

A STUDY OF LANDSCAPE CHANGES IN
OUACHITA PARISH, LOUISIANA

By

DANNY ALLEN

Bachelor of Arts
Northeast Louisiana University
Monroe, Louisiana
1967

Master of Education
Northeast Louisiana University
Monroe, Louisiana
1970

Master of Science
University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, Mississippi
1971

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Thesis Approved: Thesis Approved: Thesis Approved:

John T. Rooney
Thesis Adviser
Thomas C. Carney
George C. Carney
James H. Stone
Thomas D. Johnston
n n n

Dean of the College

907111 907111 907111

PREFACE

This study is concerned with the transformation of the landscape of Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, during the occupation by Indians and the culture groups which followed, up to the late 1830's. The study focuses upon an investigation and analysis of the changes in the landscape which resulted from man's socio-economic activities.

The author wishes to express his appreciation and gratitude to all his committee members; and most especially to Dr. John Rooney for his assistance and guidance, to Dr. George Carney for his encouragement and advice, to Professor James Stine for his helpful suggestions concerning cartography, and to Dr. Tom Karman for his suggestions concerning format and style. A note of thanks is given to Diana Franks of the departmental staff for her assistance and to Vicki Maxwell of the graduate college for excellent guidance and advice. Thanks are also extended to Gayle Maxwell of the departmental staff for cartographic assistance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. General Nature of the Problem

A mass migration of settlers into Ouachita Parish in northern Louisiana began during the late 1830's. These settlers were confronted with a landscape quite unlike that which existed at the time of the original inhabitants. The landscape, having been changed by various cultures over a period of hundreds of years, was no longer the swampy, untamed wilderness the original inhabitants, the Indians, knew.

This study will be concerned with the transformation of the landscape of Ouachita Parish during the occupation by the Indians and the groups which followed, up to the time of the mass influx of settlers. The problem under investigation is in the realm of historical geography which, according to Andrew H. Clark, is "a study which gives that attention to differentiation through time necessary to an adequate understanding of circumstances at a point in time."¹ This study will focus upon an investigation and

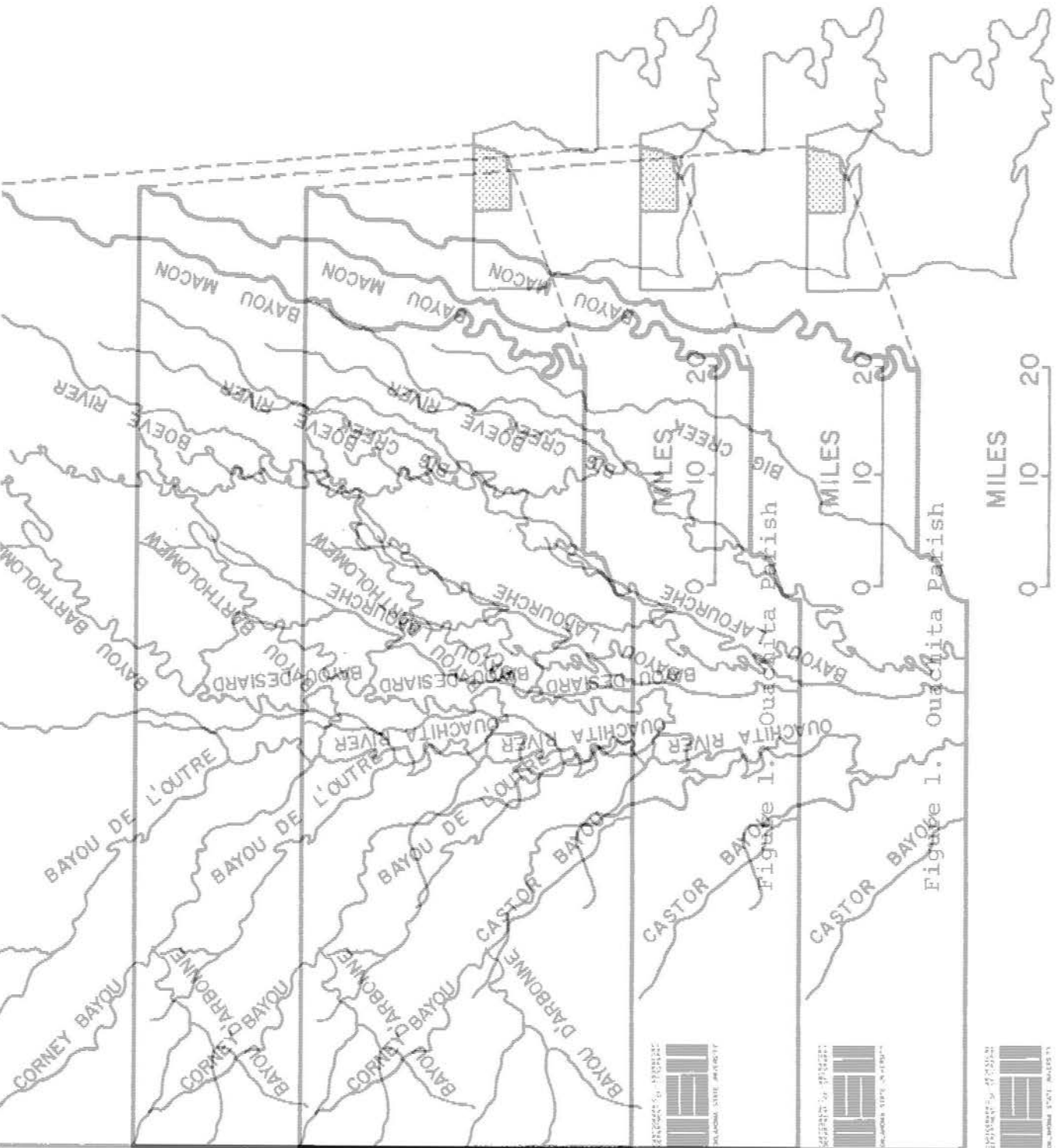
¹Andrew H. Clark, "Historical Geography," in Preston E. James and Clarence F. Jones, eds., American Geography: Inventory and Prospect (Syracuse, 1954), p. 72.

analysis of the socio-economic determinants of various cultures and their influence on the transformation and development of the landscape of Ouachita Parish, Louisiana. The writer will attempt to explain the changes in the landscape which resulted from man's economic activities.

B. Need for the Study

Continuing investigation and comprehensive reporting provide society with greater knowledge about man, where he has been, where he is now, and the direction in which he is heading. The present geography of any landscape, whether it is physical, cultural, or biotic, contains vestiges of previous landscapes. For this reason, a knowledge of past events is necessary to an understanding of the present spatial organization of an area.

This study will provide some insight into man's cultural heritage with reference to the historical geography of that area in North Louisiana known as Ouachita Parish (Figure 1). Ouachita Parish was one of the first areas settled in the present state of Louisiana. The region functioned as a governmental and strategic location under French and Spanish rule; moreover, it functioned as a focal point for settlers migrating northward on the Ouachita River and westward over a major land route which crossed the parish. The changes in the landscape of Ouachita Parish have not been investigated, and it is hoped that this study will provide data concerning the evolution of this landscape.



C. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the transformation of the landscape of Ouachita Parish as influenced by socio-economic determinants prior to the mass migration of settlers beginning in the late 1830's. The emphasis of this study is an investigation, through a temporal space perspective, of the manner in which man's activities altered the landscape.

D. Study Area

Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, the study area of the investigation, was established in 1805 as one of the twelve counties of the Territory of Orleans, the present state of Louisiana. The parish, one of three located in the extreme northern part of the state, included more than one-third of that area (Figure 2). The parish boundaries were changed many times during the study period, increasing and decreasing the total area, sometimes adding area which had been taken away a few years previously.

Ouachita Parish was occupied by Indians when Spanish explorers visited the area in the 1540's. The Spanish were followed by French explorers in 1700, and a French settlement was established during the first half of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although other areas of the South were important settlement locations, this study is limited to the political area of Ouachita Parish as it existed prior to the late 1830's.

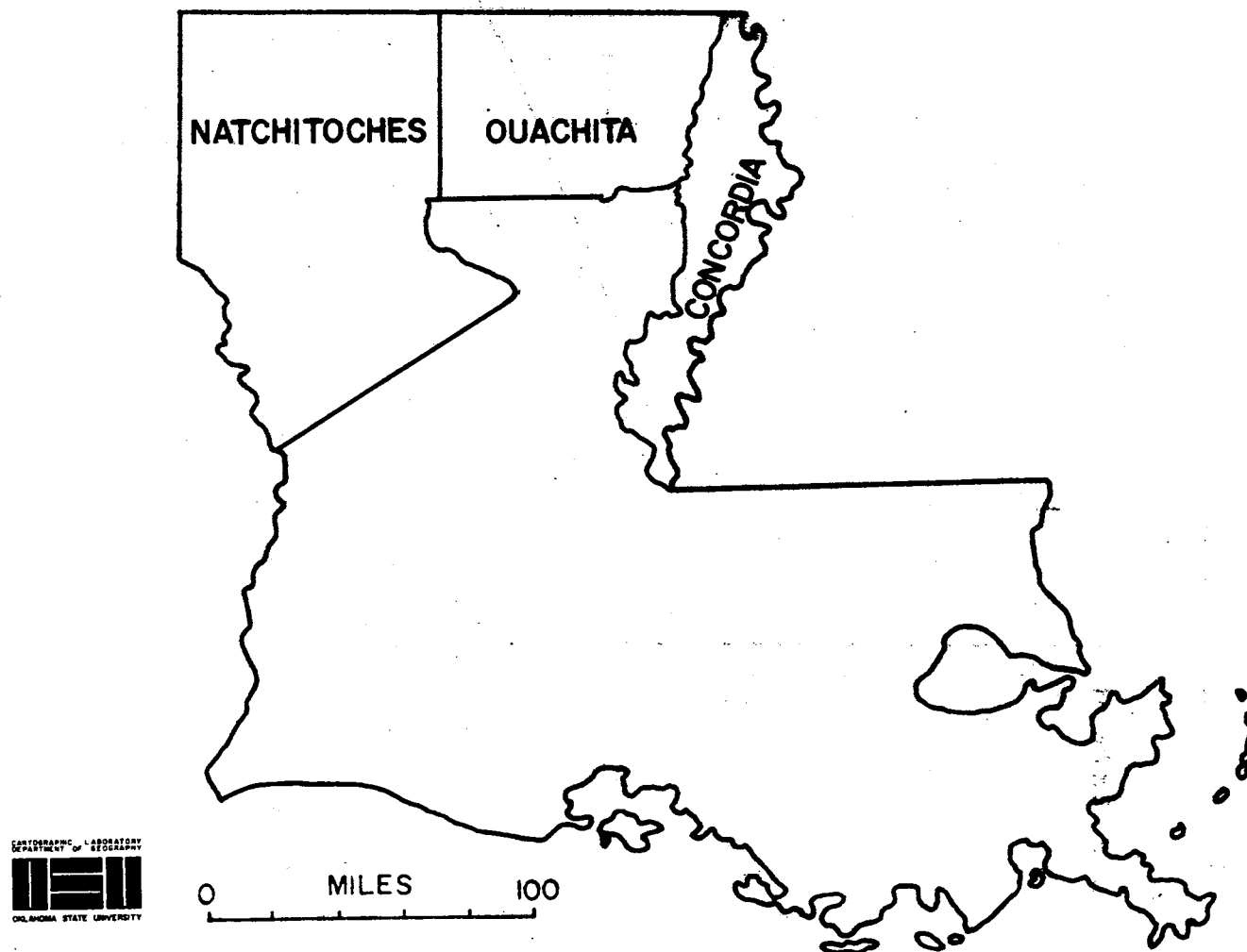


Figure 2. Parish of North Louisiana, 1805

E. Limitations of the Study

The scope and limits of the study are best set by the character of the landscape to be investigated. Man's socio-economic activities were influenced by his environment, and, over a period of years, these activities themselves altered the landscape. This investigation will be limited to these activities and the resulting modification of the landscape prior to the mass migration of settlers beginning in the late 1830's. The cultures which transformed the landscape include the prehistoric and historic Indians, the Spanish and French explorers and settlers, and the Anglo-American settlers.

F. Procedure and Method

The methodology of this study will be based on that set forth by Jan O. M. Broek in his work entitled The Santa Clara Valley, California: A Study in Landscape Changes.² Broek analyzed the changes in the landscape effected by different succeeding cultures. He examined the cultures and the accompanying phases of economy that succeeded each other over a period of less than 200 years.

No element exists singly or alone, but in interaction with other elements. Geographic research and methodology, therefore, deal with interactions: interactions among

²Jan O. M. Broek, The Santa Clara Valley, California: A Study in Landscape Changes (Utrecht, 1932), 185 pp.

natural elements, interactions among cultural elements, and interactions among cultural and natural elements.³ Furthermore, geographic research and methodology are concerned with the analysis and synthesis of earth-space elements in interaction in such a way that reality may be better understood.⁴

This writer intends to utilize recorded descriptions of the early environment and man's early activities to better understand the transformation of Ouachita Parish. In addition, the historical method as pertaining to temporal space, cartographic techniques, air photographs, field surveys, and analysis and synthesis as required, will be utilized in this investigation. Also, the many historical primary sources available at the Ouachita Parish Courthouse at Monroe; Louisiana State Archives; Louisiana State University Library; the Louisiana State Land Office at Baton Rouge; and the Library of Congress at Washington, D. C., will be researched.

The aforementioned techniques, methods, and sources will be utilized to examine and analyze the origin of pertinent geographical features and to explain the transformation of Ouachita Parish.

³Richard Hartshorne, The Nature of Geography (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1939), p. 415.

⁴Edward A. Ackerman, Geography as a Fundamental Research Discipline (Chicago, 1958), p. 5.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature pertinent to the changes in the landscape of Ouachita Parish as influenced by the socio-economic activities of various culture groups which occupied the region prior to the mass influx of settlers.

In an article entitled "Time, Space, and the Geographic Past: A Prospectus for Historical Geography," John Jakle discussed the development of historical geography within human geography.¹ Jackle stated that an increasing number of geographers no longer study spatial relationship in its static sense, but focus on spatial change through time.² He suggested that, in the future, historians and geographers might share a common territory. Jakle analyzed the contributions to historical geography made by both historians and geographers and offered suggestions for future researchers.

¹John A. Jakle, "Time, Space, and the Geographic Past: A Prospectus for Historical Geography," The American Historical Review, LXXVI (October, 1971), pp. 1084-1103.

²Ibid., p. 1084.

Derwent Whittlesey, who wrote "Sequent Occupance," described a technique for analyzing a given locality or region by the presentation of its space content at specific sequential time.³ He discussed many of the problems which the student of sequent occupance must overcome. In addition, he presented several examples of human occupance of an area and the resulting transformation of that area. The author stated that each generation of human occupance is linked to its forbear and its offspring, and each is representative of the mutations in some elements of its natural and cultural characteristics.⁴

Donald Meinig's three works dealing with various regions located in the western half of the United States are valuable additions to recent research in historical geography.⁵ The Southwest, Great Columbia Plain, and Imperial Texas are examined by analyzing the different cultural groups which occupied these regions over time. Meinig expands his culture region model which he so aptly set down in his study on the Mormons.⁶

³Derwent Whittlesey, "Sequence Occupance," Annals of Association of American Geographers, XIX (September, 1929), pp. 162-165.

⁴Ibid., p. 163.

⁵Donald W. Meinig, The Great Columbia Plain: A Historical Geography, 1805-1910 (Seattle, 1968); Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography (Austin, 1969); and Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographical Change (New York, 1971).

⁶Donald W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964," Annals of Association of American Geographers, 55 (June, 1965), pp. 191-220.

One study similar to that undertaken by this author was written by Carl O. Sauer. Sauer's study was concerned with an examination of the settlement and development of the Ozark Highland region in Missouri and the cultures which occupied it during a given time period.⁷ One part of Sauer's study involved an analysis of the settlement and development of the region by French, Americans, and Germans; while another section stressed the recent economic conditions of the region.

Another study involving an historical approach was written by Jan O. M. Broek. In his study, Broek examined the changes in the landscape of Santa Clara Valley, California. He analyzed three different cultures and the corresponding phases of economy which covered a period of less than 200 years. The author accounted for landscape changes during an Indian period prior to the white man, a Spanish period marked by missions and cattle ranches, and the early American period composed of an economy based on cattle and wheat. Broek divided the study of each period into two parts: the first of which was an explanation of the functions and forces that accounted for the mode of life in the valley; and the second part of which was an analysis of the changes in the landscape as influenced by socio-economic determinants. It is the intention of this writer to utilize part of Broek's

⁷Carl Ortwin Sauer, The Geography of the Ozark Highland of Missouri (Reprinted from the 1920 Edition, New York, 1971).

approach to the study of change in the landscape over a given time period.

A third related work, entitled "Historical Geography: Current Trends and Prospects," was written by C. T. Smith.⁸ He emphasized the importance of historical studies which seek to establish what a region was like in the past and how it came to be what it is. Smith stated that many geographical features require historical study for a satisfactory explanation of their development; furthermore, a study of changing situations often produces a clearer picture of the function of position or resource.⁹ Smith discussed the aims and purpose of historical geography and the current trends in research in this area, as well as the direction of future research.

In a study entitled Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century, Harry Merrens analyzed the geography of a segment of the colonial seaboard.¹⁰ In his study, he attempted to examine the factors which led to geographical changes of eighteenth century North Carolina. Merrens focused his study on the geographical changes which resulted from basic differences in migrants. He found that

⁸C. T. Smith, "Historical Geography: Current Trends and Prospects," in Richard Chorley and Peter Haggett, eds., Frontiers in Geographical Teaching (London, 1970), pp. 118-143.

⁹Ibid., p. 133.

¹⁰Harry Roy Merrens, Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1964).

cultural differences contributed to changes in the landscape. He also contrasted the geographical development of North Carolina with that of the adjacent colonies, Virginia and South Carolina, and stated that his study might possibly serve as a starting point for a study of the colonial seaboard.

Merrens has also written an environmental perception study focusing on colonial South Carolina.¹¹ In examining the perception of the physical environment of South Carolina held by Europeans, Merrens has used various diaries, travel reports, and newspaper descriptions to illustrate how man's behavior may be affected by promotional literature.

Only recently have researchers begun investigating phenomena and conducting research pertaining to the development of northeast Louisiana. Moreover, recent studies concerning Ouachita Parish have been limited to the discipline of history; consequently, much of the data used for this study was obtained from field surveys, maps, and geographic descriptions and observations of Ouachita Parish recorded by early explorers and settlers.

Among the many early explorers and travelers who recorded their observations of Ouachita Parish were C. C. Robin, William Dunbar, Timothy Flint, and William Darby. Robin, an early traveler who entered the region in

¹¹H. Roy Merrens, "The Physical Environment of Early America: Images and Image Makers in Colonial South Carolina," Geographical Review, 59 (October, 1969), pp. 530-556.

the early 1800's by way of the Red, Black, and Ouachita Rivers, described the eastern section of the region.¹²

Dunbar, who explored along the Ouachita River to gather data for President Thomas Jefferson concerning the acquired Louisiana Purchase, recorded descriptions of the vegetation and land in the region.¹³ Darby,¹⁴ an early traveler who wrote a geographical study of Louisiana, described the vegetation, roads, and topography of the region; while Flint, an early traveler who ascended the Red and Ouachita Rivers during the early 1830's, recorded data concerning the waterways and navigable streams.¹⁵

An important editor and writer on Ouachita Parish, Henry Bry, provided useful information concerning transportation in the region; in addition, he wrote accounts which document the evolution of the region.¹⁶ Ouachita Parish conveyance records were also a source of much data

¹²C. C. Robin, Voyage to Louisiana, tr. and abridged by Stuart O. Landry, Jr. (New Orleans, 1966), pp. 136-159.

¹³William Dunbar, "Journal of a Voyage Commencing at St. Catherine's Landing . . .," in American Philosophical Society, ed., Documents Relating to the Purchase and Exploration of Louisiana (New York, 1904), pp. 30-31.

¹⁴William Darby, A Geographical Description of the State of Louisiana (Philadelphia, 1816), pp. 42-45, 47; William Darby, The Emigrant's Guide (New York, 1818), pp. 99-101.

¹⁵Timothy Flint, Journal of Rev. Timothy Flint from Red River to the Ouachita in Louisiana in 1835 (Alexandria, Louisiana, 1835), pp. 1-31.

¹⁶Henry Bry, "The Louisiana Ouachita Region," DeBow's Review, III (New Orleans, 1847), p. 229.

concerning the study area, especially the location of land purchases, settlers, and settlement sites.¹⁷ These early survey and conveyance records and maps enable one to cross reference and verify data; moreover, they provide a basis for the analysis of land purchases and the settlement pattern within Ouachita Parish.

B. Indians in Ouachita Parish

Prior to the coming of the white man, hunting-fishing-gathering Aborigines occupied settlement sites which were concentrated along the higher natural levees paralleling the waterways. These waterway locations afforded the Indians ready access to an abundance of plant foods as well as terrestrial and aquatic animal foodstuffs. In addition, the locations provided them with transportation and protection from floods.

James Ford and Clarence Webb, who studied the Indians extensively, provided important data describing the earliest well-known Aboriginal culture, Poverty Point, on Bayou Macon (Figure 3).¹⁸ The culture, which was established about 1300 B. C., centered on a region which is now within West Carroll Parish. Jesse Jennings conducted

¹⁷Conveyance Books A-I, O, Z, Ouachita Parish Clerk of Court, Monroe, Louisiana.

¹⁸James A. Ford and Clarence H. Webb, "Poverty Point, A Late Archaic Site in Louisiana," Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, XLVI (1956), pp. 1-136.

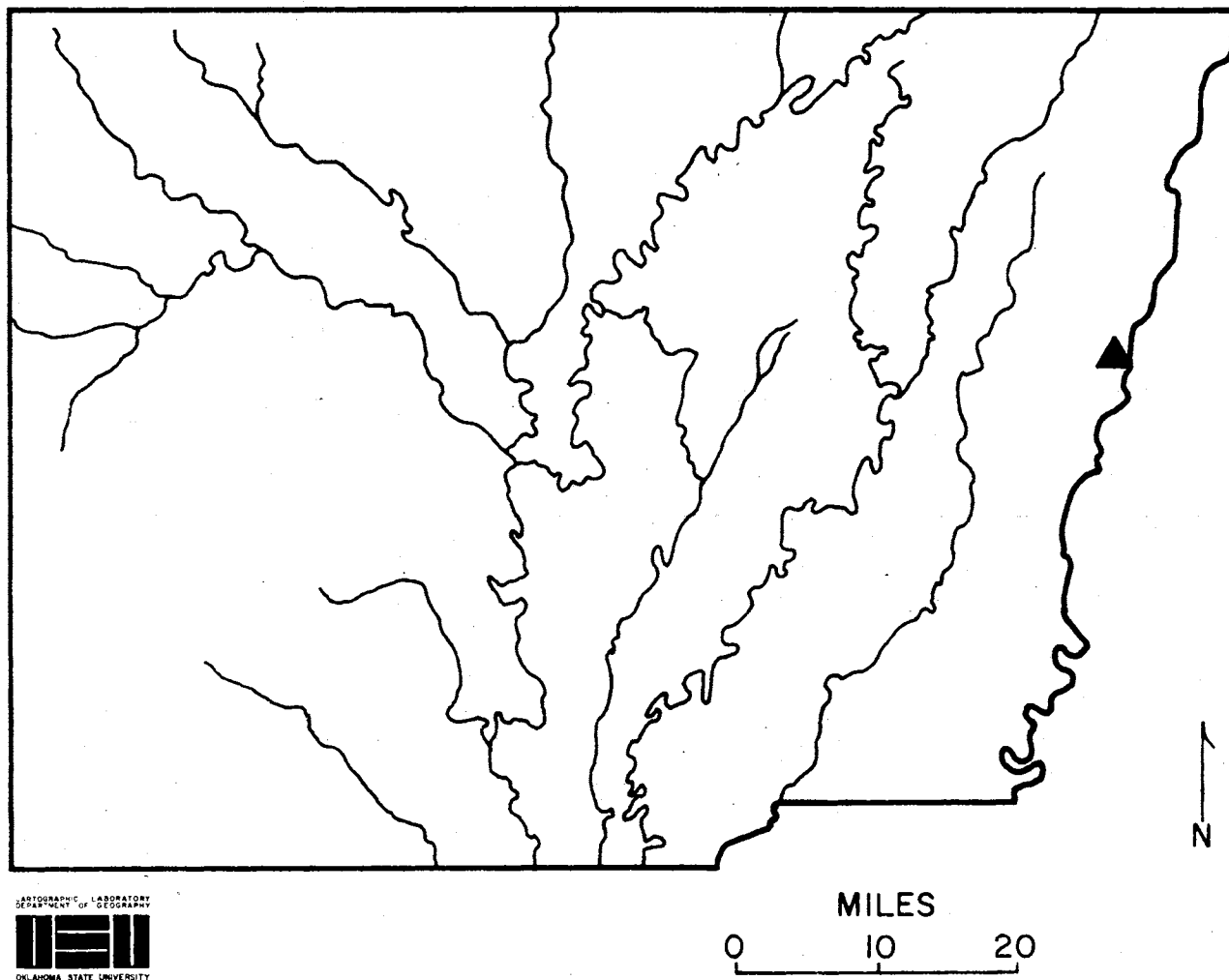


Figure 3. Poverty Point

research and compiled data on Indians inhabiting North America; he stated that it is probable that this group was practicing a limited, supplemental agriculture.¹⁹ However, other researchers in disagreement have stated that the Aborigines of this culture were primarily foragers. For example, Joseph Caldwell, a researcher and author of publications concerning early inhabitants of the United States, argued that agriculture was not necessary to the development of complex settlements such as Poverty Point.²⁰ Omer C. Stewart investigated the use of fire by early inhabitants and wrote an article in which he described the advantageous use of fire by the Aborigines.²¹ Other authors also provided an important account of the Aborigines as well as various historic Indians of Louisiana. These authors include James Mooney, who has conducted research on Indian population,²² and Fred B. Kniffen, a prominent geographer

¹⁹Jesse D. Jennings, Prehistory of North America (New York, 1968), p. 215.

²⁰Joseph R. Caldwell, "Trend and Tradition in the Prehistory of the Eastern United States," American Anthropological Association Scientific Papers, IX (1958), pp. 11-27.

²¹Omer C. Stewart, "Fire as the First Great Force Employed by Man," in William L. Thomas, Jr., ed., Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth (Chicago, 1956), pp. 118-119.

²²James Mooney, "Aboriginal Population of America North of Mexico," Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, LXXX (1928), pp. 1-40.

who studied the Indians of Louisiana.²³

The historic Indians had basically the same economy as the Aborigines; however, they are known to have practiced agriculture to supplement their food supply. Records of de Soto's travels provide descriptions of fruits and vegetables that were discovered in the Indian villages.²⁴ Valuable information concerning the location of historic Indian tribes was contributed by Kniffen²⁵ and Paul A. Kunkel, who investigated various Indians of Louisiana and published findings of his research.²⁶ Kunkel described the physical characteristics of the villages and living conditions of the tribes.

Very little additional information concerning Indians of the region was collected during the years between the coming of the Spanish explorers and the establishment of the first permanent European settlement. At the time of the establishment of this settlement, only a few scattered, small tribes of Indians were left in the region. Bry stated

²³Fred B. Kniffen, "The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana," Louisiana Conservation Review, IV (1935), pp. 5-12.

²⁴F. W. Hodge and T. H. Lewis, "The Narrative of the Expedition of Hernando de Soto by the Gentleman from Elvas," in J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Original Narratives of Early American History in the Southern United States, 1528-1543 (New York, 1907), p. 226.

²⁵Kniffen, Louisiana Conservation Review, IV, pp. 5-12.

²⁶Paul A. Kunkel, "The Indians of Louisiana, About 1700--Their Customs and Manner of Living," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXXIV (1951), p. 178.

that by 1825 the only Indians in the area were a band of 50 Choctaw families who lived on the hills 20 miles west of the present site of Monroe.²⁷

The Indians did not drastically alter the landscape, however, they did much toward preparing settlement sites and transportation routes. Stewart stated that the Indians altered the natural landscape by clearing their fields with fire and by driving game.²⁸ LePage de Pratz wrote a history of Louisiana in which he reported the Indian practice of burning tall, dry grass to make travel easier.²⁹ These contributions not only helped make the region more attractive to settlers but also made permanent settlement more probable.

There has been much speculation among researchers regarding the cause or causes of the drastic decline of the Indian population in the region after the arrival of the white man. Father Lemaire, a missionary who traveled to the present state of Louisiana in the early part of the eighteenth century, reported that there was much evidence to support the contention that Louisiana had been densely populated with Indians.³⁰ He stated that disease had been

²⁷Bry, p. 228.

²⁸Stewart, pp. 118-119.

²⁹M. LePage du Pratz, The History of Louisiana, or of the Western Parts of Virginia and Carolina . . . (New Orleans, 1941), pp. 119-120.

³⁰F. Lemaire, "Memoires Sur la Louisianne," French Archives (Paris, 1718).

a primary agent in destroying the Indians and was largely responsible for the decline in population.³¹ Mooney also indicated that disease and epidemics destroyed many Indians of the region.³² It was probably the indirect effects of disease, however, rather than disease itself that effected the actual decline of the Indians. Fiennes, who has researched the diseases of man and the sociological and economic effects of these diseases, stated that disasters such as epidemics usually do not occur in a devastating degree without an accompanying social, political, and economic upheaval.³³ It is conjectured that the social and economic results of the epidemics among the Indians were so great they never recovered from them.

C. Spanish and French Exploration of Ouachita Parish

One of the first Spanish explorers to enter Ouachita Parish was probably De Soto. It is thought that De Soto and his men explored Ouachita Parish about the year 1542; however they made no effort to settle it.³⁴ The explorers,

³¹Ibid.

³²Mooney, pp. 7-12.

³³Richard Fiennes, Man, Nature, and Disease (New York, 1964), p. 165.

³⁴Tennant S. McWilliams, "The De Soto Expedition in the Mississippi Valley, II Armada on the Mississippi, 1542," Louisiana Studies, VII (Fall, 1968), p. 214.

greatly disappointed at not finding treasures in the region, discouraged further exploration, and it was not until almost 150 years later that explorers began to visit the parish.

The actual colonization of the region by the white man dates back to 1682 when La Salle descended the Mississippi River and viewed the western banks of the river. La Salle not only led the French advance into Louisiana, but also claimed the Mississippi Valley and the Louisiana Purchase territory for France. One of La Salle's lieutenants, Henri de Tonti, wrote of returning to the Ouachita basin to explore. His writings confirmed the existence of the Washita Indian village near the present town of Columbia.³⁵ Grace King, author of a book based on research and investigations of Jean Baptiste Lemoyne, Sieur de Bienville, reported that the French explorer visited the Ouachita basin during the flood season of 1700.³⁶ After Bienville's visit the French did not further their efforts to colonize or explore the region again until 1719.

D. French Settlement of Ouachita Parish

In 1719 the first permanent settlement, the Cantillion Concession, was attempted on de Siard

³⁵Henri de Tonti, "Memoir," in B. F. French, ed., Historical Collection of Louisiana, 1 (New York, 1846), pp. 52-78.

³⁶Grace Elizabeth King, Jean Baptiste Lemoyne, Sieur de Bienville (New York, 1892), p. 100.

Prairie,³⁷ east of the Ouachita River and south of Bayou³⁸ de Siard (Figure 4). The settlement was not successful and was very close to complete failure at the time of an Indian uprising in 1729 at the present site of Natchez, Mississippi. The Indian uprising, coupled with many internal problems in the settlement, led to its ultimate failure. The settlers, alarmed after the Natchez massacre, abandoned the settlement, and many joined other French settlements further south.³⁹ Following this initial failure, the French made no further attempts to settle the region. The short period of French occupancy of Ouachita Parish had little influence on the landscape and few permanent changes were recorded. It was only after 1763 when Spain acquired control of the region that permanent colonization was successful.

³⁷A prairie was a relatively small, open, and level area and was generally higher in elevation than the densely-vegetated surrounding area. The principal vegetation of the prairie was grass, primarily blue stem, water grass, and broom sedge. On some prairies, sparse stands of hawthorne and other type trees grew.

³⁸A bayou is a minor river or secondary watercourse. In the region many bayous are tributaries to rivers and other water bodies.

³⁹Jennie O'Kelly Mitchell and Robert Dabney Calhoun, "The Marquis de Maison Rouge, the Baron de Bastrop, and Colonel Abraham Morehouse--Three Ouachita Valley Soldiers of Fortune; the Maison Rouge and Bastrop Spanish Land 'Grant'," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XX (April, 1937), p. 294.

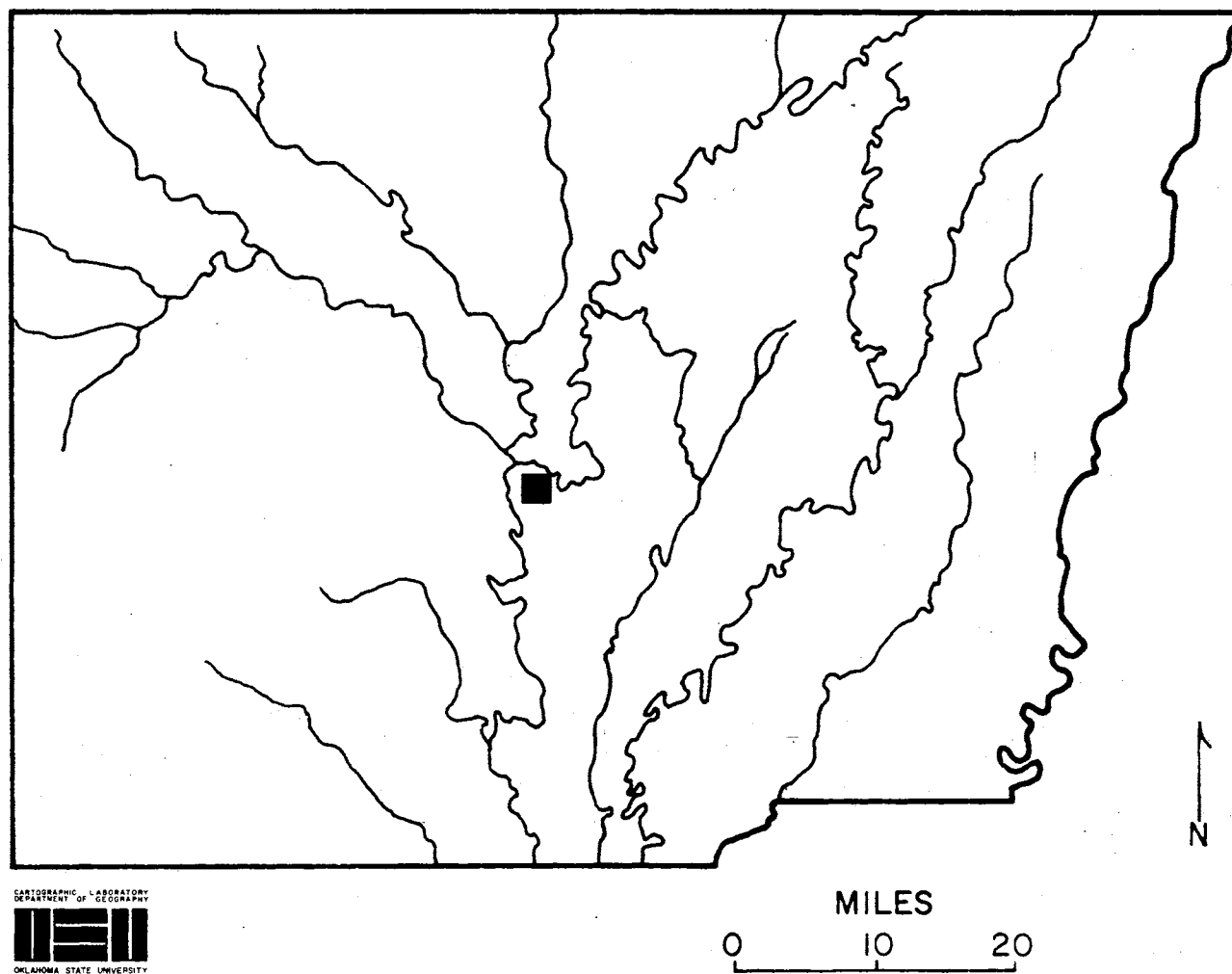


Figure 4. Cantillion Concession

E. Spanish Settlement of Ouachita Parish

Henry Chambers, who wrote a history of Louisiana based on extensive research of the state, stated that in the late 1700's Spain began formulating plans to create a buffer zone just west of the Mississippi River since it seemed likely that the English would secure control of the east bank.⁴⁰ Chambers pointed out, however, that since the lands immediately west of the Mississippi River were very low and there was no system for flood protection, settlement there was not possible. Moreover, building and maintaining a system of levees was too expensive and difficult; thus Spain chose the higher lands along the Ouachita River for settlement.⁴¹

The Spanish government selected a high point on the Ouachita River, approximately 75 miles from the Mississippi River, for the building of a fort. The government appointed Don Juan Filhoil as the commandant of the Post of the Ouachita in the early 1780's. The post, located on Prairie des Canots, was subsequently called Fort Miro, and, later, Monroe (Figure 5).⁴² Filhoil was in charge of a land development program that was designed to encourage settlement and to develop a loyal agricultural community in the

⁴⁰Henry E. Chambers, A History of Louisiana, I (New York, 1925), p. 381.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

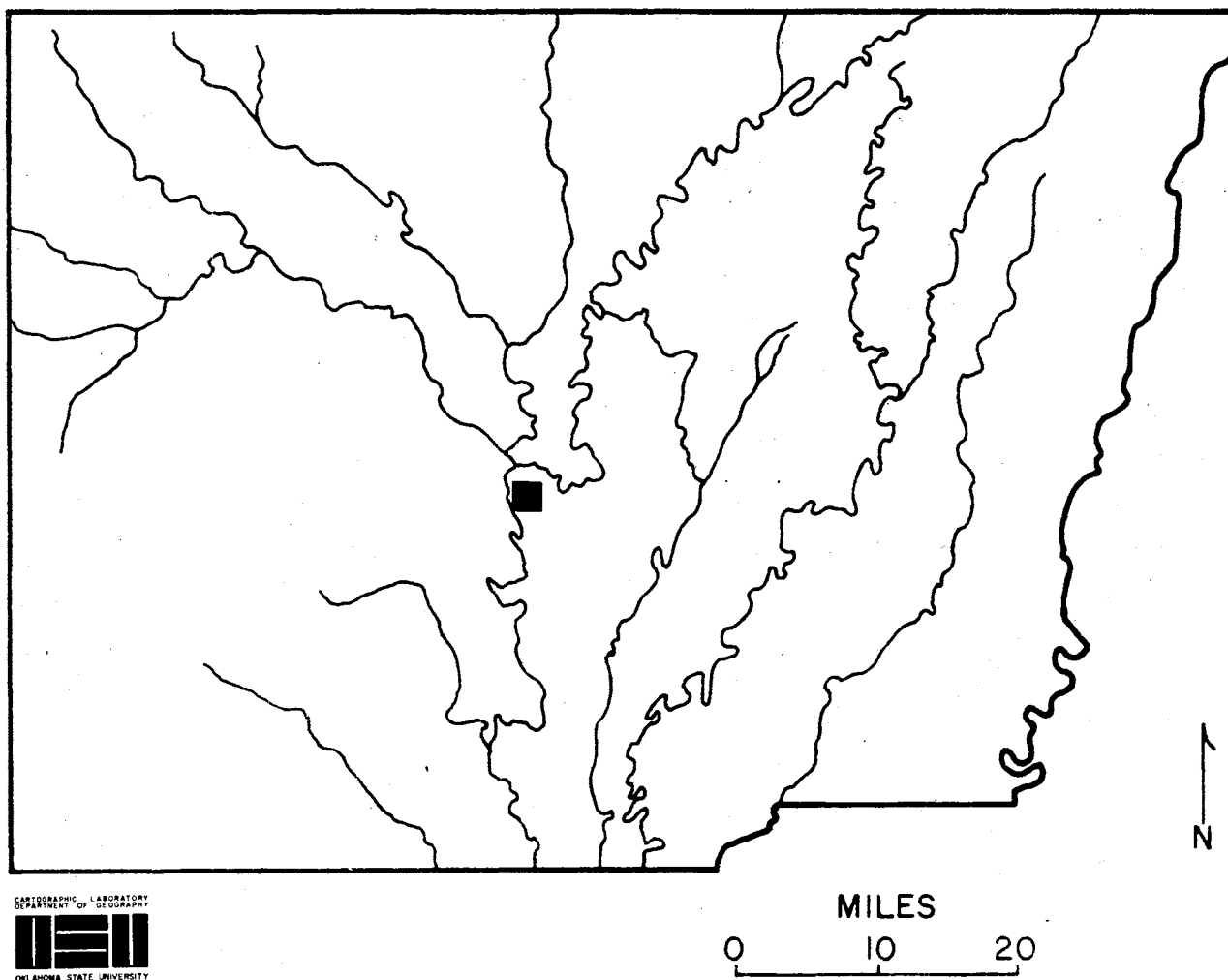


Figure 5. Fort Miro

Ouachita Basin. Bry stated that, when Spain began to develop the Ouachita Basin, it was already occupied by a group of hunters and trappers who had apparently moved in with their families after the failure of the original French settlement.⁴³ Filhoil attempted to bring these scattered settlers into a compact settlement by issuing grants of land to each of them.⁴⁴

The primary concern of the Spanish government in Louisiana was with increasing the population of the country in order to strengthen its political hold; therefore, the government readily granted land to those persons wishing to settle in the territory. The stipulations regarding the grants were that they should be settled within three years, that roads and levees should be constructed, and that the grantee should not alien (i.e., sell land to second parties) unless such conditions were set forth for the second parties as well.⁴⁵

Filhoil and his aide, de la Baume, claimed the property on either side of the Ouachita River and divided the region in half, with each person supervising one sector. As an inducement to permanent residence, settlers were awarded a tract of land fronting a water body. After the

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴J. Fair Hardin, "Don Juan Filhoil and the Founding of Fort Miro, the Modern Monroe, Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Review, XX (1937), p. 484.

⁴⁵Hardin, pp. 468-472.

settlement on Prairie des Canots, the settlers petitioned that a fort be built for protection. Fort Miro was subsequently constructed and was occupied until 1804 when the United States had it dismantled.⁴⁶

Spanish authorities in New Orleans and the commandant of the fort worked to develop trade and agriculture as the economic basis of the Ouachita basin. By 1788 the annual commerce of the basin consisted of about 7,000 quarts of bear oil, 2,000 deer skins, 2,000 pounds of suet, 500 beaver pelts, and 100 other pelts (Appendix A).⁴⁷

Filhoil stated that he tried, with little success, to develop agriculture in the region. The people, however, chose not to work the soil; thus, in spite of Filhoil's efforts, the basin was not an agricultural success until it was invaded by the dispersed, small-farm Anglo-Americans.⁴⁸

Spain signed the Treaty of Lorenzo el Real in 1795, relinquishing to the United States all claims to territory east of the Mississippi River and north of the 31st degree of latitude and opening trade and navigation on the Mississippi River to all citizens of the United States and Spain.

⁴⁶Jean Filhoil, "Description of the Ouachita in 1786," tr. by H. Wynn Rickey from original in Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XX (April, 1937), pp. 484-485.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 484.

⁴⁸Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States (3rd ed., New York, 1950), pp. 103-107.

Spain was now even more concerned with the need for the creation of a strong, loyal buffer settlement in the Ouachita basin; therefore it adopted a settlement policy to populate the buffer zone with settlers loyal to Spain. Governor Carondelet, who represented the Spanish government, entered into an agreement with two Europeans, the French Marquis de Maison Rouge and the German Baron de Bastrop. Each agreed to recruit, transport, and settle a number of families on the Ouachita River.

Maison Rouge was instructed to settle at least 30 families in the basin and to assign a grant of ten arpents⁴⁹ of frontage by forty of depth to each new family. Baron de Bastrop hoped to establish enough settlers on the Ouachita River to warrant a large grant of 144 square leagues on it and some of its tributaries. The new settlers were to raise wheat for export to Cuba and other areas.⁵⁰ Baron de Bastrop, however, was able to introduce only two small groups into the region.⁵¹

In a secret treaty, the Treaty of San Ildefonso, in 1800, Spain agreed to cede her Louisiana possessions to

⁴⁹The arpent, a French unit of linear measurement, was equivalent to 192 feet in length. The practice of granting six to eight arpents frontage and forty deep gave the settler from 199 to 265 acres of land (one arpent equals .84 acres).

⁵⁰Mitchell and Calhoun, pp. 303-306, 369.

⁵¹R. Woods Moore, "The Role of the Baron de Bastrop in the Anglo-American Settlement of the Spanish Southwest," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXXI (July, 1948), p. 616.

France. In 1803, Spain delivered possession of Louisiana claims to France, and, on December 20 of the same year, France transferred the area known as the Louisiana Purchase to the United States.⁵² One year later, the title, Territory of Orleans, was given to that region south of the 33rd parallel (the present state of Louisiana).⁵³

France and Spain had been in control of the region for more than 100 years; however, the landscape retained neither a strong French nor Spanish influence. The French failed to establish a permanent settlement and thus never formed a nucleus from which French influence could emanate. The Spanish were successful in establishing a colony; however, they relinquished title to the area and, thus, Spanish influence over it ended after approximately 38 years. Few Spanish migrated to the region while it was under Spanish control, and those remaining soon dwindled in number and were replaced by incoming Anglo-Americans. Very little French or Spanish influence remained. Perhaps the most that these two countries left behind to attest to their presence were a few names given to bayous and other water bodies, streets, and various geographic locations and a system of dividing the land (Appendix B).

⁵²Charles Gayarre, History of Louisiana, III (3rd ed., New York, 1854), p. 620.

⁵³Act of the 8th U. S. Congress, 1st Session, Approved March 26, 1804, p. 1293.

F. Anglo-American Settlement of
Ouachita Parish

In the late 1700's, settlement of the study region was sparse, being limited to a few explorers and an occasional group of Spanish or French settlers. In the 1800's, however, with the transfer of Louisiana to the United States, the establishment of local government, and the opening of lands for settlement, there was a surge of interest in the exploration of the region. Settlers were attracted by the fertile soil, accessible waterways, relatively favorable climate, vast resources of a variety of timber, abundance of game, and other amenities. After a sufficient number of Anglo-Americans had migrated into the area, the land was surveyed and settlers obtained tracts for settlement.

The settlers were located at various points in the study region; however, most settlements were located adjacent to water. Dunbar stated that, in the early 1800's, the area near Breston Landing was the site of four small settlements and a ferry (Figure 6).⁵⁴ The area from Breston Landing, near the site of present-day Riverton, to Fort Miro was uninhabited except for Filhoil's plantation at Logtown. D'Anemours reported that there were approximately 90 families living at Fort Miro and in the adjoining

⁵⁴Dunbar, pp. 30-31.

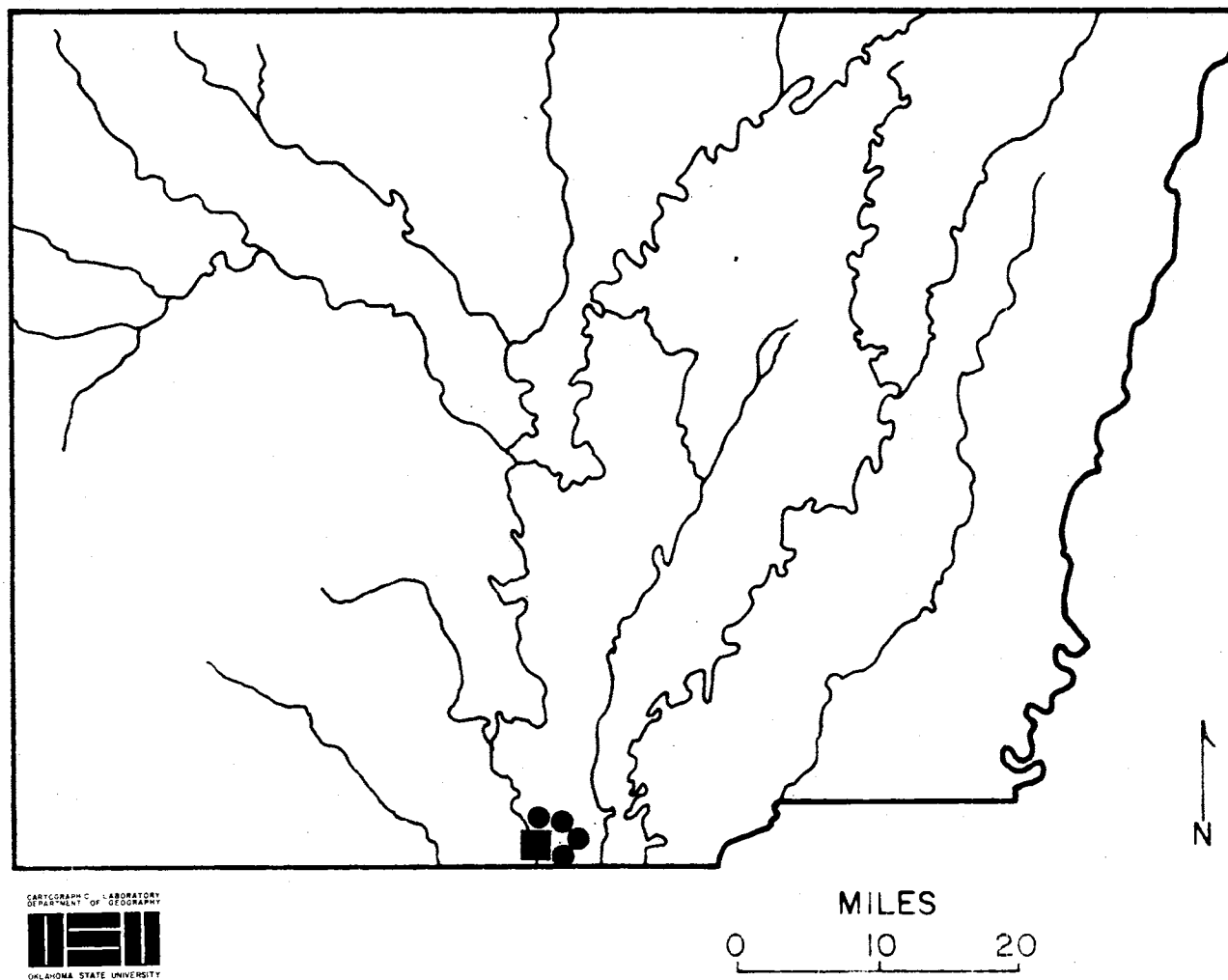


Figure 6. Breton Landing and Settlements

settlements that surrounded the small town.⁵⁵ The majority of the settlers lived on individual holdings located along the edge of de Siard Prairie on the southern bank of Bayou de Siard to Bayou Bartholomew. By 1804 there was a total of 450 whites and 50 or 60 slaves at the fort and in nearby settlements.⁵⁶

Hunter reported that there were two planters, Don Juan Filhoil and Charles Le Paulmier D'Anemours, who resided at Fort Miro in 1804. These planters had a combined work force of twenty slaves.⁵⁷ There were only a few other small plantations being developed at that time. Peter and Boston Olivos each held a grant of 400 arpents on the Ouachita River. The property of Peter Olivos, the site of the present-day Synope Plantation, now contains one of the older homes of the region.⁵⁸

Anglo-Americans were part of the small farm group which was active in farming in Ouachita Parish. The farmers sowed wheat and planted corn, beans, pumpkins, and cotton.

⁵⁵Charles Le Paulmier D'Anemours, Memoire sur le district de Ouachita dans le Province de la Louisianne 1803 (Philadelphia, 1803), p. 32.

⁵⁶Robin, p. 136.

⁵⁷George Hunter, "The Western Journal of Doctor George Hunter, 1796-1805," in John Francis McDermott, ed., Transactions of American Philosophical Society, New Series 53 (Philadelphia, 1963), p. 88.

⁵⁸Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke, eds., American State Papers, Public Lands, II (Washington, D. C., 1832), p. 817.

The cotton gin helped to make cotton a major crop in the region, and by 1803 there were two cotton gins under construction near Fort Miro.⁵⁹ A few settlers raised cattle in addition to their farming activities. Hunter reported that some settlers had as many as 100 head which lived on open range in a semi-wild state.⁶⁰

There were several other economic activities available to the settler not interested in farming and raising cattle. A tannery, which processed leather for shoemakers, was located where Bayou de Siard and the Ouachita River joined. Brick kilns were located about eight miles east of Fort Miro and a sawmill was operated in the small town.⁶¹ By 1810, interest in lumbering had grown, and woodcutting was a common occupation among the whites in the region. In the 1810 census, many wealthy persons listed their occupation as "lumber merchant" or "woodcutter," but less than ten percent of those persons engaging in lumbering were wealthy.⁶² The settlers cut thousands of trees from the bayous, lakes, and streams and rafted the timber down the rivers to Natchez or New Orleans.⁶³ Moore described the

⁵⁹D'Anemours, p. 32.

⁶⁰Hunter, p. 88.

⁶¹D'Anemours, p. 32.

⁶²U. S. Bureau of the Census, United States Census of Population: 1810, No. 1, Characteristics of the Population, Louisiana.

⁶³Robin, pp. 138-139.

manner in which the loggers constructed flatboats, floated them downstream to markets, disassembled them and sold the lumber.⁶⁴

Hunting, trapping and trading were also popular occupations among the settlers. Venison, bear oil, and pelts were sold or traded at Fort Miro, Natchez, and New Orleans. Bear oil, the principal cooking oil at that time, was often exported to Europe; tallow from deer was made into candles.⁶⁵ Pelts were exported as well as sold locally for use in making clothing and household items.

Agriculture, lumbering, and trading were well established in Ouachita Parish by the 1800's; and by the late 1830's, the landscape had been transformed from a wilderness into a successful settlement based on an agricultural economy. The region had been occupied from approximately 1300 B. C. to 1803 A. D. by different groups with varying interests and economic activities. While these groups, ranging from the primitive Indian to the eager settler, had altered the landscape and effected minor changes, they did not radically modify the landscape nor did they leave behind much evidence to prove their existence.

It was the farming Anglo-American settler who greatly transformed the landscape in northeast Louisiana. This was the settler who cleared the land, tilled the soil,

⁶⁴John Hebron Moore, Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest (Baton Rouge, 1967), p. 75.

⁶⁵Robin, pp. 138-139, 151.

established the field patterns, built roads, levees and dams, provided impetus for further economic development, and established a nucleus for future settlement. It was this Anglo-American settler who brought about a permanent change in the landscape and whose influence upon the land can be seen today.

CHAPTER III

PHYSICAL SETTING

A. Introduction

The first known inhabitants of Ouachita Parish, the hunting-fishing-gathering aborigine Indians, had a relatively limited effect on the landscape. Although these Indians and the historic Indians who followed must certainly have had some impact on the natural vegetation of the region, they did not greatly modify their habitat. They did, however, set the stage for settlement of the region by the white man by clearing the land and building settlement sites.

The white man's first recorded trip into Ouachita Parish was about 1540, when De Soto and his men traveled through the region. This initial visit by the Spaniards was followed by numerous visits from explorers and settlers from European countries and America; but, it was not until the late 1700's that any group of settlers was able to establish a permanent settlement in the region. Thus, the study region has been permanently occupied by the white man for approximately 200 years. Therefore, an understanding of the changes in the landscape must begin with a reconstruction of the physical setting as it existed at the time of the Indians.

Ouachita Parish lay in the Coastal Plain physiographic province and included two sections bisected by a physiographic boundary line extending north-south in the longitude of the present city of Monroe.¹ Lying between the two sections was a narrow, discontinuous upland belt of Pleistocene Alluvial deposits.² On the east was the Mississippi Alluvial Plain consisting of an alluvial section or floodplain. The Alluvial Plain was interrupted by Macon Ridge which was a low, flat terrace extending in a north-south direction between Boeuf River and Big Creek. Lying in the northwest section of the alluvial floodplain were the Bastrop Hills, which were approximately five miles wide and 17 miles long. The Upland Coastal Plain Hills lay on the west and were comprised of hills of a dissected upland of Tertiary Age (Figure 7).

At floodstage the Mississippi River overflowed and flooded the area toward the Ouachita River; the Arkansas River flowed southward into the region and often flooded it; and waters from the north caused the overflowing of tributaries of the Ouachita River. This periodic flooding, particularly by the Mississippi River, extended the alluvial

¹N. M. Fenneman, Physiography of Eastern United States, Geological Maps, Plate I and Plate III (New York, 1938).

²Harold N. Fisk, Geological Investigations of the Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi River (Vicksburg, 1944).

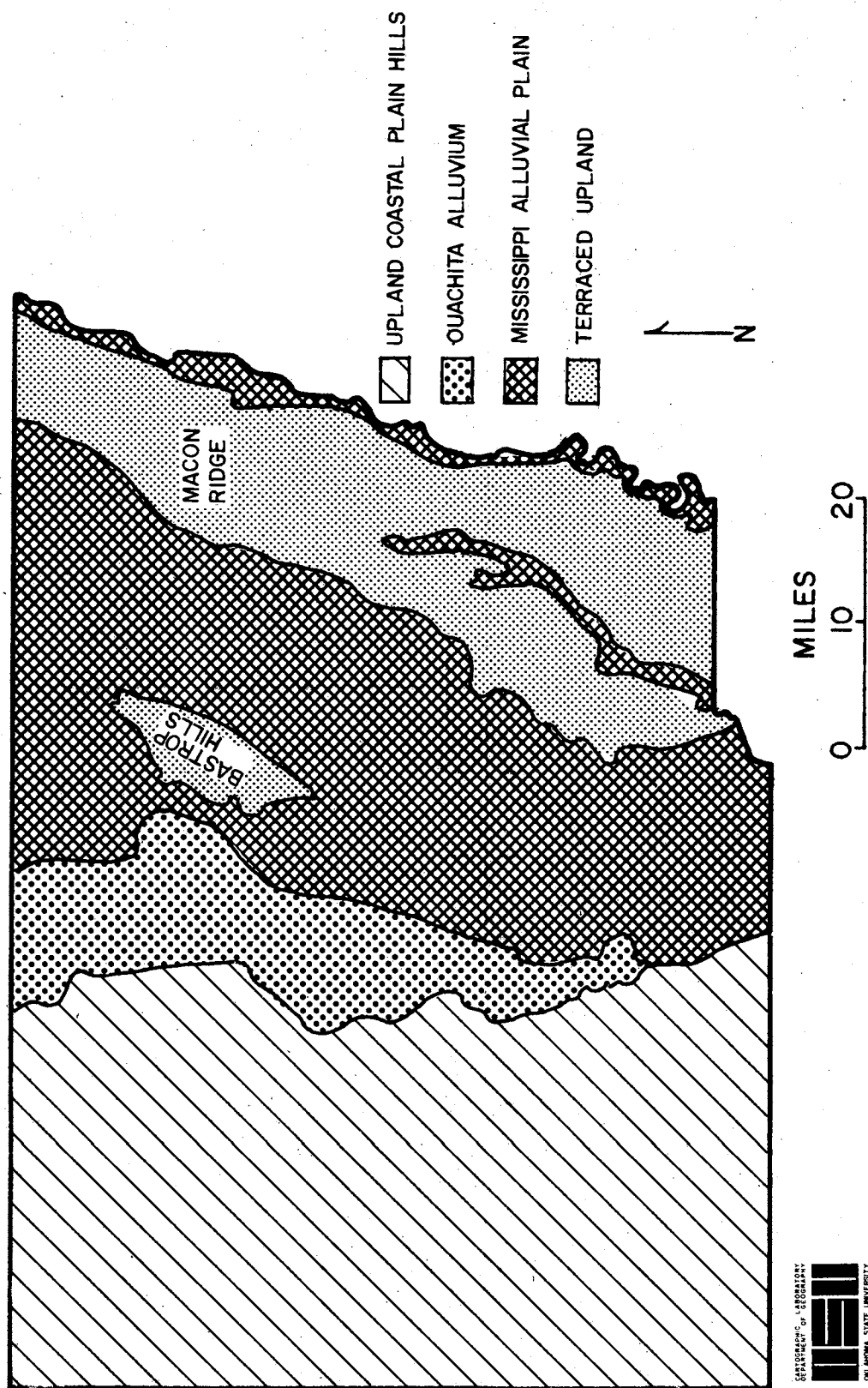


Figure 7. Ouachita Parish Land Forms

floodplain 80 miles westward.³ The flooding of the alluvial floodplain discouraged settlement and resulted in a large part of the region being uninhabited.

The Tertiary Uplands, approximately four miles west of the Ouachita River, extended westward beyond the western boundary of the region. This hill section consisted of a mature dissected upland. Elevation ranged from over 200 feet in the eastern part to over 300 feet in the western section. In the valleys the elevation dropped to 75 feet with most of the area near 250 feet (Figure 8).⁴ There was a rolling surface in the central part of the uplands, while the northern and southern portions had an irregular dissected surface.⁵ Between the steep ridge in the southwest part of the region and the Ouachita River in the southeast there were rolling hills and broad ridges. Immediately adjacent to the river on the west bank were 80-foot bluffs which contrasted sharply with the alluvial floodplain east of the river.

³F. N. Tompkins, North Louisiana: Its Climate, Productions, Health, Schools, Etc. (Cincinnati, 1880), pp. 19, 119.

⁴Topographic Maps, U. S. Geological Survey, Scale 1:62500; Aerial Photographs, U. S. Soil Conservation Service, Ouachita Parish, Louisiana.

⁵Kia Kang Wang, Geology of Ouachita Parish (Baton Rouge, 1952.)

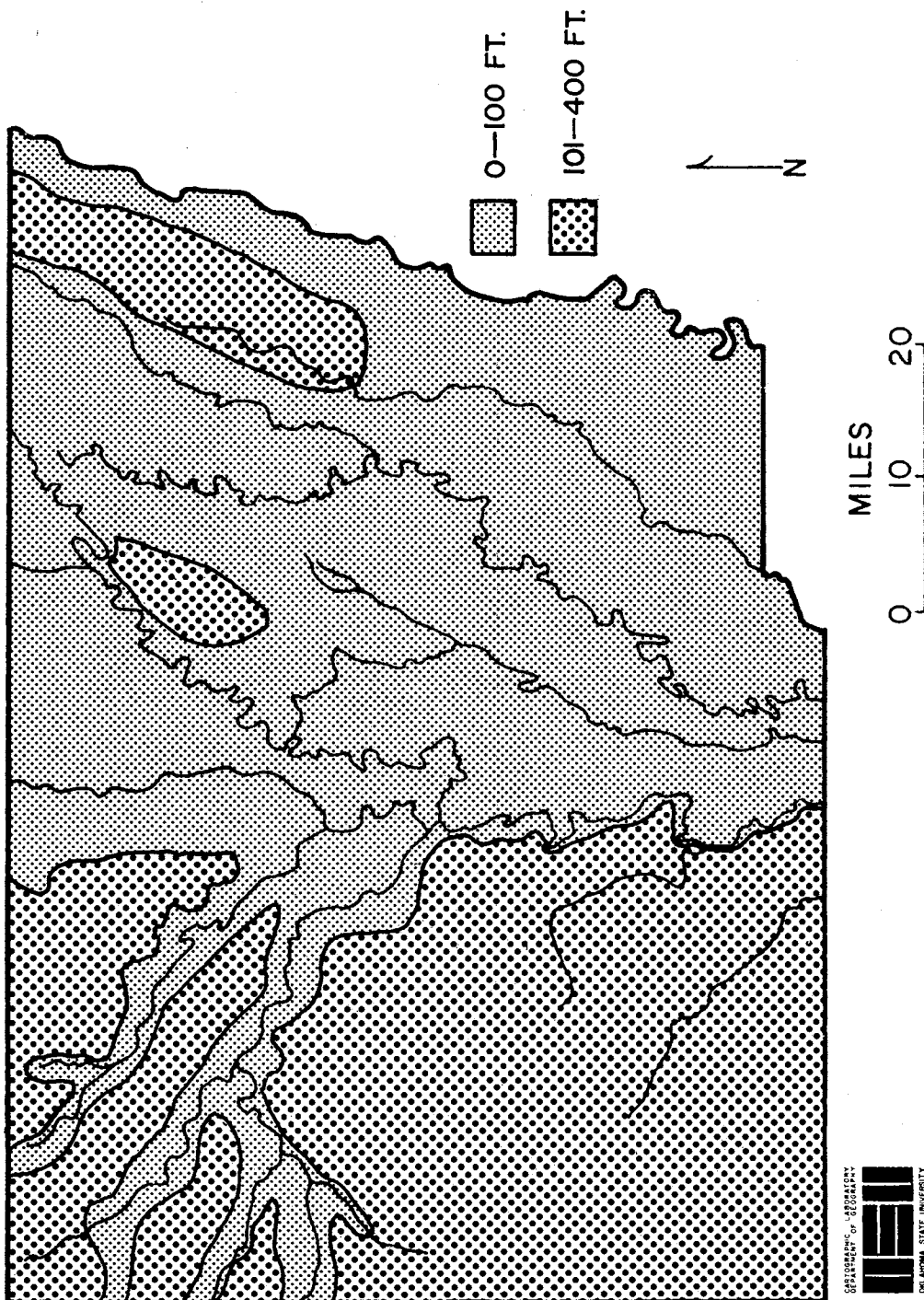


Figure 8. Elevation

B. Alluvial Floodplain of
Ouachita Parish

The alluvial floodplain of Ouachita Parish consisted of the Mississippi Alluvial Floodplain and a discontinuous belt of Pleistocene Alluvial deposits. It was interrupted by two sections of Terraced Uplands, Macon Ridge and Bastrop Hills. The alluvial floodplain contained overloaded streams which meandered, leaving ox-bow lakes, natural levees, back-swamps, and meander scars. The elevation was low, with most of the eastern half between 55 and 70 feet, reaching 85 feet on the natural levees. In the southeast section, the highest elevation was approximately 85 feet, 22 to 24 feet above the adjacent bottom land.⁶ Along the Ouachita River the elevation was as low as 35 to 45 feet; moreover, the relief was less than five feet over many square miles.⁷

There were two groups of alluvial soils in the floodplain. The first group included those soils located on either side of Macon Ridge and deposited by the Ouachita, Mississippi, and Arkansas Rivers, and the old distributaries of the Arkansas River. The natural levees and ridges were comprised of brown to reddish-brown sandy loam surface soils while grayish-brownish or dark brown clay or silty clay

⁶A. C. Veatch, Notes on the Geology Along the Ouachita, (Louisiana State University Experiment Station, 1902).

⁷Wang, p. 11.

surface soils were located between the natural levees and backswamps. Gray or dark gray acid clay soil to silty clay surface soils were found in the backswamps and basins. These soils were slightly acid and low in organic matter and mineral plant nutrients.⁸

The second alluvial soil group included the bottom lands of the Ouachita River, its western tributaries, and small streams. These areas were comprised of silty, sandy, and clay sediments from the Coastal Plain sections. The soils were brown sandy loams, located in level areas, and grayish soils found in poorly-drained areas. They contained low to moderate amounts of organic matter and mineral plant nutrients, and their locations were subject to floods and frequent inundation.⁹

Flint wrote "the soil of the alluvions of Washita, in its lower courses, is black and extremely fertile;"¹⁰ he further described the soil of the alluvial zone as sandy and absorbent and stated, "the soil on the surface is generally light, fertile, and of a black colour, except in the oaklands, where it is whitish, and rather stiff and meagre clay."¹¹ Flint viewed the area near the Ouachita

⁸S. A. Lytle and M. B. Sturgis, compilers, General Soil Areas and Associated Soil Series Groups of Louisiana (Baton Rouge, May, 1962).

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Flint, p. 16.

¹¹Ibid.

River and stated "thence to the river the surface has a gradual slope to a belt of hard clay soil, chiefly timbered with oak, which skirts the Ouachita to the distance of a league" ¹² Robin referred to the east side of the river as the left bank, and stated, "the soil on the left bank, . . . being flat and covered with a thick layer of humus overlying the reddish subsoil is fertile, and will be inexhaustible for a long time." ¹³

The lowland of the alluvial floodplain was subject to inundation during the study period and was developed very little in contrast to higher elevations. Also, the dense vegetation of the floodplain was a great obstacle to transportation and hampered settlement of the region. The higher alluvial areas immediately adjacent to the major streams were initially the most sought-after settlement sites, since they offered fertile soils and readily-accessible water transportation. Within this section were some of the richest agricultural lands in the region; however, drainage was poor in many locations and several large tupelo and cypress swamps existed.

Thomas Hutchins, a geographer to the United States who surveyed the so-called Geographer's Line in the Land Ordinance of 1785, descended the Mississippi River and

¹²Ibid., p. 10.

¹³Robin, p. 137.

recorded descriptive accounts of his journey. Of the alluvial floodplain in northeastern Louisiana, he stated:

No country in North America, or perhaps in the Universe exceeds the neighborhood of the Mississippi in fertility of soil and temperature. Both sides of this river are truly remarkable for the very great diversity and luxuriance of their productions.¹⁴

The entire region, excluding the prairies, had stands of oak, cypress, gum, elm, ash, hickory, and pine. Darby stated that the area was timbered with hickory, white oak, maple, cypress, ash, pecan, tupelo, sweet gum, dogwood, sycamore, walnut, locust, red gum, and pine.¹⁵ The large stands of cypress trees impressed travelers and explorers, and many of these individuals made reference to them in their writings. Flint viewed the cypress growth in the region and remarked:

There are sometimes extents of fifty or sixty acres of rich land in a body, often interrupted by what are called cypress brakes, full of cypress trees of magnificent dimensions. And I remark, in passing, that the cypress of the Ouachita is of the largest size, and the finest timber anywhere found on the water of the southwest.¹⁶

Ellicott, an American surveyor who traveled through the region between 1797 and 1800, stated:

¹⁴Thomas Hutchins, An Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and West Florida. A Facsimile Reproduction of the 1784 Edition with Introduction and Index by Joseph G. Tregle, Jr. (Gainesville, Florida, 1968), p. 29.

¹⁵Darby, A Geographical Description of Louisiana, pp. 43-44.

¹⁶Flint, pp. 10-11.

The cypress . . . grows in swamps, marshes, and ponds, but not on high dry land. From the roots of the tree a number of conical excrescences grow up, which are eight or ten feet high, and being hollow are used for bee-hives, and other purposes¹⁷

C. Terraced Uplands of Ouachita Parish

The alluvial floodplain in the eastern portion of the study region contrasted sharply with the Terraced Uplands which were comprised of two sections, Macon Ridge and Bastrop Hills. The elevation of these areas, in present Morehouse and West Carroll Parishes, ranged from 20 to 60 feet above the floodplain.

Macon Ridge was a low-lying terrace which formed the backbone of present West Carroll Parish. It formed the divide between the drainage basins of Bayou Macon to the east and the Boeuf River to the west. The ridge had a poorly-defined escarpment with elevations reaching 15 feet in very few places.¹⁸

Bastrop Hills, located northeast of the present city of Monroe, were approximately five miles wide and 17 miles long and covered approximately 47 square miles of present Morehouse Parish. This terrace was located between the Bonne Idee Bayou to the east and Bayou Bartholomew to the

¹⁷Andrew Ellicott, The Journal of Andrew Ellicott (revised, Chicago, 1962), p. 286.

¹⁸U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lower Ouachita and Black Rivers, Arkansas and Louisiana: General Geology (Vicksburg, No. 3-546).

west. The Bastrop Hills, the depositional cone of the Ouachita River, were of Pleistocene deposits, and were 50 to 60 feet higher than the surrounding floodplain.¹⁹ The maximum elevation reached 160 feet.²⁰

The soils and vegetation of Macon Ridge and Bastrop Hills areas were varied. The soils were light brown to gray, generally fertile, and varied from clay and very fine sandy loams to silt loams and silty clay loams.²¹ Toward the interior of the two areas, the land was covered with a thick natural growth of grass interspersed with mixed hardwoods. The higher elevations were covered with stands of pines.

Macon Ridge and Bastrop Hills might possibly have been formed by the Arkansas River as it originally entered the flat Mississippi alluvial plain. It has been suggested that, as the Arkansas River flowed through the Mississippi alluvial plain, there was a decrease in slope along with a decrease in stream velocity, resulting in a drop of the silty load to form cones of sediments along the old channel courses. The Arkansas River later shortened its course length and entered the Mississippi River in the present state of Arkansas.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 4-02.

²¹S. A. Lytle, The Morphological Characteristics and Relief Relationships of Representative Soils in Louisiana (Baton Rouge, November, 1968).

The extensive alluvial floodplain located to the east of the Ouachita River was interrupted not only by the Terraced Uplands but also by several prairies (Figure 9). In present Morehouse Parish, the largest prairie was Prairie Mer Rouge. Located approximately six miles east of the present town of Bastrop, it was an open prairie with stunted hawthorne and sycamore trees as the natural growth; it extended three miles in length and one mile in width. Another open area was Prairie Jefferson, located about six miles south of Prairie Mer Rouge. It was not as large as the former area but contained similar vegetation. Other prairies in present Morehouse Parish included Seymour and des Butte, which were small prairies located north of Bayou Bartholomew.

D. Upland Coastal Plain Hills of Ouachita Parish

The Upland Coastal Plain Hills encompassed the western section of the parish and extended westward from the Ouachita River floodplain. It was here that settlers found the greatest variety of relief features in the region. Robin noted that west of the Ouachita ". . . are found sandy hills containing sandstone, obviously formed in seas, while here and there are some pretty cypress swamps."²² The area was comprised of hills which varied in height from a few

²²Robin, p. 159.

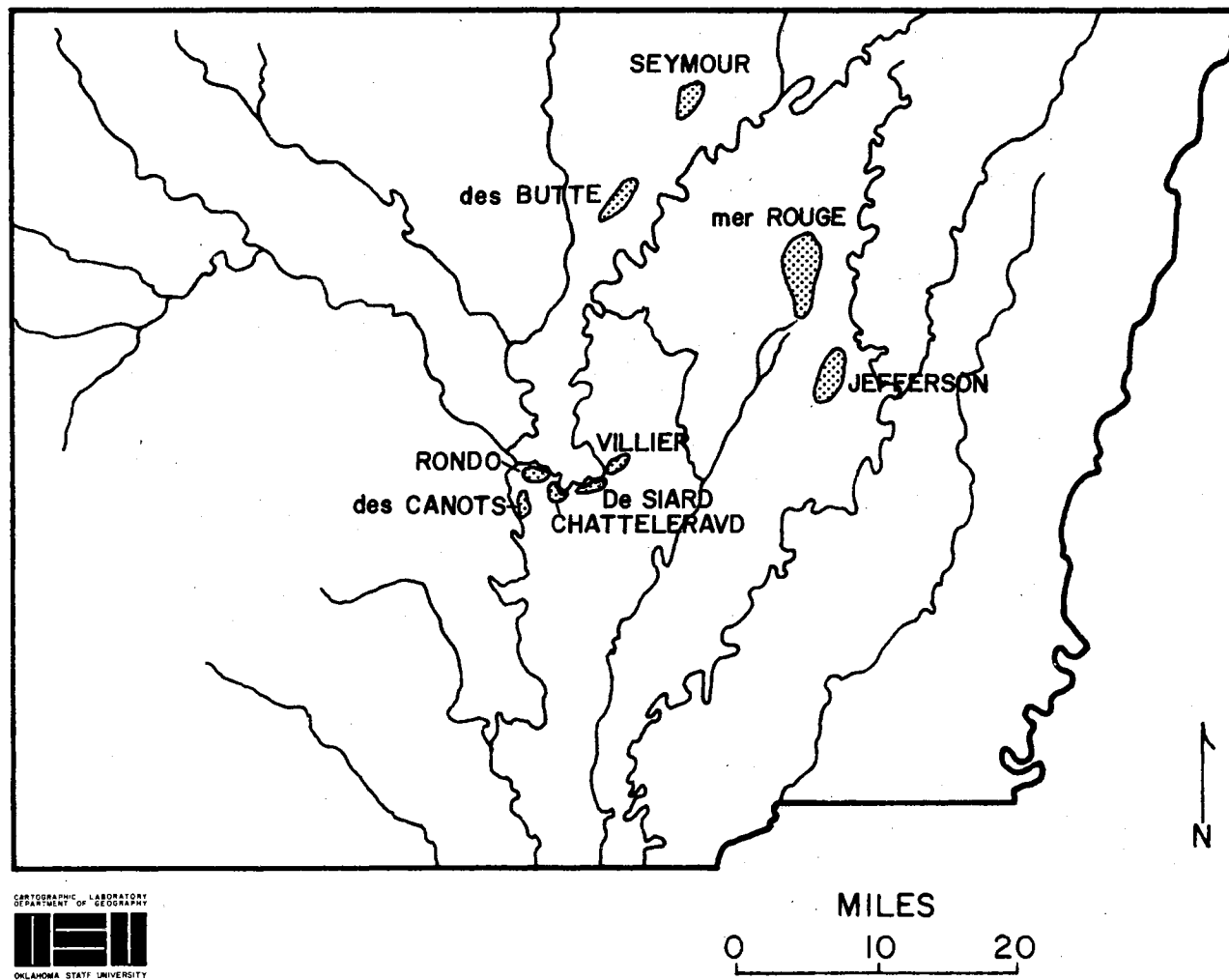


Figure 9. Prairies in Ouachita Parish

feet above the alluvial floodplains to elevations over 400 feet. Located between areas of rough relief features were gently rolling plains and low hills which had been weathered and eroded. The area west of the Ouachita River meets with Albert L. Seeman's definition of hill country as being "that major landform which has slight summit area and slight relief."²³ The section also meets the requirements of C. Langdon White and George T. Renner's definition which states that hill country is characterized by land relief of "several tens or a few hundreds of feet" and that they "may be described as land too rough and broken to be classified as plains, but possessing far too small a relief to be classed as mountains."²⁴

The soils of the Upland Coastal Plain Hills were grayish-brown sandy loams to fine sandy loams and were low in organic matter and plant nutrients. They varied from medium to strongly acid and were susceptible to erosion in many locations. Much of the area, except for the alluvial land of minor waterways, was too steep for cultivation; thus, these soils were some of the last to be settled by the Anglo-American farmers.²⁵ Robin described the soil west of the Ouachita River as being ". . . less suitable

²³Albert L. Seeman, Physical Geography (New York, 1942), p. 139.

²⁴C. Langdon White and George T. Renner, Human Geography (New York, 1948), pp. 378, 371.

²⁵Lytle and Sturgis.

for agriculture because, being raised, it is promptly leached by the rains after being cleared."²⁶

The Upland Coastal Plain Hills had a broken and hilly surface with a variety of vegetation. There was a mixture of oaks, hickory, pines, dogwood, sassafras, persimmons, and chinquapins on the higher lands; while beeches, ashes, maples, water oaks, black and sweet gums, hickory, and elm grew on the alluvial bottoms.

E. Summary

Ouachita Parish included two physiographic sections, the alluvial deposits east of the Ouachita and the hills west of the river. The rich alluvial bottomland found in the region was covered with a dense growth of many types of vegetation. Lush virgin forests covered a large part of the region and provided a home for wild animals and many species of fowl. The entire region was subdivided by rivers, streams, lakes, and bayous which frequently overflowed their banks. In these waterways one could find fish, clams, turtles, frogs, and many other forms of aquatic animal life as well as plant life.

The abundance of plant and animal life and the high humidity, combined with the low elevation, gave a subtropical appearance to the region. The abundance of foodstuffs and the easily-accessible waterways of the

²⁶Robin, p. 137.

region provided an environment in which man was able to live quite adequately without significantly disturbing the landscape.

The rich alluvial land which first provided food, shelter, and household goods for the Indian and the first settlers later became the productive cotton fields of the Anglo-American farmer. The waterways which were a source of food as well as a means of transportation to the early settler later helped to make the farmer most successful. He relied on the waterways not only for food but also for a means of transporting his goods to market.

The positive features of Ouachita Parish, the rich farm land, and the readily-available waterways were appealing to the settler; however, the negative aspects, the high humidity, the hot summers and cold, damp winters, and the frequent flooding discouraged many people from going to the region.

CHAPTER IV

INDIAN PERIOD

A. Introduction

The first inhabitants of the geographic region that later became Ouachita Parish were a mobile people who left few traces of their existence. They depended largely on the lush surroundings for their subsistence and did little to alter the natural landscape; however, they did pave the way for future settlement by the white man.

The sparse evidence left by the Indians reveals much about their economic activity and settlement pattern. Archaeological studies indicate that the Indians were primarily a hunting-fishing-gathering people who utilized a variety of tools, weapons, and pottery. As agriculture became more prevalent among the Indians, the population increased and the numbers of settlements grew.

The coming of the white man brought not only new ideas, goods, and tools to the Indians but also new problems in the form of disease. Epidemics of measles, smallpox, and other diseases not only reduced the Indian population but also reduced the Indian's will to continue his struggle against the white man.

B. Prehistoric Indians

Significant development of a cultural landscape in Ouachita Parish began with the development of an Indian Culture. Several Indian cultures which developed in the region have been identified by the use of archaeological evidence secured in the excavation of tools and weapons, various objects of pottery, and skeletal remains. Midden contents and site characteristics have also provided important information concerning these cultures. The archaeological evidence found at the village sites has enabled archaeologists and historians to reconstruct the economic activities of the Indians, as well as the rise and decline of their culture.

One of the earliest known Indian cultures in Louisiana, Poverty Point Culture, dating from approximately 1500 B. C. to 250 B. C., was located on Bayou Macon; however, villages of this culture existed throughout the southeastern portion of the region, which is now Franklin Parish.¹ The Poverty Point Indians were primarily foragers; however, according to Jennings, it is probable that they were practicing a limited, supplemental agriculture.² Excavations at the Poverty Point site, however, have failed to reveal direct evidence of food production and have caused some observers

¹Bob Neuman, Curator of Louisiana State University Museum of Anthropology and Geography, Baton Rouge. Personal communication and unpublished data, April 4, 1974.

²Jennings, p. 215.

to conclude that agriculture was not necessary to the development of complex settlements such as Poverty Point. These authorities feel that people possessing a gathering economy might have been able to secure the residential stability necessary to construct the Poverty Point mounds and earthworks.³ Other authorities, however, argue that agriculture had to have been a part of the Indian's way of life in order for him to have produced such complex mounds and embankments at Poverty Point. Stephen Williams, a leading researcher on Indian settlement patterns, stated:

The large mounds and embankments at Poverty Point . . . are without precedent, but both seem to indicate quite a sizable assemblage of people or a great length of occupation or both. This . . . appearance of circular embankments and mounds . . . is something of a cultural and temporal anomaly"⁴

Caldwell stated that building large mounds must have required enormous resources in manpower, and he supposed that a project such as this was possible, at that time, only because of a food surplus. This food surplus, he contended, was probably obtained when the primary gathering economy of the Indians was supplemented by a rudimentary agriculture. With a surplus of food, it was possible for the Indians to turn their attention to other matters.⁵

³Caldwell, p. 22.

⁴Stephen Williams, "Settlement Patterns in the Lower Mississippi Valley," in Gordon R. Willey, Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the New World (Reprinted by Johnson Reprint Corp., New York, 1971), pp. 56-57.

⁵Caldwell, p. 22.

In addition to hunting, fishing, gathering, and possibly agriculture, there is evidence that the Poverty Point Indians also engaged in limited trading. The artifacts of the Poverty Point Culture are evidence that these Indians used black argillite from eastern Oklahoma; slate, hematite and magnetite from Missouri; flints from Indiana and Ohio; quartz from near Hot Springs, Arkansas; copper from Lake Superior; and sandstone from central Louisiana.⁶

Another important Prehistoric Indian Culture in the region was the Marksville Culture. The sites of the Marksville Culture, which dated from approximately 100 A. D. to 450 A. D., show evidence of the earliest conical burial mounds and characteristics of a culture in which agriculture, rather than hunting, fishing, and gathering, was predominant.⁷ One village site located on the western bank of Bayou Macon, approximately six miles south of Delhi, Louisiana (T 16N, R 10E, S7), has been identified through the use of pottery and shell middens as being of the Marksville Culture (Figure 10). This site included four mounds which extended over ten acres.⁸

There has been insufficient evidence in the region to account for the time period between the Marksville Culture and the more recent Indians just prior to the arrival of

⁶Neuman, personal communication and unpublished data.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

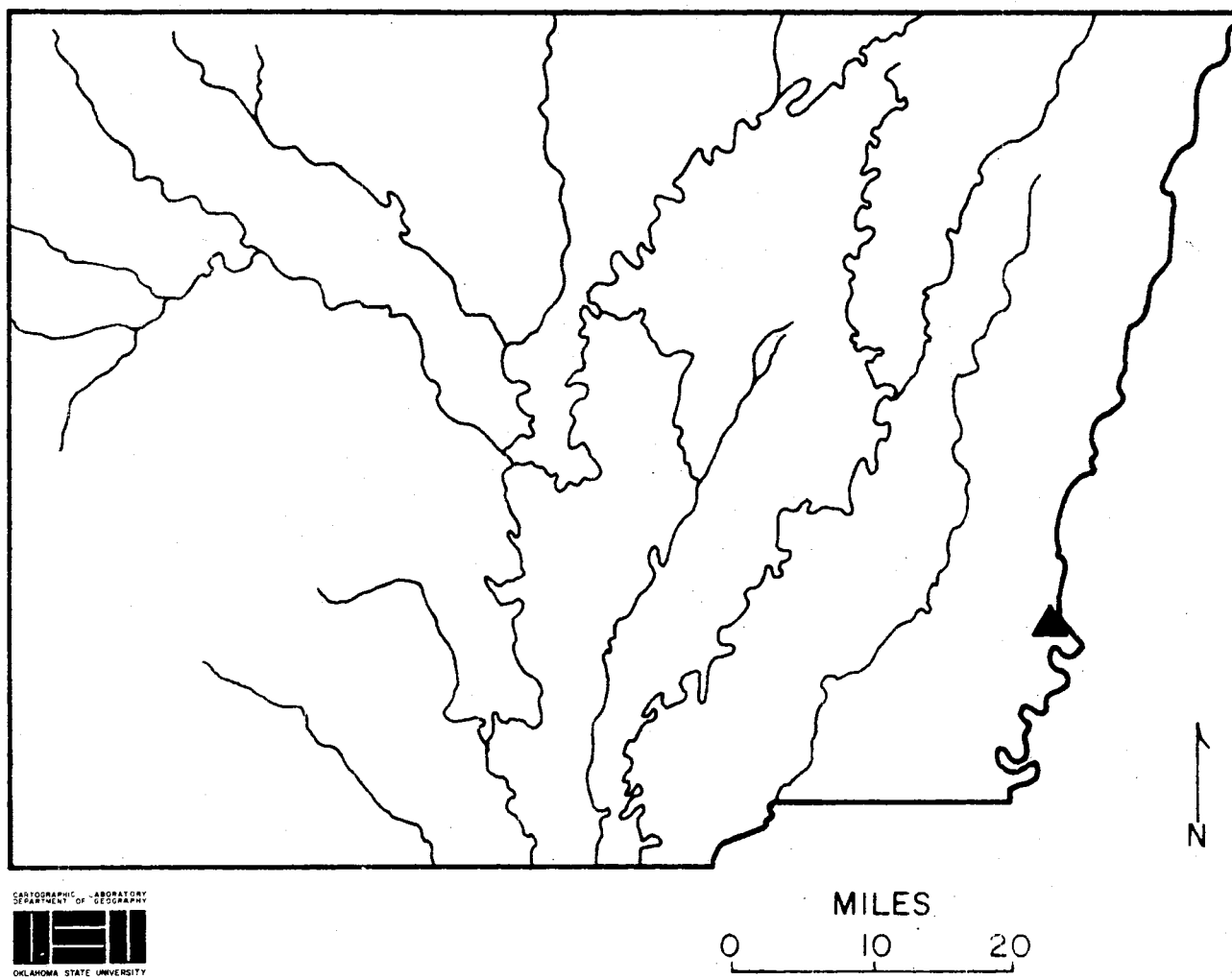


Figure 10. Marksville Indian Culture

the white man. Excavations outside the region have revealed evidence of other cultures dating to 1450 A. D. Indians of those cultures may have occupied the study region, and descendents of these cultures might possibly have evolved into some of the historic Indian groups met by the early explorers and settlers who penetrated Louisiana's interior.

C. Historic Indians of Ouachita Parish

Much of the information concerning the historic Indian tribes of Louisiana must be gathered from the accounts of the Spanish and French explorers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. These explorers, including De Soto, La Salle, Iberville, and others, kept records of the locations and characteristics of the Indian tribes which they encountered. From these records and materials discovered in excavations, it has been found that two major linguistic groups, each comprised of various tribes, inhabited the study region. The Caddoan Linguistic Group occupied the western portion of the region while the Tunica Linguistic Group was established in the eastern portion (Figure 11).

Evidence of Indian material has been found at Glendora Landing north of Monroe, Pargould Plantation in Monroe, Moon Lake north of Monroe, Indian Village 20 miles west of Monroe, the Keno Plantation in present Morehouse Parish, and the Point site in present Union Parish. Evidence of

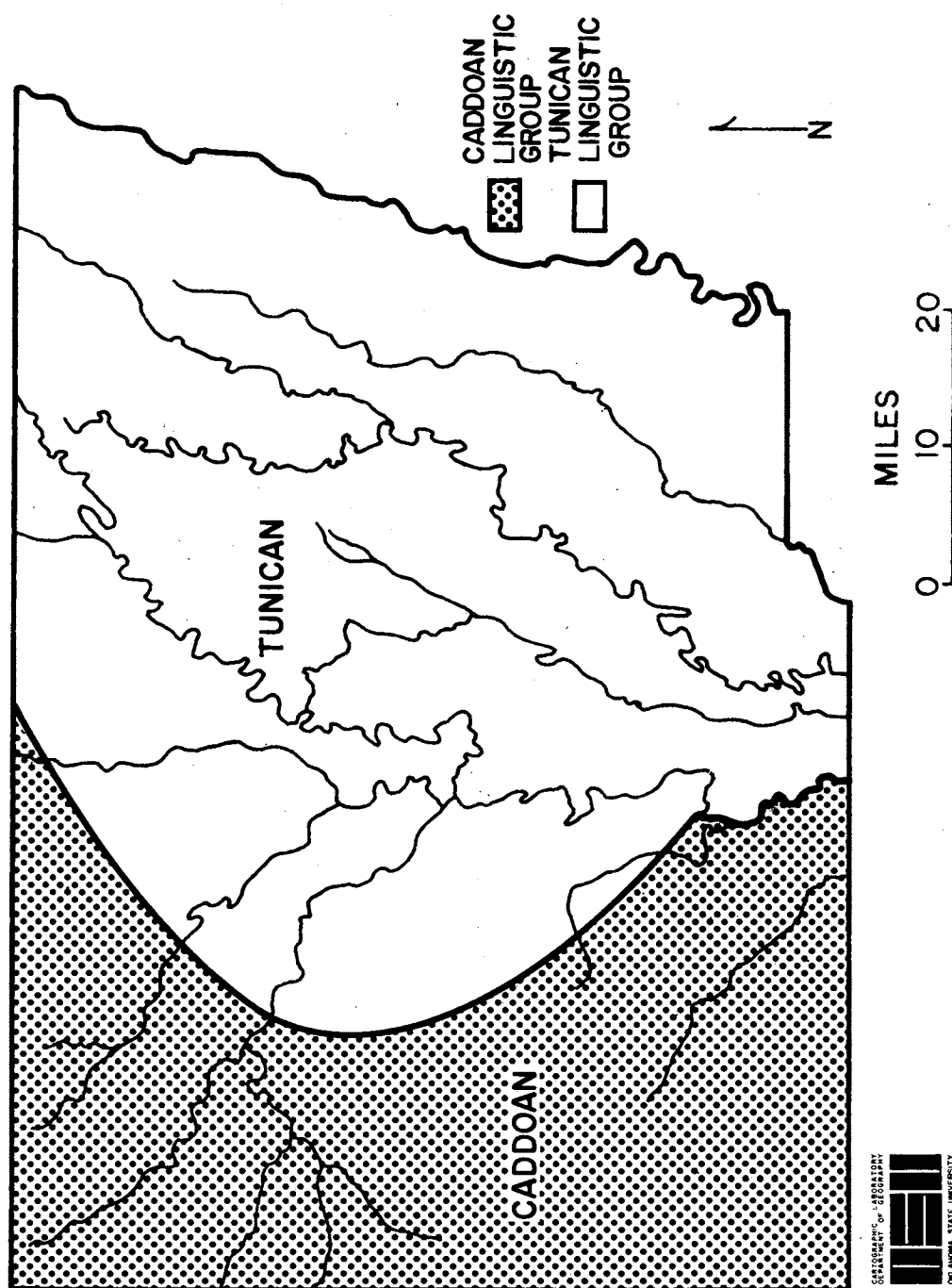


Figure 11. Indian Linguistic Groups

Indian settlements also exist at other sites including Cut-Off Landing, Gerson Place, Logtown Landing, Myatt's Landing, Ragland's Place, Rhymes' Place, Kitchell Place, Zeigen's Point, D'Arbonne Point, Wall Lake, Ransom Place, and the La Fourche site (Figure 12). Historic trade goods have not been found at these latter locations, however, pottery found there is definitely of Caddoan nature. The area along the Ouachita River between the present town of Sterlington and the northern state boundary line was relatively uninhabited by Indians. This area was low and subject to serious flooding by the Ouachita River and Bayou Bartholomew. Available maps and other data sources do not indicate the presence of any mounds, cemeteries, or dwelling sites in this section. However, the Indians did utilize the higher terrain along Bayou Bartholomew to the east of the Ouachita River.

The Caddoan tribes were distinct culturally as well as linguistically from the other Louisiana linguistic groups. John Swanton, a leading researcher on Indians of North America, stated that the Caddoan tribes were known for their distinct vocabularies and speech.⁹ The Washitas, a tribe which represented the Caddoan Linguistic Group in the region, were probably a small confederacy tribe which

⁹ John R. Swanton, Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico (Washington, D. C., 1911).

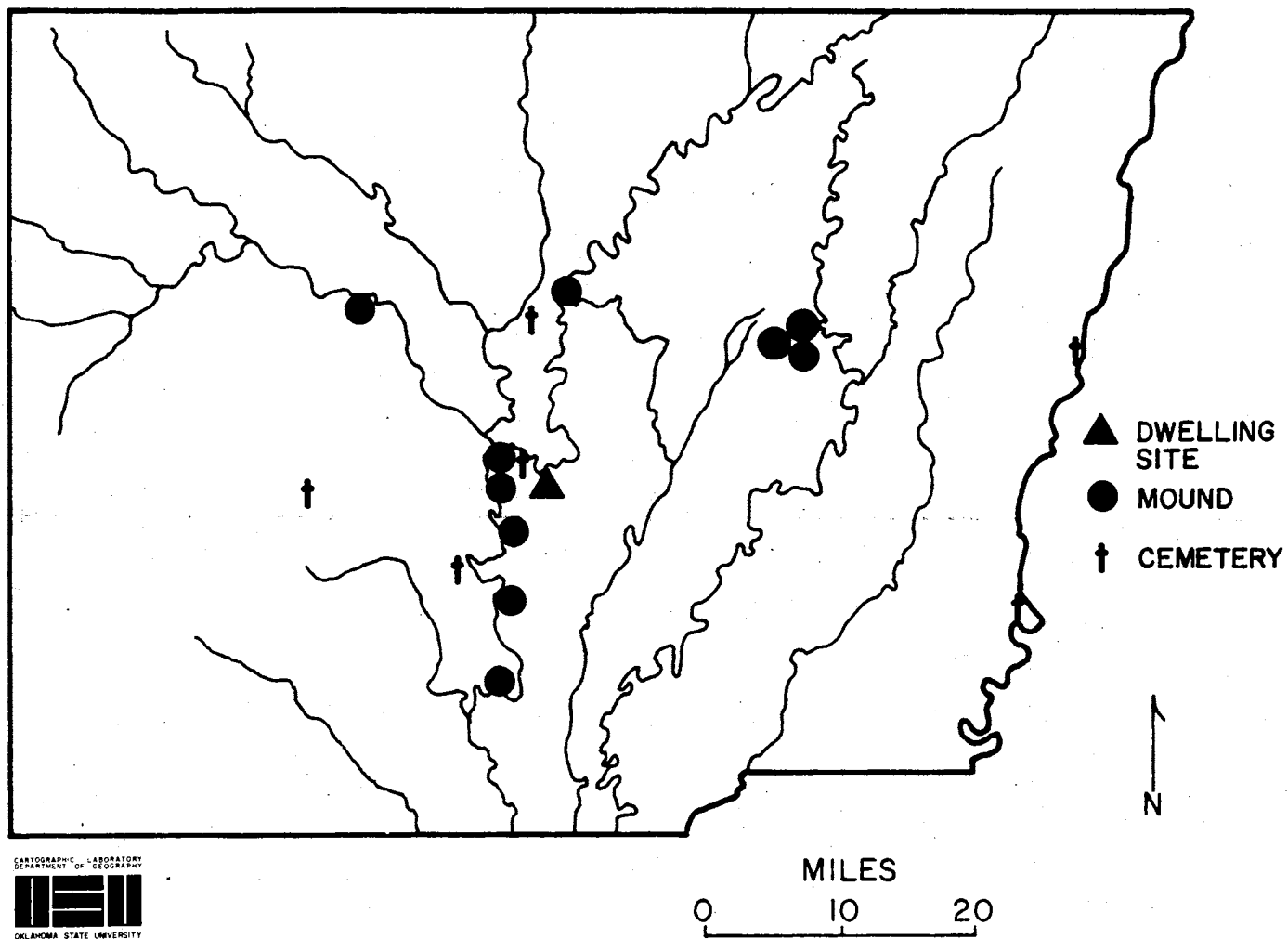


Figure 12. Identified Indian Sites

inhabited an area adjacent to the Ouachita River.¹⁰ By the late 1600's most of the Washita Indians had left the region, many migrating to the western portion of Louisiana.¹¹

The Tunica Indians, the second linguistic group found in Louisiana, were more vegetarian and more agriculturally oriented than other tribes occupying the area; they lived almost entirely on Indian corn and supplemented a diet of corn and squash, which they grew, with wild fruits and roots gathered from native plants.¹² The Koroa were the only definite representatives of the Tunica Linguistic Group in Louisiana and, according to archaeological evidence, they were once quite numerous in Louisiana. In the mid 1600's, the territory of the Koroa tribe included not only part of the study region but also covered southeast Arkansas and northwestern Mississippi, centering on the mouth of the Yazoo River.¹³ Father Gravier, a Jesuit priest who descended the Mississippi River, reported, in 1700, the following concerning the Tunicas:

The men do here what peasants do in France: they cultivate and dig the earth, plant and harvest the crops, cut the wood and bring it to the cabin,

¹⁰Kniffen, p. 6.

¹¹John R. Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States (New York, 1969), pp. 197-198.

¹²Swanton, Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico, p. 317.

¹³Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States, pp. 197-198.

dress the deer and buffalo skins when they have any¹⁴

Evidence obtained from excavations indicates that the Koroas had villages along water courses in the state as late as 1700.¹⁵

Around 1704, the Koroa tribe began moving to and concentrating on the Yazoo River near their allies, the Yazoo. Warring with neighboring tribes and Frenchmen had reduced the number of Koroas and

It is probable that they . . . retired with their Natchez allies to the Chickasaw, but, instead of keeping company with them, it would appear that they finally went over to the Choctaw, for Allen Wright, late head chief of that nation, was of Koroa descent.¹⁶

It was estimated that by 1698 there were approximately 612 Koroa and Yazoo Indians,¹⁷ 175 in 1722, and 150 in 1731.¹⁸ The last Indian tribe to inhabit the parish was a group of Choctaws. Approximately 50 Choctaw families settled at Indian Village, located about 20 miles west of present Monroe; they left this site about 1825.¹⁹

¹⁴John R. Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States, p. 317, citing John Gilmary Shea, ed., Early Voyages Up and Down the Mississippi (Albany, 1861), p. 134.

¹⁵Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States, pp. 197-198.

¹⁶Swanton, Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and the Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico, p. 332.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸Richebourg Graillard McWilliams, ed., Fleur De Lys and Calumet, Being the Penicaut Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1953), p. 203.

¹⁹Bry, p. 11.

According to Kniffen, the historic Indians of Louisiana were a semi-sedimentary people. They located their villages along waterways and lived on the abundant wild foods, supplemented with crops grown in large fields. Kniffen stated that:

Culturally, the tribes of Louisiana belong to the Eastern Maize Area, that portion of the United States where agriculture takes its place with hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild fruits as a source of subsistence.²⁰

D. Contributions to the Landscape

A knowledge of the economic activities of the Indians, which in turn contributed to the development of the landscape, may be gathered from an examination of the many artifacts obtained in excavations and from the written accounts recorded by travelers and explorers. The Indians left behind old fields, mounds, village sites, and cemeteries. Large areas which they had cleared through the use of fire were left, along with many trails, paths, and clearings in the forests.

The many weapons found in excavations are evidence of the fighting and hunting activities of the Indian. The bow and arrow was one of the most important of the Indian's weapons. It was typically made from acacia wood. Often the arrows were not tipped, but, rather, the ends of the

²⁰Kniffen, Louisiana Conservation Review, p. 5.

shafts were hardened in fire. The cherty gravels found in the central and northern parts of the state were used in making the stone point. The Indians who lived in the stoneless, alluvial lands had to trade for the points with friendly tribes. A blowgun was used for hunting small game. The gun was made of cane which was obtained from thick cane breaks growing in the alluvial areas.²¹

There was an abundance of game available to the hunter, including deer, turkeys, ducks, squirrels, rabbits, geese, and bears in the immediate vicinity; moreover, large numbers of bison roamed through the area. Evidence indicates that the bison extended its grazing grounds into the region and was driven from the area prior to mass permanent settlement. The bison was listed as numerous in 1725. The last one killed in the region was killed near Fort Miro in 1803; however, five years later a herd of about 150 bison was sighted north of Monroe near Bayou Saline.²²

The Indians also depended on aquatic life for their food, and they developed a variety of equipment for catching and trapping fish, frogs, turtles, alligators, and other aquatic life. They utilized small, crudely shaped canoes for fishing and traveling on the many bayous, lakes, rivers, and streams in the region. The Indians

²¹Ibid., p. 7.

²²Lyle S. St. Amant, Louisiana Wildlife Inventory and Management Plan (Baton Rouge, 1959), p. 37.

hollowed the canoe from a cypress log by using fire.²³ The canoe was used by the Indians for water transportation until the French introduced their version of the pirogue.

In the hill country west of the Ouachita River, water travel was restricted; thus, other means of transportation, principally the horse, were used. Travel over land, however, was relatively easy due to the presence of trails cleared by bison. According to H. S. Tanner, who drew a map of Louisiana in 1825 which indicated the presence of Indian trails, the Ouachita trail led from Prairie des Canots directly to Indian Village and then southwest to several salt licks.²⁴ Another trail led south along the east bank of the Ouachita River; a third led north along the east bank of the river to Hot Springs, Arkansas; while a fourth one followed Bayou De Siard for a short distance and then cut eastward toward the Mississippi River (Figure 13).

The Indians engaged in trading and often traveled long distances over these trails to obtain their needs. Indians of many tribes traveled through the region to obtain salt in present Winn Parish. The Caddoan tribes actively engaged in trading salt with many Indian tribes, including the Tunicas.²⁵ Trading among the Indians probably began many

²³Works Progress Administration, Writers Report, Louisiana, A Guide to the State (New York, 1941), p. 31.

²⁴H. S. Tanner, The Traveler's Guide: A Map (Philadelphia, 1825). A copy of the map is in the State Land Office, Baton Rouge.

²⁵Swanton, p. 317.

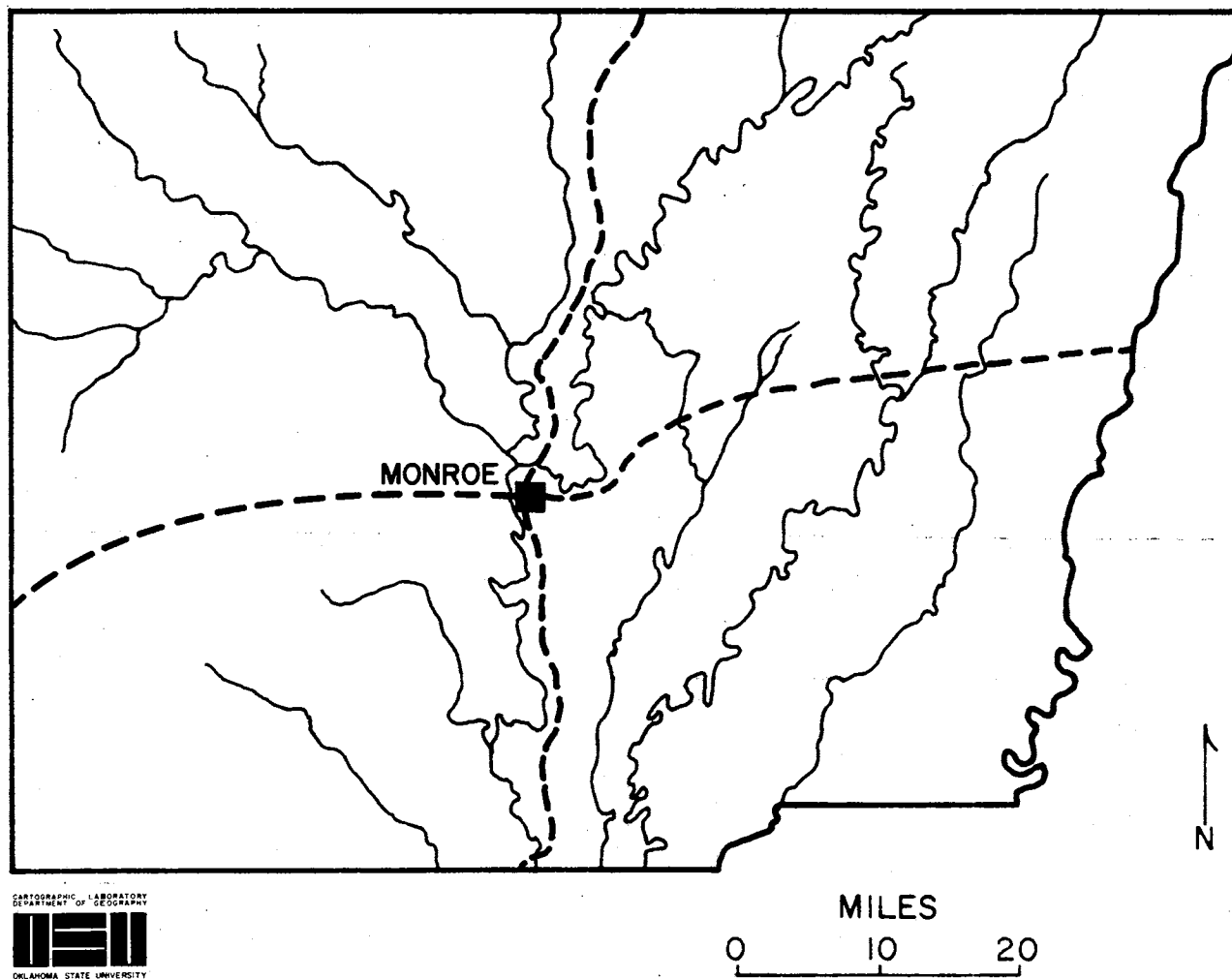


Figure 13. Early Indian Trails

centuries before the first white man appeared in the region; however, with the appearance of the white man, trading flourished. The Indians were able to procure necessities by hunting, fishing, gathering, and trading with other nearby groups for the goods they were unable to obtain by themselves. These activities met the needs of the Indians; thus, any additional form of economic activity was slow to develop. However, the more recent Indians did engage in a limited agriculture, and it was in this endeavor that they made some of their greatest contributions to the landscape.

The Indians utilized two primary methods of clearing fields for establishing villages, planting crops, and developing transportation routes. They regularly burned the open grasslands in the fall when the grass was dry. According to LePage de Pratz, the Indians burned the prairies during the month of September.²⁶ The burning of the tall, dry grass made travel easier. The fall rains usually began soon after the burning, and the prairies were visited by grazing animals attracted to the new grass. Many of the clearings, though not cultivated, resulted from this practice of burning the fields and prairies.

Another simple and effective method the Indians used to clear the land involved girdling trees within two feet above the ground so they would soon die. The underbrush was then gathered, burned, and the ashes used as fertilizer.

²⁶M. LePage du Pratz, pp. 119-120.

The soil was easy to cultivate; the resulting cover of ash was tilled with a digging stick and seed was planted.

The most common crops grown by the Indians were varieties of maize, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, melons, squashes, and tobacco. The tribes discovered by De Soto's party had supplies of corn, beans, walnuts, and dried persimmons.²⁷ Many vegetable foods grew wild, and these were of great importance to the Indians. They gathered the seeds of the palmetto and pond lily, wild potatoes, fungi, various kinds of nuts and berries, persimmons, and wild beans. Salt, obtained from "salines" west of the study region, was added for flavoring.²⁸

At the time of the first encounter with the Europeans, the Indians of the region were semi-sedentary. Agriculture, although secondary to hunting, fishing, and gathering as a part of the Indian economy, played an important role in daily life. The settlers benefited from the Indian experience in hunting and trapping, especially in the method of securing and processing bear oil. More important to the early settler, however, was the assurance provided by the Indian fields that agriculture was practicable. The inland settler of the eighteenth-century frontier developed a frontier complex which included many Indian traits. The frontier settlers adopted from Indian agriculture such

²⁷Hodge and Lewis, p. 226.

²⁸Kniffen, p. 5.

crops as beans, corn, pumpkins, and squash. These crops played a significant role in supplying the settler and were important additions to the supplies of the fur trader and adventurer.

Trade with the Indian became important in the economy of the settler. The principal cooking oil of both Indian and European settler, bear oil, was an especially important trade item, and large quantities were shipped to France.²⁹ Settlers observed the Indians and learned to grow various herbs for medicinal purposes. In addition, they adopted the pirogue, a boat designed to travel on the many waterways in the region.

Another contribution the Indians made to the development of the landscape involves place names. Many towns, bayous, and rivers have been given names taken from the Indians who previously inhabited the region (Appendix C). The name of the parish, as well as its major river, was given by the Washita Indians.³⁰

The Indians also aided the white man by clearing fields of vegetation which enabled settlers to have

²⁹M. LePage du Pratz, p. 249.

³⁰Alcee Fortier, A History of Louisiana, II (Madison, Wisconsin, 1914), p. 279; William A. Read, Louisiana Place-Names of Indian Origin, University Bulletin XIX, No. 2, Louisiana State University and Agriculture and Mechanical College (1927), pp. 47-48. The exact meaning and origin of the Indian word "Ouachita" is debated. Read provides the following translations of the name: "Big Cat River," "Big Cow River," "Big River," "Silver Water," "Male Deer," and "Country of Large Buffaloes."

readily-accessible areas to produce crops. Furthermore, the Indians had established trails through the wilderness; some of them later became major transportation routes for settlers migrating into the region. Today, many of the original trails remain as primary avenues of transportation. The Indians were responsible for introducing early explorers and settlers to locations of mineral deposits, primarily salt and clays, and building materials.

While the economic activity of the Indian helped to insure permanent settlement by the white man, the appearance of the white man greatly influenced the decline of the Indian population. According to Father Lemaire, who traveled to the Louisiana territory as a missionary in the early part of the eighteenth century, Louisiana had once been densely populated with Indians. The Indians informed him that their numbers had been many, a claim supported by evidence of abandoned fields and camp sites. Lemaire noted that it was difficult to determine whether the diseases introduced by the Europeans or the casualties of war were responsible for the drastic reduction in the Indian population.³¹ The Indians had little immunity to the diseases introduced by the Europeans and lacked the will to survive;³² the explorers and settlers brought diseases, and epidemics of smallpox and measles destroyed a great

³¹Lemaire, p. 11.

³²Ibid.

many Indians of the Ouachita. In 1691, an epidemic of unknown character swept through east Texas and adjacent Louisiana and was reported to have destroyed 3,000 of the southern Caddoans alone. Moreover, a great smallpox epidemic in 1698 was reported to have destroyed the larger part of the Tunica tribe.³³ Epidemics and other disasters seldom occur in devastating degree without an accompanying social, political, and economic upheaval.³⁴ The social and economic effects of these epidemics were of such degree that the Indian groups were never able to recover; similarly, disruptions caused by contact and conquest reduced Indian resistance to disease and the Indian population quickly dwindled.

E. Summary

The first known inhabitants of Ouachita Parish were the Aborigines. These Indians were a hunting-fishing-gathering people who were able to live in the study region for many years without significantly altering the landscape. The environment was rich with an abundance of food and the climate was relatively mild. The Indians did not find it necessary to cultivate large fields or build strong, lasting shelters. Rather, they preferred to remain mobile, utilizing the waterways for rapid transportation and living off

³³Mooney, pp. 7-12.

³⁴Fiennes, p. 165.

the land as they moved about.

The Indians relied primarily on hunting, fishing, and gathering for their food and household goods. The few items which they were not able to obtain by these methods were easily procured by trading with neighboring tribes. Moreover, most all of the materials the Indians needed for making weapons and tools were easily obtained from the environment. The Indians were not compelled to develop agriculture or trading because they were able to meet their needs by utilizing their constantly-replenished surroundings; however, a few of the historic Indian tribes did eventually turn to agriculture to supplement their diet.

As the Indian population increased in number, the people began to practice a limited agriculture. They established settlements along the rivers and streams and burned the nearby areas to clear fields for crops. Many of these cleared fields were later used by the early settler in establishing his farm. The Indians not only provided cleared fields for the settlers but also demonstrated to the settler that farming was possible in the region. This served to greatly encourage the hesitant settler and give him confidence in the suitability of the region for farming.

The Indians also burned trails through the forests and enlarged existing trails. These served to aid the early settler by providing him with a means of finding his way in the region. Many of these Indian trails later became roads.

One of the most interesting alterations of the landscape produced by the Indians was the building of large mounds as burial grounds for their dead. The contents of these mounds provide an insight into the culture and economic activity of the Indian. It is through these mounds that one is able to learn of the hunting-fishing-gathering economy of the Indian and the simplicity of his existence.

Today when one observes the landscape of Ouachita Parish, the only evidence of the existence of the Indian that he can readily see is the preponderance of Indian place names and the occasional Indian mound; however, if one observes the area after a study of Indian habits, he recognizes the fact that many of the cleared fields located near the bayous, rivers, and lakes once belonged to the Indian; he also realizes that some of the streets located near the waterways were possibly Indian trails. Though the Indians made few alterations in the landscape, those changes which they did effect were permanent and have contributed to the culture of Ouachita Parish.

CHAPTER V

SPANISH AND FRENCH EXPLORATION OF OUACHITA PARISH

A. Introduction

The Spanish and French explorers, the first known white men to enter the study region, provided the impetus needed to encourage further exploration and settlement of Ouachita Parish. They came expecting gold and other riches and were greatly disappointed; their records revealed their disappointment and, for a time, tended to dissuade further exploration. Included in their journals, however, were records of fertile ground; lush vegetation; abundant wildlife; navigable rivers, streams, and bayous; and the successful growing of vegetables by the Indians.

These attributes of the land, which were of secondary importance to the explorers, were noted with interest by the countries which later sent settlers into the region. Though these first explorers did not remain in the region and left little evidence of their travels, they did pave the way for later exploration and settlement by recording their observations and drawing maps and charts.

B. Spanish Exploration of
Ouachita Parish

The first known white men to reach the study region were the Spanish, led by Hernando De Soto. The Spanish explorer sailed from Spain to Cuba and then to the United States in 1539; he and his men explored the southeastern United States and reached the state of Arkansas in 1542. They spent the winter at an Indian village called Autiamque, the present site of Camden, Arkansas.¹ From this location, De Soto's exact journey is debatable; however, it has been maintained that De Soto traveled southward along the west bank of a river known to him as the Anilco, which was probably the Ouachita.²

Ogg, who wrote a history of the opening of the Mississippi River, recorded that: "early in March, 1542, the party advanced down the Washita in the hope of reaching the sea, where boats might be constructed, after the plan of Narvaez, and a return to Cuba thus made possible."³ De Soto and his army probably would have preferred to utilize the Mississippi River to reach the ocean; however, it is conjectured that impassable swamps diverted De Soto

¹Frederick William Williamson and George T. Goodman, eds., Eastern Louisiana, I (Louisville, Monroe, and Shreveport, 1939), pp. 9-16.

²U. S. De Soto Commission Final Report, House Doc. No. 71, 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.

³Frederic Austin Ogg, The Opening of the Mississippi (New York, 1904), p. 37.

along the Ouachita River.

De Soto is believed to have crossed the river to the eastern bank at a fordable place, probably near present Columbia, and proceeded southward.⁴ He then descended further down the river in search of Nilco, a large Indian settlement probably located at present Jonesville, Louisiana. De Soto's expedition southward along the Ouachita River is illustrated by an old map by Gillaume De L'Isle, printed in French's Historical Collections of Louisiana, Volume II.⁵ Williamson points out that:

While this evidence is not conclusive in itself, because of the long lapse of time before any maps were made of the journey, it may reasonably be concluded that De Soto passed through or near the present cities of Monroe . . ."⁶

De Soto and his men made no effort to settle the region, but their presence left its mark. They had carried swine and chickens on their journey for sources of fresh meat. Horses were slaughtered when the supply of fresh meat was depleted. Moscoso, De Soto's successor, and his men wrote of slaughtering horses during periods when wild animals were scarce. Some horses, hogs, and chickens

⁴Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States, p. 55.

⁵B. F. French, Historical Collections of Louisiana, II (2nd ed., Philadelphia, 1850).

⁶Frederick W. Williamson and Lillian Herron Williamson, Northeast Louisiana (Shreveport, 1939), p. 16.

probably escaped from the Spanish explorers and may account, in part, for the presence of wild hogs which later inhabited areas of the Ouachita. Also, the horses used by the Indians may have escaped or been captured from the Spanish explorers.

The fruitless Spanish search for wealth discouraged further exploration in the area, and almost 150 years passed before the region was revisited. This exploration was made by a French group that traveled down the Mississippi River from the north.

C. French Exploration of Ouachita Parish

The leader of the advance of French explorers was Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, a resident of Canada who had gained wealth from fur trade. He and a large party reached the vicinity of present Tensas Parish on the Mississippi River in 1682 and learned of the Ouachita River and the Indians inhabiting the region.⁷ His party did not visit them but, instead, continued to descend the Mississippi. They reached the mouth of the Mississippi during the same year and claimed the land for France, naming it "Louisiane." Although La Salle did not explore the study region, his important expedition provided a basis from which the French made claims to the Mississippi Valley and Louisiana. More importantly, the expedition initiated the

⁷Joseph Wallace, The History of Illinois and Louisiana Under the French Rule (Cincinnati, 1893), p. 139.

transformation of the landscape by the white man.

One of La Salle's lieutenants, Henri de Tonti, is believed to have explored the southern portion of the region. De Tonti became interested in the area west of the Mississippi River and made an expedition in 1690. His journey led him to a Washita Indian village near present-day Columbia, just south of the study region. His visit and journal confirm the existence of the Indian village which was subsequently abandoned.⁸ Another French explorer, Jean Baptiste Sieur de Bienville, ascended the Ouachita River during May, 1700, in search of mines and precious metals and probably reached the southern portion of the region before turning westward to the Red River.⁹ Bienville's party experienced great difficulty in their efforts to explore the territory. Their visit was during the flood season, and the expedition had to travel through floodwaters for much of the journey. It was often difficult for the men to find suitable high ground to spend the night out of the water.¹⁰ The flooding of the area adjacent to the Ouachita River continued to plague the area until an effective system of high levees was constructed in the first half of the twentieth century.

The early Spanish and French explorers suffered many hardships in their efforts to find gold and precious stones,

⁸de Tonti, "Memoir," pp. 52-78.

⁹Wallace, p. 225.

¹⁰King, p. 100.

and they felt that their efforts had been wasted. They had, however, acquired a knowledge of the inhabitants and of the landscape that was invaluable. This knowledge not only aided later explorers and settlers who journeyed to the region but, more significantly, it stimulated further investigative expeditions into the region for the purpose of selecting strategic points for settlement.

CHAPTER VI

FRENCH PERIOD

A. Introduction

French settlement of Ouachita Parish initially began in 1699 with the claiming of the colony. The first few years of French rule were marked by the exploration of the acquired land to obtain knowledge of inhabitants and the extent of holdings. Extensive plans were made to settle the territory and exploit the resources. The French government endeavored to encourage Frenchmen to settle the colony; however, there was a lack of interest among the people in migrating to the new colony. Those who did migrate were often of a low socio-economic level. A poor choice of settlers, the unfortunate use of greedy men to manage the territory, an unhealthy climate, and unstable economic conditions in France led, in part, to the ultimate failure of French control of the colony.

The French land grant policy, which was quite liberal, was designed to encourage settlers to move into the region; however, the grants were so poorly managed by ambitious men interested only in large profits that the result was disastrous. France was unable to properly manage the new colony because of the insurmountable problems of internal

strife and preoccupation with war. There was little money available for the new colony, and economic conditions among the settlers grew steadily worse. The people were so dissatisfied, and physical and economic conditions were so poor that the settlers readily gave up and moved from their settlements after being frightened by the Natchez Massacre in 1729. No permanent French settlement was established in the region during the years of French control; however, there were permanent changes in the landscape as a result of the French occupation.

B. Settlement Problems

Efforts by the French to colonize the new region immediately after its discovery met with little success. One of the foremost problems involved in settlement of the region was the unwillingness of persons to migrate to the area.¹ People were afraid because there was virtually no knowledge of the new location; moreover, they were unwilling to settle in an area where the climate was unhealthy and constant danger prevailed.² The poor and uneducated persons did not

¹Wallace, p. 259.

²A Complete Historical, Chronological, and Geographical American Atlas, Being a Guide to the History of North and South America, and the West Indies: Exhibiting an Accurate Account of the Discovery, Settlement, and Progress of Their Various Kingdoms, States, Provinces, etc. Together with the Wars, Celebrated Battles, and Remarkable Events, to the Year 1822. According to the Plan of Le Sage's Atlas, and Intended As a Companion to Lavoisne's Improvement of that Celebrated Work (Philadelphia, 1822), p. 31. Hereinafter cited: American Atlas.

think in terms of becoming colonists and were not easily persuaded to migrate; and, the richer class was not interested in the new colony.³

Conditions were extremely bad for those who did migrate to the area. The constant high humidity posed problems with the storage of food which was vital for survival, forcing the settlers to depend on the native Indians for much of their needs. Also, the many swamps and low-lying areas provided breeding grounds for mosquitoes which carried malaria; because of the mosquitoes and the continual dampness, the settlers were constantly exposed to the danger of the fever, colds, infections, and many other diseases. France, engaged in internal strife concerning money shortage and experiencing a scarcity of crops due to harsh climatic years, was unable to provide essential items to support the infant colony. The French merchants were hesitant to invest in the colony, and the French government was unable to spare money because of the involvement in war and problems within the country. These factors, combined with the fact that the cost of living under French rule was extremely high, made the new colony the most unpopular colony of the French settlements, excluding Martinique and San Dominique.⁴

³Marcel Girard, "France and Louisiana in the Early Eighteenth Century," Mississippi Valley Historical Review XXXVI (March, 1950), p. 665.

⁴Ibid.

C. French Settlement Policy

In order to increase the number of settlers in the colony and further its commercial development, the French government issued a royal edict which authorized the collection of mendicants and vagabonds and their transportation to the new province.⁵ Some prisoners who agreed to marry prostitutes were also shipped to the colony and set free; however, this practice was discontinued soon after it began because few children were being born.⁶ To improve the situation, Louis XIV authorized Antoine Crozat, a financier, to manage the territory.

Crozat was given a charter for a term of 15 years. He took control of the territory, but his main interest turned to commerce and the acquisition of sudden wealth. His explorations, which were primarily for the purpose of finding gold and silver, required a large expenditure of money and much preparation.⁷ Crozat was unable to locate any precious metals in the colony and, after five years and a great expenditure of money, he relinquished his charter to John Law, a speculator who headed the Mississippi Company. During the five years under Crozat, settlement was sparse and the colony progressed very little.⁸

⁵Wallace, p. 259.

⁶Herbert Priestly, The Coming of the White Man (New York, 1929), p. 263.

⁷Wallace, p. 239.

⁸Ibid., pp. 240-241.

Following Crozat's failure, Law, a financier who was appointed comptroller general for France, organized a company to develop the colony. He was initially given authority by France to control the commerce of the province for 25 years beginning in 1718. Also, he was given the right to grant lands. Law's business and financial methods became unpopular, and within two years he resigned his position; however, his company continued to develop the province for 15 years under various names.⁹

In 1719, during the proprietorship of the Company of the West, a grant of land was made for the establishment of a settlement on the Ouachita River. The settlement was initially begun by Crozat. Under his command "posts were established on all the important rivers, and explorers were sent out in every direction to search for mines and waterways."¹⁰ About 1715, Crozat ordered a trading post to be built on the Ouachita River; however, it was not until land was granted in 1719 that the settlement was actually established. The first settlement, the Cantillion Concession, was attempted on de Siard Prairie, east of the Ouachita River and south of Bayou de Siard (Figure 4). The area is now included in the eastern section of Monroe. The Cantillion settlement was part of the French policy to grant land to entrepreneurs who attempted to establish

⁹Ibid., pp. 249-259.

¹⁰Ogg, p. 201.

planned towns. People of varied backgrounds and those who were willing to develop new skills as necessary were selected as members to form the town. The Cantillion group was comprised of all the personnel thought necessary to establish and maintain a trading post.

Cantillion brought 37 men and three women in his party.¹¹ The colonists included many craftsmen: cook, baker, wheelwright, joiner, cooper, valet, refiner, miner, clerk, tailor, wigmaker, serving girl, carpenter, miller, blacksmith, proprietor, and laborer (Appendix D). Though the settlers had diverse skills and the settlement had been well planned, the people were not able to cope with the many problems that beset them. The high humidity, the high incidence of sickness and disease, the scarcity of food, and the high cost of living proved to be too burdensome to the settlers; and, the settlement was abandoned after the Natchez Massacre in 1729. At the time of the establishment of the first permanent settlement in 1783, only the ruins of the concession remained to remind one of the previous attempt to settle the region. Alarmed after the Natchez Massacre and the abandonment of the concession, the isolated, dispersed colonists left their settlements and either returned to France or joined more prominent settlements farther south on the Mississippi River.

¹¹ Albert Laplace Dart, tr., "Ship Lists of Passengers Leaving France 1718-1724," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XV (1932), pp. 73-75.

After the disappearance of the Cantillion Concession, an impoverished and isolated post, no attempt was made by the French to re-establish a post or settlement in the region. During the remaining years of French control there was no further official exploration of the region. Had the Cantillion venture been successful and the settlers remained to expand their operation, colonization of the region might have been accomplished a century earlier. The short period of French occupation of the region resulted in a weak French impression of the landscape.

D. End of French Control of Ouachita Parish

The cost of supporting the Louisiana Purchase Territory was a great burden to the French. Wallace stated:

It has been computed that France, in her prolonged attempt to colonize Louisiana, expended directly, or indirectly, nearly twenty millions of dollars, without receiving any proportionate return; and if she had continued to hold the country, it would have been necessary for her to have incurred a large additional outlay.¹²

France was not only burdened with the cost of the colony but also with great internal strife and the additional expense of the Seven Years War. Thus, on November 3, 1762, by the Treaty of Fountainebleau, France granted to Spain the Louisiana Purchase Territory. This land was given as a means of compensation for the financial aid which

¹²Wallace, p. 370.

Spain had given to France during the Seven Years War.¹³

One additional factor involved in the relinquishing of the colony to Spain might possibly have been the desire by France to prevent the British from gaining control of the colony.¹⁴ Thus, the Seven Years War not only meant defeat for the French, but it also meant the loss of all possessions in America.¹⁵

E. Summary

French control of the region came to an end without a permanent settlement having been formed. The French people were not willing to migrate to the new colony because of the poor climate and the constant danger; moreover, the French had relatively little knowledge of the new location and were afraid. The few colonists who did migrate were from a low socio-economic group and were ill suited for settling the colony. In addition to these problems, the French were unable to allocate money to the colony, and the colonists were forced to depend on Indians and travelers for many of their needs.

Though the French were not able to directly contribute to the permanent settlement of the area, they did contribute to its later settlement. The French had explored

¹³E. Wilson Lyon, Louisiana In French Diplomacy 1759-1804 (Norman, Oklahoma, 1934), p. 39.

¹⁴Wallace, p. 370.

¹⁵Bemis, pp. 103-105.

northeastern Louisiana and attempted a permanent settlement and, thus, had acquired invaluable knowledge concerning the landscape. Once a region has been explored and settlement attempted, even though it may fail as an established permanent settlement, those who follow frequently profit from the experiences of their predecessors.

The French had gained much knowledge concerning sources of water, food, and supplies. The settlers had also learned which crops grew well in the region. This information, combined with the fact that the French had been able to live in Ouachita Parish for a period of ten years, helped to attract European settlers in later years. Thus, the French contribution to the landscape was of an indirect nature. The French did not leave concrete evidence of their occupation of Ouachita Parish, but they did contribute to the eventual settlement of the region through the knowledge they were able to pass on to their followers.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPANISH PERIOD

A. Introduction

In 1762, with the signing of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, France gave Spain the area known as the Louisiana Purchase Territory.¹ With this transfer, France was able to compensate Spain for the loss of the Floridas and for financial aid given during the Seven Years War; at the same time, she was able to rid herself of a tremendous financial burden. For the Spanish government, the transfer offered an opportunity for the creation of a buffer zone which would block the expansion of Americans toward the rich Spanish colonial empire in Mexico.²

Spain did not immediately direct her attention toward settlement or development of the newly-acquired territory because of her involvement in efforts to regain lost colonial territory. In 1779 Spain entered the war against England in an attempt to recover Florida and drive her enemies from the Gulf of Mexico. By 1783 Spain was able to recover East Florida and close navigation on the

¹Lyon, p. 39.

²Bemis, p. 11.

Mississippi River to all except Spanish trade.³

During the years Spain was engaged in war, Ulloa, the first Spanish governor, took command of the new province; however, he was unpopular with the French inhabitants and was expelled at the end of two years.⁴ He was replaced by Alexander O'Reilly who abolished French law in the province and instituted Spanish rule.

At this time, Spain regarded the Louisiana province acquired in 1762 as:

separate from the rest of its colonial dominions in America, and proceeded to treat it as such. Its evident purpose was to use the new territory as a buffer between its English neighbors and the more important interior provinces of Mexico.⁵

Spain recognized the threat of the rapidly growing, energetic American population and planned to halt their westward expansion with this buffer zone. According to Issac Cox, who has made extensive investigations of early travelers and explorers of Louisiana:

The stream of American migration that was beginning to sweep through Louisiana and to threaten Texas, by way of the Red and Washita Rivers, became more disquieting to Spanish officials, because [the Americans were] less understood and harder to control. The leading spirits of this

³Arthur Preston Whitaker, The Spanish American Frontier: 1783-1795 (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1962), pp. 7, 10-11.

⁴Cardinal Goodwin, "The Louisiana Territory From 1682-1803," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, III (January, 1920), p. 9.

⁵Issac Joslin Cox, "The Early Exploration of Louisiana," University Studies, II (January-February, 1906), p. 11.

movement became managers of plantations, owners of cattle ranches, horse traders, and Indian factors, and in many other ways urged the development of the natural resources of the country. But the suspicious Spaniards saw in them only the first tide of an American invasion, destined ultimately to sweep over all Mexico.⁶

B. Ouachita Parish as a Buffer Zone

The Spanish government felt that the securing of Spanish possessions east of the Mississippi River and the closing of navigation on the river to all Americans gave her an advantageous, but precarious, point from which she could inhibit American westward expansion. In order to further discourage the encroachment of Americans on Spanish territory east of the Mississippi, Spain formulated a plan to create a buffer zone inhabited by an agricultural population. The need for a buffer zone became even more important with the signing of the Treaty of Lorenzo el Real in 1795, when Spain relinquished claim to the land east of the Mississippi River to the United States.⁷ With the loss of this land, Spain sought to insure the absence of Americans in Spanish territory by establishing regulations to prohibit American citizens from acquiring land grants in the new territory.⁸

⁶Ibid, p. 12.

⁷Bemis, pp. 103-107.

⁸John W. Monette, History of the Discovery and Settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi, I (New York, 1848), p. 547.

As a stimulant to the settlement of the new territory, the Spanish government provided an incentive of free tools and implements in addition to grants of free land.⁹ Spain felt that in this manner she could encourage settlement of the territory by all nationalities and thereby create a strong buffer zone which would protect her colonial empire in Mexico.¹⁰ Concerning the threat of Americans to Spanish territory, Issac Cox stated:

This strip of territory, 250 leagues from east to west, and extending from the Gulf to the Arctic Ocean, was coveted by the Americans, and their threatened occupation formed a menace to the frontier lands and mines of Mexico. To avoid this danger the Spaniards must people this intervening strip. This could easily be done, for, under Spanish control immigrants would flock in from Europe and America, as was clearly shown by the conditions on the Washita.¹¹

About 1783 Spain decided that posts should be constructed along the frontier and new buffer zones created to check the advance of the American settlers. One of the buffers selected was Ouachita Parish. The study region was occupied at this time by a small group of hunters and trappers who apparently had migrated into the basin following the Natchez Massacre. A majority of the inhabitants were Canadian and French, but scattered among them

⁹James Houck, The Spanish Regime in Missouri, II (Chicago, 1909), pp. xx.

¹⁰William C. Claiborne to Thomas Jefferson, August 24, 1803, quoted in Clarence E. Carter, ed., "Orleans Territory, 1803-1812," Territorial Papers of the United States, IX (Washington, 1934), p. 18

¹¹Cox, pp. 62-63.

were a few Spaniards and several Americans.¹²

Spain sent Captain Don Juan Filhoil¹³ of the Spanish militia to establish an agricultural community in the Ouachita basin. Filhoil was ordered to establish a formal, compact settlement and to centralize control over the Post of the Ouachita. He was not given a party of settlers because Spanish officials believed that there were already a sufficient number of people in the basin to form a permanent settlement.

Filhoil first chose Ecore a Fabri, the present site of Camden, Arkansas, as his post headquarters. His instructions were to form a viable settlement from the settlers he found living there (Appendix E).¹⁴ He tried unsuccessfully to draw the settlers into a compact settlement and decided to move the post headquarters to a more favorable location.

Filhoil chose Prairie des Canots, a location he had previously observed while ascending the Ouachita River (Figure 14). Prairie des Canots, the new location and the

¹²Bry, p. 226.

¹³Don Juan Filhoil was selected to serve as commandant of the Ouachita Post because he was a native of Bordeaux, France. When he was commissioned a captain of the Spanish militia, he was given the title of "don." He had distinguished himself with Galvez in the conquest of West Florida. The government felt that his French background and language ability would be helpful in dealing with the French hunters of the Ouachita basin.

¹⁴Original instructions of Estevan Miro to Juan Filhoil, 1783, in J. Fair Hardin, "Don Juan Filhoil and the Founding of Fort Miro," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XX, tr. by H. Wynn Rickey (April, 1937), pp. 473-475.

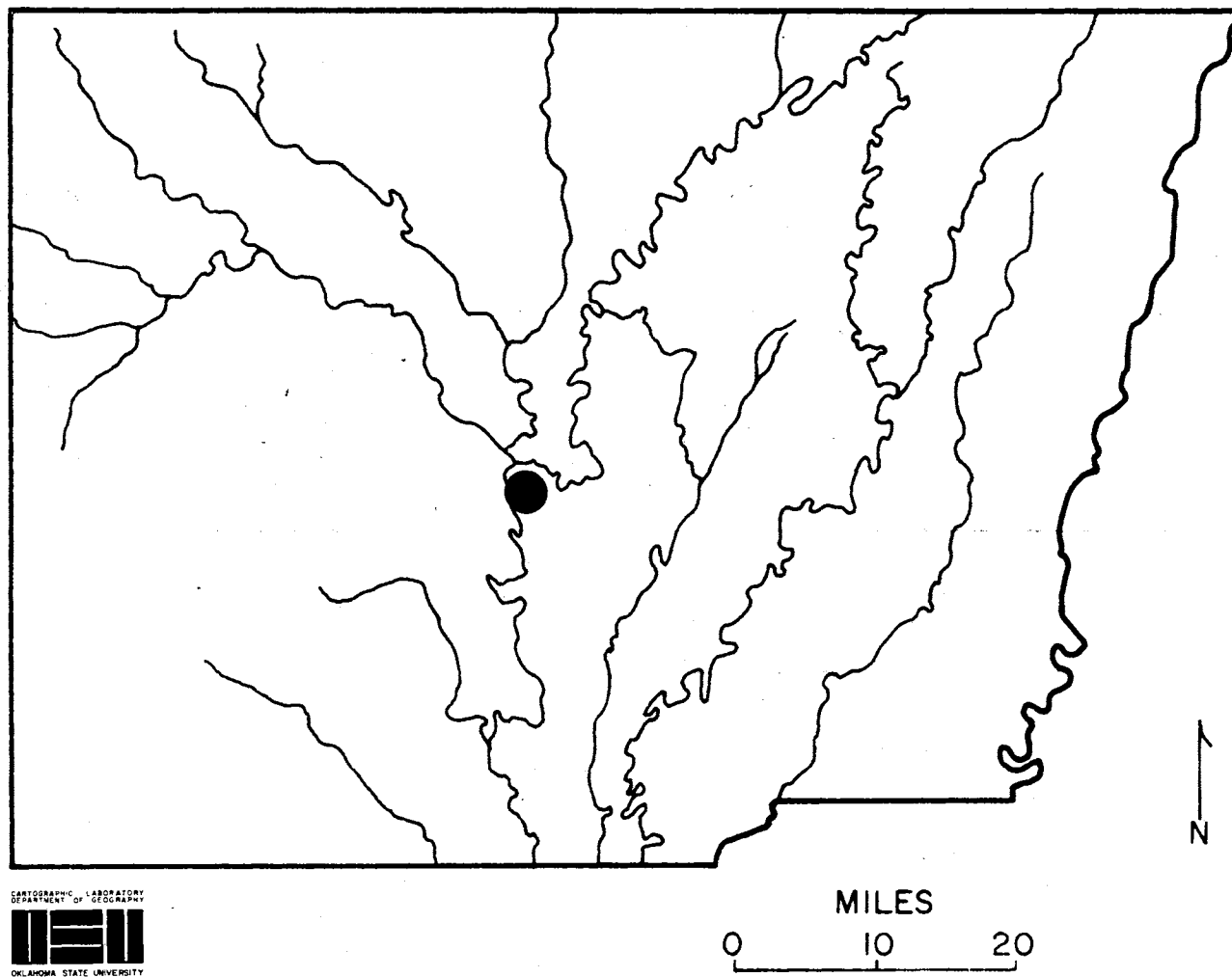


Figure 14. Prairie des Canots

present site of Monroe, Louisiana, was chosen during the flood season. The chosen site, the high ground of the natural levee of the river, was surrounded by water; the boats and canoes of hunters, trappers, traders, and Indians lined the new settlement location. Filhoil found the inhabitants to be very uncooperative and resistant to the settlement project. He also found the inhabitants to be extremely independent, seeming to take pride in resisting authority. The inhabitants resented having to abide by regulations established and enforced by the Spanish. In addition, their economic system was based upon hunting and trading, and they disliked the establishment of a settlement with an economy based upon agriculture. Filhoil seemed to resent the settlers as much as they resented him for, in 1788, while describing the settlers to his superiors in New Orleans, he wrote that he could locate only 200 inhabitants and of this number only 74 were capable of bearing arms (Appendix A).¹⁵

The commandant and his assistant, de la Baume, had been instructed to supervise the property on both sides of the Ouachita River; thus, they divided the region approximately in half, Filhoil taking the southern part and Baume supervising the northern portion. Both Filhoil and Baume acquired small tracts of land, and their claims remained intact until after the first quarter of the nineteenth

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 483-484.

century. Progress was slow, but continuous, and in 1790 the settlers petitioned for a fort to protect their families.

Fort Miro was erected to drive away squatters and to protect the settlers from Indian attacks.¹⁶ The fort, constructed as a cooperative effort by the commandant and the settlers, was built on property owned and occupied by the Filhoils (Figures 15, 16, and 17).¹⁷

Although the small settlement of Fort Miro¹⁸ was founded and constructed during Spanish reign, its design was related to other French communities in Louisiana. The French settlements were usually located along a navigable water course adjacent to a fort or other secure location and near timber and a prairie. The timber provided necessary construction material while the prairie furnished cleared, fertile soil for cultivation.¹⁹ Fort Miro was a compact village located on the banks of the Ouachita River near several prairies and forests of virgin timber.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 470.

¹⁷Filhoil grants were located on both sides of the river at Prairie des Canots, the site of the present city of Monroe. They were dated June 6, 1785, for ten arpents front on each bank of the river. American State Papers, Public Lands, III (Washington, 1834), p. 600.

¹⁸Named Fort Miro to honor Governor Estevan Miro, the fort was occupied until 1804 when the United States had it dismantled. The name remained the official designation of the surrounding settlement until it was officially changed to Monroe in 1819, following the establishment of a thriving community of Anglo-Americans.

¹⁹Wallace, p. 404.

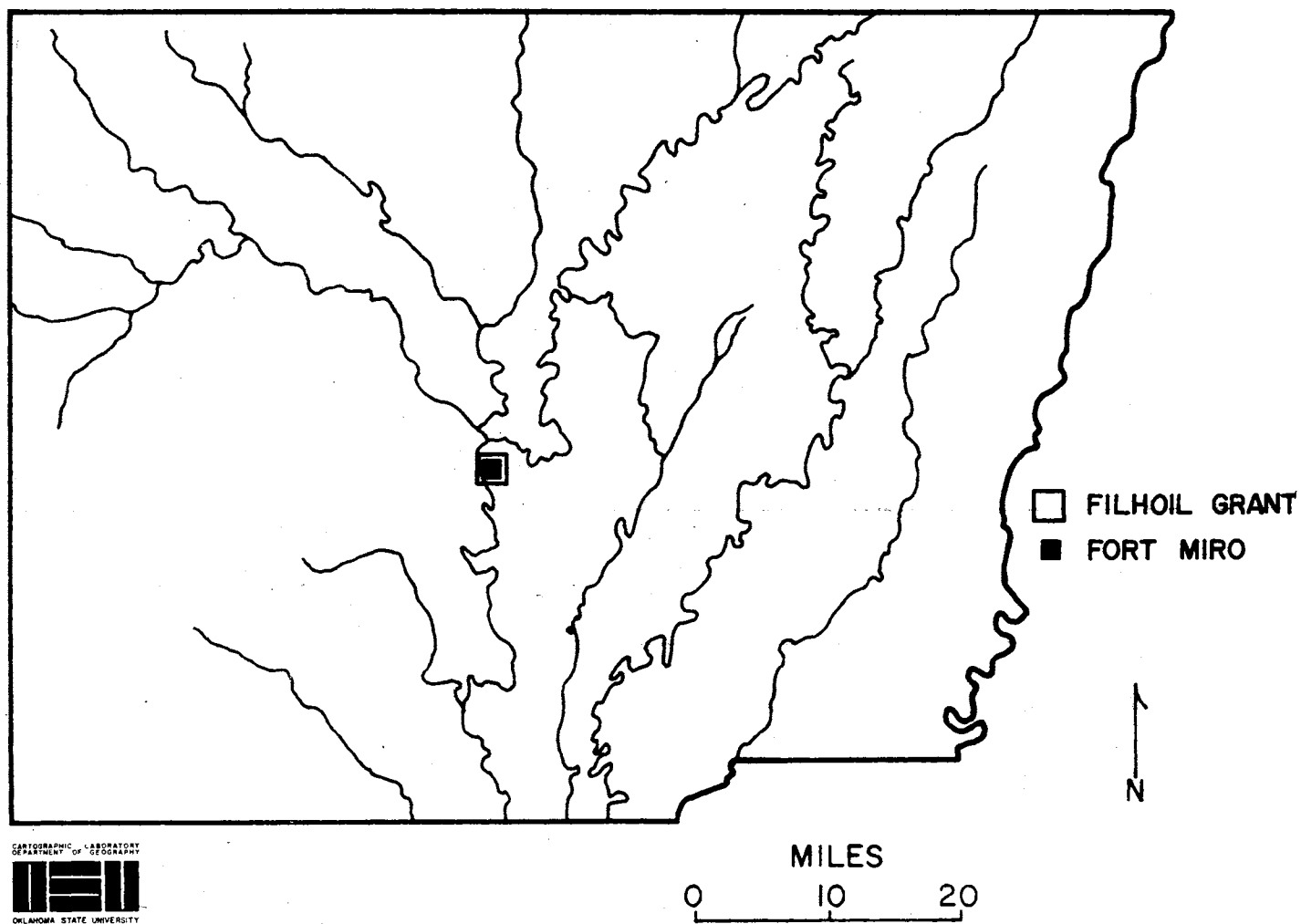


Figure 15. Fort Miro on Filhoil Grant

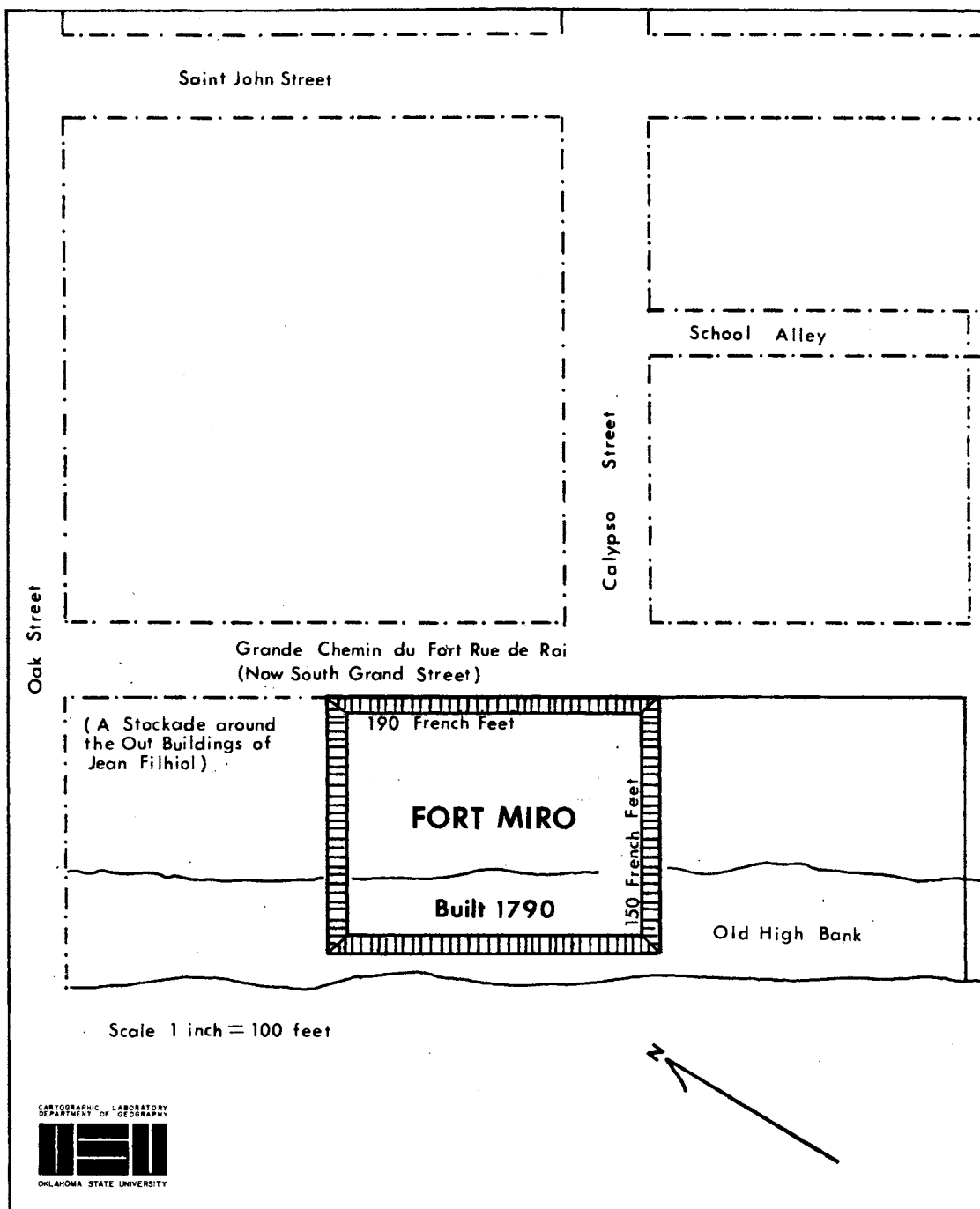


Figure 16. Fort Miro Located in Relation to the Present Street Pattern of Monroe, Louisiana. Map Based on Materials Abstracted from Parish Court Records by John R. Humble, Ouachita Abstract Company

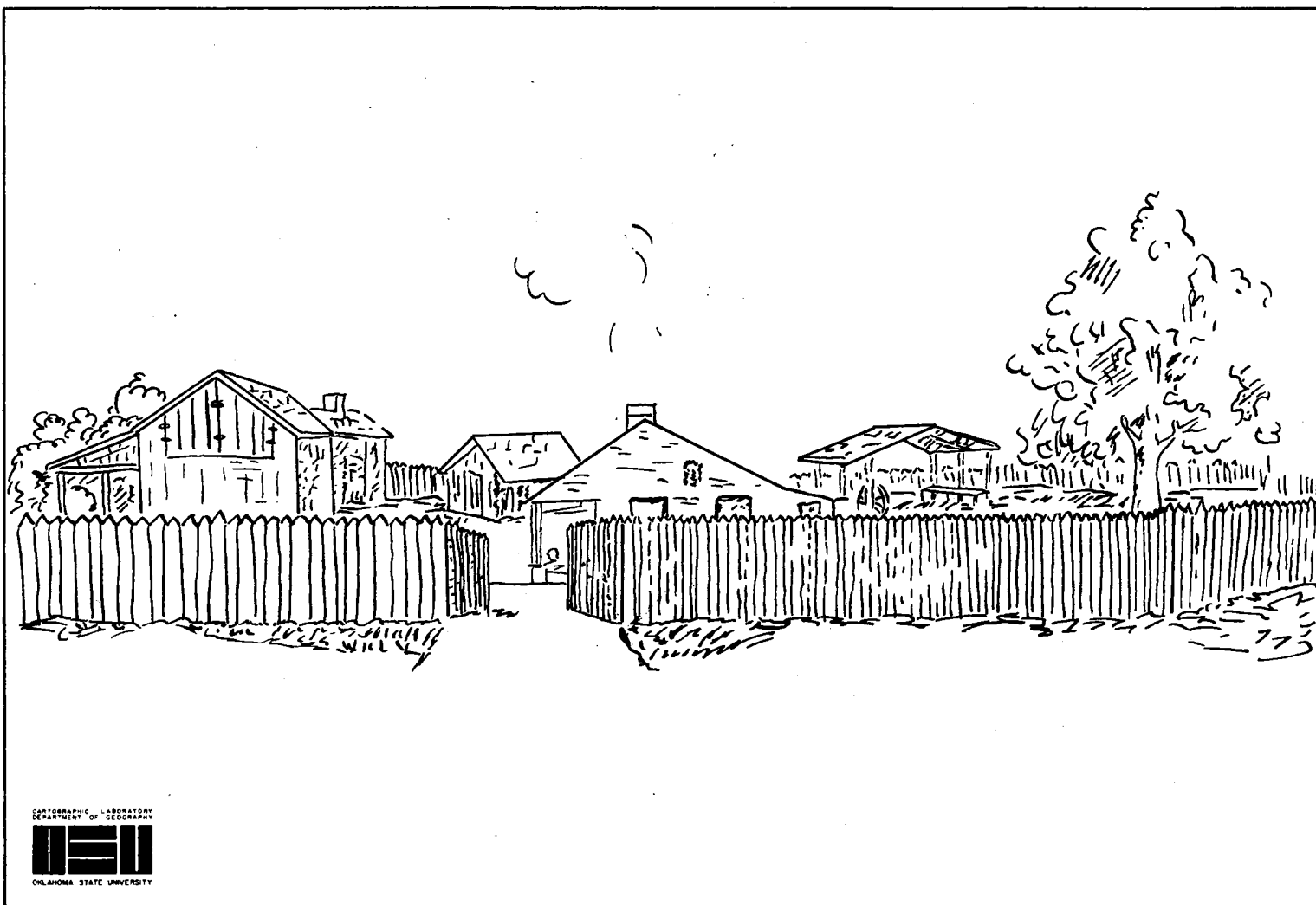


Figure 17. Fort Miro ca. 1792, an Artist's Conception, Based on a Written Description

C. Economic Activities Under
Spanish Rule

It was the intention of the Spanish government to establish an agricultural community to serve as a buffer zone in the Ouachita basin. Filhoil, the commandant of the basin, endeavored to develop trade and agriculture as the economic basis of the basin; however, the inhabitants were not inclined to support agriculture. Filhoil stated that the people chose not to work the soil.²⁰ They preferred to produce only those crops essential for survival; the rest of their time they spent hunting. The agricultural products they produced were used to supply the settlement, and very little was sold commercially.

There were several factors which discouraged the selling of crops commercially and led in part to Filhoil's failure to develop an agricultural settlement. Crops had to be transported to New Orleans, and the long, arduous journey, as well as the expense in transporting low-profit items, was disadvantageous for commercial agricultural development. The return on investment was low, and there was not a sufficiently-developed market system to warrant large-scale commercial agricultural production in the region.

Filhoil stated that he tried with little success to

²⁰Filhoil, p. 484.

develop agriculture.²¹ In spite of his efforts to develop the basin, it did not flourish as an agricultural region until it was invaded by the dispersed, small-farm culture of Anglo-Americans. The inhabitants of Filhoil's settlement continued to emphasize the development of hunting and fishing. They did not have to expend much time and labor to engage in successful hunting since there was an abundance of many kinds of animals. The animals were sought for the skins, meat, and lard which were not only used by the inhabitants but were also used as major items of trade. By 1788 the annual commerce of the basin consisted of about 7,000 pots (quarts) of bear oil, 2,000 deer skins, 2,000 pounds of suet, 500 beaver pelts, and 100 other pelts.²²

Although Filhoil was unable to develop an agricultural economy in Ouachita Parish, the establishment of agriculture ultimately became one of the major Spanish contributions to the landscape. The agricultural land grants which were awarded under the Marquis de Mason Rouge and the Baron de Bastrop were granted to individuals who were dedicated to farming. The settlers made improvements in the land and demonstrated that a farmer in the region could not only produce enough for his family's needs but could also produce enough to market profitably. The establishment of agriculture by the Spanish served as an incentive to the American settlers who followed.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., pp. 484-485.

D. The Treaty of Lorenzo el Real and the
Resulting Spanish Settlement Policy

The Spanish government, which now controlled Florida, the lower Mississippi River, and the Louisiana territory, was in an excellent position to halt the westward expansion of the American settlers; moreover, the government took full advantage of their position by subjecting American traders, who were shipping foods to market in New Orleans, to heavy tolls and delays.²³ After many complaints and demands from traders and frontiersmen, the United States succeeded in persuading Spain to stop the harrassment of commerce on the Mississippi.²⁴

On October 27, 1795, Spain reluctantly signed the Treaty of Lorenzo el Real, relinquishing to the United States all claim to territory east of the Mississippi River and north of the 31st degree of latitude and, at the same time, opening trade and navigation on the Mississippi River to all citizens of the United States and Spain.²⁵ With the signing of this treaty, the United States agreed to recognize the Mississippi River as the boundary of the Spanish colony of Louisiana.²⁶ The developments that soon followed

²³Ogg, p. 417.

²⁴Bemis, pp. 103-107.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Hunter Miller, ed., Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America (Washington, 1931), pp. 320-321.

the signing of the treaty opened the way for rapid settlement of the rich agricultural land in Ouachita Parish. Spain became even more concerned about the need for a strong buffer settlement and adopted a policy of rapid colonization to populate and develop the region as a buffer zone. The new policy also prohibited any American from settling in the region.²⁷

In order to increase further rapid settlement of the region, Spanish officials entered into contracts to develop agricultural and commercial practices and to stimulate growth of the settlement. Governor Carondelet signed an agreement with two Europeans who had traveled to Louisiana seeking political asylum.²⁸ The two entrepreneurs, the French Marquis de Maison Rouge and the German Baron de Bastrop, agreed to recruit, transport, and settle a number of families on the Ouachita. The plans called for the awarding of two large grants of agricultural land in the vicinity of Fort Miro (Figure 18.)²⁹ In 1795 Baron de Bastrop received a grant of more than two million acres to the northeast of Fort Miro and extending into present southeast Arkansas; while Marquis de Maison Rouge obtained a grant of 132,840 acres on both sides of the Ouachita River.

²⁷Monette, I, p. 547.

²⁸John D. Winters, "The Ouachita-Black," in Edwin Adams Davis, ed., The Rivers and Bayous of Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1968), p. 24.

²⁹Louis Pelzer, "Spanish Land Grants," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, XI (Des Moines, 1913), pp. 3-37.

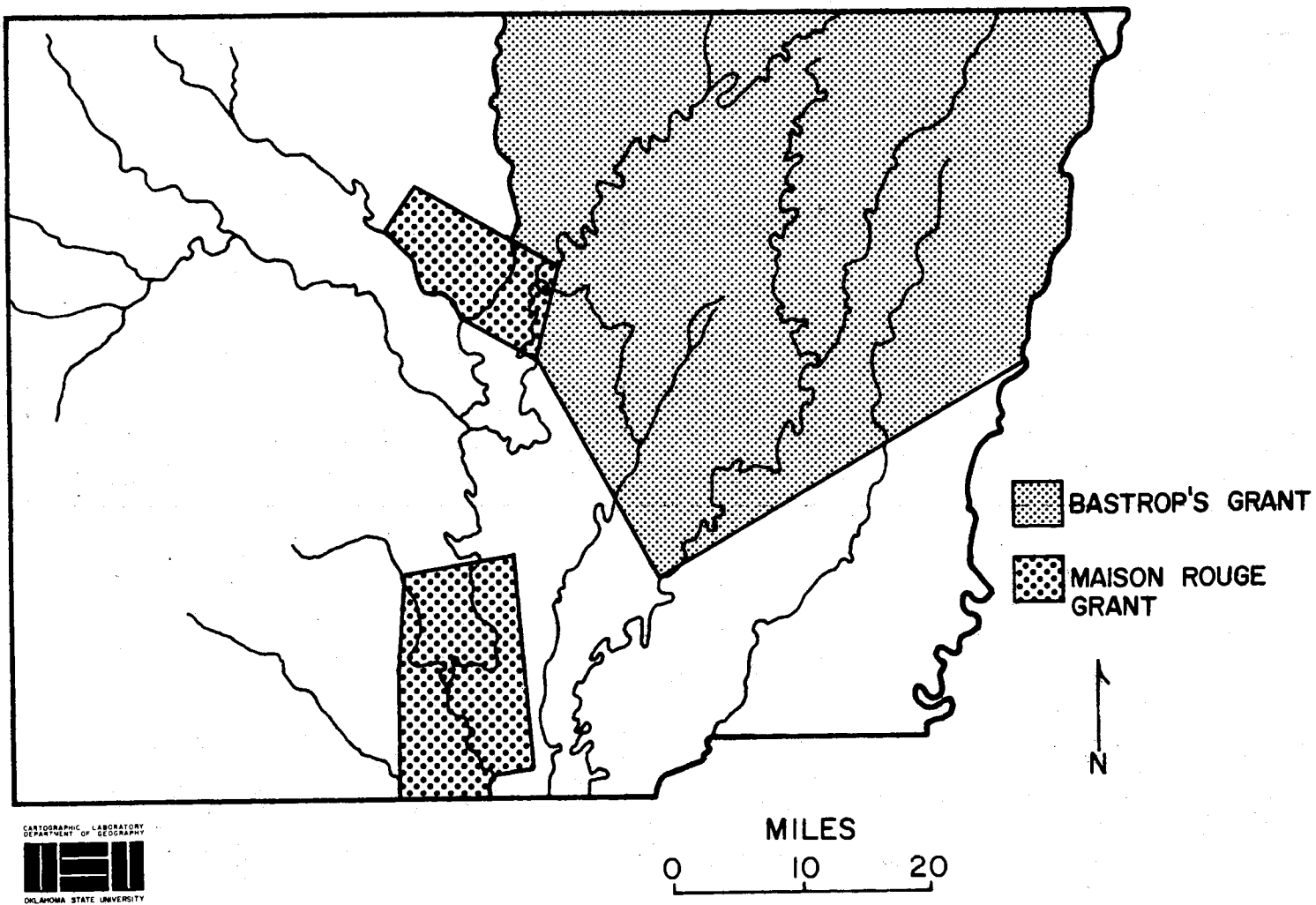


Figure 18. Bastrop and Maison Rouge Land Grants

The Maison Rouge grant was awarded in three portions, one in the vicinity of the present town of Sterlington, with the bulk of the grant in the second portion south of Fort Miro (Appendix F). The grant consisted of 30 superficial leagues along the Ouachita River and was some of the best alluvial bottomland soil on the east bank of the river and the best of the higher, pine-hill lands on the west bank.³⁰

Under the terms of the agreement, Maison Rouge was to settle at least 30 families and to assign a grant of ten arpents of frontage by 40 of depth to each new family. Maison Rouge was able to bring in only a few settlers.³¹ The Spanish government did not approve of Maison Rouge's business methods³² nor his settlement policy, since Americans were among the settlers he brought in.³³

Maison Rouge had been instructed to build a fort at Bartholomew-Washita junction; however, the area where he wanted to build the fort was already claimed by Morrison and claimed by George Hook, his son-in-law. Maison Rouge

³⁰American State Papers, Public Lands, IV (Washington, 1834), pp. 7-9.

³¹One of the settlers introduced by Maison Rouge, a French farmer named Charles F. Adrien Le Paulmier Chevalier D'Anemours, wrote a valuable description of the Ouachita for the Spanish government. His description has contributed to the understanding of the change in the landscape of Ouachita Parish.

³²Winters, p. 24.

³³Ibid.

wrote many letters to Filhoil and Carondelet, the governor, seeking to have Hook and Morrison removed; however, Carondelet upheld Morrison.³⁴ At the time of Maison Rouge's death in 1797, he still had not fulfilled the agreement with Carondelet and, as a result, lawsuits arose that were not settled until the 1850's.³⁵ The Maison Rouge claim was significant in that it contained almost all of the known land in the present state suitable for the cultivation and production of small grains such as wheat and rye.³⁶

Baron de Bastrop proposed to establish enough settlers on the Ouachita to warrant a large tract of 144 square leagues on the Ouachita River and some of its tributaries. The Bastrop grant was located to the northeast of the Ouachita River, the land being equally distributed on either side of Bayou Bartholomew (Figure 18).³⁷ The land was a square, 12 leagues on each side (144 square leagues), and contained a little more than one million

³⁴Mrs. Hazel Smith Short, "The History of Sterlington, Louisiana" (unpub. manuscript, Monroe, Louisiana, 1967).

³⁵The Board of Land Commissioners for the Western Land District of Louisiana investigated Maison Rouge's land claim, concluded that the claim was valid, and recommended that Congress confirm it. American State Papers, Public Lands, IV (Washington, 1834), p. 8.

³⁶Mitchell and Calhoun, p. 303.

³⁷A detailed discussion of the Bastrop grant is found in the American State Papers, Public Lands, IV, pp. 9-11. Also discussed in full is the Supreme Court decision regarding the case, "United States vs. Philadelphia and New Orleans," 11th Howard, pp. 646-647.

French acres.³⁸ It was to be subdivided into smaller individual grants of 400 areal arpents each, with ten arpents of water front per family.

Bastrop's contract with Carondelet had been set with a figure of 500 families which were to be transported to the region to raise wheat for export to Cuba and other locations (Appendix G).³⁹ However, Bastrop was able to introduce only two small groups into the region.⁴⁰ The first group arrived April 19, 1797, and consisted of ten families and seven single individuals, a total of 64 persons. This group was followed on May 7 of the same year by a second group comprised of five families and eight single persons. Both groups totaled 99 persons (Appendix H).⁴¹

On November 6, 1804, an expedition led by William Dunbar of Natchez, Mississippi, and Dr. George Hunter of Philadelphia⁴² visited the plantation of de Bastrop and recorded the following:

The settlement of five hundred persons is capable of extension, and may be expected, with an accession of population to become very flourishing: There are three merchants settled at the post who

³⁸Dunbar, p. 46.

³⁹Moore, XXXI, p. 614.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 616.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 616.

⁴²President Jefferson sent an expedition party into Louisiana to gather comprehensive data for an official report. The party, led by William Dunbar and Dr. George Hunter, explored the Ouachita region along the Ouachita River in 1804.

supply the inhabitants at very exorbitant prices with their necessities; those with the garrison and two small planters and a tradesman or two constitute the present village: a great part of the inhabitants still continue the old practice of hunting during the winter season; their peltries go to the merchant at a low rate in exchange for necessities; in the summer these people content themselves with making corn barely sufficient for bread during the year; in this manner they always remain extremely poor; some few who have conquered their habits of indolence (which are always a consequence of the Indian mode of life) and addicted themselves to agriculture, live more comfortably and taste a little the sweets of civilized life.⁴³

In 1796, Baron de Bastrop sought permission to build a dam across Bayou de Siard to construct flour mills which were completed within two years.⁴⁴ The planned agricultural program for cultivating wheat and flour milling did not prove to be successful.⁴⁴ However, he also planned and constructed a sawmill and a trading post which were profitable.⁴⁵

The Spanish government did not fully approve of the Bastrop grant; by 1803, when Louisiana was transferred to the United States, de Bastrop had not received royal confirmation of his grant. As a result of mortgaging, selling, and lawsuits, de Bastrop relinquished all liens to the

⁴³William Dunbar, Life, Letters, and Papers of William Dunbar, ed. Mrs. Dunbar Rowland (Eron Rowland), (Jackson, Mississippi, 1930), pp. 238-239.

⁴⁴Davis, p. 24.

⁴⁵American State Papers, 18th Congress, 2nd Session, House of Representatives, Representative Committee No. 243, Cities of Philadelphia and New Orleans; and Claim of Baron de Bastrop, 18th Congress, No. 417, Public Lands, IV, pp. 9-11.

property and it was bought by two land speculators, Abraham Morhouse and Charles Lynch.⁴⁶ De Bastrop then moved to Texas and successfully engaged in promoting the settling of East Texas.⁴⁷

The Board of Land Commissioners examined Baron de Bastrop's land claim and concluded that it could not be confirmed, according to the customs and usages specified by the Spanish government. They recommended that the grant claim be rejected and be referred to the United States Courts for disposition.⁴⁸

E. Spanish Land Grant Policy and Survey Methods

At the time that the Spanish took control of the territory, the government had felt that the French land grant policies were compatible with theirs; thus, the French policies and procedures had been continued.⁴⁹

However, these methods of land settlement were discontinued in 1770 with the adoption of new detailed regulations.⁵⁰

Under O'Reilly's Ordinance of 1770, a settler was to be

⁴⁶Davis, p. 26.

⁴⁷Bastrop was associated with Moses Austin, Stephen F. Austin, and other developers. Moore, XXXI, p. 641.

⁴⁸American State Papers, Public Lands, IV, p. 11.

⁴⁹Francis P. Burns, "The Spanish Land Laws in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XI (New Orleans, 1928), p. 560.

⁵⁰Gayarre, III, p. 34.

granted a tract of six to eight arpents of frontage on a water course. The Ordinance also placed restrictions on the settlement of land: the use, the quantity desired, the number of persons in a household,⁵¹ the quantity of livestock, and, more important, the location of land to be settled. Before obtaining title to land, settlers were required to be on the land for a specified time, cultivate a portion of it, and construct necessary roads and levees. After a period of three years, titles were given. However, many persons in Louisiana occupied land without seeking any type of title.⁵² They remained as squatters for several years and were allowed to do so since they paid land taxes.⁵³

Surveys by the Spanish government were made on the front of watercourses. The side lines extended at right angles from the front and many times converged at a point and diverged where the front was convex or concave. The Spanish government permitted a depth away from the watercourse of 40 arpents.⁵⁴ The unique survey method allowed all land owners fronting a bend to claim equal frontage. All tract sides adjoined a common point which was at the

⁵¹ The household included any slaves, and additional land was given for them.

⁵² Pelzer, p. 6.

⁵³ Thomas Jefferson, "Description of Louisiana," November 14, 1803, American State Papers, Miscellaneous, I (Washington, 1834), p. 351.

⁵⁴ The arpent equaled 1 5/11 English miles.

center of two points on the concave side of the stream (Figure 19).⁵⁵

Spanish officials generally made grants of land to those who applied for them; however, the grants frequently stipulated that persons obtaining them settle on the land within three years and that they construct needed levees and roads. Settlers were not required to keep complete records or perfect titles to their land, and, as a result, imperfect land titles were handed down from generation to generation. Furthermore, many titles were not completely recorded and records of ownership were inaccurate.⁵⁶ Moreover, many titles and records of land grants were destroyed in fires in New Orleans.⁵⁷

F. Summary and Conclusions

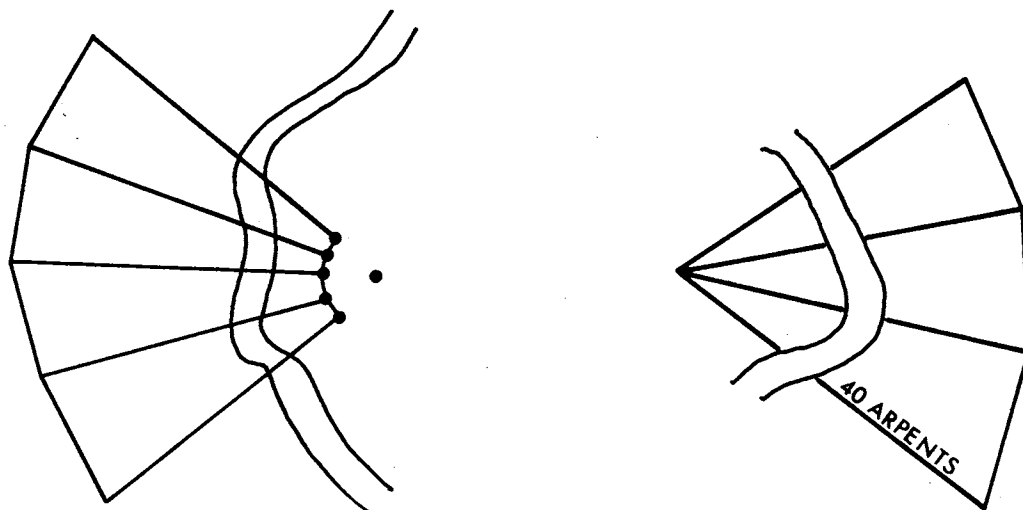
The Spanish government failed to develop Ouachita Parish and was unsuccessful in its efforts to create a buffer zone; however, it provided the impetus for the future development of the region based on an agricultural economy. In 1800, by the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso,

⁵⁵ Charles Trudeneau provided this information to Gideon Fitz, and he related this to his surveyors. Gideon Fitz to Mathew Stone, John Dinsmore, and Samuel Cook, October 2, 1810, Records of the Western Land District.

⁵⁶ Harry L. Coles, Jr., "Applicability of the Public Land System to Louisiana," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIII (June, 1956), p. 41.

⁵⁷ American State Papers, Miscellaneous, I (Washington, 1834), pp. 344-356.

SPANISH SURVEY METHOD



CARTOGRAPHIC LABORATORY
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Figure 19. Spanish Survey System

Spain ceded the Louisiana Purchase Territory back to France; three years later, France sold the vast area to the United States.⁵⁸ The Americans had little concept of the area they had purchased or the extent of its size. The boundaries were not clearly defined and no accurate description of it existed.

Although the Spanish settlement system did not develop the region as expected, some Spanish influence was transposed into the Anglo-American culture which later dominated the region. Of primary importance were the survey methods used in granting tracts of land to settlers. This system was adapted from the survey methods used by the French. The tracts of land granted by the Spanish were concentrated along primary watercourses which were utilized for transportation. The terrain and vegetation restricted travel and thus necessitated the granting of tracts near waterways. Moreover, the more fertile land was located on the natural levees of the waterways. These levees, being of higher elevation, served to protect the settlers from flooding. This settlement pattern continued until the small farm Anglo-Americans moved into the region. Spanish survey methods and land ownership patterns are evident today in street patterns and land ownership.

Another important contribution to the landscape are the place names of Spanish origin found in the region. Also,

⁵⁸Gayarre, III, p. 620.

there are many individuals in the region who are direct descendants of the original settlers.

Perhaps the most relevant of the Spanish contributions was the emphasis placed on agriculture as the basis of economic activity in the region. The Spanish provided the leadership for the preparation of the land for cultivation and proved that agriculture was economically sound in Ouachita Parish. Settlers were able to grow a wide variety of crops for personal use as well as for trading. This fact served as the impetus for the settlement and further development of the region by Anglo-American settlers.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PERIOD

A. Introduction

In 1803, when France ceded Louisiana to the United States, the study region began a gradual metamorphosis that would result in the permanent establishment of government as well as a successful agricultural economy and a rapidly growing population. Although the Spanish had been successful in establishing agriculture in the region, it was the small farm Anglo-Americans who became permanently settled in the region and established farms, built roads and levees, and were responsible for the settlement of Ouachita Parish.

Establishment of government at the local level was not an easy task at the beginning of United States ownership since, at this time, the inhabitants were primarily French.¹ The laws and requirements of the United States government were often objectionable to the French inhabitants who felt that they were not being treated fairly; however, after a few years a well-organized local government was established and the survey of public and private lands began.

Even though the land was hastily surveyed and put on

¹Monette, II, p. 516.

the market, few settlers were eager to buy. There were many factors that accounted for their hesitancy, one of the primary ones being the inappropriate survey method which was used. Soon after the method of surveying was changed, however, settlers rapidly began moving into the area to farm the land.

An economy based on agriculture brought stability and security to the region and attracted more settlers to the parish. As farming became more and more successful, the population increased and settlements grew. The lumbering industry also grew rapidly and soon became a major part of the economy.

The readily-accessible waterways provided an inexpensive and relatively fast means of transporting both farm and lumbering materials to market and greatly helped to insure the success of both enterprises. The existence of the major waterways in the region was perhaps the single most important factor leading to the development of Ouachita Parish.

B. Establishment of Government in

Ouachita Parish

The beginning of the Anglo-American period in Ouachita Parish was marked by the organization of government at the local, state, and national levels. Approximately one year after the United States acquired Louisiana, the Congress passed the Breckenridge Act, which created the Territory of

Orleans, the present state of Louisiana.² The President nominated and appointed members of a Legislative council; however, most of them declined to serve. Governor Claiborne finally succeeded in organizing the legislative council by utilizing blank commissions forwarded by the President.³

The legislative council met and an organized territorial government was established. The council divided the present state into twelve counties; these included Acadia, Attakapas, Concordia, German Coast, Iberville, La Fourche, Opelousas, Orleans, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Ouachita, and Natchitoches.⁴

The plan of government provided for the Territory of Orleans did not give the people the privilege of electing the legislative assembly; rather, it provided that the legislative power should be confided to the governor and a legislative council. The council was to consist of thirteen persons nominated by the governor annually to the president. These persons were to be chosen from among the resident inhabitants holding real estate in the territory and holding no office of profit in the territory or the United States.⁶

The American citizens were dissatisfied with this act

²Annals of Congress, 1803-1804, 8th Congress (Washington, 1852), p. 1229.

³Statutes At Large, II, 8th Cong. 1st Sess., Ch. I., approved October 31, 1803, p. 245.

⁴Orleans Territorial Acts of 1804-1805, 1st Session of 1st Legislature. Approved April 10, 1805, Chapter 25 (New Orleans, 1805), p. 144.

⁵Monette, II, p. 451.

⁶Ibid.

because it deprived them of the advantages of popular suffrage in the election of their legislature; the French population, on the other hand, disliked the act because they had expected to be quickly given all the rights and privileges of citizens of an independent state. Moreover, they also objected to being denied the right to introduce African slaves into the territory.

The term "county" was unpopular with the inhabitants of the Territory of Orleans; in 1807, at the second session of the territorial legislature, the Act of 1807 was passed which created nineteen parishes:⁷ "... and be it further enacted that the said territory shall be and the same is hereby divided into 19 parishes," ⁸ After the passage of this legislation, Ouachita Parish was referred to as the settlements of the Ouachita.⁹

In 1812, the Territory of Orleans was admitted to the Union of the United States; with this action came many stipulations and requirements which the settlers had to meet.¹⁰ As with the principle established with Ohio becoming a state in 1803, five percent of the net proceeds

⁷Orleans Territory Acts of 1807, 2nd Session of 1st Legislature. Approved March 31, 1807, Chapter 1 (New Orleans, 1807), p. 10.

⁸Orleans Territory Acts of 1807, 2nd Session of 1st Legislature. Approved March 31, 1807, Chapter 1, p. 2.

⁹Louisiana Acts of 1804, 1st Session of 1st Legislature. Approved April 10, 1805, Chapter 25 (New Orleans, 1805), p. 148.

¹⁰Statutes at Large, II, 12th Cong., 1st sess., Ch. 48, July 11, 1812 (Boston, 1850), p. 774.

from sale of public lands was to be used for planning and construction of levees and roads as directed by the state legislature.¹¹ Another requirement was the provision that inhabitants relinquish total claims to unappropriated lands or wasteland in the state. Third, all land sold by the federal government was to be exempt from parish, municipal, and state taxes higher than resident citizens', and the state legislature was required to enforce this principle. Without this latter provision, Congress felt that public land sales would suffer should the state discriminate among inhabitants.¹²

C. Establishment of Boundaries of Ouachita Parish

The county of Ouachita was one of twelve counties created out of the Territory of Orleans by the governor of the territory under the provisions of Act 25 of 1805.¹³ The location and extent of Ouachita County was vaguely sketched on Bmi. Lafon's map of 1806. The county, occupying the northeastern corner of the territory, was shown as being bounded on the east by the Mississippi River above a

¹¹Ibid., p. 664.

¹²Benjamin H. Hibbard, A History of Public Land Policies (New York, 1939), p. 84.

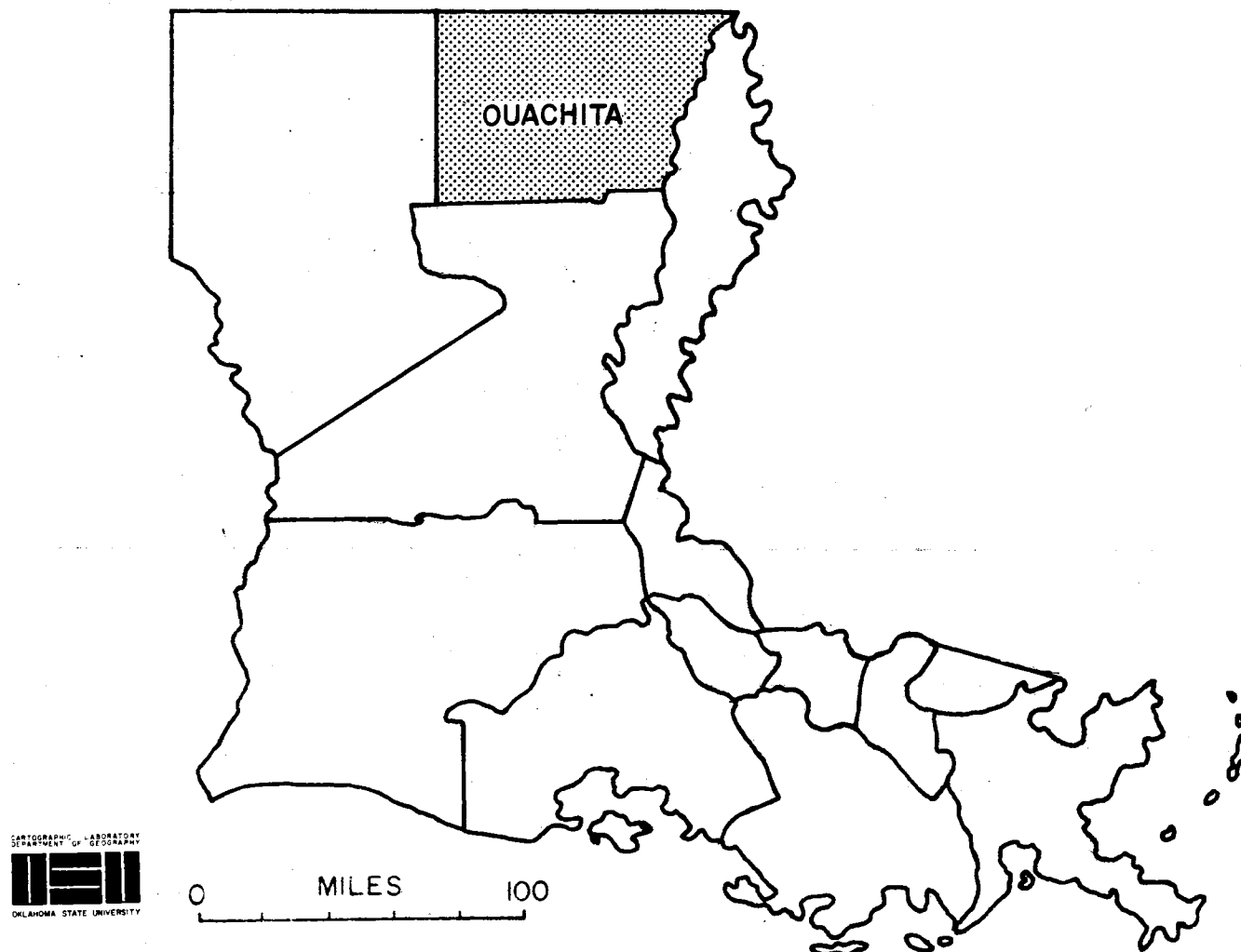
¹³Orleans Territory Acts of 1804-1805, 1st Session of 1st Legislature. Approved April 10, 1805, Chapter 25, p. 144. The County of Ouachita was described only by the words: "County of Ouachita: shall comprehend all that country commonly called the Ouachita settlements."

point opposite the upper part of Tensas Lake, on the west by the County of Natchitoches, on the north by the 33rd degree of latitude, and on the south by the Counties of Concordia and Rapides.¹⁴ Lafon's map was, for the most part, sketchy and vague and failed to show the northern boundary of the County of Rapides which bordered Ouachita County on the south. The northern limits of Rapides County were later indirectly defined by Act Ten of 1808, an act which itself was vague and indefinite. According to this act, the Rapides-Ouachita Parish boundary line became the Catahoula-Ouachita Parish boundary line. This line extended from the upper end of Tensas Lake to some point near Three Rivers Landing on the Boeuf River. Thus, the exact eastern and southern boundaries of the original Ouachita County were indefinite and uncertain. Moreover, the Historical Records Survey Map of the Territory of Orleans as it existed in 1805-1806 does not show the eastern and southern boundaries as reaching the Mississippi River (Figure 20).¹⁵

Though Lafon's map and William Darby's map of 1816 were vague, it is possible to reconstruct the southern and

¹⁴County-Parish Boundaries in Louisiana. Prepared by the Historical Records Survey Division of Professional and Service Projects, Works Projects Administration (New Orleans, 1939).

¹⁵This map is accepted by the Louisiana State Land Office as representative of the original location and extent of Ouachita County; however, this map does not conform to the descriptions of the boundaries given by the Territorial Acts at that time, nor does it conform to Lafon's Map of 1805 and William Darby's Map of 1816.



Source: Historical Records Survey

Figure 20. Ouachita County in 1805-1806

eastern boundaries of Ouachita County as it existed in 1805 by utilizing Lafon's map and overlaying various maps as described by the Territorial Acts which served to divide and add territory to Ouachita County. Act 25 of 1806 stated:

County of Concordia: shall comprehend all that portion of country within the following boundaries: beginning at the mouth of the Red River and ascending the same to the Black River to the Tensas River and along the same to the Tensas Lake; thence by a right line easterly to the Mississippi, and down the same to the point of beginning.¹⁶

The law placed the northern boundary of Concordia approximately ten miles north of the line which existed prior to the creation of Warren; furthermore, it re-established Ouachita on the Mississippi River (Figure 21).¹⁷ Section three of the legislation stated the following:

. . . that the Parish of Concordia shall comprehend all that part of said county, beginning at the junction of the Red River with the Mississippi River and ascending the latter about three miles above Grand Gulph, to a place known as Shipp's Bayou, thence along said Bayou to Lake St. Joseph, thence northerly through the middle of said lake to a Bayou called, and known by the name of Durosset's Bayou at or near the plantation of Gibson Clark, Jr., thence along the said Bayou to the Tensas--thence down to Black River--thence down Black River to its junction with the Red River--thence down the same to the beginning.¹⁸

¹⁶Orleans Territory Acts of 1804-1805, 1st Session of 1st Legislature. Approved April 10, 1805, Chapter 25, p. 144.

¹⁷Orleans Territory Acts of 1811, 2nd Session of 3rd Legislature. Approved March 30, 1811, Chapter 10, pp. 37-38.

¹⁸Ibid.

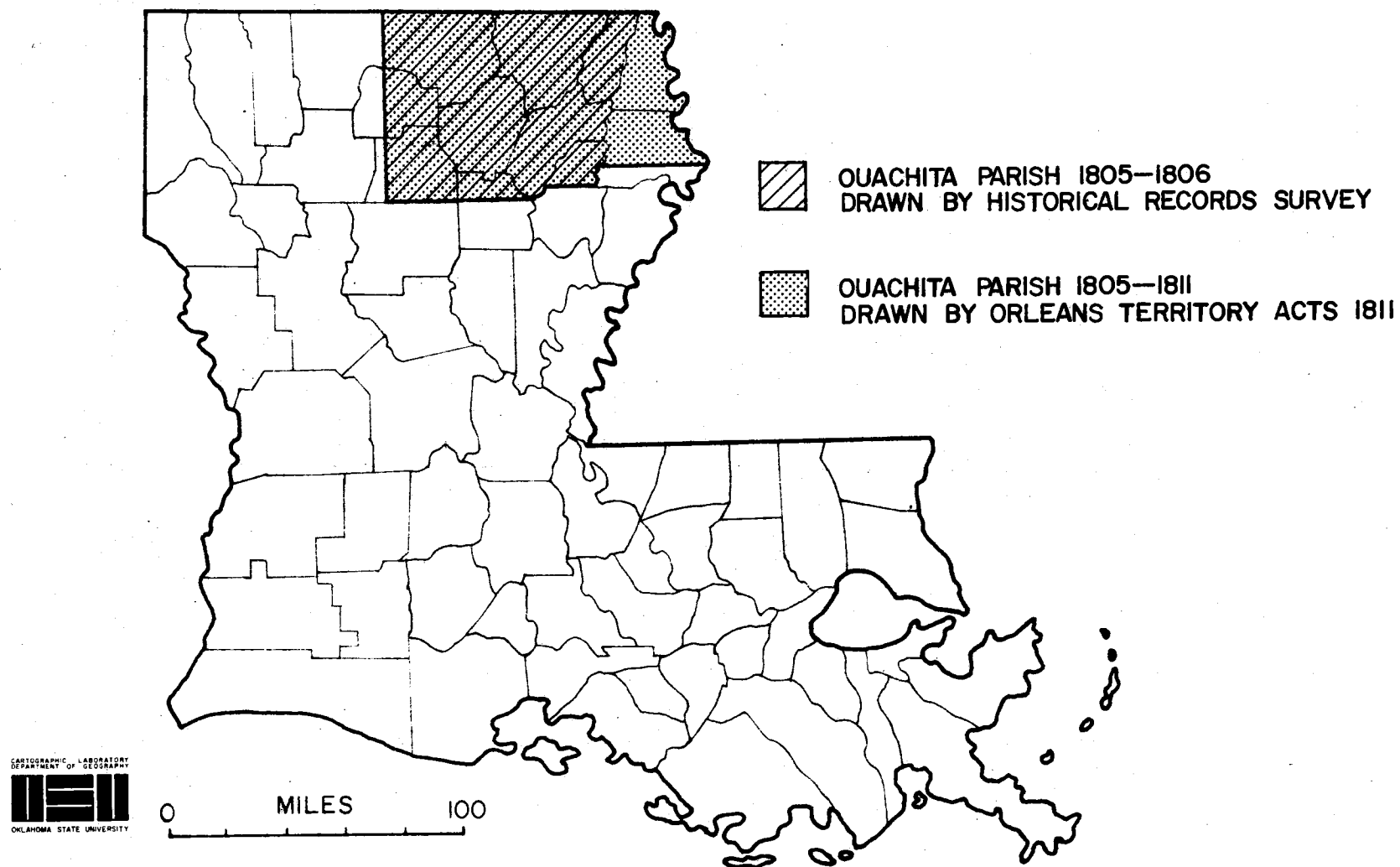


Figure 21. Ouachita Re-established on the Mississippi River

Section four stated:

That the parish of Warren shall comprehend all the part of the aforesaid county beginning on the Mississippi River, about three miles above the Grand Gulph, at the place Shipp's Bayou, thence along said Bayou to Lake St. Joseph, thence northerly through the middle of said lake to a Bayou called Durosset's Bayou at the plantation of Gibson Clark, Jr.--thence along said Bayou to the Tensas, thence to Bayou Macon, thence up the Bayou Macon to the 33^o of north latitude--thence down East to the Mississippi River--thence down the same to the beginning.¹⁹

In 1813, Catahoula was enlarged by an extension of approximately 30 miles to the north. In 1828, Claiborne Parish was carved from Natchitoches Parish. The formation of this parish was of great significance to Ouachita Parish because, for the first time, limitation was given to the western boundary of Ouachita. The following description of the legislative action established the western boundary of Ouachita Parish:

. . . thence east in the direction of said line to the dividing line between range 3 and 4 west; thence along said line, which shall form the western boundary of the parish of Ouachita, north to the Arkansas territory²⁰

In 1830, legislation was passed which provided a more definite southern boundary. The legislative description stated:

. . . beginning at the point where the dividing line between range 14-15 starts at the Bayou Macon, thence west on said line to Big Creek,

¹⁹Orleans Territory Acts of 1811, 2nd Session of 3rd Legislature. Approved March 20, 1811, Chapter 10, p. 38.

²⁰Louisiana Acts of 1828, 2nd Session of 8th Legislature. Approved March 13, 1828, Ch. 42 (New Orleans), p. 70.

thence down said creek to the dividing line between the range 13-14, thence west on said line to little river.²¹

The creation of Carroll Parish in 1832 marked the beginning of the contraction of Ouachita Parish. Legislation was passed in 1832 which created Carroll Parish from the eastern portion of Ouachita Parish (Figure 22). A description of the legislation stated:

. . . there shall be a new parish formed out of the eastern part of the parish of Ouachita and the northern part of the parish of Concordia to be called and known by the parish of Carroll.²²

D. Survey and Settlement of Private and Public Lands

When the United States took control of Louisiana on December 20, 1803, the government was immediately faced with two problems. These concerned settling private land claims based on foreign titles and surveying and selling public land. There was much confusion concerning land claims, since the federal government passed laws regulating territory, individuals, and foreign land policies--all of which were unfamiliar to the government. In spite of many problems, however, congress made every effort to protect claims of settlers who had settled in the region prior to

²¹Louisiana Acts of 1830, 2nd Session of 9th Legislature. Approved March 4, 1830, Chapter 1 (New Orleans, 1830), p. 36.

²²Louisiana Acts of 1832, 3rd Session of 10th Legislature. Approved March 14, 1832, Chapter 1 (New Orleans, 1832), p. 100.

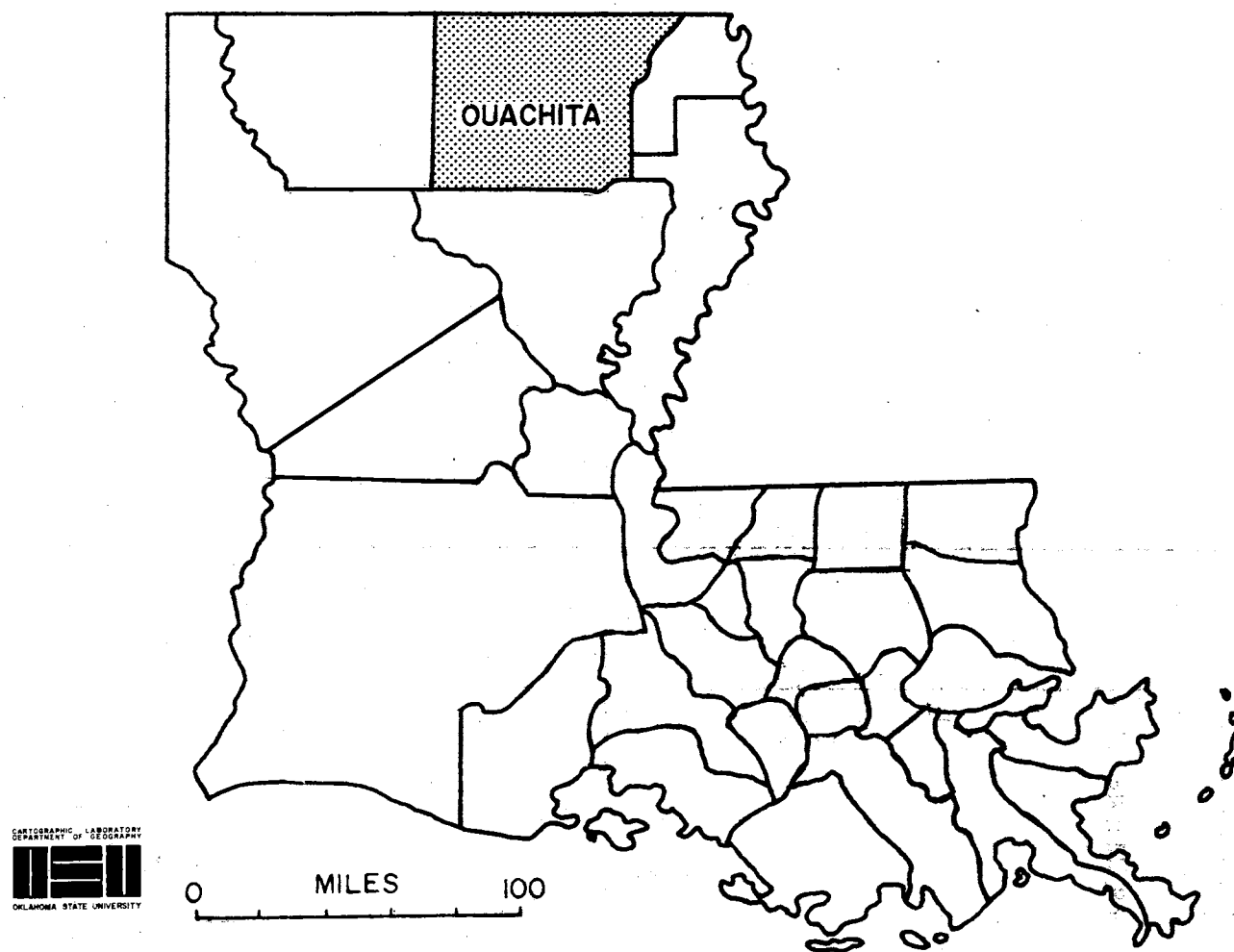


Figure 22. Ouachita Parish, 1832

1803. Congress had passed a law in 1800, before the acquisition of Louisiana, which served to stimulate the migration of settlers into that region. The law had established a credit system for people to purchase land and had reduced the minimum amount of land that settlers could purchase from the federal government from 640 acres to 320.²³

On March 26, 1804, Congress enacted legislation which divided the Louisiana Purchase Territory into the Orleans Territory, the present state of Louisiana, and the Louisiana District.²⁴ Following this legislation, the first attempts to survey the land were begun with the commissioning of Bartholomew Lafon to survey the land.²⁵ In 1805, Congress approved the "Act for Ascertaining and Adjusting the Land Titles and Claims to Land, within the Territory of Orleans, and the District of Louisiana."²⁶ This legislation created two boards of commissioners to investigate land titles in Orleans Territory. The commissioners divided the territory into two land districts, the western one containing the study region (Figure 23).

²³Statutes at Large, II, 6th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter XXV, 1800, pp. 73-78.

²⁴Statutes at Large, 8th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter XXXVIII, 1804, pp. 283-285.

²⁵William C. Claiborne to Bartholomew Lafon, June 23, 1804, quoted in Clarence E. Carter, ed., "Orleans Territory, 1803-1813," Territorial Papers of the United States, IX (Washington, 1934), p. 244.

²⁶Statutes at Large, II, 8th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter XXVI, 1805, p. 324.

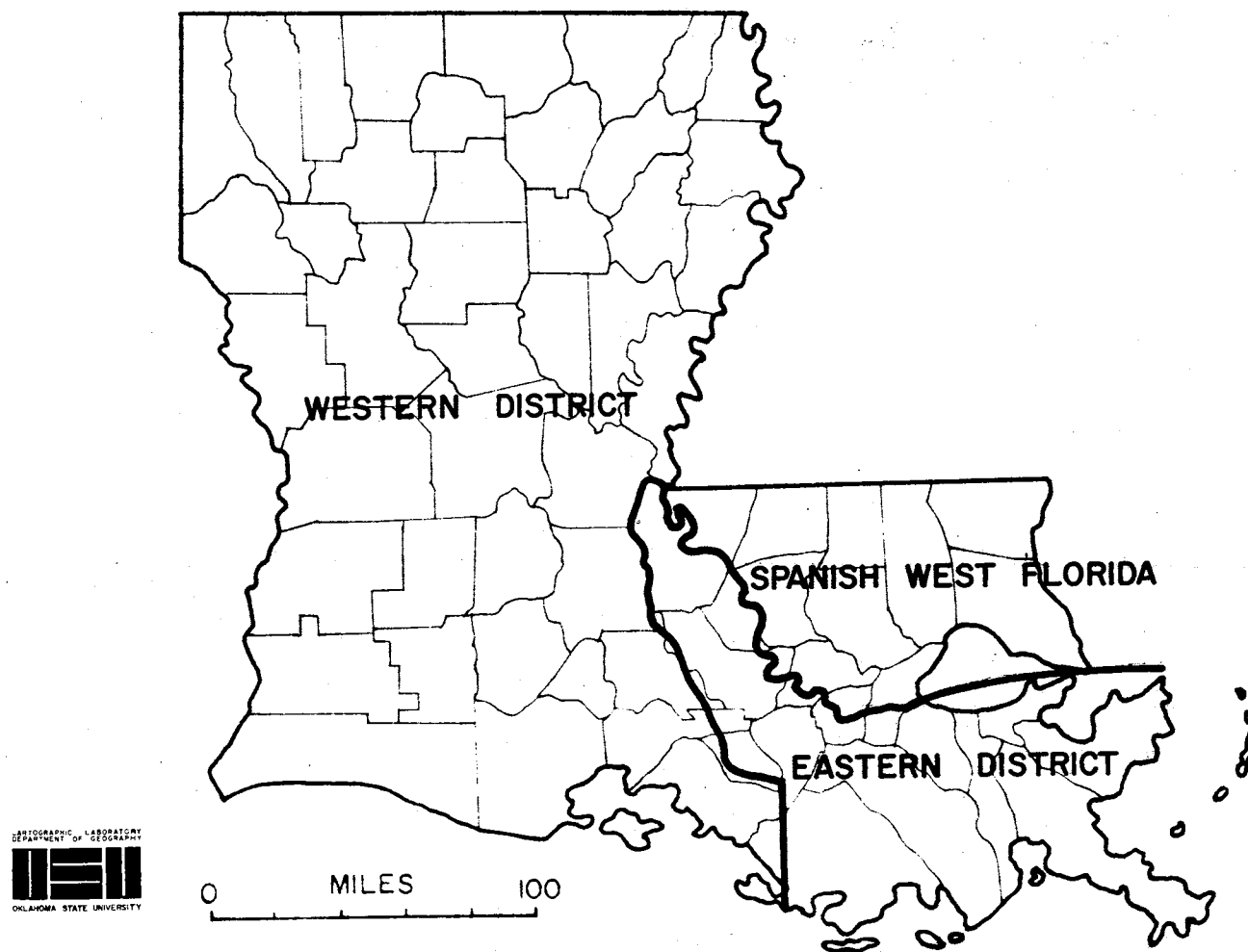


Figure 23. Land Districts in Louisiana, 1805-1811

The surveying of Orleans Territory began in 1805 with the appointment of a chief surveyor.²⁷ The latitude and meridian lines were located and the exterior lines of the townships were surveyed. The chief surveyor felt that the line of 33 degrees north latitude was to become the northern boundary of the Territory of Orleans.²⁸ Under his direction, the deputy surveyor measured and marked the line.²⁹ The section lines were to be measured when the need arose. The 31st degree north latitude, the boundary line which separated the United States from Spanish Florida, was surveyed westward and was utilized as the basis for surveys in Orleans Territory.³⁰ A meridian was located at 92 degrees, 20 minutes west of Greenwich, at a point which intersected the 31st degree north latitude that was not subject to inundation.³¹

The major factor influencing the immediate surveying of land was the fear of confrontation between Spain and the

²⁷ Albert Gallatin to Isaac Briggs, July 2, 1805, quoted in Clarence E. Carter, ed., "Orleans Territory, 1803-1813," Territorial Papers of the United States, IX (Washington, 1934), pp. 459-462.

²⁸ Statutes at Large, II, 8th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter XXXVIII, 1804, p. 283.

²⁹ Gideon Fitz to Seth Pease, November 25, 1807, Records of Western District, Records of Louisiana State Land Office, State Capitol, Baton Rouge.

³⁰ Gallatin to Briggs, p. 462.

³¹ The meridian, known as the Louisiana Meridian, served as the basis for all surveys west of the Mississippi River. Thomas Donaldson, The Public Domain, Its History (Washington, 1884), p. 181.

United States. The Secretary of the Treasury anticipated the possibility of the encroachment by Spain into the area west of the Mississippi River. Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, insisted that the vacant land be surveyed as soon as possible and offered for sale no later than the end of 1806, since many settlers in the western part of the state were probably not loyal to the United States.³² He felt that the rapid surveying of the land and the settlement of Americans in the area would insure a firm American hold on the land.

In 1805, Spanish troops from Texas reoccupied a part of the western section of Orleans Territory, and this threat to the United States soil caused a general reinforcement along the boundary between Louisiana and Texas.³³ Following this event, the United States felt an even stronger need to survey the land rapidly and to encourage settlement by loyal American citizens. The chief surveyor of Orleans Territory was instructed to survey the land rapidly and as much as possible:

It is the wish of the Legislature that the public lands should be offered for sale in that quarter; and I will add, that the object is considered as intimately connected with the welfare and even the safety of that newly-acquired territory. For it is the only portion where any great increase of

³²Albert Gallatin to Isaac Briggs, May 8, 1806, Orleans Territory, 1803-1812, p. 462.

³³Issac J. Cox, "Exploration of the Louisiana Frontier, 1803-1806," in Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1904, pp. 151-174.

American population can take place, and I need not comment on the importance of that object. It may indeed in this instance be found necessary to sacrifice the scientific correctness, which would otherwise be desirable, to the dispatch which is indispensibly necessary.³⁴

In 1806, Congress passed a law which stipulated that vacant land should be surveyed quickly and offered for sale.³⁵

When Louisiana was admitted into the Union in 1812, much of the vacant land in Ouachita Parish lay unclaimed. In fact, a survey had not been made of the land prior to the Commissioner of the General Land Office ordering the chief surveyor to make a partial survey of the vacant lands north of the Red River.³⁶ Prior to the passage of the Act of March 3, 1811, the land was surveyed by the Americans according to the sectional system. The new legislative action changed this method of surveying and provided for the establishment of a land district north of the Red River; the sale of public land previously surveyed allowed persons claiming land and holding land titles under the French and Spanish governments to apply for land located directly behind the original claim.³⁷ Ouachita, the

³⁴The Secretary of the Treasury to Isaac Briggs, May 8, 1806, quoted in Records of Government Land Office, Letters Sent to the Surveyors General, I.

³⁵Statutes at Large, II, 9th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter XXXVIII-XXXIX, 1806, p. 393.

³⁶Thomas Freeman to Gideon Fitz, December 6, 1812, quoted in Records of the Western District of Louisiana, Records of the Louisiana State Land Office, State Capitol, Baton Rouge.

³⁷Statutes at Large, II, 11th Congress, 3rd Session, Chapter XLVI, 1811, pp. 618-619.

District North of the Red River and the third land district created by the Act of 1811, was scheduled to open at Monroe soon after the passage of the act; however, it did not open until 1818 (Figure 24).³⁸ Since the Mississippi River had overflowed its banks, much of the land was inundated and could not be surveyed.

After the passage of the Act of 1811, creating the Ouachita Land Office, plans were adopted to survey the public land in the district. In 1813, surveying began with the extension of the meridian northward. The land east of the Louisiana Meridian and south of the Ouachita River was to be surveyed into townships after extending the meridian line to the 33rd degree of north latitude.³⁹

Many problems arose which delayed or hindered the surveying of land in the region. Among these were the following: finances, inclement weather, diseases and illness of surveyors, terrain, and war. Many of the surveyors were confronted with the task of surveying without any finances, since Congress did not appropriate sufficient funds to conduct authorized surveys. In addition, surveyors were not provided with funds to purchase

³⁸D. J. Sutton, Register at Ouachita, to Commission of the General Land Office, August 26, 1818, quoted in Records of General Land Office, Letters Received from Registers and Receivers, Ouachita, XXIV.

³⁹Thomas Freeman to Charles Lawson and Christopher Stone, January 28, 1813, quoted in Records of the District North of Red River, Records of the Louisiana State Office, State Capitol, Baton Rouge.

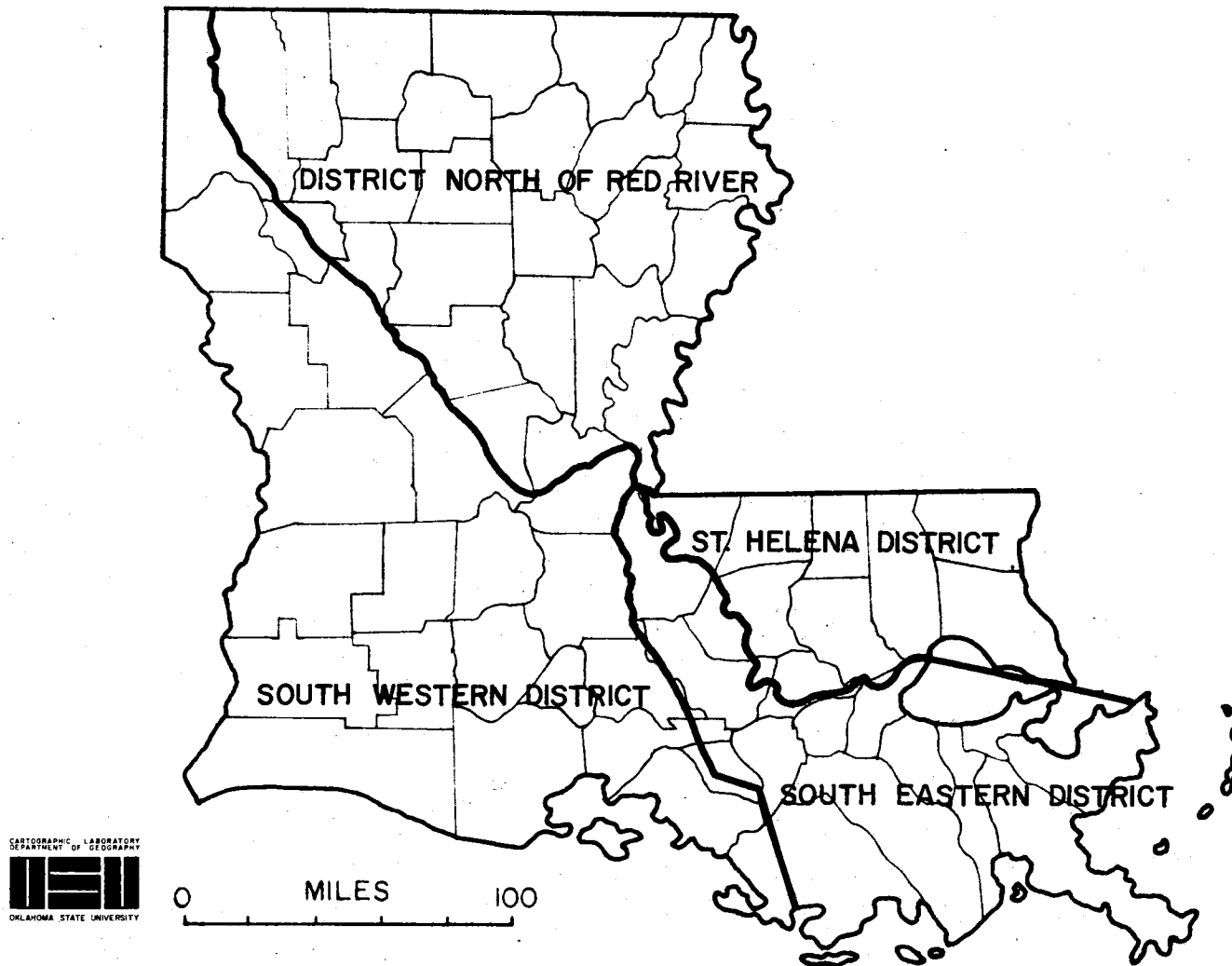


Figure 24. Land Districts in Louisiana, 1811-1818

supplies or rent equipment.⁴⁰ Ouachita Parish contained many swamps, rivers, and bayous which required the renting of boats to properly measure land distances. Furthermore, appropriated funds to pay surveyors and their helpers were delayed.⁴¹

The climate also presented difficulties to the surveyors. The hot, humid summer season slowed the survey parties; and the damp, bitterly cold winter season made surveying a difficult task. Extreme amounts of rainfall caused small streams to overflow into lowlands, completely flooding vast areas. These impenetrable locations blocked surveying until the water receded. Because of the climatic conditions, illness of surveyors was commonplace. Surveyors blamed the dampness for their illnesses; in fact, one surveyor resigned his position because of poor health which he attributed to the climate.⁴²

Another major difficulty faced by surveyors attempting to establish boundaries was the dense vegetation and the presence of snakes. The War of 1812 also affected the surveying, since many surveyors were recruited for military

⁴⁰Surveyor Notes, State Land Office, State Capitol, Baton Rouge.

⁴¹A surveyor party consisted of deputy surveyor, axeman, two chairmen, and a flagman. Donaldson, The Public Domain, p. 182.

⁴²Gamiel Pease to Gideon Fitz, November 6, 1810, quoted in Records of the Western District of Louisiana, Records of the Louisiana State Land Office, State Capitol, Baton Rouge.

duty and were not available to survey the land.⁴³ Resumption of full scale surveying did not begin again until the armed conflict subsided.

After a sufficient number of tracts of land had been surveyed, they were offered for sale; however, only a few tracts were sold. The lag in land sales in the district can be attributed primarily to the type of land system utilized. The land had been surveyed according to the sectional system which resulted in tracts of land which were mixtures of land and water and were of little value to settlers desiring fertile soil suitable for cultivation. Moreover, many tracts consisted primarily of water with accompanying poor soil. Thus, settlers were not eager to buy the available tracts even though they sought land in the area.

Another important factor which accounted for the poor land sales was the location of the land office. Prior to 1818, land sales in Ouachita Parish were conducted through the Western District located at Natchitoches, Louisiana. Settlers were required to travel to that location to transact land business. Because of the distance, poor transportation, and the inconvenience, many settlers were hesitant to locate in the region and buy land. In 1818, the land office of the District North of the Red River opened at present Monroe; however, four years passed before

⁴³Gideon Fitz to Thomas Freeman, December 31, 1814, quoted in Records of the Western District of Louisiana, Records of the Louisiana State Land Office, State Capitol, Baton Rouge.

land was purchased. In 1822, the first public sale of land was held for the region, but there were no bidders.

Still another factor which slowed the settlement of public lands was the price of land. Prior to 1820, land cost a minimum of two dollars per acre. Credit was given to purchasers; however, few settlers were able to produce a sufficient quantity of goods for a large enough profit margin to warrant the high payment of land extended on credit. In order to increase the purchase of land and advance settlement, the price of land was reduced in 1820 to one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre and the credit system was abolished.⁴⁴

Land sales were held in 1822, 1826, and 1829, at Monroe. One and a half million acres were available to sell. Of the total, approximately 20,000 acres were sold just above the minimum price of one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre. Henry Bry, the register of lands, estimated that the average value of the unsold lands was approximately 26 cents per acre. Land subject to inundation could not be sold at the minimum price per acre because the bayous, rivers, and other water courses were not dyked and levees were not constructed.⁴⁵

⁴⁴The Act of March 3, 1811, provided for the sales period for purchasing land to be open only three weeks. Statutes at Large, II, 11th Congress, 3rd Session, Chapter XLVI, pp. 662-666; The Act of April 24, 1820, reduced the time limit for purchasing land to two weeks. Ibid., 16th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter LI, 1820, pp. 566-567.

⁴⁵American State Papers, Public Lands, V (Washington, 1860), pp. 561-568.

Water courses often overflowed their natural banks, resulting in the inundation of these lands and the destruction of crops and animals. Settlers were not able to sell their produce, and the loss of income created financial hardships. There was a scarcity of money for purchasing public lands, and settlers were reluctant to even attend land sales in which land offered for sale had been previously inundated. In addition, many persons were hesitant to purchase land since they felt that the government would provide free grants of unsold land.⁴⁶ The land which had been offered for sale was not only subject to inundation but was also not very fertile for cultivation.

An additional factor, recorded by Henry Bry, which influenced the sale of land, involved the individual bidders.⁴⁷ Bry stated that persons at land sales agreed not to bid against each other. As a result, at the land sale in 1829, several tracts were sold for the minimum price of one dollar and twenty-five cents; one tract sold for three dollars and fifty cents per acre, and another for one dollar and fifty-one cents per acre. Of the land purchasers, Bry reported that not one speculator or land

⁴⁶Henry Bry to Commissioner of Government Land Office, June 30, 1828, quoted in Records of Government Land Office, Letters Received from Registers and Receivers, Ouachita, XXIV.

⁴⁷Henry Bry to Commissioner of Government Land Office, September 30, 1826, and November 29, 1829.

jobber purchased land.⁴⁸

This pattern of land purchasing changed during the next decade. In the 1830's, there was an inflationary boom in Louisiana, and the purchase of land by settlers greatly increased. Speculators also began purchasing tracts of land, hoping to make a quick profit from the sale of land to incoming settlers. The land boom generated interest in the region and led to a great influx of settlers and a rapid growth in population.

E. American Land Policy

The initial efforts by the Americans to survey the land in Louisiana, particularly that in Ouachita Parish, were unsuccessful because of the survey method used. This method, the sectional method, was effective in many locations of the United States; however, it proved to be rather difficult to implement in Louisiana. The topography of the alluvial areas in Louisiana and the lack of equipment needed to utilize the system efficiently resulted in many problems to the surveyors.

The use of the sectional survey system in Ouachita Parish which contained many rivers, bayous, lakes, and swamps resulted in many land tracts which consisted of total land or water or of a combination that was invaluable and not in demand by settlers who sought land for

⁴⁸Ibid.

cultivation. Previously, the Spanish government had permitted persons to establish settlement sites along water courses as they desired. The inhabitants had adjusted their land tracts and surveys according to the nature of the landscape.

The Americans soon recognized the problems involved in the application of surveying methods to the land of Ouachita Parish and began to use the rectilinear survey system adopted by Congress in the Ordinance of 1785.⁴⁹ The rectilinear system permitted the surveying of lands adjacent to water bodies, rivers, lakes, and bayous into parcels which differed according to size, angles, and boundary lines.⁵⁰ The landscape was allowed to dictate the shape of the tract, but, whenever possible, the surveyors were required to have tracts 58 poles wide and 465 poles deep.⁵¹ The rectilinear survey system permitted the rapid surveying of the land and, in addition, offered the advantage of surveying only that land which was to be sold for settlement purposes. Land which was not initially suitable for settlement could later be surveyed.

The use of the rectilinear survey system often resulted in tracts of land fronting a swamp or other water bodies;

⁴⁹Donaldson, p. 183.

⁵⁰Statutes at Large, II, 11th Congress, 3rd Session, Chapter XLVI, 1811, pp. 662-666.

⁵¹Ibid. The regular pole was a unit of measurement equal to 16 1/2 feet or 5 1/2 yards. The regular pole was approximately the size of a rod.

because of this, on March 3, 1811, Congress approved of the Spanish procedure of allowing "double concessions" and permitted persons who claimed land adjacent to waterways to purchase land directly behind their tract. Congress stipulated that the rear tract could not contain more land than the front tract, that it could not extend more than 40 arpents in depth, and that it could not adjoin any suitable land for cultivation fronting on another water course.⁵²

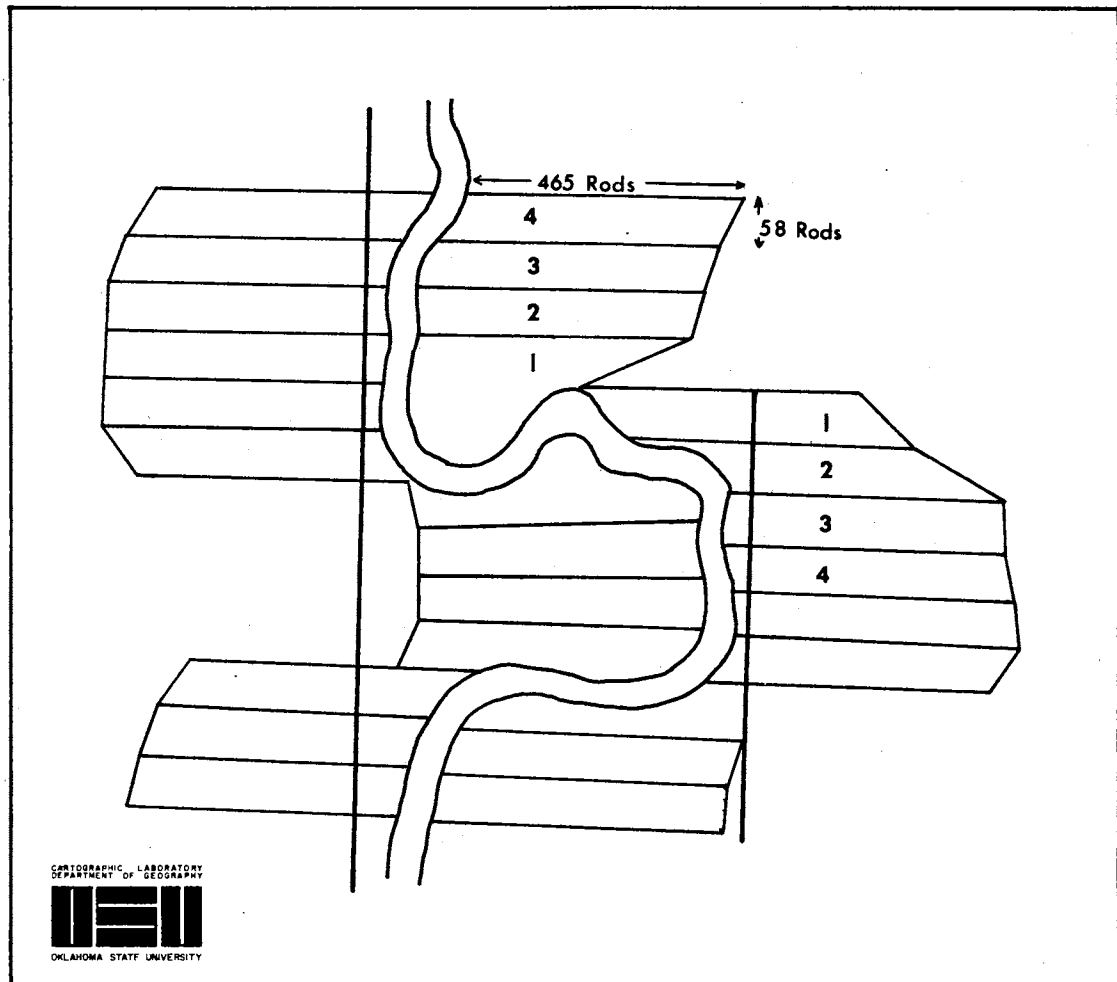
The surveyor responsible for surveying all land in Orleans Territory made a detail drawing, illustrating the method of surveying the land according to the law of 1811.⁵³ The surveyor drew a line in the direction of a water course and lines were extended at right angles to 465 rods. A distance of 58 poles separated the lines. The back lines were drawn parallel to the front line.⁵⁴ Where bends or large waterway curves were encountered, the side boundary lines were to be drawn in, converging on the concave side to prevent tract interference or diverging on the convex side to eliminate the possibility of small, irregular tracts. These would have resulted if the side lines were drawn parallel to each other (Figure 25).⁵⁵

⁵²Ibid., p. 663.

⁵³Thomas Freeman to Gideon Fitz, June 15, 1811, quoted in Records of the Western Land District, Records of the Louisiana State Land Office, State Capitol, Baton Rouge.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.



Source: Thomas Freeman to Gideon Fitz, June 15, 1811,
Records of the Western Land District, Records of
the Louisiana State Land Office, State Capitol,
Baton Rouge

Figure 25. Freeman's Instructions to Deputy
Surveyors for Surveying Lands

F. Characteristics of Anglo-American
Population in Ouachita Parish

The Anglo-Americans began their occupation of the study region while it was still under Spanish domination. Many of the Anglo-Americans had received land grants during this time and, in 1803, when the United States gained control of the region, this culture group began to rapidly alter the landscape. Moreover, this transfer of Louisiana from France to the United States encouraged even more Americans to migrate to the study region.⁵⁶ At this time the population was comprised of French hunters from Canada and Anglo-Americans who had drifted into the region primarily from the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys.⁵⁷

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase, the majority of the settlers in the Ouachita basin inhabited the area surrounding Fort Miro. By 1804, there were approximately 90 families living at Fort Miro and in the adjoining settlements which surrounded the small town that served as the headquarters of the post of the Ouachita.⁵⁸ These settlers held titles to the lands granted them by the Spanish.⁵⁹ Most of these holdings were located along both

⁵⁶Williamson and Goodman, p. 114.

⁵⁷Maurice Thompson, The Story of Louisiana (Boston, 1888), p. 199.

⁵⁸D'Anemours, p. 32.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 36.

banks of the Ouachita River and Bayou de Siard (Figure 26).

Excluding the settlement at Fort Miro, there were few frontier settlements in the region by 1804. One important settlement site was located in the southern portion of the region near Breston Landing. This was the site of four small settlements and a ferry. The area between Breston Landing, near the present site of Riverton, to Fort Miro was not occupied except for Filhoil's plantation at Logtown (Figure 27).⁶⁰ Dr. Hunter, who traveled up the Ouachita River in 1805, gave the following account of the population of Ouachita Parish:

The greater part [of the population] consisted of Canadian French of few wants and as little industry! There were a number of Spanish and French Creole families apparently of the same general character as the Canadians, but interspersed with them were a few of a higher order of industry and intelligence. Mingled with the elements surviving from the previous regime were a few German, Irish, and American settlers of the frontier type, and the soldiers of the post of the Ouachita. About this post were grouped some 150 families of this nondescript population. A few scattered cabins above and below this place, with an occasional house of more pretentious appearance, constituted the settled portion of the country.⁶¹

The Anglo-American who:

had crossed the [Mississippi] river and taken up their abode on what at the time was foreign soil, but most of the English-speaking people in the territory were transient traders rather than permanent settlers.⁶²

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 13.

⁶¹Hunter, "The Western Journal of Doctor George Hunter, 1796-1805," p. 88.

⁶²Ogg, p. 578.



Figure 26. Spanish Land Grants

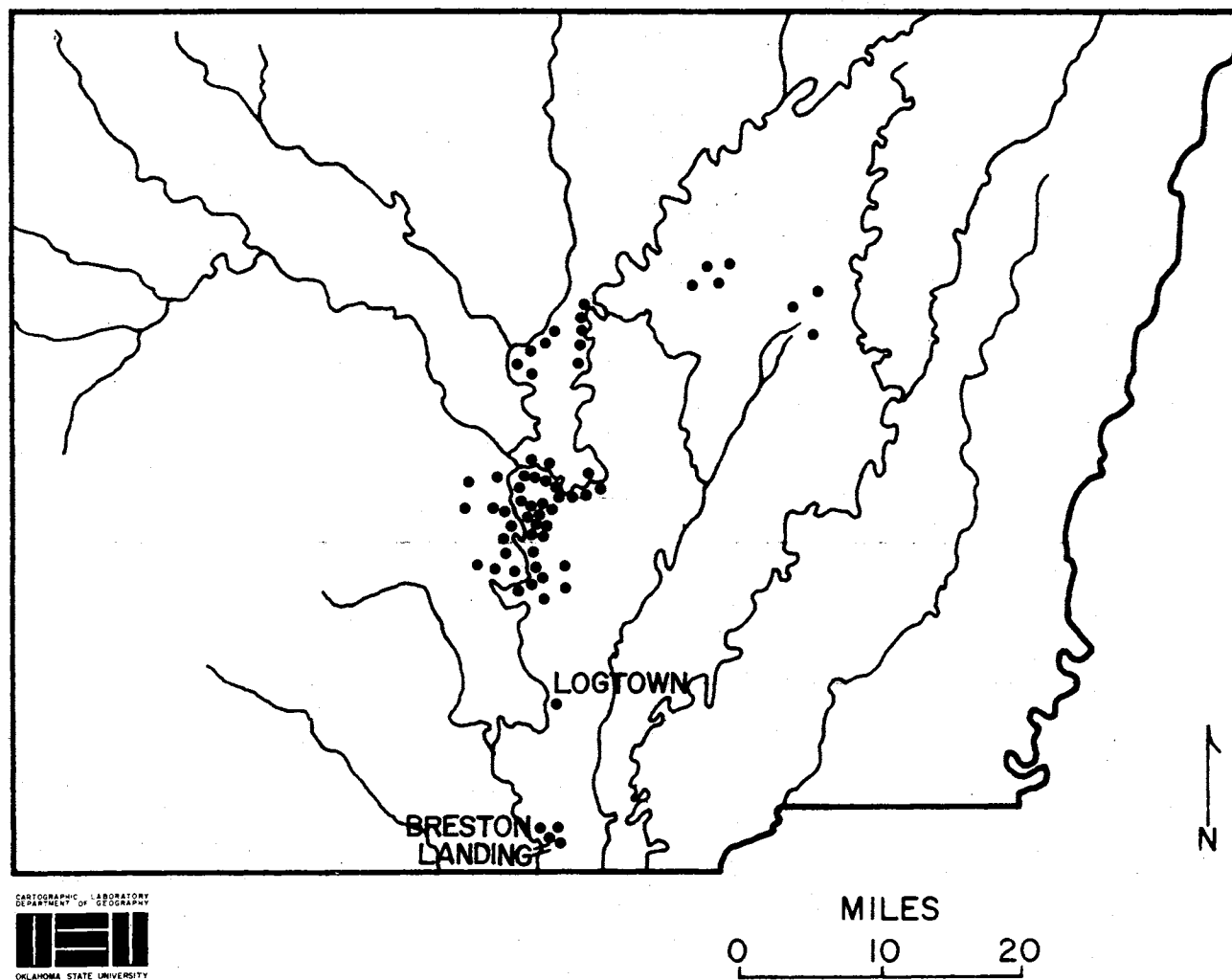


Figure 27. Distribution of Settlements at Fort Miro and Vicinity,
1804

Those Anglo-Americans who did settle in the region permanently, unlike the French and Spanish, clung to the fields and small businesses and engaged in agriculture, trade, and politics.

The small farmstead of the Anglo-Americans appeared on the landscape. These farmsteads were located in close proximity for mutual benefit and protection. Moreover, transportation tended to restrict the settlement location. In addition, the fields farmed by the early settlers were comprised of only a few acres. The lack of labor confined the farmer to limit the field size to less than 20 acres. The fields were enclosed by hewn palings which served to protect the crops from loose animals.

The following passage written by Hickman provides a description of the early settlers in the region:

Soon after the arrival of the squatter family, a small patch of land was cleared and a crude cabin erected. Bells were attached to the cattle and they were turned loose in the woods. Looms were mounted, and spinning wheels soon furnished yarn to provide apparel suitable for the climate. Before the coming of frost in November, the un-acclimated family was attacked by fever. But the sickly season soon passed and, with a diet of bear meat and venison, the family regained its physical strength. During the winter months, the largest ash trees were felled and the trunks were split and corded. By the end of the first year, the family had substantial food and suitable clothing and were better prepared to cope with fever. Each successive year the savings of the family increased. Their livestock--cattle, hogs, and horses--grew in number, as did their cultivated acreage. Eventually, they purchased the lands they had farmed for years.⁶³

⁶³Nollie W. Hickman, "The Tensas-Bayou Macon," in Edwin Adams Davis, ed., The Rivers and Bayous of Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1968), p. 16.

As more and more farmers bought land and became permanently established in the region, the population began to increase steadily. The total population of the Ouachita basin in 1769 had been reported to consist of only 110 whites.⁶⁴ By 1788, the population of the basin had increased very little, the total population being recorded as 232 persons.⁶⁵ In 1804, there were 450 whites and 50 or 60 slaves at Fort Miro and nearby settlements.⁶⁶ By 1810, however, Ouachita Parish was reported to have a population of 1,077 inhabitants.⁶⁷ The population had increased, by 1820, to a total of 2,896 persons, of which 2,080 were white, 41 free blacks, and 834 slaves.⁶⁸ Ten years later the population had increased to 5,140 persons. There were 2,938 whites, 57 free blacks, and 2,145 slaves.⁶⁹ Monette stated that, for several years prior to 1836, the American population from Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee,

⁶⁴Francois-Xavier Martin, History of Louisiana From the Earliest Period, II (2nd ed., New Orleans, 1882), p. 13.

⁶⁵Monette, I, p. 477.

⁶⁶Robin, p. 136. Two planters with a combined work force of twenty slaves were reported at Fort Miro in 1804. These were Don Juan Filhoil and Charles Le Paulmier D'Anemours; Hunter, p. 88.

⁶⁷Third Census of the United States, 1810: Population, p. 22.

⁶⁸Fourth Census of the United States, 1820: Population, p. 23.

⁶⁹Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Population, pp. 106-107.

Carolina, and Georgia had been moving into the cotton regions on the Red River and the Washita.⁷⁰

G. Economic Activities

The economic interests of the settlers who moved into the study region after the Louisiana Purchase were more agriculturally oriented than those of their predecessors. While these settlers continued to engage in hunting, fishing, trapping, and trading, as the earlier settlers had, they were primarily interested in farming. They worked tirelessly to develop a sound agricultural economy in the region and often farmed the land for several years before saving sufficient capital to purchase it. Most of the settlers were able to produce a sufficient quantity of crops to meet their own needs and still have a surplus for selling and trading.

The settlers raised a variety of crops in the rich alluvial bottomland, including various vegetables, oats, rye, wheat, and cotton. They also raised cattle, chicken, sheep, goats, and hogs which provided meat, lard, milk, clothing, and various household items (Appendix I).⁷¹ This type of economy was adequate for the settlers' simple lives

⁷⁰Monette, V, pp. 516-517.

⁷¹Compendium of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States, obtained from Sixth Census, Counties and Principal Towns Exhibiting the Population, Wealth, and Resources of the Country. Printed by Thomas Allen, 1841, at the Department of State, Washington, pp. 241-249.

and provided them with ample income to purchase the necessities. The economy would probably have continued to develop at a steady rate had it not been for major changes in methods of transportation.

Economic development in Ouachita Parish prior to and immediately following the Louisiana Purchase had been dependent largely upon farm land which was not periodically inundated and the availability of water transportation. In the summer months, when the waterways became very shallow, much of the water receded from the alluvial land and overland transportation in these areas became possible; however, the crossing of major waterways posed a problem and hampered transportation. Travel on the Ouachita River was hazardous and beset with dangers such as swift, changeable currents, floating logs and debris, and shallow sand bars.

The advent of the steamboat made much of Ouachita Parish accessible to settlers who had not been willing to face the difficulties of early transportation and marked the turning point in the economy of the region.⁷² The steamboat enabled farmers to safely ship their vegetables and their cotton to the New Orleans market, and it was not long before cotton had become the principal and most profitable crop in the study region.

⁷²After the appearance of the steamboat "James Monroe," the inhabitants of Fort Miro or the Post of the Ouachita changed the name of the settlement to Monroe in 1819. Hardin, p. 472.

Planters found it an extremely easy matter to raise thousands of bales of cotton, load them on the steamboat which pushed up to their very doors on their own secluded bayou, send it to New Orleans, and become rich off the proceeds.⁷³

Timothy Flint recognized the relationship between cotton production and the steamboat on the Ouachita River by recording in his diary the following:

Three steamboats already run on this river and its tributaries. One of them, the Chesapeake, in which I afterward descended the river to its mouth, passed us, as we stood on the shore twenty-five miles south of Monroe, smoking down the forest with a load of 800 bales of cotton Cotton plantations are supplanting all other projects. Steamboats plow up and down the forests. The numerous water courses connected with the Ouachita [sic]; as the Bayou Barthelimi [sic], Bayou Macon, River-au-Boeuf, . . . long, deep, and winding water courses in these alluvial swamps, which seem to have been dug out by the hand of nature, as navigable canals, are all beginning to experience the changes of cotton plantations forming on their banks. Probably thirty thousand bales of cotton are already made upon these shores, and the amount will soon be quadrupled.⁷⁴

Cotton producers along the Ouachita River in the southern portion of the region transported their cotton and other goods to Columbia, a small river settlement established in 1827, south of the study region (Figure 28).

Since it was the only settlement on the Ouachita River between Monroe and the Black River towns, a number of steamboat owners and captains found it a convenient place to live. There was a good harbor, and the village became a busy port for packet from New Orleans, St. Louis, and more distant points. Farmers from the surrounding area

⁷³Garnett Laidlow Eskew, The Pageant of the Packets (New York, 1929), p. 80.

⁷⁴Flint, pp. 27-28.

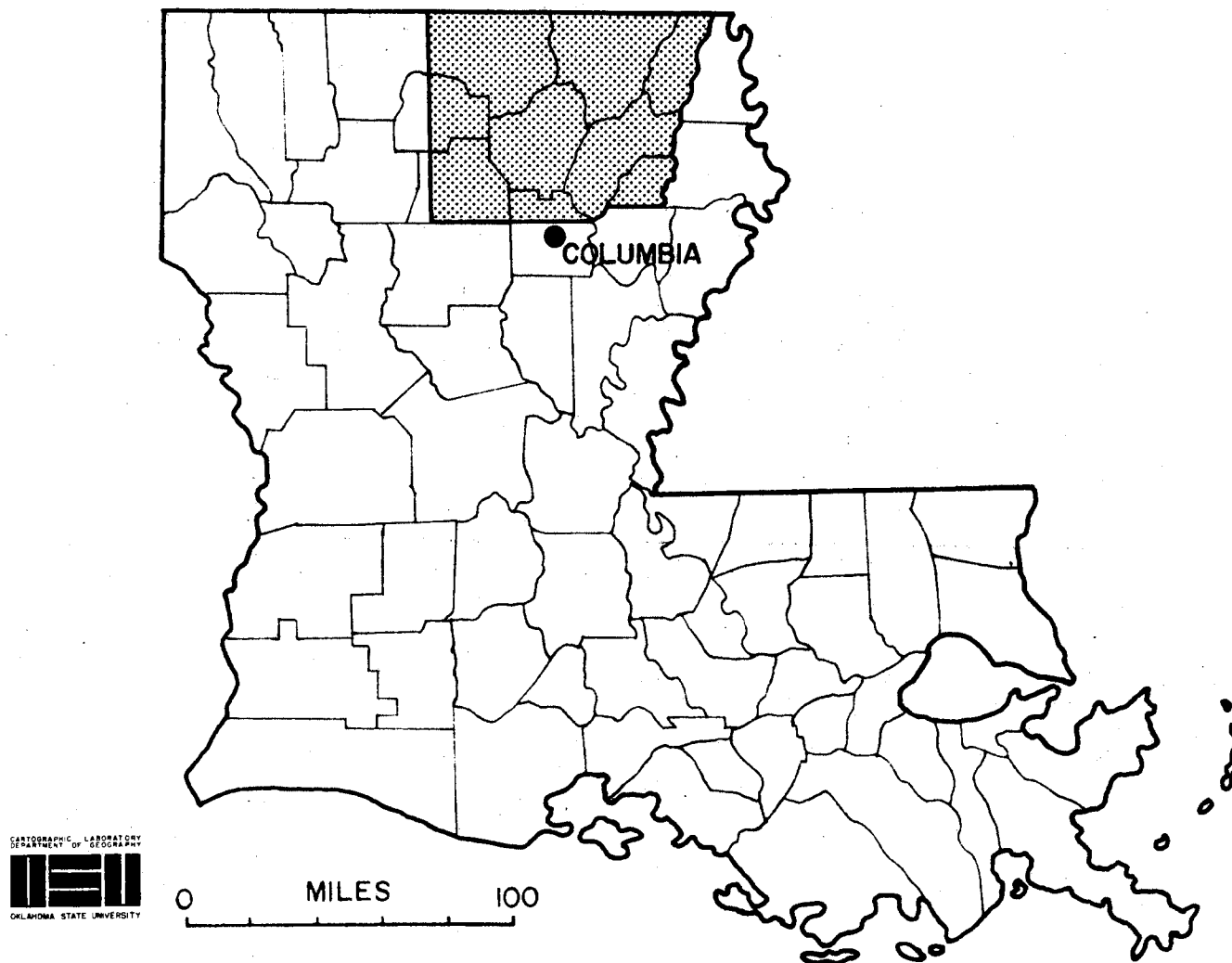


Figure 28. Columbia

brought cotton to Columbia to be shipped by water, frequently blocking the streets with wagons and ox carts.⁷⁵

The coming of the steamboat had, of course, been beneficial to other than the cotton farmer; but, because of the great demand for cotton, the suitability of the soil and climate, and availability of adequate water transportation, this commodity soon became the major product of Ouachita Parish. The following figures illustrate the rapid growth in the region's production of cotton. In 1800, the first cotton was planted in the region and, a year later, the first cotton gin was constructed. In 1809, the quantity of cotton exceeded 100 bales;⁷⁶ and by 1840 there was a total of 1,724,658 pounds of cotton gathered in Ouachita Parish.⁷⁷

Lumbering was another very important economic activity in Ouachita Parish which greatly benefited from the development of the steamboat. Extensive farming had resulted in the irresponsible cutting of hundreds of acres of hardwood forests; however, once the value of this timber was recognized, this indiscriminate cutting was stopped and lumbering became an important economic activity in the region. Cypress trees were cut in the region and rafted to a steam sawmill

⁷⁵Works Projects Administration, *Workers of the Writer's Program*, p. 602.

⁷⁶Bry, "Louisiana Ouachita Region," p. 228.

⁷⁷Sixth Census, *Counties and Principal Towns Exhibiting the Population, Wealth, and Resources of the Country*, p. 240.

located at the mouth of the Red River.⁷⁸

When dense stands of cypress were located away from water courses, they were cut and transported to the banks of bayous and rivers. Cordwood was cut and loaded on cypress rafts and floated downstream to New Orleans. Money received from the sale of the timber and cordwood was then used to purchase needed supplies. After the boat was unfastened and the logs sold for timber, the boat crew would return to their homes, construct another boat, and repeat the trip.⁷⁹

By the early 1800's, the area had a sawmill that produced a small quantity of lumber for local use.⁸⁰ As the demand for lumber increased, more timber was cut and floated down the river to be processed and marketed in New Orleans. Lumbering soon became a major economic force in Ouachita Parish. The recorded value for lumber produced in Ouachita Parish had reached \$6,371 by 1840.⁸¹

Prior to the coming of the steamboat on the Ouachita River, planting of large crop acreage was impractical. Flat boats had been the chief means of transporting products to market, primarily to New Orleans. This type of transportation was very hazardous and offered a limited amount of available space. Transportation on land was very slow,

⁷⁸Flint, p. 11.

⁷⁹Hickman, p. 16.

⁸⁰D'Anemours, p. 32.

⁸¹Sixth Census, Counties and Principal Towns Exhibiting the Population, Wealth, and Resources of the Country, p. 240.

since the roads were nothing more than cleared trails. Moreover, overland transportation was by foot, horseback, or pack train (Appendix J). The appearance of the steamboat on the river brought about an immediate development of the region. The larger type vessel stimulated migration which increased steadily after 1819. Monroe served as the focal point for settlement of the region. Supplies were shipped from New Orleans to Monroe and sold or traded. Settlers were able to produce larger quantities of crops, especially cotton, and have a dependable and safer means of getting products to market. Moreover, the steamboat gave the cotton planters in the region an opportunity to enter the markets of distant locations and to compete with those producers in locations close to the markets.

After 1819, water traffic increased with as many as six steamboats operating on the major waterways during the study period. The boats made regular trips transporting passengers, different types of livestock, produce, grains, cotton, lumber, leather and furs, and many types of finished products. On return trips, various plantation supplies, general merchandise, and settlers with personal belongings, seeking land and homes, were transported. From New Orleans and more distant markets came goods and cargoes. The level of living increased substantially, and by the early 1830's the stage was set for the mass migration of settlers.

The importance of the Ouachita River and its

tributaries was stated by Henry Bry:

Few countries offer as many advantageous means of communication for transport of produce as the one embraced within the limits of the Ouachita Valley. From several points on that river, where the distance due east to the Mississippi varies from forty to sixty miles, we have five navigable streams running nearly parallel to it: the Mississippi, Tensas, Mason, River aux Boeuf, and Ouachita: besides these there are several of small importance, which, however, can be made useful in intersecting the larger ones, or can be rendered navigable for various distances.⁸²

Bry also described the navigation season of the Ouachita River. He stated:

From November to July, the Ouachita River presents a safe navigation for steamers. Few streams are as clear of snags and other impediments. It has been but once in nearly fifty years navigable during the whole year. The receding of the waters taking place at a time when all produce has gone to market, and all importations have reached their destination, the interruption during four or five months is not so disadvantageous as might be supposed.⁸³

H. Summary

The majority of the Anglo-Americans entered Ouachita Parish in the early 1800's and brought with them a culture that was to radically alter a landscape which had been slowly developing since the time of the Aborigines. Ouachita Parish had been occupied by diverse culture groups which had lived in a manner quite similar to that of the

⁸²Henry Bry, "The Ouachita Country, Number III," in J. D. B. De Bow, ed., The Commercial Review of the South and West, III, No. 5 (May, 1847), p. 409.

⁸³Ibid., p. 408.

first known occupants, the Indians. These groups had all utilized the readily-available natural resources of the land and had done relatively little to alter their environment.

The Anglo-Americans also utilized the natural abundance of the environment; but, in addition, they worked to further the development of that environment and to increase its yield even more. They avidly farmed the land, seeking to develop a sound agricultural economy, and divided the land into small tracts which a man and his family could successfully farm. The efforts of the Anglo-American settlers resulted in the permanent establishment of a sound agricultural economy based primarily upon cotton.

The Anglo-Americans also made other outstanding contributions to the landscape. They built roads, levees, and dams and succeeded in lessening the flooding of their farm lands. They permanently instituted various industries such as lumbering, tanning, and the processing of brick and provided the needed force for the encouragement of future economic growth and settlement of the region.

One of the more important achievements of the Anglo-Americans was the establishment of a functioning government. This was the first time since settlement by the white man that the people of Ouachita Parish had not been under military rule. With the establishment of a local government came a growing sense of pride in the parish and a cohesiveness among the settlers.

Another major contribution of the Anglo-American settlers was the establishment of the boundaries of Ouachita Parish and the surveying of all public and private lands. Inaccurate records and maps of land titles were some causes of many disputes and much discontent among the settlers. There were few clear boundaries and much of the land had not even been surveyed. The rectilinear survey system was used and the land was rapidly surveyed. This system dictated not only the location of farms and plantations but also the placement of streets. This resulted in a recognizable pattern that can be seen in the parish even today.

Thus, it was the Anglo-American settler who, in a few decades, radically altered a landscape which had remained relatively unchanged throughout the occupation of several culture groups. The Anglo-American settler was able to obtain his needs from his environment in the same manner as those who came before him; however, he felt compelled to improve his life style by making his environment work for him even more. The Anglo-American utilized the rich soil and favorable climate of Ouachita Parish and turned a wilderness into cotton plantations; they utilized existing virgin forests and began a prosperous lumbering industry; they built levees and dams, making former swampland available for settlement. Thus, the Anglo-American settler was able to profit from the experiences of his predecessors and build a successful settlement.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Introduction

The methodology employed by Jan O. M. Broek in The Santa Clara Valley, California: A Study in Landscape Changes was utilized by this writer in the analysis of the alteration and development of the landscape of Ouachita Parish, Louisiana. Broek analyzed the transformations which occurred in the landscape of Santa Clara Valley, California, from Spanish times to the present. He emphasized the social-economic forces leading to these changes as well as their geographic manifestations. He divided the subject matter of each historical period by first discussing and analyzing the socio-economic determinants of that period and then describing the location and form of the landscape features.¹

This writer approached the study of landscape change in Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, in a similar manner; however, he did not segregate the subject matter as did Broek. The interactions between man and his environment and the resulting landscape changes were treated in the same

¹Broek, p. 9.

chapter. Like Broek, this writer found that among the most significant modifications of the landscape were the alterations in the areal division of land and water and the changes in manufactured structures. In Broek's study, there were significant changes in vegetational cover during the three historical periods. This writer did not find this to be the case in Ouachita Parish. Indeed, some sections of Ouachita Parish today are covered with a dense growth of vegetation that is possibly quite similar to that which was in the region at the time of the first known inhabitants. Like Broek, however, this writer found that each time period and culture which occupied a given region brought about some change in the landscape of that region. Each generation built upon the changes wrought by the preceding generation, yet no generation completely transformed the former regional structure.

B. Summary and Conclusions

The landscape of Ouachita Parish, Louisiana, remained virtually unchanged by human hands for hundreds of years while the Indians occupied the region. Though the Indian population was significantly large, the red man was able to remain in the region without significantly altering his environment. He utilized the bounties of his environment, taking from it only what he needed. He neither built large monuments or dwelling places nor did he destroy the natural environment in order to improve his life style. Thus, the

landscape remained virtually unchanged, except for a few minor alterations, for an unknown number of years. The basic economy of the Indian revolved around those elements which were readily available in the environment. The Indians hunted and fished and gathered their food from the area immediately surrounding their village; they traded with other tribes for the few supplies which they were not able to obtain for themselves. There was a plentiful supply of wild animals in the region, and nuts, berries, and other fruits grew in abundance. Also, the numerous lakes, streams, and bayous provided a variety of aquatic plant and animal life. The lush vegetation found throughout the region was the source of household goods, hunting and fishing equipment, and various tools and weapons. The Indians supplemented a diet obtained by hunting, fishing, and gathering with a few vegetables which they raised in fields near their village.

The small fields which the Indians cleared for raising crops were one of their most significant contributions to the development of the landscape. By burning and clearing the land for cultivation, the Indian not only prepared the region for future farmers but also established the fact, for future settlers, that one could successfully raise crops in the region. This was a most important contribution to the future settlement of the region, for settlers were hesitant to move into a region where farming did not seem feasible.

The trading and hunting habits of the Indians resulted in the establishment and enlargement of existing trails and paths through the wilderness. These paths were used by explorers as well as by later settlers, and many of the present-day roads follow the patterns established by the Indians.

The cultural habits of the Indians led to other alterations of the landscape. It was the custom of the Indians to bury their dead, along with their possessions, in a common mound. The result was the establishment of large mounds in the settlement sites. Many of these mounds remain in the region and are the object of much study by archaeologists and anthropologists. The pottery and midden contents found in these mounds provide evidence of the culture and economic activity of the Indians and offer an insight into their way of life. The Indians also named rivers, lakes, and other water bodies in the region; many of these water bodies have retained these names and are present-day evidence of the former Indian occupation.

In the early 1500's, the region was visited by Spanish and French explorers seeking gold and other treasures. The explorers did not attempt to settle the region nor did they contribute directly to the development of the landscape; however, they did contribute to the ultimate settlement of the region through their reports of the lush vegetation and mild climate characteristic of the region. Their writings told of large, navigable rivers and streams full of aquatic

life, and virgin forests abounding with a variety of wild game and edible fruits and nuts. These reports enhanced the settlers' perception of the region and thus helped to encourage settlement by the white man.

In 1699, France claimed the colony and immediately initiated efforts to explore the region and ascertain the extent of their holdings and the character of the inhabitants. The French government, anxious to exploit the resources of the area, encouraged Frenchmen to settle the region. They offered land grants with a minimum of restrictions as an inducement to settlement; however, the rich Frenchmen were not interested in migrating, and the poor were hesitant to settle in an area with which they were unfamiliar. The settlers who did migrate were quite often of a very low socio-economic level and did not prove to be a good choice to send to initiate settlement.

In addition to the poor quality of the settlers, the French government made an unfortunate choice of leaders to manage the territory. The men who were placed in charge of settling the region were greedy individuals who were not interested in settlement but rather in the acquisition of wealth. These men were unsuccessful in their efforts to become rich as well as their half-hearted attempts to settle the land.

The French government added to the problems of settlement by their failure to properly provide financial support of the inhabitants. Unfavorable economic conditions in

France restrained the French leaders from allocating money for the new colony, and, as a result, the people in Ouachita Parish were forced to rely on the Indians and their own resources for food and supplies. This, of course, contributed to the poor morale and lack of ambition among the colonists. Most of them became discouraged and readily returned to their homeland or a more inviting settlement at the slightest provocation.

The poor climate also contributed to the failure of the settlement. The high humidity, frequent heavy rainfall, hot summers, and damp winters caused much illness among the settlers and was often the reason for many of them abandoning the settlement. The high humidity also caused the rapid spoiling of food and other needed supplies.

Conditions were so poor in the settlement that the settlers moved away after being frightened by the Natchez Massacre in 1729. Though the French did not leave behind a permanent settlement, they did contribute to later settlement by acquiring invaluable knowledge of the landscape. They had learned the sources of water, food, and other supplies and had also learned which crops grew best in the region. They had lived successfully in Ouachita Parish for a period of ten years, and this fact, combined with the knowledge of the environment which they had gained, served to attract settlers years later.

The French, burdened by the huge financial requirement of the colony and faced with the fact that Frenchmen were

unwilling to migrate to Louisiana, gave the area, known as the Louisiana Purchase Territory, to Spain in 1762. Spain was anxious to acquire Louisiana in order to create a buffer zone that would deter the Americans from expanding westward toward the rich Spanish colonial empire in Mexico.

Spain looked upon the Louisiana Province as different from the rest of its colonial dominions. Spain had already secured her possessions east of the Mississippi and had closed navigation on the river to all Americans. The Spanish government felt that the addition of the Louisiana colony as a buffer zone would further enhance her position and would insure safety of the rich Spanish possessions in Mexico.

When the United States gained control of Spanish possessions east of the Mississippi River through the signing of the Treaty of Lorenzo el Real, Spain prohibited American citizens from obtaining land in the study region. Spain then established the Post of the Ouachita as an agricultural community in the Ouachita basin. Don Juan Filhoil was placed in charge of the settlement and was instructed to establish a formal, compact settlement from the people already present in the basin. Filhoil eventually chose Prairie de Canots, the present site of Monroe, Louisiana, as the settlement site. Although there was much discontent among the settlers and much resentment for Filhoil, the settlement did make progress; and by the early 1790's, Fort Miro had been erected and a permanent settlement

established. Fort Miro provided a settlement nucleus, a central place, for diffusion of further settlement.

Filhoil had endeavored to establish an agricultural community, but the people were not inclined to work the soil. However, a few dedicated Spanish farmers eventually established agriculture in the region and proved that one could become a successful farmer in Ouachita Parish. The majority of the Spanish settlers, though, preferred to hunt, fish, and trade for their needs.

In 1795, Spain signed the Treaty of Lorenzo el Real, and the door was opened for rapid colonization of the study region. The treaty gave the United States claim to all the territory east of the Mississippi River and north of the 31st degree of latitude and also opened trade and navigation of the Mississippi to all citizens of the United States and Spain. After the signing of the treaty, Spain immediately began formulating plans to rapidly settle the region. The Spanish government granted large tracts of land fronting water bodies to almost anyone who applied for a grant. All that was required of the settler was that he settle on the land within three years and that he construct the necessary levees and roads. It was hoped that the large land grants with few restrictions would help promote the rapid settlement of the region.

The Spanish system of surveying the land and dividing it resulted in one of the most visible changes in the landscape wrought by the Spanish settlers. Present-day

street patterns and land ownership reflect the survey methods used in the 1700's. Perhaps the most significant Spanish contribution, however, was the importance attached to the establishment of agriculture as the basis of economic activity in the region. The Spanish settlers proved that agriculture in Ouachita Parish was an economically-sound endeavor and thus served as an incentive to the Anglo-American settlers who followed.

In 1800, the Spanish government made the decision to cede Louisiana to France because of the tremendous amount of money lost on the colony and the lack of progress in establishing an agricultural community as a buffer zone. France remained in control of Louisiana for only three years and then sold the colony to the United States. It was at this time that the study region underwent changes that ultimately led to the establishment of a local government as well as a successful agricultural economy. This, in turn, resulted in a rapidly-growing population and the formation of permanent settlements in the region.

The United States government began its control of the region by organizing government at the local, state, and national levels. Congress then created the Territory of Orleans, which is now the State of Louisiana, and in 1812 the territory was admitted to the Union. The establishment of a sound government and the formation of a state greatly spurred settlement of the region. Settlers now felt confident about migrating to Louisiana and attempting to settle there permanently.

The United States government, anxious to stimulate public land sales and secure the new possession, began to formulate plans to establish definite boundaries for each county. In addition, they began to survey both public and private lands in Ouachita Parish. Congress passed a law providing a credit system for people to purchase land and allowing the settler to purchase a minimum of 320 acres rather than 640 acres, as was previously required.

The initial survey method, employing the sectional system, produced slow land sales and had to be replaced by the rectilinear system. The former survey system had resulted in tracts of land that were mixtures of land and water and were of little agricultural value. Moreover, many tracts contained more water than farm land. Land sales were also affected by the inconvenient location of the land office. In addition, the high price of land, as well as the frequent flooding of farm lands, discouraged the sale of land. Slow land sales continued until the 1830's, when an inflationary land boom spurred interest in the region and resulted in the rapid sale of land and a large increase in population.

The Anglo-American settlers who moved into the region after the United States gained possession of the Louisiana Territory were interested in further developing an agricultural community. These settlers, like their predecessors, continued to hunt, fish, trap, and trade; however, their main interests lay in tilling the soil. They were able to

raise enough to provide for their families' needs and supply needed income. The economy of Ouachita Parish continued to develop steadily but slowly for a number of years. It was not until the advent of the steamboat on the Ouachita River that the economy began to grow rapidly. The steamboat provided a relatively safe, rapid means of transportation and enabled the farmer to ship his vegetables and cotton to market in New Orleans. Within a relatively short time, cotton had become the most profitable crop in Ouachita Parish, and cotton farmers had become quite wealthy. The coming of the steamboat also greatly benefited the lumber industry in Ouachita Parish and helped to establish lumbering as a major economic activity in the region. In addition, this large vessel stimulated migration of settlers to the region and enabled farmers and traders to compete with producers in distant locations. Settlers were now able to easily obtain supplies and needed merchandise, and the level of living increased greatly; the area became more integrated with the regional and national economies.

The Anglo-American farmers had migrated to a region that was in the initial stages of development. They had found an undeveloped region in which most settlers relied almost solely on the environment for their needs. It was these Anglo-Americans who perceived an alternate mode of livelihood and endeavored to develop their environment. They divided the land into small tracts to be farmed and further developed an agricultural economy. While small truck

farmers continued to be successful, the large plantation owner who produced cotton soon became the basis of the economy. The Anglo-American settlers built roads, levees, and dams and successfully reduced the incidence of flooding. They also established lumbering, tanning, and the processing of brick as industries in the region.

Prior to the coming of the Anglo-American, the government of Ouachita Parish had been a haphazard arrangement. The lack of government discouraged settlers from remaining in the region. The government was established by the U. S., and this gave the settlers a sense of unity and security and further enhanced the appeal of the region to other settlers.

Ouachita Parish continued to prosper under the government, and the population and number of settlement sites increased. A wilderness occupied by Indians had been transformed into well-established settlements and populated by ambitious settlers. These people replaced a hunting-fishing-gathering economy with a highly-productive agricultural economy. It was these people who established permanent settlement and radically altered the landscape. In this manner they paved the way for even more settlement and alternative ways of life.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

EXCERPTS FROM DESCRIPTIONS OF THE

OUACHITA IN 1786

BY JEAN FILHOIL¹

THE FORMER INHABITANTS.. All vestiges which we discover daily everywhere announce that the nation which inhabited it formerly must have been very populous. We do not know what became of it; the oldest people of the place do not remember ever having seen a single one of them, and if some storytellers of the nation did not assure us of having seen five or six with the Panis and the Chits bearing the name of Ouachitas, one would doubt that a nation so called might ever have existed

CLIMATE. The country can only be very varied, as much for climate as for terrain, considering its extent

OUACHITA RIVER. This country is watered by a river of this name, which flows from one end to the other in the center, after having picked up a great quantity of bayous in its course, from its sources, it flows into the Red River

¹Filhoil, pp. 476-485. The description of the Ouachita Region was written over a period of at least two years. Filhoil apparently began writing the report in 1786, but made references to 1788.

at about nine leagues from the entrance of this latter into the Mississippi River.

BAYOU MACON. This bayou takes its source in some lakes . . . , follows the direction of the Tensas until it reunites with it again. These two bayous are only navigable during high water During low water one can go there with little pirogues

The banks of the Tensas Bayou, as well as east of Bayou Macon, are low and not habitable. In the west of this latter bayou there are very fine lands, although isolated

BOEUF RIVER. Boeuf River . . . takes its source in the environs of Bayou Bartholomew. It is perhaps a great help to the back country to the east of the Ouachita, if the low country which borders it from its source didn't make the bed of our approach difficult in high water; in low water even a light pirogue cannot navigate in it.

LANDS MOST SUITABLE FOR CULTIVATION. It is from twelve to fifteen leagues further from Boeuf River that the high lands of the Ouachita begin, which one can cultivate as much through the quality of the soil as that they do not drown

I stop, therefore, at the point which deserves more attention, the number of prairies . . . to the east of the river do not seem natural to me. Their products and the quantities of vestiges which one discovers on them make me presume rather that they are old clearings of former

inhabitants who in the course of time had learned how to select their lands. They have everything you can ask of them and in truth they lack only cultivators although in this part on the west of the river there are no prairies the lands do not seem to me any less good. The land is very level and well wooded where the hills do not come to the edge of the water. The level pineries are very common there; there are everywhere countrysides of canes, as well as on the opposite bank; that is what assures pasturage to the animals at all seasons. . . . it is easy to judge that this land is not lacking in water. [Many of the bayous] are navigable in high water, that is to say, several months in the year, and would facilitate a great deal the exploitation of the inhabitants which might establish themselves in the depths.

QUALITY OF THE LAND. The land is light, deep and spongy, having on top a layer of from a foot to 18 inches of black earth, the subsoil is yellow and red. Water infiltrates into it easily. You can enter the work in a plowed field the morning after a shower has fallen during the night. The earth keeps moist or feels so at four inches after a drought of three or four months in the summer.

THE PRODUCTS. Corn, rice, potatoes, pumpkins, and all products of the gardens grow there very well. I sowed some wheat for two years in succession. It succeeded quite well. Tobacco succeeds in it very well also, and is of a superior quality. Cotton and indigo do equally well in it. No one

has tried to manufacture the latter.

PLANTS. Among the plants you find angelica, dandelion, mugwort, rest-harrow, fast-growing burdock, tree moss, canes or aromatics of all sorts, crane-bill, maidenhair, sweet cicely, roland thistle, corraline, centaury, casse-lunette, ditamy, larkspur, tarragon, sweet and bitter, fern, male and female, strawberry plant, fumitory, ginger, mallows, ginseng, gentian, holly, cotton plant, carpenter's plant, ipecacuanha, wild indigo whose root never dies, iris, lily of the valley, sweet-trefoil, St. John's-wort, mozells, menstrastum, water lily, royal osmonde, cat's paw, parietary, chicory, plantain, polypody, perdicular, five-leaf herb, four-leaf herb, redroot, dragon-blood, satyrion or ragwort, seal of Solomon, samicle, dragons-wort of Virginia, wild valerian, veronica, verbena, goldenrod, etc., etc., etc.

TREES. The prevailing woods are oak, gum, walnut, pine and sassafras. The ash, elm, mulberry, acadia, cottonwood, willow, bitter pecan, plane olive, black poplar, linden, beech, birch, holly, arrowwood, or service tree which has all the appearance of the quince, elder, wild cherry, beam tree, the paw-paw or custard apple, persimmon, the plum tree and sumac are common there. . . . the wild grape is abundant. There are many grapes which would hold a place among those which are domesticated.

BEASTS, TAME AND WILD. There are in the woods . . . the wild-cat, the bob-cat, the wolf, the fox, the wood-rat, the cat, the pole-cat, the rabbit, the squirrel, the bear in

quantity, the . . . wild roe-buck. The buffalo is not common in the low country, it has been hunted there too much.

. . . there are in the swamps otter and beavers, as well as along the bayous and the river. They would catch more beavers than they do if the hunters cared more for their flesh.

GAME. The turkey is common there, swans, cranes, geese, bustards, ducks during six months of the year. The woodpigeons pass there in clouds and do great damage to the mast. All the swamp-fowl and others known in the province are found there, each in their season.

CYPRESS. The cypress groves are not all along the river, but from place to place in the low lands where the waters collect. . . . there is no habitable land which has not some near it.

MINERALS. . . . there are known places where they make salt, one in the Ouachita

DESCRIPTION OF THE RIVER. I return to the Ouachita River, where I left it to speak of the lands. It is not navigable at all seasons for the large vessels except as far as the Boeuf River. A chain of rocks prevents passing higher up during low water. . . . middle-sized vessels can go up during low water to the Rock Shoals, higher than Bayou Bartholomew. . . . during high water one would go up with a boat of 30 oars, loaded as far as the falls. The bed of the river in general is from 2 1/2 to 3 arpents wide, the bed of sand and gravel. The water clear, wholesome and

of good taste. There is no obstacle, navigation is carried on it with ease and without the slightest risk, until above Bayou Bartholomew, since stumps are very rare, because the current which is there is never very strong, and because there are very few landslides.

There is no lake to bear the name of such unless it be those which are at the head of bayous Tensas and Macon.

FISH. The most common fish are the spiked fish or gar, the catfish, carp, and the gaspergou. There are also the spoon-billed catfish or sturgeons, pikes, barfish, perch, trout, sunfish or perch, sac-a-laits or white perch, big throats, gudgeons, sardines and esels. Turtles are common there, and crocodiles. These last are . . . rare toward the [Ouachita] Post.

. . . INHABITANTS. This vast extent of country is found inhabited by two hundred individuals who when assembled form only 74 men bearing arms according to the census of the present year, 1788. These men are composed of the scum of all sorts of nations, several fugitives from their native countries and who, as well as the others have become fixed there through their attachment to their idleness and their independence, perhaps even to escape from the pursuit of justice before there was a Command.

THEIR CUSTOMS. Their customs correspond to their origin. Hardly do they know whether they are Christians. They excel in all the vices and their kind of life is a veritable scandal. The savages, though savages, who have

occasion to see them hold them in contempt, they are always ready to raise their feet provided things are not going according to their ideas, for which they experience no great difficulty, their rifle and their powder horn comprise their entire property, and every country is good to them. The women are as vicious as the men, and are the worthy companions of their husbands. What models for their posterity!!

THEIR INDUSTRY. Lazy to the uttermost, what can their industry be! If they hunt a little it is only to satisfy their first needs of nature. For the six years that I have been there I have employed all that charity and my imagination have been able to conjure up to excite the emulation of these unfortunate ones and to bring them to regard their lot just as it is, without having succeeded in it. I have attempted in vain to bring them into a village or on a hill and to persuade them of the palpable benefit that they would feel in this new position, hoping to have them close together to bring them more easily into social life by counsels and example. Twenty-five of them however finally got together and undertook to cultivate the land; but scarcely were there six among them who cleared enough of it to make their provisions, which however grow with very little effort; for a single staking out alone is sufficient for them; several others began and immediately abandoned.

They say in defense that they cannot work with their

stomachs empty, and that they have nothing to nourish themselves with during the time that they are working on the crops.. This reason would excuse them if their repugnance for work did not make one presume that it is not the only one.

COMMERCE. All the commerce of the country does not exceed annually six to seven thousand pots of bear oil, two thousand deer skins, 2,000 pounds of suet, 500 beaver pelts and 100 others. What a difference would not be seen if this same number of men were real cultivators. The pigs alone that they would raise, considering the facility which exists, would furnish more than all that, by their lard alone, independently of the provisions which they might cultivate. Wandering and transient as are these unfortunates they would cherish their hearthsides and homes and would take an interest in the state of which they would consider themselves members; their customs would improve and would offer better examples to their descendants.

This is all the enlightenment that my zeal can draw from the Ouachita to satisfy the order which I have received as of date 27th July 1786. I have done all that I could that there might be more precision.

. . . this extent of country . . . may contain a considerable population, which would find at home without the aid of the metropolis everything which would be necessary to its defense against the enemy of the state and could even furnish some to the capital. This population would protect Mexico from enemies from the other bank of the river

APPENDIX B¹

FRENCH AND SPANISH TERMS FOUND IN

OUACHITA PARISH

Arpent	A linear measurement equal to approximately 192 feet.
Bayou Bartelemy	A bayou north of Monroe named after an early immigrant. Bartelemy has been Anglicized to Bartholomew.
Bayou Derbonne	This stream is located in the northwest part of the region and bears the name of some early settler. The word is now written D'Arbonne.
Bayou De Siard	The identity of the Siard for whom the bayou and prairie are named is not known. De Siard is also the name of the main street in Monroe.
Bayou La Loutre	Modern survey records this stream as bayou de Loutre. The word is of French origin meaning "otter bayou." The bayou is located in the northwest part of the region.
Boeuf River	The river was called "buffalo river" by early explorers. It is located in the eastern part of the region.
Bois D'Arc	A tree found in the region and used by Indians to make bows.
Castor Bayou	A bayou meaning "beaver" and located in the southern part of the region.
Cheniere	A cypress forest or swamp southwest of Monroe meaning "live oak forest."

¹William A. Read, Louisiana-French (Baton Rouge, 1931).

Creole	A white descendant of the French or Spanish settlers during the colonial period (1699-1803).
Cypres	Red cedar tree
De Bastrop	A street in Monroe named after Baron de Bastrop.
El Marques de Maison Rouge	A French immigrant who received 30 superficial leagues of land on the Ouachita River in 1795.
Fort Miro	A fort named after Governor Miro. It was later called Monroe. The term also refers to a street in the city.
LaFourche	A bayou in the eastern part of the region.
Pirogue	A dugout canoe made from a cypress tree.
Prairie Chatellero	A prairie named after a person whose identity has been lost.
Prairie des Canots	"Prairie of the Canoes." It is the present site of Monroe.
Puesto de Ouachita	"Ouachita Post." The Post of the Ouachita was built on the present site of Monroe.

APPENDIX C¹

INDIAN TERMS FOUND IN OUACHITA PARISH

Bayou	A Choctaw word meaning "creek" or "river."
Caddo	An Indian linguistic group.
Choctaw	An Indian tribe located at Indian Village about 20 miles west of Monroe.
Okaloosa	The term signifies "black water;" the name is from Choctaw oka, "water" and lusa, "black." There is a small community located about 12 miles southwest of Monroe called Okaloosa.
Ouachita City	A small trading post that was located north of the present site of Monroe on the Ouachita River.
Tunica	A tribe of Indians who occupied the eastern part of the region and was centered on the lower Yazoo River in Mississippi.

¹William A. Read, Louisiana Place Names of Indian Origin (Baton Rouge, 1927).

APPENDIX D¹

PERSONNEL ROSTER OF THE CANTILLION CONCESSION

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Proprietor	1	0	1
No occupation listed	14	2	16
Serving Girl	0	1	1
Clerks	2	0	2
Wheelwright	1	0	1
Joiner	1	0	1
Cook	1	0	1
Baker	1	0	1
Farm Laborer (tiller of soil)	4	0	4
Cooper	2	0	2
Valet	1	0	1
Miner	1	0	1
Metal Refiner	1	0	1
Blacksmith	1	0	1
Miller	1	0	1
Tailor	2	0	2
Wigmaker	1	0	1
Carpenter	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	37	3	40

¹Albert Laplace Dart, tr., "Ship Lists of Passengers Leaving France, 1718-1724," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XV (1932), pp. 73-75.

APPENDIX E

INSTRUCTIONS OF ESTEVAN MIRO

TO JUAN FILHOIL, 1783

Instructions which will be exactly observed by
Mr. Filhoil, Commandant of the new post of the Ouachita.

1. He will establish the best relationship and harmony with the commandants of the post of the Natchitoches, Attakapas, Opelousas, and Pointe Coupee. He will have arrested and handed over immediately deserters and all other subjects who present themselves who come within his jurisdiction without passports, at the same time giving notice thereof to the General Government.

2. He will take care that the Indians do not trouble in any way the peace of the inhabitants and of their hunting and in case that any of the inhabitants should have need of it; he will furnish them with provisions, but before coming to actual conflict with the Indians he will employ all possible means to bring them to peaceful terms, making them to understand that we belong to the great King of Spain, lord of the lands which they inhabit.

3. He will pay the greatest attention that no Englishmen, Americans or any vagabonds of any nation whatsoever be allowed to come into the savage nations; this

communication being able to be very harmful to the tranquility of the Province and to the interests of the state by the bad reports that this sort of people may spread, seducing easily the feeble changing minds of the Indians.

4. This commerce with the savages being the most considerable part after the hunting, we enjoin and prohibit as strictly as possible to grant it exclusively; our interests being that the traders and traffickers who are all subjects of his Majesty may enjoy alternatively the advantages of this trade. Every favor or preference toward any one of the aforesaid parties contrary to the rule laid down will be extremely displeasing to us, and to avoid that he will come to an agreement upon the said article with the Commandant of the Natchitoches and everything which may possibly concern the aforesaid commerce.

5. He will not permit the Factors to be equipped to go into the nations without having assured themselves beforehand through the information that he may get as to their conduct and good customs and from the time of their departure he will take care to instruct them in the speech that they are to use with the savages urging them always to peace and to a good friendship with the Spaniards who furnish them with their needs.

6. Every time that he has notice either through the Government or through the Commandants of the posts of the flight of any criminal he will take prompt measure to capture him.

7. Immediately upon his arrival at the post he will write up an exact description of the inhabitants of his post, the number of cabins, making a difference between the white people and those of color, of the two sexes, free or slave, crops or products of the land, manner of living and religion of the inhabitants.

8. As soon as time will permit him he will try to arrange all of the diverse inhabitants under his orders, either by assembling them into the form of villages or by pallisading them as he shall judge most suitable, according to the manner of living of the individual beings, with the precaution, however, of having always fifteen cabins together with a view of preventing them from being mistreated and violences which might be committed if the cabins were isolated and apart.

9. One of his most essential duties will be to set hunting limits in which his inhabitants may regard any restraint in killing beasts without getting any profit from it. The same reason brings me to make the most rigorous prohibition to hunt on horseback or with dogs from the Missouri River on towards the sources of the Ouachita.

10. He must conform in everything to the dossier of instructions included herewith to determine the affairs of his district while observing that those which are of consequence are to be referred to the General Government, after the various documents are in a condition to be definitely adjudged.

11. It is charged very particularly to encourage cultivation by every possible means, being the only method to make vagabonds conform to their duty.

12. To foresee the disorders that drink may occasion in the distant places he will establish a tavern near the dwelling which will be awarded every year to the best and highest bidder, keeping the provision in his hands to serve in part for the building of a church, the house of the priest and that of the Commandant. It will be forbidden to any other than he who shall keep the tavern to sell or serve drinks at retail.

13. One of his first cares will be that of forming an exact description as well as possible can be done of his district and the surrounding territory, which will be sent to the Government to whom he must make known without the slightest laxity discoveries which may be made of any kind in his country, in which nature seems to invite men to cultivate the lands.

The conduct of Mr. Filhoil and his affability towards all who have resources to him, his prudence, the kindness of his command, the impartiality which he will manifest in different matters which we shall expect in advance from him in order to give to the subjects a happy jurisdiction in conformity with our desires will justify the good choice we have made in his person to fullfil to the letter our intentions contained in the above thirteen articles.

Given at our Government House under the seal of your
arms and the counterseal of your secretary at New Orleans
the first of February, 1783.

Signed ESTEVAN MIRO,
Commandant of his Lordship
ANDRUS LOPEX DE ARMESTA

APPENDIX F

LITIGATION OF THE MAISON ROUGE GRANTS

The lands included in the Maison Rouge grants were subject to litigation in the federal courts for almost half the nineteenth century. Title was finally established in 1845, when the United States Supreme Court recognized the validity of the Maison Rouge grant and awarded title to the claimants. The full text of the legal proceedings may be found in the printed transcripts of the opinions of the United States Supreme Court, in the case of "United States, Plaintiff in Error vs Richard King and Daniel Coxe, Defendants in Error," U. S. Supreme Court, 7th Howard and "United States vs 12th Howard, 215-25. A complete historical review of all Spanish decrees concerning granting of land and other relevant matters are discussed here.

APPENDIX G

PROVISIONS OF BARON DE BASTROP'S CONTRACT

De Bastrop's contract permitted him to supply the rations necessary to sustain the group for the first six months. He was to issue each a stipulated ration, for which he was to receive payment from the treasury based on his rendering a monthly report of issue. In addition, the contract stipulated that, if Bastrop did not succeed in securing sufficient settlers to occupy the land during the first three years, the remainder of the grant would be awarded to any settlers moving into the region as they established residence.

APPENDIX H

SETTLEMENT INCENTIVES

As an inducement to settlers, the Spanish government offered land, transportation expenses for family household goods, and a \$200.00 bonus for every family with two members who were able to perform agricultural labor, carpentering, blacksmith activities, or other labor.¹ Headrights were to be granted when children who had come with their parents came of age.

Spain had originally agreed to pay transportation costs to encourage the settlers to come to the Ouachita, but later, due to a scarcity of funds in the colonial treasury, this part of the agreement had to be curtailed. This may have been one of the reasons that Bastrop could not establish settlers on the Ouachita to fulfill his contract.

¹Chambers, I, p. 381.

No. of Pounds Reeled, Thrown, of other Silk Made	30
Value of Silk	\$ 180
Value of Dairy Products	\$6,910

Products of the Forest

Lumber

Value of Lumber Produced	\$6,371
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Skins and Furs

Value of Skins and Furs Produced	\$1,013
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Mills

Number of Grist Mills	3
Number of Saw Mills	2

Manufacturers

Bricks and Lime

Value Manufactured	\$1,950
Number of Men Employed	16
Capital Invested	\$9,000

APPENDIX I

CENSUS OF 1840¹

According to the 1840 Census, there were 1,895 persons engaged in agriculture in Ouachita Parish, 31 engaged in commerce and 125 engaged in manufacturing and trade. Fifteen persons were engaged in learned professions and engineering. The records list the following statistics regarding agriculture and manufactures:

Agriculture

Livestock

Horses and Mules	540
Meat Cattle	2,612
Sheep	350
Swine	4,128
Poultry of all kinds	2,696

Cereal Grains

Bushels of Wheat	15
Bushels of Oats	2,240
Bushels of Rye	15
Bushels of Indian Corn	32,898

Cotton, Potatoes, Wool, Wax, Silk, Dairy

Pounds of Cotton Gathered	1,724,658
Bushels of Potatoes	5,360
Pounds of Wool	461
Pounds of Wax	20

¹Sixth Census, The Population, Wealth, and Resources of the Country, pp. 239-249.

APPENDIX J

OVERLAND TRANSPORTATION

Trails were already marked when the white man appeared in the parish. Deer and buffalo, seeking salt licks, new pastures, and relief from cold weather, cleared trails and avenues of transportation across the parish which became known as "the first thoroughfares of America."¹

Indians partially cleared known animal trails. Their trails "became more or less plainly defined paths according to the frequency with which they were used, it being . . . (the Indian's) practice to travel over them in single or Indian file."² The Indian:

trails usually followed the banks of the streams, making detours to avoid the low bottoms and swamps. Smaller branches and creeks were crossed by ford when shallow and by a Racoon Bridge; a tree trunk felled to fall from bank to bank, when too deep to be waded.³

¹I. Hulbert, The Paths of Inland Commerce (New Haven, 1920).

²Henry Chambers, Mississippi Valley Beginnings: An Outline of the Early History of the Early West (New York, 1922), p. 13-14.

³Ibid., p. 14.

VITA 1

Danny Allen

Candidate for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF LANDSCAPE CHANGES IN OUACHITA PARISH,
LOUISIANA

Major Field: Higher Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Monroe, Louisiana, May 26,
1944, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas D. Allen.

Education: Graduated from Calhoun High School,
Calhoun, Louisiana, in May, 1962; attended
Louisiana State University, 1962-1963; received
Bachelor of Art degree in Elementary Education
from Northeast Louisiana State College in 1967;
received Master of Education in Education
Administration and Supervision from Northeast
Louisiana University in 1970; received Master
of Science in Geography from the University of
Southern Mississippi in 1971; completed require-
ments for the Doctor of Education degree at
Oklahoma State University in July, 1974.

Professional Experience: Graduate research assistant,
Geography Department, University of Southern
Mississippi, 1969; graduate research and teaching
assistant, Geography Department, Oklahoma State
University, 1971-1972; teacher, Ouachita Parish
School System, Monroe, Louisiana, 1972-1974;
member of Association of American Geographers,
American Society of Planning Officials, American
Institute of Planners, American Association for
the Advancement of Science.