

LOUIS DECLOUET'S MEMORIAL TO
THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT,
DECEMBER 7, 1814

Edited by
STANLEY FAYE

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(Conditions in Louisiana and Proposed Plan for
Spanish Reconquest)

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INTRODUCTION

Louis Bronier de Clouet came of a family known from Arkansas Post to the Gulf of Mexico. His father, Alexandre de Clouet, Sr., appears to have been more widely known than the town (St. Martinville) of his ultimate residence; Francois Bouligny in 1779, establishing the village of New Iberia on a temporary site, identified that point only as twelve leagues up the Têche and twelve leagues distant from "the churchtown where Monsieur de Clouet lives."¹ Various members of the family Declouet owned plantations along the Têche between St. Martin's of Attakapas and Opelousas.

After the cession of 1763 but perhaps before the Spaniards took possession of Louisiana, Louis de Clouet was born, constructively at least a Spanish subject.² In the Spanish military service that gave to his father the rank of lieutenant-colonel the son enrolled himself as of April 1, 1777, but at so tender an age that he received only the title of *distinguido*, or aspirant. Five years later he became a cadet. As a cadet in 1785 he sailed aboard the ship *Galveztown* with Ensign José de Evia on the voyage that was first to put Galveston Bay unmistakably on the map and to give it a name of its own. By 1800 the former *distinguido* had risen to the rank of militia captain. He commanded the battalion of free mulattoes and negroes in the coastguard expedition of that latter year against the "Indian chieftain," William Augustus Bowles of Florida.³

¹ Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2358, Bouligny to Gálvez, March 17, 1779.

² AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1710, Vidal to Garibay, July 20, 1809. Cf. Charles Arthur Etienne Gayarré, *History of Louisiana* (4 vols., New York, 1854-1866), III, 626.

³ AGI, Audiencia de México, Legajo 90-1-8, Yturriagary to Soler, October 27, 1807, first enclosure.

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Like most though not all creoles in the rural parishes the family Declouet resented the doctrines of the French Revolution brought to New Orleans by later arrivals from France and from the French Antilles. Conflicting emotions resulted in 1803 in a feud between the families Declouet and Deblanc that for a little while enlivened existence in St. Martinville. From the complete victory of Louis de Blanc, supported first by the French commissioner Laussat and later by Governor Claiborne, may have arisen much of the malice that Louis de Clouet shows in his memorial presented herewith.

The vanquished politician prospered in agriculture if not in politics. Increasing populations, from New Orleans to Natchez, made increasingly valuable the fields and pastures of plantations on the Têche. In 1807 Louis de Clouet estimated his property as worth between \$300,000 and \$400,000.⁴ His wealth permitted him to live in New Orleans as an absentee proprietor. His habits of luxurious living⁵ appear to have been quickly acquired. In 1796 he began to borrow money from Antonio Argote, a prosperous tradesman of New Orleans.

In the person of this Spaniard the colonial government had recognized an agent no less conservative in thought than Declouet. Born in 1745 of a noble family in Málaga, Argote came to New Orleans early in 1779 and set himself up as an import-and-export merchant. On July 21, 1781, he received a temporary brevet (later confirmed by the Crown) as militia captain after seeing his first colonial service in 1779 against the British in posts up the river. In 1788 he held a position as alderman (*alcalde ordinario*) in New Orleans. During the French Revolution he acted as official censor of French books.⁶

Argote's fortunes improved with those of the city. In 1785 he had paid a total of \$16,885 for ten negro servants and three houses, one a splendid place in Toulouse Street near the governor's palace, the others in Burgundy Street. The seven surviving slaves and the real estate with its improvements unchanged had attained in 1807 to a total appraised value of \$48,950.⁷

Late in 1795 Argote gained momentary celebrity in New Orleans by leading a little military expedition to Natchitoches in

order to quell disorders in that frontier village.⁸ It may have been this feat that brought him to the attention of Louis de Clouet. In the following year the creole planter first condescended to borrow money from the Spanish merchant. Some of the funds the benefactor lent at the legal annual interest rate of six percent, some at different rates privately arranged. At the end of eight years the total that Declouet owed to Argote amounted to \$18,969. This amount was not reduced until nearly another two years had passed by.⁹

Like most of the better-class Spaniards in Louisiana who were not dependent for support on governmental appointments, Argote chose to remain under American domination rather than to accept the Spanish general invitation of 1803 and transfer his residence to some Spanish colony. Yet his conservative principles and his loyalty to Spain lured him again into the service of Don Carlos.

That monarch's special commissioner, the Marqués de Casa Calvo, lingering in American Louisiana until February of 1806, selected Argote among others to perform for him duties of secret character. June of the same year brought Argote to the City of Mexico on an official mission that if revealed, the messenger asserted,¹⁰ would make him liable to criminal prosecution by the American government. That reason he advanced for accepting three years late the invitation of 1803 and making himself a resident of Vera Cruz.¹¹ Under date of July 28 the viceroy gave him permission to remove his Louisiana property to Mexico.¹²

Mexican mines and mints produced milled pesos in abundance for Vera Cruz; New Orleans and the United States in general lacked hard money. Spain kept the port of Vera Cruz jealously closed to world commerce; American bills of exchange had no currency there. Argote could transfer the value of his property to his new place of residence only in the form of trade goods. He wrote to his New Orleans agent, the consular secretary Angel Benito de Ariza, to liquidate his account with Louis de Clouet. On only sixty-five days' notice Declouet succeeded in delivering to Ariza manufactured goods to the value of eighteen thousand dollars. A schooner bearing this first shipment arrived at Vera Cruz early in January of 1807.

⁴ AGI, AdeM, Legajo 90-1-8, as above.

⁵ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1710, as above.

⁶ Archivo General de Méjico, Marina, 1802-1808, Argote to the acting intendant, January 8, 1807, *copias*, ff. 17-20, 21-23.

⁷ AGM, Marina, 1801-1807, Argote to the vice-consul, July 29, 1807, and enclosures.

⁸ AGM, Marina, 1802-1808, as above, ff. 18-19.

⁹ AGM, Marina, 1801-1807, as above, contract of September 15, 1806.

¹⁰ AGM, Marina, 1802-1808, as above, ff. 22-24.

¹¹ Cf. AGM, Marina, 1802-1808, ff. 37, 40.

¹² AGM, Marina, 1801-1807, Argote to the vice-consul, July 29, 1809, Memorial.

Argote had not informed himself fully concerning the Spanish monopoly of colonial commerce. His shipment from New Orleans included woolens and French brandy. After more than six months of negotiation Argote learned that in order to import these articles he had no choice but to send them first to Spain for reexport under a Spanish manifest. The rest of his cargo was permitted to enter. Then Argote risked a return to Louisiana, where he himself might see that future shipments should be made in exact accord with Spanish regulations. In July and August he concerned himself in New Orleans with appraisals of property that he had acquired during the years of Spanish domination.¹³

Before Argote's tangible assets could be sold and turned into goods for export the Jeffersonian embargo of December 16, 1807, went into effect. Captain Ciriaco Cevallos, fugitive from Mexican colonial justice despite his position as naval commandant at Vera Cruz and his dignity as a brother of the Spanish prime minister, was able to enter New Orleans in 1808,¹⁴ but Argote's goods could not leave. The fugitive from unsuspecting American justice shut himself up fearfully in his own house. He refused to receive any but his most trusted friends. In all but complete seclusion he diverted his mind by composing metrical lampoons against Spain's new enemy, the Emperor Napoleon. These he caused to be printed and distributed at his own expense.¹⁵

Argote's superior officer, Casa Calvo, did not complete his duties as special commissioner merely by transferring Louisiana to France and witnessing its subsequent transfer to the United States. His commissionership included unfinished business of the province.¹⁶ In February of 1804 he conferred in New Orleans¹⁷ with Vicente Folch, governor of Spanish West Florida. Within two months he received for transmission to Spain a petition from Louis de Clouet, whereby the creole was asking royal leave to remove Spanish subjects from Louisiana in order to form agricultural colonies in the viceroyalty of Mexico.¹⁸

The Burr conspiracy and troubles of 1806 on the international border of Louisiana and Texas joined other obstacles that Declouet

¹³ AGM, Marina, 1801-1807, 1802-1808, as above.

¹⁴ Dunbar Rowland (ed.), *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne, 1801-1816* (6 vols., Jackson, Miss., 1917), IV, 209-210.

¹⁵ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1710, Vidal to Garibay, July 20, 1809.

¹⁶ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 179, Casa Calvo to Caballero, March 30, 1805, Copia 5.

¹⁷ *American Historical Review*, XIX, 795.

¹⁸ AGI, AdeM, Legajo 90-1-8, Yturriagary to Soler, October 27, 1807, Petition.

confronted in establishing his Texan colony.¹⁹ Already the impresario had turned his thoughts to the more southerly provinces of the viceroyalty. Prohibition of trade between Vera Cruz and non-Spanish ports made difficult any communication between New Orleans and the City of Mexico, but the Burr conspiracy itself gave Declouet means for sending a new petition to the viceroy.

In September of 1805 newspapers of the Mississippi valley first reported news of the impending plot.²⁰ Governor Folch immediately took steps to strengthen the defences of West Florida against the threat of Aaron Burr. For this purpose he borrowed twenty thousand dollars from Jean Michel Fortier, a conservative Louisiana creole. Then he caused the schooner *Montgomery* of New Orleans to be loaded with a cargo that, passing through the forbidden customhouse of Vera Cruz, should earn enough profit to repay the loan. Aboard the *Montgomery* schooner Declouet sent his agent, Manuel Gonzales Moro, bearing his petition to the viceroy and prepared to inspect Mexican sites for Spanish colonists from Louisiana.²¹

The viceroy let the cargo enter, but the agent he sent home at the earliest moment. Although the Crown had authorized colonization in Texas, no permission had been granted for colonization in the viceroyalty itself.²² The disappointed Declouet on May 1, 1806, therefore drew up a second petition to the king, and to Casa Calvo (still in West Florida) he sent it to be forwarded directly to Spain. He waited in vain for an answer. Late in 1806 word was sent from Texas by way of Governor Folch that the fortunes of Declouet's colony on the Trinity River had become desperate.²³ The impresario determined to apply to the viceroy in person for permission to direct his labors toward a more favorable province.

On March 20, 1807, Governor Folch in Baton Rouge gave Declouet a paper that should serve as a note of introduction to the viceroy. In April²⁴ he conferred with Declouet in New Orleans. In midsummer the Louisiana creole put aboard the schooner *Cen-*

¹⁹ Mattie Austin Hatcher, *The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1801-1821* (Austin, 1927), 119.

²⁰ Walter Flavius McCaleb, *The Aaron Burr Conspiracy* (New York, 1903), 36-37.

²¹ AGI, AdeM, Legajo 90-1-8, Yturriagary to Soler, October 27, 1807.

²² Royal orders of 1804 put Texas into a commandancy general independent of the viceroyalty; a Regency decree of May 1, 1811, returned it and its neighboring provinces to the viceroy's rule.—AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara, Legajo 104-2-22, Gonzales Vallez to Montemar, November 12, 1815, second enclosure.

²³ Hatcher, *op. cit.*, 115-116, 119, 120. Cf. Nacogdoches Archives (Texas State Library, Austin), Salcedo to Cordero, December 9, 1806.

²⁴ Cf. *American Historical Review*, X, 834; XIX, 805.

turion a cargo for Vera Cruz that he intended for his own use as leader of his proposed southern establishment. The month of September saw him in the City of Mexico seeking to untangle the red tape of colonial government.²⁵

Declouet, like Argote, had endangered his liberty at home by carrying out commissions for the Spanish government. These he was to describe in his memorial of 1814, but in 1807 he felt his position to be so delicate that, again like Argote, he dared not confide them to paper in Mexico. The viceroy nevertheless could not help this patriot except to permit entrance of the *Centurion's* cargo through the customhouse. The new petition went forward to Madrid for action. Declouet returned to New Orleans. There he found a new friend, José Vidal, who was an old friend of Spain.

José Vidal, captain of cavalry, after service in Louisiana, in 1792 became secretary in Natchez under the Spanish commandant, whom later he succeeded in command. Much of the modest wealth that he amassed came to him as an inheritance from his wife.²⁶ More promptly than Argote after the cession he determined to transfer his possessions to Vera Cruz, where his brother, Fray Manuel Vidal y Alarcón, was rector of the College of San Pablo. The duty of commanding Spanish troops on their journey from Louisiana to Texas detained him in the north. He converted some of his property into manufactured goods. These he sent as a cargo to his brother's care in Vera Cruz, where ecclesiastical influence helped them in their way through the customhouse.²⁷

Returning from Texas to Louisiana in November of 1807, Vidal found that the Spanish legation in Philadelphia under an August date had appointed him to act as consular agent in New Orleans. In that city on November 26, 1807, he announced his appointment by letter to the governor of Havana.²⁸ A few weeks later, early in 1808, the Jeffersonian embargo closed the Louisiana port to foreign commerce, and most of Vidal's new duties passed out of existence. His office was not an established consulate but merely an official agency for the transaction of private business²⁹ and therefore dependent for income on almost nonexistent fees.

²⁵ AGI, AdeM, Legajo 90-1-8, Yturriagary to Soler, October 27, 1807, Petition; Testimonio, Declouet to Espino, September 18, 1807, and Informe by Folch, Baton Rouge, March 20, 1807.

²⁶ AGM, Historia, v. 161, Vidal to the first secretary of state, September 1, 1809; Marina, 1802-1808, as above, Superior Orden.

²⁷ AGM, Marina, 1802-1808, as above, Pedimiento Fiscal.

²⁸ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1710, Castillon to Someruelos, November 12, Vidal to Someruelos, November 26, 1807.

²⁹ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1710, Castillon to Someruelos, November 12, 1807.

During two years' time the patriotic Vidal paid his living expenses out of his own pocket.³⁰

The viceroy of Mexico had asked Vidal to act in New Orleans also as a secret agent. The consulate therefore took up as a new duty the forming of public opinion to protect, if that might be possible, the Spanish government of West Florida. That province was approaching revolution in favor of the United States.³¹ Of its total population two-fifths were French and French creole, two-fifths American, British and German, and only one-fifth Spanish.³² The Jeffersonian embargo, designed to starve the Antilles, threatened to starve West Florida also, and in January of 1808 it brought Governor Folch on a hurried trip to New Orleans.³³ Folch intended to send Declouet to the legation in Philadelphia and perhaps on to Spain to seek aid,³⁴ but news came to him in June that would make such a journey useless. The American government, he learned, was expected to join Great Britain in the current war against France, still at that time Spain's ally. The Floridas, he knew, were defenceless.³⁵ The American army would quickly perform the invasion of West Florida and of Texas that Folch had feared³⁶ in the time of the Burr conspiracy. In June, also, Declouet wrote to warn the commanding general in Texas that "Burr's project" was apparently coming to life.³⁷

Officially leader of the loyal group in Louisiana, Vidal looked about him to see what he might do. With better success than the Spanish legation in a later year,³⁸ with far better success than the Spanish legation in an earlier year,³⁹ he prevailed late in August upon John Mowry, Federalist editor of the *Louisiana Gazette*, to open the columns of that newspaper to Spanish propaganda. Spanish enthusiasm quickly flamed up. Money appeared for a more ambitious project. The services of William H. Johnson, an American job printer, were engaged. On September 10, even before learning that the Emperor Napoleon had seized Spain for

³⁰ AGM, Historia, v. 161, Vidal to the first secretary of state, September 1, 1809.

³¹ Cf. McCaleb, *op. cit.*, 90.

³² AGI, PdeC, Legajo, 1565, Folch to Someruelos, August 21, 1808.

³³ AGI, PdeC, Legajo, 1564, Folch to Someruelos, May 6, 1808, enclosure, Folch to Morales, New Orleans, January 31, 1808; *American Historical Review*, XIX, 807.

³⁴ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 2369, Folch to Someruelos, April 19, 1808.

³⁵ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1565, Folch to Someruelos, June 1 and 4, 1808.

³⁶ McCaleb, *op. cit.*, 97-98, 263-264.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 366.

³⁸ AGM, Historia, v. 161, Onís to the viceroy, March 20, 1810.

³⁹ Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America* (9 vols., New York, 1889-1891), II, 265-266.

himself, New Orleans viewed the first issue of a daily newspaper printed both in Spanish and in English and bearing the title *El Misisipi*.⁴⁰

The Imperial French consul, Colonel Deforgues, took prompt counteraction. The *Echo du Commerce*, established and even edited by Deforgues himself, that violent man,⁴¹ soon rang in New Orleans the knell of Don Carlos' monarchy. Although *El Misisipi* managed for a while to continue a precarious existence, the *Echo* ceased to spoil good grey paper in the following March.⁴² Two months later vessels began arriving with refugees from Cuba, unoffending French residents whom the Spanish government of Havana had exiled as enemy subjects.⁴³ By the end of summer the French population of New Orleans had doubled in size and in hatred of Spain. With better commercial prospects therefore than the *Echo's* editor had possessed, certain friends of the emperor and foes of the new Spanish regency thought proper to establish a new French newspaper. *L'Ami des Lois et Journal du Soir*, edited by Jean Le Clerc, made its first appearance in November of 1809.

In March of that year, when New Orleans was receiving news that the embargo had ceased to be operative, a rumor ran through the town that Governor Folch had given up hope of preserving West Florida for whatever Bourbon king of Spain might survive the Napoleonic wars. Governor Claiborne of Louisiana forwarded the news to Washington. One month later he reported the rumor in expanded form: Governor Folch, he said, only awaited an excuse to deliver West Florida to the United States.⁴⁴

Claiborne had not exhausted the possibilities of gossip that existed in his capital. In April, with the lifting of the embargo, certain friends of Spain sent out cargoes of foodstuffs for Spanish ports of the Gulf and the Caribbean. The American schooners *Financier* and *Célestine* cleared for Yucatán, the former for Campeche, the latter for Laguna de Términos, both of which Mexican ports were open lawfully to American commerce. Each schooner carried in addition to her cargo certain missives from certain imperialists of New Orleans addressed to certain

⁴⁰ AGM, Historia, v. 161, Vidal to the first secretary of state, September 1, 1809; *Claiborne Letter Books*, V, 14. Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Early Printing in New Orleans, 1754-1810* (New Orleans, 1929), 80 (cf. 138), calls this a semi-weekly only.

⁴¹ *Claiborne Letter Books*, III, 311.

⁴² AGM, Historia, v. 161, as above.

⁴³ *Claiborne Letter Books*, IV, 351; *Southern History Association Publications*, IX, 293-299.

⁴⁴ *American Historical Review*, X, 833; XIX, 812.

Spanish merchants of Campeche and Laguna. These letters denounced the owners and officers of the vessels as being implicated in an expedition fitting out in New Orleans, with connivance of the American government, against the dominions of Bonaparte's royal prisoner, King Ferdinand VII. At the same time certain loyal Spaniards of Mérida, the seat of government in Yucatán, had become informed that the international plot included among its leaders the French creole Joseph Rufignac, who bore the title of count; Ciriaco Cevallos, the refugee from Vera Cruz; Vicente Folch, the Florida governor; and Captains Argote, Vidal and Declouet.⁴⁵

The *Financier*, a vessel of unquestionably American character, could prove that she sailed lawfully under the American flag. No excuse was found even for holding her long under suspicion at Campeche. In the absence of Governor Claiborne she returned to New Orleans to tell not only what had been her own experience, but also that her companion in misfortune, the *Célestine*, was languishing a prisoner in the port of Laguna while ship's officers and crew languished likewise in the colonial calabozo.

The Republican but anti-Claiborne *Orleans Gazette* seized upon the story. Mowry's Federalist *Louisiana Gazette* gave it space. The United States and Spain seemed to be involved in an international incident (only one, indeed, out of a long succession) that might bring the hoped-for Spanish war to prevent which President Jefferson and the new President Madison had carefully labored.

Captain Vidal, and also Governor Claiborne upon his return to town on July 16, protested to the governor of Yucatán. No American plot impended, they said, against the dominions of His Catholic Majesty. Jacob Hart, Jr., owner of the *Célestine* and travelling aboard her, was a young man of good reputation, a native citizen of the United States (they did not say, of New York.) The schooner's supercargo, Jean Robert, although formerly a French subject, had been naturalized in the United States and was a respected and bona fide employee of the aforesaid Hart.⁴⁶

In due Spanish course of time the government of Yucatán released the *Célestine*. Hart and Robert came back home to seek revenge not upon French imperialists but upon their Spanish captors. They entered into the trade of French piracy that within

⁴⁵ AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1708, Onís to Someruelos, November 18, 1809; Legajo 1710, Vidal to Pérez, July 17, 1809.

⁴⁶ *Claiborne Letter Books*, V. 10-13; AGI, PdeC, Legajo 1710, Vidal to Pérez, July 17, 1809; AGM, Historia, v. 161, Vidal to the first secretary of state, September 1, 1809.

the next four years gave a permanent celebrity to Barataria and its smuggler gangs. Their acts and those of their associates occupied the mind and the pen of Louis de Clouet until the year of the first state election, the events of which form in great part the subject of his memorial of 1814.

Even with so many interesting affairs to think about Louis de Clouet did not forget his early plan of emigrating from Louisiana to some Spanish land. His petition sent from Mexico in October of 1807 had found no answer from a government that could scarcely maintain itself in Spain until August of the following year. From that time until after the release of the imprisoned King Ferdinand in the spring of 1814 nothing could be expected from the regency of Cádiz. But with the reestablishment of royal government in Madrid, Declouet's hopes rose once again. Early in June of 1814 the Spanish minister in Philadelphia wrote to his Regency chief that he had received a visit from a person "whose name," said the minister, "I do not dare to reveal to Your Excellency because he is very well known in this country, and it might do him harm."⁴⁷

This person was a man "entirely honest, of recognized zeal and addicted to our nation, who to a topographical knowledge of Louisiana unites some military knowledge." It was in fact none other than Louis de Clouet, who had told to the Spanish envoy his plan for regaining from the United States (still in that year engaged in war with Great Britain, royalist Spain's ally) the Louisiana that the United States had acquired from France despite Spanish protests. From the legation under date of June 8 a letter went to the prime minister in Madrid detailing Declouet's military plan of reconquering his homeland for King Ferdinand VII.

The letter and the subject of it reached Madrid at perhaps the same time. King Ferdinand had returned from French captivity, dismissed the regency's ministry and appointed one of his own. From a subordinate post in the state department he had recalled to the highest post among his councillors his royal father's old prime minister. So at the head of the government Declouet found the brother of Ciriaco Cevallos, his own old friend in New Orleans.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ AGI, Indiferente General, Legajo 146-3-8, Estado (Cevallos) to Guerra, Marina and Hacienda, December 9, 1813, enclosure, Onís to Luyando, June 8, 1814, in correspondence of 1813, No. 37.

⁴⁸ José Luyando, first secretary of state from November, 1813, to May, 1814, was succeeded by the Duke of San Carlos who, being appointed ambassador to London, was succeeded by Pedro Cevallos.

Meanwhile the letter from Philadelphia, outlining the plan that the man from New Orleans was setting down on paper, seemed of sufficient importance to be shown forthwith to the king. Thus by royal order the prime minister on December 12 referred the letter to the colonial minister. Promptly on the following day the latter statesman's reply was dated for transmittal to His Majesty. The plan, it seemed, was sound. Unfortunately the plan would be expensive to carry out, and there was no money available. Neither were there any ships to spare for transporting troops. Even if there were, there were no troops. The plan, it appeared, must be regretfully rejected.⁴⁹

Louis de Clouet would never see invading Spanish cavalymen picket their mounts on the banks of the Têche. In New Orleans he would never invite a conquering Spanish captain-general to dinner. Yet his long journey was not to go for nothing. In a changing world that King Ferdinand could not hope to change back again without aid from many conservatives, Louis de Clouet was too loyal a native subject to let go unrewarded. In recognition of his services and his loyalty he received appointment as governor of a province in Cuba.⁵⁰

TRANSLATION OF DECLOUET'S MEMORIAL

[*Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente General, Legajo 146-3-8, Declouet to Cevallos, Madrid, December 7, 1814.*]

In conformity with Your Excellency's orders relative to the commissions of the royal service with which I was charged in the Province of Louisiana, I will say that:

At the moment when the Americans took possession of that province, and perhaps earlier, they formed the intention of encouraging the spirit of revolution in our Americas.¹ I knew much about those men, and those particularly who were employed by their government revealed their ambitious designs with no attempt at concealment whatever. They sent spies by way of Natchitoches, on the frontiers of the Internal Provinces of New

⁴⁹ AGI, Indiferente General, as above, December 9, 1813. enclosure, Cevallos to the Secretario del Despacho Universal de Indias, December 12, 1814; Secretario de Indias to the king, December 13, 1814.

⁵⁰ Cf. Gayarré, *op. cit.*, III, 626.

¹ Cf. American Historical Association, *Annual Report for 1903*, I, 133-143; cf. McCaleb, *op. cit.*, 29-30.

Spain,² to see whether by that means they might incite an insurrection, which did not delay in breaking out.³

Various plans were formed, of which I gave advices at proper times to the Marqués de Casa Calvo, who was then His Catholic Majesty's commissioner for making the transfer of the boundaries.⁴ After his withdrawal from the Floridas to the Court here I continued, in obedience to the orders that I had received, to make report of events to the governor of the aforesaid Floridas, Brigadier-General Vicente Folch, and more lately to our minister to the United States of America, Don Luis de Onís,⁵ on the aid they were giving to Gutiérrez,⁶ Robinson,⁷ and various others in the same scheme of revolution that those men were forwarding in Baton Rouge and Mobile, West Floridas,⁸ and on the various spies that were sent by that government to our territories, &c.

Probably Your Excellency has been opportunely informed of all those plans and their results; but the one that has seemed to me most likely to succeed and that in time may become very dangerous to us will be set forth to Your Excellency in all its details and with the truthfulness that characterizes an honorable officer.

In the year 1812, when Louisiana was declared an independent state, its government abandoned caution and showed itself hostile towards the possessions of His Catholic Majesty. The rebellious spirit had greatly increased among the partisans of independence.⁹ Those conspirators had openly formed the intent of aiding the rebels. I knew that their plan was to advance to Natchitoches with six thousand men under the pretext that the state was being threatened;¹⁰ another two thousand were to sail from the Isle of

² New Spain: Mexico. The Internal Provinces of the East consisted of Texas and parts of Tamaulipas, Chihuahua and Nuevo León.

³ The garrison of San Antonio revolted in January, 1811.

⁴ Casa Calvo was commissioner for the transfer of Louisiana, for delineation of the boundaries and for other unfinished business.

⁵ Onís arrived in the United States in October of 1809.

⁶ José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, a veteran of Hidalgo's revolution, went in 1811 from Texas to Washington, returned in 1812 to Natchitoches with some small financial aid from Madison's administration in company with a member of the United States consular service assigned as official observer, and led across the border a raid that caused the surrender of San Antonio.

⁷ Dr. John Hamilton Robinson, late of Zebulon Pike's expedition, was one of Gutiérrez' two successors in command.

⁸ Disorders in West Florida from 1808 to 1810 were caused in great part by the Kemper gang, various members of which joined Gutiérrez in 1812.

⁹ Elections in the new state of Louisiana were held June 29, 1812. The first action in the Gutiérrez raid was that of August 22, 1812, at Attoyac, Texas.

¹⁰ When Gutiérrez visited the War Department in Washington, Secretary Eustis showed him such a plan already drawn up.—*American Historical Review*, XXXIV, 70-71; cf. McCaleb, *op. cit.*, 98, 107.

Barataria¹¹ for the Trinity River, or Orcóquisac,¹² whence they were to join the big army in San Antonio de Bexar.

For the transport of these troops the leaders of the plan had at their disposal the privateer or pirate vessels, of which they are in part, although secretly, the owners. They had proclamations of the most incendiary character already printed in the Spanish language and all needs properly provided for.

These depraved men lacked nothing except that the people should elect a governor satisfactory to them and elect them themselves to the offices of senators, representatives, magistrates, judges of the Supreme Court, and in short to all the principal positions. As soon as Tousard, the French consul,¹³ and leader of that infernal gang, whom I knew quite well indeed, became aware that I was opposed to those elections he looked me up and after some circumlocution gave me the following information about his plans:

These were, he said, the intention of his emperor, who had already communicated the orders to his ambassador, Sérurier,¹⁴ who was authorized to use every means to forward this enterprise by distribution both of money and of honors. That same Tousard communicated to me the aforesaid plans, of which I myself already had the knowledge that I have just set forth; the secret orders that he had had from the aforesaid Sérurier and that authorized him, along with the Council, to draw on the aforesaid to the amount of two millions of dollars from the contributions that various persons had offered; and the incendiary proclamations that were to be issued and distributed in the Kingdom of New Spain.

Tousard made me great offers that on principle I could not have accepted; but in view of my commission and of the duties intrusted to me I felt that it was to the king's interest to feign an acceptance, since from him himself I could gain knowledge of whatever was going on.

¹¹ So the Spaniards of New Orleans called Grande Isle.

¹² The Orcóquisac region of the lower Trinity included five miles above the river mouth the long abandoned presidio of Orcóquisac, to which the detachment of Atascosito, stationed from 1808 until 1811 at the site of modern Liberty, had been destined in 1815.

¹³ Louis Tousard came to America in the time of the American war of independence. By resolution of October 27, 1778, the American congress gave him the brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel in recognition of bravery shown in the action against Newport, where he had lost one arm, and awarded him a pension of thirty dollars a month for life. Tousard received on May 26, 1800, the full rank of American lieutenant-colonel commanding artillery and engineers. He came to New Orleans January 22, 1806, as secretary to Deforgues in the French Imperial consulate, and during most of the following decade remained as such and as acting consul, even under the Bourbon restoration, until 1816.—William H. Powell, *List of Officers of the U. S. Army, 1776-1900* (New York, 1900), 148; *Claiborne Letter Books*, III, 247; *Louisiana Gazette*, July 18, 1816.

¹⁴ Louis Sérurier, French minister to the United States, 1811-1816.

He tried to make me see that the thing most necessary at that time was to elect a governor for the state, and the other authorities. When I observed to him that Claiborne, no less than he a friend of independence, ought rather to continue in the position of governor, Trousard replied,

"No. He is a weakling who will not dare do anything at all without being sure of support from the pusillanimous Madison, who uses only surreptitious means for fear of some break with Spain. It will not be the same with us, because we shall make war openly, and once we collect our army in Texas there will be no human power that can stop us. Besides, since we shall be supplied with arms and everything necessary for arming and equipping our brothers the Mexicans, that same Madison, knowing the situation to be thenceforth ours, will give us help."

Tousard came another time to instruct me concerning the election of the governor and the other officials.

"Here," he said, "are the stalwarts who ought to be elected."

He gave me a list¹⁵ in which were included the following: For governor, Jacques Villeré; for senators or representatives of the two Houses, Joseph de Ville Bellechasse, Jean Blanque, Louis Habiné, Bernardo Marigny, Anderson, Louis de Blanc, Flojac Garic, and others; for mayor, Nicholas Girod; for judge of the Supreme Court, Pierre Derbigny, [Etienne] Mazureau and [Louis] Moreau Lislet. As for the other persons named in the list it seems to me I should regard them as unobjectionable but at the same time without strength to be able of themselves to oppose the plans so forcibly that in any case those rascals would need the influence of those same good men; because if their projects are carried into effect it will be the former who will be elected to those offices.

"Besides," said Tousard, "it does not matter to us whether those men are or are not elected so long as we have the principal ones, who always and in any case will form a majority, and that will be all we need."

Nothing that Tousard told me about Madison and Claiborne was unknown to me, as Your Excellency will have seen. I have had acquaintance with many of their plots, and the truth is that the greatest and most dangerous enemy of the possessions in America pertaining to the Spanish Monarchy is the government of the

¹⁵ The translation revises this and the following lists, which Declouet presents partly in Spanish and partly in French and with erratic spelling of French names.

United States, as much because of its democratic as because of its Machiavellian principles.

Those pirates who have been arming in such great numbers in the port of New Orleans since the last war with France¹⁶ have done very great injury to our mercantile trade. Many richly laden vessels going to or from Spain have been captured and burned and the cargoes smuggled in by way of the lagoon called Barataria, situated to the westward of the Mississippi River, under the very eyes of the government, which, to dissimulate, sent out orders from time to time, which were never carried into proper effect. All these facts are well known to me, especially that of two boats that were carrying on the slave trade, one Spanish and the other Portuguese, which in the course of their voyage to Havana were captured by those miserable pirates, who murdered the crews and threw them into the water and by way of the aforesaid lagoon brought the negroes into Louisiana, where they were sold.¹⁷

It is a fact of which there can be no doubt that, as long as that country belongs to the United States, New Spain will be continually exposed to such disturbances and some day the most unfortunate results might come about, because if the plan of Tousard and his associates had been realized—and it almost was—it would have caused the greatest damage, and I have not the least doubt that sooner or later they will try again to bring it back to life. At least that was their plan in the year 1813, when it was necessary for me to leave the country.

Despite all that I have explained about the election of a governor and other officials, the Spanish party found itself in the very critical dilemma that, of two evils that offered, the worse must be avoided. Claiborne as well as Villeré was on the list so that one of the two should be elected governor. The former, although favoring independence, would not have dared openly to forward it without the approval of Madison, who, fearful of war, would likewise not have dared to give it to him.

Then, too, Claiborne had recommendations in his favor; and in order to prevent the election proposed by Tousard I thought it

¹⁶ After February of 1810, when the British closed the last French Caribbean port, French colonial privateer vessels reëquipped themselves at New Orleans more or less in accordance with international law. Pirate vessels also were equipped there as early as 1810. South American commissions were assumed early in 1812.

¹⁷ The cruisers making these prizes were the *Guillaume* and the *Sally*. The *Guillaume* was a French colonial privateer whose lawful commission had run out and whose commander (the name appears in the *Louisiana Gazette* of April 26, 1810, as Laurine) may have been Charles Lominé of New Orleans. The *Sally* was a pirate falouche (felucca, lugger) owned by Louis Prince of New Orleans and commanded by the already famous Ange Michel Brouard.

my duty, which I carried out, to use all means possible in order that Claiborne might be elected. I was able to manage with the help of my friends that he should be elected¹⁸ and likewise a majority in both Houses of the legislature consisting of men less dangerous than the scheming friends of Tousard, who like Tousard himself were foiled and confounded in their plans. All that were named and proposed by Tousard, excepting Villeré, were men of a corruption and immorality unparalleled, all of them enemies of Spain and agents whether public or secret of Bonaparte, whose satellites they were. The character of these and of other friends I shall present to Your Excellency in the following manner:

Tousard, an officer in the Royal French army, took part in the war of the United States and obtained the rank of lieutenant-colonel with a pension from the unfortunate king Louis XVI. He felt no gratitude for that, since I have been told that in the French Revolution he showed himself an active revolutionist, as I can well believe, and certainly he shows himself entirely dedicated to the cause of Bonaparte, speaking of the Bourbons in terms no wise decorous.

Jacques Villeré, head of a family, enjoying the reputation of an honored citizen, but without education or character. The conspirators counted much on taking advantage of his weakness, regarding him as a puppet. Villeré's father was one of the leaders of the Louisiana insurrection against Spain when the province was ceded by France. General Urily (O'Reilly), who was sent to reestablish order and punish the guilty, condemned Villeré to death, and Villeré suffered this penalty as did the other offenders. At the gubernatorial election the conspirators brought up this old affair, doubtless to excite the minds of Villeré and his friends.

Joseph de Ville Bellechasse obtained the rank of captain in the Regiment of Louisiana and was appointed commandant of the post of Barrancas Amargó,¹⁹ situated in Upper Louisiana. The former governor, the Baron de Carondelet, employed him for his private communications with secret agents who were in the western states. That correspondence came into the possession of a friend of Bellechasse, one Daniel Clark, a spy for the Americans, who made use of it for purposes of his government, since it helped out his own denunciation of General Wilkinson. These facts, made known by

¹⁸ The election went to Villeré in radical New Orleans, but Claiborne received a larger majority in the conservative country parishes.

¹⁹ The Spanish version of *les écores de la rivière à Margot*: Choctaw Bluffs, Memphis, Tennessee.

the newspapers, show the guilt of Bellechasse, who, a little before the transfer of the country, was dismissed, which caused him great dissatisfaction, and he showed his resentment especially after the taking of possession by the French commissioner Laussat, who appointed Bellechasse colonel of militia, in which office he was continued by the American government; but by his false and vacillating character he has lost all favor even with that same American government.

Jean Blanque came to Louisiana a little before the taking of possession. He had some small part in the French Revolution, and although he said that he was an American citizen he did not nevertheless cease to be an agent of Bonaparte. This clever and daring man is persuasive of tongue, whereby he sways the crowd. Blanque is regarded as one of the persons [financially] interested in the piracies of Barataria, which he openly protects.

Louis Habiné was born in the province of Béarne, as was Blanque, his intimate. At first a schoolmaster, he had the luck to marry a rich widow of a highly respected family. His wealth gives him great influence, which in part he uses for the advantage of his friends Blanque and company. That same Habiné was one of those concerned in the abovementioned loan, to which he contributed his quota of twenty thousand dollars.

Anderson, Irish by birth, is of a turbulent nature and, like the others, a great partisan of the Mexicans and of their independence.

Bernardo Marigny, little more or less than a boy, without moral sense. His desires have grown into a boundless ambition. Good men in general despise him, but his wealth gives him some influence over the minds of the lower class. He fancied himself already to be general-in-chief of the Mexican armies. This boy was one of the contributors to the loan previously mentioned, to the amount of twenty-five thousand dollars; and according to his own confession to me his father-in-law, Don Juan Ventura Morales, former acting-intendant in Pensacola, also entered into that same project; and I cannot help believing that, because Marigny has no property except land and he could not of himself make so considerable an advance.

Louis de Blanc, resident of the post of Attacapas, was captain of militia under the Spanish government and obtained a command in the infantry. Through a favor that he did not merit he was appointed commandant of that post. Upon the arrival of the com-

missioner Laussat, Deblanc declared himself most decidedly as a partisan of his, calumniating the government that he served and compromising his superiors by reason of a secret order, with intention of pleasing Laussat, whom he served as spy and adulator. Because of these acts he was deprived of his command and arrested, but upon the taking of possession by the French Republic he was liberated on his own recognizances; and Laussat, with the pretext that he had been a victim of the despotic Spanish government, *as he said*, restored to him the command that had been taken from him. Deblanc is of a rebellious spirit. He is clever, and a great partisan of the independence of the Mexicans, from whom he descends on his mother's side, for which reason and because of his knowledge of the Spanish language many of his friends count on his influence.

Flojac Garic, resident in the post of Opelousas, came to Louisiana a little before the cession. Without education and of obscure birth, he had the luck to marry the daughter of a rich planter of Opelousas, whose family is quite extensive, which gives Garic some influence in that post, where despite opposition by friends of good order he succeeded in having himself elected member of the senate for the State of Louisiana.

Nicholas Girod, native of Savoy, who came to Louisiana in the time of the Spanish government, is of obscure birth and without education. He began as a tavern-keeper. Later he went into the shipping business, and the smuggling voyages that he made to the neighboring coasts and islands have brought him more than ordinary wealth. He is one of the principal stockholders of the Bank of Louisiana and one of its directors and, although despised by proper people, has great influence with the populace. Since he once held the office of magistrate, Girod bears with justice the nickname of *Santer*. This rascal is one of those most interested as owners of the pirate vessels of Barataria, and, although he does not appear as such, is nevertheless one of the principal agents. He is an intimate friend of Blanc, Marigny and company (the former is a member of his private Council), and he was also the one who made the gift of a thousand muskets for the expedition.

Pierre Derbigny came to Louisiana with Monsieur de Lassure, who was of a distinguished family of France, in the position of tutor to the latter's sons. Monsieur de Lassure, who arrived contemporaneously with his friend the Baron de Carondelet,²⁰ obtained

²⁰ Carondelet arrived in New Orleans in February of 1792.

for Derbigny the lucrative position of interpreter for the government; but our government had scarcely come to an end when Derbigny calumniated it even in the newspapers. Derbigny is, or was, one of the authors of the incendiary proclamations that were prepared to be sent into New Spain. He has had himself elected judge of the Supreme Court, a position that gives him great influence.

Mazureau, native of Rochelle, came upon the taking of possession or a little earlier. He is a worthy colleague of Derbigny and is a member of the Council of Tousard, Girod and company.

Moreau de Lislet was secretary to the negro Toussaint in the island of Santo Domingo. He came to Louisiana after the taking of possession. A worthy colleague of the preceding, with no difference whatever.

Jean Le Clerc was taken to Mexico under the patronage of the Count of Casa Rul, who employed him in the position of tutor for his sons. He was driven away from there, and with the aid of his friends and others he established in Louisiana the newspaper there called *L'Ami des Lois*, which publishes many and many an infamy against Spain and her government. He is, or was, the printer of the proclamations.

Pierre Foucher, who was an officer of Sastre's. His younger brother, a worthy young man, a protégé of General Gálvez who made him his private secretary, obtained for his brother Pierre a sub-lieutenancy in the Regiment of Louisiana, and the latter rose to the rank of captain. He has nevertheless shown very little gratitude since the cession, both by his conduct and by his indecent remarks. He was one of those who joined in the contributions.

Joseph Sorel, a resident of Attakapas, former captain of militia, was compromised in the plottings of Louis de Blanc against our government. His contribution to the gift was two hundred head of cattle, which he owns in large numbers.

Pierre Pedescrau, notary-public, of a very bad reputation; likewise as to his two elder sons.

Gros, a physician, by reason of his profession has great influence and exercises it to aid his friends Blanc and others.

Antonio Carabi, who was an officer of Sastre's. He enjoys a bad reputation and, like the other friends, is a member of that infernal pack of dogs.

The Delinos Chalmet, brothers, are rogues with few equals. One of them in the month of February last went with others of his friends with the intention of joining the insurgents.

For the most part the Anglo-Americans ought to be watched, except the small number of old landowners in the country, who are the only ones it seems who regret the loss of its old government.

The Louisiana such as we possessed before the unfortunate treaty dated October 27, 1795, which concedes to the United States among other things the territory of Natchez, situated on the Mississippi River, has a population of two hundred thousand souls including the slaves. It may be estimated that two-thirds of that population are favorable towards Spain. The old population, who have lived under the paternal government, feel bitterly their separation, the agriculturists in particular. The free people of color are likewise favorable, the same as the Indians, who still exist in great numbers.

The citizens whom I know most particularly and who are of greatest influence, by reason of their worthiness and of their being attached to the Spanish monarchy, are the following:

Antonio Argote, who was formerly captain of militia, a man of the greatest learning, whom our government employed and frequently consulted.

The Reverend Father Fray Antonio de Sedella, pastor of the parish of Orleans, a respected friar.

✓ Martin Duralde, former commander of Attakapas, like Argote highly educated and well considered by our government.

[The Rev. Fr.] Michel [Bernard] Barrière, former pastor of Attakapas. His loyalty to the cause of Spain cost him his parish, and it was Louis de Blanc and Joseph Sorel who schemed to that purpose.²¹

The Rev. Fr. Fray Bernardo de Deva, pastor of the parish of Valenzuela,²² justly esteemed.

Nicholas Daunoy, retired colonel, and his son:

Bartholomé Daunoy, former officer of militia.

Louis the chevalier Macarty, respected resident, as is:

Bartholomé Macarty, his son.

²¹ Cf. Gayarré, *op. cit.*, III, 596-597; *Claiborne Letter Books*, II, 169.

²² Interior of La Fourche.

✓ Alexandre de Clouet, who was captain and commandant of the militia of Attacapas, where he resides.

Balthasar de Clouet, former lieutenant of the aforesaid militia. These two are my brothers.

Florence Basil, chevalier of the order of St. Louis.

Paul Le Blanc, former adjutant-major of New Orleans. ✓

Joseph Le Blanc, his son, who was a captain in the Regiment of Louisiana. ✓

Louis de Sales, ditto, ditto.

Jean de Lasière, ditto, ditto.

Joseph the count de Rufignac, who was a cavalry captain in the Regiment of Mexico.

Charles de Viellier, retired lieutenant.

Louis the Baron de Faliet, ditto, ditto.

Pedro Marinos, who was director of the post-office.

Manuel Gonzales Moro, who was custodian of the ordnance warehouse.

Carlier d'Outremer, who was navy commissioner and an émigré of the French Revolution.

Michel Fortier, a merchant.

Charles Fagot, judge of the parish of Plaquemine, and Maglorio Guichard, old and respected residents.

Felix Trudeau, who was captain and commandant of the post of Natchitoches, where he still resides.

Monsieur Cavellier and his sons.

Monsieur Mantégüe and his sons.

The brothers Ayures, old chevaliers of the order of St. Louis.

Luis and Antonio Gayarré, who were officers in the Regiment of Louisiana.

Pierre Lacoste, former officer of militia.

Antoine and Pierre St. Amant, brothers; the former was commandant of the German Coast.

Michel Andry, commandant of the second German Coast.

Michel Cantrel, lieutenant of infantry and former commandant of the parish of [St. James of] Caabanose.

Some of the abovementioned have accepted subordinate offices from the American government, but that does not cause them to be the less respected and devoted to our interest.

In case that H.R.M. should indeed seek the conquest of Louisiana, four or five thousand men will be enough; but since it will

be necessary to guard that immense country, more than five hundred leagues in extent from the mouth of the Mississippi River to the Illinois,²³ the most distant settlement in Upper Louisiana, to fortify the various points that are susceptible of defense and to compel respect from the States of Ohio and Kentucky, whose population including the slaves amounts to five hundred thousand souls, ten thousand men it seems to me would not be too many. With Louisiana conquered it might be necessary to add to our regular troops another ten or twelve thousand militiamen, all excellent shots, especially the free mulattoes and negroes.

In view of the topographical information that I have collected, on which points I have full information, having travelled over the country, of which I am a native and in which I have passed my life in the Royal service of His Majesty, it seems to me that the expedition ought to be prepared with the greatest possible secrecy to attack three different points at the same time. Twelve to fifteen hundred cavalry coming by way of the Internal Provinces of New Spain could take possession of the posts of Natchitoches, Rapides, Opelousas and Attakapas, situated to the westward of the Mississippi River. These two latter points are distant about fifty leagues from the capital and would be highly essential, since they produce cattle in abundance and many other provisions that are taken to New Orleans for consumption.

This cavalry should be set upon the Sabine River one month before the attack, both for a rest period and also because there are excellent pastures and forage in that region. In less than six days they can go from the Sabine to the points that I have just mentioned, and thence in eight days to the capital.

Two thousand or twenty-five hundred men, who shall sail from Pensacola or from Havana in gunboats that do not draw more than from six to seven feet of water and which also are indispensable for the defense of the country, shall enter by Lake Pontchartrain and disembark their troops by way of the Chef Menteur River, the Bayou St. John and others nearby, and then the troops shall take positions three-quarters of a league distant from the capital, which, with our army established before it, will surrender immediately, in view of the fact that the city is open²⁴ on all sides and moreover that the greater part of its inhabitants would refuse to take up arms, especially against Spain.

²³ Missouri, a part of the old French commandancy-general of Illinois.

²⁴ *Abierta*: unfortified.

The rest of the army, which would sail from Havana or Vera Cruz, shall attack by way of the Balize, or mouth of the Mississippi, where it is possible or probable that they may meet some resistance at Fort St. Philip of Plaquemines, situated eight leagues above the aforesaid Balize or mouth. It would be easy to attain the objective, attacking at the same time by land and by the river. With the fortification taken, the only one that exists today in Louisiana, all the country would thereupon unavoidably surrender.

The attack shall be put into execution in the month of October or early in November in order to avoid the contagious diseases epidemic in Lower Louisiana from the first of July until September. In addition to this consideration, the low state of the water would make it impossible for the Americans to get any reinforcement from the States of Ohio and Kentucky, since these States are unable to communicate with Louisiana except at times when the water is high, and the water does not begin to rise until the ice melts in the month of February and does not begin to fall until June.

Invasion of the country in the season mentioned would give time for establishing the government, organizing the militia and calling out the Indians; and it would be possible to gather more than thirty thousand men including the latter. Not only would this command respect from the States of Ohio and Kentucky, but I dare say that in time we should even have the good fortune to persuade their inhabitants away from the federal government, as I think probable and all the more so because those men have no other patriotism than that of their own interest. In granting them the exportation of their products, which consist of flour, tobacco, salt meat and other provisions that our colonies lack, I am convinced that we should accomplish our purpose, all the more because those inhabitants would profit much in putting themselves under the protection of Spain. To attain this important end the pen and good, loyal, active agents would serve much better than armed force, as Your Excellency by reason of your full knowledge will appreciate, whether in this case or in any other that you may judge more suitable.

Attacked as I have already described, at three different points, the enemy would be taken in such a state of surprise that he would not know what to do for his defense. I believe that he would have no choice but flight or surrender, and in this manner bloodshed would be avoided; whereas in the other case, attacked

only at one point alone, which naturally would be the Balize, he could by earnest efforts gather the terrified militia and compel them to take up arms against their will.

Suitable proclamations circulated at an opportune moment would produce their effect and would quiet the inhabitants.

If it should be necessary to send some secret agents into the country, many officers or persons native to the country would be found in Pensacola. Captain Louis de Sales and Don Manuel Gonzales Moro, residents of New Orleans, might be useful for this purpose because of their energy and attachment to the King, and since they own no tangible property they could act with greater freedom.

If H.R.M. does not intend to seek the reconquest of all Louisiana in its entirety, it cannot be doubted that the Americans, in view of the critical situation in which they have been put by the war with Great Britain, would not fail in that case to enter into negotiation with the Government of Spain and content themselves with holding the Mississippi River as the boundary, and think themselves quite lucky.

Gaining for ourselves the territory to the westward of the Mississippi, which in any case ought to remain intact, there would still be the great disadvantage of having them as neighbors and the even greater disadvantage of leaving them with a port on the Gulf of Mexico, since it seems to me that the ports opening on that Gulf ought to belong exclusively to our Monarch.

This is all, on my word and conscience, that I have to report to Your Excellency, who perhaps will think that I have given too much extension to my reflections; but in view of the reasons that have inspired me to make them I dare say that your high comprehension will find me worthy of your indulgence.

God keep Your Excellency many years—Madrid, December 7, 1814 — To His Excellency — Luis de Clouet — (Rubric) — To His Excellency Don Pedro de Cevallos, First Secretary of State.