Quintanilla's Crusade, 1775-1783: "Moral Reform" and Its Consequences on the Natchitoches Frontier

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Colonial Louisiana has been described as "*sans religion, sans discipline, et sans ordre*";[1] and the Natchitoches frontier is often depicted as the most wayward offspring of a willful colonial regime. A quantitative analysis of social patterns at that outpost based upon a reconstitution of the lives of all individuals known to have tarried at or traipsed through its jurisdiction during the colonial years, clearly supports the charge of willfulness. However, the state of moral turpitude and the official relationship between church and state along the colonial frontier varied widely over the course of the eighteenth century, in response to myriad factors.[2]

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[1]George W. Cable, *The Creoles of Louisiana* (New York, 1884), 24-25. Carl A. Brasseaux's "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History,* 27 (1986): 27-41, offers anecdotal evidence, without specifically addressing Natchitoches.

[2]This study has examined the lives and relationships of some 2,702 individuals, almost half of whom have been tracked through two to six other colonial settlements from Acadia to Mexico City. Locally, there exist some 4,000 registrations of baptisms, marriages, and burials in the records of the colonial church, for which translated abstracts are published. Another core group of approximately 4,000 civil records were generated locally; they and 1,000 or so records created at the provincial capital relating to Natchitoches settlers are almost entirely untranslated and unpublished and most are still retained in Louisiana. Considerable

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The most striking variances occurred in eight tumultuous years between June 17, 1775, and February 17, 1783, a period when the spiritual flock of Louisiana's western frontier was shepherded with relentless vigor by Spanish Capuchin Luis de Quintanilla.[3] A zealous crusader who felt the state existed to enforce church dogmas, Quintanilla initiated a "cleanup campaign" that left almost no facet of daily life untouched. Race relations and women's rights, public welfare and private morals, child-spacing and taxation—all were dealt visible blows by this shepherd's rod.

At best, Quintanilla's crusade was but temporarily effective; and its long-range impact was counterproductive. His heavy-handed attempt to enforce theological dogmas upon a society in which "Catholic missionaries [had been] consistently unsuccessful in their efforts to dictate . . . moral values"[4] created sharp cleavages between the western frontier's civil and ecclesiastical administrations. It fostered resentment between the populace and the spiritual authority that was to guide it. It underscored the ideological differences that existed between Spain's colonial administration and the French subjects it tried to rule. And it set the stage for an episode of political unrest in the 1790s that historians have debated for sixty years.[5]

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quantities of other useful material, civil and ecclesiastical, reside within France and Spain—much of which has been filmed for United States scholars. For early findings from this study, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Social and Family Patterns in the Colonial Louisiana Frontier," *Sociological Spectrum,* 2 (1982): 233-48; and Mills, "Family and Social Patterns on the Colonial Louisiana Frontier: A Quantitative Analysis, 1714-1803" (B.A. New College Thesis, University of Alabama, 1981). For translated abstracts of sacramental registers extant from colonial Natchitoches, see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803: Abstracts of the Catholic Church Registers of the French and Spanish Post of St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches in Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1977); Mills, *Natchitoches, 1800-1826: Translated Abstracts of Register Number Five of the Catholic Church Parish of St. François des Natchitoches in Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1980); Mills, "Natchitoches Baptisms, 1761-1776: A Supplement to Mills's *Natchitoches, 1729-1803,*" *Natchitoches Genealogist,* 7 (1983): 6-11; Mills, "Burials at Natchitoches, 1793-1796: Edited Translations from Register 15, Parish of St. François des Natchitoches," *Natchitoches Genealogist,* 5 (1980): 112; and Mills, *Natchitoches Colonials—Censuses, Military Rolls, and Tax Lists, 1722-1803* (Chicago, 1981), 121-23, for 1801 burials.

[3]The classic work on Natchitoches in this era, Herbert Eugene Bolton's *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780,* 2 vols. (Cleveland, 1914), 2:134, dates Quintanilla's arrival in the post at 1776. However, parish registers document his appearance there from June 17, 1775.

[4]Brasseaux, "Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana," 27.

[5]The so-called "Ghosts' Revolt" at Natchitoches was first discussed in Ernest R. Liljegren, "Jacobinism in Spanish Louisiana, 1792-1797," *Louisiana Historical*

In July 1772, the first contingent of Spanish Capuchins arrived in Louisiana. At their head was the zealous, tempestuous, and rigidly austere Cirilo de Barcelona, who found shocking the unbecoming "luxury" in which the French Capuchins lived. As the colony's vicar general, he took seriously his vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, but Cirilo had considerable trouble conquering the sin of pride.[6] Among the quartet of disciples he brought with him was a young Castilian, Luis de Quintanilla, who strove to display all the qualities of his mentor—and succeeded.

The outpost to which Padre Luis was dispatched in 1775 actually enjoyed but one luxury: the freedom of its citizens to do as they pleased so long as they did not impinge upon the private enterprises of frontier officials or make waves that washed ashore at New Orleans. The Capuchins who preceded Quintanilla at Natchitoches had foregone even this luxury. As a consequence, the sister ships of church and state had rowed a rocky course on Red River from the time of the first resident priest. Capuchin Père Maximin, who arrived early in 1729, was quickly "encouraged" to leave by the post's commandant and founder, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis. Three decades later, the governor of Spanish Texas, Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui, testified that when the commandant's son and namesake was born, St. Denis (whose wife was Spanish) wanted the infant baptized by Spanish friar Francisco Ballexo. However, the Capuchin pastor of Natchitoches refused to allow it. As Barrios y Jáuregui explained it, "they had to wait more than six months for the Capuchin father . . . to leave before the ceremony could be performed."[7]

Quarterly, 22 (1939): 47-97. The latest study, Gilbert C. Din, "Father Jean Delvaux and the Natchitoches Revolt of 1795," *Louisiana History,* 40 (1999): 5-32, provides a more-incisive analysis of the evidence that Liljegren and several successors introduced; however, some fundamental issues and a number of records still remain unexplored in the literature.

[6]Caroline Maude Burson, *The Stewardship of Don Esteban Miro, 1782-1792* (New Orleans, 1940), 211; Roger Baudier, *The Catholic Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1939), 184.

[7]Affidavit of Barrios y Jáuregui, November 5, 1757, see "Bexar Archives Translations," vol. 32:1-5, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. The name of the Spanish friar is customarily rendered by historians as *Vallejo;* however, his name is given as *Ballexo* in the above testimony by his contemporary Barrios y Jáuregui, and it also appears as *Ballexo* in the contemporary church registration made at Natchitoches when Ballexo, in 1734, attested the 1733 marriage of Marie Rose Juchereau de St. Denis to Jacques de la Chaise. See Register 1:9 (verso), Parish of St. François (present Immaculate Conception), Natchitoches. As for Maximin's abrupt departure in mid-1729, Baudier's detailed study of colo-

Until another resident priest arrived in 1734, the St. Denis regime was quite content to have religious needs served by curates from the nearby Spanish post of Los Adaes. Maximin's replacement, a Jesuit sent amid a shortage of Capuchins, was quite acceptable; but the 1738 Capuchin decision to replace him with one of their own reopened religious rivalry at Natchitoches. Two petitions signed by the frontier flock, plainly stating a prejudice against Capuchins and a preference for Jesuits, were denied. Not surprisingly (and for reasons no historian seems to have documented), the replacement lasted no longer than his predecessor had in 1729. For the next two decades, a string of Capuchins lasted scarcely longer, for similarly unrecorded reasons.[8]

The chronic friction galvanized in 1759 under Père Valentin, who was embroiled in litigation from the time of his arrival. Baudier vaguely refers to his "unsatisfactory conduct," intimating that his woes stemmed from his neglect of Natchitoches while he conducted missionary work elsewhere.[9] To the contrary, it was Valentin's activities at Natchitoches, itself, that were unsatisfactory—at least to the post commander. A colonial inventory of papers at the post, containing entries for no-longer-extant documents, includes one of July 9, 1759, for a "Certificate on the Subject of Insults Spoken in the Pulpit by the Reverend Father Valentine [*sic*] against Mr. de Blanc, Commandant."[10] Beyond that, the surviving notarial records include affidavits and other documents from a case prosecuted between November 1761 and January 1762, which detail Valentin's "slanders" against the commandant and the subsequent auction of his property—apparently after his conviction.[11]

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nial pastoral assignments offers no explanation; for Maximin's career, see Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana,* 117, 119, 127-29, 133, 142, 147.

[8]Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana,* 147-51; see also registers of the Parish of St. François, vols. 1 and 2.

[9]Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana,* 151, 156.

[10]1780 Inventory of Papers, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba (hereinafter cited as AGI, PC), Seville, Spain, legajo 193B. A subsequent inventory describes the document in a slightly different manner that sheds a bit more light on the nature of the dispute: "Certification on the wrongs, *said to be superficial,* done by the Rev. Father Valentin to Mr. De Blanc, Commandant" [italics added], AGI, PC, leg. 198A.

[11]Declaration of Remis Poissot, November 14, 1761, and Declarations of Remis Poissot and Gabriel Buart, January 18, 1762, in *Rex v. Père Valentine,* docs. 304 and 308, Colonial Archives, Office of the Clerk of Court, Natchitoches.

Valentin's replacement of 1764, Père Stanislas struggled to establish a rapport with his flock, but he fared no better in the end and left in a fit of fury. In 1770, he earned a gubernatorial reprimand when he reported to Alejandro O'Reilly that his parishioners could not afford to rebuild the parish church and then demanded that they be allowed to sell their tobacco through every outlet in Mexico. O'Reilly curtly ordered Athanase de Mézières—the St. Denis son-in-law appointed by the governor to fill the lieutenant governorship at Natchitoches—to repair the church anyway and to see that Stanislas meddled no more in secular affairs.[12] De Mézières himself stepped across the line that separated church and state shortly thereafter when Stanislas's superior, Dagobert de Longuory, ordered the priest to leave the frontier and start a new parish on the Acadian Coast; De Mézières "quite forcibly" detained his prelate. The issue resolved itself, apparently to no one's satisfaction, in early 1774 when Stanislas decided to abandon not only Natchitoches, but also the colony. Baudier reports that his parishioners begged him to stay with them at least through Holy Week, but he turned a deaf ear.[13] Extant sacramental registrations for the parish attest Stanislas's presence at Natchitoches as late as March 20. Considering that this was but one day before Palm Sunday in 1774, his refusal to delay his departure just eight days for the comfort of his flock during the year's holiest season does suggest that he harbored a serious grudge toward either his parishioners or post officials.

When the last French governor, Jean-Jacques-Blaise d'Abbadie, evaluated the colony in 1764, he pleaded that "every effort . . . be made 'to reestablish the good order entirely absent in the conduct and in the morals of the residents of this colony'."[14] His successors did try to uphold that mandate, reflecting the view of their Catholic Majesties, the kings of Spain, that church and state were Siamese twins. Gov. Estevan Miró's "Bando de buen gobierno" would later declare quite bluntly: "The first and special concern of our

[12]O'Reilly to Stanislas and O'Reilly to De Mézières, January 17, 1770, AGI, PC, leg. 188-1; and Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana,* 180-82. For biographical and ancestral data on Athanase-Christophe-Fortunat Mauguet de Mézières that corrects and considerably extends the commonly used account by Bolton, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "(de) Mézières, Trichel, Grappe: A Study of Tri-Caste Lineages in the Old South," *The Genealogist,* 6 (1985): 3-84.

[13]Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana,* 181-82.

[14]Quoted in Brasseaux, "Moral Climate of French Louisiana," 41.

most sacred laws is religion."[15] But even before the articulation of Miró's "Bando," the Spanish Capuchins applied those precepts—oblivious to the cultural chasm they first needed to bridge: Their flock was Gallic, not Iberian; and the Franco-American concept of *laissez-faire* most definitely embraced religion.

Considering the notoriously rocky shoals upon which religion had long foundered along the upper Red River, Cirilo de Barcelona could not have dispatched a less fitting captain to steer the frontier's wavering souls onto a course of piety. Quintanilla—who, throughout his career at Natchitoches and elsewhere, lacked the ability to be flexible when discretion demanded it[16]—was to play at Natchitoches the proverbial role of Daniel in the lions' den.

Extant evidence is deceptively quiet about the first two years of Quintanilla's regime. The first hint of troubled undercurrents is the sudden cessation of sacramental entries in June 1777. In a record dated some seven weeks later, the missing padre appears at New Orleans, where he apparently had gone to win backing for his planned reforms. In mid-July, Gov. Bernardo de Gálvez addressed the following directive to the Natchitoches commandant:

> In view of the lack caused in that post by the absence of Father Fray Luis de Quintanilla, . . . he is now returning thither. . . . This father appears to me to be adorned with all the virtues suitable to his estate and the Holy Religion, and fitted to teach the faith in pueblos where it is being lost. . . . I therefore recom-

[15]Burson, *Stewardship of Miro,* 210.

[16]Quintanilla's lack of political discretion would later earn him the chastisement of his own Spanish superiors. Baudier recounts how, at the Cathedral of St. Louis in the 1790s, Quintanilla declined to perform a certain obeisance before Gov. Luis Francisco Héctor de Carondelet during mass—one that the nobleman felt was his due, while Quintanilla deemed it improper and "not according to the rubrics." The piqued Carondelet reported the incident to the bishop at Havana, who promptly dispatched a warning to Quintanilla against "scandal and obstinacy." See Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana,* 226. Extant diocesan papers reveal even more such incidences, as in 1798 when he thwarted burial plans for Brigadier Diego Lazaga. Gov. Manuel Luis Gayoso de Lemos petitioned Quintanilla's superiors to "repair the scandal so that it will not occur and, in the meanwhile, [see] that Father Luis [is] restricted in his ministry so that his misdirected zeal does not cause similar incidents." Bishop Luis Peñalver y Cárdeñas responded with a technical defense of Quintanilla's position but concluded with an admonition to the priest that "prudence should regulate action." See Proceedings about the Burial of Diego Lazaga, June 4-19, 1798, Reel 1, *Records of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas,* 12 reels (Notre Dame, 1967).

> mend that you treat him well and protect him as far as you can in order that he may remain willingly in that district.[17]

Protecting the pertinacious padre from his own flock was a responsibility the frontier commandant could have done without. Subduing the Osages who threatened colonial security, finding outlets for local crops to boost a struggling plantation economy, securing a teacher to educate the frontier youth, and maintaining adequate medical care amid the worst epidemic in post history were far more pressing concerns to De Mézières than the litany of moral transgressions Quintanilla demanded that he prosecute.[18] The response of the beleaguered commandant to the governor's directive was to stall the cleric when he could not ignore his demands and to bluff when his stalls were challenged. "Protecting" Quintanilla was an impossibility, because the prelate's worst enemy was his own zealous conviction that "moral right"—as *he* interpreted it—was his armor, his shield, and the scepter before which all mortal knees should bow.

Supremely confident that his mid-1777 journey to New Orleans had secured both gubernatorial and ecclesiastical support for his crusade, Quintanilla launched his reforms. The number of mandatory holy days was increased to the point that his parishioners packed up and left—relocating in posts where more-understanding pastors permitted flocks to spend fewer days on their knees and more days in pursuit of preferred activities. To stanch that exodus, worried officials at Natchitoches beseeched the governor to order their "subjects" to return, pointing out that a strong frontier outpost was vital to the safety of Louisiana's interior.[19] Church taxes were increased "arbitrarily," and irate parishioners gained relief only when De Mézières appealed to Quin-

[17]Bolton, *Athanase de Mézières,* 2:134-35.

[18]De Mézières's correspondence of the period, for example, chronicled his difficulties with the Osages who "do not stop their rapine, assassination, and outlandish barbarity even with us." He faced his first competition from Anglo-American intruders, who hoped to lure away both the trade and the allegiance of mid-America's Indians, and he pleaded unsuccessfully with the governor for a schoolmaster to educate the children who were growing up unlettered on that frontier—all chronicled in Bolton, *Athanase de Mézières,* 2:130-31, 138-39, 142-43. Meanwhile, local burial records graphically attest the decimation of the post by a plague that also claimed De Mézières's wife, son, and daughter and several of his slaves; see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803,* nos. 1144-1225.

[19]AGI, PC, leg. 195, contains a flurry of letters from January to August 1782, particularly, between Étienne de Nuisement de Vaugine and officials at the capital relative to the continuing problem of out-migration.

tanilla's superiors. Noting the particular complaint that Padre Luis's assessment on the burial of slaves was "exorbitant and unjust," Fray Cirilo ordered him to conform exactly to the approved tariffs without exceeding it for either blacks or whites.[20]

Undaunted by his chastisement, the prelate generated a litany of other complaints—some against him and some by him. With "temerity," a parishioner alleged, Quintanilla "meddled" in family squabbles and "appropriated" the estates of intestate citizens whose heirs were in no position to oppose him. He stood accused of "bringing scandal upon his robe" by lodging his assistant, Hermano Casiano de Casanave, in the unchaperoned home of a widow. Then with more bravura than discretion, he had "attacked the honor" of one of the post's most venerable matrons: Marie des Neiges de St. Denis de Soto[21]—none other than the daughter of the post's revered founder and also sister-in-law of De Mézières. Here, Quintanilla met a foe as intransigent as himself.

[20]Not surprisingly, the tax complaint was first raised by a parishioner whom Quintanilla had publicly chastised. An examination of extant burial registers confirms that there had been an acute decline in slave burials, but that drop paralleled a similarly steep reduction in white and free-nonwhite burials as the epidemic waned. Of the six slaves buried at Natchitoches in the previous seven months (a period that saw seven white and one free-nonwhite burials), all but one of the slaves belonged to the influential Buard-Lambre-Prudhomme clan. For the complaints, see Luis de Quintanilla to "Lieutenant Governor and Commandant at Natchitoches," October 23, 1777; Response of Pierre Metoyer to Athanase de Mézières, October 27, 1777; Order of De Mézières, October 27, 1777; Luis de Quintanilla to Dn. Atanasio de Mézières, June 20, 1778; and Response of Marie de St. Denis to Monsieur des Mézières, June 26, 1778; all in *Rex v. de Soto,* doc. 1227, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches. Also De Mézières to Cirilo de Barcelona, October 11, 1778, together with the response of Fray Cirilo to "Reverend Father, Curate of Natchitoches," October 13, 1778, Roll 1, *Records of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas.*

[21]Madame de Soto was the wife of the former Spanish official, Antonio Emanuel de Soto y Bermúdes. De Soto had absconded from the nearby Texas capital (Los Adaes, near present Robeline, Louisiana) in the 1750s, only a few steps ahead of prosecution, and secured French protection by marrying the sister of his partner in illicit trade, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, *fils.* When the Spanish took control of Louisiana in the 1760s, they ordered De Soto's arrest and incarceration in Mexico City. In his ten-year absence, his wife ramrodded the interests of their household with iron resolve that few contemporaries dared to breach. For De Soto's legal problems, see numerous documents on reels 9 and 10 of *Béxar Archives,* 172 reels (Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin, 1967-71). For biographies of this controversial couple, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Marie des Neiges Juchereau de St-Denis," and "Antonio Emanuel de Soto y Bermudes," in Glenn R. Conrad, ed., *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography,* 2 vols. (New Orleans, 1988), 1:449-50; 2:755-56. One other published account, unfortunately, laces fact with romance and speculation the documents do not support; see Catherine Vines Davis, "Marie des Neiges de St. Denis Desoto: Mother of DeSoto Parish," *Louisiana History,* 35 (1994): 350-54.

Quintanilla himself was to blame for the extent to which his flock defied him, according to the bill of complaint by which Mme. de Soto attempted to usurp his moral superiority. His "tedious and disagreeable" sermons—harangues of two to three hours in length, delivered in an "atrocious rendition of French idioms"—and the "violent, scandalous, and unpleasant" nature of his sermons were said to drive even that good lady away.[22] It would behoove him, in her opinion, to follow the advice of St. Paul and make his "sermons brief and to the point."[23] Equally offensive were his "ambitious encroachment upon civil power" and the "despotism with which he exercised rights that did not belong to him." Padre Luis, in this parishioner's view, was clearly in disobedience of Jesus Christ himself, who had left to him the mandate: *Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.*[24]

A closer study of Quintanilla's activities suggests that he was not just unwilling to "render unto Caesar," but also that he was unwilling to render unto the St. Denis faction, which had long controlled the Louisiana frontier with no small degree of despotism. Indeed, the major family squabble in which Quintanilla intervened and the principal estate whose disposition he attempted to direct involved Mme. de Soto and her brother. Yet his motives, at least in that particular case, were unselfish.[25] Louis Juchereau

[22]Mme. de Soto's self-characterization of piety wilts a bit when parish records are examined. Two years before her marriage (and in a period when premarital pregnancy accounted for just 2.4 percent of all free births at the post), the sixteen-year-old Marie bore a child whose father escaped identification in all known records. For the baptism, see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803,* no. 332; for the illegitimacy statistics, see Mills, "Family and Social Patterns," 97 (table 10).

[23]True to character, Quintanilla took no heed of Mme. de Soto's suggestions for improving his homilies. A decade and a half later, his colleague Joachim de Portillo cited him as a supreme example of problems created by cultural differences between the French populace and Spanish pastors. Among other points, Padre Portillo argued that proper pronunciation was "important, as . . . shown by the ridicule excited in Lent by the sermons of Father Luis de Quintanilla." See Portillo to Estevan de Quinoñes, October 20, 1792, roll 1, *Records of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas.*

[24]Response of Marie de St. Denis to Commandant, *Rex v. de Soto.*

[25]This one case was not the only succession in whose settlement he "meddled." In fact, the extensive tentacles of the St. Denis clan at Natchitoches made it difficult for Quintanilla to avoid crossing their paths. For example, another clash with Mme. de Soto occurred in the wake of the November 1777 death of Marie-Françoise-Renée Le Boeuf (Mme. Joseph-Michel Gutiérrez), when Quintanilla sought to "properly direct" the disposition of her meager belongings. While the young matron's social status hints of no St. Denis connection, her grandmother had been the illegitimate half-Indian daughter of Mme. de Soto's father. Post re-

de St. Denis, *fils,* in late life, had wed a half-Indian widow who bore him no children.[26] Concerned about his health and her future, St. Denis had asked the commandant to pen for him a last will and testament, manumitting certain slaves and leaving his widow the usufruct of the rest of his property. De Mézières thrice refused—knowing that if St. Denis died intestate, the property would revert to his siblings (of whom Mme. de Soto was one) and the heirs of his deceased siblings (including De Mézières's first-born child).[27] On his deathbed, then, St. Denis had turned to Quintanilla, beseeching the priest to see that his widow was supported.[28]

The priest kept that trust and, in the process, created endless difficulties for the widow's sanguinary in-laws. According to Quintanilla's defense, providing the Widow St. Denis with some means of support and labor was the reason he sent his unmarried assistant to live under her roof; and if he were out of bounds, he

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cords reveal no interaction between the legitimate and illegitimate branches of this family, until Mme. de Soto chose to adopt the interests of her unacknowledged kin against Quintanilla's "interference." For the Gutiérrez complaints and succession proceedings, see Response of Marie de St. Denis, *Rex v. de Soto;* and Succession of Marie-Renée, Wife of Martín Gutiérrez, docs. 1277, 1324, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches. For Mme. Gutiérrez's death in the plague of 1777, see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803,* no. 1157. For her St. Denis connection, see Gary B. Mills and Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Louise Marguerite: St. Denis' *Other* Daughter," *Southern Studies,* 16 (1977): 321-28.

[26]On October 21, 1764, St. Denis, Jr., had married Louise-Marguerite Derbanne, widow of Étienne Barbier and daughter of the late official François Derbanne by the Christianized Chitimicha, Jeanne de la Grande Terre. The St. Denis-Derbanne exchange of vows was witnessed by Père Valentin, while he pastored the mission St. Louis des Rapides. According to certification offered in St. Denis's succession, the Rapides register had been lost. See "Intestate Succession of Mr. de St. Denis," in Laura L. Porteous, trans., "Index to Spanish Judicial Records of Louisiana," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly,* 13 (1930): 180.

[27]On April 18, 1746, De Mézières had wed Marie-Petronille-Félicité de St. Denis. Their brief union resulted in the birth of one daughter in September 1746, Elisabeth-Marie-Félicité-Nepomucene Mauguet de Mézières. See Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803,* nos. 172 and 347; and Mills, "(de) Mézières, Trichel, Grappe," 34-36.

[28]Apparently it was at Quintanilla's insistence that De Mézières permitted the filing of a September 7, 1776, document he labeled "Model of a Testament Demanded by Mr. and Mde. de St. Denis" and indexed as "M. and M^{de} St. Denis' Attempt to Make a Mutual Will." However, the "model" presented only the wife's donation *inter vivos* to her husband; the corresponding document by Sieur St. Denis apparently was kept off the record by De Mézières. The commandant's determination not to legalize the document is further evident from the fact that it was not drawn by any notary. Rather, it was merely witnessed by two local merchants. See doc. 1107, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches.

had no regrets. It was also the need of such widows, who had no means of generating income without damaging their health or souls, that had prompted his increased taxes upon planters whose slave property made them wealthy. And it was Mme. de Soto—not the parish curé, he retorted—who needed "to grasp the wisdom of speaking in one's own place."[29]

Quintanilla was less understanding of other situations in which unmarried persons of opposite sexes shared unsupervised quarters. Although circumstances support the logic of his reasoning, his flock did not. Yet even his incessant squabbles with the St. Denis–De Mézières faction did not keep Quintanilla from expecting the commandant's full cooperation in ridding the post of these other moral scandals. Babet Varangue, for example, was branded a woman of "bad life" and a public prostitute when Quintanilla protested her living in the house of a bachelor shopkeeper.[30] Babet's "benefactor," Jean Jacques David, quickly rose to the defense of her honor and his own. Invoking his love for God and his "paternal" regard for the fatherless waif, he labeled Quintanilla's charges "false, odious, and at the same time absurd." Babet's brother also felt compelled to speak on her behalf, admitting that his sister may have "failed at her state of maidenhood" (an acknowledgment he could hardly have avoided, given that she had already borne three illegitimate children); but whatever shortcomings she possessed, he believed, were due only to her being "swept away" and not from any "delight in libertinage or for the financial rewards of prostitution."[31]

[29]Luis de Quintanilla to Atanasio de Mézières, *Rex v. de Soto;* "Intestate Succession of Mr. de St. Denis," 177-93.

[30]This charge by Quintanilla represents the only known record for colonial Natchitoches of any female legally accused of prostitution. See *Rex v. Babet Varangue et al.,* doc. 1308, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches. Marie Barbe Josèphe "Babet" Castel *dite* Varangue was baptized June 21, 1755, at New Orleans as the natural daughter of Bernard Marsant and Cécile Christophe, widow of Jean Castel. Babet's Natchitoches surname is that of her subsequent stepfather, Joseph Sarde *dit* Barranco (var. Barrangue and Varangue). For the baptism, see Register 3 [St. Louis Cathedral Baptisms, 1753-1759]: no. 444, Archdiocese of New Orleans. The record seems not to appear in the unindexed *Archdiocese of New Orleans Sacramental Records,* vol. 2, *1751-1771* (New Orleans, 1988), which includes only "selected" entries, as set forth in the preface to the series; however, a photocopy was provided to the present writer some years ago by the late archivist of the archdiocese, Alice Forsythe. For the Christophe-Barranco marriage, see Marriage Book 1:44a-2, Chancery Office, Archdiocese of Mobile.

[31]Babet's first child had been born a month before the 1773 census of Rapides, see AGI, PC, leg. 178-2. In 1777, she bore twins; see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803,* nos. 1704-1705, where their father is said to be "unknown." Even before

The busy commandant, just back from an exhausting sweep through Texas in search of hostile Indians,[32] obviously had concerns more serious to him than who was sharing whose roof or bed. When the young lady's brother joined in Quintanilla's call for an open trial, however, De Mézières had no choice but to schedule a hearing and summon witnesses. Extant records do not reflect the verdict, but the accused girl shortly thereafter left the post and returned to her mother at Rapides.[33]

The Reverend Father's disappointment with the moral fabric of his parishioners and the truth of Mme. de Soto's assessment of his tedious homilies are both obvious in another set of Quintanilla's charges. De Mézières was absent in October 1778 when the outraged priest tried to take advantage of the temporary commandant by not only filing a complaint, but also assuming a guilty verdict and setting forth the sentence. According to Quintanilla's brief, Dr. Jean-Charles Rouelle "did scandalize the assembly of faithful, on Sunday last, in the church itself, during the Holy Mass, by having shown to those around him some lewd, obscene, very abominable, and horrible prints which one can only view as subject matter for lust." Fit punishment, Quintanilla declared, was a fine of at least ten piasters for the benefit of the church and imprisonment for at least eight days.[34] While extant records again leave the outcome to speculation, the fact that this case is labeled *Luis de Quintanilla v. Dr. Rouelle* rather than *Rex v. Dr. Rouelle* suggests that even the interim commandant did not feel civil law needed to concern itself with such trifles as French

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these births, Babet had been arrested and sent to New Orleans to answer for lewd behavior when, in the winter of 1771-72, she ran off with Antoine Riche on a hunting trip; see Commandant Étienne Marafret Layssard to [Governor?], March 29, 1772, AGI, PC, leg. 188C; copy provided by James Michael Hilton.

[32]De Mézières's reports of this mission are translated in Bolton, *Athanase de Mézières,* 2:187-216.

[33]Babet thereafter became the wife of the Apalache Indian settler, Salomon; see 1788 census of Rapides, AGI, PC, leg. 201. As *Madame Babet,* she was memorialized in Rapides lore as one of the region's Gypsy "founders." A brief account of her unconventional family appears in Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Cécile Marguerite Christophe," *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography: Ten Year Supplement, 1988-1998,* Carl A. Brasseaux and James D. Wilson Jr., eds. (Lafayette, 1999), 43-44. See also testimony of Bret Lacour and others in Private Land Claim 4459 (Representatives of Jean Baptiste Vallery), Record Group 49, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[34]*Luis de Quintanilla v. Dr. Rouelle,* October 26, 1778, doc. 1343, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches.

postcards. Realistically, it is unlikely anyone at the post would have prosecuted its one licensed physician, a point to which Quintanilla's rabid zeal obviously blinded him. Amid the virulent epidemic that had wracked the frontier for a year and a half, Rouelle had voluntarily come up from New Orleans to tend the ill.[35]

Quintanilla's moral crusade was not so easily ignored by frontier officials in one other regard—the issue of illicit miscegenation. De Mézières himself had given at least lip service to the problem early in his administration. In fact, as his first act of office, he issued a *code noir* with the stated intent of curbing not only theft and marronage, but also the "scandalous libertinage" of black women and those whites who were "base enough to addict themselves to their shameless prostitutions."[36] Yet in the seven years that had elapsed since that edict, the post had not seen the prosecution of anyone on such a charge, while the complexion of the infants brought to the baptismal font clearly showed that the problem was epidemic.

Quintanilla's stormy trip to New Orleans in 1777—a move clearly calculated to rally support for his crusade—seems to have centered principally upon this issue. Soon after his return, he informed De Mézières that he had the explicit mandate of the bishop himself: *illicit concubinages must end.* Specifically, he charged, Mme. de Soto's Negro Coincoin was a public concubine, whose sins the lady brazenly supported. She had rented her slave to the bachelor merchant, Claude-Thomas-Pierre Metoyer, for some years and the woman lived in his home unchaperoned—during which time she had borne "five or six mulattoes."[37]

[35]Adolph Baum and Arthur C. Troncaro, trans., *Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo; Book No. 1, from August 18, 1769, to August 27, 1779* (New Orleans: 1934), 284. Two surgeons (a lesser rank than Rouelle's status as "medical doctor") did reside at Natchitoches during this period; but the first of them, the homegrown, frontier-trained Jean-Baptiste Prudhomme, had been denied a license by the more-stringent Spanish regime a decade earlier; and the second, Francisco la Casa, had been barred from practice by De Mézières just that summer for "troubling" Rouelle in the conduct of the latter's practice and "creating prejudice against the public good." La Casa's practice was restored by the Cabildo within a month, but only after he paid the fine it imposed and then consented to practice under Rouelle's supervision. See Rouelle to De Mézières, and order of De Mézières, both dated August 19, 1778, doc. 1318, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches; and *Records and Deliberations of the Cabildo,* 1:291.

[36]Doc. 652, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches.

[37]This complaint by Quintanilla was the opening salvo in the protracted case, *Rex v. de Soto.* Metoyer was born March 12, 1742, at La Rochelle, as son of the merchant Nicolas-François Metoyer; he emigrated to Louisiana about 1766; and

Without equivocation, Quintanilla demanded that the commandant "castigate [Coincoin] according to the law" (De Mézières's own edict of 1768), that he order Metoyer to put the woman out of his home, and that he command Mme. de Soto to look after the moral welfare of those whom God had entrusted to her. Otherwise, she should face charges herself. Quintanilla confidently signed his bill of complaint as "Fr. Luis de Quintanilla, who is Supreme," but the ensuing battle clearly proved that the church did not hold supremacy over the state in Louisiana. By the end of the protracted litigation, Metoyer had freed Coincoin so that Quintanilla could no longer pressure authorities to seize and sell her, Mme. de Soto had joined the exodus from Natchitoches to a more-agreeable post downriver, and De Mézières had left for Texas to assume its governorship. Meanwhile, the reverend father had sarcastically adopted a new signature: "Your attentive servant and chaplain, Fr. Luis de Quintanilla, humble Capuchin."[38]

Quintanilla's pretense of humility was shortlived. His tenure continued to be rocked by controversy, and a retrospective view of colonial Natchitoches starkly etches his presence there. During

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his first offspring by the Negro slave Marie-Thérèse *dite* Coincoin (a set of twins) were born in January 1768. Metoyer was also a nephew and the heir of a continental cleric, Père Jorge Metoyer—a fact that seemed to cause him much moral conflict of his own. For Metoyer's origin, see 1802 Will of Metoyer, Cammie Henry Collection, Northwestern State University Archives, and Baptismal Registers of Paroisse de Notre-Dame de la Rochelle, Archives Départementales de Charente-Maritime, La Rochelle. Metoyer's verbal circumlocutions about his relationship with Coincoin, amid his efforts to protect her and their children's status and property, have been found in two documents: his 1782 unprobated will that he discreetly filed while on a business trip to New Orleans (Testament of Claude-Thomas-Pierre Metoyer, February 26, 1783, Acts of Leonardo Mazange, 7:188-91, New Orleans Notarial Archives, Civil Courts Building, New Orleans); and his 1788 marriage contract with Marie-Thérèze Buard, which was recorded in the index to Colonial Archives, Natchitoches, as doc. 2121 but has been missing for at least most of the twentieth century (the present writer holds a photocopy of the couple's personal copy, penned by notary Louis de Blanc and labeled "Copie du Contrat de Mariage Entre Metoyer et Thérèz Buard Passé le 10 October 1788," which has been preserved by family members). Also see Gary B. Mills, *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color* (Baton Rouge, 1976) for an extensive study of Metoyer and Coincoin's relationship and offspring; and Gary B. Mills, "The Ancestry of Sieur Nicolas Augustin Metoyer, f.m.c., Patriarch of Isle Brevelle," *Natchitoches Genealogist,* 8 (1984): 27-31, for additional evidence relating to the Metoyer-Coincoin affair.

[38]Response of Quintanilla, *Rex v. De Soto*. Coincoin's manumission occurred by a private document that was not filed at Natchitoches but was acknowledged in Metoyer's previously cited, unprobated will of 1783. See also *Quintanilla v. Bouet Lafitte,* doc. 1578, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches.

his regime almost every facet of frontier life, death excluded, displayed a dramatic reversal of previous patterns. Even without direct evidence to document his contributory influence, the connections seem obvious—as the following examples illustrate.

Church rules were rigidly enforced. In the decade before Quintanilla's arrival, a lax French priest had performed nearly 70 percent of parish marriages after the announcement of just one ban. Under Quintanilla, the required three bans preceded forty-six of the post's forty-eight marriages. Neither pregnancy nor prominence persuaded him to ease that restriction, except when the two factors happened to be combined. Never again, after Quintanilla's departure, would ban regulations be so rigidly enforced. Throughout the remainder of the century, almost half the marriages would be preceded by only one or, at most, two of the required announcements.[39]

Illegitimacies declined noticeably. In the decade prior to Quintanilla's arrival, the illegitimacy rate among white infants topped 7 percent. During his tenure, it dropped to nearly 5 percent; and in the decade that followed his departure—one that coincided with the sexual maturation of females who had experienced his tutelage from infancy—the rate plummeted to less than 2.5 percent.[40] Not surprisingly, it climbed thereafter, as a new generation of girls sprouted under the less watchful eye of a French priest who was more of a social *confrère* than a spiritual *père*.[41] (See Figure 1.)

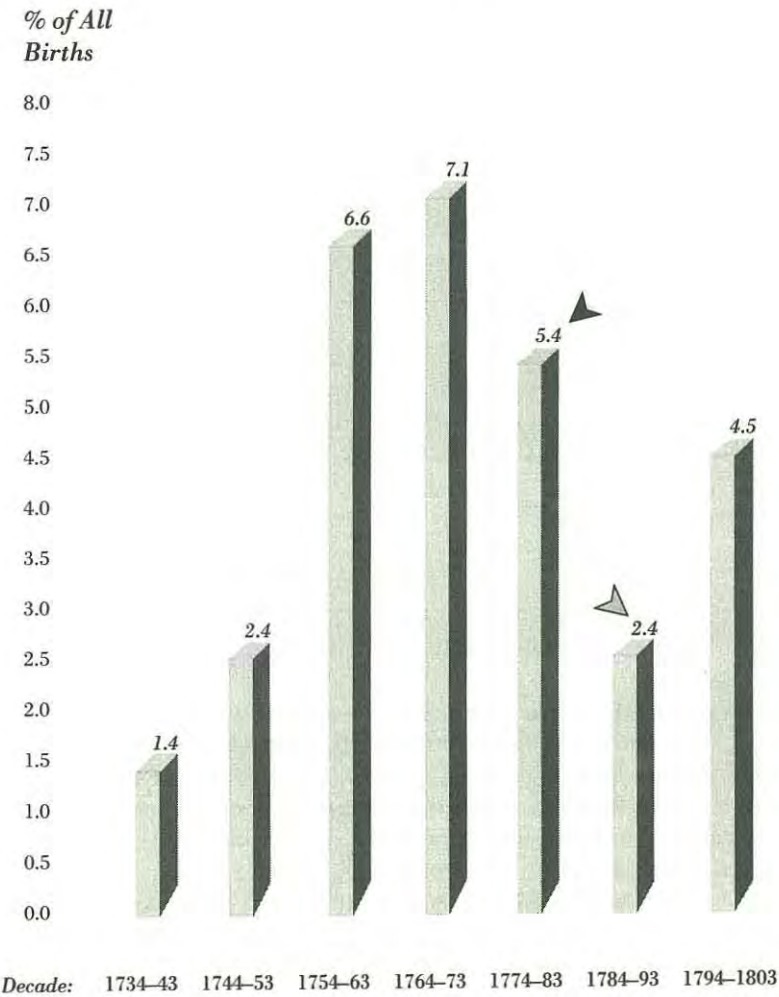
Marital patterns veered wildly from the norm. The increased dole to the needy, of which prominent locals had complained so bitterly, seems to have been generously dispensed by Quintanilla to widows with children. The remarriage rate of this cohort in the Quintanilla years dropped drastically, as fewer widows felt an economic pressure for male support. As shown in Figure 2, in the decade preceding Quintanilla roughly 91 percent of all widows had remarried. With his increase in financial aid, that figure slid to an all-time low of 50 percent. Again, in the decade after his departure, the numbers escalated toward the previous high.

[39]Mills, "Family and Social Patterns . . . Quantitative Analysis," 128-29.

[40]Ibid., 86-109, offers a much more extensive analysis of this point.

[41]Two temporary replacements followed Quintanilla at Natchitoches in 1784 and 1785; but the congregation would enjoy a decade-long respite from religious constraints under its beloved, pro-Gallic replacement, Jean Delvaux. For more on Delvaux's lax but ultimately tumultuous tenure at Natchitoches, see Din, "Father Jean Delvaux and the Natchitoches Revolt of 1795."

Figure 1
White Premarital Pregnancies



Comment: The 30-year low that occurred during Quintanilla's tenure continued its freefall through the next decade, which saw the sexual maturation of girls he had catechized from their infancy.

Figure 2
Remarriages by White Widows

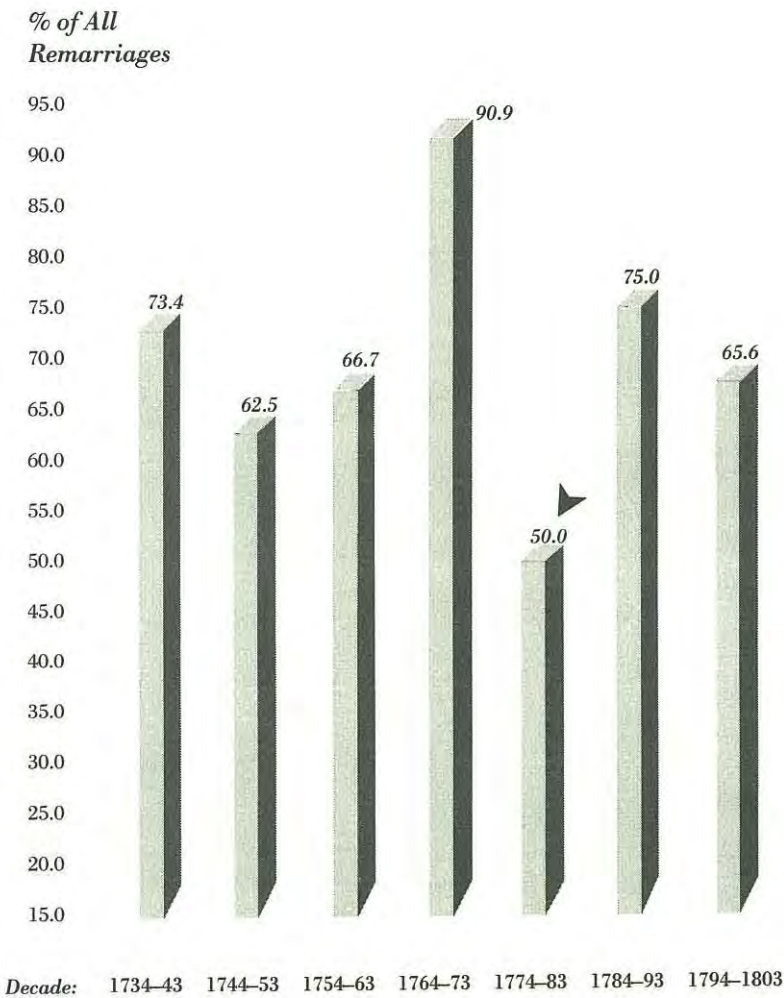
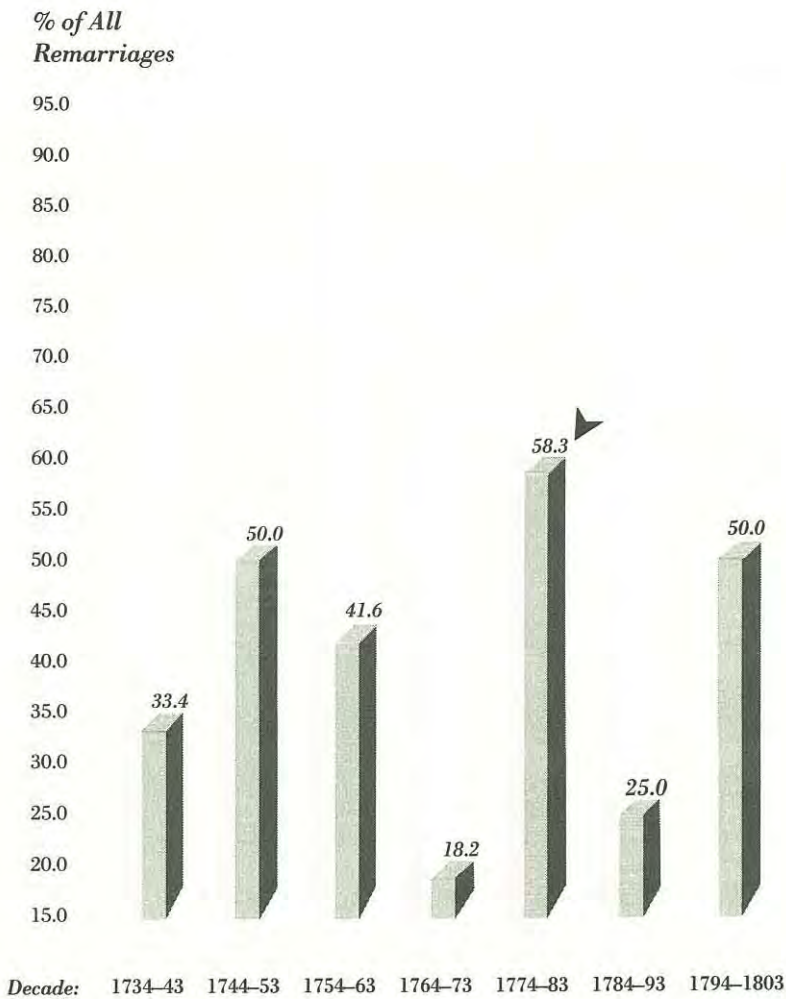


Figure 3
Remarriages by White Widowers



Conversely, the padre's open war against interracial, illicit sex may well be responsible for a contrasting *rise* in the number of *widowers* who took new wives. (See Figure 3.) In the decade prior to Quintanilla's arrival, fewer than 20 percent of remarriages at the post had involved a widower. Under Quintanilla, unions that were second or subsequent marriages for one spouse or the other were more likely (nearly 60 percent of the time) to be a remarriage of the man than the woman.[42]

Black marriages "soared," but miscegenation defied control. Ironically—or was it intentionally?—Quintanilla left no records to document how effective his measures were in reducing white-male liaisons with Negro females. Forsaking the practice of most pastors before and after him, he rarely specified skin colors for children born to Negro women during his regime. Their offspring were labeled *natural* or *legitimate,* and the mother's race was cited; but if any Negro mother bore a child of lighter hue, Quintanilla made it difficult for posterity to document it through his records.[43] His exhortations do show results when slave marital figures are examined. Of the mere ten slave unions that occurred at Natchitoches during the Spanish regime, nine are attributable to Quintanilla. (See Figure 4.) After his departure, no more unions of slaves would be legalized until the 1840s, when another foreign-born priest would commit a brief flurry of similar offenses against the autonomy of Natchitoches slaveowners.[44]

[42]Mills, "Family and Social Patterns . . . Quantitative Analysis," 145-48.

[43]Auxiliary civil records and later church records on those baptized by Quintanilla clearly attest that many of them were of lighter hue than their mothers.

[44]The one slave marriage of the Spanish regime that cannot be credited to Quintanilla was that of Athanase and Louise, slaves of St. Denis, Jr., who wed in a ceremony performed in St. Denis's private chapel by Père Valentine in 1765. For more on the paucity of slave marriages at Natchitoches, see Elizabeth Shown Mills and Gary B. Mills, "Missionaries Compromised: Early Evangelization of Slaves and Free People of Color in North Louisiana," *Cross, Crozier, and Crucible: A Volume Celebrating the Bicentennial of a Catholic Diocese in Louisiana* (Lafayette, 1993), 40-41. Gilbert C. Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803* (College Station, Tex., 1999), 55-57, 127-29, reinforces this point (the dearth of slave marriages) with statistics from New Orleans and several anecdotes—one of which is attributed to Natchitoches. In this puzzling account of a late-1772 incident, one Vicente (identified as the slave of "M. Alain") and María Francisca (identified as the slave of "M. Metole") are said to have eloped to New Orleans because they were not allowed to marry at the Natchitoches post, even after seventeen years of concubinage. According to Din, Alain's son pursued them to New Orleans and took them back to Natchitoches, unwed; and so, De Mézières was instructed to order "Father Hirene" to marry them. However, there was no "Alain" residing at Natchitoches in that

Female activities became more home- and child-centered. Sample texts of the sermons that shocked Quintanilla's parishioners do not exist; but if the radically altered habits of his flock can be considered a reflection of his teachings, then it appears that he also exhorted women on their proper place in life. "Public assemblies of men" were obviously not among appropriate places, in the estimation of both Quintanilla and colonial law.[45] Female participation in notarial activities dropped significantly—only to soar skyward when he left, as the women of the post filed a backlog of actions.[46] (See Figure 5.) Child-spacing within individual families, which had held steady at an average 24.5 to 25.5 months in every decade of the post's history, shrunk to an average 21.7 months between births in the Quintanilla decade—but then returned to its normal weathermark for the rest of the colonial period. (See Figure 6.)

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period or for decades before or after; and no "M. Metole" can be identified there, either. The merchant *Metoyer's* surname was sometimes written *Metoie* (which, conceivably, could be misread as *Metole*), but he owned no slave until 1776 and owned no female slave named Marie Françoise until 1789.

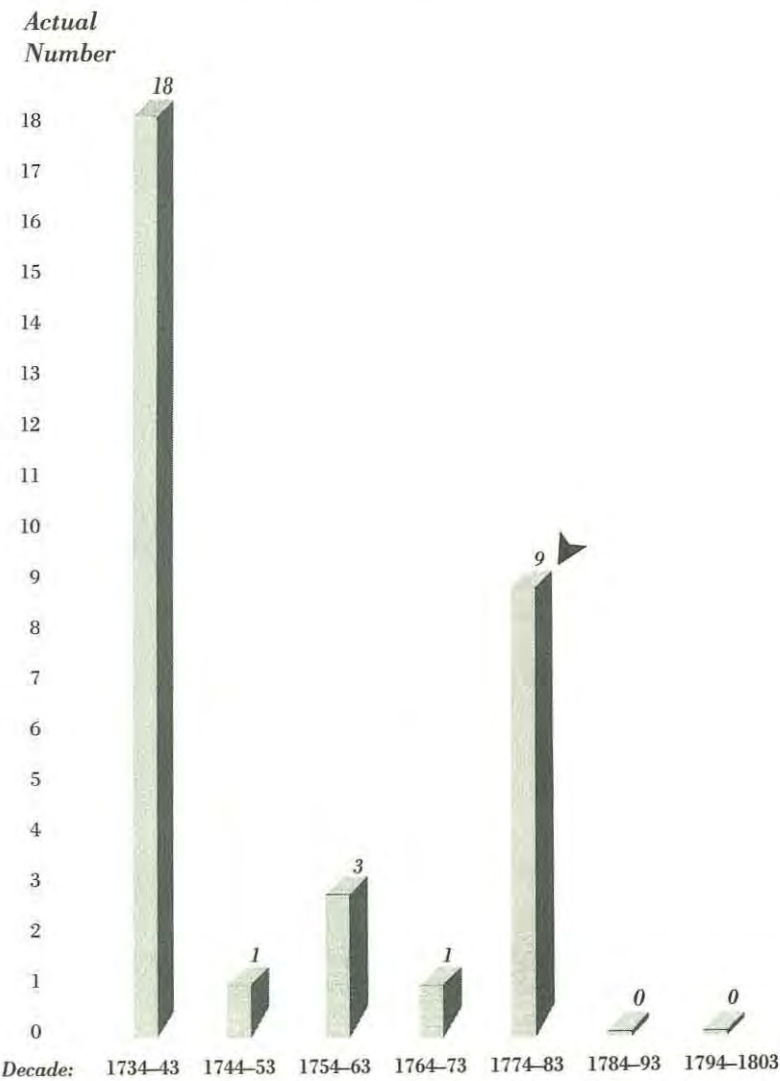
The cited priest offers the best clue to placement of the incident. Din suggests that "Father Hirene" might be Père Stanislas, the priest who served Natchitoches in 1772. A more probable candidate for "Father Hirene" would be the Capuchin Father Irenée (var. Iranaeus); during 1770-74 and in various years before that, Irenée served at Pointe Coupée, where there were slaveowners named Allain and Methode. See Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana,* 159, 164, 174, 180, 183, and 190 (especially); also Winston De Ville, *Pointe Coupée Documents, 1762-1803: A Calendar of Civil Records for the Province of Louisiana* (Ville Platte, La., 1997), numerous entries.

[45]For example, Partida 3, Title 6, Law 3 holds, "It is not decent and becoming, that a woman should . . . mix and argue publicly with men." Laws 5 and 6 make provisions for women, who had causes to be prosecuted, to be represented by a male relative or have an *advocat* appointed for them. Partida 5, Title 12, Law 2 is even more explicit: "It is not becoming that women should be engaged in litigation . . . or go into public assemblies of men, where things take place, repugnant to the chastity and good morals which women ought to observe"; and Partida 6, Title 3, Law 2 forbade them to even witness wills. See L. Moreau Lislet and Henry Carleton, trans., *The Laws of Las Siete Partidas, Which Are Still in Force in the State of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1820), 1:131-33, 822, 964.

Much the same views existed during the French regime, as shown by Vaughan Baker, Amos Simpson, and Mathé Allain, *"Le Mari est Seigneur:* Marital Laws Governing Women in French Louisiana," in Edward F. Haas, ed., *Louisiana's Legal Heritage* (Pensacola, 1983), 7-17. However, Allain separately observes: "Once the legislation reached the American shores, enforcement depended on the settlers and the officials whose interests were often identical with those of the colony"; see Allain, "Slave Policies in French Louisiana," *Louisiana History*, 21 (1980): 137.

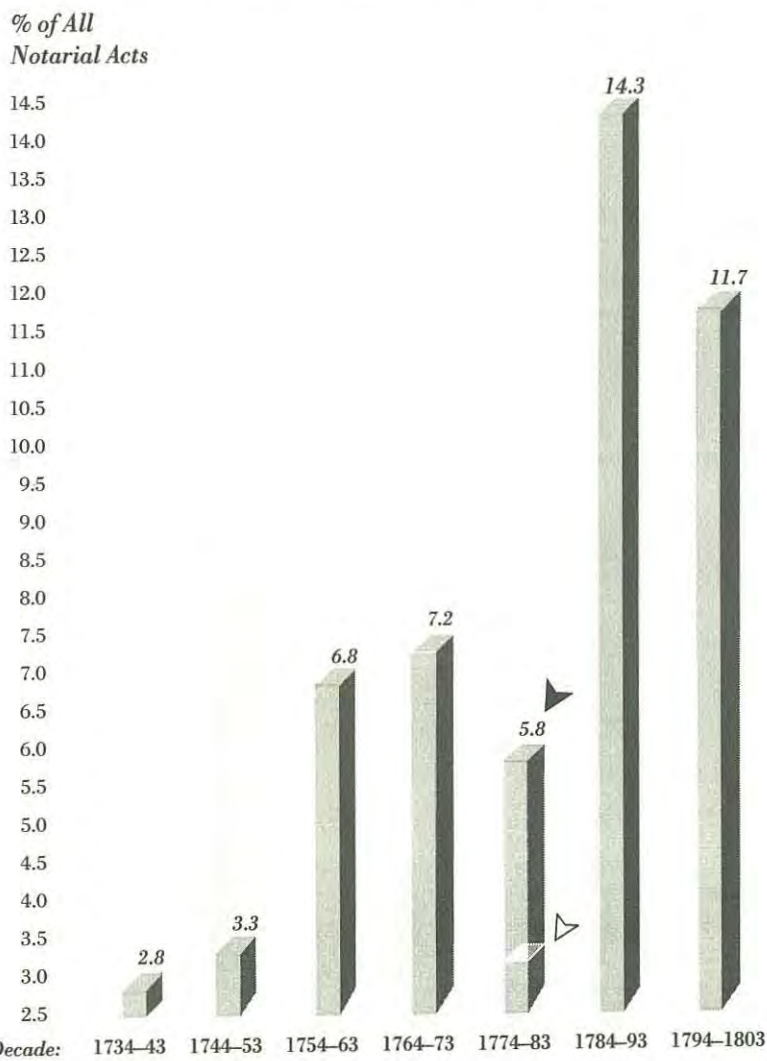
[46]Mills, "Family and Social Patterns . . . Quantitative Analysis," 66-67.

Figure 4
Black Slave Marriages



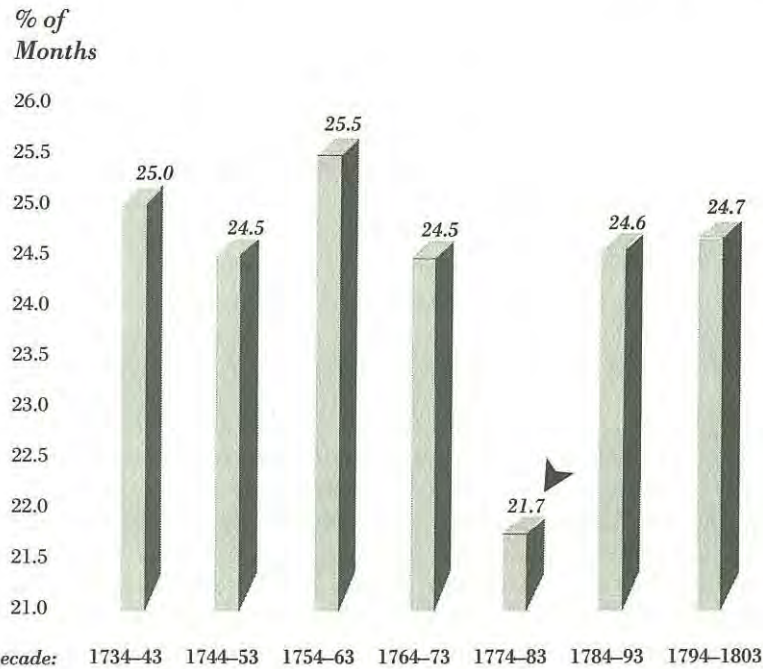
Comment: The drastic fall-off in marriages after 1743 coincides with the death of the post founder and commandant, St. Denis. The 5 slave marriages over the next 3 decades occurred in the households of his son, his 2 immediate successors in office, and 2 early settlers who were strong St. Denis supporters.

Figure 5
White Female Participation in Notarial Acts



Comment: When this figure excludes Mme. de Soto, who refused to live by Quintanillas's precepts, it plummets to 3.2%.

Figure 6
Median Intervals between Births to Fertile (White) Wives



All points considered, it is tempting to conclude that all the verses and the refrain of Quintanilla's "tedious homilies" were *duty, duty, duty*. Every soul, white and black, had a duty to follow the commandments. Every master had a duty to see that servants did so. Every Christian had a duty to attend the Lord's Supper every time the mass was said—and should welcome an increase in holy days of obligation as nourishment for the soul. Every person with worldly blessings had a duty to support those without. Every man in the secular world had a duty to marry, lest his lusts lead him astray. Every wife had a duty to supply her husband's physical needs, lest he be tempted to seek another bed; and she was obliged to bear the children God ordained, without sinful intervention.[47] Every woman had a duty to submit to

[47]On one hand, it might be posited that Quintanilla's expansion of the dole for widows with children, so they felt less compulsion to remarry, would subvert any injunction to "be fruitful and multiply." However, priests who were appropriately pious also lived by the tenet that celibacy was a greater virtue than marital chas-

the wisdom of men, who had, all men knew, been made in God's own image. Above all, secular law (and those who served it) had the duty to enforce the laws of God—as interpreted by His Annointed Shepherds.

The Natchitoches frontier, beyond all doubt, felt the impact of this missionary's zeal, but the foregoing graphs show just as clearly that the impact was but temporary. Moral precepts were enforced, but morality did not really change. The frontier inhabitants chafed under his restrictions, but most complied—that being less onerous than the alternatives. Left to their own inclinations, after Quintanilla's departure, they reverted to past ways.

Quintanilla himself left Natchitoches no wiser about the ways of the human heart and psyche or the delicate balance between religion and politics. For the next three years, he was kept under a watchful eye at New Orleans. Reassigned to Pointe Coupée in 1786, he was removed for the "ridicule excited by his sermons" and similar causes; meanwhile, a contemporary Pointe Coupée census (as does a Natchitoches notarial record) reveals that his view of justice and humanity included no aversion to slaveowning. As an assistant pastor at New Orleans throughout most of the 1790s, he did subsidiary service as a collector and auditor and as a chaplain to the Ursuline nuns. The Ursulines seemed satisfied with his service, but well-placed parishioners repeatedly charged him with disrespect. Curiously, when he filled a temporary post at St. Gabriel, a new commandant reported: "The people here are sad and cried at his departure because he was well loved." In October 1796, Quintanilla petitioned for relief from his own duties in Louisiana—pointing out that the crown required service abroad for only ten years, while he had been gone from his native Castile for twenty-five (twenty-four being spent in Louisiana). Bishop Luis Peñalver y Cárdeñas approved his request on condition that the vicar-general ratify it; but the latter declined, citing a shortage of priests. Quintanilla's last pay record notes his death on February 1, 1801, place unstated.[48]

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[48]Quintanilla's post-Natchitoches career has been pieced together from his pay records in AGI, PC, leg. 158B (abstracts provided to the present writer by the late Jack D. L. Holmes); from the 1786 census of Pointe Coupée and Fausse Rivière, AGI, PC, leg. 2361; from the letter of Martín Duralde to Carondelet, February 28, 1795, AGI, PC, leg. 128; from numerous 1795-98 entries in *Records of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas;* from Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana*, 198, 226, 234, 238; and from sacramental registers of the parishes where he served.

In retrospect, the seeds of change were planted in the children that Quintanilla baptized and catechized. Had he been replaced by pastors whose religious zeal reinforced his own, some permanent effect upon local mores might have been achieved; but too many counter-forces existed. The population was scattering itself too thinly by that time, using the distance between it and the post as an excuse for escaping the chafing regulations of both church and state.[49] The church itself was too short-staffed, and the personalities of its not-so-humble servants were too much in conflict. Civil administrators in outposts such as Natchitoches were too often French throughout the Spanish period and too prone to view the church as a competitive authority rather than a handmaiden with the common goals lauded by Miro's "Bando." Viewing this

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For Quintanilla's slave ownership at Natchitoches, see Luis (de) Quintanilla to Jean Jacques David, 1783 sale of slaves, doc. 1638, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches.

[49]Annual statistical reports of the parish from 1795 repeatedly lament the difficulties of catechizing children and otherwise administering to the frontier's rapidly dispersing congregation. Père Pierre Pavie, for example, wrote to his bishop in 1798: "I have the sadness of seeing that very few persons have satisfied their Easter Duty. It appears to me that the great distance of the inhabitants from the church contributes to this. It is for this reason that I have proposed to the residents of Isle Brevelle to build a small chapel where I can come and say mass several times each year, and where it can be celebrated with more appropriateness than on their plantations, and those settlers from Rivière aux Cannes would be able to come." For the 1795-1803 parish censuses and annual commentaries, see rolls 5, 7-10, *Records of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas.*

Père Pavie's tenure at Natchitoches introduces an ironic postscript to the Quintanilla saga. His brother Étienne had shared the bachelor dwelling of Metoyer during the time that Quintanilla had tried to drive Coincoin from their quarters; and the woman whom Étienne subsequently married became Metoyer's wife after Étienne died—making Metoyer the brother-in-law of Père Pavie by affinity. Under Pavie's tenure at Natchitoches, Metoyer became a warden of the church; and Pavie's selection of Isle Brevelle as the locus of a mission undoubtedly lay in the fact that the upper and more-thickly settled portion of the Isle (later called *the Côte Joyeuse*), was the site of the Pavie-Buard-Metoyer plantations. Even more ironically, the only known chapel to be consecrated on Isle Brevelle was built and donated for community use in 1829 by two sons of Metoyer and Coincoin. However, Quintanilla left Natchitoches before the Metoyer-Coincoin affair burned itself out; and he died before Metoyer committed himself to the service of the parish.

For Étienne Pavie's shared residence with Metoyer, see Declaration of Étienne Pavie, September 24, 1771, doc. 713, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches; for his and Metoyer's marriages to Marie-Thérèse Buard, see Mills, *Natchitoches, 1729-1803,* nos. 1052, 1552; for Metoyer's service as church warden, see doc. 3266, Colonial Archives, Natchitoches. For the 1829 dedication of the Chapel of St. Augustine on Isle Brevelle, "erected . . . on the plantation of Sieur Augustin Metoyer, through the care and generosity of the above-named Augustin Metoyer [and] Louis Metoyer, his brother," see Parish of St. François, Register 6:116.

problem from a Gallic perspective, James Pitot made a fair evaluation in his observations upon Louisiana: "Religion is perhaps the segment of the colony's administration over which Spain has had the least influence. . . . Priests . . . do not have the power to meddle in the conduct of citizens, but are obliged to allow religion to remain in the *relaxed state* that it was throughout the French Colonies."[50]

At Natchitoches, the citizenry often held the balance between church and state. Under Quintanilla's regime and under certain of his predecessors, the common goals and ideals held by citizens and their civil leaders constrained religious zeal, although neither the populace nor the state was powerful enough to disregard ecclesiastical mandates entirely. In the post-Quintanilla regime, this balance of power shifted at Natchitoches, a situation that also might well be attributed to Quintanilla. Men of influence, whom he had driven to obedience by shaking his rod and declaring "I am supreme" (in fractured French), enthusiastically embraced his French-born successor—a man who held their hands and called them "mes confrères," who danced and sang and partied all night in their homes, and who plotted with them to drive out Spain's local officials against whom they all nursed grudges.[51] In this respect, and only in this respect, Quintanilla's moral crusade had a pervasive hold upon Natchitoches for the remainder of the colonial era.

[50]James Pitot, *Observations on the Colony of Louisiana from 1796 to 1802,* Henry C. Pitot, trans. (Baton Rouge, 1979), 32-33.

[51]Din, "Father Jean Delvaux and the Natchitoches Revolt of 1795," argues convincingly that—despite the assumptions of Liljegren and other earlier writers—Natchitoches was in no danger of a Jacobin revolution. The political and social unrest that festered there (and oozed into adjacent Nacogdoches and Rapides) consisted of far more bravado, revelry, and threats than actual violence; Din presents the affair as an attempt by Delvaux to avoid being removed from Natchitoches. While the local records document other motivation on the part of the Natchitoches "rebels," there is no doubt that Delvaux played a central role in the agitation; and his participation in their sport and intrigues underscores his failure to serve his frontier flock as a spiritual shepherd.