

Section 1

Louisiana Becomes a Spanish Colony

As you read, look for:

- the arrival of the Acadians,
- the events that led to the French and Indian War and the transfer of Louisiana from France to Spain,
- the colonists' reaction to the transfer, and
- vocabulary term **treason**.

In 1762, during the French and Indian War, France transferred Louisiana to Spain. This was done with the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau. France needed money and military aid from Spain. As payment, France gave up Louisiana west of the Mississippi and the "Isle of Orleans."

Lagniappe

The kings of France and Spain had signed an agreement, the Family Compact of 1757, pledging to support each other in case of conflicts.

Figure 18 Timeline: 1750–1800



<p>1764 First Acadians arrived in Louisiana</p>	<p>1768 Colonists rebelled against Ulloa</p>	<p>1777 Isleños began arriving in Louisiana Gálvez became governor</p>	<p>1794 First newspaper in colony published</p>
<p>1762 Louisiana transferred to Spain</p>	<p>1769 O'Reilly arrived in colony</p>	<p>1779 Spain entered American Revolution</p>	<p>1795 Pinckney's Treaty</p>
<p>1750</p>	<p>1760</p>	<p>1770</p>	<p>1780</p>
<p>1754 French and Indian War began</p>	<p>1763 French and Indian War ended Proclamation of 1763 forbade settlement west of the Appalachians</p>	<p>1773 Boston Tea Party</p> <p>1775 American Revolution began</p>	<p>1779 George Washington elected first U.S. president</p> <p>1787 U.S. Constitution written</p> <p>1783 American Revolution ended with Treaty of Paris</p>

Connecting with U.S. History

The French and Indian War

From 1689 to 1763, France, Spain, and Great Britain fought a series of wars in Europe and in North America. The names of the wars changed, and the official reasons for them changed. Sometimes a war started when a king died and a struggle resulted over who would hold the power. One war was called the “War of Jenkins’s Ear” because the Spanish cut off the ear of a smuggling British sea captain.

The key war in this long list was called the Seven Years’ War in Europe and the French and Indian War

in America. The British colonists called it the French and Indian War because they fought against the French and their Indian allies.

Below: During the French and Indian War, British General Edward Braddock was mortally wounded in a battle near present-day Pittsburgh. His continental style of fighting had made his army an easy target for the French and the Indians. His death and the defeat of his army was a terrible blow to the British.



By the 1750s, the French had pushed into the Ohio River Valley, seeking control of the fur trade there. The British were eyeing the same territory. The British government wanted the fur trade, and its colonists wanted the land. A young George Washington led a troop of Virginians to investigate the French activity near present-day Pittsburgh. He warned the French to get out, but they refused.

When the British tried to force their claims to the area in 1754, the French reacted. This conflict resulted in the French and Indian War. The heaviest fighting between Great Britain and France took place in Canada, which had long been the center of their struggle. In 1758, the French lost Fort Louisburg, which protected the approach to the St. Lawrence River. The loss of this stronghold opened the way to the heart of New France. Quebec fell to the British on September 18, 1759; the French surrendered Montreal almost exactly one year later. The British continued to seize French territory, but fighting shifted to other areas.

Spain entered the war in 1762 to help the French. The kings of France and Spain had signed an agreement to support each other. These royal relatives were cousins, both of the Bourbon dynasty.

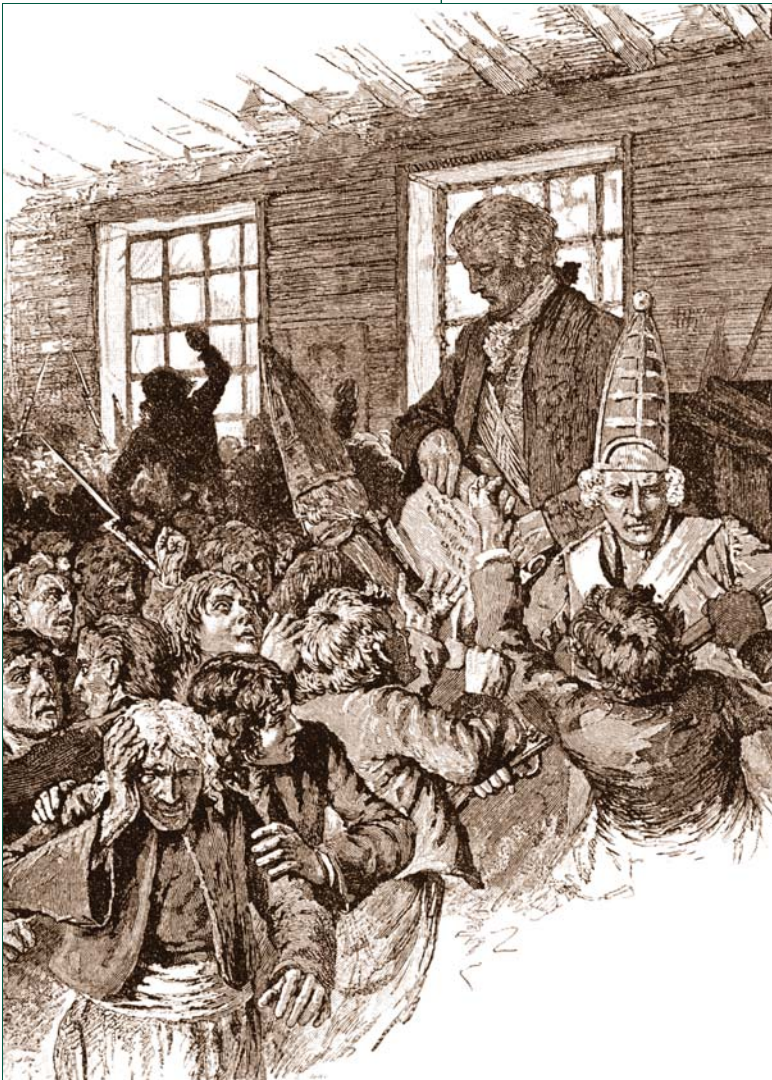
The fighting ended in North America in 1760, but a settlement was not signed until 1763. In the Treaty of Paris, the three European nations divided North America as a war prize. The French lost Canada and all French territory east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain. Spain traded Florida to Great Britain



Map 25 North America after the French and Indian War

Map Skill: What territory did France control after the French and Indian War?

in return for Cuba, which the British had captured during the war. Spain needed its port of Havana back because the silver-laden Spanish ships from Mexico always stopped there before heading home.



Above: The British doubted the loyalty of the French colonists in Acadia (present-day Nova Scotia). In 1755, during the French and Indian War, the British evicted the Acadians from their land. Many eventually found their way to southern Louisiana.

The arrangement was hidden from Great Britain, because it might have affected the war and its results. If Great Britain had known that Louisiana already belonged to Spain, it might have demanded the colony in the war settlement. It did try to bargain for New Orleans, but failed. The capital of the French colony became the capital of Spanish Louisiana.

The new colony would be very expensive for Spain to operate. The military expense alone would be huge; keeping a soldier in Louisiana cost five times as much as in Spain. For its part, Great Britain hoped that operating this expensive colony would further weaken Spain.

Even so, Spain wanted the colony. Louisiana would serve as a buffer and keep the British away from the Spanish silver mines in northern Mexico. Spain's control of the Mississippi River offered even more protection for Mexico. This strategic location made the colony worth the expense to Spain.

The Acadians

The French and Indian War also brought new colonists to Louisiana. The Acadians were exiles from French Acadia, which had become the British Nova Scotia in 1713.

The Acadians were peasants who had come from France to Canada in 1632. In Acadia, their Canadian home, they were hard-working trappers and farmers. The land, their families, and their Catholic faith defined their lives. Even though Canada changed governments several times, the Acadians continued to farm and live their simple lives. They ignored the clashes in Europe that spilled over into North America, until the violent conflict pushed its way into their villages. All around them, the French and English struggled for control of land and forts.

In 1755, early in the French and Indian War, a British officer claimed these farmers were enemies because they refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Protestant British king. The British evicted the Acadians from their land. They were sent to British colonies on the Atlantic coast and told they must "learn to become good British subjects." After the tragic events of this journey and the years following, some Acadians made their way to Louisiana. The first group arrived in 1764.

The king of France had arranged for the Acadians to go to Louisiana but had not provided supplies to help them get settled. The confusion in the colonial

government increased their problems. But the French colonial officials gave the new settlers supplies from the government warehouses and sent them to live in the Attakapa region. The prairies there offered a place to raise livestock, as they had done in their homeland. Other Acadian settlements developed in the colony. More Acadians continued to come to Louisiana after Spain took over the colony. Today Louisiana is home to the descendants of these hardy people.

The Secret Transfer

The French sent a government official to transfer the colony to Spain. When he arrived in 1763, he inspected the colony. In his report to France, he said the government was understaffed and corrupt and the warehouse and the treasury were nearly empty. The French government was almost bankrupt and had sent the colony little other than complaints about its expense.

Because France did not send supplies, the colony asked the British at Pensacola to sell them flour. In addition, the poor conditions made keeping order more difficult. More troops were needed, but France sent none.

The transfer of Louisiana to Spain was kept secret from the colonists while French officials waited for the arrival of the Spanish. This situation lasted for almost two years.

Finally, on September 30, 1764, the French government officially announced the transfer of the colony to Spain. The news had already begun to leak out, and the colonists were very bitter about this betrayal by their country. After they received official word of the transfer, the colonists held a meeting to decide what to do.

Delegates from the colony headed to France to ask the French government to keep the colony. The group's leader was a wealthy merchant, Jean Milhet. He spent almost two years in Paris urging France to keep Louisiana. The eighty-six-year-old Bienville, who had retired to France, tried to help him speak for the colony. The king did not want to hear from his former colonists, and all the other officials refused to help. Back in the colony, the people struggled along, hoping that a change in government would not come.

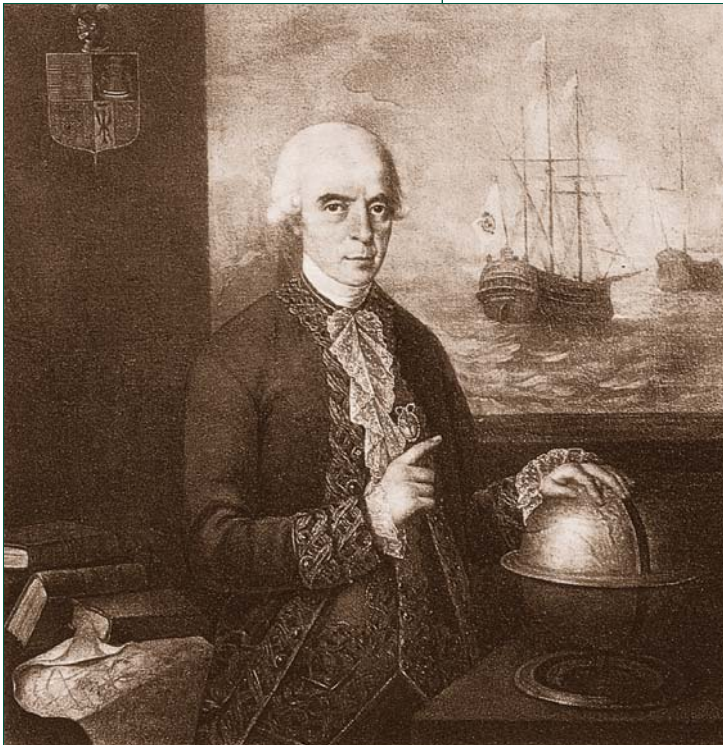
Arrival of the Spanish Governor

The Spanish government sent Antonio de Ulloa (ool YO a) to Louisiana as its governor. Ulloa was a high-ranking and competent naval officer with experience in other Spanish colonies. Unfortunately, he was not a forceful leader but a reserved scientist. His quiet manner and low-key style were not effective with these people who did not accept his authority.

Ulloa arrived on March 5, 1766, with only seventy-five soldiers and one ship. The New Orleans weather that day hinted at his unpleasant stay in the colony. A heavy downpour made his entrance less than dignified. The small number of soldiers made a poor show of strength.



Above: King Carlos III of Spain was the cousin of French King Louis XV and came to his aid during the French and Indian War. To keep Louisiana out of the hands of the British, Louis XV gave the colony to Spain in 1762.



Above: Antonio de Ulloa was the first Spanish governor of Louisiana. A noted scholar, Ulloa tried to impose Spanish trade rules on the colony. That eventually led to a rebellion in 1768.

Lagniappe

Ulloa learned to speak French when he was invited to join a group of scientists on a South American expedition led by the French Royal Academy of Science. The group completed a scientific study to measure the length of the equator.

Arriving with such a small force was not Ulloa's intention. He had asked for seven hundred troops, but was instead told the French soldiers in the colony would join his military forces. But the few French troops considered themselves French, not Spanish, subjects.

Perhaps because he had so few troops, Ulloa did not have the colony formally transferred to Spain when he arrived. Instead of taking official control, he worked with the French officials to conduct the business of the colony. This confused the colonists and encouraged them to think the transfer to Spain might be temporary.

Some of the first changes made were very unpopular. Spain did not believe in helping other nations develop their trade by using Spanish markets. Following orders from Spanish King Carlos III, Ulloa announced that the colony must now follow Spanish trade laws. The colony could trade only with Spanish ports.

To the colonists, the Spanish trade laws meant ruin. While they were under French control, the colonists had traded with the French ports in the Caribbean. They had also carried on a busy but illegal trade with the nearby British colonies. The successful merchants resented the loss of this business.

The Spanish governor's social behavior also offended the colonists. The French governors had held ceremonies and provided formal parties in New Orleans. The social life in the city had been led by the governors, and the French colonists expected this lifestyle to continue. They were also insulted when he had a private wedding and did not invite them.

Because of these problems, the colonists gave Ulloa little credit for his positive actions. To improve the colonists' safety, Ulloa toured and inspected the forts. He communicated with the nearby British governor in West Florida to make a positive connection. Ulloa also sought the goodwill of the Indians. He gave them more gifts than the French had given them, even more than the amount the Spanish government had allotted.

The Rebellion

The people had many concerns about the transfer of the colony to Spain. Would the Spanish culture be forced upon them? Would Spanish become the official language? When they cheered "Long live the king," must they now say *Viva el Rey* instead of *Vive le Roi*?

These fears, the strict enforcement of the Spanish trade laws, and Ulloa's other actions added to the growing complaints. The colonists still considered the colony French because they did not accept the authority of Ulloa. He had

never informed the French Superior Council that he officially accepted the transfer of the colony.

By October 28, 1768, an armed mob had gathered in New Orleans. The merchants of New Orleans and the members of the Superior Council were its organizers. The leaders made sure that all the colonists were represented to show unity. The Germans came because they wanted to be paid for the produce purchased from their farms. The Acadians came because Ulloa had forced some of them to settle near Natchez, instead of allowing them to join relatives near St. Gabriel.

Ulloa could do little to stop the rebellion. He had sent most of the Spanish soldiers to the frontier forts, and only ten were still in New Orleans. The governor took his family and left the city on the only Spanish warship at the dock.

After Ulloa left Louisiana, the people tried to justify their actions to the French king. They wrote a lengthy explanation in “The Memorial of the Planters and Merchants of Louisiana.” The people appealed to the king to return Louisiana to the French family.

Their pleas were ignored. King Louis XV did not want to offend his ally, King Carlos III of Spain. In addition, the colony had always been an expensive burden. Why would the French king want it now?

After this rejection, the leaders of the rebellion knew they would need the protection of a European country. Spain would certainly punish them. So they contacted the British governor at Pensacola and requested help from that government. But King George III was already hearing talk of independence from his own colonies. He would not help these colonists who had shown disrespect to a king.

Arrival of the Military

When Ulloa reached Havana, he sent a report of the rebellion to Spain. The Spanish considered the colonists’ actions to be **treason** (the crime of trying to overthrow the government of one’s own state or country). The rebellious colony must be regained and controlled. A strong and forceful military leader—Alejandro (Alexander) O’Reilly—was selected for this assignment. O’Reilly had been born in Ireland but had come to Spain when he was young. He became a hired soldier, then a hero. He had once saved the king from a mob, proving his bravery and gaining the king’s favor.

Three thousand soldiers and twenty-four ships were sent to enforce the king’s orders. (The total population of New Orleans at that time was less than four thousand.) This mighty fleet arrived in August 1769.

When O’Reilly arrived at the fort south of New Orleans, the ringleaders of the rebellion rushed to tell him their side of the story. O’Reilly politely heard their complaints and their explanation that they had opposed Ulloa but not Spain. They said that because Ulloa had not officially accepted the colony for



Above: In 1768, the citizens of Louisiana appealed to King Louis XV of France to take back control of the colony. He refused.



Above: In 1769, King Carlos III named Alejandro O'Reilly governor of Louisiana and gave him orders to put down the rebellion.

Lagniappe

The trial of the rebels lasted two months. As was Spanish custom, the prisoners and witnesses were questioned secretly, and a judge decided and delivered the verdicts.

Spain, they were not rebelling against the king. Since O'Reilly listened politely, they thought he accepted their statements. They left the fort and returned to New Orleans, thinking they were safe.

O'Reilly headed for New Orleans, to make his next move. He planned his arrival to display the strength and power of Spain. His troops paraded in the Place d'Armes (present-day Jackson Square) while cannons fired. Red and gold flags announced the Spanish presence. The Spanish officials hosted a formal ceremony in the church. A Catholic mass reminded the people of the connection between their religion and the Spanish king's authority. Speeches by O'Reilly and other officials emphasized Spain's control.

To continue his message, O'Reilly reviewed his troops on the parade grounds. This military procedure showed the skill and number of the Spanish soldiers. Backed by his huge army, O'Reilly asserted the power of Spain. Louisiana was now a Spanish colony and must conduct itself properly.

O'Reilly dealt with the rebellious colony as the king expected. After a trial following Spanish laws of the time, the leaders of the rebellion were sentenced to death and others were sent to prison. O'Reilly then pardoned all others who might have been involved and required all colonists to take an oath of allegiance to Spain.

Anyone who was not willing to take the oath had to leave the colony.

The trial and the death sentences angered the colonists. In fact, the French called the Spanish general "Bloody O'Reilly" for years afterward, and New Orleans schoolchildren even memorized a poem about his evil actions. However, at the time, the Spanish king was concerned that the unrest in the British colonies might spread, and he wanted all Spanish colonies to know that rebellion would not be tolerated.

Check for Understanding ✓

1. Why did Spain want the colony?
2. Why were the Acadians driven from their homeland?
3. How did the people in the colony react when they finally learned of the transfer to Spain?
4. What kind of leader was the first Spanish governor?
5. Why did the colonists rebel against Ulloa?
6. How did O'Reilly end the rebellion?