Chapter II

The Year 1709

A new Fort Mobile is established near the Bay—M. La Vigne Voisin builds a fort on Isle Dauphine—Fifteen Chactas savages clash with fifty Alibamons

At the beginning of this year, Fort Mobile and the residents' settlement near the fort were so inundated by the overflow of the river that only high places were without damage.

MM. Dartaguet and de Bienville, seeing that, according to the accounts given them by the savages, we should often be in danger of such floods, decided to move Fort Mobile. They chose the place where we had located the Chactas savages—at the cove\(^1\) on Baye de la Mobile, on the right. The savages whose grounds we were taking were given another place to live, two leagues below on our right side going down to the sea, on the bank of Rivièreaux-Chiens.

M. Pailloux,\(^2\) assistant adjutant, went with our officers to this place, where it had been decided to have the fort built. He laid out the outer wall of the fort requisite for the interior and then the distances for the empty spaces of the cleared-off area outside the fort; also, beyond those

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\(^1\) Choctaw Point is the bayside edge of modern Mobile. The French were choosing the site of this city. L'Anse des Chactos, Choctaw Point, is south of the Bankhead Tunnel beneath Mobile River. The date of the founding of Mobile is commonly accepted as 1711.

\(^2\) Jacques Barbazan de Pailloux, an officer who came to Louisiana in 1707. He held important commands at Mobile, Natchez, and New Orleans. See Rowland’s biographical note, in Rowland and Sanders, MPA, II, 44.
distances, he assigned to the residents each family's location, giving them each a plot of ground twelve toises wide by twenty-five long. At the same time he marked the place for the soldiers' barracks. The residence of the priests was to the left of the fort and faced the sea. Work on this establishment continued through the whole year.

During that time, M. La Vigne Voisin, a captain of St. Malo, arrived at Isle Dauphine, where he dropped anchor; then he came to Mobile to call on MM. Dartaguet and de Bienville; and after stopping there for several days he asked them to permit him to have a fort built on Isle Dauphine. This pleased them. He did not fail to have the work started as soon as he got there. At his fort he had embrasures constructed to contain cannon which secured the entrance to the harbor from all ships that might come there with the purpose of making a landing.

Also, at the place where the residents of the island lived, he had a very pretty church built. The front of the church faced the harbor where the ships were, and people in the ships could come there in a moment and hear Mass. This was the reason that several habitans of the environs of Mobile went to Isle Dauphine and settled. M. de La Vigne returned to France a month later.

This year a savage nation named the Oumas deserted their settlement and came to dwell on the bank of the Mississippi River near the Rivière des Chetimachas. Another savage nation named the Tonicas, among whom

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8 Probably the uncle of Jacques Esnould de Livaudais, pilot of the port of New Orleans, who founded the Creole family De Livaudais in Louisiana. Jacques had served his apprenticeship as seaman under his uncle, Lavigne Voisin, whom Bienville called a "famous corsair." Jacques's family came from St. Malo, and so did the La Vigne Voisin, a captain, mentioned by Pénicaud. King, Creole Families, pp. 212-13.
M. Davion resided—the priest who had expected to lose his life for breaking their idols—went to settle in the location that the Oumas had vacated.

This year a party of fifteen Chactas who were on a bear hunt were encountered in the woods by a party of fifty Alibamons, their enemies. The Chief of the Chactas, named Le Dos Grillé, a man of courage, was not in the least shocked by the number of Alibamons; and although he was straightway shot from a very long range, the bullet piercing his cheek, he drew out the bullet, which had lodged in his mouth, put it in his gun, and with that bullet killed the man that had wounded him. Instantly he drew his fifteen men together in a rather high spot, from which, each posted behind a tree, they killed more than thirty of the Alibamons, who did not dare resist further and fled, deserting their dead and wounded. The Chactas had only three men killed and three or four very slightly wounded. They brought the thirty Alibamon scalps to MM. Dartaguet and de Bienville at our fort and two deer they had killed on the way. As a reward for their bravery they were presented with gifts of merchandise and were given much powder and lead. The Chief of these Chactas had killed eight as his share, badly wounded as he was by the shot in the mouth.

Several residents of Mobile went this year to settle on the seashore at a place called Miragouin, five leagues

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4 The translation is Broiled Back or Grilled Back. This chief may have got his name from the scars of wounds inflicted upon him during such torture as that inflicted by the Koroa on their captives. On the other hand, he may have had a reputation as torturer himself.

6 Marked Miraguine on the detailed inset on Delisle's "Carte de la Louisiane," 1718. It was a place on Mon Louis Island, just north of Cedar Point. Here is an instance of a place named for a man or the man for the place. This spot on Mon
from Mobile going toward Isle Dauphine, one league above Rivière-aux-Poulles.

We spent the rest of the year improving the new fort we were building on the seashore. We set up two batteries outside the fort, each of twelve pieces of cannon, which faced the sea.

Louis Island was granted to a man named Nicolas Bodin, dit Miragouin, according to Hamilton (Colonial Mobile, pp. 154–55). Hamilton, thinking Miragouin to be a variant of Marioguin, "mosquito," indulged in some light punning humor at the expense of Nicolas Bodin, the "mosquito" knight. But this place name, in my opinion, has no connection with Marioguin, "mosquito." It is merely a variant of Miragoane, which is the French form of Spanish miraguano, "a low palm of tropical areas." Miragoane is the name of a city and bay in Haiti. The entry for the baptism of Nicolas Bodin's child (Mobile Baptismal Records, January 22, [1719]) gives Bodin's name as Sieur de Miragouanne or Miragouanne. Hamilton himself knew another entry, for 1762, plainly denying the mosquito jest: it gives Louis Alexandre Bodin dit Miragoine.