

**A HISTORY OF THE  
FOUNDATION OF NEW  
ORLEANS (1717-1722) BY  
BARON MARC DE VILLIERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760575113

A history of the foundation of New Orleans (1717-1722) By Baron Marc de Villiers by Marc de Villiers du Terrage & Warrington Dawson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**MARC DE VILLIERS DU TERRAGE & WARRINGTON DAWSON**

**A HISTORY OF THE  
FOUNDATION OF NEW  
ORLEANS (1717-1722) BY  
BARON MARC DE VILLIERS**



# THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Vol. 3, No. 2.

April, 1920

*A History of the Foundation  
of New Orleans  
(1717-1722)*

*By Baron Marc de Villiers*

*Translated from the French by Warrington Dawson*

Published Quarterly by

THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CABILDO, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

# THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY


VOL. 3, No. 2

April, 1920



Entered to the second class mail matter June 6, 1917, at the post-office at New Orleans, La.,  
under Act of August 24, 1912.

Subscription \$2.00 per annum, payable in advance. Address, Louisiana Historical Quarterly,  
Cabildo, New Orleans, La.

  
Ramirez-Jones Printing Co.  
Baton Rouge, La.

**OFFICERS**  
**OF THE**  
**LOUISIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

GASPAR CUSACHS, President.  
JOHN DYMOND, First Vice-President.  
BUSSIÈRE ROUEN, Second Vice-President.  
HENRY RENSCHAW, Third Vice-President.  
W. O. HART, Treasurer.  
MISS GRACE KING, Recording Secretary.  
MRS. HELOISE HULSE CRUZAT, Corresponding Secretary.  
HENRY P. DART, Archivist.

**Executive Committee**

John Dymond, *Chairman*; Gaspar Cusachs, Bussière Rouen, Henry Renschaw,  
W. O. Hart, Henry P. Dart, Miss Grace King and Mrs. Heloise Hulse Cruzat.

**Editor Historical Quarterly**

JOHN DYMOND, Cabildo, New Orleans.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 3, No. 2

April, 1920

A HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF NEW ORLEANS  
(1717-1722)

*By Baron Marc de Villiers*  
*Translated from the French by Warrington Dawson*



6261  
Library

# THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. 3, NO. 2

April, 1920

## *A History of the Foundation of New Orleans (1717-1722)*

*By Baron Marc de Villiers.*

*Translated from the French by Warrington Dawson.*



### FOREWORD



LIBRARY

ATTITUDE must be allowed in the use of the term foundation, when speaking of New Orleans. According to the interpretation given, the date may be made to vary by six years, or even much more.

Since time immemorial, the present site of Louisiana's capital had been a camping-ground for Indians going from the Mississippi to the mouth of the Mobile River. As soon as the French had settled on Massacre Island, that site became the

customary landing-place for travellers on the Father of Waters. Wherefore the history of New Orleans might be said to date from the winter of 1715-1716, when Crozat demanded that a post be founded where the city now stands; or even from 1702, in which year M. de Remonville proposed the creation of an establishment "at the Mississippi Portage."

And yet, a lapse of fifteen years, which might be almost qualified as proto-historic, put a check upon the Colony's development. Then Bienville revived Remonville's project. The Marine Board at last harkened to reason, and, in concert with the Company of the West, appointed, on the 1st of October, 1717, a cashier in New Orleans.

Land was not broken, however, until the end of March, 1718. Even then, work progressed slowly, owing to the hostility of settlers along the coast. A year later, the new post consisted but of a few sheds built of boughs surrounding a "hut thatched with palm-leaves." The great Mississippi flood followed in 1719, and then came the war with Spain. New Orleans was all but abandoned. At Paris, Rue Quincampoix, marvellous drawings were displayed. But in January, 1720, Bienville could count, within the circumference of a league, "only four houses under way."

News of the flood had been considerably exaggerated by partisans of Mobile or of Biloxi. The Directors of the Company of the Indies stopped work on the new counter. There was even talk of transferring it to the Manchac Plain, about a dozen leagues farther north.

Thanks to Bienville's tenacity, New Orleans was never completely abandoned, and so managed to exist until the decision of the 23rd of December, 1721, reached Louisiana, raising the town to the rank of capital.

---

So the date for the foundation of New Orleans may be fixed at pleasure anywhere between the spring of 1717 and the month of June, 1722, when Le Blond de La Tour, the Engineer-in-Chief, compelled to go and visit the site of the capital, had no choice but to ratify purely and simply the plan drawn up a year before by Adrien de Pauger.

In 1720, Le Maire, one of the Colony's best geographers, still obstinately refused to mark the place on his map. Franquet de Chaville, the engineer, one of the founders of the town, declares, categorically in favor of the year 1722. According to Pénicaud, Father Charlevoix gives 1717. Even by eliminating 1722 and 1721

—and 1719, when the great flood occurred—the years 1717, 1718, and 1720 remain. Stoddart rejects historical subtleties and chooses 1720. (*Sketches Historical and Descriptive of Louisiana*, 1812.) More circumspect, the Chevalier de Champigny asserts in 1776, in his *Etat present de la Louisiane*: “New Orleans was founded by Bienville in 1718, 1719, and 1720.”

---

The surest date would appear to be 1718. Nevertheless, 1717, recalling the official foundation of New Orleans in Paris, might be adopted, for with towns as with men, a christening is a species of consecration. Furthermore, in French territory, where administrative formalities thrive to excess, can it be alleged that a town which boasts a cashier and a major does not exist?

In its prolonged uncertainty, the fate of New Orleans suggests that of a seed cast hap-hazard on uncultivated soil. At the end of a year it might begin to sprout, but, unable to thrust its roots firmly down, might remain latently alive, always exposed to chance gusts of wind seeking to blow it away. Luckily, the germ of the future capital took to the water as naturally as did its soil. The inundation of 1719, after very nearly drowning New Orleans, ended by settling it firmly upon the fine crescent of the Mississippi.

