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Entangled Trade: Peaceful Spanish-Osage Relations in the Missouri River Valley, 1763-1780

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**ENTANGLED TRADE: PEACEFUL SPANISH-OSAGE RELATIONS IN THE
MISSOURI RIVER VALLEY, 1763-1780**

A Masters Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of
Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts, History

By

Maryellen R. Harman

December 2017

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History

Missouri State University, December 2017

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines peaceful Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations with an emphasis on the period 1763-1780. Using specific primary source documentation, this study highlights frequent reports from Lieutenant-Governors stationed at St. Louis concerning the thriving fur trade and positive Osage economic exchanges with Spanish-licensed traders. The multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial inhabitants and the entangled nature of trade and political interactions in the Missouri River Valley region, specifically in the Upper Louisiana capital, St. Louis, complicated and sometimes undermined peace. During this period, however, the Spanish, Osage, and Missouri nations, sought to overcome these misunderstandings and emphasized instead the mutual benefits of trade and peace. The findings of this thesis challenge the characterization of the Osage as warlike and violent and demonstrate that the Osage understanding of belonging and the use of fictive kinship ties established between St. Louis and the Osage made peace possible in this region.

KEYWORDS: Osage, borderlands, territoriality, Native American, Indigenous peace, cultural conflict, Spanish Illinois, Spanish Louisiana, Missouri River Valley, St. Louis, kinship, trade

This abstract is approved as to form and content

John F. Chuchiak IV, PhD
Chairperson, Advisory Committee
Missouri State University

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Approved:

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Just as I argue for the importance of understanding the complex entanglements involving economic, social, and political interactions in the Missouri River Valley region, this project has benefited from direct and indirect contributions from a wide variety of individuals and organizations. It would be impossible to mention each individual who has helped me during this process. I hope, though, that the resulting product demonstrates my sincere appreciation for the much-needed encouragement, advice, and camaraderie that I have received. The remaining errors, of course, are mine.

I am grateful for the patience and encouragement of my fantastic colleagues, administrators, and students at North Central Missouri College. Thank you especially to our wonderful librarians who have learned far more than they ever wanted to know about Upper Louisiana in the period 1763-1800 over the past few years; thank you for listening to me as I processed through my research.

My global community of friends and fellow historians has expanded during this research process. I am especially grateful to Dr. J. Michael Francis for welcoming me into the network of graduate students while I researched at the Archivo General de Indias (AGI). Thank you to the wonderful archivists at the AGI for answering my many questions. In addition, Dr. Robert J. Moore, Jr., a Historian at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis provided much-needed encouragement at just the right time. Jana Morehouse and Sarah Chalaby, thank you for your willingness to dialogue with me from across the planet about our mutual historical pursuits.

I am deeply indebted to my committee members and mentors at Missouri State University. Dr. John Chuchiak, IV, you added me to your already-full schedule and provided the guidance and encouragement that led me to the archives in Seville, Spain. Thank you for your passion and advice; they enriched this study and encouraged me to pursue my own love of research and travel. Dr. Eric Nelson, you have tirelessly answered my many questions on such a wide variety of topics. Thank you for generously sharing your time, wisdom, and passion for world history and teaching with me. I am a better teacher and researcher because of your influence. Dr. F. Thornton Miller, thank you for widening my understanding of British Atlantic Studies. Dr. William Piston and Dr. Marlin Barber, thank you also. I have learned so much from each of my professors; thank you for pushing me to become a better researcher, teacher, and historian in general.

Finally, but most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their loving encouragement and tireless support throughout this process and my life. Thank you to my first and best teacher, my mother, who provided the educational foundation that has enabled me to learn from so many other wonderful teachers throughout my educational endeavors. To both of my parents, I owe the deepest debt of gratitude not only for your love and support, but also for always listening to yet one more discussion of Spanish Illinois, the Osage, and the Missouri, or whatever topic has my interest. Granny, thank you for encouraging my love of history and learning. To my siblings, Timothy, Annie, and Peter, thank you for being my constant friends through thick and thin. To my siblings-in-law, Lisa, Sam, and Anna, thank you for choosing to be part of our family; I am so grateful for you and for the nieces and nephews who make life so much fun.

Siempre a Dios sea la gloria.

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INTRODUCTION

On August 15, 1761 in Versailles, France, the Spaniard Jerónimo, Marqués de Grimaldi, and the Frenchman Étienne-François de Choiseul, Duke de Choiseul, acting as plenipotentiaries for their respective monarchs, signed the preliminary *Convención, o Tratado Particular entre las Dos Majestades Católicas y Cristianísimas contra la Inglaterra, Únicamente Relativa a las Circunstancias Presentes, y a la Perpetua Alianza Establecida en el Pacto de Familia* later ratified by the French and Spanish monarchs in Versailles on February 4, 1762. With this treaty, often referred to as the *Pacto de Familia* or “Family Pact,” the Bourbon monarchs, French King Louis XV and Spanish King Carlos III reaffirmed their alliance based on shared familial relations and common interests in the worldwide struggle for colonial supremacy against an increasingly powerful British Empire.¹ Unfortunately for Spain’s global interests and aspirations, their French cousins increasingly lost much of this struggle against the British in Europe, in the Americas, and around the world. By entering the Seven Years’ War (known as the French and Indian War in North America) to support France, Spain opened its own global empire to possible English attack. By the end of 1762, it had become painfully obvious to both Bourbon monarchs and their plenipotentiaries that France and her allies would lose the war and that the British diplomats had the upper hand in the treaty negotiations that resulted from the Treaty of Paris of 1763. Spain had lost some of its most prized colonies and sought to regain Cuba, the Philippines, and other important lands in these

¹ *Convención, o Tratado particular, celebrado entre SS. MM. Católica y Cristianísima contra Inglaterra relativo a la perpetua alianza establecida en el Pacto de familia y ratificación del mismo por S. M. Cristianísima, 7 de febrero, 1762, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Ramo de Estado, Legajo 3372, Exp.5.*

negotiations. Amid these increasingly threatening circumstances, the Spanish Marqués de Grimaldi and the French Duke of Choiseul met once again, this time at the French castle at Fontainebleau, and negotiated the November 3, 1762 *Acto Original Preliminar por el que S. M. Cristianísima Cede al Rey N. Sr. la Luisiana y la Nueva Orleans, y el Exmo. S. Marques Grimaldi la Acepta Sub Spe Rati, Condicionalmente*. This new Treaty of Fontainebleau of 1762, ratified by both the Spanish and French monarchs, effectively ceded all French claims to the North American lands west of the Mississippi River, and New Orleans on the eastern shore of the Mississippi River along the Gulf of Mexico coast, to Spain.² With the signing of the Treaty of Paris of 1763 that formally ended the Seven Years' War, the former French *Louisiane* became the Spanish *Luisiana* and the European powers divided the formerly French-claimed *Illinois* country that had primarily focused on trade with the northern territories in Canada, at the Mississippi River (see Figure 1).³ With this treaty, the eastern Illinois region, with its strong northern trade routes, fell under English control along with almost all of the rest of eastern North America. The western Illinois country became Spanish *Ylinoeses* or *Illinois*, with increasingly strong ties to southern trade routes along the Mississippi River and down into the Gulf of Mexico.⁴

² *Acto preliminar y otros documentos relativos a la cesión de la Luisiana hecha al Rey de España por el de Francia, Fontainebleau, 3 de noviembre de 1762*, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Ramo de Estado, Legajo 3372, Exp.6. Note: Some historians, including John Francis Bannon, refer to this treaty as the Treaty of San Ildefonso of 1762 because Carlos III signed the treaty at San Ildefonso. The preliminary articles agreed to by Grimaldi and Choiseul, however, were signed at Fontainebleau on November 3, 1762; this study uses the more conventional Treaty of Fontainebleau.

³ Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State*, A History of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 51.

⁴ John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, Histories of the American Frontier (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 191.

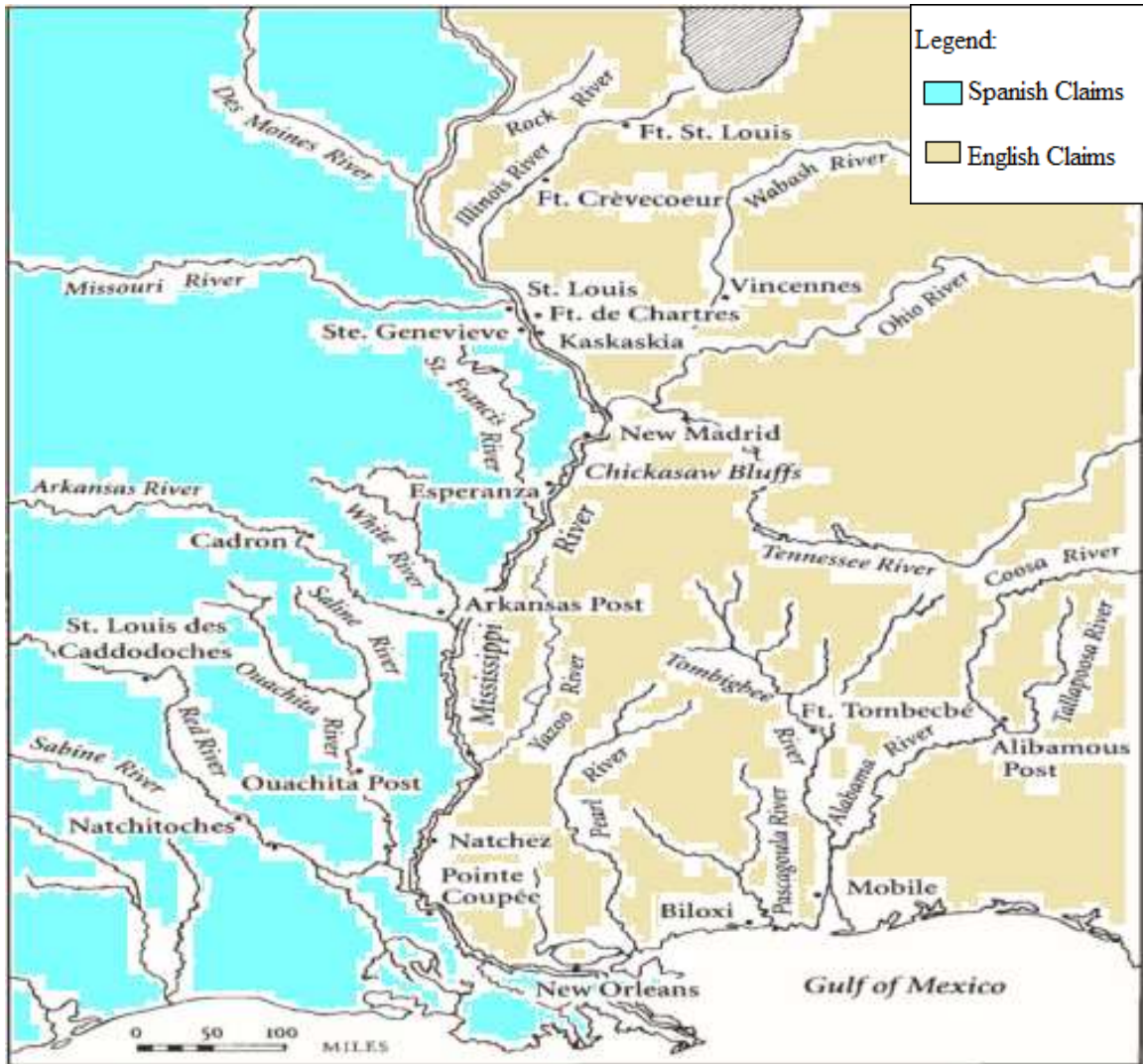


Figure 1. Map of Colonial Louisiana, 1763-1803. Adapted from Barnett, “This is Our Land: Osage Territoriality and Borderland Violence, 1763-1803.”⁵

Whereas some historians argue that the Spanish King Carlos III only reluctantly accepted France’s offer of the 820,000-square mile region generally known as Louisiana, others assert that both France and Spain viewed this region, with its rich fur trade, as valuable.⁶ In the 1970s, members of the Borderlands historiographical school depicted

⁵ Map adapted from Stephen Edouard Barnett, "This Is Our Land: Osage Territoriality and Borderland Violence, 1763-1803" (Master's Thesis, Missouri State University, 2015), 2.

⁶ For a depiction of King Carlos III as reluctant, see, for example: Claudio Saunt, *West of the Revolution: An Uncommon History of 1776* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2015), 121. For a more positive

Spanish claims in North America as an attempt to form a border or barrier between French-then-English claims and Spanish claims in North America. The school's founder, John Francis Bannon reminded scholars that Spain had prior claims to the lower Mississippi River Valley region from as far back as the 1519 Alonso Pineda and the 1541 Hernando de Soto expeditions.⁷ Bannon emphasized the claims in the Texas and New Mexico regions, which the Spanish government reorganized in the 1760s as the *Provincias Internas*. He demonstrated that conflicting Spanish and French claims in the lower Louisiana region largely stemmed from the importance of Spanish silver mines in New Mexico and the fur, gun, horse, and slave trade in "middle America." These conflicting titles to control over the region led to Spanish and French attempts to ally themselves with the many Indigenous Nations in their respective claimed regions.

When France ceded its claims over Louisiana to Spain in the early 1760s, these alliances complicated relations between the various Indigenous Nations that maintained jurisdiction over, or sought to control, their respective hunting, farming, and village grounds in the regions that Spain viewed as the provinces of Louisiana (Luisiana) and Texas (Tejas).⁸ The Spanish governors and other colonial officials, many of whom actually had served as former French officials, recognized the importance of seeking new alliances among the many Indigenous Nations and they viewed it as one of their many

depiction, see, for example: William E. Foley, *The Genesis of Missouri: From Wilderness Outpost to Statehood* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 31.

⁷ John Francis Bannon, S.J., "The Spaniards in the Mississippi Valley--An Introduction," in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804*, ed. John Francis McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 4.

⁸ Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 118.

duties during the transfer of Louisiana claims from France to Spain.⁹ For example, on January 22, 1770, Governor Alejandro O'Reilly responded to a request by Athanaze de Mézières, Commander of the post at Natchitoches, for goods for gifts for the Great Caddos (See Appendix A). In this letter, O'Reilly wrote:

You will receive, Sir, the entire amount of the presents which you regard necessary for the Indians of our environs. I have ordered M. Rancon to furnish them to you annually in your post in good condition. He will undoubtedly do this, for he is a very honest man, and will be paid promptly on delivery. I have even wished to render him responsible for the safety and the transportation of the goods, which is already arranged for.¹⁰

The Indigenous Nations with whom Mézières treated to these gifts included the Nations of the *Grandes Cados* and *Pequeños Cados*, the *Nachitos Nation*, and the *Yatassé Nation*. In New Orleans, French Governor or Director-General of Louisiana, Jean-Jacques d'Abbadie, recorded his own efforts to console and convince the leaders of the region's Indigenous Nations of the truth of the rumors that they had heard of the French cessions.¹¹ No doubt a great apprehension had fallen over the Indigenous Nations, as many had experienced earlier wars and depredations from the Spaniards. For example, d'Abbadie wrote in July 1763:

⁹ Julia Carpenter Frederick, "Luis de Unzaga and Bourbon Reform in Spanish Louisiana, 1770-1776" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 2000), 163.

¹⁰ Alejandro O'Reilly, "Letter from Governor O'Reilly to Natchitoches Post Commander Athanase de Mézières concerning Annual Presents for the Grandes Cados, etc. January 22, 1770," in *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier 1768-1780: Documents Published for the First Time, from the Original Spanish and French Manuscripts, Chiefly in the Archives of Mexico and Spain; Translated into English; Edited and Annotated*, ed. Herbert Eugene Bolton (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1914; New York: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 1:132 Hereafter *AM*.

¹¹ Jean-Jacques d'Abbadie, "Chapter IV Excerpts from the Journal of M. Dabbadie, 1763-1764," in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), 162.

I saw during the course of this month the chiefs of several savage nations: the Biloxi, the Chitimacha, the Huma, the Choctaw, the Quapaw, and the Natchez—all these nations, friends of, and attached to, the French, came to New Orleans to be informed concerning the rumors current among them of the cession of part of Louisiana to the English, and, it is said, to the Spaniards.¹²

Again, in August 1763, Director General d'Abbadie recorded reports concerning the response of the Indigenous Illinois Nations to rumors that the French had ceded their claims to the English. He reported:

The second of this month has brought us by letters from the Illinois all the details of the movements of the savages against the English. They have attacked and defeated them by trickery. M. de Villiers sent a long account of this to M. de Kerlérec which he promised me. It was current rumor here that this account was exaggerated and that he wished to make himself of value and to prolong his sojourn in the post. There set out on the first days of this month five bateaux which carried the duplicates of our first dispatches, our seconds, and the supplies of various kinds, which are judged necessary for the Illinois.¹³

As late as April 7, 1765, further north, in the Illinois country, the Spanish officials in the newly-settled city of St. Louis, including the formerly French subject Monsieur Louis Groston St. Ange de Bellerive, also sought to convince the Indigenous Nations that had grown accustomed to treating and trading with their French allies that they should now trade with and recognize the claims of the Spanish on the western shore of the Mississippi River, and the English control over the eastern shore, due to France's divided cession of its claims in the Mississippi River Valley region. St. Ange wrote to d'Abbadie of his own efforts and what he recorded as the Osage, Missouri, and Illinois reluctance to

¹² Jean-Jacques d'Abbadie, "Chapter IV Excerpts from the Journal of M. Dabbadie, 1763-1764," July, 1763 excerpt, "There Arrived Here Different Chiefs of the Savage Nations," in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), 162.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 162.

accept English overtures of peace, especially within the context of the efforts of the well-known Pontiac's Rebellion.¹⁴ In his letter, he shows his frustration that, despite his best efforts, distrust on both sides undermined the transfer of alliances and trade between the French and the English involving the region's Indigenous Nations. St. Ange observed in his missive:

Since my last writing all the Illinois Indians have returned from their winter quarters and as soon as they arrived they deliberated on the decision they were to make about the proposition of peace with M. Ross and I made at Kaskaskia. I invited them to come to my house. They all came accompanied by the principal chiefs of the Osage and Missouri. We repeated to them the same peace propositions that we made before, showing them all the advantages they would have in accepting them, and the frightful misery into which they would be plunged if they continued the war. All this did not lead them to any new determination. The one called Tamarois, a chief of the Kaskaskia, who spoke in the name of his nation, replied to us that he had done all he ought concerning what we had told him, that he had conferred with his nation, that they were all unanimously agreed to continue the war, and that they did not wish to receive the English on their lands. The Osage and Missouri said the same. Finally, sir, I inclose [*sic.*] herewith the minutes of the council. You will be able to judge their disposition, the way in which they talked, and what I, conjointly with M. Ross, said to them.¹⁵

The Osage and their Missouri allies along with the Illinois with whom the Frenchman St. Ange and British Ross discussed peace became the focus of much of the correspondence between Spanish officials stationed at St. Louis, Natchitoches, and the Arkansas Post in the 1760s-1800s (see Figure 2).

¹⁴ Pontiac's Rebellion is the name given to the 1763 war against British claims and English colonists' encroachment into the Ohio River Valley region by a confederation of Native Americans led by Pontiac of the Ottawa Nation following the Treaty of Paris of 1763.

¹⁵ Louis Groston St. Ange de Bellerive, "Copy of Letter from M. de St. Ange, Commandant at the Illinois, written to M. Dabbadie, dated April 7, 1765 concerning the Illinois, Osage, and Missouri and Efforts to Propose Peace between These Nations and the English," 1765, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period 1663-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), X:468. The M. Ross referred to here is British Lieutenant John Ross. See Patricia Cleary, *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil: A History of Colonial St. Louis* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2011), 60.



Figure 2: Map of New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana and Courses of the Missouri, Mississippi, and Other Rivers. From AGI, MP-MEXICO, 502. The Great Osage Village appears on this 1810 map.¹⁶

Although Grimaldi and Choiseul disregarded the Osage or other Indigenous Nations' reactions to the French cession of claims to Spain and England in the Treaty of Fontainebleau of 1762 and the Treaty of Paris of 1763, the commanders of these Spanish posts remained keenly aware of the importance of considering and responding to the powerful Osage and Missouri nations. Letters from these officials, such as Lieutenant-Governor Pedro Piernas, reveal the importance of the Missouri River-based fur trade to

¹⁶ *Mapa del Nuevo Mexico, Texas y Luisiana, y curso de los Rios Missouri, Mississippi, &c.*^a AGI, Mapas y Planos, MP-MEXICO, 502.

the Spanish officials and their French, Spanish, and other subjects and the ability of the combined Osage and Missouri efforts to subvert that trade (See Appendix C).¹⁷ Spanish officials reported the Osage nation's ever-expanding claims in the region roughly bounded by the Missouri, Mississippi, and Arkansas Rivers during the 1770s-1790s and the tensions with other nations that these expanded claims caused. This thesis seeks to discuss the entangled histories of Osage and Spanish claims in the Missouri River Valley region in the late-1700s and to identify ways in which their competing and complementary jurisdictions demonstrated interdependence and the importance of the role of belonging in this region.

At times, these interactions became characterized by conflict, especially as each group used violence or threats of force to shape their interactions with each other and with other Indigenous and European groups. Even amidst these periods of discord, however, trade and cooperation remained important. Emphasizing violence while minimizing these more peaceful interactions gives undue attention to specific members of the Osage and Spanish communities, and certain regions in which these interactions occurred, whereas examining times when peace and trade remained the focus during the

¹⁷ Pedro Joseph Piernas (birth unknown-March 28, 1792) a Spanish military official who rose to the rank of commandant of Upper Louisiana in 1768 and served as the first Lieutenant-Governor of Spanish Illinois 1770-1775. When Piernas assumed the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Louisiana under Governor Alejandro O'Reilly, he faced a general population, mainly of French and Indigenous origins, which at first rejected the Spanish government. O'Reilly and Piernas astutely appointed many of the French colonists to important posts and instilled a less oppressive government, thereby gaining the colonists' support. However, both contemporary officials and later historians have blamed Piernas for failing to respect the pre-existing French trade and gift-giving cycle with the local Indigenous groups and his overall lack of diplomacy. For specific information on the life and work of Pedro Piernas see his widow's request for a military pension: *Peticion de Doña Felicitas Robino de Port Neuf de una Pensión de viudedad*, 1795, Archivo General de Simancas, Ramo de Secretaría de Estado y del Despacho de Guerra, Legajo 7227, Exp. 65, 26 folios.

period 1763-1780 gives a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of Spanish-Indigenous relations in the Upper Louisiana Territory.

Although incidents of Osage violence undoubtedly occurred, this thesis argues that scholars have paid far too much attention to these acts of aggression and have ignored the episodes or indications of peace recorded by the same Spanish officials who wrote about conflict. These more peaceful interactions demand our attention and provide us with a more complex, entangled view of Spanish-Indigenous relations in Spanish Illinois. The Osage nation, consisting of the Little and Great Osage and, after the 1770s, the Arkansas Osage, came to exercise disproportionate geographic, social, political, and economic influence in Spanish Illinois. Their dominance of the fur trade and of commercial routes in general in the region commanded the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor stationed at St. Louis, the other Lieutenant-Governor stationed at Natchitoches along the Texas-Louisiana border, and the commandant of the Arkansas Post along the Arkansas River. In addition the Osage nation's larger population and flexible and non-centralized political structure made it possible for independent groups of Osage warriors to attempt to control trade between the Spanish and their subjects who sought direct commercial exchanges with tribes west of the Osage by attacking or stealing from traders who attempted to sail up the Missouri River, or other rivers, to pursue trade with these western tribes.¹⁸ Smaller tribes, on the other hand, with their limited numbers and influence, likely found it more worthwhile to seek more peaceful means to curb Spanish control or European trade with other nations. When the Osage, or individual or sub-groups within the Osage, used violence or threats of violence or stole from Europeans in

¹⁸ Juan José Andreu Ocariz, *Penetración Española Entre los Indios Osages* (n.p.: Zaragoza, 1964), 8.

the Missouri and Arkansas River Valley regions, Spanish officials and their subjects, including traders and hunters, took notice. These events found their way into the historical record in the form of letters and reports written by these officials to the Governor in New Orleans or to other members of the Spanish governing bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the Spanish and Osage both had a vested interest in maintaining peace. They both needed trade and they found it mutually beneficial to develop trading partnerships. Reciprocally different views of each group's roles as "others" within the broader "international community" or shared misunderstandings about war, peace, and kinship, however, often became the sources of confusion and conflict.

The more violence-focused incidents recorded by these officials represented one aspect of "typical" regional relations between the Spanish and Osage, but as this thesis will argue peace and trade, rather than violence and conflict, mostly served as the "norm" in Spanish-Osage relations. Solely focusing on conflict and warfare skews the picture and our understanding of Spanish-Indigenous relations in the Missouri River Valley. Aggression-focused scholarship ignores the trade that continued, sometimes even despite government orders, in this region between Indigenous, European, and Creole individuals and groups. In addition, it minimizes the importance of the relationships that formed and continued to matter to families and within the context of tribal relations and trade and the efforts of these individuals and groups to maintain peace. Focusing on violence ignores times when trade flourished, and Spanish-Osage relations remained more peaceful. By highlighting warfare, previous scholarly studies have overemphasized conflict and given the impression that the Osage and their Missouri allies and Spanish constantly fought

with each other, or with other Indigenous Nations, and that the Spanish and their Indigenous allies lived in constant fear of the threat of Osage violence.

This thesis is divided into four main chapters as it examines Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations with emphasis on peaceful interactions during the period from the 1760s and 1770s. Chapter 1 reviews the historiography, ethnography, and primary sources that informed this study. Chapter 2 explores the background and context of the area that became Upper Louisiana with emphasis on early Osage and Missouri migrations and settlement patterns and the introduction of the French into the Lower Missouri River Valley region in the pre-1763 period. In addition, this chapter also analyzes Auguste Chouteau's St. Louis "foundation myth," St. Louis's richly multi-ethnic, multi-racial community, and the entangled interactions that St. Louis and its settlers had with the Missouri and Osage from the beginning. It then redefines the region and its changes after 1763 and seeks to examine the way that Spanish officials sought to work within this diverse community.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of war, peace, and conflict studies for some theoretical background for this study. It then focuses on Osage views of peace and conflict and ways that Spanish misunderstandings of Osage concepts of trade, gifts, and borders sometimes led to violence. Finally, it compares Spanish and Osage conceptions of belonging and ways in which Natchitoches and the Arkansas Post opened themselves up to violence by remaining outside of the St. Louis-based kinship network with the Osage.

Chapter 4 emphasizes the availability of documentary evidence of peace in Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the 1760s-1770s. It considers the

importance of Antoine Chouteau as evidence of a cultivation of peaceful Spanish-Osage interactions in the 1760s and examines the entangled nature of trade and inter-ethnic relations in Spanish Illinois. It discusses the early optimism of Spanish officials' reports concerning the Osage and Missouri and the negotiating, testing and maintaining of Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the early 1770s. The chapter also acknowledges the violence associated with the Arkansas River Valley and explores ways that the area's entangled relations, including particularly those of Athanase de Mézières, undermined peace. The chapter then focuses on the year with the most positive reports from St. Louis involving peace, good order, and strong trade in Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in 1774, before looking at the burgeoning trade and continued peace in these interactions even as the British in the east threatened Spanish peace during the American Revolutionary War.

Finally, the conclusion builds on Chapter Four by examining, briefly, the heightened tensions of the 1780s-1790s, while seeking to contextualize the discussion of violence and peace in these decades. The thesis concludes by examining this study's findings and explores the possible future expansion of the research.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHODOLOGY

[I]t is well that the English do not come here, for we shall always aid our brothers in preserving their lands; besides we know only the Frenchman for our father. Never have we heard our ancestors speak of another nation. They have always told us that it was the French who gave us life and supplied our needs. They advised us never to loose their hand. We still hold it, my father, and it shall never escape from us.

- Chiefs of the Osage and Missouri to St. Ange and Ross, 1765.¹⁹

In the mid-1760s, as rumors spread of the treaty-based transfer of French territorial claims over Louisiana to the Spanish and the division of Illinois between England and Spain, the Osage and Missouri must have wondered how and why these Europeans thought that they could buy, sell, and cede lands over which the Osage and other Indigenous Nations claimed sovereignty. The decisions made by Grimaldi and Choiseul, or by Kings Louis XV and Carlos III, in Europe did not, at first, directly impact the lives or trade interactions between the Osage and the area's French traders. With time, however, as Spanish officials replaced French leaders at newly-settled St. Louis and other trading and governmental posts, the Osage recognized the need to respond to these changes that began with decisions made from thousands of miles away. Similarly, the history of the Osage and their relations with the French, Spanish, and later Americans, and that of the Missouri River Valley region and its multi-ethnic communities and

¹⁹ "Speech by the Chiefs of the Osage and Missouri" as recorded in Louis Groston St. Ange, "Copy of Letter from M. de St. Ange, Commandant at the Illinois, written to M. Dabbadie, dated April 7, 1765 concerning the Illinois, Osage, and Missouri and Efforts to Propose Peace between These Nations and the English," 1765, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period 1663-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), X:479.

interactions in general, has been marked by a tendency for scholars, seemingly writing from afar, to assign geographic boundaries based on European or American constructs to their studies without considering the people who worked, traded, lived, and interacted within these regions.

Frontier and Borderlands Historiography

In the late-19th century, Frederick Jackson Turner helped shape this discussion in a series of essays that included, most famously, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” In this essay, Turner, a professor from the University of Wisconsin, offered the concept of the frontier as a way of viewing United States, or American, history. From his focus on U.S.-based expansion, Turner asserted that the so-called West, really, the middle of the North American continent or the Mississippi River Valley region, acted as one of a series of frontiers that English and then American people settled. For example, Turner wrote:

American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West. Even the slavery struggle...occupies its important place in American history because of its relation to westward expansion.

In this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization. Much has been written about the frontier from the point of view of border warfare and the chase, but as a field for the serious study of the economist and the historian it has been neglected.²⁰

²⁰ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History* (Auckland: Floating Press, 2014), digital file.

Subsequent scholars have demonstrated the over simplicity and romanticization of Turner's "Frontier Thesis," which viewed the Americans as the "civilizing" force in a seemingly dualistic struggle between civilization and wilderness. In one particularly telling excerpt from a subsequent essay from 1909, "The Significance of the Mississippi Valley in American History," Turner wrote that the Mississippi Valley's importance to American history:

was first shown in the fact that it opened to various nations visions of power in the New World—visions that sweep across the horizon of historical possibility like the luminous but unsubstantial aurora of a comet's train, portentous and fleeting.

Out of the darkness of the primitive history of the continent are being drawn the evidences of the rise and fall of Indian cultures, the migrations through and into the great Valley by men of the Stone Age, hinted at in legends and languages, dimly told in the records of mounds and artifacts, but waiting still for complete interpretation.

Into these spaces and among savage peoples, came France and wrote a romantic page in our early history, a page that tells of unfulfilled empire. What is striking in the effect of the Mississippi Valley upon France is the pronounced influence of the unity of its great spaces.²¹

Significantly, Turner depicted the Mississippi Valley during the pre-1800s period as a uniform, wild, primitive space, a frontier with fertile possibilities that waited for the Americans to settle and cultivate it so that it could reach its potential. To Turner, Indigenous Nations such as the Osage and Missouri seemingly had histories, but their histories remained hidden behind a veil of darkness, primitivism, and uniformity. Similarly, although Turner acknowledged the French and Spanish in this region, he viewed the French and Spanish periods as romantic, but largely unproductive. Turner did not mention the men and women of African descent who settled in this region before the

²¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Mississippi Valley in American History," in *The Frontier in American History* (Auckland: Floating Press, 2014), digital file.

Americans, whether enslaved or free; to do so would have undermined his depiction of the period of French, Spanish, and Indigenous claims of sovereignty as homogenous and uncivilized.

Turner's "Frontier Thesis" helped to shape American scholars' views of North American continental history, especially United States history, as a series of east-to-westward moving frontiers that moved in waves over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. From this perspective, the history of the West included the Missouri and Mississippi River Valley regions and placed Indigenous Nations' histories within the conceptual framework of the Frontier. Herbert Eugene Bolton's "Spanish Borderlands" historiographical school emerged from Bolton's training under Turner. Whereas Turner focused more on east-to-west studies of the British colonies and then the United States as they expanded westward, Bolton argued for the idea of "Greater America" with the Western Hemisphere as the unit of study. Significantly, Bolton trained his "Boltonian" graduate students during the first half of the 20th century at the University of Texas and University of California, universities in regions where Spanish and Mexican historical and cultural influence remain obvious to the present. The western locations of these universities helped shape the Boltonian emphasis on a sort of west-to-east Spanish border or frontier that sought to correct the Turner school's east-to-west bias. Boltonians remained keenly aware of the more English- and U.S.-based focus of most North American histories and often self-consciously located their own, more Spanish American-focused histories within these contexts.

For example, Mary A. O'Callaghan's "An Indian Removal Policy in Spanish Louisiana," from *Greater America: Essays in Honor of Herbert Eugene Bolton*, clearly

shaped her topic and title around the Jacksonian Indian Removal Bill of May 28, 1830. While this may simply be evidence of O'Callaghan attempting to begin with a topic more familiar to her readers, it also reflected the frequent references to the American officials and their policies in the 1790s that she discussed in this essay. She wrote, for example, "Beginning as a defense measure and as a means of checking American westward expansion, the removal policy of the Spaniards was characterized by the use of persuasion, special agents, councils, and agreements."²² Statements such as this minimized the role of other, non-Spanish or American, actors in the process, but acknowledged the importance of the Spanish and the Indigenous Nations in the Mississippi Valley. Due to the subject, and the need for a United States against which the Spanish, according to O'Callaghan, formed their defensive policy, this essay focused on the 1790s, with a brief mention of the 1763-1780s period. The Osage made a few appearances in this essay, largely as the perpetrators of violence against the Spanish or the Indigenous Nations that the Spanish officials sought to relocate. For example, "the Shawnee village whose members, after a time of wandering, trial, and Osage opposition, came to settle near Cape Girardeau."²³ Later, "The Shawnee village became a rallying point to which the Peorias and Kaskaskias, preyed upon by Osage raiders, gravitated as to the center of the strongest tribe submissive to Spain."²⁴ Throughout this essay, O'Callaghan depicted the Osage as violent without exploring reasons for their

²² Mary A. O'Callaghan, "An Indian Removal Policy in Spanish Louisiana," in *Greater America: Essays in Honor of Herbert Eugene Bolton* (Regents of the University of California, 1945; Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), 281.

²³ *Ibid.*, 286.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 287.

aggression; the focus on a Spanish and American border of the Boltonian school tended to minimize the possibility of an Osage borderlands or attempts to secure their own boundaries.

In 1942, Lawrence Kinnaird, one of Bolton's Ph. D students, wrote that, "Professor Bolton dared to suggest that a knowledge of the New World might be of more practical value to Americans."²⁵ Bolton's focus on the idea of "Greater America" and his and the Boltonians' emphasis on American, as opposed to United States, history that allowed for the introduction of Canadian and Latin American histories into the English- and Atlantic Seaboard-based discussion clearly has had ramifications for American history courses at the secondary and postsecondary levels in the United States. Kinnaird followed in his mentor's footsteps and helped make available to English-speaking scholars many Spanish and French documents in translation. His *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, a three-volume collection and translation of documents from Spanish and Mexican archives has been integral to this and many studies of the Mississippi River Valley region during the Spanish period.

Abraham P. Nasatir, another early scholar whose insistence on the use of the phrase "Spanish Illinois" has left an important impression on scholars of this region, wrote as a Boltonian "Borderlands" historian. His *Borderland in Retreat: From Spanish Louisiana to the Far Southwest* helped shape the borderlands approach to studying this region's history. In it, he followed Bolton's tradition of viewing American colonial history as a series of struggles between the British and Spanish empires and later between

²⁵ Lawrence Kinnaird, Quoted in "The Americas Concept Emerges, 1919-1929," in *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, by John Francis Bannon, *Histories of the American Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 54.

Spain and the United States for control. Within this view, scholars discussed the idea of shifting borderlands, or of shifting emphases over time, with Louisiana as a barrier between the important New Spain silver mines in the southwest and English encroachment.²⁶ During this same period, Jose A. Armillas Vicente, writing from Spain, demonstrated the far reach of the frontier or borderlands approach in his *El Mississippi, Frontera de España: España y los Estados Unidos ante el Tratado de San Lorenzo*. Like many Boltonian Borderlands works, Nasatir's *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785-1804* emphasized the 1780s-early 1800s, when Spanish Louisiana faced the U.S. as the new claimants of the eastern side of the Mississippi River. Despite its post-1780s emphasis, which overlooked the major focus of this study, the 1760s-1770s, Nasatir's introduction and translation of these documents helped remind scholars of the existence of the rich resources available in the Spanish archives and sought to explain Spain's early reluctance to claim the Mississippi River Valley region.²⁷

St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve Historiography

More recently, a group of scholars who are sometimes classified as Neo-Turnerians due to their borderlands approach sought to understand Spanish colonial Upper Louisiana. These included David J. Weber's *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, Stephen Aron's *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland*

²⁶ Abraham P. Nasatir, *Borderlands in Retreat: From Spanish Louisiana to the Far Southwest*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 16.

²⁷ A. P. Nasatir, ed., *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785-1804* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 1:2.

to *Border State*, and Stuart Banner's *Legal Systems in Conflict: Property and Sovereignty in Missouri, 1750-1860*. Their approaches contextualized St. Louis as a frontier or borderlands town and fur trade hub while they and other scholars contrasted the trade-focused St. Louis with Ste. Genevieve as a more agrarian-based settlement. Throughout, they showed that that these settlements developed within a zone of multiple ethnicities, cultures, and legal systems. Weber's *The Spanish Frontier in North America* and Aron's *American Confluence* demonstrated the importance of the fur trade and other forms of exchange within this region. They also highlighted the ethnic and racial complexity of this frontier or borderlands area in which many cultures interacted regularly. Aron's *American Confluence*, especially, formed part of a broader discussion of borderlands that complements the entangled histories approach to studying this region. Stuart Banner's *Legal Systems in Conflict: Property and Sovereignty in Missouri, 1750-1860* focused on a different aspect of sovereignty and source of conflict than most of these other works. Instead of discussing Osage-Spanish conflict or striving for sovereignty, Banner analyzed the roles of the French, Spanish, and American legal systems in shaping Missouri territorial and then state law and government.

New Social Historiography

An understanding of the context in which St. Louis developed and its multi-ethnic, multi-racial character provides an important backdrop for this discussion of Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations that centers on St. Louis as an important settlement, fur trade hub, and governing center, and indeed, the region's strongest Spanish presence during this period. In an excellent example of this, *The World, the*

Flesh, and the Devil: A History of Colonial St. Louis, by Patricia Cleary, a New Social Historian, highlighted the importance of the seemingly more mundane aspects of life that made up early St. Louis's history by including a broad swath of early St. Louis society. Her discussions of the Chouteau family and their interactions with the Osage and other Indigenous people groups, in addition to a chapter on slavery in this settlement, particularly highlight these rich identities. Another New Social Historian, Julie Winch, in *The Clamorgans: One Family's History of Race in America* examined the Clamorgan family's navigation of the complexities of race in America beginning with Don Santiago Clamorgan and Esther, Clamorgan's slave and partner who may have borne his children.²⁸ With Esther's help back at home in St. Louis, Clamorgan became a successful fur trader in the 1780s, shortly after the period that this study examines. Judith A. Gilbert, in her chapter on "Esther and Her Sisters: Free Women of Color as Property Owners in Colonial St. Louis, 1765-1803," from the book, *Women in Missouri: In Search of Power and Influence*, examined ways in which specific enslaved women of African descent asserted their influence and became fairly wealthy property owners during this period.²⁹ These books focused on race relations and women of African descent, rather than the Osage or Spanish officials, but they informed this study by demonstrating the multi-layered, multi-faceted society to which the Spanish officials came and in which they lived. The entangled nature of Indigenous and European interactions in the Missouri and

²⁸ Julie Winch, *The Clamorgans: One Family's History of Race in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011). Clamorgan is also referred to as Sieur Jacques Clamorgan, depending on the language used in the source.

²⁹ Judith A. Gilbert, "Esther and Her Sisters: Free Women of Color as Property Owners in Colonial St. Louis, 1765-1803," in *Women in Missouri History: In Search of Power and Influence*, by LeeAnn Whites, Mary Neth, and Gary R. Kremer (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2004), 32, EBSCOhost eBook Collection.

Mississippi River Valleys, however, dwarfed even these rich, complex interactions within the St. Louis settlements.

In *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis*, William E. Foley and C. David Rice examined the settlement of St. Louis and the prominent role of Auguste and Pierre Chouteau, and the entire Chouteau family in this village. More recently, Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon Person's *St. Louis Rising: The French Regime of St. Ange de Belleve* provided an important counter-balance to the typical "founding myth" of St. Louis. Although careful not to simply replace the Chouteaus and Pierre Laclède with a new "founding father" of sorts, the authors pointed to discrepancies in the St. Louis founding myth as told by Auguste Chouteau in his journal fragment, a document written years after the event. This book, along with Ekberg's other writings, demonstrated the importance of viewing Spanish-Indigenous relations in the Mississippi and Missouri River confluence region around St. Louis within the broader framework of earlier French-Indigenous alliances and trade networks.

Studies of Ste. Genevieve, the other main settlement in Spanish colonial Upper Louisiana, although not the main focus of this research, have informed this thesis and provided helpful context and contrast with St. Louis and its surrounding settlements. Bonnie Stepenoff's *From French Community to Missouri Town: Ste. Genevieve in the Nineteenth Century* focused more on the 1800s than the Spanish colonial period. Its discussion of the complexities of this town that remained primarily French, despite Spain's influence, and its transition in the early 19th century to include U.S. settlers and other "outsiders" to the agricultural and mining-based community revealed the importance of understanding communities as ever-changing based on the populations

with whom they interacted. In addition, Carl J. Ekberg has written many important studies of the Upper Louisiana region and Ste. Genevieve and its surrounding areas. Notable among them are *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* and *François Vallé and His World: Upper Louisiana before Lewis and Clark*, each of which provided context for the French background that influenced Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the 18th century.

Osage and Missouri Historiography

During the early 20th century, John Joseph Mathews wrote a series of books that discussed the Osage and reminded scholars of their importance in the Missouri and Mississippi River Valley region's history. His *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters* attempted to trace the Osage from their own creation or founding myths, as recorded by the elders of the tribe with whom he talked as a child or who he interviewed as a scholar later in his life. The grandson of John Mathews, head of the trading post at Fort Gibson at the Osage Mission in what became known as Osewego, Kansas, Mathews lived among the Osage from his birth and seems to have gained the respect of the elders when he showed interest in Osage history as a young scholar.³⁰ Although Mathews wrote this book half a century ago, it still provides insight into the way that the Osage elders, and Mathews himself, remembered or wanted to record their history. The focus on the Osage complemented the more European-focused writings of other scholars. Mathews's discussion of the Osage, especially in their early years, suffered from a tendency to

³⁰ John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), viii.

portray pre-European North America as less nuanced or complex than recent scholars, such as Daniel Richter and Kathleen DuVal, have suggested, but despite this difficulty, the book represents an excellent attempt to demonstrate the richness of Osage history and heritage. In the portions that included European-Osage interactions, Mathews emphasized the importance of trade and of understanding the strength and power of the Osage in the heart of the North American continent. Importantly, Mathews alluded to, but then deemphasized, the role of trade as a cause of conflict or tension between the French and Spanish and the Osage, especially when either the European traders or the tribes to the west of the Osage attempted to circumvent trade with the Osage by cutting out this nation as the middleman.³¹ Since direct European trade with their enemies to the west, such as the Caddoan Pawnees, or Comanches, threatened to strengthen these nations in their conflicts with the Osage, it is little wonder that the Osage objected to this trade, especially with its resulting loss of Osage control and profit.

Another book to which Nasatir contributed alongside Gilbert C. Din, *The Imperial Osages: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley*, relied heavily on European perspectives and emphasized violence as it portrayed the Osage as an “imperial” nation. Despite these tendencies, this work remains one of the best sources for scholarly discussions about the Osage.

More recently, the “New Indian History” school has impacted Osage and other Indigenous historiography, which, in turn, has influenced borderlands and other approaches to colonial histories such as that of Louisiana/Spanish Illinois. Richard White’s *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region*,

³¹ Ibid., 237.

1650-1815 focused on the Great Lakes region and encouraged historians to use more ethnohistorical approaches to attempt to “tease” out Native voices from the available sources. White defined the “middle ground” as “the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages.”³² This concept, and his reminder that people in the middle ground influenced and became influenced by each other pushed scholars to reconsider the way that they discussed Native-European interactions. Willard H. Rollings’s *The Osage: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony on the Prairie-Plains*, building on *The Middle Ground*, reintroduced the ethnography and ethnohistory methodologies to the study of Osage history. More recent works such as DuVal’s *Native Ground* and Richter’s *Facing East from Indian Country* have complemented these earlier books. DuVal and Richter pushed the idea of “middle ground” further and added to the field a discussion of the idea of “native ground” and the importance of claims of being “indigeneity” to a region as a mechanism for establishing legitimacy of territorial control. They especially demonstrated that Indigenous people groups such as the Quapaw (Arkansas) and Osage who sought to depict themselves as “native” used this concept to shape European views of regional authority as their histories became increasingly entangled. Whereas White’s “middle ground” discussion centered on relatively equal relations, DuVal’s “native ground” emphasized that powerful Indigenous Nations such as the Osage and Quapaw used claims of “nativeness” or “indigeneity” to regions such as the Arkansas or Mississippi River

³² Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), XXVI.

Valley regions as a form of diplomacy, although, they had moved to these regions in previous years because of other population movements.

F. Todd Smith, in “A Native Response to the Transfer of Louisiana: The Red River Caddos and Spain, 1762-1803” provided another form of contextualization for this study by discussing the Red River Caddos and other nations along the Texas-Louisiana border and their responses to the transfer of power from France to Spain in Louisiana. Especially important to this study is Smith’s discussion of the differing approaches to trade among Texas and Louisiana governors and the resulting decision by both to follow more-or-less French trading patterns.³³ Smith stressed the importance of Caddo willingness to seek an alliance with the Spanish once they learned about the transfer of territory; these former French allies who had pushed back against Spanish encroachment in their region became one of the strongest Spanish allies in the area.

Although a small book in comparison with many Osage-focused works, Michael Dickey’s *The People of the River’s Mouth: In Search of the Missouri Indians* added a much-needed discussion of the Missouri nation to scholarship concerning this region. Dickey used *Missouria* to distinguish between the Indigenous people group and the river that came to bear their name, but most scholars use “Missouri” to refer to both the people and the river. The overall scarcity of scholarship and documentary evidence on the Missouri nation or its members makes this book especially important. Adding the Missouri nation to the discussion of the Osage, and the French, Spanish, and other traders, hunters, soldiers, settlers, and other people of European descent, or even the

³³ F. Todd Smith, "A Native Response to the Transfer of Louisiana: The Red River Caddos and Spain, 1762-1803," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 37, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 170, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4233287>.

enslaved or free persons of African descent, who lived in this region and interacted with each other further reminds us of the rich cultural, ethnic, and racial complexity of this region. Dickey collected as much information as possible from the available sources and his book included a helpful comparison between the Missouri nation and other Siouan cultures with whom they shared many similarities in language and tradition.³⁴

Significantly for this study, Dickey discussed the close alliance between the Osage, especially the Little Osage, and Missouri nations in the 18th century, despite some times or threats of violence between them.³⁵ In addition, he highlighted the complexity of identities and associations of European traders in the Mississippi and Missouri River Valley regions. These included the prohibited-but-existent former French-Canadian traders who like Mézières, switched allegiance from France to their new sovereign and traded under the British flag in English- and Spanish-claimed territories. The discussion of changing allegiances and complex identities again reminds us of the entangled nature of identities, loyalties, and trade relations in this region and the way that these entangled histories often powerfully impacted and undermined Spanish-Missouri, and Spanish-Osage, relations.³⁶ Overall, *The People of the River's Mouth* contextualized both Missouri-Osage and Missouri-Spanish relations and provided a much-needed discussion of the Missouri nation.

³⁴ Michael Dickey, *The People of the River's Mouth: In Search of the Missouri Indians* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2011), 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

Entangling Spanish-Osage Historiography

Kathleen DuVal's *Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* and *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*, along with Eliga H. Gould's "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery," deserve primary credit for helping to shape this study. Their examinations of the entangled histories that included the Spanish provided the framework within which I have sought to understand the more peaceful times of Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations as they centered around St. Louis and the Missouri River Valley region. Gould's study demonstrated the value of the "entangled histories" approach. He reminded his reader that "[d]espite some apparent similarities, 'the new England and new Spain' were ultimately 'not equivalents,' as Francisco Valdes-Ugalde has written, and at no point were their national boundaries and histories unproblematically separate."³⁷ Gould's reminder about the many communities to which individuals belonged, even though many histories divide them by national affiliation, has informed this study's approach. Although this thesis attempts to examine Spanish, Osage, and Missouri interactions with roughly national identities at the forefront, it also acknowledges and seeks to understand the complexity of identities in this multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-national region in which individuals had to navigate the layered claims of sovereignty and in which no one group retained or could honestly claim total control.

Kathleen DuVal's *The Native Ground* sought to understand the power base involved with interactions between European colonists and Indians in the Louisiana area.

³⁷ Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 785, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40006670>.

Although DuVal's book focused especially on the Arkansas River Valley, it also included the Mississippi River Valley and sometimes reached to the Missouri River Valley. The Quapaw (Arkansas) nation remained the primary focus of *Native Ground*, but DuVal also examined the Osage and their interactions with the French, Spanish, and Americans who had to negotiate with the powerful Quapaw and Osage in these regions. This important text built on Daniel K. Richter's *Facing East from Indian Country: a Native History of Early America* that emphasized the importance of understanding the power of Indigenous Nations and the dependence of European and Creole colonists on networks that they formed with these powerful nations for existence, settlement, and trade in the Ohio River Valley. Like Richter's book, *Native Ground* stressed the strength of Quapaw, Osage, and other Indigenous Nations in the Arkansas and Mississippi River Valleys. DuVal expanded the discussion to emphasize the interdependence that emerged within and between the European and Creole settlers and the Indigenous Nations with whom they interacted. DuVal's comparison and contrast of the Quapaw and Osage pointed to the willingness of the Quapaw to cooperate and welcome settlers, both Indigenous and European, within their boundaries, as long as these individuals submitted to Quapaw sovereignty and maintained their alliances with the Quapaw. DuVal depicted the Osage, on the other hand, as more warlike and aggressive, demonstrating that they used violence to control and expand their territory and to control interactions with European and Indigenous Nations alike. Both *Native Ground* and *Facing East from Indian Country* are important to this study because they did not, like many former studies, assume that the European colonists had greater power and influence than the Indigenous people in their respective regions. One limitation of both, however, is the emphasis on control through

violence, in a form of agency-focused study, which tended to minimize periods of more peaceful interactions or signs that even in the midst of conflict, peace and trade remained important.

Stephen Barnett's recent Master's Thesis, "This Is Our Land: Osage Territoriality and Borderland Violence, 1763-1803" provided balance to this study by discussing periods or incidents of violence that complement and contrast with the evidence of periods of peace discussed in this thesis. Barnett also demonstrated the importance of both Osage and Spanish understandings of territorial control, borders, and claims to sovereignty. Osage concepts of borderings remained just as important as Spanish or European notions of borders or boundaries; the conflicts between these nations' socially constructed ways of viewing landownership, territorial claims, and belonging often resulted in violence or threats of violence in this region. Although this thesis argues that scholars have over-emphasized violence and warfare in Spanish-Osage interactions, Barnett's discussion demonstrated the importance of understanding and contextualizing the Osage use of violence. Barnett's focus on Osage ethnohistory showed a willingness to reconsider Osage-French and Osage-Spanish, in addition to Osage-other Indigenous Nation, relations in light of more recent understandings of the Osage nation. It reassessed the way that the Europeans who wrote about the Osage depicted these individuals and the nation and demonstrated that some of the negative stereotypes of the Osage probably stemmed more from a misunderstanding of this nation than from their own actions.

In addition, Barnett importantly noted that sometimes incidents of violence that other Indigenous Nations or Spanish officials blamed on the Osage may be attributed to

other individuals or groups.³⁸ This appears to have occurred especially often in the Arkansas River Valley region, an area known for its violence, competing sovereignties, and individuals who did not view themselves as under the jurisdiction of any nation, whether European or Indigenous. From the Arkansas River Valley region, notably, emerged most of the reports of Osage violence in the 1760s-1770s.

Many other works have addressed Spanish Louisiana or the Osage, but few focused on the topic of peaceful relations between these groups. Much of previous scholarship has portrayed the Osage as a warlike, fierce, aggression-driven nation that frequently conflicted with the French and Spanish. DuVal's *Native Ground* nuanced this portrayal by demonstrating the high degree of success of the Osage strategy of seeking to expand their borders during the period of Spanish claims over the Louisiana Territory. She contrasted the Osage strategy with the more peace-focused system of the Quapaw (Arkansas) that emphasized control of trade and relations through cooperation and compromise. Despite these important observations and her nuance of the discussion by portraying Osage violence as a bordering strategy, as a form of Osage agency, DuVal's writings still suffered from the tendency to emphasize Osage aggression while ignoring or minimizing efforts at peace. This thesis seeks to build on the works of these scholars by discussing the entangled histories of Osage and Spanish jurisdictions in Louisiana and identifying ways in which their competing and complementary jurisdictions demonstrated interdependence and the importance of the role of belonging in this region. While this study acknowledges the violence that sometimes characterized Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri interactions, it seeks to contextualize these groups' use of violence or

³⁸ Barnett "This Is Our Land," 74.

threats of violence as they interacted and to emphasize instead the importance of trade and cooperation and efforts at peace of the individuals associated with the Osage, Missouri, and Spanish who lived in the Missouri River Valley region in the period 1763-1780.

Primary Sources: Osage Ethnology

This research has focused broadly on sources that discussed the Missouri River Valley region, especially the settlements under Spanish colonial rule in the area that became Missouri, concentrating its attention on St. Louis and those documents that contextualize the Spanish government's approach to governing Spanish Illinois and Louisiana in the period 1763-1800. In addition, this study draws on sources that discussed the Osage and Missouri nations, especially those relating to Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations or those that contextualized Osage, Missouri, and Spanish views of war, conflict, and peace.

Working in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, ethnologist and ethnographer Francis La Flesche recorded Osage stories and language, which provided scholars with collections of Osage sources that are the closest records scholars have to primary sources produced by the Osage. Born to a traditional Omaha chief in Nebraska in 1857, La Flesche attended a mission school on the Omaha reservation while participating in more traditional tribal rituals, buffalo hunts, and activities with his family during school vacations.³⁹ In his twenties, La Flesche became a copyist for the Indian Service and he

³⁹ Garrick Bailey, "Introduction" from Francis La Flesche, *Traditions of the Osage: Stories Collected and Translated by Francis La Flesche*, ed. Garrick Bailey (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 1.

moved to Washington, D.C., where he became involved in anthropology, immersed himself in linguistics informally, and studied at National University (now George Washington University) for his law degrees. He and Alice Fletcher, another prominent late-19th and early-20th century ethnologist and anthropologist, collaborated on their research on the Omaha, which the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology published as *The Omaha Tribe*. La Flesche followed this study with his own research among the Osage, with some collaboration with Fletcher. Both Osage and Omaha are part of the Siouan language group, so La Flesche's own Omaha and English linguistic and cultural upbringing combined with his previous research to enable him to study the Osage, a group whose language and culture closely resembled the Omaha.⁴⁰ La Flesche based his recordings, transcriptions, and translations of the oral traditions and rituals of the Osage on interviews with Osage authorities, such as *Wa-xthi'-zhi* of the Puma gens and *Tse-zhin'-ga-wa-da-in-ga* (Saucy Calf), one of the last Osage priests. Although La Flesche recorded and compiled these sources in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, Garrick Bailey, in his introduction to *Traditions of the Osage: Stories Collected and Translated by Francis La Flesche*, reminded his readers that these religious rituals and stories "were also extremely complex and sophisticated mnemonic devices by which the Osage recalled and transmitted sacred knowledge."⁴¹ In addition, Bailey wrote that *Tse-zhin'-ga-wa-da-in-ga*, "remarked to La Flesche that 'our ancestors

⁴⁰ Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 66.

⁴¹ Garrick Bailey, "Introduction" from Francis La Flesche, *Traditions of the Osage: Stories Collected and Translated by Francis La Flesche*, ed. Garrick Bailey (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 1.

knew not the art of writing, but they put into ritual form the thoughts they deemed worthy of perpetuation.”⁴² Osage elders such as *Wa-xthi'-zhi* and *Tse-zhin'-ga-wa-da-in-ga* , then, had been trained by their own ancestors in the Osage nation’s sacred traditions and histories. Their own grandparents or great-grandparents likely interacted with the Spanish officials or their claimed European or multi-ethnic subjects in the region between the Missouri River and Arkansas River Valleys during the late-18th century, although their names often went unrecorded in Spanish officials’ correspondence involving Spanish-Osage relations.

The Osage ethnohistories represented in La Flesche’s works, then, provide the richest and closest primary sources for understanding life among individuals from the Osage nation or their perspectives on interactions within their nation or with other nations and individuals. In addition to the sacred teachings, folk stories, and animal stories collected by La Flesche and edited by Bailey in *Traditions of the Osage: Stories Collected and Translated by Francis La Flesche*, two other La Flesche works, his last two of six about the Osage and both published posthumously, have provided valuable context and documentary evidence for this study. These manuscripts, *A Dictionary of the Osage Language* and *War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians*, published in 1932 and 1939 respectively, provided rich evidence concerning the importance of peace and war to the Osage and offer hints that help us better understand the Osage and Spanish officials’ misunderstandings of the Osage that we find in correspondence between Spanish officials.

⁴² “Saucy Calf to Francis La Flesche,” quoted in *Traditions of the Osage: Stories Collected and Translated by Francis La Flesche*, ed. Garrick Bailey (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 2.

French and Spanish Primary Sources

One source that has been particularly helpful in contextualizing and describing the early history of St. Louis is *Auguste Chouteau's Journal: Memory, Mythmaking & History in the Heritage of New France* edited by Gregory P. Ames. This book not only included a retranslated and annotated version of Chouteau's journal fragment, the *Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis*, but also contained essays that discussed the founding and early development of St. Louis and a reprint of John Francis McDermott's 1941 *Glossary of Mississippi Valley French*.

The Boltonian school's emphasis on translating Spanish and French archival documents resulted in a variety of collections that have helped inform this study. Bolton's own collection and discussion of Athanase de Mézières, Natchitoches, and Spanish and French relations with the Indigenous Nations in the Red River and Arkansas River Valley regions offered an interesting counterbalance to this more St. Louis-based study of Osage-Spanish relations. In *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780*, Bolton translated a collection of French and Spanish manuscripts from the Mexican and Spanish archives that relate to Mézières. Nasatir's *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785-1804*, as noted previously, focused primarily on documents that highlighted the U.S.-Spanish borderlands concept and conflict between these groups along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

Kinnaird's *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794 (SMV)*, although more geographically dispersed in its focus, proved much more useful by providing documents from the St. Louis, Arkansas, and Natchitoches posts, as well as New Orleans, that demonstrated the ethnic diversity of this region and the Spanish officials' attempts to

understand the Osage, Missouri, and other Indigenous Nations in the lands that they had gained, from a European perspective, from the Treaties of Fontainebleau and Paris of 1762-1763. Bolton's influence on Kinnaird, and perhaps the American Historical Association's own biases in the 1940s, become visible when examining the titles of the three volumes that make up this set. Part I focused on "The Revolutionary Period, 1765-1781," which emphasized the U.S.-English clash in the East that resulted in the emergence of the United States as a nation. The other two volumes, Part II "Post War Decade, 1782-1791" and Part III "Problems of Frontier Defense" also demonstrated this tendency to depict the Mississippi River Valley region as the frontier or border between the United States and Spain in the post-American Revolutionary War period and to emphasize the increasing encroachment of United States settlers on Spanish-claimed lands in the 1790s. Kinnaird seems to have selected primarily the more conflict-focused documents from the *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, commonly known as the *Papeles de Cuba* (PC), to include in his volumes, but despite these limitations, Kinnaird's volumes contained many helpful Osage documents, including some from the 1760s-1770s.

Another invaluable resource for this study came from Louis Houck's *The Spanish Regime in Missouri* (SRM), which also included translated versions of documents from the *Papeles de Cuba*. Houck's selection of documents emphasized official writings involved with the establishment of Spanish authority in Spanish Illinois. The bulk of the documents from the 1760s-1770s period in Houck's volumes focused on routine matters such as sending military leaders, constructing forts, and deciding to use the pre-existing settlement of St. Louis as the governing post. This collection also contains records, however, that provide insight into Spanish officials' views of the Osage and other

Indigenous Nations in this region and reports involving the fur trade or presents for Indigenous Nations. In addition, Clarence Walworth Alvord's *The Critical Period, 1763-1765* from the Collections of the Illinois State Historical Society provided some much-needed, yet elusive French and English documents that informed this study and demonstrated the importance of understanding French, British, Spanish, Osage, Missouri, and other nations' competing, conflicting, and complementary, in other words, entangled, histories in this region.

The author's trip to Seville, Spain to the Archivo General de Indias (AGI) provided the richest sources for this study. The depth and breadth of sources available at the AGI made it impossible for me to plumb the depths of available documents from Spanish officials in Louisiana, which helped inform my decision to focus this thesis primarily on the period 1763-1780. After many days spent shivering in the archives while examining documents from the *Papeles de Cuba*, especially Lieutenant-Governor Pedro Piernas's correspondence with Governors Alejandro O'Reilly and Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga from the 1770s in Legajo 81, it struck me that Piernas's frequent reports concerning peaceful trade and relations with the Osage that emphasized the thriving fur trade and positive Osage relations with Spanish-licensed traders seemed at odds with most scholarly depictions of Spanish-Osage relations (See Appendices A and C). Further examination revealed that Zebulon Trudeau, another Lieutenant-Governor stationed at St. Louis later in the 1770s, also carefully discussed this information in some of his reports. These documents, which often included the Missouri nation in reports involving the Little Osage, quickly became the center of this study of Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations.

Archivists have digitized almost all the manuscript documents found in the *legajos* (bundles) from the Papeles de Cuba in the Archivo General de Indias used by the author; at this point, they remain available only to researchers who travel to the AGI. Perhaps someday, these digitized microfilms will be made available to the public at large on Spain's PARES Portal de Archivos Españoles. On rare occasions, the author needed to consult documents that had not been microfilmed or digitized; while this scholar recognizes that other archeologists, ethnologists, and historians have the privilege of handling even older documents and artifacts regularly, few experiences match the awe of realizing that you hold in your hand an actual document written by Pedro Piernas or other individuals whose thoughts and actions you are trying to understand. The availability of digitized files would enable more scholars around the world to access the vast resources of the AGI. Perhaps, though, these experiences and the camaraderie that comes from spending hours examining documents in the same silent room as other historians, with a brief break at *onces* (eleven o'clock) for coffee and conversation explains why research should be done, when possible, on-site in the archives. In a way, it is similar to the treaties made and signed in Paris, Fontainebleau, and San Ildefonso that had implications for the Osage, French, Missouri, and other inhabitants of Louisiana. Perhaps if Grimaldi and Choiseul had ever traveled through the Louisiana region and seen the power of the Osage, they would have considered Indigenous Nations' responses to their decisions.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the historiography, ethnography, and primary sources that have informed this study. Each historiographical school has informed our present

understanding of the Osage and Missouri and shaped the way that we view the Spanish Illinois and Louisiana region. The borderlands and frontier approaches of the early-20th century provided an important counterbalance to more Anglo-and U.S.-centric views of American history. In doing so, however, these Western historians tended to ignore or minimize the agency and importance of the Osage and other Indigenous Nations. Later, the New Western Historians highlighted the importance of social histories in understanding this region. These scholars emphasized Native American agency and may have overstated the role of violence in shaping Osage and other Indigenous Nations' interactions with Europeans and Americans. More recently, Richter's *Facing East from Indian Country* inspired scholars to consider a different west-to-east focus than that of the Boltonians by examining American history through the lens of Native Americans.

Although the Osage voice often remained unheard in Spanish and French officials' reports found in the archives, these products of Spain's highly bureaucratized colonial governing system nevertheless remain a treasure-trove for historians. The combination of these reports and the La Flesche sources, however, allows us to hear echoes of Osage voices and explanations for their actions involving and reactions to the Spanish within these reports. The voices of Piernas and Trudeau ring strongly, as do those of O'Reilly and Unzaga in other documents. Their correspondence often demonstrates the difficulties that the lieutenant-governors faced in trying to officially represent Spain and Spanish authority in Spanish Illinois. Here, even more so than in Lower Louisiana, the Osage and other Indigenous Nations maintained their own sovereignty and interacted with the Spanish and other Europeans or other Indigenous Nations in ways that the Spanish officials frequently misinterpreted or misunderstood.

Seeking to understand these complicated, entangled histories and interactions sometimes shows us the purpose of violence or threats of violence by the Osage and Missouri. Teasing out the voices of the Osage from the La Flesche sources and the Piernas, Trudeau, and other French and Spanish officials' documents, while simultaneously attempting to maintain awareness of these officials' own voices and understandings of Spanish-Indigenous interactions, shows the interdependence and importance of belonging in this region. Overall, they demonstrate that, despite the existence of periodic violence, Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri interactions in the Missouri River Valley region in the 1760s-1770s emphasized trade, cooperation, and efforts at peace.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT—SPAIN’S LOUISIANA AND ILLINOIS INHERITANCE

He reports that the Osage are not happy. That he is not yet able to send the enumeration of the nations of Missouri and the Mississippi, that he is instructing the traders of this commissary as to where to place a fort at Saint Louis.

- From a Summary of the Report from Commandant St. Ange to Governor Ulloa and Monsieur Aubry, June 6, 1766.⁴³

Early Osage and Missouri Migrations

Scholars speculate that the Osage and Missouri nations, along with the Quapaw and many of the other Siouan groups who settled in the Mississippi River Valley region sometime during the 16th or 17th centuries moved from the Ohio River Valley as a result of Iroquoian nations’ increased power in the region due to their own territorial expansion aided by Dutch trade that included guns.⁴⁴ The Osage and other Dhegiha Siouan speakers might have descended from the Mississippian, Hopewell, or Escanxague groups. Unfortunately, this portion of their history remains unclear. When they traveled to the Missouri and Osage River region, however, the Osage found a geographic area that included woodlands in the east and prairie to the west. Scholars are uncertain whether the Osage continued habits that they had established long before their move to the region, but by the 17th century, the Osage followed a seasonal pattern of winter villages along the

⁴³ Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, *Précis les lettres des Illinois écrites à Monsieur Ulloa et ensuite à Aubry par Monsieur Aubry par Monsieur de Saint Ange, commandante au Villages Sainte Louis et autre en postes des Illinois, lettre des 6 juin 1766*, June 6, 1766, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2357, folio 14r.

⁴⁴ Du Val, *The Native Ground*, 67.

Osage River where women planted corn, squash, pumpkins, beans, and other agricultural products in the spring, which they left to grow when the village groups dispersed to their summer prairie camps to hunt bison and other game. This seasonal cycle, and the availability of game, enabled the Osage to participate in the fur trade and become one of France's and then Spain's major fur trading partners.⁴⁵

French-Indigenous Relations in the Lower Missouri River Valley Region Pre-1763

In 1673, French Canadians in two canoes led by Louis Jolliet, a Quebec merchant, and Father Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit priest, traveled from New France to the Mississippi River and then descended that great river until they reached the Quapaw nation slightly north of the Arkansas River (see Figure 3). These Frenchmen, using trade rituals that they had learned from Illinois and other northern Indigenous Nations, welcomed the Quapaw offer of food and then participated in the calumet peace ritual.⁴⁶ Quapaw leaders took advantage of the arrival of these Europeans, who offered to thicken the Quapaw nation's trade network by bringing goods from the north, thus circumventing the Quapaws' trade rivals in the south and west that limited their access to Spanish trade goods. Like the Quapaw, the Osage, a powerful nation who located their winter villages along the Osage and Missouri Rivers, sought to strengthen their own trade networks and circumvent the Caddo and other western nations. The Caddo limited Osage access to Spanish goods and the Illinois and other powerful northern and eastern tribes previously

⁴⁵ Carl H. Chapman, "The Indomitable Osage in Spanish Illinois (Upper Louisiana) 1763-1804," in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804*, ed. John Francis McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 288.

⁴⁶ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 1.



Figure 3: Map of the Mississippi River and Its Tributaries from Its Source to the Gulf of Mexico during the French Period. From AGI, MP-FLORIDA_LUISIANA, 29.⁴⁷

had limited Osage attempts to trade with the English or Dutch in the east.⁴⁸ Marquette, Joliet, and their fellow travelers had entered a region of complex, rich identities and relationships. Although these Frenchmen might not have recognized it, the Osage, Quapaw, and other claims to indigeneity or “native” origins from these areas formed a part of these Indigenous Nations’ diplomacy and their attempts to shape trade and political relations in the Mississippi River Valley region.

During Marquette and Joliet’s journey, and on their return up the Mississippi River, they passed another large river that the Indigenous travelers who accompanied them called the “*Pekitanoui*” or the “river of the muddy waters.”⁴⁹ Marquette’s map, which labeled the area around the *Pekitanoui* as “Missouri,” from the Missouri nation, included the first European report of the Missouri River.⁵⁰ If these Frenchmen had traveled up the Missouri River, they might have encountered the Missouri nation’s villages along its northern banks. If they had continued their journey and taken a turn south at the tributary now known as the Osage River, they might have met the Osage returning to their woodlands villages from the summer hunt. Although Marquette and Joliet did not meet the Osage, Marquette included the Osage and the Missouri on his map, based on accounts of their locations from other area Indigenous Nations.⁵¹ Later, Robert Cavelier de La Salle and his party passed the Missouri River’s mouth as they

⁴⁷ *Mappa del río Missisipi. Dedicada al Excelentísimo Señor Duque de Iovenazo, por su servidor don Armando de Arce, Barón de Lahontan. 1699*, AGI, Mapas y Planos, MP-FLORIDA-LUISIANA, 29.

⁴⁸ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 106.

⁴⁹ Foley, *The Genesis of Missouri*, 1.

⁵⁰ Dickey, *The People of the River's Mouth*, 3.

⁵¹ Foley, *The Genesis of Missouri*, 8.

traveled along the same north-to-south path. Whereas Marquette and Jolliet returned north after their meeting with the Quapaw, fighting the current as they traveled, La Salle and his fellow explorers reached the Gulf of Mexico.⁵² Another Frenchman, Étienne Veniard de Bourgmont, became the first known European to ascend the Missouri River in 1714. Bourgmont lived with the Missouri nation and traveled in the river valley until 1718; and during this time, he may have participated in Missouri kinship rituals by taking a Missouri wife.⁵³ Thus began a strong trade relationship between the Missouri and Osage nations and the French *voyagers*, or *coureurs de bois*, and other trappers, traders, and settlers who moved to or through the region. When the French entered the Missouri River Valley region, they became one group among many in the region's vast trade and social network that, through its various links, stretched across North America. By 1724, the French had established a series of forts and settlements in the Illinois country that included Fort St. Louis (near present-day Creve Coeur) along the Illinois River, Cahokias, and Fort de Chartres (see Figure 4). Fort d'Orléans, established in 1723 along the Missouri River and commanded by members of the St. Ange family that included Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, became a gathering place and trade site for the Missouri, Osage, and Oto nations.⁵⁴ By trading there, members of these nations avoided some of the conflict caused by trade and boundary disputes with the powerful Illinois nations to the east whose French Illinois connections provided them with guns and other resources that enhanced their power in the region.

⁵² Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon Person, *St. Louis Rising: The French Regime of Louis St. Ange De Bellerive* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 15.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 and 25

Over the course of the 18th century, partly because of conflict with the Indigenous Nations to their north, west, east, and south, the Osage expanded their territorial claims to an area that, by the 1770s, roughly reached from the Mississippi River in the east to the Missouri River in the north and then to the Quapaw territory along the Arkansas and Red Rivers in the south and west. The Osage and Quapaw seem to have respected their respective territorial claims for most of this period and to have formed a trade partnership.⁵⁵ The Osage sought to integrate themselves into European trade networks so that they could gain access to guns and horses to use in their constant struggle against the aggressions of other Indigenous Nations around them.



Figure 4. The Lower Missouri River Valley and Illinois Region in 1724. Adapted from Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising: The French Regime of Louis St. Ange de Bellerive* “Étienne Veinard Bourgmont’s Fort d’Orléans and the Approximate Route of His Peacemaking Expedition to the Padoucas (Plains Apaches) in 1724.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 106.

⁵⁶ Map adapted from Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 21. Note: Ekberg and Person adapted this map from Marc Villiers du Terrage, *La Découverte du Missouri et l’histoire du Fort d’Orléans, 1763-1728* (Paris: H. Champion, 1925). The authors noted that St. Louis, which had not been settled yet, was depicted as a reference point.

The access of the Caddoan-speakers of the Arkansas River Valley and of Plains tribes to horses and guns from trade with and raids on Spanish settlements threatened the Osage in the south and west.⁵⁷ On their northern and eastern side, the Potawatomi, Muskogee, Sauk, and Illinois, armed by their close trade connections with the French, attacked the Osage.⁵⁸ The Osage recognized the value of access to horses, guns and ammunition, and other European goods and adapted these goods to their own uses even as they retained strong ties to their own cultural artifacts. In addition, the Osage, like other nations from this region, raided the Caddoan tribes for captives to sell to willing French purchasers in Louisiana, especially after these nations became weakened with the spread of disease.⁵⁹

During the period of French claims over the Louisiana and Illinois regions in the 1600s-1763, the French recognized the Osage as a powerful nation that could easily have threatened the existence of French settlements along the upper Mississippi River. Ste. Genevieve, France's one settlement on the western bank of the Mississippi River in this region prior to the founding of St. Louis after France officially ceded claims over the region to Spain in the 1760s, remained especially vulnerable to attack.⁶⁰ Stephen Aron in *American Confluence* discussed the importance of intra-Osage and Osage-Indigenous conflicts and transitions during the 1740s and 1750s in protecting Ste. Genevieve from

⁵⁷ Garrick Alan Bailey, *Traditions of the Osage: Stories Collected and Translated by Francis La Flesche* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 9.

⁵⁸ Rollings, *The Osage*, 6.

⁵⁹ Bailey, *Traditions of the Osage*, 152.

⁶⁰ Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State*, A History of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 49.

Osage scrutiny during this period. Scholars struggle to determine the exact time of the split between the Great and Little Osage, but Aron placed it during this period. In addition, according to DuVal:

Probably to waylay westward-bound traders, both for trade and to dissuade them from continuing to the west, several bands of Osages moved north to the Missouri River in the early eighteenth century and settled near their allies the Missouris. This division became known as the Little Osages, while those who remained on the Osage River called themselves the Great Osages.⁶¹

Scholars generally agree that the Little Osage-Great Osage split, although not always as clear-cut and firm as these labels make it appear, occurred during the early eighteenth century. The second major recorded split, the division of the Arkansas Osage from the other two groups, occurred during the period of Spanish claims beginning in the 1770s; official Spanish records indicate the formal division of the Arkansas from the other Osage by the 1790s. Like the Great-Little Osage split, the attempt to control trade seems to have influenced strongly the formation of the Arkansas Osage group, although struggles for leadership also impacted this division.⁶² This complex, powerful people-group, collectively the Osage nation, largely controlled trade in the heart of the Louisiana territory that Spain inherited from France in the Treaty of Fontainebleau of 1762.

Auguste Chouteau's St. Louis "Founding Myth"

In a fragment that remains from the bundle of papers written by René Auguste Chouteau, Jr., in his later years are the recollections of Chouteau on his travels with St. Louis founder and former French soldier, Monsieur Pierre Laclede Ligeste in the mid-

⁶¹ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 106.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 170.

1760s, roughly 90 years after French explorers and missionaries made the north-south voyage from New France in Canada, through the Illinois country, and down the Mississippi River.⁶³ In his journal fragment, Chouteau introduced himself stating that Laclède “took with him a young man in his confidence” for the journey from New Orleans up the Mississippi River to the *Ylinoises* (Illinois) territory.⁶⁴ Their voyage included stops at the French Ste. Genevieve settlement on the western shore and Fort Chartres farther north on the eastern shore of the Mississippi River before they landed on the western shore and selected a site at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. From all appearances, Chouteau wrote this journal fragment years after the event, making this recollection a sort of “founding myth” for St. Louis. According to Chouteau, Laclède informed him that Chouteau would return after waterway navigation opened in the spring to begin building the settlement and fur trading post that he named Saint Louis. This new post became the base of operations for the fur trading company, Maxtent, Laclède and Company, with Laclède as part owner. The company had received a monopoly of the fur trade in that region from the French governor of Louisiana in New Orleans, Jean-Jacques d’Abbadie.⁶⁵ Correspondence between Pierre-Joseph Neyon de

⁶³ Officially René Auguste Chouteau, but generally known as Auguste Chouteau to distinguish himself from his estranged father. Chouteau referred to him as Monsieur Pierre Laclède Liguette; hereafter Pierre Laclède. The exact date of his writing of these journal fragments is unknown, but scholars agree that Chouteau penned them later in his life, probably as a draft-in-progress. See, for example, Auguste Chouteau, "Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis," trans. Gregory P. Ames, in *Auguste Chouteau's Journal: Memory, Mythmaking & History in the Heritage of New France*, ed. Gregory P. Ames (St. Louis: St. Louis Mercantile Library University of Missouri St. Louis, 2010), 41.

⁶⁴ Auguste Chouteau, "Fragment of Col. Auguste Chouteau's Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis. A Literal Translation from the Original French Ms., in Possession of the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association," 1764, <http://www.americanjourneys.org/aj-126/>, 3. The area referred to as the Illinois or Ylinoises territory under the French, and sometimes the Spanish, included present-day Missouri and Illinois, in addition to areas farther north.

⁶⁵ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 50.

Villiers and Governor d'Abbadie from March 13, 1764, supported this portion of Chouteau's journal fragment.⁶⁶ Chouteau informed his readers that in February of 1764, Laclede "fitted out a boat, in which he put thirty men,--nearly all mechanics,--and he gave the charge of it to Chouteau...."⁶⁷ Laclede reportedly chose this fourteen or fifteen-year-old to lead the group while Laclede finished other business in Fort Chartres. The men and Chouteau traveled to the previously-selected site and constructed St. Louis's first buildings, including quarters for themselves and storage for the supplies that Laclede brought soon thereafter. More recently, Carl Ekberg and Sharon Person argued compellingly that French Canadian-born Jean-Baptiste Martigny, not young Chouteau, truly led the expedition from Fort de Chartres to found or expand the settlement that became St. Louis.⁶⁸ Either way, the multi-ethnic character of this community, from its earliest stages, and its interactions with the local Indigenous Nations, including the Missouri and Osage nations, clearly shaped St. Louis from its beginnings.

Entangled from the Beginning: 1760s St. Louis, Missouri, and Osage Interactions

Although Chouteau's journal fragment did not emphasize the Missouri and the Osage, these nations both evidently played a role in the early settlement of St. Louis. Chouteau highlighted Laclede's diplomatic ability in his recollection, or historic fictionalization as the case may be, of Laclede's response to the Missouri in 1764.

⁶⁶ Pierre-Joseph Neyon de Villiers to Governor Jean-Jacques d'Abbadie, March 13, 1764, quoted in: Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 50.

⁶⁷ Chouteau, "Fragment of Col. Auguste Chouteau's Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis." 4.

⁶⁸ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 59.

According to this recollection, “all the Missouri nation-men, women, and children” arrived in the area, demanded provisions, and told the French settlers that they intended to “form a village around the house” that Laclede and Chouteau built.⁶⁹ Even if Chouteau’s writing overemphasized the roles of Laclede and Chouteau in these interactions, the diplomatic negotiations and the importance of gift giving by the French to the Missouri followed the pattern that had developed in the trading and diplomatic alliances between French traders and officials and the Quapaw and other Indigenous Nations in the Arkansas and Mississippi River Valley regions.⁷⁰ Although Chouteau never mentioned the Osage by name in his journal fragment, correspondence between St. Ange and Governor d’Abbadie from August 12, 1764, indicated that the Missouri and the Great Osage fought during this period and that the Missouri sought French protection from the Osage at Cahokia and Fort de Chartres in July 1764.⁷¹ By 1763, St. Ange had moved from Fort d’Orléans and served as the French commandant at the Illinois in Fort de Chartres; later, after he moved to St. Louis in October 1765, the first Spanish Governor and Captain-General of Louisiana, Antonio de Ulloa, selected him to act as the first official to govern St. Louis and Spanish Illinois under the Spanish (see Appendices

⁶⁹ Auguste Chouteau, "Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis," trans. Gregory P. Ames, in *Auguste Chouteau's Journal: Memory, Mythmaking & History in the Heritage of New France*, ed. Gregory P. Ames (St. Louis: St. Louis Mercantile Library University of Missouri St. Louis, 2010), 70.

⁷⁰ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 98.

⁷¹ Louis Groston St. Ange de Bellerive, "Copy of Letter from M. de St. Ange, Commandant at the Illinois, to M. Dabbadie, Director General, Commandant for the King in Louisiana, August 12, 1764," 1764, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period 1663-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), X:292. This document also hints at the possibility that the Little Osage, who lived geographically closer to the Missouri, may have sided with the Missouri against the Great Osage.

A and B).^{72, 73} Even though Missouri and Osage warred during this period, they generally seem to have become allies in the eighteenth century. It is difficult to determine when the Little Osages moved to the Missouri River area, closer to the Missouri nation's own lands, but DuVal and others have indicated that they likely did so in the early eighteenth century, probably as a result of the desire of the Osage nation as a whole to control trade in this region.⁷⁴ Given this context, it is possible that the Little Osage and Missouri nations had formed a stronger alliance than the Great Osage and Missouri at this point.

St. Louis's Multi-Ethnic, Multi-Cultural Inhabitants

Chouteau's journal fragment, like many of the writings from this period, focused primarily on Laclede's and Chouteau's interactions with free persons of European

⁷² Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State*, A History of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 51.

⁷³ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 96. Don Antonio de Ulloa (1716-1795) a Spanish naval officer, diplomat, and scientist who was appointed as the Governor of Louisiana in 1766. When Ulloa arrived in Havana in 1765 after being forced out of the Viceroyalty of Peru because of his role in exposing corruption, he learned of his appointment to Spain's newly-acquired Louisiana colony. King Carlos III commissioned Ulloa as Governor of Louisiana on May 21, 1765 and he and a force of about 90 troops arrived in New Orleans on March 5, 1766. Facing a general population mainly of French and Indigenous origins, Ulloa's attempts to work alongside the former French governmental system by appointing Charles-Philippe Aubry, the former French military commander who became the acting military commander when French Governor Jean Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie died in 1765, as his agent. Although Ulloa's fluency in French and diplomatic abilities made him an ideal choice as Louisiana's first Spanish Governor, the ongoing tensions with French merchants and the limited Spanish military force and Spanish financial support combined to undermine Ulloa's government. A rebellion by some New Orleans and other area inhabitants forced Ulloa to leave Louisiana in 1768. For specific information on the commission of Ulloa and the uprising and its aftermath, see: Carlos, III, "Royal Decree from King Carlos III of Spain Commissioning Don Antonio de Ulloa Governor of Louisiana, May 21, 1765," in *SMV*, ed. Lawrence Kinnaird, Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1945 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:1. And Antonio de Ulloa, "Letter from Governor Antonio de Ulloa to Captain-General of Cuba Don Antonio Bucareli Discussing the Necessity of Proceeding to Spain to Report on the New Orleans Uprising, December 8, 1768.," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:83.

⁷⁴ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 106.

descent such as those at Fort Chartres or Ste. Genevieve, but even this demonstrated the complex layers of belonging in this region with French, English, and later Spanish traders, settlers, priests, and officials living in the settlements along the route from New Orleans. The inclusion of the Missouri nation in this foundation myth further establishes the importance of the Missouri and hints at the power of another Indigenous Nation in the area, the Osage nation, whose dominance in the region probably led to the Missouri's request for protection from this French fur trading group.⁷⁵ In addition, at each of the Mississippi River port towns along their journey from New Orleans to the St. Louis founding site, the French-born Laclede and Creole Chouteau in 1763 and Marie Thérèse Bourgeois Chouteau in 1764 each likely encountered enslaved and sometimes free men and women of African, Indigenous, or multi-racial descent.⁷⁶ In this region of multi-ethnic, multi-racial communities, free persons of European descent, enslaved or free Native Americans, enslaved or free persons of African descent, or people of any combination of these racial and ethnic backgrounds interacted regularly. At Ste. Genevieve, for example, one of the men listed as *negre* (black) members of the LaRose and Jaque Ohouquet households in the French 1752 census of the village, probably enslaved, may have assisted them.⁷⁷ During their winter at Fort de Chartres, they might have met the newly-freed family that included Appollo and Jeannette Forchette and their

⁷⁵ Auguste Chouteau, "Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis," trans. Gregory P. Ames, in *Auguste Chouteau's Journal: Memory, Mythmaking & History in the Heritage of New France*, ed. Gregory P. Ames (St. Louis: St. Louis Mercantile Library University of Missouri St. Louis, 2010), 72.

⁷⁶ Rene Auguste Chouteau, hereafter Auguste Chouteau, son of French-born Rene Chouteau and French-(or Louisiana-) born Marie Thérèse Bourgeois Chouteau, hereafter Madame Chouteau, born in New Orleans.

⁷⁷ "Village Ste Junnevieve 1752 (Village of Ste. Genevieve 1752)," 1752, Territorial Censuses (1752-1819) and Tax Lists (1814-1821), Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO.

child Anselmo. Jeannette, like Madame Chouteau, moved to St. Louis with her family; both women became property owners during their lives, but Jeannette, who had experienced slavery in her own life, did not become a slave owner as did Madame Chouteau. It is unclear whether the thirty men who accompanied Chouteau in February 1764 included enslaved or free persons of African or Indigenous descent or if men of Indigenous descent traveled with Laclede and Chouteau in 1763 as they sought a good site for the future settlement of Saint Louis. Probably, however, during this visit to the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, Laclede and Chouteau interacted with at least one of the many Indigenous groups in the area, perhaps even the powerful Osage, who later preferred the St. Louis post over Fort de Chartres because of the convenience of St. Louis's location closer to the Osage-claimed territory.⁷⁸

In 1798, during the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul of France, instructed French Foreign Minister Charles Maurice de Talleyrand to find a way to return Louisiana to French control as part of Napoleon's attempt to reestablish French control in the Americas.⁷⁹ France's extension of authority over Spain under Bonaparte forced Spain to cede control of the Louisiana Territory back to France. Soon thereafter, Bonaparte offered to sell the territory to the United States. Although Spain contested the Louisiana Purchase, arguing that Spain, not Bonaparte, maintained control of the territory, the United States successfully supported its new claims to the area. From roughly 1763 until about 1800, St. Louis grew from its obscure origins to a small-then-growing-settlement, fur trading hub, and governing post and the capital of the

⁷⁸ Mathews, *The Osages*, 231.

⁷⁹ Folley, *The Genesis of Missouri*, 78.

Spanish Illinois or Upper Louisiana region. At the turn of the century, the city quickly expanded to a more thriving town with an advantageous location.⁸⁰ Known as *San Luis* under the Spanish, and sometimes referred to as *Pain Court* or *Paincourt*, seemingly meaning “short of bread” for its lack of agriculture compared to other settlements, St. Louis inhabitants, by and large, emphasized the fur trade over agriculture.⁸¹ Throughout this period, the very existence of St. Louis and its economic success depended, in large part, on its interactions with Indigenous Nations from the Missouri and Mississippi River Valleys; the Osage nation and its Missouri ally figured especially prominently in official correspondence involving St. Louis.

In the earliest census of the recently-settled town of St. Louis from May 31, 1766, Spanish officials recorded the existence of seventy-five people classified as *Esclavos* (slaves) living in the settlement. In addition, the census records that there were 118 *Hombres de armas* (men in arms or men of military age), 38 *Mujeres* (women), 14 *Hijos varones grandes* (young men), 13 *Hembras grandes* (young women), 37 *Niños* (male children/boys), and 37 *Niñas* (female children/girls) in the settlement. It is difficult to determine whether the categories for non-slaves include men and women of color or only the white inhabitants. Perhaps the individuals listed as *Esclavos* were all slaves, but it is possible that both enslaved and free men and women of color were listed as enslaved

⁸⁰ Pedro Piernas, "XVII Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly, Describing the Spanish Illinois Country, Dated October 31, 1769," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:75.

⁸¹ Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, "Un Reconocimiento de la Ilihoa Española: Nuevo Madrid, 24 de Noviembre 1795," in *Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de la Luisiana, 1792-1810*, ed. Jack D.L. Holmes (Madrid: Ediciones Jose Porrua Turanzas, 1963), 269.

simply because of the racial categorization used by the census taker.⁸² Within this population, with a total of 56 households, the census taker listed 24 households (42.9%) that included slaves. A clue that implies that the above, non-slave, categories refer primarily or solely to white inhabitants is the categorization of two entire households as enslaved.⁸³ From this early census, it is obvious that this so-called “Spanish” or “French” community had a much more complex identity than a more nationally-focused narrative otherwise implies.

By 1766, clearly, enslaved and free persons of African and Indigenous descent lived in St. Louis alongside and often in the same households as free persons of European descent and sometimes these close living quarters led to the births of children of multi-racial and ethnic heritage. In addition, over the course of their lives, Auguste Chouteau, and his brother Pierre, spent much of their time living among the Osage and interacting with this powerful nation, which resulted in the birth of at least one son, Antoine Chouteau whose own life demonstrates the entangled histories of St. Louis and the Osage. The founding myth of Laclede and Auguste Chouteau is a familiar one in the histories of present-day St. Louis, Missouri, and the complicated relationship between Laclede and the Chouteaus has become an accepted part of that history. Less familiar,

⁸² The Spanish government had clearly defined racial categories for purposes of categorization, so it seems unlikely that this would be the case. Evidence demonstrates, however, that free women of African descent, such as Jeanette Forchette, lived in St. Louis as early as 1765. For example, see Frederic L. Billon, comp., *Annals of St. Louis and Its Early Days under the French and Spanish Dominations 1764-1804* (Arno Press Inc., 1971; St. Louis: Press of Nixon-Jones Printing, 1886), 38, which indicates that Marie Juannette who received lot No. 57 when Pierre Laclede made verbal grants of village lots in 1765 likely was Jeanette Forchette.

⁸³ "Estado General de Todos los Habitantes de la Colonia de la Luisiana Según los Padrones Que Se Han Hecho el Año de 1766," May 31, 1766, File originally from Archivo Nacional, Havana, 1905., Territorial Censuses (1752-1819) and Tax Lists (1814-1821), Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO.

although still important, is the role of the Osage and Missouri nations in shaping the development of this city. Although scholars such as Ekberg and Person rightly challenged this founding myth, seeking, instead, a more nuanced and accurate portrait of St. Louis's beginnings that acknowledges its place within French Illinois and the areas that European officials divided into British Illinois and Spanish Illinois, the importance of the Missouri nation and French traders such as the Chouteaus in shaping St. Louis rings true.

Regardless of who, exactly, founded St. Louis, this settlement at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers helped shape, and was shaped by, the area's richly multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual inhabitants. With the signing of the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1762, it became Spain's northernmost trading post along the Mississippi River. While adjusting to this richly multi-ethnic, multi-racial settlement, Spanish officials in the late-18th century sought to develop and maintain trade with the Osage, Missouri, and other Indigenous Nations in the region. The Spanish government viewed St. Louis as an important hub in the Spanish-Indigenous fur trade network and from this settlement, Spanish Lieutenant-Governors sought to curb British traders' encroachment on Spanish-claimed lands west of the Mississippi River. During the mid-18th century, St. Louis, more than any other location, symbolized the efforts of Spanish, Missouri, and Osage leaders to maintain peace.

Redefining the Region Post-1763: Establishing Spanish Rule

In 1762, France ceded the Louisiana Territory to Spain in the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau; a year later, Britain acknowledged Spain's new ownership of this territory in the Treaty of Paris of 1763 that ended the Seven Years' War, known in the British

North American colonies as the French and Indian War. It took time for news to travel to Louisiana that the former French colony had been divided into a Spanish territory on the western shore of the Mississippi River and a British colony on the eastern shore. The French fur traders, Laclede and Chouteau, ascended the Mississippi River to select a site at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers during this period. They may not have realized initially that their new settlement, named Saint Louis after the famous French king, had become a Spanish settlement when French and Spanish officials across the Atlantic Ocean signed the Treaty of Fontainebleau. During this period, the last acting Governor of French Louisiana Charles-Philippe Aubry wrote an account that described the Illinois country, but Laclede and Chouteau had left New Orleans by this point.⁸⁴ Spain's management of the Louisiana region, especially Upper Louisiana, in which St. Louis became a prominent town, remained fairly weak in the 1760s, largely due to the policies set in place under the first Spanish Governor and Captain-General of Louisiana, Antonio de Ulloa. Governor Ulloa arrived in New Orleans on March 5, 1766, with a force of 90 Spanish soldiers under the command of Pedro Piernas and officials who the Spanish government expected to work with the local French population to govern the newly-acquired Spanish territory.⁸⁵ Significantly, Spanish King Carlos III chose to govern the

⁸⁴ Charles-Philippe Aubry, "Captain and Last Acting Governor of French Louisiana Charles-Philippe Aubry's Account of the Illinois Country," 1763, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period 1663-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), X:2.

⁸⁵ Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1945 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 1: xv. Hereafter *SMV*. And Louis Houck, ed., "Introduction," *The Spanish Regime in Missouri: A Collection of Papers and Documents Relating to Upper Louisiana Principally within the Present Limits of Missouri during the Dominion of Spain, from the Archives of the Indies at Seville, Etc., Translated from the Original Spanish into English, and including Also Some Papers concerning the Supposed Grant to Col. George Morgan at the Mouth of the Ohio, Found in the Congressional Library* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1909), 1:xvi. Hereafter *SRM*. Note: Kinnaird spells this Gerónimo, while others spell it Jerónimo. For

Louisiana territory by maintaining many of the French administrative procedures and placed it under the authority of the Spanish Ministry of State, then led by Jerónimo de Grimaldi, Marqués de Grimaldi, the same man who had negotiated the treaties with the French Duke of Choiseul in the 1760s that gave Spain claims to Louisiana.⁸⁶

Ulloa's initial efforts to establish Spanish authority in Louisiana focused on strengthening the new border between the Spanish and English empires. St. Louis, as the northernmost European settlement on the Spanish side of the Mississippi River, became important not only as a hub for European-Indigenous trade, but also as the governing center of Upper Louisiana.⁸⁷ The long Mississippi River border between these empires presented a variety of challenges to the British and Spanish, including attempts by both nations to control trade and passage into their respective regions. In addition, the borderlines set by Grimaldi and Choiseul ignored the realities of the regional hunting and trade boundaries recognized by the Indigenous Nations whose opinions, although ignored by leaders in Europe, shaped the region's interactions. Indeed, the Mississippi River acted more as a transportation and trade artery than as barrier. Spanish Illinois escaped the violence associated with the transition from French to English claims in the Illinois and Ohio River Valley region that has become known as Pontiac's Rebellion. The strong French presence in Louisiana, complemented by Spanish officials' willingness to work with the former French officials, such as St. Ange, probably helped with this transition.⁸⁸

continuity, Jerónimo will be used.

⁸⁶ Lawrence Kinnaird, "Introduction," *SMV*, 1: xv.

⁸⁷ Nasatir, *Borderland in Retreat*, 9.

⁸⁸ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 90.

Captain Don Francisco Ríu y Morales and his 103rd Infantry Company embarked on the frigate *la Liebre* in Ferrol in northern Spain on July 7, 1765, destined for Spain's newly-acquired Louisiana to help establish Spanish authority under Ulloa's leadership.⁸⁹ Ríu and his second-in-command in the company, Pedro Joseph Piernas, both played important roles in establishing Spanish authority in Upper Louisiana in the 1760s and early 1770s. If their embarkation destination provides any indication of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, these men may have grown up in northern Spain in the Galician area; if so, this may have helped them as they sought to communicate with the primarily francophone inhabitants of European descent of Louisiana. In 1767, Governor Ulloa sent an expedition of forty-four men, half of the eighty-eight men that remained in the Spanish company at New Orleans at this point, under Ríu's command to Spanish Illinois to establish a fort in this region (See Appendix B).⁹⁰ Piernas's frequent correspondence with Ulloa updated with news from Spain's northernmost post along the Mississippi River.⁹¹ In 1767, however, Ulloa ordered Piernas to establish a Spanish fort at San Luis de Naches, opposite the British fort at Natchez.⁹²

⁸⁹ *Carta de capitán general de Galicia François Charles, Marqués de Croix a Antonio Ulloa, nuevo gobernador de Luisiana para informarle del embarcamento de la compañía de infantería en el pie de 103 Plazos en la fragata la Liebre baja el cargo del Capitán Francisco Ríu, 7 de Julio de 1765, Archivo General de las Indias (AGI), Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2357, folio 2r.*

⁹⁰ Antonio de Ulloa, "I 1767--Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country to Establish a Fort and Settlement and His Rules for the Government of the Same," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:2.

⁹¹ *Carta de Pedro Piernas en San Luis a gobernador Ulloa en Nueva Orleans sobre la llegada del capitán Don Francisco Ríu con información sobre la tropa y cuatro desertores, 14 de septiembre de 1766, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2357, folio 24r.*

⁹² *Carta de Pedro Piernas en San Luis a gobernador Ulloa en Nueva Orleans sobre una expedición del Rio Colorado y sus planes de construir el Puesto de Natché, 8 de mayo, 1767, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2357, folio 31v.*

Ulloa's instructions to Ríu demonstrated the governing transition of this region as it changed hands from French to Spanish and English claims while its inhabitants remained primarily Francophone settlers, whether French-born, Creole, Canadian, or otherwise. For example, Don Guido du Fosatton, a French officer and engineer, joined this arduous journey up the Mississippi River and Ulloa's instructions reminded the Spanish and French group to use caution near the English Fort Bute and the new English settlement at Natchez.⁹³ Ulloa and Ríu recognized the need to work with the French settlers in the Spanish Illinois region and Ulloa's instructions required Ríu to consult with Monsieur Louis Groston St. Ange de Bellerive, the area's French administrator and commandant.⁹⁴ St. Ange, who moved from the French-then-British Illinois country at Vincennes to Fort de Chartres and then across the Mississippi River to the newly-Spanish Illinois country at St. Louis during the period 1764-1765, served as the governing official alongside Ríu. St. Ange, with his experience with both French administrative, economic, and military procedures and French-Indigenous relations, served as the Spanish government's administrative and diplomatic leader in St. Louis until Captain and newly-named Lieutenant-Governor Pedro Piernas arrived on February 17, 1770, with orders from Governor O'Reilly to take over as the first true Spanish governing authority in the Missouri River Valley region.⁹⁵ Ever aware of the importance of maintaining positive

⁹³ Antonio de Ulloa, "I 1767--Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country to Establish a Fort and Settlement and His Rules for the Government of the Same," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:3.

⁹⁴ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 79.

⁹⁵ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 75.

relations with the region's Indigenous inhabitants and Spain's new French subjects, O'Reilly ordered:

The lieutenant-governor shall preserve the best of relations with Monsieur de Santo Ange [St. Ange], whose practical knowledge of the Indians will be very useful to him. He [the lieutenant-governor] shall do whatever he can to gain his [St. Ange's] friendship and confidence, shall listen to his opinion attentively on all matters, and shall condescend to him so far as possible without prejudice to the service.⁹⁶

Piernas seems to have obeyed these orders; his wife, Felicitas Robino de Port Neuf, who had lived in Fort de Chartres, probably helped her husband navigate the cultural differences between Piernas's Spanish and her French Creole upbringing.⁹⁷ Additionally, Piernas corresponded with François Vallé in French in 1774, which indicates that he may have spoken French. The handwriting in these French letters differs from Piernas's Spanish correspondence, so it is difficult to determine whether he dictated to a scribe or wrote the letters himself.⁹⁸ Either way, Piernas seems to have worked to understand the local French population and to have tried to use their expertise in matters such as local Indigenous relations during his term as Lieutenant-Governor.

Prior to this, Irish-born Spaniard Lieutenant General and Governor Don Alejandro O'Reilly arrived in New Orleans on July 24, 1769, to suppress a rebellion among the New Orleans population that had led to the overthrow of Governor Ulloa and his retreat

⁹⁶ Alexandro O'Reilly and Francisco Cruzat, "XVIII General Instructions of O'Reilly to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Villages of St. Louis, St. Genevieve, Etc., Dated February 17, 1770 Copied by Cruzat May 19, 1775," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:83. Brackets are Houck's.

⁹⁷ *Concesión de pensión de viudedad a Felicitas Robino de Port Neuf, viuda del coronel Pedro Piernas*, 1794, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 7227, folios. 284r-290r.

⁹⁸ *Lettre du commandant et lieutenant-gouverneur don Pedro Piernas, à M. François Vallé, lieutenant particulier de Ste. Geneviève, concernant la réconciliation de Dame Duclos et de son mari, 8 juillet, 1774*, 8 de julio, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 192, folio 1069r.

to Havana in Cuba.⁹⁹ O'Reilly's arrival with sufficient troops and vigor to convince the inhabitants of New Orleans and its surrounding areas of Spanish authority in the region marked the transition from a quasi-French rule of the Louisiana territory supplemented by Spanish officials to Spanish rule. Multi-ethnic communities such as St. Louis, however, continued to benefit from the administrative talents and cross-cultural understandings of French individuals such as St. Ange.¹⁰⁰ Significantly, while O'Reilly's governorship marked the transition from French to Spanish officials administrating Louisiana, the Spanish, like the French before them, lacked sufficient resources or power to truly govern the many Indigenous populations who also claimed sovereignty over many of the areas in the Louisiana, and Spanish Illinois, territories.¹⁰¹

Protection, Trade, and Agriculture: Spanish Officials and St. Louis Diversity

The history of Spanish-Osage relations cannot be fully understood without considering the role of the many people who lived in St. Louis, Ste. Genevieve, and other areas of Spanish Illinois in shaping these relations. The licensed and non-licensed traders, of course, clearly helped to shape relations in this region. Other individuals and members of sub-groups within St. Louis and other settlements interacted and shaped this region's

⁹⁹ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 74. And DuVal, *Native Ground*, 120.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Alexandre O'Reilly, "Proclamation by O'Reilly, Commander of Benfayan in the Order of Alcántara, Lieutenant General and Inspector General of His Catholic Majesty's Armies, Capitan General and Governor of the Province of Louisiana to the Inhabitants of the Province of Louisiana Expressing His Displeasure with the Rebellion and Clemency toward the Inhabitants, August 21, 1769," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:89-96. And Alexandre O'Reilly, "Letter from Louisiana Governor Alexandro O'Reilly to English General Thomas Gage, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in North America, Discussing Spanish and English Indian Relations in the Mississippi River Valley, September 21, 1769," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:95-96.

¹⁰¹ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 120.

entangled history. One such population included enslaved or free men and women of African or multi-racial descent. Slavery formed a large portion of the St. Louis labor force from its founding, and although enslaved men and women rarely went on fur trading expeditions, individuals who became prominent St. Louisans such as Claymorgan depended on the labor and caretaking of their St. Louis holdings by enslaved, or later freed, individuals, especially well-known Esther.

In the 1770s, Spanish officials in St. Louis and Louisiana discussed slave labor and the importance of the availability of slaves of African descent in the production of agricultural products such as hemp and flax.¹⁰² The importance of the fur trade did not diminish in the 1770s, in fact, official accounts indicate its increased importance, but Spanish officials also concerned themselves with the cultivation of food products such as wheat and fiber products such as flax and hemp. The need for knowledgeable and willing agricultural workers and farmers in the fur-trading focused settlement of St. Louis provided an opportunity for free women of African descent to obtain land grants from Spanish officials and economically support their own families while helping to make real the vision of these Spanish officials.¹⁰³

Even as they sought to increase the enslaved African population of St. Louis and other Mississippi and Missouri River Valley settlements, however, the Spanish officials remained concerned with limiting the interactions between these enslaved individuals and

¹⁰² Bernardo de Gálvez, "XXXIII Letter from Bernardo de Louisiana Governor Barnardo de Gálvez to Minister of the Indies José (Joseph) de Gálvez Discussing the Cultivation of Hemp and Flax to be Encouraged by Providing Settlers with Negro Slaves, 1778.," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:158.

¹⁰³ Julie Winch, *The Clamorgans: One Family's History of Race in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011), 45.

the Indigenous Nations in the area, mirroring worries throughout the Spanish empire that members of these groups could combine and undermine the Spanish government and the efforts of the Spanish to spread their own culture to their colonies. For example, in his orders from August 12, 1781, Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat, clearly frustrated with both enslaved individuals and their owners, discussed “The abuses which are daily creeping in through the unruly conduct of the slaves at this post of St. Louis, owing to the criminal indulgence of some masters who are too little solicitous from their authority and for the public welfare.”¹⁰⁴ Cruzat issued a series of orders such as this one involving slaves in St. Louis and his reasoning for issuing the orders demonstrated that non-enforcement of laws by slave-owners remained a persistent problem for this Spanish official (See Appendix C).

Cruzat’s prohibition of too many interactions between enslaved or free Africans or Indigenous persons in the St. Louis area from a few days later provides an especially enlightening reading. Cruzat wrote:

As it has come to the knowledge of the government that the savages, both free and slaves, and the negroes who belong to this post often dress themselves in barbarous fashion, adorning themselves with vermilion and many feathers which render them unrecognizable, especially in the woods: in order to avoid the misfortunes which may follow from the surprises which these men, thus metamorphosed, could occasion to those who might see them in an unexpected moment, and who, taking them for enemies, would shoot at them....¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Francisco Cruzat, "Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat's Orders Prohibiting the Assembly of Slaves at Night, August 12, 1781," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:244.

¹⁰⁵ Francisco Cruzat, "Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat's Orders Prohibiting the Adornment with Vermilion and Feathers of Indigenous and African Individuals from St. Louis, August 15, 1781," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:245.

Dressing this way, according to Cruzat, endangered the individuals because they might be mistaken as enemies of the settlement and shot. One wonders whether any persons of European descent ever wore vermilion and feathers and faced similar expressions of worry over their safety; the absence of discussion of these individuals in Cruzat's orders may indicate that none dressed in this way or it could demonstrate the racialized nature of interactions in the St. Louis settlement. Due to safety concerns, and doubtless also as a control mechanism, Cruzat forbade "all savages, whether free or slave, and all negroes of this said post to clothe themselves in any other manner than according to our usage and custom, either in the village or when they go into the woods or fields—under penalty of being punished with severity, and according to the result of their infraction of our orders."¹⁰⁶

The ability to distinguish at a glance between "friendly" and "enemy" persons provided an underlying rationale for these orders, but these orders also served to try to control the interactions between members of these groups amidst heightened regional tensions. During this period, settlers in St. Louis and other Spanish settlements prepared and remained alert due to the war between England and the United States when Louisiana Governor and General Bernardo de Gálvez provided support for the rebelling *Bostoneses* or the newly-formed United States. Spanish officials such as Gálvez and Cruzat understood even more than the British did that enslaved or free individuals of Indigenous or African descent could act covertly to support enemy forces (See Appendices A and C). After all, Petit Jean, an enslaved man of African descent worked in the Mobile area to

¹⁰⁶ Francisco Cruzat, "Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat's Orders Prohibiting the Adornment with Vermilion and Feathers of Indigenous and African Individuals from St. Louis, August 15, 1781," in *SRM*, ed. Louis Houck (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1909), 1:245.

gather beef for the Spanish forces, even as he also provided beef for visiting Choctaws who came to meet with local British officials and French inhabitants in 1779.¹⁰⁷

The Spanish official feared that the enslaved and free people of African and Indigenous descent might engage in illegal activities while they spent time together, especially when dressed in vermilion and feathers. This observation speaks volumes about power, control, and racial constructs in this settlement. In addition, these writings demonstrate the entangled nature of Spanish-Osage relations in St. Louis, a settlement in which the Osage and other Indigenous people interacted with individuals of African descent. When young men from the Little Osage and Missouri entered St. Louis and exchanged the Spanish flag for the British flag in 1772, they likely passed at least one enslaved man or woman of African descent. In addition, despite Governor O'Reilly's 1769 proclamation that prohibited further Indigenous slavery, the late date of freedom for those Indigenous slaves reported in the required census so their owners could legally continue to hold them as property meant that the youths also likely passed at least one enslaved man or woman of Indigenous descent; perhaps someone who had been captured by the Osage in the past.¹⁰⁸ Did these enslaved individuals aid, or perhaps hinder, the Little Osage and Missouri youth in their endeavors? No available documentary evidence mentions this and if Piernas had similar fears to those of Cruzat, then any such alliance or working together in the raid likely would have come under his official notice.

¹⁰⁷ Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2016), 168.

¹⁰⁸ Alexandre O'Reilly, "Proclamation by Governor Alejandro O'Reilly Forbidding Indigenous Slavery December 7, 1769," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:125.

The Spanish officials' lack of consistent enforcement of the prohibition against further capturing, buying, or selling of Indigenous slaves remained evident even in 1787, well into the years in which the Spanish and Osage moved away from negotiating peace and toward warfare.¹⁰⁹ The attempt to avoid conflict and violence caused by the enslavement of Indigenous people in Louisiana, or, by extension, in the Spanish *Provincias Internas* that included Texas, prompted O'Reilly's issuance of the prohibition against Indigenous slavery in Spanish Louisiana.¹¹⁰ In addition, O'Reilly's policy extended Spanish laws concerning Indigenous slavery to this former-French territory. The required records from both St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve indicated the nation, if known, of the enslaved individuals whose owners retained ownership because the officials viewed them, officially, as property at the time of the issuance of O'Reilly's proclamation prohibiting Indigenous slavery.

Although the records did not include every enslaved individual's nation, the Pawnee nation represented the predominant affiliation listed in the Ste. Genevieve census.¹¹¹ On the other hand, Wesley Mosier offered another explanation for this designation when he wrote that, "the Osage term Panis (Pawnee) became synonymous with their word for slave."¹¹² It could be that the Osage targeted the Pawnee, which led to

¹⁰⁹ Francisco Cruzat, "Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat's Orders Repeating the December 7, 1769 O'Reilly Proclamation Prohibiting Indigenous Slavery in Louisiana, June 12, 1787," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:249.

¹¹⁰ Alexandre O'Reilly, "Proclamation by Governor Alejandro O'Reilly Forbidding Indigenous Slavery December 7, 1769," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:126.

¹¹¹ François Vallé, "Indian Slaves at Ste. Genevieve, May 27, 1770," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:167.

¹¹² Wesley Kenneth Mosier, "The Influence of Euro-American Trade upon the Osage Nation with Special Emphasis on the Indigenous Slave Trade, 1670-1803" (PhD diss., Oklahoma State University, 2014), 117.

their use of the term for slaves in general. Unfortunately, La Flesche's *Dictionary of the Osage Language* does not offer insight into this discussion. La Flesche recorded that "Pa-i" was "the Osage name for the Pawnee Tribe."¹¹³ He did not, however, provide an entry on the term "slave" in general, making it difficult to determine conclusively whether Vallé likely used the general Osage term or meant that these enslaved individuals truly identified themselves as part of the Pawnee nation. The report from St. Louis, unfortunately, does not include the national identities of the individual listed, except for the important reference to "Marie Louise, baptised, [*sic.*] aged about thirty-five, born in Illinois..." that became important in freedom suits in the 1800s.¹¹⁴ These records clearly indicate that from its beginning, St. Louis's history remained an entangled history woven together by individuals from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds.

Conclusion

While adjusting to this richly multi-ethnic, multi-racial settlement, Spanish officials in the late-18th century sought to develop and maintain trade with the Osage, Missouri, and other Indigenous Nations in the region. In time, with the help of French settlers-turned-Spanish-subjects such as St. Ange and the Chouteaus, in addition to the efforts of Spanish officials such as Piernas, the Osage came to view St. Louis as the hub of the Spanish-Osage fictive kinship relationship. This allowed Spain's subjects to participate in the rich Osage trade network. Simultaneously, the St. Louisans and the

¹¹³ La Flesche, *A Dictionary of the Osage Language*, 126.

¹¹⁴ Pedro Piernas, "Declarations Received by Pedro Piernas Concerning Indian Slaves at St. Louis" July 12, 1770," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:172.

Osage competed against and cooperated with each other as they each grappled for sovereignty and the control of the fur trade with Indigenous Nations to the west. The linguistic and cultural diversity of this region sometimes led to shared misunderstandings that undermined peace. However, overall, St. Louis formed the hub of Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations and symbolized efforts by individuals associated with these groups to maintain peace and positive trade relations during the 1760s and 1770s.

CHAPTER 3: DEFINING PEACE AND CONFLICT IN SPANISH ILLINOIS

War was not thought of by the Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga as desirable, for while the warriors of the tribe might triumph over their enemies in a single encounter or in a number of battles the fear of attack in retaliation would always follow them while engaged in hunting the deer or chasing the buffalo, and the women would be in constant dread while working in the fields. War meant to them only malice, hatred, and death.

- *Wa-xthi'-zhi*, a member of the Osage Puma gens on *Wa'-Wa-Thoⁿ*, the Osage Peace Ceremony, in an interview with Francis La Flesche, early 1900s.¹¹⁵

A good deal of research has focused on conflicts between Indigenous Nations and Europeans in the Americas. Less research has been dedicated to periods of peace and trade between these groups. This thesis seeks to introduce the discussion of peace to the more conflict-oriented research on Spanish-Indigenous relations in Upper Louisiana. It examines the early period (1763-1780) of Spanish territorial claims over this region in order to better understand political and economic relations between and among the Spanish and other European and Creole settlers, on the one hand, and the Missouri and the Great and Little Osage, and the group that moved to the Arkansas River Valley region and became known as the Arkansas Osage, on the other, focusing on the St. Louis area.

This thesis emphasizes the role of peace in Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations, which became almost inextricably intertwined with Spanish, Osage, and

¹¹⁵ Francis La Flesche, *War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians*, Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), 228.

Missouri interactions with other Indigenous Nations whose territorial claims for their farmlands, settlements, and hunting grounds bordered Osage and Missouri lands. Spanish-English relations complicated interactions in this region. In addition, the European view of territorial claims that allowed one European nation, such as France, to cede a large area of land over which it did not truly have control, such as the Louisiana region that included western (Spanish) Illinois, to another European nation without consulting the many nations that actually controlled, lived in, and also claimed these lands as their own further undermined peaceful regional relations.¹¹⁶ With the Spanish territorial claims of the regions west of the Mississippi River came, in the minds of Spanish and other European officials, a paternalistic obligation to attempt to broker peace between and try to control the many Indigenous Nations within these territorial claims.

Their inability to maintain such control, particularly in the Arkansas River Valley area in which the Osage and many other nations competed for control during the mid-to-late-1700s exasperated Spanish officials, especially those stationed at Natchitoches and the Arkansas Post. The dominant sources of tension between the Spanish and Osage during the 1760s-1770s, these conflicts, extended to include European traders, hunters, and settlers in the region, but principally involved the non-licensed traders who took advantage of the weakness of Spanish control in the Arkansas Post region. Even during

¹¹⁶ Rollins, *The Osage* does an excellent job of discussing the impact of bordering nations, and of the stronger French ties with the Illinois nations and other Indigenous Nations to the north and east of the Osage. He asserts that these ties, and access to European guns and other weapons, helped to check the power of the Osage on their northern and eastern borders, even though the Osage sometimes contested these borders. On the other hand, the relative weakness and historic rivalries of the nations to the south and west of the Osage, especially in the Arkansas River Valley region, combined with the Spanish attempts to limit this region's access to guns, livestock, and other trade items that often were confused with those stolen from the Texas region, enabled the Osage to assert control. This, along with conflict with the Chickasaw to the east and other nations that threatened Osage hegemony in their own claimed borders, gave rise to violence in this southern and western region. See especially p. 120-178.

the more conflict-driven period of the 1780s-1790s violence between the Osage and these groups remained prominent, rather than true Osage-Spanish warfare. As Stephen Barnett has shown, Spanish officials' attempts to limit Osage trade and gift-giving to the post at St. Louis further exacerbated tensions between the Osage and these groups in the Arkansas River Valley, especially because of Osage perspectives on kinship.¹¹⁷ An examination of peace and trade in the Arkansas River Valley region would be an excellent topic for a future study. The available evidence of times of peace and the importance of trade discussed by Lieutenant-Governors Pedro Piernas and Zebulon Trudeau at St. Louis, however, and the Spanish attempts to center trade and gift-giving on the St. Louis post make this settlement and the Missouri River Valley region a logical focus for this study. Throughout this chapter, then, the periods of peace and conflict discussed will emphasize the roles of and relations between the Spanish officials and the licensed traders, on the one hand, and the Osage and Missouri nations, on the other hand, especially as they related to the Missouri River Valley and St. Louis.

This chapter examines the Spanish and Osage understandings of peace, war, and conflict in order to better define these topics within their historical, social, cultural, and political contexts. Exploring these topics from the Spanish and Osage perspectives, respectively, provides a lens through which we can view how misunderstandings and misinterpretations arose in Spanish-Osage relations and led to conflict and Spanish officials' frustration, attempts at cutting off Osage trade, or threats of war. The scarcity of Osage primary sources makes it more difficult to directly hear Osage leaders' responses to Spanish misunderstandings. Osage ethnographies, however, especially *War Ceremony*

¹¹⁷ Barnett, "This Is Our Land," 102.

and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians and *A Dictionary of the Osage Language*, both the results of studies by Francis La Flesche, provide valuable insight into Osage understandings of these topics. By comparing the peace and war ceremonies and the explanations for their uses by tribal elders whose grandparents or great-grandparents participated in these ceremonies during the late-18th century as discussed in these works, we begin to assess the impact of Spanish misunderstandings of Osage ceremonies and attempts at peace.

War, Peace, and Conflict Studies Overview

Conflict, warfare, and peace are difficult to define. Stephen L. Quackenbush, in *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, discussed a variety of political scientists' approaches to defining war and conflict. It is important to note, though, that these definitions of war emerged from the emphasis on international conflict and armed struggle that occurred widely from the period that began with the Napoleonic Wars in Europe.¹¹⁸ Although recent conflicts have encouraged scholars who study war, conflict, and peace to nuance their discussions and to consider conflicts at varied levels of analysis, the international model that focuses primarily on European warfare from the 19th century to the present continues to predominate the field.¹¹⁹ For example, Quackenbush discussed the classical approach to defining war as presented by Hedley Bull, who "defines *war* as 'organized violence carried on by political units against each

¹¹⁸ Stephen L. Quackenbush, *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence*, (Sage, Los Angeles, 2015), 9.

¹¹⁹ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 21.

other.”¹²⁰ Quackenbush himself pointed to specific problems with this definition of war, including the lack of “specific, measurable [*sic.*] criteria so that we can look at various events in history and determine whether or not they are wars,” although he noted that this definition does rule out the extension of the definition of war to such efforts as the “war on poverty or war on drugs.”¹²¹ Moving to another approach, Quackenbush then considered the “traditional way that people have separated wars from other types of international conflict” by focusing on “a formal declaration of war.”¹²² This, of course, provides a criterion for considering whether more recent conflicts such as the Korean War, or Korean Police Action qualifies as a war, but its formal, international focus limits its usefulness for an examination of Osage-Spanish relations and warfare.

Another approach to defining war focuses “on a certain number of deaths as a requirement to consider a conflict a war.”¹²³ This definition shifts the focus somewhat from a party-on-party approach to determining whether or not a war exists, for example, the Correlates of War Project (COW), “defines **interstate war** as fighting between regular military forces of two or more countries, directed and approved of by central authorities, where at least one thousand battle deaths occur.”¹²⁴ The high number of deaths required over a period of time used for the COW approach, though, limits its

¹²⁰ Hedley Bull, “International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach,” *World Politics* in Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 31.

¹²¹ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 31.

¹²² Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 32.

¹²³ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 32.

¹²⁴ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 32. Note: Bolded in original.

effectiveness for a study such as this one in which the Osage or Spanish caused only a small number of verifiable conflict-driven deaths even over the period 1763-1800. Additionally, Quackenbush discussed extrastate wars in which “a state fights a war outside of its borders against a nonstate actor” and intrastate wars, which occur “between state and nonstate actors within the territory of a state.”¹²⁵ He also defined regional internal wars, in which “a local or regional government—rather than the national government—is fighting against nonstate forces over local issues,” and intercommunal wars, in which “the government is not involved at all; rather, different factions within the state are fighting against each other.”¹²⁶ The final category of war that Quackenbush introduced does not involve a state; instead, these nonstate wars “involve nonstate actors fighting against each other outside of a particular state’s borders.”¹²⁷

These definitions help provide parameters for better understanding global, regional, and local wars and conflicts, however, none of them completely fits the situation involving Spanish-Indigenous, especially Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the Mississippi, Missouri, and Arkansas River Valley region. Importantly for this study, though, they demonstrate the complexity of defining even a seemingly straightforward concept such as war. In addition, they remind us of the need to consider historical, social, cultural, and political contexts when examining war, peace, and conflict, especially the misunderstandings that often arose in intercultural interactions

¹²⁵ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 35.

¹²⁶ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 35.

¹²⁷ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 35.

within this multi-ethnic region in which the Spanish and Osage, along with many other actors, negotiated for sovereignty and alliances.

The term from *International Conflict: Logic and Evidence* that best describes the more violence-driven Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the 1760s-1780s is “militarized interstate dispute (MID),” which Quackenbush defined as “a set of interactions between or among nations involving (1) the threat to use force, (2) the display of force, or (3) the actual use of military force.”¹²⁸ Part of the difficulty of categorizing war and conflict between European and Indigenous groups in this region in the 18th century stemmed from the lack of clarity concerning the categorization of the many people-groups in this region of fluid and layered identities. From the perspective of official Spanish policy, Spain claimed control over the Louisiana and Spanish Illinois region and needed to maintain these claims against English or other European nations’ encroachment. When Spain gained this territory, from a European perspective, in the Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1762, however, many Indigenous groups and Europeans or Creoles, in addition to people of African or multi-racial descent, already lived in the then-Spanish Illinois. They became, from a Spanish and European perspective, subjects of Spain with this treaty, but this official change did not guarantee that the individuals involved considered their own identities or loyalties to have changed with the treaty. Some French soldiers and officials such as St. Ange and Mézières, at Fort de Chartres and then St. Louis and Natchitoches respectively, resigned their French military commissions and became Spanish officials. Other French inhabitants or those of other national identities showed more reluctance to become Spanish subjects, as became

¹²⁸ Quackenbush, *International Conflict*, 38

painfully evident to Governor Ulloa in 1768 when the rebellion by some New Orleans and other area inhabitants forced him to leave Louisiana and report to Spain.¹²⁹ French-turned-Spanish officials such as St. Ange and Mézières encouraged the Osage, Caddo, and other Indigenous Nations who had formed trade agreements and alliances with the French to recognize Spanish (and English in the region east of the Mississippi River) sovereignty and shift their friendships and alliances.¹³⁰ All of this, though, focused on the change of ownership, claims, and sovereignty from the perspective of European powers.

The Osage, on the other hand, also laid claim to the region that was roughly bounded by the Missouri, Mississippi, and Arkansas River Valleys. The French-Spanish Treaty of Fontainebleau negotiated by Grimaldi and Choiseul that gave Spain claim to Louisiana, while it brought change, did not, from the Osage perspective at least, reflect a true shift in authority or power in the region because the Osage, not the French, Spanish, or British, had sovereignty over this region.¹³¹ As DuVal so carefully demonstrated, the Osage, Quapaw, and other Indigenous Nations had and maintained control in the Mississippi River Valley region and its tributaries, even as they skillfully used diplomacy and negotiations, sometimes even including threats to use force or displays of force as in the “militarized interstate dispute” model, to remind the Spanish and other Europeans of Osage and Quapaw sovereignty over their respective claimed areas.

¹²⁹ Antonio de Ulloa, "Letter from Governor Antonio de Ulloa to Captain-General of Cuba Don Antonio Bucareli Discussing the Necessity of Proceeding to Spain to Report on the New Orleans Uprising, December 8, 1768.," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:83.

¹³⁰ See, for example, “St. Ange to Dabbadie April 7, 1765” in Clarence Walworth Alvord, *The Illinois Country, 1673-1818* (Illinois Centennial Commission, 1920; University of Illinois Press, 1987), 468.

¹³¹ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 121.

Osage Governance and Division of Power

Willard H. Rollings in *The Osage: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony on the Prairie-Plains* wrote an important discussion of the Osage governing and economic systems that provided background information for this study. Specifically, Rollings, like Mathews, pointed to the greater complexity of Osage governance and division of power than the Spanish officials recognized. These Spanish officials' misunderstanding of Osage government, rooted in their own more monarchy-oriented view of government, undermined the Osage system by favoring one leader instead of recognizing the Osage divisions of power. Rollings highlighted the two moieties, or tribal divisions, the *Tsi-zhu* and the *Hon-ga*, within the Osage polity and the sub-division of each moiety into subgroups.¹³² The dualistic nature of leadership within the Osage system provided for a flexible system with a balance of power between the peace and war chiefs, or the *Tsi-zhu Ga-hi'-ge* and *Hon-ga Ga-hi'-ge*, respectively, and the tribal council known as the Little Old Men or *Non-hon-zhin-ga*.¹³³ The Osage system's flexibility allowed it to reproduce itself when a group broke off from the main group and moved to another area, such as the Little Osage movement to the Missouri River in the early 18th century.

Rollings demonstrated that the European assumptions about government and power stemmed from their monarchy-focused and more centralized power-based experiences and often undermined European-Osage relations when Spanish officials demanded that only one Osage leader, or sometimes one Little Osage and one Great

¹³² Willard H. Rollings, *The Osage: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony on the Prairie-Plains* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 48.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 61.

Osage leader, act as the sole representative of Osage authority. The peace leader, or *Tsi-zhu Ga-hi'-ge*, whose responsibilities lent themselves to this public diplomacy role usually became the leader, or Osage *Ga-hi'-ge*, with whom the Spanish officials most frequently interacted and whose authority they officially recognized.¹³⁴ By ignoring the war leader, or *Hon-ga Ga-hi'-ge*, and misrepresenting one leader as the sole Osage authority instead of recognizing the importance of the tribal council, the Little Old Men or *Non-hon-zhin-ga*, these Spanish officials undermined these other governing bodies within the Osage system even as they demonstrated their own ignorance or misunderstanding of Osage customs.¹³⁵

Osage Views of Peace and Conflict

In *War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians*, Francis La Flesche recorded Osage traditions and cultural practices involved in the war and peace ceremonies, especially as *Wa-xthi'-zhi*, a member of the Puma gens, remembered them. La Flesche interviewed *Wa-xthi'-zhi* and other Osage tribal elders between 1910 and 1923 while doing fieldwork among the Osage.¹³⁶ From them, he learned about practices, stories, and traditions that *Wa-xthi'-zhi* and other tribal elders had learned from their parents and grandparents; these grandparents or great-grandparents probably lived during the late-18th century. These Osage individuals may have included members of the Great, Little, or Arkansas Osage groups, with whom Spanish officials such as Pedro Piernas

¹³⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹³⁶ Garrick Bailey, *Traditions of the Osage*, 6.

interacted. Although there exists the possibility that *Wa-xthi'-zhi* and others shared only information that they thought La Flesche, a member of the Omaha nation, but a representative of the Smithsonian Institution by this point, and the Americans that he represented, wanted to hear. Either way, these records represent the closest sources that we have to primary sources for the Osage that depict their war and peace ceremonies; these ceremonies and *Wa-xthi'-zhi's* commentary on them provide fascinating and valuable context for better understanding Osage views of war and peace.

In his discussion of the *Wa-sha'-be A-thiⁿ*, or War Ceremony, *Wa-xthi'-zhi* described the multi-day, elaborate ceremony that the Osage used; significantly, La Flesche's description from *Wa-xthi'-zhi* included the following commentary before the description of the *Wa-sha'-be A-thiⁿ*:

It sometimes happened, in the life of the Osage people, that the aggressions of their enemies became intolerable, and at the same time there was a feeling of indifference among the warriors toward the taking of retaliatory measures. As, for instance, women would be slain while planting the corn, cultivating the growing stalks, or when gathering the edible roots that form a part of the food supply; hunters would be slain or the men herding their horses would be killed and their animals driven away. At such times, the No^{n'}-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga Wa-thiⁿ would suddenly call, through his Sho'ka, the No^{n'}-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga to assemble for council. The Keeper of the No^{n'}-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga would take his place, as presiding officer, at the eastern end of the lodge. When all had assembled and taken their places according to gentes, those of the Tsi'-zhu division on the north and those of the Ho^{n'}-ga on the south side of the lodge, the Keeper would speak to them, saying: "O, Tsi'-zhu, Wa-zha'-zhe and Hoⁿ-ga, I have taken it upon myself to call you together that I may bring to your attention the conditions which necessitate our taking some definite action toward the prevention of the attacks made upon us by our enemies. There is no safety for us except by a common defense and retaliation against our enemies. The boldness and the frequency of their attacks upon those who attend the fields and those who hunt for game have brought about a state of confusion and unhappiness among the people. The time has come for us to look to our safety and comfort. I also take it upon myself to ask the Wa-zha'-zhe Wa-noⁿ (gens) to place before us the sacred pipe which is in his keeping."¹³⁷

¹³⁷ La Flesche, *War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians*, 4.

Wa-xthi'-zhi followed this information with a detailed description of the ceremony. Notably, in his descriptions of both the war and peace ceremonies, when his recollection reached a point or song that he either had not learned, because it belonged to a different gens, or that he did not recall, *Wa-xthi'-zhi* indicated this to La Flesche. This tribal elder's willingness to admit when he did not know or recall a portion of a ceremony adds further credibility to his recollections. It seems to demonstrate that *Wa-xthi'-zhi* wanted to present an honest, accurate account of each ceremony to La Flesche. In addition, La Flesche's own Omaha background probably helped him as he and *Wa-xthi'-zhi* could compare and contrast Osage and Omaha ceremonial aspects.

In his description of the Osage war ceremony, *Wa-xthi'-zhi* asserted that the *No''-ho''-zhi''-ga Wa-thi''* called for a war ceremony to gather the Osage warriors so that they would move past their "feeling of indifference" and "take retaliatory measures" in order to protect the people of the Osage villages. From this perspective, the purpose of warfare among the Osage was protection, rather than violence or conflict for its own sake. The Osage war ceremony acted as a rallying point for a sort of offensive-defensive strategy of taking revenge upon enemies who harassed women in the fields, attacked men while out on the hunt or herding the animals, or bothered or stole Osage livestock. Osage warfare, from this perspective, protected the Osage so that they could live in peace.

Seen this way, the Osage war ceremony fulfilled a necessary role in the continuation of Osage lifeways. The corn, squash, pumpkins, beans, and other crops that the Osage women planted each year supplied much of each Osage village's annual caloric intake. Rollings indicates that these agricultural products may have provided up to

three-fourths of an Osage family's food.¹³⁸ If women remained unable to plant these crops in the gardens around the Osage villages in the late spring, prior to the annual Osage movement to the prairie hunting grounds, then the families would be left without their supply of corn, squash, and beans when they returned to harvest these items in August.¹³⁹ Similarly, the Osage depended on successful buffalo hunts each year; therefore, if Osage hunting parties suffered attack by enemies while hunting, they could lose another important food and supply source. After men killed the bison, Osage women skinned and butchered these large animals and used their meat and hides for the village. In addition, women gathered wild foodstuffs such as grapes, black walnuts, wild potatoes, pecans, and persimmons from the forest areas near their settlements in the autumn.¹⁴⁰ The entire village faced hardship or starvation if the Osage warriors failed to protect the men, women, and children by warring against their enemies, if necessary.

La Flesche, in his *A Dictionary of the Osage Language*, reported that “*noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga*” translated to “old men” with an additional note that it meant “The title of a man who has been initiated into the mysteries of the tribal rites.”¹⁴¹ According to *Wa-xthi'-zhi*:

From the earliest times there was among the Osage a “house” or place of gathering called *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* *Wa-thiⁿ Ṭsi*, House of the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga*. At this house the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* met almost every morning, sometimes officially but more often in an informal way. At the informal gatherings the conversation frequently turned to matters of importance to the tribe, such as any practices among the people that seemed to be injurious to their effects or liable to become a menace to the internal peace of the tribe. Some means would then be sought by which to overcome these evils. On the other hand, any acts that tended to promote

¹³⁸ Rollings, *The Osages*, 70.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴¹ La Flesche, *A Dictionary of the Osage Language*, 114.

a feeling of friendliness or kindness among the people found hearty expressions of approval in the sacred “house.”

No “house” was purposely established and maintained by the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* for their gatherings. They selected for their home the house of a man (who might belong to any other of the various gentes of the tribe), but he was always one who, by his valor, generosity, and hospitality, had won the esteem and affection of all the people. The title given the man at whose house the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* made their home was *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga Wa-thiⁿ*, Keeper of the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga*. The selection of a man’s house for the home of the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* was regarded as conferring an honor of the highest character upon the owner.¹⁴²

The Little Old Men or *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* acted as the tribal council or legislative body of tribal elders made up of members of each gens and helped govern the Osage along with the peace and war chiefs, or the *Tsi-zhu Ga-hi'-ge* and *Hon-ga Ga-hi'-ge*. When the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga Wa-thiⁿ*, the Keeper of the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga*, called the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* together to begin the war ceremony, he sent his *Sho'-ka* to call the tribal council and others to gather.¹⁴³ La Flesche provided us with insight when he defined a *Sho'-ka* as “a ceremonial messenger” and added a note that “This was an office necessary for communicating with the other gentes in a ceremonial and authoritative manner. A captive was sometimes chosen to fill this office because, it is said, he was a real *Sho'-ka*; in order that he may be easily recognized from others he carries a pipe in his left hand as his badge of office.”¹⁴⁴ After the *Sho'-ka* called together the gathering, the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga* gathered as described by *Wa-xthi'-zhi* above, and the *Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga Wa-thiⁿ* requested that the leader of the *Wa-zha'-zhe Wa-noⁿ* gens present the ceremonial pipe

¹⁴² La Flesche, *War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians*, 4.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4

¹⁴⁴ La Flesche, *A Dictionary of the Osage Language*, 132.

from its wrappings along with tobacco for smoking, at this point, the multi-day ceremonies of preparing for war began.¹⁴⁵

Admittedly, when talking with La Flesche, *Wa-xhti'-zhi* might have avoided discussing any more aggressive or expansion-driven wars, preferring to cast the Osage in a peaceful, protection-oriented light. Even given this possibility, it remains significant that he discussed the development and purpose of these ceremonies as an attempt by the Osage to respond as one body or group to aggressions by outsiders that had potential to harm individual Osage men, women, children, or possessions, to threats that undermined the nation as a whole. This contrasts sharply with the image presented by Din and Nasatir in *The Imperial Osages: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley* in which the authors emphasized Osage violence by highlighting Osage fierceness, writing, for example, that “Boys among the Osages were expected to inhale the martial spirit of the warriors, become proficient in the use of weapons, and win honors in raids.”¹⁴⁶ They moderated their tone a bit with the next sentence in which they noted, “The highest honors were not derived from killing or scalping the enemy, but from touching him while he was still alive or immediately after he had been killed.”¹⁴⁷ Whereas *Wa-xhti'-zhi* in the early 20th century emphasized the role of the *No''-ho''-zhi''-ga* in moderating Osage passions and protecting the Osage, Din and Nasatir in the late-20th century focused on Osage expansion and violence.

¹⁴⁵ La Flesche, *War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage Indians*, 4

¹⁴⁶ Din and Nasatir, *The Imperial Osages*, 21.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

The way that scholars discuss the Osage war ceremonies and mourning rituals impacts our interpretation of these ceremonies and the Osage attitudes toward conflict, warfare, and violence. Whereas Nasatir and Din in *Imperial Osages* chose to focus on Osage violence, La Flesche contextualized it by acknowledging *Wa-xthi'-zhi's* description and purpose of the *Wa-sha'-be A-thi'*, or Morning Rite. La Flesche carefully denoted that *Wa-xthi'-zhi* distinguished between the “original and true *Wa-sha'-be A-thi'* rite” and stated, “that the Mourning Rite is of later origin, although it bears the same title and resembles the earlier rite in many of its details.”¹⁴⁸ Din and Nasatir, instead, noted:

Violence often followed the death of an Osage. It was the belief of the tribe that the dead required vengeance or company to reach the land of the spirits. Although the scalp of an enemy was preferred to hang over the grave of an Osage, that of anyone not a member of the tribe would do just as well. Many of the murders of white hunters and traders and of other Indians caught in the woods were a result of the Osage mourning-war ceremony, *Wa-sha'-be A-thi'*.¹⁴⁹

They continued their discussion by emphasizing the violence of the ritual, its religious purpose, and its role in permitting “young men to rise to prominence through their successful participation in it.”¹⁵⁰ Clearly, the Mourning Rite included and led to violence, but the rite’s existence and use should not overshadow the Osage efforts at peace within the nation and with their allies and fictive kin, such as the Spanish. *Wa-xthi'-zhi* seems to have anticipated violence-focused depictions of the Osage like that of *Imperial Osages* when he discussed this ritual. La Flesche recorded that *Wa-xthi'-zhi* followed his remarks about the Mourning Rite and its later origins with additional commentary:

¹⁴⁸ La Flesche, *Osage War and Peace Ceremonies*, 86.

¹⁴⁹ Din and Nasatir, *Imperial Osages*, 17.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

The original *Wa-sha-‘-be A-thi*ⁿ relates to the organization of a war party to engage either in defensive or offensive warfare; the later ceremony is for the organization of a war party for the purpose of slaying a member of some enemy tribe in order to secure a spirit to accompany that of a dead Osage to the spirit land. There is a belief among the Osage that the path to the spirit land is a lonely one and he who travels upon it craves company, therefore a man who has lost by death his wife, son, daughter, nephew, or other loved relative, desires to have the ceremonies of the Mourning Rite performed, provided that he has the means to meet the expenses that arise therefrom.¹⁵¹

Clearly, violence played a role in shaping Osage responses to the deaths of their relatives, especially among the wealthier Osage who could afford the Mourning Rite. Whereas Din and Nasatir emphasized the role of this ritual in causing members of the Osage to seek out and murder innocent victims, *Wa-xthi’-zhi* asserted that the Osage who participated in the ritual went out to find and kill a member of an enemy tribe. Beyond this important point about the differing targets for victims of the Mourning Rite, *Wa-xthi’-zhi*’s account also emphasized the purpose of the earlier *Wa-sha-‘-be A-thi*ⁿ as part of either defensive or offensive warfare, especially noting that the Osage used offensive warfare to mourn their own dead and to take vengeance against their enemies, rather than to wantonly attack innocent and defenseless victims. We also see a hint of Osage views of kinship and friendship in *Wa-xthi’-zhi*’s discussion of the Mourning Rite, when he told La Flesche that the Osage believed that “the path to the spirit land is a lonely one and he who travels upon it craves company.”¹⁵² It seems strange to our ears today that the spirits of the dead would desire to travel the path to the spirit land accompanied by their former enemies, but perhaps this also represents the Osage attempts to seek peace and reconciliation with their enemies, even if this occurred after death.

¹⁵¹ La Flesche, *Osage War and Peace Ceremonies*, 86-87.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 87.

Trade, Gifts, Kinship, and Borders: Roots of Osage Violence

In the early-18th century, French fur *voyageurs* traveled from Canada and into the Illinois country, down the Mississippi River, and then into the Missouri River region to seek Indigenous trade partners in their competition against the English, Dutch, and others to expand French fur trade networks. DuVal posits that many of these French explorers and traders failed to travel deeply into Osage country, which may have led to the Little Osage decision to move closer to the Missouri nation.¹⁵³ Rollins, in *The Osage*, provided an excellent discussion of the impact of bordering nations, and of the stronger French ties with the Illinois nations and other Indigenous Nations to the north and east of the Osage, on Osage-French relations in the 17th and early 18th centuries.¹⁵⁴ He asserted that these ties, and access to European guns and other weapons, helped to check the power of the Osage on their northern and eastern borders, even though the Osage sometimes contested these borders.

On the other hand, the relative weakness and historic rivalries of the nations to the south and west of the Osage, especially in the Arkansas River Valley region, combined with the Spanish attempts to limit this region's access to guns, livestock, and other trade items that easily became confused with those stolen from the Texas region, enabled the Osage to assert control. This, along with conflict with the Chickasaw to the east and other nations that threatened Osage hegemony in their own claimed borders, gave rise to violence in this southern and western region. In addition, Osage violence often came from their attempts to stop the western tribes from gaining access to direct trade with the

¹⁵³ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 106.

¹⁵⁴ Rollings, *The Osage*, 120.

Spanish or French traders, or even British interlopers from the north, or to keep these European traders from gaining access to direct trade with these western tribes. In other words, the Osage used violence or the threat of violence, in these cases, because of Spanish or European disrespect of Osage trade routes and boundaries.

Trade and fictive kinship relationships complicated inter-cultural and intra-cultural interactions in this multi-ethnic, multi-cultural region. In 1765, when St. Ange attempted to convince a gathering of some members of the Osage, Missouri, and Illinois nations that they should accept the new territorial arrangements from the Treaty of Fontainebleau of 1762 and Treaty of Paris of 1763, he faced resistance based on the fictive kinship relationship that these nations had cultivated with the French. For example, in a letter to d'Abbadie dated April 7, 1765, St. Ange recorded the speech given by leaders of the Osage and Missouri in response to St. Ange's prompting of these leaders to accept the new authority of the British, represented by Ross, in eastern Illinois. In their speech, the Osage and Missouri chiefs, presumably the peace leaders, the *Tsi-zhu Ga-hi'-ge*, rejected the proposed change in the relationship and demonstrated that they considered the fictive kinship relationship that they had developed with the French to be indissoluble. According to St. Ange, they said:

My father, we Osage and Missouri think as do our elder brothers, the Illinois. We shall do all they wish, and it is well that the English do not come here, for we shall always aid our brothers in preserving their lands; besides we know only the Frenchman for our father. Never have we heard our ancestors speak of another nation. They have always told us that it was the French who gave us life and supplied our needs. They advised us never to loose their hand. We still hold it, my father, and it shall never escape from us.

Why do you, Englishman, not remain on your lands, while the red nations remain on theirs. These belong to us. We inherit them from our ancestors. They found them by dint of wandering. They established themselves there and they [*the lands*] are ours; no one can contest them. Leave, depart, depart, depart, and tell

your chief that all the red men do not want any English here. Pay good attention to what we tell you. Do not insist on remaining here longer. Leave and do not come back any more. We only want to have the French among us. Adieu, leave (giving him his hand).¹⁵⁵

Ross heard the Osage, Missouri, and Illinois message clearly, especially when, as he recorded, “One Day a Chief of a Nation of Indians called the Ozages [*sic.*], bordering up on the Missouri came to See Captain St. Ange the Commandant, and demanded an Audience.” The Osage leader does not appear to have expected to see Ross, an Englishman, with St. Ange, because when he saw Ross, the Osage leader, “threw himself in a Rage and would have given me a Stroke with his Hatchet; had not Capt. St. Ange Interfered, telling him that he Sacrifice him....”¹⁵⁶ This Osage leader rejected St. Ange’s attempt to help Ross establish fictive kinship and trade relationships with the Osage nation; instead, he asserted that he viewed Ross as an enemy worthy of death. Spanish officials likely appreciated that the Osage, Illinois, and Missouri leaders openly rejected British friendship and trade overtures. These leaders had traveled across the Mississippi River to the eastern shore to meet with St. Ange and Ross; in later years, the Osage and Missouri welcomed St. Ange’s move to St. Louis on their, and Spain’s side of the river.

¹⁵⁵ “Speech by the Chiefs of the Osage and Missouri” as recorded in Louis Groston St. Ange de Bellerive, “Copy of Letter from M. de St. Ange, Commandant at the Illinois, written to M. Dabbadie, dated April 7, 1765 concerning the Illinois, Osage, and Missouri and Efforts to Propose Peace between These Nations and the English,” 1765, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period 1663-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), X:479.

¹⁵⁶ John Ross, “Letter from John Ross, Lieutenant in the Thirty-Fourth British Regiment, written to Major Farmer, Discussing His Meetings with the Illinois and other Indigenous Nations, September 23, 1765,” 1765, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period 1663-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), X: 482.

Unfortunately, we do not have a similar record of the Osage leaders' responses to Spanish officials' entry into Spanish Illinois. A December 29, 1769, letter from Governor Alejandro O'Reilly's to Minister of the Indies Don Bailio Frey Julian de Arriaga, however, contains an important clue. In it, O'Reilly wrote:

At Ylinueses, when Captain Don Francisco Ríu went there with his detachment, he himself confesses that the present given him by the Indians was worth two thousand pesos *fuertes* which Ríu said he divided with the French commandant, M. de St. Ange.

From the regulation here the Indians know what they are to receive from the King each year, and in this there will be no excessive charges nor deceit in the distribution. I assure you that the Indians who have come here have in no previous year cost the King so little, nor have they ever gone away so well supplied with presents or so contented....¹⁵⁷

St. Ange's decision to move to St. Louis enabled him to continue his relationships with the Osage, Missouri, and Illinois. O'Reilly recognized this in his orders to Ríu. For his part, Ríu seems to have followed these directions closely, probably because he realized that St. Ange's strong relationship with the Indigenous Nations in the region was invaluable to the Spanish. O'Reilly's letter also demonstrated the early efforts of the Spanish officials in Louisiana to follow the French-established gift-giving practice that helped to strengthen the Osage-French, and then Osage-Spanish, fictive kinship and trading relationships. O'Reilly emphasized that the Indigenous man, whose identity Ríu does not seem to have supplied, remained contented with their gifts and that they had received more supplies under O'Reilly than they had from previous French or Spanish leaders. At the same time, this letter's emphasis on the decreased price of the goods for

¹⁵⁷ Alexandre O'Reilly, "Letter from Louisiana Governor Alexandro O'Reilly to Minister of the Indies Bailio Frey Julian de Arriaga Reporting on Conditions in Louisiana, including the New Post Called Isla Real Católica, December 29, 1769," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:148.

the annual present demonstrates the Spanish government's desire to minimize costs while maintaining strong relations with the powerful Indigenous Nations in Louisiana. With time, these Spanish attempts to save money threatened the fictive kinship relationship, but the early efforts of St. Ange and the Spanish officials to conform to previous French trade and gifting practices helped solidify the St. Louis-based Osage-Spanish kinship relationship.

Spanish and Osage Conceptions of Belonging

Barnett, in "This Is Our Land," emphasized the importance of these ritual kinship relationships in Osage and other Indigenous Nations' trade networks, which formed a thick network that spread across the North American continent and threatened the Spanish ability to control the fur trade.¹⁵⁸ The Osage understood the importance of trade to the Spanish and they also insisted on their own right to control trade within and across their boundaries. Barnett's discussion centered on the role of Spanish misunderstandings of these kinship relationships and explained that the "Osage culture revolved around a dualistic worldview in which an individual or group either existed apart from or included within the social networks of the tribe. Admission to the kinship network of the Osage required a ritual exchange between both parties."¹⁵⁹ Auguste Chouteau, aware of the importance of kinship and belonging to the Osage, seems to have formed a marital kinship relationship with the Osage that led to the birth of Antoine Chouteau around

¹⁵⁸ Barnett, "This Is Our Land," 95.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

1767-1768.¹⁶⁰ He seems to have recognized the importance of women in Osage society that extended to the fur trade and Osage ceremonies.¹⁶¹ Although the Osage followed a patrilineal kinship system, they had matrilineal residences, demonstrating the importance of both men and women within this society, a concept that the Spanish never understood.¹⁶² Pierre Chouteau, Auguste's brother, established a residence in an Osage village around age seventeen, further helping to cement these ties.¹⁶³ Their long relationship with the Osage allowed the Chouteau brothers to learn the Osage language and understand Osage customs, enabling them to negotiate between the Spanish and the Osage. French Creole by birth, these men from St. Louis moved within and between the Spanish and Osage worlds as they lived their lives.

The Osage name for St. Louis, “*Sho-do' to'-wo'*,” demonstrates the strength of the Chouteau-Osage relationship.¹⁶⁴ These strong ties, combined with St. Ange's efforts and the decision by the Spanish officials to give the Osage their annual gifts at St. Louis, helped to cement the Spanish-Osage relationship in the St. Louis region. Although I have

¹⁶⁰ *Acto de entierro hecho por Fr. Luis de Quintanilla, Dia Quatro de noviembre de este año de mil setecientos noventa y seis Yo Fr. Luis de Quintanilla religioso Capuchino y teniente de cura del Sagrario de Esta Santa Yglesia Catedral de esta Ciudad de la Nueva Orleans di supultra en el Campo Santo de la referida Yglesia al cuerpo de Antonio Chouteau natural de los Yllinois, hijo natural de Augusto Chouteau (su madre se ignora)...*, November 4, 1796, Parish Records of St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana, Record 430: https://archives.arch-no.org/system/sacramental_records/attachments/000/000/065/original/St._louis_cathedral_New_Orleans_funeral_1793-1803_microfilm_1954.pdf.

¹⁶¹ Mathews, *The Osages*, 336.

¹⁶² Garrick Alan Bailey, "Changes in Osage Social Organization, 1673-1906," *University of Oregon Anthropological Papers* 5 (1973): 10.

¹⁶³ William E. Foley and C. David Rice, *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 21.

¹⁶⁴ Francis La Flesche, *A Dictionary of the Osage Language* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government, 1932), 322.

not found any record of a Spanish official at St. Louis participating in the *Wa'-Wa-Tho'*, or Osage Peace Ceremony, often referred to by writers as “the Calumet dance” or “the pipe dance,” it seems likely that the Osage and some St. Louis officials, perhaps St. Ange, Laclede, or others, followed this ritual in the 1760s and perhaps repeated it again in the 1770s.¹⁶⁵ Alternatively, since the Chouteau brothers had formed a strong kinship bond with the Osage, perhaps the Osage considered “*Sho-do' to'-wo'*” part of their kinship network because the Chouteaus' other family members resided in St. Louis. The Spanish expected the Osage to go to St. Louis for their annual gifts and the Osage viewed St. Louis as the core of the Osage-Spanish relationship, but they also insisted on trading with the other Spanish settlements.¹⁶⁶ Unfortunately, this policy undermined Spanish-Osage relations in the Arkansas River Valley region. Whereas the Osage expected each settlement to integrate itself within the Osage kinship network, Spain followed a hierarchical, bureaucratic model that focused on St. Louis as the only trade and gift-giving center with whom the Spanish officials expected the Osage to interact. Shared misunderstandings concerning kinship networks and trade models combined with competing visions of sovereignty to cause tension in Spanish-Osage relations. Despite the added difficulty caused by cultural differences and lack of comprehension of customs, however, the Osage and Spanish leaders each sought ways to forge ties and maintain peace in the 1760s-1770s, even though they sometimes used violence or threats of violence or cutting off trade to reinforce their own visions of sovereignty.

¹⁶⁵ La Flesche, *War Ceremony and Peace Ceremony of the Osage*, 203.

¹⁶⁶ DuVal, *The Native Ground*, 122.

In the Bourbon Spanish monarchy-based system, within which the Spanish officials worked, governed, and viewed the world, King Carlos III of Spain and the bureaucratic government that operated for him throughout Spain's global empire had sovereignty in Louisiana, based on the Treaty of Fontainebleau. Within this system, all people in Louisiana, whether of African, European, or Indigenous descent, or a combination of these heritages, lived as the king's subjects, in this view.¹⁶⁷ The Spanish recognized the need to negotiate with powerful nations such as the Osage for trade purposes, but they do not seem to have understood that the Osage viewed themselves as outside of Spain's authority, even as sovereign over the lands that Spain claimed.

From the Spanish officials' perspective, the Spanish lieutenant-governor at the St. Louis post negotiated trade relationships for all Spanish subjects and settlements with the annual gift-giving ceremony at St. Louis. For this reason, St. Ange and Ríu sent annual reports that discussed the Indigenous Nations to whom they had distributed gifts that included the Missouri, the Little Osage, and the Big Osage.¹⁶⁸ Piernas, in 1771, sent a more detailed report that gives us insight into the kinds of food supplies that the Spanish officials provided to the Osage and other nations each year when they came to St. Louis (see Table 1). The commodities provided represent basic food rations, wheat-based bread and corn. Juliana Barr, in *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*, demonstrated the

¹⁶⁷ DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 174.

¹⁶⁸ Francisco Ríu and Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, "XI Report of the Various Indian Tribes Receiving Presents in the District of Ylinoia or Illinois, 1769," in *SRM*, ed. Louis Houck (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1909), 1:44.

importance of women in groups such as these and argued that “the inclusion of women and children in traveling parties communicated a peaceful demeanor.”¹⁶⁹

One wonders whether the Osage and other Indigenous women appreciated receiving food to feed their travel-weary and hungry families or if they viewed these

Names of the Nations	Number of Indians Including Leaders	Days Passed in St. Louis	Bread Ration (1.5 <i>libras</i>)	Barrels of Corn
Soioux [Sioux]	36	3	108	3 ½
Grandes Ôsages [Great Osage]	49	2	98	3 1/3
Ayoua [Iowa]	26	2	52	¾
Cancé [Kansas]	30	3	90	1
Panimacha	15	3	45	2/3
Sacs [Saux]	22	2	44	2/3
Autocdata [Otoes]	17	2	34	½
Sateux [Ottowas]	31	2	62	¾
Petits Ôsages [Little Osage]	43	2	86	1
Misouri [Missouri]	40	2	80	1
Renaxo [Renards]	28	2	56	2/3
KasKasias [Kaskaskias]	23	1	23	2/3
Nombres de las Seis de la Bello Riviere				
Pianasquichias [Piankishas]	19	2	38	½
Kicapoux [Kickapoo]	21	2	42	2/3
Mascouteioes [Mascoutas]	34	2	68	2
Haiatanomi [Ouiatanon]	16	2	32	¼
Poutuatamis	32	2	64	¾
Peorias	50	1	50	½

Table 1: Amount of Bread and Corn Given to the Indigenous Nations for their Annual Gifts in St. Louis May 20, 1770-February 4, 1771.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 33.

¹⁷⁰ *Estado del pan y maíz que se ha subministrado al número de Yndios que de las Naciones que manifiesta han concurrido para recibir los regalos anualmente destinados en este puesto, desde el 20 de maio de 1770, hasta el 4 de febrero de 1771*, 4 de febrero, 1771, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 538B, Folio 721r.

gifts, combined with Spanish officials' tendency to try to talk only with the leading male figures within the tribe, as a Spanish attempt to undermine their power. The Great Osage, Little Osage, and Missouri each arrived in larger numbers compared to most of the other nations, with the exception of the Peorias, in the 1770-1771 period. The Sioux, Kansas, and Panimaha, who traveled from farther up the Missouri River, stayed one day longer than the Osage or Missouri, but the Osage and Missouri appear to have been the longest-staying guests from the area. The fact that Piernas recorded the Little and Great Osage guests separately, and housed the Little Osage and Missouri close to each other, indicates that the Little Osage and Missouri probably traveled together or arrived within a few days or weeks of each other. The annual gift-giving gatherings, then, helped to solidify the relationships between the Spanish subjects in the Missouri River Valley region and the Indigenous Nations, even as Spanish misunderstandings of the symbolism and role of these relationships sometimes undermined their own efforts at maintaining peace. The Osage, for their part, seem to have acknowledged the differences between Spanish and English subjects, but their willingness to trade with both groups sometimes undermined Spanish overtures of peace as well.

Outsiders: Natchitoches, the Arkansas Post, and Osage Violence

Athanase de Mézières featured prominently in Smith's "A Native Response to the Transfer of Louisiana: The Red River Caddos and Spain, 1762-1803" discussion of the negotiations between the Caddo and the Spanish as the Caddo, enemies of the Osage and

(Translation is mine). Note: This document includes the size of food distributed to each nation during its stay in St. Louis, rather than representing the annual gift given to each nation by Spain.

former enemies of the Spanish, switched allegiance from the French to the Spanish in the 1760s-1770s. Mézières, a former French officer who had been stationed in the Natchitoches area beginning in the 1740s, received an appointment by Louisiana Governor O'Reilly as the lieutenant-governor stationed at Natchitoches in 1769.¹⁷¹ Significantly, Mézières became the main source of information for the Spanish officials in Louisiana concerning conflicts in the Red and Arkansas River Valley regions. Specifically important to this study, Mézières provided the reports through which these officials learned of Osage-Caddo and other Osage-Indigenous (or Osage-European hunter or trader) conflicts in this region. Certainly, Mézières's long history with the Red River Caddo helped to shape his perception of Osage-Indigenous interactions in this area; this likely increased his willingness to believe reports from others that blamed the Osage for most of the region's conflicts, thefts, and murders. In addition, Mézières reported Osage violence for areas that the Osage viewed as outside of the kinship network established with the Spanish at St. Louis. Spain wanted to base trade and give gifts to the Osage at St. Louis only, but Osage demanded that the Arkansas River Valley region and other posts provide their own gifts and participate in the Osage exchange-based kinship network in order to come under Osage protection.¹⁷²

Thus, although clearly the Osage frequently engaged in conflict in the Arkansas River Valley region, they may not have always, or even primarily, have instigated these conflicts. Smith's narrative, however, followed the more traditional depiction of the Osage. For example, he wrote, "For the Red River tribes, the only immediate

¹⁷¹ Smith, "A Native Response to the Transfer of Louisiana," 169 and 173.

¹⁷² Barnett, "This Is Our Land," 105.

consequence of Louisiana's transfer to Spain was increased warfare with their ancient enemies, the Fierce Osages."¹⁷³ He followed this statement with a discussion of geography and a bit of contextualization to explain why the Osage increasingly focused their attention on the Arkansas River Valley region, including the unauthorized relocation of many European traders and hunters to that region. It would be inaccurate to depict the Osage as innocent within this relationship, but one of the first reports of Osage-Caddo conflict discussed by Smith provided further insight into this topic. It began in 1768 with a raid of Osages on Kadohadacho horses and the pursuit of these Osages, and the stolen horses, by the Caddo sub-group led by Tinhioüen. In the aftermath of this raid, Tinhioüen and his fellow Kadohadacho pursuers located two of the Osage chiefs and killed them; a group of Osage warriors avenged these murders in the summer of 1770 when they killed a Kadohadacho leader.¹⁷⁴ All of the records involving these events came from Mézières, whose strong ties to the Caddo probably helped convince him that the Osage deserved the blame for this situation. In this way, an Osage raid that involved horse theft, certainly a serious crime, but not the same as murder, resulted in revenge by the Caddo under Tinhioüen with the shedding of Osage leaders' blood, an act of revenge that increased, rather than disarmed, already tense relations between the Osage and Caddo.

Conclusion

Whereas scholars such as Din and Nasatir in *The Imperial Osages* focused on conflict in Spanish-Osage relations in the 1760s-1790s, an understanding of "militarized

¹⁷³ Smith, "A Native Response to the Transfer of Louisiana," 171.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 171.

interstate disputes” and the importance of the threat or display of force, or even the actual use of military force within a region contextualizes many of these interactions. In addition, Barnett’s study of Osage territoriality and the role of kinship ties, fictive or otherwise, in Osage-Spanish relations demonstrates that many of these threats or uses of force by the Osage resulted from shared or Spanish misunderstandings of Osage cultural practices and land claims or of Osage conflicts with other Indigenous Nations.

Considering the shared misunderstandings involved with conflicting Spanish and Osage views of belonging and kinship helps us to better understand Osage frustrations with Spanish officials’ attempts to stop the encroachment of British traders, or French or Canadian traders who traveled under British authority, across the Mississippi River and into Spanish-claimed lands to trade with Indigenous Nations like the Osage. Whereas the Spanish officials viewed the Osage, Missouri, and others as Spanish trade partners, these nations demonstrated a willingness to trade with a variety of European traders and, at times, to take advantage of the fluidity of national identities among these traders..

These conflicts or incidents of “militarized interstate disputes” have remained the major focus of studies of the Osage or of Osage-Spanish relations, and while they are important, the overemphasis on incidents of violence mischaracterizes these relations as consistently hostile. Documentary evidence suggests that this aggression-focused view presents an incomplete picture of this region’s highly entangled histories. The Spanish and Osage, in addition to their Missouri allies, sought ways to interact peacefully that emphasized the importance of trade and favorable relations between these groups and their respective subjects in the 1760s-1770s. This study focuses on the 1760s-1770s because of the shift in Spanish-Osage relations in the 1780s that tended to emphasize

violence and threats of force more so than in the 1770s. “Militarized interstate disputes” or even open conflict between the Spanish and the Osage characterized the 1780s-early 1800s. During the later period, Spanish officials demonstrated a willingness to arm the Quapaw, Cherokee, and other Indigenous Nations so that they could attack and attempt to limit Osage territorial claims and violence. Even at this point, however, trade and attempts at peaceful relations within and among these groups remained important to both the Osage and Spanish officials. The next chapter will examine examples and evidence of peace and trade during the 1760s-1770s period and discuss factors that led to the increased Spanish-Osage hostility in the 1780s-1790s, even as peace and trade remained their mutual, even if conflicting, goal. Overall, although periods and incidents of “militarized interstate disputes” occurred, the norm and goal remained peace and trade in the 1760s-1770s in Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the Missouri River Valley.

CHAPTER 4: PEACE MOVEMENTS OF THE 1760S-1770S: EVIDENCE OF PEACE IN SPANISH-OSAGE AND SPANISH-MISSOURI RELATIONS

*Until now, nothing special has happened,
everything is calm, with the exception of my head,
which is troubled by the continuous litigation of
creditors and debtors that present themselves daily.
I am incessantly worried to end these competitions
to the satisfaction of the parties, with the firmness,
equity, and justice to which each individual aspires.*

- Lieutenant-Governor Pedro
Piernas, in a letter to Louisiana
Governor Luis de Unzaga, June 27,
1770.¹⁷⁵

In the 1760s and early 1770s, many of the reports sent by Lieutenant-Governor Pedro Piernas or other officials to Governors Alejandro O'Reilly and Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga Unzaga, respectively, sounded similar to this excerpt from one of Piernas's letters from June 27, 1770. Litigation involving debt must have consumed much of his time during this period. Evidence from letters between Spanish lieutenant-governors stationed at St. Louis and their respective governors in New Orleans and other primary sources suggests that peace and trade, rather than violence and warfare, characterized Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the 1760s-1770s. These documents acknowledged violence and conflict, but they also described mutually beneficial trade and interactions between the Osage and Missouri and the French traders of St. Louis.

¹⁷⁵ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen orden en el puesto y el rompecabezas causado por la litigación entre los acreedores y deudores en San Luis, 27 de junio, 1770, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 328v. (Translation is mine)*

Antoine Chouteau and 1760s Spanish-Osage Peace

The transition from French to Spanish rule or claims over the Spanish Illinois area must have seemed important, but fairly remote to Auguste and Pierre Chouteau in the 1760s as they continued to trade with the Osage and other Indigenous Nations along the Missouri River. They likely heard rumors of unrest in what had become English Illinois as the Illinois and other Indigenous Nations reacted to the French ceding of claims that they viewed as a betrayal.¹⁷⁶ In the mid-1760s, however, these young French Creole men focused on forming the kinship ties that gave them belonging among and opened the opportunity to trade with the Osage. Trade and relationships, rather than rumors of war or threats of conflict seem to have consumed their days. For example, Antoine Chouteau, *mestizo* son of Auguste Chouteau was about 28 when he died in New Orleans and was buried after receiving his last rites from a Capuchin monk in 1796. He died November 4 and was buried in the cemetery of St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans.¹⁷⁷ Prior to this, Antoine became the only *mestizo* and only non-French man of the seventeen men identified as receiving a license from Lieutenant-Governor Zenon Trudeau to trade with Indians in 1792 (See Appendix C).¹⁷⁸ Based on this information,

¹⁷⁶ Neyon de Villiers, "Copy of a letter from M. Pierre-Joseph Neyon de Villiers, commandant at Fort de Chartres, to Governor-General Jean-Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie, concerning news of the English coming and the arrival of Pontiac to Fort de Chartres, April 20, 1764," 1761464, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, vol. X, *The Critical Period 1663-1765*, British Series 1 (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), X:242.

¹⁷⁷ *Acto de entierro hecho por Fr. Luis de Quintanilla, Dia Quatro de noviembre de este año de mil setecientos noventa y seis Yo Fr. Luis de Quintanilla religioso Capuchino y teniente de cura del Sagrario de Esta Santa Yglesia Catedral de esta Ciudad de la Nueva Orleans di supultra en el Campo Santo de la referida Yglesia al cuerpo de Antonio Chouteau natural de los Yllinois, hijo natural de Augusto Chouteau (su madre se ignora)...*, November 4, 1796, Parish Records of St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana, Record 430: https://archives.arch-no.org/system/sacramental_records/attachments/000/000/065/original/St._louis_cathedral_New_Orleans_funeral_1793-1803_microfilm_1954.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ Shirley Christian, *Before Lewis and Clark: The Story of the Chouteaus, the French Dynasty That Ruled*

Auguste Chouteau and Antoine's unnamed mother conceived Antoine in the period 1767-1768. Antoine's existence and his seeming ability to move within and between the multi-layered French, Spanish, and Osage society gives evidence of the entangled history of this region. In addition, it suggests the importance of French, Spanish, and Osage trade and hints at peaceful relations between the St. Louis-based French trader, who had a license from the Spanish to trade with the Osage, and the Osage in the late-1760s.

Studies of Osage aggression and violence or of conflict between the Spanish, and their subjects, and the Osage, and their Missouri allies, tend to overemphasize events such as the 1768 Osage raid on a Caddo village south of the Arkansas River to steal horses from the Caddo.¹⁷⁹ Clearly, that raid was important enough to attract Spanish officials' attention, whereas the likely marriage, according to Osage customs, between Auguste Chouteau and his unnamed Osage wife that strengthened kinship ties between Chouteau and the Osage fell outside the bounds of Spanish officials' notice. The complexity of historic conflict between the Caddo and the Osage merits attention and has been studied by other scholars. The more peace-focused marital arrangement between Chouteau and his new Osage wife and the birth of their son, Antoine Chouteau, however, demonstrates the complex, entangled histories and relationships from this region. In the Missouri River Valley, people from profoundly different linguistic, political, and cultural backgrounds worked together to form kinship and trade ties, to create peace. Their relationship indicates that, despite the more violence-oriented horse theft along the Arkansas River, the Osage sought to form kinship ties and trade relations with the French

America's Frontier (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), 87.

¹⁷⁹ Barnett, "This Is Our Land," 87.

traders who became Spanish subjects under the terms of the Treaty of Fontainebleau of 1762. Overall, trade, not violence, characterized Osage-Spanish relations during the late-1760s, especially in the Missouri River Valley region that included the Osage River.

Entangled Relations and Trade in Spanish Illinois

In the 1770s, Spanish Lieutenant-Governors and others from St. Louis sometimes wrote about Osage-Spanish relations in the region; however, their correspondence with New Orleans officials expressed more alarm over the threat of British encroachment, which could undermine Spanish-Indigenous trade and political relations. In addition, their correspondence discussed the general security of the settlements or recorded monetary exchanges and payments of salaries that reveals the bureaucratic nature of Spanish government and provides insight into the more mundane elements of life in the Missouri River Valley.¹⁸⁰ In some ways, the Spanish-Osage kinship and trade ties and Osage misunderstandings or exploitations of the varying European identities in the area undermined Spanish attempts to block British traders, including their efforts to stop the encroachment of French-Canadian or Illinois traders who had become British subjects under the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1763.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ For two examples, see: *Carta de recibo escrito por Don Francisco Vallé, capitán de milicias residente en el pueste de Santa Genoveva de Ylinois, que afirma el recibo de cuatro mil ochocientos pesos fuertes por los treinta y ocho mil cuatrocientos reales de plata*, 1 de mayo, 1775, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, folio 676r; and *Carta de recibo escrito por Don Pedro Piernas capitán del batallón de la Luisiana, y teniente de gobernador de los Ylinueses, que afirma el recibo de cuatrocientos pesos fuertes para pagas y prest de los oficiales y tropa*, 30 de diciembre de 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, folio 675r. These are two of a series of correspondence involving the receipt of *pesos fuertes* in Ste. Genevieve and St. Louis.

¹⁸¹ Claudio Saunt, *West of the Revolution: An Uncommon History of 1776* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2015), 179.

What items did the Osage target for theft as recorded by the Spanish Lieutenant-Governors in St. Louis and other officials? Barnett's analysis revealed that border protection remained the primary focus of Osage uses of violence; the main methods included horse raids and murders of French traders in the Arkansas River Valley region, mostly within the lands claimed by the Osage nation in the southern portion of their hunting grounds (See Appendix D).¹⁸² In addition, much conflict stemmed from Osage attempts to control trade with the western tribes and their efforts to keep the French, Spanish, and other traders from directly bringing trade goods to these groups.¹⁸³ The Osage wanted access to Spanish trade goods and resources and they sought to retain their regional role as gatekeepers to commercial exchanges with the nations on the upper Missouri River. For example, on May 20, 1770, Mézières wrote to Governor Unzaga to report on the unhappy state of affairs in the Arkansas River Valley region. He included a discussion of the Osage among his many complaints about the people in the area. In his description, he eagerly wrote:

To make clear what I have the honor to report to you, I ought to tell you that the Osages, living on the river of the same name, which empties in to the Missuris, have from time immemorial been hostile to the Indians of this jurisdiction; but on account of the immeasurable distance which intervenes between their establishments and that of the Comanchez, Taouaiazes, Yscanis, Tuacanas, Tancaoüeyes, and Quitseys, they formerly inflicted on these tribes only slight injuries or damages, their mutual enmity being more in evidence through talk than through actual hostilities; and the Osage being diverted in hunting to pay their creditors of Ylinuéz, to which district they belong, their enemies being occupied in the same pursuit for the Frenchmen from here, neither party aspired so much to be at war as to enjoy the pleasures of their respective trade. But that river of the Akansa having become invested by the concourse of malefactors of which I have spoken, they soon came to know the Osages, and incited them with powder, balls, fusils, and other munitions (which are furnished them by the merchants who go

¹⁸² Barnett, "This Is Our Land," 87.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 75.

annually with passports to visit them) to attack those of this district, for the purpose of stealing women, whom they would buy to satisfy their brutal appetites; Indian children, to aid them in their hunting; horses, on which to hunt wild cattle; and mules, on which to carry the fat and the flesh.¹⁸⁴

Mézières consistently portrayed the Osage negatively, probably because of his own affinity for their Caddoan enemies. By examining the kinds of supplies that Mézières complained about the Osage trading or taking in the region, however, we see that the Osage exploited the weakness of Spanish control in the Arkansas River Valley; some of these unlicensed traders likely came over from British Illinois.¹⁸⁵ The Osage found a way to supply their desire for horses and other livestock, in addition to weapons, possibly to use for their own protection and for hunting. Conflict arose between the Osage and Spanish because members of both groups wanted to control trade, but neither ever fully achieved this goal. Their own understandings of sovereignty and borders conflicted and exacerbated tensions in this region. On the other hand, the importance of trade with the Osage, and the political and economic power of the Osage, led the Spanish to seek more peaceful ways to interact with the Osage while recognizing that the Spanish officials proved unable to control the Osage.¹⁸⁶

In addition, the Spanish officials struggled to control all European traders and settlers, evidenced especially by the Arkansas River Valley region area in which most of the reported Osage violence occurred.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, the Osage often pointed to certain

¹⁸⁴ Athanase de Mézières, "30. Letter from Mezieres to Unzaga y Amezaga Reporting on Conditions in the Arkansas River Region, May 20, 1770," in Bolton, *AM*, 1:167.

¹⁸⁵ Nasatir, *Borderland in Retreat*, 15.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸⁷ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 125.

members of the tribe as the perpetrators of violence, seeking to define these individuals as the cause of violence between the groups. At times, for both the Spanish and Osage, this practice probably provided a way of diplomatically confronting violence while minimizing the ripple effects that could result from otherwise isolated incidents of conflict. On the other hand, focusing on individuals or smaller groups as the cause of these conflicts recognized that neither people group was monolithic; the rich variety that made up these Osage and, especially, Spanish subjects brought racial, ethnic, linguistic, and other cultural diversity to this area. These varied backgrounds and perspectives guaranteed that individuals categorized as Osage or Spanish subjects sometimes disagreed with their leaders and acted in their own interests, rather than considering the wellbeing of the settlement, community, nation, or region.

The Osage valued their kinship-based trade network with the Chouteaus and with St. Louis and viewed these individuals and the traders who came from St. Louis as members of the Osage network. For this reason, in the 1790s, when tensions between the Osage and Spanish increased and the Spanish considered outright warfare against the Osage, Auguste Chouteau provided invaluable service by suggesting ways for the Spanish to seek peace with the Osage and by negotiating between these groups.¹⁸⁸ Belonging mattered to the Osage, a fact that Spanish officials never seem to have fully comprehended. Barnett demonstrated that the Osage sometimes used violence or threats of violence to clarify and negotiate sovereignty and boundaries or to try to bring the Spanish settlement back under the protection of the fictive kinship relationship. When the

¹⁸⁸ *Carta de Auguste Chouteau, comerciante de San Luis de Ylinoia, al Baron de Carondelet sobre la Nación de los Grandes y Pequeños Osages en que se cuentan como mil doscientos hombres de armas, escrito en Nueva Orleans, 18 de mayo, 1794, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2363, folio 392r.*

Spanish officials threatened to cease trading with the Osage, in response to the Osage use of violence, the Osage viewed them as ungrateful kin who threatened the family ties established between the Osage and St. Louis. The attempt to control Osage violence through intimidation or cutting off trade consistently backfired by increasing threats of violence or violent episodes as the Osage sought to coerce the Spanish officials to heal the broken family ties. For example, Barnett notes that the Yatasí also used threats of violence in 1767 when Spanish governor Don Antonio de Ulloa ordered the closing of French trade in Texas.¹⁸⁹ In addition, unofficial, or unlicensed, trade continued even when the Spanish attempted to control Indigenous Nations such as the Osage by limiting their access to trade, and opened the door for stronger Osage-British trade relationships.¹⁹⁰

Scholars, including DuVal, partly due to the attempt to demonstrate Native American agency against Europeans, have often portrayed the Osage threats and use of violence as examples of their aggressiveness.¹⁹¹ Recently, however, Barnett and DuVal began a conversation that re-shaped our understanding of Osage violence as a diplomatic and trade-based form of negotiation that demonstrated this nation's strength and ability to exploit Spanish weakness.¹⁹² These reevaluations of boundaries and of portrayals of the Osage help us to reconsider the role of conflict and provide an opportunity for us to nuance our understanding to include periods of peace in Spanish-Osage relations. They

¹⁸⁹ Barnett, "This Is Our Land," 70.

¹⁹⁰ Nasatir, *Borderland in Retreat*, 18.

¹⁹¹ See, for example, Rollings, *The Osage*, 142. Or DuVal, *Native Ground*, 165, when she points to the desire of other nations to war against the Osage.

¹⁹² Barnett, "This is Our Land," 75. DuVal, *Native Ground*, 122.

not only demonstrate that misunderstandings or the portrayals of other nations impacted Spanish-Osage relations, but they also show the importance of the Osage understanding of their own political and economic power in the Missouri and Arkansas River Valley region and their willingness to use threats of violence, or perhaps even minor forms of violence such as the raising of an English flag in St. Louis and the stealing of pirogues to travel to Ste. Genevieve to steal horses, but not to kill anyone, simply as a negotiation tool to remind the Spanish of Osage power and borders. Although the Spanish officials, and most historians, viewed these actions as evidence of the violence of the Osage, they demonstrate a complex understanding by the Osage of the strengths and limitations of the Spanish in the Spanish Illinois and Louisiana regions and their willingness to use threats of violence to negotiate for trade, better presents, and more respect from Piernas and other Spanish officials.

Early Optimism and Negotiating Peace, 1769-1770

In the 1770s, the Spanish governing officials of Louisiana clearly attempted to keep the English and other European traders from infringing on what they viewed as their own control of the fur trade. At the same time, they made efforts to maintain peace with the Indigenous Nations with whom they traded and with the British in English Illinois. For example, on February 17, 1770, Governor Alejandro O'Reilly, writing to Lieutenant-Governor Pedro Piernas in St. Louis, specifically ordered the lieutenant-governor that "The lieutenant-governor shall preserve, so far as possible, the greatest harmony with the

English.”¹⁹³ After a series of similar instructions concerning attempts to maintain peace with the English, O’Reilly decreed:

5. In all licenses which the lieutenant-governor shall issue, either for trade with the Indian tribes or for hunting, he shall expressly forbid those same licensees any entrance into the territory of His Britannic Majesty, for any reason whatever; or the least offense to be caused said vassals who voyage on the Misisipi River.

6. Any trader, who shall take goods from the English, or who shall sell them furs, or any other thing, shall have his property embargoed, and his cause shall be prosecuted with due formality. All those who engage in commerce in Ylinneses must supply themselves with the goods which they use in this capital [*i.e.*, Nueva Orleans] and must send their effects to it. This punctuality and good faith will extend commerce more with general benefit to the vassals of the king.¹⁹⁴

Expounding further on his plans for Louisiana, O’Reilly dealt a death blow to the attempts by the Maxtent, Laclede, and Company to create, or maintain, their monopoly in the region when he wrote:

7. No trader shall be permitted to enter the villages of Indians who inhabit His Majesty’s territory, unless the commandant has good reports concerning his conduct; but the commandant shall not refuse his license to anyone who shall be recognized as an honest man. No reason at all shall he suffer or authorize any monopoly, or concede any exclusive rights. He shall advise all traders to uniformly proclaim among the Indians the mildness and equity of our government, and the happiness resulting therefrom to our vassals.¹⁹⁵

In these orders, O’Reilly reminded the St. Louis official that, just as the Spanish demanded that the English traders respect Spanish boundaries, the Spanish-region traders also needed to respect the English-claimed trade and settlement areas. Significantly, there is not a similar set of instructions for respecting Osage-claimed trade areas, although the

¹⁹³ Alexandro O’Reilly and Francisco Cruzat, "XVIII Lieutenant Governor Francisco Cruzat's Copy of General Instructions of Governor Alexandro O’Reilly to Pedro Piernas, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Villages of St. Louis, St. Genevieve, Etc., Dated February 17, 1770 Copied by Cruzat May 19, 1775," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:76.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:77. (Bracketed note is Houck’s).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:77.

Spanish government required traders to seek a license from the commandant to trade with specific Indian nations or villages. In addition, O'Reilly's seventh order above demonstrates that the Spanish officials attempted to limit trade to those individuals who they recognized as "honest men" whose behavior among the Indigenous Nations promoted peace, rather than conflict. Furthermore, O'Reilly's orders required the lieutenant-governor to "cause the Indians to know the greatness, clemency, and generosity of the King... [and] exhort them, by an offer of a good reward, to arrest and take prisoner any trader or fugitive, who shall scatter want of confidence for their true Father among them...."¹⁹⁶ O'Reilly ordered the lieutenant-governor to ensure that the settlers in St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve treated well the members of Indigenous nations who went to these settlements. Clearly, the governor desired a highly successful year for the fur trade, but he also expressed his concern over the treatment of the Osage, Missouri, Sauk, Fox, and many other Indigenous Nations in the area. Mistreatment of these groups could have worried O'Reilly because of a benevolent concern for these nations, although it more likely stemmed from the power of these groups, especially the Osage and their Missouri allies, and the Spanish need to seek and attempt to maintain trade with these powerful people.

The year before Governor O'Reilly issued his orders to Lieutenant-Governor Piernas, Piernas wrote a report for O'Reilly, dated October 31, 1769, that described the Spanish Illinois Country. Writing soon after his arrival in St. Louis, Piernas optimistically

¹⁹⁶ Alexandro O'Reilly and Francisco Cruzat, "XVIII Lieutenant Governor Francisco Cruzat's Copy of General Instructions of Governor Alexandro O'Reilly to Pedro Piernas, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Villages of St. Louis, St. Genevieve, Etc., Dated February 17, 1770 Copied by Cruzat May 19, 1775," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:78.

discussed the importance of trade and the difficulty of controlling European traders, despite Spanish attempts to do so.¹⁹⁷ Within this report, the military commander and soon-to-be-named first lieutenant-governor indicated the importance of Indigenous hunting parties to the French and English settlers, largely because these settlers relied on members of these nations to determine the best time for hunting. Interestingly, he noted that “Those Indians are almost all domesticated, little to be feared, and useful, because they trade in flesh, oil, and skins, which they exchange for effects or merchandise with the habitants, and are thus provided with their necessary sustenance.”¹⁹⁸ It is doubtful that these Indigenous persons truly relied on trade for their basic sustenance needs, but clearly, Piernas and O’Reilly wanted to determine how the Indigenous groups in the area viewed the Spanish.¹⁹⁹

Hints of future trouble appeared in this optimistic report, when Piernas followed his remarks about the “domestication” of the Indigenous Nations with a discussion of the brandy trade. He asserted:

If the brandy trade were rigorously forbidden them, one could do with them whatever he pleased. But with the abuse of that trade the Indians are found to be importunate, insolent, and perhaps murderous, because of the intoxication to which they are inclined. During their stay at Misera, [Ste. Genevieve] which is only in passing, they are generally supplied with their sustenance at the expense of the king. Monsieur Balé [Vallé] is in charge of this under the orders of the commandant, Monsieur de Rocheblave (sic).²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Pedro Piernas, "XVII Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly, Describing the Spanish Illinois Country, Dated October 31, 1769," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:71.

¹⁹⁸ Pedro Piernas, "XVII Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly, Describing the Spanish Illinois Country, Dated October 31, 1769," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:72.

¹⁹⁹ Rollings, *The Osage*, 108.

²⁰⁰ Pedro Piernas, "XVII Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly, Describing the Spanish Illinois Country, Dated October 31, 1769," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:72. (Bracketed comments are mine; the parenthetical *sic* is Houck’s).

Piernas clearly disapproved of the brandy trade and viewed it as detrimental to Spanish-Indigenous relations. Interestingly, his later discussions of conflicts with the Osage, Missouri, and other nations did not include direct references to the brandy, or liquor, trade and its impact on these relations. This document, however, raises the possibility of viewing the continuance of the trade of high proof alcoholic beverages as one factor that undermined peaceful Spanish-Osage relations.

Piernas continued his report with a brief description of “Pancourt or San Luis the second and modern settlement” that he viewed with a soldier’s eye toward defense.²⁰¹ He reported that St. Louis’s:

situation is high and pleasant, being built on rocks and not in any danger of inundation. Behind it is a higher plain which dominates the village and the river, and appears to be suitable for the construction of a fort for the defense of the troops which are destined for that part; for, if they were insulted at all or there were any war, they could defend themselves as they would have the village and its territory under shelter.²⁰²

Based on Piernas’s account up to this point, it seems evident that this soldier-turned-lieutenant-governor maintained an awareness of the nearness of the English on the other side of the Mississippi River and the complications that conflicts in any or all Spanish-English, English-Indigenous, and Spanish-Indigenous relations in the region could cause.

Testing and Maintaining Peace, 1772-1773

Even during conflict, many Osage and European or Creole leaders and traders attempted to maintain trade and probably sought ways to cooperate rather than

²⁰¹ Pedro Piernas, "XVII Report of Don Pedro Piernas to Gov. O'Reilly, Describing the Spanish Illinois Country, Dated October 31, 1769," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:72.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 1:72.

overemphasizing disharmony. In a July 30, 1772 letter, Lieutenant-Governor Piernas wrote to Governor Unzaga to inform him about an attack on St. Louis that included the taking down of the Spanish flag and raising of the English flag over the settlement and the resulting disorder caused by members of the Little Osage and the Missouri nations, probably mostly youths.²⁰³ Piernas's report demonstrates the complexity of interactions within and between groups as he discussed his own return from Ste. Genevieve in order to hold a council with the Little Osage and the Missouri. When he returned to St. Louis, Piernas learned that these nations had been pursued by a party of the Sotoux and Putatami nations because of an earlier attack by the Little Osage and the Missouri against the fort and town of St. Louis. The Putatami and Sotoux had taken it upon themselves to avenge the Spanish and, according to their report to Piernas, they wanted Spanish protection against a counter-attack by the Missouri and Little Osage out of revenge for their actions against these groups. The Putatami and Sotoux offense against the Little Osage seems to have subdued this group for a time, whereas the Missouri sent a group of thirty individuals to Ste. Genevieve and settlements in the English area on the eastern shore, using pirogues stolen from St. Louis, to purloin horses from these settlers. In general, this report by Piernas underscored his attempts to show the Osage and Missouri that the Spanish did not fear them and that their misconduct, from a Spanish governmental perspective, would be punished. In addition, amid this series of complicated events, both

²⁰³ Pedro Piernas, "Letter from Lieutenant-Governor Piernas to Governor Unzaga Concerning a Council with Two Parties of Indians of the Little Osage and Missouri Nations, July 30, 1772," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:206.

emphasized that the raid on St. Louis was a prank done by Osage youths, rather than an official Little Osage and Missouri affront against the Spanish.²⁰⁴

In a follow-up letter involving this event from November 19, 1772, Piernas again optimistically reported that he expected peaceful relations to return between the Little Osage and Missouri, on the one hand, and the Spanish officials and the French traders in the region, on the other. This was part of an ongoing series of letters between Piernas and Unzaga involving the way that the Spanish lieutenant-governor at St. Louis should handle the increased tensions between these groups. The incident itself and the letters dealing with its aftermath revealed the importance with which the Spanish officials viewed the Osage and their efforts to maintain, or restore, peaceful trade and interactions with the Osage and Missouri nations in Spanish Illinois.

Significantly, neither Unzaga nor Piernas wrote as though their decisions had become set in stone; instead, they indicated that they remained dependent on the responses of the leaders of the Little Osage and Missouri nations. For example, on November 19, 1772, Piernas, wrote to Unzaga, “As you instructed in your letter from August 21 about how we should proceed concerning the attempt by the Little Osage and Missouri Indians, I will seek to explain the circumstances to them as you instructed as much as is necessary to reduce them to reason, without employing violent means.”²⁰⁵ Clearly, Piernas and Unzaga considered a violent military response too costly to St. Louis and to the Louisiana coffers and sought, instead, to convince the Missouri and Little

²⁰⁴ Barnett, “This Is Our Land,” 1.

²⁰⁵ *Reporte de Pedro Piernas en San Luis a gobernador Luis de Unzaga en Nueva Orleans sobre la situación con Los Yndios Pequeños Osages y Misouri*, 19 de noviembre, 1772, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, folio 445r. (Translation is mine)

Osage that peace, rather than violence, benefited both groups. Piernas followed this with a mixture of hope and frustration:

I hope that everything will become calm and that the two said Nations will be more controlled. From the Missouri [nation], I still maintain in prison the two about whom I told Your Lordship and they will be there until their Leader comes with the Nation to give the required satisfaction.

Last month, a party arrived here to see the prisoners, and to convince me to free them; they came down with a few furs to pay for some rifles they had taken by force in their village from some traders, and with that the interested parties were left and were satisfied with the good treatment that the their two said prisoners had experienced, and as I did not want to free them because the principal chief had not come with them, they returned with encouragement to come back shortly to reestablish the previous good harmony²⁰⁶

Piernas's account of this interaction likely differed from the Missouri interpretation of their experience, but this account shows Piernas's willingness to compromise a little by trading a few goods with the group that came to visit while insisting that the principal Missouri chief must visit St. Louis to negotiate peace. Based on this account, it seems that both the Missouri and Piernas sought a way to mediate their differences so that they could return to their previously peaceful trade relationship. Commerce between the Missouri and St. Louis and its licensed traders played an important role in this conversation; as Piernas reported it, the Missouri party especially emphasized the importance of trade to reestablish peace and harmony between the groups.

Although individuals from the Missouri and the Osage nations both participated in the raid on St. Louis and the taking of pirogues and horses from St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve, Piernas emphasized that only a party from the Missouri nation had arrived to talk with the lieutenant-governor. Piernas closed his letter by noting, "The Little Osage

²⁰⁶ Ibid., folio 445r-445v. (Translation is mine)

still have not appeared, but I believe that in imitation of the Missouri, they will be forced to ask for clemency. The divine grant us this good, for the general tranquility of this post in which nothing else novel occurs.”²⁰⁷ Whereas members of the Missouri nation made overtures of peace, the Little Osage had failed to perform similar actions to try to restore trade. Piernas, thought, noted hopefully that he believed that the Little Osages would soon imitate the Missouri and “ask for clemency” for the actions of members of their nation so that peace and trade could once again characterize the Spanish-Osage relations.

The smaller numbers and proportionally lesser power of the Missouri might have played a role in their decision to send a delegation to check on the imprisoned Missouri men. The Missouri are often characterized as allies of the Osage, which is supported by these documents, but this situation might also cast light on the possibility of the Missouri seeking to form stronger ties with the Spanish while maintaining their alliance with the Osage. These complex alliances and trade partnerships demonstrate a negotiating of relationships that fits within Stephen Edouard Barnett’s and Kathleen DuVal’s discussions of the overlapping sovereignties of the Osage and French-then-Spanish in the Missouri River Valley. While violence or threats of violence sometimes had a place in these interactions, seeking peace and alliances with both groups held advantages as well and helped encourage continued trade in the region that benefited the Missouri nation in addition to these other groups.

The Great and Little Osage, on the other hand, separately or as one nation, remained stronger than the Missouri and their predominance in trade in this region enabled them to ignore the demands of the Spanish officials in the region without being

²⁰⁷ Ibid., folio 445v. (Translation is mine)

as concerned about serious consequences involving the nation's strength or a complete end of trade between the Osage and the Spanish-licensed traders. At the same time, the importance of trade for both parties led their leaders to seek reconciliation, even when that meant that the Osage went through the motions of submitting to Piernas and other Spanish officials in the anticipation of receiving gifts and reaffirming their trade partnership. By July 6, 1773, Spanish-authorized commerce had resumed between St. Louis and its licensed traders and the Osage.²⁰⁸ Piernas reported as a development in relations to Unzaga that trade with the Great Osage went well and that those who negotiated between the groups had returned with good amounts of furs without any of the posts experiencing danger. The Great Osage remained less of a concern to Piernas and Unzaga judging by the previous letters from 1772, but nevertheless trade with the Great Osage generally included movement through Little Osage lands. In addition, the Osage often worked together, although, as DuVal demonstrated in her discussion of both Osage-French and Osage-Spanish diplomacy, they emphasized their separation more when it was convenient to do so, which reminds one of modern diplomacy tactics.²⁰⁹

The St. Louis event from 1772 paled in comparison with the conflict that led to open warfare between the Osage and Cherokee in the 1790s, but clearly it caused discomfort for the Spanish officials, in part because it demonstrated their lack of ability to act upon their own more violence- or revenge-driven impulses. Governor Unzaga and Lieutenant-Governor Piernas discussed various responses to the Missouri, Great Osage,

²⁰⁸ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre los regalos y el comercio con las naciones de los indios*, 6 de julio, 1773, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, folio 454r. (Translation is mine)

²⁰⁹ See, for example, DuVal, *Native Ground*, 113 and 124.

and Little Osage while dealing with this incident and even considered war, but ultimately determined that peace and resumed trade mattered more than seeking revenge or killing the Indigenous prisoners taken in the aftermath of this event.

As late as 1779, Don Fernando de Leyba recalled this event in his July 13 letter to Governor and General Bernardo de Gálvez (See Appendix C). In this missive, the governor of Upper Louisiana discussed this event, and other incidents which focused on the Arkansas River, as proof of trouble or alleged crimes caused by the Osage and Missouri. This letter highlighted another important point involving Spanish-Indigenous relations when Leyba discussed the correspondence between Unzaga and Piernas that included their efforts to determine what to do with the imprisoned principal chief. Unzaga agreed with Piernas's summary of the situation and ruled out the option of the condemnation and execution of the chief at the hands of the Spanish. He argued that the killing of the chief might appear revenge-driven and give others the perception that the Spaniards committed an act of murder "in cold blood."²¹⁰ For example, Leyba wrote:

[In regard to] the insult of the Big Osages on the hunters of the river of the Arkansas [and] the so ancient treaty as Your Lordship is not unaware, Don Pedro Piernas, in a letter of April 24, 1773, informs the predecessor of Your Lordship, that he has in the prison of this village the principal chief of a band of that nation who was convicted of having committed some thefts and murders on the Arkansas river, and he had not determined to pass sentence. As he feared lest the revengeful nature of the Indians would lead them to commit other greater excesses, Don Luis de Vnzaga orders in a letter of August 14th of the same year that the criminal be set at liberty and does not approve of the indecision of Don Pedro Piernas; she he says that he ought immediately to have deprived him of his life (as a malefactor) by the hand of his companions. His Lordship cannot order that done now as it will be done in cold blood, etc. The resolution of Don Luis de Vnzaga is the only

²¹⁰ Fernando de Leyba, "XXXV Trouble With the Big Osages" "Letter from Commandant and Lieutenant Governor Fernando de Leyba to the Governor of the Province of Louisiana, Don Bernardo de Gálvez, concerning the insult of the Big Osages on the hunters of the Arkansas River and informing Gálvez of previous correspondence between Pedro Piernas and Unzaga, July 13, 1779," in *SRM*, ed. Louis Houck (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 1909), 1:163.

remedy so that that and other tribes may view us with respect. Various habitants, whom I have consulted are of the same opinion; but they also say that to despise the opinion of Don Pedro Piernas, as this post was, and is situated, is necessarily to touch the limits of temerity.

The Little Osages and the Misuris are less important [*punto*] than the Big Osages. In enclose a memorial for Your Lordship which the habitants of Santa Genoveva have sent me. I have answered them that I would inform Your Lordship of it and that in the meanwhile they could defend their property with force.

There are hints in Leyba's discussion of this correspondence that, in 1773, Piernas and Unzaga may have self-consciously recognized that seeking revenge through the killing of their own captive, would undermine future attempts to take the higher moral ground in their discussions with the Osage and other Indigenous Nations in cases of and killings of traders or settlers in the Missouri, Arkansas, and Mississippi River Valley regions.

Leyba's own discussion, and Governor Bernardo de Gálvez's response, demonstrated both these officials' frustration with the Osage and, perhaps, their own aggressive or violent tendencies. For example, Gálvez, in his response, wrote to Leyba, "I must advise Your Grace to take for yourself the resolution to punish criminals; that is, that if their deeds are so evil as to merit death, you shall petition their heads from their respective chiefs, after informing the latter of the just reason which forces you to go to such an extreme."²¹¹ The governor then moderated his statement slightly, reminding

Leyba to tell these chiefs:

that if they have until that time been treated with more kindness, it has been for the purpose of seeing whether they would turn over a new leaf with good treatment, but that seeing the contrary, and that their boldness increases daily, it is most necessary to put reins to them by threatening them that if the example of the

²¹¹ Bernardo de Gálvez, "XXXV Trouble With the Big Osages "Response, written in the margin, from Governor of Louisiana Don Bernardo de Gálvez to Commandant and Lieutenant Governor Fernando de Leyba, concerning the insult of the Big Osages on the hunters of the Arkansas River and informing Gálvez of previous correspondence between Pedro Piernas and Unzaga, January 13, 1779," in *SRM*, ed. Louis Houck (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 1909), 1:164.

punishment does not correct them in the future, their presents shall be taken away from them, and no one shall be permitted to take merchandise to them or trade with them.²¹²

These Spanish officials, writing in 1779, demonstrated exasperation with the Osage and reluctantly sought more diplomatic, peaceful solutions to regional tensions. Although Leyba's discussion of the Piernas-Unzaga exchange indicated that these two also considered the use of violence, perhaps Leyba and Gálvez could have pondered the reasons for Piernas's expressed reluctance to kill the imprisoned Osage man. By 1779, of course, Spain's Louisiana governing officials had even more tensions and conflict on their minds as Spain became embroiled in the American Revolutionary War. That war to Louisiana's east started as a rebellion by thirteen of Britain's North Atlantic colonies and, with the signing of the Franco-American Alliance in 1778, grew to include France. As DuVal so masterfully demonstrated, the far reaches of the British, French, and Spanish empires gave this local rebellion global consequences.²¹³ In the end, though, the original trouble caused by the situation discussed from the July 30, 1772 letter ended concurrently with the other problems from along the Arkansas River. On April 4, 1773, 130 members of the Great and Little Osage nations and Piernas made a peace agreement after this group delivered the three men who they credited with responsibility for both situations.

Entangled Relations Undermine Peace: The Arkansas River Valley

As DuVal clearly indicated, this peace was St. Louis-based, not a universal peace and not one that directly addressed the tensions that threatened to undermine Spanish-

²¹² Ibid., 1:164.

²¹³ DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 111.

Osage relations. Neither did it solve the issues involved with Osage-Quapaw relations in the Arkansas River Valley, despite the contingency clause offered by the Osage that the Quapaw could destroy the Osage if the Osage did not maintain their peace agreement.²¹⁴ The complexity of these interactions reminds us that one cannot examine Spanish-Osage relations without considering the Quapaw, Caddo, Kadohadachos, and other Indigenous Nations in this region. The Osage and Spanish both had large claims to overlapping areas in Upper Louisiana, but so did other Indigenous Nations, especially as the Osage sought to expand their control of and hunting grounds in the Arkansas and Red River regions and continued fighting against their historic enemies that included Caddoan peoples.²¹⁵

DuVal's observation also emphasizes the conflict of interests that the Osage saw in Spanish and other Creole or European traders, licensed or unlicensed, attempting to travel west through or bypassing Osage lands to trade with western nations against whom the Osage had long been at war. By directly trading with these nations, the European traders undermined the Osage by bringing more weapons to their enemies and threatened to undercut Osage control of trade with these western nations or others with whom they had more amicable relations. The other lieutenant-governor, Athanase de Mézières, who was posted at Natchitoches, probably knew of these Osage concerns, but his correspondence with the governor emphasized the detrimental impact of the St. Louis-based peace system to Natchitoches and to the Arkansas and Red River Valley regions.

DuVal focused on this conflict-prone region and emphasized the Osage ability to use this system of going to St. Louis to apologize for incidents of Osage violence and to

²¹⁴ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 125.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

gain official pardons by the St. Louis (not Natchitoches)-based lieutenant-governor. She stressed the way that this St. Louis-based peace enabled the Osage the ability to continue to receive presents and engage in formal trade with St. Louis-licensed traders even while they engaged in conflict in the areas that the Arkansas and Red River Valley regions. While the correspondence of Mézières seems to confirm these assertions, the Spanish and Osage consistently sought to find a way to deal with conflicts and to return to more amicable relations. These efforts indicate that the Spanish officials, overall, cared more about maintaining peace and trade with the Osage than about the conflicts between the Osage and other groups in the Arkansas and Red River Valley regions. In addition, it is not always clear that every time that Mézières alleged that the Osage attacked the Kadohadachos or others that this actually occurred. It is possible that the traditional enemies of the Osage whose locations placed them in a less advantageous position for trade had found in Mézières an advocate who consistently believed their allegations against the Osage, even if they, rather than the Osage, instigated violence and regardless of whether or not the Osage even engaged in violence against these groups.

Throughout this chapter, we have focused on Spanish-Osage or Spanish-Indigenous interactions in the Missouri River Valley, especially those recorded by Spanish officials in St. Louis. Although times of conflict and tension between these groups in the period 1763-1780 occurred, it has been shown that periods of peace existed in which the Osage and Spanish focused on trade and maintaining positive relations. If we move our attention further south, however, to the Arkansas River Valley region and the Spanish officials at the Arkansas Post, or further south in Natchitoches, it is clear that the complications caused by tensions between the powerful Osage and the also powerful

Quapaws and the disagreements and conflicts between these two groups, in addition to their attempts to control trade and territory in this region, led to conflict with the Spanish. In general, the Spanish officials in this region seem to have sided with the Quapaws and their allies and to have viewed the Osage as outsiders who came to the area to conquer.²¹⁶ This led to increasingly tense relations between the Spanish and the Osage in the Arkansas River Valley region in the 1770s that contrast with the generally peaceful and trade-oriented relations in the Missouri River Valley region.

In the Arkansas River Valley as well, the traders and *voyageurs*, who may or may not have received licenses from the Spanish, played a role in Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Quapaw, and Caddo, Chickasaw, and other Quapaw allies, relations. When the Osage attacked these traders or French families in the Arkansas region as the Osage became increasingly dominant in that area, the Quapaw and their allies retaliated. For example, in April 1773, they used these raids or attacks to suggest that the Spanish officials needed to supply the Quapaws with weapons and food so these groups who portrayed themselves as aiding the Spanish officials and French families could continue fighting against the aggressive Osage.²¹⁷

These conflicts had ramifications for the Spanish officials in St. Louis and for trade along the Missouri River Valley. In the same month in 1773, Lieutenant-Governor Piernas reported to Governor Unzaga that he had followed the governor's command and "given orders that no trader accustomed to deal with the Little Osages and Missouris shall carry on trade with them until such time as I shall have definite proof of their

²¹⁶ Ibid., 148.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 148.

peacefulness and submission.”²¹⁸ Although a later paragraph reveals the failure of Piernas’s attempt to control trade, especially due to unlicensed traders who ignored the orders, this demonstrates that the events in the Arkansas River Valley impacted those in the Missouri River Valley as both lieutenant-governors from these posts attempted to control and maintain positive relations with the powerful Indigenous Nations in these regions. The equally complex Osage-Quapaw interactions complicated these efforts, of course, especially as each of these nations also vied for sovereignty and control of trade.

Athanase de Mézières, the lieutenant-governor stationed at Natchitoches, wrote most of the reports concerning Osage violence, especially in the Arkansas River Valley region. A little background on Mézières helps to better contextualize these reports. Mézières was a French officer who was born in Paris in St. Sulpice Parish. Stationed at the Natchitoches post as a French soldier, he came to the Louisiana area around 1733 during the period when Spain and France still maintained conflicting claims to the Spanish Texas and French Louisiana borderlands area.²¹⁹ He established strong ties with some of the area’s Indigenous Nations, especially the Caddo. When Spain gained territorial claim over Louisiana in the 1762 Treaty of Fontainebleau and the area became a clearly Spanish-claimed area, Mézières, like many of the French Louisiana inhabitants, chose to remain in it and he became a loyal Spanish subject. By this time, Mézières had received his promotion to the rank of captain within the French military from which he

²¹⁸ Pedro Piernas, "Letter from commandant and lieutenant governor Don Pedro Piernas, to the governor of Louisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga, concerning his orders to restrict trade with the Little Osages and Missouri, 12 April, 1773," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:214.

²¹⁹ Bolton, *AM*, 79.

received his official discharge on September 15, 1763.²²⁰ With time, his skill in negotiating with the Caddo and other nations gained Mézières the respect of the Spanish officials of both Texas and Louisiana, although he also earned some detractors. In 1769, after a conference in New Orleans, Spanish Governor O'Reilly named Mézières the lieutenant-governor of Louisiana at the Natchitoches post.²²¹ Much of Mézières's correspondence with Louisiana Governors O'Reilly and Unzaga concerned relations with the many Indigenous Nations in the Red River Valley and Arkansas River Valley regions, including, throughout the years, reports that generally characterized the Osage who came to the Arkansas River Valley region as violent, fierce, warlike, and even sometimes cannibalistic.²²²

Over the years, the reports from Mézières have served as a major focus of those studying Osage violence, but few scholars have discussed the role that Mézières's own connections with the Caddo and other historical enemies of the Osage might have played in shaping his own perceptions, and subsequently tainting his reports concerning the Osage. The context of Mézières's relationship with the Caddo introduces the possibility that Mézières may have misattributed violence to the Osage in his reports or that the Osage violence he discussed formed only part of the story. Perhaps the Osage reacted to violence and conflict instigated by the Caddo and other area nations who knew that their reports to Mézières would be filtered through his respect for them and his negative view of the Osage. Although it is impossible to determine conclusively whether Mézières

²²⁰ Ibid., 81.

²²¹ Ibid., 79.

²²² "De Mézières to Unzaga y Amezaga, May 2, 1777," in Bolton, *AM*, 130-131, 131.

overstated Osage violence because of his own Caddo connection, we must consider this possibility when reading his accounts of Osage violence.

Evidence in support of this possibility includes a report written by Mézières to Colonel Baron de Ripperda on July 4, 1772.²²³ Within this report, which reviewed interactions with many nations, Mézières discussed the Osage nation and his concerns that the Osage might be tempted to ally with the English against the Spanish because of trade. This concern and the way that Mézières represented it demonstrates the power of the Osage during this period and the ability of the Osage to navigate the competing claims of sovereignty and desires for trade of the English and Spanish even as they maintained their own claims of sovereignty in the Missouri River Valley region and extended them to the Arkansas River Valley region. Mézières made his own opinion of the Osage clear in this letter. For example, he wrote, “They appear insolent and proud, and commit the gravest injuries, because of the assurance that attacks made by them on one party will cause the other to free itself from similar attacks. They never fail to demand that protection which favors and perpetuates their outrages—a sad example of which has just occurred in Luisiana [sic.], with danger to the intercourse, property, and life of its inhabitants.”²²⁴ Taken at face value, this description characterized the Osage as a strong, proud, war-like nation of individuals who refused to fully submit to any other authority, which Mézières viewed as insolence. When considered in context, especially with the understanding of the strong relationship between Mézières and the Caddo, the

²²³ “Report of Dn. Athanacio de Mézières, Captain of Infantry, to Colonel Baron de Ripperda” July 4, 1772,” in Bolton, *AM*, 284-306, 304.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 284-306, 304.

historic enemies of the Osage, however, this description of the Osage also indicates that the Osage remained powerful enough not to need to submit to the Spanish, French, or Caddo. The Osage maintained their claims of sovereignty even as they negotiated with and navigated the inter-national, overlapping claims of sovereignty in the area, especially the Spanish-Osage claims. The “sad example” cited by Mézières did not indicate if the Osage had any reasons for being incited to endanger “the intercourse, property, and life” of the inhabitants of Louisiana, but evidently Mézières considered the Osage to have instigated the violence.

Mézières further demonstrated his antipathy toward the Osage in the next portion of this report, especially in the wording of this paragraph that began, “Since, happily, these Osage are irreconcilable foes of our Indians, as I have noted, we ought to see to it that they never make peace with them, for from it would result the very grave consequences here set before us.”²²⁵ Significantly, in this statement, Mézières indicated that he preferred that the Osage not make peace with the Caddo and other nations that he, and other Spanish officials, viewed as subjects of Spain. Mézières confirmed this preference by the telling use of the phrase “our Indians” to distinguish the other Indigenous Nations from the Osage. For an individual who spent much of his life visiting with the “Nations of the north” on the border between Texas and Louisiana and who tried to make peace between first the French and these Indigenous Nations and then the Spanish and these nations, Mézières seemed unwilling to even consider the possibility of peace with the Osage; instead, he preferred that they remained the “irreconcilable foes” of the “Nations of the north.”

²²⁵ Ibid., 284-306, 304.

Reports of Peace, Good Order, and Strong Trade, 1774

During the year 1774, Lieutenant-Governor Pedro Piernas in St. Louis sent a series of letters to Governor Luis de Unzaga in New Orleans reporting on feedback from the French and Spanish trappers and traders and their interactions with the Osage and Missouri nations in the Missouri River Valley. Significantly, these letters show us that peace generally characterized interactions between these and that the traders anticipated unusually strong trade for the year. For example, on April 15, 1774, Piernas wrote:

in these establishments, peace and good order continue; and likewise in the wild Indian nations, up to the present nobody has experienced the slightest insult or damage. The traders who went up the river with commerce to the Little Osage have returned contented, assured that they were well received and had traded with the said Nation....²²⁶

Again in 1774, this time discussing the "Nations of the Missouri," Piernas wrote to the governor to tell him that, according to the reports from the traders after most of them had returned, trade had gone well that year. The traders returned contented; they had traded with the nations with whom they had Spanish trade licenses and their experiences that season remained positive. Piernas also reported:

I believe that the few remaining [traders] who will come down, at that I expect shortly, have had equally good experiences; and this shows the good disposition that I recognize in all of the Nations that have come recently to this Post to receive their gifts, manifesting desires to maintain peace, and establishing correspondence.²²⁷

²²⁶ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen comercio con los Pequeños Osages*, 15 de abril, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 506r. (Translation is mine)

²²⁷ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen comercio con las Naciones del Misuri*, 2 de julio, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 515r. (Translation is mine)

Evidently, the traders returned to St. Louis with positive and encouraging news for the Spanish Lieutenant-Governor. One could argue that the need for Piernas and others to inform their superiors of the tranquility and increased trade demonstrates that sometimes conflict and tension overshadowed interactions between these groups. While episodes of violence certainly appeared in many writings concerning the Osage and their interactions with European traders and governments, these writings provide a reminder of the importance of the Osage trade to the Spanish government. Clearly, maintaining positive interactions with the Osage was a priority for the Spanish in St. Louis and in Louisiana in general.

Yet another letter written by Piernas to Unzaga dated July 13, 1774, provides further indication that peace and trade served as the normal state of Osage-Spanish interactions in the St. Louis area in 1774. In this letter, Piernas focused his attention on other Indigenous Nations and their interactions with French and other traders within Spanish-claimed regions of the Missouri River and farther west. Piernas noted that:

all of the traders that remained to come down the river have arrived, without having experienced any harm, and with them have come more distant Nations from the Missouri River that are the Majá, Pani, Paninuar and Hotoes, and a newly discovered and even more internal than the others, named the Ricarrá, that, attacted by these, solicited our friendship and communication to have with the others the accustomed help from the traders....²²⁸

Throughout this letter, Piernas discussed these nations and their positive interactions and commercial exchanges with the traders. Although this report contained no mention of the Osage, it provides us with further evidence of peace between the Osage and the Spanish during this period. In the event of Osage-Spanish conflict, the strong

²²⁸ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen comercio con las Naciones más distantes del Misuri* 13 de julio, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 521r. (Translation is mine)

Osage presence along the Missouri River could have hindered the traders from traveling west with their goods or the traders and the Indigenous Nations from traveling east with their goods and their desire for Spanish gifts. This letter additionally demonstrated that the Spanish governing officials remained concerned with Spanish-Indigenous relations with many Indigenous Nations, not just the Osage and the Missouri. The frequency of discussions of the Osage in other letters, however, indicated the importance of this powerful nation that vied for sovereignty with the Spanish, even as the Osage also had a mutually beneficial, even if sometimes conflicting, political and economic relationship with the Spanish, especially in the St. Louis region.

Interestingly, within this same letter, we see hints of troubled interactions between the Spanish and the loyal French traders and the “French fugitive traders [who] for much time before the Spanish took possession of the area, caused the traders that annually went up the river considerable damage and pillaging.”²²⁹ These non-licensed French traders who seemingly refused to acknowledge Spanish territorial claims over the Spanish Illinois region remained an unpredictable element in Spanish-Indigenous relations. If Piernas can be believed, they frequently instigated conflict between the Spanish and their licensed European or Creole traders and the Indigenous Nations with whom these rogue traders lived.

A comparison could be made between these non-licensed French traders and the young Osage men whose own “rogue” behavior sometimes troubled Osage-Spanish relations. For example, Barnett portrayed the 1772 situation discussed earlier in which Piernas reported that some of the Little Osage and the Missouri had harassed the St.

²²⁹ Ibid., Fol. 521v. (Translation is mine)

Louis settlement, disrupted talks between Piernas and other Indigenous Nations' leaders, and exchanged the flying Spanish flag for the English flag during their escapade as being perpetrated by young Osage men.²³⁰ The existence of these rogue European and Creole traders provides further insight into the complexity of social, ethnic, cultural, political, and economic interactions in the Missouri River Valley region. When making governing and trade-related decisions, the Spanish lieutenant-governor and other Spanish officials had to consider their own more loyal subjects, regardless of their French, German, English, Irish, African, Creole, or other ethnic backgrounds by birth. Beyond this, they also had to keep in mind the reactions or actions of the non-loyal Europeans in the region, or even British or French traders from the Canada or English Illinois region who ignored the Mississippi River boundary between English and Spanish Illinois. In addition, these Spanish officials had to try to predict the response of the Osage, Missouri, and other Indigenous groups, especially because of the power of the Osage in the region.²³¹

The complexity of interactions within and between the Osage and Spanish in this region and the memorable nature of events such as the English flag raising in the place where the Spanish flag typically flew or the stealing of pirogues from St. Louis to aid in efforts of Osage and Missouri young men to purloin horses from Ste. Genevieve has led to an overemphasis on violence, conflict, and warfare in Spanish-Osage relations during this early period of Spanish claims in Spanish Illinois. These episodes and the discussions of the unlicensed French traders demonstrate that both the Spanish and the Osage leaders sometimes had to try to remind the other group's leaders that sub-groups within the

²³⁰ Barnett, "This Is Our Land," 1.

²³¹ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 126.

Spanish subjects or Osage nation existed and that they did not always conform to Spanish or Osage expectations and acted extra-legally.

These sub-groups remained difficult to control, and yet the Spanish lieutenant-governor at St. Louis and the Osage leaders sought ways to react to their actions as they worked to negotiate political and economic interactions. Sometimes, such as on September 11, 1773, this meant that Lieutenant-Governor Piernas issued orders forbidding the traders from trading with or helping in any way the non-licensed French traders to try to discourage these rogue traders from their persistent living and interacting with the Osage and other nations to their west.²³²

Piernas's letter from August 4, 1774, especially highlighted the pacific relations that generally characterized Spanish-Indigenous relations in the Missouri River Valley region during the summer of 1774. This letter began:

There is no news in these establishments; the calm and good order that they have experienced continues. And the traders that are accustomed to go up to the Nations to trade with them are preparing for this and with that of obtaining an advantageous benefit that the good disposition of the Nations offers them in the present year....²³³

Although Piernas did not specifically mention the Osage or the Missouri in this letter, the absence of these nations as an exception to his general statement of the tranquility in the settlements indicates that Piernas included these nations in his general assessment of the state of the nations in Spanish Illinois in 1774. This and the other letters from 1774 that

²³² Pedro Piernas, "Passport from commandant and lieutenant governor Don Pedro Piernas issued to Sieurs Chauvin and Lajoie to trade with the Oto Nation, 11 September, 1773," in *SMV*, ed. Lawrence Kinnaird, Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1945 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:220.

²³³ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen orden en el puesto y el buen trato con las Naciones Indias*, 4 de agosto, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 523r. (Translation is mine)

discussed peaceful relations between the Spanish-licensed traders from the St. Louis area and the Osage, Missouri, and other Indigenous Nations demonstrated the importance of these nations to Spanish officials, both in St. Louis and in New Orleans. Piernas and Unzaga recognized that they needed to maintain an awareness of the state of trade in this region as an indicator of political, economic, and social interactions within Spanish Illinois. At the same time, the emphasis that Piernas gave to these relations also demonstrated the entangled and sometimes competing claims of sovereignty and jurisdiction in this region. If the Osage, Missouri, and other nations in this region did not, at times, use violence or threats of violence to shape their interactions with the Spanish officials or with individuals or settlements that these Spanish officials viewed as under their jurisdiction, then it is unlikely that we would encounter any references to these nations and the peacefulness or violence of trade interactions with them.

The overall findings of this section point to the importance of the year 1774 as the year of greatest calm in Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri interactions. This point is emphasized in the November 6, 1774, letter from Piernas to Unzaga in which the lieutenant-governor discussed his ongoing investigation into a violent incident from June 5, 1774, in which “los Yndios de la Nacion Chicachas” (Chickasaw nation) attacked the area around Ste. Genevieve and across the Mississippi River.²³⁴ This event will be discussed below. For now, it is important to note that in this same letter, Piernas again emphasized the positive reports that he had received from the traders who went up the

²³⁴ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre un partido de Yndios de la Nacion de Chicachas de la dependencia de la Mobila y su quitó de vida de siete personas de una mina cerca de Santa Geneveva, 5 de junio, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 510v. (Translation is mine)*

Missouri River to trade with the nations of the Missouri. The positive tone of Piernas's discussion of these nations of the Missouri River, which would have included the Osage and the Missouri, stands in contrast with his expressions of worry or dismay involved with the Ste. Genevieve and Chickasaw event. Other than these two contrasting examples of Spanish-Indigenous relations, Piernas's letter to Unzaga included a brief reference to the soldiers and the military post at St. Louis and its normalcy. Piernas noted that he had received Unzaga's report about the state of skins and wheat that left St. Louis for New Orleans and a requisition for the apprehension of Don Diego de Alva. Topics such as these demonstrate the routine, mundane information that the lieutenant-governor in this region regularly reported to the governor.

Unrest in the East: The Chickasaw Threat

According to DuVal, the Chickasaw nation, led by Payamataha, "strove to maintain Chickasaw independence through a pragmatic course of peaceful coexistence."²³⁵ Whereas DuVal portrayed the Osage as using violence to negotiate their contested boundaries of sovereignty with Spanish, she indicated that "in the 1760s and 1770s he led the Chickasaws in systematically making peace with a startling array of old enemies: Choctaws to the south, Cherokees and Catawbas to the east, Creeks to the southeast, and Quapaws to the west across the Mississippi River."²³⁶ The Quapaw peace brought with it the possibility of peace and negotiations with the Spanish, but in 1774, a

²³⁵ Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2016), 17.

²³⁶ DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 17.

group from the Chickasaw nation, perhaps outside the leadership of Payamataha, crossed the Mississippi River, traveled west past Ste. Genevieve and killed seven people while they worked in a lead mine about 14 leagues from the settlement.²³⁷ Among those killed was the second son of Francisco Vallé, the leading citizen of Ste. Genevieve.²³⁸ In addition, the group from the Chickasaw nation had killed three settlers from Kaskaskia on the eastern shore of the Mississippi shortly before this. In his letter to Unzaga about this incident, Piernas indicated that this was not the first time that violence broke out between the Chickasaw and the inhabitants of Ste. Genevieve. The previous year, according to the letter, the same Chickasaw nation had killed another two workers in the area around the lead mine. Based on these accounts, it seems evident that sporadic violence at least sometimes existed between the Chickasaw and the inhabitants of Ste. Genevieve and its surrounding areas who were subjects claimed by Spain. Others, including hunters, had also reported poor treatment, theft, and harm at the hands of the Chickasaw nation in the area around the Mississippi River.

The Chickasaw violence stands in stark contrast to the May 8, 1774, letter from Piernas to Unzaga in which Piernas indicated that everything continued peacefully in the St. Louis post and its surrounding areas and that the Indigenous Nations also maintained their peace. Specifically, in this letter, Piernas reported that trade was going well, according to news from the traders, and that “a part of those destined for the Great Osage just arrived in the post after having dispatched the merchandise that they brought to that

²³⁷ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre un partido de Yndios de la Nacion de Chicachas de la dependencia de la Mobila y su quitó de vida de siete personas de una mina cerca de Santa Genoveva, 5 de junio, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 510r. (Translation is mine)*

²³⁸ Piernas referred to this man as Francisco Vallé, but he is also known as François Vallé.

nation. They arrived contented by the great benefit that they had obtained in furs and by the good trade that they had all received from that nation.”²³⁹ This letter and others from the 1770s demonstrate that, despite some incidents of violence between the Osage and Missouri, on the one hand, and the Spanish and their claimed subjects, on the other hand, this decade of Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations was characterized more by peace and trade than by violence.

Bourgeoning Trade, Continued Peace, and War in the East, 1775-1779

On November 21, 1776, Lieutenant-Governor Francisco Cruzat wrote to Governor Unzaga in New Orleans to discuss the fur trade along the Missouri River.²⁴⁰ Most of his report from St. Louis focused on the reopening of trade with the Sioux in peace, despite the deaths of five Sioux leaders, seemingly from disease, who had visited the post and received gifts and medals in 1775. The letter opened, though, with a discussion of reports from the traders from September 3, 1776, that indicated that the traders had gone up the Missouri River safely to their respective licensed Indigenous Nations. Cruzat specifically mentioned that the traders took notice that the Little Osage and the Kansas nations had expressed their discontent with the traders, perhaps because of the ever-broadening destinations of the traders as they sought more nations with whom to trade, such as the Sioux. Kinnaird translated this section, “The traders of Missouri left

²³⁹ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Pedro Piernas al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen orden en el puesto y el buen trato con las Naciones Indias*, 8 de mayo, 1774, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 508r. (Translation is mine)

²⁴⁰ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Francisco Cruzat al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen trato con las Naciones de Pequeños Osages y Canzes y un partido de la Nación de los Sioux.*, 21 de noviembre, 1776, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 646r. (Translation is mine)

this town for their destinations on the third of September and, although the Little Osage and Kansas tribes were not very friendly, I have been informed by various soldiers and by letters from the traders themselves that all of them reached their destinations and that never before had they been so well-received by the savages as this year.”²⁴¹ The wording of the original report, though, was less negative in its depiction of the Little Osage and Kansas nations. In the original letter, Cruzat wrote, “sin embargo de que las Naciones de pequeños Ôsages y canzes no estaban mui contentas, he tenido noticia...”²⁴² A more accurate translation of this section, then, would be, “although the Little Osage and Kansas nations were not very contented, I have taken notice...”²⁴³ Both translations are similar, but one reflects a more negative portrayal of these nations and their attitudes toward the traders and, by extension, the Spanish, whereas the other follows more closely Cruzat’s comment that these nations expressed their dissatisfaction, but despite this attitude, they treated the trappers well.

Notwithstanding this account of the Little Osage and Kansas and their expressed displeasure, the traders reported that they had all arrived at their respective destinations. According to the report, “in no other year had they been as well received by the savages like this one, that they maintained with great tranquility and very content because they

²⁴¹ Francisco Cruzat, "Letter from commandant and lieutenant governor Francisco Cruzat, to the governor of Louisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, concerning the good trade with the Little Osage and Kansas nations and a party of the Sioux nation," in *SMV*, ed. Lawrence Kinnaird, Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1945 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:235.

²⁴² *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Francisco Cruzat al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el buen trato con las Naciones de Pequeños Osages y Canzes y un partido de la Nación de los Sioux.*, 21 de noviembre, 1776, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 646r. (Translation is mine)

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, Fol. 646r. (Translation is mine)

assure me that trade will be extremely beneficial.”²⁴⁴ Once again, in the 1770s, in spite of some concerns about dissatisfaction among the Little Osage nation, and the Kansas this time, the lieutenant-governor at St. Louis passed along to the governor at Louisiana reports of calm and beneficial relations between the traders from St. Louis and the Indigenous Nations with whom they traded and interacted. Although it is possible that Cruzat’s report was overly optimistic, he, like Piernas in the early 1770s, expected trade to further improve in 1776 and tranquility and peace to prevail in the Missouri River Valley region.

The possible threat of attack by the English on the “fort of the Missouri” that, according to Cruzat, needed repairs, remained more important to Cruzat than Osage violence in November of 1776. In his November 1, 1776, letter to Unzaga, Cruzat reported on the conditions of the fort and its vulnerability in case of an attack (see Figure 5).²⁴⁵ Although any attack could have troubled the Spanish, French, and other inhabitants of St. Louis, considering the context of the American Revolutionary War and Spain’s ever-increasing support for the Americans against the British in this rebellion, Cruzat’s expressed concern about possible attack seems to have focused, not on an attack from the Osage, Missouri, or other Indigenous Nations, but from the British.²⁴⁶ This pattern of concern over British, or later American encroachment continued into the 1780s and

²⁴⁴ Ibid., Fol. 646. (Translation is mine)

²⁴⁵ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Francisco Cruzat al gobernador de la provincia de Luisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, sobre el estado deplorable del Fuerte del Misury*, 1 de noviembre, 1776, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 81, Fol. 642r.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., Fol. 643r.

1790s.²⁴⁷ Peace and trade, not war and violence, characterized Spanish-Osage relations in the 1760s-1770s.

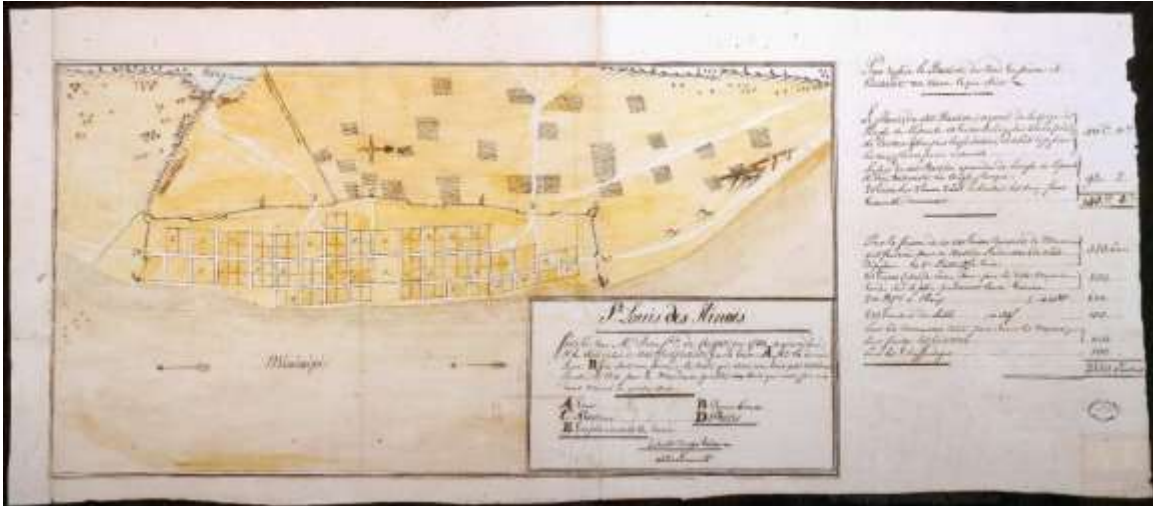


Figure 5. St. Louis and Its Fortifications Plan from Lieutenant-Governor Don Francisco Cruzat, 1780. From AGI, MP-FLORIDA_LUISIANA, 105.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ See, for example, Francisco Cruzat, "Confidential letter from Louisiana Governor Francisco Louise Héctor Baron de Carondelet, to commandant and lieutenant governor Don Zenon Trudeau, ordering Trudeau to use the Indian nations to march to the defense of New Madrid in case of an American attack, December 22, 1792," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:107.

²⁴⁸ *Saint Louis des Illinois, fortifié par Monsieur dom Fre. de Cruzat en 1780*, AGI, Mapas y Planos, MP-FLORIDA_LUISIANA, 105.

**CONCLUSION: SPANISH-OSAGE WAR AND PEACE—DETERIORATING
RELATIONS IN THE 1780S-1790S**

Don Renato Augusto Chouteau—a merchant from San Luis de Ylinoia, makes known to Your Excellency that experience has demonstrated that the Nation of the Great and Little Osages, in which they count some two thousand fighting men, could not be subjected and reduced to reason by all the means that have been employed until the present; and on the contrary, their raids and rapines are increasing daily; so that the Provincias Internas are greatly disturbed, as well as the settlements of Ylinoia, Nuevo Madrid, Arkansas, and even Natchitoches, even though it is well separated [from the others] by close to three hundred leagues. In view of the knowledge that the speaker has acquired of this nation, of their customs and of their location (which contributes infinitely to their security) after thirty years of trading in it, it seems evident to him that the only means of subjecting the Indians, and impeding their destruction and pillaging of our settlements, is to construct a fort in their own village...

- Lieutenant-Governor Carondelet to
Don Luis de las Casas, May 21,
1794.²⁴⁹

Substantial evidence demonstrates that peace and trade characterized Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations in the Missouri River Valley region in the 1760s-1770s. While these trends continued into the 1780s-1790s, Spanish officials' correspondence revealed a rise in tension and violence during this later period. Much of

²⁴⁹ *Carta del comandante y teniente del gobernador Don Francisco Louise Héctor Baron de Carondelet al gobernador e intendente general, Don Luis de las Casas, sobre la experiencia de Don Renato Augusto Chouteau con la Nación de los Grandes y Pequeños Osages y su oferta de construir un fuerte en la aldea de la misma Nación, 21 de mayo, 1794, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2363, Fol. 395r. (Translation is mine)*

this can be explained by the movements of other Indigenous, European, and American settlers into Osage lands and by Spanish officials' misunderstandings of Osage attempts to communicate their frustrations and protect their boundaries. Some of these less peaceful interactions will be discussed below as we consider times of increased aggression, conflict, and even warfare between the Spanish, on the one hand, and the Osage and Missouri, on the other. Most studies of Spanish-Osage interactions emphasize the more violent interactions of the 1780s and 1790s. By examining these two periods separately, however, we see the general focus on peace in the Missouri River Valley region more clearly. This study's more chronologically divided thematic approach helps us to understand that violence escalated especially during the period in which the English and Americans of the newly-formed and then independent United States increasingly tried to move westward in the 1780s-1790s. In addition, nations such as the Cherokee, Shawnee, and other Indigenous Nations encroached on Osage lands when they moved into the Mississippi and Arkansas River Valley regions. Although these groups received permission from the government officials of Spanish Louisiana, neither they nor Spanish officials consult with the Osage who also claimed sovereignty over these lands.

Rising Violence and Maintaining Peace and Trade Continued, 1780s-1790s

In the 1780s-1790s, Spanish officials' reports of violence between the Osage and Spanish, or Spanish-claimed subjects, increased in the region between the Missouri, Arkansas, and Mississippi River Valleys. In Barnett's study of the Osage use of violence as a territorial expression, he provided a table that allows us to examine the type, location, and date of documented cases of Osage violence during the period 1763-1803

(See Appendix D).²⁵⁰ Barnett did not claim comprehensiveness in this list, but he asserted that it represented the best-documented occurrences that he encountered in his study and that the Osage almost certainly committed. He noted the difficulty of determining whether others provoked the Osage to violence. Despite these limitations, the table provided a way of visualizing Spanish-Osage relations over the course of the period in which Spain claimed ownership of Louisiana and Spanish Illinois. The table lists a total of 28 events; ten of these events occurred between about 1768, the earliest event, and September 1777, the latest pre-1780 event. The colonial authorities reported five additional events during the decade of the 1780s, and a final thirteen events in the 1790s, especially the largest number in the month of March 1790. Barnett carefully reminded us that “it is impossible to know whether the Osage instigated these events or whether the act represented an Osage response to territorial expressions of a neighboring tribe. In the Mississippi Valley, violence was often multi-directional in that the Osage both perpetrated and reacted to violence.”²⁵¹ Based on this information, it seems evident that periods of tension and violence existed between the Spanish and the Osage throughout the period of Spanish claims and control in the region. Importantly, however, many of these reports recorded Osage violence in the Arkansas River Valley region or the Red River or Natchitoches area in which there were many, overlapping and conflicting territorial claims between and among the regions’ many Indigenous and European nations, many of whom did not recognize the authority of the “other” claimants. At the same time, these periods of tension and violence should not be allowed to overshadow

²⁵⁰ Barnett, “This is Our Land,” 87-90. An adapted version of this table is available in Appendix D.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

evidence of times when peace characterized Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations and when trade and sometimes even fictive or real kinship ties became the focus of Spanish-Indigenous interactions.

Belonging and Experience: Relationships Impacted Spanish-Indigenous Interactions

The importance of the concept of fictive kinship and trade relationships established between St. Louis and the Osage becomes evident when looking at this list. For instance, of the four incidents reported from the St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve region, only one, the June 1772 event discussed in Chapter 2, and reviewed briefly in Chapter 4, on the occasion when a group of Little Osage and Missouri individuals suddenly raided St. Louis and replaced the Spanish flag with the British flag occurred during in the 1760-1770s. Although this event included violence, and raised the ire of Piernas, it also provided an opportunity for the new Spanish officials to learn how to better understand Osage and Missouri customs, and apparently this attempt at understanding “the other” met with success as the groups settled their differences before the end of the next year.

Beyond the Osage fictive kinship system, marital kinship in the form of Piernas’s French Creole wife, Felicitas, may have helped Piernas adapt to the multi-ethnic community of St. Louis and her experiences growing up in Fort de Chartres may have taught her to appreciate Illinois, Osage, and Missouri kinship customs. In addition, Lizette, an Indigenous slave woman, appears to have served as St. Ange’s concubine. Lizette accompanied St. Ange from Vincennes to Fort de Chartres and then to St. Louis and bore three children in the bachelor’s household.²⁵² If she was St. Ange’s concubine

²⁵² Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 46.

and perhaps confidant, then she may have helped St. Ange navigate the cultural boundaries of the region's Indigenous Nations and their relationship may have become a marriage that gave St. Ange belonging within her nation. In the 1760s and early 1770s, then, the two main leaders, from the Spanish perspective, of St. Louis and Spanish Illinois, the men charged with negotiating with and developing strong trade and diplomatic relationships with the region's Indigenous Nations, seemingly benefited from their own kinship ties that gave them insight into the region's complex, nuanced relations.

His lack of a similar relationship connecting him to the St. Louis region might help explain Cruzat's frustration with the Osage as he took over as lieutenant-governor after Piernas. For example, in a letter to Governor Unzaga from March 17, 1776, Cruzat happily informed the governor of peace and good trade in the Missouri River Valley region, but expressed his frustration with "the principal chiefs of the Little Osages" who had arrived in St. Louis.²⁵³ He confessed to Unzaga his confusion over what to do when both the principal chiefs expected a gift from him; in his letter, he seemed unfamiliar with the roles of the peace and war chiefs, or the *Tsi-zhu Ga-hi'-ge* and *Hon-ga Ga-hi'-ge*, in Osage leadership. Although the incident ended well, Cruzat wrote that the "last circumstance embarrassed me so that I did not dare give them what they expected until I had communicated the details..." to Unzaga. Although Cruzat sought direction from his

²⁵³ Francisco Cruzat, "Letter from commandant and lieutenant governor Francisco Cruzat, to the governor of Louisiana, Don Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga, concerning the good conduct of the Little Osages and the Missouri, beneficial trade with the Great Osages, Kansas, and Missouri nations, and the visit of the principal chiefs of the Little Osage, March 18, 1776," in *SMV*, ed. Lawrence Kinnaird, Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1945 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:229.

governor, he probably would have received better guidance from individuals from St. Louis whose familiarity with Osage trade and cultural customs helped them negotiate these cultural differences.²⁵⁴ Within his discussion, Cruzat added, “[i]t is well to know that the second chief mentioned has already been honored by my predecessor, Don Pedro Piernas, with a coat and hat, presumably on account of his power and influence among his people.”²⁵⁵ Does this demonstrate Piernas’s diplomatic ability and willingness to honor both Little Osage leaders, even as he attempted to adhere to Spain’s official policy of giving a medal to only one leader within a nation? Unfortunately, we will never know, but Cruzat’s letter may reveal that the early expertise or cultural sensitivity among Spanish St. Louis officials, including St. Ange, slowly eroded as Spanish authorities replaced these men (and their wives or concubines) with leaders whose misunderstandings of Osage customs sometimes undermined Spanish-Osage relations.

Horse Theft, Imprisonment, and Death—La Balafre and Cruzat, 1780

The next incident of Osage violence from Barnett’s table that involved St. Louis was recorded in a November 1780 letter from Cruzat to Governor Gálvez in which Cruzat reported horse thefts by the Little Osage in the St. Louis area. Even this event, though, demonstrated the efforts of both the Spanish officials and the Little Osage leader to maintain peaceful Spanish-Osage relations. Cruzat reported:

Upon my arrival at this place, Lieutenant Don Francisco Cartabona advised me of an incident during his period of command involving the Indian named La Balafre, principal chief of the nation of Little Osages.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 1:229.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 1:229.

This nation came with the abovementioned chief to this town on the 28th of June of the present year, under the pretext that it desired to be forgiven for the thefts of horses which it continually made in these settlements. As the chief who wanted to prove his repentance was being received, it was learned that at that very instant some of the inhabitants' horses were being stolen, and the aforesaid La Balafre himself had on that very day stolen from different inhabitants in their own homes some silver service and other things. The provisional commandant took the precaution of arresting the brazen chief when he saw the insolence and daring which he manifested in coming to solicit clemency and pardon for the crimes of his nation.

A few days after his imprisonment, he tried to escape, assaulting the sentinel and seeking a way to disarm him in spite of the vigilance of the guard who, with considerable difficulty, arrested him on the street. His intention was to kill some of the soldiers and make his escape. This was verified by the fury, wrath, and blind animosity with which he opposed his arrest. He intended to disarm some soldier, but did not succeed.²⁵⁶

Based on Cartabona's and Cruzat's report on the event, it appeared that the Little Osage leader, La Balafre, took advantage of Cruzat's absence and attempted to make peace with St. Louis even as he and other Little Osage men stole from the community (See Appendix C). These thefts, and the possible attempted deception, while threatening to Spanish-Osage relations, paled in comparison with what happened because of La Balafre's arrest and imprisonment, however. After La Balafre attempted to escape and fought against his arrest, Cruzat reported, he was imprisoned for forty days and treated well, from Cruzat's perspective. Cruzat wrote of La Balafre's next action with a hint of disdain:

when least expected, cruelty found lodgment in his perverse heart. While he was peacefully staying in the quarters assigned to him with his wife, who had been permitted to keep him company, he took the knife of his wife and fondling her with honeyed words, induced her to lie down next to him. Scarcely had this poor woman placed herself at his side, when he gave her a great blow with his knee to her chest. The poor unfortunate was left as if in a faint, and he then wounded her with three dagger thrusts, two in the throat and one in the chest. Immediately he

²⁵⁶ Francisco Cruzat, "Letter from commandant and lieutenant governor Francisco Cruzat, to the governor of Louisiana, Don Bernardo de Gálvez, concerning an incident during Lieutenant Don Francisco Cartabona's provisional commandancy involving La Balafre, principal chief of the Little Osages, November 12, 1780," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 1:393.

laid hold of an old stock of a musket and with this he tried to hit over the head the soldier Domingo Alonso who was prostrate in bed, ill and without strength.²⁵⁷

These seem, at face value, the actions of a cruel, violent man who cared little for his wife. On the other hand, the force with which La Balafre had fought against his arrest and his actions after he injured his wife, which ultimately led to her death, hint at a different possibility. Perhaps La Balafre's wife, rather than the accused and arrested man, had stolen the silver service items and he chose to punish her for her actions. Or, after his capture and imprisonment by the Spanish military, maybe La Balafre feared for his own life and the life of his beloved wife. Even though Cruzat indicated that she had been allowed to join La Balafre in prison, the Little Osage couple might not have understood that she was not also a prisoner. It seems odd that only Domingo Alonso, a weak, sick soldier, was left to guard the couple, so perhaps they decided to try to escape (see Figure 6 for examples of the uniforms worn by the Louisiana soldiers in 1785 and 1804). Since La Balafre used his wife's knife, maybe he recognized the unlikelihood of success if both of them tried to escape, so he tried to manipulate the emotions of the Spanish soldiers by making it appear as though he wanted to kill his wife so the Spanish soldiers would take care of her if he succeeded in his escape. Unfortunately, these are only speculations, but they raise the issue of shared misunderstandings that could undermine Spanish-Osage relations.

In the end, La Balafre and his wife both died, but even this sad report ended with a report of restored relationship. Cruzat reported that when members of the Little Osage

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 1:394.



Figure 6. Examples of the Uniforms Worn by the Louisiana Fixed Regiment in 1785 (right) and 1804 (left). From AGI, MP-UNIFORMES, 54 and 55.²⁵⁸

nation returned to St. Louis a few days after his own homecoming to the town, he welcomed them, treated them well, and gave gifts to them, all of which symbolized restoration of relationship to the Osage. It helped, of course, that Cruzat needed to ensure the Little Osage nation's loyalty so they would help the Spanish lieutenant-governor "to repress and punish the Kansas nation" that had "already committed some murders on the Missouri River, assassinating and burning seven hunters who were hunting on that

²⁵⁸ Left: *Diseño de Uniforme para los Regimientos de Luisiana y Florida Occidental*. 20 de julio, 1804. AGI, Mapas y Planos, MP-UNIFORMES, 55. Right: *Diseño de "Uniforme [del Regimiento Fijo] de la Luisiana"*, 15 de septiembre, 1785, AGI, Mapas y Planos, MP-UNIFORMES, 54.

river.”²⁵⁹ Cruzat sought to reestablish peace and the Little Osage-St. Louis alliance because he needed the Osage to help him with a larger threat.

Heightened Tensions and Threats and Rumors of War, the 1790s

In the early 1790s, many Spanish officials, including those from St. Louis, argued for and attempted to organize other Indigenous Nations allied with the Spanish to fight an open war against the Osage. For example, Lieutenant-Governor Manuel Perez at St. Louis wrote to Governor Esteban Rodríguez Miró y Sabater on August 6, 1790 (See Appendices A and C). In his report, he requested that Miró supply the Quapaw tribe’s hunters with ammunition in order to “attack the Great Osage for having continued to inflict on them various vexations, despoiling them of their hunting.”²⁶⁰ The major reason for this appeal, according to Perez, in addition to the information that “the Sacs, Foxes, and Iowas are determined to do so themselves this autumn,” was the death of one of the men under La Badia (probably Silvester Labadie) in the Osage River region between the Great and Little Osage territories.

Considering the context of heightened tensions in this region between the Osage and the Spanish and their subjects, especially with the news that Lieutenant-Governor Perez had prohibited trade with the Osage, it is unsurprising that Perez and La Badia both blamed the Osage, although they remained uncertain which group to blame for the man’s death when they found his body shot through by a gun far from the camp. The

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 1:394.

²⁶⁰ Manuel Perez, "Letter from commandant and lieutenant governor Manuel Perez, to the governor of Louisiana, Estevan Miró, requesting that the Arkansas nation be given ammunition so that they may attack the Great Osage for having continued to inflict on them various vexations, August 6, 1790," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 2:369.

circumstantial evidence does point to the trader's death at the hands of the Osage, but the man clearly had entered Osage territory during a period of strained relations. Barnett pointed to the importance of fictive kinship ties in shaping Spanish-Osage relations, especially in usually producing positive relations between the Osage and St. Louis, the settlement from which the Osage received their gifts and with which the Spanish officials wanted the Osage to trade.²⁶¹ From this perspective, without this fictive kinship or a willingness, due to Spanish policy, to trade at the Arkansas Post, the Osage viewed the Arkansas River Valley settlers as outsiders who threatened Osage territory and who lived outside the protection of the Osage and their Spanish allies from St. Louis.²⁶² In 1790, La Badia and his men, all likely from St. Louis, fell outside the protection of the St. Louis-Osage fictive kinship system because the Spanish officials, including Lieutenant-Governor Perez, had made decisions that undermined these ties.

As late as April 18, 1788, however, Perez informed Governor Esteban Miró that traders with the Little Osage and Missouri, in addition to Kansas and Oto nations reported that they were "greatly pleased with having done a good business."²⁶³ Perez also wrote that the traders, "tell me the nations are tranquil, and they did not meet with any difficulties on their journey."²⁶⁴ Interestingly, just after this positive statement on trade, Perez reported to Miró that one of the traders "met a Little Osage on the way who

²⁶¹ Barnett, "This is Our Land," 104.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁶³ Manuel Perez, "Letter from commandant and lieutenant governor Manuel Perez, to the governor of Louisiana, Estevan Miró, reporting on good trade with the Kansas, Little Osage, Missouri, and Oto nations and a trader's report of the confession of a Little Osage man concerning the death of La Buche near Ste. Genevieve, April 18, 1788," in Kinnaird, *SMV*, 2:253.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.

confessed to him that he had been one of the party of that nation which killed the man named La Buche in the neighborhood of Ste. Genevieve.”²⁶⁵ The murder of this French man was the first of the two Ste. Genevieve events from Barnett’s table; the last of the four events, from March 1790 involved an Osage raid on Ste. Genevieve to steal horses. According to the trader, the Little Osage party killed La Buche in self-defense only after La Buche fired at them as they approached him with peaceful words and gestures. Perez confirmed that this Little Osage man’s report “agreed with the declaration of the small boy” from the incident, at least involving the number, nine, of Little Osage men in the party.²⁶⁶ In this case, violence clearly broke out between the Little Osage party and La Buche, a Frenchman in origin, but a Spanish subject living in Spanish-claimed Ste. Genevieve. Significantly, however, as recorded by Perez, both the Little Osage and the traders downplayed the importance of this incident of violence. Instead, the Little Osage man explained the incident of violence, citing a form of violence that was viewed as legitimate by both the Osage and the Spanish, self-defense. In this way, the man from the Little Osage nation, possibly representing the group in his diplomacy, attempted to legitimize the use of force and violence while he also sought to maintain trade and peaceful relations between the Little Osage and the Spanish, and their subjects. Similarly, the trader who reported this man’s confession, at least as discussed by Perez, seemed to provide this confession as evidence of efforts at peace that would help maintain trade relations between the traders of the Spanish settlements at St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve and the Little Osage.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 253.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 253.

Conclusion

Although the Spanish Marqués de Grimaldi and the French Duke of Choiseul, acting as plenipotentiaries for their respective monarchs, may not have realized it when they negotiated the *Convención, o Tratado Particular entre las Dos Majestades Católicas y Cristianísimas contra la Inglaterra, Únicamente Relativa a las Circunstancias Presentes, y a la Perpetua Alianza Establecida en el Pacto de Familia* in Versailles, France on August 15, 1761, the concept of family ties and kinship responsibility represented by this treaty would have resonated with the Osage and Missouri nations across the globe in French-claimed Louisiana in the North American heartland. When France and Spain lost in their global struggle for empire against the English in the Seven Years' War, the French and Spanish plenipotentiaries, and later the French monarch, King Louis XV, offered his cousin, the Spanish King Carlos III, a gift in the form of Louisiana. This present protected Spain's valuable silver mines and settlements in the southwest and acted as a barrier or buffer between the lands east of the Mississippi River ceded by France to England in the Treaty of Paris of 1763. It is unlikely, however, when they negotiated these treaties, that Grimaldi and Choiseul pondered the customs and trade networks of the Osage, Missouri, or other Indigenous Nations who had formed commercial and political alliances with France in the North American heartland. If these nations had been part of the discussion, they might have reminded Grimaldi and Choiseul that the Mississippi River, although a seemingly simple division or boundary marker on a map, formed part of a rich, thick trade network that spread across the North American continent, and, through Spanish, English, and French trade networks, around the globe.

When France ceded the Louisiana territory to Spain, the Indigenous Nations that had allied and formed trade partnerships with France on the Texas-Louisiana border and in Spanish Illinois responded by re-negotiating relationships and belonging patterns with Spain and by reaffirming their own borders and boundaries. The Osage and Missouri nations rejected English overtures of peace and instead took advantage of the opportunity presented by the new settlement of St. Louis in the 1760s. Continued relations with some of the area's French Illinois inhabitants, including St. Ange, who had a long history of trade and positive relations with the Osage and Missouri, made the transition easier for these nations. St. Louis became the hub of a thriving fur trade that depended on maintaining peaceful relations with the powerful Osage and their Missouri ally. Under the experienced leadership of St. Ange and later Piernas, the settlement entered into the Osage fictive kinship relationship and achieved the status of belonging, with the gift-giving and trade responsibilities and protection that this relational network included.

The Osage nation, with its complex interactions between the Little, Great, and Arkansas Osage, had disproportionate geographical, social, political, and economic influence in Spanish Illinois in the mid-to-late 18th century. Unfortunately, sometimes Spanish misunderstandings of Osage customs or their attempt to control the Osage by cutting off trade threatened to undermine the Spanish-Osage relationship. At times, violence characterized Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri interactions, especially when each group used violence or threats of violence to shape their interactions with each other and with other Native and European groups in this region of richly diverse communities and entangled histories. When the Osage, or individuals or sub-groups within the Osage, used threats of violence or violent measures, Spanish officials took

notice and these events found their way into the historical record in letters and reports written by the officials within the vast Spanish governing bureaucracy. If the books, movies, news reports, and video games available in the 21st century are any indication, then it is evident that war, conflict, and violence, rather than peaceful, trade-based relations easily capture peoples' attention. Reports of murder, rather than of marriages and births clamor for our attention. Despite this tendency, however, more mundane, peaceful interactions are more characteristic of most people's daily life and we desire peace, rather than violence.

Similarly, even amid periods or threats of violence in Spanish Illinois, trade and cooperation remained important to the Spanish subjects and members of the Osage and Missouri nations. Accounts of thriving trade and of peace also found their way into the historical record as Spanish officials in St. Louis reported on trade and relations to the governor in New Orleans. Emphasizing violence while minimizing these more peaceful interactions gives undue attention to certain members of the Osage and Spanish communities, and certain regions in which these interactions occurred, whereas examining times when peace and trade remained the focus in the period 1763-1780 reveals a more nuanced understanding of these relations. These more peaceful, trade-based interactions quietly demand our attention and offer us a more complex, entangled view of Spanish-Indigenous relations in Spanish Illinois.

The previous scholarship that studied the Osage or Spanish-Osage relations ignored or minimized peace-focused negotiations and interactions; instead, it focused on the Osage use of violence and portrayed this powerful nation as warlike, aggressive, and imperialistic. Although the Osage certainly used violence and threats of violence to

protect their borders and interests, this focus on conflict skews our understanding of the complex, entangled interactions in the Missouri River Valley region. Peace and trade may be more mundane topics that lack the flashiness and intrigue of stories of murder, revenge, and warfare, but they, more than conflict, characterized Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri relations centered on St. Louis and the Missouri River Valley. At times, the complication of Osage efforts to protect their interests and claims in the Arkansas and Red River Valley regions, British traders who sought to undermine Spanish control, or Spanish misunderstandings of Osage peace and kinship customs threatened these pacific relations. Overall, however, throughout the 1760s and 1770s, the Spanish, Osage, and Missouri nations, aided by Spain's former French subjects, sought ways to live in peace and maintain trade and cooperation. These more peaceful, trade-based interactions demand our notice and provide us with a more complex, nuanced understanding of the entangled Spanish-Indigenous relations in Spanish Illinois.

Although this project relied on many sources and provided evidence of peace in Spanish-Osage and Spanish-Missouri interactions in the Missouri River Valley region during the 1760s and 1770s, it serves more as a call to notice and study peace than as a comprehensive discussion of this topic. A greater depth of understanding of Osage history, culture, and language would deepen and strengthen our understanding of the entangled interactions in this region. In addition, a study of Pedro Piernas and other Spanish lieutenant-governors stationed in St. Louis, similar to Ekberg and Person's *St. Louis Rising* study of St. Ange, might provide further insight into Spanish perspectives of war, peace, and conflict that would explain their interactions with the Osage and Missouri. Although this thesis briefly examined the role of this region's other Indigenous

and European inhabitants in shaping the entangled Spanish-Osage histories, the additional study of the impact of the Illinois and other northern nations, or of the impact of Spanish efforts to circumvent the Osage and trade directly with the western tribes would cast additional light on this topic. Studying British-Indigenous interactions in English Illinois and the frustrations caused and opportunities presented by British subjects in Osage and Missouri lands would further enhance our understanding of this region's entangled histories. Additional further research of the 1780s and 1790s might reveal more peace-focused tendencies during that period as well or may expose additional layers of entanglements, such as Spain's attempts to respond to the threat posed by the French Revolution, and their impact on Spanish-Osage interactions. It is my hope that this and future studies will lead to a clearer, more nuanced understanding of the entangled Spanish-Indigenous histories in the Missouri River Valley region that enables us to contextualize violence and threats of violence and see the importance of peace and trade in this North American heartland region.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Spanish Governors of Louisiana, 1766-1803

Name of Governor	Beginning Date	Ending Date
Antonio de Ulloa	March 5, 1766	1768 ²⁶⁷
Brief interim: New Orleans Regional French Colonist Rebellion-Ulloa returned to Havana, Cuba (1768-1769) ²⁶⁸		
Alejandro O'Reilly	July 24, 1769	1770 ²⁶⁹
Luis de Unzaga y Amezaga	1770	1777 ²⁷⁰
Bernardo de Gálvez	January 1, 1777	fought in West Florida and returned to Cuba 1782-1785, became Viceroy of New Spain, 1785 ²⁷¹
Esteban Rodríguez Miró y Sabater	Interim Governor 1782	Interim Governor 1785
Esteban Rodríguez Miró y Sabater	Governor 1785	1792 ²⁷²
Francoise-Louis Hector, Baron de Carondelet et Noyelles	1792	1797 ²⁷³
Manuel Gayoso de Lemos y Amarin	1797	1799 ²⁷⁴
Sebastian Calvo de la Puerta y O'Fariel, Marquis de Casa Calvo	1799	1801 ²⁷⁵
Juan Manuel de Salcedo	1801	1803 ²⁷⁶

²⁶⁷ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 96.

²⁶⁸ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 120.

²⁶⁹ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 74.

²⁷⁰ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 124.

²⁷¹ Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 41. And DuVal, *Native Ground*, 159.

²⁷² DuVal, *Independence Lost*, 239. And DuVal, *Native Ground*, 154.

²⁷³ Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 65.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁷⁵ DuVal, *Native Ground*, 173.

²⁷⁶ Aron, *American Confluence*, 109.

Appendix B: Interim Spanish Officials at St. Louis, 1765-1770

Name of Official	Beginning Date	Ending Date
Monsieur Louis Groston St. Ange de Bellerive, administrator and commandant	October, 1765	May 20, 1770 ²⁷⁷
Captain Don Francisco Ríu y Morales, military commander	1766	1768 ²⁷⁸
Pedro Piernas, military commander	appointed successor to Ríu August 5, 1768, arrived March 6, 1769	received letter dated October 30, 1768 ordering him to evacuate the fort and turn over property in St. Louis to St. Ange ²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Antonio de Ulloa, "I 1767--Ulloa Sends an Expedition to the (Spanish) Illinois Country to Establish a Fort and Settlement and His Rules for the Government of the Same," in Houck, *SRM*, 1:2.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:2.

²⁷⁹ Thomas Edwin Spencer, *The Story of Old St. Louis*, (St. Louis: Book Committee of the St. Louis Pageant Drama Association, 1914), 39.

Appendix C: Spanish Lieutenant-Governors Stationed at St. Louis, 1770-1803

Name of Lieutenant-Governor	Beginning Date	Ending Date
Pedro Piernas	February 17, 1770	1775 ²⁸⁰
Francisco Cruzat	May 20, 1775	June 1778 ²⁸¹
Fernando de Leyba	June 1778	d. June 28, 1780 ²⁸²
Silvio Francisco de Cartabona	interim governor 1780	September 24, 1780 ²⁸³
Francisco Cruzat	September 24, 1780	1787 ²⁸⁴
Manuel Pérez	November 1787	1792 ²⁸⁵
Zenon Trudeau	1792	1799 ²⁸⁶
Charles Dehault Delassus	1799	1804 ²⁸⁷

²⁸⁰ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 75. And Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 36.

²⁸¹ Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 41. And Spencer, *The Story of Old St. Louis*, 45.

²⁸² Spencer, *The Story of Old St. Louis*, 41 and 45.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 45 and 47.

²⁸⁵ Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 63. And Spencer, *The Story of Old St. Louis*, 63.

²⁸⁶ Spencer, *The Story of Old St. Louis*, 63. And Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 99.

²⁸⁷ Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 67.

Appendix D: Historical Occurrences of Osage Aggression and Violence, 1763-1803, Adapted from Barnett “This Is Our Land.”²⁸⁸

Date	Description of Event	Location of Event	Source
c. 1768	Osage horse raid	Caddo village just south of the Arkansas River	AGI, PC, leg. 188-1, no. 80.
April 1772	Osage murder of two Frenchmen	Along the Verdigris River	Kinnaird, SMV, 1:202-3.
June 1772	Osage murder of three French Traders, two others taken as slaves	Just North of Natchitoches.	Kinnaird, SMV, 1:202-3.
June 1772	Osage steal Spanish flag replacing it with British Flag	Saint Louis	Kinnaird, SMV, 1:206.
26 Jan 1773	Osage horse raid	Along the Cayaminchy River, fifty leagues northwest of the Caddos	Bolton, AM, 2:84.
March 1773	Osage accused of murdering 5 traders	Somewhere along the northern reaches of the Ouachita River	AGI, PC, leg. 2537, no.
May 1777	Large Osage horse raid	A homestead just Outside Natchitoches.	Bolton, AM, 2:130-31.
May 1777	Osage horse raid and murder of five men and two women	Chief village of the Caddo	Ibid, 131 (Also included are two unsupported accusations of Osage murders in the region).
Aug 1777	Osage supply robbery, four hunters were robbed and stripped of all supplies and clothes (physically unharmed).	Along the Arkansas River near El Cadron	AGI, PC, leg. 2358, no. 261.
Sept 1777	Osage murder of seven Frenchmen	Just a few leagues upriver from the Arkansas Post	AGI, PC, leg. 2358, no. 261.
Nov 1780	Horses stolen by the Little Osage	Saint Louis	Kinnaird, SMV, 1:393.
March 1786	Caddo hunters attacked by Osage, two killed and two wounded	Along the Arkansas River between the Caddo village and the Arkansas Post	Kinnaird, SMV, 2:172.
March 1786	Kichai hunters attacked returning from hunt, four killed	Upper regions of the Arkansas River	Kinnaird, SMV, 2:172.
April 1787	Osage killed two men and one Indian women	Sixty leagues west of the Arkansas Post	Kinnaird, SMV 2:200.

²⁸⁸ Adapted from Barnett, “This is Our Land,” 87-90.

Date	Description of Event	Location of Event	Source
March 1788	Murder of French hunter	Just west of Saint Genevieve	Kinnaird, SMV 2:246-47.
March 1790	Osage murder of Spanish hunter	Along the Arkansas River	AGI, PC, leg. 16, no.184.
March 1790	Osage robbery of three hunters	Along the White River	Ibid.
March 1790	Osage horse raid	Saint Genevieve	AGI, PC, leg. 16, no. 129.
March 1790	Osage murder of one Creole man and three Caddos	North of Natchitoches just south of the Arkansas River	AGI, PC, leg. 16, no. 45.
24 April 1790	Osage robbery and capture of one	Near the Quapaw Village	Kinnaird, SMV 2:331-32.
August 1790	Osage murder of one of the village trader's men	Along the Osage River between the Big and Little Osage Villages	Kinnaird, SMV, 2:369-70.
March 1791	Osage visit Kansas Indian village and force traders to trade with them	Kansas village along the Kansas River	AGI, PC, leg. 17, no. 179.
February 1792	Osage murder of Natchitoches trader	North of Natchitoches	Kinnaird, SMV, 3:9.
April 1793	Osage killed two French hunters and enslaved another.	Along the Rio Blanco (White River)	Nasatir, BLC, 1:171-73.
Summer 1793	Undisclosed number of Osage horse raids totaling 60 horses	Border settlements of New Madrid	Houck, SRM, 1:105.
28 March 1794	Two horses stolen by the Osage	Near Saint Genevieve	Houck, SRM, 81.
31 March 1794	Osage Horse raid	Near La Saline	Ibid, 81.
February 1795	Osage robbed two hunters	Northwest of the Arkansas Post	Nasatir, BLC, 1:318.