

MINERVA; or, ANTI-JACOBIN.

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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.)

Indians.

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

On the Eastern bank of the Mississippi about 25 leagues above Orleans the remains of the nation of Houmas or Red Men, which do not exceed 60 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 Tunicas 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 Chitumachus consisting of about one hundred souls.

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

Wanderers of the tribes of Bilexis 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 Sabinas 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 Biloxes, 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 Cadoquies, 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 Olages 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 Ouacheta 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 two hundred and sixty 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 first is at eighteen leagues from the Mississippi on the Arkansas river, and the others are at three and six leagues from the first. A scarcity of game on the Eastern side of the Mississippi has lately induced a number of Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, &c. to frequent the neighbourhood of Arkansas, where game is still in abundance: they have contracted marriages with the Arkansas, and seem inclined to make a permanent settlement and incorporate themselves with that nation. The number is unknown, but is considerable and is every day increasing.

On the river St. Francis, in the neighbourhood of New-Madrid, Cape Girardeau, Reviere a la Pomme, and the environs, are settled a number of vagabonds, emigrants from the Delawares, Shawnee, Miamis, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Florias, and supposed to consist in all of five hundred families; they are at times troublesome to the boats descending the river, and have even plundered some of them and committed a few murders. They are attached to liquor, seldom remain long in any place, many of them speak English, all understand it, and there are some who even read and write it.

At St. Genevieve in the settlement among the whites are about thirty Florias, Kaskaskias, and Illinois, who seldom hunt for the other Indians; they are the remains of a nation which fifty years ago could bring into the field 1,200 warriors.

On the Missouri.

On the Missouri and its waters are many and numerous nations, the best known of which are: The Olages, situated on the river of the same name on the right bank of the Missouri at about eighty leagues from its confluence with it: they consist of one thousand warriors, who live in two settlements at no great distance from each other. They are of a gigantic stature and well proportioned, are enemies of the whites and of all other Indian nations, and commit depredations from Illinois to the Arkansas. The trade of this nation is said to be under an exclusive grant. They are a cruel and ferocious race, and are hated and feared by all the other Indians. The confluence of the Olage river with the Missouri is about eighty leagues from the Mississippi.

Sixty leagues higher up the Missouri, and on the same bank, is the river Kansas, and on it the nation of the same name, but at about seventy or eighty leagues from its mouth. It consists of about two hundred and fifty warriors, who are as fierce and cruel as the Olages, and often molest and ill-treat those who go to trade among them.

Sixty leagues above the river Kansas, and at about two hundred from the mouth of the Missouri, (still on the right bank, is the Riviere Platte, or Shallow River, remarkable for its quick sands & bad navigation; and near its confluence with the Missouri dwells the nation of Oclotacos, commonly called Oros, consisting of about two hundred warriors, among whom are twenty-five or thirty of the nation of Missouri, who took refuge among them about twenty-five years since.

Forty leagues up the Riviere Platte you come to the nation of the Panis, composed of about seven hundred warriors in four neighbouring villages; they hunt but little, and are ill provided with firearms; they often make war on the Spaniards in the neighbourhood of Santa Fe, from which they are not far distant.

At three hundred leagues from the Mississippi and one hundred from the Riviere Platte on the same bank are situated the villages of the Mahas. They consisted in 1799 of five hundred warriors, but are said to have been almost cut off last year by the small-pox.

At fifty leagues above the Mahas and on the left bank of the Missouri dwell the Poncas, to the number of two hundred and fifty warriors, possessing in common with the Mahas their language, ferocity, and vices. Their trade has never been of much value, and those engaged in it are exposed to pillage and ill-treatment.

At the distance of 450 leagues from the Mississippi, and on the right bank of the Missouri, dwell the Aricaras, to the number of 700 warriors, and 60 leagues above them, the Mandane nation consisting of about 700 warriors likewise. These two last nations are well disposed to the whites, but have been the victims of the Sioux, or Mandowessies, who being themselves well provided with firearms, have taken advantage of the defenceless situation of the others, and have on all occasions murdered them without mercy.

No discoveries on the Missouri, beyond the Mandane nation, have been accurately detailed, though the traders have been informed, that many large navigable rivers discharge their waters into it, far

above it, and that there are many numerous nations settled on them.

The Sioux, or Mandowessies, who frequent the country between the north bank of the Missouri and Mississippi, are a great impediment to trade and navigation. They endeavour to prevent all communication with the nations dwelling high up the Missouri, to deprive them of ammunition and arms, and thus keep them subservient to themselves. In the winter they are chiefly on the banks of the Missouri and massacre all who fall into their hands.

There are a number of nations at a distance from the banks of the Missouri, to the north and south, concerning whom but little information has been received. Returning to the Mississippi, and ascending it from the Missouri, about 75 leagues above the mouth of the latter, the River Moingona or Riviere de Moine enters the Mississippi on the west side, and on it are situated the Ayogas, a nation originally from the Missouri, speaking the language of the Otatachias; it consisted of 200 warriors, before the small pox lately raged among them.

The Sacs and Renards dwell on the Mississippi, about 300 leagues above St. Louis, and frequently trade with it—they live together, and consisted of 500 warriors—their chief trade is with Michilimakinac, and they have always been peaceable and friendly.

The other nations on the Mississippi higher up, are but little known to us.—The nations of the Missouri, though cruel, treacherous, and insolent, may doubts be kept in order by the United States, if proper regulations are adopted with respect to them.

It is said that no treaties have been entered into by Spain with the Indian nations westward of the Mississippi, and that its treaties with the Creeks, Choctaws, &c. are in effect superseded by our treaty with that power of the 27th October, 1795.

Of Lands and Titles.

The lands are held in some instances by grants from the Crown, but mostly from the Colonial government. Perhaps not one quarter part of the lands granted in Louisiana are held by complete titles; and of the remainder a considerable part depends upon a written permission of a Commandant. Not a small proportion is held by occupancy with a simple verbal permission of the officer last mentioned. This practice has always been countenanced by the Spanish government, in order that poor men, when they found themselves a little at ease, might at their own convenience apply for and obtain complete titles. In the mean time such imperfect rights were suffered by the government to descend by inheritance, and even to be transferred by private contract. When requisite they have been seized by judicial authority & sold for the payment of debts.

Until within a few years, the governor of Upper Louisiana was authorized to make surveys of any extent. In the exercise of this discretionary power, some abuses were committed; a few small monopolies were created. About three years ago, he was restricted in this branch of his duty: since which he has been only authorized to make surveys to emigrants in the following manner: Two hundred acres for each man and wife, fifty acres for each child; and twenty acres for each slave. Hence the quantity of land allowed to settlers depended on the number in each family; and for this quantity of land they paid no more than the expence of survey. These surveys were necessary to entitle the settlers to grants; and the governor, and after him the Intendant at New-Orleans, was alone authorized to execute grants on the receipt of the surveys from the settlers.—The administration of the land-office is at present under the care of the Intendant of the province.

There are no feudal rights nor noblesse.

It is impossible to ascertain the quantity of lands granted, without calling on the claimants to exhibit their titles; the registry being incomplete and the maps made by the different surveyors general having been burnt in the fires at New-Orleans of 1788 and 1794. No estimate has been obtained.

All the lands on both sides of the Mississippi, from the distance of 16 leagues below New-Orleans to Baton Rouge, are granted to the depth of forty acres, or near half a league, which is the usual depth of all grants. Some have double and triple grants,—that is to say, they have twice or thrice forty acres in depth; and others have grants extending from the Mississippi to the sea or the lakes behind them. In other parts of the country the people, being generally settled on the banks of creeks or rivers, have a front of from six to forty acres, and the grant almost invariably expresses a depth of forty acres. All the lands ungranted in the island of New-Orleans or on the opposite bank of the Mississippi, are sunken, inundated, and at present unfit for cultivation; but may, in part, be reclaimed at a future day by efforts of the rich and enterprising.

Cultivation of Sugar.

The sugar-cane may be cultivated between the river Iberville and the city, on both sides of the river and as far back as the swamps. Below the city, however, the lands decline so rapidly that beyond fifteen miles the soil is not well adapted to it. Above the Iberville the cane would be affected by the cold, and its produce would therefore be uncertain. Within these limits the best planters admit that one quarter of the cultivated lands of any considerable plantation may be planted in cane, one quarter left in pasture, and the remaining half employed for provisions, &c. and a reserve for a chance of crops. One Parisian Arpent of one hundred and eighty feet square may be expected to produce on an average twelve hundred weight of sugar, and fifty gallons of rum.

From the above data, admitting that both sides of the river are planted for 90 miles in extent and about three-fourths of a mile in depth, it will result that the annual product may amount in round numbers to twenty-five thousand hogsheads of sugar, with twelve thousand puncheons of rum. Enterprising young planters say that one-third, or even one-half of the arable land might be planted in cane. It may also be remarked that a regular supply of provisions from above at a moderate price, would enable the planter to give his attention to a greater body of land cultivated with cane. The whole of these lands, as may be supposed, are granted; but in the Atacapas country, there is undoubtedly a portion, parallel to the sea-coast, fit for the culture of the sugar cane. There vacant lands are to be found, but the proportion is at present unknown.

In the above remarks the lands at Terre aux boeuf, on the Fourche, Bayou St. Jean and other inlets of the Mississippi, south of the latitude supposed to divide those which are fit, from those which are unfit, for the cultivation of the cane, have been entirely kept out of view. Including these and taking one third instead of one fourth of the lands fit for sugar, the produce of the whole would be fifty thousand instead of twenty-five thousand hogsheads of sugar.

The following quantities of sugar, brown, clayed and refined, have been imported into the United States from Louisiana and the Floridas, viz.

In 1799	-	773,542 lb.
1800	-	1,560,865
1801	-	967,619
1802	-	1,576,933

Of the Taxes.

When the country was first ceded to Spain, the preserved many of the French regulations, but by almost imperceptible degrees they have disappeared, and at present the province is governed entirely by the laws of Spain and the ordinances formed expressly for the colony. Various ordinances promulgated by general O'Reilly, its first governor under Spain, as well as some other laws, are translated and annexed in the appendix No. 1.

Courts of Justice.

The governor's court has a civil and military jurisdiction throughout the province. That of the lieutenant governor has the same extent in civil cases only.

There are two Alcaldes, whose jurisdiction, civil and criminal, extends through the city of New-Orleans and five leagues

(Continued in last page.)