Chapter 4

The Year 1702

M. d’Hyberville arrives in Louisiana—M. d’Éraque comes down from Fort Huilier—Cause of war with the Alibamons—Strange festivals of the Mobiliens—M. de Bienville leads a war party against the Alibamons—M. de Boisbriam leads a detachment against the Alibamons

Near the beginning of spring in the year 1702, M. d’Hyberville arrived in Louisiana. He anchored at Isle Massacre; and as soon as he got there he came on to our fort upon the Mobile, which he found to be constructed very well; and two days later he sent workmen from Mobile to Isle Massacre to labor upon the construction of several warehouses to hold the goods he had brought with him in the two ships from France. He had several barracks built there, too, to house the soldiers that were to remain to guard the merchandise.

Several days later, M. d’Hyberville came to this island and named it Isle Dauphine; and, from that time, too, Isle Surgère took the name Isle-aux-Vaisseaux because it is the first approach-to-land that one finds for ships on arriving in the country. He then returned to Mobile and organized several detachments to ascend the Rivière de la Mobile in search of the chiefs of the savage nations of the neighboring region. For guides they took some Mobiliens, who led the way, some directing our men toward

1 Ship Island, off Biloxi, Mississippi.
the Alibamons, a savage nation off toward Carolina, others toward the Chactas and Chicachas, who are savages in the direction of the Illinois. The chiefs of these nations, with others from the area close to us—the Mobiliens, the Tomez,² and the Gens des Fourches ³—came all together to our fort one month later and sang the calumet of peace to M. d'Hyberville. Before sending them away, he gave presents to them all. He made them understand through an interpreter that they should come freely to our fort to barter their provisions and merchandise with the French and that they would be well pleased if they did. After this they went home quite satisfied.

During this time M. d'Hyberville sent a traversier ⁴ loaded with munitions and provisions to M. de St. Denis, the commandant of the fort on the bank of the Mississipi. There they found M. d'Éraque, who had got there with the twelve Frenchmen that had remained with him at Fort Huilier. A few days later M. d'Éraque came in the traversier to Mobile, where M. d'Hyberville was. He paid

² The Tohoma Indians, speaking a Choctaw dialect, lived on the west side of the river eighteen to twenty miles north of Fort Louis de la Mobile.

³ The translation is People of the Forks, who were, by inference, the Naniabas, since several times, in giving the names of small tribes close to the fort, Péncicaut mentions the Mobiliens, the Tohoma, and a third tribe, which he twice calls Gens des Fourches and once the Naniabas. The Naniabas lived on a bluff on the Tombigbee, just above its fork with the Alabama River. Their name seems to survive in Nanna Hubba bluff, which is in the right location. The Naniabas were almost certainly a Choctaw tribe. Swanton (Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley, p. 32) says they were sometimes called Gens des Fourches; but he may be making the same inference from Péncicaut that I have made. Gens, "people," was commonly used by the French in naming Indian tribes because in naming themselves or their neighbors Indians themselves used "people" as a part of the names. Cf. Bayogoula, from báyuk-okla, "bayou people." Hodge's Handbook, II, 1056, lists seventy-nine tribal names beginning with the word Gens, even a Gens de la Fourche du Mackenzie, which is not the one in question.

⁴ A freight boat or ferryboat of light draft.
his respects to M. d'Hyberville and reported that, after
M. Le Sueure had left him at Fort Huilier, promising to
send him some ammunition and food supplies from the
Illinois, and he had waited a long time without receiving
news of them, he had been attacked by the nation of the
Mascoussins and Renards,\(^5\) who killed three of our
Frenchmen that were working in the woods two gunshots
away from the fort. When these savages withdrew he had
been compelled—after burying the goods he had left,
seeing that he lacked both powder and lead—to abandon
the fort and go down to the sea with his men. At Oùiscon-
sin he had met M. Jusserot,\(^6\) a prosecuting attorney from
Montreal in Canada, with the thirty-five men he had
brought along to set up a tannery at Oùabache.\(^7\) He had
gone with him down to the Illinois,\(^8\) where he found the
boat sent him by M. de Bienville; and in this boat he had
come to M. de St. Denis' post the day before the \textit{traversier}
got there; and from M. de St. Denis he had learned of the
arrival of M. d'Hyberville and had taken advantage of
the facilities of the \textit{traversier} to come and pay his respects
to him and at the same time to offer him his services. M.
d'Hyberville showed him a good many honors and then
pressed him to remain at Mobile. And then M. d'Hyber-
ville went to Isle Dauphine to inspect the warehouses in
which the goods had been stored. He also inspected the

\(^5\) The Mascoutens and Foxes, both Algonquian tribes living on or near the Fox
River, were strategically located near the Wisconsin–Fox River portage; both were

\(^6\) Charles Juchereau de St. Denis, or St. Denys, not to be confused with Louis
Juchereau de St. Denis, one of the heroes of this book.

\(^7\) On the Ohio River (Oùabache), at the site of Cairo, Illinois. Adams (ed.),

\(^8\) Almost certainly Cahokia, which like other Illinois settlements was given the
common place name "aux Illinois."
barracks built for the soldiers guarding the warehouses.

During this time the Spaniards came and built a fort
which they named Passacol, nine twelve leagues from Isle
Dauphine, on the mainland some thirty leagues east of
Mobile. As we were at peace at that time and it was on
their land, we did not judge it proper to oppose them;
but we shall see hereafter that that fort was the cause of
a war we had with the Spaniards over a period of two
years.

After he had given all necessary orders and said goodbye
to our officers, M. d’Hyerville sailed back to France in
the month of June.

Just a few days after he had gone, M. de Tonty, the
governor at the Illinois, came with some Canadian
merchants to Mobile, believing he would find M. d’Hy-
erville there. He paid his respects to M. de Bienville, our
governor, with whom he remained for some time.

During this time five of our Frenchmen asked M. de
Bienville for permission to go among the Alibamons and
traffic for poultry and other food supplies that they

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0 Pensacola. The memory of the information of the author is faulty: the Spanish post at Pensacola had been built three months before Iberville attempted to bring his ships into the harbor on January 27, 1699. See Iberville's log for January 26-28, Margry, Découvertes, IV, 142-43.

10 "... aprés son départ," Parkman, p. 100. Clermont, p. 92, has "peu de jours avant son départ," which is not logical.

11 Henri de Tonty, "of the Iron Hand," the companion and lieutenant of La Salle. His loyalty to La Salle is still one of the most moving experiences a reader finds in following the history of the Mississippi Valley. A change in Crown policy toward the fur trade accounts for his leaving his Illinois post and coming downriver; he died at Fort Louis de la Mobile in the yellow-fever epidemic of 1704.

12 The Alibamu Indians, whom the ethnologist Swanton calls a stinkard element of the Creek confederacy. (Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley, p. 33.) De Soto met the Alibamu in Mississippi, but before the French arrived on the Coast they had moved to the forks of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, which form the Alabama River just north of Montgomery, Alabama.