Chapter 12

The Year 1710

Old Fort Mobile is abandoned—MM. de Rémonville and de Waligny arrive in the frigate “La Renommée”—Description of the Apalaches

The NEW Fort Mobile on the seashore being finished and the living quarters built, all the furniture and merchandise were moved there in boats. Some raftlike structures were made, on which the cannon were put and, in general, all supplies and effects that were at the old fort.

Likewise, the residents carried their possessions at the same time to the dwelling place that had been given them very close to the new fort; and the old one was entirely abandoned. Several days after we were well established at our new fort on the seashore, a ship came and anchored at the Isle Dauphine roadstead. This was the frigate named La Renommée, commanded by M. de Rémonville, who was captain of it.

The Sieur de Waligny, an officer who had been a post adjutant from his youth, had come in that ship, bringing twenty-five Frenchmen to add to the garrison.

1 This may be the same Rémonville who, after La Salle’s failure, wrote a memorial urging the colonization of the Mississippi. Hamilton, Colonial Mobile, p. 29.

2 Also spelled Valigny. A letter dated “At Marly, September 9, 1710,” gives permission to a Sieur Jean Baptiste Valigny to go to Louisiana. (Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 155.) The Sieur Valigny who had a wooden leg was, in the opinion of Governor Cadillac, a quarrelsome blunderer who had held no higher office than master-at-arms. Lamothe Cadillac to Pontchartrain, Fort Louis of Louisiana, October 26, 1713, ibid., II, 194.
The munitions and food supplies were unloaded and stored in the warehouses in the fort on Isle Dauphine, and troops assigned to guard them. Also, many people came and settled on the island. Something of a little town developed, as all the free persons settled there who came in the ships from France.

A while later, M. de Rémonville sailed for Vera Cruz, by order of MM. Dartaguet and de Bienville, to trade merchandise there for flour and livestock, which we needed because the overflow that had occurred the year before had flooded all the houses of the savages and rotted the grain planted in the countryside; consequently, after that flood most of us were compelled to go into the woods and hunt buffalo and deer to keep ourselves alive.

M. Blondel, a lieutenant of infantry, went with thirty soldiers to stay among the Chactas in order to subsist. The Sieur de Waligny went down Baye de la Mobile with twenty-five soldiers in the direction of Rivière-aux-Poissons, taking, also, eight Apalaches savages with him that were quite good hunters.

These Apalaches are good Catholic Christians. They had been worn out with Spanish rule, under which they had lived for a long time and which they had deserted in 1705. Their village having been destroyed by the Alibamons, they had come and settled between the Mobiliens and the Tomez at a place that M. de Bienville had given them, together with the grains to plant their fields the

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3 Identified by Hamilton (Colonial Mobile, p. 67) as Philippe Blondel, who was later commandant at Natchitoches. He died at Natchitoches about 1721. Philippe Blondel belonged to Chateauguë’s company on January 24, 1705. Mobile Baptismal Records.

4 Now Fish River, on the eastern side of Mobile Bay.
first year; but the year we left the settlement at the first Fort Mobile, they followed us, and MM. Dartaguet and de Bienville assigned them a dwelling place on the bank of Rivière St. Martin, one league above us on the shore of the bay. The Taoëachas were also given grounds on the river, extending down to one league above the Apalaches. They, too, had quit the Spaniards because of the wars of the Alibamons. They are not Christians like the Apalaches, who are the single Christian nation that has come from the direction of the Spaniards.

The Apalaches conduct divine service like the Catholics in France. Their big festival is St. Louis' Day. On the day before, they come and invite the officers of the fort to attend their village festival; and that day, with great feasting they regale all who come there, and particularly the French.

The priests from our fort go there and say high Mass, which the Apalaches hear quite reverently, singing the Psalms in Latin as is done in France and, after dinner, Vespers and the Benediction of the Holy Sacrament. On that day the men and women are dressed very decently: the men wear a kind of cloth overcoat; and the women wear cloaks and skirts of silk cloth in the French style, but haven't the least headdress, going bare-headed. Their hair, which is quite long and quite black, is plaied and hangs down their backs in one or two plaits, the way Spanish girls wear theirs. Those whose hair is too long fold it up to the middle of their backs and fasten it with a ribbon.

They have a church to which one of our French priests

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5 The Tawasa.
AND CALUMET

goes and says Mass every Sunday and every feast day. They have a baptismal font at which to baptize their infants, and at the side of the church a graveyard in which there is a cross. Here they are buried.

On St. Louis’ Day, toward evening after the service is ended, they dress up in masks, men, women, and children. For the rest of the day they dance with the French who happen to be there and with other savages who come to their village on that day. They have cooked meat a-plenty with which to feast them. They love the French very much, and it must be confessed that the only thing savage about them is their language, which is a mixture of Spanish and Alibamon.

M. de Rémonville returned toward the end of the year with several sacks of flour; but he had not been able to do as much business as he would have wished, because the Governor of Vera Cruz would not permit him to engage in open trading. Some sacks of flour were sent to him out at the roadstead, with the command to go back at once.

A league from the fort, going toward the sea, M. de Bienville had a very pretty house built with a garden, which he had planted, and with extensive surrounding grounds, which he had plowed.

6 The French text of this paragraph, taken from Parkman, p. 211, is as follows: “M. de Bienville fit bâtir a une lieue du fort du costé de la mer une tres belle maison avec un jardin quil y fit planter et beaucoup [sic] de terres alentour quil fit cultiver.” B. F. French’s translation of this passage is as follows: “M. de Bienville has built himself a beautiful country house on the sea shore, about a league from the fort, which he has ornamented with a grove of orange trees, where he resides, most of the year, for his health.” “Annals of Louisiana . . . By M. Penicaud,” p. 106.