

# WILMINGTON GAZETTE.

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## AN ACCOUNT OF LOUISIANA,

Being an abstract of Documents in the Offices of the Departments of State and of the Treasury.

[Continued from our last.]

### Canal of Carondelet.

Behind New-Orleans is a Canal about one and a half mile long, which communicates with a creek called the Bayou St. Jean, flowing into lake Ponchartrain. At the mouth of it about two and a half leagues from the city is a small Fort called St. Jean, which commands the entrance from the lake. By this creek the communication is kept up through the lake and the Rigolots to the Mobile and the settlements of West-Florida. Crafts drawing from six to eight feet water can navigate to the mouth of the creek, but except in particular swells of the lake cannot pass the bar without being lightened.

### St. Bernards.

On the East side of the Mississippi about 5 leagues below New-Orleans and at the head of the English bend is a settlement known by the name of the Poblacion de St. Bernards or the Terre aux Bœufs, extending on both sides of a creek or drain, whose head is contiguous to the Mississippi, and which flowing eastward, after a course of 18 leagues, and dividing itself into two branches, falls into the sea and lake Borgne. This settlement consists of two parishes; almost all the inhabitants of which are Spaniards from the Canaries, who content themselves with raising fowls, corn, and garden-stuff for the market at New-Orleans. The lands cannot be cultivated to any great distance from the banks of the creek, on account of the vicinity of the marsh behind them, but the place is susceptible of great improvement and affording another communication to small craft of from eight to ten feet draught between the sea and the Mississippi.

### Settlements below the English Turn.

At the distance of 15 leagues below New-Orleans, the settlements of both banks of the river are of but small account. Between these and the fort of Plaquemines, the country is overflowed in the spring and in many places is incapable of cultivation at any time, being a morass almost impassable by man or beast. This small tongue of land extends considerably into the sea, which is visible on both sides of the Mississippi from a ship's mast.

### Country from the Plaquemines to the Sea, and effect of the Hurricanes.

From Plaquemines to the sea is 12 or 13 leagues. The country is low, swampy, chiefly covered with reeds, having little or no timber, and no settlement whatever. It may be necessary to mention here, that the whole lower part of the country from the English Turn downward, is subject to overflowing in hurricanes, either by the recoiling of the river or reflux from the sea on each side; and on more than one occasion it has been covered from the depth of two to ten feet, according to the descent of the river, whereby many lives were lost, horses and cattle swept away and a scene of destruction laid. The last calamity of this kind happened in 1794; but fortunately they are not frequent. In the preceding year the engineer who superintended the erection of the fort of Plaquemines was drowned in his house near the fort, and the workmen and garrison escaped only by taking refuge on an elevated spot in the fort, on which there were notwithstanding, two or three feet of water. These hurricanes have generally been felt in the month of August. Their greatest fury lasts about twelve hours. They commence in the south-east, veer about to all points of the compass, are felt most severely below, and seldom extend more than a few leagues above New-Orleans. In their whole course they are marked with ruin and desolation. Until that of 1793, there had been none felt from the year 1780.

### Passes, or Mouths of the Mississippi.

About eight leagues below Plaquemines, the Mississippi divides itself into three channels, which are called the Passes of the river, viz. the East, South, and South-West Passes. Their course is from five to six leagues to the sea. The space between is a marsh with little or no timber on it; but from its

situation, it may hereafter be rendered of importance. The East Pass which is on the left hand going down the river, is divided into two branches about two leagues below, viz. the Pass a la Loure, and that known to mariners by the name of the Balize, at which there is a small block house and some huts of the pilots, who reside only here. The first of these secondary channels contains at present but eight feet water; the latter from fourteen to sixteen, according to the seasons. The South Pass, which is directly in front of the Mississippi, has always been considered as entirely choked up, but has ten feet water. The South West Pass, which is on the right, is the longest and narrowest of all the Passes and a few years ago had eighteen feet water, and was that by which the large ships always entered and sailed from the Mississippi. It has now but eight feet water, and will probably remain so for some time. In speaking of the quantity of water in the Passes, it must be understood of what is on the bar of each Pass; for immediately after passing the bar, which is very narrow, there are from five to seven fathoms at all seasons.

### Country east of Lake Ponchartrain.

The country on the east side of lake Ponchartrain to Mobile, and including the whole extent between the American line, the Mississippi above New-Orleans, and the lakes (with the exception of a tract of about 30 miles on the Mississippi, and as much square, contiguous to the line, and comprehending the waters of Thompson's creek, Bayou Sara and the Amel) is a poor thin soil, overgrown with pine, and contains no good land whatever, unless on the banks of a few small rivers. It would however afford abundant supplies of pitch, tar, and pine lumber, and would feed large herds of cattle.

### The inhabitants and their origin.

The inhabitants of Louisiana are chiefly the descendants of the French and Canadians. There are a considerable number of English and Americans in New-Orleans. The two German coasts are peopled by the descendants of settlers from Germany, and a few French mixed with them. The three succeeding settlements up to Baton Rouge contain mostly Acadians, banished from Nova Scotia by the English, and their descendants. The government of Baton Rouge, especially the east side, which includes all the country between the Iberville and the American line, is composed partly of Acadians, a very few French and of a great majority of Americans. On the west side they are mostly Acadians: at Pointe Coupee and Fausse river they are French and Acadians. Of the population of the Atacapas and Opelousas, a considerable part is American—Natchitoches, on the Red river, contains but a few Americans, and the remainder of the inhabitants are French. But the former are more numerous in the other settlements of that river, viz. Avoyelles, Rapide, and Oucheta. At Arkansas they are mostly French; and at New-Madrid, Americans. At least 2-8ths, if not a greater proportion of all the settlers on the Spanish side of the Mississippi in the Illinois country, are likewise supposed to be Americans. Below New-Orleans the population is altogether French, and the descendants of Frenchmen.

### New-Orleans.

By recurring to the maps and examining the position of Louisiana, it will appear, that the lower part projects considerably into the sea. It has in all probability been formed by the sediment brought down by the current and deposited on the flat coast: There is therefore on the east side but a very narrow slip along the bank of the river, from the sea to the Iberville. The land is not generally susceptible of cultivation more than a mile in depth from the river, the rest is low and swampy to the lakes on the sea, but in general abounds with cypress timber, which is sawed by mills, which are worked by artificial streams from the Mississippi, in the time of freshes. They generally run five months in the year.

What has been said on the east equally applies to the west side of the river. The soil and situation are nearly the same. After leaving the bank of the river, there is an immense swamp, intersected by creeks and lakes, extending to the high lands of

Atacapas, and occupying a space of thirty or forty leagues.

The city of New-Orleans, which is regularly laid out on the east side of the Mississippi, in lat. 30, N. and lon. 90, W. extends nearly a mile along the river, from the gate of France on the south, to that of Chapitoulas above, and a little more than 1-3d of a mile in breadth, from the river to the rampart; but it has an extensive suburb on the upper side. The houses in front of the town and for a square or two backwards, are mostly of brick, covered with slate or tile, and many of two stories. The remainder are of wood, covered with shingles. The streets cross each other at right angles, and are 34 French feet wide. The squares between the intersections of the streets have a front of 300 French feet. There is in the middle of the front of the city a *place d'armes*, facing which the church and town house are built. There are from 12 to 1400 houses in the city and suburbs. The population may be estimated at 10,000, including the seamen and garrison. It was fortified in 1793, but the works were originally defective, could not have been defended, and are now in ruins. The powder magazine is on the opposite bank of the river.

The public buildings and other public property in New-Orleans, are as follows:

Two very extensive brick stores, from 150 to 180 feet in length, and about 30 in breadth—They are one story high and covered with shingles.

A government house, stables and garden, occupying a front of about 220 feet on the river, in the middle of the town, and extending 255 feet back to the next street.

A military hospital. An ill built custom house of wood, almost in ruins, in the upper part of the city, near the river.

An extensive barrack in the lower part of the city, fronting on the river, & calculated to lodge 12 or 1400 men.

A large lot adjoining the King's stores, with a few sheds in it: it serves as a park for artillery.

A prison, town-house, market-house, assembly room, some ground rents, and the common about the town.

A public school for the rudiments of the Spanish language.

A cathedral church unfinished, and some houses belonging to it.

A charitable hospital, with some houses belonging to it, and a revenue of 1500 dollars annually, endowed by an individual lately deceased.

The canal de Carondelet has been already described.

### Number of Inhabitants.

According to the annexed census, No. 2, of Louisiana, including Pensacola and the Natches, as made in 1785, the whole number of inhabitants amounted to 32,062, of which 14,215 were free whites, 1,305 free people of colour, and 16,542 slaves.

The statement No. 3, from the latest documents, make the whole number 43,375—the free whites, 21,244—the free people of colour, 1,769—and the slaves, 19,920.

A particular statement respecting the population, &c. of Upper Louisiana, and another containing the census of New-Orleans, in this year, are numbered 4 and 5, in the appendix.

These papers certainly exhibit a smaller number than the real population of the country. From an official document, made in July last, and received from Atacapas since the statement, No. 3, was formed, it appears that it contained 5,370 white, 210 free people of color, 1,365 slaves, in all 3,745 souls, instead of 1,447, as therein stated. It is highly probable that the return for the neighboring district of Opelousas, is in the same proportion underrated.

A conjectural estimation made by a gentleman of great respectability and correct information, residing at Natchez, raises the number of whites in the island of New-Orleans, on the west side, to 50,150, and the number of blacks to 39,820. His statement is also subjoined, No. 6.

It is at all times difficult to obtain the full census of a country, and the impediments are increased in this from its scattered population. The actual enumeration may therefore fall short of the true numbers.

### Militia.

There is a militia in Louisiana. The following is the return of it, made to the Court of Spain by the Baron of Carondelet:

From Balize to the city—*vo. Militia*  
Junters of the Mississippi—  
4 companies of 100 men each complete, 400

City—Battalion of the city 5 companies, 500

Artillery company, with supernumeraries, 120

Carabineers, or privileged companies of horse, 2 companies of 70 each—complete, 100

Mulattoes two companies, negroes 1 do. 300

Mixed legion of the Mississippi, comprehending Galvestown, Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, Atacapas and Opelousas, viz.

2 companies of grenadiers, 8 do. of fusileers, 4 do. of dragoons, 2 do. lately added from Bayou Sara, 1600

15 companies of 100 men each, 1500

Avoyelles, 1 company of infantry, 100

Oucheta, 1 do. of cavalry, 100

Natchitoches, 1 do. of infantry and 1 of cavalry, 200

Arkansas, 1 do. of infantry and cavalry, 100

Illinois, } These are all ways above the completion. 200

Provincial regiment of Germans and Acadians, from the its German coast to Iberville, 10 companies, viz. 2 of grenadiers, 8 of fusileers, 1000

Mobile and the country east of Lake Ponchartrain, 2 companies of horse and foot, incomplete, 150

The same gentleman alluded to, page 18, makes the number of the militia to amount to 10,340 men within the same limits to which his estimate of the population applies. He distributes them in the several settlements, as follow:

1. The island of New-Orleans with the opposite margin and the adjacent settlements, 5,000

2. The west margin from Manchac, including Pointe Coupee, and extending to the Red River, 800

3. Atacapas, along the coast between the Delta of the Mississippi and the river Sabine, 550

4. Opelousas, 750

5. Red River, including Bayou Benif, Avoyelles, Rapide, and Natchitoches, 1000

6. Oucheta, 300

7. Concord, 40

8. Arkansas, 150

9. New-Madrid and its vicinity, 350

10. Illinois and Missouri, 1000

11. The settlements on the east side of the Mississippi, from the American line to the Iberville, and some other settlements, 600

It is to be observed, that none of these statements include the country beyond the river Sabine, nor even all those which lie eastwardly of it. Data are also wanting to give them.

### Fortifications.

St. Louis has a lieutenant colonel to command in it, and but few troops—Baton Rouge is an ill constructed fort, and has about fifty men. In describing the Canal of Carondelet, the small fort, of St. Jean has been mentioned, as has the block house at the Balizetin its proper place. The fortifications of New-Orleans, noticed before, consist of five ill constructed redoubts, with a covered way, palisade and ditch. The whole is going fast to decay, and it is supposed they would be of but little service, in case of an attack. Though the powder magazine is on the opposite side of the river, there is no sufficient provision made for its removal to the city, in case of need.

ruinous.—The principal front is meant to defend the approach from the sea, and can oppose, at most, but eight heavy guns. It is built at a turn in the river, where ships in general must anchor, as the wind which brings them up so far is contrary in the next reach which they mostly work through; and they would therefore be exposed to the fire of the fort. On the opposite bank are the ruins of a small closed redoubt, called Fort Bourbon, usually garrisoned by a serjeant's command. Its fire was intended to flank that of a fort of Plaquemines, and prevent shipping and craft from ascending or descending on that side. When a vessel appears, a signal is made on one side, and answered on the other. Should she attempt to pass, without sending a boat on shore, she would be immediately fired upon.

### Indians.

The Indian nations within the limits of Louisiana, are, as far as known, as follows, and consist of the numbers hereafter specified.

On the Eastern bank of the Mississippi about twenty-five leagues above Orleans are the remains of the nation of Houtans or Red Men, which do not exceed sixty persons. There are no other Indians settled on this side of the river, either in Louisiana or West-Florida, though they are at times frequented by parties of wandering Choctaws.

On the West side of the Mississippi are the remains of the Taumicas settled near, and above Pointe Coupee on the river, consisting of fifty or sixty persons.

### In the Atacapas.

On the lower parts of the Bayou Teche at about eleven or twelve leagues from the sea, are two villages of Chittimachas, consisting of about one hundred souls.

The Atacapas, properly so called, dispersed throughout the district, and chiefly on the Bayou, or creek of Vermillion, about one hundred souls.

Wanderers of the tribe of Biloxis and Choctaws on Bayou Crocodile, which empties into the Teche, about fifty souls.

### In the Opelousas to the N. W. of Atacapas.

Two villages of Alibamas in the centre of the district near the church, consisting of one hundred persons.

Conchates dispersed through the country as far West as the river Sabines and its neighbourhood, about three hundred and fifty persons.

### On the River Rouge.

At Avoyelles, nineteen leagues from the Mississippi, is a village of the Biloni nation, and another on the lake of the Avoyelles, the whole about sixty souls.

At the Rapide twenty-six leagues from the Mississippi is a village of Choctaws of one hundred souls, and another of Biloxis, about two leagues from it, of about one hundred more: About eight or nine leagues higher up the Red River is a village of about fifty souls. All these are occasionally employed by the settlers in their neighbourhood as boatmen.

About eighty leagues above Natchitoches on the Red River is the nation of the Cadoques, called by abbreviation Cados; they can raise from three to four hundred warriors, are the friends of the whites, and are esteemed the bravest and most generous of all the nations in this vast country; they are rapidly decreasing, owing to intemperance and the numbers annually destroyed by the Osages and Choctaws.

There are, besides the foregoing, at least four to five hundred families of Choctaws, who are dispersed on the West side of the Mississippi, on the Oucheta and Red Rivers, as far West as Natchitoches, and the whole nation would have emigrated across the Mississippi, had it not been for the opposition of the Spaniards and the Indians on that side, who had suffered by their aggressions.

### On the River Arkansas, &c.

Between the Red River and the Arkansas there are but a few Indians, the remains of tribes almost extinct. On this last river is the nation of the same name, consisting of about 250 warriors; they are brave, yet peaceable and well disposed, and have always been attached to the French, and espoused their cause in their wars with the Chickasaws, whom they have always resisted with success. They live in three villages, the 1st is at 18 leagues from the Mississippi on the Arkansas river, and the others are at