Hand-built Ceramics at 810 Royal and Intercultural Trade in French Colonial New Orleans

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Hand-Built Ceramics at 810 Royal and Intercultural Trade in French Colonial New Orleans

A Thesis

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University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
in
Urban Studies

by

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Abstract

While trade relations between French colonists and indigenous peoples in New Orleans are well documented, there have been few in depth studies utilizing archaeological sites in the city to illuminate the ways in which such relations shaped the day to day lives of the peoples involved. This work has attempted to elucidate trade practices between these groups by utilizing archaeological data uncovered at 810 Royal Street during excavations from 2015 through 2018. A collection of hand-built ceramics typically associated with indigenous peoples found in French colonial contexts on the site may help explicate the nature of trade occurring within the city and the ways in which this trade was reflective of larger patterns of urban colonial adaptation and creolization. This work seeks to illuminate the motivations behind such trade and the ways in which economic motives and individual self-interests drove colonists to undermine the original French designs for the city.

Keywords: New Orleans, hand-built ceramics, creolization, Louisiana, French colonialism, intercultural trade
**Introduction**

When the French began settling in what is now known as New Orleans in the early 18\textsuperscript{th} century, they quickly realized the need to develop alliances and trade relations with indigenous peoples for defense and subsistence. In a harsh foreign climate surrounded by potential enemies in the nearby English and Spanish settlements as well as hostile indigenous groups, the aid of various indigenous peoples was crucial to the survival and prosperity of French settlements. The French relied upon these peoples to bolster their military force, to provide sources of food and export commodities, to build city infrastructure, and to advise them on how to subsist within the brutal climate that engulfed the area.

The increased presence of Europeans in the area in the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries led to an arms race and increased conflict between indigenous groups. Peoples who found themselves the targets of English and Spanish supported aggression frequently sought aid and European weapons and goods through the French. Thus, the French relied upon trading coveted European goods to indigenous peoples in exchange for their own goods and alliances. Further, enterprising individual colonists frequently engaged in this sort of trade for their own personal gain as they were poorly provisioned by the metropole and trade with indigenous peoples proved to be a more sensible source of livelihood than the ill-suited plantation economy originally planned by the French. Though the Native American presence in the city during the founding era is scantily documented, ceramic assemblages recovered from archaeological sites such as 810 Royal Street have revealed that they may have played a larger role in the early phases of the city than previously known.

While it is well documented that Louisiana’s French colonists traded extensively with Native Americans (Usner 1992, Woods 1980), the effects of such trade relations on quotidian
aspects of life in and around the city of New Orleans are not thoroughly documented in the historical record. Archaeology seeks to illuminate these aspects of everyday life through the study of material culture and the physical evidence of the lifeways of these peoples. When the owners of a building complex that had tragically collapsed at 810 Royal Street in the French Quarter provided the University of New Orleans with an opportunity to excavate a site that had been developed since the nascent stages of the city, a rare glimpse into such trade practices and the daily lives of colonists was provided.

Excavations at this site took place from 2015 through 2018 under the direction of Dr. Ryan Gray. The lot was a part of the original city grid drawn up in 1721 and is documented as having been occupied by colonists as early as 1722. Furthermore, as property records have indicated that, a French-Canadian fur-trader named Augustin Langlois, who would have almost certainly had extensive dealings with indigenous peoples, owned the site in the 1730s (Vieux Carre Survey:hnoc.org/vcs). The site yielded an abnormally large assemblage of hand-built ceramics. Though a significant number of sherds were found in later contexts as well, most of these sherds dated to the French colonial era which will be the sole focus of this study. Although there has been some speculation that African slaves and European potters may have produced some of the hand-built pottery found on such sites, such wares in Louisiana are typically associated with indigenous peoples. Markers of the continuation of prehistoric pottery production techniques in the region are omnipresent and the larger assemblages frequently suggest that the pottery came to such sites through trade with indigenous groups (Zych 2013:72; Hall 2005:302; Markell et al., 2013:46). Thus, the discovery of these sherds at 810 Royal provides a glimpse into the sorts of trade and cultural mixing that were occurring between colonists and indigenous peoples in the area.
I have systematically analyzed each hand-built sherd from French colonial contexts, denoting the different types of temper, paste, color, decoration, vessel forms, and vessel portions present. As only a handful of French colonial contexts in New Orleans have been excavated, this analysis can play a vital role in achieving a greater understanding of what the presence of these ceramics means in terms of intercultural trade, urban colonial adaptation, and processes of creolization. The questions that this thesis has sought to address primarily revolve around the motivations and nature of the trade represented by the presence of these ceramics. Why would French colonists be acquiring indigenous-made ceramics when they had ample access to more fashionable European wares? Did this pottery have a functional or symbolic role? Could the pottery present be both symbolic and functional? Do these findings reflect gift-giving or cultural traditions of indigenous peoples in any way? What might the pottery indicate about the motives of indigenous peoples who participated in this trade? Could the pottery be reflective of larger government initiatives encouraging trade with indigenous groups following the catastrophic Natchez Revolt of 1729? How is this pottery and trade reflective of urban colonial adaptations? What can this data reveal about the day to day lives of colonists and indigenous peoples in this area that are not well documented in the historical record?
II. Methodology

The methodology deployed in this thesis involved two primary aspects. This included analysis of the hand-built ceramics yielded from excavation and comparisons of the data yielded from 810 Royal Street to other Colonial era sites around the city in attempt to determine whether any significant patterns or differences exist between the data recovered at 810 Royal and those of sites with similar contexts. To provide historical background and further contextualize the data, this work primarily relied upon secondary sources which focused upon French colonial Louisiana, the Lower Mississippi Valley, and Gulf Coast regions during this period as well as sources focused upon trade relations between French colonists and indigenous peoples and more microscopically the history of French colonial New Orleans and of the archaeological site in question. The works of Shannon Dawdy, Daniel Usner, Patricia Dillon Woods, Lawrence Powell, Gregory Waselkov, Rob Mann, Patricia Key Galloway, Diane Silvia, Bonnie Gums, and Lauren Zych were relied upon most heavily for historical background and archaeological data comparisons.

II. i. Archaeological Investigations

Excavations at 810 Royal Street began in 2015 and lasted through 2018. To begin, shovel tests were conducted throughout the lot to determine stratigraphic integrity and archaeological potential. This was followed by unit excavation in areas that seemed to have research potential (described below). Vertical levels within the units were dug in arbitrary 10-centimeter increments or in natural levels that were determined by soil changes or features. The dirt from each unit was sifted on a ¼ inch mesh screen and all diagnostic artifacts- primarily ceramic,
bone, glass, and metal- bagged for later analysis. Flotation samples, which can reveal smaller artifacts that may fall through the ¼ inch mesh of a normal screen, such as seeds and beads, were taken from each archaeological context. Substantial amounts of architectural debris such as bricks were typically weighed and discarded, with small representative samples being bagged for further analysis at the lab.

In total, nineteen units were excavated from 2015-2018. The artifacts and features uncovered ranged from early French colonial contexts to 20th century American ones. Each unit was excavated down to sterile subsoil and divided into four loci based upon their relation to the site (See Fig. 1 pg. 6). Unit designation was determined by the coordinate location of each unit in relation to the site. The units of primary interest to this study are those associated with the original French colonial occupation and particularly those believed to be associated with the aforementioned French-Canadian fur-trader, Augustin Langlois. These include units in loci 2 and 4, consisting of units N3 W17, N4 W15, N4 W13, N4 W11, N3 W6, N6 W4, and N7 W4. Units N1 W2-3 and N1 W0 of locus 1 also yielded a substantial amount of hand-built ceramics in French colonial levels but were located on the southern portion of the lot which was associated with the neighboring lot at the corner of Royal Street and St. Ann during the French colonial era. Hand-built ceramics from these units will however be incorporated into the study as a valuable source of aggregate data, but with the understanding that they are not connected to the Langlois occupation. Units in locus 3 will be ignored as these did not yield a significant amount of hand-built pottery and primarily consisted of cesspit and trash dump contexts which date to later periods.
II. ii. Analysis

Hand-built ceramics were systematically analyzed by denoting variance in decoration, temper, paste, color, vessel form, and vessel portion. Although most of the sherds were tiny fragments, making vessel identification difficult, a conservative minimum vessel count was deployed to get a sense of how many hand-built wares were recovered. Though Lower Mississippi Valley groups during this time shared many cultural traits and pottery production techniques, in some cases decoration can be used to make a reasonable guess as to which specific indigenous group or nation produced a vessel. Such decorations may also be reflective of symbolic values and social customs, potentially illuminating the nature of trade occurring. Most
of the sherds recovered were shell tempered, which is consistent with indigenous pottery production trends of the region during this time and reflects the continuance of longstanding traditions in this region during the colonial era. There were also a few outlier sand and grog temper sherds and one fiber tempered sherd in the assemblage. Vessel form indicates the functional purpose a vessel may have served, with this assemblage being made up of what appear to be primarily open bowls with a notable number of what are likely jars present as well. Vessel portion indicates whether a sherd was a body, rim, base, or other type of sherd. Though few were recovered at this site, rim and base sherds can be useful in determining the vessel form. The Munsell color system was used to determine color variations in each sherd.

The type-variety system was not utilized to categorize the pottery as there is a great deal of dispute with regards to the accuracy of the established type-varieties for historic contexts (Brown 1998; Phillips 1970). As others have stated, these type-varieties are an unwieldy and potentially inaccurate tool in relation to sites such as this one (Gray et al., 2014:71; Zych 2013:74). Given the substantially increased mobility of indigenous groups during the colonial period resulting from European backed conflicts and slave raids, the amount of diffusion that likely occurred with regards to pottery production techniques makes it extremely difficult to connect specific pottery types to specific groups. Increased contact with European colonists during this period drove many indigenous groups to seek refuge among other societies, leading to frequent absorptions of one group by another and fostering a social fluidity that has made tracing artifacts to any one group especially difficult (Kniffen 1987:50). As Lauren Zych has pointed out, the often used Lower Mississippi Valley type variety system was developed without much data from the lower delta and it is well documented at this stage that historic era ceramics do not always align with prehistoric types as indigenous cultures underwent massive changes
during the contact period and groups became far more mobile than they had been, likely spreading various production techniques (Zych 2014: E-2).

While it is difficult to trace the pottery sherds to any one indigenous group, systematic ceramic analysis and interpretation has been used to illuminate the function and potential social implications of the indigenous produced pottery present on the site as well as the possible motivations the occupants of the lot may have had for acquiring said pottery. This can reveal methods through which colonists adapted to their surroundings in French colonial New Orleans by trading with indigenous people either to acquire goods of necessity or to build beneficial relationships, as well as reveal further the large role that indigenous peoples played within the city.

II. iii. Definitions and Terminology

i. Ceramic Analysis Terms

Assemblage- a pattern of artifacts reflecting the shared activities of a community (Hardy 1998: 22).

Ceramics- objects produced by the transformation of clay through heat into hard and durable products. Ceramics are composed of three basic raw materials: (1) clay, (2) non-plastic inclusions, mineral or organic materials found naturally in clays or deliberately added to them that help make clays more easily workable and also help to limit shrinkage; and (3) water, added to the clays and inclusions to make them plastic and lost during vessel drying and firing. Other raw materials are also involved in ceramic production: pigments or coloring agents used in vessel decoration and the fuels used in firing vessels (Sinopoli 1991:9).
Minimum Vessel Count- the minimum number of vessels represented in the assemblage for a site (Hardy 1998:22).

Vessel Form- The type of ceramic vessel, i.e. jar, bowl, or bottle.

Type-Variety System- An established categorization system which is intended to connect pottery to specific cultures.

Munsell Color System- The standard color system used in archaeology to determine soil color variation which is also used to analyze pottery color variation.

Hand-Built Ceramics- A ceramic production technique that predominated in Native American pottery production before and during the colonial era, as opposed to the wheel-thrown pottery production technique used by most Europeans.

Coiling- The hand-built production technique most germane to this work, which involves the potter shaping prepared clay into long narrow coils by rolling it against a hard surface or squeezing it between her or his fingers. The coils can be used to form a base or can be added on to a base formed by another technique. The walls of the vessel are gradually built up by successively adding on more coils (Sinopoli 1991:17).

Paste- the material from which ceramics are made; the total composition of clays and minerals which makes up a ceramic body (Hardy 1998: 19).

Surface Treatment: the way the surface of the vessel is treated, covered or glazed (Hardy 1998: 19).

Decoration: the methods, colors, and motifs used to adorn a vessel (Hardy 1998:19).
Temper- nonclay particles added to clays to improve its workability and responses to firing and conditions of use and reduce shrinkage, such as organic materials, rock fragments, sand, and shell (Sinopoli 1991:12). Tempering materials relevant to this study are shell, sand, grog, and fiber.

Shell Temper- Crushed up bits of shell added to clay before firing. This was the most common temper type among indigenous peoples who the French interacted with in the Lower Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast regions.

Sand Temper- sand added to clay before firing, recognizable by its gritty, sandpaper texture.

Grog Temper- small fragments of fired ceramic vessel added to clay before firing (Sinopoli 1991:12).

Fiber Temper- fibers such as palmetto leaves and Spanish moss added to clay before firing.

Red Film- A pottery decoration created by dipping dry leather hard pots into pigmented clay slurry before firing (Waselkov and Gums 2000:131). This decoration became increasingly common among Native American potters during the 18th century and is frequently found on southeastern colonial sites related to indigenous and colonial interaction.

Burnishing- a pottery decoration technique in which a hard tool, often a stone or a broken and smothered potsherd, is rubbed against the surface of the pot in order conceal irregularities on the vessel’s surface and to alter the vessel’s appearance (Sinopoli 1991: 25).

Incised- A Native American pottery decoration in which patterns are incised into vessels with a pointed tool (Sinopoli 1991:26).
**Perforating** - an incised decoration in which portions of the vessel are cut away and the wall of the vessel is perforated (Sinopoli 1991:26).

**Impressed** - a Native American pottery decoration in which a tool is pressed into the soft clay of the vessel wall, often forming a continuous patterned design (Sinopoli 1991:26).

**Punctated** - A Native American pottery decoration in which punctations are imprinted upon the pottery.

**ii. Cultural terms**

**Creolization** - In this work creolization is used to refer to the process of intercultural mixing that occurred between European colonists, Africans, and indigenous peoples in the Americas.

**Creole** - Here the word ‘Creole’ is used merely to refer to French colonists born in French Louisiana.
III. Historical Background

III. i. The Founding of New Orleans: French Designs and Colonist Adaptations

In 1717 John Law’s Company of the West took over proprietorship of the fledgling colony of Louisiana, hoping to make the colony central to the resuscitation of France’s struggling economy. In agreement with Governor Bienville that an agricultural settlement was needed along the fertile soil of the Mississippi River to make Louisiana a profitable colony, the Company of the West declared that a principal city to be named after Philippe, the Duc d’Orleans was to be founded somewhere on the lower portion of the Mississippi in 1717. Bienville led construction of a city at the site of the modern-day French Quarter in 1718, though he faced considerable opposition from those who wanted the principal city near modern day Natchez or Baton Rouge. Bienville’s primary reasoning for his site choice selected appears to have been the benefits provided by Bayou St. John and a portage revealed to French explorers by indigenous peoples, which virtually connected the Mississippi to what is now known as Lake Pontchartrain. This allowed for easier entry from the Gulf via the lake rather than ascending the violent river (Powell 2012: 40-57).

As his critics pointed out, the natural conditions of the site chosen by Bienville were incredibly harsh. The principal disadvantage of this area in comparison to the others proposed was its vulnerability to flooding. When a massive flood destroyed what little had been built up in 1719 most were ready to abandon the site and accept that Bienville had made a poor choice. However, Bienville took advantage of an economic collapse in 1720 which came to be known as the bursting of the Mississippi Bubble by appealing to starving colonists elsewhere who had been abandoned by the metropole. To entice them he used his position as Commandant-General to offer them land and slaves. Despite considerable opposition and brutally harsh conditions, New
Orleans had become the most densely populated French settlement along the lower Mississippi River by 1721, lending Bienville the clout he needed to continue developing his city. Impressed by engineer Adrien de Pauger’s designs for the city, France officially declared New Orleans the capital of Louisiana in December of 1721 (Powell 2012:40-57).

New Orleans was intended by its planners to be representative of the Enlightened Absolutism of Louis XIV and adherent to a rigid hierarchy and class structure which above all else deferred to the Crown. Furthermore, the colony was intended to be run on mercantilist principles in which the enrichment of the metropole took priority in its economy. A metropolis was considered a crucial part of asserting imperial authority in a region and French planners would come to view New Orleans as a social laboratory in which they could experiment with ideas for an improved French city reflective of Enlightened Absolutism. Planners wanted trade to be restricted to dealing with and enriching the metropole, to wall off the town from the surrounding wilderness and peoples, and for the city to be exclusively white (Powell 2012:60-65). Their ideal hierarchy would be reflected in the physical layout of the city itself and class-based land concessions. Additionally, the French originally planned for the colony’s economy to be driven by agricultural export commodities. However, due to more pertinent concerns and desires of the region’s inhabitants in addition to administrative neglect by the metropole, none of these designs would be truly upheld.

While the city was intended to be a company town in which all foreign trade was to go through Law’s Company of the West and benefit the metropole, citizens frequently flouted these regulations in pursuit of their own interests. As the Company charged colonists exorbitant prices for goods and taxed trade heavily, smugglers and improvisational citizens trying to survive and prosper in a difficult environment derailed these plans quickly. Provisions from the metropole
had been scant from the time of the city’s founding, and when the Mississippi Bubble burst and left colonists with even less in the way of provisions, illicit trade increased further. Additionally, colonists quickly realized that they did not have the funding, manpower, or suitable conditions in which to produce surplus agricultural commodities and often turned to illicit trade with nearby colonies and indigenous groups as an alternative source of livelihood. New Orleans quickly developed a reputation as a failed city of debauchery and squalor, discouraging further immigration and investment from France (Powell 2012: 60-128; Usner 1992: 41-42).

Though the original designs for the city included walls which were meant to project power to indigenous peoples and prevent young people from being seduced by the lifestyles of both the indigenous and the illicit *coureur des bois* (French-Canadian fur trappers), these walls were never built until the end of the French era. Further, all African slaves were intended to be housed outside of this ideal white city. As the metropole failed to support the residents of the city non-whites came to play an even more crucial role in its economy via trade and utilization of skills developed in natural conditions that the colonists were not accustomed to. This involved indigenous peoples and Africans playing vital roles in food cultivation, boatmaking, seafaring, infrastructure development, skilled labor, and trade among other aspects of society. Like many French plans for New Orleans, these segregationist and monopolistic designs for the city did not achieve the desired effect as black-market dealings, illicit operations, racial mixing, and a blurring of class lines would quickly become prominent elements of the town (Powell 2012: 60-91). A frequent blurring of the racial delineations laid out by the French ruling class led to what has become referred to as the “creolization” of New Orleans’ lifeways and culture. Peoples of three different continents interacted regularly and combined various cultural traditions to form
distinctly New World lifeways in response to the conditions they were faced with in this environment.

Informal trade with indigenous peoples and illicit dealings with nearby colonies would help create a more stable society in the city by the late 1720s after its early years of poverty, famine, and horrific mortality rates. The trade opportunities provided by the location of the city and its porous boundaries allowed colonists easy access to illicit goods from the North American interior as well as the Caribbean. This provided many colonists with a more practical source of livelihood than the plantation-based economy which the French originally planned to implement. Indigenous peoples in the area would play a crucial role in the vital informal markets that Daniel Usner has dubbed the “Frontier Exchange Economy” during the French era of the city.

III. ii. The Frontier Exchange Economy

Indigenous peoples played a substantial role in New Orleans’ economy from the city’s earliest stages as colonists largely depended on their aid. In a foreign and an extremely harsh climate surrounded by potential enemies, the French needed the advice and support of indigenous peoples to survive. Though archaeologists have had a notoriously difficult time connecting protohistoric archaeological data to historic groups it is highly likely that the groups the French were interacting with were the immediate descendants of the Plaquemine peoples, whose populations had been drastically reduced due to European diseases by the time the French established Louisiana (Dawdy et al., 2008:10). It is estimated that by 1700 there were around 70,000 indigenous people living in the region which was far less than there had been before the De Soto expedition of 1540 but still far outnumbered European colonists in the area (Usner
Thus, indigenous alliances could determine the success or failure of colonial settlements and conflicts.

The key to building alliances with indigenous peoples during this time was typically providing them with valuable European goods. Knowing that they could not defend Louisiana’s settlements from larger hostile nations or the English should they decide to attack, the French set about building alliances with indigenous groups through trade. The French frequently settled near indigenous tribes to foster trade and many indigenous groups likewise migrated to be closer to French settlements in search of European goods and alliances. Many indigenous peoples relished the opportunity to acquire French imports, especially considering their rivals had often been armed with guns by the English and not acquiring European goods could mean falling behind in the arms race for regional supremacy. The French also provided indigenous peoples with clothing, metal cooking wares, axes, knives, glass beads, and hoes among other goods, sparking somewhat of a technological revolution among groups who began relying more heavily upon iron. (Woods 1980:36). Deerskins quickly became the colony’s primary export commodity and numerous outposts were developed along waterways to facilitate its acquisition which led to more frequent interactions between European merchants and indigenous peoples (Usner 1992:27-28).

French strategies of alliance-building varied, as in some cases they brokered peace deals between groups and in others fostered divisions and encouraged attacks in the hopes of reinforcing dependencies. Indigenous groups often used European rivalries as leverage in trade negotiations and would trade with various colonies simultaneously. Knowing that they could not appease every major group and that they did not have the ample supply of trade goods that the English did, the French often sought to foster tension between its allies and those who dealt most
extensively with the English as a way of strengthening dependence by certain groups upon the French for European goods (Daniel Usner 1992; Patricia Dillon Woods 1980). Europeans also frequently enslaved indigenous peoples during this time, causing various groups to begin capturing and selling members of other indigenous groups to colonists and increasing conflict in the area between indigenous groups and colonists. In one instance, the Chitimacha attacked the French in retaliation for the enslavement of its people and the French responded by decimating a Chitimacha village (Usner 1992:17-24). The largest English backed group in the area was the Chickasaw while their rivals, the Choctaw, allied with the French in response and played a substantial role in Louisiana’s fur trade and military exploits and became a primary source of food for the first wave of French settlers (Woods 1980:9-10).

Though private individual trade with foreign peoples was technically illegal for much of the early French colonial period, many colonists turned to illicit dealings with indigenous peoples in response to the exorbitant prices for goods and taxes charged by the colony’s proprietors. Colonists regularly acquired foodstuffs, furs, meats, and bear grease among other goods from indigenous peoples, often exchanging them with nearby Spanish settlers for other goods such as wine and wheat (Usner 1992:27-28). When an earlier proprietor named Antoine Crozat outlawed foreign trade and marked up prices on merchandise, many colonists were forced into black market dealings outside of the Crozat monopoly as a source of livelihood. When John Law took over in 1717 and transported 7000 Europeans and 2000 Africans to the colony over the next four years, settler dependence on indigenous food sources and illicit dealings only increased, as there were not nearly enough provisions from France to feed this booming population and many were dying of starvation (Usner 1992:27-28, 33-36; Ingersoll 2005:58).
While the metropole and original planners of the colony desired for an agricultural export economy to take hold in Louisiana, colonists found that black market dealings with foreign peoples were far more suited to their interests, as the conditions of the colony were ill-suited for surplus agricultural production. In 1716, General Commissioner Marc-Antoine Hubert predicted that the colonists would never transition into large-scale agricultural production, saying the colonists “will never be satisfied with this infallible resource, accustomed as they are to the trade with the Indians the easy profit from which supports them, giving them what they need day by day like the Indians who find their happiness in an idle and lazy life.” Many of those who were transported during the wave of mass immigration were forced emigres who had been smugglers and vagrants accustomed to nomadic lifestyles in France and continued their wayfaring habits in Louisiana by traveling and peddling goods with indigenous peoples to make a living. Describing such trade practices, one official in 1724 noted that many common people in New Orleans “were engaged in a commerce detrimental to the Colony and even to the interests of the Company.” Merchants frequently took the goods delivered by French ships and resold them at higher prices in their own personal trade networks. Further, enterprising Frenchmen would routinely borrow from wealthy colonists to fund trading ventures with indigenous peoples, bringing back a surplus of furs and produce as repayment (Usner 1992:40-43). By 1720 colonists had established additional trade networks in the Natchez region, along the Yazoo River, and with Caddoan peoples to the northwest (Usner 1992: 28-31).

In 1725 the Company attempted to curtail illicit trade with foreign peoples, further restricting trade permits as it believed the livelihoods provided by this sort of trade were draining the city of a potential labor force (Usner 1992: 42). With the arrival of more African slaves in the 1720s, tensions between the elite and common colonists were somewhat reduced and the French
felt that they might finally be able to kickstart a plantation centric economy. But this system still ran contrary to the interests of most colonists and indigenous peoples who found their previously established trade patterns to be highly beneficial, and never fully took hold during the French era (Usner 1992:43). When the colony’s most successful tobacco production operation disastrously fell apart, plans for such an economy would be virtually abandoned until the Spanish era.

Louisiana’s most successful attempt at producing an agricultural crop for export during the 1720s occurred in the way of tobacco cultivation in the Natchez region. The French established a fort in the region in 1716 and steadily increased their presence in the area during the subsequent decade (Usner 1992:66). Their encroachment and influence in the area led to various smaller conflicts that were largely outweighed by beneficial trade relations until the Natchez Revolt of 1729, which had a massive ripple effect on the colony. In response to unreasonable demands made by a tyrannical post commandant, the Natchez killed at least 200 settlers, virtually wiping out the French population in the area. This led to a distrust of indigenous peoples throughout Louisiana and a fear of a unified indigenous and slave uprising against the colonists. Further, it led to the French launching multiple costly and unsuccessful wars against the Natchez as well as the Chickasaw who provided their enemies refuge. (Usner 1992:65-76; Powell 2012:76-77, 83-87, 93-95, 102). Investment from the metropole effectively came to a halt after the attack and the Company of the Indies retroceded its proprietorship of the colony back to the Crown soon after, believing that gaining a profit from Louisiana was now hopeless. With the Company and the metropole essentially leaving colonists to fend for themselves, informal localized trade markets with indigenous peoples and the smuggling of goods from other colonies continued to grow in prominence in New Orleans’ economy.
In 1731 the Crown mandated that trade with indigenous peoples was to be opened to all people, forbidding exclusive trade licenses and making various efforts to improve trade relations with indigenous groups in response to the negative impacts of the Natchez Revolt. Later governors and post commandants would however ignore these mandates and manipulate trade regulations for profiteering purposes (Woods 1980:111). As the archaeological record and recent works on this era seem to indicate, the second generation of ‘Creole’ colonists who were born in the colony and began to come of age during this time seemed to embrace localized lifeways more wholly than their predecessors, who more often tried to replicate the lifestyles they were familiar with in Europe. For example, faunal remains found in contexts believed to be associated with this period have suggested that the Creole generation incorporated indigenous foods far more than the first generation of settlers (Dawdy 2008; Dawdy 2000; Scott and Dawdy 2011). These intercultural trade practices would continue to play a major role in the city’s economy, only declining significantly when the Spanish were finally able to transform Louisiana’s economy into a plantation based one near the end of the 18th century. As archaeological data has frequently displayed, enterprising colonists who were poorly provisioned by the metropole often adapted to their surroundings in New Orleans by participating in intercultural trade networks which often undermined the original designs laid out by the French ruling class.

Such trade relations with the French transformed indigenous societies substantially, sparking new conflicts, migrations, technological revolutions, and massive changes in lifeways and economies as they adapted to the presence of Europeans. Many indigenous peoples made livings as hunters for colonists and many frequented New Orleans to sell their baskets, herbs, foodstuffs, and as archaeology seems to indicate, their pottery. By the 1720s there were nearly twenty different petites nations surrounding New Orleans, Mobile, and other French settlements,
playing large roles in the economies of each. Many groups were driven down towards these areas by English-backed raids on their settlements. Groups such as the Chaouacha, Bayogoula, Houma, Acolapissa, Tunica, and Chitimacha were in the immediate vicinity of New Orleans and frequently participated in its economy, supplying meat, corn, and deerskins among other goods (Usner 1992:60-63).

Despite occasional mentions of their role in everyday aspects of life in New Orleans, there is scant official documentation of the indigenous presence in the city. As Jennifer Spear has pointed out, indigenous peoples frequently took advantage of pervious city boundaries to participate in this trade but were inconsistently documented, allowing them to carry on their activities in a way that was “camouflaged from official gaze,” and virtually left out of the historical record (Spear 2009:157). Thus, archaeological studies of the material evidence left behind by these interactions have a vital role to play in understanding the extent of their influence upon the city and the ways in which they adapted to the increased presence of the French.
IV. History of the Site

The lot was part of the original city grid shown on the Le Blond de la Tour map of 1722 and is documented as having been occupied by colonists since as early as 1722. This map has the site labeled as lot number 83, showing two buildings within the lot, most likely a pioneer hut or cabin with an outbuilding (See Fig. 2 pg. 23). The building in the rear makes up a portion of the site excavated. The 1731 map drawn up by Gonichon has the 808-810 Royal lot labelled as number 84 with only one structure on the property (See Fig. 3 pg. 24).
Figure 2: Le Blond de la Tour Map of 1722. Lot #83 includes the modern-day archaeological site.
Originally the plot was allocated to Francois Fiot, and by 1731 it was owned by a French-Canadian fur trader named Augustin Langlois. As noted by Erin Greenwald, Royal Street served as the dividing line between upper-class and lower-class residents of the city during the French era and featured occupants of a variety of backgrounds, including a former king’s commissioner and workshops of coopers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths as well as two inns and two of the town’s three barracks (Greenwald 2018:52). It is also documented that Langlois owned at least one slave and at least one other property along Bayou Road. Units N4 W1 and N4 W2 yielded data that could be indicative of slave-quarters but these have been left out of this analysis because these units consisted of unique deposits in relation to the rest of the site.
The property was later purported to be occupied by a Spanish administrator named Juan Ventura Morales. Although no legal documents mention him, Morales’ name appeared associated with the property on maps at the time. Records show that in 1784 it was purchased by Antonio Boudousquier. Whatever buildings remained at the site were destroyed in 1788 during the Good Friday fire that burned down most of the city. Following the fire, Boudousquier sold the property to Don Manuel de Lanzos, who also famously owned the nearby Madame John’s Legacy property and used the same builder to construct a new structure at 810 Royal Street (Vieux Carre Survey:hnoc.org/vcs).

Sometime between 1731 and 1788 the property lines of the lot shifted, though it is not clear why. At some point 20 inches were added onto the neighboring lot at the corner of St. Ann and Royal Street, cutting into the lot originally designated as #84 on the Gonichon map. In 1801 new owner Don Francisco Balthazar Languille built a new complex of structures on the lot, with the primary three story building constructed having remained until its collapse in 2014 (Vieux Carre Survey:hnoc.org/vcs). The period this thesis is most interested in is that associated with Fiot and Langlois in the early French colonial era. Though not much is known about Fiot, Langlois is of particular interest as French-Canadian fur traders had a history of extensive travel and trade relations with indigenous peoples. It is highly possible if not probable that the bulk of the hand-built ceramics recovered are associated with Langlois, given the amount of trade related items found in contexts believed to be associated with his ownership of the lot.
V. Archaeological Investigations and Ceramic Analysis

Excavations at 810 Royal Street were carried out by teams from the University of New Orleans led by Dr. Ryan Gray from 2015-2018. 1x1 and 1x2 meter units were used where suitable, though in some instances utility obstructions and architectural features altered unit dimensions and some were enlarged and some contracted during fieldwork. Levels were dug in ten-centimeter increments or until there was a noticeable stratigraphic change in the soil or a feature was uncovered. Each unit was taken down to sterile subsoil, profiled, and photographed. Overall 19 units were excavated, with lot and context numbers being assigned to artifacts. The soil was sifted on ¼ inch mesh screens with all diagnostic and curatable artifacts being bagged for later lab processing. Bricks, rubble, mortar, bousillage, shell, and other non-curatable architectural materials were generally weighed and tossed aside, with small amounts of representative samples being saved for lab processing in some instances. Flotation samples were taken from each context. Units were labeled according to their orientation in correspondence with the southeast corner of the lot, which was designated the zero point with Dumaine Street as grid north. Elevations were measured in relation to a datum which was located based on the unit’s orientation in relation to the zero point, with the datum string typically being ten centimeters above ground-surface. Excavation was done using primarily trowels, though shovels were used for levels which contained excessive amounts of clayey soil.

This thesis has focused on those units and contexts which yielded hand-built ceramics associated with French colonial occupation and likely the occupation of Augustin Langlois specifically, units N3 W17, N4 W15, N4 W13, N4 W11, N3 W6, N7 W4, and N6 W4. Units N1 W0 and N1 W2-3 were associated with the neighboring lot at the corner of St. Ann and Royal Street during the French colonial era but yielded a significant amount of hand-built sherds in
French levels and will be analyzed here for their value as an aggregate data source. In addition to historical knowledge of the site, the presence of French-made faience and the diminishing presence or absence of English creamware have been used as the most general determinants for which contexts constitute French colonial era occupation, as these serve as temporal archaeological markers at sites throughout the city. The lot was divided into four loci based on stratigraphic similarities inside the units. Locus 3 has been excluded as it was made up primarily of a post-French level cesspit and a trash dump and is not pertinent the interests of this study. N3 W6 was originally assigned to locus 4 but has been changed to locus 2 for this study as its French colonial levels share more in common with the stratigraphy of N3 W17, N4 W15, N4 W13, and N4 W11.

Locus 1: N1 W0, N1 W2-3

Locus 1 was located in the southeastern portion of the lot and provided evidence of early building foundations. This locus included units N1 W0, N1 W2-3, N4 W1, and N4 W2 although the latter two units were excluded from analysis as a specialized type of deposit given their potential association with a slave during the French period. Though the possibility that some of the hand-built ceramics were produced by the slave should be noted it is highly unlikely given that the types align with traditional indigenous pottery throughout the region which predated the presence of Europeans and Africans, and the variety of types present suggests that the pottery came from multiple sources. N1 W0 and N1 W2-3 were also associated with the neighboring corner lot during the French era, thus provide slightly different contexts than the rest of the site and are not related to Augustin Langlois. However, these units, especially N1 W0, yielded a significant amount of hand-built pottery in French colonial contexts and thus provide valuable
information in the aggregate with regards to French and indigenous interaction at the time and indigenous made ceramics within colonial households.

In total these units yielded 64 hand-built ceramic sherds within French colonial contexts, making up 13% of the overall ceramic assemblage in this component, which was a notably smaller proportion than the other loci. The sherds were predominantly undecorated, as only 21% were adorned with decoration. This was significantly less than the amount of decorated sherds within loci 2 and 4, suggesting further the ties of those assemblages to Langlois’ extensive trade networks. Nine of the decorated sherds were incised while three were red-filmed and one was incised and burnished. Of the diagnostic vessel forms, open bowls were the most prevalent. There were 4 sand-tempered sherds while the other 60 sherds were shell tempered (See Tables 1-4 pg. 62). The most common colors were dark gray and pale brown, while smaller amounts of reddish brown and red sherds were also present. Two sand tempered sherds of a restricted orifice vessel were recovered in N1 W2-3, a singular occurrence on the site. The smaller amount of hand-built sherds along with the smaller proportion of hand-built to European sherds and the lesser amount of decoration present in this locus compared to the other two lend credence to the notion that the pottery found in French contexts in the other loci were predominantly connected to Langlois’ likely extensive trade networks.
Figure 4: N1 W0 Context 45
Figure 5: Sand Tempered restricted orifice vessel from Unit N1 W2-3
Figure 6: Incised (Leland?) rim sherd from Unit N1 W2-3
Figure 7: Incised (Leland?) rim sherd from N1 W2-3.
Figure 8: Red film sherds from N1 W0
Figure 9: Incised sherd from N1 W0. (Anna Incised?)
Locus 2: N3 W17, N4 W11, N4 W13, N4 W15, N3 W6

Locus 2 consisted of the units closest to the street-front and provided an opportunity to excavate areas adjacent the main buildings on the lot during the colonial era. The archaeological contexts within these units dated back to the French era and yielded a considerable amount of hand-built ceramics. N3 W6 was originally assigned to locus 4 but its French colonial levels share more in common with the western units in locus 2, thus it has been included here instead. These units had generally comparable and undisturbed stratigraphy, making them a useful lens
into French occupation of the lot. Though unit N1 W16 also yielded hand-built ceramics, this portion of the lot was originally associated with the corner lot and none of these sherds recovered dated to the French era, thus this unit will be ignored here. This locus had the highest occurrence of decorated hand-built sherds in French levels, with 49% of the 149 hand-built sherds in these contexts containing adornments. Unit N4 W11 is largely responsible for this, as decorated sherds within this unit accounted for 64% of the 73 hand-built sherds in its French colonial contexts. 75% of the decorated sherds within this locus were incised, while 21% were red-filmed, 3% were both incised and punctated, and 1 sherd was incised and cross-hatched.

Figure 11: Unit N3 W17

In total 52 hand-built vessels were noted using a conservative minimum vessel count. The 149 hand-built sherds found in French colonial contexts accounted for 23% of the 649 ceramic sherds recovered from French contexts in these units. Though most of the sherds were too small
to determine vessel form, most of these vessels were likely open bowls, and at least two jars were present. 2 sand temper sherds were present, as were 1 grog tempered sherd and 1 rare fiber temper sherd, while the other 145 hand-built ceramics were all shell tempered (See Tables 1-4 pg. 62). Colors consisted of predominantly pale brown, grayish brown, and dark gray with small amounts of reddish brown and yellow-brown sherds present.

Figure 12: N4 W13 Context 50
Figure 13: Red Film Bowl sherds from N4 W11
Figure 14: Incised open vessel sherds including rim from N4 W11
Figure 15: Incised and Punctated sherd from N3 W17 (Owens Punctated?)
Figure 16: Incised sherd from N4 W15 Context 99
Locus 4: Units N6 W4, N7 W4

Locus 4 was located in the north-central portion of the lot and provided insight into historic building foundations on the lot. N6 W4 and N7 W4 abut the northern border of the lot and are associated with the building which occupied the site during Langlois’ period of ownership. These units, perhaps unsurprisingly, contained the highest density of hand-built ceramics on the site. In addition to the hand-built ceramics recovered, other items indicative of trade including a lead bailing seal, a French colonial coin, and beads were recovered from these units.
Overall 171 hand-built sherds were recovered from units N6 W4 and N7W4, making up 21% of the 810 ceramics present in French colonial levels. There were four sand tempered sherds present while the other 167 were all shell tempered. 40% of the sherds were decorated, with incised being the most prevalent, making up 64% of the decorations present. Red filmed sherds made up 29% of the decorations, while 4 incised and burnished sherds and 1 punctated sherd were also present (See Tables 1-4 pg. 62).
VI. Similar Sites in New Orleans

This section provides a brief summary of three other archaeological assemblages throughout the French Quarter that included substantial amounts of hand-built ceramics believed to be of indigenous origin within French colonial contexts. These include 400 Chartres Street (Site number: 16OR467), St. Anthony’s Garden (16OR443), and the Ursulines Convent (16OR49). Each of these included many of the same types found at 810 Royal Street, perhaps revealing valuable patterns to be parsed out of the datasets.

400 Chartres Street (16OR467)

400 Chartres Street is a French Quarter site which was excavated in 2008 by the Greater New Orleans Archaeology Program and Earth Search, Inc. Excavations revealed a series of private household contexts dating back to the early French colonial era of the city. The site was originally part of a lot assigned to a French military officer named Francois Phillippe De Hautmesnil de Mandeville, Sieur de Marigny in 1722, who traveled throughout Louisiana extensively for his various military assignments and as a trapper and trader. When he passed away in 1728 his widow married Ignace Broutin, a royal engineer who similarly traveled around the colony for his work. It is possible if not likely that many of these hand-built sherds are tied to the relations these men forged with indigenous peoples while traveling and living at various outposts throughout Louisiana. It is however worth noting that four French boarders, two enslaved Africans, and one Native American slave each lived in this household at some point during the French period and it is possible their presence contributed to the diversity of hand-built pottery found on site. In total 245 hand-built sherds were recovered from the site and 169 of
these were found in French colonial contexts which made up 18% of all ceramics within French contexts (Zych 2013:87-91).

As throughout the city, the sherds were predominantly shell tempered, making up 76% of French colonial era hand-built ceramics. There was however a larger portion of grog/clay tempered sherds present than at 810 Royal Street, making up 17% of the hand-built ceramics in French colonial contexts. Additionally, 7% of the sherds were sand tempered, which is slightly more than the proportion which was documented at 810 Royal Street. Similar to the dataset from 810 Royal, there was a good degree of diversity in terms of decorations and surface treatments. 30% of the hand-built sherds in French colonial contexts were decorated, with red film being the most common as it was present on 15% of hand-built sherds in French levels, while incised motifs were present on 9% of these sherds. There was also a miniscule presence of perforated, complicated stamped, punctation, engraving, and fabric impressed decorations, which are rare in New Orleans’ contexts and suggest a variety of sources for the pottery. Supporting this theory is the use of neutron activation analysis on a number of the sherds, which suggested that most of the pottery present was imported rather than locally made (Zych 2013:87-91). Like the 810 Royal French era assemblage, it has been suggested by Lauren Zych that most of these sherds belonged to simple bowls. The diversity of decoration types and the foreign nature of the sherds makes this site particularly interesting in comparison to similar ones throughout the city.

St. Anthony’s Garden (16OR443)

St. Anthony’s Garden was excavated from 2008 through 2009 by a team led by Dr. Shannon Lee Dawdy. Excavation revealed contexts dating to the earliest phases of the city and included the remains of a French-era palmetto hut which is claimed by Dawdy to be the oldest
known Colonial structure in New Orleans. The garden was located behind the church and religious center of the city and archaeological data suggests that the area was used as an informal trade market where one could purchase goods produced all over the world. In total 225 hand-built ceramics were recovered, while 90 were recovered in French colonial contexts, making up 17% of the total amount of ceramics found in French contexts. Further supporting the theory that this was once a trade hub during the French colonial era is the finding of various other items associated with indigenous trade in these contexts, including glass beads and hide processing equipment suggesting ties to the deerskin trade and a lead baling seal, an item used to secure French goods for export (Zych 2013:75-87).

As in other French colonial contexts in New Orleans, shell tempering dominated the assemblage, with 76% of the hand-built sherds in French levels being shell tempered, while 7% were clay/grog tempered, 4% were grit tempered, 4% were sand tempered, and the rest reported as unidentified. This site was extremely unique in that decorated hand-built sherds outnumbered undecorated ones, with 70% of the hand-built sherds being decorated. Red film was present on 64% of the hand-built sherds, with small amounts of incised, crosshatching, and engraved decorations present as well. As with other datasets of this sort, the sherds recovered were often too small to reach a definite conclusion with regards to vessel form, but it is believed that the assemblage is made up primarily of simple bowls (Zych 2013:83). According to neutron activation analysis performed, an unusually high proportion of these sherds were imported rather than locally produced, with results indicating that sherds produced as far away as Alabama and either Mexico or the Caribbean were present (Zych 2013:84). Comparisons with data from nearby regions revealed that some of the sherds came from the east, with signatures consistent with ceramics from the Tombigbee River and Mobile Bay (Zych 2013:82-84). The archeological
data suggests that the site served as an informal marketplace where people could purchase French, Native American, African, Mexican, and possibly Caribbean products in the early French colonial period (Zych 2013:100; Dawdy 2018: 129).

**Ursulines Convent (16OR49)**

Excavations at the Ursulines Convent in the French Quarter were carried out in 2011 by a team from the University of Chicago. The Convent is the oldest building in the city, having been erected in between 1749 and 1753, and famously housed nuns of the Ursulines order along with their students, Native American refugees, orphans, widows, abused wives, single mothers, and patients for whom the nuns provided healthcare. 121 hand-built ceramics made up 58% of all ceramics found within French colonial levels at the site, which is an abnormally high proportion in comparison to similar sites. As noted by Zych, the unique makeup of this collection of sherds may be linked to its association with early land-clearing episodes in the 1720s and 1730s. 96% of these hand-built sherds were shell tempered, while the other 4% were clay/grog tempered. 61% of the sherds were undecorated while 38% contained incised decorative motifs and 1 roughened sherd was present. Lauren Zych’s utilization of neutron activation analysis indicates that, unlike most New Orleans sites, the hand-built ceramics at Ursulines Convent were primarily locally made. This perhaps suggests a high degree of dependence on indigenous peoples during the early land-clearing phases of the city or that indigenous women who lived in the convent produced the pottery themselves (Zych 2013:96-98).

This site was notable for the uncommon homogeneity of the hand-built ceramic assemblage and the seemingly locally produced nature of the sherds. Unlike the other sites
mentioned there were no red filmed sherds present, which were quite prominent elsewhere in the city. Further, there was a stark drop-off in hand-made ceramics after the early French colonial period at this site, perhaps suggesting an initial dependence on indigenous peoples which waned over time (Zych 2013: 91-100).

Summary

Though indigenous peoples’ impact on quotidian aspects of French colonial life in New Orleans is not well documented, archaeological data recovered throughout the city has repeatedly illuminated their role in the city and the frequent exchanges they had with colonists. The sites described in the previous section have various similarities between them as well as unique qualities. While combining these datasets to reveal larger patterns is useful, the idiosyncratic aspects of each suggests each site deserves to be treated as an individual context as well. St. Anthony’s Garden excavations revealed what appeared to be an informal trade market in the city during the French period, atypically consisting primarily of decorated rather than undecorated sherds and seemingly containing a high proportion of imported sherds. Meanwhile, the Ursulines Convent assemblage has proven to be the only site in the French Quarter in which hand-built sherds outnumbered European ones within French contexts and consisted of almost exclusively locally made sherds. The French colonial assemblage recovered here seems to suggest a higher dependence upon local indigenous goods by the early occupants of the site.

The assemblage at 400 Chartres Street shares the most in common with 810 Royal Street, as it was also occupied by French men who traveled extensively and likely forged far-reaching trade networks with various indigenous peoples. The two French era assemblages yielded similar
proportions of decorated vs undecorated sherds and European vs hand-built sherds and also shared a similar range of decorations. Incised and red film were the most numerous adornments on both sites and less common decorations such as punctation were also present. The unusual variety present at both sites lends credence to the idea that these sherds were associated with Langlois, Mandeville, and Broutin’s likely trade networks forged during their travels.

The main similarities that these sites share are the dominance of shell tempering present throughout and the strong presence of red film sherds, with the exception of the Ursulines Convent where red film was curiously absent. Though vessel form was largely indeterminate at each site due to the small nature of the sherds and the preponderance of body sherds as opposed to rim or base sherds, it appears that open bowl forms were the most prevalent at each, with a notable presence of jars as well. 400 Chartres and 810 Royal Street seem to best highlight small-scale trade practices of enterprising and well-traveled colonists with indigenous peoples.
VII. Interpretations and Conclusion

The data from French levels at 810 Royal Street further illustrates the large role that indigenous peoples played within the city during its early phases. Given that their presence within the city is scantly documented in the historical record, material evidence amassed through archaeology has a critical role to play in better understanding their presence in the area as well as quotidian interactions between indigenous peoples and French colonists which further reveal patterns of adaptation and the creation of a “creolized” culture. The central issue which this work seeks to address is determining the motivation behind the acquisition of Native-produced hand-built pottery by colonists in the city. Analysis of these artifacts can help understand what drove this trade and how this pottery is indicative of smaller scale interactions between the city’s colonists and indigenous peoples in the area as well as processes of creolization. Were the colonists merely lacking European made ceramic vessels? Were these vessels acquired because they were better suited to food preparation methods which incorporated traditional indigenous foods and cooking styles? Are the vessels reflective of intermarriage between male colonists and indigenous women, as Kathleen Deagan has suggested? Were these vessels perhaps used to transport more valuable commodities, such as bear grease or hickory nut oil, as suggested by Gregory Waselkov in his work on Old Mobile? Is the presence of these sherds merely a reflection of reciprocal gift-giving traditions and reifications of beneficial relations between colonists and indigenous groups? Or as Shannon Dawdy has suggested, was this pottery primarily used for display and reflective of increased trade encouraged by French administrators after the 1729 Natchez Revolt?

While it is unlikely that any one of these theories will explain the presence of every sherd found at 810 Royal Street, some of these theories clearly have more applicability here than
others. The abundance of redundant European ceramics recovered in the same French contexts suggests that the site’s occupants were not acquiring indigenous made wares because of a lack of European ones. Further, the diversity of sherds and the near absence of hand-built vessels mimicking European form, often referred to as “colonowares,” suggests that indigenous peoples were not mass-producing pottery specifically to supply colonists with needed tableware. This was the case in Old Mobile, where such imitative wares were far more prevalent in early French colonial contexts and where indigenous-made wares in some instances outnumbered European made ones in colonial household assemblages, as there was a documented shortage of European wares in this area during the early colonial era (Waselkov 1989:57, 66; Waselkov 2005:46; Silvia 1998:339). Rather, this assemblage represents what Diane E. Silvia has termed the “household industry,” in which pottery was produced in a household on a small scale for use outside of the household, as opposed to the “workshop industry” level in which ceramic specialists produced pottery on a larger scale (Silvia 2002:27-29). Given the information available in the historical and archaeological records, it is reasonable to conclude that colonists in New Orleans were not acquiring this pottery because they lacked European-made ceramics.

One theory posited by Kathleen Deagan suggests that such assemblages within colonial household contexts are the result of intermarriage between male colonists and indigenous females who produced pottery on the property (Deagan 1973, 1983, 1996, 1998). However, the wide range of variation present suggests far-reaching trade networks and makes it highly unlikely that this pottery was produced by any one person living on the property. It is virtually impossible that this could explain the presence of all pottery found in French contexts in New Orleans given that the hand-built pottery at the St. Anthony’s Garden site was likely associated with an informal market and not a household and there was no documentation of any married
couple living at the site of the Ursulines Convent. Further, Zych’s neutron activation analysis on the pottery at 400 Chartres Street and St. Anthony’s Garden indicated that a significant amount of the hand-built pottery present was not locally produced (Zych 2013:75-101). Additionally, there is no record of any of the French owners of the lot at 810 Royal Street having been married to an indigenous woman. The possibility that slaves and Europeans may have produced hand-built vessels found in such household contexts must also be mentioned, however this is incredibly unlikely for similar reasons, as there is too much diversity in the vessels for any one resident of the household to have produced them all and the types are consistent with prehistoric indigenous pottery production traditions.

One potentially plausible theory is that these wares were acquired to be used as cooking vessels which were better suited to preparing indigenous inspired foods than European wares (Waselkov 2005:39). Archaeological evidence has revealed that local wild game, fish, ducks and small mammals became an increasingly regular part of the French diet as indigenous peoples brought such foods to town to trade. This incorporation of indigenous foods into the colonial diet seems to have increased after the abandonment of the colony by the Company of the Indies in 1731, as the new Creole generation proved to be more comfortable with indigenous and localized lifeways than the first generation of immigrant colonists. (Usner 1998:56-72; Scott and Dawdy 2011:101). This would indeed align with Langlois’ period of ownership of the lot given that he came into possession of the property in 1731. However, as has been documented at similar sites, there was not a significant amount of charring suggestive of use as cookware or even the wear and tear suggestive of regular usage on the hand-built sherds found at 810 Royal Street (Waselkov and Gums 2000:48; Dawdy and Matthews 2010:284-285). Thus, it seems improbable
that these vessels were acquired for regular use within the household and more likely that they were used for display or contained something more valuable when they were acquired.

If one accepts the premise that undecorated wares were more likely to be created and acquired for utilitarian purposes, it seems doubtful that these vessels were predominantly acquired for display purposes given that the majority of them were undecorated. Considering pottery is mentioned very little in official documents as a trade good despite archaeological evidence proving its prominence within intercultural trade, it seems implausible that the pottery itself would have been considered to hold significant trade value. Therefore, it is unlikely that colonists were acquiring the pottery to put it on display (Silvia 2002:28-29).

A more reasonable theory which has been proposed is the use of indigenous made vessels to transport valuable commodities, such as bear oil and hickory nut oil, which were often used by the French in place of the olive oil and butter they enjoyed in the metropole, as well as foodstuffs. Bear oil is particularly well documented as playing a significant role within intercultural trade during this period and was additionally used to treat rheumatism. (Waselkov and Gums 2000:45; Brown 1992:20-1; Mann 2015:278; Usner 1992:206). Antoine-Simon Le Page du Pratz, a French historian who lived in the region during this time period, made perhaps the first reference to indigenous pottery being used in this way when he described indigenous women who made “pots of extraordinary size, pitchers with a small opening, plates, two-pint bottles with long necks, pots or pitchers for their bear oil that hold up to forty pints. (Waselkov and Gums 2000:45).” A second reference is made to the use of such vessels for the transportation of bear oil in an estate inventory of Kaskaskia in 1723, noting “two Natchez earthenware jugs full of oil.” Another reference details an encounter in which the Yazoos and Koroas visited the Ofogoulas who were “occupied with making earthen jars in which to put their bear grease”
which were acquired by the French (Waselkov and Gums 2000:45). This seems to be a reasonable explanation for the possible functional value of the pottery, as one struggles to see any regular functional utility for the vessels within the household. However, jar forms would have been more likely to be used to transport oils, and it is impossible to say with any certainty how many jars were present within this assemblage given the tiny nature of the sherds (Mann 2015:278-279). Though at least 6 jars were present at 810 Royal, most of the diagnostic vessels were open bowls. While this appears to be a sensible explanation for the presence of at least some of the pottery, it cannot be extrapolated to the larger assemblage given the limitations presented by the size of most of the pottery sherds and the lack of definitive jar forms present.

It is also possible that many of these vessels originally contained gifts of food which were considered critical to sustaining relations with many indigenous groups at the time, as a rejection of food offerings could be interpreted as a sign of hostility by many peoples. (Braudel 1980:163-72; Usner 1992:211; White 1991:441). For instance, Patricia Galloway points out that the Choctaw did not immediately embrace the capitalist economic system implemented by the French, but rather interacted with colonists in what she has termed the “subsistence sphere of exchange.” One frequent aspect of these interactions was the preparation and presentation of food within their own vessels during exchanges, a ritual they considered important in the formation of bonds with other societies (Galloway 2009:345, 352-353). As has been suggested by Rob Mann, the pottery in this sense may be reflective of a reinforcement of ethnicity through the continuance of indigenous pottery production techniques and ritual gift-giving traditions in the face of the growing European influence on the region. This would contrast narratives that depict indigenous peoples as being rapidly and wholly assimilated into the culture of the colonizers (Mann 2015:280-283).
It would certainly seem plausible that these vessels once contained small gifts of food which were used to strengthen valuable relationships between traders such as Langlois and indigenous peoples. The variety of decoration present would seem to reinforce this theory, suggesting a variety of sources and the possible social function that some of the pottery played. For instance, incised decorations often served important symbolic functions within indigenous cultures. Timothy Pauketat and Thomas Emerson have suggested certain incised motifs represented indigenous cosmology and what some indigenous peoples referred to as the “Under and Upper Worlds” and Earth and also served to separate the elite from the lower classes (Pauketat and Emerson 1991:919-941). Though it is difficult to interpret what the incisions on these particular sherds may have meant given their fragmentary nature, it is highly likely they held some sort of symbolic and social significance to the indigenous peoples who produced them. Given the variety of decoration present as well as the lack of signs of domestic usage and the predominance of open bowls within this assemblage as well as that of 400 Chartres Street, the vessels being used in gift giving rituals may be the most sensible explanation for the presence of these pottery sherds.

Considering much of this pottery is likely associated with Langlois’ occupation beginning in 1731, this assemblage also lends credence to the idea put forth by Shannon Dawdy that the acquisition of Native-made pottery increased after the Natchez Revolt of 1729 as a result of pro-trade policies implemented by French administrators in an attempt to repair relations with indigenous groups. It is certainly possible that the pottery originally contained gifts of food and was merely used for display after the consumption of said food. Thus, the pottery may have had a functional value as comestible containers as well as a ritual and symbolic one in its potential use in social rituals and display.
Red Film Decoration

One common aspect of many southeastern French colonial sites that has piqued the interest of many archaeologists and scholars concerned with these contexts is the increased presence of red film on indigenous-made wares during the 18th century. This decoration has been a strong presence on nearly all French colonial sites in the city and was well represented at 810 Royal Street, making up 25% of all decorated hand-built sherds in French levels. Some have suggested that this surface treatment was an attempt to mimic European red lead-glazed vessels, revealing the influence of Europeans on indigenous ceramic production at the time (Waselkov and Gums 2000:131). However, at this site and others these sherds appear to be primarily associated with shallow bowls which are not imitative of the more prevalent European vessel forms. Others have suggested that these wares increase after the Natchez Revolt of 1729 and are typically found in contexts indicating social interaction between indigenous peoples and colonists, which would be consistent with this site given the likely association of this pottery with Augustin Langlois. (Gray et al., 2014:141; Dawdy and Matthews 2010:284). Some have also posited that the Apalachee, who left Florida for Mobile in 1704-1705, were responsible for its spread. However, this seems unlikely to be an adequate explanation for its presence given the prevalence of this decoration throughout the region in the 18th century (Gray et al., 2014:141).

Others have noted filming’s potential functional value in reducing vessel porosity (Silvia 1998:28).

The variation found in this assemblage and often in other French colonial assemblages looks similar to what is often called “Old Town Red,” a shell tempered variation which has been associated with a number of groups throughout the Lower Mississippi Valley, making it difficult to connect the sherds to any one group of people (Mann 2015:276). These sherds have
predominantly been associated with open bowl vessels, which was indeed the case with the 810 Royal Street sherds where vessel form was identifiable (Mann 2015:278; Hunter 1985:89; Waselkov and Gums 2000:48, 131). 18th century French historian Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz made a possible reference to this pottery in his *Histoire de la Louisiane*, referring to an instance in which he “had some made out of curiosity upon the model of my faience, which are a rather pretty red (Mann 2015:278).”

These red-filmed sherds present an interesting case study as a decoration potentially indicative of European influence on indigenous pottery production during the early contact period. Given its scarcity within prehistoric and protohistoric archaeological sites its presence raises questions as to whether colonialism led to an increase in its production and why it may have done so (Waselkov 1989:60). Was its spread merely a result of diffusion during an increased period of mobility among indigenous groups, or was this increase due to a deliberate attempt to cater to French colonists? Given that this decoration was far more prevalent on sites suggestive of far-reaching trade networks and was entirely absent at the Ursulines Convent site in which the assemblage was more localized in nature and more likely associated with either a land-clearing period in which French supplies were at their lowest or with indigenous potters living within the convent, it would seem more probable that indigenous groups incorporated red filming as an attempt to appeal to French traders in an aesthetic way or that French traders were specifically requesting red filmed pottery, as Le Page du Pratz once appears to have done. This decoration is being researched in further depth by Lauren Zych of the University of Chicago.
Conclusion

When taking into consideration the historical record and the archaeological data from this site and various other French colonial contexts throughout the region, there seem to be two primary plausible explanations for the presence of large amounts of hand-built pottery in these contexts. The first is that these vessels were used to transport more valuable commodities, as the colonists were clearly not lacking in more fashionable and durable European wares and the historical record does not indicate anywhere that these vessels in and of themselves were considered valuable trade goods. This theory provides a more practical materialist explanation than their use as decorative items, given that indigenous vessels are documented as having been used to transport indigenous goods that colonists desired such as bear oil and the fact that the majority of the sherds found in these contexts are undecorated.

The other most plausible theory is that these vessels originally contained gifts of food from indigenous groups seeking to build relationships with French colonists. Rather than an attempt to meet French market demands, this theory suggests that the pottery is more indicative of indigenous groups reinforcing their traditions and ethnic identity through gift-giving rituals. As has been described by Patricia Galloway and Daniel Usner, many indigenous groups maintained their own forms of economies and gift-giving traditions despite the increasing presence of a European capitalist system. In this sense the pottery could be interpreted as a form of a more gradual adaptation to the European presence in the area rather than indigenous groups allowing their cultures and traditions to immediately subsumed by Europeans and their market demands.

Such interactions suggest a process of creolization in which societies impacted each other in multi-directional rather than unilateral fashion, as opposed to the notions of total assimilation
or acculturation of indigenous peoples by Europeans. Thus, this pottery is reflective of the creation of a creolized culture in which French and indigenous cultures acted upon each other to create a new one. This pottery has further revealed how indigenous peoples frequented the city and sought out trade with the French but maintained certain elements of their culture while the French incorporated various indigenous goods, lifeways, and social practices into their own lifestyles in an adaptation to their environment in Louisiana. As Diana DiPaolo Loren has suggested, such interactions reveal the ways in which colonists and indigenous groups were forced to form new heterodoxies as they realized their traditional orthodoxies were not going to suffice in this environment (Loren 2001). As Jerome Voss has argued, the persistence of indigenous pottery techniques during the spread of European colonization and pottery production techniques suggests there was more at play in the creation and exchange of this pottery than merely pure economic motives (Voss 1995:22). Simultaneously, the notion that such pottery is reflective of administrative attempts to rebuild relations with indigenous groups by encouraging increased trade after the 1729 Natchez Revolt is supported here, as much of this pottery appears to be associated with Langlois’ ownership of the lot beginning in 1731 and does not appear to have been acquired out of a necessity for ceramic vessels. Thus, this pottery is likely to have been associated to some degree with social functions rather than being merely an attempt to meet French market demands.

Given that most of this pottery is likely associated with Augustin Langlois, the site has provided a fascinating glimpse into small-scale interaction between individual colonists based in New Orleans and indigenous peoples. Excavations at sites such as 810 Royal Street have revealed the various ways in which peoples of various backgrounds were brought into cultural and economic spheres of exchange through urbanization and the ways in which various
communities adapted to new conditions in and around French Louisiana. Further, such data has provided material evidence of adaptive subsistence practices of colonists which undermined the original racial delineations implemented by the French ruling class, as well as those of indigenous peoples attempting to survive in the changing environment brought about by colonization.

As the artifacts at this site further illustrate, the French administrative class clearly failed in their original attempts to monopolize foreign trade, minimize colonist interaction with indigenous peoples, and to keep indigenous influence out of the city. This was in part in because of the realization that heavy dependence upon indigenous groups was needed for the colony to survive and in part because of economic forces which drove enterprising colonists to seek this trade out to meet their needs of subsistence that were difficult to acquire through the original avenues French planners had intended the colony’s economy to be based upon. While some aspects of indigenous cultures may have been quickly made obsolete by European influences and technologies, pottery production techniques and ritual gift-giving traditions appear to have persisted well past the French colonial period, revealing ways in which indigenous peoples continued to assert their ethnicity and traditions in times of rapid and violent change.

This pottery is also reflective of the pull that this urban center and trade entrepot had upon indigenous peoples. As Louis Wirth would argue, New Orleans managed to influence aspects of cultures both near and afar and frequently drew indigenous peoples into its economic and cultural orbit. In this urban milieu, racial delineations meant less to enterprising colonists than did opportunity for trade and the acquisition of their means of subsistence, leading to a new cultural hybrid formed within the city. Further, as alluded to by Wirth in *Urbanism as a Way of Life*, the continuation of traditional pottery production techniques and gift-giving rituals reflects
that indigenous cultures did not instantaneously transform as a result of the growing European presence but rather changed gradually while maintaining various aspects of their previous traditions (Wirth 1938:2-3, 9-10, 15-16).

While this assemblage offers but a small piece to the puzzle, it is hoped that similar contexts will continue to be excavated and studied and that this systematic analysis can lend itself to larger interpretations of the implications of the presence of this pottery in French colonial contexts and processes of creolization and urbanization. Ongoing research upon the European sherds and faunal remains found in these contexts may further illuminate the meaning of the presence of this pottery and the function that it served within the households which occupied this lot. Future studies may expand the scope applied here and utilize Spanish contexts in Louisiana and elsewhere in the South to gain a greater understanding of the evolution of intercultural trade during the colonial era in this region. Further, indigenous occupation sites indicating interaction with the French may be further used to illuminate these trade practices and it is hoped that more such sites near New Orleans will be excavated and provide additional frameworks through which to view such intercultural relations. It is hoped that this work will inspire such studies which can further reveal processes of urbanization and colonial adaptation as well as the large role that indigenous groups played within the city’s economy during this period.
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Woods, Patricia Dillon


Zych, Lauren


Appendix: Data Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hand-built sherds</th>
<th>Other ceramics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent of French ceramic assemblage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Locus 1</td>
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<td>424</td>
<td>488</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locus 2</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>Locus 4</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>810</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1563</td>
<td>1947</td>
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Table 1: Presence of Hand-Built Ceramics in French Components at 810 Royal Street

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undecorated</th>
<th>Percent of Assemblage</th>
<th>Decorated</th>
<th>Percent of Assemblage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Locus 1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Locus 2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>Locus 4</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>41%</td>
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Table 2: Decorated vs Undecorated Hand-Built Ceramics in French Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shell</th>
<th>Sand</th>
<th>Grog</th>
<th>Fiber</th>
<th>Incised</th>
<th>Red Filmed</th>
<th>Punctated</th>
<th>Incised and Punctated</th>
<th>Incised and Burnished</th>
<th>Incised with Cross-hatching</th>
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<tr>
<td>Locus 1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus 2</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus 4</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Table 3: Primary Temper Used Among Hand-built Ceramics Recovered from French Components

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<tr>
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<th>Incised</th>
<th>Red Filmed</th>
<th>Punctated</th>
<th>Incised and Punctated</th>
<th>Incised and Burnished</th>
<th>Incised with Cross-hatching</th>
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<tr>
<td>Locus 1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Decorated sherds in locus 1</td>
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<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locus 2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Decorated sherds in locus 2</td>
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<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus 4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Decorated sherds in locus 4</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Decorated sherds overall</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Hand-built Sherd Decorations within French Component
Vita

The author was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. He received his bachelor’s in business administration from Loyola University of New Orleans in 2014. He joined the University of New Orleans Department of Planning and Urban Studies in 2016 to concentrate on Cultural Resource Management and archaeology and has volunteered on various archaeology projects with the university over the years.