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EUROPEAN COLONIZATION IN MISSISSIPPI¹

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to identify the cultural resources of Mississippi pertaining to the Period of European Colonization. The cultural resources include both sites and buildings. The term “sites” is the more inclusive of the two terms. Sites are the places at which past activities occurred and consequently include sites on which are located historic building, sites with archaeological remains, and even sites which were the scenes of past activities, yet at which there are no extant physical remains other than the physical landscape, associated with those events.

The Period of European Colonization is separated from the preceding Period of European Exploration by the beginning of permanent European settlement. Permanent settlement is particularly important for the aspect of historic preservation programs that deal with Euro-American culture in that it marks the inception of a time period in which we first find significant numbers of sites and other remains of occupation. Prior to the beginning of permanent European settlement in Mississippi the European presence was confined to merely sporadic expeditions and wanderers that seldomed on the same site for more than a season at most. Such sites have typically been difficult if not impossible to identify. It has only been with the inception of permanent European settlement that we first have settlements that were sufficiently permanent that they can be identified through maps, written sources, and archaeological remains. Consequently, the distinction between the periods of exploration and colonization is more fundamental than that between the period of colonization and the succeeding periods under American jurisdiction.

The focus of this study will only be on those settlements that were predominantly European. It will not include: (a) Indian settlements that were inhabited during the period of study, (b) Indian settlements that incorporated European elements such as traders or missionaries, and (c) the sites of European-Indian battles that were associated with the sites of Indian settlements.

Spatially, European colonial settlement in Mississippi was confined to two narrow strips of land, the Gulf Coast and the Natchez District. Settlement of these areas was related to their proximity to navigable waters, the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River respectively. Settlement on the Gulf Coast was predominantly French throughout the 18th century, while settlement in the Natchez District was initially French with settlements at Natchez and the Yazoo. The French Natchez District settlements disappeared, however, with the massacres of 1729 to be succeeded only by a military garrison at the Fort of Natchez. A second wave of European settlement began in the late 1760s with the immigration of Anglo-American settlers into the Natchez District. These people formed the bulk of the population of the Natchez District

¹Cautionary Note: Numbers presented in the text and tables should be viewed with appropriate caution. Site counts, component counts, etc., are approximations at best. Numerical values are included only for the purpose of illustrating general trends. In that this project has been ongoing for over 5 years, they are also somewhat out of date. An accurate reporting will be produced from the recently computerized data base which is currently being reviewed and updated. Hopefully, a more workable inventory will be accessible in the near future. To be included within the Comprehensive State Planning document for the State of Mississippi and submitted to the National Park Service. Not for Citation.

through the successive periods of British and Spanish rule. During the Spanish period, people of a Hispanic background were in the minority and were primarily associated with administering and controlling the District for Spain. Nevertheless, they had a fairly significant impact in their establishing administrative centers for the area. The continued growth of the population of the Natchez District provided the core area of what became the Mississippi Territory in 1798.

Temporally, the Period of European colonization is defined by a beginning in 1699 with the construction of Fort Maurepas and lasting until the end of European control of the area that is defined by the present-day boundaries of the State of Mississippi. European rule was terminated at two different times for two different portions of the state. North of the 31st parallel of latitude the period was ended in 1798 by the withdrawal of the Spanish from the Natchez District; south of the 31st parallel, it was ended in 1810 following the West Florida Rebellion and the withdrawal of the Spanish from Baton Rouge and the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Regarding the organization of the discussion, it should be indicated that this period covers: two regions of settlement (the Gulf Coast and the Natchez District), three periods of colonial rule (French, English, and Spanish, respectively), basically two different ethnic groups of settlers (French and Anglo-Americans), and a number of discrete settlements. A problem that has to be dealt with is inherent in the particular spatial framework of this report, that is the area which is now the State of Mississippi. Historical and prehistorical studies, often because of present-day political and administrative considerations, tend to use the areas of present-day states as spatial units of study, a practice that is only meaningful for the study of a state itself as a coherent geopolitical unit. Prior to the existence of a state, its boundaries are arbitrary and usually have little if any relevance to the study of the settlements under consideration. Indeed they often cut across basic settlement areas, and in doing so they effectively decapitate meaningful spatial units.

Additionally, historians who have treated colonial Mississippi have usually given little attention to spatial considerations, most often emphasizing political history. Maps, when provided, have tended to focus on the geopolitical situation rather than where people actually lived. Additionally, emphasis on organizing the discussion around political history has often distorted the settlement picture, in that some political regimes which were poorly represented demographically, such as the Spanish, receive a disproportionate amount of attention, while people who are not of the same ethnicity as those who rule are often neglected to the point of omission, with an example being the French settlers of the Gulf Coast during the English and Spanish rule. Figure 1 has been created as a heuristic device for placing all of the colonial settlements in a spatial-temporal matrix and to establish their relationships to the various periods of colonial rule.

Because the focus of this study is on settlement, I have therefore attempted to organize the discussion with due consideration to relevant factors, including geopolitics. The two major divisions are based on the two major ethnic groups that formed the settlements, the French and the Anglo-Americans. The two divisions are then subdivided into (a) overviews of general settlement history, (b) consideration of discrete areas of settlement, and (c) discussion of vernacular architecture. Accordingly, I have attempted to first place the settlement processes, including demography, agriculture, trade, and geopolitical considerations. Afterwards I have focused on specific settlements, outlining the course of their development and settlement morphology, including numbers, types, and locations of buildings. Finally the overall character of the vernacular architecture is described with consideration of construction methods and house forms. In conclusion I summarize what are the most significant sites and buildings dating to the Period of European Colonization.

Regarding the overview of settlement, the discussion in the French section is lengthier, because it must serve as the framework for explaining the development of three discrete areas of settlement, including the complex maneuvering that resulted in the opening of the Mississippi River to French settlement and the shifting of the political center from its various locations on the Gulf Coast, the Mobile River, and at New Orleans. In contrast because Anglo-American settlement was confined to only one discrete area, the Natchez District, the overview did not need to be so complex, so it is considerably shorter, despite the fact that the population of the Anglo-American Natchez District at its peak was much higher than the combined peak populations of all three French areas of settlement.

FRENCH SETTLEMENT IN COLONIAL MISSISSIPPI

History of French Settlement

Permanent European settlement in what is now the state of Mississippi began with French colonization in 1699. In an attempt to gain control of much of the North American continent the French began their colonization in and around the valley of the Mississippi River and created the province of Louisiana, an enterprise that continued until 1763 at which time their vast land holdings were divided up between Spain and Great Britain by the terms of the Treaty of Paris.

The history of French settlement in provincial Louisiana can be divided into two periods, one from 1699 to 1718, and a second from 1718 to 1763. The first period was characterized primarily by small settlements near the Gulf Coast. The total population remained in the hundreds, while there was little emphasis on agriculture. The colonial capital was moved frequently as the French tried to maximize their control over a large hinterland. Bienville, who was governor of the colony for many years, noted that during this period.

The King seemed to be maintaining a small garrison there only to preserve for himself the possession of such a vast extent of country (Rowland and Sanders 1932:523).

During the second period, the center of settlement shifted from the Gulf Coast to the Lower Mississippi River as the population increased into the thousands. This stage of settlement began with the 1717 acquisition of the colony by the Company of the West, which became the Company of the Indies in 1719. This French company was initially under the control of the Scottish financier John Law. Although Law's financial schemes brought chaos to the French economy, they did succeed in getting civilians to settle in Louisiana. In the first years of this period the population rose from the hundreds into the thousands as agricultural colonies were established along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. New Orleans, which became the provincial capital in 1722, quickly emerged as the leading town and port of the colony.

First Period: The Gulf Coast

In 1697 following the cessation of hostilities with the English, the French government decided to push ahead with plans for colonizing the lower Mississippi River valley and thereby re-enforcing claims to the valley that had been made by LaSalle in his ill-fated expedition of the 1680s. Selected to lead the expedition was a Canadian-born Frenchman Pierre LeMoyne, Sieur D'Iberville, who was charged by the Comte de Pontchartrain, the Minister of the Marine to locate "the mouth [of the Mississippi river]. . . . select a good site that can be defended with a few men, and block entry to the river by other nations" (McWilliams 1981:4). When the Spanish were informed of the French plans, they sent an expedition from Veracruz in 1698 to construct a fort at Pensacola. At the time the harbor at Pensacola was the only one on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico to have sufficient depth to permit usage by ocean-going vessels. Iberville noted in 1700 that the Spanish only occupied Pensacola so as to deny the French adequate port facilities (McWilliams 1981:136).

On October 24, 1698 Iberville left the port of Brest, France, bound for the Gulf of Mexico with two frigates, the Badine and the Marin. At St. Dominique in the Caribbean they rendezvoused with the warship Francois which was sent to protect the expedition from the English. After stopping briefly at Pensacola the expedition continued westward, landing at Dauphine Island opposite Mobile Bay on February 2. Although Iberville took soundings in the area and explored the coast he failed to locate the harbour on the north side of Dauphine Island. Continuing westward they anchored in the harbour on the north side of Ship Island on February 10. The next few days were spent exploring the coastline and taking soundings in the Mississippi Sound. On the 27th of the month Iberville left his fleet at Ship Island and sailed westward with 51 men in four boats looking for the mouth of the Mississippi which they managed to inadvertently enter on March 2nd. After exploring the river and determining that it was indeed the Mississippi, Iberville returned to his base at Ship Island where on the 31st he observed that because his provisions were low it was "necessary to establish a post quickly and as near to the ships as would be possible. . . while he returned to France with the fleet (McWilliams 1981:89). On April 8th work began on a fort located on the backside of Biloxi Bay at the present site of Ocean Springs. The first was referred to as both Fort Maurepas and Fort Biloxi, apparently the former name was the official name while the latter was then the more commonly used one (Higginbotham 1968:32n). Today, the name Fort Maurepas is more commonly used. After the completion of the Fort, Iberville sailed for France on May 3 with the intention that "part of the men at the fort will be employed in thoroughly exploring the country and the most suitable places to establish a colony" (McWilliams 1981:89).

The ideal base of operations for the French was a site that was easily accessible from both the sea and the land. Access from the sea entailed having a port that could be reached by ships, while access from the

land entailed being on a river that was sufficiently large as to provide water transportation to a large portion of the North American continent. A base on the lower Mississippi would seemingly provide these factors; however, in the early 18th century access to the Mississippi was difficult for ships and larger boats. This was due in part to the fact that in its lower reaches the Mississippi becomes smaller as its waters are divided into small distributaries, most of which are not navigable by larger crafts. In the late 17th century it was believed that the mouths were blocked by a palisade of "logs" or "black rocks," which Iberville later learned to be only curious formation which he referred to as "mud lumps" (McWilliams 1969:128-129). Also, sand and mud bars were commonly encountered at the river's mouths. These were subject to constant change as a result of the actions of the riverine and coastal geomorphical processes which introduced an uncertainty factor that continued to plague navigation even after dredging was begun (Rowland and Sanders 1932:228-229, 320, 344; Surrey 1916:41, 51-54). Furthermore, once on the river sailing vessels were sometimes helpless by a lack of wind, a condition particularly common during the summer (Memoir of Bienville on Louisiana, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:510).

Sites on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico west of Pensacola made poor harbors because the waters between the barrier islands and the coast was quite shallow. Good natural harbors were however found on the northern sides of, first, Ship Island and later Dauphine Island. These harbors were initially utilized with ships docking there, and then the cargo and passengers were unloaded and placed on smaller boats before they could be transported to the coastal bases. This was an awkward situation considering that these harbors are over ten miles from the coast. Further complications arose from the geomorphology of the barrier islands which are essentially large sand bars. Storms have the ability to alter not only the islands themselves but also any natural harbors that might be associated with them, as the French discovered.

By 1701 D'Iberville, after more closely assessing the geographical and political circumstances, had determined to move the colony to the vicinity of Mobile Bay. There were two reasons for this decision. First, a satisfactory deep-water harbor had been located at Dauphine Island opposite the bay. Second, although the French were ultimately interested in controlling the Mississippi Valley, it appeared to be of more immediate strategic importance to gain control of the Tombigbee and Alabama drainage basins because they were closer to the advance of the English and Spanish (Higginbotham 1977:24). The move began in January 1702 with an advance party traveling to Dauphine Island where a warehouse was constructed as the nucleus of port facilities. (Higginbotham 1977:33, 38-39).

By January 17th Iberville had decided upon the second bluff on the west side of the Mobile River as the new base of his colony (McWilliams 1981:161-162). This site is about 26 miles above the river's mouth and present-day Mobile. The reason for placing the site so far upriver was in part due to Iberville's desire to encourage settlement along the river. Also considered was the topography; there were no bluffs at the mouth of the river (Higginbotham 1977:44, 46, 46-47n). A fort was soon constructed, and in March a town plat was surveyed. The entire populace of Ft. Maurepas was moved to the new settlement known as Ft. Louis de la Louisiane, or La Mobbille, and the older fort was dismantled (Higginbotham 1977:47n, 84). By 1704 there were 80 houses in the town and a population of about 259 of whom 180 were soldiers, about 64 were civilians, four were ecclesiastics, and 11 were Indian slaves (Rowland and Sanders 1929:19-20).

Being forced to utilize a port as distant as Dauphine Island could be awkward. By 1710 there was a small settlement with a stockade located near the port. That year the port was assaulted by a ship of English privateers and taken without a shot. While the inhabitants were confined, the pirates transferred the contents of the warehouse to their ship and burned the settlement (Higginbotham 1977:446-447; Holmes 1969:106-107).

As a result of flooding at La Mobbille and because of a desire to be nearer the Dauphine Island port, the town was moved in 1711 downstream to the mouth of the Mobile River. Here another town was surveyed and another fort was constructed. Initially named Fort Louis, the fort was later changed to Fort Conde. The new town eventually evolved into the present-day city of Mobile, Alabama.

From its founding in 1699 until 1712 the Louisiana was a royal colony governed by naval officers and commissaries under the Ministry of the Marine. There were few people with these consisting mainly of military personnel, artisans, priests, and Canadian backwoodsmen (*coureurs de bois*). No grants of land were made other than town lots in the two successive towns on the Mobile River. Settlers outside of the towns were therefore squatters (Galloway 1984:5). Attempts at farming failed due to the infertility of the coastal soils. The raising of cattle was, however, more successful. The commerce of the colony consisted of the sale of planks and skins to ships which brought supplies to the colony and to the Spanish at

Pensacola. The skins were from bears, deer, raccoons, and other animals that had been trapped by the coureurs de bois (Duclos to Pontchartrain, 1713, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:79-81).

In 1712 the crown granted to Antoine Crozat a monopoly on all trade of the colony and ownership on all improvements that he might make there. The government of the colony was placed under a royal governor and an ordonnateur, in whom were placed the authority to make for the first time grants of land to the populace of the colony. All land grants were to be brought into cultivation, or otherwise developed, within two years or they were to be forfeited. In 1716 an additional requirement for land grants was made; all granted land was to be in the form of “long lots,” with a width of either two or four arpents, and a depth of either 40 or 60 arpents (An arpent is 192 English feet). The only exception was to be Dauphine Island which was to be used as open range for the grazing of livestock, excepting small parcels to be used for gardens and residential lots (Galloway 1984:6). The long lot system of land survey was ideal for a population strung-out along beaches or rivers. It played a much greater role beginning in the 1720’s with the settlement of the Lower Mississippi River, where it has left its imprint on the land until the present day (Hilliard 1972; Knipmeyer 1956:36-41; Rehder 1978).

In August 1717 the harbor at Dauphine Island was blocked by a large storm and made virtually useless for ships. This condition persisted as late as the mid-1720s and possibly later (Rowland and Sanders 1932:320, 511; McWilliams 1953:207). Attention then focused on the harbor at Ship Island. Marc Antoine Hubert de St. Malo, the new commissary general of Louisiana, arrived at Mobile from France in either March or May 1717 (Rowland and Sanders 1929:226n, 236n; James 1968:7) and soon afterward noted to the Council that Ship Island was “at present the only port on which one can count.” He further suggested that in this roadstead [Ship Island] which we are assured is very good we could easily unload onto brigantines the goods, the munitions and the supplies sent from France and these brigantines would carry them to the storehouses built at Fort Louis at Mobile and to those that would be built at Biloxi on the Mississippi where they would be of an advantageous use for the trading people who navigate this river (Hubert to the Council, 1717, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:228).

The Biloxi to which Hubert referred was not the Biloxi on the Gulf Coast but instead was a site on the lower Mississippi River at or near the present site of New Orleans (Villiers 1920:166, 169). This area could be reached by either sailing up the main channel of the river, or by going through Lake Pontchartrain and then into the Mississippi through a small distributary known as Bayou St. John. His suggestions to develop this site anticipated the forthcoming emphasis by the colony on the Mississippi River.

It was in the following year, 1718, that the town of New Orleans was founded at this location. At this time studies were undertaken to find the most appropriate route of entry. A letter of April 25, 1718 from La Chappelle to Bienville reported that soundings were made on one of the channels. He noted that there was a bar separating the mouth from the Gulf over which there was only ten to eleven feet of water. Once over the bar, however, the depth increased to fifteen fathoms. La Chapelle suggested that the bar might be dredged in the event that a port should be developed on the river. He further noted the importance of the Ship Island Harbor and remarked on the proximity of it to both Mobile and the Mississippi River (Rowland and Sanders 1932:228-229).

The next few years were a period of rapid transition in the history of Louisiana. In 1717 Antoine Crozat, having failed in placing the colony on a sound economic footing, was allowed to turn-over his control of it. The character was then given to the “Company of the West,” headed by John Law, a Scottish-born financier residing in France. Following a merger of the company in 1719 it became known as the Company of the Indies. “The Company,” as it was often called was responsible for the rapid settling of the colony as a result of Law’s financial machinations. Despite Law’s dealings, which resulted in financial collapse and his having to flee France in 1721, the colony had attracted enough people to become self-sustaining.

The Company was able to populate the colony by granting “concessions,” or tracts of land, to either individuals or partnerships. The first concessions were given to small companies, who then sold shares. The shareholders were expected to travel to Louisiana to cultivate their portion of the concession. In 1719, however, concessions began to be granted to wealthy financiers (Galloway 1984:7). These grantees, who seldom left France, were then expected to colonize and develop the estates. To accomplish they equipped vessels and filled them with superintendents, stewards, storekeepers, clerks, and workmen of various trades, with provisions and all kinds of goods. They had to plunge into the woods, to set up cabins, to choose their ground, and to burn the cane-brakes and trees (du Poisson 1959:281, 283).

This type of concession was responsible for the large number of colonists who were sent to Louisiana about 1720 (Galloway 1984:7).

Concessions were granted primarily on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Locations on the river included the Houmas, Cannesbrule, the Tchoupitoulas, the Tunicas, Pointe Coupe, Bayou Goula, Baton Rouge, and Natchez. Concessions were also located along tributaries of the Mississippi included the Yazoo River, the Arkansas River, the Black River, the Red River, and the Ouachita River. Other locations included the Pascagoula River, Vieux Biloxi, and Bay St. Louis (Du Poisson 1959; Dumont 1976:22; La Harpe 1976:78n; Du Pratz 1975). Many of these concessions were economic failures such as the Arkansas River concession of John Law (Deiler 1975:36-37), the Yazoo River concession of Le Blanc, and the Chaumont concession on the Pascagoula River. The Meziere concession at Vieux Biloxi and Bay St. Louis may have never been established. Instead it appears to have moved to a more fertile location on the lower Mississippi River. The settlement at Natchez which appears to have been on its way to economic success was annihilated in November 1729 as a result of the massacre by the Natchez Indians.

By October 1719 the Company had decided to establish warehouses at Biloxi and Ship Island for the central port of the colony. It was observed at the time that Ship Island was “the maritime center of the colony where one can take easily and without risk of bad weather the provisions and merchandise to New Orleans and to Mobile” (Minutes of the Council of Commerce, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:264). The site of old Fort Maurepas or Biloxi was to become the new headquarters of the colony (this site became known as Vieux or Old Biloxi in contrast to Nouveau or New Biloxi). In November 1719 work began on clearing the site establishment of Vieux Biloxi, shiploads of settlers began to arrive at Dauphine Island. From there they were directed on to Ship Island and Biloxi. The ships carried them to the new location where they were put ashore at a site known as Nouveau Biloxi located across the bay from Vieux Biloxi (Dumont 1976:19-20). Here they erected tent camps and began to prepare boats for their journey to the various concessions.

Unfortunately the Company had not made suitable plans to feed and provide transportation for the 6000-7000 people who immigrated into the colony from 1719 through 1721 (Memoir on the Services of Bienville, in Rowland and Sanders (1932:492-493). Once at New Biloxi they were unable to travel to the concessions for lack of boats. Trapped in camps along the coast without sufficient food and without fertile land for growing food, over 500 people starved to death in what was perhaps the greatest debacle in the history of the colony (Le Page du Pratz 1975:31-32).

A few days after arriving in the colony the engineer Le Blond de la Tour recommended on December 20, 1720 that the headquarters of the Company be moved from Vieux Biloxi to Nouveau Biloxi, a recommendation that was implemented (Minutes of the Council of Commerce, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:298-301). In the long term though, the site of Nouveau Biloxi was little better than that of Vieux Biloxi. On January 8, 1721 de la Toure presented four plans for a town and fort (Fort Louis) to be constructed at New Biloxi. One of these was selected by the company and work was begun immediately on the new fort. It was at about this time that the name of the fort at Mobile was changed from “Fort Louis” to “Fort Conde,” presumable to prevent confusion with the name of the new fort. Although work progressed for nearly a year, little had been accomplished by the end of 1721 (La Harpe 1976:84; Wilson 1965:112-114). Vieux Biloxi, in the meantime, continued to be occupied. De la Tour drew a plan of the settlement on January 19, 1721 (see copy of map in Higginbotham 1968). It was not until September 9, 1721 that Bienville moved across the bay to New Biloxi (La Harpe 1976:96). His move may have been caused by a fire that burned Old Biloxi about this time (Dumont 1976:20).

Second Period: The Mississippi River

By 1722 it was apparent that the capital would have to be moved, as Bienville observed in a letter to the Navy Council dated April 25. He further noted that ships drawing no more than thirteen feet of water could enter the mouth of the Mississippi and that it would be far more advantageous for them to enter their with their cargoes than to have them dock at Ship Island and have the cargoes carried by smaller boats to Biloxi (Rowland and Sanders 1932:320-321). Bienville was obviously promoting the development of New Orleans which he had founded in 1718 when he advocated having ships dock on the Mississippi River. Furthermore since the majority of the concessions were located on the Mississippi River and its tributaries the demographic center of the colony quickly moved from the Gulf Coast to the river making it all the

more critical to move to New Orleans, a move implemented by February 1, 1723 (Bienville to the Council, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:343-344; Miller Surrey 1916:50).

In the next few decades New Orleans continued to grow although not at a rapid rate. It had a population of 250 in 1721 and 938 by 1727 (Clark 1970:4). A map of New Orleans and its environs (ca. 1723) shows numerous farmsteads on either side of the river both above and below town, indicating that the agricultural hinterland had rapidly developed (Ries 1936, Map 5).

Prior to the establishment of the concessions under the Company, the colony had been on a very poor footing economically. Antoine Crozat, whose proprietary company had been in control of Louisiana from 1712 through 1717 had expended much capital in the search for mineral wealth in the hinterland. The venture resulted in failure because of the distance of minerals from the coast (Clark 1970:15). The only exports to France during the administration of Crozat were peltries (Miller Currey 1916:160). Meanwhile the colonists were strung out along the Gulf Coast where the infertility of the soil prohibited the success of farming. However, in the 1720s several large plantations were established along the Mississippi River and its tributaries and in other areas. The results of this were to place Louisiana on a more secure economic foundation with much of the produce being shipped out through the port of New Orleans.

Some of the concessions, particularly some of the more far-flung ones were failures, such as the Arkansas River concession of John Law and the Yazoo River concessions of M. le Blanc. Upon the financial collapse of the Company of the Indies in 1721, some of the concession owners who were frightened by "the bad stories circulated against the colony" wrote to the managers of their plantations commanding them to "abandon everything." The Company to prevent a massive exodus of people from the colony gave orders to let no one return to France. A few years later in 1727 the Company made an effort to consolidate the population of the colony by deciding to grant further lands only in the lower Mississippi as far north as Natchez. Slaves were to be sold only to the inhabitants of this section of river (The Company of the Indies to the Council of Louisiana, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:254, 259).

By the mid-1720s areas of economic specialization had begun to develop in the colony. The lower part of the Mississippi River had proven to be suitable for rice production. Farther up the river around Natchez and the Yazoo concession tobacco of good quality was being produced on land that also grew wheat and other grains. Naval stores and timber were prospective items of productions along the Gulf Coast. Also at the time cotton and indigo were beginning to appear in the colony (Memoir on Louisiana by Bienville, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:520-522).

French settlements in the Mississippi Valley formed discrete units separated from each other by tens and even hundreds of miles. Many of these settlements appear to have been agricultural villages in the form of "linear settlements." This form of settlement consisted of continuous rows of closely spaced buildings located on natural levees along the Mississippi River and its tributaries (Knipmeyer 1956:29). Linear settlements had already developed on the Mississippi as early as the 1720s in the vicinity of New Orleans (Ries 1936:map 5). They also developed in the Upper Mississippi in the French settlements located in the present-day states of Missouri and Illinois, at Detroit, and in the Saint Lawrence River Valley (Knipmeyer 1956:35).

Linear settlements in the Lower Mississippi used the long lot system of land survey. The long lots were ideal for settlement on alluvial plains bordering on large streams. The long axis of the lot was oriented perpendicular to the river providing a narrow river frontage. The buildings were usually constructed on the natural levees and the progressively lower land back from the river was used for agriculture and pasturage. From the Lower Mississippi Valley the long lot system spread upriver along the Mississippi and the Red and onto numerous smaller rivers that drain the coastal plain of Texas (Hilliard 1972:7-9, 140; Jordan 1974; Knipmeyer 1956:37; Stokes 1964). As will be seen, the three areas of French settlement in Mississippi varied in some aspects from the overall pattern of commercial agriculture, linear settlement, and long lots.

From the core of settlement on the Lower Mississippi around New Orleans, French settlement spread out across the continent with centers of settlement near Mobile, Natchez, the Yazoo, Natchitoches, and the Illinois. Of settlement within the boundaries of the State of Mississippi, the centers established on the Gulf Coast were all short-lived. Natchez and the Yazoo fell victim to Indian revolts in 1729, and only the fort at Natchez was re-established. When in 1763, following the French and Indian War, France ceded all of Louisiana to Great Britain and Spain, the only French settlement in Mississippi was a scattering of farmers along the Gulf Coast and the fort at Natchez. In the years to come the Natchez fort became the center of a

new settlement by Anglo-Americans, a settlement that would become the nucleus of the Mississippi Territory and later the State of Mississippi.

FRENCH SETTLEMENTS IN MISSISSIPPI

The Gulf Coast: Historical Overview

Focal points of settlement along the coast were primarily Biloxi Bay and the lower reaches of the Pascagoula River. Biloxi Bay was, of course, the site of the center of the colony at two different times, 1699-1702 and 1719-1722, with the settlements of Fort Maurepas/Vieux Biloxi (1699-1702, 1719-1721) and Nouveau Biloxi/Fort Louis (1720-1722). Overall Biloxi Bay's position as the principal headquarters of the colony was quite short. On September 11, 1722, a hurricane struck the Gulf Coast, destroying the warehouse and other buildings at Fort Louis and sinking a number of boats (La Harpe 1971:214-215; Mereness 1916:28). After the capital was moved to New Orleans a small garrison remained (Minutes of the Superior Council for September 11, 1723, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:371), which may have still been there as late as 1726 as Bienville was advocating leaving "there likewise a sergeant with six men" (Memoir on Louisiana by Bienville, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:511). The garrison size of seven men suggests that by that time no great priority was placed on Fort Louis. Writing in regard to a time of ca. 1730 Du Pratz (1975:50) noted that between the Pascagoula River and New Orleans "there is no post at present," indicating that even the garrison did not last long. Remembering the tragic events that occurred there with the death of hundred of prospective settlers, he observed bitterly that the two Biloxis "deserved an oblivion as lasting as their duration was short."

The Meziere concession was presumably planned to establish a plantation at Vieux Biloxi and Bay St. Louis. Nothing is known about operations of this concession in this coastal area. Presumably if it did begin operations there it did not last long. However, writing about settlements on the Mississippi River in the 1730s, Le Page du Pratz (1975:56) mentions "les Petits Ecores" (the Little Cliffs) located on the river below Pointe Coupe as "where was the grant of the Marquis de Mezieres" (see also du Poisson 1959:303). This statement suggests that once realizing the infertility of the soils in the Bay St. Louis/Biloxi area, the concession acquired more fertile lands along the Mississippi River.

A number of agricultural settlements had developed along the lower Pascagoula River by the mid-1720s. In 1715 Joseph Simon de la Pointe had received a grant of land located at the present town of Pascagoula. At about the same time another Canadian, Jean Baptiste Baudreau de la Graveline received a large tract of land that extended from the Pascagoula River to the Bay of Biloxi (Higginbotham 1967:4-5). About 1710 Graveline had resided on Dauphine Island where he had a herd of cattle that was begun from breeding stock acquired in Havana. He also raised poultry and vegetables there (Higginbotham 1977:442-443). When Graveline moved to the mouth of the Pascagoula River he may well have continued such economic activities. Today Graveline's name is perpetuated in the area in the name of "Graveline Bayou."

On January 3, 1721 the ships *la Gironde* and *la Volage* arrived at Nouveau Biloxi with about 300 people who were bound for the concessions of Mezieres and Chaumont (La Harpe 1976:79). The Chaumont concession plantation was established on the lower Pascagoula River in February 1721 under the direction of M. de Revillon. The people sent from Europe to staff the plantation represented a variety of skills, including carpenters, sawyers, and tailors. However, there was a shortage of agricultural laborers with only two cultivators and three gardeners being included. To remedy the situation Revillon purchased a score of slaves, and shortly afterward the plantation was described as "one of the best stocked farms in Louisiana and there are about 55-60 person, black and white, living on it" (Higginbotham 1974). During its first year of operation, the plantation was able to harvest a crop of grain (McWilliams 1953:244).

However trouble soon developed in that the Chaumont family, who were the financial backers of the project, failed to produce money and supplies. By 1722, Revillon had left the plantation and returned to France to bring suit against the Chaumonts for compensation due to him as director. The directorship was assumed by a Guillaume Morin and then by a M. La Garde. The rapid abandonment of the plantation by the Europeans is evidenced by a 1725 census that listed La Garde, one house servant, and 19 black slaves as being the sole occupants of the concession. As a result of growing debts and without financial support from the Chaumonts, La Garde had to gradually sell the cattle and slaves. By November 1727, even he had abandoned the plantation and had taken up residence on the Mississippi River (Higginbotham 1974).

Graveline continued living in the area as did la Pointe. The latter died without male heirs although one of his daughters married a German Hugo Ernestus Krebs who had moved into the area about 1730. Numerous descendants of la Pointe and Krebs reside in the Pascagoula area today (Higginbotham 1967:4-7). What is possibly the oldest building in Mississippi today, the misnamed "Old Spanish Fort," may have been part of the la Pointe-Krebs farmstead (Deiler 1975:25-27). In 1772, the Krebs family was growing rice, corn, and cotton, with evidence of the latter crop from one of the Krebses' having constructed a type of roller gin as noted by Romas (1961:3, 98; for roller gins in French Louisiana see Thomas 1965).

Settlement around the lower Pascagoula was rather dispersed in the 18th century, probably relying on farming and the raising of livestock. Naval stores and lumber for boats were probably also produced. In the 1720s or 1730s, Du Pratz (1975:50) described "the small settlement of the Pasca-Ogoulas" as consisting of

only a few Canadians, lovers of tranquillity, which they prefer to all the advantages they could reap from commerce. They content themselves with a frugal country life, and never go to New Orleans but for necessities.

An Englishman Thomas Hutchins briefly described the Gulf Coast as he passed through it about 1770. Speaking of the settlers on the Pascagoula, he noted

There are some good plantations on the East side, but here, as well as all the way to the westward, the inhabitants are much molested by the natives, especially by the Choctaws who kill their cattle, & c. (Hutchins 1968:64).

At Biloxi he recorded that:

There are still a few inhabitants... some of whom are the offspring of the original settlers. Their chief employment is raising of cattle and stock, and making pitch and tar: but the natives are very troublesome to them (Hutchins 1968:63).

At Bay St. Louis he observed:

There were several settlers formerly on it, but in the year 1767, the Choctaw Indians killed their cattle and obliged them to remove (Hutchins 1968:63).

The lower Pearl River like the Pascagoula was able to support some agricultural settlements on its alluvial soils. Hutchins (1968:63) observed that in 1769

... there were some settlements on this river, where they raised tobacco, indigo, cotton, rice, Indian corn, and all sorts of vegetables. The land produces a variety of timber fit for pipe and hogshead staves, masts, yards, and all kinds of plank for ship building.

In 1777 William Bartram (Van Doren 1940:334) sailed from Mobile with an unnamed French planter who was returning to his Pearl River plantation in his own "large trading boat... well equipped for sailing, and manned with three stout Negroes..."

In a 1774 report the Lieutenant Governor of British West Florida, Elias Durnford noted that most of the inhabitants of what is now the Mississippi Gulf Coast are

the old French familys[sic]; they have a few Negroes, and employ Themselves [sic] in making Pitch [sic], and Tar, which They oftentimes Secretly transport to New Orleans; as also great part of the Cattle they raise in those parts... (quoted in Sturdivant 1975:47-48).

Although Mississippi Gulf Coast lands were transferred from France to Great Britain in 1763 and to Spain in 1781, the population composition appears to have remained relatively unaffected by the successive British and Spanish occupations of the area. A map of land grants for the first five years of the

British control (1763-1769) indicates that most of the grants to British settlers on the Gulf Coast were around Mobile Bay and Pensacola Bay. No British grant is indicated for the Mississippi Gulf Coast (Howard 1947). Following the West Florida Revolution, the area was annexed in 1811 by the United States. In that year a Dr. Flood traveled through the area as an emissary of the United States. In his report (Claiborne 1978:306-307) Flood noted that the populations of the parishes of Pascagoula and Biloxi, into which the area had been divided had populations of about 350 and 420 respectively. The inhabitants were “chiefly French and Creoles.” They were further described as

a primitive people, of mixed origin, retaining the gaiety and politeness of the French, blended with the abstemiousness and indolence of the Indian. They plant a little rice, and a few roots and vegetables, but depend for subsistence chiefly on game and fish.

Flood could not find anyone who could read or write at either the Pascagoula settlement or at Biloxi Bay. He did imply that a Philip Saucier who lived at Bay St. Louis could read, and a Simon Favre who was a planter on the eastern side of the Pearl River was described as being an “educated and very agreeable gentlemen” (Claiborne 1978:306). Undoubtedly, these two men were quite in the minority.

Descendants of these early Creole settlers remained a distinct ethnic group well into the 20th century. In 1880 J. F. H. Claiborne (1978:90) recorded that

the colonies she [France] planted on our sea-board--especially the hardy Canadians--still live in their descendants, preserving their provincial dialect and primitive habits--their fondness for hunting--their skill with the lasso and the oar--their songs and dances--and in many instances, the physiological peculiarities of the races with whom they intermarried.

As late as the 1930s descendants of these people still resided in the rural coastal meadows back from the urbanized beachfronts (Federal Writers Project 1939:7-8, 10-11).

In summary it appears that a small population of Frenchmen intermixed with Germans and Indians continued to reside along the Mississippi Gulf Coast after the focal point of the Louisiana colony had moved to the Mississippi River. Largely self-sufficient, but also producing some products for sale to the nearby towns of Mobile and New Orleans, they continued to perpetuate their life-style until large numbers of Anglo-American settlers began to move into the area in the early 19th century.

It appears that settlements were located along the coastal waterways, that is along the coast itself and along the lower reaches of the rivers, primarily the Pearl and the Pascagoula. Landgrants that antedate the GLO surveys were sometimes preserved as irregular surveys that were incorporated into the rectilinear sections and townships. These metes-and-bounds parcels were all located on the coast and on the lower Pearl and Pascagoula Rivers, thus indicating the approximate distribution of landowners. There were also some Creoles who lived inland who were presumably landless herdsmen. This pattern persisted for decades. In 1850 almost all of the land in Harrison County, which stretched from the coast north for about 35 miles to the 31st parallel, that was in private ownership was on the coast (Harrison County 1850). Over 95 percent of the hinterland was still in the public domain, an ideal situation for open-range grazing.

Sites: Fort Maurepas and Vieux Biloxi

These two settlements appear to have been located on the same site at two different time periods (1699-1702 and 1719-1721). The first settlement consisted primarily of a square fort with bastions on each corner and a number of buildings on its interior (Plan du Fort de Maurepas n.d.). The second settlement was composed of a number of buildings, including a headquarters office, a warehouse, Bienville’s house, a hospital, barracks for the sisters of the hospital, and barracks for soldiers (Le Blond de La Tour 1721a). The site has been established as being located on high ground approximately midway between Plummer Point and Fort Point on the east side of Biloxi Bay in Ocean Springs, Mississippi (Higginbotham 1968:74-80; Mississippi Department of Archives and History 1973).

In essence the argument for the location of the site of the two settlements is as follows. The site of the later of the two settlements, Vieux Biloxi, can be established by comparing two maps of Le Blond de la Tour (1721a; 1722a) with modern maps. Which depicts Vieux Biloxi as being located in the aforementioned location where the coastline protrudes slightly into the bay. The accuracy of the French maps can easily be seen through their accurate depiction of the coastline and other topographic features.

The only map available that shows the location of Fort Maurepas is that of Jousette (n.d.), which does not depict the topography as reliably as the Le Blond de la Tour maps and consequently is not as valuable for establishing locations. The location of Fort Maurepas is established then by identifying its site with that of the site of Vieux Biloxi. The basis for this identification comes from the minutes of the October 1719 meeting of the Council of Commerce, where it was decided to move the commercial center of the colony to Ship Island and to “the old fort of Biloxi,” and that “warehouses should be built immediately at the old fort of Biloxi,” twice referred to, is without a doubt the same as Fort Maurepas. It might be noted that placing the site of Fort Maurepas at the site of Vieux Biloxi does not contradict the location of the fort according to the Jousette map. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History report (1973) suggests that the fort was “just south” of the Vieux Biloxi site.

Excavations were conducted in 1973 by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (1973) in an attempt to locate the exact site of the fort. The test excavations were conducted in the located described above on those lots whose owners gave permission to excavate. Although 18th century French artifacts, including ceramics and gun flints, were found, no definite structural remains of the fort were found. The artifacts, of course, could conceivably have come from either the fort or from Vieux Biloxi. The conclusions of the report are as follows:

... it was recognized that there was a strong possibility of the fort site having eroded into the bay. On the basis of the evidence examined to date, this seems to be the most likely possibility. Several factors contribute to this conclusion. Long time residents of the area tell of up to seventy feet of shoreline being eroded within approximately that many years.

There was formerly an oyster shell road along the beach which vanished many years ago. Perhaps the strongest suggestion of the erosion theory is the absence of the prominence of land on which Old Biloxi was apparently built. As stated before, this area does not appear on any coast maps as far back as 1855 and since it is depicted on three different maps, it must have existed. If Old Biloxi or substantial parts thereof eroded away, it seems entirely possible that so did the remains of Fort Maurepas. The fact that the French artifacts found on the Connor property seem to cluster near the bay is suggestive that perhaps most of the French settlement is in the bay and that excavations moved from the east westward to what was perhaps the rear of the fort.

The possibility cannot yet be ruled out that the fort site is on land, however, since it could be buried under some unexcavated portion of the area. Permission was sought for excavation of the nine lots along the stretch of beach front where the maps seemed to indicate the fort location... Five of the nine landowners did not grant permission for excavation.

In 1987, a hewn timber was discovered on or near the beach in this general location by Dale Greenwell, a member of The South Mississippi Archaeological Research Group (SMARG). It was described as follows:

about 20 feet long, 18 inches wide and 11 inches thick. It is handmade of cypress and has four heart-of-pine pegs. Today, only one peg can be seen coming out of the timber (Ruddiman 1987).

The timber appears to be fairly similar to those used in two bastions of Fort Maurepas (Higginbotham 1968:25; Plan du Fort de Maurepas n.d.). The exact location of this discovery was not provided in the Ruddiman article nor has SMARG been forthcoming with any information. However, Edmond Boudreaux (1989) has been informed by a member of SMARG that the timber was discovered on a lot known as the Schuyler Poitevent property. This is one of the five lots, mentioned above, to which the Mississippi Department of Archives and History was not granted permission to excavate in 1973. Furthermore, both Boudreaux and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History report (1973) refer to oral traditions pertaining to the discovery of buried timbers on the Poitevent property.

Sources from about the turn of the century mention artifacts possibly dating to the 18th century as having been found on this lot. Writing in the late 18th century, Hamilton (1976:45:46) recorded that “Mr. Poitevent [sic]... still digs up hatchets, cannon balls, and even iron shoes of tent or flag poles.” Riley

(1902) noted that “he [Mr. Poitevent] owns a number of relics which have been dug up or found otherwise on his place, among them the iron shoe of a flagstaff.”

Ruddiman (1987) also wrote that:

Members of SMARG have spent years carefully digging in an area Greenwell described as the peninsula north of the old Biloxi-Ocean Springs Bridge. So far they have tentatively identified four structures that were in a second settlement which dated 1717-1719. The group has many colonial artifacts they uncovered in the area and along the waterfront...

Despite the erroneous dates, the settlement referred to here is obviously Vieux Biloxi. If the information presented is correct, this is potentially a very significant discovery. However, SMARG has not been forthcoming with any additional information.

Finally, it should be noted that despite a strong possibility that much if not all of the sites of Fort Maurepas and Vieux Biloxi have eroded into the bay, there is still a potential for productive archaeological fieldwork...

Nouveau Biloxi

The settlement of Nouveau Biloxi largely consisted of rather ephemeral camps of the concessions, waiting for passage to the Mississippi River. The peak population during the brief period of 1720-1722 may have reached as high as 2,500 (Higginbotham 1974:356). There was also a warehouse, fort, and possibly several other administrative buildings (La Harpe 1976:96). The settlement can be identified with a great deal of accuracy and with a high level of resolution due to the variety of maps available that locate it as extending along the beach for approximately a mile from the Biloxi cemetery on the west to the Biloxi central business district on the east.

The general layout of the settlement, that is the distributions of the camps, can be determined through the two maps (Le Blond de la Tour 1722; Carte de Partie de la Coste du Nouveav Biloxy n.d.). These maps can be correlated with modern maps through a comparison of the outlines of the coast and of Deer Island. The latter of the two maps is of a larger scale and it shows many of the individual buildings or tents of the camps along with one of the drawings of the projected fort. Even higher degrees of resolution are available such as with the large scale map of the camp of the Meziere concession with an accompanying legend that identifies each of the numerous buildings (Plan du terrain... n.d.). Also Le Bouteux 1720 is a painting of one of these camps--the camp of the concession of M. Law.

The fort as proposed was to be quite large and elaborate with bastions and outlying earthworks, all enclosing a platted town and plaza (cf. the various versions of the proposed fort and town, Le Blond de la Tour 1721b; 1721c; Plan du Fort Projectte au Nouveau Biloxy n.d. and the enormous proposed hospital, Le Blond de la Tour 1722b). Judging by the short life of the settlement, it is very improbable that any version of the elaborate projected fort was ever constructed. Construction on a fort was undertaken; however little was accomplished, and it is not clear as to the nature and state of completion of whatever it was that was built (Wilson 1965:112-114). References to “Fort Louis,” dating to 1722 suggest that there was indeed a structure of some sort that was deemed a fort (Mereness 1916:28; Rowland and Sanders 1929:268). Its location is unknown; presumably it would have occupied a site within the area of the enormous projected fort.

The projected fort and town would have been located approximately between the Biloxi cemetery on the west and Porter Avenue, near the lighthouse, on the east. The location can be fairly precisely determined as a result of a small creek being shown on two of the maps as passing from west to east through the northern parts of the fort and then flowing into the Gulf just east of the fort (Le Blond de La Tour 1721b; Plan du fort projectte au Nouveau Biloxy n.d.). The creek can be identified with a small creek in the City of Biloxi that enters the Gulf near the light house, that is where Porter Avenue intersects the beach. A spring once fed this creek (Thompson 1956), and can be identified with the spring mentioned by Le Blond de la Tour in his report to the Council of Commerce in which he advocated that the headquarters of the Company of the Indies should be moved to Nouveau Biloxi:

The site is surrounded by a running stream which comes from a spring the water of which is clear, clean [and] very good and which does not dry up at all (Rowland and Sanders 1932:300).

By about 1721, there was already quite an occupation on either side of the mouth of the creek. On the eastern side was the Concession of M. le Blanc and on the western side was an unnamed settlement, which would have been displaced by the construction of the proposed fort (Plan du fort projette au Nouveau Bilocxy n.d.).

Judging by the fact that there were little substantial building conducted in Nouveau Biloxi during its peak period of activity and by the extensive development along the coast in this area today, it is unlikely that there are many archaeological remains. However, remains of human burials apparently dating to the early 1720s when hundreds died there have been discovered in this century. In 1914, "four skulls and numerous bones were found on the Hayward property at the corner of the Beach and Porter Avenue when the north part of the lot was graded down" (Indian Skull is found in Biloxi in Grading Yard 1914). The newspaper reporter went on to identify, probably erroneously, the bones as being Indian. In 1969, several other burials were uncovered while repairs were being made on the Moran Art Gallery, located on the east side of Porter Avenue, less than a block north of the beach. These were excavated by a group of local amateurs and two professors from Mississippi State University (Greenwell 1970). No report has appeared on the excavation to date. Four of these burials are on display in situ in the Moran Art Gallery in Biloxi. I have observed that they were buried in rectangular coffins, apparently made of planks. The burials are extended, lying on their backs with their hands crossed over the abdominal area. They are undoubtedly of European origin, judging by the burial practices. Considering the large number of people who died in Nouveau Biloxi in the early 1720s, these burials very likely date to this period. The cemetery appears to have been located between the camp of the Le Blanc concession and the unnamed camp to the west (Plan du fort projette au Nouveau Bilocxy n.d.).

Ship Island

As previously discussed, Ship Island had been used as a harbour by the French as early as 1699, as a result of its having deep and protected waters on the northern side. Following the silting up of the harbour at Dauphine Island, the primary port for Louisiana was moved to Ship Island where a warehouse was established (Rowland and Sanders 1929:269). Other than for the warehouse, there are no other references to buildings in the settlement on the island. Presumably there were houses for the warehouse keepers and possibly for others.

At extensive report on historic settlement on Ship Island was prepared by the National Park Service as a result of the island's being part of the Gulf Island's National Seashore (Bearss 1984). The report, while covering the 18th century history of the island, did not consider either the location of the French settlement or the possibility of there being archaeological remains. Recently, however, the National Park Service has conducted test excavations at a site named the "French Warehouse Site" located on the eastern half of Ship Island. The preliminary report on the excavation (Wilson 1988) is very short and is devoted primarily to a description of field techniques and a tabulation of artifacts, which included both aboriginal and 18th century European artifacts. Neither the specific location of the site nor cultural-historical interpretation were provided. Presumably a final report will soon be forthcoming.

Agrarian Settlement

The settlements of Fort Maurepas/Vieux Biloxi and Nouveau Biloxi have dominated discussion of the 18th century history of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. However, for most of the 18 century settlement in the area was more characterized by dispersed agrarian and pastorally based settlements located near the coasts and the lower reaches of streams that flow into the Gulf, particularly the Pascagoula and the Pearl Rivers. By 1811 this Creole population was estimated to be 770.

Despite the fact that little work has been conducted toward the locating of 18th century French site, a few are known. A map of the lower Pascagoula River, drawn ca. 1726 by Dumont de Montigny (n.d.), indicates the locations of the houses of Graveline and la Pointe and the Chaumont concession. Inset drawings depict the farmsteads of la Pointe and the Chaumont concession, both of which were quite elaborate with numerous buildings included inside palisaded compounds. Higginbotham (1974:356-357) has located the site of the Graveline farmstead as being on the west side of the Pascagoula River at Martin's Bluff (Section 3, Township 7, Range 6 West). He also has located the plantation of the Chaumont concession at Prichard's Landing on the Pascagoula River (Section 24, Township 5, Range 7 West). I do not know if any archaeological remains were recovered from these locations.

The “Old Spanish Fort” in the City of Pascagoula is probably of colonial vintage. It is actually neither Spanish nor a fort. Instead it is an example of Creole vernacular architecture, a three room colombage house surrounded on three sides by galleries with the spaces between the timber framing filled with a coarse tabby. The “Fort” would better be called the Krebs House, because it has traditionally been considered to be located at the site of the La Pointe-Krebs farmstead (Maddox 1971). The location of the farmstead and an inset detailed drawing of it are depicted by Dumont de Montigny (n.d.). The map location of the house. The age of the site is suggested by the adjacent Krebs family cemetery that has tombstones dating to the early 19th century, and very likely has unmarked graves dating much earlier. Claims that the building dates to ca. 1718 have been disputed (Little 1973), and in fact there is no known evidence for establishing even an approximate date. Excavations under and around the house have produced ceramics that dated to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, with the exception of one possible sherd of faience (Padgett n.d.).

A possible site of 18th century rural French occupation is the Mulatto Bayou site (22Ha515). Although this is primarily an aboriginal site, a number of European artifacts, seemingly all of 18th century vintage, were found here. They included ceramics, beads, brick fragments, buttons, nails, and gun flints. Williams (1987) regards these as being trade goods used by historic period Indians. Although I consider this remains a possibility, there is also a strong possibility that the area was occupied by Frenchmen. Indeed this hypothesis might serve as a better explanation for the presence of architecturally related artifacts such as bricks and nails.

Shipwreck in Biloxi Bay

During the summer of 1892, the wreck of a wooden-hulled ship was found in Biloxi Bay near the Fort Maurepas/Vieux Biloxi area by an oysterman, Eugene Tiblier, Jr. In the following days, Tiblier and others removed numerous artifacts from the wreck, including four cannons. Other finds included bricks, flint-lock muskets, a sword scabbard, and stones used for ballast. The wreck itself they estimated to be about 55 feet long by 20 feet wide (A Mysterious Find 1892). According to a Tiblier descendant the wreck soon silted in again after the salvages were made (Hudson 1973). As for the artifacts:

All of the materials salvaged from the old French wreck were assembled and put on display in front of Captain Tiblier’s home. This spectacle soon became the top offering of Captain Martin Green’s catboat tour of Biloxi waters. He carried boat loads of people everyday to the North Bay shores giving them a close-up view of the rare historical artifacts. The imposing array of French bric-a-brac, weapons and utensils dwindled a little every day as Captain Tiblier liberally gave some visitors a souvenir cannonball, or copper pot, or hunk of mahogany. Soon, only the four cannons remained (Fountain n.d.). The four cannons, now in a deteriorated condition, are presently embedded in a concrete block along Highway 90 in Biloxi.

The boat wreck probably dates to a hurricane that struck the Gulf Coast on September 1722 (cf. Mereness 1916:28). According to La Harpe (1971:214-215):

September 11, 1722. A hurricane began in the morning which lasted until the 16th. The winds came from the southeast passing to the south and then to the southwest. This hurricane caused the destruction of beans, corn, and more than 8,000 quarts of rice ready to be harvested. It destroyed most of the houses in New Orleans with the exception of a warehouse built by M. Pauger. The warehouse of Fort Louis [Nouveau Biloxi], containing a large quantity of supplies was overturned...

The Espinduel, three freighters, and almost all the boats, launches, and pirogues perished. The Neptune and the Santo-Cristo, which had been repaired according to the orders of the commissioners, were entirely put out of service. A large supply of artillery, lead, and meats, which had been for a long time in a pincre, were lost near Biloxi. The French had neglected to unload the ship for more than a year. They were also worried about the three ships anchored at Ship Island and the Dromadaire, which had been sent to New Orleans loaded with a supply of pine wood, which would have cost the company more than 100,000 livres.

It would seem that judging by the location of the wreck and the cannons found onboard it that it can probably be identified with the pincre mentioned by La Harpe.

Writing in regard to a proposed project to excavate the shipwreck, Hudson (1973) noted that:

Perhaps the most important aspect of this project is the preservation due to the silting that covered the ship in question. If this wreck is indeed one that was lost in the storm of 1722, and if the hull is intact, then Mississippi has the earliest intact colonial ship extant. The only other salvaged colonial ship I know of is the gunboat Philadelphia... which went down some 40 to 50 years after 1722.

Natchez: The Fort

The French settlement at Natchez was centered on a nucleus consisting of the fort, then called Rosalie, and support structures consisting of houses for military personnel and Company of the Indies personnel, church and rectory, and warehouses. The agricultural population were scattered out between the Mississippi River and St. Catherine's Creek, which is to say within a radius of three mile of the fort. Although most of the farms were small, there were two fairly large plantations known as the Concessions of St. Catherine and Terre Blanche.

The loess-covered bluffs at Natchez provided a fertile setting for agricultural settlement as well as easy access to the Mississippi River. On his second voyage to the Gulf Coast, Iberville visited the Natchez Bluffs area on March 11, 1700 which was then the home of the Natchez Indians who lived in scattered hamlets somewhat back from the river. In his journal Iberville described the land as

a country of plains, prairies, full of little hills, with clumps of trees in some spots, many oak trees, and many roads criss-crossing, leading from one hamlet to another or to huts (McWilliams 1981:126).

The journal of Father Pierre Charlevoix for December 15, 1721 notes that it was on the occasion of the 1700 visit of Iberville that the latter decided that Natchez would eventually be the capital of the colony and would be called "Rosalie" after the Duchess of Pontchartrain (Charlevoix 1976:146-147). If this was true, Iberville made no mention of it in his journal. It is more likely that Charlevoix statement was a distortion of the founding of Fort Rosalie at Natchez in 1716 by Iberville's brother, Bienville.

Prior to 1713 a man named La Vigne settled at Natchez and attempted to raise wheat. Despite the fertility of the soils the venture was a failure (Cadillac to Pontchartrain, Oct. 26, 1713, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:166). According to Pennicaut (McWilliams 1953:158-159), it was about 1713 that Antoine Crozat, who then held the charter to the colony, ordered the establishment of a trading post there. This action was implemented in April 1714 by the de La Loire brothers, Marc Antoine de La Loire des Ursins and Louis Auguste de La Loire Flaucourt who ascended the river to Natchez in two canoes and opened the trading post in "the Natchez village," possibly meaning the Grand Village (McWilliams 1953:158-159, 170; Villiers 1920:169; Wilson 1982:196). In years to come the operator of the magazine held the title of "company clerk."

Following the discovery that Englishmen were trading with Indians on the Mississippi, an order was signed on May 18, 1715 instructing Bienville to construct a fort at Natchez. It was at about this time that the Natchez Indians were involved in hostilities with the French. Penicaut related that these Indians robbed and murdered a group of Frenchmen who were traveling up the river to the Illinois country. Shortly afterward, the Natchez looted the trading post (McWilliams 1953:167-174; Villiers 1920:168; Wilson 1982:196-197).

Subsequently, Bienville was ordered to bring troops from Mobile to Natchez to punish the Natchez. The mission was accomplished and as a result of the peace treaty, the Natchez were ordered to construct a fort of palisades with four bastions for the usage of the French. Construction was apparently begun in June 1716 and was completed by August 3 of the same summer. The fort was located on the edge of the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River (Richebourg as quoted in Swanton 1911:202-204; Wilson 1982:196-197).

The Company's trading post or warehouse (magazine) was re-established near the fort, with the two forming a nucleus and something of a rudimentary political center of the settlement that grew up around it. The Commandment of the fort and the company clerk served as judges for the settlement although there

were barracks for the garrison inside the fort by 1729 many of the soldiers had apparently constructed residences for themselves outside of the fort the Commandant's house was on the terrace between the fort and the river (Broutin n.d.; Dumont 1976:31-32; Du Pratz 1975:109; *Memoirs on Louisiana* by Bienville, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:506-507; the maps of Dumont du Montigny).

Within a decade of its construction Fort Rosalie was very deteriorated. Father Raphael in his December 28, 1726 letter to the Abbe Ragué refers to it as "an enclosure of poor piles, half-rotten that permit[s] free entrance almost everywhere" (Rowland and Sanders 1929:525). In his report to the governing council of Louisiana on March 23, 1725, Desliettes, the former commander at the fort, noted that because the fort was "completely decayed" it would be necessary to rebuild it. It was suggested that it be rebuilt on earth "because it would last longer."

In June 1729 the plan of Governor Perier to rebuild the fort with bricks was approved by the directors of the Company of the Indies. This plan had quite likely been instigated by the engineer Ignace Francois Broutin (Rowland and Sanders 1929:649; Wilson 1982:201). The plan was never implemented because on the morning of November 28, 1729 virtually the entire French colony at Natchez was massacred by the Natchez Indians with the exception of many of the women, children, and slaves.

Other than its original function of trading goods to the Indians the warehouse² was also used for selling merchandise to the French settlers (*Minutes of the Council*, March 23, 1725, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:420; *The Revocation of Sieur Dumanoir* n.d.). The warehouse was also used for the storage of flour which was either acquired from voyageurs descending the river from the Illinois or sent upriver from New Orleans. The flour was then dispensed to the garrison of the fort for use in making their bread. The company clerk along with the commandant of the fort also served as something of a judge for the Natchez settlement (Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas, May 12, 1733, and *Memoirs on Louisiana* by Bienville, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:506-506, 590).

The growing population of Natchez resulted in the establishment of a church there. When Father Charlevoix (1976:172) visited there in December 1721 he noted that it had been five years since any Frenchman had heard mass there. By 1725, however, a priest was resident there. There was still no church as late as December 1726 at which time services were being held in the parsonage which was located below the bluff on which the fort was located. A cemetery had been established nearby (Fr. Raphael to the Abbe Ragué, May 15, 1725, and December 28, 1726, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:482, 525-526). Within the next 3 years a church was constructed near the Commandant's house on the terrace between the fort and the river (Broutin to the Company, August 7, 1730, in Rowland and Sanders 1927:133; Broutin n.d.; also see the maps of Dumont de Montigny).

Agrarian Settlement

Following the founding of the company warehouse and the fort, an agrarian population began to develop at Natchez which was in the form of a number of farms of greatly varying sizes.* The two largest were plantations known as the Concession of St. Catherine and the Concession of Terre Blanche.

²At least one of the La Loire brothers continued to operate the company trading post or warehouse. Du Pratz (1973:26) noted that upon arriving at Natchez in January 1720 he was received by "M. Loire de Flaucourt, storekeeper of this post." Father Charlevoix during his visit to Natchez in December 1721 noted that "The company have a warehouse, and keep a clerk here, who has not as yet much employment." He erroneously spelled the clerk's name as "Sieur le Noir" (Charlevoix 1976:150; 159). The *Minutes of the Superior Council* for April 21, 1722 provide a list of the company's employees which includes for Natchez "Sieur La Loire, chief clerk and keeper of the warehouse." This must have been the brother de Flaucourt, because the same minutes list the other brother la Loire des Oursins as holding the same position at the Illinois (Rowland and Sanders 1929:270). It would appear then that by 1720 the only La Loire brother remaining at Natchez was de Flaucourt. However, when the Natchez colony was massacred by the Natchez Indians in 1729, a list of the casualties included the brother des Oursins instead of De Flaucourt (From Father Philibert, in Rowland and Sanders 1927:123; For an overview of their careers see McWilliams 1953:173n).

The first farm at Natchez was the concession of M. de la Houssaye and his two partners the Tisserand brothers which was established in 1718 probably on the bank of St. Catherine's³ Bellecourt. The 1723 census for Natchez lists "Pelerin and Cache, associates," while the 1727 census lists the "concession of Pellerin's farm was quite modest in terms of number of personnel having on it only two Frenchmen, one French servant, and three Negro slaves. In 1725 the Minutes of the Council mention a Sieur Guyot of Natchez as being the partner of Sieur Pellerin. Overall, relatively little is known about these early concessions (Census of Louisiana 1727; Albrecht 1946:337-338; De Ville 1971; McWilliams 1953:213-214, 229; Minutes of the Council, March 23, 1725, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:420).

In describing the process of settlement at Natchez, Dumont (1975:31) recorded that

many Frenchmen, soldiers and workmen, after obtaining their discharges, went and settled there, and new dwellings were built. Most bought their lands of the Indians of the place.

Writing about the Lower Mississippi in general du Poisson (1959:283) noted in 1727 that

A smaller portion of land granted by the Company is called a "habitation." A man with his wife or his partner clears a little ground, builds himself a house on four piles, covers it with sheets of bark, and plants corn and rice for his provisions; the next year he raises a little more for food, and has also a field of tobacco; if at last he succeeds in having three or four Negroes, but how many of them are as nearly beggars as when they began!

Presumably the small-holders at Natchez could have acquired their land either directly from the Indians or from the Company. They could conceivably have initially received a grant from the Company, then had to establish their title to it through agreement with the Indians. In the 1727 census only a few of the small holders, such as du Pratz and Pellerin, are listed as concessionaires while the vast majority are not. This majority may have been the ones who purchased their land from the Indians without having acquired a grant from the Company.

The farms and plantations were dispersed across the rolling hill landscape between the river and St. Catherine Creek and a number were along the creek, probably farming the terraces and bottomlands. Father Raphael in a 1726 letter noted that "the colonists are established on the hills where each has his land around his house" (Rowland and Sanders 1929:525). Following the 1729 massacre du Pratz noted that one of the reasons for the settlers inability to defend themselves was that they were "dispersed in the country, each amidst his field" (du Pratz 1975:35). In a 1730 letter Diron d'Artaguet described the area as

an elevation covered with hills, with meadows here and there, and besides densely wooded. The dwellings were on these meadows and consequently at a distance from each other, or according to the extent of the land that each person might have (Rowland and Sanders 1927:76).

Additional evidence for a dispersed settlement comes from the maps of Dumont de Montigny (n.d.) that show numerous individual houses scattered over the hills lying between the Mississippi river and St. Catherine Creek. The map of Broutin (n.d.) while not covering so great an area as the Montigny maps is of far greater accuracy. It depicts scattered buildings surrounded by clearings. Such a settlement pattern would have in turn deterred the used of the long lot system. In lieu of a rectilinear survey system, the parcels must have been surveyed as irregular parcels, that is to say, in a metes and bounds system.

³ Loire, chief clerk and keeper of the warehouse." This must have been the brother de Flaucourt, because the same minutes list the other brother la Loire des Oursins as holding the same position at the Illinois (Rowland and Sanders 1929:270). It would appear then that by 1720 the only La Loire brother remaining at Natchez was de Flaucourt. However, when the Natchez colony was massacred by the Natchez Indians in 1729, a list of the casualties included the brother des Oursins instead of De Flaucourt (From Father Philibert, in Rowland and Sanders 1927:123; For an overview of their careers see McWilliams 1953:173n).

Whereas the long lot system was of European origin (Jordan 1974) the dispersed settlement pattern at Natchez seems to show influence of the native inhabitants, the Natchez Indians. This is based on a statement of du Pratz who moved to Natchez in 1720 to open a small farm.

I found upon the main road that leads from the chief village of the Natchez to the fort... a cabin of the natives upon the road side, surrounded with a spot of cleared ground, the whole of which I bought by means of an interpreter. I made this purchase with the more pleasure, as I had upon the spot, wherewithal to lodge me and my people, with all my effects: the cleared ground was about six acres, which would form a garden and a plantation for tobacco, which was then the only commodity cultivated by the inhabitants. I had water convenient for my house, and all my land was very good... All this piece of ground was in general good, and contained about four hundred acres... (du Pratz 1975:27)

Thus du Pratz began his farming career at Natchez using an Indian house and farming a clearing that had presumably been created by the Indian. The size of his acquisition gave him considerable space for grazing livestock and/or expansion of his fields. The purchase and use of Indian farmsteads could have had a considerable influence on the development of the pattern of settlement.

The Concessions of St. Catherine and Terre Blanche

The two largest agricultural enterprises at Natchez were the plantations of the concessions of St. Catherine and Terre Blanche with both being located near St. Catherine Creek. Events leading to the founding of the largest concession/plantation--St. Catherine's--were initiated in 1719. That year Le Page du Pratz, a new arrival in Louisiana, was farming on the Mississippi River near New Orleans. In conversation with Hubert de S. Malo, the commissary general, he was informed that Hubert was in the process of establishing a concession at Natchez. Hubert encouraged Du Pratz to follow suit. Within a short time Du Pratz was traveling upriver to Natchez with two slaves where he was to establish a farm for himself and select two parcels of land--one for Hubert and another for the Company (Du Pratz 1975:23-27). It was at the October 26, 1719 meeting of the Council of Commerce at Dauphine Island with Hubert in attendance that the Council had decided to

establish the cultivation of tobacco for the Company at the Natchez since it is the most suitable place to gather the best tobacco, and to send there the tobacco experts and the negroes whom it will be necessary to bring together there (Rowland and Sanders 1932:368).

The first of these parcels--Hubert's--eventually became the St. Catherine concession and the latter became the Terre Blanche concession.

Du Pratz arrived at Natchez on January 5, 1720 where he was "well received" by La Loire de Flaucourt. Within the next few days he located farmlands for himself and for Hubert and the Company. Later that year a fleet of eight boats left New Orleans for Natchez, with Hubert* and his family and sixty workers whom he had brought from France on board. Also traveling with the flotilla was M. de Montplaisir, a representative of the Company of the Indies, who had been ordered to "establish a tobacco factory" for which purpose he brought with him thirty tobacco workers from Clerac, France (Du Pratz 1975:23-30; McWilliams 1953:237-238).

Hubert rapidly developed his plantation. He had a large residence constructed while the surrounding land was planted in wheat. To grind the grain he had a water mill constructed on St. Catherine's Creek. He also had a forge mill built on the same creek for the use of a gunsmith and a blacksmith. Hubert was so enamored with Natchez that he wanted to make it into the provincial capital. To lobby for this he returned to France in 1721 where he shortly died (Dumont 1975:30-31; McWilliams 1953:237-239).

His plantation eventually was obtained by a group of Parisian financiers and St. Malo merchants, who in 1719 had organized to finance a concession to be known as the “St. Catherine Concession.” Most prominent in this company was one Faucon Du Manoir as their agent to organize and operate their⁴ plantation (Engagement of Faucon Dumanoir, December 29, 1719). Du Manoir recruited 243 people who sailed from France on May 20, 1720 and arrived at New Biloxi in late August. There they were forced to camp for several months until they could be transported to the Mississippi River, and there 73 of them died from starvation, exposure, and disease (Memoir of the investors of St. Catherine Concession, March 16, 1731). A 1721 map of New Biloxi depicts the camps of various concessions including the “Concession de M. Colly” (Carte de Partie de la Coste du Nouveau Biloxi... n.d.).

About half of the remaining settlers were settled on a tract of land near New Orleans with the remainder along with Du Manoir reaching Natchez in mid-summer 1721. By then it was too late in the season to clear land and plant a crop, so De Manoir purchased Hubert’s plantation. Hubert’s workers were also retained to supplement the now depleted labor force of Koly’s concession (Phelps 1966:49; McWilliams 1953:252). Sources vary as to who sold Hubert’s concession. Penicaut states that Hubert sold it himself before his return to France (McWilliams 1953:252), while Dumont (1975:31) claims that it was sold following Hubert’s death in France. A 1724 letter from De La Chaise to the Directors of the Company of the Indies (Rowland and Sanders 1929:340) strongly suggests that Hubert was alive at the time.

Father Charlevoix who visited the plantation in December 1721 noted that “it wants nothing to make an improvement of the land but negroes, or hired servants” (Charlevoix 1976:154). During October 1722, the plantation was the subject of a number of raids by Natchez Indians, which became known as the second Natchez War (Phelps 1945). In January of 1723 Diron d’Artaguette visited the plantation and noted that “the Frenchmen and negroes” were raising “Indian corn, beans, potatoes, and other necessities of life” along with tobacco (Mereness 1916:46). Dumanoir remained as director of the plantation until 1728, when he was relieved of his duties. Although he brought a legal suit for damages in 1731 he was nevertheless lucky in having been relieved because if he had remained he would have most surely died during the massacre of November 1729. His successor as director of De Longrais was listed among the casualties (From Father Philibert, in Rowland and Sanders 1927:122; Phelps 1966:51).

The plantation later called “Terre Blanche” was established by Montplaisir for the Company of the Indies for the purpose of producing tobacco. Although the venture appears to have been successful initially--they produced over 100,000 pounds of tobacco in their second year--the workmen soon began to abandon the site. In a report dated March 8, 1724 (Rowland and Sanders 1929:335) M. de la Chaise, Special Commissary of the colony (commissaire extradordinaire), observed regarding Montplaisir that “it does not appear that this man has looked after the interests of the Company.” Father Charlevoix (1976:159) noted in December 1721 that the workers had “almost all returned to France.” On September 24, 1722, the engineer Broutin was ordered to travel to Natchez “to draw a map and investigate the concession of La Terre Blanche,” and was later ordered to purchase the plantation for M. Le Blanc who had formerly owned a concession on the Yazoo River which had failed (Cruzat 1937:238). By the time of Diron d’Artaguette’s visit to Natchez in January 1723, the plantation had come into the possession of Le Blanc. On the 20th of that month d’Artaguette had observed workmen arriving by boat at Natchez from the Yazoo (Mereness 1916:45-46, 49). The new director of the concession was a Sieur La Bro (Rowland and Sanders 1929:335).

On October 18, 1724 the engineer Ignace Francois Broutin was appointed director of the Terre Blanche concession, a position he held until 1726 (Cruzat 1937:238). During his administration he appears to have been successful in raising tobacco. He was also engaged in mapping in the Natchez area and rebuilding Fort Rosalie. Broutin was replaced as director of the concession by a Sieur Bonnaud (Wilson 1969:240-242). At the time of the Natchez massacre of 1729 one Desnoyers was director (From Father Philibert, in

⁴Hubert was in attendance when the Council of Commerce met at Mobile on May 9, 1720 and at Biloxi on May 24, 1720. However, when it met on July 12, 1720 on Dauphine Island he was not in attendance (Minutes of the Council of Commerce, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:288-289, 295). Presumably he had left for Natchez sometime after the May 24th meeting.

Jean Daniel Kolley, formerly an official with the Bavarian government, who served as a director. The company selected

Rowland and Sanders 1927:122). There were then 280 arpents (ca. 280 acres of land in cultivation, about forty horses, and “a large number of horned cattle” (Cruzat 1925:391).

The schematic maps of Dumont de Montigny depict the two concessions as consisting of fairly large clusters of buildings adjacent to St. Catherine Creek. The St. Catherine plantation had a large main house and adjacent to it two or more rows of buildings. Nearby on the creek there was a water mill for grinding wheat (cf. McWilliams 1953:238).

The Terre Blanche Concession plantation is drawn as a far more elaborate complex although it was considerably smaller than the St. Catherine concession plantation. It is possible that this might have resulted from Dumont de Montigny’s being more familiar with the former plantation. Terre Blanche had at its core a cluster of buildings surrounded by a palisade. The buildings vary in size and distribution with the most prominent being a pair of two-story buildings, labeled as being the magazines. Also quite prominent is the “house of the director.” Other buildings are smaller and occur in clusters within the palisaded compound. Some of these are labeled as “oven,” “guard house,” “forge,” and “indigo manufactory.” Presumably others were the homes of the workers. On the north side of the compound is a garden surrounded by a palisade with a cruciform walkway dividing it into quadrants with each quadrant being filled with a different type of cultigen.

The Latter Years of French Settlement at Natchez

By 1723 the civilian population of Natchez was 275, which included 168 French, 7 Indian slaves, and 100 Negro slaves (De Ville 1971). By 1727 the number had increased to 874, consisting of 314 French, 38 Indian slaves, and 522 Negro slaves (Phelps 1966:53). In 1723 most of the Negro slaves were on the two concessions with St. Catherine having 45 while Terre Blanche had 28. About 49 of the settlers seem to have been small farmers, which is to say that they were not concerned with the two large concessions (De Ville 1971).

On the morning of November 28, 1729, the neighboring Natchez Indians attacked the French settlement without warning and killed almost every white male and many of the white women and children. Casualties number well over 200. The surviving women and children were held hostage, while the slaves were released. After the killing was ended, virtually every building of the French was destroyed. According to Le Page du Pratz (1975:91), “after [they] had cleared the fort, warehouse, and other houses, the Natchez set them all on fire, not leaving a single building standing.” Similarly Petit (1950:23) observed torn “the houses of the French were torn down or burned.” The massacre resulted in the end of the French domestic settlement in the Natchez area.

Following the massacre Governor Perier led a force of French troops up the river to Natchez. There he attacked the Natchez Indians and secured the release of the women and children who were being held hostage. The Indians were defeated, and they fled the area.

Following the cessation of hostilities a provisional fort was built on a ridge overlooking the Mississippi River a short distance to the southwest of the site of Fort Rosalie. This fort which was completed by August 1730 was apparently to be occupied only while Fort Rosalie was being constructed on its original site. Work on the new fort continued over the next few years with the fort being constructed with earthen embankments and moats in the shape of a pentagon. Because the loess soils characteristic of the Natchez area are extremely susceptible to erosion after they have been disturbed, the embankments of the new fort were constantly plagued with erosion (Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas, May 12, 1733, in Rowland and Sanders 1932:592-593; Broutin n.d.; Broutin to the Company, August 7, 1730, in Rowland and Sanders 1927:136; Journal of the Chickasaw War, September 25, 1739, in Claiborne 1978:68).

It appears that France maintained a garrison of about fifty men at the fort until 1763 at which time it gave up its claim to Louisiana (Rochemore to Berryer, June 23, 1760, and Statement of the current strength..., in Rowland, Sanders, and Galloway 1984b:142, 255; Journal of the Chickasaw War, September 25, 1739, in Claiborne 1978:68). During these years the fort served as “an entrepot for the convoys ascending to the Illinois” and for conducting trade with the Indians for peltris (Chambers 1942:14n; Thomas 1960:177).

Location of the Fort Site

A wealth of documentary materials has established beyond reasonable doubt the location of the Fort of Natchez. The site is on the knoll or hill west of South Canal Street, south of Compress Street and north of

Green Street, the small city-owned lanes called Rosalie Street and Rumble Street, both lead up onto the site.

The fort had two basic forms: (1) from 1716 until it was burned by the Natchez Indians in 1729 it consisted of a rectangular palisade with four bastions, and (2) during the early 1730s it was reconstructed on the same site as an earthwork in the form of a pentagon. During the French occupation the fort was known as "Rosalie." Under the British and Spanish its official name was "Fort Panmure," and during the early years of the Mississippi Territory it was named Fort Sargent after Winthrop Sargent, the first territorial governor. Unofficially it was sometimes referred to as "Fort Natchez" by both the Spanish and early settlers.

Despite the fact that the primary sources are clear as to the location, there remains a lingering notion in the public mind that prior to the 1729 massacre the fort was at an unknown location farther inland from the river. The earliest known source for this belief was John Wesley Monette (1846:214-215) who wrote that

the fort [constructed in 1716] was situated remote from the bluff which overlooks the river. Its site was probably near the eastern limit of the present city of Natchez.

Other 18th century writers who followed Monette with the two fort theory were Claiborne (1978:47) and Shields (1930:6). All three of these writers were, however, in agreement with me that the post-1729 fort site was located at the bluff site.

As was typical of writers of Monette's era they usually did not cite their sources or make clear the difference between statements based on archival sources on one hand and inferences on the other. It is quite possible that Monette had based his statement on the maps and history of Dumont de Montigny (n.d.;1976). Dumont's maps depict the fort at a knoll at an undetermined distance inland from the river. Because the maps are only schematic and are not drawn to scale the fort as depicted could be anywhere from a few yards to a few miles inland. About the location Dumont (1976:31) wrote: "West of this village [the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians] the French built a fort on a hill and called it Fort Rosalie." The statement could be taken to imply that the fort was in proximity to the Grand Village.

Since the letter place was located approximately three miles east of the river this would have placed the fort inland from the river. However, it must be emphasized that Dumont gave no distance between the fort and the Grand Village so he could have been referring to the site on the bluffs. In fact this would appear to be the case because in a later reference Dumont implies that the fort was always in the same location. Relating the events that followed the Natchez massacre and the destruction of the fort, he wrote that after the French retaliatory attack upon the Grand Village "the whole army decamped and returned to the spot where Fort Rosalie had been. There they began to raise a new fort..." (Dumont 1976:93-94). In summation there is not known evidence in the primary source material that would support Monette's two fort theory.

The most convincing evidence for the location of the fort come from three 18th century maps. The earlier by the French engineer Broutin (n.d.) "Map of the Environs of Fort Rosalie of the Natchez..." was made following the Natchez massacre of 1729 and was probably based in part upon surveys that Broutin had made during the 1720s. It shows the location of the palisaded fort that was burned in 1729 and the location of the temporary fort that was constructed in 1730 (Rowland and Sanders 1927:136). The second maps, also by Broutin (1732), depicts the fort as reconstructed in its pentagonal form. The map is derived from the same base map, as previously cited Broutin map and it has almost exactly identical physical and cultural features, even including the location of buildings destroyed by the Indians in 1729. On this map the new fort is located on exactly the same site as the original one. The third map entitled "Plan of Fort Rosalia [sic]" was made in 1756 by the British Engineer Philip Pittman (1906) upon the occasion of a tour of inspection following the acquisition of West Florida in 1763 by Great Britain. Pittman's map depicts the same pentagonal fort as Broutin (1732) on the same site in relation to the same topographic setting. Both of the engineers produced maps that were drawn with sufficient attention to scale and topography so as to easily permit a correlation between them and the fort site today, leaving little doubt as to its location. Later maps such as that of Dunbar (1794), Collot's 1796 map (1974), and Lafon (n.d.), although done to a much smaller scale and without great attention to topography, all show the fort in relationship to the platted city of Natchez, and all agree as to the general location of the fort.

Documentary sources also indicate that the fort was on the edge of the bluff and not at some inland site as Monette would have it. Father de Charlevoix (1976:140-143) who visited Natchez in 1721 wrote:

One the 15th we arrived at the Natchez... The landing place is over against a pretty high hill, and very steep... From this first hill we ascend a second smaller one, at the top of which they have built a kind of redoubt, enclosed with a single palisade.

It seems fairly clear that the “first hill” ascended by Father Charlevoix was the terrace, referred to above as lying between the fort and the river, and that the “second smaller” hill is the knoll overlooking the terrace. Both the Broutin (n.d.) map and the Pittman (1906) map indicate that after landing one ascended first to the terrace before climbing to the fort.

Father Raphael visited Natchez in 1726. He wrote that the fort is “on the first eminence” and that “the parsonage is at the foot of this eminence” (Rowland and Sanders 1929:525). This verbal description supports Broutin’s map (n.d.) which shows the church and parsonage as being located on the terrace just below the knoll on which the fort sat.

Diron d’Artaguette who visited Natchez in 1723 noted that the fort was “situated at the top of the hill” (Mereness 1916:45). Du Pratz who arrived at Natchez as a settler in 1720 recorded that

... we put on shore at a landing-place, which is at the foot of a hill two hundred feet high, upon the top of which Fort Rosalie built, surrounded only with pallisadoes. About the middle of the hill stands the magazine, nigh to some houses of the inhabitants, who are settled there, because the ascent is not so steep in that place ... When you are upon the top of this hill, you discover the whole country, which is an extensive beautiful plain... (Du Pratz 1975:26)

Du Pratz’s account also echoes the topography of the area. The bluffs according to him have three levels: (1) the foot of the hill where the landing is, (2) the middle of the hill with the magazine and some residences, and (3) the top of the hill where the fort is located and from which one can see the surrounding countryside. The middle of the hill obviously corresponds to the terraced on which Broutin depicts a number of residences and the top of the hill refers to the top of the bluff. Du Pratz makes only one mistake in placing the magazine on the terrace. The magazine owned by the Company of the Indies stood on the edge of the bluff at the northern end of the terrace. This mistake is not surprising considering that du Pratz, unlike Charlevoix, d’Artaguette, and Raphael, was writing in retrospective years after he had lived at Natchez.

An examination of the title to the land on which the fort stood provides additional corroboration as the fort site. Although by 1798, virtually all of the land in and around Natchez had been granted to individuals, the fort parcel was still owned by the Spanish crown and subsequently passed into the possession of the United States government. After about two decades of ownership, the Federal government issued a patent to the property on October 5, 1821 to the legal representatives of Henry Willis, deceased. The property was designated as Section 77, Township 7, Range 3 West and contained 21.84 acres. Apparently Willis had already had effective title to the parcel, because on November 15, 1820, Josias H. McComas, husband of Willis’ widow, had already sold it to Gamaliel Pease for \$3,000. Pease sold it the following month for the same price to Peter Little. Both of the deeds for these transfers of title referred to the parcel as “all that certain tract or piece of land situated, lying and being in the city of Natchez at the Old Fort” (Rosalie--Chain of title n.d.). Section 77 is depicted on the plats of Freeman (n.d.b) and Wailes (n.d.). It was Peter Little who had the elegant Rosalie mansion, named after the fort, constructed on the north end of the parcel in 1823 (Miller and Miller 1985:41-42). Following Little’s death much of the fort parcel was subdivided and sold. In the records of this division, the lots produced by the subdividing are listed; it is noted there that Lot 22 was the site of “old Fort Rosalie.” This lot was located at the crest of the hill that has already been described (Adams County Probate Real Estate Record Book 2, p. 646; Plat of Land Belonging to the Estate of Peter Little Dec. 1858).

Other than documentary sources, there is evidence of an oral tradition regarding the site of the fort that can be traced from the early 19th century on into this century. Physical evidence of this tradition remains on the site in the form of the base of a flag pole, once used by the Daughters of the American Revolution to commemorate the history of the fort. In 1820 John James Audubon observed that the town gallows was located in the middle of the site, and his 1823 painting of the Natchez landscape depicts the ruins of the fort (Peattie 1940:152 and reproduction of painting). J. H. Ingraham (1835:23) in the 1830s referred to

seeing “the romantic ruins of Fort Rosalie, now enamelled with a rich coating of verdure.” Sir Charles Lyell (1849:154) who visited Natchez in the 1840s mentioned the fort site in his writings. As late as the 1890s Steve Power (1984:7) noted that “the ruins of the old Fort Rosalie still stand...”

Rowland’s (1925:125) history of Mississippi includes a photograph of an earthwork that is captioned “Site of Fort Rosalie, Natchez.” In 1918, the Daughters of the American Revolution erected a flagpole with a bronze plaque on this embankment to commemorate the raising of the American flag over earthwork and the base of the flagpole are still extant at the site at the western terminus of the small drive called “Rumble Street.”

About 1940 the site was the scene of a “reconstruction” of the fort, built by Jefferson Davis Dickson, a native Natchezean, who had traveled to Europe after World War I and had become famous there as a sports promoter. At the beginning of the Second World War he returned to Natchez where he developed several tourist attractions. One of these was a so-called replica of Fort Rosalie that was built with little concern for historical accuracy. After the United States entered the war, Dickson enlisted in the military and was eventually killed in Europe. Following the war the reconstruction was allowed to deteriorate and is not longer extant.

In recent years those who have researched the location of the fort have been unanimous in placing it on the knoll west of Canal Street. Dawson Phelps (1966) in a report prepared for the Natchez Trace Parkway noted that “only [my emphasis] on this eminence could the fort have been located.” In a recent paper Joseph V. Frank III (1987), an amateur archaeologist, was also in agreement in regards to the location.

Finally it might be recalled that the fort site during the 1720s was much more than the site of only the fort *per se*, there were a number of additional structures associated with the central place function of the site. There were the warehouses of the Company of the Indies, the Church and priest’s house, residences of the Commandant, of the Clerk of the Company of the Indies, and of soldiers. These are all depicted on Broutin’s (n.d.) map which is sufficiently accurate that they can all be located approximately.

It might be noted that the locations as shown by Broutin as drawn to scale correspond to the schematic layout of buildings as depicted in the maps of Dumont de Montigny (n.d.). Although the Dumont maps are far from being identical they have a tendency to show the following spatial arrangement: (1) the fort is depicted as being the knoll east of the river and (2) between the fort and the river are three structures running from north to south, respectively, the warehouse, the church, and the commandant’s house (“house of M. Chopart”). This is exactly the same arrangement that Broutin depicts in his far more accurate map. The Dumont maps depict the French cemetery as being located at an undetermined distance north of the fort at a location that is probably off the rim of the Broutin map. Considering that Dumont appears to be fairly accurate if taken only schematically, then it would appear quite likely that his location of the cemetery is essentially correct.

THE YAZOO SETTLEMENT

History

A second fort and agricultural colony existed contemporaneously with that of Natchez. It was located on the loess bluffs on the south side of the Yazoo River a few miles above the confluence of the Yazoo and the Mississippi. Like the Natchez colony it fell victim of an Indian massacre in 1729; yet unlike Natchez the fort here was never rebuilt.

The fort was usually referred to as Fort St. Pierre although Dumont du Montigny referred to it Fort St. Claude (Brown 1979:79). It was established in 1718 according to Penicaut who wrote:

During this same time M. de Bienville sent M. de la Boulaye, a lieutenant, with thirty men and a great deal of munitions and merchandise to establish a fort close to the village of the Yasoux [Indians]. When he got there, he chose the highest place he could find on the bank of their river, on the right side four leagues inland from its mouth, two musket shots from their village, and there he had his fort built (McWilliams 1953:215-216).

Although never explicitly stated, the fort was probably established for the purpose of trading with the Indians for peltries. This was a fairly common function of the French forts of this time period (Thomas

1960:172-178). It is also suggested by the location of the fort with its being off the major transportation corridor of the Mississippi River and consequently of no value in defending the river and supplying convoys. Additionally the fort was in the proximity of Indian villages. It was described in 1723 as being square in plan and “having four bastions surrounded by a little moat about six feet wide and three feet deep” (Mereness 1916:51).

As at Natchez following the establishment of the fort agricultural settlers began to locate themselves in its vicinity. Most of these were presumably small farmers as was predominant Natchez; however, there was one plantation founded there. This latter was the concession of Messrs. le Blanc, le Comte de Belle-Isle, le Marquis d’Asfeld, and le Blond de la Tour. The last named individual was the engineer who has previously been discussed. He served as the director of the plantation. De la Tour established the concession in 1720 or 1721 with sixty men (Brown 1979: 80-81; McWilliams 1953:242; Charlevoix 1976:140).

The settlement was hardly established before it was declining. Father Charlevoix visited there in December 1721 to find that the commandant M. Bizart had just died. The priest noted that the commandant had been preparing to move the fort to a more healthy location at the time of his death. The reddish waters of the Yazoo apparently inflicted those who drank from them with “the bloody flux.” As for the plantation of the le Blanc concession he wrote that “I can see no reason why they chose the river of the Yasous for the place of their grant” (Charlevoix 1976:135, 138-140). A few days later on January 26, 1722 La Harpe visited. He found the location to be “unhealthy.” Furthermore he noted that the le Blanc concession was only cultivating about 30 arpents of land (about 30 acres) and that “the rest of the soil is so thin and sandy, that it can never be cultivated” (La Harpe 1976:105-106). Dumont de Montigny who also visited in 1722 found that half the garrison was dead ostensibly as a result of bad air or water (Delanglez 1937:37).

To make matters more difficult, Indians in the area were hostile. The Chickasaws who were allies of the English attacked the settlement in 1722 and murdered a number of the inhabitants (Le Page du Pratz 1975:60). By the latter half of 1722 Le Blanc was making arrangements to purchase the Company’s tobacco plantation at Natchez and move the workers from his concession to Natchez (Cruzat 1937:238). By January 1723 the workers were on their way to Natchez along with a sizable percentage of the soldiers from the garrison (Mereness 1916:49-51). A few years later it was noted that Le Blanc’s Yazoo concession had “come to ruin” (du Poisson 1959:317).

On June 23, 1727 Father du Poisson arrived at the Yazoo settlement. Besides noting that the “air is said to be unhealthy” he observed that the only inhabitants of the place were “an officer with the title of Commandant, a dozen soldiers, and three or four planters” (du Poisson 1959:317).

The settlement came to an end in December 1729. The commandant of Fort St. Pierre M. du Codere and two other Yazoo inhabitants were at Natchez when the November 28 massacre occurred, and they were among the victims. Then in December the Yazoo Indians made an attack on the French settlement on the Yazoo River. Initially killed were the missionary Father Souel and his African slave. The Indians then attacked the fort where the settlers had sought protection. All inside were killed except for nine women and children. According to various accounts the number of slain ranged from nine to twenty with seventeen being the most probable number (Brown 1979:88-93).

The massacre completely ended the dwindling French settlement on the Yazoo River. No settlers returned, and unlike at Natchez the fort was never re-established.

The Site

The site of Fort St. Pierre (22Wr514) has been established conclusively by archaeological excavations conducted jointly by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and Harvard University. The site is located on a high bluff overlooking the Yazoo River and the Mississippi Delta in the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 34, Township 18, Range 4 East. Much of the ground at the site has apparently sloughed off down the bluff or been removed by the construction of the no longer extant Fort St. Peter Bridge. Excavations have delineated portions of the southeast bastion, southern curtain, dry moat, and two buildings. It was noted following the conclusion of the excavations that “it is now known that a large portion of the eastern part of the fort, as yet virtually uninvestigated, remains for the future” (Brown 1979:163-206).

Unfortunately there are no known maps of Fort St. Pierre of the quality of the maps of Broutin or any other trained engineer. Those that are available are either by Dumont de Montigny or were inspired by

him. They are typically schematic in their layout, and even if a scale is depicted, it was apparently not adhered to in constructing the map. Although the maps vary in terms of minor details, they overall show the same layout of settlement around the fort. The number of buildings shown outside the fort is considerably lower than the number shown around the fort at Natchez, which supports my contention that the Yazoo population was even in the early 1720s far less than that of Natchez. The overall pattern of buildings that are recurrently shown are: (1) gardener's house, (2) interpreter's house, (3) Sergeant Riter's house, (4) Sergeant Desnoyer's house, and (5) houses of the workers, ten are usually depicted forming two parallel rows. The houses of the workers are presumably the residences of the workers on the Le Blanc concession. The number of them as depicted might be merely an approximation. The maps also show the arrangement of buildings within the fort and a large garden on the south side of the fort.

Near the site of Fort St. Pierre, a smaller site (the Lonely Frenchman site, 22Wr541) was tested that produced artifacts dating almost exclusively to the early 18th century. Brown believes this to be a French residential site that was occupied contemporaneously with the fort and suggests that it was possibly the site of the interpreter's house as depicted on the Dumont maps (Brown 1979:231-234).

FRENCH VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

Examination of the vernacular rural architecture of the French settlements of 18th century Mississippi will be conducted in two sections, structure and form. In examining structure I will focus on the components of buildings and their construction materials, including wall construction, chimneys, and roofs (McAllester and McAllester 1984:33). Under house types I will attempt to determine what were the most common building types.

It appears fairly certain that a number of influences have been involved in the origin of Creole architecture. Suggested influences include French, French Canadian, African, and West Indian. Elements from these traditions have apparently combined to form a new tradition that was adapted to various social and environmental conditions present in the Lower Mississippi Valley (Edwards 1976-1980; 1988; Noble 1984a; Vlach 1975).

STRUCTURAL ATTRIBUTES

Palisade Construction

During the 18th century, wall construction involved three basic forms: (1) palisade, (2) timber framed, or colombage and (3) piece sur piece. Palisade walls consisted of rows of posts, either hewn or unhewn, placed upright in trenches a few inches apart. In a house wall, the interstices were usually filled with mud mixed with some type of organic matter (referred to as bousillage or bousillee) or with mortar. When available, small stones were mixed with the mortar as was done in the Illinois settlement. However, because of a lack of availability, stone was seldom if ever used in the Lower Mississippi Valley (Peterson 1965:26-27). Besides being used for houses palisade construction was also frequently used for fences and for the walls of forts.

Two types of palisade construction are frequently mentioned in the 18th century sources, pieux en terre and poteaux en terre. Although it is quite possible that the terms were often used interchangeably, Peterson (1965:26-27) makes a distinction between the two: pieux en terre consisted of unhewn round posts and poteaux en terre consisted of posts that were "probably hewn neatly to allow a good exterior finish like the framed houses" (cf. Kniffen and Glassie 1966:47).

Palisade construction was probably the most common technique used for the construction of houses in rural Louisiana during the first half of the 18th century. The building technique was commonly used by the aboriginal populations of North America and the Caribbean. By the end of the 17th century it was used by the French in their settlements in Canada and St. Dominique in the Caribbean. During the 18th century it was common among the French not only on the Lower Mississippi, but also in the Illinois and at Detroit (Peterson 1965:26-35).

Considerable evidence exists to suggest the prevalence of palisade walls for rural construction. According to Dumont de Montigny the settlements of Vieux Biloxi and Nouveau Biloxi were made up of "palisade cabins," as was New Orleans during its first few years of existence. Apparently because of

environmental differences the houses at the sandy Biloxis were made of pine whereas at riverine New Orleans they were made of cypress (Dumont de Montigny 1976:24-25). Le Page du Pratz (1975:34) noted that his house at Natchez was made of pieux en terre. The English edition of this work used a rather poor English translation of pieux en terre--"piles." (The French term was provided from the original edition by Patricia K. Galloway). Broutin (n.d.) in his map of Fort Rosalie and environs at Natchez noted that "all the houses in general are huts [baraques] of "poteau [sic] en terre covered with bouzille and covered with bark" (translation by Patricia K. Galloway). Broutin was apparently referring to the houses of the settlers, because the buildings inside the fort were apparently of piece sur piece construction (see page ___). When Diron d'Artaguet visited Natchez in 1723 he described the houses at the St. Catherine concession as being "very ordinary and very badly built," suggesting typical palisade construction (Mereness 1916:46). A 1716 description of Dauphine Island noted that the only residences were "fourteen poor huts of stakes... all of them covered with reeds" (Minutes of the Council, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:220).

Dumont de Montigny described the construction of palisade-wall houses:

In regard to cabins; they do not require much craftsmanship and their method of construction is very quick. First one takes as many poles [perches] or forked logs [fourches] as are judged appropriate to the length and width desired for the cabin. These forked logs ought to be at least a dozen feet long. They are planted in the ground at regular intervals two and a half feet deep and joined together by plates [traverses] laid on top. Thus is formed a rectangle of which the short sides make the width of the cabin, taking the place of a gable. In the middle of the two short sides, one raises two other forked poles to the height of sixteen to eighteen feet on which is placed the ridgepole [faitte] to which are nailed the rafters, the latter being properly spaced and falling on the plates to which they are also nailed. The framework [carcasse] of the cabin is thus raised. It is closed in with cypress stakes [pieux] driven a foot into the ground and fastened above to the plates [traverses] with nails, allowing for doors and windows in the walls. Finally it is covered, as I have said, with cypress bark or palmetto [lantancier] leaves and, viola, a cabin has been built. One can see that in a country as well wooded as Louisiana there should be no difficulty of procuring shelter since one can build a house in twenty-four hours (quoted in Peterson 1965:28-29).

Palisade fences were frequently used during this period. They were placed around gardens and houses and were used for penning livestock. They apparently served to protect crops from free-ranging livestock. They apparently served to protect crops from free-ranging livestock. They were constructed by driving stakes into the ground, leaving them at a height of about six feet above the surface. The stakes were not connected by stabilizing horizontal rods as they were in later years. During the 19th century, runners were added for stability to the palisade fences and the stakes became shorter. This fence type eventually was replaced by the picket fence (Knipmeyer 1956:138-139; Peterson 1965:25-26).

Evidence of 18th century usage of palisade fences in French Louisiana is considerable. In describing Dauphine Island in 1713 Cadillac noted the "vast gardens enclosed with stockades" (Cadillac to Pontchartrain, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:165). The engineer Baron described similar "vast gardens enclosed with stakes" in Mobile when the population was still relatively sparse (quoted in Giraud 1974:284). After New Orleans was founded those who acquired lots in the towns were initially obligated to "inclose [sic] them with palisades" (Dumont de Montigny 1976:24). Montigny provided a detailed drawing of his residence in New Orleans, probably on Bourbon Street. A palisade fence surrounds the house and yard and adjacent is an even larger area enclosed by such a fence in which was a rather elaborately laid-out garden (Wilson 1971:88, 103). Montigny's schematic maps (n.d.) also show numerous palisade fences. At the Terre Blanche concession at Natchez and adjacent to Ft. St. Pierre at the Yazoo there are palisades around gardens layed out in a formal fashion. At Natchez palisade fences enclosed the plantation headquarters of Terre Blanche, various farmsteads, and the cemetery near the fort. Other fences probably enclosing gardens are shown adjacent to the commandant's house and some farm houses. The Yazoo map depicts a palisade fence around the interpreter's house. Montigny's Pascagoula River maps depicts palisade enclosures around the nucleated plantation headquarters and the gardens of Chaumont Concession and the La Pointe plantation. At the Chouachas Concession plantation located on the

Mississippi River below New Orleans both the plantation headquarters and a formally layed-out garden are similarly enclosed according to another Montigny drawing (Wilson 1971:89, 104).

Colombage Construction

The second type of wall construction is timber-framing, or colombage. This type involved the hewing of beams which were held together by mortise-and-tenon joints. Although this type of construction involved more time and skill than palisade construction, the result was a far more substantial building that was far less subject to rot, principally because it did not inherently involve wood coming in contact with the ground (Peterson 1965:35).

During the early and mid-18th century colombage construction seems to have been less common than palisade construction. In the first half of the 18th century, it appears to have occurred primarily in New Orleans, where it quickly became dominant, and in more prestigious buildings in rural settings.

By the early 1720s, a version of the technique called colombage sur solle was being used in New Orleans. This involved the sills being placed directly on the ground. The outside walls were covered by wide boards. However within a few years there were brickmakers in operation in New Orleans and brick foundations came into use. Bricks were also used to fill in between the timbers, although the walls appear to have still been boarded-over. This technique was called briquete entre poteaux, although in 1727 Marie Madeleine Hachard, an Ursuline nun-observed that “the houses are very well built of colombage et mortier,” apparently referring to the same phenomenon. At one time ca. 1735 the timbers were left exposed in New Orleans buildings; however, rot forced the abandonment of the technique (Cable 1980:6-9; Wilson 1963:77).

The first all-brick building in New Orleans was constructed in 1730 and others followed (Wilson 1971:90). A succession of fires during the 18th century obliterated the colombage buildings that had been dominant. Today, only a few examples of this type of construction, such as the Ursulines Convent, Madame John’s Legacy, and the “Lafite Blacksmith Shop.”

During the early 18th century, colombage buildings were usually the more important structures in rural settlement with the lesser important buildings being of palisade construction. For example there are the 1732 Alexandre De Batz drawings, made the plantation of the Company of the Indies which was on the Mississippi River opposite New Orleans, indicate that the manager’s house, the mill house, the warehouse, and the slave hospital were all of colombage construction, while the 32 one-room slaves cabins were all of pieux en terre construction with bark roofs (Wilson 1963:79-81). The 1763 inventory of Fort Tombeckbe located on the Tombigbee River reveals a similar phenomenon although by that time colombage construction had become dominant. The inventory lists as being of colombage: the officers apartments, the barracks, the magazine, the kitchen, the hospital, the prison, and the bake house. Other buildings including the shed, the privies, the building for the interpreter, and the “building for the savages without the fort” were all of palisade construction (Rowland 1911:98-99).

The Fort Tombeckbe inventory suggest what would seem to be an obvious tendency toward replacing buildings of poorer construction with buildings of better construction over a period of time. The same tendency is seen at Fort Rosalie at Natchez. Prior to 1730, buildings in and around the fort were apparently constructed of piece sur piece (see below) and poteaux en terre (Broutin n.d.). After the fort was reconstructed in the 1730s most if not all the buildings inside the fort were apparently of colombage construction. The De Batz (1732) section of the fort depicts one colombage building, probably the guard house. In 1765 when the British expedition visited the fort to inspect it, the accompanying engineer Philip Pittman (1906:80-81) noted that all the buildings within the fort were

made of framed timber, filled up with mud and barbe Espagnole, (a kind of moss, which grows in great abundance on all the trees in Louisiana) and in this country that manner of building houses is very common.

Pittman noted that the spaces between the timbers were filled with bousillage, mud mixed with moss. This appears to have been the most common fill used in rural areas, as opposed to urban areas where as has already been noted bricks were commonly used (Knipmeyer 1956:110-113).

By the end of the 18th century, colombage buildings had largely replaced those of palisade construction (Knipmeyer 1956:110-113). The ascendancy of colombage construction had little effect on the area that became the State of Mississippi because the Natchez and Yazoo settlements were essentially extinct by the

time it became dominant. During the 1720s when the settlements were at their peak there is little evidence to suggest anything other than palisade construction. Some of the buildings at either the Terre Blanche or St. Catherine Concessions were probably of colombage. The one surviving Creole building that probably dates to the 18th century, the so called “Old Spanish Fort” located near the mouth of the Pascagoula River, is of colombage construction; however, instead of using bousillage for filling the space between the timbers, an oyster shell mortar, or “tabby,” was used (personal observation).

Piece sur Piece Construction

The third construction technique used was piece sur piece construction, which was a vernacular term that appears to include two different forms of “log construction” (cf. Peterson 1965:40). One technique is defined by Kniffen and Glassie (1966:50) as “the support of horizontal timbers by corner posts” and note that it was “the prevailing method of wood construction in early French Canada.” The second technique is defined by Edwards (1988:5-6) as using logs that

were hewn into planks 4 to 6 inches wide and 8 to 16 inches tall. They were tied together at the corners with full-dovetail notching to form a solid crib. Unlike Anglo and Scotch-Irish log cabins, the planks were beautifully hewn and fitted so closely together that little chinking material was required to fill the cracks.

Both of these techniques were used in French Louisiana; however, it is my impression that they were not used as frequently as palisade and colombage construction.

Evidence of the use of the first technique of piece sur piece is found at three sites in the Lower Mississippi Valley. This latter form seems to have occurred at the Yazoo settlement with two houses inside Ft. St. Pierre (Brown 1979:189-195) and at the Bayou Goula Concession in the present-day state of Louisiana (Brown 1976). Excavations at both sites revealed wall trenches without the closely spaced postmolds which one would have expected with palisade construction. Instead, the only postmolds occurred at corners and at well-spaced intervals along the walls, in a configuration that one would expect from this form of piece sur piece. During the 1716 construction of Fort Rosalie at Natchez, 2500 pieces of wood, each three feet in length by 10 inches in diameter, were used, probably for buildings inside the fort. The length of these pieces of wood suggest that they were used for buildings of this forms of piece sur piece (Brown 1976:198; Richebourg quoted in Swanton 1911:202).

Evidence of the second technique also comes from several site. First, the ill-fated Fort St. Louis founded on the Gulf Coast of Texas in 1685 by Robert La Salle included two houses, built “in the Canadian manner.” The timbers were “dovetailed at the corners, fastened with a good peg...” (quoted in Wilson 1965:106). It seems to have also occurred in a house at the Arkansas Post founded on the Mississippi River in 1686 which was described as

a house in the French manner... It is built of heavy pieces of wood notched one into the other, dovetailed, all the way up to the height of the roof... (quoted in Wilson 1965:106).

A third example is an extant late 18th century house at Point Coupee in present-day Louisiana (Edwards 1988:7). A variation on this technique was used in constructing Ft. Maurepas on Biloxi Bay. Two of the bastions were constructed of “piece sur piece, according to Iberville, using logs a foot and a half thick (Higginbotham 1968:25; Wilson 1965:108). Detailed drawings of the fort (see the “Plan of Fort Maurepas...” in Higginbotham 1968) indicate that the two bastions were constructed of square hewn timbers laid in even tiers and lap-jointed at the corners, a construction technique referred to as “false cornering” by Kniffen and Glassie (1966:49, 52-54). Judging from the plan view of the upper course of timbers, the corners were secured by wooden pegs.

Chimneys

Creole architecture of the lower Mississippi Valley is characterized by internal chimneys in buildings of more than one room (Edwards 1976-1980:14; Newton 1976; 1985:183; Toledano et al. 1974:43). Extant plans, sections, and elevations of 18th century French Louisiana structures indicate that from the beginning of French settlement this attribute was dominant on at least the more pretentious buildings (e.g. Cable 1980:7; Wilson 1963:81, 88; 1965:figures 5, 9, 11, 16, 17; 1969:288; 1971:105; 1975:116, 122, 128-129,

136). A few chimneys were located on exterior walls, although even here they were constructed on the interior of the building (e.g. Wilson 1963:82; 1965: figure 15; 1969:274). It appears from the Dumont de Montigny illustrations of settlements at Natchez, the Yazoo, and the Pascagoula River that rural houses of the 1720s also generally had internal chimneys. The “Old Spanish Fort” at Pascagoula has an uncertain construction history. It apparently began as a single-room structure and had two additional rooms added to make a three room wide single-pile structure. The chimneys on it are internal.

As was typical, because bricks were generally not used in rural areas until after they had appeared in urban areas, the settlers at Natchez and the Yazoo in the 1720s and on the Gulf Coast probably did not use bricks. There is no known information describing chimney composition there. In the 1730s the house of Father Avond, missionary to the Arkansas Post, had a chimney made “of mud mixed with dry grass” (Father Vitry quoted in Delanglez 1935:438) which is to say *bousillage*. It would seem probable that this would have been a common practice in the 18th century French settlements of Mississippi.

Roofs and Galleries

Traditional Creole architecture utilized both hipped-and gabled roofs in both rural and urban settings (Knipmeyer 1956:115; Newton 1971:13-14; 1985:180-183; Toledano *et al.* 1974:41, 52). A few buildings used mansard roofs (e.g. “Plan, section and elevation of the warehouse... at Fort Conde,” De Pauger, 1724, in Wilson 1975:117). The frequency of use of the hipped-roof is in marked contrast to its infrequent usage in the Anglo-culture hearths of the eastern sea board.

During the early 18th century roofs in rural areas appear to have been covered with cypress bark or palmetto leaves as Dumont de Montigny noted (Peterson 1965:29; cf. Le Page du Pratz 1975:211-212). A 1704 census of the original Mobile reveals that 80 buildings, that is the overwhelming majority, were built of wood and roofed with “palmetto leaves or straw.” There were, however, a few others with shingled roofs (Census of Louisiana, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:20). Broutin (n.d.) noted that in general the houses at Natchez prior to the 1729 massacre were “covered with bark,” presumably both the walls and roofs.

Wooden shingles seem to have replaced thatching first in the urban areas. This appears to have taken place in New Orleans by 1727 in which year Sister Marie Hachard wrote from that town observing that “the roofs are covered with tiles which are really small pieces of wood shaped like slate” (quoted in Cable 1980:8). Later, wood shingles became dominant in rural areas (Knipmeyer 1956:101).

A common characteristic of Creole architecture was the gallery, which could occur on several sides of a building (Peterson 1965:19-20; Newton 1985:183). They appeared as early as 1704 in French Louisiana. In that year a house in Mobile was inventoried that had “a gallery from one end to the other” (Census of Louisiana, in Rowland and Sanders 1929:19). However galleries were apparently not very common at that early data because this was the only building in the town that had a gallery listed (cf. Edwards 1988:2). It has been suggested that the gallery or porch was introduced into French Louisiana via the West Indies (Edwards 1976-1980:10; Little-Stokes 1978:104-106; Newton 1985:181-183). The West Indies has also been suggested as the source area for the introduction of the gallery into the Atlantic Seaboard from Georgia to North Carolina (Johnston and Waterman 1941:41-42; Little-Stokes 1978:104-106; Morrison 1952:171; Zelinsky 1953:118).

Galleries in French Louisiana appear in two basic forms. The first is sometimes referred to as an “undercut gallery.” It has a continuous pitch roof-line from the ridge down to the edge of the gallery itself. It has also been referred to as a “built-in porch” by Kniffen (1936:184) and as the porch of a “Louisiana roof” by Jordan (1978:86). This type of gallery is diagnostic of the Louisiana Creole Cottage which is a common house type today along the Lower Mississippi and the less common but larger hipped-roof Creole house (Edwards 1976:1980:12; Newton 1971:13-14).

The second type of gallery involved a broken-pitch roof. The rafters of the gallery were attached to the rafters of the main roof at a point that could vary but was somewhere between the plate and the ridge. Peterson (1965:plate 3D) illustrates the manner in which a French pavilion roofed (steep hip) house was converted into a rather typical 18th century Creole house by the addition of a gallery of this type completely around the house.

Both of these gallery types appear to have been fairly commonly used in 18th century French Louisiana. A 1734 plan and section by Deverges depicts a proposed guardhouse and prison at the Balise with a continuous pitch roof over the gallery (Wilson 1965:figure 11). A 1761 section and elevation of the corps de gard at Fort Tombecbe, also by Deverges, had a broken-pitch roof over the gallery (Wilson 1975:129).

The “Old Spanish Fort” at Pascagoula has full galleries on front and rear with a continuous pitch roof over one and a broken pitch over the other (personal observation).

House Types

Oblong, one room houses seem to have been standard for the first settlers according to Dumont de Montigny, as quoted above. Du Pratz (1975:211-212) described the construction of a tobacco house for which he noted that “the first settlers likewise build their dwelling houses in this manner.” For the construction

... they set several posts in the ground, at equal distance from one another, and lay a beam or plate on the top of them, making thus the form of a house of an oblong square.

In the middle of this square they set up two forks, about one third higher than the posts, and lay a pole cross them, for the ridge-pole of the building; upon which they then nail the rafters, and cover them with cypress-bark, or palmetto leaves.

Slave houses at the plantation of the Company of the Indies near New Orleans in 1732 were constructed of pieux en terre with one oblong room with the single door being located in a long side (1732 plan by Alexandre de Batz, in Wilson 1963:79). Le Bouteux (1720) depicts the camp of the concession of John Law at Nouveau Biloxi. Although this was only a temporary camp and most of the residences were merely tents a number of one room, gable-roof buildings of pieux en terre are depicted in the background. Excavations inside Ft. St. Pierre at the Yazoo and at that Bayou Goula Concession have revealed houses of piece sur piece construction that are one room deep by, usually, two-rooms wide. There do not appear to have been galleries (Brown 1976). The houses in Montigny’s paintings of the Natchez settlement appear to have both hipped and gabled roofs. The addition of a hipped-roof to an oblong, one room floorplan produces a rudimentary Norman cottage. With the expansion of the floor plan to two-rooms wide, one has a full-blown Norman cottage. Indeed many of the houses illustrated on Dumont de Montigny’s drawings of Natchez seem to be by Norman cottages complete with internal chimney and hipped-roof. The type could be constructed out of palisades, colombage, or piece sur piece. More sophisticated versions of the Norman house were depicted by the drawings of engineers: (a) in New Orleans in 1723 as a workmen’s barrack (Wilson 1965:fig. 5) and (b) at the plantation of the Company of the Indies near New Orleans in 1732 as a slave hospital (Wilson 1963:80).

It is suggested, therefore, that the basic house type used by the yeoman farmer in the French settlements of Natchez, the Yazoo, and the Gulf Coast during the first half of the eighteenth century was essentially a hipped-roof Norman cottage or a variant with a gable roof. This type was oblong with the front being on a long side. It was one room deep by one, two or possibly more rooms wide. Only a few of the larger houses appear to have had galleries this early.

Beginning with this basic form, Creole houses became increasingly elaborate with the addition of various combinations and forms of galleries, roofs, floorplans, and raised brick basements, creating a wide variety of distinctive forms (Edwards 1988; Noble 1984a:91-93). Of these one of the most common house types that evolved by the late 18th or early 19th century was the Creole cottage (or “Grenier cottage” to use Noble’s [1984a:89] term). Examples of this house type can be seen today along the Gulf Coast and the Natchez District.

An examination of those lots for Natchez Under-the-Hill that had validated claims indicates that five of the six lots with known grant dates date back to 1795 and consequently about two decades after the beginning of the settlement (Section 15 is excepted here because it lay outside of the 18th century area of Natchez Under-the-Hill). Thus most of these parcels were outside of the original (1770s-1780s) nucleus of the settlement. Of the six lots only two can be precisely located--Sections 82 and 83, which as noted above, were adjacent to Silver Street and that. This would suggest that possibly all of the 1795 grants were near Silver Street and that they represented a shift of the settlement from the original landing northward following the opening of the Silver Street in the early 1790s.

NEW TOWN, OR UPPER TOWN

The Birth of the Town

The creation of the upper town, which was surveyed with lots, blocks, and streets in a gridiron pattern, can be viewed as a direct consequence of the transfer of the Natchez District from military to civilian rule. Spanish rule of the Natchez District had initially been under the commandment of Fort Panmure (formerly Fort Rosalie). The 1787 appointment of Manuel Gayoso de Lemos as the first civilian governor of the district was soon followed by the surveying of a town on the bluff and the construction of a church, a new hospital, and other administrative buildings (Holmes 1965).

The new town was surveyed on land either belonging to or formerly belonging to Stephen Minor and William Barland. The majority of the town was on the Minor parcel which had originally been part of a 300 arpent parcel granted by Spain to Richard Harrison about 1784. Harrison sold the parcel to Stephen Minor at an undetermined date between 1784 and 1788 (McBee 1979:51, 484, 567).

A February 16, 1788 letter by Juan Ventura Morales, Intendent of Louisiana, outlined the Spanish plans for land acquisition at Natchez and the development of a church parish. Oddly, there is no reference to plans for the surveying of a town on the parcel:

According to the official letter of the Govn, of the 7th of January in which he expresses the necessity that the Irish Clergymen that are now in this city [New Orleans] should go over to the port of Natchez... and that they should be provided with a dwelling house, and at the same time that a Church should be built in order that they may use it for the celebration of the sacred functions of their Ministry; in the meantime till His Maj. Vouchsafes to decide on the representation that has been made, I have adhered to the solicitude of said Governor to buy at the expense of the Royal Treasury for the price of two thousand dollars, a lot of ground of 300 square Arpents, lying in the immediate vicinity of the fort, which contains a house... which will answer the said clergyman for a dwelling-house and for the most indispensable accessories.

In virtue of which, & as soon as the Commander of said port shall advise me that he has effected the purchase of said lot of ground; I will make arrangements to build on the same the Church on the terms specified by the said Governor (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.b.).

About a month later on March 17, 1788, Stephen Minor issued a power-of-attorney to Richard Carpenter to sell his 300 arpent parcel to the Spanish crown (McBee 1979:51). The sale by Carpenter to the Spanish Government occurred in early April 1788 for 16,000 reales (2,000 pesos) (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.b.).

Although plans for surveying a town plat had not been mentioned previously to my knowledge, on July 5, 1788, Grand-Pre wrote to Miro informing him that the survey of a town was underway ("Estoy delineando la Ciudad en la tierra comprada a Don Estevan Minor...," Grand-Pre 1788). In 1805, John Girault recalled that the town was initially surveyed by William Vousdan, who frequently conducted cadastral surveys in the Natchez District (e.g. McBee 1979: 202, 204, 302, 362, 368, 371-373, 572), and that Girault

was with him[Vousdan] at the operation, and saw it laid off, it was then confined within the limits of the land bought by the Spanish Government from Stephen Minor for the purpose of erecting thereon public buildings and was laid out in squares, quite to the brink of the Bluff including all that part now called the commons - No buildings took place, nor were any lots granted, the business of the City seemed to die away until after the arrival of Governor Gayoso... (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.)

Gayoso, who arrived at Natchez in June 1789, instigated a program of buildings in 1790, including the church, the hospital, and others (see below). Then, as Girault recalled, Gayoso

in 1791 did employ him [Girault] officially to survey and lay off the city anew, as no vestige then remained of the former survey - the witness [Girault] says he [Girault] had

seen the former plan, but did not approve of it and applied to the Governor [Gayoso] for instructions to form a new one - he [Gayoso] was busy in the affairs of Government and desired the witness to form a plan and to show it to him for approbation - the witness did so - and the Governor approved of it, and in June 1791 commissioned the witness to lay off the city agreeably to the plan, which he did - leaving the square in front between Front Street, and the Bluff for a Common or parade ground, subject to the further orders of the Governor (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.).

Girault makes it fairly clear that he surveyed the town in or shortly after June 1791. Corroboration for this date comes from a January 6, 1792 letter from Gayoso (1792a) in which he stated that “Last year [my emphasis] we drew plans for a city adjacent to the fort of Natchez.” It would appear then that the town was surveyed after the construction of the church and hospital, construction of which began in 1790. Support for Girault’s having surveyed the town plat comes from an 1818 deed that referred to Natchez “town lots laid out by John Girault esquire late deceased” (Adams County Deed Book K, p. 109). Also, in 1791, Girault had the title of Assistant Surveyor for the Natchez District (Young 1943:24).

The priests’ house appears to have been extant prior to the acquisition of the Minor property by the Spanish government. It seems strange that the survey of the town plat would follow rather than precede the construction of some of some of the primary buildings. Of course, the hospital and a few other buildings were located on the commons so there would have been little need to adjust the plat to fit their locations. The church was different since it was located in the platted area itself in the center of a block and facing the plaza. Since this is a fairly typical location for churches in Spanish towns in the New World, it seemed obvious that it was intended to be in this location. Consequently, if the church was not built after the plat was surveyed, then the whole plat must have been designed and surveyed so as to arrange to have the church located on the plaza.

Indeed, we do find evidence in the plat itself of its having been designed to accommodate the church and the priests house. This evidence is found in the dimensions of the rows or columns of town blocks. Rather than each row of blocks having the same width as one would expect in a regular gridiron fashion, instead the plat has many variations in the widths of the rows, suggesting that the dimensions within the plat had to be adjusted to accommodate the pre-existent buildings.

The Barland parcel consisted of 105 arpents in the shape of a square identified with section 22, Township 7, Range 3 West of the Freeman survey. The southeastern portion of the town plat was laid out over a corner of Barland’s parcel. William Barland acquired the parcel by grant from the Spanish Crown on May 8, 1786 (American State Papers 1832b:875, certificate A-356; McBee 1979:465). Although Barland’s grant was not formalized until 1786, he may have actually been granted the parcel in 1782. Several deeds in which he conveyed portions of the parcel list the original grant as having been in 1782. When Barland presented his claim to the United States Government, he listed 1786 as the date of the formal grant, but he included a plat of the property that was dated August 21, 1782 (McBee 1979:107, 108, 119, 465).

For some unknown reason the Spanish Government apparently never obtained title to the majority of Barland’s land lying within the boundaries of the town plat. This is suggested by the fact that Barland sold off almost every town lot lying with the boundaries of his property during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Only a few were sold during the Spanish occupation (McBee 1979:101, 107, 108, 119, 412), unlike the balance of the town where virtually every lot was granted to area residents by the government. In the years following the Spanish withdrawal, Barland sold off the remainder of his town lots (e.g. Adams County Deed Book B, pp. 167, 353-355; Book C, pp. 21, 354; Book D, pp. 47, 62-63, 137, 207-208, 238-239, 298-299; Book E, pp. 2-3, 60-63, 91-92, 116; Book F, pp. 367-371, 390-391).

The construction of the Catholic church on Square 24, the establishment of the Catholic cemetery on Square 30, and the existence of the town plaza, all lying with in the original Barland parcel, suggests that Barland had ceded these parcels to the Spanish government. It would seem very unlikely that the Spanish government would have built a church and started a cemetery on land belonging to a private citizen. In 1802, the “Roman Catholic Society of Natchez” purchased the church and cemetery lots from Barland. He also began to subdivide and sell the plaza (Adams County Deed Book B, pp. 353-355; Book D, pp. 62-63, 207-208, 238-239). This all suggests that Barland had taken advantage of the absence of Spanish governmental officials and a decimated Catholic community to sell land that did not belong to him. Such a scenario is suggested by the following undocumented scenario from Gerow (1941:7):

[After granting the parcel to Barland,] the Spanish government made an agreement with Barland whereby the government was to receive back from Barland the land granted to him. Then the government gave part of this tract to the church... and gave to Barland in lieu of it a tract in Kingston; but the papers were not at that time fixed up. When the United States was about to take possession of Natchez in 1798, Gayoso, the Spanish governor of this section, sent for Barland to execute the papers, but the latter hid himself, and the papers were not executed.

Regardless of what occurred, the United States General Land Office recognized, either rightfully or wrongly so, Barland's claim to the entire 105 arpent parcel in 1805 (American State Papers 1832b:875, certificate A-356).

The town plat, as surveyed by the Spanish, served as the nucleus from which the modern city of Natchez has developed. It is bounded today by Canal Street on the west, Monroe Street on the north, Rankin Street on the east, and Orleans Street on the south. The plat consisted of 35 blocks, extending seven blocks along the river and five blocks deep. The blocks were separated by six streets oriented perpendicular to the river and four streets oriented parallel to it. This area consisted of approximately 112 acres, or 132 arpents (for the original plat see Dunbar 1794 and Freeman n.d.a.). The long axis was oriented approximately 30 degrees east of north and thus had the same orientation as the western boundary of Minor's 300 arpent parcel, which was the same line as the eastern boundary of section 15, Township 7 Range 3 West, that was originally granted to Richard Harrison in 1783, then sold to Stephen Minor on March 17, 1788 (for orientation of plat see Adams County Deed Book C, p. 268; American State Papers 1832:883 certificates A-883; McBee 1979:51).

Since a portion of the plat lay on William Barland's land, much less than 132 arpents was left to be taken out of the approximately 300 arpents that were purchased from Stephen Minor for the purpose of laying out a town. This left a considerable area that Gayoso reserved until the demand for lots increased sufficiently to require an addition to the town (Holmes 1965:41).

From the founding of the town, the Spanish crown intended it to be occupied only by merchants, craftsmen, and officials, who provided goods and services to the rural hinterland. Farmers were not expected to reside in the town (Holmes 1965:41). Granting of lots in the town was evidently done with social zoning in mind. In an 1805 deposition, Lewis Evans recalled that when asked to select a lot for himself, he chose Lot 1 of Block 1, a lot that is adjacent to the common. Gayoso then informed him that he could not have it because "these lots in front of the city next to the common will be granted to merchants or able planters, who will build large and elegant homes thereon" (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.).

Writing in early 1792, Gayoso (1792a) noted that there were a few houses on the townsite prior to the survey, probably referring to the houses that became the priests' house and the Government House, and possibly a few others of which we have no record. Within the year, he hoped the number of houses to increase to 30. For some unknown reason development was apparently slower than Gayoso had planned. An examination of all of the land petitions and grants for Natchez indicates that the earliest recorded petitions date to January 1793, with the grants often occurring months if not years later. Presumably in the case of delayed grants, people had already begun to build on the lot for which they had petitioned. Support for an approximate date for construction on the Natchez townsite comes from a somewhat confusing statement in the 1805 deposition of Lewis Evans which noted that

sometime as he believes in the year 1793, he made application to Governor Gayoso for a lot in the Town of Natchez... the witness believes he was first applicant, for a lot, and his House was the first that was built where the city now stands... (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.).

The only known lot granted to Evans, was petitioned for on January 9, 1795, approximately two years after the earliest known petition (McBee 1979:497). It is conceivable that the date was copied incorrectly and that the 1795 should have been 1793, in which case his would be the earliest petition followed by the January 10, 1795 petition of Benjamin Monsanto. Nevertheless his claiming to have constructed the first house would seem to be a fact that a person would not easily forget, particularly given that his deposition post-dated the events by only about a decade. Nor was there a likely motive for Evans to have lied.

Visiting the town in 1796, Victor Collot (1974:62) observed that it “contains about a hundred houses, built of wood.” The following year, another traveler Francis Baily (1969:150) noted that the town consisted of “about eighty or ninety houses scattered over a great space of land.” About the overall appearance of the town, he observed that “there is so much ground between most of the houses, that it appears as if each dwelling was furnished with a plantation.” These figures are probably generally accurate.

What can we say in general about the distribution of the houses? It would appear that very few were located within the boundaries of William Barland’s parcel. As noted above Barland sold very few of his town lots during the Spanish period, which in itself suggests little development in this area. Additional evidence of the underdevelopment of the Barland area is to be found in an 1805 tax roll for Natchez that listed all parcels of land within the town along with an inventory of buildings on each parcel. The roll lists Barland as owning 16 parcels of land lying in the original town plat. Each ranged in size from one lot up to one block and all totaled represented a substantial portion of the town property lying within his original boundaries. On all of this property there were only five houses, and many of these could conceivably have been constructed in the seven years following the Spanish Withdrawal.

In the portion of the town outside of Barland’s property there were approximately 23 blocks or ca. 92 lots. It was on these lots that the majority of the estimated 80-100 houses of the last years of the Spanish period were located. The fact that the estimated number of houses closely corresponds to the number of available lots, along with the fact that the houses were “scattered over a great space of land” with “much ground between” suggests that the houses were spread out over virtually the entire available area of the town with an average about one house per lot. After researching all of the deeds and land claims pertaining to the Spanish period, there is only direct evidence of between 20 and 30 houses (see discussion below). Many lots, therefore, that had no direct evidence of buildings apparently possessed buildings.

One should not infer that all lots had one and only one house. Some had more than one (see below, discussion of Block 4, Lot 3), whereas some were probably undeveloped as of March 30, 1798, for example lots that were owned by owners of multiple properties (e.g. William Dunbar and James Moore) and who probably owned them for speculative reasons. Additionally, the housing estimates cited above probably included suburban houses located near but outside of the town plat.

Despite the houses’ being set fairly far apart from each other, many if not most were set fronting directly on the streets, instead of being set back at a distance. This practice was observed in the early 19th century by a surveyor who was resurveying the town plat of Natchez (Notes of Surveys of Private Land Claims n.d.). Evidence of the practice can still be seen in many houses from the Colonial and Territorial Periods (e.g. Coyle Tavern, and Texada Tavern). This type of siting of houses directly on the street, even though considerable land might be available in the rear in not a characteristic of Anglo-American settlement in the South where in towns one finds houses that are “set well back from the street” (Zelinsky 1951:173). However it appears to have been fairly typical of French settlement in the Mississippi Valley during the 18th century (cf. De Pauger 1724; Peterson 1965:illus. 1-B, 1-C).

SITES IN THE UPPER TOWN

Gun Batteries

In 1792, the Spanish Government constructed two gun batteries at Natchez to supplement the defenses of the main Fort of Natchez. One was located at Natchez Under-the-Hill and the other some distance to the southeast of the main fort near a cemetery. The construction of these batteries was suggested by Gayoso in a January 6, 1792 letter to Carondelet. By the time of a November 26, 1792 letter from Gayoso to Carondelet they seem to have already been constructed (Gayoso 1792a; 1792b).

The battery located at Natchez Under-the-Hill has been described variously as “the King’s Works” and “La Bateria del Rey” (the King’s Battery). Other than that it was located on the batture and that it was subject to flooding, the only other information about its location was that, according to George Willey, it was “below” (south) of the ferry. The other battery has been referred to as “La Bateria del Cimiterio” (the Battery of the Cemetery), “La Bateria del Principe” (the Principal Battery), and the “Gayoso Battery.” Clues to the location of this fort are somewhat vague. Various distances have been given for the separation between it and the Fort. A probable location is on a ridge with steep slopes located northeast of the present-day Sheraton Hotel. If this was the site of the battery and cemetery, then remains of these features

might be well preserved, because the ridge has not been developed (Claiborne 1978:527; Collot 1974:59; Gayoso 1792a; 1793; De Lanzos 1797).

Cemeteries

During the Spanish occupation there were at least two cemeteries at Natchez. The earlier known one was located near the site of the gun battery that was located southeast of the fort. It was referred to by Gayoso (1792a; 1792b) in two letters to Carondolet in 1792. It was presumably several years old by that time. A letter of April 26, 1793 (Gayoso 1793) referred to the cemetery as “el Cimiterio antiguo (the old cemetery), alluding to the existence of a new cemetery. The allusion was apparently to the cemetery that was located on Block 30 of the town plat of Natchez. Because this cemetery was located within the town plat, it would appear to have been planned for the new town and hence probably post-dated the 1791 survey of the plat.

If the old cemetery was located on the ridge northeast of the present-day Sheraton Hotel, as suggested above, then its burials are presumably still intact. The new cemetery was eventually abandoned and is currently used for the City of Natchez’s Memorial Park (Miller and Miller 1985:64).

The Commons

Between the new town and the bluffs the Spanish set aside a rectangular parcel of 26 arpents, 91 perches (approximately 22.9 acres) to be used as a public commons. It was not a feature of the first Natchez plat of Grand-Pre and surveyed by Vousdan, but was incorporated into the second plat as surveyed in 1791 and was presumably the idea of Gayoso.

Bounded on the east by present-day Canal Street it stretched almost to the bluff, actually to the boundary of Stephen Minor’s parcel (Section 15, Township 7, Range 3 West). The boundary between the commons and Minor was at or just to the west of present-day Broadway Street. Minor’s parcel which lay between the town and the river covered only a narrow sliver of land on top of the bluff. As will be seen below, the Government House was located on the edge of the bluff on Minor’s property. Most of it was on the bluffs and on the batture. The southern boundary of the commons was in alignment with present-day Orleans Street, that is to say with the southern boundary of the town. Strangely, the northern boundary of the commons was not in alignment with the northern boundary of the town (Monroe Street), but ended about midway between Jefferson and High Streets (for the boundaries of the common and its relationship to other parcels, see Dunbar’s plat in Adams County Deed Book C, p. 268, and Freeman n.d.b.).

The Commons was to be “reserved as a Common for the use of the inhabitants of [Natchez]...” (Carter 1937:339). According to a disposition of Ebenezer Rees, Gayoso had informed him that “no buildings whatsoever should be permitted to be raised on the [Commons]... unless it be found necessary to build a market house...” Undoubtedly, Gayoso meant that it was not intended to allow the construction of any private buildings on the Commons, because, as will be seen below a number of governmental buildings were constructed on the Commons. Rees further elaborated that

the governor stated... that Health being of the greatest importance to them, he conceived it absolutely necessary that a certain space should be left open, between the Town and the River, in order to contribute to the health of the Settlers. The Governor also stated his intention of having Trees planted on the said space in front of the Town (Carter 1937:336).

On April 4, 1797, after having heard of the Treaty of San Lorenzo that provided for the withdrawal of the Spanish from the Natchez District, William Dunbar applied on April 4, 1797, for possession of the Commons. His application was made on the basis of his having been

employed in matters of the public service, such as the laying of and measuring the lots of this city, forming plans of the elevations in the vicinity of the fort, copying charts, and several journeys performed, by order of your excellency [Gayoso], for the public service, at his own expense; for which he has not been recompensed otherwise than by the promise of a grant of land within this district, in compensation of those services (American State Papers 1832b:186).

Despite his having reserved the Commons for the use of the people, Gayoso granted it to Dunbar on April 19, 1797 (American State Papers 1832b:186-187). However, after the Spanish departure in 1798, two additional claims to the Commons arose, one from the City of Natchez and the other from the newly founded Jefferson College, the latter having been given the Commons and other land as a source of revenue. The conflicting claims to the parcel led to legal disputes that lasted for years. In the course of the dispute, the City of Natchez in 1803 attempted to portray its case as being the most utilitarian that:

If this land is held by the town, experience will dictate the propriety of keeping it unoccupied by buildings, and of planting it with trees, in order to preserve the health of the inhabitants ; but if it is possessed by the college, the interest of that institution will require that it should be either leased or sold; in which case it would be crowded with houses, which, by confining and vitiating the air, would render the town unpleasant and unhealthy (American State Papers 1832b:163).

The claim of Jefferson College to the Commons was withdrawn in 1805 by the governor of the Mississippi Territory (American State Papers 1832b:260-261). In March 1806, the Committee on Public Lands of the U.S. House of Representatives ruled in favor of Natchez's claim to the Commons stating that the town's inhabitants having

settled and made improvements there under an impression that the reservation of this land, made by the competent authority, would be continued for their common convenience, and as it was continued as long as that authority existed, they ought not to be deprived of the benefits of that reservation, either by the Government which had ceased, or that which succeeded (American State Papers 1832b:260).

In giving the right to the land to the City of Natchez, the Committee stated one provision:

That the said land be neither cultivated nor occupied with buildings, but be planted with trees, and preserved as a common for the use, and comfort, and health of the inhabitants of the city aforesaid (American State Papers 1832b:260).

Years later additional suits were brought against the City of Natchez by the Trustees of Jefferson College. Finally, "in order to terminate all further litigation" an agreement was reached between the City and the Trustees in 1827, "to compromise the said suit and to make partition of the aforesaid piece of land in the manner herein setforth." A new street, Broadway, was to be surveyed on the common with all the land in between Broadway and Canal (Front) Street being divided into blocks and lots and sold off. The land lying between Broadway and the bluff was "to remain a common never to be built upon nor tilled but may be ornamented... by planting trees thereon for a Promenade" (Adams County Deed Book C, pp. 676-679).

By the late 1830s, the development of the "Jefferson College Lots" as they came to be called was well underway J.H. Ingraham (1839:40) described the area as follows:

The esplanade in front of the town, which has been for years the grazing spot for cows, the play-ground for boys, the parade for soldiers, and the promenade of the citizens, is nearly filled up with buildings; whose encroachments upon this naturally beautiful spot-- whose healthy air and open space are so essential to the health of the city-- promise soon to obliterate it altogether. On crossing it on my way into the town from the landing, I could not but view with regret, the unsightly inroads which business is making upon this spot, which has no equal as a public promenade in the whole United States. It is not yet too late to reserve a belt of it along the cliffs, but it is now too much deformed ever to be restored to its former beauty.

The area between Broadway and the bluff, That was to remain a common, was eventually encroached upon during the latter half of the 19th century by the construction of railroad facilities.

Public Buildings on the Commons

The only buildings constructed on the commons during the Spanish administration were a group of public buildings: the Royal Hospital, the barracks, the market house, and a house for the governor's residence that was destroyed by a storm before its completion. Most, if not all of these buildings, were located on between the bluff and Lot 1 of Block 3, a site that is adjacent to the upper terminus of Silver Street. This location is deduced from a 1797 statement by Gayoso in which he recalled the site "upon which I had, at that time [1790], caused buildings to be erected in front of the lot granted to the late Benjamin Monsanto" (American State Papers 1832b:186). The Monsanto lot can be identified with Lot 1, Block 3 which fronted on the commons and which was the only lot known to have been granted to Benjamin Monsanto (McBee 1979:445).

One of the buildings referred to as having been constructed in this location in 1790 was undoubtedly a house that was to serve as Gayoso's residence. Construction began in 1790; however the building was destroyed by a "hurricane," presumably a tornado, before completion. Gayoso then abandoned his plans for constructing this house and began to reside in the rented house that was known as the "Government House" (American State Papers 1832:186, 196; McBee 1979:491-492; see the discussion of the Government House below).

Another one of the buildings was the hospital. Upon his arrival at Natchez in 1789, Gayoso discovered that the hospital in use that had been constructed in 1782 had a leaking roof and was shortly afterward almost destroyed by a "hurricane," possibly the same one that destroyed the house under construction. Gayoso drew plans for a new hospital and had them approved by Miro (Holmes 1965:132-133). An August 27, 1790, a letter of Gayoso (1790) to Miro that mentioned the location of the "new hospital" suggests that the building was under construction if not completed. In the letter Gayoso was suggesting constructing a new road down the bluff to give the hospital personnel more direct access to the river. As discussed above, this proposal apparently led to the construction of Silver Street. Following the Spanish withdrawal from Natchez, the hospital was in use as a customs house in 1804 (Mississippi Herald and Natchez City Gazette 1804), but was converted into a theater during the following year, and continued in this use at least until 1807 (Cuming 1904:322; Lowery 1924:52).

A barracks for the troops was constructed in the same area near the terminus of Silver Street, probably in the early 1790s. A 1795 deed to a lot at Under-the-Hill notes that the lot was "situated at the foot of the new road which runs from the barracks..." (McBee 1979:484). The "new road" referred to was Silver Street (see above), and the description of it indicates that there was a barracks buildings near its upper terminus. The fact that they refer to it running to the barracks instead of the hospital indicates that the barracks was probably closer to the terminus of the road than the latter building. Following the American acquisition of the Natchez District in a July 3, 1798 letter, Captain Issac Guion mentioned work done by American troops toward repairing "the Hospital and Garrison buildings" (Rowland 1909:96).

There was also a bakery, which might have been an outside oven. It was also located in the hospital/barracks area. In a January 19, 1798 letter, Gayoso (1798) referred to "the bakery to William Dunbar." The land conceded to William Dunbar, as will be remembered, refers to the commons.

Another building located on the commons was a market house. Initially there was only an open-air market place on the commons. As Polsner Shilling recalled in 1804:

Governor Gayoso had a post or picket planted on the Common on which he placed an advertisement directing, that those who had any marketing to dispose of should go to the Post on the common to sell the same, and those wishing to purchase should also resort to that post. (Carter 1937:339).

Afterwards inhabitants of Natchez obtained permission from Gayoso to construct a market house on the commons. The materials for the building were purchased by subscription and it was constructed by the carpenter John Scott. It was still standing in 1804 (American State Papers 1832b:196; Carter 1937:336, 339).

It is not clear as to exactly where the market house was constructed on the common. A deposition of Stephen Minor states that it was "built upon a line of one of the streets of the town," and an 1805 deposition of Lewis Evans stated that it was "on the Common in front of the Merchandise Row" (American State Papers 1832b:196; Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.). Unfortunately, I do not know which street is referred to nor where Merchants Row was located in 1805. Because clusters of stores develop at major

intersections, it would seem to be axiomatic that Merchants Row was located on a major street in Natchez. Furthermore, as Evans implies, Merchants Row was adjacent to the common. The most probable location of this commercial district then would be at the intersection of the common and present-day Main Street. Even in the 1790s, Main Street was a major thoroughfare in that it led past the plaza to the church which was the center of the town. It along with present-day Franklin Street were the two widest streets that intersected the common indicating that they were planned to be more important thoroughfares. The only store that I have been able to locate in the new town of Natchez for the 1790s was the Joseph Murray store located on Lot 3, Block 4, which is to say that it was located on Main Street near its terminus on the common (see below). Where there was one store, there were quite likely others. Could this then have been the vicinity of Merchants Row? If so, the probable location of the market house was on the common in alignment with Main Street.

The Government House

This building was a center of political activity for the Natchez District under the Spanish during the period in which the territorial capital was located at Natchez. It was located on the bluff at the northwest corner of the town.

The site of this building is fairly precisely shown on two plat maps of the 1790s and somewhat more ambiguously on a 1794 plat of the town of Natchez and its environs (Adams County Deed Book B, p. 225; Book C p. 268; Dunbar 1794). In all three plats the building is identified as “Casa del Gobo,” undoubtedly meaning Casa del Gobierno, or Government House. One of the two former plats depicts the building north of the commons by about one block, just west of a line projected north from the western boundary of the commons, and approximately in line with present-day Monroe Street. The other plat places it just west of a parcel of property owned by Stephen Minor. This Minor property can be identified with section 72, Township 7, Range 3 West judging by its shape and relationship to surrounding land (Freeman n.d.b.). This location confirms exactly the former location deduced from the plat. Both place the Government House on the eastern edge of the parcel that was later designated Section 15, Township 7, Range 3 West. This property which extended from the top of the bluff to the river and which is discussed elsewhere herewith was acquired by Stephen Minor in 1788, and he was later its original claimant (American State Papers 1832b:883, certificate A-775; McBee 1979:51). Sections 15 and 72 were located adjacent to one another and both were owned by Minor.

An 1805 Natchez tax roll (Assessment List 1805) lists Stephen Minor as owning a 50 acre parcel located “Between the Town & the river,” which can undoubtedly be identified with Section 15, and on this parcel was “1 Dwelling House 50 by 20 [feet] with galleries” which can possibly be identified with the Government House.

George Willey in his recollection of Natchez in about 1790 noted that “...the house of the Governor was about where that of Dr. Harper now stands” (Claiborne 1978:527). Dr. Harper’s house stood on the site of the Government House as indicated by an 1884 map of the City of Natchez by Charles W. Babbit (1884). Willey then was apparently identifying the “house of the Governor” with the Government House, an identification that was not inaccurate considering that Gayoso apparently lived there prior to his residing at Concord.

According to Holmes (1965:120):

When Grand-Pre complained that there was not suitable residence for the commandment of Natchez in 1788, the governor general [Miro] recommended renting a house from Juan Vaucheret until a new structure, not to exceed \$8,000, could be built.”

We then find that beginning on October 30, 1788, Vaucheret was paid 40 pesos per month as rent on a house to serve as quarter of the governor (notes by Holmes 1988 on the pay sheet for rent of government house). The new governor Gayoso, however, did not arrive in Natchez until 1789. It is not known what Vaucheret’s house was used for in the meantime.

Three different petitions of William Dunbar and a statement of Stephen Minor indicate that Gayoso began construction of “a large building, destined for his own residence” on the commons adjacent to the town. This being “sometime in 1790” according to Dunbar. The building was destroyed by a “hurricane” prior to its completion, and “the Governor then found it more convenient to rent a house for the use of the Government, in which he continued afterwards to reside.” Stephen Minor further added that Gayoso

“thought proper to rent the house of the subscriber [Minor] for Government use, and his own was not rebuilt” (American State Papers 1832b:186, 196; McBee 1979:491-492). On November 11, 1790, 1,280 reales were paid to Stephen Minor as rent for the government house. Payments were made to the Minor family through December 31, 1797, when the last was made (Holmes 1988).

We can summarize then that following the destruction of the building on the commons by a tornado, sometime in 1790, Gayoso began to rent a house from Stephen Minor to be used for governmental functions including his own residence. This building is almost certainly the Government House that was located, as demonstrated, on the bluff on Minor’s land, Section 15.

Gayoso lived at the Government House for only a short time. His residence there is reflected in the accounts that referred to the building as the “Governor’s House,” rather than as the “Government House.” On March 27, 1791, Pope (1888:30) recorded that “On Sunday I took a View of the Governor’s palace, as also of the Fort...” Forman (1888:53) writing about Natchez as of ca. 1790 noted that “the governor’s house was not far from the garrison.” The garrison was on the commons as demonstrated above. Gayoso’s residence in the building was terminated by his moving to his plantation and palatial house called Concord located outside of Natchez to the northeast (Holmes 1965:120-121). Other than these few early accounts, most other sources refer to the building only as the Government House.

At an undetermined date, Gayoso issued a proclamation establishing a Cabildo or Council that “shall sit at Government House, twice every week, on the usual days of Audience, and administer justice...” Despite this proclamation, Holmes (1965:49-50) stated that a Cabildo was never organized. The Natchez Spanish Court Records include numerous references to the Government House that indicate that it was a judicial center. Many civil suits involve subpoenas for persons to appear at the Government House to present their case or to bear witness at trials held in the building (e.g. McBee 1979: 110-111, 167-170, 193, 221-222, 231-232, 287, 343-344). Other records mention the public sale of a slave held at the Government House and the hanging of legal notices on the building (McBee 1979:94, 154).

Following American annexation of the Natchez District in 1798, the Government House appears to have been used as one of the main buildings used by the government of the Mississippi Territory during the few years in which the capital was located at Natchez (1798-1802). On April 17, 1800, it was ordered that “...the Territorial Judges... [were] to convene... in their legislative capacity at the Government House Natchez...” On December 18, 1801, the “Legislative Council, & House of Representatives of this territory were... to have met in General Assembly, at the Town of Natchez in the Government House...” In April 1802, the Governor addressed a group of Indians” at Government House in Natchez” (Rowland 1905:224, 362, 400). I have found no evidence that following the removal of the seat of government to Washington in 1802 that this building was ever used again for any governmental function.

The Plaza

The plaza of Natchez was the central square of the town plat, which is to say it is the present-day block that is bounded by the following streets : Pearl, Franklin, Commerce, and Main. Although not labeled as the plaza, William Dunbar’s August 1794 untitled map of Natchez and its environs makes it fairly clear that this square was the plaza through his not depicting a boundary between the square and the streets surrounding it, as he did with all of the other squares. The Catholic parish church also fronted on this square as is so common in many, if not most, Hispanic towns in the New World. The square also was not numbered unlike all of the other squares (Freeman n.d.a.). This indicated that it was not intended for sale as were lots in the other squares. However, it was soon subdivided and sold, by William Barland. Some of Barland’s deeds refer to it as the “centre square” and the “public square” (Adams County Deed Book B, pp. 355; Book D, pp. 62-63, 207-208, 238-239; Book E, pp. 60-61). Today the block is covered with commercial buildings and parking lots.

The Parish Church of San Salvador

A contract to build the parish church in Natchez was approved in 1790, and the construction was largely complete by June 1791, when the carpenter John Mills turned over the remaining details to a subordinate and went to Cole’s Creek (Villa Gayoso) to construct another church. A special benediction service was held for the new church on Sunday, June 12, 1791, although it was not finally completed until January 1792 (Holmes 1965:73-73). On May 14, 1792, the church was the site of the signing of the Treaty of Natchez between Spain and the Choctaw and the Chickasaw Nations (American State Papers 1832a:280, erroneously gives the year as 1790; James 1968:60).

The church was a two-story building and was located on near the center of the west side of Square 24 on Commerce Street, facing the plaza. The location was commonly referred to as the “center of Natchez,” and it became the center of the corporation limits when the town was incorporated. An August 1819 survey of the property lines adjacent to the church seems to indicate that the lower story was of brick construction and the upper story was of wood construction. (Babbit 1884; Dunbar 1794; Gerow 1941:3; Notes of Surveys of Private Land Claims n.d.).

Following the withdrawal of the Spanish from the Natchez District in 1798, the church was left under the charge of Jose Vidal, who remained in Natchez as the Spanish Consul (Gayoso 1798). With the Spaniards gone there were few Catholics left in Natchez. In 1805, Lowery (1924:52) reported that “[there is in Natchez] an old Roman Catholic chapel, seldom opened...” The 1822 landscape painting of Natchez by John James Audubon depicted the spire of the church on the Natchez skyline (A Relic of Natchez as it was 1856; Peattie 1940). Occasionally used for masses, the church was also periodically rented for use as the city hall and as a store. Presumably, the lower story was rented and the upper story was used for a chapel. The church burned on December 28, 1832 (Gerow 1941).

The Priest’s House

This building was apparently a residence that was located on Stephen Minor’s 300 arpent parcel prior to its acquisition by the Spanish government. Writing on February 18, 1788 in regard to the proposed acquisition of the 300 arpents, Juan Ventura Morales, Intendent of Louisiana, noted that the parcel

contains a house 50 feet long & 40 feet wide (including its porches), divided into a hall and five rooms which will answer the said clergymen for a dwelling-house & for the most indispensable accessories (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.b.).

An additional description of the house, although written years after the building was demolished, is in an 1850s statement of J.O. Van de Velde, Bishop of Natchez, in which he noted that the priests’ house was “a frame building two stories high, with a gallery around it” (Gerow 1941:125). The two-story height is quite possibly unfounded. This fairly large house was apparently the building that was actually used by the priests for a rectory. This is suggested by the lack of any known evidence of a new rectory’s having been constructed. As discussed above the town plat of Natchez was surveyed around this building and the church, with the plat’s having been adjusted to accommodate these structures.

The parcel of land associated with the priests’ house was Lots 1 and 3 of Block 10. An 1805 deposition by Polser Schilling stated that the building was on Lot 1 (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.).

In 1792, Gayoso approved having the priests’ house repaired. In 1796, John Scott was authorized to build an additional room onto the building for the assistant pastor, John Brady (Holmes 1965:75). On June 25, 1796, \$110 was paid for the construction of a brick chimney “for the Parish house of Natchez, & also for the inclosure of two lots belonging to said house” (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.b.).

After the Spanish withdrawal from Natchez in 1798, the parcel of land on this building stood was one of the few lots not in town not in private ownership. Consequently, when the City of Natchez was incorporated, it took possession of the house for use as a governmental building. In 1804, the building was said to have been used as the Adams County Courthouse and as the place where “the District and County Courts have been held and where the Post Office and other Offices have been held and now are still kept” (Carter 1937: 338-339). An 1805 deposition of John Girault stated that since the Spanish withdrawal the house had been “used by the Legislature, the Courts and the City Council, and City Courts” (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.). In 1806, the building was being used for “the threefold purpose of holding the Mayor’s court, the meetings of the Common Council, and the performing divine service” (American State Papers 1832b: 260). All combined, these sources indicate that the priests’ house in the early Territorial period served as a multi-functional building by territorial, county, and city governing bodies by a Federal agency in the form of a post office, and for church meetings. Despite the claim of the City of Natchez to these lots, Governor W.C.C. Claiborne donated them to the newly founded Jefferson College as a source of revenues. This resulted in years of dispute (Blain 1976:12-15).

In March 1817, the City of Natchez deeded most of Lots 1 and 3 to Adams County, retaining only a small parcel on the east end of Lot 4, for “the purpose of erecting a courthouse and jail, pillory, and stock thereon.” This action was taken in concert with a movement to return the courthouse to Natchez from Washington. A courthouse was constructed soon afterwards on Lot 1, and is still extant although

considerably remodeled. A combination city hall and market was constructed on Lot 3 in the mid-1830s. It was later demolished and the present city hall was constructed on the site in 1924 (Adams County Deed Book I, p. 273; Miller and Miller 1985: 33-35).

Other Buildings

There is documentary evidence of additional buildings, most of them residential, in the upper town. Much of the evidence comes from references to buildings that were incorporated in deeds and land claims. Unfortunately, most of the deeds and land claims did not refer to buildings, although many if not most of the lots referred to probably had buildings on them.

On some parcels the presence of buildings can be inferred from a claim based on occupancy. One form of land claim was based on the criterion that

residence on the evacuation day in 1797 [actually March 30, 1798] entitles the party to confirmation of land not exceeding 640 acres which on that day he inhabited and cultivated, proved the settler was the head of a family or above 21 years of age (McBee 1979:354).

Individuals claiming lots under this criterion then were supposedly occupants of the lot on the date of the Spanish withdrawal, with their occupancy inferring the existence of buildings. For such claims, the American State Papers (1832b) give the date of March 30, 1798, as the “grant date.” In fact many of these land claimants already had Spanish grants, but in many cases the grants may have been considered invalid because of late dates and therefore the claims had to be based on occupancy.

Block 1, Lot 3

On July, 1795, John Scott sold his lot to John Joseph Vidal for \$700.00. Located on the lot were “two dwelling houses, kitchens, stables and other buildings.” Vidal sold the parcel in September 1797 to Gregor Bergel for \$1000, with the deed noting that buildings were included (McBee 1979:115, 133).

Block 1, Lot 4 house

On July 20, 1796, John Scott petitioned the Spanish Government to grant him this lot, noting that he had already built a house on it. He was granted the lot on the same date as his request (McBee 1979:480).

Block 2, Lot 1

The first known owner of this lot was Joseph Vidal, Captain of the Militia and Secretary for the Spanish Government in Natchez. It is not known as to whether Vidal purchased this lot or received it by grant. He sold it to Antonio Novella at an undetermined date for 100 pesos. Novella’s wife sold the lot with a house thereon in November 1797 for \$700 to Domingo Lorero and Pedro Ancid (McBee 1979:155, 412).

Block 2, Lot 3

On February 13, 1793, Miguel Solibellas petitioned the Spanish Government for the lot because he needed a “house in the villa.” He was granted the lot on May 6 of the same year. He was at the time First Sergeant of the First Company of Grenadiers of the Louisiana Infantry Regiment. A few years later he became military storekeeper at the fort of San Fernando de las Barrancas (present-day Memphis, Tennessee). In this capacity he was convicted of having embezzled \$2000, and his Natchez property was ordered to be sold. The property located on Lot 3, Block 2 was inventoried as “a house in the town of Natchez, 50 feet long and 30 feet wide, including galleries, two old chairs, one cypress bedstead, 1 cypress table, 1 small cypress post bed, 1 pair kitchen fire-dogs, etc.”. The property, appraised at \$1400, sold for only \$940 to Maurice Stacpoole on February 14, 1798. Shortly afterward, Stacpoole sold the lot to Manuel Texada (McBee 1979:348, 459).

Block 2, Lot 4

This lot was granted to Maria Gertrudis Solibellas in 1793, after she had petitioned the Spanish Government for “a lot in the City on which to build a house.” On February 27, 1796, Senorita Solibellas sold this lot to George Overaker “with house thereon” for \$150. In 1804, when Overaker applied for a certificate of title that the lot had been “improved and built on by the claimant [Overaker] in 1795,” indicating that he himself had built the house prior to his actually receiving a deed for it (McBee 1979:121,480).

Block 3, Lot 1

On January 12, 1793, Benjamin Monsanto petitioned the Spanish Government for this lot claiming the desire to build a house. Following the death of Monsanto, the lot was sold on December 10, 1794 to Antonio Gras for \$300, at which time it was listed as having a building on it, presumably a house. In October 1800, the lot was described as having “houses, outhouses, stables, etc. where Antonio Gras now lives” (McBee 1979:106, 445).

Block 3, Lot 3

This lot was granted by the Spanish Government to George Overaker on July 19, 1796. However, Overaker was already inhabiting and cultivating the lot as early as October 1795, indicating the presence of a house at that date. He sold the lot to Stephen Henderson in October 1796, who in turn sold it to Francis Jones on December 2, 1799, who in turn sold it to John Wilkins, Jr. on April 25, 1804 for \$3000. The high price of the lot seemingly indicates one or more buildings on it in that year (McBee 1979:508).

Block 4, Lot 3

This parcel was sold on May 23, 1793 by Bridget Roberts to Joseph Murray, merchant, for \$160. It was described at the time as a “house and lot.” Following Murray’s death in 1795, seals were placed on “his late dwelling house and store in the new town.” These buildings were undoubtedly on Lot 3, Block 4, because this was the only lot in the new town.” These buildings were undoubtedly on Lot 3, Block 4, because this was the only lot in the new town that I could find Murray as having owned. Also in the record of Juliana Stacpoole’s 1804 claim to this lot it mentions “Bridget Robert’s assignment of house and lot to Joseph Murray for \$160.” There was also a dwelling on the back of the lot occupied by Murray’s sister-in-law (McBee 1979:96, 116, 478-479).

Block 5, Lot 3

As of September or October 1795, this lot was vacant. On July 20, 1796, Robert Scott, merchant, applied to the Spanish Government that the lot be granted to him. On the same day, his grant was approved with the condition that “he finish the building he has commenced thereon.” The following month Scott made out a will leaving the lot “with house I intend to put upon it” to his brother William, probably meaning the building that he meant to complete. By October he was dead. Presumably there was either a complete or incomplete building on the lot at the time (McBee 1979:126, 349, 486).

Block 7, Lots 1 and 2

On July 27, 1796, William Lintot petitioned the Spanish Government for Lots 1 and 2 of Block 7 because “he wishes to build two houses in the New City.” Two days later William Dunbar signed a certificate stating that the two lots were then vacant, and on July 30, Lintot was issued a patent for the lots. Lintot had his title to the lots confirmed by the American Government on the virtue of his being a settler on them on March 30, 1798, indicating that there must have been minimally some type of residential structure constructed there between July 1796 and March 1798 (American State Papers 1832b:896, certificate B-282; McBee 1979:485).

Block 8, Part of Lot 1

This parcel was in the portion of town that lay within William Barland’s 105 arpent grant of 1782 or 1786. In September 1788, Barland sold 11 acres (arpents?) to John Girault. Most of this parcel lay outside the boundaries of the plat of Natchez as surveyed in 1791. The majority of it which Girault still owned in the early 19th century became Section 78, Townsite 7, Range 3 West when the GLO surveys were made (American State Papers 1832b:881, certificate A-728; Freeman n.d.b.; McBee 1979:535-536, 566, 576). However, a small portion of the parcel lay within the town plat and specifically included most of Lots 1 and 3 of Block 8. Girault sold Lot 3 to Catherine Caudel in August 1794 (McBee 1979:101). On April 2, 1796, he sold a portion of the remainder to Simon de Arze (McBee 1979:121). This parcel is hardly described in the deed; however, by tracing its title I have determined that it included Lot 1, Square 8 and a small area adjacent to the south edge of Lot 1 and thus outside the town plat. On June 6, 1796, Simon de Arze sold a portion of this small parcel, evidently part of Lot 1, to Luther Smith with the portion being described as being a lot 100 feet front by 125 feet depth with a half-finished house and fences (American State Papers 1832b:880, certificate A-725; McBee 1979:123, 576). This portion of Lot 1 was probably the

more northerly portion of the lot, because the remainder of Arze's parcel, which was sold to Francisco Caudel on March 24, 1797, included property lying outside but adjacent to the town plat and thus on the south side of Lot 1. The parcel acquired by Caudel in 1797 included "two dwellings and other buildings" (McBee 1979:129). It is not clear as to which side of the boundary of the town plat the buildings were in, the southern portion of Lot 1 or in the small area adjacent. Caudel soon sold his portion of Lot 1 to John J. Walton and the remainder to Melling Wooley (American State Papers 1832b:880-881, certificates A-724 and -726; McBee 1979:535-536, 560).

Block 8, Lot 2, North 1/2, Extant Building (Griffith-McComas House)

On March 2, 1793, Hugh Coyle petitioned the Spanish Government for Lot 2 of Block 8 because he wished to build a residence for himself and his family. The patent was ratified in July 1796 as a result of Coyle's having "complied with all conditions of this grant," suggesting that he had indeed built that residence that was the grounds for his petition between 1793 and 1797. After having sold the southern half of the lot to George Furney in 1797 for \$80, he sold the northern half in August 1799 for \$1075. Coyle's residence was probably located on the more expensive northern half of the lot (Adams County Deed Book I, p. 154; McBee 1979:412).

Here is presently located the Griffith-McComas house, a two-story house that has a brick first floor and a frame second floor. According to architectural historians Mary W. Miller (n.d.), the second floor has architectural features suggestive of the late 18th century and predating the features of the lower floor. Thus it would appear that Coyle's house (built about 1793-1796) can probably be identified with the upper floor, which was apparently later jacked up with the lower floor being constructed under it, a fairly common practice in antebellum Natchez (for a floorplan see Cooper 1970:169).

The Griffith-McComas House is listed as a contributing element in the Natchez On-Top-of-the-Hill National Register District.

Block 9, Lot 1, Extant Building, the Governor Holmes House

Although there are no explicit references in the 18th century deed to a building on this lot, Miller (n.d.) has suggested that in regard to the Governor Holmes House that stands on this lot that "the original detailing and the brick-between-post construction of the upper story would not be inconsistent with a 1790's date of construction." Indeed the original grantee of Lot 1 Maurice Stackpoole sold it in 1796 for \$550, a price that is sufficiently high as to strongly suggest the presence of a building (McBee 1979:483-484). Thus the architectural evidence combined with a 1795 grant date and the implications of the 1796 sale price strongly suggest that the Governor Holmes house was built ca. 1795-1796 (McBee 1979:483-484).

Like the Griffith-McComas House, the Governor Holmes house has two-stories with a frame upper story and a brick lower story. Because "what trim is original on the first story level seems to date to about 1830," Miller (n.d.) has suggested that, again like the Griffith-McComas House, the Governor Holmes House originally consisted of a one-story house that was later raised so that a brick story could be constructed underneath. According to her:

The house probably began life as a one-story brick-between-post house that was probably sheathed in clapboards. The evidence remains on the second-story level for the full-width gallery that was a feature of the early house and for the rear cabinet room that once enclosed the northern end of the original rear gallery... When the house was raised, the front gallery was enclosed and the whole house, or at least the front wall, was bricked. The side elevations are stuccoed.

The Governor Holmes House is a contributing element in the Natchez-On-top-of-the-Hill National Register District.

Block 10, Lots 1 and 3

See the discussion of the Priests' house, above.

Block 11, Lots 3 and 4

On January 30, 1795, John Wilson petitioned the Spanish Government for these lots, noting that he had previously bought them from William Barland and had built houses on them. On December 8, 1798, Wilson sold half of the lots to John Rabb for \$1100 with the notation that there was a house on the parcel. On December 3, 1801, Wilson sold the other half to David and William Lattimore for \$1400. Although no buildings are mentioned, it would appear that since the Lattimore paid more for their half of the parcel than did Rabb, and there was a house on the Lattimore's half. The original petition had already described the original parcel as having houses, plural, on it (McBee 1979:429,431).

Block 12, Lot 1

On January 10, 1795, James Moore petitioned the Spanish Government for this lot stating that he had bought from "the agent of Mr. Adam Cloud some improvements which he [Cloud] had made certain lot [1, Block 12], conceded verbally but having no title form" (McBee 1979:486). The lot was granted to him five days later. The "improvements" referred to were obviously one or more buildings that had been constructed by Cloud without his having title to the lot. It was possible that this lot and these buildings that were referred to in the rejected land claim of George Matthews to an unnamed lot in the City of Natchez which was supposedly deeded to Matthews by Adam Cloud "who held the same by concession from the Spanish Government and by occupancy and improving it and building on it between the years 1792 and 1795" (McBee 1979:529, cf. p. 436). After a thorough search through McBee(1979), I could find no lot other than Lot 1, Block 12 to which Cloud's name was associated. Additionally, the validation of Moore's grant would explain the rejection of Matthews' claim.

Block 12, Lot 3

This lot was granted by the Spanish Government to Margaret Ury at an unknown date. When she applied for a certificate of title in 1804, she claimed that she had "actually inhabited and improved the said lot on 3 March 1803 and many years prior to that date, namely from 1796 and 1797." Her habitation of the lot as early as 1796 indicates that there was a residential building on it as early as that date (American State Papers 1832b:883, certificates 767; McBee 1979:552, 559).

Block 12, Lot 4

On June 5, 1795, James Cole petitioned the Spanish government for this lot, stating that he is "a carpenter and desires to build a house in the New City of Natchez so that he may have his residence there." A certificate from William Dunbar having the same date stated that the lot was vacant and the following day Gayoso gave a patent to Cole for the lot. Cole's claim to this lot was later rejected by the American government. The claim of Samuel Moore was later confirmed with his having acquired the lot from James Rose on March 19, 1799. It was noted that Rose had received a Spanish grant to the property and had "improved" it prior to October 27, 1795. Rose's claim was recognized though not by the "Spanish grant" but because of his having been an occupant of the lot on March 30, 1798. This along with the noted absence of any dates of petition and patent suggest thrust of this is that although Cole had received a grant to the lot, he never actually improved or occupied it. In the meantime James Rose apparently constructed a residence there between June and October 1795 and resided there until as late as the date of the Spanish departure from Natchez (McBee 1979:484, 576).

Block 19, Lot 2

On January 9, 1795, Lewis Evans petitioned the Spanish government for this lot and received a grant for it on June 20, 1795 (McBee 1979:497). In an 1805 deposition Evans recalled he "was the first applicant for a lot, and his House was the first that was built where the city now stands" (Catholic Diocesan Archives n.d.a.). Although this was obviously not the first lot applied for it is probably the lot to which Evans referred, since it is the only lot for which we have a record of his having been granted. It is conceivable that his house on this lot was the first built (excluding the priests' house), providing that it had been constructed a year or two before it was actually granted to him. Although the possibility of Evans' having constructed a house on a lot that did not belong to him may sound absurd, it is a possibility, giving the mysteries of early land title.

Block 20, Lot 2 and 4

The title to this parcel was validated by its having been occupied at the time of the Spanish withdrawal from Natchez (American State Papers 1832b:895, certificate B-260; McBee 1979:419). This suggests that the presence of a building by 1798.

Block 25, Lot 2

Bertrand Favreau received this parcel as a Spanish grant in August 1796, but the title was later validated on the basis of Favreau's having occupied it at the time of the Spanish withdrawal from Natchez (American State Papers 1832b:896, certificate B-288; McBee 1979:502). This suggests that he began occupying squatting on it at some time prior to the withdrawal and was presumably residing in a building.

Block 26, Lot 1

On November 9, 1796, Andrew Scandlan sold this lot to the estate of Robert Scott for \$300. The deed noted that on the lot was a "house and other buildings." James Moore later had his title to the lot validated on the basis of the lot's having been occupied on March 30, 1798, by its then current owner (American State Papers 1832b:896, certificate B-289; McBee 1979:126).

Block 26, Lot 3

Title to this lot was given to John Williams in 1807 based on his occupancy of it prior to the withdrawal of the Spanish from Natchez. An August 27, 1795, certificate by William Dunbar stated that the lot was vacant at that time. However, shortly afterwards Williams began to squat on it, either in 1795 or 1796. Sources for the date vary somewhat. One indicates that he "actually inhabited and cultivated [the lot]... prior to and on 27 October 1795," while another indicates that he "did improve the said lot by building a house upon it in 1796" (American State Papers 1832b:896, certificate B-283; McBee 1979:480, 492).

Block 26, Lot 4

This lot was granted to Louisa Wylie, the wife of John Wylie, on August 24, 1795. In 1801, John and Louisa Wylie sold it to John Stump for \$130. Stump later was given a certificate of title to the parcel based on the Wylies' having occupied it at the time of the Spanish withdrawal from Natchez. The occupancy would suggest the presence of a building (American State Papers 1832b:896, certificate B-292; McBee 1979:450) building.

Block 31, Lot 2

This lot, lying within William Barland's 105 arpent parcel, was deeded by Barland to William Rucker for \$50 at an unspecified date, but probably December 1794. Rucker sold the lot "with house" on February 16, 1797 to Luther Smith for \$350 (McBee 1979:107, 128).

Block 32, Lot 1

James Wiley petitioned the Spanish Government on July 19, 1793 for this lot because he wished "to establish himself and family in the New City." He apparently received the lot no later than the following year and sold it on May 15, 1799 to John Holland. An 1804 land claim noted that Wiley had claimed the lot "by virtue of a settlement thereon by the building thereon by James Wiley," indicating the construction of at least one building. In 1802, there were two "houses" on the lot; certainly one if not both of these had been constructed by Wiley (McBee 1979:458).

Block 32, Lot 2

On April 6, 1795, Cornelius McKann received Lot 2 of Block 32 or probably more likely the north half of Lot 2 from the Spanish Government (McBee 1979:457, 507). During the summer of 1796, Bennet Truly brought suit against Neil McKann in that

during the course of the winter of 1795, he [Truly] contracted with and obliged himself with considerable expense to provide timber and build a house for Mr. Neil McKan in the new town, which house when finished [would be appraised by good workmen] (McBee

1979:216).

The suit was brought because Neil McKann would not pay the amount that Truly wanted. The lot number on which Truly constructed the house was not given; however it would appear that it was almost certainly on the north half of Lot 2, Block 32, because the only lot owned by any McKann in the “new town” during the Spanish occupation was the north half of Lot 2, Block 32, and because Cornelius McKann the lot owner was prominently involved in the legal proceedings, then it is almost certain that this was the lot on which Bennet Truly constructed the house.

Block 33, Lot 3, Extant Building, King’s Tavern

This is the site of the house presently know as “King’s Tavern.” George Willey, in his reminiscence of early Natchez, noted that this building is “probably the oldest house now existing in Natchez It was at one time kept as a tavern by a man named King, and was the stopping place of western men on their return from New Orleans, after selling out their flatboats of produce” (Claiborne 1978:529).

On July 20, 1794, Prosper King petitioned the Spanish Government that they grant him this lot because he “desires to build a house in the New City.” Although Gayoso did not grant the lot to him until July 21, 1796, the American State Papers (1832b:887, certificate B-9) date his claim to July 20, 1794, so he could have actually had possession of the lot as early as this. On January 18, 1798, he sold the lot to Richard King for \$50. The low price of the lot indicates one of three things: there was no building there in 1798, the building was not considered to be valuable, or with Richard probably being kin to Prosper, Prosper may have sold him the lot for less than it was worth. Considering that George Willey is a reliable source and considering that his statement would seemingly make King’s Tavern predate 1798, I think that one of the latter two options is more likely than the former one.

Suburban and Rural Houses

With a population of approximately 5,000 in the mid-1790’s, there must have been approximately 1,000 occupation sites and houses by the end of the period of Spanish rule. Of all of these houses only seven are known to exist with three in the 1791 platted area of the town of Natchez and four in what was outside the 1790’s plat. Of the four lying outside the platted area, three were constructed fairly close to the town and fort and thereby could be considered as suburban. This means that only one of the seven know surviving houses can strictly be considered as rural. However, because the greater bulk of the population of the Natchez District was rural, Then the greater number of homes must have been rural. The fact that the number of rural homes that have survived is much less than the number of urban and suburban homes indicates a much higher attrition rate for rural houses.

Thus far we have already considered the three houses that were constructed within the 1791 plat of Natchez: Griffith-McComas House, Governor Holmes House, and King’s Tavern. To be discussed now are the suburban houses--Airlie, Hope Farm, and Richmond--and the one rural house--Mount Locust.

Airlie

This house is located on a 31 arpent 63 perch parcel that Stephen Minor petitioned for in March 1795 and was granted, apparently in August of the same year (American State Papers 1832b:608, certificate A-608; McBee 1979:451). The parcel was apparently part of the 300 arpent parcel that Minor had sold the Spanish Government in 1788 for the purpose of laying out the town of Natchez. It was later designated as Section 61, Township 7, Range 3 West. Referring to this parcel and Airlie, Mary W. Miller (n.d.) has written:

In 1800, Stephen and Catherine Minor conveyed to Daniel Clarke a piece of property “on which the Mansion House now stands” that the Minors had received as a grant from the Spanish government in 1793 (Adams County Deed Book B:68). Although deed records indicate that Clarke acquired the house on August 20 and sold it two days later on August 22, 1800, he was apparently residing in the house earlier than the deeds indicate, since letters written from Clarke to Territorial Governor Winthrop Sargent are headed Belvidere and are dated earlier than the purchase.

The house was probably constructed soon after the parcel of land was granted to Minor in 1793. A detailed inspection of the building by Mary and Ron Miller (personal Communication) indicates that the original structure consisted of only two rooms, those identified as the dining room and the parlor on the floor plan provided in Cooper (1970:153). According to the Millers, the original core is of brick-between-post construction and did not originally have galleries. Airlie is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Hope Farm

Mary W. Miller (personal Communication) has suggested that Hope Farm was built by Charles de Grand-Pre soon after he acquired the land on which the house stands in 1789. Grand-Pre was a commandant at the Natchez Fort and was effectively military governor of the Natchez District until the arrival of Manuel Gayoso in 1789.

The house is situated on an 83 arpent parcel that was granted to John Row in 1795 and passed through several ownership's before it was acquired by Grand-Pre. The parcel can be identified with Section 40, Township 7, Range 3 West (American State Papers 1832b:878, certificate A-651; McBee 1979:64). The house is located on Homochitto Street which was formerly an old road that lead southwest and then south from the fort. It had apparently been constructed by March 1791, because Pope (1888:31) related that on the 28th of that month he

paid a visit to Don Granfrey [sic], Commandant of the Regular Forces throughout the Natchez District: he lives about two miles from town. Here I was regaled with different kinds of Fruits, Wines and Parmesan Cheese, which were succeeded to a very good substantial Dinner. Hospitality and Urbanity presided at his Board...

Pope was probably using the fort as his point of reference in giving the distance to Grand-Pre's house; the town had not been surveyed and presumably Pope was using the term "town" loosely to refer to the fort, hospital, government house, and other buildings. Hope Farm is approximately 1.5 miles from the fort site today, a distance that reasonably coincides with Pope's two miles. Miller has noted that although the architectural details are Greek Revival in character, the overall form of the house with "its low pitched, hipped and gabled roof and its irregular fenestration" is very characteristic of the 1790s. Although local legend has it that the rear ell dates to the 1770s, there is no known architectural or written evidence of this. Indeed, the overall topographical situation suggests that the main body of the house was the first part constructed, in that the main part is situated on the crest of a knoll whereas the ell extends out over a slope to the rear. A floorplan of Hope Farm is provided in Cooper (1970:49). The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Richmond

Is located about a mile south of the Fort of Natchez on Section 24, Township 7, Range 3 West. According to Matilda Gresham (1919:245), who visited there during the Civil War, construction on the house was begun about 1784. Judging by the usual reliability of Gresham for recording observations and local traditions, the date is probably approximately correct.

According to Mary W. Miller (n.d.)

The early central section of Richmond, as originally constructed, was a one-and-a-half story frame house with a raised brick basement that may or may not be original. Like other early Natchez area houses, the frame portion may have later been raised for the construction of the brick first story. The front galleries are not an original feature, and they obscure massive, hewn wooden gutters that originally carried rain water from the roof.

Richmond is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mount Locust

The house known as Mount Locust was located on the Natchez Trace in Section 65, Township 8, Range 1 West, in Jefferson County. It was constructed ca. 1780, and its floorplan evolved over the following decades. Today it is an interpretive feature on the Natchez Trace Parkway and has been restored to its ca.

1820 condition when it served as a home and inn (Bailey 1956; Mount Locust on the Old Natchez Trace n.d.). Mount Locust is not listed On the National Register of Historic Places.

VILLA GAYOSO

Historical Sketch

On February 1, 1787, the Governor of Louisiana Estevan Miro wrote to the Minister of the Indies and described the three main areas of settlement in the Natchez District, i.e. along St. Catherine's Creek, Second Creek, and Cole's Creek. He suggested that two parishes be created with one to include the first two areas of settlement and the other to include the Cole's Creek settlement. The first parish already had a natural nucleus at Natchez; however, for the second parish a site would have to be found for the construction of an administrative center to include a church, presbytere, guardhouse, and commandant's house (Holmes 1965:40-41).

After some problems with locating a suitable site for the administrative center for the Cole's Creek Parish, one was finally selected by June 1791. The site was described by Holmes (1965:44), paraphrasing Governor Gayoso of the Natchez District, as being "a high, flat plateau with a good view of the [Mississippi] river. Two springs nearby provided fresh, healthy water." A contract for the construction of the buildings had been let in 1790 for the construction of a church, a house for the commandant, quarters for the troops, two kitchens, and two latrines. In January 1792 letter, Gayoso de Lemos (1792a) reported that

I am at present constructing and establishing a military post which will be composed of the commandant's house, barracks for the troops, a church, and the priest's house... All of it will be surrounded by a strong stockade. Contiguous to this site there is a beautiful tract of level ground which would be very suitable for the building of a city. When I return there I am going to draw up plans for same.

A survey of all of the abstracts of Spanish land grants and deeds included in McBee (1979) did not reveal a single reference to lots in a town of Villa Gayoso. This suggests that Gayoso's plans for surveying a town consisting of lots, blocks, and streets was never implemented. A belief that there was an actual town with a population of 909 in 1792 has crept into the literature (Cox 1970:66). This population figure though has been misinterpreted so as to suggest an urban population, when in actuality the figure represents not the population of the "town" but of the district of Villa Gayoso.

Shortly after reporting on the progress of the construction, Gayoso received a petition from some of the Cole's Creek settlers to change the name of the parish and its administrative center from "Cole's Creek" to "Villa Gayoso" in honor of the governor (Holmes 1965:44-45).

Following the evacuation of the Spanish from the Natchez District in March 1798, Villa Gayoso which had been the property of the Spanish crown passed as public property into the possession of the United States government. A Corporal Diddup and five troops under him were sent to Villa Gayoso to protect the property for the Federal government (Claiborne 1978:229n). Meanwhile, the month after his arrival in Natchez, the territorial governor Winthrop Sargent wrote that he proposed to divide the territory into two counties with Natchez being the seat of justice of one and Villa Gayoso of the other. He noted that at Villa Gayoso

there are a sufficiency of buildings there for Court purposes, which with a Body of Land, say two hundred acres, seem to me to have been the property of Spain, though a Mr. Green pretends to claim it.--The Military at present hold it, by a Noncommissioned officers guard, for the United States... The Expenses of Jails and Courthouses in this Count[r?y], will be very great-- Jails however must be built; at the Villa Gayoso the appropriation of the public Buildings, for Civil purposes, would be a very great accommodation, and they can not be of any use whatever to the army (Rowland 1905:57).

The garrison remained at Villa Gayoso through February 1799 before leaving to turn the buildings over to the civil government (Rowland 1905:136). An inventory of the buildings revealed there to be "a

Church, Commandants and Priests house, small Barrics [sic] and Kitchen, all framed Buildings ill finished” (Rowland 1905:184). When Pickering County was created in 1799, Villa Gayoso served as the first county seat with the church building serving as the courthouse, while the commandant of the local militia occupied one of the dwellings (Rowland 1905:127, 184). An educational society, the “Franklin Society for the Acquisition of Useful Knowledge,” met there for a period of time (Claiborne 1978:229n; Logan 1980:137).

In a letter dated November 1, 1799, Winthrop Sargent, the governor of the Mississippi Territory noted that “of Course [sic] the Villa Gayoso must be evacuated” because “the situation is deemed unhealthy and the County will press erecting the necessary accommodations, in another position...” (Rowland 1905:184). However, by early 1800 the county seat appears to have still been located at Villa Gayoso, although there was apparently a movement underway to move the seat to a new location. In a letter dated January 2, 1800, Winthrop Sargent noted that

if the Buildings and Situation of the Villa Gayoso might be found of accommodation to the County for the Courts of Justice \$ c-- it is very probable they may be obtained from the United States, at considerably less expense, than new ones possibly can be erected (Rowland 1905:203-204).

Although Sargent appears to have favored maintaining the county seat at Villa Gayoso, it s not to be. As early as 1798, Everard Green (ca. 1781-1813) was claiming that the land on which the settlement was located had been deeded to him by his father. A title trace of the parcel (see below) does suggest that Everard had title to it. However, it is not clear as to why the Green family remained silent (Everard was only about ten years old at the time) if the Spaniards did not have some agreed upon right to the property. Haynes suggests that Gayoso had promised to provide Green with another land grant to compensate him for the loss of the Villa Gayoso tract, but had failed to do so. Regardless of what had transpired, Sargent presumably believed that the Spanish government had a valid claim to the parcel and that the claim subsequently was inherited by the United States government. When Sargent refused to recognize Green’s claim, Green took his case to court and was awarded the parcel in 1802 (Cox 1970:67; Haynes 1973:191). Afterwards the county seat was moved about 1803 to the new town of Greenville. Villa Gayoso was then incorporated into the new plantation lands of the Everard Green (Logan 1980:138, 141).

A probable myth seems to have developed about the site; that is, it has become widely believed by state and local historians that Governor Gayoso had a summer residence there. While I have not been able to thoroughly trace the origins of the story, it does appear as early as ca. 1876 in Reed (1876). Claiborne’s 1880 book (1978:229n) also repeats the story. A later version is included in Logan (1980:135-136). I have found nothing in either the primary sources or in Holmes’ (1965) biography of Gayoso that would substantiate this story. It may have begun by misinterpreting the term “villa” to mean “summer residence,” hence “Villa Gayoso” seems to have been interpreted to mean the summer residence of Gayoso. The term as used in this context should more appropriately be translated as “village.” Thus it seems that the term “Gayoso” was used merely in an honorific fashion, as previously demonstrated, so as to mean merely a village named after Gayoso. I see in the name no implications that Gayoso ever resided there.

The Location of Villa Gayoso

The tract of land on which the administrative center Villa Gayoso was located can be identified with Section 39, Township 9, Range 1 West. This is an irregular section based on a British land grant that was defined merely by metes-and-bounds until the G.L.O. survey of the early 19th century established its boundaries as permanent fixtures in the system of sections and townships. Prior to the survey, the deeds invariably stated that this parcel consisted of 100 acres; however, the survey seems to have proven this wrong in that there were actually 121.26 acres.

That this parcel was the site of Villa Gayoso is made clear by an examination of the early chain of title. The parcel was originally granted to Athanasius Martin by the British government on October 9, 1777. The following year, Martin sold it to Ann Thompson, who in 1783 sold it to Thomas Green. On January 13, 1785, Green gave the parcel to his son Everard who was only about four years old at the time (McBee 1979:17-18, 78, 357). The identification of this parcel with Villa Gayoso was made by a deed of April 1, 1804, in which, probably to reaffirm Everard’s claim to the parcel, Everard’s father Thomas and a number of Everard’s siblings redeeded the parcel to Everard. The deed stated that

the said Everard Green who is now in the possession by virtue of a Deed made by Thomas Green Senior bearing date [January 13,1785] of... a certain Tract or parcel of land containing one hundred acres situate... in the county of Jefferson... commonly known and called the Villa Gayoso tract of land (Jefferson County Deed Book B-1, p. 33).

This identification is further supported by a rejected land claim of 1804 of John Thompson who noted that the parcel was “commonly called and known as Villa Gayoso” (McBee 1979:562). For background on the Thompson family and their claim to the parcel see Roberts (1977).

Having established that Everard Green’s “100 acre” parcel was the site of Villa Gayoso, then the location of this parcel must be established. After filing a claim for the parcel with the U.S. Government, the claim was validated in January 1806 by the issuance of Certificate A-715 to Everard (American State Papers 1832b:880). By examining the Freeman (n.d.c.) plat of Township 9, Range 1 West and its list of sections and their corresponding certificate numbers, it can be seen that Certificate A-715 is associated with Section 39.

Identification of the Villa Gayoso tract through the land title is virtually certain. However, it might be noted that other sources tend to support this identification. According to Gayoso’s description (see above), the site was on a high, flat plateau with a beautiful view of the Mississippi River. The site of Section 39 is quite level yet on the edge of a bluff. To the west the Mississippi River in the early 1800s came within a mile of the bluff in a meander that has subsequently been abandoned and now has formed oxbow lake. The map (1806) depicts Villa Gayoso as being just to the east and probably less than a mile from this river bend, which again coincides with the location of Section 39. An oral source provides evidence that suggests the actual location of the Villa Gayoso buildings within the parcel. On March 20, 1988 and before I had ever deduced the location of the site through the land title information, I visited Mr. Gene Bates who resides in the area of Villa Gayoso. Mr. Bates informed me on the occasion that he knew, based on oral tradition, the location of Villa Gayoso.

Mr. Bates who has lived in the area at least since the 1940s accompanied me to the site that he believed to be Villa Gayoso. He indicated it to be on the northwest side of Section 39 and on the north side of the country road that runs southwest through northeast through the section. The Freeman (n.d.c.) plat depicts a road as following this course in the early 19th century. The site is on the edge of the bluff overlooking the bottomlands of the Mississippi River. According to Mr. Bates the Spanish Church was located on the eastern half of the site and the barracks were located on the western side. He said that his father had once talked to an elderly black man who could remember having seen the old church on the aforesaid location. Between the barracks site and the church site is a cut in the bluff that could possibly have been used as a descent from the bluff to the river. Because Mr. Bates was not feeling well I was able to only briefly walk across the western portion of the site. Both portions of the site are follow fields covered only by dead vegetable matter. Portions of the ground surface were visible. I found no artifacts. Due to my needing to keep an appointment and due to Mr. Bates’ reluctance to let me survey on his property alone, I was not able to survey the site any further.

Because Mr. Bates had no way of knowing by documentary source the location of Villa Gayoso and because he unknowingly placed it within Section 39 which has been proven to be the correct parcel, suggests the veracity of the tradition that he was basing his belief on. Hopefully, both archaeological fieldwork and the appearance of Spanish and early Territorial maps can help us to more precisely locate the buildings of Villa Gayoso.

The King’s Road to Villa Gayoso

There was a road in the Natchez District that held the rank of Camino Real, or the King’s Road. There are at least four references in the Natchez Spanish Court Records, with these references dating to 1788, 1789, and 1797 (McBee 1979:50, 51, 127, and 130). It would seem most probable that the road was essentially a north-south thoroughfare paralleling the Mississippi River and linking the settlements on the east side of the river from New Orleans through Baton Rouge, Natchez, and points beyond. A March 9, 1797 deed indicates that the road passed through Natchez, while a January 23, 1797 deed refers to “the King’s Road leading to the District of Villa Gayoso” (McBee 1979:127, 130). The reference would imply that if the road went to the District of Villa Gayoso, it would have almost certainly led directly to the crown property of the administrative center of Villa Gayoso.

Because of the rugged, dissected topography that dominates the area lying a few miles to the east of the Mississippi River, there are a limited number of possibilities for roads to run within engaging in major engineering feats. Thus it would seem likely that the King's Road from Natchez to Villa Gayoso must have essentially followed the routes of present roads which occupy most of the potential transportation routes north of Natchez.

Leading north from Natchez the King's Road probably followed the present Pine Ridge Road for the first few miles. This road seems to have been the major north-south thoroughfare during the mid-19th century and very likely had preserved this dominance from an earlier era. It appears as such on the 1864 map of Natchez (Wilson 1864). An 1839 map (Adams County Probate Real Estate Book 1 n.d.:313) depicts the Pine Ridge Road in its present location running from Natchez to the edge of the map at Mammoth Bayou. This map labeled the road as the "Road to Port Gibson." Because Port Gibson is a county seat town and approximately to the north of Natchez, this would suggest that in 1839 the road was the main road leading out of Natchez to the north. Even greater antiquity for this road can be ascertained from the fact that the Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church was established on the west side of the road about 1807, and in the 1790s Gayoso constructed his large plantation house "Concord" on the road just outside Natchez.

LOS NOGALES

Historical Sketch

The history of the Fort of Los Nogales have been treated extensively by Kinnaird and Kinnaird (1980) and Young (1943). It was founded as a result of Spain's attempt to maintain the land on the eastern side of the Mississippi River north of the 31st parallel. In 1789, the State of Georgia made a large land grant to the South Carolina Yazoo Company in the vicinity of Walnut Hills or Los Nogales as it was called in Spanish. In March 1791, in order to thwart efforts of the Company to colonize its grant, Governor Esteban Miro ordered Governor Gayoso to mount an expedition to Los Nogales and there to create a fortified position. Within the year considerable work was put into the site, producing a complex of several forts, and barracks, bakery and storehouse.

The presence of the fortification apparently thwarted the plans of the South Carolina Yazoo Company. To prevent a buffer zone against American intrusions into the area, the Spanish called a conference of southeastern Indian tribes to meet at the Nogales. In late October 1793, representatives of the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, Tallapoosas, and Alabamas met at the site. The Cherokees who were at war with the Americans were unable to end their own representatives, but they delegated the Creeks to represent their interests. The treaty that was signed at the end of the meeting created a defensive confederation of Indian tribes under Spanish protection. Following the 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo by which Spain ceded its claim to lands east of the Mississippi and north of the 31st parallel and the confederation fall apart.

Despite the signing of the Treaty of San Lorenzo, Spain did not withdraw from the Natchez District. In May 1797, with American troops descending the Mississippi River to take possession of the area, Governor Carondelet sent orders to Lieutenant Colonel Jose Corail, commander to the Spanish troops at Los Nogales, informing him that if a manageable body of American troops was to attempt to take the fortifications they were to be resisted by force if necessary. Fighting did not occur and finally on March 25, 1798, the Spanish troops were removed from Los Nogales.

A few days afterward, on April 2, 1798, Major William Kersay and a force of approximately 207 American troops occupied Los Nogales which was soon renamed Fort McHenry. One of the officers stationed there was Lieutenant Andrew Marschalk who had brought with him a small printing press. While stationed at Fort McHenry he had printed a ballad entitled "The Galley Slave," which was the first printing ever conducted in the newly founded Mississippi Territory. Marschalk was later reassigned to the fort at Natchez where he printed the newly passed territorial news.

No longer of strategic value, Fort McHenry was abandoned by 1800.

The Site of Los Nogales

The following is an extended quotation describing the site of Los Nogales and the layout of the Spanish structures from the work of Rogers W. Young (1943:42-49), a former historian with the National Park Service:

A careful analysis of Collot's description of Los Nogales, and of the plan adapted from his sketches of the site, indicates with certainty... that the different military works and buildings of this Spanish post were located in part of or near the present-day site of Confederate Fort Hill, but in the main were distributed along the slopes leading southwestward, westward and northwestward from Fort Hill toward the former bend of the Mississippi below. A comparison of Collot's observations of 1796 with Governor Gayoso's account, dated May 10, 1791, of the establishment of Los Nogales, may be relied upon largely for contemporary proof as to the identity of the post's general situation at the Walnut Hills. Other historical evidence, contemporary with the existence of Los Nogales or its immediate successor, Fort McHenry, which is treated in this study, also tends to substantiate the foregoing conclusions. Together, these sources, clearly disprove the popular misconception that Los Nogales was a single fortification, occupying only the site of Confederate Fort Hill, on top of the prominent ridge at that point. In fact, these sources, especially Collot, show that actually Los Nogales was a complete fortified post, constructed of logs, earth and masonry, and consisting of six separate military works or detached batteries and forts, together with a powder magazine and appendant garrison buildings, including, barracks for 200 men, the commandant's house, a hospital, store and bake house; all of which was surrounded in part by log stockades. One of the six works of the post, Fort Mount Vigie, [actually Vigia] was unquestionably located on top of the Fort Hill ridge at, or very near, the location of the existing redoubt known as Confederate Fort Hill, and was flanked at a short distance on the right and left by two small blockhouses. However, the main structures of the post were located along the slopes leading from Fort Mount Vigie toward the former bend of the river below, including: first, Blockhouse B, and below it, the main fort, Battery A, while within or near these works were located the garrison buildings listed. The sixth military work, known as Fort Sugar Loaf because of the nature of the terrain at its site, was located on the mound in the southwestern section of Vicksburg National Cemetery, below and to the northwestward of the site of Fort Mount Vigie.

In studying the sources contemporary with Los Nogales and in comparing their statements with the present-day terrain, due allowance must be made for the fact that approximately a century and a half has elapsed since the heyday of Los Nogales [writing ca. 1943], and during this long period many natural and man made changes have occurred in the topography at the site of the old Spanish post. Two of the chief landmarks at this site in the Walnut Hills: the eastern shoreline of the former bend of the Mississippi, and the great bluff where Fort Hill is now situated, have unquestionably undergone erosion in this period, thus altering the terrain and making statements of distances and descriptions of topography in contemporary and present-day sources difficult to reconcile upon comparison. Nevertheless, there are enough general points of similarity between the earlier sources, especially Collot and the plan adapted from his sketches, as compared with modern maps and existing topographic conditions, to warrant the unreserved acceptance of the present terrain at Confederate Fort Hill and that immediately adjacent to the mouth of Mint Spring Bayou as the situation of Los Nogales.

An effort has been made by the writer, with the able technical assistance of Mr. C. W. Schwiezer, Senior Engineer, Mississippi River Commission, Vicksburg, to plot the general location of the military structures in the post of Los Nogales upon a composite map of the Fort Hill and Mint Spring Bayou area, showing comparative conditions in 1796, 1878-83, and 1837-40. It was realized, of course that the plan adapted from Collot's sketches obviously contains certain inaccuracies of detail, such as its north line not being a true north and its scale in most instances being about twice that referred to in Collot's description of Los Nogales. Nevertheless, since the plan coincides to a marked degree with the terrain at and near the mouth of Mint Springs Bayou, this plan, together with Collot's description of the post, were used as the basic guides. The information thus secured from Collot was plotted on and adapted to the topography in: "Survey of the Mississippi River made under the direction of the Mississippi River Commission, Chart No. 48," 1878-83, which was used as the base of the composite map mainly because it is the

best available map of the site under study, immediately after the shift of the river's main channel to the south of Vicksburg by the cut-off through the peninsula opposite the city in 1876.

Superimposing the 1796 conditions upon the 1878-83 map, attention was first given to the location of the three upper forts on the top of the steep bluffs rising along the southern side of Mint Spring Bayou. It was found immediately that the site of Fort Mound Vigie as a base point, therefore, the site of Blockhouse H was found to have a true bearing south 25 degrees west of this point, and to have been located at a point some 1,200 feet distant, along the lower slopes of the Fort Hill range, and west of the Yazoo City Road. The site of blockhouse G was similarly found to have a true bearing north 73 degrees east from Fort Mound Vigie, and also to have been located at a point some 1,200 distant, on the top of the ridge along the southern side of Mint Spring Bayou.

Sketching in the eastern shoreline of the Mississippi at and near Mint Spring Bayou from 1796 data upon the 1878-83 map, by following the bankline rather than the waterline shown by the unreliable hatching on the plan adapted from Collot, the 1796 shoreline was found to have been generally located some 350 feet to the west of the 1878-83 shoreline. With these two important 1796 point generally established: the eastern shoreline of the river and the location of Fort Mound Vigie, an attempt was then undertaken to locate the most important military structure of the post of Los Nogales, along the slopes below Fort Mound Vigie, at and near the mouth of Mint Spring Bayou. The site of Blockhouse B was found to have a true bearing from Fort Mound Vigie of south 65 degrees west, and to have been located at a point about 900 feet distant. Such a site would correspond generally with Collot's statement that Blockhouse B was on the first elevation behind Battery A, at a distance of about 200 yards.

From Fort Mound Vigie, the angle of the northwest and chief bastion of the main masonry wall of Battery A was found to have a true bearing of north 81 degrees west, and to have been located at a point some 1,400 feet distant. Similarly, the exterior angle of the ditch at this southwest bastion, with about the same bearing from Fort Vigie, was found to have been located at a point some 1,450 feet distant. This location of Battery A in 1796 would have placed its lower ditch about 200 feet, and its main masonry wall some 150 feet, to the west of the eastern shoreline of the 1878-83 map. Such a location would also correspond generally with Collot's statement that Battery A was placed "at the extremity" of one of the slopes at Walnut Hills, and between Blockhouse B and the river. Therefore, it would appear that the 350 foot recession of the eastern shoreline of the river, between 1796 and 1878-83, had carried the major lower part of Battery A into the Mississippi. Moreover, it is possible that the recession along the eastern shoreline at the site of Battery A, after 1796 and prior to the change of the river's channel in 1876, may have been even slightly more than 350 feet, since the eastern shoreline was probably built up somewhat between 1876 and the survey of this point as shown on the 1876-83 map.

However, in order to determine actual conditions along the eastern shoreline at the former site of Battery A in a more recent period, the shoreline shown on the "Mississippi River, Hydrographic Survey, 1937... U.S. Engineer Office, Vicksburg, Mississippi... Edition of 1940, [sheet] 73," was then superimposed upon the 1878-83 map and the 1796 data. When the 1937-40 eastern shoreline was thus plotted on the composite map, it was found to be located generally about 210 feet to the west of the 1878-83 shoreline. From this finding it would appear, therefore, that between 1878-83 and 1937-40, as a result of the 1876 cut-off in the river and the opening of the Yazoo Canal, 1902-03, successive accretions of mud and silt were deposited along the eastern shoreline at the site of Battery A until the bank at this point was gradually extended far enough westward for the former site of the chief fortification of Los Nogales to be located today barely within the existing eastern shoreline of the Yazoo Canal. While it would then appear possible today to locate the former lowlands to the west of the railroad right-of-way near this point and south of the stream at the mouth of Mint Spring Bayou, this present-day site would be located only upon comparatively new terrain and not on the original land where Battery A actually stood, which was eroded away by the Mississippi prior to 1876-83.

The sixth military work of the post of Los Nogales, known as Fort Sugar Loaf because of the nature of the terrain at its site, was apparently located on the site of the existing mound in the southwestern section of Vicksburg National Cemetery. Plotted on the composite map, Fort Sugar Loaf was found to have a true bearing from Fort Mound Vigie of north 12 degrees west, and to be located at a point some 1,080 feet distant, on the small mound rising to the north of the mouth of Mint Spring Bayou. From the angle of the southwest bastion of Battery A, the mound at the site of Fort Sugar Loaf was found to have a true bearing of north 52 degrees east, and to be located at a point some 1,500 feet distant. The mound at the former site of the Fort Sugar Loaf its commonly referred to at present as the "Indian Mound," owing to the reputed excavation in the past of India bones at the site, but of which discovery there is no scientific archeological report available. However, historical evidence available in maps of the area clearly substantiates the unbroken existence of a mound at this point from 1796 until the present time. Furthermore, Collot's description of Los Nogales refers to the location of the mound in 1796, and its existence during the siege of Vicksburg in 1863, and occupation by Union sharpshooters at the right of Sherman's line, was repeatedly referred to by Brig-Gen. John C. Vaughn, commanding the Confederate left at Fort Hill, who stated that his force suffered "great annoyance from those [Union sharpshooters] in [the] mound in front of my left..."

In concluding this analysis of Collot's data regarding Los Nogales, and its comparison with modern maps and existing topographic conditions, several important considerations must be borne in mind. All of the directions, bearings, distances and locations given here for the various military works of Los Nogales are, of course, only approximate, being based merely upon map studies and a general examination of the terrain. The analysis of these points in the study is in the main only general, and has been prepared for the purpose of serving merely as a guide toward the solution of the long standing controversy concerning the location of the post of Los Nogales and its chief military works. To determine these points with complete accuracy, in so far as possible, for the purposes of development, it would be necessary to run survey lines with the transit, recording exact distances and locations by this means. Furthermore, in adapting the findings of this study to the existing terrain, or in plotting them upon the present topographic maps of the National Park Service, it should be remembered that allowance must be made for the inaccuracies of the Collot data, and for the true north and the scale as used on the 1878-83 base map.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE OF THE NATCHEZ DISTRICT

It has been established that the settlers of the Natchez District under both the British and the Spanish were primarily Anglo-Americans and their black slaves. Given this fact one would assume that the vernacular architecture would be similar to that of the English settlements on the Atlantic Seaboard. This architectural tradition would have been very similar to the Midland or Upland South architectural tradition (Jordan 1985; Newton 1974). This tradition relied heavily on the use of log construction and house types based on the use of the "pen" as the basic unit from whence various single-pen and double-pen forms were derived.

Despite the Anglo-American background of the settlers, early travelers' accounts suggest that the vernacular architecture of the Natchez District was heavily influenced by the Creole culture of French Louisiana than it was by the settlers' own traditions. A Dr. John Bedford (1919:119) visited Natchez in 1807 and noted that.

most of the houses are of wood and in the French style--elevated 7 or 8 feet from the ground--above which is one story only--and piazzas or galleries all round.

Fortesque Cuming (1904:320), who visited the town in the same year as Bedford, observed

I was much struck with the similarity of Natchez to many of the smaller West India towns, particularly St. Johns Antigua, though not near so large as it. The houses all with balconies and piazzas...

In 1820, John James Audubon visited Natchez and described a hotel that was built "on the Spanish plan, very large and surrounded by wide verandahs" (Ford 1969:92). Additionally, an unknown writer in 1826 recalled that Natchez in 1799 consisted of "a few low and ragged houses, built in the Spanish manner" (*Natchez Courier* 1852).

Although these four writers used different specific comparisons in the describing the early Natchez architecture, it is clear that they were referring to the same phenomenon--the Creole or French vernacular architecture that evolved in the Lower Mississippi Valley during the 18th and 19th centuries (Edwards 1988). The architectural tradition was the product of the process of syncretism, by which elements of several traditions were merged to form a new tradition. Creole architecture has antecedents in French, West African, and Caribbean architecture (Edwards 1976-1980; for the concept of syncretism see Jordan 1985:6, 154-155). Caribbean vernacular architecture had similarities in appearance to the Creole architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley, hence Cuming's comparison of Natchez architecture to that of West Indian (Caribbean) towns (Edwards 1980). The references to Spanish-like buildings is probably derived from the association of Creole architecture with the Spanish regime that ruled portions of the Creole heartland from 1763 to 1813.

Other sources give more specific references to architectural attributes suggesting a Creole origin. A 1781 inventory of the estate of John Blommart, a former merchant at Natchez Under-the Hill who had fled the District following the 1781 revolt, lists a number of buildings, including a dwelling on St. Catherine's Creek plantation made of "poteaux en terre et de pieces sur pieces," and at Natchez Under-the-Hill, an old store house of poteaux en terre. It will be recalled that these are typical Creole construction techniques that are typically associated with the earliest phases of settlement. No known examples of these construction techniques have survived in the Natchez District. Also listed was a frame house in Natchez Under-the-Hill with front and rear galleries and containing a salle, two chambers and two cabinets on the back gallery, indicating a fairly typical Creole floor plan of the late 18th century (Edwards 1988; McBee 1979:4; Spanish Records vol. 1, pp. 286, 288-289).

Extant frame houses in and around Natchez also demonstrate a strong Creole influence beginning in the Colonial Period, extending through the Territorial Period (1798-1817) and into the period of early statehood. House forms in this tradition utilize full galleries, roof types of either broken-pitch or the Louisiana type, internal chimneys, multiple exterior doors, and a set of floor plans based upon the use of rooms referred to as salles, chambers, and cabinets. At least two surviving houses, Airlie and the Governor Holmes House, exhibit the Creole attribute of having brick fill between the framing members. The use of the central hallway with a bilaterally symmetrical arrangement of rooms on either side was typical Anglo-Saxon traditions. Examples of the Creole influenced architecture include Airlie, the House on Ellicott's Hill, Hope Farm, the Gardens, the Griffith-McComas House, Mount Locust, Saragossa, Williamsburg and the middle portion of Richmond (Crocker 1973; Gleason et al. 1986).

Despite the strong Creole influence in the vernacular architecture of the Colonial Period Natchez District, the Anglo-American settlers did preserve much of their own architectural tradition. For example one of the earliest recorded dog-trot houses was constructed on a St. Catherine's Creek plantation ca. 1789 by an uncle of Samuel Forman (1888:53).

The place had a small clearing and a log house on it, and he put up another log house to correspond with it, about fourteen feet apart, connecting them with boards, with a piazza in front of the whole. The usual term applied to such a structure was that it was "two pens and a passage." This connecting passage made a fine hall, and altogether gave it a good and comfortable appearance.

Also indicative of log construction, typical of the Midland Anglo-American tradition is the memoir of John Hutchins (b. 1774) who recalled that after his family moved to the Natchez District from South Carolina in 1774, they constructed "log cabins" (Anderson 1958:2, 17). No known Colonial period log houses have

survived in the Natchez District. All surviving houses are beam-framed (i.e. French colombage), although some of these have brick substructures that might have been added later.

The grafting of a Creole architectural tradition into an Anglo-Saxon population led to early syncretism in which elements of the Creole tradition were combined with that of the Midland or Upland South. Examples of this include the usage of a fanlight in the House on Elliot's Hill and Tidewater chimneys on Mount Locust and the Selma Plantation house.

With the passage of time during the 19th century, the Creole tradition waned to be replaced by architecture tending to reflect Anglo-American vernacular and academic traditions. Nevertheless one can still see numerous Creole cottages located in and around the town of Natchez, many of which date back to the late 19th and possibly even the early 20th centuries.

CONCLUSIONS

I shall now attempt to summarize the cultural resources available from the Period of European Colonization. These will be treated under the rubric of sites and buildings, although all could ultimately be defined as sites. The major sites were the settlement nuclei that are still extant. They are significant through their association with events that have shaped the nation's history and possibly through the presence of archaeological remains that serve as information for interpreting the settlements of colonial Mississippi. The few extant buildings are significant as being representative of types and periods of construction characteristics of the Colonial Period in Mississippi. One is also significant through its association with a famous personage.

Sites associated with Historical Events

The major sites that gained their significance through association with historical events were all nuclei of settlement. The most important of these was the Fort of Natchez, indeed this is certainly more significant than any other site or building in Mississippi from the Colonial Period. This is because the site served as the major nucleus of settlement for so long that settlements on the Mississippi in that area essentially evolved around it. The site is associated with both French and Anglo-American settlement. It was occupied by troops of all four of the political states that sequentially controlled the area: France, Great Britain, Spain, and the United States.

Also significant is the site of Los Nogales, established as a major fortification for maintaining Spain's claim to the Mississippi River and the location of perhaps the most comprehensive treaty between Spain and the Indians of the Southeast. Villa Gayoso, while an important center for the Natchez District, was not nearly as important in the struggle for power in Mississippi Valley or to the development of local settlements as was the Natchez Fort and Los Nogales. Potentially important would be the site of Fort Maurepas/Vieux Biloxi, if it still exists, and the site of Fort Louis if it can be located.

Other than settlement nuclei, of significance are the French burials exposed in situ under Moran's Art Gallery in Biloxi. They are the only known remain of the Nouveau Biloxi settlement visible today. Also, the shipwreck in Biloxi Bay that apparently dates to 1722 could conceivably be of great significance if it is in fairly good condition.

Archaeological Significance

It is not within the scope of any research design to suggest all of the potential research problems that could be addressed by archeological research at any given set of sites. Certainly one goal of fieldwork should be site identification so as to be able further refine the general parameters of site distribution as discussed in this report. Most of the sites of settlement nuclei are in general known. One of the major problem areas concerns the determining of how much, if any of the site of Fort Maurepas/Vieux Biloxi is still extant. Effort does need to be expended to refine our knowledge of the spatial layout of most of the settlement nuclei, both on the Gulf Coast and in the Natchez District, including Nouvea Biloxi, the Natchez Fort, Natchez Under-the-Hill, Villa Gayoso, and Los Nogales. For many of these their could be additional maps and architectural plans available in foreign archives that should be investigated.

For approximating the number of sites that originally existed and most of which probably still exist, I will assume 5 people to a house and one house to a site. This is of course only an approximation, not only in terms of population per household, but also in definition of site in that in some cases a cluster of more

than one house might be defined as a site, as a planter's house site might be combined with the site of a cluster of slave cabins. To compensate for approximations and possible conceptual obscurities, I have attempted to aim at estimate only orders of magnitude. For the agrarian population of the Gulf Coast, with a population of about 770 in 1811, the number of sites should be in the 100s. At Natchez during the 1720s with a population approaching 900, one would initially estimate the number of sites as being in the 100s; however, a considerable number of the inhabitants were slaves who probably resided in clusters with other slaves and whites, indicating that the number should be reduced possibly to the 50-100 range. At the French Yazoo settlement, the population was uncertain, although considerably lower than at Natchez. I would estimate the number of sites as being in the 10s. For the Natchez District with a population of about 5000 in the mid-1790s, the number of sites must approximate 1000.

Despite the fact that the total number of sites of colonial settlement in Mississippi must have been between 1000 and 2000, very few of these are known. These may be due in large part to the sparsity of non-perishable material culture on the sites that can be dated to the Colonial Period. The fact that interest in the historical archaeology of these settlements has only recently developed is also in part to be blamed.

Buildings

There are eight known extant buildings. I must emphasize the word known in that there could be others which either have-not been located or have not been documented as dating to the Colonial Period. Indeed, documenting dates of construction is often inconclusive and obfuscated by recent secondary sources that often give exaggerated early dates. Even the construction dates of the buildings listed here are somewhat ambiguous. Of the eight, all but one are from Natchez and the Natchez District with that one being the "Old Spanish Fort" in Pascagoula on the Gulf Coast. Additionally all except Mount Locust are listed on the National Register of Historical Places. As noted above all are significant as representatives of Colonial Period architecture. Hope Farm is also significant as having been the home of Charles de Grand Pre when he served as Commandant of the Natchez Fort and as military governor of the Natchez District. The eight are: "Old Spanish Fort", Airlie, Governor Holmes House (upper story), Griffith-McComas House (upper story), Hope Farm, King's Tavern, Mount Locust, Richmond (middle portion).

A systematic study of the Creole-Anglo architecture of the Colonial and subsequent periods in the Natchez District should be conducted so as to record and synthesize all pertinent information available on this material culture.

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