In the middle and on the margin : Greater French Louisiana in history and in professional historical memory

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The North American territory and society that we may call Greater French Louisiana[1] - that is, the French colony of Louisiana and its successor, French-related places and societies - has in many ways been both in the middle and on the margins of history. That is, French Louisiana has occupied a marginal position in professional historical study despite the fact that it may be seen to have occupied certain middle positions historically and, potentially, even historiographically. During the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century, for example, the colony of French Louisiana occupied the geographical - and, arguably, the societal - middle of France's North American empire, between the Canadian (and Acadian) north and the Caribbean south, incorporating unto itself, as it did, variously Canadian and Caribbean aspects of French North American colonial society. By its very position the colony was also situated geographically - and, arguably again, societally - in the middle of two other North American colonial empires, between Britain's mainland North American colonies to its east and Spain's extensive territories to its west (as well as between the latter and easterly Spanish Florida). In respect to the Native

1 LaMonte (1999) has proposed the French term « *La Louisiane* » to be used in English-language historical presentations to refer to a somewhat similar temporal / spatial and cultural domain as that of our term, « Greater French Louisiana » - although she would seem to be applying *La Louisiane* more particularly to the southern parts of the territory.

populations of the continent, it was also located in a middle position between the woodland peoples situated along its easterly areas and those of the continent's central plain and desert regions on its more westerly reaches. Additionally, as French colonial Louisiana took form in the central part of the Mississippi River Valley as well as that of the Mobile, in that vast territory situated between the Gulf Coast and the near-Great Lakes region, it occupied what would become the geographical heartland of the United States. Finally, by its very nature, and by virtue of its having ultimately become incorporated, gradually but fully, into the United States, Greater French Louisiana has potentially occupied, historiographically, a position at the very intersection of two central themes that have come to be invoked to apprehend the history, society, and culture of the Americas in general, and of the United States in particular - namely, that of « settlement and society. » on the one hand, that of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity, on the other; it has thus potentially provided signal opportunities for related, important comparative study. Nevertheless, despite the significant, often central historical and, potentially, historiographical position that it has occupied, Greater French Louisiana - whether as French colony or as successor French-related places and societies - has, until recently, received relatively little scholarly attention from students of either American, North American or French colonial history.

In the past generation or so, however, the history of Greater French Louisiana has come to attract the interest of a small, but increasing number of scholars in North America, Europe, and Africa - scholars whose diverse national and disciplinary backgrounds seem to have influenced, however, the orientation they have taken to this newly rediscovered field of study, particularly as regards questions of space, race, society, and the social-political order. After initially situating early French Louisiana historically, as a place, people, and society « of the middle. » and after considering the implications of its relative inclusion and exclusion in the historiography of different countries, the article examines the varying ways recent historical studies have treated the twin, sometimes overlapping, themes of spatial and racial relations - as well as the attendant social-spatial

inclusions and exclusions of the social-political order itself - as these came to develop in the Greater Louisiana territory - this essentially for the French colonial period (1699-1760s), but also, in part, in respect to the succeeding British (1760s-1780s), Spanish (1760s-1803/1812), and early American (post-1780s/1795/1803/1812) regime periods of Greater French Louisiana history.

Early Greater Louisiana: a French colonial society of the middle[2]

If early Greater Louisiana eventually came to be situated in the middle of a number of different places, peoples, and societies, it did so, first and foremost, by having come to occupy the geographical - and ultimately societal - middle of France's Ancien Regime North American empire. Formally founded in 1699 (the celebration of its tricentenary having just been marked), as what would be the last of France's colonies in mainland North America, Louisiana's occupation of the vast mainland territory situated between the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes put it, as we have indicated, between France's already established Caribbean colonies to the south and Canada and Acadia to the north. At the same time, by laying claim to the huge expanse of territory that extended from the Appalachian Mountains on the east to the Rocky Mountains on the west, Louisiana also found itself, geographically and geopolitically, in the North American continental center, wedged in, deliberately, between Spanish Florida and Britain's mainland Atantic colonies to the east and New Spain, the future Mexico, to the west. Despite its vast territorial pretensions, however, French colonial Louisiana basically came to develop - as had Canada - as a potamic civilization,[3] one situated along or

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2 The following section on the social-spatial and social-political organization of French colonial Louisiana, including the comparisons with Canada, brings together perspectives variously put forth in several of my different earlier works - e.g. (1974, 1979: 44-49; 1994a: 3-7; 1994b [1989]; 1994c, and 1996). In lieu of extensive footnoting on such themes, the reader is invited to consult those works. For relevant comparisons with Canada under the French regime, see also Hero (1995: Chs. 1-5, pp. 1-124; 1991: Chs. 1-5, pp. 1-205), as well as Ekberg (1998: 5-110) for especially spatial organization.

3 Jaenen (1996a: 21), drawing on Rein (1931: 122), would seem to have been the first to employ the term « potamic » to characterize the French way of organizing and using space in Canada.

nearby the Gulf Coast, the Mobile River Valley and, most especially, by the central course of the Mississippi River - that is, along that great North American waterway whose immense riverine valley gave form to much of the continent's central part and which, importantly for French America, connected the Great Lakes and Canada in the north to the continent's southern areas, to the Gulf of Mexico and, by extension, to the Caribbean.

Louisiana would exploit these geographical connections so as to give a social reality to its spatial possibilities. In doing so, Louisiana came to form the central part of that great French American waterway crescent that extended, as a long blue line, from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, up the Saint Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, through the Great Lakes, down the Mississippi from the « *pays des Illinois* » to the Gulf Coast, and on to the Antilles. As such, Louisiana became, within the French colonial empire of North America, a kind of intersection, a middle zone, between Canada and the Caribbean: following the initial period of its foundation, there would always be admixtures of both Canadian and Caribbean elements to its society. These may be seen especially in respect to its spatial and racial contours.

Initially an extension of activities emanating from Canada itself, Louisiana also came to share with Canada the latter's geopolitical mission to contain the British to the east of the Appalachian Mountains. Louisiana would also come to resemble Canada for its continental dimensions and pretensions, and for its different, territorially extensive riverine networks of military, trading and missionary posts - as well as for the alliances, exchanges, and evangilizing activity and subsistence relations that these entailed with the Amerindian, on the food support from whose nearby villages its different interior posts often depended. As in Canada, such activities would connect it closely to the Amerindian. When, as of 1717, and especially 1719, Louisiana came to develop into an agrarian and nature exploiting settlement colony, as Canada had already done, Louisiana would also round out its Canadian-like forms of local and extensive spatial organization.

It would do so by sharing with Canada certain fundamental ways of occupying, organizing and settling the North American space. That is, Louisiana would share with Canada a particular

orientation to *collectivity* and *connectivity*: settlements - whether they were geopolitical, military, trading, religious, agrarian or extractive - were made either by groups of people or, if individually, at or near other groups of people - hence, collectivity; such settlements were also established and maintained in terms of their continuous interaction with other settlements or with external activity more generally - hence, connectivity. Like Canada, Louisiana also revealed a partly institutionally structured way of occupying space, this through formal, potentially territorially extensive organizations, such as the state, the church, trading companies, even mining and landed concessions. Louisiana also shared with Canada a strong orientation to a core area, one which was located essentially at or near the chief points of entry to the territory, especially that near the coast. As a consequence of especially the first two of these features of socio-spatial organization - of collectivity and connectivity, of a structured way of occupying space - Louisiana, like Canada, was from its very beginning, and continuously thereafter, organized according to an urban or proto-urban mode of territorial structure and activity.

Within that common urbanistic spatial framework, Louisiana would also share with Canada the tension in its terrorial organization that was produced by its disposition to extensive territorial activity, on the one hand, and its orientation to important compact core-area establishment on the other. Within that urbanistic framework, too, in its most local rural spatial form, Louisiana also resembled Canada for organizing its territorially connected local agrarian units and collectivities largely as individual longlot farmsteads, each one the scene both of individual family residence and of cultivation, with the one longlot situated next to the other along the rivers to form so many « rang »-like agglomerations.[4]

These different commonalities in the way space came to be organized in both Louisiana and Canada suggest a particular French American approach to territorial occupation and establishment in continental North America.

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[4] On the question of compact versus extensive territorial organization in Canada, see Jaenen (1996a). On the survey systems and cadastral plans in Louisiana, see J. Hall (1970); for Canada, Harris (1966).

In Louisiana, it was also such largely Canadian-like spatial forms that came to frame the activities of its Euroamerican inhabitants. The latter basically included two French-speaking populations: first, Canadians, who were early present in Louisiana, both among its general population and its leadership, and who, in small numbers, would enter the colony via its northern areas at different times during the eighteenth century;[5] and second, the French from the metropole, whose relatively small early presence was enhanced by those who came to Louisiana during an important, but short-lived migration of the late 1710s and early 1720s. Added to this core French-speaking population were also a certain number of Germans from the Rhineland who, recruited as farmers, arrived during the early 1720s, at roughly the same time as many of the metropolitan French, as well as a number of Swiss soldiers-become-settlers. These different, primarily French-speaking colonists, the great bulk of whom had arrived by the early 1720s, came to form the core white French Creole population of Louisiana.[6]

In Louisiana this population lived not only within the frame of Canadian-like spatial forms, but also in the context of a socio-political regime that showed certain similarities to that of Canada as well. In terms of legal privilege, for example, in Louisiana, as in Canada and, indeed, as in all French American colonies, and as in Spanish America too, a monopoly Catholic state church reigned in religious matters, such that the Protestants among Louisiana's German and Swiss populations would be denied the right to practice their religion openly or to marry other than through a Catholic ceremony. At the same time, however, in Louisiana as in Canada, as elsewhere in French America, a good many of the other bases, and loci, of social place and privilege in France's Ancien Regime society were absent. Socially, for example, the *corps de metier* did not reappear as a component of the socio-political order

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5 For Canadian migration to France's Louisiana colony, especially to its northern parts, Vidal (1995: 256-267), also Lessard, Mathieu, and Gouger (1988).

6 Giraud (1958: 113-120; 1966: 221-283, 316-347; 1974: 154-195), Hero (1995: 39-55, 63-67), Ingersoll (1999: 125), the several reprinted articles of Allain (1995), Hardy (1995), Conrad (1995c), and Arnold (1995), respectively, in Glenn R. Conrad, ed. (1995b: Part II), as well as those by Brasseaux (1996b) and Le Conte (1996), in Carl A. Brasseaux, ed. (1996a: Part I).

in the colonies; nor, as a basis of socio-spatial privilege, did the *incorporated* town and its « *droits de ville.* » A more simplified, executive state socio-political order gave the appearance of taking form in French North America.

Yet, while it shared much of its spatial and social-political regime with Canada, Louisiana nevertheless offered some important differences with the latter in its form of social, spatial, and especially racial, organization. For example, we do not find in Louisiana's socio-political regime much of the otherwise already fettered feudalistic or corporatist elements that still existed in Canada. In contrast to Canada, land, large and small, was accorded in fee simple (*franc alleu*); seigneurial rights and privileges, and aristocracy, were also absent. And the church, if privileged, appears generally to have been a weaker church nevertheless.[7] In terms of spatial organization, the local establishments made in Louisiana's important, interior Illinois country took the form of nucleated villages, in which the colonial population lived, with the nearby longlots being used chiefly for cultivation, but not residence - in contrast to Canada and to most of the rest of Louisiana. As a further nuance, this form of nucleated settlement may actually have meant a greater power to the local church over the local Illinois country inhabitants, who were heavily Canadian in their origin. Finally, by way of further spatial contrast with Canada, at the French settlement at Natchez, in Louisiana's southern Mississippi River interior, the local inhabitants often

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7 On the perspectives presented in our text above on the socio-political regime in French colonial Louisiana, including the question of seigneurial rights and aristocracy, see Zitomersky (1979: 44-49; 1994b: 56ff; 1994c); concerning particularly the question of seigneurial status, Giraud (1966: 321-322, 332; 1974: 257; 1991: 190-192); for the situation in the Illinois country, Alvord (1922: 203-204, 205-206), and especially Vidal (1995: 289-297), Havard (2000: 96-98). Hinderaker (1997: 93-96), like United States-based American Americanists generally, seems unaware of the historical research and reflections offered in Europe on Greater French Louisiana, and appears to accept the substantive existence of *seigneuries* in the French Illinois country. Although some few seigneuries were indeed granted there, they, like one established outside New Orleans, were in violation of the law in the Louisiana colony; nor is there any evidence that they took on any substance as seigneuries. Until its retrocession of Louisiana to the French crown in 1731, only the Company of the Indies had seigneurial rights, this over the whole colony, but there is no indication that it put those into effect (see the work quoted in this footnote).

occupied individual small plots of land scattered outward from the local fort, while at some distance from both fort and plots, and from each other, could also be found two large plantations striving to grow tobacco for export.

Those plantations also signalled certain major differences that obtained between Louisiana and Canada, and indicated that Louisiana also shared much with yet another part of France's North American empire, with the Caribbean islands to the south. This, in turn, also pointed to Louisiana's middle position between Canada and the Caribbean. When coming to develop as a settlement colony, Louisiana also came to organize much of its attendant economy of commercial crop agriculture and forest and mineral exploitation, as well as much of its very society, around African slave labor and a racial caste-like system of social relations - all this with much approximation to the Antilles, and in great contrast to Canada. The slave population itself basically came directly from Africa and, like the Europeans, arrived in Louisiana massively during a relatively short time - although themselves for a somewhat more extended period, from 1719 down to 1731 - this, in contrast to the situation in the Antilles, where Africans were imported throughout the eighteenth century. In an analogous way to Louisiana's white Creole population, it was this early African population that would very largely form the basis of the Afro-Creole population of Louisiana. At the same time, if the period of the Africans' arrival was much shorter than that for the Antilles, their legal situation, and that governing race relations generally, bore much resemblance to that on the islands. This included the use in Louisiana, as of 1724, of the *Code Noir*, a slave code to regulate relations between master and African slave, a code which Louisiana borrowed, with some little modification, directly from the Antilles.[8]

In socio-political terms, it was in the juxtaposition of its racially hierarchical slave system and of its, at least formally, relatively egalitarian socio-political regime for its Euroamericans that Louisiana came to offer a particular kind of socio-political

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[8] Baade (1983: 48-50), Allain (1980), Brasseaux (1980), Ingersoll (1999: 10-13, 125-127, 130, 135ff.), McGowan (1976: 48ff.), G. Hall (1992a: 56-95; 1992b: 65-71), Ekberg (1985: 197ff.; 1998: 147-148).

order that effectively occupied the societal - as already geographical - middle of the world of French North America. In socio-political terms, this effectively meant that, as one made the journey, in the early and mid-eighteenth century, from the north to the western center and south of the Great French American waterway crescent, from Canada to Louisiana to the Antilles, one appeared to be moving along interwoven socio-political lines, to societies that had more fully made what we may call « The Great North American Transition. » from a society of estates to one of formal equality before the law and to differences based on social class - from nobility to notability, if you will - at least for Euroamericans, but also to societies of increasingly important racial caste-like slavery, where the state and its army, already strong in Canada, became even more important mechanisms of control and « integration » than the established church, itself become less wealthy, less influential than in Canada itself.[9] In the dual North American socio-political transition that French North America underwent, Louisiana occupied a middle societal position.

Louisiana's middle position may also be seen in other different aspects of its social-spatial configuration. In developing itself as a settlement colony with slavery, Louisiana found itself creating, as on the islands, one particularly important town linked to the sea, New Orleans, which, standing at the apex of the territory's geopolitical, governmental, economic, religious, social, and cultural networks of activity, functioned at once as capital, entrepot, and general social center for the colony. This contrasted with Canada, where Quebec and Montreal divided between them the larger, territorially wide urban functions of that colony - the one, Quebec, Canada's capital, ocean port, religious center, and largest town; the other, Montreal, its entrepot for the interior fur trade and the scene of high level diplomatic meetings with the Amerindians of the interior.

As was also the case for the chief cities of the islands - but here, as was also true for Quebec and Montreal - New Orleans was situated in a relatively compact local area of large and small

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9 As concerns the socio-political regime at the Canadian interior posts and settlements, see the remarks of Jaenen (1996: 7), and Havard (2000: 96-98).

plantations, themselves basically located on the Missisippi River above and below the city. With their local and regional densities of white and especially black populations, however, the compact town and plantation settlement in Louisiana offered parallels more particularly to the conditions of agro-urban settlement that characterized Antillian island establishment. As on the islands as well, one could also find in Louisiana some few plantation areas located further away from the main, compact agro-urban core, as at Natchez and, more persistently, at Pointe Coupee, in the immediate southern regional interior, respectively some 400 and 200 kilometers upriver from New Orleans. This relative agricultural dispersion contrasted with the situation in Canada, where agrarian settlement basically confined itself, densely, to the roughly 230 kilometer Saint Lawrence River area between Quebec and Montreal.

As on the islands, too, Louisiana came to have a smaller, secondary agro-urban area situated by its coast, at and near the satelite town of Mobile - although here some of the forms and context of the French American north were also present. Mobile was situated, Canadian-like, at the head of its own regional river system and hosted, as did Montreal, the important diplomatic meetings that were held with the southeastern interior's large Amerindian populations, on whose friendly relations Louisiana much depended.

Mixtures of Canadian and Caribbean forms and contexts also characterized much of the very local spatial and racial context in Louisiana. On the one hand, the slave-worked plantations largely fit into Louisiana's Canadian-like system of local agrarian establishment. That is, they took form as so many riverine lots of combined residence and work that were located adjacent to, or nearby, other farmstead lots large and small. At the same time, however, the larger such slave plantations not only often maintained wider riverfront properties than was otherwise the case, but they also effected on those properties a residential separation between white master family house and black slave quarters that was akin to what could be found in the Antilles. They thus gave a different, racially hierarchical, social configuration to a cadastral structure initially developed for simple family

farmsteads by and among the *habitants* on the *seigneuries* of Canada.[10] Moreover, even if the widespread presence of just one or two slaves on many of Louisiana's small farms, as at the German Coast near New Orleans - a local area named after the ethnic background of its initial colonial settlers - or in the distant interior Illinois country, did not lead to the kind of local, farmstead racial separations that could be found on the larger plantations, it was nevertheless clear that slavery had come to give a particular shape, of a mixed Canadian and Caribbean kind, to the local social-spatial relations in the colony. Even in the northern interior Illinois country, for example, located far from the more slave accented plantation society of the Louisiana south, for a good number of years during the latter period of the French regime in Louisiana, black slaves would account for about one-third of that region's colonial population and Indian slaves for perhaps another one-eighth.[11]

Mention of the Illinois country also suggests another aspect of the particular social-spatial mix that was Louisiana. Not only does it clearly point to the fact that, in contrast to the Antilles islands, Louisiana had Canadian-like continental dimensions, it also reveals an important difference between Louisiana and Canada itself. The Illinois country of Louisiana was simply a much more important - and racially much more diverse - interior colonial settlement area than could be found, comparatively, anywhere in the Canadian interior, whether at Detroit or elsewhere in the Great Lake Basin of Canada's upcountry interior, its *pays d'en haut*. It was in the Illinois country that an important amount of Louisiana's grain and other foods were grown, for the ultimate benefit of the different regions of the colony. The Illinois country's settlements served in part to provide the foodstuffs for the posts situated nearby in that larger interior area, including at times those of the Canadian interior as well; also for the Louisiana

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10 On the rural establishments in Canada, see especially Harris (1966).

11 See Archives Nationales (Paris), Archives des Colonies, G1, 464: Recensement général du pays des Illinois, janvier 1732, and C13c, 4, fol. 197: Récapitulation du recensement général de la Louisiane en 1737; Huntington Library (San Marino, California), Loudoun Papers [Vaudreuil Letters], LO 426: Recensement des Illinois, 1752; also Vidal (1995: 240-241), Ekberg (1998: 150-154).

posts located further south along the Mississippi; as well as for the town and plantation markets in the more coastal south.[12] In doing so, the interior Illinois settlements performed, in part, a function analogous to that of the cultivators of Canada's Saint Lawrence River heartland who, they, sold their surplus to local urban and proto-urban markets and to the posts located in the Canadian interior. At the same time, the farms of the Illinois country, along with the produce of some small farmers located nearer to New Orleans, especially those at the German Coast, as well as the efforts in that southern area of some of the plantation slaves themselves, together allowed Louisiana, much more than the islands - and ultimately more like, if not quite as soundly as, Canada - to provide for its own food supply to varying but important degrees. Indeed, this early use of the Mississippi Valley interior as a locus of food production and export became part of Louisiana's, and France's, legacy to North America. It was the precursor of that great development that would subsequently take place, which would see the Mississippi Valley interior become the granary and food supplier for much of North America and different parts of the world, with New Orleans as the great entrepot.

In further contrast to the situation on the islands, also adding to the colonial food supply in Louisiana were a number of Amerindian villages that were individually located in proximity to the different interior posts, so as to form dual French and Amerindian village areas, much as was true in the Canadian interior. In contrast to Canada, however, such Amerindian villages in Louisiana could also be found close to the commercially oriented plantations and within the very compact core town and plantation settlement area near the Gulf Coast. Their presence made for an importantly multiracial, multicultural compact core region that would exist down to the end of the French regime period and during the years thereafter.[13] It was one that contrasted

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12 For different indications of the Illinois country's food trade and contacts with other areas, see Surrey (1916: 288-303; 1922: 231-232), Belting (1948), J. Clark (1970: 30, 59), Zitomersky (1974, 1979, 1994a: 17-19 and n. 14-15, 1994b, 1994c, 1996), Ekberg (1985, 1996, 1998: esp. 213-238), Briggs (1985, 1990), Conrad (1995a), Saadani (1993: 267-271), Arnold (1991: 59-60), and especially Vidal (1995: Ch. 7: 375-414) for extensive archival research on the question.

13 Usner (1981, 1987, 1992), Zitomersky (1992, 1994c: 359-387).

with the almost exclusively French colonial settlement in Canada's Saint Lawrence River core area and, given the basic elimination of the Amerindian populations in the Caribbean, with the more particularly French and African settlement on the Antilles islands. If in Canada the major racial and cultural questions were between white and Amerindian, and in the Antilles between white and African, in Louisiana a more complex society of white, red, and black, of métis, mulatto, and grif, took form. Here, too, in the world of French America, Louisiana stood in the middle, between Canada and the Caribbean.

The vast mixed territory and society of Louisiana, at the geographical and societal middle of the French empire of North America, remained under the French regime until the 1760s, that is, until the end of the Great War for Empire, when it - like Canada, once again - was lost to France. Whereas all of Canada now fell under British control - as already had been the case, since 1713, for much of the once-French colony of Acadia - Louisiana was divided into two. Its territory east-of-the-Mississippi, including the populous parts of the Illinois country and the areas around the Gulf Coast, was transferred to the British, while the territory west of the Mississippi, but also including the compact agro-urban delta area at and near New Orleans, were given to Spain. As such, this large, newly Spanish part of Louisiana also came to occupy the middle of an empire, that between Spain's North American colony of Florida to the east and New Spain, the future Mexico, to the west.

Thereafter, however, by a series of steps, all the once-French colony of Louisiana would be brought together again under one geopolitical regime, that of a new actor in North America, the United States. In 1783, in the treaty recognizing the independence of that new country from Britain, the eastern interior regions of the former Louisiana colony were transferred from British to American authority - as was too that part of the Canadian interior south of the Great Lakes - with Spain gaining from the British the territory along the eastern Gulf Coast and in the southeastern interior. In 1795, through a treaty with Spain, the United States took possession of much of that southeastern interior region, with Spain still retaining the Coast itself and the lands located near to it.

Although in 1800, under Bonaparte, France would regain from Spain the large western and delta areas of the once-French colony, it would not occupy them until late 1803, and that for only three weeks, as in that year Bonaparte sold France's recently regained Louisiana lands to the United States. Soon thereafter, in the years 1810-1812, the United States would obtain the remaining parts of the once-French colony, pressuring Spain to cede to it the Gulf Coast areas. As that new country, in the 1840s, extended its continental expanse and geopolitical regime to the Pacific, Greater French Louisiana, and its rich Mississippi Valley interior, would once again find itself in the middle of an empire, that of the, now continental United States.

The geopolitical changes had made for social demographic ones as well. Into Spanish Louisiana had come, forcibly, large numbers of African slaves,[14] also some few Anglo-American, Spanish and Canary Islander settlers, as well as important numbers of newer francophonic ones, the latter largely as refugees from elsewhere in the once-extensive French empire of North America.[15] These included those from Acadia, who arrived largely in the 1760s to settle in the very southwestern part of Louisiana, where they would become known as Cajuns; later, in the 1790s, also came free and forced refugees from Saint Domingue, including among them whites, free persons of color, and slaves. The number of arrivals from Saint Domingue would experience an important increase in 1803-1804, in the period of transition between Spanish, French, and American rule, and then increase even more massively in 1809-1810. These refugees directed themselves largely to the city of New Orleans, where they added their number to the different components of Louisiana's multiracial Creole population.[16] In addition, during much of the early nineteenth century, largely to what had become, in 1812, the state

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14 Lachance (1979: 162-167, 193-197), Ingersoll (1999: Ch. 7: esp. 181-186), G. Hall (1992a: 277ff.).

15 See the reprinted articles of Daigle (1996), LeBlanc (1996), Brasseaux (1996c, 1996d), Chandler (1996), Winzerling (1996), Conrad (1996a, 1996b), and Cummins (1996), respectively, in Carl A. Brasseaux, ed (1996a: Part II); also Din (1969, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1986, 1988).

16 Lachance (1988, 1992: 103-105), Debien and Le Gardeur (1981), Fiehrer (1989: 428-434; 1992).

of Louisiana - that is, to a much reduced version of Greater Louisiana - and especially to New Orleans, came a fair number of « foreign French. » that is, basically French from the metropole, who added themselves to the French Creole population of Louisiana.[17] There, however, they would encounter other migrants and immigrants, particularly the increasingly numerous Anglo-Americans, as well as, in largely the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, the many Irish and German immigrants who had settled in New Orleans; the city had become, after New York, the second largest port of entry into the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century.[18]

During these different periods of population change, Louisiana, especially in its very southern parts, continued to show both similarities to, and differences from, the scenes of French North American civilization in Canada and the Antilles. As had already been true in Canada and in the eastern Illinois country since the 1760s, the bulk of Greater Louisiana's French-speaking population - north and south, white and black - found itself, as of 1803, under the authority of an English-speaking governmental regime and facing questions of assimilation / particularity, of integration, accommodation and autonomy, vis-à-vis an increasingly important English-speaking population. Added to that, New Orleans, like Montreal, like also the northern parts of the former French Louisiana territory, experienced the problems of significant allophone European immigration, and the complex relations among French, « Anglo » and immigrant European that this entailed.[19] At the same time, the important refugee populations from Saint Domingue, that had arrived before the period of important European immigration, reinforced aspects of southern Greater Louisiana's, and especially New Orleans's, Antillian-like contours. These admixtures of peoples reinforced, as they reoriented, Louisiana's complex multiracial, multicultural

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17 Lachance (1992); Brasseaux (1996e), in Carl A. Brasseaux, ed. (1996a: 323-349).

18 See the respective reprinted articles of Brasseaux (1996e), Spletstoser (1996), Niehus (1996a, 1996b), Nau (1996), and Proctor (1996), in Carl A. Brasseaux, ed. (1996a: Part III); also Logsdon (1996: 76-80), Tregle (1992: 163-167), Hirsch and Logsdon, eds. (1992: 96-97).

19 See Logsdon (1996: 71-72, 78-79), Anctil (1996: 110-118).

society « of the middle » and offered a multitude of intercultural contexts and potential « middle grounds » of interaction.

Historiographical marginalization and exclusion: Disclaimed / unclaimed lands and peoples in ethno-national-state identification and memory

If we are able to trace out early Louisiana's geopolitical history and some of its spatial, racial, and ethnic contours, as well as certain of its socio-political features, much of the nature of early French Louisiana history and society, and of its different intercultural contexts, still remains little known. Despite its occupying several different middle terrains, historically and, potentially, historiographically, Greater Louisiana has been largely neglected by the historical communities of the different countries that, one may be permitted to think, might reasonably have incorporated it into their national history - as, for example, those of France, Canada, and the United States.[20] That the neglect has not been total is evidenced by two bibliographies on colonial Louisiana and New France (Canada) published in 1982 and 1992, respectively, by the Center for Louisiana Studies; by different bibliographical reviews of the historical literature on the respective French, Spanish, and American territorial and antebellum regime periods that were published together in 1982; and by the collections of reprinted articles that have more recently appeared in different volumes of the « The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History. »[21] The amount of work has been

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20 For comments along these lines and reviews of the scholarly literature on French colonial Louisiana, partly in reference to the historiography in the different countries, see Eccles (1972: 258; 1990: 270-271, 291-293), Saadani (1993: 12-16), Zitomersky (1994a: 4-10), Vidal (1995: 4-10). See also the remarks in Brasseaux (1982: 15), G. Hall (1992a: xiii) and Holmes (1970: xii) concerning the neglect which the history of the French and Spanish regime periods have suffered and, in a similar vein, those of Din (1982: 27-28) as concerns the state of Louisiana's American territorial and antebellum periods.

21 For the two bibliographies, Conrad and Brasseaux, eds. (1982), Brasseaux and Conrad, eds. (1992a); for the respective bibliographical reviews, Brasseaux (1982), Cummins (1982), and Din (1982), all in Cummins and Jeansonne, eds. (1982); in the Louisiana Purchase series, the volumes edited by Conrad (1995b) on the French regime period, Din (1996) on the Spanish regime period, and

limited nevertheless. The result is that, in respect to Greater French Louisiana, there has been much less Memory than Forgetfulness, thus leaving us with comparatively little knowledge of many of the basic features of its historical course as a territory, polity and society.

In many ways the relative scholarly *in*attention that Greater Louisiana has long experienced, as well as the recent (if modestly) increased attention it has come to enjoy, may be seen to reveal certain strong ethno-national and national-state orientations in the historiography of different countries and peoples - especially those of France, Canada, and the United States - orientations that, until recently, long worked to exclude Greater Louisiana from, rather than include it into, their collective memories. As concerns France, for example, aside from the massive historical work undertaken by Marcel Giraud, French Louisiana long was the object of almost no research at all on the part of French historians. In this it was not alone. Even French Canada - arguably, a more important French colony in North America - long attracted only slightly more of their attention. Both Canada and especially Louisiana have been basically cut out of the collective memory of France, at least by that country's historians, in principle the very individuals, the profession, that are charged with safeguarding that memory.[22]

This state of Forgetfulness among historians in France suggests the importance, we may speculate, for a territory - here, Louisiana, Canada - to have been part of an empire at the critically decisive moment of the political transformation of the empire's core into a new modern regime, into a nation-state - here France, via the French Revolution - in order for that territory, that society, that people, to be subsequently included in that nation-state's own story and collective memory - whether republican, imperial or otherwise. It is, we may further speculate, as if the two former

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Brasseaux (1996a) on immigration to Greater French Louisiana across the years.

22 See the remarks in this regard of Eccles (1972: 258; 1990: 270-271). As a sign of how little attention has been accorded French colonial Louisiana by French historians, see also two general works recently published in France on the history of French colonization, Meyer et al. (1991) and Pluchon (1991). Note exceptionally Giraud (1950, 1953, 1958, 1966, 1974, 1991), and much earlier Heinrich (1908) and Villiers du Terrage (1904, 1917, 1925).

French North American colonies had left the relevant world of French collective memory too early, before the decisive revolutionary act that transformed and gave birth to modern France itself. At once established and lost to the French empire during France's Ancien Regime, neither colony was part of French territory during that creative Revolutionary time, nor did either become so afterwards - save, as concerns Louisiana, for but three effective weeks under Bonaparte in 1803. Louisiana, like the once-French Canada, therefore belong fully to another regime and world, a status that has long led to a sort of ideological rejection of them, and of continental French North America as a whole, as being ineligible to occupy a part of the French collective memory. In this Louisiana and Canada stand in contrast, historically and historiographically, to the more studied French Antillian colonies, and especially to the much more researched world of francophonic Africa and Asia, that is, to colonies and societies, and ultimately countries, that were launched after the Revolution and that belong to France's modern (colonial) history.[23]

Something similar may be said of the place which greater Louisiana has occupied in Canadian historical study. Here, too, there has been much more Forgetfulness than Memory. Aside, basically, from the earlier work of Guy Frégault, and some more recent work on the socio-demographic conditions, and ethnic, racial and gender relations, in Greater French Louisiana, historians in Canada have given little attention to Greater French Louisiana.[24] This has been true for both Anglo-Canadians, who have otherwise conducted much research on colonial New France as part of Canadian history, and even French Canadians themselves, who could otherwise be supposed to be interested in the history of the general French presence in North America. After all, Greater Louisiana was a once-French North American territory that was initially an extension of Canada, both as a locus of activity and a

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23 Eccles (1972: 258; 1990: 270-271); for relative (in)attentions, Meyer et al. (1991) and Pluchon (1991).

24 Frégault (1944, 1952, 1968); Lessard, Mathieu and Gouger (1988) on migrations; Lachance (social demography, ethnicity, race); Ingersoll (race and gender relations). The last two historians, both Americans working and residing in Canada, have been providing the bulk of the recent work on Greater French Louisiana that is coming out of Canada (see our bibliography for examples).

destination for migration and settlement; that, from earliest times onward, bore certain resemblances to, and maintained close ties with, Canada, certainly under the French regime but even afterwards, in its northern parts, under the succeeding British regime; and that later, at different times after the end of the French regime period, experienced broadly analogous pressures of ethno-national integration / autonomy in respect to a dominant English-speaking society and regime. The relative paucity of Canadian scholarly research on Greater Louisiana would appear to underscore the abiding importance that ethno-national-state borders and geopolitical transformations have been for the study of Canada's history - here, we might add, as regards both Anglo- and French-Canadian historical study - and for the North American continent's history as a whole. The geopolitical outcome - i.e., the drawing of an international border separating Canada from the United States - rather than the past's different contexts and once-possible futures, would seem to have guided research on French North America's historical territories, regions, and societies, particularly as concerns Louisiana, and to have determined the eligibility, or not, of former, historically relevant places and societies, such as Louisiana, to be included in the collective memory of subsequent present-day ones. Here, too, as was the case for France, Louisiana lay outside the pale at the time when Canadian society, in the nineteenth century, was coming to form itself, generally and geopolitically, as a modern national (if still nationally divided) society and state.

If Greater Louisiana has represented a sort of *old* Lost Place / Lost People, *dis*claimed by France and Canada, rejected by them to a kind of a pre-relevant national historical past, for historians of Britain's North American colonies and the United States, and for these places' collective memories, its position as a belatedly acquired *new* territory and people - a shortlived one in Britain's case - has also rendered it as a basically *un*claimed part of their imperial, colonial or national stories. As concerns the United States, among the historians of that country there has been an important amount of Forgetfulness rather than Memory in respect to Greater Louisiana. Largely excepting some earlier (and continuing) work done on its Spanish period, relatively little

significant historical research has been undertaken in the United States on Greater French Louisiana, whether on its extensive or truncated parts, whether for the period before or after that once French colonial region became part of the United States. Moreoever, if it did come to be studied, it was much more for the period after its possession by the United States than before, and essentially for the very reduced part of the territory that became the state of Louisiana than for the larger territory itself.

In Greater French Louisiana's case, as that of the Spanish colonies to its east and west, what we have suggested for France perhaps partly applies to the United States as well. That is, with the very limited exception of some of its northern and central parts, such as the « pays des Illinois. » the once-French territory of Louisiana - like, too, the Spanish colonies - was neither a part of the United States nor much of a scene of « American » action at that decisive and creative moment of regime shift, when the United States successfully fought its War of Independence and undertook its own republican revolution, when it left its own « ancien » geo- and socio-political regime to become an independent federal republic. And as for France at the time of that country's decisive, creative moment of republican regime shift, so as regards the United States, Greater Louisiana itself was, very largely, elsewhere.

As a long unclaimed part of the history of the United States, early Greater French Louisiana has not been completely alone however. It may be likened - albeit to different degrees - to other territories and societies of the United States that had been founded, or governed, by European countries other than Britain - e.g., the western interior parts of New France south of the Great Lakes, the former Spanish colonies in Florida and the now-American southwest (New Spain), the New Netherlands, New Sweden. Whether they were located inside or outside the United States at the time of its creation as an independent republic, basically none of the histories of these territories and societies were integrated into the American national story. As an object of research, Greater French Louisiana actually occupied somewhat of a - here, once again - middle intermediate position in comparison to such other places. It came to be situated between, on the one hand, that of the

Spanish regions (including also Spanish Louisiana treated as a Spanish colony) and on the other, that of the little studied colonies and colonial parts of New Netherlands, New Sweden or the once-southwestern (French) Canadian interior. If more the object of historical research than the latter areas, French Louisiana nevertheless did not gain the kind of research attention that the Spanish colonial regions came to attract, this already in the early twentieth century. No equivalent to the « Spanish Borderlands » school emerged, with the latter's sense of a defined historical research field, internal historiographical debates, and concerted, cross-generational research efforts. Nevertheless, however different was the research attention given to these various non-British colonial and post-colonial regions, the amount was still comparatively limited, even for the Spanish Borderlands school. Such regions and their peoples basically remained unclaimed as part of the general history of the United States and unintegrated to it.[25]

In this, these once-colonial ethno-regional societies were not alone. Relative inattention and non-integration long applied as well to other non-Anglo-American social categories that, nevertheless, came to contribute much to the ethnic and racial diversity of the country - such as the different indigenous (Amerindian), forced migrant (African American), and immigrant-derived ethnic populations. We have come to take for granted the theme of American ethnic and racial diversity, and the associated double-sided question of integration / particularlity, as being classical themes and questions for the definition and apprehension of American society.

Yet, we need recall that such themes were little studied by the American historical community before the 1960s. Until circa a good generation ago, then, neither Greater French Louisiana as an ethno-regional society nor the other three population components of American ethno-cultural diversity were much integrated into the story of American society, a story that very much centered on

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25 See Steele (1998: 73-74); on the Spanish Borderlands, Bannon (1964, 1978), Weber (1986) and, as related to Louisiana, Cummins (1982); on the New Netherlands, Goodfriend (1988, 1992: 3-7), Rink (1986: 21-22).

the history of *Anglo*-American society, culture, and (geo)political contexts.[26]

In the United States, therefore, Greater French Louisiana has long been historically forgotten twice over, for being absent at the time of the creation of the United States, for being different from the country's Anglo-American cultural mainstream in any case.

As such, the relative scholarly *in*attention given in American Americanist historiography to Greater Louisiana, as a different, once-French territory and regional culture, and the minimal part it has had in the hegemonic American collective memory, need not be surprising.

The period since the 1960s has witnessed, however, a relative explosion of research activity on the theme of American ethnic and racial diversity, one that has borne on all four component categories of that diversity and of the relations that have existed among them. In this historiographic movement, Greater French Louisiana has occupied a position both similar to, and different from, those of the other categories of ethnic and racial diversity in the United States. It, like they, has enjoyed a certain reappreciation, a relative inclusion, as a component of American cultural diversity. Yet, as for others in the category of « non-Anglo ethno-regional cultures » - that is, regional societies derived from an originally non-British colonial past - the increased attention accorded to Greater Louisiana has come more lately, and has been of lesser magnitude, than that which the other categories - the Amerindian, the African American, the immigrant ethnic group - have enjoyed. In this, the ethno-territorial component of American diversity has suffered as an object of research,[27] in part, from the fact that the study of regions qua regions has not been

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26 Foner (1997: vii-viii); on ethnicity and immigration, Shenton and Kenny (1997), Weil (1994); on African Americans, Holt (1997), Ndiaye (1994); on Native Americans, Rostkowski, Delanoe, and Jacquin (1994), Wilson (1993).
Here, too, the historical memory of the United States may be likened to that of republican France, whose historical community has little integrated into that country's central narrative the ethno-regional (e.g., Brittany, Occitania, Catalonia) or immigrant populations, societies and cultures of the French metropole itself, whether they were part of the country before or after the latter achieved its modern national-state construction.

27 See Shenton and Kenny (1997: esp. 356, 367-369), Steele (1998: 70-77)

very important in the United States for much of the twentieth century, and has revived as an area of scholarly inquiry only in very recent times.[28]

At the same time, the lesser historical attention given to early ethno-regional societies would largely seem to reflect historical time as well as cultural space. In the midst of the greatly increased attention accorded to American ethnic and racial diversity, even the different non-English European settler or immigrant groups who were present in the future United States during the latter's British colonial period, as well as the interethnic relations that obtained among them and with those of English background, have, they too, received only a modest amount of the greatly increased scholarly attention that has been accorded to the theme of American ethnic and cultural diversity. They have also enjoyed much less attention than has been accorded to analogous immigrant-derived ethnic groups of the long post-independence period of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[29]

What is more, the scholarly attention which European settler and immigrant populations of the British American colonial period has gained has also been much less than that which has been accorded to the Amerindians and African Americans in the corresponding early period of American history.[30] What seems apparent is that, for the colonial period, the newer historiographic trends, in overcoming earlier failures of collective memory, are putting greater importance on non-white race as opposed to European-origin ethnicity, whether the latter be of an immigrant or non-Anglo territorial kind. The ethnic relations between the Anglo-American and other Euro-Americans, who were, historically, perhaps greater candidates for social inclusion than the Amerindian or African American in the very process of forming « American » society, would, in relative terms, still seem to be too difficult to manage. (As we implicitly suggest further below, such an emphasis on race over ethnicity can also be found in the

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28 Implicitly, Karsky and Rossignol (1994: 58-62).

29 See Shenton and Kenny (1997), Karsky and Rossignol (1994: 57-58), implicitly Weil (1994). On some recent studies of ethnic groups within British colonial America, Steele (1998: 74).

30 Implicitly, Karsky and Rossignol (1994: 73-76), Steele (1998: 70-77), Brown (1998).

different studies that have more recently been made of colonial Greater Louisiana itself.) Thus, whether the non-English Euro-american populations and societies were inside or outside the future United States during the time of its colonial period, they have each still enjoyed a certain lesser recognition and treatment as basic components of American cultural diversity.

Of the increased amount of scholarly attention that has nevertheless been accorded early, once colonial, non-Anglo ethno-territorial societies and cultures, Greater French Louisiana occupies a respectable, if not primary, place. The principal work on this category has continued to be conducted on the older, once Spanish regions, that is, on Florida and most especially on the American southwest - a region, as we have noted, that had long attracted some degree of research interest, particularly earlier in the twentieth century, when it came to form the field of study known as the « Spanish Borderlands. »[31]

Nevertheless, the recent work on Greater French Louisiana has been more considerable than the newer attention that has been accorded to the New Netherlands or to New Sweden, such that, historiographically, Greater Louisiana continues to occupy an intermediate middle position among the ethno-territorial societies of the United States.[32]

Much of the increased scholarly attention accorded to Greater French Louisiana has been given to the period of the French colonial regime; yet only a part of such work actually focuses on that era. It is often the case, for example, that studies give their focal attention to a later period of Greater Louisiana history than that of the French regime - although when doing so, they at times present the earlier French regime period as an important background or starting point for the themes and

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31 As studies focusing on the Spanish regime period of Greater Louisiana history have tended to be made within the field of Spanish Borderland research, they are not included here as being also part of the research on Greater French Louisiana, except in cases where a study may give strong emphasis to themes and conditions derived or extending from the previous French regime period or to the question of the French-connected context and society at the time of the Spanish period.

32 On recent research on the New Netherlands, see note 25 above.

developments evoked in their later-period research.[33] Yet other studies often give important direct attention to the French regime period itself, but do so in the context of a larger research effort that also includes an important treatment of the following Spanish and perhaps early American periods[34] - and occasionally even beyond.[35] Additionally, a number of works, having come to realize some of the historiographic potential of Greater French Louisiana that we evoked earlier, at times offer comparisons between Greater French Louisiana and other historical places on a number of, especially, racial, spatial, and societal themes. Yet, even while the direct comparative attention they give to Greater Louisiana and its French regime period is not unimportant, they often put their emphases on the other, non-Louisiana societies.[36]

As a consequence, the actual amount of the (increased) recent research that treats only, or basically, the French regime period in some important way is, in fact, still rather limited, especially when compared with that which has more recently been devoted to the regime's different successor periods or to the history of Greater French Louisiana more generally. In this sense, within the increased research attention that has been given to the history of Greater Louisiana in the past thirty years or so, the actual French colonial period itself has had some problems in fully affirming its research legitimacy as a subject area to be studied on its own right. On the other hand, judging from the odd doctoral dissertation that is now underway and from those that have rather recently been completed (including subsequent papers, articles, etc.), as well as from some newer studies starting to be made by

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33 E.g., Hanger (1991, 1997), Gould (1996), Logsdon (1996). The historical scholarship on Greater French Louisiana that we consider here and in the sections below bears exclusively on that of professional historians, except in the case of those few scholars who, though they formally may not be members of the historical discipline, have been offering historical studies that follow well disciplinary norms - e.g., Anctil, Arnold, Balesi, Creagh, Hero, Rossignol (see our bibliography).

34 E.g., J. Clark (1970), McGowan (1976), Arnold (1985, 1991, 2000), G. Hall (1992a), Ingersoll (1990, 1991, 1999), Usner (1998), E. Clark (1998, 1999), Spear (1999).

35 Hero (1991, 1995); or « beyond » both temporally and spatially, even to include other places of French presence in the United States, e.g., Creagh (1988).

36 Berlin (1974, 1998), Zitomersky (1979).

more established scholars, the specifically French regime period of Greater Louisiana history may be at the point of affirming itself as an object of research.[37] Interestingly, the greater number of scholars who have very recently come to be interested primarily in the French regime period of Greater Louisiana history seem to be doing so either from research bases situated outside the United States or, if in the country, largely from outside of American history and / or certain of its current main historiographical thrusts.[38] In this, as in the recent research more generally, certain aspects of the context and background of the researchers themselves appear to play a strong conditioning role.

Greater French Louisiana: background, memory, interpretation

Even as the increasing scholarly corpus is still of relatively modest size, different temporal-spatial foci and different interpretive orientations have nevertheless surfaced in the treatment which recent historical studies have given to early Greater Louisiana, particularly as regards questions of « race and space » - differences that would seem to reflect, in part, the combined effects of both the ethno-regional / national-state context - this once again - and the scholarly background of the researchers involved.

For example, as had been true earlier, a good many of the historians who have been undertaking research on early Greater French Louisiana in the past thirty years or so are themselves, if American, either originally from some near-Mississippi River or Coastal place of the present-day, once-French Louisiana territory or, whatever their national origin, they have come to reside and work in that territory - professionally, perhaps personally, adopting the region as their own, as it were. At the same time, however, of the many scholars that have such a personal Greater Louisiana territorial connection, it is almost exclusively but a

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37 E.g., Saadani (1993, 1998, 1999), Vidal (1995, 1999), Langlois-Bethelot (1999), LaMonte (1999), Mapp (1999); Johnson (1992), Lugan (1994), Galloway (1998), Ekberg (1998), Lachance (1999), Pritchard (1999), Carson (1999), Zitomersky (1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1996).

38 See, for example, note 37 above: all but Carson, Galloway, and LaMonte work either outside the United States or have their scholarly starting points in fields other than American history.

number of those working in a Cajun country context that would actually seem to be able to trace themselves back to the inhabitants of early Greater French Louisiana. While the research of these Cajun country scholars covers the earlier French colonial period, and is responsible for much important work done on it, its treatment of Cajun history in its own right, as well as in relation to Greater Louisiana's (and Greater French America's) more general history, is rather exceptional: for it is providing the history, and thus safeguarding the collective memory, of a people and place, as reconstructed by those originally of that place - and by some others associated with them.[39] In contrast, with perhaps just a few exceptions, other recent historians engaged in what we may call Greater French Louisiana's non-Cajun « Creole » history, whether or not personally associated, in some way, with the present-day version of that earlier territory, do not seem to have had their origins in the region's « *ancienne population.* »[40] Unlike the Cajun country historians, these scholars, as well as those from elsewhere, are not establishing or reinforcing the collective memory of their own people / place - except in the broadest sense, namely, that that people / place is now coming to be seen, perhaps, as a true part of their own larger history: for Americans, that of the region itself and that of the United States; for French-connected scholars, that of France and its colonial empire.[41]

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39 E.g., the work of Brasseaux on both Cajun history itself (1987, 1992) and on French colonial Louisiana, and of Conrad (himself apparently of « Creole » origin), working partially in a Cajun context (for example, 1978), but productive on the French colonial regime period especially; similarly Baker, as concerns work in both areas; and also Oubre, of apparent Creole background, working on Cajun history (e.g., Brasseaux, Fontenot, Oubre, 1994). See our bibliography for the work of these different scholars.

40 Among such other scholars recently active in the study of Greater French Louisiana history who are either from, or have come to live and work in, some part of the present-day, once-French territory of Louisiana (and who figure in our bibliography) are: Arnold, Bell, E. Clark, Ekberg, Galloway, Gould, G. Hall, Hero, Johnson, LaMonte, Logsdon, Ricard, Tregle, Usner. Of these, only Hero and Ricard would seem to be descended from the original Creole population (but also Conrad, note 39 above).

41 Two scholars active in the historical study of Greater French Louisiana come from, and currently reside and work in, what are former parts of the French colonial empire in Africa, namely, Saadani of Morocco and Seck of Senegal (see our bibliography).

Various other combinations of ethno-national cum educational and / or residential context and disciplinary background among the historians recently engaged in the study of early Greater French Louisiana would also seem to have influenced the temporal / spatial coverage and the interpretive direction of the work being done. Some relevant categories of scholarship in this regard would seem to be those distinguishing United States-based American Americanists, American Latin Americanists, American Europeanists, and Cajun country researchers; Canadian or European (basically French) based and / or educated scholars of North America; as well as a few others basically working on French colonial history, whether of the Americas or elsewhere. For example, in terms of the temporal domain of early Greater French Louisiana that is covered in the recent studies, those researchers of (North) American history educated *or* based in Europe or France (whatever their national origin),[42] as well as those few of French colonial history both educated *and* based in Canada or France,[43] generally focus their attention on the French regime period of Greater Louisiana history almost exclusively. At the same time, American Latin Americanists / « Hispanicists » working in the field of Greater Louisiana history would tend not to give focal attention to the French regime period, even as they might include it in a scholarly treatment of Greater Louisiana's long eighteenth-century colonial, or particular Spanish regime, period.[44]

Space and society

Differences of ethno-national and residential context and of historical subdisciplinary background may be seen particularly to mark the interpretive orientations given to Greater French

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42 E.g., Allain, Balesi, Saadani, Vidal, Zitomersky (see bibliography). An exception of sorts is Rossignol (1996), which, if not treating the early French regime period, focuses on the second, mini-French period of late 1803, the moment of Louisiana's transfer to the United States.

43 E.g., Canada: Pritchard, Lessard, Mathieu, Gouger; France: Giraud, Langlois-Bethelot, Lugan (see our bibliography).

44 Din, Fiehrer, G. Hall, Hanger (see our bibliography). I am using the term « Hispanicists » to capture those who approach Greater French Louisiana from a background and interest in Spanish Borderland / Spanish North American fields of study; they give primary attention to Louisiana's Spanish period.

Louisiana history in the recent research - not least as concerns the degree to which Greater Louisiana can be understood as a part of a larger French-speaking world, territorially or otherwise. Interestingly, on this question, as on a few others of thematic importance in the research, we find the diversity of background largely reducing itself to produce, basically, but two general interpretive orientations - the one generally held by United States-based (but not Cajun country) American Americanists and in some « complicitous » Latin Americanist work, the other, to put it simply, held by all other scholars taken together, including Hispanicists.

That is, in the recent treatment of Greater French Louisiana differences have come to exist on the very perception of it as a territory, socio-political order, or society (in racial terms or otherwise), and of its relation to the larger world of which it was a part. American Americanists based in the United States, for example, whether focused on the period of the French regime or the years following, tend to stress much less than do others - almost to the point of rejecting - the notion that French and, later, Spanish and British (i.e., east-of the-Mississippi) Louisiana may have been parts of larger territorial and socio-political wholes - whether North American or Euro-Atlantic. This, however much they - like other American Americanist work on early American society - may have recently left traditional « Anglo-American-centered » historiographical moorings.

For example, whereas the more recent, general historiographical interest in race, ethnicity, city and - more belatedly for American Americanists - region can be found to apply, now too, to different recent works on early Greater Louisiana, differences exist among them, along some of the broad lines of national cum disciplinary field backgound indicated above, in regards to the spatial foci and bounds of their studies, and in respect to their understanding of the territorial wholes of which their more specific spatial objects of study are a part - differences which ultimately extend to their understanding of the (interactive) nature of the French regime period's territorial orientations and activity. When examining a more specific area of greater Louisiana, American Americanists and American Latin Americanists / Hispanicists tend to present their city, locality, or

region of study - quite often located in the southern part of Greater Louisiana - in more spatially bounded terms, one that hardly admits, for example, of the possible relevance for the evolution of their particular area of its interaction with the distant interior or with Canada - an interaction that is basically ignored.[45] Furthermore, in its rather reductionistic focus on Greater Louisiana's Creole south, such American work effectively comes to imply for French Louisiana's extensive Mississippi Valley territory a form of the North-South division that would ultimately come to pass when that territory became part of the United States. As such, the work indirectly serves to impose the American historical future as a way to apprehend the French North American past, and in doing so offers an example of the way the French colony of Louisiana has risked coming to be assimilated into a particularly Anglo-American historiographical and culturally interpretive context.

By way of contrast, American Europeanists, French colonial historians, some United States-based American Americanists interested in government, law or institutions, and certainly (North) Americanists originating from, or based in, other countries than the United States tend either to treat some general phenomenon for, or across, the whole of French Louisiana territory or - as do also the Cajun-based historians and those working on the interior Illinois country and Arkansas areas - they tend to understand the specific Louisiana place that they are investigating to be part of a

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45 E.g., Usner (1981, 1987, 1992), as commented upon by Zitomersky (1994a: 18 and n 13), Ekberg (1996); also G. Hall (1992a, 1992b). Unusual in this respect for United States-based American Americanist work is that of J. Clark (1969, 1970), Briggs (1985, 1990), and Arnold (1985, 1991, 2000). Different among recent scholarship for having been undertaken from a background in economic history, the work of J. Clark gives emphasis to the commercial ties of New Orleans with the interior. The research of both Briggs and Arnold (who himself, as a federal judge, is also different for having law as his main profession), in its focus on two of Greater Louisiana's interior regions, the Illinois country and the Arkansas area, respectively, takes into account the region's external ties with New Orleans and other areas to the south as well as with different places in the interior and Canada - something which is, in any case, generally done by a number of the different studies focusing on the Illinois country. In the three American Americanist cases above, the research object would seem to have been able to impose itself on the study.

larger territorial network, even « system. » of interaction that was characteristic of French North America;[46] they at times even suggest that that system left an important heritage in the spatial organization of much of the North American continent in post-French regime years.[47] In doing so, they come to approximate the more continental perspective, and the sense of an important French heritage, that may be found in Canadian historical research on Canada itself. In this respect, they may be labelled more North Americanist than simply Americanist in their research.

For example, we find in this research a greater sense of Louisiana occupying an interactive - and not merely geographical - middle position between Canada and the Caribbean; of its interaction with Canada particularly; of the interaction that existed between its distant territorial parts, e.g., between its Gulf Coast and interior Illinois country regions; and of the Illinois Country as both a crossroads and object of contention between Louisiana and Canada, between New Orleans and Quebec-Montreal - a position and rivalry that was a kind of precursor to the setting and urban-territorial rivalries that would take place in the subsequent British and American regime periods between, ultimately, Montreal, or New York, and New Orleans for the Great Lakes interior, for « The Old North West. » A French

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46 As examples of such United States-based American Americanist work, see the reprinted articles of Allain (1980), Brasseaux (1980), Hardcastle (1995), Lemieux (1995), Micelle (1995), Conrad (1995a), Baker (1995), and Baker, Simpson, and Allain (1995), in Conrad (1995b: Parts III, V, VI, and VII); several of these articles, and yet other work to which they are connected, have been produced by scholars working out of the Cajun country, and is a sign of the greater range of that scholarship. For the connection made between the Cajun country itself and the larger territory, see Brasseaux (1987, 1992). For American Europeanists, Ekberg, Johnson; for French colonial historians, Giraud, and for (North) Americanists outside the United States, Lachance (1999), Saadani, Zitomersky. For work on the Illinois country particularly, see Balesi, Briggs, Ekberg, Vidal, Zitomersky; only a portion of this is produced by a United States-based American Americanist (Briggs). Work by Arnold on the Arkansas area and by Hero comparing Louisiana and Canada also incorporate a larger territorial perspective; interestingly, for neither scholar is the study of history his primary profession. (For the titles of the different works, where not otherwise referred to here, see our bibliography.)

47 Zitomersky (1979, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1996).

heritage of spatial organization and urban-core-territorial rivalry, as it were.[48]

As we have noted, such differences of perspective on spatial loci, bounds, and organization is related to perspectives on both the multicultural relations in the territory and the nature of French-connected society and activity itself. In disconnecting French Louisiana from a larger French North American whole, for example, the work of United States-based American Americanists and some American Latin Americanists on the Louisiana south also tends to give less emphasis to the more particularly French-influenced aspects of society - especially those of a patterned behavioral or structured institutional kind. In implying the historical socio-political and territorial discontinuity of Louisiana from the larger French North American world, for example, these « southern studies » - as too some little American Americanist work on the northerly Illinois country - show an historiographical continuity with both older Turnerian and more recent social-historical orientations in American Americanist historiography. They do so, for example, by interpreting colonial Louisiana history as a process of evolution from a materialistically-based (French) frontier stage of fluid, institutionally formless, rationally adaptive, individually-based, multiracial interactions, one that is conditioned and expressed through important land availability and frontier subsistence exchanges, to a next economistically based (post-French) stage of more structured commercialized and institutionalized patterns of social interaction. Such an approach has the effect of treating a French colonial context via historiographical questions, concerns and categories that are effectively derived from the American historical (and historiographical) mainstream areas, which serves, particularly in the southern studies, to make the object of study, French Louisiana, into a quasi-Anglo-American new-old place « with a difference. »[49]

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48 Mention of the Illinois country as both crossroads and object of contention between Louisiana and Canada may be found here and there in the different work on the Illinois country (see note 46 above). For focal attention on the rivalry, see Conrad (1995a), Hero (1995: 97-102); and for both questions, in terms of competing urban networks and a French legacy, see Zitomersky (idem).

49 See largely Usner (1981, 1987, 1992), and earlier comments thereupon in Zitomersky (1994a: 18). See also Briggs (1985, 1990) on the Illinois country,

This interpretation of a fluid French frontier period may also be found in the work of American Americanists and American Latin Americanists / Hispanicists treating, partially or focally, the succeeding Spanish period of colonial Louisiana history (1760s-1803) and American territorial and antebellum periods (and beyond), where the « fluid. » purportedly even « chaotic. » French period partially functions as a background counterpoint to that of the more state-structured (corporatistically racially defining and, possibly, protective) Spanish regime.[50] By way of contrast, American Europeanists and (North) Americanists originating from, or based in, Europe or Canada tend to see structured, including state, institutions and patterned forms of territorial occupation and social relations as both very much present and of influence in the articulation of the spatial and racial relations, and the economic and socio-political regime, that developed in the early French period - to different degrees suggesting French Louisiana to be a sort of great French North American « middle ground » between Canada and the Caribbean. It is also a perspective which informs this very essay.

French Louisianian - Amerindian relations

These different ethno-national-state and disciplinary contexts and perspectives have their effects on the specific understanding that is proferred on the place that the Amerindian and the African American occupied in French Louisiana. For example, the important scholarly attention that has been given in

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whose work, while capturing the region's French-like territorial interaction, nevertheless emphasizes, Turnerian-like, the availability of land and, concomitantly, the open, egalitarian, consensually democratic, local society that took form in this Mississippi Valley area, in contrast to a purportedly more authoritarian Canadian East.

50 As « chaotic » or « extremely fluid. » Latin Americanist G. Hall (1992a: xiii-xiv, 1-27, 128, 160), and as especially racially fluid, G. Hall (1992b: 63-66, 87); for the French period as a « fluid » one, generally and in racial terms, see also the following works, which often draw on Hall and Usner's characterization of the earlier French regime period, to wit: those of « Hispanicist » Hanger (1997: 2-3) on the Spanish period; of American Americanists Gould (1996: 28-34) on the antebellum period, Bell (1997: 11-13) on the long antebellum and immediate post-Civil War years, and Logsdon (1996: 74) on New Orleans down to today.

North American historical research, in the last generation or so, to the Native American, and to colonial-Amerindian relations, has more recently been extended to the vast territory claimed by the French colony of Louisiana.[51]

While both maintaining and enriching an established interest in such traditionally studied aspects of French-Amerindian interaction as geopolitical relations, missionary activity, and export-oriented (fur and deerskin) economic exchanges, these recent studies of French-Amerindian contacts in Louisiana have also come to treat a varied number of other domains that often bear on more continued, daily economic and social forms of interaction - for example, in relation to settlement patterns, local territorial cooperation and conflict, demographic trends, family and marital practices, subsistence activity, and to the application of authority and the law. In this we may see an extension to French Louisiana of the interest in the larger social-relational context that can be found in historiographic trends more generally.

In this regard, United States-based historians, especially those undertaking the study of French colonial Louisiana from within the larger field of American history itself, have continued to use the concept of « frontier » to structure and interpret their studies of Louisiana and of the attendant French-Amerindian relations that took place in that territory. While largely abandoning much of the traditional Turnerian approach to the frontier in favor of the recently developing emphases in American Americanist historiography on the varied, persistent, proximate relations of settler and Amerindian in the construction of society in broad frontier contact zones - and on the position of the Amerindians themselves in that interactive process - these American Americanist historians have nevertheless retained a more traditional focus on economistic forms of interaction (e.g., frontier subsistence exchanges) and on the informal nature of such contact: the interactive frontier may be shown as being more persistently closer to the heartland of French Louisiana settlement than in Anglo-America - or, indeed, we may add, than in Canada - but, joining newer to older American social-historical interpretations, the interactive frontier is depicted as a one of fluid, rationally

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51 In this regard a useful, if not quite complete, indicator is Forêt (1995).

adaptive, racially interactive, individualistic responses to shifting economic opportunities and contexts, if now for Amerindian and colonial alike.[52]

From such work one gains the impression of a fluid « middle ground » - although the term is not always used - of shared activity among French settlers and indigenous Amerindian peoples. Concomitant with this portrayal of equal, reciprocal, daily relations and a common middle ground is the fact that, at times, the very designation of the region under study is not made in terms of a French-related context, i.e., Louisiana, but rather of a common natural area, i.e., the Lower Mississippi Valley, in which the different colonial and indigenous peoples interact and create their apparently common societal context. We are reminded here of Richard White's work on « The Middle Ground » of the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815. Different from White's « middle ground. » however, and, once again, more traditional as a result, is the fact that the contact zone of relevance in the studies of French-Amerindian interaction in the Mississippi and Mobile River valleys is actually that of certain core areas of the French Louisiana colony itself, whatever natural label may actually be given to the spatial domain under study.[53]

Traditional, too, in this American Americanist work is the fact that the Turnerian interpretive framework of stages of economic and civilizational evolution used for Anglo-America is also partially applied to characterize the course of colonial Louisiana history: the fluid, informal frontier period continues throughout the French regime, eventually to evolve, under the

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52 See especially Usner (1981, 1987, 1992, 1998), Briggs (1985, 1990). Somewhat unusually, the important work on the Illinois country by Ekberg, an American *Europeanist*, has also been using the concept of the « frontier » in its studies (1985, 1998). Initially the term seems to have been employed partly as a colloquial expression to help establish the setting of the study, partly as a recognition of some conditioning factors on society that recall, to a certain extent, the work of the American Americanists. However, as the most recent publication (1998) offers, in addition, a description of the social structure among the French Illinois inhabitants that recalls Briggs, it suggests an understanding of an Illinois « frontier society » by an American Europeanist that approximates that of the Turnerian school of American Americanist writing.

53 See Usner (idem), White (1991).

Spanish, into a next post-frontier period-stage of more structured, institutionalized and commercialized economic patterns that come to marginalize the Amerindian from Louisiana's subsistence, and post-subsistence, economy, and to reduce, if not eliminate, colonial-Amerindian contacts accordingly.[54] Implicitly, French Louisiana's evolution, and that of the colonial-Amerindian relations connected to it, are best understood as being of an Anglo-American evolutionary kind, if spatially and temporally a bit differently so.

In contrast, American Europeanists[55] and European-based or educated North Americanist and French colonialist scholars of French colonial Louisiana and Louisianan-Amerindian relations[56] - who often concern themselves with more varied spheres of interest than just the economistic - may be distinguished by the serious attention they generally give to the formative role which different institutional structures and patterned forms of social interaction early played in the construction of French Louisiana society and of attendant French-Amerindian relations. At times differences may appear among these historians in the emphases they give to the importance, for those formative processes, of metropolitan or colonial-based structures and institutions; or in the social importance they may attribute to the different colonial institutional actors - e.g., state, church, commercial company - and to the degree to which the structures may have oriented, but not quite enveloped, the range of individual and group-related interaction. Nevertheless, the tendency among them, for some perhaps more than for others, is to understand that the apparently fluid, individual interaction that is found by United States-based American Americanist scholars (as well as, to a certain degree, by some American Latin Americanist work) to characterize social and French-Amerindian relations in colonial Louisiana - where it may have existed - was itself made possible, to different degrees, by

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54 See Usner (1981, 1992, 1998); for explicit indication, however, of continued, if altered Amerindian market activity in New Orleans, Natchez, and Mobile after the 1760s, see Usner (1992: 213; 1998; 81-82, 103), and for such activity in New Orleans in the nineteenth century, Johnson (1992: 39-40), and especially Usner (1998: ch 6).

55 Ekberg (1985, 1998), Johnson (1989, 1992).

56 Balesi, Giraud, Saadani, Vidal, Zitomersky (see our bibliography).

institutions and patterned forms of behavior that shaped and structured social relations generally and colonial-Amerindian interaction in particular - and that this was true throughout the French period, even in the purportedly initially formless frontier stage of Louisiana history. Anglo-America, French Louisiana was not.

For example, because of the sometimes greater reference in these works to specifically socio-institutional and socio-cultural, as opposed to merely materialistic, Amerindian-colonial interaction, one actually gains a more substantiated impression of the shared practices of the two populations, but also of the tension existing between certain popular, if still uneven, colonial tendencies towards mixture and more state-governed strictures in favor of the segmentation and hierarchization of French-Amerindian relations - and of the importance that this latter disposition would have. The latter might admit of - indeed organize - the presence of French settlements and Amerindian villages in close proximity to each other, as well as the associated interaction between the two for purposes of mutual economic, ecological and defensive support;[57] and it might also accept (reluctantly) mixed domestic settings. But it would basically discourage, with effect, any general settlement mixtures or domestic coresidence of the two populations. It would work to deny, for example, through special legislation the Amerindian spouse or partner - often a woman - and métis offspring any of the normal legal claims of succession arising from such domestic unions should the spouse or children identify themselves, through their subsequent residence, too strongly with their larger Amerindian family and people. Thus, what was shared was often done so under terms oriented, if not totally encapsuled, by the state. Even at the presumably more open popular level, the civic rights and general acceptance of an Amerindian within the French colonial settlements would be compromised should the individual remain too culturally an Amerindian and insufficiently French. From such work, therefore - and in contrast to the image proferred by American Americanists - one is hard put to gain the impression of a French-connected territory of simple fluid, equal, reciprocal relations

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[57] See Zitomersky (1992, as revised in 1994a: 359-387; 1994b: 67-71).

among Amerindians and French colonials. Rather one gains the impression that, just as there were core areas of French Louisiana settlement, in proximity to which, in segmented fashion, small Amerindian settlements might be allowed for certain supportive interactive purposes, so there was to be a socially privileged core population, the French colonial, to which Amerindians might be related, but in a decidedly unequal way.[58]

In certain basic respects such studies of French-Amerindian relations fit more readily than do those of the United States-based American Americanists with the logic of the pioneering work on the « middle ground » proferred by Richard White, however much the former do not employ the concept of « middle ground » itself as an interpretive framework. For in such a framework, it is the arrival into the interior of the state and of colonial institutions and settler establishments that will end the purportedly reciprocal relations colonials and Natives held with each other, to the disadvantage - through his exclusion or marginalization - of the Amerindian. What the above, essentially non-American Americanist research is showing is that such a persistent colonial presence arrived rather early in the territory of French Louisiana, certainly for the coastal areas and also with but short delay, for the Illinois country interior. It is something which, in their following of general American historiographical trends, the United States-based American Americanists appear to have misapprehended in their treatment of the *French* colony of Louisiana and which, in respect to its northerly Illinois country, the equally American Americanist work on the « Middle Ground » of the Great Lake Basin and Ohio River Valley also seems to have missed.[59]

Finally, in respect to middle positions, what is perhaps being suggested by the recent work of American Europeanists and non-

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58 For this understanding, see Zitomersky (1994b: 70); for important empirical work and some similar reflections, see Vidal (1995: 485-510), and Havard (2000); for additional information, Ekberg (1985: 114-121).

59 White (1991); also Hinderaker (1997: 9-19, 34-39, 43-64, esp. 87-101, 262-263), whose treatment of French society and French-Amerindian contact in the interior, as we suggested in note 7 above, seems unaware of recent historical research and reflections in Europe on the Illinois country - e.g., Saadani (1993: 265-288), Zitomersky (1994a, among others), and especially Vidal (1995); also, in part, Havard (2000)..

United States-based historians on the French-Amerindian relationships that took place within French colonial Louisiana is the possible existence of a French way of doing things that itself formed a middle way between Spanish corporatism and Anglo-American exclusion - one of relative, if unequal, individual inclusion operating in parallel to group segmentation and interaction. Their work on the convergence of socio-political and social-spatial regimes in French colonial Louisiana also suggests the evolution of a different, perhaps more « integrative » kind of « modern » North American society existing parallel to that of Anglo-America - one of the (not always so Anglo-American-like) territorial integration of its different regions, of relative equality before the law for its Euroamerican inhabitants, and of persistent, if unequal, niches for its Amerindian populations. At the same time, their emphasis on larger socio-political dimensions to apprehend French North America also reveals Louisiana to have offered, in the kinds of local interaction that took place with the Amerindian throughout the territory, a sort of middle way of French-Amerindian relations and societal construction within French America itself, one lying between Caribbean Amerindian elimination, on the one hand, and two different sorts of French-Amerindian contact in Canada, on the other - i.e., that of colonial-Amerindian « segmentation / interaction » at both the regional and *interior* local levels, that of important colonial and Amerindian mixing in the upper Canadian interior.

The Greater Louisiana South, slavery and race relations

The treatment which recent historical research has accorded French - African-American relations in Greater French Louisiana, and the relationship which the historians' respective national and disciplinary backgrounds might have to that treatment, bear both similarities and differences to what is true for the work on French - Native American relations in the territory.

Perhaps even more so than the research on French-Amerindian relations, the several studies that focus on, or offer important attention to, French-African American relations have

come to emphasize the southerly parts of the Greater Louisiana territory, that is, the Mississippi delta and Gulf Coast areas. And like the studies that focus on French-Amerindian relations in that southern region, those treating white-black relations there effectively do so without giving much recognition to the connection which the region had with the French North American interior. As is true for the studies of the Amerindian, this has an effect on the treatment that is given to the position of the African in the south. For example, in tending to ignore or minimize the importance which French Illinois foodstuffs had for the support of the territory's southern establishments, they, like the work on the Native Americans, may well be exaggerating the importance which Africans had as general food suppliers within southern Louisiana society - a theme that is of some importance in the research on the position and relations of both Native American and African American in respect to a French and multiracial southern Louisiana society.[60] Such research becomes particularly skewed, however, to the degree to which it suggests that it is capturing something general or essential in the nature of the relations the French had with the African American, even as it effectively ignores, at the same time, the important presence of racially based slavery in the Louisiana north, in the Illinois country, and the differences that may well have obtained between slavery and black-white race relations there and in the south.[61]

Nevertheless, in contrast to the work done on the Native American, that on slavery and black-white relations in the French Louisiana south does show a sense that the southern region was part of a larger territorial and cultural world, even to the point of suggesting at times the important connections it maintained with that exterior world. That world lay, however, to the south and east, that is, largely to the Caribbean - either French or Spanish, depending on the temporal focus of the study - and also to Africa,

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60 E.g., Usner (1979: 28, 39; 1981, 1987, 1992: esp. Ch. 6: 191-218), McGowan (1976: esp. 135-145), G. Hall (1992a). The point is not to deny the fact but to raise the question of the relative significance.

61 For the argument about the *essential* particularity of French relations to the African American, see the pages below discussing the « New Orleans School. » For French colonial - African American relations in the Illinois country, see Vidal (1995: 534-557), Ekberg (1985: 197-239; 1998: 145-161).

the direct place of origin of the great bulk of the slaves imported to French Louisiana, slaves whose culture may have influenced that of Louisiana society itself.

Such an external orientation is not uncommon in this research and, when present, it often sets the system of slavery and black-white race relations in the Louisiana south in comparison to what was happening in the French or Spanish Caribbean as a way to situate more sharply the more particular developments in Louisiana itself. Interest often bears on legal-institutional questions concerning the role meant to be occupied by Africans in society, the latitudes and limits of the niche(s) the Africans actually do come to occupy, the interaction between white and black, and the social control over black people in society. The fact that American Latin Americanists / Hispanicists, as well as comparatively minded Americanists, working within or without the United States, have been well represented in this recent work helps explain the Caribbean and thematic orientations that the research on black-white relations in the Louisiana south has taken on.[62]

Less commonly, however, does the external orientation move from establishing the larger context to examining the actual interaction that Louisiana had with that larger context - with the exception, perhaps, of the interest to be found in some research on the influence on Louisiana of Caribbean slave law,[63] or, more explicitly, on the refugee migrations and ideological currents that flowed from Saint Domingue to Louisiana during the time of the French and Haitian Revolutions,[64] this well after the end of Louisiana's French colonial period. When attention is sometimes given in this research to Louisiana's actual external interaction during the time of the French regime, it is generally directed to Africa and to questions of the slave trade, of the slaves' rather immediate African origins, and, in connection with this, of the effects of this very African presence on Louisiana society. Such

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62 For Latin Americanist / Hispanicist work, Fiehrer (1979, 1989), Baade (1983), Hanger (1991, 1993, 1997); for some comparative others, Everett (1966), Foner (1970), Ingersoll (1990, 1995, 1999: esp. 211-239), McGowan (1976).

63 Foner (1970), Ingersoll (1990, 1995, 1999), McGowan (1976), Baade (1983), Hanger (1991, 1993, 1997).

64 Lachance (1979, 1988), Debien and Le Gardeur (1981), Fiehrer (1979, 1989: 428-434), Hall (1992a: 346-350, 374), McGowan (1976: 380-385, 402-410).

interests reflect themes that have gained importance in the more general, often « Atlanticist » research that has been conducted of late on slavery and black-white race relations in the Americas. Here, the interesting trans-Atlantic wholes and connections have often come to mean those between the New World and Africa,[65] rather than between it and Europe, as might be found either in more traditional historiography or in that part of the recent research on Louisiana that treats it as a particularly French-formed place.

Nevertheless, whether concerning Africa or the Caribbean, the actual attention given in these studies to the interaction with the larger whole still generally occupies a lesser place in the research. This is true especially when compared to the work conducted on Greater Louisiana as a French place and society in North America by different American Europeanist and Cajun-related scholars or by various (North) Americanists based outside the United States. In this respect, the research on Greater French Louisiana has still generally not responded to the calls made in some historiographical circles for the development of themes that could address the question of Louisiana's especially more Caribbean and African, as well as continental North American and metropolitan French, connections.[66]

In respect to the actual system of slavery and black-white race relations that developed among African and colonial in the Greater French Louisiana south, the different works treating that theme offer the outlines of a common story, but with different descriptive and interpretive versions of it that partly reflect, once again, the national cum disciplinary backgrounds of the researchers themselves. Much of the research suggests that during Greater Louisiana's « Latin » colonial period, under the succeeding French and Spanish regimes, there began the development of a three-tiered racial structure of free Euroamericans, free (if unequal) persons of color, and black slaves that would come to emerge with particular strength in the early American period. This served to make the Greater Louisiana south, especially its main coastal cities, a unique place in the United States, particularly in comparison

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65 Usner (1979: 36-37), Fiehrer (1979), Hall (1992a, 1992b), Ingersoll (1996), Seck (1999).

66 See Fiehrer (1979, 1989), and implicitly Foner (1970), Hall (1992a), Seck (1999).

with the Anglo-American South, where a more bipolar set of racial relations was otherwise in practice.[67] Implicitly, there is an integrative place, so many niches, for the African to occupy in French and Spanish Louisiana, much as there was for the Native American in French Louisiana. Here, French relations to the two races points to the existence of a Greater French Louisiana society that was, if hierarchical and partially segmented on racial grounds, also much more integrative than that of Anglo-America.

A number of the studies also generally seem to agree that such an unusual and continuous three-tiered system existed as part of another kind of continuity, that of a francophonic Creole culture that embraced all members of the three-tiered racial hierarchy and that had formed and continued to exist during the French and Spanish periods and into that of the American regime. A number also generally suggest that both the broader francophonic Creole culture and, especially, its particular three-tiered racial hierarchy - and most especially the middling free persons of color within it - were being pressured to disappear as such during the American antebellum period by a fundamentally intolerant and repressive Anglo-American culture and regime (whether national, state or local in its political expression); the latter, in unequal alliance with allophone immigrants (whose history, and whose cultural alliances - given the much more important recent attention accorded race over ethnicity - are yet to be adequately researched) is taken to have ultimately succeeded, hegemonically, to effect the demise of that early Creole societal structure, if not quite its civic culture. In these latter points, a certain linear and binary Manichean history is implicitly being offered, one that runs downward from racially tolerant, semi-integrative Latin(-regime) « good guys » to racistic, segregationistic, exclusionary Anglo-American « baddies. »[68]

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67 For different pieces of this general story, see Foner (1970), McGowan (1976), Usner (1979), Hall (1992a, 1992b), Gould (1991, 1996), Hanger (1996, 1997), Dormon, ed. (1996: Preface), Ingersoll (1991, 1999), Hirsch and Logsdon, eds. (1992: Part III: Introduction), Logsdon and Bell (1992), Logsdon (1996); also, Brasseaux, Fontenot and Oubre (1994) and Brasseaux (1996f) for a Cajun country context and a somewhat different time line.

68 For such views, see especially our comments below of the « New Orleans School. » Implicit in this general story, following a rather common American

The broad attention given in this history not only to the Latin colonial eighteenth but the American nineteenth century indicates the degree to which the question of heritage - especially, as we shall note, that of the French regime period on its successor societies in the Greater Louisiana territory - has emerged as a theme of interest in this research. As we have noted, the nature of the French regime-period and its possible heritage is a theme that is varyingly present in recent research on the spatial organization of Greater French Louisiana territory, and is somewhat referred to in work relating to French-Amerindian relations. But it is a subject that fairly pervades, in an often explicit way, much of the recent, very largely (ethnically) American historical research that treats - across the French, Spanish and subsequent American territorial and antebellum years of Greater French Louisiana history - such particularly cultural and racial matters, especially as regards the question of slavery and the position of the African in society.

If sharing much, these studies of slavery and black-white relations in Greater French Louisiana nevertheless reveal important differences among them that reflect both certain broader ethno-national and disciplinary backgrounds of the scholars working in the field, but also aspects of local and regional background that partly cut across the general categories. That is, we not only see, as elsewhere, a certain subdivision between United States-based American Americanists cum colonial Latin Americanists, on the one hand, and historians with different other kinds of national and subdisciplinary backgrounds on the other hand. We also find a subdivision largely between what we may call the « New Orleans School » and the « Others. » each with different admixtures of cultural, political, social, and materialistic explanations for the origins and timing of the Creole culture and

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Americanist historiographical path, one of the important societal actors in the French regime-period studies, the Amerindian, has by now largely disappeared from the central tale - though, as a sign of a persistently open Creole culture, material needs and reactive Amerindian adaptations, he is cited at times for his continued presence as supplier to diverse local markets (see note 54 above). For a partial exception to the standard treatment of the Amerindian, see Arnold (2000).

society's formation, development, persistence and (partial) demise.[69]

Grouping an unusual mix of United States-based American Americanist, colonial Latin Americanist / « Caribbeanist. » and Europeanist work, and composed of historians who are either originally from the present-day southern parts (but not French regime period) of the once-Greater French Louisiana territory - often coming from the New Orleans area itself - or resident and working there, this New Orleans School offers a rather « essentialistic » cultural orientation to the common story: it understands the formation of the racially « fluid » Creole culture to have taken root in the French regime period, which functions as a sort of « golden age » of open, tolerant « golden (French) people » who were able to carry forth their culture and society despite strict Spanish racial corporatism and Anglo-American racial intolerance. Implicitly, what is being suggested here is something analogous to that which we have found in certain work on the Native American, that of a French Louisiana being a society of the « middle way. » for its relative, if uneven, inclusion of, here, the African American. In terms of its open civic culture, that society is seen to have continued on in New Orleans until today, an abiding legacy of the early interactive French cum Afro-Creole culture and society. In terms of the actual structure of racial relations and positions, however, the open three-tiered form of society itself is seen to have met its demise as of the mid-ninetenth century, when Anglo-American racial intolerance succeeded in detaching white Creoles from the others, leaving « Creolity » to be borne, down to the period of Reconstruction and beyond, by still-francophonic Afro-Creoles, themselves in touch with republican thinking and practices in Haiti and France. Nevertheless, if there is general agreement on matters of history and heritage within this school, a difference may yet be noted as to the particular sources understood to lay behind the open, racially integrative Creole culture that came to form during the French regime; it is a difference between an American Europeanist emphasis on the importance of the « assimilationistic » socio-political culture of

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69 For further elaboration of the different perspectives treated below, see Zitomersky (2000).

France itself, as it was transmitted to Louisiana, and an Americanist / Latin Americanist stress on North American frontier conditions. In this respect, it is a division in interpretation that follows somewhat expected lines of subdisciplinary background differences as applied to the study of Greater Louisiana history.[70]

In the emphasis it gives both to a culturally generative early French regime period and to its important legacy across the succeeding Spanish and American regimes, a legacy that extends well into the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries, the New Orleans School thus offers an interpretation of the question of slavery and black-white race relations that is as much about persistent (cultural) heritage as early history. It is also an interpretation that effectively serves to affirm, even celebrate, for the members of the New Orleans School, the particular virtues of « their » alternative regional culture as against that of mainstream Anglo-America.

Other work on the subject of slavery and black-white race relations in southern Greater Louisiana, if accepting parts of the general narrative, also offer a contrast to the New Orleans School - a contrast that reflects, again, certain national and disciplinary backgrounds. Such work, for example, is more likely to emphasize

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70 A central work of « New Orleans School » historians is Hirsch and Logsdon, eds. (1992), a book whose preface, three main section introductions, and six separate chapters extend their historical coverage from the French beginnings of New Orleans down to recent times. The book's seven contributors include three members of the University of New Orleans History Department, the Europeanist Jerah Johnson, and two Americanists, Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon; an Americanist from the New Orleans area, Carryn Cossé Bell; an Americanist who has long worked on antebellum New Orleans, Joseph G. Tregle, Jr.; a Latin Americanist / « Caribbeanist. » originally from New Orleans, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall; and Paul F. Lachance, an American Americanist working in Canada, who has written a number of important articles on New Orleans from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries and whose work, we need acknowledge, is less « culturalist » than the others. Able to be associated to this school of thought for the compatible interpretive orientiations it offers is the work of Virginia Meacham Gould, an American Americanist who comes from the (once-French) Gulf Coast and is presently residing and working in New Orleans. See our bibliography for a number of the different works of the historians mentioned here, works which, except for Lachance, generally fall within what we have called the New Orleans School of interpretation.

the importance to racial relations of social class and institutions, of comparison with the Caribbean, and ultimately of the governmental influences of Europe upon Louisiana. This last reintroduces a more northerly European Atlanticist perspective than the southerly African Atlanticist one that has come to characterize much recent work on slavery and race relations in the Americas. As concerns Greater Louisiana, for example, certain American Latin Americanist / Hispanicist work, which is much more focused in its temporal purview on Greater Louisiana's Spanish period - if willing to accept the existence of a certain racially fluid frontier period under the early French regime - is nevertheless more likely to see the complex, racially three-tiered, Creole society starting to chrystallize only during the last years of the Spanish regime under a more metropolitan controlled government - that is, via a quite European influenced institutional agent - which, for a combination of humanistic, political, and materialistic reasons, is willing, and politically able, to offer non-whites greater corporatist protection against (not so really tolerant) French Creole patricians. Herein may be found a perspective, as yet undeveloped, that not only points, in complex fashion, to more institutional, legal and cultural dimensions, but also to more materialistic and class-state-hegemony questions, than that which can usually be found in the more culturally oriented French-regime / French and Afro-Creole work of the New Orleans School.[71]

An emphasis on materialistic and class-state-hegemony questions can also be found in work that is variously marxistic in perspective and has been produced by Americanist historians with some form of non-American character to them (as regards either their national origin or professional workplace and residence). Like the New Orleans School, this work considers the whole eighteenth century down to, and partly including, the early American regime years - although not beyond. If, like that school, it also asks of the history of the French regime period and of its heritage in succeeding years, one part of this marxistic work finds less an essentially, pervasively, fluid and tolerant early French Creole

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[71] See the work particularly of Hanger (1991, 1996, 1997); for a compatible perspective concerning less than tolerant French Creoles and a more enlightened Spanish state, see Baade (1983).

population and culture than, at most, a utilitarian openness among chiefly leading French Creoles to greater Afro-Creole latitude, an openness that is practiced primarily for class-based interests and under the pressure of a French, then Spanish, state, itself acting on humanistic norms and in response to material and governmental exigencies. The racially three-tiered society could emerge as a result, although here, as in the Hispanicist work, it is not so much during the early French as in the later Spanish years that it perhaps may have developed.[72]

Another part of this marxistic research, conceding much less to either Creole tolerance or class-state tensions, and following much less the common historical narrative, finds neither an essential nor much of an instrumental French Creole openness to fluid race relations so much as a collusion between the dominant Creole class and the state in both the French and Spanish periods that, out of common understandings of class interest and social order, works to control and limit the possibilities for blacks in society. If the situation is more difficult for Afro-Louisianians in the early years of the American regime, it is simply because the dominant French Creole class has been able to take greater « control of the state » in the decentralized American system of government, so as to strengthen its class position and power that much more. As to the emergence of a racially three-tiered society, if that does indeed seem to take place, it did not happen during either the French or Spanish regime periods so much as in the early American years, when the Afro-Creole population in New Orleans, greatly boosted in number by its Saint Domingue refugee counterparts, is able to define and organize itself more meaningfully against, rather than with, both the French Creole and Anglo-American groups of Greater Louisiana's dominant class. It is not so much the difference as the similarity that Greater French Louisiana bore to other racially based North American and Caribbean slave societies and systems that is invoked here, however much particularities of form may have existed in the contours and course of race relations in Greater Louisiana throughout the years. We are thus offered a quite different reading

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72 See McGowan (1976), himself originally from Ireland, before coming to undertake doctoral studies at the University of Rochester.

of history and heritage in this interpretation, one hardly suggestive of an essentially different « middle way » for Greater French Louisiana society.[73]

The differences and the debate that implicitly exist in the recent research on slavery and race relations in Greater French Louisiana serve in different ways to raise basic questions about the nature of the French regime and of its succeeding periods in Greater Louisiana history, about the history and heritage of a possibly different North American society. Joining them to the

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[73] See primarily the work of Ingersoll (1990, 1991, 1995, 1999), who is an American Americanist living and working in Canada. See also Baade (1983) for compatible observations about less than tolerant French Creoles and their quick use, in the early American regime years, of the more decentralized political power afforded them within the American system of government to limit severely the positions of slaves and free persons of color in Louisiana. Interestingly, Usner (1979), arguing on largely materialistic rather than cultural or institutional grounds, offers a somewhat different view of black-white race relations in Louisiana as compared to the above schools of thought. While subscribing to the idea of the emergence of a free black population already as of the first part of the French regime period (38-39, 48) - something which other historians do not see happening quite so early - it nevertheless also sees a hardening in Louisiana of the French colonists' position vis-à-vis enslaved Africans already as of 1731. This, in turn, is seen to have led the Africans to create « an autonomous and antagonistic community » (48) - which, possibly except for maroon communities, other historians do not necessarily see taking place so early either (if at all in the colonial period). Additionally, the more class-based materialistic work of McGowan would also see 1731 to mark the moment when a greater « instrumentalist » relaxation, rather than a hardening, of authority comes to develop under a more liberal French (then Spanish) state. Nevertheless, Usner's sense of a regime of basically harsh relations between the two races as coming into existence for much of the latter part of the French colonial period recalls Ingersoll and adds further challenge to a culturalist explanation of race relations in Louisiana of any kind, even that of a culturally more enlightened state if not white populace. Actually, where culture may be implied as a factor in Usner, it is that of the negative cultural attitude of the French that would see Africans as an essentially inferior race (48); implicitly, increasingly harsh French behavior is in accord with French attitudes toward the African. In terms of the convergence of both culture and behavior, the interpretation effectively takes a directly opposite position, to the negative, to that of the New Orleans School. Conceptually, too, the notion that Africans would organize in response to repression approximates the sense of struggle that one finds in G. Hall and Ingersoll, although the latter would not see important autonomy and organized antagonism taking place until the early American regime years, when Creole oppression intensifies under weaker American executive governmental authority.

variously conflicting research bearing on other domains of race, space and the socio-political order, and bringing them forward to the nineteenth, even twentieth centuries - as do a part of the New Orleans School and some few others[74] - may serve to open up research on Greater Louisiana from being simply one of Anglo-American thematic work extended to a once-neglected « particularistic » region, to one of broader historical and geographical connections and comparisons, one that could incorporate, as well, more varied Atlanticist, North Americanist, and Caribbeanist perspectives.

The effort might bear not only on the racial and spatial questions for earlier, then succeeding years, but also - for the territorial ethnic cum immigrant society that was Greater Louisiana - on immigrant ethnic subjects for both colonial and more contemporary periods, treated in comparison with the rest of the United States; or, in a more complicated vein, on Anglo-French cum immigrant questions in comparison with Montreal and Canada - thus reconnecting back to the extensive history of (French) North America;[75] or, even more broadly, on questions bearing on the relative integration / autonomy of incorporated territorially ethnic regions, with comparison made to both Canadian and European examples of ethnically composite territories, societies and states.

The different new research on early, and succeeding, periods of Greater French Louisiana history thus has the promise not only to draw together two basic themes in older cum recent American Americanist historiography - that of settlement and society, that of ethnic and racial diversity - but the capacity to do so along more complex, internationally comparative lines. Doing so may help us

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74 E.g., see Bell (1997), Bell and Logsdon (1992), Logsdon (1996), Gould (1996), and especially the articles by Johnson (1992), Logsdon and Bell (1992), Tregle (1992), and Hirsch (1992), as well as the respective section introductions, in Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon, eds. (1992); also Tregle (1952, 1972), Lachance (1982, 1988, 1992, 1994), Hero (1991, 1995), Rossignol (1996), Ostendorf (1997).

75 See, for example, Logsdon (1996), Hero (1991, 1995); also, on French Canada per se, Anctil (1996); on « Creole » Louisiana, Lachance (1982, 1992), Tregle (1952, 1972, 1992), Ostendorf (1997), the last offering a theoretical perspective; on Cajun Louisiana, Baker (1978), Brasseaux (1992).

define how much of a different, possibly « middle way » Greater French Louisiana actually may have represented, and may still be.

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