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Family Networks in Colonial Louisiana: Evidence from Eighteenth-Century Parish Records

The Beginnings of Family Networks in Colonial Louisiana

On February 1, 1723, the Capuchin priest Philippe signed a marriage entry documenting the wedding of "laboureur" Pierre Bayer and widowed Margueritte Pellerine, both of whom had only recently arrived in the colony of Louisiana. The wedding ceremony took place at one of the temporary quarters in use before a church was erected in New Orleans and it marked the first documented marriage of the so-called German immigrants.[1] Looking for spiritual guidance, many immigrants were to follow the example of Pierre Bayer and Margueritte Pellerine in the subsequent years. The Capuchin priests officiating in the Lower Mississippi Delta were happy to administer to these immigrants and soon began to protocol their services in church registers. Until today, the Sacramental records of the Archdiocese of New Orleans and the registers of the St. Charles Borromeo Church represent the archival remnants of these services and grant an insight into family formations among the early immigrants of colonial Louisiana.[2]

The immigrants had started their journey towards colonial Louisiana in groups recruited from their hometown communities by the Swiss tradesman Jean-Pierre Purry in 1719 and 1720. Many of these groups had been separated during the journey due to the hardships of the transatlantic voyage, the lack of food supplies and the starvation upon their arrival. For many immigrants, the journey came with the destruction of their families and communities. Men and women lost their spouses, children became orphans. Family networks and community ties that existed prior to their departure had slowly been demolished. Consequently, once arrived in Louisiana in 1721, the im-

migrants started to form new families and family ties that were to provide support networks in the future.[3]

Marriages, baptisms, funerals and abjurations provided the means to build these networks. In result, the parish records, while documenting religious ceremonies, constituted a written foundation that established and represented local family ties in colonial Louisiana. In this sense, the marriage entry of Pierre Bayer and Margueritte Pellerine did not merely serve religious purposes; it constituted the beginning of a material support and family network.

German-speaking Immigrants and the Church Records of Colonial Louisiana

The marriage entry of Pierre Bayer and Margueritte Pellerine can still be found in the archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. After their marriage, the couple moved upriver from New Orleans and resided along the Mississippi, where they had been allotted a petite "terrain." Here, they cultivated some rice and produced a small quantity of pumpkins. In November 1724, noting their industriousness, a French colonial officer described the couple as good workers. The officer hence designated the couple as prosperous peasants and "laboureurs."[4] As such, they were restricted to the status of subsistence farmers or "petits habitants" and always faced the threat of crop failure, financial ruin, and disease. Being illiterate, Bayer and Pellerine could hardly voice any demands to improve their situation. Neither did they ask for labor support nor did they claim a larger parcel.[5]

The couple's marital bliss was short-lived. On November 26, 1725, at the age of 24, Pierre Bayer was interred and Margueritte Pellerine was widowed again.[6] The story of Bayer and Pellerine exemplified the fate of many "laboureurs." Their marriage resembled as much a bond of human affection as of material support. Indeed, Bayer and Pellerine struggled to build a family and a support network through marriage. They might have failed, but other immigrants of the "laboureurs" status surely succeeded.

The Capuchin priests administered to these immigrants of colonial Louisiana who for the most part settled in an area now identified as the German Coast. This area, located about 30 miles upriver from New Orleans, was populated by German-speaking immigrants from 1720 onwards. While originating from various regions of present-day Germany and from different places all over Europe, the immigrants were altogether labeled as Germans by French census takers. Thus, their settlement came to be known as the "Côte des Allemands" in French and as the "Costa de los Alemanes" in Spanish colonial times. The immigrants themselves were to be recognized as the Germans of Louisiana.[7]

Attracted by the scheme of the Scotsman John Law, architect of the *Banque Général* of France, they had left their German-speaking homelands and hoped for improvement in the colony of Louisiana, both materially and spiritually. In the censuses of the eighteenth century, most of these immigrants were identified according to their regional or hometown sovereigns or dioceses. Many of them were registered to be from Alsace. Others were delineated as originating from the Diocese of Spires or from regions in present-day Hungary and Switzerland. The act of being designated as "Germans" by French census takers in the heading of a 1724 census mirrored the colonial administration's struggle to find an overall label for this diverse community.[8]

In compliance with the Code Noir of 1724, the immigrants were predominantly of Catholic faith. A noteworthy number, however, about one fifth of altogether 169 immigrants, was identified as Lutheran, Calvinist, or simply Protestant in the census records.[9] Among the non-Catholics, the "commandant" of the German Coast, Karl Friedrich D'Arensbourg, was the most prominent. Having been born and baptized in the then Swedish-owned town of Szczecin, D'Arensbourg had pursued a career in the Swedish military. In the course of the Great Northern War, 1700–21, D'Arensbourg resigned from the Swedish military service, and left for Paris, where he was contracted by the Company of the Indies for service in Louisiana. Here, D'Arensbourg and his family were to emerge as leaders of the German Coast community for the decades to follow. The D'Arensbourg family represented the "gros habitants." From the beginnings, they were distinct from "laboureurs" or "petits habitants" like Pierre Bayer and Margueritte Pellerine: Property, political agency, and literacy confirmed their status. Church records, including baptism, marriage, and funeral entries, helped to reinforce their status. The D'Arensbourg family successfully utilized the Catholic Church records to build far-reaching kinship networks.[10]

The bulk of the church records was collected in the registers of the St. Charles Borromeo Church and of the St. Louis Church, which would later on become the cathedral of New Orleans.[11] While most of the records regarding the German immigrants were destroyed during a fire in 1877, the records from the years 1739 to 1755 remain available today.[12]

These surviving records provide a substantial source and they have been the center of many research endeavors. Historians such as Charles O'Neill and Roger Baudier have employed them to support their studies on the religious history of Louisiana.[13] The genealogical works of Albert Robichaux are based on the records. Nonetheless, they have never been considered to discuss the construction of family and support networks on the German Coast.[14]

Emphasizing the role of the Capuchin order to begin with, this article therefore concentrates on various baptism, marriage, funeral and abjuration

entries in the registers of the St. Charles Borromeo Church of the German Coast and explores their function in the establishment of family networks. In fact, the evidence from the St. Charles Borromeo Church records shows that geographically and religiously diverse immigrants, both elite and "laboureur," literate and illiterate, were utilizing this very structure and, that they were able to create new family and support networks—after former ties had vanished in the process of migration.

The Capuchins in Colonial Louisiana

In September 1722, a decree of the Company of the Indies initiated the deployment of four Capuchin clergymen to Louisiana. Out of these, the Capuchin priest Philippe de Luxemburg was to perform the sacramental functions on the German Coast and the neighboring concessions.[15] The other Capuchins, the priests Bruno, Christophe, and Esuebe, took over the parish of New Orleans and stayed in the city.[16] Philippe and his successors, the Capuchin friars Prosper and Pierre, were in charge of the local congregation from about 1723 onwards. Philippe, whose signature approved the marriage of Pierre Bayer and Margueritte Pellerine, held the position of "missionarius" in the early days of the settlement. He was replaced in the mid-1730s by "curé" Prosper.[17] While Prosper's overall service to the German congregation lasted at least until 1755, his term was interrupted by an interim period during which "curé" Pierre served the Germans from 1742 to 1748.

In the past, historians such as Baudier, himself a Capuchin, have emphasized the positive impact of Philippe, Prosper and Pierre and stressed that they made themselves "very useful among the Germans" and that "certainly nothing but good can be said of this first little band of Capuchins."[18] Though Baudier's words may have been influenced by his affiliation with the Capuchin order, they were formally based on his assessment of the Capuchin situation in colonial Louisiana. According to Baudier, the Capuchin friars successfully officiated at baptisms, marriages as well as funerals, and they dutifully documented these services in the church records. Moreover, the Capuchins instructed and offered the "Mass" to the Germans. In short, the Capuchins seemed to serve the needs of their congregations.

On the German Coast, a chapel to support the Capuchin performance had been built in the early years of the settlement. "Missionarius" Philippe visited the colonial settlement on a regular basis in the 1720s. The register entries were made and kept in New Orleans until the construction of a parish church later on.[19]

Baudier's narrative only illustrated one side of the medal. In contrast, the Capuchin Superior Raphael de Luxembourg seemed rather critical about the

overall situation in the colony. Raphael who had been travelling along the German Coast in 1725, filed bitter complaints against the Germans and, most significantly, doubted the faith of the German commandant D'Arensbourg: "At the village of the Germans there is a Lutheran commandant who maintains a concubine by whom he has already had two or three children."[20]

The accusations were likely to be true. A census taken in November 1724 had only listed a teenaged orphan living on the estate of D'Arensbourg. Neither a spouse nor an illegitimate partner of D'Arensbourg had been registered. In like manner, D'Arensbourg's religious denomination had been kept from the record, indicating towards his non-Catholic beliefs.[21] In 1726, a new census specified D'Arensbourg as being married and having formed a proper family. The census recorded D'Arensbourg, his wife, and one child on the estate. Most likely, the concubine had simply been withheld from the 1724 census and, by 1726, D'Arensbourg had silenced any sorts of accusations against his person by ways of marrying.[22]

In the mid-thirties, Raphael's earlier impressions were reconfirmed by a Jesuit mission superior to Louisiana, probably father Le Petit, who suggested that a sizable proportion of non-Catholics lived in the colony. Furthermore, he informed his general superior about the availability of so-called "Forbidden Books" and reported that "it often happens that we have reason to read these books here in the colony where we deal with Lutherans, Calvinists, Jansenists. . . ."[23]

Lutherans and Calvinists could for sure be found on the German Coast, the existence of Jansenists was more than likely. What was missing on the German Coast, were an inhabitable presbytery and the permanent presence of a priest. Although a chapel surrounded by a house, a kitchen and a garden had been documented in the census of 1724, its condition did not seem to promote the residency of a priest.[24] The Capuchin Superior Raphael complained about the chapel and characterized the building as a "miserable shed standing in a hole."[25] Raphael's request for a new building found no response. In 1734, Governor Bienville and *ordonnateur* Salmon still spoke of a "little hut in ruin" that "serves as a chapel, but the habitants are too poor to have a permanent one constructed."[26] By that time, the Capuchin Philippe de Luxembourg, who was to become the Capuchin Vicar General to Louisiana, lived on the German Coast. He was registered as a regular resident in a census taken in 1731 that described him as a "capucin curé" and recognized the presbytery, "le presbittaire," he was occupying.[27]

In the year 1739, after the unexpected death of Philippe de Luxembourg, the then Capuchin Vicar General to Louisiana, the Jesuit order was placed at the top of the colony's church hierarchy. The Jesuits, even more so than the Capuchins, were willing to turn Louisiana into a Catholic colony. Under Je-

suit rule the implementation of religious practices in colonial Louisiana began to be stricter, resulting in the construction of a new church on the German Coast. Church registers were introduced for the different parishes, the records of the St. Charles Borromeo Church being one example. Starting in the year 1739, baptisms, marriages, funerals and abjurations were documented and archived directly in the respective church records on the German Coast.[28]

The Baptism Entries of the St. Charles Borromeo Church Records

The Capuchins were in charge of administering local church services and of documenting these services in ecclesiastical records on the German Coast. The records and its entries were structured in accordance with the procedures determined by the Capuchin order. Like the records of many small frontier posts, the records of the St. Charles Borromeo Church did not reserve different sections for baptism, marriage, or funeral entries, but simply listed them in chronological order. The baptism entries were organized in a predefined pattern: the date of the baptism was given first, followed by the identification of the Capuchin friar in charge of the ceremony. The name of the candidate for baptism was then clarified, most often underlined with a phrase that confirmed his or her day of birth and affirmed that the candidate had been born into a legitimate relationship. The expression "née en légitime marriage" exemplified this practice. Thereafter, the parents and godparents were specified. If other witnesses joined the ceremony, their names were noted at the end of the entry. Finally, everyone mentioned had to sign the entries.[29] Apart from the Capuchins, most of the witnesses would apply a so-called "marque ordinaire," a simple "X," on the side of which the Capuchins were to highlight the signee's name. The "marque ordinaire" indeed identified the illiterates among the immigrants of the German Coast.[30]

The baptism entry of young Louise Margueritte de la Chaise was structured in that very manner. Dated January 12, 1745, the record identified Louise Margueritte herself, and listed her parents Jacques de la Chaise and Margueritte D'Arensbourg.[31] Louise had been born into the family of a former general director of the Compagnie des Indes, on the de la Chaise side,[32] and, on the D'Arensbourg side, into the family of the "commandant" of the German Coast.[33] Altogether, the entry revealed Louise Margueritte as a member of the literate class of the "gros habitants."

The parents of Louise belonged to the most influential families of the German Coast. Her status was further emphasized by the choice of her godparents. Louis Dubreuil, a successful franco-creole "concessionaire" of colonial Louisiana, and Louise D'Arensbourg, a daughter of Karl Friedrich D'Arensbourg, were acting as godparents. In terms of establishing a family

and support network for Louise Margueritte, Dubreuil and Louise Darenbourg could surely make a difference. Clearly, the D'Arensbourg clan was willing to intensify its ties with the franco-creole and franco-Canadian elite of colonial Louisiana. Soon, the baptism entries were to represent family networks, the significance of which, according to historian David Wheat, cannot be underestimated:

> [P]eople ostensibly received a Catholic baptism for spiritual purposes. Yet for many, membership in the Catholic Church constituted an important social resource as well. Whether free or enslaved, people used this system to form fictive kinship networks in which godchildren and biological parents possibly could turn to godparents for financial and material support as well as for spiritual guidance.[34]

"Fictive kinship networks" guaranteed for the financial and material well-being of the baptized children in the future. In this respect, the D'Arensbourg clan turned the disadvantage of having hardly any family ties into an asset upon which it built and strengthened family relations in the second and third generation.

On January 2, 1745, the baptism entry of Charles Pierre Delatour showcased this sort of strategy. Charles Pierre had been born to Pierre Maret de la Tour, a lieutenant of the French colonial troops, and to Pelagie D'Arensbourg, yet another daughter of Karl Friedrich D'Arensbourg. The baptism entry signified Karl Friedrich D'Arensbourg and Margueritte D'Arensbourg as godparents. The entry also identified de la Chaise as a witness of the baptism ceremony and confirmed his marriage to Margueritte D'Arensbourg. Through the baptism of Charles Pierre, the D'Arensbourg clan deepened its ties with the franco-creole elite and built a family network of its own.[35]

The "laboureurs" of the German Coast seemed to have understood these functions of the baptism practices and entries. Hence, they tried to win over protagonists of the local elite to serve as godparents at their children's baptism ceremonies. The "laboureurs" Francois le Bœuf and Magdelaine Schmidt, for instance, successfully attracted the "commandant" D'Arensbourg and Madame Lange, the wife of a militia officer, to serve as their child's godparents. Thereby, le Bœuf and Schmidt had been able to include their son, Charles le Bœuf, into the kinship network of the colonial elite.[36]

The choice of the godparents was motivated by material aspects. Looking at the high mortality rates of colonial Louisiana, the chances that the godchildren would later rely on the help of their godparents were not to be underestimated. After all, as historian Thomas Ingersoll has stated, the godparents had to fulfill two basic duties: if the biological parents died, they had to

manage the baptized child's inheritance and they had to offer a new home to the orphan child. In order to widen the range of prospective support for the potential orphans, the godparents were usually not tied by marriage to each other.[37] Ingersoll has argued that "white children always had two godparents at baptism . . . , and most often those spiritual parents were not married, that is, they hailed from two different families, which would tend to maximize their prospective role by giving a child a choice between two quite different appellant mediators in case of need."[38]

In retrospect, the written form of the baptism entries needs to be emphasized and the agency of the Capuchin priests is to be discussed. The Capuchins were officiating at and documenting the baptisms. Besides, their signatures finalized the baptism ceremonies. In most cases, the Capuchins were the only individuals present at the ceremonies, who were able to read and write at all.[39] If the parents, godparents, or witnesses were able to sign the records, the signatures appeared rather inexperienced. In contrast, the well-defined and nicely-curved signatures of the Capuchins expressed an impressive state of literacy.[40]

Generally, only those Capuchins assigned to the German Coast were present at the baptisms. However, ceremonies that included members of the literate local elite, drew the church elders from New Orleans to the settlement upriver. On January 2, 1745, a Capuchin by the name of Dagobert officiated at the baptism of the afore-mentioned Charles Pierre.[41] Dagobert, who was introduced as "prêtre capucin supérieur de la mission en toute la province de la Louisiane" in the baptism entry, ranked among the top of the Capuchin hierarchy. His sheer presence at the baptism of Charles Pierre signified the importance of the ceremony. Charles Pierre had been born into the highest circles of the German Coast. His parents, Pelagie D'Arensbourg and Pierre Maret de la Tour, made sure to include him into local family networks. Karl Friedrich D'Arensbourg was chosen as a godfather for the new-born, as was his daughter Margueritte D'Arensbourg, who, as remarked earlier, was connected to the de la Chaise clan by marriage.

The baptism ceremony and its entry unfolded the family network of the D'Arensbourg clan. It disclosed the power relations on the German Coast to anyone, who was willing to observe the baptism ceremony or able to read and acknowledge the entry. By ways of the church records, literacy and illiteracy became visible, and literacy could rise as a marker of distinction. Yet, illiteracy was not to be equated with non-agency. Like the literate elite, illiterate immigrants became agents by means of the utilizing the parish records and building family and support networks of their own.

The Marriage Entries of the St. Charles Borromeo Church Records

The advent of family and support networks was further enforced through marriages and marriage entries. The structure of the marriage entries was similar to the baptism entries: the date of the wedding was given first, next to the identification of the Capuchin friar in charge of the ceremony. Then, the wedded couple was identified, followed by the parents, the maid of honor, the best man and other individuals witnessing the ceremonies. The Capuchin's signature concluded the entry and sanctified its content. All attendees signed the entry, either via signature or "marque ordinaire."

The marriage entry of Pierre Marist de Latour and Pelagie D'Arensbourg was organized according to that structure.[42] But, whereas three to four baptism, marriage or funeral entries were listed regularly on one page, the entry of Pierre Marist de Latour and Pelagie D'Arensbourg took up an entire page. The entry was characterized by its finely-crafted handwriting that indicated the couple's significance for the local elite. That significance was outlined by the individuals listed as having attended the wedding ceremony. Of course, the couple's parents, Charles Mariot and Marie Juteau, on the one side, and Karl Friedrich D'Arensbourg and Margueritte Metzerinne, on the other side, were specified. Aside from these, the entry highlighted the presence of Jean Marest de Latour and Nicolas Chauvin Boiclaire, two planters of Louisiana's early elite of "concessionaires." The illustrious wedding party was joined by Jacques de la Chaise, François Fleuriau, the *procureur général* of Louisiana, and by one Bellile, whose descendants would later on serve as "commandants" on the German Coast.[43] The Capuchins appeared to have been aware of the ceremony's significance: apart from Prosper, Capuchin priests from New Orleans and Natchitoches had travelled to the settlement and witnessed the ceremony.[44] Their presence seemed to reinforce the networking of the colonial elites and to sanctify the staging of family ties.

Like the local elite, the "laboureurs" of the German Coast seemed to be willing to utilize the marriage entries, but their entries stood in stark contrast to the records of the elite. About two months before the wedding of Pierre Marist de Latour and Pelagie D'Arensbourg, the marriages of Jean (Jacques) Touteheck and Barbe Ackersman, and of Thomas Beeknel and Catherine Bro had been registered in the St. Charles Borromeo Church records. At the ceremonies, solely the Capuchin priest Prosper had acted on behalf of the Catholic Church and only he had signed the respective entries. All other persons, who had attended and served as witnesses had simply added a "marque ordinaire."[45]

The wedding parties had been illiterate, pointing towards their lower class status. Still, while the newly wedded couples did not belong to the local elites, the entries showed that the "laboureurs" were utilizing the church

records to create family networks of their own. The Capuchins sanctified these networks, and the "laboureurs" were able to build their own ties and to stage themselves as an exclusive community. Less than two hundred years later, historian and filiopietist J. Hanno Deiler would, in result, speak of the renowned first German families after examining the St. Charles Borromeo Church records.[46]

The marriage entries of the German Coast posed no exception but were in line with the practices in other places of colonial Louisiana. Analyzing marriage entries in colonial Natchitoches, historians Sophie Burton and Todd Smith have pointed out that weddings among immigrants often functioned to produce or reproduce family networks: "the majority of Natchitoches marriage contracts, however, served to reinforce social bonds or strengthen ties within the free community."[47]

The Funeral and Abjuration Entries of the St. Charles Borromeo Church Records

In addition, family and support networks were established with the help of funeral entries and entries verifying abjurations. In colonial Louisiana, acts of abjuration were to a great extent connected with marriage and funeral practices. The act of abjuring required the distancing of oneself from heretical thought. The act was performed to ban Lutheran, Calvinist, or other Protestant practices among the immigrants. Abjuring initiated the process of becoming a part of Catholic family networks.[48]

On June 14, 1752, the Capuchin priest Prosper registered the death of one Jacques Weis. Prosper remarked that Weis, after having received the sacraments, was buried in the local cemetery.[49] Just two days earlier, Weis' name had been mentioned in the St. Charles Borromeo Church records. Weis and his wife, Magdelaine Matt, had taken part in an abjuration ceremony. Witnessed by Jacques Mayer, Andre Dreyer and other immigrants, and sanctified by Capuchin Prosper, the abjuration had put an end to the excommunication of Weis and his wife, and it had allowed their entry into the Catholic community. While Weis' decision to abjure might have been driven by spiritual or religious reasons, it also exemplified that immigrants were willing to utilize the practices of the Catholic Church.[50]

On July 9, 1743, the marriage of Jean George Stally and Christine Edelmayer illustrated a different function of abjuring.[51] Prior to the marriage, a flood of abjurations had been documented in the records. The first to abjure was Jean Adam Edelmeyer, the father of the bride, who had been described as Calvinist in a census of 1724.[52] His abjuration on May 10 was followed by his wife's, Anne Catherine Keime, on June 8.[53] Two days before the marriage, the

groom, Jean George Stally, went through the procedures of abjuration.[54] Born in Switzerland, Stally probably had to abjure from Calvinist thoughts, too.[55]

Stally had been a member of the Karrer Regiment that had operated in New France and Louisiana under French command since 1722. Most of the mercenaries of the Karrer Regiment were of Swiss or German descent and of protestant faith. According to historian Andrew Johnston, many of these mercenaries, being at death's door, converted to Catholicism out of "fear for their own souls, or for what would happen to their bodily remains."[56] Although Stally and Edelmayer did not face the threat of death, they, like the mercenaries, looked for religious approval and spiritual guidance. In this way, Stally and Edelmayer hoped to legitimize their relationship and sought help from the Capuchins. Indeed, the act of publicly abjuring guaranteed for the establishment of a unique family and support network, sanctified by Catholic superiors.

Admittedly, the records surrounding the wedding of Stally and Edelmayer only documented the official practices of, and ways to sanctify marriages under the realm of the Catholic order of the Capuchins. Whether Stally and Edelmayer adhered to Catholic practices in privacy could not be controlled. The Capuchins often complained bitterly about mischievous practices among the immigrants. Similar to a Jesuit Mission Superior in the mid-1730s, many priests had to deal with "men who have no religion at all."[57]

The church records surely celebrated the Capuchin priests as the agents of a process that enhanced the function of the parish records beyond religion and spirituality towards a means of representing local family networks. This process was facilitated by a change in the religious hierarchy of colonial Louisiana from a Capuchin to a Jesuit Vicar General. The new Vicar General, Pierre Vitry, appeared to have instructed the Capuchins in charge of the German Coast to restrict baptism, marriage and funeral procedures to outspoken Catholics only. The written documents that evidenced this change are to be identified as the parish records of the St. Charles Borromeo Church.[58]

Conclusion

The agency of the Capuchin clergymen, who compiled the parish records, cannot be underestimated. In colonial Louisiana, the Capuchins were fully intertwined in the process of constructing family and support networks. As a literate group, they were in control of the written documents that, apart from rare census takings, dominated on the German Coast. The Capuchins had the final say in who was to be baptized, married, or buried under the realm of the Catholic Church and they made sure that the Capuchin priests

or superiors officiating at the different ceremonies represented the status of the person or persons in question.

Besides, the presence of witnesses accentuated the significance of the baptism, marriage, funeral, and abjuration ceremonies, and emphasized that the ceremonies were not only to be taken as religious but as worldly means of expressing family ties and kinships. For men and women like Stally and clans like the D'Arensbourgs, the records provided a structure to establish and represent local family and support networks—as well as to secure their visibility for future generations, even if the ties themselves were short-lived as in the case of Pierre Bayer and Margueritte Pellerine.

The evidence shows that elite and "laboureur" immigrants, literate and illiterate, were utilizing the records. Both groups were making conscious choices of whom to select as their children's godparents, their best men or their maids of honor. In the process, the immigrants slowly constructed family and material support networks that were to be extended over the next generations. In the absence of any other administrative records, the church records were to provide a fundamental source to archive these networks in rural colonial Louisiana. The Capuchin priests, the local elite, and the "laboureurs" seemed fully aware of this extra-religious function of the parish records.

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Notes

[1] See Charles E. Nolan and Earl C. Woods, eds., *Sacramental records of the Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans*, col. 1, 1718–1750 (New Orleans, LA: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1987–2003), Marriage Book 1, 60, Entry 145, cited according to Albert J. Robichaux, *German Coast Families: European Origins and Settlement in Colonial Louisiana* (Rayne, LA: Hébert, 1997), 61f. A church was first erected in New Orleans in 1727.

[2] AANO (Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans), St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, and AANO, St. Louis Cathedral Baptisms, 1731–1733, SLC, B1.

[3] Cf. Ellen C. Merrill, *Germans of Louisiana*, (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2005), 21–28.

[4] Historian Carl A. Brasseaux has shown that the term "laboureur" was utilized in ancient régime France to designate the nation's most prosperous peasants. This designation was adapted by French officers in colonial Louisiana, see Carl A. Brasseaux, *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 47f.

[5] ANOM (Archives nationales d'outre-mer), G1, 464, "Recensement des habitans depuis la Ville de la N.^{lle} Orleans jusqu'aux Ouacha ou le village des allemands a dix lieues au de sous de la d. ville, a droitte en remontant le fleuve," November 12,1724, #52

[6] Cf. Robichaux, *German Coast Families*, 96.

[7] Cf. Helmut Blume, *Die Entwicklung der Kulturlandschaft des Mississippideltas in kolonialer Zeit – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschen Siedlung* (Kiel: Selbstverlag des Geographischen Instituts der Universität Kiel, 1956), Andreas Hübner, *Famous Leader of the German Colony Here? – Die Biographie des J. Hanno Deiler und ihre Implikationen für die deutsch-amerikanische Gemeinschaft von New Orleans* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2009), Reinhart Kondert, *The Germans of Colonial Louisiana: 1720–1803* (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1990), and Merrill, *Germans of Louisiana*.

[8] The census records showed that the census takers and the migrants themselves must have been aware of their regional identity. The census of 1724, for instance, listed the regional origin of each family.

[9] ANOM, G1, 464, "Recensement de la communauté du village des Allemans Hoffen à dix lieues au dessus de La Nouvelle Orléans sur le fleuve St-Louis et a droite en descendant," November 12, 1724.

[10] Cf. Reinhart Kondert, *Charles Frederick D'Arensbourg and the Germans of Colonial Louisiana* (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2008), 2ff.

[11] Historian, bibliographer, and archivist Henry Beers compiled a compelling introduction into the holdings of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. See Henry P. Beers, *French and Spanish Records of Louisiana: A Biographical Guide to Archive and Manuscript Sources* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 171–74.

[12] See Beers, *Records of Louisiana*, 167.

[13] Cf. Roger Baudier, *The Catholic Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans, LA: 1939), and Charles O'Neill, *Church and State in French Colonial Louisiana* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966).

[14] See Robichaux, *German Coast Families*.

[15] Philippe de Luxemburg is also designated as Philippe de Vianden in some sources, f.e. see ANOM, G1, 412, "Extrait des registres du père Philibert de Vianden, Capucin, depuis les Chapitoulas jusqu'à la Pointe-Coupée," 31.10.1722, folio 4.

[16] See Baudier, *Catholic Church*, 69.

[17] "Missionarius" referring to missionaries, and "curé" referring to curates or parish priests.

[18] Baudier, *Catholic Church*, 69/72.

[19] Baudier, *Catholic Church*, 71.

[20] Mississippi Provincial Archives (MPA) 2:489f, "Father Raphael to the Abbe Raguet," May 15, 1725.

[21] ANOM, G1, 464, "Recensement de la communauté du village des Allemans Hoffen à dix lieues au dessus de La Nouvelle Orléans sur le fleuve St-Louis et a droite en descendant," November 12, 1724, #38.

[22] ANOM, G1, 464, "Recensement general des habitations et habitans de la Colonnie de La Loüisianne ainsy qui la se sont trouvés au Premier Janvier 1726," 01.01.1726, folio 5.

[23] O'Neill, *Church and State*, 280.

[24] ANOM (Archives nationales d'outre-mer), G1, 464, "Recensement de la communauté du village des Allemans Hoffen à dix lieues au dessus de La Nouvelle Orléans sur le fleuve St-Louis et a droite en descendant," November 12, 1724, #45.

[25] Vgl. Baudier, *Catholic Church in Louisiana*, 71.

[26] Robichaux, *German Coast Families*, 64f.

[27] ANOM, G1, 464, "Recensement des habitations le long du fleuve," 1731, folio 16.

[28] See Beers, *Records of Louisiana*, 152–154.

[29] Cf., for example, AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, October 9, 1740.

[30] Cf., for example, AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, January 13, 1741.

[31] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, 12.01.1745.

[32] *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, 2:661f: "PRADEL, Alexandrine de la Chaise."

[33] Cf. Kondert, *D'Arensbourg*, vii-ix.

[34] David Wheat, "My Friend Nicolas Mongoula: Africans, Indians, and Cultural Exchange in Eighteenth-Century Mobile," in *Coastal Encounters: The Transformation of the Gulf South in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Richmond F. Brown (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 117–31, here 126.

[35] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, January 2, 1745.

[36] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, October 13, 1754.

[37] Cf. Thomas N. Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon in Early New Orleans: The First Slave Society in the Deep South, 1718–1819* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 57.

[38] Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon*, 57.

[39] See the baptism entry of David Marx, AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, June 13, 1739.

[40] See the baptism entry of Marie (Catherine) Foltz, AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, November 15, 1739.

[41] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, January 02, 1745.

[42] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, February 03, 1742.

[43] See Jennifer M. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 31.

[44] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, February 03, 1742.

[45] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, January 09, 1742, and April 04, 1742.

[46] See J. Hanno Deiler, *Die ersten Deutschen am unteren Mississippi und die Creolen deutscher Abstammung* (New Orleans, LA: 1904).

[47] H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 42.

[48] Cf. Heribert Heinemann and Bruno Kleinheyer, "Abschwörung," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (LThK), Bd. 1, ed. Walter Kasper (Freiburg: Herder, ^{3}1993), Column 77f.

[49] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, June 14, 1752.

[50] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, June 12, 1752.

[51] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, July 09, 1743.

[52] ANOM, G1, 464, "Recensement de la communauté du village des Allemans Hoffen à dix lieues au dessus de La Nouvelle Orléans sur le fleuve St-Louis et a droite en descendant," November 12, 1724, #57.

[53] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, May 10, 1743, and AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, June 08, 1743.

[54] AANO, St. Charles Borromeo, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals, Vol. 1: 1739–1755, July 07, 1743.

[55] Tellingly, the two entries in the parish records that refer to Stally provide three different spellings: Jean George Staily, Jean George Stailly and Jean George Stally.

[56] Andrew J. B. Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713–1758* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 191.

[57] O'Neill, *Church and State*, 280.

[58] Cf. Beers, *Records of Louisiana*, 152–54.