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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.

(CONCLUDED)

Of the officers of Government.

THE CABILDO is an hereditary council of twelve, chosen originally from the most wealthy and respectable families. The governor presides over their meetings. Their office is very honorable, but it is acquired by purchase. They have a right to represent, and even to renounce to the governor, in respect to the interior government of the Province. The police of the city is under their controul and direction. In it they regulate the admission of physicians and surgeons to practice. Two members of the Cabildo serve by turn monthly, and take upon themselves the immediate superintendance of markets, bakers, streets, bridges and the general police of the city. This council distributes among its members several important offices, such as Alguazil Mayor, or High Sheriff, Alcalde Provincial, Procureur General, &c. The last mentioned is a very important charge. The person who holds it is not merely the king's attorney, but an officer peculiar to the civil law. He does not always prosecute; but after conviction he indicates the punishment annexed by law to the crime, and which may be, and is mitigated by the court. Like the chancellor in the English system, he is the curator and protector of orphans, &c. and finally, he is the expounder of the law, the defender of the privileges belonging to the town, province or colony, and the accuser of every public officer that infringes them.

The cabildo is also vested with a species of judicial authority, for which, and for a further elucidation of its constitution, and the functions of the officers springing from it, see the Appendix No. 1.

THE INTENDANT is chief of the departments of finance and commerce, & exercises the judicial powers already mentioned. He is entirely independent of the governor, and no public monies can be issued without his express order. The land office is under his direction.

The condator, Treasurer & Interventor, are officers subordinate to the Intendant. The first has four clerks under him, and keeps all accounts and documents respecting the receipt and expenditure of the revenue, and is therefore a check upon the Intendant. The treasurer is properly no more than a cashier, & is allowed one clerk. The Interventor superintends all public purchases, and bargains. The Administrador is also subordinate to the Intendant, and with a number of inferior officers, manages every thing respecting the custom house. Every clerk in these offices receives his commission from the king.

The Auditor is the king's counsel, who is to furnish the governor with legal advice in all cases of judicial proceedings, whether civil or military.

The assessor's functions are similar to those of the Auditor, and are properly applicable to the Intendant's department.

Both of the officers last mentioned are also the councillors of some of the other tribunals, as before intimated.

A Secretary of the government and another of the intendancy.

A Surveyor General.

A Harbour Master.

A Store Keeper, who takes charge of all public moveable property.

An Interpreter of the French and Spanish languages, and a number of other inferior officers.

All appointments in the province with a salary of more than thirty dollars per month are made by the king, and most of those with a lower salary by the Governor, or Intendant as belongs to their respective departments. There are no officers chosen by the people.

The salaries & perquisites of the principal officers are as follows:

G. v. annually,	6,000 p. salary	2,000 p. perquisites.
Intendant,	4,000	none.
Auditor,	2,000	2,000
Contador,	2,000	none.
Assessor,	1,200	1,000
Secretary,	1,200	none.
Administrador,	1,200	none.
Secretary of Government,	600	2,000

The commandants of districts receive each 100 dollars from the king annual-

ly, unless they are possessed of a military employment or pension.

Taxes and Duties.

Instead of paying local taxes, each inhabitant is bound to make and repair roads, bridges, and embankments thro' his own land.

A duty of six per cent. is payable at the custom house, on the transfer of shipping. It is ascertained upon the sum, the buyer and seller declare to be the real consideration. As no oath is required from either, they seldom report more than half the price.

The following taxes are also payable in the province.

Two per cent. on legacies and inheritances, coming from collaterals and exceeding 2,000 dollars.

Four per cent. on legacies, given to persons who are not relatives of the testator.

A tax on civil employments, the salaries of which exceed 300 dollars annually, called *media annata*, amounting to half of the first year's salary. By certain officers, it is to be paid in two annual instalments, and by others in four.—The first person appointed to a newly created office pays nothing, but the tax is levied on all who succeeded him.

Seven dollars is deducted from the sum of 20 paid as pilotage by every vessel entering or leaving the Mississippi; but the treasury provides the boats, and pays the salary of the pilots and sailors employed at the Balize. The remainder of the 20 dollars is thus distributed: To the head pilot 4—to the pilot who is in the vessel 4, and 5 to the crew of the row-boat, that goes out to put the pilot on board, or take him ashore.

A tax of 40 dollars per annum for licences to sell liquors.

A tax on certain places when sold, such as those of Regidor, Notary, Attorney, &c.

But the principal tax is that of 6 per cent. levied on all imports and exports, according to a low Tariff. The proceeds, of which nett about 120,000 dollars, whilst all the other taxes are said not to yield more than 5 or 6 thousand dollars annually.

Expenses and debts.

The expenses of the present government, comprehending the pay and support of the regiment of Louisiana, part of a battalion of the regiment of Mexico, a company of dragoons, and one of artillery, which from the garrison of the country, including Mobile; the repairs of public buildings and fortifications; the maintenance of a few galleys to convey troops & stores throughout the province; Indian presents and salaries of officers, clergy, and persons employed for public purposes, amount to about 650,000 dollars. A sum in specie, which does not generally exceed 400,000 dollars is annually sent from Vera Cruz; but this, together with the amount of duties & taxes collected in the province, leaves usually a deficiency of one hundred or one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, for which certificates are issued to the persons who may have furnished supplies, or to officers and work men for their salaries. Hence a debt has accumulated, which, it is said, amounts at present to about 450,000 dollars. It bears no interest, and is now depreciated 30 per cent. The latter circumstance has taken place not from want of confidence in the eventual payment of the certificates; but from the uncertainty of the time when, and the want and general value of the specie. The whole of this debt is said to be due to the inhabitants, and to American residents. It would have been long since paid off, but for a diversion of the funds, destined for that purpose, to different and external objects.

Imports and exports.

The productions of Louisiana are—sugar, cotton, indigo, rice furs and peltry, lumber, tar, pitch, lead, flour, horses and cattle. Population alone is wanting to multiply them to an astonishing degree. The soil is fertile, the climate salubrious, and the means of communication between most parts of the province certain, and by water.

The following has been received as a sketch of the present exports of Louisiana, viz.

	Dollars.
20,000 bales of cotton, of 3 cwt. each, at 20 cents per lb.	1,344,000 increasing
45,000 casks of sugar, 10 cwt. each, at 6 cents, per lb.	302,400 ditto.
800 do. analeses, 100 gallons each.	32,000 ditto.
Indigo,	100,000 } diminish
Peltry,	20,000 } ing rapidly
Lumber,	80,000
Lead, corn, horses & cattle, uncertain.	
All other articles, suppose	100,000
	2,158,000

According to official returns in the Treasury of the United States, there were imported onto our territory from Louisiana and the Floridas, merchandise to the following amounts, in the several years prefixed:

	Dollars.
In 1799 to the value of	507,132
1800	904,322
1801	956,635
1802	1,006,214

According to the same authority, which makes the total of the exports to amount to 2,158,000 dollars, the imports, in merchandise, plantation utensils, slaves, &c. amount to two and an half millions, the difference being made up by the money introduced by the government, to pay the expenses of governing and protecting the colony.

According to the returns in the Treasury of the United States, exports have been made to Louisiana and the Floridas, to the following amount in the years prefixed:

	Dollars.
In 1799 to the value of	3,056,268 in foreign articles.
	447,824 in domestic do.

	Dollars.
In 1800	1,795,127 in foreign articles.
	240,662 in domestic do.

	Dollars.
In 1801	2,035,789

	Dollars.
In 1801	1,770,794 in foreign articles.
	137,204 in domestic do.

	Dollars.
In 1802	1,054,600 in foreign articles.
	170,110 in domestic do.

It is to be observed that if the total of the imports and exports into and from these provinces (of which the two Floridas are but a very unimportant part, with respect to both) be as above supposed, viz.

Imports,	2,500,000 dollars
Exports,	2,158,000
Making together	4,658,000

The duty of six per cent. ought alone to produce the gross sum of two hundred seventy-nine thousand four hundred and eighty dollars, and that the difference between that sum and its actual net produce, arises partly from the imperfect tariff by which the value of merchandise is ascertained, but principally from the smuggling, which is openly countenanced by most of the revenue officers.

Manufactures.

There are but few domestic manufactures. The Acadians manufacture a little cotton into quilts and cottonades; and in the remote parts of the province, the poorer planters spin and weave some negro cloths of cotton and wool mixed. There is one machine for spinning cotton in the parish of Iberville, and another in the Opelousas; but they do little or nothing. In the city, besides the trades which are absolutely necessary, there is a considerable manufacture of cordage, and some small ones of shot and ball-powder. There are likewise in, and within a few leagues of the town, twelve distilleries for making tafia, which are said to distil annually a very considerable quantity; and one sugar refinery, said to make about 200,000 lbs. of loaf sugar.

Navigation employed in the trade of the province. In the year 1802 there entered the Mis-

issippi two hundred and sixty-eight vessels of all descriptions, eighteen of which were public armed vessels, and the remainder merchantmen, as follows, viz.

	American.	Spanish.	French.
Ships,	48	14	
Brigs,	63	17	
Polacres,		4	
Schooners,	50	61	
Sloops,	9	1	
Total	170	97	1

Of the number of American vessels, twenty-three ships, twenty-five brigs, nineteen schooners, and five sloops came in ballast, the remainder were wholly, or in part laden.

Five Spanish ships and seven schooners came in ballast. The united tonnage of all the shipping that entered the river, exclusive of the public armed vessels, was 33,725 register tons.

In the same year their sailed from the Mississippi two hundred and sixty-five sail, viz.

	American.	Tons.	Spanish.	Tons.
Ships,	40	14,972	18	3,714
Brigs,	58	7,546	22	1,944
Sch's,	52	4,345	58	3,147
Sloop,	8	539	3	168
Polacres,			3	240
Total	158	21,383	104	9,753

	Tons.	Total.	Tons.
Sch's,	105	Americans 158	21,383
		Spanish 104	9,753
		French 5	105

Grand total, sail, 265 tons 31,241

The tonnage of the vessels which went away in ballast, and that of the public armed ships, are not included in the foregoing account—these latter carried away masts, yards, spars, pitch, tar, &c. at least 1,500 tons.

In the first six months of the present year, there entered the Mississippi 173 sail, of all nations, four of which were public armed vessels, viz. two French & two Spanish, whose tonnage is not enumerated.

	American.	Tons.	Spanish.	Tons.	French.	Tons.
Ships,	23	5,306	14	3,080	5	1,002
Brigs,	44	5,701	20	2,173	8	873
Polacres,			3	430	2	436
Sch's,	22	1,899	18	1,187	7	489
Sloops,	4	273	3	187		
Total	93	13,264	58	7,087	22	2,804

	Total of Ships.	Tons.	Total of Tons.
American,	93	13,264	
Spanish,	58	7,087	
French,	22	2,804	
Grand Total,	173	23,155	Tons.

In the same six months there sailed from the Mississippi one hundred and sixty-six vessels, viz.

	American.	Spanish.	French.
Ships,	21	18	2
Brigs,	28	31	1
Polacres,		6	
Schooners,	17	26	5
Sloops,	9	1	
Total	85	81	8

Coasting Trade.

There is a considerable coasting trade from Pensacola, Mobile, & the Creeks and Rivers falling into, and in the neighbourhood of Lake Ponchartrain, from whence New-Orleans is principally supplied with ship timber, charcoal, lime, pitch and tar, and partly with cattle, & the places before named are supplied with articles of foreign growth and produce in the same way from Orleans.—The vessels employed are sloops & schooners, some of which are but half decked, from eight to fifty tons; five hundred of which, including their repeated voyages, and 13 galleys and gun boats entered the Bayou St. Jean last year.

There is likewise a small coasting trade between the Atacapas and Opelousas, and New Orleans, by way of the Balize, which would much increase, if there was any encouragement given by government, to clear away a few obstructions, chiefly caused by fallen timber, in the small rivers and creeks leading to them.

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For the Year 1804.