

I.

**T**he land upon which stood the Presidio Nuestra Señora del Pilar de los Adaes, was donated by the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury to the Office of State Parks in 1979. The Police Jury had acquired this property in 1931, from Joe Welch, with money donated from the Daughters of the American Colonists. To protect this site, the Jury passed

The Presidio  
Nuestra Señora del Pilar de los Adaes  
and the Spanish Colonial Presence in Northwest Louisiana

By  
Raymond O. Berthelot, Jr.

an ordinance in 1970, which prohibited the removal of artifacts or damage to the location. In 1972, the Los Adaes Foundation of Robeline, with Robert Welch as first president, was organized to preserve, protect, and promote the Los Adaes site; and in 1978, Los Adaes was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1983, the facilities at the new Los Adaes State Commemorative Area were dedicated, and by 1986, Los Adaes was named a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.<sup>1</sup>

Although archaeologists have taken an active interest in the presidio at Los Adaes for many years, most historians of Louisiana's colonial period have failed to see the significance of this site as a Spanish presidio and

mission. The Spanish settlement at Los Adaes is commonly mentioned in the histories of Texas, northwest Louisiana, and the Spanish Borderlands, yet “no historian has taken a direct, long-term interest in Los Adaes,” and a detailed account of the lives of the settlers, missionaries and soldiers who lived there does not exist.<sup>2</sup> Historians such as Herbert Bolton and Carlos Castañeda, and most recently Jim McCorkle, have all addressed Los Adaes at one point or another, but Los Adaes has failed to produce a “long-term” historian as other similar sites have. Most Louisiana history books only see the importance of the presidio at Los Adaes as “the easternmost Spanish colonial settlement” in the province of Texas, when in fact, and more importantly, it served as the capital of Spanish Texas for over forty years.<sup>3</sup>

## II.

Spain’s concern over French intrusion into her territories was increased when a French expedition, lead by Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, arrived at Presidio San Juan Bautista on the Río Grande in 1714. St. Denis had set up a trading post on the Red River among the Natchitoches Indians just prior to the journey across what is now the state of Texas. Another indication of a French “threat” included the establishing of Fort St. Jean Baptiste aux Natchitos in 1716. In addition, France had also made moves into the interior of Texas in 1716, when French travelers journeyed to the mission San Juan del Bautista, near the Río Bravo del Norte [Río Grande] in order to buy cattle.<sup>4</sup> Spain responded to the French presence by establishing a series of missions and presidios across the Province of Texas to create a buffer zone against French invasion.

Ironically, it was a Franciscan Friar—Francisco Hidalgo—who had initially invited the French expedition into Texas by way of two letters, one in 1711, and the other in 1713. Hidalgo, having failed to get official permission to go into the borderlands to convert Indians, sent a letter of invite to trade to the French in Louisiana, hoping that a French presence in the borderlands would prompt Spanish authorities to help finance his mission work. France sent a delegation to Presidio San Juan Bautista on the Río Grande, under St. Denis in 1714, with the express purpose of meeting with Father Hidalgo, and Spain’s response was as expected.<sup>5</sup>

The Spanish response involved an expedition in 1716-17 which set up missions and presidios across the Province of Texas. Oddly enough, none other than St. Denis was hired as guide for the expedition, as he had married the step-granddaughter of the Commandant—Diego Ramón—who had initially arrested him. This expedition was

led by Diego Ramón's son—and uncle of St. Denis' new wife—Captain Domingo Ramón, and accompanied by Father Antonio Margil de Jesús and other friars from the Franciscan college of Zacatecas. The expedition founded the Misión de San Miguel de Linares in March of 1717, about fifteen miles west of the French Fort St. Jean Baptiste Aux Nachitos.<sup>6</sup> This mission, headed by Father Margil, served the Adaes Indians, who initially welcomed the missionaries and invited them to live in their territory.<sup>7</sup> The ultimate goal for the establishment of the Misión de San Miguel was not only to spread the Roman Catholic doctrine to the Native-American population, but also to form a permanent Spanish-French boundary through Louisiana by winning Indian allegiance to Spain.<sup>8</sup>

In November 1718, another expedition, led by Don Martín de Alarcón, arrived at the mission of San Miguel de Linares.<sup>9</sup> In honor of Alarcón's visit, the missionaries sang a Solemn High Mass for the guests. After settling in, the group's first task was to rename the mission—San Miguel de Cuellar. The main reason for the trip, though, was that Alarcón, who had been named Governor of Texas in late 1716, was under orders to establish new missions, villages, and presidios.<sup>10</sup> This edict was in direct response to the 1718 establishment of New Orleans, which intensified Spanish fears of the growing French presence in Louisiana.

Tensions between the Spanish and the French increased in 1719, when, prompted by war in Europe between the two countries, seven French soldiers from Fort St. Jean laid siege to the Los Adaes mission, only to encounter one soldier and one lay brother. The second soldier that was normally stationed at Los Adaes to protect the Franciscan missionaries was away at the time of the encounter, with the priest, visiting the mission at Dolores.<sup>11</sup> Meeting no resistance, the French soldiers took the mission's chickens and brought them back to Natchitoches. This incident was later known as the "Chicken War," and the mission of San Miguel was shortly, thereafter, deserted.<sup>12</sup> This event caused the Spanish colonists, missionaries, and twenty-five soldiers that were spread throughout the half dozen missions and two presidios in East Texas, to abandon the area and return to San Antonio, leaving Spanish East Texas open to the French.<sup>13</sup>

### III.

In 1721, the new Governor of Coahuila and Texas, Marqués de Aguayo, financed an expedition with the hopes of re-establishing a Spanish presence in East Texas. Aguayo's team, accompanied by "the most imposing force Spain would ever send into Texas," was made up of five hundred troops, and herds of horses, cattle, sheep,

and goats. They proposed to re-conquer Texas, and check the French threat by establishing new presidios and missions in East Texas.<sup>14</sup>

Upon reaching the old site of the Misión de San Miguel, they found the area deserted, its inhabitants driven out, and the Native Americans enslaved by the French.<sup>15</sup> After careful inspection of the land for a suitable site for a new mission and presidio, construction was started about a mile and a half east of the abandoned Misión de San Miguel, and about twelve miles west of Natchitoches. The presidio was built

“with a stockade of pointed logs, two and three-quarters *varas* high all around it. The presidio was hexagonal in shape with three bulwarks placed on alternate corners, each protecting two sides. A garrison of one hundred men was placed in charge of the presidio, which was officially named Presidio Nuestra Señora del Pilar. Twenty-eight of these were married men, and all were fully equipped with arms and horses. Six brass fieldpieces, brought from Mexico, were placed in the presidio, and the necessary powder and balls supplied.”<sup>16</sup>

The dedication of the mission church and presidio was celebrated on October 12, 1721, the Feast Day of Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza. In addition to the masses and procession with the image of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, the Governor gave a banquet to the friars and captains, and brandy to the soldiers. The soldiers performed dances, pranks, and other dramatic performances.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the herds of livestock accompanying the expedition, Aguayo ordered 300 more cattle, 400 more sheep, and a fresh supply of 800 horses to be supplied to Los Adaes from Nuevo León.<sup>18</sup> Aguayo appointed Don Joseph Benito de Arroyo as captain, and formally placed him in command of the post on November 4, 1721.<sup>19</sup> A site was also selected, under the direction of Father Margil, in the fall of 1721, for the re-establishment of the mission, Misión San Miguel de Cuellar de los Adaes, across a small creek, or ravine, from the presidio.<sup>20</sup>

Possibly due to the French intrusion into the old mission, the Adaes Indians, never having lived permanently at the first mission site, relocated a few miles away from the area. More than four hundred men, women, and children returned to Los Adaes to see the Governor in the spring of 1722, after the fall harvest was completed. Father Margil, with the permission of Aguayo, promised to minister to the Adaes from the recently built presidial chapel until construction of the new mission and pueblo was completed.<sup>21</sup>

The growing importance of this new site was supported through the number of troops stationed there, as compared to the number of troops located at the other presidios throughout Texas. The presidio

at La Bahía had 90 soldiers, San Antonio had 54 soldiers, and Dolores had 25 soldiers, whereas, Los Adaes had one hundred soldiers serving the crown.<sup>22</sup> Aguayo saw the significance of Los Adaes as a cornerstone in New Spain's defense against the French, and acted accordingly by fortifying Los Adaes with the best he had to offer. The soldiers at Los Adaes, members of a cavalry company, served for an indefinite amount of time, depending on the kindness of the presidial captain for an honorable discharge.<sup>23</sup>

Although this site was secure in numbers, by 1725, the presidio stockade was rotting and in bad need of repair. The new Governor of Texas, Almazan, who was suffering from bad health, appointed Don Melchor de Mediavilla y Aucona as his Lieutenant Governor, and stationed him at Los Adaes to deal with this problem. Aucona was efficient, and the entire stockade was replaced and the military living quarters were rebuilt with timber by July of 1726.<sup>24</sup>

In 1727, Brigadier Pedro de Rivera, under the direction from the Viceroy in Mexico City, inspected the missions and presidios in the Province of Texas. In his inspection he found a hundred men, still under the command of the Governor, residing at Los Adaes. The duties of these men, other than guarding the presidio and mission, included the following: caring for the horses, cultivating the fields where grain and vegetables were grown, improving their quarters, and aiding the Franciscan missionaries. Rivera's report cited no irregularities other than two men who were determined to be unfit for duty.<sup>25</sup> Rivera did find that very few Indians were living on the mission site at the time of the 1727 inspection. The majority of the Indians in the area continued to live away from the mission, with most deciding to remain at their *rancherías*.<sup>26</sup>

Based on Rivera's 1727 inspection, recommendations were made and implemented in the *Reglamento* of 1729. In this *Reglamento*, it was suggested that the force at Los Adaes be reduced to sixty soldiers instead of one hundred. Rivera pointed out that the French had only twenty-five soldiers at Fort St. Jean in Natchitoches, and, at that time, were of no threat to the Spanish. He believed that since Spain and France were at peace in Europe, the threat of war was remote. If a war did begin, Rivera rationalized that Los Adaes could be quickly reinforced from the presidios at La Bahía or San Antonio.<sup>27</sup>

The *Reglamento* cut the annual pay of the common soldiers at Los Adaes from 450 pesos a year, to 420 pesos. Sergeants were to receive 435 pesos, *alféreces* [ensigns]—440 pesos, lieutenants—450 pesos, and captains—6,000 pesos annually.<sup>28</sup> Even before this pay cut, the Spanish soldiers saw little, if any, of this money, since most of it went towards their service gear, horses, and food. Soldiers were also required to purchase their own muskets, an item that was once

provided by the crown.

Several missions and presidios were closed because of this *Reglamento* of 1729, including the presidio at Dolores. With the closing of the Presidio Dolores, Los Adaes was officially named the capital of the province of Texas, though the Texas governor had been residing at Los Adaes since 1722.<sup>29</sup> By 1730, the total number of soldiers serving in Texas was cut in half.<sup>30</sup>

Another stipulation in the *Reglamento* of 1729, was that Spanish presidio commanders were allowed to aid other Spanish presidios when they were in danger or in need of assistance. This practice was extended to the French establishment in Natchitoches in the year 1730. Trouble started in July, when four hundred warriors from various Natchez tribes attacked the French fort and settlement. In fear of the same fate, Los Adaes was mobilized, but no attack came to the presidio that summer. In October, the Natchez again attacked Fort St. Jean, and seventeen Spanish soldiers, accompanied by 'Asinai' [possibly a generalized reference for Caddoan] warriors, were sent from Los Adaes to aid the French. After twenty-two days of fighting, the Natchez were finally driven away. St. Denis, the commander of the French settlement, was so grateful for this Spanish support that he sent several native women as presents to the Spanish officers, but this gesture was not accepted.<sup>31</sup> During another incident in 1733, Joseph de Urrutia was forced to send fifteen men from Los Adaes to aid the Presidio de Béjar in the face of a threat from the Apaches.<sup>32</sup>

Due to the distance of Los Adaes from Coahuila (approximately 800 miles), where reasonably priced Spanish merchandise could be obtained, Los Adaes became dependent on corn, beans and other merchandise that was traded, both legally and illegally, with the French in Natchitoches. The dependence on these goods from the French was due to the fact that Los Adaes lacked a large labor pool that could be used in much needed farming activities.<sup>33</sup>

Though urged by Rivera in 1727 to stop all trade with their French neighbors, for this was an order by the crown, illegal trading continued. In response to this perceived danger of unceasing, illicit trade between the French and Spanish, a council was held in Mexico City in 1730, which sent a viceregal decree to Governor Juan Antonio Bustillo y Ceballos, ordering him to find a new location for Los Adaes, away from the French in Natchitoches. Governor Bustillo inspected possible relocation areas suggested by Rivera, but found them all to be useless since the recommended locations were subject to flooding.<sup>34</sup>

As a result of the ban on trade, Los Adaes was soon in need of corn and beans. Governor Bustillo complained to the viceroy in Mexico about this shortage, and the result was another viceregal decree from Mexico, sent in 1731, permitting Los Adaes to purchase food sup-

plies from the French.<sup>35</sup> In return for food and other commodities the Spanish were receiving, the French in Natchitoches were receiving Spanish horses from Texas. Texan cattle from the surrounding *rancherías*, and from the San Miguel mission, were also used for trade with the French.<sup>36</sup>

Trade goods, bound for Los Adaes from Spain, could only enter the Viceroyalty at Veracruz. From there, they were sent to Mexico City, and then distributed throughout northern New Spain. Because Los Adaes was the furthest eastern settlement in Texas, "foreign-made manufactures far outnumbered those from Spain" at the presidio and mission.<sup>37</sup>

At this time, good social relations existed between the settlers at Natchitoches and those at Los Adaes. Spanish priests would conduct mass for the Natchitoches peoples when French priests were not available. Even St. Denis' Spanish wife, Emmanuela María Stephania Sánchez de Navarro whom he had married while in San Juan Bautista, served as a godmother to many of the children born at Los Adaes.<sup>38</sup>

Conditions at Los Adaes took a turn for the worse when heavy rains fell during the winter of 1734, causing a shortage of corn, beans, and other food products. Because of the close proximity of Fort St. Jean in Natchitoches, they too were affected by the adverse weather and failing crops. This meant that the French were in no position to help relieve the deteriorating state of affairs at Los Adaes. With the bean crops destroyed, and corn put on short rations, malnutrition and exposure to the elements greatly affected the running of the presidio. Even the livestock was affected, forcing soldiers to go two, three, and sometimes even four weeks without meat.

These poor conditions at Los Adaes began to be reflected in the clothing of the settlers. Common-wear items at this time consisted of dirty blankets and buffalo hides, and no shoes, hats, hose or soap. Trying to help relieve this depressive state, on Christmas day 1734, Lieutenant Governor Joseph González distributed the remaining cloth left in the storeroom, but unfortunately, it was too rotten to be used.<sup>39</sup> There was hope that the latest governor of Texas, Governor Juan Manuel de Sandoval, who was in San Antonio, would return soon to Los Adaes with supplies, but he did not arrive.

Maintenance of the presidio and mission was neglected during this period, and the structures began to rot. The stockade of the presidio soon fell into such disrepair that there were open spaces in the wall. The cannons were no longer in place inside the presidio, and the earthenworks had been washed away by the rains. To make matters worse, in January of 1735, a severe storm destroyed many houses, including the living quarters of the missionaries. Lieutenant Gover-

nor Gonzáles reported to Governor Sandoval that repairs were being made, but not much could be expected since many of the soldiers were sick. By the spring of 1735, construction on a new set of barracks and a new presidial chapel was started.<sup>40</sup>

Relief arrived for the residents of Los Adaes in February 1735, when badly needed supplies came in from San Antonio, and the restocking of horses and mules expected soon from Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches. The restocking of these animals was imperative since six mules and eight horses from the Governor's herd died during the harsh winter at Los Adaes.

As the year continued, rising food prices and a clamp down on illegal trade by St. Denis in Natchitoches due to food shortages, heightened the depressive state at Los Adaes. Hope of outside relief was further dampened when an inadequate train of supplies arrived in the fall of 1735, consisting of rotten flour and dying horses and mules.<sup>41</sup> Because of this, the presidio became entirely dependent on the crops from the surrounding Spanish missions of Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, Dolores de los Ais, and of course, San Miguel de los Adaes.

Relations between Los Adaes and Fort St. Jean, which were already strained from food shortages and price wars, were again tested when the location of Fort St. Jean was moved, by orders of St. Denis, to the west bank of the Red River in late 1735 and early 1736. To make matters worse, the French force at Natchitoches was increased from twenty five to fifty soldiers. Lieutenant Governor Gonzáles protested to Governor Sandoval, who was still in San Antonio, about this French movement, but due to the poor conditions of the men at the presidio, nothing could be done by the Spanish to stop this change.

Gonzáles tried to show his disapproval of this French action by prohibiting trade with Natchitoches, but was forced to let badly needed French grain into Los Adaes during the night. To make matters worse for Gonzáles at this time, his daughter, Victoria Marguerite who was only fifteen years old, eloped with a French, half Indian, soldier ten years her senior, by the name of Jean D'Herbanne, and moved with him to Fort St. Jean Baptiste. They were married by a Jesuit priest at Fort St. Jean Baptiste on April 8, 1736.<sup>42</sup>

Because the French were now on the west bank of the Red River, the viceroy had Governor Sandoval arrested for permitting this move in 1736. After examining witnesses at Los Adaes though, and determining the boundary between Los Adaes and Natchitoches to actually be the Arroyo Hondo, Governor Sandoval was released in 1744.<sup>43</sup>

By the end of 1736, conditions at Los Adaes were improving, though in 1737, the new Spanish governor, Franquis, still claimed that Los



Adaes looked more like a cattle pen than a presidio. The men and women of Los Adaes were able to survive, without aid from the French, throughout the winter, although trade continued between them.<sup>44</sup>

In 1741, Los Adaes, which was now under Governor Orobio y Basterra, was once again dependent on food provisions from the French.<sup>45</sup> It was due to this dependence on French supplies at Los Adaes that the economy of Natchitoches prospered. Governor Tomás Winthuysen found the population in East Texas, which included Los Adaes, not even trying to attempt subsistence farming, choosing instead to rely solely on Natchitoches and the Crown for food supplies. He therefore provided proper uniforms, equipment, horses, arms and ammunition, and allowed trade to continue with the French.<sup>46</sup>

In 1754, the new governor, Barrios y Jáuregui received word at Los Adaes of more French activity near the mouth of the Spanish-held Trinity River. Fearing a new French settlement, Governor Barrios sent Lieutenant Marcos Ruiz and twenty-five Spanish soldiers from the presidio to investigate and arrest the French leader, Blancpain. Reinforced by Bidai warriors, the soldiers arrested Blancpain, his brother-in-law Elias George, Antonio Dessois, and two black slaves, and burned their house and destroyed their canoes. Ruiz took the prisoners, accompanied by half of the soldiers, to San Xavier, and then on to Mexico. The remaining Spanish soldiers returned to Los Adaes in order to give their testimonies on this encounter.<sup>47</sup>

During the 1750s, one of the soldiers' duties included scouting trips into the lower Trinity River region.<sup>48</sup> The reason for these expeditions was to look for French infiltration into the area. Other duties for the sixty soldiers at Los Adaes included guarding the horse herd, assisting the missionaries, and escorting supply caravans from Saltillo, a journey of over 1,000 miles in each direction.<sup>49</sup>

Governor Barrios had the stockade at Los Adaes rebuilt in 1758, but by 1760, when Governor Martos y Navarrete arrived for a visit, it had again rotted due to heavy rains. There were approximately 350 persons living at Los Adaes when Martos y Navarrete arrived, not including the Native Americans who lived not too far from the mission.<sup>50</sup> In his inspection, Governor Martos y Navarrete found the number of cannons at the presidio reduced from six to two. Of the four missing cannons, two were loaned to Colonel Ortiz Parilla and the other two had been sent to the new Presidio San Agustín de Ahumada. Governor Martos was dismayed to see the gunpowder, enough for the sixty soldiers stationed at Los Adaes, stored on a high platform without any protection from the weather.<sup>51</sup>

Based on this inspection, the new governor planned to rebuild the presidio using stone and mortar.<sup>52</sup> He believed that this would make

a stronger presidio, and cut the time and energy expended by the soldiers, who were constantly repairing the wooden stockade and timber buildings such as the church, friary, and granary.

During Martos' inspection, few crops were raised on the mission lands since wheat from Natchitoches replaced corn as the staple food crop at Los Adaes. The missionary cattle ranch, "El Baño," had only a few cows and some horses and mules.<sup>53</sup> It was also noted that many of the Native Americans from the surrounding areas only came into contact with the mission in time of need, such as the winter months.

In 1762, as a result of the French and Indian War, France ceded all of its land holdings west of the Mississippi River to Spain.<sup>54</sup> This meant that Fort St. Jean Baptiste and Natchitoches were now in the hands of Spain, and with the threat of French invasion removed, the military importance of Los Adaes ceased to exist.

In September 1767, Marqués de Rubí arrived at Los Adaes during his inspection trip of the missions and presidios in Texas. Governor Martos y Navarrete had left Los Adaes for Mexico City in July, and Sergeant Major Hugo O'Connor was acting Governor in Navarrete's absence. Rubí, in his examination of Los Adaes, found sixty-one soldier and twenty-five horses fit for service. The other forty-nine horses were found to be totally useless. Only two muskets and seven swords passed inspection. Very few of the soldiers had powder horns, and most lacked a hat, shirt or shoes—their families equally destitute. When checking church records, Father Solís' diary of 1767, reported "103 Indian baptisms, 256 baptisms of people living adjacent to the fort, 64 marriages and 116 deaths."<sup>55</sup>

Rubí also found the accounts of Governor Martos y Navarrete to be in violation of several regulations. It seemed that Governor Martos would sell the best Spanish horses to the French leaving the substandard horses for the soldiers at Los Adaes. He also had the soldiers work the presidio farm, and sold this produce back to his men at high prices.<sup>56</sup>

A French traveler, Pierre Marie Francois de Pagés, visited Los Adaes in 1767, on his way to Mexico, and described the military dress of the common soldiers at the presidio. Pagés described their clothing as a "large hood and short cloak adorned around the neck with broad stripes of gold lace," as well as an "under-waist coat" and breeches without seams held together with buttons of gold and silver. The uniform was ornamented with lace, stockings were made of skin, and deerskin quilted with cotton was worn for protection against arrows. Pagés also described spurs five or six inches in length, saddle leathers garnished with trinkets of steel, and iron stirrups weighing fifty pounds in the shape of a cross.<sup>57</sup> Another visitor during this time, Fray Gaspar José de Solís, described the wooden buildings at Los

Adaes as neat and clean, but in perpetual need of repair.<sup>58</sup>

By August 1768, the acting governor of Texas moved his residence from Los Adaes to San Antonio.<sup>59</sup> As a result of the Rubí inspection and the recent transfer of Natchitoches to Spanish control, the order to close the fort and mission was included in the *Reglamento* of 1772. Hugo O'Connor, now a lieutenant colonel, was named to the new position of Commandant Inspector, and was ordered to put the articles of the new *Reglamento* into operation.<sup>60</sup> By 1768 the College of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas, responsible for all missionary activities at Los Adaes, officially abandoned its task of converting the Indians of the region to Catholicism, turning over control of the mission directly to the Viceroy in Mexico City.<sup>61</sup>

In 1771, the new Governor of Texas, Ripperdá, ordered Lieutenant González to send all but ten men to San Antonio. These remaining soldiers were left to protect the two remaining missionaries at Los Adaes. In 1773, Governor Ripperdá received the order to abandon the Misión de San Miguel de los Adaes and the Presidio Nuestra Señora del Pilar de los Adaes. This location was closed along with all the other missions and presidios in the province of Texas. Lieutenant Joseph González, who was put in charge of the withdrawal from Los Adaes, was promised an honorable discharge upon reaching San Antonio, but died on the return journey.

All soldiers, their families, and the missionaries, approximately five hundred *Adaesanos* in all, departed Los Adaes for San Antonio on June 25, 1773. The people who did not want to return back to San Antonio fled to Natchitoches before this date in order to distance themselves from this forced closure and march. They had plans of resettling in their abandoned homes once everyone had left. Immediately after Los Adaes was abandoned, the Caddo Indians raided the settlement finding five small bronze and two iron cannons left behind.<sup>62</sup> It is not known what eventually became of the cannons. Having no place in society in San Antonio the *Adaesanos* were permitted to return as far east as Nacogdoches in 1779, led by Antonio Gil Ybarbo.<sup>63</sup>

The economy in Natchitoches suffered heavily from the abandonment of Los Adaes and the loss of Spanish trade. Natchitoches lost an economic source that brought in 35,000 pesos annually to the settlement. Once this resource was gone, Natchitoches experienced a considerable debt.<sup>64</sup>

After the transfer of Louisiana to the United States of America in 1803, the border dispute once again flared. In 1804, Manuel Antonio Cordero, Governor of Texas from 1805-1808, ordered a detachment of Spanish soldiers to be stationed at the old site of the Los Adaes presidio. To deal with this Spanish fortification, Captain Turner,

accompanied by sixty U.S. troops, confronted the officer-in-charge of Los Adaes, Gonzáles, and his Spanish troops on February 5, 1806. Captain Turner withdrew and attacked two smaller Spanish outposts, setting their barracks on fire. Governor Cordero, not wanting to ignite war with the United States, agreed to establish the territory between the Arroyo Hondo and the Sabine River as a neutral ground.<sup>65</sup> Spanish troops, again led by Gonzáles, left Los Adaes for the last time.

#### IV.

The impact made on Louisiana by the presidio and mission at Los Adaes does not stand out today like a red flag, but it is there. The closing of this presidio and mission did not mean the end of the Spanish presence in this part of Louisiana, for many settlers later returned from Texas to carry on the traditions and culture of the *Adaesaños*. Those who returned continued to labor as they had before. Occupations existing amongst Los Adaes' civilian population included cattle tending, wood cutting, blacksmithing, domestic service, and trading in deerskins. Upon returning in 1791, one Joseph Valentine petitioned for his old lands in order to "raise horses, cattle, etc. and to plant and raise corn and other grains . . . ."<sup>66</sup>

Many communities in northwest Louisiana have direct ties to eighteenth century Los Adaes.<sup>67</sup> The communities of Zwolle, Ebarb, Spanish Lake and Gorum still contain a number of families with Spanish surnames, who can trace their ancestors to the settlers and soldiers of Los Adaes.

Two nineteenth century accounts of visits to the *Adaesaño* community, near what is today Robeline, Louisiana, described a community that retained "all their national peculiarities of language, customs, houses and husbandry," and "houses, streets, manners and customs all Spanish. . . ."<sup>68</sup> In this "island" of Spanish culture, folk stories of Ybarbo are still told today, mainly about his travels to Mexico City to plea on behalf of the *Adaesaños* for their return to Louisiana. Legends of *La Llorona* weeping at the riverbank for her lost child are also told, and tamales and chilies are not foreign in the kitchen.<sup>69</sup> The legacy of Los Adaes lives on in the everyday lives of the men and women who make up this "island" of Spanish culture in Louisiana.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> George Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program" (Natchitoches, 1996), 68; *Los Adaes Historical Park* (Brochure), Los Adaes Foundation of Robeline, Inc. (ca. 1979); *Los Adaes State Commemorative Area* (Dedication Brochure), Office of State Parks (1983); *Los Adaes Foundation Welcomes You to Los Adaes National Historic Landmark Dedication Ceremonies* (Brochure), Los Adaes Foundation of Louisiana, Inc. (1987).

<sup>2</sup>George Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program" (Natchitoches, 1996), 39. Dr. Hiram F. "Pete" Gregory has been excavating at Los Adaes since the early 1960s, and Dr. George Avery is the current station archaeologist at Los Adaes.

<sup>3</sup>Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program", 1.

<sup>4</sup>Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M., translator, "Puelles' Report of 1827 on the Texas-Louisiana Boundary," *Louisiana History* 19(1978):162. (Leutenegger's translation is of the *Report to the President of the Mexican Republic on the Boundaries Between the Provinces of Texas and Louisiana* by Father José María de Jesús Puelles, made in 1828.)

<sup>5</sup>James McCorkle, "Los Adaes: Outpost of New Spain," *Journal of the North Louisiana Historical Association* 12 (1981): 114, 115; James McCorkle, "Los Adaes: A Historical Survey," in "Los Adaes Historical and Archaeological Background." (Natchitoches, 1980, 1981), 3, 4.

<sup>6</sup>Patricia R. Lemée, "Tíos and Tantes: Familial and Political Relationships of Natchitoches and the Spanish Colonial Frontier," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* vol. 101, no. 3, (1998), pp. 341-350. Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program", 54; Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*. Seven vols. (Austin, 1936-1958), 2:66-67.

<sup>7</sup>The Adaes were a sub-group of the Caddo Native-American group, as were other tribes in the surrounding area such as the Asinai and the Bidai. Clarence H. Webb and Hiram F. Gregory, *The Caddo Indians of Louisiana* (1990).

<sup>8</sup>McCorkle, "Los Adaes: Historical Survey," 2.

<sup>9</sup>At the time of Alarcón's visit, the missionaries at Los Adaes had

baptized only seventeen Indians at the mission. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 2: 105-107.

<sup>10</sup>Leutenegger, "Puelles' Report of 1827 on the Texas-Louisiana Boundary", 163, 163n.

<sup>11</sup>The Misión Dolores was another mission established by Ramón, and was west of San Miguel.

<sup>12</sup>Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program", 57.

<sup>13</sup>David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven and London, 1992), 167.

<sup>14</sup>Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 167.

<sup>15</sup>Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 2:143.

<sup>16</sup>Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 2:144-145.

<sup>17</sup>Diana Hadley, Thomas Naylor, and Mardith Schuetz-Miller, eds, *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain: A Documentary History* (Tucson, 1997), 429.

<sup>18</sup>Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station, 1986), 11-12.

<sup>19</sup>Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 2:144-145.

<sup>20</sup>Peter P. Forrestal trans., *Pena's Diary of the Aguayo Expedition in Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society*, 1935:54,55.

<sup>21</sup>Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 2:159; Hadley, *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier*, 427.

<sup>22</sup>Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman, 1975), 31.

<sup>23</sup>McCorkle, "Los Adaes: Historical Survey," 13.

<sup>24</sup>Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 2:204.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:220.

<sup>26</sup>Another major factor accounting for the lack of Native Americans found living at the mission was disease. By the eighteenth century, a majority of the remaining Native-American men living in Texas had syphilis, and a large number of the women were sterile. Peter Gerhard, *The North*

*Frontier of New Spain* (Norman, 1993), 340.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:225.

<sup>28</sup> Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands*, 41, 205n.

<sup>29</sup> Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program", 55.

<sup>30</sup> Odie B. Faulk, *A Successful Failure*, No. 1 in the *Saga of Texas Series* (Austin, 1965).

<sup>31</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 3:77.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:44.

<sup>33</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 173.

<sup>34</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 3:75-76.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:75.

<sup>36</sup> Cattle brands developed at this time on the Spanish *rancherías* surrounding Los Adaes, making these some of the first cattle brands in Texas. Miguel de Córdoba, *vaquero* for the San Miguel ranch, described the brand used on the cattle here as a heart shaped symbol known as the "Anchor Brand." Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, 117-118, 117n.

<sup>37</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 175-176.

<sup>38</sup> Gerald Ashford, *Spanish Texas: Yesterday and Today* (Austin and New York, 1971), 149. St. Denis's wife was the niece of Domingo Ramón, leader of the expedition that initially founded the mission at Los Adaes in 1717, and step granddaughter of Diego Ramón, Sr., captain of the presidio of San Juan Bautista. Leutenegger, "Puelles' Report of 1827 on the Texas-Louisiana Boundary", 162n.

<sup>39</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 3:78.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:78-79.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:79-81.

<sup>42</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 3:82-84; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 173-174; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, 40-41; Mills, *Natchitoches 1729-1803*, 4 No. 13, 22 No. 168. The marriage vows of Victoria and Jean were renewed in 1738 because the original marriage was "against the laws of the church and of the state." It is interesting to note that Jean D'Herbanne's mother was Native

American. Here we have Spanish, French, and Native American backgrounds coming together in one family.

<sup>43</sup> Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, 34.

<sup>44</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 3:78-79.

<sup>45</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 3: 84-85.

<sup>46</sup> Donald Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin, 1992), 144.

<sup>47</sup> Robert S. Weddle, *The French Thorn: Rival Explorers in the Spanish Sea, 1682-1762* (College Station, 1991), 294-295.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>49</sup> Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, 242.

<sup>50</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 194.

<sup>51</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 4:37-38.

<sup>52</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 4:37-38.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:38-39.

<sup>54</sup> Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program", 62.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 4:238-239; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 211.

<sup>57</sup> Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, 73-74. Pagés description of the soldiers dress at Los Adaes is very different from the dress found by Rubí, though both observations were made in the same year.

<sup>58</sup> McCorkle, "Los Adaes: Historical Survey," 24; Peter P. Forrestal, trans., "The Solis Diary of 1767," *Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society* 1 (1931): 31.

<sup>59</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 211.

<sup>60</sup> Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands*, 68.

<sup>61</sup> James McCorkle, "Los Adaes," *New Handbook of Texas*, 4 (1996): 292.

<sup>62</sup> Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 4:278.



<sup>63</sup> Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 222.

<sup>64</sup> Lawrence Kinnaird and Lucia B. Kinnaird, "The Red River Valley in 1796", *Louisiana History*, 24 (Spring 1983): 190.

<sup>65</sup> Leutenegger, "Puelles' Report of 1827 on the Texas-Louisiana Boundary", 172, 172-173n.

<sup>66</sup> John R. Swanton, *Source Material on the History and Ethnology of the Caddo Indians* (Norman, 1996): 84, 85; McCorkle, "Los Adaes," 292, 293.

<sup>67</sup> Avery, "1996 Annual Report for the Los Adaes Station Archaeology Program", Appendix 7, 3.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>69</sup> Hiram F. Gregory, "Los Adaes: The Archaeology of an Ethnic Enclave," *Geoscience and Man*, 23(1983), 54-55.

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