Chapter 21

The Year 1719

M. de Séryigny and three ships arrive at Isle Dauphine—War declared with the Spaniards and Fort Passacol captured—Treachery of the Spaniards: they lay siege to Passacol and retake it—The Spaniards come to make a raid on Isle Dauphine and are repulsed—Arrival of M. de Chamelin's squadron and the second capture of Fort Passacol by the French and the destruction of it—Isle Dauphine abandoned

In February there arrived at the Isle Dauphine roadstead three ships from France named Le Comte de Toulouze, Le Marechadal de Villars, and Le St. Louis, commanded by M. de Séryigny. 1 MM. de Villardeau, 2 de Gaque, 3 and du Chambeau 4 came on them as directors in place of M. Rugeon, 5

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1 Joseph Le Moyne de Séryigny, brother of Iberville. Along with Iberville he governed Louisiana in 1718–20. He became governor of Rochefort; and of the many Le Moyne brothers, only he founded a family. Surrey, Calendar of Manuscripts in French Archives, I, ix, and Rowland and Sanders, MPA, II, 550 and n. 3.

2 Minutes of the Council of Commerce of Louisiana for 1719 and 1720 carry his signature. Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 268 ff.

3 Charles Legac, whose signature, C. Legac, is on Minutes of the Council of Commerce as a member and apparently as secretary in 1719 and 1720. (Ibid., III, 268.) These meetings were held at Mobile and at Dauphin Island. Gayarré has his name as Legas. History of Louisiana, I, 253.

4 It was not a Du Chambeau, but Larubault who, with the director C. Legac, signed the Minutes of the Council of Commerce in April, 1719. (Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 240–41.) Larubault was at Pensacola, presumably a prisoner of the Spaniards, when Chateaugué as prisoner wrote his letter to Bienville on August 9, 1719. (Chateaugué to Bienville, ibid., III, 251–52.) Pénicaud tells on p. 232 that Du Chambeau was sent to Havana as prisoner along with Chateaugué. Fortier (History of Louisiana, I, 68) and Gayarré (History of Louisiana, I, 251–54) both have this agent-director of the Company as L'Archambault.

5 Raujon.
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whom they relieved. Also, there was M. de Montplaisir, heading a party of thirty workmen from Clérel, coming to work in a tobacco factory, and M. de Catillon, an Irish gentleman who had brought sixty men under his orders to work on a concession which he came to establish. This concession was placed at La Fourche des Ouachitas, on the bank of the Rivière Rouge, on the right side of this river, eight leagues above the mouth, and seventy-four leagues from New Orleans.

The concession of M. de Bonne—who had come with the rank of attorney-general, bringing his whole family and fifteen persons—was placed on the right side two leagues above Rivière d'Orléans.

MM. Pellerin and Bellecourt's concession, with fifteen persons and their family, was placed at the village of the Natchez.

On these three ships M. de Sérgny had brought a great

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6 De la Chaise reported that a Sieur La Bro had taken the place of De Montplaisir as manager of the Clairacs' tobacco plantation at Natchez by the time the plantation was being granted or sold to M. Le Blanc, September 6 and 10, 1725. Rowland and Sanders, MPA, II, 294 and 335.

7 Glossed by Margry as "Ouvriers de la manufacture du tabac, établie sur le territoire de Clérel (Charente-Inférieure)." Découvertes, V, 573.


9 Parkman, p. 346, has de Borme or de Boume. Gayarré gives this attorney-general as Cartier de Baune. History of Louisiana, I, 252-53.

10 Minutes of the Council, March 23, 1725, mention a Sieur Guyot, of Natchez, as being the partner of Sieur Pellerin. Rowland and Sanders, MPA, II, 420.

11 This partner of Pellerin may have moved to the Illinois Country, for in 1725 Sieur Guyot is Pellerin's partner. (Ibid.) I have been unable to find a Bellecourt among the well-indexed documents in MPA. But in the Illinois Country there was an L. Belcour as buissier in 1728; and a Bellecourt family lived at Kaskaskia. Joseph Bellecourt's will is dated October 11, 1748. Belting, Kaskaskia under the French Regime, pp. 111-12.
many soldiers, workmen, and two hundred and fifty Negroes, who were from the very first used in unloading the ships and moving the munitions and merchandise to the warehouses on Isle Dauphine.

A few days after M. de Sérigny had gone ashore at Isle Dauphine, he announced that war had been declared with Spain; therefore, with M. de Bienville and the other officers he held a council at which it was decided that they would go and lay siege to Fort Passacol, which is the closest fort the Spaniards have to Mobile. With this in mind, he sent M. de Bienville to Mobile to have all the residents living there warned to be ready to go on this expedition. At the same time he sent word to our friends among the savages, those living closest to us, and set a day for them to go to Mobile. When all the French soldiers and the savages got there, MM. de Bienville and de Chateaugué, with the other officers and all the troops, left Mobile to go by land and lay siege to Passacol, while M. de Sérigny went by sea with four ships to enter the harbor. The Spaniards put up scarcely any resistance and surrendered the very first day, according to the following terms:

First, two ships would be provided to take them to Havana, with the necessary food;

Second, they would leave all their weapons and ammunition, cannons as well as guns, cannon balls, powder, and food supplies that were in the fort.

As the capture of this fort had cost so little and the fortifications were scarcely damaged at all, M. de Cha-

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13 Fort Pensacola.
teaugué was left there as governor, with three hundred Frenchmen and the necessary munitions and provisions. All the savages were sent home, and MM. de Sérigny and de Bienville brought the troops back to Mobile and Isle Dauphine.

A few days later, the fourteen hundred Spaniards who, according to the terms, had to be returned, were sent back to Havana; they were sent in the two ships, *Le Comte de Toulouze* and *Le Maréchal de Villars*; ¹³ but the Governor of Havana had had ten bilanders ¹⁴ armed and had made the prisoners revolt whom we had taken there in our two vessels. They seized control of them, making prisoners of our men, and immediately returned and laid siege to Passacol. MM. de Sérigny and de Bienville, who had not expected such treachery, did not have enough time to assemble the troops and the savages, whom they had disbanded, and to go to relieve Passacol. On the other hand, M. de Chateaugué had not made preparations to withstand a siege so soon: he suffered the further grief of seeing ninety of the three hundred men he had as his whole garrison desert the very first day he was under siege; and in spite of all his admonishments to the two hundred who remained—encouraging them as best he could, both by his words and his example to resist strongly—they nevertheless resisted so poorly during the four days he

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¹³ This ship, or possibly the *Toulouse*, was commanded by the Chevalier de Grieux, which is the same name as the one chosen by Prévost for the hero of *Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*. The real De Grieux was captured at Havana. (Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 246 and 269.) Harry Kurz, who edited Prévost’s novel, gives a possible identification of the hero as Charles Des Grieux, “écuyer, chevalier de St. Louis et lieutenant de carabiniers, mort en 1723.” *Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (New York, 1929), p. 234.

¹⁴ A bilander is a small two-masted merchant vessel that operates chiefly in coastal waters, “by land.”
held out that he was compelled to surrender as a prisoner of war with his garrison.

The Spaniards put our soldiers in the bottom of the hold, their hands and their feet tied. As for MM. de Châteaugué and du Chambeau, they were immediately taken to Havana in one of the Spaniards' bilanders.

After the Spaniards had retaken Passacol, they followed the advice of the French deserters and came down in the direction of Isle Dauphine, boasting of coming there and getting a foothold to pillage by means of the nine bilanders they manned and our two ships which they had armed and equipped with a great many troops. M. de Bienville, having foreseen this emergency, had sent an order to several different nations of the Mobile area to come down to Isle Dauphine. M. de St. Denis came, too, from Biloxi, leading a great many savages from the neighborhood where he lived. This proved to be of great help to Isle Dauphine. There came, too, a great many people from the concessions, who with great courage defended the island in the places where they were posted, so that the Spaniards were repulsed from all sides of the island at every landing they attempted during twelve consecutive days and nights.

One of the most powerful of their bilanders, on which were the eighty French deserters, landed at a place called Miragouin,\textsuperscript{15} at the beginning of Baye de la Mobile, where they knew there was some merchandise belonging to several persons of the concessions. They pillaged a part of this and carried it in rowboats to their bilander; but when

\textsuperscript{15} On Mon Louis Island. Nicolas Bodin, Sieur de Miragouanne, owned the land there.
they came back a second time, they were surprised by a party of Mobilien savages, who killed some thirty of them and captured seventeen. These they escorted to Mobile, where their heads were broken. After twelve days the Spaniards went back to Passacol in their bilanders, having failed in their attempt on Isle Dauphine.

At that same time, [fortunately], Commodore de Chamelin \(^\text{16}\) arrived at the Isle Dauphine roadstead with five warships and immediately had M. de Sérgny notified to have his troops assembled to go by land to Passacol, while he would go with his squadron and enter the harbor to attack the fort. As soon as M. de Sérgny received this news, he wrote about it to M. de Bienville, who was at Mobile. M. de St. Denis came over also, leading several savage nations. M. de Sérgny, having learned that all the troops had assembled there, left Isle Dauphine to go to Mobile and lead all these troops by land to invest Passacol.

When M. de Chamelin had been informed that M. de Sérgny had invested Fort Passacol by land, he led the way into the harbor with his ship named *L'Hercule*, followed by four others, which went in without firing a single cannon shot. Only the last ship, named *Le Mars*, fired at the little fort, from both her sides, for two hours, knocking it down completely. Only this little fort \(^\text{17}\) resisted. The Spanish governor, who was in command of it, saw that his fort was no longer in condition to hold out and sounded a parley two hours later.

\(^{16}\) His signature was Desnos de Champmeslin. (Copy of the Minutes of the Navy Council Held on Board the Vessel “Hercule” in the Roadstead of Dauphine Island, September 5, 1719, in Rowland and Sanders, MPA, III, 263.) One word in this sentence, “fortunately,” is supplied from Parkman, p. 351.

\(^{17}\) Built on the western tip of Santa Rosa Island. Bienville to the Council, Dauphine Island, October 20, 1719, *ibid.*, III, 273.
M. de Chamelin had had his guns trained on the big fort, but it did not put up any resistance and straightway surrendered without firing one cannon shot. So, the recapture of Passacol lasted no longer than three hours. MM. de Sérginy and de Bienville had the savages go inside the big fort and the little one, which they were permitted to plunder as a reward for their efforts. The nine bilanders belonging to the Spaniards and our two ships, which they had treacherously seized and armed, were taken after a little fight, which lasted one hour at most. In the big and the little Fort Passacol there were fifteen hundred Spaniards, who were sent back to Havana in two bilanders. After the savages had plundered all there was in Passacol, the two forts were completely razed.

At this time M. de St. Denis arranged to entertain M. de Chamelin and the captains and officers of marine with a dance of the savages, who sang a calumet of peace to him. Next, in the name of M. de Chamelin, M. de St. Denis made them an oration in their own language, exhorting them to be friends of the French forever. After this speech, M. de Chamelin had presents given to them all, with which they were quite satisfied.

A few days after the demolition of Fort Passacol, M. de Chamelin took his squadron back to France. The Spanish bilanders and our two ships were brought to Isle Dauphine. MM. de Bienville and de St. Denis disbanded the savages and led the French troops to Mobile and Isle Dauphine. Since Passacol was an advanced post, a sergeant was left there with twelve soldiers to give warning of ships approaching land from that direction. When M. de Chamelin had come to Isle Dauphine, a flûte named
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La Marie had come with his squadron. Aboard La Marie was M. Arnaud, in charge of a party of fifty miners whom he had brought along with him, and a great many soldiers, some ammunition, and merchandise.

Upon arrival the captain in command of La Marie, named Sieur Japy, had given a letter to M. de Bienville by which the Company ordered him to have several flat boats built to transport the personal effects of a great many persons who would arrive in Louisiana the following year, to whom the Company had granted concessions. This forced M. de Bienville to send orders to the workmen at Mobile, Biloxi, New Orleans, and everywhere else to construct some flat boats as quickly as possible and take them over to Biloxi.

M. de Sérigny sailed about that time on the ships Le Comte de Toulouze and Le Maréchal de Villars to go back to France. One month after the departure of M. de Sérigny, a vessel named Les Deux Frères arrived, with a great number of German men and German women on board. It was further loaded with all kinds of merchandise and personal possessions which belonged to them. This vessel anchored in the Isle-aux-Vaisseaux roadstead, and their personal effects and merchandise were unloaded at New Biloxi, to which they were brought in flatboats along with all the people that were on the ship.

Toward the end of this year, several of the Isle Dauphine families left to go to New Biloxi and settle. At the same time a great deal of merchandise and munitions and

\[18\] I suspect this is a penman's error for Renault, which in script can be taken for Arnauld. The man in question was Philippe François Renault, who had been a banker in Paris. He became the Company's director-general for mines and was quite active in the Illinois Country. See Alvord, The Illinois Country, p. 154.
provisions that were in the warehouses on the island and a great number of families that lived there were loaded aboard *Le Neptune*, a small ship, which was to take them to New Orleans.

Near the end of this year, M. Hubert, the commissary-general at New Orleans, had bought a great supply of corn from the savages and had had it stored in the warehouses. Finally this year all the warehouses on Isle Dauphine were emptied and moved to New Orleans and Biloxi, where M. de Bienville and the officers went to live, with all the troops that were on Isle Dauphine. Left on the island were only one sergeant with twelve soldiers and a coastal pilot to land ships from France at the Isleaux-Vaisseaux roadstead, situated opposite New Biloxi.