

History of New Orleans Sets Stage for Kingfish

(Continued from Page One)

Mrs. Hammond has the zeal and the patience of a crusader. Her committee is perhaps the final gesture of resistance by the old order in New Orleans against the new. The family background of this militant leader, who seeks no political reward, is illustrious.

Hilda Phelps Hammond, belle of carnival balls, was born and reared in the conservative environment of New Orleans, where woman's place is so strongly fixed by old-world ideals. Although she takes no part in club work, prefers the quiet of her home, good books, and the companionship of close friends, she has been nevertheless a militant leader for several years in Louisiana's bitterest political struggle. Long's recent victory has disheartened many of the men of New Orleans, but not Mrs. Hammond and her committee. They are still carrying on.

Her grandfather, John Phelps, went to New Orleans from Massachusetts shortly after the Louisiana territory became part of the United States. His family had moved to New England when the Massachusetts Bay colony was formed. Mrs. Hammond's paternal great-grandmother was Clara Sherman Browning, a relative of Roger Sherman, one of the signers of the constitution. Also related to the Phelps family are the Endicotts and the Embertons. Mrs. Hammond's maternal grandfather was Alfred Moulton, eldest son of the Moultons of Bath, England, who still own Kingston house, one of the finest examples of Tudor architecture in England today. Her maternal grandmother was of French Huguenot extraction. Her mother's grandfather went to New Orleans in 1834.

When the war between the states broke out her grandfather, John Phelps, closed his cotton firm to fight in the confederate army. Later he became president of the New Orleans Cotton exchange and president of the Boston club. Her maternal grandfather also was president of the Boston club, one of the most exclusive social organizations in the south.

Her father, Ashton Phelps, was president of the Times-Democrat of New Orleans for years. He also was a member of the Crescent City Rifles, the crack company organized by the outstanding men of New Orleans to combat evils and to keep Louisiana free.

Her mother was the first queen of Twelfth Night, the famous carnival organization, which will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 1935.

Hilda Phelps took her A.B. degree at Newcomb college in New Orleans, then made her debut in the traditional way—parties, carnival balls, etc. But after a few years she went back to Newcomb and took the A.M. degree. She speaks French and Spanish and is trained in all the graces and culture prescribed for a girl for whom marriage and the making of a home are a career.

Her husband, a prominent attorney, is a member of a fine old New Orleans family.

Preparing for Battle

This is the background of the woman who in her thirties put aside the life she preferred to live and threw herself into a maelstrom of political strife. As the leader she realized that she would have to do a great deal of fighting—letters and articles—so she went to school and learned to be an expert typist. She has developed into a forceful speaker, able to sway conviction by the sincerity of her utterances. To finance her campaign against Long, Mrs. Hammond appealed to the women of New Orleans to contribute their heirlooms and antiques to a public auction sale. With the funds so raised Mrs. Hammond will carry on this work this winter. It is well organized, this campaign; lawyers and politicians are astounded at the astuteness Mrs. Hammond shows in a field in which—speaking in terms of the calendar—she still is a neophyte. They admit that she and her committee of women have been the head and shoulders of the senatorial investigations that already have been held, the power that drove them toward accomplishment. Hilda Phelps Hammond has met the most hardened champions of political power in debate and routed them with incisive analysis. She has turned the sword of senatorial threat with a smile and with a flashing counter thrust has disarmed her opponents.

But for Long's recent victory in the New Orleans primaries Mrs. Hammond would now be making plans to return to the quiet privacy and comfort of her home life. That hope is deferred, but she accepts the lengthening of her service with the same quiet smile that sealed her first decision. Mrs. Hammond is fighting harder than ever now—harder than when she said, "If the men don't do it, I will"; for she was leading a forlorn charge then, a leader with no followers; now she has the em-



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" . . . his right-hand man, Oscar K. Allen, governor of the state, will call a special session of the legislature at Baton Rouge."



"The obstacle is Mayor T. Semmes Walmley of New Orleans . . . His chances are considered slim in any event."



Figures on the photograph show: 1. City hall, facing Lafayette square. 2. Lafayette square, where militia kept vigilance. 3. Masonic temple. 4. Hibernia bank. 5. American bank. 6. Canal Bank building. 7. Roosevelt hotel, where Long maintains political headquarters. These were the scenes of the recent political "battle of New Orleans," in which Senator Long's forces, including the entire militia forces of Louisiana, were victorious over the forces of Mayor Walmley.

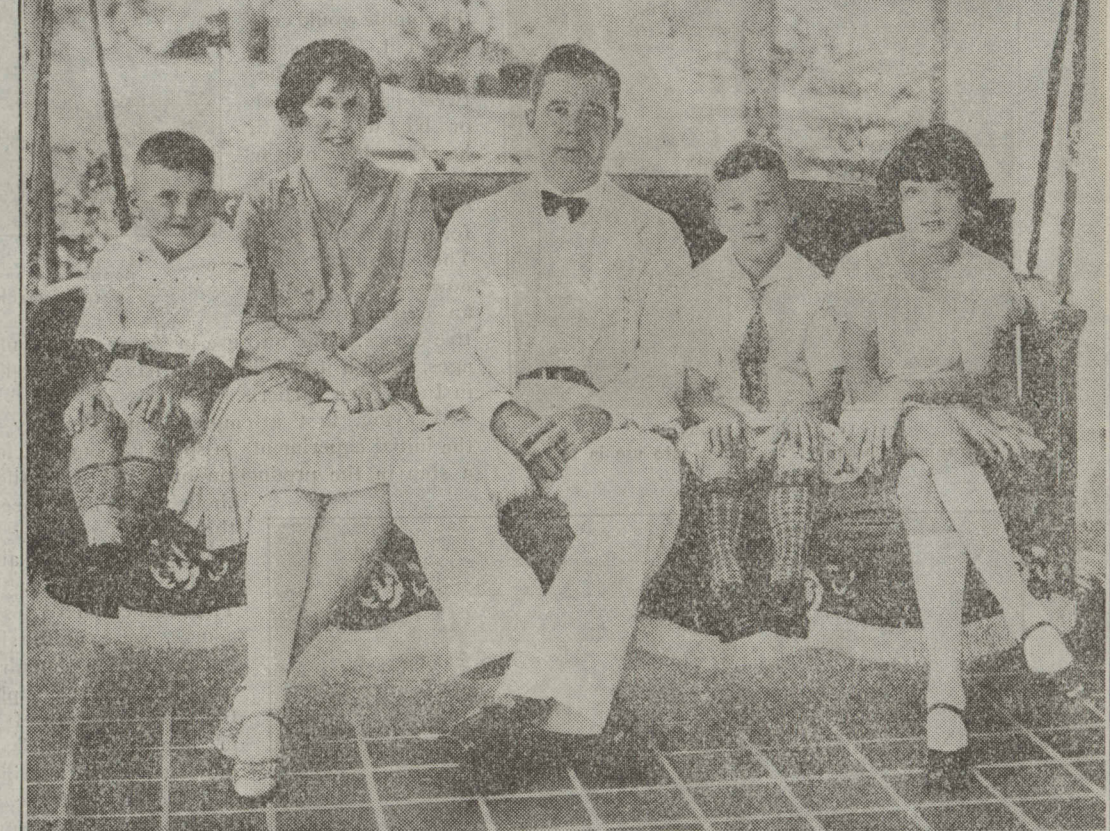


"Samuel T. Ansell . . . filed a lawsuit against Huey."

part of New Orleans society, but the Kingfish has kept his family life strictly in the background. The story of Huey's rise to political power is familiar. His present struggle to get complete control of the city government of New Orleans is current news. Huey Long is a figure in the history of New Orleans, but his importance in that romantic tapestry of 19 persons and events is based upon the fact that he is the modern leader of a struggle for supremacy in Louisiana which began more than two hundred years ago.



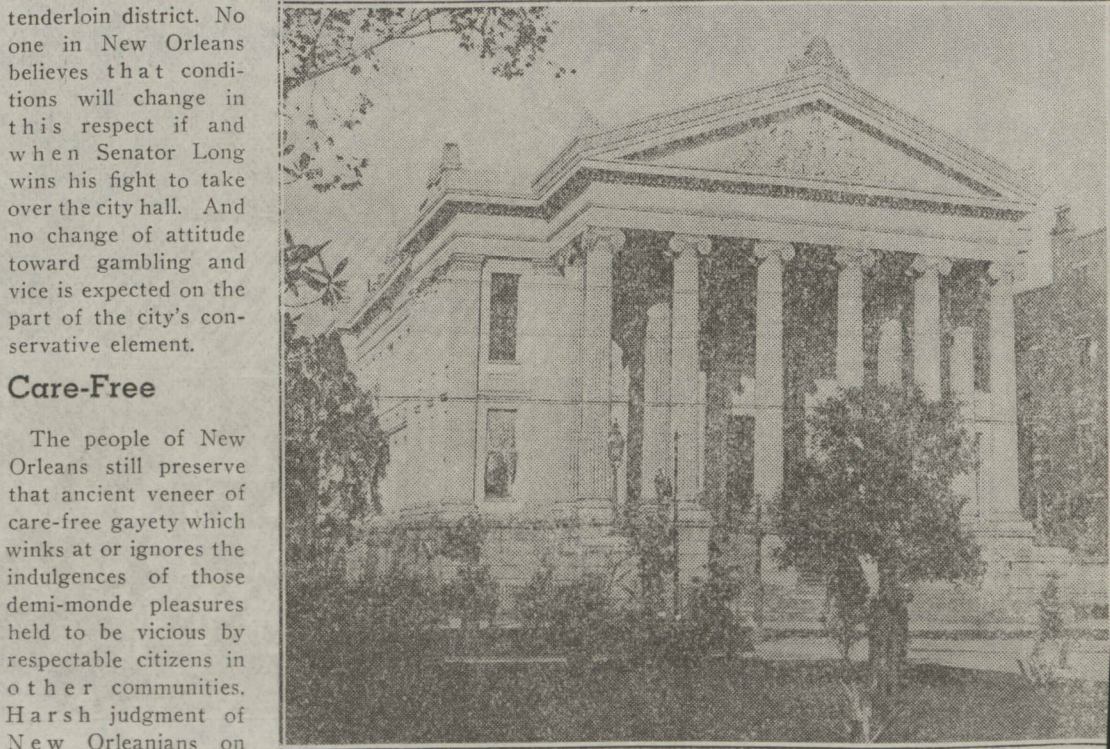
"For several years the senator has maintained for his family a \$60,000 mansion in the fashionable Audubon park district of New Orleans, but Huey loves to pose as a common man who sprang from the soil. He champions the poor."



"His wife, daughter, and sons are a part of New Orleans society, but the Kingfish has kept his family life strictly in the background . . ." (The photograph of Senator Long and his family was taken several years ago, before the senator had reached his high place in politics. The Long children now are almost grown.)

tion to Huey's investigation of gambling and vice in New Orleans than have the substantial residents of the town. They knew that Huey's inquiry would reveal plenty of evidence of graft, but they also knew that the investigation was inspired by political rather than moral motives.

In Latin communities throughout the world the existence of gambling and vice has been tolerated, if not condoned, for centuries. Such tolerance on the part of the decent citizenry of New Orleans has been for many years the excuse of politicians for exacting tribute in the form of graft from the denizens of the city's tenderloin district. No one in New Orleans believes that conditions will change in this respect if and when Senator Long wins his fight to take over the city hall. And no change of attitude toward gambling and vice is expected on the part of the city's conservative element.



Center of the controversy between the senator and the mayor is the stately city hall of old New Orleans. Its classic beauty suggests peaceful quiet rather than the blatant conflict which has swirled about it in recent weeks.

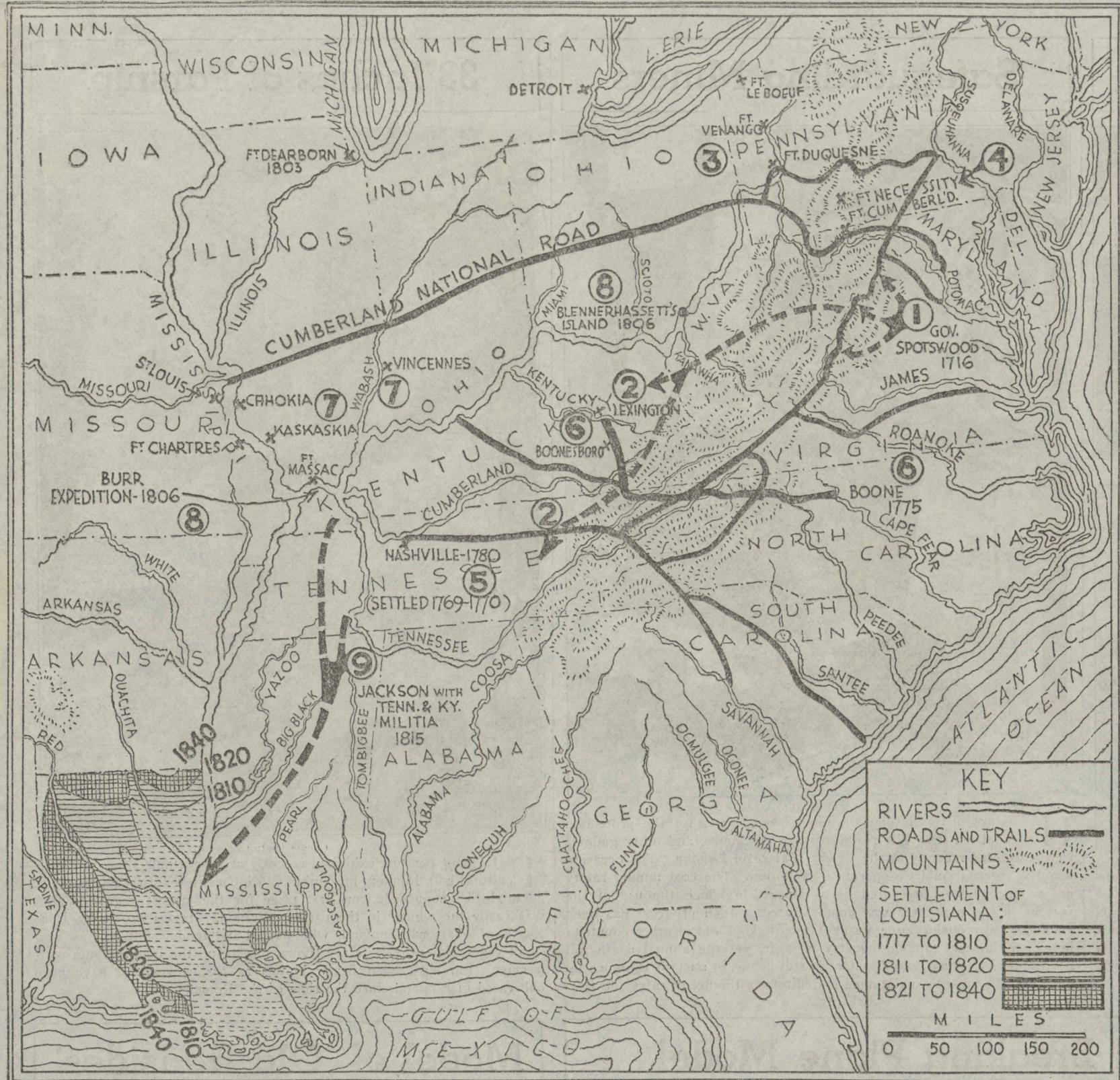
which has withstood the ravages of famines, fire, floods, pestilences, and political misrule since 1718. Surviving in New Orleans is a charm and beauty to be found in no other American city. The flavor of this charm is distinctly old world. It is the inimitable which recalls the story of the beginning, the rich glory, and the final decay of French civilization in America.

What Might Have Been

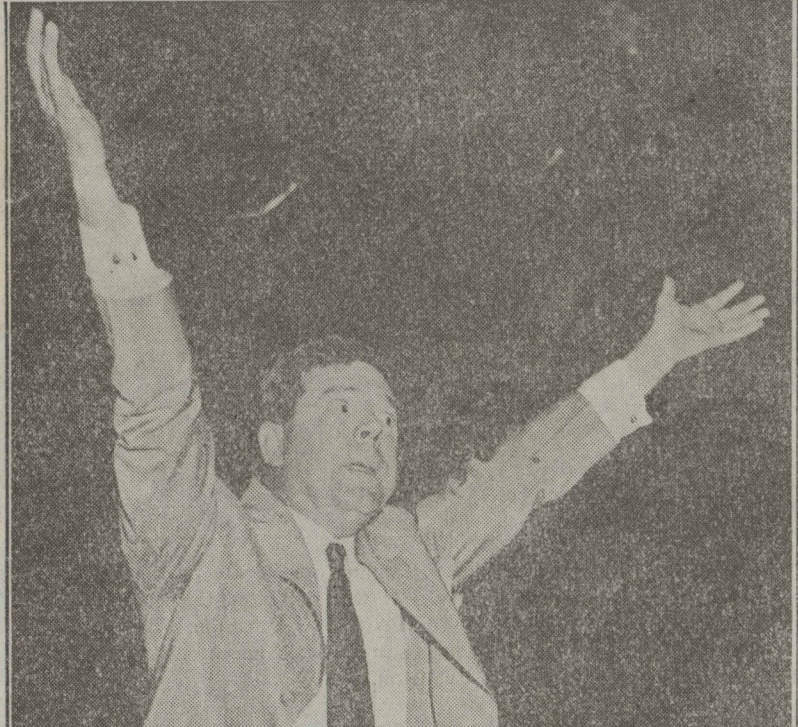
It is probable that if Louis XIV., le Grand Monarque, had been less concerned with conquest in the old world than in the new, Canada and a vast and rich portion of the United States today would have comprised provinces of France. It is unlikely that Louis shared the dreams of an American empire which inspired his emissary, Samuel de Champlain, to win for France in the new world a territory far more important than the old-world countries Louis attempted without success to conquer.

Properly the history of New Orleans begins with the arrival in 1603 of Champlain at the mouth of the St. Lawrence river. The subsequent exploits of this great Frenchman in colonizing eastern Canada and in defeating the British, thus extending the French domain, were preludes to the penetration of the middle west and the Mississippi valley by Marquette, Joliet, and La Salle and the colonization of Louisiana by Iberville and his brother, Bienville. The gallant Spaniard Hernando De Soto discovered the lower Mississippi in 1541 and was buried in its waters, but his purpose was not so much a colonization effort as a search for a short route to Spanish Mexico.

Rene Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle, was born in Rouen, France, in 1643. He became a Jesuit, forfeiting his patrimony, but left the order in 1666, when he went to Canada as an adventurer. In the new world he became the friend of Governor



"Although the French control of the Mississippi valley was thoroughly established, the tide of English colonists sweeping into the western country had begun . . ." (Figures on this map show: 1. Direction of the party led by Governor Spotswood in 1716. 2. Where Iberville created into Kentucky and Tennessee in 1718. 3. Line of French forts 1722-54. 4. Washington builds Fort Necessity in 1754. 5. Settlement of Tennessee 1769-70. 6. Daniel Boone establishes Kentucky settlement in 1775. 7. The campaign of George Rogers Clark in the middle west. 8. Aaron Burr at Blennerhassett Island in 1805. 9. Jackson at New Orleans with militia in 1815.)



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La Salle Dreams of Empire

La Salle established, or caused to be established, a string of fortified trading posts throughout the Great Lakes country. He was motivated by stirring dreams of opening up for France a vast and rich country which might prove to be the long-sought-for route to China. Distances were only

guessed at in those days. There were few maps, and those which did exist were glaringly inaccurate.

This fact led to the failure of La Salle's pretensions plan to establish a colony near the mouth of the Mississippi. His party lost its way, dissension broke out, and La Salle was killed in 1687. His dream of a chain of forts from Montreal to the mouth of the Mississippi was only partly realized, but other men soon took up the work of colonization where he had left off.

City Founded

Iberville and his brother, Bienville, wealthy and aristocratic French Canadians, with a group of men and women equally cultured, were the founders of New Orleans in 1718. Iberville gave the city its name in honor of the Duc d'Orleans, then regent of France. Bienville was first of all a priest. Joliet was more a pioneer commercial adventurer than a man concerned with extending and protecting the French frontier.



"Father Marquette and Joliet had preceded La Salle and had brought back enthusiastic reports of the fertile lands and transportation facilities of inland America, but Marquette was first of all a priest. Joliet was more a pioneer commercial adventurer than a man concerned with extending and protecting the French frontier."

which had been colonized by rough Frenchmen known as Acadians. Although the Acadians were pictured as heroes and heroines in Longfellow's "Evangeline," historians have said that these people were a roistering lot, who finally became so unruly that they were expelled by the British. Some of them found their way to Louisiana, and their ancestors today comprise a section of the state which is opposed to the old order at New Orleans and which supports Huey Long. Some of the Acadians settled in the bayou district below New Orleans, the country once ruled by the notorious pirates, the Lafitte brothers. The descendants of this group, known today as cajons, support the Kingfish.

The Acadians, or cajons, were troublesome elements in the early history of New Orleans, and they cannot be considered as a part of the French aristocracy which founded and built the city. Under the supervision of Bienville the streets of the city were laid out and the first public buildings were erected. In 1722, when the population was 500, the streets were named. Today they are quaint thoroughfares of the old French quarter.

Pioneers Invade Land

French control of the middle west was established, but the tide of English colonists, later to become United States citizens, had begun. These were the American pioneers—sturdy, headstrong, independent. Their trek into the west was made easy by the great system of rivers flowing west and south into the rich Mississippi valley. Some of the movements of Americans into the west were organized, even as early as 1716, when Governor Spotswood of Virginia led a party across the mountains of West Virginia. Another organized expedition, which historians now believe was primarily for the purpose of founding a settlement in western Louisiana, was the famous party led by Aaron Burr in 1805. He never reached Louisiana because he was accused of treason by the United

States government. His party had reached Blennerhassett Island in the Ohio river. Burr stood trial and was acquitted, but his colonization scheme never was resumed.

Most of the early pioneers of English descent were a restless lot, unwilling to stay very long in one place. They were impelled to penetrate and conquer the wilderness by a fierce desire for freedom. Law and order and the routine dullness of life in settled communities irked them. They cleared the land, cultivated small farms, hunted and trapped fur-bearing animals. The great rivers gave them access to New Orleans, which, although a French city, was nevertheless an important commercial gateway. Flatboats loaded with furs, farm produce, timber, and other merchandise were floated down to New Orleans in an endless parade.

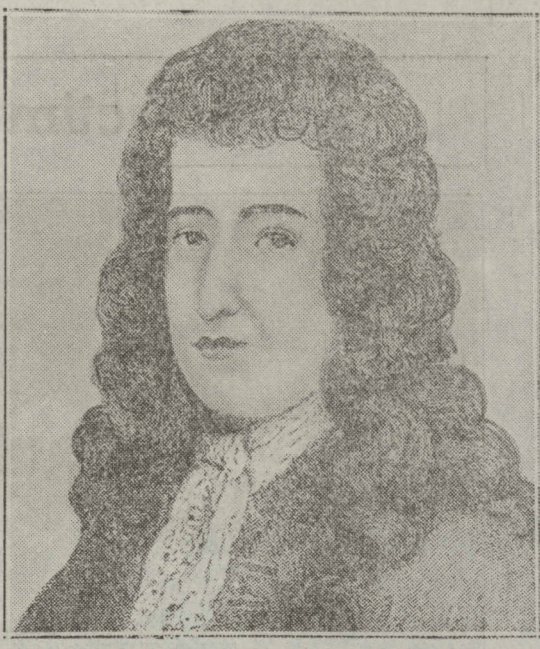
The flatboats were manned by men of the pioneer type. As time went on, hundreds of them, impressed by the ease of earning a living in the country near New Orleans, remained to settle the back



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country land. Their arrival was the beginning of a long struggle which still may be faintly recognized in the political squabbles of Louisiana. Scores of Louisiana families in the back country today have been residents of the state for generations and trace their ancestry directly to the early pioneers. They brought no ordered society into French-controlled Louisiana, but their zealous desire for them at any cost and their numbers soon made them a formidable element. The strategically placed French forts and trading posts along the rivers and lakes of the middle west gave nominal control of the domain to France, but the land itself was fast being settled by Americans.

Bienville had erected in the Place d'Armes (now Jackson square) an imposing city hall. Soon a cathedral was built beside it, and fine houses and buildings rose throughout the town. Finest of these were structures built by the Capuchin monks and the Ursuline nuns. The members of these



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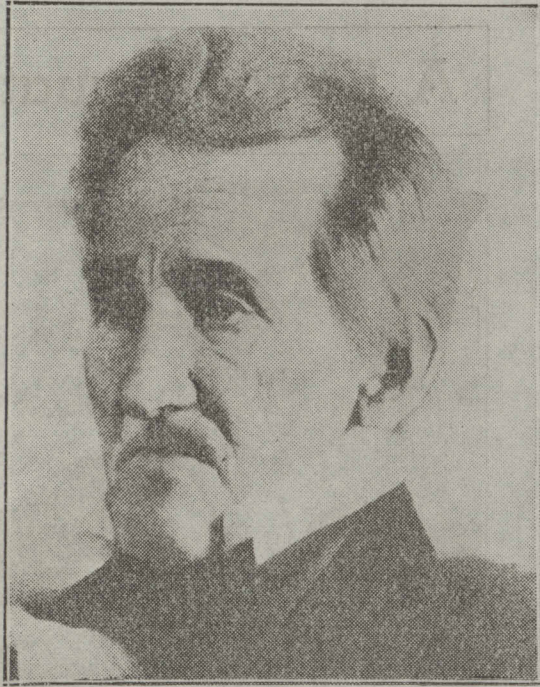
rowdy crew and the authorities of the city held them in disrepute.

History reveals that the decline of French power and influence in America was started and later contributed to by political action in France. In 1763 Louis XV. secretly gave to his cousin, Charles III. of Spain, New Orleans and all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi. The transfer was not made public until 1764. Fortunately for the people of the city, however, the Spanish king sent a fine man to govern the subjects of France in America. Under Gov. Almonaster y Rojas, New Orleans continued to prosper and grow. He built the Cabildo, city jail and fortress, many new churches, and other fine buildings.

The Louisiana Purchase

Spain ruled New Orleans and Louisiana until 1800, when France regained title through the treaty of Ildefonso. Napoleon promptly sealed the doom of French civilization in America, however, by selling the Louisiana territory in 1803 to the U. S.

Although the impression exists that there was a great celebration in New Orleans on the day that Gov. William Claiborne took charge for the United States government, the truth is that it was a day



" . . . a poorly trained and equipped American army, composed of French New Orleansians and American pioneer settlers, commanded by Gen. Andrew Jackson." (A portrait of Jackson as President.)

of mourning in the city. As has been mentioned, the French and Creole New Orleansians were not friends of the Americans, who boasted of themselves as being "half alligator and half horse."

The date Jan. 8, 1815, recalls a stirring event in the history of New Orleans and of the nation. It was on that day that a poorly trained and equipped American army, composed of French New Orleansians and American pioneer settlers, commanded by Gen. Andrew Jackson, decisively defeated an army of British soldiers.

Then followed the lush and prosperous days leading up to the Civil war, when New Orleans, because of the river steamboat traffic, became one of the world's most important commercial centers. The Civil war ended the rule of the old order in New Orleans, and the subsequent decline of river trade ended the prosperity. In recent years the old prosperity has returned, but New Orleans is a city of memories. And the new order, personified by Huey Long, is at last supreme in old Louisiana. How long it will prevail depends upon the last stand of the old order as represented by Mrs. Hammond and her associates.



"The gallant Spaniard Hernando De Soto discovered the lower Mississippi in 1541 and was buried in its waters, but his purpose was not so much a colonization effort as a search for a short route to Spanish Mexico." (An old print showing the burial of De Soto at the confluence of the Mississippi and Red rivers.)