

The French Natchez Settlement

According to the Memory of Dumont de Montigny

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Natchez settlement, founded in 1716, was one of the many settlements founded by the French in the Louisiana Colony. Fort Rosalie was built to protect the settlers and concessions from the dangers of the frontier. Despite the military presence, the Natchez Indians attacked the settlement and destroyed the most profitable agricultural venture in Louisiana. While this settlement has not been excavated, many first-hand accounts exist documenting events at the settlement. The account this paper is concerned with is the work of Dumont de Montigny, a lieutenant and engineer in the French Army.

Dumont spent his time in Louisiana creating plans and drawings of various French establishments, one of which being Fort Rosalie and the Natchez settlement. Upon his return to France, Dumont documented his experiences in Natchez in two forms, an epic poem and a prose memoir. Included in these works were detailed maps of Louisiana and specifically of the Natchez settlement. In addition he created two large maps of the Natchez settlement for professional purposes. Dumont's maps, along with his memoirs, can help reveal information about the architecture and layout of French Colonial Natchez which in turn can help to determine the function of the settlement as well as provide information on French architecture in Louisiana.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is broken down into five chapters. The remainder of this first chapter provides background information on Louisiana and on the Natchez settlement. This information is important to understand the context the Natchez settlement existed in. The second chapter provides biographical information on the mapmaker, Dumont, and supplies information about the four Dumont maps and their current locations. The third chapter describes typical French Colonial architecture, such as would have been present in Natchez. The fourth chapter contains the bulk of this paper. This chapter is the analysis of Dumont's four maps. The maps all show different versions of the colony but many patterns can be identified that shed light on what the French settlement at Natchez would have looked like. Included in this chapter are comparisons to architectural plans in order to better identify the structures. The fifth chapter concludes the paper and contains a brief synthesis and reconstruction of the settlement.

The Founding of the Louisiana Colony

Louisiana was the second French colony to be founded in the Americas, the first being New France. New France encompassed all of the French occupied area of present-day Canada but typically referred to the region surrounding the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. The colony was based on the trade in fur, primarily beaver, which was extremely lucrative. The discovery of Louisiana was largely due to the explorations undertaken by settlers of New France. The first was in 1669, René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle along with a small group of men explored the area of the Great Lakes and the Ohio River. The second major exploration was in 1673 when Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet descended the Mississippi River in hopes of expanding the fur trade.¹ These two men brought back reports of a region with a mild climate, fertile soil, large amounts

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of game and peaceful Indians; this information piqued the interest of the French. Marquette, a priest, returned in 1675 and founded a mission, Immaculate Conception, in order to convert the Indians.² Meanwhile La Salle was busy obtaining permission for further exploration from the French King, Louis XIV. In 1678 La Salle set out to further explore the Mississippi River. During his travels he built Fort Crèvecoeur at the mouth of the Illinois River.³ This was the first of many forts to be built in the colony with the purpose of keeping an eye on the Indians and on the encroaching English. In 1682 La Salle reached the mouth of the Mississippi and officially claimed all land drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries in the name of France.⁴ Eventually this territory was divided into three sections, the Ohio Country, the Illinois Country and Louisiana became known as the area on the lower Mississippi.

After claiming this land for France, La Salle returned to New France and set sail for France. He returned in 1685 via the Gulf of Mexico in hopes of colonizing the territory, but he was murdered before finding the mouth of the Mississippi.⁵ However, the land needed to be settled in order to protect the waterway, which would be useful in transporting fur, from the English and the Spanish who controlled territories on either side of Louisiana. In 1698, 200 settlers sailed for the colony under Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville. The settlers landed at Biloxi Bay and raised a fort there. However, this area did not give the settlers access to the interior of the colony. Another fort was built at Mobile Bay in 1702. Mobile became the capital of the colony; however it was nearly impossible for ships to access the town. Dauphin Island, located at the mouth of the bay was used as the trading post.⁶ During a trip to France Iberville died; thus leaving his brother, Bienville, to become governor of Louisiana in 1706. However, Bienville had a

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Figure 1.1 French Territory in the Americas (*Wikipedia*).¹

difficult time obtaining monetary support for colonization from the Crown because they did not have the money to spare.

In order to ensure that the colony would be properly settled and protected the Crown decided to turn it over to a private company. In 1712 exclusive trading rights for Mobile and Dauphine Island were granted to Antonie Crozat and in return Crozat was

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:LouisianeFran%C3%A7aise01.png> accessed April 24, 2011.

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expected to develop the colony. The agreement was a 15 year contract, which granted Crozat's company all of the profits from the skin and fur trade of the colony and 75 percent of all gold mining profits. Crozat was expected to fund the settlement of the colony including the transportation costs of relocating the settlers. The colony was to remain under the authority of the French Crown.⁷ Unfortunately Crozat and his newly appointed governor, Sieur de Cadillac, were more interested in the fur trade and on mining expeditions than developing the colony. No new settlements were founded by these two men. In 1717 Bienville was reinstated as governor and Crozat gave up his rights to the colony.⁸

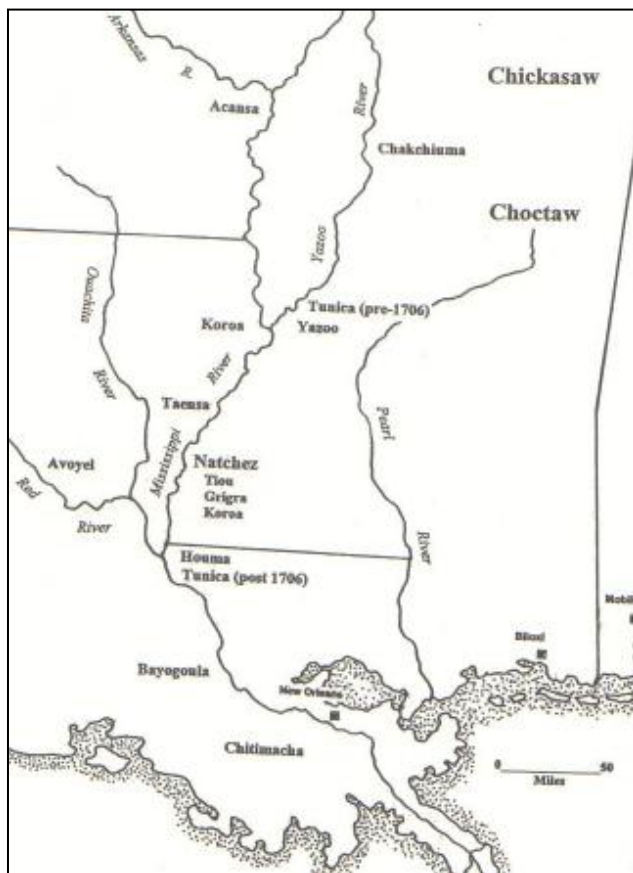


Figure 1.2 Lower Mississippi Valley (After Barnett 2007).

The French Crown granted another trading contract to John Law and the Company of the West, this time for 25 years.⁹ In addition to the rights given to Crozat, the Crown also granted some of the land in the colony to the Company. The Company then granted portions of this land to settlers in the form of concessions. John Law put a lot more effort than Crozat into encouraging settlers to move to Louisiana. A lot of the propaganda he distributed contained false information about the

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wealth of the colony. Most of the settlers who wanted to make the voyage were German. In order to obtain more French settlers Law persuaded the King to send French prisoners.¹⁰ In 1719 the company became the Company of the Indies when it merged with the Senegal Company.¹¹

Despite the effort put into the colony by the various companies, Louisiana struggled economically. Very early failed trading ventures included pearls, buffalo wool, and fish. Under Crozat's company the only profitable export was peltry. When the Company of West took over in 1717 they built up the trade of peltry, lumber, pitch, and tar. They also traded tobacco and Campeachy wood, although at this stage these goods were bought from the Spanish. By the time the Company of the Indies was formed they were trying to expand trade into agricultural sectors, namely tobacco and rice.¹² By 1726 the Company had further expanded its exports; new exports included indigo, silk, ship masts and sassafras.¹³ However, the Company faced many difficulties in turning the colony into a profitable venture. It was almost impossible to keep coins in Louisiana; most of what they had came from trade with the Spanish. They tried many ways to remedy this situation both through encouraging paper money and implementing a system of bartering.¹⁴ Neither was very successful and the Company was forced to subsidize the depreciation of the paper money, a huge cost. The company also failed to keep ships in good repair.¹⁵ This made it exceedingly difficult to transport what goods the colony did manage to produce. In addition, many shipments were lost during the Atlantic crossing. In the end the colony was not worth holding on to and the Company gave control back to France in 1731. France then gave control of the colony to the Spanish in 1762. They

regained control in 1800 but never reoccupied Louisiana before selling the territory to the newly created United States in 1803.¹⁶

The Natchez Settlement

There are several firsthand accounts remaining that describe the history of the Natchez settlement. Priests and other travelers, such as Sr. La Page du Pratz, documented their observations regarding everything from the landscape to their experiences in the colony and even anthropological observations about the Indians. The most detailed record was left by Dumont de Montigny in his memoirs and epic poem. Dumont tends to be biased towards his patrons and supporters and against those authority figures with whom he has had disagreements. His memoirs and poem were also written years after his time in Louisiana and events are not always discussed in chronological order.

Dumont places the founding of the settlement in 1717 when Sieur Hubert and Sieur La Page du Pratz traveled from New Orleans to establish St. Catherine's Concession. Dumont claims it was after Hubert's establishment that workmen and discharged soldiers moved to settle in the area and that Fort Rosalie was built. The appeal of Natchez lay in its fertile soil and elevated land. The area could be agriculturally prosperous without the dangers of floods. Dumont believed that the land was perfect for growing vine plants, tobacco, indigo, wheat, flax and hemp and for the raising of silk worms due to the number of mulberry trees.¹⁷

However, this was not the first European occupation of the area. Accounts exist of exploration and habitation in the area as early as 1699. The first missionary contact was by François-Jolliet de Montigny and Antoine Davion, two Seminarian priests who

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traveled to Natchez from New France.¹⁸ During the time these two priests were living with the Natchez, Iberville also explored the area and documented the Grand Village of the Natchez.¹⁹ When Davion and de Montigny left their post at the Grand Village a third Seminarian priest, Saint-Cosme, moved in to take their place. He was lived right outside the Grand Village from 1700 until his death in 1706, all the while carrying out mission work in the five major settlement districts.

Exploration of the Natchez area by several different parties has left a picture of

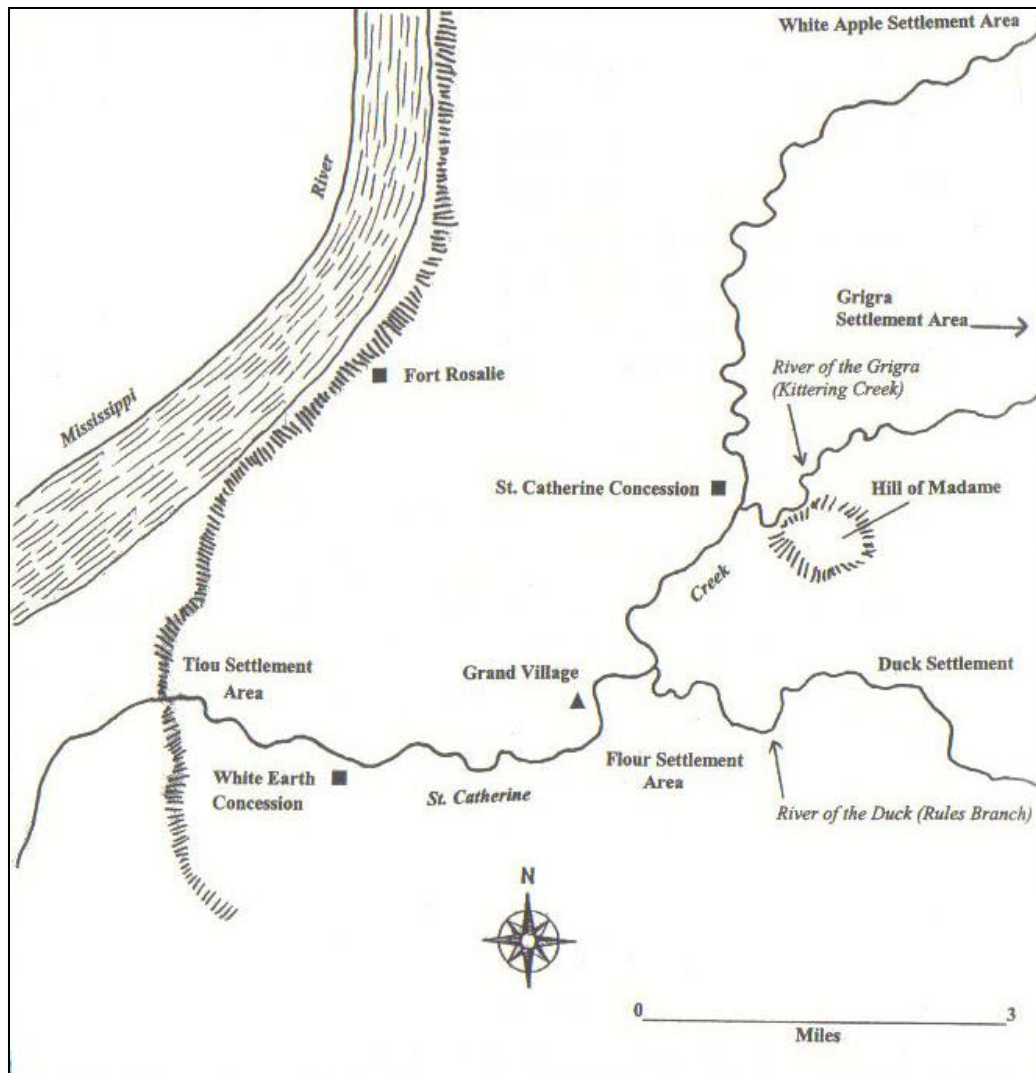


Figure 1.3 French Natchez Settlement and the Indian Settlement Districts (After Barnett 2007).

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the Natchez settlement districts. The Grand Village of the Natchez was the main ceremonial center located on the west bank of St. Catherine's Creek. Many sources place the Flour Village just across the creek. However, others believe that the Flour Village was in actuality the Duck Village (seen in Figure 1.3) and located behind St. Catherine's Concession.²⁰ Slightly to the south was the small Tiou village. Towards the east was the Grigra Village and to the north were the White Apple Village and the Jenzeaque Village. The settlements were not always united, when the Europeans arrived in the area these divisions manifested themselves in the loyalties each village showed. The Grand Village, Flour Village and Tiou Village all supported the French while the Grigra, Jenzenaque and White Apple Villages all had pro-English tendencies.²¹ This division would cause problems for the French settlers.

The first group of French settlers to arrive in the Natchez area was led by Pénicault, a ship carpenter and interpreter. He along with twenty other men left New Orleans in 1704 when a shortage of supplies from France threatened to cause starvation in the town. These men along with many others left New Orleans to make their livings elsewhere. Pénicault's group followed him to the Natchez area where they settled among the Natchez Indians.²²

The second group to arrive was led by Marc-Antoine de La Loires des Ursins and his younger brother in 1713. They had been commissioned with setting up a trading post in the area by Crozat's company. They built a house for themselves and a storehouse near the Grand Village. Most of the trade revolved around exchanging rifles for deerskins.²³ Unfortunately this post was abandoned in 1715 during the First Natchez War.

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The spark of the First Natchez War was the murder of four Frenchmen by a couple of the Natchez Indians.²⁴ Bienville, who had just been instructed to build two forts, one in the Natchez area and one further north near the Yazoo tribe, instead found himself leading the first of several punitive expeditions against the Natchez. Bienville and his men set up on an island near the Natchez settlement, lured eight chiefs onto it and then took them hostage. The hostages were released when the heads of the murderers were brought to Bienville.²⁵ This was the first instance in Natchez of the French demanding the deaths of Indian leaders in reparation for crimes against the French. The Natchez war chief, Tattooed Serpent, was always ready to meet the terms of the French in order to keep the peace, despite having a much larger military force.

After the First Natchez War came to an end, Bienville resumed the construction of Fort Rosalie at Natchez. The fort was completed in 1716 after which a new storehouse was built right next to the fort and trade resumed.²⁶ By this time the colony was in the hands of John Law and the Company of the West. Beginning in 1717, thanks to Law's encouragement, tobacco planters began to move into the area.²⁷

Finally La Page du Pratz arrived in the settlement in order to secure land for two concessions. According to du Pratz's journal he arrived in 1720,²⁸ three years after Dumont places him there. Du Pratz secured St. Catherine's Concession for Sr. Hubert who intended to grow wheat, a decision made based on successful experiments done in similar environments. To support this venture Hubert brought with him 60 indentured servants.²⁹ According to Dumont's account, Hubert believed that Natchez would be the perfect place for the new capital of the colony. He returned to France to rally support but unfortunately died before returning to his concession which was bought by Sr. Coly.³⁰

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Du Pratz also secured the Terre Blanche concession for the Company of the West. The Company planned to start a tobacco plantation there. However during the reorganization of the Company, they were forced to sell the concession. Terre Blanche was bought by Mr. Le Blanc and the Duke de Belle-Isle, who had formed a partnership in order to buy several concessions in the colony. When the company had been reorganized into the Company of the Indies, the Company sought to build another concession in the Natchez area.³¹

While the Natchez settlement and concessions were growing another conflict with the Natchez Indians erupted. Dumont and du Pratz cite different reasons for the Second Natchez War. Du Pratz considers the origin to be a small argument between the French and the Natchez where an Indian was shot.³² Dumont describes more complex origins, but he seems to condense the Second and Third Natchez Wars into one event. According to Dumont the Second Natchez War occurred just after an incident with the Chickasaw Tribe in 1722, which began with the murder of a French sergeant and escalated into a larger altercation.³³ Sr. Guenot, the director of the St. Catherine's Concession, had done something to upset the Indians from White Apple village. One shot him on his way from the fort. However, when they failed to kill him they entered the house of the soldier La Rochelle and killed him instead. La Rochelle had, apparently, never bothered to put a door on his cabin. After this incident troops were sent from New Orleans, however, the Natchez chief, in an attempt to keep the peace taxed the offending villages (White Apple, Jenzenaque, and Grigra) in poultry which was given to the French in reparation. After the tax was paid and the troops left, people from the White Apple village attacked St. Catherine's Concession destroying buildings, cattle, and horses.³⁴

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The French retaliation for this attack prompted the Third Natchez War, which took place in 1723.³⁵ The retaliation came with the arrival of Bienville. After destroying the White Apple, Jenzenaque and Grigra villages, Bienville demanded that Tattooed Serpent provide the heads of the six offending tribal leaders or the French would attack Flour Village. Probably only one head was received, but it seemed to appease the French.

The next few years marked a time of change for the Natchez settlement. First, the death of the Natchez war chief, Tattooed Serpent, in 1725 was a huge loss to the French settlers. Tattooed Serpent had been instrumental in keeping the peace between the Indians and the French, and without him as an ally it became much harder to do.³⁶ Second, there was an economic boom from 1726 until 1729. Logistical problems had been solved allowing easier transportation of tobacco to New Orleans. In fact, in 1729 300,000 pounds of tobacco was shipped to France, much of which came from the Natchez settlement. During this time the population doubled from 200 to 400 and the number of African slaves increased to 280.³⁷ However, despite the population growth the number of military personnel stationed at Natchez did not increase, although the commander changed numerous times.³⁸ Finally, in 1729 Commander Chepart arrived. According to Dumont, this man was entirely to blame for the massacre. Dumont claims that Chepart mistreated settlers and Indians alike. He also attempted to establish a concession, on behalf of the company, at the White Apple village and when that failed he attempted to do the same at the Grand Village of the Natchez.³⁹

According to Dumont, the massacre of 1729 was the direct result of Chepart's attempt to seize the Grand Village. The Great Chief of the Natchez had been given two weeks by Chepart to evacuate the village. During these two weeks the Chief and his

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council decided that their only option was to rid their country of the French. The Natchez, along with several other Indian nations, planned to kill the French settled in their respective areas. Bundles of sticks were distributed to the various nations. One stick was supposed to be discarded from the bundle every day in order to ensure that the attacks would be simultaneous. However, something went wrong with the bundle used by the Natchez and they attacked early. Chepart had received several warnings of this attack both from his soldiers and from female Indians living with the French, including his own mistress. However, Chepart ignored these warnings and, according to Dumont, 700 Frenchmen were killed during the massacre.⁴⁰ In actuality the number was probably closer to 230.⁴¹

After the uprising the Indians destroyed the French settlement at Natchez. When news of the attack reached the capital a force led by the Chevalier de Loubois was sent against the Natchez Indians. After a battle at the Grand Village, the Natchez abandoned their village and retreated north.⁴² They made their “last stand” at Ft. Valeur and some eventually surrendered. According to Charlevoix approximately seventy Natchez families escaped. However, despite the guerilla warfare they engaged in, the Natchez never managed to reconstitute their nation.⁴³

As for the French settlement, Fort Rosalie was rebuilt, this time as an earthen fort accompanied by barracks and officers’ houses. According to Dumont 120 men were left under the command of Chevalier Baron de Cresnay.⁴⁴ This force was substantially larger than any force that manned the fort before the uprising. These soldiers continued to face hostilities from the small number of Natchez Indians who remained in the area.⁴⁵ As Louisiana passed out of French control other groups built forts at the site.

Notes from Chapter One - Introduction

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- ¹ Surrey 21
² Surrey 22
³ Ibid
⁴ Surrey 23
⁵ Surrey 24
⁶ Surrey 155
⁷ Surrey 157
⁸ Worth 38
⁹ Surrey 159
¹⁰ Worth 43
¹¹ Surrey 160
¹² Surrey 161
¹³ Surrey 164
¹⁴ Surrey 121
¹⁵ Surrey 65
¹⁶ Worth 104
¹⁷ Dumont 30-32
¹⁸ Barnett 33
¹⁹ Barnett 39
²⁰ Steponaitis
²¹ Barnett 44
²² Barnett 51
²³ Barnett 58
²⁴ Barnett 63
²⁵ Barnett 67-71
²⁶ Barnett 71
²⁷ Barnett 75
²⁸ Barnett 78
²⁹ Barnett 81
³⁰ Dumont 31
³¹ Barnett 82
³² Barnett 85
³³ Dumont 43-45
³⁴ Dumont 47-49
³⁵ Barnett 90
³⁶ Barnett 95
³⁷ Barnett 99
³⁸ Dumont 59
³⁹ Dumont 64-65
⁴⁰ Dumont 71
⁴¹ Barnett 105
⁴² Barnett 117
⁴³ Barnett 127
⁴⁴ Dumont 94
⁴⁵ Dumont 95

CHAPTER 2

DUMONT DE MONTIGNY

Dumont de Montigny greatly contributed to the documentation of French Colonial Louisiana. During his time in the French army Dumont created many maps and plans of various forts. After his return to France Dumont wrote about his experiences first in 1744 in an epic poem entitled “*L’établissement de la Province de la Louisiane*” and later (1747) in his more in depth manuscript “*Mémoires Historiques*,” which was published in 1753.¹ These two documents as well as the maps and drawings they contain are particularly valuable in preserving the history of the French Natchez settlement.

Biography

Jean François Benjamin Dumont de Montigny was born in Paris on July 31, 1696. He was the youngest son of a prominent lawyer and despite his Jesuit schooling did not pursue the academic or religious careers of his brothers.² Instead Dumont joined the military where he relied heavily upon the good will of powerful patrons to obtain his posts. Dumont first served in New France from 1715 until his return to France in 1717. Most of this time Dumont considered himself too sick to work and, instead, he spent his

time writing poems and other such documents. Upon his return to France he attempted to visit Paris, however, his father told him to stay at Port Louis. Dumont remained “in exile” until 1719 when he was sent to Louisiana with the Company of the Indies with a commission as a second lieutenant and another as an engineer.³ Upon his arrival in Louisiana Dumont made the mistake of insulting Bienville’s uncle,⁴ a mistake that would haunt him through his time in the colony and would also contribute to the critical remarks about the French military included in his memoirs.

Dumont spent the first part of his commission travelling around Louisiana drawing plans of various forts and towns. All of this travelling equipped Dumont with opportunities to make his own observations about what was going on in the colony and to talk to a wide variety of sources, which in turn allowed him to create a comprehensive memoir upon his return to France. He was involved in the attack on the Spanish fort at Pensacola where he was given the responsibility of drawing plans of the fort. Next, in 1720, Dumont was sent to the settlement at New Biloxi, again to draw plans. After this job Dumont returned to France for a short time.⁵ Once back in Louisiana in 1722 Dumont was sent to draw plans of the Yazoo post. From there he joined the expedition in the Arkansas River Valley as a surveyor; the goal of the expedition was to find precious stones. After this expedition Dumont returned to New Orleans and discovered his officer’s commission had been cancelled due to reports others had made to Bienville.⁶ Eventually, with the help of two *commissaires*, Dumont was reinstated as an officer and joined the punitive expedition against the Natchez in 1723 (the Third Natchez War), marking Dumont’s first exposure to the Natchez settlement. According to Dumont, during his first stay at Natchez the commander, Broutin, left Dumont in charge of the fort

while he (Broutin) was stationed at Terre Blanche. Dumont does not refer to his time away from Natchez in his memoirs.⁷ Other sources claim Dumont returned to his post at Yazoo before being recalled to New Orleans by Bienville.⁸ Dumont then spent time managing two plantations, one in Bayou St. John and the other in Pascagoula,⁹ actions that contradicted his military orders.

Finally a new governor arrived in Louisiana named Perier. Perier was the only official for whom Dumont had any respect, probably because of the help he gave to Dumont rather than the decisions he made regarding the colony. After making sure Dumont got his pay, Perier sent Dumont to the Natchez post. During his time at Natchez, from 1727 until 1728, Dumont lived with Rousin and his family.¹⁰ When Rousin and the new commander Chepart got into an argument, Dumont helped Rousin write legal briefs and eventually went to New Orleans himself to complain about Chepart. However Chepart was sent back to Natchez and Perier urged Dumont to stay and become a planter outside New Orleans.¹¹ Again these events are not explicitly mentioned in his memoirs. It is unclear if Dumont returned to Natchez at all after building his plantation near New Orleans. However, in his memoirs he claims that he had left Natchez the night before the massacre, and that his wife was taken captive by the Indians and most likely became a slave.¹²

After the destruction in Natchez, Dumont stayed on his plantation outside of New Orleans. But he was forced to sell it in 1732 after a failed trading venture and the destruction of his plantation. By this time Dumont had remarried and he and his wife moved into the capital. In 1736 Dumont joined the military expedition against the Chickasaw who had been rumored to be harboring the surviving Natchez families.¹³ He

then returned to his house in New Orleans and attempted to make a living from his garden, hiring out his remaining slaves, and working on legal briefs. In 1737 Dumont and his family returned to France and after a brief visit to Paris where he met his benefactor the Comte Belle-Isle, moved to Port Louis where Dumont worked as a half-pay lieutenant.¹⁴

In the early 1740s Dumont wrote his epic poem of which two copies survive. This poem focused mainly on the Natchez massacre and the subsequent military expeditions of the French. Included in his poem were over 18 drawings and maps.¹⁵ Dumont began writing his memoir in 1747, which he dedicated to his patron the Comte de Belle-Isle.¹⁶ This copy is now housed in the Ayer Collection at the Newberry Library. In 1753 his memoir was officially published, the document resides in the Library of Congress. Again his memoir included many maps and drawings of the Louisiana colony. By this time Dumont was back in Paris and continued writing articles about Louisiana for various publications. The date of his death is unknown.¹⁷

The Maps

In addition to his memoirs and poem, Dumont left behind an extraordinary number of maps and drawings of Louisiana. In his memoirs Dumont included 23 maps and drawings, one of which was a detailed map of the Natchez settlement. In his poem he included 18 maps, again one was a detailed rendering of the Natchez settlement. Dumont also created other maps and plans for the army and other such purposes. The majority of his maps show an oblique view of the landscape. In this way he was able to document both the landscape and show details of the houses and plantations found in the area. Of



Figure 2.1. Newberry Library Map (Newberry Library Ayer MS 257 map 9).

his surviving works four detailed manuscript maps of the Natchez settlement survive. An engraved map of the Natchez settlement also survives, however it is most likely a composite of Dumont's maps rather than an original creation of Dumont's.¹⁸

The first map is housed in the Newberry Library (NL) in Chicago in the Ayer Collection (Newberry Library, Ayer MS 257 map 9). The NL map was one of the 23 maps included in Dumont's 1747 manuscript of his memoirs. The map is 45.1 cm by 34.7 cm in size, making it the second smallest. Dumont created this map to provide an illustration of the Natchez settlement to those reading his memoir. Some of the important buildings were labeled with numbers which were explained in the legend. The legend also identifies this map as a "map of Ft. Rosalie of the French Natchez with its dependencies and native village."¹ It also mentions that the roads lead to other houses in the valleys which are not drawn on the map. The NL map was not meant to be viewed as an independent document. Rather, it was meant to provide visual support for Dumont's memoir where all the details and description were located. The only important detail missing from the map is a date.

The second map is the smallest and was included in Dumont's epic poem. Today this map is housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF) in Paris (BNF, Arsenal, MS 3459). The BNF map, as it shall henceforth be called, measures only 21.4 cm by 16.9 cm. Due to its size the BNF map has very little in the way of writing. Dumont does label some buildings but much of his writing is illegible. A small legend was included at the bottom of the map. It states that the map depicts the disposition of the houses of French Natchez, the Indian village and the two concessions before the

¹ Translated by Elizabeth Jones



Figure 2.2. BNF Map (BNF, Arsenal, MS 3459).

massacre. While the map lacks a concrete date the description suggests that the map depicts the Natchez settlement from either Dumont's 1723 visit or his stay from 1727 until 1729. The BNF map was meant to illustrate a poem. The poem served more as a historical story than a historical account. Therefore the map just had to provide basic details about the layout of the settlement.

The third map is housed in the Archives Nationales (AN), also in Paris (Archives nationales (Paris), Cartes et Plans, N III Louisiane 1/2). The AN map is 70 cm by 47 cm, much larger than the NL and BNF maps. The detail and care taken with the AN map suggests that Dumont drew this map for a professional purpose. In the top left corner of the map Dumont included the crest of Belle-Isle, his patron. Several other maps drawn by Dumont also show this crest in the corner. While today these maps are scattered among various museums they were probably originally drawn as a set. The crest, along with the extremely detailed depiction of the Terre Blanche concession, suggests that this set of maps was made for the Duke of Belle-Isle. The AN map did not have any corresponding text, for this reason Dumont included several panels of text on the map. These panels (translated below) provide information about the settlement, concessions and Indian village as well as the time period depicted, 1729. Dumont also labeled most of the buildings, sometimes indicating the function of the structure and other times providing the name of the inhabitant. The panels read as follows²:

Carte du Fort Rozalie des Natchez François ou l'on voit le situation des concessions et habitations telles qu'elles étoient avant le massacre arrive le 29 Novembre 1729 et le tout par la faute de celui que la Compagnie des Indes avoit choisy pour y commender.

² Translated by Elizabeth Jones

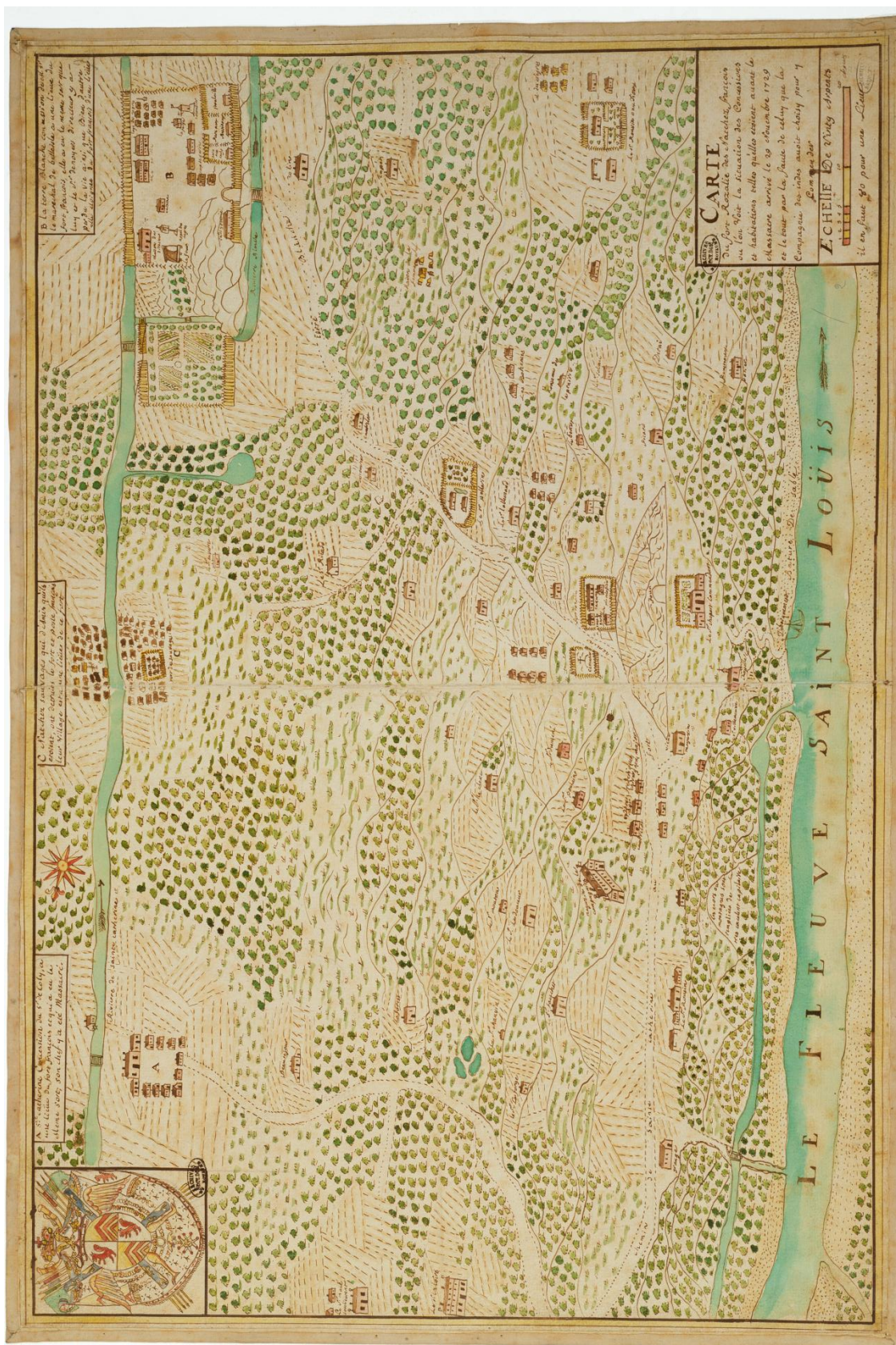


Figure 1. Archives Nationales (Archives nationales (Paris), Cartes et Plans, N III Louisiane 1/2).

Map of Fort Rosalie of the French Natchez where one can see the situation of the concessions and dwellings such as they were before the massacre of November 29, 1729 and all by the fault of him who the Company of the Indies had chosen for command there.

Ste Catherine Concession du Sieur de Coly, a une lieu de fort François et qiu a eu le meme sort; son chef y à été massacred.

Saint Catherine Concession of Sr. Coly has a section of Fort François (Ft Rosalie) and who has the same fate, its chief officer was massacred there.

Natchez sauvages qui d'amis qu'ils etoient, ont destruites le fort et poste français leur village est a une lieue de ce fort.

Natchez Indians that were friends, destroyed the fort and French post their village is a section of this fort.

La terre Blanche commission de Monsieur le marchal de belleisla a une lieue de fort français, elle a eu la meme sort que luy et le Sieur denoyers directeur y a perdu la vie ainsi que Bien d'autre elle éloignée du fort François d'une lieue.

The Terre Blanche concession of Sr Marshall of Belle-Isle has a section of Fort François it had the same fate as it and Sr Denoyers, director, lost his life there. That's the way that another section of Fort François was lost.

The fourth map is similar in size and purpose to the AN map. It is housed in the archives at the Service historique de la Défense (SHD) (Service historique de la Défense, Département de l'Armée de Terre, Etat Major 7C 211). The SHD map measures 73 cm by 47.6 cm, making it the largest map. Part of the legend has been damaged but fortunately a photograph of the map before it was damaged survives in the Harvard Map Collection. The legend on the SHD map says the map depicts the Natchez settlement before the massacre, however the date provided is 1739. When the date is examined carefully writing can be seen underneath the 3. There are other pieces of text on this map that look altered, the original legend most likely read 1729. The reasons for the alterations are unclear. Like the AN map, the SHD map was probably originally part of a



Figure 1. Service Historique de la Defense (*Service historique de la Défense, Département de l'Armée de Terre, Etat Major 7C 211*).

set of maps drawn by Dumont. The image Dumont drew over the legend may be the Belle-Isle crest flanked by two lions. The legend and panels on the SHD map provide far more information than the panels on the AN map. Unfortunately no translation is available. Fewer buildings on this map are labeled. The SHD map and other maps from this set were clearly intended to provide specific information about the Natchez and other settlements to an interested party who had not been to Louisiana himself, possibly Belle-Isle or Le Blanc.

These four maps provide excellent information about the basic layout of the Natchez settlement as well as the function of the settlement. By analyzing and comparing these four maps a comprehensive picture of the settlement can be created.

Notes from Chapter Two

¹ Zecher 1268-1273

² Zecher 1265

³ Delanglez 33

⁴ Delanglez 34

⁵ Delanglez 35

⁶ Delanglez 38

⁷ Dumont 58

⁸ Delanglez 39

⁹ Delanglez 40

¹⁰ Delanglez 41

¹¹ Delanglez 42

¹² Dumont 76

¹³ Delanglez 45

¹⁴ Delanglez 47

¹⁵ Zecher 1271

¹⁶ Zecher 1268

¹⁷ Zecher 1273

¹⁸ Steponaitis

CHAPTER THREE

FRENCH COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE

French Colonial architecture was influenced by the French architecture found in New France, by the architecture employed in the Caribbean and by the architecture of the American Indians. All of these styles were combined in Louisiana to create the Creole architecture that came to pervade the colony. The expression of the newly developing Creole style was limited by time, resources and the availability of skilled labor. The movement of stylistic elements into Louisiana continued throughout the entire life of the colony. Thus, the houses from the early 1700s looked very different from those of the 1760s. The resources found in Louisiana differed from those found in France and the Caribbean. Substitutes were found, contributing to the unique nature of Creole architecture. Finally, skilled labor was not always widely available in Louisiana. As a result, earlier buildings, built by soldiers and early settlers, were probably built using simple methods of construction. As more settlers came to the colony, the availability of skilled labor increased, as did the complexity of construction techniques.

Building Techniques

Construction techniques had to address three main elements, walls, roofs and floors. Each element presented their own options which led to a wide variety of structural possibilities within Creole architecture.

Walls

There were three primary methods used to construct walls in Louisiana. These options allowed for the construction of quick, easy to build, temporary structures (*poteaux-en-terre*) as well as more durable buildings (*poteaux-sur-sole* and *pièce-sur-pièce*).

Poteaux en Terre

The simplest type of wall construction in the American French colonies was *poteaux-en-terre*. In *poteaux-en-terre* construction a series of upright posts were set in a trench of approximately 2-3 feet in depth and surrounded with earth.¹ The posts were typically left rounded below the surface but could be squared above. A space approximately equal to the diameter of the posts was left between each one. This space was then filled with *pierrotée* (stones and mortar) or *bouzillée* (sticks plastered with mud and straw).² A simpler form known as *pieux-en-terre* lacked this space between posts; instead the posts were placed directly next to each other.³ Depending on the function of *poteaux-en-terre* building the walls were finished with plaster and whitewashed⁴ or simply covered in clapboard.⁵



Figure 3.1 Post replacement in a Poteaux-en-Terre structure (After Maygarden 2006).

Poteaux-en-terre houses were simple to build and typically very cheap because of the abundance of raw material in Louisiana. However there were some very large drawbacks. The most obvious problem of placing wood directly in the ground is the potential for rot. For this reason colonists typically chose to use cedar or white mulberry wood for their posts,⁶ which resisted rot better than many other types of wood. Another problem was the potential for load-

bearing posts to sink further into the ground and create uneven wall height which in turn would destabilize the roof.⁷ Later construction techniques addressed this problem.

Poteaux-en-terre houses were probably the most common type during the eighteenth century although very few actually survive. According the French and Spanish records about two-thirds of the houses in St. Louis were of this type.⁸ However it is unclear where the tradition for this building style emerged. Peterson states that it was a common building technique in Spanish and English colonies as well as in England but that it was virtually unused in France and Canada.⁹ Edwards believes that *poteaux-en-terre* construction was adapted from local Indian building styles.¹⁰

Poteaux sur Sole

With the arrival of colonists there was an increase in skilled labor. More carpenters and joiners were available and consequently more complex construction techniques could be utilized. The *poteaux-sur-sole* technique sought to limit damage from rot and increase the longevity of a building. Instead of anchoring posts in the ground, the posts were set onto a sill and attached using mortises and tenons. The sill could be above or below ground and made of either stone or wood, although stone was more common.¹¹ The posts could be spaced close together or at intervals of approximately five feet. Buildings with more closely spaced posts were easier to build and were common in the Illinois country.¹² Walls with more widely spaced posts required filling. *Pierrotée* was still in use, as was *bousillage*. Originally *bousillage* referred to filling made of mud or clay, straw, and animal dung. However the term came to be used for any such filling

whether or not animal dung was used. Eventually French settlers began to use Spanish moss as a binding agent, a practice borrowed from the Indians.¹³ The fill was placed over sticks that were wedged between the posts. Walls of this type required constant upkeep.¹⁴



Figure3.2 Poteaux sur Sole house in Normandy (After Peterson 1993).

In order to protect these

walls from the elements they were commonly plastered or covered with clapboard.¹⁵

A later development in *poteaux-sur-sole* construction was *colombage* walls. These walls were braced with diagonally placed beams and then filled and covered like traditional *poteaux-sur-sole* walls. The technique was first employed in France before the creation of the Louisiana colony. However, its use in the colony depended upon the availability of expert carpenters.¹⁶

It is difficult to determine how common *poteaux-sur-sole* houses were in French Louisiana. The technique was common in France, particularly Lower Normandy, and in Canada.¹⁷ *Poteaux-sur-sole* houses, being the most durable, comprise most of the French colonial buildings that survive today. However, scholars believe that they were the least common type actually built during the colonial period.¹⁸

Pièce sur Pièce

Pièce-sur-pièce buildings were common in Canada and the English American colonies; however they were only occasionally built in Louisiana and the Illinois country, mostly in smaller settlements.¹⁹ These buildings were akin to log cabins, they were built by placing squared logs one on top of another. The corners were either dovetailed or joined using a mortise and tenon to an upright corner post.²⁰ The method required a substantial amount of lumber and was more difficult than the *poteaux-en-terre* technique, issues that probably contributed to their lack of popularity.

Roofs

There were two main types of roofs used in French colonial houses, hipped and gabled roofs. Hipped roofs were more technically demanding but required far less lumber than gabled roofs. Gabled roofs were far simpler to build and allowed for a loft to be placed above the regular living space. Sometimes houses were built

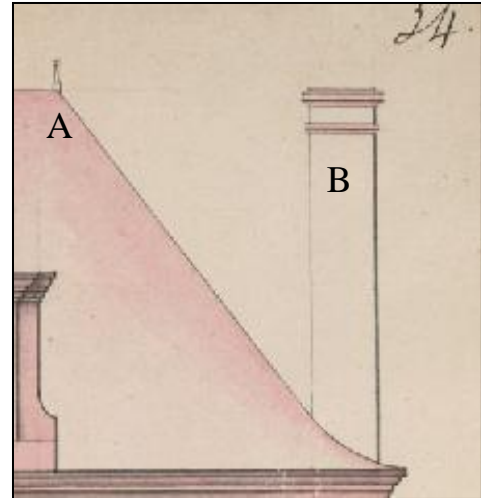


Figure 3.3 Examples of (A) a finial and (B) a chimney from a New Orleans residence (After Wilson 1969).

with a hipped roof on one side and a gabled roof on the other side to allow for a chimney to be attached to the gable end of the house. Both types of roofs could be double pitched in order to cover an attached gallery. Most roofs had a steep pitch to better shed water.²¹

Depending of the function and permanency of a given building various methods were used to form the covering of roofs. A common method for covering basic buildings was thatch. In France straw was used but it was unavailable in Louisiana so they borrowed the Indian method of using palmetto instead. Other coverings included bark and clapboard.²² Brick tiles were rarely used because they were expensive to obtain. When they were used they were reserved for covering the ridgeline of the roof.²³ Many colonists placed finials at the corners of their roofs, an embellishment that could be as simple as a post or more elaborate in the shape of a ball or an attached flag.

Floors

Many houses in French Louisiana lacked a wooden floor. Instead beaten-earth floors were utilized. Creating these floors was a community effort. After flattening damp

earth, straw and lime or ash was mixed into the surface and the community danced on the floor to produce a burnished surface. Beaten-earth floors were, for the most part, functional. However, moisture could easily damage the floors and encourage wooded furniture to rot. To help solve this problem some people added crushed shell to the floor to raise the surface.²⁴

Wood floors were also employed in Louisiana and, after gaining popularity during the 1770s, became a staple in the 1780s.²⁵ Wood floors were either of the plank or puncheon variety, the latter being split logs. The use of a wood floor would have greatly extended the life of a house and of the furniture within it.

Doors and Windows

Doors on French colonial houses probably followed the French style. That is, they were probably double hung and built to swing inwards, allowing for shutters to be attached to the outside.²⁶ They were typically placed on the long walls of the house, either the front and, or the back walls of the house.²⁷

Window placement was much more arbitrary. Glass was very expensive and thus was very rare in Louisiana. Instead oiled skin or cloth was placed over windows, especially in the northern areas such as Illinois and Canada. In lower Louisiana windows were often left

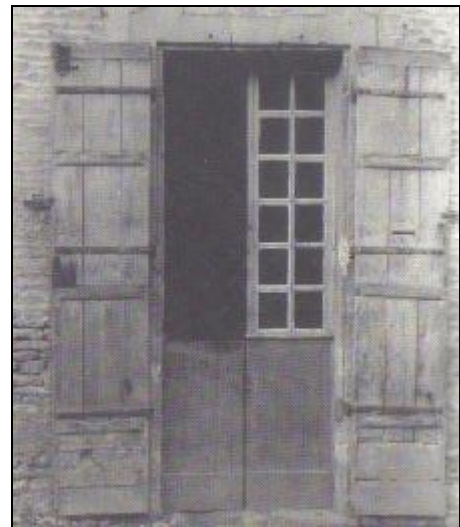


Figure 3.4 Double hung French doors (After Peterson 1993).

uncovered. Most windows had wooden shutters which could be closed over the windows if the need arose.²⁸

Chimneys

Fireplaces and chimneys served to heat colonial houses and were rarely used for cooking. They were typically placed at one or both ends of a house, although in more northern areas of the colony they were placed between interior walls. Chimneys were

typically made by inserting four posts into the ground and filling in the space with wattle and *bousillage*. The nature of the chimneys posed a significant risk of fire, but bricks were largely unavailable to early colonists.²⁹



Figure3. 5 Bousille chimney (After Maygarden 2006)

Town Plans

In many cases small towns in Louisiana grew up around French forts, however there were several planned towns that were constructed in the colony. The best documented examples are New Orleans, begun in 1718, and St Louis, begun in 1764. Planned towns followed a certain formula. Towns were typically placed on a natural levee, to protect the city against floods, but with easy boat access to promote trade. The town was divided into equal blocks which were further divided into lots. The center blocks along the river were reserved for public and mercantile buildings which were placed around a central plaza. For example, early plans of New Orleans show a town

eleven blocks wide along the Mississippi and anywhere from four to twelve blocks deep. The center block along the river was the Place d'Armes,³⁰ an area used for public meetings.³¹ The building fronting the Place d'Armes included the church, priest's house, government buildings and company buildings.³²

The surrounding blocks were subdivided into lots for private dwellings. Many planned towns followed traditional European models where the dwellings were clustered close together with the pastures and fields on the periphery of the settlement.³³ This layout offered a more secure environment to colonists. In both St. Louis and New Orleans, settlers were required to build a palisade fence around their property within a year of claiming ownership of a lot.³⁴ In this way towns could increase their security, especially against Indian raids, with no cost to the developers.

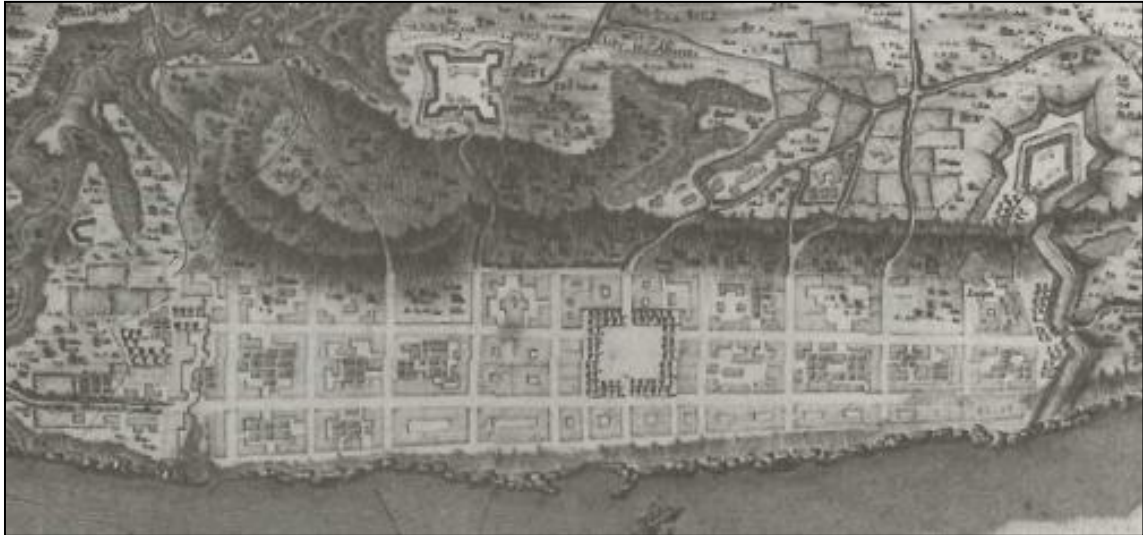


Figure 3. 6 Plan of St. Louis 1796 Drawing by Georges de Bois St. Lys (After Kornwolf 2002)

Pasture space, also known as the commons, was allotted outside of the town limits. In St. Louis the commons was primarily used for grazing animals and as a communal source of timber. Each of the settlers was responsible for building and

maintaining a section of fence surrounding the commons.³⁵ Agricultural space, or the commonfields, typically took the form of long narrow strips. One or more strips were granted to each settler. This method was taken from the convention used to grant land to people who settled outside of town. The strip of land would begin at the river and extend into the woods. By allocating land in this manner each settler had access to the river, good agricultural land and woodland.³⁶ While settlers in the towns did not receive river access they still had several types of land in their allotment. As the city grew the commonfields became more dispersed and many settlers were given several unconnected fields.³⁷ Due to the distance between the agricultural area and the town, many colonists built huts on their fields for shelter.³⁸

Elements of a Homestead

Homesteads in colonial Louisiana varied in complexity depending upon the wealth of the owner. However they were all built following the same patterns, a main house was accompanied by outbuildings and some type of agricultural space. Dumont's illustration of his house in New Orleans provides an excellent example of how a typical homestead was arranged during the early colonial period.

Main House

The main house was obviously the main living area for each family. Depending on the era during which the house was built it could have been constructed using any of the aforementioned techniques. The earlier and simpler houses were built using *poteaux-en-terre* construction while later and more elaborate plantation houses typically employed the *poteaux-sur-sole* technique.

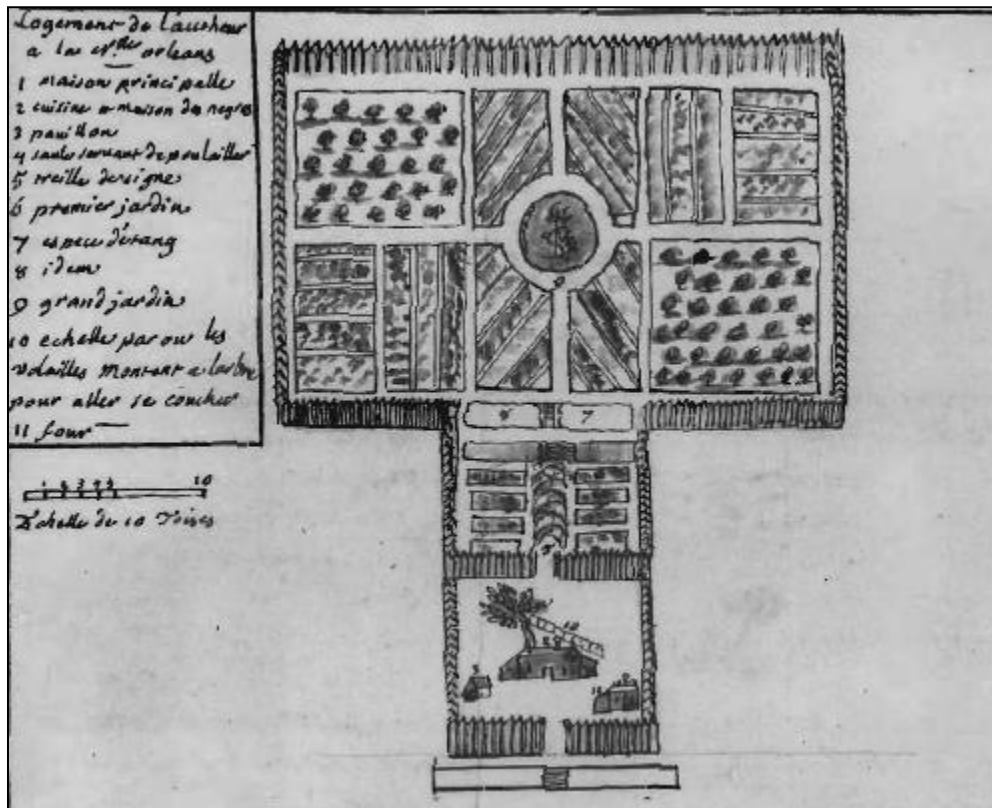


Figure 3.7 Drawing of Dumont de Montigny's house in New Orleans, drawn by Dumont. Legend: 1. main house, 2. kitchen and house for negroes, 3. pavilion, 4. willow tree serving as a hen house, 5. trellis for vines, 6. first garden, 7. pond, 8. pond, 9. large garden, 10. ladder for hens, 11. oven. (After Poesch and Bacot 1997)

The characteristic layout of early houses was as follows. Houses were built to be only one room deep. The large main room, known as the *salle*, was the living area. At one end of the house a section was walled off to be used as a sleeping chamber.³⁹ Small cabinets could be added in the corners to form additional bedrooms. In traditional Creole architecture this was accomplished by adding lean-tos onto one or both ends of the house, usually with the chimney in between the house and the lean-to in order to heat the extra living space. Acadians also used the loft space under the ceiling as a *garconnière*, or room for young unmarried men. In Creole architecture however this space was rarely inhabited. Instead it helped with ventilation.

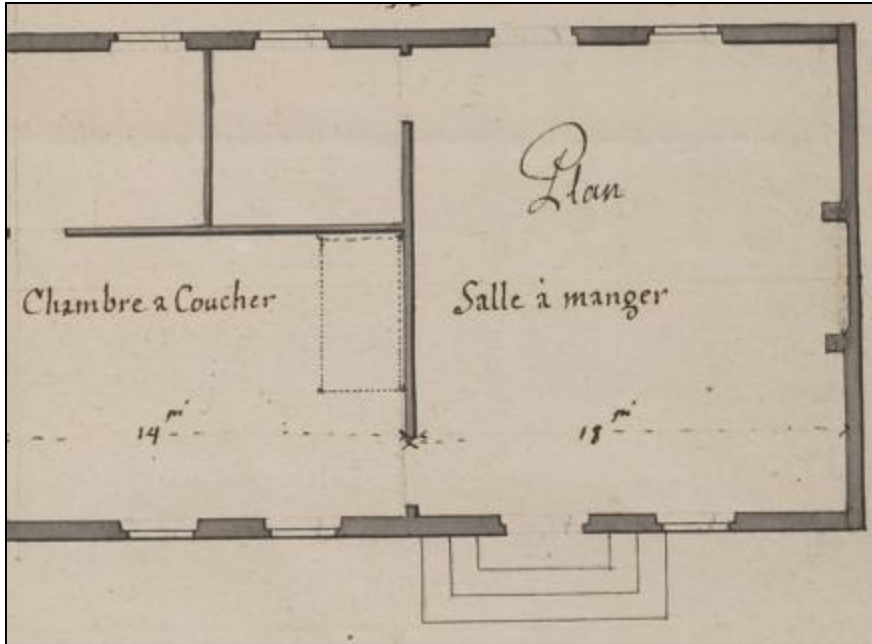


Figure 3.8 Plan of Priest's quarters, Balise 1722 (After Wilson 1944)

Galleries also became very important living spaces, so important, in fact, that they are a part of the archetype for French Colonial architecture even though they did not become popular until 1740. Galleries could be built on anywhere from one to four sides of the house. Roofs were extended to cover these galleries which often served as outdoor rooms; this was the origin of double pitched roofs.⁴⁰

There are two competing theories on the origin of galleries in French Colonial architecture. The original theory, propagated by Wilson and picked up by others, claims that galleries first appeared in the Louisiana River Valley as an adaptation to the Acadian houses of the St. Lawrence River Valley to the North.⁴¹ However, a newer theory suggested by Peterson states that galleries first emerged in the humid climate of the French West Indies and then moved northward into the Louisiana River Valley.⁴²

Outbuildings

Houses were accompanied by a number of outbuildings which functioned in ways the main house could not. One of the most important of these outbuildings was the kitchen. Apparently the construction of a separate kitchen was a tradition that evolved in the New World.⁴³ However, its employment greatly reduced the danger posed by cooking in the house, especially when most chimneys in Louisiana were made of *bousille*. In addition many colonists build outdoor baking ovens. Both of these elements are apparent in Dumont's illustration (figure 3.7).

Other potential outbuildings include buildings for storage, additional living spaces, and animal enclosures. Storage facilities could include sheds (*pavillions*), storehouses (*magazins*) and barns (*granges*). Additional living space usually took the form of slave quarters. However, on larger plantations the director sometimes had his own, separate house and occasionally there were guardhouses. The most common animal enclosures were chicken coops (*poulaillers*) and dovecotes (*colombiers/pigeonniers*). On rare occasions *garconnières* were placed on the ground floor of dovecotes. More complex estates could have also had stables for cows and horses or pig sties.

Landscaping Details

Many homesteads during the colonial period were enclosed with palisade fences, as depicted in figure 3.7. In many of the larger towns this was a requirement to increase security. Figure 3.7 also shows ponds and gardens. It is unclear how common artificial ponds were during this period but gardens were extremely prevalent. Many followed the geometric pattern of formal gardens in France. In figure 3.7 the garden has clear sections

devoted to growing vegetables and two others that appear to be orchards. Gardens were usually devoted to growing vegetables while outlying fields were used for growing grains.

Notes from Chapter Three

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- ¹ Maygarden pg 216
² Peterson pgs 43-44
³ Maygarden 216
⁴ Peterson 42
⁵ Maygarden 217
⁶ Peterson 42
⁷ Maygarden 218
⁸ Peterson 41
⁹ Ibid
¹⁰ Edwards 245
¹¹ Maygarden 220
¹² Ibid. Maygarden 220
¹³ Maygarden 225
¹⁴ Waselkov 16
¹⁵ Maygarden 226
¹⁶ Maygarden 222-223
¹⁷ Peterson 44
¹⁸ Ibid
¹⁹ Peterson 46
²⁰ Ibid
²¹ Maygarden 227
²² Ibid Maygarden 227
²³ Waselkov 17
²⁴ Maygarden 228
²⁵ Maygarden 229
²⁶ Peterson 144
²⁷ Waselkov 19
²⁸ Maygarden 231
²⁹ Maygarden 229
³⁰ Kornwolf 326
³¹ Peterson 7
³² Kornwolf 326
³³ Peterson 6
³⁴ Peterson 10
³⁵ Peterson 12
³⁶ Peterson 17-18
³⁷ Peterson 18-20
³⁸ Peterson 19
³⁹ Duncan 3
⁴⁰ Maygarden 231
⁴¹ Edwards 257
⁴² Edwards 259
⁴³ Maygarden 232

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATCHEZ SETTLEMENT

Analysis of Dumont's Maps

The French settlement at Natchez has yet to be excavated. Fortunately, Dumont's surviving maps provide information about the layout of the settlement and the two concessions, St. Catherine's and Terre Blanche. Analysis of these maps in conjunction with Dumont's memoirs and surviving architectural examples and architectural plans allows for a virtual reconstruction of the settlement without archaeological data from the site.

The structures on Dumont's maps can be divided into five categories: those associated with Fort Rosalie, mercantile buildings, those in St. Catherine's concession, those in the Terre Blanche concessions and independent homesteads. These categories demonstrate multiple functions fulfilled by the Natchez settlement.

Summary of the Maps

The four Dumont maps discussed in Chapter 2 all present different views of the Natchez settlement. There are several potential sources for these discrepancies. First, the sizes of the maps and their functions obviously have an effect on what information can be included. Second, Dumont was drawing these maps many years after he lived in Natchez,

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mistakes of memory are probably prevalent in his maps. Third, Dumont was not detail oriented, many inconsistencies can be attributed to his lack of concern for details. A fourth possibility remains open, the maps may depict different years in the settlement's history. These potential dates would be limited to the years Dumont was in Natchez, 1723 and 1727-1729.

Table 1. Building totals for Dumont's maps.¹

	NL	BNF	AN	SHD
French Buildings				
Town Area	56	45	66	90
St Catherine's	17	9	14	30
Terre Blanche	12	15	32	33
Tioux Village	7 ^a	3	11 ^a	11 ^a
Countryside	13	13	16	31
Sub Total	105	85	139	195
Grand Village	17	10	39	66
Total	122	95	178	261
Indian Buildings				
Grand Village	13	9	48	27
Tioux Village	0	6	0	0
Other	0	1 ^b	7	7
Total	13	16	55	34
Total Buildings	135	111	233	295

¹ Only the French buildings in the French settlement area are used in the following analysis. However, the inclusion of French and Indian structures in the Indian village contributes to the reliability of the maps.

^a Rousin's Tioux Village

^b This building was in the town area

Table 1 gives a summary of the number of buildings found on each map. Figure 4.1 shows the area of each map and indicates the total number of French buildings in the French settlement on each. From these it becomes clear that the AN and SHD maps are more detailed than the NL and BNF maps and thus most reliable renderings of the Natchez settlement.

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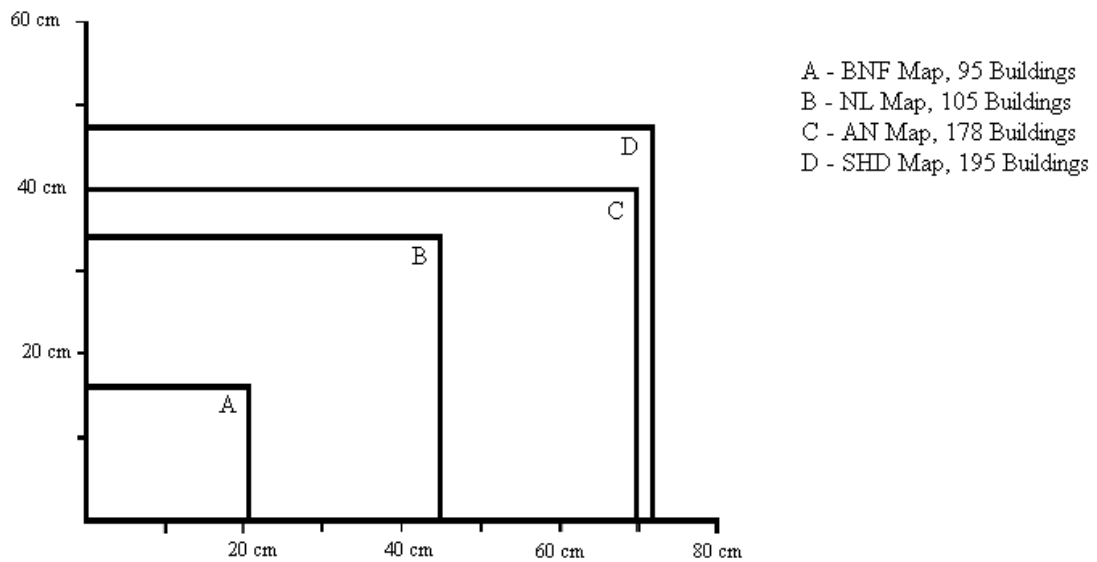


Figure 4.1. Comparison of the areas of Dumont's Natchez Maps

An attempt has been made to measure the complexity of each map as well. To do this an index was devised to measure the complexity of each building, measured on a scale of 1 to 7. A point was given for each of the following elements: walls, roof, floor, doors, windows, chimney, and finials. The total number of points accumulated by each building was the complexity of the structure. A summary, Table 2, was then made for each map detailing the number of houses that fit into each complexity level.

Table 2. Building totals by map and complexity level.

Complexity Level	Newberry	BNF	AN	SHD
1	0	1	0	1
2	1	2	3	4
3	12	38	13	27
4	20	24	3	17
5	39	15	42	22
6	24	4	50	71
7	6	0	21	48
Mean	4.89	3.74	5.41	5.42

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Figure 4.2 shows a graph of the complexity percentages for each map. It becomes apparent that the AN and SHD maps show the most complex buildings, with the buildings on the SHD map falling just slightly higher on the index. The NL map is slightly behind these two maps while the BNF map lags significantly. Based on this information it is clear that the AN and SHD maps contain the most detailed renderings of individual structures. When this information is combined with the total number of buildings per map, the AN and SHD maps emerge as the most reliable maps to use in the reconstruction of the Natchez Settlement. However the other two maps, the NL and the BNF, clearly should not be forgotten, especially if it is possible that they include information about Dumont's 1723 visit. This possibility will be explored during the general analysis.

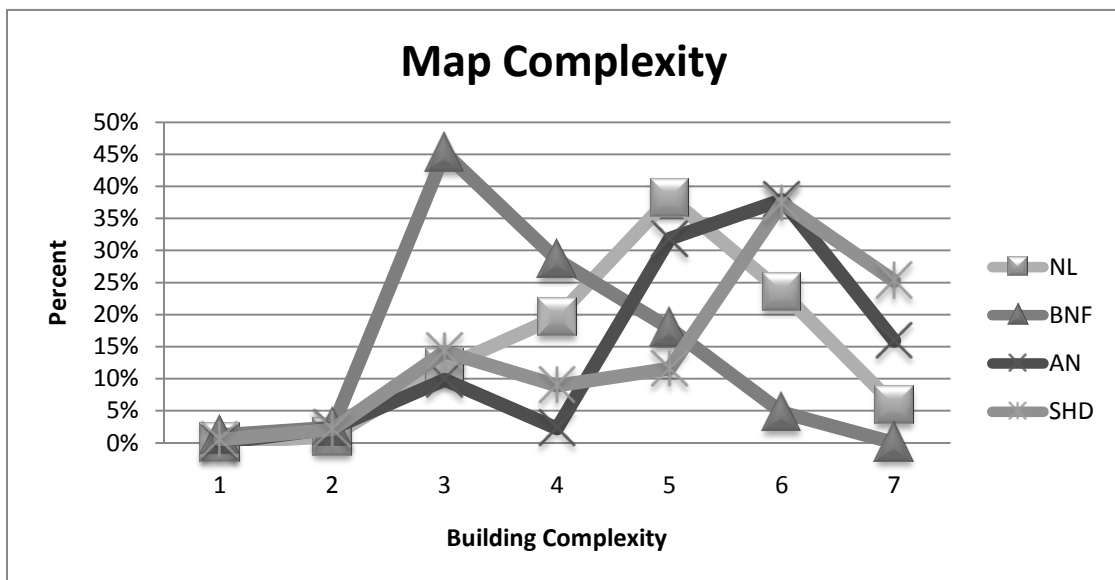


Figure 4.2. This graph shows the percentage of buildings for each complexity level. It is apparent the the AN and SHD maps are the most complex.

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Fort Rosalie

Fort Rosalie was erected at the French settlement at Natchez in 1716.

Enclosed within the palisade of the fort were four buildings, a fact with which both the AN and SHD maps agree. The NL map depicts five structures while the BNF map shows only one. Also associated with the fort, but outside the palisade, are the commander's house, the church and the cemetery. Together these structures formed the core of the Natchez settlement.

The Fort

The fort itself is depicted on all four of Dumont's maps as resting atop a small hill. Figure 4.3 shows Fort Rosalie as it appears on the AN and SHD maps. Apparent features include the palisade surrounding the fort, the flag (presumably French) and the

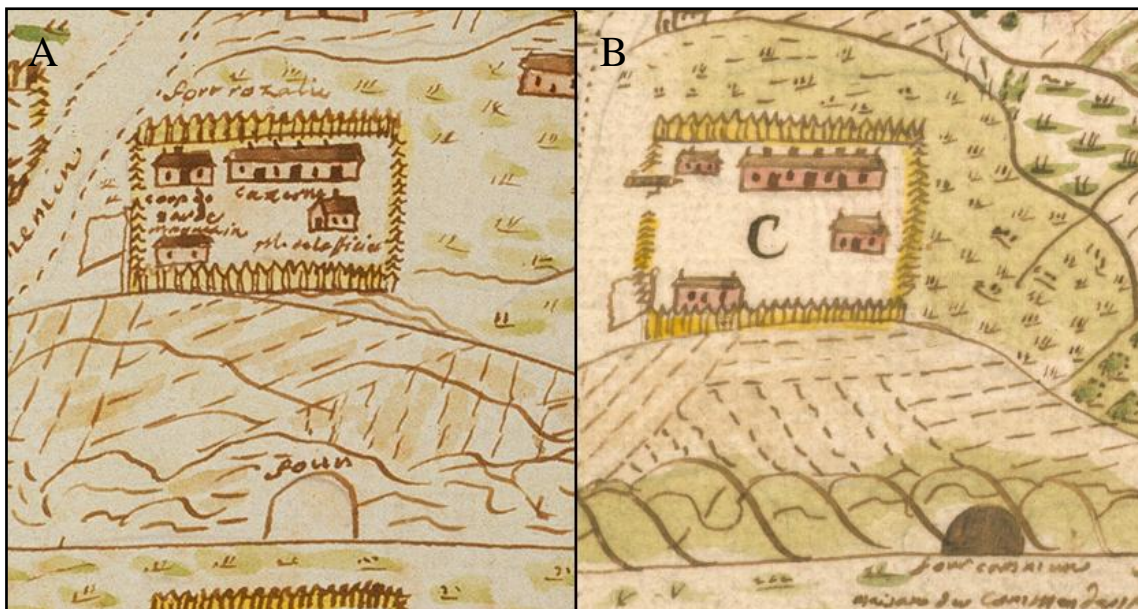


Figure 4.3. Fort Rosalie as depicted on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map. All of Dumont's maps are oriented with the North to the left.

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cannon near the gate. At the bottom of the hill there is an oven dug into the side of the hill, however, no kitchen building is shown.

The palisade is shown as a single row of sharpened posts. A gate is depicted on the north side of the palisade. The cannon is only depicted on the NL and SHD maps. In his description of Fort Rosalie Dumont does not mention any cannons, however, later in his description of the massacre Dumont describes the use of cannons by the French soldiers.¹ It is probably safe to assume that Fort Rosalie, like all the other forts of this period, was defended by cannonade. One common element of forts during this period is conspicuously absent on the three most reliable maps, bastions. The reason for their absence is unclear. Someone decided they were not necessary for this fort. In any case, Dumont's memoir confirms that the fort did not have bastions.

All four of the buildings are shown with hipped roofs on this map. However both the NL and AN maps show one building with a gabled roof. The presence of hipped roofs suggests that these buildings were important, permanent structures worth the investment of employing knowledgeable carpenters in their construction. The presence of finials on all four of the buildings drawn on the SHD map further supports this point. Why they are not included on the AN map is unclear.

The building in the northeast corner is labeled as a guardhouse on the AN and NL maps, the building in the northwest corner is labeled as a storehouse or powder magazine. The lack of chimneys depicted on these two buildings makes sense if neither building was a residence. The lack of a chimney on the south building, however, is strange. On the NL and AN maps this building is labeled as the commanding officer's house.

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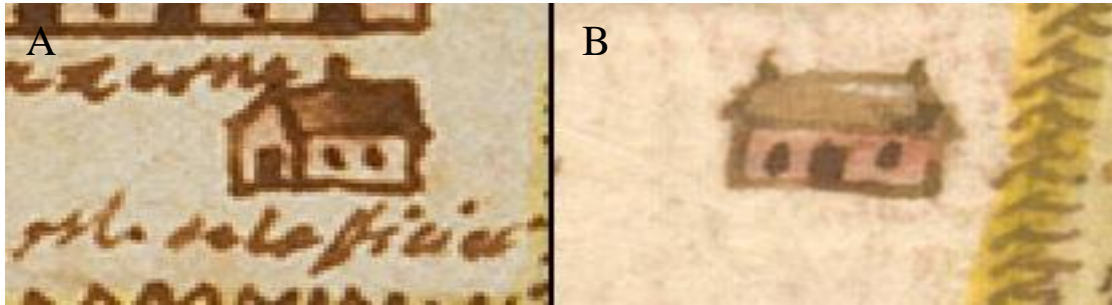


Figure 4.4. Commanding officer's house as seen on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

The commanding officer's house is the building with the most discrepancies between the AN and SHD maps. As shown on the SHD excerpt this building has a door flanked by two windows across the long side of the house. The roof is hipped with finials and no chimney is shown. On the AN map the house is shown as a gabled roof structure, without finials but with a chimney. The door is located on the short wall and the two windows are next to each other on the long wall. The drawing of this structure on the NL map supports the image on the AN map. The reason behind the discrepancy is unclear. The majority of the dwellings on all four maps are hip roofed. However, the structures in the fort are the earliest buildings in the settlement. The officer's house may have been built before there was a large availability of carpenters and joiners. It makes sense that the house could have been built during this period by less skilled laborers in an attempt to construct the fort buildings as fast as possible. In addition, there would have been no restrictions on the availability of timber, thus less incentive to put in the extra work to build a hipped roof on this particular structure.

The southeast building is labeled as the barracks. It is depicted as an elongated building with a hipped roof, three doors, four windows (three on the AN) and five chimneys (four on the AN). This configuration suggests that the building was at least

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three rooms across with the entrances on the outside. The chimneys were probably placed with one at each end and the others in between the interior dividing walls.

Below is an excerpt from Dumont's memoirs which supports the maps' depiction of Fort Rosalie.

West of this village (the Grand Village of the Natchez) the French built a fort on a hill and called it Fort Rosalie. It was merely a plot twenty-five fathoms long by fifteen broad, inclosed with palisades, without any bastions. Inside near the gate was the guardhouse, and three fathoms off along the palisade ran the barracks for the soldiers. At the other, opposite the gate, a cabin had been raised for the residence of the commanding officer, and on the right of the entrance was the powder magazine. At this post the company maintained a company of soldiers, with an ensign, sub-lieutenant, and a captain to command.²

The Commander's House

The commander's house was situated between Fort Rosalie and the Mississippi River. The AN map and the SHD map show very different versions of the commander's house. The AN map, Figure 4.5A, shows the main house in the center with two smaller houses on either side with a small palisaded garden in the back. The only architectural embellishments included are finials on the main house. The structures drawn on the SHD map are far more complex. As Figure 4.5B shows, the main house is still in the center but with one hip roofed building to the south and a gable roofed building slightly further off to the north. The garden is still enclosed in a palisade; however it is drawn here in the formal French fashion.

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Figure 5.5. (A) Commander Chepart's house as it appears on the AN and (B) the SHD map.

The main house exhibits the most differences. In the SHD map it appears to have an L-shaped floor plan. An additional room with a door appears to extend from the south end of the house. On the AN map the floor plan is clearly rectangular. The NL map goes even further to show a U-shaped house with two attached lean-tos rather than separate outbuildings. The BNF map shows a single building with no details. Both the AN and SHD maps show Chepart's house with two chimneys, indicating that the house had multiple rooms. The maps also show a variety of finials on the commander's roof. The AN map shows standard finials. The NL map shows flags and the SHD map shows both balls and flags on the corners of the roof. While it is impossible to tell what form these finials actually took, Dumont's drawings show the variety of embellishments utilized in French Colonial architecture.

The outbuildings present their own problems as they also are drawn differently on all the maps. This is a consistent problem throughout the analysis of Dumont's maps. Not only does he use different images to represent the same architecture, he uses similar images to represent different building structures. The only time outbuildings can be confidently identified is when Dumont includes a label. The SHD map seems to be the most detailed. The north building was most likely a detached kitchen, like those

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employed on most homesteads during the French Colonial period. It makes sense that the building would have a chimney and a simple, gabled roof and most importantly that it would have been placed at a safe distance from the main house. The function of the south building is unclear. As depicted in the SHD map (Figure 4.5B), with a hipped roof, chimney, finials, and central door with flanking windows, it appears to be a standard dwelling house. Perhaps this building is an attached room as the NL map suggests, although why Chepart would need that much extra space is unclear. Other possible functions include a barn or slave quarters, but the structure seems to have been too well-made for these purposes, or as a storehouse, which Chepart would have had little use for.

The Church

The church was also located on the bluffs above the river, and slightly to the east lay the cemetery. It was in the fort area but probably served the whole community. The buildings drawn on the AN and SHD maps are almost identical in their included features. Both are hip roofed structures with one door and two windows on the long side. Both houses have a steeple topped with a cross on the south end of the building and a small finial on the north end. The only small difference is the number of chimneys; two on the



Figure 4.6. The church as it appears on (A) the AN map, (B) the SHD map and (C) the NL map.

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SHD but only one on the AN. The NL map only has one chimney, however there are also two lean-tos attached to the building.

The church from these drawings does not fit the pattern employed in the New Orleans church, which was a cross shaped floor plan with the door on the short side. A plan survives of a contemporary church on Balise Island, drawn by Adrien de Pauger in 1723. It shows a church with a rectangular floor plan and two additions on each side.

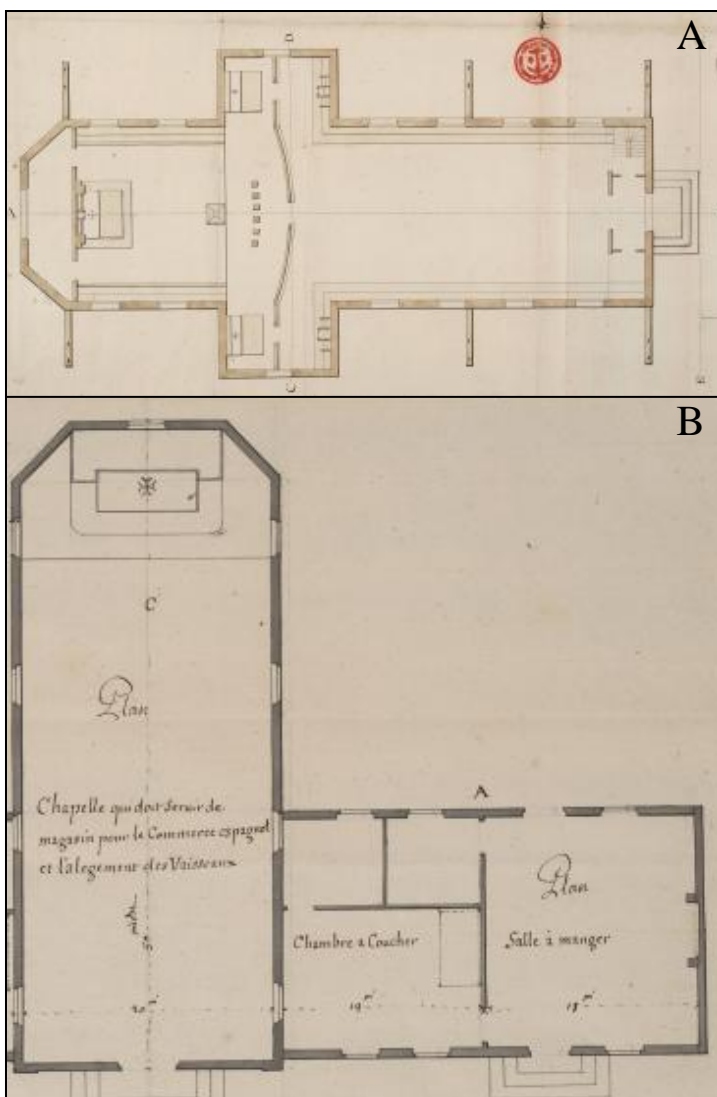


Figure 4.6. (A) Detail from the plan of the Church of St. Louis, New Orleans. Drawn by Pauger 1724 (*Archives nationales d'outre-mer*, 04DFC 70B). (B) Detail from the plan of the Church at Balise. Drawn by Pauger, 1723 (*Archives nationales d'outre-mer*, 04DFC 107C).

These additions were living quarters for priests. This document proves that not all churches were built with the cross-shaped floor plan. It makes sense for the church at Natchez, a smaller settlement, to follow this more simple floor plan. The addition of living quarters on the Pauger plan shows interesting parallels with the image of the Natchez church on the NL map. It is possible that the NL map is an earlier representation of the Natchez colony, and that the lean-tos

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shown on the NL map were built as the priest's quarters prior to the construction of a private house. These structures may have later been torn down, leaving only the church with a single rectangular room.

Mercantile Buildings

The mercantile buildings were located near the center of the Natchez settlement near the river. The AN and SHD maps both show two structures, a new and old storehouse. The NL and BNF map each show only one building, contributing to the idea that these two maps represent an earlier period. These buildings were owned by the Company of the Indies and probably used as the trading outpost for the settlement.

The Main Storehouse

The main storehouse (*magazine de la compagnie*) is the two story building located just off the road. On the AN map above the main storehouse is depicted as a two story, gable roofed, L-shaped structure. It has a door on each end, eighteen windows and five chimneys. There are also architectural embellishments on the roof; at each end there are finials in the form of balls topped with flags. The SHD map depicts a similar enough

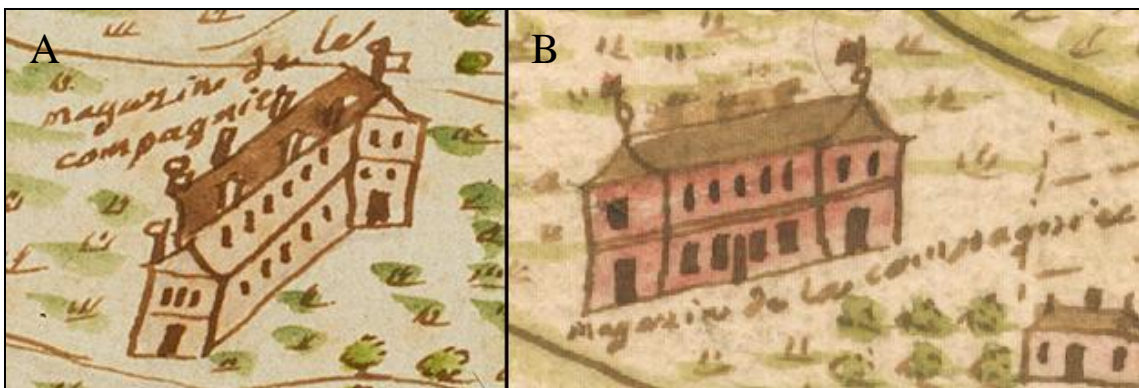


Figure 4.8. The Company storehouse as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

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building. It is two stories however with a hipped roof. There are three doors, one on each end and an additional one in the center of the building. There are only twelve windows and three chimneys drawn, regardless both sets of numbers convey the image of a larger than average building. In the NL and BNF maps the storehouse is depicted in much less detail. On the BNF map depicts a two story building with a hipped roof, but it is so small that the other details were omitted. The NL map shows a simple one story, hipped roof building with no chimney but finials on the roof. This building looks much more like the old storehouse depicted on the AN and SHD maps. This similarity supports the theory that the NL map shows an earlier version of the settlement. However the two-story building on the BNF map suggests that it is closer in time to the AN and SHD maps.

The storehouses shown on the AN and SHD maps fit the pattern found on

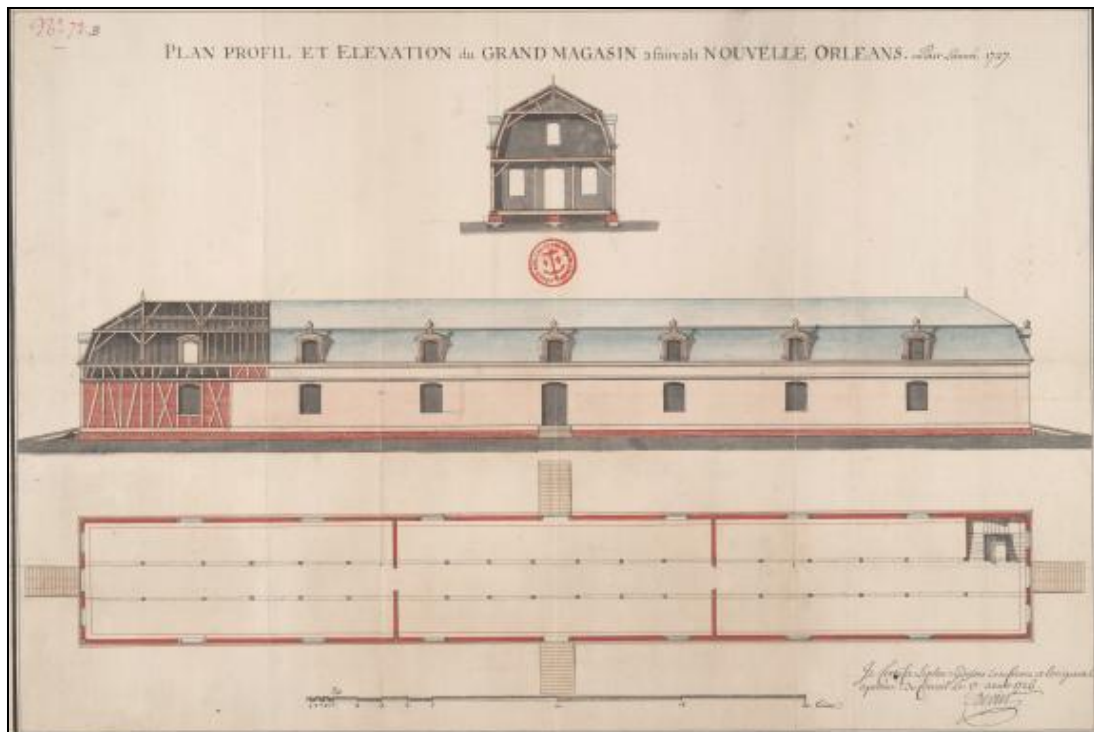


Figure 4.9. Plan of the Company storehouse in New Orleans. Drawn by Valentine Alexandre Devin 1726 (Archives nationales d'outre-mer, 04DFC 72B).

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architectural drawings of French Colonial storehouses. A plan of the New Orleans storehouse (Figure 4.9) shows an elongated two-story building with four doors and many windows (on the second story the windows were on the ends of dormers). There is one spiral staircase shown in the corner. Inside the storehouse is divided into three bays with additional divisions along the long axis. The storehouse at Natchez may have resembled this one. One of the main differences between this plan and the maps is the inclusion of chimneys in Dumont's drawings. Upon closer examination these chimneys are only outlines instead the solid blocks that appear everywhere else. This was probably Dumont's attempt to draw dormers. Additionally, while examples of L-shaped buildings have been found in French Colonial architecture, no plans have been recovered to provide examples of L- or U-shaped buildings being used for storehouses. It is possible that Dumont simply wanted to show both ends of the storehouse on the map to illustrate the doors placed at each end.

The Old Storehouse

The old storehouse (*vieux magazine*) is south of the main storehouse, closer to the fort. Both the AN and SHD maps show the old storehouse as a simple rectangular building with a hipped roof, door on the long side flanked by two windows and finials on

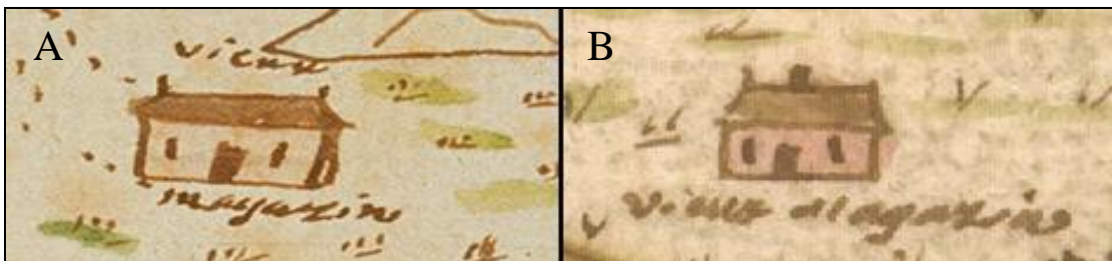


Figure 4.10. The old Company storehouse as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

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the roof. The SHD map also shows a chimney. This is an odd inclusion for a storehouse. Here fire would not only destroy the building but all the goods inside, a huge profit loss. However, in his memoirs Dumont mentions that Sr. Ricard, the storekeeper, lived in the old storehouse. The chimney was most likely added when the structure was converted into a dwelling.

As stated above, the storehouse on the NL map is much more akin to the old storehouses than to the main storehouse. The BNF map does not show a building labeled as the old storehouse, however the BNF is clearly missing many houses, the old storehouse was probably not important enough to merit inclusion on this condensed map. This information indicates that the NL map is the earliest representation of the Natchez Colony with the other maps all representing a later time, with the BNF map simply being a less detailed map.

St. Catherine's Concession

St. Catherine's Concession was located northeast of Fort Rosalie on the banks of St. Catherine's Creek. It was a fairly large complex located on a large expanse of agricultural fields. There was a water mill associated with the concession on the far bank of St. Catherine's Creek. However, gardens and fences are absent from all of Dumont's drawings of the concession.

The four Dumont maps all depict very different images of the concession. The most elaborate depiction is found on the most complex map, the SHD. The next most elaborate depiction is found on the AN map. The BNF map shows a very condensed version of the concession. The NL map shows a comparable number of buildings for the

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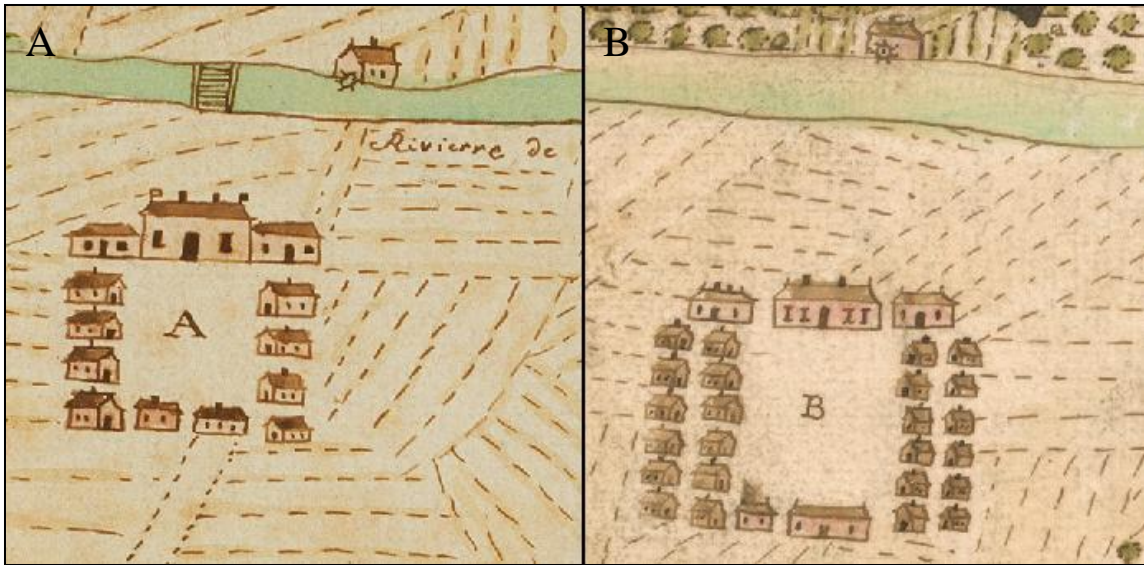


Figure 4.11. St. Catherine's Concession as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

concession, however, the buildings lack the organization found on the other maps.

As displayed on Figure 4.11 St. Catherine's Concession had several types of buildings. First, there was the water mill on the east bank of the creek. On the west bank, oriented toward the town and the Mississippi River was the main part of the concession. The buildings form a square complex surrounding a courtyard on the SHD and AN maps. At the top of the complex were three primary houses, one large house in the center flanked by two slightly smaller buildings. This configuration is found on both the SHD and the AN maps. On the BNF map there is only one flanking building. On the NL map it is difficult to discern a main building. There are several larger buildings at the center of the complex surrounded by many smaller buildings. There is no courtyard area. The SHD and AN maps shows two other hipped roof buildings at the opposite end on the complex while the BNF map shows only one. On the NL map, Figure 4.12, there is one large hipped roofed building at the top of the complex and two smaller ones at the bottom. The SHD map shows a total of 24 gable-roofed buildings, these were placed in two rows on



Figure 4.12. St. Catherine's Concession as it appears on the NL map.

either side of the courtyard. The AN map shows only eight such buildings and the BNF shows only five and no courtyard. The NL map has ten gable roofed structures surrounding the main houses in a circular configuration. The reasons behind the wide discrepancy in building numbers is not certain, it is highly possible that it is just a function of the size of the map in

question or the amount of attention Dumont paid to small details.

The Director's House

The buildings at the top of the complex are larger in comparison to the other buildings in the concession, indicating that they were more important. This is true on all four of the maps (on the NL map it is the center buildings that are drawn larger). The largest house was in the center and was probably the house belonging to the director of the concession even though Dumont did not label it as such. Based on comments from Dumont's memoirs the owner only occasionally visited the concession, although he was there during the massacre.³ For simplicity's sake this house will henceforth be referred to as the director's house. The director's house is portrayed differently on all of the maps. On the SHD map the house is one story with a hipped roof, two chimneys and finials at the ends of the roof. It has one door on the long side of the house and four windows. The

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AN map shows a similar house but with only two windows and flags instead of finials. On the BNF map the director's house is almost identical to the one shown on the AN map. The only exception is that there is only one chimney located at the end of the house with a finial at the other end. It is difficult to determine which house belonged to the director on the NL map. Most likely it was the more visible of the two hipped roofed houses at the center of the concession. This building is one story with a chimney in the center of the building and finials at either end. There are four ambiguous lines drawn on the long side of the house that may be any combination of doors and windows. Overall the director's house was probably the sturdiest house on the concession. If the BNF map is depicting an earlier period then the house may have been smaller, thus only needing one fireplace. The AN and SHD maps both have two, centrally located fireplaces; an indication that the house had two internal walls dividing the house into at least three rooms.

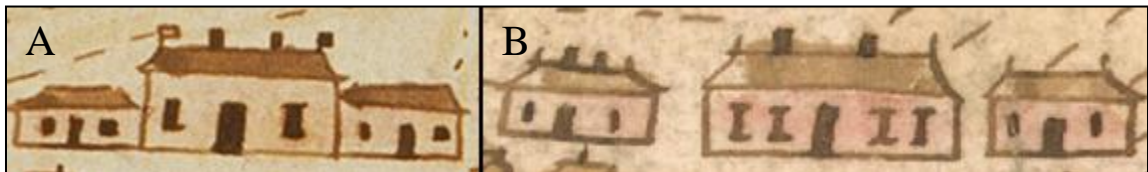


Figure 4.13. The director's house from the St. Catherine's Concession from (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

The Outbuildings

The two houses flanking the director's house again bring up the outbuilding dilemma. Dumont shows the same structure in multiple ways on his four maps. The two most likely scenarios appear on the AN and SHD maps. On the AN map the main house is drawn with two connecting buildings, a common image for homesteads on the SHD map. The most obvious interpretation for these structures is that they are attached lean-tos.

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However, the fact that they are shown as separate buildings on the SHD map suggests that they are outbuildings. Dumont's drawing of the La Pointe Concession (Figure 4.14) provides a comparison. Here the director's house is flanked by two buildings labeled as storehouses; the image is almost identical to the one on the SHD map. The parallels between the images of these two concessions strongly suggest that the buildings at St. Catherine's are also storehouses. If this is true it opens up the possibility that other connecting buildings represent storehouses or other outbuildings rather than an attached living space.

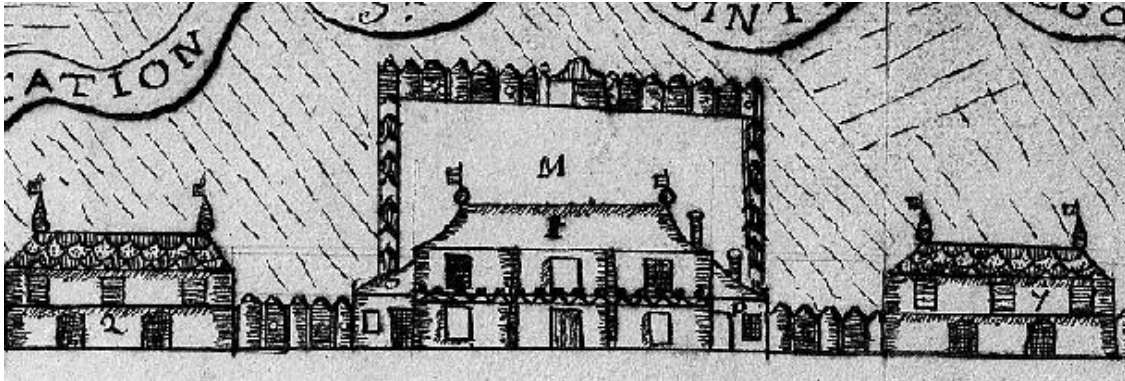


Figure 4.14. Excerpt from the La Point Concession, Dumont (*Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des cartes et plans, Ge DD 2987 (8818 B)*).

Based on the AN and SHD maps, there seem to be two hip roofed structures at the west end of the complex. No clues are included as to their use. They could be additional dwellings or storehouses or perhaps multi-purpose barns to store items used on the concession.

The remaining outbuildings are all gable-roofed structures; the number of these structures varies greatly between the maps. On the AN eight gable structures (four per side) form the sides of the complex. On the SHD map 24 buildings are placed in two rows which form the sides of the complex. All of these structures have doors on the gable

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end of the house and chimneys drawn in the center of the roof. Most also have windows on the long sides of the house. On the BNF map there are only four gable-roofed structures. They are placed in two short rows along with the hipped roof buildings. No details are included. On the NL map there are ten gable-roofed buildings that circle the main houses at the center of the complex. Most are depicted with some assortment of doors (always on the gable end), windows and chimneys.

These building are clearly the simplest buildings on the concession; most likely they were dwellings for workers or slaves. Dumont's memoir does not mention slaves on St. Catherine's; instead he says that Hubert arrived with 60 indentured servants. According to the 1723 census these workers did not stay when Coly bought the plantation. In 1723 there were 45 African slaves and 3 Indian slaves on the concession. There were also 43 free men living on the concession.⁴ The population of the concession had dropped by the time the 1726 census was taken. Aside from the director there were only 12 indentured servants, 4 Indian slaves, and 25 African slaves in residence.⁵ Based on these numbers it is likely that the gable-roofed structures served as housing for both the free and enslaved workers. While the housing was not exclusively slave housing, Alexandre de Batz's 1732 plan of the Company slave quarters in New Orleans provides an interesting comparison.

Dumont's drawings of these buildings do not agree with much of the data on such buildings. First of all, Dumont draws the doorways on the gable end of the

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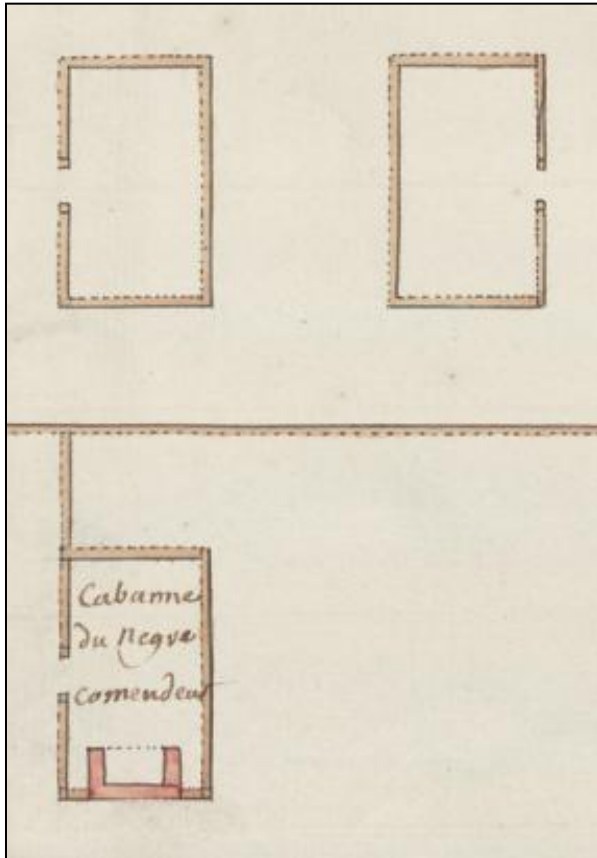


Figure 4.15. Detail from the plan of the Company slave quarters in New Orleans. Drawn by Alexandre de Batz, 1732 (Archives nationales d'outre-mer, 04DFC 91B).

structure, the short side. According to Waselkov doors were never placed on the short ends of buildings in French Colonial architecture.⁶ The only place doors appear on the short sides of buildings in architectural drawings are on large storehouses where doors are placed on every side. In the plan of the Company slave quarters in New Orleans the doors were located on the long ends of the building. However, in Lassus's map of New Orleans he draws many buildings with doors on the short ends. It is unclear if the maps by Dumont and Lassus show

gable structures like this because it was easier to draw or because the structures actually looked like that.

Another disagreement between existing archaeological data and Dumont's drawings is the placement of the chimneys in these simple structures. In most early Creole architecture chimneys were placed on the ends of houses unless the house was large with several interior dividing walls. The slave quarters were very simple and unlikely to have dividing walls. The abovementioned plan of the Company slave quarters in New Orleans shows that not only did slave quarters not have any dividing walls, most did not have any fireplaces at all. Only the two dwellings for the supervisors had

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fireplaces. In these two buildings the fireplaces were located at the ends of the buildings. Dumont typically draws chimneys in the center of buildings. It is likely that this was just the easiest way to draw the detail. If the slave quarters were truly all equipped with fireplaces and chimneys they were most likely placed on the gable ends of the houses. Free workers and indentured servants may have been afforded better living conditions.

The Mill

The mill owned by St. Catherine's Concession was located across the creek from the main part of the concession, except on the NL map on which the mill is placed on the same side of the creek. While Dumont's four drawings of the mill do not agree in some of the details, all depict a single rectangular building with an external waterwheel attached. The AN and BNF maps both show a gable roofed building with two windows and a chimney. The AN map also depicts finials on the roof. The SHD and NL maps both show a hipped roof structure with a chimney. No doors or windows are included on the SHD drawing. These details have no bearing to the interpretation of the building, which was clearly a mill.



Figure 4.17. The mill at St. Catherine's Concession as displayed on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

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The plan of a combined pestle and tunnel mill from the Company of the Indies plantation in New Orleans provides an excellent comparison for the mill at St. Catherine's Concession. The plan was drawn by Alexandre de Batz in 1732. This building included two types of mills. The tunnel mill (*Moulin a tonnelle*) was powered by a horizontal wheel. There is no indication that such an apparatus was used on the St. Catherine's mill. The other mill is a pestle mill (*Moulin a pillons*). This mill was powered by a vertical wheel which turned the grinding stone inside of the mill. In this case the waterwheel was enclosed in a room that extended over the water source, this room was needed to house the tunnel mill. Such a room is not included on Dumont's drawing and probably never existed on the St. Catherine's mill.

Based on the presence of this mill at the St. Catherine's Concession and the large expanse of fields the production of flour was probably at the center of the plantation's

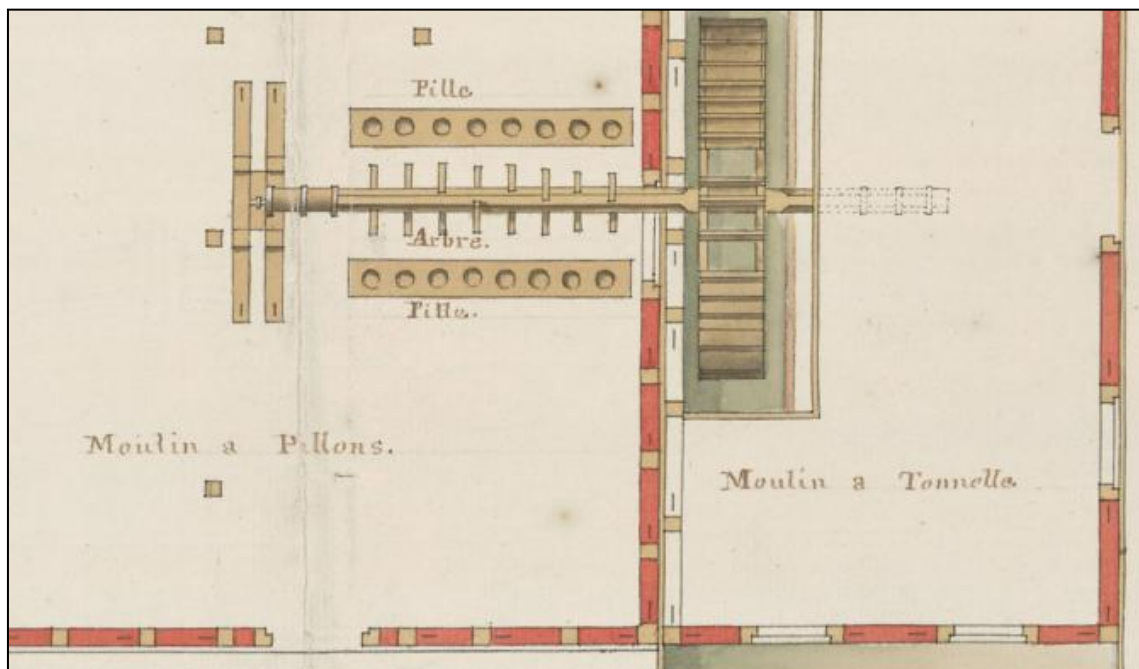


Figure 4.17. Detail from the plan of the Company tunnel and pestle mill in New Orleans. Drawn by Alexandre de Batz, 1732 (*Archives nationales d'outre-mer*, 04DFC 95B).

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economy. This conclusion is supported by the presence of at least two large storehouses, extensive labor housing and agricultural space. This conclusion is confirmed by Dumont's memoirs where he states Hubert's intent was to grow wheat.⁷

Terre Blanche

The Terre Blanche concession was located southeast of Fort Rosalie along St. Catherine's Creek. Based on the detail with which Dumont drew this concession, it was an elaborate one. In both the AN and SHD maps the Terre Blanche concession is placed in the area where the Sycamore Bayou splits off from St. Catherine's Creek, although on the maps Dumont reverses the rivers and mislabels Sycamore Bayou as the White River. On both maps the domestic complex is placed in between Sycamore Bayou and St. Catherine's Creek with the garden on the opposite side of the St. Catherine's Creek. Agricultural fields spread out around the concession on both sides of St. Catherine's Creek. The NL map does not show the Sycamore Bayou at all. The BNF map shows a river along the west side of the concession but not one to the east. It could be either river. The reason behind this discrepancy is probably simply a lack of attention to detail. These two maps were the smaller ones included in his manuscripts, the placement of a creek would not have affected the usefulness of these maps.

The domestic complex contained approximately 30 buildings based on the AN and SHD maps. The area was enclosed in palisades and appears to have been built on top of small bluffs that formed the east bank of the St. Catherine's Creek. On the AN map the bluffs cut into the property of the domestic complex creating a protected corner that did

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Figure 4.18. Terre Blanche Concession as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

not require palisades. The SHD and BNF maps do not show the bluffs as interfering with the palisade which forms a complete enclosure. The NL map does not show a river on the west side of the complex and thus the bluffs are absent as well.

The garden is depicted in the formal French style on the AN map, with one quadrant being reserved for an orchard. On the SHD map only one half of the formal garden is drawn with an extra quadrant placed below. The remaining area was devoted to

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the orchard. Despite these small differences it is apparent that there was some type of formal garden combined with an orchard and enclosed in a palisade across the creek from the domestic complex. Neither the NL nor the BNF map shows a garden. It is possible that these maps are simply less detailed, or that they depict an early stage of the concession that predated the construction of the garden.

The domestic complex itself has an interesting layout. The complex seems to be divided into four sections. Isolated in the northeast corner are the director's house and its domestic outbuildings. In the southeast there is a complex of smaller buildings, most likely the slave quarters. Also in this section are two large storehouses. In the northwest corner there is an isolated building used to house Indians, it is probable that they were slaves as well. In the southwest corner there is an area sectioned off for the domestic animals. Also in this area are the guard buildings and the forge. Fortunately almost all of the buildings in the concessions are labeled on the AN map. This makes it much easier to determine the use of various outbuildings. The labels also aid in the identification of unlabeled buildings on this map and the others.

Director's House and Associated Buildings

While the concession belonged to Monsieur le Blanc and the Compté de Belle-Isle, they did not live there. Instead the concession was run by the director, Monsieur Desnoyers.⁸ The director's house was the most elaborate on the concession. Figure 4.19B shows the house as it appears on the SHD map. The house has two chimneys, indicating that there

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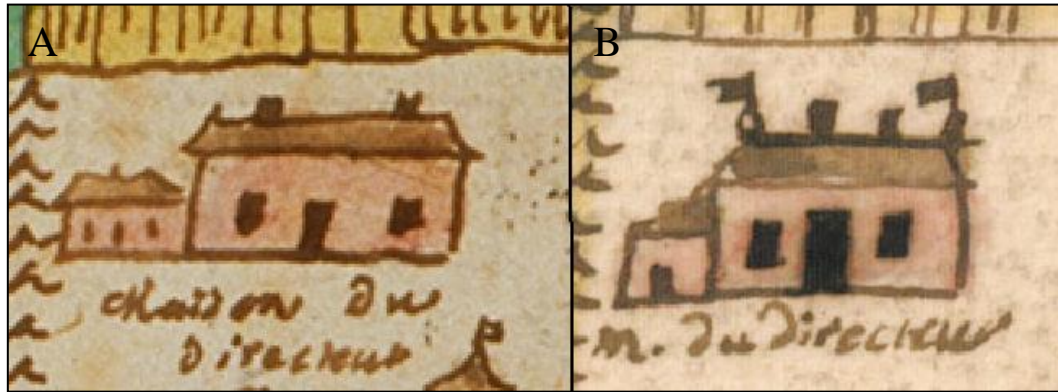


Figure 4.19. The Terre Blanche Director's house as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

were at least two dividing walls in the house. The house also has two ball shaped finials topped with flags. In addition there is an attached wing with its own door. The AN map shows a similar building, Figure 4.19A. While there are no finials the building is still drawn with two chimneys. Here the wing is drawn as an entirely separate building (although still attached) with its own chimney, door and windows. Based on the examples from the St. Catherine's concession this form is interpreted as two unconnected buildings. However, the fact that at this concession the form is equated with an attached wing poses an interesting dilemma. The NL and BNF maps do not help to clear up the issue as they both show only a solitary building. The BNF map shows a building with only one chimney at the end of the house. The NL map shows a slightly more complex one with two chimneys, again indicating that there were interior dividing walls.

The kitchen (*cuisine*) is drawn near the director's house yet seemingly far enough away that a fire would not damage the other building. On the SHD map the building is drawn as a simple gable roofed building with a door on the gable end and two windows on the long side of the structure. There is also a chimney. Both the AN and NL maps show a hipped roof structure for the kitchen. All the other elements are the same except for the door placement on the long side and the lack of windows on the NL map. On the

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BNF map there is no structure discernable as the kitchen although it is safe to assume that there was one. Interestingly, although almost every French Colonial homestead had a separate building for the kitchen, the kitchen at the Terre Blanche concession is the only labeled kitchen on any of Dumont's maps of Natchez. This suggests that such a common element of a homestead that Dumont believed people who viewed his maps would just assume their presence; there was no need for him to draw them.

Separate from the kitchen was the oven. The only other representation we have

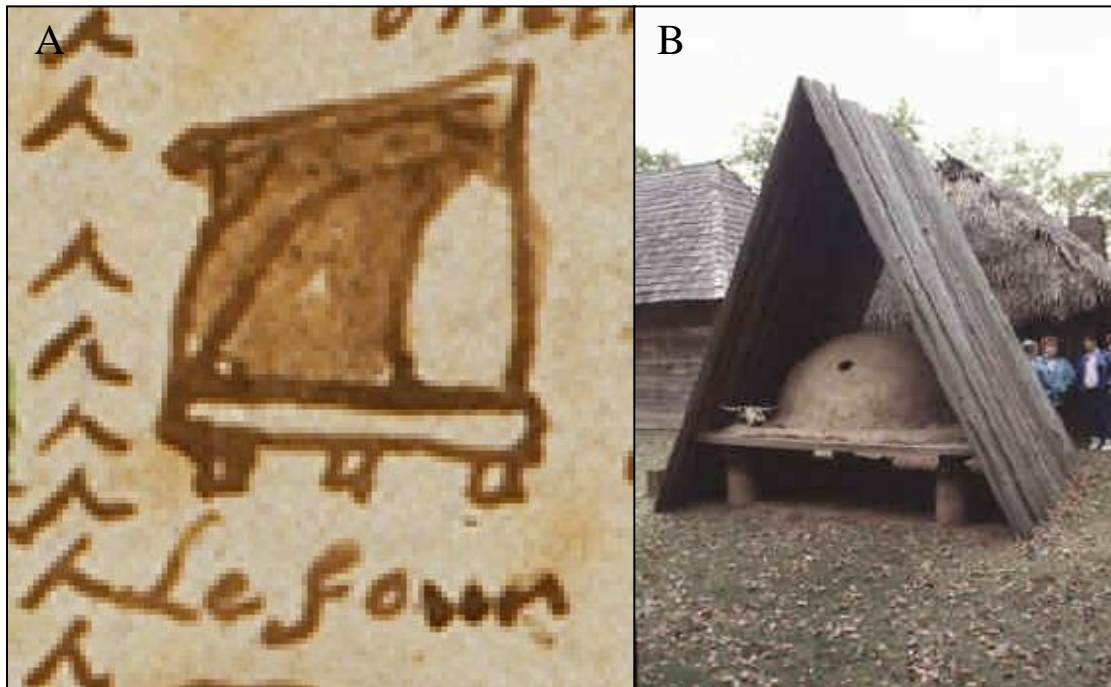


Figure 4.20. (A) Terre Blanche oven as it appears on the AN map and (B) a recreation of a French oven (*The University of South Alabama*).

from Dumont's Natchez maps is the oven for use at the fort. The fort oven was unconventional in that it was dug into the side of the hill. The oven at Terre Blanche was most likely a traditional oven. The representations in both the AN and SHD maps are very similar and extremely detailed. Figure 4.20A demonstrates the oven was set on a raised platform. The oven itself is a domed structure with an opening at one end. The

oven is then covered by some sort of roof. Figure 4.20B shows a recreation of a French Colonial oven based on examples found in French Canada. The image from Dumont's map matches the facsimile exactly. As with the kitchens, it is likely that every French Colonial homestead had an oven. These two items were probably only included on the drawings of the Terre Blanche concession in order to show the layout of the concession.

Slave Quarters

The slave quarters at the Terre Blanche concession were located in the southeast corner of the complex near the storehouses. On the AN map the African slave camp is arranged in four rows of three with one slave house sitting off to the side. This lone house probably belonged to the overseer. The plan of the New Orleans slave camp indicates the presence of such buildings. The buildings themselves are small gable roofed structures with no indication of doors, windows or chimneys. Obviously there had to be doors on the buildings but it is entirely possible that the other two elements were absent. There is no indication of either element on the buildings of the New Orleans slave camp. On the SHD map there are three rows of five and no additional house heading the complex. On the AN map the area is labeled *cage des negres*. The term *cage* has a double meaning. The first meaning is shack which suggests that these houses were not well made, probably employing *poteaux en terre* construction. The second meaning is cage, indicating in no uncertain terms that the Africans living there were slaves.

Other Buildings

There were several other buildings within the domestic complex at Terre Blanche. These buildings included the storehouses, the forge, and the guardhouses. All of these building contributed in some way to the economic production of the concession.

The storehouses were located along the eastern wall of the domestic complex. The buildings appear almost identically on both the AN and SHD maps. Both maps show two two-story hip roofed buildings with one door on the long side and somewhere on the order of nine to thirteen windows on each building. Although the buildings do have finials, none of them are depicted with chimneys or dormers. The NL map shows only one storehouse along the east wall of the complex. The BNF map shows two buildings that could be storehouses although they are on the south, not the east, wall. It is possible that the layout of the concession changed over time, however it is equally likely that Dumont was just careless in his drawing on this map. The interior of these storehouses were probably not very different from the company storehouse in the town. In this case, Terre Blanche had storage that rivaled, if not exceeded, the storage of the company. It is entirely possible that Terre Blanche had a bigger economy in Natchez than the Company did.

The forge was located on the south end of the complex in between the African slave camp and the guard houses. This building is shown as a hipped roof structure with a chimney on the SHD map and as a gable roofed structure with a chimney on the AN map. The building is not identifiable on the NL and BNF maps. Without the label there would be no way to identify the function of this building on the AN and SHD maps either. The

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only other place a forge is mentioned is on the AN map; one of the homesteads is attributed to a Sr. la Forge. Either this homestead belonged to the Terre Blanche blacksmith or it is another working forge. This distinction affects the interpretation of the forge at Terre Blanche. Obviously allowing the blacksmith to serve the entire Natchez community would be an excellent way to expand the economy of the concession. However, this opportunity would not be present if the settlement had its own blacksmith.

In the northwest corner of the complex was a building labeled *indigorerie*, or an indigo manufacturing plant. It makes sense for this building, or possibly two buildings according to the SHD map, to be isolated. The plant would have produced some measure of pollution. The ability to manufacture indigo would have greatly expanded the economic potential of the concession.

The other buildings were grouped around the animal pens with the label *corp de guard*. In fact, there was probably only one guardhouse. The other buildings in the area were most likely the houses of the soldiers and perhaps of free workers, such as the blacksmith if he did not live in town. On the AN map there were six buildings laid out in an L-shape around the corner of the animal pens. Four were gable roofed, two were hip roofed. All were drawn with a single, central chimney and some assortment of doors or windows. On the SHD map there are nine houses in the same configuration, seven are gable roofed and two are hip roofed. One of these buildings was probably the active duty guard house. One was probably reserved for the commanding officer while the rest were probably used as barracks for the soldiers. It is possible that one of these houses was used by the blacksmith, although he may have lived in his shop.

Animal Shelters

There are three labeled animal pens shown on the AN and SHD maps, the *parc aux cochon* (pig pen), the *parc aux bestiaux* (cattle pen), and the *poulailler* (hen house). On the AN map the three pens are lined up side by side along the west wall of the domestic complex. Each has a one-story structure in the pen which is enclosed with a palisade. On the SHD map the hen house and the pig pen are along the west wall with the cattle pen adjacent to them on the interior of the complex. Again they are enclosed in palisades however there are no barns indicated on the map. Neither the NL nor the BNF map indicates that there were any animal pens or barns at the concession. The pens could have been later additions or simply left off of these two maps. In any case it is safe to assume that these elements were present, most likely with the barns.

Also drawn on the AN and SHD maps but missing from the NL and BNF maps is the dovecote (*colombier*). This interesting building is drawn in far more detail on the Natchez maps than on any other of Dumont's maps. The building matches up very well with surviving examples.

Independent Homesteads

The majority of Dumont's maps are taken up by independent homesteads. Most are clustered in what appears to be the town area, however there are several that are isolated in the countryside. By no means are all the homesteads that were actually present at Natchez included on these maps. In fact, Dumont states in the legend on the NL map that the roads lead to unseen houses in the valleys. In order to better see the patterns the homesteads have been sorted into three types. Type 1 represents all of the homesteads

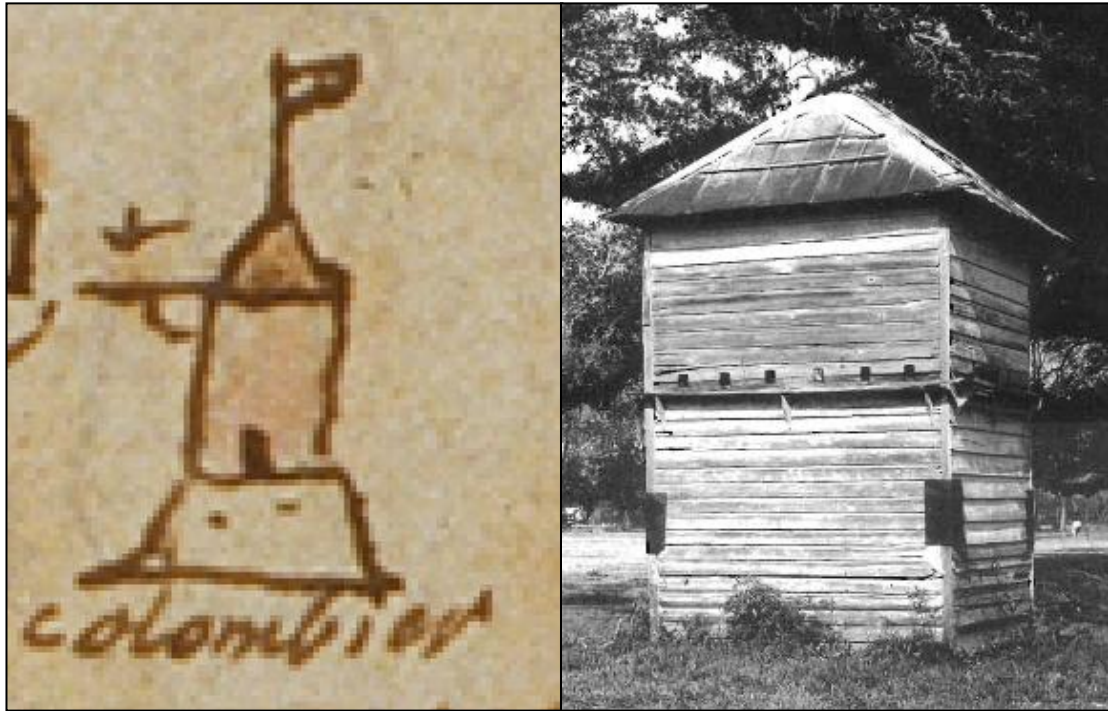


Figure 4.22. (A) Dovecote from the Terre Blanche concession as it appears on the AN map and (B) Surviving dovecote from Magnolia Plantation, Natchitoches (After Duncan 1998).

that are not associated with agricultural fields. Type 2 represents all those that show a single house associated with a field. Type 3 represents homesteads with multiple houses built around the same field. These types have been further compared based on their placement within the town or in the countryside and also with the roofing techniques applied to the houses. Finally the types have been compared across the four Dumont maps. Figures 4.22 and 4.23 show the distributions.

As Figures 4.22 and 4.23 show the most common type is clearly Type 2, a single structure on an agricultural field. This is interesting considering that the majority of homesteads during the French Colonial Period had outbuildings. The lack of inclusion of outbuildings on Dumont's maps suggests that these outbuildings were so common that he did not need to draw them. The only places he included extensive outbuildings were in his detailed drawings of concessions. In the places where he did include additional

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buildings it was probably because the outbuilding was not a necessary part of the homestead. For example, it is safe to assume that every homestead would have needed a separate kitchen; however a barn would represent a more optional addition to the estate. These Type 2 homesteads probably represent the average independent settler, men who came over from France or Germany to build lives in the New World. Some of them may have had wives from France while many others took Indian wives.

Type 1 homesteads appear most commonly in the town area of Natchez, especially on the NL and AN maps. On the NL map there is also one homestead without a field in the countryside. On the chart it appears as ten percent of the homesteads but that is simply a function of the number of countryside homesteads represented on the map, which would be ten. This anomaly could be a mistake by Dumont, an issue with the preservation of the ink, or the building could be a barn belonging to one of the other homesteads. If this last option is true the area was probably used for pasturing animals. However, the lack of such a building on any of the other maps suggests that this last option is not the case. Most likely the lack of a field for this building was an oversight by Dumont.

The Type 1 homesteads make much more sense when found in the town. There are two of these homesteads that can be identified on several maps. The first is a house build north of the fort along the bank of the Mississippi River. This homestead is identifiable on the AN, NL and SHD maps. On all of them the house is shown as a one-story, hipped roof house with one door, two windows, a chimney and finials. On the SHD map however there is an additional building shown attached to the side of the main

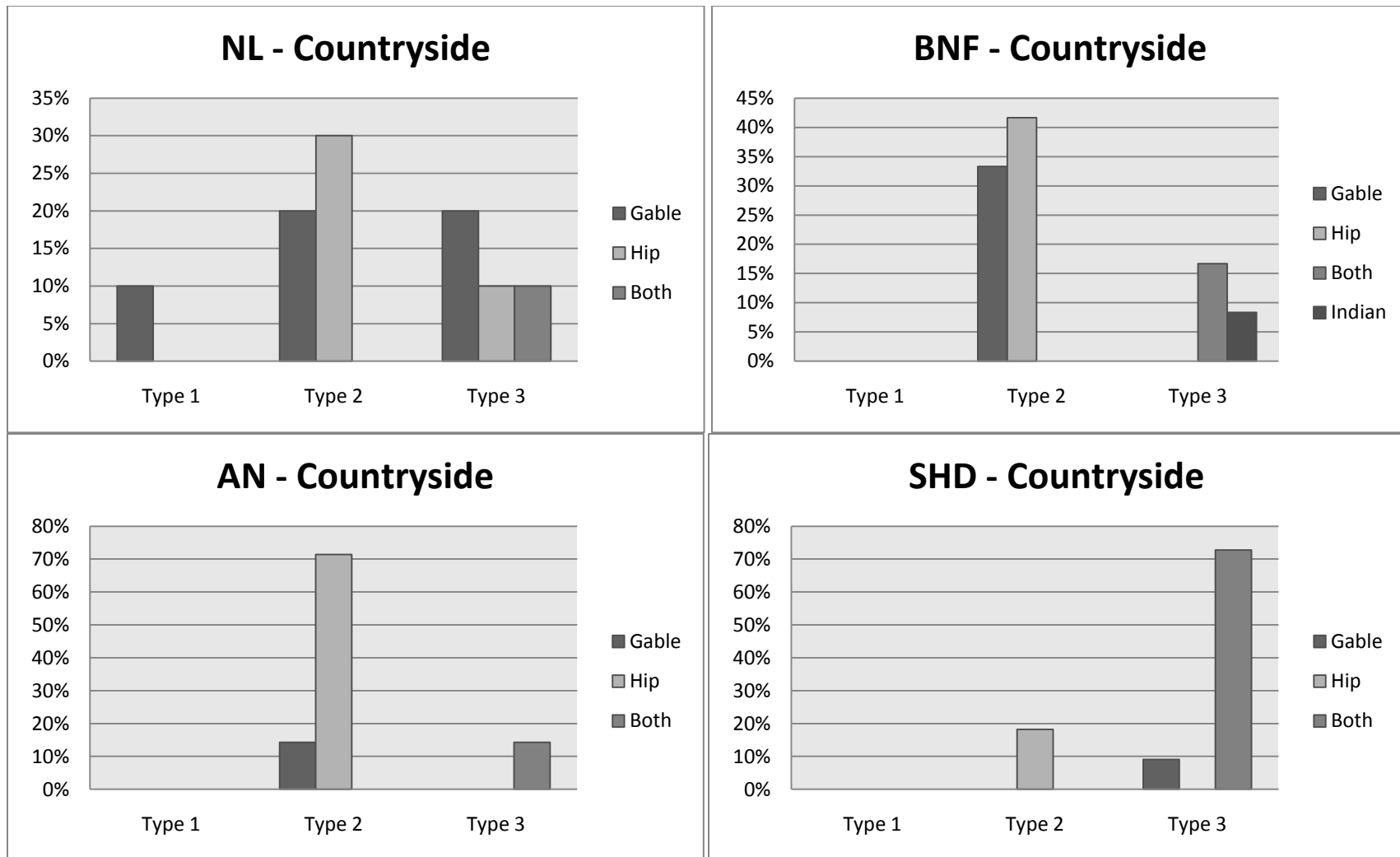


Figure 4.22. Shows percentages of homestead types according to map, area and roof style.

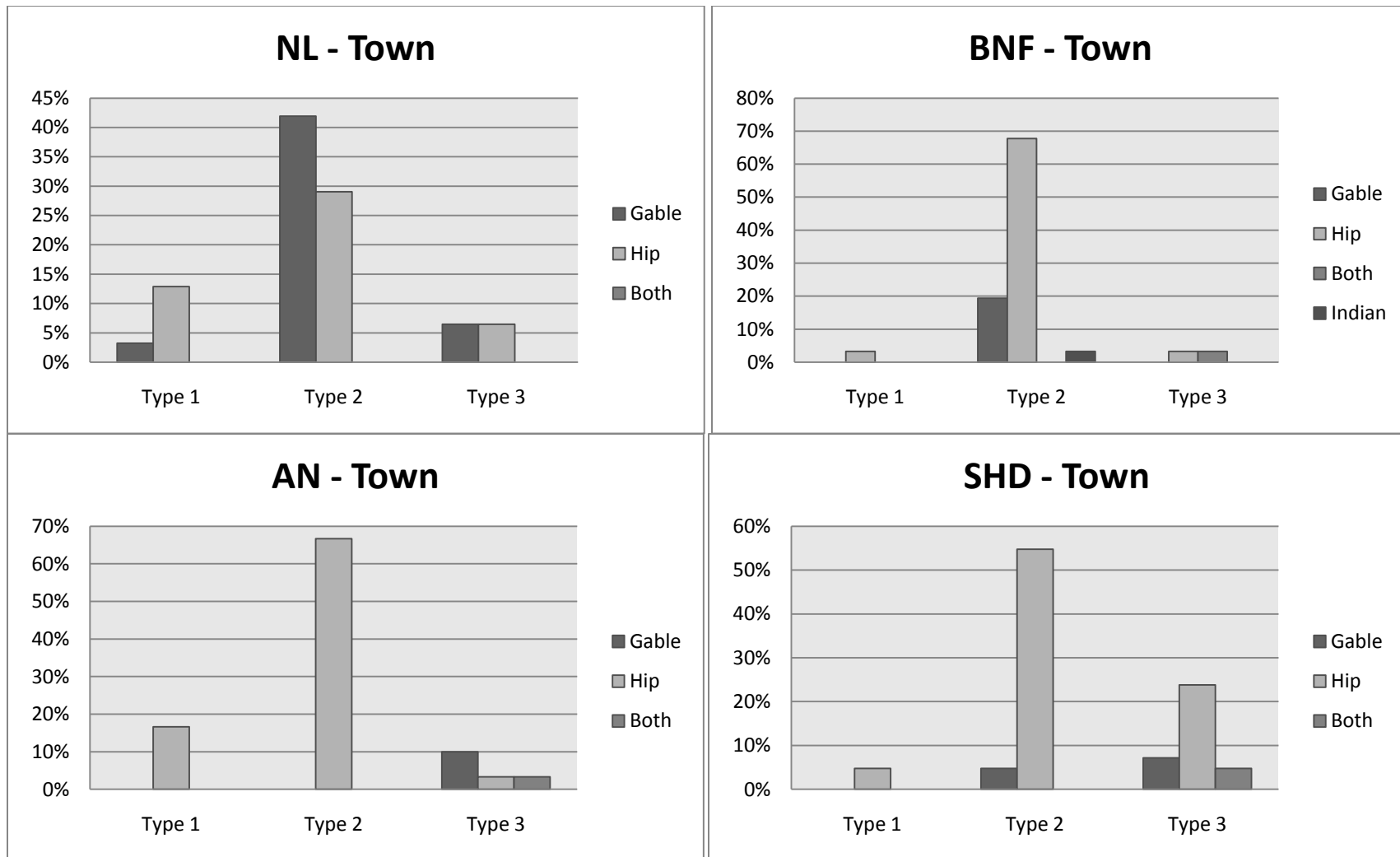


Figure 4.23. Shows percentages of homestead types according to map, area and roof style.

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Figure 4.24.. Type 1 homestead as it appears on the AN map.



Figure 4.25. Type 1 homestead as it appears on the SHD map.

house. This addition could indicate a wing; it has its own chimney, finials and windows but no door. It is unlikely that the building was a barn or storehouse considering there is no indication of agricultural production. The house could belong to a town official or craftsman. The second homestead is also along the banks of the river, this time closer to the fort near the church. Once again the homestead appears on the AN, NL and SHD maps. It is a hip roofed, one-story building that seems to be further down the bluffs than any of the other buildings. Most certainly on shown the NL map and possibly on the other two is a small orchard associated with the house. On the AN map it is labeled with the name Le Sr Villeneuve, a man mentioned by both the 1723 and 1726 censuses. In 1723 Villeneuve lived alone with one indentured servant.⁹ By 1726 he had married and the indentured servant was gone. Interestingly the 1726 census says that Villeneuve had five units of land under plow (the unit is not given). This fact suggests that Type 1 homesteads were simply mistakes made by Dumont.

Type 3 homesteads appear on all of the maps. They typically represent a smaller percentage than Type 2 homesteads but a larger percentage than Type 1 homesteads. Usually they appear more commonly in the country. The only map where this pattern is

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different is on the SHD map. In the countryside 82% of the homesteads are Type 3. In the town Type 2 is still more common but Type 3 represents 36% of the homesteads. This is more than twice the percentage from any other map. The AN and SHD maps do not display a different time period. Instead this discrepancy seems to be an indication that the SHD map has more detailed illustrations. This is supported by the drawings of both the St. Catherine's Concession and the Terre Blanche Concession.

There seem to be three common patterns within the Type 3 homesteads. The first and most common is the one previously examined in the St. Catherine's and Terre Blanche concessions: one main building with a second building shown either attached or in very close proximity. The second type is almost like an independent slave camp. In this subgroup there are several small buildings placed in rows sharing a field but without a discernable main building. The final form is akin to a miniature concession, more of a developed estate than the other homesteads. In this type there is usually a discernable main building along with several smaller outbuildings. There is also often some sort of landscaping detail such as a palisade, garden or orchard included.

The standard model of the Type 3 homesteads (the ones with two attached



Figure 4.26. Type 3 homestead, standard model from town area as it appears on the SHD.

building or two buildings in close proximity) appears almost solely on the SHD map. Of these occurrences the most common is for two hipped buildings to be attached to each other. However, there are a significant number of examples of a

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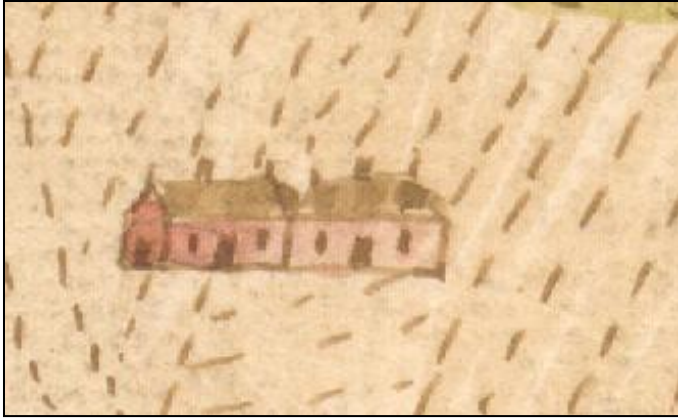


Figure 4.27. Type 3 homestead, standard model from the countryside as it appears on the SHD map.

hipped roof structure drawn attached to a gable-roofed building. Along with these examples there are many homesteads with hipped roofed buildings drawn next to, but not attached to, gable roofed structures. The only example of

such a case happening with two hipped roof buildings is on the AN map. The most obvious conclusion to which the images of two attached buildings leads to is that the structures represent a conventional dwelling with an attached lean-to. This is the juxtaposition of the Terre Blanche director's house found on the AN and SHD maps. However, in this case the lean-to appears in the SHD map. Dumont's choice to differentiate between the lean-to on the director's house and the attached buildings on the other homesteads on the SHD map suggests that on the SHD map the images represent different things. In the image of St. Catherine's on the SHD map Dumont separates the storehouses from the main house while on the AN map he draws them connected. This information suggests that the attached buildings on the SHD map were again something different. Based on the inconsistencies it seems impossible to discern a pattern and thus impossible to determine the functions of attached buildings. For the most part, attached buildings were probably not connected in real life. Possible functions include residences, barns, kitchens, storehouses and even lean-tos. Additional dwellings would have been necessary on homesteads owned by associates rather than a single family. Several such

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arrangements are mentioned in the 1723 and 1726 censuses. Multi-purpose barns would have served the storage needs of an average family. Any livestock the family owned could be housed in the barn. Many multi-purpose barns also had corn cribs and storage space for other agricultural products grown on the family fields.¹⁰ In many of the larger towns fields and barns were located in commonfields on the periphery of the town. However, it is clear based on Dumont's maps that the fields were located with the houses inside the town limits. It is logical that barns would still have been necessary in these conditions. However, it is impossible to determine these functions without excavating.

The camp model of the Type 3 homestead appears only in the town. There are a couple of examples of two similar sized gable roofed buildings sharing a field in the countryside on the NL and SHD maps, however these fit better in the Type 3 standard model category. Most of the Type 3 camp model examples have either six or eight buildings of the same size. In two examples all are gable-roofed structures while in the third all have hipped roofs. There are three of these examples on the SHD and BNF maps. The NL map shows only one of the examples while the AN map show an additional example. The fourth example from the AN map has only three gable roofed structures and is labeled *Les Bohemies*. It is probably a coincidence that this homestead appears similar to the other examples. The primary three examples are placed in almost identical places on the three maps (NL, AN, and SHD). One straddles the road between the fort and the company storehouse; one is just east of the fort and the other a little bit south of the fort.

The homestead that straddled the road between the fort and the storehouse had six hip roofed buildings on the AN and SHD maps and seven on the NL and BNF maps.

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Figure 4.28. Type 3 homestead, camp model, north of Ft. Rosalie as it appears on the AN map.

There were fields adjacent to the three houses on the east side of the road. Most of the buildings were drawn with the standard assortment of architectural elements (one door and two windows on the long side, a central chimney and roof finials), except for on the BNF map where few buildings were drawn with these. These details indicate that these were dwellings. In New Orleans there was a slave camp associated with the Company storehouse. However this group does not look like the slave camps at either the St. Catherine's or the Terre Blanche concession. Furthermore, there are labels associated with these buildings on both the BNF and AN maps. Both are difficult to make out however a couple of words can be identified. The word on the BNF map appears to be *habitant* or house. On the AN map there is a lot more writing but most of it is unreadable. In the middle of the label the word *cour* or court can be seen and at the end of the label the words *gen. major* are legible. These labels indicate that the buildings are houses associated with military personnel. Based on Dumont's memoirs many soldiers were housed outside of the fort, this is a possible example.

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The group to the east of the fort lay on the opposite side of the road leading to the Terre Blanche Concession. On the AN map there are eight gable-roofed buildings in two rows with fields on each side. On the SHD map there are five gable-



Figure 4.29. Type 3 homestead, camp model, south group as it appears on the AN map.

roofed buildings in one row surrounded by fields. On this map the group is more north than east of the fort, however is probably represents the same group. On the NL map the group is represented by three gable-roofed buildings surrounded by fields.

The south group is depicted as slightly south east of the fort on the SHD and AN maps but due south on the NL map. On the AN map there are six gable-roofed buildings in two rows with fields on the south side and an orchard on the north side. On the SHD map there are four gable-roofed buildings in one row with fields on the south side and an orchard and more fields on the north. On the NL map there are four gable-roofed buildings in a single row with the same field/orchard configuration. It is likely that these two groups served a similar function to the first group. This town was the military outpost in the Natchez parish; it is entirely possible there were more soldiers than could comfortably fit in the barracks. It is clear from Dumont's maps that there were officers who lived outside the fort. He also mentions soldiers in his memoir that lived in their own houses. These buildings could have served as extra housing for soldiers or as housing for soldiers with families.

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The estate model appears on all the maps, mostly in the countryside however there are several examples from the town area. Due to the labels provided by Dumont many of these estates are identifiable by owner. Countryside estates includes the estate belonging to le Sr. Macé, a French lieutenant, the estate of le Sr. la Loire des Urzin, and the estate of le Sr. Rousin, formerly the Tioux Village. In the town area there are two identifiable estates. The first belonged to le Sr. Pellerin, the second to le Sr. Rousin. These estates had substantial economic production, most likely enough to engage in trade even though they were not fully developed or sanctioned concessions.

The estate of le Sr. Macé was north of Fort Rosalie along the road to St. Catherine's concession. The estate appears on three of the four maps, the AN, the SHD and the NL. While the estate is only labeled on the AN map, placement and layout suggest that estates appearing on the SHD and NL maps represent the same estate. The



Figure 4.30. Countryside estate of le Sr. Macé as it appears on the AN map.

estate consisted of three buildings on a substantial expanse of fields. As the estate rendering on the AN map is the only labeled one it follows that it is also the most accurate. As displayed in Figure 4.30, the estate has one main dwelling and two smaller outbuildings. The main building has a hipped roof, a door and two windows on the long side of the house, two ball-shaped finials and two central

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chimneys. The two chimneys indicate that the main house has at least two dividing walls inside the house, most likely the dwelling would have accommodated a family. One of the outbuildings seems to be a smaller dwelling. It is a hip roofed building with one central chimney and a door and two windows on the long side of the house. The second outbuilding is only partly shown. The visible portion indicates that the building is one-story with a gable roof and a door on the short end. The SHD map shows a similar group of structures however all of the buildings are drawn with at least one connecting wall. The central house appears just like the main house on the AN map except the finials are only posts and there is only one chimney. The other two buildings are the same other than the fact that they are joined with the main house. Since the gable roofed structure is entirely visible it is apparent that this building also had windows and a chimney. On the NL map there is again a group of three houses north of the fort area on the road to St Catherine's Concession. This time all three houses have hipped roofs, however it still seems likely that it represents the estate of Sr Macé. The presence of chimneys on all of the buildings is rather confusing. It would indicate that they are either all dwellings or perhaps one is a kitchen. However, Dumont does not include kitchens anywhere, the Terre Blanche Concession being the sole exception. It is logical that the estate would need some sort of storage facility; however neither storehouses nor barns would have any use for a chimney. Perhaps these buildings are in fact dwellings, possibly for laborers, and the other outbuildings such as kitchens and barns are assumed. It is unlikely that there were any large storehouses on the property; these seem exceptional enough that Dumont included drawings of them when they were present.

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The estate of Sr. la Loire was just west of the estate belonging to Sr Macé. This estate appears on three of the maps, the AN, SHD and BNF. It is labeled on both the BNF and the AN. The BNF map shows the simplest drawing of the la Loire estate. It shows one hip roofed structure with a chimney at one end of the house. There are also two partially obscured gable roofed



Figure 4.31. Estate of Sr. la Loires as it appear on the SHD map.

structures. In fact, this estate looks more like the estate of Sr Macé than it does the La Loire estate from the other two maps. However, Dumont's memoir helps to clarify the situation. He talks about how Sr la Loire built an estate in between the fort and St. Catherine's when he was removed from his office as judge and commissary at the port. On the BNF map there is a house labeled Sr Bailly, the name of the man who replaced Sr la Loire, in the fort area just above the port. Sr Bailly's dwelling only appears on the BNF map, however its presence indicates that the estate of Sr la Loire would have been in its earlier stages of construction. Since the estate of Sr Macé does not appear on the BNF map it seems that la Loire's estate predates it. This new information suggests that the estate on the NL map in fact belonged to Sr la Loire and not Sr Macé.

The representations of Sr la Loire's estate on the AN and SHD maps both show a multi-storied building. The AN map shows a three story building with ball-shaped finials

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and two central chimneys. No additional buildings are shown. On the SHD map the main house is only two stories, with flags on the roof and two chimneys. Also on the property are six smaller structures. Four have hipped roofs and chimneys, one has a gable roof and a chimney, the final building is a simple gable roofed structure with no chimney. The building without a chimney was probably a barn. The others were most likely dwelling for laborers based on the chimneys. Also present on the SHD map is a small orchard that surrounded the housing complex.

The countryside estate of Sr. Rousin was south of the fort and appears on three of Dumont's maps. This estate is by far the most elaborate of the independent homesteads. The NL map shows the simplest representation of Rousin's estate. On this map there is one main house, six smaller outbuildings (four of which have chimneys) and a large portion of cultivated fields. The layout suggests that the main house was for Rousin and his family while the other buildings with chimneys were built to house laborers. Of the two buildings without chimneys, the gable roofed structure was probably a multi-purpose barn while the hip roofed structure was likely a storehouse.

The AN and SHD maps show a far more developed estate. On the AN map displayed in Figure 4.32A there is a main house and garden surround by a palisade. Around this palisade are four other structures, two hipped roof buildings, one gable roof structure and what looks like a pavilion. The hip roofed buildings both lack chimneys, likely they were used as storehouses. The gable roofed building was probably a barn. The pavilion is very interesting. It is the only one drawn on Dumont's maps, however he does mention them in his memoirs in the section about the Arcanas Post. Here they seem to

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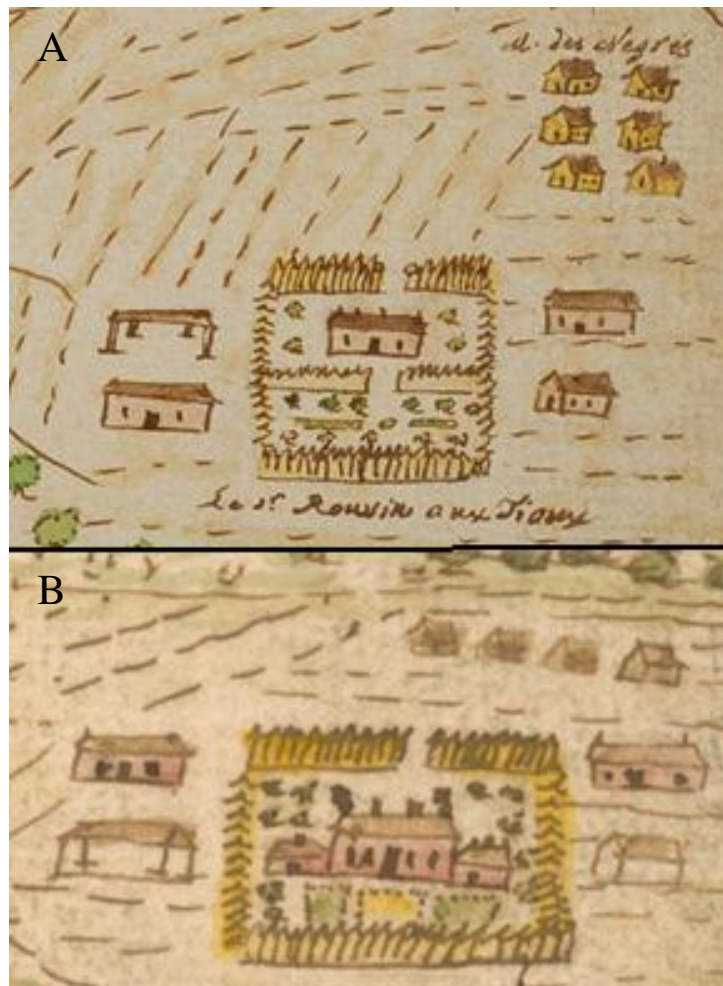


Figure 4.32. Countyside estate of Sr. Rousin as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

have been used as temporary shelter for officers.¹¹ Obviously this was not the function of the pavilion at Sr Rousin's estate; however it was probably built as some type of temporary storage. Off to the side of the estate are six gable roofed buildings labeled as houses for slaves. The SHD map shows a remarkably similar image. The only major difference is the main house. On the SHD map the house has four windows instead of

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two and the finials are more elaborate. There are also two smaller hipped roof structures attached to the main house. This type of addition that Dumont uses has been interpreted in many ways. In this case it is unlikely that they represent a barn or a storehouse since those are clearly indicated outside the palisade. Instead it seems logical that these were additions to the main house, perhaps they were built more solidly than the average attached lean-to. Rousin's estate is conspicuously absent from the BNF map. There is one larger homestead almost exactly in the area of Rousin's estate however it has a name attached to it. The name is difficult to read but it is certainly not Rousin. Dumont describes Sr Rousin as "one of the richest settlers in the country" in his memoirs.¹² Sr Rousin bought the land for his estate in 1727 from the Tioux tribe who had a small village south of Fort Rosalie.¹³ On the BNF map Dumont draws the village of the Tioux, the future site of Rousin's estate. If this representation is accurate it would suggest that the BNF map showed the Natchez settlement as it appeared prior to 1727.

Sr. Rousin also own a large independent estate in the town itself. Again Rousin's



Figure 4.33. Sr. Rousin's in town estate as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

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estate appears on three of the maps, the NL, AN and SHD. The estate is somewhat north of the fort along the river bank. On the NL map the estate is labeled with the number 14 which is identified on the legend being owned by the same person who owned the Tioux village. The estate shows three hip roofed buildings, two with chimneys and one without. The two with chimneys were probably dwellings while the third was probably a storehouse. There was also a simple gable roofed structure a little ways off from the main building group, chances are that this building was also associated with the concession. On the AN map the estate is labeled with Rousin's name. It shows one hip roofed building, the main house, and two gable roofed buildings, one with a chimney, probably a dwelling and one without, a storehouse or barn. There is also a pavilion. A little ways off there is a large gable roofed building labeled as a barn. It seems to sit on the same field at Rousin's estate and thus likely belongs to him as well. On the SHD map a similar group appears. There is a main house with two attached lean-tos and two chimneys; there are two gable roofed buildings with chimneys and in a separate section of the field a hipped roof building. The hipped roof on the isolated building suggests that the building was a storehouse rather than a barn. However since barns could serve storage functions the difference does not alter the interpretation of the overall function of the estate, which was likely agricultural production and trading.

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Figure 4.38. Town Estate of Sr Pellerin as it appears on (A) the AN map and (B) the SHD map.

The final estate homestead was also in town. The estate of le Sr Pellerin was located at the edge of the town along the road to the Terre Blanche Concession. Pellerin is included in both the 1723 and 1726 censuses. In 1723 Pellerin and his associate Cache were listed as having one indentured servant and three African slaves.¹⁴ By 1726 there were three indentured servants as well as

four African slaves. Pellerin and Cache also had 21 units of cultivated

land and two cattle.¹⁵ The layout and placement of the estate is almost identical on the two maps, however the houses are completely different. Both maps show a palisaded estate along the road to Terre Blanche. The palisade surrounded the estate and split it into two parts. The right side held the buildings while the right side enclosed a garden. The AN map shows only two buildings on the estate, both look slightly elongated. One is a hipped roofed building with a chimney and the other is a gable roofed building also with a chimney. SHD map shows a two story building with two central chimneys and four small outbuildings surrounding it, all with chimneys. The Pellerin estate clearly had enough agricultural production to allow Pellerin and Cache to be involved in trade, indicating that at least one of the buildings would have been a storehouse.

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Despite the huge differences between the homesteads Dumont illustration a basic picture can be compiled. Obviously each homestead needed to have a dwelling. They also all probably had the traditional outbuildings including a kitchen, oven and possibly a multi-purpose barn. It seems as though almost every settler at Natchez was involved in agricultural production. Those who were heavily involved, especially those isolated in the countryside, also probably had storehouses to protect their products for trading.

Notes on Chapter Four

¹ Dumont 91

² Dumont 31-32

³ Dumont 72

⁴ de Berardinis, 1723 Census

⁵ de Berardinis, 1726 Census

⁶ Waselkov 19

⁷ Barnett 81

⁸ An map, translation by Elizabeth Jones

⁹ de Berardinis, 1723 Census

¹⁰ NL legend, translation by Elizabeth Jones

¹¹ Dumont, 35

¹² Dumont 32

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ de Berardinis, 1723 Census

¹⁵ de Berardinis, 1726 Census

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Dumont's Natchez maps provide a great deal of information about both the Natchez settlement and about French Colonial architecture. Despite the differences between the maps, certain patterns do become apparent and images of the Natchez settlement and French Colonial architecture in 1729 emerge.

The possibility was presented in Chapter Four that Dumont's maps may have depicted different dates. However, it seems more likely that on all four maps Dumont intended to show the Natchez settlement as it existed on the eve of the rebellion in 1729. First, Dumont was only in Natchez twice, once in 1723 for a brief period, and the second from 1727 until 1729. The majority of Dumont's memories would have been from the second, longer stay. Second, the legends for both the AN and SHD maps state that the maps depict the Natchez settlement before the uprising of 1729, most likely immediately before the uprising. Third, while there are some differences between the maps, overall they show a very consistent image of the settlement.

On occasion Dumont included anachronistic elements. For example, on the BNF map he includes the Tioux Indian village instead of Rousin's estate. However, the Tioux left Natchez in 1727. The NL map also includes elements from several different years. Chepart's name is attached to the commander's house, indicating that the map is

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depicting 1728 at the earliest. However, only the old Company storehouse is drawn. In addition, St. Catherine's Concession has a completely different layout in the NL map. This could be the original layout from before the concession was destroyed in 1723. Only archaeological excavation would be able to answer this question.

The Layout of the Natchez Settlement

Planned towns in Louisiana such as New Orleans and St. Louis show a distinct pattern. Even the buildings at Old Mobile seem to be oriented according to the same pattern. At the center of the town along the river was a plaza surrounded by public and mercantile buildings. Laid out in blocks surrounding the central plaza were the plots given out to settlers. Behind the town, away from the river, were the commons and commonfields, the latter was distributed in plots to the settlers. The settlement pattern seen on Dumont's maps does not fit the pattern of planned towns at all.

Dumont's map displays a town which is really just an area of independent homesteads grouped together. At the center of this area was Fort Rosalie, the Company storehouse, and the dock. Surrounding the town were some larger homesteads isolated in the countryside. The two concessions were located further off along St. Catherine's Creek; St. Catherine's Concession was northeast of the town, while Terre Blanche was southeast. Almost directly east of the town was the Natchez Grand Village, again along St. Catherine's Creek. This general layout is confirmed by Broutin's map of the area, although he shows a much more disperse settlement than Dumont's maps. Obviously Broutin's map, being an official survey of the area in 1723, would have been as close to

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accurate as possible when placing homesteads on the map. Even after the population boom the Natchez Settlement was still probably extremely spread out.

Dumont's maps do show a central public area near the river; however there is no formal public square. Rather it seems as though the location of fort and the storehouse was decided based on easy access to the landing. The town organically grew up around it. There are roads, but no large avenues running parallel to the river with perpendicular cross streets as seen in New Orleans and St. Louis. Instead they seem to conform to the landscape. Rather than using a system of commonfields, settlers just chose a plot of land right in town to farm. This system lacked the security of the New Orleans town plan, an issue that became apparent during the uprising. The reason for this odd settlement pattern is twofold. First, the environment at Natchez was unlike the environment anywhere else in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Instead of levees, the riverbank at Natchez consisted of huge bluffs. There was no way to give settlers strips of land with access to the river. The second factor was the culture at Natchez. The French settlement began without any direction from the colonial government. By the time Bienville arrived in 1716 to establish Ft. Rosalie Frenchmen were already living among the Indians. The practice of buying individual plots of land from the Indians continued through the economic expansion in 1726 and until the rebellion in 1729.

As Dumont stated in his memoirs, the land at Natchez was extremely fertile and the bluffs decreased the dangers of flooding. This was the perfect area to invest in agriculture. Obviously the owners of the St. Catherine's and Terre Blanche concessions hoped to make a profit in agriculture and the Company was hoping to establish its own plantation. The rapid population expansion in 1726 suggests that even average settlers

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thought that farming in the area would be profitable. This settlement was without a doubt and agricultural one. The military post, like others in the northern section of Louisiana, was originally established to deter English expansion. However, its primary function clearly became the protection of settlers and concessions at the site.

Archaeological Expectations

Portions of the Natchez settlement have been found but due to certain constraints have not been excavated. Both concessions sit under present day factories. Ft. Rosalie lies beneath several later forts. The National Park Service is currently conducting excavations.¹ Many of the homesteads have yet to be located; an extensive survey would be required to find their remains. This lack of archaeological information is extremely unfortunate because while Dumont's maps provide a lot of information about the settlement there are still many unanswered questions.

A consolidated area of historical, French Colonial artifacts would indicate the presence of a structure. Refuse pits were often located near dwellings and would contain discarded household items such as broken pottery and food waste. Beaten earth floors were often slightly higher than the surrounding land; a raised area near a refuse pit is a clear indication of a dwelling. Decaying houses typically leave linear soil stains just below the surface. Solid stains would indicate trenches used in *poteaux-sur-sole* construction while lines of circular stains would indicate *poteaux-en-terre* construction or a palisade. This information would provide a far clearer picture than Dumont's maps do of the types of construction employed at the Natchez settlement. Because many of the sections of the settlement were burned, additional information may be available. Charred

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wood preserves better than regular wood and could provide radiocarbon dates to verify the identification of the settlement. Also any *bousille* used in the walls would have been fired into daub. The amount of this material could help to differentiate between the two construction types.

The artifacts present in excavated buildings obviously provide clues about the function of the structure. In particular about the connected structures that populate the SHD map and appear consistently on the other maps. Clearly Dumont is representing several types of structures with the same image of connecting houses. He also represents the same structures in a variety of ways (i.e. the storehouses at St. Catherine's Concession and the attached lean-to on the director's house at Terre Blanche).

Archaeological evidence would help to elucidate the function (residence, storehouse, barn, kitchen, etc.) of the attached structures on independent homesteads. Dwellings would obviously be accompanied by household waste while barns and animal pens would show chemical changes in the soil. The fort area would have more iron artifacts, sword and gun parts, ammunitions, cannon parts etc. Coins may also be more likely at the fort than in other parts of the town since soldiers were paid by the government.

Recovery of archaeological data from this site would be immensely beneficial in reconstructing the French Natchez Settlement.

House Construction

One important piece of information that can be obtained from excavation is the construction methods employed by the colonists. This information is much harder to

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discern when working only with Dumont's drawings. Fortunately, preliminary conclusions can be drawn by examining excavated sites and surviving building plans.

The buildings about which the safest conclusions can be made are the slave quarters at Terre Blanche and Rousin's Tioux Village. The drawings on Dumont's maps correlate with the one room plans of the Company slave quarters in New Orleans. The plan states that these buildings were constructed using the *poteaux-en-terre* technique. This was the easiest and most fragile house construction. It is likely that the average multi-purpose barn also employed *poteaux-en-terre* construction. Excavations at Old Mobile indicate that the soldiers barracks were also built using this method. It is very possible that the barracks at Natchez were the same, especially considering Dumont's description of the rotten and decrepit state of Fort Rosalie. The labor housing at St. Catherine's was mostly housing for indentured servants. Still it is likely that these buildings were also constructed using the *poteaux-en-terre* method, although fireplaces were more likely included in these dwellings than in the slave quarters. All of these buildings would have had beaten earth floors and simple gable roofs (supported by Dumont's maps) covered in thatch.

Safe conclusions can also be drawn about the Company storehouse, and through that, about the other two-story buildings at Natchez. Storehouses contained goods intended for trading, a substantial investment. These goods obviously need to be well protected from the elements, meaning the storehouses had to be well constructed. The plan of the Company storehouse at New Orleans shows the elevation. The storehouse was built on a series of raised blocks to remove the floor from the dangers of wet earth. Both floors show what could either be plank or puncheon floors, definitely not earthen floors.

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The Company storehouse at Natchez was probably constructed in exactly the same way. Other two-story houses in Natchez include Sr. La Loire's house, Sr. Pellerin's house and the two storehouses at Terre Blanche. Again these buildings were almost certainly *poteaux-sur-sole* buildings with wooden floors and carefully constructed hipped roofs.

The construction type used for independent homesteads is more difficult to determine. The dwellings uncovered at Old Mobile were all of the *poteaux-sur-sole* type with clay floors, except for the soldiers' barracks. Excavations at the Yazoo Bluffs uncovered several *pièce-sur-pièce* buildings, a more typical fashion in the Illinois country and the English colonies. These remains showed post holes only and the corner and flanking the doors, suggesting that horizontal planks occupied the rest of the space.² Natchez lies directly in between these two sites. It is difficult to say which pattern the houses in Natchez would follow. Based on other excavations in the Louisiana colony it seems that *poteaux-sur-sole* houses were much more common than *pièce-sur-pièce*. Natchez is still a part of the Lower Mississippi River Valley which suggests that residents would follow the architectural conventions of the region. However without excavation the theory that most dwellings were *poteaux-sur-sole* with beaten earth floors is nothing more than a guess.

Architectural Implications

Not only do Dumont's maps inform about the Natchez settlement, they also provide information about the development of architecture in French Colonial Louisiana.

One interesting detail that stands out in Dumont's Natchez maps is door placement. On hip roofed buildings Dumont places doors on the long sides of buildings.

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This fits with the traditional convention discussed by Waselkov. However, on all the gable roofed buildings drawn by Dumont the doors appear on the short, gable ends. This could just be Dumont's tendency. However, on the Lassus map of New Orleans (Figure 5.1) he also draws doors on the short sides of buildings. Lassus's map was very carefully drawn, his New Orleans map strongly suggests that doors were placed on the short ends of buildings in French Colonial Architecture. If homesteads from Natchez are ever excavated attention should be paid to the placement of doors, especially on secondary buildings such as slave quarters and barns.



Figure 5.1. Detail from Lassus's map of New Orleans (*Archives nationales d'outre-mer*, 04DFC 71A).

The most obvious element of French Colonial architecture missing from the buildings on Dumont's Natchez maps is galleries. Not a single building on the four Natchez maps has a gallery. In Chapter Three two theories about the origin of galleries in French Colonial architecture were presented. The original theory suggests that galleries were an adaptation to the Acadian house. One scholar even goes so far as to say that the gallery actually developed in the St. Lawrence River Valley as a storage space for wood in the 1690s.³ This theory would indicate that galleries spread southward through the

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French colony, or at the very least, appeared simultaneously. The lack of galleries at the Natchez settlement by the end of the 1720s indicates that they were not present in the Natchez region at this time. If galleries had indeed originated in Acadia in the 1690s they would most certainly have been present at Natchez.

There is one Dumont map that includes a gallery. The map of the La Point Concession (Figure 4.13) clearly shows a gallery on the main house. This map depicts the concession as it existed in the 1720s. The La Point Concession was in Pascagoula, in the southern region of the Mississippi River Valley. The presence of galleries in Pascagoula in the 1720s and the absence of them further north at the same time indicates that galleries originated in the south. These images strongly favor Peterson's argument that galleries originated in the French West Indies and then spread northward where they became incorporated with French Colonial Architecture in Louisiana.

Notes from Chapter Five

¹ Hardy

² Brown 191

³ Edwards 258

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