

RESEARCH IN THE SPANISH BORDERLANDS: MISSISSIPPI, 1779–1798

William S. Coker, University of West Florida

ONE OF THE REASONS GIVEN FOR THE NEGLECT OF THE SPANISH ERA IN MISSISSIPPI history has been the concentration of historians and writers on the Civil War which has overshadowed everything else. To that conclusion should be added a second consideration. The attention of a large number of graduate students has been centered on those four horsemen (one horsewoman) of Mississippi literature, William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, James Street and Eudora Welty. A brief examination suggests that there have been more graduate studies written on these authors in the last thirty years than on any single topic of Mississippi history, the Civil War notwithstanding. The number of theses and dissertations on Faulkner alone would make an impressive bibliography. Without any visible decrease in the devotion shown Faulkner and his literary companions, the decade of the 1960s may be considered the renaissance for the study of Spanish Mississippi. Not that there have been any large number of people working in that period; but, because a few dedicated scholars of the younger generation, notably Jack D. L. Holmes, have worked energetically and productively on the years of the Spanish domination. The renewed interest in that fascinating age stimulated by Holmes and others is responsible for this survey which attempts to assess the state of historical and other scholarly studies for Spanish Mississippi. But what specific geographic area does this term embrace?

The name Spanish Mississippi as used in this study refers only to the Natchez district governed by Spain from New Orleans between the years 1779–1798. The Mississippi River formed the western boundary of the district. In the south, the original border at Punta Cortada (Pointe Coupée), was later moved northward to the Old Tunica stream. In the north, the district extended to the mouth of the Yazoo River, whence a line was drawn eastward which served as the northern boundary. The eastern boundary was never clearly defined but extended inland from the Mississippi River to the point of contact with the Indian settlements. Population clusters were located along the creeks and bayous which emptied into the Mississippi such as the Big Black, Bayou Pierre, Cole's Creek, Fairchild's Creek, and St. Catherine's, with its two upper branches, Second and Sandy Creek. The rest of the present state of Mississippi at the time was largely Indian territory. A few families had settled on some of the rivers, notably the Tombigbee. Along the Gulf Coast, the old French settlements extended from Bay St. Louis to Pascagoula and from 1780 to 1813 were governed by the Spanish from Mobile. The history of the district prior to 1798 is easily traced.

Natchez belonged to France until 1763 when she ceded it to Great Britain as a result of France's defeat in the French and Indian War. Natchez became a part of

British West Florida administered from Pensacola. In 1779, during the American Revolution, Natchez fell to Spain with her victory over the British at Baton Rouge. The Treaty of Paris four years later formally awarded West Florida to Spain. The British legacy was an unresolved boundary between West Florida and Spain's new northern neighbor, the United States. Both countries claimed Natchez. The problem was not resolved for a dozen years. Finally, in 1795 as a result of the Treaty of San Lorenzo, or Pinckney's Treaty, the Natchez area became a part of the United States. It was three years, however, before the Spanish elected, somewhat reluctantly, to turn the district over to its new owner.

Since there was no contemporary history written during the Spanish years at Natchez—not even a newspaper—subsequent accounts have had to rely on available documents. Some records from that period found their way into the papers of the early governors of Mississippi territory, and eventually into the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson. Others have been discovered in the private collections of prominent individuals such as William Dunbar, Andrew Ellicott, and J. F. H. Claiborne. The bulk of the documentary material, however, wound up in the major Spanish archival depositories. This manuscript material consisted of a vast miscellany of documents: official letters and reports from the Spanish officers stationed at Fort Panmure de Natchez with indorsements and replies from their superiors; lawsuits, land grants, census reports, directives, royal orders and *cédulas* from officials at all levels; and memorials, complaints, petitions and letters from private citizens comprise the major portions of the collections in Spain, Cuba, Mexico and elsewhere.

Comprehensive surveys of the material in the foreign archives and in the United States have been made. Most notable among the early efforts were the guides prepared under the auspices of the Carnegie Institute which are still of value, and fortunately have been reprinted in the last few years: Bolton (1913), Hill (1916), Paullin (1914), Pérez (1907), Robertson (1910), and Shepherd (1907). These must be supplemented by a series of new guides prepared by the foreign depositories, the U.S. Library of Congress (1967), and similar institutions, and others by researchers interested in sharing their knowledge of the source material. One of the most complete guides to the location of material for the Spanish colonial period is the two-volume compendium by Lino Gómez Canedo (1961). He describes the manuscript holdings of many archives and libraries, large and small, in Europe, Hispanic America and the United States. Spanish depositories are covered in the most detail. The study is less comprehensive on similar institutions in the United States. The annotated bibliographic references to guides, calendars, catalogues, and finding aids throughout the two volumes add greatly to its value. It also contains an analytic index. Missing from the list, because it was published about the same time, is the guide by John P. Harrison (1961), which contains some references to material for Spanish Mississippi. Armed with all this vast information about what and where, researchers may not always find it possible to go to Spain or elsewhere to secure their material first-hand, as desirable as that might be.

It is fortunate, therefore, that investigators—relatively few until recent years—have been at work in the foreign depositories. The Carnegie Institute, the Library of Congress, and other organizations, through the use of specialists in the field, have been able to copy many documents and to bring them back to the United States. Of especial interest to Spanish Mississippi are several collections obtained in that fashion.

The earliest major project of this nature for Mississippi came through the efforts of Dunbar Rowland, archivist, historian, and director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History from 1902 to 1937. With aid from the organizations already mentioned, Rowland secured nine volumes of material on the Spanish domination in Mississippi. Copies were made largely from documents in the Archives of the Indies (AGI), Sevilla, and the National Historical Archives (AHN), Madrid. With one exception, the Natchez Chancery Court Records, these transcriptions formed the first significant collection of materials for Spanish Mississippi.¹

The Natchez Chancery Court Records are a second excellent source for the history of Spanish Mississippi. These records in forty volumes cover the years from 1781 to 1797, and are on file in the Chancery Clerk's Office, Natchez. Entered in the records are copies of wills, mortgages, business transactions of all kinds with supporting documents, and civil and criminal court cases including the investigative reports of the *alcaldes* and *syndics*. They are a gold mine of information on the legal, commercial and social history of Natchez and its environs. In 1817–1818, David Harper translated these records and others from the Spanish period into a seven-volume set, lettered A through G. The Natchez Chancery Court Records and the Harper translations have been microfilmed.² Although the originals and the Harper translations are indexed, May Wilson McBee (1953) compiled an invaluable indexed abstract of the Harper translations.³

Two additional collections of documents, the *Despatches of the Spanish Governors of Louisiana, 1776–1791* (25 vols.) and the *Messages of el Baron Carondelet [1792–1797]* (11 vols.), may be treated together. Since the Governor-General of Louisiana and West Florida was the immediate superior of the officials at Natchez, for most purposes, the correspondence of those governors is essential to the history of Spanish Mississippi. Located in the Manuscript Division, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, these documents are copies made from material in the *Papeles procedentes de la isla de Cuba*, AGI, in the Library of Congress. The Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration translated and indexed the two collections, and typescripts are located at Tulane University and at the Library at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. Plans are afoot to microfilm these papers and to make them available to interested parties.

Perhaps the most significant long-term project to date for the acquisition of documents from Spain has just completed its first giant step. Some 140,000 pages of microfilmed material for Spanish Louisiana, *ca.* 1762–1810, were recently opened to researchers by Loyola University, New Orleans. Conceived in 1958, the project was under the direction of Father Ernest J. Burrus, S. J., Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, Rome and St. Louis, and archival officials in Spain. Ill health eventually

caused Father Burrus to relinquish his part of the project to Father Charles Edwards O'Neill, S. J., Loyola University, New Orleans. The documents microfilmed were from the AGI, *Sección de Gobierno, Audiencia de Santo Domingo*. This records group was chosen because of the large number and variety of documents on Spanish Louisiana (and West Florida, *i.e.*, Spanish Mississippi), which had not yet been calendared or copied to any great extent. A two-volume catalogue of the microfilmed documents has been prepared (de la Peña 1968).⁴ The significance of this program is that it is just the first of a continuing effort to microfilm and catalogue the vast number of historical materials in Spanish Archives which record Spain's presence in the Mississippi Valley. If Charles Gayarré, noted nineteenth century Louisiana historian, were alive today, he would consider this project the fruition of his dreams to secure copies of Spanish documents pertaining to Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley. Gayarré was largely responsible for the acquisition in the 1840's, of copies of a number of documents from the Spanish archives which he used in the preparation of his *History of Louisiana, Spanish Domination* (Gayarré 1854, Dart 1921c).

Another large collection of documents (*ca.* 20,000 pages) of interest to Spanish Mississippi is the twenty-nine reel microfilm set of materials on Spanish Alabama, secured by Professor Jack D. L. Holmes in Spain. Dr. Holmes has described this material in his study of Spanish Alabama elsewhere in this volume.

Of limited value to the Natchez district, but very important for the southern portion of Mississippi (included in Spanish Alabama in this study) are two translated manuscript collections. The Papers of Vincente [Vicente] Sebastian Pintado, assistant surveyor-general of Louisiana, and after 1803, chief surveyor of West Florida, consist of eleven volumes in the WPA translations with indexes and cover the years 1771–1818.⁵ The Pintado Papers contain information on British, French and Spanish land grants. The other collection is the Spanish West Florida Records (19 vols., 1782–1810). These are the official papers of the Spanish domination of West Florida. WPA translations and indexes are available in the Clerk of Court's Office, East Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse, where the originals may also be found. A microfilm copy of the WPA edition is in the Louisiana State Library in Baton Rouge. In September 1968, the *Louisiana Genealogical Register* began to publish the indexes of the Pintado Papers serially, and similarly, in December 1968, began publication of abstracts of the Spanish West Florida Records.

No effort will be made in this study to furnish information on private manuscript collections which are far too numerous to mention. Reference to most of the collections pertinent to Spanish Mississippi may be found by consulting the Library of Congress, *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* (1962).

Finally, a large quantity of documentary materials has been translated into English and published. Some of the more important of these sources are: American Historical Association (1896), Caughey (1938), Corbitt (1937–), Hammond (1932), Kinnaird (1946–49), Nasatir (1946, 1968), Robertson (1910–11), and Whitaker (1931). The various publications of the state historical societies and other organizations in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee contain a number of translated and

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edited documents pertinent to the subject. Other publications contain untranslated French and Spanish materials: Holmes (1963a), Serrano y Sanz (1912, 1916), and Turner (1903), important to the Natchez district.

The Mississippi Union Catalog, a project announced in 1969, should prove of inestimable value to researchers (Mississippi Library Commission 1970). These catalogs will list publications about Mississippi including the library location of the publications. Mary Lee Nelson, Consultant for the Mississippi Library Commission, will serve as clearing house and editor. Ultimately, references to all published documentary material along with their location for Spanish Mississippi should appear in this publication. At the present time no convenient guide or catalog exists which includes such information. Of course, the Mississippi Union Catalog will not be restricted to documentary publications but will include *all* publications about Mississippi.

The general histories and textbooks on Mississippi history, by and large, have given only limited space to the Spanish era. One reason for this, of course, is that the territorial and statehood periods have been the focus of attention with much less interest in the earlier epoch. The older historians which deal with the Spanish period Monette (1846), Wailes (1854), Claiborne (1880), Riley (1894, 1900b), and Dunbar Rowland (1907a, 1925), must be used with care. The new two-volume cooperative history of Mississippi now in preparation will go a long way to update the story of Spanish Mississippi and to bring it abreast of current research. Professor Jack D. L. Holmes has been commissioned to prepare that portion of the history dealing with the period of the Spanish domination. Anyone interested in Spanish Mississippi will be indebted to Holmes (1972a).

It is impractical in the present study to discuss all of the major works which have been published about Spanish Mississippi. Most of the scholarly studies mentioned herein include suitable references in their notes and bibliographies to the older works, therefore, this paper is restricted principally to the more recent books, articles, and graduate theses and dissertations. Occasionally, however, the older studies will be referred to when they are still the accepted standard in the field. Many pages have already been filled with praises or criticisms of the early historians and their publications. A brief glance at Mississippi historiography and hence to those who have written on the period of the Spanish domination will quickly bring anyone so interested up-to-date. Listed in chronological order some of the more important historiographic and bibliographic studies are: Bassett (1902), Sydnor (1938a, b), William Baskerville Hamilton (1939), McCain (1941), Stephenson (1945), Hamilton and Neumberger (1945), McLemore and McLemore (1947), Southwood (1951), Lang (1953), Bettersworth (1957), Higginbotham (1958), Pilkington (1958), Owsley (1958), Holmes (1962b), Haynes (1967), Gass (1970), Coker (1971c) and Coker and Holmes (1971). A brief outline of the Spanish era may be found in McLemore, McLemore and Gonzales (1958) together with a short bibliography.

A review of graduate studies written about the Spanish period indicates that the work has not been provincial. To this author's knowledge the earliest dissertation

involving the Natchez district, at least in part, was written by Regina K. Crandall at the University of Chicago in 1902, entitled "Genêt's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas, 1793-94." Crandall's topic was undertaken at the suggestion and with the encouragement of Frederick Jackson Turner who showed considerable interest in the French intrigues in the Mississippi Valley while at Wisconsin. (See Turner entries in bib.) It was Turner's capable student at Harvard, Arthur Preston Whitaker, who really broke the ice, however, for a study of the Spanish years in the area. Whitaker's research in the Spanish archives and the completion of his dissertation in 1924 laid the groundwork for several excellent articles and books on the subject (1924, 1927a, b, 1928a, b, c, 1929, 1931, and 1934a, b). But among the number of no less gifted students whose work related in some degree to Spanish Mississippi, signal honors must go to Herbert Eugene Bolton and the University of California at Berkeley, where four or five dissertations and a handful of theses were completed (Ogden 1945).⁶ The University of Texas seems to be comfortably in second place in the amount of work done on this topic, followed by several universities including Alabama, Stephen F. Austin, Claremont, Columbia, Duke, Emory, Illinois, Louisiana State, Madrid, Pennsylvania, Rice, Tulane and Zaragoza.

If a single dissertation on Spanish Mississippi has been written at a Mississippi school, it was not discovered during the investigation for this report. Not much more can be said about the MA theses written in Mississippi on the topic. A checklist of Mississippi theses written between 1928 and 1952 (Bettersworth 1953) lists only one or two that can remotely be classified as pertinent to the subject. In addition, a careful screening of the issues of the *Journal of Mississippi History* which have carried a bibliography of theses and dissertations completed and in progress, reveals not more than three or four in that category (Pate 1965), and even those have been done for the most part at colleges and universities outside Mississippi. Mississippi College at Clinton has several theses which touch on the era. At the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, may be found a few theses which have some information on the Spanish period. This survey indicated that a very limited amount of work on the subject by graduate students is currently underway anywhere.

The foregoing summary of sources, historiography, and the status of graduate activities for Spanish Mississippi, brings us to the point at which we can proceed with a topical review of what has been done and what remains to be accomplished. Lack of space dictated to a large extent the topics selected for discussion in the following pages.

Mississippi is still considered an agricultural state, and it might be well to begin this survey with farming and related activities. The three major crops during the Spanish period listed in chronological order were tobacco, indigo and cotton. John Hebron Moore's work on agriculture in ante-bellum Mississippi (1958) covered the Spanish era in less than a chapter, but Moore does provide an excellent summary of the development of the cotton culture in the last years of the Spanish occupation. Holmes has also written about agriculture in the Natchez district in his admirable study of Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos (1965b). Some general studies of par-

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ticular crops and industries such as tobacco (Robert 1949), and lumbering (John Hebron Moore 1967), have pertinent references to those subjects. Several articles are worthwhile contributions including McLendon (1951) on the development of agriculture in Mississippi and Holmes on cotton gins (1969b) and indigo (1967b). However, B. L. C. Wailes (1854) is still the basic study, although the two-volume survey of Southern agriculture to 1860 by Lewis C. Gray (1933) should not be overlooked. Closely associated with agriculture is the livestock industry about which Holmes has written an article (1961b). Two studies of Natchez area plantations, Mount Ararat (Aikman 1963, and Propinquity Braden 1965), suggest the possibility of similar projects for the Spanish years. Missing is an integrated history of agriculture and livestock production and technology, with markets and prices for the Spanish domination. George Rogers Taylor (1932) and John G. Clark (1966, 1970) have furnished studies of other areas along the lines of the one suggested for Spanish Mississippi. Clark (1970), Holmes (1961b), and Taylor (1930) have given prices and market information on the subject indicating the feasibility of an integrated agricultural-economic history of the period.

There were no banks in the Natchez district until the American occupation. How then did the Natchez planters finance their operations? One way was to obtain credit from the Natchez and New Orleans merchants. But the failure of the tobacco and indigo harvests (*ca.* 1790–1796) to enable the planters to pay their debts created great distress for planter and merchant alike. Spain remedied the situation for the planter through a series of debt moratoriums. Holmes (1965b) and others have touched on the subject, but no one study covers all of the debt moratoriums, and none has indicated its impact on the merchants. By implication some conclusions can be drawn from Clark (1970). Hamilton and McCain (1948) have provided some interesting comparisons on wealth in the district, but much is still unknown. What also of the medium of exchange, or the kind of money used? According to Brough (1900) it was a confused mass of coins: doubloons, dollars, pisatrens and picayunes.

The lack of educational opportunities for all classes were notorious. There were no established schools. Holmes (1965b) mentions at least two private schoolmasters, Patrick Taggert and Valentine Thomas Dalton, but certainly more information on them must be available. Hamilton also mentions the private teachers briefly in his study of early education in Mississippi (1941). The inventory of Gayoso's library (Leonard 1943) indicates an awareness and interest in education by the Spanish governor. In the light of Spain's long history of proselytization, why weren't Gayoso's recommendations acted upon to establish church schools to woo the children of the predominantly Anglo-Saxon population to the "true faith"? The answer to that and to many similar questions about education in Spanish Mississippi remains a mystery.

If the two preceding subjects seemed barren, genealogy offers abundant opportunities. During the British era, 1763–1779, Natchez was populated by English Tories and others migrating from the eastern seaboard and from the British islands in the Caribbean. After the American Revolution, many veterans of the war disillusioned by the economic conditions in the United States elected to make Spanish

Mississippi their home. Thus, the South is filled with the descendants of these early colonists, and many a person can trace his ancestry to Natchez during the days of the Spanish dons. Land grant records, wills, Revolutionary War records and pension files, and the whole gamut of Spanish records contain abundant genealogical material. *The Mississippi Genealogical Exchange* is again being issued after a short lapse in publication. The Mississippi Genealogical Society has published a number of volumes of Bible and cemetery records indispensable to genealogists. The *Louisiana Genealogical Register* (John Preston Moore 1969) offers many helpful suggestions to those wishing to learn more about genealogical research in the Spanish records.

Archaeological work in the Natchez area has been restricted largely to the study of the pre-Spanish period. Even so, several items from Spain have been found in some of the Indian mounds in the vicinity. These artifacts date from early contact with the Spaniards, possibly from the sixteenth century and the expedition of Hernando de Soto. Brown (1926) is the standard work on archaeology in Mississippi. Other studies have been indicated in the *Journal of Mississippi History* (Jennings 1940 is an example) and in the *Newsletter* issued by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The study of Spanish architecture spurred by the annual Natchez pilgrimage has been the object of much attention including one master's thesis (Cunningham 1937), which touches on the period. Surprisingly, Rexford Newcomb's illustrated book, *Spanish-Colonial Architecture in the United States* (1937) neglects Spanish Mississippi. Brandon (1899), DeRosier (1965), Guyton (1942), Marshall and Evans (1939), Newell and Compton (1935), Oliver (1940), Pratt (1947), Smith (1941), Tyree (1964), and the U.S. Department of Interior Survey (1936) contain descriptions, drawings, pictures, locations and the history of many of the homes and taverns dating from the Spanish era. It is tempting to say that this is one topic which appears to be well worked, but the continuing output of articles and books on the subject would seem to belie such an assertion.

One of the most promising fields for future work is biography. Examples of sound biographies for the period are wanting, though Holmes' Gayoso (1965b) serves as a guide. Biographies exist on a number of persons whose lives touched Natchez during their careers. For example, General James Wilkinson has been the subject of numerous studies (see references in Holmes' essay on "Spanish Louisiana"). Some of them are apologies which have attempted to absolve Wilkinson of treasonous complicity with the Spanish, while others have damned him for those activities. Arthur H. DeRosier is currently at work on the life of one of Natchez's most distinguished personalities, the scientist, inventor, explorer, and man of many talents, "Sir" William Dunbar. Holmes is engaged in studying Philip Nolan, who inadvertently became the "Man without a Country," in Edward Everett Hale's famous story. Coker (1968, 1969, 1970) is at work on Peter Bryan Bruin, Revolutionary War hero and later a Spanish alcalde, syndic and colonel of militia at Natchez. In addition, Coker has done some work on the Collins family. Several members of this family remained in Natchez during the second Spanish period with Susanna, who

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married Charles Percy, perhaps the most prominent (Coker 1971b). Other figures have attracted attention as a review of May Wilson McBee's biography of David Smith (1959), friend of Andrew Jackson, will reveal. Far more remains to be done. Most deserving of a full treatment is the old Tory, Colonel Anthony Hutchins, who played an important if controversial role during the Spanish era. G. Douglas Inglis, a student at William Carey College, Hattiesburg, has recently indicated an interest in writing his thesis on Hutchins. Thomas Green, Sr., another of the major figures of the period, also deserves further study. Any of the Spanish commandants from 1779 to 1789 is worthy of a biography: Juan de la Villebeuvre, Carlos de Grane-Pré, Pedro Joseph Piernas, Francisco Collell, Phelipe Treviño and Francisco Bouligny. In addition, several of the military officers who served under Governor Gayoso at Natchez from 1789–1797 would make excellent studies, including Stephen Minor and José Vidal. These are only a few suggestions. For the serious student, sufficient material is available for adequate biographies of these and others from the period, all of which would make a contribution to the study of Spanish Mississippi.

The diplomatic history of the lower Mississippi Valley has attracted a number of distinguished historians. Numbered among them are Frederick Jackson Turner (1898, 1904, 1905), Samuel Flag Bemis (1926), Arthur Preston Whitaker (1924, 1927b, 1929, 1934a, b), Lawrence Kinnaird (1946–49), Abraham P. Nasatir (1968) and John Caughey (1938). Of major interest were the questions of the boundary line between the United States and Spanish West Florida and the right of the United States to navigate the Mississippi River (McLemore, 1944, Riley 1898, 1900b, and Holmes 1962d, 1964g, 1965b). During the dozen years of negotiation over these problems, others cropped up, too. The various land company enterprises like the South Carolina Yazoo Company involved such heroes as General George Rogers Clark and such villains as General James Wilkinson. The Bourbon County controversy was also a major diplomatic problem. There were plots and counterplots to separate the western country from the United States. Intrigues by Spain and the United States with the Indian tribes, the designs of Citizen Edmond Genêt to take the Spanish colonies by storm, and the antics of Philip Nolan and later Aaron Burr have been the subject of many books and even more articles. Because of its strategic position, Natchez must be considered by anyone writing on the diplomacy of the Mississippi Valley during the last decades of the eighteenth century. The diplomacy of the Natchez district will figure to some extent in several biographies already underway including Peter Bryan Bruin, William Dunbar, and Philip Nolan. It must figure prominently in similar studies of the Greens, the Hutchins, and other significant families of the district. The only doctoral dissertation currently underway involving the diplomacy of that area and era of which this author is aware is that of James J. Dwyer on "The Yazoo Territory." It is in the last stages of completion at the University of Florida.

Diplomatic history can hardly be discussed without regard to its handmaiden, military history. Again, Holmes has been one of the major contributors to our knowledge of this important topic (1962d, 1964f,g,h, 1965b,c,e, 1966e and 1968e). Several accounts depict the Spanish victory over the British during the American Revolution

(Lewis 1932, Haarman 1960–61). Nasatir (1968) and Turner (1897a) have written on Spanish defense plans for the district. Liljergren (1939) and Holmes (1965b,c) have provided brief glimpses of the Natchez militia which was officered and manned almost entirely by Anglo-Americans. Some questions continue to nag. According to Spanish law, members of the militia were protected by the *fuero militar*. To what extent did this privilege extend to the Anglo-Americans of the Natchez militia? Although the question is more properly asked for the area to the south of Natchez, did the militia organized and trained by the Spanish play an important role in the defeat of the Spanish forces of West Florida? Is this the first example of the oft-heard claim that the militia was a major factor in the ultimate victory of the Spanish colonies in their fight for independence?

Closely coupled to the defense of the district were the various immigration and colonization schemes. There has been a renewed interest in these subjects. Going beyond the work of Burson (1940), Hatcher (1921), Kinnaird (1946–49), Hammond (1932), and Whitaker (1927b), Gilbert C. Din completed his dissertation at the University of Madrid in 1960 and subsequently published two articles (1969, 1970). Coker (1970) has read a paper on Bryan Bruin and his son, Peter Bryan Bruin, and the formulation of Spanish immigration policy in 1787–1788, which will soon be in print. Charles D. Lowrey (1968) has reemphasized the Turnerian frontier hypothesis in his recent article on migration to the area. All of this work on immigration and colonization has been accomplished in the last decade. It is indicative of the new ground which has been plowed and of the new interpretations which have resulted.

Another topic on which work continues apace in spite of a legion of earlier studies is the Indian. Cushman (1899), Debo (1934), Hodge (1907), Serrano y Sanz (1916), and Swanton (1911, 1922, 1946, 1953), have been supplemented by Caughey's work on the Creeks (1938) and O'Callaghan's (1942) yet unpublished dissertation on Carondelet's Indian policy. Of especial interest to those concerned with Spanish-Indian relations is the three-volume dissertation by Vicente Cortés Alonso at the University of Madrid (1956), which hopefully will be published. But work goes on according to a report that Mary Jane McDaniel at Mississippi State University completed in 1971 a dissertation on Creek Indian relations with the United States from 1783–1792.

After this brief look at the Indian who once owned the land, it as appropriate to turn to the land itself. Geography and geology (Hilgard 1900, Nickles 1923, and Jackson 1940) can best be handled as a unit. Reasonably accurate contemporary topographic surveys of the district were made, although there is a suspicion that the reports by Philip Pittman (1770), Thomas Hutchins (1784), and Gilbert Imlay (1797) followed too faithfully the survey made by George Gauld (1769). Gauld, a Scot, served the British Admiralty in Florida from 1764–1771, and may in turn have borrowed from the work of John Lorimer, William Roberts and Bernard Romans (Charles A Gauld, 1969). Subsequent soil surveys have analyzed the surface and sub-surface soil of the area in great detail and have described the crops, pastures,

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woodlands, climate, geology and related topics (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1963). This and companion surveys of the other counties contain a series of maps depicting soil types and coverage and other information which has conveniently been reduced to map form.

The Spaniards were ardent map-makers, but unfortunately the 1966 annual issue of the *Southeastern Geographer* (Lonsdale 1966), devoted to "Early Mapping of the Southeast," did not cover the Spanish era at Natchez. Maps drawn between 1779 and 1797 have turned up in the Spanish documents (Madden 1969). A book of old maps was compiled by Charles W. Babbitt in 1902, and at last report was stored with the Natchez Chancery Court Records. But who were the map-makers of Spanish Mississippi? Were they the land surveyors, the military engineers, and/or the scientists like William Dunbar? Are there enough maps and related information to construct an historical atlas? Holmes' work on Alabama and Louisiana (1963c, 1965a, d) makes it seem likely that a study along these lines is entirely possible.

Historical geographic studies have been made of the thirty first parallel treaty line and the parts played by William Dunbar and Andrew Ellicott (Dunbar 1900, Ellicott 1814, McGroarty 1950). The "Ellicott Stone" has been the subject of a short study (Gallalee 1965). Similar works include Sternberg's article on False River and Pointe Coupée (1948). A project which has fascinated this author concerns the post-Spanish era, but would be of great interest for the earlier period too. Fortescue Cuming (1810) toured the Natchez district in 1807 and kept a journal in which he described the distances and directions between the plantations and homes of important persons along the route together with some information about the families there. To plot this journal on a map and to provide data about the families and towns visited by Cuming seems an appealing idea. Other journeys through the Natchez district also lend themselves to similar treatment (Ross and Phelps 1953).

With the modern emphasis upon environmental geography, it should be worth noting that one of the earliest ordinances designed to end indigo pollution of streams in the South was issued by Governor Gayoso in 1793 (Holmes 1961b, 1967b, Coker 1972). Central America, several islands in the Caribbean, Portuguese Brazil, and the English Carolinas were also indigo producers. Were these colonies, like the Natchez district, subjected to anti-pollution laws? Were there other man-made pollutants that required regulation by the Spanish? There are possibilities for a study of environmental pollution and the efforts to control it.

Transportation, travel, and other aspects of the great arteries of communication, the Mississippi River and the Natchez Trace, have held the spotlight for many authors of history and fiction (Bretz 1927, Carter 1942, Cotterill 1921, 1923, Daniels 1962, Jamison 1939, Leftwich 1916, Phelps 1949, 1953, Sublette and Kroll 1943, and the U.S. Department of Interior 1940a, 1941). Thomas D. Clark (1956) is a useful bibliography of early travel accounts. General Collot's journey down river in 1796 helped publicize the Natchez district as one of the finest parts of North America (Cruzat 1918). At least three M.A. theses have found the subject worthy of study, if only in part (Hicks 1963, Robertson 1961, and Stark 1969). Phelps (1949) has

added a new dimension by studying "hotels" and travel accommodations along the overland route. But the Natchez Trace is only one of a number of traces and trails used by the Spanish and their Indian allies. The National Park Service pamphlet (U.S. Department of Interior 1940a) lists and briefly describes many others which need further treatment.

Travelers along the Natchez Trace, especially those returning with profits from sales of merchandise and agricultural products in New Orleans, attracted bands of outlaws. The hair-raising episodes of Big and Little Harpe, James May, the Masons, and other cutthroats have given rise to a number of stories some true and some invented (Coates 1930, Rothert 1924, and Wellman 1964). Coming at the end of the Spanish and at the beginning of the territorial period, these outlaws would commit their crimes in United States territory and would then take refuge in Spanish Louisiana. Not infrequently they would put in an appearance at Natchez-under-the-Hill, made famous as one of the most sin-filled towns on the Mississippi. The adventures of these criminals, the efforts to capture them and to bring them before the bar of justice, their trials and executions have engaged scholars (Dunn 1970, William Baskerville Hamilton 1968, Hatfield 1965, Haynes 1960, Holmes 1963b and Edith Wyatt Moore 1958). Even the Church as a sanctuary for outlaws has not been overlooked, and reportedly the sun came up occasionally on a criminal with his finger inserted in the keyhole of the church door claiming its protection (Marshall and Evans 1939). The fast gun and the sharp knife have not lost their appeal, if current television trends are any indication; and sufficient material still exists for a good bloodcurdling story of the Natchez Trace.

Spanish justice and legal procedure for West Florida and Louisiana may be studied in a series of cases and articles that have been published in the *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* (Dart 1921a, 1923b, 1932, 1934, 1939, Dart and Porteous 1929, and Porteous 1925, 1929, 1934). But Spanish Mississippi differed from Spanish Louisiana. English was permitted in cases involving Anglo-Americans. Perhaps other exceptions to Spanish law occurred, but, since no systematic study of the law in that period exists, no one knows what the exceptions may have been, if any. Many words have been written about the marriage of Andrew Jackson and Rachel Robards in Spanish Mississippi. What laws applied? Was the marriage legal? Sparks (1870) and his successors equivocate on these questions for lack of definitive answers. Who were the lawyers and what qualifications did they possess? William Baskerville Hamilton (1953), Rowland (1935), and Hembelen and Bennett (1965) have given us an insight into the law and lawyers of the early territorial period, and it is hoped that someone will do the same for the Spanish years.

The institutional history of the Spanish regime in Mississippi has been examined briefly by Holmes (1965b), but more needs to be done. The office of commandant from 1779 to 1789 has been neglected. Wilbert James Miller (1965) in his master's thesis on the commandant at Baton Rouge provides a model for a similar project for Natchez.

Miller's dissertation on the commandant system in Spanish Louisiana is ex-

pected to be finished in 1972. Nasatir (1946) has uncovered a series of documents which contain considerable information about government employees and salaries in Louisiana and West Florida which would be of great value in an institutional history of the Natchez district.

Land grants, claims and laws have been studied in some detail. The overlap of British and Spanish grants complicated the land problem enormously. James Marvin Helms, Jr. (1955) wrote his master's thesis on land tenure in the early territorial period, 1798–1809, but concentrated on the operation of the U.S. land offices established during those years. C. Richard Arena (1954) studied the social impact of land tenure in Spanish Louisiana 1762–1803. A number of shorter studies on land have been published (Arena 1955, Burns 1928, Harrell 1946, Haynes 1962, and Eron Rowland 1916). Ample material is available and a timely contribution to the land questions would be a restudy and synthesis of the entire matter.

Events and persons living on the Spanish frontier have attracted the writers of fiction. Frank G. Slaughter utilized Pickett's account (1851) of the Natchez Rebellion of 1781 as the basis for his popular novel, *Flight from Natchez* (1955). Lucile Finlay, *The Coat I Wore* (1947) cast Anthony Hastings as the hero of her book. Hastings is obviously none other than Colonel Anthony Hutchins. James Street and Eudora Welty both have used Natchez occasionally as the locale for their stories, although neither of them has really dipped back earlier than the territorial period. Nevertheless, their books along with the two mentioned previously suggest the wide range of topics which are available in the field of historical fiction.

Public entertainment in Natchez is the subject of a master's thesis (Grantham, n.d.) which is well along at the University of Southern Mississippi. Hopefully, it will delve into the Spanish period. Laura Harrell has written an interesting article on jockey clubs and race tracks (1966) and one on horse-racing (1951). What other forms of entertainment were popular? What games of chance were employed to fleece the clientele in the taverns and bordellos at Natchez-under-the-Hill? Holmes (1970b) has managed to find some humor in the Spanish efforts to regulate liquor and gambling at Natchez.

Liquor gave rise to fighting, and often the loser was in need of medical attention. Several articles have been written on medicine and medical history (Holmes 1964c, 1969d) indicating the primitive state of that profession. A hospital existed at Natchez, but it was more akin to a first-aid station, if the reports about it are correct. Laura Harrell has been at work on the Natchez hospitals for several years. The best hospitals and physicians were located in New Orleans, but doctors did practice in Natchez. One in particular, Dr. David Phelps had a reputation with the Spaniards that was less than complimentary. Luis Faure was the Spanish military surgeon at Fort Panmure for a while. Regulations for pharmacy and surgery date from Governor Alexander O'Reilly's days (Cowen 1943). It seems obvious that the requirements for licensing doctors and surgeons at Natchez did not approach the strict standards and rigorous examinations required in New Orleans at the close of the century (Dart and Porteous 1931b). Was the old cliché that doctors buried their mistakes more

fact than fiction in Spanish Mississippi? Such thoughts lead not unnaturally to a discussion of those who helped prepare the victims for their last, long journey.

During the British years at Natchez, the Anglican Church held sway but gave way to the Catholic faith during the Spanish domination. In comparison with earlier practice, the Spanish at Natchez were surprisingly tolerant of dissenters (Cabaniss and Cabaniss 1944). Nevertheless, there was opposition to those few protestant preachers who attempted to carry on during the Spanish period. Most notable in this group were Samuel Swayze (Congregationalist), Richard Curtis, Jr. (Baptist), and Adam Cloud (Episcopal). (See Boyd 1930, Burger 1947, Burger and Capers 1946, Jones 1866, Leavell 1901, Otken 1900, and Posey 1957.) Not to be overlooked was the colorful Baptist preacher, Barton Hannon; saint to some, sinner to others. Hannon wound up confined in the stocks at Fort Panmure more because of his bellicose (drunken) nature than because of his religious inclinations. To minister to the Catholics in the district, Spain sent four Irish priests who served the congregation until Spain evacuated the area (Baudier 1939, Curley 1940, Bekkers 1902, Gerow 1939, 1941, Holmes 1966b, 1967c, and Pillar 1964). Needed is a good synthesis of religion in the district bringing together the able studies of individual denominations.

Interest in religious history may also bring with it a renewed zeal for social history including both the free and slave societies which have been neglected. William B. Hamilton has touched on the subject (1937, 1944). John Q. Anderson (1958) edited the narrative of John Hutchins, son of Anthony Hutchins, which contains a close look at the social life of the area. Minter Wood (1939) and William B. Griffen (1959–60), although dealing with Louisiana and Florida respectively, offer excellent suggestions and guidelines for a social history of Spanish Mississippi. But what of the Negro, free and slave, during this era? No adequate study has been written on these subjects. Holmes is currently working on a study of the Negro and the law of Spanish Louisiana which will no doubt shed some light on that topic for the Natchez district as well. The intense interest in Black history at the present time does not appear to have included this theme.

Last but by no means least, urban history has also commanded the attention of the historical profession in recent years. Natchez, the only real town in the district, has been the subject of a number of excellent studies. Older histories include Power (1897), Shields (1930), and Oliver (1940). In the more popular vein are the works of Harnett Kane (1947) and Marshall and Evans (1939, 1946). But Natchez was really two towns, upper and lower, and the latter, Natchez-under-the-Hill, enjoyed a reputation as the most wicked city in the West. Virginia Park Matthias (1945) has ably examined the lower town. D. Clayton James' dissertation on antebellum Natchez, covering both the upper and lower towns, was recently published (1968). According to one of its reviewers, however, this able study has not said the last word on Natchez (DeRosier 1969). Several towns, Bruinsburg and Old Greenville, flourished briefly and then ceased to exist. Coker's work on Bruin will provide a more complete picture of the landing named for him and made famous as

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the place where Grant crossed the Mississippi before the siege of Vicksburg in 1863. Howard C. Adkins (1972) just completed his dissertation on some of the extinct towns in Mississippi, but did not deal in any detail with those from the Spanish era. Thus, even the urban history of Spanish Mississippi is not yet completed.

To end on an optimistic note it should be borne in mind that editors generally have shown an inclination to accept good scholarly material from the Spanish period. It is hoped that this inventory and discussion of the Spanish years in Mississippi will provide scholars with ideas which ultimately will lead to publication and to a better understanding of the Spanish era in Mississippi history.

NOTES

1. The Mississippi Provincial Archives, Spanish Dominion (9 volumes, 1759–1820), have been microfilmed and may be purchased from the Micro Photo Division, Bell and Howell, Drawer "E," Wooster, Ohio 44691. In January 1970, the quoted price for the film was \$72.80. Several university libraries have secured copies of the microfilm edition: the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of West Florida, the University of Florida, and Florida State University among others.
2. Copies of the film are located in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, and in the John C. Pace Library at the University of West Florida. Copies have been purchased by other libraries as well. The loss of several of the original volumes from the Courthouse in Natchez, has made the complete microfilm copy indispensable. Interested parties should contact the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, P. O. Box 571, Jackson, Mississippi 39205, in regard to purchasing the microfilm.
3. Available at last report for \$22.50 from the Genealogical Book Company, 521–23 St. Paul Place, Baltimore, Maryland 21202.
4. The two-volume catalog may be purchased from the Louisiana Documents Project, Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118.
5. These volumes have been microfilmed and may be ordered from the Louisiana State Archives and Records Commission, P. O. Box 44422, Capitol Station, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804.
6. Although Bolton had taken some courses with Turner while at Wisconsin, one of Bolton's students insists that Turner had little influence on him. Professor Alfred Barnaby Thomas has stated that Bolton often told his students that it was his exposure to the Spanish documents at the University of Texas at the beginning of his teaching career that turned his attention in that direction. The conceptual differences between Turner and Bolton are briefly but well described by Ray Allen Billington in the foreword to John Francis Bannon's book, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier*, 1970.