Chapter 19

The Year 1717

M. de l'Épinet, M. Hubert, and several other officers arrive in Louisiana—M. de Bienville comes down to Isle Dauphine—M. de Gosseville's trip to Vera Cruz—An English ship comes to Isle Dauphine—Calumet of peace sung to M. de l'Épinet by more than twenty-four savage nations—New Biloxi established—The town of New Orleans is begun

At the beginning of this year, on the ninth of March, three ships arrived from France at the Isle Dauphine roadstead, namely: Le Dudlot,\(^1\) commanded by M. de Gosseville; \(^2\) Le Pan,\(^3\) by M. Dussaut; \(^4\) and the frigate La Paix, by M. Jary.\(^5\) They brought M. de l'Épinet\(^6\) as Commander-in-

\(^1\) Commonly written Dudlow, as in Margry (Découvertes, V, 545). The name may have been Ludlow. That the name gave trouble is evident from the spelling Le Luclo in “Carte de L'Isle Dauphine” by Lieutenant Du Sault, who commanded the sister ship Le Paon at the time of the spring storm in 1717. On the ms. chart “Idée ou plan du chenal par lequel est sorty le navire la Paix et le vaisseau du Roy le Pan [sic] du port de l'Isle Dauphine le 15e may 1717” (Bibliothèque Nationale), the name is written Le Lud Louw.

\(^2\) Margry reports his name from some other ms. as “Godeville, capitaine de brûlot [captain of a fire-ship].” Découvertes, V, 545 and note.

\(^3\) Correctly written Le Paon (the Peacock); but since Paon and Pan have the same pronunciation, many people, including naval officers, wrote the name as Pan. See n. 1, above.

\(^4\) Margry (Découvertes, V, 545 and note) reports the name as given in some other ms. as Dussaut-Santille. But it is spelled Du Sault on “Carte de L'Isle Dauphine . . . Par le St. Du Sault Lieut. Command[ant], le Vaisseau du Roy Le Paon,” published in this book.

\(^5\) Given as M. Japy by Margry (Découvertes, V, 545). Margry recalls seeing Chapy also. Pénciat gives Japy too, but in command of the Marie at a later date. The names may be the same. Bienville’s nephew, M. de Noyan, gave even a third spelling of the name of the officer commanding the Marie in August, 1719—Sieur Japi. Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 254.

\(^6\) Governor of Louisiana from March 3, 1716, to September 20, 1717. Surrey, Calendar of Manuscripts in Paris Archives, I, ix.
Chief of Louisiana, replacing M. de la Mothe de Cadillac, and as commissary-general M. Hubert, who came to relieve M. Duclos. Also, there were M. Artus, as captain, and many other officers and a great number of soldiers and a great deal of munitions, food supplies, and all kinds of merchandise, which were unloaded and stored in the warehouses at Mobile and on Isle Dauphine.

From a boat that stopped at the Natchez on its way up to the Illinois, M. de Bienville learned that M. de l'Épinet had come to Mobile as Commandant-General, replacing M. de la Mothe de Cadillac, and a little later M. de Bienville came down to Mobile to pay his respects to M. de l'Épinet. When he got there, M. de l'Épinet gave him the cross of Chevalier de St. Louis, which His Majesty had sent him in recognition of his good services. On setting out from the Natchez, he had left M. de Pailloux as commandant of Fort Rosalie during his absence and M. de Villers as lieutenant, with sixty men.

Several days later, M. de l'Épinet sent M. de Gosseville—the captain of the ship named Le Dudlot, from which

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7 Marc Antoine Hubert was ordonnateur, or commissary-general, of Louisiana from November 12, 1716, to September 15, 1720. (Ibid., I, x.) On May 18, 1718, when a child of his was baptized, his wife was Dame Elizabet Cesteri. Mobile Baptist Records.

8 Often written Dartus or D'Artus. This captain of infantry and engineers, who had served under Crozat's monopoly, was commandant of Dauphin Island in 1717. Complaints were made about his petty acts of discipline. He was at one time ordered back to France. See Company of the West to the Navy Council, [1717], in Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 190; and [Hubert] to the Council, [1717], ibid., II, 227.

9 There may be a connection between this De Villers and the De Villiers brothers with whom George Washington fought just before and at the time of the surrender of Fort Necessity, in 1754. A Nyon de Villiers was commandant in the Illinois Country in 1764. See Fortier, History of Louisiana, I, 134 and 151.
the goods had not been unloaded—to Vera Cruz to try to sell them. M. de Gosseville did not go directly to Vera Cruz, but twelve leagues to one side, between Vera Cruz and a little town called Villarica. When he got there, he secretly sent out two of our soldiers, who spoke Spanish, with a price list of the goods on board the ship. These two soldiers talked to three Spanish merchants and came back with them at night. They got into the longboat, which was at the beach, and came in it out to the ship, where the Spanish merchants looked at the goods that were on board. When they had agreed with M. de Gosseville about the price, they had the goods carried ashore, after paying cash for them. M. de Gosseville, greatly pleased over the outcome, then returned to Isle Dauphine. He sailed a week later to go back to France with the other two ships. MM. de la Mothe and Duclos went to France with him.

A few days later, M. de l'Épinet had a fort built on Isle Dauphine and some barracks for the soldiers. This fort was located two musket shots from the seashore, to protect the warehouse and prevent any landings in that direction.

While people were busy constructing this fort, an English ship landed at Isle Dauphine to take on water and wood. We took advantage of this opportunity to turn over to them the English men and English women who had been at Mobile for two and a half years. They had been ransomed by M. de Bienville from the Alibamons and Canapouces savages when they returned from Caro-

10 Usually Villa Rica.
lina, where they had made an irruption. All the English men and English women that wanted to go back to their homes were put on the English captain's ship.

During that time the savages friendly to the French, those nearest to Mobile, learned that M. de l'Epinet had arrived as Governor-General of Louisiana, replacing M. de la Mothe de Cadillac, who had returned to France; and all the chiefs of more than twenty-four nations 11 came down to Isle Dauphine and sang their calumet of peace to M. de l'Epinet. These savages are named the Chactos, 12 the Taoùachas, the Apalaches, the Tinssas, the Mobiliens, the Tomez, the Gens des Fourches, 13 the Chactas, the Pascagoulas, the Passacolas, the Capinans, the Colapissas, the Bayagoulas, the Oumas, the Tonicas, the Chaoùachas, the Natchez, the Chicachas, the Nassitoches, the Yataacez, the Alibamons, the Canapouces, and others. 14 These calumets of peace lasted more than two months because the savages, being too badly separated one from another, could not all be there at the same time. They were all well received by M. de l'Epinet, who sent them back home with presents.

11 Parkman, p. 311, gives "... les chefs de ces sauvages avec leurs femmes."
12 Erroneously given as Chactas by Marry (Découvertes, V, 547); therefore, when he found Chactas coming lower in the list—after Gens des Fourches—he omitted the name.
13 The first seven tribes named are small tribes living near Fort Louis de la Mobile. The Naniabas, who lived at the Forks (Fourches) of the Tombigbee and Alabama rivers, are omitted from this list. Surely they came to sing the calumet to the new governor and share in French largess. The deduction is that the Gens des Fourches were the Naniabas.
14 I have twenty-two tribes listed. But I had to supply Chactas, Pascagoulas, and Passacolas from Spofford, p. 372. Marry has nineteen in his list. (Découvertes, V, 547.) Several of these tribes had come from a great distance: the Chicachas from north Mississippi and Tennessee; the Nassitoches and Yataacez from the Red River; the Canapouces (Catawba) from Carolina. But French presents no doubt paid them well for the effort.