

## AN UNFAMILIAR ESSAY BY FREDERICK J. TURNER

Quite early in his professional career Professor Turner evinced an interest in immigration problems, historically considered, as a particular aspect of his central interest—the study of the territorial advance of the American population. In the course of a review of Roosevelt's *Winning of the West*, in 1889 Turner wrote:

To this valley, also, have come migrations from the Old World such as can be compared only with the great Wandering of the Peoples—the *Völkerwanderung*—of the Middle Ages. A new composite nationality is being produced, a distinct American people, speaking the English tongue, but not English.<sup>1</sup>

Once his period of apprenticeship was completed—it terminated when Johns Hopkins conferred the doctorate in 1890—Turner seized the opportunity of planning research projects in this inviting field. As his seminar topic for the college year 1890–91, he selected the study of immigration into Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> Turner's approach to the subject was broad and philosophical. Wisconsin had been rocked by controversies between natives and foreign-born, the latter strongly resenting the enactment of the Bennett Law, which prescribed that all schools in the state should give a portion of their instruction in the English language. To the scholar's mind it was clear that immigration, historically treated, opened the gate to a better understanding between native and foreigner.

Toward the close of 1891 Turner published an essay on the "Philosophy of History," in the course of which he took occasion to remark:

<sup>1</sup> *The Dial* (Chicago), 10:71 (August, 1889).

<sup>2</sup> University of Wisconsin, *Catalogue*, 1889–90, p. 100. The history department announced that its "seminary" for the year would be "in the study of emigration into Wisconsin."

Thus we not only meet Europe outside our borders, but in our very midst. The problem of immigration furnishes many examples of the need of historical study. Consider how our vast western domain has been settled. . . . Every economic change, every political change, every military conscription, every socialistic agitation in Europe has sent us groups of colonists who have passed out on to our prairies to form new self-governing communities, or who have entered the life of our great cities. These men have come to us historical products, they have brought to us, not merely so much bone and sinew, not merely so much money, not merely so much manual skill — they have brought with them deep-inrooted customs and ideas. They are important factors in the political and economic life of the nation. Our destiny is interwoven with theirs; how shall we understand American history, without understanding European history? The story of the peopling of America has not yet been written. We do not understand ourselves.<sup>3</sup>

Because of this interest in the problem of the peopling of America, much sound writing by Turner's pupils was destined to appear in later years. In the early nineties he had the satisfaction of guiding one of his seminar students along this path. In 1892 she completed a master's thesis on "German Immigration into Wisconsin."<sup>4</sup>

The essay by Turner which is here reprinted, "The Rise and Fall of New France," offers an outline of the main movements in the history of the French element in America. Historically, of course, the French stock was of great importance in the development of North America, though by the close of the nineteenth century its numerical strength inside the bounds of the United States was relatively unimpressive. Noteworthy is the brief observation toward the close of the essay:

It is significant that the French Huguenots won their influence in our history not by acting as a separate people but by assimilating themselves to American life. They found themselves by losing themselves.

Are we not entitled to see in these remarks Turner's guarded

<sup>3</sup> *Wisconsin Journal of Education* (Madison), 21: 230-234, 253-256 (October, November, 1891).

<sup>4</sup> University of Wisconsin, *Catalogue*, 1892-93, p. 151. The author of the thesis was Kate A. Everest.

but sage counsel to those Wisconsin Scandinavians and Germans who had lately risen in opposition against the Bennett Law, preferring to live an exclusive cultural life of their own?

Some reasons there are for believing that Turner blocked out and gave preliminary form to this essay before the close of 1892, but in its present shape the piece could not have been completed much before the spring of 1895. It was early in this year that an attempt was made for the first time by the census authorities to determine the approximate number of persons in this country who were of French-Canadian extraction.<sup>5</sup>

"The Rise and Fall of New France" was published originally in the *Chautauquan* for October and December, 1896. It is here reprinted in the hope of making more widely accessible an interesting piece of writing that is too little known to Turner's followers.<sup>6</sup>

FULMER MOOD

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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## THE RISE AND FALL OF NEW FRANCE

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### I

The story that opens with Cartier and closes with Montcalm is one of the most picturesque and dramatic in history. When the Norman and Breton fishing fleets followed Cabot to the Grand Banks, and began traffic with the natives on the shores of St. Lawrence gulf, they found the key to the interior of North America. This deter-

<sup>5</sup> See the report on the French-Canadian element in United States Census, *Population*, 1890, part 1, p. clxxiii-clxxv.

<sup>6</sup> "Notes and Word Studies" supplied for Chautauqua students, probably by the editor, have been omitted in reprinting Turner's article. See the *Chautauquan*, 24:113, 366. Footnotes obviously supplied by Turner himself, however, have been retained. A few typographical errors have been corrected.

mined the destiny of New France. The water systems of the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi interlace with each other and form a labyrinth that drew the French fur traders and Jesuit missionaries onward, revealed to them the vastness of this imperial domain, and seduced them into an attempt to seize and hold a continent with hardly more than a handful of men. On the lower St. Lawrence and about the mouth of the Mississippi French settlements grew up, which tended to slip away along the shining river courses into the wilderness. The *voyageurs* seized the strategic points for trade and war—the straits between the lakes and the portages between the rivers; they made friends with the Indians, traded, danced, and married with them, but left no deep or permanent impression on the interior.

French ideals of colonization and social and political organization furnished a sharp contrast to those of the English, who had settled between the Allegheny Mountains and the Atlantic. In the course of the eighteenth century these settlements gradually spread along the coast and contested with the French the fisheries off the St. Lawrence; crossing the mountains to the western waters, they contended for the possession of the fur trade. The colonial systems of France and England became involved in that new hundred years' war which opened with the war between Louis XIV and William of Orange and closed with the defeat of Napoleon. In America the struggle of the colonial powers resulted in the eviction of France from the New World, followed by the independence of the United States.

The catastrophe of the French rule in America was as complete as its development had been extensive and picturesque. By the passage of the Quebec Act England recognized and perpetuated the French element in Canada as a self-conscious people with survivals of French law and ideals. By the acquisition of Louisiana the United States was met with a like problem, which it solved by extending American institutions to the inhabitants and assimilating them. The lesser settlements were soon engulfed in the flood of the pioneers, although the *voyageurs* and French-Indian half-breeds found a place in American exploring expeditions, and as boatmen and packmen for fur companies in the West. In parts of the Great Lake basin the old French life went on until the end of the first third of the present century. In the meantime Louis XIV had driven the Protestant French, the Huguenots, to migrate in considerable numbers to America, and from this

stock came some of the most distinguished political leaders in the United States. More recently many Canadian French have been immigrating, particularly to New England, and abundantly proving the persistence of the French as factors in our national life.

Such, in outline, are the main movements in the history of the French element in America. To the unfolding of the rise and fall of New France Parkman has devoted about a dozen brilliant and fascinating volumes, while Roosevelt has briefly portrayed the aspects of French settlement in the United States at the time when the stalwart frontiersmen seized the lands beyond the Alleghenies. Gayarré has presented the history of the French in Louisiana, and Baird the history of the French Huguenots. Winsor's "Cartier to Frontenac" and "Mississippi Basin" give an excellent view of French exploration; while the fourth and fifth volumes of the "Narrative and Critical History of America," under his editorship, contain an extensive citation of the authorities. The original material for the study of the work of the fur traders and official explorers is chiefly in Margry's great collection of "Mémoires et documents" and the "Jesuit Relations" are becoming accessible to English readers in the reprint and translation now publishing under the editorship of Mr. R. G. Thwaites. Writers of historical fiction, like Gilbert Parker, Conan Doyle, and Mrs. Catherwood, have dealt with the French period in a way to attract as well as to inform the reader.

In so vast a field no more can be attempted in this article than to suggest the principal features of the movement down to the fall of New France, and to touch upon its relations to the main current of French history.

In the lull between the wars of Francis I and Charles V two French corsairs had laid the basis of the claims of France to America. Verrazano had skirted a great extent of its coast and Cartier (1535) had ascended the St. Lawrence to the rapids above Montreal. That France did not continue these explorations and build up permanent settlements in the sixteenth century was largely due to the civil wars that distracted her energies in the period when English seamen like Drake and Gilbert were contesting the monopoly of Spain in the New World and the Dutch were waging their war of liberation. It was in these troubled times that the admiral Coligny made his futile attempt to plant Huguenot settlements at Port Royal in South Carolina and on the St. John's River. The butchery of the last colony

by Menendez, the Spaniard, in 1565 ended this attempt at Protestant colonization under French authority. The Huguenot wars were closed by the conversion of Henry of Navarre to the Catholic faith, and France found itself united under this energetic monarch and ready for colonial enterprises at the very time when the defeat of the Spanish Armada, in 1588, by the English seamen opened the ocean to the colonizing fleets of England, Holland, and France. The result appears in the planting of Jamestown, New Amsterdam, and Quebec.

Champlain's services, beginning in 1603 and ending with his death on Christmas day, 1635, mark the first period of successful French settlement. He acted in the service of monopolists of the fur trade, but was himself the life of the colony. Among the fruits of his labors were the foundation of Quebec at the bold headland which commands the lower St. Lawrence, and Montreal where the Lachine rapids interrupt navigation, a strategic point for war and trade by its relations to the Ottawa and Lake Champlain. The latter lake he explored and named at about the same time that Hudson, in the service of the Dutch, was ascending the river that bears his name. By setting the French in opposition to the Iroquois, who dominated the region of New York, Champlain paved the way for a long and bitter struggle. The water system of the Hudson, the Mohawk, and Lake Champlain taps the system of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence, and thus opens a route to the interior. Natural hostility would seem to have been decreed between the peoples who held these rival waterways; and so, in fact, we find that the Hurons were the deadly foes of the Iroquois, though of the same stock, and that the Dutch and their successors, the English, grappled with the French, as afterward English and Americans struggled over these avenues to the North and West.

Another important event in the period of Champlain's activity was the advent of the Jesuit priests. Champlain's first missionaries were the gray-robed Recollects, but in 1625 the black robes sent their pioneers, headed by Lallemand and Brébeuf. The history of the Jesuits is checkered and world-wide, but one of its noblest chapters deals with the heroic devotion of its missionaries in the woods of America. They were appalled at no perils, they shrank from no toils. Men educated in the learning of their time traversed the gloomy forest, and set up the cross on the farthest shores of the Great Lakes. They lived in the smoky huts and dined on the disgusting food of the sav-

ages; torture and burning only called out renewed devotion. Their records of the mission have given us a large part of our knowledge of the early history of New France, and the black-robed priest threading the forest paths has become to many the picture of French exploration. Nevertheless it was not by the Jesuit that the exploration of the Northwest was effected. The fur trader, the wild, daring wood ranger, or *coureur de bois*, was the pioneer of New France; in his footsteps followed the priest, and the trading post and the mission house, lonely in the interminable forest, are the twin types of French occupation of the West.

On taking up the administration of France Cardinal Richelieu organized the company of the Hundred Associates to colonize and monopolize the fur trade of New France. At the same time England attempted to relieve the besieged Huguenots of La Rochelle, and a fleet was sent to seize Quebec, for the advantage of the English claim to Nova Scotia. In 1629 Quebec capitulated, only to be restored three years later.

The close of the career of Champlain was marked, also, by the visit of his agent Nicolet to the Sault Ste. Marie and to the Winnebagoes about Green Bay, on Lake Michigan, in the interest of the inter-tribal trade, and in the hope of finding the passage to the Pacific. On his return he reported that if he had proceeded three days farther he would have reached the great waters. What he would have reached is the Wisconsin, a tributary of the Mississippi, but the elusive phantom of a water route to Asia continued to influence French explorers.

By the close of Champlain's activity, therefore, the forces at work in New France might all be seen in embryo: the fur trade was attracting men into the forest, and was made a monopoly; the search for the route to Asia was another impulse to exploration, while the Jesuits had engaged in their heroic, if ineffective, efforts to Christianize the savages, and the hostility of the Iroquois and the struggle with the English had been begun.

In 1641 the Jesuits Raymbault and Jogues, hoping to reach China, followed the path of Nicolet to the Sault Ste. Marie, where Raymbault died—"God diverted his path to heaven," reported the superior. Jogues, vainly endeavoring to placate the Iroquois, was brained with a hatchet. That fierce people, having procured firearms

from the Dutch, swept the Hurons from their homes in 1649. Part of the fugitives from the wrath of the Iroquois reached the upper lakes and the Mississippi. Their flight may have induced the voyages of the unlicensed adventurers Radisson and Groseilliers, who, in pursuit of the fur trade, followed the southern shore of Lake Superior to its head in Minnesota, penetrated to Hudson Bay, and returned in 1660. Radisson claims in a previous voyage to have followed the route of the Hurons and to have entered the Mississippi. Their goods being confiscated by the French, the two traders turned to England, where they induced the formation of the Hudson Bay Company.

The career of these men forms a neglected chapter in the history of New France. Aside from their explorations their voyages are important, as leading the way for the missions of Menard, Marquette, and Allouez along Lake Superior, and as being representative of the large class of *coureurs de bois* who now began to flee from the restraints of civilization to the wilds of the Northwest. Mackinaw was their rendezvous, and they took their furs to Albany or to Montreal as their wishes led them, regardless of the authorities. From all sides, from Indian, trader, and missionary, came rumors of the "great waters" of the interior. The time was ripe for a more systematic organization of the advance of New France, and at this time a number of great men enter the history of New France.

Louis XIV, having taken personal control of his government, appointed the able and energetic Colbert as his minister. The organization of the colonial commerce of France under the Company of the West was the work of this famous mercantilist. In this period, moreover, two great administrators appear in New France, Talon, the far-reaching intendant, and Frontenac, the masterful governor. The daring and indefatigable La Salle, with his vast designs of trade and exploration, is a third heroic figure in this new era. In 1671, at Sault Ste. Marie, St. Luson took possession of the West in the name of Louis XIV. La Salle probably explored the Ohio in 1670. Three years later the trader Joliet and Marquette the missionary entered the Mississippi by way of the Fox and Wisconsin and descended it to the mouth of the Arkansas. Rightly concluding that the river flowed into the Gulf of Mexico and that the hope of finding in it a route to the Pacific was not warranted, they returned with their re-



port. With the favor of the governor La Salle established Fort Frontenac on the northeastern shore of Lake Ontario, thus intercepting the fur trade on its way to Montreal, a policy which had before been left to the illegal traders, the *coureurs de bois*. Jesuits and merchants complained as the center of trade receded into the interior. To the former it meant corruption of their converts; to the latter it meant a loss of profit.

It was not long before La Salle conceived the bold design of pushing the depot of trade into the heart of the wilderness. He proposed to gather the Indians into a great colony in the Illinois country, where the furs of the Northwest should be collected and shipped down the Mississippi to a post at its mouth. Thus the two portals to the interior—the Gulf of Mexico and the St. Lawrence gulf—would both be in French possession, with the interior as its trading territory, and the English behind the mountains would be cut off from the West. Meeting appalling misfortunes with superb courage and indefatigable endeavor, La Salle in 1682 succeeded in descending the river to its mouth. But in 1687 he was assassinated by his followers, after having failed to plant a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi. La Salle's extensive plans had failed, but the idea of holding the great valley did not die out.

A new era of this colonial history was reached when the English revolution of 1688 brought to the throne the antagonist of Louis XIV, William of Orange, for the English monarchy now ceases to be a paid dependent of France, and engages in the century of conflict for the colonial empire of the world. We shall soon consider the steps of this great struggle in New France; but first let us complete our survey of the spread of French exploration and settlement.

Fearful of the entrance of the English traders, who now began to turn their attention to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi as well as to Hudson Bay, the French began to establish stockaded trading posts at the key points of the interior. Thus while Livingston of New York was urging the governor of that colony to fortify Detroit, in order to secure the trade of the Great Lakes, Cadillac in 1701 erected a French post there. In 1699 D'Iberville founded Biloxi to control the mouth of the Mississippi, and by this expedition he barely anticipated the occupation by the English, whom he turned back as they were about to plant a colony. Kaskaskia and Cahokia (1700) were

planted on the banks of the Mississippi between the Kaskaskia and Illinois Rivers; at Green Bay was a post controlling the Fox-Wisconsin route; Mackinaw was occupied to guard the passage between lakes Huron and Michigan; and before long the route by way of the Maumee and the Wabash was secured by Fort Vincennes and a fort at the portage, while the St. Joseph was held by another post. Crown Point (1731) guarded Lake Champlain. Lesser posts were scattered throughout the lines of connection between the great Lakes and the Mississippi. Like most of the other forts, these were palisaded trading posts, where the commandant supported himself and his little garrison by the profits of the fur trade. They were not so much for the protection of French soil as for the management and protection of the Indian trade.

## II

While they occupied the trade centers of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, the French pushed on into the far West. Two motives guided this advance: the hope of opening trade connections with Mexico, and the search for the Sea of the West. When New Orleans was founded, in 1717, and Law's Mississippi Company was formed to support French credit on the basis of the mines, the pearls, and the buffalo wool of Louisiana, the desire of opening trade with the Spanish colony was not forgotten. Expeditions to this end were sent up the Red River, the Kansas, the Platte, and the Arkansas. In 1739 the Mallet brothers reached and traded with Santa Fé. In the meantime the Missouri had been ascended to the vicinity of Bismarck, in the hope that its course would be found to turn toward New Mexico.

In the Northwest another series of expeditions, conducted by Vérendrye and his sons, had led to the erection of posts at Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, Lake Winnipeg, and Lake Manitoba, all stages of an advance in search of the Pacific. At last, in 1743, French exploration reached the mountain barrier, when the Vérendrye brothers saw the Big Horn range.

Thus New France had spread throughout the Mississippi basin; but while this expansion had been going on the valley of the Ohio was left unguarded, and at its sources the frontiersmen were gathering, stalwart foes of the wilderness and the Indian, ready to strike this attenuated line of trading posts in its center and cut New France

apart. Let us turn to note the stages in the contests between the French and the English colonies.

Two primary elements of opposition are revealed in these wars, determining the form of the struggle and the points of attack: the rivalry over the fur trade on the part of the colonies that adjoined the interior water system of New France, and the contest for the control of the fisheries on the part of New England. Neither of these interests could call out the combined effort of the disunited English colonies, while they constituted the very life of New France.

It would be a mistake to look upon these wars as conscious efforts on the part of either the French or the English government to secure territory for agricultural occupation. On the part of the authorities the struggle was predominantly a contest for trade. Governor Spotswood, of Virginia, who had led a noteworthy expedition across the Blue Ridge in 1716, put the English view of the situation, four years later, when he wrote:

The danger which threatens these, His Majesty's plantations, from this new settlement is also very considerable, for by the conveniency of the lakes they do in a manner surround all the British plantations. They have it in their power by these lakes and the many rivers running into them and into the Mississippi to engross all the trade of the Indian nations which are now supplied from hence.

While there were permanent local reasons for collision between the French and English colonies, the wars which broke out were accompaniments of the European wars between the two rivals. When William of Orange and Louis XIV engaged in the War of the Palatinate (1689-97) King William's War broke out in America. The aged Frontenac was recalled from his seven years' retirement and was given instructions to expel the English from Hudson Bay and to capture New York, thus cutting off the English line of trade that tapped the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Neither of these measures was successful; the Iroquois proved an effective barrier between the French and the English, they formed connections with the Fox Indians in Wisconsin and thus interrupted the Fox and Wisconsin route to the Mississippi, and they cut off the northwestern tribes from the goods of the French. "They have powder and iron," complained an Ottawa deputy; "how can we sustain ourselves? Have compassion on us, and consider that it is no easy matter to kill men with clubs." New England sent a fleet under Phips and struck

a blow for her fisheries by reducing Acadia, but failed to capture Quebec. Frontenac's successes consisted in such massacres as those at Schenectady and Salmon Falls, but above all in the campaigns that broke the power of the Iroquois.

The peace of Ryswick (1697) restored the conquests of both parties. But it was no more than a truce, for the War of the Spanish Succession was reflected in America by Queen Anne's War (1702-13). During the longer portion of this war peace existed between Canada and New York, because the French traders did not desire to arouse the Iroquois and interrupt the supply of English goods, carried by neutral Indians acting as middlemen. The stress of the war fell on the frontiers of New England, as at Wells, Casco, Deerfield, and Haverhill—attacks conducted with the purpose of attaching New England Indians to the French. In 1710 the English took the stronghold of Acadia (Port Royal) and the peace of Utrecht recognized England's possession of Hudson Bay, Acadia (Nova Scotia), and Newfoundland.

To preserve a hold on the fisheries France fortified Louisburg, on Cape Breton Island, and denied the limits claimed for Nova Scotia by the English. In the interior the years following the peace of Utrecht were occupied, as we have seen, by increasing the control over the strategic points for the fur trade and in expanding into the vast wilderness. When the War of the Austrian Succession came America was soon swept into it, under the name of King George's War (1744-48). Under the lead of New England Louisburg was taken and Canada threatened, but the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle provided for the restoration of this defense of the fisheries to the French.

By this time the English traders had taken possession of the Ohio valley, and behind them was the comparatively compact and extensive population of the thirteen colonies. The frontiersmen were looking for land rather than for Indian trade, and the final struggle was at hand. What were the colonial traits of the two peoples that now fronted each other in this contest for the continent?

The English farmers and seamen stood for the ideals of political freedom and local self-government. They were implacable foes to the Indian and to the wilderness—a solid, substantial people, hewing out homes for their race. They lacked in picturesque elements, but what they took they held and reduced for the purposes of civilization.

Acquiring industrial power and discipline in their narrow country between the Allegheny Mountains and the Atlantic, they now numbered something more than a million; their expansion was to be irresistible.

The French habitants and fur traders were about 80,000, scattered through a continent and organized in the two provinces Canada and Louisiana.

The political life of New France was a modification of the France of the old *régime*. A centralized autocracy converging in the king was the form of their government. "Let every one speak for himself and no one for all," had commanded Colbert, when he forbade legislative organization for the colony. Local self-government did not exist; the seignior on his estate and the village priest and commandant looked after local concerns, subject to minute orders from the governor or the king's ministers. The latter officials did not hesitate to pass upon such petty details as the number of pickets to be placed in a stockade at Sault Ste. Marie, or to require the commandant to refrain from raising wheat, which the wise minister declared unfitted for that region! As in the Old World, French local government was directed by the authorities most remote from the locality.

By making the fur trade a monopoly the government hampered and harmed the vital industry of the colony, while the habitant was hedged in by irksome dues to the seignior, or lord of the estate, and the noblesse and the habitant were divided by sharp social lines. With the great authority and vigor of the clergy adding to these restraints it is not surprising that the free life of the forest fur trade increased the numbers of the *coureurs de bois* and the *voyageurs*, whose birch canoes skirted the clear waters of the Great Lakes or floated to the tune of the gay boating songs down the rivers of the West. Boon companions of the Indians, they ate and drank and sang and fought side by side with their savage brothers, married with them and took up their life. The gay, adaptable Frenchman was no wilderness conqueror. Said Duquesne to the Indians in 1754:

Are you ignorant of the difference between the king of England and the king of France? Go see the forts that our king has established, and you will see that you can still hunt under their very walls. They have been placed for your advantage in places which you frequent. The English, on the contrary, are no sooner in possession of a place than the game is driven away. The forest falls before them as they advance, and the

soil is laid bare, so that you can scarce find the wherewithal to erect a shelter for the night.

When George Washington came through the snows of December, 1753, to the trader-commandant at Fort Leboeuf, at the portage between the sources of the Ohio River and a tributary of Lake Erie, and in the name of the governor of Virginia demanded that the French withdraw from the valley of the Ohio, he was the herald of English civilization proclaiming war against the French ideals. He was the prophet of a new era for the West.

In the war that followed, the traders struggled to defend their trade. From the remote parts of the Northwest they led their Indians to the battles for the retention of the strategic trading points that they had seized. The campaigns centered about these key-points of the Indian trade. But at last on the Heights of Abraham the final act came in this great drama, and the keeping of the prairies and the plains, the mountains and the valleys of the continent passed forever from the French to the people of the English tongue.

When at the close of the Seven Years' War France yielded her territory on the North American continent to England and Spain, she left but faint evidences of her former possession. Of the French population of eighty thousand souls which had spread over the vast area less than fifteen thousand dwelt in the present territory of the United States. In the vicinity of Detroit were perhaps two thousand; Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and the outlying villages in the Illinois country included about as many more; while in Vincennes and the lesser posts of Indiana were nearly the same number. Soon after the war a considerable number of French settlers crossed the Mississippi into the province of Louisiana, then transferred by France to Spain, and thus insured the growth of the fur-trading village of St. Louis. The French whites at New Orleans and along the lower Mississippi may be reckoned at about seven thousand. This included some six or seven hundred Acadians, who after their banishment by the English had found refuge along the bayous and on the prairies of the Attakapas and Opelousas regions of Louisiana. Scattered through the northwestern woods were wandering French traders, who for the most part could claim a residence either in Canada or the villages already mentioned. Among the Indians there was growing up a considerable half-breed population, the offspring of the ubiquitous *voyageurs* and their Indian mates.

This was not a very substantial showing after a century of occupation. For all the daring, distant explorations of the gentry, for all the devoted wanderings of the missionaries, for all the forest traffic of the gay *voyageurs* along the western streams, there could be shown only a few lonely and deserted posts and little villages. Perhaps the most enduring evidence of the French dominion in the United States is found in the names upon the map.

At the time of its cession to Spain, in 1762, New Orleans contained about two thousand French settlers, and from its position and the character of its population it had precedence among these settlements. Already it had become the depot of trade for the Mississippi Valley with France and the West Indies, exporting indigo, deerskins, lumber, and naval stores. The villages of the interior were much alike. Agriculture struggled with the Indian trade for ascendancy. Along the village river front were the log houses, with their orchards and outlying buildings, while the farms ran back side by side from the river, in ribbon-like strips about two hundred feet wide and from two to six miles long.\* In some villages the rules regarding the management of these farms, the regulations for plowing, planting, and harvesting, were made and administered by a village council; but the local commandants had the civil authority, while the priests served as mediators in disputes. Besides these fields there was the village commons, the collective property of the settlers, for wood and pasturage.

The men were picturesquely clothed in *capotes* and moccasins, with earrings and black queues. They drove their two-wheeled pony carts, plowed their fields with clumsy wooden-wheeled plows, fastened by rawhide harnesses to the oxen's horns, and lived a simple, careless life in their prairie homes. There were some rich men among them, such as the Kaskaskia farmer who owned eighty slaves.

But the fur trade constituted the most typical industry of the Frenchmen of the interior. Picturesque in gaudy turbans or betinseled hats, they manned the birch trading canoes in crews of eight, shipped their load of axes, guns, and powder, kegs of brandy, coarse cloths, and blankets, trinkets, and provisions, and started from the depots of trade to greet the Indians as they left for the hunting grounds in the fall. The paddles beat time to rollicking songs; every

\* See American State Papers, "Public Lands," Vol. II., p. 166 (edition of 1834), for map of Cahokia. The farms vary in different villages.

two miles they stopped for a three-minutes' smoke or "pipe." Carrying the canoe across the portages, and running the rapids, reckless of their soakings, they reached the lesser villages and divided the cargo into smaller craft to visit the numerous trading posts at the Indian villages or hunting grounds. It was a wild, free life, and the forest trade left its impression on Indian industrial life, as well as produced a trained body of boatmen, packmen, and guides for the later British and American traders and explorers in the far West. Many a town in the interior dates its annals from the advent of these Indian traders, whose posts became the nuclei of settlements.

The part played by France in American history in the years that followed the downfall of her colony was an important one. The American Revolution gave to her statesmen an opportunity for revenge upon England which they were not slow to embrace. But the treaty of alliance made with us in 1778 was designed to humble Great Britain and create a weak and dependent ally of France rather than to erect a powerful democracy. The government of the old *régime* had no republican illusions, as Vergennes showed in the negotiations over the treaty of peace, when he aimed to restrict our boundaries to the Alleghenies and desired to deprive us of the navigation of the Mississippi and of the fisheries. But with the people of France it was different, and the army officers imbibed revolutionary enthusiasm in their service here, and in their travels after the war, that had important influence in shaping the course of the French Revolution.

Lafayette's part in that struggle is well known. The Lameth brothers who served in Rochambeau's army also won distinction in the French Revolution. Charles sat in the States-General, was instrumental in the arrest of the king, and served as president of the Assembly; Alexander was also an eloquent member of the States-General. Brissot de Warville, whose American travels are well known, became the advocate of French war against Europe and drafted the declaration against England; and Volney, another sojourner here, was a member of Napoleon's senate.

It was natural, therefore, that the more democratic elements in America sympathized with the French in their European struggle that ensued. American politics were profoundly affected by this Old World duel. For nearly a quarter of a century the antagonisms of the friends of France and the friends of England were among the



most important issues that shaped and kept in conflict the Democratic-Republican and Federalist parties.

In these formative years of our nation a portion of the French element in the United States played an important part. French Huguenots, whom Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes had driven out, had scattered themselves among the colonies and now produced notable public men.

Among the leaders of Protestant French descent, in this era, were three presidents of the old Congress, Laurens, Boudinot, and Jay, the last named being also one of our ablest diplomats and first chief justice of the federal Supreme Court; Manigault, who loaned his great fortune to the revolutionary cause in South Carolina; Marion, "the Swamp Fox"; Paul Revere, the "midnight messenger"; Sevier, the dashing Indian fighter, hero of King's Mountain, and governor of the state of Franklin; Faneuil, giver of the "cradle of liberty" to Boston; Freneau, the poet. Statesmen like Bayard, Bowdoin, and Gouverneur Morris (who gave the literary form to the Constitution of the United States) were of Huguenot descent. Perhaps the French blood in our diplomats, Jay, Bayard, and Olney, aided them to cope with European ambassadors. It is not without significance that in the veins of two of our greatest financiers and administrators, Hamilton and Gallatin, flowed French blood. The same French element was inherited by Longfellow and Whittier, Maury, of the signal service, Agassiz, the scientist, Presidents Tyler and Garfield, Chauncy M. Depew, Legare, Bishop Vincent, Gallaudet, and many others of note.

It is significant that the French Huguenots won their influence in our history not by acting as a separate people but by assimilating themselves to American life. They found themselves by losing themselves.

The French element in the United States at the present time embraces various groups. The French of Louisiana include the dwellers in and around the picturesque old capital of New Orleans—exotic among American cities with its French survivals, its dream of past commercial dominion, and its vision of future power; and the simple and ignorant Acadian farmers, continuing the primitive customs of the basin of Grand Pré, along the tranquil waters of the Têsche, remote from the corroding touch of busy modern life. The *métis*, or half-breeds, also survivals of the old French days, are scattered in

considerable numbers through the Northwest, as packmen, boatmen, and lumbermen.

But the most noteworthy French element in the United States at the present time consists in the French Canadians who began about twenty years ago to cross the border into this country. This movement was due in part to the expansive power of this fecund people and in part to the effort of New England mill-owners to bring them as operatives. The result has been to introduce a new strain of French influence into this country. The United States census of 1890 reports 537,000 white persons having either one or both parents born in Canada and Newfoundland of French extraction. Leading French Canadians deny the correctness of this report, and, on the basis of church records, hold that it should be more than doubled.

The French Canadians are found in greatest numbers in the North Atlantic States and the North Central States. As a rule they are grouped in settlements of their own, aiming to preserve their race, language, customs, and religion.

So pronounced has been this tendency to resist assimilation, so rapid the growth of the French families, that some writers have expressed a fanciful apprehension lest these parochial French communities should connect with the Canadian network of French parishes and form a revived New France on the ruins of Anglo-Saxon New England. Recent studies of the increase of the French Canadians, however, seem to show that the check to population produced by heavy infant mortality overcomes their remarkable birth rate,\* and that the tendency to naturalization is increasing. Nor does there seem any evidence that the French leaders desire to do more than to retain their race autonomy in the midst of the American peoples and under American government.

The last United States census also shows here a total population of French having one or both parents born in France amounting to 255,000. If we accept the census report, therefore, the combined French Canadian and French element proper in the United States is nearly 769,000, while Germany, that never had a colony in our territory, shows on the same basis a German element in America of over 6,800,000.

\* Families of twenty children are not considered remarkable among the Canadian French. One of the recent prime ministers of Quebec was the twenty-fourth child of the family.



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