

RESEARCH IN THE SPANISH BORDERLANDS: LOUISIANA

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THE RENAISSANCE OF INTEREST IN SPANISH LOUISIANA OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS owes much to the acquisition of important document collections by such universities as Loyola in New Orleans, Northwestern of Louisiana, Tulane and Memphis State. Graduate students and scholars who lacked sufficient funds for research in Europe now find adequate materials in the United States.

The nineteenth-century historians who first wrote on Spanish Louisiana (Martin 1827–29, Gayarré 1854, and Fortier 1904) lacked these materials. Moreover, scholars have translated and assembled selected documents with helpful editorial comments (Carter 1934, Corbitt 1937–, Holmes (see bib.), Kinnaird 1946–49, and Nasatir 1946, 1952, 1968), which are, in many cases, superior to the earlier works (Billon 1886, Houck 1909, Robertson 1910–11, Serrano y Sanz 1912, 1916, and Whitaker 1931).

Architectural historians have examined old drawings and calculations in public and private collections and have made notable contributions to the story of the building of the lower Mississippi Valley. Samuel Wilson, Jr. is noted for his many careful, illustrated studies, some of them in collaboration with Leonard V. Huber (Wilson 1959, 1971, Huber and Wilson 1964, 1965). Charles E. Peterson of Philadelphia has examined the architecture of upper Louisiana, including the important Missouri posts of St. Louis (1949) and Ste. Genève (1941) which revises the earlier study of Marshall Smelser (1938).

Art historians owe a debt of gratitude to the Spanish legal requirements for detailed inventories of estates of intestates. Isaac M. Cline (1922), Ben Carl Looney (1935) and Harnett T. Kane (1933) have made use of these valuable sources.

Biographers have written on a variety of colorful characters. The intrigues of General James Wilkinson have been described by Green (1891), Hay and Warner (1941), Jacobs (1938), Navarro Latorre and Solano Costa (1949), Serrano y Sanz (1915), Shepherd (1904c), Whitaker (1927b, 1928b) and Wilkinson (1928b). Many of the Spanish governors-general have had their biographers (Bjork 1924, Burson 1940, Caughey 1934, Holmes 1965b, and John Preston Moore 1967). Aaron Burr's ambitions in Louisiana are the subject of several works (McCaleb 1936 and Parton 1870). Andrew Ellicott, the Southern Boundary Commissioner, has been partially covered by Alexander (1899), Mathews (1908) and Gallalee (1965), but a full, solid treatment, based on the Ellicott papers in the National Archives is still required.

Other biographical studies on key figures in Spanish Louisiana are Mitchell and Calhoun (1937), Holmes (1964b,f,h; 1965h, 1966f & 1967a), and Pitot (1968).

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Coleman (1968) has recently studied Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent, one of the outstanding creoles, but his failure to consult many Spanish records weakens his study. John Francis McDermott (1967) has noted several studies in progress which, when completed, will do much to correct and amplify the brief volume on Louisiana governors by Reeves (1962).

Diplomatic history has been covered by sound studies, especially on the French Jacobins by Liljegren (1939); on the 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo (Bemis 1926, Whitaker 1929, Young 1963); the Louisiana cession (Aiton 1931, Lyon 1934, 1942, Fletcher 1930, and Turner 1898, 1902–3, 1904, 1905, 1909–10); and the Adams-Onís Transcontinental Treaty (Brooks 1939, Onís 1969).

Drama during the Spanish period has had its devotees (Allain 1965, LeGardeur 1963, LeBlanc de Villaneufve 1964, Watson 1970, and Wood 1939).

Economic history will continue to attract scholars as it has in the past (Clark 1970, Arena 1961, Holmes 1962c, 1966c, 1967b, 1968e, 1969b, c, and Whitaker 1928c, 1931). Williams (1957) has indicated what might be done in the area of transportation, but economic historians still have a fertile field on such topics as currency, trade, import and export taxes, production, industry and labor.

Education went little beyond the elementary stage in Spanish Louisiana, as noted by Bjork (1925) and Dart (1928) for lower Louisiana, and by Francis (1914–15), Cruzat (1919), Liljegren (1941) and Riley (1936) for the Mississippi Valley. A careful examination of contemporary sources would reveal further topics such as the private schools and seminary proposals.

Family records are often utilized by genealogists, who are not always scrupulous in their transcriptions and in mixing legend with fact. The Pontalba family papers of Tulane University are still closed to scholars, except by special permission, but if they are opened to historians in the near future, they will constitute a careful and dramatic source for everyday life in Spanish Louisiana. The LeGardeur and Pitot (1969) publication of a previously-unpublished *mémoire* is indicative of the type of research that needs to be done. Many genealogists have compiled valuable lists on certain families and militia rosters (DeVille 1965, Gianelloni 1961, 1964, 1967, Cochran 1963, Arthur and Kernion 1931, Rieder and Rieder 1965), and the New Orleans *Genesis* and *Louisiana Genealogical Register* should be consulted by historians. J. Preston Moore (1969) has indicated the type of sources in Spanish archives of a genealogical nature.

Guides to Spanish documents concerning Louisiana are numerous. They result in a considerable saving of research time and offer numerous leads for future research.

Few circumstances are more frustrating to researchers than to spend considerable time investigating a topic, only to find that someone else is doing the exact same thing. The current interest in the merchant firm of Panton, Leslie and Company and the John Forbes Company is illustrative. White (1972) and Upchurch (1965) have both written dissertations on the latter, and a half-dozen theses and dissertations have appeared on the Panton firm. A review of the other papers in this volume will indicate additional information about work on this important company. Fortunately, a

number of conferences over the past few years have brought scholars together where they might learn of current research in progress in various fields. The Gulf Coast Conference of December, 1969 brought out papers by Holmes, Robert Rea and Sam Proctor (see Dibble and Newton 1970) concerning research possibilities and sources on the Gulf Coast. Charles Edwards O'Neill's (1970) paper on "The State of Studies on Spanish Colonial Louisiana" and Corbitt's (1966) survey of research on the Southwest Territory are also helpful, as are Holmes' historiographical article (1971b) in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and the Coker-Holmes survey (1971) of sources which appeared in two places.

Ethnohistory and archaeology have also come into their own in recent symposia and conferences, such as the Second and Third Gulf Coast Conferences held in 1970 and 1971 (Dibble and Newton 1971; the papers from the 1971 meeting will be edited by Lucius Ellsworth and published in 1972) and the two symposia held by the American Society for Ethnohistory in 1970 and 1971. Proceedings for these conferences have been published, thus spreading the word on what is being done to supplement classic studies of Spanish policy toward the Southeastern Indians by Hodge (1907), Swanton (1911, 1922, 1946, 1953), Hawkins (1848, 1916), Berry (1917), West (1915–15) and Whitaker (1927a, b, 1928a, 1934b). The annotated bibliography on Louisiana Indians, which was published in 1969 (Neuman and Simmons) is rapidly being supplemented by various studies.

Immigration is another favorite topic investigated by such scholars as Deiler (1909) for the Germans; and by Ditchy (1932), Solano Costa (1954) and Webre (1901) for the Acadians. Savelle (1932) and Solano Costa (1956a) have stressed the importance of New Madrid. Carter (1911), Coker (1970), Kinnaird (1932) and Din (1960, 1969, 1970) have all published excellent studies of various immigration schemes, which compliment the two classic studies of Whitaker (1927b, 1934b).

In addition to the excellent two-volume work on medical practice in early Louisiana by Duffy (1958, 1962), Carrigan (1962), Holmes (1964c, 1965i, 1969d) and Nasatir (1942) have published sources and monographs on yellow fever, general medical practice and royal hospital regulations.

Military history includes a descriptive study of Spain's regular army units and provincial militia in Louisiana by Holmes (1965c), as well as a book by Nasatir (1968) on the Mississippi Squadron to 1796. Spanish-American rivalry in Missouri and upper Louisiana is the subject of numerous articles by Nasatir (1929–30a, b, 1930b, 1932). Rivalry over the Chickasaw Bluffs (Memphis) is traced in studies by Holmes (1962d, 1964h) and Whitaker (1927b). Holmes (1965e) has also studied military uniforms in Spanish Louisiana. The best general treatment of military affairs until 1794 appears in the three-volume *Annual Report* of the American Historical Association, which has important introductions by Kinnaird (1946–49).

Scholars interested in natural history have scrutinized the journals and narratives of contemporary travelers such as Bailey (1856), Bartram (1791, 1943), Berquin-Duvallon (1803), Collot (1796), Cuming (1810), Dunbar (1809), Evia (Holmes

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1968d), Hunter (McDermott 1963), Michaux (1889), Milfort (McCary 1959), Forman (1888), Ellicott (1814), Pope (1792), Pittman (1770) and Robin (1807). McKelvey (1955) has published an excellent survey of the botanical explorations in the Louisiana area, and Ewan (1965), Hume (1943) and McDermott (1935b) have studied several of the important naturalist travelers.

Research in the field of Afro-American contributions to American civilization has burgeoned in recent years. Louisiana blacks during the Spanish dominion have been studied in various aspects. Aptheker (1943) includes several slave revolts, and Holmes (1970c) has published on the Pointe Coupée uprising of 1795. Everett (1966) has studied the role of free blacks and mulattoes in Louisiana in a pair of excellent articles, while McConnell (1968) and Holmes (1968f) have written on the black and mulatto militia units. Holmes is currently exploring the status of free and slave blacks before the Spanish legal system.

Additional research in legal history is needed to supplement the translation of various Spanish judicial records in Louisiana by Dart and Porteous (numerous bib. entries). Burns (1928) has written on the land laws, and John Whitting Hall, a graduate student at Louisiana State University, is completing a comparative study of the various survey systems employed in Louisiana by the French, Spanish and Anglo-Saxon settlers. The status of the Spanish commandant is a topic in political research which W. James Miller (n.d.) has explored in the Spanish archives. Reynolds (1971) has concluded that much of Louisiana's Civil Code can be traced to the Spanish laws of Alfonso el Sabio. In addition to general studies of local Spanish government by Pierson (1922) and Priestley (1922), Holmes has been studying the New Orleans Cabildo during the Spanish dominion, thanks to grants-in-aid (1961 and 1966) from the American Philosophical Society.

Scholars have examined the field of letters with some interesting results. Laroque-Tinker (1933) and William Beer (1915, 1920) join McMurtrie (1929, 1942) on literature and printing. Samuel J. Marino (1962) wrote his doctoral dissertation at Michigan concerning the French refugees and their literary activities, and Dart (Dart and Porteous 1931a) has published on the printer, Denis Braud. McCutcheon (1937a, b) has studied New Orleans books and libraries. McDermott (1934, 1935a, b, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1957) has published numerous works concerning libraries and books in upper Louisiana. Holmes (1960b, 1961d, 1966d) has written on the *Moniteur de la Louisiane*, the New Orleans newspaper founded during the last decade of Spanish rule. Tulane University has taken over the fine work of the Works Progress Administration in compiling the papers of Pierre Favrot (Griffith 1940–63) one of the most literary of the Louisiana creoles, and Parkhurst (1945) has also published on Favrot.

Baudier (1939), Curley (1940) and Shea (1886–92) have written the best over-all studies of the Catholic Church. Cruzat (1919) and Renshaw (1901) have written on the Ursuline nuns. Bishpam (1919) has studied "Père Antoine" and the rivalry over missions. Faye (1939b) has also studied the schism in the New Orleans church. Bertram W. Korn has given us an in-depth study of early Jews in Mobile

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(1969–70) and from Natchez to New Orleans (1969). Holmes (1966b, 1967c) and Din (1971) have both studied the Irish priests in the lower Mississippi Valley, and Holmes will present a paper on general Spanish religious policy in West Florida at the Southwestern Social Science Association meeting in 1972. Richard E. Greenleaf's (1972) study of the Mexican Inquisition during the closing years of the eighteenth century investigates the activities of the *Santa Oficio* in Louisiana.

Weather topics have intrigued David R. Ludlum (1963, 1966), who has published two excellent books on early American winters and hurricanes which include data on Louisiana. Andreassen (1938) has also written on ice at New Orleans.

Even as research continues apace on individual facets of Spanish Louisiana, there has been some attempt at "putting it all together" in the form of synthesis. Professor Santiago Vilas the Modern Language Department of Louisiana State University is currently doing research on the over-all survival of the Spanish heritage in Louisiana. Scholars should welcome the results of his study.