2010

The power struggle between Americans and Creoles in the first half of the nineteenth century and its influence on the architecture of New Orleans

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THE POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN AMERICANS AND CREOLES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF NEW ORLEANS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by

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B.A., L.S. U., 1976
M.A., L. S. U., 2002
August, 2010
for Sylvia Burleigh Harrod
August 23, 1936 – December 26, 2006
Acknowledgments

While I am solely responsible for the end result of such a length and time-consuming exercise as the pursuit of a doctoral degree, I wish to express my appreciation of a number of individuals who have supported me in my quest. The direction and nature of my studies is due to Professor Fred B. Kniffen, ably supported by Professor Robert C. West, both of the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University. They instilled a love of houses and their meanings to me in my early years as a student at LSU. Dr. Kniffen had been trained in his studies by Alfred Kroeber and Carl Sauer, both well-renowned in their respective fields of anthropology and geography. Professor West had also been trained by Sauer. We had talked about house types for several years before I took my first formal class in the study in 1976. Dr. Robert West, via an independent reading and research course, was my tutor, while Dr. Kniffen remained my mentor. Both were demanding perfectionists, who expected me to read house type literature in French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Dutch, and of course, English. My already firm foundation in the study of house types was furthered by Professor Jay Edwards.

The expertise of each of the select members of my committee have garnered acclaim from their peers. Each of the members has made a significant contribution to this project. Professors Miles E. Richardson, Kent Mathewson, William Brockway, and Barry Keim have earned my respect and gratitude.

In addition there are a number of others who also have earned my gratitude. I truly appreciate the assistance of my friend David Dorrell, who took my graphs, charts, and maps and made them “presentable.” My friend Dominica read and made valuable comments on several
sections of the study and showed extreme patience, while Dorrell assisted me. Ms. Vicki Terry, secretary of the Department of Geography and Anthropology, has helped in numerous ways over the years, not the least of which was tracking down elusive professors on my committee. Ms. Clovier Torrey, Director of the Graduate School, who guided me through the rules, guidelines, and deadlines pertaining the accomplishment of my Master’s and this degree. Ms. Leah Whitmire, Assistant Director of the Graduate School, who not only aided immensely in the more technical aspects of the dissertation as a document, but who was also a diligent cheerleader and advocate; we have developed a friendship.

This entire project would not have been started, much less completed without the encouragement and support of my family. My mother, Sylvia B. Harrod, taught me to finish things I started. My husband Darrel and each of my three children, Kathleen, Alexander, and Frederick, each helped in numerous ways in tending to everyday matters, while I concentrated on this work. Even my granddaughter Rachael helped – she would help with getting books to and from the library and handing me pages of notes or index cards that slipped off the desk.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .......................................................................................................................... iv  
List of Tables .................................................................................................................................... vii  
List of Figures .................................................................................................................................. viii  
Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... xi  
Part I Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1  
Part II The Setting: Eighteenth Century ......................................................................................... 36  
Part III The Setting: Nineteenth Century ....................................................................................... 63  
Part IV New Orleans in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century .............................................. 108  
Part V American Sector .................................................................................................................. 159  
Part VI Summary and Conclusion .................................................................................................. 193  
References Cited .............................................................................................................................. 201  
Appendix 1 Obituary of John McDonogh ...................................................................................... 215  
Appendix 2 Summary of McDonogh’s Inventory .......................................................................... 216  
Appendix 3 Irish Channel ............................................................................................................... 217  
Appendix 4 Development on Julia Street ...................................................................................... 218  
Appendix 5 White and Morrow Building Contract ....................................................................... 243  
Appendix 6 Yellow Fever Deaths .................................................................................................. 246  
Vita ................................................................................................................................................... 247
List of Tables

1. Summary of French Census of 1721.................................................................27
2. Excerpt from the Census Summary of 1806..................................................28
3. New Orleans Census Data...............................................................................34
List of Figures

1. New Orleans Population 1810-1900.................................................................29
2. Images of the growth of New Orleans..............................................................31
3. New Orleans Development as of 1863 by Abbot...........................................32
4. Nineteenth Century White/Non-White Graph...............................................33
5. New Orleans in 1896.......................................................................................35
6. Plan of 1720 by Pierre Leblond de la Tour....................................................39
7. Plan of the city in 1731 by Gonichon..............................................................41
8. Extent of 1788 fire.........................................................................................44
9. Micaela Almonester, Baroness de Pontalba....................................................48
10. St. Louis Cathedral in 1849...........................................................................49
11. Creole cottage, drawing from Vogt.................................................................51
12. Creole cottage on Dauphine Street.................................................................52
13. Madam John’s Legacy, 632 Dumaine............................................................53
14. Pedesclaux-Lemonnier House 636-640 Royal Street.................................56
15. Rillieux-Waldhorn House.............................................................................56
16. Entresol Townhouse.....................................................................................70
17. Porte-cochère Townhouse............................................................................70
18. Creole Townhouse dependency....................................................................71
19. La Direction..................................................................................................72
20. Some of the property on the West Bank.......................................................87
21. Monplaisir.....................................................................................................87
44. 735-737 St. James, brick double cottage.................................................................165
45. 510-514 Race Street.................................................................................................166
46. Masonry cottages in 1860.......................................................................................171
47. House on Julia Street.............................................................................................172
48. Location of Julia Street and Thirteen Sisters..........................................................175
49. Map of the Vieux Carré and upriver.......................................................................176
50. Map of Julia Street affiches....................................................................................182
51. Map of Julia Street Building Contracts.................................................................187
52. Timeline of Building Contracts.............................................................................188
54. Number of Contracts.............................................................................................189
55. 600 Julia Street, late Georgian style......................................................................189
56. The Thirteen Sisters...............................................................................................191
57. Rear View of The Thirteen Sisters.........................................................................192
Abstract

In the first half of the nineteenth century the house types of the landscape and the footprint of New Orleans changed dramatically. Many of the changes can be attributed to the influx of the refugees from Saint Domingue and the Americans who immigrated from the North and the East Coast of the United States. Both sets of influxes reflect the impact of these two immigrant groups on the previously existing power structures in economics, politics, and society of the city. While the refugees from Saint Domingue more or less assimilated into the city, and in doing so, achieved power over the native Creoles, primarily in the area of social sophistication, the Americans with their more blunt approach to business and politics tended to wrest power from the Creoles by a superior, or at least more effective, business acumen. The landscape generated by the social, political and economic activities and conflicts of the first half of the nineteenth century are apparent in New Orleans today. A number of the buildings built during the period are still present. For example on the 400 block of Royal Street, the old Louisiana State Bank building still has the initials “LSB” in the ironwork of the balcony and Brennan’s Restaurant now occupies the old Banque de la Louisiane, but the St. Louis Hotel has been replaced by the Omni Royal Orleans Hotel. The Thirteen Sisters is home to a number of art galleries and host to the annual White Linen Night in early August, and social rivalry is maintained by the annual Dirty Linen Night on Bourbon Street the following weekend.
Part I

Introduction

My hypothesis is that immigrants from the northern states to New Orleans in the first half of the nineteenth century were as instrumental in the creation of the New Orleans we see today, as were the non-Anglo residents of the city in the early nineteenth century. In the past fifty years the literature of anthropological and cultural geographical works portraying ethnicity has largely been done from the perspective of the common man or woman. My research and this story on historical New Orleans is based not on the lives and fortunes of the common, everyday people of the city, but rather on the economic giants of the community, and the shift in cultural hegemony from Creole-dominated to American-dominated, most strongly exhibited in the economy. This perspective is utilized for a number of reasons. The stories of these entrepreneurs provide a catalyst for a significant part of the story of New Orleans. The majority of the built environment “developed” in the nineteenth century was accomplished by entrepreneurs, not merely by folk utilizing vernacular architecture. Although many of the buildings constructed during the eighteenth century, as well as many during the nineteenth century, were considered “folk,” or vernacular, architecture, it is important to keep in mind that this folk housing did not exist in a vacuum. A great number of the immigrants to New Orleans came from homelands with longstanding traditions of “polite” architecture, buildings designed by architects and engineers. However, the Americanization of the buildings, demonstrated by the predominance of national architectural types and styles, that occurred in the relatively short period of the first half of the nineteenth century is evidence of the shift in power from the Creole-dominated hegemony that had existed in New Orleans prior to 1800.
The key question of this study is whether the shift in the cultural hegemony between the Creoles and the Americans, written throughout much of the literature of the period and since, can be verified in the artifactual record: the buildings constructed or modified during the period. A large number of the buildings constructed during the period are still standing. Though many are not. Some examples of buildings extant in the late twentieth century are 1) Girod House (also known as Napoleon House) at 500 Chartres; 2) 417 Royal Street, now Brennan’s Restaurant, and formerly Banque de la Louisiane; 3) 403 Royal, formerly Louisiana State Bank; and 4) the whole of the upriver side of the 600 block of Julia Street. *Louisiana Buildings, 1720-1940: The Historic American Buildings Survey* (1997) by Poesch and Bacot is an extensive and intensive survey of buildings of the past, a large number of which are still standing. Fortunately, records of contracts, that is contractual agreements, written during the period are preserved in the Notarial Archives in New Orleans. Virtually all buildings of the period, both commercial and residential, actually constructed by anyone other than the owner, or by informal (verbal) agreement between the owner and the builder, entail a contractual agreement. Therefore, there is a wealth of data available for this and other studies found at this source alone. However, pursuit of this study required some review of other sources as well. In addition to numerous books and articles on various aspects of the topic, some of the other documentary sources it was necessary to review included: New Orleans newspapers published in the 1830s; the Acts of the Legislature of the 1830s; City Directories (such as Gibson’s 1838 *Gibson’s Guide and Directory of the State of Louisiana*); City Ordinances of the 18th and 19th century (including Leovy’s 1857 *The Laws and General Ordinances of the City of New Orleans*); lists of City Councilmen, and Boards of Directors of Banks and some other corporations; and census data.
Much of the recent literature on the house types of New Orleans has been on the vernacular aspects of architectural contributions by Creoles such as the material culture of the period. For example, some recent works by Jay D. Edwards are “Cultural identifications in Architecture: The Case of the New Orleans Townhouse” (1993) and “Vernacular Vision: The Gallery and Our Africanized Architectural Landscape” (2002). Some exploration into those modernizing contributions made by developers in the first half of the nineteenth Century evident in the historical documentation has been done, but these studies do not directly relate data of social and economic events to specific buildings, streets, and neighborhoods. This study builds on historical data, with emphasis on the fact that developers active in the modernization of the city were real people. It becomes apparent that many persons acted in their own self-interests, either for personal enrichment or in defense of their “Southern honor.” In the aggregate these individual actors, acting rationally, represent cultural forces vying for dominance.

The contributions of a few developers stand out in the review of the historical documents. Certainly, very little of the literature has focused on the relation of the economic and political situation(s) of the conflict between the two ethnic groups of Creoles and Americans, as documented by changes in house types of two parts of the city, the changes in the Vieux Carré (often called the French Quarter, or translated as the old square) and development of the American Sector, the area upriver of the Vieux Carré and includes the old Faubourg St. Mary and what is now the Central Business District (CBD) of New Orleans. The action in both areas took place in this period. Squares 39 and 40, the block in New Orleans on which the Louisiana

1Specifically with respect to the Creoles of New Orleans, Southern honor may be more closely associated with the “ancienne régime.”

2 Faubourg is French for suburb.
State Supreme Court building is now located, reflect changes to the city in the 1830s, in particular, showing how the city evolved. Many of the material features of the landscape are still evident in the city today, but some have been replaced by further changes and development projects in the present cityscape.

Much of the literature of the period indicates an animosity between two ethnic rivals for dominance. The Creoles fought to preserve the existing social order by maintenance of a social structure in which the economy played a central role. While a number of the Americans relocating to the newly acquired American territory of New Orleans in the early 1800s did achieve social and political acceptance in the existing Creole structure of society, the literature is pervaded with a sense of resentment of the newcomers. Unfortunately, the literature provides little in the way of historical documentation to bear out the veracity of the reality of the ethnically polarized social situation. This document is an effort to reconcile grounds for the rumors of dissension with that of the buildings constructed during this era.

**Organization of Document**

This anthropogeography of New Orleans is divided into six parts. Part I primarily consists of a Review of the Literature and the premises to this study, followed by New Orleans census data and a brief history of the city. This study also addresses the utility of material culture and in particular, house types that reconstruct the lives of those who formerly lived and died in a defined area.

Part II discusses the city in the eighteenth century, as a setting for the city in the early nineteenth century. Part III describes the city in the early nineteenth century. Part IV concentrates on the social, political, and economic changes faced by the city in the first half of
the nineteenth century. Part V focuses on the upriver development, an area originally known as Faubourg Marie in the first half of the nineteenth century. Part VI is a short summary and conclusion.

The history of New Orleans, during its first two centuries, is historically primarily based on political eras divided into eight periods with the following approximate dates: Pioneering Period (1718-1722); French Colonial Period (1722-1762); Spanish Dominion (1763-1803); Early American Period (1803-1835); Economic Expansion (1835-1850); Antebellum and War Years (1850-1865); and Reconstruction (1865-1900). The eighth and most recent period is usually addressed as Twentieth Century (1900 to Present). This document concentrates on the period from the early 1820s to the city’s occupation by Union forces in 1862.

Review of the Literature

There is a great volume of literature on many of the various aspects of this study. Some of the more relevant include works on house types, material culture, the people, history, and geography of New Orleans. The perspective, or approach, of some works of the more traditional cultural geography, and especially, as that perspective is quite different from a newer, more recent, approach to the topic. While not all of the books, articles, and other literature directly relevant to the topics of the succeeding chapters, they each contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the house types, settlement pattern, and the nature of the people of the city.

A firm foundation in the more traditional, materialist studies is important to this study which looks at house types and the settlement pattern of New Orleans to determine whether the writings of and about the period from 1820 to the Civil War are evidenced in the material culture. One first needs to learn to see houses as people and history. Some of the early works in this vein
which relate houses and settlement patterns to the people and their cultures which built them were written in the late nineteenth century. The three volume work by August Meitzen (1895) is a highly detailed study of the house types, settlement patterns, and the people of Germany and Northern Europe. It has not yet been translated from German into English. Although contemporaneous, Ratzel’s work (in two volumes – 1882 and 1891) discussed environmental aspects and historical migration and diffusion. Works by Demangeon in the 1920s and 1930s relate the socioeconomics of the people to their respective house types. Carl Sauer’s “Morphology of Landscape” (1925) discussed Meitzen’s work and features of the landscape from a “culture area” approach, including house types. He also noted in his “Foreword to Historical Geography” (1941), the value of studies such as those done by Fred Kniffen. Some of the works by Kniffen which put the spotlight on culture as the medium of the interrelationship of people with the landscape include: “Achomavi Geography” (1928); “The Primitive Cultural Landscape of the Colorado Delta” (1931); “The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana” (1935); “Louisiana House Types” (1936); “Rural Occupance Pattern of Louisiana” (1937); “Notes on the Genetic Relations of Certain Louisiana House Types” (1938); and “Folk Houses of Louisiana” (1942). Kniffen legitimized the study of folk housing as the artifact of cultural diffusion and a tool in the mapping of the movement of culture groups and feature complexes. Although initially not well-accepted by the American geography community of academics, Kniffen’s many works soon became well-established as an appropriate methodology in the practice of American geography:

accurate and detailed documentation is required, before generalizations or suppositions can be made.

“Must reads” for the student of New Orleans are the many works of architectural history by Samuel Wilson, Jr. and recent comprehensive works by Richard Campanella. Some of Wilson’s are *New Orleans Architecture, Vol I: The Lower Garden District* (Wilson and Lemann 1971), “Early History of Faubourg St. Mary” (1978), “Julia Street’s Thirteen Sisters” (1978), “Architecture in Eighteenth-Century West Florida” (Farnsworth and Masson 1971), “The Director’s House – La Direction – 1722” (1987), and “Maspero’s Exchange: Its Predecessors and Successors” (1989). Specifically, the more recent comprehensive works by Richard Campanella are *Time and Place in New Orleans: Past Geographies in the Present Day* (2002), *New Orleans Then and Now* (with Marina Campanella 2005), and *Geographies of New Orleans: Urban Fabrics Before the Storm* (2006). Although touted by many as an important introduction to the study of New Orleans, the 1976 *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape* by Peirce Lewis contained a number of misunderstandings about the city. The second edition of his book, published in 2003, *New Orleans: The Making of an American Landscape* corrected some of the misunderstandings, such as Lewis’ statement that the people of New Orleans were “suspicious of multistory residential quarters,” while New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston had built multistory row houses for decades, and New York even had tenements that were even more than three-story (1976:58). Also in this 1976 book on page 36, Lewis stated that the architecture of the French Quarter looks more like Castille, Spain than it does Paris. Although limited in discussion of periods and focus on a specific area of the city, the 1995 article “Downtown Dynamics” by Mosher, Keim, and Franques is a good, basic introduction to the city of New
Orleans of today. Jay D. Edwards has done a sizeable body of work on the origins of the Creole house type, in addition to two already mentioned, “What Louisiana’s Architecture owes to Hispánola (and what it does not)” (1999) and “Architectural Creolization: The Importance of Colonial Architecture” (2001). Paul A. Brasseaux has done extensive work on the people of French heritage in Louisiana, such as Foreign French 19th Century Immigration into Louisiana (1990), The Road to Louisiana: The St. Domingue Refugees, 1792-1809 (1992), and The Foreign French: Nineteenth Century French Immigration into Louisiana, 1840-1848 (1992). Paul F. Lachance has written extensively on Creoles and the Creole refugees from Saint Domingue. Lachance’s 1988 “The 1809 Immigration of Saint-Domingue Refugees: Reception, Integration and Impact” provides insight into New Orleans society in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The 1990 article “The Built Environment and Spatial Form” by Lawrence and Low is a survey with discussion of some of the recent approaches to the study of house types done by a number of authors. Some attention will be given to the upper socioeconomic class, and some of the recent work on the subject in the section “Elites.”

Methodology

Research for this study included review of coeval literature of and about the period and modern literature about the period. The newspapers of New Orleans including The Bee (L’Abeille), the Picayune, and The True Delta were reviewed. At the New Orleans Notarial Archives, records of the notaries public were reviewed for building contracts, property transfers, wills, bequests and inventories, survey maps, and building plans. Also here are many of the affiches done during the period, as well as the databases of affiches and building contracts were analyzed, respectively. At the New Orleans Historical Collection, the Williams Research Center,
the following documents were consulted: the block-by-block Tulane architectural survey of the Vieux Carré, original maps, original survey maps, original documents of legal suits, some master’s theses and doctoral dissertations, and some nineteenth century original court records.

The Acts and Deliberations of the Cabildo were reviewed not only for the specific acts themselves, but also to give a perspective on some of the difficulties that the administration and the people of New Orleans faced during the period. The Acts of the Legislature of the period, housed at the Louisiana State Archives in Baton Rouge, including Legislative acts of incorporation of the city and businesses, as well as recent relevant Acts of the Legislature were researched for changes from the laws of the period. Some memoirs and reminiscences were read carefully for insights into the period. Translation of eighteenth century records of the Superior Court were reviewed. New Orleans City Ordinances and New Orleans City Council records and minutes of the first half of the nineteenth century were closely scrutinized for changes in building regulation, city sanitation, and to assess some of the social, economic, and political difficulties which the city faced during this period. The City Directories of the period were checked for commercial and residential entries. The Acts of Congress and minutes during the period were reviewed for their impact on Louisiana and New Orleans. Survey maps, city planning maps, and the nineteenth century Robinson fire insurance maps and the Sanborn fire insurance maps were carefully examined for building types and their construction materials, the layout of the buildings on the lot and square, for businesses, street plans, addresses, etc. Census data of the eighteenth century and nineteenth century collected and preserved by the governments of France, Spain, and the United States were analyzed, including the “Population Schedules” (where available).

Population Schedules are the block-by-block original canvas of individual households of both
free and slave. Each item of data was considered for consistency with other data to confirm or contradict other records from and about the historical period.

**Material Culture**

Material culture is the manifestation of culture – the physical representation of the values and ideas of a cultural or ethnic group. As Glassie wrote (1999:41), “Material culture is the conventional name for the tangible yield of human conduct... culture made material... the study of material culture uses objects to approach human thought and action.” Careful and thoughtful analysis of specific features as well as feature complexes is in effect putting “tongues in inanimate objects” (Glassie 1988:86). Material culture studies aid us in the interpretation of the past, and in some cases, the present. “Few people write. Everyone makes things” (Glassie 1988:82). Glassie also notes the significance of the complementary use of historical documentation where and when available in the interpretation of what these items of material culture tell us (Glassie 1999:46). However, he stresses the importance that sole reliance should not be placed on history written by humans, and often influenced by the contextual aspects of the time of the writing:

> When documents accompany artifacts, it would be foolish to ignore them, but it would be no less a mistake to assume that they say the same thing and the document is the more reliable source. Documents and uninscribed artifacts want separate analysis, followed by comparison to locate their points of complement and conflict. There are times when it is clear that the artifact should lead the investigation. A building is far grander than a building contract (Glassie 1999:46).

Importantly, consistency of data from among a variety of sources and types of sources should be sought, prior to placing confidence in interpretation and explanation of data meaning.

The cultural geographic study of housing as a cultural indicator was pioneered in the United States by Fred B. Kniffen, a significant work of his is “Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion.”
According to a footnote in “The Study of Folk Architecture,” (1979), Kniffen generally avoided the term “architecture;” he preferred to use “folk housing” for simpler buildings, although “simpler” does not imply lack of expertise. He also considered that the terms “folk” and “vernacular” represented different concepts.

Furthermore, vernacular housing is deemed more closely related to the ethos and world view of a cultural group than polite architecture: “The humbler buildings by reason of their adherence to type and numerical superiority are far more important markers of basic cultural processes than are uniquely designed individual structures (Kniffen 1965). Rapoport (1969:2) in House Form and Culture elaborated on the significance of the vernacular built form:

The folk tradition is the direct and unself-conscious translation into physical form of a culture, its needs and values – as well as the desires, dreams, and passions of a people. It is the world view writ small, the ‘ideal environment of a people expressed in buildings and settlements, with no designer, artist, or architect with an axe to grind... The folk tradition is much more closely related to the culture of the majority and life as it is really lived than is the grand design tradition, which represents the culture of the elite. The folk tradition also represents the bulk of the built environment.

Houses are value-laden, because they not only have monetary value, but also are symbolic of cultural value. Representative of a considerable amount of effort, time, and economic expense, it is assumed that value in this sense is further correlated with the cultural values of the builders. As cultural values, perceptions, and world views change over time, so do houses through modification, reflecting those changes through adaptation, creolization, and the infusion of features and feature complexes. In this manner, house type variation over time is considered to be reflective and expressive of the active cultural processes in the lives of the real people who build them and live in them.

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4 According to a footnote in “The Study of Folk Architecture,” (1979), Kniffen generally avoided the term “architecture;” he preferred to use “folk housing” for simpler buildings, although “simpler” does not imply lack of expertise. He also considered that the terms “folk” and “vernacular” represented different concepts.
Buildings and settlements are the visible expression of the relative importance attached to different aspects of life and the varying ways of perceiving reality. The house, the village, and the town express the fact that societies share certain generally accepted goals and life values. The forms of primitive and vernacular buildings are less the result of individual desires than of the aims and desires of the unified group for an ideal environment. They therefore have symbolic values, since symbols serve a culture by making concrete its ideas and feelings... We can say that houses and settlements are the physical expression of the genre de vie, and these constitutes their symbolic nature... I would further suggest that the socio-cultural component of the genre de vie is the sum of the concepts of culture, ethos, world view, and national character ... (Rapoport 1969:47-48).

**Interrelationship of Geography and Anthropology**

Historically, the two disciplines of anthropology and geography have a common tradition. Many of the most noted researchers and authors are held in esteem by geographers and anthropologists alike. There is a vast area of overlap in the subject matter. Fieldwork is of great significance in both disciplines; many of the methodologies are similar. To a large extent both disciplines speak the same language, although the same terms do not always mean the same concepts.

Prior to the establishment of anthropology and geography as academic disciplines, Columbia University’s Department of Anthropology by Boas in 1899 and University of Chicago’s Department of Geography by Salisbury in 1903, the differentiation between ethnology and human geography was vague and relatively minor in that there was significant crossover between the disciplines. The definitive separation of cultural studies into the two disciplines at the beginning of the twentieth century also marked the onset of a divergence in perspective, as exemplified in the broadening of each to embrace theories and models of various social and physical sciences deemed relevant to their respective research and analysis. Although somewhat
backhandedly, Ellen (1988: 250) compliments geography on its openness with other sciences in the sharing of theory and its adoption of theory where appropriate:

> The dangers of crossdisciplinary borrowing have often been stressed... Frankly, I find such criticism overplayed, often knee-jerk reaction to what is perceived as an intrusion on professional territory. As a social anthropologist, I have always been impressed by the lack of such territoriality in geography and a willingness to seek explanations of spaciality wherever these might lead; a thoroughly laudable commitment... Some of the most spectacular advances in science are derived from creative misunderstanding, plagiarism or manipulaiton of a concept in a way unacceptable or unknown to its originator.

> Growth and separate development in anthropology and geography furthered the distinction(s) between the two disciplines, yet the historical roots and the underlying precepts permitted the more or less parallel development of perspectives. As Mikesell (1967:618) suggests “...For anthropologists and geographers – or at least cultural geographers – not only share common ancestors but are also united by bonds of temperament and rationale.” The objective of the two disciplines is to make observations about culture; to analyze the observations; and to formulate generalizations from the analyses. While geography emphasizes “man’s adaptation of nature,” anthropology explores “man’s adaptation to nature” (Grossman 1977). The objectives reflect both the similarity of and the difference between “doing geography” and “doing anthropology.” The fact that the generalizations of geography emphasize the “land,” including spatial distribution, in the human-environment interactions, while those of anthropology stress the structural and/or functional aspect of “man,” human societies, in these human-environment interactions, does not refute the qualitative commonalities found in the generalizations.

> In the early twentieth century, geography and anthropology were very similar in practice, especially with respect to ethnographic fieldwork. This similarity can be traced to their common
The title of the area of concentration was changed from anthropogeography in 2006.

Geography and anthropology both emerged as “disciplines” and “subjects” during the nineteenth century, and during their formative phases were clearly connected. Indeed, what has sometimes been described as “anthropo-geography” was at the very centre of the geographical venture of this period’ (Ellen 1988:232).

Geography and anthropology developed from a natural history background with a strong German flavor. Notables such as Alexander von Humboldt, Karl Ritter, Adolf Bastian, Friedrich Ratzel, Theobald Fischer, and Franz Boas all had significant impact on the development of American anthropology and geography. Carl Sauer and A.L. Kroeber, both of German heritage and rearing, are foremost among American formulators of the two disciplines. In the late 1920s at Berkeley Fred Kniffen, was trained by both Kroeber and Sauer. He later came to the Department of Geography and Anthropology at LSU. Anthropology and geography remain intertwined to some extent today, as exemplified by both the combined department and the avenue of specialization in “anthrogeography”\(^5\) in the doctoral program of cultural geography. Empirical fieldwork remains the central feature of the disciplines as practiced at LSU.

Spatial distribution studies revealing the evolution and diffusion of culture traits and adaptive mechanisms bridge the empirical identification and definition or delimitation of region/culture area and inter-cultural and ecological, and systems relationships, as well as forming a bridge between geographic and anthropologic studies. The studies done by Fred Kniffen, “The Study of Folk Architecture: Geographical Perspectives,” a paper presented for the Conference on Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Vernacular Architecture at LSU in 1979 and “Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion” (1965) are fine examples of encompassing form and

\(^5\)The title of the area of concentration was changed from anthropogeography in 2006.
dynamics. Spatiotemporal distribution of artifacts (material and nonmaterial) is a methodological framework contextualizing analyses and is used in geography and anthropology.

As Kniffen so often emphasized, the temporal aspect cannot be overlooked:

Without the perspective afforded by a knowledge of developments leading up to it, the present lacks a vital dimension and certainly the future can be projected with little assurance. The absence of a time-range concept compresses expanding novelties together with fading relics into a common flatness. The geographical scene is likely to be regarded unconsciously as fixed and changeless when actually it is constantly in flux (Kniffen 1951:126).

For example, the works of Terry G. Jordan (Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov in his later work) German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas (1966) and The Upland South: The Making of an American Folk Region and Landscape (2003), as well as those by Richard Campanella, are recent literature which make good use of the spatiotemporal perspective.

**Elites**

“Élite” is a value-laden term which is in popular parlance in most cases used in a derogatory manner. Although writing specifically about political elites, Welsh (1979: 13) wrote:

> More often than not, especially in the last 200 years, the term “elite” has taken on a distinctly negative meaning in this normative literature; the presumption has been that the existence of power concentrations was inconsistent with basic liberal democratic theory, and that the existence of “elites” was therefore undesirable. For many people the term “elite” still has this negative normative implication.

The use of the negative connotation is further explained by Bottomore, who quoted Meisel:

> Élite was originally a middle class notion... [In the Marxist theory] the proletariat is to be the ultimate class which will usher in the classless society. Not so. Rather, the history of all societies, past and future, is the history of its ruling classes... there will always be a ruling class, and therefore exploitation. This is the anti-socialist, specifically anti-Marxist, bent of the élitist theory as it unfolds in the last decade of the nineteenth century (Meisel 1958:10 quoted in Bottomore 1993:10).
Edward T. Hall (1990:175), after many years of studying twentieth century society, found that there does not appear to be an American class system as such, due to the vertical mobility permitted to the members of society. However, Americans are very status-conscious, and place a high value on status symbols.

Although this document investigates the physical expression of social values in the material culture of two neighborhoods in New Orleans in the first half of the nineteenth century, it may be that many of those high achievers involved in the development of this created landscape may have been considered elite by the population of the city. Whether they are elite may be debated, however, they were intimately involved and instrumental in the commercialization and Americanization of the landscape of New Orleans.

In 1964, and re-published in 1993, Tom Bottomore reviewed the course of the definition of “elite:”

The word ‘élite’ was used in the seventeenth century to describe commodities of particular excellence; and the usage was later extended to refer to superior social groups, such as prestigious military units or the higher ranks of nobility. In the English language the earliest known use of ‘élite’, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is in 1823, at which time it was already applied to social groups. But the term did not become widely used in social and political writing until late in the nineteenth century in Europe, or until the 1930s in Britain and America, when it was diffused through the sociological theories of élites, notably in the writings of Vilfredo Pareto.

In his *Treatise on General Sociology* (1915-1919) Pareto defined ‘élite’ in two different ways. He began with a very general definition:

Let us assume that in every branch of human activity each individual is given an index which stands as a sign of his capacity, very much the way grades are given in the various subjects in examinations in school.... So let us make a class of the people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity, and to that class give the name of élite (pp. 1422-3, quoted in Bottomore 1993:1).

In this sense it may be considered that by the attainment of wealth, political power, and possibly social influence, the high achievers of nineteenth century New Orleans were elite. C. Wright
Mills in *The Power Elite* (1956:12) considered that there were no American elites. Those who may have been considered elite by some were from the “higher bourgeoisie,” but by dint of wealth, many attained an upper strata in which they “monopolized not only wealth but prestige and power as well.”

“... no matter what its pretensions, the American upper class is merely an enriched bourgeoisie, and that, no matter how powerful its members may be, they cannot invent an aristocratic past where one did not exist” (Mills 1956:50).

Aside from any consideration of elite-ness, Fox-Genovese and Genovese (1983:176) concede, whether directly or indirectly, the ruling classes do affect the lives of the non-ruling classes.

Much of the literature of the last seventy-five years in both cultural geography and anthropology, as well as such disciplines as sociology, addresses a recounting and interpretation of the trials, tribulations, triumphs, and steadfast continuance of groups of peoples of lower socio-economic classes, the “folk” or the “have nots.” Fox-Genovese and Genovese wrote, in *Fruits of Merchant Capital* (1983), the trend of replacing “political history” with “social history” began in the 1930s.

In general, the preoccupation with sociological and anthropological questions have decreased interest in the actual events of history and has created a passion for such abstractions as industrialization, urbanization, and something called modernization. As a result, the active role of human beings has been disappearing from history, and with it any attempt at theoretical reflection on history itself (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 1983:184).

*Critical Geography: A Critical Introduction* (2000) by Don Mitchell discussed the course of general trends in geographical literature, including those of the recent period in literature in which geographers have campaigned for political and social justice in their writings. He specifically addressed the work of James Duncan (Mitchell 2000:36) as in this vein. Mitchell (2000:xxi) advocates cultural relevancy and cultural justice throughout the volume. Early works
by James Duncan demonstrated a more traditional approach to the study of landscape (See the articles published in 1976 “Landscape and the Communication of Social Identity” and that published in 1973 “Landscape Taste as a Symbol of Group Identity: A Westchester County Village”), while more recent work with Nancy Duncan, such as that published in 2004, “Legislating Beauty: The Politics of Exclusion,” tends to be more “socially relevant.” However, the interest in this dissertation is primarily the changes in the landscape during a specific period of time, which were wrought by a few individuals who were part of a small, but powerful, portion of the population of New Orleans, rather than a commentary or campaign for social reform.

The house type and non-residential building modifications to the landscape that appeared in the city in the first half of the nineteenth century did not occur in a vacuum. In a world of continental and inter-continental business and trade, social and political intercourse permitted the rapid transmission of ideas from Europe and the northern United States to appear in New Orleans. Among the ideas transmitted were new approaches to business with a concurrent display of this commercialism and sophistication in the architecture.

While the persons mentioned in this document were certainly high achievers and more successful economically through their efforts and their understanding of financial and social matters, they may also be considered as elite. Many of them do not meet a definition of elite that includes a respected family name and family history of being outstanding for more than a single generation. Most did not come from a wealthy or titled family, and they may not have had genteel manners or more than civility in dealing with others in their business dealings. Many probably did not even possess the qualities of grace or generosity, during their active business
lifetimes. This document is not about “elites,” other than “elite” in the sense that they were more financially successful than others in New Orleans.

Several second and third sons of noble families immigrated to the New World before and during the eighteenth century, but their noble blood was rapidly diluted by the limited, or non-existent, presence of appropriate marriage partners. Few, if any, females of noble families migrated to Louisiana. Practically all of the males were single, or perhaps left behind in Europe, their noble wives, to make their fortunes in Louisiana and across the islands of the Caribbean.

Those “nobles” who came to New Orleans were men of “minor” noble families which were generally impoverished. These men came to the New World with expectation and determination to make their fortunes by any means necessary. The whole of the world view and their economy was predicated on their position in the social order. “Wealth” was not the defining criterion of “elite,” but merely a contributing characteristic in the definition of elite.

Many of the immigrants to eighteenth century New Orleans were unscrupulous, whose only hope for economic success and upward social mobility lay in the raw, undeveloped city. Many were men of little education, from impoverished noble families, adventurers and entrepreneurs, petty criminals, and worse; the females were the corrections girls or the casket girls who had little or no hope of social or economic security or advancement in their native France; and the slaves and convicts who had no choice in their relocation and the indentured servants.

It was only in the very late years of the century that nobles immigrated, sought refuge as married couples and families, when the French Revolution made flight necessary for survival.

6 The section on Almonester in Part II cites Minter Wood quoting such a description as applicable to Almonester.
While many of these adventurers remained un-married, or otherwise un-allied to locals, a large number formed alliances with Indians, slaves, indentured servants, corrections girls and casket girls. With the exception of Madame John’s Legacy and a few remaining Creole cottages, these people, disaffected by the invasion of the St. Domingue refugees, who were better educated, more “cultured,” and more accustomed to their dominant position in society, have left few explicit, unaltered identifiable marks on the landscape of the city. Late eighteenth century and very early nineteenth century urban buildings in New Orleans and Saint Domingue were similar.

While wealth may be a defining or critical component of elite or upper-class status of the perception of inclusion in this social class, wealth is, at least in the South, a secondary consideration. Once upperclass status is achieved, or earned over a long period of time, the status is a characteristic attributed to the family as a whole, notwithstanding the individual accomplishments of its members. Furthermore, the elite status is maintained regardless of the actual amount of wealth of the family or its individual members.

The sense of being Southern contains the additional components of intense family loyalty and Southern honor. Wyatt-Brown (2001) explored the deep commitment to religion as another factor in the Southern personna, and therefore was intimately bound to the concept of honor. The story of Josh and Cousin Jeff related by Fox-Genovese and Genovese (1983:258 and following) is a poignant one which helps to clarify our understanding of Southerners, especially the relationship between wealthy family members and non-wealthy family members. Cousin Jeff, because of Southern honor, was obligated to treat Josh with a certain amount of respect and consideration, simply because he was “family.” However, these two authors find that overall, Southern slave-holders had much in common with many people in the North.
The jockeying for economic domination in New Orleans between Creoles and Americans changed the direction of the growth of the city. Not only was the physical growth impelled by social forces, but the same forces were made evident in the material culture – the house types, the architectural embellishments on the buildings, the paving and gas lighting of the streets. While frequent reference to the animosity between the Creoles and Americans is found in the literature, these same sources do not relate the material changes and the social changes that occurred in the city in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The balance of power in the cultural hegemony of Creoles over all newcomers to the city shifted in the first half of the nineteenth century, when the Americans first dominated the economic realm and then extended the force of their power in politics. The Northern invasion into the city, and more importantly, into the commerce of the city, began during the Spanish period. Immediately prior to the Louisiana Purchase, more than half of the city’s mercantile establishments were operated by agents of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore (Chenault and Reinders 1964:232-233). Another influx of Americans from these Northern cities arrived during the next twenty years, being present in the city before the financial crisis of 1837. The financial crisis temporarily stemmed the influx, but by the mid-1840s immigration from Northern cities resumed. Chenault and Reinders quote from the New Orleans Crescent published on June 7, 1851 that most of the businessmen of this city came from north of the Mason-Dixon Line (Chenault and Reinders 1964: 232). The review of the 1850 census by DeBow concluded that there were more Northern immigrants to the city than immigrants from Southern states, including those from other parts of Louisiana. The Yankee entrepreneurs were not in direct competition with Southern aristocrats (Fox-Genovese and Genovese 1983). The agrarian-focused Southern
aristocrats had agents or factors to pursue their interests economically and politically, and most
did not pursue these types of professions themselves. The Americans, or Northern entrepreneurs,
of the first half of the nineteenth century pursued the professions for personal economic and
social gain. The Southern aristocrats, possibly as many as twenty percent of the population
according to the estimates by Fox-Genovese and Genovese, managed their plantations and
plantation business and closely monitored the national political scene. “Business,” in the manner
at which the Northern entrepreneurs excelled, was not the focus of their business dealings in New
Orleans. As such, they did not bring to the fore their social and economic clout in a sufficiently
timely manner to quell or stifle the power of the Northern entrepreneurs. The well-educated and
“intellectual” majority of the large land- and slave-holders had two primary pursuits – the
prosperity of their plantations and an avid interest and stake in the tumult of the political
ideologies of national politics and economics. It was not that they necessarily considered
“business” to be infra dig (beneath one’s dignity), as they naturally would consider manual labor,
but only that they had different concerns.

Not only was the success of the Americans demonstrated in the adoption of architectural
features by the Creoles, the city itself was rent physically and politically. Evidence of the
physical separation is demonstrated by the extension of Exchange Place through Squares 39 and
40 to create Exchange Alley, providing a clear line of sight between the St. Charles and the St.
Louis Hotels and Exchanges. Evidence of the balance of power in the hegemony is demonstrated
by the division of the city into three municipalities. However, a strong case may be made that
although the Americans may have achieved economic and political hegemony, they may have
succumbed to the social hegemony of the Southern, specifically New Orleans Creole, elite.
In the eighteenth century concepts related to control, especially related to separation of upper class from lower class became expressed in urban settlement pattern. Benthan’s (1787) social control through architecture was published – “Panopticon.” Foucault picked up the idea in *Discipline and Punish* (1975, translated edition 1977), although generally his writings focus on resistance to power, including that as demonstrated in spatially, can be seen also, by the explicit identification of space and architecture as aspects of the built environment in the demonstration of power and authority, as a form of “how to” manual for architecture and its spatial arrangement to do much of the “work” of power.

**A Brief History of New Orleans**

Though one of its nicknames is “The Big Easy,” New Orleans is not easy from an architectural standpoint. From the time of its inception with Bienville’s founding in 1718, water has always been a problem. The city is surrounded by it: the early crescent shape of the city followed the higher land of the natural levees created by the Mississippi River. New Orleans is nested within one of the great meanders of the river with original cypress swamp cutting her off from drier, firmer land. Furthermore, the crescent shape of the higher and drier natural levees tends to give New Orleans a topographically distinctive “bowl” shape.

New Orleans experienced almost continuous growth and development from its establishment in 1718 by the French until post-Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Throughout the eighteenth century the original site, the Vieux Carré, became increasingly denser in population, and outlying plantations spread both upriver and down-river. New Orleans remained under French rule until the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1762 and the confirming Treaty of Paris in 1763 and then was transferred to Spain. However, Louisiana was retroceded to the French by the
Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, although actual possession did not take place until November 20, 1803. On December 30, 1803 the Louisiana Territory was sold to the United States. The Americans took possession of the city in January, 1804. On April 30, 1812 Louisiana became the eighteenth state.

During the first decades of the eighteenth century, French traders, adventurers, and administrators began settling in the “city,” displacing many of the Native Americans of the area. Slaves, originally from Africa, had been steadily imported since the 1720s. Spanish administrators and urban support personnel (grocers, shopkeepers, and other workers) immigrated throughout the Spanish Dominion. Most of the Spanish had moved away from the city when the Territory was retroceded to France in 1800.

Even before the Americans took possession of the Territory in 1804, Americans had been visiting and re-locating to New Orleans. Although relatively small at the turn of the nineteenth century, the city was a polyglot of natives and immigrants. The resultant social fabric was a complicated construct, with the population increasing by leaps and bounds.

Encouraged in a bid for freedom and independence by the revolution in France, other parts of the New World began to break free of their colonial homelands. One such revolution of the late eighteenth century with a tremendous impact on New Orleans was that which occurred in Saint Domingue (re-named Haiti by the revolutionaries). Whites, many free non-whites, and some slaves in the company of their masters fled the resulting massacres. A large number of these refugees came directly to New Orleans, while many others evacuated to Cuba and other Caribbean islands. In March 1809 the Governor of Cuba issued an order that all non-naturalized French, primarily the Saint Domingue refugees, must leave Cuba (Babb 1954:48). Most of these
deportees ended up in New Orleans during 1809 and 1810 (Brasseaux 1992). This influx doubled the population of New Orleans. The city responded almost immediately with a building boom.

Many of the white and free non-whites (most were mulatto) refugees from St. Domingue had been quite wealthy, or at least well off, but most of them arrived with little beyond their lives and the shirts on their backs. They shared a cultural heritage with the Creoles7 of New Orleans, and many had pre-existing social and/or economic ties with families or individuals in the city. Therefore, although they may have arrived with no money, they had vast resources of social capital with which to begin rebuilding their lives.

The population of the city steadily increased. The U.S. census of 1840 shows that the white population of New Orleans almost tripled in the years since the previous census of 1830, marking the first time the white population outnumbered the non-white population in at least 40 years. The total residential area expanded in response to the city’s growth.

7“Creole” is a term which has a complicated history. See A Creole Lexicon: Architecture, Landscape, People by Jay Dearborn Edwards and Nicolas Kariouk Pecquet du Bellay de Verton, (2004:76-77). 1) 15th to 18th century – persons descended form Old World settlers but born in the tropical new world, beginning in 16th century in Santo Domingo criollo referred to non-indigenous persons born in the colonies; 2) any descendant of a Creole, or loosely, anyone who had adopted the culture of a Creole colony, a Creole of full French or Spanish descent, or a person of mixed heritage which would include any combination of French, Spanish, African, or Amerindian (but not pure Amerindian; 3) late 18th to early 19th century in Louisiana, Latin America and W. Indies term became locally specific and referred to any language or cultural pattern distinctive to Creole peoples; 4) late 18th century Creole house meant any house with a full or encircling gallery, also term took on a more generalized meaning related to authentic or distinctly national, currently in U.S. indicates native of Louisiana, especially south Louisiana; creolization refers to unfinished cultural processes of fragmentation, blending and redefinition particularly of post-colonial societies influenced by non-Europeans. The context in this study is white Creoles of New Orleans and “black” (or rather non-white) Creoles of New Orleans (or gens de couleur libres), most of whom were mulatto.
In the 1840s and early 1850s the Irish Potato Famine was responsible for a huge immigration to the United States, and a significant number of them re-located to New Orleans. The influx of the Irish and property values of the city differed from the impact of the refugees from Saint Domingue. The density of the population increased with no substantial enlargement of the city’s footprint. In contrast to the St. Domingue refugees, the Irish did not have a cultural heritage in common with the Creoles, nor had pre-existing social or economic ties in the city. Furthermore, not only were they destitute when they arrived, many had been destitute in their homeland, and practically none had social capital in New Orleans.

The Civil War arrived in New Orleans at the end of April, 1862, when Forts Jackson and St. Philip surrendered, then Captain David G. Farragut took possession of the city. Although the War continued until 1865, the post-war Reconstruction period in New Orleans effectively began May 1, 1862, when General Benjamin F. Butler assumed command of the city.

**Population of New Orleans**

The French took census sporadically during their reign in Louisiana; however, the Spanish periodically took accounting of their holdings in the New World. Possibly the earliest French census was that taken August 1, 1706 (Beer 1908:1), finding that most of the 85 persons enumerated resided in or near Biloxi, Mississippi. The next French census (see Table 1), and the first to specifically indicate inhabitants residing in the New Orleans area, was that taken in 1721 (Beer 1908:2).

With the exception of the Spanish census taken in 1791, the population of the city increased from one census to the next (see New Orleans Census Data, Table 3). Shortly after the United States government took possession of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Congress ordered
what was more or less an inventory of the newly acquired holdings. The population of Orleans “County,” i.e., the city of New Orleans and the surrounding areas, may be found in “A General Return of the Census of the Territory of Orleans, taken for the year 1806” (Excerpt from the Census Summary of 1806, Table 2). Thereafter, the population census of the city was included in the U. S. decennial census (Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Summary of French Census of 1721</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following digital mapping and graphics in ten images produced by Richard Campanella, and published in his 2006 Geographies of New Orleans (see Figure 2) give a clear picture of the areal development of the city for the period 1700-2000. The footprint of the city grew from 0.3 square miles in the early 1700s to approximately 200 square miles during the next three hundred years. While the overall areal distribution of the population increased, in some areas at certain periods of time, the density achieved astounding numbers. For example, according to the census of 1900, Squares 39 and 40, in the heart of the Vieux Carré, was home to 203 persons. This figure extrapolates to a density of approximately 55,000 per square mile.

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8Squares 39 and 40 were created by the division of a single city block, when Exchange Place was extended; the narrow section of street was called Exchange Alley (discussed in Part IV).

9Squares 39 and 40 were razed and re-united in the early years of the twentieth century to be the site of the Louisiana Supreme Court Building, built in 1910. Currently no one permanently resides on these former two squares of the city.
Recent figures (based on 2000 census) indicate the population density of Metropolitan Statistical Area of New Orleans to be approximately 393.5 persons per square mile\textsuperscript{10}.

Table 2 Excerpt from the Census Summary of 1806

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Males</th>
<th>White Males</th>
<th>White Females</th>
<th>Free Persons of Color</th>
<th>All Slaves</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 21</td>
<td>&lt; 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,108</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>2,781</td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td>8,378</td>
<td>17,001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The periods of the highest growth rate (with respect to population) occurred when the population was very low, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, during the entire nineteenth century New Orleans continued to grow, at various rates. Periodic floods, especially that of 1849, when the city was inundated for months, affected both the city’s areal distribution of the population and immigration to the city. The devastating epidemics of the 1820s, 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s were more than offset by immigration to effect a continued positive growth rate. The lowest growth rate was experienced during the Civil War period. However, immigrants again flooded the city during Reconstruction.

Population density intensified, yet with little increase in the settled areas, until significant drainage and reclamation projects were begun in the early 1900s. This is particularly evident in the maps of New Orleans dated 1863 (Figure 4) and 1896 (Figure 5). While areal distribution of the settlement showed no appreciable expansion in a thirty-three years period, the population increased by approximately 75,000. After 1900, when the land and the river were “tamed,” the

\textsuperscript{10}This density figure of the New Orleans MSA is from the 2000 Census at: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GCTTable?_bm=y-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&-C...
city rapidly expanded. Campanella’s map of the city dates the development of the various areas of New Orleans.

A few notes on the data contained in summary of population censuses (see Table 3) chart (Figure 3) may serve to emphasize and clarify data:

1) 1721 – a) French servants (28) were included in the total number of whites; b) slaves included both black (73) and Indian (21); c) no free persons of color were enumerated. It may be assumed that there were no free persons of color living in the city at the time of the census. During this period, the city was administered by the Company of the Indies, primarily as a business venture. It is, therefore, assumed that all reported aspects of the colony were presented in the most favorable light. Figure 5 is de la Tour’s 1722 plan of the city, indicating the populated area of the city.

2) 1771 – a) the white population increased from 278 to 1803, an astounding increase of 649%; b) free mulattoes were enumerated, but based on other Spanish census data, may have been undercounted; c) the slave population, as well as the total population, increased dramatically. As Hanger (1996) noted, since the censuses done by the Spanish government were for taxation and military

Figure 1 New Orleans Population 1810-1900. Source: Author and D. Dorrell.
purposes, both women and free persons of color were routinely undercounted during the period of Spanish Dominion.

3) 1777 – the total number of whites decreased, but there is an increase in the total population due to the increase in free persons of color.

4) 1788 – all categories of the population increased.

5) 1791 – a) the number of whites and free persons of color are relatively unchanged from the previous census; and b) this represents an overall decrease in the total population of the city, with respect to the 1788 census, due to a significant decrease (about 340 individuals) in the city’s slave population. Hanger (1996:46) attributes this decrease in the city’s slave population to curtailment of the importation of slaves.

6) 1805 – there is a substantial increase in the total population with increases in each category. The increases are probably related to both a change in the census-taking from Spanish to the United States government, and the change related to immigration to the city after the Louisiana Purchase. Fears related to the insurrections in the Caribbean continued the prohibition on the importation of slaves from that region. By 1800 the need for slaves to work the prosperous plantations, coupled with the generally enhanced economic activity of the period, caused the ban to be rescinded.

7) 1810 – a) this census was taken at the time of a new influx of refugees from Saint Domingue; b) the populations of whites and slaves approximately doubled, but numbers of free persons of color nearly tripled. There were serious reservations as to whether such a high volume of slaves (as well as free persons of color) formerly of Saint Domingue should be permitted to enter New Orleans.
8) 1820 – a) this is the first Louisiana census since statehood was granted in 1812; b) the white and the slave populations had almost tripled, while the free persons of color population doubled.

9) 1830 – there is a slight increase in the white and the slave populations, while the free colored population exhibits a substantial increase.

10) 1840 – a) this is the first time in forty years that the number of whites exceeded the total number of non-whites; b) the overall population doubles: the numbers of whites more than doubles, and there is increase by half of both the free persons of color and the slaves. Economic Expansion Period begins around 1835.

11) 1850 – a) the white population increased by 54%, the slave population decreased by 23%, and the free colored population decreased by 48%. The increasingly significant immigration of Europeans, especially the Irish fleeing their home country due to destitution and famine, heavily impacted the

**Figure 2** Images of the growth of New Orleans. By Campanella (2006:91) based on elevation and historical maps.
previous ratio of whites to free persons of color and slaves. From the aspect of the economy, the destitute white immigrants willing to work for less wages than unskilled free persons of color forced many to abandon the city. At the same time the booming plantation economy was draining the city of slaves suitable to work in the fields.

12) 1860 – a) there was a slight increase in the free persons of color population; b) the slave population showed a decrease; c) the white population increased by 63%. New Orleans was experiencing an economic boom, and white immigration – particularly Americans from the North, Europeans, together with Chinese – reflects the draw of...
the economy. Figure 4 is Abbot’s 1863 map of the city.

13) 1870 – This is the first official United States census to be taken after the Civil War; a) the period after the Civil War marked the first decrease, declining by 6%, in the overall white population since the city was founded, and is probably attributable to casualties of the war, mortalities from the epidemics of the 1850s, and significantly reduced white immigration; b) total non-white population of the city doubled. Slaves were emancipated all over the United States at the end of the Civil War and many of the former slaves, as newly freed blacks, left the plantations and relocated to major urban centers across the country. One city was New Orleans.

The population figures broadly reflect the impact of administrative purposes to enumeration, governmental policies, the economy, and the affects of sanitation (or lack thereof), epidemic diseases, nutrition, etc. Although summarized, these numbers reflect general trends in positive and negative forces of societal values and mores. Census data, especially when summarized based on the legal status of individuals,

![New Orleans Population](image)

**Figure 4** Nineteenth Century White/Non-White Graph. Source: Author and D. Dorrell.
broadly represents New Orleans as a tripartite society. Closer examination indicates each of the three sectors of legal status was further ranked by social and economic factors. Race, ethnicity, cultural heritage, manner of earning a living (trade, skill, talent, etc.), relative wealth, etc. within the boundaries of the respective legal statuses not only complicated, and guided or restricted, the social interaction between individuals and groups, but also is reflected in the diversity of house types.

### Table 3 New Orleans Census Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed or Free</th>
<th>Slave</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>278</td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>1,803</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1,227</td>
<td>3,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>1,736</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>3,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>2,370</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>5,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>2,386</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>5,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>3,551</td>
<td>1566</td>
<td>3,105</td>
<td>8,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>6,331</td>
<td>4950</td>
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<td>19,737</td>
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<td>14,946</td>
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<td>1830</td>
<td>21,281</td>
<td>11906</td>
<td>16,639</td>
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<td>1840</td>
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<td>19226</td>
<td>23,448</td>
<td>102,193</td>
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<tr>
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<td>91,431</td>
<td>9961</td>
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<td>1870</td>
<td>140,923</td>
<td>50456</td>
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<td>1880</td>
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<td>1890</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>208,946</td>
<td>77714</td>
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<td>287,104</td>
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Figure 5 New Orleans in 1896. Map from Louisiana Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University.

Drawn by the Mississippi River Commission in 1896, this map shows the still-restricted nature of development in New Orleans at the turn of the twentieth century. Confined by river, lake, and swamp, the city had changed very little since the Civil War, as is evident from a comparison with the 1863 map drawn for the Union army.

Courtesy Louisiana Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans
The history of New Orleans is often divided into periods or eras defined by political dominance, or economic trends. With respect to New Orleans, the eighteenth century is usually divided into such periods. The Pioneering Period, 1718-1722, is based on the founding and initial settlement efforts, sponsored by the French government as a political strategy, and commercial interests as a money-making enterprise. The French Colonial Period, 1722-1762, is the period during which the French government regained administrative control of the new colony, since the commercial experiment failed to produce the desired wealth for the government. Spanish Dominion, 1763-1803, represents the period during which the area was ceded to Spain, exchanged for other areas which the French deemed more economically beneficial. This period ended in 1800, when the area was re-ceded to France in accordance with the Treaty of San Ildefonso. However, the French did not assume administrative control of New Orleans until November, 1803. One month later New Orleans was included in the sale of the territory to the United States; American administrative control of the city began on December 30, 1803. The three-year political-administrative control hiatus represents a period of limbo, both administratively and in the literature.

**Pioneering Period, 1718-1722**

Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville officially founded, and laid out the direction of the streets in New Orleans in 1718. I was not at the mouth of the Mississippi River, as he had been instructed, rather it was located at the river end of an old Indian portage from Bayou St. John. A few French had been established on concessions along the bayou since 1708.
Prior to 1718 there were at least two censuses of Louisiana. The first in 1706 was recorded by Nicholas de la Salle, the nephew of the explorer. The total population was eighty-five, most of whom lived in and around Biloxi. There were very few women in the new colony during its first years. The majority of the population were military personnel, traders, trappers, and administrators. They were not agriculturalists. In general, these French men mingled freely with the local Indians and the French government encouraged intermarriage. Nevertheless, relations with the local Indians deteriorated, and many that were not enslaved left the area.

Within the next couple of years, the ranks of the original French settlers had been augmented by a shipload of convicts to construct the necessary buildings. In addition, at least one shipload of African slaves had arrived. The first French-imported female colonists arrived in 1721. By the 1721 census, the total population had grown considerably to 1,249 (Beer 1908:14-15):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Servants</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro Slaves</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Slaves</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early buildings in New Orleans were similar to those of Biloxi at the time. The larger buildings were of French military design and made of local materials. The wooden sills were placed directly on the ground and the walls were heavy timber framing (colombage). The exterior of the walls were covered with wide, horizontal weather-boards. The roofs were steeply pitched, hipped, and covered with wood shingles or strips of cypress bark. The smaller individual residences copied the huts of the local Indians or military tents: “tentlike palmetto covered structures” (Wilson in Farnsworth and Masson 1987:74). In these earliest structures, in the absence of bricks, the French replaced these early construction materials with briquettes-
entre-poteaux (brick in-fill between posts), with bousillage (mud and moss in-fill between posts), adapted from the local Indians. The exterior of these walls were then covered with mats woven of palmetto leaves. Roofs were thatched with long grass attached with cane and cane wicker and covered with cane mats. In another variation, the cabins and huts were made of cypress boards with cypress bark roofing. Even at the founding of New Orleans in 1718, it was recognized that water was a problem. A hurricane in 1719 completely inundated the site and destroyed many of the smaller, less substantial structures, as well as the crops. Another hurricane struck in 1721 with similar destruction.

The original plan of New Orleans, based on French military encampment – a bastide, was designed by Pierre Leblond de la Tour in 1720 (Figure 2). This area, later known as the Vieux Carré (the “Old City,” or now sometimes called “the French Quarter”) is nine blocks parallel to the river by six blocks deep, back toward the swamp. Each block was approximately 320 feet square. The plan called for both a system of levees and fortification of the city. The levee work began in 1717, but it was not completed until 1726, almost a decade later. However, the intended fortifications were never completed. Although the Indians were deemed somewhat of a threat, no major work was done on the fortifications, until after the Natchez Massacre in November, 1729. When Adrien de Pauger arrived in the Spring of 1721 to implement de la Tour’s plan, thirty to forty houses (mainly huts) had been built. Only one large structure, the company store (Company of the West, then later Company of the Indies), stood in the settlement. De Pauger was not pleased with either the houses or the way they had been placed. In 1722 he ordered one house torn down because of its mis-alignment. When the owner (Traverse) objected
and petitioned for an indemnity to rebuild, de Pauger beat him with a stick until the man was nearly blind, had him shackled and incarcerated (de Villiers 1920:3(2):226-227).

**Figure 6** Plan of 1720 by Pierre Leblond de la Tour.

**French Colonial Period, 1722-1762**

In September of 1722 another hurricane destroyed many of the less substantial early buildings, i.e., the more “temporary,” alleviating any other mis-alignment problems. By the mid-1720s, bricks were being made locally. The original, beehive-shaped kiln produced bricks that were unevenly dried. The early bricks were soft and crumbly on one end, and overly hard, brittle
and cracked on the other end. Also, the mortar used in building with bricks was inadequately made, using an insufficient amount of lime and using sandy soil, rather than just sand. Therefore, only single story, brick-only buildings were structurally sound. Many early brick buildings fell to pieces within five years of construction. Within a few years, it was determined that even the more substantial buildings would require some adaptations to survive in this environment: 1) sills of houses should not be placed directly on the ground; 2) cypress piers used to raise the structure should not be placed perpendicular to the ground (piers should be parallel to the ground to obstruct the “drinking straw affect”\(^1\)); and 3) better brick- and mortar-making were needed.

Throughout the 1720s both males and females were obtained from France to settle in the new colony. Most of these “colonists” were procured from prisons and brothels or were abducted from the streets of Paris. These early female colonists are sometimes referred to as “corrections girls,” as many of them came directly from La Salpetrière, a prison in Paris. It was not until much later in the decade that the French began to import the “filles à la cassette” or “casket girls.” These were girls of good families who carried with them a small chest containing clothing provided by the Mississippi Company (Asbury 1936:13).

By 1728 most public buildings were more substantially built by using *briquette-entre-poteaux* (brick between posts) construction, and many structures had galleries. Brick-only was often used in the *rez-de-chaussée* (ground floor) of two-story buildings. Brick walls were covered with wood siding or lime stucco. Improvements in brick- and mortar-making by the mid-1730s made the final touch of covering the porous bricks unnecessary.

\(^1\)Capillary action or capillary attraction.
The 1731 plan of the city by Gonichon (Figure 12) indicates that many of the structures had galleries. In addition, Gonichon’s plan is only of the city proper; it includes no outlying plantations, either upriver and down-river of the city, or on the west bank of the Mississippi River.

In the early French Colonial Period, once beyond the “survival” Pioneering Period, residences typically encompassed a few types. Although not as well-documented, there also may have been quite a few smaller houses, similar to those built in the early years of the period. It is evident from Gonichon’s plan of the city, dated 1731, that not all of the city blocks had buildings. Furthermore, the city does not appear to be densely populated. It is possible that numerous, less substantial dwellings were not shown on the plan.
Spanish Dominion, 1763-1803

New Orleans was ceded to Spain at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. The population estimates of the time indicate there were approximately 5,000 residents in the city and surrounding area. The O’Reilly census of 1769 enumerated a total of 3190, with a population of 1,902 free persons: 1,803 white, 31 free persons of color and 1,288 slaves (Wood 1939:92). The census further listed 60 Indian slaves, along with O’Reilly’s proclamation that the Indians would not be further exploited3 (Wood 1939:15 and footnote No. 2 referencing Charles Gayerre’s History of Louisiana, vol. III of 1885). In addition to the Indians enumerated in the census, there were several hundred free Indians living with their families in flimsy skin or leaf-covered huts on the outskirts of the city” (Wood 1939:16). Wood further references Berquin-Duvallon’s assessment that the Indian population appeared to decrease as the Negro population increased (Wood 1939:17, referencing Berquin-Duvallon 1803:198-199). Berquin-Duvallon speculated that the population shift resulting in a decline of the Indian population could probably be attributed to the high incidence of smallpox, strong drink, and proximity to civilized people. Crevasses in the levees caused flooding in many parts of the city in 1780, 1785, 1791, and 1799. Disease and subsequent increase in mortality usually followed the flooding.

While the Spanish were extremely meticulous in their record-keeping, Hanger (1996) suggested that the Spanish routinely undercounted certain categories of individuals. “Census

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2Wood’s footnote indicates the source of these figures to be Calendar of Documents Photographed in the Archives of Seville for the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Despatches of the Governor of Louisiana to the Captain General of Cub. Regular (civil) series, (1768-1791), No. 42.

3O’Reilly’s proclamation did not free those Indians already enslaved, but prohibited the enslavement of additional free Indians.
counts were very low for free blacks. The Spanish government conducted most census for military service or tax reasons and thus also undercounted women as well” [Hanger:1996:62, footnote number 8, referencing Cecilia Wu’s “The Population of the City of Querétaro in 1797,” Journal of Latin American Studies, 16 (1984), pp. 277-307].

Minter Wood’s “Life in New Orleans in the Spanish Period” referenced Pittman’s (1770) notes on the city, estimating there were between seven hundred and eight hundred houses, most of which were picket-fenced (Wood 1939:7). On Good Friday, March 21, 1788, there occurred a Great Fire in which 856 of the approximately eleven hundred buildings were destroyed (Figure 8). On April 1, 1788, shortly after the fire, the Spanish Royal Surveyor drew the plan for Faubourg Ste. Marie, just upriver of the limits of the Vieux Carré, on the property of Bertrand and Maria Gravier. The extension of the city was to be named Ville Gravier, but after Maria’s death, Bertrand renamed it Faubourg Ste. Marie. Although only a few homes and other structures were built before the 1800s, Faubourg Ste. Marie was the first suburb of New Orleans.

After the great fires of 1788 and 1794, which destroyed the majority of the buildings in the city, the local Spanish government, in the body of the Cabildo, issued a recommendation that building rules for houses be established. This was approved by the Commissioners on October 2, 1795. The new building regulations, requiring fire-resistant construction materials, resulted in a

4The property had formerly belonged to the Jesuits, but after their mission was suppressed, the Superior Council of Louisiana had the property confiscated and had been sold at public auction on July 9, 1763. A portion of the property was purchased at the auction by Charles de Pradal, who later added to his holdings of the former Jesuit plantation. After Pradel died, his mother inherited the property in a settlement with Charles’ widow. Madame Pradel sold the property to Andres Reynard on January 11, 1773, in a transaction notarized by Andres Almonester. After Reynard’s death in 1785, the property passed to his widow Dona Maria Josepha Deslondes, who re-married Don Beltran (Bertrand) Gravier (Christovich et al 1998:6-8).
Spanish-influenced construction in the city, composed of tile-covered flat (or nearly flat) roofs and brick exterior walls. The rule for the building of houses in brick, however, was amended July 29, 1796, to provide concessions for building rules for persons of limited means. However, frame buildings were prohibited in the Second Ward, and in the other three Wards only tile or other fireproof material(s) were permitted (Alphabetical and Chronological Digest of the Acts and Deliberations of the Cabildo, 1769-1803, Book 4, Vol. 1, page 53, October 2, 1795 and Book 4, Vol. 1, page 141 July 29, 1796). It is noted in the Acts and Deliberations (April 18, 1800, Book 4, Vol. 3, p. 166) that the building rules were not strictly implemented. (Specific house types are discussed later.)

**Calamities**

A combination of disasters, ranging from a poor condition of the flour used in bread-making that caused illness all over the city in 1777, to the Great Fire of 1788, and the 1789 hurricane, contributed to the American commercial invasion. Further, Great Fire of 1794 not only destroyed most of the buildings in the city, but nearly all of food supplies. Therefore, the Treaty

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5 The continuous dearth of flour resulted in the 1782 lifting of the prohibition of French imports from the West Indies.
of 1795 between the United States and Spain was viewed with relief by the New Orleans’ populace. The Treaty gave American river-ships the right to make port in the city without government taxation and commercial obstruction, while they transhipped goods to ocean-going ships. Naturally, a good proportion of the goods never made it out of port; these goods were sold in New Orleans, and thereby, contributing to the enhanced economic condition of the city in general.

The increased economic activity, and the transient population of the sailors and merchants, as well as the influx of immigrants seeking residence in Louisiana, facilitated the flourishing of disease. Although yellow fever was an annual scourge in the city, in 1796, the disease reached epidemic proportions. Apparently, the English were the most common victims of the disease, while the non-whites and the Spaniards were less susceptible. Pleurisy and pneumonia were common winter ailments, while other diseases and ailments were rampant in the summer months. Leprosy also was prevalent, with lepers besetting passers-by, imploring for alms. (Medical literature of 1899 attributed the sources of the disease to be the slaves from Europe and the American colonies and the Acadian refugees (or deportees) from Canada in 1756.) Trying to secure the public health, Don Andrés Almonester built, with the permission of Governor Miro and the Cabildo, a leper hospital in 1785. The hospital was built “near the Bayou Gate on Metaire Ridge in the rear of the city, and the neighboring ground, a wild looking spot covered with palmetto, was long known as La Terre des Lepreux or lepers’ land” (Wood 1939:41).

**Don Andrés Almonester y Rojas**

One of the few individuals who could afford to live in comfort in the last years of the Spanish Dominion was Don Andrés Almonester. Almonester, originally from a poor family of
minor Spanish nobility, had arrived in the West Indies in 1769, at the age of forty-one. Previously, he had learned and pursued a career as a notary public in Madrid, but it is unknown whether his wife and son died before or after his move to Madrid. In any case, they did not accompany him to Madrid, and he arrived alone in the Indies (Vella 1997:41-42). Being of a more or less financially aggressive disposition, during a time when it was acceptable to purchase boons (benefits or favors, usually in response to a request) from the Spanish Crown (and with no blood descendants, who may later have borne the brunt of any repercussions), Almonester proceeded to accumulate a small fortune. Minter Wood (1939:34) quotes Berquin-Duvallon from his (1803:178, 280) Vue de la Colonie Espagnol, Almonester “Landed in New Orleans poor as Job, but less scrupulous,” and within ten years had amassed a large fortune. It was not long after his purchased appointment to “Notary Public of War and Royal Finance” in New Orleans, that he began to turn his small fortune into a larger one. In addition to his annual income from his position as the official Notary Public, he was also able to realize a substantial income from the work. He charged by the document and by the line of each document which he notarized – every one of the hundreds of official documents submitted each month to the Spanish government. Even the testimony of criminals required notarization. Soon Almonester was able to invest in his new home – New Orleans. His first purchase was the property on each side of the Plaza des Armas, later the site of the famous Pontalba apartments. These two blocks of land turned out to be the basis for his subsequent great fortune. During this period Almonester lived modestly, sharing a house with another Spanish official of the city. Having no blood relations in the New World, and this also being the period during which good works in the form of beneficence to the poor was perceived as a way to advance oneself, politically, economically, and spiritually,
Almonester bought and developed property in the city. He built the Leper’s Hospital (donating the land to the city with the provision that the land was for the use of the lepers and the poor), gave alms to the poor, and after the fires, re-built, or at least financed the re-building of the Cathedral on a much grander scale. Almonester continually bought property throughout the city, building stores and rental properties, all of which produced income. However, he continued his modest standard of living, until he remarried; his daughter Micaela was born when he was sixty-seven years of age. Micaela’s mother, Louisa (Louison) de la Ronde, inherited the bulk of Andres’ estate, when he died April 25, 1798.

Almonester’s succession records have been lost; but we know that he left behind one plantation, a great deal of uncultivated acreage, two factories, over twenty rental houses and stores on the Place d’Armes, his own residence, and probably a large number of properties scattered over the city, all Louison’s responsibility (Vella 1997:69).

Louise de la Ronde, Veuve Almonester, considered that Almonester’s generosity died with him. She was successful in negating at least one sizeable of the bequest to charity.

Before his death, Andres had committed to build the Cathedral, the Presbytere, and the Cabildo, with the city to repay him for the Cabildo. Within three weeks of her husband’s death, Louisa de la Ronde appeared before the commissioners, successfully begging off the completion of the Cabildo and petitioning for repayment for the part that had been built. However, the bishop of the diocese brought suit against her for the completion, a suit she eventually won. She was an astute businesswoman, and afterward increased the Almonester fortune that Micaela was to inherit.

Almonester’s daughter Micaela married Célestin Delfau de Pontalba in the St. Louis Cathedral on October 23, 1811. She was sixteen years of age. Unfortunately, while living in France with her husband (and his parents), her husband and her father-in-law, Joseph Xavier
Delfau de Pontalba, were able to wrest most of
the fortune from her. At the end of the
relationship with her husband Célestin, Joseph
(often called Xavier), at age 80, came after her
with his dueling pistols. She was hit four times in
the chest above the heart, at least part of one
projectile lodged in her lung, and in her hand.
She was able to escape their clutches and
recovered sufficiently to return to New Orleans.

Micaela, an astute businesswoman as was
her mother, managed the remainder of her
fortune, the businesses and the properties she had
inherited from her parents. She worked twelve
hours per day in the management of her affairs and “like her father, she counted minutes as if they
were money” (Vella 1990:225). Like many in New Orleans, she was not adverse to pursuing via
legal suit any who defaulted on rents, mortgage(s) and/or other monies owed to her. Having lost
much of her fortune to her husband and his father, and in order to obtain sufficient funds to build
more rental properties, in 1836 she sued the Mayor, the Aldermen, and the people of New Orleans
for the return of the land her father had donated in 1785 and on which he had built the San Lázaro
Lepers’ Hospital. The property had been unused since 1810. Although the suit was not
completely settled for more than 14 years, during the later 1830s and into the 1840s she
nonetheless auctioned this and other properties (divided into lots) for sale. In the end, she had to

Figure 9 Micaela Almonester, Baroness de Pontalba. Around age forty-five, ca. 1840
(from Vella 1997:180).
pay the City $10,000 which she had failed to put into escrow at the sale of the properties associated with the lepers hospital.

In 1847 Michaela had the Cabildo and the Presbytère refurbished, each with a mansard-roofed third story, as was popular in Paris at the time, where she had spent part of her life. It was she, Baroness Pontalba, who had the Pontalba apartments built in the years 1849-1850. They were the first buildings in the city to have the balconies decorated with cast iron.

During this same relatively short period, Micaela also had buildings constructed in Paris.

**Last Years of the Spanish Dominion**

In the last years of the Spanish Dominion, especially after the Treaty of 1795, the city was on an economic upswing. Although a number of individuals became extremely wealthy, most of the people still lived in poverty. The usual daily wage was approximately fifty cents (Robertson 1911:85), at a time when the cost of living was exorbitant that few could live in comfort.

In the late 1700s ideas of democracy, freedom, and equality began to be seriously discussed in Europe and in the New World. The English Colonies in North America rebelled, and
later the French populace rose up to topple the French regime. The French and Creoles of Saint Domingue were considered to be citizens of France, as French as any Parisian. With all the traffic back and forth between France and Saint Domingue, concerns related to the island’s social order soared. As feared, those free persons of color who either had been in France themselves, or were in contact with those who were or had been, began to wish for, and plan and plot a more equal social order than that to which they had been born.

In Saint Domingue the pervasiveness of revolution was in the air, and many of the island slaves of Saint Domingue also caught the freedom fever. The free persons of color of the colony sought to achieve rights equal to those of the whites, and thus aligned themselves with the black slave population; concurrently these lessened their interdependence with the white population. The black slaves plotted and planned insurrection. The insurrection, driven by black slaves, began in 1791, and within hours had escalated to massacre. Whites fled the island in droves, dispersing throughout the Caribbean. As time went on, the persecution of whites and free colored persons on the island persisted. Those who had escaped with their lives took refuge wherever they could. Many went to neighboring islands, especially Cuba, as the closest. However, a number ventured to New Orleans. Approximately ten years later the Spanish of Cuba ousted the French Creoles from Saint Domingue from their midst, and a great number were transported to New Orleans. In the last years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century, thousands of refugees from Saint Domingue made their way to New Orleans to begin life anew.

**From Cap François to New Orleans: The House Type Connection**

The close relationship and contacts between New Orleans and Cap François had a definite effect on the character of the city of New Orleans. The house types of the two cities are lasting
evidence of the processes of Creolization and maintenance of ethnicity. This well-established ethnicity, though modified by Creolization, resulted in a prolonged period of adjustment toward the Americans. Americanization of New Orleans was delayed until long after the Louisiana Purchase, primarily due to the city’s lingering and pervasive relationship with the former Caribbean residents.

In the eighteenth century Saint Domingue was the richest colony of the French. Throughout the 1700s, there was significant contact between Cap François and New Orleans. Ships from France to New Orleans stopped for re-fitting in Cap François for periods of weeks at a time. The beginning of the bloody slave insurrection of Saint Domingue in 1791 marked the onset of significant emigration from the island of Hispaniola. Literally fleeing for their lives, many whites of Saint Domingue, a large number of mulattoes, and an even larger number of trusted slaves, left Hispaniola. Many of the emigrés escaped the former island paradise with nothing more than the clothes on their backs, their will to survive, and their cultural baggage – the knowledge of how to survive. Ships carrying thousands of refugees – possibly as many as 30,000 – set sail for destinations near and far: Jamaica, Cuba, the smaller islands of the West Indies, and cities within the United States – Baltimore, Maryland; Norfolk, Virginia; and Charleston, South Carolina were the primary receiving ports (Babb1954). While some of the refugees fled directly to New Orleans, New Orleans was more or less a secondary port in the mass exodus from Saint Domingue.
Many of the houses of New Orleans were familiar to the refugees from St. Domingue. The Creole Cottage is a foursquare room end-gabled (roof ridge parallel to the street) building, usually a residence, with four bays – that is four symmetrically spaced openings for an exterior door and a window in each of the two front rooms. Behind the four rooms there are two cabinets (closets) flanking a loggia (porch). The whole of the structure is slightly elevated, but still low to the ground. The less common variant is the two-bay cottage, one half the rooms of the common basic cottage. These houses have a narrow alley on each side of the house, and most have a two- or

Figure 12 Creole Cottage on Dauphine Street. Photo taken by Jay Edwards, October, 2005, a month after Hurricane Katrina. The house was built in the 1820s.
three-story “dependency” or outbuilding in the rear. The ground floor rooms were for cooking, and sometimes dining, with the upper rooms for slaves’ or older children’s residence. There are mainly found in the Vieux Carré, Tremé, and Marigny. They were popular from about 1790 to 1840.

The Raised Creole Cottage (or Plantation) House was a distinctive architectural form that appeared in Louisiana early in the French Colonial Period (1722 – 1762), but it was probably typical of the larger houses during both the French and Spanish periods. The house was usually one or two stories. The galleries, with exposed ceiling joists and a wooden balustrade with slender, bracketed colonnettes, were used as additional living space. The premier étage (first floor), was of briquette-entre-poteaux (brick between posts) construction, covered with wide, horizontal, beaded boards, was used as the principal living area.

Figure 13 Madame John’s Legacy, 632 Dumaine. Photo taken September 2005 by Jay Edwards.

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See Part III, “House Types of New Orleans,” Figure XX for an example of a dependency.
The stuccoed brick *rez-de-chaussée* (ground floor) was used as a service area and for storage.

An existing example of the raised Creole cottage, Madame John’s Legacy at 632 Dumaine was built after the Great Fire of 1788, is reputed to be a reproduction of the house as it was before the fire. It survived the Great Fire of 1794. The building was not damaged by Hurricane Katrina, as you can see from this photo taken less than a month after the hurricane.

**Architecture**

**Barthélmey Lafon**

Lafon is relatively well-known in historical architecture circles with respect to his work in New Orleans; however, most of the buildings which are attributed to his design and/or building have little or no documentation verifying that he designed or constructed them. The majority of the buildings attributed to him base that credit on the impression that it “looks” like his work. In historical estimation, much of the way New Orleans looks today is directly attributable to Lafon’s creativity and skill.

Regarding his work, Bos (1977) details a building dispute in the construction of the house for Mme. Jeanne Macarty, probably the first house which is known to have been built by Lafon. Bos suggested that Lafon may not have been entirely scrupulous. Construction to have been completed in the fall of 1794 may have been delayed by the great fire in the city on December 8, 1794. However, when by the spring of 1796, the house was still not completed, Mme. Macarty enlisted the assistance of Baron Joseph X. Pontalba. Pontalba, thinking Mme. Macarty was being cheated, had the foundation of the house demonished [sic], and the number of whole bricks counted. It was determined that only one-fourth of the bricks used in the construction were whole (three-fourths of the bricks were in pieces) and, therefore, would not support the walls of the
house. “On September 3, 1796 Lafon signed an agreement in which he undertook to pay all costs, demolish all previous work and begin construction no later than September fifteenth with whole bricks” (Bos 1977:47). In addition, Lafon agreed that a representative of Mme. Macarty could supervise all work on the building, and that if the building were not completed by November 1, 1796, he, Lafon, would pay rent on the house until it was completed. Based on Christina Vella’s (1990 and 1997) works on Michaela Almonester Pontalba and the information contained about her father-in-law, Joseph Xavier Delfrau de Pontalba, this entire incident may actually reflect more on Pontalba and his tendency to use strong-arm tactics, than it does on Lafon.

The renowned architectural historian Samuel Wilson, Jr., particularly noted for his extensive research and documentation, is sparing in attributing credit to Lafon. While Lafon is mentioned in passing in several of his essays (Farnsworth and Masson 1987), these references use the words “possibly designed by,” “probably first designed by,” and “may be the work of” Bartolomé Lafon. Lafon is mentioned in reference to a “resurvey” done by him on the plantation property owned by Pontalba (given to him by her as part of the marriage agreement) for the purpose of subdivision and sale. Lafon is also mentioned as being one of the architect-builders employed by Veuve (Widow) Louise de la Ronde Almonester to appraise the work that had been done on the Presbytère by the time of the death of her husband. Naturally, the attorney for the Bishop, in seeking to reduce the amount owed to the estate, declared that the appraisal was “over-estimated.”

Bos (1977) cites documentation of several of the houses which were built by Lafon. Several of the notable houses definitely associated with Lafon are the Riviere House, a brick house with dependencies, facing the river on the corner of Bienville and Decatur Street (formerly
Levee Street) and the Pedesclaux-Lemonnier House, also known as Sieur George’s House, 638 Royal Street at the corner of St. Peter, an imposing (for the time) building of three stories to which a fourth story was added in 1876. Both of these houses were built at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Riviere House, contracted in December, 1797, was completed in 1799, and the Pedesclaux-Lemmonier House, begun some time after the fire of 1794, was at least partially completed in 1807. Built after the fire of 1794, but before 1800, the Rillieux House at 343 Royal Street on the corner of Conti Street (Figure 1), is not documented as being built by Lafon, but has the same “feel” as others which are documented as his work. The Rillieux House in particular, demonstrates “The French architect was able to manipulate Spanish requirements regarding the use of tile roofs and specified building materials into a French design” (Bos 1977:71). In 1811 this house was sold to become Planter’s Bank; beginning in 1820, the house contained the regional branch of the Bank of the United States. When the bank’s charter was not re-issued in 1836, banking was
resumed as the New Orleans Gas Light and Banking Company, which operated between 1836 and 1838. Since 1881 the building has housed Waldhorn’s Antiques (http://www.waldhornadlers.com/ accessed 07/03/2010).

According to a 1798 survey by Carlos Trudeau, a large tract of land between the fortifications of the old city and St. Mary had been granted to Lafon by Governor Carondolet. A year later the fortifications of the city were extended to include this land. Lafon was dispossessed of the property by this action, and he spent many years trying to recover his land. His claim of ownership was finally reestablished in 1818 by the Eastern District of Louisiana Federal Land Office, only two years before Lafon’s death (Christovich et al 1998:10).

Although Lafon was known as an architect and builder, he was also known as a geographical surveyor from as early as 1800. He was a deputy to the Surveyor General for Orleans County from 1806 through 1809 (Bos 1977:85, 89). Lafon’s surveying practices were not universally acclaimed:

Mr. Lafon has made, or rather pretend [sic] to make surveys of private claims by measuring the front only, and taking the bearing of the side lines, from which data he makes his return and demands of the Claimant the full compensation which the law allows for an actual survey” (from a letter dated 06/30/1807 by Lafon’s superior at the time, Walker Gilbert, Député Principal our le District de l’Est, to Seth Pease, at the time occupying the position for which Lafon was applying, cited in Bos 1977:89-90).

Lafon also engaged in private surveying. The “Plan of the Delord Plantation, to serve for the enlargement of the Faubourg St. Mary, projected and executed by Batheleme Lafon, geographical engineer” is dated February 6, 1806 (Wilson and Lemann 1998:9) and pre-dates

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7 The confirmation of the affirmation of the validity of Lafon’s claim by Eastern District is recorded at “Eastern District Decisions,” pages 87 & 88. The copy of the recording of the decision at the Registrar of the lands office for the Eastern District of Louisiana on 10 July 1818 is documented at The Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center MSS 331 F.4.
Lafon’s September, 1806 plan for the subdivision of the plantation of Jean Baptiste de Marigny (brother of Bernard de Marigny and also brother of Marie Celeste de Marigy, wife of Jacques François Enoul Livaudais, Jr.) which was slightly upriver of the Delord Plantation. The owner Marguerite Foucher, widow of Silvestre Delord Sarpy, originally had the plan made preparatory to subdividing and selling the inherited property by the lot. She, instead, sold the plantation to Armand Duplantier. The following year, Duplantier had Lafon revise the plan: “Plan of the Plantation of Mr. Duplantier To serve for the enlargement of the Faubourgs, St. Mary and Annunciation. Projected and executed by B’my Lafon, Geographical Engineer. New Orleans, the 18 July, 1807” (Wilson and Lemann 1998:9). During this period Joseph Pilié, later well known as a prominent surveyor, was apprenticed to Lafon. However, the two parted in 1810 on less than amicable terms.

Throughout his career in New Orleans, Lafon was beset with financial and professional difficulties. He faced numerous lawsuits regarding the quality of his work and delays in his work, as well as for non-payment of bills and contractual agreements. A housing boom, spurred by the devastating fire of 1794, was over in the early years of the nineteenth century, and Lafon’s fortunes took a definite turn for the worse. There is no documentation for success in his work in the field of residential designing and building after the War of 1812. After the War he could not prove ownership of a number of his holdings that the city claimed. Over the next few years, he was forced to sell his properties (those that were not in legal dispute), his horse and carriage, his furniture, and his books. These possessions were sold at Sheriff’s sale, but the proceeds went to Lafon’s creditors. Subsequently, he turned to other another form of livelihood – piracy and smuggling. He became involved in the operations of Jean Lafitte.
In the course of the yellow fever epidemic of 1820, Lafon died on September 29. No death certificate for Lafon was issued, but that was probably due to the extremely high number of deaths at the time. According to his will dated August 29, 1813 (New Orleans City Archives, Vol. 3, Fol. 166), Lafon died a wealthy man. His brother, Pierre, came from France to collect his inheritance, but after years of dispute (Louisiana Supreme Court No. 753, 822, 988, 1092, and 1358), the courts found that Lafon’s succession was “wholly insolvent and unable to pay the legacies and debts” (U.S. District Court Case Papers No. 1062).

**Eighteenth Century New Orleans**

Vella’s (1997) description of New Orleans of the eighteenth century presents an appalling, if not horrifying, image. It is inconceivable that the elites of Europe would be enticed to venture there. If they had done so, they would promptly have left the squalid and destitute frontier – deemed too repugnant to be termed “wilderness.” Based on documents written during the eighteenth century and literature from and about the period, Dawdy’s assessment of the overall prosperity and of a leisure elite class appears to be greatly exaggerated. It is difficult to reconcile two such opposing views on life in eighteenth century New Orleans, unless one casts aside the letters, official correspondences by the many eighteenth century officials, and travelers, and assumes that the whole of New Orleans was indeed a wonderful and prosperous city that fell on hard times.

Furthermore, an interpretation that “wealth” equals “elite” (Dawdy 2008:141-142) superficially places a rosy view of the dirty, morally corrupt, crudity of the city and its inhabitants. Such an interpretation may be generally espoused by middle or lower classes (Bottomore 1993:10). In reality, eighteenth century New Orleans was literally a sewer and disease-riddled
pest-hole inhabited by criminals and cheats, indicative of a new frontier port, bawdy and open to
corruptive influence.

In Building the Devil's Empire (Dawdy 2008) exemplifies meticulous and exhaustive
research, however, the interpretation of New Orleans as a rosy and prosperous city relies
principally on two findings: First, the archaeological record is compared to that of Port Dauphin
with a quote from Shorter that the archaeological record “does not suggest an impoverished
colony on the brink of financial ruin” (Dawdy 2008:132). Second, the New Orleans of 1730 is
described by a visitor to the settlement, Sieur Caillot, as

not a town suffering privation, but rather a place with “many inns and cabarets where you
are not only well served, but also catered to. You will also see there many dry goods
shops of various merchandise that they buy off ships, although this is against the orders of
the Company. They buy from women that sell in the streets” (Dawdy 2008:132).

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that many, if not most of the inhabitants of New
Orleans, were of the lower classes and were there because they were either soldiers or criminals.

As early as 1725 the Superior Council felt compelled to pass ordinances to reduce the
number of taverns and increase the restrictions and penalties for fraternization between and among
slaves, free persons, and soldiers. Apparently by 1763 poor whites and slaves continued to be a
problem (Dawdy 2008:185-186).

Dawdy’s recitation of a specific case concerning the actions of the overseer Le Roy,
considered by the Superior Council in 1730, is questionable. While there is no doubt that Le
Roy’s actions were heinous, the use of the term “infanticide” is incorrect and misleading. There is
no mention of “infanticide” in the translation of the records of the Superior Council with regard to
this case. A summary of the record translated and found in the Louisiana Historical Quarterly,

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8The reference is simply “Shorter, ‘Status and Trade at Port Dauphin,’ 137.
Vol. 4, No. 4 (1921: 510, 518, 521; Vol. 5, No.1 (1922: 89, 91, 92, 94. is as follows: 1) January 17, 1730 – Le Roy was charged by D’Auseville, the plantation owner, with fraudulent management, cruelty to slaves, and suspicious death of one or more of the slaves. The complaint, or charges, against Le Roy also mentioned that snakes had destroyed pigeons and weasles [sic] had destroyed poultry (which gives added support to the charges of mismanagement); 2) April 6, 1730 – the Surgeon Manade supports the allegations of cruelty to slaves by his obnoxious acts; 3) April 29, 1730 – the main charge against the brutish overseer is causing frequent abortion among slave women by corporal punishment during pregnancy, especially against those who “repel his lust in the open field,” furthermore, Le Roy “slights” the Black Code in the prohibition of Sunday taskwork, and he is also unsparing of horse life; 4) August 30, 1730 – petition to prosecute monster overseer with remedy to be allowing (forcing) Le Roy to “retract his lease, quit the plantation, be sentenced to 20,000 francs by way of damages;” 5) September 5, 1730 – petition to prosecute scoundrel overseer, earlier charges supplemented with “especial stress on the overseer’s fool cruelty (senseless not less than devilish) in the direction of starving the cattle, exhausting the slaves by long hours and vile fare (one meal of rotten beans a day), and causing continual abortions... Let negroes also be admitted in the trial proceedings;” 6) the Council orders that “the accursed Le Roy be heard and examined.” The translator notes:

N. B. – the scribbler of these cards came from a northern State, and possibly retains a traditional Union bias towards slavery. But the charges of brutality in this case and others among the French records of Louisiana Province are adduced by an acclimated slave owner, speaking right from the spot and core of that abolished “institution” (Louisiana Historical Quarterly:1922:89).

The resolution of the case is not found as among these pages translated and published in the Louisiana Historical Quarterly. However, the use of the term “infanticide” is fallacious, and it
leads the reader to believe that the charges against Le Roy were more serious than they actually were. The correct term is “feticide,” an act which was not criminalized in Louisiana until 1989, Act 777 of the Louisiana Legislature\textsuperscript{10} – 259 years after the act was committed! Furthermore, the actions of Le Roy were offenses of the Black Code (Code Noir) (for exceeding the proscribed punishment of slaves) and property damage. These offenses, if substantiated, warranted restitution to the plantation owner for the damages done to his property and fines.

Dawdy’s “analysis” of this case underlines her personal biases, and the dangers of imposing “current” moral values on a historical situation, resulting in great peril to the correct interpretation of a historical event. This fallacy, this misrepresentation of historical fact, brings into serious question the validity many other of her statements and interpretations. Possibly support for this interpretation of Dawdy’s analysis is found in \textit{Elitism} by Field and Higley:

Preferences, and beliefs resting on them, usually pervade inexpert thought, just as they pervaded all thought in the pre-modern period. People commonly interpret factual matters according to their preferences and then spend most of their time arguing that these preferred interpretations are, or should be, true. Very largely, what one wishes were true determines what one judges to be useful knowledge. In social thought at least, the possibility that matters contrary to our preferences might be true is seldom explored seriously (Field and Higley 1980:vii).

They further explain that the possible source of an interpretation such as Dawdy’s “analysis” may be found in her personal biases:

Most commonly, the active social scientist has been an “intellectual,” not just in the sense of a learned person but also in the sense of a social critic. He has been strongly, if sometimes ambiguously, attracted to the democratic, socialist, and anarchist currents of modern social thought (Field and Higley 1980:ix).

\textsuperscript{10}Louisiana Revised Statutes address definition of the offense of feticide, see R.S. 14:32.5, and R.S. 14:32.6 and R.S. 14:32.7 deal with the conditions which would determine whether the action was a first degree feticide or a second degree feticide, respectively.
Part III

The Setting: Nineteenth Century

In the year 1800 New Orleans was again under French rule, although the city was to remain unclaimed until November 20, 1803. After some period of negotiation, the purchase of the Louisiana Territory was completed, and on December 30, 1803, the Territory became the property of the United States.

During the three years without rule, New Orleans developed a well-deserved reputation as a lawless place, a reputation which continued to plague the city for a hundred years (Asbury 1936:3, 67-68). As of this writing, the city again reverted to its dangerous and criminal activities in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in the fall of 2005 and the subsequent flooding of approximately 80% of the city.

Early American Period, 1803-1835

The Early American Period was one of transition in more ways than one. Not only was New Orleans beginning the process of becoming “American” politically, similar adaptations had to be made socially and culturally.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, New Orleans was a frontier town. The few streets were muddy and very dark at night. Chickens, turkeys, hogs, and dogs wandered in search of food. Boisterous and dangerous rivermen came to New Orleans by the thousands and “caused more trouble than any other class in the history of the city” (Asbury 1936:93). These river

1The Advocate, the Baton Rouge, Louisiana newspaper, from www.foreignpolicy.com on October 8, 2008, reported New Orleans is in the top five (!) of the list of “murder capitals” of the world.
ruffians, many of whom had come downriver from Kentucky, were called “Kaintucks” by the Creoles: “for keelboatmen were generally regarded as a very low form of life. Kaintucks they were called, and they helped give the New Orleans riverfront its reputation for rowdiness and violence” (Cable 1980:24). Later in this period, as an increasing number of Anglo-American immigrants came from the northern and northeaster states, they were called “Americans. The term generally indicated that the person (or group) was Anglo-American, rather than French or of French-speaking origin (Edwards and Kariouk 2004:6). The river-front was noisy both day and night, as the boisterous “Kaintucks” reveled and brawled.

New Orleans had been under the control of Spain from 1763 until it was returned to France by the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, but the French did not take administrative control of the city until November, 1803. Spain withdrew her administrators and military after the Treaty, but the French officials did not arrive. Spanish policies were no longer in force. During this titular governmental three-year period, the city was, in practical terms, under self-rule. The visiting and newly immigrating foreigners had little regard for the local officials, and lawlessness became rampant with robbers and thieves roaming the city. The numbers of taverns and gambling-halls multiplied. It was during this period that New Orleans began to earn a much-deserved reputation of disregard for the law in any form.

Much of the city was newly built. Relatively few of the hundreds of houses and stores remained untouched, after the disastrous fires of 1788 and 1794. According to Kendall (1922:33, 35)), 856 houses burned in the fire of 1788, and 212 houses burned in the fire of 1794. Although the Spanish had ruled the city since 1763, it was still French. Relatively few Spaniards, other than administrators, shopkeepers and the military, had made the city their home. The majority of
the Creole population of the city had refused to learn Spanish, so other than legal and official
documents and notices, most of the everyday business of the populace was conducted in French.

Impacts of The Creole Refugees From Saint Domingue

The Creoles and Cap François², Saint-Domingue

One of the most significant, if not the most significant, and reliable sources of written
documentation of the pre-revolutionary inhabitants, conditions, and history of Saint-Domingue
and Cap François (later re-named Cap Haïtien) comes from the work of Médéric-Louis-Elie
Moreau de Saint-Méry which was published in 1797-1798. Moreau de Saint-Méry, a native of
Martinique, was an attorney who lived for a number of years in Cap François during the 1780s.
He, accompanied by his wife and children, sailed to the United States from France on November
9, 1793, escaping the order for his arrest, and the subsequent penalty of the guillotine, by only a
matter of hours (Moreau de Saint-Méry [Spencer 1985:viii]).

The population of Saint-Domingue was divided into three distinct strata: whites,
mulattoes and slaves (Babb 1954; Heinl and Heinl 1978). In the bustling urban center of Cap
François alone there were about 8,000 free persons (whites and the affranchis or mulattoes) and
approximately 12,000 slaves, the vast majority of whom were black. Each section was further
hierarchically stratified. In Saint-Domingue the slaves comprised over 80% of the total
population, and most of them had been born in Africa. Native-born, or creole, slaves were more
highly valued as chattel than the foreign born: they spoke the creole language and were
considered less “wild” than those from Africa. Although enslaved, there was some opportunity
for economic gain.

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²Cap François is sometimes spelled Cap Français.
The whites, the elites of the society, were divided into *grands blancs* (“big” or principal whites) and *petits blancs* (“little” or minor whites). Babb explained (Babb 1954:10-13,17) these designations: *Grand blancs* were the owners of large plantations and were in general extremely wealthy. In a number of cases these *grand blancs* often actually resided in Cap François or France. *Petits blancs* were generally less wealthy: some owned small plantations, others were the overseers or managers of large plantations. Other occupations of the *petits blancs* included tradesmen, physicians, lawyers, etc. As such, they in large part formed the “middle class” of Saint-Domingue, and Cap François in particular. Whites, including those who were relatively poor in comparison to the *grands blancs*, in a country heavily populated with slaves, disdained any manual labor (Babb 1954:14, 18).

The *gens de couleur* (*mulattoes* or mixed bloods) (Babb 1954:18), most of whom were free, were ranked both according to economic status as well as degree or percentage of Negro/white blood. As craftsmen, tradesmen, and owners of plantations of varying sizes, this portion of the society was in economic competition with the *petits blancs*. Although free, they did not command the privileges of the whites (Heinl and Heinl 1978:36). For instance,

> By the Code Noir of 1685 any free Negro was a full French citizen, but in Saint Domingue such citizens could not hold office and had no political rights. There was no opportunity to obtain a medical, law, or divinity degree, nor could they do work of these professions (Babb 1954:18).

Even though separated from France by the expanse of the Atlantic Ocean, the free persons of Saint-Domingue were familiar and to some extent involved in the goings-on in France in the period before and during the early years of the French Revolution. As wealthy Creoles, many whites and mulattoes journeyed to France to be educated, to enjoy the wealth they had gained in the West Indies, and to participate in French politics. In the few years prior to the onset of the
French Revolution, freedom and liberty were contested issues in French politics. With respect to the continued economic health of her colonies in the West Indies, these issues assumed great significance, particularly in the area of freedom and rights for mulattoes.

Even so, Cap François, with its Paris fashions and predominantly slave population, public baths and piles of rotting rubbish, casinos and partly-paved streets, where wandering livestock obstructed sedan chairs and ox-carts, at best, rivaled Charleston. The other towns [of Saint-Domingue] were merely small collections of houses, mainly wooden, though at the end of the Ancien Régime the construction of public fountains and highways, quaysides and bridges, lent them a prosperous air. Schools were nearly non-existent and creole women were notoriously ignorant. While stone plantations houses were becoming more common, as in Jamaica, the grand case generally was a flimsy construction and always sparsely furnished.

This was largely because few colonists regarded their stay there as permanent. All commentators noticed an atmosphere of hurry and obsession with return to France, that was also a persistent theme in colonists’ correspondence. The extent of absentee proprietorship is unknown and controversial, but in the plains it was probably as great as in the British islands, and was responsible for draining away profits better spent in the colony (Geggus 1982:7-8).

The greater part of societal tensions was between the petits blancs and the mulattoes. The petits blancs resented that the mulattoes were free (and not enslaved) and envied their wealth; the mulattoes envied the “whiteness,” as a criterion of elite status and privilege, of the petits blancs. In fact, it was the eruption of this tension that initiated the slave insurrection.

The Creoles and New Orleans, Louisiana

During this early period and although under Spanish dominion until the end of 1803, New Orleans effectively remained French in its atmosphere and population. Between the years 1791 and 1810, a large contingent of the refugee population ended up in New Orleans (see 1805 and 1810 census data). Several thousand arrived in late 1803 and early 1804, while approximately ten thousand arrived in the years 1809-1810 (Lachance 1988:109-141). This later immigration effectively doubled the existing population of New Orleans. Some of these immigrants had
managed to escape from Saint Domingue with much of their former wealth, others had again
amassed fortunes in their sojourns in what turned out to be temporary homes such as Cuba, but a
great many others came with only hopes and determination.

A certain amount of accommodation and adjustment were necessary by both Creoles from
Saint Domingue and Creoles of New Orleans. Notably, the strengthening of color lines and the
increased rigidity of social classes mark the re-defined ethnicity of the newly amalgamated
population. Much of the increase in rigidity was related to the recent insurrection and massacres
of Saint Domingue, which led to a certain degree of wariness and mistrust on the part of the New
Orleans Creoles. Some of the more lasting effects of the creolization and integration of this
population into the fabric of New Orleans can be seen in the house types of the period.

The Creoles of New Orleans, although perhaps not as wealthy as the immigrants from
Saint Domingue, were well aware of the fashions and politics of France. A number of wealthy
whites and wealthy affranchis (gens de couleur, many of whom were mulattoes) had spent some
time in France, and of these, many had been educated there, just as many of the wealthier
refugees had been.

The population of New Orleans was also a tripartite society with hierarchical internal
stratification within each sector. From basically the same ethnic stock, with all the inherent
cultural values, the Creoles of New Orleans had much in common with the immigrant Creoles
from Saint-Domingue: social mores, attitudes toward wealth, prerogative, and leisure, opinions
related to social and economic status, and a strong affiliation with their native France. The
personae of Creoles in New Orleans prior to the Saint-Domingue immigration is documented in
Kendall (1922) and Clark (1970).
House Types of New Orleans

After the conflagration of 1794, Spanish regulations mandated that the houses of New Orleans were required to be flush with the banquette, with flat tile roofs\(^3\), and constructed of brick then stuccoed to reduce fire hazards\(^4\). This resulted in a more urban appearance to the city. The outdoor work area of the house became the courtyard, situated at the rear of the house.

Several basic types, well-described in Vogt (1985:43-56), were to be found in the re-built city: the Creole cottage, the raised Creole cottage, and the Creole Townhouse. The Creole Townhouse was built in two basic designs: the entresol (Figure 16) (usually for commercial or combined commercial-residential use), or the porte-cochère (Figure 17), which could be also entresol (Vogt 1985:52, 54). The latter was popular between 1794 and 1840. Galleries and the extensive use of wrought iron were found on many, especially those with a floor above the rez-de-chaussé.

The townhouses were detached, semi-detached or row-houses from two to four stories, often with a balcony on the second and sometimes the third floors. Generally, the townhouse was of stucco-covered brick which was painted a pastel color. Early Creole townhouses exhibited the following features: arched openings on the ground level with multi-light French doors and semi-circular transoms with vertical iron bars. Shutters, vertical-board on the ground level and louvered on upper levels, were used on all openings. Iron or wooden balconies were attached to nearly every building of more than one story high; the balconies were not only practical (in the

\(3\) Roofs were to be tiled rather than shingled. Tiles were either the rounded Spanish roof “mission” tiles or flat, either completely flat, or had a lip on the side. Nearly flat roofs covered with flat tiles were often used as terraces (King 1968:148). However, later, due to leaks, most were replaced with pent roofs.

\(4\) Building regulations were codified October 2, 1795 (Acts of the Cabildo, Book 4, Volume I, p.55 ff. The regulations were modified July 29, 1796 (Acts of the Cabildo, Book 4, Volume I, p.141) to accommodate housings for persons of limited means.
heat), but they were also attractive (Castellanos 1978). On wealthier houses, balconies generally had wrought-iron railings. Roof dormers on the front and on the back of the steep roof allowed light and ventilation to the attic. Dormer windows usually had segmental arches or rounded heads until about 1815. Double chimneys extended from the fire-wall of the roof edge.

In the entresol townhouse, which may be a Spanish creole contribution to New Orleans’ architecture, the ground floor was usually commercial. This type had a low-ceilinged second floor that was not defined on the exterior of the building. This floor was used for storage, an important feature to merchants. The arch of the ground floor arched openings, the distinctive feature of the type, served as windows to this level.

In the porte-cochère townhouse (Figure 17), the porte-cochère was the main entrance, and beyond it, a staircase led to the upper rooms. This type could have an

**Figure 16** Entresol Townhouse. Illustration from Vogt 1985:18.

**Figure 17** Porte-Cochère Townhouse. Illustration from Vogt 1985:18.
**entresol** floor. In the American townhouse, popular from the 1820s to the 1850s, the doorway on one side was a pedestrian passage, similar to but much more narrow than the *porte-cochère* style, which led to the rear stairs. A wide arch at the end of the main house opened onto the courtyard.

Service buildings were usually two or three stories and sometimes completely detached from the main house until the 1830s (Figure 18). The service buildings, often “slave quarters”, were located at the property line, either at the back of the property and parallel to the main house, or on the side of the rear property and perpendicular to the house. The remainder of the property usually enclosed a patio with a high wall. The patio in French houses is used as a work area.

In the service building, the kitchen was on the ground floor, and dining area was usually also on the ground floor or, occasionally, on the floor above. Storage and small bedrooms for servants or older children were on the upper floors. Often the back wall of the outbuilding was shared with that of the neighbor’s outbuilding, a “party wall”. The parapets, gable ends higher than the roof line,
provided some fire-wall protection. Usually there was a wooden upper-level balcony which extended a few feet beyond the front (court-facing) wall and functioned to provide access to upper front rooms.

Thus, French Creole patio houses are divided into three zones: the corps de logis (the living body of the house), the loggia (the area with the stairway), and the garçonnière (translated as “boys house,” but the building was often used as slave quarters), kitchen and service.

As in Cap François, the less expensive and generally single story houses, Creole cottages, were to be found primarily in the rear portion of the city, away from the river toward the swamp. The earliest documented drawing of an entresol building in New Orleans was La Direction on Decateur Street (then called Quay); the drawing (Figure 19) was dated January 3, 1723 (Wilson 1987b:387-389). Madame John’s Legacy, a raised Creole cottage, was re-built immediately

**Figure 19** La Direction. Signed by Pierre Leblond de la Tour, January 3, 1723. Courtesy Archives Nationales. La Direction was New Orleans’ first house of architectural importance and built to serve as headquarters for the directors of the Company of the Indies. From Farnsworth and Masson 1987:8.
following the great fire of 1788 in New Orleans. Single-story porte-cochère houses were commonplace in the city as well.

**Creole New Orleans: People and House Types**

The most significant aspect of the newly integrated Creoles of New Orleans is that the redefined and numerically strengthened ethnicity of the population served to delay the Americanization of New Orleans beyond the expectations of the American government in the early years of American possession. Houses of the immigration period and immediately after are remarkably similar to buildings found in New Orleans and in Saint-Domingue prior to the immigration.

Among the Saint-Domingue immigrants and their descendants who gained political, social, and economic prominence were the Lafitte brothers and their lieutenants (Babb 1954:79, 185-190); Morin, the sugar-maker hired by Etienne de Boré (Babb 1954:164); James Pitot, the Mayor of New Orleans in 1806 (Babb 1954:173); J. F. Canonge, a linguist and Judge of the Criminal Court in New Orleans for at least ten years (Babb 1954:174); Don Diego Morphy, Sr. and his infant son Diego Morphy, Jr. who became a lawyer and Supreme Court Judge and the father of Paul Morphy the international chess champion (Babb 1954:174-175); John J. Audubon, the illegitimate son of a merchant-planter and a Frenchwoman of Saint-Domingue (Babb 1954:181); John Davis who built the Theatre d’Orleans (Babb 1954:184); Thomy Lafon, one of the wealthiest of the gens de couleur, whose father, Barthelémy Lafon, was part-French and mother was “Haitian” (Babb 1954:195-196); J. F. Canonge, who became a judge of New Orleans’ Criminal Court (and whose son was Louis Placide Canonge was born in New Orleans) (Babb 1954:174); and Antoine A. Peychaud who operated the *Pharmacie Peychaud*, and created
the “cocktail” (Arthur 1937:53-55). By virtue of social, political, and economic power gained in New Orleans, these and numerous others from Saint-Domingue became some of the city’s most prominent and powerful leaders of the Creoles.

The United States took possession of New Orleans on December 30, 1803 (Kendall 1922:48). Although Americans had been moving into the city since at least 1800, with the transfer of New Orleans to the United States, they became source of significant immigration to the city. The Creoles of New Orleans, unlike their reception of the Creoles of Saint-Domingue, resented the intrusion of the Americans. The Americans were just too different: They were viewed as boisterous and vulgar by the more refined people of New Orleans. In addition, as the Americans were in in administrative control of the city beginning in 1804, the Americans were extremely wary of the influx of the refugees from Saint-Domingue: More French-speaking immigrants, with their love of France and anything French, were seen as a threat to the Americanization of the city.

In the context of chronic tension between English-speakers and French-speakers in New Orleans since the Louisiana Purchase, the apparent reinforcement of the Gallic population by the refugees was a major factor in the negative reaction of Anglo-Americans. From the start, the latter had counted on immigration to make English-speakers a majority of the population. For those who entertained such hopes for the rapid Americanization of Louisiana, the influx of refugees in 1809 seemed a major setback. It more than cancelled out previous gain in the American population (Lachance 1988:117).

The immigration of 1803-1804 spurred a building boom in the city of New Orleans; most of them needed houses or rooms to rent, at least initially. It turned out to be fortunate for Bernard de Marigny. As a major landowner at the time, and finding himself in need of additional funds, in 1805 much of his plantation property, downriver of the Vieux Carré, was subdivided to create Faubourg Marigny. Initially most of the buildings in the new development were simple
Creole cottages inhabited by *gens de couleur*, who were primarily artisans and workers (Vogt 1985).

Another building boom was experienced in 1809 and 1810, when the immigration of Saint-Domingue refugees doubled the population of New Orleans. Again simple Creole cottages were the type most commonly, and hurriedly, erected. Although historical documentation mentions only the Creole cottages, it is quite likely that even less substantial dwellings were also built. There is at present a controversy regarding when the first of the shotgun houses appeared in Louisiana (See Edwards 1999:44-46). It may be that in the area of New Orleans closest to the swamp where many slaves and poorer free blacks and mulattoes lived, the area now called Faubourg Tremé, was the thus-far-undocumented home of the early shotgun houses in New Orleans.

Although the loyalty of the Creoles to their new American home was demonstrated in the course of the War of 1812, this was probably more of a reaction to the British attempt at invasion than it was a true reconciliation between the Americans and the Creoles. Politically, the white Creoles gained power. The rights and privileges of mulattoes and free persons of color had become increasingly under stricture by an act of the territorial legislature: enacted on June 7, 1806, and extended to all free persons of color on April 14, 1807. The slaves of the refugees had been permitted entry by a special exemption to the 1808 law regarding entry of foreign slaves into the Territory of Orleans. By 1809, then “Governor Claiborne wanted this law enforced”

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5 This act, adopted “June 7, 1806, the entry of free men of color fifteen years old and above from Hispaniola and the other French islands...act of April 14, 1807, extended the prohibition to all free persons of color regardless of origin” (Lachance 1988:124, footnote 65).

6 Lachance explained that slaves were permitted entry into Louisiana by an exception to the 1808 law prohibiting the importation of foreign slaves. Lachance’s footnote 55 cites the
Bernard Marigny

Bernard Marigny, one of the most famous French-Creoles, and one of the few noble families in Louisiana, of the period, was born Bernard Xavier Philippe de Marigny de Mandeville in New Orleans in 1785. As his father, Pierre Philippe, had amassed a “colossal fortune,” Bernard had been indulged for all his young life (Spalek 1959:28). Bernard was about aged 15, when his father, Pierre Philippe de Marigny died about 1800. When his father’s estate was finally resolved in 1803, Bernard was still a teenager. He inherited the fortune which was reputed to be approximately seven million dollars. Due to the indulgence to which he was accustomed, his guardian was unable to control the headstrong teen. Bernard was sent to England in the hope that his behavior and manners would improve. They did not. Bernard developed into a willful and self-indulgent young man with a fondness for wine and women and a predilection for playing “Hazard” and other games of chance. He was sent home to New Orleans.

Back in New Orleans, and only a short year since he had received his inheritance, Bernard married a young woman named Mary Ann Jones in the summer of 1804, when both were aged nineteen. Her father, Even Jones, was a wealthy Pennsylvanian and the American Consul in New Orleans. Her mother was Marie Verret, from “a fine Creole family” (Spalek 1959:46-47).

reference for this as “Section II of the ‘Act for the remission of certain penalties and foreitures, and for other purposes,’ approved June 28, 1809, Annals, 11th Congress, appendix 2508.”

7 “Hazard” was a game Marigny frequently played and introduced to New Orleans upon his return. In New Orleans the game soon became known as “crapaud,” shortened by Americans to “craps.”
Marigny was an inveterate gambler, and his vast fortune became significantly depleted. To recover some of his wealth, tossed away through gambling and his very expensive lifestyle, Marigny, upon reaching his majority in 1806, subdivided the bulk of his plantation for sale into individual lots. The “piecemeal” (Tinker 1971:36) sale of the property would bring a greater return than if the plantation had been sold as a single unit. The subdivision\(^8\) was known as Faubourg Marigny, and initially the sixty-foot lots were sold to his fellow Creoles. However, still hard-pressed for cash, it was not long before he began to sell even smaller-sized lots to \textit{gens de couleur}, free people of color.

Mary Ann Jones de Marigny died at age 23 in August, 1808. Within a few months, at a ball in Pensacola, Marigny met eighteen year old Anna Mathilde Morales, whose father was Don Juan Ventura Morales, Intendent and Royal Contador at Pensacola,. They were married in March, 1809 (Notary Pierre Pedesclaux, volume 47, pages 534-535). Bernard’s second marriage was not a happy one; he still loved wine, women, and gambling (Spalek 1959:49).

Perhaps because of his love of New Orleans, or patriotism, or to increase his income, Marigny entered the political arena. He ran for and was elected to the New Orleans City Council in 1811 (New Orleans Public Library, Records if the City Council, Inventory of the letters, petitions, and decrees of the New Orleans Cabildo, the N.O. Conseil Municipale and the New Orleans Conseil de Ville 1770-1835). During the War of 1812, Andrew Jackson headquartered at Marigny’s plantation. Marigny, along with Edward Livingston, encouraged Jackson to accept the assistance in the war of the service of their men that the Baratarians had offered (King

\(^8\) Marigny named one of the streets in his subdivision “rue de Craps.” Fifty years later, after a church had been built on the street and the “good parishioners” were horrified to walk on a street by that name, Craps Street was renamed Burgundy (Tinker 1971:37).
1915:217-218). Although reluctant to do so, Jackson finally acceded. After the war, in 1814, Marigny was re-elected to the city council.

It was during this period that Marigny became acquainted with Samuel Peters and entered into negotiations to sell much of the property of the Marigny Plantation. In what turned out to be a financial disaster for the City of New Orleans, and change the direction of its growth and history, the negotiations failed to culminate in the sale of the property. His detestation of Americans became known to the whole of the city. Marigny’s archenemy, Peters, entered politics in 1829. Marigny and Peters ran against each other for State Representative. Marigny won the election by a small margin, although many of the Creoles disagreed with him and refused to continue to support him in his political campaigns.

Marigny stated in his 1822 “Memoires” (Blanchard 1939) that he was a member of the Louisiana Senate. In 1822 a printer in Paris published Marigny’s “Memoire of Bernard Marigny, Resident of Louisiana Addressed to His Fellow Citizens.” The document iterates Marigny’s objections to the possible change in policy and ownership of the batture under consideration by the Courts, and expresses Marigny’s understanding of the dire financial situation of the Vieux Carré (and Faubourg Marigny), that would result from the Faubourg St. Mary developments upriver. Also, although not documented until 1848, the contents of what was apparently read

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9 This document was originally published in Paris in 1822, and the translation by Olivia Blanchard was published in 1939 by the Works Project Administration.

10 Marigny also wrote a pamphlet which was read into the record of the Louisiana Senate on March 18, 1822. The pamphlet was Marigny’s statement of his remembrance of the Battle of New Orleans and associated events. In the statement he attested to his great and abiding patriotism and defended his fellow Creoles “against the insinuations and inuendos” they suffered from Americans after the battle. Marigny’s statement was translated by Grace King, “Reflections on Jackson’s Campaign”(1923:61-85). The document may be found at The Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center, MSS 557, folder 219. The document was
into the Louisiana Senate record was “Marigny’s Réflexions sur la campagne du Général André
Jackson, en Louisiane, en 1814 et 1815.” (See footnote 9.) The translation by King in 1923
indicates the Louisiana Senate unanimously adopted a resolution on March 18, 1822 that they
should “give him [Marigny] a right to the esteem and respect of this body, and as to the gratitude
of its members as well as to the good wishes they express for his happiness.” (See footnote 8).
Lacking sufficient support, Marigny was defeated in 1828 and 1830, when he ran for governor.

Much of New Orleans blamed Marigny, when the prosperity of Faubourg St. Mary
outstripped the rest of the city. Marigny could no longer garner the support needed to pursue
politics. By 1839 he was impoverished and needed to make a living: He became a Notary
Public. The extravagance of his lifestyle, his continued self-indulgence in wine, women, and
gambling, had brought him nearly to poverty, at least by his previous standards. He “was almost
penniless and was reduced to the barest necessities in a tiny cottage, attended by one loyal old
negress” (Tinker 1971:39), until his death in 1868.

Early Nineteenth Century New Orleans

By the early nineteenth century New Orleans had a long history of being a city of diverse
ethnic groups. The arrival of the emigrés from Saint Domingue effectively doubled the city’s
population in 1808 and 1810 and permanently altered the atmosphere from provincial to
cosmopolitan. Yet, these emigrés were not the only ones pouring into the city – Americans and
immigrants from other countries were also arriving daily.

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published by the printer J. L. Sollee, 137 Chartres Street (New Orleans), in 1848. In 1848 the
statement was entered in the Notary Public ledger of Marigny, as the Clerk of the District Court
of Louisiana.
There were very few Irish immigrants to be found in New Orleans during the French Colonial Period (1722-1762), but more began to arrive during the Spanish Dominion (1763-1803), after O’Reilly arrived in 1769. By the early nineteenth century, a number of both Anglo and Irish immigrants had become well-established and proceeded to make their fortunes.

Fortunes were made in real estate and land speculation. Anglo-Americans such as Samuel J. Peters, John McDonogh and Peter Conery, and Easterners Judah Touro, Thomas Slidell and L. C. and G. B. Duncan joined wealthy Irishmen John Hagen and Patrick Irwin and prominent Creoles such as Benjamin Laurant Millaudon in promoting an American New Orleans from the cypress swamp and cane and indigo plantations. As Anglo-American, Irish and Germans came to the city by the tens of thousands, these speculators acquired and developed real estate to absorb the immigrants (Wilson 1971:xiv).

These earlier Anglo-heritage immigrants from other American cities were quite unlike the impoverished Irish refugees who arrived later. To a great extent the earlier immigrants came to be more or less accepted by the Creoles of the city. However, with respect to their relations with the Creoles, these American and Irish immigrants, may have been granted only “American” social status and may not have been actually socially accepted as equals. The volume of Irish immigration became a flood in the 1830s and 1840s, before the Irish Potato Famine began in 1845 (Niehaus 1965:132). This massive immigration was “a leading factor in changing the composition of the city’s population from dominantly Negro to dominantly white” (Niehaus 1965:35-36), which it did according to the U. S. Censuses of 1830 and 1840 (see Table 3 in Part I). There were too many of them, and they were too different from the Creoles, to be assimilated easily.

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11 While the question may have been partially responsible for non-acceptance, it could well have been solely a matter of ethnic and cultural values (especially with respect to marriage to any in the highest socio-economic category), particularly as displayed in attitude and behavior.
Notables in the Growth and Development of the City

Roffignac

Joseph Roffignac was born in 1766 in Angoulême, France. His godparents were the Duke and Duchess D’Orleans, whose son became Louis Philippe, King of France. He was a member of the French army. In 1789 he fled from France to avoid the guillotine and arrived in New Orleans in 1801, accompanied by James Pitot. When he became a naturalized citizen of the United States and elected to make New Orleans his new home, he discarded his title of Count Louis Philippe Joseph de Roffignac to become a republican.

In 1803 he was a member of the Territorial Legislature. Later he served ten consecutive terms in the State Legislature. He was a long-time Director of the Bank of Louisiana. He had been connected with the City Council for ten years before he was elected Mayor of the City of New Orleans on May 1, 1820. He was repeatedly re-elected without opposition, and he served for eight years. During his tenure as Mayor, the city was continuously beset by problems of public order. His tempestuous administration [was] highlighted by bitter Gallic-Anglo-American ethnic conflicts, with Roffignac assailed as champion of corrupt, “aristocratic” and “backward” French community, climaxing in near civil war 1823-1825 (Conrad 1988:692).

In 1822 as Mayor, he lobbied the Legislature to authorize $300,000 in city bonds to fund “paving and watering” of the Vieux Carré and St. Mary (Kendall 1922:17). He was a constant advocate of paving the city. The majority of the 1822 bond funds were put to this use, but the paving did not go very far. By 1835 only two streets had been paved the whole length.

He paid constant attention to the cleaning of the streets, primarily for purposes of sanitation. He also tried to improve sanitation by developing a natural drain in the rear of the
American quarter. He had trees planted in Place D’Armes, Circus (Congo) Square, and on the levee fronting the city. He advocated extending the levee in front of the city.

John McDonogh

Although Samuel Wilson refers to John McDonogh (1779-1850) as an Anglo-American, he is referenced as a “third generation Scotch-Irishman” in Allan’s biography (Allan 1983[1886]:iv). McDonogh was involved in numerous commercial enterprises and was heavily involved in land speculation. He has often been termed a speculator, buying property but rarely selling any.

John McDonogh was born December 29, 1779 and reared in Baltimore. He relocated to New Orleans by 1800 at about the age of twenty (or twenty-one) to carry on the business of his employer, a Baltimore flour merchant named William Taylor, to whom McDonogh had been indentured since the age of 17\(^{12}\) (Allan 1983 [1886]:8-10). While still in the employ of Taylor, in 1801 McDonogh formed a partnership with W. O. Payne. Payne left New Orleans in mid-1802, and thus that partnership was dissolved. In September, 1802 McDonogh formed a new partnership with Shepherd Brown, and together they started “J. McDonogh, Jr. & Co.” and “Shepherd Brown & Co.” (Ciravolo 2002:1).

Within the first few years of his residence in New Orleans, McDonogh “acquired a good mastery of the French and Spanish languages” (Allan 1983[1886]:20). As a young man, newly freed from the strictures of his very religious father, and the daily oversight of his indenture, he pursued the “good life” and was extremely sociable.

\(^{12}\)As cited in a footnote in Ciravolo (2002:1), the whole of the indenture contract appears in William Talbot Childs’ John McDonogh: His Life and Works (Baltimore, 1945) on pages 4 and 5.
In 1803 and 1804, after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, McDonogh, in conjunction with his partner Shepherd Brown, began his accumulation of real estate with the purchase of land certificates for 120,000 arpents in West Florida, located on both sides of the Pearl River and south of the 31st latitude, from the Spanish government. It was not until January of 1874, twenty-four years after McDonogh’s death, that the Supreme Court of the United States upheld McDonogh’s claim of ownership (Allan 1983[1886]:31-32).

In 1805 McDonogh became a director in the Louisiana Bank (Allan 1983[1886]: 19). McDonogh retired from actively working in mercantile business in 1806 to devote his time and energies to the acquisition and maintenance of his real estate, although he did have several commercial stores. At the time of his death at age 70, McDonogh was thought to be the largest landholder in the state, owning approximately 610,000 acres most of which were in Louisiana (Allen 1983[1886]:17).

McDonogh fought for New Orleans against the British on January 8, 1815, at the Battle of New Orleans in Chalmette. He was a member of Beale’s Rifles, a unit composed principally of “men of property and influence,” and acquitted himself quite well (Allan 1983[1886]:30).

The young McDonogh was apparently both handsome and sufficiently wealthy to be invited to numerous social events. He hosted many of his own fêtes at his home on the northwest corner of Chartres and Toulouse13 (Kendall 1943:8). The parties were well-attended, though at least some Creoles may not have considered him completely socially acceptable. He was lucky

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13 Although this intersection is specifically cited in Kendall’s article, there is no documentation in either the City Directory or the Census for his residence at this location. He purchased 610-612 Chartres on December 11, 1844, but he continued to reside on the West Bank.
in business, but not lucky in love. After McDonogh’s death, rumors to explain his reclusive life of later years circulated, involving unrequited love (Kendall 1943).

One rumor was that John McDonogh, aged about thirty, asked for Micaela Almonester’s hand in marriage around 1810 (or 1811) when she was fourteen, still a schoolgirl at the Ursuline Convent. According to the rumor, the romance was terminated because her father disapproved of the alliance, McDonogh was not Catholic. Her father, Don Pedro Almonastre y Roxas had died years earlier in 1798, so there is the strong possibility that this rumor may not be true. The rumor of a proposed marriage between the two later surfaced, or re-surfaced, based on the fact that the Baroness wanted to demolish some of McDonogh’s buildings which abutted her property in the late 1840s. Micaela needed a few more feet of property to make an alley by the Pontalba Apartments she was building. Regardless of the possibility of previous hard feelings or unrequited love on his part, when McDonogh discovered she had destroyed some of his property to build the Pontalba Apartments, he sued her (Ciravolo 2002:16-17). Christina Vella, author of Intimate Enemies, considers the rumors of any romance between McDonogh and Micaela to be unsubstantiated (Vella 1997:255). Members of the Pontalba family denied any engagement. They “maintained that McDonogh was too poor and of origins too humble to have ever been an acceptable candidate for the hand of the wealthy and wellborn Micaela” (Kendall 1943:9).

However, Kendall tends to give credence to the rumor in his 1943 article, based on the fact that not only were both parties in question still alive at the time of the rumor, but also were presumably capable of denying the veracity of any such rumors. Hundreds of individuals in New

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14 A year or so later, in 1811 when she was sixteen, Micaela did marry her cousin, Baron Joseph Xavier de Pontalba.
Orleans were personally acquainted with both McDonogh and Micaela at the time, although it may be that these acquaintances were those who initiated and perpetuated the rumors.

Another rumor of unrequited love was that between McDonogh and Susan (or Elizabeth) Johnston (or Johnson) around 1814. Apparently again McDonogh was denied the marriage due to differences in religion: the young lady’s father refused to permit the marriage because McDonogh was not Catholic. Apparently McDonogh and Miss Johnston waited for several years for her father to give his approval to the marriage, which he never did. A Miss Johnston later joined the Ursuline Convent (Ciravolo 2002:17-18). Many years later as the head of the house of a religious society, when the lady in question was permitted visitors, McDonogh began to visit her annually, during the first week of January (Kendall 1943:12).

McDonogh had a mistress, a Frenchwoman named Carmelite (or Carmelita) Pena who had two children (Francis Pena and Gertrude Pena). The dates of this relationship with Madame Pena are not specified in his biographies. Furthermore, it is not known whether he was the natural father of the children or if their father had died. However, he had both of Carmelite’s children educated and gave a dowry to Gertrude which permitted her to marry well and relocate along with her husband to France. In the original version of the will, McDonogh stated specifically that he had no children of his own, and no financial bequest was made to Francis. A codicil to the will was presented years after McDonogh’s death, and in 1858 the court awarded $100,000 to Francis (Ciravolo 2002:18-20).

In a spate of legal and financial “housekeeping,” McDonogh transacted a number of property transfers between March and October, 1821. On May 25, 1821, as recorded in the Acts of the Notary Michel de Armas, McDonogh gave three pieces of property to Francis and one
McDonogh was a member of the First Episcopal Church in New Orleans. After his move to the West Bank, he attended St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, almost directly across the river from his home in McDonoghville.

Regardless of the true depth of his love and affection, he was unable to overcome his rigid up-bringing with respect to his religious convictions. The elite of nineteenth century New Orleans did not accept McDonogh as a social equal. In any event, McDonogh removed himself to McDonoghville on the West Bank, either in June, 1817 (Allan 1983:33) or in 1825 (Kendall 1943:9), where he reputedly became a miser and a recluse. The 1827 City Directory has John McDonogh living on the West Bank. Large tracts on land on the West Bank were among the properties that McDonogh acquired (Figure 20). It was during this same period and in preparation for his anticipated life as a married man, that McDonogh prepared a home for his intended bride prior to his move (no later than 1825) to McDonoghville. McDonogh built a huge house (Kendall 1943:13) or according to Allan 1983:32-33) bought a house – Monplaisir – on the West Bank of the river (Figure 21). The house fronted on the river and had two wings, each two stories with 5 or 6 rooms. As a bachelor McDonogh lived in three rooms on the second floor.

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15McDonogh was a member of the First Episcopal Church in New Orleans. After his move to the West Bank, he attended St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, almost directly across the river from his home in McDonoghville.
floor, leaving the remainder of the finely furnished house relatively untouched. Dust, moisture and moths progressively damaged the furnishings, which lay undisturbed for the twenty-five years prior to his demise.

Apparently about the time McDonogh removed himself from the city and social pursuits, his friend and physician suggested that if McDonogh wished to live to be old he could quit drinking and smoking cigars.

McDonogh prided himself on the fact that he could give up these two vices, however, he kept a well-stocked wine cellar to share with his occasional guests. While he may have been a miser, and appeared so to the people of New Orleans, he did not curtail his enjoyment.
of personal comforts. His furnishings were mahogany, the table service was solid silver, and the best quality coffee, milk, and various foods were served. In addition, he and his home were attended by “scores of slaves” (Kendall 1943:14).

While McDonogh lived in the suburb across the river from the city, he journeyed into the city almost daily to conduct his various business affairs – attending meetings with attorneys, bankers, and other businessmen; collecting rents; managing his properties; and checking on his stores. McDonogh had several working plantations which claimed no small portion of his attention. The plantation on which he resided in McDonoghville sent vegetables to the Farmer’s Market in the Vieux Carré every day. In addition to his income from rents and businesses, vegetable sales were quite profitable, earning him $80 to $100 daily (Kendall 1943:14). Even though his income was clearly very high at a time when many earned significantly less, he was heavily in debt. He routinely borrowed heavily to increase his property holdings. His predilection for suing tenants who failed to pay their rents earned him the reputation of being a cold and hard businessman (Ciravolo:2002:10). In particular, one suit (which he lost, due to public sympathy for her plight) against a widow with children elicited general disapproval by the citizens of New Orleans (Kendall 1943:7-8).

Allen quotes from the Continental Magazine of August, 1862 that a few years prior to his death, McDonogh had completed “his line of circumvallation around the city of New Orleans” (Allan 1983:71). McDonogh was extremely proud of the completion of this property acquisition. No one could enter or leave New Orleans without crossing his property.

McDonogh utilized a two-pronged attack in his quest for property acquisition. One method discussed in Continental Magazine was that he purchased the back-lands of river-
fronting plantations. The other method is mentioned in Vella’s *Intimate Enemies*. She quotes from the May 2, 1851 issue of the *Daily Delta* which published a letter from a reader who wrote that McDonogh “preferred letting his houses to disorderly people, prostitutes, etc., as it depreciated the property adjoining, and he could buy it lower as few people would buy or improve in such a neighborhood” (Vella 1997:255). Through such methods McDonogh was able to acquire over 600,000 acres. The vast majority of McDonogh’s property was left to the public school systems of New Orleans and Baltimore with the provision that the property was never to be sold. However, contrary to McDonogh’s wishes, most of the real estate was sold at a fraction of McDonogh’s estimate of the value before the beginning of the Civil War.

This political cartoon (Figure 22), drawn by D. Canova, appeared October 31, 1850 in the New Orleans’ *Bee* a few days after McDonogh’s death. The caption of the illustration indicates the drawing was done October 24 and McDonogh died two days later, on October 26, 1850 (Appendix 1 for Obituary). The implication of the descriptive statement at the bottom of the cartoon is that McDonogh was too miserly to pay the fare to cross the river by ferry. According to Kendall (1943:17-18), McDonogh had explained to one of his friends that it was too far for him to walk from his home in McDonoghville to Algiers to board the ferry and then back every day for his daily business visits to the city.

But New Orleans would not believe this simple explanation, and once when bad weather made the river too dangerous for the old man to attempt its passage in his tiny boat, and he was compelled to utilize the ferry, so extraordinary was the event considered that the next morning one of the newspapers felt free to print a derisive paragraph, announcing that John McDonogh had actually spent five cents to be taken over to the city, and five cents to return (Kendall 1943:18).

The ferry docked at Canal Street, and it was McDonogh’s practice to walk from the Canal Street docks to attend to his many business affairs. It was reported that only once was it noted in
forty years that McDonogh took the omnibus, a fare of ten cents, from Canal Street to the Courthouse. “The only exception apparently was when he was feeling faint two days before his death, an exception which caught the public’s fancy” (Ciravolo 2002:10 from the 1862 issue of the *Continental Monthly*. Thursday October 24, 1850 was the last day McDonogh went into the city to work (Allan 1983:63).

![Figure 22](image.png) McDonogh crossing the Mississippi River on the last day he went into New Orleans to work. Image courtesy The Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center.

**The Will**

McDonogh’s will was dated December 29, 1838. Prior to McDonogh’s death his attorney C. Roselius was the only one privy to the provisions of the will; the attorney revealed
the matter when consulted about it years later in 1844 (Allan 1983:57). Allan (1983:75-76) discusses the will’s provisions: 1) a moderate provision for the support of his sister Jane McDonogh Hamet and her family; 2) his slaves (except for those recently acquired) were to be set free and sent to Liberia (except for a few older slaves who wished to remain in New Orleans). Fifteen years after his death, the more recently acquired slaves were to be set free and sent to Liberia as well; 3) the remainder of his estate, and including one-half of the total net income of the estate until the other endowments were met, was to be applied to the establishment and support of free schools for the education of the poor in Baltimore and New Orleans; and 4) the school boards were to establish one day each year on which all the children who attended the schools were to place flowers on his grave. Each of the endowments included in the will were for one-eighth of the total net income of the estate: 1) up to $25,000 per year for forty years to the American Colonization Society; 2) up to $600,000 to the City of New Orleans to found an asylum and care for the poor; 3) up to $400,000 to the Society for the Relief of Destitute Orphan Boys of the City of New Orleans; and 4) up to $3,000,000 for the establishment of a farm school near the city of Baltimore for poor boys. In addition, McDonogh directed that all his estate be invested in real estate and should never be sold or alienated, and that only the income from the property be used to pay the endowments.

\[16\] Originally McDonogh was interred in a tomb in McDonoghville on the West Bank, but in 1860 his remains were removed to Baltimore. After McDonogh’s servant Fanny, who had accompanied him from Baltimore at the beginning of the nineteenth century, died and was also interred in the same tomb, it was decided that it was inappropriate for the schoolchildren of New Orleans to place flowers on the grave of a former slave (Kendall1943:4-5). McDonogh Day (or Founder’s Day) was celebrated by the children of the McDonogh public schools from 1878 until the 1950s with children placing flowers at a monument (Figure 23) that they had saved their pennies to have erected (www.geocities.com/twincousin2334/NO_McDonogh_Day.html, accessed 02/23/09). The practice has recently resumed by some schools.
The Inventory

As McDonogh’s will made a number of provisions and endowments, he named 17 executors. Of these men, four who lived in New Orleans took charge of the estate’s inventory: Christian Roselius, François Bizot D’Aquin, William E. Leverich, and Abial Dailey Crossman (Allan 1983:78-79). On November 1, 1850, according to Notary Adolphe Mazureau (Volume 38 of the Notary’s records), he met with these four principal executors, two court appointed appraisers, and two witnesses in McDonogh’s office in the Union Bank of Louisiana on the corner of Royal and Customhouse Streets in New Orleans. The inventory committee met, usually five days per week for approximately seven and one-half months, from November 1, 1850 to June 16, 1851 to complete the inventory. The inventory comprises the whole of Notary Mazereau’s Volume 38 and is 851 pages (see Appendix 2 for a Summary of McDonogh’s Inventory).

Although McDonogh himself had valued his estate at upwards of ten millions, this was probably based on his assessment of the future value of the property. The exact amount of total value of the estate determined by the appraisers at the time of the inventory was $2, 079,926.23 1/12 (Mazereau 1851, Vol. 38).

At this first meeting it was noted by the executors that the seals on the doors of McDonogh’s home on the West Bank of the Mississippi River had been raised by a Justice of the Peace, because a gang of burglars had broken into the house on the night of October 28, while it
was under seal by the court. The burglars had stolen a tin box which had been found in an open
field not far from the house on the morning after the theft. Upon discovery the box contained:

certain envelopes being pieces of oil cloth and paper, greatly lacerated and nearly torn to
pieces, which were supposed to have contained Bonds of the Municipality No. One, to the
amount of one hundred and sixteen thousand dollars, together with Dividend Warrants
thereto annexed; Second, of a bundle containing Bonds of the said Municipality No. One
to the amount of one hundred Thousand Dollars, together with Dividend Warrants thereto
in the margin annexed, which bundle had evidently been enveloped in the same manner
and with the same material as above described (Notary Adolphe Mazereau Vol. 38,
1850).

Notes found in McDonogh’s ledger confirm that the Bonds with Dividend Warrants were
contained in a tin box marked with his name and to be found in his house.

Largely due to his business practices, but also because of his penury, McDonogh was
reviled by many in New Orleans, and to a great extent his infamy has persisted. Of the more than
thirty elementary schools which were originally named for McDonogh, only seven continue to
carry his name.

Maunsel White

Maunsel White was another of the early Irish
immigrants to New Orleans who achieved great wealth through
the accumulation of property. He was born in Ireland and
orphaned at age six. About 1783 at age 13, penniless with only
an informal education, he immigrated to Louisville, Kentucky,
where he became friends with Zachary Taylor. He relocated to
New Orleans in 1801 (Kendall 1922:124), and was a naturalized
citizen of the United States. He entered business as an
accounting clerk and then became a cotton factor. He

Figure 24 Maunsel White
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maunsel_White)
eventually established Maunsel White and Company. He invested in other businesses and enterprises as well, including DeBow’s Review, the planters’ journal.

During the War of 1812, White attained the rank of Captain, commanding the troops of the Louisiana Blues, uniformed volunteers who fought in the Battle of New Orleans. In 1812 he was elected to the New Orleans City Council, where he became a member of the Finance Committee. As a member of the Finance Committee, he devised a plan whereby property owners paid the cost of paving city streets. He was appointed to the first Board of the new University of Louisiana, which later became Tulane University. As president of one of the many railroad conventions, he furthered the development of railroads in Louisiana. He was a life-long friend of Andrew Jackson, and was his cotton factor from 1826 to 1845. In 1846 he was elected to the Louisiana Senate for a four-year term, and he often served as President Pro Tem of that body.

After he retired from active participation in Maunsel White and Company in 1845, he concentrated on raising sugarcane and other produce at his model plantation of Deer Range, where he had invested in modern equipment to streamline sugar production. In 1849, Deer Plantation reported the first crop of tabasco chiles grown in the United States (New Orleans Weekly Delta, December 10, 1849, page 69, column 3). However, according to the web site for McIlhenny’s, as White’s recipe for tabasco sauce varied from theirs, “McIlhenny Company’s Tabasco Sauce,” the McIlhenny family does not credit White for the introduction of the chiles to Louisiana (www.tabasco.com/tabasco_history/mcilhenny.cfm). White also invented a wine sauce, which is still produced by his descendants.

17 McIlhenny sold tabasco sauce as early as 1869, but his letter to the U. S. Patent Office is dated September 27, 1870 (Letters, Patent No. 107,701) (www.montezumabrand.com accessed 05/27/2010).
Unlike McDonogh, White acquired property for the purpose of development and resale. His marriage to Celeste Laronde, blessed by Père Antoine at the St. Louis Cathedral, is further evidence of his success with the elite of New Orleans. After Celeste’s death, he married her sister Heloise. His acceptance by the Creole community may have been due to a number of factors: He was Episcopalian and became Catholic; Celeste was not of such vaulted social and economic standing as Michaela Almonester; and he was not penurious. By virtue of his business practices and benevolence, he became a well respected member of the “American” white community. He died December 17, 1863.

White’s social and economic success, in contradiction to McDonogh’s economic success and subsequent social rejection, indicates that religion (Protestant vs. Catholic) was a telling facet of social acceptability. It is very likely that McDonogh’s religious rigidity was a crucial factor in his attempts at upward social mobility.

**Benjamin Henry Latrobe**

This is a short summary of biographical information and discussion of Latrobe found in Marshall B. Davidson’s (1981) *Three Centuries of Notable American Architects*, pages 26-47. Benjamin Henry Latrobe was born in Yorkshire, England in 1764 and died in New Orleans in 1820. He introduced Greek Revival as a style to American national architecture. He was

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18 Samuel Wilson, Jr. In his essay “Churches of Faubourg St. Mary” (Christovich et al 1988:21-35) agrees: “Benjamin Latrobe... designed some of the first Gothic Revival structures in America” (p. 21). In *New Orleans Architecture, Vol. I*, Wilson and Lemann (1971:11) credit Latrobe with the introduction of national architecture to the city. Latrobe designed the new U. S. Customs House ... “Latrobe’s building being one of the first in the city in which red brick, white columns and trim and green blinds were used, the materials and color that soon became the characteristics of American building in New Orleans.”
educated in Moravian schools in Fulneck, Yorkshire, and then at Nieski in German Silesia. As a young man he toured Germany, France, and Italy. He started work about 1784 as a clerk in the Stamp Office. Then about 1787 he began his professional training with the engineer John Smeaton, the best in England at the time, where he learned draughtsmanship. His interest in engineering led him to an interest in architecture. He was apprenticed to the architect S. R. Cockerell, who designed public buildings. He was also influenced by George Dance the Younger and Sir John Sloane. A number of occurrences combined led to his immigration to America in 1795: his first wife Lydia had died in childbirth in 1793; the financial instability in England related to the pre-Revolutionary period in France; his mother died, leaving him some property in Pennsylvania; he was reputed to have been involved in MI-5\(^\text{19}\) activities in England, and he had possibly been framed by his superior in

\(^{19}\) MI-5 is Military Intelligence, Section 5, the United Kingdom’s counterintelligence and security agency.
that service; and, probably the most urgent, he was within ten days of being imprisoned for bankruptcy.

Much of Latrobe’s work in America was governmental largely due to the patronage of Thomas Jefferson. One of his first public buildings was the penitentiary in Richmond, Virginia (Davidson 1981:35). While still working in Pennsylvania, and later in Washington, D. C., Latrobe designed the New Orleans Customhouse, which his associate Robert Alexander built in 1807 (Donaldson 1987:383).

Latrobe, along with Magnin, Mills, and Strickland were the first full-time, technically trained professionals in engineering and architecture in America (Fitch 1948:42). Gary Donald’s 1987 article “Bringing Water to the Crescent City: Benjamin Latrobe and the New Orleans Waterworks System” specifically stated that Latrobe was “responsible for establishing the professions of both architecture and engineering in the United States (Donaldson 1987:381).

Similar to Bentham’s 1787 writings on effective and efficient control in the penitentiary, Latrobe published an essay on acoustics in the planning of public buildings (Davidson 1981:42). He was involved in the building of America’s first Greek Revival buildings – the White House and the U.S. Capitol. Later when these buildings were burned by the British in the War of 1812, President Madison had Latrobe repair the damage.

Latrobe’s greatest achievement in New Orleans was to design and build the waterworks system (Donaldson 1981:382). The project, approved in the City Council in 1811, was not completed until shortly before he died, September 3, 1820 (Colten 2005:60). The plan used for the waterworks was based on one he had prepared for Philadelphia in 1799-1801 and adapted for New Orleans. Latrobe did not actually arrive in New Orleans until January, 1819 (Figure 25).
It was Latrobe’s son Henry, aged eighteen in 1810, who spoke French and in whom Latrobe had great confidence, who presented the plan for the waterworks to the New Orleans City Council; it was his son Henry who obtained most of the extensions of the contract period for the completion of the waterworks. Henry also served as a “spotter” in 1815 in New Orleans against the British. By 1817 Henry had completed all of the waterworks project except to install the engine for the pump (which he did not have) and the main suction line from the river, but there was no money to complete the project. Henry built the lighthouse on Frank’s Island, which unfortunately collapsed in 1820 (Donaldson 1987:387). Henry designed and built the New Orleans Charity Hospital, when it was located on Canal Street between Baronne and University Place. Henry designed and built the city’s first French Opera House which was completed in 1817, but it burned soon after it was completed\(^{20}\) (Figure 26, rebuilt French Opera House). Henry died of yellow fever on September 3, 1817. Latrobe then assigned one of Henry’s associates to continue working on the waterworks project. In December, 1817 Latrobe’s finances were in such parlous condition that he was forced to declare bankruptcy and move his family from Washington to Baltimore; he still could not afford to complete the New Orleans waterworks project.

Latrobe was constantly over-committed to various projects, and whenever he could, he invested in various schemes. Although he earned good salaries and commissions from his work, many of his projects experienced delays due to financial difficulties. For instance, his re-location to New Orleans was delayed by the fact that his salary from the federal government ended when his work on the White House and Capitol ended. He, at the time had no savings because he had

\(^{20}\) The French Opera House was finally rebuilt in 1859.
invested all the money he had available in a scheme to sell German-made weapons and
knapsacks to the American government during the war, but the American government only
wanted to buy American-made goods (Donaldson 1987:386). He finally had to declare
bankruptcy in New Orleans, December 17, 181721, due to debts he had incurred in a scheme to
build steamboats with Robert Fulton, Robert Livingston, and Nicholas Roosevelt. Fulton had
died in 1815, and as his partner in the steamboat project, Latrobe fell liable to the debts.

Figure 26 James Gallier, Jr.’s drawing of the French Opera House in 1859, corner of Bourbon
and Toulouse Streets (Poesch and Bacot 1997:238).

21 Petition for bankruptcy dated December 17, 1817, copy made in 1820 located in the
Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center MSS 458, Folder 4.
Latrobe did not arrive in New Orleans until January 1819, and the engine arrived from New York in March. The steam engine was to pump water from the Mississippi River to elevated wooden reservoirs and then from there to the city through wooden and iron pipes (some wooden, some iron) to the consumers of the city (Donaldson 1987:384). Also while in New Orleans, as Latrobe could not work on one project at a time, he designed and built the central tower of the Cathedral, work was completed shortly before he died. He designed the Louisiana State Bank of New Orleans (Figure 27) on the corner of Royal at Conti, which was built posthumously in 1820. Latrobe died of yellow fever September 3, 1820, three years to the day after his son had died of a fever they had both come to New Orleans to eradicate (Donaldson 1987:395).

His journal, written in New Orleans, contains his observations on New Orleans and its people. He mentioned the Indians as having some admirable qualities, but he expressed as much contempt for them as he did for slaves (Hamlin 1955:513). Although he detested the treatment of the slaves, he considered the character of African slaves to be uncivilized (Donaldson

Figure 27 Louisiana State Bank on Royal Street. Photo from Poesch and Bacot (1997:370).
1987:391-392). Latrobe was convinced that water quality and yellow fever were related, but he did not directly associate mosquitos with the disease. The journal includes observational notes on local mosquitos: one night while in his rented room in New Orleans, he had seen four different types, one type of which was later known to carry yellow fever (Donaldson 1987:392). He further noted that new immigrants were more susceptible to yellow fever, especially those from the North. He attributed this to their style of dress, as they usually wore black hats. Mosquitos were attracted to the black hats, while they gave little attention to persons wearing white hats. Donaldson (1987) related some of the topics of journal entries which reveal he was much taken with the French women of New Orleans; he considered them beautiful (Donaldson 1987:391). In his remarks on the increasing American influence in the city, he noted that good taste was being replaced by bad. Latrobe brought more of modern look to the city. A number of the buildings he designed still stand, including the old Louisiana State Bank Building on the corner of Royal and Conti.

**Mid-Nineteenth Century**

**Samuel Jarvis Peters**

Samuel Jarvis Peters came from a long line of Puritan ancestors. He was born July 30, 1801, the oldest son of William and Pattie Peters in Toronto, Canada. The family moved back to Hebron, Connecticut where he attended school. At age 16 his school assignment was to draw a map of North America. As he followed the Mississippi River down the map, he noticed New Orleans and became intrigued. He thought that New Orleans was some day going to be a great city, so he began to prepare for his move to New Orleans to become a part of the city’s destiny (Carey 1947:443).
As a first step he moved to New York. He lived with a French family there, and he found work in a countinghouse. At night he took lessons in French (Carey 1947:443). Later, he set himself to become “acquainted with the Spanish tongue” (Carey 1947:444). He set sail from New York to New Orleans in October of 1821 at age 20, and he arrived in the city in November of 1821, a stranger. Not only was he a stranger in town, he only had three week’s worth of rent money for a room in his pocket. He found a job at Leverich and Company, a grocery wholesale business Carey (1947:145). In 1822 he was the only one of eight boarders at his boardinghouse to survive an epidemic of yellow fever. In November, 1822 he married Angelique de Silly from Santo Domingo. Kernion related in “Samuel Jarvis Peters” (1915:78) Mlle. De Silly was from St. Domingo.” In 1823 he established his own wholesale grocery, the firm of Peters and Millard, with his new partner Thomas Millard. The business was noted for its “strict integrity and honorable dealings” (Carey 1947:445).

Peters became associated with James H. Caldwell, and together they decided the future of New Orleans would depend on the economic development of the city. The Americans and others who would throng to the city to make money would need homes. They first approached Bernard Marigny with a plan to buy a large amount of his plantation property for the housing development. As the river was quite deep in this area downriver of the Vieux Carré, it would be an excellent site for warehouses and cotton presses. Marigny already had some of the streets laid out. Shortly after the streets of Ville Gravier had been laid, a number of Faubourgs were planned. Although Marigny needed the money, he abhored Americans. After an exorbitant price had been negotiated, Marigny reneged on the deal. Peters vowed revenge on Marigny. Supposedly, he “cried out ‘I shall live, by God, to see the day when rank grass shall choke up the
streets of your old faubourg” (Kendall 1922:125). In any case, Peters and Caldwell set their sights on Faubourg Ste. Marie as the site for their development. Peters and Caldwell were sure that Americans would flock to live apart from the Creoles; to some extent, they were correct. With the financial participation of Banks and Pritchard, and a few other local investors, they bought the property from Jean Gravier, the son of the Gravier for whom the area had been named. In 1829 eight years after his arrival in the city, Peters was elected to the New Orleans City Council. The especially remarkable aspect of this was that he was elected a representative of the Vieux Carré, the old city where the Creoles lived (Carey 1947:447).

There was much contention within the City Council. It was Creoles against Americans. The Creoles, having the balance of power, voted for the revenues of the whole city be applied to improvements in only the Vieux Carré and in no other areas of the city that also needed work. This rankled the Americans, especially as Faubourg Ste. Mary (their home area) had provided at least half of the revenue and had no paved streets or gas lighting. Peters was eventually able to convince the Council to build new warehouses and to repair the levees in Ste. Marie (Carey 1947:448).

During his second year on the City Council, Peters was made Chairman of the Finance Committee. Thinking that the monies of the City had been either wasted or absconded, he launched an investigation into the City’s finances. During the course of the investigation, two attempts were made on his life. It turned out that money was, in fact, missing. One Councilman absconded, and another committed suicide. At the end of his second year on the City Council in 1831, Peters resigned from the Council and was nominated to run for State Representative against Marigny. Marigny won the election by only a narrow margin.
In January of 1830 Peters, together with Hoffman, Duralde, and Cucullu, formed the New Orleans Railroad Society. On April 24, 1831 the railroad to Lake Pontchartrain was officially opened. This railway was four and one-half miles long and was perfectly straight. In September of 1832 the train was changed to a steam engine, becoming the first steam-operated railroad in America. Peters was the director of the Pontchartrain Railroad Company for years. After one hundred years of operation, the last run of the Pontchartrain Railroad was made in 1932.

**The Balance of Power Shifts**

The Faubourg Ste. Mary area developed so rapidly that by 1835, the population was nearly equal to that of the Vieux Carré, and its commerce had begun to eclipse the older portion of the city. The Creoles traded principally with the West Indies, France, and Spain and their economy remained steadfast, but the Americans traded with the North and the East, and they prospered.

There was an increase in the New Orleans banking industry during the period 1820 through 1840, and a number of banks became established during the period. (The banking industry of this period is discussed more in Part IV.) On March 12, 1832 the board of directors elected Peters President of the newly opened City Bank of New Orleans. Peters held this position until 1848, when the bank was merged into the State Bank of Louisiana. Peters was made President of the State Bank, a position he held for several years. The Commercial Bank of New Orleans was incorporated in 1832 for the express purpose of conveying water from the Mississippi River throughout the city, and Peters was on that Board of Directors.

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22 The City Bank of New Orleans was established in March, 1831 by Act of the Legislature.
In February, 1834 Peters became chairman of the committee to establish a Chamber of Commerce for the City of New Orleans. In June, once the Chamber was established, Peters became President of the Chamber of Commerce. A goal of the organization was to further the economic interests of the city; a major part of the goal was fulfilled when Peters and the Chamber were able to build up the port. “DeBow’s Review commended the Chamber of Commerce for its influence in commercial circles and the amicable settlement of so many important matters” (DeBow’s Review, II, 431 referenced in Carey:1947:454).

Peters was instrumental in the development of the St. Charles Hotel and Exchange. He was not only involved in a number of the economic projects in the city, including the banking industry, but he was also a prominent and vocal participant in politics.

Upon reaching an impasse with the City Council in the efforts to have more of the city’s revenue expended in Faubourg St. Mary, a plan was devised in which the city government could be of financial benefit to the American sector. The plan called for the separation of the city into three separate municipalities, each with their own revenue and decision-making abilities. Naturally, under this plan the Mayor and General Council were to retain certain elements of superior authority. Although initially opposed to the division of the city, Peters was among those who were assigned responsibility of presenting to and obtaining the approval of the Legislature. The plan was accepted, and Faubourg St. Mary was now called the “Second Municipality.” Peters assumed leadership of the Second Municipality, and in 1836 he was named Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Peter’s vision and efforts focused on developing New Orleans into the city that he knew was its destiny: to be the economic focus of the Mississippi River Valley. He was very
successful in his efforts to enhance the economy of the American sector. Peters died on August 11, 1855, much beloved by the people of New Orleans.

**James Henry Caldwell**

this is a short summary of the short biography of Caldwell found in Conrad (1988). Caldwell, actor, theater manager, and businessman, was born in Manchester, England in 1793. He began his acting career as a child in England and was brought to Charleston, South Carolina in 1816. He began theater management in 1817 in Alexandria, Virginia. The next year, 1818, he presented a play in Richmond and built a theater in Petersburg. He married Maria Carter Wormeley in November, 1819, who had two sons from a previous marriage. In that same year, 1819, he relocated to New Orleans. He built the Camp Street Theater in 1823, which was the first important building in the American sector of the city.

He introduced gas lighting to the American Theater in New Orleans. Caldwell was the “guiding light” behind the Gas Lighting and Banking Company, and he was the organizer for the company to supply gas lighting for the City of New Orleans. The new improvement bank organized to fund the gas lighting company received its charter on January 11, 1836 (Acts passed at the Second Session of the Twelfth Legislature, pp. 3-4). The gas lighting company began operation in 1834, and Caldwell sold his interest in the company in 1835. He opened the St. Charles Theater on November 12, 1835, one of the largest and finest in the South. The theater burned in 1843.

Caldwell also had two illegitimate sons (born 1837 and 1844, respectively). He had divorced his wife Maria some time before 1850, and in 1850, remarried Josephine Rowe in May of that year. The only child of this marriage died at the age of five. In 1862 Caldwell relocated
to New York where he died a year later on September 11, 1863. In both cultural and economic areas, Caldwell literally brought New Orleans into the light of the nineteenth century. He was a principal in the movement in New Orleans’ early steps toward modernity.
Part IV

New Orleans in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Introduction

New Orleans’ society and culture of the expansionist and antebellum years, roughly 1835 through 1860, has often been described as tripartite – consisting of whites, free non-whites, and slaves. However the actual situation may have been more complicated. Factors such as race, ethnicity, cultural heritage, and socio-economic diversity contributed to the city’s complicated social fabric and the consequent variation in house types.

Throughout the antebellum South, the exigencies of urban slavery resulted in a residential pattern at variance with that of the rural plantation. Due to the differences in population densities, economic situations, urban economics, and responses to the changing economy, numerous aspects of urban slavery differed from its rural counterpart. Racial segregation in the rural setting was based on the social and legal barrier of slave or non-slave status. This was a primary determinant of residence and was much more obvious than that found in the naturally higher density of the urban situation with its more complicated social and legal status distinctions. Although there were some free non-whites in the rural landscape, the vast majority of non-whites were slaves.

The basic white versus non-white racial division on the rural plantation was socially framed by the owner-slave relationship. The physically segregating expression of this racial and social division is evident in the house types of these two major populations. While the majority of rural whites did not in fact own slaves, of those who were slave owners, it was common for a slave-owner to only have one or two slaves. However, a relatively few large plantations owners
did have a significant number of slaves – twenty, fifty, even hundreds – giving the rural population a distinctive landscape. This landscape was seen in the house types and residential complexes and was directly related to the social and legal status of the population.

Free whites lived in the “big house” and the black slaves lived in a community of small (usually one- or two-pen) houses between the “big house” and the fields. Distance to other populated areas (such as other plantations) and available leisure time were the principal segregating barriers to casual communication between slaves of one plantation and the next.

In the urban situation slave owners had to exercise alternative methods to address the same two-fold problem of owning slaves. There was the desire, or perceived necessity, of keeping an “eye” on their property. A secondary, and potentially socially disruptive, aspect was to reduce the possibility of insurrection by limiting opportunities for slaves to congregate. This fear, in certain times and certain areas, was quite real, as history has demonstrated. The late eighteenth century revolutions, insurrections, and massacres (American Revolution, French Revolution, Haitian Revolution, etc.) were not easily put into the past. Over the years New Orleans enacted specific laws and city ordinances to address the many aspects of control of the slaves. City Ordinance No. 750 addresses locations where a slave was permitted to sleep:

Be it ordained by the common council of the city of New Orleans, That it shall not be lawful for any slave to lodge or sleep in any house or premises other than that of his owner or master, or that of his owner’s agent, or of the person to whom he may be hired, without special authority in writing to do so, which authority or permit shall specify the length of time for which it may be given. Any slave lodging or sleeping in any house, room, cabinet, or other place without permit so to do, as aforesaid, shall receive not less than ten, nor more than twenty-five lashes, unless his owner shall pay a fine of not less than ten dollars nor more than twenty-five dollars; and any free person allowing or permitting any slave to lodge or sleep in his or her house contrary to the provisions of this ordinance, shall be fined not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars. One-half of which fine shall be for the benefit of the informer (Leovy 1857:257).
City Ordinance No. 750 was not strictly enforced and, therefore, contributed to the difficulties inherent in social control of the urban non-white population. As noted by Fischer, the discipline which existed in the rural areas could not be duplicated in the complexity of the social reality of the city.

Control over the Negro population was, in short, virtually nonexistent in New Orleans. The personal system of race discipline that worked so well in the rural areas simply could not function in an urban amalgam of absentee owners, indifferent strangers, and unusually sophisticated free Negroes and slaves (Fischer 1969:930).

**Urban Residential Patterns**

Originating in the Vieux Carré, the built city spread upriver, down-river, and away from the river into the less desirable swampy area between the older portion of the city and Lake Pontchartrain (Figure 28, map of National Historic Districts). Whites, other than poor white immigrants, lived principally in the older and more central area(s) of New Orleans, as they did in other urban settings. Until the mid-nineteenth century, non-poor, white residential areas were focused in two core areas of the city: the Vieux Carré (also called the French Quarter), where many Creoles lived, and Faubourg St. Mary, home primarily to the Americans who had begun large scale immigration following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Due to the continuous in-flow, other white immigrants and non-whites principally lived in three areas of the city: the integrated Vieux Carré, Tremé (the faubourg located on the swampy area just to the lakeside of the Vieux Carré), and Faubourg Marigny\(^1\), on the down-river side of the Vieux Carré. Of the many factors involved in the selection of an urban residence, economic ones were significant.

\(^1\)The Faubourgs Tremé and Marigny were originally part of the Marigny Plantation. Bernard Marigny was white and definitely not poor. The change in its social and economic composition was very rapid in the first few years of the nineteenth century, when de Marigny developed some of his plantation.
Afford-ability and proximity to employment were important economic aspects of residential choice. However, proximity of housing does not necessarily mean amicable social interaction or social integration.

In New Orleans, which was never a strictly segregated city, blacks often lived in the white neighborhoods where they worked. Downtown, in Faubourg Marigny and elsewhere, were neighborhoods of free persons of color; uptown there were certain all-black neighborhoods, which grew in size after the advent of streetcars to transport workers to and from jobs. The two racial groups rarely mingled until Jim Crow laws were passed in the 1890s... (Cable 1980:205-206).

In New Orleans prior to the late 1840s, there existed a functional social structure based on legal status. However, the introduction of great numbers of impoverished Anglos began to erode that functionality.

The first, and most recognized, area of urban non-white residence was that of slaves living with their owners. It was common for slaves to live in the same household, although not necessarily in the same building, as their white owners. Usually a dependency, often a two-story brick building on the side of or at the rear of the primary home structure, which also housed the kitchen, served as slave quarters in the enclosed, urban household compound. Early dependencies

![Image](image-url)

**Figure 28** National Historic Districts of New Orleans. Map from Campanella’s *Time and Place in New Orleans* (2002: 82).
were not commonly attached to the primary residence, but during the 1850s the attached or in-
house kitchen began to grow in popularity (Jay Edwards Personal Communication).

However, not all urban slaves of the South, including those of New Orleans, lived with
their owners. Quite a large number of urban slaves “lived out” – that is, lived on their own, in
their own or rented, less-expensive residences or boardinghouses away from the households of
their owners (See Figures 30 and 31 for examples of rental buildings common in the 1830s and
1840s).

In the 1850s New Orleans was a city of rented rooms and boardinghouses (Figure 29). In
addition to the permanent population, thousands of people stayed in temporary quarters.

Most parts of town were filled with boarding houses, occupied by winter visitors, couples
who hadn’t yet set up housekeeping, and the several thousand single men who resided in
the city, as well as transients – ship captains, entertainers, gamblers, painters, writers,
adventurers, exiles, salesmen, and all other manner of travelers (Brady 1999:xxi).

Typically, the smaller houses, whether owned or rented, were either of the shotgun or the
Creole cottage type. Both whites and free non-whites owned boardinghouses. “In every
Southern city, free Negroes ran boardinghouses for free Negroes and slaves whose owners
allowed them to live on their own” (Berlin 1974:241).

Besides providing income and adding a measure of comfort, property ownership
had immense symbolic importance to free Negroes. In a society where their legal status
was steadily degenerating, the ownership of property held out hope that improvement was
possible. Free Negroes, like many other ethnic groups, seemed to use property mobility
as a means of compensating for the barriers to the traditional routes of occupational
mobility (Berlin 1974:246).

The most common area for non-white habitation, other than slaves living with their
owners, was on the periphery of the white residential area. Socio-economic factors rather than
racial distinctions strongly affected the area of residence. During the antebellum period this
residential periphery was home primarily to a) slaves who lived out, b) escaped slaves, c) less affluent free persons of color, and d) poor white immigrants. The periphery was usually contiguous or in close proximity to the employment of individual, but due to some physical attribute(s) of the peripheral area, it was considered an undesirable location for habitation by families and individuals of higher social and/or economic standing.

Yet no unitary black ghetto developed. The absence of urban transportation and the need for blacks to live near their place of work scattered free Negroes throughout Southern cities. Even with the advent of omnibuses in the 1830s, whites were reluctant to create a single community which might unite blacks and serve as a breeding ground for insurrection. Free Negroes usually could be found in almost every section of Southern cities, living close to whites of every nationality. Although the poorer districts of most cities contained an occasional all-Negro block – or more frequently, all-black rooming houses – working-class neighborhoods usually were a mélange of whites and blacks (Bérin 1974:253).

In New Orleans there were two primary peripheral areas for habitation predominantly by non-whites: the battures and the “back swamp.” A third area for the non-affluent was found just upriver, interspersed with the houses of the more affluent. This third area later became known as the Central Business District, the Lower Garden District and the Upper Garden District, respectively.

The battures are those areas, periodically flooded and fluctuated in size, found between the edge of the

Figure 29 Tremoulet-Pavie houses, corner of Royal and St. Louis Streets. Above – 19th century, Below – Photo by Richard Koch. Illustration from “Architecture in Eighteenth-Century West Florida” by Samuel Wilson (Farnsworth and Masson 1987:92)
Mississippi River and the higher ground of the natural levees. The *batture*, as public but not
government-owned property, was available for use by anyone. Squatters built shanties and huts,
which were more or less expected to be washed away during the next high water. The legal
“private” ownership of the *batture* of Faubourg Ste. Marie was the subject of a highly contested
(and years-long) legal battle. John Gravier had fenced off “his” strip of the *batture* from Julia
Street to St. Joseph Street. Gravier then sold the section between Julia and Common Streets of
the *batture* to his attorney Edward Livingston for $80,000. When Livingston tried to fence in
this piece of property, thousands of New Orleanians rioted (Chase 1960:219-220).

The back swamp portion of New Orleans was that swampy, wooded area of town beyond
“high” ground of the natural levees of the Vieux Carré. In the early 1800s Faubourg Tremé was
established here, on the lakeside of the Vieux Carré. The Tremé neighborhood was home to a
large number of free persons of color and slaves who lived out, as well as a haven for escaped
slaves. Inexpensive individual vernacular housing in the forms of Creole cottages and shotgun
houses were commonly found in Faubourg Tremé (Figure 30).

Notably some of the earliest-dated shotgun houses of New Orleans are found in this
primarily non-white Creole area of the back swamp, Faubourg Tremé. John Vlach noted in his
1975 dissertation on shotgun houses that the earliest date associated with a shotgun house was
the sale of one on Bourbon Street near St. Philip Street in the French Quarter in November, 1833
(Vlach 1975:63). The house may have been built years earlier, but this is not noted. Richard
Campanella (2003, personal communication) of Tulane University recently has found and dated
three houses prior to the 1833 verified date of advertisement for sale – 1805, 1806, and 1810, just
a few blocks away in Faubourg Tremé.
Three double, dormered cottages on Religious Street were the type common to rental units. These were built before 1843 (drawing made about 1843), and two of the three (1510-1512 and 1520-1524 Religious Street) were still standing as of 1998. The drawing is housed at the Notarial Archives. *New Orleans Architecture, Vol. I*, p.40.

The upriver area has had numerous designations over the years – Faubourg Ste. Marie (Faubourg St. Mary to the Americans), Lower Garden District, Second Municipal District, First Municipal District, and Irish Channel. Residences of working-class whites and non-whites were predominantly separate, small households on smaller streets located in the midst of larger, white residences on the larger streets and avenues. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, this residential pattern was even more pronounced in the “Upper Garden District,” in the area of Audubon Zoo, which is located slightly farther upriver.

Many of the servants to the more wealthy whites of the larger houses, the non-wealthy, non-whites (principally free women of color and hired female slaves) and female whites, lived in the areas of the Lower and, later, the Upper Garden District area. The male residents of these working-class households were often employed nearby at the railroads, docks, warehouses, and other businesses.

While many whites did not object to living in close association with their slaves, living in close proximity to free Negroes, particularly those of higher economic standing, was objectionable – both to the whites and to the free Negroes (Berlin 1974:256-257). In the South
white confidence in the social hegemony made racially restricted neighborhoods largely unnecessary. In the primarily Creole area of the Vieux Carré, the intersection of Bourbon and Orleans Streets was “distinguished for the equality which reigns between black and white” (New Orleans *Louisiana Gazette*, 20 May 1810 quoted in Berlin 1974:262).

To a certain extent the similarity of lifestyles, coupled with proximity, of poor whites and the less-affluent of the free Negroes paralleled the social bonding shared by upper class whites and elite freemen, and contributed to warm associations between each of the two respective groups in many cases. However, this was done with the veneer of adherence to the mores of social acceptability.

To further complicate the already diverse composition of the social fabric, neither free nor slave non-whites constituted a cohesive social group. The in-migrated, non-Creole non-whites from other areas of the United States did not blend smoothly with the Creoles (Castellanos 1978:158).

In the Lower South, these differences were further complicated by a large number of free people of color of French and Spanish ancestry and Catholic religion who
remained aloof from the “Yankee” blacks who had migrated to the Gulf ports or were manumitted by late-arriving Protestant masters. In some places, French- and Spanish-speaking creole Catholic freemen established separate communities apart from whites as well as blacks. In cities like Pensacola, Mobile, and especially New Orleans, they strove to keep their creole heritage alive through French- and Spanish-language schools and by educating their children in Europe or the West Indies. The efforts of French-speaking New Orleans free Negroes were rewarded in the 1840s when creole culture enjoyed a brief renaissance (Berlin 1974:278).

Thus far in the inspection of the social fabric, this study finds Creole and non-Creole whites, Creole and non-Creole freemen, and Creole and non-Creole slaves, and Creole and non-Creole escaped slaves. This mix is inescapably apparent in the architectural pattern of New Orleans. Examples are 1) the shotgun houses of Faubourg Tremé; multi-storied row houses; Madame John’s Legacy on Dauphine; and Creole cottages on Dauphine and Burgundy.

**Urban Social Segregation**

Although a trend towards separation along racial lines increased throughout the years preceding the Civil War, segregation was largely a matter of defined social status. Among the white Creoles, the free non-white Creoles, and the slaves, there was a socially well-regulated and relatively well-tolerated societal structure that was based on the legal status of whites, free non-whites, and slaves, respectively.

As the social role of racial segregation became blurred by the increased population and population mix, as well as the more cosmopolitan nature of the city which was developed to enhance business, more physically segregated aspects of the built environment gained in importance. Previously, segregation of whites and non-whites was more a matter of spatial segregation, i.e., separate seating at the opera or the race track, and sometimes temporal segregation, i.e., events were held at different times (particularly services at some churches). The class and racial consciousness that began to develop during the nineteenth century
subsequently led to entirely separate facilities for whites and non-whites in a number of social meeting places. Other facilities, such as coffeehouses and bars, generally remained open to patrons of any color.

In the rural (agricultural) social setting, there was little room for confusion of social roles between the masters and the slaves. “Slavery was in itself the supreme segregator,” and Fischer goes on to note that “familiarity on the plantation carried with it no possible inference of racial equality” (Fischer 1969: 927). In the urban situation, relations between whites and non-whites were not always as clearly defined as that of the master-slave relationship. In the first place, not all urban slaves worked solely for their owners. Many urban slaves in New Orleans also worked for others or had small enterprises of their own.

The profits to be made serving blacks encouraged businessmen to build separate institutions for free Negroes. During the 1830s, a New Orleans railroad opened an exclusive resort for free people of color along the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. The spa attracted wealthy freemen from Natchez as well as New Orleans and proved an enormous success. Eventually, the railroad added segregated cars to carry the free Negroes to and from the resort (Berlin 1974:323).

The situation was further complicated by the fact that poor, free non-whites and poor whites were nearly socially equal from an outsider’s point of view. The introduction of white non-Creoles, particularly poor white non-Creoles, to the mixture caused a certain amount of racial friction to develop, which spread beyond the competition between the two categories for employment. Naturally, slaves remained on the lowest rung of the social ladder, even though in many instances they were also among those competing for jobs.

Whites and slaves stood at the extremes of Southern society. According to law and custom, white citizens enjoyed nearly total freedom and black slaves almost none. Neither citizen nor slave, free Negroes dangled awkwardly in the middle of the Southern caste system. They shared some of the privileges of whites and were burdened with many of the liabilities of slaves, yet they stood apart from both. Their social identity was
further obscured by class divisions within the caste, and the fissures along class lines were complicated by color, ethnic, and denominational differences. Origin and interest often divided rich and poor, mulattoes and blacks, Episcopalians and Baptists, creoles and “Yankees” as much from each other as from whites or slaves. Still, within this matrix of whites and slaves, rich and poor, mulattoes and blacks, free Negroes tried to define their role as privileged, if oppressed, blacks (Berlin 1974:250-251).

This multi-stranded social fabric, based on legal status, color, ethnicity, culture, religion, economic situation, and social resources, the network of family and friends made the framework of every day life much more complicated than a simple tripartite explanation of New Orleans society. Although not necessarily explicitly recognized by New Orleaneans of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, many of the same factors are at play at present.

By the beginning of the Civil War, whites, that is, white immigrants in the course of their Americanization, wanted spatial segregation when other methods of social distancing were not possible (Berlin 1974:326). The emancipation of slaves reduced New Orleans from a multi-faceted three-caste society to a complicated two-caste one, effectively destroying the special legal status of free people of color.

Mid-Nineteenth Century New Orleans

As a city in which social mechanisms structured relations between the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural populace, limited immigration was not viewed as problematic. When the mass immigration of French-heritage refugees from St. Domingue arrived, and doubled the population of the city, the city maintained social stability. The influx of thousands of impoverished Irish immigrants to the city in the quarter of a century preceding the Civil War did not assimilate into New Orleans as easily as earlier large immigrations of others had done, and the social structure of the city was destabilized. Although well-distributed throughout the city, a very large number of the recent Anglo immigrants resided in Faubourgs St. Mary and Marigny. The census of 1850
indicates that these two faubourgs had a high proportion of Irish and Germans who had not been born in America.

When the Irish newcomers, many fleeing in the wake of the Irish Potato Famine, arrived in New Orleans in the mid-nineteenth century, often they were met at the ship by boardinghouse-keepers, who directed them to their and other Irish-owned enterprises in the Lower Garden District area and to the Third Municipality (Gordy 1960:14). These recent arrivals were in close competition with non-whites for jobs. Unlike earlier Irish immigrants, when the future of slavery was not in question, these Irish feared the emancipation of the slaves. It would only serve, from their point of view, to put more non-whites on the labor market.

The white worker suffered from indirect competition with slaves because the chief advantage of the system lay in the fact that, for all but dangerous occupations, it was cheaper than free labor for tasks requiring skilled or unskilled workers (Gordy 1960:22-23).

This economic competition was largely responsible for the developing class consciousness of the poor whites who feared loss of their distinction from the slaves should the slaves be freed (Gordy 1960:23).

The preference of employers for white or slave labor forced free Negroes to underbid whites and work on the same terms as slaves. By accepting lower wages and longer hours, many free Negroes found employment, but they aroused the ire of white workingmen, who complained that free Negroes depressed their standard of living (Berlin 1974:229).

The skills free Negroes acquired because of the stigma of “nigger work” protected their jobs from the least skilled white workers, while fear of being identified with blacks guarded freemen from more accomplished white competitors (Berlin 1974:237-238).

While on one hand economic competition with poor whites was giving rise to a class (and racial) consciousness, free Negroes were at the same time dependent on their social and familial relations with more wealthy whites for economic security and advancement. In New Orleans
many of the supportive whites were Creoles. “By pursuing success in the white economy, free
Negroes tied themselves to the white standard of values” (Berlin 1974:248).

The census of 1850 indicates an extremely high proportion of the population of the 2nd
Municipality (which includes the area around Julia Street) was white. Furthermore, a great
number of these residents were born in either Ireland or Germany. Although crowded, the area of
Magazine Street, inhabited by German and Scot immigrants, was “orderly and clean” (Gordy
1960:36-37). The tenements on St. Thomas Street (which housed Irish and English) were a row
of one-story brick tenements roughly 150 feet long and with a narrow alley of approximately six
feet wide. The tenements of the Irish and English immigrants were “disorderly and dirty,”
especially the alley (Gordy 1960:36-37).

In the literature on the 1853 yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans, it is estimated that
one out of five Irish died (Kendall 1922:175-178; King 1968:282-289). The fever victims were
primarily concentrated in “Lynch’s Row” and the area of St. Thomas and Tchoupitoulas Streets
(Kendall 1922:176). The prevalence of particular diseases which seemed to “favor” certain
population groups greatly facilitated upward socio-economic vertical mobility for those on the
lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder by eliminating some of those higher on the ladder.

Money and Politics: Economic Activity

Economies are in continuous flux. They rise and decline at varying rates and intensity,
often separated by periods of stagnation. As Clark (1970) demonstrated in the Economic History
of New Orleans, 1718-1820, after 1800 the city began an almost steady climb to its pinnacle of
the Antebellum period, which has been called the “Golden Age.” Henry Rightor in Standard
History of New Orleans, Louisiana explained: “...The quarter of a century between 1815 and
1840 was the golden age commercially of that city, when it saw its greatest prosperity” (1900:553). In the period generally termed “Economic Expansion,” associated with the years 1835-1850, there was a flurry of activity in nearly all areas of the economy. Construction of new buildings, updating or modernization of older ones, and financing for new projects was made possible by the new financial institutions that were created. Although there had been ups and downs in the economy, a major “down” was the national financial crisis of 1837. Peter Rousseau in “Jacksonian Monetary Policy, Specie Flows, and the Panic of 1837” described the panic as “among the most severe in its [U. S.] history” (2002:257). The pace of the economic recovery of the city was astounding. New Orleans was a place to get rich and enjoy the “good life,” and thousands swarmed to the city to try.

There was a period of great activity and interest, in fact, during the decade 1830-1840, New Orleans was the point at which money could be made with more rapidity than anywhere else in the United States. Commission merchants made thousands, where they had to be satisfied with hundreds after the Civil War (Thompson 1915:38).

The Golden Age was abruptly halted by the Civil War.

A few of the major developments affecting the economic situation in New Orleans as the city entered the period of Economic Expansion may be in order. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 was accompanied by an influx of Americans. Early in the century banking became more formalized, and a few local institutions were established.

The transfer of Louisiana to the United States was the signal for a large immigration of American merchants into New Orleans from Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and other Atlantic coast cities, Beverly Chew, Judah Touro, Maunsell White, John McDonough, Rezin Shepherd, Samuel Lockwood, Richard Relf, J. W. Zacharie and Geo. B. Ogden were of this number (Thompson 1915:16).

Thomas Jefferson authorized the United States Branch Bank, which opened in 1804 (Thompson 1915:11). Later Beverly Chew became President of the bank, during which time he
became friends with Maunsell White. The first local bank, Banque de la Louisiane (located in the building which is now Brennan’s restaurant on Royal Street), was the first bank to issue paper notes (Figure 32). The bank was chartered March 4, 1804 and opened the following January 1st. The wealthiest planter in Orleans Territory, Julien Poydras, was president, and Stephen Zacharie was cashier. The Board of Directors was composed primarily of merchants in the city: John McDonogh, Nicholas Girod, Richard Relf, and Thomas Urquhart (Thompson 1915:16).

The need for an enhanced cash flow to facilitate the high costs of production directly related to the scale of the plantations, as well as the high, but delayed, profits from the sale of plantation produce, supported the rise of a significant banking industry in the nineteenth century.

According to the *Annuaire Louisianais*, a little French directory printed in ‘Nouvelle Orleans for 1809,’ the personnel of the bank boards of that year, were: Banque de la Louisiane: Julien Poydras, president; Nicholas Girod; Richard Relf; Michel Fortier; Franc Duplessis; Thomas Urquhart; Paul Lanusse; J. B. Labbatut; Francois Livaudais; Jas. Carrick; Jean Soulie; J. McDonough, Jr.; Wm. Donaldson; Samuel Winter and Jas. Pitot directors, with J. B. Fitzgerald, cashier. The office was No. 18 Rue Royalle...Banque des Etats-Unis: Benj. J. Morgan, president; Directors – Geo. T. Phillips, Wm. Brown, Joseph McNeill, W. C. Mumford, Beverly Chew, Anthony Cavalier, Jr., John W. Gurley, Wm.

The Banque de la Louisiane and the U.S. Bank remained the only major banks in the city for the next few years. The Legislature authorized two additional banks in 1810: The Planter’s and the Orleans (Figures 33 and 34). The city was expanding. During the growth made possible by the economic up-tick, Canal street was laid out (Thompson 1915:18).

Congress created the state of Louisiana in 1811, and sanctioned the new Louisiana Constitution in 1812 (Thompson 1915:18). It was also during this year, 1812, that the first steamboat arrived in New Orleans, a development which greatly enhanced the marketing and trade up and down the river. At the time of Louisiana’s admission as a state, a federal tariff on imported sugar and molasses was in effect. This tariff was of great financial benefit to the Louisiana planters, in that they could then charge more for the sugar they produced, yet continue to remain competitive in the market.

...With the advent of war with Great Britain, however, all existing tariff rates were doubled by Congress, the duty on sugar jumping to 5 cents a pound, that on molasses to 10 cents a gallon (Tregle 1942:28).

When the English arrived on the Mississippi at New Orleans in 1814, the economy was threatened, but the actual defense from the British encroachment was precarious. Andrew Jackson met with Edward Livingston, John Grymes, A. D’Avezac, Livingston, John Grymes, A. D’Avezac,
Maunsell White, George Ogden, Beverly Chew, and “others of high standing” at Maspereos’ Exchange to plan the defense of the city (Thompson 1915:19).

Unfortunately for Louisiana planters, the tariff was to end the year after the cessation of hostilities. A number of American politicians, each presenting arguments for particular products produced in their respective sectors of the country, were opposed to ending the import tax on products which could be produced in America, explaining it was needed to encourage production and make the United States independent as a nation.

In 1816 Louisiana politicians argued adamantly in Congress for some federal protection in the marketplace. Louisiana needed the federal assistance that was provided by the tariff on imported sugar because of the high costs related to sugar cultivation in Louisiana, where occasional hurricanes and or flooding not only destroyed the crop in the ground, but also affected the next year’s crop, and the crop lands, large numbers of slaves were required to work the fields and harvest the crop, and the machines and necessary buildings all added up to a huge capital outlay to even get started in the sugar business. Even after making the initial capital outlay, it could take years before a plantation could begin to make profits (Tregle

![Figure 34](https://www.flickr.com/photos/wallyg/2494003810)
Congressional Representative Thomas Bolling Robertson from Louisiana argued in opposition to any reduction in the tariff:

Louisiana... was able to supply the United States with all the sugar it might require, but to do this the encouragement of the Federal government was indispensable... the question before the House was as vital to every other section of the country as it was to Louisiana, for if a native supply of such a necessary of life was to be allowed to die, what then would become of American independence from foreign nations?...the story of the great wealth of Louisiana sugar planters was also ridiculous, a tale probably based on false statements of the great profits which the culture was bringing in Georgia (Tregle 1941:30-31).

Subsequent reduction of the tariff necessitated that Louisiana planters reduce the asking price for their sugar (to remain competitive). This reduced profitability of sugar production. However, the strong, sugar-based economy continued. By 1816, despite the reduction in the tariff, sugar production was booming, and new sugar cane plantations were established. A second Bank of the United States was incorporated with a branch located in New Orleans (Thompson 1915:19).

The State Bank of Louisiana, the first since Louisiana became a state, was incorporated in 1818. It was also during this year, in compliance with its charter, the Banque de la Louisiane began to liquidate (Thompson 1915:10).

While the Creoles were accepting of the forward progress of the city in some areas, specifically those which made their pocketbooks fatter, they were reluctant in other areas. Among the “areas of reluctance” was the paving of streets and the enhanced sanitation improvements in the city. They were concerned about the increased noise and traffic on their streets that would be the result of paving. In addition, a cleaner, healthier city would mean more immigrants and more transients, and they (the Creoles) were less likely to contract the diseases that tended to befall newcomers to the city. But progress marches on. The first “American”
business directory was published in 1822, and it included Paxton’s remarks on the city that “general street paving” began this year.

Paxton comments on the beginning of a general street paving this year, the first stretch above Canal street being on Gravier between Tchoupitoulas and Magazine. Chartres street and Royal had already been completed with curbstones and raised sidewalks (Thompson 1915:20).

Thompson (1915:20-21) goes on to reference Paxton’s 1822 business directory listing of the following banks and banking personnel information:


The economy was very strong, and trading was vigorous. A period of “overtrading” began in approximately 1824. “The flourishing condition of agriculture and commerce and the big profits being realized, excited a desire among merchants and others to extend their business...” (Thompson 1915:21). In 1825 the Erie Canal was opened, making trade to the Northeast faster and less costly.

By 1827 there were 607 sugar plantations in Louisiana (Thompson 1915:23). Also in this year the planters (plantation owners) decided an institution that was more closely attentive to
their particular banking needs would be beneficial to their interests. The planters organized the Consolidated Association of the Planters of Louisiana:

Many planters advanced nothing [using their lands as security], got this stock and paper notes, living at once verged on extravagance, importations increased beyond the real wants of the country. The high living for the next ten years was later given as another cause of the financial panic in 1837 (Thompson 1915:23).

When the next year the Tariff Act of 1828 further reduced the duties on imported sugar, planters became concerned about their profits.

Beverly Chew became president of the U.S. Branch Bank in 1830 (Thompson 1915:23).

New Orleans was now assuming great importance as a reliable banking center, and bank note currency with the New Orleans date line circulated from the Alleghanies to the Mexican border (Thompson 1915:23-24).

The Pontchartrain Railroad company was incorporated in this same year (1830): “... it being the second railroad to organize, and the third to be built, in the United States” (Thompson 1915:24).

Also in this year, 1830, the city and state became very concerned about the possibility of slave uprising. Slave trouble was a constant fear, but usually it was not of “immediate” concern. However, the lessons of the 1795 uprising at Julien Poydras’ estate in Pointe Coupee was not very many years before, and neither was the Saint Domingue massacre (Heinl and Heinl 1978:46, 52-53, 128). As the unrest of this year was attributed to freemen of color, possibly abolition agents from other parts of the country, inciting the slaves, the legislature acted to expel “all persons of this description” from the state. A year later, when the populace had calmed somewhat, the Legislature modified the act to only banish “those half-breeds who were known to be ‘worthless’” (Kendall 1922:130).

In 1830 disease was rampant in the city: mortality was “abnormally” high at 147/1000 (Thompson 1915:23-24). A more “normal” rate for the time was around 15/1000. However, the
Maunsel White realized that if the city would not make the improvements necessary to make New Orleans more competitive with the cities in the North, then possibly the “private” sector could. He conceived of the idea of a new basis for a financial institution: the “improvement bank.” Accompanied by his associate Beverly Chew, White convinced legislators the idea would work. In March of 1831 the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company, locally known as “the Canal Bank,” was the first “improvement bank” to be incorporated (Act No. 18, Third Session of the Tenth Legislature). A road alongside the canal was built (or improved) at the same time. The shell road was a popular pleasure outing whether on horseback or in a carriage, and among the “racing” people of New Orleans, the shell road was a thing of beauty of which they were very proud (Thompson 1915:27-28).

Cholera and yellow fever continued their rampages during the summer of 1832, but the city worked on. The people of New Orleans were enured to the almost annual visitations of disease. The combined mortality of the summers of 1832 and 1833 was 10,000 (Kendall 1922:134). The canal, funded by the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company, was slowed but not stopped by the high mortality of the workers:

... the mortality was 8099 out of [the city’s] total population of a little more than fifty thousand; nearly one in every six died! [emphasis Thompson]...5,000 people, mostly blacks, died this year with cholera in New Orleans, yellow fever at the time being epidemic among the whites...The great mortality in the summer of 1832 played sad havoc with the organization of working forces to dig the new canal. All work had to be done with the spade. Negro labor was at the time employed with the growing crops, and the contractors had, therefore, to arrange with immigration agents to supply Irishmen and Germans who were coming to America in great numbers, many coming in English cotton ships directly to New Orleans. These men were put on at good wages and did excellent work during the early summer. It is estimated that many thousands were victims of the fever and the bowel troubles that prevailed, in fact, the French experience at Panama was foreshadowed in this terrific slaughter of aliens, in whose demonstration of the survival of the fittest, there was left a parent stock in our growing city that has given to it just before the Civil War, a reputation for vigor and enterprise not equalled in all the world...the
Canal construction went forward rapidly, and seven years later there was handed over to the State a three-fold return for the chartered right bestowed in 1831 (Thompson 1915:26-27, 29).

The horrifying news of the severity and rapidity of the spread of the disease struck fear into many. Those who could, fled the city, and the population was reduced to approximately 35,000 almost overnight. Approximately 8% of the population died of cholera; 6,000 died within twenty days (Kendall 1922:133-134).

The federal Compromise Act of 1832, which modified the impact of the Tariff Act of 1828, was enacted.

Sugar planters at this time were the most prosperous class in the State, there being seven hundred plantations with capital of forty millions. Louisiana furnished half of the sugar of the United States (Thompson 1915:29).

Also in 1832 two banks, the Planter and the Union, were devoted to the planters’ interests, and a third, the Citizens, had been proposed. Apparently New Orleans was in the grips of what Thomas Jefferson had termed “bancomania.” By now, there were a large number of banks in the city (Thompson 1915:29-31):

- Gas Light and Banking Company – James H. Caldwell, “leading spirit.”
- Citizen’s Bank – E. J. Forstall, president; Directors – Bernard Marigny, among others.
- Bank of Louisiana – Benjamin Story, president; Directors – W. A. Gasquet, H. Henderson, J. D. Denegre, and others.
- Mechanics and Traders Bank – James Hopkins, president; Directors – Nicholas Sinnott, George Morgan, George Buchanan, A. Miltenberger, and others.
- Union Bank of Louisiana – Glendy Burke, president; Directors George Legendre, J. H. Leverich, J. P. Freret, and others.
Bank of Orleans – Andrew Hodge, president; Directors – Hyde, Ker, Cenas, and others.
Commercial Bank of New Orleans – Wm. G. Hewes, president; Directors – Robert
Layton, Maunsell White, Abigah Fisk, and others.
Atchafalaya Banking Company – Joshua Baldwin, president;
City Bank of New Orleans – S. J. Peters, president; R. J. Palfrey, cashier.
Merchants Bank – John Minturn, president; Directors – Stephen Henderson, Samuel
Thompson, J. W. Breedlove, and others.
Consolidated Association of the Planters of Louisiana – H. Lavergne, president; Directors
– G. Villere, W. C. C. Claiborne, Sosthene Roman, Geo. Pollock, Felix
Forstall, Valerie Allain, and others.
Exchange and Banking Company – E. York, president; Directors – L. Matthews, Peter
DeBuys, W. Christy, and others.
New Orleans Improvement and Banking Company – Pierre Soule, president; Directors
Pitot, Buisson, Coujot, Ducros, and J. F. Canonge.

Many Louisianans who had the interest to keep abreast of news and events in the city, the
state, the country, and the international scene did so. Current political events and economic
conditions in the United States and Europe were hot political topics in the exchanges and
coffeehouses of New Orleans. The political and economic situation on the national front was of
particular interest to them, especially when it began to appear that Andrew Jackson was taking
steps that would impact them adversely. Trufant (1918:27-28) specifically discussed the actions
taken by Jackson: Thinking that the influence of the Bank of the United States had prevented his
election to the Presidency in 1824, Jackson set out to destroy it. In his first message to Congress
he recommended that the bank’s charter not be renewed. Overriding Jackson’s objections,
Congress provisionally renewed the charter until 1832. After his re-election, Jackson vetoed the
charter renewal and, subsequently, in 1833, began to remove the public deposits from the bank.

Although some of the details differ from those provided by Trufant and those of Tregle,
Thompson’s assessment of the financial repercussions facing Louisiana as a result of the
Compromise Act of 1832 were dire. Not only did they affect sugar production profits, but they
also impacted property values in the city.
Federal Government dealt the first blow to agriculture in Louisiana in the year 1833. A new tariff was enacted, providing for a gradual reduction of duties on foreign goods to 20%, taking off every two years one-tenth of all there was above that, as fixed by the former tariff. This minimum was reached on the first of July, 1842. The effect of this change would be to diminish the price of foreign sugars, and consequently, that of the domestic article... real estate was inflated to an exorbitant nominal value. During 1832, land which could have been bought the year before for fifty thousand dollars, sold for ten times that sum...

The Canal and Banking Company paid before this boom $130,000 for an undivided half interest in the McCarty plantation... selling off the slaves and improvements so that the net cost was $85,000. Later this property was sold in town lots and netted an enormous profit to the Canal Bank Company... The purchasers of these lots began to realize great profits by re-selling; they rose to twice, ten times, even a hundred times their actual value – most of the lots were in the swamp and covered with water, but it made no difference. It was the map distances of five miles from Canal street that determined their selling quality, and there was but a limited extent of ground for the growth of a greater New Orleans... (Thompson 1915:31-33).

Despite the downside of the Compromise Act on sugar prices, the economic boom was on.

Property values sky-rocketed, and interest rates soared in the speculative boom – 15%, 18%, and even as high as 24%. Thompson (1915:37) notes that in 1835 the United States Census estimated that New Orleans had a resident population of 70,000 plus 40,000 transients.

Travelers from Europe and from the North came to New Orleans as to a new El Dorado, spending six months in our delightful climate, to make as much money as possible out of our cotton, sugar, our exports and imports... (Trufant 1918:33).

In 1835 Louisiana “pledged the credit of the State in favor of the Citizens’ Bank...” (Thompson 1915:33, quoting from Bunner’s History of Louisiana printed in 1841). This apparently only made things worse, and the banks began to issue paper up to five times the amount of their available funds (Thompson 1915:34). In 1836 the city was divided into three municipalities, each with its own government. In addition to the specie issued by each bank, each municipality was authorized to issue its own specie. With such a tremendous amount of unsecured paper in circulation, there was a subsequent downturn in the economy. The incidence
of bankruptcy increased, including among the large merchant firms. A financial crisis followed in 1837. Fourteen of the sixteen banks in the city suspended payments on specie (the changing of “specie,” issued paper, for real money). “Public confidence and private credit were practically destroyed by the financial crisis or crash occurred on May 13, 1837” (Thompson 1915:35-36).

The new tariff, now in effect, was causing serious affects. Planters not only ceased producing sugar cane, but they also destroyed the existing crop. Many of these planters went into cotton, but about one-third of the sugar planters gave up entirely. “Usurers were the only class that now prospered, and they proceeded to reap a rich harvest from the calamities of others” (Thompson 1915:34-35).

...The withdrawal of the government deposits, coming at a time when the directors of the Bank of England, in 1836-1837, becoming alarmed at the great diminution of precious metals, prescribed the paper of even the most eminent American bankers in London, with a view of contracting suddenly their business to force the exportation of gold and silver from the United States.

The inflation of note issues by the State bank soon precipitated the hoarding of specie and demonstrated the unsoundness of our financial system as soon as the restraining influence of the Central Bank was removed....

...The Louisiana banking law of 1838, which was drafted under his [Governor E. D. White] inspiration, provided a board of currency to carry out the provisions of the act, limited the bite issue by requiring State banks should have at all times in their vaults specie equal to one-third of their note issue, and that the maximum note issue should not exceed one-fifth of the paid-in capital.

The Louisiana banking law became a classic and the pattern of all other State banking laws, as well as the foundation stone for our national banking system at the close of the Civil War (Trufant 1918:34-35).


In 1836 New Orleans received a new charter from the state legislature. Each of the districts became an independent municipality with control over its own affairs, a plan long urged by the Americans. The French Quarter became the First Municipality. The
American section above Canal Street, commonly referred to as ‘uptown,’ became the Second Municipality, and the ‘Old Third,’ as the Third Municipality came to be known, was below Esplanade Avenue. Each of the municipalities had its own political machinery, although there was a general council which controlled such common matters as wharfage rates and relief for the poor. Only one mayor was elected for the whole city, the separate boards of aldermen each being presided over by a recorder, or police court judge (Soulé 1857:56).

The separation of the city into three separate political entities had worked to the American sector’s benefit, just as Peters had intended. The Second Municipality’s tax revenues went into its own coffer from which it was used to make improvements in the Second Municipality. A better public transportation system, better streets, well-kept wharves, a better school system, and a new municipal hall were among the many improvements that the sector afforded and made a reality. The Second Municipality no longer had to financially carry the entire city, as the largely Creole City Council no longer had the authority over its revenues to continue to devote a disproportionate share of the funds to the Vieux Carré.

By this time the Gas Company, financed by the Gas Lighting and Banking Company (the “Gas Bank”), an improvement bank influenced by Caldwell, had completed the laying of pipes through the Vieux Carré and was working on the piping in Faubourg St. Mary, the Second Municipal District (Thompson 1915:35). In 1838 the New Basin Canal was completed and turned over to the State. Gibson’s Directory (1838) lists eighteen banks operating in the city in this year, most of which were engaged in public improvements. The Waterworks Company, a project of Maunsel White, began their piping this year. (Thompson: 1915:36). The recovery from the 1837 financial crisis was well on its way. New Orleans was rapidly becoming a serious rival to New York and other cities of the Northeast as the economic center of the United States.

Gibson had this to say in 1838: “New Orleans has been rated as the third city of the Union; but she is in reality the third only in population, and second in a commercial
point of view. Her imports are exceeded now only by New York and Boston, and her
exports are nearly triple any port of the United States, which New Orleans exceeds one-
third (Thompson 1915:37).

Samuel Peters was the president of the new and very active Chamber of Commerce. His efforts
in business and civilian affairs was making his dream for New Orleans come to fruition. “... during the decade 1830-1840, New Orleans was the point at which money could be made with more rapidity than anywhere else in the United States” (Thompson 1915:38).

Although initially the plan to separate the city into the three municipalities had seemed to work, with each municipality competing for better and more improvements, it was not long before both the First and the Third Municipalities were significantly in arrears and facing bankruptcy. The wharves along the river had been improved in both the First and Second Municipalities, however, there remained a deficit in the finances of the city after the wharfage fees reduced the total. According to Kendall (1922:147) the city’s total wharfage fees for 1838 totaled $282,000, while the expenditures came to $410,268. Kendall went on to explain the dire financial straits of the Third Municipality:

There the rapid growth of the city, the expansion of commerce, and expenses entailed by the division of the city under the charter of 1836 had run the expenses of the administration up to an alarming figure. Between May 1, 1836, and October 1, 1839, some $4,820,610 had been expended, as against receipts amounting to only $1,754,773, leaving a deficit of $3,065,837, which there seemed no means to pay. In addition to this debt, there was a proportion of the general city debt, which involved the payment of interest which, in the previous ten years, had aggregated $103,594 (Kendall 1922:147).

In 1841 there was another financial panic. All banks in New Orleans suspended specie payment in this year, but the suspension lasted only a few months because crops were good (Thompson 1915:39). Overcoming panic, banks soon resumed normal functions, until 1845. In this year the State (Louisiana) announced it would no longer interfere with the banking industry,
inducing a minor and short-lived panic. “Public credit was restored, and a sound currency was in
circulation before the year closed” (Thompson 1915:43). Banks, having previously fueled the
ups and downs, elected to pursue a more prudent and conservative stake in the world of New
Orleans business.

The city was flooded for six months when the Sauve Crevasse occurred in 1849 (Thompson 1915:44). The crevasse caused a major flood, and the city was flooded for 48 days. Such flooding was not new to the Mississippi River Valley, or even new to New Orleans. Between the years 1717 and 1862, floods of “notable importance” on the Mississippi River, had occurred on an average of every 5.8 years (Davis 2000:88). Davis noted that 1) the city could not be built until the waters of the 1717 flood had receded; 2) in 1735 and 1775 flood waters submerged New Orleans; 3) New Orleans remained underwater between December to June of 1783; and 4) the city was submerged in 1785, 1791, 1799, 1816, and 1823... “the river and the city were at war; the river was winning” (Davis 2000:87).

Thompson (1915:44) related some major events: In 1849 Maunsell White retired to Deer Range. Even though “retired,” Maunsell White presided over the 1850 Railroad Convention. In 1852 the three separate municipalities were reunited, and later that year the city of Lafayette was incorporated.

In 1853 and 1854 the city was hit by devastating epidemics. The city had been hit by numerous epidemics in the past, but these were worst on record.

It is estimated that the total number of deaths between June 1 and October 1 were over 11,000. Between May 28 and September 1, there were 9,941 deaths from all causes, of which 7,189 were known to have resulted from yellow fever. These figures are confessedly incomplete. Hundreds were swept off without any record being made of them... It is believed that there was about 30,000 cases of fever in New Orleans in the course of the summer of 1853 (Kendall 1922:177).

In the city known as “the necropolis of the South,” an epidemic always meant bad news for business, and years earlier, in 1810, the City Council had passed an ordinance prohibiting the ringing of funeral bells between July 1 and December 31 of each year (Cable 1980:138, 131). In short, in 1853, and without going into gruesome detail, the city was unable to deal adequately with the dead; the whole of it had become a charnel. Yellow fever had hit in 1766, and by 1906, according to health records,

... there were 13 severe and 26 mild epidemics... Between 1822 and 1861 it [yellow fever] was an annual and dreaded visitor... The reputation of New Orleans as a plague-spot was thus supported in all parts of the world by statistics difficult to controvert... the general attitude was ... that yellow fever was emphatically the strangers’ disease, and that once acclimated the residents of the city had nothing to fear (Kendall 1922:174-175).

Despite the mortality from epidemics and despite the recent history of floods in the city, new residents and transients continued to pour into the city. Business was flourishing and many found their dreams of wealth come true. The city reached the peak of its prosperity in 1860.

1860 opened prosperously but closed in gloom. Crops were good, money abundant, and the summer was exceptionally healthy, but on the 21st of December demonstrations were made that showed the fever for war was uncontrollable. ...the impending crisis was to put the community into a Rip Vanwinkle sleep for the next twenty years, that war and its after sequence, reconstruction, was to paralyze the machinery of commerce... (Thompson 1915:49).
With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the populace of New Orleans was both tense and excited. There was much concern for the individuals actually going off to the fighting, yet many were confident the Southerners would prevail. It was a time of parties and fund-raisers. The funds were needed for equipment, uniforms, and a hundred other things needed to send their troops to battle. At the same time the economy of the city came under great strain.

The panics of 1832, ‘37, ‘41, ‘46, ‘48, ‘54, ‘57, were in comparison pleasant memories to bankers in New Orleans who dealt now with a war crisis that consumed the very sources of supply, and extinguished in a year both crops and commerce. Four years of chaos and darkness ensued (Thompson 1915:51-52).

Fort Sumter fell on April 14, 1861, and a year later the forts of New Orleans were embattled. By the evening of April 24, 1862, the forts had lost. Kendall (1922:274) related the events of May 1 and May 2, 1862: On May 1, 1862 in order to avoid any violent opposition by the city in the expected area of disembarkation, the Vieux Carré, Butler came ashore at the foot of Julia Street. New Orleans was under federal martial law. Now the city was under the control of General Benjamin F. “Silver Spoons” Butler, a nickname Butler “earned” by “appropriating” (stealing) silverware from the wealthy households of the city. By the time he and his men were disembarked, it was nearly dark. Butler and his men marched up Julia Street to St. Charles Street, to the Customhouse on Canal Street, where they stayed the night. The next morning he returned to the Julia Street landing, got into his carriage and was transported to the St. Charles Hotel. He went in through the Ladies entrance on Common Street and met with the son of the proprietor (the proprietor not being on the premises) of the hotel. In what can only be described as a typically upperclass, or at least upper-middle class, response when confronted by adversity, the young man informed Butler that the hotel was closed and was not accepting visitors. Butler then took possession of the hotel, attended by his own men.
Relying on their history with disease and the high mortality of strangers to the city, New Orleaneans hoped and prayed for an unusually virulent visitation. Butler, abhorred at the unsanitary and filthy condition of the city, set his men to work immediately to clean the city from top to bottom. His efforts paid off, because the total mortality in all of New Orleans from 1862 to 1865, when the war ended, totaled 11 (Louisiana Division, New Orleans Public Library website “Yellow Fever Deaths in New Orleans, 1817-1905) (see Appendix 6 for annual figures of deaths attributed to yellow fever).

New Orleans apparent economic stagnation during the Civil War and Reconstruction began long before the War. While New Orleans made a relatively rapid, but merely adequate, recovery from the financial crisis in 1837 and the two financial “snags” of 1841 and 1845, much of their efforts were directed to economic issues which were focused and locally-oriented. They failed to look at the broader economics of the United States.

In their chapter “Banking and Commerce” of New Orleans Architecture Vol. II: the American Sector, Christovich and Toledano attribute the stagnation as stemming from the city’s failure to completely recover from the financial crisis of 1837.

All seemed secure in New Orleans’ expansive financial system, but long-term loans, acquisitions of large amounts of foreign capital, easy credit and land speculations made New Orleans one of the most seriously affected sections of America in the Panic of 1837. The inevitable bank runs began. Most banks suspended payment. Foreclosures and note demands forced factors, merchants and planters into instant financial ruin. The deadly cycle had begun, and New Orleans remained in a financial quagmire until 1845. This slow recovery was aggravated by yellow fever epidemics in 1837 and 1839, unfavorable tariffs on sugar and cotton and finally by the 1840 flood, one of the worst ever. In spite of bankruptcies, commerce continued throughout the crisis, but the city’s competitive attempts often were thwarted by discount species, and businesses moved to New York, Charleston and Savannah (Christovich et al 1998:71-72).

Actually, New Orleans’ economic race to supplant New York City’s spot as the premier economic center of the United States had been lost even earlier. The far-reaching significance of
a major development in the North, though read about and discussed by businessmen of New Orleans at the time, was not recognized as foreshadowing their economic stagnation: the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825.

The Erie Canal opened a more direct and easier route for trade between New York City and the western frontier, effectively cutting New Orleans out of the loop. The network of canals in the North, following the Erie Canal’s success, further eroded the position of New Orleans as an entrepôt. “More importantly, they [the network of canals] extended the role and regional dominance of New York City” (Groves 2001:192).

An ever-increasing flow of trade goods was shunted directly to New York City; the bulk of the traffic was then bypassing New Orleans, obviating any commissions the city’s merchants and brokers may have received. This was largely unrecognized, because the traffic that did pass through New Orleans did not actually lessen. Overall, trade continued to increase, but New Orleans’ share of the traffic did not increase. Along with the ever-increasing volume of the goods and produce shipped directly to New York went the increasing profits.

... New Orleans’ share of the total western output was decreasing. But the tremendously rapid rate of growth taking place in the agricultural West concealed New Orleans’ declining position. Getting a shrinking share of a dramatically growing pie, New Orleans lulled itself into complacency, over-depending on the Mississippi River and failing to develop back-up competitive advantages in industry and the latest transportation technologies, namely railroads (Campanella 2006:87).

Carville Earle (2001), in “Beyond the Appalachians, 1815-1860,” also described New Orleans’ waning market-share.

By the eve of the Civil War, the commerce of the trans-Appalachian West had been thoroughly restructured. Although the largest cities were still located on the old southern route – New Orleans, St. Louis, and Cincinnati ranged between 160,000 and 175,000 people – the bulk of the trade of the Old Northwest now flowed through the eastern and northern gateways... New Orleans, once the master of the Mississippi Valley, suffered sizeable losses of its hinterland. Although the Crescent City in 1860 retained the lucrative
cotton trade of the lower Mississippi and some of the provisions trade from the Tennessee and Cumberland valleys, the city’s share of the trans-Appalachian trade had diminished to about 25 percent, scarcely any of which came from north of the Ohio River (Earle 2001:176).

The heightened port activity in New Orleans meant increasing profits and contributed to a nearly exclusive reliance on river traffic, serving to veil the economic implications of developments in transportation in the North from much of the New Orleans business community.

Conservative New Orleans business community fails to diversify economy during ensuing decades, focusing instead on booming river trade. Seed for New Orleans decline is planted, but buried by antebellum prosperity... Railroads further weaken New Orleans’ command of Mississippi valley trade... Complacent business leaders in New Orleans are late in bringing railroads and industry to city, viewing traditional river transportation as salvation (Campanella 2006:10, 13).

Although the Pontchartrain Railroad was near the front of the race in the early years of rail system development, the lack of connections to other major cities – as both markets and producers – limited the value of the enterprise. The Pontchartrain Railroad was only a few miles long and only extended to what was a resort.

Many factors explain New Orleans’ decline from the heady visions of the early nineteenth century, when pundits and pontificators predicted that this city would someday rank among the richest and most important on earth. Chief among them is the simple fact that its riverine *raison d’être*, despite its magnitude and magnificence, is much less critical to the nation than it once was. New Orleans today may be viewed as a grand and splendid vestige of an economic geography that no longer exists (Campanella 2006:87).

New Orleans comfortably “coasted” through the “Golden Age,” which accounts for much of the romanticism associated with the period. Many of the ambitious young Americans who had come to New Orleans from the North from the early 1800s to the early 1820s had successfully adapted to the Southern “way of life” and had achieved their dreams of wealth and social prominence (at least among other transplanted Northerners). In the course of the path to their achievements, they had lost something. They had lost that sharp edge of foresight and daring, and
the energy, which had formerly propelled them, driven them, to their accomplishments. They had lost that “lean and hungry look.” They had become comfortable, even complacent, with the way of life they had achieved.

**Richard Relf**

*A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography* (1988) by Conrad contains a short profile of Relf on pages 676-679. Richard Relf was born in Philadelphia on March 12, 1776, moved to New Orleans in 1792, and was married three times. He was partners with Beverly Chew, with whom he was involved in a number of commercial ventures. In 1801 Relf and Chew entered into partnership with Daniel Clark, Jr., a partnership that lasted until Clerk’s death in 1813. Financial reverses related to the War of 1812 caused them to go into bankruptcy. From 1818 until his own death, he was cashier of Louisiana State Bank and closely associated with the Canal Bank. He also held the position of Steamship Debenture Clerk in the New Orleans Customhouse. He died on October 22, 1857.

**Beverly Chew**

Conrad (1988) also has a short biography of Chew. Beverly Chew was born in Virginia on February 6, 1793. He married Maria Theodora Duer of New York with whom he had several children, including a daughter Catherine and a son Beverly Chew, Jr. Once in New Orleans he was partners with Richard Relf, the well-known merchant in the city. The firm of Chew and Relf

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Caesar: Antonio!
Marcus Antonius: Caesar?
Caesar: Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep a-nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.
was closely associated with the prominent businessman Daniel Clark, Jr. The firm prospered until the War of 1812, when commerce was disrupted. Chew served in the Louisiana militia during the War of 1812. After the War, by 1817, he became a customs collector, where he had a hostile relationship with the Lafitte brothers.

According to Conrad (1988) Chew had a long career in banking. He was president of the U.S. Branch Bank in 1804 and again in 1830. He was instrumental in the organization of the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company (1832) and was president of the New Orleans Savings Bank, which was a branch of the Canal Bank. He retired as cashier of the Canal Bank in 1844. He died in New Orleans on January 13, 1851.

The Exchange-Hotels

The two new exchange-hotels that were built just after 1835 provide documentation in the material culture of the city of a flare-up of the rivalry between the Creoles and the Americans (Figures 35 and 37). Although the initial rivalry in the earlier years of the century was intense, it appears to have been more “social class” oriented than that which occurred later in the century\(^4\). The intensification of rivalry, beginning in the

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\(^4\) Some of the literature cites the Creoles as using such derogatory terms as “Les Américains” and “Kaintocks,” when referring to the transients to the Creole city from the North or from upriver, respectively (Asbury 1936:93; Cable 1980:24; Vella 1997:39). “Les Américains” and the “Kaintocks” were generally considered to be ill-mannered. The Lexicon (2004) by Edwards and Kariouk has the term “American” defined on page 6.
early 1820s, seems to have been focused on ethnic differences based on fundamentals related to pursuit of wealth and power between the Creoles and the Northerners who relocated to the city. Prior to the period of upriver development on Canal Street and in Faubourg St. Mary, much of the commercial activity of the city was found on Royal and Chartres Streets (see Figure 36), with most grocery shopping done at the French Market. Even after the upriver developments, the Vieux Carré remained the center of the city for many of the Creoles.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the coffeehouse as a place where businessmen could meet to discuss world and local events became even more popular in New Orleans. The financial “core” of the city had been the area of the Vieux Carré centered around Squares 39 and 40, the block centered by Royal, Chartres, St. Louis and Conti Streets (Figure 36). This business center of New Orleans was the locus of a majority of the financial transactions. As the economy grew, the “exchange” aspect of the coffeehouse as an economic facility became increasingly important to the businessmen of the city. Although the principal activities of the facility, while it operated under Maspero’s management, were gambling and billiards, business activities were on the rise. Auctions were

Figure 36 Squares 39 and 40, prior to division to create the extension of Exchange Place through the block. Some of the properties are identified: 1) Maspero’s Exchange; 2) Jackson’s first headquarters in New Orleans; 3) Banque de la Louisiane; 6) Louisiana State Bank; 7) Delphine Macarty’s house; 11) 619-621 Conti Street; 12) Marigny’s house; 13) Pharmacie Peychaud; and 14) Tremoulet-Pavie House. Map from Mince 2002:55).
held daily for stocks, real estate, and other properties, and slaves were auctioned on Saturdays.

The facilities upstairs included gambling, dominoes, a billiard hall, and a reading room. The reading room was open only to paying members. The following announcement was published in the *Louisiana Courier* in September and October, 1814:

**A Reading Room**

Will likewise be established in the upper part of the building, in which will be preserved files of the principal Gazettes in the United States, also charts, maps and books relating to geography, commerce, &c &c. To defray the expense of the reading room a subscription will be opened of five dollars from each person, and after a certain number is obtained, no person, not a subscriber, will be admitted, unless introduced by a subscriber (Wilson 1989:205).

Within the space of a few years, the burgeoning business in New Orleans, as well as the number of businessmen frequently meeting at the exchange, had outgrown the facilities of Maspero’s Exchange on the corner of Chartres and St. Louis Streets.

Businessmen, particularly American businessmen, desired a new and larger exchange, where business could be transacted. The exchange was sold to Dominique Seghers on January 18, 1830 and placed under the management of Hewlett. The exchange, now under Hewlett’s management, and called Hewlett’s Exchange and Coffeehouse or the New Exchange, was greatly enlarged and improved. Even after the improvements, the ever-increasing number of businessmen enjoying the facility, practically filled it to bursting (Wilson 1989:215-217).

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*Figure 37* Location of the St. Charles Hotel, St. Louis Hotel, Exchange Alley extension and Julia Street. Map by Author and D. Dorrell

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5 After Maspero died the facility was managed by Elkins and was known as Elkins Coffeehouse.
On March 18, 1835 a number of American businessmen, working together, awarded a contract for the building of a new exchange to be known as the Merchants’ Exchange. The new exchange was located on Royal Street near Canal and designed by the architects Gallier and Dakin. Gallier and Dakin were at the same time working on the plans for the St. Charles Exchange Hotel, even though financing for the hotel had not yet been officially arranged.

The Merchants’ Exchange running through from Royal to Exchange Place, served the purposes then of club, exchange, post office and auction room for slaves and real estate. Here were piles of newspapers, and the world’s news was discussed at tables, upon sanded floor, and here was the home of the Roffignac, as well as the birthplace of the cocktail. Today it carries on a part of its original service, spiritual comfort still being dispensed at possibly the oldest laboratory for the rejuvenation of the tired business man, that is still left in the South.

Two great hotels, the St. Charles, the largest then in America, and the St. Louis, with three other first-class smaller places, and more than twenty-five good restaurants, besides lodgings of all kinds, took good care of the forty odd thousand transients who came hither each year to spend the winter (Thompson 1915:38).

The following month a group of New Orleans citizens, including Peters, petitioned the Louisiana Legislature in April, 1835 for the incorporation of the Exchange and Banking Company, the purpose of which was to erect a hotel to accommodate transient businessmen and other travelers. None of the many boardinghouses in the city had facilities to provide the special services that would be available in a large hotel. The Legislature granted the petition by Peters and his associates. An association was incorporated by the Legislature on February 5, 1835 to engage subscribers for the purpose of building the city’s first major premier hotel, the St. Charles Hotel on Canal Street. The St. Charles Hotel was funded by the “improvement” Exchange Bank. The bank was incorporated and granted banking privileges on April 1, 1835 for the purpose of building the hotel. A few “associates” had previously attempted to get the hotel arranged, financed and built several years earlier, but the initial charter, dated February 21, 1831, expired after the allotted one month, due to an insufficient number of subscribers to proceed with the
Acts of the Legislature were continued to be published in English and French, during this period. The Legislative Act enacted in the First Session of the Twelfth Legislature\(^6\), dated February 5, 1835 (Acts of the First Session of the Twelfth Legislature, pages 22-23) also repealed the similar act, Act No. 10 of the Third Session of the Tenth Legislature dated February 21, 1831, which had failed to come to fruition. Later that year construction was begun on the St. Charles Hotel and was completed in 1837 (Figure 38).

The St. Charles Hotel was the first large building in the newly developing portion of the city. It was one of the first great American hotels, and gave the city a reputation for being modern and enterprising. Although there were quite a number of boardinghouses and small hotels in the city, a major hotel (the St Charles) which had the facilities and capability of providing an atmosphere more conducive to business and entertaining than had previously existed in the city was desired to accommodate businessmen accustomed to the luxuries available in New York and other northern cities.

To the Creoles the St. Charles Hotel and Exchange meant a loss of commercial activity in the Vieux Carré; they could literally see business and profits leaving the Vieux Carré. Quick action was needed to counter the economic threat: they decided to build a new exchange to remain

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\(^6\) Acts of the Legislature were continued to be published in English and French, during this period.
competitive (Wilson 1989:216-217). Funded by the New Orleans Improvement Bank and the New Orleans Improvement Company, on September 28, 1835 the Creoles awarded a contract to E. W. Sewell for the carpentry work on their new exchange. The company had purchased all the property along St. Louis Street from Royal to Chartres, including Hewlett’s Exchange from Dominique Seghers on May 22, 1835 (Notary Felix Grima). The new “City Exchange” was built in two phases, to avoid disruption of business in the existing exchange.

On February 9, 1836, during the Second Session of the Twelfth Legislature, the Legislature acted to grant banking and other privileges to the New Orleans Improvement and Banking Company for the purpose of building a hotel to compete with the St. Charles. The St. Louis Hotel complex (Figure 39), which included the hotel, a banking facility, and the exchange, was exempt from paying any state or municipal taxes, as long as it was in good financial standing. However, certain specific strings were attached: 1) The company was required to build three steam packets for the express purpose of transporting passengers between Natchitoches and New Orleans, and to Lake Pontchartrain between the railroad and the landing in Covington; 2) The company was required to build a wharf at the end of St. Louis Street for the exclusive use of these steam packets. The St. Louis Hotel (or City

Figure 39 Drawing of the St. Louis Hotel and Rotunda. Illustration from Cable 1980:117.
Exchange Hotel as it was called by the non-Creoles) was built at a total cost of approximately $900,000.

Although the St. Louis Hotel was soon destroyed by fire, it was quickly re-built (Cable 1980:116). In the center of the Rotunda was a large slave block (Figure 39). The slave auctions held in the Rotunda were among the largest and best-known in the South. The dome, coffered with insets painted by Dominique Canova, was copper-covered and ingeniously built of hollow terra cotta cylinders or inverted pots (Heard 1997:77; Cable 1980:119; Caldwell 1975:207-215). The hotel not only was quite grand, it even had a Ladies Exchange, naturally with a separate entrance, which was on Royal Street. Until the building of the St. Louis Hotel, there were no restaurants, cafés, coffeehouses, tea rooms or “women’s exchange” that a woman could enter and keep her reputation - assuming, of course, that she would even be admitted!

**Exchange Alley**

The St. Louis Hotel and Exchange, opened in January, 1838, was intended to be a part of a complete economic revitalization project, designed to compete effectively with the Americans’ Merchants’ Exchange and the St. Charles Hotel. Another part of the “complete project” was an early urban economic development, but minus the more recently used expropriation of private property for the development. Almost as soon as the two new hotels and exchanges were underway, as per their agreements with the financiers of the project, the Creoles, began to “update” and modernize the existing buildings in the business sector of the Vieux Carré. Such “modern” features as trabeated doorframes and granite “pillars” or pilasters were added to the street-front facades of commercial buildings (figure 40). The features were intended to present a

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7 Horizontal (as opposed to arched) lintels.
more cosmopolitan appearance and imply a more sophisticated approach to business to aid them in retention of customers. While the Americans pursued business with their associates and acquaintances in the northern cities, the Creoles continued to focus on their trade relations with Europe, the increasing volume of trade from the West, and the significantly increasing development of trade with Mexico. However, the ever-present specter of disease hindered the city in each trade effort.

To emphasize the importance of the St. Louis Hotel and Exchange, Exchange Street was extended through the intervening block in front of the hotel, dividing the block between Royal and Chartres (Figures 37 and 41). The Exchange extension, designed by J. N. B. de Pouilly, was called Exchange Alley (Alleé), and thus, Squares 39 and 40 were formed from a single, original-sized block. One could look down Exchange Street from Canal Street and see the St. Louis Hotel (Figure 40). The entire project - St. Louis Hotel, the extension of Exchange Alley, the development of buildings on Exchange - was contrived to effect the revitalization of the decaying Creole commercial district.

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8 Exchange Street runs between Canal Street and Conti Street, intersection with each in a “T.”
commercial aspect of Exchange Alley was pre-ordained. The New Orleans Improvement Company contracted with Edward Sewell to construct a building on their property (Notary W. Y. Lewis, contract dated August 15, 1837). Sewell also received the building contracts for four other properties on this block of Exchange Alley: 1) property owned by Alonzo Morphy, Notary W. Y. Lewis, contract dated May 17, 1836; 2) property owned by John West, Notary W. Y. Lewis, contract dated August 15, 1837; 3) property owned by Pierre Biusson (the database at the Notarial Archives probably has this name misspelled), Notary L. T. Claire, contract dated April 25, 1837; and 4) Property owned by Dominique Francis Burthe, Notary W. Y. Lewis, contract dated May 11, 1836. Most of the buildings constructed on this block of Exchange Alley were three-story brick structures. In addition to a myriad of stores for the purchase of goods, the offices of many of the city’s architects, engineers, and other services found a home on this block of the street.

The following information is drawn from the Vieux Carré survey of Squares 39 and 40: A number of the properties involved in the development of the Exchange Alley extension through Squares 39 and 40 were owned by Philippe Auguste Delachaise.

![Figure 41](image-url) **Figure 41** Plan of Exchange Alley Extension, Sketch by de Pouilly. Illustration from Vieux Carré Survey by Tulane, Historic New Orleans Collection.

Other properties had been owned by Widow de la Ronde. The heirs of Widow de la Ronde sold
the several properties on this block belonging to the estate to Thomas and David Urquhart in 1805. Thomas Urquhart, after David died, sold these properties in 1833 to Tricou, Delacrois, and Hiligsberg, a group that then owned the majority of the properties on the block. In 1835 Tricou, Delacrois, and Hilisberg divested themselves of the jointly owned properties. Hiligsberg bought out Tricou’s and Delacrois’s shares of some of these properties, and the remainder were sold to Alonzo Morphy and John McDonogh, among others. In 1848 Christian Roselius bought into the recently developed block by purchasing the properties held by Hiligsberg’s estate.

While the St. Charles, and the business of the Americans, aimed toward garnering business from the northern U.S. cities, the St. Louis catered to local planters and European visitors, particularly European investors and travelers. Even though much of the northern commercial traffic was shunted via the canal network and the east-west railroads to the major cities in the North, the growing commercial traffic through New Orleans was sufficient to make New Orleans a very favorable place to do business. Both of the two hotels and exchanges flourished. In fact, they each became quite famous and furthered New Orleans’ reputation as a profitable place to do business.

The St. Louis Hotel was erected by the Improvement Bank, chartered in 1834, at a cost of $900,000, in the center of the old city, or French Quarter, in the square bounded by St. Louis, Toulouse, Chartres and Royal Streets.

In 1834, the Exchange Bank was chartered with a capital of $2,000,000 and the charter obligated the corporation to erect the St. Charles Hotel, which was the first of the great buildings erected in the American quarter above Canal Street.

The St. Charles was designed by Gallier & Dakin, architects, who also designed the City Hall and the French Opera House. It was begun in 1835, and completed in February, 1837, at a cost of $616,775, and formally opened on Washington’s birthday with a grand ball.

Locating the St. Charles above Canal Street, marked a period of great rivalry between the old French quarter and the new American district. Around it immediately sprang up a new business center, which has continued to grow in importance (Trufant 1918:33).
The City Exchange restaurant is credited with being the first in New Orleans, if not the first in the United States to offer patrons a free lunch.

The menu consisted of soup, a piece of beef or ham with potatoes, meat pie, and oyster patties. At first a plate of lunch was handed to the customer with whatever drink he had ordered, but later the food was placed on a separate counter and anyone could help himself to as much as he desired. The innovation proved so popular that it was quickly copied by all the first-class bars in New Orleans and soon spread to other cities. Before many years bar-rooms all over the country were serving free elaborate repasts which compared favorably with the menus of the best restaurants (Asbury 1936:139).

In the early 1840s subscription balls were initiated at the St. Louis Hotel. Some were also held at the St. Charles, but since the management at the St. Charles insisted that all hotel guests be invited, they were soon discontinued. This was not the case at the St. Louis Hotel, where exclusive functions with the guest list under the firm control of the host were permitted. One of the most famous of these subscriptions balls was held at the St. Louis Hotel during the winter of 1842-1843 in honor of Henry Clay. Although the number of guests present at this gala is reported by Asbury (1936:141) as two hundred and reported by Mary Cable (1980:118) as six hundred, the per person price of $100 made this one of the most expensive affairs of the era. The services and the amenities, and to some extent the quality of the food, of the St. Louis Hotel, the St. Charles Hotel, and the other bars and restaurants of the time were comparable. While the St. Charles catered to a more American clientele, the St. Louis Hotel was the center of the social activities of the Creoles and visiting Europeans.

The original plans of the City Exchange, as prepared by the Architect J. N. de Pouilly, called for the construction of an enormous building to cover the entire block bounded by Royal, Toulouse, Chartres and St. Louis Streets. Work on the structure was begun in 1836 with materials imported from France, but the money crisis of 1837 compelled the promoters to modify their plans, and the size of the building was greatly reduced. When the Exchange opened, in the summer of 1838, it occupied only the St. Louis Street side of the square. The principal entrance, on St. Louis Street, opened into a vestibule 127 feet wide and 40 feet deep. The ballrooms were on the second floor, with separate entrances on both Royal and St. Louis Streets. The main feature of the hotel, however, was the Rotunda,
a circular apartment with a high domed ceiling, in the center of the building. The Rotunda soon replaced Hewlett’s Exchange as the principal auction mart of the city and until the Civil War was also a favorite place for political mass meetings” (Asbury 1936:138-139).

**Buisson, Benjamin**

The following is a summary of the short section on Buisson found in Conrad’s 1988 *A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, page 126. Benjamin Buisson was born Pierre Benjamin Buisson on May 20, 1793 in Paris, France. He was a member of the Grand Army of France from 1813 to 1815. He arrived in New Orleans in 1817, where he established himself in business as an engineer (which included surveying, architecture, and contracting). He designed the New Orleans Custom House in 1819. He married Sophie Guillotte, with whom he had six children, in New Orleans in 1820. He was publisher and editor of *Courrier des Natchitoches* in 1824 and 1825, then publisher and editor of the New Orleans *Journal de Commerce* from about 1825 to 1829. He also had a printing business between the years 1825 and 1832. He was appointed to the Committee on City Defense to protect New Orleans from federal invasion, and he commanded 22nd Louisiana Volunteers during the fall of the city in 1862.

**James Pitot (Jacques-François Pitot)**

This is a summary of Pitot’s short Biography as found in Conrad (1988:126). James Pitot was born on November 25, 1761 in Villedieu-des-Poeles, Normandy, France. He lived in Saint Domingue from 1781 to 1792, where he was in the sugar business. He returned to France in 1792, due to the slave uprisings. In 1793 he immigrated to the United States, settling in Philadelphia, where he became a U.S. citizen. He then moved to New Orleans, and shortly after his arrival, he was elected syndic of commerce. He established a successful import/export business, but this career was ended by the blockade during the War of 1812.
In 1802 he was elected by the Cabildo as Card Commissioner of New Orleans. In 1804 he was a member of the New Orleans Municipal Council. He was mayor of New Orleans from 1804-1805. From 1812-1831 he was a judge of the parish court of New Orleans. From 1813 to 1860 he was president of the Orleans Parish Police Jury. He died in New Orleans on November 4, 1831.

**Pierre Soulé**

A short biography of Soulé is included in the 1988 *A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, page 760. Pierre Soulé was born in Castillon, France on August 28, 1801. He founded the newspaper *Nain Jaune* (“yellow dwarf”) in 1824. He published an editorial that was critical of the church and the state for which he was tried and sentenced to prison. He immigrated to the United States to avoid prison. When he arrived in New Orleans, he established his law practice. He married in 1828 and had one son, who married the granddaughter of Bernard de Marigny.

He gained prominence between 1828 and 1847 as a lawyer, financier, orator, and politician. He was appointed to the United States Senate in 1847, and then he was elected to a full six-year term. On the death of John C. Calhoun, he assumed the leadership of the states rights Southern Democrats. He resigned from the Senate to become a diplomat. The tsar of Russia rejected him as an ambassador, so he was named instead as the ambassador to the court of Spain. He became controversial as an ambassador, and he wounded the French ambassador in a duel. He resigned from diplomatic service to resume his law practice in New Orleans, where he successfully defended William Walker in prosecution relating to the Nicaraguan filibuster⁹, which occurred in 1857.

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⁹ A filibuster is the independent military action on a foreign country by an American without the official sanction of the government of the United States.
After New Orleans fell to the federal troops, he was arrested as a provocateur and was sent to prison in New York. While on parole, he fled to the South. He was then appointed Brigadier General in the Confederate Army. He was aide-de-camp to General P. G. T. Beauregard for the remainder of the war. He became embittered and paranoid in his final years. He died in New Orleans on March 26, 1870.

**Louis Placide Canonge**

In a short summary of Conrad’s (1988:150) of him, Louis Canonge was born on June 29, 1822 in New Orleans. He was educated in France and returned to New Orleans in 1838. He married Heloise Halphen (daughter of Michael Halphen) with whom he had two sons.

He was admitted to the bar in 1843 and later was Clerk of Court of New Orleans Criminal Court. He was also a journalist and editor and the author of a number of dramas and a comedy. He was director and manager of the French operatic company in New Orleans from 1873 to 1878. He was the Superintendent of Education of Orleans Parish. He was professor of French at the University of Louisiana. He was a member of the State House of Representatives 1850-1852 and 1884-1888. He died in New Orleans on January 22, 1893 (Conrad 1988:150).

**Recap of Economic Expansion**

Many of the Creole and non-Creole owners of property in this concentrated area of the Vieux Carré did not live on the property they owned. The property was quickly becoming too valuable for them to “waste” it for a personal property. It was even too valuable to rent an entire building to a single tenant. The Creoles and others quickly learned they could receive much more in rental income on the building, were it to be rented to a commercial enterprise on the first floor and one or more tenants on the upper floors. By the 1850s the increasing property value and
increasing amounts charged for rents drove many of the existing and potential tenants away from the Vieux Carré to the American sector, where property values and rents were much cheaper. Eventually, as tenants in the Creole sector became less willing to pay premium amounts for rents and therefore became more scarce, property values in the area declined.

The developments of the St. Charles Hotel and Exchange, the St. Louis Hotel and Exchange, and the modernizations of the buildings in the surrounding blocks represent the material expression of economic, political, and social events to support the designation of this historical period, Economic Expansion, in New Orleans’ history. It is confirmation in the material record of the rift between Creoles and Americans. While much of the “on the ground” evidence has been destroyed by subsequent modernizations and other developments, there is sufficient evidence in the historical record to document the social, political, and economic jostling.

The adoption of a new city charter on April 12, 1852 dissolved the three-municipality organization of New Orleans and politically reunited the city (Kendall 1922:172). The construction of the Louisiana State Supreme Court Building (Figure 42) in the early 1900s physically removed the Exchange Alley extension between Squares 39 and 40, reuniting them into a single block.
Figure 42 Louisiana State Court Building and other buildings. 1. 406 Chartres. 2. 410 Chartres. 3. 412 Chartres. 4. 414 Chartres. 5. 400 Royal. 6. St. Louis Hotel, Royal Orleans Hotel. Map from Mince 2002:138.
Part V

The American Sector

The American Sector

The Lower Garden District was the first “semi-urban residential area” in New Orleans (Wilson and Lemann 1971:xiv). Although the area had been laid out for development in 1806 by Barthelemy Lafon, significant development did not begin until the late 1820s and early 1830s. Although much of this area has also been called the “Irish Channel,” because of the masses of Irish immigrants who became settled in the area beginning in the 1830s (Chase 1960:142), the area did not acquire that appellation until later in the 1800s. Richard Campanella (2006:242) mapped his analysis of the 1901 City Directory, demonstrating the variability in the theories of the actual location of the Irish Channel (Appendix 3).

The Lower Garden District represents roughly four neighborhoods. One, the Irish Channel, or part of it, developed from Constance Street to the Mississippi River, where industrial buildings and rental property were intermixed. The Annunciation Square area became fashionable in the 1830s with Greek Revival mansions, suburban villas and country cottages; these stood beside the old French and Spanish colonial plantation houses. In the 1840s and 1850s Coliseum Place began to boom. At the same time, the area “back of town” from Carondelet toward Lake Pontchartrain was first begun for the Irish immigrants who had worked on the nearby New Basin Canal. Later, as the “river side” filled in, the “wood side,” or section “back of town,” became more densely populated. Fashionable homes were built next to the sophisticated multiple-family dwellings, and from the first the Lower Garden District had a rich blend of socioeconomic and ethnic groups (Wilson 1971:xiv).

As the Irish immigrant population in the area increased, so did the number of saloons, coffee-houses, and boarding houses, especially near the intersection of Tchoupitoulas and St. Thomas streets. John McDonogh had been buying property – single lots, whole blocks, and larger tracts – in and around New Orleans from 1803 until his demise in 1850. His practice of no
maintenance of his rental properties led to their degeneration. This was especially evident in Faubourg St. Mary. As the properties declined in value, he collected less and less in rents. This meant that the renters he was able to attract were progressively of lower income. As a result, it did not take many years for what had been originally an exclusive wealthy neighborhood to degenerate into one that was known for indigent immigrants. While many of these immigrants were hard-working family people, a large number were prone to drunkenness, rowdiness, and brawling in the many taverns of the area. Property values declined, and many of the wealthier residents moved slightly further upriver.

**The Lithograph**

According to *New Orleans Architecture Volume II: The American Sector* page 78, the caption (or title) of the reproduction of the lithograph below is “Faubourg St. Mary in the 1820s” by Felix-Achille Beaupoil de Saint-Aulaire (Figure 43). Correspondence dated December 15, 2009 with Daniel Hammer of The Historic Collection, Williams Research Center indicates otherwise. The lithograph’s documentation, albeit somewhat sketchy, of the lithograph as found in their catalogue record indicates their information is based on THNOC (The Historic New Orleans Collection) *Encyclopedia of New Orleans Artists, 1718-1918*, page 335. The catalogue record of this particular lithograph states it was done in approximately 1821 by P. Langlume. However, a number of elements of the scene are not consistent with much of the literature about Faubourg St. Mary in the early 1820s. Keeping in mind:

In 1801, when Maunsell White arrived in New Orleans, and for the first time strolled down Poydras Street, the Faubourg Ste. Marie consisted of five houses. Between Common on Poydras, from Magazine to Carondelet, the whole space was given up to truck-gardens” (Kendall 1922:124).
There were no development “projects,” only the occasional house built, between 1801 and 1821 in Faubourg St. Marie. The illustration is more consistent with the descriptions of the area almost a decade later, in the late 1820s and early 1830s. First, the street appears to be paved or cobbled. One such reference in the literature is the first two sentences of “Review of Banking in New Orleans, 1830-1840” by S. A. Trufant:

Vincent Nolte, in his very interesting memoirs, entitled “Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres,” tells us that in 1821 New Orleans did not possess one single paved street. In 1822 the City Council, recognizing the necessity for some improvements, decided to pave Rue Royale, at a cost of $300,000, and the Council arranged through Mr. Nolte for a loan to be repaid in ten years from the banking house of Barings, London (Trufant 1918:25).

Figure 43 Lithograph by Felix-Achille Beaupoil de Saint-Aulaire showing a street in Faubourg St. Mary in the 1820s. Historic New Orleans Collection.

\(^1\)Emphasis added.
However, according to Kendall in his 1922 *History of New Orleans*,^2^ one block of a single street was paved by 1821 New Orleans: the one-block section of Gravier between Magazine and Tchoupitoulas Streets, which had been paved as an experiment in 1817. Mayor Roffignac had convinced the State Legislature to allow him to issue city stock (bonds) in the amount of $300,000 for the “watering and paving” of the city in 1822. The bond money was used to pave ... several of the main streets, including St. Charles, with cobblestones, over which fine gravel was laid; and substantial stone curbing was put along the sidewalks. The work, however, does not seem to have been carried very far, as in 1835 we hear that only two streets had been paved through their entire length (Kendall 1922:117).

Considering that other than these few streets, supposedly very few portions of any street above Canal Street were paved before 1828, the lithograph may have been done in 1828 or 1829. Although it may be only a matter of “artistic perspective,” even the breadth of the street appears exaggerated for New Orleans in the period.

Second, the type and density of the buildings suggest a later period than the early 1820s. The two-story brick (or, more likely, clapboard) federal (or sometimes termed “Georgian”) building near the middle of the lithograph was probably an apartment building. The brick-built federal style did begin to appear in New Orleans in the early 1820s, but as of 1820 or 1821, very few people at all lived above Canal Street. Third, in this scene, it is notable that there are twelve people, each going about his business, in an area in which literature indicates was a sparsely populated residential neighborhood.

The nearer, but adjacent, house in the lithograph appears to be a Creole cottage with an extension. Such extensions became increasingly popular later during the period on similar, smaller houses of working class people either to provide an indoor kitchen or, probably even

^2^Kendall’s reference is *De Bow’s Review*, VII, 415.
more often, as additional bedrooms. The additional bedroom(s) could provide increased income by renting to transients and visiting businessmen. From the cut of their clothes, the horseback-rider and the man with the umbrella appear to be Creoles, possibly planters, businessmen, or clerks, while the white men on the corner are more apt to be newcomers to the city from the North. The black woman sweeping the sidewalk is quite likely to be a slave belonging to the owner of the fenced property behind her. The two black men cleaning the streets are likewise probably slaves belonging to the same property-owner; however, they may be slaves-for-hire or hired, unskilled free men of color. Based on his dress (and the fact he is carrying tools) the white man crossing the street is more than likely of the working class. Two dogs either are running free in the streets, or they may be accompanying the rider.

It is unlikely that the documentation given by The Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center, is incorrect. However, the Notarial Archives’ Building Contract database has only three (3) entries for the particular block of Gravier (between Tchoupitoulas and Magazine – the 400 block) that was paved by 1821: 1) building contracted in 1845; 2) building contracted in 1859; and 3) repairs on a building contracted in 1878. The database does not contain any information indicating any houses at all were built on Gravier Street from the 200 block though the 2000 block until the 1830s. While houses may be built by an individual, or as the result of a verbal contract, it is unlikely that all of the buildings shown in the lithograph were built without a written contract. Therefore, based on the literature and the information from the Notarial Archives, it is also unlikely that the lithograph is of the section of Gravier Street that had been paved in 1817. The scene in the lithograph is more typical St. Mary at a much later date, or if the date is correct, then some place other than Faubourg St. Mary. It is possible the lithograph
was promotional material for property sales in Faubourg St. Mary, showing how it could look, rather than what the area was like at the time.

**Creole-American Relations**

Land speculators such as Samuel Peters and John Caldwell (in association) and Maunsel White were in good position to take advantage of the housing needs of the burgeoning population. Peters had ideas of development in the Faubourg Marigny years earlier, when he and Caldwell attempted to purchase much of Bernard Marigny’s downriver property in 1822. Castellanos goes on to cite the incident between Peters and Marigny as the point at which the relations between the Creoles and the Americans changed from a mere discomfort to an active thorn in the side of the efforts to the “Americanization” of the Creoles. Previous ambivalence became animosity, and this was reflected in numerous ways and numerous occasions throughout the Antebellum Period.

The refusal of Mr. Bernard Marigny to participate in the advantages offered by the financial magnates not only sealed the doom of his own immediate section and brought about the eventual decline of the ‘carré de la ville,’ but was the event from which dates the surprising transformation of that once gigantic quagmire, known to-day as the First District [Faubourg Ste. Marie, formerly Second Municipality], into a new and wonderful city, the centre of progress, wealth and refinement, with its attractive public buildings, immense warehouses and stores and palatial residence for its merchant princes. The New Canal, the Waterworks, the St. Charles and Verandah hotels, the Gas Works, the St. Charles theatre, the introduction of square stone pavements, were not a few, although among the first, of the improvements inaugurated by those men of iron, and notwithstanding the financial crash of 1836-37, which for the nonce, paralyzed every industry, the work of progress and go-aheaditiveness steadily went on (Castellanos 1978:253-254).

The intense hatred that Marigny felt (and expressed) for “Americans” prevented his sale of the property. The incident provided the catalyst for the American-directed and American-oriented development upriver of the Vieux Carré, rather than a joint American and Creole development
downriver. With the overt rebuttal to his aspirations for success in New Orleans, Peters turned his attention to the, at the time, very underdeveloped Faubourg St. Mary, with every intention of foiling Marigny’s plan for the exclusion of Americans in the city (Kendall 1922:125). He and Caldwell (and Maunsel White, as well as other American investors and speculators) purchased vast tracts in St. Mary and Lafayette. They were also eventually successful in purchasing a goodly portion of Faubourg Marigny.

From the beginning of the Anglo intrusion on the economic scene in New Orleans, there had existed some animosity. The Americans were considered crude and without manners, and their business practices were quite unlike those of the Creoles. During the 1830s the ethnic differences were evident in the buildings constructed by the two groups. The Creoles, more or less, remained attached to such dwellings as the urban plantation house (i.e. Madame John’s Legacy) in the less crowded areas, townhouses in the more urban center of the city, and Creole cottages and shotgun houses in the more crowded and in the poorer sections of the city. The Americans tended to opt more for the “Americanized” versions of these. However, all types of houses were represented on both sides of Canal Street – the somewhat loosely defined boundary between the Creoles and the Americans (Figures 44 and 45).
When the economic pressures of competition between the Creoles and Americans increased to the threat of the economic survival of the Creoles, the Creoles responded by electing to erect new commercial buildings and to modify ("update" or "modernize") existing older ones to maintain their control over the unstable economics of the times. However, in some ways the Creoles tended to resist the Northern newcomers' ideas on modernization. Creoles clung to notions of maintenance of the status quo, while the Americans brought a capitalistic vision into the mix. For instance, the Creoles were initially opposed to the paving of streets. Not only would paving entail additional taxes (the 1822 bond money for this investment in the city had primarily been used to lay gravel rather than cobblestones), but the resulting noise from the traffic would be disturbing. Even the anticipated health benefits afforded by a more sanitary environment was countered by the Creoles. They were not greatly afflicted by either cholera or yellow fever as new immigrants to the city were, and perhaps that would discourage additional in-migration (Kernion 1915:72; Carey 1947:450).

Vella (1997) tends to de-emphasize this Creole-American rivalry. However, hers is only one voice among the many found in the literature about the period, and her opinion is not substantiated by the evidence of the buildings. Not only was there a great deal of competition between the Creole and American investors, but also shopkeepers, speculators, and plantation investors.
owners. The same economic competition was even more pronounced between those ethnic groups of appreciably less financial resources.

**The Rise and Fall of Faubourg St. Mary**

**Eighteenth Century St. Mary**

Faubourg St. Mary, later sometimes also known as the “Irish Quarter” or “Irish Channel,” is the area slightly upriver of Canal Street in New Orleans. The land was initially issued by the Superior Council of Louisiana on March 27, 1719, as a portion of a grant to Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, the founder of New Orleans, for a plantation (Wilson 1978a:3). The lower limit of this plantation’s lands would have been approximately at what is now Canal Street. A plan of the city dated May 30, 1725 marked the property as “Land and House of M. de Bienville” and shows “three units, but in an asymmetrical arrangement, and there are formal gardens in the rear and an avenue of trees leading from the canal to the house” (Wilson 1978a:4). On April 1, 1726 Bienville sold a twenty arpent tract, including the plantation buildings, to the Jesuits for 12,000 livres. In this notarial act, the property is described as “a house of fifty two feet in length, of wood colombage, built and constructed on part of the said twenty arpents, pigeon cote, a corps de logis, garden planted with fruit trees adjacent to the said house”(Wilson 1978a:5). As early as 1744 the Jesuits tried to raise sugarcane on the property, but were not successful in this endeavor.

The house, being made of colombage, with sills perpendicular to the ground and exterior walls covered with wide boards, began to rot within a few years. In 1728 new buildings were erected. The new main building was three stories high and similar to, but much smaller than, the

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3 Colombage is “the in-fill of a wall constructed of timber posts and braces” (Edwards and Kariouk 2004:64-65). For a much more in-depth explanation of colombage and other terms, see *A Creole Lexicon: Architecture, Landscape, People.*
first Ursuline convent (Wilson 1978a:5-6). Wilson (1978a:6-7) related more history of the property, including specifications of the property and buildings listed in the inventory, when the Superior Council decreed on July 9, 1763 that the property was to be sold. After the missionary activities of the Jesuits were suppressed, the property was confiscated by the Superior Council of Louisiana. The seven arpents nearest the Vieux Carré was purchased by Charles de Pradel. The inventory of the property at the time of sale was as follows:

A principal house in bricks, with two upper stories.  
Another house and cellar below, in bricks, gallery all around.  
A building in brick containing four apartments (rooms).  
Two dove cotes in brick and colombage, a brewery in brick, a stable for oxen with brick piers, surrounded with stakes, a large store house for the hay.  
Item, a store house containing two apartments (rooms), in brick, a sheepfold containing two apartments (rooms) with brick piers, surrounded with stakes. A second sheepfold of posts in the ground, roofed and surrounded with stakes. Another building in brick containing carpentry shop, the forge and a small chamber, a coach house with brick piers and a shop in brick for the wheelwrights, a barn in wood, a storehouse in brick

In addition there was a five-room galleried-all-around brick house used as a hospital, a number of hen houses, an indigo manufactory, and forty-five Negro cabins and other farm buildings.

Shortly after the sale, the chapel was razed, and the sepulchers were burned (Wilson 1978a:6-7).

Pradel later bought the next upriver parcel of five arpents from Larivee. Pradel died soon after this and his mother, Alexandrine de la Chaise (widow of Chevalier Jean de Pradel), inherited the plantation. She appealed to the Superior Council and was granted permission to convert the plantation to sugarcane. To accommodate the processing of sugarcane, she added a number of new buildings including a sugar house, two furnaces, a drying house, a distillery, two mills, cylinders and boilers (Wilson 1978a:7).

The Widow Pradel sold the entire property (twelve arpents along the Mississippi River and extending back to Bayou St. John) to Andres Reynard for 14,000 pesos. The act of sale was
notarized by Andres Almonester on January 11, 1773. Upon Reynard’s death, his widow, Dona Maria Josefa Deslondes of the German coast, inherited the property. She later re-married to Don Beltran (Bertrand) Gravier (Wilson 1978a:7). The property was subdivided after the Great Fire of March 21, 1788. The plan by the Spanish Royal Surveyor Carlos Laveau Trudeau dated April 1, 1788 shows this early partition into lots with several streets: “the front of this plantation divided into lots, cut by three cross streets with four perpendicular streets and one oblique.” Wilson noted that the cross streets were Magazine, Camp, and St. Charles Streets, and the perpendicular streets were Poydras, Girod, Julia, and Foucher Streets; the oblique street was named Gravier. Less than a month later, Trudeau drew a revised plan which added the streets of Carondelet, Baronne, St. Philip (Dryades), and el Camino Real (Royal Highway) along the levee. There was a plaza, Place Gravier, in the middle of this plan. This first suburb of New Orleans was initially called Ville Gravier, but after the death of Madame Gravier, it was re-named Faubourg Ste. Marie in her memory (Wilson 1978a:8).

**Nineteenth Century St. Mary**

The public land between the upriver fortification of the city proper and Faubourg St. Mary was granted to Barthelemy Lafon, architect-surveyor, in 1798. By 1805 the fortifications had deteriorated, and much of the material had been used for firewood. After the Louisiana Purchase, Lafon’s ownership of the property remained unconfirmed by the American government until 1818.

Canal Street was created by an Act of Congress on March 3, 1807 for the purpose of building a canal. Development along the street began immediately, and continued until it was the principal business street in New Orleans. One of the earliest buildings in New Orleans designed
by Benjamin Henry Latrobe was the 1807 Custom House on Canal Street. Coincidentally, this building was among “the first in the city in which red brick, white columns and trim and green blinds were used, the materials and color that soon became the characteristics of American building in New Orleans” (Wilson 1978a:11).

Only a very few houses had been built in the suburb by the early 1800s. “In 1801, when Maunsel White arrived in New Orleans, and for the first time strolled down Poydras Street, the Faubourg Ste. Marie consisted of five houses” (Kendall 1922:124). One of these was owned by Nicholas Gravier. The house, probably typical for the area at the time, was described in the advertisement for sale in the Moniteur on June 6, 1807:

A House now occupied by M. Forstall, situated in Magazine street, Faubourg Ste. Marie, on a lot adjoining on one side to Mr. Benjamin Morgan and on the other to Mr. MacDonogh, of 60 feet front by the whole depth of the block. The said house in colombage, elevated nine feet on walls, consists of six chambers, four of which with fireplaces, three warehouses on the ground floor, a gallery of ten feet in width enclosed in jalousies in its entire length, a double staircase in brick and a large cellar in masonry (quoted in Wilson 1978a:9).

Benjamin Morgan, one of the major developers on Faubourg Ste. Marie, bought this property on two lots from Nicholas Gravier, and had in 1804, purchased an adjacent lot from Julien Poydras, executor for Felix Matherne. The Matherne house on the lot from Julien Poydras was similar to, but larger than, the Gravier house.

In 1822 James H. Caldwell and Samuel J. Peters attempted to purchase property in Faubourg Marigny for housing development from Bernard de Marigny. When the deal fell through, they instead purchased property in Faubourg Ste. Mary from Jean Gravier, who had inherited the property from his father. Caldwell undertook the project in earnest to “exploit these antagonisms” between the Creoles and the Americans (Kendall 1922:125).
John Chase quotes a description of Faubourg St. Mary of 1822 (written twenty years later) by James H. Caldwell, actor and builder of the American Theater on Camp Street near Poydras:

New Levee street (now called Peters) was a continuous line of ponds for more than a mile, and Tchoupitoulas and Magazine could then boast of no better buildings that such are denominated as shanties, with here and there the mouldering remains of a former plantation residence. Camp street had only at that time a few tobacco and cotton warehouses, and St. Charles street was best known to the boys, who sought in sport for snipe among the latanier in the marshes, which had never been disturbed otherwise in their original growth (Chase 1960:122).

Relatively few persons of consequence actually resided in Faubourg St. Mary until the mid- to late-1830s, when development of the area was positively impacted by the rapidly increasing economy of the city (Figures 46 and 47). A number of the Anglos and Irish immigrants who had moved to New Orleans around the time of the Louisiana Purchase rapidly became of economic and political significance in the city; these individuals had formerly resided in the better, more central area of the Vieux Carré. It was during this later period, the 1830s, that many relocated to Faubourg St. Mary, in particular the Prytania, St. Charles, and Julia Streets area. Among those notable were such businessmen as Maunsel White, John McDonough, Samuel J. Peters, Julien Poydras, John Slidell and Samuel Kohn. Each of these men had businesses in Faubourg St. Mary and many also resided there, although considering the extensive economic development, the faubourg maintained much of its rural or village aspect.

Figure 46 Masonry cottages in 1860. Plan Book 42, Folio 47, New Orleans Notarial Archives
with many of the houses being of the Creole cottage or the Americanized version of the Creole
cottage until this later development.

Faubourg St. Mary experienced slow housing development until the 1830s, at which time
the speed of development rapidly increased, and the area came to take on more of a sophisticated
and urban character. In 1831 the corner lot, formerly the location of the Matherne house, was
sold to the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company. The company had been formed to dig a
canal from Lake Pontchartrain to
Faubourg St. Mary. The canal
was named the New Basin Canal
and functioned until the 1940s.
The turning basin was at the
intersection of Rampart and Julia
Streets (Wilson 1978a:10).

There had existed a certain
degree of animosity between Anglos and Creoles from the beginning of their association around
1800 in the crowded city. Over the years the rivalry only increased, particularly the economic
aspect. The Anglos were making fortunes in various ventures and enterprises, while the Creoles
were fighting for economic survival and to retain social supremacy.

The differences which came to the surface as a result of the 1822 failed property
transaction between Marigny, as a Creole landowner and aristocrat, and Peters and Caldwell, as
American speculators, heightened tensions between Creoles and Anglos. Although many of the
Creoles deplored Marigny’s hatred of Anglos and subsequently withdrew their political support
of him, a significant number did not. In 1823 Peters embarked on his political career and was elected by a large majority (Kendall 1922:125-126).

After years of attempting to accomplish a more equitable distribution of the city’s funds to the newer faubourgs, Peters, along with several other businessmen, appealed to the Legislature for assistance. In 1836 the Legislature renewed New Orleans’ charter specifying that the city was to be divided into three nearly autonomous sectors. The American sector, the area of Faubourg St. Mary became the Second Municipality with the authority to collect and expend its own revenues without the necessity of sharing the tax money with other portions of the city. Thus, “Beginning in 1836 for a stretch of seventeen years, it was like twin cities, adjacent but distinct and separate, and not very compatible twins at that” (Wilson 1978a:50).

Fears on the part of free non-white Creoles with respect to the recent Irish immigration supplanting them in the for-wages workforce proved to be well-founded. The Germans and especially the Irish replaced many of the free persons of color in unskilled, common labor job, particularly those controlled by Americans. The Irish replaced slaves and free persons of color in such service employment as draymen and as servants in the American hotels: “Europeans tended to replace free Negroes as domestic servants, waiters, and hotel workers. The St. Charles Hotel, which once employed free Negroes, by the 1850s had an almost all-Irish staff” (Reinders 1965:276).

Martha Ann Peters, in her 1960 article “The St. Charles Hotel: New Orleans Social Center, 1837-1860,” noted that based on her review of correspondence written “by James Stirling, an English visitor who arrived at the St. Charles in January, 1857” that of his fellow visitors to the hotel one-third were semi-permanent residents of three to five months, one-third
were planters and their families in for the season, and the other third were transient businessmen and travelers. The statements by Reinders and Peters give support to other contemporaneous literature and is consistent with reviews of the census of the era. The census of 1850 indicates that an extremely high proportion of the population of the 2nd Municipality (which includes the area around Julia Street) was white. Furthermore, a great number of these residents had been born in either Ireland or Germany.

In *The Irish in New Orleans, 1850-1860* by Earl F. Niehaus stated that by the 1850s the riverside area of Faubourg St. Mary was the roughest section of the city. The roughest of this area was centered in the heavily-Irish area of boardinghouses on St. Thomas Street near the river. The violence in the area was reported almost daily in the newspapers. Numerous reports describe St. Thomas Street as “Irish and unsafe” (Niehaus 1965:29). In 1852 Maunsel White began subdividing his property and selling the lots.

In the literature regarding the 1853 yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans, it is estimated that one out of five Irish died. The victims of the fever were primarily concentrated in “Lynch’s Row” and the area of St. Thomas and Tchoupitoulas Streets. The overcrowded and unhygienic Irish neighborhood accelerated the spread of the disease. Faubourg St. Mary reached economic maturity in the late 1850s. By the time of the beginning of the Civil War, “the building of residences in old Faubourg St. Mary ended and the area gradually lost its residential character” (Wilson 1978a:72, 43).

**Julia Street**

Julia Street is taken as an example that is representative of Faubourg St. Mary (Figures 48 and 49). The rise and fall of the prevailing economic conditions of the city in the first half of the
nineteenth century can be read in the history of the street from its origin as the most popular and exclusive neighborhood of the wealthy to its degeneration to the home of poor immigrant wage laborers. The street is reputed to have been named for the black slave cook of Julien Poydras who finally freed her, due to her excellent skills in the kitchen. Julia Mathew is listed in one city directory as a free woman of color, residing at 28 Levee (Decatur) Street. On earlier maps the street was named “Julie,” rather than “Julia.” Both Kendall (1922 II:674) and Chase (1960:72) determined the street was named for Julien Poydras, whose nickname was “Julie.”

During the 1830s, Julia Street was, at that time, one of the “broadest and best streets” in Faubourg St. Mary (Lemann 1978:52). The population on Julia Street ranged from wealthy whites on the lakeside end to the very poor living in boardinghouses and rent houses at the Tchoupitoulas end of the street. The boardinghouse end was notorious as a very rough area of New Orleans during the 1850s. As Niehaus (1965:28-29) remarked:

Julia, another Irish street, was also an illustration of a residential commonplace in New Orleans, i.e., elite housing adjoining rundown tenements. On Julia, between Camp and St. Charles, were the famous “Thirteen Sisters,” the aristocratic dwellings in the uptown part of the city prior to the development of the Garden District. Toward the river on Julia were the Irish boardinghouses. A group of these, between Magazine and Tchoupitoulas, were known as “Connaught Yard.” To call the yard a “jungle” would, perhaps, be too harsh; but the “charlies” (New Orleans’ nightwatchmen) shied away from lower Julia Street (Niehaus 1965:28-29).

\[\text{4}\text{Much later the stretch of Julia Street beyond St. Charles Avenue building became very commercially oriented, for instance the 1891 Building Contract Item #18.}\]
Julia Street Affiches

A 2005 report generated by the Notarial Archives of their holdings of *affiches* (poster prepared of a property for sale, usually at auction) indicates there are twenty-seven (27) *affiches* in the New Orleans Notarial Archives of properties on Julia Street. Twenty-four of these are discussed here and are included in Appendix 4. Figure 50 is a map of the approximate sites represented by the *affiches* and is based on the information held in the *Affiche* database at the Notarial Archives. These properties were for sale between the approximate years 1831 and
1867; however, several are undated. Although undated, the undated *affiches* are undoubtedly from this period. The approximate sites of twenty-four of the properties represented in these *affiches* are mapped in Figure XXX.

(1) *Affiche* 12.34. Notarial Archive ID #489, square 134, lots 1-3. Located on the corner of Foucher and backed by Magazine Street. It is shows two four-story brick houses and one frame house. The *affiche* was done and signed by J.N.B. de Pouilly and dated April 1, 1849. No estimated date of construction is given. The *affiche* is accompanied by notices in French and English describing the property for sale:

A portion of land composed of two properties measuring just over 48 feet fronting on Julia Street between the streets of Magazine and Fouché extending to a depth of just over 170 feet each with a 4-story brick building and all dependencies thereon, along with all the privileges and servitudes. The two stores on the ground floor (*rez-de-chaussée*) with granite facades are rented at $25.00/month each from now until November, 1849. The upper tenements have large moving in (?) rooms and the ____ stables and the rooms of the courtyard are rented at $75.00 for the same period _____ together with 400 shares of Citizen’s Bank.

A corner lot facing Julia, and adjoining the above, is just over 41 feet wide with a depth of 170 feet on Fouché, between parallel lines, including a frame house (*maison basse*) and the dependencies and right of ways, privileges and servitudes. All is rented, the lease expires in November for _____ together with 230 shares of Citizen’s Bank stock.

(2) *Affiche* 31.16. Notarial Archive ID #1386, square 256, lots 64-67. Facing Julia, corner of Philippa (Baronne) and backed by the Alley (Howard). The *affiche* is unsigned (or the signature is obscured), but it is dated March 7, 1844.

(3) *Affiche* 32.10. Notarial Archive ID #1428, square 123, lots 1-2. Facing Julia, corner of Foucher and backed by Tchoupitoulas and St. Joseph Streets. The *affiche* is unsigned, but is assumed to be the work of W. T. Thornton. It is dated April 27, 1841.
(4) *Affiche* 32.38. Notarial Archive ID #1456, square 256, lot 65, 22 x 120. Facing Julia, between Baronne (Philippa) and backed by Triton Walk. The lot is near three alleys. The *affiche* is unsigned and undated.

(5) *Affiche* 61.9. Notarial Archive ID #2926, square 218, lots 1-5. Facing Julia, corner of Carondolet and backed by Girod, near St. Charles. It is a gable-side building with a dependency. Diagram only. The *affiche* is by Journot who was an architect. It is dated January 9, 1836.

(6) *Affiche* 11.32. Notarial Archive ID #431, square 124, lots 1-2. Facing Julia, between Magazine and Tchoupitoulas Streets. This is the Baptist Church complex. The estimated date of construction is 1840. The *affiche* was signed by Henry Moellhausen, architect and surveyor. It is dated March 31, 1845.

(7) *Affiche* 12.38. Notarial Archive ID #493, square 161 (old 132), lot 30.8 x 97.4. Facing Julia, between Magazine and Camp Streets. The building is labeled an “early creole cottage” and kitchen (two-story dependency). The estimated date of construction is 1829. The *affiche* was done by C.A. de Armas. It is dated May 1, 1849.

(8) *Affiche* 23.40. Notarial Archive ID #982, square 179, lots 1-2. Facing Julia, between St. Mary and Camp Streets, backed by Girod (?), row of six creole cottages. The estimated date of construction is 1820. The *affiche* was done by W. Thornton Thompson. It is dated February 16, 1839.

(9) *Affiche* 29.7. Notarial Archive ID none noted, square 181. Facing Camp Street, near the rear of the Thirteen Sisters (discussed in the next section) between Julia Street and St. Joseph

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5This name or the name on (3) *Affiche* 32.10 is quite similar and may be an error in the records of the Notarial Archives.
Street. The *affiche* is of a two-story building with a two-story rear wing (or dependency). The property is 42.8 feet wide and approximately 173 feet deep.

(10) *Affiche* 29.10. Notarial Archive ID #1290, square 123, lots 1-5. Facing Julia, corner of Foucher, between Foucher and Tchoupitoulas, and backed by St. Joseph Street. There is a large hip-roofed building with two dependencies. The *affiche* was done by Joseph Pilié, city surveyor. It is dated October 22, 1831.

(11) *Affiche* 32.14. Notarial Archive ID #1432, square 235, lots 1-12. Facing Julia, corner of Baronne, and backed by Carondolet Street. There are three buildings, one of which has a rear wing. It backs on a 25 foot alley and the railroad runs along Baronne. The *affiche* was done by Louis Surgi. It is dated October 4, 1841.

(12) *Affiche* 37.47. Notarial Archive ID #1722, square 235 or 257, lots 1-3. Facing Baronne, corner of Julia. It is a hip-roofed storehouse with two “kitchens” (dependencies?). The estimated date of construction is 1830. There is an associated newsclipping. The *affiche* was done by Jacques N.B. de Pouilly whose office was 43 Exchange Alley. It is dated December 4, 1847. The railroad runs down Baronne.

(13) *Affiche* 42.57. Notarial Archive ID #1970, square 274, lot 31.8 x 100. Facing Julia, between Philippa and Circus Streets, and backed by Girod Street. This is of two three-story brick stores. The estimated date of construction is 1840. The building has Greek Revival doorways and dentils. The *affiche* is dated and unsigned, but it is done in the style of Hedin (Carl A. Hedin of the survey and architect firm Hedin and Schlarbaum).

(14) *Affiche* 42.59. Notarial Archive ID not listed. There are three properties: 1) facing Julia, between Dryades (formerly Philippa) and Baronne, and backed by Girod. The building is
three-story with a rear wing or dependency and has a Greek Revival doorway. It is unsigned and undated.

(15) Affiche 43.46. Notarial Archive ID not listed. There are three properties: 1) facing Julia and crosses the alley, between St. Charles and Camp Streets, and back by St. Joseph Street, it is a four-story brick building, and the doorway has a fan transom and side lights; 2) and 3) facing St. Charles, between Julia and St. Joseph Streets, backed by Camp Street, there are two three-story brick buildings, each with a rear wing (or dependency). It is unsigned and undated.

(16) Affiche 43.57. Notarial Archive ID #2034, square 54, lots 1-7. Facing Julia, corner of Commerce, between Commerce and New Levee Streets, backed by St. Joseph Street. There are seven contiguous brick stores found in this large three-story building covering the seven lots. Arched transoms span front and sides of the entire ground floor. It is signed by C. A. de Armas dated February 7, 1859.

(17) Affiche 43.61. Notarial Archive ID #2038, square 218, lots 1-3. 700 block of Julia at the corner of Carondolet, between Carondolet and St. Charles. Creole cottage with a storehouse, the business of J.G. Weber Boots and Shoes, and a carpenter’s shop. The estimated date of construction is 1820. The affiche was done by Eugene Surgi and Adrien Persac, civil engineers, office located at 130 Exchange Alley. The affiche is date March 1, 1860.

(18) Affiche 52.46. Notarial Archive ID #2646, square 275, lot 25 x 62, Faubourg Duplantier (Delord). Facing Julia, corner of Dryades, between Dryades and Rampart Streets, and backed by Triton Walk. It is frame three-story, side hall Greek Revival townhouse. The estimated date of construction is 1840. The floor plan is well-labeled. The affiche was done by
Abraham de Young, surveyor, office address No. 5 Merchant and Auctioneer Exchange. It is dated May 7, 1862.

(19) Affiche 62.14. Notarial Archive ID #2992, square 257, lot 25 x 95.10. Facing Julia, between Philippa (Dryades) and Baronne, and backed by Girod. It is a three-story, three-bay mixed townhouse with a semi-detached rear wing. There are iron balconies. The estimated date of construction is 1840. The affiche was done by Carl A. Hedin and Schlarbaum, surveyors and architects. It is dated April 3, 1854.

(20) Affiche 62.15. Notarial Archive ID #2993, square 256, lot 26 x 120. Facing Julia and extending to the 15 foot rear alley, between Baronne and Philippa (Dryades), and backed by Triton Walk. The house is a four-bay double galleried, mixed Greek Revival townhouse. The estimated date of construction is 1830. There is a semi-detached kitchen and a front garden. The affiche is by Carl A. Hedin and Schlarbaum of Hedin and Schlarbaum, surveyors and architects. It is dated April 3, 1853.

(21) Affiche 63.3. Notarial Archive ID #2998, square 161, lots 6-8. Facing Julia between Magazine and Camp, and backed by St. Joseph. The affiche is unsigned, but in the style of Hedin, and undated.

(22) Affiche 83.17. Notarial Archive ID # 3955, square 25, lots 87-88, 25 feet width. Facing Julia, between Baronne and Philippa, and backed by Girod. It is a double dogtrot⁶, three-

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⁶ While the description assigned on the Notarial Archive database may be appropriate for the “type” of the house, the “style” is exteriorly similar in appearance to the I-house described by Fred Kniffen in his seminal house type work based on a “windshield” survey done in 1935. For this building to be an I-house in “type,” as opposed to a “double dogtrot,” the central hall to the kitchen wing would possess the single central entrance to a single residence, rather than two front doors to possibly two “separate” residences in the one building.
bay American townhouse. The estimated date of construction is 1840. There is a central kitchen wing and has attic windows. The *affiche* was done by C.A. Hedin and dated March 29, 1852.

**Development on Julia Street**

![Map of Julia Street Affiches](image)

*Figure 50* Map of Julia Street *Affiches*. Map by Author and D. Dorrell.
(23) *Affiche* 94.3. Notarial Archive ID #4488, square 57, lots 1-5, Faubourg St. Mary (old batture). Facing Julia, corner of Commerce, between New Levee and Commerce Streets, and backed by Notre Dame Street. There is possibly a frame store on lot #1, and a building on lot #5. The *affiche* was done by Louis Surgi and is dated January 15, 1847.

(24) *Affiche* 69.019. Notarial Archive ID #3334, square 309, lot 26 x 120. Facing Julia Landing (which is parallel to the New Canal), corner of Franklin (St. Peter Street) and Basin (St. John Street), and backed by Girod. It is a three-bay, cast iron-galleried brick structure. The estimated date of construction is 1839. The building’s sign is “Boatman’s Exchange.” The *affiche* was done by Louis H. Pilié and is dated December 8, 1858.

**Julia Street Building Contracts**

A separate report, also prepared by the Notarial Archives in 2005, is of building contracts (See Figure 51, map of approximate locations of the building contracts). It includes 27 contracts, which range between the dates of 1826-1926. It is possible that some building was done without the formality of a written contract. Further, it is possible that other written contracts did not specify that the property was located on Julia Street, and therefore would not be included in this report. Note that the contract represented in Items #19 and in #26 is for work done on the same two houses, both referenced as contract #377, and both of which were owned by Maunsel White. On March 3, 1841 Maunsel White contracted with Thomas Morrow for the construction of two houses on Julia near Philippa Street. The specifications of the buildings are quite explicit. (See transcript of the contract in Appendix, Notary William Christy 41/377, New Orleans Notarial Archives). Item #27, “repairs needed for lease,” is for a property owned by John McDonogh who died three months before the contract was written. Only two listings in the report specified “building type:”

2) To take the house of Mr. Parker as a model. Located corner of Julia/Baronne. Cost, none given. Contract dated 04/09/1833, reference Notary De Armas, O., 19/205. Owner Tabony, Joseph; Builder Coulon & Tabony.


11) A brick between posts house 28 x 34. 4 rms & gal 7’ & cabs; 2st kit w gal. The note on “building type” in the report is “creole cottage.” Cost $1,000. Contract dated 09/06/1828, reference Notary Caire, Louis, 005/442/568. Owner Adam, Louis; Builder Charpiau, Bernard.


16) A building. Cost $4,000. Contract dated 03/10/1836, reference Notary Lewis, Willi, destroyed. Owner Austin, Garretion; Builder Lane, Nathaniel C.


20) None given. Cost $5,800. Contract dated 07/06/1906, reference Notary Le Gardeur, 21/817. Owner Female Orphan Society; Builder Hinrichs, Henry F.


As was common, the building contract (Appendix 5) explicitly states the specifications of the work to be done, in this case by Morrow, and the provision of supplies and the manner of payment by the owner White. Please refer to the timeline below (Figure 52, Timeline; also see Figure 53, number of contracts by period, and Figure 54, population 1810-1900). There are two contracts for buildings in the 1820s, one during Reconstruction, five after Reconstruction, and nineteen between 1833 and 1844. Of these nineteen, ten were brick construction and two were frame. One building, contract dated 1828, was for a house constructed of brick between posts with the dimensions 28’ x 34’ and specifically designed as a “creole cottage.” Two contracts in the 1833-1844 period were for frame buildings. Fourteen others which were described in the report were of brick. The single one built during Reconstruction and the five others built after

Figure 51 Map of Julia Street Building Contracts. Source: Author and D. Dorrell.
Reconstruction (until the last in 1926) were brick, or did not specify construction materials.

Fully two-thirds of the building done on Julia Street between 1826 and 1926 was done during the period of increased economic activity, 1833 and the Civil War. Of the nineteen buildings constructed in the period 1833-1860, ten were built between 1833 and 1844, and the other nine were built between 1849-1859. No construction was documented during the Civil War.

![Timeline of Building Contracts](image_url)

**Figure 52** Timeline of Building Contracts. Source: Author and D. Dorrell.

**Affiches and Building Contracts**

While it may be that at least a portion of the buildings that were constructed with a store on the ground floor and a residence on the upper floor(s) may have been owner occupied (a long-standing precedent in the Vieux Carré), some of them may have been built entirely as income producing properties with all three floors rented, as in the case of Affiche #1. In some cases, as in Item #19, two houses built on the same lot with a fence between the houses, or Item #13, the building of five houses on contiguous lots, it is obvious that at least the buildings in these two contracts were built either with the intention of renting or resale. It is apparent from both data sets of historical documentation that the period from 1833 up to the Civil War was one of
increased construction made possible by favorable economic conditions. Faubourg St. Mary was a neighborhood of mixed socio-economic classes. In general, the pattern ranged from warehouses nearest the river, to the saloons of Tchoupitoulas Street and surrounding blocks, to tenements for wage laborers, to apartments and houses of the upper middle class, and finally toward lakeside, to the large manufactories. Residential and commercial buildings were interspersed, often contained within the same building.

**The Thirteen Sisters**

The row houses were constructed in 1833 by the New Orleans Building Company, a company formed for the purpose of housing development in Faubourg St. Mary. The architect for much of the construction contracted by NOBC was Alexander Thompson Wood and the builder was D. H. Twogood. In Samuel Wilson’s 1978 “Julia Street’s Thirteen Sisters,” the architectural design of this row of houses is attributed to Wood. However, based on Arthur Scully’s 1973 biography of James Dakin, Poesch and Bacot (1997) attribute the design of the buildings to Dakin. Although Dakin was in New York at the time and did not arrive in New Orleans until 1835, he was
associated with a New Orleans building contractor to whom he sent designs for houses, including others in Faubourg St. Mary, at least one of which was on Julia Street.

The Thirteen Sisters\(^7\), a block of thirteen row-houses in the 600 block of Julia Street was considered one of the most, if not the most, exclusive residential areas of the city, when it was first built. Eliza Ripley (1912:167-172) discusses the prominent people who lived in or visited the residents of the Thirteen Sisters, when she lived there with her family (her father was Richard Henry Chinn).

I wonder if anyone under seventy-five years of age passes old “Julia Street row” today and knows that those “13 Buildings” between Camp and St. Charles Streets have an aristocratic past, and were once occupied by the leading social element of the American colony residing in the early forties above Canal Street? “13 Building” it was called, and at that date, and a decade later, every one of them was tenanted by prominent citizens of New Orleans. There they lived and entertained a host of delightful guests, whose names were a power then, but whose descendants are perhaps little known today (Ripley 1912:167).

Near the end of the discussion on Thirteen Sisters, Ripley tells of its fall from prominence:

In the course of time a Mme. Peuch took possession of the house on the St. Charles street corner, and, horrors! Opened a boarding house, whereupon the aristocratic element gradually fluttered away... The infection spread, and in a short time the whole “13 Buildings” pimped out into cheap boarding houses or rented rooms. (Ripley 1912:171-172)

During his youth, H. H. Richardson, the architect for whom the architectural style “Richardsonian Romanesque” is named, lived in his father’s home in one of the thirteen row-houses from 1849-1859 (Kendall 1937:16-17)\(^8\). A very clear description of the row house type of

\(^7\)The footprint of the Thirteen Sisters is seen in (9) Affiche 29.7 in the previous section”Julia Street Affiches.”

\(^8\)The world-renowned architect, Henry Hobson Richardson, better known as H. H. Richardson in architectural circles, was born September 29, 1838 on Priestly Plantation in St. James Parish. He was the great-grandson of the inventor and philosopher Joseph Priestly. At least part of H. H.’s childhood was spent in the newly developed suburb of St. Mary, where he lived with his family in the row-house development of the “Thirteen Sisters.”
As a young man he left home to pursue an education at Harvard; then in 1859 he moved to Paris to study architecture at École des Beaux Arts. He was only the second student from the United States to attend the École. He attended the École from 1859-1860 and did not graduate, due to the reduced financial circumstances of his family incurred during the Civil War. His family’s fortune had been drastically deteriorated due to the Civil War. He was unable to return to the United States until 1865, when the war was over and travel was safer.

He developed the influential architectural style known as “Richardsonian Romanesque,” which is characterized by massive stone walls, semi-circular arches, and a dynamic use of interior space. Although his architectural work was primarily done in New England and the Midwest, especially Boston and Chicago, his influential style can be seen as far away as Scandinavia. One of the few buildings in the South which he did design is the Howard Memorial Library near Lee Circle in New Orleans. Richardson died at age 58 on December 27, 1886.

In the 600 block of Julia Street is a row of thirteen houses with common side walls, as in Philadelphia and Baltimore. According to Arthur Scully, James Dakin may have been the architect of the row houses, erected in 1833. Still residing in New York at the time, Dakin was connected with a New Orleans contractor and sent drawings for the houses. Each of the three-story units is two rooms deep and has a side stair hall. The width of a dwelling is 26 feet. A one-room-deep service wing stands at right angles to the rear of each house, with galleries facing a narrow courtyard. Including the wing, the depth of a house is 135 feet. The elegant fanlights above the doors and the slender Ionic columns alongside are neoclassical details. The transom fanlights radiate from a central nodal point, and six floral torches or spikes separate them. The door’s sidelights are articulated as elongated garland shapes, three to the right and three to the left, and these are linked by carved bows. On the facade, only the deep entablature has the robustness of a Greek style. On the main floor – the second story – the black marble mantel with Ionic columns supporting the shelf and the heavily undercut acanthus leaves of the ceiling medallions are typically Greek. The reeded moldings are reminiscent of earlier neoclassical motifs. Like many buildings of the 1830s, the row houses of Julia Street are transitional in style. The transitional coexisted with the full-blown Greek Revival (Poesch and Bacot 1997:178-179).

Figure 56 The Thirteen Sisters, photo taken 2005. Photo by author and F. Mince
In 1978, when Wilson wrote about these buildings, they were in deplorable condition, but they have since been restored to their original condition (Figures 56 and 57).

... later owners, seeking to express their own individuality, destroyed the essential unity of the row by changing cornices, balconies, doors and windows and, more recently adding a rash of signs and unsightly fire escapes. Restored to its original form, this row would be an architectural treasure comparable to the Pontalba Buildings, for which they might be considered the prototype (Wilson 1978b:176).

Currently a number of individual art galleries occupy the Thirteen Sisters. The 600 block of Julia Street is the host of the annual “White Linen” night which is held on a Saturday in early August. The Creole-American rivalry is still evident in the city: Bourbon Street now is host to the annual “Dirty Linen” night held on the following Saturday.

Neither the Vieux Carré nor this part of New Orleans experienced much, if any, damage from Hurricane Katrina (2005). The Thirteen Sisters, as well as many other buildings which were well-built and well-maintained, withstood the storm and aftermath admirably, unlike the many buildings of lesser quality and less well-maintained which were found in the later developed and topographically lower areas of New Orleans.
Part VI

Summary and Conclusion

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, New Orleans grew in sophistication, complexity in the social fabric, and physical size. Both the refugees from Saint Domingue and the Americans had an impact in all three realms.

The Saint Domingue refugees changed many aspects of the Creoles. Formerly, the sons and daughters of adventurers and convicts, the “elite” Creoles of Louisiana, had donned the trappings of French nobility. Soon after, the Saint Domingue refugees, some of whom had been Grand Blancs – privileged, wealthy, and “elite” both in France and in Saint Domingue – arrived and made New Orleans their home; these refugees began to intermarry with the Creoles. Features of their clothing and manner assumed a different depth and significance, a history and culture, hitherto unknown in the relatively young city. Many of the newly relocated individuals assumed positions of leadership in the economy, the social scene, and politics.

The population increased greatly, in fact doubling, with the arrival of the refugees in the early years of the nineteenth century. With this influx, the city’s footprint increased somewhat to include the development of Faubourg Marigny and then Faubourg Tremé. The new-to-New Orleans shotgun house was added to the city’s catalog of house types. The development of the balloon frame permitted these shotgun houses to rise up literally overnight. A single person could build a shotgun house in a couple of weeks, while two or three men working together could put up one in a day or two.

Although Faubourg Ste. Marie had been laid out in 1788, the later years of the Spanish Dominion, relatively few buildings had been erected by the time of the mass immigrations in the early nineteenth century. It was only after the Americans began to move into this upriver
neighborhood, that more than an occasional house was built. The Americans were not of the same culture as the French heritage natives of the city, and therefore, were unaccustomed to the degree of intimacy which the French enjoyed. The Americans desired more space and more privacy for their comfort, and the houses and the new neighborhood of Faubourg St. Mary were designed with Americans in mind. While many of the houses built were of the same types as those of the Creoles, the house types underwent modifications to better accommodate American tastes – the addition of a side hall to the shotgun, the central double fireplace (to serve two rooms) was separated and placed on the two gable ends of the house. Later, the “modern” Greek Revival house type was a national trend, and the romanticism evident in its appearance captivated the people of New Orleans.

Changes were also evident in the economy and social life of the city. In both arenas the Creoles viewed the American newcomers as brash and hurried, quite unlike the relatively easy-going (but hot-tempered), fun-loving Creoles. The Americans brought an English-language, American theater, an entertainment form the Creoles dearly loved, to the practically frontier city. Previously, local productions were performed only in French.

Likewise, the commercial, capitalistic nature of the Americans blossomed in the relatively laissez faire arena of business. In the few years prior to the development of Faubourg St. Mary, Americans had established their businesses in the Vieux Carré alongside the Creoles. Their relocation to the new part of town allowed them to expand their businesses and earn even greater profits. A small portion of these American profits were turned to personal use in the building of larger houses, some of which were mansions. However, the bulk of the profits were invested in property, development, and business ventures, such as waterworks, gas lighting, street paving, and bigger and better warehouses.
Beaux Arts buildings began to appear. The Americans’ new St. Charles Hotel and Exchange struck fear for their livelihoods into the financial hearts of the Creoles of the Vieux Carré. To counter this drain on their business, the Creoles built the equally fabulous St. Louis Hotel and Exchange. They also “modernized” the exteriors of their businesses, even to the adding of a fourth floor on a number of the buildings to present a more cosmopolitan and sophisticated appearance in the hopes of retaining and garnering business.

Of the thousands of persons living and working in New Orleans after the turn of the nineteenth century, a relatively few men took the lead in guiding the future of the city. In his *Economic History of New Orleans 1718-1820*, John Clark identified 149 men whose names appeared time after time in the rosters of councilmen, members of boards of directors, and financiers in the period 1803-1815.

To the casual observer, society in New Orleans appeared as fluid as in other western communities, yet operating beneath the flux was a solidly entrenched establishment. This inner core of individuals ran the town politically, set the social tone, and controlled its economic development through a virtual monopoly of corporate enterprise in the city (Clark 1970:332).

This “core” was somewhat flexible in composition as to the exact number and specific individuals. Over time, deaths and retirements made “room” for the occasional newcomer to be admitted, but the core’s approximate size and composition remained relatively stable. This core with its relatively few members continued for many years to guide the economy, the politics, the social scene, and the landscape of the city.

In fact, the upriver direction of the city’s growth can be directly attributed to these very few men. A single personal incident, a confrontation actually, between Peters and Marigny led to the upriver development of St. Mary as a locus of American business, rather than the more geographically-suited downriver area of Marigny’s plantation. This confrontation also had
widespread and lasting social implications. The Creoles and the Americans became antagonists socially, politically, and economically.

Although the War of 1812, and more specifically the Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1814, united the recently “American” city, the unity between the Creoles and the newcomer Americans was only a temporary measure to fight a common foe – the English. However, the advent of the Civil War forged a lasting unity among the people of New Orleans. It was a matter of New Orleanians and other Southerners against an aggressive North. Similar in fact, to the dynamics often found in families, that while the family may be buffeted by severe internal disputes, the family often closes ranks to present a solid front to an exterior threat. The landscape of New Orleans continues to reflect this conflict to this day.

To recapitulate the action leading to mid-nineteenth century New Orleans, Creoles were initially wary and in a number of ways contemptuous of Americans. A few of the Americans by their personalities and efforts to work with and “fit in” with Creoles were accepted to a certain extent. As in the rumor about a possible alliance, assuming the rumor to be true, between McDonogh and Michaela Almonester, it may be these overtures were rebuffed as an attempt by a member of a lower class overstepping his bounds in assuming a closer and more “equal” relationship than an upper class family would permit. In the case of Marigny and Peters, although Peters did in fact “fit in” with many of the more wealthy and influential of the Creoles, the personal grudge between these two men had a direct impact on the direction of growth and the prosperity of the city. Furthermore, this personal grudge spread throughout much of the upper middle class – the businessmen class of the city. Caldwell was only briefly in the picture of the city’s growth, but among other things, he brought American theater to all of New Orleans who could afford to attend the theater. Gas lighting in the city, as well as other civil and cultural
improvements credited to him, were major steps in the city’s modernization and facilitated the city’s movement into mainstream American culture. Possibly initially because of McDonogh’s work ethic and hopes to provide well for a bride, and then later, as compensation for his disappointments in achieving this romantic goal, McDonogh accumulated a vast amount of property and a fortune. It was due to his base of power in the financial arena that he, possibly indirectly, affected the geographical socio-economic distribution of the city.

“The Northern Born Community of New Orleans in the 1850s” (1964) by Chenault and Reinders, a review of the population in the first half of the nineteenth century, sheds a light on the nature of the population of the city; the review focuses on the segment of the population born in the northern states, who migrated to the city. The first paragraph noted that on June 7, 1851, the New Orleans Crescent (a local newspaper) reported “a majority of the business men of this city” were importations from north of the Mason Dixon Line. These merchants immigrated to a city and “society dominated by Creole and southern attitudes” to which they “brought a northeastern, business-oriented culture.” The authors also noted that “on the eve of the Louisiana Purchase, more than half of the city’s mercantile establishments were operated by agents of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore merchants” (Chenault and Reinders 1964:232). Many of this group became integrated into the city’s existing social structure and heavily impacting its economic arena.

... [They became] important figures in the city’s commerce and legal profession. The newcomers frequently intermarried with the native French and Spanish population, and became, in effect ‘Old Families.’ A second influx of Yankees coincided with the prosperity of the years before 1837. Oriented almost exclusively toward mercantile interests, these later settlers established retail and wholesale enterprises, became sugar and cotton brokers and commission merchants, and served as agents of northern banking, export, and merchandising houses (Chenault and Reinders 1964:233).
Chenault and Reinders (1964) cited James D. B. De Bow’s review of the 1850 census to say that “23.2 percent or nearly one fourth of all free, white native-born Americans in New Orleans were Yankees” (Chenault and Reinders 1964:233). On the next page (234) they note that censuses were normally taken during summer, when northerners, more so than southerners, left the city. This would indicate that the proportion of northern born Americans resident (not transient) in the city was possibly higher, even much higher, than were counted in the censuses. Continuing in their analysis, “foreign-born residents represented approximately one half of the total population of New Orleans” (Chenault and Reinders 1964: 234). Therefore, this means, that in 1850, fully one-fourth of the free, white population, that is only one in every four white persons you might pass on the street, had been born in New Orleans.

Taking into account such statistical qualifications, it is not surprising that, despite many evidences of French and Spanish influence, a traveller should discount these as superficial and conclude: ‘New Orleans is as essentially an American city as New York or Boston’ (Chenault and Reinders 1964: 234, quoting from Semi-Weekly Creole, May 9, 1855).

The earlier northern immigrants were fairly wealthy, had married into good (socio-economically speaking) Creole families, and now “provided a segment of the city’s elite,” while “the population of the 1850s revealed rather distinct class divisions...” (Chenault and Reinders 1964: 234). A prominent part of this immigrant group from the North entered almost directly into the upper middle class as “merchants, bankers, brokers, newspaper owners, and agents of northern concerns” (Chenault and Reinders 1964: 234).

The archtypal figure was born on a northeastern state and educated in a common school; in his mid-teens he moved to a nearby city where he became a clerk in a mercantile house; he came to New Orleans in his late teens or early twenties, during the plus years before 1837 or the mid-1840s, without money but possessing a skill and the all-important letters of introduction...He was less likely than earlier immigrants to marry into an old Creole family, and he was not interested in achieving status by owning a plantation (Chenault and Reinders 1964: 234-235).
Among the northern-born middle class, success in business was often followed by political and social acceptance.

A study of 339 clerks, bookkeepers, and accountants in the first ward of New Orleans in 1860... revealed... [that] of the 57 who reported real and personal property over $500 in value... nearly a third were northerners (Chenault and Reinders 1964: 235).

It was not only the ambitious middle class who immigrated to the city. Lower-middle and lower economic class skilled workers, unskilled workers, and “non-workers”¹ (thieves, scam and con artists, etc.) came to New Orleans as well (Chenault and Reinders 1964:27). Many or most of the poor immigrants were compelled to rent rooms or apartments, rather than buy or build houses of their own, especially at a time when property values were soaring.

Brady’s observation (1999:xxi) that the New Orleans of the 1850s was “a city of boardinghouses” (quoted on the fourth page of Part IV of this document) is supported by all of these assessments and contemporary reports, including the 1835 U. S. Census information, estimating 40,000 transients in the city, which was taken either before or early in the flood of poor immigrants to the city, and the historical documentation of building contracts and affiches (of buildings extant during the period). Brady surmised and estimated that one in five buildings in the city had rooms for rent.

The reviews and analyses cited in earlier portions of this document are all consistent with the modernizing efforts in the Vieux Carré and the new housing, which occurred in the rapidly developing Faubourg St. Mary. As presented in the historical documentation of buildings in St. Mary, specifically focusing on those of Julia Street in the first half of the nineteenth century, the

¹Chenault’s and Reinders’ (1964:27) view is based on their assessment of Charity Hospital records and the Board of Directors of Louisiana Penitentiary Report (Baton Rouge, 1859, pp 29-32).
area progressed rapidly from an almost exclusively wealthy neighborhood to one of rentals occupied by lower socio-economic classes of immigrants.

While hundreds and thousands of people lived and worked in the city, their lives were directly or indirectly affected, if not guided, by the few men and women who developed New Orleans. These persons, their hopes and dreams, their angers and fears, their achievements and failures, were played out on the larger stage of the economy, society, the geographic area, the population distribution, and the house types of New Orleans.

New Orleans was a marketing center, but it was set in the midst of the agrarian economy and mind-set of Louisiana. However, New Orleans and environs lacked the natural resources which may have facilitated industrialization to the extent which developed in the northern United States. Although in the increasingly industrialized economy, agrarian produce could not give the New Orleans area the “edge” that could have propelled the city to the forefront of the national economic scene. And this is the story of how New Orleans, once the hoped-for added jewel to the crown of France, became the city of today, with architecture that commands attention. In addition to the many buildings built in the nineteenth century, there are, as of March 1, 2001, at least thirty-six (36) houses in the Vieux Carré that were built between the years of 1763 and 1803 that are still standing (Dan Brown, personal communication March, 2000).

New Orleans is a complex city that defies simple explanation. Use of the integrating perspective of anthropogeographic perspective permits a more complete view into the city of the nineteenth century. While historical documentation and literature of a specific historical period are vital to our understanding of the past, it is essential that these elements reconcile with material culture, in the forms of house types and settlement patterns, to ascertain the veracity of history as it is written and permit its valid interpretation.
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Appendix 1 Obituary of John McDonogh

The Daily Picayune, Sunday Morning October 27, 1850 (page 2, column 3)

The announcement yesterday evening of the death of John McDonogh took our city by surprise, and formed the sole subject of conversation wherever it was known. His long residence among us, his immense wealth, his peculiar habits and appearance, had made his name familiar, not only here but everywhere in the State, as a household word. He seemed to many a being apart from his fellow-men. While youth, and strength, and health and beauty were year after year struck down beside him, he moved on, tall, spare, erect, with sprightly step and look. Every school urchin recognised [sic] at a first glance the thin, sharp, intelligent face, the small, sparkling brown eye, the long white hair, the neat, prim white cravat and high shirt collar, the well-preserved old hat and blue umbrella, and the never-to-be-worn-out old fashioned, tight-fitting [sic] blue cloth dress coat and pantaloons, and well-polished shoes. We had gradually become impressed with the idea that John McDonogh would never die. He appears as much an indestructable [sic] relic of our city’s ancient history as the old State House or the old Cathedral. One of those antique monuments has been razed to the ground; the other has thrown off its old vesture, for a new one, and the third, John McDonogh, now lies ready for his last journey and his last resting place – the tomb.

He was in the city of Thursday, looking as well and as active as ever. His old friends thought him better than usual. He spoke much of his private affairs. He said he had made provision for his family, and felt himself in excellent health. That night he was seized with a severe colic, which we are informed afterwards took the appearance of cholera. The most powerful remedies were employed, but in vain. He continued to sink; his pulse became feebler, and about 4 o’clock yesterday afternoon he died. A number of his friends and medical attendants were present. He handed his will to his legal adviser, Mr. C. Roselius. We learn indirectly that the bulk of his fortune is left to the poor of Baltimore, his native city, and to those of New Orleans. He has a sister in Baltimore, married to a Mr. John Cole, a music seller. At the time of his death he was within two months of being seventy-one years of age.

John McDonogh came to this city immediately after cession of Louisiana to the Union. He engaged in business as a merchant, and then entered largely into speculations in lands and other property. By dint of the strictest economy and the exertion of rare business talents he succeeded in amassing a fortune variously estimated at from ten to fifteen millions. This most singular propensity was a settled resolution not to sell any of his immense possessions, and that resolution he has kept. At the battle of Chalmette Plains, and in the preceding movements and conflicts of the campaign under Gen. Jackson, he served as a private soldier in the Louisiana Regiment, and comported himself as a valiant soldier. Many traits of benevolence are cited of him on good authority, notwithstanding the general opinion to the contrary.

A belief has long been entertained that he was meditating some grand scheme, either of negro [sic] colonization or otherwise, in which his magnificent fortune would have proved of immense benefit to humanity. If he has bequeathed his wealth to the poor of two great cities, he has done well, and will leave to posterity something more than the name and reputation of a Croesus.
Appendix 2 Summary of McDonogh’s Inventory

1) Five stores (each numbered with the highest number being “#19”) on Julia Street between Levee and Commerce Streets, in the 2nd Municipality

2) Personal Property located in his mansion $1,627.30

3) Promissory Notes owed to McDonogh totaling $97,793.46 2/3

4) Slaves $42,960.00
   - Allard Plantation – 20 slaves – $8,330.00
   - St. Geme Plantation – 24 slaves (not counting 2 who had run away years before) – $9,550.00
   - His Residence – 48 slaves – $25,080.00

5) Real Estate in New Orleans
   - Municipality #1 – $380,745.00
   - Municipality #2 – $550,040.00
   - Municipality #3 – $270,230.00

6) Real Estate in the Parish of Orleans – $32,250.58 3/4

7) Rent Notes – $7,176.00

8) More Promissary Notes – $14,693.00

9) More Real Estate in McDonoghville (Parish of Jefferson)

10) More Real Estate in Lafourche Interior, Plaquemines Parish, East Baton Rouge Parish, St. Tammany Parish, Livingston Parish, St. Landry Parish, Assumption Parish, St. Charles Parish, and Iberville Parish

11) More Real Estate in the state of Alabama

12) In the Box Office of the Orleans Theatre $30,426.00

13) Bundles of Titles (Deeds)
   - Municipality #1 – 31 bundles
   - Municipality #2 – 49 bundles
   - Municipality #3 – 46 bundles
   - Parish of Orleans – 10 bundles

Net Total of the Estate $2,079,926.23 1/12
Appendix 3 Irish Channel

Appendix 4 Development on Julia Street

Development on Julia Street

Map of Julia Street with landmarks such as Rainurst, O'Keele, Baronne, Carondelet, St. Charles, Capo, and Magazine. Numbers indicate distances in miles:

- Affiches
  1. 12.34
  2. 31.16
  3. 32.10
  4. 32.38
  5. 61.9
  6. 11.32
  7. 12.38
  8. 23.40
  9. 29.7
  10. 28.10
  11. 32.14
  12. 37.47

- Affiches
  13. 42.57
  14. 42.59
  15. 43.46
  16. 43.57
  17. 43.61
  18. 52.46
  19. 62.14
  20. 62.15
  21. 63.3
  22. 83.17
  23. 94.3
Legend 2. Affiche 31.16
Legend 5. Affiche 61.9.
Legend 8. Affiche 23.40
Legend 13. Affiche 42.57
THREE LOTS
OF GROUND WITH THE BUILDINGS THEREON SITUATED IN THE
2nd MUNICIPALITY

Legend 12. Affiche 37.47
Legend 14. Affiche 42.59
Legend 17. Affiche 43.61
Legend 18. Affiche 52.46
Legend 19. Affiche 62.14
Plan of a lot of ground situated in the First District

Legend 20. Affiche 62.15
PLAN
OF
3 LOTS OF GROUND
SITUATED IN
MUNICIPALITY N°2

Legend 21 Affiche 63.3
PLAN
OF
5 LOTS OF GROUND
MUNICIPALITY NO. 2
TOGETHER
WITH THE BUILDINGS THEREON

Legend 23 Affiche 94.3
Not on Legend. Affiche 69.19
Appendix 5 White and Morrow Building Contract

3rd March 1841

Contract for Joiners and Carpenter’s Work

Thomas Morrow and Maunsel White

State of Louisiana
City of New Orleans

Be it known that this day before me, William Christy, a Notary Public in and for the City and Parish of New Orleans, State of Louisiana aforesaid duly commissioned and qualified.

Thomas Morrow of this City, Carpenter and Joiner, party hereto of the one part, and Maunsel White, also of this City, Merchant party hereto of the other part.

Which said appearers declared that they had contracted and agreed, and do, by these present mutually contract, agree and bind themselves. The one party unto the other party, as follows, to wit:

The said Thomas Morrow hereby agrees and binds himself to execute all the Carpenters and Joiners Work, of every kind and nature whatsoever that may be requisite in the erection and completion of Two dwelling houses and kitchens, now building for the said White in Julia Street near Philippa Street, Second Municipality of this City, in conformity with the plans thereof and the following specification, to wit:

The houses shall be divided by an alley running between them, four feet wide in the clear, with strong substantial doors in the front and on each end of the passage leading into the yards.

The joists of the first floor shall be 3 in x 11 in and 2 feet from centre to centre: those of the second floor 3 x 9, and the third tier 3 x 8, placed 16 inches from centre to centre. The roof timbers shall be 2 feet 6 inches from centre to centre. Rafters 24 feet long with collarbeams in each pair of rafters, 3 x 5 with strong pieces for purloins to support the rafters running from one gable end to the other 5 x 9, under which the collar beams run, and also wallplates 2 x 6. The timbers of the partition walls shall be 3 x 4, except where it may be required larger, and the whole to be framed and put together in the best and most solid manner, with all proper and necessary braces.

The floors shall be laid with cypress boards 1 1/4 inch thick, tongued, grooved and secret nailed, and the narrowest and best plank put in the first and second story floors.

The Front Doors shall be 3 feet 10 inches wide by 8 feet high, 1 3/4 inch think, with six panels, the frames to be panned, and the whole done in conformity with the plan, and trimmed with double faced architraves.

The remainder of the Doors in first Story are to be 3 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 6 inches and 1 3/4 inch thick, made of Cypress, and trimmed with 8 inch thick back-moulded architraves. The Sliding Doors to be 7 feet 9 inches by 9 feet 6 inches and 2 inches thick, panned and double-faced with suitable architraves, mounted and trimmed complete. The Doors of the Second Story to be 3 feet 6 inches by 8 feet, and 1 3/4 inch thick, six panned, double-faced and trimmed with
7 inch moulded architraves. The front and rear Doors of first story and the rear doors of Second Story to have sash and headlights. The doors in the attic to be four panned 1½ in thick, 3 feet by 7 feet, trimmed and faced with six inch back mouldings. All said doors to be hung and finished with Locks etc in the best manner.

The Windows of the main houses to be made 1 3/4 inch thick, shashes double hung with cords and weights in suitable box frames, and finished with standing blinds, glazed with 12 x 18 glass, and trimmed with panned backs and architraves like those of the doors, all to be 12 light windows except those in front of the Second Story which are to have 15 lights to run down to the floor and made to run up into the head. The attic windows to be according to the plan and to be hung with butts.

The Roof to be covered with 1 inch yellow pine plank to receive Slate, and the front cornice to be plain as shown on the plan and so arranged as to receive the gutters to carry off the water from the centre to the ends.

The cills and lintels to be of wood.

The First and Second Stories to be finished with moulded Buses, the former 16 inches wide and the latter 12 inches. The attics with 8 inch plain moulding.

The chimney pieces of the Second Story to be of wood in imitation of marble, those of the attic to be plain slab.

The front Gallery to be laid with 1½ inch plank planed on both sides and beaded beneath and finished with nosing and in the usual manner that Iron Galleries are finished. The back Galleries of the main houses to be framed and floors laid in the same manner as the floors of the House to be closed in with sash in first and second stories and covered with shed roof. The sash to be hung with weights, or made to open at the option of the said Maunsell White.

There shall be a flight of winding stairs, running from each of the back galleries up to second story, finished with rounded rails, turned newells and square balusters, and another flight from the Hall in second story to the attic on a straight rabbit or line, finished in the same manner to be three feet wide, and of easy and comfortable ascent.

There shall be a handsome closet in each House or on the gallery of the same, running from floor to ceiling with panned fronts.

The Kitchens are to be two stories high. The timbers of the Second Story to be 3 x 7 placed 16 inches from centre to centre. The ceiling timbers to be 3 x 5 placed 16 inches from centre to centre, and the roof timbers to be 3 x 5 placed 2 feet from centre to centre and sheathed for slating. The Doors to be battened with head lights, 3 feet by 7 feet. The windows to be made with twelve lights each of 10 x 12 glass, to be 1½ inch thick, hung in Box frames and to have battened shutters. All the openings in the kitchens to be faced with four inch plain architraves. The Galleries to be four feet wide, supported with square antae or columns and protected with rails and balusters in the usual manner. The floors of Rooms and galleries to be laid with 1 1/4 inch Cypress plan dressed and secret nailed. The bases to be 8 inches wide, beaded only, to have plain chimney pieces in the servants rooms.

There are to be two privies and a fence across the rear of the lots and one from the kitchens to the rear to separate the lots, which fence is to be 8 feet high, made of posts, girders and boarded in the usual manner.

The whole of the above mentioned work is to be done in a good, substantial, neat, and workmanlike manner, and to be finished on or before the first day of August next (1841). All the
materials are to be furnished by the said Maunsel White. It being well understood that neither party shall occasion any delay in the execution of the work to be done by each of them.

All of which said Carpenters and Joiners work is to be executed and completed for the sum of Twenty three hundred and seventy dollars, in payment of part of which sum, say one thousand and sixty dollars, the said Maunsel White hereby binds himself and his heirs and assigns to convey by a good and valid title to the said Thomas Morrow, on the completion of said work, a lot of ground situate at and forming one of the corners of Erato and Dryades Streets in Faubourg Lacourse above the City, measuring about twenty nine feet by one hundred and fifteen feet, more or less, and for the balance of Thirteen hundred and ten Dollars, the said White hereby binds himself to pay the same to the said Morrow in instalments of thirty five dollars per week, during the progress of the work and the balance, if any, at its completion.

This done and passed in my office at the said City of New Orleans, in the presence of William G Sactrain and George Rareshide, witnesses of lawful age and domiciliated in this City, who hereunto sign their names with the said parties and me, said Notary on this Third day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty one.

(Signed by)
W.G. Sactrain Thomas Morrow
Geo Rareshide Maunsel White

Wm Christy
Appendix 6 Yellow Fever Deaths

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Vita

Sylvia Starns Mince, as a member of a cultural exchange program through the University of Colorado at Boulder, studied in Europe for the summer before her junior year in high school which enhanced her French language skills. She began taking classes toward a bachelor’s degree at LSU in the summer of 1970, before she graduated high school in 1971. After spending two years starting a family, she graduated from LSU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology in 1976. In her senior year in college, she learned to read pertinent house type and material culture literature in five additional languages. Although she entered graduate school immediately, she put aside her education to support her family. In addition to her work, she was president of the St. Aloysius Altar Society for eight out of fifteen years and a member of the Board of Directors of the Eye Bank Auxiliary. She retired from service organizations and her healthcare management consulting corporation, Mince Consulting Inc., where she was president and chief executive officer. Electing not to further pursue a musical career as a flautist, she returned to complete her education in 2000. While continuing to care for her family, she earned her Master of Arts degree in anthropology at LSU in 2002. She will receive her Doctor of Philosophy degree in geography with a concentration in anthropogeography in Summer, 2010.