreds, in all probability, he did not. After consulting with Aubry – in whom Governor Ulloa still had faith to resolve the situation peacefully, Ulloa made the decision to retreat with his pregnant wife and child to the packet ship *Volante*, accompanied by “all Spanish military personnel, with all those of Spanish descent or sympathizers among the French welcome to join the defense of the boat”, as a precautionary measure he ordered all important papers to be destroyed and the ship’s guns readied for defense against the rebels.¹³¹

For his part, Governor Aubry sent an additional twenty soldiers to join Ulloa on the *Volante*, detached another thirty to the central square, and kept the remainder to rally a small force of seventy to eighty men should a confrontation with the forces of the Superior Council be necessary.¹³² Following this, Governor Aubry made another appeal to Foucault and Lafrénière to abandon the conspiracy, insisting to them that they stood to risk everything for little chance of any gain.¹³³ As before, Aubry’s appeals to the conspirators had little effect, other than perhaps contributing to Denis-Nicolas Foucault’s decision to take a more passive and cautious role in the rebellion from that point forward.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Gayarré, 189.

¹³¹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 152-154.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 154-155; Gayarré, 190.

¹³³ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 154-155.

¹³⁴ Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 77-81.

The following day, October twenty-ninth, the Superior Council met at Foucault's residence in New Orleans to compile a list of grievances against Governor Ulloa. To prevent any disruption from Governor Aubry's small force that remained in the city, the Superior Council arranged patrols of militia and gatherings of supporters shouting angrily for removal of the Spaniard.¹³⁵ At Ulloa's behest Aubry was present, and again offered a remonstrance against the conspirators but "neither prayer nor threats could produce any impression, except on two or three, who seemed to be moderate, and that the rest allowed themselves to be swayed by the sentiments of Lafrénière."¹³⁶ It was clear to Ulloa at least that at this point his most powerful ally, Aubry, had lost all influence with the Superior Council, if not the majority of the French populace.¹³⁷ After deliberating, the Council prepared their petition of six points to be sent to the king of France.

The proclamation listed grievances and attacks against the character of Governor Ulloa as evidence of the perfidy committed by the same and justification for his removal. Through their complaints, the Superior Council systematically attacked the legitimacy of the Spanish regime in Louisiana by claiming that no Spanish policy had lawfully replaced the pre-existing French policies.

In large part their basis for this claim was that "Mr. Ulloa" failed to show proof that the colony was ceded to Spain. John Preston Moore points out that Lafrénière was correct on the point that Governor Ulloa did not follow the formal protocol for accepting the colony, but hastens to add that in accepting Spanish money and following Spanish directives, Louisiana had

¹³⁵ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 155.

¹³⁶ Gayarré, 202.

¹³⁷ Chandler, "Ulloa's Account", 435.

been a Spanish colony nonetheless.¹³⁸ However, regardless of the validity of the Attorney General's claims, the council delivered these points at a time when the conspirators had shown that the Spanish forces under Ulloa could not hold the colony through force. As they had in the past with Governor Kerlerec, "the leaders of the conspiracy turned once again to force as a solution to their economic and social ills."¹³⁹ Emboldened by popular support, ideological grounds, and strength of arms the Superior Council (minus only the dissenting voice of Governor Aubry, and moderating voice of Foucault who wished Governor Ulloa removed from power but not expelled) demanded the removal of Governor Ulloa within three days of the proclamation date, October 29th, 1768, on "whatever ship he shall think proper".¹⁴⁰

By early afternoon on the twenty-ninth, the Superior Council had a copy of the proclamation delivered to Ulloa. Upon receiving it, Ulloa ordered the Spanish Commissary Loyola to end all funds meant for French soldiers and officials in the colony and to halt the purchase of all gifts meant as presents for native tribes. He also ordered all Spanish troops in the colony be recalled to Havana.¹⁴¹ Governor Ulloa used the three days allotted to him by the Superior Council to purchase passage on a French merchant vessel, the frigate *Cesár*, as the packet ship *Volante* was in need of repairs and not seaworthy. He left New Orleans at the end of his allotted time.¹⁴² The *Cesár* delayed a short while in Balize for re-supply, and to wait out

¹³⁸ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 155.

¹³⁹ Governor Kerlerec, a firm military governor suffered at the hands of the Intendent Rochemore, who instigated an investigation into his governorship during which Kerlerec was imprisoned for a time. Andre Lafargue, "The French Governors of Louisiana", *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 14, No. 2 (1927), 165-166; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 161.

¹⁴⁰ Gayarré, 380-382.

¹⁴¹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 163.

¹⁴² Chandler, "Ulloa's Account", 435; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 163.

weather not fit for sailing. Then the *Cesár* proceeded south across the Gulf to Havana and arrived in the Cuban capital on December 3rd, 1768.¹⁴³

Though Governor Ulloa had it in mind that he would return to New Orleans both with the battalion which had been assembling in Havana for his use and with additional Spanish support, he was never to see that city or any of Louisiana again. In the brief interim wherein the rebels held power, Aubry was still nominally the acting Governor of the colony. However, as he complained to the French court, he held little power and considered the nature of his tenure as one of continued indignity to the office of Governor.¹⁴⁴ This is not to say that Aubry held no power in the colony, however. Aubry, for a time, using threats of force and forceful appeals to the Council, was able to prevent Lafrénière and Foucault from removing the *Volante* from the river. From its position, the *Volante* was able to fire on ships moving into New Orleans and kept smuggling, which the Superior Council depended on for finance after Ulloa's departure, at a reduced level thus contributing to the malaise and enervation suffered by the Superior Council's temporary government.¹⁴⁵ Aubry's remaining vestiges of command aside, the real driving force behind governance at this time was the Superior Council, and its most prominent and powerful member the Attorney General Nicolas Chauvin de Lafrénière. Denis-Nicolas Foucault remained a strong presence "behind the scenes" but wished to limit the visible extent of his involvement as he was wary of how the European powers would view the revolt and wished to protect his career.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Gayarré, 210-211.

¹⁴⁵ R. E. Chandler, "Aubry: Villain or Hero?", *Louisiana History* 26, no. 3 (Summer, 1985): 254.

¹⁴⁶ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 165-166; A more sympathetic accounting of Foucault's post rebellion activities can be found in Brasseaux, *Denis-Nicolas Foucault*, 80-84.

After the crescendo of October twenty-eighth and ninth the new administration lost a lot of momentum and a degree of popular support. In part this was because it was, at heart, a reactionary movement. It is hard to keep up enthusiasm for a return to the status quo once it has been restored. The conspirators proved themselves to be better adept at overthrowing a government than running one themselves. In general the rebels maintained a hope that the colony would be welcomed back by the French king. However they had no clear plan as to how to maintain the government in the meantime or, other than the republican leanings of Pierre Marquis, no clear inclination of what to do if the French king refused to accept them.¹⁴⁷ In an attempt to maintain control, solidify popular support, and justify their actions to the European monarch they wished to rejoin, the conspirators published a list of their grievances and condemnations of Governor Ulloa and as well as their forceful rejection of the Spanish mercantile system for the colony.¹⁴⁸

They also began appointing syndics from the ranks of men who were well connected and had supported the rebellion.¹⁴⁹ The office of syndic was a French innovation in which honored or distinguished gentlemen acted as a kind of intermediary between the citizenry and the government. That measure expanded the powerbase of the insurgents by incorporating sympathizers into the power structure. But printed propaganda and the appointment of syndics was not enough to maintain popular support. What the people wanted most was a sense of security. After the departure of Ulloa, the Superior Council saw a small reversal of popularity

¹⁴⁷ Kondert, 396; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 171-172.

¹⁴⁸ Florence M. Jumonville, "Frenchmen at Heart: New Orleans Printers and Their Imprints, 1764-1803", *Louisiana History* 32, no. 3 (Summer, 1991): 292-293; Winston De Ville and Florence M. Jumonville, "Denis Braud's Petition to Ulloa: An Addendum to Early Louisiana Imprints", *Louisiana History* 32, no. 3 (Summer, 1991): 314-315; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 168; Douglas McMurtrie, "The Pioneer Printer of New Orleans", *Southern Printer's Journal*, (Jan. - Feb. 1929): 1.

¹⁴⁹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 166.

with Governor Aubry rising in the eyes of many French soldiers and the Council losing the support of the German Coast settlers, though the German Coast proved to be resistant to the acceptance of Spanish rule upon the arrival of Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly, almost certainly for economic reasons.¹⁵⁰

There is little evidence that the revolt actually acted to improve the conditions causing discomfort to the colonists. Lack of financial means caused a great degree of their difficulty. Governor Aubry had a hand in this as it was his stern refusal to allow the *Volante* to be removed that prevented the flow of trade into the city which the Superior Council depended on to finance their new government. The Superior Council had a far larger problem in the lack of funds from either the Spanish or French crowns – money the colony had always needed to function. With a lack of funding and no clear direction to move the new government, a complacency and sense of ennui set in.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Chandler, "Aubry", 255; Kondert, 396.

¹⁵¹ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 177, 183.

CHAPTER II

O'REILLY RESTORES ORDER

The awaited, and feared, Spanish response to the rebellion came in the form of the arrival of Lieutenant General Don Alejandro O'Reilly, nearly nine months after the removal of Governor Ulloa. Alejandro O'Reilly was an Irish soldier of fortune in service to Spain, who had served with honor and distinction in His Most Catholic Majesty's army since the age of ten, some 37 years before the Louisiana revolt.¹⁵² He was recognized for bravery, skill and valor in the wars of Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War, and most recently during the 1766 riots in Madrid, when he oversaw the protection of Charles III's royal palace from angry mobs.¹⁵³ In addition to his bravery, talent and martial skills, O'Reilly proved to have the insight of a sharp colonial administrator in his short time in Cuba assessing and re-organizing the army. While there he made several prudent observations and recommendations toward improving security and efficiency.¹⁵⁴ This experience, and his deep personal respect for the Lieutenant General, convinced King Charles III that O'Reilly was the right man for the job of restoring order in Louisiana.¹⁵⁵

The arrival of O'Reilly represents the final stage of Welch's model – the end of the rebellion. The Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly's actions in Louisiana show how a mixture of repression and conciliation effectively pacify a populace. From the start of his administration, O'Reilly displayed an overwhelming force that denied the Louisiana rebels the

¹⁵² David Ker Texada, *Alejandro O'Reilly and the New Orleans Rebels*, (Lafayette: USL Center for Louisiana Studies, 1970), 22.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 23, 25.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

¹⁵⁵ A brief history of Alejandro O'Reilly's military career and advancement can be found in: A. S. Aiton, "Spanish Colonial Reorganization under the Family Compact", *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 12, no. 3 (Aug., 1932): 275-279; Texada, 22-26.

hope of being able to withstand a direct confrontation. O'Reilly backed that force up with sensible policies and reforms that made life better for colonists, and addressed many of their concerns. While doing so he made sure to drive a wedge between those members of the conspiracy who directed action against the government and those who followed. This split allowed O'Reilly the means to reconcile the majority of colonists with the Spanish government while excising from the colony the most dangerous rebels.

On July 24, 1769, news of O'Reilly's imminent arrival reached Governor Aubry, who was overwhelmed with joy at the return of Spanish order (and funds).¹⁵⁶ Many of the colonists echoed Aubry's sense of relief – regardless of the manner of the Spanish return, Spanish rule would be more orderly, and the economic situation could hardly be less prosperous than it had been under the interim government.¹⁵⁷

But there was more to the lack of resistance to O'Reilly than a cooling passion for revolt, general confusion as to the direction of governance, and slowed momentum. O'Reilly brought several powerful tools to combat insurgency. First he brought a great deal of money to the colony. Financial aid helped to reduce the discontent of the subjects and lessen the economic crisis. O'Reilly brought measures to reform the governmental and economic systems to bring them into clear and well delineated and productive forms. Finally O'Reilly brought an overwhelming force coupled with the skill and acumen to use that force judiciously, lest it become a point of instigation rather than a deterrent. Even had O'Reilly not possessed a forceful personality, powerful public presence, tactful approach to diplomacy and keen mind, any two of

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 27-28.

¹⁵⁷ Chandler, "Aubry", 255; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 184.

these factors would likely have been enough to settle the uprising and prevent any future outbreaks.¹⁵⁸

Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly set out to Louisiana with a force that would overwhelm the rebels, either awing them into submission or defeating them without challenge. His aim was not only to suppress the revolt, but also to impress upon the revolutionaries the majesty, grandeur, and might of His Most Catholic Majesty. O'Reilly brought with him to Louisiana 2,700 soldiers sailing on 27 ships.¹⁵⁹ The force consisted of "a Battalion from Lisbon, another from the troops at Havana; eighty men from a Company of Grenadiers from each of the three militia corps at Havana; 150 artillerymen; 40 dragoons and 50 soldiers from the cavalry militia from Havana; and 150 Catalan riflemen", as well as 50 pieces of artillery, and the armaments on the ships themselves.¹⁶⁰ In contrast to the Louisiana militias, these were highly trained professional soldiers – many of the units selected were either chosen by O'Reilly himself for this duty or formed as part of the Fixed Louisiana Infantry Battalion that had been slowly growing in Havana for the use of Governor Ulloa.¹⁶¹ The Lieutenant General developed a training program under which local militia units would be trained under Spanish soldiers. He meant this force of militias to supplement the Fixed Infantry Battalion as the colony's major

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 191.

¹⁵⁹ R. E. Chandler, "Eyewitness History: O'Reilly's Arrival in Louisiana", *Louisiana History* 20, no. 3 (Summer, 1979): 317; There is quite some disagreement to the exact numbers of soldiers brought by O'Reilly. Some historians have place his forces as low as 2,000 and others have placed them as high as near 5,000. Similarly there is disagreement to the numbers of ships with estimates ranging from twenty one to twenty nine. R. E. Chandler presents a number of historian's estimates in: Ibid., 318-319. Chandler draws his numbers from a source discovered in the archives at Madrid, the "Relación en forma de diario, probablemente escrita por un testigo presencial de la toma de Luisiana por el Teniente General D. Alejandro O'Reilly en nombre de Carlos III. Nueva Orleans, 30 Agosto, 1769.", found within the *Catalogo de Manuscritos*, compiled by D. Julian Paz, Vol. I, which he translates in Chandler, "Eyewitness History", 319-324. The bulk of the other estimates fall close to his numbers, with only a few outliers pushing the extremes.

¹⁶⁰ Chandler, "Eyewitness History", 319.

¹⁶¹ Din and Harkins, 41; Chandler, "Eyewitness History", 318-319.

defensive (and policing) force. By the time O'Reilly left Louisiana (taking the bulk of his Spanish regulars with him), the Fixed Louisiana Infantry Battalion number over 500 men – 412 Spaniards and at least 100 foreign troops, mostly French.¹⁶²

In addition to these considerable forces, Governor Aubry pledged the full support of himself and his troops to O'Reilly.¹⁶³ The fighting men loyal to the Superior Council meanwhile had dwindled in the period of malaise after the initial thrilling spasm of revolution. Though there is not a reliable source of information on the total number of fighting men left to the rebels on the eve of O'Reilly's arrival, O'Reilly in all likelihood enjoyed a far greater than three to one advantage. With the disparity between the number, training, morale, and equipment of the troops between the two forces, it must have seemed obvious that O'Reilly's soldiers would have easily won any conflict.

In addition to overwhelming force, O'Reilly also brought an air of authority the Louisianans found lacking in Governor Ulloa. In terms of physical and social presence, Lieutenant General O'Reilly was everything that Ulloa was not. O'Reilly was “physically stout, well formed and taller than average” with a slight limp due to a wound received in a military action.¹⁶⁴ Of his personality it was said that he was “energetic, firm in his opinions, and confident to the point of arrogance” – the last trait tempered by his “intelligence and lofty ambition”, skill with duplicity, and years of court life in Madrid, during which he developed a “certain polish and courtesy.”¹⁶⁵ The demeanor he assumed when dealing with the rebels was

¹⁶² Gilbert C. Din, “Protecting the “Barrera”: Spain's Defenses in Louisiana, 1763-1779”, *Louisiana History* 19, no. 2, (Spring, 1978): 194-196.

¹⁶³ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 196.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 191-193.

stern and austere. Accounts attribute to him an air of solemnity, dignity, and authority. When O'Reilly had the rebels summoned to meet with him, he adopted an appearance of magnanimity bordering on sympathy.

During his meeting with the delegates from the Superior Council, O'Reilly chose his words carefully, allowing Nicolas Chauvin Lafrénière, Pierre Marquis and Joseph Milhet to believe that he would not seek to punish them for their roles in the rebellion. There is some debate as to whether this constituted some sort of deceit on his part, an act to mollify the rebels and lure them from any consideration of flight.¹⁶⁶ Given O'Reilly's willingness to use deception when necessary, and intent to prevent either another revolt or worse, an exodus to British Florida which would have robbed the colony of valuable citizens, it is entirely likely that O'Reilly meant to deceive the conspirators into believing that they had nothing to fear from his investigations, but in doing so was careful to avoid any outright lies.¹⁶⁷ Whether O'Reilly lied, evaded the truth, or spoke honestly and earnestly without intent to deceive the result was certainly in line with his wishes. A relative calm settled in at New Orleans, and none of the rebel leadership attempted to flee Spanish justice.

After a consultation with Governor Aubry, on August 21st, Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly summoned those considered to be the ring-leaders of the insurrection for their trial. O'Reilly had arrested the following twelve members of the rebellion's leadership: Nicolas Chauvin de Lafrénière, Jean Baptiste de Noyan, Joseph Villeré, Pierre Caresse, Pierre Marquis, Joseph Milhet, Jean Milhet, Joseph Petit, Balthasar de Masan, Julien Jerome Doucet, Pierre

¹⁶⁶ John Preson Moore recounts an anecdote in which a younger O'Reilly claimed to be the son of a nobleman to save his own life from an Austrian soldier on a battlefield in Italy. Rather than killing him, the soldier took the "noble" O'Reilly hostage. *Ibid.*, 193, 197. The anecdote was quoted from Rodriguez Cassado, *Primeros años*, 295.

¹⁶⁷ Texada, 31; Chandler, "O'Reilly and the Rebels", 48-50.

Poupet, and Hardy de Boisblanc.¹⁶⁸ The arrests caused a stir in the city of New Orleans, and

O'Reilly, fearing a desertion of citizens to the English colonies, ordered a proclamation stating:

In the name of the King,

We, Alexander O'Reilly, Commander of Benfayan in the order of Alcantara, Major General and Inspector General of the armies of his Catholic Majesty, Captain General and Governor of the Province of Louisiana, in virtue of his Catholic Majesty's orders, and of the powers with which we are invested, declare to all the inhabitants of the Province of Louisiana, that, whatever just cause past events may have given his Majesty to make them feel his indignation, yet his majesty's intention is to listen only to the inspirations of his royal clemency, because he is persuaded that the inhabitants of Louisiana would not have committed the offence of which they are guilty, if they had not been seduced by the intrigues of some ambitious, fanatic, and evil-minded men, who had the temerity to make a criminal use of the ignorance, and excessive credulity of their fellow citizens. These men alone will answer for their crime, and will be judged in accordance with the laws.

So generous an act on the part of his Majesty must be a pledge to him that his new subjects will endeavor, every day of their lives, to deserve by their fidelity, zeal and obedience, the pardon and protection which he grants them from this moment.¹⁶⁹

This proclamation, posted in various positions throughout New Orleans had the desired effect of calming the populace and preventing any mass panic.

The proclamation also drew a sharp distinction between the actions of those caught up in the confusion of the moment, or seduced by the conspirators, and the criminalized actions of the conspirators. In doing so the proclamation stripped the revolt of any nobility or shared purpose which its ideological grounds might have granted it. In this way the proclamation also introduced a wedge between the people who had supported the rebellion and their leadership, thus dramatically reducing the possibility of further civil disobedience in support of the leaders of the coup. The proclamation also cast a shadow of criminality and illegitimacy on the revolt as it would be recorded and thus remembered, and so potentially reduced its power as an inspiration

¹⁶⁸ Gayarré, 303.

¹⁶⁹ Alejandro O'Reilly, "Proclamation", translated and reprinted in: Gayarré, 307-308.

to any future malcontents. It is debatable, to say the least, that O'Reilly intended the proclamation to be an exercise in public relations to future generations. However it certainly was in his interests to make sure the leaders of the coup were not remembered as either heroes of the people, or as martyrs to a greater cause.

The trial was swift – lasting only two months. On October 24th, 1769, the court had reached its verdicts for the accused - all guilty.¹⁷⁰ Nicolas Chauvin Lafrénière was found guilty of abusing his position of Attorney General and inspiring the populace to sedition. His sentence was death.¹⁷¹ Felix del Rey accused Jean-Baptiste Noyan of inciting the Acadians to take up arms, spreading complaints against Governor Ulloa, urging the Superior Council to have Ulloa expelled, and refusing to accept Spanish rule.¹⁷² For his crimes Noyan also received a penalty of death. Pierre Marquis also received a death sentence for his crimes of inciting the militia to revolt against Ulloa, accepting a position in the illegal government, advocating the institution of a republic in Louisiana, and for voting to approve the “Memorial” against the Spanish administration of Louisiana.¹⁷³ Pierre Caresse likewise received a death sentence for his crimes of leading an armed militia in the revolt, his part in the drafting of the “Memorial” and for “spreading among the colonists the seeds of sedition”, and for helping to form the Bank of Monte Pio in the illegal government.¹⁷⁴ Del Rey accused Joseph Milhet of sedition, accepting a position in the new government, and soliciting money to help pay for the new government.

¹⁷⁰ Gayarré, 336-337. Pages 324-337 *Ibid.* contain a good amount of transcription from Felix del Rey's arguments regarding the guilt of the accused, and the nature of their crimes. Urrutia and O'Reilly's proclamation of the results of the trial are translated on pages 337-339.

¹⁷¹ Texada, 45, 59.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 47-48, 59.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 48-49, 59.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 49-50, 59.

Milhet also received a penalty of death.¹⁷⁵ Joseph Villeré was posthumously accused of treason and sedition as well as held accountable for his role in preventing St. Maxent from delivering money to the Acadians and Germans of the German Coast.¹⁷⁶ Had it not been for the fact that he had already died while a prisoner aboard the *Volante*, allegedly from wounds gained while resisting arrest, Villeré would have most assuredly received a death sentence.¹⁷⁷ As there were no hangmen in New Orleans at the time, the death sentences of the conspirators were to be carried out by firing squads composed of Spanish soldiers.¹⁷⁸

The rest of the accused were found to have committed less serious offenses, and did not receive the death penalty. Joseph Petit received a sentence of “perpetual exile in prison” for his crimes of speaking publicly against Spanish commercial regulations, his part in calling for the ousting of Ulloa and the forcing of the departure of the *Volante*, as well as his willingness to set out for Balize and actively resist O’Reilly.¹⁷⁹ Del Rey accused Balthasar Masan of forcing citizens to sign the Council’s petition to the King of France asking for the retrocession of the colony, refusing to assist Aubry in maintaining control, and aiding the rebels. He received a sentence of ten years imprisonment.¹⁸⁰ Julien Jeromé Doucet also received ten years for collaborating with the rebels in the drawing up of the “Memorial” and other documents as well as helping them to justify the rebellion.¹⁸¹ Joseph Milhet’s brother Jean received charges of

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 51-52, 59.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 53, 59.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 52-53.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 59; Alejandro O’Reilly, “O’Reilly to Arriaga, December 27, 1769, No. 9”, AHA, *Annual Report*, Vol. 2 Pt. 1, 105-106; Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 209-210.

¹⁷⁹ Texada, 53, 59.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 54, 59.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 54-55, 59.

speaking out against Spanish regulations, supporting the Superior Council's "Memorial", and leading a section of the militia during the actual rebellion itself. Despite the seriousness of these charges, Jean Milhet was considered a minor accomplice and received only six years imprisonment for his role in the revolt.¹⁸² Another minor accomplice, Pierre Poupet was charged with being the treasurer for the rebels after the rebellion had occurred. For this he also received six years imprisonment.¹⁸³ Pierre Hardi de Boisblanc also received a six year prison term for being a minor accomplice. Boisblanc was charged by del Rey with setting up the Bank of Monte Pio for the rebels as well as for having had a "conspiratorial association with Lafrénière and Foucault."¹⁸⁴ The prisoners were shortly thereafter sent to Havana, Cuba to fulfill their various sentences.¹⁸⁵ All of those sentenced to death and imprisonment also had their property forfeited to the Crown.

In addition to these twelve conspirators there were others who acted sympathetically to the rebellion. While not an immediate threat, those sympathizers might have produced trouble for Spanish authority in the colony. Therefore O'Reilly decided to have them removed from the colony and their return barred. The total number banished in this way was 27, including one Mr. Lessassier, who was already in France at the time and three Jews, who, in the only incident of the whole trial which brought the "black legend" to mind, were expelled for their religion, and suspect business practices.¹⁸⁶ Despite the impressive force he brought, O'Reilly fully realized that he could not reconcile the colony to Spanish rule by force alone.

¹⁸² Ibid., 55-56, 59.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 56, 59.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 57-59.

¹⁸⁵ O'Reilly, "O'Reilly to Buccareli, October 27, 1769, No. 82", *Despatches*, 16.

¹⁸⁶ Texada, 62; see also footnote 47 in Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 209; which cites the list of expelled persons found in: O'Reilly, "O'Reilly to Arriaga, December 17, 1769, No. 3", AHA, *Annual Report*, Vol. 2 Pt. 1, 103.

To help show the colonists of Louisiana the benefits of Spanish rule, Alejandro O'Reilly also brought a large amount of money with him to Louisiana. On top of the payment for his soldiers, he brought an expense account of 150,000 pesos. Jack D.L. Holmes estimates that O'Reilly spent over 260,000 pesos before ever reaching Louisiana.¹⁸⁷ O'Reilly also moved quickly to resume the flow of Spanish funds, make sure that French soldiers in service received their back pay, and sought to redeem 100,000 pesos worth of paper currency with specie.¹⁸⁸ In addition to confirming French land grants, and implementing a legal basis for land titles, O'Reilly continued Ulloa's land grant and aid programs to increase the settlement of the colonial interior. Immigrants received land as well as food, tools and money to ease their transition into the colony.¹⁸⁹ Such programs could not have helped but to allay fears over the "tyranny" of the Spaniards.

O'Reilly streamlined government operations and trimmed wasteful and inefficient spending. He reduced the number of posts with stores in the colony, and the personnel required to fully man them.¹⁹⁰ To prevent inflation from accompanying the Spanish monies into Louisiana, O'Reilly fixed the prices of food, wood and some basic services such as cartage.¹⁹¹ In addition to the regulation of inflation, these set prices helped to lessen discontent due to shortages of staple foods by preventing price gouging by unscrupulous merchants. Taxes were imposed on "taverns, inns, billiard parlors, and butcher stalls", which along with proceeds from

¹⁸⁷ Holmes, "Some Economic Problems", 524.

¹⁸⁸ O'Reilly, "O'Reilly to Buccareli, October 27, 1769, No. 81", *Despatches*, 15.

¹⁸⁹ Holmes, "Some Economic Problems", 524-525.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; O'Reilly, "O'Reilly to Arriaga October 7, 1769", AHA, *Annual Report*, Vol. 2 Pt. 1, 97-99.

¹⁹¹ Holmes, "Some Economic Problems", 524.

renting royal property, paid for “the conduct of city business.”¹⁹² Funds were also generated through the levying of duties on anchorage at New Orleans and “special taxes” on imported brandy.¹⁹³ To revive the flagging colonial trade O’Reilly suggested that the colony be allowed to operate under relaxed trade restrictions and granted open trade with Spain and Havana, provided the appropriate duties were paid. By January of 1770, Louisianans were able to export and import duty free from the port of Havana.¹⁹⁴

In addition to trade reforms, O’Reilly spent a considerable amount of time reforming the legislative, executive and judicial functions of the government. To begin with, as soon as his fleet could be sailed up from New Orleans, O’Reilly arranged for a suitably impressive ceremony in which, after volleys of cannon fire and a parade of his soldiers, he lowered the French flag and raised the Spanish.¹⁹⁵ This act ended the “government of two heads” and left no doubt as to the seriousness of the Spanish intent – from that point onward, there would be no grounds for confusion as to which Royal Majesty owned Louisiana.¹⁹⁶

Perhaps O’Reilly’s largest step along the path to unifying the colonial government was the dissolution of the Superior Council and creation of the Spanish Cabildo in New Orleans on November 25, 1769. O’Reilly intended to institute the Cabildo system in the colony as soon as possible, and had minutes of the organization recorded as early as August 18th, when he first arrived in the city – well before the system was implemented and the body had its first official

¹⁹² Ibid.; Fortier, 7.

¹⁹³ Holmes, “Some Economic Problems”, 524.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 525.

¹⁹⁵ Louisiana Cabildo, *Records and deliberations of the Cabildo, 1769-1803*, vol., 1 no. 1, trans. Adolf Baum, (New Orleans: City Hall Archives, 1939), 1-2.

¹⁹⁶ Richard E. Chandler, “O’Reilly and the Rebels: Report to Arriaga”, *Louisiana History* 23, no. 1 (Winter, 1982): 51.

meeting on December 1st, 1769.¹⁹⁷ O'Reilly needed the Spanish instrument of law and governance implemented to phase out the laws and customs of France and usher the Spanish legal system into the colony.¹⁹⁸ The Cabildo also served as a much preferred alternative to the Superior Council, an administrative and legislative body which had proven itself both ineffective in governing and dangerous through its members' involvement in, and the Council's position as a French institution during, the Revolt of 1768.

After dissolving the Superior Council O'Reilly began integrating the colony into the Spanish legal system. He appointed two of the lawyers he had used in the trials of the insurgents: the prosecutor Felix Del Rey, and Judge Advocate Manuel José de Urrutia to draft the collection of reforms, regulations and compilations of legal abstracts commonly known as the Code O'Reilly.¹⁹⁹ This code was then made available in both the Spanish and French languages in order that the citizens could learn their new laws.

O'Reilly realized it was critical that he impart an understanding, if not appreciation, for Spanish law and custom in the Louisianan subjects if the colony was to be successfully reconciled to Spanish rule. To that end, and to the end of securing colonial loyalty, O'Reilly placed five of the wealthier planters who had remained loyal during the rebellion on the Cabildo as *regidores*, or councilors.²⁰⁰ A sixth seat went to Denis Braud, the French printer who had gone to trial for his printing of the memoirs of the Superior Council.²⁰¹ This integration of

¹⁹⁷ Gilbert C. Din, "The Offices and Functions of the New Orleans Cabildo", *Louisiana History* 37, no. 1 (Winter, 1996): 6; Louisiana Cabildo, vol., 1 no. 1, 3-5.

¹⁹⁸ Miriam G. Reeves, *The Governors of Louisiana*, (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2004), 25; Gilbert C. Din and John E. Harkins, *The New Orleans Cabildo: Colonial Louisiana's First City Government, 1769-1803*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 49, 53.

¹⁹⁹ Din and Harkins, 48, 50.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 54; Din, "The Offices and Functions", 9.

²⁰¹ Din and Harkins, 54.

interested and respected locals, he hoped, would help to attach the new government to the people it governed and place governance in the trust of respectable people who had a vested tie to the welfare of the colony through the value of their personal property.

Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly turned over the administration of Louisiana to Governor Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga December 1st, 1769.²⁰² Having effectively put down the rebellion, and restored order to the colony in his time there, O'Reilly left Louisiana with distinction. His blend of the threat of overwhelming military force, judiciously used punishment, amnesty, and meaningful reform could serve as a text on how to effectively pacify collective political violence. O'Reilly replaced the French laws, official language, commercial policies and administrative forms – cutting Louisiana's ties to France significantly, if not completely. This was reinforced by the introduction of Spanish as the official language, as well as the pomp and ceremony that O'Reilly used to solidify the Spanish regime as legitimate. He used selective punishment and forgiveness as well as incorporating the local elite into the Spanish governmental system to effectively isolate and criminalize the rebel faction – turning the basis for revolt back from the collective to the personal.

His legal and commercial reforms energized the colonial economy, alleviating that as a source of discontent.²⁰³ It is important to note that these changes were made with a large degree of transparency allowing the colonists to see how Spanish rule benefitted them – a marked change from the quiet work of Governor Ulloa. The increased budget from Spain that O'Reilly took with him also acted to lessen the discomfort and fears of the populace of Louisiana. Finally, the considerable military force he left behind provided a deterrent to further incidents of

²⁰² Reeves, 25.

²⁰³ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 218.

rebellion. This is not to say that French sympathy, and a certain degree of distrust of the Spaniards, was not left in the colony. After the poor start with Governor Ulloa, and the rebellion, neither Spaniard nor creole could entirely trust the other. However, O'Reilly's mix of repression through implied force, enforced laws and concession through amnesty and meaningful reform went a long way toward unifying those two factions within the colony to a peaceful, if not always completely happy whole.

CHAPTER III

CARONDELET'S TENUOUS PEACE

The peace and stability brought to Louisiana by Lieutenant O'Reilly would not last for long. Twenty three years after the rebellion under Ulloa, economic woes, natural disasters, pressure from the United States, ethnic tension and revolutionary ideologies brought the possibility of collective political violence to the administration of Francisco Luis Hector, Baron de Carondelet. Carondelet announced his arrival as military and civil governor of the province of Louisiana on December 29, 1791.²⁰⁴ The strength of his familial connections and his command of the French language from his childhood, considered important given the amount of French still spoken in the colony, may have accounted in part for why he was chosen for the governorship of Louisiana.²⁰⁵ Carondelet was also a skilled administrator who had through "ability and unremitting exertions and zeal, risen to rank and importance in the service of Spain."²⁰⁶ Despite his qualifications and troubles, Carondelet has received a fair amount of criticism as a colonial leader.

The historiography on colonial Spanish Louisiana largely castigates Carondelet for overreacting to the threat of revolution and damaging the diplomatic position of Spain versus the United States (especially with regards to his Indian policies).²⁰⁷ Arthur P. Whitaker found him

²⁰⁴ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 2, 163.

²⁰⁵ Carondelet was born in Noyelle, Flanders, to a Burgundian noble, Juan Louis Nicolas de Carondelet, Viscount of Laugle, and Rose Plunkett of Dunsany. His marriage to Maria de Castaños y Aragonri in 1777 provided him with ties to a wealthy and influential family. Reeves, 31-32.

²⁰⁶ Gayarré, 312.

²⁰⁷ Arthur Preston Whitaker in particular was one of Carondelet's harshest critics. Whitaker believed that Carondelet was in many ways the worst man for the job of Governor of Louisiana. Among his faults: Carondelet spoke no English (he was Flemish, and chosen in part for his command of French), lacked geographical and cultural knowledge of Louisiana and America, lacked competent advisors, did not have the temperament to take advice, held too strongly to his convictions, and greatly preferred direct action (particularly military action) to administration;

shortsighted and militaristic. Ernst Liljegren and later Gilbert C. Din criticize Carondelet for lacking prudence, character, good judgment, and being unable to accurately discern the scope of the various dangers the colony faced.²⁰⁸ Perhaps to a certain extent this is a just assessment of him. Baron Carondelet enacted a number of measures meant to save Louisiana for the Spanish crown, but in the end some of his choices hurt the Spanish effort. In any event, he certainly did not single handedly save Louisiana for Spain. Ultimately that would have required significant Spanish support, and the colony did not produce enough to justify the massive expense Spain would have to have laid out to keep her.

It must be considered that Carondelet did what he could to assuage the populace of his colony during troubled times by providing them access to necessary staples. Also, it should be said in his defense that there is ample evidence that Carondelet recognized that economic dependence and demographic ties were the forces that would pull Louisiana from Spain and to the United States. However he was limited by his resources and was constantly distracted from attending to the long-term viability of the colony by immediate threats. One must keep in mind that for the duration of his stay in Louisiana Baron Carondelet was able to successfully keep a large degree of control, and though there were periods of unrest, a large scale popular revolt never broke out in the colony.

Throughout Baron Carondelet's governorship, Louisiana's distance from Spain and close proximity to the United States made the colony difficult to control. Though there were significant internal threats to security, as well as European intrigues; the colony's proximity to

Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The Spanish American Frontier: 1783-1795: The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1927), 153-154.

²⁰⁸ Ernst Liljegren, "Jacobinism in Spanish Louisiana, 1792-1797", *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXII (1939): 47-97; Gilbert C. Din, "Father Jean Delvaux and the Natchitoches Revolt of 1795", *Louisiana History* 40, no. 1 (Winter, 1999): 6-7.

the relatively free Americans was almost always a factor to some degree. Carondelet found a number of causes to fear for American invasion, or colonial revolt spurred on by American aid. Particularly in the Kentucky territory and along the Georgia frontier, American settlers looked to expand into territory claimed by Spain. At the same time ‘Citizen’ Edmund Genet was agitating (from America) for the French ‘habitants’ of Spanish Louisiana to revolt - promising American assistance.²⁰⁹ Jacobin propaganda printed in Philadelphia found its way into New Orleans by ships sailing from American ports. Carondelet’s spies repeatedly advised him that America might invade, and that his defenses were weak in the north of the colony.²¹⁰ This pushed him to try to settle northern or sparse areas of the colony such as New Madrid, Natchez or Nogales, and make risky alliances with native tribes.²¹¹ Especially during the wars with France (1793-1795) and Great Britain (1796-1808) – when Louisiana needed her more as a trade ally, America was a powerful force in shaping the nature of Spanish policy.

Despite a lack of commitment to invasion by the American Government (which opposed any kind of invasion into Spanish Louisiana), there were a number of reasons that Baron Carondelet believed that an invasion of American frontiersmen very well could be imminent.²¹² Foremost among those was that occasionally Americans *would* plan to invade Louisiana. In 1797, Senator William Blount of Tennessee was involved with such an invasion plan. Blount,

²⁰⁹ Edmund Charles Genet, “Liberty, Equality”, 1793. The pamphlet is translated and reprinted in its entirety in: Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 3, 56-60.

²¹⁰ Liljegren, 60.

²¹¹ Whitaker, 158. The Indian Confederation consisted primarily of the 4 southern tribes: Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Cherokee; Celia Barnes, *Native American power in the United States, 1783-1795* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 2003), 166.

²¹² The United States government intended to wait out the Spaniards. Jefferson and Washington both firmly believed that they could use the settlement of European wars to achieve their diplomatic goals with Spain: securing the disputed territory between the thirty-first and thirty-second parallels, and more importantly the right of deposit in New Orleans. John R. Spears, *A History of the Mississippi Valley: From its Discovery to the End of Foreign Domination* (New York: A.S. Clark, 1903), 370; *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, collected and edited by Paul Leicester Ford, volume V, (New York: GP Putnam Sons, 1904), 74-75.

with American frontiersmen, British, and Indian allies, intended to lead a three pronged invasion into New Madrid, New Orleans and Pensacola.²¹³

As far as Carondelet was concerned, that was neither a new, nor isolated incident. Among the more important of the earlier invasion threats was Citizen Edmund Charles Genet, official minister to the United States from the French Republic during 1793. Genet was a loud and forceful proponent of an American invasion of Louisiana. He wanted to stage such an invasion alongside a simultaneous revolt of the French *habitants*. French Foreign Minister Pierre Lebrun dispatched Citizen Genet to the United States with secret orders to foment rebellion within Louisiana and to promote American filibusters into the Spanish colonies of Florida and Louisiana.²¹⁴ Genet's 'secret' invasion raised the specter of insecurity that haunted Carondelet for the majority of his term.²¹⁵

Carondelet's concern over Genet stemmed in part from a pamphlet that Genet published in America. This pamphlet, entitled *Liberty, Equality. The Freemen of France to their brothers in Louisiana: 2d year of the French Republic*, compares the economic misfortune of the Louisiana colony under the Spanish regime to the success of the free men in the "province of Kentucky... rapidly increasing its population and wealth, and already presaging a prosperity which causes the Spanish government to tremble."²¹⁶ Thus establishing the reasons for a justified ire with the Spanish regime, the pamphlet moves on to prompt immediate action, calling

²¹³ John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier 1513-1821*(Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press,1970), 205.

²¹⁴ J.C.A. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1766-1821* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 37; Frederick J. Turner, "The Origin of Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas", *The American Historical Review* 3, no. 4 (Jul., 1898): 655.

²¹⁵ Lebrun may have intended Genet's mission to be secret, but the minister was very open about it.

²¹⁶ Edmund Charles Genet, *Liberty, Equality*, 1793. The pamphlet is translated and reprinted in its entirety in Liljegren, 56-60.

on the French ‘habitants’ to remember their mother country and be ready to rise against the Spaniards. Lest they be afraid for the success of his cause, Genet promises “that the republicans of the western portion of the United States are ready to come down the Ohio and Mississippi in company with a considerable number of French republicans, and rush to your assistance under the banners of France and liberty”.²¹⁷

In broad strokes, Genet’s pamphlet encapsulated the entirety of Carondelet’s problems. It not only trumpeted the threat of American invasion (though that invasion never materialized); it also showed that the highly regulated Spanish colonial system was perceived to be stagnant when compared to the free system of the United States’ frontier. This was exactly the kind of ideological hook that could catch hold with the discontented and spark another revolt among the French “habitants”.

Alongside the appearance of the pamphlet were reports from Spanish spies that Genet was massing a small army of Americans to march into Louisiana. These reports indicated additional reasons that Genet was providing to the discontented on the American side of the frontier.²¹⁸ Throughout April of 1794 Carondelet wrote secret letters to the Captain General of Cuba, Don Louis de las Casas alerting him to the creation of a French army in America, led by “Jorge Clark Commander-in-chief of the French against the upper settlements of Luisiana”; Jorge Clark was the American General George Rogers Clark.²¹⁹ Carondelet included with this

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Raymond J. Martinez, *Rousseau: The Last Days of Spanish New Orleans* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003), 45-46.

²¹⁹ “Carondelet's brother-in-law, Luis de las Casas, was governor of Havana and captain-general of Louisiana and the Floridas from 1791 to 1796.” Whitaker, 154; George Rogers Clark was a revolutionary war hero and prominent citizen of Kentucky, who involved himself in a number of the Western intrigues. Clark, feeling jilted by the US government, tried to secure land along the Mississippi by appealing to Spain directly, through the Yazoo company schemes, and when those fell through attached himself to Citizen Genet’s 1793 plot, and further French plots in 1798. *The Louisiana Purchase: A Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 2002, s.v. “Clark, George Rogers (1752-1818)”; Francisco Hector Louis, Baron de Carondelet, “To his excellency, Don Louis de las Casas,

letter a translation of Clark's proposal offering men who would fight with him at least one thousand acres of land. The stated purposes of the invasion were "a reduction of the Spanish posts of the Mississippi, for the purpose of opening the navigation and commerce of said River, and giving liberty to its inhabitants".²²⁰ These reports gave Carondelet a plausible motive for a Franco-American alliance – navigation of the Mississippi (America) and liberty for the French inhabitants of Louisiana (France). Sent alongside that report was a translation of a report given by a Chickasaw chieftain, Ugula Yucabe. That translation reports a massing of white men, either Americans or Frenchmen, who were constructing boats to carry men and pieces of artillery down the Mississippi river to New Orleans.²²¹

The shared border between Spanish Louisiana and the United States acted to erode Spanish authority, economic importance, and cultural cohesiveness in much the same way that the Spanish/British border did in the 1760's. Throughout the 1790's the United States gained a significant advantage over Spain in terms of trade, immigration, lands gained through diplomatic concessions, and economic dependence. Importantly, the Spaniards were not as successful as the United States in recruiting and securing the loyalties of the frontiersmen. To use A.P. Whitaker's terminology, Spain and the United States were waging a war of incorporation along the frontier borderlands, and the United States was winning.²²² That is, the Spanish colonial model could not withstand direct competition with the more robust model of trade and expansion fostered by the Americans. Carondelet's administration – a remote arm of a distant centralized

Apr. 7, 1794", General Archives of the Indies - Papers from the Island of Cuba. Translated and reprinted in: Louis Houck, *The Spanish Regime in Missouri, V.II* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1909), 25-26.

²²⁰ George Rogers Clark [translated Jorge Clark], "Cincinnati, January 25, 1794", *Ibid.*, 26.

²²¹ Ugula Yucabe [also translated Ugulayacabe], "Report dated February 23, 1794", *Ibid.*, 27.

²²² Whitaker, 13.

power, Spain, could not compete with America - a local and decentralized (thus more flexible) power.²²³

The American threat to Spanish colonial Louisiana was not just a military, or ideological one, it was a demographic and economic one. Baron Carondelet recognized this. However, whether he was focused on military defenses or civil administration, he did not have the means to turn that tide. In fact it seems that many of the short term measures necessary to keep the peace served to strengthen Louisiana's reliance on Americans and thus pull her away from Spain. This reliance on the nearby foreign power only served to exacerbate other problems of control which Carondelet's administration routinely encountered.

While not as significant a split as that between the French and Spanish populations of Louisiana, an "internal border" was developing in Louisiana between the Spanish, habitant, and American settlers. By the time of Carondelet's governorship, the Louisiana colony had already absorbed a number of American immigrants. Prior to Carondelet, Governor Miro instituted a generous immigration policy designed to bring Americans into Louisiana, "Hispanize" them, convert them to Catholicism and secure their allegiance to Spain, such that they would defend her even against other Americans.²²⁴ Miro's immigration policies saw initial success. The rate of increase threatened to overwhelm the existing free population of the colony. Americans made up a large number of the white immigrants who entered Louisiana between the years 1782 and 1792. According to David Weber's numbers, American immigrants into the colony "helped

²²³ John G. Clark delves into the differences between the Spanish model of colonization which relies on centralized power in cities and the English model which focused more on disperse hinterland development in: John G. Clark, "The Role of City Government in the Economic Development of New Orleans: Cabildo and City Council, 1783-1812", in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley 1762-1804*, ed. by John Francis McDermott, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 133-134; Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 356.

²²⁴ Gilbert C. Din, "The Immigration Policy of Governor Esteban Miró in Spanish Louisiana", *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (Summer, 1970): 156, 159-160; Gilbert C. Din, "Spain's Immigration Policy in Louisiana and the American Penetration, 1792-1803", *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (January, 1973): 255.

swell its population from some 20,000 in 1782 to 45,000 a decade later.”²²⁵ Immigrants from that period would have accounted for half the population of the colony by 1792. However that growth would not last. By 1803, the population of the colony had grown only by another 5,000 persons.²²⁶

By the mid 1790’s Miro’s plan was failing for a number of reasons. Miro’s immigration plan required a relatively peaceful period to concentrate the energies of the state on importing and converting the Americans.²²⁷ Spain did not enjoy any such period of peace for long during Carondelet’s term. Furthermore American immigrants had a tendency not to assimilate to Spanish rule. This again, as in the 1760s, created an “internal border” of ethnic allegiances within the colony. While recognizing that colonists leaving the American western frontier would weaken the United States, Carondelet distrusted the new American immigrants, whom he considered to be republicans. Early in his administration he acted to curtail the rather generous immigration policies of Governor Miro.²²⁸

Carondelet’s writings show ample evidence that during the first few years of his rule he believed that American immigrants posed a significant threat, not in their strength of arms, but in the rapidity with which they settled, and the virulence of their ideas. In the aforementioned report to the Duke de la Alcuia, dated November 24, 1794, he refers to them as a “vast and restless population, progressively driving the Indian tribes before them and upon us, seek[ing] to possess themselves of all the vast regions which the Indians occupy between the Ohio and

²²⁵ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 281.

²²⁶ Gilbert C. Din, “Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790”, *Louisiana History* 11, no. 3, (Summer, 1970): 211-212.

²²⁷ Din, “Spain’s Immigration Policy”, 255.

²²⁸ Baron Carondelet, “Carondelet to Floridablanca, February, 25, 1792, No. 82”, *Despatches* Vol. 9, 317.

Misisipi [sic] rivers, the Gulf of Mexico and the Apalache mountains”.²²⁹ Once the Americans were allowed to cross the Mississippi and Missouri rivers they would spread colonies throughout the Spanish holdings, enticing Spanish subjects into disloyalty by “offering them their help and protection for the securing of independence, self-government and self-taxation”.²³⁰ If they are allowed to spread into Louisiana, American frontiersmen “will flatter them [the inhabitants] with the spirit of liberty, [and] the hope of free, extensive and lucrative commerce”.²³¹ Carondelet’s eventual restrictions on written materials coming from abroad show that he also recognized that American (and French) cultural contact was a threat to the colony. Carondelet feared that contact with Americans would breed fervor for liberty, and that contact with the French would renew old ties. In both instances the “Spanish” character of the colony, and thus Spain’s hold on her, would be lessened by the other influences and the potential for political unrest would increase.²³²

In addition to border tension and distance from Spain, Louisiana suffered from a number of economic troubles – many similar to those of the 1760’s. Parts of the colony could not be considered self sufficient. Food scarcity continued to be a problem that plagued Carondelet throughout his term as governor, just as it had the governors before him and would the governors after. Under the administration of Bernardo de Galvez, the rarity of food caused a Cedula to be passed in 1782 which allowed trade to the United States for flour and supplies, and lessened the

²²⁹ Francisco Hector Louis, Baron de Carondelet, “No. 129”, Archivo General Central in Alcalil de Henares, Spain; Estado, Legajo 3897, copy held in the Draper Collection of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Translated and reprinted in: American Historical Association, “Carondelet on the Defense of Louisiana, 1794”, *The American Historical Review* 2, no. 3 (Apr., 1897): 474-505.

²³⁰ Francisco Hector Louis, Baron de Carondelet, “No. 129”, AHA, *Annual Report*, “Carondelet on the Defense”, 478.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Liljegren, 4.

trade restrictions with France.²³³ That opening of trade to Americans made Baron Carondelet quite nervous because he feared that American spies would make use of the freedom of travel in the province, as alleged spy Don Midad Mitchel did in 1793.²³⁴ Even more than American spies, Carondelet feared that rumors were true that such trade with Americans would give slaves an opportunity to escape to America, where they would be given freedom and that specie would be traded out of the province.

Another issue for Carondelet was the perpetual scarcity of money backed by precious metals. The desire to keep what little coin was in the colony was so great that exportation of specie from New Orleans was, in fact, illegal except when it was used as payment for slaves.²³⁵ From time to time the colonial administration introduced paper money as a stop-gap substitute in order that some form of currency would be available for trade. Traders valued such paper money very little compared to specie and would avoid using it when they could do so. There are letters by the trader Juan Batista McCarty in 1784 noting that the cost of flour or African slaves doubled when they were purchased with paper money. He further asserted that there was no reason to accept paper currency. McCarty advised accepting bills of exchange to be honored at the treasury at Vera Cruz rather than deal with any non-specie backed currency from Louisiana.²³⁶

Such paper money issuances led to rampant inflation. In 1791 there was a petition to the Cabildo to have the monies allotted to prisons upped by ½ real per day to account for inflation.²³⁷ Likewise in April of 1792 bailiffs appointed by the Cabildo complained that their salaries were

²³³ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 233.

²³⁴ Carondelet, "The Arrest of Mitchel - 1793, Secret Letter no. 8", General Archives of the Indies, Seville, Papers from the Island of Cuba, translated and reprinted in Houck, 4-8.

²³⁵ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 235.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 236.

²³⁷ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 2, 144.

no longer sufficient and were a cause of disrespect, which was impeding their ability to carry out their duties.²³⁸ On June 13th of 1794 the head constable had to request that several cabarets be opened in order that the fines and taxes from those cabarets pay the salaries for more deputy constables.²³⁹ Many of these cabarets were closed not because of the threat to public order or the morale and morals of the general population. Rather they were closed because there was a fear that escaped and rebellious slaves were using the cabarets as black markets to purchase munitions and liquor at night and successfully avoiding the slave patrols. That these would be re-opened is a telling indication of both how dire the need for more deputy constables must have been as well as an indication of a complete lack of money in the colony with which to pay them.²⁴⁰

A shift in agriculture was part of the economic instability. Planters were replacing indigo and tobacco with cotton and sugar as the main colonial exports. In the ten years between 1784 and 1793, the production of indigo bound for Europe dropped from 220,000 lbs to less than 5,000 lbs.²⁴¹ A number of conditions contributed to the decline. Blights, vermin and/or flooding devastated colonial indigo crops in the years 1793, 1794, and 1796.²⁴² This combined with decreases in the costs of East Indian indigo, general European preferences for the same, the increasing costs of slaves – of which a large number were needed for indigo production--

²³⁸ Ibid., 212.

²³⁹ Ibid., 142.

²⁴⁰ The closing of the cabarets occurred during the administration of Miro, in May of 1791. Ibid., 143-144.

²⁴¹ Thomas Fiehrer, *The Baron de Carondelet as Agent of Bourbon Reform: A Study of Spanish Colonial Administration in the Years of the French Revolution*, New Orleans: Tulane University, dissertation, (1977), 435-436.

²⁴² Ibid., 436.

combined to cement the downward spiral of indigo as a viable commercial crop.²⁴³ Baron Carondelet considered, and attempted, several schemes to incentivise Louisiana indigo but the market was dropping out from under the crop, which must have made the effort seem some Louisiana planters to be foolish and thus potentially damaging to the prestige and authority of his office.²⁴⁴

Tobacco exports, likewise, saw a huge drop when the Spanish tobacco monopoly stopped buying in 1790. There were a number of reasons for the collapse of the Louisiana tobacco market. The quality of Louisiana tobacco was inferior to that of Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean Islands. Planter fraud led to conflicts with Spanish regulators. For example, General Wilkinson maneuvered to break the Louisiana monopoly of tobacco with Spain, opening Spanish markets to tobacco from Kentucky. Finally, a building surplus in New Orleans led to a decline in the demand for new leaf there – reducing the amount purchased by the state monopoly from 2,000,000 lbs. to a mere 40,000 lbs. in 1790.²⁴⁵ Such a relatively rapid decline ruined farmers who had speculated heavily on tobacco cultivation, betting that the market would keep rising (or even remain relatively stable). Many who lost big on tobacco correctly blamed the Spanish commercial policies for their reversed fortunes.

The rise of cotton and sugar as replacement exports took time. Sugar did not really take off until the mid 1790's after the proven success of Etienne de Borés granulation process in 1795 and the collapse of the Caribbean sugar plantations of St. Domingue. Early European monopolies limited the import of sugar to that produced in the Caribbean colonies, thus limiting

²⁴³ Jack D.L. Holmes, “Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas”, *Louisiana History* 8, no. 4 (Autumn, 1967): 346-349; Fiehrer, 435-436.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 440.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 441.

the viability of Louisiana sugar. It was not until the mid 1790's that many of these restrictions were lifted, due in part to the Haitian revolution which limited the production of Caribbean sugar and led to the immigration of many experienced sugar planters from the island to Louisiana.²⁴⁶ However, even after sugar began to replace indigo as a crop there were significant barriers to sugar planting which prevented many failing indigo planters from making the transition. Sugar planting required a large initial outlay of capital for the slaves to work the fields, as well as the equipment and fuel necessary to process the cane (often cords of wood, or, once in operation, the pressed remnants of unused cane), and the cane shoots themselves.²⁴⁷ This outlay, and the limited season for sugar growing and production (the available sugar cane varieties would not stand frost either during growth or before grinding) prevented many planters from making the indigo to sugar transition.

Cotton was not an effective crop until the mid 1790's, after the adoption of Eli Whitney's cotton gin and the increased immigration of American settlers and slaves into Spanish Louisiana.²⁴⁸

In sum, the agricultural disruption caused by a shift in the relative value of commercial crops lead to discontent in city and country alike, as farmers and merchants both suffered under weight of export crops with shrinking markets – leading to widespread financial insecurity.

Farmers often expressed their discontent “in the form of dissatisfaction from Spanish rule”, and felt that a French acquisition of the colony would not only allow them to explore

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 444-445.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 446.

²⁴⁸ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 217.

markets denied to them by the Spanish mercantile system, but also absolve them of prior debt and allow them the freedom to re-tool their plantations to take advantage of sugar or cotton.²⁴⁹

The colony also had to contend with food production that was hardly sufficient to its needs. John Clark, in *New Orleans: An Economic History, 1718-1812*, calculated that the Missouri country produced 38,000 to 45,000 bushels of wheat a year in the 1790's. This was enough wheat to generate around 7,000 to 9,000 barrels of flour.²⁵⁰ Of this amount, farmers would have shipped perhaps half to New Orleans for consumption. Given that New Orleans' population alone was around 8,000 and the lower valley held between 35,000 to 40,000 souls during the 1790's, the amount of flour produced was problematic. That amount of flour was not nearly enough to satisfy the demands of the city, to say nothing of the rest of the colony.²⁵¹ Such shortages created discontent – hunger being a significant impediment to happiness.

War with France prompted the colonial officials to press the king for more trade rights with America. Previously the province had maintained trade with France, and a stable trade ally was needed for the colony in order to prevent the colony from running low on critical supplies and staples, and to ease tensions caused by the sudden loss of trade. During the war with France, America was considered a 'Friendly Nation' to Spain, allowing it to be a trade partner for the duration of the war under the trade allowances of the edict of June 9th, 1793.²⁵² The supplies from America came with a cost to the Governor. As mentioned, Carondelet was very suspicious of potential expansion by American frontiersmen and the increase in trade with America made Carondelet more nervous about the security of the colony.

²⁴⁹ Fiehrer, 438.

²⁵⁰ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812* 211.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 211-212.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 102.

The close attention Spanish officials normally paid to persons and written materials imported into Louisiana stood in contrast to the rather lax enforcement of shipping laws concerning the import of foodstuffs. In addition to food shortages, New Orleans was almost always short of supplies. To satisfy the need for goods, colonial officials were willing to ignore the entry of smugglers, particularly the smuggling of taxable food into New Orleans.²⁵³ In July of 1791 a Royal Decree pardoned those in the colony accused of smuggling.²⁵⁴ It is likely that the attachment to (if not outright dependence on) American shipping as the main source of sustenance of the colony was in the long term a greater problem for Spanish retention of the colony than republican frenzy spurred on by Jacobin propaganda. That trade created ties to America; at the same time ties to Spain were weakening through the loss of Spanish trade. Stronger ties to Spain would have helped prevent discontent from being politicized as it was in the 1768 revolt. Furthermore, direct external trade to foreign powers also contributed to the colony being a net loss for Spain. Illegal and duty-free trade out of New Orleans was a financial blow to the colony. Charles Gayarré demonstrates this deficit by citing “a dispatch of the Intendant Rendon, dated on the 28th of April, 1795, that the expenses of the province had amounted in 1794 to \$864,126, and that the custom-house revenue had not given more than \$57,506.”²⁵⁵

Devastation from natural disasters as well as man-made disasters deepened the economic hole that New Orleans, the economic center of the province, was in. On Oct. 10, 1794 Attorney General Don Juan Bautista Labatut wrote to the king asking for aide to the province. He cited a number of troubles. Amongst those troubles were: repeated scarcity from war, hurricanes, the

²⁵³ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 2, 148; Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 239.

²⁵⁴ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 2, 148.

²⁵⁵ Gayarré, 371.

Cuban administration's confiscation of silver meant for the province, little to no trade to Europe, poor trade to the United States, and no goods coming from the other Spanish American colonies.²⁵⁶ On December 19th of that same year, Labatut wrote the king again asking for a loan of 1,000,000 pesos. He cited the following reasons that the loan was justified: five hurricanes, floods too numerous to count, two great fires and the sudden withdrawal of paper money. He claimed that those factors had greatly weakened commercial production, nearly to the point of destruction, and lead to an imminent threat of mass immigration from the colony.²⁵⁷ Not all of these great disasters happened during the governorship of Baron Carondelet; however he certainly had to deal with their effects, particularly the heightening of distress and unrest amongst the citizens of New Orleans and the colony as a whole that accompanied and followed economic depression.

To some planters there was an upside to the disasters that plagued the colony. Some disasters brought the planters and colonial administration to work more closely together. Slaves were often loaned out to the governor to work in repairing damage caused by natural disasters such as damage to levees due to flooding.²⁵⁸ Some planters preferred this as a method of disposing of slaves who were caught committing crimes. Planters could loan their slaves out to the governor for periods of time, rather than risk losing the investment to deportation.²⁵⁹ This arrangement, in a way turned the normally stressing condition of natural disasters (at least hurricanes, and floods) to one that fostered a tighter relationship between the administration and one of the more important classes of colonists.

²⁵⁶ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 3,160-162.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 180.

²⁵⁸ Din and Harkins, 252, 256.

²⁵⁹ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 172.

For the most part, however, Louisiana planters preferred to have free reign to run their plantations and slaves as they saw fit. This preference to run their own affairs, running against the wary policies of Carondelet, may itself have engendered feelings of resentment that the Governor may have interpreted as Jacobin leanings. Such resentment of government interference, as well as observations of the American success to the north, and sympathies to their French ties may have indeed bred sympathy in some for the Jacobin cause – although that sympathy would always be tempered by the anti-slavery views espoused by some of the Jacobins. Baron Carondelet hinted in the 1795 decree that he believed there were enemies of the crown and his personal political enemies at work undermining his efforts.²⁶⁰ Carondelet believed these personal enemies to be the French, and Jacobins in the northern part of the Louisiana province, near Ohio, and along the Mississippi river, men who could not defeat Spain in the open. He believed they used local sympathizers and agent provocateurs to slander him and claim that he maneuvered to position slave against master and actively hoped for a slave revolt in order to spread dissatisfaction with him amongst the habitants.²⁶¹ That belief was not entirely without merit.

There were, in 1793, one hundred and fifty subjects of the colony who petitioned the French government to reclaim Louisiana. In March of that year a delegation of fifty merchants from New Orleans sent deputies to the French convention with gifts. Rumors circulated that this same group of men conspired to have Baron Carondelet removed as Governor-General of the colony.²⁶² These petitions circulated in a period of exuberant popular mania for all things French which occurred in the city of New Orleans in the early 1790's. At that time, the colonists

²⁶⁰ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 1,18.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 14.

²⁶² Liljegren, 54.

celebrated their French heritage in a manner which occasionally seemed threatening to the Spanish governor.²⁶³

Carondelet also had to contend with rural discontent. The Natchitoches revolt led by Father Delvaux is an extreme example of the occasional rural unrest in Carondelet's Louisiana, as well as of some weaknesses of the syndic system for maintaining order. Ernest Liljegren's take on events holds that Father Jean Delvaux, a parish priest in Natchitoches had as his flock a number of old French families that had "degenerated" in status during the Spanish rule of Louisiana.²⁶⁴ Delvaux developed a penchant for negatively commenting on Spanish rule, and promoting the French. Eventually word of this reached back to New Orleans. For inciting the populace of Natchitoches to anti-Spanish sentiment, Baron Carondelet requested the replacement of Delvaux, and the Vicar-General granted the governor's request. Delvaux's flock refused to accept his relocation out of the parish, and when the local syndic, François Bossie, refused to sign their petition to prevent Delvaux's removal, Delvaux's supporters informed him (Bossie) that they would no longer recognize him as syndic.²⁶⁵ They took to harassing those in the community that would not sign the petition, and split the town into two opposed factions. One faction was composed of the supporters of Delvaux, who adopted revolutionary ideology and agitated in the streets; in the other were the loyal citizens who were largely afraid to leave their homes.

When Carondelet denied the parishioners' petition they formed a drunken "*Compagnie des Revenants*" and demonstrated against Spanish rule – singing revolutionary songs and loudly

²⁶³ Ibid., 51, 53.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 66-67.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 68.

criticizing both Carondelet and the syndic system.²⁶⁶ In H. Sophie Burton & F. Todd Smith's *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier*, the impetus for the creation of the *Revenants* is revealed to be the negative impact that the Spanish cancellation of Natchitoches' tobacco contracts had on the young men within the area, rather than republican teachings by Delvaux – though Burton and Smith do acknowledge that Delvaux was a contributing factor to the unrest. Many planters in the Natchitoches area were still heavily vested in tobacco after many other areas left the crop, and suffered a great economic hardship when the Spanish demand for Louisiana tobacco plummeted in 1790. Many farmers blamed Spanish officials for this sudden decline in their personal fortunes and the *Revenants* were a group of young men expressing their discontent with the economic environment and what they believed to be Spanish mismanagement of the Louisiana colony.²⁶⁷

Patrols raised by the surrounding syndics did not have the confidence of the area, and could not maintain control. The *Revenants* harassed, insulted and beat those with whom they disagreed with seeming impunity. Even after Carondelet had Delvaux removed he still remained a source of agitation in the community by writing letters to his supporters urging them to continue their efforts against Spanish authority and claiming that the French were on their way to reclaim the colony.²⁶⁸ Fearing for his reputation and that these events would damage the case he was making for using Louisiana settlers as a barrier between the United States and Mexico, Carondelet decided to quell the rebellion. On January 14, 1794, Captain Antonio Argote of the

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁶⁷ H. Sophie Burton & F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 137-139.

²⁶⁸ Liljegren, 73.

Baton Rouge militia took a company of fifteen men and easily restored order in Natchitoches , with only a few punitive measures taken against the former *Revenants*.²⁶⁹

The Natchitoches rebellion serves as an example of how local discontent wholly unrelated to the ideology of the French Revolution borrowed its slogans. Delvaux's discontent was personal, or perhaps professional. Economic troubles due to the sudden lack of Spanish interest in tobacco produced in Natchitoches and the removal of Delvaux caused most of the discontent felt by his followers.²⁷⁰ Like the 1768 coup, the Natchitoches revolt was directed by a small, yet influential segment of the local population. And similar to, and even more exaggerated than the 1768 coup, there was no clear agenda after the removal of the local source of authority.²⁷¹ Delvaux simply wished to resist the Spanish authority until the time that the French arrived.

Historian Ernst Liljegren took Carondelet's (allegedly wildly exaggerated) reports of the Natchitoches demonstrations as proof of wide-scale discontent and political violence. After examining Liljegren's sources, historian Gilbert C. Din came to a different conclusion about the incident. Comparing Carondelet's reports to his superiors with those to his subordinates led Din to the conclusion that in many reports to those superiors Carondelet exaggerated the opposition he faced, perhaps in an attempt to ensure more resources and minimize any possible reprimand for failure.²⁷² Carondelet's exaggerated reports led Liljegren to overstate the problems in

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 75-76; Din, "Father Jean Delvaux ", 20-21.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 8.

²⁷¹ Liljegren, 78.

²⁷² Din, "Father Jean Delvaux", 31-32.

Natchitoches and the rest of the rural Louisiana countryside as well as Carondelet's inability to deal with the problems at hand.²⁷³

More than the French military, Baron Carondelet feared French ideological influence. Carondelet had good reason to fear the spread of Jacobinism in the city of New Orleans as well as in remote areas such as Natchitoches. In May of 1795 songs defaming him, and calling for the guillotining of notables within the city, including the governor, were heard at night in the streets.²⁷⁴ The anthem of the French republic, the 'Marseillaise' was played alongside other Jacobin songs in some theatres.²⁷⁵ At the same time the French phrase 'Cochon du lait', meaning 'suckling pig', began to see use as a derogatory rhyming slang for Carondelet in the streets of New Orleans.²⁷⁶ There are mentions in the deliberations of the Cabildo on May 2nd 1795 of "rumors and calumnies against the person of his lordship". The rumors complained that Carondelet purposefully kept the city in a state of defense as a pretense to enforce more draconic and tyrannical laws against the people, and furthermore that he used methods proscribed by law to investigate and punish those who insulted the persons who governed. Carondelet vehemently denied these rumors and vowed to spare no expense to investigate them.²⁷⁷

Arson had gotten to be a problem in New Orleans. Some feared that rebellious slaves were behind the conflagrations of 1788 and 1792 that burned a large portion of the city.²⁷⁸ In

²⁷³ Ibid., 6-7.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, Vol. 4 No. 1, 20.

²⁷⁵ Carondelet, "A Decree for Louisiana issued by the Baron of Carondelet, June 1, 1795", ed. and trans. by James Padgett, *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 20, no. 3, (July, 1937): 4.

²⁷⁶ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 154.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

²⁷⁸ Jack D.L. Holmes, "The Abortive Slave Revolt at Pointe Coupée, Louisiana, 1795", *Louisiana History* 11, no. 4, (Autumn, 1970): 343.

1795 arsonists set a series of small fires around the city of New Orleans. These came at the same time as a resurgence of Jacobin sentiment, expressed through “revolutionary songs...and incendiary papers” appearing in the city. Jacobin mobs used the fires as gathering places, and Carondelet feared that attempts to disperse them would instigate violent action.²⁷⁹ For the same reason he felt that policing such areas was dangerous. This is not to say that he abandoned all attempts to control the situation; Carondelet posted a reward of 500 pesos to any person who could provide information leading to the capture of the arsonist or arsonists.²⁸⁰

All of this concern about Jacobinism and Carondelet’s rule came to a head in 1795 during the months following the April 9th report of a planned slave revolt in Point Coupée. A group of Point Coupée slaves, perhaps inspired by French republican propaganda originating from France and Saint Domingue, plotted to revolt and burn their master, Julien Poydras’ estate.²⁸¹ Once the fire had started, the slaves planned on ambushing and killing the neighboring planters who would rush to Poydras’ assistance. The conspirators then would take up the arms of the killed planters and launch a large revolt, killing both colonial whites and slaves who refused to join their rebellion.²⁸²

Once alerted to the danger, Militia Captain Alejandro LeBlanc reported to his post commandant Guillermo Duparc and sent a patrol to uncover more information.²⁸³ The initial patrol was not successful in doing so. However, Duparc launched his own defensive measures, including an increase of armed patrols. Local planters armed themselves in preparation for a

²⁷⁹ Liljegren, 62-63.

²⁸⁰ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 1, 28.

²⁸¹ Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718-1868*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 28.

²⁸² Hall, 344.

²⁸³ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 155.

revolt. Not long thereafter two slaves, Juan Batista and María Luisa, provided specific information regarding the planned slave insurrection. Two Tunica tribeswomen, Francisca and Magdalena, confirmed their story – fearing that should the slave revolt succeed, they would suffer retribution alongside the slaves.²⁸⁴ Duparc, with the aid of Lt. William McIntosh, who had been dispatched with a company of militia to assist, began a thorough search of the slave cabins. This uncovered more conspirators, and some of their arms. Planters and syndics uncovered the shocking revelation that there were whites among the Point Coupée conspirators as well.²⁸⁵

Throughout April and into May the numbers of uncovered conspirators grew. Commandant Duparc began to believe that the conspiracy was an attempt by “indigenous people amongst the pro-French, anti-Spanish elements of the colony or outside agitators” to either overthrow the colony or disgrace governor Carondelet.²⁸⁶ By May 15th authorities had arrested 60 conspirators: 57 slaves and 3 whites.²⁸⁷ After a series of trials the conspirators received a variety of punishments. Advisor to the intendancy Manuel Serrano sentenced twenty three to twenty six of the slaves to hang.²⁸⁸ Another twenty-two were sentenced to 10 years service in the *presidio* system of fortresses. Nine of the slaves received shorter sentences of 5 years in the *presidios*. Serrano had one slave and one of the whites banished. The other two whites received sentences of 6 years *presidio* duty.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 156, 158.

²⁸⁶ Holmes, “The Abortive Slave Revolt”, 348.

²⁸⁷ A complete list of those implicated in the revolt, with notes concerning race and ownership, can be found in: Ibid., 359-362.

²⁸⁸ There is some discrepancy regarding the number of slaves that were executed. Records of the event signed by Carondelet indicate twenty six, while a later dispatch indicates twenty three. Ibid, 352.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 351-352.

During the later stages of the investigation there was some disagreement between Carondelet and the New Orleans Cabildo over which of them should have handled the matter, and what actions were to be taken to secure the colony. The Cabildo sent representatives to Point Coupee to investigate at the same time that Carondelet sent a small military detachment for the same purpose.²⁹⁰ Carondelet viewed this act with some suspicion. On May 1st, Carondelet took care to explain his actions to the Cabildo with emphasis on how he strove to secure the colony. Given that Carondelet wrote, secretly, to Luis de la Casas in Cuba that he believed some on the Cabildo to be Jacobin sympathizers, the explanation of his actions that he presented to the Cabildo may have been an attempt to protect his reputation from Jacobin slander in that body.²⁹¹

Baron Carondelet issued a decree on June 1st encapsulating his thoughts on a variety of issues as well as a defense of his actions. This decree starts out with Carondelet's thoughts on the current political climate: "The astonishing success, with which some disaffected, restless enthusiasts, have promulgated injurious reports, tending to introduce distrust, and jealousy, between Government and the habitants, that would inevitably expose the Province to all the Horrors that have ruined the French Colonies, has engaged us to form Regulations, calculated to re-establish throughout this Province good order, Police and Public tranquility."²⁹² This passage begins to outline the suspicions that Baron Carondelet had that there were conspiracies behind the social problems in the Province. Slaves were not simply driven into revolt by mere dissatisfaction with their lives; they were incited by European events. Crimes were not committed by the hungry and desperate, they were products of propaganda from "restless enthusiasts".

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 350.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Carondelet, "A Decree for Louisiana", 6.

The June 1st decree, which also broadened the role of the syndics, and tightened the police duties, had a section on slave treatment. Carondelet ordered slave owners to exercise extreme care over the conduct of their slaves and to make sure that they were kept contented and subordinate. The stated concern was that the recent war might have put them in a state ready to be incited to rebellion. The goal was then to “banish from their minds the notion of acquiring a liberty that has caused the effusion of so much blood to those of St. Domingo.”²⁹³ A set of 31 rules and guidelines for the treatment and conduct of slaves followed this declaration. They were meant to keep the slaves contented enough not to want to rebel, yet not indulged enough to begin to be tempted to insubordination. The 1795 decree presented again a philosophy of moderation, and while far more restrictive than was usual before the Pointe Coupee revolt, it still to a certain extent called for appeasement of the slaves. As such, Carondelet’s policies were still not the most popular with planters, who openly blamed Carondelet and the lenient slave policies before the revolt for it.²⁹⁴

Baron Carondelet understood the dire need for defense, security, and measures of control in Louisiana well before he issued the June 1st decree of 1795. Early in his tenure, he implemented a number of safety and security measures meant both to reinforce Spanish control and to protect the colony against the machinations of its enemies: the French, Americans, British, Jacobins, criminals and rebellious slaves. In October of 1792 he called for the property owning citizenry of New Orleans to put money together for the purchase of reflectors to be installed on street lamps. That would have allowed for much better lighting in the city and reduced crime.²⁹⁵ More street lamps, ordered from Philadelphia, arrived in April of 1794. Carondelet instituted a

²⁹³ Ibid.,13.

²⁹⁴ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 153, 161.

²⁹⁵ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 3, 24-25.

nine real per annum tax on the chimneys of the city to pay for city lighting. He was concerned about burdening (or agitating) the poor, and taxing the chimneys would limit the tax to reasonably wealthy citizens.²⁹⁶ In order to root out any potential spies or agents provocateur Carondelet made it the law that any immigrants to the colony after 1790 had to swear allegiance to Spain. Any person who refused to do so had a choice of being deported to the United States or the Danish Islands.²⁹⁷

Baron Carondelet also tried to be responsive to the complaints and requests of the subjects.²⁹⁸ In particular, he responded to the feeling of many of the important planters and merchants that they were being left out of the administration of the colony in favor of outsiders from Spain. He had already re-introduced the Syndics in 1792. Now, on April the 25th 1794, Governor Carondelet wrote to the King asking for the appointment of more locals to judgeships.²⁹⁹ This would not only have given Carondelet more judges under him, but also would have helped to garner for Carondelet support from the local community by involving more of the local elite in government.

To the same end, Carondelet, as part of the Decree of 1795, more clearly defined the roles of the Syndics.³⁰⁰ The Syndics were a French institution in which a series of men were chosen from the locals, stationed every three leagues or so and asked to act as reporters and

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 128, 147. At least those were the reasons given for levying the new tax on chimneys. Perhaps, though, one shouldn't make too much of this altruism. It stands to reason that only those wealthy enough to have homes, and thus chimneys, would be able to pay the 9 reals per year asked of them.

²⁹⁷ Liljegren, 54.

²⁹⁸ Clark, "The New Orleans Cabildo", 142-143.

²⁹⁹ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 3, 129.

³⁰⁰ Din and Harkins, 119-120.

intermediaries for the post commandants.³⁰¹ These Syndics were to act as a kind of front men to the commandant of the district in which they lived. The local habitants were, under threat of punishment, to report any crime they had knowledge of to the nearest Syndic. They also were to bring to the attention of the Syndic “all seditious reports, or such as tend to alarm and disturb the minds of the people...under the penalty of one Hundred Dollars”.³⁰² This move was calculated not only to reinforce order by creating a tighter network of information, but also (as has been noted above) to engender in the habitants a sense of belonging to the system by increasing their involvement in the system. At the same time the Syndic was under orders to report to the commandant any meeting of eight or more habitants intending “to treat upon Public Affairs.”³⁰³ The Syndics thus also acted as informants within the habitant community, introducing an element of risk to potentially seditious gatherings similar, perhaps, in effect to living in a panopticon like environment. Syndics were also expected to be agents of information dissemination in order that the population received trustworthy and controlled information rather than hearsay and rumor, thus in theory preventing agitating news from spreading and alarming the habitants.³⁰⁴

Carondelet was keenly aware that information control was about more than preventing unfavorable rumor and reports from circulating; he knew that he needed to put his own message out to the people. The reinstated French Syndic system in part was intended for the dissemination of “good intelligence” to the people, in order that the populace had the “correct”

³⁰¹ Carondelet, “A Decree for Louisiana”, 6.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid., 8.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 11.

idea of what is going on in the colony.³⁰⁵ But the Baron went further. In March 1794 he spearheaded the publication of the first newspaper printed in Louisiana. *Le Moniteur de la Louisianne*. It began its print run in March of 1794, on Louis Duclot's New Orleans press and was unabashedly an organ of Spanish government.³⁰⁶

Carondelet attempted to use these means of information to portray the French revolution as a disorganized mass mob action, and to suggest that if the revolution spread to the colony it would be followed by "looting and deprivations." Furthermore he asserted that any French uprising in the colony would bring about a slave revolt like the one that had occurred in Saint Domingue. Early in his reign this propaganda was largely successful and fear of slave revolt helped to sway the large planters against openly supporting revolution. Those planters feared at first that the slaves would be set free by the French government following a successful transition of the colony, and this kept them loyal to the Spanish government to an extent.³⁰⁷

Another component to Carondelet's ideological defense planning was screening traffic to keep out propaganda materials, spies, and provocateurs. Particularly after the slave revolts in St. Domingue, Carondelet was fearful of outside agitators in Louisiana. This fear was based on "the astonishing success with which some disaffected restless enthusiasts have promulgated injurious reports tending to introduce distrust and jealousy between government and the inhabitants that would inevitably expose the province to all the horrors that have ruined the French colonies".³⁰⁸ Even before the slave unrest, with circulars like Genet's "*Liberty, Equality*" pamphlet,

³⁰⁵ Carondelet, "A Decree for Louisiana", 600-601.

³⁰⁶ Liljegren, 60; Gayarré, 336; Jack D.L. Holmes, "Louisiana in 1795 the Earliest Extant Issue of the "Moniteur De La Louisiane", *Louisiana History* 7, no. 2 (Spring, 1966): 133-134; *Le Moniteur de la Louisianne* was occasionally subject to inaccuracy and exaggeration in its reporting, going so far in one issue to cause the Natchez district Governor, Manuel Gayoso de Lemos to complain to Baron Carondelet.

³⁰⁷ Liljegren, 61.

³⁰⁸ Carondelet, "A Decree for Louisiana", 595.

Carondelet found ready cause to blame unrest on outside factors; perhaps distracting him from legitimate internal failings, which if corrected might have contributed to the success of the colony.³⁰⁹

Another major issue Carondelet had to face was the importation and conduct of slaves. Since the August 22nd, 1791, revolt in St. Domingue, many in Louisiana, including Carondelet, justifiably feared a slave revolt occurring in the colony – spread to Louisiana by the importation of African slaves “tainted” in the French islands by revolutionary thought or brought by the house slaves of fleeing Haitian planters.³¹⁰ To prevent such a revolt from occurring in Louisiana, he felt it was necessary to enforce the Spanish slave system as it was written – which would prevent slaves from becoming desperate enough to revolt. In doing so he constantly struggled against the planter class, including some members of the Cabildo, who felt that he was intruding too often in the affairs of the planters and their treatment of their property.³¹¹ The large planters did not appreciate this meddling. Many of them resented the relatively lax slave codes of the Spaniards, and longed for the older French code.³¹² Others objected to the myriad requirements of the Royal Cedula on the Education, Treatment, and Occupations of Slaves passed in 1789, and felt that they would be ruined by the expense of keeping up with them.³¹³ Almost all of the planters resented the intrusion of the Spanish governor into the social structure of the plantation on behalf of slaves – that kind of meddling lost the master of the plantation a certain degree of

³⁰⁹ Edmund Charles Genet, *Liberty, Equality*, 1793. The pamphlet is translated and reprinted in its entirety in Liljegren, 56-60.

³¹⁰ David Barry Gaspar, and David Patrick Geggus, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 178-180.

³¹¹ Din and Harkins, 181.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 153.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 170.

autonomy, status, and upset “the symbolic relationship of planters and their families to the slaves themselves.”³¹⁴

As much as the planters feared an increase in the expense of maintaining slaves, they also feared that the importation of slaves would be restricted. Restricted importation would mean a limitation on their ability to grow their businesses and profits. Those fears were completely justified. Over the course of Carondelet’s reign as governor, he placed numerous and repeated restrictions on the importation of slaves.

Carondelet announced his *bando de buen goberno* (proclamation of good government) on January 22nd of 1792. One of the proscriptions of the bando prevented the importation of Caribbean slaves in order to prevent potential contact with slaves who may have had exposure to the revolutionary ideas of the French West Indies or Jamaica.³¹⁵ Within three years, this part of the decree ceased to be observed and the year 1795 saw a marked increase in imported slaves.³¹⁶ So on February 19, 1796 Baron Carondelet again temporarily banned the introduction of slaves into the colony being “neither Spanish nor foreign”.³¹⁷ On February 22nd of that same year, the Attorney General of the Cabildo, along with the Secretary, inspected a ship with a cargo of fifty Africans that was at the harbor. They went to test the Africans on board for “savagery,” – that is still “native” in appearance and mannerisms-- and if they showed any sign of not being savage then the shipment was to be refused.³¹⁸ The implication here is that it was not the savagery, or a

³¹⁴ Fiehrer, 421, 425.

³¹⁵ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 134.

³¹⁶ Jean-Pierre Leglaunec, “Slave Migrations in Spanish and Early American Louisiana: New Sources and New Estimates”, *Louisiana History* 46, no. 2 (Spring, 2005): 196.

³¹⁷ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 1, 92.

³¹⁸ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 2, 93.

supposed base nature of the African that was feared but evidence of contact with rebellious slaves or exposure to the ideology of freedom.

Bans on the importation of Africans limiting import to only the “savage” or “brute” periodically recur. There are reports in the Cabildo records on July 16th, 1792 of suspicion of the introduction of African slaves from Guarico in violation of the February 10th laws forbidding any but “brutes” to be brought in. Similarly there was a motion put forward in the Cabildo to ban the introduction of Africans from any place where there had been a revolt. The resulting ban prevented the importation of some slaves that were already on ships at New Orleans, causing considerable loss to the slave trader involved. Indeed the financial risk of importing slaves into the colony could be quite high. The penalty the Cabildo proposed for the importation of undesirable slaves was a 200 pesos fine as well as the cost of returning the slaves to their point of origin, and of course, the acceptance of responsibility for any damage or detriment caused by the slaves.³¹⁹

June 20 of 1795, the Cabildo discussed the possibility of blocking the importation of slaves into the colony who were not completely illiterate for the duration of the war with France.³²⁰ The fear seems to be that there would be a spread of revolutionary propaganda to slaves as the new imports were introduced into the slave populations of the colony’s plantations. In short, *any* literate slaves were being viewed as potential carriers of an infectious revolutionary sentiment in much the same way that slaves from the Caribbean islands where slave revolts took place were.

³¹⁹ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 3, 9. 200 Pesos was roughly half the cost of a slave, which at the time ranged from 450-500 pesos, estimated by merchant J.B. MaCarty in: Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 236.

³²⁰ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 1, 36.

The value that the slaves had for the merchants and planters was a mitigating factor in how far the restriction on slave importation was enforceable. Planters were able to, and frequently did, petition to have the embargo lifted for them. These cases were examined by members of the Cabildo under orders of the governor, reported on, and accepted or denied. For example, on June 17, 1796, Don Alejandro Baudin petitioned to import so-called “savage negroes”. His grounds were that Baron Carondelet had allowed certain individuals to do the same on January 1st of 1796, and as Spain was no longer at war with France, there would be little risk in allowing him to do so as well. Attorney General Gabriel Fonvergne argued against the petition. In his words “peace with the republic of France neither diminishes nor removes the dangers when the criminal intention of negroes is not destroyed and annihilated.” The petition was judged to be “against the interests of the King and colony.”³²¹

Carondelet did not stop his reforms with restrictions on the importation of slaves. He also sought to move the colony into compliance with newer Spanish laws governing the treatment of slaves. The slave laws of prior administrations – based on the French Code Noir - were less restrictive to the planters than Carondelet’s new regulations. His deviation from the French laws proved the basis for some of the resentment he suffered at the hands of the New Orleans planters and merchants.

There were two major sets of laws that formed the Spanish policy during the colonial administrations before Carondelet’s: the *Recopilacion de leyes de los reynos de las Indias* (Summary of the Laws of the Governance of the Indians)³²² and the *Real Cedula de su majestad*

³²¹ The petition itself is found in: Ibid., 122. The presentation of findings by the attorney general and recommendations are found Ibid., 130-133.

³²² Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 35.

sobre la educacion, trato y ocupaciones de los esclavos (His Majesty's Royal Decree on the Education, Treatment, and Work of the Slaves).³²³

The Code Noir, as it was practiced in French Louisiana, was to the slave, in many ways a harsher and more restrictive system with fewer protections than the systems introduced later by the Spaniards.³²⁴ Under French rule, the authorities only enforced those sections of the code that were found favorable by the large planters. One example of this is that while the Code Noir technically allowed the freeing of slaves with permission of the Superior Council, in practice the Superior Council rarely gave permission to any planter seeking to free a slave, and there was no incentive under the code for a planter to do so. Thus the Code Noir stood in stark contrast to the Spanish system of slave management with regard to manumission – a component the Spaniards felt was necessary as a “safety valve” to allow slaves the hope of freedom and thus reduce the chance of slave revolt. Slaves could purchase their own freedom if they had the money and a record of good conduct.³²⁵ Another example of the relative restrictiveness of the Code Noir, is that while the slave had the right to complain against his/her master under the Code, it forbade a slave's testimony against the master, which rendered that complaint practically useless.³²⁶ Nor was education of slaves (religious or otherwise) a concern of the typical French Louisiana planter, though religious indoctrination was given lip service in the Code. The Spanish system was, again in theory, much more lenient to the slaves.

³²³ Ibid., 125.

³²⁴ Light Cummins, “Louisiana as a French Colony”, *Louisiana A History, 4th ed.*, edited by Bennett Wall, (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 2002), 51-52.

³²⁵ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 240-241.

³²⁶ Thomas Ingersoll, “Slave Codes and Judicial Practice in New Orleans, 1718-1807”, *Law and History Review* 13, no. 1, (Spring, 1995): 31-33

However, the implementation of the Spanish laws of slave ownership was not immediate when the Spaniards gained control of the colony. The planters operated more or less under the Code Noir until Alejandro O'Reilly began attempting to enforce the laws of Castille, the *Recopilacion de leyes de los reynos de las Indias*.³²⁷ The Spanish system recognized that slaves possessed identities within the law, as opposed to being mere property. Therefore the Spanish slave laws provided many more rights to slaves, including a process for *coarticion* (self purchase).³²⁸

While O'Reilly was keen to bring the French planters into compliance with the Spanish slavery laws, his successors were not effective at doing so for a number of reasons. In the earlier years of the Spanish regime, remaining relatively lax on slave regulation was a necessary step. The French habitants already feared a tight and controlling Spanish rule, and the local administrators did not need planters agitating again for retrocession or revolt.³²⁹ Because of that laxness, the planters became more entrenched in their own customary methods of slave control. Also the Spaniards, even at the height of their military presence in the colony, simply did not have the resources and manpower to properly police the plantations for violations of the slave laws. Furthermore, the plantation owners were the elite of the colony. The Spanish regime needed their cooperation if not their consent to govern effectively. This need for the cooperation of the planters continued to inhibit the strict enforcement of slave laws until the administration of Carondelet. Carondelet's fear of rebellion caused him to risk alienating the large planters by meddling more directly and persistently in their affairs. Moreover, he had new legislation on slave rights to guide him.

³²⁷ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 35.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 222.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

In 1789 king Carlos IV of Spain issued the *Real Cedula de su majestad sobre la educacion, trato y ocupaciones de los esclavos*, superseding the *Recopilacion de leyes de los reynos de las Indias*.³³⁰ This decree dictated that the plantation owners provide chaplains for their slaves, permit slaves to marry, and allow them days of rest on holy days. The decree also allowed slaves recourse against abusive masters. They could file claims against them with the governor of the colony who would come to judgment and potentially enforce a settlement of some kind.³³¹

The Real Cedula arrived in Louisiana by 1790, but was not strictly enforced for some time. One reason that it wasn't immediately enforced was a fear at that time that strict enforcement would drive the planters to yearn for the "old ways" and sympathize more with the French, eventually causing problems in the colony. As a measure to prevent this kind of thinking, in the early years of the French revolution the Spanish administration played on the planters' fears that the revolution, if it spread to the colony, would cause the slaves to rise up.³³² The planters needed the assistance of the Spanish government to control the slaves and prevent a slave revolt. To a large degree that was effective and the large planters became valuable allies in governing the populace.

However, in 1791 Baron Carondelet, contrary to the practices of his predecessor Esteban Rodriguez Miro, began to enforce the Cedula.³³³ The planters of Louisiana were uncomfortable with the requirements of the Cedula and wrote letters asking for it to be rescinded. They argued that the new regulations were a danger and would encourage slaves to file false claims against

³³⁰ Ibid., 125.

³³¹ Ibid., 125-129.

³³² Ibid., 223.

³³³ Ibid., 124-128.

their masters. Furthermore they argued that the costs of providing chaplains for the slaves would be prohibitive, as would requirements that male and female slaves be segregated from each other unless they were married. Planters also contended that the idleness of slaves on the rest days allotted in the Cedula was a danger, as hard work left the slaves too fatigued to conspire against them.³³⁴

Planters and peers on the Cabildo attempted to influence Carondelet to believe that the slaves were constantly threatening to revolt. The influence of the planters heightened his fear of rebellion, but did not immediately sway him to their way of thinking on the issue. Thus the goodwill between Carondelet and the planters was damaged by what they viewed as his insistent and dangerous leniency toward the slaves.³³⁵ Carondelet was cognizant of the coolness in relations between the government and the planter class, and had cause to fear that some of the habitant planters might have been driven to sympathize with American adventurers, or the republican French. However, regardless of any attempt to sway him to their point of view, and the threat of driving his old allies to become new enemies, until 1795 Carondelet remained determined to provide the slaves the rights granted to them by Spanish law. Carondelet did not oppose the planters out of altruism, but because he felt that more complacent slaves would be less likely to revolt. The Point Coupee slave rebellion of 1795 changed his mind about that. In the aftermath of the Point Coupee rebellion he cracked down heavily on slave rights and freedoms.³³⁶ However this reversal of position did not re-endear him to the large planters, many of whom blamed him for the unrest.

³³⁴ Ibid., 125-129.

³³⁵ Liljegren, 64.

³³⁶ Ibid., 66-67.

After the 1795 slave revolts at Point Coupee, Carondelet believed, perhaps even more strongly, that he was besieged by “enemies of Spain” who “desperate because they could not defeat [Spain] in open in Ohio and along the Mississippi river mouth...slander Carondelet and claims he keeps slaves against master and wants a slave revolt.”³³⁷ While the propaganda in question may not have necessarily been American it would most likely travel from an American port – entering the Louisiana colony either down the Mississippi River or from Philadelphia into the port of New Orleans. Thus it appeared to the Spaniards that the mode of entry, if not the origin of the materials, made the propaganda problem at least in part an American one. Because this was the case, Baron Carondelet knew he had to control the American border to effectively control his populace. The baron also recognized a need for internal controls, as has been noted.

Carondelet restricted travel and required visitors to check in with local commandants, receiving passports to travel on. Travelers would be stopped on the roads and if they did not have the appropriate passports for themselves, their transport and their servants they could face arrest and interrogation.³³⁸ Spanish travel restrictions were infamous to the point that when one American traveler experienced a journey with few troubles, he found the event noteworthy enough to write a letter for publication in a newspaper.³³⁹ Ships, likewise, were searched for printed materials which may have been against the interests of the crown. Such a search brought the arrest of Thomas Mitchell, who possessing drawings of the Mississippi, was suspected of

³³⁷ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 1, 13-16.

³³⁸ Carondelet, “A Decree for Louisiana”, 597.

³³⁹ “Extract of a Letter from Pensacola, Dec. 1, 1792”, *North-Carolina Journal, published as The North-Carolina Journal*, Iss. 44, (5/15/1793), 3.

being a spy and sent back to Spain – but only after Baron Carondelet gave consideration as to whether or not Mitchell could be used as a Spanish agent.³⁴⁰

These restrictions were not without some cost. The reinstatement of the old French syndical system and the strict control of travel must have served as a reminder of the restrictions that living under a monarchy imposed. This may have chafed the sensibilities of the relatively liberal French colonists in New Orleans, as well as potentially discouraging the immigrants that Carondelet eventually wished to lure from the relative freedom of America.

Perhaps the key step Carondelet took to limiting revolutionary zeal was to play up the fear of slave revolt. Carondelet made efforts to convince the planter class that once the revolutionary spirit was spread amongst the white citizenry, it would catch on with the slaves and cause a bloody uprising.³⁴¹ By alienating a majority of the planters from the more radical merchant class of New Orleans, Carondelet kept the French ‘habitants’ from consolidating a power block which could be used against him. By the time of the 1795 Pointe Coupee revolt, fears of slave revolt had largely convinced the planters to fear, rather than sympathize with Jacobin demonstrators.

Carondelet was capable of shrewd displays of force as well. On April 5th 1793, there is mention in the Cabildo records of an order forcing the Butchers of New Orleans to move their slaughterhouses away from their then current position on the outskirts of the city to make way for new fortifications.³⁴² Those new fortifications must also have been a reminder to those living in the city of Spanish authority. The same order also called for the forest around New Orleans to

³⁴⁰ Thomas Mitchell was also referred to in some letters and records as Don Midad Mitchell or Thomas Medad Mitchell; Carondelet, “Letter of Carondelet in regard to formation of American Settlement on Mississippi below New Madrid – 1793”, Houck, 4-8.

³⁴¹ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 1, 15-16, 91.

³⁴² Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 3, 60.

be cleared. This would allow the cannon that were to be placed in the new fortifications to fire on open ground. As an added benefit the removal of the woods would take away a hiding place from the “savage negroes” and “men of bad character” who were thought to congregate there at night.³⁴³ The clearing of the woods around New Orleans would also allow for better defense of the city against an Indian, American or the French invasion, thus easing tensions by removing sources of unease and doubt about the effectiveness of the Spanish protection of the colony.

Defensive measures against the French were of particular importance to Carondelet because since the French Revolution rumor of French retrocession travelled through the colony.³⁴⁴ The outbreak of war with France was announced in June of 1793, shortly after the Baron’s appointment, along with a notice that it was expected of the citizenry of the city to contribute to Spain’s efforts to defend and secure the colony.³⁴⁵ Following the declaration, in July, Carondelet ordered the Cabildo’s administrative staff to attend masses for the success of the King’s army to be held on Sunday, August 11th, arguably in part as a display of public loyalty, and ritual reassurance of belonging for the people.³⁴⁶

Native tribes played an active part in Carondelet’s plans to harden the border between Spain and the United States. In a letter of 1795 to Don Louis de las Casas, Baron Carondelet directly cites the assemblage of a force to invade Louisiana by “Monsieur Genet” as his reason for seeking an alliance with the Osage Indians.³⁴⁷ Such an alliance would prevent Genet and

³⁴³ Ibid., 24-25.

³⁴⁴ Baron Carondelet, “Carondelet to Senior Don Lus de la Casas, April 14, 1792, No. 21”, *Despatches Vol. 9*, 439.

³⁴⁵ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 3 No. 3, 73.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 78.

³⁴⁷ Francisco Hector Louis, Baron de Carondelet, “To his excellency, Don Louis de las Casas, Dec. 2, 1795”, Houck, 100-102.

Clark from using the 1,200 Osage warriors against Spain as well as provide those warriors for Spain's use against invading Americans.³⁴⁸ Building such Indian alliances was central to Carondelet's plan for the defense of Louisiana. On his eastern frontier, Carondelet actively courted Indian tribes both to build a buffer between Louisiana and to counter American Indian agents.³⁴⁹ In October 1793, He called together the Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw and Cherokee to Nogales to form a defensive alliance – the “Indian confederation”.³⁵⁰ At the time he encouraged his Indian allies to act aggressively toward the American frontiersmen – keeping them from moving further toward Spanish holdings.

Though it must have seemed a necessary activity for defense early on, Carondelet's Indian alliances eventually came to be recognized as a strategic misstep. Carondelet's Indian policy ultimately proved fiscally untenable, as the cost of Indian allies proved too large a drain on Spanish coffers. By 1794 gifts to Indian allies was costing Spain 55,000 pesos annually, an amount that was roughly 10% of the annual budget for the colony, and very nearly the equal to the annual customs house earnings.³⁵¹ This money could have found other uses to help control the growing unrest in New Orleans. At the same time the Indian raids that Carondelet's policy fostered lessened the ability of Americans to transport goods that were desperately needed in New Orleans, damaging both the colony's financial well being and the morale of those in the city. Finally, Carondelet's Indian allies also proved to be an embarrassment in diplomacy

³⁴⁸ Francisco Hector Louis, Baron de Carondelet, “To his excellency, Don Louis de las Casas, Dec. 2, 1795”, General Archives of the Indies - Papers from the Island of Cuba. Translated and reprinted in: *Ibid*, 100-102; Carl H. Chapman, “The Indomitable Osage in the Spanish Illinois (Upper Louisiana), 1763-1804”, in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley 1762-1804*, ed. by John Francis McDermott, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 288, 298.

³⁴⁹ Stagg, 36.

³⁵⁰ Weber, 284.

³⁵¹ Weber, 282-284; Woodward, 151.

between the United States and Spain. The need Spanish diplomats felt to distance Spain from aggressive Indian actions may have contributed to the ease of which the US obtained its terms with the Treaty of San Lorenzo, in 1795.³⁵²

Important as he felt they were, Carondelet did not rely entirely on native alliances for defense. He also recognized the importance of securing the Mississippi River to prevent contraband as well as any potential transport of invading troops. By 1793, Carondelet, receiving reports that the Americans would use the Spanish war with France as an opportunity to seize the Mississippi river, took actions to fortify both the river and the north of the colony.³⁵³ A thorough and revealing summary of his defensive plans can be found in his November 24, 1794 letter to his excellency Manuel Godoy, the Duke de la Alcuia.³⁵⁴ Carondelet's plans for securing the north called for creating a number of new fortifications as well as repairing many of the current Spanish fortifications along the river. To man these fortifications, he wished to increase the Spanish defense of the north with at least an extra regiment of soldiers. Carondelet recruited men from Mexico, though those recruits were unreliable and many deserted. Such was his need that Carondelet was not above using conscripted prisoners from Cuba to serve in infantry

³⁵² The Treaty of San Lorenzo (also known as Pickney's Treaty), signed October 27, 1795, ceded the 31st parallel to the United States, and set the Western border of the US at the Mississippi River, the treaty also gave the US right of deposit in New Orleans, and committed both sides to restraining their Indian allies from violence. *The Louisiana Purchase: A Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 2002, s.v. "San Lorenzo, Treaty Of (1795)"; Whitaker, 169-170.

³⁵³ Weber, 285; Gilbert C. Din, "'For Defense of Country and the Glory of Arms': Army Officers in Spanish Louisiana, 1766- 1803", *Louisiana History* 43, no. 1 (Winter, 2002): 32.

³⁵⁴ Manuel Godoy, the Duke de la Alcuia was the current Prime Minister of Spain. Francisco Hector Louis, Baron de Carondelet, "No. 129", in AHA, *Annual Report*, "Carondelet on the Defense", 474-505. Extracts from the same letter were reprinted in: Houck, 9-17. While the translated text varies little, there is considerable difference in the attributed date of the letter and the addressee. The AHA translation (by W. F. Giese, University of Wisconsin) dates the letter Nov. 24, 1794, and addressed to "Ex. Senor Duke de Alcuia.". Houck's translation dates 1793 (no month or day provided), and is addressed to "The Count de Aranda". Hereafter footnotes to this letter will cite the translation provided in *The American Historical Review* only.

regiments along the northern frontier of the colony (usually after those conscripts served time building fortifications in the south of the colony).³⁵⁵

Carondelet also found the colony's defenses lacking in the south. In 1792, the total number of Spanish regular troops in New Orleans was 766 men - 297 from Louisiana and 469 from Havana. During times of stress, Carondelet requested additional troops from Havana. This was the case in June of 1793 when he used Cuban soldiers to reinforce New Orleans in the face of rumors that French sympathizers might move against the government. Despite demonstrations earlier that year, and the recent signing of a petition asking France to retrocede the colony, the Cuban soldiers helped assure that the June announcement of war with France was met with little opposition.³⁵⁶

As valuable as his regular troops were, Carondelet recognized that his permanent forces were not sufficient to defend the city, and so increased the militia in New Orleans.³⁵⁷ He also raised a kind of auxiliary militia with citizens from "Baton Rouge, Point Coupée, Opelousas, Feliciana, Galveztown and Attakapas", who were instructed to be ready to report to New Orleans within five days of notice. He valued these militias for their knowledge of the local terrain and communities and skill with guerilla tactics.³⁵⁸ Carondelet may have intended these troops primarily for defense from external enemies (if Carondelet made such distinctions). Nonetheless these are characteristics that Claude E. Welch Jr. found highly advantageous to combating rebellion.

³⁵⁵ Fiehrer, 461.

³⁵⁶ Liljegren, 53-54.

³⁵⁷ Fiehrer, 459.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 460.

Carondelet constructed a freshwater fleet to defend the Mississippi river. He organized a small fleet of gunboats under the command of Captain Pedro Rousseau for that purpose in January of 1792.³⁵⁹ By 1793, Carondelet grew “His Majesty’s Light Squadron of Galleys” to include seven galleys, four galiots, and one *lancha*.³⁶⁰ The largest of these vessels (the *Leal*) patrolled the Gulf of Mexico. The next two in terms of size (the *Victoria* and *Louisiana*) sailed the lower river from New Orleans to Nogales. The galleys *Filipa*, *Vengenza* and *Castilla* were deployed to the upper Mississippi. The *lancha* (launch) *el Rey*o patrolled near the mouth of the Ohio. Of the three galiots (*Flecha*, *Activa* and *Vigilante*), the *Vigilante* served as Carondelet’s personal transportation.³⁶¹ The squadron served to adequately control access to the Mississippi, and served as a means of troop transport, but at a cost.³⁶² None of this could be done without significant expense to Spain for the sake of a colony that was not producing a tremendous return on the investment.

Despite Carondelet’s measures, he could not keep Jacobin propaganda from spreading. Jacobin songs, like La Marseillaise, became popular in the streets of New Orleans and cabarets there were ordered closed to keep order and limit Jacobin demonstration (at the expense of lost license revenue and taxes).³⁶³ This Jacobin sentiment *seemed* to feed a number of

³⁵⁹ Jack D.L. Holmes, *A Guide to Spanish Louisiana 1762-1806* (New Orleans: [A.F. Laborde], 1970), 20; Captain Pedro Rousseau, also known as Pierre George Rousseau, is the same Spanish Captain that Carondelet sent on a mission to map the Mississippi River from New Orleans to New Madrid in 1793, and who captured the trouble maker and suspected agent William Bowles. His records of this journey and the Bowles affair are translated and published in: Martinez, 46-74, 83-89.

³⁶⁰ Fiehrer, 464.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 464-465.

³⁶² Abraham P. Nasatir, *Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, 1792-1796*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 36-37.

³⁶³ Louisiana Cabildo, Vol. 4 No. 1, 20; also letters petitioning the Cabarets be reopened to generate revenue for the city; *Ibid.*, Vol. 3 No. 3, 142.

demonstrations in the colony.³⁶⁴ Carondelet, recognizing that a display of authority was needed to keep order in the city, requested help. In November 1793, to pacify the crowds of discontented that demonstrated in New Orleans, Baron Carondelet called upon Governor Gayoso de Lemos of Natchez to send him aid. Governor Gayoso sent 300 Anglo-American monarchists who had immigrated to Spanish Louisiana after the American Revolution. Liljegren attributes Carondelet's ability to maintain order in late 1793 and early 1794 to these "Tory Volunteers".³⁶⁵ In some ways the sparse population of the colony helped to contain radical sentiment. The effect distance had on containing rebellion should have been heightened under the Syndic system when news of disturbances in other parts of the colony had to travel through official channels which were not adverse to censorship and propagandizing news – though such an effect would be extremely difficult to prove with evidence.

Wars with Britain and France, as well as the specter of slave revolt or invasion of "Kentuckians," hindered Baron Carondelet attempts to resolve a number of important local sources of discontent. So too did the turbulent economy of Louisiana, which fell even further into decline during the years between the fall of indigo and tobacco exports from the colony and the rise of sugar and cotton.³⁶⁶ But Carondelet did not let these problems prevent him from seeing to matters of local control. Carondelet actively pursued measures such as slave reform, enhancement of security, inclusion of locals into the government and a propaganda program to ensure the safety of the colony, and its viability to Spain through physical force, regulation, and information control.

³⁶⁴ Examples of this kind of revolt are offered up in: Liljegren, 47-97, and explored in further detail, with particular attention to how the largest of the 'habitant' turmoil was *NOT* revolutionary in nature, in: Din, "Father Jean Delvaux", 5-33.

³⁶⁵ Liljegren, 57.

³⁶⁶ Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812*, 191-192, 201; Fiehrer, 441.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the rebellions under Ulloa and Carondelet through the lens of Claude E. Welch Jr.'s model of popular collective action one is able to see threads of continuity between the two. Many of the physical setting requirements for popular discontent were present in the colony, from geographic marginality caused by distance from Spain and frequent opportunity to natural disasters, and the shifts in methods of production and transport of commercial and agricultural goods that occurred during the Spanish transition. Social and economic tensions, exacerbated by a minority and alien rule led in both instances to a tighter sense of both perceived inequality and self ascription for the "indigenous groups", be they the original French and German colonists, Afro-creole slaves or American immigrants.

Both administrations had to contend with the physical distance of Louisiana from the mother country. The colony lay some 4,500 miles from even the southern Spanish ports. Louisiana was only 700 miles away from the large Spanish colonial center at Havana, but even at that distance the journey across the Gulf could take weeks and was fraught with dangers of storm and attack from privateers. Governor Ulloa found this distance to be more of a factor because he did not possess enough resources in terms of money or manpower to install himself in New Orleans as a suitable surrogate presence (in terms of majesty, or authority) for the Spanish crown. Even after O'Reilly more firmly established Spanish law and authority in the colony, turning New Orleans into a colonial administrative center in its own right, distance from the support and guidance of the Spanish court remained a problem. Delay waiting for orders from the central government lessened the habitants' perception of Spanish authority.

In addition to the remoteness of the colony, Louisiana also suffered from relatively inhospitable terrain, which acted to separate the settlement into dispersed locations, favorable for

agriculture or trade. The terrain also hindered the kind of rapid transit that would be necessary for patrolling the land and keeping order. Hurricanes, outbreaks of Yellow Fever, and years of poor conditions for the growing of food staples created or complicated many of the colony's other problems. Those disasters also helped to foster the appearance that the Spanish government was unwilling, or incapable of protecting the citizens.

From the perspective of the Spanish crown, Louisiana's proximity to British colonies, later the United States, and its close cultural and periodically economic ties with France also proved to be a problem in terms of colonial management. The porous borders of the colony led to an endemic weakening of Spanish authority there, as laws meant to control the border had to be modified, or in some instances could not be enforced at all. The constant interaction with foreigners also contributed to a sense of independence and prevented the creation of any kind of Spanish cultural hegemony in the colony. Methods to control the borders, whether Ulloa's attempts to settle Acadian immigrants near the British border or Carondelet's formation of the so called "Indian Confederation" and the Mississippi River forts and patrol fleet led to economic and public relations strains. These strains furthered the social tensions within the colony. When judgment compelled the respective governors to abandon those programs, colonists perceived the abandonment as a potential weakness of the administration. This was particularly evident under both the administrations of Ulloa and Carondelet when they attempted, and to varying degrees failed, to limit smuggling operations on the Mississippi river.

Not all of Welch's physical factors were issues for all the Spanish administrations. Land scarcity was not a large problem; however, one is able to see resource scarcity. Also, when considering slavery as a means of production, the limitation on slave imports effectively limited the use of land. This was felt particularly strongly under Governor Carondelet's administration

when he restricted (though never halted) slave imports. Likewise, the limits on trade put a hindrance on the ability of German and Acadian farmers to profit from their lands through foreign export during Ulloa's administration. In a similar vein, the trade restrictions limited the amount of food and staple goods able to reach the colony. In a relatively isolated colony, subject to frequent disaster, artificial limitations on the citizens' available food were not popular.

Capitalization of agriculture was not an issue because the agricultural system was already commercialized to an extent. Louisiana farmers practiced a mixture of subsistence and commercial farming. Therefore the loosening of social ties that Welch claims accompanies the capitalization of agriculture had already taken place to a degree.

Given the relative dominance of entrenched French society in the Superior Council, military, and all other governmental forms, it is hard to see perceived inequality being a factor in the 1768 revolt. Yet for the Acadian or German farmer, positioned away from the colonial center of New Orleans, it may have indeed seemed so. Given that there were so few Spaniards in the colony with whom to compare, it would have been easy to claim that they would be immune to the hardships suffered by others, especially because the most visible Spaniards were officials. Some members of New Orleans high society saw Governor Ulloa's trips to Balize as elitist. Likewise, in the 1790's there was no real system of formalized material or status inequality between the colonial government and the elite citizens, though increased opportunities allowed officials (and elites) access to greater material goods and comforts. However anti-monarchical language had made its way to the street of New Orleans, infecting the rioters there with a general sense of somehow being aggrieved by the Spanish monarchy.

The same strands of Francophile ethnic ascription played a large role in the revolts under Governor Ulloa and Governor Carondelet. This ascription is evident in the appeals to the French

government to take the colony back from Spain which occurred in both periods. The colonists showed French ascription through displays of French culture. In 1768 the rebels bonded around the “good wine of Bordeaux”.³⁶⁷ In the 1790’s agitators sung *La Marseillaise* in the streets. In the 1760’s, the Germans and Acadians had their own ethnic ascriptions and traditions of independence, but they were pulled into ascribing with the French Creoles through economic and social ties – perhaps in the process adopting the larger ascription of “Louisianan.” Those same social and economic ties existed between the merchants and planters who opposed Carondelet. The demand for a return to the French “laissez faire” system united the rebels.

The coming of the Spaniards in 1766 began a strain on the French influenced social order of the colony. New regulations meant a shift in the established commercial patterns that the social hierarchy relied upon for their position and status. Likewise the threat of implementing Spanish governmental systems hung over the head of those sitting in the Superior Council. However, that danger must have seemed far off, given the glacial pace at which Spain was moving to establish its presence in the colony. This presented to the discontented a window of opportunity to prevent looming detrimental social change. By the 1790’s the Spanish governmental system was well established – O’Reilly’s governmental changes saw to that -- and social change due to Spanish rule should not have been a threat. However economic and regulatory changes provided the potential for social change and social friction.

Years of colonial neglect had already preconditioned the Louisianans to independence, and a certain amount of disrespect for strong authority. The same can be said even more so about the Acadian immigrants, many of whom had resisted the British in Nova Scotia. This independence, distrust, and even hostility to being governed left the Louisianans a legacy of

³⁶⁷ Moore, *Revolt in Louisiana*, 151-154.

discontent and a strong tradition of resistance. The rampant smuggling, border crossing, and display of traits which were perceived as indolence, sloth, or recalcitrance give some evidence to support a more independent atmosphere in the colony.

Even though the 1768 revolt was stopped short by the arrival of O'Reilly, it became a part of the cultural narrative and indirectly acted to legitimize future acts of rebellion. Thus Louisianans were in a way primed for resistance before the strong messages of republicanism coming from French cultural ties in the 1790's acted to underscore the independence felt in the colony and prompted the discontented to riot in the streets. Theories of discontent hold that once a people resort to popular protest, it becomes part of their cultural lexicon and they are likelier to return to protest in the future.³⁶⁸

This author has discovered no documents explicitly citing the 1768 rebellion as cause, basis, or justification for the protests of the 1790's. However a tradition of willingness to resort to popular protest is revealed somewhat in the repeated attempts of merchants to petition the king of France for retrocession, first in 1768 and again in 1793. It is shown again through the constant willingness of the populace to accept smuggling in the colony. Attempts to find a protest tradition among the working classes is a little more difficult. There may be a dim reflection of the German Coast and Acadian popular protests in the New Orleans street demonstrations that occurred in 1793, and perhaps in rural protest exemplified by the Nachtitoches tumult. Shifts that occurred in the nature of the working class make the attempt harder. Between the 1760's and 1790's slaves performed an increasing amount of the colony's labor.

³⁶⁸ Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 132-141.

Attempts to find any kind of continuation of popular protest between the farmer protests of 1768 and the slave revolts of 1793 is even more difficult still. In *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Gwendolyn Milo Hall attempts to create a connection between lower class white workers and the rebellious slaves of the 1790's through their shared Jacobinism (that is, a desire for freedom from the legal and social restrictions that governed their lives).³⁶⁹ If that is the case, then one may begin to trace the intersection of Afro-creole protest traditions and Euro-creole protest traditions (including the 1768 rebellion). Gilbert C. Din raises serious concerns about whether there is evidence to back Hall's assertion.³⁷⁰ Din contends that several of the rumors of free/slave cooperation were proven false by area Commandants, and that Spanish records lack references to such cooperation.³⁷¹ For the time being at least, there remains the possibility of, but no compelling direct proof of, a connection between the popular protest of the 1760's and the slave revolts of the 1790's.

The Spanish administrations themselves played a large role in determining whether the French Creole colonists would, or could revolt. Through integration, or superiority, they could have denied the colonists the impetus to enact a revolt. A lack of co-option of French creoles into the system was never a source for discontent in the populace. The French Superior Council and Governor were in power during the first revolt in Louisiana, and after the re-institution of Spanish rule half of the sitting members of the New Orleans Cabildo were French creoles. Governor Ulloa could hardly have included the French more in his government. But he may have been including them at the wrong level. Ulloa succeeded in creating a layer of French

³⁶⁹ Hall, 372-374.

³⁷⁰ Din, *Spaniards, Planters and Slaves*, 175-176.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

administration under him that had no upward mobility in the Spanish system. Governor Carondelet, in an attempt to stave off rebellion, re-introduced the syndic system of appointed “best men” spread throughout the colony, men whose positions in society were enhanced by their relations and service to Spain. The Spaniards had no superiority myth to justify their position of dominance. Rather they had the well established tradition of European monarchy as a basis for their ownership of the colony. This proved somewhat difficult as throughout the history of the Spanish regime in Louisiana the French Creoles felt umbrage and a certain amount of disbelief that they would be “traded away” and would not give up hope that the French monarch (or eventually Republic) would accept them back – though the plantation owners that made up the colonial elite in the 1790’s developed serious reservations about the abolitionist tendencies of the Republic.

The mounting sense of relative deprivation, driven by economic policies instituted by the Spanish government, was capitalized upon in both periods by parties interested in fomenting revolution. Ulloa’s decision to implement the Cedula of 1768, limiting trade to approved Spanish ports, provided the impetus for the rebellion against his administration. The Creole merchants, guided in their perception of the policy changes by agitators like Lafrénière, saw themselves as being denied what they considered to be customary, or “ancient rights and liberties”.³⁷² The new sense of deprivation caused by the trade restrictions compounded the anxieties felt by colonists over the weak trade and lack of specie in the colony. In the Carondelet administration there were also unpopular trade restrictions, brought about by wars with customary trade partners – perhaps most notably the trade cessation with France in 1793. Again, as Governor Ulloa did before him, Baron Carondelet tried to police and reduce illicit trade. And

³⁷² Krousel, 58.

again this act was politicized as evidence of the Spanish interests running counter to the interests of city merchants, and evidence that the Spanish regime wished to strip the colony of its ties to France, and thus its French heritage. Likewise, Baron Carondelet's attempts to enforce the Cedula regarding the education and treatment of slaves of 1789 caused a great unease among the colony's large planters, giving them cause to see themselves as victimized by the Spanish regime.

The presence, or lack thereof, of military forces useable for coercion was important to not just the success of a rebellion, but of one's occurrence. At the time of the 1768 rebellion Governor Ulloa did not have sufficient military forces in the colony to resist the rebels. That was an undeniable factor in the decision to rebel against the governor. The militias that he did have to keep order were used sparingly, as Governor Aubry did not wish to provoke the discontented. In the 1790's Governor Carondelet also used his military sparingly, so as not to stretch his limited forces too thin, or provoke the colonists into a greater spirit of rebellion. However, Carondelet had forces to use, and the ability to call for reinforcements. In 1793 he displayed those forces by mustering them at New Orleans.³⁷³ Carondelet also had the benefit of the memory of the impression that O'Reilly made on the colony upon his arrival. Since O'Reilly's arrival, Spanish force was never in doubt.

O'Reilly's administration also demonstrated how the colony could be controlled and order restored in case of widespread active discontent. O'Reilly showed a mastery of all four of Welch's maxims of control. O'Reilly used criminal charges and the granting of pardons to separate the rebel leaders from the base. By pomp and ceremony O'Reilly restored a degree of faith in the majesty and authority of the Spanish crown, which was the justification of the

³⁷³ Feihrer, 482-483.

Spanish occupation of the colony. He incorporated leading creoles into the Spanish system of government, and in doing so involved them with government in a way that offered a more permanent station. Finally, O'Reilly possessed the capability to coerce the creoles if need be, and made sure to display that force prominently, but restrained from using that force unless it was necessary.

Baron Carondelet also attempted to cast the actions of political actors in a purely criminal way. In doing so, and later in trying to use the threat of slave revolt to scare planters into supporting the Spaniards as their assurance of order, Carondelet was able to somewhat divide the discontented. Through the Syndic system, and the appointment of local judges, he further integrated the creoles and vested them into the success of the colony. Perhaps because of his tendency to overreact to dangers, Baron Carondelet did all he could to ensure that he had ample soldiers to contain a rebellion. In spite those tendencies, he also recognized that open hostilities would cause a great many problems and refrained from using his men except at Natchitoches.

The weak Spanish presence in Louisiana greatly aided the politicization of discontent. This is most radically evident when one juxtaposes the actions and stance of the Superior Council in October 1768, with itself in August of 1769. The rebels knew they had little to fear with Governors Ulloa and Aubry due to the lack of forces, weakness, and desire to accommodate when confronted. Even with Aubry's aid Ulloa did not have the man-power to intercede in the rebel actions, even had he been aware of them earlier. For his part, Aubry contented himself to issue stern warnings with little ability, or possibly even intent, of backing them up. The administration failed to successfully enforce policies and regulations, particularly with regard to smuggling. While this was arguably necessary to the survival of the colony, it greatly weakened the perceived strength of the joint government.

By contrast, Lieutenant General O'Reilly brought with him an overwhelming force, and used it sparingly. In doing so O'Reilly maximized the benefit of a force as deterrent to rebel action while minimizing the use of force as a contributing factor to discontent. O'Reilly enforced the vast majority of his regulations and laws, creating the appearance of Spanish authority. The only notable exception to O'Reilly's success with enforcing regulation was the non-enforcement of slave regulations.

The inability of the Spaniards to decisively regulate slavery from 1769 onward set the stage for the troubles Baron Carondelet would have with slave regulation in the 1790's. Baron Carondelet struggled to improve the quality of slave care enough to prevent a slave insurrection. The reluctance of the planter class to adopt his reforms, and impact of Jacobin ideology as well as rumor of potential abolition or uprising on the slaves themselves thwarted the Baron's efforts. In the wake of the Point Coupee revolt, Carondelet's tactics regarding slave pacification turned toward stricter control, and in doing so brought the interests of the Spanish authority and the planter class into closer alignment.

With regard to effective mobilization of his small forces, displays of force, and rapid enhancement of his forces through loaned troops, as well as incorporation of well placed colonists into the control structure as Syndics, Carondelet succeeded in preventing popular revolts from capitalizing on a perceived weakness of Spanish authority. However the success of popular unrest in France and the frequent threat of invasion from out of the colony allowed agitators to use the possibility of a future moment of Spanish weakness as propaganda.

A greater threat to Spanish authority was the lack of police enforcement. This was seen in both the inability to prevent popular demonstrations and to catch the arsonists that moved about in New Orleans, and even more prominently in the lack of Spanish authority in the more

remote rural villages. Nonetheless, Carondelet used the mostly adequate forces at his disposal (and imported forces when necessary) to enforce most regulations in the colonial center, and maintained enough control over the city to prevent that city from ever falling completely out of his control. In doing so, Carondelet maintained the perception of a fairly strong Spanish authority in the Louisiana colony.

Baron Carondelet was lucky in that he never had to face a united opposition behind a character such as Nicolas Chauvin Lafrénière. Lafrénière's strength of personality, powerful oratory, personal connections and relatively high status and authority allowed him to become a strikingly effective leader in the 1768 rebellion. These qualities allowed Lafrénière, and the other coup leaders, to reach across large sections of the colonial community and organize a well put together rebellion. Lafrénière's contacts put him in position to disrupt the Spanish government through Foucault, block payment to the Germans, and convince the Acadians that Governor Ulloa was hoarding money meant to pay off their paper currency. They damned the Spaniards and celebrated French culture, thus beginning the ideological indoctrination of the rebels by drawing a sharp division between the interests of colonial Louisiana and the interests of the Governor Ulloa.

Once the militias were gathered in New Orleans, the rebellious members of the Superior Council printed circulars through which to present the militias, and the rest of New Orleans, with the formal ideological foundations of the rebellion. This ideology combined a criticism of the Spanish regime, outlined a set of immediate actionable points, and hinted at their vision of a new colonial future without Spain – though they were ultimately unable to accomplish much after the expulsion of Ulloa. This, as well as their already prominent positions in society, allowed the Superior Council members to effectively position themselves as a desirable and effective

replacement for the Spanish administration. The participants of the 1768 rebellion exercised remarkable discipline in secrecy, time management, and self restraint. An organized and disciplined force reveals good management skills on the part of the rebel leadership. Likewise the ability of Lafrénière and company to reach across ethnic and economic gaps testifies to the communication skills and persuasiveness of the coup members. The leadership of the rebellion displayed some tactical skill, no doubt from the militia captains, in organizing the street patrols, and spiking of the New Orleans cannons.

In the 1790's no such strong organizing leadership, capable of uniting the disparate interests of the discontented, emerged to challenge Carondelet's authority. Rather Carondelet faced a period of rebellious behavior, with small demonstrations – harrowing, but lacking the coordination and skill that contributed to the danger and effectiveness of the 1768 rebellion. New Orleans saw no shortage of revolutionary ideology entering from France and the United States. However a galvanizing leadership did not present itself. The closest thing New Orleans saw to such effective leadership was in the organization of merchants who signed petitions to the king of France to retrocede the colony. However, they quailed in the presence of Carondelet's reinforcements from Havana. Likewise, in rural Natchicohes Padre Delvaux proved effective in organizing a small group of discontented to cohesive action, but that resistance did not last long in the face of the relatively small Spanish force sent to disband it.

But effective pacification of a rebellion relies on well thought out concessions as well as repression by coercion. Governor Ulloa never really had a chance to confront the Superior Council conspirators. Had he spent time developing stronger channels of information, he might have. The authority's response to the 1768 rebellion fell instead to Lieutenant General Alejandro O'Reilly. O'Reilly approached the colony with a mixture of overwhelming force, restraint,

magnanimity, reform and aid. Using criminal proceedings for the leadership, combined with a general amnesty, O'Reilly created a split in the rebellion – cutting the head off of the body, so to speak. The Spanish funds he took with him and the economic reforms that ultimately benefitted the colony lessened the discontent felt by the citizens, as did a sense of security from knowing that the colony once again had the attentions of a European power.

But even Alejandro O'Reilly could not return the colony to a pre-rebellion state. Once the rebellion occurred, the memory of the rebellion entered into the collective consciousness and became an internalized part of the citizen's dialogue with the ruling administration. Not only would rebellion, once the colonists had some experience with it, be considered more of a viable outlet for discontent, but the act of rebellion itself would act as a form of ascription. Opposition to the entrenched power ties together the elements that participated in the revolt, possibly for generations. Thus by the 1790s the Creoles of Louisiana had a tradition which included rebellion as a form of dealing with relative discontent.

Baron Carondelet used the revived French syndic system both to incorporate creoles into the Spanish system and to act as a highly effective communication network. This gave Carondelet's administration local agents to report what was happening in the more remote parts of the colony and an avenue to control information going out to the colony – thus controlling how events were perceived by releasing “official” versions of news, esp. via the *Moniteur*. This not only allowed Carondelet some ability to prevent the spread of discontent, it also allowed him the opportunity to isolate any rebellious persons by criminalizing them in released news. Carondelet also capitalized on the there being two different strains of rebellious persons in Louisiana during his administration – slave and free. He argued successfully that any movements toward French republicanism would lead to a slave revolt. This scared many of the

large planters into allying with the governor for the early years of his time in the colony and prevented that powerful faction from allying with other discontented groups. Not until he decided to implement slave reform did the relationship between Carondelet and the planters sour.

Carondelet made a number of defensive improvements to the colony as well as civil and administrative ones. However mounting economic troubles due to the wars, trade restrictions, and anxiety over slave unrest built discontent, which was ignited by an influx of Jacobin and republican propaganda which incited demonstrations in the streets of New Orleans. Likewise the failure of Carondelet to successfully prosecute demonstrators led to a serious challenge to his authority in the city of New Orleans, and even more so in the remote countryside where his presence was considerably less felt. But the Governor was able to stave off large scale revolt. Carondelet paired media control with a reinforced police and military force that he was able to bolster with troops from Havana or Natchez when he needed them. Carondelet's fear of large scale revolt and lack of a sizeable military presence prevented him from overreacting with military force in masse. The need for Carondelet to reserve his military forces for external defense, which he had been bolstering with questionable alliances, also limited the extent to which he could commit soldiers. Ultimately this forced moderation of commitment was appropriate.

Compared against each other with Welch's model as a guide, the two rebellions do reveal certain commonalities. The distance of the colony from Spain played a large role in the relative inability of the Spanish crown to regulate and control her. It also bred a sense of independence in the colonists which was compounded by the decades of French "laissez faire". Spanish attempts at regulation, and bringing the colony into the Spanish mercantile system caused fear and anxiety amongst the colonists who were already suffering from a continually depressed

economy. Ethnicity was used to unite the colonists against the Spaniards, and in both instances so was collective political violence in New Orleans alongside attempts to persuade the French king to retrocede the colony. The ideology of both periods contained references to free trade and natural rights – though the 1768 conspirators were no Jacobins.

The rebellions differed on a number of points. The degree of external influence, in terms of ideology, was much higher in the 1790's. The leadership of the 1768 rebellion was much stronger, and the rebellion itself much more organized. By contrast the turmoil of the 1790's was scattered, and no strong leadership unified the multiple discontented groups into a cohesive opposition. During the 1760's the colonial government was organizationally divided, unfocused, weak, and only nominally aligned with its Spanish head. There was no apparatus for the gathering or dissemination of intelligence, which allowed the rebels to catch the governors unaware. The government in place during the 1790's was stronger, more organized, and extremely active in terms of seeking out potential rebellion. In the later years of the colonial government a lot of energy was invested in gathering intelligence, disseminating propaganda and incorporating the creoles into the colonial administration.

The differences are less pronounced in the conditions of relative deprivation that started organized unrest. This reveals a continuity of problems that were almost systemic to the Louisiana colony. Chief among these was the economic woes of the colony. The economy of the Louisiana colony was perpetually weak due to an imbalance in imports versus exports. This led to a "bleeding out" of specie, wild inflation and a damaging dependence on foreign trade. These conditions, compounded by natural disaster and disease, produced an environment engineered for discontent. With weak authority and poor governance this discontent easily manifested itself in collective political violence as members of the discontented agitated against

Spanish changes to systems they developed to survive in Louisiana. However, with strong governance the colony was able to endure these conditions.

The study of these revolts together and against the “model” of revolt presented by Welch suggests that they are different manifestations of popular discontent caused by systemic economic, geographic or physical, and social problems. This suggests that they also fit the mold of a “peasant revolt” as defined by Welch, as does the tendency for the agitators to seek limited change in government to address specific and local ills. This indicates that perhaps, though the Spanish regime is known to have implemented successful social and commercial reforms which are widely thought to have begun Louisiana’s ascent toward being a profitable and stable land, important problems could not be addressed in the context of a colonial system. Spaniards adopted, and adapted various methods of control over the course of their administration of the colony, but never managed to address the deeper causes of discontent in a fashion that would have allowed them to keep the colony without future demonstrations. This was compounded by the relatively rapid expansion of the Americans into their shared border space.

There remain a number of questions that were raised during the research of this thesis, but were beyond the scope of this study, or for other reasons not fully explored, and a number of avenues open to further investigation. It would be interesting to see how the results of these rebellions can be compared to other rebellions in the Spanish new world over the length of Spanish colonialism in America. Perhaps Welch’s models could be compared with the models presented in William B. Taylor’s *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*. Such lines of inquiry may shed light on Spanish methods of control, and how they adapted to face changes in subjects from native tribes to European colonists, as well as any impact of the eighteenth-century enlightenment on Spanish colonialism. Using Welch’s methods

to compare the Spanish rebellions with North American rebellions that occur throughout the second half of the eighteenth-century, particularly those in the British colonies and the United States may, likewise, yield interesting results.

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