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**SUBJECTS AND CITIZENS:
French Officers and the North American Experience,
1755-1783**

by

MARTIN LATHE NICOLAI

**A thesis submitted to the Department of History
in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada**

April 1992

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ABSTRACT

When the social, political, and economic beliefs of French officers who served in Canada during the Seven Years' War are compared with those of officers who fought in the United States during the War of American Independence, it becomes evident that substantial ideological changes took place in the officer corps between 1760 and 1780. Both groups of Frenchmen rejected the concept of the noble savage and considered "civilization" a more worthy ideal, but their views differed in a number of other respects.

Montcalm's officers defended every detail of the traditional social hierarchy, and displayed deeply conservative values with regards to women, marriage, and other social relationships. They showed no sign of political consciousness, and believed that the state's economic role was to distribute economic privileges to deserving subjects. In addition, despite anticlericalism in their ranks, they did not tolerate popular dissent from the established church.

French officers two decades later, by contrast, were interested in the concepts of liberty and equality before the law, and although they possessed only the first glimmerings of a political consciousness, the new political climate generated a debate about citizenship, what the best institutions were to protect "liberty" in France, and the morality of slavery. Officers remained generally ignorant of economic theory, but they usually supported a free domestic marketplace and in some cases international free trade. In addition, officers had become openly deistic in their attitudes, and attacked almost all aspects of traditional religion. Judging by these changing attitudes, French noblemen in the military were clearly affected by the Enlightenment, and cannot be dismissed as a static, unprogressive element of educated French society.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AN	Archives nationales, Paris.
BN N.A.F.	Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises.
<i>EAMG</i>	Henri-Raymond Casgrain, ed., <i>Extraits des archives des ministères de la Marine et de la Guerre à Paris. Canada: Correspondance générale, MM. Duquesne et Vaudreuil gouverneurs-généraux, 1755-1760.</i>
<i>JSAP</i>	<i>Journal de la Société des américanistes de Paris.</i>
<i>Lévis MSS</i>	Henri-Raymond Casgrain, ed., <i>Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis.</i>
<i>MAH</i>	<i>Magazine of American History</i>
<i>MRNF</i>	Jean Blanchet and Narcisse-Henri-Édouard, Faucher de Saint-Maurice, eds., <i>Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires, et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France, recueillis aux archives de la Province de Québec ou copiés à l'étranger.</i>
NA	National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
<i>NYCD</i>	Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., <i>Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York.</i>
<i>PMHB</i>	<i>Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography.</i>
<i>RAPQ</i>	<i>Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec.</i>
<i>RPBSO</i>	<i>Revue philomathique de Bordeaux et du Sud-ouest.</i>
SHAT	Service historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes.
<i>WMQ</i>	<i>William and Mary Quarterly.</i>

INTRODUCTION

The French military expeditions to North America during the Seven Years' War and War of American Independence provide an excellent opportunity to analyze the ideological development of the French officer corps during the decades leading up to the French Revolution. Between 1755 and 1760 4,300 French line troops led by 316 officers served in Canada under the successive command of Major-General Johann Hermann, Freiherr (Baron) von Dieskau (1755), Lieutenant-General Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm (1756-1759), and Major-General François-Gaston, Chevalier de Lévis (1759-1760).¹ The French army fought six hard campaigns in Canada, but was finally forced to capitulate in September 1760. The French prisoners were subsequently transported home on condition that they not serve again for the duration of the war.

During the early years of the War of American Independence, between 1775 and 1779, at least 87 French officers arrived in the new United States and offered their services to the Continental Congress, the most famous of them being Captain Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette. These officers, often unemployed or unable to afford anything but a lieutenant's commission, hoped to obtain high rank, remuneration, military experience, glory, and the opportunity to fight France's hereditary

¹ William J. Eccles, "The French Forces in North America during the Seven Years' War", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)*, 3: xviii-xx; René Chartrand, *The French Soldier in Colonial America* (Ottawa: Museum Restoration Service, 1984), p. 32; and Susan W. Henderson, "The French Regular Officer Corps in Canada, 1755-1760: A Group Portrait" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maine, Orono, 1975), p. 111.

enemies. A few of them also desired the honour of defending American liberty. In 1779, a year after France formally entered the war, a force of 5,000 troops and 272 officers commanded by Vice-Admiral Charles-Henri-Jean-Baptiste, Comte d'Estaing, cruised off Rhode Island and later took part in the unsuccessful siege of Savannah. When it became evident that more substantial aid was required to save the American Patriots from defeat, Louis XVI dispatched an even larger army in 1780. The main force, under Lieutenant-General Jean-Baptiste-Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, was conveyed to Rhode Island by Rear-Admiral Charles-Henry-Louis d'Arsac, Chevalier de Ternay, and the following year more troops under Major-General Claude-Anne de Rouvroy, Marquis de Saint-Simon Montblieru, were brought up from the West Indies by Lieutenant-General François-Joseph-Paul, Comte de Grasse, to join Rochambeau in Virginia. When concentrated at Yorktown, Rochambeau's command numbered 8,000 men and 746 officers, and in company with the French fleet it played a decisive role in bringing about the surrender of Cornwallis' army. If the volunteers are included, and officers who served under both d'Estaing and Rochambeau are counted only once, some 980 French army officers took part in the War of American Independence.² Numerous French naval officers also visited the United States while serving with fleets operating off the American coast under d'Estaing, Ternay, and Grasse.

Officers in both expeditions belonged to the educated elite of the most culturally influential nation in Europe, and they brought with them a tradition of journal writing, sometimes in the form of a series of letters to a real or fictional person in Europe. Since in wartime the flow of transatlantic mail was vulnerable to British naval vessels and other maritime hazards, keeping a journal which would eventually be shown to one's family was often as useful as writing letters which might or might not reach their destination. In a few cases, journals were written with future publication in mind. Other officers wrote their memoirs in later years using notes or a rough

² Gilbert Bodinier, *Dictionnaire des officiers de l'armée royale qui ont combattu aux Etats-Unis pendant la guerre d'Indépendance, 1776-1783* (Vincennes: Service historique de l'Armée de Terre, 1983), pp. i-ii.

journal they had kept during their stay. Individual letters which have survived were usually addressed to the Ministry of Marine or to other officials, but there are instances when letters sent to private individuals have been preserved in family archives. When units of an army were widely dispersed, as was frequently the case in Canada, a large number of dispatches and orders passed between the various local commanders and between the staffs of the respective detachments, often containing personal messages and various gossip in addition to military reports and orders. In addition, the Minister of Marine received correspondence not only from the commanding general, but also from individual officers who readily criticized their superiors, gave their own version of events, and made repeated requests for promotion. The volunteers, who served in the United States mainly in order to obtain promotion or employment in the French army, were particularly prolific in their reports on the situation overseas, their own distinguished role in events, and desire to return to the French service with the same high rank that they enjoyed in the Continental army or state militia. Montcalm and Rochambeau also regularly corresponded with their immediate respective superiors, Vaudreuil and Washington.

French officers are an important source for the study of eighteenth-century North America because these men were literate visitors from a distant country. Not only could they write with relative ease, but as visitors unfamiliar with the continent they were more inclined than local peoples to describe their surroundings. This was especially true in wartime, for officers' professional and patriotic concern about French power and influence meant that they needed to understand their allies and enemies and calculate the potential of these two groups for aiding or harming French interests. Most important for this study, the fact that French officers were forced to deal with the formidable social, political, economic, and military systems of their British and American rivals obliged many of them to define their own values and aspirations.

The common people in English America were literate while commoners in France and Canada were not, and the Canadian elite was even less inclined than the American upper classes to write about their country and society, so French officers are particularly important for the

study of Canada during the French regime. While numerous American veterans of the War of American Independence left accounts of their experiences in the ranks of Washington's army, not a single letter written by a private soldier in either Montcalm's or Rochambeau's line regiments has ever been found. There is one fascinating case of a memoir written by an anonymous Parisian artillery gunner, military secretary, and storekeeper in the *Compagnies franches de la Marine* or colonial regulars in Canada during the Seven Years' War, but this enterprising author, who was more of a *petit bourgeois* than a member of the popular classes, was clearly a rare exception to the rule.³ Since the vast majority of colonial officers in Canada and many of those in Île Royale and Louisiana were Canadians of the seigneurial class, only a handful of French officers in the colonial regulars appear in this study. Occasional references have been made to accounts by persons who are not officially part of this study in order to help reinforce certain arguments. For example, in early chapters there are references to the journal of an army captain in the disastrous expedition led by Lieutenant-General Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Frédéric de La Rochefoucauld de Roye, Duc d'Anville, to recapture Louisbourg in 1746. In addition, the reports of one or two French officers who were sent to assess American defences and political sentiments between the wars are employed.

A total of 140 individual officers are included in this study. Some 23 of Montcalm's 316 officers left a record of their stay, as did 77 of the 980 volunteers and army officers who served during the American War of Independence. By coincidence, 8% of Montcalm's officers and 8% of the volunteers and Rochambeau's officers left known written sources. The 23 individuals from the Seven Years' War include 4 generals, 8 staff officers, and 11 regimental officers. In the latter category are two captains in the corps of engineers and one artillery lieutenant. One of the staff officers, Montcalm's aide-de-camp Lieutenant James Johnstone, known as the Chevalier de Johnstone, and an officer with a commission in the Régiment de La Sarre, Lieutenant

³ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, ed. Sylvester K. Stevens, Donald H. Kent, and Emma E. Woods (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1941).

Michel-Guillaume Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, were colonial regular officers incorporated into the line army during the war. Four naval officers, military engineer Colonel Louis Franquet, who took part in the Siege of Louisbourg in 1758, and Captain Jean-Bernard Bossu, who belonged to the Louisiana colonial regulars during the conflict, bring the total number of sources from the Seven Years' War to 29 individuals, 30 if we include the anonymous artillery gunner.

The sources for the American War of Independence are three times as numerous because of the proportionally larger size of the expedition. They include 5 generals, 15 staff officers, and 40 regimental officers, among them 7 engineers, 2 artillery officers, and an army chaplain. There are also 17 volunteers--20 if three who also served in Rochambeau's army are included--and 33 naval officers, making a total of 110 sources. The proportion of staff officers among the sources is evident. A remarkable 52% of the Seven Years' War army officers were generals or staff officers and a comparable 50% of the army officers in the War of American Independence fall in this category. Well-educated officers from wealthy, prestigious noble families were slightly more likely than officers from poorer and less prestigious noble families to leave accounts, but all ranks and social backgrounds are represented to some extent. A full 22% of Montcalm's army officer sources were bourgeois, including two of Montcalm's aides de camp--Johnstone and Pierre Marcel--two of his war commissaries, and Captain Pierre Pouchot of the Régiment de Béarn, the son of a merchant. Bourgeois sources are less common among Rochambeau's officers, but they form a significant proportion of those among the volunteers. According to Bodinier, 23% of the 980 volunteers and army officers in the second conflict were bourgeois.⁴

A significant proportion of the officers in the expeditionary forces were foreigners. Dieskau was a Saxon, Johnstone was a Scottish Jacobite, and the sources for Rochambeau's army include three Germans, two Swiss, and two Swedes as well as a third-generation Irishman. One of Rochambeau's regiments, Royal Deux-Ponts, was a German unit raised in the Duchy of Zweibrücken. These foreign officers sometimes had a slightly different perspective than French

⁴ Bodinier. *Les officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 83.

officers. Johnstone, for instance, was more willing to criticize discipline among Montcalm's regulars, and the Germans had interesting comments about Pennsylvania Germans and other Protestants in the United States. Despite the fact that so many of these foreign officers, in particular German ones--who came from client states on the French frontier and were completely at home in a French cultural milieu--shared so many assumptions about society and politics with their French colleagues, their backgrounds have to be taken into account when their views are discussed. As members of the French military and as Europeans, however, they complement rather than detract from the views of ethnically French officers.

The character and background of each individual officer has to be assessed separately in order to relate that person to the subgroup to which he nominally belongs and to the rest of the corps. Although there are imbalances in the numbers of officers in various categories, a sufficiently numerous and varied sample of officers exists to permit cautious generalizations about most subgroups of officers. Since bourgeois officers were a clear minority in the corps and were not particularly representative of the Third Estate, it is dangerous to try to apply their attitudes to those of their civilian counterparts, but it is easier to develop parallels between the officer corps and the nobility. On the whole, it is possible, by taking into account the actual representation of each group in the expeditionary corps, to make quite solid conclusions concerning the attitudes of the more educated officers in each expedition, and some tentative conclusions about the entire officer corps during each period. The fact that sources for both groups of officers are biased in the same way, toward more wealthy, educated officers, helps to maintain a standard of comparison between the two groups.

One serious problem is that of the 140 officers in the study, a large proportion left only a few letters or brief chronologies of their experiences, and even when they wrote more, their comments were devoted almost entirely to military matters. Naval officers and some of the army officers who served at Savannah and Yorktown were on land for only a few weeks, and the army officers were in camps largely segregated from American troops and civilians. Even if they did

see Americans they could not easily communicate with them because of the language barrier. Some gave detailed accounts of the Siege of Yorktown with barely a mention of American participation beyond the presence of George Washington. Since this study is concerned primarily with cultural, social, political, and economic matters, the sources which deal with such issues at length are extremely valuable. Inevitably, there is again a bias in favour of literary-minded officers who took the trouble of going beyond the usual litanies of how far the army marched each day, what towns they passed through, and complaints about the high cost of living, boredom, the heat, lack of mail from France, and the problems of "roughing it" with only one servant and limited baggage. As a result, the more valuable sources must be used in conjunction with small quantities of information from the other less detailed accounts. All of these factors have to be carefully weighed when making any generalizations.

For obvious reasons, it is virtually pointless to attempt a quantitative study of officers' views on North America. Interpreting ephemeral attitudes is difficult enough in our own day of sophisticated, statistically-accurate polls; for the eighteenth century the task is much more challenging. Nevertheless, all historians have to deal with the incomplete evidence of the past in the best manner possible. And in this case, it is important to realize that these wandering Frenchmen possess at least one important asset. Whether or not we agree with what these officers said, or whether we believe that they spoke for all of their comrades, these men usually wrote what they believed was true. An historian cannot really ask for more.

In order to understand the significance of this study, it is worthwhile reviewing some of the relevant historiography. Since the ideological development of the French nobility is the central theme of the following chapters, work on the French nobility and the ideological origins of the French Revolution will be dealt with first. Next, historiographical perspectives on the French image of the aboriginal, Canadian, and American inhabitants of North America during the eighteenth century will be briefly examined. Of particular relevance to this study are

interpretations of officers' involvement in and attitudes toward the American and French Revolutions. Finally, historiographical interpretations of French economic and colonial thought during these decades will be discussed in order to prepare the way for an eventual examination of these issues in the context of the French officer corps.

One of the most interesting developments in historiographical interpretations of the half century prior to the French Revolution has been the radical change in perceptions of the nobility's relationship with the bourgeoisie and its role in bringing about the Revolution. This important shift in emphasis has regenerated scholarly interest in nobles because the nobility is no longer seen as a static, homogeneous force completely opposed to the Revolution, but as a diverse collection of active participants in its intellectual and political origins and subsequent history.

Until 1960, Marxist and liberal historians alike portrayed the French nobility in the eighteenth century as fanatical reactionaries, defending their privileges against all other sectors of society and obstructing government reforms through their monopoly in the parlements. In the end, the Marxist Georges Lefebvre argued in his widely-acclaimed classic *Quatre-Vingt-Neuf*, their short-sighted greed brought about the collapse of the regime and allowed the powerful, progressive-minded capitalist bourgeoisie to take control of the state.⁵ Historians of the right and left in France disagreed about the benefits of the Revolution, but they all believed that the rise of the bourgeoisie, the Enlightenment, which they saw as a product of bourgeois aspirations, and the obstructionism of the feudal nobility led to the upheaval.⁶ In 1955 Alfred Cobban attacked

⁵ Georges Lefebvre, *Quatre-Vingt-Neuf* (Paris: Université de Paris, 1939). This work was published in English in 1947 as *The Coming of the French Revolution*. Lefebvre's interpretation was popular because of the author's undogmatic tone and his depiction of the Revolution as unfolding in four simple, distinct stages as the nobility, the bourgeoisie, the people of Paris, and finally the peasants claimed or attempted to claim their rights.

⁶ See Jean L. Jaurès, *La Constituante (1789-1791)* (Paris: J. Rouff, 1901) and Albert Mathiez, *La Révolution française* (Paris: A. Colin, 1948) for other twentieth-century left-wing interpretations of the Revolution, and Pierre Gaxotte, *La Révolution française* (Paris: A. Fayard, 1928); Bernard Fay, *La grande révolution* (Paris: Le livre contemporain, 1959); and Frédéric Braesch, *1789: L'Année cruciale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1941) for contemporary conservative interpretations.

the Marxist interpretation of the bourgeoisie as a class of prosperous capitalists overthrowing feudalism, arguing that by 1789 the system which could be defined as feudalism was long gone. He also maintained that bourgeois who provided political leadership during the Revolution were often *rentiers* in increasingly difficult economic circumstances who had no desire to abolish the seigneurial rights and other privileges which they benefitted from. Nevertheless, he did not challenge the traditional interpretation of the nobility.⁷ Nor did François Furet and Denis Richet in their 1965 revisionist attack on Albert Soboul's Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution.⁸ In 1953, however, two studies cast new light on the French nobility. Franklin Ford's *Sword and Robe* stressed for the first time divisions within the nobility, but he reinforced the idea that the nobility and bourgeoisie were deeply at odds over economic and political issues.⁹ John McManners, however, argued that wealth, not privilege, was the key social factor in late Ancien Régime France and that the great nobles and upper bourgeoisie belonged to an upper class united by money.¹⁰ Unfortunately, McManners' work was largely ignored, as were the findings of Jean Egret, who in his study of the parlements suggested that the "noble reaction" which was believed to have precipitated the Revolution was not as reactionary as previously thought.¹¹

It was not until 1960 that the traditional interpretation of the French nobility really began to crumble. Robert Forster published a study of the nobility of Toulouse and demonstrated that they were not as economically eclipsed by the bourgeoisie as other historians had suggested. Far from being decadent spendthrifts or living in genteel poverty, they effectively outclassed local

⁷ See Alfred Cobban, *The Myth of the French Revolution* (London: H. K. Lewis, 1955) and Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

⁸ François Furet and Denis Richet, *La Révolution française*, 2 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1965) and Albert Soboul, *Précis d'histoire de la Révolution française* (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1962).

⁹ Franklin Ford, *Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953).

¹⁰ John McManners, "France", in *The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century: Studies of the Nobilities of the Major European States in the Pre-Reform Era*, ed. Albert Goodwin (London: Black, 1953), pp. 22-42.

¹¹ Jean Egret, "L'Aristocratie parlementaire française à la fin de l'Ancien Régime", *Revue historique* 208 (1952): 1-14.

bourgeois in every capitalist enterprise, carefully and prudently managed their estates, offices, and family fortunes over the generations, and espoused all of the so-called bourgeois virtues. In subsequent years Forster published studies on the nobility in other parts of France and reinforced his theme that they shared many economic interests with the bourgeoisie.¹² Forster's views received support from Betty Behrens, who believed that the urban bourgeoisie had more fiscal privileges than the nobility and that most of society was privileged in one way or another. Although her views did not go unchallenged, Behrens encouraged more research in this field.¹³ Soon afterward, Elizabeth Eisenstein revealed that many members of the radical Committee of Thirty were in fact noblemen, undermining the theory that the attack on privilege was organized entirely by the bourgeoisie.¹⁴

In a series of very important articles published between 1964 and 1972 George V. Taylor pushed the argument further by stating that wealth in Ancien Régime France was almost entirely non-capitalist in origin and that proprietary wealth was dominant even among the upper bourgeoisie, making the nobility and bourgeoisie economically a single group. He proposed that the confrontation between the Second and Third Estates in 1789 had a political rather than an economic origin, arguing that the radical social and political reforms which followed the formation of the National Assembly were the result of a political crisis and had little connection with the conservative demands found in the *cahiers* of the Third Estate.¹⁵ Other local studies on

¹² Robert Forster, *The Nobility of Toulouse in the Eighteenth Century: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960); Robert Forster, "The Noble Wine Producers of the Bordelais in the Eighteenth Century", *Economic History Review* 14 (1961): 18-33; and Robert Forster, "The Provincial Noble: A Reappraisal", *American Historical Review* 68 (1962-63): 681-91.

¹³ Catherine Betty A. Behrens, "Nobles, Privileges and Taxes in France at the End of the Ancien Régime", *Economic History Review* 15 (1962-63): 451-75 and Catherine Betty A. Behrens, *The Ancien Régime* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967). See also Gerald J. Cavanaugh, "Nobles, Privileges and Taxes in France: A Revision Reviewed", *French Historical Studies* 8 (1974): 681-92.

¹⁴ Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "Who Intervened in 1788? A Commentary on *The Coming of the French Revolution*", *American Historical Review* 71 (1965): 77-103.

¹⁵ George V. Taylor, "Types of Capitalism in Eighteenth Century France", *English Historical Review* 79 (1964): 478-97; George V. Taylor, "Noncapitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution", *American Historical Review* 72 (1967): 469-96; and George V. Taylor, "Revolutionary and Nonrevolutionary Content in the Cahiers of 1789: An Interim Report", *French Historical Studies* 7 (1972): 479-502.

capitalism and the wealth of the elite in pre-revolutionary times appeared in subsequent years.¹⁶ In France, meanwhile, Furet and Richet attempted to force Soboul and other followers of Marxist orthodoxy to take notice of the new historiography appearing outside of their country.¹⁷

It was increasingly evident that Ancien Régime society had to be seen as a complex of orders rather than as a neat division into classes, and that the nobility and bourgeoisie were divided into a large number of competing subgroups.¹⁸ Jean Meyer revealed the tensions between rich and poor nobles in Brittany and their mutual antagonism toward the court nobility and Bailey Stone discussed the delicate relations between nobles of the robe in the parlements and nobles of the sword on the eve of the Revolution.¹⁹ David Bien, in turn, undermined the idea that the Ségur ordinance of 1781, which limited entry to the officer corps to noblemen with four generations of noble ancestry, was a manifestation of the "noble reaction". He argued that the ordinance was not specifically aimed at bourgeois officers but at nobles of the robe.²⁰ Another historian, William Doyle, came to the conclusion that the noble reaction was in fact a dispute between different groups of nobles.²¹

¹⁶ See Olwen H. Hufton, *Bayeux in the Later Eighteenth Century: A Social Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Jean Sentou, *Fortunes et groupes sociaux à Toulouse sous la Révolution (1789-1799): Essai d'histoire statistique* (Toulouse: E. Privat, 1969); Maurice Garden, *Lyon et les Lyonnais au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1970); Jean-Pierre Poussou, "Les structures démographiques et sociales", in *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle*, ed. François-Georges Pariset (Bordeaux: Fédération historique du Sud-Ouest, 1968), pp. 325-69; and Yves Durand, *Les fermiers-généralistes au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971).

¹⁷ See Denis Richet, "Autour des origines idéologiques lointaines de la Révolution française: Élitisme et despotisme", *Annales: Économies sociétés civilisations* (*Annales*) 24 (1969): 1-23; François Furet, "Le catéchisme révolutionnaire", *Annales* 27 (1971): 255-89; and Denis Richet, *La France moderne: L'esprit des institutions* (Paris: Flammarion, 1973).

¹⁸ For notable work on the theory of orders see Roland Mousnier, *Les Hiérarchies sociales de 1450 à nos jours* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1969) and Roland Mousnier, *La Société française de 1770 à 1789* (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, 1970).

¹⁹ Jean Meyer, *La Noblesse Bretonne au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: S.E.P.E.N., 1966) and Bailey Stone, "Robe against Sword: The Parlement of Paris and the French Aristocracy, 1774-1789", *French Historical Studies* 9 (1975): 278-303.

²⁰ David D. Bien, "La réaction aristocratique avant 1789: L'exemple de l'armée", *Annales* 24 (1974): 23-48, 505-34 and David D. Bien, "The Army in the French Enlightenment: Reform, Reaction and Revolution", *Past and Present* 85 (1979): 68-98.

²¹ William Doyle, "Was There an Aristocratic Reaction in Pre-Revolutionary France?", *Past and Present* 57 (1972): 97-122.

The most influential study of the French nobility published during the last two decades is Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret's *La Noblesse au XVIIIe siècle*, which appeared in 1976.²² This relatively short survey takes into account all of the scholarship of the previous two decades and examines the social and economic status of the nobility and its close relationship with the bourgeoisie. Chaussinand-Nogaret's concluding chapter presents the first detailed analysis of the *cahiers de doléances* of the nobility, and he concludes that the majority of the nobility demanded reforms which equalled or even went beyond the reforms considered in the *cahiers* of the Third Estate. The nobles favoured regular sessions of the Estates-General, the doubling of the Third Estate, and were not opposed to voting by head rather than by order if the Third Estate strongly desired such an arrangement. They also requested equality of taxation, equality before the law, and the abolition of archaic seigneurial dues which did not fall in the category of rent payments. Chaussinand-Nogaret discusses the cooperation between nobles and bourgeois in drawing up their *cahiers* and how liberal and more conservative noble delegates differed primarily over strategy rather than in attitudes toward reform. This important study places in doubt the contention that the nobility and bourgeoisie were enemies with fundamental social and economic differences, but Chaussinand-Nogaret occasionally exaggerates the harmony between the two groups, and his assertions require some modification.

By the 1970's, historians had established that the nobility and bourgeoisie shared many common interests and opinions, but they had not successfully explained why these groups suddenly turned against one another in 1789. Colin Lucas proposed in 1973 that although the two groups belonged to a single propertied elite, when the Parlement of Paris called for the Estates-General to meet according to the forms of 1614, artificially subordinating the middle and lower sections of the elite, where the bourgeois were concentrated, to all strata of the nobility, the

²² Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *La noblesse au XVIIIe siècle: De la féodalité aux lumières* (Paris: Hachette, 1976). An English edition has subsequently appeared: *The French Nobility in the Eighteenth Century: Feudalism to the Enlightenment*, trans. Robert R. Palmer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). This book replaces Henri-P.-M.-F. Caré, *La noblesse de France et l'opinion publique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Librairie ancienne Honoré Champion, 1920).

bourgeois fought to retain their share of power.²³ William Doyle explored further the idea that the abolition of privilege in 1789 was the confirmation of social reality, and concluded that the reforms were meant to ensure that France was led by notables or men of property rather than noblemen and an arbitrary monarchy. In his opinion, the notables considered the Revolution over by the end of August 1789, once they had enshrined their principles in the decree abolishing feudalism and in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen and established their authority across the country.²⁴

Recent studies by François Furet, Lynn Hunt, Donald M. G. Sutherland, John F. Boshier, William Doyle, and Simon Schama do not contest the idea that Patriot notables, noble and bourgeois, attempted to establish a set of mutually satisfactory reforms in 1789.²⁵ They differ, however, over the ideas and forces which drove the Revolution onward. Furet proposes that a “revolutionary discourse”, in particular a “discourse of equality”, produced ideas and actions beyond original intentions, and that war radicalized the Revolution, producing a war for equality--the Terror. A more flexible approach, provided by Lynn Hunt, takes the pre-Revolutionary period more into account. She suggests that “political culture” provides a better framework to explain the causes and effects of the Revolution, arguing that a political vocabulary which appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century was further defined by rhetoric, ritual, and symbols during the Revolution itself. Hunt’s views are not contradicted by Sutherland, but he sees circumstance, the fear of counterrevolution, as the force behind events from the Third Estate’s attack on the Second Estate in 1789 until the fall of Napoleon’s empire.

²³ Colin Lucas, “Nobles, Bourgeois and the Origins of the French Revolution”, *Past and Present* 60 (1973): 84-126.

²⁴ William Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980).

²⁵ François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978); Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Donald M. G. Sutherland, *France, 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (London: Fontana Press, 1986); John F. Boshier, *The French Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988); William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1989).

This thesis works better for some periods of the Revolution than others, however, and Bosher and Doyle prefer a more pragmatic, non-dialectical approach to events. Schama perhaps goes furthest in portraying the reign of Louis XVI as a period of reform, with the Revolution completing rather than initiating major institutional changes. He also provides a very generous image of a reforming nobility, inspired to a great degree by the work of Patrice L. R. Higonnet on the nobility during the revolutionary period.²⁶ Even when Furet's thesis concerning the radical transformation of ideas after 1789 is taken into account, it is evident that the evolution of ideas before that date had a considerable impact on the nature of the Revolution. The Enlightenment therefore remains an important field of study for historians interested in the French Revolution.

The most influential study of the intellectual origins of the French Revolution was written by Daniel Mornet in 1933.²⁷ By studying a wide array of literature, and not only the works of the principal *philosophes*, Mornet found that the climate of opinion in the decades prior to the Revolution became increasingly hostile to the traditional order. He distinguished three phases: attacks on organized religion between 1715 and 1747, criticisms of society and the state between 1748 and 1770, and finally a diffusion of the educated elite's critical attitudes to the provinces and all social orders during the last two decades of the Ancien Régime. Mornet denied that the *philosophes* were revolutionary or that the Revolution was a masonic plot. Simply, in 1789 an intellectual climate existed which was favourable to radical change and contributed to events once the old order began to collapse for other reasons. In 1949 Henri Peyre followed up with an essay in which he argued that Enlightenment ideas ended the French people's age-old belief that society would never change, making the idea of revolution possible.²⁸

²⁶ Patrice L. R. Higonnet, *Class, Ideology, and the Rights of Nobles during the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

²⁷ Daniel Mornet, *Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution française 1715-1787* (Paris: A. Colin, 1933).

²⁸ Henri Peyre, "The Influence of Eighteenth-Century Ideas on the French Revolution", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 10 (1949): 63-87.

While Lefebvre and other Marxists saw the Enlightenment as the ideology of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, revisionist historians went even beyond Mornet in denying the importance of intellectual factors in actually precipitating the Revolution.²⁹ By the end of his career even Soboul was admitting that the *philosophes* included both noblemen and bourgeois, that probably all of them enjoyed some privileges and proprietary revenue, and that their ideas were essentially non-revolutionary.³⁰ Nevertheless, historians of the French Revolution have continued to return to the Enlightenment for answers. Paul Hazard produced a superb survey of European Enlightenment thought in 1963, but Norman Hampson's study of 1968, which focused on France, probably had more influence in the English-speaking world.³¹ Hampson argued that by 1760 the optimism which writers expressed about man and society had turned to pessimism, and that a debate between proponents of these opposing philosophical perspectives continued until the end of the century. The more immediate pre-Revolutionary period was examined by Robert Darnton, who after producing a fascinating study of Mesmerism, focused on the radical pamphleteers of the 1770's and 1780's, who in their effort to distinguish themselves from the great *philosophes* of the "heroic" Enlightenment, began to reject the Enlightenment's ideal of an enlightened natural elite at the head of society in favour of a more spartan, strictly egalitarian vision of the future where "the People" were in control.³² In step with the ideas of Furet and Hunt, Keith M. Baker discussed the development of "political culture" and "political

²⁹ See Joan McDonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution 1762-1791* (London: Athlone Press, 1965), who denies that Rousseau or the Enlightenment had a direct impact on the revolutionaries, and a strong criticism of this stand in L. A. Leigh, review of *Rousseau and Revolution 1762-1791*, by Joan McDonald, in *Historical Journal* 12 (1969): 561-63.

³⁰ Albert Soboul, "Les philosophes, l'Ancien Régime, et la Révolution", *Canadian Journal of History* 17 (1982): 409-23.

³¹ Paul Hazard, *La pensée européenne au XVIIIe siècle: De Montesquieu à Lessing* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963) and Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1968).

³² Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) and Robert Darnton, "The High Enlightenment and the Low Life of Literature in Pre-Revolutionary France", *Past and Present* 51 (1971): 81-115. See also Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) and Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

discourse" in pre-Revolutionary France in three important articles published between 1978 and 1982.³³ He sees the 1750's and 1760's as a crucial period in the development of a French political consciousness, and believes that the essential elements of the ideas of 1789 were already in circulation by the early 1770's.

The general consensus about the origins of the French Revolution--so far as one can refer to a consensus in such a lively historiographical field--is that social, economic, and intellectual factors played only an indirect role in bringing about the Revolution, but that these factors were crucial in shaping revolutionary change. Recent historians have tended to see the Revolution itself as a predominantly political series of conflicts, a power struggle between elements of France's social elite. This may be true, but politics cannot be divorced from their social and economic context and all factors have to be examined in order to arrive at a better understanding of the Revolution. The political clash at the convening of the Estates-General was rooted in differing interests and misunderstandings of those interests, and it is important to explore the nature of noble and bourgeois social and political consciousness in the decades prior to the Revolution. In light of the work of Chaussinand-Nogaret, Bien, Higonnet, and others, it is crucial that noble perceptions of other noblemen, of bourgeois, and the common people as well as their concepts of privilege and equality, the nature and role of government, and of reform be more clearly defined. We should attempt to discover, in addition, to what extent the nobility was affected by Enlightenment ideas, and in what period. A useful way to examine both the effect of Enlightenment ideas on the nobility and the changes in the elite's consciousness is to apply Daniel Mornet's and Keith Baker's theses concerning the evolving intellectual climate during the eighteenth century to French officers who participated in the expeditions to North America during this period.

³³ Keith M. Baker, "French Political Thought at the Accession of Louis XVI". *Journal of Modern History* 50 (1978): 279-303; Keith M. Baker, "A Script for the French Revolution: The Political Consciousness of abbé Mably". *Eighteenth Century Studies* 14 (1981): 235-63; and Keith M. Baker, "On the Problem of the Ideological Origins of the French Revolution". in *Modern European Intellectual History: Appraisals and New Perspectives*, ed. Dominick La Capra and Steven L. Kaplan (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp. 197-219.

Studies devoted to French perceptions of Indians and Canadians during the eighteenth century are extremely rare; they are far outnumbered by books dealing with French attitudes toward the American Colonies and the United States. Gilbert Chinard, who deals mainly with French literary images of Indians, stresses the utopian character of most of these works, which he argues mainly served as means of attacking the alleged evil, corruption, and distorted morality of French society. With some reason, he believed that even the most scholarly Jesuits in Canada described Indians in the context of French literary themes.³⁴ Similarly, Durand Echeverria, who focuses on French perceptions of American society, argues, with some references to La Fayette and Rochambeau's officers, that Frenchmen always viewed Americans through the prism of French values and saw only what they wanted to see rather than reality.³⁵ It is true that travellers, upon arriving in a new country, will analyze that new society in terms of their own, but Echeverria, like Chinard, tends to exaggerate the poor judgement of French observers who actually visited North America. French officers, like Jesuits, were educated and generally pragmatic men, and while a few lived in a fantasy world while they were abroad, most did not. Few officers were inclined to idealize the local Indians, as many French literary figures were inclined to. In addition, Montcalm's officers found a solid and relatively familiar point of reference in Canadian society and institutions, and this contributed to a realistic assessment of their surroundings. This was nearly as true for Rochambeau's officers, especially after two winters in the country, because they found many familiar British institutions and cultural characteristics which they could understand and build upon. It is important to realize that many of their myths concerning the United States, especially the idea that it was a precarious haven of virtue and liberty which might lose its democratic character once civilization and corruption set in, were hopes and fears also shared by many American leaders. As outsiders, the Frenchmen were

³⁴ Gilbert Chinard, *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique dans la littérature française au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1913).

³⁵ Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). See also Edith Phillips, *The Good Quaker in French Legend* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932).

sometimes able to judge North Americans more realistically than the local inhabitants themselves. Important qualifications have to be made about the extent to which Frenchmen suffered from delusions while absent from their homeland; their cultural assumptions were not necessarily completely out of touch with North American realities.³⁶

Since the 1950's, historians of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Canada and American Colonies have moved away from a focus on what was unique about Canadians and Americans toward a realization that North Americans had much in common with their French and British cousins across the Atlantic. The influence of the *Annales* school produced a wave of demographic studies on early Canadian and New England communities, and this work demonstrated just how closely settlers replicated the society which they had left behind.³⁷ With few exceptions, historians placed emphasis on such themes as social hierarchy, deference, patriarchy, class conflict, social, religious, and ethnic tensions, and urban and rural economic stagnation and decline, demonstrating that neither Canadians nor Americans enjoyed unqualified equality and opportunity. These differences and similarities between North America and Europe mean that French officers were able to encounter institutions, customs, and ideas which they were at least partially able to relate to, and yet were sufficiently different that they could not pass over them without comment. In the process, they indicated what their own values were.

³⁶ For an excellent examination of French perceptions of the United States during the years after the American Revolution see Peter P. Hill, *French Perceptions of the Early American Republic, 1783-1793* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988).

³⁷ Examples of these studies include Marcel Trudel, *The Beginnings of New France 1524-1663*, trans. Patricia Claxton (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973); Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1974); Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970); Philip P. Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970); Edward M. Cook, *The Fathers of the Towns: Leadership and Community Structure in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); and Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976). See also Jack P. Greene and Jack R. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

Literature on the involvement of Montcalm's officers in the Seven Years' War focuses almost exclusively on military matters and the poor relations between Montcalm and Governor-General Pierre de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil.³⁸ One exception to this rule is Susan Henderson's Ph.D. dissertation, a quantitative analysis of the geographic and social origins of Montcalm's officers and their rates of promotion. Henderson provides a detailed analysis of the Montcalm-Vaudreuil debate, but she also mentions some of the officers' impressions of Canadian society.³⁹

Historiography on French involvement in the American War of Independence is more prolific, fueled by a fascination with the Marquis de La Fayette. In contrast to the material on Canada and the Seven Years' War, however, practically all of this work has a strong political component due to a conviction among many French and American historians that the French Revolution was the direct result of the ideology and example of the American Revolution. Some moral and political themes were already apparent when François Soulès wrote the first history of the French involvement in the American Revolution in 1787, two years before the fall of the Bastille.⁴⁰ After the French Revolution various conservative French writers attempted to prove that the ideals of the American Revolution led deluded Frenchmen to make the experiment themselves, with disastrous, bloody consequences. The respective centennials of the American and

³⁸ For "pro-Montcalm" views see Francis Parkman, *France and England in North America*, part 7, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1884); Henri-Raymond Casgrain, *Guerre du Canada, 1756-1760: Montcalm et Lévis* (Quebec: L.-J. Demers & frère, 1891); René de Kerallain, *Les français au Canada: La jeunesse de Bougainville et la guerre de Sept ans* (Nogent-le-Retrou, France: Imprimerie Daupeley-Gouverneur, 1896); Thomas Chapais, *Le marquis de Montcalm (1721-1759)* (Quebec: J.-P. Garneau, 1911); and Lionel-Adolphe Groulx, *Histoire du Canada français depuis la découverte*, 2 vols. (Montreal: L'Action nationale, 1950). For views more sympathetic to Vaudreuil see Guy Frégault, *La guerre de la conquête* (Montreal: Fides, 1955); Charles P. Stacey, *Quebec, 1759: The Siege and the Battle* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1959); George F. G. Stanley, *New France: The Last Phase, 1744-1760* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968); William J. Eccles, "The Battle of Quebec: A Reappraisal", in William J. Eccles, *Essays on New France* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987); William J. Eccles, "French Forces in North America during the Seven Years' War", *DCB*, 3: xv-xxiii; William J. Eccles, "Montcalm, Louis-Joseph de, Marquis de Montcalm", *DCB*, 3: 458-69; and William J. Eccles, "Rigaud de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial, Pierre de, Marquis de Vaudreuil", *DCB*, 4: 662-74.

³⁹ Henderson, "French Regular Officer Corps in Canada".

⁴⁰ François Soulès, *Histoire des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise, écrite sur les mémoires les plus authentiques*, 4 vols. (Paris: Buisson, 1787).

French Revolutions in 1876 and 1889, however, encouraged a large number of publications commemorating Franco-American amity in the past and present, and works from this period worth noting are those by the American historians Thomas Balch, Edwin M. Stone, and Henry P. Johnston and the monumental five-volume study by the French historian Henri Doniol, which included a mass of valuable documents reproduced in full or abridged form.⁴¹ Histories written during the first half of the twentieth century added little to traditional interpretations of the French role in the American Revolution. Studies by the Vicomte de Noailles, Joachim Merlant, and Stephen Bonsal continued to praise the volunteers and Rochambeau's officers as devotees of American liberty who, on their return to their homeland, enthusiastically spread the revolutionary gospel.⁴² The authors made little distinction between French volunteers and later officers, and assumed that liberal officers in both groups had attitudes which were typical of their companions. Numerous biographies of La Fayette appeared, the most important and detailed of which was Louis R. Gottschalk's multi-volume study.⁴³ A number of biographies, varying widely in quality, were also written about important officers in Rochambeau's army and the French navy.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Thomas W. Balch, *Les français en Amérique pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance des Etats-Unis, 1777-1783* (Paris: A. Sauton, 1872); Edwin M. Stone, *Our French Allies* (Providence, R.I.: Providence Press Company, 1884); Henry P. Johnston, *The Yorktown Campaign and the Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781* (New York: Harper & brothers, 1881); and Henri Doniol, *Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats-Unis d'Amérique: Correspondance diplomatique et documents*, 5 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1886-92).

⁴² Amblard-Marie-Raymond-Amedée, Vicomte de Noailles, *Marins et soldats français en Amérique pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance des Etats-Unis, 1778-1783* (Paris: Perrin, 1903); James B. Perkins, *France in the American Revolution* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911); Joachim Merlant, *Soldiers and Sailors of France in the American War of Independence (1776-1783)*, trans. Mary B. Coleman (New York: Charles H. Scribner's Sons, 1920); and Stephen Bonsal, *When the French Were Here: A Narrative of the Sojourn of the French Forces in America and Their Contribution to the Yorktown Campaign* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1945).

⁴³ Louis R. Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); Louis R. Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937); Louis R. Gottschalk, *Lafayette and the Close of the American Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942); and Louis R. Gottschalk, *Lafayette Between the American and the French Revolution (1783-1789)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950).

⁴⁴ For a few examples of biographical monographs see Roger, Comte de Montmort, *Antoine-Charles du Houx, Baron de Vioménil, Lieutenant-General of the Armies of the King, Second in Command under Rochambeau*, trans. John F. Gough (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935); Maurice-Charles Renard, *Rochambeau: Libérateur de l'Amérique* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1951); Arnold

The question of how the American Revolution affected its French counterpart has continued to intrigue numerous historians. Philippe Sagnac's and Bernard Fay's work concerning revolutionary sentiments on both sides of the ocean supported the idea that the veteran officers were important in bringing the principles of the American Revolution to France.⁴⁵ An updated and more extensive version of Fay's study, covering America and all of Europe, was written by Robert R. Palmer at the end of the 1950's, but Palmer was more cautious about establishing direct links between the two revolutions.⁴⁶ In a 1951 statistical study Forrest McDonald attempted to prove that French soldiers who returned from America promoted agrarian uprisings in their home provinces during the Great Fear of 1789, but Jacques Godechot and more recently Samuel F. Scott argued that McDonald's evidence was not sufficiently strong to support such conclusions.⁴⁷ Claude Manceron and the Duc de Castries provided popular histories of the expeditions in the 1970's. Castries was in some respects more balanced in his treatment of the subject than Manceron, who featured mainly liberal officers who participated in the first stages of the French Revolution.⁴⁸

Whitridge, *Rochambeau* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Maurice Linyer de La Barbée, *Le chevalier de Ternay: Vie de Charles Henry Louis d'Arsac de Ternay, chef d'escadre des armées navales, 1723-1780*, 2 vols. (Grenoble: Editions des 4 Seigneurs, 1972); and Paul-Hubert Février, *L'un des trois grands qui firent l'événement: L'amiral de Grasse* (Paris: Barre-Dayez, 1977).

⁴⁵ Philippe Sagnac, "La fin de l'ancien régime et la Révolution américaine (1763-1789)", 3d ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1952) and Bernard Fay, *L'esprit révolutionnaire en France et aux Etats-Unis à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: E. Champion, 1925).

⁴⁶ Robert R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959-1964).

⁴⁷ Forrest McDonald, "The Relation of the French Peasant Veterans of the American Revolution to the Fall of Feudalism in France, 1789-1792", *Agricultural History* 25 (1951): 153-65; Jacques Godechot, "Les combattants de la guerre de l'Indépendance aux États-Unis et les troubles agraires en France, de 1789 à 1792", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* (1956): 292-94; and Samuel F. Scott, "The Soldiers of Rochambeau's Expeditionary Corps From the American Revolution to the French Revolution", *La Révolution américaine et l'Europe* (acts of the colloquium) (Paris: C.N.R.S., 1979), pp. 565-78.

⁴⁸ Claude Manceron, *Les hommes de la liberté*, vol. 2, *Le vent d'Amérique: L'échec de Necker et la victoire de Yorktown (1778-1782)* (Paris: R. Laffart, 1974) and René de La Croix, Duc de Castries, *La France et l'indépendance américaine: Le livre du bicentenaire de l'indépendance* (Paris: Perrin, 1975).

During the mid-1970's René Pichon completed a doctoral thesis concentrating on French military involvement during the war and Lee Kennett published an excellent overview and analysis of French diplomacy, Rochambeau's campaign, and officers' perceptions of Americans and their institutions.⁴⁹ These works were followed by Captain Gilbert Bodinier's article of 1976, followed by a book in 1983, focusing on the political ramifications of the French officers' visit to the United States.⁵⁰ Bodinier's exhaustive study of participating French officers and their subsequent careers during the French Revolution concludes that French officers did not change their political convictions because of their sojourn in North America, and that although they were slower to resign their commissions during the political troubles of the 1790's than colleagues who had not been to the American republic, this was because they were older, had families, and were less inclined to abandon economic security than younger men. Eventually, however, when the situation grew intolerable, they resigned in proportionally larger numbers than their colleagues. Bodinier also lays to rest the notion that most officers eagerly sailed to the United States in order to serve the cause of liberty. Most volunteers, he points out, were poor officers desperate to gain military experience and advance their careers, and few of them sympathized with American democracy. Even La Fayette was primarily concerned with military glory when he first arrived. As for Rochambeau's officers, they did not even know for certain that they were destined for the North American mainland until their fleet was over half way across the Atlantic. Bodinier's argument is generally solid, but in proving how reactionary and anti-democratic Rochambeau's officers were, he goes too far in denying the existence of what might be called liberal, "progressive" tendencies in the officer corps. Traditionalist views did persist, but when officers'

⁴⁹ René Pichon, "Contribution à l'étude de la participation militaire de la France à la guerre d'Indépendance des Etats-Unis, 1778-1783" (Thèse de doctorat de troisième cycle, Université de Paris I, 1976); Lee Kennett, "L'armée française en Amérique, 1780-1782", *Annales du Centre de recherches sur l'Amérique anglophone* 4 (1975): 73-97; and Lee Kennett, *The French Forces in America, 1780-1783* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977).

⁵⁰ Gilbert Bodinier, "Les officiers du corps expéditionnaire de Rochambeau et la Révolution française", *Revue historique des armées* No. 4 (1976): 139-62; and Gilbert Bodinier, *Les officiers de l'Armée royale: Combattants de la guerre d'Indépendance des Etats-Unis, de Yorktown à l'an II* (Vincennes: Service historique de l'Armée de Terre, 1983).

attitudes of the 1750's become the standard of comparison, the conservatism of officers in the 1780 period pales by comparison. In addition, it also might be asked whether officers resigned from the army and often emigrated after 1791 because they opposed constitutional government or because their personal safety and that of their families was threatened.

French economic and colonial ideas also need to be examined. While the theoreticians of freedom of commerce and anti-colonialism have been studied in detail, not enough work has been done to see how far these ideas actually affected public opinion. French officers were very interested in the role of sea power, colonies, and overseas trade in the balance of power, American trade with Britain and the rest of Europe, and the role of the state in the economy. Their opinions, therefore, provide a very good idea of trends in economic thinking during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Physiocratic free trade ideas are at the centre of the debate over Anglo-French economic rivalry during this period. Georges Weulersse's classic study of the physiocratic school and their ideas concerning agriculture and commerce has greatly stimulated interest in the subject.⁵¹ During the 1960's André J. Bourde supported Weulersse's argument that the physiocrats perceived English progress in agriculture as the basis of England's wealth and power.⁵² Political ideas featured more prominently in Frances D. Acomb's interesting examination of anglophobia in France, but she also stressed the importance of French perceptions of English agriculture, trade, and manufacturing.⁵³

The 1970's were marked by the publication of a large number of important books on British and French economic development and overseas trade. The most notable was Ralph Davis'

⁵¹ Georges Weulersse, *Le mouvement physiocratique en France (de 1756 à 1770)*, 2 vols. (Paris: Mouton, 1910); Georges Weulersse, *La physiocratie sous les ministères de Turgot et de Necker (1774-1781)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950); and Georges Weulersse, *La physiocratie à la fin du règne de Louis XV (1770-1774)* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950).

⁵² André J. Bourde, *Agronomie et agronomes en France au XVIIIe siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1967).

⁵³ Frances D. Acomb, *Anglophobia in France, 1763-1789: An Essay in the History of Constitutionalism and Nationalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1950).

balanced, masterful study, which rehabilitated the image of France's economy during the eighteenth century and countered the biases of Anglo-Saxon historians, who tended to portray the British economy as inevitably triumphant over a struggling, backward rival across the English Channel.⁵⁴ Another valuable but briefer examination of the subject was John R. Harris' essay comparing industry and technology in Britain and France, in which he suggested that it was only in the 1780's that the French realized that British technology was advancing on a broad front and would be difficult to match.⁵⁵ Jean Tarrade, Jacob M. Price, and Paul Butel produced detailed studies of French colonial commerce and its growing importance in European trade, further undermining unqualified statements about the dominance of British trade.⁵⁶ More recently, François Crouzet has summarized French ideas about the sources of British wealth, underlining the confusion in educated Frenchmen's minds about how this smaller country was more than holding its own against its French rival.⁵⁷ Statesmen such as d'Argenson, Choiseul, and Vergennes saw British trade, supported by the nation's expensive navy, as a key factor in producing this wealth. Important works on French foreign policy, tying politics to colonial and economic questions, were published by John F. Ramsey in 1939, Marcel Trudel in 1949, and more recently by William C. Stinchcombe, Jonathan R. Dull, and Orville T. Murphy.⁵⁸ Trudel's book, which

⁵⁴ Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973).

⁵⁵ John R. Harris, *Industry and Technology in the Eighteenth Century: Britain and France* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1972).

⁵⁶ Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce coloniale de la France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime: L'évolution du régime de "l'Exclusif" de 1763 à 1789*, 2 vols. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972); Jacob M. Price, *France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791, and of Its Relationship to the British and American Tobacco Trades*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973); and Paul Butel, *Les négociants bordelais, l'Europe, et les îles au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1974).

⁵⁷ François Crouzet, "The Sources of England's Wealth: Some French Views in the Eighteenth Century", in *Shipping, Trade and Commerce: Essays in Memory of Ralph Davis*, ed. P. L. Cottrell and Derek H. Aldcroft (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981), pp. 61-79.

⁵⁸ John F. Ramsey, *Anglo-French Relations, 1763-1770: A Study of Choiseul's Foreign Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939); Marcel Trudel, *Louis XVI, le Congrès américain et le Canada, 1771-1789* (Quebec: Éditions du Quartier latin, 1949), reprint ed. under the title *La Révolution américaine: Pourquoi la France refuse le Canada (1775-1783)* (Sillery, Que.: Les Éditions du Boréal Express, 1976); William C. Stinchcombe, *The American Revolution and the French Alliance* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1969); Jonathan R. Dull, *The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Orville

tends to be overlooked by historians outside of Canada, is especially commendable because it was practically the first study to reveal the Machiavellian nature of French policies toward their American allies and former Canadian subjects. Despite all of the evidence to the contrary, Louis XVI and Vergennes had customarily been portrayed as generously devoting themselves to the American cause because public opinion was sympathetic to the rebels, and their refusal to annex Canada was perceived as an act of selflessness rather than an attempt to keep the Americans weak and dependent on France.

According to most French statesmen, the growth of British power had to be met not only by political and military responses, but by new economic policies. John F. Boshier ably examines the movement to eliminate internal customs barriers and replace private financial interests and monopolies with state supervision of taxation and companies which had no ties to government, a move which did not conform to orthodox physiocratic opinion, but was nevertheless progressive.⁵⁹ France was changing, and members of the officer corps were changing with it.

After considering some of the most important historiography up to the present time, it is necessary to identify more closely the areas in which this study will attempt to make its contribution. The most important argument to be made in the following chapters is that small but significant changes took place in officers' attitudes during the brief interval between 1760 and 1780, indicating that, as Keith Baker suggests, this period was characterized by a crucial ideological shift which made the French Revolution a revolution instead of a mere rebellion. The French officer corps, and by extension much of the nobility, was clearly affected by new ideas characteristic of the Enlightenment. While noble officers used aspects of Enlightenment thought

T. Murphy. *Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes: French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution, 1719-1787* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982).

⁵⁹ John F. Boshier. *The Single Duty Project: A Study of the Movement for a French Customs Union in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Athlone Press, 1964) and John F. Boshier. *French Finances 1770-1795: From Business to Bureaucracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

stressing liberty and equality to suit their own group interests, their constitutional views and critique of French society often did as much to undermine noble privilege as reinforce it, and some radical officers actually rejected the whole notion of a legal aristocracy. The most prestigious, influential leaders of the military nobility, those who set the tone for the rest of the corps, were predominantly liberal in their attitudes by 1780, and many of their views were shared by the more humble members of the officer corps, both noble and bourgeois. As we shall see, their "liberal" attitudes were not equivalent to the liberalism characteristic of the nineteenth century, but these views, sometimes described as "libertarian" by recent historians, do have something in common with later ideas because of their stress on the liberty of the individual. The term "conservative" is used as a synonymy for traditional, in the context of eighteenth-century thought.

An initial chapter of this study describes the composition of the officer corps and its place in society, the development of what might be called politics during the confrontation between the parlements and the crown, the evolution of French political ideologies as a result of the new power struggle, and the general effect of these ideas on the officer corps. French officers' attitudes suggest that, as Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret maintains, nobles and bourgeois shared many of the same social and political values during the decades prior to the French Revolution.

The next chapter explains how both groups of French officers reacted to the North American natural environment, including geography, climate, flora, and fauna, and the extent to which literature and general knowledge assisted them in describing, analysing, and adapting to this new environment. Their expectations regarding the aboriginal and European inhabitants are also discussed. The evidence indicates that although officers in both expeditions rejected the more extreme French literary theories about climate and its effect on the physical characteristics of the flora, fauna, and peoples of the Americas, they did believe, like Montesquieu, that climate and had a major influence on the cultural habits of the human inhabitants of any specific region.

This section is followed by two chapters concerning French officers' perceptions of the aboriginal peoples of North America. The first of these chapters deals primarily with the ideal of the noble savage and the extent to which it influenced the officers' image of Indians, with a particular focus on social values. The second aboriginal chapter addresses the related question of how officers defined a civilized society, with special emphasis on economic, political, and military issues. Although the concept of the noble savage existed well prior to the sailing of French troops to Canada in 1755 and 1756, the theory did not enjoy a dominant position in French officers' imaginations during the Seven Years' War, and Diderot's and Rousseau's writings did nothing to change officers' attitudes by 1780. In fact, both groups of officers arrived on the continent imbued with the more traditional image of natives as barbarians, and only prolonged contact with natives in a non-military setting tended to overcome prejudices and bring tolerance, if not any particular idealization of Indians, to the fore. French observations on native women, marriage, religion, economic activities, political organization, and warfare all reflect the nature of contact, but nevertheless also provide some insight into French values.

In contrast to the first three chapters, which compare and contrast officers' views during both of the periods under study, the next section is devoted solely to the ideas of French officers who served under Montcalm during the 1750's. Officers' observations on all aspects of Canadian and then American colonial society are analyzed in an effort to determine what social and political values were shared by members of the officer corps during this period. Even the most enlightened officers under Montcalm's command, it is evident, were products of a highly traditional, hierarchical society. Even by 1760, the Enlightenment had not had much of an impact on French officers, and their displays of rationalism and anticlericalism were frequently contradicted by appeals to the powerful authority of tradition and Roman Catholicism. Montcalm's subordinates did not reveal even the faintest glimmerings of a political consciousness, and they uncritically advocated detailed and almost random intervention by the royal authorities in both the social and economic spheres. Hierarchical, authoritarian attitudes were so strong in

the corps that even slavery remained unquestioned. Historians such as Daniel Mornet and Norman Hampson are apparently justified in emphasizing that there were several stages to the Enlightenment, and that during the early period change was less significant than continuity.

The following two chapters focus on the views of French officers during the War of American Independence period, with one chapter on social values and the other dealing with political ideas. The fact that two chapters rather than a single one are devoted to Rochambeau's officers and the volunteers makes it possible not only to describe these officers' observations but also to analyse the way in which officers' values in the 1780 period differed from those of their predecessors. This is important because by 1780 subtle but real changes had taken place in officers' attitudes. The concepts of liberty, equality before the law, and merit placed in question the rigid nature of the French social structure, and invited new perspectives on women, marriage, and the relationship between different groups in the social hierarchy. French officers subjected Christianity to a more vigorous attack than formerly, and they praised tolerance as a means to undermine rather than protect traditional religious faiths. In the political sphere, officers remained essentially apolitical, ascribing more importance to political personalities than constitutional structure, but nevertheless, the interest with which many officers discussed citizenship, the special social and political merits of property owners, and the emancipation of slaves indicates that an embryonic political consciousness was emerging in the officer corps. Gilbert Bodinier is right in pointing out that French officers were not enthusiastic democrats, but at the same time it is important to realize that these men were substantially more liberal-minded than the generation which preceded them.

The final chapter, which concentrates on the economic ideas of French officers, reverts to the earlier practice of considering both groups of officers within the confines of a single chapter. Montcalm's and Rochambeau's officers were rarely able to consistently follow a line of economic thought, but officers during the second period were generally more sophisticated in their economic thinking. The debate between the orthodox physiocrats and their opponents over the

extent of liberty of commerce had clearly had an impact on officers' economic beliefs by 1780, and the Frenchmen overwhelmingly supported moderate free trade policies involving a free national market, a reduction in monopolies dominating international and colonial trade, and a larger role for the state in supervising the economy than the physiocrats had originally envisioned. These findings confirm John Bosher's argument that the economic debate of the time should not simply be seen as one between progressive physiocrats and regressive "mercantilists".

This study of two groups of French officers observing similar societies at two separate points in time provides some useful insights into the mentality of the French educated classes--in particular the nobility--during the important pre-revolutionary decades. It also throws some light on French and European attitudes toward native peoples, Canadians, and Americans during this period. Such a comparative study has never before been attempted; this fact is perhaps the source of the strength and the weakness of this dissertation.

CHAPTER I

THE OFFICER CORPS AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In order to understand something about the impact of the Enlightenment on the officer corps and changes in officers' sociopolitical attitudes during the second half of the eighteenth century, it is necessary to understand the composition and dominant values of the officer corps, the intellectual, in particular political, trends of the period, and outline the manner in which noblemen, and particularly military noblemen, responded to these new ideas. This will help to lay the foundation for a more detailed examination, in subsequent chapters, of two sizeable groups of French officers which visited North America during the second half of the eighteenth century.

The officer corps of the *ancien régime* was an institution made up of noblemen and a few bourgeois who provided the soldiers and sailors of the king's service with military leadership. It is important to realize, however, that the officer corps was not a profession in the modern sense. First of all, war was traditionally an integral part of the lifestyle of the ruling noble classes, and the military service which the nobility provided over the centuries constituted the justification for the very existence of their order. The military ethos, derived from the centuries-old association between noble privilege and military leadership, still dominated the upper strata of French society, and this ingrained cultural mode of thought affected every family which belonged to or strove to belong to the nation's elite. In the eighteenth century the officer corps was still the locus of privileged society, and admission to the corps was largely conditional upon membership in social groups with access to privilege by virtue of birth or wealth. The officer corps was less a

profession than an expression of a way of life, and most officers did not see a sharp division between their military and civilian roles. They were noblemen first, and soldiers as a logical consequence of their status.

The second reason why the officer corps was not a profession in the modern sense is that it was not “professional” as we understand the word. The corps was in many ways an exclusive social club whose members usually required only a minimal amount of professional knowledge. Officers customarily obtained their commissions because of their hereditary social status, and knowledge and talent were not major criteria either for admission to the corps or for promotion within it. Traditional assumptions about the necessary correspondence between birth and civil and military leadership, however, slowly evolved under the impact of Enlightenment ideas. More and more reformers advocated organizing the military and the military hierarchy along rational, professional lines. The state established schools to provide some officers with technical training, and many officers supported the idea that talent and experience should be a criterion for promotion along with social qualifications. Others began to justify the exclusion of nobles of the robe and commoners from the corps on rational grounds rather than simply tradition. These ideas did not revolutionize the officer corps, but they did lead to reforms which in retrospect often seem to be the antithesis of Enlightenment attitudes, but in fact represented a melding of rationalism, egalitarianism, and traditional theories about society.

Enlightenment ideas had an important impact on French officers and the nobility as a whole. Members of the officer corps were among the most educated and influential people in the country, and as such they played an important part in creating and disseminating Enlightenment ideas. They took an active part in the new political debate over France’s essentially absolutist system of government because of their concern as “citizens” and their acute awareness of the connection between the power of the state and its ability to defend the kingdom and promote order and prosperity. As noblemen, officers were in a sense rivals of the monarchy and threatened by encroaching absolutism, but they were also servants of the state who depended on the king and

his continued patronage for their livelihood. This gave them a special perspective of the situation and a strong motive to follow political events. Officers' conflicting concern with abuses of royal power and the dangerous weakness of the monarchy attracted them to different political positions, all of which were critical to some extent of the sociopolitical structure to which they belonged.

Officers who took part in the North American campaigns of the Seven Years' War and the War of American Independence represented two generations of educated Frenchmen. Their opinions provide an insight into the officers' social and political attitudes during two separate time periods, and by extension the attitudes of a large segment of the nobility and educated public. By comparing these "snapshots" of two generations of officers' attitudes, it is possible to detect certain changes in the ideas and assumptions which made up the reality of their time.

The officer corps, like the rest of the nobility, did not respond to the array of new social and political ideas in a uniform manner. In order to understand officers' reactions it is important to examine the composition of the nobility, the subgroups within the second and third estates from which officers were recruited, and the manner in which these groups interacted. It is also essential to explore their education and institutional identity and the way in which Enlightenment values stimulated a growing desire among officers to professionalize their corps, strengthen the state which they served, and at the same time prevent France's monarchy from becoming a true despotism.

Approximately 110,000 to 120,000 nobles lived in France at the end of the *ancien régime*, and they belonged to some 25,000 families.¹ Some 6,500 of these families were admitted to the nobility during the eighteenth century--5,510 becoming nobles of the robe through the purchase of ennobling offices and 1,000 by other means, usually through the confirmation of supposed noble status by families which had been living nobly for several generations. By 1789 only a third of

¹ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility*, pp. 28-30.

the nobility could truthfully claim to belong to the nobility of the sword through a noble and usually military origin prior to 1600, and only 942 families could be "presented" to the king by virtue of origins before 1400.² Nobles engaged in four principal professions: the military, church, law, and administration. The nobility of the robe dominated the system of justice and administration, and the nobility of the sword retained a strong presence in the officer corps. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that noblemen of the sword and robe could be found in any of these professional categories.³

A family's noble roots and professional employment were important factors in determining its rank in the noble hierarchy, but in the eighteenth century the most important criterion dividing noblemen was wealth. Money provided a means to promote family status through advantageous marriages, gave access to higher education and social links to the most prestigious families, and the ability to purchase land, the most remunerative offices, and a range of military commissions. Wealth divided the nobility into a clear hierarchy.⁴ Newer and older noble families mixed easily at the upper echelons of this hierarchy of income. Sharing a common lifestyle, education, and values, economically secure, and the old peerage possessing unchallenged prestige, neither group was particularly threatened by the other. Peers and noble financiers frequently linked their families by marriage because the peers could offer higher noble status in exchange for huge dowries, adding to their already considerable income from the land and other *rentes*.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 25-30 and Carée, *Noblesse de France et l'opinion publique*, pp. 14-19. I prefer Chaussinand-Nogaret's statistics.

³ Ford, *Robe and Sword*, pp. 17-18, 20-21 and James S. Pritchard, *Louis XV's Navy 1748-1762: A Study of Organization and Administration* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), pp. 38-40.

⁴ The top 1 per cent, some 250 families, including 50 noble financiers of the robe, enjoyed incomes of over 50,000 livres a year. They formed the nation's social elite and the bulk of the court nobility. Next in rank were noblemen with incomes of between 10,000 and 50,000 livres a year, some 3,500 families or 13 per cent of the total, who constituted the rich provincial nobility. 7,000 other families, a quarter of the French nobility, were in easy circumstances with between 4,000 and 10,000 livres in income, and had servants, horses, and comfortable homes. 11,000 or 41 per cent of noble families were in modest circumstances, and by living frugally could maintain themselves with some dignity. They had incomes of between 1,000 and 4,000 livres. Last of all were some 5,000 noble families with incomes of less than 1,000 livres, 20 per cent of the whole, who lived in real poverty and were often indistinguishable from peasants. Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility*, pp. 52-53 and Ford, *Robe and Sword*, pp. 31-32. A post-1726 livre was worth roughly ten 1991 Canadian dollars, but comparing the currencies in terms of buying power is problematic.

Wealthy commoners were incorporated into the nobility of the robe at a steady rate so that most bourgeois were economically akin to the less wealthy groups of nobility.⁵

Bourgeois, an appellation which in the eighteenth century generally meant *roturiers* or non-nobles who partially or completely avoided manual labour, formed their own hierarchy parallel to the lower rungs of the nobility.⁶ This hierarchy, like the noble hierarchy, was very complex, stratified, and overlapping. Nobles were chiefly divided according to the period of their family's entry into the nobility and their wealth. Among bourgeois, wealth and occupation were the only major criteria defining status, but the hierarchy of occupations did not always match differences in income. In general, bourgeois who were in the best position to acquire letters of nobility were at the peak of this hierarchy of occupations. Wealthier merchants and administrators had their sons educated as lawyers, doctors, and engineers and purchased royal and municipal offices and military commissions for them. Meanwhile, they married their daughters to noblemen whenever financially possible, easing their family's path toward not only noble status, but a degree of acceptance in noble circles. Even after letters of nobility were obtained, social barriers had to be overcome.⁷

The legal barrier of noble status was very important to contemporaries, and was a principal focal point of social tensions within the uniformly literate or educated classes. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that hundreds of other privileges and social barriers divided society. Nobles, bourgeois, and even artisans benefitted from a maze of privileges, and determining which privileges were the most important in order to unite separate social groups into cohesive "social classes" is problematic. Many social groups existed with distinct and overlapping interests, and it is more useful to analyze them in terms of group identity than to create artificial "classes" based on the single criterion of income or occupation.

⁵ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility*, and Ford, *Robe and Sword*, pp. 204-6, 214.

⁶ Elinor G. Barber, *The Bourgeoisie in 18th Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 14-33.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-24, 99-117.

French officers were among the best educated people in France, even if their level of education varied widely from person to person. Officers of higher rank generally belonged to the elite families which frequented the court and literary salons, and they often received their education at the expensive and exclusive colleges. The Swede Colonel Hans Axel Fersen, one of Rochambeau's aides-de-camp, was educated in French, attended military academies in Brunswick, Turin, and Strasbourg, as well as the University of Paris, and was accompanied by a guardian with a knowledge of philosophy.⁸ Fersen's level of education, however, was unusually high for a nobleman or indeed anyone in France. Even among elite families, education was not an automatic priority, for almost as a rule children were educated according to the position they were expected to fulfill in society.⁹ Fersen's close friend Colonel Armand-Louis de Gontaut-Biron, Duc de Lauzun, commander of the Légion de Lauzun, was taught reading and good handwriting by a servant, but his haphazard education was by his own admission increasingly neglected after the age of twelve because of his frequent, prolonged visits to Versailles.¹⁰ Parents decided very early on what professions their children would follow, and educated them accordingly. Boys destined for the magistracy or higher clergy were sent to good schools, while their brothers, destined for the infantry or cavalry, received a more basic education. Artillery officers and engineers usually had a very good technical training, as did many but by no means all naval officers.¹¹

Despite a confusing lack of standards, the French navy attempted to ensure that their naval officer candidates had at least a rudimentary background in navigation before they were posted to a warship. Nevertheless, Minister of Marine François-Étienne, Duc de Choiseul, frequently complained about naval officers' lack of navigational skills, and he appointed an army officer,

⁸ Frederik Ulrik, Grefve af (Count of) Wrangel, ed., *Letres d'Axel de Fersen à son père pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance d'Amérique* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1929), pp. 4, 8.

⁹ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility*, pp. 69-73.

¹⁰ Armand-Louis de Gontaut-Biron, Duc de Lauzun, *Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928), p. 2.

¹¹ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility*, pp. 69-73.

Colonel Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Montcalm's former senior aide-de-camp, to lead a colonizing expedition to the Falkland Islands, in part because Bougainville had an excellent background in mathematics.¹² In the 1780's, after the French navy had recovered from its disastrous state at the end of the Seven Years' War, army officers were still highly critical of the technical training of naval officers they encountered. Sublieutenant Gabriel-Joachim Du Perron de Revel of the Régiment de Monsieur-Infanterie, who belonged to the "garrison" or contingent of temporary marines with Grasse's fleet in 1781, believed, with some exaggeration, that "There were only three or four officers in Grasse's fleet who were able to take a longitudinal reading; and there was only one, M. le marquis de Chabert, then chef d'escadre, who did so; they called him, derisively, the astronomer".¹³ An army officer with Ternay's fleet, Armand-Charles-Augustin de La Croix de Castries, Comte de Charlus, was amazed that a naval officer looking at a map thought that the Black Sea was the Mediterranean and that another stubbornly argued that Constantinople was on the Tiber.¹⁴ However biased these opinions may have been, they suggest that naval officers did not devote as much attention to their profession as they might have.

Infantry and cavalry officers had by and large the lowest level of education of all branches of the military, even though the government attempted, through the establishment of the Ecole Militaire in 1751 and other measures, to encourage the study of military science and to cultivate a spartan military ethos among young men destined for the officer corps.¹⁵ Louis XV took a

¹² Pritchard, *Louis XV's Navy*, pp. 38-40. See Jean Béranger, "Le maréchal de Belle-Isle, général et homme d'état à l'époque des lumières (1684-1761)", in *Soldier-Statesmen of the Age of Enlightenment*, records of the 7th International Colloquy on Military History, Washington, D.C., 25-30 July 1982, ed. International Commission of Military History (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1984), p. 204 for Belle-Isle's ideas on army and navy officer training.

¹³ Gabriel-Joachim Du Perron de Revel, *Journal particulier d'une campagne aux Indes occidentales (1781-1782)* (Paris: H. Charles-Lavauzelle, 1898), p. 48.

¹⁴ Armand-Charles-Augustin de La Croix de Castries, Comte de Charlus, "Journal de mon voyage en Amérique (7 mai 1780-27 septembre 1780)", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 189.

¹⁵ David D. Bien, "Military Education in Eighteenth-Century France: Technical and Non-Technical Determinants", in *Science, Technology and Warfare, Proceedings of the Third Military History*

personal interest in the Ecole Militaire, and did much of the planning for it himself. The school was not, however, fully completed until 1770.¹⁶ Poorer officers of the sword who formed a large proportion of the infantry officer corps were rarely able to attend academies, and often had to make do with the instruction of a parish priest, a relative, or a tutor who gave them basic literary skills. Lieutenant Thomas-Jacques de Goislard, Chevalier de Villebresme, was a Mousquetaire Gris who entered the navy and served at Yorktown attached to the Régiment de Gâtinais after the musketeers were disbanded. Villebresme recalled in his memoirs how he and his two brothers, more interested in “the sword than the [clerical] collar”, had often escaped the family chaplain’s lessons, hunting wolves in the woods and engaging in other outdoor activities. However, the boys adored an old cavalry trooper who taught them fencing, riding, and the use of firearms under the stern eye of their father, and all three of them entered the musketeers as soon as they reached the age of seventeen or eighteen.¹⁷ Villebresme’s experience was relatively typical of infantry and cavalry officers. Poorer noble families possessed few books, and most of these were pious works which contained few if any Enlightenment ideas. Education was related to wealth, and education brought more contact with secular Enlightenment values.¹⁸ In general, wealthier officers were more inclined to be well educated and liberal in attitude, while poorer officers of all social backgrounds, who stagnated in the lowest ranks, were more traditional in outlook. On the one hand, poorer noble officers were in favour of equality within the officer corps, with no privileges for wealthy officers of the new or even the old nobility, an attitude which might potentially lead

Symposium, United States Air Force Academy, 8-9 May 1969, ed. Monte D. Wright and Lawrence J. Paszek (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 51-60.

¹⁶ Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour, to a friend, 3 Jan. 1751, cited in Olivier Bernier, *Louis the Beloved: The Life of Louis XV* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), pp. 162-63 and Nancy Mitford, *Madame de Pompadour* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1954), pp. 166-67. Madame de Pompadour also played a role in the creation of this establishment.

¹⁷ Thomas-Jacques de Goislard, Chevalier de Villebresme, *Souvenirs du chevalier de Villebresme, mousquetaire de la garde du Roi 1772-1816: Guerre d’Amérique--émigration* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1897), pp. 3-4.

¹⁸ Carée, *Noblesse de France*, pp. 194-207; Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility*, pp. 68-74; and Ford, *Robe and Sword*, pp. 87, 188-89, 218-21, 227.

in a radical direction; but on the other hand, the precariousness of their economic status made them especially concerned with emphasizing their superiority over non-nobles, a stance which reinforced conservative rather than radical tendencies. Bourgeois officers were subject to similar influences, hoping for equality of advancement yet at the same time frequently adopting elitist noble values with a vengeance, becoming more noble than nobles in order to be accepted as equals.

The French officer corps was an integral part of noble and educated society, although it was hardly representative of France's propertied classes. As we shall see, the older nobility of the sword comprised the largest single group, almost half of all officers; in addition, a third of all officers were of recent robe origin and a fifth were bourgeois. Practically all officers began as ensigns or sublieutenants, but here equality between them ended. The presented families of the court nobility, which included the dukes and wealthiest titled nobility in the kingdom, virtually monopolized the general-grade ranks of brigadier, major-general (*maréchal de camp*), lieutenant-general, and marshal of France. These noblemen were promoted through the lowest ranks in the minimal required time, and their wealth permitted them to purchase the necessary commissions. Promotion among general officers was supposedly according to merit, but colonelcies and captaincies were purchased with ministerial permission. Colonelcies were particularly expensive, costing up to 75,000 livres in older infantry regiments and up to 100,000 livres in the more prestigious cavalry regiments, a fortune far beyond the resources of the average nobleman. Captaincies, which gave officers proprietary rights over a company, cost up to 7,000 livres, but were within the reach of a larger body of officers. Other ranks of *officiers particuliers*, such as ensigns, lieutenants, and lieutenant-colonels, did not officially have to purchase their commissions, but in practice they usually did pay a sum to their colonel, lieutenants, for instance, sometimes having to lay out as much as 3,000 livres.¹⁹ On some

¹⁹ Lee Kennett, *The French Armies in the Seven Years' War: A Study in Military Organization and Administration* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1967), pp. 54-56 and Carée, *Noblesse de France*, pp. 42-43.

occasions poor nobles were obliged to leave the army because they could not afford to maintain themselves on their abysmally low pay. This money, however, provided the principal or only source of income for thousands of poor noblemen, and the government was habitually under great pressure to issue extra commissions.²⁰

In Montcalm's army the average age of ensigns and second-lieutenants in 1757 was 21.3 years, lieutenants 27 years, lieutenants of grenadiers 35 years, captains 40 years, and lieutenant-colonels 51.9 years. In 1789 average ages for officers in the French army as a whole were over three years higher for each rank, which may have been a result of slower peacetime promotions during the last three decades of the *ancien régime*.²¹ No fewer than 10 of the 12 known *officiers de fortune*--officers commissioned from the ranks--in Montcalm's army who were commissioned captains before 1760 received their promotions in wartime, when there was a strong demand for officers. The regiments in Canada were increasingly short of officers in the last years of the Seven Years' War, and as a result they commissioned several sergeants and enlisted 10 Canadians as well as 2 Frenchmen who were officers in the *Compagnies franches de la Marine* or colonial regulars.²²

Contrary to what one might expect, all of the *officiers de fortune* who became captains rose from the rank of lieutenant to captain in less than 12 years except for the only noble among them, Lieutenant Guillaume de Méritens de Pradals of the Régiment de La Sarre, who took 14 years.²³ This was an average rate of promotion for noble officers, and suggests that despite prejudice against *roturiers* in the officer corps, once they received their commissions, they advanced through the ranks more or less according to seniority and were thereby promoted at the same rate

²⁰ Carcé, *Noblesse de France*, pp. 157, 162.

²¹ Henderson, "French Regular Officer Corps in Canada", p. 53 and Charles J. Wrong, "The French Infantry Officer at the Close of the *Ancien Régime*" (Ph.D. dissertation. Brown University, Providence, R.I., 1968), pp. 126-128.

²² Henderson, "French Regular Officer Corps in Canada", pp. 56, 63-64.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

as noblemen. *Officiers de fortune* were generally older than their noble comrades who began their military career as officers, but this was mainly because they had to spend several years in the ranks.²⁴ This helps to explain why Montcalm's lieutenants of grenadiers--a post usually reserved for *officiers de fortune*--were on average 35 years old while Montcalm's lieutenants as a whole averaged 27.²⁵

Rates of promotion also differed according to other factors, of course. Jean Bélot, who became a sergeant in the Régiment de La Reine at the age of 20--he was born in 1732--was appointed sublieutenant of grenadiers in 1760, a few days after the bloody Battle of Sainte-Foy, when he was 28 years old. He became a second captain in 1780, when he was 48.²⁶ Bélot required 20 years to rise from lieutenant to captain. By contrast, another more talented *officier de fortune*, Pierre Marcel, made this transition in a single year. Marcel was born in 1730, and enlisted in the Régiment de La Marine as a private soldier in 1746. In 1756 he was made a *lieutenant réformé*, a lieutenant unattached to any company, in La Reine, and because he was literate and intelligent was attached to Montcalm's staff. Thanks to the assistance of Montcalm and Bougainville, who took an interest in him, Marcel was appointed *capitaine réformé* in 1757, when he was only 27 years old. He retired as a major-general in 1791. Although the age at which Marcel was promoted captain was not unusual--the average age at which most officers reached this rank in the 1780's was 29.1 years--he made the transition from lieutenant to captain even faster than elite nobles who belonged to families with the honours of the court and were destined for colonelcies, who required 4.4 years, on average. Of course this did not mean that Marcel was in the most desirable situation. He was paid as a staff officer, but as an officer *réformé* he would not have any income after the war was over. In addition, although Montcalm had several

²⁴ Henderson believes that *officiers de fortune* were promoted at a slower rate than noble officers, but her statistics do not support this conclusion. See Bodinier for the average age of officers at promotion and his discussion of *officiers de fortune* in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée Royal*, pp. 73, 104-7.

²⁵ Henderson, "French Officer Corps in Canada", p. 53.

²⁶ Records of the Régiment de La Reine. *Service historique de l'Armée de Terre (SHAT)*, Vincennes, Série X, Xb. 54, fol. 42.

aides-de-camp, Marcel was the one who did all of the routine work at headquarters and acted as Montcalm's secretary, recording much of the general's journal for him.²⁷ If *roturier* officers were promoted at roughly the same rate as their noble colleagues, they were not quite perceived as social equals.²⁸

In the 1750's Philippe-Auguste de Sainte-Foy, Chevalier d'Arcq, argued that noblemen should be required to serve in the military for a certain period of time in order to preserve their privileges, encouraging a military spirit in the nation. He strongly objected to allowing merchants to become officers or noblemen merchants, for this would "harm the harmonic inequality of ranks".²⁹ There was already social mobility within each estate, he maintained, and France benefitted from a balance of power between the three orders of society. If the estates mixed their duties, however, the resulting confusion and obsession with commerce and luxury would transform the monarchy into a defenceless republic or a despotism. Evidently, the chevalier had been reading his Montesquieu.³⁰ It might be noted, however, that the same year Abbé Gabriel-François Coyer argued that the nobility should make an effort to be of some use to society by entering business.³¹ The colonel of the Régiment de l'Ile-de-France, the Marquis de Crénolle, wrote to the Minister of War during the demobilization after the Seven Years' War to demand that a serving *roturier* officer be placed on the list of *officiers réformés*, or essentially fired. He explained that the officer corps "should be composed of the purest part of the nation", for a nobleman "born with the honour which blood gives him" had to maintain the honour and

²⁷ Henderson, "French Regular Officer Corps in Canada", p. 51 and Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, pp. 54-55, 73.

²⁸ Carée, *Noblesse militaire*, pp. 154-65.

²⁹ Philippe-Auguste de Sainte-Foy, Chevalier d'Arcq, *La Noblesse militaire, ou Le patriote français* (Paris: Duchesne, 1756), pp. 38, 190, 207-8.

³⁰ D'Arcq, *Noblesse militaire*, pp. 7, 14-15, 18-19, 26-27, 32, 36, 76.

³¹ Gabriel-François Coyer, *La noblesse commerçante* (Paris: Duchesne, 1756), pp. 213-15.

status of his family at all costs, and therefore had more incentive to fight bravely than a commoner.³²

One difference between Montcalm's expedition and Rochambeau's is that while each of Rochambeau's battalions was accompanied by a colonel, second-colonel, and lieutenant-colonel, none of Montcalm's battalions was honoured by the presence of either a colonel or a second-colonel. In part this was because all of Montcalm's battalions were either the second or third battalion of each respective regiment, and colonels were more inclined to remain with the first battalion. Far more important, however, was the fact that officers of the court nobility did not consider garrison duties or even combat in the Canadian wilderness a suitable field for acquiring honour and glory. When most of the battalions were dispatched in 1755, it was still peacetime, and Dieskau, an obscure foreign baron, was chosen to command the expedition. By the time Montcalm's reinforcements were being organized the following year, a European war was in the offing, and few peers of the kingdom or their immediate relatives were inclined to go overseas when glory could be won closer to Paris. In 1780, however, France was at war only with Britain, and the Channel invasion force had been sitting idly for over a year. As a result, the prospect of combat in Jamaica or the United States drew the high nobility like a magnet.

The Chevalier de Lévis, who belonged to a cadet branch of the house of Lévis-Mirepoix, was the only officer with any connection to families with the honours of the court to serve in Canada. Thanks to the patronage of his cousin, Marshal Gaston-Charles-Pierre, Duc de Lévis-Mirepoix, and his own talent, Lévis rose to the highest ranks. His decision to go to Canada was a carefully calculated move. Not being a peer himself, he had to continue to distinguish himself in action in order to achieve high command, and early in 1756 Canada was the only field of action available. During his absence he continued to bombard various ministers and relatives with letters explaining his distinguished role in the war and emphasizing the sacrifice he had made

³² Marquis de Crénolle to Étienne-François, Duc de Choiseul, 4 July 1764, cited in Louis Tuetey, *Les officiers sous l'ancien régime: Nobles et roturiers* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1908), p. 242.

in going abroad to serve the king's interests. He also succeeded in remaining in the good graces of both Montcalm and Montcalm's immediate superior, Governor-General Vaudreuil, even though these men intensely disliked one another, with the result that both of his superiors sent glowing reports about Lévis to the Minister of Marine. To Lévis' credit, he differed from many other officers who corresponded with ministers at Versailles in that his claims of distinguished conduct were largely merited, and that he gave others credit where it was due instead of heaping criticism on all possible rivals. Lévis' victory at Sainte-Foy in 1760, one of the few French victories of the Seven Years' War, also served him in good stead. Later in the war he fought in Germany, and eventually he became a marshal, with the titles Marquis and then Duc de Lévis.³³ In January 1780 Fersen heard rumours that Lévis would be chosen to command an army of 12,000 men being dispatched to the United States, for the general had a good reputation and supposedly knew the country.³⁴ However, Rochambeau was sent instead with a force about half that size.

Ironically, Montcalm's senior aide-de-camp Bougainville, whose immediate ancestors were humble merchants, had more connections at court than the marquis himself, who was a titled member of the nobility of the sword with a distinguished lineage. Montcalm's family belonged to the medium income level of the Languedoc nobility, and the general had no relatives in high military or civil posts, with the result that he lacked great influence outside of his home province. Bougainville's father, on the other hand, was able to purchase an office and gain noble status in 1781, and his son, who was twelve years old at the time, made the best of this new prestige. In fact, his collection of papers with proofs of noble Medieval ancestry--they probably were in fact his actual ancestors--suggests that he may have wished to buttress pretensions to membership in the nobility of the sword. Bougainville was admitted to the Parlement of Paris, purchased a

³³ William J. Eccles. "Lévis, François de, Duc de Lévis", *DCB*, 4: 482.

³⁴ Hans Axel Fersen to Frederik Axel Fersen, Paris, 5 Jan. 1780, in *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen*, ed. Wrangel, p. 15.

commission in the elite Mousquetaires Noirs, was recognized in the salons by virtue of his published work on mathematics, and through his friendship with another army officer acquired the patronage of the officer's mother, Mme. René Hérault de Séchelles, sister-in-law of Minister of Marine François-Marie de Peirenc de Moras. Mme. Hérault de Séchelles was instrumental in obtaining Bougainville's appointment to Montcalm's staff, and throughout the war the general and his aide corresponded with her. After the war Bougainville obtained the patronage of Choiseul, Minister of Marine and then Foreign Affairs.³⁵

Ambitious men of lower rank were sometimes eager to go to Canada, even before the declaration of war. Charles-Augustin, Chevalier de Floyd, who was of British ancestry, failed to obtain a commission in any of Dieskau's battalions despite being a protégé of Lieutenant-General Louis-Hyacinthe Boyer de Crémilles, so he enlisted in the Régiment de La Reine as a common soldier in an attempt to see action and distinguish himself. By August 1755 he had managed to obtain the special Canadian rank of *cadet à l'éguillette* in his regiment, and on his return to France in 1760 he was a lieutenant with expectations of becoming a captain in the near future.³⁶

The ambition which drove Floyd overseas also inspired the 87 volunteers who served in the Continental army and American militia during the War of American Independence. The volunteers were decidedly not representative of the French army. A substantial 42.9% of the 77 officers of French nationality among the volunteers were *roturiers* or of doubtful nobility. Only La Fayette and Colonel Armand-Charles Tuffin, Marquis de La Rouërie, belonged to the high nobility, and of these two only La Fayette's family had the honours of the court. Another officer, Captain Jean-Baptiste-Benoît, Chevalier de Beaupoil de Saint-Aulaire, belonged to an obscure

³⁵ Bougainville possessed proofs of nobility which dated to 1399, 1420, and 1470. Bougainville proofs of nobility, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Département des manuscrits, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises (BN N.A.F.) 9406, fols. 3-4; Bougainville to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, 16 May 1759, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 237; Montcalm to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, 11 July 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 61-63; Étienne Taillemite, "Bougainville, Louis-Antoine de, Comte de Bougainville", *DCB*, 5: 103-5; and Jean-Étienne Martin-Aillan, *Bougainville navigateur et les découvertes de son temps* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964), p. 1.

³⁶ Records of the Régiment de La Reine, SHAT, Série X, Xb. 54, fol. 39.

branch of a family with the honours of the court.³⁷ Volunteers also usually held low ranks in the French army, and 50 of the 87 men, 57.5 per cent, had not been actively employed in the regular forces immediately prior to their enlistment in the American forces. Some 17 officers had been on the inactive list because of peacetime reductions in the military, 18 had voluntarily resigned because of frustration at lack of promotion or other causes, 6 were forced to leave because of discipline problems, 2 were in the Martinique militia, and 7 had tenuous status in the military.³⁸ Most volunteers can be characterized as disadvantaged members of the corps willing to undertake any enterprise which could gain them promotion and economic security within the military. Their contemporaries, including their colleagues in the line regiments, considered them unscrupulous adventurers of low social status.³⁹ A number of the French volunteers had previous military experience as officers in the employ of foreign European monarchs, and for them their service in the United States was not much different than their mercenary activities in Russia, Austria, Poland, and Turkey.⁴⁰

Senior officers with the expeditions to the United States between 1779 and 1781 came from far more prestigious families than the volunteers, and they socially outclassed Montcalm's commanders. Most colonelcies and higher commands went to officers who not only belonged to families which had the honours of the court but were also the sons of marshals and other general officers. Senior officers who had the honours of the court became captains at an average age of 19.6 years and obtained colonelcies between the ages of 20 and 38. The 8.8 per cent of senior officers who did not belong to families with the honours of the court usually had relatives who held ministries or other important functions at court or were the sons of generals. Foreign

³⁷ Bodinier. *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, pp. 266-69.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 266-70.

³⁹ Galvan to Sartine, Charleston, S.C., 19 April 1778, AN Marine B4 192, fol. 215 and Abbé Robin, *Nouveau voyage dans l'Amérique septentrionale en l'année 1781; et campagne de l'armée de Monsieur le comte de Rochambeau* (Paris: Chez Moutard, Imprimeur-Libraire de la Reine, de madame, & de madame comtesse d'Artois, 1782), p. 26.

⁴⁰ Bodinier. *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, pp. 272-97.

noblemen and French officers who belonged to less distinguished families generally took longer to achieve senior rank. Only one *roturier* in the expeditions became a colonel, the false noble Colonel Laurent-François Le Noir, "Marquis" de Rouvray, who was a subaltern in Montcalm's Régiment de La Sarre and commanded the short-lived Régiment des grenadiers et chasseurs volontaires de Saint-Domingue at Savannah in 1779.⁴¹

French officers who served in the expeditions to the United States and never achieved the rank of colonel during their careers came from more diverse social backgrounds. A substantial 47.9 per cent of infantry officers belonged to families which are known to have achieved noble status before 1700, and 44.7 per cent of artillery officers. While this does not indicate that the social origins of the officers of the two corps were radically different, the artillery attracted fewer members of the elite nobility and more commoners. While 12.7 per cent of infantry officers belonged to families with the honours of the court or possessed an early Medieval "chivalrous" origin, the same was true for only 3.5 per cent of artillery officers. In addition, 21.8 per cent of the infantry officers were *roturiers* or of doubtful nobility while 34.1 per cent of the artillery officers were in this category.⁴² These statistics confirm the assertions of many historians that the artillery, one of the technical arms of the military, had more officers of *roturier* background than the infantry and had little attraction for the most important noble families. It is also evident that in the second half of the eighteenth century the nobility of the sword constituted about half of the infantry and artillery officer corps, the remainder being recent nobility, doubtful nobility, or commoners.

⁴¹ Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée Royale*, pp. 54-64.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 72-91, 98-99, 112-13. Bodinier has done a superb job of compiling statistics about the officer corps, but his analysis of those statistics is sometimes unsatisfactory. One problem is that he removes *officiers de fortune* from their respective corps and places them in a separate category. Since nearly half of the *roturiers* were *officiers de fortune*, however, this distinction distorts most of his statistics about the composition of the officer corps. He separates *officiers de fortune* because they did not reach ranks at the same age as other *roturiers*, but omitting these officers when considering other questions causes serious distortions. He concludes, for instance, that the artillery officer corps was no more a refuge for *roturiers* than the infantry, but this was not in fact the case. Many of the statistics found below are my own, based on Bodinier's data.

A surprising 114 or 11.8 per cent of the French army officers who served in the United States during the American War of Independence were *officiers de fortune*, common soldiers whose talents enabled them, despite numerous obstacles, to obtain officers' commissions. Almost all of these officers were *roturiers*, for contrary to popular belief, few impoverished nobles were *officiers de fortune*. Only 4 of the 114 are known to have been nobles, and a mere 2 others were of doubtful noble origin. *Officiers de fortune* joined the army as private soldiers, and many of them had worked as day labourers, wood cutters, and servants before joining the military. Of those whose parents' professions are known, 14 had fathers who belonged to the liberal professions, 12 were the children of merchants or master artisans, and 20 were sons of manual workers of rural or urban origin. *Officiers de fortune* were commissioned officers at a considerably more advanced age than officers who did not have to serve in the ranks, an average of 40.4 years, and this meant that they were rarely able to obtain sufficient seniority to be considered for promotion to captain before retirement. In any case, their lack of funds made it unlikely that they could purchase this rank even if they did obtain sufficient seniority. In a few rare cases *officiers de fortune* who were commissioned before 1763 and served in the War of the Austrian Succession or the Seven Years' War were named majors or lieutenant-colonels, in part thanks to the army's wartime expansion.⁴³

Over one quarter of the army officers dispatched to the United States--22.6 per cent--were either *roturiers* or of doubtful nobility. Even when the doubtful cases are excluded the total proportion of commoners comes to 22.6 per cent. Some 57 per cent of these *roturiers* and doubtful noblemen received their commissions immediately upon commencing their military career and the other 43 per cent were *officiers de fortune* who obtained their commissions after a period in the ranks. The proportion of commoners among the officers who went to the United States was larger than in the army as a whole because of the lack of almost exclusively noble cavalry regiments and the unusual numbers of commoners among the hussars of the Légion de

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84, 104-113. See also Tuetey, *Officiers sous l'ancien régime*, pp. 281-96.

Lauzun and the contingents belonging to colonial regiments based in the West Indies. The regiments of infantry of the line in the expeditions, however, provide a large and quite representative sample of the proportion of commoners in the infantry as a whole. Since 21.8 per cent of the officers in the infantry regiments of the line were *roturiers* or doubtful noblemen and the cavalry is known to have had a far larger proportion of noblemen than the infantry, Bodinier estimates that at least 15 per cent of France's entire army officer corps was made up of commoners.⁴⁴

The most serious obstacle which *roturiers* faced was admission to the officer corps. Once they were in, the seniority system, which in practice applied to all officers except those destined for colonelcies, worked in their favour and they advanced through the ranks at approximately the same rate as their noble colleagues. Surprisingly, 13 per cent of the *roturiers* in the infantry regiments who were commissioned officers immediately on their admission to the military attained the rank of major or lieutenant-colonel as opposed to only 8 per cent of their noble comrades. Whether or not this was true of the army as a whole, it at least indicates that *roturiers* held their own in the lower ranks.⁴⁵ This does not prove that nobles considered their *roturier* colleagues social equals or that nobles and bourgeois were developing closer ties, but it does demonstrate that on the professional level there was a vague semblance of equality between nobles of the sword and robe and commoners in the lower ranks of the officer corps.

The government's financial embarrassment meant that it was tempted to appoint officers who could support themselves and not require a pension when they retired. According to the reformist Minister of War of the late 1770's, Lieutenant-General Claude-Louis, Comte de Saint-Germain, "In the present state of affairs, it is impossible any longer to accept officers who do not buy their jobs and who cannot provide their own pensions. The whole impoverished

⁴⁴ Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, pp. 111-13.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

nobility which used to make up the strength of the the armies is now absolutely excluded."⁴⁶ Commoners who obtained commissions on entering the military were often protected from noble officers by the colonels who had sold them commissions at a good profit, and other influential noblemen intervened to defend certain non-noble protégés, undermining the efforts of Saint-Germain's predecessor Minister of War Marshal Charles Fouquet, Duc de Belle-Isle, and Choiseul to demobilize commoners before noblemen.⁴⁷ This frustrated many officers who were nobles of the sword. While they were not especially concerned about *officiers de fortune*, as long as they did not proliferate, their feelings about wealthier commoners and nobles of the robe were different. In 1781 François-Philippe Loubat, Baron de Bohan, a writer on military affairs, strongly protested against the intrusion of wealthy *roturiers* into the officer corps:

The nobility are humiliated to see themselves often frustrated in their quest for posts which their ancestors cemented with their blood. Riches, which corrupt and breach all barriers which honour and glory elevated between citizens, have become sufficient title for pretensions to all places. One sees the son of a clerk clad himself with a uniform, dispute the right of way and want to march as the equal of a man of quality...complaints, intrigue and petty schemes are used to elevate oneself and leave the place which one honoured before and scorn today.⁴⁸

More and more restrictions were imposed to protect the interests of the old nobility. In 1751 commoners who became generals were automatically enobled, but attaining this rank was extremely difficult for a person of humble social origins, and was almost impossible after the Seven Years' War.⁴⁹ In the 1770's, it became necessary to be a noble in order to progress beyond

⁴⁶ Claude-Louis, Comte de Saint-Germain, to Paris Duverney, cited in Léon Mention, *L'armée de l'Ancien Régime de Louis XIV à la Révolution* (Paris: Société française d'éditions d'art, 1900), pp. 140-41. See also Knud J. V. Jesperen, "Claude-Louis, Comte de Saint-Germain (1707-1778): Professional Soldier, Danish Military Reformer, and French War Minister", in *Soldier-Statesmen of the Age of Enlightenment*, records of the 7th International Colloquy on Military History, Washington, D.C., 25-30 July 1982, ed. International Commission of Military History (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1984), pp. 307-8. Saint-Germain was author of the *Mémoire sur les vices du système militaire français* (1758).

⁴⁷ Béranger, "Le maréchal de Belle-Isle", in *Soldier-Statesmen of the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. International Commission of Military History, pp. 203-4; Carée, *Noblesse de France*, pp. 162-63; Higonet, *Class, Ideology, and the Rights of Nobles*, p. 40; and Tuetey, *Officiers sous l'ancien régime*, pp. 236-54, 264-78, 320-25.

⁴⁸ François-Philippe Loubat, Baron de Bohan, *Examen critique du militaire français: Suivi des principes qui doivent déterminer sa constitution, sa discipline et son instruction*, 3 vols. (Geneva: n.p., 1781), 1: 58.

⁴⁹ Bernier, *Louis the Beloved*, p. 162.

the rank of lieutenant, and after 1781 one had to possess four generations of nobility in order to be commissioned, unless one rose from the ranks or joined the artillery. The famous Ségur ordinance of 1781 was intended to exclude all recently enobled families and wealthy bourgeois from the officer corps, thereby reducing a threat to the professional future of nobles of the sword.⁵⁰ One of Marie-Antoinette's ladies-in-waiting, Jeanne Campan, wrote that the ordinance of 1781 would be a blow to many bourgeois, for a man

in that class of citizens, justly respected, an individual, long employed in diplomacy, having even been honored with the title of minister plenipotentiary, kin of colonels, and on his mother's side, nephew of a lieutenant-general with the cordon rouge, [could not] have his own son accepted as sublieutenant in an infantry regiment.⁵¹

The ideal officer, for the reformers, was the poor nobleman of the sword who was completely devoted to the traditional profession of his family. They felt that, unlike noblemen of the sword, noblemen of the robe had alternative career opportunities and bourgeois did not have to fear *dérogance* or a loss of noble status through involvement in commerce or manual labour. According to the reformers, this disciplined and devoted military elite, supposedly uncorrupted by contact with wealthy civilians who tempted them to live beyond their means, were also potentially better soldiers.⁵² Enlightenment thought stressed the rational organization of the state and society for the good of all, and military reformers had begun to think along these lines. This, however, did not prevent them from combining genuinely positive reforms with what seemed like a fair and rational decision but was in fact a reactionary defence of traditional privileges.

⁵⁰ Bien, "Réaction aristocratique", *Annales* 29 (1974): 23-48, 505-34; Carée, *Noblesse de France*, p. 157; Tuetey, *Officiers sous l'Ancien Régime*, pp. 279-80; and Barber, *Bourgeoisie in 18th Century France*, pp. 117-25. Bien argues that the ordinance was aimed at nobles of the robe rather than bourgeois because limited numbers of commoners were still allowed become subalterns in the artillery or rise from the ranks, but it seems clear that wealthy bourgeois were among the most important targets of this reform. Commoners had even made major inroads among the elite household troops such as the gendarmerie because few noblemen were able to afford the astronomically expensive commissions in these units.

⁵¹ Jeanne-L.-H. Campan, *Mémoires sur la vie de Marie-Antoinette, reine de France et de Navarre; suivis de souvenirs et anecdotes historiques sur les règnes de Louis XIV, de Louis XV et de Louis XVI* (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1849), p. 179.

⁵² Bien, "Military Education in Eighteenth-Century France", in *Science, Technology and Warfare*, ed. Wright and Paszek, pp. 51-60.

One of the last Ministers of War before the French Revolution, Athanase-Louis-Marie de Loménie, Comte de Brienne, who was in office in 1787-1788, was ably supported by a new nine-man war council headed by Major-General Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, Comte de Guibert. This council of officers and administrators served as an early form of general staff, and with it Guibert reduced the size of the officer corps, gave men in the ranks a pay raise, eliminated honourific military posts and disbanded household troops, closed the Académie Militaire and replaced it with provincial military academies, placed military procurement under government control, reorganized logistics, artillery, and engineering, and regrouped regiments of infantry and cavalry into combined brigades which were trained as units. Despite all of these reforms, and Guibert's concept of a citizen army, the general believed that most of the officer corps must be recruited from the nobility. This was consistent with his desire to foster a new nobility characterized by professional devotion to state service, courage, and patriotism rather than simply privilege and wealth.⁵³ The nobility had in former times been an autonomous ruling class with nominal allegiance to a royal overlord, but now, more than ever before, noble status was to be a badge of royal service, distinguishing those in responsible civil and military posts from the mass of the citizenry. This would provide a modicum of utilitarian honour and status for persons of merit in an increasingly egalitarian society. However, the unspoken corollary, overlooked by many noblemen, was that noble rank would still have to be awarded to distinguished commoners.

Military officers belonged to a variety of social groups which were divided by the possession of noble status, the duration of a family's noble lineage, wealth, education, and the professional background of officers' parents. It is dangerous, therefore, to treat the officer corps as a homogenous bloc. Nevertheless, some observations can be made about the organization. Despite the differences between various groups, the officer corps was virtually monopolized by aristocrats and aristocratic, military values. These values were shared not only by nobles of the sword, but also to a great extent by "militarized" nobles of the robe and even by many commoners who held

⁵³ Schama. *Citizens*, pp. 257-59.

commissions and were "living nobly". In addition, the officer corps was an institution, and as such it imposed institutional values on its members. The borderline between nobles of the sword and those of the robe was often artificial, for even officers who could trace their lineage to before 1600 were not necessarily of military origin, and usually had a number of more recent robe ancestors who had entered the nobility via judicial and administrative posts. Marriages between members of sword and robe families were a perfectly normal occurrence, and if a "robe" family had provided soldiers for the crown for four generations or more, an officer from such a family would not usually be considered an outsider. Even if the army was half composed of officers with origins prior to 1700, a third composed of more recent nobles, and a fifth made up of commoners, the corps can be considered a noble institution dominated by aristocratic social and military values, affecting everything from manners and social interaction to leisure time and intellectual pursuits. For all intents and purposes, "noble" and "officer" can be considered virtually synonymous terms, even if these noblemen's opinions differed according to education, social ambitions, and other individual or group characteristics.

The Enlightenment, it may be argued, was a climate of opinion which fostered critical thinking and rationalism and encouraged such concepts as humanity, toleration, the equal dignity of all human beings, and the duty of the state to promote the general good of society. In France, new methods of criticism and new criteria for analyzing the state of humankind made the second half of the eighteenth century a period of rapid intellectual change. In the space of a few decades traditional conceptions of society were completely transformed. The dramatic political experiment which began in 1789 produced the most revolutionary change, but the ideas generated during this upheaval were inspired to a great extent by the ideals which had already entrenched themselves in the minds of a significant proportion of the French educated public.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the development of public opinion see Mona Ozouf, "'Public Opinion' at the End of the Old Regime", *Journal of Modern History* 60 (1988): S1-S21.

The French Revolution was brought about by a number of factors, most notably a financial crisis which required a political solution, but the dimensions of this political upheaval can only be attributed to a major intellectual phenomenon which had existed in France roughly since the death of Louis XIV some seventy-four years earlier--the Enlightenment. People who shared Enlightenment values such as critical thinking, rationalism, humanity, tolerance, education, and reform believed that human beings could achieve greater happiness and dignity if their social institutions were organized according to rational and scientific criteria instead of tradition. Their scepticism concerning Christianity's ability to rationally explain human nature and humankind's relationship with the natural environment resulted in a belief in religious toleration, strong anticlericalism, and Deism. Another Enlightenment premise was that humans enjoyed certain inalienable rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom from arbitrary arrest, and unrestricted access to information. Some writers considered freedom of commerce, or enterprise without the interference of monopoly and other restrictions, another basic right. Finally, proponents of Enlightenment attitudes also believed that all human beings were potentially equal except in intelligence. These ideas were characteristic of the Enlightenment, but as we shall see they were far from being consistently applied. In particular, contemporary assumptions about the impact of environment on various peoples and social groups and the differing natures of the sexes meant that their "reality" and therefore their criteria for "rational" decisions were not the same as our own.⁵⁵

A decisive shift occurred between 1750 and 1775 as the struggle between the crown and the noble-dominated Parlements acquired a new and more radical ideological tone. Proponents of the *thèse royale* and the *thèse nobiliaire* infused their arguments with Enlightenment ideas, in part attributable to seventeenth-century thinkers, in a bid to gain further power. Unintentionally, they

⁵⁵ Hampson, *Enlightenment*, p. 253 in particular, and Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. 1, *The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. xi, 8-9. Gay sees the Enlightenment as "a volatile mixture of classicism, impiety, and science" and the *philosophes* as "modern pagans" who used the techniques of classical criticism to attack Christianity and support "modernity" or modern rationalism. I have largely followed Hampson's interpretation, however.

generated a political philosophy which fundamentally rejected both absolutism and the aristocratic principle. Royalist, Patriot, and "Independent" positions all influenced public opinion, but the latter two philosophies acquired a greater hold on the public imagination. By 1789 all sectors of educated society, even the officer corps, adhered at least in part to liberal ideas which had come to the fore during the previous decades. Before discussing the development of liberal political ideas in the officer corps, however, it is worthwhile to outline the evolution of these ideas up to the late eighteenth century.

Dieskau's and Montcalm's officers sailed for North America in the midst of an important clash between the Parlements and the monarchy over Jansenism. This confrontation, however, was part of a chronic conflict between the nobility and the monarchy which had roots in the distant past. In the Middle Ages the monarch was the chief symbol and instrument of the unity of the kingdom. Noble and clerical authorities generally agreed that royalty was of divine origin, but that in the beginning the people had conferred the responsibilities of governing upon the king. Power was exercised by one person, within certain limits fixed by fundamental laws governing the succession. Despite the king's ultimate authority, French tradition dictated that councils were the essence of monarchy and that the king was bound to rule according to the advice of his private councillors and of aristocratic corporations which expressed the interests of his subjects.⁵⁶

In the sixteenth century, however, the theory of monarchy changed in France. In the 1570's a *maître de requêtes*, Jean Bodin, developed a secular theory of absolute monarchy in order to counter the Huguenot's subversive theory of legitimate resistance. According to Bodin, the king possessed undivided sovereignty, and was only limited by the scriptural law of God, the rational law of nature, which justified private property, and certain *leges imperii*, fundamental constitutional laws regarding the transference of sovereignty. The people had, in the act of

⁵⁶ Bernard Basse, *La constitution de l'ancienne France: Principes et lois fondamentales de la royauté française* (Liancourt: Presses Saint-Louis, 1973), pp. 17-32.

consenting to the monarchy, completely renounced and alienated their sovereign power, and therefore the king was not bound to listen to purely advisory bodies such as the Estates.⁵⁷ During the seventeenth century various political theorists carried the concept of absolute monarchy even further. Chief among them was Jacques Benigne Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, who in about 1670 wrote that the king was appointed solely by God to be his minister on earth, and that God reigned over his peoples through their kings. The will of the monarch was absolute, and only if his wishes clearly opposed the laws of God could individuals or assemblies convened with his consent send him respectful remonstrances with their grievances. Bossuet insisted that since a true monarch ruled according to reason and Christian principles, he was not an arbitrary despot.⁵⁸

The theory of divine right monarchy, which was the official ideology of the monarchy of Louis XIV, crippled ancient French constitutional traditions.⁵⁹ By the middle of Louis XIV's reign the parlements registered royal edicts without protest, the provincial estates granted the king whatever taxes he desired, and there was no obvious opposition to the monarch's authority either from the great nobility or the peasantry.⁶⁰ The second half of his reign, however, was marked by almost continuous war, frequent military reverses, a deteriorating economy, crushing taxes, numerous peasant rebellions, and the mass exodus of about 200,000 persecuted Huguenots.⁶¹ Popular unrest was matched by dissatisfaction among the elite, and noblemen in the circle of the

⁵⁷ Jean Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, trans. and abridged M. J. Tooley (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), pp. 25-36, 40-49; Julian H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Rise of Absolutist Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. vii-viii, 41, 108; and George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), pp. 399-414.

⁵⁸ Jacques B. Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture Sainte*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Bossuet, précédés de son histoire par le cardinal de Bossuet*, ed. abbé Guillaume (Lyon: Librairie ecclésiastique de Briday, 1879), 8: 338-480. See also Catherine Betty A. Behrens, *Society, Government and the Enlightenment: The Experiences of Eighteenth-Century France and Prussia* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), pp. 29-35, 152-53.

⁵⁹ David Parker, *The Making of French Absolutism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), pp. 146-51.

⁶⁰ Gerald J. Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot: From Absolutism to Constitutionalism in Eighteenth-Century France" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1967), p. 20.

⁶¹ Louis André, *Louis XIV et l'Europe* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1950), pp. 260-62 and Warren C. Scoville, *The Persecution of the Huguenots and French Economic Development, 1680-1720* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), pp. 26, 119-28, 436.

king's heir, Louis, Duc de Bourgogne, blamed France's problems on the "despotism" of the king and on the "reign of the vile bourgeoisie" who supposedly served him. Members of the circle wanted the king's authority reduced and the nobility's power correspondingly increased through reformed and strengthened aristocratic corporations, including the Estates General, provincial estates, and parlements.⁶²

This desire for a return to the golden age of feudalism, however, did not go unchallenged. Many servants of the crown, both noble and bourgeois, saw the monarchy as a positive force in providing internal peace and countering the ambition of a rapacious nobility. One important defender of absolute monarchy was Marshal Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, a member of the humble and obscure *petite noblesse* whose unsurpassed skill as a military engineer eventually won him the baton of a Marshal of France. Vauban accepted without question the theory of divine right monarchy and considered the king's person sacred. He never proposed the revival or establishment of intermediate powers or any restriction of the king's absolute authority. The only criticism Vauban made was that the king was sometimes poorly advised, and he considered it essential that the monarch be assisted by a council of talented men dedicated to the state and the well being of the king's subjects.⁶³ Rather than seeking to increase the influence of the nobility, his proposals to reform the military and taxation system aimed to curtail noble privileges, and he constantly complained about the oppression of the common people by greedy aristocrats. Vauban strongly advocated the idea that servants of the crown should be appointed and promoted purely according to merit. Despite his criticisms of the French nobility, he considered noble status

⁶² Lionel Rothkrug, *Opposition to Louis XIV* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 345-48, 464-65; George Tréca, *Les doctrines et les réformes du droit public en réaction contre l'absolutisme de Louis XIV dans l'entourage du duc de Bourgogne* (Paris: Librairie de la Société du recueil général des lois & des arrêts & du Journal du Palais, 1909); Victor L. Tapié, "Comment les français du XVIIe siècle voyaient la patrie", *XVIIe siècle* 25-26 (1955): 54-55; Roland Mousnier, "Les idées politiques de Fénelon", *XVIIe siècle* 2 (1951): 190-207; Henri Sée, *Les idées politiques en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Marcel Giard, 1923); Basse, *Constitution de l'ancienne France*, pp. 334-39; Joseph Dedieu, *Montesquieu et la tradition anglaise en France: Les sources anglaises de "L'Esprit des lois"* (Paris: Librairie Victor Leoffre, 1909), pp. 106-13; and Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot", pp. 73-74. For the writings of Saint-Simon see Louis de Rouvray, Duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, 41 vols., ed. A. M. de Boislisle (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1879-1928).

⁶³ Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot", pp. 75-77.

the best reward for talent, and he favoured granting letters of nobility to *roturiers* of proven merit. He also wished to transfer the tax burden from the peasants to their noble landlords. In addition, while Vauban was a devout Catholic and not particularly anticlerical, he advocated that the Church's authority be restricted to purely spiritual matters. No believer in liberty of conscience, he favoured toleration for Huguenots on purely pragmatic grounds.⁶⁴ Many of the marshal's more progressive ideas were being seriously debated by his military colleagues during the 1770's and 1780's.

After the death of Louis XIV, the Regent Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, restored the traditional powers of the parlements and replaced the secretaries of state with councils dominated by court noblemen, the *polysynodie*. This represented a triumph of the *thèse nobiliaire*, but the councils were so hopelessly incompetent and inefficient that the regent customarily bypassed them, and three years later the ministerial system was reestablished.⁶⁵

Henri, Comte de Boulainvillier, further developed the *thèse nobiliaire* in works published mostly after his death in 1722, claiming that the "pure and ancient" nobility, directly descended from the Frankish conquerors of the Gallo-Romans, were the true source of sovereignty, and that they had the right to elect the monarch and participate in decision-making.⁶⁶ Boulainvillier was attacked on his own ground by Abbé Jean-Baptiste Dubos, who claimed that the Franks were mercenary allies of the Roman emperors and obtained their authority from the Roman monarchy. They eventually established a corrupt feudal system by usurping the rights of the king and the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-72, 78-85; Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, "Réorganisation de l'armée" and Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, "Mémoire pour le rappel des huguenots", in Albert de Rochas d'Aiglun, ed., *Vauban, sa famille et ses écrits: Ses Oisivetés et sa correspondance: Analyse et extraits*, 2 vols. (Paris: Berger Levrault et Cie., 1910), 1: 325-26, 465-77; and Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, *Projet d'une dixme royale* (n.p., 1708), p. 23.

⁶⁵ Henri Leclercq, *Histoire de la régence pendant la minorité de Louis XV*, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1921-22), 1: 140-56, 2: 53-55, 203-7; J. H. Shennan, *Philippe, Duke of Orleans: Regent of France, 1715-1723* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979); Ford, *Robe and Sword*, p. 83; and Charles Urbain, ed., *Fénelon: Écrits et lettres politiques* (Paris: Éditions Brossard, 1920), pp. 20-22, 99.

⁶⁶ Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot", p. 90. For a eulogistic biography of Boulainvillier see Renée Simon, *Henry de Boulainvillier: Historien, philosophe, astrologue, 1658-1722* (Paris: Boivin, 1941).

people. Writers on both sides were barely affected by Enlightenment ideas, for they based all of their arguments on the authority of tradition rather than on rationality or natural law.⁶⁷

Another critic of Boulainvillier was René-Louis de Voyer, Marquis d'Argenson, who vainly hoped that Louis XV would preside over a rational reorganization of the nation's administration and taxation system and abolish most noble privileges.⁶⁸ One of his most interesting ideas was that of "an absolute government tempered by reason and by justice", with the country run on the local level by a system of self-government on Dutch and Flemish lines, which he called "democracy", and considered best suited to prosperity and public order. In this alliance of monarch and people, the king's authority would increase while the influence of the bureaucracy and nobility would decrease.⁶⁹ His dilemma was that of all supporters of absolutism: "Absolute monarchy is excellent under a good king; but who shall guarantee that we shall always have a Henri IV? Experience and nature prove that, on the contrary, we shall have ten worthless kings for each good one."⁷⁰

The inglorious end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748 and the simultaneous publication of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois*, a talented, persuasive defence of the *thèse nobiliaire*, added fuel to criticism of royal government in the 1750's. The Parlement of Paris, dominated by noblemen of the robe, played a prominent part in this opposition, and their resistance was particularly vigorous during the Seven Years' War. The parlements and church were aroused by the attempted imposition of a permanent *vingtième* or income tax on the nobility and clergy in 1749, and the government backed down.

⁶⁷ Jean-Baptiste Dubos, *Histoire critique de l'établissement de la monarchie françoise dans les Gaules*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam: J. Wetsten & G. Smith, 1735. rev. ed., Paris: Nyon fils, 1742), 1: 1-15.

⁶⁸ Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot", pp. 93-95, 107-8 and Antony Lentin, ed., *Enlightened Absolutism (1760-1790): A Documentary Sourcebook* (Newcastle: Averro Publications, 1985), pp. ix-xx.

⁶⁹ Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot", pp. 97-98, 110-17, 137-39. His ideas on democracy are most prominent in René-Louis de Voyer, Marquis d'Argenson, *Considérations sur le gouvernement ancien et présent de la France* (Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1765), written in 1737.

⁷⁰ René-Louis de Voyer, Marquis d'Argenson, *Mémoires et journal inédit du marquis d'Argenson, publiés et annotés par M. le marquis d'Argenson*, 9 vols., ed. Edmé-J.-B. Rathéry, (Paris: P. Jannet, 1857-1858), 7: 230.

In 1753 the king ordered the Parlement of Paris to cease prosecuting clergymen who refused to grant the sacraments to Jansenists, and in response the Parlement issued its widely-read Grand Remonstrances. They maintained that the monarch was bound to obey the fundamental laws of the kingdom, which only the Parlement could interpret. Louis XV exiled the magistrates and then recalled them in 1754 on condition that they remain silent on the question, a provision which the Parlement ignored. Controversy over Jansenism, the authority of the Grand Conseil, taxation, and the Jesuit order continued over the course of the next few years. The government practically capitulated to the Parlement of Paris, conforming to its financial demands and barely opposing the dissolution of the Jesuit order in 1763, even though the Ultramontane Jesuits had traditionally been strong supporters of the monarchy.⁷¹

This confrontation attracted the interest of a large number of educated Frenchmen. The first printing of the Grand Remonstrances, 20,000 copies, was sold out in a few days, and many revised and expanded editions followed.⁷² Until the 1750's, even the educated classes saw government in terms of justice and personalities, and they showed more interest in privileges than in constitutional forms. Now, however, the issue of privileges or liberties assumed a different nature. The parlements helped to make opposition to the crown respectable, reinforced in public consciousness the idea that law restricted the powers of the state, encouraged the notion that there were intermediary corporate bodies which represented the people, and brought into the debate such important words as "citizen", "nation", "country", and "natural and imprescriptible rights".⁷³

⁷¹ Jean Egret, *Louis XV et l'opposition parlementaire, 1715-1774* (Paris: A. Colin, 1970), pp. 56-92, 133-39; J. H. Shennan, *The Parlement of Paris* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1968), pp. 305-15; Roger Bickart, *Les parlements et la notion de souveraineté nationale au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1932), pp. 13-20; Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot", pp. 144-60, 175-77; and Dale K. Van Kley, *The Damians Affair and the Unraveling of the Ancien Régime, 1750-1770* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 149-62, 184-201.

⁷² Cavanaugh, "Vauban, d'Argenson, Turgot", p. 154.

⁷³ Palmer, *Age of the Democratic Revolution*, 1: 89 and d'Argenson, *Journal et mémoires*, ed. Edmé-J.-B. Rathéry, 8: 315.

In other respects, however, it is difficult to assess how deeply the debate of the 1750's affected educated opinion. Although many noblemen sympathized with the parlements' opposition to royal despotism and defence of noble fiscal privileges, the ideal of the strong monarch retained a considerable hold on the public imagination. Institutional membership also played a role in perceptions of royal power. Magistrates of the parlements did not necessarily have the support of noblemen of the robe more closely associated with the monarchy, such as intendants. And despite the fact that their ranks contained some noblemen of the sword and bourgeois, the magistrates' views did not always coincide with those of either of these latter groups. Magistrates knew that if they were to dissuade the king from crushing them outright, they had to gain a degree of popular support among the Third Estate, thereby discrediting any effort by the government to replace them with a more amenable court of justice. They could not do this simply by basing their arguments on noble privilege, and for this reason they were encouraged to base their *thèse nobiliaire* or *thèse parlementaire* on such principles as national sovereignty, the contract between the king and the nation, the rule of law, and representative government. One of their most important arguments was that in the absence of an Estates General, the Parlements were obliged to represent the nation and go beyond their admittedly traditional judicial role. In arguing for aristocratic republicanism, they provided indirect justification for a more universal republicanism in which noble privilege had no place. This was, of course, far from being their intention. Underlying all of their views was a deep, reactionary conservatism which had little in common with Enlightenment attitudes. Their insistence on the maintenance of archaic legal and fiscal privileges of all kinds, their censorship of philosophic publications which did not conform to Catholic orthodoxy, and appeals to ancient constitutional traditions rather than natural law or rationality demonstrate that they had only partially absorbed Enlightenment ideas.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Durand Echeverria, *The Maupeou Revolution: A Study in the History of Libertarianism: France, 1770-1774* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), pp. 4-7.

By the late 1760's Louis XV's personal prestige and popularity had reached new lows, his senior minister, Choiseul, had to use troops to stop riots against his policy of free trade in grain, and the parlements had almost taken control of the tax structure. In addition, during the trial of Major-General Emmanuel-Armand de Vignerot du Plessis de Richelieu, Duc d'Aiguillon, Governor of Brittany, the Parlement of Paris demanded government papers as evidence and claimed to have jurisdiction over the government executive.⁷⁵ In December 1770, with the support of the king, René-Nicolas-Charles-Augustin de Maupeou and Abbé Joseph-Marie Terray exiled Choiseul and issued an edict condemning the pretensions of the Parlement of Paris and asserting the absolute executive, legislative, and judicial power of the monarch based on divine right. The Parlement of Paris went into permanent session, and in January the government exiled the entire magistracy of the Parlement from the city. Maupeou set up *conseils supérieurs* all across northern France to replace the functions of the Parlement of Paris, and ordered other Parlements purged. Terray then passed a series of tax laws which mostly affected the previously exempt rich.⁷⁶

Although technically a success, this decisive move by the government provoked a major public reaction. A pamphlet war between pro-Parlement *patriotes* and pro-government *royalistes* took place, and the Patriots won over public opinion. The government's coup had a profound effect on the French upper classes, forcing them to consider fundamental political questions which had not been widely or seriously considered before. The *philosophes* became increasingly politicized, and all at least indirectly supported the parlements except for Voltaire. This elderly writer preferred enlightened absolutism to what he saw as the lust for power of the tyrannical, self-serving, reactionary parlements and the arbitrary violence of the ignorant masses they unwisely stirred up. He believed that the enlightened, self-regulating exercise of absolute power was the system of government best suited to protect the tranquillity and personal liberty of

⁷⁵ John Rothenay, ed., *The Brittany Affair and the Crisis of the Ancien Régime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 22-25 and Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 10-14.

⁷⁶ Egret, *Louis XV et l'opposition parlementaire*, pp. 175-81; Bickart, *Parlements*, pp. 71-73, 77-82; and Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 14-20.

citizens. The power of free public opinion would guide the actions of the monarch, who would be subject to the rule of law along with everyone else. Even Voltaire, however, was aware that in practice Maupeou's and Terray's reforms were not especially enlightened or effective.⁷⁷

Other Royalist authors based their arguments in favour of absolutism on tradition, divine right theory, and pragmatism, stressing the dangers of "republicanism" and the benefits of reform. Some Royalists proposed a statist theory which gave the king absolute power to enforce the public good, while others discussed non-binding fundamental laws which protected personal liberty and property.⁷⁸ They occasionally referred to the despotism of the British Parliament, and equated British liberty with anarchy.⁷⁹

The *économistes* or *physiocrates* were harassed by the new government and had their free trade ideas thrown out along with their patron Choiseul, but they also generally favoured a form of absolutism, which they called "legal despotism". The physiocrats believed that natural laws of political liberty already existed, and that all the king had to do was oversee a system which operated by itself and fulfill the role of educator and policeman. The individual, they were convinced, acted in enlightened self-interest, and required no bureaucratic intervention on his behalf. According to the physiocratic system, benevolent capitalistic landowner citizens would be the basis of society, with a class of "plebs" below them. Everyone, including the plebs, would benefit from the free play of natural economic forces. Physiocrats strongly supported such ideas as freedom of commerce, scientific agriculture, public education, anticolonialism, the abolition of slavery, and world peace. Slavery and colonialism, they believed, caused distortions in the marketplace, and for this and humanitarian reasons they had to be eliminated. Although the illiberal and more impractical theories of this school were largely rejected, many of its social and

⁷⁷ Peter Gay, *Voltaire's Politics: The Poet as Realist* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), pp. 309-10, 314-24, 327-30; Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 22-28, 147-68; and Bickart, *Parlements*, pp. 71-73.

⁷⁸ Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 125-46 and Egret, *Louis XV et l'opposition parlementaire*, pp. 209-13.

⁷⁹ Acomb, *Anglophobia in France*, pp. 19-29.

economic ideas increased in importance during the late 1770's and the 1780's, supported by such writers as Major-General François-Jean de Beauvoir, Chevalier de Chastellux.⁶⁰

Patriots were united by their opposition to "despotism", and included among their number many if not most of the nobility of the robe; some of the nobility of the sword, including, as we shall see, many military officers; the Princes of the Blood; and numerous writers. Their concepts of liberty and constitutionalism were very important, for these fundamental laws and principles protected rights and defined the specific structure of the state. The magistrates who formulated most of Patriot thought were trained in justification by precedent, and their arguments were based to a great extent on ancient customs and quasi-history as well as natural law and public utility. Nevertheless, Enlightenment ideas played a considerable role in their ideology, and natural law formed the basis of their arguments for sovereignty of the nation, the contract between the ruler and ruled, natural rights, and public utility. Fundamental laws, they believed, included not only the traditional constitution regarding the king, parlements, and Estates General, but principles such as the rights of citizens to life, liberty, property, status, and honour, as well as taxation by consent, equality before the law, and protection from imprisonment without a fair trial. The parlements did not lay claim to sovereignty; rather, the magistrates believed that the "nation" as a moral entity possessed sovereignty and a general will and had the right to be represented by a constitutional corporation, preferably the Estates General. Up until 1771 they had essentially accepted divine right theory, but now they advocated the direct opposite of this doctrine.⁶¹ The Patriots wished to replace the sovereignty of the king with the sovereignty of the *patrie*, which is why they called themselves *patriotes* and *citoyens*, members of the sovereign nation. The king became the first minister of the sovereign, and all citizens would indirectly participate through a

⁶⁰ Weulersse, *Le mouvement physiocratique en France*, 2: 683-90, 710-14, 731-33; Pierre Teyssendier de La Serve, *Mably et les physiocrates* (1911; repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), pp. 33-43, 115-30; Gustave Schelle, *Du Pont de Nemours et l'école physiocratique* (Paris: Librairie Guillaumin, 1888; repr., Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), pp. 88-92; and Cavanaugh, *Maupéou Revolution*, pp. 178-213.

⁶¹ Echeverria, *Maupéou Revolution*, pp. 37-72 and Egret, *Louis XV et l'opposition parlementaire*, pp. 213-19.

hierarchy of orders, enjoying virtual representation in the corporations and the king. Despite the fact that Montesquieu was widely quoted by magistrates and Royalists alike, practically no one favoured his idea of the separation of powers on British lines. They did not see any need to coordinate the powers of the king, Estates General, and Parlements, and did not see them as separate sovereign entities.⁸²

Patriots unanimously rejected the idea of absolute equality, even if they supported the principle that everyone should be equally subject to the law--a concept which fell somewhat short of equality before the law because the laws could specify different rights for different people. They considered democracy an institution of ancient Athens which had no practical application, and most deemed inequality of wealth, social status, privilege, and political power perfectly acceptable. The Patriot slogan of "life, liberty, and property", taken from John Locke, also sometimes had "status" and "honour" added to it, specifically guaranteeing the enjoyment of rights appropriate for an individual's position, since rights did not have to be universal.⁸³ More conservative Patriots were horrified when some of the writers who supported their cause gave these ideas a more democratic tone. When Guillaume Saige proudly sent a copy of his *Catéchisme du citoyen* to every magistrate of the restored Parlement of Paris in 1775, expecting to be praised for his advocacy of the idea that the people had legislative power, the Parlement ordered his book lacerated and burned.⁸⁴ There was often a gap between the conservative magistrates and their more radical supporters. In later years Second Colonel Louis-Philippe, Comte de Ségur, of the

⁸² Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 100, 126 and Acomb, *Anglophobia in France*, pp. 19-29. Interestingly, the only Royalist pamphlet in which Echeverria found criticism of Montesquieu was by an anonymous Royalist military officer. Anonymous, "Lettre d'un officier du régiment de *** à Monsieur de ***, son frère, conseiller au parlement de ***" (n.p., 1771).

⁸³ Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 101-7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Régiment de Soissonnais wrote that the parlements gave "the signal for revolution", but it is doubtful whether the Revolution of 1789 was what they had in mind.⁸⁵

A number of individuals disapproved of the Parlements' objectives almost as much as they disliked Maupeou's measures. This group of Independents included most of the *philosophes* and their sympathizers, among them Major-General Guibert and the Chevalier--later Marquis--de Chastellux, also an officer. These men sympathized neither with the *thèse royal* nor with the *thèse nobiliaire*, and condemned both absolutism and the self-interest of the magistrates. They generally agreed that absolute power in the hands of one man degraded both the possessor of that power and his subjects, and Abbé Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, a popular author among the French officers who served in the United States, stressed that even the ideal absolute monarch deprived the people of their dignity and ability to decide their own destinies, with the result that they became docile slaves unable to remember their rights or resist potential abuses.⁸⁶ Chastellux, who would soon serve under Rochambeau, unreservedly condemned despotism because of its record of injustice, corruption, and cruelty and its fundamental opposition to human happiness. While he acknowledged that it still prevailed throughout the world, he believed that as time passed society was gradually growing more civilized and enlightened.⁸⁷ His optimism was nearly matched by that of another military officer, Guibert. In the preface to his essay on tactics Guibert recounted how despotism and misery prevailed in Europe, with the common people living "in a state of apprehension and anguish, sick of life, existing mechanically...enchained by habit and

⁸⁵ Louis-Philippe, Comte de Ségur, *Mémoires ou souvenirs et anecdotes par M. le comte de Ségur, de l'Académie française, pair de France*, 3 vols., 2d ed. (Paris: Alexis Eymery, 1825), 1: 24.

⁸⁶ Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* 6 vols. (Amsterdam: n.p., 1773), 6: 37, 39, 48, and Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 217-27.

⁸⁷ François-Jean de Beauvoir, Chevalier de Chastellux, *De la félicité publique, ou considérations sur le sort des hommes dans les différentes époques de l'histoire*, 2d ed. (Paris: Antoine-Augustin Renouard, 1776), 1: 106-8, 113-15; 2: 102-19. This book was first published in 1772.

vice."⁸⁸ Despite all this, he still had faith in future regeneration. Few of these officers' civilian counterparts had such a positive image of the future, but even the most pessimistic believed that it was important to strive for certain goals.⁸⁹

Independents strove to find a constitutional alternative which avoided the extremes of absolutism and aristocracy, yet incorporated the rational reform of the Royalists and the liberal attitudes and constitutionalism of the Patriots. They also expanded the Patriots' concept of rights in a more democratic direction. In many ways, however, their ideas were not truly liberal. Ultimately, Independents were less interested in toleration than in the virtual destruction of the Roman Catholic Church and Christianity. They could not conceive of a separation of church and state, and favoured subordinating a salaried priesthood to the government and the reform of Catholicism on Deistic lines. Religious doctrines themselves had long since ceased to be an issue--only Voltaire continued to harp on the theme of superstition--for agnosticism or Deism was prevalent among large sectors of the educated classes. In addition, although Independents promoted the concept of freedom of conscience, most had only qualified support for freedom of speech and press, seeing it as good policy for education and enlightenment rather than as a basic right. Turgot and Mercier were notable exceptions in their full support for freedom of speech and press. Among Patriots and Independents, the concept of rights was generally limited to life, liberty, and property.⁹⁰

One of the most important principles of the Independents was that they did not merely favour liberty under the law--a law which could specify different "rights" for different orders of society--but believed that the law had to be applied equally to all, with no exceptions by reason

⁸⁸ Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, Comte de Guibert, *Essai général de tactique, précédé d'un discours sur l'état actuel de la politique et de la science militaire en Europe, avec le plan d'un ouvrage intitulé: La France politique et militaire* (London: Librairies associés, 1772), pp. v-vi.

⁸⁹ Echeverria, *Maupéou Revolution*, pp. 227-45.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 246-54, 256, 272-81.

of profession or birth.⁹¹ Denis Diderot and others proposed that individuals could not alienate their sovereignty but only freely delegate it to an assembly of representatives, but a few, such as Abbé Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, Sébastien Mercier, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, denied that the people could delegate sovereignty at all. Government could only be their direct agent. Rousseau, however, was in good company when he rejected the notion that the landless proletariat were active citizens.⁹² Independents were virtually unanimous in their belief that only landowners were true citizens and had the right to vote.⁹³ When discussing ancient Rome, the liberal Chastellux stated his admiration for the Roman people as a whole, but had reservations where the poverty-stricken masses of the city of Rome itself were concerned.⁹⁴ Independents such as Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, Baron de l'Aulne, and Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Condorcet considered it reasonable that a citizen's political status should be relative to his contribution to society, and in a plan for a hierarchy of elected municipalities in France drawn up by Pierre-Samuel Du Pont de Nemours and Turgot, large landowners were accorded several votes.⁹⁵

During the course of the 1770's the Independents' evolving constitutional models steadily reduced the power of the king and added to the power of the assemblies.⁹⁶ Guibert proposed a

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 256-58.

⁹² Baker, "A Script for the French Revolution: The Political Consciousness of abbé Mably", *Eighteenth Century Studies* 14 (1981): 248-49; Teysseidier de La Serve, *Mably et les physiocrates*, pp. 53-68, 136-41; Norman Hampson, *Will and Circumstance: Montesquieu, Rousseau and the French Revolution* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), pp. 65-83; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. and ed. Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1968), book 3, chapters 1, 3; and Echeverria, *Maupeou Revolution*, p. 260.

⁹³ Echeverria, *Ibid.*, pp. 262-64.

⁹⁴ Chastellux, *De la félicité publique*, 1: 114-15.

⁹⁵ Schelle, *Du Pont de Nemours*, pp. 97, 114, 190-98, 272-76; Gerald J. Cavanaugh, "Turgot: The Rejection of Enlightened Despotism", *French Historical Studies* 6 (1969): 31-58; and Douglas Dakin, *Turgot and the Ancien Régime in France* (1939; repr., New York: Octagon Books, 1965), pp. 266-80.

⁹⁶ *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 264, 266-70.

permanent assembly of representatives like the House of Commons.⁹⁷ His colleague Chastellux had the same faith in representative bodies:

M. Rousseau has said that in any country where the citizens are so numerous that it is necessary to make the government representative there can be no true liberty. For my part, I believe that there will be no solid and enduring liberty, and certainly no public felicity, except among peoples whose governments are wholly representative....Assemblies are the source of all liberty. No matter what its laws and customs are, every represented nation, every assembled body, will in the end acquire great political power.⁹⁸

The Independents were more inclined to study foreign models of government than either the Royalists or Patriots, and most admired the British constitution to some degree.⁹⁹ Chastellux had an especially high opinion of the House of Commons, which he considered the part of the British government "most firmly founded on reason and most supportive of the right of property."¹⁰⁰

The Independents showed unusual compassion for the common people, and while they believed that the masses were too irrational to be given political power, they also thought that everyone deserved equality before the law, fair taxation, freedom from seigniorial dues, the right to subsist, and perhaps a minimal education. Almost all of the Independents, including Chastellux, favoured educating the children of every social class in order to develop equality of opportunity; only a few of them, Necker for one, feared educating the masses.¹⁰¹ With the possible exception of Mably, the Independents were unable to imagine a classless society, but if they did not consider absolute egalitarianism realistic, they at least wished to bring the aristocracy down to the level of the bourgeoisie. The chief difference between the Patriots and Independents was the latter's strong rejection of the aristocratic principle and belief that talent, industry, and virtue were the only criteria for distinction in society and the state. They could not agree with the full program

⁹⁷ Guibert, *Essai général de tactique*, p. xv.

⁹⁸ Chastellux, *De la félicité publique*, 1: 101. 2: 44.

⁹⁹ Acomb, *Anglophobia in France*, pp. 30-50 and Echeverria, *Maupéou Revolution*, pp. 264-65.

¹⁰⁰ Chastellux, *De la félicité publique*, 2: 42-43.

¹⁰¹ Echeverria, *Maupéou Revolution*, pp. 255-56.

of the Patriots because they considered it essential that aristocratic corporations, titles, and feudal rights be abolished.¹⁰²

The years between 1750 and 1775 saw the emergence of a political consciousness among important sectors of the French educated public. This educated public basically included nobles and bourgeois, for other social groups such as urban artisans were not consistently literate. Previously, only small court cabals had struggled to replace one minister with another, but now a larger public became aware of political issues and discussed constitutional ideas which went beyond the traditional division between king and subjects. The Marquis de Montcalm's officers were in Canada when this process of political education was in its infancy, but the Comte de Rochambeau's officers, plunged into the midst of a revolutionary war overseas, were at the forefront of contemporary political debate. The North American environment, where officers faced unfamiliar populations and dangerous enemies, forced them to define their positions on a variety of social and political issues. Military officers who served in North America in the 1750's and in the 1770's and 1780's displayed different attitudes toward the colonial societies around them, and this was less a result of changes in the colonies than shifts in attitude among the French elite. Rochambeau's officers were more influenced by Enlightenment values than Montcalm's, had a slightly more liberal attitude toward relations between different social classes, criticized French institutions with more thoroughness and intensity, and took ideas of citizenship, hierarchy by merit, and social and political reform more seriously. Montcalm's generation of officers, deeply traditional in outlook, would not even contemplate any tampering with the sociopolitical structure, but Rochambeau's generation was willing to at least discuss change, even if this discussion remained on the theoretical level.

Officers were very much involved in the debate about absolutism which flared up in the 1750's and in the 1770's. Officers were among those who condemned Maupeou's use of military force to intimidate the Parlement, and a former captain argued that a soldier was morally obliged

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 282-95.

to disobey an order "which obviously contributes to the total subversion of society...Those who refuse to obey such unjust and harmful use of power condemned by society are not 'rebels' but rather citizens loyal to their country." He proposed that soldiers should not say that they "served the king", but that they "served the country", and that "king's officers" should be the "nation's officers".¹⁰³

If some officers sympathized with the Patriots' superficially liberal *thèse nobiliaire*, however, many of them also favoured a strong monarchy. Military men were generally attracted by the idea of a strong executive authority and chain of command along the lines of their increasingly professional officer corps. The military's internal structure promoted the ideals of hierarchical leadership and obedience mitigated by certain traditional rights. Most officers were happy to see the king enforce the law, but felt that the nation--by which they usually meant the nobility--should sanction those laws in a manner which did not undermine the king's authority. The Enlightenment ideas which attracted them the most tended to be ones which stressed rational organization of the state and society for the benefit of all.

The ties between the nobles of the sword who predominated in the military and the nobles of the robe who predominated in the parlements were not unbreakable, for while they had many points of common interest, they also had their differences. While many nobles of the sword were magistrates--most of the Parlement of Rennes, for instance, was made up of nobles of the sword rather than of the robe--their interests were not synonymous with those of nobles of the robe.¹⁰⁴ Military officers, like magistrates of the parlements, served the crown, but they belonged to a separate institution and a separate order within the nobility. Their institution was organized as

¹⁰³ Anonymous, "Lettre de M. le comte de ***, ancien capitaine au régiment d'***. Sur l'obéissance que les militaires doivent aux commandemens du prince", in anonymous, *Les Efforts de la liberté et du patriotisme contre le despotisme du sieur Maupeou, ou Recueil des écrits patriotiques publiés pendant le règne du chancelier Maupeou, pour démontrer l'absurdité du despotisme qu'il voulait établir et pour maintenir dans toute sa splendeur la monarchie française. Ouvrage qui peut servir d'histoire du siècle de Louis XV pendant les années 1770-71-72-73-74*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1775), 6: 330-47, cited in Echeverría, *Maupeou Revolution*, pp. 52-53, 74.

¹⁰⁴ Carée, *Noblesse de France*, p. 100.

an instrument of the crown in the pay of the crown, and as such they were more dependent on the monarchy than magistrates who supported themselves from fees and revenues from their estates and perceived themselves as largely independent of and even equal to the crown. Officers considered the parlements both allies and rivals, for while these corporations defended noble fiscal property rights, they were largely made up of nobles of the robe aggressively undermining the power of the royal master who employed much of the nobility of the sword. Most members of the officer corps did not want the patron of the poor but deserving provincial nobility replaced by upstart noblemen of the robe and bourgeois who might have little sympathy or understanding for the older military nobility. Their attraction to noble republicanism was based less on the parlements than on the noble-dominated estates in which nobles of the sword had more influence.

A few officers, notably Guibert and Chastellux, were among the founders of a more liberal, democratic constitutional philosophy, and as time went on the views of this school were increasingly influential among the military nobility. In 1789 a majority of the Second Estate supported the abolition of feudal rights, the levying of equitable taxes, and the establishment of a representative constitutional system in which the nobility was not guaranteed separate constitutional powers.¹⁰⁵ Many nobles opposed the Revolution from the beginning, but the majority accepted it; even the conservative noble deputies in the National Assembly offered little or no resistance to the abolition of noble privileges in 1789 and 1790. Like the bourgeois deputies, conservative nobles enthusiastically supported the idea that men of property were active citizens, and that everyone, even women, deserved certain basic rights.¹⁰⁶ Former nobles generally accepted their lot as individual citizens of the constitutional monarchy and republic. They only began to leave the army and retire to the countryside or flee the country when the bourgeois revolutionaries, responding to a radical populace in Paris and other areas, changed their acceptance of nobles as fellow citizens--this was Marat's view even in late 1792--into a crusade

¹⁰⁵ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility*, pp. 130-65.

¹⁰⁶ Higonnet, *Class, Ideology, and the Rights of Nobles*, pp. 58-63.

against nobles as inherent non-citizens, a campaign which intensified from 1791 to 1794 and only ended in 1799.¹⁰⁷ It is important to point out that officers who emigrated were not necessarily opposed to a relatively democratic constitutional regime, but were often simply afraid for their lives in a country which had stripped them of their citizenship. The reactionary attitude characteristic of the nobility during the Restoration only developed during the Terror.¹⁰⁸ The initial attitude of liberal and conservative nobles toward the French Revolution indicates that by 1790 most noblemen had abandoned even the Patriot position in favour of the more radical stance of the Independents of the 1770's.

Enlightenment ideas about the dignity of the individual, the rational organization of state and society for the benefit of all, and guaranteed individual rights had an impact on educated French society during the course of the eighteenth century. The nobility, as an important segment of educated society, played a major role in developing and disseminating Enlightenment thought. When these ideas were injected into the traditional struggle for power between the crown and the aristocratic corporations, they helped to generate a more liberal vision of society and politics which partially or completely rejected both absolutism and the principle of aristocracy.

Enlightenment ideas affected the officer corps as a professional institution, as an aristocratic corporation dominated by the nobility of the sword, and as a collection of individuals with different degrees of education, wealth, and social status. Officers of the sword increasingly based the defence of their institution against the encroachment of nobles of the robe and bourgeois on rational criteria rather than simply tradition. As members of an essentially aristocratic corporation, officers were drawn to the *thèse nobiliaire*, which defended the power and status of the nobility as proprietors of the land and as representatives of the nation against royal power

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6, 65-66, 131-32.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 133-38.

or despotism. On the other hand, they were not eager to see the king's authority undermined by nobles of the robe in the Parlements. By the early 1780's, officers tended to favour either a constitutional body composed of noblemen or one in which property owners, noble and non-noble, were represented, with the king retaining his executive and most of his law-making powers.

Military noblemen of the 1750's were deeply conservative and traditional in outlook, supporting benevolent but authoritarian royal power and a strictly hierarchical society dominated by the nobility. The very stability of the system to which they belonged made them content with the status quo and unwilling to question seriously the nature of their society or royal power. The severe clashes between the monarchy and parlements in the 1750's and 1770's, however, began to politicize the nobility and drew most military noblemen toward the Patriot position, which emphasized the contract between king and nation, the rule of law, and representative government on behalf of the sovereign nation. The rationale of these ideas, however, drove many intellectuals, including those of noble status, toward a more democratic definition of individual rights and the sovereignty of the nation in which aristocratic corporations had no place. The generation of noblemen who would live to see the Revolution incorporated many elements of this new thought into their ideology. Members of the French officer corps in the 1770's and 1780's adhered to a variety of political positions ranging from divine right absolutism to virtually democratic constitutionalism. There is no question, however, that they were different from the officers of the 1750's and were increasingly influenced by liberal and potentially revolutionary Enlightenment thought.

CHAPTER 2

NOBLEMEN IN THE NEW WORLD

French officers believed that climate and geography had a major impact on the character of societies, influencing a people's prosperity, social customs, and the nature of their government. Officers' views on climate and geography reveal a great deal about how they analyzed a country and what they considered "normal" and civilized. The manner in which they reacted to the distances they had to travel, the terrain and species they encountered, and the degree of isolation they felt so far from their homeland also measures how closely they associated North America with Europe in terms of mental distance, cultural distance, and relative importance. Environmental factors also affected their assessment of the continent's potential and the influence it might have on European affairs in the future.

In analyzing French officers' opinions about North America's plants, animals, and human inhabitants, it is apparent that while they rejected more extreme European theories about the biological effects of climate, they did accept Montesquieu's idea that climate had a significant cultural influence on human beings.¹

Officers were also convinced that scientific biological laws applied equally to Europe and North America, and if they found Canada, the American colonies, and later South America relatively foreign, this was less true of the United States. Their testimony regarding the scattered

¹ Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois: Les grands thèmes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Garnier frères, 1963), book 14, chapter 9.

information and literature which they had been exposed to in France indicates the extent to which most educated Europeans were informed about North America during the 1750's and again during the period around 1780. For most officers, the United States of 1780 lay comfortably within their European realm of experience.

To mid-eighteenth century Europeans, North America was on the periphery of the known world. This was not so much because the continent's vast interior remained only partially explored, but because Europeans' perceptions of the world outside Europe did not focus on North America. For most of them, the world beyond the Atlantic coast and the Mediterranean basin was "the Indies", a vague geographical area encompassing southern Asia and Spanish America. North America, like Africa and northern Asia, was on the edge of this area and European consciousness.

French-born officers garrisoning French possessions in North America in mid-century had to deal with two forms of isolation: a sense of separation from the familiar imposed by the geographic extent of the Atlantic Ocean and the sparsely-inhabited continental landmass, and a lack of "belongingness" created by the peripheral position of their colonies in the French world view. The isolation experienced at Île Royale, the French colony closest to the mother country, was different from that encountered in other parts of French North America. In some respects, Île Royale was simply the most distant of the islands, rimmed with forts and fishing villages, which lay off the coasts of Brittany, Saintonge, and Aunis. In other respects, it was the first outpost of French America. But Île Royale's physical distance from the long-established population centres of France and Canada underlined its psychological separateness from everything around it. As transatlantic commerce increased during the course of the eighteenth century, communications also improved, but Louisbourg was still a considerable distance from any other large settlement.³

³ Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic 1675-1740: An Explanation of Communication and Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 93, 213.

For many officers, living at Louisbourg was like being marooned on an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. The visiting Frenchmen also had difficulty in identifying with the more permanent sector of the local community because they knew that they were ultimately, like the fishermen, transients who would one day return to France. This feeling of transition, of living and yet not being a part of life, was the basis of the dislocation often felt by French officers among the colonial regulars elsewhere in North America. For Canadian officers stationed in Canada, Île Royale, and Louisiana, the experience was, of course, somewhat different. They too suffered from the boredom of garrison life at various posts, but at least North America was their home.

Louisbourg was not a desirable posting, and few officers stayed there because they wanted to. The fortress-town was economically as important to France as Canada and French Acadia combined, but this did not make life on the island any easier.³ The realization that even educated Frenchmen were barely aware that their island existed eroded the sense of purpose and belongingness which formed the basis of their morale. The urbane Scottish officer, Johnstone, was an ensign and lieutenant at Louisbourg, and he found local life stagnant and provincial and the company of his equally unstimulating colleagues intolerable. In 1758 he made his way to the more populous colony of Canada, where he served as aide-de-camp to Lévis and then Montcalm. After the capitulation he was happy to make his way back to France.⁴

Ensign and lieutenant Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur was another European in the colonial regulars, stationed in Canada from 1755 to 1759 after spending his youth in Normandy and with relatives in England. In Canada he travelled widely as a military mapmaker, then was commissioned a lieutenant in the Régiment de La Sarre. Crèvecoeur was heartily disliked by the junior officers of La Sarre, being twice an outsider, a former colonial officer and someone who felt relatively at home in Canada. Even worse, his contemplative character made him poor

³ John R. McNeill, *The Atlantic Empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 138.

⁴ Gordon Donaldson, *Battle for a Continent: Quebec, 1759* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1973), pp. 73-76, 122. See also Jay Cassel, "Les Troupes de la Marine in Canada, 1683-1760" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1988).

company for other young officers. He was captured during or soon after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, and Commissary Benoît-François Bernier reported that unlike the captured officers of the line regiments, who were eager to get back to Europe by any means, "Crèvecoeur aspires only to seek his fortune elsewhere." Transported to New York as a prisoner-of-war, carrying 240 livres borrowed from Bernier, he decided to travel in the colonies instead of going on to England to be exchanged. He settled on a farm in the colony of New York, was naturalized as a British subject in 1764, and married an American woman five years later, adopting during this period the full spectrum of rural American values. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur and Johnstone both dealt with their sense of isolation in different ways, Johnstone by attaching himself to Montcalm and his European circle so that he could pretend that he was back in Paris or Edinburgh, and Crèvecoeur by assimilating into the local community. Few other French officers followed Crèvecoeur's example. For most, living in a kind of mobile European world was easier than facing an unfamiliar North America.⁵

Officers stationed in the colonies had either to accept their situation with good grace or else succumb to misery. The best method of dealing with isolation was to make oneself at home, become involved with the local population, and enjoy one's natural surroundings. This was easier at some garrisons than at others, for while Johnstone claimed that he had to subsist on a diet of cod and pork fat for months on end at Louisbourg, others enjoyed fine dining and good society at Quebec, Montreal, or New Orleans.⁶ One member of the colonial regulars who adapted well

⁵ Montcalm to Bourlamaque, Montreal, 4 May 1758 and Montcalm to Bourlamaque, Quebec, 18 March, 1759, in *Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis*, 12 vols., ed. Henri-Raymond Casgrain (Quebec: L.-J. Demers & frère, 1891-1895) (*Lévis MSS*), 6: 237, 298; Bernier to Lévis, Quebec, 4 Oct., 1759, Bernier to Bougainville, Quebec, 21 Oct., 1759, and Bernier to Bougainville, Quebec, 5 Nov., 1759, *Lévis MSS*, 11: 11, 23-24, 36; Michel-Guillaume Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur [pen name J. Hector St. John], *Letters From an American Farmer* (J. M. Dent & Sons, 1912), pp. vii-xix; Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches of Eighteenth Century America: More "Letters of an American Farmer"*, ed. Henri L. Bourdin, Ralph H. Gabriel, and Stanley T. Williams (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 1-24. The *Sketches* published for the first time manuscript letters omitted from the original publication of 1782. See Ms. (Marie-Charlotte?) Chartier de Lotbinière to (Nicolas?) Renaud d'Avène des Méloizes, New York, 7 June 1790, in *Sketches*, p. 15, for Crèvecoeur's relationship with the lieutenants of La Sarre. She claims that they hated him so much that after the 1759 campaign he was forced to flee to New York.

⁶ Donaldson, *Battle for a Continent*, pp. 75-76 and McNeill, *Atlantic Empires*, pp. 21-23.

to North America was Captain Jean-Bernard Bossu, who during his years in Louisiana took a strong interest in the colony and spent some of his spare time writing an account of his travels in the form of letters to the Marquis de l'Estrade de la Cousse in Bourgogne.⁷ Similarly, the Swiss officers of the Régiment suisse de Hallwyll--formerly Karrer--also enjoyed a relatively pleasant, trouble-free stay in Louisiana. This regiment had companies garrisoning La Rochelle, Île Royale, Louisiana, Saint-Domingue, and Martinique and preserved good morale and discipline because of the unit's autonomous, privileged status as a Swiss regiment and because of the high quality of its officers, who unlike those in the colonial regulars had a good reputation for looking after their men. When the Swiss soldiers felt that their rights were being violated, however, they were the first to rebel. Swiss officers accepted exile from their country as a fact of life and comforted themselves by making their regiment their home wherever it was stationed and by taking great pride in their military profession.⁸ Their French counterparts, by contrast, often ended up in the colonies because they were unable for financial reasons to obtain commissions in the line regiments, and they often indulged in money-making schemes which included selling their men's rations.⁹ A variety of factors affected officers' acceptance of isolation from their homeland. These included the reward of military commissions which might not be obtained in France, expectations regarding the duration of their stay, perception of the advantages to be gained overseas, the location of the post, regimental spirit, and individual attitudes toward the places they were staying.

⁷ Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America 1751-1762*, ed. and trans. Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), pp. 8-11.

⁸ Records of the Régiment Suisse de Karrer, Service historique de l'Armée de terre, Vincennes (SHAT), Série X, Archives administratives des Corps de Troupe. Xg. 87, Xi. 31, Xi. 32, Xi. 33; Chartrand, *French Soldier in Colonial America*, p. 25; Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 177-84. The regiment changed its name when a colonel named Halwyll took over command from Karrer in 1752. The Swiss were involved in mutinies at Louisbourg in 1744 and at Île Dauphine near New Orleans in 1757, both the result of intolerable living conditions made worse by the corrupt abuses of French officers.

⁹ Christopher Moore, *Louisbourg Portraits: Life in an Eighteenth-Century Garrison Town* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982), pp. 223-49.

French army officers encountered new realities of space and time when leaving French ports for the open Atlantic. For naval officers this experience of long-term isolation from familiar surroundings was part of a seaman's profession, but for officers of the line regiments their encounter with the sea was different. Transatlantic voyages were generally uncomfortable, but when vessels were also crammed with troops, conditions were miserable. While ships used the wind to propel them in the right direction, they were also at its mercy. Being driven far off course, dismasted, shipwrecked, or rendered almost immobile by direct headwinds were common problems for naval officers and their army passengers. Numerous officers of line regiments commanded by d'Anville, Dieskau, Montcalm, and Rochambeau chronicled their vessel's daily progress or lack thereof, the panic when sails appeared on the horizon, the monotony, cramped quarters, seasickness, and increasingly awful food and water. Sickness and often death were omnipresent on even the swiftest voyages, at least for the soldiers and sailors who did not eat as well as the officers. The latter also had relatively monotonous diets, but rarely became ill.

The hazards of maritime travel during the 1750's is illustrated by some examples from the previous decade, during the War of the Austrian Succession. In 1745, the frigate *Renommée* under Captain Guy-François de Coëtnempren, Comte de Kersaint, attempted to reach Louisbourg, about to undergo a siege. Unable to enter the harbour because of treacherous ice, the vessel sailed to Canso and then further south. Short on supplies, Kersaint finally had to battle his way back across the Atlantic. Immediately joining a squadron ordered to relieve Louisbourg, the *Renommée* returned across the ocean, only to discover off Newfoundland that the fortress had fallen. After a bad storm, which caused severe damage to the squadron, the French vessels limped back to France.¹⁰

¹⁰ Guy-François de Coëtnempren, Comte de Kersaint, "Campagne de la *Renommée* de 32 canons", 1745, AN Marine B4 57, fol. 288 and Antoine-Alexis Perier de Salvert, "Antoine Alexis Perier de Salvert, commandant le *Mars* et l'escadre destinée à secourir Louisbourg assiégé par les anglais. 18 Octobre 1745", AN Marine B4 57, fol. 290.

A year later, an inexperienced naval officer, the Duc d'Anville, was sent to recapture Louisbourg with 7,000 soldiers and sailors. Kersaint and the *Renommée* were part of the ill-fated fleet. A captain in one of the line regiments in the force, the Régiment de Ponthieu, gave an account of the voyage. The embarked troops, he wrote, had to wait for "an infinite time" in the shelter of the Île d'Aix before the right winds appeared to take them out to sea on 20 June 1746. The officers were not told of their destination, and at first thought that they were headed for Gibraltar or Mallorca; then, as they continued to the southwest into hotter climes, they concluded that they were sailing to Martinique. Food and water were growing short when the Duc d'Anville announced that Louisbourg was their destination. The panic among the sailors alarmed the army officers, wrote the captain, "for we did not yet know the consequences of...such a late enterprise."¹¹ Because officers and men lacked experience and vessels of equal seaworthiness, the captains of the faster ships let themselves get too far ahead of the rest of the fleet and had to wait for two hours at the end of each day to let the others catch up, a procedure all too common among French naval formations. Storms, gales, and a hurricane caused damage and further delays. Water rations were down to a glass a day when they were hardly more than half way to their destination, and more than fifty scurvy victims were thrown overboard each day. In early September the force approached the coast of Nova Scotia without knowing their precise latitude, and a violent storm ensued. A transport collided with a warship and went under with all hands, and the fleet was completely dispersed. Flotsam off Sable Island suggested that several ships had run aground during the night. The damaged ships, filled with hundreds of sick and malnourished soldiers and sailors, straggled into Chebucto Bay, the future site of Halifax. Friendly Micmacs, seeing the numbers of sick in the French camp on shore, promptly fled for fear of infection. D'Anville died of apoplexy, and his feverish, despairing successor Rear-Admiral Constantin-Louis

¹¹ Anonymous, "Journal historique en forme de lettre d'un officier capitaine dans le régiment de Ponthieu embarqué sur le vaisseau *Le Prince d'Orange*", *Collection de documents inédits sur le Canada et l'Amérique*, 3 vols., ed. Henri-Raymond Casgrain (Quebec: Imprimerie de L.-J. Demers & frère, 1888), 1: 75-78.

d'Estournel barricaded the door of his cabin and thrust his sword through his body in an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide. He promptly handed over command to Rear-Admiral Jacques-Pierre de Taffanel, Marquis de La Jonquière. In late October La Jonquière set out to sea with his remaining ships, planning to attack Louisbourg with the 1,000 men who were still fit to fight. Contrary winds and another destructive storm led to a decision on 27 October to return to France. Of eleven companies under the captain's supervision--about 500 men at full strength--only 91 soldiers were still in good health. On the return voyage, so many men died or were incapacitated that the survivors feared that they would perish at sea for lack of men to manoeuvre the ships. Over the course of December 1746, the surviving vessels struggled into the Breton port of L'Orient. Some had to fight their way past British naval vessels, and at least one was shipwrecked at the harbour entrance. Dropping anchor after nearly six months without new provisions, the captain of Ponthieu testified that he and his men sang the *Te Deum* and made "very sincere vows, never to expose ourselves to such events...[only] the future will tell me [if this decision is justified] but I doubt that it will persuade me more strongly than I already am."¹²

The mortality rate on ships during the Seven Years' War was usually far less severe, but nevertheless, many risks were involved. Naval ensign Louis-Auguste, Chevalier de Rossel, who was on board the *Duc de Bourgogne* with Rear-Admiral Emmanuel-Auguste de Cahideuc, Comte Dubois de La Motte's squadron when it crossed from Brest to Louisbourg in 1757, even reported an outbreak of "plague", which was actually typhus.¹³ Ships following the usual northern route to Canada and Île Royale had to worry about icebergs as well as British naval vessels; it was difficult enough to manoeuvre around these floating mountains in the daytime, let alone at night. Ships destined for Canada also had to navigate the Gulf of St. Lawrence and make their way

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 79-107.

¹³ Louis-Auguste, Chevalier de Rossel, "Journal de ma campagne à l'île Royale (1757)", *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec (RAPQ)* (1931-32): 374 and Étienne Taillemite, "Cahideuc, Emmanuel-Auguste de, Comte Dubois de La Motte". *DCB*, 3: 92-93.

slowly and haltingly up the river to Quebec.¹⁴ Ascending or descending the St. Lawrence was no mean feat, for it was necessary to wait for winds in exactly the right direction in order to navigate the dangerous, confined waters. Sudden squalls or larger storms made the situation far worse. As ships rode out storms at anchor, seasick officers and men braved the torrential rain on frequent trips to the rail and worriedly listened to the sailors' devotional songs.¹⁵ The unhealthy diet and unsanitary confinement of troops on board transports meant that even moving soldiers from Quebec to the Île Saint-Jean (Prince Edward Island) area resulted in widespread illnesses.¹⁶

Rochambeau's officers were luckier than the Duc d'Anville's, but they also suffered from crowding, bad food, sickness, and numerous deaths. Chief Commissary Claude Blanchard reported that bodies were shoved through a gunport at all hours of the day and night, invariably without announcement.¹⁷ Amassing glory on distant colonial battlefields was an exciting prospect, but since the chances of ever making it back alive were by no means clear, officers had mixed emotions when the fleet set sail. As Charlus saw the Breton coastline sink below the horizon in May 1780, he was seized with the feeling that he would never see his family or friends ever again, and thought that this sensation of despair was the worst that he could wish on an enemy.¹⁸ For reasons of security, Rochambeau's officers were not told their destination, and while a landing in Ireland was soon ruled out, Jamaica and Puerto Rico were the preferred landfalls until the fleet

¹⁴ Montcalm to Marquise de Montcalm, Quebec, 11 May 1756, National Archives, Ottawa (NA) MG18, K7, vol. 3, pp. 55-62 and Jean-Baptiste d'Alegrac, *Aventures militaires au XVIIIe siècle d'après les mémoires de Jean-Baptiste d'Alegrac*, ed. Charles Coste (Paris: Éditions Berger-Levrault, 1935), pp. 12-22.

¹⁵ Daniel-Hyacinthe-Marie Liénard de Beaujeu, "Journal de la campagne du détachement de Canada à l'Acadie et aux Mines, en 1746-47", *Collection de documents inédits sur le Canada et l'Amérique*, ed. Henri-Raymond Casgrain (Quebec: Imprimerie de L.-J. Demers & frère, 1889), 2: 17-22. Liénard de Beaujeu was a Canadian officer in the colonial regulars, but French officers had similar experiences on the river.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22. For more on the difficulties of getting from one place to another by sea in wartime see Paul-Antoine, Chevalier Fleuriot de Langle, to Charles-Eugène-Gabriel de la Croix, Marquis de Castries, on board the *Resolue*, Boston, 22 Sept. 1781, AN Marine B4 192, fol. 59.

¹⁷ Claude Blanchard, *The Journal of Claude Blanchard*, ed. Thomas W. Balch, trans. William Duane (Albany: J. Munsell, 1876; reprint, New York: New York Times & Arno Press, 1969), p. 30.

¹⁸ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 174.

eventually turned north toward New England. Only Blanchard, who noted that items suitable for Indians were among the goods stowed on board, privately suspected their destination.¹⁹ Not knowing where they were going made the normal disorientation of army officers at sea even more acute. In addition, the monotony, long-term crowding, and often heated interaction between army and navy officers contributed to a tense atmosphere on board. In Charlus' opinion, the naval officers were incredibly ignorant of their profession and insanely jealous of one another, officers from one naval port hating those from all others and constantly casting scorn on their superiors.²⁰ Revel, with Grasse's fleet, thought that the rough life at sea and lack of good society gave naval officers "a hard and unsociable character", and he agreed that they needed more training.²¹

The loneliness of the Atlantic was an introduction to North America which no one who had experienced it would ever forget. The endless, purgatorial voyage imbedded in everyone's consciousness just how far the New World was from the Old. If the officers were relieved at seeing land and people again, they remained uneasy about their very real separation from their French homeland and all that it represented.

Geography had an important impact on officers' perceptions of North America, and in some ways the land's physical appearance was more significant in contributing to impressions of the continent than its actual inhabitants. In an age when the entire economy depended on the whims of the weather, it was difficult for most Europeans to ascribe success at survival to anything but the favour of an omnipotent God. No matter how strongly the Enlightenment emphasized the individual's control of his own life, members of the French officer corps could not entirely escape the realities of their time. Old World Europeans had in some respects tamed

¹⁹ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 9-10.

²⁰ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fols. 185, 189, 192-94.

²¹ Revel, *Journal particulier*, pp. 233-34.

the land, but in the New World French officers came face to face with raw, unconquered nature. D'Anville's malnourished soldiers and sailors, dying by the dozens from scurvy on the beaches and waters of Chebucto Bay, were helpless without the hunting skills of the local Indians, even though they belonged to the wealthiest, most powerful country in the world. The conifers and stark granite outcroppings which surrounded them provided little reassurance that they could survive very long without assistance. And none of Montcalm's officers, surveying the fragile strip of cleared land along the St. Lawrence River, could claim that French settlers had conquered the continent. Only in the American Colonies, according to information the French army received, did it seem that geography and nature were being subdued.

For Europeans who had never before left land, their encounter with the immensity of the Atlantic was an experience in itself. But the continent they reached was even larger, and to Europeans often seemed just as empty. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur was the most poetic in his description of the dimensions and potential of the sparsely-inhabited land:

Many ages will not see the shores of our great lakes replenished with inland nations, nor the unknown bounds of North America entirely peopled. Who can tell how far it extends? Who can tell the millions of men whom it will feed and contain? for no European foot has yet travelled half the extent of this mighty continent!²²

Throughout their travels the officers recorded the distances they had to cover and the size of the provinces they were passing through.²³ In Canada Montcalm's senior aide-de-camp Bougainville morosely complained in November 1756 that he was an "unhappy expatriot" 1,500 leagues [7,200 km] from his loved ones, and Bossu, in Louisiana, required no less than seven months to travel the 11,000 km from the Illinois country to Brittany.²⁴ Homesickness was a problem for many of Montcalm's officers, and Bougainville recounted their trials, exclaiming that when they left

²² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 41.

²³ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. xii-xiv and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 44.

²⁴ Bougainville to Jean-Pierre de Bougainville, l'Isle à la Bague (now Île à la Pierre, in St. Lawrence near L'Assomption), 7 Nov. 1756, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Département des manuscrits, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, (BN N.A.F.) 9406, fol. 42 and Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 112, 121.

Canada they would sing *In exier Israel* with good heart.²⁵ Officers on various expeditions wrote to their families without knowing when or whether they would get an answer. The distance the correspondence had to be transported and the regular capture of French vessels by the British meant that much of it was never delivered. The arrival of mail from the mother country, often after a year or more without news from one's spouse or parents, was a very important occasion for men risking their lives on the other side of the world. It provided a crucial emotional link to home and made officers feel that they were not forgotten, that they and their efforts meant something to their families and countrymen.²⁶

In the second half of the eighteenth century France possessed as many inhabitants as the rest of Europe combined, and was the continent's most densely settled country. Villages were numerous and in close proximity, urban populations were substantial compared to those of other countries, and the most barren, remote areas were inhabited. Even royal and seigneurial forests were criss-crossed by roads and carefully supervised. North America, on the other hand, had a strikingly different atmosphere, and everything seemed to be on a larger scale. Canada, reminisced Captain François-Charles de Bourlamaque in 1763, was a "beautiful and vast country".²⁷ Second Captain Foligné of the corvette *Swhinton*, who commanded an artillery battery overlooking the St. Lawrence during the Siege of Quebec, used similar language to describe the beauty of the river, "one of the most considerable in the world".²⁸ According to Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste d'Aleynac of the Régiment de Languedoc, the colony was "only...a vast forest

²⁵ Bougainville to Jean-Pierre de Bougainville, l'Isle à la Bague, 7 Nov. 1756, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 43. See also Bougainville to Mme. René Hérault de Séchelles, Montreal, 16 May 1759, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 237.

²⁶ Hans Cristoph Ludwig Friedrich Ignatz, Freiherr (Baron) von Closen-Haydenburg [Jean Cristophe Louis Frédéric Ignace, Baron de Closen de Haydenburg], *The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig von Closen 1781-1783*, ed. and trans. Evelyn M. Acomb (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p 64.

²⁷ François-Charles de Bourlamaque, "Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada", in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 10 vols., ed. Edmund B. O'Callaghan (Albany: Weed Parsons, 1853-1887) (NYCD), 10: 1155.

²⁸ Foligné, "Journal de Foligné", in *Siege of Quebec*, ed. Doughty and Parmelee, 4: 163.

intersected by an infinity of very large rivers filled with rapids." The trees were huge, as were the tremendous falls at Niagara, the "most beautiful in the universe."²⁹ His fellow-officer Pouchot commanded Montcalm's westernmost line troops at Fort Niagara and was within sight of the billowing mist of one of the world's largest waterfalls. This thundering torrent of water, wrote Pouchot, crowned by a series of interlocking rainbows whenever the sun was out, could be seen and heard far out into Lake Ontario. He estimated the height of the falls reasonably well, but exaggerated their width by apparently including the Horseshoe Falls, the American Falls, and intervening Goat Island in his measurements.³⁰

To Charles-Albert de Moré, Chevalier de Pontgibaud, a major in the Continental Army and aide-de-camp to the Marquis de La Fayette, who was in the United States two decades later, the rivers were "almost seas" and the "giant trees which form the primaeval forests of the New World" filled him with awe. He observed that "all which is not the work of men's hands is so surprising on account of its imposing and gigantic proportions, that when I returned to Europe I seemed to be in another world--the Continent appeared to me like a pretty miniature reduced from a large picture by means of a pantograph."³¹ Rochambeau's officers described the forests as beautiful, majestic, and savage. Ségur could readily imagine the feelings of the first European explorers to arrive in America as he rode through the dark woods. Standing on a ridge overlooking the Hudson Valley in 1781, the young Frenchman found that "This rough and savage

²⁹ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 23, 26-27.

³⁰ Pierre Pouchot, *Memoir Upon the Late War in North America Between the French and English, 1755-60*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Franklin B. Hough (Roxbury, Mass.: W. Elliot Woodward, 1866), 2: 154, 173-79. Pouchot recorded the falls as 45 m high (140 *pieds de roi*) and 1,754 m wide (900 *toises*); the Horseshoe falls are 54 m high and 675 m wide and the American falls are 64 m high and 305 m wide, for a total width of 980 m, not counting Goat Island. A *pied de roi* equals 0.3248 m and a *toise* is 1.949 m or six *pieds*. Pouchot's sections on the Appalachians and Niagara Falls are interspersed with comments and data supplied by his editors.

³¹ Charles-Albert de Moré, Chevalier de Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer of the War of American Independence*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Douglas (Paris: Charles Carrington, 1898), pp. 145-46. See also anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les États unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458. This very good memoir was almost certainly written by one of the French volunteers with the American army after the signing of the Treaty of Commerce in 1778.

view inspired me with sad, profound thoughts, and as we say at present, romantic".³² Unlike Montcalm's officers, he was in a position to be affected by Rousseau's romantic novels, which were published during the two decades following the Seven Years' War. Montcalm's subordinates, while impressed by the forests, enjoyed them less. Their campaigns took place in wilderness areas where there were no people, no roads, and no cleared areas with farms where one could chat with the locals, stay overnight, and purchase supplies. The forests were less a peaceful natural interlude as one marched from one town to the next than an unrelenting enemy which slowly wore down one's health from exhaustion, exposure, and bad food.³³

North American attitudes toward their wood resources shocked French officers. Forest products were scarce commodities in France carefully protected by seigneurial foresters and a judicial system which inflicted draconian penalties on peasants who cut firewood without permission and payment. North America, by contrast, possessed more wood than people could use, and standing timber was worth little or nothing. The military engineer Lieutenant-Colonel Louis Franquet recorded in 1752 how forest fires customarily raged all summer in Canada and only went out as winter approached. Similarly, the Swiss Sublieutenant Jean-Baptiste Antoine de Verger of Rochambeau's German Régiment Royal Deux-Ponts, was amazed when his American host ignored a fire sweeping across his woodlot. "It is a custom of the country", he wrote, "to let forest fires burn without doing anything to halt their progress."³⁴ Brush fires near their camp frightened Rochambeau's troops, who tried unsuccessfully to put one of them out. After this amateur effort at firefighting, the second colonel of the Régiment Royal Deux-Ponts,

³² Louis-Philippe, Comte de Ségur, *Mémoires ou souvenirs et anecdotes par M. le comte de Ségur, de l'Académie française, pair de France*, 3 vols., 2d ed. (Paris: Alexis Eymery, 1825), 1: 367, 380. See also Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 73 and François-Jean de Beauvoir, Chevalier de Chastellux, "Voyage de Wipennay [Whippany River] à Philadelphie", AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

³³ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 23 and Bougainville to Jean-Pierre de Bougainville, l'Isle à la Bague, 7 Nov. 1756, BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 42-43.

³⁴ Louis Franquet, *Voyages et mémoires sur le Canada* (Montreal: Éditions Élysée, 1974), p. 60 and Jean-Baptiste-Antoine de Verger, "Journal of Jean-Baptiste Verger", in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*, ed. and trans. Howard C. Rice and Anne S. K. Brown, vol. 1, *The Journals of Clermont-Crèvecoeur, Verger, and Berthier* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972 and Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1972), p. 6.

Wilhelm Philipp von Forbach, Graf von Zweibrücken--known to the French as the Comte de Deux-Ponts--noted that while in all other countries these fires were a catastrophic, terrifying event, the Americans were completely indifferent to forest fires and even thought them beneficial because they cleared land without the trouble of cutting down the trees.³⁵ Americans seemed to burn firewood with abandon, and Europeans found their woodpiles excessively large. Only when French troops learned how much they needed to cut in order to keep their camp supplied during the long New England winter months did they realize that the locals were justified in their stockpiling efforts. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur wrote that wood cost nothing because every farmer had enough trees, but cutting the seventy cords he needed for his farm was a laborious, time-consuming process. Presumably, however, his handful of black slaves fulfilled this task for him.³⁶

The Frenchmen were also impressed by North America's great rivers. The St. Lawrence, which at its mouth far exceeded the width of the estuary of the Gironde below Bordeaux, amazed Montcalm's officers. Even above Montreal, where the vast St. Lawrence plunged through the roaring Sault Saint-Louis, officers found the beauty and extent of the river admirable.³⁷ Just crossing the river at Montreal involved considerable planning and took an hour to accomplish.³⁸ The importance of the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes system, which was Canada's means of communication and transportation--serving agriculture and the vitally-important fur trade--as well as being the avenue of French power in the northern half of the continent, was not lost on the officers. They recorded river and lake systems with their rapids and portages in minute detail

³⁵ Wilhelm Philipp von Forbach, Graf (Count) von Zweibrücken [Guillaume-Philippe de Forbach, Comte de Deux-Ponts], *My Campaigns in America: A Journal Kept by Count William de Deux-Ponts, 1780-81*, ed. and trans. Samuel A. Green (Boston: Wiggin and Lunt, 1868), p. 32.

³⁶ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 79 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 144.

³⁷ Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France (1757)", *RAIQ* (1923-24): 67.

³⁸ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 33-35.

because these were essentially the only routes for the movement of troops and supplies.³⁹ Pouchot left over one hundred printed pages worth of river-lake itineraries, including detailed descriptions of the Richelieu, upper St. Lawrence, Niagara, upper Ohio, Monongahela, Mohawk, and Hudson rivers, the shores of Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario, and Lake Erie, as well as New York harbour and Long Island. His tour of the colony of New York in 1759 as a prisoner-of-war was especially useful in obtaining information about enemy communications.⁴⁰

The Hudson River, "which divides America into two parts", was a major landmark for Rochambeau's officers during the War of American Independence. Almost all of them commented on its size and beauty, and Chastellux's aide-de-camp Captain Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu--grandson of the philosopher--wished that he was a painter so that he might capture the scene of the Mohawk River falling into the Hudson near Albany, a torrent of water framed by the distant, snow-capped Adirondacks.⁴¹ The strategic necessity of holding the Hudson, the geographic if not the political border between the northern and middle states, was clear to everyone. To the south there were other large rivers, and those flowing into Chesapeake Bay, "a little Mediterranean", were able to carry the largest ships, and this, wrote captain of engineers François-Ignace Ervoil d'Oyré, allowed British troops on naval vessels to devastate the fertile interior of Virginia.⁴²

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁴⁰ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 55-164. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur mentions the tides of the Bay of Fundy, but it is unclear whether he actually visited the area. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 107.

⁴¹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 113; Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 380; Raymond Céleste, "Un Petit-fils de Montesquieu en Amérique (1780-1783)", *Revue philomathique de Bordeaux et du Sud-ouest (RPBSO)* 5 (1902): 546, 548; and Charles-Louis-Victor, Prince de Broglie, "Narrative of the Prince de Broglie, 1782", *Magazine of American History (MAH)* 1 (1877): 307.

⁴² Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 138; anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *American Historical Review (AHR)* 27 (1921-22): 70; and François-Ignace Ervoil d'Oyré to the Comte de Chastellux, Providence, 15 June 1781, AN Série M 1021 IV. It is uncertain whether the anonymous traveller sent to the American colonies in 1765 to report on their economic and military strength and political situation was a military officer. He knew something of the science of fortification, but this is not conclusive evidence of his military status.

Ships which approached Louisiana were guided to New Orleans, wrote Bossu in the early 1750's, by vast amounts of driftwood discharged into the Gulf of Mexico by the Mississippi. "one of the biggest rivers in the world, which flows through eight hundred leagues of explored country." It required three and a half months to ascend the river to the Illinois country, but to compensate for this, the current also afforded a very pleasant downriver journey lasting ten to twelve days. Like the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi was the heart of the colony, and its basin roughly outlined Louisiana's borders. Parallel to it were several other sizeable rivers, including the Alabama, whose waterlevel was affected by storms and, in its lower reaches, by the tides of Mobile Bay. This was dramatically illustrated when Bossu awoke one morning to find his moored canoe stuck high in a cypress tree, obliging him to wait until it was refloated by the tide. "You can see, sir, by this story", he concluded, "that there is a great difference between American and European rivers." The cypress trees on the Mobile River were often so huge, he added, that ten men could hardly put their arms around their trunks, and the Indians used them to make dugout canoes which held up to sixty people.⁴³

If the regions of North America did not reveal the same internal geographic diversity as France, the continent as a whole certainly did. The arctic environment of the Hudson Bay area, described in detail by a naval lieutenant named Vigny in a memoir of 1780 proposing an attack on the Hudson's Bay Company posts, revealed a land where even trees had difficulty in growing. Vigny and Bougainville considered the area important because of the access it offered to the furs in the continent's interior, but they were also aware of the probable existence of a Northwest Passage nearby. Bougainville planned an attack on Hudson Bay during the Seven Years' War, and in 1778 he proposed leading an expedition to discover a northern sea route to the Pacific. Although neither idea was fulfilled at the time, Captain Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La

⁴³ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 21, 24, 116-17, 127-30.

Pérouse, did carry out a successful attack on several of the Hudson's Bay Company posts in 1782.⁴⁴

Like Canada, Hudson Bay was physically, climatically, and ecologically different from any region of France, or most of Europe for that matter. The temperate zone of the northern and middle states of the United States, however, was similar to what many officers had known at home, and the settled nature of the coastal areas made the area even more familiar. Ségur remarked during the American Revolution that the coast of Delaware looked like the coast of France, and upon entering central Connecticut, Lieutenant Jean-François-Louis de Lesquevin, Comte de Clermont-Crèvecoeur, of the Régiment d'Auxonne-Artillerie, wrote that the fields, orchards, landscape, and climate made him feel as though he was in Europe. Many officers expected the United States to be a strange, alien-looking land, and were pleasantly surprised when they saw the more densely settled parts of New England. While they found many differences from their homeland, they also encountered comforting similarities.⁴⁵ Two officers who paid special attention to American geography were the *philosophe* Chastellux and his well-educated aide Montesquieu, who spent every moment of their spare time during the campaign of 1780-1782 recording everything they saw in minute detail. Obtaining leave during the winters, they ranged

⁴⁴ Vigny, "Projet d'une expedition pour la baye d'Hudson", AN Marine B4 183, fols. 122-23 and René de Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing: Guerre d'Amérique 1778-1779", *Journal de la Société des américanistes de Paris (JSAP)* 19 (1927): 156. Bougainville transferred to the navy in 1763, his formal posting being confirmed in 1770. He and La Pérouse both commanded squadrons off the American coast during the American Revolution. For an account of La Pérouse's expedition to Hudson Bay see Maurice de Brossard, *La Pérouse: Des combats à la découverte* (Paris: Éditions France-Empire, 1978), pp. 425-45.

⁴⁵ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 434 and Jean-François-Louis de Lesquevin, Comte de Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal of the War in America During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783, with some remarks on the Habits and Customs of the Americans; an account of the Battles fought, from the beginning of the war in New England, against the English in those places through which the army of the Comte de Rochambeau passed; with a description of the remarkable sights between Boston and Williamsburg, capital of Virginia, a territory extending some 300 leagues", in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*, ed. and trans. Howard C. Rice and S. K. Brown, vol. 1, *The Journals of Clermont-Crèvecoeur, Verger, and Berthier* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972 and Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1972), p. 29. German officers of the Hessian auxiliary regiments attached to the British army noted that almost everything they saw in America was similar or identical to Hesse. However, north-central Germany was far more similar to the United States than France. Ernst Kipping, *The Hessian View of America, 1776-1783* (Monmouth Beach, N.J.: Philip Frenau Press, 1971), pp. 9, 13, 20 and Rodney Atwood, *The Hessians: Mercenaries from Hessen-Kassel in the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 167-68.

from an Iroquois village in the Mohawk Valley to the Blue Ridge Mountains and Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello.⁴⁶ Chastellux's frantic research on a planned book on North America caused one of his fellow officers to joke that "a certain general" had been so absorbed in composing philosophical treatises during the Siege of Yorktown that he was caught unprepared by a British sortie.⁴⁷ Montesquieu's above-average education was displayed in his description of Connecticut's geology, including its granite and "more or less formed schistes" with traces of quartz, as well as the iron-rich granite hills of the Hudson Valley. He intently studied the soil, trees, agriculture, population, and other items of scientific and philosophical interest on the line of march.⁴⁸

Once Rochambeau's army entered the subtropical American south, however, there was no mistaking that they were in an alien land. A Frenchman in the area in 1765 reported that Virginia and the Carolinas were flat for 130 to 160 km inland, and the coastal or tidewater region consisted of wooded swamps and stagnant rivers which on hot, calm days were carpeted with a thick scum. Verger, who was in the area seventeen years later, described Virginia in similar terms, but despite the heat and humidity enjoyed the state because of its fertility and the beauty of the flowering, sweet-smelling trees. One of his fellow officers, Captain Charles-Joseph-Antoine Soalhat de Fontalard, Baron de Turpin, was lucky enough to visit the Blue Ridge Mountains, and enthusiastically described the scenery and a spectacular 30 m long natural stone arch which spanned a deep gorge.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ François-Jean de Beauvoir, Chevalier de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782*, 2 vols., trans. Howard C. Rice (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963).

⁴⁷ Alan C. Kors, "François-Jean Marquis de Chastellux", in *Abroad in America: Visitors to the New Nation 1776-1914*, ed. Marc Pachter (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1976), p. 5 and Ervoil d'Oyré to Comte de Chastellux, Providence, 15 June 1781, AN Série M 1021 IV.

⁴⁸ Céleste, "Un Petit-fils de Montesquieu en Amérique", *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 544-46.

⁴⁹ Anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller". *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 735, 743; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 160; Verger, "Journal" in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 67-68, 156, 158; and Cloisen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 184. This stone arch is the Natural Bridge near Lexington, Virginia.

Far to the west was Louisiana, which stretched across the temperate and subtropical zones. While for many if not most colonial regular officers it was an empty, isolated place of exile. Bossu, for one, loved the country, calling the homelands of the Illinois and Alabama Indians "the most beautiful in the world."⁵⁰ He found Louisiana's healthy climate, extreme fertility, beautiful rivers and forests, and abundant wildlife simply delightful. Bossu's claim that "The soil is extremely fertile everywhere in America" was generally accurate for the continent south of the boreal forest and west of the Rocky Mountains, but several officers, including Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, noted that New England's soil, while arable, was not ideal for farming.⁵¹

French officers varied in their grasp of the fundamentals of North American geography. Those serving in the colonial forces were as a whole probably the most aware of the continent's layout because of their long residence overseas and their knowledge of New France's communications, settlements, forts, and tribes. The expeditionary forces of regiments of the line, however, included wealthier officers of higher social and military rank who were in general also very well informed. Staff officers of the expeditionary forces, who had access to maps and were involved in military planning, were equal to if not superior to colonial regular officers in geographical knowledge and demonstrated a considerable awareness of geography and its significance for military operations. Many of the sharp, young staff officers of Rochambeau's army, such as the future Napoleonic chief of staff and marshal Captain Louis-Alexandre Berthier, sub-assistant-quartermaster-general attached to the Régiment de Soissonais, made it their business to study American campaigns and battles, which undoubtedly increased their awareness of the layout of the United States and the location of towns, cities, mountain ranges, rivers, seacoasts, roads, and harbours.⁵² Engineers and artillery officers, with their technical training and absolute

⁵⁰ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 61, 76. For other French opinions on Louisiana see Pierre H. Boulle, "Some Eighteenth-Century French Views on Louisiana", in *Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley*, ed. John F. McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), pp. 15-27.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 127-29 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 41.

⁵² Louis-Alexandre Berthier, "Journal of Louis-Alexandre Berthier", in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*, ed. and trans. Howard C. Rice and Anne S. K. Brown, vol.

need for geographical information to carry out their duties, were better informed than their infantry colleagues. Pouchot, a bourgeois officer with a background as a military engineer, showed abilities in both the science of fortification and topography, and owned a British map of North America published in 1755. In addition to detailed accounts of the major river-lake routes and portages in the northeastern part of the continent, he left a detailed description of the Appalachian ranges from Canada to Georgia.⁵³ Untitled, lower-ranking non-staff infantry officers of the line regiments, who had limited access to maps, less education, and lower expectations of promotion showed the least awareness of geography. As in most armies, the average officer devoted his attention to the performance of his own unit, and the geographic awareness of many officers extended to little more than the road their regiment was marching on. An initial obstacle to understanding North American geography was the lack of relevant maps in the possession of the Ministries of War and the Marine. The French armed forces had never campaigned in the region, and Charlus reported that all his unit was issued, at least at first, was a map of the eastern seaboard of North America which showed hardly any detail south of Acadia.⁵⁴

Knowledge of North America's physical geography, including its extent, terrain, rivers, mountains, and vegetation, were essential for understanding the continent's importance and potential. Eighteenth-century European land transport was so inefficient that large-scale movement of people and goods was largely dependent on water transport, which meant that winds, currents, and access to harbours, rivers, and lakes determined the economic usefulness of any given area. Those concerns also dictated the targets, routes, and timing of military operations. Any officer interested in his profession had to educate himself in geographical matters, and those

1: *The Journals of Clermont-Crèvecoeur, Verger, and Berthier* (Princeton: Princeton University Press and Providence: Brown University Press, 1972), pp. 250-51; Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, untitled memoir of July 15, 1761, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 321; and Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. xiii-xiv, xvi. See also "Itineraries" and "Maps and Views" in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, vol. 2, for examples of the superb geographic records and maps made by Rochambeau's officers.

⁵³ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 166-72.

⁵⁴ Charlus, "Journal". AN Marine B4 183, fol. 174.

who visited North America faced a realm of geographical knowledge barely tapped by their European contemporaries.

Unbeknownst to the British or French, the Industrial Revolution was beginning in England in the 1770's and 1780's. This economic transformation would be vital in reducing the age-old human dependence on the climatic cycle of the seasons. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, the patterns of human life and survival still centred on the land, and the nature of the climate was fundamental to every society. For French officers in North America, climatic observations revealed the character of the people, the state of communications, the strengths and weaknesses of local defence, agricultural potential, export potential, and the general usefulness of a given area. Analyzing local climate was a first step in determining the social, cultural, economic, political, and military basis of any society.

The range of North American climates from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico was not as surprising to European visitors as the vast fluctuations of temperature in each region. Seasonal variations of temperature at home were negligible compared to what the officers experienced in North America. French naval officers who proposed attacks on fur trading posts in Hudson Bay knew that the north's long winters placed severe constraints on any attacking force. Vigny stated that operations were restricted to the months of July through mid-September, and La Pérouse recommended that the projected attack take place immediately after the ice melted at the end of June. Defending forces, wrote Vigny, knowing that the French would be forced to withdraw by a certain date, could use this weakness to their advantage.⁵⁵

Île Royale also experienced cool temperatures much of the year, and naval ensign Rossel, at Louisbourg in 1757, blamed the long winter and "ungrateful soil" for the failure of

⁵⁵ Vigny, "Projet d'une expedition", AN Marine B4 183, fols. 121-22 and Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse to Antoine-Raymond-Jean-Gualbert-Gabriel de Sartine, Comte d'Alby, Paris, 1 Dec. 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 111.

wheat-growing in the area “despite the infinite care given to it”.⁵⁶ Strawberries and raspberries were the only fruit which could survive. Nevertheless, he admitted, the air on Île Royale was very healthy and July and August were sometimes as warm as France.⁵⁷

Campaigning was seasonal in Canada, and major operations ceased once winter began. During the winter of 1756-1757, the St. Lawrence remained frozen from December until mid-April; and according to Bougainville temperatures were usually -12° to -15°C, often dropping to between -22° and -25°C, and twice fell to -27°C. During western Europe’s dreaded winter of 1709, Bougainville pointed out, the thermometer never fell below -22°C.⁵⁸ On his return to Canada in the spring of 1759 after a mission to France, Bougainville’s vessel was caught in the ice at the mouth of the St. Lawrence and remained immobile for a month, “with the greatest risk and a frightful cold.”⁵⁹ Lieutenant Jean-Vincent Touzé du Guernie of the Régiment de Berry found himself in a similar predicament below the Île d’Orléans in November of that year, but in his case the vessel sank with all of his baggage and several of his men froze to death.⁶⁰ Snow could also be a problem in Canada, and Franquet was in one snowstorm which lasted two days, with visibility limited to twenty paces. He had to abandon an attempt to reach someone’s house because the snow was up to his waist. Bougainville reported that snow was usually 2 m but sometimes nearly 3 m deep, and although his measurements must have reflected

⁵⁶ Rossel, “Journal”. *RAPQ* (1931-32): 377.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁵⁸ Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, “Précis de ce qui s’est passée de plus considérable dans l’Amérique Septentrionale pendant l’hiver de 1756 à 1757”, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 34. These temperatures are converted from the Réaumur scale, invented by René-Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur in 1730 with 0° as the freezing point and 80° as the boiling point of water. The scale developed by the Swede Andreas Celsius in 1742 did not come into wide use in France until the very end of the century.

⁵⁹ Bougainville to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles. Montreal, 16 May 1759, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 237.

⁶⁰ Jean-Vincent Touzé du Guernie, “Mémoire pour demander une pension de retraite”, St. Brieuc, 31 July 1781. records of the Régiment d’infanterie d’Anjou et d’Aquitaine, SHAT Série X, Xb. 48. The Régiment de Berry was incorporated into Aquitaine during the post-war amalgamations of 1762. Touzé du Guernie had already lost his baggage during a grounding on the Île d’Orléans the summer before.

the size of the largest snowdrifts, he undoubtedly succeeded in impressing his correspondent in Paris.⁶¹

Canadian winters did have some benefits, however. Franquet, like the locals, used the frozen St. Lawrence as a highway in wintertime, and the colony had better communications during this season than at any other time of the year. And while Montcalm's officers complained bitterly about the long, cold winters, Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who had been in French North America for several years, adopted a truly Canadian attitude by portraying the season in the most positive terms. He believed that the hardy Canadian settlers "improved their breed" under the purifying influence of their vigorous climate, and their confinement for seven months of the year made them bold and restless, so that they "plunged into the immensity of this continent" without the least hesitation.⁶² One of his most charming stories, written while on his New York farm during the 1770's, describes the American farmer's preparations for winter and the snugness of his family in their snow-bound home. As in Canada, the cold made the transport of grain, logs, and stones far easier than in summertime. Crèvecoeur pitied his fellow colonists to the south, who never enjoyed "a cold Canadian storm".⁶³ Montcalm's officers knew that winter was one of Canada's main lines of defence, for British and American provincial troops were immobilized after a certain date, and ships could no longer enter or leave the St. Lawrence. The Americans encountered similar problems in Canada during the War of American Independence, and Chastellux described how the American forces besieging Quebec in 1775-1776 suffered from the "rigorous cold" of the Canadian winter. The weather immobilized larger armies, but not traditional Canadian and Indian war parties, and numerous officers under the command of

⁶¹ Franquet, *Voyages*, p. 159 and Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France". *RAPQ* (1923-24): 42, 55.

⁶² Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 131-40 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 173-74.

⁶³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 39-50.

Dieskau and Montcalm, such as Lieutenant Guillaume-Jude de Laubanie of the Régiment de La Sarre, took part in raids on British outposts and detachments.⁶⁴

Canada experienced extremes of temperature, for while the winters were extraordinarily cold, the summers were very hot. Franquet found the heat of late August 1752 quite uncomfortable, and after inspecting Fort Saint-Frédéric on Lake Champlain he reported that it was necessary to build a cool, partially underground headquarters for the fort commandant so that he could carry on his duties in the hottest weather.⁶⁵ Montcalm, whose Château de Candiac stood on the sun-baked plain of Basse Languedoc not far from Nîmes, wrote to his mother that Canada was hotter than Languedoc in summer and as cold as Stockholm in winter.⁶⁶ One of his officers, d'Aleynac, was in agreement about Canadian winters and excessive heat, but noted that the Lake Champlain area, south of Montreal, was as temperate as certain French provinces and that the Illinois country in the Canadian southwest was similarly mild all year round.⁶⁷ Bougainville hoped that the strategic Canadian settlement at Détroit could be expanded, for the post's short winters would allow the settlers to grow enough food for several garrisons in the far west.⁶⁸ Canada's climate also had a reputation for healthiness. In 1752, for example, a nineteen-year-old clerk at a garrison on the Île de Ré, near La Rochelle, was "tormented with a desire to travel", and decided to accompany one of the colonial troop transports to Louisiana or Canada. Inquiring among the sailors, he was told that Canada was healthier than Louisiana, but had colder winters. The clerk

⁶⁴ François-Jean de Beauvoir, Chevalier de Chastellux, manuscript on the history of the War of American Independence from 1775 to 1777, AN Série M 1036 F60 7; Pontgibaud, *French Volunteer*, p. 47; and records of the Régiment de La Sarre, SHAT Série X, Xb. 64.

⁶⁵ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 100, 166.

⁶⁶ Montcalm to his mother Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte de Lauris de Castellane, Marquise de Saint-Véran, Fort Carillon, 18-22 Sept. 1756, NA MG18 K7, vol. 3, pp. 76-77

⁶⁷ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁸ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 43.

decided on Canada, and sailed to Quebec. After a few days of aimless tourism, he signed on as a gunner in the colonial regulars.⁶⁴

These climatic contrasts were also encountered in the northern United States. Rochambeau's officers found autumns in the northern United States similar to French winters, but by December the region was colder than their homeland at any time of the year.⁷⁰ In Connecticut in November 1782 the French army's tents froze solid, standing without poles or pegs, and Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste-Elzéar, Chevalier de Coriolis d'Espinousse, of the Régiment de Bourbonnais, complained that "It is very hard to sleep under canvas on 1 December in a climate much colder than any of the French provinces." However, he admitted that if they went to the West Indies, as it seemed they would, in a month's time they would probably be complaining of the heat.⁷¹ While French officers dreaded leaving the United States for the disease-ridden West Indies, once they arrived in the islands, their experiences of the climate were not as bad as they expected, principally because they spent most of their time in what is now Venezuela, where the mountains and sea breeze made the temperatures bearable. Also, they were not in the region during the season for malaria and yellow fever. If the German Closen-Haydenburg hated Venezuela and unfavourably compared its heat to the "excellence" of New England's climate, the Provençal Coriolis thought that the area possessed "the climate of earthly paradise", for temperatures remained between 19° and 29°C all year long.⁷² A French naval officer named Jacomel de Cauvigny in Boston in 1782 would have agreed with Coriolis, for

⁶⁴ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁰ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 400.

⁷¹ Jean-Baptiste-Elzéar, Chevalier de Coriolis d'Espinousse, to Mme. de Coriolis, Providence, R.I., 30 Nov. 1782, in Jean-Baptiste-Elzéar, Chevalier de Coriolis d'Espinousse, "Lettres d'un officier de l'armée de Rochambeau: Le chevalier de Coriolis", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 March 1932, p. 818. See also Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 81.

⁷² Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 261, 304; Coriolis to his brother, Puerto Cabello, (Venez.), 17 March 1783, in Coriolis, "Lettres", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 Mars 1932, p. 827; and François-Jean de Beauvoir, Chevalier de Chastellux, manuscript of December 1782, AN Marine 1036 F60 7.

he dreaded the prospect of wintering in the "excessive" cold of New England and hoped to be able to return to "a more temperate climate" in the Indies.⁷³ French naval vessels based in the islands were not prepared for North American winter weather, and it was dangerous to linger in these waters because the crews had hardly a stitch of clothing between them, a problem for Bougainville's Provençal sailors on the *Languedoc* when d'Estaing's Siege of Savannah stretched into October 1779.⁷⁴ The officers concluded, however, that if northern winters were cold, they were also healthy, and the "fresh air" of the region prevented almost annual outbreaks of malaria and yellow fever in the tidewater areas of the southern states.⁷⁵ They considered it essential to keep French troops out of the south during the unhealthy months, although they recognized that it was completely safe for the army to winter there, as it did in 1781-1782.⁷⁶

Summers in the northern and middle states were hot. Charlus experienced a heat wave near the city of New York in July 1781, and concluded a brief letter to his friend the naval lieutenant Hippolyte-Louis-Antoine, Comte de Capellis, commander of the frigate *Danaé* at Rhode Island, with the words "adieu my dear Capellis, I am too harassed by the heat to be able to write you anything more."⁷⁷ Officers from northern France found the summer weather in New England,

⁷³ Jacomel de Cauvigny to Comte de Chastellux, on board *Citoyen* in Boston harbour, 1 Sept. 1782, AN Série M 1021 IV. See Charles-René-Dominique Gochet, Chevalier Destouches, to Sartine, on board *Neptune*, Newport, R.I., 15 Oct. 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 78, for even more panic at the idea of wintering in New England.

⁷⁴ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 193-94.

⁷⁵ John R. McNeill, "The Ecological Basis of Warfare in the Caribbean, 1700-1804", in *Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Ultee (University: University of Alabama Press, 1986), p. 28.

⁷⁶ Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, to Sartine, Newport, R.I., 16 July 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 142; Pierre-François de Boy, "Mémoire sur les peuples du nord de l'Amérique fait par le Sr. De Boy Major à leur service, et envoyé au Consul français De Caillery en Sardaigne le 10. May 1780", AN Colonies E50; anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 13 Nov. 1777, in anonymous, "Letters of a French Officer, Written at Easton, Penna., in 1777-1778", *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (PMHB)* 35 (1911): 99; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 19; Charles-Henri-Jean-Baptiste, Comte d'Estaing's, commentary in Antoine-François-Térence O'Connor, "Journal du siège de Savannah avec des observations de M. le comte d'Estaing", 23 Oct. 1779, AN Marine B4 142, fol. 160; and Hippolyte-Louis-Antoine, Comte de Capellis, "Protection du commerce des Etats-unis", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 240.

⁷⁷ Armand-Charles-Augustin de La Croix de Castries, Comte de Charlus, to Hippolyte-Louis-Antoine, Comte de Capellis, White Plains, N.Y., 8 July 1781, Capellis Papers, AN Série T 228, folio 64.

New York, and Pennsylvania hotter than they were used to and complained accordingly, but those from the south found the temperatures tolerable and even enjoyable. Montesquieu was ridiculed by his comrades for riding around Rhode Island during the hottest time of day, but replied that he was used to these temperatures at home in Guyenne, where he went for rides among the sunny vineyards around the Château de La Brède.⁷⁸ Blanchard thought that temperatures that July were about the same as Corsica's, averaging about 30°C.⁷⁹ The French simply had to adjust their daily schedule to the temperature, and on the march moved reveille to 4:30 A.M. and their rest period to 10:00 to 2:30 so as to avoid the midday heat.⁸⁰

The extreme heat and humidity of the American south in summertime was more difficult for Rochambeau's officers to bear, and it was fortunate that most of their stay in Virginia was not during the warm season. Soldiers dropped dead or unconscious from heatstroke at Clermont-Crèvecoeur's feet during the march to Yorktown, and he wrote that for four months of the year the heat in Virginia was unbearable. When there was no breeze one practically suffocated. "It is even hotter here than in the Antilles, because in the islands you are at least sure of a cooling breeze morning and evening, whereas in Virginia you may go four or five days without a breath of air." Clermont-Crèvecoeur insisted on going swimming despite warnings by the locals that this activity was unhealthy. He noted that the Virginians stayed indoors during the summer, and believed that they stood the heat better than the French.⁸¹ Several officers considered Virginians a languid people, and Closen-Haydenburg blamed their lack of gaiety and

⁷⁸ Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, to Vicomte Amand de Saint-Chamans, Baron de Rébénac, Newport, R.I., ca. July 1780, in Octave Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu, soldat de l'indépendance américaine", *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire (RHRFE)* 5 (1914): 240.

⁷⁹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 46.

⁸⁰ Kennett, *French Forces in America*, p. 49. For further comments on the region's climate see Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 163; Montesquieu to the Comtesse de Chastellux, Philipsburg, N.Y., 17 Aug. 1781, AN Série M 1021 IV; anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller", *AHR* 26 (1920-21): 80; and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAG* 1 (1877): 186.

⁸¹ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 67, 71. See Kipping, *The Hessian View of America*, pp. 19-20 for Hessian officers' impressions of the American climate.

activity on their “oppressively hot” climate, which made any activity an effort.⁸² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, by contrast, claimed that the inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina, were the *gayest in America, forming the centre of the continent’s “beau monde”*. Despite the dangers of excess of any kind in this hot climate, he explained, the planters, merchants, and lawyers frantically spent their immense wealth and lived short and merry lives. Their more restrained wives often outlived three husbands.⁸³

Rochambeau’s officers found Virginia’s winters dry and mild, with intervals of cold temperatures, strong winds, heavy rain, and even snow. Blanchard wrote that “The sudden changes in the weather of this province, as in the north, must be injurious to agriculture; for instance, it does not seem to me possible in such a climate to have olive trees and vines, which the warmth of the summer would recommend to the cultivator.” It would be freezing one day and 20°C the next.⁸⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur conceded that the “gentleness of seasons” and near year-round agriculture of western Europe were advantages over the climate of America, where “one sees and feels nothing but extremes”, but Europeans could not, he believed, enjoy the beautiful transformations of nature afforded by North America’s changing seasons.⁸⁵

In the 1750’s few people of European descent had ever set eyes upon the vast central region of North America. Bossu lived among the first European farming settlements here, formed by Canadian colonists who made the long trip to the Illinois country because “they found the climate at forty degrees North latitude very much to their liking.”⁸⁶ The immense size of the country was reflected in its many climatic zones. Upon his arrival in France on a leave of absence in 1757, Bossu wrote that “in eight months time I have seen two winters, two summers, and two springs.”

⁸² Closen-Haydenburg, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 165.

⁸³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 158-59. See also anonymous, “Journal of a French Traveller”, *AHR* 26 (1920-21): 735.

⁸⁴ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 156-57. See also Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 191.

⁸⁵ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 53.

⁸⁶ Bossu, *Travels*, p. 76.

He had left the Illinois country at the end of December 1756 when the rivers began to freeze, and when he arrived in New Orleans in January it was gardening time. He found summer weather in Saint-Domingue, spring weather off the Bahamas, and winter weather off Newfoundland, where they sighted "a mountain of floating ice". On their arrival at Brest on June 15, 1757, a half year later, they found summer again.⁸⁷

Montcalm's officers found Canada's geography and climate unfamiliar, and Rochambeau's considered Venezuela and to some extent the American south an exotic tropical zone. The human and natural geography and climate of the northern and middle states, however, was more to their taste, for despite its extremes in temperature, this region was not unlike France. French officers in the United States were willing to mentally transfer the country from the category of exotic to the more prosaic category of "normal", something which Montcalm's officers had been unable to do in Canada. Part of North America, at least, was now qualified to become part of the European world.

A similar process occurred with regard to North America's biota, its flora and fauna. French officers found North America's flora and fauna familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. The natural surroundings owed their familiarity to a number of factors. Most of Europe and eastern North America belonged to the temperate zone, and had a similar range of ecological niches. The two areas were in contact before the continents finally separated and trees and other plant species often belonged to the same genera. In addition, after North America came into contact with Siberia, a considerable interchange of mammals occurred between the two landmasses, and when Europeans invaded the continent, they brought with them their plants and animals. Wild cattle, hogs, and even sheep often preceded the settlers westwards by hundreds of kilometres, eating the native vegetation to the ground. Fast-growing European weeds, which came over with planting seed, rapidly colonized areas laid bare by extensive agriculture and pasturing and often

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

almost completely displaced slower-growing native plants, which had never encountered all-devouring domesticated animals or plowed fields. Europeans also deliberately spread useful European herbs around their homes.⁸⁸ French officers who visited North America during the second half of the eighteenth century were therefore in an environment which was filled with large numbers of familiar indigenous and recently-introduced plant and animal species, allowing Montesquieu, for instance, to write home in 1780: "I think that the climate of Rhode Island is very healthy; the plants that one commonly sees in France grow here in abundance; the fields are absolutely carpeted with the same herbs; the cattle are large and beautiful, the horses are excellent."⁸⁹ Before he sailed from Brest, Montesquieu had told his former tutor Abbé François de Paule de Latapie that if the war and his staff work left him time, he would make a complete collection of plants, shells, and minerals of the continent and would send them to France. He kept his word by sending Latapie and the Duchesse de Civrac plant, leaf, and seed samples whenever convenient.⁹⁰ Capellis possessed a catalogue of 251 trees and other plants with their scientific names, and although it is doubtful that he compiled this catalogue himself, it does demonstrate his keen interest in North American botany.⁹¹ Franquet in Canada, Bossu in Louisiana, and Blanchard and others in the United States made more perfunctory lists of trees and interesting plants during their stays.⁹² Rochambeau's aide-de-camp Captain Marie-François-Joseph-Maxime, Baron Cromot du Bourg, found domestic animals and fruits

⁸⁸ Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 146-94.

⁸⁹ Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, R.I., ca. July 1780, Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RIIRFE* 5 (1914): 240.

⁹⁰ Montesquieu to François de Paule de Latapie, Brest, 2 April 1780 and Montesquieu to Latapie, Crown Point, N.Y., 13 Oct. 1782, Raymond Céleste, "Charles-Louis de Montesquieu à l'armée (1772 à 1782)", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 514, 523.

⁹¹ Hippolyte-Louis-Antoine, Comte de Capellis, "Catalogue des plantes, arbres, arbustes et semences de l'Amérique septentrionale, contenues en trois caisses numérotées 1. 2. et 3.", *Papiers Capellis*, AN Série T 228.

⁹² Franquet, *Voyages*, p. 80; Bossu, *Travels*; and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 61.

exactly the same as those in France, and noticed only small differences in the species of birds.⁹³ In Canada, on more unfamiliar ground, Franquet and the colonial gunner described the process of making maple sugar, while Bossu in Louisiana enthused about the Indians' fruits and vegetables, which were entirely unknown in Europe. The gunner even brewed himself a large quantity of wine with wild grapes, and concluded that "The wine is not found bad after it has worked for about three days", neither improving nor getting worse after two months.⁹⁴ Less desirable were plants which Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur called "mercury" and "water-sumach" and which d'Aleynac and the colonial gunner gave the Canadian name *herbe à la puce*. These were plants of the genus *rhus*, commonly known as poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac.⁹⁵ One of Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur's letters concerned the self-taught Philadelphian Quaker botanist John Bartram (1699-1777), who was known in Europe for his studies on American plants. This reflected Crèvecoeur's attempt to demonstrate that Americans, while a nation of peaceful farmers and merchants, were by no means ignorant of the useful arts and sciences.⁹⁶

French officers were much more interested in North American animals than plants. While they frequently commented on trees and crops, they were generally silent about other plant species, which were not sufficiently exotic. Animals, however, were more likely to catch their attention. The emotions of the eighteen-year-old volunteer Pontgibaud when landing on the wooded coast of Virginia in 1777 and making his way alone to Williamsburg help to illustrate the officers' initial ignorance of North American wildlife. Surrounded by woods as he walked along the road, he had to suppress rising fears of the bears, rattlesnakes, and panthers which he had read about in adventure travel books. Later, however, when he learned that his fears were largely

⁹³ Marie-François-Joseph-Maxime, Baron Cromot du Bourg. "Diary of a French Officer, 1781 (Presumed to be that of Baron Cromot du Bourg, Aid to Rochambeau", *Magazine of American History* 16 (1880): 210.

⁹⁴ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 83-84; Bossu, *Travels*, p. 61; and J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 93-94, 96.

⁹⁵ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 110; d'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 28; and J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 96.

⁹⁶ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 174-81, 241-42.

baseless, he enjoyed watching the species of birds and squirrels, none of which he had ever seen before.⁹⁷ Rochambeau's officers also liked the variety of American birds, and Blanchard was particularly intrigued by the tiny hummingbird.⁹⁸ Game birds were so numerous in Louisiana, according to Bossu, that they kept him awake at night; he claimed that in the Illinois country wood pigeons would eclipse the sun, being so densely packed that eighty could be brought down with a single gunshot. He named sixteen common species of birds, but said that there were many other kinds, none of which were found in Europe. Bossu was with some Indians who shot two golden eagles, whose strength was attested to by the carcasses of fauns, rabbits, turkeys, and other large birds in their nest.⁹⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur travelled with a party of Indians which shot an owl with an alleged wingspan of 1.7 metres. He loved birds, and frequently described their appearance and activities.¹⁰⁰

By contrast, the size and strength of American hares and foxes disappointed Rochambeau's officers. Verger said that American deer were very much like European deer, but claimed that hares and foxes were much smaller than their European counterparts, some officers insisting that the small hares were actually rabbits. Rochambeau took a group of officers fox hunting several times a week in Virginia, usually running two a day, but Closen-Haydenburg complained that American foxes were a weaker species, and were easily run down in an hour.¹⁰¹ Some officers were familiar with the writings of the famous French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, who published forty-four volumes on natural history between 1749 and 1803. Buffon, who was considered the chief European authority on the subject, devoted considerable space to

⁹⁷ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, pp. 34, 38.

⁹⁸ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 169 and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 158.

⁹⁹ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 61, 69, 161. According to d'Aleynac, wood pigeons were a popular Canadian dish. D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁰ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 27, 33, 70-71.

¹⁰¹ Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 158 and Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 177.

species in the Americas, and proposed that this landmass had emerged from the sea more recently than the Old World, with the result that its species were younger and less evolved and therefore smaller, weaker, and less varied. It is possible that officers were aware of this theory, leading them to confirm preconceived ideas after seeing some immature or malnourished animals. It is probable, however, that they came to their conclusions without the aid of Buffon, for only in the case of these two species did they insist that North American animals were smaller or weaker.¹⁰²

Animal species which attracted the most attention were those unique to North America. These included the opossum, skunk, racoon, beaver--virtually extinct in Europe--otter, muskrat, various wildcats, bison--European varieties survived only in Byelorussia and the Caucasus--the alligator, and species of turtles, frogs, and snakes. Hardly any of the officers failed to mention the opossum, an American marsupial which carried its young in a pouch.¹⁰³ Of equal interest was the skunk, which they had various misconceptions about, believing that it sprayed its urine with its tail. One officer became better acquainted with this animal than he wanted to, and had to throw out his expensive uniform coat after failing to find a way to clean it.¹⁰⁴ Other misconceptions existed regarding beaver, which were believed to know trees with their teeth and then fell them by beating them with their tails. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur claims to have wept while watching a colony of these "philosophers of the animals" being slaughtered.¹⁰⁵ The officers' misconceptions were probably derived from or influenced by popular local beliefs. A few of Rochambeau's officers were able to inspect beaver lodges of "astonishing neatness and solidity" in Virginia, but

¹⁰² Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière, avec la description du Cabinet du roy*, 44 vols. (Paris: De l'imprimerie royale, 1749-1803). American hares are in fact the same size as European ones, and species of foxes are either the same size or larger.

¹⁰³ Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 158 and Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 188.

¹⁰⁴ Verger, "Journal", in Brown, *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 169; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 188; and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁵ Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 154; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, *ibid.*, 1: 68; and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 126.

a Frenchman who travelled in the American colonies in 1765 reported that beavers were extinct in the Carolinas as they had been for some time in central Canada.¹⁰⁶

The anonymous gunner in the Canadian colonial regulars was an avid hunter, and described a large number of mammals, from mink and beaver to bear, moose, cougar, and bison, explaining how each animal was killed. He also described whales, porpoises, walruses, seals, and various fish which lived off the Atlantic coast. No area escaped without a detailed list of game and personal hunting stories. The gunner easily outclassed any of the line officers in his knowledge of wildlife.¹⁰⁷

Bossu, who was in the colonial regulars at the same time as the gunner, observed a number of species west of the Appalachians which were not usually seen in the eastern coastal areas. Montcalm and Rochambeau's officers at least had names for the animals they spotted, but the beasts which Bossu encountered he called "wild cattle", "wild cats", "tigers", "tiger cats", and "leopards", since there were no French names for bison or various species of American cats.¹⁰⁸ The unfamiliarity of these animals, however, did not prevent him from tasting many of them, and he judged salted bison and deer meat to be as good as the salt beef of Bayonne.¹⁰⁹ Bossu had an uncomfortably close meeting with a large alligator, which late one night seized a catfish lying by the door of his tent and dragged the fish, tent, and entangled officer to the nearby riverbank. A terrified Bossu managed to free himself from the tent just before the huge reptile slid into the river. Not surprisingly, he never forgot this experience with "the most horrible animal in all nature", and relished recounting the methods used by Europeans and Indians to kill them.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 107 and anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller", *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 736.

¹⁰⁷ J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 4, 7-8, 33-36, 44-50, 93-96, 108-10.

¹⁰⁸ Bossu, *Travels*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 201.

Officers were interested in other reptiles and amphibians such as 18 kg snapping turtles which ate geese and ducks. Most interesting for the Frenchmen, however, were snakes. Rochambeau's men found blacksnakes in their tents in Virginia, but these, like a snake which bit a soldier at a camp in New York and a hognose snake which bit one of Bossu's men in Louisiana, were recognized as being more or less harmless. More dangerous were rattlesnakes, which Clermont-Crèvecoeur explained could attain a considerable length. As with other animals, the officers had various misconceptions about snakes, Bossu, for example, believing that they could hypnotize their prey. Vipers existed in France, and common European beliefs about these reptiles may have been applied to North American species.¹¹¹

France's open and well-drained land was by and large not conducive to large insect populations. The partially-drained salt marshes around La Rochelle, where malaria was endemic, were among several exceptions. Eighteenth-century North America, by contrast, was a land of woods, ponds, and undrained swamps where insects flourished. For Indians, European settlers, and European visitors alike, insects were the continent's most unpopular wildlife. Montcalm's officers complained of their forcible submission to "the martyr of insects...as thick as the air" during their campaigns in Canada.¹¹² Bossu said that mosquitos were "absolutely unbearable throughout Louisiana", especially during a certain season, and explained how people made insect-proof tents from arched reeds covered by a cloth.¹¹³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, thanks to his extensive travels, could claim to be a connoisseur of North American insect pests. He believed that of all the northern provinces, Nova Scotia was by far the worst for mosquitos, and he blamed the sparsity of settlement in the province on the insect problem, asserting that "I would not live in any part of Nova Scotia nor on the island of St. John [Prince Edward Island] for a valuable

¹¹¹ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 70; Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 87; Franquet, *Voyages*, p. 71; d'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 26; Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 56; Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 199-201; and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 175-80.

¹¹² Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 26.

¹¹³ Bossu, *Travels*, p. 160.

consideration.”¹¹⁴ On the shores of Lake Champlain he was covered by such a swarm of mosquitos that he retreated to his boat with his eyes closed and headed far out into the lake, accompanied for “several miles” by these persistent creatures. In the American colonies, he added, there were not only mosquitos but swarms of almost invisible gnats. Crèvecoeur asserted that European North Americans were not as sensitive to the bites as Europeans, while the Indians used bear grease as insect repellent, which was “the reason for their being more swarthy than Nature intended.”¹¹⁵ Rochambeau’s officers complained about the “tortures” of mosquitos and gnats in Virginia, and bad memories of this province’s insects were triggered during a stop in Saint-Domingue on their return voyage to France in 1783.¹¹⁶ The only American insects which they liked were fireflies, and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur claimed that he could read pages line by line by holding a firefly by its wings; it is unlikely, however, that he ever actually tried this. He also devoted nearly an entire “letter” to honeybees and ants.¹¹⁷

While French officers noted many differences between the flora and fauna of North America and Europe, they were not staggered by what they found. The many basic similarities between these two continents became clear once they reached South America. Coriolis, after a sight-seeing trip in the mountains of Venezuela, reported that he and his companions were exhausted by the travel and the heat, but also by all the new things which they had seen: “Nothing, in this country, resembles Europe...it seems that we are transported into a new world.”¹¹⁸ The officers were fascinated by the monkeys, “lions”, “tigers”, exotic birds, vampire bats, boa constrictors, and unusual tropical trees. Even the huge mountains emphasized that they were in

¹¹⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 107-10.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-10.

¹¹⁶ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 70 and Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 330.

¹¹⁷ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 33; Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 57, 126; and *ibid.*, *Letters*, pp. 27-31.

¹¹⁸ Coriolis to his brother. Puerto Cabello, 17 March 1783, “Lettres”. *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 March 1932, p. 826.

an entirely alien environment.¹¹⁹ On Martinique, Revel noted, the scenery resembled Europe's from a distance, but up close not a single tree or plant was familiar.¹²⁰ Among Connecticut's wheat fields and cattle pastures, officers might have been excused for thinking that they were at home; in South America such illusions were impossible. Caracas' indigenous and introduced biota showed the officers that this region, unlike temperate North America, was unsuitable for most French crops, but was ideal for a variety of valuable tropical products and was capable of generating considerable wealth for its colonial masters. The French army's encounter with the tropical Americas was extremely valuable in placing North America in perspective.

French officers did not discuss North America's terrain, river and lake systems, climate, and vegetation simply to satisfy their curiosity. These natural characteristics had a decisive impact on the social, cultural, economic, political, and military organization of the continent's inhabitants. Mountain ranges, rivers, and the fertility of the land were crucial to settlement patterns, and the Frenchmen believed, in part because of Montesquieu's writings, that the climate had considerable impact on the character of the local people. Fish and beaver had an important influence on relations between the major powers, for each nation sought to control these natural resources to increase their manufactures, commerce, wealth, population, and trained naval manpower. Colonies which owed their success to favourable geographic and environmental conditions increased the power of the mother country, and this directly affected the balance of power in Europe. By the mid-eighteenth century, North America was important enough to France and Great Britain that disputes on the continent were the cause rather than the result of military confrontation between these powers, and their wars became major struggles which spanned the globe.

¹¹⁹ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 434-40 and Chastellux, manuscript of December 1782, AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

¹²⁰ Revel, *Journal particulier*, p. 99.

Most French officers of the 1750's, 1770's, 1780's were not particularly well informed about North America on their arrival, and Montcalm's officers were especially at a disadvantage when it came to obtaining information about Canada and the American colonies. Practically all books dealing with the Americas in mid-century concerned Spanish America and the Caribbean, and the most authoritative works were very poor and already a century out of date. Like the vast majority of Europeans of all levels of education, these authors depended on travel accounts of varying quality for their information on the Americas and their inhabitants. In fact, the French officers who recorded their knowledge of the continent in book form invariably followed the travel account literary tradition, even Chastellux with his "definitive" study which Ervoil d'Oyré boasted in 1781 would make "all other relations insipid and useless."¹²¹

French knowledge of Indians came largely from the authors of travel accounts and clergymen. The Indians were described in various ways, as peaceful, naive peoples hungering for the word of Christ as well as savage, subhuman cannibals who had no concept of God, morality, law, or government and were too intellectually stunted to absorb these fundamentals of civilization. Despite a growing understanding of Indian cultures as the sources of reliable information increased in number, the abstract, polarized intellectual debate over their nature as innocent or depraved continued throughout the eighteenth century.¹²² The French officers arrived in North America at a time when there was no consensus on Indians in the intellectual community, and this meant that they had two traditions of thought to draw upon when they actually encountered native peoples.

In the minds of most Frenchmen of the 1750's, North America was an almost complete blank. They were somewhat more aware of their own North American possessions than those of the British, perceiving Canada and Acadia to be lands of freezing winters, endless forests,

¹²¹ Ervoil d'Oyré to the Comte de Chastellux, Providence, 15 June 1781, AN Série M 1021 IV.

¹²² See Henri Baudet, *Paradise on Earth: Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man*, trans. Elizabeth Wentholt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965) and Olive P. Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984).

ferocious savages, martyred missionaries, and a handful of fur traders.¹²³ The public image of Louisiana was hardly better, for ever since the financial disaster experienced by investors in John Law's *Compagnie des Indes* in 1720, the colony was considered an almost worthless tract which would not be settled and made productive for several centuries. Voltaire's quip about France and Britain fighting over "a few acres of snow toward Canada" neatly summarized a popular French perception of their country's colonies in North America as an investment gone bad, a view reinforced by an awareness of the great wealth of France's sugar colonies.¹²⁴ The military, which was largely responsible for all French colonies through its connection with the Ministry of Marine, was more aware of the value of French North America than most educated citizens, but it too had ambiguous attitudes toward these possessions. For the military, the chief value of French North America lay in its denial to the British of access to land, the fur trade, and the silver of northern Mexico. The potential economic value of New France was a constant theme, but low expectations of realizing that potential within several generations persisted.

Frenchmen were also aware of the presence of a collection of British colonies on the continent's eastern coast, but during the early eighteenth century the French did not recognize their importance. Writers stressed British trade with Portugal--an exchange of British goods for Brazilian gold--far more than British trade with the Spanish colonies, while Britain's substantial trade with her own North American possessions was ignored.¹²⁵ According to the author Georges-Marie Butel-Dumont, writing in 1755, the British North American colonies were little known in France: "One could even say that with the exception of a small number of persons who are instructed on the state of this part of the New World, & who have not communicated anything

¹²³ Major works on French North America available in late eighteenth-century France included the writings of Jacques Cartier, Marc Lescarbot, Samuel de Champlain, Gabriel Sagard, Louis Hennepin, Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce Baron de Lahontan, Joseph-François Lafitau, and Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, as well as the *Jesuit Relations*. Sagard and Hennepin were Récollets, Lafitau and Charlevoix were Jesuits, and the others were merchant-colonizers or officers.

¹²⁴ François-Marie Arouet, dit Voltaire, *Candide, ou l'optimisme* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1968), p. 199.

¹²⁵ Crouzet, "Sources of England's Wealth", in *Shipping, Trade and Commerce*, ed. Cottrell and Aldcroft, pp. 66-67.

of what they know, one is amongst us in almost complete ignorance in this regard."¹²⁶ He criticized the entry on British colonies in the *Dictionnaire de commerce* for being incomplete, confused, or plain wrong. The British colonies, Butel-Dumont believed, were responsible for weighing the European balance of trade in favour of Britain, and he asserted that all Europe now had its eyes fixed on the Americans "to learn by what means a kingdom so limited in extent as England had achieved a power equal to that of the largest states."¹²⁷ It was important, he warned, to guard against secret British designs to conquer French North America and master the entire continent, for the balance of power in America was as important as the balance of power in Europe.¹²⁸ The belief that the British intended to exclude all rivals from North American trade, in particular by conquering French possessions on the continent, was widespread among French writers and diplomats.¹²⁹ By the 1770's, French writers had accepted the idea that British trade with the Americas and India were the main source of Britain's wealth, and there was an assumption that the mysterious growing strength of the small and underpopulated island of Great Britain had been explained.¹³⁰

In 1700 the British North American colonies were a virtual economic nullity, with the possible exception of Virginia and Maryland, but by the 1770's their population had increased ten

¹²⁶ Georges-Marie Butel-Dumont, *Histoire et commerce des colonies angloises dans l'Amérique septentrionale, où l'on trouve l'état actuel de leur population, & des détails curieux sur la constitution de leur gouvernement, principalement sur celui de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, de la Pensylvanie, de la Caroline & de la Géorgie* (Paris: Le Breton, 1755), p. v.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. vi, viii-ix.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. x.

¹²⁹ Anonymous, "Mémoire sur la situation financière, économique et politique de l'Angleterre", 5 July 1736, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, Mémoires et documents, Angleterre, 6 and Étienne de Silhouette, "Observations sur les finances, le commerce et la navigation d'Angleterre", October 1747, BN Manuscrits français 12162, cited in Crouzet, "Sources of England's Wealth", in *Shipping, Trade and Commerce*, ed. Cottrell and Aldcroft, pp. 62, 67.

¹³⁰ Crouzet, "Sources of England's Wealth", in *Shipping, Trade and Commerce*, ed. Cottrell and Aldcroft, p. 67.

fold and their wealth in proportion.¹³¹ The American colonists enjoyed a standard of living which at the time was probably the highest ever achieved by any country in history.¹³² As early as the 1640's New Englanders began shipments of foodstuffs, lumber, horses, and other products to the British West Indies, and after 1713 they extended their trade to the French and Dutch islands.¹³³ A significant part of the earning power of British, French, and Dutch colonists was concentrated in the hands of American merchants who spent that wealth in England because of the Navigation Acts. The American colonies were important to a large range of British industries, buying up to a fifth of output, and they were responsible for most of Britain's expansion of overseas trade during the mid-eighteenth century. British trade with the rest of Europe grew much more slowly, and in real terms British external commerce was outpaced by the growth of French trade, for the French captured British sugar markets in continental Europe and British woolen and linen markets in the Mediterranean, Spain, and to some extent Spanish America.¹³⁴

Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques* (1734) were instrumental in establishing eighteenth-century French attitudes toward English society. He maintained that English peasants ate white bread, meat, and fish, drank tea, wore shoes and good clothes, and had clean, well-furnished houses, while all strata of society, free from arbitrary financial exactions and aided by a free, enlightened government, lived in considerable ease. The British constitution, with its balance of powers between king, lords, and commons, he believed, secured liberty and property, prevented the king from interfering with business, and allowed Parliament to promote trade and guarantee the public debt. The size of the court, administration, army, and clergy were kept in

¹³¹ John J. McCusker and Russel R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 51-70, 258-69 and Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p. 306.

¹³² McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, p. 55.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 42-43, 79-80 and Davis, *Rise of the North Atlantic Economies*, p. 307. It is important to point out, however, that British sugar exports to continental Europe were reduced by a massive and profitable increase in domestic sugar consumption.

check, the rich were taxed rather than the poor, and a free press allowed the public to know their economic interests. Voltaire idealized English society, and stressed the equality of classes, merchants becoming members of parliament and gaining knighthoods, and peers, in the absence of *dérégance*, engaging in commerce.¹³⁵ Even in the midst of war, French anglophobia mixed with anglophilia. The British were hated for their system's success, but at the same time many Frenchmen wanted their country to emulate much of that system. French writers saw the British Navigation Acts and tariffs as the cornerstone of British success in overseas commerce, and the theory that trade was more important than agriculture in accumulating national wealth prevailed until the middle of the eighteenth century. However, physiocrats and other writers of the 1760's and 1770's agreed that Britain had reached the zenith of its power and would soon begin its inevitable decline, for it was felt that the British had failed to maintain the proper balance between agriculture, industry, and trade. France, they wrote, was capable of maintaining a much greater population and output and therefore had much greater potential, for its power was not based on a fragile, artificial system of credit which might collapse at any moment.¹³⁶

The decades after 1730 were characterized by the development of an alternative and increasingly dominant perception of British American colonists. The more traditional view was that the colonies were filled with groups of English religious fanatics who in most respects equalled other Englishmen in greed and bigotry, with the addition of a primitive republicanism which at best was as relevant to the real world as the outmoded French provincial estates. The alternative view was to a great extent established by Voltaire and promoted by subsequent writers. Voltaire became interested in English Quakers as a people who despite their alleged eccentricities--which he pointed out--seemed to reflect his deistic philosophy by engaging in a simple worship of the Supreme Being and attempting to fulfill his rational, moral laws of peace

¹³⁵ François-Marie Arouet, dit Voltaire, *Letters on England [Lettres philosophiques]*, trans. Leonard Tancock (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1980), pp. 44-50 and Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, pp. 48-65.

¹³⁶ F. Chaumont, "Mémoire sur la France et l'Angleterre", BN, Manuscrits français 10716, cited in Crozet, "Sources of England's Wealth", in *Shipping, Trade and Commerce*, ed. Cottrell and Aldcroft, pp. 63-64, 71.

and brotherly love. Beginning with his *Letres philosophiques*, he discussed William Penn's Quaker colony of Pennsylvania as an experiment in simple egalitarianism, perfect religious freedom, and pacifism.¹³⁷ Voltaire associated the American colonies with British religious toleration and social and political enlightenment, frequently citing John Locke's *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*.¹³⁸ Articles in Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* reinforced this positive image of the colonies, and the articles on Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and Virginia--significantly, the only references to the colonies in the early editions--stressed their good climate and prosperity.¹³⁹ When the French line regiments went to Canada at the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, however, there was hardly a single book in French devoted entirely to the American colonies. The publication of three books in 1755 and 1756, one a translation of William Smith's *A brief view of the conduct of Pennsylvania, for the year 1755*, was in response to a sudden public interest in the region.¹⁴⁰

French awareness of political events in the American colonies grew in the late 1760's and in the 1770's, chiefly through French newspapers, which relied heavily on the British pro-government and opposition press for their articles. Important American political pamphlets appeared in translation and in combination with newspapers exposed the French educated public and even the popular classes to the political ideas and vocabulary of the American Whigs as well as the names of American political leaders and generals. French attitudes toward the political

¹³⁷ Voltaire, *Letters on England* and François-Marie Arouet, dit Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations et sur les principaux faits de l'histoire depuis Charlemagne jusqu'à Louis XIV* (Paris: Éditions Garnier frères, 1963), 2: 383-84.

¹³⁸ John Locke, "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina", 1699, in *The Works of John Locke*, 10 vols., ed. Thomas Tegg, 10: 175-99 and Echeverria, *Mirage in the West*, p. 17.

¹³⁹ Louis, Chevalier de Jaucourt, "Pensilvanie", "Phitadelphie", and "Virginie", in *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des aris et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres*, 1765 ed., 12: 313-14, 502, 17: 326-27.

¹⁴⁰ Jean Palairet, *Description abrégé des possessions angloises et françoises du continent septentrional de l'Amérique, pour servir d'explication à la carte publiée sous ce même titre, par J. Palairet* (London: J. Nourse, 1755); Butel-Dumont, *Histoire et commerce des colonies angloises*; and Abbé Delaville, *État présent de la Pensylvanie* (N.p., 1756). The latter book was a translation of William Smith, *A Brief View of the Conduct of Pennsylvania, for the Year 1755* (London: R. Griffiths, 1756). See also Echeverria, *Mirage in the West*, pp. 15, 19.

events in North America corresponded to the educated public's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their own political system, and officers, as members of the educated public, were by no means isolated from this debate.¹⁴¹

Britain's economic and military threat to France, clearly stated during the course of the Seven Years' War, resulted in considerable French interest in Britain's trade system, agricultural advances, parliamentary government, and more open social structure. Many educated Frenchmen questioned different aspects of *ancien régime* society, including the nature of their absolute monarchy, and realized that significant changes had to take place if France was not to fall victim to the combined European powers. Officers who visited North America in the late 1770's and early 1780's were participants in this debate, and realized that the United States was a manifestation of the British system which challenged their country. It is no coincidence that there is a strong parallel between observations on England made by French travellers and opinions on American society made by military officers. Rochambeau's men knew that Great Britain was militarily stronger than the United States in terms of ships, troops, and supplies, and had a different constitution. But they were also aware that the political institutions, standard of living, commercial values, class structure, religious toleration, and cultural values prevalent in the United States closely reflected those of Great Britain, and were therefore of special significance. Ségur and La Fayette liked the United States for the same reasons that Voltaire admired England, and the Continental army volunteers Major Galvan and Major Pierre-François de Boy hated the United States for the same reasons that French anglophobes loathed England.

A number of books shaped officers' views of North America. Inexpensive adventure travel books in the Robinson Crusoe genre were widely read by young Frenchmen, and these and other works provided readers with a general image of *les Indes* and colonial societies. With many modifications, appropriate or inappropriate, these conceptual models of colonies might be applied to the French and British possessions to the north. References to the North American colonies

¹⁴¹ Echeverria, *Mirage in the West*, pp. 70-71.

in factual or fictional works strengthened knowledge or misconceptions of what these places were like.

Soon after learning of his command, the Marquis de Montcalm read at least the last two volumes of Father Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix's authoritative *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France*, first published in 1744.¹⁴² He also read the section on colonies in Victor de Riqueti, Marquis de Mirabeau's *L'ami des hommes ou Traité sur la population*. Mirabeau, father of the revolutionary, was a military officer and physiocrat, stressing the primacy of agriculture over commerce as a source of wealth.¹⁴³ Montcalm's senior aide-de-camp Bougainville also tackled Charlevoix, and through his knowledge of English was able to read a travel account by the Swedish naturalist Pehr or Peter Kalm, who had visited the American colonies and Canada a few years before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War.¹⁴⁴ Méritens de Pradals also mentioned reading king's lieutenant Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan's *Voyages*, which described Lahontan's travels in Canada with the colonial regulars at the end of the seventeenth century. By 1758 no less than twenty-five editions of Lahontan's book had been published in several languages, reflecting the widespread interest of the time in travel accounts.¹⁴⁵ Montcalm's officers' knowledge of the American colonies was even more limited than their awareness of Canada, which suggests just how little French people of the time knew about this region. The virtual absence of French literature on the subject made their ignorance almost inevitable.

¹⁴² Montcalm to Marquise de St. Véran, Lyon, 8 March 1756 and Montcalm to Marquise de St. Véran, Montreal, 16 June 1756, NA MG18, K7, v. 3, pp. 45-46, 64-67.

¹⁴³ Victor de Riqueti, Marquis de Mirabeau, *L'ami des hommes ou Traité sur la population* (Avignon: n.p., 1756-1758; reprint, Aalen: Scientia, 1970) and Montcalm to his wife Angélique-Louise Talon de Boulay, Marquise de Montcalm, Montreal, 12 April 1759, NA MG18, K7, vol. 3, pp. 151-54.

¹⁴⁴ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 69 and Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, "Mémoire sur le Canada", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 24. Pehr Kalm, *Travels into North America*, trans. John R. Foster (Barre, Mass.: Imprint Society, 1972), was not published in French until 1761.

¹⁴⁵ Raymond Douville, "Le Canada, 1756-1758, vu par un officier de La Sarre", *Cahier des dix* 24 (1959): 443 and Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan, *Voyages du Baron de Lahontan dans l'Amérique septentrionale*, 2 vols., 2d ed. (The Hague: Charles Delo, 1706) and David M. Hayne, *Lom d'Arce de Lahontan, Louis-Armand de, Baron de Lahontan*", *DCB*, 2: 443.

The most important work on North America for most of the officers involved in the War of American Independence was Abbé Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements & du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770-1774), which devoted several chapters to the American colonies. Captain Pierre-Étienne Duponceau, secretary and aide-de-camp to Major-General Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin, Freiherr (Baron) von Steuben, wrote that "All that I knew...on my arrival in this country" came from Raynal, which Duponceau and Steuben read during their voyage from Marseille in 1777. Various references to Raynal by Rochambeau's officers make it evident that copies of his book circulated among them during the Atlantic voyage and in the military camps, and that many officers were either directly or indirectly exposed to Raynal's ideas.¹⁴⁶ Buffon was also mentioned, but more as a well-known authority than as an author who had actually been read. Several officers had access to an English copy of William Smith's *A History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia* (Williamsburg, 1747), or at least handwritten translations of sections of the work, and Berthier had a nine-page manuscript in his handwriting which was taken directly from Smith.¹⁴⁷

Raynal supported Buffon's theory about the smallness and weakness of animals in the Americas, but he also supported the ideas of Cornelius de Pauw, who applied Buffon's theory to the human inhabitants of the continents, insisting that the primitive climate of the Americas made the Indians physically and intellectually stunted and morally depraved. He also believed that Europeans were affected by the climate and that they and their livestock were degenerating over the generations. Pauw, a Dutch Lutheran minister who lived in Germany, was a virulent

¹⁴⁶ Pierre-Étienne Duponceau, "The Autobiography of Peter Stephen Duponceau", *PMHB* 63 (1939): 449 and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 47. See also Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres d'un officier au service des Etats Unis à Mrs. de Sartine et de L.", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 227. It might be worth noting that the anonymous gunner in the colonial regulars used Raynal as a reference book when he was preparing the account of his years in Canada for publication in the 1790's. J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 4, 125.

¹⁴⁷ Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 155-56; see 1: 155 fn. for reference to Berthier's manuscript.

anticolonialist, believing that the discovery of the Americas was an unmitigated disaster, consuming population, capital, and useful commodities while providing useless luxuries like tobacco and inflationary bullion.¹⁴⁸ Raynal was attacked by pro-American authors during the American Revolution and he retracted his stand on the degeneracy theory in his next publication, *Révolution de l'Amérique* (1781).¹⁴⁹ The editors of Pouchot's *Memoir Upon the Late War in North America*, published posthumously in 1781, introduced Pouchot's section on Indians with a vehement attack on Pauw, maintaining that Pouchot's unbiased account proved the absurdity of the clergyman's opinions.¹⁵⁰

The degeneracy theory seems to have had little or no impact on the French officers. Rochambeau's subordinates showed no sign of believing that Americans were racially inferior to their British cousins, and the contempt which many felt for the Indians cannot be attributed to Raynal because Montcalm's officers reacted in much the same way. A few comments on the size and strength of hares and foxes are also not conclusive evidence that the degeneracy theory had an impact on the visiting officers. Raynal was a respected author, but not everything that an authority writes is transmitted to the public and the ideas which filter down are not always accepted. The officers were a relatively pragmatic lot, and their opinions were formulated as much or more by personal observation, professional assessment, and traditional values than by the latest intellectual theories.

Frenchmen who visited North America during the second half of the eighteenth century were made conscious of the fact that they were entering a new environment by the very distance

¹⁴⁸ Cornelius de Pauw, *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains, ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'histoire de l'espèce humaine, par Mr. de P**** (Berlin: n.p., 1768-1769; reprint, Berlin: n.p., 1771). See also Durand Echeverria, "The Colonies Before 1776: The View from Continental Europe", in *Liberty's Impact: The World Views 1776*, ed. Donald K. Moore (Providence, R.I.: Brown Alumni Monthly, 1976), pp. 6-7.

¹⁴⁹ Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal, *Révolution de l'Amérique* (London: n.p., 1781) and Echeverria, *Mirage in the West*, pp. 4-14, 37, 64-65.

¹⁵⁰ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 180-83.

which they had to travel to reach the continent. They experienced new concepts of space and a geography in which the configuration of land and water, the climate, flora, and fauna were different from what they had previously known. Nevertheless, it is evident from their observations that despite all of the differences they found, emphasizing the separateness of the New World from the Old, universal laws of science did apply here, and North America, particularly the United States, had a great deal in common with Europe. There is no sign in their observations that they gave any credence to a contemporary theory common among natural scientists from the 1750's to the 1780's that human and non-human biological degeneration was characteristic of the Americas due to the hemisphere's particular climate. This concept, found in Buffon, Pauw, and even Raynal, does not seem to have had much effect on the French nobility--and by extension the French educated public--at least by 1783. More common among officers was the assumption that climate had an effect on the cultural--not the physical--characteristics of the inhabitants of different regions, an idea disseminated by Montesquieu in the late 1740's. French officers were usually quick to reject idealistic or absurd philosophical theories, especially when faced by their direct observations in North America. They also did not treat North America, in particular the United States during the War of American Independence, as a completely foreign land. Their testimony with regards to literature and newspapers and awareness of what they were facing on their arrival in the continent suggests that if Canada and the American colonies had been relatively uncharted territory during the 1750's, the United States was being mentally integrated into the European world by the 1780's, at least in the minds of officers who had been to the country.

CHAPTER 3

"SAVAGES" AND "NOBLE SAVAGES"

The concept of the noble savage played an important part in Enlightenment thought. Determining how people lived in the state of nature helped to answer the age-old question of whether or not human beings were naturally good or evil. Among other things, the fundamental nature of the human character dictated the most suitable form of government for human beings. If humans were basically good, then a liberal, more democratic form of government was best. If naturally bad, then a strict, authoritarian regime was more likely to be the answer. During the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes offered a gloomy portrait of anarchy and violence in the state of nature, but most eighteenth-century thinkers, such as Montesquieu, Claude-Adrien Helvétius, d'Holbach, Diderot, and Rousseau, followed John Locke's lead in declaring that people are born good, and exhibit a vigorous virtue in the state of nature, or when they first band together to form lawful societies, but are usually corrupted by civilization. Spartans, Roman republicans, Gallic and Germanic tribesmen, Genevan Swiss, and other peoples were all used as examples of primitive, free communities which defended their liberty, families, and what little property they had against less virtuous neighbours. One of the classic descriptions of the noble savage was found in Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, written in 1772 and superficially based on Bougainville's account of a visit to Tahiti during the late 1760's.¹ There

¹ Denis Diderot, *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville: Publié d'après le manuscrit de Leningrad avec une introduction et des notes par Gilbert Chinard* (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1935); Louis-Antoine de

was, however, a competing tradition which was never far from that of the golden age and the noble savage, and this one involved the brutal savage or barbarian, the hairy man of the woods.² For Voltaire, civilization, however many problems it brought with it, offered the only escape from barbarism. Neither his story in *l'Ingénu* of a fictitious Huron who arrives in France to deliver a detailed critique of society, nor his theme in *Candide* that in the midst of the evils of the world we have to cultivate our garden, indicate that Voltaire wanted his fellow subjects to abandon civilization.³

These images were inspired by a European tradition found among all ranks of people, a belief in a "golden age" of simplicity and happiness which lay somewhere in the distant past. It is clear that the concept of the noble savage or humankind in the state of nature was central to Enlightenment philosophy. Less certain, however, is the extent to which the idea of the noble savage influenced the French educated classes, in particular the French nobility. To help answer this question, one might ask whether French officers demonstrated that they were aware of the concept on their arrival in North America, whether or not they accepted it, to what extent their idealism or prejudices affected their ability to understand the true nature of aboriginal societies, and whether their views changed over time. In order to analyze officers' ideas, it is necessary to examine their reactions to a wide range of native social and religious cultural traditions.

Almost all French officers who visited North America during the second half of the eighteenth century had some contact with the native peoples of the continent. French-born officers in the colonial regulars of course knew Indians well, Montcalm's men fought several campaigns beside France's Indian allies, French volunteers fought with and against Indians, and

Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde par la frégate du roi la Boudeuse et la flûte l'Étoile, en 1766, 1767, 1768 et 1769*, ed. Jacques Proust (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), pp. 229-71; and Hampson, *Enlightenment*, pp. 208-11.

² Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, pp. 63-84.

³ Will Durant and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 9, *The Age of Voltaire: A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756, with Special Emphasis on the Conflict between Religion and Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), pp. 664, 718.

Rochambeau's officers met an Iroquois delegation on Rhode Island. In addition, in 1746, just prior to the period being covered, d'Anville's officers encountered a few Miami. The Indians made a different impression on each group of officers. Brief meetings between d'Anville's and Rochambeau's officers and Indians left the Frenchmen with largely negative, superficial impressions of natives, and Montcalm's officers, who habitually witnessed the Indians engaged in their traditional form of warfare, which included massacres, torture, cannibalism, and temporary slavery, also found it difficult to develop a very positive image of their native allies. Only officers and soldiers who were exposed to the full range of Indian culture and had it carefully explained to them developed a real understanding and tolerance for native peoples. In most cases, Frenchmen belonging to this latter group were members of the colonial regulars, troops which were permanently stationed in North America.

For many officers, especially Rochambeau's, their contact with the Indians was so brief that their assessment of the natives rested almost entirely on the Indians' physique, dress, language, and manners. The alien and deliberately frightening appearance of paint-bedecked warriors, joined with their unfamiliar behaviour patterns, gave rise to mixed feelings of fear, pity, and disgust among the Frenchmen. Basing their judgements on appearance and a few American opinions, officers came to quick conclusions about the Indians' savagery and backwardness.

Other French officers, however, who were able to learn about the Indians' hospitality, generosity, and honesty and gain insights into courtship, marriage, child-rearing, and social harmony among natives were more aware of the human qualities shared by Europeans and Indians. They did not reject Indians' special values out of hand, and in the tolerant spirit of the age many officers made a real attempt to surmount ethnocentric biases and analyse aboriginal cultures on their own terms. The visitors also found native education, social activities, social welfare, and medical practices fascinating, and while rejecting most native religious beliefs, many identified the Great Spirit with the Supreme Being and perceived the Indians' religions as primitive but valid manifestations of humanity's common desire to communicate with God.

After taking into account various circumstantial differences between French officers, it is evident that there was little change in their assessments of Indians between 1760 and 1780. The majority of officers during both periods perceived Indians chiefly as culturally inferior "savages". Aboriginal social customs, most officers believed, were strange and unadmirable, and reflected depravity rather than virtue. However, a minority of officers during both periods were clearly affected by Enlightenment ideas of the noble savage, and analyzed Indian societies with some assistance from this intellectual framework, often with reasonable ethnological accuracy. Since the idea of the noble savage dated back at least to Michel Eyquem de Montaigne in the late sixteenth century, and the theme of the golden age was centuries older than that, the theoretical basis of this more positive image of Indians was already well disseminated by the 1750's.⁴

Officers who had a positive image of Indians cannot simply be categorized as infatuated with the idea of the noble savage. In fact, most of the time they were able to avoid idealizing natives. It is a mistake to consider French officers in North America as living in a dreamland of idealism and self-delusion, as some historians have suggested, just as it is wrong to dismiss the *philosophes* as being out of touch with reality. During this period, the disciplines of history and science were emerging from the realm of myth and the supernatural, and the fact that many officers, with enough evidence before them, were able to overcome substantially their ethnocentric biases, is a tribute to this process. Well-educated and informed officers were largely able to distinguish between stereotypes and reality. In examining French officers in North America, one generally sees a transition from a highly polarized positive or negative image of natives among first arrivals toward a more balanced, undogmatic perception of Indians among officers who had extensive contact with them. The two theoretical images of native peoples, older than most of the social and political themes of the Enlightenment, were present at the beginning

⁴ Cornelius J. Jaenen. *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 14, 17, 28 and Philip P. Boucher, *Les Nouvelles Frances: France in America, 1500 to 1815: An Imperial Perspective* (Providence, R.I.: John Carter Brown Library, 1989), pp. 12-17.

of the period under study, and did not change significantly over the following decades, at least where officers were concerned.

Groups of French officers will not be dealt with chronologically in this chapter. As each specific topic is discussed, it is more useful to present the groups in the order of their increasing contact with Indians. This means reversing the typical chronological order; Rochambeau's officers will be followed by the volunteers, Montcalm's officers, and finally French-born officers in the colonial regulars. D'Anville's expedition will occasionally be mentioned in order to help illustrate certain themes.

Many French officers, it is clear, had only brief, superficial encounters with Indians. In 1746, d'Anville's men were visited by a few Micmacs at Chebucto Bay, but the natives promptly fled the French camp when they saw the hundreds of sick and studiously avoided any further contact with their allies. In October 1780, Rochambeau's officers hosted a conference with an Iroquois delegation mainly composed of Oneidas and Kahnawake Mohawks which had been invited to meet the newly-arrived French army at Newport, Rhode Island. In both cases, the French assessed the Indians by combining their scanty preconceptions of what these people were like with their immediate impressions of the natives' physical appearance and manners. One problem which they faced was that no one was present to carefully introduce and explain aboriginal customs and values to them. Chebucto Bay was uninhabited in 1746, and only a handful of Acadians and Canadian officers visited d'Anville's fleet. At Rochambeau's Newport conference with the Iroquois, the language barrier prevented easy communication with either the Americans or the Indians present.

A captain in the Régiment de Ponthieu who belonged to the d'Anville expedition promptly labelled the Micmacs "ferocious beasts".⁵ Rochambeau's officers described the natives in more flattering terms as "big", "tall", "robust", "muscular", and "well-made", with olive or

⁵ Anonymous, "Journal historique", in *Collection de documents inédits*, ed. Casgrain, 1: 96.

copper-coloured skin, but at the same time they were repelled by the warriors' body paint, hair, elongated ears, and bear grease insect protection. Clermont-Crèvecoeur remarked that "The oil and the dye they use on their bodies makes them stink and look disgusting", and his colleague Closen-Haydenburg added that "One cannot imagine the horrible and singular faces and bizarre manners of these people."⁶ The fact that "These barbarians go naked" was perceived as an additional sign of their lack of civilized qualities.⁷ However, according to Sublieutenant Gaspard-Gabriel, Baron de Gallatin, a Swiss officer in the Régiment Royal Deux-Ponts, they resembled Europeans far more than blacks, and he was told that they were born as white as Frenchmen, only getting darker as a result of being in the sunshine all of their lives, without houses or European clothes, and wearing fish oil--actually bear grease--against mosquitos.⁸ One of the naval officers with La Pérouse in Hudson Bay in 1782, Ensign César-Auguste de Lannoy, was slightly more positive about Indians, and thought that the Chipewyan women he saw were often very pretty.⁹

Many of the officers in North America during the Seven Years' War came to similarly negative conclusions about the Indians. Naval ensign Rossel saw Micmacs at Louisbourg in 1757, and was disgusted by their "grotesque" appearance and "monkeying".¹⁰ Montcalm told his mother that the Indians "spent their lives" donning war paint, always carrying a mirror to war, and thought elongated ears a sign of beauty. "[Y]ou would take them", he wrote, "for devils or a

⁶ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 20 and Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 37.

⁷ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 20. See also Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183 fol. 220 and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 61.

⁸ Gaspard-Gabriel, Baron de Gallatin, "Un garde suisse de Louis XVI au service de l'Amérique: Le baron Gaspard de Gallatin". *Le Correspondant*, vol. 324 (n.s. 228). 10 Aug. 1931 (no. 1653): 330.

⁹ César-Auguste de Lannoy, "Mémorial de M. de Lannoy (1763-1793): Notes de voyage d'un officier de marine de l'ancien régime". *Carnet de la sabretache: Revue militaire retrospective* 2nd ser. 3 (1904): 753.

¹⁰ Rossel, "Journal". *RAPQ* (1931-32): 381.

mascarade".¹¹ His subordinates also generally found the native warriors alien in appearance, but their comments were not all negative. D'Aleynac reported that "The savages of Canada are very different from the idea which we commonly have of them in France".¹² Denying that they were covered in hair, he explained that in fact they had less than Europeans, lacking beards and plucking whatever body hair that did appear. His portrait of the Indians as handsome and dignified did not correspond to the negative, traditional European image of the native inhabitants of the Americas, which was partially based on European legends of the wild man of the woods.¹³ Pouchot was similarly positive regarding the Indians' unusual stature, and claimed that men ranged from five French feet four inches to six feet in height (173 cm to 195 cm or 5 English ft. 8 in. to 6 ft. 5 in.), which would have made the shortest Indians some 3 cm taller than the average eighteenth-century French male.¹⁴ He also explained that Indians appeared swarthier than their natural copper skin tone because of constant exposure to the sun, their summer bear grease insect protection, and their red ochre body paint. Some Indians in the west, he wrote, were as white as Germans. In Pouchot's opinion, Indian women were less well proportioned than their male counterparts and became overweight and faded at an early age. Pouchot also described male and female clothing in detail, and thought that European troops should adopt Indian winter clothing, for he judged the latter's tall, laced moccasins, blanket hoods, and mittens suspended from the neck by a string far superior to the shoes, hats, and gloves which made French troops so vulnerable to frostbite. Pouchot also found native face painting interesting rather than repulsive, and he compared the warrior's time-consuming daily toilette to a French dandy's. For Pouchot, who was in far more contact with Indians than most of Montcalm's officers and had ample

¹¹ Montcalm to Marquise de Saint-Véran, Montreal, 16 June 1756, NA MG18 K7, vol. 3, pp. 64-67. See also Montcalm to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, Montreal, 11 July 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 62.

¹² D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 36.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 36 and Dickason. *Myth of the Savage*, pp. 63-84.

¹⁴ Pouchot. *Memoir*, 2: 184. 5 French ft. 2 in. (168 cm or 5 English ft. 6 in.) was an average height for Frenchmen of those times. Claude Manceron, *The Men of Liberty: Europe on the Eve of the French Revolution, 1774-1778*, trans. Patricia Wolf (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), p. 132.

opportunity to see normal village life rather than just war parties with the French army, Indians were not frightening savages but simply people with different customs from his own.

Officers and men of the colonial regulars were even more attuned to native life than Pouchot. Bossu discussed tattooing among the Louisianian tribes, and understood the cultural importance of these designs as well as the tattooing ceremony's significance. When a deer was tattooed on his thigh to signify his adoption by the Arkansas, his jokes and lack of concern during the painful process resulted in the delighted audience calling him "a real man", their highest compliment.¹⁵ The tattoo and adoption bound him more closely to the tribe than any treaty of alliance, and his demonstration of bravery showed that he possessed the highly-valued qualities of a warrior prepared to defend his people.¹⁶ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur compared the Indians' concern with ornamenting their bodies to that of "our own forefathers the Picts"--he posed as an average British colonist in his writings--suggesting that the Indians were divided from Europeans by cultural development rather than by any inherent differences. He had known many natives during his military career on the frontier, and had relatively few prejudices against them.¹⁷ Another member of the colonial regulars who also saw service in the Ohio valley during the Seven Years' War, the Parisian gunner and clerk in the colonial artillery, dismissed the French notion that Indians were hairy people, and ascribed the natives' general lack of body hair not to a genetic difference, but simply to their diet, which he believed was less extravagant and consequently made the blood purer and more abundant. He also undermined the image of the Indian warrior as a mindless killing machine devoid of human emotion, explaining that warriors

¹⁵ Bossu, *Travels*, p. 66.

¹⁶ The modern editor of Bossu's travels acknowledges that while Bossu was a straightforward military man, he was influenced by the *philosophes* in his portrayal of the noble savage. It might be added that this captain was more obviously affected by Enlightenment ideas than any other officer of the Seven Years' War period included in this study, with the exception of Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur. However, the latter's writings date to the mid-1770's, over twenty years later, and for all intents and purposes Crèvecoeur has to be dealt with in relation to officers of the War of American Independence period. *Ibid.*, pp. x-xi.

¹⁷ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 110, 222.

wore paint chiefly to frighten their enemies, but also, perhaps, to disguise their own fear. "for they are probably not immune to it."¹⁸

Language could be either a barrier or a bridge to understanding the Indians. Rochambeau's officers were unable to understand a word of any aboriginal language, and Closen-Haydenburg remarked that "Their language, or rather their gibberish, had nothing in common with any known tongue."¹⁹ Like his colleagues, he found the natives' piercing war cries, which he compared to the sound of an exploding artillery shell, horrible and terrifying.²⁰ The excellent French spoken by one of the Indian chiefs at Newport, a Jesuit-educated Kahnawake Mohawk named Colonel Louis Atayataghronghtha, provided the only direct link between the two groups.²¹ According to the Swiss junior officer Gallatin, Atayataghronghtha spoke French extremely well: "He was the only one of his troop who was clothed and, except for his smoky physiognomy, we would not have taken him for a savage."²²

Franquet, some of Montcalm's officers, and especially members of the colonial regulars had a more respectful attitude toward Indian languages. Franquet was overwhelmed by the beauty of Roman Catholic hymns sung by Indian women in their native languages, and he and Pouchot were aware of the major Indian language groups in their part of the continent, which permitted relatively easy communication between many tribes.²³ The Parisian in the colonial artillery explained that fluency in Algonkin and Huron guaranteed almost universal comprehension, and his knowledge of Algonkian languages and dialects permitted him to converse with Shawnees he

¹⁸ J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 96, 138-39.

¹⁹ Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38 and Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFE* 5 (1914): 242.

²² Gallatin, "Un garde suisse", *Le Correspondant*, vol. 324 (n.s) 228, 10 Aug. 1931 (no. 1653): 330.

²³ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 44, 49-50 and Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 233, 235.

met at Fort Duquesne without ever having heard their language before.²⁴ Bossu learned several languages in Louisiana, and studied their vocabularies with interest. He was intrigued to discover that the Attacapas of the Gulf coast used a sign language when communicating with other tribes, and supported the theory that the Indians came from Asia by claiming that Chinese terms had been found in the Natchez language of the lower Mississippi.²⁵ Canadians frequently had a working knowledge of Algonkian languages, and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur found that colonial Nantucketers were familiar with Nattick, sometimes had Nattick grammar books in their homes, and used Nattick terms when whaling.²⁶ For obvious reasons, Frenchmen who knew Indian languages no longer considered them "gibberish". As is often the case, communication and comprehension led to greater respect for other peoples, even if the ultimate French aim was to assimilate the Indians linguistically and culturally.

Native food and drink and ritual behaviour associated with them sparked another range of reactions among the French. Nothing except the killing and torturing of civilians and captured soldiers in wartime did more to place a gulf between Europeans and Indians than cannibalism and the violent form of alcohol addiction found among the natives. Both of these practices had cultural roots which the Europeans found difficult to understand, let alone sympathize with. For Frenchmen, consuming one's own kind constituted the ultimate in human savagery, and the cannibalism practiced among several tribes, most notably the Ojibwa and Ottawa, evoked horror among the European visitors.²⁷

The captain in d'Anville's Régiment de Ponthieu believed that the Micmacs were not motivated by national interest when they fought the English, but rather, "the sole idea of being

²⁴ J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 87, 149-50.

²⁵ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 105, 192.

²⁶ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 121-22.

²⁷ Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies & Tribes in the Seven Years' War in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), pp. 49, 196, 318-19, 446-47 and Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, pp. 120, 122, 140, 142-48.

able to eat them animates them[;] they find human flesh perfect and much better than the excellent game provided by the country."²⁸ Cannibalism was exceedingly rare or nonexistent among the Micmacs, and the captain's source for this information is unclear. Were d'Anville's officers taken in by the exaggerated account of a visiting Acadian, or was the Ponthieu officer simply assuming that the Micmacs were cannibals because they were savages? The captain's assessment not only reveals general ignorance of Micmac culture, but also a predetermined contempt for the continent's native peoples. The cannibalism of the Carib Indians in the West Indies, notorious since the time of Columbus, as well as cannibalistic incidents found in the *Jesuit Relations*, helped to imbed in the popular imagination the notion that cannibalism was universal among the tribes of the Americas. Whatever the source of this belief, many Frenchmen of the second half of the eighteenth century were apparently convinced that North American Indians were hairy man-eaters.

Members of the predominantly noble officer class may have been somewhat better informed about aboriginal Americans than the average Frenchman, but they also had suspicions which had to be overcome. In the United States, Montesquieu was surprised to find that the French army's Iroquois guests "did not have a too savage air" and that "They did not appear at all embarrassed to eat cooked meat with forks and soup with spoons. I can assure you that the Lower Bretons which I saw are really more savage than these savages."²⁹ Montcalm's officers, however, frequently had to watch the torture and consumption of British and American prisoners, and were sickened by it. The fact that only a few tribes from the upper Great Lakes were responsible, and that local Indians claimed to be aghast at the custom, did not make it easier to bear.³⁰ Captain Pouchot, who was in constant contact with the western Indians while posted at

²⁸ Anonymous, "Journal historique", in *Collection de documents inédits*, ed. Casgrain, 1: 602.

²⁹ Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFE 5* (1914): 242.

³⁰ See Bougainville to Jean-Pierre de Bougainville, Montreal, 2 July 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 86; Montcalm to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, Montreal, 11 July 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 62; and d'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 56-57.

Fort Niagara, wrote that among some tribes cannibalism was relatively frequent, and in times of scarcity they would eat their slaves with no more reluctance than they would eat an animal. Among some other peoples, however, prisoners were only ceremonially eaten to replace a dead chief, and they consumed human flesh only with repugnance.³¹ The gunner in the colonial artillery recounted that most tribes ceremonially consumed a dog before going on a raid, but that peoples from the north country--namely the Ojibwa--customarily killed and divided up a prisoner. Present at one of these feasts, he saw the Indians devour their morsels of flesh "as though wishing to do the same with a common enemy". The soldier quietly dropped his own portion into the frill of his shirt after biting into it, for he did not want to be considered a coward for refusing to take part in this spiritual conquest and absorption of the enemy's spirit.³²

The Frenchmen were unanimous in believing that cannibalism was the ultimate sign of savagery, and saw it as one of the worst features of Indian cultures. Officers and men who were the most familiar with the Indians vaguely understood some of the spiritual beliefs underlying cannibalism, but even they could not accept the practice. For Bossu, the Gulf coast Attacapas' abandonment of cannibalism after they had allied themselves with the French was an important sign that they were moving toward the fundamentals of civilization.³³

Another phenomenon which interested the French was Indian alcohol addiction, which went far beyond the behaviour associated with European alcoholism.³⁴ Few of the officers, however, knew enough about Indians to even speculate about its origins. Rochambeau's officers--doubtless advised by the Americans--were careful to give the Iroquois delegates wine heavily diluted with water so as to avoid drunken scenes.³⁵ The naval officer Vigny, writing in

³¹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 252-53.

³² J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 80-81.

³³ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 186-92.

³⁴ Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, p. 112.

³⁵ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 220 and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, i: 123.

1780, knew that alcohol made the Indians "dangerous and ferocious".³⁶ Montcalm's officers, including Captain Anne-Joseph-Hippolyte de Maurès, Comte de Malartic de la Devèse, adjutant of the Régiment de Béarn, Desandroüins, and d'Aleyrac, were even more aware of the problem.³⁷ Bossu witnessed several alcohol-related murders with his own eyes.³⁸ Explanations for this phenomenon, however, were less forthcoming. Indians, as savages, were assumed to have less self-control than civilized Europeans, and for many officers this was a sufficient explanation. Only Pouchot delved deeper into the question. Warriors, who were normally stoic and reserved, he wrote, drank as much alcohol as they could hold and rapidly became completely inebriated. "They reserve for these drunken revels", he explained, "to make their reproaches and to quarrel, which is always upon the want of bravery."³⁹ Injuries and sometimes death ensued. Relatives of the dead would wait until the next revel to pick a fight with the murderer and exact revenge, sometimes only feigning drunkenness. A raid might be organized against a traditional enemy tribe to replace the dead man, but this did not necessarily stop the chain of murders and invited retaliation from the enemy as well. As Pouchot knew, social harmony was the chief goal of all native societies, which meant that members of the community, especially warriors, had to suppress negative emotions for the good of society. Pouchot thought that when the Indians "lost their spirit" through alcohol, they were presented with a socially acceptable means of venting those suppressed emotions. Pouchot added that the natives were "very much ashamed" of becoming accustomed to French brandy and that they considered it "the principal cause of their ruin."⁴⁰

³⁶ Vigny, "Projet d'une expedition", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 123;

³⁷ Anne-Joseph-Hippolyte de Maurès, Comte de Malartic de La Devèse, *Journal des campagnes au Canada de 1755 à 1760 par le comte de Maurès de Malartic* (Paris: Librairie Plon, ca. 1890), pp. 22-24, 83; Desandroüins to ?, Montreal, 28 Aug. 1756, NYCD, 10: 465; and d'Aleyrac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 36-37.

³⁸ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 72-74, 112. See also Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 105 and J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 89-90.

³⁹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 237.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 237-39, 254. See also Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, pp. 110-15, 183-84.

Officers and soldiers in the colonial regulars became accustomed to and enjoyed most Indian foods, and Bossu was especially enthusiastic about the delicious meals produced by Louisianian tribes. Line officers with Montcalm's army were aware that Indians ate dog meat, which led many of them to reject Indian food altogether, but Bossu grew used to eating dog and explained that it was usually eaten at special feasts, for the Indians believed that since a dog will die to defend its master, eating it and absorbing its spirit power would make the diner brave.⁴¹ Bossu also found the Indians' hunting skills impressive, for a hunter would go out in search of game when he felt hungry and promptly return with an animal.⁴² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur carried eighteenth-century theory on the environment's impact on human beings to extremes by stating that hunting and eating wild game made people wild, and that this "strange effect" had an influence not only on Indians, but on American frontiersmen who were too lazy to become farmers.⁴³ In some ways, however, his thinking was in accordance with the views of other French officers on the continent, for they all had a Gallic and indeed human tendency to judge peoples by the foods they ate. In their eyes, the Indians' consumption of dogs, human beings, and excessive quantities of alcohol made them savages. Only officers like Bossu, who experienced and came to appreciate the wider range of native gastronomy, realized that the mere fact that Indians had a different menu than Europeans did not make them depraved.

The French visitors not only judged Indians by their appearance and their food, but also by their manners, for eighteenth-century gentlemen believed that a person's manners mirrored that individual's inner qualities. A person who displayed grace, politeness, and intelligent thought and conversation was believed to show firmness of character, integrity, and a noble spirit which surmounted the crass ignorance and depravity of the mass of human beings. If Indians behaved

⁴¹ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 62, 108, 128, 218; J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 6, 141, 144; and d'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 38.

⁴² Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 201, 204-13.

⁴³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 221-22.

like gentle noble savages, they would be perceived as such; on the other hand, if they behaved crudely and violently, they would be dismissed as corrupt and debased.

On meeting Indians for the first time, most French officers were open to both European cultural traditions concerning primitive peoples, the gentle, naive, naked innocents of the golden age, before Adam ate the apple, and monstrous, hairy cannibals. Rochambeau's officers were confused to find both, and neither. At Newport in 1780, Charlus found the Indians' "cries which rather resembled animal howls" very strange, and he concluded after attending the Iroquois dance that "Never, I think, have we seen anything so extraordinary. One cannot form an idea of it when one has not seen it. Is it possible that men put themselves in such a state to do such follies; one would take them more for ferocious beasts."⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he added, "I found that these nations were strongly policed [orderly] for savages."⁴⁵ The Iroquois delegates' usually dignified behaviour, their habitual calm restraint, intelligent and well-delivered oratory, excellent table manners, attachment for the late Marquis de Montcalm, inquiries for news of the Chevalier--by now Marquis--de Lévis, and the pious Catholicism of the Iroquois from Kahnawake or Sault-Saint-Louis by Montreal helped to counter expectations that the Indians would be monstrous savages. But the natives' essentially alien behaviour prevented Rochambeau's companions from developing a genuine liking for them. Tolerance and affection required understanding and familiarity, and this was lacking. Even the enlightened Chastellux and Montesquieu were excessively critical of the Indians.⁴⁶ No one with Rochambeau suggested that the natives were better off or more virtuous in a non-civilized state.

French officer volunteers with the Continental army and American militia openly detested Indians, for their ethnocentric biases and negative preconceptions were reinforced by the Americans' hatred for their tribal enemies. Boy, a volunteer who commanded fifty pro-American

⁴⁴ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fols. 220-21.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fols. 220-21.

⁴⁶ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 207-09 and Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFE* 5 (1914): 242.

Indians at Fort Ticonderoga in 1778, vilified natives for what he saw as cruel and cowardly massacres of civilians and soldiers, and Pontgibaud thought that Indians were more disgusting than European beggars.⁴⁷

Montcalm's officers had experienced similar reactions to the Indians. The natives' unfamiliar behaviour and harsh treatment of all enemies, civilian or military, did little to gain the Frenchmen's esteem and friendship. Nevertheless, prolonged contact allowed the officers to understand Indians better than Rochambeau's officers, and in many cases this led to greater respect for them. Young d'Aleynac wrote that the natives possessed many good qualities, and he befriended an Indian who accompanied him on campaign and shared his food and tent for eighteen months. Indians never forgot the most minor favour, he believed, and were "good friends and generous", but he added that they balanced generosity with a spirit of vengeance against those who had wronged them. A small number of French officers served with Indian war parties and gained the natives' esteem and affection, but d'Aleynac implied that most remained cool toward their native allies. After dancing with a group of Indians on one occasion, he wrote that "They applauded me a great deal and felt flattered, despite their pride, that a French officer, instead of scorning them sought to imitate them; this did not contribute a little to the esteem they accorded me."⁴⁸ He was later adopted by the Abenaki and given the name *Soleil*.⁴⁹ Pouchot also attested to the good qualities of the native peoples, and especially liked the calm harmony of their domestic lives. Their few wants, when satisfied, he wrote, gave them such an aura of tranquility and patience that they "appear melancholy" to a European; "They are naturally so quiet, that they cannot conceive why we talk so much, and are always surprised at seeing us raise our tone of voice in our disputes."⁵⁰ In addition, he wrote, the Indians would go without food to give a visitor the

⁴⁷ Boy, "Memoire". AN Colonies E50 and Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 48.

⁴⁸ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

⁵⁰ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 219.

best of whatever they had, while among some tribes men would offer their wives to a guest to prevent him from being lonesome. They considered stinginess despicable, so great care had to be exercised when offering them presents in order to avoid insulting them.⁵¹

Bourlamaque and other officers under Montcalm's command may have complained about the cost of the supplies and gifts offered to their native allies to keep them in the field during the course of an entire campaigning season, but at least they could vaguely comprehend native values of reciprocated generosity.⁵² Rochambeau's officers, however, knew nothing about this important custom, as is evident from Charlus' conclusion that the Iroquois delegation--and by implication all Indians--"are not very honest people. They have no money, and when they travel, one feeds and supports them without their paying the slightest thing." The Americans, he added, footed the bill for everything because it was in their interest.⁵³ Montcalm's officers were better able to avoid simplistic stereotypes of Indians than Rochambeau's officers. Montcalm himself attested to the fact that if the Indians were ferocious in war, they led peaceful home lives, had morals, and never produced monsters like the assassins who attacked Henri IV and Louis XV. The Indians were never told of the assassination attempt against Louis XV, he wrote; they would have been aghast at such a crime involving two members of the same people.⁵⁴

The colonial regulars lived and fought beside the Indians, and their close cooperation with the natives required them to learn their languages, methods of travel, military tactics, and customs. In Canada, Canadian officers of the colonial regulars taught the French soldiers who filled the ranks and the minority of French officers in the Canadian branch of the corps to respect and fully cooperate with the Indians, and the Europeans and native peoples often developed strong bonds of friendship and comradeship. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, Bossu, and the Parisian

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2: 220, 254.

⁵² Bourlamaque. "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1140.

⁵³ Charlus. "Journal". AN Marine B4 183. fol. 222.

⁵⁴ Montcalm to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, 11 July 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 63.

clerk-gunner demonstrated a knowledge of Indian manners and values which was far superior to that of the vast majority of officers in the line regiments who visited North America. Crèvecoeur projected an almost uniformly positive image of Indians in his stories, and attempted to provide them with a human face. He listed “moroseness” and “ferocity” as their chief vices, but added that they were also mild, industrious, and generous. Crèvecoeur wrote that he hoped that his sons would emulate the Indians’ quietness, modesty, and absolute harmony with one another, and in several accounts he attempted to undermine the perception of Indians as “savages”.⁵⁵ In one story, he meets a party of Indian hunters in the woods. They all shake hands and enjoy a “hearty supper” of bear meat and peach brandy followed by pleasant conversation around a fire before going to sleep on beds of leaves. If Indians were savages, he implied, this was the last thing one would do on sighting them. In another story, a Scottish emigrant and farmhand rushes to church to report to the farmer that “nine monsters were come to his house” and were seizing his food.

Pacify yourself, said Mr. P.R., my house is as safe with these people, as if I was there myself; as for the victuals, they are heartily welcome, honest Andrew; they are not people of much ceremony; they help themselves thus whenever they are among their friends; I do so too in their wigwams, whenever I go to their village: you had better therefore stop in and hear the remainder of the sermon, and when the meeting is over we will all go back in the waggon together.⁵⁶

In yet another story an Indian tracks a young child lost in the woods and returns it to his frantic parents, then modestly declines any reward for his neighbourly assistance.⁵⁷ In all of these accounts Crèvecoeur portrayed the Indians as “regular folks” with different customs but fundamentally not much different from anyone else. In attempting to counter the myth that Indians were wild, unthinking barbarians, he occasionally exaggerated their virtues but rarely strayed too far from reality.

⁵⁵ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 53, 226-27.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁷ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 133-34.

Bossu offered an equally sympathetic portrait of the Indians. "Many Europeans," he wrote, "thinking that the Indians cannot reason and have no common sense, consider them...brutes."⁵⁸ This, Bossu maintained, was utterly false, for the Indians were honest, had a sense of honour, and clearly distinguished right from wrong.⁵⁹ Selfishness was unknown amongst them, he insisted; there were no intrigues to become rich through "inhumane methods" and no women who poisoned their husbands, ridiculed them, or murdered their children to avoid a reputation for unchastity. Liars were simply despised. Bossu believed that Europeans should emulate the Indians' love for their relatives, and he found their habitual friendliness and hospitality endearing.⁶⁰

For members of the colonial regulars, who knew the Indians well, it was difficult to depersonalize natives and create simple stereotypes of them as either good or evil. As the Parisian gunner wrote, remembering his years in Canada during the 1750's, "The character of these peoples is a peculiar mixture of simplicity and trickery, nobility and meanness, vanity and politeness, good nature and treachery, valour and cowardice, and humanity and barbarity."⁶¹ The colonial regular officers' personal links with the Indians, made necessary by their profession and encouraged by the example of the local French colonists--who maintained a fraternal relationship with the surrounding native peoples--went far beyond the experiences of the vast majority of line officers. This link to the local populations of European and aboriginal descent also played a significant role in making the Frenchmen feel at home in their adopted continent.

French officers often demonstrated an interest in relations between the sexes in aboriginal societies. Womens' social and economic functions and the nature of courtship, marriage, and

⁵⁸ Bossu, *Travels*, p. 72.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 164, 167, 170.

⁶¹ J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 140.

child-rearing were in many ways considered a barometer of civilization among the native peoples. The prevailing image of native women among newly-arrived officers was predominantly negative. Women were expected to be wild, promiscuous, and thoroughly lacking in the special feminine qualities thought necessary for running a proper household and preparing children for their place in society.⁶² The Frenchmen's views on Indian women also provide revealing insights into contemporary expectations surrounding the role of noble and bourgeois women in French society. Very few of Rochambeau's officers actually saw native women, and most of Montcalm's officers had limited contact with them, so their comments were based largely on second-hand and often not very enlightened sources. Not surprisingly, the colonial regulars were far better informed about native women and had a far more accurate picture of their social role. While Frenchmen generally pitied native women for what they perceived as low status in Indian societies, some admired aspects of the "natural" behaviour associated with women, marriage, and child-rearing in these cultures.

Chastellux and Montesquieu, with their special travel privileges, were among the only officers in Rochambeau's army to see native women, but they said little or nothing about them. A staff officer, Captain Louis-François-Bertrand Dupont d'Aubevoye, Comte de Laubardière, aide-de-camp to his cousin Rochambeau and later a Napoleonic general, explained that Indian women did all the work inside and outside the home, and on trips were the ones who carried the baggage. Men, he stated, were lazy, for all they did was hunt.⁶³ In Laubardière's opinion, women had low status in native society. He also implied, however, that they were industrious, a virtue of civilization which he felt their husbands lacked and should acquire. Lannoy, a naval officer who saw Indian women while attacking the Hudson Bay forts, agreed that women did all of the work, and noted that men took as many wives as they could support through hunting and

⁶² See Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, pp. 31, 59-60, 107-8, 112.

⁶³ Louis-François-Bertrand Dupont d'Aubevoye, Comte de Laubardière, "Journal de l'Armée aux ordres de Monsieur le Comte de Rochambeau pendant les campagnes de 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783 dans l'Amérique Septentrionale". BN N.A.F. 17691, fol. 18.

fishing.⁶⁴ He made no moral judgements about polygamy, but it is doubtful that he considered it appropriate for a civilized society. Contemporary Frenchmen believed that men and women were unequal, but that women deserved protection, respect, love, and even friendship as long as they fulfilled their responsibilities and respected their husband's control of finances and affairs outside the domestic sphere. Indian men fell short of these social expectations, for they apparently neglected to fulfill their own economic responsibilities and on top of that failed to treat their wives with the consideration that they deserved. If Rochambeau's officers had any further curiosity about Indian women, it remained unsatisfied.

Unlike Americans, Canadians had Indian settlements in close proximity to their country's main cities. The engineer Franquet visited all of the mission villages in the St. Lawrence valley during the early 1750's, and he found the Indians' traditional way of life still largely intact. He admired their singing and modest manners, and was particularly struck by the voice, beauty, and graceful bearing of a Dakota woman who had been brought to the St. François Abenaki village as a slave. Unlike Lauberdière, he was not disturbed by the subordinate role of Indian women, and in fact thought that their modest domestic conduct was preferable to Canadian women's dangerously liberated behaviour.⁶⁵

Montcalm's officers had little contact with Indian women, and consequently paid more attention to the activities of native warriors. They did, however, pay special attention to the status of women among the Iroquois, for unlike other peoples, among the Iroquois clan matriarchs chose league chiefs and women could veto declarations of war and attended councils, although they were rarely permitted to speak at them.⁶⁶ Montcalm told his mother that a group of these women had sent him bands of wampum inviting the general to make an official visit at

⁶⁴ Lannoy, "Mémorial", *Carnet de la sabretache* 2d ser. 3 (1904): 754.

⁶⁵ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 49-50, 95, 104.

⁶⁶ See Elizabeth Tooker, "Women in Iroquois Society", in *Iroquois Women: An Anthology*, ed. William G. Spittal (Ohsweken, Ont.: Irocrafts Ltd. Iroquis Publications, 1990), pp. 203-5.

Kahnawake, and he explained their special political powers.⁶⁷ He and his officers displayed a condescending attitude toward the political rights enjoyed by Iroquois women. European men and women of the time almost all believed that the female sex had no place in politics, and public disapproval of the real or perceived role of influential women at Louis XV's court in making appointments and political decisions fueled the creative imaginations of pamphleteers and amateur poets. Bougainville and Montcalm maintained a steady correspondance with their patroness Madame René Hérault de Séchelles, sister-in-law of the Minister of Marine, and when Bougainville was sent to France during the winter of 1758-1759 to plead for reinforcements or a diversion to reduce British military pressure on Canada, he concentrated his lobbying efforts as much on the Marquise de Pompadour and Madame Hérault de Séchelles as on the King's ministers. Nevertheless, while officers were interested and amused to discover that Iroquois women also had some political power, it is unlikely that they considered this role suited to most women. Matrilineal descent was a more widespread feature of native societies than female political power, and d'Aleynac discussed this custom and the woman's right to save prisoners for adoption.⁶⁸ *Matrilineal descent was considered as odd as women in politics.*

Rightly or wrongly, Montcalm's officers concluded that, on the whole, native women's social status was inferior to that enjoyed by Frenchwomen. Pouchot explained the privileges of Iroquois women in political decision-making, but added that among most tribes "The women think, as among the Turks, that they were created for the service of man, and to relieve them of their domestic cares."⁶⁹ He described how laborious female work was, and recounted how a hunter would return home and light up a pipe, and then, a short while later, tell his wife where

⁶⁷ Montcalm to Marquise de Saint-Véran, Montreal, 19 May 1756, NA MG18 K7, vol. 3, pp. 64-67.

⁶⁸ D'Aleynac. *Aventures militaires*, p. 40.

⁶⁹ Pouchot. *Memoir*, 2: 199-202.

he had shot an animal so that the woman could find the carcass in the woods and carry it home on her back.⁷⁰

The clerk-gunner in the colonial regulars, writing in the 1790's, supported this belief that Indian women had low status in society, and listed mistreatment of women and indulgence in liquor as the Indian male's most common vices. "Perhaps no nation in the world", he wrote, "scorns women more than the savages usually do."⁷¹ Bossu agreed that native women's lives were hard, and that they were never allowed in councils among most tribes, but he did not see them as especially downtrodden and admired many of their qualities. Only among the Natchez, the sole highly-organized, hierarchical, sun-worshipping culture in the region, did he note special status among some women, and this tribe had been destroyed in a war a few decades before his own arrival in Louisiana. Women who belonged to the ruling chief/priest class of Suns had established political power, and the mother of the Chief Sun had the right to review all important decisions made by the Suns. As among most Indian peoples, Bossu explained, Natchez descent was matrilineal, and women passed on noble status, not men. The father's identity was unimportant, and the fact that the last Chief Sun of the conservative Natchez was the offspring of a Frenchman made no difference to other tribal leaders or to his servile subjects.⁷²

Bossu strongly denied that Indian women's European reputation for wildness had any basis in fact. He admired their gentleness, industriousness, good sense, and respect for their husbands.⁷³ Like Franquet, Bossu was comfortable with the status of women in Indian societies, and thought that they were a model for Frenchwomen rather than vice versa. From these officers' point of view, it was perfectly normal for women to work hard to serve the needs of their

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 201.

⁷¹ J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 140, 144.

⁷² Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 41-42, 77, 140-44. Some ethnohistorians believe that other advanced cultures existed in the Mississippi basin in 1500, and that devastating epidemics caused depopulation and cultural retrogression in the region. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, pp. 209-15.

⁷³ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 77, 140, 164.

husbands and children. The weaker sex's subordination to their husbands was justified in the eyes of contemporaries by women's supposed need, as mothers and persons of lesser intellect, for protection and guidance. Canadian women and upper class Frenchwomen seemed to be forgetting their proper role in society, but the officers found it encouraging that at least Indian women followed the precepts of natural law. This contact with native women served to reinforce Bossu's and Franquet's traditional values, which Bossu, younger than the engineer, couched in Enlightenment terms.

In apparent contrast to this attitude, Bossu, a true disciple of the Enlightenment, showed considerable toleration for native sexuality and courtship and marriage practices. He explained that sexual freedom was normal in the stages prior to a formal marriage, but that sexual fidelity was the rule afterward. Marriages and separations occurred without ceremony or fuss, for marriages, "governed entirely by natural law, depend only on the consent of both parties."⁷⁴ Couples separated when they were no longer happy together, "claiming that marriage is a matter of love and mutual assistance."⁷⁵ Formal marriages were generally happy, Bossu believed, and divorce and polygamy were rare. In addition,

The Indian father, whose natural sentiment is not stifled by greed, ambition, or other well-known European characteristics, does not force his child to do things against his will. With natural understanding, which we would do well to imitate, children are married to those whom they love.⁷⁶

Women chose their formal husbands carefully because they had to be faithful to them, and adulterers of both sexes were punished by having their hair cut off, women also being beaten with switches. Premarital sex meant nothing, wrote Bossu, but he denied that this resulted in all young people being promiscuous. In native societies, he added, children cemented marriages and blood ties served to bind the community together. Bossu observed that these values made it customary

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

in many tribes for fathers to offer their daughters to visitors, especially to valued allies like the French. Chiefs appealed to young men to supply their French guests with game, and asked that "You girls, do not be hard or ungrateful. Offer your bodies to the white warriors so that we can have children of their blood. Through such an alliance, we shall have their intelligence, and we shall be feared by our enemies."⁷⁷ Bossu was convinced that the Indians observed natural law more closely than the French and were better for it. These rational natural laws, he thought, were essentially moral ones, and if the Indians had some barbarous and absurd customs, the French outdid them at every turn. The Indians were far from being lawless savages, he believed, for their humane unwritten laws were followed with more faithfulness than any royal statute.

Native marriage practices, which gave women greater freedom of choice than in France, appealed to Bossu, who shared a relatively popular belief among the educated classes that a father should never force a girl to marry against her will. It was normal among educated families that a daughter indicate her happiness with a prospective marriage candidate--on occasion she even played a role in choosing him--but she was often pressed to make a decision contrary to her natural preferences in order to advance family interests. Despite the futile efforts of a few isolated proto-feminists during the French Revolution, tradition would prevail until the twentieth century. Bossu did not necessarily advocate premarital sexual relations and informal marriages, but he did believe that freedom of choice permitted happiness and greater stability in a marriage. The Indians seemed to prove that happy marriages based on love virtually eliminated adultery, a vice almost institutionalized among the wealthier sectors of the nobility and bourgeoisie in France and Spain. Some people believed that the traditional sanctity of marriage could be revived if rationality and virtue were made compatible; indeed, this belief in rationality as a cure for society's ills and a means to increase happiness, was the chief principle of the Enlightenment.

Pouchot and the gunner in the colonial service knew the Indians as well as Bossu, but they painted a less rosy picture of Indian women's lives and marriages. The sexual freedom of native

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32.

girls often resulted in pregnancy, Pouchot stated, and these girls “were frequently subject to miscarriage.”⁷⁸ Indians knew methods of inducing abortions, but Pouchot does not make clear whether he believed that these miscarriages were natural or the result of human intervention. Also, if a temporary marriage broke up with the woman feeling bitter, she would sometimes neglect or even poison her child. Some tribes, Pouchot added, gave adulterous women draconian punishments. Among the Illinois, a husband had the right to bite his wife’s nose off, and among the Dakota, the offending woman was subjected to a communal male gang rape and then murdered. In addition, divorces often occurred when the husband grew bored with his wife.⁷⁹ The gunner explained that jealousy and suspicion within a marriage could also cause severe problems.⁸⁰ He and Pouchot described the courtship process in detail, and Pouchot explained how the woman always took the initiative at dances and on other occasions and could be very forward, while men were far more discreet because it was considered unmanly to pursue women.⁸¹ Pouchot had an unusually precise understanding of the different degrees of relationships among Indian couples, listing three types: “love in the ring”, which were liaisons after a dance or a present; trial marriages, when couples lived together for a few months; and legitimate marriages, which were usually arranged by the parents with the woman’s consent. Since there were no dowries and marriages brought hunters into the household, there was no particular disgrace in bearing daughters as well as warriors, however desirable the latter goal might be.⁸² Enlightenment writers and playwrights frequently criticized the French custom of arranging dowries, since financial and property settlements, it was argued, tended to undermine the happiness of marriages by placing a family’s economic and social goals ahead of the emotional satisfaction of the partners

⁷⁸ Pouchot, *Memoir.*, 2: 199.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 198, 201-2.

⁸⁰ J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 143.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44 and Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 195-98.

⁸² Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 198-99.

concerned. Pouchot was pleased by the absence of dowries in Indian societies, and thought that his countrymen should emulate the natives and abandon this custom so open to abuse.

Other French officers besides Pouchot who took part in the Seven Years' War had less favourable reactions to native sexual and marital customs. Unlike Pouchot, they failed to see the underlying morality of Indian societies, and adhered to a more traditional European perception of Indian cultures as lawless and immoral, making frequent references to native "libertinism" and its dangers for young Canadian males. While on trading voyages in the west, these young men met Indians who, in the words of naval ensign Louis-Guillaume de Parscau du Plessis, who anchored at Quebec in 1756, "debauched them and engaged them to run with them in the woods, and to live with them."⁸³ The Canadian traders' temporary marriages, made even when they had wives at home, did, he acknowledged, create close ties between Indians and the French. Nevertheless, Canadians should make certain that their legitimate white daughters did not follow the example of Indian maidens, who took as many lovers as they wanted before they married, obeying "the principle that all men are born free, a prerogative of which they are the most jealous."⁸⁴ The author implied that this principle was dangerous, for it naturally led to debauchery detrimental to the order and welfare of society. Citizens who led wastrel lives and gave vent to the full range of their passions could not be productive workers or raise hard-working children who would obey their parents, social superiors, and king. It is important to add, however, that Montcalm's officers were also attracted by the temptations of this sexual liberty. Although it is doubtful whether many officers became involved with Indian women, it is possible that Bougainville had a son by a woman of his adoptive tribe, the Kahnawake Iroquois, with whom he spent the spring of 1757.⁸⁵

⁸³ Louis-Guillaume de Parscau du Plessis, "Journal de la campagne de *la Sauvage* frégate du Roy, armée au port de Brest, au mois de mars 1756 (écrit pour ma dame)", *RAPQ* (1928-29): 225. See also Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1149.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁸⁵ In 1778 Bougainville's cousin Gérard claimed that Bougainville had married the daughter of Chief Onoraquete, who adopted the officer, and that Bougainville's Iroquois nephew was among three Indians

The Frenchmen were also interested in Indian child-rearing practices and education, which were based on completely different principles than prevalent European customs. The volunteer Duponceau met the Abenaki leader Niaman or Colonel Louis, who would later attend the Newport conference, at Valley Forge in the spring of 1778. Walking near camp, he was astonished to hear a powerful voice singing a popular French opera song, and he was even more surprised to learn that the singer was an Indian. Duponceau was greatly moved by the song, and thought that Niaman's voice was superior to anything he had heard at the Paris opera. The Abenaki, who was from Canada, praised the Jesuits for teaching him to read and write in French, and eagerly discussed politics. The young Frenchman bade the Abenaki farewell with great regret.⁸⁶ Duponceau was surprised by the Indians' musical and literary accomplishments, but there was no hint of racism in his attitude. The ties of language and culture bound him as closely to the native as to the American officers in Washington's army.

French officers during the Seven Years' War knew more about native education than either Rochambeau's officers or the volunteers. Parscau du Plessis noted that Indians never restrained their children and allowed them complete liberty, and although he did not elaborate on this statement, he took it for granted that his readers would find the practice absurd, for most Europeans believed that children required a structured, disciplined upbringing.⁸⁷ Franquet and Pouchot also observed that Indian parents showered their children with affection and gave them considerable independence, but Pouchot added that this did not mean that the children grew up spoiled and ill-mannered.⁸⁸ Pouchot described the process of raising children in relative detail.

who visited him on board the *Languedoc* in Boston harbour. Bougainville refers to the visit but only says that the Indian was the grandson of the chief who had adopted him. Canadians widely believed that Bougainville had an Indian son, and in 1811 a chief living near the mouth of the Ohio River claimed that the French officer was his father. Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 172 and de Mun, "Notice sur mon frère le Sauvage", BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 369.

⁸⁶ Duponceau, "Autobiography", *PMHB* 63 (1939): 222-23.

⁸⁷ Parscau du Plessis, "Journal". *RAPQ* (1928-29): 225.

⁸⁸ Franquet, *Voyages*, p. 80 and Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 193.

Mothers gave birth alone in the woods, standing and leaning on a bough and not making a sound, then carried the child back to the village. Although Pouchot might have taken this as a sign that Indians were biologically different from Europeans, he did not. Noting that Indian women were surprised when told that European women cried out from pain when delivering a baby, he implied that sophisticated Europeans might use some lessons in natural childbirth. Infants were nursed for as long as they wanted, and after the age of four or five were deliberately left virtually on their own, playing and weeping without their parents showing any concern. They were encouraged to behave properly by positive reinforcement, not by berating and physical abuse, and were allowed to satisfy their sexual curiosity without interference because parents believed "that everyone is the master of his or her person."⁸⁹ This did not prevent girls from being very decent in their bearing, he added.⁹⁰

Bossu had further insights into native child-rearing, and strongly approved of the way children were brought up. He praised Indian women for breastfeeding their own children, which they allegedly told him was an act of love, a bond between themselves and their husbands, and Bossu suggested that Frenchwomen abandon the common practice of farming out their babies to wetnurses, who fed and raised them, often without the least supervision by the natural mother.⁹¹ He recounted how in 1749 he saw a wetnurse carelessly drop a baby on the pavement, killing it instantly. His criticisms of mothers who did not breastfeed or raise their own children reflected ideas common in French literature from 1750, including works by Buffon in mid-century and by Rousseau in *Émile* (1762) a decade later.⁹² Unlike other officers, he believed that Indian children

⁸⁹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 193-95.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 196.

⁹¹ For French customs see Cissie C. Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies: Servants and Their Masters in Old Regime France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp. 193-228.

⁹² Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 10, *Rousseau and Revolution: A History of Civilization in France, England, and Germany from 1756, and in the Remainder of Europe from 1715, to 1789* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), pp. 179-80 and Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*, pp. 213-15.

had a highly structured and even severe upbringing. "The Indians", he wrote, "accustom their children to hardship early in life, because they love them."⁹³

The colonial gunner had similar observations on children and their education. Kindness was used to correct them, never threats, and children were shamed into good behaviour. Boys were encouraged to fight one another and revenge themselves, cultivating a desire for glory. "The only education children receive", explained the gunner, "is by having their mother and father tell the brave deeds of their ancestors and their tribe."⁹⁴ Pouchot also stressed the importance of oral history in native education, and told how the young people listened intently so that they could learn about politics and war. He praised their quick intelligence and excellent memory, even though "The Indians have but little knowledge"--a comment which Montcalm's officers also frequently made about Canadians. "Knowledge", of course, was information thought important by educated Europeans. Many Indians were "very stupid", he added, "but is this not so among our own peasantry?"⁹⁵ Pouchot did not suggest that Indians were fundamentally inferior to Europeans in intelligence, but he did believe that their abstract thinking was somewhat weaker because they were ignorant of philosophy. The Indians never thought at all about metaphysics or morals, he wrote, and when these ideas were explained to them they did not make "a very strong impression", the natives simply saying that "they do not have enough spirit to comprehend things which are only subjects of reasoning."⁹⁶ European writers had accused the Indians of lacking reason and only being able to live by instinct, like animals. This, of course, undermined their humanity and no less importantly their rights as individuals and sovereign nations. Pouchot, however, did not ascribe this supposed deficiency to the Indians' inferior intelligence, but to the simplicity of their technological and cultural milieu, which it seemed did not require philosophical

⁹³ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 100-101, 133-34, 170-71.

⁹⁴ J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 144-45.

⁹⁵ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 203, 253.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 223.

thinking. As the Indians became civilized, they would naturally acquire knowledge of metaphysics and other tools of urban-centred peoples.

Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, however, was more ambiguous in his assessment of Indian intelligence. Although in his stories set in Martha's Vinyard and Nantucket he told how the natives received a religious education and used Nattick Bibles and grammar books, he also mentioned Europeans' "superior genius" and natives' "inferior organs".⁹⁷ He implied that this European genius was primarily a cultural one which made them knowledgeable enough to defeat the Indians and subdue the continent, but was not completely clear on this point. Crèvecoeur neglected to really think out this question of intelligence, or else failed to come to any firm conclusions and therefore avoided the issue.

Other measures of civilization, for the Frenchmen, were the ways in which people interacted through social activities, cared for the sick and aged, and practiced their religion. Violent social activities, neglect of the weak, and bloodthirsty rituals before idols were perceived as clear signs of barbarism, while rational, humane forms of social interaction and worship which bound society together supported a different conclusion. French officers had low expectations of finding many positive aspects of Indian social life and organization, but those who learned more about the native peoples formed a generous opinion of the Indians, even if their impressions were partly based on illusion.

The most important native social activity discussed by visiting French officers was dancing. Rochambeau's officers considered Indian war dances strange and wild, and were struck by the Iroquois' chilling war cries.⁹⁸ Franquet attended several dances in Canada, and generally found them boring after a while--Blanchard compared their paces to peasants treading grapes on the

⁹⁷ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 104, 106-107, 156, 215-16.

⁹⁸ Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 123; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 38; Lauberdière, "Journal", BN N.A.F. 17691, fol. 18; and Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 221.

winepress--but sometimes quite spectacular, for he thought that the Indians' leaps and contortions outdid the performances of the acrobats of the Saint-Germain market and theatre dancers in Paris.⁹⁹ Bossu explained that there were dozens of dances, each to express a different type of occasion, such as peace, marriage, or death, and that they were very important to the Indians. Feasts, which were usually accompanied by dances, were also important occasions, and the Alabamas, for instance, held their principal feast after the harvest in July, when they dedicated food to the Great Manitou. Gambling, footraces, "a sort of tennis", and especially lacrosse were popular activities as well.¹⁰⁰ Bougainville recounted how 500 to 1500 Indians gathered at Détroit each year for footraces, and Pouchot and the gunner described in detail the natives' obsession with gambling. Frenchmen who were aware of the meanings of dances and how much Indians enjoyed sports and gambling--activities which had European parallels--were less likely to dismiss Indian culture as savage or incomprehensible.

For French officers, one of the most impressive aspects of Indian society was the way in which they took care of all members of the community. In France, orphans, illegitimate children, and the sick, elderly, and poor who did not have family members or relatives able to support them, faced dismal prospects, and the church's resources devoted to such aid fell far short of providing adequate services for all disadvantaged members of society. Bossu was touched by the loving care which Indians gave to the sick as well as their sincere grief when people died, and believed that this spirit of charity, "so rare among Europeans, is worthy of imitation."¹⁰¹ Elderly people were treated with care and respect, he reported, and when an old man felt that he was too invalid to retreat in times of danger, he would ask his son to club him to death, and the grieving son would comply out of filial duty.¹⁰² Pouchot was also impressed by the respect and obedience

⁹⁹ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 47-49, 106 and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁰ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 147, 169-70.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

shown toward the elderly, and wrote that young men would build cabins and chop wood for older people without being asked, while the latter sat quietly smoking.¹⁰³

While French officers mocked Indian medicine men for their spiritual healing practices, they took most native medical knowledge very seriously. Indeed, it is quite possible that many native medical practices were more effective than those found in the Old World. In the eighteenth century, Europeans had not yet assumed the arrogant attitude toward the medical practices of overseas cultures that they would demonstrate after the scientific breakthroughs of the following century. Captain Pouchot recounted with surprising hostility the antics of medicine men or "real charlatans", but admitted that they were experts on medicinal plants and that "It is at least certain that when they have any broken bones, no surgeon could treat them more surely, with less style or greater promptness."¹⁰⁴ They kept their medical remedies secret from Europeans, but Pouchot believed that it was important to learn them and suggested that the French bribe medicine men with gifts. The Indians, he added, could cure the most stubborn cases of venereal disease "without mercury", had no gout, rheumatism, or scurvy, and knew how to treat frostbite.¹⁰⁵ Bossu also disliked the "charlatans" so respected by the Indians, but grudgingly admitted that the medicine men knew a thousand excellent medicinal plants "good for purifying the blood" and curing wounds and other ailments; he recommended the remedies he knew, and praised the Indians' excellent physical fitness for contributing to good health. He also noted that medicine men were no less resourceful than French doctors when it came to finding excuses why they had failed to cure a patient or had even killed him. Bossu was immensely relieved when a medicine man used an antidote to prevent a French soldier, bitten by a poisonous snake, from dying. The captain rewarded the Indian handsomely, but reverted to his old prejudices when the man refused to

¹⁰³ Pouchot. *Memoir*, 2: 222-23.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2: 230.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2: 211, 215, 230-31.

reveal the ingredients of his secret antidote.¹⁰⁶ Pouchot and Bossu's dislike for medicine men stemmed not only from their lack of enthusiasm for doctors in general, but more importantly from their revulsion at the spiritual side of the healing activities. Strong believers in the scientific and rational nature of medicine, they considered spiritual healing a sham, no better than the French peasantry's superstitious medical beliefs. An element of subconscious anticlericalism, transferred from priest to shaman, may have also stimulated their prejudices.

The French visitors were mystified by the impact of European diseases on the Indians, and their comments tell us something about eighteenth-century ideas concerning differences between the races. Bougainville wrote that Indians lived as long as people in France and had fewer maladies, but were afflicted by the same venereal diseases and ravaged by smallpox.¹⁰⁷ This latter disease was important because the French considered it responsible for the absence of Indians during the campaign of 1758, with the result that the French regulars had to face a large British and American army at Fort Carillon without the aid of Indian scouts and raiding parties. A smallpox outbreak, Bougainville wrote, had killed many warriors belonging to the contingent from the far west, and the natives blamed the French for giving them this bad medicine with their food supplies.¹⁰⁸ Disease may have been a factor in keeping the Indians away, but native anger at the French for trying to prevent them from carrying off paroled prisoners from the garrison of Fort William Henry in 1757 probably had an even greater role in their decision. Bossu considered smallpox and the murderousness of Indian warfare the two main causes of aboriginal demographic decline, but he noted that Europeans had contracted syphilis from the Indians and suffered in turn. Although his theory that Indian slaves had become infected with the disease through exposure to sulphurous fumes in Caribbean gold mines and passed it on to their Spanish

¹⁰⁶ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 167-68, 196, 200-201.

¹⁰⁷ Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, pp. 196-216.

¹⁰⁸ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 69 and Bougainville to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, Montreal, 17 June 1758, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 239.

masters was inaccurate, it is possible that the disease was native to the Americas.¹⁰⁹ Significantly, Bossu thereby absolves the Indians of responsibility for the disease and blames it on the Spaniards, a European people.¹¹⁰ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur discussed disease among the Indians in the northern colonies, and believed that the Indians suffered from three curses they had obtained from Europeans: smallpox, rum, and "a sort of physical antipathy", which consisted of "particular fevers, to which they were strangers before, and sinking into a singular sort of indolence and sloth."¹¹¹ In eighteenth-century medical parlance, the Indians had somehow been affected by bad humours which unbalanced their health and led to physical and mental decline sometimes ending in death. Crèvecoeur probably mistook the despair of survivors of defeated, demographically-declining nations for symptoms of disease. Today people would distinguish between a physical health problem and a mental one, but in the eighteenth century these problems were considered to have similar or identical sources in the body's constitution. Crèvecoeur noted that in 1763 over half of the Indians on Nantucket had died from "a strange fever, which the Europeans who nursed them never caught; they appear to be a race doomed to recede and disappear before the superior genius of the Europeans."¹¹² Here, for once, Crèvecoeur vaguely implied that the Indians were biologically as well as culturally less virile than Europeans, but he declined to make explicit conclusions because he was unable to define the differences between the two races. Some contemporary theorists did state that certain races were inferior to others, but there was a consensus that this was largely a result of climatic differences. This meant that if anyone was undergoing transformations in their physical constitution in North America, it should be the European settlers or their black slaves, not the Indians.

¹⁰⁹ Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, p. 107.

¹¹⁰ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 14, 133-34.

¹¹¹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 105-106.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 106. See *Ibid.*, p. 139 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 70-71 for his comments on the success of Indian remedies used by American colonists.

Montcalm's officers were rarely as positive about Indians as the writer Lahontan or the missionaries Lafitau and Charlevoix, perhaps because their contact with Indians was generally limited to warriors. Their views more closely approximated those of Samuel de Champlain, who showed considerable respect for natives, but pitied them for their poverty and ignorance of Christianity and civilization.¹¹³ Lahontan, a Frenchman in the colonial regulars a half century earlier, used Indians in an aggressive attack on French society and Roman Catholicism, while Lafitau compared them to the ancient Greeks and other early Europeans, supposedly proving that Indians were originally from Eurasia. Charlevoix was the best of these three writers in terms of explaining native society as it actually was.

Although many French officers during the War of American Independence period were prejudiced against Indians, none of them used the racist terminology of the Dutch writer Pauw, who published a book criticizing the Americas for its unhealthy climate, which caused animals and humans to degenerate. According to Pauw, Indians were "like a degenerate species of human being, cowardly, powerless, without physical force, vigour, elevation of the spirit", ugly, hairless people who lacked strong nerves, which meant that they were unaffected by any passion--hence their demographic decline for lack of a sexual drive--and were indifferent to torture or even life itself.¹¹⁴ Nor were officers in accord with the extremely objective views of Raynal, who used Charlevoix and other dependable sources, for although a number of the visitors read Raynal, his observations were obviously not enough to overcome ethnocentric biases and American opinions once officers actually came into contact with Indians.¹¹⁵ The presence of a handful of Montcalm's

¹¹³ Lahontan, *Voyages*, 1: 34, 2: 94-151, 197-200; Joseph-François Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1974), 1: 29, 46, 79-81; Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *History and General Description of New France*, 6 vols., ed. and trans. John G. Shea (London: Francis Edwards, 1902; Chinard, *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique*, pp. 313-40; and Baudet, *Paradise on Earth*, pp. 34-37, 50.

¹¹⁴ Pauw, *Recherches philosophiques*, 1: xi-xii, 12, 37, 42, 71-73. Buffon discussed the degeneration theory in relation to American animals, but Pauw carried the idea much further. Echeverria, *Mirage in the West* pp. 7-8.

¹¹⁵ Raynal, *Histoire philosophique*, pp. 302-34.

veteran officers in Rochambeau's army also had little or no effect on the attitudes of the second group of officers; their complete lack of knowledge about Indians indicates that they were virtually blank slates in this respect. In any case, for the most part Montcalm's officers did not greatly differ from Rochambeau's in their assessments of natives.

French officers who understood what Indian dances and ceremonies meant and enjoyed watching native sports developed more toleration for Indian cultures, but their awareness of the native peoples' scrupulous and affectionate care for the sick and elderly was even more effective in demonstrating that Indians, while less technologically advanced than Europeans, were not barbarians. Anarchic, depraved savages would not show such a high degree of social consciousness, and this realization helped to undermine the image of Indians most predominant among newly-arrived French officers. Similarly, the effectiveness of Indian medicine obliged Europeans to develop more respect for the Indians.

Rochambeau's officers, like other fresh arrivals, were completely ignorant of native spiritual beliefs, and only knew that the local Indian peoples were pagans, with the exception of a few converted by Christian missionaries. When Admiral d'Estaing visited Newport in 1778, he was introduced to some Roman Catholic Indians and organized a mass which they greatly enjoyed. In the spring of that same year, at Valley Forge, the Kahnawake Mohawk chief Atayataghronghtha informed the volunteer Duponceau that Louis was his baptismal name. The Mohawk maintained that he was "a good Christian and a good Catholic", and spoke of the Jesuits with great respect.¹¹⁶ Catholic Iroquois from Kahnawake were present in Newport in 1780, and Charlus wrote that they "loved church ceremonies", and that some were even "very devoted", but he was sceptical that they were sophisticated enough to understand the theological basis of Catholicism.¹¹⁷ This condescending attitude was not necessarily a purely racial slur, for he might

¹¹⁶ Duponceau, "Autobiography", *PMHB* 63 (1939): 222.

¹¹⁷ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fols. 220-21.

have said the same about French peasants. For political reasons as much as spiritual ones, the French furnished the Catholic Iroquois with a Capuchin priest who was serving as a chaplain on board one of the naval vessels.¹¹⁸

One of the French officers most favourable to Indians during the War of American Independence period was the naval ensign Lannoy, who helped to capture the Hudson Bay forts in 1782. It is significant that he had native customs explained to him by an educated English prisoner who was very sympathetic toward the Indians, the explorer and Hudson's Bay Company employee Samuel Hearne.

Mr. Hearne, commander of the fort, an infinitely well-educated man and who speaks their language very well, assured me that the Indians have no religion but natural law: they are charitable to each other and each family nourishes those to whom nature has refused the faculties to provide for themselves.¹¹⁹

It would be difficult to find a better statement of the Enlightenment concept of the noble savage, living according to the rational dictates of nature. Perhaps if officers in the United States had been introduced to Indians by Samuel Hearne, they might have had a slightly better opinion of them.

The secular-minded engineer Franquet, inspecting fortifications in Canada in 1752, visited Kahnawake, opposite Montreal, and attended a service there. He was very impressed by the Indians' orderly religious conduct, but was critical of many aspects of their mission establishment. All of his comments about the Catholic church and religion in general were tinged with suspicion and anticlericalism, and he perceived ulterior motives behind any manifestation of religion. Although his sentiments may have been partly designed to feed the prejudices of the minister to whom he was reporting, there is no doubt that his feelings were genuine. Franquet was convinced that the Kahnawake Iroquois had come to Montreal from the Mohawk and other Iroquois villages not because of religion, as they claimed, but out of self-interest, and were only attached to

¹¹⁸ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 61. 63.

¹¹⁹ Lannoy, "Mémorial". *Carnet de la sabretache* 2d ser. 3 (1904): 754.

Catholicism as far as their interests dictated. He also thought that the Hurons who came from the Détroit area to join their countrymen at Lorette were lying when they claimed that they had made the move for religious reasons. If he considered the Indians religious hypocrites, however, he concluded that the missionaries were even worse. Knowing that their missionary effort had failed, he claimed, they issued wildly exaggerated accounts of the number of converts they had made and concentrated on squeezing profits out of their mission seigneuries. They persuaded the Indians to build European-style houses, then, when the Indians made one of their occasional moves to a new site, the clever priests, who had anticipated the move, eagerly sought out more productive Canadian *cessitaires* to take over the houses and fields on terms advantageous to the church. Franquet was obliged to admit that the Kahnawake Indians were at least outwardly very devoted Christians, and that the orderly female choirs presented some of the most exquisite singing he had ever heard. He was annoyed, however, when at a celebration at Lorette the priest intervened to prevent the waiting Huron women from dancing when the men were done, overriding the wishes of the Governor-General himself. For Franquet, this was yet another example of the clergy's petty tyranny and excessive power vis-à-vis the state.¹²⁰

Many of Montcalm's officers visited the missions when they arrived in Canada a few years later. Pouchot was as critical as Franquet about the success of the mission effort, but had no vendetta against the church. In his opinion, Indians who were too lazy to hunt lived in the mission villages, and few of them stayed. Men, he wrote, would often flee to avoid living with wives they did not love, since divorce was forbidden by the priests. Few of the remaining residents converted, and they drank and had more vices than non-Christian Indians "less exposed to the contagion" of European materialism. The converts were more humane than non-Christian Indians, he believed, and were attached to the French through their common faith, but their small numbers were evidence of the natives' indifference to Catholicism. The Indians listened politely to the priests, he added, whom they greatly respected because they were believed to devote all

¹²⁰ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 37, 44, 49-50, 104-107.

of their time to the worship of the "Supreme Being", but did not follow the clergymen's teachings. The Indians were not fanatical about religion, for although they had martyred some missionaries, "this was never because [the Indians] hated their dogmas, but because they regarded them as belonging to a hostile nation."¹²¹ Pouchot had a reasonably accurate understanding of some basic native spiritual beliefs, but was hampered by his monotheistic conception of religion. He described their belief in a world of spirit forces part of a greater spirit as a pantheon of gods or manitous subordinate to a Supreme Being which they called "Master of Life". They paid no homage to the Master of Life, Pouchot explained, although they believed that they were subject to a fate which he determined. Their only religious practices, he stated, consisted of gifts to placate the minor Manitous, and he discussed the superstitions of the "Jugglers" or "real charlatans" who were their medicine men. Indians did not fear death, believing that they simply travelled to a new and better life in a country across the sea, which they called the great lake.¹²²

Other French officers were aware of some native spiritual beliefs, especially the natives' faith in dreams. These dreams were important to officers because they often affected military operations. If a member of a war party dreamt that anyone in the party would be killed during the raid, the operation was cancelled and the Indians would return to camp or, even worse, return home. D'Aleynac discussed dreams and manitous, and listed the Master of Life, the moon, and the sun as the the Indians' chief deities. Anyone with a smattering of classical education could understand the worship of a pantheon of gods and minor spirits, and indeed all so-called savages were expected to follow this pattern of religious belief.¹²³

Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, Bossu, and the gunner in the colonial regulars all stressed the importance of the Great Spirit, which they identified as synonymous with God. The gunner called the Great Spirit "the Great Spirit of God", superior to other manitous, and Bossu, who

¹²¹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 224-26.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 2: 226-32.

¹²³ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 38.

lived among the sun-worshipping Louisianian tribes, wrote that the Indians "believe that the Supreme Being lives in the sun and wants to be worshipped in this life-giving star as Author of Nature."¹²⁴ Crèvecoeur went a short step beyond this by equating the Great Spirit with his own deistic conception of God:

The Supreme Being does not reside in peculiar churches or communities; he is equally the great Manitou of the woods and of the plains; and even in the gloom, the obscurity of these very woods, his justice may be as well understood and felt as in the most sumptuous temples.¹²⁵

In his opinion, the Indians' religious beliefs and the American frontier farmer's simple faith were essentially identical. Crèvecoeur frequently stressed a link between members of all religions, citing a common belief in God as a basis for tolerating all Christian denominations and non-Christians alike. This plea for toleration reinforced his positive and often idealized picture of Indians, whom he portrayed as living in spiritual and secular purity in the shelter of nature. Christianity, for Crèvecoeur, was chiefly a corrupting influence on the natives, and he believed that missionaries were useless, for they preached a gospel which the Indians could not understand. At the same time, however, he praised the civilization and strict Christianity of the Indian fishermen and whalers on Nantucket.¹²⁶ For Crèvecoeur, this was no contradiction: the simple life, industry, and worship of the remoter Indians corresponded to the uncomplicated daily life and moral code of the honest American farmer and sedentary Nantucket Indians, while excessive sloth and indulgence in materialism, practiced by depraved and poverty-stricken frontiersmen, corrupted Indians, and the rich and poor of Europe, was the opposite of this virtuous existence. As an amateur *philosophe*, Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur went far beyond most of his pragmatic military colleagues in his support for the literary idea of the noble savage. At the same time,

¹²⁴ J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 150 and Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 30, 60. For further observations on Natchez sun worship and other Indian spiritual beliefs see Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 31-33, 105, 109-12, 145, 147, 166-69.

¹²⁵ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 227.

¹²⁶ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 104, 107, 216, 223.

however, he differed from the vast majority of literary advocates of the noble savage in that he actually lived with and knew the people he was idealizing.

Other native cultural values affected French perceptions of North American Indians. Among these were industriousness and attitudes toward wealth, both values which were central to European culture. Many officers who knew little about Indians, such as Rochambeau's aide Lauberdière, considered them "lazy", for they believed that the Indians had no fixed homes and lived primarily by hunting.¹²⁷ Hunting, in their eyes, was an activity which had no relation to true productivity, which centred on agriculture and manufacturing. It did not produce the surplus of wealth which was the basis of civilized society.¹²⁸ For most Europeans, the Indians' lack of interest in constant effort to produce a surplus was a sign of sloth. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, however, believed that Indians were generally industrious, but had no interest in riches and property; instead, they lived with ease and led happy, contented existences despite the lack of so many of the material comforts which educated Europeans valued so highly. They readily opened their homes to visitors and were willing, he claimed, to share their land with people they considered friends.¹²⁹ Bossu reinforced this impression, writing that the Indians never intrigued to gain riches, but scorned those who led dissolute, wasteful lives and did not contribute to the well-being of their family and community. War chiefs gave away all booty to their warriors and the relatives of those who had been killed, never seeking any reward except honour. Natchez Suns, Bossu alleged, complained that European goods were useless luxuries which corrupted the nation's youth, and they had considered this corruption an additional reason for war with the French.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Lauberdière, "Journal", BN N.A.F. 17691, fol. 18.

¹²⁸ Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, p. 84.

¹²⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 53, 215, 219-20 and *Sketches*, p. 209. See also Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 203.

¹³⁰ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 39, 146, 164.

At Newport some German-speaking officers of the Régiment Royal Deux-Ponts spoke with a German named Frey, who had lived with the Iroquois ever since he left the British army in 1758. When they asked whether he wished to return to his native country, they were surprised when Frey replied that among the Iroquois he was a free man living among people who loved him and that he had no desire to return to a country where he would be a slave.¹³¹ The German and Swiss officers could not fully understand why he would want to live among poverty-stricken "savages", and as noblemen or patricians were annoyed by the fact that a commoner would imply that there was something wrong with the social system of the old country.

Franquet and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur also wondered why some Europeans were so attracted by the native lifestyle, as demonstrated by the large number of American children and young adults who were captured and adopted by the Indians and refused to go home, preferring life with their adoptive families.¹³² Listing the captive's motives, most prominently their freedom and easy existence, Crèvecoeur explained how they preferred a life "of which we entertain such dreadful opinions":

It cannot be, therefore, so bad as we generally conceive it to be; there must be in their social bond something singularly captivating, and far superior to anything to be boasted of among us; for thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those Aborigines having from choice become Europeans!¹³³

He suggested that their lifestyle, the way they "take life as it comes, bearing all its asperities with unparalleled patience" and faced death without fear of what they had done or the hereafter, outdid any system of philosophy in providing for human happiness.¹³⁴ Pouchot also discussed this characteristic of the aboriginal mentality. In his opinion, once an Indian had eaten, he quietly

¹³¹ Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 39 and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, p. 123.

¹³² See James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 302-27.

¹³³ Franquet, *Voyages*, p. 38 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 214-15 and *Sketches*, pp. 194-95.

¹³⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 216.

nothing, and exhibits an extreme tranquility and patience which makes him appear melancholy."¹³⁵ The Indian male, wrote Pouchot,

has no proper idea of what we call *ambition*...his only aspiration being to be thought a great hunter and a formidable man, who has killed many people. If a European undertakes to recount the power of the king of France or of England, he listens very attentively to what they say, and then will ask very coolly: "Is he a good hunter?--has he killed many enemies?" If they assure him that he has been to war, and that he fires well, "Oh!" he cries, "That's a man!"¹³⁶

As Bossu commented, "The only arts that interest the Indians are medicine, war, hunting, and fishing."¹³⁷ In a sense, French officers understood and admired these values because war and the hunt were the nobility's most traditional activities. At the same time, however, as products of eighteenth-century French civilization, they saw war as an unfortunate part of life, undertaken by the monarch in the interest of state and society. The Indians were thought to begin wars for trivial reasons and then indulge in unnecessary and irrational slaughter. And hunting, meanwhile, contributed nothing to the state or the well-being of a civilized society. These beliefs, less pronounced among officers who knew the Indians well and had a degree of sympathy for their way of life, helped to undermine the Frenchmen's respect for native cultures. A fundamental cultural gap existed between the two groups, for stone age peoples and members of a highly complex civilization were attempting to understand one another. Leaping across the mental chasm between their two worlds was not a simple process for either side.

Despite different perceptions of Indians among the different groups of officers, which ranged from pity and disgust to a degree of admiration and even affection, almost all agreed that it was necessary and desirable to "civilize" the Indians.¹³⁸ This process was not only designed to prevent the Indians from being an actual or potential threat to the interests of European colonial

¹³⁵ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 219.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 219-20.

¹³⁷ Bossu, *Travels*, p. 133.

¹³⁸ For Jesuit and Puritan efforts to Christianize and Europeanize the Indians see Axtell, *Invasion Within*, pp. 59-69, 133-36, 167-75.

powers, but to benefit the Indians themselves. No matter how closely Indian tribes were allied to the French, and how much officers liked these peoples, the Frenchmen remained suspicious of these nations' loyalty and advocated bringing them under further French control.

Most line officers during both wars took it for granted, like Blanchard in the 1780's, that the Indian peoples were an obstacle to settlement and had to be subjugated.¹³⁹ Franquet, whose task during the early 1750's was to judge how well Canada's forts could withstand attacks from all potential foes, was suspicious that someday France's closest native allies might turn against the French, and like Pouchot, who commanded Fort Niagara after the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, advocated further measures to attract Indian peoples to settle close to the French in order to weaken their power and gradually assimilate them into the Canadian population.¹⁴⁰ Ultimately, they realized, the Indian peoples perceived themselves as independent nations and placed their own interests ahead of those of the King of France. Among the mission Indians, there were some signs that the assimilation process was taking place, and d'Aleynac, one of Pouchot's fellow officers, wrote that the Hurons of Lorette were the most gallicized Indians and the strongest Catholics, to the extent that two or three Huron men had Canadian wives.¹⁴¹ In his opinion, the cultural changes taking place, including intermarriage between the French and Indians, were positive ones. His colleagues in Montcalm's line regiments would have agreed that gallicizing the Indians was an excellent policy, even if many of them might have shown less enthusiasm about interracial intermarriage.

The anonymous colonial gunner, writing in the 1790's, believed that "The process of civilization will be long and difficult", for the Indians generally lived far away from the European settlers and enjoyed "unhampered freedom" and independence. Missionaries, he stated, had failed to gain more than a negligible number of converts. Nevertheless, he added, the British in

¹³⁹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁰ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 59-60, 111, 121 and Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 236.

¹⁴¹ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 27.

Canada and the Americans could be far more successful in their Indian policies if they ceased to be dishonest in their dealings and brought the Indians closer to inhabited areas, where they could be given farm allotments and the necessary tools and supplies for cultivating their land. The Europeans could also trade for the Indians' surplus food and furs. He readily admitted that an element of compulsion might be necessary to keep order and make the Indians aware of civilized laws, and advocated the stationing of police in each village. It was better to give the Indians land allotments, the gunner concluded, than to drive them out, for this only perpetuated a pattern of repeated violent confrontations between the settlers and Indians.¹⁴²

Most Frenchmen believed that transforming Indians into Europeans was a desirable goal for European governments and beneficial for the natives themselves. None of them could really escape the belief that the Indians would benefit from having their standard of living raised, a goal which could only be accomplished by transforming the natives' social and economic lifestyle. They also implied that if persuasion failed, a degree of coercion might be necessary to force the Indians to become civilized. Even Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who was fully aware of what had happened to the Indians of New England, praised the benefits that civilization had conferred upon many of the survivors, who exactly resembled their American neighbours in manners, dress, occupation, and religion. The Europeans, he explained, had ended the Indians' senseless, internecine wars and brought them the benefits of peace.

French officers dispatched to North America during both wars arrived there without a firm image of the continent's aboriginal inhabitants. They unanimously rejected the ideal of the "noble savage", expecting to find people with the same collection of positive and negative human characteristics as anywhere else. If anything, they tended to have excessively low expectations of Indians, believing that they would meet poor, ignorant, irrational, and sporadically violent savages. By and large, line officers who had limited contact with Indians, such as those with Rochambeau, had their negative image of Indians confirmed. The almost naked Indian warriors,

¹⁴² J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 136-37.

bedecked in paint and animal ornaments, seemed, despite their fine physique and bearing, pathetic and rather repulsive. The *philosophe* Chastellux concluded that the natives were brutes, not paragons of virtue, and confirmed his own view that European idealizations of Indians and Quakers were not based on fact. He was a strong supporter of the idea of progress during the course of history--in other words, civilization.¹⁴³ French volunteers with the American army had even more violently negative reactions thanks to their involvement in the Americans' traditional struggle against the Indian nations. Officers serving under the Marquis de Montcalm found themselves allies of the Indians, knew them for much longer period than officers with Rochambeau, and were introduced to them by Canadians who often spoke native languages and were intimately acquainted with these cultures. They were generally not very enthusiastic about the Indians, but at least came to recognize that the natives had good qualities and were not complete barbarians.

Other officers such as Bougainville, d'Aleyrac, and Pouchot realized that the Indians were not primitive subhumans but people with special customs and values. Indian warriors reminded Bougainville of the heroes of the *Illiad* and *Odyssey*, but he admired them without idealizing them.¹⁴⁴ He showed a similar attitude when he visited Tahiti in the late 1760's, praising many aspects of Polynesian culture but not hiding the fact that the Tahitians had the same foibles as other peoples, waging senseless wars and obeying the whims of despotic kings. Bougainville prided himself on being a realist, and in the preface to his account of his circumnavigation of the world he ridiculed the prevalent *esprit de système* or doctrinaire theorizing and "that class of lazy and vainglorious writers, who, in the darkness of their studies, philosophize without seeing the world and its inhabitants, and imperiously submit nature to their imagination."¹⁴⁵ He was deliberately anti-Rousseauian, and in describing the inhabitants of Tahiti during the late 1760's

¹⁴³ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 207-9.

¹⁴⁴ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 66.

¹⁴⁵ Chinard, *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique*, pp. 374-82 and Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde*, p. 46.

he employed the classical, pastoral vocabulary of Virgil, an author he had studied during his youth, and ignored the theories of many of the contemporary authors he had also read.¹⁴⁶ Bougainville's fellow-officer Captain Pouchot expressed disappointment that Europeans had come among the Indians and inflicted such devastating cultural and economic changes on these peoples, and wondered whether Indians were better off without Europeans and their goods. He concluded that more than any person in the world, the Indian, materially content and unrestrained by written laws, "appears to be indeed free."¹⁴⁷ Pouchot believed that Indians were happier when they followed their traditional way of life, yet he advocated that they be attracted closer to the French and civilized because he felt that this was in the interest of the French state and because if the French did not attach the Indians to them politically, economically, and culturally, the English would accomplish this in an even more brutal manner. Always the realist, Pouchot did not pursue the full range of theoretical possibilities because he sensed that it was pointless. Bossu, like Pouchot, admired the harmony and basic decency of native societies, and questioned whether the label "savage" was appropriate for them.¹⁴⁸ These two officers' literary treatment of Indians as normal, likeable people was similar to that of Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who differed principally in his occasional literary tendency to portray his subjects in black and white, for instance, contrasting good Indians with other native groups which were supposedly bad and corrupt. Crèvecoeur praised the Indians' "uncontaminated simple manners", which substituted for the law statutes required in more complex societies, and their lives of "ease, decency, and peace".¹⁴⁹ He also pondered the virtues of natural versus civilized man:

Would you prefer the state of man in the woods, to that of man in a more improved situation? Evil preponderates in both; in the first they often eat each other for want of

¹⁴⁶ Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁴⁷ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 218. For earlier French views on assimilation see Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, pp. 153-55.

¹⁴⁸ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 56-57, 93.

¹⁴⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 211.

food, and in the other they often starve each other for want of room. For my part, I think the vice of miseries to be found in the latter exceed those of the former, in which real evil is more scarce, more supportable, and less enormous.¹⁵⁰

Most officers would not have agreed with him because they were convinced to a greater or lesser degree that civilization elevated the mind and improved people's quality of life. A small minority shared Crèvecoeur's sentiments, but like him were unable to consider such an existence a realistic long-term alternative for North America's aboriginal inhabitants.

French officers who served in North America rarely shared the extreme theories of many French writers regarding the virtue or depravity of Indian peoples, but their observations on Indian social customs and religious values were certainly affected by European images of primitive, non-Christian peoples. Their two main images both had deep, pre-Enlightenment roots in the European past. The first was that of the noble savage living in a golden age of innocence and virtue amid the bounties of nature. The second image was one of the savage barbarian who revelled in anarchy and violence. During the Enlightenment, Voltaire championed the benefits of reason and civilization while Rousseau stressed the virtue of conscience and the simple life, so the image of the noble savage is more closely associated with the latter figure.

The vast majority of officers during both the 1750's and 1780's had low expectations of Indian virtues, and newly-arrived Frenchmen tended to be critical of natives. Both groups disembarked armed primarily with the mental image of the Caribbean cannibal, although Rochambeau's officers in particular were also aware of a more flattering ideal, even if they were not inclined to place much stock in it. Their predominant sentiment on first meeting Indians was a mixture of fear, pity, and disgust. There was no question in these officers' minds that advanced civilization was vastly preferable to any alternative, and that there was no such thing as people living in a virtuous state of nature; rather, primitive people lived in misery and depravity. Rochambeau's officers tended to have little sympathy for Indians, and Montcalm's officers were

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

little different, even though they had more contact with Indian warriors and were introduced to Indians by Canadians, who tended to have a somewhat more objective view of native peoples than Americans at this time. Both groups of officers saw Indians in a military rather than a social context, and few peoples can be genuinely liked for the way they destroy their enemies. As far as most of the Frenchmen were concerned, the more quickly Indians were Europeanized, the happier and more virtuous they would be.

Nevertheless, a smaller group of officers from both periods, but especially the 1750's, had a more balanced view of Indians, although sometimes they were guilty of idealizing them.¹⁵¹ These men knew Indians better, and realized that despite the natives' unique customs and behaviour, their underlying human emotions and instincts were typical of people everywhere. This realization prevented either an extreme idealization of native societies or an arrogant dismissal of their cultures. Detailed experience of native village life--apart from the horrors of war--made it easier for them to analyze native social customs and relate them to a broad range of Enlightenment ideals.

A glance at the views of French officers from both periods makes it clear that the concept of the noble savage was well established by 1750. Individuals either demonstrated that a virtuous people could exist or pointed out that Europeans were misled in believing in such a concept. Rousseau's promotion of simple, harmonious, yet civilized societies from the end of the Seven Years' War had a very subtle effect on French officers of the War of American Independence period, but this is more evident from their observations on Americans than their views on Indians. Rochambeau's officers rejected the concept of the noble savage, but they were more favourable to the idea that a "simple" but civilized society presented the best chance of achieving human happiness. Montcalm's officers also largely rejected the concept of the noble savage, but their

¹⁵¹ For a French civilian admirer of Indians see Louis Le Clerc de Milfort, *Memoirs or a Cursory Glance at My Different Travels and My Sojourn in the Creek Nation*, ed. John F. McDermott, trans. Geraldine De Courcy (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1956). Le Clerc de Milfort was a young tourist who walked into the wilderness and lived among the Creeks from 1775 until 1795. During the War of American Independence he led parties of Creeks on raids against the American Patriots, but when the French joined the war he advocated Creek neutrality.

ideal was more sharply in favour of full civilization, mirroring Voltaire's perspective. These similarities and differences between officers of the 1750's and 1780's, in particular with regard to the ideas of more intellectual officers, indicate that Enlightenment thought was having some impact on the officer corps. But in the case of the noble savage, at least, perceptions underwent little change over time.

CHAPTER 4

FRENCHMEN, INDIANS, AND THE PARAMETERS OF CIVILIZATION

French officers observed native societies in order to satisfy a natural curiosity about cultures that were so different from their own. Most of these Frenchmen, however, considered social and religious matters to be secondary, for as military men, their central interest lay in assessing the Indian nations' economic, political, and military potential. Most French officers, whether in the 1750's or the 1780's, perceived Indians as either instruments of French power, to be used and discarded at the dictates of the French state, or as obstacles to French interests that had to be overcome. Many officers visiting North America during the 1770's and 1780's perceived the rebelling American colonists in much the same way, but cultural links between the French and the English-speaking peoples tended to introduce a more personal element into the relationship. No special cultural links tied the French to the Indians, however, and on an emotional level most line officers remained relatively indifferent toward the Indians.

Assessing the power of Indian nations demanded some knowledge of human geography, including demographics, settlement patterns, and communications. It also required an awareness of native economic activities and the ideological and economic bases of aboriginal social structure. The political constitution of native societies was equally important, for it determined the distribution of power in society, the ways in which political decisions were made, including foreign policy decisions, and the extent to which human and economic resources could be mobilized for war. Political power also affected the nature of military leadership and organization

as well as morale, while demographics, communications, and technology had an impact on tactics and military effectiveness.

French officers concluded that native societies were very unsophisticated. They were not impressed by the fact that Indian nations often consisted of a mere few hundred individuals in a handful of small villages and could muster a single battalion's worth of warriors. Indians produced little besides food for personal consumption and furs, and as a result Europeans did not consider the natives a profitable target for conquest and subsequent economic exploitation. Officers also considered the natives' egalitarian social structure and political system to be primitive because it did not provide the social, economic, and military organization thought necessary for a civilized society. These factors suggested that the Indian nations were essentially poverty-stricken and unorganized, with little claim to sovereignty over their land or resources.

The singular effectiveness of Indian warriors in wilderness warfare, all out of proportion to their numbers, however, made them formidable allies and opponents. In the North American wilderness--essentially most of the continent--they were superb scouts and guerilla fighters, and under the right conditions could annihilate superior forces of European troops. But since the tactical requirements of an army differed according to the geography of the campaign area and the nature of its opponents, the Indians' military importance for the French army was not constant, and this affected perceptions of the Indian warrior. In campaigns where irregular tactics appropriate for warfare in dense forest were in little demand, French officers tended to have less respect for their native allies and were more inclined to dismiss native culture in general. The cruelty of native warfare added another dimension to the problem, for anger at aboriginal military customs harmed French perceptions of native irregulars even when irregulars were in high demand. French officers in the colonial regulars embraced irregular tactics and greatly admired native warriors, but during the Seven Years' War, as campaigns evolved towards conventional confrontations between regular troops, Montcalm's men in the line regiments experienced increasing disillusionment with Indians. Rochambeau's Yorktown campaign did not

call for irregular tactics, and this led French officers of the 1780's to dismiss the Indians as tactically irrelevant and militarily useless.

All of these factors, together with officers' observations on social and religious values discussed in the previous chapter, help to form an idea of what French officers of the second half of the eighteenth century considered a "civilized" nation. If there were many differences between groups of French officers on social matters, there was more of a consensus when it came to economic, political, and military issues. When various circumstantial differences between the two groups--some of which are significant in themselves--are cancelled out, it is evident that even the officers most sympathetic to Indians believed that natives would benefit from the exchange of nomadic hunting for advanced agriculture in fixed settlements, a more centralized, authoritative government, and paradoxically, greater humanity toward captured soldiers and civilians in tandem with more intensive, systematic campaigning in which even higher levels of destruction could be expected.

There were some subtle differences between the more sympathetic observers of the two periods. During the 1750's officers expressed few reservations when advocating that Indians should be Europeanized as quickly as possible. While most officers of the 1770's and 1780's held the same views, a small minority placed limits on the extent to which natives should be civilized. In their opinion, Indians should become sufficiently civilized to lead comfortable, stable, and happy lives and leave behind their vices, yet not become too civilized, for this would corrupt them. The search for a happy medium reflects the influence of the concept of the noble savage, but more importantly the simple, virtuous, civilized life advocated by Rousseau. Despite the avowed pragmatism of French officers, the evolving ideas of the Enlightenment were present in this predominantly noble institution. This will become more evident when observations on Canadians and Americans are brought into the picture in later chapters, for these peoples lay closer to the ideal of a Rousseauian society with Voltairian arts and amenities added.

This chapter will employ a more chronological approach than the preceding one. In each succeeding section, Montcalm's officers will be followed by the volunteers and Rochambeau's men, and after this discussion of line officers, the ideas of colonial regulars will be examined.

European officers found the sparseness of human geography in regions occupied by North America's aboriginal inhabitants significant in itself. Indian peoples made little impression on geography because their populations were small and declining, villages were decreasing in number, and native mesolithic or early neolithic technology resulted in little artificial change to the environment. Pouchot, during the 1750's, thought that the population of Paris was larger than the number of Indians north of Mexico, and although his estimate of the total Indian population was too low, it was not especially inaccurate. He sensed that tribal populations were declining, but explained that it was impossible to measure this change because the earliest European arrivals had not recorded contemporary populations. He could only note that the Choctaws had fallen from 20,000 warriors to scarcely 4,000 since the arrival of the French in the area earlier in the eighteenth century, and that in many cases tribes had actually disappeared, leaving nothing but their name. Pouchot ascribed the demographic decline to smallpox, brandy, "the wars which the arrival of Europeans have occasioned", and the custom of replacing the dead with prisoners, which resulted in unending conflict and made the Indians the authors of their "own destruction".¹

Rochambeau's officers were also conscious of this decline in population among the Indians, but made no effort to explain the causes because they were unsure about the exact nature of the phenomenon. Chastellux, who visited the Mohawk villages in December 1780, expressed surprise that this nation, which had formerly been so powerful and still had considerable influence during the War of American Independence, apparently numbered only 350 people. He doubted that the

¹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 256-61.

Iroquois as a whole could muster 4,000 men, and as a result did not believe that they would be much of a threat without British and Loyalist support.²

Men in the colonial regulars were able to give more solid reasons for the decline, and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur and Bossu listed disease, alcohol, and war as the major causes. Bossu believed that the unending wars between various tribes was the main factor, and that low population in turn made the Indians nomadic. He postulated, with some reason, that greater population pressures would force migratory Indians to become agriculturalists and give up their wandering ways.³ There was, in fact, a relationship between population pressures and dependence on agriculture among peoples in arable geographic regions.

Line officers new to North America thought that the Indians were all nomadic, wandering at will with no fixed abode. More informed officers realized that while this was partly true for some tribes, others, notably Iroquoian peoples, were more sedentary. Franquet called the Montagnais or Innu north of the St. Lawrence "wanderers, without a fixed home", but referred to the Iroquois as the *sauvages envillagés*, describing their longhouses in detail. He found it especially curious how numbers of unrelated people of all ages and all sexes were crammed into one building without privacy.⁴ Franquet overlooked the fact that urban working class Frenchmen lived in crowded, squalid conditions with almost no privacy, while large, extended peasant families commonly worked, ate, and slept in two rooms. As with other officers, Franquet compared the quality of life prevalent among foreign cultures with the quality of life enjoyed by his own decidedly privileged class.

The colonial gunner and Pouchot also described longhouses and the absence of any regular plan to Iroquoian or Algonkian villages. Pouchot explained that Indian villages were usually

² Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 48; Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 233; and Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 208-9. Chastellux was apparently unaware that many of the women and children had left with the warriors fighting as allies of the British, and that he was merely seeing those who remained in their principal home village.

³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 105-6, 223 and Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 112, 133-34, 216.

⁴ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 33, 37-38.

strung out along the shores of a lake or river, sometimes for two leagues (10 km). These settlements were abandoned in the wintertime, when the Indians lived in hunting cabins out in the woods. The Indians, he added, disliked crowding and large open spaces, and when Canadian habitants began clearing farms near the missions, the Indians would move to a new site. In addition, some of the mission Indians, encouraged by their priests, built Canadian-style homes of squared timbers.⁵ With the exception of Chastellux and Montesquieu, who described Mohawk longhouses, Rochambeau's officers never even saw Indian settlements.⁶ French officers in general found native housing unusual in design and primitive, both qualities which they considered appropriate for unsophisticated natives.

Frenchmen also considered native modes of transportation primitive, but generally practical for North American conditions. Colonial regulars and many of Montcalm's officers experienced travel in canoes, although European-style bateaux were the most common means of transporting troops and supplies in Canada. Bougainville testified to the incredible difficulty of moving military forces employing "very rude" local transportation. "These are not the campaigns of Flanders", he told his brother, alluding to the convenient rivers, canals, and prosperous food-producing areas of the Austrian Netherlands which made the region a favourite route of invasion.⁷ In the far west, the French army depended more on native modes of transportation. Pouchot described the small elm canoes which Indians used for short-distance travel, the birch-bark canoes which the Indians and French used for long-distance travel, and how the Indians wore snowshoes and backpacks in wintertime and pulled toboggan-type sleds with their supplies. The Parisian gunner, as a private in the colonial troops, had his own sled, but characteristically showed more enterprise than his comrades by buying a dog to pull it for him.

⁵ J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 145 and Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 185-86, 203-4, 226. See also Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 94, 107.

⁶ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 208 and Montesquieu to Lapatie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céleste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 5-19.

⁷ Bougainville to Jean-Pierre de Bougainville, Montreal, 4 June 1756, NA MG18, K10, v. 1.

He somehow knew about Inuit kayaks, which he described, and Bossu lived in an area where huge dugout canoes were commonly used.⁸ If Canadians made limited use of canoes, however, the Indians adopted some Canadian transportation. According to Franquet, a few Hurons at Lorette had horses and carriages, while Bossu recounted how a Breton sailor had taught Caddoes in Louisiana to mount sails on their canoes and use oars.⁹ Despite the prevalent image of North American Indians as wandering nomads with no home, Pouchot asserted that Indians travelled very little and did not leave their home districts or communicate with foreign peoples unless war or tribal interests made it necessary to do so.¹⁰ This ran contrary to the theory that Indians did not have claim to their land because they did not remain in any one place, an idea which may have sounded convincing to Europeans but had little credibility with Canadians.¹¹

Despite the existence of numerous Indian peoples in North America, most line officers and even many French officers in the colonial regulars considered the continent an empty wilderness. The contrast between their densely populated homeland and the country they were visiting was so great that it was difficult for them to avoid this conclusion. They considered the human geography of the region inconsequential because of the small and declining tribal and village populations and the lack of roads, fields, and other evidence of human influence on geography. Only the Indian nations' economic and military importance, soon evident to any French officer campaigning beyond the frontier of European settlement, served to counterbalance the seemingly logical conclusion that the natives were essentially irrelevant. Officers who had been on the continent for only a short time and had minimal contact with Indians were more prone to such conclusions than those who had been on the continent longer and had come to accept the fact that

⁸ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 212-14, 217-18; J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 6; and Bossu, *Travels*, p. 127.

⁹ Franquet, *Voyages*, p. 107 and Bossu, *Travels*, p. 67.

¹⁰ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 185.

¹¹ See the essay "Sovereignty Association" in William J. Eccles, *Essays on New France* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 156-81.

Indians were an integral part of North American affairs and would continue to play an important role for considerable time to come.

For many French officers, the Indian tribes' lack of a "civilized" material infrastructure, which included such things as roads linking zones of agricultural production with markets, weakened the Indians' claims to the land and resources of their tribal homelands. This lack of impact on the geography of aboriginal North America reflected the type of economic activity which Indians engaged in. The way of life enjoyed by hunters and hunter-cultivators differed from that of European cultivators in a number of fundamental ways, and French officers had difficulty in escaping European assumptions about what constituted "real" economic activity.

While the Frenchmen perceived hunting as a sign of savagery--hunters could not truly own land because they did not really "use" it--the officers interpreted agriculture as a sign of incipient civilization and thus legitimacy, for Europeans considered land which was cultivated and physically occupied property.¹² The limited amount of land which the Indians had under cultivation, however, undermined the Indians' legal position. In a similarly contradictory fashion, hunting was considered uncivilized while the fur trade which it fed was deemed a legitimate commerce vital to Canada's and Louisiana's economy. However, since civilization is usually linked to urban cultures and significant levels of trade, it is easy to see why they made these assumptions. Gathering pelts and meat for private use is different than acquiring these products purely for commercial profit.

Franquet and Pouchot recorded that most tribes in southern Canada supported themselves through agriculture and hunting. Franquet noted that the Hurons of Lorette, more Gallicized than most Indians, also raised cattle and poultry.¹³ Rochambeau's officers made no mention of

¹² See Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 166-80; Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, pp. 84-85; and Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, pp. 273-78.

¹³ Franquet, *Voyages*, 44, 47, 51, 95, 99, 107, 177 and Pouchot, *Memoirs*, 2: 203-5, 213.

native agriculture, although the volunteer Boy, who served with Continental troops on the New York frontier, wrote that the Indians lived from "hunting, rapine & produce of the land."¹⁴ When the French army arrived in Venezuela in 1782, however, the line officers were not surprised by the fact that the Indians were cultivators.¹⁵ The fact that Rochambeau's officers discussed Indians as hunters rather than as cultivators suggests that the officers considered hunting a more important indicator of native economic and cultural activity than agricultural production, for the typical "savage", by European definition, was a hunter, not a farmer. The Indians had to conform to basic European stereotypes. Also, since native women did the bulk of agricultural work, the officers may have been convinced that farming was a secondary rather than a primary economic activity. In France, men were usually the primary producers while women customarily assisted men and took care of the household.

Colonial regulars naturally knew that most tribes south of the Boreal forest depended economically on both hunting and agriculture, although in their accounts the officers paid more attention to hunting. The Parisian clerk-gunner explained that before Canada was discovered by Europeans, the country was a vast forest filled with wild beasts:

But this host of animals was subject to man's dominion, which includes every living thing. Without knowledge of the arts or of agriculture, the savages got food and clothing solely at the expense of the beasts. When European fashion adopted the use of their skins, the American savages slaughtered them more vigorously because it obtained for them an abundance of new possessions, and more murderously because they had adopted our firearms.¹⁶

The soldier exaggerated native reliance on hunting, in part because many northern Canadian tribes were exclusively non-agricultural, and in part because hunting was an important source of food for many tribes as well as an important source of income after trade relations were established with Europeans.

¹⁴ Boy, "Memoire", AN Colonies E50.

¹⁵ Chastellux, manuscript of December 1782, AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

¹⁶ J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 125. He also described Labrador Inuit fishing, sealing, and whaling methods. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

An officer in the same corps as this soldier, Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, placed much more emphasis on native agriculture, although he also discussed hunting at length. He had extensive contact with tribes south of the Great Lakes whose diet included a large proportion of agricultural produce. Crèvecoeur believed that Indians were excellent judges of land and greatly prized the most fertile areas, which they carefully fertilized with fish. When European settlers were searching for good land, he wrote, they "could not make a better choice" than abandoned Indian village sites, and many "Indian towns" became flourishing New England settlements. He also thought that sedentary Indians involved in the whaling industry were more successful in achieving an advanced "degree of civilization" than those who were purely dependent on hunting.

Crèvecoeur shared the American yeoman's belief that farming provided the best quality of life, for it eliminated the plethora of vices associated with idleness and at the same time brought the prosperity which was the natural result of honest industry. In one of his stories he imagined taking his family to an Indian village to escape the ravages of the War of American Independence. He intended to build a wigwam and work the "lands which they propose to allot me", and perhaps by his example encourage the local natives to place more emphasis on agriculture. He also hoped that by keeping his sons busy on the land they would not become "wild", for if hunting was an activity with negative cultural consequences, consuming wild game, in his opinion, had a genuine biological effect on humans as well. The meat caused people to accumulate negative "humours", triggering moroseness and savagery, at least over the short term. Crèvecoeur believed that Indians, while primitive, possessed many civilized traits, such as civility and basic agricultural knowledge, and hoped that if their commitment to agriculture was encouraged, they could make some progress toward full civilization and all of the social benefits that it entailed. Europeans who encountered prosperous communities of full-time native farmers "using" their land could not easily compare these people to wild animals who roamed in the woods without any claim to the

territory they inhabited. While this might not guarantee the independence of native farmers, it did help to ensure their continued survival as communities in possession of their land.¹⁷

The fur trade with the Indians was the chief reason for Canada's existence, and without it the colony's economy would be seriously damaged if not crippled. Visiting French officers were well aware that the province's security and economic success depended on France's ties with the Indian nations. Franquet, who travelled to Canada in 1752 to assess the colony's defence capabilities, paid considerable attention to this problem, and was especially concerned by trade between France's Indian allies and the New Yorkers at Albany. The extent of this commerce became especially clear when he was inspecting Fort St. Frédéric on Lake Champlain, for Franquet witnessed a constant procession of canoes up and down the lake as the Indians travelled between Canada and Albany to take advantage of the higher fur prices in the province of New York. Franquet wanted this trade stopped or restricted, but he overlooked both the difficulty of enforcing such restrictions and the dangers of alienating France's Indian allies. The fact that natives were valuable trading partners encouraged the French to think of Indians as important customers with interests which had to be satisfied in the same way as European trading partners, and this economic legitimacy conferred political legitimacy upon the Indian nations. American colonists, whose economic interests clashed with those of their Indian neighbours, rarely saw the natives as business partners, and as a result were less inclined to see the Indian tribes as sovereign political entities. Commerce provides economic ties between peoples, and this in turn opens an avenue for social and political links, increasing harmony between states. It is significant that when Franquet stated that the French had no commerce with the Inuit, he immediately added that "we cannot humanize them". Trade was a basic form of human interaction, and only savages would refuse to engage in it.¹⁸

¹⁷ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 107, 109, 120, 215, 219-24. See Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 82, 127-28, 146-47 for his comments on native agricultural tools and techniques and hunting practices.

¹⁸ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 23-24, 46, 51, 80, 96, 99. See also J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 92.

One problem in the relationship between Montcalm and the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Governor-General of New France, was their different understanding of the relationship between Canada and the Indian nations. Vaudreuil, a Canadian, was extremely sensitive to the state of the Indian trade and alliances. Almost his first action on the outbreak of war in 1755 was to organize an expedition against the American forts at Oswego or Chouaguen, which had challenged the virtual French trade monopoly in the Great Lakes region for decades. Montcalm and Vaudreuil's brother Rigaud de Vaudreuil successfully carried out the operation in 1756, but in subsequent years Montcalm began to question Vaudreuil's insistence on committing huge quantities of valuable supplies and manpower to the far west when the principal force of British regulars was stationed on Lake George and had a good chance of reaching Montreal if the outnumbered French general was defeated. For Montcalm, the west was less important than the central core of Canada, and he favoured a minimal commitment beyond Lake Ontario. Vaudreuil, however, could not contemplate even a temporary slackening of Canada's alliance with the Indian nations, for Canada's history was synonymous with the west and the fur trade.

For French officers and most Europeans, a nation's social structure was essentially identical to its political structure. This was as true for Indian nations as for European ones, but in a significantly different way. Aboriginal societies, as the French soon learned, did not have a formal social structure; general equality prevailed, and apparent differences in social rank did not correspond to the degrees of personal power which Europeans expected. This difference between expectations and reality was difficult to grasp, and political models which Frenchmen used to explain Indians' socio-political structures, taken from European constitutional traditions, often proved inadequate to the task. In examining native concepts of liberty and equality, the institution of slavery, attitudes toward social and political hierarchy, and constitutional practices, the officers more often succeeded in revealing their own political philosophies than in describing aboriginal political structures.

French officers quickly learned the importance of equality and personal liberty in Indian societies. Franquet discovered that Indians divided presents equally among all members of the community, and the smallest children received their share, whether or not they could use it. Brought up enjoying “liberty and libertinism”, the Indians could not be persuaded to abandon their way of life.¹⁹ Pouchot also discussed the importance of equality, which extended into the political field. Chiefs, he explained in his memoirs, only had the power to persuade, not the right to give orders. Frenchmen, who were convinced that society could only function if it included leaders with absolute authority and obedient followers, found this especially difficult to understand. The captain called the Iroquois Confederacy a “true federated republic”, since its chiefs were not kings but simply “a point of reunion...for their councils or deliberations”.²⁰ In comparing the Iroquois Confederacy to a well-known variety of European state, Pouchot ascribed a civilized legitimacy to the Iroquois political system, which he considered more sophisticated than that of other tribes because of the scale and organization of the political union. The Confederacy’s military strength and diplomatic success played no small part in gaining Pouchot’s respect. He also demolished the theory that Indians were nomads with no concept whatsoever of territoriality:

They think that [since] the Master of Life...created them in the land they inhabit, no one has a right to trouble them in their possessions. As they recognize no territorial property, they think that the land where they live, and where the bones and spirits of their ancestors are, is sacred and inviolable. They think they cannot leave it without going to take some other tract which should be their hunting ground. This sentiment, born with them, renders them very delicate upon this subject, and it is constantly an occasion for war when one nation comes to hunt around the houses of another. Travelling Indians even take care to leave the skins of animals that they kill upon the territory of a foreign nation hung upon the trees so that they can profit from them. It was therefore quite out of place for the English to say that they had bought several countries from someone among them.²¹

¹⁹ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 36, 38.

²⁰ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 222, 234. For Franquet’s opinions on band, clan, and village chiefs see Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 37, 107. He thought that the Indians had too many of them.

²¹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 220-21.

In addition, Pouchot believed that the Indians on the Atlantic seaboard never formally ceded their land to the American colonies, but only retreated inland, for while they had a concept of territoriality, they did not understand the idea of sale or cession. He also admitted that the French king's claim to most of North America was simply windowdressing for the benefit of foreign powers, noting that while the French only occupied the banks of the St. Lawrence River, the Indians "still retained the whole of the interior of the country."²² Even if he sometimes applied inappropriate European terms to Indian customs, Pouchot had a surprisingly good understanding of the ideas behind those traditions.

Rochambeau's officers, in the 1780's, held more biased and confused perceptions of native concepts of personal liberty and egalitarianism. Ségur claimed that Indians "have a horror" of civilization, and children raised at colleges escaped to the forests "to taste there the charms of a stormy liberty and a wandering life which they prefer to all others. To them, no liberty appears to merit the name once it is restrained by limits."²³ During the conference at Newport the senior chief of the Iroquois delegation refused to accept a coronation medal bearing the image of Louis XVI, explaining that the other Iroquois present might accuse him of desiring and demanding this honour, so the embarrassed French presented him with some silver bracelets instead.²⁴ Charlus and the other French officers found this attitude curious, for they considered it only proper that the leader of the group obtain some special recognition.²⁵

Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur described the liberty and equality prevalent in native societies in the most positive terms. In his view, personal liberty was the chief attraction of the Indian lifestyle: "though governed by no laws," he wrote, "[one can] yet find, in uncontaminated simple

²² *Ibid.*, 2: 221-22, 257. See also Eccles, *Essays on New France*, pp. 167-71.

²³ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 398-99.

²⁴ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 222.

²⁵ See Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, pp. 88-89.

manners...all that laws can afford.”²⁶ Even though the natives lacked temples, priests, kings, and laws, he felt that their lives were in many ways qualitatively superior to that of Europeans. Indians also did not recognize any differences in political rights, he added, and adopted foreigners immediately acquired full equality with everyone else in the tribe.²⁷ The colonial gunner further clarified the position of chiefs in Indian communities, village chiefs only possessing the power to convene assemblies and war chiefs simply appealing to young men to join them on a military expedition.²⁸ Unsuccessful war chiefs, wrote Bossu, were simply demoted to warrior, and chiefs' sons received no particular consideration from other members of a tribe. He recounted how Governor Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne de Bienville of Louisiana attempted to make an influential Alabama leader “emperor” of his tribe, bringing the many autonomous villages under the authority of one man, who of course owed a debt of gratitude to his French supporters. This proposal met a chilly reception from the Alabamas: “They refused to do this, claiming that one chief over each village was enough. In brief, they were unwilling to make any changes at all in their form of government.”²⁹ Rather than castigating the Alabamas for being stubborn and ignorant because they defied the superior judgement of civilized Europeans, Bossu admired them for standing up for their independence and constitutional traditions. Deliberately or not, he drew a parallel between the Alabama assembly and the republican senate of ancient Rome. At one such assembly, he recounted, each chief spoke in turn, and the Great Chief delivered a patriotic speech:

He advises them to face adversity courageously and to sacrifice everything for love of nation and liberty. It is a thousand times more glorious to die as a true man than to live as a vile slave....Nothing is more edifying than these assemblies. You hear no chattering, no indecent remarks, no untimely applause, and no immoderate laughter. The young men, convinced that it is for their own good, listen attentively and respectfully to the words of their elders.³⁰

²⁶ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 211.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 216, 221 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, 194.

²⁸ J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 146.

²⁹ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 95, 152-53, 165.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-55.

Bossu's interpretation of the status of chiefs in native societies, however, showed subtle differences from the descriptions given by Pouchot and Crèvecoeur, chiefly because he used the vocabulary of Bourbon absolute monarchy to define the institution. According to Bossu, "a chief, or a minor king", is "given his power by the Great Spirit or the Supreme Being. Although these chiefs are despotic rulers, their authority is not resented because they know how to gain love and respect."³¹ Considering themselves "fathers of their people", civil and war chiefs took greater pride in their honourary status than in ostentatious titles, and because of their special status they did not have to fear revolutions or murders.³² Chiefs were not born to the position, but were elevated to their position by the free consent of the community, much like the Frankish monarchs so beloved of French constitutional theorists favouring the *thèse nobiliaire*. Once chosen, however, they were mysteriously anointed by the Great Spirit or God and acquired absolute powers, tempered only by their duty to seek council and act in accordance with the interests of the people.³³ It was impossible to make a clearer description of the ideal enlightenment monarch or philosopher king advocated by many eighteenth-century writers. The Indian chief, Bossu was saying, fulfilled the proper role of a monarch and did not abuse his power as did Louis XIV when he suppressed the traditional constitution and ruled purely by divine right, bypassing all traditional safeguards and opening the way to arbitrary rule opposed to the true interests of the people.

Bossu's political ideals encouraged him to cast the Indians as models for the moral reform of the French state, much in the same way that French writers employed classical examples, or else visitors to France from Persia or Huronia. Political theorists of the age continued to consider government a moral rather than a strictly political problem. The existence of native Americans who embodied the virtues of ancient Rome suggested that it was remotely possible, even in a

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

³³ Basse, *Constitution de l'ancienne France*, p. 59.

sophisticated, civilized country like France, to regenerate the nobility and people and cast aside the burden of centuries of royal and clerical despotism.

Further evidence of Bossu's framework is found in his description of the Natchez political system, which featured a ruling class of Suns obedient to a Great Sun. These Suns had absolute authority, and when any Sun died, his wives and several of his subjects were put to death to serve him in the afterworld. The common people, Bossu, explained, were known as "stinkers", and existed to serve their godlike masters, descended from the Great Spirit who lived in the sun. Despite the fact that the Natchez state was essentially a despotic theocracy, Bossu called the Natchez a "Free and peaceful people" who "could not permit themselves to be tyrannized by foreigners".³⁴ Although by "free" Bossu meant independent from foreigners, he also suggested that the Natchez enjoyed a free society because the Suns were relatively enlightened despots who looked after their subjects and only indulged in bloodthirsty rituals on rare occasions. Bossu considered the Natchez more civilized than other tribes because their social organization was more structured, and it is evident that he believed that a social hierarchy was normal rather than an aberration. He also approved of the way in which Natchez political decisions were made, recounting a meeting of the Elders or Suns when they carefully deliberated whether or not to rebel against the French in the name of freedom and national virtue. The Chief Sun exactly fulfilled the constitutional role of the King of France, for he made his decisions in council but "had to give his approval" before the final decision was made. His mother had a right to veto these decisions, but in this case the council met in secret and circumvented this constitutional step because they knew that she would oppose them. When the Chief Sun's mother found out, however, she was not amused: "The Princess was furious at the idea that they were hiding from the nation and even from her what they had a right to know."³⁵ Bossu's account provided

³⁴ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 31-47.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-42.

interesting information about the Natchez political system, but it revealed more about the officers' own political philosophy than about the Indians.

French officers of the 1750's also tolerated the evils of another more serious form of inequality in native societies--slavery. Ironically, while officers tended to dismiss egalitarian aspects of native society as primitive and impractical, they readily accepted social inequality because this conformed more closely with French social mores. Franquet noted without comment that tribes in Canada used slaves from the far west, and Bougainville was similarly unemotional in reporting that Indians sold "Panis" or Pawnee slaves captured in wars on the plains to the Canadians.³⁶ Bossu, in his turn, roundly condemned the Spanish for their cruel exploitation of Indian slaves in the silver mines, but did not consider normal Indian slavery particularly cruel or unusual.³⁷

The officers made no objection to Indian slavery because the practice did not conflict with French social mores. Frenchmen of the 1750's simply considered slaves unfortunate individuals on the bottom rung of the social ladder, just below servants and serfs. Vestiges of serfdom still existed in France, and black slaves were commonly found in the western port cities. Inequality was considered a basic "reality" of society, and while slaves were often pitied, especially if they were born free, few people questioned the institution itself. Bossu objected to slavery in the mines of Spanish America not so much because he was an abolitionist but because the Spanish enslaved innocent free Indians and then ignored the principles of humanity by grossly mistreating them. It was considered proper to subject slaves, like apprentices and free servants, to appropriate discipline, but this did not mean that it was acceptable to work slaves to death deliberately or torture and execute them without just cause. Franquet and Bougainville believed that the form of slavery practiced by the Canadians and Indians was relatively humane and bound by accepted limits. As the colonial gunner explained, Indian slaves did the same work as native women, and

³⁶ Franquet. *Voyages*, p. 95 and Bougainville. "Mémoire sur la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 66.

³⁷ Bossu. *Travels*, pp. 14-15, 188.

could be made free, equal members of the community after a small adoption ceremony.³⁸

Disobedient slaves were beaten as severely as disobedient wives, and many Frenchmen and male Indians considered this form of punishment socially acceptable.

French officers with Montcalm's army pitied the male and female American prisoners enslaved by the Indians during the Seven Years' War and cooperated with Vaudreuil to have as many ransomed as possible. D'Aleynac noted with a hint of disapproval that Canadians used American prisoners as slaves, but added that the Americans were well treated.³⁹ Curiously, the officers did not object to the Indians enslaving Americans because slavery was wrong or because they found the notion of Indians owning Europeans racially abhorrent, but because they pitied Europeans who had to live the same hard, miserable existence as Indians, far from their relatives, friends, and civilization. The officers knew that prisoners were assimilated by the Indians with minimal coercion, but they considered this a backward step, as though they were lost to the world. Desandroüins told how against orders he hid the blonde thirteen-year-old son of a drum major found in Fort William Henry in 1757 because the officers could not bear to see him seized and, as Desandroüins said, made an Indian. After the Indians had gone, the captain confessed to a staff officer, Montreuil. Instead of issuing a severe reprimand, however, Montreuil embraced the surprised engineer.⁴⁰ For the civilized French, allowing children to be turned into "savages" was criminal, and they surrendered prisoners to the Indians only with extreme reluctance. Montcalm's men were also aware that prisoners were taken in order to replace a dead warrior and that this was accomplished in two ways: by adoption, which ended a person's status as a slave; or by torture and execution, which brutally cut short a person's life. Adult male prisoners were vulnerable to death by torture, but women were rarely subjected to mistreatment. French officers pitied white

³⁸ J. C. B., *Travels*, p. 100.

³⁹ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 38.

⁴⁰ Charles-Nicolas Gabriel, *Le maréchal de camp Desandroüins, 1729-1792: Guerre du Canada, 1756-1760, guerre de l'Indépendance américaine, 1780-1782* (Verdun, France: Imprimerie Renvé-Lallemand, 1887), pp. 115-17.

slaves more than black slaves because they felt greater sympathy for the former, who in their view were less accustomed to hardship than downtrodden blacks who came from allegedly uncivilized African despotisms or grew up in slavery.

The Indian nations played an important military and political role during the Seven Years' War and to some extent the War of American Independence, and for this reason officers had to have some understanding of the political relationship between the Indians and the French, Canadians, and Americans. Indians obtained many benefits from their economic and military relationship with the French, including protection from other tribes and the English and a convenient means of marketing their furs in exchange for goods brought directly to their villages by *coureurs de bois*. At the same time, however, they had to put up with various aggravations from the French, most notably threats to their independence and mediocre prices for their furs. It was therefore necessary to "remind" the Indians occasionally of how beneficial it was to be allied to the French and just how bad it might be to count the French as enemies. Officers who spent some time in North America and had some contact with natives realized that the Indians had their own political agendas and that the French had to make continual efforts to influence tribal foreign policies so that they roughly coincided with French interests.

Franquet was present at several friendly meetings between the Indians and Governor-General Rear-Admiral (*Chef d'escadre*) Ange de Menneville, Marquis Duquesne, and visited the missions, but he was nevertheless worried about the prospect of Indian wars and wanted the government to organize a system of fortified Canadian villages as well as to engage in further efforts to entice Indians to settle close to the French and thereby undermine tribal power before a war broke out. Franquet also believed that palisades built around the mission villages were designed to restrict the Indians' independence and trade with Albany as much as defend the mission communities. Placing little trust in the Kahnawake Mohawks or other tribes, he believed that the Abenakis of St. François and the Hurons of Lorette were the only Indians that the French could really trust. Franquet was mistaken in insisting that the Mohawks had

separated from the Iroquois Confederacy because they differed from the other Iroquois in their pro-British foreign policy, and was equally misinformed in claiming that the Iroquois "pretend to maintain neutrality" even though the French had recognized British sovereignty over the Iroquois in 1713. The Iroquois never recognized British sovereignty and were perfectly justified in maintaining an independent foreign policy. Any of Franquet's informed Canadian acquaintances could have pointed out that if anyone was "pretending", it was the British themselves. Like the French, they made brazen claims about sovereignty when negotiating with their European counterparts, but carefully disguised or indignantly denied the claims at conferences with the Indians concerned.⁴¹ Franquet's comment reveals a distinct prejudice against the natives, even though he acknowledged the Iroquois to be the strongest and most respected Indians in "the known part of America".⁴² The governors of the late 1740's and early 1750's, naval captain Roland-Michel Barrin, Marquis de La Galissonière, Rear-Admiral Jacques-Pierre de Taffanel, Marquis de La Jonquière, and Rear-Admiral Duquesne, were equally aware of the importance of influencing the policies of their Indian allies. La Galissonière, an interim appointee, was an outstanding naval officer and one of the best governors ever to serve in the colony. His tenure was brief, but he later wrote an important memoir assessing the colony's strategic importance and the role of Indian nations in its defence and the arrest of British-American expansion. For La Galissonière, Indians existed to serve the interests of the French state, and he was frank about the mixture of friendship, aid, and coercion necessary, in his words, to "overawe" the natives and maintain the Indian alliance. The governor advocated building more forts to keep the English out of the Ohio region and strengthen the political and economic barrier against the Americans, but he had to leave this project to his successors, La Jonquière and Duquesne.⁴³

⁴¹ Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, pp. 163-67 and Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, pp. 47-48.

⁴² Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 45-46, 59-60, 94-95, 107, 120-21.

⁴³ Roland-Michel Barrin, Marquis de La Galissonière, "Memoir on the French Colonies in North America", 1750, *NYCD* 10: 220-32. La Galissonière was actually the "governor commanding", taking

The Marquis Duquesne established a chain of forts on the upper tributaries of the Ohio River in order to discourage American traders and settlers from entering the area and to intimidate the local Indians. Duquesne knew that it was not in the Ohio Indians' interest to place themselves solidly in the French camp and trade solely with the French, but that with a measure of friendly persuasion combined with a demonstration of French power he believed this policy could be substantially fulfilled. In the end, he succeeded in persuading the Indians that their twin goals of remaining independent and obtaining European goods was best met by remaining in the French military and economic sphere while carrying on limited trade with the Americans.⁴⁴ By 1754 most Ohio tribes were leaning toward the French and were willing to fight the English under French leadership. When the Canadian ensign Joseph Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville was ambushed and killed by Virginians that year, Duquesne was able to report that not only the "domiciled" or mission Indians were eager to revenge the death, but that many other Indians were indignant and willing to fight. He had to admit, however, that some tribes still supported the British.⁴⁵

Montcalm's officers quickly learned the basics of French-Indian relations. Montcalm, following instructions from the Minister of Marine and the Governor-General, soon prided himself on being an expert in handling Indians. He certainly had considerable practice, for while on campaign he spent much of his day meeting with war chiefs. Montcalm seems to have performed his duties competently, although on one occasion, after the Battle of Carillon in 1758, he was unable to conceal his anger that the Indians had either arrived late for the engagement or declined to participate, leaving his small army to fight alone against thousands of British and American troops. The Indians were deeply insulted and left for home, complaining to Vaudreuil

over until La Jonquière, delayed by naval operations and capture by the British, could assume his duties. See also Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, pp. 154-56.

⁴⁴ Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, pp. 52-54.

⁴⁵ Ange de Menneville, Marquis Duquesne, to Antoine-Louis Rouillé. Comte de Jouy, Montreal, 21 June 1754. BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 16.

about how they had been treated.⁴⁶ Bougainville was sceptical that the Indians could really be counted on when the going got rough. In late 1758 or early 1759 he listed the forces under Montcalm's command, adding that "I do not count the Indians here at all; calculating, politic, and greedy, can we flatter ourselves that they will remain constantly attached to the excessively weak party, which will possibly have nothing to give them?"⁴⁷ He was right in doubting that the Indian nations, no matter how much real or pretended affection they had for their allies, would choose to destroy themselves in an effort to preserve French power on the continent.

Pouchot held no illusions regarding the carefully calculated nature of Indian foreign policies, and stated without rancor that "the savages are only honest as far as their interests are concerned". He took it for granted that even the friendliest Indians gave the French and British selected information about each other in order to gain an advantage; they tolerated the French during most of Canada's history only because of their useful trade goods and military protection against various enemies. Intertribal wars, he explained, allowed the French to ally themselves with most peoples in the eastern part of the continent, after which troublesome tribes were kept in line by exploiting traditional jealousies and uniting the other nations against them.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Pouchot observed that the Indians did not think exactly like Europeans when formulating their foreign policy. The Iroquois, he maintained, "never had a thought of extending their country, nor of gaining a larger hunting ground, nor of subjugating other nations to themselves." The proof, he believed, was that after almost destroying tribes, the Iroquois declined to annex conquered lands or enslave the survivors. The Eries, Tuscaroras, and many of the Hurons were incorporated into the confederacy, but Pouchot did not consider this slavery. In a sense this was quite true. The Iroquois incorporated large numbers of prisoners, mostly by adoption; they were not technically slaves. The Tuscaroras joined the Confederacy voluntarily and

⁴⁶ Vaudreuil to Claude-Louis, Marquis de Massiac, Montreal, 4 Aug. 1758, *NYCD*, 10: 805.

⁴⁷ Bougainville, "Situation du Canada en hommes, moyens, positions", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 8.

⁴⁸ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 26, 57, 221, 236.

remained a distinct tribal group. In addition, Iroquois war aims, especially in the early decades of contact with Europeans, remained traditional in the sense that war was waged for the sake of honour and revenge rather than for loot, long-term economic advantages, or land. Pouchot was also justified in concluding that British claims of sovereignty over all areas conquered by the Iroquois were absurd, for the Iroquois did not effectively claim the enemy territories, which were subsequently occupied by other tribes.⁴⁹

Officers in Rochambeau's regiments of the line had not forgotten France's North American empire, which had expired only twenty years earlier. Indeed, some officers hoped that France's imperial presence might be resumed in the near future. It was common knowledge, of course, that the Indians were former allies and had fought with the French in the Seven Years' War. The army's meeting with an Iroquois delegation confirmed the officers' belief that the Indians were still attached to the French, for the Indians showed great favour toward them, praised the Marquis de Montcalm and the Chevalier de Lévis, and were content with the presents they received.⁵⁰

Charlus argued that the Indians

must like us for ourselves, because they find the English more generous with presents and drink, and despite this they wish to see us in their country, being more than certain that their compatriots will eagerly place themselves under the protection of their good father the King of France.⁵¹

Most officers took the delegation's addresses at face value, not suspecting that the Indians were sophisticated enough to engage in subtle diplomatic manoeuvres.

French volunteers were also aware of the connection between France and the Indian nations. The volunteer Duponceau met the French-speaking Kahnawake Mohawk Colonel Louis Atayataghrongta at Valley Forge in 1778, and the Indian, addressed in French, appeared

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 234-35 and Conrad E. Heidenreich, "The Great Lakes Basin, 1600-1653", in *Historical Atlas of Canada*, vol. 1. *From the Beginning to 1800*, ed. Richard C. Harris (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), plate 35.

⁵⁰ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. Rice and Brown, 1: 20; Verger, "Journal", in *ibid.* 1: 121; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 37; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 61; and Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4, fol. 220.

⁵¹ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4, fol. 222.

astonished; "he extended his hand towards me saying 'Ah! my father, you are French; I am very happy to see you; we like the French, why did they abandon us?'" He proceeded to ask numerous questions about Marie Antoinette and the rest of the royal family and whether or not the French intended to reconquer Canada. Colonel Louis recounted that the English had wanted the Mohawks to call them father, a term of respect, instead of brother, but the Indians had responded by saying that the French alone were their fathers. The Kahnawake Mohawks were among the most pro-French of the mission Indians, and a number of them maintained their anti-British attitude after the conquest of Canada in 1760. Atayataghronghta had joined General Richard Montgomery's American army during the unsuccessful invasion of Canada in 1775-1776, and was now essentially an exile.⁵² La Fayette sought to exploit pro-French sentiment among many of the Indians by appealing to the Iroquois to aid the Patriot cause. The meeting failed to influence Iroquois policies, for the visiting tribes, which already leaned toward the Americans or favoured neutrality, continued to do so afterward to the same degree. Iroquois groups such as the Oneidas and some Kahnawake Mohawks which were anti-British during the Seven Years' War were also anti-British during the American Revolution; the pro-British Mohawks of the Mohawk Valley remained equally consistent in their foreign policy.⁵³ La Fayette did not expect to make a diplomatic coup at the conference, but at least he assured himself that the Onondagas, Oneidas, and Tuscaroras would not attack the Americans, and he even managed to hire a few as scouts. "The old men, as they smoked," he wrote, "spoke very sensibly about politics. A balance of powers would have been their object if only the drunkenness produced by rum, similar to that caused in Europe by ambition, had not often confused them."⁵⁴ The volunteer Boy, however, accused the Indians of being completely mercenary, becoming Whigs or Tories depending on

⁵² Duponceau, "Autobiography", *PMHB* 63 (1939): 222.

⁵³ See Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1972), pp. 128, 149, 163.

⁵⁴ La Fayette, cited in Olivier Bernier, *Lafayette: Hero of Two Worlds* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1983), p. 66. See also Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, pp. 48.

which side paid the most. Like many of his American Patriot colleagues, Boy was unable to believe that Indians could ever have just motives for their actions or even that they reasoned like most human beings.⁵⁵

Colonial regulars were more involved in French-Indian diplomacy than almost any line officer, and commanders of detachments in the far west were essentially ambassadors of the King of France. Bossu recognized the legitimacy of native peoples' desire to remain independent, but fully approved of and carried out French policies designed to bring tribes under further French control. He cited many examples of the Indians' affection for himself and individual French civilians in Louisiana, explaining the reasons why these people gained the natives' trust.⁵⁶ By contrast, however, he recounted how his garrison shot twenty-two Illinois at Kaskaskia when they attempted to surprise and massacre the local Europeans, with the result that the survivors soon "came crying, peace pipe in hand."⁵⁷ He applauded other French successes in coercing various Louisianian tribes into attacking and defeating other nations resisting French control. These actions involved the death or enslavement of the entire Natchez tribe, the defeat of the Chickasaws--who had dared to shelter the Natchez--and the surrender of the Chitamachas, who from then on were "unswervingly loyal" to the French and continued to bring game as tribute. Admitting that his friend Chief Tamathlemingo was more devoted to the French than most other Indians, Bossu knew that the French presence in the region was a product of economic and military coercion, accepting this as a necessary evil.⁵⁸ It was obvious that the English would be no less ruthless if they had the opportunity to control the region. On the positive side, Indian acceptance of French authority established a sort of *Pax Gallica*, ending the bloody inter-tribal wars, an improvement which the humane Bossu could appreciate. In 1752, while posted at a

⁵⁵ Boy, "Memoire", AN Colonies E50.

⁵⁶ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 66, 68, 72, 180.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28, 47, 135, 173-75.

village of Illinois Indians, he witnessed a surprise attack on the settlement by a party of one thousand Foxes, Sauks, Kickapoos, and Dakotas, who practically annihilated the Illinois in a few minutes. The attackers, who carried a French flag in the hopes that the French would overlook the massacre, left Bossu and a teenage girl who ran into his arms for protection untouched. Bossu knew that he was spared not because the Foxes and their allies loved the French but out of fear.⁵⁹

Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur respected the foreign policies of Indian nations and their attitude toward Europeans. He did not believe that the Indians could understand the War of American Independence, for the idea of a single tribe engaging in a civil war, he claimed, was completely foreign to them. Knowing that they were "the dupes and victims of both parties", he added, they generally avoided involvement in the quarrel. Crèvecoeur conveniently blamed dishonest traders for frontier wars, and held the same class of traders and dissolute settlers responsible for the frontier raids of the War of American Independence. Normal, virtuous Indians were not blamed for the raids; rather, the culprits were "a few hundreds of the worst kind mixed with whites, worse than themselves, and now hired by Great Britain, to perpetrate those dreadful incursions".⁶⁰ Crèvecoeur asserted that political harmony between settlers and Indians was theoretically possible, only requiring basic justice and friendship. He pointed first to an example of cooperation with which he was familiar and which he knew worked, explaining that even two decades after the fall of New France, the Indians and Canadians preserved their traditional amity: "to this day the Indians love the name of Canadian; they look upon them to be much more their compatriots than they do the English."⁶¹ With at least some justification, he attributed this to the Canadians' adaptation to the native lifestyle while on voyages in the west and their fairness and friendliness as they traded, a strong contrast to the attitude of most American traders. Likewise,

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-80.

⁶⁰ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 55, 219.

⁶¹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 173.

he praised New Englanders for upholding the treaties they had signed with the natives, with the result that the local Indians still had the small patches of land that their forefathers had reserved for themselves.⁶² To reinforce this idea of potential concord between the two peoples, Crèvecoeur told the story of how during the Wyoming Massacre of 3 July 1778, one of the raiders called elsewhere "the very worst class" of Indian saved a white family from slaughter. Crèvecoeur also claimed that the Indians were willing to consider white men brothers because they all sprang from the same soil, but that injustice by Europeans unwilling to share that land ruined the potential for peace.⁶³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur was not completely naive in believing that there could be peace between Europeans and Indians, for he had seen many examples of harmony and friendship between these peoples in Canada and a few examples in the American colonies. There was evidence that a satisfactory political relationship between Indian nations and Europeans could substantially reduce tensions over land and trade and allow the Europeans to obtain what they wanted through political coercion rather than military force. Crèvecoeur's solution to the dilemma of Indians' and farmers' competing land claims was that the Indians would have to surrender a share of their hunting grounds and learn to adapt to new conditions, maintaining the integrity of their communities while learning to farm beside their European neighbours. The solution the officer presented strongly resembled the reserve system which was developed in Canada and the United States over the next century and a half.

Native concepts of personal liberty and equality surprised most French officers. They often found the operation of aboriginal political systems difficult to grasp. Even men in the colonial forces found it surprising that society functioned and wars were fought on an essentially voluntary basis without the aid of a formal socio-political hierarchy authorized by law. For most officers, this lack of structure was the principal weakness of native cultures. Because these concepts were

⁶² For an analysis of relations between Europeans and Indians in New England see Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence* and Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 214-17, 222 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 120, 219.

unfamiliar, it remained difficult for Frenchmen to explain native political systems. The political vocabulary and ideas they employed were often inappropriate, serving to distort rather than clarify the situation. While officers were sceptical about native egalitarianism, they easily accepted evidence of inequality such as slavery because it conformed with French beliefs in social inequality. In addition, even officers who were highly sympathetic toward the Indians believed that it was desirable to place native peoples under French control because the British would do the same if the French hesitated. Officers who were less acquainted with the Indians, such as Rochambeau's officers, were even more Machiavellian.

Virtually all French officers, whether with line regiments or the colonial regulars, understood the Indians' military importance. Because the nature of warfare experienced by various groups of officers differed, however, they had different attitudes toward the Indians' military role. Colonial regulars, like local Canadians and Louisianians, considered Indians of central importance in winning the war on all fronts, but Montcalm's officers, more concerned with fighting conventional battles on a central front, were more sceptical about native warriors. This debate between French and Canadian officers over tactical priorities was complicated by the command structure in Canada and endemic rivalry between the army, navy, and colonial regulars. Montcalm and Vaudreuil quarreled bitterly over this issue, and neither of them distinguished themselves in tactical or strategic knowledge or emotional restraint. They thought that Indians were extremely important as scouts and raiders, but did not feel that they were sufficiently disciplined to take part in major conventional engagements against armies equipped with conventional and light infantry, as was the case by 1758.⁶⁴ This trend toward conventional warfare continued, for in 1781 the French army fought a European-style campaign without any native participation at all. For this reason, Rochambeau's officers tended to be relatively indifferent

⁶⁴ See Martin L. Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage: The French Military and the Canadian Irregular Soldier during the Seven Years' War", *Canadian Historical Review* 70 (1989): 53-75 and Ian K. Steele, *Guerillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689-1760* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969).

toward the Indians as soldiers and civilians, only going through the motions of dealing with them in order to please their American hosts, who were very concerned about war on the frontier.⁶⁵ La Fayette negotiated for the same reason, but he, at least, like the other volunteers, perceived the Indians as having some military importance. In general, as native power declined, and respect for Indians correspondingly decreased, Indians were perceived more as "savages" than "noble savages".⁶⁶

Without exception, French officers were more interested in the Indian warrior than the Indian hunter or trapper. The officers' professional concern was the achievement of military victory through the most efficient use of manpower and materials and by developing effective organization, training, tactics, and strategy. Up until the end of the Seven Years' War, the Indians were the most important line of defence for Canada, and they helped to ensure the continued existence of French North America. The continent's physical geography limited the success of traditional European methods of waging war, and officers realized that Indians, as specialists in irregular tactics, could offer valuable assistance to the French as scouts, irregulars protecting and assisting regular troops, and as experienced members of raiding parties composed of Frenchmen, Canadians, and natives. Line officers objected to Indian irregulars because these warriors fought according to their own schedule and degree of commitment and did not always fulfill the army's

⁶⁵ For the adaptation of British and American troops to irregular warfare during the Seven Years' War and the War of American Independence see Harold M. Jackson, *Rogers' Rangers* (Ottawa: n.p., 1953); Durand Echeverria and Orville T. Murphy, "The American Revolutionary Army: A French Estimate in 1777", *Military Affairs* 27 (1963): 1-7; Peter Paret, "Colonial Experience and European Military Reform at the End of the Eighteenth Century", *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 37 (1964): 47-59; John Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); Orville T. Murphy, "The French Professional Soldier's Opinion of the American Militia in the War of the Revolution", *Military Affairs* 32 (1969): 191-98; John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Paul E. Kopperman, *Braddock at the Monongahela* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977); Peter E. Russel, "Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America, 1740 to 1760", *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d ser. 35 (1978): 629-52; Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); and Daniel J. Beattie, "The Adaptation of the British Army to Wilderness Warfare 1755-1763", in *Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Ultee (University, AL.: University of Alabama Press, 1986), pp. 56-83.

⁶⁶ See Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, pp. 7-11.

objectives. Another reason for not wanting to use the Indians, however, was revulsion at the massacres, scalping, and torture associated with native warfare. At best, officers considered the employment of Indian warriors a necessary evil.

Franquet admired the skill of native scouts, but found the practice of scalping wounded men cruel.⁶⁷ French line officers serving in Canada and on Île Royale during the Seven Years' War experienced the same conflicting sentiments of admiration and revulsion. They admitted the utility of Indians; Du Fresne du Motel, at Louisbourg in 1756, wrote that British troops in Nova Scotia were so terrified of the Indians that they did not emerge from their towns and forts except in large detachments and then only for brief periods.⁶⁸ Captain Desandroüins, Montcalm's chief engineer, who later served Rochambeau's army in the same capacity with the rank of colonel, described French reactions when they saw Indians and Canadians in action for the first time at Oswego in 1756. The Europeans were amazed when, during the first sharp engagement at the forts, Louis Coulon de Villiers' militia and Indians fled as fast as they could, deserting their Canadian commander. "We joked a lot" about these events, wrote Desandroüins, but he added that the Indians and militia fought well from the cover of the woods, firing a great deal and undermining the enemy's morale, and he praised them for their "good countenance" in the face of the enemy.⁶⁹ Montcalm acknowledged the Indians' importance in redressing the imbalance in numbers between the French army and the enemy.⁷⁰ He believed that the American surrender at Oswego in 1756 was hastened by the army's fear of the Indians, and in 1757 he successfully exploited this fear by warning the American garrison of Fort William Henry that once the French opened fire and the siege began, it might be impossible to control the cruelty of his native allies.

⁶⁷ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁸ Du Fresne du Motel, Louisbourg, 1 Dec. 1756, cited in John D. McLennan, *Louisbourg from its Foundation to its Fall, 1713-1758* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1918; reprint, Halifax, N.S.: Book Room, 1979), p. 190.

⁶⁹ Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, pp. 50, 64.

⁷⁰ Montcalm to Marquise de Boulay, Montreal, 18 April 1756, NA MG18 K7, v. 3.

The Americans ignored his warning, but after their eventual surrender, the Indians, furious at seeing all the prisoners allowed to march off on parole, carried some of them off as captives and scalped several dozen others in order to take home the necessary trophies of their victory.

During much of the war Montcalm placed Canadian regular officers and some French officers, those "most agreeable to the different nations", with Indian scouting and raiding parties, and under their leadership and guidance--the Frenchmen were not authorized to give orders to Indian warriors--the natives performed valuable service for his army.⁷¹ Numerous officers from Montcalm's line regiments served with Indians because there were not enough Canadian regular officers to lead the militia and act as military attachés with the Indians; after all, they had their own French colonial regulars to command. Captain Guillaume de Montbrais of the Régiment de La Reine reported that during his five years in Canada he spent a total of only eighteen months recuperating in quarters because during the campaigning season and the winter he was on detached service with the Indians at the advanced posts.⁷² Swiss line officers with the Régiment Suisse de Karrer in Louisiana also spent a considerable amount of time fighting against Indians and in company with them.⁷³

Bougainville, who respected the Indians' abilities as much if not more than Montcalm, was fascinated by irregular warfare, and believed that Indian raids might force Pennsylvania to sue for peace and secede from the British Empire.⁷⁴ He described how the Indians fired into the centre of Fort William Henry during the siege and destroyed all of the horses and cattle, also dissuading the garrison from making a planned sortie one night because their cries terrified the soldiers

⁷¹ Montcalm to Marquise de Boulay, Montreal, 30 Aug. 1756, NA MG18 K7, v. 3, p. 17; Louis-Antoine de Bougainville to Antoine-René de Voyer, Marquis de Paulmy d'Argenson, Montreal, 19 Aug. 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 68; and Montcalm to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, Montreal, 11 July 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 61.

⁷² Neroyer d'Ayerlon to Jules-Hercule Mériadec, Duc de Montbazou, Prince de Rohan-Guéméné, on behalf of Guillaume de Montbrais, 9 Jan., 1779, SHAT Série Xb. 54, fol. 36.

⁷³ Antoine François de Billaud, Régiment Suisse de Karrer, SHAT Série Xg 87.

⁷⁴ Bougainville, *Journal*, p. 191.

about to take part in the attack. Bougainville even blamed the paroled American prisoners for their own massacre because they were so afraid that they panicked and left the fort before their French escort could be assembled. He paid the Indians an additional compliment, saying that that they were more disciplined and active than the Canadian militia as well as much better fighters.⁷⁵

More than most of Montcalm's officers, Pouchot respected the effectiveness of Indian warriors against other Indians and against Europeans. Indians, he maintained, were almost all excellent shots because they lived largely by hunting, and he thought that Europeans could defeat Indians in the woods only by charging them at a full run with bayonets fixed on ground which gave the Indians little room to manoeuvre. In his opinion,

the troop which should amuse itself with firing would soon be beaten, on account of the accuracy of their fire. If unfortunately they should disband they would be certainly destroyed, by their activity in attacking with hatchets and lances.⁷⁶

His Scottish colleague Johnstone concurred with this tactical opinion.⁷⁷ Parscau du Plessis and d'Alelyrac also strongly admired the skilled musketry and other talents of Indian warriors, and Parscau du Plessis noted that the self-confident natives ridiculed Europeans for fighting in ranks and being shot down "one after the other like turtles."⁷⁸

Montcalm's officers, however, felt that the Indians had their military drawbacks. Not only did the natives have a different concept of what constituted a campaigning season, making it difficult to keep them with the French army after they had achieved a single victory, but, as d'Alelyrac explained, they might abort an operation if one of their warriors dreamt that even one

⁷⁵ Bougainville to Marquis de Paulmy d'Argenson, Montreal, 19 Aug. 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 68, 73 and Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760*, ed. and trans. Edward P. Hamilton (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 259.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 253.

⁷⁷ James, Chevalier de Johnstone, *A Dialogue in Hades: A Parallel of Military Errors, of Which the French and English Armies Were Guilty, during the Campaign of 1759, in Canada* (Quebec: Morning Chronicle, 1887), pp. 27-29.

⁷⁸ Parscau du Plessis, "Journal", *RAPQ* (1928-29): 222 and d'Alelyrac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 35-36, 44-45; 55.

of 1,000 men in the party might be killed.⁷⁹ In addition, the Indians required constant encouragement and large quantities of presents and supplies even when the French army itself was short of food and equipment. As a result, French officers sometimes thought the Indians to be more trouble than they were worth. Bourlamaque thought it important not to overestimate the Indians:

The Indians are very good for *la petite guerre*, and when well disposed, a general will derive great benefit from them in the way of obtaining intelligence and making prisoners; but that is all. The best are at most hussars; besides, they act well in their way only when one is in possession of a decided superiority.⁸⁰

Hungarian hussars of the Habsburg army were light cavalry which excelled in raids on enemy communications and supplies, but also specialized in pillage and committing ghastly atrocities against civilian and military prisoners. They were virtually useless on the conventional battlefield at this time because these tough frontier levies lacked normal army discipline.⁸¹ Indians had to be kept on the French side, according to general consensus, because they were a military asset and because of their trade, but the French should not rely on them too much. The Canadians, Bourlamaque believed, still respected the Indians because of the Iroquois wars and, despite Indian

⁷⁹ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 37.

⁸⁰ Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1140.

⁸¹ For the development of regular light infantry in European armies see Maurice de Saxe, *Reveries on the Art of War*, trans. Thomas R. Phillips (Harrisburg, Penn.: Military Service Publishing Co., 1944); Jean Colin, *L'infanterie au XVIIIe siècle: La tactique* (Paris: Berger-Levrault & Cie., 1907); John F. C. Fuller, *British Light Infantry in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1925); Spenser Wilkinson, *The Defence of Piedmont 1742-1748: A Prelude to the Study of Napoleon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927); Robert S. Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare: The Theory of Military Tactics in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); Eugène Carrias, *La pensée militaire française* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1960); John M. White, *Marshal of France: The Life and Times of Maurice, Comte de Saxe* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962); Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Military Border in Croatia, 1740-1881* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1966); Johannes Kunisch, *Der Kleine Krieg: Studien zum Heerwesen des Absolutismus* (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1973); Hugh C. B. Rogers, *The British Army in the Eighteenth Century* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977); John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648-1789* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982); Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983); Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: A Military Life* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987); and Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

weakness and enemy's strength, attempted to persuade the court that the Indian alliance alone was nearly sufficient to repel the English invasion.⁸²

Bourlamaque was clearly criticizing Vaudreuil's theory that strikes by mixed groups of Indians, Canadians, and French colonial and line troops were the best means of defeating the Anglo-American enemy. Vaudreuil and other Canadian officers wanted the French regulars to leave their artillery and supplies behind and launch swift attacks against distant targets, along the lines of Dieskau's attempted surprise attack on Fort Edward in 1755 and Rigaud de Vaudreuil's attack on Fort William Henry in 1757. Dieskau's attack was a complete fiasco and Rigaud's met with mixed success, though he destroyed enough supplies and equipment around the fort to prevent the English from undertaking any operations that year. French officers felt that these tactics might sometimes be effective against American militia, but were not only useless but outright dangerous when used against a large, professional British army operating from well-designed forts and supported by regular light infantry regiments. To send French regulars against one of these forts without siege artillery or adequate food supplies was, in their opinion, suicidal and an incredible waste of manpower. Raids intended to harass the enemy, officers felt, were best carried out by Indians supported by a proportion of the militia and a few colonial regulars. Harassing the enemy, however, was not the same as destroying the enemy; this latter objective was the job of regular troops trained to fight enemy regulars and invest and storm fortresses.⁸³

Pouchot was probably more familiar with the native philosophy of war than most officers. Realizing how integral war was to Indian cultures, he explained how Indian men were raised to "acquire that emulation for war, which is the most essential object of their lives."⁸⁴ The custom of replacing people who died from any cause with a scalp or a prisoner destined for death or

⁸² *Ibid.*, 10: 1140.

⁸³ Bougainville, "Situation du Canada en hommes, moyens, positions". *RAPQ* (1923-24): 9 and Montcalm to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, Montreal, 11 July 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 62.

⁸⁴ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 203.

adoption, he believed, was “one of the principal causes of their wars, being always obliged to have at least one nation from whom [they] can take prisoners or scalps to replace their dead.”⁸⁵ Wars were frequent because every nation needed another nation “to eat”, as they said, and a warrior who had not been to war for three years was not considered a man. Pouchot described in detail how a respected war chief recruited a war party and how one of the Indians’ murderously effective raids was carried out. Indians, Pouchot explained, were not interested in booty, and only attacked if they felt that they could come away with scalps or prisoners without losing any men at all. A large party considered an expedition over when they had achieved any victory, whether it meant that several dozen of the enemy were killed or only one or two, for they believed that the Great Spirit would consider them greedy and see to it that they suffered losses if they continued. Even one death made victory meaningless, and the war chief had to lead another raid to avenge the loss.⁸⁶

Line officers in Canada had grudging respect for Indian warriors. They complained about lack of “discipline” and “insolence”, for Indians, while polite, showed no deference toward Europeans. But when warriors did carry out a raid or attacked enemy patrols, they were obviously very effective. Several French officers commented on one incident when a group of Indians and Canadians ran into a force of Rogers’ Rangers. The militiamen panicked and fled, but the Indians stood their ground and inflicted heavy casualties.⁸⁷

The savagery of Indian warfare, however, horrified line officers and eroded much of the respect they felt for native warriors. Like *commissaire des guerres* or quartermaster André Doreil they considered the Indians excessively bloodthirsty, cruel, obsessive, and ultimately self-destructive.⁸⁸ Although Frenchmen accepted that war and conquest was necessary for the

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 241-49.

⁸⁷ Gabriel, *Desandrouïns*, pp. 203-5.

⁸⁸ André Doreil to the Duc de Belle-Isle, Quebec, 31 July 1757, in André Doreil, “Les lettres de Doreil”. *RAPO* (1944-45): 101. See also Jennings, *Invasion of America*, pp. 146-70.

security and expansion of the state, the Indians seemed to wage war for no reason at all, and this apparently irrational behaviour helped to label them barbarians.⁸⁹ As Pouchot wrote in his memoirs,

In fact the Indian abuses himself, because he feels too much. He yields without difficulty to the impulses of vengeance, and raises the cry of arms, which he always takes to destroy, and never to acquire or to preserve. His appetite is tyrannical and his wants urgent. Both have been multiplied since the discovery of the new world. To satisfy these, he has forgotten his dearest interests, and has become the instrument of hatred between two powerful rivals, and also that of his own destruction.⁹⁰

He also condemned the torture and burning of prisoners, cannibalism, and the mutilation of enemy corpses. "Although they repent much of these horrors", he explained, "they nevertheless give way to them, to animate themselves for courage, and inspire a kind of fury, which makes them appear more brave among their fellows, and heedless of peril."⁹¹ Méritens de Pradals was no more impressed: "The savages are rogues, drunkards, and cruel. I assure you that historians have not said too much in speaking of their cruelties. We saw them eat human flesh, as Lahontan told us in his writings on Canada."⁹²

The massacre of thirty American prisoners after the fall of Oswego in 1756 did not excite the Americans, Canadians, or even the French very much, according to Desandroüins. The English, he explained, were used to Indian atrocities.⁹³ Like a number of fellow officers, Captain Jean-Guillaume-Charles Plantavit de Margon, Chevalier de La Pause, of the Régiment de Guyenne believed that Canadians had few scruples about such matters.⁹⁴ But when the Indians set about killing over fifty prisoners at Fort William Henry in 1757, Montcalm and a number of

⁸⁹ Strachan, *European Armies*, pp. 8-22 and Childs, *Armies and Warfare*, pp. 1-27.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 2: 247, 251-52.

⁹² Douville, "Le Canada 1756-1758", *Les cahiers des dix* 24 (1959): 124.

⁹³ Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, pp. 62-63;

⁹⁴ Jean-Guillaume-Charles Plantavit de Margon, Chevalier de La Pause, "Relation des affaires du Canada depuis l'automne dernière 57", *RAPQ* (1932-33): 350 and Jean-Guillaume-Charles Plantavit de Margon, Chevalier de La Pause, "Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada", *RAPQ* (1931-32): 61-62.

his officers and soldiers physically wrestled with the warriors in a vain effort to stop the slaughter. The Indians rushed into the fort before the small customary French guard which took possession was able to gather the garrison and dependents and escort them to a place of safety. The French could not even threaten to use lethal force to restrain their valuable allies, and were completely ineffective in stopping the massacre. The Indians even wounded several grenadiers in the melee.⁹⁵ From hindsight, one wonders whether more could have been done to protect the prisoners. The surrenders were so badly managed that it is not surprising that one American historian believes that Montcalm sanctioned the killings by prior arrangement with the Indians.⁹⁶ This episode made a great impression on the French officers. D'Aleynac, who was almost tomahawked when he tried to get a prisoner from an Iroquois warrior, was sickened by the Indians' scalping of the patients in the fort's hospital, and wrote that he would never forget the sight of women being butchered in front of their husbands and parents slaughtered as they begged for their children.⁹⁷ The French faced a dilemma, for while they were revolted by the savagery of Indian warfare, they encouraged and even planned raids which they knew would result in atrocities. As Bougainville commented, "Humanity shudders at being obliged to make use of such monsters. But without them the match would be too much against us."⁹⁸ The French were obliged to resign themselves to the situation, for they had little choice if they intended to win the war. Montcalm wrote that "we regard these events as the fortunes of war, inevitable in America", but he was obviously uncomfortable about what he considered a stain on his honour.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Bougainville to Marquis de Paulmy, Montreal, 19 Aug. 1757, BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 72-73.

⁹⁶ See Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, pp. 295-96, 316-21 for his views on the massacres at Oswego and Fort William Henry. In his opinion, at both places Montcalm deliberately planned the evacuation process in such a way that the Indians could get past the guards to scalp wounded soldiers in the hospital and kill or carry off prisoners. For a more detailed and convincing analysis of the massacre at Fort William Henry see Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the "Massacre"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁹⁷ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 67-70.

⁹⁸ Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 191.

⁹⁹ Montcalm to Lévis, Quebec, 2 Aug. 1759, *Lévis MSS*, 6: 213; Montcalm to Marquise de Saint-Véran, Montreal, 16 June 1756, NA MG18 K7, vol. 3, pp. 64-67; and Montcalm, *Journal*, *Lévis MSS*, 7: 602.

For French officers, the laws of war, like law in general, provided a basis for interaction between civilized nations. The absence of laws of war among Indian tribes seemed to be further proof that they were lawless societies deserving the name "savage", a word which the French did not necessarily use in a perjorative way, but nevertheless had negative connotations. The brutality of native warfare emphasized more strongly than anything else that Indians were indeed "savage" in their behaviour, and this immoral conduct contrary to the long-term harmony of society proved to the Frenchmen that Indians were culturally inferior to Europeans.

Rochambeau's officers generally had a lower opinion of the Indians' military abilities than Montcalm's because they did not consider the Indians' irregular warfare especially relevant to what they considered "normal" battlefield conditions, and because they questioned the military qualities of the Indian warrior. Most of Rochambeau's officers were still in infancy when Montcalm was in Canada, and while light infantry and cavalry had played a part in battles of the Seven Years' War, the French army's only real example of guerilla warfare in the last thirty years was the Corsican campaign of 1768-69, and even then the French were victorious because Pascual Paoli chose to meet the French head on and had his army destroyed. Several of Montcalm's and Rochambeau's officers took part in this campaign, including Pouchot, who was killed by partisans. Rochambeau's officers knew that they had been sent to the United States to fight the British, not the Indians, and they were aware that the conference between the Iroquois and their general had been arranged by American politicians and was not directly relevant to their own operations. The warfare on the American frontier seemed very distant as well as tactically uninteresting because it was doubtful that they would ever have to fight in dense forests in Europe. The Frenchmen considered the light infantry and cavalry tactics practiced by the British and Americans far more interesting, for these lessons had more of a bearing on their own experience. After all, each of their battalions had a light infantry company and Lauzun's legion was largely composed of hussars, especially chosen in the belief that light cavalry might be useful in North America.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Kennett, *French Forces in America*, p. 14.

As a result of this attitude, the officers trivialized Indian warfare and considered skulking "savages" poor soldiers.

Chastellux, who studied the military history of the early years of the American Revolution, described Burgoyne's Saratoga campaign of 1777, and recounted how the Indians with St. Leger at Fort Stanwix, "by an inconstancy which is natural to them", deserted, pillaged the supplies and equipment of their British allies, and even, he was told, stabbed to death all the British, German, or American soldiers who strayed from their respective camps. In his opinion, "As an advanced guard they are formidable, as an army they are nothing."¹⁰¹ Another enlightened Frenchman with the expedition, the chaplain Abbé Robin, who boasted that he devoted his life to the arts and sciences, was equally scathing in his remarks, which form an absolute contrast to his enthusiasm for Americans:

The inconstant, capricious, unmanageable humour of these peoples, their barbarous and bloodthirsty mores, avidity for plunder, [and] lack of good faith in fulfilling their engagements, do not impede the English from wanting to make them the companions of their conquests.¹⁰²

Indians, he believed, took scalps, drank the blood of their enemies, and "do not know even the words equity and humanity." At least the abbé acknowledged that the Americans had often wronged the natives.¹⁰³ According to Gallatin, the Iroquois were surprised and impressed by a demonstration of the French army's drill at Newport, and Charlus recounted that on another occasion they were frightened when cannon were fired, which greatly amused the French soldiers.¹⁰⁴ This contempt, almost unrelieved by any positive comments, suggests the extent to which officers were affected by negative French attitudes against primitive peoples, probably reinforced by American prejudices.

¹⁰¹ Chastellux, manuscript on the history of the War of American Independence from 1775 to 1777, AN Série M 1036 F60 7 and Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 209.

¹⁰² Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, p. 146.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-47.

¹⁰⁴ Gallatin, "Un garde suisse", *Le Correspondant*, vol. 324 (n.s. 228), 10 Aug. 1931 (no. 1653): 322 and Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 221. See also Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 62.

Volunteers such as La Fayette had to take Indian warfare more seriously because Indian raids affected almost every state and were an important concern. La Fayette did his part to attract the Iroquois to the American camp and recruited Indian scouts for the Continental Army.¹⁰⁵ Boy, who saw the bloody frontier war at first hand, attacked the Indians as a "cowardly and dangerous people, making a cruel war by hiding themselves and scalping and massacring all that they encounter", being no more than "speaking animals" who made their living largely from "rapine". His appointment as the leader of fifty Indians at Fort Ticonderoga did not mitigate his hatred. An unemployed bourgeois officer who had already resigned from the French army twice because his career was going nowhere, Boy was frustrated by the Americans' refusal to grant him high rank, and considered being put in charge of a few Indians instead of Continental troops an additional insult.¹⁰⁶ Another volunteer, Captain Pierre Colomb, who skirmished against "cruel enemies" in the back country of Georgia in 1777, had little admiration for them or their tactics either.¹⁰⁷ Unlike Montcalm's officers, volunteers usually fought against Indians rather than with them. When they arrived, volunteers had a negative or ambiguous image of Indians, and exposure to alien native cultures, the death and destruction which the raiders wreaked upon frontier settlements, and the hatred of American soldiers and civilians for Indians, intensified their negative feelings.

French officers in the colonial regulars had far more respect for Indian warriors than most of their counterparts in regiments of the line. Bossu described various occasions, such as the Battle of Ackia in 1736, when the French were defeated by the Louisianian Indians, and outlined the efforts which were required to defeat the resisting tribes. He also described the slaughter of Braddock's army in the Battle of the Monongahela in 1755, which he considered a good example

¹⁰⁵ Bernier, *Lafayette*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁶ Boy, "Memoire". AN Colonies E50.

¹⁰⁷ Pierre Colomb, "Memoirs of a Revolutionary Soldier", *Collector: A Magazine for Autograph and Historical Collections* 63 (1950): 199-200.

of how effective Indian warriors could be. Bossu doubted that young officers accustomed to high society would shine in a wilderness campaign:

Our French dandies, who carry with them mirrors, toiletries, dressing gowns, etc., would be considered women and not war chiefs by the Indians. They would not distinguish themselves in this type of campaign, where they would have to endure excessive summer heat and the rigors of winter, sleep on the ground, and expose themselves to the weather in order to keep the Indians from taking them by surprise.¹⁰⁸

He smugly noted that if Hernando de Soto expected to conquer the Mississippi tribes as easily as the peoples of Mexico and Peru, he was sadly mistaken. The Indians of the region were tough warriors, he claimed, and he praised the Choctaws for their excellent tactics, never standing against European troops, but harassing them constantly. It is doubtful whether a line officer, steeped in another tradition of warfare, would have been quite so enthusiastic about this type of resistance. Bossu referred to Canadian officers in Louisiana's colonial regulars as "our brave Louisiana officers"--Montcalm's officers were considerably cooler toward what they considered amateur soldiers--and he shared the Canadians' confidence in irregular warfare. He eagerly endorsed a plan proposed by the Canadian Jean-Baptiste-François Hertel de Rouville and other Louisiana officers in 1759 to lead four thousand Choctaw warriors on a campaign of destruction in Georgia and the Carolinas, spreading panic "to the very port of Charleston" in order to divert the English from Canada, since the "national militia" of these southern provinces had supposedly left for the siege of Quebec.¹⁰⁹

Bossu's lengthy description of native military customs and tactics revealed a strong fascination as well as respect for native warfare. He recounted the Indians' stoicism on the warpath and under torture and their relentless hatred of those who had wronged them, to the extent that the Alabamas nursed memories of acts committed by the Spaniards a generation or two earlier. Everyone knew the standard tactics, he explained, and this meant that the shrewdest war party won. Cowards were not punished, but were considered a disgrace to the human race

¹⁰⁸ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 45-46, 88, 159-60, 173-74.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 163.

and went on suicidal missions to redeem themselves. Bossu was especially interested in the Indian custom of promotion by merit and the corresponding demotion of unsuccessful war chiefs to warrior.¹¹⁰ This system offered quite a contrast to that prevalent in the French forces, where inexperienced or incompetent officers of high social status often rose to command armies. Even after these generals were repeatedly defeated it was often difficult to remove them from their positions of authority because of their influence at court.

Similar attitudes toward Indian warfare existed among members of the Canadian colonial regulars. The Parisian gunner in the colonial artillery discussed Indian tactics and weaponry with respect, and testified that the natives were no fools when it came to buying guns, carefully testing half a dozen before making a purchase.¹¹¹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur also admired Indian warfare, even though he regretted the Indians' cruelty. He denied that they could be mercenaries like Europeans, and explained that their involvement in the War of American Independence reflected their gross abuse by American Whigs, but then immediately contradicted himself by saying that the Indians who attacked the frontier were corrupted Indians hired by the British. Crèvecoeur perceived the Indians as fierce warriors, reaching a "degree of frenzy they call courage", while victory always filled them with "indignation, pride, and cruelty". He also gave an example of how a party of Iroquois and Loyalists virtually annihilated nearly 600 Pennsylvania militia with negligible loss, taking few prisoners. While this seemed to suggest that Indians were unmitigated barbarians, Crèvecoeur countered this impression by adding that the Indians refrained from killing or carrying off the women and children gathered in a nearby fort and allowed them to depart.¹¹² Crèvecoeur clearly shared the military tradition of the colonial regulars, forged in combat using the natives' irregular tactics. These men disapproved of the Indians' killing and torturing military and civilian prisoners, but did not allow such considerations to cloud their views

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65, 79-83, 107, 114, 134-35, 145-46, 165-66.

¹¹¹ J. C. B., *Travels*, pp. 99, 145, 147.

¹¹² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 219 and *Sketches*, p. 195-204.

on the role of Indians in warfare; indeed, this was not an option because the Indians were an integral part of warfare in the North American wilderness.

Montcalm's officers, Rochambeau's officers, and colonial regulars showed distinctly different attitudes toward native warriors and their methods of waging war. Montcalm's men had mixed feelings about the value of their Indian allies because while natives frequently performed excellent service, they were not always dependable and did not share western European ideas regarding the purpose of war or the treatment of the wounded, dead, and military and civilian prisoners. While Canadians tolerated Indian atrocities as an unfortunate side effect of military campaigns and even shared their allies' enthusiasm for destroying civilian settlements, French officers found it more difficult to accept such incidents. Indians occupied two very specific roles in Montcalm's army, as raiders and scouts, but French officers, unlike their Canadian colleagues, did not consider these roles to be the army's dominant tactical focus, which was to fight conventional battles.

Rochambeau's officers participated in European-style campaigns along the eastern seaboard of the United States and never saw Indians in action. Their American hosts also did little to help the Frenchmen develop any admiration for Indians or their tactics. At most, the officers considered the natives a peripheral political and strategic problem because they affected the overall deployment of American troops. Because officers did not consider irregular tactics appropriate for warfare in dense forests relevant to their present or future campaigns and had sufficient previous experience in the use of light troops under "normal" conditions, they observed the Indians with idle curiosity rather than carefully analyzing their military attributes. While Rochambeau's officers remained relatively indifferent to the Indians' military effectiveness, French volunteers were more concerned about Indians because of their role in campaigns on the American frontier. Their awareness of Indian atrocities and exposure to common American perceptions of their native enemies cultivated negative views of Indians and their special brand of irregular tactics.

Accustomed to serving with Indians and trained to respect and learn native tactics as well as to immerse themselves in all aspects of native culture, colonial officers accepted not only the idea that Indians possessed a coherent tactical system, but also that they had the right to follow their own laws of war. All that French and Canadians could do was to reduce the killing and torture by ransoming as many prisoners as possible and persuading the Indians to moderate their desire for revenge.

French officers who served in North America during the Seven Years' War and the War of American Independence shared similar ideas about how a civilized country should function. In their opinion, it required a settled, agricultural, hard-working population which physically occupied and "used" the land. A civilized country also needed a recognizable political hierarchy which could effectively exert its authority in civil and military matters. In addition, the soldiers who defended this country had to be subject to discipline and treat enemy dead and prisoners according to certain minimum standards of conduct. Irregular tactics were acceptable, and militarily advantageous, but light troops, officers believed, should be subject to conventional military discipline.

North American Indians, however, did not meet any of these criteria, and their conduct, at such apparent variance with European norms, almost guaranteed that the vast bulk of French officers of both periods would intensely dislike them. Most of Montcalm's officers, the volunteers, and Rochambeau's subordinates, it is clear, regarded Indians as "savages" in the most negative sense of the word. The concept of the noble savage, so prominent in French Enlightenment literature, did not have much influence among French officers, even though they were educated and affected by many other ideas characteristic of the Enlightenment. Nor did it have much influence among most of the colonial regulars, who were more familiar with Indian nations and their economic, political, and military practices. These officers generally considered natives people with very different customs, but people nonetheless. Even they, however, hoped

to see Indians adopt the standards of French civilization in order to improve their way of life and end their demographic decline. Although a number of line officers made references to the concept of the noble savage, only two officers, the colonial regulars Bossu and Crèvecoeur, were strongly influenced by the idea, framing their analysis of aboriginal peoples largely in the context of this theory. The fact that they were writing at either end of the period being studied indicates that the concept of the noble savage was constantly present. However, it is evident that the idea did not have much impact on the bulk of the officer corps.

It might also be asked whether Rousseauian ideas about "primitive civilizations", the next theoretical step in cultural and technological development beyond the average condition of the Indians of eastern North America, had some influence on officers. This is a legitimate question, but must be answered by examining officers' perceptions of Canadian and American societies. All officers who discussed Indians, even Crèvecoeur, agreed that they had to be civilized for their own good, and it is plain that officers rejected "primitive" societies as their ideal, without clearly indicating, in the context of aboriginal peoples, what their alternative ideal was except civilization itself.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIOPOLITICAL VALUES IN THE OFFICER CORPS, 1755-1760

Montcalm's officers were products of their time, and they faithfully reveal opinions which were common among important sectors of the French elite during the 1750's. Many of the ideas which these men harboured to some degree--rationalism, scepticism, and good government on behalf of all--had existed in various forms since the Renaissance and even since classical times, but in the eighteenth century they acquired a particular form and changed the way educated Europeans perceived their world. Officers' views on Canadian and American colonists demonstrate that in 1760, despite the writings of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and other early Enlightenment figures--Rousseau was still a new figure--many educated French people still perceived the "reality" of their society in much the same way as generations of their predecessors. Enlightenment values had permeated society, but they had not yet generated decisive intellectual change.

Montcalm and his officers visited North America in the aftermath of yet another clash between the monarchy and the parlements and on the verge of a more political phase of the Enlightenment. The 1750's and 1760's were crucial decades in the development and dissemination of Enlightenment values, but the evidence suggests that even Montcalm's most educated officers had not yet experienced the transition to the next intellectual stage. Most French officers favoured the idea of a government acting in the supposed interest of society, and advocated a colonial government in Canada staffed by virtuous servants of the king who would

exercise justice and foster economic prosperity for the benefit of the state, nobility, and indirectly the people. They considered the role of the state essential in maintaining order in the state and society, and placed no formal checks on monarchical power. Their concept of "reform" was directed mainly toward preserving and purifying traditions, and there was no overt attempt to justify these traditions on rational grounds. The wisdom of the ages was proof in itself that they were worth preserving.

If some French officers were slightly affected by rationalism and scepticism, they showed little sign of favouring aspects of Enlightenment thought which stressed personal liberty and equality and the fundamental goodness and dignity of all individuals. They strictly opposed any relaxation in the social barriers which divided society, believing that the common people were subjects in the full sense of the word and that, unable to see their own interests, it was necessary to subject them to social and economic discipline from above. Montcalm's officers lacked sensitivity toward the common people, and despite a humanitarian impulse which reflected a sense of *noblesse oblige* more than a civic spirit in tune with Enlightenment ideals, persisted in seeing the interests of the monarchy and highly privileged social groups as synonymous with the public interest. Officers also accepted slavery and distrusted democratic tendencies in the American colonies because government by the people was supposedly incompatible with social stability. Despite the parlements' new arguments concerning the sovereignty of the nation and the place of "citizens" in the state, officers showed no sign of abandoning their faith in what amounted to absolute monarchy tempered by the privileges of the nobility.

Some of Montcalm's officers showed signs of being affected by religious scepticism, but even they strongly supported an established church subordinate to state control and had very limited tolerance for groups which dissented from established religion. Even if many officers were not very enthusiastic about priests or church attendance, most of them adhered to the Roman Catholic faith to a greater or lesser degree. There was certainly no overt attack on Roman Catholicism. Officers had limited respect for liberty of conscience, and they balanced scepticism

concerning certain aspects of Catholicism with a conviction that the authorities had the right to suppress religious groups when their beliefs or practices interfered with the public or state interest.

By examining French officers' attitudes toward Canadian and then American colonial society and politics during the Seven Years' War period, it will be possible in subsequent chapters to compare their values with those of French officers in the United States during the War of American Independence. Montcalm's officers were in contact with a Canadian society which despite its unusual characteristics was basically French in culture and values. They had limited knowledge of the American colonies, which were more alien and presented different challenges to their own beliefs. Both of these cultural experiences were in turn different from what officers later experienced in the United States. In each of these three cases a distinction has to be made between the basic values at the centre of this study and reactions to circumstantial geographic and cultural situations.

For many of Montcalm's officers, Canada was a useful colony which possessed great potential for adding to the wealth and power of the French state. At the same time, however, they felt that Canada had fallen short of its potential and had serious weaknesses because of undesirable social attitudes among the common people, the colony's poor leadership, and the lack of a vigorous French colonial policy. Their views on the lifestyles of the local populace, including the habitants' general social status, standard of living, and education, as well as the status of women, marriage practices, and social discipline, reveal a great deal about officers' perceptions of society in the 1750's. Equally important are their reactions to Canada's military and administrative elite, which reflect officers' belief in a highly structured, hierarchical society and their virtually unqualified support for an absolute, yet enlightened monarchy. In addition, officers' observations on the Canadian clergy and religion in the colony help to illustrate the

extent to which Enlightenment-inspired religious latitudinarianism had begun to creep into the French officer corps.

French army officers were frequently surprised and somewhat dismayed by the self-confidence and comfortable standard of living enjoyed by Canadian habitants. They were practically unanimous in describing Canadians as a proud, spirited, hospitable, and well-mannered people.¹ In Bougainville's opinion,

The common habitants would be scandalized to be called peasants. In effect, they are of better stuff, have more spirit, more education than those of France. This comes from the fact that they pay no taxes, have the right to hunt and fish, and that they live in a species of independence.²

Officers considered common Canadians proud and tenacious of their rights. D'Aleynac noted that even commoners called each other monsieur and madame, appellations normally employed only among the more educated public, while almost everyone claimed descent from the officers and men of the Régiment de Carignan-Salières "because this is, for them, most illustrious".³ He blamed the lack of servants in Canada not on the labour shortage but on the extraordinary "pride" of the habitants, who would not lower themselves to serve others.⁴ Canadian hospitality won praise from a wide number of officers, although they learned that if they stayed with a family for a prolonged period of time it was possible to outlast their welcome.⁵ Even the French-born gunner in the colonial regulars was able to testify that "a thoughtful and generous hospitality" was "universally found" among Canadians.⁶

¹ The Swedish botanist Pehr Kalm's impressions of Canada in 1749 were very similar to those of French officers a decade later. See Kalm, *Travels into North America*, pp. 356-504.

² Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 58.

³ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 29-30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30. For discussions of servant-master relations in the eighteenth century see Jean Guitton, *Une femme dans sa maison* (Paris: Éditions du Chalet, 1961); Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies*; and Sarah C. Maza, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France: The Uses of Loyalty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

⁵ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 64; Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 266; and d'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 30.

⁶ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, p. 105.

French officers were evidently impressed by the standard of living enjoyed by Canadian habitants. D'Aleynac found that most Canadian homes were clean, well furnished, had glass windows, and were warm all year around. In contrast to the average French peasant, habitants burned firewood in profusion during the winter and had food, including what seemed like enormous quantities of meat, in abundance.⁷ French peasants almost never ate the animals they raised, needing to use what livestock they had to pay their seigneurial dues and royal taxes. D'Aleynac's belief that among common Canadians "luxury is pushed to the last extreme" may have been exaggerated, but it was certainly true, as Parscau du Plessis noted, that the high cost of goods from Europe

does not prevent Canadians from loving spending, and from making the most of what they have. We reproach them for extreme vanity, but, if they sin by pride, they do not sin by avarice, for they never try to hoard. All they collect is spent in good cheer, on clothes or other commodities.⁸

One officer observed that the popular classes in Canada normally did not wear French clothes, but sported costumes unique to the country; on Sundays and other occasions, however, even country women frequently wore beautiful French-style dresses trimmed with silk and lace.⁹ Bougainville noted that there were almost no poor in Canada, and that practically every family owned a *calèche*, a one-horse buggy, and a *carriole*, a horse-drawn sled, as well as several horses. No one, he believed, went to church or to visit their neighbours on foot.¹⁰ The engineer Franquet, who was serving at Louisbourg at the time but had been in Canada on a tour of inspection in 1752 and 1753, noted that a family owned horses for ploughing and moving wood as well as one horse for each of the many sons in the household.¹¹ In Canada, it was the custom to use horses rather

⁷ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, pp. 30-31.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29 and Parscau du Plessis, "Journal de la campagne de la *Sauvage*", *RAPQ* (1928-29): 224-25.

⁹ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 29. See also Raymond Douville and Jacques Casanova, *Daily Life in Early Canada*, trans. Carola Congreve (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 39-61.

¹⁰ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 58, 64.

¹¹ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 27-28.

than oxen for ploughing, and these horses, in addition to those used for transport, gave officers the impression that Canadians had far too many of these animals. In France, ownership of horses was associated with noble or at least bourgeois social status, so Canadians seemed to be violating French sumptuary standards. This was yet another sign that Canadian habitants were living far better than was proper for their social rank. For most officers, such a degree of prosperity and leisure signalled that something was wrong with Canadian society, for rich peasants normally meant large revenues for the state and aristocracy, and there was little sign that this transfer of wealth was occurring. It is not surprising, therefore, that officers could not understand why Canadians were exempt from taxes.¹² In France only nobles enjoyed tax-exempt status, a leisurely lifestyle, fine clothes, and riding horses; the idea of mere peasants enjoying the same status seemed absolutely preposterous. Society had been turned upside down, and officers were all in favour of forcing civilization's natural producers back to work and reduced to a more humble lifestyle. The French state and leading classes should not be in penury, unable to uphold justice and maintain internal and external security, because of lazy peasants. Perhaps Canada would be in better economic shape if the local elite had not been so lax, coddling the lower orders of society. Montcalm's officers were unable to imagine a need for more social and economic equality. As far as they were concerned, the ancient hierarchy of status and wealth was synonymous with monarchy and a large, civilized state; there was simply no alternative. Montesquieu himself had pointed this out a few years earlier in his celebrated *De l'esprit des lois*.

French officers considered habitants poorly educated. Pouchot listed Canadians' virtues, but added that their "little knowledge of the world renders them volunteer braggarts and liars, being little informed upon any subject."¹³ According to a naval officer, Parscau du Plessis, male

¹² Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1147 and Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France". *RAPQ* (1923-24): 58. For a discussion of taxation in Canada see Roberta Hamilton, *Feudal Society and Colonization: The Historiography of New France* (Gananoque, Ont.: Langdale Press, 1988), pp. 53, 55-56, 60-61, 63.

¹³ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 45.

habitants were lacking in wit, and he ascribed this to the fact that they were raised "more or less like the savages".¹⁴ His colleague Bougainville paradoxically found Canadians better "educated" than French peasants, but almost universally illiterate because few schools existed and the local authorities neglected the instruction of young people.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Bougainville added,

One must admit that, despite this lack of education, Canadians have natural wit; they speak with ease...their accent is as good as in Paris, [and] their diction is filled with slang borrowed from the language of the savages or nautical terms.¹⁶

Bougainville evidently saw education in terms of both formal education and general intelligence and knowledge. In his eyes, Canadians were more "educated" than French peasants because they were more confident, informed, and well-spoken, not because they were more literate.¹⁷ Whether or not officers found Canadians full of wit or completely lacking in it, they all indicated that they admired a people which possessed spirit and intelligence comparable, perhaps, to partially literate members of the French urban populace, who served as the officers' principal standard of comparison. It was easier, they believed, to make useful soldiers and servants out of people who possessed initiative and intelligence. Officers' cautiously positive attitude toward formal and informal education suggests that Enlightenment ideas about the importance of education had gained some influence among the French elite by the middle of the eighteenth century. It is doubtful, however, whether many of Montcalm's officers believed in general or universal education; even Rousseau considered such an idea utopian.¹⁸

¹⁴ Parscau du Plessis, "Journal de la campagne de *la Sauvage*", *RAPQ* (1928-29): 225.

¹⁵ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 58, 61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61. See d'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 31 for his remarks on the lack of a Canadian *patois*.

¹⁷ For a discussion of French education during the pre-Revolutionary decades see Howard C. Barnard, *Education and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), pp. 1-15.

¹⁸ Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, pp. 223-27.

Education might have the effect of making commoners discontented with their lot in life, and Franquet was very concerned about the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame teaching Canadian habitant girls to read and write:

the evil which results from this is like a slow poison which tends to depopulate the countryside, for an instructed girl acts like a young lady, is well-mannered, wishes to establish herself in the city, needs a merchant [husband] and regards as beneath her the state in which she was born.¹⁹

He suggested that the Sisters' teaching order be reduced, if possible, and that girls should be content with the religious instruction of their *curés*.²⁰ Presumably, the Ursulines who educated the daughters of seigneurs were less of a danger to society, for Franquet neglected to criticize their work.

Officers considered Canadian women intelligent, witty, vivacious, amiable, and beautiful--qualities which eighteenth-century French noblemen greatly admired because they were necessary in cultivated society.²¹ On the other hand, the Frenchmen also criticized local women for being very "proud", by which they meant bold and independent.²² Although officers believed that this spirit of independence was a fault characteristic of all Canadians, it was especially reprehensible where women were concerned. Their open, friendly, and egalitarian attitude toward men, even those they had never met before, seemed vaguely unnatural, especially to officers who belonged to the provincial nobility. The visiting Frenchmen were concerned by certain potential dangers posed by this lack of subordination, for it had implications for the French family's traditional patriarchal structure.²³ For these noblemen, liberty and anarchy went hand in hand, and they feared that a reduction in parental control would be matched by a

¹⁹ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 31-32.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²¹ See Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 2: 103-9.

²² Montcalm to Marquise de Montcalm, 16 April 1757, NA, MG18, K7, vol. 3; Parscau du Plessis, "Journal de la campagne de *la Sauvage*". *RAPQ* (1928-29): 225; and d'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 29.

²³ Anderson and Zinsser, *A History of Their Own*. 1: 119-24, 133-40, 2: 26-43.

corresponding decline in a woman's willingness to be loyal to one man and bear and raise his children. They were extremely surprised when young women, who thought nothing of socializing with all sorts of men without the presence of a chaperone, refused to yield to their advances.²⁴ It was difficult for the young men to realize that the liberty young Canadian women enjoyed was not a sign of immorality.

French observers also found the status of women inside marriage intriguing. Méritens de Pradals was astonished to find that dowries, considered virtually essential by French people of all social backgrounds, did not exist in Canada.²⁵ Although this belief was not quite accurate, since dowries did exist in some form among all classes, and marriage contracts involving property were common among the seigneurial class, the relative rarity of formal dowries was significant.²⁶ If marriages were not intimately tied to parental negotiation and economics, this suggested that parents might have less control over the individuals getting married. Any reduction in parental discipline threatened the stability of the social and political hierarchy headed by the king, the father of all French subjects. A Canadian custom permitting young men and women to marry without the consent of their parents reinforced officers' concerns, for in France parents had legal authority over their children almost until their offspring reached middle age.²⁷ There is some significance in the fact that La Pause felt it worthwhile to mention that Canadian men loved their wives and that it was rare for couples to live in a state of separation, while Pouchot, in a similar vein, recorded how women seemed happy and well-treated.²⁸ To some extent, they were simply

²⁴ Montcalm to Bourlamaque, Montreal, 16 June 1757, *Lévis MSS*, 5: 168.

²⁵ Méritens de Pradals to his brother, 4 June 1756, in Douville, "Le Canada, 1756-1758", *Cahiers des dix* 24 (1959): 117. See also Anderson and Zinsser, *A History of Their Own*, 1: 120-22, 321, 394-40, 2: 31-34.

²⁶ For marriage and dowry practices at Louisbourg see Moore. *Louisbourg Portraits*, pp. 55-117.

²⁷ Bougainville. "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 59. For studies of women and the family in New France see Jan Noel, "New France: Les femmes favorisées", *Atlantis* 6 (1981): 80-98 and John F. Bosher, "The Family in New France", in *In Search of the Visible Past: History Lectures at Wilfred Laurier University 1973-1974*, ed. Barry M. Gough (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1975), pp. 1-13.

²⁸ La Pause, "Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada", *RAPQ* (1931-32): 10 and Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 45.

surprised that such civilized conditions should prevail in the wilds of North America, but one is also left with the impression that they found the treatment of women in Canada unusually good, even by French standards. Lack of dowries and fears about Canadian women notwithstanding, a number of officers, including Lieutenant Joseph Fournerie de Vezon of the artillery, did marry Canadian women.²⁹

With a few exceptions, such as Lévis and Bougainville, Montcalm's officers belonged to the conservative provincial nobility, and while they were influenced by the social mores prevalent at court, where marital infidelity among both sexes was common, they did not by any means wholeheartedly endorse such conduct. As a result, they were generally impressed by the morals prevalent among young Canadians, and fully approved of husbands treating their wives well, for just behaviour by the head of the family hierarchy contributed to marital happiness. Nevertheless, they were also uncertain about the apparent lack of social control over unmarried women, the frequent absence of dowries and parental consent to marriages, and the status of women in marriage. While they were not absolutely opposed to all such innovations, at the same time they were concerned that this lack of control might be abused and undermine family solidarity, creating problems for society in general. After all, even Rousseau, who was unusually liberal in his views on child raising, advocated the subordination of wives to their husbands and viciously criticized women who strayed beyond the boundaries of demure domesticity.³⁰ It did not seem natural for the weaker sex, destined for important domestic and maternal responsibilities and by strength and temperment apparently suited for little else, to lead independent lives.

Officers were especially concerned that aboriginal peoples were encouraging degeneracy among young Canadians. While the Frenchmen admired the military skills which Canadians had derived from their Indian allies, they did not see cultural contacts with natives in the same

²⁹ Joseph Fournerie de Vezon, "Événements de la guerre en Canada depuis le 13 septembre 1759 jusqu'au 14 juillet 1760", *RAPQ* (1938-39): vii.

³⁰ See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, trans. Barbara Foxley (London: Everyman's Library, 1974), pp. 320, 330, 337, 340-51, 370-71, 443-44 and Barnard, *Education and the French Revolution*, pp. 18-19.

light.³¹ Young habitants, wrote La Pause, were “raised from infancy to imitate the savages for whom they have, with reason, a singular esteem...Many speak their language, having passed a part of their lives with them at the [fur trading] posts.”³² The naval officer Parscau du Plessis was less impressed by people whom he believed had been raised like Indians.³³ French noblemen considered the native “principle that all men are born free” disquieting not so much because the Indians ardently believed in this “prerogative”, but because impressionable European settlers might be led astray by this idea, to the detriment of the state and society.³⁴ Stories circulated among the officers that Canadians were descended from deported criminals and prostitutes, and although these myths contained barely any truth, they reinforced a feeling that Canadians required a special degree of guidance and discipline.³⁵

Accustomed to seeing peasants work hard in all seasons in order to pay their obligations to the state, seigneur, and church and ward off starvation, French officers could not help but consider the habitant’s comfortable lifestyle lazy and unproductive. They perceived the colonists, like all common people, primarily as units of labour meant to supply the needs of the state and the social elite. This transfer of wealth was a basic requirement of civilization, which ultimately benefited all social groups. As will be seen, officers frequently blamed the Canadian administration for laxness in enforcing sufficient social and economic discipline among the common people. It was felt that if this tendency continued, and no one worked to support society, then Canadians could slip into a state of virtual barbarism. The visitors blamed the colonial

³¹ For a discussion of children in New France see Peter Moogk, “‘Les Petits sauvages’: The Children of Eighteenth Century New France”, in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 17-43.

³² La Pause, “Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada”, *RAPQ* (1931-32): 66.

³³ Parscau du Plessis, “Journal de la campagne de *la Sauvage*”, *RAPQ* (1928-29): 225.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

³⁵ De Blau to Bougainville, 15 Aug. 1759, cited in Kerallain, *Les français au Canada*, p. 134 and d’Aleyrac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 29. See Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 174 and Gustave Lanctôt, *Filles de joie ou filles du roi: Étude sur l’émigration féminine en Nouvelle-France* (Montreal: Éditions Chantecles, 1952) for a counter-argument.

authorities more than the common people for these supposed shortcomings, for they considered it natural that commoners would not work unless they had to. It was up to the habitants' social superiors to make them see their proper interests and push them in the right direction.

French officers often complained that Canadians were "haughty", "vainglorious", and "independent", and Montreuil wrote in frustration that the colonial authorities should be much stricter with the "independent, wicked, lying, braggart Canadians."³⁶ These military men were clearly aware that Canadians were not as subordinate to authority as they should be. Nevertheless, officers' complaints about habitant indiscipline were moderated by their equally frequent praise of Canadians' unusual willingness to serve their sovereign in any way possible. "Their love and submission for their Prince", wrote Bourlamaque, "made them sacrifice everything rather than wish to be suspected of the slightest disobedience to his Majesty's orders."³⁷ Similarly, Pouchot described the local people as "ardent patriots" who "evinced a strong attachment for their mother country".³⁸ In contrast to French peasants, who resisted and deeply resented militia conscription and military food requisitioning, Canadians served in the unpaid militia with apparent enthusiasm, accepted the quartering of troops in their homes all winter with good grace, and cooperated in selling their produce to Intendant Bigot's agents at extremely low fixed prices. Bourlamaque was amazed by their conduct, and claimed that "not a single one made the slightest complaint, even when their grain, cattle, sheep, hogs &c., were carried off, notwithstanding they were obliged to purchase for their support the same things at double what had been paid them."³⁹ His colleague Johnstone portrayed Canadians as a people "as brave as

³⁶ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 58; Montcalm to Bourlamaque, Montreal, 16 June 1757, *Lévis MSS*, 5: 168; and Montreuil to Comte d'Argenson, Montreal, 12 June 1756, *NYCD*, 10: 419.

³⁷ Bourlamaque, "Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1155.

³⁸ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 45.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10: 1155. See also La Pause, "Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada", *RAPQ* (1931-32): 10 and Jean-Nicolas Desandroüins, "Précis des événements de la campagne de 1756 en Nouvelle France, envoyé le 28 aoust de la dite année", *NA MG4, A1*, vol. 3498, no. 209.

they are docile and easy to be governed", who despite ruthless exploitation by Intendant Bigot and his friends, patiently bore "these horrible and infamous vexations" in the belief that they were serving their king and country.⁴⁰ Other officers made similar statements about how Canadians were the "dupe and victim" of the rapacious authorities.⁴¹

Twenty years later, in the midst of a new war, the Loyalist Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur looked back on the Canadian campaigns. Canada might have defeated the invasion forces, he thought, had not "France overlooked it until it was too late. The very struggle they [Canadians] made during the last war shows what they could have done had they been on a broader bottom."⁴² Canadians, in his nostalgic memory, were simple, virtuous, and patriotic people who fell victim to the greed of British and American politicians, and the Conquest had not improved their lot:

Had they been slaves before, this change would have improved them, but they perhaps were happier than the citizens of Boston, perpetually brawling about liberty without knowing what it was. They were equally secured in the possession of their lands. They loved, though at a distance, the name of a monarch who seldom thought about them. They were united; they were strangers to factions and murmurs and to those evils which disturb society; they were healthy, hardy, subject to no diseases besides old age. Ignorant, they envied not the lot of their more learned, more gaudy neighbours. They ploughed, they fished, they hunted, they discovered new nations.⁴³

Although Crèvecoeur's words were affected by the Rousseauian temper of the 1770's, his basic opinions on Canadians were shaped by his experiences in Canada during the Seven Years' War, and were similar to those of other French officers with Montcalm. The French visitors usually

⁴⁰ James Johnstone, "The Campaign in Canada from the Death of Montcalm", in Jean Blanchet and Narcisse-Henri-Édouard, Faucher de Saint-Maurice, eds., *Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires, et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France, recueillis aux archives de la Province de Québec ou copiés à l'étranger (MRNF)*, 4 vols. (Québec: A. Côté et Cie., 1883-1885), 4: 242 and James Johnstone, "The Campaign of Canada, 1760", *MRNF*, 4: 262.

⁴¹ Anonymous, "The Siege of Quebec in 1759", in *The Siege of Quebec in 1759: Three Eye-Witness Accounts*, ed. Jean-Claude Hébert (Québec: Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, 1974), p. 57. For a few Canadian perspectives on the war see the rest of Hébert's collection as well as Aegidius Fauteux, ed., *Journal du siège de Québec du 10 mai au 18 septembre 1759* (Québec: n.p., 1922); Nicolas Renaud d'Avène des Méloizes, "Journal militaire tenu par Nicolas Renaud d'Avène des Méloizes, cher., seigneur de Neuville au Canada", *RAPQ* (1928-29): 1-86; and anonymous, "Relation du siège de Québec", in *Siege of Quebec*, ed. Doughty and Parmelee, 5: 303-26.

⁴² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 173.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

blamed the Canadian elite for whatever alleged shortcomings common Canadians had, not the habitants themselves.

It is significant that Johnstone not only denied that Canadians were independent and unruly by nature, but considered them unusually obedient subjects. The Scottish Calvinist tradition of borough self-government, parliamentary government, religious and secular covenants, and national resistance against foreign domination resulted in a degree of political mobilization among the Scottish citizenry which went far beyond anything which existed in France, where the elite and the common people were divided by a tremendous gulf.⁴⁴ Where some French officers in Canada detected signs of potential popular disorder, Johnstone saw only a harassed citizenry. French officers' praise of habitant conduct was a direct result of their surprise that independent-minded Canadian soldiers and civilians usually obeyed orders despite serious grievances and a lack of overt coercion by the authorities. French peasants would have evaded military service and requisitioning if given the chance, but Canadians, despite opportunities to shirk their responsibilities, voluntarily chose to participate in the defence of their province and to feed the armies. The visiting noblemen could not conceal their surprise at this unexpected behaviour by commoners who were in other ways so difficult to manage.

Canadian seigneurs attracted their share of criticism. Local seigneurs and their sons virtually monopolized commissions in the Canadian companies of colonial regulars, and French visitors such as Captain Armand Joannès of the Régiment de Languedoc considered them ignorant and unprofessional.⁴⁵ Line officers especially disapproved of fort commanders in the west obtaining trading concessions from the government, which the officers used to accumulate fortunes in the fur trade. Post commanders formed partnerships with merchants and sometimes sold a portion

⁴⁴ David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (Newton Abbot, U.K.: David & Charles, 1973), pp. 15-16, 19, 82-85, 276-78 and Arthur H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: The Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1979), pp. 140-46.

⁴⁵ Armand Joannès, "Mémoire sur la campagne de 1759 depuis le mois de mai jusqu'en septembre", in *Siege of Quebec*, ed. Doughty and Parmelee, 4: 229.

of the gifts which the king intended for distribution to the Indians for extra profits.⁴⁶ Bourlamaque believed that the profits of the fur trade could be greatly increased by eliminating the monopoly held by the western fort commanders, who kept prices high and discouraged trade.⁴⁷ His colleague Bougainville was even harsher. In his opinion, "Everything that is happening in the colonies constitutes a criticism of aristocrats engaged in trade", for in the unrestrained pursuit of wealth, noblemen lost their traditional military virtues of honour and service--in other words, the very talents which gave them their social utility and justified their social elevation.⁴⁸ This economic activity threatened to erode social barriers between noblemen and bourgeois merchants. The lack of distinction between noble and non-noble officers in Canada also annoyed Bougainville, for commoners could live nobly as seigneurs and follow the military profession. In France *roturier* officers were at least nominally distinguished from their colleagues, but in Canada this was not the case: "In general, wholesale and retail commerce is practiced by everyone; this is the reason why there is less distinction of status, and why they regard as nobles all the officers' families."⁴⁹ Montcalm was displeased when the Canadian Governor-General, Vaudreuil, appeared to favour marriages between noble French officers and Canadian commoners, and acidly commented in his correspondence with the Minister of War that the governor's conduct was understandable because "he is encompassed by relatives of mean extraction."⁵⁰ Merchants, according to most officers, made poor soldiers. Even Montcalm's bourgeois aide Marcel cast aspersions on the martial virtues of "workers and merchants, who

⁴⁶ See William J. Eccles, "The Social, Economic and Political Significance of the Military Establishment in New France", in *Essays on New France* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 118-19 and Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, pp. 145-48.

⁴⁷ Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1141.

⁴⁸ Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 201. Cameron Nish argues that the Canadian nobility had adopted a bourgeois mentality and could barely be distinguished from merchants. Other historians, however, disagree with this assessment. See Cameron Nish, *Les bourgeois-gentilshommes de la Nouvelle-France, 1729-1748* (Montreal: Fides, 1968).

⁴⁹ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 61.

⁵⁰ Montcalm to Comte d'Argenson, Montreal, 24 April 1757, *NYCD*, 10: 550.

never go to war. Besides [they are] guided by their personal interests. One can judge of what help a swarm of fighters of this type would be for a besieged town."⁵¹

French officers strongly criticized the policies and conduct of the colonial administration.⁵² Montcalm never ceased to complain about the supposed incompetence and interference of Governor-General Vaudreuil, his immediate superior, who held a nominal military rank and, in Montcalm's opinion, was not qualified to run the campaign.⁵³ Vaudreuil was also blamed for turning a blind eye to the activities of Intendant François Bigot. The Intendant was responsible for supplying the army, but he went beyond even the standards of the time in profiting from his position, and made millions of livres requisitioning food from the habitants at a low fixed price and then selling it to himself in his official capacity at a massive profit.⁵⁴ Canadians of the seigneurial class saw nothing wrong with Bigot's conduct, but many French officers, whose meagre salaries were eroded by inflation which they blamed on Bigot, were more critical.⁵⁵ Although their scruples did not prevent them from attending Bigot's lavish dinner parties, many echoed Johnstone's disgust at "the manner in which immense fortunes are made in this

⁵¹ Pierre Marcel, "Journal abrégé de la campagne de 1759 en Canada par M. M*** ayde de camp de M. le Mis. de Montcalm", in *Siege of Quebec*, ed. Doughty and Parmelee, 5: 229.

⁵² For a good description of the operation of the Canadian government see Yves F. Zoltvany, *The Government of New France: Royal, Clerical, or Class Rule?* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 1-23.

⁵³ Montcalm to Berryer, Montreal, 12 April 1759, *MRNF*, 4: 226; Montcalm to Comte d'Argenson, Montreal, 24 April 1757, *NYCD*, 10: 550; Montcalm to Bourlamaque, 9 Dec. 1758, *Lévis MSS*, 5: 285; and Montcalm, *Journal*, *Lévis MSS*, 7: 542.

⁵⁴ See Guy Frégault, *François Bigot, administrateur français*, 2 vols. (Montreal: L'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française, 1948) and John F. Boshier, "Government and Private Interests in New France", in *Canadian History Before Confederation*, ed. J. M. Bumstead (Georgetown, Ont.: Irwin-Dorsey, 1972), pp. 110-24.

⁵⁵ Montreuil to Comte d'Argenson, Montreal, 12 June 1756, *NYCD*, 10: 419. For a good idea of what the high cost of living meant for the average officer see Méritens de Prélais' comments in Douville, "Le Canada, 1756-1758". *Les cahiers des dix* 24 (1959): 117-18, 122, 124; 127.

country.”⁵⁶ Officers also accused the government of economic incompetence, and Montcalm frankly told the Minister of War that “Our government is worth nothing.”⁵⁷

It is difficult to assess this criticism. On the one hand, it might be interpreted as a call for government in the public interest. But it also reflected the resentment of people who had no access to the web of patronage and privilege which produced such wealth. A Parisian gunner in the colonial regulars believed that if the French metropolitan authorities had sent inspectors to Canada and put an end to the gross abuses prevalent in the colonial administration, Canada would have shown a profit rather than constituted a drain on the French treasury. At the same time, he was proud of having made a small fortune from his appointment as military storekeeper at Fort Duquesne.⁵⁸ Officers possessed an ideal of a relatively efficient, fair government organized along hierarchical lines, not unlike the military hierarchy, but they did not yet conceive of an anonymous bureaucracy operating according to almost scientific principles.⁵⁹ They tended to attribute political and economic problems to the moral faults of individual authorities rather than to a need for institutional reform. In accordance with a prevalent eighteenth-century mindset, whenever things went awry, critics immediately attempted to identify the corrupt conspirators who were deliberately sabotaging the system, urging that they be purged and replaced by persons of integrity.⁶⁰ For officers, these persons of integrity had to be dedicated to the king, motivated by honour rather than material concerns, well-informed, and armed with natural authority. Who could be better suited to such a task than themselves? In fact, La Pause was under the impression that Canada had originally been under a military government, and he wanted this regime restored

⁵⁶ Johnstone, “The Campaign in Canada, 1760”, *MRNF*, 4: 242; Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1:95; and Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 201.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, “Siege of Quebec in 1759”, in *Siege of Quebec*, ed. Hébert, p. 87; Bourlamaque, “Memoir on Canada”, *NYCD*, 10: 1139; and Montcalm to Duc de Belle-Isle, Montreal, 12 April 1759, *MRNF*, 4: 226.

⁵⁸ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, pp. 101, 104, 125.

⁵⁹ Boshier, *French Finances*, pp. 276-302.

⁶⁰ See S. Dale Standen, “Politics, Patronage, and the Imperial Interest: Charles de Beauharnois’s Disputes with Gilles Hocquart”, *Canadian Historical Review* 60 (1979): 22.

in order to curb the corrupt government which had developed in the meantime.⁶¹ Officers' solutions to Canada's problems called for more honest, noble-minded administrators and better laws, not major constitutional changes. They accepted Canada's somewhat chaotic political organization more or less as it was, without subjecting it to sophisticated, systematic analysis. Officers also believed that subjects had an array of customary rights, but they showed no interest in formally defining these liberties or setting them in law. The king would presumably not violate the rights or privileges thought necessary to maintain the social hierarchy and his own authority.

Officers also made negative comments about the lower ranks of the administration. Bougainville thought that captains of militia, who were habitants charged with local powers of administration, assumed too many social pretensions. Their prestige in the parishes, which allowed them to acquire "a pew at church ahead of that of the co-seigneurs", who were usually noble members of the chief seigneur's family, shocked him.⁶² Any breach in the social hierarchy, however small, threatened the whole system because it undermined the people's understanding of who their superiors actually were. In France, local officials with real power were either noblemen of the robe or commoners well on their way to purchasing noble status. Bougainville, an author well known in intellectual circles in London and Paris, was probably one of the most liberal officers in Montcalm's army, but he could not accept even this small discrepancy.

Officers did not see commoners who held positions of authority in the municipal administrations as a serious threat because they belonged to local organizations recognized as clearly inferior to the noble-dominated royal administration and provincial estates. One officer wrote a condescending, satirical description of a special municipal council held in Quebec in 1759, but he mocked the disorderliness and pretensions of its bourgeois members without special

⁶¹ Jean-Guillaume-Charles Plantavit de Margon, Chevalier de La Pause, "Les 'Papiers' La Pause", *RAPQ* (1933-34): 207.

⁶² Bougainville. "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 55. For an assessment of captains of militia see Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 99-100.

malice.⁶³ The French visitors also noted the lack of “archers” or policemen in the colony, and Montreuil complained that “The Governor and Intendant are too easy and too remiss in a country where greater strictness is required than in any other.”⁶⁴

Ironically, considering the anticlericalism common in the French officer corps at this time, the only element of the Canadian elite which most of Montcalm’s officers approved of were the clergy. The Roman Catholic church was the preferred target of such anticlerical Enlightenment writers as Voltaire, who accused the clergy of being social parasites who cultivated superstition and fanaticism among the common people while mercilessly persecuting anyone who strayed from their doctrines.⁶⁵ Although scepticism and possibly deism had made inroads among officers, it was still possible for the Chevalier de La Pause to find “marked traits of a particular Providence” in the success of Gaspard-Joseph Chaussegros de Léry’s raid on Fort Bull in the Mohawk Valley.⁶⁶ La Pause considered it significant that the Canadian militiamen, who placed themselves under the protection of the Holy Virgin before the attack, struck “on the Saturday in the Octave of the Annunciation.”⁶⁷ His commander, Montcalm, whose fervent Catholic mother had converted the general’s Huguenot father to the Catholic faith, frequently recorded his thankfulness to God in his journal and correspondence.⁶⁸

Most officers agreed that the church in Canada was free of the luxury, absenteeism, and immorality which plagued the church in France, and considered the Breton bishop Henri-Marie Dubreil de Pontbriand a model to his clergy and the people of his diocese, who accorded him

⁶³ Anonymous, “Siege of Quebec in 1759”, in *Siege of Quebec in 1759*, ed. Hébert, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁴ Bougainville, “Mémoire sur l’état de la Nouvelle-France”, *RAPQ* (1923-24): 59 and Montreuil to Comte d’Argenson, 12 June 1756, *NYCD*, 10: 419.

⁶⁵ Gay, *Voltaire’s Politics*, p. 24.

⁶⁶ Jean-Guillaume-Charles de Plantavit, Chevalier de La Pause, “Relations de la prise d’un entrepôt anglois le 27 mars 1756 dans lequel il y avoit environ quarante milliers de poudre”, *RAPQ* (1932-33): 321.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁶⁸ Chapais, *Montcalm*, pp. 2-4.

great affection and esteem.⁶⁹ In addition, religious orders, which in France were often accused of consuming public wealth and hampering population growth, performed useful public functions which benefited the state and the people alike. Even Bougainville, who later criticized the Jesuits for running theocratic, despotic missions in Paraguay, praised the Canadian church for its utilitarian role.⁷⁰ He strongly approved of the way it established institutions to take care of the sick, mentally ill, and small numbers of “deserving” poor, but did not provide a haven for lazy people who preferred charity to honest work: “It could be the same everywhere; hospitals of the poor serve only to authorize idleness; and there are in effect almost no poor here and people beg neither in the streets nor in the churches, but those who are in real need beg with the permission of the priest.”⁷¹ As was common in the eighteenth century, he did not recognize the legitimacy of unemployment, for there was always theoretically work to be done, even if it involved hard labour at starvation wages. He also testified to the religious and by extension political orthodoxy of Canadians when he wrote to his brother, a recently-elected member of the Académie française, that not only were there no Jansenists in Canada, but people even refused to associate with individuals who knew what one was.⁷² Bougainville was a former lawyer of the Parlement of Paris, which protected the heretical Jansenists from persecution by zealous Catholic authorities, and he knew that his brother would understand his message that Canadians were religiously and by extension politically orthodox, accepting clerical and royal authority virtually without question.⁷³

⁶⁹ Parscau du Plessis, “Journal de la campagne de la *Sauvage*”, *RAPQ* (1928-29): 217 and La Pause, “Journal de l’entrée de la campagne de 1760”, *RAPQ* (1932-33): 386. See also Cornelius J. Jaenen, *The Role of the Church in New France* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976) and A. John B. Johnston, *Religion and Life at Louisbourg 1713-1758* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1984).

⁷⁰ Bougainville, *Voyage autour du monde*, pp. 129-44.

⁷¹ Bougainville, “Mémoire sur l’état de la Nouvelle-France”, *RAPQ* (1923-24): 64.

⁷² Bougainville to Jean-Pierre de Bougainville, 1758, cited in Guy Frégault, “Une société à hauteur d’homme: La Nouvelle-France”, *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française* 17 (1963): 10. For an interesting discussion of Jansenism see Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 71-74.

⁷³ Robin Briggs, *Early Modern France 1560-1715* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 183-92.

There was a consensus among the Frenchmen that a moderate, pious clergy was useful in cultivating general morality and obedience to God and king. An institution like the church, they felt, was useful in checking the turbulent Canadian character, and they considered it a good sign that Canadians were “generally religious and of good morals.”⁷⁴ Their chief concern was that fanaticism or laxness on the part of the clergy might undermine public order and interfere with the smooth functioning of the state. In Bourlamaque’s opinion, the bishop appointed to the diocese should be “sufficiently enlightened to prevent religion being, in his hands, an obstacle to the good of the colony.”⁷⁵ He proposed settling foreign Protestant settlers in Canada in order to increase the colony’s population, but it is evident that he did not genuinely tolerate religious dissent. He considered it likely that most of these Protestant families would voluntarily adopt the dominant Catholic religion, but if they proved reluctant to do so, he calmly suggested, they might “be constrained to have their children baptized.”⁷⁶ His well-read superior Montcalm, whose Huguenot ancestors had loyally fought for the Catholic kings of France, was less willing to forcibly convert potential Protestant settlers, for he hoped that Huguenots could be attracted to Canada from France and places of exile by a guarantee of toleration. He still, however, thought it wise to settle them around Trois-Rivières so that they would be isolated from the American colonies by a zone of loyal Catholics.⁷⁷

Bourlamaque’s frank support for state coercion of the church and church coercion of innocent civilians reveals the extent to which French officers’ beliefs had been shaped by the authoritarian society they belonged to. Bourlamaque’s willingness to exploit the church and unsuspecting settlers in order to further the needs of the state resembles Machiavelli’s secular political philosophy more than any Enlightenment ideal. His proposal, which would have found

⁷⁴ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 46 and Parscau du Plessis, “Journal de la campagne de *la Sauvage*”, *RAIQ* (1928-29): 224.

⁷⁵ Bourlamaque, “Memoir on Canada”, *NYCD*, 10: 1145.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 10: 1148.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, “Extrait des mémoires de Mr. de Montcalm”. *NA*, MG18, K7, vol. 1.

favour with almost any minister of Louis XIV, is typical of the time. If a cold, secular, elitist reason was slowly beginning to supplement tradition as a criterion for officers' assessments of society, there was certainly no hint of a democratic, sentimental, Rousseauian conscience in their approach to problems.

Montcalm's officers were subdued in their anticlerical attitudes mainly because the Canadian church at this time seemed to conform to its proper role in respect to the state. However, the engineer Franquet, in the colony earlier in the 1750's, was not so sure about the purity of the Canadian church. He observed sinister designs behind almost everything the clergy did. For example, he noted that missionaries encouraged the Kahnawake Mohawks to build homes of logs and even stone, but suspected that the priests did this so that they could profit from the houses when the Indians moved elsewhere.⁷⁸ The grey nuns, lay sisters who devoted their lives to helping the poor, he saw as "nothing but free girls", since they did not take vows and were unrecognized by the king or Pope. Franquet wanted their order suppressed and taken over by the more disciplined Sisters of Charity. It was best, he thought, to act quickly before the grey nuns increased in number and wealth--and by implication became a powerful body independent of the state.⁷⁹ Franquet wanted to discipline the church, not destroy it. Amid all of these attacks on the church he attended mass.⁸⁰

The religious scepticism which formed such a prominent part of the early Enlightenment had affected some officers' way of looking at the world. The calculating manner in which officers assessed the church and Protestant heresy suggests that for many officers Roman Catholic spirituality was not at the centre of their lives. There probably were many sincere, devout Catholic officers who strongly supported the Catholic church, but there were also latitudinarian Catholics who gave their qualified support to the Catholic church more out of habit than a belief that it

⁷⁸ Franquet. *Voyages*. p. 38.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

had a monopoly on religious truth. They identified the Gallican church with their country and considered themselves, with some justice, Catholics. These officers believed that the church was especially important because it encouraged devotion to God and the king, reinforced moral values such as honesty, hard work, and obedience, and helped to take care of the poor and unfortunate. Many of them supported the Catholic church because they felt that a state needed an established church to organize uniform and politically correct worship, not because they had great faith in Catholic doctrine. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that Catholicism still had a great hold on French officers of this period. For all of their anticlericalism and occasional impiety, few would have refused confession and absolution at the end of their lives. A minority of Montcalm's officers may have been genuine deists, in effect rejecting Roman Catholicism and Christianity. If they existed, however, they left no overt record of their opinions; nor did any atheists, who were practically unknown at this time.

Montcalm's officers' very traditional social, political, and religious beliefs reflected, at least to some extent, the nature of early Enlightenment thought, which stressed rationally organized social and political structures and religious scepticism, but not inherent rights or egalitarianism. Their vision of an ideal society called for modest reforms supposedly benefiting society as a whole, but their assumptions about society as a hierarchy of orders resting on political, social, and economic inequality almost ensured that their ideas were thoroughly unrevolutionary.

Indeed, officers in Canada were far more concerned about defending the status quo than attacking it. They were very uneasy about the habitants' independent character, tax exemptions, standard of living, and customs regarding marriage and children, all of which seemed to undermine social discipline among the common people. The visitors squarely blamed the Canadian elite, which seemed very lax in enforcing necessary social distinctions at all levels of the hierarchy, for this lack of social discipline. The longer such popular behaviour was entrenched by custom, the more difficult uprooting it would be, and there were numerous examples of French peasants rebelling against new tax levies or extensions of customary seigneurial

obligations. It would not be surprising if the visiting officers learned of how outraged Canadian habitants were on occasions when the authorities attempted to tamper with established custom. Nevertheless, a few officers thought that "reforms" in Canada were still possible. What surprised many officers was that despite the lack of social control in Canada, habitants were patriotic, fulfilled their duties to the crown with unusual enthusiasm, and often showed remarkable orderliness and self-discipline.

Although officers discussed the state's role in organizing society at length, they evinced no clear idea of personal rights or the limits of royal power. These Frenchmen of the 1750's were fundamentally apolitical. They saw politics merely as a process of deciding which individuals were to fill specific posts in the hierarchy of authority descending from the king. They took for granted that enlightened but absolute monarchy was the most logical form of government, and they had no real concept of law besides tradition. Only in spiritual matters were officers affected by quasi-liberal ideas associated with the Enlightenment, for scepticism and anticlericalism were present in among the officer corps. Nevertheless, they still defended the idea of an established church, and were ambiguous in their attitudes toward religious toleration.

French officers who took part in the Seven Years' War spent several years camped just beyond the periphery of British North America, and for military reasons gathered intelligence about their enemies from books, captured soldiers and civilians, enemy deserters, returned prisoners of war, and British officers who participated in parleys. Several captured Frenchmen visited the colony and city of New York and left a record of their stay. Though officers' observations on the American colonies are a poor guide to contemporary American life, they provide extremely valuable insights into their own social, political, and economic attitudes. The fact that the American colonies were socially, politically, economically, and culturally different from both France and Canada pushed officers' analytical abilities to greater limits.

American egalitarianism, liberty, and autonomy from the crown and Parliament amazed and horrified French officers, and they wondered how Britain could possibly govern their colonies under such conditions. The liberty prevalent in these possessions were the antithesis of everything the *ancien régime* represented, but this did not prevent officers from hoping to encourage these subversive opinions in order to achieve certain military and political goals. They happily criticized American slavery and unenlightened Indian policy, but admitted that the French did not treat their slaves or Indian allies a great deal better. Indeed, their criticisms of slavery concerned the treatment of slaves rather than the institution itself. Only in the realm of religious toleration and ethnic diversity did officers display some vaguely liberal Enlightenment attitudes, but here as well their liberal thought had decided limits.

Officers in Montcalm's army found American social and political ideas both foreign and repellant, and they were almost consistently negative in their assessments of American social customs and political culture. They were especially critical of the egalitarianism prevalent in the American colonies. Pouchot, himself the son of a merchant, was astonished by the New England custom of commissioning officers for a six-month period every year instead of giving them permanent commissions, which in his opinion would give officers more prestige and authority among their soldiers. Even worse, he believed, was the fact that some men would serve as officers in one campaign, fight as common soldiers in the next, and then perhaps receive officers' commissions for the following campaign. Nothing, for Pouchot, could be better calculated to reduce their authority almost to nil.⁸¹ Although of bourgeois background, he was no more able to accept this democratic antithesis of French social and military values than his noble colleagues. Few officers would have disagreed with a Louisbourg merchant who in 1745 accused William Pepperrell of breaking the articles of capitulation after the fall of the fortress, writing in disgust:

⁸¹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 88. See Anderson, *A People's Army*, pp. 48-50, 114, 169, 191-92.

"What could we expect from a man, who, it is said, is the son of a shoemaker of Boston?"⁸² An Englishman's word, the merchant concluded, could never be trusted, especially in distant colonies, "where honour is among things unknown."⁸³

French observers did not demonstrate much admiration for Anglo-American liberties or representative institutions either. Voltaire's praise for William Penn's Quaker colony of Pennsylvania and the constitutionally enlightened Carolinas may have encouraged French literary figures to associate the American colonies with political and social progress.⁸⁴ But military officers had a more pragmatic attitude toward American constitutionalism and liberty, and their views were probably shared by many other members of the nobility and educated public. Not all of them, for instance, agreed that the liberty of the press advocated by many of the *philosophes* was desirable, for libel and irresponsible attacks on the government and religious truths could adversely affect public order to the detriment of the public good. War commissary Benoît-François Bernier worried that the lack of censorship in the American and British press might give currency to false stories about Vaudreuil's cruelty to prisoners of war, for "In a country where everything is printed, it makes an astonishing impression."⁸⁵ There was little sign of Voltaire's and Montesquieu's anglophile political opinions in officers' writings, and indeed no overt references to political theory at all.⁸⁶

In addition, officers were surprised by the virtually sovereign powers of the colonial assemblies. "These singular people", wrote a Louisbourg merchant during the War of the Austrian Succession, "have a system of laws and of protection peculiar to themselves, and their

⁸² George M. Wrong, ed., *Louisbourg in 1745: The Anonymous "Lettre d'un habitant de Louisbourg" (Cape Breton) Containing a Narrative by an Eye-witness of the Siege in 1745* (New York: New Amsterdam Book Co., 1897), p. 65.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁸⁴ Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs*, 2: 381 and Echeverria, *Mirage in the West*, pp. 15-19.

⁸⁵ Bernier to Lévis, Quebec, 20 Oct. 1759, *Lévis MSS*, 10: 19.

⁸⁶ Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, pp. 58, 102, 115, 217-21.

Governor carries himself like a monarch."⁸⁷ He also noted that the colonists seemed to conduct their military operations without reference to the British military authorities. "What other monarchy was ever governed in such a way?...Only the English are capable of such oddities, which nevertheless form a part of that precious liberty of which they show themselves so jealous."⁸⁸ French officers a decade later offered similar opinions, and an anonymous analyst of Montcalm's journal, probably Bougainville, declared in astonishment that "These English colonies enjoy an almost republican liberty; they even...conserve the right to examine and reject...the orders that can come from the court of England."⁸⁹ Since the colonists were "very little attached to the English government", the analyst suggested that in the future every attempt should be made to manipulate ambitious governors resentful of orders from England.⁹⁰

La Pause agreed; he believed that if a French squadron captured Nova Scotia, it could sail to Boston and "ask the Parlement for an audience" to arrange a peace treaty, for he assumed that the General Court of Massachusetts had sovereign treaty-making powers.⁹¹ He had no doubt that the French could impress Massachusetts and other colonies with the power and generosity of the King of France and offer them an alliance as independent states, for the American provinces, La Pause explained, had cause to complain about the English court and the governors it sent over, "who seek to diminish little by little the authority of their chambers."⁹² His views on colonial independence were indeed prophetic:

The English treat them as masters do: they can do without them, [for] circumstance offers them a favourable occasion to form a state by making a treaty of alliance with France and treaties of commerce with all the other states; free in their government and in their possessions, they would become every day more powerful from the inhabitants of different

⁸⁷ Wrong, ed., *Louisbourg in 1745*, p. 37.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38, 57.

⁸⁹ Anonymous. "Extrait des mémoires de Mr. de Montcalm", PAC, MG18, K7, vol. 1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ La Pause, "Mémoire sur la campagne à faire en Canada l'année 1757", *RAPQ* (1932-33): 337-38.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 337.

nations and different religions who will go to establish themselves there, and could hope one day to form a flourishing republic.⁹³

La Pause was certainly not the first Frenchman to suggest that the American colonies might become independent, for the concept had occasionally been mentioned since the beginning of the eighteenth century, but his idea that the American colonies could combine to form a successful republic is interesting. Despite contemporary criticisms of republics as impractical political organizations which could not form large unitary states and still maintain their traditional republican system, it is evident that La Pause and presumably others could imagine the colonies forming a successful union akin to the Swiss Confederation, an entity made up of sovereign republican cantons which united on general questions of foreign policy and defence.

Usually, however, the officers did not see quite this far ahead, and considered the colonies individually rather than collectively. Mirroring La Pause's views on Massachusetts, Bougainville was under the illusion that Pennsylvania with its large German and Quaker population was prepared, under the pressure of devastating Indian raids which were laying waste to much of the province, to become an independent republic under French protection.⁹⁴ It was true that the Quakers were seeking peace with the Indians, but they had no intention of seceding from the British Empire.⁹⁵ Other officers, such as Lévis and Montcalm, were aware of anti-British and anti-war sentiment in the colonies, although many may have believed, like Montcalm, that the time for revolt was not yet ripe. One officer, in fact, was certain that it would require centuries for the American colonies to become independent kingdoms and republics.⁹⁶

The degree of confidence with which some officers predicted that British colonies would willingly become French protectorates is significant in another respect, for it reveals not only their desperate hopes, but the particular mindset within which they operated. It is evident that

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 337-38.

⁹⁴ Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 191.

⁹⁵ Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, pp. 266-68, 281.

⁹⁶ Péan to Lévis, Chambly, 13 July 1758, *Lévis MSS*, 10: 87; Montcalm, *Journal*, *Lévis MSS*, 7: 168-69; and anonymous, "Mémoire sur le Canada", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 24.

La Pause saw alliances with the American provinces in much the same light as he saw France's treaties with its various dependencies, such as the Republic of Genoa. He saw no reason why cultural, ethnic, or constitutional ties between Great Britain and her colonies would present much of an obstacle to his plan. French officers underestimated the strength of English national consciousness, which was different in nature from French national consciousness. The long-term political unity of the English state, its geographic unity, and the special brand of patriotism which united all social classes, a result of a significant degree of political mobilization among the English people, created a sense of English nationalism which had not disappeared among settlers who took up residence overseas. American parochialism, sense of religious identity, and ethnic diversity were indeed realities, but officers tended to exaggerate the ease with which colonists would sever their ties with the mother country. The Frenchmen rarely if ever used the word *patrie* or fatherland, although the celebrated Montesquieu had frequently employed it throughout the 1740's, and when they referred to a "nation" they simply meant a people living in a particular country or province. "Nation" did not yet mean, for them, a free and happy national community, as the word *patrie* also came to signify.⁹⁷

Although African slaves died by their thousands in the French West Indies and Canadians owned a significant number of Indian and black slaves, French officers felt free to criticize the condition of bondsmen in the English colonies.⁹⁸ Pouchot thought that the English treated their slaves unjustly, and one of his men, who shared his captivity in New York, was horrified "by the barbarous way they punished negroes", attempting at one point to dissuade an inn owner from flogging a young slave.⁹⁹ However, the French gunner went on to explain that West Africans were

⁹⁷ Jacques Godechot, "Nation, patrie, nationalisme et patriotisme en France au XVIIIe siècle", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 43 (1971): 485-92.

⁹⁸ For a discussion of American slavery see Edwin J. Perkins, *The Economy of Colonial America*, 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 91-114. For an outdated but adequate examination of the conditions endured by slaves in the French islands see Shelby T. McCloy, *The Negro in the French West Indies* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), pp. 15-34.

⁹⁹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 71 and J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, p. 132.

depraved because "Their lack of civilization has left them with neither intellect nor judgement", while native African slavers treated their slaves worse than the Europeans they sold them to. He condemned the punishment of slaves in Saint-Domingue and elsewhere as uncivilized, but did not openly state that slavery itself should be abolished.¹⁰⁰ He also revised his diary during the French Revolution, using Raynal's abolitionist history of the colonies as a reference book, and this may have enhanced his unusually progressive ideas concerning slavery.

Officers never directly questioned the institution of slavery itself--except, of course, when Indians enslaved their white prisoners, for then it became an unspeakable crime.¹⁰¹ Even Bougainville, the budding *philosophe*, after suggesting that the French carry off as many slaves as possible from Virginia and the Carolinas in order to undermine the economies of these provinces, declined to add that the black prisoners should be liberated.¹⁰² After his return to France on parole he wrote two memoirs proposing the establishment of Canadian settlers and African slaves in Louisiana, pointing to the phenomenal prosperity of Saint-Domingue, where although there were only a third as many whites as in Canada, the island produced twenty times as much wealth as the northern colony. There "is not a negro in Saint-Domingue who does not contribute by his production to the maintenance of several families in France, and who does not augment as much the population of the kingdom."¹⁰³ Free commerce in slaves for five years would be a great boon to Louisiana, in his opinion.¹⁰⁴ The Frenchmen disapproved of the criminal abuse of slaves and other members of the lower social orders because this was contrary to the good of society, but at the same time they considered it necessary to keep these groups of

¹⁰⁰ J. C. B., *Travels in New France.*, p. 133.

¹⁰¹ Bougainville. *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 173.

¹⁰² Bougainville. "Réflexions sur la campagne prochaine--examen de cette question: si Québec pris le Canada l'est; et de cette autre: si le Canada perdu la France peut soutenir la Louisiane", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 17.

¹⁰³ Louis-Antoine de Bougainville. "Moyens de peupler La Louisiane--Encouragements à donner aux habitants du Canada pour passer au Mississippi", June 1761, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 319.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 320.

unenlightened commoners in a state of subordination. Slaves were simply people on the bottom rung of the social ladder, and officers did not need racial theories to explain why they should remain there.

Officers were also somewhat hypocritical when they criticized Americans for their poor relations with the Indian nations. All of the officers, whether they liked Indians or not, congratulated themselves on having a better Indian policy than the English, citing the love the Indians had for the French and their hatred for the English.¹⁰⁵ Pouchot was pleased to report that General John Forbes, the British commander on the frontier of Pennsylvania, had to threaten rather than persuade the Indians to abandon their French allies--testimony to English brutality and French benevolence--and he warned wavering Indians near the end of the war that the English "will treat you, and your other Indian friends, worse than their dogs and negroes".¹⁰⁶ At the same time, however, some Frenchmen admitted that their alliance with the Indian nations depended largely upon the principles of power politics, for the Indians tended to join the side which seemed the strongest.¹⁰⁷

The religious scepticism of the Enlightenment, which undermined any church's claim to a monopoly on religious truth, made religious toleration a popular concept in intellectual circles before the middle of the century. Many officers expressed approval of religious toleration in the American colonies, and even asserted that it did not go far enough. This was a rather hypocritical attitude considering that in France Protestants were still being sent to the galleys for attending a religious service, occasionally had their children forcibly removed to be raised as Catholics, and were even tortured and executed on absurd charges, but at least it indicates that officers were sympathetic toward some liberal ideas.¹⁰⁸ The Society of Friends or Quakers was mentioned more

¹⁰⁵ Rossel. "Journal de ma campagne à l'île Royale (1757)". *RAPQ* (1931-32): 381. See also La Jonquière to Philipps, 7 March 1751, Quebec, *MRNF*, 3: 504.

¹⁰⁶ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 71, 148.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 71. See also J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁸ Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, pp. 289 and Durant and Durant, *Age of Voltaire*, pp. 727-36.

frequently than any other denomination because thanks to Voltaire and other writers they were well known as virtuous primitive Christians living in the modern world and because they had dominated the government of Pennsylvania.¹⁰⁹ French authors were very sympathetic toward the Quakers, and one, writing in the 1750's, criticized the allegedly fanatical New England Puritans for persecuting the Quakers.¹¹⁰ Officers under Montcalm's command were less respectful, finding the Quakers' apparent refusal to defend the Pennsylvanian frontier against Indian raids simply astonishing. Many, like Pouchot, discussed "the Pennsylvanians, people of the Quaker sect, who do not make war at all because of religious principles", and delighted in recounting how helpful this was for the French war effort, since the Pennsylvania government allegedly raised neither militia, provincial troops, nor supplies for the army.¹¹¹ They were sometimes confused by the doctrines of the more obscure Protestant groups, and Pouchot apparently believed that two German Seventh Day Baptists brought in by a party of Ottawa Indians were Augustinian monks because he understood that they followed the Roman Catholic ritual in their prayers and came from "convents" in Pennsylvania. These two men had lived in the woods in order to avoid being forced to serve in the Virginia militia against their consciences, and they had even been put in prison and interrogated by the Virginian authorities, who wished to know whether they had been in contact with the French or Indians. Pouchot was impressed by their simplicity and sincerity, and doubtless considered their persecution another example of English perfidy.¹¹² Perhaps the

¹⁰⁹ Voltaire. *Letters on England*, letters 1-4 and Voltaire. *Essai sur les moeurs*, 2: 383-84.

¹¹⁰ Butel-Dumont, *Histoire et commerce des colonies anglaises*, p. 118.

¹¹¹ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 82 and Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 323. The Quakers, who worked steadily to satisfy Indian grievances and restore peace, were not the chief obstacle to war taxes: "strict" pacifists resigned from the assembly and "defence" Quakers voted general money bills which did not specify how the funds were to be used. The absentee proprietor Thomas Penn, who refused to have his own extensive private lands in the province taxed, created the most problems for the local assembly, vetoing many tax bills and blaming the Quakers in the process. The Indians knew very well who their friends were, and left Quaker homes untouched when they lay waste to the frontier, not taking a single Quaker prisoner. See Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, pp. 240-43, 268-71, 281, 327-28, 379-83, 403-4 and Jack D. Marietta, "Conscience, the Quaker Community, and the French and Indian War", *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95 (1971): 3-27.

¹¹² Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 93-94. These men were followers of Friedsam Gottrecht, better known by his pre-baptismal name of Johann Konrad Beissel (1690-1768), who founded the "Ephrata Cloister" near Ephrata, Lancaster County, in 1735. Christian W. Neff, "Beissel, Johann Konrad", and Ira D. Landis,

most enlightened view of religious toleration came from Pouchot's literate artilleryman, who was surprised by the number of denominations which had churches in New York:

More astonishing is the fact that Quakers, Anabaptists, Dumplers [Dunkards], Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Moravians, Lutherans, and Calvinists all pray to God beside each other, each in his own way, without troubling the good will that should prevail among citizens.¹¹³

The fact that he collected and revised his journal notes during the French Revolution may have influenced his text, but it is quite possible that he held these views during the 1750's.

The tolerance some officers showed for Huguenots and certain Protestant denominations in the American colonies suggests that a number of them had largely abandoned Catholic orthodoxy. Their criticisms of overzealous Catholic clergy and Quaker pacifism reinforce the impression that they tended toward religious latitudinarianism, supporting religion as long as churches did not insist on indoctrinating their adherents with "fanatical" ideas. Most officers, however, remained in favour of established churches. Most of their hostility toward Quakers was due to the fact that Quakers were not under the direction of an established clergy linked with the state, and were free to maintain religious views inimical to state interests. Officers were unprepared to tolerate this form of religious dissent. While Voltaire may have favoured Quaker pacifism, there is little doubt that French officers would have reacted differently if they were faced with a population which refused to obey the government. The ideal solution, for some, was to have a Roman Catholic clergy regulated by the state, preventing the clergy or their parishioners from acting contrary to the public interest.

Although a number of French officers favoured settling foreign immigrants in Canada, and saw foreign immigration as a principal reason why the population and wealth of Britain's North American possessions had grown so quickly, they were also suspicious of these groups.¹¹⁴ One

"Ephrata Cloister", in *Mennonite Encyclopaedia: A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement*, 1: 167, 2: 229-30.

¹¹³ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, p. 127.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, "Mémoire sur le Canada", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 24 and Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1148. For other French views on British policy toward foreign Protestant immigration see

officer, probably Bougainville, saw the colonies as “a composite of different peoples so badly assembled that very often they are in uneasy accord among themselves. The diversity of these nations makes them very little attached to the English government.”¹¹⁵ Although he referred to the ethnic minorities as “nations”, and not the individual colonies, it is evident that he considered intercolonial relations and colonial-metropolitan relations an extension of this ethnic discord. Thanks to the testimony of Dutch and German-speaking civilians captured on the colonial frontier, some officers were persuaded that foreigners were lured to the colonies with false promises, only to become “slave inhabitants”.¹¹⁶ This rather extreme impression was probably derived from the prisoners’ complaints about the exploitation of indentured servants and discrimination against foreign immigrants. Bougainville was convinced that if 4,000 French troops were landed in the Carolinas, “they would summon to freedom the Germans that the English treated as slaves in their colonies, after having attracted them there under the allurements of advantageous concessions.”¹¹⁷ His colleague Bourlamaque suggested that three battalions of German troops in the French service be stationed in Canada after the war to add to the colony’s population, and, in addition, “be a decoy for the *coureurs de bois* and *vagabonds* or wanderers of the English colonies, where there are a great number of Germans.”¹¹⁸ Montcalm was pleased when in 1756 several German families from the Halifax area who had been living among the Acadians came to Canada to avoid being swept up in the deportations. He considered them an excellent addition to the population of the province.¹¹⁹ Montcalm’s officers had no objection to

Durand to Pyzieux, London, 11 June 1750. *MRNF*, 3: 487. See also Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986).

¹¹⁵ Anonymous. “Extrait des mémoires de M. de Montcalm”, NA, MG18, K7, vol. 1.

¹¹⁶ Montcalm. *Journal, Lévis MSS*, 7: 254. See also Walter A. Knittle, *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1937).

¹¹⁷ Bougainville. *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 323.

¹¹⁸ Bourlamaque. “Memoir on Canada”, *NYCD*, 10: 1150.

¹¹⁹ Montcalm to Comte d’Argenson, Montreal, 26 June 1756, *MRNF*, 4: 47.

foreign settlers as long as they were loyal to the French crown, but in order to ensure their loyalty they preferred that these settlers be assimilated linguistically and spiritually.

The French visitors had no deep hatred for the inhabitants of the American colonies, whom a contemporary French writer described as “mostly a race of merchants and peaceful bourgeois”.¹²⁰ Absorbed in farming, fishing, and commerce, and reputed to have little aptitude for war, they did not seem by themselves to be an overwhelming threat to France’s possessions.¹²¹ A far greater threat, they believed, came from the British government, for the British seemed determined to acquire a monopoly of the world’s maritime commerce through the Navigation Acts and aggression against foreign shipping and colonies. In 1755 M. de Béhague, a brigadier in the French army, wrote a memoir on the importance of arresting the power of England, pointing to the English Constitution and the Navigation Act of 1660 as the foundation of that country’s greatness. He considered the swift development of populous colonies in America a sinister example of the consequences of England’s newly-found power and ambition.¹²² During the war Montcalm’s officers were delighted by a satirical song about the nationalities of Europe which portrayed the English as pirates taking advantage of honest France.¹²³ The French gunner in the colonial regulars under Montcalm’s command expressed a widely felt belief in the French camp in 1756 that the innocent, credulous French had been deceived by the repeated lies of the English, and that Braddock’s expedition was part of a long-term plan of aggression whose first manifestations had been seen in the Acadia-Nova Scotia

¹²⁰ Butel-Dumont, *Histoire et commerce des colonies anglaises*, p. 40.

¹²¹ For examples of French officers’ opinions of American military prowess during the Seven Years’ War see d’Aleyrac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 55; Montcalm to Comte d’Argenson, 28 Aug. 1756, PAC, MG4, A1, vol. 3498, no. 208; and La Pause, “Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada”, *RAPQ* (1931-32): 66.

¹²² M. de Béhague, “Mémoire par M. de Béhague, brigadier des armées du Roy”, in *Extraits des archives des ministères de la Marine et de la Guerre à Paris. Canada: Correspondance générale, MM. Duquesne et Vaudreuil gouverneurs-généraux, 1755-1760 (EAMG)* (Quebec: L.-J. Demers & frère, 1890), pp. 276-82.

¹²³ D’Aleyrac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 75.

area in 1750.¹²⁴ Major George Washington's ambush and massacre of Ensign Louis Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville and ten others near the Virginian frontier in 1754 and Admiral Edward Boscawen's treacherous peacetime attack on French vessels off Newfoundland a year later--netting at least one company of Dieskau's regulars--did little to improve French or Canadian opinions of their English enemies.¹²⁵

Montcalm's officers almost ignored ambitious colonial officials such as William Shirley, paying far more attention to British generals in North America. For example, while Pouchot was at least partially aware of Governor Shirley's role in organizing the war effort in Massachusetts and the rest of New England, when Montcalm mentioned Shirley in one of his letters to Lévis in August 1759 he identified him as "one of their governors" as though his second-in-command might not know who this man was.¹²⁶ The French considered Sir William Johnson more important than Shirley because he was a military leader with extensive influence over the Iroquois and a victory over Dieskau's army to his credit.¹²⁷ Officers' Eurocentricism, concept of military professionalism, and opinions on colonial inefficiency in French and British North America combined to produce a belief that the British and French governments and regular forces were of central importance in the war effort while amateurish and disorganized colonials were economic and military auxiliaries who existed to help secure the victory of the main combatants. As far as they were concerned, the British and French were fighting a European war overseas. French officers considered the British government chiefly responsible for acts of aggression, and

¹²⁴ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, pp. 79-80. See also the opinions expressed in anonymous, "Mémoire sur les limites de l'Acadie", *MRNF*, 3: 527.

¹²⁵ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 24 and anonymous, "Relation du combat de l'*Alcide* pris par monsieur de Boscawen. 8 juin 1755", *MRNF*, 3: 541.

¹²⁶ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 100 and Montcalm to Lévis, 2 Aug 1759, *Lévis MSS*, 6: 213.

¹²⁷ Bougainville to Mme. Hérault de Séchelles, 21 April 1757, Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 333; Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 245, 2: 143; Pouchot, "Journal de Niagara du mois de juin au mois d'août 1757", *Lévis MSS*, 11: 110; and La Pause, "Relations de la prise d'un entrepôt anglais le 27 mars 1756", *RAPQ* (1932-33): 321. See also anonymous, "Relation de la victoire remportée à Carillon par les troupes du Roy le 8 juillet 1758", NA, MG18, K7, vol. 3, p. 221 and Vaudreuil to Moras, Montreal, 21 April 1758. *NYCD*, 10: 701.

saw colonists foremost as collaborators. They had little fear of colonial troops, who by themselves presented little danger to French interests in North America, but the British regular army and the Royal Navy were another question altogether. For this reason, their attention was focused on the British government and British generals, troops, and warships rather than colonial authorities or provincial troops.

The officers of Montcalm's army showed a consistent lack of respect for "British liberties" in the colonies and considered the representative governments of these provinces not only subversive, fostering parochial political attitudes and disloyalty to the crown, but basically illogical. They also had a poor understanding of national sentiments among Americans and sometimes believed that they would accept the hegemony of the King of France almost as easily as that of the King of Great Britain. In addition, they did not genuinely question the institution of slavery.

Officers were liberal enough to be opposed to religious persecution, but at the same time they were not very enthusiastic about religious toleration, fearing that a lack of state control over the church might permit subversive ideas like pacifism to flourish, contrary to the public interest. In a similar fashion, they approved of policies encouraging foreign Protestants to settle in the colonies, but suspected the loyalty of these groups. Montcalm's officers possessed very traditional values, and while they sometimes demonstrated vague support for Enlightenment ideas favouring religious scepticism and rationality in state organization and policies, they adhered to an authoritarian, hierarchical conception of the sociopolitical structure, showed little enthusiasm for liberal ideas concerning the dignity and rights of the individual, and favoured subordinating the church to the state.

French officers who served in North America during the Seven Years' War were products of a very traditional society which had been affected only slightly, if at all, by the Enlightenment. Louis XIV or Colbert would have been quite comfortable with most of their values and ideas, in

particular their belief in a social hierarchy anchored in the monarchy and their quest to increase the wealth and power of the state. For these officers, and by implication for many other members of the French upper classes, the 1750's were years of continuity rather than change.

Montcalm's officers were partly true to Enlightenment principles in that they supported some reorganization of colonial social and political institutions, with the intention of increasing state power and revenues. But these "rational" reforms were in most respects traditionalist and reactionary, designed to halt change as much as foster it. Officers were convinced that social harmony was best achieved by strengthening barriers between social classes, increasing the power of an authoritarian state to decide the public good, and keeping individual rights in check along with certain institutional "liberties" or privileges. As a result, officers were extremely critical of egalitarian social customs in Canada and the American colonies and considered democracy a threat to society. Montcalm's officer corps showed faith in absolute monarchy tempered by tradition, noble privilege, and justice, and for them, political reform only meant replacing corrupt officials with honest ones, while patriotism chiefly constituted a desire to serve one's prince. They made little or no attempt to define customary rights, let alone natural rights, and apparently chose to leave the interpretation of these rights in the king's hands. Radical, egalitarian trends in Enlightenment thought, stressing individual rights and the sovereignty of the nation, had, as of yet, made little progress among French officers, and since men like Bougainville, Montcalm, and Lévis were near the centre of intellectual society, it is doubtful that these ideas had made real inroads among France's nobility or educated elite as a whole. In the religious sphere, some of Montcalm's officers were affected by what might be called Enlightenment ideas, since they opposed overt religious persecution, favoured limits on church power, and were often anticlerical. This does not, however, necessarily prove that they had broken with the Roman Catholic faith.

Enlightenment principles had only a superficial effect on Montcalm's officers. Their conservative proposals for "reform" did not in any way challenge the status quo. In fact, officers vigorously attacked any social or political practice which seemed to undermine the hierarchical,

authoritarian sociopolitical system which they belonged to, and they examined the values and customs of Canadians and Americans without really questioning those of their own society. This suggests that in 1760 Enlightenment values had not yet converted the rest of the educated public either. One way of finding out if or when the more radical theories of the *philosophes* affected the officer corps is by examining another group of French officers twenty years later, during the War of American Independence.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL VALUES IN THE OFFICER CORPS, 1775-1783

Twenty years after Montcalm's army returned to France on condition that its members not serve again for the duration of the Seven Years' War, another generation of French officers arrived in North America. Many of the older officers had served during the late 1750's in Europe, and a handful had taken part in the Canadian campaigns, including captain of engineers Desandroüins, now Rochambeau's colonel of engineers, the so-called "Marquis" de Rouvray, a captain in Montcalm's Régiment de La Sarre and later colonel of d'Estaing's Régiment des volontaires de Saint-Domingue at Savannah in 1779, naval ensign Parscau du Plessis, now with a vessel of his own in Grasse's fleet, and colonel Bougainville, who in the meantime had become a naval captain with d'Estaing and Grasse.¹ Even these older officers, however, had been affected by changing ideas and assumptions which younger officers had grown up with, and the climate of opinion in the 1770's and 1780's was subtly different than that of the 1750's. If Montcalm's officers were upset and confused by their country's weakness in the face of growing British power,

¹ Rouvray has not left any writings from either period, and Parscau du Plessis did not leave behind any records of importance during the second. For information on Le Noir de Rouvray see Bodinier, *Dictionnaire des officiers*, p. 308, and for a few details on Parscau du Plessis see E. de Sereville and F. de Saint-Simon, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse française* (Paris: La Société française au XXe siècle, 1976). Parscau du Plessis gained considerable notoriety in the fleet in July 1780 when the rum store on his vessel *l'Intrepide* accidentally caught fire while Grasse's ships were at anchor in the harbour of Cap François, Saint-Domingue. The fire spread and the crew was evacuated just before the ship blew up in a spectacular explosion. See Louis-Jean de Rigaud, Comte de Vaudreuil, "Notes de campagne du comte Rigaud de Vaudreuil, 1781-1782". *Neptunia* (1957-58): no. 45, p. 38 and Revel, *Journal particulier*, p. 111.

and advocated some military and administrative reforms to cope with that weakness, they almost fanatically supported the socio-political status quo. Two decades later this was no longer strictly the case, and French officers' attitudes during the American Revolutionary period reveal that they at least theoretically accepted a degree of social and political change. Affected by liberal, egalitarian Enlightenment ideals, many of Rochambeau's officers had less faith in traditional doctrines of social segregation. They were also sometimes less authoritarian in their attitude toward the common people, and hoped that reforms could bring about greater social harmony. Many of the ideas debated by Rochambeau's officers had been in existence twenty years earlier, but officers placed a slightly different emphasis on them. Officers remained highly conservative, and their discussions of social and political reform were very much on the theoretical level, but it is important to realize that they did consider change.

American society was sufficiently different from what French officers were used to that they were able to analyze it in a more abstract manner than French or Canadian society. The cultural distance encouraged officers to be less sensitive about customs which, if they had observed them in their own country, might have provoked sharply negative reactions. Frenchmen considered differences in cultural environment an important factor in human behaviour, and what they deemed acceptable in the United States was not necessarily acceptable in France. In addition, the Americans were now allies instead of enemies, and consequently had a more positive image in the eyes of many officers. The relationship between the degree of friendliness with which officers were received in the United States and their attitude toward Americans and their institutions is most evident in the contrast between the negative attitude of many disappointed, homesick volunteers, who often received a cool reception in the United States, and the attitudes of Rochambeau's officers, who were greeted as friends and saviours. Nevertheless, these factors do not fully explain the changes in officers' attitudes, for even officers who intensely disliked Americans differed from Montcalm's officers in their assumptions about society. Furthermore, the issue of whether or not officers liked the United States is separate from the problem of

assessing their values, for even if officers often differed over whether or not Americans possessed certain desired qualities, it is important to point out that all of them valued the qualities in question.

Like Montcalm's officers, Rochambeau's thought that widespread prosperity was good for society, and they were happy to see the common people enjoying an above average standard of living, with good health, fine quality clothing, abundant food, and even such luxuries as tea. However, they differed from Montcalm's officers in their attitude toward the common people, for they were generally more respectful of their rights and did not analyze them simply as objects capable of furnishing tax revenues and other benefits for the state. Rochambeau's officers also did not show the same unquestioning acceptance of the social and political order as Montcalm's, and some of them attempted, not very successfully, to critically examine both the use of power by the government and the whole concept of a rigid, segregated hierarchy of social classes. The words liberty and equality had acquired new meaning by this time, and even officers who later violently opposed the events of 1789 had adopted a political discourse which promoted change rather than tradition.

Social values of the officer class underwent some changes over the course of two decades. Officers still advocated behaviour which they considered conducive to social harmony, such as politeness, courtesy, grace, friendliness, hospitality, honesty, and skill in conversation, but many objected to stilted formality, artificiality, and ostentatious displays of wealth. These objections were hardly novel, but they did reflect a new enthusiasm for "natural" behaviour, including a Rousseauian willingness to display emotions. Officers' observations on American women, courtship, and marriage practices reveal that many French noblemen disapproved of promiscuity--especially female promiscuity--before and during marriage, thought that love should have some role in marital unions, and liked women to have intellectual qualities which made them good partners for their husbands, if not their absolute equals. In general, they were less afraid of "independent" women than Montcalm's officers, even if they also believed that a wife should

be subordinate to her husband. They also often favoured a more humanitarian upbringing and education for children, one which stressed love as much as discipline, and considered a degree of education for the popular classes more of a benefit than a danger. In addition, Rochambeau's men gave clearer support to the idea of religious toleration, although they too imposed limits on it. Deistic attitudes were now virtually unchallenged in the officer corps, and there was almost no sign of traditional Catholicism. A considerable number of Enlightenment ideas, rare or absent among Montcalm's most educated officers, were circulating in the officer corps by this time.

While officers disparaged the idea that Americans were a great deal more virtuous than Europeans, they did believe that American society was relatively free of the degenerating influences of both primitive savagery and excessive civilization. The United States, they felt, constituted a proto-civilization in which abundant land and hard work produced widespread prosperity equally free of the corrupting influence of luxury and idleness and the vices created by desperate poverty. While most officers considered this only a temporary situation, since growing wealth would produce inequality and undermine virtue, some also believed that the forces of progress might someday result in future states acquiring a greater measure of happiness, social harmony, liberty, and equal rights for citizens. French officers still thought that humans were subject to natural social and economic laws which made inequality a feature of all advanced societies, and as such their world view was essentially static, but they were now more willing to discuss the merits of the traditional hierarchy or orders in promoting social harmony.

Many of Rochambeau's officers were evidently impressed by the rapid population growth, expanding settlement, and economic development of the United States, and they predicted a great future for the country. Even at this time the American people probably had the highest standard of living in the world, and the wealth enjoyed by the average white citizen was probably unique

in history up to that date.² Many officers recorded the populations of the cities and states they visited, and carefully described the characteristics of each region's economy. Chastellux praised Americans' agricultural achievements, especially the rapid clearing of new land, and believed that hard work and cooperation were the key to the nation's success.³ Another officer, Ségur, described how villages rapidly became "cities where everything reminds you of perfected civilization", with churches, schools, and universities and a population imbued with the "modest and quiet pride of the independent man".⁴ Officers were impressed by the virtual absence of poor people and the fact that everyone seemed well dressed; for the young Second Colonel Charles-Louis-Victor, Prince de Broglie, the well-being and handsome appearance of the people was the factor which disposed him in favour of the country.⁵ American prosperity signified that the country's economy and society were not only viable, but successful, and were worthy of study and perhaps in some rare cases emulation. Officers did not object to the American popular classes enjoying a high standard of living; they would have been happy to see French peasants and artisans with the same prosperous lifestyle.

Significantly, the Frenchmen unconsciously compared the average Americans' lifestyle to that of a French bourgeois, not to that of an "average" French person--who was an impoverished peasant. French officers in North America often stated that they felt comfortable in the American domestic setting, for the average noble officer, who had limited financial resources, enjoyed a modest lifestyle only slightly superior to that of many of their American hosts. With the exception of Virginian plantation owners, Americans generally treated their aristocratic French allies in Rochambeau's army with a certain deference, which is what the officers were accustomed to in

² For American standards of living see Richard B. Sheridan, "The Domestic Economy", in *Colonial British America*, ed. Greene and Pole, pp. 43, 49 and James A. Henretta, "Wealth and Social Structure", in *ibid.*, pp. 270-73.

³ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 79-80.

⁴ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 368.

⁵ Broglie, "Narrative". *MAH* 1 (1877): 306.

France. However, officers who did not receive the deference they expected were offended, for even in egalitarian societies with no formal social stratification they expected to see some recognition for persons of supposedly superior merit.

French officers considered physical appearance a clue to an individual's and a society's morality and well-being, and they carefully observed their hosts for positive or negative physical attributes. They also considered clothing important because it revealed the economic and social status of each individual. Officers customarily described American men as tall, strong, thin, and handsome, and American women as pale, delicate, and pretty, but because they had rarely if ever seen English people before, the typically English physique and complexion of their hosts struck them as somewhat unusual. Lieutenant Louis-Jean-Baptiste-Sylvestre de Robertinier of the Régiment de Soissonnais, for instance, thought that "The Americans are big and well made, but most have the air of having grown up while recovering from an illness."⁶ To Robertinier, local women seemed extremely pale, as though they were in feeble health, and in his opinion a woman of twenty seemed like a woman of thirty. Nevertheless, he immediately added that he liked their pale skin and thought that in general they "are all beautiful".⁷ Similarly, although Clermont-Crèvecoeur claimed that he had never seen more beautiful women before, the locals' paleness and thin physique and the apparent rareness of people over the age of sixty in Newport, Rhode Island, forced him to conclude that Americans did not live very long.⁸ Army chaplain Abbé Robin came to similar conclusions.⁹ Despite these observations, officers do not seem to have been overtly influenced by Cornelius de Pauw's theories about the moral and physical degeneration

⁶ Louis-Jean-Baptiste-Sylvestre de Robertinier. "Journal des guerres faites en Amérique pendant les années 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783", unpublished manuscript in Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, Providence, cited in Mary E. Loughrey, *France and Rhode Island, 1686-1800* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1944), p. 124.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Clermont-Crèvecoeur. "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 21. In actual fact, life expectancy in late seventeenth-century New England was as high as that of England in the late nineteenth century. Higonet. *Sister Republics*, p. 88.

⁹ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 14-15.

of European settlers under the influence of the American climate, which enjoyed some currency in French intellectual circles at the time.¹⁰ In general, they considered Americans physically sound, as one might deduce from Cromot du Bourg's amused comment that his two hosts at an inn were "about a third taller than M. Beaujon."¹¹

Officers also found Americans well dressed in English-style clothing, and Blanchard, watching the inhabitants of a Connecticut town arrive at a Sunday church service, believed that they made "as good an impression as the bourgeois of our cities."¹² Only one officer, a viciously anti-American volunteer, criticized Americans, not for their clothing itself, but for the general untidiness of their appearance, which clashed with "the good taste which characterizes our nation".¹³ For French officers, the quality, style, and manner in which clothing was worn was an immediate indicator of membership in a social group, and the more that people they visited resembled members of the social classes they normally associated with at home, the more comfortable they were with them.

Officers' reactions to American culinary practices also reveal aspects of their social values. For some, American dishes embodied the virtues of republican simplicity and equality. A naval officer named Jacomet de Cauvigny, for instance, thought that the simplicity of a state dinner given by the Governor of Massachusetts in terms of dishes and the manner in which they were served "announced the frugality of these good Republicans."¹⁴ Nevertheless, many officers

¹⁰ Pauw, *Philosophie sur les américains*. For other comments on the subject see Nicolas-François-Denis Brisout de Barneville, "Journal de guerre de Brisout de Barneville, mai 1780-octobre 1781", *French-American Review* 3 (1950): 241; anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les États unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 45; Céleste, "Montesquieu à l'armée", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 516; and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 306.

¹¹ Cromot du Bourg, "Diary of a French Officer", *MAG* 4 (1880): 212. During the period 1756-1783, American men were on average about 175 cm or five feet nine inches tall.

¹² Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 112. See also Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 51; Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 149; and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 306.

¹³ Anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 1777, in anonymous, "Letters of a French Officer", *PMHB* 35 (1911): 90.

¹⁴ Jacomet de Cauvigny to Comte de Chastellux, on board the *Citoyen* in Boston harbour, 1 Sept. 1782, "Lettres de divers officiers" AN Série M 1021 IV.

sometimes found it difficult to tolerate the “rustic” simplicity of the average Americans’ table manners, for most households lacked such innovations as multi-pronged forks, serviettes, and glasses, which meant that even middle class Americans ate off their knives, wiped their hands on the tablecloth, and passed around a common drinking vessel.¹⁵ The visitors were also appalled by Americans’ never-ending toasts and habitual overconsumption of alcohol, practices common in both the United States and England but considered uncouth in France, although La Fayette and other anglophiles of the court set followed a fad for English horseracing and drinking in the mid-1770’s.¹⁶ Preudhomme de Borre, with Washington’s army, was especially disgusted by the frequent drunkenness of American soldiers and civilians.¹⁷ American table manners and drinking habits tended to reinforce the officers’ image of America as a new country where culture and manners were as of yet poorly developed. As Robin remarked, Americans, a cold people moved “more by the impulse of reason than that of sentiment...occupy themselves more with useful things than agreeable ones.” They made progress in politics and the mechanical arts, but the “agreeable arts” remained unknown.¹⁸

The sheer abundance of food on every American table, however, seemed to demonstrate the bounties of happy republican prosperity.¹⁹ Officers described American meals in detail, from hearty breakfasts of tea and coffee, “butter on grilled bread which they call *tosies*”, jam, “fried meat”, and cheese, followed by a heavy dinner usually consisting of roast beef and gravy with

¹⁵ D’Estaing to Sartine, at sea on board the *Languedoc*, 5 Nov., 1778, in *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776-1790*, ed. Stanley J. Kizerda (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 202-3; Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 369; and Broglic, “Narrative”, *MAH* 1 (1877): 379.

¹⁶ Bernier, *Lafayette*, p. 29.

¹⁷ Preudhomme de Borre, “Description des 13 colonies de l’Amérique septentrionale”, AN Marine B4 144, fols. 375, 398, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l’Armée royale*, p. 328. By 1760 Americans could purchase a whole gallon (4.5 L) of rum for two shillings, a day’s wage, and consumed about one quart (1 L) of whiskey per person per week. Higgonnet, *Sister Republics*, p. 87.

¹⁸ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 205-6.

¹⁹ For the American diet see Perkins, *Economy of Colonial America*, pp. 6, 63, 65, 77, 85, 109, 215-17 and James A. Henretta, *The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815: An Interdisciplinary Analysis* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1973), p. 20.

vegetables and English pudding, followed by tea time, and then a supper which was essentially a lighter version of dinner, but with even more cider, beer, grog, rum punch, or, in wealthier households, Madeira wine. During the winter it seemed as though Americans spent most of their lives at the table, and when this cycle of heavy eating and continuous consumption of tea and alcohol went on day after day, visitors unused to such a regimen found it tortuous.²⁰ Blanchard's hypothesis was that since Americans "go out little in winter and spend whole days alongside of their fires and their wives, without reading and without doing anything, going so often to table is a relief and a preventative of boredom."²¹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who had been living in the colony of New York ever since leaving Montcalm's Régiment de La Sarre in 1759, and therefore knew the country well, explained that winter was the season when farmers consumed, without regret, most of the food which they had stored up during the summer, for there was no market for much of their produce except in the neighbourhood of the towns.²²

If this abundance of food provided evidence of a high American standard of living, the widespread consumption of an imported luxury product, tea, was even more influential in conveying the impression that this people was unusually well off. Rochambeau's officers were amazed not only by the amount of tea Americans drank--Broglie claimed that he was obliged to drink twelve cups on one occasion--but by the fact that everyone, including country people, soldiers, and many blacks, seemed to drink it several times a day.²³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur

²⁰ For accounts of American meals, tea drinking, and alcohol consumption see Gabriel, *Desandroïins*, p. 365; Robertinier, "Journal", cited in Loughrey, *France and Rhode Island*, pp. 123-24; Montesquieu to Madame de Chastellux, Phillipsburg, N.Y., 17 Aug. 1781, in "Lettres de divers officiers", AN Série M 1021 IV; Hans Christoph Ludwig Friedrich Ignatz, Freiherr (Baron) von Closen-Haydenburg, "Manière de vivre des Américains", part of notes on the United States of America, AN Série M 1036 F60 7; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 49-50, 274; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 20-21, 29, 75; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 66, 78, 116, 119, 168; Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 148 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Skeiches*, pp. 102-5, 124.

²¹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 78.

²² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Skeiches*, pp. 124, 144-45, 149.

²³ Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 232; Closen-Haydenburg, "Manière de vivre des Américains", part of notes on the USA, AN Série M 1036 F60 7; and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 20-21.

recounted how in North America "Everyone drinks tea, from the westernmost settlers in western Florida to the northernmost ones in Canada, and I am sure that it is a pretty extensive market. The poorer the people the stronger is the tea they drink. Some have told me it feeds them,--a strange food indeed!"²⁴ Few of the visitors failed to express their surprise at the widespread use of a product which in France was restricted to wealthier social groups.

This large-scale consumption of food, alcohol, and tea by all social classes was a novelty for French officers. Although food was inexpensive in France, peasants and urban workers were often short of basic necessities, and malnutrition was a fact of life for a large sector of the population. Americans' standard of living was partly a result of their access to abundant arable land, as officers knew, but the Frenchmen also saw this prosperity as a product of a civilized political system. The standard of living enjoyed by the American farmer, English yeoman, and even the English labourer was something which educated Frenchmen could not easily explain. They usually ascribed it to the political advantages which these nations enjoyed.²⁵ This widespread prosperity was so obviously beneficial to every social class, as well as the state, that officers perceived it in a very positive light. None of them indicated that they were frightened by the prosperity of the common people, or outraged by their enjoyment of luxuries, and no one demanded that Americans be taxed to the hilt to put them in their place. In a republic this made no sense, for it was apparently ruled by the people, there was no privileged class--except perhaps the southern planters and patroons of New York--to support, and it was well known that the issue of taxation had ignited the Revolution in the first place.

Officers' reflections on American manners reveal contradictory assumptions about Americans and human nature, but common assumptions about civilization. Some saw Americans as living in a rough, primitive condition, only barely aware of the benefits of morality and

²⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 136.

²⁵ Crouzet, "Sources of England's Wealth", in *Shipping, Trade and Commerce*, ed. Cottrell and Aldcroft, pp. 61-62, 64-65, 68. See also Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 85-88.

civilization. According to another interpretation, however, colonists in North America had avoided either sinking into savagery, which brought misery and moral depravity, or reaching the other extreme, excessive civilization, characterized by luxury, vanity, and corruption. The young and idealistic Ségur was more optimistic about human nature than most of his fellow officers, and believed that under "natural" conditions, if people were left free of unnatural constraints such as the desperation of poverty and the power of despotic princes, happiness and rationality would prevail and society would acquire positive characteristics. Many of his colleagues were less certain about the naturally beneficent nature of humankind, and believed that civilization was the product of a difficult struggle against the selfish passions of human nature. Despite these perceptions of civilization as either a process of moral decay or a triumph over human nature, officers had a common ideal of civilization as a rational, moral social organization with institutions and customs which promoted human happiness. Ségur, the optimist, was far from advocating a literal return to nature; rather, he saw the American farmer, who seemed to live a modest, peaceful, prosperous, happy, and natural life, as embodying an ideal of human civilization, avoiding the evils of misery and degradation--a result of free people falling victim to tyrants--and the excesses of the idle rich, who lived off the fruits of society without giving anything in return. Some officers dismissed both Indians and Americans as "savages", rebels against the principles of law and morality, but others were willing to see Americans, if not Indians, as civilized republicans who had avoided the savage state of nature and subjected themselves to rational natural law. Whether this state of social virtue could or should be reproduced in Europe, however, was another question.

The civilized person, according to these Frenchmen, displayed careful courtesy, propriety at the table or in the salon, generosity, honesty, moderation, good sense, and patriotism, all virtues which enabled him to live harmoniously in society and contribute to it. The French nobleman was in a better position to achieve this state of enlightenment than most human beings, they believed, but others could also come close to the desired goal. Some court noblemen, such as

La Fayette, Ségur, and Lauzun, objected to the stilted formality, pretentiousness, and cruelty of court society, considering this a corruption of the superior values of friendship, natural courtesy, and the art of placing people at ease and making them happy. Their sentiments were shared by many members of educated society, and this helps to explain the enthusiasm with which so many educated people greeted Rousseau's ideal of humankind in a more natural state. Rousseau believed that in simpler societies primitive natural liberty--not unlike the hardy Alemannic direct democracy of his native Switzerland--produced greater harmony than that enjoyed by sophisticated societies, where political authority and social convention suppressed the individual and collective conscience, the general will. He distinguished--not always clearly--between humans in their original, pre-moral primitive "state of nature", and humans in their "natural state", which was in society. In simple, austere communities people were conscious of civic and moral values, but if these societies became too complex they faced the danger of corruption. Rousseau rejected the polished, artificial manners of high society in favour of more natural behaviour characteristic of virtuous peoples, but he did not necessarily equate natural social behaviour with rough, crude, anti-social behaviour.²⁶ While Rousseauian attitudes were by no means universal in the officer corps, the fact that his ideas did exist demonstrates that values characteristic of the Enlightenment did have an impact on military noblemen.

A nation's character, officers believed, could be measured by the behaviour or manners of its members, but despite this doctrine the visitors often found the American character frustratingly difficult to assess. One young officer found that his colleagues were divided between those who considered Americans "an almost supernatural people" for having resisted British might for so many years, and those who found them "slack and almost imbecilic." His own tentative conclusion was that the Americans were unenterprising and indolent, to the extent that they would not even make the effort to communicate with each other. One example of this, he believed, was that it was possible to spend an entire day with an American male of any social class

²⁶ Rousseau, *Social Contract*, pp. 16-20, 28-29 and Hampson, *Enlightenment*, pp. 208, 210.

and he would not speak unless he was specifically addressed, while American women, despite their frequent statuesque beauty, were almost inanimate.²⁷ Zweibrücken, with Royal Deux-Ponts, was surprised by American "coldness and reserve", finding that Americans did not fight for their liberty with the passion he expected.²⁸ And another officer observed that the quiet, sober American farmers appeared stunned by the customary Gallic high spirits of the visiting noblemen. French officers considered skill in conversation a sign of sociability and the mark of a civilized person, and they felt that their stolid Anglo-Saxon hosts fell far short in this respect. In this case, Americans resembled Rousseau's solitary primitives living in a state of nature more than his civilized humans gathered together in society.

A German officer in Royal Deux-Ponts, Clozen-Haydenburg, was surprised and confused by Americans' informal manners, for despite their attention to handshaking, even well-cultivated people thought nothing of putting their elbows or feet on the table:

The outward appearance of Americans rather generally indicates carelessness, and almost thoughtlessness; but it is astonishing that with this apparent indifference, these same people fight with so much bravery, can support a war, and have such trained and disciplined troops. Who would believe that an American, who scarcely dares to go out of his house on a rainy day, the moment he has a musket on his shoulder, braves every danger and the most indifferent weather?²⁹

Certain volunteers were particularly harsh in their criticism of what they perceived as boorish behaviour among the local people, and one, who spent some time in a frontier community, felt that they had more in common with the Indians than their English cousins.³⁰ "This nation", concluded Preudhomme de Borre, "is still completely new, without education, without politeness, nonchalant, lazy, without soul [and] brutalized by drink".³¹ Even Chastellux, who liked

²⁷ Anonymous, manuscript of a young officer, AN Série M 1036, F60 7.

²⁸ Zweibrücken, *My Campaigns in America*, p. 15.

²⁹ Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 49.

³⁰ Anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 23 Oct. 1777, in anonymous, "Letters of a French Officer", *PMHB* 35 (1911): 95-97.

³¹ Preudhomme de Borre, "Description des 13 colonies", AN Marine B4 144, fol. 375, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 316.

Americans, suggested that they engaged in politeness out of form rather than true feeling. Only Ségur praised Americans for the moderation of "their free, frank, familiar manner, equally removed from gross rudeness and mannered politeness", a balance which he considered a sign of true virtue.³²

French officers valued politeness and careful good manners, which were designed to show consideration for others, and much of their upbringing was devoted to cultivating these social graces. Some of them became accustomed to Americans' casual manners and accepted them as proper and legitimate behaviour, but most could not help but feel that these manners betrayed a certain lack of sociability, and needed to be polished. Sociability, they believed, was the measure of an individual's ability to live in society, and was therefore among the most valuable characteristics of any culture. When Voltaire used the word "civilized" the idea of civility was foremost in his mind.

Another social value which the French visitors admired was hospitality. With the exception of La Fayette, Pontgibaud, and Duponceau, the volunteers who have left papers had little good to say about American hospitality, Mauroy claiming that Abbé Raynal's stories of American hospitality were completely false. However, when Rochambeau's army arrived, the French were welcomed with open arms, and this had a positive influence on French perceptions of the local people.³³ Officers differed on which Americans were the most friendly--the people of Connecticut were a popular choice--but the later arrivals commonly believed that Americans were almost invariably hospitable, even if they often seemed cold and reserved.³⁴ Several officers commented on how uncommunicative their hosts were at homes where they were billeted overnight, and they

³² Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 127 and Ségur, *Mémoires*, p. 351.

³³ For the reaction of a volunteer see Preudhomme de Borre, "Description des 13 colonies", AN Marine B4 144, fol. 375, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 316.

³⁴ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal" and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 22, 30, 66, 82, 169; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 66, 180, 273; and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 306. See also anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 80 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 80, 149.

concluded from this that Americans led dull, unsociable lives.³⁵ Others, however, found just the opposite, and Rochambeau's chief engineer Desandroüins, a veteran of Montcalm's campaigns in Canada, stopped by a Massachusetts home he had been at briefly a year earlier and reported that "the whole family, including the small children, covered me in caresses" and showed great friendliness toward his servants.³⁶ Whatever officers' views were concerning American hospitality and friendliness, however, it is plain that they all considered these qualities important, and rough barometers of a society's level of civilization.

Honesty was a virtue which French officers considered equally important, for no society could function without a degree of mutual trust. The French press portrayed Americans as an exceptionally virtuous, honest people, and French officers sought to find out whether they were really as unique as they were supposed to be. They were not surprised to find that Americans fell short of this ideal, but concluded that with the exception of merchants and innkeepers they were on the whole an honest people. Bougainville, who was with d'Estaing off Long Island in 1778, bitterly complained about American provisioners selling food to their allies at exorbitant prices, a sentiment shared by practically every Frenchman to visit the country.³⁷ Major-General Antoine-Charles Du Houx, Baron de Vioménil's aide-de-camp Sublieutenant Nicolas-François-Denis Brisout de Barneville acknowledged, however, that provisioners were just as profit-oriented when it came to supplying the Continental army, and that French merchants would do the same if they had the opportunity.³⁸ Officers frequently mentioned the lack of crime in the United States, and Ségur noted how doors were never locked, people left their money and effects exposed, and sixteen-year-old girls thought nothing of walking alone with male

³⁵ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 160.

³⁶ Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, pp. 356, 360.

³⁷ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 164 and Preudhomme de Borre, "Description des 13 colonies de l'Amérique septentrionale", AN Marine B4 144, fol. 375, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 316.

³⁸ Brisout de Barneville, "Journal", *French-American Review* 3 (1950): 241.

strangers.³⁹ One of the volunteers, Pontgibaud, who served in the Continental army without any expectation of being paid his full salary by the insolvent Congress, was surprised to be awarded the remainder of his pay during the mid-1790's. "I had lost nothing fighting for an honest people", he wrote, and applauded American delegates to the French Republic for refusing to bribe Talleyrand.⁴⁰ Crime and dishonesty, which the Frenchmen thought were more characteristic of urban populations, led directly to the breakdown of community life, and as such posed an immediate danger to the integrity of society. Officers therefore admired any people who were bound together by their trust for one another. Honesty was a basic requirement for a superior civilization.

Officers also looked for other signs of civilization in the United States, and the amount of attention they devoted to different practices clearly reveals what they considered important. They paid an inordinate amount of attention to dancing, and rated people according to their proficiency in the minuet and quadrille. At the bottom of their scale were people who only knew country jigs and did not appreciate European classical violin tunes.⁴¹ Desandroüins concluded that the Frenchwomen of Saint-Domingue "dance with a precision, lightness, and natural grace a thousand times superior to anything we saw from one end of America to the other."⁴² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, of course, defended the simple virtues of American social gatherings, with dancing, fiddle music, and conversation, but conceded that sophisticated Europeans, accustomed to luxury, would be bored at many of these celebrations.⁴³ He implied that wealthy Europeans, who enjoyed

³⁹ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 162, 165, 185 and Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 424. See also Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 110 and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 66.

⁴⁰ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, pp. 101, 120, 123, 141.

⁴¹ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 72; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 51, 169, 176, 304; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 63, 81; anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 23 Oct. 1777, in anonymous, "Letters of a French Officer", *PMHB*, 35 (1911): 96-97; and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 379.

⁴² Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, p. 394.

⁴³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 147-48, 153 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 96-97.

gambling and pretentious amusements, did not know the pure happiness of a more simple, moderate existence. While many European officers, the bourgeois Blanchard for one, were reasonably happy with this lifestyle, most considered a more cultivated simplicity and grace, designed to provide perfect harmony and sociability, a more worthy ideal. Americans' unsophisticated social gatherings, during which men and women took part in separate activities much of the time, seemed almost anti-social in comparison to what French officers had known at home.

This belief in moderate, natural behaviour is evident in Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur's description of male and female social interaction on the island of Nantucket: "The pleasures of the day were enjoyed with the greatest liveliness and the most innocent freedom; no disgusting pruderies, no coquettish airs tarnished this enlivening assembly: they behaved according to their native dispositions, the only rules of decorum with which they were acquainted."⁴⁴ This natural but civilized behaviour, which Crèvecoeur attributed to almost all Americans, demonstrated that his countrymen lived in a special society. Without the need for sophisticated education or religious indoctrination they were able to engage in moral behaviour which showed moderation and good sense. In essence, their society, in which people enjoyed peace, morality, sufficient prosperity, and, as a result, happiness, was the most desirable civilization in existence. Like many officers, particularly liberal ones, Crèvecoeur believed that under ideal conditions society would be moral, its members engaging in behaviour which led to the long-term harmony of society. Rudeness, pretentiousness, and lavish displays of superior wealth, all of which undermined social harmony, would have no place in such a society.

Rochambeau's officers were naturally very interested in American women and local customs regarding courtship and marriage, and their comments reveal a great deal about their

⁴⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 153.

own social values.⁴⁵ They appreciated the alleged beauty, simplicity, and virtue of American women, but at the same time did not feel that they were sufficiently skilled in conversation, the social graces, or fashion. Robertinier, for instance, admired their beauty, but considered womens' "glacial air" their greatest fault, and he was forced to conclude that "the character of this nation is little suited to society."⁴⁶ Broglie, who belonged to one of the most distinguished court families, found that Philadelphia and Boston women, the cream of American society, dressed expensively but in poor taste, did not know how to arrange their hair, were poor dancers, lacked grace, and made poor curtsies. Even though he still liked them, it is evident that he was unable to avoid making French high society his frame of reference. At one point, however, he temporarily revolted against convention after visiting Polly Lawson, a Newport Quaker girl who became the object of a virtual cult among French officers on Rhode Island. Her striking beauty, simple clothing, and polite, unaffected conversation made a great impression on Broglie and others. "I acknowledge", wrote Broglie, "that this attractive Polly appeared to me the most exquisite work of Nature, and that every time her image occurs to me I am tempted to write a big book against the dressing, the theatrical graces, and the coquetishness of certain rich ladies much admired in the world of fashion."⁴⁷ This did not stop him, however, from criticizing Boston women a few weeks later for not meeting his exacting standards of dress and deportment. Broglie's friend Ségur, who considered Miss Lawson an "angel", shared this admiration of simple manners, as did Montesquieu, who approved of the fact that American women "are not at all cruel", lacking the sharp edge and biting wit of women in French high society.⁴⁸ French officers purported to dislike women who were allegedly tasteless and crude as well as those who sported the tower coiffures

⁴⁵ For American women in the eighteenth century see Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: Free Press, 1989), pp. 34-43 and Julia C. Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1966).

⁴⁶ Robertinier, "Journal", cited in Loughrey, *France in Rhode Island*, p. 124.

⁴⁷ Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 186, 234, 306, 375-79.

⁴⁸ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 366, 394-96 and Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, ca. July 1780, in Heuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFES* (1914): 241.

and absurdly exaggerated manners then in vogue in French social circles. They appreciated women of grace and good taste who could shine in company and converse intelligently with their husbands while respecting the latter's special place as the head of the household.

The Frenchmen were intrigued by American courtship practices, in particular bundling, which they discussed at length. They considered bundling an extremely curious activity highly uncharacteristic of Americans' supposedly simple and sensible lives. At the same time, they acknowledged that only a people as virtuous as the Americans could follow such a custom without dire consequences. If officers were surprised and faintly scandalized by bundling, it convincingly demonstrated the strength of moral codes among Americans in general and reinforced their impression that virtue was stronger in North America than in Europe.⁴⁹ Among young Americans, it seemed, a morally-based liberty did not produce licentiousness. As Berthier explained, "People here cannot believe that a man would think of seducing a girl, so the latter are allowed an extraordinary amount of freedom."⁵⁰ Young couples did not take "the slightest advantage of this liberty, which is regarded as a sacred trust, by doing anything wrong."⁵¹ Young, unescorted women did not show the slightest shyness in entering French tents or even sitting in an officers' room, and Blanchard was surprised when he encountered a woman of about twenty lodging and entertaining a young man without any fear of arousing public suspicion.⁵² Although American women were friendly and it was often possible to kiss them, after this point emboldened officers were embarrassed to encounter an "insurmountable barrier" which proved impossible to

⁴⁹ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", Verger, "Journal", and Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 39, 66, 169, 245-46. Bundling involved a couple lying together on a bed, fully clothed, and engaging in romantic conversation.

⁵⁰ Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 245.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1: 245. This is not quite true. In Hingham, Massachusetts, for example, the proportion of premarital conceptions grew from 10% in 1700 to 50% in 1750, and the pattern was borne out elsewhere. Nevertheless, pregnancy was almost inevitably followed by marriage, so these statistics did not result in large numbers of single mothers. Henretta argues that premarital conception served to reduce the parental role in choosing marriage partners, although it is doubtful that the couples used pregnancy as a deliberate tactic. Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, p. 133.

⁵² Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 169 and Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 50, 178-79.

cross.⁵³ Americans obviously had a developed moral system, and this was an important sign that their society was civilized.

Nevertheless, it was felt that certain perils threatened American morality. The French were surprised by the number of prostitutes in the devastated region around New York, where the British and American armies had faced one another for several years. "In such a new country, where vice should not be so deeply rooted," wrote Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "why should there be such a large number of prostitutes?"⁵⁴ He supposed that once girls grew up they were allowed so much freedom that many of them became promiscuous. He did not approve of bundling in New England or similar practices in Virginia, and implied that both he and other officers were shocked by "these new-fangled ways", but added that his colleagues were even more surprised that these customs had no dire consequences. The lieutenant was relieved to hear that education had led to the decline of bundling in the towns.⁵⁵ Some disillusioned volunteers harshly attacked the French press' idealization of American virtue. Mauroy "found morals here almost as dissolute as in France", with widespread drunkenness throughout the country and prostitution and even rumours of homosexual activity in Philadelphia.⁵⁶ Another of the volunteers found women on the Pennsylvanian frontier crude and disgusting, completely lacking in propriety in dress, manners, or conduct regarding the opposite sex.⁵⁷ Most officers, however, believed that American morality was at least somewhat superior to French morality.

It seems hypocritical for officers from a country where adultery was common among the social elite, and who sometimes attempted to seduce American women, to be shocked by relatively

⁵³ Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 246.

⁵⁴ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 38-39.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 66. Bundling was common between 1750 and 1780, but declined thereafter. Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, p. 100.

⁵⁶ Mauroy, Broglie Papers, AN Série K 1364, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 316.

⁵⁷ Anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., and anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 23 Oct., 1777, in anonymous, "Letters of a French Officer", *PMHB* 35 (1911): 90-91, 95-96.

innocent courtship activities and the existence of prostitution in the United States.⁵⁸ But in France infidelity and promiscuity were more common among the wealthier court nobility than among the mass of the nobility, where more conservative, traditional values prevailed, and most of the officers who left accounts did not belong to these exclusive families. Another factor is that officers held citizens of this republic to a different standard than themselves. Americans, a new people uncorrupted by an excess of civilization and bravely fighting for their liberty, were expected to be more virtuous than Europeans living in an older and more jaded civilization, and European writers and journalists had encouraged this expectation. The visitors from overseas eagerly analyzed any evidence that Americans were no more virtuous than other human beings in order to confirm or deny common beliefs about the country.

Young adult Americans were seen to exercise their liberty in a virtuous manner, guided by a rational moral code derived from the special state of their civilization. The same was apparently true for married couples. According to Closen-Haydenburg, American women were "models" of marital virtue, and possessed "a very decent manner, even with their air of familiarity. Young persons enjoy the greatest liberty; [women] choose...their husbands, living with them long enough to know them by the time a marriage is contracted; also, all marriages are happy."⁵⁹ Other officers echoed his assessment, and contrasted American women's virtue with the alleged depravity of Spanish American women, who mixed extreme religious devotion with what seemed like universal adultery.⁶⁰ They were impressed that the liberty women enjoyed did not degrade their morals or manners, for they found that American women were industrious, had a sweet, modest, friendly demeanour, and displayed unaffected good manners, embodying all the feminine virtues valued at the time. Officers attributed the restraint shown by married and unmarried couples to

⁵⁸ Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 246.

⁵⁹ Closen-Haydenburg, "Manière de vivre des Américains", part of notes on the USA, AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

⁶⁰ Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 272, 275 and Coriolis to brother, Puerto Cabello, 17 March 1783, in Coriolis, "Lettres", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 March 1932, p. 827.

republican virtue, and hoped that American morals would not be corrupted in the future.⁶¹ Several of them noted that although it was difficult to win a woman's affections without a long process of courtship, once she had made a decision she truly loved her spouse and was faithful to him.⁶² American men and women were apparently completely loyal during marriage, for officers found that adultery was rare and divorce illegal. They thought it particularly interesting that when a woman became pregnant before marriage, the woman was not the only one to suffer public disapproval; the man was disgraced and could not marry into a respectable family.⁶³ The concept of marital fidelity strongly appealed to many officers. Whether or not these Frenchmen rigorously practiced what they preached, their views indicate that there was considerable theoretical support for marital love and fidelity among the elite in the late eighteenth century.

Many officers were surprised by how unmarried young men and women were allowed to associate and court without parental supervision, and simply informed their parents of whom they wished to marry.⁶⁴ Formal dowries were rare in the United States, and as Montesquieu remarked, women brought only their charms to marriage.⁶⁵ The idea that love could take precedence over social and economic advancement held a certain romantic appeal for many officers, for more than one of them had been forced into a marriage that they did not want. Lauzun, who as a young teenager was only informed of the identity of his future spouse--whom he had never seen--after his father had made a binding arrangement with her parents, never actually lived with his wife,

⁶¹ Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 245-46.

⁶² Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780, in C eleste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RPBSO 5* (1902): 547 and Clermont-Cr evecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 72. Divorce was rare but legal. Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, p. 100.

⁶³ Clermont-Cr evecoeur, "Journal", *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 39. See also Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 246.

⁶⁴ Closen-Haydenburg, "Mani ere de vivre des Am ericains", part of notes on the USA, AN S erie M 1036 F60 7.

⁶⁵ Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780, in C eleste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RPBSO 5* (1902): 547. Dowries did actually exist in some form, but were not usually part of a written contract. Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, p. 29.

and eventually the couple legally separated.⁶⁶ His experience was by no means unusual. Most officers sought a wife whom they could simultaneously love and derive economic security and social status from, and while they often succeeded in making such a match, this combination was not always easy to achieve. Clermont-Crèvecoeur noted that on the one hand American women had fewer rights than Frenchwomen because the law did not permit them to own any property, and any inheritance went to their brothers, but on the other hand, it was easy for them to marry: "Men here do not look for fortunes but for a companion of their choice; when they are sure of her virtue and morals, they marry her. A father cannot dispose of his children against their will."⁶⁷ He also discovered that the age of majority was lower than in France, twenty for women and twenty-five for men, making them independent from their parents at an earlier age.⁶⁸ According to Robin, he found copies of Thomas' *Essay on Women* all over the country.⁶⁹

Coriolis, who wished to marry the daughter of a wealthy Virginian plantation owner, wrote to his mother in order to obtain her permission to wed, explaining how wealthy and esteemed the Virginian family was, the probable size of Miss Blair's inheritance--120,000 livres--and how Blanchard and Chastellux, who had initially discouraged the match, had changed their minds about it. He pointed out twice that Miss Blair was "not pretty" in order to demonstrate that he was making a practical decision and was not simply carried away by emotion. He also explained that "Marriages in this country are not made by interest; sentiment is everything, and riches are perhaps not as prized as in Europe", adding that when he asked Miss Blair's father for permission to court his daughter, Mr. Blair responded that he and his wife were only concerned about their

⁶⁶ Lauzun, *Memoirs*, pp. 7-8, 155. See also Clément C. Velay, *Le duc de Lauzun 1744-1793: Essai de dialogue entre un homme et son temps* (Paris: Éditions Buchet/Chastel, 1983), pp. 24-25, 30, 354.

⁶⁷ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 83. The right of women to possess property and make contracts developed quickly in eighteenth-century Colonial America. Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, p. 100.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 83. For information on the structure and size of American families see Jim Potter, "Demographic Development and Family Structure", in *Colonial British America*, ed. Greene and Pole, pp. 140-47.

⁶⁹ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, p. 142.

daughter's happiness and that "it was therefore not [their permission] that he should work to obtain, but hers."⁷⁰ In the end, Coriolis was unsuccessful with both his mother and Miss Blair, but at least twenty of his colleagues did marry American women. Officers displayed more interest in forming alliances with the daughters and widows of plantation owners in Saint-Domingue when the fleet stopped there at the end of the war, for these women were French, Catholic, wealthy, and often noble, making them suitable marriage candidates.⁷¹ The ideal of love and happiness in marriage, the product of freedom to choose one's mate, coincided with Enlightenment values promoting humanity and happiness, and during the more sentimental period of the Enlightenment, in which inner emotion was raised to the same level as rationality, the concept had considerable appeal, even if it had no obvious effect on social convention.

Like Rochambeau's officers, Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur praised American women for their virtue and considered the absence of dowries a blessing. Marriages, he explained, did not require lawyers or negotiations to satisfy the pride of two families; brides brought with them nothing but their education, health, economy, modesty, skillful management, and "the customary out-set" to start their new households.⁷² Unlike other officers, however, Crèvecoeur went out of his way to praise the independence of American women and portrayed those involved in business in the best possible light. He recounted how the women of Nantucket and Montreal, whose husbands were away on whaling or fur trading expeditions for months at a time, were left in charge of business affairs. This work gave women

the abilities as well as a taste for that kind of superintendancy, to which, by their prudence and good management, they seem to be in general very equal. This employment ripens their judgement, and justly entitles them to a rank superior to that of other wives; and this is the principal reason why those of Nantucket as well as those of Montreal are so fond of society, so affable, and so conversant with the affairs of the world.⁷³

⁷⁰ Coriolis to his mother, Baltimore, 17 Aug. 1782, in Coriolis, "Lettres", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 March 1932, pp. 808-11.

⁷¹ Bodinier, *Officiers de l'armée royale*, pp. 213-17 and Loughrey, *France and Rhode Island*, p. 37.

⁷² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 131.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

He added that the responsibility of running a home and business did nothing to reduce their female qualities: "But you must not imagine...that the Nantucket wives are turbulent, of high temper, and difficult to be ruled", for domestic peace was undisturbed. To reinforce the point he gave the example of "Aunt Kesiah" of Nantucket, who in her husband's absence developed a small business selling pins and needles and graduated to more important articles, formed connections with merchants in London and elsewhere, and made her husband and herself the richest people on the island. Her husband was "a very respectable man, who, well pleased with all her schemes, trusts to her judgement, and relies on her sagacity, with so entire a confidence, as to be altogether passive to the concerns of his family", and this allowed them to live "in perfect union."⁷⁴ Although Crèvecoeur was by no means advocating that women abandon their household duties and follow the same economic pursuits as men, he recognized that women were equal to men in intelligence and initiative and that they could become better persons by expanding their horizons without losing their treasured feminine qualities, neglecting their special domestic responsibilities, or rebelling against ultimate male authority. This unusually liberal attitude was in part a result of his travels in Canada and the United States, where women, by all accounts, did enjoy more rights and responsibilities than most of their European counterparts, but the whole idea that greater liberty--the absence of oppression--could lead to greater virtue was characteristic of the more liberal, post-1760 phase of the Enlightenment.

From the evidence we have, it seems that Rochambeau's officers cautiously admired the status of women in the United States, but had little confidence that women elsewhere could be given the same degree of liberty without its being abused by men and women alike. Fundamentally, they believed in traditional male and female roles, which they considered natural and moral, and were suspicious of innovations which might disrupt the patriarchal organization of their families and society. It was wrong, they believed, for a wife to be a slave to her husband;

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-49. For a discussion of the role of women in the American economy see Perkins, *Economy of Colonial America*, pp. 141-60.

her natural place was beside, not behind, her spouse. Nevertheless, because of her supposedly weaker female nature, the male still had to be the mediator between the household and the public. A woman had the right to be free from degradation and oppression, but at the same time she had to recognize her second rank in the natural family hierarchy. Sometimes, however, French law, which gave women some control over the property they brought into the marriage--often more than the man contributed--could upset this theory of dependence. Officers of the court nobility may have tolerated more "liberated" women than their more traditionalist provincial colleagues because they were accustomed to independently wealthy women who lived separately from their husbands in their own apartments and residences, doing more or less as they pleased, while women of the lesser nobility lived in their husband's social circle and ran their households more or less like bourgeois women, under the eye of their male consorts. Ironically, one of the officers who was most "liberated" in his attitudes toward women, perceiving them virtually as equals, was the Duc de Lauzun, who seduced dozens of married and unmarried women in England and France. His romantic Rousseauian sensitivity toward his female companions seems to have contributed to his success as much as his looks, title, wealth, and the apparent passion which he brought to each relationship.

Officers disagreed as to whether or not American children were well brought up or spoiled, but it is evident that the French visitors were affected by Enlightenment ideas about education, believing that the best way to raise children was to give them the proper degree of love, attention, and freedom to be creative under the guidance and discipline of a parent or teacher. Among the French educated classes, at least, callousness and brutality toward children was beginning to go out of fashion. Broglie maintained that American children were brought up with great care, and Montesquieu found them "charming".⁷⁵ When Blanchard visited a schoolhouse he was impressed by its cleanliness, the neat appearance of its students, their good handwriting, and the

⁷⁵ Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 234 and Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 16 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, "Montesquieu à l'armée", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 516. See Henretta, *Evolution of American Society*, pp. 100-2.

schoolmaster, who “had not the air of a missionary but the tone of the father of the family.”⁷⁶ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur also presented a positive image of American children, which he knew would gain the approval of his readers. Stating that the parents’ example was the best education, he described how Nantucket children were “gently held by an uniform silk cord, which unites softness and strength”, were corrected with tenderness, and learned prudence, thrift, and a trade from their parents.⁷⁷

Chastellux, however, was less convinced that American children were raised so well, describing one American boy as a “spoiled little child, as are all American children--very willful, mischevious, and likeable”. He thought that parents indulged their infants’ every whim while almost neglecting their older children, in both cases giving them too much freedom.⁷⁸ This does not mean that he was a fanatical disciplinarian. He simply felt that with children in particular liberty had to be balanced with careful attention and discipline. French officers’ reactions to American children, both positive and negative, indicate that they believed that childrens’ upbringing was of great importance and required care, affection, and sensitivity as well as firm discipline. Their views suggest that many of them were beginning to consider the separation of child and parent in so many upper class French households both unnatural and unhealthy. This sensitivity, popularized by Rousseau, was already having an impact on educational theory and public attitudes toward childrens’ upbringing, and officers were among those affected by these ideas. While there is often a gap between ideas and action, some changes were in fact taking place in middle and upper class French households.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 42-43.

⁷⁷ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 113, 131.

⁷⁸ Chastellux, *Travels*, pp. 221, 442, 507, 543. See also Kors, “Chastellux”, in *Abroad in America*, ed. Pachter, p. 7. Children were given an increasing degree of autonomy in eighteenth-century Colonial America. Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, p. 100.

⁷⁹ See Barnard, *Education and the French Revolution*, pp. 16-53; William Boyd, *The Educational Theory of Jean Jacques Rousseau* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), pp. 297, 304; and Durant and Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution*, pp. 179-80.

Officers considered formal education an element of if not an integral part of childrens' upbringing, for they believed that every civilized nation required sectors of society to be literate and possess academic training. They were impressed by how widespread literacy was in the United States, and Blanchard, for instance, believed that everyone could both read and write.⁸⁰ Artisans and generals, he wrote, had had an education which was "very nearly the same; so that an artisan is often called to their assemblies, where there is no distinction, no separate order."⁸¹ This educational equality therefore had political implications. Women also seemed very well educated, but no officer found this objectionable. Perhaps if women had obtained post-secondary educations or actually used their education outside the home, some Frenchmen would have been more inclined to protest. Practically every officer commented on the country's universities, in particular Harvard, Princeton, and the College of William and Mary, and considered them up to European standards.⁸² Cromot du Bourg, for instance, left Harvard College "delighted with what I had seen in a country still barbarous in its manners and slight cultivations."⁸³ It was noticed, however, that only a handful of Americans could speak French very well, and in Boston in 1778 the two sides were obliged to communicate in Latin.⁸⁴ Pontgibaud noted that Americans of all classes read newspapers, and he believed that there were thousands of different ones in the country.⁸⁵ While this was an exaggeration, American towns certainly had far more newspaper publications than French communities and a proportionately larger readership, a result of

⁸⁰ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 43-44.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 133; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown. 1: 47, 163-64; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 72, 165; Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport. 11 Nov., 1780-29 Jan., 1781, in Céleste, "Un petit-fils de Montequieu". *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 547; and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 41. See also Higgonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 101, 195.

⁸³ Cromot du Bourg, "Diary of a French Officer". *MAG* 4 (1880): 214.

⁸⁴ Paul M. Spurlin, *The French Enlightenment in America: Essays on the Times of the Founding Fathers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), p. 32.

⁸⁵ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 135.

widespread literacy and freedom of the press.⁸⁶ The Frenchmen found that Americans certainly shone better than the Portuguese inhabitants of the Azores, whom Broglie described as stupid, ignorant, and superstitious.⁸⁷

Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur stressed Americans' sagacity, inventiveness, and practicality, and the outstanding work of such individuals as Benjamin Franklin and the self-taught Pennsylvanian botanist John Bertram, presented living proof that Americans were civilized and enlightened.⁸⁸ He consciously attacked a persistent European image of the American colonies as backward and completely unsophisticated, and insisted that Americans were equal to or surpassed the average European in "useful" education. He went out of his way to stress the contrast between the civilized coastal areas of the colonies and the barbarous frontier, where families lived in sloth and inactivity and children "grow up a mongrel breed, half civilised, half savage".⁸⁹ If the frontier was indeed savage, like some European images of the whole continent, the coastal areas were a model of virtuous civilization, worthy of imitation by Europeans.

Rochambeau's officers, who arrived several years after independence, had been inundated with French press accounts portraying the United States as a haven of enlightenment, but were sceptical because this image presented such a contrast to normal standards of human behaviour. They were surprised and impressed by the quality and scale of the American educational system, and considered it a very positive aspect of American society. According to their thinking, education was excellent for people who could use it, but was potentially dangerous if it fell into the wrong hands. Education had to be tailored to the sex, social class, and occupational group concerned. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they completely opposed education for the

⁸⁶ See Jeremy D. Popkin, "The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics Under Louis XVI", in *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France*, ed. Jack R. Censer and Jeremy D. Popkin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 77.

⁸⁷ Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 182-83.

⁸⁸ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 114-15, 156, 190-91 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 84, 125.

⁸⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 52.

popular classes. Rather, they believed that it could do a great deal of good, as long as this privilege was exercised in the proper manner. They did not betray any fear of Americans acquiring an education because of the special nature of their society, where misery, desperation, and mutual antagonism between social groups did not seem to exist. American commoners were proprietors and could put their education to good use in managing their estates, improving the quality of their lives, and contributing to the public good, not unlike Roman citizens and virtuous French noble landowners. French peasants, however, were not and could never hope to be in the same position, and to give them an advanced education when all they could do was toil in the fields all of their lives for little reward, threatened to stimulate social unrest. The American educational system provided an example more relevant to French proprietors than French peasants, but officers' general attitude toward education indicates that while they did not yet conceive of standardized, universal education, they were not opposed to a degree of formal education for all sectors of society.

French officers of the period possessed a work ethic, and believed that everyone should contribute to society in some fashion. Most noblemen managed their estates full-time or entered the military, judiciary, or the church, and they had little respect for courtiers who merely engaged in conspicuous consumption. Even court noblemen in the officer corps carefully distinguished themselves from individuals in court circles who did not assume the military profession, or did not take it seriously. Officers' comments during their travels in the United States provide us with some insights into their attitudes toward work, which, as in the 1750's, involved different standards for each social class. While Ségur and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur considered Americans hard working, many officers were struck by what they considered American laziness.⁹⁰ Bougainville, who was placed in charge of French and American troops building earthworks to defend Boston harbour in 1778, was frustrated by the lack of drive among American work parties,

⁹⁰ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 400 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 42, 144.

and wrote that "One cannot believe how slow and lazy the people of this country are."⁹¹ Similarly, Closen-Haydenburg complained that the American motto was "by and by", for they put off building fortifications until the enemy was practically upon them.⁹² Other officers such as Chef d'escadre Louis de Rigaud, Comte de Vaudreuil, nephew of Canada's former governor-general, also considered Americans slow and lazy.⁹³ Commissaire des guerres Blanchard had to purchase supplies for the French army, and he found American suppliers slow to make decisions and unreliable, but extremely eager for French silver écus.⁹⁴ Another officer, Montesquieu, commented on Americans' unwillingness to work very hard or engage in intensive agriculture: their fields seemed almost untended in comparison to the ones he was accustomed to seeing in France.⁹⁵ The French visitors deemed Virginians the laziest of all, for no whites seemed to work in the fields unless driven to do so by dire poverty.⁹⁶ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, an astute observer, maintained that people in Connecticut did not cultivate wild grapes because they were too lazy, but immediately qualified his remarks:

The people of this province are very hard-working, but they do not labor to excess, as our peasants do. They cultivate only for their physical needs. The sweat of their brow is not expended on satisfying the extravagant desires of the rich and luxury-loving; they limit themselves to enjoying what is truly necessary.⁹⁷

While his explanation that Americans did not produce more because they were uninterested in luxury was faulty--they probably valued a certain amount of leisure time more than material

⁹¹ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 168.

⁹² Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 121.

⁹³ Vaudreuil, "Notes de campagne", *Neptunia* (1757-58): no. 50, pp. 29-30.

⁹⁴ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 71.

⁹⁵ Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 16 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, "Montesquieu à l'armée", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 516 and Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFE* 5 (1914): 243.

⁹⁶ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 67.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 29.

possessions which they would have no time to enjoy--Clermont-Crèvecoeur at least attempted to explain the roots of so-called American "laziness".

Officers did not realize that the labour shortage in the United States and the abundance of land meant that intensive agriculture, in which every scrap of land was used to its maximum potential, was not appropriate for most American farms, and people were not forced to engage in laborious cottage industries all winter in order to make ends meet. French commoners had to work hard in order to support their fiscal burden and stay alive, but Americans, who had almost no taxes, rent, or seigneurial dues, had the option of working to excess or enjoying some leisure time. Accustomed to considering commoners criminally lazy if they did not work twelve hours a day, officers had trouble understanding Americans' behaviour. Part of the problem was that they alternately compared the average American to different French social groups, considering him in relation to both their own privileged elite and the French popular classes. Sometimes, for instance in regard to dancing, they held them up to the standard of the nobility and bourgeoisie, while at other times they compared them to French peasants. They did not differentiate very well between different social classes in the United States, and tended to treat all Americans as a bloc because their social structure was so different. Officers, no matter how much leisure they enjoyed, considered themselves hard-working, and they felt perfectly justified in stringently applying the work ethic to the popular classes.

By the 1770's and 1780's, the principles of religious toleration were well entrenched in French educated public opinion, even if statutes against Protestants and Jews remained. A number of French officers gave religious toleration in the United States their cautious approval, although others doubted that true religious toleration could ever be achieved because of religious fanaticism. In general, officers supported toleration while being relatively anti-Christian. Most officers commented on the religious diversity in the country and the number of denominations in each town, and often decried the customs and theology of these groups in considerable detail.

Quakers were well known, of course, and while a few officers were initially willing to see them in a positive light, many found that Quakers did not live up to expectations.⁹⁸ A few remained admirers of the Society of Friends throughout their stay, and Ségur, who praised the Quakers as a simple, moral people living like “sages”, found it unjust that most Americans spoke of them with disdain.⁹⁹ Many of his colleagues, however, were less enthusiastic about them. Montesquieu was typical in claiming that they had been corrupted by hypocrisy and were as vicious as the rest of humankind. While Quakers had built a number of useful public establishments in Philadelphia, he wrote, “they have, on the other hand, banned all forms of public entertainment, with the result that Boston with its intolerance and Philadelphia with its gravity are insupportable. At the moment people accuse the Quakers of being the Jesuits of America...they are Tories for the most part and have greatly degenerated from the virtue of their ancestors.”¹⁰⁰ His superior Chastellux, who wrote a treatise on religious toleration, liked some Quakers, but found their religious services more tiresome than inspiring and dismissed their doctrine of inner grace as “nonsense”.¹⁰¹ The fact that Quakers were pacifists and advised the Frenchmen to return to France does not seem to have lowered officers’ opinions of this group, even though they found pacifism unrealistic and not very good for the American war effort.¹⁰² What really gratified them was their discovery that Quakers were not enlightened philosophers following a relatively secular morality, but relatively normal, imperfect human beings, and worst

⁹⁸ Robertinier, “Journal”, cited in Loughrey, *France and Rhode Island*, pp. 124-25 and Chastellux, manuscript of December 1782, AN Série M 1036 F60 7. See also Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁹ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 359-61, 394-96. See also Clermont-Crèvecœur, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 22.

¹⁰⁰ Montesquieu to Comte de Chastellux, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in “Lettres de divers officiers”, AN Série M 1021 IV; Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in Beuve, “Un petit-fils de Montesquieu”, *RHRFE* 5 (1914): 243; Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céleste, “Un petit-fils de Montesquieu”, *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 547; and Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 16 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, “Montesquieu à l’armée”, *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 516.

¹⁰¹ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 127, 157, 165-67, 181-82. See also Kors, “Chastellux”, in *Abroad in America*, ed. Pachter, p. 3.

¹⁰² Anonymous, “Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d’amérique”, AN Marine B7 458.

of all, too religious. Most were aware that Quakers, despite their lack of ritual and clergymen, were not perfect deists, but a very religious Christian group whose members were frequently beset by typical human weaknesses. French observers, priding themselves on their "realism", were happy to criticize French writers who idealized Quakers and Americans in general.

Officers were clearly disappointed that toleration in the United States was not equivalent to religious indifference, but instead constituted a truce between very devout religious groups. Montesquieu noted that "religion has more of an empire over the spirit of these simple people than it does at home", and added that "tolerance...does not exist to its fullest extent; although different sects publicly exercise their religion, these sects are themselves intolerant and jealous of one another."¹⁰³ Officers continually praised religious practices which encouraged morality and simple worship of the Supreme Being while attacking "fanaticism" and intolerance. Few had much good to say about the Congregationalists or "Presbyterians" of New England. Volunteers found them bigoted and fanatical, and Rochambeau's officers, who generally liked New Englanders, believed that they sometimes carried religion to extremes.¹⁰⁴ A volunteer, Lieutenant Denis-Jean Florimond Longlois Dubouchet, considered Boston a grim place because the "Puritans" of the city, he alleged, never laughed, and one could be fined or even imprisoned for singing, playing cards, or frequenting taverns on Sunday.¹⁰⁵ A number of other officers also complained about these rules, which prevailed almost everywhere in the country.¹⁰⁶ Bougainville mocked a printed sermon by the Reverend Charles Chauncy of Boston on the sins of Israel--"Americanized for the occasion"--in which the minister blamed the sins of his countrymen

¹⁰³ Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport. 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céleste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 544 and Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport. 12 Oct. 1780, in Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFE* 5 (1914): 243. For observations on religion in the United States at this time see Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 91-95, 118-19.

¹⁰⁴ See also the 1765 report of a Frenchman, possibly an officer, to the Minister of Marine: anonymous, "Journal", *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 70, 75, 82.

¹⁰⁵ Denis-Jean Florimond Longlois Dubouchet, cited in Morris Bishop, "A French Volunteer", *American Heritage: The Magazine of History* 17 (1966): 46.

¹⁰⁶ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 183 and Montesquieu to Comte de Chastellux, Newport. 12 Oct. 1780, in "Lettres de divers officiers", AN Série M1021 IV.

for the contrary winds which ruined the manoeuvres of d'Estaing's squadron off Rhode Island and obliged him to abandon operations.¹⁰⁷ Galvan claimed that Americans discussed their country in the same way as the Jews described their history in the Old Testament and that Americans and Jews had the "same political enthusiasm, the same religious fanaticism, the same national prejudice, the same scorn for foreigners, the same love for the supernatural."¹⁰⁸ He ridiculed an omen, reported in the press, which allegedly signified that God supported the Patriot cause.¹⁰⁹ Clermont-Crèvecoeur alleged that the Congregationalists of Massachusetts--he called them Presbyterians--persecuted other denominations such as the Quakers, and he feared a future "revolution" in which these religious minorities would be massacred by the Puritan majority. Religious toleration, in his opinion, could never be truly achieved:

I note with sorrow the unhappy results for mankind of that religious tolerance which is said to ensure the well-being of a state but which, in my opinion, becomes on the contrary a source of evil when a sect as intolerant and fanatic as the Presbyterian dominates through sheer numbers those living peaceably within their respective faiths. The Roman and Presbyterian religions are made to live alone and, futhermore, far apart. How many revolutions England has had, all started by the Presbyterians! Literary men have come out in favour of religious tolerance, but in expressing these sentiments they believed men were what they hoped they were, not what they are.¹¹⁰

Most officers, however, had no difficulty in concluding that despite a few problems, religious harmony had been achieved in the United States.¹¹¹ They noted that there were still prejudices and sometimes discriminatory laws against Roman Catholic Americans, but were impressed to find how many French Huguenots had taken refuge in the country and, ironically, how Jesuit priests, whose order had been abolished in France, were leading Catholic

¹⁰⁷ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 171.

¹⁰⁸ Galvan to Sartine et L., camp by West Point, 8 Oct. 1779, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 227. See also Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1967), pp. 140-41.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 82-83.

¹¹¹ See, for instance, Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 245 and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 231.

congregations in Maryland.¹¹² Ségur believed that all of these religious groups were united by the fact that they fled to North America to avoid persecution, and that British law and the sheer number of denominations led to toleration.¹¹³ He was not alone in believing that the very diversity of religious groups led to toleration, for one of the volunteers came to the same conclusion.¹¹⁴ Protestant German and Swiss officers in the French service were particularly enthusiastic about toleration, and it is worth noting that officers in German regiments with the British army, who were extremely conservative in their socio-political perspective, admired the Quakers and cautiously approved of religious toleration in the United States.¹¹⁵ Even the volunteer Preudhomme de Borre, who was frequently very critical of the country he was fighting for, supported religious toleration.¹¹⁶ If officers differed in their opinions on how successful religious toleration was in the United States, they infinitely preferred conditions there to those prevalent in Spanish America, where they considered the people slavishly subservient to priests, monks, and the Inquisition, superstitious, fanatically devout, and yet permeated with vice.¹¹⁷ They came to similar conclusions about the Portuguese of the Azores.¹¹⁸

While there is often a considerable gap between Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur's opinions and those of other officers, in part because of his unique experiences in North America, his views on religion provide particularly relevant clues to those of his colleagues who visited the continent

¹¹² Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 93, 101-2; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 54, 153; and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 183.

¹¹³ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 408-9.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458.

¹¹⁵ It might be argued that the German nobility was still, in some respects, in the earlier phase of the Enlightenment. Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. xii-xiii, 51, 53, 73, 212, 250-51; Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 124, 125, 160, 163; and Kipping, *Hessian View of America*, p. 28.

¹¹⁶ Preudhomme de Borre, "Description des 13 colonies", AN Marine B4 144, fol. 363, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 331.

¹¹⁷ Chastellux, manuscript of December 1782, AN Série M1036 F30 7; Verger, "Journal", and Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 173, 272, 275; and Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 307.

¹¹⁸ Broglie, "Narrative". *MAH* 1 (1877): 181, 183.

during the War of American Independence. Crèvecoeur devoted considerable attention to Quakers in his essays, and he praised them for their peaceful, moral lives and simple worship and beliefs, which he considered based on the "most essential duties of Christianity".¹¹⁹ He particularly admired them for emancipating their slaves and for their refusal to take up arms during the Revolution, even when they were arrested by the Patriot authorities.¹²⁰ Crèvecoeur's principal argument was that freedom of conscience and a mixing of religious groups led inevitably to deism. According to his theory, religious zeal, fanned by persecution, slowly faded into religious indifference in North America's free environment, and when young people from different denominations intermarried, they taught the next generation a diluted form of Christianity and attended whatever church was nearest. While they remained naturally moral, their prosperity, happiness, and absorption in their work meant that they paid little attention to the formalities of religion, and ended their days without any remorse of conscience.¹²¹ A primitive Christianity or deism was the final result:

Thus all sects are mixed as well as all nations; thus religious indifference is imperceptibly disseminated from one end of the continent to the other...Persecution, religious pride, the love of contradiction, are the food of what the world commonly calls religion. These motives have ceased here; zeal in Europe is confined; here it evaporates in the great distance it has to travel; there it is a grain of powder inclosed, here it burns away in the open air, and consumes without effect.¹²²

Although he admitted that the Congregationalists had persecuted and even executed Quakers in early colonial days, over time these denominations had smoothed their differences, and they now lived in perfect harmony.¹²³ Crèvecoeur attacked the idea that "a unity in religious opinions was necessary to establish the unity of law and government", and maintained that it was the cause of

¹¹⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 114, 137-38, 195-96.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 164, 298-301.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 46, 48-51 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 63-65, 152-71.

¹²² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 51.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

almost all calamities in history. "It is not very long", he wrote, "since it has been demonstratively proved that variety, nay, a discord of religious opinions is the true principle on which the harmony of society is established."¹²⁴ Elaborate ritual and theology were also unnecessary: religious gatherings only required the transmission of a few simple moral lessons.¹²⁵

The worldly chaplain Abbé Robin, who was a Freemason, took a different approach, one which he knew was "well removed from the received ideas of our times."¹²⁶ In his opinion, religious tolerance eventually led to civic discord unless the population was distracted by commerce and foreign enemies, as was supposedly the case in the Netherlands and Britain. Governments should actively encourage a "moderate...and conciliatory" philosophy--equally removed from religious fanaticism and the hedonistic materialism of atheistic *philosophes* such as Helvétius--to educate their citizens toward a single world faith which "presents the greatest number of truths, best ordains the extent & limits of reason, best makes one love virtue, fear vice, & is best suited to all times, places, conditions, and spirits."¹²⁷ People should be taught that persuasion, not imperious conviction, is most effective in leading others to truth and virtue. Confusing dogmas should be avoided. However, Robin added that even if Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes, ending toleration for Huguenots, was unjust, it was perhaps the most useful act of his reign because it put an end to the intestine divisions between Catholics and Huguenots and brought peace to the kingdom.¹²⁸ Crèvecoeur and Robin had different approaches to the question of religious diversity, but both men hoped that people would voluntarily move toward general religious unity based on truth, reason, virtue, and presumably, although his name is not mentioned, God. Robin was more concerned about having people worship the Supreme

¹²⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 152.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 152, 168.

¹²⁶ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, p. 212 and Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 345.

¹²⁷ Robin, *Nouveau voyage.*, pp. 212-13.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 216, 218.

Being in the same temples than Crèvecoeur, and he endorsed ornaments and saints as useful aids which spoke to the imagination or the heart, but neither individual conformed very well to Roman Catholic orthodoxy.¹²⁹ Nor did they favour state coercion, but Robin's state-sponsored philosophic program and partial endorsement of Louis XIV's terrible persecutions certainly contained the seeds of such actions. The Enlightenment stressed the fulfillment of the individual within the community, and rejected coercion. Few people at the time fully realized that there might be a contradiction between the twin goals of individualism and communal virtue.

French officers of the 1770's and 1780's were more openly in favour of religious toleration than Montcalm's officers. Their objections to "overzealous" religion--which could include almost any expression of religious sentiment--and attraction to Masonic beliefs suggests that deism exerted a considerable influence on the officer corps. Many of Rochambeau's officers were Freemasons or became Freemasons during their stay in the United States.¹³⁰ No officer, however, seems to have completely rejected conventional religion. Like Rousseau, they frequently sympathized with the idea of a deistic public religion which stressed patriotic and civic virtues but did not object to Christianity as a private religion, even though it taught devotion to heaven rather than the earthly community and advocated pious resignation in the face of danger rather than patriotic martial virtues.¹³¹ Since many considered Jesus Christ an inspirational example of a near-perfect human being, they were willing to countenance his worship as a kind of saintly hero of morality. Their toleration did have some limits, for they were willing to have the state intervene in order to crush "fanaticism" which threatened the public interest. They also preferred a single established church to a more religiously pluralistic society, but were usually open to a more diverse range of churches.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

¹³⁰ See, for instance, Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 325 and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 88. For a discussion of Freemasonry during the eighteenth century see W. Kirk MacNulty, *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol* (London: Thomas and Hudson, 1991), pp. 70-89.

¹³¹ Rousseau, *Social Contract*, p. 40.

One of the most important questions which the French visitors addressed, directly or indirectly, was whether or not Americans were examples of humankind in a more natural state. Prior to their departure for the United States, officers had been exposed to a heavy barrage of pamphlets, newspaper articles, books, and plays which portrayed the country as a kind of republican Eden. Inspired by Rousseauian ideals and classical models of the stern, virtuous citizens of the Roman Republic, who lived in spartan equality on their farmsteads, taking up arms when the nation was in peril, writers portrayed Americans as living in republican simplicity with the morals and virtues of the ancients. Practically all of the visitors agreed that thanks to a variety of fortunate circumstances early American colonists had fled from the evils of European civilization and built a simpler but purer proto-civilization of their own in the freedom and isolation of a distant continent. Only a handful of officers who have left papers, most notably certain volunteers, considered the American nation "still completely new" in the sense that its inhabitants were uncouth savages only vaguely acquainted with the concepts of law and civility.¹³²

Almost all officers subscribed to some extent to the idea that American society was simpler and more virtuous than that prevailing in Europe, even though they constantly pointed out exceptions to the generalizations they had made. Americans, who shared the same belief that their states were havens of virtue threatened by British and European corruption, helped to encourage this perception of their society. They were not shy to let the French know their ideological views, and thought nothing of telling officers at dinner that France had endured "many centuries of corruption", with no idea that this might be interpreted as an insult.¹³³ Fortunately, most officers seem to have agreed with them. If the French officers were suffering from idealized delusions about America, in part inspired by the Roman classics so widely read during this period, then so

¹³² Preudhomme de Borre, "Description des 13 colonies de l'Amérique septentrionale", AN Marine B4 144, fol. 375, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 316; Galvan to Sartine et L., Charleston, S.C., 30 May 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 219; and anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l'Amérique, quelques détails sur la guerre de ces états avec les Anglais", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 37.

¹³³ Dr. Samuel Cooper of Boston, 1782, cited in Merlant, *Soldiers and Sailors of France*, p. 205.

were their equally literate American hosts.¹³⁴ The elites of both peoples were steeped in classical traditions and Enlightenment assumptions about humankind, and on this general cultural level they had a great deal in common. They shared similar fears about the future of American society, when wealth and luxury threatened to undermine equality, virtue, and civic spirit. They also shared a belief in the theme of pastoral virtue, a concept treasured by Patriot revolutionaries as the basis of their national virtue.¹³⁵ If American Patriots generally had more faith in the ultimate success of democracy than French officers did, it is important to remember that many other Americans, including many Loyalists and conservative Patriots, shared the Frenchmen's general pessimism concerning human nature.

La Fayette adopted Patriot ideology virtually in its entirety, and although he gradually abandoned some of his more idealized images of the United States, he never lost his conviction that the citizens of this new country were superior to Europeans. In 1778 he was even concerned that worldly French volunteers might corrupt American soldiers, and he advocated keeping them separate from the rest of the army.¹³⁶ La Fayette's aide-de-camp Pontgibaud and Steuben's aide Duponceau also remained strong admirers of American simplicity and virtue throughout their lives.¹³⁷ Many of Rochambeau's officers joined the volunteers in ascribing to the ideal of American virtue, believing that if there was corruption in American cities, the countryside provided a haven for human goodness. Clermont-Crèvecoeur recorded a typical ode to American pastoral virtue in his journal:

Happy Americans--I speak now of the country people--who live with your families in peace and plenty, whose anxieties are confined to rearing your children in the sound

¹³⁴ See Spurlin, *French Enlightenment in America*, pp. 142-44.

¹³⁵ Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, pp. 25-27, 82-85 and Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 112-13, 188-89, 213-14.

¹³⁶ La Fayette to Charles Lee, June 1778, in *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Idzerda, 2: 62-64. See also La Fayette to Marquis de Castries, New Windsor, Conn., 30 Jan. 1781, AN Marine B4 192, fol. 163 and Lloyd S. Kramer, "America's Lafayette and Lafayette's America: A European and the American Revolution", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 38 (1981): 233-35.

¹³⁷ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 125 and Duponceau, "Autobiography", *PMHB* 63 (1939): 313.

principles you yourselves profess! Far from the cities with their corrupt morals, your virtue derives solely from your innocence.¹³⁸

Clermont-Crèvecoeur was a relatively practical man and assessed Americans' problems in a thoughtful manner, but he firmly believed that rural Americans, blessed with good government and widespread prosperity and isolated from the vice prevalent in their cities and in densely-populated Europe, enjoyed a larger measure of virtue than most other peoples. His assessment was based to a large extent on traditional western beliefs about rural virtue versus urban corruption, which are still commonly found today. This theme of pastoral virtue was championed by Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who became an American farmer and completely adopted the ideology of his new country, in part because it was in tune with Enlightenment ideals he had absorbed during his youth.¹³⁹

French officers of the 1770's and 1780's were fully aware of persistent evils which plagued humankind, yet they also had ideals which they believed people should strive for, even if they could never be fully achieved. Their experience in North America suggested to some that under the proper government and right social and economic conditions, people could lead happier and more virtuous lives than in the past, but most officers doubted that fundamental socio-economic conditions, which shaped political systems, could be significantly transformed, which in turn limited the potential for real change.

The Chevalier de Chastellux and his aide-de-camp Montesquieu each compiled an exhaustive description and analysis of American society during their visit, and although some of their fellow officers poked fun at them for spending so much time on philosophic endeavours, their opinions do provide some insight into their colleagues' views. Both of them prided themselves on being "realists", and Montesquieu happily announced the confirmation of what the two of them had previously suspected: "That vaunted probity, morality, and simplicity of the

¹³⁸ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 83.

¹³⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 21-38.

inhabitants of North America, does not exist except in the philosophic novels we have read."¹⁴⁰ But he did acknowledge that while Americans were not perfect, they preserved some elements of moral superiority. Montesquieu considered American virtue "delicate", sustained by "liberty, peace, and good laws", and confined mainly to the countryside.¹⁴¹ He fully ascribed to the idea that the virtual absence of luxury in the United States, the product of its austere proto-civilization, underlay its virtue: "Liberty, this precious blessing which man has never been able to conserve, here takes the place of the pleasures which the arts and riches have offered to the inhabitants of other climates."¹⁴² His superior, Chastellux, agreed that Americans were not morally perfect, but perhaps somewhat better than the inhabitants of the Old World. Liberty and good laws, he stated, were sustaining their virtue, and rural Americans of the interior were resisting corruption better than their more commercially-oriented compatriots on the coast.¹⁴³ While Chastellux's idealization of the simple, egalitarian rural society was Rousseauian in nature, his belief that scientific, empirical knowledge provided the road to happiness and virtue, his faith in progress, and his interest in seeing the centralized state fulfill philosophic aims was at variance with Rousseau's ideas, even if we see Rousseau's lawgiver as a state executive. Unlike other *philosophes*, Rousseau believed that science was ruining, not saving, humankind, and considered the idea that human progress could be achieved through scientific knowledge an illusion.¹⁴⁴ Most officers, however, largely shared Chastellux's faith in the pursuit of knowledge and the role of the centralized state in bringing about reform.

¹⁴⁰ Montesquieu to Comte de Chastellux, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, "Lettres de divers officiers", AN Série M1021 IV.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* See also Montesquieu to Saint-Chamans, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFE* 5 (1914): 243.

¹⁴² Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céleste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu". *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 545.

¹⁴³ Kors, "Chastellux", in *Abroad in America*, ed. Pachter, p. 10.

¹⁴⁴ Rousseau, *Social Contract*, pp. 16, 20, 25.

Séгур was even more optimistic than Chastellux, and hinted that a perfect society might one day be achieved, although he was not consistent on this point.¹⁴⁵ He greatly admired the United States because it seemed to be at a unique stage in the evolution of civilization, and he wrote to his wife that “This is the only country for honest people; the beginning of civilization is the time for their reign. Before this epoch, there was too much vulgarity; since then one is too blasé to be virtuous”.¹⁴⁶ He did not explain whether or not the United States could be frozen forever at this point between savagery and corruption, or whether countries in an advanced state of civilization could revert to a more primitive but virtuous way of life, but his idle speculations about how he and his wife might one day live together in the country, far from the evils of Europe, suggests that he doubted that France could easily accomplish this transformation.¹⁴⁷

Most officers considered these special American mores very fragile indeed, for they commonly expressed the idea that Americans had once been more virtuous than Europeans, but that the march of civilization, war, and other contact with Europe was causing a gradual decline in American virtue. Lauberdière regretted the passing of a happy, idyllic society as “Luxury and the mores of Europe introduce themselves”, and Robin, who described Americans as living “still in the happy century where ranks and distinctions of birth & rank are ignored”, believed that the peaceful, benevolent Americans had been turned into monsters by war.¹⁴⁸ The classic image of American society is found in Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur’s essays. Wherever a person went in the world, Crèvecoeur maintained, he would find misguided religion, tyranny, and absurd laws, but in North America “he might contemplate the very beginnings and outlines of human society, which can be traced nowhere now but in this part of the world.”¹⁴⁹ He portrayed the pioneers

¹⁴⁵ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 381.

¹⁴⁶ Ségur to Comtesse de Ségur, cited in Merlant, *Soldiers and Sailors of France*, p. 192.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Lauberdière, “Journal”, BN N.A.F. 17691, fol. 66 and Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 37, 55.

¹⁴⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 12.

on the lawless fringe of the American frontier as living in a pre-civilized state, and explained that they were an example of how many of the first settlers who came to North America lived, if they were not corrected by strong religious convictions. These people, turned into savages by their lifestyle of idleness, hunting, and drinking, were eventually displaced or, if they worked hard, became prosperous, more polished, and more virtuous, like newly-arrived colonists from more settled areas. Hunting, he explained, made people ferocious, unsociable, and slothful, while hard-working farmers had no time for vice. He was careful, however, to distinguish the lawless hunters' gloomy solitude from the Indians' more sociable and virtuous lifestyle.¹⁵⁰ When Crèvecoeur debated the respective merits of "natural" versus "civilized" life, he seems to have had Indians and Europeans in mind:

Would you prefer the state of men in the woods, to that of men in a more improved situation? Evil preponderates in both; in the first they often eat each other for want of food, and in the other they often starve each other for want of room. For my part, I think the vices of and miseries to be found in the latter, exceed those of the former; in which real evil is more scarce, more supportable, and less enormous.¹⁵¹

This former lieutenant differed from most of Rochambeau's officers in believing that uncivilized peoples led slightly happier lives than civilized ones. He cast his lot with Rousseau, who believed that primitive peoples in or just emerging from the state of nature were, despite their ignorance of morality, better able to enjoy happiness, freedom, and dignity.¹⁵² However, he shared with other officers and Rousseau a conviction that excessive civilization led to more evil than good, and like them admired the American farmer as a civilized man who was fortunate enough to enjoy a balanced, natural existence which avoided the extremes of depraved poverty and overindulgence.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47, 51-53.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁵² Hampson, *Enlightenment*, p. 210.

French officers who visited North America during the Seven Years' War and the War of American Independence had a great deal in common. Their social values and ideas matched to such a degree that from a broad perspective they can be treated as a bloc. Nevertheless, subtle differences existed between the two groups, and while circumstance, such as the nature of the society being observed, can help to explain many of these differences, the time gap between the groups is also an important factor.

Gilbert Bodinier has argued that the French officer corps was a reactionary body of noblemen essentially unaffected by experiences in the War of American Independence, and that only a handful of idealistic court nobles, predisposed in favour of republicanism, were enthusiastic about the United States.¹⁵³ There is considerable truth to this. Rochambeau's officers were no democrats, and were suspicious of excessive American liberty and equality. They also frequently had little affection for Americans, and were not obviously transformed into liberals or conservatives by their time overseas. But when the letters and journals of French officers in the 1770's and 1780's are compared with those of officers in the 1750's, there are so many differences in the ideas contained in them that some changes in social attitudes must have taken place during the intervening period.

The sources we have for both groups of officers are biased in the same way: educated and literary-minded officers are more numerous than poorly-educated ones, and therefore it is difficult to determine exactly how representative ideas were for the officer corps as a whole. But the views of the two groups of well-educated and best-represented officers changed over time, and those of the less-educated officers were also frequently different. Chaussinand-Nogaret's thesis that the Enlightenment had a widespread impact on the nobility cannot therefore be easily dismissed.¹⁵⁴ Even the best-educated officers of the Seven Years' War period had been extremely sensitive about the preservation of all social differences, however minute, were obsessed with

¹⁵³ Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*.

¹⁵⁴ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *French Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*.

methods of squeezing more revenue out of the common people, supported dowries and traditional female subordination virtually without question, and favoured a state-dominated established church to coerce all subjects into religious conformity.

By 1780, however, the situation was different, at least on the theoretical plane. Many officers expressed an interest in reducing rather than strengthening some social barriers as a means of increasing social harmony among "citizens". Authoritarian attitudes were less obvious, and this was most striking in theories about love and marriage and kindness in bringing up children. Officers were also less ambiguous in their attitudes toward religious toleration, and deistic attitudes and Freemasonry were much more common. Enlightenment ideas concerning the development of civilization also affect officers' analyses of American society.

Even when we acknowledge that there is a gap between theory and practice, French officers were at least discussing many issues which had barely even existed in Montcalm's day. The officer corps cannot be considered a bastion of reactionary traditionalism in which nothing ever changed. While the deep and genuine conservatism of the officer corps should not be underestimated, it is important to realize that French noblemen, like all educated Frenchmen, were affected by evolving attitudes which were slowly changing the nature of the *ancien régime*.

CHAPTER 7

POLITICAL VALUES IN THE OFFICER CORPS, 1775-1783

During the 1770's and 1780's France's educated elite widely adopted a political discourse based on the words liberty, equality, citizen, and the nation, and these concepts acquired increasingly radical definitions. French officers in North America were not immune from this change in the ideological climate, and their views indicate that words and ideas which were at least nominally liberal in scope had to some degree permeated all social groups within the officer corps. In the 1750's Montcalm's officers had shown little sign that they were politically conscious, and they accepted the political status quo without question. This was less true of officers two decades later. Despite their continued political naivete, officers in the United States demonstrated their opposition to arbitrary government and support for the idea that active citizens and indeed everyone in society deserved equal--although sometimes different--rights and duties.

This cautious liberal attitude manifested itself in different ways. For instance, in the 1750's Montcalm's subordinates considered slavery cruel, but did not really question the principle itself. Most officers in the American Revolutionary period, however, condemned slavery as fundamentally immoral and frequently discussed the abolition of both the slave trade and slavery, even if they considered these reforms unlikely in the foreseeable future, if ever. Officers in Canada had criticized the American press, as did Rochambeau's, but the latter group also showed theoretical support for Raynal and the principles of freedom of speech and press even while they attacked the libel, lies, and sedition in the partisan American press. In addition, although in many

respects the concept of patriotism remained the same as earlier, in the eyes of a few liberal-minded officers, fighting for the king and fighting for the nation was no longer absolutely synonymous.

Officers' views on the historical, political, regional, and ethnic diversity of the United States also reveal certain differences from the Seven Years' War period. Rochambeau's officers sometimes accepted the legitimacy of the Patriots' rebellion from a standpoint of principle rather than simple expediency, indicating that a number of them were willing to countenance the overthrow of governments under certain circumstances; however, their unwillingness to condemn Loyalists suggests they they did not perceive themselves as ideological opponents of their British rivals. They shared with their predecessors a belief that American regional differences constituted a serious obstacle to unity, but on the whole they were less worried about the diversity of American ethnic groups because these peoples had usually adopted the political ideals of the larger community.

French officers during both periods used the same arguments to criticize the American political system. They considered executive officials in the various states insufficiently powerful, making government slow and inefficient, and deplored the lack of a strong central authority capable of exerting its power across the whole country. Officers during the Seven Years' War considered democratic institutions in the American colonies weak, subversive, and completely unadmirable. Twenty years later, many of these same concerns remained, although officers often admired the participation of property owners in the political process. French officers paid as much attention to the quality of American leaders as to the political institutions which had placed them in positions of authority. Despite officers' discussions of political equality, they believed that the political systems of civilized states should enhance respect for hierarchies based on the natural inequality between human beings, taking into account social and economic conditions and merit. Merit, for these officers, meant intelligence, education, cultivation, and good character, and while they believed that the nobility enjoyed a larger share of these virtues than other social classes, they

admitted that noblemen did not have a monopoly of them. Legal privilege was the best method of ensuring recognition of the natural aristocracy, but modifications to this rule might be admissible under certain circumstances.

Although French officers did not believe that American-style democracy was applicable to most European states because in the Old World the propertied classes were in a minority rather than a majority, they did not completely reject the principle of property-holders representing the nation. French officers' comments on political institutions in the United States and France indicate that many of them believed that constitutional bodies--such as the provincial estates--were required to defend and promote the interests of the nation, eliminate ministerial despotism, and allow liberty and other enlightened principles to flourish. They did not question the king's sole authority to rule, but believed that he required some kind of organization to acquaint him with the true needs of the nation and help him rule wisely. A variety of officers offered solutions to this problem, all of them involving a body of specially-qualified citizens. Citizenship and property ownership were closely linked in officers' minds, and they envisioned the nobility as having a central role in this constitutional body because they were the principal property-holders in France. Despite their first-hand experience with the American Revolution, few of them were seriously able to imagine the nobility ever losing its position of honour in France. Even in European republics, noble and patrician families dominated governments for generations. Rochambeau's officers were strongly attached to the monarchy and traditional corporate bodies, but a number of them were open to constitutional ideas only partly dependent on privilege. The discourse of equality and citizenship used by liberal and conservative officers alike raised the question of equality within the nobility and by extension the role of non-noble property owners in the political process, and whether they knew it or not, these ideas would have significant political consequences.

The French educated public of the 1770's and 1770's expressed great enthusiasm for the principles of liberty, equality, and the rights of the citizen and nation. Young people in Paris and the provinces were strongly affected by what Ségur called "republican mores".¹ Several of the more liberal volunteers and expeditionary officers attributed their political awakening and hatred of despotism to an intensive study of the classics, a revolt against the doctrines of Catholicism, and the inspiration of traditional French liberties. One of the volunteers, Duponceau, who grew up on the Île-de-Ré, claimed that the French educational system inflamed young people by assigning them Greek and Roman history as well as French literature which dated to before the reign of Louis XIV, written when "there was...yet nominally at least, some liberty in France".² His Huguenot uncle further stimulated Duponceau's rebellion by attacking Roman Catholic doctrine and railing against the cruelties of Louis XIV, filling the young boy with ideas which shocked his Catholic parents and his confessor.³ Many of the youths at court shared this revolt against authority, and Ségur and his friends, who included La Fayette and the Vicomte de Noailles, supported the idea of a "French Parliament" or a "Chamber of Peers" like the House of Lords.⁴ Ségur also ascribed young people's admiration for the American Patriots to the fact that they studied "without cease the works of the most famous republicans of antiquity."⁵ Many officers who opposed arbitrary government were proud to declare that they were "a friend of liberty".⁶ In the United States Robin praised the court nobles for being the first to give an

¹ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 83.

² Duponceau, "Autobiography", *PMHB* 63 (1939): 447-48.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-32.

⁴ Ségur, *Mémoires*. 1: 148.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 82, 107.

⁶ Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céleste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 550 and Montesquieu to Latapie, Crown Point, N.Y., 13 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, "Montesquieu à l'armée", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 524.

example of simplicity, frugality, and affability, "as though they had never lived with anyone but equal men."⁷

The cult of equality affected French officers in both France and the United States. Ségur reported how junior officers in the Duc de Castries' camp at Paramé in Brittany amused themselves by forming a sort of secret society called *la colotte*, the colloque or club, whose members accorded rank and title little importance.⁸ Many French officers in the United States were Freemasons, an organization in which all members, no matter what social station they belonged to, were at least theoretically equal, with equal access by merit to the three levels of Freemasonry.⁹ In addition, some of the volunteers--including La Rouërie, who would violently oppose the constitutional monarchy of 1789--refused to be addressed by their titles or as "Monsieur". La Rouërie went by his first name and was known as "Colonel Armand".¹⁰ Prior to the arrival of Rochambeau's army, La Fayette warned that French naval officers must show great respect for American state governors, officers, and even ship's pilots, for a "pilot's self-perception is proportionate to the part he plays in the government and...individual rudeness is capable of doing us irreparable harm."¹¹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur also gloried in the equality of Americans of all social, economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. In one revealing illustration of an enlightened American proprietor, however, he portrayed the farmer's family at one end of the dinner table, his white hired men along the middle of it, and his free black hired men on the lower end. For Crèvecoeur it was important that everyone be treated equally, but at the same time he

⁷ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, p. 30.

⁸ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 208. See also Leon Apt, *Louis-Philippe de Ségur: An Intellectual in a Revolutionary Age* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), pp. 1-16, 22.

⁹ Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 345 and MacNulty, *Freemasonry*, pp. 20-32, 34, 52, 58, 70-72, 85, 88-89.

¹⁰ Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, 324, 378-79 and La Rouërie, "Letters", *New York Historical Society, Collections* 11 (1878): 287-396.

¹¹ La Fayette, "Observations on Matters Pertaining to the Navy for an Expedition to North America", Versailles, 21 Feb. 1780, in *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Idzerda, 2: 255-57.

emphasized that there were still differences in talent and responsibility recognized by everyone in society.¹²

By contemporary European standards American society was extraordinarily egalitarian. The bourgeois commissaire des guerres Blanchard, for instance, explained how artisans were often delegates to assemblies, where there was no distinction between members or separate orders, and how everyone was a proprietor, tilling the earth themselves. "This way of living and this sweet equality", he wrote, "have charms for thinking beings. These manners suit me pretty well."¹³ Abbé Robin was also enthusiastic about American equality, which he believed even extended to the relationship between soldiers and officers.¹⁴ Another egalitarian-minded officer, Ségur, considered the United States the home of the civilized or "independent man", with his "modest and quiet pride". Nothing but the laws were above him, and he was unaffected by the vanity, prejudices, and servility of European society. In addition, no useful profession was ridiculed, and in unequal conditions all enjoyed equal rights. The less able were servants, workers, or sailors, but "far from resembling men of the inferior classes of Europe, these merit the regard which one has for them, and which they exact by the decency of their tone and conduct."¹⁵ Officers were amazed to learn of the supposedly low origins of many American officers. For volunteers, this usually explained why American generals were so incompetent, but for Rochambeau's officers, who arrived after the Americans had begun to score impressive victories, were less critical. Rochambeau's aide-de-camp Cromot du Bourg noted in his journal that "Our innkeeper was a captain, the several military grades being granted here to every rank of people. There are shoemakers who are Colonels; it often happens that the Americans ask the French officers what

¹² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 40-41, 58-60, 184.

¹³ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 79.

¹⁴ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, p. 37.

¹⁵ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 368-69.

their trade is in France."¹⁶ Even conservatives like Pontgibaud admired the harmony existing between social classes in the United States and the "antique simplicity" of this people.¹⁷ According to Boy, a strongly anti-democrat bourgeois volunteer, the Americans' "supposed liberty" and equality created great problems for civilian and military discipline, but "Nevertheless there still reigns a distinction from rank to rank which one cannot at all define but which exists; one has to see it in person to believe it. Providence which regulates all makes things run in that country, well enough!"¹⁸ Many officers seem to have conceived of the ideal society as one in which prosperous, property-owning citizens lived in harmony under the equal protection of the laws. Often they expressed regret that there were signs of growing differentiation between social classes in the United States, for this was a sign of advancing civilization and decadence.¹⁹

Almost all officers, however, believed that sometimes American equality went too far. On one occasion a sheriff attempted to arrest Rochambeau for debt after the commissariat refused to pay an exorbitant bill for firewood. Some of the general's shocked and enraged entourage wanted to beat the man for his impudence, but Rochambeau fortunately intervened and the problem was solved amicably.²⁰ The Frenchmen were even more offended when a farmer whose fields were being trampled by a hunting party under Major-General Vioménil threatened the general with a cane and demanded compensation. Lavergne de Tresson was disgusted: "It is at the point where we are compelled to have more respect for a boor than for a duke in France...What is hard to believe is that one raised his cane against Major-General Comte de Vioménil, who had enough prudence not to use a musket he had, being hunting. Nothing came

¹⁶ Cromot du Bourg, "Diary of a French Officer", *MAG* 4 (1880): 209.

¹⁷ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 107.

¹⁸ Boy, "Mémoire". AN Colonies E50.

¹⁹ Broglie, "Narrative". *MAH* 1 (1877): 234.

²⁰ Coriolis to his mother, Baltimore, 17 Aug. 1782, in Coriolis, "Lettres", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 March 1932, pp. 817-18; Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 161, 167; Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 258; Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 414; and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 178.

of this, [but] in France the galleys, prison everything would be employed [to punish the man].”²¹ Rochambeau was obliged to reimpose a ban on hunting after this incident.²² Coriolis told his mother that while in France armies could requisition whatever they wanted, in the United States a person could refuse officers and soldiers food, shelter, or transport if they were so inclined, and the words “I do not want to” terminated all debate.²³ Liberal-minded officers pointed to these incidents and customs as positive examples of the extent of citizens’ rights in the United States, but even they sometimes considered American practices excessive and often contrary to the public good. Officers as a whole admired the theory of equality before the law, but did not believe that everyone was of equal merit. People of less merit must show deference to their superiors, and the law must somehow require recognition of these differences between individuals and classes or else anarchy would prevail. Pro-American officers thought that social distinctions were being recognized in the United States, and conservatives generally did not, but they all agreed that these distinctions were important.

French officers considered slavery a strange anomaly in a country fighting for its liberty, and they deplored the harsh treatment to which slaves were often subjected. Some officers considered slavery a necessary evil, and deemed even the harshest punishments justified. In their opinion, slaves were simply unfortunate people on the bottom of the social scale, and as in the French military, corporal punishment was sometimes necessary to ensure that these people fulfilled their duty to their superiors. Many officers hired free black servants in the United States or took escaped slaves into their service, and while most eventually discharged them or, in some cases, took them back to France as free servants, a few did not hesitate to sell their employees in Saint-Domingue at the end of the war, laughing off the protests of their more scrupulous

²¹ Laverne de Tresson, Newport, 24 Jan. 1781, in Laverne de Tresson, “Lettres”, BN N.A.F. 21510.

²² Kennett, *French Forces in America*, p. 86.

²³ Coriolis to his mother, Baltimore, 17 Aug. 1782, *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 March 1932, p. 818.

comrades.²⁴ A number of other officers, such as Lauberdière and the normally enlightened Clermont-Crèvecoeur, made deprecating remarks about dirty and “naturally lazy” blacks, who had to be punished in order to make them work, thereby justifying the degraded position of blacks in society.²⁵ The future republican general Berthier watched a pregnant black woman being administered fifty lashes, and recorded in his journal that “Such severity, which seems inhuman to a European, is necessary to maintain the authority of a handful of whites over an enormous number of blacks. Nevertheless, the negroes of good character are more fortunate than most of our peasants, who despite their labours often lack for bread.”²⁶ He considered free blacks more unfortunate than their enslaved compatriots because they often wasted their money and ended their lives as beggars, while elderly slaves were taken care of by their masters. In Saint-Domingue Berthier was touched by the supposed devotion of the slaves on the Ségur family plantation to their visiting master, whom they had never seen before, and he drew some sketches of these desperate blacks abasing themselves before the nobleman.²⁷ Officers such as Lauberdière, Clermont-Crèvecoeur, and Berthier did not display great moral indignation when confronted by slavery; they accepted it as a social custom in some parts of the world and a necessary, justifiable evil.²⁸

No officer who recorded his views on slavery used racial theories to explain the phenomenon. Closen-Haydenburg, who supported abolition, speculated that dark-skinned Venezuelan blacks appeared more handsome and dignified than American blacks because they

²⁴ Revel, *Journal*, p. 98.

²⁵ Lauberdière, “Journal”, BN N.A.F. 17691, fol. 18 and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 64, 67, 75, 89.

²⁶ Berthier, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 231.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 231, 281 and Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 486.

²⁸ For opinions on slavery see Verger, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 176; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 163, 166-67, 198; Broglie, “Narrative”, *MAH* 1 (1877): 231; Montesquieu to Comte de Castellux, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in “Lettres de divers officiers”, AN Série M 1021 IV; Brisout de Barneville, “Journal”, *French-American Review* 3 (1950): 277; and O’Conner, “Journal du siège de Savannah”, AN Marine B4 142. For a French civilian opinion see Milfort, *Mémoire*, p. 331.

came from a more “advanced” part of Africa. While he established a tentative link between culture and physical appearance, his theory was more culturally than racially oriented, and he distinguished between groups of blacks rather than considering them only as a bloc.²⁹ He also explained that because slaves were poorly fed and treated they often “recouped” themselves by pilfering from their masters. Free blacks, however, he considered honest and “as faithful as gold”, and his servant, “my good Peter, born of *free* parents in Connecticut, belonged to the latter class.”³⁰ This officer considered membership in a social group far more important than skin colour in cultivating virtue. Another example of this non-racial attitude is seen in Pontgibaud’s comments on American racial divisions. He noted white Americans’ ingrained belief that people of “colour” should not consort with whites, and felt that the French should respect American “social prejudices”, which “rightly or wrongly” were part of the manners and customs of the country.³¹ He considered divisions founded on racial differences imperfectly justified, even if he advised that they be tolerated.

Visitors such as Berthier, Abbé Robin, and Chastellux often remarked that slaves in the United States, particularly in the north, were relatively well treated and materially better off than many French peasants.³² While this does not mean that the officers concerned supported slavery--Chastellux did not--it does suggest that to some extent French officers shared a mindset in which justice and good government was as important or more important than individual or national freedom. As long as the social elite was just and fair and ruled wisely, their subordinates had no material or moral justification to object to their situation. More importantly, like Englishmen and even some of the most radical American revolutionaries, they equated liberty, independence, and personal rights with property ownership, feeling that the landless, white or

²⁹ Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 303-304, 318-20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³¹ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 134.

³² Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 104, 111-12 and Chastellux, manuscript of December 1782, AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

black, were a danger to liberty.³³ Slaves, admittedly, were in a very particular situation, for they had no rights at all, obtained minimal benefits from their status, and were often cruelly abused with no recourse to justice. Regular soldiers at least consented to military discipline when they volunteered for service; slaves did not, and their position was only justified by extraordinary circumstances. A labour shortage in the West Indies or the American south might or might not be justification for what many considered cruel and unusual treatment.

Enlightenment theories about natural rights and the social contract reinforced such objections to slavery, and some of these ideas were beginning to make an impression on French officers, just as American Revolutionary ideology, directed against George III's alleged enslavement of his American subjects, made many white Americans conscious of the problem of slavery for the first time.³⁴ Many of the Frenchmen were plainly troubled by slavery, and did not consider it morally legitimate. They frequently stated their support for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, but since they were pessimistic about this happening very quickly, if ever, their principal concern was to see reforms making slaves' lives more bearable. Slavery was not a metropolitan French institution, and many officers were prejudiced in favour of free labour, an inclination probably encouraged by Enlightenment ideas about natural rights.³⁵ Chastellux opposed slavery and considered it one of the most serious problems for the future of the United States. He was not certain how the slavery question would be solved, but he hoped that time and

³³ See David B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 261-65.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 279, 283-85.

³⁵ As early as 1691 Minister of Marine Pontchartrain decreed that all slaves were free as soon as they landed on French soil, but exceptions were made for the slaves of French planters visiting the country. According to regulations of 1716 and 1738, planters had to register their slaves, specify why they had been brought to France—either to be taught a trade, instructed in the Catholic faith, or both—and promise that the blacks would stay for a maximum of three years; if they were not taken back to the West Indies before this time, or they were given permission to marry a French subject, then they were automatically free. The black population of Paris was so large by the 1760's that there were attempts to prevent further slaves from entering the country and to ban further marriages between blacks and Frenchmen and Frenchwomen. The people of Cassis, Provence, wrote to the authorities to make certain that a black man married to a local girl was not deported to the colonies. Shelby T. McCloy, *The Negro in France* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), pp. 14, 21-26, 44, 49-50, 53.

education would eventually bring about its abolition. His own proposal was that because prejudices against blacks were so severe that free blacks were reluctant to live and work in white society, then outward racial differences must disappear. Black men should be deported in large numbers and black women should be offered legal incentives to marry white men, producing a race of maroons, quadroons, and so on until blacks became whites.³⁶ He did not consider blacks inferior to whites, but his attitude toward this underclass, even if his motives were humanitarian, was somewhat callous, to say the least. The German Closen-Haydenburg admired the Quakers for liberating their slaves and criticized the "despotism" prevalent in Virginia, which not only caused great suffering for the blacks themselves, but also created a class of lazy planters who despised anyone who worked the soil. He also harshly condemned the "abominable" slave trade after seeing an Austrian slave ship in the Caribbean.³⁷ Ségur, like Chastellux, believed that slavery clashed with the principles of American liberty, and he too wondered whether the slavery question would lead to the breakup of the United States. He was convinced that the contrast between the harsh lot of slaves in the south and "the entire liberty enjoyed by men of the same colour in the other states of the union" helped to precipitate slave revolts.³⁸ When he visited his family's plantation on Saint-Domingue in 1782 he felt pangs of guilt when his suffering and degraded bondsmen threw themselves at his feet in apparent joy. They reminded him, he wrote, of the "subjects of absolute Asiatic monarchies". He noted that cases of immediate emancipation had led to slave revolts, and thought that gradual reform was wiser. On his own plantation he instituted reforms to make the lives of his bondsmen more bearable.³⁹ Officers generally admired the Quakers' abolition of slavery, and although most considered this a utopian gesture far ahead

³⁶ Chastellux, *Travels*, 2: 431-32, 435, 438-41, 486. See also Chastellux, manuscript on the history of the War of American Independence from 1775 to 1777, AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

³⁷ Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 51, 187, 286.

³⁸ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 412-13.

³⁹ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 478-86.

of its time, their attitude indicates that they perceived abolition in a positive light. They do not seem to have been aware of the gradual emancipation of slaves in a number of northern states.⁴⁰

Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur was another abolitionist, but like other officers he often defended the institution even as he attacked it. He frankly condemned slavery, “that shocking insult to humanity”, but at the same time he may have owned slaves himself, for his semi-autobiographical narrator possessed several of them.⁴¹ He described at length the horrors suffered by blacks in the American south, but contrasted their situation with that of slaves in the American north, where they enjoyed “as much liberty as their master” as well as the same clothes, food, care, family life, work schedule, holidays, and even education. Living under the same roof as their owners, “they are, truly speaking, a part of our families”.⁴² Nevertheless, Crèvecoeur hoped that “the time draws near when they will all be emancipated.”⁴³ He regretted the attitude of southern planters, “who, bred in the midst of slaves, learn from the example of their parents to despise them”.⁴⁴ Despite Crèvecoeur’s praise for the Quakers’ emancipation of their slaves, and acknowledgement of blacks’ intelligence and potential for refined sentiments, he does not seem to have envisioned them leaving their subordinate social position even after their liberation. In the words of his Quaker acquaintance Bertram, who gave his loyal former slaves a salary, food, and clothing in return for their labour:

Our society treats them now as the companions of our labours; and by this management, as well as by means of the education we have given them, they are in general become a new set of human beings. Those whom I admit to my table, I have found to be good,

⁴⁰ The Quakers began to free their slaves by 1758, and in 1780 Pennsylvania passed legislation enforcing the gradual emancipation of slaves. The Continental Congress banned slave importations in 1774, Vermont outlawed slavery outright in 1776, and Connecticut and Rhode Island passed laws for gradual emancipation in 1780, the year of Rochambeau’s arrival.

⁴¹ His stance was similar to that of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, although the latter, in his will, took the step of ordering that his slaves be freed upon the death of his wife. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-78.

⁴² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur. *Letters*, pp. 142, 160-65, 172-73 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Skeiches*, pp. 44-45, 83, 145.

⁴³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur. *Letters*, pp. 163-64.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

trusty, moral men; when they do not what we think they should do, we dismiss them, which is all the punishment we inflict. Other societies of Christians keep them still as slaves...but when we found that good example, gentle admonition, and religious principles could lead them to subordination and sobriety, we relinquished a method so contrary to the profession of Christianity.⁴⁵

While slavery was evil, a labouring class was perfectly normal and desirable, whether it be black or white. Even the greatest idealists saw the emancipation of the slaves as a process which might take generations to accomplish. The fact that some officers seriously discussed emancipation, however, suggests that Enlightenment ideas were making some progress among noblemen.⁴⁶

The concepts of freedom of speech and freedom of the press enjoyed cautious, theoretical support among several members of the officer corps. Chastellux had written a treatise on the subject, Ségur supported the idea, and many officers admired Raynal, a champion of these principles.⁴⁷ Officers were extremely impressed by Americans' almost universal literacy, and observed that the average male read newspapers and could discuss politics intelligently. In general, however, while officers considered the American press very influential, they also believed that it was severely lacking in veracity. According to one of the volunteers, the American political leadership mobilized the people and maintained its military spirit, but were strongly "supported by newspapermen and other writers who possess the art of adorning disgraces so well that they take the form of real advantages after having passed into their hands."⁴⁸ Galvan also attested to the influence of the press in the United States, but believed that newspaper articles were filled with nothing but enthusiasm, vanity, and distortions.⁴⁹ Other officers also complained about lies in American newspapers.⁵⁰ D'Estaing reported bitterly that the American press, "as little truthful

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 164, 192-93.

⁴⁶ See Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 348 and Kennett, *French Forces in America*, p. 157. For the debate over slavery during the French Revolution see Davis, *Problem of Slavery*, pp. 138-50.

⁴⁷ Kors, "Chastellux", in *Abroad in America*, ed. Pachter, p. 4 and Ségur, *Mémoires*, I: 212.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458.

⁴⁹ Galvan to Sartine and L., Paris, 28 April 1777, and Galvan to Sartine and L., West Point, N.Y., 8 Oct. 1779, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 204-5, 226-27.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis d'Amerique", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 211-12.

as the English papers", published the news of the arrival of his advance guard, which immediately informed the British of his designs on Savannah.⁵¹ The quality of the American press often left much to be desired, as Clermont-Crèvecoeur noted at the capitulation of Yorktown: "This event furnished material to the journalists with which to attract attention, something the Americans never neglect, any more than do the British. They are only too happy when their newspapers are not full of malicious statements and lies."⁵² Major-General Louis-Marie, Vicomte de Noailles, even indignantly complained to Alexander Hamilton after the capitulation that the American press had unjustly sullied Cornwallis' reputation.⁵³

French officers were astounded by the extent of freedom of speech in the country, and Bougainville noted the curious fact that while the British occupied Boston Dr. Samuel Cooper preached independence in his church, and now that the Patriots were in control Loyalist pastors gave public prayers for the king.⁵⁴ Despite his support, as a part-time *philosophe*, for free speech, he considered the toleration which both sides displayed for open treason rather excessive. Many educated Frenchmen had accepted the principle of free speech and a free press by this time, and officers admired responsible writers who challenged convention, like Voltaire and Raynal. However, at the same time they found the highly partisan press in the United States and Britain difficult to stomach. Perhaps they would have been happier if strict libel laws had been enforced, making editors more careful about what they published. It seems that most officers were in favour of the free publication of "good ideas", but also wanted allegedly "bad ideas" seriously opposed to the public interest restricted. Their support for a free press was therefore conditional.

French officers admired patriotism, and considered it a chief characteristic of the virtuous inhabitants of all republics. According to Ségur, the subjects of despotisms fought for glory; a free

⁵¹ O'Conner, "Journal du siège de Savannah" AN Marine B4 142, fols. 155-59.

⁵² Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 62.

⁵³ Alexander Hamilton to Louis-Marie, Vicomte de Noailles, no date, Papiers de Louis-Marie, Vicomte de Noailles, AN, Série T 1108 3, fol. 512.

⁵⁴ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 172.

people fought because of their "love of country" or fatherland--*l'amour de la patrie*. When he sailed to join Rochambeau's army, which had already been overseas for a year, Ségur stated that while some of his fellow officers were solely interested in promotion, his only aim was to pursue the immortal principles of virtue, justice, and patriotism.⁵⁵ Volunteers and Rochambeau's officers alike found that war weariness, indifference, and Loyalism abounded in the population, and that patriotism, while strong at first, had waned.⁵⁶ The statesman Turgot believed in April 1776 that it would require a long war before "national patriotism" linking the British and Americans was completely dissipated, and a military engineer in France over a year later, either Brigadier Charles-René Fourcroy de Ramecourt or Colonel Le Vaux, still thought that reconciliation was possible.⁵⁷ Villebresme insisted that American patriotism, so vaunted in France, did not in fact exist, for people changed sides according to circumstance, and American troops were not heroes but hired vagabonds who lived in a state of anarchy and mutiny.⁵⁸ The Swede Fersen claimed that only the leaders were patriotic and that everyone else thought only of their personal interests.⁵⁹ Only a few officers implied that despite adversity the Americans remained highly patriotic and willing to fight on without compromise.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 299-301.

⁵⁶ Anonymous. "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l'Amérique". AN Marine B4 192, fols. 215, 220; Galvan to Sartine and L. Totowa Bridge, N.J., 22 Oct. 1780, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres". AN Marine B4 192, fol. 237; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 78; Montesquieu to Comtesse de Chastellux, Philipsburg, N.Y., 17 Aug. 1781, "Lettres de divers officiers". AN Série M 1021 IV; and Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 16 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, "Montesquieu à l'armée". *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 517.

⁵⁷ Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, Baron de l'Aulne. "Réflexions redigées à l'occasion du Mémoire remis par Mr. le comte de Vergennes sur la manière dont la France et l'Espagne doivent envisager les suites de la querelle entre la Grande Bretagne et ses colonies", 1^{er} avril 1776, AN Série K 1340, no. 10, p. 56 and Charles-René Fourcroy de Ramecourt or Le Vaux. "Idées sur la guerre de l'amérique, ou première suite au mémoire intitulé sur les moyens de procurer, avec la paix, l'indépendance de l'amérique". Fonds d'Éprésmenil, AN 158 AP2, dossier 21.

⁵⁸ Villebresme, *Souvenirs*, pp. 73-75.

⁵⁹ Fersen to his father, Newport, 9 Jan. 1781, in *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen*, ed. Wrangel, p. 98.

⁶⁰ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. xvi, 45, 126 and anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique". AN Marine B7 458. See also François Barbé de Marbois, "Mémoire que m'a remis à Philadelphie Monsieur de M. _____ le 1^{er}. de février 1781". AN Marine B4 192, fol. 247. Barbé de Marbois was French ambassador La Luzerne's civilian secretary.

Montcalm's officers had customarily referred only to their devotion to their king or prince. French officers of the 1770's and 1780's, however, employed a more modern patriotic discourse based on the Roman republican model, which implied devotion to one's nation or *patrie*.⁶¹ In their letters to the Minister of Marine French volunteers often referred to both their devotion to the king and their patriotism. German and Swiss officers were probably also familiar with the idea, but were silent on the subject, perhaps because they had no true focus for this patriotism. In separating the king and patriotism--or the king and the nation--officers were not in accord with the absolutist idea that the sovereign was the sole focus of loyalty in the state. If the king and the nation were separate entities, then patriotism, like republicanism, could theoretically be seditious. It is doubtful that the replacement of expressions of loyalty to the king with loyalty to both the king and the nation was very significant in terms of officers' general outlook, but the new stress on the nation provided scope for new ways of perceiving the state.

French officers' idea of patriotism had no particularly sinister, aggressive connotations. Devotion to one's king and country did not imply hatred of other nationalities. War, for them, was a part of the natural relationship between states, and every country occasionally sought to advance or defend its interests by force. To prevent this behaviour from getting out of hand, however, it was necessary to avoid losing one's perspective amid the passions of battle. The visitors frequently criticized the implacable hatred that American officers and men alike had for the enemy, which they considered very uncivilized, particularly for officers, whom they expected to behave like gentlemen. They could not understand why Americans, "even Washington", objected when the French engaged in regular parleys with the British outposts at New York and displayed great friendliness toward British officers captured at Yorktown.⁶²

⁶¹ See Godechot, "Nation, patrie, nationalisme et patriotisme", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 43 (1971): 485-92.

⁶² Hamilton to Vicomte de Noailles, no date, AN Série T 1108 3, fol. 512; Clermont-Crèvecœur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 64; and Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 45, 126, 154.

French officers' perceptions of the American political system were affected by their knowledge and analysis of American political history. Like the engineer Major Louis-Florel Cantel, Chevalier d'Ancteville, they tended to concentrate on the establishment of Pennsylvania by William Penn and the founding of New England by the Puritans, stressing the uniqueness of local political institutions.⁶³ Only Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who actually lived in the colonies, emphasized the British origin of American institutions, and his conviction that the Puritans carried ancient Anglo-Saxon democracy, endangered by Stuart tyranny, to a safe haven in New England reflects the influence of American political ideology on the author.⁶⁴ According to Ségur, however, Penn, whom he thought had occupied Pennsylvania by peaceful means, not by conquest, shared with other American legislators a perfect liberty to create an ideal state:

Legislators, working in a century of enlightenment, without being obliged to triumph over a military power, limit an absolute authority, or strip a dominating clergy of its power, a nobility of its rights, and many families of their fortunes, and to construct their new edifice on debris cemented with blood, were able to found their institutions on the principles of reason, complete liberty, and political equality; no old prejudice, no antique phantom placed itself between them and the light of truth.⁶⁵

Laws, made in the general interest, were traced on a "tabula rasa, without being arrested by any class spirit, religious sectarianism, or private interest", and they were still working half a century after Penn formulated them.⁶⁶

A number of political attitudes toward the United States are evident from officers' assessments of the origins and legitimacy of the American Revolution. One observer, who may have been an officer, was in the colonies in 1765 in order to report to Choiseul, Minister of Marine and War, on the political climate there. He personally witnessed Patrick Henry's protest

⁶³ Louis-Florel Cantel, Chevalier d'Ancteville, "The Chevalier D'Ancteville and His Journal of 'The Chesapeake Campaign'", *Légion d'honneur*, 2 (1931): 87; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 47, 155-56, 162, 164; and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 50.

⁶⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 80 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 39.

⁶⁵ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 405.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 406.

against the Stamp Act in Virginia's House of Burgesses, and was intrigued by Henry's veiled threats aimed at George III. The Frenchman attended a dinner at Newcastle, Virginia, where the Americans talked of nothing but the stamp duties. They praised Henry and said that they would fight if necessary, and some allegedly maintained that they would call the French to their succour, claiming that the British would never dare to pass such legislation if the French were still in Canada. Elsewhere in the colonies, he reported, people discussed the possibility of sending delegates from the various provinces to form a general committee, while in Boston mobs threatened stamp officers.⁶⁷ Chastellux agreed with Samuel Adams that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies without their consent, and considered it self-evident that a people had a right to become independent if it so wished.⁶⁸ Many officers admired the stand of Patriot farmers at Bunker Hill, and the Americans' ability to maintain a long struggle against a superior British regular army, although they noted that this bellicose spirit had waned by 1780.⁶⁹ Only a few volunteers, such as the embittered Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Louis, Vicomte de Mauroy, whom Congress would not employ, believed that the Americans rebelled essentially because of their greed for commercial profits and love for libertinage or that soldiers rushed to the colours solely because of the high wages and bountiful rations they were offered.⁷⁰ A French officer of engineers in France in late 1777 cautioned the government that the Americans, despite their admirable struggle for liberty, might still make peace with the mother country. Unlike the Swiss and Dutch in their wars for independence, he maintained, the Americans already had personal if not public

⁶⁷ Anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies", *AHR* 26 (1920-21): 727, 745-47 and 27 (1921-22): 72-73, 75, 84-85.

⁶⁸ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 160.

⁶⁹ Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 67-70; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown. 1: 78-79, 170; Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 107, 384, 409, 411; anonymous, manuscript by a young officer, AN Série M 1036, F 60 7; anonymous, manuscript of the history of the War of American Independence from 1775 to 1777, AN Série M 1036 F 60 7; and Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. xv-xvi.

⁷⁰ Charles-Louis, Vicomte de Mauroy, 23 Oct. 1777, in *Papiers du comte de Broglie*, AN K 1364, cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 342 and anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis d'Amerique", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 180-81, 184.

liberty and were not burdened by bloody oppression or heavy taxation. They were fighting the mere threat of light taxation, and commercial motives dictated reconciliation with a nation joined to the American people by language, mores, religion, and principles of government.⁷¹ Most officers sympathized with the American cause--in part because it benefitted France's interests--and accepted the Patriots' declaration of national independence as legitimate. Even those who considered the Patriots' aspirations unreasonable did not question their right to establish an independent state. Sovereignty resided with the nation rather than their master King George III.

Officers' attitudes toward Loyalists also reveal a great deal about their ideological beliefs. Every officer noted the number of "Tories" or "Royalists" in the United States, and while a few of the more liberal officers considered them corrupt traitors, the vast majority accepted their political stance without difficulty. One of the more critical officers was Clermont-Crèvecoeur, who described most Loyalists as "cowardly and cruel", lured to the British side by money and permission to plunder their fellow countrymen. At the same time, however, he sympathized with those Loyalists whom he had met in person, describing them as honest people who had declared their support for the king because of their "fortune and gratitude". He noted that three-fourths of the people in Newport were Loyalists, and wrote with emotion: "What misfortune one can foresee from the division of opinion in a country where the public good demands that everyone think alike!"⁷² One is reminded here of political attitudes prevalent during the French Revolution. The only officer to display an uncompromising dislike for Loyalists, whom he described as "tory filth", was the volunteer Major Claude-Noël-François Romand de l'Isle, but the letters he published in the American press were chiefly designed to curry favour with the authorities and

⁷¹ Fourcroy de Ramecourt or Le Vaux, "Idées sur la guerre d'Amérique", Fonds d'Épréménil, AN 158 AP2, dossier 21.

⁷² Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, pp. 23, 77. For other mildly anti-Loyalist statements see Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 137; Cloisen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 261; and Charlus to Capellis, Philipsburg, N.Y., 20 July 1781, Papiers Capellis, AN Série T 228, fol. 63.

obtain himself a promotion in the Continental army.⁷³ Frequently officers differentiated between Loyalists and Patriots by describing the former as the rich and the latter as the poor.⁷⁴ They were struck not only by the number of Loyalists in the country but by the way in which families were split along political lines.⁷⁵ Officers reported that even their hero Washington had initially voted against independence, while his mother remained a confirmed Loyalist.⁷⁶ Many officers found large sectors of the population indifferent to which side won the war.⁷⁷ One of Rochambeau's officers, Robertinier, frankly admitted that he did not have a very high opinion of either party in the conflict, although he admired Washington.⁷⁸ Lieutenant Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur was, of course, unique among the French officers in that he was himself a naturalized British subject and Loyalist. Although he supported democracy and criticized taxation without representation, he opposed the rebellion and condemned the evils committed by both sides in the civil war.⁷⁹

⁷³ Claude-Noël-François Romand de l'Isle to "Count", Morristown, N.J., 9 June 1777, and Romand de l'Isle to "Count", Reading, Penn., 28 Nov. 1777, in Claude-Noël-François Romand de l'Isle, "Letters to His Friends in France". *New Jersey Gazette* (Burlington and later Trenton, N.J.), No. 6 (7 Jan. 1778) and No. 7 (14 Jan. 1778).

⁷⁴ Fersen to his father, Newport, 8 Sept. 1780, in *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen*, ed. Wrangel, p. 74; Boy, "Mémoire", AN Colonies E50; Brisout de Barneville, "Journal", *French-American Review* 3 (1950): 242; and Montesquieu to Lapatie, Newport, 16 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, "Montesquieu", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 517.

⁷⁵ Rochambeau to Sartine, on board the *Duc de Bourgogne*, Newport, 16 July 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 142; Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 208; Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 147; Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 242, 245; Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 166, 172; Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 251, 343-44; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. xiv-xv, 113; O'Conner, "Journal du siège de Savannah", AN Marine B4 142, fols. 160-95; anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l'Amerique", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 180, 184, 189; Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 16 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, "Montesquieu", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 517; and anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 23 Oct. 1777, in anonymous, "Letters", *PMHB* 35 (1911): 99.

⁷⁶ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 105 and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 73.

⁷⁷ Villebresme, *Souvenirs*, pp. 74-75; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 38; and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 48.

⁷⁸ Robertinier, "Journal", cited in Loughrey, *France and Rhode Island*, p. 125.

⁷⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 200-8 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 80, 94, 124-25, 137, 178-332. For Loyalist ideology see Janice Potter, *The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology in Colonial New York and Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1974); and William A. Benton, *Whig-Loyalism: An Aspect of Political Ideology in the American Revolutionary Era* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1969).

French officers' attitudes toward Loyalists indicate that they understood and partly sympathized with the Loyalist political position. This suggests that although they habitually identified the Patriot cause with liberty, most officers did not consider the British and Loyalist desire to maintain the connection between the mother country and her colonies particularly evil. They also did not feel that wealthy Loyalists' fears were unfounded. For most French officers, their own role in the war was to weaken British power, not promote American liberty and democracy. Anglophile officers generally admired both the British and Americans, and considered their respective political systems legitimate for each country. If officers as a whole sympathized with American liberty and were apprehensive about British imperialistic designs, they also considered the British social and political system more relevant to their own experience.

French officers were also intrigued and concerned by regional differences among Americans, which were sometimes quite drastic. They commonly compared Virginians and New Englanders, mostly to the detriment of the former, finding New Englanders more virtuous, industrious, egalitarian, and courageous.⁸⁰ The Frenchmen often criticized the "aristocratic" Virginians for being lazy, vain, uncultivated, and clearly a rank below themselves in terms of personal qualities. Nevertheless, they enjoyed the planters' hospitality during the winter of 1781-1782, and maintained cordial relations with them.⁸¹ A French civilian named Le Clerc de Milfort who passed through Connecticut in April 1775, right at the outbreak of the war, claimed that the only thing which surprised him on his travels was the "remarkable jealousy" between northerners and southerners.⁸² Other officers commented on the border disputes and the

⁸⁰ Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, pp. 345-46; Chastellux, *Travels*, 2: 434-37; Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 419-20; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 50; and anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458.

⁸¹ Kennett, *French Forces in America*, pp. 156-57; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 66, 72; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 165, 187; Chastellux, *Travels*, 2: 429, 434-44; Fersen to his father, Williamsburg, Va., 25 March 1782, *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen*, ed. Wrangel, pp. 133-34; Lauberdière, "Journal", BN N.A.F. 17691, fols. 153, 170; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 162; and anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458.

⁸² Le Clerc de Milfort, *Mémoire*, p. 331.

traditional jealousy between different states, which they fully expected to continue after the war.⁸³ Galvan even stated with confidence that for some time in the future these regional quarrels would divert Americans from intervening militarily in Europe.⁸⁴ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur also discussed the characteristics of the inhabitants of each colony, as well as differences between the civilized inhabitants of the coastal areas and the crude and barbarous people of the frontier. He expected regional differences to become more pronounced as time went on, and that in the future--he was writing just before the American Revolution--the American provinces would only be united by religion and language.⁸⁵ Like Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830's, officers identified regional quarrels and the issue of slavery as future sources of discord which threatened American unity.⁸⁶

French officers approved of British policies which allowed free immigration of non-British settlers into the colonies, and believed that these immigrants had greatly contributed to the strength and prosperity of the United States. Montcalm's officers had seen ethnic diversity as at least a potential source of weakness for the British crown, but Rochambeau's men thought that these ethnic groups were reliable because of the very fact that they often had joined their Anglo-Saxon comrades in rebellion. Officers often described the different ethnic groups they encountered.⁸⁷ One noted, for instance, that Germans formed a quarter of Pennsylvania's 300,000 people.⁸⁸ Officers of French birth were particularly interested in Huguenots, Acadians, and

⁸³ Anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l'Amérique", AN Marine B4, fols. 215-16, 220; Cloisen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 233; and Kors, "Chastellux", in *Abroad in America*, ed. Pachter, pp. 8-9.

⁸⁴ Galvan to Sartine and L., Charleston, S.C., 19 April 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 214.

⁸⁵ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 42-48, 51-52, 55, 135 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 79, 95.

⁸⁶ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Jacob P. Mayer and Max Lerner and trans. George Lawrence (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

⁸⁷ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 49-50, 77, 115, 172, 183 and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 54.

⁸⁸ Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 231.

French Canadians in the country, while German officers--nearly one third of Rochambeau's army was German--were intrigued by the large numbers of Germans they found, particularly in Pennsylvania.⁸⁹ The officers of the German Régiment Royal Deux-Ponts felt almost at home in Pennsylvania, and had to take special precautions to prevent their men from deserting.⁹⁰ While they did not feel any particular comradeship with German commoners in the United States, at least they did not display overt hostility toward German Patriots, as German officers with the British army, not surprisingly, often did.⁹¹ Most of these ethnic minorities supported the Patriot cause, and none of the officers questioned their political loyalty or wondered whether the establishment of so many ethnic groups in the United States might present a danger to national unity, although Chastellux believed that Pennsylvania's diverse ethnic and religious composition made its inhabitants "more attached to individual liberty than to public liberty, more inclined to anarchy than to democracy".⁹² In other words, he felt that this diversity led people to be more concerned with their individual rights and interests than national independence and made unanimity, a supposed basic principle of democracy, next to impossible. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, of course, applauded this immigration and boasted of the sheer diversity of peoples who made up the American colonies. He considered them true Americans as soon as they landed, and a source of strength and prosperity, not a danger.⁹³ Officers in the 1780 period were less concerned about relations between ethnic groups and their loyalty to the government than they were about regional differences.

⁸⁹ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 54, 160, 162-63; Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. xxv, 101, 111, 120, 125; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 49-50, 77, 115, 171, 183-84; and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 231. See also anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies", *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 82.

⁹⁰ Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 162-63 and Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 116.

⁹¹ Atwood, *Hessians*, p. 169.

⁹² Chastellux, *Travels*, 2: 436-39.

⁹³ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 41-43, 56, 61-63, 187 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 80.

Various French officers attempted to describe the system of government at the state and federal level and the distribution of powers, with varying degrees of success. During the early years of the war in particular people in France tended to see Americans as backward, simple-minded, and awestruck by Europeans, and in general greatly underestimated Americans' political and cultural maturity. Broglie's uncle in France, Charles-François, Comte de Broglie, invited the Americans to appoint him Stadtholder of America, with a large salary and absolute powers over the army and foreign affairs. An ambitious diplomat with limited military experience, he fully expected the Americans to seriously consider his offer.⁹⁴ Newly-arrived French officers were often confused about American political terminology, although they soon came to understand the basic outline of the political system.⁹⁵ They certainly showed no surprise at the idea of an election.⁹⁶

Officers gave the federal system qualified praise because it suited the American character and reflected the simplicity and virtue of the American people, but they frequently criticized Americans for failing to make their central government sufficiently strong.⁹⁷ Many American leaders shared their concerns, and managed to get a formal constitution, the Articles of Confederation, ratified by the states in March 1781, while the French were at Newport, to be followed by a stronger federal constitution in 1789.⁹⁸ The visitors often found the initial, loose federal system of government in the United States confusing and frequently ineffective, although

⁹⁴ Charles J. Stillé, "Comte de Broglie, the Proposed Stadtholder of America", *PMHB* 11 (1887): 369-405.

⁹⁵ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 170; Ternay to Sartine, Rhode Island, 2 Dec. 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 66; and anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458.

⁹⁶ Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, p. 364 and Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 125.

⁹⁷ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, pp. 71, 124; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 29; and Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 36-37.

⁹⁸ See John R. Alden, *The American Revolution 1775-1783* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1954), pp. 164-77.

they generally admired the actual laws passed by Congress.⁹⁹ Almost all of the officers criticized Congress' severe weakness in respect to the sovereign states, for it did not have the power to tax and received few contributions from the state legislatures. This was especially serious, officers believed, because Congress was unable to properly finance the Continental army. The volunteer Galvan discussed Congress' weakness and the fears of state politicians that Congress was already too powerful. Like General Washington, he particularly disliked state interference in the organization and supply of the Continental army. In his opinion, many of these problems stemmed from the fact that the continental union "has not yet hardened".¹⁰⁰ Other problems included a high turnover in membership in the various legislatures and a lack of long-term planning. The French government, Galvan suggested, should send consuls to each state as well as a representative to Congress because Congress was too weak for its decisions to affect the whole country.¹⁰¹ Although he feared the furious "party" spirit which prevailed among the "vulgar", Galvan did believe that "In America the interest of all determines the general will, in the governments of Europe on the contrary the general interest almost always gives way to the particular interest."¹⁰² In addition, he advised the Minister of Marine that Americans could engage in constitutional quarrels without undermining the basic unity of the United States.¹⁰³ Another complaint officers had was that the democratic process, which often dragged out minor decisions, was too slow, and they criticized the inability of the executive to do anything without the consent

⁹⁹ Anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. xv; Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 231-34; and Clozen-Haydenburg, "Notes sur la Constitution des 13 Etats Unis et le Congrès de l'Amérique" and "Constitution de l'Etat de Virginie", part of notes on the USA, AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

¹⁰⁰ Galvan to Sartine and L., West Point, N.Y., 8 Oct. 1779, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 224-26.

¹⁰¹ Galvan to Sartine and L., Totowa Bridge, N.J., 22 Oct. 1780, and Galvan to Sartine and L., West Point, N.Y., 8 Sept. 1779, *Ibid.*, fols. 220, 237-38.

¹⁰² Galvan to Sartine and L., Charleston, S.C., 30 May 1778, and Galvan to Franklin, Paris, ca. May 1777, *Ibid.*, fols. 207-8, 219.

¹⁰³ Galvan to Sartine and L., Charleston, S.C., 19 April 1778, *Ibid.* fol. 209.

of the legislature.¹⁰⁴ The idealistic Robin was one of the few to avoid criticism of American politics. He described the federal system tolerably well, and claimed that “The good Pennsylvanians are far behind us in etiquette, just as we are far behind them in legislation.”¹⁰⁵ He also discussed the Americans’ pre-revolutionary stance on taxation without representation and a 1774 “declaration of rights which the provinces held to be immutable laws of nature, the principles of the British constitution, and of their different charters.”¹⁰⁶ Ségur also gave the American federal system unqualified praise, believing that it established a strong central government while the legislatures of the states “guaranteed...local liberty”.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, on the whole French officers were critical of the American political system, considering it severely flawed. But the fact that their political views partially coincided with American ones, and they wished to strengthen rather than demolish the American government, suggests that if they had little enthusiasm for democracy, they did not inherently reject constitutional government.

Some officers were not very impressed by what they perceived as the low calibre of American legislators, who were, according to Desandroüins, “rarely real statesmen”.¹⁰⁸ The critical-minded volunteer Galvan was concerned that in Congress and the state legislatures “members are so numerous and change so often that that America would have to be peopled only with first class statesmen to furnish these assemblies with subjects capable of affairs of state”.¹⁰⁹ In any case, he observed that men of genius rarely reached the halls of power, and complained

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous, “Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l’Amerique”, AN Marine B4 192, fols. 206, 209-10, 216, 219. See also Barbé de Marbois, “Mémoire que m’a remis à Philadelphie Monsieur de M.”, 1 Feb. 1781, AN Marine B4 192, fol. 247, a memoir submitted by an ambassador La Luzerne’s civilian secretary.

¹⁰⁵ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 89, 94-95.

¹⁰⁶ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 195-200. He seems to be referring to a resolution of the Continental Congress. See Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Rebels and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 245-49.

¹⁰⁷ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 161, 411.

¹⁰⁸ Desandroüins, “Mémoire sur le Canada par M. Desandrouins, ancien ingénieur dans cette colonie”, Sarrelouis, 26 Aug. 1778, *Lévis MSS*, 4: 320 and anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 23 Oct. 1777, in anonymous, “Letters of a French Officer”. *PMHB* 35 (1911): 92.

¹⁰⁹ Galvan to L., Totowa Bridge (Peterson), N.J., 22 Oct. 1780, in Galvan, “Recueil de quelques lettres”, AN Marine B4 192, fol. 238.

that only “charlatans who dazzle the vulgar” were at the head of affairs.¹¹⁰ Broglie acknowledged that Congressmen were “very ordinary people”, with “good sense and sagacity” rather than great talent, and believed that this was a result of the state governments withholding men of talent when they sent delegates to Philadelphia, as well as the fact that intelligent members of Congress obtained offices.¹¹¹ The apparent consensus among officers was that members of Congress, who greeted the French army in Philadelphia, were modest and solid men who designed good legislation, even if they could not always enforce it. Some regarded their unfashionable clothing and ignorance of etiquette charming republican simplicity, but others considered it a sign of American provincialism, demonstrating that the representatives were not statesmen of professional calibre.

While French officers were not terribly impressed with minor American legislators, they greatly admired American political leaders, including Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Gouverneur Morris, Henry Laurens, and Samuel Cooper. Numerous officers paid visits to them during the campaign.¹¹² During these meetings the Frenchmen readily discussed such subjects as democracy, the federal system of government, and the military situation, not hiding their concerns about many of the problems they saw, and were pleased to learn that American leaders shared many of their worries. Officers often noted that both major and minor political figures frequently came from humble backgrounds--or what the noblemen considered humble backgrounds--but in the case of senior civilian leaders, at least, this did not seem to be a serious drawback. In a republic, they did not consider it particularly unusual for common but talented people to have their merit rewarded by

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 239.

¹¹¹ Broglie, “Narrative”, *MAH* I (1877): 233-34.

¹¹² Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, p. 363-65; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 65-66, 182-84, 191; Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 108-9, 272, 420; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, “Journal”, in *Rochambeau’s Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 82; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 50, 182; Broglie, “Narrative”, *MAH* I (1877): 233-34, 378; and Galvan to Sartine and L., Charleston, S.C., 19 April 1778, in Galvan, “Recueil de quelques lettres”, AN Marine B4 192, fols. 209-10.

positions of political leadership. All officers, whether or not they loved or hated the United States, practically worshipped George Washington, considering him one of the great men of modern times. His great height, calm dignity, patriotism, dedication, and leadership qualities gave him the aura of a Roman hero to men raised in the classical tradition. Even the Comte de Vaudreuil, nephew of Canada's former governor-general, paid homage to the American general after meeting him at a dinner on board the *Ville de Paris* celebrating the capitulation at Yorktown.¹¹³ More than one officer felt that only Washington's example prevented the American cause from collapsing in times of adversity. French officers paid more attention to American leaders than American legislative institutions, in part because the outline of these institutions was already known, but mostly because they considered leaders more important than the institutions through which they worked. These Frenchmen, who lived under a virtually absolute monarchy, still found it difficult to see government in anything but personal terms. If the system placed men of merit in places of authority, then the system was working, and the calibre of American leaders gave the American government more prestige than the actual mechanics of its organization. The officers' unwillingness to focus their detailed attention on political structures is at least in part due to their Montesquieuan idea that every form of government arises naturally from the individual character of each people. It is the character of a nation which is of central importance, not its political institutions. Also, they may have taken the American political structure somewhat for granted, since by this time it was relatively well known.

Officers liked the idea of equality before the law as long as natural social superiors were shown proper respect and men of merit were systematically placed in positions of authority. According to many, this was generally the case in the United States. Clermont-Crèvecoeur explained that "The rich alone take precedence over the common people", but that merit prevailed over wealth more often than in most countries. "The sensible people", he wrote, "respect merit and admit their inferiority to those who are so gifted. But among men are there

¹¹³ Vaudreuil, "Notes de campagne". *Neptunia* (1957-58): no. 47, p. 35.

many who admit they are inferior to others?"¹¹⁴ "As for the civil and military posts," he added, "they are obtained on merit alone; a locksmith, a cobbler, or a merchant may become a member of Congress."¹¹⁵ Some officers, mainly volunteers who were with the Continental army during its early defeats, considered many American officers poorly qualified for their jobs because they came from a humble, non-military background. Rochambeau's officers also noted the modest origins of many leading American generals, but were more respectful than the volunteers because these men had gained a number of victories by the time the French army arrived in late 1780, and many of the incompetents had been weeded out. The volunteer Captain Louis-Antoine, Chevalier de Magallon de La Morlière du Tillet, of the Régiment des volontaires de Saint-Domingue, was typical of most French officers during the war in that he praised American Continental officers while insulting those in command of the militia.¹¹⁶

French officers of the 1770's and 1780's supported the principle of recognition according to merit, but with a number of qualifications. They perceived merit as a combination of intelligence, education, proper cultivation, good character, and dedication to the public good. Many of these characteristics, they believed, were a product of good upbringing. Officers who belonged to the nobility of the sword, for instance, often believed that men who were raised in families with an ancient noble lineage, devoted for countless generations to the profession of arms, were better qualified for military commissions than nobles of the robe who had a shorter noble lineage and a background in the civil professions or commerce. The son of an officer acquired the values and skills of his parents, giving him an advantage over the son of a bricklayer, who had been raised with values appropriate for manual work. This concept of meritocracy seemed quite logical to many officers, and helped to justify the supremacy of their

¹¹⁴ Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 48.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 48.

¹¹⁶ Louis-Antoine, Chevalier de Magallon de La Morlière du Tillet, "A French Account of the Siege of Charleston, 1780", *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 67 (1966): 152.

social group. How far officers were willing to carry this form of discrimination largely depended on how secure officers were from competition by outsiders. Wealthier officers from court families had less fear of outsiders who were able to imitate the values and lifestyle of the social elite because they were so convinced that no one could threaten their wealth, prestige, and natural position at the top of every civil and military hierarchy they deigned to enter. Many of Rochambeau's officers were willing to associate with commoners in France and in the United States as long as they met the proper criteria of wealth, education, and upbringing, but others were touchy about a lack of American deference, especially in aristocratic Virginia, where the planters considered themselves equal to noblemen.

Officers' critiques of American government reflect their respect for the idea of constitutional government and the rule of law, but also their scepticism about democracy. Unlike Alexis de Tocqueville, who carefully studied the practical operation of the American administration, popular participation in government, the independent judiciary, and the separation of church and state, French officers considered American democracy a product of unique and probably transitory conditions in North America.¹¹⁷ As the Breton Lieutenant-Colonel Gilles-Jean Barazer, Chevalier de Kermorvan, told Benjamin Franklin after complaining about how hard it was to get American work parties to build fortifications when they were not immediately threatened by the enemy:

It is not...easy to swiftly execute great things in a republic because it is not easy to obtain everyone's consent...In truth I think that men are made to be slaves for the most part, and more, they do not deserve the trouble of having their interests consulted and made a command.¹¹⁸

Lauberdrière made some positive remarks about individuals sharing in government, but other officers tended to be more sceptical about popular political participation.¹¹⁹ Preudhomme de

¹¹⁷ See Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

¹¹⁸ Kermorvan to Franklin, Perth Amboy, N.J., 12 Aug. 1776, in Lyman H. Butterfield, "Franklin, Rush, and the Chevalier de Kermorvan: An Episode of '76". *Library Bulletin of the American Philosophical Society* (1946): 41-42.

¹¹⁹ Lauberdrière, "Journal", BN N.A.F. 17691, fols. 55, 161, 209.

Borre, for instance, was distinctly unimpressed by state assemblies, where he found no dignity or courtesy. He noted with disgust that "they are all equal from the governor to the deputy."¹²⁰ The Swede Fersen was surprised that aristocratic Virginia, based on a slave economy, was willing to embrace the doctrine of perfect equality. He wrote that he would not be surprised if Virginia left the union after the war and added that "I would not even be surprised to see the American government become a perfect aristocracy."¹²¹ Some of the visitors wondered whether Americans were sufficiently virtuous or enlightened enough for democracy to work at all. After a second riot between French soldiers and a Boston mob in 1778, which like the first left several people dead or wounded, Bougainville could only conclude that the people of this "ferocious" new republic were affected by the same foibles which had plagued the people of the old world since time immemorial.¹²² Conservative officers did not admire American liberty, for they defined liberty as the freedom to act within the boundary of good laws, and believed that Americans lacked sufficiently strong laws and even the necessary respect for the concept of law. Some of them later blamed the deluded liberal court nobles on the expedition for causing the French Revolution. La Fayette's aide-de-camp Pontgibaud wrote after the Revolution that "it would have been better, both for themselves and us, if these young philosophers in red-heeled shoes had stayed at Court".¹²³ "Imitation was all the rage," he added, "and the English and Americans--the two most thoughtful, practical, and solid nations in the world--were held up as models to be imitated by the most witty and frivolous people."¹²⁴ Like La Rouërie, who served as a volunteer and would only allow Americans to call him by his democratic first name, Armand, but later led royalist Chouan

¹²⁰ Preudhomme de Borre, "Description des 13 colonies", AN Marine B4 144, fols. 375, 398, in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 342.

¹²¹ Fersen to his father, Williamsburg, Va., 25 March 1782, in *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen*, ed. Wrangel, pp. 133-34.

¹²² Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 170.

¹²³ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 89.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 104.

rebels in Brittany, Pontgibaud believed that the French were different from Americans in temperament and social discipline, and required a different form of government. He strongly objected even to the moderate constitutional monarchy of 1789.¹²⁵ One wonders what a French officer thought when thanked, as the Comte de Vaudreuil was by the representatives of New Hampshire, for his “efforts in favour of the independence of America and of the rights of man”, and was urged to “continue to be the scourge of tyrants and the shield of the oppressed until the liberty and independence of these states are assured and the universe enjoys peace and happiness.”¹²⁶ Vaudreuil did not add any sarcastic comments when he recorded this extract from the speech in his notes, and one suspects that he was not particularly shocked by this republican rhetoric, which was already common in the French press. A handful of liberal officers like Ségur, who believed that they were indeed fighting for virtue and liberty, took these ideas more seriously.

Chastellux was positive about many American institutions, but he doubted that a popular government could have enough strength to govern because leaders had to cater to the masses, and became their slaves rather than their governors. He believed that when the population increased and the American artisan class was reduced to misery, as in England and France, that the rich and poor would engage in a violent, ruinous struggle. He essentially believed that a nation's form of government had to accord with socio-economic realities, and was relieved to learn that the radical Samuel Adams had come to support the idea of a senate composed of men of considerable property who had a conditional veto over legislation.¹²⁷ Chastellux published *De la félicité publique* or *On Public Happiness* in 1770, ten years before sailing for North America with Rochambeau's army. In this work he portrayed the common people of the world as doomed to permanent exploitation by their masters, and he doubted that they would ever be able to

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107 and La Rouërie to Washington, Fougères, Brittany, 2 Jan. 1790 and 20 Aug. 1790, in La Rouërie, “Letters of Col. Armand (Marquis de la Rouërie), 1777-1791”, *New York Historical Society Collections* 11 (1878): 388-95.

¹²⁶ Vaudreuil, “Notes de campagne”, *Neptunia* (1957-58): no. 50, pp. 31-32.

¹²⁷ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 160-63 and Chastellux to Madison, 12 Jan. 1783, in Chastellux, *Travels*, 2: 533-36.

understand the causes of or the solutions to their plight. Chastellux therefore called upon the educated elites to dedicate themselves to helping their fellow men by instituting laws which contributed to the happiness of all. He did not offer any specific constitutional advice to the elites on how to achieve this goal, however, for he believed that every society required a constitutional arrangement to fit the special character of that society.¹²⁸ In the United States Chastellux studied the special characteristics of each region, discussing the modest egalitarianism of New England, a product of their barren soil, the individualist, confrontational character of Pennsylvania's diverse polity, and the vast wealth of Virginia, which made its society more aristocratic in nature. He feared that applying an inflexible constitution to each society would result in an imbalance between socioeconomic power and political power, with dire consequences.¹²⁹

Although Ségur believed that the United States was an example to the world, he thought that it was impractical to establish American-style institutions in "old civilized countries", where they could only be founded on ruins in the face of almost invincible resistance. Americans were also free of "the misery and idleness of a mob of proletarians", which he considered as dangerous as corrupting luxury. North America's open spaces, he believed, were a principal factor in ensuring a degree of economic equality among its inhabitants and the success of its political institutions.¹³⁰

Even La Fayette, a devotee of liberty and equality, was slow to become convinced of the importance of democratic institutions. His mentor George Washington taught him respect for the principles of American government, but at times the young Frenchman could not hide his feeling that democratic institutions were a waste of time. As late as 1781 he was hoping that Washington might become dictator, in the Roman republican sense of a magistrate whom the people invested with extraordinary powers for a fixed period. La Fayette was convinced that if

¹²⁸ Kors, "Chastellux", in *Abroad in America*, ed. Pachter, pp. 9-10.

¹²⁹ Chastellux, *Travels*, 2: 434-44.

¹³⁰ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 407.

Americans remained virtuous and vigilant they would continue to maintain control over their government, but it is evident that at the time he had no idea that democracy could be transferred to France. Only in the late 1780's did he become fully committed to representative government.¹³¹

Perhaps the only officer who genuinely believed in American democracy as a permanent institution was the Loyalist Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur. Crèvecoeur displayed great pride in his country's democratic institutions, which he considered the product of Americans' British heritage and solidly based on centuries of tradition as well as the colonies' unique social and economic conditions. He objected to Britain's attempts to tax the colonies and to its stratified social system and "corruption", but he still regarded Britain as the source and guarantor of American liberty. The Revolution, in his opinion, was a senseless tragedy for which both sides shared the blame, and he was forced to abandon his farm because of his Loyalist views. For Crèvecoeur, American democracy was not a fragile new institution, but a strong tradition which could not easily be undermined.¹³²

American democracy was never seriously considered as a model for France because it was suited for a nation of substantial proprietors. It is necessary to point out, however, that while French officers rejected democracy, they did not entirely reject the idea of constitutional government, which they had brought with them from France. As Ségur pointed out, French *philosophes* thought that they had inspired the liberal doctrines of the revolutionaries in North America.¹³³ The American Revolution strengthened French public interest in finding an alternative to absolute monarchy, an alternative which involved a degree of power sharing between the king and the "nation", an arrangement which might include anything from a panel of advisers to an Estates General incorporating a significant proportion of the propertied classes.

¹³¹ Bernier, *Lafayette*, pp. 63, 68, 111, 177, 180, 190, 231.

¹³² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 8-10, 80, 95, 178-91 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 40, 102, 110.

¹³³ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 110.

The American political system, like the British political system, provided an example of a functioning constitutional government which the French could use in conjunction with their own tradition of parlements, provincial estates, and estates-generals in order to formulate a native French form of constitutional government. The call for "liberty" did not necessarily infer that revolutionary changes must take place in the political system, but it did call for more than reliance on custom to safeguard personal rights and protect the rights of different classes of citizens.

Ségur helped to launch the French Revolution and supported the idea of a relatively broadly-based constitutional government as late as the 1820's. His constitutional ideas took shape in the 1770's and 1780's, and his views provide insights into the nature of liberal French opinion during this period. He and his circle of friends at court, he later wrote, unfavourably compared the frivolity of the French court to the "dignity, independence, and useful, important existence of an English peer, a member of the House of Commons, and to the liberty, as quiet as it was proud, of all citizens of Great Britain."¹³⁴ In almost all European republics, he noted, there were strong remnants of feudal institutions, and England had even more ancient privileges than other countries because its aristocracy had "the happy wisdom to make itself the patron of public liberty and to unite itself with the people against arbitrary power."¹³⁵ On leaving for the United States he denounced absolute monarchy as a system in which "the court is everything, and the nation nothing", and maintained that "I suffer from no other passion except that of meriting the support of public opinion, not as it is, but as it should be; the opinion, for example, of a free people for whom a sage would be the legislator."¹³⁶ One is reminded here of Rousseau's lawgiver, whose laws are sanctioned by the people.¹³⁷ In later years, however, he was less harsh in his criticisms of France's political institutions during the late *ancien régime*:

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 140.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1: 404-5.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 300, 302.

¹³⁷ Rousseau, *Social Contract*, book 2, chapter 7.

We had, it is true, neither elections nor a national Parliament: by old customs the prince was the sole legislator; but authority found, in the sovereign courts, in the privileged orders themselves, and in all classes of society, a point of honour and a freedom of opinion which resisted the yoke of arbitrariness more effectively than laws: we were subjects in law, but citizens in fact.¹³⁸

Despite Ségur's attraction to the idea of a sage legislator, his constitutional ideas centred on rule by an enlightened aristocracy which had the confidence of the people and could draft legislation which benefited the nation as a whole. While he approved of the large number of voters participating in the political process in the United States, he did not consider the democratic process itself essential to liberty. Government only had to be democratic in spirit, not in fact. He believed that the number of active citizens should be related to education and the ability to make properly enlightened decisions, and had no qualms about restricting power to a tiny elite as long as it acted on behalf of the people. When he left for the United States it is evident that he had not decided whether a state should be ruled by a single enlightened legislator, a Chamber of Peers, a British-style Parliament, or an American-style democracy. He simply desired the triumph of virtue, justice, and liberty and government on behalf of the citizenry. During the French Revolution Ségur supported the idea of an all-powerful president advised by a legislature, both elected by a limited number of propertied citizens. At the end of the 1790's he turned to Bonaparte and virtual enlightened despotism, only returning to a liberal stance in 1819.¹³⁹ Since by Ségur's own admission his attitudes toward the United States were more liberal than those of most of his colleagues, we can be assured that most French officers in North America were not democrats.

During the Siege of Yorktown another officer had an opportunity to observe the United States: Captain Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon, of the Régiment de Touraine. He did not discuss his experiences in the country in any detail, but his general attitude toward democracy, found in his writings of the early nineteenth century, may provide additional clues to

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 201.

¹³⁹ *Apt, Louis-Philippe de Ségur*, pp. 95-104, 121-26, 132-36.

French officers' opinions during the early 1780's. Saint-Simon's utopian scheme called for a European Parliament with subordinate local or national parliaments. Each million literate Europeans would elect one businessman, one scientist, one administrator, and one magistrate to the European Chamber of Deputies for ten years, and the King of Europe would appoint men or the sons of men who had done especially useful work to the Chamber of Peers. This meritocracy of experts would develop rational economic guidelines which the rest of society would follow voluntarily. There would be no coercion in this harmonious, Christian community. All producers, from workers to scientists, would participate in decision-making in the workplace according to their talents, and this general cooperation in municipalities, corporate bodies, and trade unions would constitute democracy. People of merit would rise to leadership in such a society, and their voice would naturally count most.¹⁴⁰ Although important aspects of Saint-Simon's system would have been quite foreign to officers of the 1780's, others resemble theories circulating among more intellectual officers during the War of American Independence. Many of Rochambeau's subordinates would have been familiar with the idea that persons of merit should rule society with the happy acclaim of their more humble fellow citizens and that the best form of government was a monarchy with an estates-general comprising separate chambers of the second and third estate. They would also have agreed that educated, responsible citizens should be able to vote and that society was naturally made up of various corporate bodies.

The Swiss nobleman Verger praised the Parlement and Estates of Brittany, which he considered an "inestimable advantage" for the province, for these bodies, "composed of the leading noblemen of the country", rendered justice without remuneration and "have the noble firmness to uphold at court the rights of their compatriots, often to their own detriment."¹⁴¹ He liked their voluntary but economical and efficient way of forwarding taxes to the king without the

¹⁴⁰ Claude-Henri de Rouvroy, Comte de Saint-Simon, *The Political Thought of Saint-Simon*, ed. Ghita Ionescu (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 14-15, 28-47.

¹⁴¹ Verger, "Journal". in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, I: 181.

intervention of parasitic tax farmers, and considered it fortunate that neither the Farmer-General nor the Intendant of the province had any power.¹⁴² Verger evidently supported traditional French political institutions as a guardian of public liberty. He probably considered the king essential for many purposes of state, but did not assess the authority emanating from the court in a very positive light. Political action in Switzerland's cantons undoubtedly made it easier for Swiss officers in French service to analyze events.

A number of historians have argued that Germany was behind France in terms of Enlightenment thinking, and that whatever political discussion took place tended to reinforce absolutism rather than weaken it.¹⁴³ The vast majority of the German nobility opposed the American Revolution, but many German bourgeois were sympathetic toward American liberty, even if their knowledge of the issues was almost ludicrous from our point of view.¹⁴⁴ Hessian officers in British service were completely incapable of analyzing American political issues, and one American historian states that nowhere in their voluminous letters and diaries was there the faintest sign that they knew what Americans were fighting for. All that they could say was that Americans were the spoiled and ungrateful children of a generous monarch.¹⁴⁵ We do not have sufficient sources to make firm conclusions about Germans serving in the French army, but they may have been more sophisticated than those under British command, probably due to their greater exposure to French culture. Closen-Haydenburg was plainly a liberal, and even

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Rudolf Vierhaus, *Germany in the Age of Absolutism*, trans. Jonathan B. Knudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 79-86.

¹⁴⁴ Horst Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking*, trans. Bernhard A. Uhlendorf (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 209-14, 225-31.

¹⁴⁵ Atwood, *Hessians*, pp. 158-60, 164. See also Kipping, *Hessian View of America*, pp. 21-25, 33 and Ray W. Pettengill, *Letters from America, 1776-1779: Being Letters of Brunswick, Hessian, and Waldeck Officers with the British Armies during the Revolution* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), pp. 79-80.

Zweibrücken, who did not like Americans or their institutions, was able to describe Washington as "a citizen happy about the good fortune of his country".¹⁴⁶

Officers' unanimous condemnation of "despotism" in South America and the Azores and sympathy for the revolutionary ideas of leading gentlemen in Venezuela suggests that they believed that monarchs and their officials should be subject to the rule of law--in other words, they had to obey the general laws they issued just like everyone else.¹⁴⁷ The best way to ensure this was to depend upon constitutional bodies autonomous of the crown. Even Louis XVI's Minister of Foreign Affairs Vergennes, after hearing of Britain's massive naval mobilization in 1776, admitted how much he envied the power and effectiveness of a more broadly-based constitutional government:

It is something admirable, and something to behold, this ease with which the nation, or rather its representatives, proceed to such frightening expenditures. We have apparently, more real resources than does England, but we must be certain that the action be as easy. That holds to an opinion which can not become established in an absolute monarchy as in a mixed monarchy.¹⁴⁸

The War of American Independence did not transform French officers' political convictions--liberals returned to France as liberals and conservatives as conservatives. They admired aspects of American democracy, but rejected it as a viable model for their own country.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, their views on American and French political institutions indicate that there was considerable support among French officers for aristocratic constitutional bodies capable of representing the "nation's" interests against an autocratic power. They conveniently separated the king's person from the ministerial despotism which surrounded him, for the principle of monarchy remained sacred. If some officers dallied with the idea of an enlightened

¹⁴⁶ Zweibrücken, *My Campaigns in America*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁷ Berthier, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 272, 275-76 and Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 183.

¹⁴⁸ Vergennes to Marquis de Noailles, Fontainebleau, 14 Nov. 1776, in William B. Clark and William J. Morgan, eds., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1976), 7: 740-41.

¹⁴⁹ This is also Bodinier's conclusion. See Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, pp. 343, 387, 400, 539-41.

monarch-lawgiver in the Rousseauian mold, on a practical level they placed more faith in constitutional assemblies acting in concert with the monarch, as did other officers. Constitutional corporate bodies seemed to be the most practical means of opposing arbitrary government.

The conservatism of their stance is obvious, for it largely relied on traditional, almost archaic institutions based on privilege. Nevertheless, if the general form of these contemplated institutions was traditional, Enlightenment ideals concerning rationality, liberty, equality, property, and citizenship had an impact on their organization. Liberty required an end to ministerial despotism and the introduction of greater personal rights. Equality called for a recasting of the structure of privilege to reflect its subordination to social utility. This did not necessarily mean an end to the concept of noble status, but it did present possibilities for the reduction of distinctions within the nobility itself and make the question of accessibility to the nobility more important. Citizenship was just as significant, for it opened up the question of who a citizen was and what, in essence, the nation was. Citizens might be adult male noblemen or simply males with sufficient property, and if the latter was the case this citizenship would have to be defined in economic terms. In addition, it would be necessary to decide whether noblemen and qualified commoners should sit in one assembly or in two chambers. Such questions stimulated a move toward a real break with tradition, a bridging of the very real gap in officers' minds between their traditionalist thinking and their radical discourse. Many French officers supported the idea of constitutional bodies which they assumed would be primarily noble in composition. They also supported a new system of law which entrenched the rights and duties of citizens and was generally more equitable. How this constitutional body or bodies would be organized and how closely they would affect the executive was open to debate, but officers did recognize the legitimacy of the concept itself.

The most substantial difference between Montcalm's officers and Rochambeau's is that while the former group was completely apolitical, some of the latter officers had begun to express

a few political opinions, employing such words as liberty, equality, despotism, citizen, *patric*, and nation. No doubt their environment, a republic in revolution against a king, helped to encourage some tentative steps toward considering government in a larger sense than personalities and a chain of command, but at least a few officers in this study were discussing such ideas even before they left French soil. Their views on slavery, freedom of the press, patriotism, revolution, and Loyalism all provide means of understanding their relatively naive concepts of human rights and the relationship between citizens and the state. The simple fact that a number of officers were considering the abolition of slavery is significant, for it indicates that they thought that even the most humble persons deserved certain protection under the law.

Officers' comments on the American federal system of government, political leadership, democracy, and the rights of citizens reveal that probably not a single one was a democrat in our sense of the word, but that they were not opposed to a representative government in which the interests of property-owners were paramount. Officers liked the idea of a "free society" with just laws in which the most qualified citizens--nobles, patricians, or in the United States men like Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, and John Adams--would govern with authority sanctioned in some way by the citizenry. Most officers were probably relatively happy with the status quo in France, with Louis XVI legislating according to the advice of his ministers and listening to the remonstrances of his parlements and the wishes of his provincial estates. Most would have said that liberty outweighed despotism in their country. Nevertheless, the abuses and inefficiency of the French government and its many unjust laws suggested that some reforms were necessary. Liberals believed that substantial reforms were called for, among them a means of placing men of virtue at the centre of power. Liberal and conservative officers suggested stronger provincial estates, representative institutions such as a Chamber of Peers, a French version of Britain's Parliament, an assembly or senate elected by substantial and predominantly noble property owners, and a monarchical or republican dictatorship sanctioned by the people. Even the most traditional-sounding calls for an active political nobility were framed within the context of

citizenship, and there was a new concern for “equality before the law”, however that might be interpreted.

Despite the deeply conservative nature of the officer corps, the new political consciousness which had emerged in France since about 1770 was forcing officers to begin to think in political terms. Instead of relying on simple, ingrained beliefs in monarchy and the traditional hierarchy, many officers were starting to justify this social and political leadership, placing it in a political framework. It is easy to point out how apolitical, anti-democratic, and traditionalist Rochambeau's officers were, but it is also evident that they were influenced by many political values characteristic of the Enlightenment. This is not something which can easily be said about French officers who had been in North America during the Seven Years' War.

CHAPTER 8

TRADE, COLONIES, AND THE DECLINE OF ECONOMIC PRIVILEGE

In dispatching troops and naval forces to North America during the second half of the eighteenth century, the French government wished to fulfill important political and military objectives, at the heart of which were the vital economic issues of trade and colonies. All thinking officers were aware that some economic goals underlay their presence in the New World, and often they attempted to sort out their opinions on the subject. Their views on economic issues during the 1750's and 1770's and 1780's provide a useful indicator of general economic attitudes at two different points in time, and it is possible to draw some cautious conclusions about the changes which took place during the interval. This is important because while a great deal of work has been done on the development of economic ideas in eighteenth-century France, most of these studies have focused on economists and their writings rather than the dissemination of these ideas among the educated classes as a whole.

During the second half of the century, as we shall see, the concept of liberty of commerce gradually made headway against old-fashioned fiscalist or "mercantilist" policies, which involved state intervention in the economy to ensure a favourable balance of trade and the accumulation of wealth, especially state revenues. The principal means of increasing private and royal income was the state-sponsored development of agriculture, the merchant marine, navy, colonies, manufacturing, mining, and population. Revenue duties were imposed on goods circulating within France as well as on those arriving from the colonies and foreign nations. Privilege played

an important role in this system because nobles and certain groups of merchants and artisans were granted special commercial rights which other French subjects did not possess; a commercial hierarchy formed part of the social hierarchy.¹

Enlightenment thought, however, stressed the existence of certain natural rights common to all humankind which took precedence over the interests of any individual, social group, or nation. *Philosophes* argued that group interests and privileges which served no social utility had to give way to a system of rational laws which respected basic rights, benefitted the community as a whole, and legally bound both the sovereign and his subjects. According to economists of the physiocratic school, one basic right was liberty of commerce. Physiocrats, who founded modern economic theory during the course of the Seven Years' War, argued that individual self-interest was in harmony with the universal moral order, and that the search for profit indirectly benefitted the entire community. Although they believed that economic inequality was essential for the economy to function, and made a strong distinction between landowners and their landless employees, they were also convinced that equality of opportunity should prevail in the marketplace, and that an enlightened monarch should not interfere with the economic liberty of his subjects. Time-honoured trade barriers which gave special advantages to certain regions or economic interests, they argued, should be eliminated so that wheat and other grains could flow freely to wherever demand was highest. While their principal concern was with agricultural production and distribution, which they thought was far more important to national wealth than the exchange of gold, silver, and manufactures, they paved the way for Adam Smith's application

¹ See Eli F. Hecksher, *Mercantilism*, 2 vols., trans. Mendel Shapiro (London: George Allan and Unwin, 1935), 1: 269-93; Charles W. Cole, *Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 1: 334-55; Henri Hauser, *La pensée et l'action économiques du cardinal de Richelieu* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1944), pp. 121-42; Bernard Schnapper, "A propos de la doctrine et de la politique coloniales au temps de Richelieu", *Revue de l'histoire des colonies* 41-42 (1954-55): 314-28; Charles Wilson, *Mercantilism* (Cambridge, U.K.: Historical Association, 1958), pp. 3-10, 21-24; Daryl M. Hafter, "Critics of Mercantilism in France, 1751-1789: The Industrial Reformers" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, 1964), pp. 1-29; Jacob Viner, "Power versus Plenty as Objectives of Foreign Policy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", in *Revisions in Mercantilism*, ed. Donald C. Coleman (London: Methuen, 1969), pp. 61-91; Martin Wolfe, "French Views on Wealth and Taxes from the Middle Ages to the Old Regime", in *ibid.*, pp. 190-209; and Donald C. Coleman, "Mercantilism Revisited", *Historical Journal* 23 (1980): 773-91.

of their principles to the world of maritime commerce and manufacturing.² Physiocrats were also generally opposed to colonies, for colonization promoted peasant emigration, the consumption of useless luxuries, and high taxation to pay for garrisons and senseless colonial wars--funds which landowners could spend on French agricultural development.³

Physiocratic doctrines were simultaneously liberal and conservative. They can be called liberal in the classic nineteenth-century sense of the word because they freed the individual from the control--and protection--of the state and various social and economic corporations, creating the nineteenth-century philosophy of laissez-faire capitalism. Physiocratic ideas become even more liberal when we compare them to the almost feudal economic system prevalent in eighteenth-century France. But on the other hand, their attack on commerce, manufacturing, and local self-government, and their disregard for the need to protect disadvantaged members of society, was not particularly progressive.

Montcalm's officers lived in a culture in which various forms of privilege dictated the conduct of all social orders, from the highest levels of the nobility to the most humble members of the Third Estate. The same was true in the economy. Officers considered the state an ally in maintaining their country's traditional social hierarchy, and while they resisted the crown's feeble, sporadic attempts to reduce the economic privileges of the nobility, they readily collaborated with the state in *manipulating or undermining the economic privileges of other social groups*. Officers often called for a transfer of economic privileges between various officials, merchants, and monopolies, but did not indicate that they believed in equality of economic opportunity or any

² Weulersse, *Mouvement physiocratique en France (de 1756 à 1770)*, 1: 510-17, 588-89, 2: 17-30; Weulersse, *Physiocratie à la fin du règne de Louis XV (1770-1774)*, pp. 60-76; Teyssendier de la Serve, *Mably et les physiocrates*, pp. 86-91; Gustave Schelle, *Du Pont de Nemours et l'école physiocratique* (Paris: Librairie Guillaumin, 1888; reprint, Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), pp. 130-37; Ronald L. Meek, *The Economics of Physiocracy: Essays and Translations* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), pp. 112, 122-23, 161-63, 218, 235, 245, 250-1, 260; Hampson, *Enlightenment*, pp. 106, 252; and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *The Origins of Physiocracy: Economic Revolution and Social Order in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 304-14.

³ Thomas A. Cassilly, "The Anticolonial Tradition in France: The Eighteenth Century to the Fifth Republic" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1975), pp. 79-85.

other aspect of liberty of commerce. Indeed, rather than idealizing commerce, they displayed a condescending attitude toward merchants and profit and tended to analyze merchants solely in terms of how much tax revenue they could produce for the state. In addition, it never occurred to them that colonies had any purpose except to benefit the metropolis, more specifically the state, and they favoured measures designed to ensure that French colonies did not trade with foreign powers, even when these restrictions clearly harmed the colonists' interests. While the Frenchmen generally respected the social and economic privileges of the colonial nobility, they showed less concern for the church or Canadian merchants and advocated eliminating the special economic privileges granted to the popular classes during the early years of colonization. They had no difficulty in accepting company monopolies and regulated prices, as long as they served their intended purpose. Montcalm's officers advocated change in the name of their master the king, but their goal was to strengthen a traditional social and economic system based on the most stratified inequality. They displayed an abiding faith in state intervention as the means to solve most economic problems, but considered economic questions in terms of redistributing privileges rather than eliminating them.

Two decades after Montcalm's army returned to France on parole, a new group of officers arrived on the continent. In contrast to their predecessors, some of them had begun to question important aspects of privilege, and even the principle of privilege itself. Individualism was beginning to balance corporatism in their economic thinking, although even the most liberal officers found it virtually impossible to escape the corporatist mentality.⁴ Most of the volunteers, Rochambeau's officers, and naval officers still favoured exclusive markets and thought primarily in terms of finding the political and military means to increase France's share of world trade while reducing that of other maritime powers. They also had almost no idea how capitalism functioned. Nevertheless, France's lack of naval dominance, its loss of Canada, Louisiana, and India, and Enlightenment-inspired physiocratic and anti-colonialist ideas critical of the financial,

⁴ Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, p. 5.

demographic, and political disadvantages of colonies, combined to persuade many officers that it was better to open regions to international commerce than to acquire expensive new colonial possessions. They were more critical of the system of economic hierarchy prevalent in the past, and tended to think in terms of larger national interests rather than simply the economic interests of the aristocracy and their patron, the king. A smaller number of officers, however, went even further than this, for they were convinced that liberty of commerce was a fundamental principle and that colonialism was an evil which produced only exploitation and war. All colonies, they maintained, should enjoy autonomy or actual independence and trade freely, producing peace, harmony, and prosperity for all nations. The state should be restricted to a supervisory role, and avoid intervening in economic processes and citizens' daily lives. It would be misleading to claim that most French officers of the American Revolutionary period had a radically different economic philosophy than Montcalm's. Nevertheless, it is evident that a number of changes had taken place during the intervening period, and that liberal economic ideas were beginning to influence numerous members of the officer corps.

Montcalm's officers were the king's privileged servants, and as a result it was usually in their interest to support the expansion of state power. Confident that the king would almost automatically support the interests of the nobility of the sword, which led the army, and accustomed to a relatively authoritarian system of government, they did not show a great deal of concern about the economic rights of non-nobles. Seigneurs enjoyed monopoly rights over land, labour, hunting and fishing, the grinding of grain, and other sources of revenue in their seigneuries, and the income thus derived theoretically provided them with the leisure and funds to fight in the king's service at minimal expense to the crown. Similarly, monopolies granted to companies or farmers generally provided an efficient means of gathering wealth without royal expense. The interests of peasants and French and foreign merchants who did not benefit from the system could safely be ignored, and their economic activities interfered with at will. Officers

did not favour a command economy in which the state directed every detail of the economic process, but had few objections to the authorities dealing with even the most trivial matters whenever the situation seemed to require it.

A good example of this economic philosophy is found in a memoir on the means to increase agricultural production in the colony without expense to the crown, written in 1753, two years before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, by Franquet, Engineer-in-Chief of the fortress of Louisbourg. Franquet found it deplorable that such a fertile country should be unable to produce a food surplus and even suffered from periodic shortages. In order to deal with this problem, he advocated setting up a bureau of agricultural affairs made up of the governor, intendant, bishop, and two notable cultivators from the Quebec area, who would assess reports compiled by the curé and captain of militia in each parish. These local officials would report on the number of farmers, how much land they owned, its quality, and the farm's agricultural production. In addition, he advised that they project what the farm's production should be and the personal habits of each habitant, whether he hunted and fished on a long-term basis, left the area, or went to the city as a worker or salesman. The bureau would threaten to punish lazy habitants and put beggars, vagabonds, salesmen, and discharged soldiers to work on pieces of land, "for in a well-ordered state, everyone must occupy themselves usefully and work".⁵ Franquet also suggested that parishes be obligated to help new settlers, and that the funds they required for this purpose be raised by cutting back on the pensions which the king normally gave to priests in Canada and by having the parish elect two men each year to levy the sum necessary to cover the rest of the cost. The king would exempt new settlers from *corvées* and buy their produce at a fixed price to help them subsist, but settlers at the forts in the far west should be allowed to sell their produce to the garrisons for as much as they could get in order to encourage agriculture there and avoid the cost of transporting food from the east at royal expense. Further, the engineer advised that serving soldiers and officers be settled on the frontier, where the soldiers would learn to cultivate the land

⁵ Franquet. *Voyages*. pp. 179-87.

and acquire the skills necessary for campaigning in Canada.⁶ In Franquet's opinion, taxation would do the colony a lot of good because the people of the countryside lived with too much ease, a condition brought about by their prosperity. Young men all owned horses and were able to wear fine clothing when they went to church, exceeding the limits of what he considered appropriate for their social station.⁷ According to contemporary educated opinion, the populace did not have sufficient education and moral fibre to continue working when they had enough to satisfy their immediate wants. Luxury, untempered by knowledge and virtue--which noblemen, according to themselves, had in abundance--resulted in moral degeneration and social and economic disaster.

Montcalm's officers believed that Canadian habitants were insufficiently productive. Unlike desperate French peasants, they did not have to work hard all year round in order to survive. Bourlamaque proposed that a tax be imposed on the "naturally lazy" habitants in order to force them to maximize production on their land and abandon their errant ways.⁸ He also believed that special severity was required to prevent Canadian and French "libertines" from living among the Indians, "because once adopted by them, they are lost to the state."⁹ Montcalm, Bougainville, and Bourlamaque all wished to limit any expansion of the fur trade because of its supposedly pernicious influence on Canadians, who were distracted from agricultural pursuits.¹⁰ In Bourlamaque's opinion, control of the Great Lakes basin and guaranteed access to the West were the only factors which had to be considered in determining Canada's frontiers.¹¹ His colleague Bougainville hoped that a military colony at Détroit could ship food produced there throughout

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-196.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 158.

⁸ Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1147.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10: 1149.

¹⁰ This reflected official opinion since the time of Colbert. See Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, pp. 104-13.

¹¹ Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1141.

the Great Lakes, reducing the need for *coureurs de bois* and thereby, he wrote, “conserve the men in Canada and augment the number of *laboueurs*, which are the basis of the state.”¹² In the Paris region, where Bougainville was from, *laboueurs* were secure or independent peasants who often owned their land. In other parts of France, however, they were hired farm workers. Bougainville was probably using the word in the general sense of cultivator, but since habitants were practically all independent peasants, the Parisian definition of the word was fully appropriate.¹³ Bougainville also suggested that the number of horses in the colony be restricted to one per family, for despite the fact that habitants used horses for plowing as well as transport and recreation, he considered them a luxury which reduced the number of cattle on each farm.¹⁴ While it never would have occurred to him to restrict nobles from riding for recreational purposes, he had no inhibitions about regulating the lives of the common people for their own good.

An officer of colonial regulars who served in Louisiana during the Seven Years' War, Bossu, was enthusiastic about the agricultural potential of the Mississippi basin, whose fertile soil, he was convinced, could produce sugar, tobacco, cotton, rice, beef, and an enormous variety of fruits. In 1762 Bossu paid tribute to contemporary ideas about the primacy of agriculture as the source of all true wealth. Highly critical of the French public's obsession with Louisiana's fabled gold and silver mines during the 1720's, he insisted that “the interior of this great continent contained much more valuable treasure in the cultivation of the land, which nurtures all men and creates the true riches of nations.”¹⁵

¹² Anonymous, “Extrait des mémoires de Mr. de Montcalm”, NA, MG18, K7, vol. 1 and Bougainville, “Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France”, *RAPQ* (1923-24): 43-45.

¹³ Pierre Goubert, *The Ancien Régime: French Society, 1600-1750*, trans. Steve Cox (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 114-15, 119-20.

¹⁴ Bougainville, “Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France”, *RAPQ* (1923-24): 42.

¹⁵ Bossu, *Travels*, pp. 24, 127-28, 193-96, 205-6, 225.

Bougainville shared Bossu's confidence in Louisiana's future, for in 1761 he discussed the agricultural potential of the Ohio Valley and lower Louisiana and the means of populating these areas with Canadians--now under British rule--and slaves, with special provisions for carefully replicating the stratified Canadian social hierarchy. He depended upon Canadians' antipathy toward the British and temporary or permanent tax exemptions to attract them from their homes in British territory. Bougainville was confident that Louisiana's prosperity could more than make up for the loss of Canada, for the colony could replace the American colonies in the provisions trade with the French islands as well as exchange produce for Mexican silver. This would keep French colonial trade exclusively in French hands and attract foreign bullion to French territory, thereby fulfilling two major fiscalist aims. His main regret was the loss of the fisheries of Acadia and Gaspésie. Bougainville's attitude toward the market was typical for the time, involving temporary concessions or privileges: tax free status for settlers in Louisiana for twenty years, *permission* for settlers to cultivate whatever crops they wanted, no export taxes on furs and merchandise from New Orleans for ten years, and free commerce for foreign slave ships for five years in order to quickly build up the slave population.¹⁶

Franquet, Bossu, and Bougainville all considered agricultural production fundamental to a country's wealth, and had no qualms about using state incentives or coercion to ensure that it was maximized. They all favoured interventionist, fiscalist policies, and thought only in terms of North America's benefits to the French crown. Despite glimpses of enlightened humanitarianism in their writings, they tended to view European colonists as anonymous economic units, not unlike the peasants the officers were accustomed to in their homeland. Their attitude went far beyond an economist's professional detachment; rather, their mentality reflected the hierarchical, authoritarian nature of their society and their deep-seated class prejudice. The price and marketing controls they envisioned were an extension of those imposed in French

¹⁶ Bougainville, "Transmigration", BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 313-16 and Bougainville, "Moyens de peupler la Louisiane", BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 319-20.

provinces and communities, which usually served a useful purpose in that they tended to reduce the shortages and speculation characteristic of small, isolated markets, which is what both Canada and Louisiana were. Although these controls were to a great extent rational and pragmatic, the unrestrained eagerness with which these state servants regulated the lives of the popular classes reveals the absence of an economic ideology proclaiming the economic liberty of the individual.

Further evidence of this haphazard interventionist mindset is found in officers' attitudes toward manufacturing and commerce. Franquet was highly critical of the workers at the Saint-Maurice forges, who were unhappy about living and working conditions, resisted workplace discipline, and demanded high wages, especially when they were renewing their contracts. Force was sometimes employed to make them work, and this caused some workers to leave the area. The only solution, he felt, was to bring in a better manager and master worker and have the Intendant supervise operations and review the accounts more closely.¹⁷ The government, not private enterprise, would find the solution to problems at the forges.

Like most officers, Franquet did not have a very high opinion of merchants. He insisted that French merchants who did business in Canada should each be granted or forced to purchase a farm and bring two or three settlers over from France each year to cultivate it, for he did not consider it fair that a merchant who came to Canada to make large profits put nothing back into the country.¹⁸ Even worse, he believed, were the merchant speculators protected by people in high places, for "these brokers, who are usually rogues and rascals", bought up all available food, often on the pretext that it was for the king's garrison, and then sold it abroad, which created artificial shortages and obliged the authorities to import food from France and New England. Franquet's bureau would force all merchants and entrepreneurs for the king to declare how much flour they needed, and their quota would be checked against a report by the captain of militia in the parish where they bought the food. If the merchants did not cooperate, they would be fined

¹⁷ Franquet, *Voyages*, p. 113.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-95.

in proportion to their resources.¹⁹ Although Franquet was bourgeois, he obviously felt more solidarity with nobles in the officer corps than with merchants, whom he perceived as a species of social parasite. Clearly, he had little faith in the idea that individual self-interest was beneficial to society, as the physiocrats were soon to proclaim.

French officers of the Seven Years' War period strongly objected to the way in which Canadian officers engaged in the fur trade, but did not always oppose their benefitting from the profits of the trade.²⁰ Franquet worried that officers' absorption in commerce and the ease which the profits afforded might cause them to neglect their profession. As an engineer he may have felt a stronger sense of professionalism than many of his colleagues in less technical branches of the military, such as the aristocratic cavalry and infantry, who often perceived military service more as a lifestyle than an occupation. At Fort Saint-Frédéric Franquet found the garrison officers angry at their commander because he enforced his wife's local trade monopoly, which she even extended to the herbal root ginseng, bought from the Indians for sale in China. The subordinates were annoyed that they were unable to share in the profits: "All the others, revolted by this despotism, said that the commander was not competent to prevent them from trading any merchandise whatsoever".²¹ This practice, noted Franquet, was completely foreign to the French officer corps, for in France any officer found engaged in commerce would immediately be forced to cease his activities. He believed that Canadian officers should be prohibited from trading under the threat of court martial or else they should share revenue derived from the *congés* or trade licenses sold to traders at the posts every year.²² In France, if a nobleman engaged in wholesale rather than retail trade, then his involvement in this field was considered reasonably acceptable. Indeed, the crown actually encouraged noblemen to participate in such "honourable"

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54, 179-81, 189-90.

²⁰ See Eccles, "Social, Economic, and Political Significance of the Military Establishment in New France", in Eccles, *Essays on New France*, pp. 118-19.

²¹ Franquet, *Voyages*, pp. 56, 67.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

commerce, but royal edicts were not completely effective in transforming ingrained attitudes.²³ The contracts Canadian noblemen made with merchants for trade at the posts hardly meant that these seigneurs were embroiled in day-to-day trade matters, but nevertheless Franquet still disapproved. He thought that it was ethical for officers to benefit from a general levy on *congés*, but not for them actually to deal with merchants in person.

Other French officers were equally critical of noblemen's commercial practices in North America. Bossu, for instance, found little good to say about the officers' monopoly over the fur trade in the Alabama country.²⁴ His colleague Bougainville was convinced that commerce degraded officers' social status and made Canadian society more egalitarian.²⁵ He was clearly disgusted when François-Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, the Governor-General's brother, urged a French captain to ask the British for money when the enemy requested that a miniature portrait of "Mrs. Bever" found on the body of a British officer killed in the Battle of Carillon be returned so that it could be sent to his widow. The portrait was immediately returned free of charge.²⁶ The shameless profiteering of Intendant François Bigot went beyond the bounds of decency, as far as most officers were concerned, and, as one of them wrote, they severely disapproved of "the manner in which immense fortunes are made in this country".²⁷ Johnstone claimed that Bigot would buy an ox from an habitant at the fixed price of eight livres, and then sell it to the army for 1,200 livres.²⁸ The inflation caused by large issues of paper money and influxes of specie eroded the value of officers' meagre pay, and this only reinforced their image of the Canadian

²³ John Boshier, *The Canada Merchants, 1713-1763* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 68-69, 78-84.

²⁴ Bossu, *Travels*, p. 127 and

²⁵ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 61.

²⁶ Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 248.

²⁷ Anonymous, "Siege of Quebec in 1759", *Siege of Quebec in 1759*, ed. Hébert, p. 87. See also Montreuil to d'Argenson, Montreal, 12 June 1756, *NYCD*, 10: 419 and Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1139.

²⁸ Johnstone, "The Campaign of Canada, 1760", *MRNF*, 4: 242.

government as mismanaged and corrupt.²⁹ Like most other Frenchmen, they expected officials to keep their office's profits within reasonable bounds; it was improper to exceed the habitual rewards of the office in question, especially if this harmed the nobility's welfare. Officers considered income from rents and civil and military posts honourable because it was a just reward for real and potential service to the crown, but because merchants served themselves rather than the crown, their money-making activities were merely selfish. This was especially true because unlike peasants, who actually produced wealth, merchants lived by manipulating it.

Montcalm's officers considered colonies a significant economic asset, perceiving them as overseas extensions of the realm which served to strengthen the crown's financial and military capability. No one questioned whether or not colonies were necessary. The visiting Frenchmen considered Canada important because it effectively blocked British expansion in North America, and they felt that by holding on to the country France was reserving for herself--and denying to the enemy--the immense, unexploited agricultural and commercial potential of the interior. Taxes levied on the peasants who cultivated these lands and the merchants who supplied their wants could substantially contribute to the state's resources. Officers do not seem to have even seriously considered the possibility that Canada might become independent one day. "It is true", one of them wrote, "that in the passage of time these vast lands could become separate kingdoms and republics; the same is true for New England. But how many centuries must one first wait?"³⁰ According to an analyst of Montcalm's papers--probably Bougainville--the general believed that the abundance of land in North America meant that centuries would pass before the continent was settled. Montcalm apparently appreciated Canada's land resources, but also believed that the country had silver deposits, might develop a wool industry if skilled workers were brought from France, and could support a large fishing industry.³¹

²⁹ Parseau du Plessis, "Journal de la campagne de *la Sauvage*". *RAPQ* (1928-29): 225 and Montcalm to Vaudreuil, 8 Oct. 1758, NA MG1, C11A, vol. 103, p. 240.

³⁰ Anonymous. "Mémoire sur le Canada". *RAPQ* (1923-24): 24.

³¹ Anonymous. "Extrait des mémoires de Mr. de Montcalm", NA, MG18, K7, vol. 1.

Another officer with Montcalm, Bourlamaque, reported that Canada had good soil and was capable of exporting a food surplus to the French West Indies and even the western provinces of France. Fish, cattle, hemp, wool, lumber, tar, and iron were all potential exports, and Canada could become a major shipbuilding centre. New England, Bourlamaque noted, illegally supplied provisions to the French West Indies, and he suggested that Canadians should be encouraged to provision the islands instead.³² This proposal was hardly a novel one, having been a chief aim of Louis XIV's Minister of Marine Jean-Baptiste Colbert in the late seventeenth century. For a variety of reasons, however, it had not been practicable and the projected triangular trade was never very significant.³³ In addition, officers could not help but recognize that Canada's manufacturing sector was greatly inferior to that of the American colonies.³⁴

Since Canada's financial needs for defence, administration, and religious institutions could not be fully met through export taxes and the church tithe, the French crown was obliged to provide the colony with large annual subsidies. Ministers of Marine constantly complained about this responsibility, for the value of Canada's fur exports did not equal the amount of money which France was investing in the colony, and the whole purpose of colonies was to provide economic benefits for the mother country. French officers could not make a convincing economic argument in favour of the colony by pointing to existing production, so they discussed the country's economic potential, its strategic role in restraining British economic and political expansion, and the loyalty, patience, and obedience of Canada's inhabitants. In eloquent terms, they explained

³² Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1140-41.

³³ See Stewart L. Mims, *Colbert's West India Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912), pp. 220-22, 318-19; Clarence P. Gould, "Trade Between the Windward Islands and the Continental Colonies of the French, 1683-1763", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 25 (1939): 473-490; William J. Eccles, *France in America* (Vancouver: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1972), pp. 64-65; James S. Pritchard, "Commerce in New France", in *Canadian Business History: Selected Studies, 1497-1971*, ed. David S. Macmillan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 38; Andrew Trout, *Jean-Baptiste Colbert* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), pp. 159-78; Dale Miquelon, *Dugard of Rouen: French Trade to Canada and the West Indies, 1729-1770* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), pp. 1-11, 91-117; Inès Murat, *Colbert* (Paris: Fayard, 1980), pp. 203-7, 293-300; Jacques Mathieu, *Le Commerce entre la Nouvelle-France et les Antilles au XVIIIe siècle* (Montreal: Fides, 1981), pp. 209-22; and Bosher, *Canada Merchants*, pp. 13-15.

³⁴ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France", *RAPQ* (1923-24): 63.

that it would be tragic indeed to have to abandon such useful and faithful subjects. Nevertheless, they never suggested that detaching a section of the realm with its subjects was a violation of the soul of the nation or a criminal abandonment of the Canadian people; the loss of Canada was presented primarily in utilitarian terms.³⁵ When Bougainville learned that the English had deported up to 4,000 Acadian refugees hiding on Île Saint-Jean--or Prince Edward Island--he expressed no sorrow for their fate, but only surprise at their numbers, remarking that they would have made useful workers or canoemen.³⁶

Like generations of Ministers of Marine, Montcalm's officers wanted Canada to become a compact, populous agricultural colony capable of feeding itself and resisting British aggression. They shared with the physiocrats a belief that agriculture rather than commerce was the prime mover of the economy, but the fact that they belonged to a society whose economy was completely dependent on the agricultural cycle was more decisive in forming this opinion than any physiocratic influence. Montcalm read the first volume of Mirabeau senior's *L'ami des hommes*, published in 1756, which contained some physiocratic ideas, but the true founder of the school, François Quesnay, published his *Tableau oeconomique* in 1758, while the officers were overseas.³⁷ Montcalm's officers were not dogmatic theoreticians, and did not see either agriculture or a trade surplus in manufactured goods as the single requirement for national wealth. Rather, they considered both agriculture and commerce as contributors to general prosperity. They were in favour of government fiscalist, protectionist policies to stimulate commerce, protect it from foreigners, and raise revenue, but did not always consider government intervention necessary in

³⁵ Bourlamaque, "Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada". *NYCD*, 10: 1155-57 and anonymous, "Mémoire sur le Canada". *RAPQ* (1923-24): 23-24.

³⁶ Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 287. Approximately 4,100 Acadians were rounded up on Île Saint-Jean: at least 2,000 of these people had fled from the mainland to escape the first stages of the deportation. Frégault, *War of the Conquest*, pp. 187, 189. For the Acadian deportations see Oscar W. Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955); Naomi Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973); and George A. Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts: A Study of Massachusetts-Nova Scotia Relations 1630 to 1784* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), pp. 180-86, 211-14.

³⁷ Montcalm to Marquise de Montcalm, 6 July 1757. NA, MG18, K7, vol. 3.

the internal workings of the economy. Bourlamaque, for instance, suggested that the fur trade monopoly enjoyed by fort commanders be abolished in order to reduce prices and increase trade.³⁸ On the whole, however, officers believed in frequent government intervention in the economy. While this idea was at odds with physiocratic free market theories of the 1760's and 1770's, it was in tune with early eighteenth-century French economic thinking.

For all officers, the economic and demographic strength of the American colonies was alarming. In 1760 Canada had a mere 70,000 inhabitants, while the colonies to the south contained a million and a half, twenty times as many people.³⁹ Pouchot noted the large population of New York City, the wartime prosperity of its inhabitants, and the large, 300 acre farms of the region. These farms, he observed, produced an abundance of wheat, corn, and fine cattle, as well as salt beef for export to the West Indies. The Long Island area teemed with people, in stark contrast to the wilderness around Fort Niagara, where Pouchot had been posted during much of the war, and one can excuse him for claiming that "There are as many inhabitants on this island alone, as in all of Canada."⁴⁰ Bougainville was also impressed by the large quantity of goods produced in the British possessions, and the British government's "attention for the the population of those same colonies."⁴¹ Like other French officers, he often worried about the lack of food in Canada, which even with successful harvests could barely supply its peacetime garrison, let alone several thousand men belonging to French regiments of the line, and poor harvests and the difficulty of transporting supplies meant that Montcalm was never certain whether he could keep all of his troops in the field throughout the campaigning season. The British also had transport problems, but at least they could depend on massive supplies of cheap foodstuffs in the

³⁸ Bourlamaque, "Memoir on Canada", *NYCD*, 10: 1141.

³⁹ Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, p. 174.

⁴⁰ Pouchot, *Memoir*, 2: 80-89. For the size of Canadian concessions see Richard C. Harris, *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966; reprint, Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), pp. 117-19.

⁴¹ Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France". *RAPQ* (1923-24): 63.

Hudson Valley and elsewhere in the colonies. Bougainville was frustrated that the American colonies “abound in food and provisions of all kinds”, and his colleagues were pleased to hear of alleged bread shortages in Massachusetts in 1758.⁴² Louisbourg was the centre of a valuable fishing industry, but Canada’s only valuable export was fur, for which France had a limited market. The American colonies, on the other hand, produced a number of valuable export commodities, one being tobacco, which La Pause noted made Virginia Britain’s most important North American colony, furnishing the mother country with huge revenues from tobacco duties and occupying a significant proportion of Britain’s shipping.⁴³ British skill in commerce, colony-building, profit-making, and general enterprise aroused a general feeling of jealousy among the officers.⁴⁴ British expertise even allegedly extended to marketing cloth among the Indians, for although Bougainville claimed that British cloth was no better or even inferior to its French equivalent, it was “more to their taste.”⁴⁵ Bougainville was amazed to learn that the British erected a prefabricated settlement and fort in Nova Scotia in the course of a single day, a project which the French would have found difficult to carry out, even if they had thought of it first.⁴⁶ As the Marquis de Montcalm concluded, “The English give us knowledge and examples which we do not know how or do not wish to profit from.”⁴⁷ It might be noted, however, that the officers’ perception that France was falling behind Britain economically was not entirely accurate,

⁴² Bougainville, *Journal*, p. 251 and Péan to Lévis, 13 July 1758, *Lévis MSS*, 10: 87. See also Bougainville, “Mémoire à la cour”, 12 Jan. 1759, *Lévis MSS*, 4: 79.

⁴³ La Pause, “Mémoire sur la campagne à faire en Canada l’année 1757”, *RAPQ* (1932-33): 333. For a good description of the importance of North American trade and markets for the British economy see Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, pp. 264-87.

⁴⁴ Montcalm, *Journal*, p. 289 and Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 289. See also Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, 2: 380 and anonymous, “Lettres d’un françois à un Hollandois, au sujet des Differends survenus entre la France & la Grande Bretagne Touchant leurs Possessions respectives dans l’Amérique Septentrionale”, cited in Frégault, *The War of the Conquest*, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Bougainville, “Mémoire sur l’état de la Nouvelle-France”, *RAPQ* (1923-24): 63.

⁴⁶ Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, p. 289.

⁴⁷ Montcalm, *Journal*, *Lévis MSS*, 7: 411.

for prior to the outbreak of war the growth of French exports to Europe exceeded those of Great Britain, which is one reason why many Britons were eager to go to war.⁴⁸

French officers were deeply suspicious of Britain's North American and maritime ambitions, which seemed boundless. In 1755 Brigadier Béhague, who did not accompany the expedition to Canada, wrote a memoir on the importance of arresting the growth of British power, pointing to the British Constitution and the mercantilist Navigation Act of 1660 as the foundation of that nation's greatness. From his point of view, the swift development of populous colonies in North America was a sinister manifestation of the newly-found power and ambition of the British state.⁴⁹ British harassment of French shipping on the high seas even in peacetime also gave Britons a reputation across the Channel as pirates.⁵⁰ One of Pouchot's subordinates stated that a credulous France had been constantly deceived by English lies, and that Braddock's expedition of 1755 was part of a long-term plan to take over the continent. He cited British actions in Acadia from 1750 on to prove his point.⁵¹ Major George Washington's killing of Ensign Joseph Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville and his escort on the western frontier in 1754 and Admiral Edward Boscawen's treacherous attack on French vessels off Newfoundland before the formal declaration of hostilities only enhanced French officers' suspicion of British ambitions.⁵² Despite these expressions of moral outrage, however, the French were quite prepared to do

⁴⁸ Davis, *Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, p. 307 and Eccles, *France in America*, pp. 172-73, 178.

⁴⁹ Béhague, "Mémoire par M. de Béhague, brigadier des armées du Roy", *EAMG*, pp. 276-82.

⁵⁰ D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, p. 75.

⁵¹ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, p. 79. See also anonymous, "Mémoire sur les limites de l'Acadie", *MRNF*, 3: 527.

⁵² Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 24 and anonymous, "Relation du combat de l'Alcide pris par monsieur de Boscawen, 8 juin 1755", *MRNF*, 3: 541. See also Duquesne to Rouillé, Montreal, 21 June 1754, BN N.A.F. 9406, fol. 16 and "Mémoire concernant les compagnies prisonnières revenues d'Angleterre", Régiment d'infanterie de Languedoc, SHAT, Série Xb, 77. Choiseul thought that the aggressive Duke of Cumberland, spoiling for a fight, gave the necessary orders to "the land general of the English in Acadia and...Admiral Braduck, who commanded the sea forces." François-Étienne, Duc de Choiseul, *Mémoires du duc de Choiseul* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1982), pp. 152-54. For modern views on the origin of the war see T. R. Clayton, "The Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Halifax, and the American Origins of the Seven Years' War", *Historical Journal* 24 (1981): 571-603 and Patrice L. R. Higonet, *Journal of Modern History* 40 (1968): 57-90.

everything in their power to harm their rivals if the opportunity presented itself. For example, an anonymous memoir submitted to the Minister of Marine at about the time of the Seven Years' War explained that commerce made England powerful, and since that power rested on such a fragile base, everything should be done to bring the country down by reducing its sources of trade. He proposed an attack on Newfoundland, Boston, and Rhode Island, a venture which would be both harmful to the enemy and profitable to the attacking forces.⁵³

Montcalm's officers considered Canada's strategic position and potential wealth important, and during the hard-fought, five-year campaign they often commented on the country's usefulness as a base for attacking and stirring up revolt in the American colonies.⁵⁴ After the final capitulation it was difficult for some of them to accept that after all of their sacrifices Canada was permanently lost, and for several decades veterans of the Canadian campaign sent the Minister of Marine memoirs suggesting how to retake the country.⁵⁵ Malartic, who dealt with Brigadier General James Murray after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, reported that the British general told him that it was in the British government's best interests to let the French keep their colony so that it would serve as a check on the restless American colonies.⁵⁶ For obvious reasons, this idea was appealing to a Frenchman fighting to hold the country in question for his king. In 1763, not long before peace was signed, Boursin proposed that the French attempt to recapture Canada, for he was certain that the Canadians, still filled with loyalty to their monarch, would rise in revolt along with the Indians as soon as the French arrived.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Bougainville was perhaps more successful than others in accepting the British conquest of the colony, for in 1761 he argued that while the loss of the fisheries was significant, the loss of the

⁵³ Anonymous, "Mémoire sur la nouvelle angleterre", AN Marine B7 458.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, "Extrait des mémoires de Mr. de Montcalm", NA MG18 K7, vol. 1.

⁵⁵ For French commercial perspectives of Canada's loss see Tarrade, *Commerce colonial de la France*, 1: 13-15.

⁵⁶ Malartic, *Journal*, p. 331.

⁵⁷ Boursin, "Abstract of a Plan to Excite a Rebellion in Canada", 1763, *NYCD*, 10: 1155-57.

fur trade was of less account. Louisiana, including the Ohio Valley, he felt, was a far more valuable asset than Canada, for if 10,000 Canadians could be induced to resettle in Louisiana, it would become France's most valuable possession within twenty years due to its capacity for agricultural production, supplying both France and the French West Indies with a wide variety of foodstuffs. The sugar colony of Saint-Domingue, he noted, had 20,000 free inhabitants, but produced eighty million livres worth of exports a year. Canada, on the other hand, had three times as many people, but could only produce four million livres worth of exports, mainly furs. Increasing Louisiana's population by 10,000 would have a greater effect than increasing Canada's by 50,000.⁵⁸ This method of calculating per capita productivity carried class prejudice and ethnocentric racism to extremes, for it ignored the labour of several hundred thousand blacks in Saint-Domingue while attributing massive productivity to their masters, who probably performed less mental and physical work than most Canadian habitants. Bougainville's views on this colony paralleled Voltaire's, for the *philosophe* vastly preferred Louisiana to Canada.⁵⁹

French officers who had gone to Canada with the colonial regulars were even more opposed to seeing Canada ceded to the British, for Canada was almost their adopted province. In 1761 Captain Jean-Daniel Dumas wrote a memoir in which he condemned the British for their "system of maritime despotism" and urged the French government to have Canada returned in the peace treaty. It was necessary, he felt, for the diplomats to ensure that Canada's frontiers be set on the height of the Appalachians and that measures be taken to restore the Indian alliance. With "such an active, ambitious, enterprising enemy", it was essential to take all possible precautions to prevent another attempt to take over the entire continent.⁶⁰ His Scottish colleague Johnstone

⁵⁸ Bougainville, "Transmigration", BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 313-16 and Bougainville, "Moyens de peupler La Louisiane", BN N.A.F. 9406, fols. 319-20.

⁵⁹ Carl L. Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question: A Study of Contemporary French Opinion 1763-1801* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 41.

⁶⁰ Jean-Daniel Dumas, "Mémoire sur les limites du Canada", 5 April 1761, in François-Joseph Audet, *Jean-Daniel Dumas, le héros de la Monongahéla* (Montréal: G. Ducharme, 1920), pp. 120-31.

thought that the surrender of Canada was shameful, and bitterly criticized Vaudreuil for his role in the capitulation of 1760.⁶¹

A literate French soldier in the colonial regulars claimed that the British had engaged in almost continual acts of aggression on the frontier since 1750, and that Braddock's expedition of 1755 was planned as early as 1752. The French had naively believed British assurances that they were only interested in peace, and after the outbreak of hostilities Canada was obliged to hastily "put herself on the defensive to preserve her territory and to keep open her trade with the savage tribes."⁶² Even after the fall of Québec, he maintained, the French--by which he meant both the French and Canadians--were determined to dispute every foot of ground, and he squarely blamed the French government for not doing enough to save the colony. "The loss of Canada was a loss for France, which seemingly was unaware of its value. The whole country was exploited for the sole profit of the officials who were sent there."⁶³ The soldier thought that the French government did not send the necessary reinforcements because Canada was an unprofitable colony, with expenses exceeding revenues. But he attributed this deficit to the corruption of the governor, intendant, and other officials, who exploited Canada's wealth for their own private gain, and left nothing for the crown. In addition, France lost a profitable trade in furs, 300 cannon, and many troops taken prisoner by the enemy, as well as the vast economic potential of French America, which he believed had enough land for 140 million people.⁶⁴ Although the British had

⁶¹ Johnstone, "The Campaign in Canada, from the Death of Montcalm", *MRNF*, 4: 235.

⁶² J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, p. 80. For other contemporary French views on British and American aggression see anonymous, "Relation de la prise de l'*Alcide* commandée par M. Hocquart, par une escadre anglaise de onze vaisseaux commandées par l'amiral Boscawen, étant dans le nord nord est du cap de raze à vingt cinq lieues sur l'isle de Terre Neuve", 1755, AN Série K 1351, no. 90; Rouillé to Marquis de Bonnavy, Compiègne, 2 July 1755, AN Série K 1351, no. 91; Duquesne to Minister (Rouillé or Machault d'Arnouville), Quebec, 3 July 1755, AN Série K 1351, no. 92.

⁶³ J. C. B., *Travels in New France*, p. 124.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25.

failed to gain the loyalty of Canadians, the soldier noted, they had been more successful than the French in exploiting Canada's resources, especially furs.⁶⁵

French officers who served in North America during the Seven Years' War displayed relatively traditional economic attitudes. They considered agricultural production fundamental to the health of the local economy, and took it for granted that the authorities would police the marketplace, controlling prices and sales in order to prevent unruliness among the popular classes. They also saw colonists, peasants and merchants alike, primarily as sources of revenue for the crown. Since the crown employed the officer corps and reinforced the nobility's economic privileges, the officers tended to identify very strongly with the king's interests, and they only considered noble privileges essential for the nation's well-being, paying little attention to the economic interests of other social groups. Officers readily supported the fiscalist policies of the French government, which exploited the colonies through monopolies granted to French merchants and Canadian noblemen, since these policies benefited the crown and nobility. No one questioned the legitimacy or importance of colonies; neither did anyone mention the economic rights of their inhabitants. In addition, no economic doctrine prevented them from advocating frequent government intervention in the colonial economy. The military struggle over colonies had one simple objective for Montcalm's officers: holding or increasing the king's domain at the expense of his enemies, and barring rivals from any commercial contact with the French possessions, which were to be exploited solely by the French crown and French and colonial noble elites. Fiscalist and interventionist ideas reigned supreme and unchallenged in the officer corps.

Twenty years later, during the War of American Independence, French officers observed with satisfaction the breakup of the British empire. Britain's near-monopoly of North America's trade was in a state of collapse because of a rebellion provoked in part by the mother country's efforts to control and tax American trade. Officers and most educated Frenchmen were

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. xiv, 124, 137. See also Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1: 12-14.

persuaded that if the Americans succeeded in gaining their independence, then Britain's share of world trade would drop drastically, and since Britain's wealth was perceived to depend solely on external trade, financial disaster would ensue. They expected to see this upstart country revert to its natural place as a second or third-rate power, for without trade and the wealth derived from it, the British would be unable to maintain the large navy with which it dominated the seas.

In France the debate about economic reform frequently involved comparisons between England and France, almost always to the detriment of the latter. Many observers pointed to the high standard of living among Englishmen, even those who belonged to the popular classes, and attempted to explain this phenomenon.⁶⁶ Some pointed to the success of the Navigation Acts of the seventeenth century, which created a transportation monopoly for English shipping and promoted English trade.⁶⁷ Physiocrats of the 1750's and 1760's usually insisted that British agriculture was largely responsible for the nation's prosperity, but most French observers of the period placed less emphasis on British agriculture than on the country's protectionist policies, which promoted a national monopoly of domestic, colonial, and foreign markets.⁶⁸ Observers praised Parliament for its role in advancing commercial interests, setting fair taxes paid by all orders of society, and keeping the domestic economy free of internal customs barriers. They also claimed that the supposedly egalitarian nature of English society allowed even the younger sons of noblemen to engage in trade, thus preventing privileged families from becoming idle, as they

⁶⁶ Davis, *Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, p. 217. For French examination of foreign models after the defeats of the 1750's see David D. Bien and Raymond Grew, "France", in *Crises of Political Development in Europe and the United States*, ed. Raymond Grew (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 222-23.

⁶⁷ Gerald S. Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic: The Maritime Struggle for North America*, 2d ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958), pp. 42, 45.

⁶⁸ Crouzet, "Sources of English Wealth", in *Shipping, Trade and Commerce*, ed. Cottrell and Aldcroft, pp. 64-67. See also François Crouzet, "England and France in the Eighteenth Century: A Comparative Analysis of Two Economic Growths", in *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England*, ed. Ronald M. Hartwell (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 139-74 and François Crouzet and Patrick O'Brien, "Economic Growth in Britain and France", in *Britain and France: Ten Centuries*, ed. Douglas Johnson, François Crouzet, and François Bédarider (Folkestone: Wm Dawson & Son, 1980), pp. 175-95. The latter article deals mainly with the post-1780 period, but is nevertheless useful for understanding the differences between the two economies.

often were in other countries.⁶⁹ In general, French writers tended to overrate the importance of Britain's virtual monopoly over the American market, which amounted to only a fifth of British trade and was not as fundamental to Britain's manufacturing capacity and naval power as they believed.⁷⁰ In any case, the British did not lose their American market after 1783.

The desire to see the British brought low, however, was not invariably matched by a corresponding ambition for France to take Britain's place as the tyrant of the seas, monopolizing the world's commerce and colonies.⁷¹ There were a number of reasons for this. First of all, Frenchmen believed that their country was blessed by nature and that under "normal" conditions France's enormous agricultural and demographic preeminence would make it the dominant economic power of Europe. As long as countries with limited local resources, such as Britain and the Netherlands, were unable to acquire France's proper share of the world's trade by artificial means, such as naval power and the British Navigation Acts, then France's commerce would prosper. Conquering colonies and destroying foreign shipping was therefore unnecessary. Secondly, France's customary weakness on the seas, the loss of Canada, Île Royale, Louisiana, and India during the Seven Years' War, and opposition to alleged depopulation and high taxation created by colonial commitments resulted in occasional anti-colonial sentiment among French intellectuals.⁷² And finally, aspects of physiocratic thought concerning liberty of commerce acquired more credibility, and were taken seriously by several government ministers and senior officials. Short-term fiscalism--a relatively indiscriminate desire for tax revenue--was being replaced by more sophisticated, long-term economic planning. As early as 1762 manufacturers were no longer granted exclusive privileges of unlimited duration, and the Bureau de Commerce

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71 and Voltaire, *Letters on England*, letters 9 and 10, "On the Government" and "On Commerce".

⁷⁰ Dull, *French Navy and American Independence*, pp. 37-43.

⁷¹ Ramon E. Abarca, "Classical Diplomacy and Bourbon 'Revanche' Strategy, 1763-1770", *Review of Politics* 32 (1970): 313-37 and Ramsay, "Anglo-French Relations 1763-1770", *University of California Publications in History* 17 (1942): v-viii, 146-47, 151, 157, 164-66, 168-69, 214, 222-26, 232.

⁷² Vincent Confer, "French Colonial Ideas Before 1789", *French Historical Studies* 3 (1963-64): 338-59.

began to restrict grants of monopoly, reflecting the new idea that competition favoured production, low prices, and higher quality. In addition, royal officials made some progress in reducing internal tariffs, a process initiated by Colbert.⁷³ In 1763 the Compagnie des Indes lost its exclusive monopoly over colonial trade and became a regular company, with the result that it almost disappeared in 1769. By 1774 there was virtual free trade in the French West Indies, which were open to the ships of not only all French merchants, but merchants of other nationalities. In 1783 Castries restored partial limits on foreign trade, but in 1787 Calonne proposed to the Assembly of Notables that these restrictions be abolished, an idea acted upon by the National Assembly in 1789-1790.⁷⁴

Many *philosophes*, such as Voltaire and Montesquieu, were opposed to emigration but not to colonies in general. Voltaire's famed anti-colonialism was directed at Canada, not Louisiana, the West Indies, Corsica, or India, which he considered valuable possessions. It also might be noted, however, that he was a supporter of free trade within France and publicized Turgot's physiocratic trade ideas, embarrassing the minister in the process because Voltaire naturally included one of his tirades against the church in his economic treatise.⁷⁵ Diderot, Rousseau, Raynal, and Mably were champions of the noble savage and highly critical of the abuses in the colonies, especially in foreign ones, but took France's own possessions for granted.⁷⁶ Similarly, early physiocrats such as François Quesnay and the Marquis de Mirabeau were more interested in free trade than free colonies. Later physiocrats, however, most prominently Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours and Turgot, Louis XVI's Controller-General of Finance, developed a true

⁷³ John F. Boshier, *The Single Duty Project: A Study of the Movement for a French Customs Union in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Athlone Press, 1964), pp. 53-62 and Harold T. Parker, *The Bureau of Commerce in 1781 and Its Policies with Respect to French Industry* (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 1979), pp. 47, 53-57, 70-74, 85-86.

⁷⁴ Tarrade, *Commerce colonial de la France*, 1: 13-63, 373-402, 2: 675-712.

⁷⁵ Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, pp. 331-32.

⁷⁶ Cassilly, "Anticolonial Tradition in France", pp. 19-62.

anti-colonialist stance, advocating autonomy or independence for colonies, not unlike Turgot's close Scottish friend Adam Smith.⁷⁷

The debate between the radical and moderate advocates of freedom of commerce is particularly relevant to officers' ideas about trade and colonies. In early 1776 Turgot, who was a strong free trader, managed to secure the abolition of most controls on the free circulation of grain. Due to popular disturbances and the strong reaction of vested interests threatened by these reforms, however, he was removed from office within a few months.⁷⁸ In April 1776, five weeks before he was dismissed, Turgot provided the king and Vergennes with a report answering specific questions concerning how France should respond to the situation in Britain's rebellious colonies, and he was able to add some suggestions on how to deal with France's own colonial possessions. Turgot believed that it was in France's best interests to give her colonies autonomy or virtual independence, with responsibility for local defence and administration. During the Seven Years' War, he noted, inexpensive local Canadian troops and some regulars had held almost all of Britain's forces in the colonies at bay for years. Only after the country fell were British soldiers in the theatre available for attacks on the French Windward Islands and Havana. Although Canada had been lost, the Americans presently rebelling against the British crown might, he argued, eventually come to support a French conquest of Canada in order to remove it from British hands and break the British commercial monopoly which had existed prior to independence. Canada would grow in population and wealth as an entrepot for French-American trade, and run by its own autonomous municipal administration, would become more self-sufficient but also firmly attached to France by sentiment and common interest. The United

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-120.

⁷⁸ Keith M. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 122-23 and Cobban, *A History of Modern France*, 1: 104-108.

States, observing Canada's freedom and feeling no threat from France, might be induced to accept French protection.⁷⁹

Turgot pointed out that the French sugar islands were extremely difficult to defend, and their tax revenues did not cover the costs of administration and defence. The revenues derived from duties on French colonial products entering France on French vessels could just as easily be raised from duties on colonial products from any French or foreign possession, carried by the ships of any nation. Noting the deficit in the colonies during both peace and war, he asked whether it was not better to give the colonies independence and let them defend themselves. The French West Indies, Turgot suggested, should be made "friendly states" rather than "servile provinces", with liberty of commerce and fiscal responsibility for their own administration and defence. The eventual demise of colonial monopolies was inevitable:

When the total separation of America will have forced everyone to recognize this truth, and corrected the European nations of their commercial jealousy, there will exist among men one less great cause of war, and it is very difficult not to desire an event which should do such good to the human race.⁸⁰

Although on another occasion Turgot favoured an attack on India, he wished to eject the British from it rather than conquer it for France.⁸¹

Turgot fully supported the Comte de Vergennes' policy of staying out of the American War of Independence, but advised that France keep its forces prepared for any eventuality and close its eyes to the sale of munitions in the United States. Whether or not the British conquered the American rebels, he felt, the British crown would amass such debts that British landowners, represented in Parliament, might acquire greater power and make the British constitution even more republican in nature. Landowners, Turgot believed, were the part of the population most

⁷⁹ Turgot, "Réflexions rédigées", AN Série K 1340, no. 10, pp. 13-14, 31-32.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-30, 35. See also Dakin, *Turgot and the Ancien Régime in France*, pp. 233-24, 300-2; Confer, "French Colonial Ideas Before 1789", *French Historical Studies* 3 (1963-64): 338-59; Tarrade, *Commerce colonial de la France*, 1: 403-49; André Labrousse, *Les idées coloniales des physiocrates* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, pp. 85-91, 115-25; Weulersse, *La physiocratie sous les ministères de Turgot et de Necker*, pp. 79-101; and Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 79-87.

⁸¹ Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question*, pp. 74-75.

attached to liberty and least subject to corruption, vanity, and delusions, with the result that they would support more sensible, pacific policies. The state should serve the interests of landowners, which in his opinion were the most productive members of society; all else was illusion and vanity.⁶²

One of Turgot's principal ideological opponents was another liberal reformer, the Swiss Protestant banker and director of the *Compagnie des Indes* Jacques Necker, who later oversaw the convocation of the Estates-General. Necker favoured colonies and Turgot opposed them, but both men developed their ideas within a liberal framework, Necker using moderate physiocratic arguments against the physiocrats. The pragmatic banker was fully aware of the expenses associated with colonies, but felt that the benefits derived from French exports to the colonies, the employment of French shipping and sailors, merchants' profits from the trade, money which white colonists spent in France, and the profits which foreigners would make from supplying France with tropical products more than compensated for the state funds invested in defence and administration and any money diverted from agricultural improvements within France. Necker was as concerned with market efficiency as Turgot and Adam Smith, and was equally opposed to internal trade barriers, but felt that in the rough world of international power politics, assured markets were better than theoretical ones. He also believed that colonial subjects in the Americas and in India should be treated fairly, just as the king's subjects in France were. Indeed, he was so concerned about the welfare of the popular classes that leftist nineteenth-century writers counted him among the precursors of socialism, portraying him as an heroic opponent of laissez-faire individualists.⁶³

⁶² Turgot, "Réflexions redigées", AN Série K 1340, no. 10, pp. 6-7, 35, 50-51, 68. See also Dull, *French Navy and American Independence*, pp. 44-46.

⁶³ Weuleresse, *Physiocratie sous les ministères de Turgot et de Necker*, p. 7; Henri Grang, *Les idées de Necker* (Paris: Librairie Klincksieck, 1974), pp. 17-33, 163; Jean Egret, *Necker: Ministre de Louis XVI, 1776-1790* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1975), pp. 14-21, 32-40, 90-92, 140-42; Cassilly, "Anticolonial Tradition in France", pp. 77-79, 116-19; Robert D. Harris, *Necker: Reform Statesman of the Ancien Régime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 19, 53-67; and Janis Spurlock, "What Price Economic Prosperity? Public Attitudes to Physiocracy in the Reign of Louis XVI", *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 9 (1986): 183-96.

A new concept of state interventionism was emerging, one not based on almost arbitrary, short-term fiscal concerns, but the long-term needs of the state and society. Economic responsibility, previously conceded to mercantile monopolies, noblemen--as in the case of Canada's fur trade--financiers, farmers-general, and the provincial estates, would now be removed from corporate institutions or intermediaries and transferred to the individual citizen or the state. But in the 1780's, the French government had no true professional bureaucracy, and faced so many checks on its power that these developments were still more theory than reality. Necker's *dirigiste* attempt to bring the financiers and the country's financial system under government control would only be realized during the French Revolution.⁸⁴

French officers in North America during the War of American Independence expressed a variety of economic opinions--mostly very unsophisticated--ranging from a pragmatic desire for assured markets to free trade idealism. A majority of officers, like Necker, favoured colonies and protected markets and a small minority were Turgot-style anti-colonialist free traders, but both groups expressed moderate to strong free trade sentiments. Even the most conservative officers opposed further colonial commitments and wished to see the powers of monopoly companies severely restricted. These latter officers also showed some respect for the economic rights of colonial peoples, especially those not under French domination. In essence, their vision of general economic relations was less frankly exploitive and privilege-based than that of Montcalm's officers.

Rochambeau's officers frequently compared the American economy with that of their own country, and were particularly impressed by the Americans' standard of living, substantial economic equality, and commercial activity--three characteristics which the local people shared to some extent with their British cousins.⁸⁵ La Fayette's aide-de-camp Pontgibaud, for instance,

⁸⁴ Boshier, *French Finances*, pp. 150, 306-8. See also Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 88-95.

⁸⁵ See Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 82-88. According to Sheridan, Americans had among the highest living standards in the world, and in the period 1770 to 1775 free white Americans possessed assets amounting to 131 pounds sterling per capita in the south, 51 pounds in the middle colonies, and 32 pounds in New England. Sheridan, "Domestic Economy", in *Colonial British America*, ed. Greene and

was disgusted by the old houses, filth, and misery which he saw in the Spanish port of Corunna on his return to Europe: "I had just left the United States, a new country where the towns were all new and where the greatest cleanliness prevailed even in the most humblest habitations; where nothing to excite disgust was ever seen, and there were no rags, and no beggars."⁸⁶ The Swiss Verger betrayed similar sentiments when he landed at Brest and was immediately surrounded by a crowd of poor people begging for money.⁸⁷ Officers did not see the American rebels as desperate people with nothing to lose. One of the volunteers, for example, wrote that the Americans could win the war if they "have the constancy to endure being temporarily deprived of a few articles which they saw as necessities in better times".⁸⁸ Repeatedly they stressed the absence of either luxury or extreme poverty in the United States, and Brisout de Barneville remarked that "The people have an air of ease and well-being which is a pleasure to see."⁸⁹ There was an appearance of plenty everywhere, and Blanchard noted that despite inflation and shortages caused by the war, houses owned by all social classes were pleasant and frequently contained wall paper and even carpets. He dined at the home of a miller's wife, "whose dress, style of living and furniture differed in no respect from the best that I had seen in the houses of the richest Americans."⁹⁰ This idea of Americans as prosperous economic equals was of course supported by Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur.⁹¹ Like several other officers, he observed that the availability of land

Pole, pp. 43, 49. See also Alice H. Jones, *Wealth of a Nation to Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 298-305.

⁸⁶ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 92.

⁸⁷ Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 181.

⁸⁸ Anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l'Amerique", fol. 41, AN Marine B4 192, fols. 180-200.

⁸⁹ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 351 and Brisout de Barneville, "Journal", *French-American Review* 3 (1950): 241.

⁹⁰ Broglie, "Narrative", *MAH* 1 (1877): 187 and Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. xv, 50, 79, 81-82. Officers in German regiments with the British army also noted Americans' high standard of living. See Kipping, *Hessian View of America*, p. 28. For the American economy in wartime see James F. Shepherd, "British America and the Atlantic Economy", in *The Economy of Early America: The Revolutionary Period, 1763-1790*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, John J. McCusker, Russel R. Menard, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), pp. 19-23.

⁹¹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 40, 90, 131, 158. See also anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 80.

and the high wages and good treatment enjoyed by labourers resulted in a greater degree of equality in relations between social classes than in France or Britain.⁹² As far as most officers were concerned, however, Americans lagged far behind the British in agricultural knowledge, for although they had plenty of food, they allegedly neglected the principles of scientific agriculture and displayed "indolence" when it came to cultivating more specialized, labour-intensive agricultural products.⁹³ This is rather unfair, for local farmers were reasonably efficient if one takes into account the special economic conditions they faced. Besides, neither French peasants nor their seigneurs were renowned for their advanced agricultural practices.⁹⁴ Naturally, Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur was eager to counter the prevailing French opinion that Americans were backward, and devoted special attention to the sophisticated methods which many Americans used to increase the fertility of their land.⁹⁵ This interest in agriculture is at least partially attributable to contemporary economic writings, including those of the physiocrats, for they played a part in making agricultural improvement a fashionable topic among the landholding classes and even in the salons. Indeed, physiocratic ideas concerning agriculture were prominent in Raynal's study, read by numerous officers during the War of American Independence. He blamed Canadians for the fall of New France because instead of being good farmers they indulged in pride, a passion for war, religious festivals, and the fur trade; long winters and a corrupt,

⁹² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 82-84, 131; Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 148; anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l'Amérique", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 216; and Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céléste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 544.

⁹³ Ternay to Sartine, Rhode Island, 2 Dec. 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 66; Galvan to Sartine, Charleston, 19 April 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 213; Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, pp. 67-68; Clusen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 29, 33; anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 26 (1920-21): 736; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 133, 160-61; anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'Amérique", AN Marine B4 458; Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céléste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RPBSO* 5 (1902): 544; and Montesquieu to Saint-Chamas, Newport, ca. July 1780, in Beuve, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *RHRFE* 5 (1914): 240. For comments on American commercial agriculture see Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 23-24, 37-38, 82-84, 87.

⁹⁴ See Arthur Young, *Travels in France during the Years 1787, 1788, 1789* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1889), pp. 22-24, 72-73, 131-32.

⁹⁵ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 41, 90, 188-89 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 86-88, 112-13, 124, 129, 150-51.

despotic administration made the situation worse. According to the liberal-minded Raynal, when the British took over and established liberty and justice, happiness and prosperity replaced feudal irrationality and despotism.⁹⁶ French noblemen were on their way to fight the British, reading a French text which attacked their own government and economy and lauded the political and economic wisdom of their enemies.

Officers associated a society's prosperity and general standard of living with a specific level of civilization. While they were often uneasy about the political implications of general economic equality and the ethics of a commerce-oriented society, they did at least admire prosperous nations. Some officers tended to associate extremes of wealth and misery in any one society with despotism, and condemned its evils in Spanish America, where Indians and mestizos were exploited by the Spanish elite.⁹⁷ It was taken for granted that enlightened governments, such as those found in the Netherlands, Britain, and the American colonies, produced prosperous and contented citizens because they instituted economically rational laws which benefited all landholders. France, officers believed, lay somewhere between these two extremes, for the nation's various "liberties" or privileges supposedly limited the king's ability to plunder and abuse his subjects, and the monarchy generally respected the rights of the nobility, which was the principal landholding class.

French officers of the 1770's and 1780's had difficulty accepting the idea of profit, in particular the concept of market prices. All mentioned Americans' penchant for money and the willingness of local farmers, military suppliers, innkeepers, and ferrymen to charge high prices for goods and services which the French required.⁹⁸ Although Brisout de Barneville acknowledged

⁹⁶ Zoltvany, *Government of New France*, pp. 26-28.

⁹⁷ Charles Gibson, *Spain in America* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), pp. 48-67.

⁹⁸ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'escadre du comte d'Estaing", *JSAP* 19 (1927): 171; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 128; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 41; anonymous to friend, Easton, Penn., 13 Nov. 1777, in anonymous, "Letters", *PMHB* 35 (1911): 99; Broglie, "Narrative", *MHI* 1 (1877): 234; Rochambeau to Ségur, 4 Sept. 1781, AN Archives de Guerre (AG) A1 3734, fol. 94, cited in Kennett, *French Forces in America*, p. 70; and Montesquieu to Comte de Chastellux, Newport, 12 Oct. 1780, in "Lettres de divers officiers", AN Série M 1021 IV.

that Newport merchants "sold to us as dearly as ours did to the Spaniards at Brest last year", officers could not help but feel that this conduct was immoral.⁹⁹ Two very critical volunteers, Preudhomme de Borre and Galvan, considered Americans boorish, rude, unfriendly, lazy, dishonest, and greedy, and complained that appeals to honour and generosity fell on deaf ears, for Americans only acted according to self-interest.¹⁰⁰ After an enraged farmer threatened to strike the Comte de Vioménil with a cane after a mounted French hunting party brazenly trampled the farmer's crops, Captain Claude-Marie-Madeleine, Chevalier de Lavergne de Tresson, of the Régiment de Saintonge complained that Americans even beat the French with sticks to get money.¹⁰¹ Everything in the country seemed to be dominated by the marketplace.¹⁰² Coriolis, who planned to marry a Virginian heiress and make his fortune in the country--which he told his mother was very easy to do--took great pains to explain that he would acquire his fortune as a French consul, where he could use his connections to monetary advantage, or else as a plantation owner; he had no intention of becoming a merchant.¹⁰³ Enlightenment free trade ideas and substantial noble investment in French industries such as mines and ironworks as well as trade with the West Indies did little to change officers' attitudes toward personal involvement in commercial money-making, for even though they considered it important for France to have a large overseas trade, they did not consider the mercantile profession very respectable.¹⁰⁴ They accepted the idea of a "fair" profit, but not the idea of charging the maximum market price under

⁹⁹ Brisout de Barneville, "Journal", *French-American Review* 3 (1950): 241.

¹⁰⁰ Preudhomme de Borre, "Description des 13 colonies de l'Amérique septentrionale", AN Marine B4 144, fol. 375 cited in Bodinier, *Officiers de l'Armée royale*, p. 316 and Galvan to Sartine and L., Charlestown, S.C., 30 May 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 220.

¹⁰¹ Lavergne de Tresson to Commandeur, Newport, 24 Jan. 1781, in Claude-Marie-Madeleine, Chevalier de Lavergne de Tresson, "Lettres du Vte de Tresson etc. (1779-1788)", BN N.A.F. 21510.

¹⁰² Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, p. 144.

¹⁰³ Coriolis to mother, Baltimore camp, 17 Aug. 1782, in Coriolis, "Lettres", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326 (n.s. 290), 25 mars 1932, pp. 808-12.

¹⁰⁴ See Taylor, "Types of Capitalism in Eighteenth Century France", *English Historical Review* 79 (1964): 478-97.

all circumstances. It was fine for merchants to make money, within reason, but it was certainly not proper for the military nobility.

Significantly, the only officer to see true virtue in profit-making was the Americanized Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who believed that it was the just reward of entrepreneurial initiative and labour. Crèvecoeur firmly believed in the physiocratic--and American--idea that independent landowners would benefit society simply by working freely for their own profit: "Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labour; his labour is founded on the basis of nature, *self-interest*; can it want a stronger allurements?"¹⁰⁵ Crèvecoeur presented North America as the land of opportunity, where any man, however poor on arrival, could work his way to the summit of society through intelligence and hard work.¹⁰⁶ He illustrated his point with the story of a pioneer who cleared some land in the wilderness and sold grain to later settlers for the highest price he could obtain, a just return for his long labour alone in the woods. By being "litigious, overbearing, purse-proud", and taking advantage of others who were lazy, drunken, or less canny, he accumulated land and became in succession an innkeeper and country merchant.¹⁰⁷ This success story was the result, Crèvecoeur proudly maintained, of typical native American sagacity. Crèvecoeur considered the rules of economic competition completely fair because everyone knew and abided by them. His ideas sound very much like Adam Smith, but Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* did not appear until 1776, when the war had already started, and it is uncertain whether Crèvecoeur could have read or heard about it before the time of writing. However, many of the ideas upon which Smith based his book were already circulating in Britain, France, and their respective colonies before the war. Capitalism was an American tradition by 1776, but American political ideology stressed civic

¹⁰⁵ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 59-60.

¹⁰⁷ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur. *Sketches*, pp. 68-77.

virtue rather than social and economic individualism until the American Revolution transformed American political culture.¹⁰⁸

Most French officers were highly critical of paper money because of rampant inflation in the United States and France's disastrous experiences with this form of exchange. They overlooked or were ignorant of the success and stability of notes issued by London banks since the late seventeenth century.¹⁰⁹ One of the more positive assessments of paper money came from one of the volunteers, who believed that the Patriots' military success came not from their talent and bravery, but from paper money. With a press and a handful of paper, the revolutionary governments were able to create an enormous amount of cash which they used to meet military and administrative expenses. Governments would not have been able to function, in his opinion, if they had relied only on specie.¹¹⁰ Galvan also acknowledged the importance of paper money in sustaining the war effort, although he reported to the Minister of Marine that the shortages experienced by Washington's army were due not to a lack of resources but to a lack of public confidence in paper money. In any case, he was convinced that the state governments could do nothing to control the value of paper money, for this was determined by the general political, military, and agricultural situation.¹¹¹ Another volunteer, Boy, was even less generous in his assessment, for inflation, stimulated, he believed, by British counterfeiting, caused unrest among the people and eroded the value of his military salary.¹¹² Officers with Rochambeau's army were almost invariably critical of paper money, considering the problems associated with it characteristic of republican instability.¹¹³ Chastellux was an exception to the rule, for he saw

¹⁰⁸ Higonet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ Davis, *Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, pp. 247-49.

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique". AN Marine B7 458.

¹¹¹ Galvan to Sartine, Charleston, 19 April 1778; Galvan to Sartine and L., West Point, N.Y., 8 Oct. 1779, and Galvan to L., Totowa Bridge (Paterson), N.J., 22 Oct. 1780. in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 211-12, 226, 236.

¹¹² Boy, "Mémoire sur les peuples du nord de l'Amérique". AN Colonies E50.

¹¹³ Anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis de l'Amérique", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 216.

nothing wrong with paper currency as long as the authorities prevented its depreciation. This attitude may reflect his pre-war friendships with Englishmen and ability to read English books.¹¹⁴

Several officers wrote about the development of American ironworks and manufactures, which they believed were increasing in number and production despite the apparent self-sufficiency of many American families in regards to clothing, leather, candles, soap, butter, and other products.¹¹⁵ According to one of Choiseul's agents in the American colonies, this increase in American manufactures made British merchants very worried about their profits, and it also disturbed Galvan, who like many other officers wished to make the Americans dependent on French rather than British goods.¹¹⁶ Galvan advised Sartine, the Minister of Marine, to

Prevent ourselves from forcing them to become a maritime power or trading nation, as England has in forcing the inhabitants to become a warlike people. We can keep their industry useless for a long time, if we know how to manage it. Their labour will be more lucratively employed in denuding the land of abundant harvests than making objects for which they lack machines and experience.¹¹⁷

He also proposed that the French navy help to escort American ships and produce to French ports so that the Americans did not have to build their own fleet. This would keep them dependent on French naval protection, and therefore subject to French political and economic interests.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 6, 180-81, 187.

¹¹⁵ Boy, "Mémoire sur les peuples du nord de l'Amérique"; AN Colonies E50; anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458; Clermont-Crèvecoeur, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 75; Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, p. 112; anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 26 (1920-21): 733; Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 81; and Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 11 Nov. 1780-29 Jan. 1781, in Céleste, "Un petit-fils de Montesquieu", *PPBSO* 5 (1902): 545. By the 1770's Colonial American iron production was equal to half that of Britain. Higonet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 36, 82, 118. See also James A. Henretta, "The War of Independence and American Colonial Development", in *Economy of Early America*, ed. Hoffman *et al.*, pp. 45-87 and Jacob M. Price, "Reflections on the Economy of Colonial America", in *ibid.*, p. 314.

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 74. For another view see Romand de l'Isle to count. Reading, Penn., 10 Dec. 1777, in Romand de l'Isle, "Letters", *New Jersey Gazette*, No. 17, 25 March 1778.

¹¹⁷ Galvan to Sartine, Charleston, 19 April 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 214.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Officers were very concerned about American commerce because they believed that it was of vital importance in determining whether Britain or France was to be the dominant western European power on land and sea. It was evident that Britain's production and trade depended to some extent on the American colonies, for, as Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur pointed out, before the war Americans consumed large quantities of British manufactures.¹¹⁹ Officers were inclined to believe that Britain's loss of this trade would bring about the virtual collapse of British power. For France to acquire a large share of the American market, however, the French government had to be aware of what Americans imported and exported. Numerous officers therefore made an effort to describe local trade patterns for the benefit of the French authorities. The fact that officers had to lobby for promotion gave them a strong incentive to do so, for their correspondence made themselves known to influential persons who were in a position to assist their careers.

Many of Rochambeau's officers described the American triangular trade in detail, in particular the role Americans played in supplying the British, French, Spanish, and Dutch West Indies with cattle, salted meats, fish, flour, cheese, and lumber in exchange for sugar, molasses, rum, coffee, and Spanish silver.¹²⁰ As d'Estaing's Swedish subordinate Colonel Curt Bogislaus Ludvig Cristoffer, Baron von Stedingk, noted, the exports of the southern colonies made this region especially valuable to the British.¹²¹ They also examined pre-war direct trade between Britain and the American colonies. Officers were very impressed by the value of Virginian

¹¹⁹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 94. See also anonymous, "Mémoire sur la nouvelle angleterre", AN Marine B7 458, a pre-war proposal on how to attack and plunder Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Boston, and Rhode Island, with comments on British-American trade. During the period 1772 to 1774, Britain imported 5.4 million pounds sterling worth of American produce. Jacob M. Price, "The Transatlantic Economy", in *Colonial British America*, ed. Greene and Pole, p. 28.

¹²⁰ Capellis, "Protection du commerce des Etats-unis", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 237; Verger, "Journal", in *Rochambeau's Army*, ed. and trans. Rice and Brown, 1: 125, 160, 162; Closen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 33, 246, 325; anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 27 (1921-22): 79, 83; Boy, "Mémoire sur les peuples du nord de l'Amérique", AN Colonies E50; and Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 80. For the American trade with the West Indies see Higonnet, *Sister Republics*, pp. 36, 83, 124, 176.

¹²¹ Curt Bogislaus Ludvig Cristoffer, Baron von Stedingk, "Count Stedingk", *Putnam's Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Science, and Art* 4 (1854): 352.

tobacco exports, and in 1765 one Frenchman reported to Choiseul that the British obtained an annual revenue of 300,000 pounds sterling from tobacco and employed 200 ships and their crews in shipping it to British and then European markets. In addition, Virginians bought everything they needed from England, further stimulating British production, shipping, and profits.¹²² In about 1778 one of the volunteers expressed a concern about the consequences of a British recognition of American independence if it were accompanied by a condition that American merchants acknowledge pre-war debts to British merchants. This, he felt, would immediately result in two-thirds of American commerce falling back into British hands:

Relations of blood and friendship, already established commercial liaisons, the habit of the same tastes, analogous education, identical mores, language, would assure the metropolis a preferred market. The other 1/3 [of American trade] would probably be divided with Portugal, Italy, and Spain, which furnish wines, silks and oils.¹²³

The only French product which he could think of which the Americans might want was salt, but he admitted that it was also readily available in the Turks Islands, near the Bahamas. The best course of action, the officer concluded, was to keep the British and Americans at each other's throats for as long as possible so that the Americans, obliged to trade surreptitiously with the French, gradually overcame their traditional antipathy for French people and culture and became accustomed to French manufactures. It would be a grave mistake, he warned, to attempt to seize colonial enclaves on the continent, for as far as he could determine Americans would rather return to the British yoke than have the French as neighbours.¹²⁴

Galvan drew up a list of French and American products which might be exchanged between the two countries, and he discussed the American trade's large rate of growth prior to the war. The country which controlled this trade, he believed, would become immensely rich. In fact,

¹²² Anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 26 (1920-21): 744. See also Price, *France and the Chesapeake*, 1: 589-90 and Joseph A. Ernst, "The Political Economy of the Chesapeake Colonies, 1760-1775: A Study in Comparative History", in *Economy of Early America*, ed. Hoffman *et al.*, pp. 196-243.

¹²³ Anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les Etats unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

Galvan worried about the future economic and political power of the United States, and proposed that France take over the American market so completely that the Americans would not have to become manufacturers or build ships to export their domestic production, thus remaining dependent on France. The abundance of land in the west and divisions between the states, he believed, would distract Americans from wars of conquest in Europe, delaying American imperialism for a long time to come, but all possible precautions had to be taken. To ensure that the French did obtain commercial advantages from the war, they should force the rebelling Americans to sign an offensive-defensive alliance with France, and in exchange close their ports to all but French vessels for the duration of the conflict. This would give the Americans enough time to become accustomed to French manufactures, and provide the French merchants with a long-term advantage over other competitors. However, Galvan felt that it was not worth fighting to maintain an absolute monopoly over American trade after the war: "Fighting for this scrap, is to play with men's lives and merit as much misery as we have already met with for four acres of snow", a reference to the lives lost defending Canada during the Seven Years' War.¹²⁵ As much as he advocated an expansion of France's overseas trade, he had no desire to extend France's colonial empire, if this could at all be avoided. The chaplain Robin offered a less sophisticated analysis of the situation, arguing that the Americans' fair climate, happy prosperity, and lack of enemies would keep them from attacking the extremely hot French islands, although this was still a future possibility.¹²⁶

A naval lieutenant, Capellis, wanted the navy to protect American convoys so that the Patriots could obtain supplies in the French islands, believing that this trade benefited French colonists in both peacetime and wartime. He did not suggest that this trade might be detrimental to the French metropolis, and probably would have been more critical of the trade if he had

¹²⁵ Galvan took this phrase from Voltaire's *Candide*. Galvan to Sartine, Charleston, 19 April 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 213-16. See also anonymous, "Quelques observations sur les États unis d'amérique", AN Marine B7 458.

¹²⁶ Robin, *Nouveau voyage*, pp. 209-11.

known that France did not benefit from it as much as the colonists.¹²⁷ Another naval lieutenant, Vigny, proposed setting up a French fur trading and whaling company on Hudson Bay after the British Hudson's Bay Company posts were captured and looted. He wanted to settle a few of the recent refugees from St. Pierre et Miquelon--mainly Acadians--at the posts to carry on the trading and whaling, and expected that the French monopoly company would provide them with what they needed. The state, however, would issue strict regulations to ensure that the company gave them a fair price for their furs and whale products. According to Vigny, this was the only way to avoid "the tyranny of monopoly".¹²⁸ This ambiguous attitude toward the idea of monopoly indicates that the institution still had considerable vitality in the second half of the century, but that the negative aspects of creating a privileged company were more than obvious.

La Fayette also devoted some serious attention to French-American trade after the war, acting on behalf of American merchants. He submitted a memoir on this commerce to the government, and on Vergennes' advice had it published as a pamphlet. He suggested that American products such as tobacco, rice, indigo, salted meat, fish, furs, iron, lumber, and masts be exchanged for French wine, sugar, and manufactures, but pointed out that there were real obstacles to trade between the two countries. One of the major problems, he noted, was that although the Americans were politically sympathetic to France and had no love for England, the mercantile interest, which was naturally oriented toward profit, remained impartial, placing economics before gratitude. This meant that French merchants had to make a better attempt to adapt their products to American tastes and provide their American purchasers with more credit. A vital element in encouraging American trade, he believed, was liberty of commerce, *la liberté*, which would result in proportionally greater revenue, consumption of manufactures, and agricultural production in the colonies. Especially onerous for American merchants were French internal customs barriers, "that establishment against nature", and vexatious regulations such as

¹²⁷ Capellis, "Projets relatifs à la Marine", Papiers Capellis, AN Série T 228, fol. 22.

¹²⁸ Vigny, "Projet d'une expedition pour la baye d'Hudson" (ca. 1780), AN Marine B4 183, fols. 123-24.

those of the tobacco monopoly of the Farmers-General. The Farmers-General, he complained, deliberated over cases for an enormous length of time and then made completely arbitrary decisions; one American vessel remained in a French port for nine months while the monopoly authorities considered the case, and its frustrated captain finally gave up and sailed to Amsterdam. In order to promote commerce, La Fayette proposed that either a few main ports or all ports be made free ports where no duty was charged. In addition, American ships should be able to trade legally in the French islands, where they could provide essential foodstuffs and supplies in exchange for French manufactures and surplus sugar products.¹²⁹ With the aid of Vergennes, Calonne, and Castries, who were interested in maintaining strong links between the United States and its patron France, Louis XVI was persuaded to establish four duty-free ports. Later La Fayette continued to press for free ports in the West Indies and aided individual American merchants, often with success.¹³⁰ Despite La Fayette's opposition to impediments to American trade, it is important to point out that he was more immediately interested in trade privileges for Americans than in opening French markets to the world.¹³¹ Nevertheless, his writings clearly indicate that he was influenced by physiocratic ideas.

Other officers also spoke out in favour of liberty of commerce. The retired veteran of the Seven Years' War, Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, condemned special charters and privileges giving one town commercial advantages over another, for he considered these privileges evils characteristic of feudalism and despotism.¹³² Another enlightened officer, Chastellux, who wrote a paper supporting liberty of commerce, criticized Pennsylvania for fixing prices and banning grain exports during part of the war, which instead of helping the province and Washington's army, ruined the farmers and prevented them from paying taxes. "This law has just been

¹²⁹ Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert Du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette, "Observations sur le commerce entre la France et les Etas-Unis", AN Marine B7 460.

¹³⁰ Bernier, *Lafayette*, pp. 151-53, 159-60.

¹³¹ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Between the American and the French Revolution*, pp. 37-51.

¹³² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 91.

repealed," he wrote, "so that I hope agriculture will soon resume its vigor and commerce make further gains. Wheat sent to the army will be a bit more expensive, but there will be infinitely more means to pay for it...."¹³³ Despite Chastellux's trust in market forces, many officers placed more faith in tradition, and Ternay was relieved that American state governments did occasionally place controls on inter-state grain sales.¹³⁴ Judging by the attitudes of a whole range of officers, only a tiny minority of them were in favour of absolute international free trade. On the opposite extreme, a number were willing to support monopolies and regulation of the grain trade. But while few were willing to throw France's borders and colonies open to foreign commerce, many criticized barriers to trade within France and supported relatively unimpeded trade between France and selected countries and French colonies. The important lesson here is that liberal economic doctrines, largely unknown among the officer corps in the 1750's, had begun to have an impact on better educated officers by the 1780's.

Physiocrats, as we have seen, were among the strongest anti-colonialists, citing depopulation, massive state spending, wars, and exploitation as drawbacks of colonial commitments, but even writers who favoured retaining France's colonies acknowledged these problems, and advised the government to be cautious about further expansion.¹³⁵ Practically all of the volunteers warned against any overt French attempt to try to politically subordinate the United States, and although a few advocated seizing Canada and Newfoundland, most preferred open commerce or friendly trade treaties to colonial commitments. Ségur, with Rochambeau's army, even hoped that one day the islands of the French West Indies would be self-governing or

¹³³ Chastellux, *Travels*, 1: 180-81 and Kors, "Chastellux", in *Abroad in America*, ed. Pachter, p. 4.

¹³⁴ Ternay to Sartine, Rhode Island, 2 Dec. 1780. AN Marine B4 183, fol. 66. See also John W. Rogers, "The Opposition to the Physiocrats: A Study of Economic Thought and Policy in the Ancien Régime, 1750-1780" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1971), pp. 277-315. Colonial governments fixed food prices and ferry rates when necessary, and this practice continued in wartime. Sheridan, "Domestic Economy", in *Colonial British America*, p. 70.

¹³⁵ See Labrouquère, *Idées coloniales des physiocrates*, pp. 39-70; Lokke, *France and the Colonial Question*, pp. 35-49, 61-67, 70-79; and Cassilly, "Anticolonial Tradition in France", pp. 79-85, 119-20.

independent countries in friendly alliance with France.¹³⁶ Many officers were able to connect internal economic liberty with international economic liberty. Despite their general lack of economic sophistication, they had developed a few principles or themes which are seen over and over again in their writings.

Louis XV's imperialist-minded Minister of Marine during the mid-1760's, Choiseul, sent a number of military officers to the American colonies with instructions to assess the political situation there.¹³⁷ One of them was Desandroüin's fellow engineer during the Canadian campaign, Major Nicolas Sarrebourg de Pontleroy. Pontleroy was in the American colonies in about 1764, and offered to return there in 1766 in charge of an American merchant ship to map and take soundings of all ports in the American colonies and British West Indies. He made the proposed second voyage, but his subsequent operations are unknown.¹³⁸ Choiseul also sent over an anonymous agent in 1765 and Lieutenant-Colonel Johann Kalb, a German officer in the French service, a few years later. Kalb was best known by his false title "Baron de" Kalb, and would later serve as a general in the Continental army. Both men reported that the American colonists were increasingly discontented with British rule, but that the French should be careful not to intervene until the colonists actually rebelled, and even then should be cautious because the Americans were intensely suspicious of the French and preferred to submit to Britain rather than become involved with their traditional enemies.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 485.

¹³⁷ For the development of American political unrest see Jack P. Greene, "The Seven Years' War and the American Revolution", in *The British Atlantic Empire before the American Revolution*, ed. Peter Marshall and Glyn Williams (London: Frank Cass, 1980), pp. 85-105; Shy, *Toward Lexington*; Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*; and Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

¹³⁸ Trudel, *Révolution américaine*, pp. 46-47.

¹³⁹ Anonymous, "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", *AHR* 26 (1920-21): 726-47 and 27 (1921-22): 70-89 and Trudel, *Révolution américaine*, pp. 47-48.

Louis XVI's Minister of Foreign Affairs during the American War of Independence, Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes, was opposed to any expansion of the French empire, but was eager to see the British empire reduced to considerably more modest dimensions.¹⁴⁰ He did all that he could to build up the French navy, provide clandestine support for the American cause, and then bring France into the war when he felt that the time was ripe. Like many French officers, he believed that Britain's economic supremacy was essentially artificial, and would completely collapse if the props which supported it were removed. In 1776 he wrote:

Regardless of what certain people say with respect to the wealth of England, I would rather call it a case of swelling. I prefer the plumpness of France in spite of her limited regimen. Everything here is real: fertile land, precious goods, clinking cash; a lack of credit would not affect any of this.¹⁴¹

One of Vergennes' secondary objectives was to prevent an American empire from replacing the British empire, for he preferred to keep the Americans weak and dependent on France. Secretly resisting American designs on Canada, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, he gave d'Estaing and Rochambeau strict instructions to give only noncommittal moral support to such American plans.¹⁴²

The volunteers and Rochambeau's officers were eager to break Britain's control over a large portion of the world's trade, which they saw as a direct result of naval and colonial power. If many of Britain's colonies became independent, they reasoned, British trade would decline along with

¹⁴⁰ Jean-François Labourdette, *Vergennes: Ministre principal de Louis XVI* (Paris: Éditions Desjonquières, 1990), pp. 94-123 and Cassilly, "Anticolonial Tradition in France", pp. 68-70

¹⁴¹ Vergennes to Beaumarchais, Versailles, 2 May 1776, in *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, ed. Clark and Morgan, 4: 1084. See also Vergennes, "Considerations on the Affair of the English Colonies in America", 12 March 1776, Comte de Saint Germain, memoir, 15 March 1776, and Sartine (?), "Reflections Upon the Necessity of Assisting the Americans and of Preparing for War with England", 15 March 1776, *Ibid.*, 4: 966-76; Marquis de Noailles to Vergennes, London, 18 April 1777, *Ibid.*, 7: 774-77; Turgot, "Reflexions rédigées", AN Série X 1340, no. 10; anonymous, "Mémoire pour le Roy", Dec. 1777, AN Marine B7 458; Dull, *French Navy and American Independence*, pp. 30-38; Kennett, *French Forces in America*, p. 4; Murphy, *Vergennes*, pp. 232-60; and Stinchcombe, *American Revolution and the French Alliance*, pp. 24, 46, 62.

¹⁴² Comte de Guines to Vergennes, London, 28 July 1775, in *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, ed. Clark and Morgan, 1: 1340; Kennett, *French Forces in America*, pp. 61; Trudel, *Révolution américaine*, 149-80, 188-92; and Stinchcombe, *American Revolution and the French Alliance*, pp. 24, 30, 65, 76-77, 151.

the country's ability to finance a large navy. Officers expected that France would be restored to her former predominance in Europe, which was based on the kingdom's large population and massive agricultural and manufacturing capacity. There was no need, they felt, for a French overseas empire to maintain this natural predominance, just a fair share of world trade derived from the free exercise of French commerce. Anti-colonial and anti-monopoly ideas were common among officers in the late 1770's and early 1780's, a result of French confidence in their country's natural economic strength, and liberal economic doctrines, as well as France's modest naval power and disappointing colonial experience. Officers gave no sign that they believed in a future dominated by international harmony and law, but many of them did favour a balance of power which made it difficult for any nation--except perhaps France--to dominate the others.

The volunteers who fought in the Patriot forces during the war generally had their personal and professional interests foremost in their minds, but they were also naturally sympathetic to French national interests. Some felt that French and American interests were more or less synonymous, and advocated straightforward French aid for the rebel forces. La Fayette, for instance, did everything that he could to obtain French aid for the United States. In 1781, a few months after the arrival of Rochambeau's army in Rhode Island, La Fayette wrote to the Minister of Marine, the Marquis de Castries, that naval superiority was an absolute necessity if the Americans were to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy, and French naval vessels were more important than more French infantry. Money, clothing, and munitions for the Continental Army, he argued, would also go further than money sent to support a large French auxiliary force. Like Washington, he wanted Rochambeau's troops to take part in an attack on New York, which he saw as the key to America.¹⁴³ La Fayette also hoped to see the Americans conquer Canada, if possible with some French assistance.¹⁴⁴ Castries was willing to send a large sum of money to assist the American army, but agreed with Rochambeau that New York was too strongly fortified

¹⁴³ La Fayette to Marquis de Castries, New Windsor, Conn., 30 Jan. 1781, AN Marine B4 192, fols. 164-68.

¹⁴⁴ Trudel, *Révolution américaine*, pp. 209-10, 233 and Bernier, *Lafayette*, pp. 61-65, 78-79, 84, 95.

and garrisoned to permit an attack at the present time, and that a siege would only be viable when the French controlled the sea.¹⁴⁵ After the war La Fayette claimed that the American Revolution had ended the certainty that France's remaining possessions in the Americas would soon end up in British hands. The war, he argued, also deprived France's British rival of an immense number of subjects and territory and a portion of her trade.¹⁴⁶

Another volunteer, Brigadier-General Louis Le Bègue de Presle Du Portail, who commanded the American corps of engineers, believed that if the French wanted to ensure the independence of the United States, then they should send money, supplies, troops to help the Americans capture New York and Charleston, and enough ships to gain local naval superiority. If this were not done, then the Americans might eventually be forced to negotiate a return to British rule, and the British were ready to welcome their former compatriots with open arms.¹⁴⁷

Other volunteers, however, were less certain that France should be magnanimous in its policies toward the new republic. La Fayette's aide-de-camp Pontgibaud, who had genuine affection for Americans, was pleased when France recognized the United States, and was happy to hear that French troops might invade England; he was also very satisfied when British pride was humbled by the capitulation at Yorktown. Yet after the war he stated his opinion that France should have acted as a "mediator" during the conflict, reconciling the British and Americans and occupying Canada and Gibraltar at the same time--a rather impractical scheme, since the British would hardly stand by while French forces seized these possessions. A newly reconquered Canada, Pontgibaud suggested, could become an outlet for France's surplus population.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Duc de Castries to La Fayette, Versailles, 25 May 1781, AN Marine B4 192, fols. 169-70. For a discussion of some of the problems involved in obtaining command of the sea see Alfred T. Patterson, *The Other Armada: The Franco-Spanish Attempt to Invade Britain in 1779* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960).

¹⁴⁶ La Fayette, "Observations sur le Commerce entre la France et les Etats-Unis", AN Marine B7, 460. For a discussion of the failure of French commerce with the United States in the 1780's see Tarrade, *Commerce colonial de la France*, 2: 495-530.

¹⁴⁷ Louis Le Bègue de Presle Du Portail, "Copie d'un mémoire de Mr. Duportail, commandant le corps de génie des américains", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 245-46.

¹⁴⁸ Pontgibaud, *A French Volunteer*, pp. 69, 87-88, 105, 149.

Villebresme and Romand de l'Isle also believed that the French should stay out of the war, only providing covert aid to the Americans.¹⁴⁹ Another volunteer offered a more ambiguous case against intervention by insisting that as long as the British held the important posts of New York, Staten Island, Long Island, and Rhode Island, which the Americans were unable to capture, then a French alliance with the United States would be more of a disadvantage than an advantage. The British were completely secure in these bases all year round, and it would take less than fifteen days for a force from one of these island bases to reach and attack the French West Indies. If the British kept these coastal possessions after the war, it was certain that they would virtually shut out French merchants as well as exploit quarrels between the different states.¹⁵⁰ This argument, of course, could serve almost equally well as a case for intervention, since the French could play a role in capturing these important bases. In the end, the officer concluded that despite so many obstacles to independence, the Americans could in fact achieve it as long as they showed more unity, their leaders resisted corruption, and the people were willing to temporarily accept some economic constraints.

Galvan supported intervention not so much because of his love for Americans but because it was so advantageous for France. Independence for the United States, he felt, would break Britain's control of the seas, shift half of the world's commerce to new routes, and give France an American overseas empire without the high costs of defending and administering it.¹⁵¹ Like La Fayette, he wished to see the Americans conquer Canada, but only because he feared that if the British retained it after the war the Americans would fall under the domination of their former masters.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Villebresme, *Souvenirs*, p. 75 and Romand de l'Isle to Count, Reading, Penn., 25 March 1778, in Romand de l'Isle, "Letters", *New Jersey Gazette*, Dec. 10, 1777.

¹⁵⁰ Anonymous, "Notions sur les 13 Etats Unis d'Amérique", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 219-20.

¹⁵¹ Galvan to Sartine, Paris, 26 April 1777, and Galvan to Sartine, Charleston, 19 April 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fols. 204, 210-11.

¹⁵² Galvan to Sartine, Charleston, 19 April 1778, in Galvan, "Recueil de quelques lettres", AN Marine B4 192, fol. 218.

Perhaps the most self-serving position with respect to American independence was Kalb's 1776 proposal to the American commissioners in France that General Charles-François de Broglie, Comte de Broglie, be appointed field marshal and generalissimo of the United States, with powers over the military and foreign affairs similar to those of the Dutch Stadtholder. The loyalty of the general's coterie of French commanders and their American subordinates would be to Broglie himself, and Congress would not interfere in affairs under his jurisdiction. Kalb, who described the American states as "mere children" in his letter to Commissioner Silas Deane, had made a year-long visit to the American colonies ten years earlier, and should not have been so naive as to believe that the Americans would happily appoint a French dictator to rid themselves of a British tyrant.¹⁵³ Captain de Roqueville of the Régiment Royal Infanterie, however, submitted an almost equally unrealistic proposal to the Ministry of Marine, asking that he be appointed commander of a naval force to capture the islands of Newfoundland and St. Pierre and blockade the St. Lawrence, thereby providing a means to obtain Canada for France. This infantry officer had been doing botanical research in Russia, and apparently knew virtually nothing about naval operations or North America.¹⁵⁴ It is fortunate that French political and military policy in the United States was entrusted to more capable individuals.

Shortly before the French intervention a senior French military engineer--who never went to the United States--suggested that subsidies be sent to help the Patriots and troops and naval forces be dispatched to India, where France could regain some of the territory lost during the Seven Years' War. The French officer had been born in French India, a factor which no doubt contributed to his colonial ambitions. He further explained that the British were fighting for empire, the Americans for liberty. The great danger, he felt, was that the Americans, who already enjoyed individual liberty and had strong cultural and commercial ties with the British, might

¹⁵³ Johann Kalb to Silas Deane, "Projet dont l'exécution décideroit peut-être le succès de la cause de la liberté des États-Unis d'Amérique sans que la cour de France parût y avoir pour le présent la moindre part", 17 Dec. 1776. Stillé, "Comte de Broglie", *PMIB* 11 (1887): 378-86. See also Friedrich Kapp, *The Life of John Kalb, Major-General in the Revolutionary Army* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1884).

¹⁵⁴ Roqueville to Castries, Regensburg, Bavaria, 1 Nov. 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fols. 244-45.

reconcile themselves with their enemies. By giving the Americans some financial assistance in buying arms from France, the French could ensure that after the war they would be commercially tied to their French friends.¹⁵⁵

Montcalm's old comrade-in-arms the Chevalier de Lévis--now Marquis de Lévis and Governor of Artois--criticized Maurepas at this time for having

missed the most favourable occasion to procure for France magnificent establishments in the old and new continent. Instead of sending a paltry expedition to the Antilles, where exploits would necessarily limit themselves to the taking of a small sugar island, a real newspaper conquest, why did he not dispatch to Canada an army corps of ten or twelve thousand men? This colony, still completely French, would have risen in our favour, and we would possess it today.¹⁵⁶

He had no idea that the Comte de Vergennes, who as Minister of Foreign Affairs had more interest and influence in these matters than the king's aged chief minister the Comte de Maurepas, had supported independence for the thirteen colonies but at the same time had done all he could to ensure that Canada, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the Floridas remained British.¹⁵⁷ Desandroüins was similarly ignorant of official policy, writing a memoir at this time detailing the supplies necessary for an army of 20,000 men to besiege Quebec.¹⁵⁸ In 1778 he argued that if the French did not help the Americans to conquer Canada, the British would continue to dominate the continent. Based on his personal experience and knowledge of events so far during the war, he was sure that the Americans were far too inept in siege warfare to be able to succeed on their own.¹⁵⁹ The most imperialist of all the French officers, it seems, were those who had personal connections with the French colonies in North America and India.

¹⁵⁵ Fourcroy de Ramecourt or Le Vaux, "Mémoire sur les moyens de procurer avec la paix l'indépendance de l'amérique", Fonds d'Éprèmesnil, AN 158 Archives Privées (AP) 2, no. 20 and Fourcroy or Le Vaux, "Idées sur la guerre de l'amérique, ou première suite au mémoire intitulé sur les moyens de procurer, avec la paix, l'indépendance de l'amérique", AN 158 AP 2, no. 21.

¹⁵⁶ Lévis, *Souvenirs et portraits, 1780-1789*, p. 15, cited in Trudel, *Révolution américaine*, p. 166.

¹⁵⁷ Trudel, *Révolution américaine*, pp. 152-53, 168-69.

¹⁵⁸ Gabriel, *Desandroüins*, p. 368.

¹⁵⁹ Desandroüins, "Mémoire sur le Canada par M. Desandroüins, ancien ingénieur dans cette colonie", Sarrelouis, 26 Aug. 1778, *Lévis MSS*, 4: 319-22.

One possible exception to this rule was Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, who early during the War of American Independence maintained that the conquest of Canada in 1760 was largely due to the French government's neglect of the colony's development:

Had France opened towards it the more philosophic eyes of the year 1776, you'd have seen a nation of Franks rising on Canadian snows, which would have been able to have settled and possessed Acadia, Louisbourg, Labrador, the shores of the interior lakes, those huge seas. France overlooked it until it was too late. The very struggle they [the Canadians] made during the last war shows what they could have done had they been established on a broader bottom.¹⁶⁰

By "the philosophic eyes of the year 1776" Crèvecoeur meant general enlightenment at the time of writing; he was not referring to the American Declaration of Independence, which he abhorred. Crèvecoeur advocated the autonomy of the American colonies in taxation and local legislative matters, and the supremacy of king and Parliament in intercolonial or imperial affairs. Direct rule by the crown and its officials led only to abuses, he felt, and he attributed Nova Scotia's stagnation and the prosperity of the other colonies to the presence or absence of royal despotism.¹⁶¹ He applied the same principles to Canada, believing that if France had established self-government in the colony, then it would have been stronger and more prosperous. Crèvecoeur described Canadians as a peaceful, inoffensive people who led an almost idyllic existence "until the demon of politics inspired William Pitt with the idea of continental conquests, exclusive fisheries, exclusive fur trade, a plenum of glory which has so astonished the world."¹⁶² In his view, there was a strong connection between despotism, monopoly, and war; all were instruments of greed and oppression. He also blamed Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia for precipitating the Seven Years' War, and found it ironic that at the time of writing "Major Washington, the murderer of Captain Jumonville, is the idol of the French."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 173.

¹⁶¹ Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, pp. 22-23, 42-43, 201-8 and Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, pp. 80, 88, 94.

¹⁶² Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Sketches*, p. 174.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-76.

Once the French did intervene in the war, the French government attempted to provide the Americans with military supplies and some naval support. D'Estaing hoped to defeat the British fleet in 1778 or at least capture Newfoundland, Bermuda, and perhaps Halifax, but in the end opted for more direct assistance by landing a French force to take part in the Siege of Savannah. After a prolonged, ineffective investment, the French and Americans stormed the British fortifications around the city and were bloodily repulsed. D'Estaing was obliged to withdraw without anything to show for his efforts.¹⁶⁴

The next French fleet on the coast was commanded by Ternay, who was charged with transporting Rochambeau's army to Rhode Island. Like Rochambeau, Ternay was of the opinion that only France's military effort would prevent the Americans from seeking peace with the British.¹⁶⁵ One of the army officers he transported to the American theatre, Charlus, took an amateurish interest in naval affairs during the voyage. Charlus believed that it was vital for the French navy to protect French shipping and attack British convoys to the Indies, for "It is only the credit of private individuals which upholds England and to destroy it is to ruin the merchants."¹⁶⁶ He was amazed to hear one of the many quarrelsome naval officers in Ternay's fleet insist that the navy was not made to protect commerce. In Charlus' opinion, the navy should dispatch twelve French warships to the American theatre and the rest should stay in France, leaving port only to escort merchant shipping. Once he was in the United States, however, Charlus realized that naval superiority was an absolute necessity if the British were to be decisively defeated, for practically every settlement of importance was on the coast.¹⁶⁷ Another army officer, Coriolis, shared Charlus' low opinion of naval officers and deplored the French navy's lack of success in fully exploiting its potential, complaining near the end of the war that

¹⁶⁴ Charles-Hector. Comte d'Estaing, "Siège de Savannah", AN Marine B4 142, fols. 119-54.

¹⁶⁵ Ternay to Sartine. Rhode Island, 6 Aug. 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 45.

¹⁶⁶ Charlus, "Journal", AN Marine B4 183, fol. 182.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fols. 181, 194, 212.

"it is astonishing how those English devils, with inferior forces, as with superior ones, always have an advantage over us at sea. They know their business better than we do."¹⁶⁸

A naval officer in the fleet, Capellis, was able to offer a more professional assessment of the role of naval power. He described the weaknesses of the American navy, and considered it essential that the French navy station a squadron on the American coast in order to protect American merchant vessels sailing to the French islands as well as attack British provision convoys which sailed between New York and Charleston. He recommended that naval vessels from Saint-Domingue make regular forays to the area, that Chesapeake Bay be used as a local naval base, and that Rochambeau's troops move from Rhode Island, where they required naval protection and barracks during the wintertime, to Virginia, which was warmer and supposedly more secure.¹⁶⁹ A year later the French army and navy did concentrate at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, where Grasse's fleet drove off a British force in the Battle of the Virginia Capes and completely isolated Cornwallis' army besieged at Yorktown. This made it possible for Washington and Rochambeau to secure a British surrender. The French navy also carried out other successful operations, including La Pérouse's successful raid on the fur trading posts of Hudson Bay in 1782.¹⁷⁰

One of d'Estaing's captains, Bougainville, had seen the French army capitulate at Montreal in 1760. In 1781, sailing with Grasse's fleet, he had the pleasure of contributing to the British capitulation at Yorktown. He was overwhelmed with joy, he wrote, to see the hereditary enemy defeated after twenty-five years of domination.¹⁷¹ As Jacomel de Cauvigny, another naval officer,

¹⁶⁸ Coriolis to mother, Boston, 5 Dec. 1782, in Coriolis, "Lettres", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 396 (n.s. 290), 25 March 1932, p. 821.

¹⁶⁹ Capellis, "Protection du commerce des Etats-unis", *AN Marine* B4 183, fols. 237-41. See also Montaudoriü (?), Nantes, 16 Feb. 1779, *AN Série T* 1108 3, fol. 572. The author, who may or may not have been an officer, favoured sending a squadron to escort merchant vessels to the United States.

¹⁷⁰ La Pérouse to Sartine (?), Paris, 1 Dec. 1780, *AN Marine* B4 183, fols. 119-20; Vigny, "Projet d'une expedition pour la baye d'Hudson", *AN Marine* B4 183, fols. 121-26; and Lannoy, "Mémoire", *Carnet de la sabretache*, 2d ser., 13 (1904): 752-57.

¹⁷¹ Kerallain, "Bougainville à l'armée du cte. de Grasse", *JSAP* 20 (1928): 29.

pointed out, the fall of Yorktown left the British with only New York and Charleston, which were too far apart for any coordinated offensive action. This meant that the British had no choice but eventually to open peace negotiations.¹⁷²

The officers in the line regiments with Rochambeau were equally concerned about the role of colonies and colonial trade in the European balance of power. Officers followed events in India, Senegal, the Balearic Islands, Gibraltar, the West Indies, and Hudson Bay with great interest, and they were horrified by the defeat of Grasse's fleet in the Battle of the Saintes, which threatened not only to ruin French ambitions in the West Indies but nullify the French army and navy's accomplishments in North America. The French troops in Virginia could accomplish very little without the cooperation of a strong navy.¹⁷³ Like Captain Thomas-Antoine, Chevalier de Mauduit du Plessis, whose brother died at the Saintes, they could only hope for revenge.¹⁷⁴

Ségur described the enthusiasm of the educated public for the American cause, a passion especially strong among young men at court, who were imbued with the ideals of liberty and equality, bored with the long peace, eager to obtain revenge for France's humiliation during the last war, and, one suspects, absolutely determined to attack the values of their parents' generation. Ségur and his teenage friends were impatient with the ministry for attempting to aid the Americans without undertaking the risks of war, a strategy which the astute British, he explained, quickly divined. Louis XVI, Ségur later reflected, was a moral man who believed in honouring treaties signed with Britain and in maintaining France's neutrality, but after it became evident that the Americans could more or less hold their own against the British, the government

¹⁷² Jacomet de Cauvigny to Comte de Chastellux, Chesapeake Bay, Virg., 22 Oct. 1781, in "Lettres de divers officiers", AN Série M 1021 IV.

¹⁷³ Ervoil d'Oyré to Comte de Chastellux, Crompond, N.Y., 4 Oct. 1782, in "Lettres de divers officiers", AN Série M 1021 IV; Clozen-Haydenburg, *Revolutionary Journal*, pp. 198, 204, 224, 238, 243, 268-69; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 127, 158-59, 182; and Ségur, *Mémoires*, 1: 171, 198-99, 242-45, 261, 268-70.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas-Antoine, Chevalier de Mauduit du Plessis, "Two Letters of Mauduit to Mrs. Mary Willing Byrd of Westover, 26 January 1782, 21 December 1782", *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 2d ser. 38 (1930): 57.

established more open ties with the rebels, which resulted in war.¹⁷⁵ The French then dispatched expeditions to North America, the West Indies, West Africa, and India. Lauzun raised a force which he hoped to lead in India, but instead commanded a successful expedition against the British establishment at Gambia in early 1779, then raised a legion which accompanied Rochambeau's army.¹⁷⁶ Rochambeau's misgivings about the military capability of his American allies were magnified after his arrival in Rhode Island, and he urgently requested that the French government send more troops and money.¹⁷⁷ His officers shared their commander's concern, for although Alexander Hamilton told the Vicomte de Noailles that the French presence in the United States was helpful but unnecessary, most French officers were naturally convinced that the American cause would collapse without the aid of the French army.¹⁷⁸ One of Rochambeau's young officers even complained that once the French arrived the Americans let their allies do all of the fighting, and almost stood by at Yorktown. He doubted that the Americans could have lasted without French aid, and discussed the importance of French naval power in winning the war.¹⁷⁹ Most French officers, however, gave the Americans more credit, and like Rochambeau's chief-of-staff Captain François-Louis-Thibault, Comte de Ménonville, thought that the Continental troops stormed a British redoubt at Yorktown with considerable élan.¹⁸⁰ If they had little respect for American militia, they were certainly impressed by the Continental troops, especially after they were all issued with uniforms.

¹⁷⁵ Ségur, *Mémoires*, I: 107-9, 160-61, 163.

¹⁷⁶ Lauzun, *Memoirs*, pp. 175, 177-81.

¹⁷⁷ Rochambeau to La Luzerne, Newport, 4 Aug. 1780, AN Marine B4 183, fol. 149 and "Questions de M. Rochambeau avec réponses", AN Marine B4 183, fols. 164-68.

¹⁷⁸ Hamilton to Vicomte de Noailles, AN Série T 1108 3, fol. 512 and Montesquieu to Latapie, Newport, 16 Oct. 1782, in Céleste, "Montesquieu à l'armée", *RPBSO* 6 (1903): 517.

¹⁷⁹ Anonymous, manuscript by a young officer, AN Série M 1036 F60 7.

¹⁸⁰ François-Louis-Thibault, Comte de Ménonville, "Journal of the Siege of York, by M. de Ménonville, Aide-Major-Général", *Magazine of History* 7 (1881): 286.

Rochambeau's officers perceived the peace treaty as a major gain for France, altering the European balance of power heavily in its favour. As Blanchard wrote, "This peace, advantageous to France, was disastrous for England, and it seemed to all that if the former knew how to avail herself of this prosperity, she might recover the superiority in Europe to which England pretended."¹⁸¹ However, France did not take over American foreign trade; indeed, Anglo-American trade resumed on a large scale as soon as the ink was dry on the peace treaty. Nevertheless, a new nation had emerged in the Americas which many French officers believed would one day have an important influence on European affairs. Coriolis predicted that the United States might one day be "the most powerful empire in the entire world", although he had no clear idea whether this would be for good or ill.¹⁸²

Freedom of trade is a theme which one repeatedly finds in the writings of even the most unsophisticated French officers of the period around 1780. This economic stance may have been encouraged by France and Spain's lack of naval dominance--weaker countries often favour international law and freedom of the seas more than stronger ones--but the concept did exist and was probably encouraged by economic theories circulating in intellectual circles at the time. Bodinier attempts to emphasize the barrier between the small, progressive intellectual elite in the officer corps and the mass of their ignorant, reactionary colleagues, but this division is not necessarily as pronounced as he suggests. The social and intellectual links between less educated and more educated officers and between the officer corps and the rest of educated society were too great for officers to remain isolated from the changes going on all around themselves.

Attitudes toward state intervention in internal and external economic activity changed during the second half of the eighteenth century. During the Seven Years' War French officers

¹⁸¹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 193-94.

¹⁸² Coriolis to mother, Boston, 4 Dec. 1782, in Coriolis, "Lettres", *Le Correspondant* (Paris), vol. 326, 25 March 1932, p. 826.

favoured price controls and state distribution of economic monopolies to individuals and companies, expected the authorities to order commoners what to produce and how hard to work, and explored every means of extracting revenue from the population without regard for economic or personal "rights". They interpreted the colonial wars in North America and the West Indies as conflicts designed to acquire exclusive national economic control over territory and its inhabitants, including the right to collect, ship, and process local exports and levy taxes. The interests of merchants, peasants, and native peoples who lived in the colonies were always subordinate to the interests of the king and French and Canadian nobility.

Twenty years later the dominant economic philosophy in the officer corps was substantially different. Well-educated, liberal officers were influenced by physiocratic free trade theory and anti-colonial attitudes, and other members of the corps were also affected by these concepts, albeit to a lesser extent. Pragmatism and principle suggested that France avoid acquiring further colonial possessions, which were expensive to govern and defend. French volunteers, line officers, and naval officers saw covert or formal intervention in the War of American Independence not so much as an opportunity to acquire further colonial territory at Britain's expense as a means to open up territory formerly monopolized by the British to French and other foreign merchants. They perceived trade agreements, rather than monopoly privileges or formal control of territory, as the most practical means of gathering the world's wealth. Victory over the British, for most French officers and statesmen of this period, meant the end of Britain's usurpation of world trade and France's restoration to her "natural" place of honour in the international economy, not an expansion of the French empire. Not surprisingly, the strongest advocates of colonial conquest were officers who had spent part of their lives in Canada or India, and wanted to see France's empire rebuilt in these parts of the world. The rosy image of a sudden British economic collapse was in part derived from officers' continuing ignorance of how capitalism actually worked.

Noblemen may have been involved in many capitalist enterprises during this period, as George

V. Taylor has argued, but military noblemen at least had little understanding of such concepts as credit and the value of labour.¹⁶³

The economic attitudes of French officers in North America, however naive, provide support for the argument that the second half of the eighteenth century marked a transition from a belief in economic privilege as a way of life to an idea of equality of opportunity in the marketplace, a philosophy which still has considerable importance today. Pressures to overthrow what even contemporary theorists called the "feudal" economic system grew during the course of these decades, and during the French Revolution the state eliminated all obstacles to the pursuit of wealth by the individual. Even Robespierre advocated liberal economic policies until bread riots forced him to reluctantly impose price controls. Economic privileges were no longer delegated to intermediary bodies like the Farmers-General and special companies, and the state finally took control of the national debt, along with general powers of regulation. The state now intervened in the economy more than ever before, but whatever control it did not exercise went to individual citizens, not to privileged individuals and bodies. The growth of bureaucracy, which Alexis de Tocqueville later perceived as the major achievement and potential danger of the French Revolution, was underway.¹⁶⁴ For French officers, Enlightenment *philosophes*, and French revolutionaries alike, economic liberty was inseparable from political liberty.

¹⁶³ Taylor, "Non-Capitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution". *American Historical Review* 72 (1967): 469-96.

¹⁶⁴ Alexis de Tocqueville. *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955). pp. 57-72.

CONCLUSION

When we carefully examine the attitudes of French officers who visited North America during the Seven Years' War and the War of American Independence, it quickly becomes apparent that there were substantial differences between the two generations of French visitors. Exposed to an unfamiliar natural environment, completely alien aboriginal cultures, and colonial societies with their own social, political, and economic mores, these Frenchmen were forced to call upon every resource in their intellectual arsenal to explain what they saw and analyze it in terms of their own frame of reference. While it is considerably easier to find similarities between officers' perspectives in 1760 and 1780 than differences, it is nevertheless possible to detect certain changes, many of which may be attributed to the growing influence and development of the Enlightenment.

The officers who accompanied the Marquis de Montcalm to North America and wrote about their experiences did not reveal any overt sign of political consciousness, which is not surprising since they had little or no exposure to anything which we might define as a political process. No officer in the corps at this time questioned the assumption prevalent in French elite circles that every person had his proper place in the social hierarchy, which was meant to provide an orderly chain of authority from top to bottom. The clash between the king and parlements between 1750 and 1770, however, helped to give officers the first glimmerings of a political consciousness, and a sense that the amalgam of customs and privileges which made up the French "constitution" did not adequately secure the French nation from despotism or provide it with

good government. Officers were exposed to such ideas as absolutism, government by noble corporations, constitutional government, citizenship, merit, liberty, and equality, and their visit to the United States helped to stimulate discussion of such ideas.

These eighteenth-century French army officers were equipped with limited information about the continent they were visiting, and Montcalm's officers were particularly disadvantaged because of the lack of books and newspaper articles which could provide them with prior knowledge of Canada or the American colonies. Rochambeau's men had the benefit of several years of intense coverage of the War of American Independence before they made the trip, and this helped to prepare them for the environment they were entering.

The geography and climate of North America did not resemble conditions prevalent in France, and the species of animals and plants were also different, emphasizing the separateness of Europe and North America. However, if Montcalm's officers found Canada's environment strange, and Rochambeau's considered the American south and Venezuela completely different from anything they had known before, the American northern and middle states did fall within a French frame of reference. Europe and North America had too much in common for officers to believe that the New World was a dreamland where European rules did not apply, and the increasing level of political, military, and literary contact between the continents by the end of the War of American Independence helped to make the United States an extension of the European world. Although North Americans had many different customs from Europeans, universal laws of social development, politics, and economics prevailed equally in both places. As a result, Rochambeau's officers' observations on the continent's climate, biota, and human inhabitants provide no clear evidence that they believed in the degeneration theory found in a number of well-known works from the 1750's to the 1780's. If the scientists were discussing this idea, it does not seem to have had much effect on the educated public, at least by this date. However, officers did believe, like Montesquieu, that climate affected the cultural habits of a region's inhabitants.

Although Montesquieu's work pre-dated the Seven Years' War, officers with the second expedition were more inclined to give prominence to the role of climate in culture.

In contrast to the view expressed by many historians, the concept of the noble savage did not gain a solid hold over the French elite's imagination, even by the time of Rousseau's death in 1778; instead, Voltaire's more traditional, negative assessment of aboriginal peoples prevailed. Most French officers of both time periods arrived in North America with an image of Indians as ferocious barbarians. Since the competing themes of noble savage versus barbarian were already well established by the time Montcalm's officers arrived in North America, circumstance rather than the time period of the visit played a major role in determining officers' attitudes toward Indians. Better-educated officers, more exposed to the literary image of the noble savage, and perhaps more open minded, were slightly more willing to be generous in their opinions, but here too circumstance played a role. In practically every case, officers who knew Indians through lengthy and varied contact, and had sympathetic local European settlers to explain native customs, were inclined to demonstrate more respect for aboriginal peoples. This helps to explain why colonial regulars and a few line officers with Montcalm were the Indians' strongest partisans, while volunteers or officers with Rochambeau, who usually obtained only a superficial acquaintance with natives via the Indians' American enemies, came to starkly different conclusions. French officers who knew Indians best were least inclined to employ polarized stereotypes, for they realized that natives were human beings with their own individual and tribal virtues and weaknesses. Judging by the comments of both groups of officers, there was virtually no change in the basic French image of native peoples during the twenty years which separated the two campaigns.

Rochambeau's officers and the volunteers were extremely ignorant about native cultures, but their prejudices are as useful as the slightly more balanced views of Montcalm's officers in assessing common French assumptions about the proper material infrastructure and economic, political, and military values of a "civilized" culture. Each group of officers considered a network

of sedentary agricultural settlements and a formal, hierarchical political system beneficial for native populations, and a necessary prerequisite for civilization. Even the most sympathetic officers pitied Indians for their lack of material comfort, and thought that they would be better off as prosperous, European-style farmers. The more hierarchical and authoritarian a tribal system was, the more officers of the 1750's considered it normal and civilized. Some officers of the Seven Years' War period thought of Indians as intelligent, patriotic peoples who only sought, like Europeans, to protect their national interests, but later officers, who had less contact with natives, dismissed them as barbarous mercenaries only interested in loot. Civilized peoples, the visitors implied, were patriotic and fought for their country, while savages thought only of personal glory and plunder. Both sets of officers considered native warfare barbarous, but because Indian raids did not have the same effect as European campaigns and resulted in few casualties, this was also held against the Indians because it revealed a lack of "civilized" military efficiency. Montcalm's officers, who were still experimenting with irregular tactics, admired the natives' irregular warfare on a technical level, but did not like the manner in which they organized or carried out campaigns. Officers in Rochambeau's army, which included light infantry companies and light cavalry, were even less respectful of Indians' military prowess because the army had already completed the professionalization of irregulars as light troops, but also because the aboriginal nations did not have as much importance during the War of American Independence, playing no role in French campaigns. The dominance of conventional warfare meant that for the French, if not the Americans, Indians were no longer grudgingly respected friends or enemies, but savages who could safely be despised and ignored.

Over the course of the six-year Canadian campaign, French officers acquired considerable knowledge of Canada's social and political system, and to a lesser extent customs prevalent in the American colonies. The comments they made indicate that the Enlightenment had had only a minimal impact on their ideology, which remained largely fixed in the age of Louis XIV. Officers' rationalism, scepticism, and selective paternalism toward the popular classes are characteristic of

the early stages of the Enlightenment, but these ideas can easily be traced back a century if not much longer. The French observers were completely unaffected by aspects of Enlightenment thought which stressed liberty, equality, and brotherhood among human beings of all social origins, themes which became central during the following decades. No egalitarians, officers demonstrated unanimous hostility to any deviation from the norms of France's social hierarchy. They generally favoured state control of the church, but were not clearly committed to religious toleration or deism. The fact that they did not seem to care a great deal about what the official, state-sanctioned religion in each country was, however, suggests that by the 1750's, if not much earlier, Roman Catholic orthodoxy was not particularly strong in the officer corps.

In addition, these military men happily advocated extending the king's authority to every imaginable jurisdiction without experiencing any qualms about the unlimited use of power by their royal master, except when it affected the nobility. This extension of state authority might be considered an aspect of Enlightenment rationality, but the way in which this authority was used was only vaguely related to Enlightenment ideals. Even Bougainville, who was already a member of France's intellectual elite, exhibited highly authoritarian, conservative attitudes and did not dream that the popular classes should enjoy basic rights or that slaves deserved to be free. If some French writers of the 1750's were beginning to expound a social or political philosophy familiar to the Patriots of 1789, there is little sign that these ideas were circulating among even the best-educated officers.

It does not, however, follow that noble attitudes remained static throughout the eighteenth century. Between 1760 and 1780 officers experienced important changes in their social attitudes, a trend very much attributable to the impact and evolution of Enlightenment thought. The ideas behind the new discourse of liberty, equality, and citizenship had begun to challenge the rigidity of France's social divisions, and encouraged many officers to think in terms of relaxing rather than strengthening legal and customary social barriers as a means to improve public harmony. While the Frenchmen still strongly believed in a social hierarchy, merit became almost as

important as birth in defining this hierarchy, although in their minds the two factors were by no means mutually exclusive. Officers also challenged the conventions of French manners and fashion in various ways, paying tribute to the idea that simple, "natural" behaviour and dress were superior to artificiality and excess. This was hardly a novel attitude, and court noblemen had very demanding tastes when it came to determining "simple" manners and fashion, but at least there is evidence of a reaction to Enlightenment ideas concerning moderation and the more natural life. The same was true of courtship and marriage, for both liberal and conservative officers argued--from a theoretical perspective--that marriages based on love were happier and more virtuous than matches based only on social and economic criteria. Although they continued to prefer religious conformity within a nation's borders, a number of them supported toleration for religious denominations as long as they behaved according to certain criteria established by the state, designed to ensure that these people were good citizens. By this date, officers were openly deistic in their attitudes, and the fact that many of them were Freemasons suggests that Roman Catholic orthodoxy was far from strong in the corps.

Their unwillingness to accept religious pluralism is a reflection of an illiberal current in their thought, one which placed limits on intellectual freedom. For Peter Gay, this authoritarianism was an integral part of the Enlightenment, while Norman Hampson believes that intolerance and coercion were foreign to its spirit. The best way to explain this dichotomy is to refer to the source of much Enlightenment thought: classical Greece and Rome, where individual liberty and community discipline, according to eighteenth-century observers, coexisted without contradiction. As Patrice Higonnet points out, few thinkers of the Enlightenment period were aware that there might be any difficulty in reconciling free personal expression and absolute conformity to the general will.¹ Unfortunately, the events of 1789-1799 would prove otherwise, for during the French Revolution violence was increasingly employed in order to fulfill the

¹ Higonnet, *Class, Ideology, and the Rights of Nobles*, pp. 6-9, 12-16.

communitarian aims of Enlightenment thought, betraying its fundamentally liberal values and bringing this intellectual era to an end.²

Political values had also undergone some changes by the early 1780's. Events in France during the previous two decades had made officers more politically conscious, and they now used such words as "despotism", "liberty", "rights", "equality", "citizen", "*patrie*", "nation", and "freedom of opinion". Their definition of these words, however, often remained extremely conservative, for they generally considered rights synonymous with privilege, liberty equivalent to security of privilege, a citizen a member of the propertied classes, and merit a characteristic of aristocracy. Politically naive, they continued to think of government primarily in terms of personality rather than structure, and when they did mention constitutional models these tended to take the form of Estates Generals or Chambers of Peers rather than more democratic assemblies. Nevertheless, the concept of equality placed in question distinctions between different noblemen and even between noblemen and other members of society, and this helped to legitimize a role for non-nobles in the nation's leadership. Some of the more intellectual officers believed that citizenship and merit transcended the boundaries of the aristocracy, and that all landowners should be citizens with a voice in government. The range of opinions among officers indicates that noblemen were no more static in their political opinions than in their social opinions, for they were clearly affected by many of the leading ideas of their time. Gilbert Bodinier is not too far off the mark when he argues that Rochambeau's officers were predominantly reactionaries, and that even the handful of liberal nobles paid only superficial homage to liberal ideas, which they used to justify noble privilege. Nevertheless, it is evident, by comparing the opinions of officers of diverse backgrounds over a thirty-year period, that their predominantly conservative attitudes were far from static, and that more than the small clique of liberal court nobles were affected by the liberal impetus of the Enlightenment.

² Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 445-47.

Economic thought also evolved over the course of twenty years, and one finds that Enlightenment doctrines about liberty of commerce spread by the physiocrats and other economic reformers had made many converts in the officer corps by 1780. Montcalm's officers had been unanimous supporters of a redistribution of economic privileges in the fiscal interests of the state and aristocracy. Believing that colonies existed to be exploited, and unable to imagine that merchants or peasants might have economic rights, they were unconcerned when state interests were detrimental to the interests of Canadian commoners. By 1780, however, economic privilege was no longer accepted as a way of life. Price controls, monopolies, and even colonies fell into disrepute as the idea of liberty of commerce and rights for colonists gained ground among a variety of officers. The state had ceased to concede monopolies and economic privileges to individuals and corporations; instead it took over the responsibility of regulating the economy while freeing its operation at the citizens' level. Most officers supported liberalized trade, arguing for free commerce within France, but they wanted the state to remain involved in regulating the economy. As John Bosher points out, however, it is a mistake to portray supporters of interventionist policies in the eighteenth century as regressive and free traders such as Turgot as the embodiment of progress. Necker placed more stress on the state and Turgot on the citizen, but their views were both "progressive" and "modern" and were not completely incompatible. Most of Rochambeau's officers, despite their extremely poor idea of how an economy actually functioned, can be described as vaguely "Neckerite" in their attitudes.

A survey of French officers' opinions during the course of the second half of the eighteenth century faces considerable obstacles in terms of statistical accuracy. The sources are biased in favour of educated officers of higher social status, and we have to deduce the views of the infamous *hobereaux* of the provinces from only a third of the sources. Indeed, a perusal of the sources makes one wonder about the stereotype of an enlightened urban nobility and bourgeoisie versus a reactionary nobility. Liberal and conservative attitudes among officers who left records rarely conform to what one is led to expect, with each category providing candidates on different

sides of the ephemeral sociopolitical fence. The principal positive characteristic of our evidence is that it is relatively easy to compare the views of educated officers during both periods, and that enough sources exist to make tentative conclusions about their less distinguished colleagues.

The chief conclusion that we can make is that noble attitudes were slowly changing during the second half of the century, and that this transformation was linked to the evolving climate of opinion known as the Enlightenment. Few of the ideas debated by Rochambeau's officers were unknown in the 1750's; indeed, many of these themes may be traced to earlier centuries. But the increasing maturity of these ideas and the emphasis officers placed on them indicates that a process of intellectual change was taking place. If officers were far from revolutionary in their attitudes, they can hardly be accused of being opposed to all new ideas, or of clashing intellectually with the "bourgeoisie". Indeed, it is impossible to distinguish between the values of noble and bourgeois members of the officer corps, even though we have access to private bourgeois diaries and letters where these officers might have felt free to express their true sentiments. Liberal and conservative opinions abounded among both social groups, and social tensions within the corps did not visibly divide along noble-bourgeois lines, although such tensions must have existed to some extent. What does emerge is that wealth and education divided the elite far more than legal differences between different social orders. Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret's thesis about the nature of late *ancien régime* society seems fully justified.

Historical inquiry into the pre-1789 period is essential if we are to learn more about the ideological origins of the liberal impulse which generated the reforms of the late *ancien Régime* and the French Revolution, as well as the roots of the conservative counterrevolutionary reaction and violent revolutionary authoritarianism which destroyed the Revolution and Enlightenment. French attitudes toward the American Revolution and republicanism also highlight the ideological gap between Frenchmen and Americans at this time, as well as the extent to which both peoples were affected by certain themes characteristic of the period. But the Enlightenment had a life of

its own, quite independent of the French and American revolutions, and even without these major world events the age stands out as one of immense intellectual vitality.

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Xb 5 Régiment d'infanterie de Béarn

Xb 5 Régiment d'infanterie de Guyenne

Xb 6 Régiment d'infanterie de Cambis

Xb 35 Régiment d'infanterie Royal [continuation of Régiment d'infanterie Cambis after incorporation]

Xb 42 Régiment d'infanterie du Dauphin [continuation of Régiment d'infanterie de Guyenne after incorporation]

Xb 48 Régiment d'infanterie d'Anjou et d'Aquitaine [continuation of Régiment d'infanterie de Berry after incorporation]

Xb 54 Régiment d'infanterie de La Reine

Xb 61 Régiment d'infanterie d'Artois

Xb 64 Régiment d'infanterie de La Sarre

Xb 68 Régiment d'infanterie de Royal Roussillon

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Sous-série Xg

Xg 87 Régiment de Karrer [Suisse]

Sous-série Xi

Xi 31 Troupes coloniales du régiment de Karrer

Xi 32 Troupes coloniales du régiment suisse de Karrer

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