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CITIZENS AND SUBJECTS: MÉTIS SOCIETY, IDENTITY AND THE STRUGGLE OVER COLONIAL POLITICS IN SAINT LOUIS, SENEGAL, 1870-1920

By

Hilary Jones

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

CITIZENS AND SUBJECTS: *MÉTIS* SOCIETY, IDENTITY AND THE STRUGGLE OVER COLONIAL POLITICS IN SAINT LOUIS, SÉNÉGAL 1870-1920

By

Hilary Jones

This dissertation is a study of the mixed race population who inhabited the port city of Saint Louis, Sénégal. It examines the society and identity that this group created and addresses the strategies they developed to respond to French rule between 1870 and 1920. Located at the juncture of the Sénégal River and the Atlantic Ocean, Saint Louis became a strategic location for French commerce in the era of the Atlantic slave trade. By the mid-nineteenth century, it served as the site to launch wars of territorial conquest. This study examines the period of French expansion in Sénégal from the rise of the Third Republic to the consolidation of colonialism after World War I. In seeking to uphold republican principles, the Third Republic re-established electoral institutions in the coastal enclaves and extended voting rights to all adult male residents of the towns regardless of race. As a result, this period gave rise to the development of urban politics and stimulated the growth of civil society in Saint Louis, the former colonial capital.

The *métis* population of Saint Louis emerged within this environment. As the children of inter-racial unions who inherited the homeland of their African mothers and the surnames of their European fathers, people of mixed racial ancestry in nineteenth century Sénégal occupied an ambiguous position within the colony. They established themselves as the leading commercial intermediaries in the Sénégal River trade. Faced with an economic crisis in the middle of the nineteenth century, the *métis* demonstrated their ability to adjust to the re-structuring of the colonial economy by shifting their

interests to the frontiers of the expanding colony. In addition, this group used their position as a French educated, Catholic and republican minded elite to gain access to power. The chapters on marriage and education show that by making the right match, attending the appropriate schools in metropolitan France, and entering into contemporary political debates, *métis* men and women solidified their status as citizens of France and bolstered their authority as power brokers in the colony.

The electoral institutions provided an avenue for *métis* residents to air their grievances and assert their interests at the highest levels of French authority. This dissertation investigates the struggle between colonial administrators and mixed race representatives in the town. It examines the process of negotiation and contestation over the limits of republican principles and the meaning of citizenship for Sénégal's urban residents. In assuming their position as elected officials, *métis* representatives demonstrated their ability to wield power in the Protectorate. While the administration eventually succeeded in suppressing the most powerful of the electoral institutions in Sénégal and eliminating their most fervent *métis* opponents, urban politics continued to occupy an important place in the colony.

This dissertation casts new light on the role of urban politics, identity construction and colonialism in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Sénégal. By investigating the activities of the *métis* population, this study reveals the inherent contradiction in French colonialism which professed republican principles on the one hand while engaging in imperial expansion on the other and brings to light the story of a group that existed in between citizens and subjects.

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2003

This work is dedicated to Noni whose love for Africa inspired me

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A work such as this could not have been completed without the support, encouragement and guidance of many people. I owe particular debt to the institutions that funded my graduate work and dissertation research. The CIC pre-doctoral fellowship program and the King-Chavez-Parks future faculty fellowship from the Graduate School at Michigan State were instrumental in my completion of graduate studies. An International Pre-dissertation fellowship from the Social Science research Council and a Fulbright Hays award for dissertation research allowed me to study Wolof and conduct research for this project in Sénégal and France. An Erskine A. Peters fellowship from The University of Notre Dame assisted in the write-up phase of the dissertation.

I benefited from the generous comments and suggestions of all those who listened and read my work in its initial stages. Parts of the dissertation were presented at the African Studies Association conference in Houston, TX, the Midwest African Studies Graduate Student conferences at Madison and Ann Arbor, and as part of the ISRCAD colloquium at Notre Dame. I am especially grateful for the feedback I received from Martin Klein and Joseph Miller on the entrepreneurial role of the *métis* after 1850. Ibrahima K. Sundiata offered an important suggestion for the title and Mamdou Diouf provided valuable insight on urban identity in Sénégal.

My experience living and learning in various regions of Sénégal and France taught me more than I could have imagined. This work would not have been possible without the assistance of all of the members of the National Archives in Sénégal. I am especially

grateful to Saliou Mbaye and Mamadou Ndiaye for their patience in answering questions and finding additional sources for me to explore. Professors Ibrahima Thioub, Penda Mbow and Boubacar Barry at the University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar as well as Ousmane Kane and Babacar Kante at University Gaston Berger in Saint Louis offered invaluable advice for constructing and carrying out this study in Sénégal.

While in Sénégal, I experienced the infamous *teranga* or hospitality that the country is known for. I am grateful to all of those who invited me into their home, spent time with me and helped me to better understand Sénégalese culture and society. This work was largely possible because of the kindness and generosity of the remaining descendants of this *métis* population who shared their family histories, photographs and private collections with me. Louis Camara and his family, Aicha Fall and Youssef and Anne-Marie Coulibaly welcomed me to Saint Louis and facilitated my work there. Monseigneur Pierre Sagna and his staff at the Catholic diocese in Saint Louis as well as Mr. Abdoul Hadir Aïdara at CRDS provided access to crucial documents during my stay in the town.

In France, I profited from contact with the Center for African Studies at the University of Bordeaux, the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris and the Overseas Archives in Aix-en-Provence. Historian Roger Pasquier alerted me to references on civic associations in Saint Louis contained in the *Bulletin Administratif du Sénégal*. Yves Pehaut of the Geography Department at the University of Bordeaux provided important information on the Bordeaux firms operating in Sénégal in the late nineteenth century. Georges Crespin spent time talking with me and allowed me access to valuable documents from his private family collection in Paris.

I am grateful to all of my colleagues and friends in the graduate program at MSU. Conversations with Cheikh Babou, Ghislaine Lydon, Kalala Ngalamulume, Heran Sereke Brhan and Jacqueline McLeod contributed greatly to my intellectual development. Interactions with other scholars who I met along the way also contributed to shaping this project. Mark Hinchman, Akua Sarr, Emily Lynn Osborn and Blair L.M. Kelley offered valuable suggestions and support at critical moments. My doctoral committee read the draft of the dissertation and offered thoughtful insights on the work. I sincerely appreciate Darlene Clark-Hine, Leslie Moch, Ray Silverman, Kenneth Harrow, and the late Harold Marcus for sharing their knowledge and expertise. David Robinson who supervised this dissertation opened my eyes to the extraordinary role of the Devès family and the treasure of unexploited resources contained in their family papers. I am most grateful for his comments and suggestions in every step of the process and look forward to many more conversations in the future. Finally, to my family without whose love and support none of this would have been possible and to the memory of Sarita who lived her dream in Sénégal.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

ADG	Archives Départementale de la Gironde, Bordeaux, France
ANS	Archives Nationales du Sénégal
AOF	Afrique Occidentale Française
BIFAN	Bulletin de l'Institut (Français) Fondamental d'Afrique Noire
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France
CAOM	Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France
CRDS	Centre de Recherche et Documentation du Sénégal, Saint Louis
GG	Gouvernement-général or Gouverneur-général
IFAN	Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire

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Introduction

Citizens and Subjects: *Métis* Society, Identity and the Struggle over Colonial Politics in Saint Louis, Sénégal, 1870-1920

In 1960, when Sénégal was granted Independence from French rule, several descendants of mixed race families from the town of Saint Louis assumed prominent roles in the new nation. Léopold Sédar Senghor, the first president of Sénégal, appointed members of these families to ambassadorships in Paris, London and the Vatican. Some served as the first generation of lawyers, magistrates, and representatives to Sénégal's National Assembly. André Guillabert became Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to France in Senghor's government. Prosper Dodds became the first Sénégalese bishop to preside over the Catholic diocese of Sénégal and Gambia. Others served among the country's first high-ranking military officers. Although members of this group were legally recognized as French citizens and some chose to leave Sénégal for France, others remained and played important roles in the national life of the new country.[1]

The situation of the *métis* population at the moment of Independence raises intriguing questions about the nature of colonialism, the role of urban populations and the emergence of mixed race groups in Sénégal. Who are the *métis* of Saint Louis? What kind of society did they build in the nineteenth century and how did they interpret

[1] I learned of these appointments through my interviews with the descendants of these families. During Senghor's government, Andre Guillabert served as Ambassador to Paris, Minister of Foreign Affairs and as Vice-President of the National Assembly. He was also elected mayor of Louga and Saint Louis. Henri Louis Valantin was ambassador to London and Pierre Devès was appointed to serve as Sénégal's ambassador to the Vatican. Members of the Crespin family held distinguished careers in law and served in Sénégal's judiciary. Members of the d'Erneville family became decorated officers in Sénégal's armed forces. See "Prosper Dodds," *Unir: L'Echo de Saint Louis*; Madelene Devès-Senghor, interview with author, 30 March 2001 Dakar, Sénégal; Georges Crespin, interview with author 8 June 2001, Paris, France; Christian Valantin, interview with author, 16 May 2000, Dakar, Sénégal.

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colonial rule? As a group with a long affiliation to French culture and politics they could have been considered part of the colonial regime. What accounts for their integration into Sénégalese society and how did their foremothers and forefathers contribute to shaping urban political culture in Sénégal?

This dissertation seeks to answer these questions through a careful investigation of *métis* society and identity in Saint Louis, Sénégal between 1870 and 1914. It focuses specifically on the role of this mixed race population from the expansion of territorial conquest in Sénégal after 1850 to the establishment of French West Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century. The history of Saint Louis in this period is also framed by the liberal reforms enacted by Third Republic France in the 1870s that brought more extensive political rights to residents of the coastal settlements. This dissertation is, therefore, concerned with the period between 1870 and 1914 in which members of the *métis* population in Saint Louis played a dominant role in the electoral institutions of the town.

In tracing the economic, cultural, and social foundations of the *métis* population, I establish a framework for understanding their strategies for gaining power and responding to the changing nature of French rule. This work enters into historiographical debates on colonialism, urban politics, and the construction of identity. In order to better understand the nature of this subject, we must begin with a discussion of the island of Saint Louis as the site for the emergence of this mixed race group.

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The *métis* population in Sénégal inhabited the port city of Saint Louis and built a thriving nineteenth century community at the intersection of Africa and the Atlantic world. Saint Louis, Sénégal is an island located at the mouth of the Sénégal River and the Atlantic Ocean. Founded as a commercial outpost in 1659, this island called Saint Louis by the French and *Ndar* by the Wolof gave rise to a new settlement of black African, European, and mixed race inhabitants. European merchant seaman arrived on the island from the Atlantic coast to engage in the slave and mercantile trade with Africans who came to the distant location from the inner reaches of the Sénégal River. As a result, Saint Louis emerged in the eighteenth century as one of a series of fortified trade posts along the Senegambia coast that supported a new "Afro-European trade network" that extended from Saint Louis in the north to the British settlement of Freetown in the South.

The Sénégal River originates far to the south in the mountains of Guinea. It meanders north and westward through the grassy plains of the Savannah and the arid expanses of the Sahel to empty out into the Atlantic Ocean. The rich floodplains of the Sénégal form a natural boundary at the southernmost edge of the Sahara Desert, separating the pastoral Bidan Moors who claim Arab-Berber descent on the north bank from "black African" Wolof and Fulbe agriculturalists on the south bank.[2] In the pre-colonial period, this location served as a major artery for the trans-Saharan trade. With the arrival of European commerce, Saint Louis served as a natural seaport for a lucrative

[2]The main ethnic groups that I deal with in this work concern people who inhabited the lower Sénégal. They include the Wolof of the states of Walo and Cayor, the Fulbe of Fouta Toro (also called "Tokolor" by the French), and the Trarza and Brakna Moors in present-day Mauritania. Mande and Soninke groups from also came to Saint Louis from their homes further east along the upper Sénégal. For a better idea of the geography of this region see Map of Sénégal and Surrounding Regions, Appendix A, Figure 1.

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trade in slaves, gold, and gum Arabic. The Sénégal River served as the northern boundary between the French colonies of Sénégal and Mauritania. With the end of colonial rule, the river formed the northern border between the Republic of Sénégal and the Republic of Mauritania.[3]

Historical studies of urban Sénégal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century generally focus on the Atlantic coast towns called the Four Communes that were created as a distinct administrative unit by the French in the 1880s.[4] The Four Communes refer to the original French settlements on the islands of Saint Louis and Gorée and the port cities of Dakar and Rufisque on the Cape Verde peninsula. All four towns held the same status as communes in metropolitan France. This approach to the history of urban Sénégal, however, reinforces the separation of town and country created by colonial administration. As a result, this interpretation obscures the particular characteristics of each place and the pattern of interaction that existed between commune residents and the inhabitants of the interior.[5] I focus specifically on the town of Saint Louis to understand its role in the development of colonialism and the particular nature of urban life that emerged in this location.

As the map of Saint Louis (Appendix A, Figure 2) shows, the town became the commercial and administrative capital of the colony in the nineteenth century. It served

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[3]The Senegal River provided a convenient political boundary for the French who separated the "white" Bidan inhabitants on the north bank from the "black African" Wolof and Fulbe populations on the south bank. While the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Mauritania adopted these demarcations upon Independence, the river actually existed as a fluid boundary for people of the region. For centuries it facilitated interaction, communication and movement between groups in the Senegal River valley.

[4] See Map of Saint Louis at the end of the Nineteenth Century, Appendix A, Figure 1.

[5] A classic example of this approach is G. Wesley Johnson's, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Sénégal* (Sanford: Stanford University Press, 1971). James Searing also critiques this approach in, "Accommodation and Resistance: Chiefs, Muslim Leaders, and Politicians in Colonial Sénégal," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1985), 364-365.

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as the location of the Governor's residence and the headquarters of French military operations. A small population of mostly male European representatives of French commercial firms lived on the island. The majority of black African inhabitants by 1850 were Muslim although a few black Catholics called *gourmets* also lived in the town.[6] The neighborhoods of the island reflect these religious, racial and class divisions. *Métis* and black African Catholics generally lived in the south. The north was comprised primarily of Muslim residents and the center of the island served as the seat of French authority. The villages of Guet Ndar and Ndar Toute on the Atlantic coast became home to a growing population of fishermen and their families. A new settlement called Sor was founded by the French on the adjacent mainland in 1837 to accommodate Saint Louis' growing population and the island dwellers need for land to cultivate gardens.[7]

Terminology

As a subject of historical study, people of mixed racial heritage in colonial Sénégal can prove challenging because they do not fit neatly into specific categories of analysis. They are neither subjects of colonial rule nor rulers of colonial empires. As a group, they were not all rich but neither were they poor. Physically, some could be described as "black" while others appeared "white." Some were staunch supporters of the Catholic Church. Others identified more clearly with the secularist beliefs gaining currency among freemasons and radical republicans in late nineteenth century France.

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[6] The term *gourmet* refers to the black Catholic families whose descendants were among the earliest inhabitants of the settlements. It is derived from a Portuguese term meaning apprentice seaman. I use the term black Catholic in this work since by the mid-nineteenth century they made up a very small percentage of the Saint Louis population. On the term gourmet see, Peter Mark, *'Portuguese' Style and Luso-African Identity* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), 57.

[7] See map of Saint Louis, Appendix A, Figure 2 and my discussion of the make-up of the town in Chapter two.

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Finally, *métis* women probably experienced colonialism and urban life in Sénégal differently from *métis* men. Women's stories are often overshadowed in the record by male leaders of politics and commerce.

Métis men and women considered Saint Louis as "their" capital. The majority of people of mixed racial ancestry in nineteenth century Sénégal lived in Saint Louis. A smaller population was born and raised on Gorée Island but maintained strong ties to their relatives in Saint Louis through inter-marriage and association. Even Saint Louis *métis* who branched out into regions further south along the coast and the hinterland or who traveled abroad in the late nineteenth century continued to call the town home. They maintained permanent residences in the capital, sent their children to Catholic schools in the town and returned to Saint Louis for electoral campaigns and annual meetings of the General Council. In effect, the city acted as the nexus of electoral politics and the center of *métis* social and cultural life.

One of the thorniest issues in constructing a study of people of mixed race ancestry in Sénégal is deciding upon the appropriate terminology to describe this group. Scholars have grappled with suitable terms for mixed race populations in Africa. In the literature, they are sometimes referred to as Afro-European, Eurafrican, Creole, or mulatto.[8] In Sénégal, the *métis* population referred to themselves as *mulâtre*. In the politically charged atmosphere of the late nineteenth century, however, *métis* leaders commonly identified themselves as *enfants du pays* or "children of the soil" to indicate

[8] On use of the terms AfroEuropean and EurAfrican see, Philip Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 112-119 For use of the term Creole to describe the *métis* and black Catholic population in Sénégal G. Wesley Johnson, The Emergence of Black Politics in Sénégal (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 23.

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their heritage as native Sénégalese.[9] I have adopted *métis*, the French language term for mixed race, to avoid negative connotations associated with the word *mulâtre* or mulatto.[10] It is also more accurate than the word Creole which in a French language context refers specifically to French nationals who settled in the colonies.

Historical evidence dealing with the *métis* population in Sénégal also presents particular challenges for determining the members of this group. Since they were not generally identified by race, family names often provide the only clues as to their mixed racial heritage. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the term *habitant* was used to refer to the class of black African or mixed race residents who specialized in the gum trade.[11] This group was made up of wealthy intermediary traders who also owned property in the towns and were commonly chosen to serve in local government. Official lists of notable *habitants* in the early nineteenth century are dominated by *métis* men but also included black African residents who participated in the Sénégal River trade.

Prior to 1850, the category of *habitant* distinguished town residents according to their class position rather than their racial identity. In the twentieth century, the term

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[9] For reference to the use of this popular term see the account from the Parisian journal, *Le Temps* of the 1897 elections in Saint Louis cited in Francois Manchuelle, "*Métis* et colons: La famille Devès et l'emergence politique des Africains au Sénégal, 1881-1897, *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, 96,4 (1984), 499. *Métis* councilor Georges Crespin also uses this term in a 1912 address to the General Council. "Allocution presentée par M. Georges Crespin à la session extraordinaire du Conseil General du Sénégal," 21 February 1912 (Dakar: Imprimerie, 1913). This term may also correspond with the Wolof term, *dommu Ndar* meaning the sons and daughters of Ndar that is used to refer to the inhabitants of the town.

[10] The word mulatto is derived from the word mule suggesting a sterile hybrid. More recently the concept of "hybridity" has been used by scholars to analyze the relationship between miscegenation and colonialism in the nineteenth century. The word "hybrid" as it came to be used in the nineteenth century was similar to "mulatto." For a more in-depth discussion of the term "hybridity" and its use in the nineteenth century see Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 6-28.

[11] This term was reserved exclusively for black and mixed race residents. European wholesalers were categorized as negotiants. See Abbé David Boilat's definition of *habitant* in, *Esquisses Sénégalaises* (Paris: Karthala, 1984), 5-6 and Michael David Marcson, "*European-African Interaction in the Pre-Colonial Period: Saint Louis, Sénégal 1758-1854*," (Ph.D diss., Princeton University, 1976), 32.

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originaire gained greater currency among black Muslim residents in the Four Communes as a means of emphasizing their position as citizens from the towns rather than subjects of the Protectorate.[12] I use the term *métis* and black African in order to distinguish between the two primary groups of local residents in Sénégal's towns in the late nineteenth century.

One informant described the mixed race population of nineteenth century Saint Louis as having a "double culture." This captures both aspects of their heritage. While they aspired to the privileges that identification with French culture and society offered, *métis* men and women remained closely connected to the larger African population through a complex network of social, cultural and economic ties. Admittedly, the *métis* population in colonial Sénégal represented a small number of the larger population of the coastal towns and the overwhelming numbers of African people in the interior. Between 1850 and 1900 the population of Saint Louis grew from around 15,000 to 20,000.[13] During this period, the established *métis* population in Sénégal numbered a little more than 2,000 people. Despite their small numbers, members of the *métis* population gained considerable influence in colonial Sénégal. As a group "in-between" they occupied a liminal position within the Sénégal colony and the larger French empire. In order to

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[12] More recently, scholars have adopted the word *originaire* as a pseudonym for the entire commune population including black African and *métis* residents. See for example James Searing, "Accommodation and Resistance," 366-377 and Mamadou Diouf, "Assimilation coloniale et identités religieuses de la civilité des originaires des Quatre Communes [Sénégal]," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 34,3 (2000): 565-568. This is useful in referring to the Saint Louis community as a whole but less effective in capturing the nuances of this particular segment of the community. I am grateful to Mamadou Diouf for his comments on the use of *originaire* in my work.

[13]Population statistics on the *métis* in nineteenth century Sénégal are difficult to compile because they are generally subsumed within the larger group of black, white and mixed race *habitants* in official census reports. This figure did not reflect the migrant populations or the expansion to the surrounding suburbs. This figure is taken from Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 207; Francine Ndiaye, "La colonie du Sénégal au temps de Briere de l'Isle (1876-1881)," Bulletin *de l'IFAN* 30B, 2(1968), 469 and Bonnardel, *Saint Louis du Sénégal*, 109.

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better understand the complexities of their actions and responses, the dissertation will examine the *métis* population as a non-monolithic group with a myriad of individual interests yet united in the practice of French republicanism.

Colonialism, Urban Politics, and Identity

As a group situated between West Africa and France, the *métis* embody several fields of historical inquiry. This study brings together scholarship on colonial Africa, modern France, and the nineteenth century Atlantic World. As one of the first western educated groups that had a long history of affiliation to colonial commerce, the story of the *métis* in Sénégal relates to similar histories of urban communities in the British West African colonies from Lagos, Nigeria to the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Freetown, Sierra Leone.[14] In addition, their story offers intriguing parallels with some European and mixed race settler groups like the Portuguese and Afro-Portugese *prazeros* of Mozambique.[15] The *métis* population in Sénégal provides a unique lens in which to view the relationship between colonialism, urban politics, and identity construction in francophone West Africa.

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[14] There is a significant literature on the history of the Krio Diaspora from Freetown to Nigeria and as far south as Equatorial Guinea. Examples include, Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962; John Peterson, *Province of Freedom: a History of Sierra Leone, 1787-1870* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), Leo Spitzer, *The Creoles of Sierra Leone, 1870-1945* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974); and Martin Lynn, "Commerce, Christianity and the Origins of the 'Creoles' of Fernando Po," *Journal of African History* 25(1984), 257-278. For works on elites in Nigeria and the Gold Coast see, Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities under Colonial Rule* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1999).

[15] Allen Issacman's study of the *prazeros* offers a compelling comparison with the *métis* of Sénégal even though this European settler population became more "Africanized" after centuries of living in rural settings. For more information on the *prazeros* and assimilation in colonial Mozambique see Allen F. Issacman, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972 and Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: the Zambezi Valley, 1850-1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

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Colonialism is most often described as an act of conquest or domination by one state over another. In Africa, the colonial state was primarily concerned with enforcing its authority and achieving its imperialist aims.[16] In some cases, scholars have described the colonial state as all-powerful. Other studies have drawn attention to the weakness and permeability of the colonial state. Berman and Lonsdale, for example, argue that in Kenya the British were constrained by a lack of financial resources and the difficulty of managing the interests of various groups within the colony while upholding their ideological position of being neutral and benevolent arbiters of state power.[17] Other works have shown that colonialism in Africa was more a process of negotiation between foreign rulers and local actors employing strategies to accommodate one another and respond to the situation "on the ground."[18]

Previously, studies of French colonialism in Africa focused mainly on the impact of European rule on the continent from the top down. These works addressed themes involving the nature of conquest, the economic structure of French imperialism and the ideologies that guided French empire.[19] Alice Conklin's study of the particular

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[16] Colonial Moment and seeing like the state

[17]The interests that they refer to include metropolitan merchant capital, local African producers and white settlers. While the Kenya case is unique as one of the few places in colonial Africa that supported a large white settler population, the expectations this group are similar to the demands the *métis* population placed on the state to respond to their political and civil rights in the colony. Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, "Coping with the Contradictions," (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), 77-95.

[18] Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Articles contained in *Le Temps des marabouts*, David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud, eds., Paris: Karthala, 1997; David W. Robinson, *Paths of Accomodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Sénégal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Athens: James Currey, 2000) and Emily Osborn, "'Circle of Iron': African Colonial Employees and the Interpretation of Colonial Rule in French West Africa," *Journal of African History* 44(2003): 29-50.

[19] Examples of this literature include, Raymond Betts, Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); Henri Brunschwig, *French Colonialism, 1871-1914: Myths and Realities*, tr., William G. Brown (New York: Praeger and Praeger, 1966) and Michael Crowder, *Sénégal: A Study of French Assimilation Policy* (London: Methuen, 1967). For work on military

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"civilizing mission" implemented by French officials in West Africa during the Third Republic offers important insight into the ways in which colonial administrators sought to reconcile their aggressive imperialism with republican ideals.[20] Although these studies further our understanding of the mechanisms of control and domination and the nature of the colonial state, they do not address the interactive nature of the colonial process.

My study of the mixed race population in nineteenth century Sénégal substantiates the view that in order to understand colonialism in Africa we must understand local dynamics and how the relationship between the state and people in the colonies evolved over time. Investigating the activities of members of the Saint Louis community reveals the nature of this process. It also shows the inherent contradiction in French colonialism that created democratic government in the coastal enclaves, on the one hand, and authoritarian rule in the interior, on another. The policy of assimilation that allowed for the co-existence of republican principles and imperial pursuits opened a space in which local actors could gain significant power and influence within the apparatus of state control. Chapters six and seven explicitly investigate the nature of this contest for power and the ways in which the activities of Sénégal's "citizens" complicated the process of enforcing colonial rule.

A second theme guiding this study is the role of urban elites and urban politics in colonial Africa. In the nineteenth century, indigenous inhabitants of West Africa's port

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and civilian officials see, A.S. Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and William B. Cohen, Rulers of Empire: The French Colonial Service in Africa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971). On French imperialism see, Jean Suret-Canale, *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa, 1900-1945*, trans., Till Gottheiner (New York: Pica Press, 1971) and Jacques Marseille, *Empire colonial et capitalisme francais: Histoire d'un divorce* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1984).

[20] Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 1-10.

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cities derived their elite status from their role as intermediaries in international commerce. By the end of the century, many of these groups lost their commercial advantage and sought new avenues for socio-economic mobility through Christian missionary schools, European commercial firms, or the colonial bureaucracy. Urban elites in the British West African colonies, for example, established themselves as leaders in the Protestant missions or as members of the limited representative institutions called Legislative Councils.[21] In late nineteenth century Sénégal, the ability for urban residents to claim citizenship rights and participate in electoral institutions gave mixed race inhabitants far more extensive privileges within the colonial system.

Scholarship on urban elites in Africa has generally focused on the rise of western educated groups and the origins of modern nationalism.[22] Previous studies on this topic, however, tend to reinforce the division between urban and rural established by the colonial order. In this framework, urban Africans appear as a "detribalized" group who rejected elements of their African identity to embrace "modern" values.[23] As a result,

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[21] On the missionary history of the Krios of Freetown see Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*. For African elites in missions in Nigeria see Jacob Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: the making of a new elite* (London: Longman, 1965). On African elites in the Legislative councils of the British colonies see Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p.203-204 and Barbara E. Harrell-Bond, Allen M. Howard and David E. Skinner, *Community Leadership and the Transformation of Freetown 1801-1976*, (The Hague: Mouton, 1978).

[22] Examples include; James Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958); Harrell-Bond et al., *Community Leadership and the Transformation of Freetown*; G. Wesley Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Sénégal*; Kristin Mann, *Marrying Well: Marriage, Status, and Social Change among the Educated Elite in Colonial Lagos* and Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1986)

[23] Abner Cohen discusses the meaning of "detribalized" and "retribalized" in his analysis of custom and urban politics for Hausa migrants in Yoruba towns. Although Cohen focuses on Nigeria after Independence, his argument about the ways in which urban groups exaggerated their distinctiveness in the towns to gain power in urban politics relates to the ways in which the *métis* used their identity to bolster their claim to leadership. Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 1-5.

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scholarship on this subject stemmed from interest in the role that elite men played as leaders of Independence movements and the rulers of post-colonial nations.

The subject of citizenship in French West Africa provides additional insight into the dichotomy between urban and rural established by the colonial order. As the only colony in which residents of the Four Communes were granted citizenship rights, the policy of assimilation as applied in Sénégal distinguished urban citizens from rural subjects. In examining the legacy of these policies in Africa, Mamdani argues that the colonial state excluded Africans from civil society by creating a barrier that separated European citizens in the colonial centers from Africans governed by an authoritarian regime in the rural "customary sphere."[24] Recent studies on the question of citizenship for Muslim residents of Sénégal's colonial towns, however, have shown that for this group their "customary status" as Muslims did not conflict with their claim to the rights and privileges guaranteed citizens of the communes.[25]

This study of the *métis* population in Sénégal counters the assumption that colonial rule created a strict division between urban citizens and rural subjects. My work shows that in the late nineteenth century, colonial rule was shaped by a struggle between local inhabitants of the towns and French officials for influence over Africans in the interior. *Métis* leaders in Sénégal relied on a complex web of social, economic, and political ties in their interactions with Africans in the frontier regions of the colony.

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[24] Mahmood Mamdani offers a compelling explanation for the weakness of the contemporary state in Africa by examining the legacy of colonial policies of direct and indirect rule on the continent. While these divisions were established at specific moments, his analysis doesn't take into account how this process developed over time or how both colonizer and colonized shaped the process. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 9-18.

[25] Mamdou Diouf, "Assimilation coloniale et identities religieuses de la civilite des originaires des Quatre Communes (Sénégal)," 565-587 and Rebecca Shereikis, "From Law to Custom: The Shifting Legal Status of Muslim Originaires in Kayes and Medine, 1903-13," *Journal of African History* 42(200), 261-283.

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Moreover, this group understood that their ability to monopolize access to the democratic institutions bolstered their authority with African rulers, traders and families beyond the towns. Chapters four and five provide a window into the private lives of this urban elite through an investigation of their marital practices and educational choices. My findings, thus, illustrate a more complex relationship between the private and public spheres in urban politics of late nineteenth century Sénégal.

The construction of identity in francophone West Africa constitutes a third theme of analysis in this study. Recent works by historians and anthropologists on the culture of colonialism have added valuable perspective on the meaning of race, class, and gender in the context of empire.[26] Specifically, these works examine how European rulers transferred notions of what it meant to be metropolitan to the colonies and how ideas like French republicanism or British Protestantism were in turn transformed by the colonial experience. In her work on Indonesia, Ann Laura Stoler suggests that colonial cultures are not transplanted European societies but "unique cultural configurations in which European food, dress, housing and morality were given new meanings in the particular social order of colonial rule."[27] Her analysis offers important insight into how this process produced new social and cultural formations in colonial capitals from a European perspective. My work contributes to this discussion by focusing on the ways in which local residents of these urban spaces interpreted the cultures introduced by colonial powers.

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[26] Nicholas B. Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[27] Ann Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," *Comparative Studies of Society and History* (1989), 136.

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I am interested in understanding how a group that existed between colonizer and colonized understood the metropole and their relationship to empire. How did the *métis* interpret Third Republic France and bourgeois society? What meanings did they give to notions of race, class, and gender in colonial Sénégal? To examine these questions my study draws upon research on citizenship and civic life in late nineteenth century France. As a group that valued their close association with metropolitan French society, the *métis* population was informed of contemporary debates on politics, economics, education, and religion. At the same time they translated their understanding of these issues to their experience in colonial Sénégal. Awareness of these intersections furthers our understanding of the world *métis* families lived in. [28]

In order to examine the history of this mixed race group, my work has benefited from comparison with the studies of the construction of identity for similar communities in the islands and port cities of the nineteenth century Atlantic World. The *métis* population of Sénégal, for example, associated with a number of *gens du couleur* from the French West Indies who attended the same schools in France, served in the French military, and rose to positions of leadership in French government and politics. Moreover, the experience of mixed race communities in coastal Sénégal raises intriguing questions about what Leo Spitzer termed, "the predicament of marginality," that faced similar groups of mixed race or free black ancestry in new world societies shaped by

[28]G. Wesley Johnson's edited volume, Double Impact, was one of first works to call attention to the need for scholars to understand colonialism as a reciprocal process. The articles in this volume not only address the impact of European culture on the colonized but how the culture of inhabitants of the colonies shaped the colonizer. See G. Wesley Johnson, "Introduction," *Double Impact: France and Africa in the Age of Imperialism.* Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1985): 3-15.

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slavery, colonialism and emancipation.[29] In placing this group within the context of other New World societies who grappled with questions of cultural assimilation and the politics of race and class this study casts new light on the ways in which inhabitants of Africa's coastal settlements shaped and re-shaped their identity in the period of colonial rule.[30] d

Civil Society, *Habitus*, and Symbolic Capital

The concept of civil society has recently generated a great deal of attention in debates on state-society relations and the meaning of democracy in Africa, Latin American and Eastern Europe.[31] Although the intellectual discourse around civil society developed in response to the rise of nations states in western Europe, I believe that this concept can be applied to the study of urban politics in colonial Sénégal. Recently, a new body of work has emerged that examines the relationship between citizenship and Islam in Sénégal.[32] By examining these questions from the perspective of an assimilated,

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[29]Leo Spitzer, *Lives in Between: The Experience of Marginality in a Century of Emancipation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 129-137.

[30]For comparative studies on free people of color in the New World that offer insight into these questions see David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene, eds., *Neither Slave nor Free: The freedmen of African descent in the slave societies of the New World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); Virginia R. Dominguez, *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1994), and James H. Dormon, ed., *Creoles of Color in the Gulf South* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996).

[31] Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Jean Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (New York: Longman, 1993); Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizenship and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and John L. and Jean Comaroff, eds., *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[32]Leonardo Villalon's, *Islamic Society and State Power in Sénégal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) deals with the relationship between the contemporary state and Muslim societies in Sénégal. He argues that Islamic orders in Sénégal play a stabilizing role in Sénégal's current political system. Further investigation into the relationship between town residents and French officials in the colonial period adds greater insight into how this pattern developed in Sénégalese politics.

French educated, republican-minded group, this study offers a new perspective on the development of civil society in Sénégal from the period of French rule. Moreover, an investigation of the activities of *métis* men and women reveals both the limitations that colonialism presented for the development of democratic politics and the spaces that were created that allowed for civil society to gain momentum in this setting.[33]

I define civil society as institutions that have some autonomy from the state and thus act as a mediating force between the populace and the government. The *métis* community formed institutions of civil society to assert their interests at the highest levels of French authority. The existence of civil society appeared in relation to state authority that was represented by the colonial administration in Sénégal, on the one hand, and Third Republic government in Paris, on the other. Sénégal presents a unique case for the operation of civil society because the electoral institutions afforded commune residents a political voice beyond the administrative apparatus of colonial rule. Consequently, *métis* politicians often took their conflicts with colonial officials to Paris lawmakers for resolution. In establishing institutions of civil society, *métis* leaders set precedents for black African politicians in the twentieth century and created a legacy of electoral politics that is still evident in Sénégal today.

In following Alfred Stepan's analysis of political society in Brazil, I consider electoral politics as the "arena of political contestation" for commune residents because it involved political institutions that could be distinguished from the administration. The organizations of civil society, therefore, consist of the political arena of electoral politics

[33]It may be more accurate to talk about civil society in the communes as a "colonial civil society" to emphasize the fact that the development of civil society could only occur in a limited form within the context of colonialism. In a sense the policy of assimilation in Senegal was an anomaly because it granted citizenship rights and democratic government to a very limited population in French West Africa.

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and the social arena of family, associations, social movements and forms of public communication. For the *métis* population, the social dimension of civil society was represented through family alliances, membership in the Church or Masonic lodges, schools, and the short-lived independent press. Analyzing the development of civil society in Saint Louis offers a new perspective on the dynamics of social and political relationships in Sénégal and shows that conflicts over the meaning of citizenship in the colonies shaped notions of citizenship and democracy in metropolitan France.

Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theories also provide a compelling framework for understanding how social behavior and cultural orientation function in response to new situations. Bourdieu uses *habitus* instead of culture to explain how socialization, tradition and an individual's earliest past experiences provide mechanisms for developing strategies to respond to change.[34] For instance, *métis* men and women constantly re-enforced their connection to the metropole by sending their children to France for secondary education and by maintaining residences and business partnerships in Bordeaux. At the same time, they used their fluency in Wolof and their familiarity with Muslim practices to forge alliances with black African politicians in the cities and Muslim leaders in the interior. The *métis* community capitalized on their dual identity to solidify their elite status and seek advantages from metropolitan capitalists, colonial officials and their African neighbors.

[34] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). Bourdieu's analysis of family and educational strategies among the French upper classes contains important parallels with the *métis* case. For a discussion of the role of schools in the production and reproduction of the educated upper classes see Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools and the Field of Power*, trans. Lauretta C. Clough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

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Secondly, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital also lends important insight into the relationship between the public and private spheres in Saint Louis.[35] For example, my examination of marriage as a strategy for the accumulation of wealth and power relies on his argument that a successful marriage alliance in kin based societies depends upon the material and symbolic or cultural capital that each party possesses. Moreover, the ability to mobilize and effectively use these resources to negotiate the most advantageous union for the family bolstered the credibility of all individuals in their public activities. For *métis* families, the honor and prestige of the household and the ability to command all of the people associated with it provided the key mechanism for producing and expanding the family's symbolic capital which, in turn, generated greater economic resources and bolstered their credibility with important segments of the population during election time. Consequently, an understanding of these various forms of capital as resources to be used to gain access to power in the political arena allows for a greater understanding of the complexity of urban politics in Saint Louis.

Methodology and Organization

The history of the *métis* population in nineteenth century Sénégal is largely a history of families. Individuals within the *métis* community knew one another by family name and reputation. The further one could trace their descent in time to an eighteenth century *signare* and a Frenchmen conferred respectability and acceptance within the

[35] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 58-61 and 171-183.

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upper echelons of the group.[36] The proper family connections, thus, ensured one's social standing within the community and even determined the ability of male leaders to amass power. Moreover, like other groups in Sénégal, the inter-related nature of these families commonly produced rivalries and competition both in the political and private realms. Consequently, I have organized this study in terms of family histories.[37] Examining the family profiles of leading individuals illuminates the tensions that existed within this community and also highlights the strategies that they developed through family alliances to build and maintain their position as power-brokers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Chapters six and seven pay particular attention to the history of the Devès family since their leadership role is often underestimated in studies of urban politics in colonial Sénégal.

This dissertation recasts the political history of the communes by examining the impact of social organization and cultural practices on urban politics. This approach illuminates the complexity of the relationship between commune residents and colonial officials by focusing on the strategies that *métis* men and women developed to respond to the changes brought about by the colonial regime and secure their political rights as members of the Republic. Specifically, I delve deeper into the intricacies of marriage alliances and educational paths to uncover the network of social relationships that were formed through these institutions and how this group obtained knowledge of French law, politics, and society. To accomplish this, I relied on both public and private archival sources as well as interviews with informants. I collected data on commune politics, the

[36] *Signare* was the title given to black African and mixed race women from Saint Louis and Goree who entered into temporary marriages with European men. The word *signare* is derived from the Portuguese term *senhora*.

[37] For a sketch of selected family histories see the family profiles in Appendix B.

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Chapter one gives information on the primary and secondary sources used for this study in greater detail. It places my investigation of *métis* society and identity within the historical literature on Sénégal. It also considers questions that arise in constructing a study of Saint Louis from archival and oral sources. Chapter two describes the transition of the colony of Sénégal from a French settlement for trade to the capital of the Sénégal colony and the expanding French West African Empire. I discuss the process of conquest and the structure of French rule in Sénégal. I also examine the development of civic institutions and the main representatives of civil society in late nineteenth century Saint Louis.

Chapter three traces the economic foundations of *métis* society from 1750 to 1850. I begin with a discussion of their emergence as a group and their primary role as intermediaries in Atlantic commerce. The second section gives an overview of the economic and social crisis that this group faced between 1848 and 1852. The final section considers the strategies they adopted to respond to the changing environment in the period to 1870. Chapters four and five explore the culture and social networks that the *métis* population developed in the nineteenth century. Chapter four focuses specifically on religion, marriage and material culture. I examine their affiliation to the Catholic Church, their marriage practices and the ways in which *métis* men and women articulated their distinctive identity through dress and building styles. Chapter five continues this analysis with a consideration of their educational background and their

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transition from commerce to employment in the colonial bureaucracy and liberal professions. The final section places the *métis* within the context of the ideological debates shaping Third Republic France and examines the civic and Church-based associations that they belonged to in the late nineteenth century.

Chapters six and seven focus on how these social and cultural networks informed their political activities between 1870 and 1920. Both chapters explore the nature of *métis* society in this period through a biographical sketch of the primary coalitions in electoral politics. Chapter six deals with the liberal reforms enacted by the Third Republic and the development of electoral politics in the Saint Louis community from 1870-1890. I investigate the emergence of *métis* leadership and the seminal events that established their role as power brokers in the expanding colony. Chapter seven examines the struggle for power between *métis* leaders and colonial officials from 1890 to 1920. This chapter offers greater insight into how the *métis* population responded to the changing nature of colonialism its impact on the political survival of this group. I end with a discussion of *métis* responses to the emergence of a new group of black African leaders and the changes in urban politics after World War I.

Sénégal is one of the few regions of West Africa to have been influenced by centuries of direct contact with the Islamic world and the Atlantic world. This dissertation is an exploration into the relationship between Sénégal and France through the eyes of the *métis* population in late nineteenth century Saint Louis. Before we examine the nature of colonial rule in Sénégal, let us begin with a consideration of the historiography and the various interpretations that have shaped our understanding of Saint Louis' past.

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Chapter 1
History and Memory: Understanding the Past in Saint Louis

The image of the *signare*, a title given to *métis* and black African women in the pre-colonial era who engaged in temporary unions with European men called *mariage à la mode du pays*, dominates popular depictions of the history of Saint Louis and its inhabitants.[1] As a symbol of beauty, opulence and *métissage* the image of the *signare* has become the object of consumption for western strangers and local inhabitants alike. She appears in advertisements for local products and as the subject of films depicting the nostalgia of inter-racial romance and the age of Europe's "discovery" of Africa.[2] Contemporary Sénégalese authors and artists have imagined her world of high society balls and teas in the pages of novels as well as on the canvases of glass paintings.[3] Even recent efforts to encourage tourism and re-energize the city evoke memories of the colonial era through an annual jazz festival and revival of the celebrated *fanals*.[4] The *fanal* festival, once associated with Christmas eve, recalls a time when lavish two story

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[1] The French term "*mariage à la mode du pays*," was adopted to describe the particular marriage practices that developed in Saint Louis and *Gorée*, that were not legal according to the Catholic Church or French state but were legitimate according to Wolof custom.

[2]Director Bernard Giraudeau's 1996 film *Les Caprices d'un Fleuve* is set in Saint Louis in 1786 and explores the subject of inter-racial romance and Europe's "discovery" of Africa. The film is based on the journal of the Chevalier de Boufflers, an eighteenth century governor of the Sénégal Company who married Anne Sabran, a *signare* from Gorée Island.

[3]In 1873 Pierre Loti published *Roman d'un Spahi* a novel about a French military officer who falls in love with three women (a *métis* woman, a European and a black woman from Galam) while serving in Sénégal. For contemporary novels on this subject see, Abdoulaye Sadji, *Nini: Mulâtresse du Sénégal* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1988) and Tita Mandeleau, *Signare Anna* (Dakar: NEAS, 1991). Moussa Johnson is a Sénégalese artist from Saint Louis known for his glass paintings of *Signares* and their society.

[4] Mamadou Moustapha Dieng, "Saint-Louis du Sénégal et son fanal, naissance et évolution d'une fête," *Fêtes urbaines en Afrique*, Odile Goerg ed (Paris: Karthala, 1999), 37-49. For more on similar lantern festivals in other cities along the Senegambian coast see, Jenny Oram, "Float Traditions in Sierra Leone and The Gambia," *African Arts* 31,3(summer 1998): 50-57 and Judith Bettelheim, "The Lantern Festival in Senegambia," *African Arts* 28,2(Feb 1985): 50-54.

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paper mâché replicas of candle lit ships, houses and colonial buildings were paraded through the streets of Saint Louis by servants charged with lighting the way for European and *métis* city dwellers making their way to evening mass. Today the festival is recreated to mark Christmas, the New Year and sometimes the end of Ramadan with paper mâché lanterns now fashioned after mosques, schools or other symbolic institutions that represent each neighborhood in competition for the best *fanal*. The festival centers on the historical image of the *signare* and reaffirms the city's legacy of diversity as men and women adorn the dress of various racial and ethnic groups of the region. Contemporary production of the *fanals* and the jazz festival builds on the centuries old tradition of multiculturalism associated with the city by drawing on a positive vision of the colonial past.

This chapter discusses the primary and secondary sources used in this study. It examines two discourses that inform our understanding of Saint Louis' past; the way in which this past is constructed in collective and individual memory and the way in which scholars have established a narrative of the city's past. As the above examples suggest, in order to understand the history of Saint Louis we must consider how the past is remembered and refashioned in the present. Historical investigation is a dynamic process that involves a synthesis of tangible evidence of the past with the ways in which history is remembered. Oral history, therefore, provides critical information to supplement the narrative of colonial rule that emerges from archival sources. Due largely to the impact of subaltern studies and postmodern theory, the field of colonial studies now recognizes the importance of oral and cultural history as a means of establishing counter-narratives

to official interpretations of European rule in Africa.[5] I maintain that oral history and analysis of material culture are central to a more complete understanding of colonial rule in urban Sénégal.

Saint Louis in the Popular Imagination

Characterizations of the *signare* and the "golden age" of *métis* society in the pre-colonial period pervade both popular culture interpretations of Saint Louis' history and scholarly work on the history of African and European relations in Sénégal. This image is mainly derived from the first hand accounts of French and British travelers to the islands of Gorée and Saint Louis in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The descriptions offered by Lamiral (1789), Pruneau de Pommegorge (1789) and Durand (1802) all give detailed descriptions of the *signares* of Gorée and Saint Louis.[6] These accounts consistently depict the *signares* as beautiful and desirable women known for their opulent lifestyle. Their writings emphasize the elaborate dress of the *signares* that combined European fabrics and Wolof style, their distinctive conical head ties and their display of gold filigree jewelry acquired through their trading ventures and fabricated by local goldsmiths. Moreover, these authors relate the tradition of Wolof and Christian marriage ceremonies between Sénégalese women and European men, inter-racial balls

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[5] For some current scholarship on these approaches and their relevance to colonial studies see, Nicholas B. Dirks, editor, *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995) and Michel-Rolf Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995). For a recent discussion of memory and African history see, Richard Roberts, "History and Memory: The Power of Statist Narratives,"*International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33,3(2000): 513-522.

[6] For selections of their writings see, George Brooks. This is a selection of the vast literature of European explorers to Saint Louis and this region of West Africa. For more information on this literature see John D.

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called *folgars* and a society in which slaves were dedicated to their owners and could be hired out for commerce or to serve company officials. The record established by these writers concerns the era of the slave and mercantile trade when the *signares* and their *métis* descendants served as commercial and cultural intermediaries between Europeans and Africans. Consequently, the impression of a harmonious inter-racial society that these authors conveyed in their writings has influenced subsequent interpretations of this period in Saint Louis' history.

Contemporary Sénégalese novelists offer another perspective on *métis* society and colonial rule in Saint Louis. Their fictional works center on the world that *signares* and their descendants created in this town and address issues such as the ambiguity of *métis* identity, the decadence of the colonial city and the politics of race, class, gender and color in this setting. Abdoulaye Sadji's novel, *Nini: Mulatresse du Sénégal* (1951) takes place in Saint Louis in the twentieth century at the height of French administrative organization in the capital city of the colony of Sénégal.[7] Born in Rufisque in 1910, Sadji drew upon his background as a Muslim *originaire* of one of the Four Communes and his observations of Catholic society while a student at *Ecole Blanchot* in Saint Louis and then the *Ecole Normale William Ponty* on Gorée in the 1920s.[8] Sadji's depiction of *métis* society and his characterization of *Nini* was also influenced by his involvement with the

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Hargreaves, ed., *France and West Africa: An Anthology of Historical Documents* (London: Macmillan Press, 1969), p.65-73.

[7] Abdoulaye Sadji, *Nini: Mulâtresse du Sénégal*, 3rd edition (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1988).

[8] Amadou Booker Washington Sadji's biography of his father Abdoulaye Sadji gives significant detail of the author's life and highlights his involvement with *gourmet* (black Catholic) society in Saint Louis and Gorée and with Creole families in Zuiginchor and Kaolack while working as a school teacher. In 1945, Sadji married Simone Carrère, a descendant of a *métis* family from Saint Louis. See Amadou Booker Washington Sadji, *Adboulaye Sadji: Biographie 1910-1961* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1997).

negritude movement and Post World War II anti-colonial politics that rejected the doctrine of assimilation to France. He thus conceived of this work as a representation of the "eternal *mulâtresse*" who could be recognized in Sénégal just as in the Antilles or North and South America.[9] In the introduction to the novel, Sadji describes his conceptualization in the following statement:

> This is the portrait of a physically and morally hybrid being who, in the unconsciousness of his most spontaneous reactions, always seeks to elevate himself above the condition done to him, that is to say above humanity that considers him as inferior but to which destiny is inexorably tied.[10]

In this depiction, the subject is portrayed as a "tragic mulatto" who is at odds within her own African society and yet aspires to acceptance in European society despite its rejection of her.

Tita Mandeleau's historical novel, *Signare Anna*, published in 1991, fictionalizes Saint Louis in the era of the Atlantic slave trade.[11] The novel takes place in the mid-eighteenth century at the time of Company rule and British occupation of the island enclaves of Saint Louis and Gorée.[12] Mandeleau, who comes from Martinique, married into a *métis* Saint Louisian family and thus presents an intimate portrait of the inner-circle

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[9] Abdoulaye Sadji also composed a poem entitled "Mulâtresses" as a student at William Ponty on *Gorée* in 1928. This poem conveys his distaste for what he considered the superficiality of *métis* women. See Amadou Booker Washington Sadji, *Abdoulaye Sadji Biographie*, p.25.

[10] Sadji, *Nini.*

[11] Tita Mandeleau, *Signare Anna* (Dakar: NEAS, 1991).

[12] From 1673 to 1791 French charter companies (ending with the Compagnie du Sénégal) maintained factories and fortified installations in Saint Louis and *Gorée*. The British captured the island forts in 1758 until *Gorée* was returned to the French in 1763 and Saint Louis was retaken in 1779. The British occupied the islands again from 1800 to 1817.

of this society. She offers meticulous historical detail derived from both the public record and access to the private archives of these families. Through the character of *signare* Anna, the matriarch of the family, the author examines the complexity of multi-cultural identity and the tensions produced in a society based on slave ownership, racial hierarchy and the politics of European imperialism. The novel further explores the centrality of Wolof cultural practices, beliefs and mores and their important function in *métis* society. Mandeleau's work, however, adds an interesting dimension in her depiction of this fiercely independent community shaped by its dual African and European heritage yet rooted in a uniquely Sénégalese, rather than a new world, context.

The body of work mentioned above has contributed to forming an image of Saint Louis and its multiracial past in the popular imagination. Contemporary depictions of the *signares* and their *métis* descendants are taken mainly from the detailed descriptions afforded by eighteenth and early nineteenth century observers. As a result, the common conception of Saint Louis' in the pre-colonial era is one of racial, ethnic and religious pluralism when the *métis* emerged as the dominant cross-cultural brokers between Africans in the interior and European strangers on the coast. Sénégalese novelists have expanded on this perception of the past by considering the exploitative and decadent nature of the colonial city and the ambivalence of multi racial, class and religious identities in this setting. Similar historical events and themes of power, wealth, and identity have emerged as the subject of scholarly inquiry and debate. The following section examines themes in the historical literature that inform scholarly interpretations of colonialism in Sénégal and the history of Saint Louis.

Saint Louis in the Historical Literature

The city of Saint Louis has attracted a great deal of attention from scholars due to its geographical location as a strategic nineteenth century port for export commerce, military conquest, and colonial administration. The wealth of material generated through the administrative infrastructure and local electoral institutions provides a large body of documentation on the political history of this particular city and the Four Communes generally. Although the historical literature on this city in the nineteenth century is dense, the nature of these sources has engendered interpretations of French rule in Saint Louis that are mainly derived from the official record. Consequently, scholars who study this subject have focused primarily on questions of slavery and the slave trade, race relations, imperial commerce, colonial policy, and the origins of modern nationalism. This section traces trends in the historical literature and situates the present study within the current scholarship on the history of the town and its inhabitants.

The city of Saint Louis and the emergence of a mixed race population in this coastal region of West Africa appear in studies of trade and commercial relations in the pre-colonial period. Specifically, scholars interested in the Atlantic slave trade, slavery in the towns and the mercantile trade in gold, gum and grain have examined the role of "Eurafricans" or Afro-Europeans as intermediaries between European traders on the coast and African kingdoms in the interior.[13] Philip Curtin's economic history of Senegambia

[13]For example see Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1975) and Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For studies of the early Afro-Portugese communities along the lower Senegambia and upper Guinea coast see Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545 to 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); George Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society and Trade in Western Africa 1000-1630* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) and Peter Mark, "The Evolution of `Portuguese' Identity: Luso-Africans on the Upper Guinea Coast from the 16th to the early nineteenth century," *Journal of African History* 40(1999), 173-191. The studies presented at a 1998 symposium sponsored by the University Cheikh Anta Diop on the slave trade

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in the era of the slave trade maintains that the Afro-French of Saint Louis formed part of an "Afro-European trading diaspora" and fulfilled needed roles as "cross cultural brokers" not only in commerce but in matters of diplomacy, security and local governance as well.[14] His perspective, however, considers the Afro-European population as mere extensions of European trade networks rather than as local traders who formed competing networks in their own right.

A number of studies have returned to the "exotic" history of the *signares*, their lifestyle and culture.[15] Historians have been particularly interested in the dominant presence of women, both slave and free, on these islands. George Brooks 1976 article on the *signares* of Saint Louis and Gorée examines their role as entrepreneurs in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[16] He concludes that "*signareship*" was an advantageous system that fit the economic and social needs of both European men seeking companionship and personal gain, and African and "Eurafrican" women seeking to acquire European merchandise. James Searing's 1993 monograph challenges the romantic vision of *signare* society by arguing that these women acted as catalysts for the

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and Saint Louis has recently been published as Djibril Samb, ed., *Saint Louis et l'Esclavage* (Dakar: IFAN, 2000).

[14] Curtin defines the "Afro-European trading diaspora" as encompassing "long term European residents, mulattoes and African brokers," who were "Afro-European" in culture. Curtin, *Economic Change*, p.95. See also, Philip Curtin, *Cross Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[15] The most recent popular history account emphasizing the exotic of Saint Louis' past is Jean Pierre Biondi's, *Saint Louis du Sénégal: mémoires d'un métissage* (Paris: Editions Denoël, 1987).

[16] George E. Brooks, "The Signares of Saint Louis and *Gorée*: Women Entrepreneurs in eighteenth Century Sénégal," in *Women in Africa*, ed. Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

development of slave owning society in Saint Louis and Gorée.[17] Searing maintains that domestic slavery provided a mechanism for *signare* women merchants to insert themselves into the Atlantic economy by acquiring slaves that could be hired out for trade expeditions, provide domestic labor, reproduce the slave population, and produce grain for African workers on the islands and the slave population in transit to the new world. Searing makes a persuasive argument for further analysis of the history of Saint Louis and Gorée as urban slave societies emerging at the "interface of the Atlantic world and Senegambia."[18]

Histories of the *métis* in Sénégal tend to concentrate on the period before 1850 and thus neglect examination of the complexity of their responses to colonialism in the second half of the nineteenth century.[19] In a case study of European-African interaction in Sénégal from 1753 to 1854, Michael David Marcson discusses the "oligarchic" nature of *habitant* families and their evolution into a distinct group with specific economic and political interests. This study provides an economic explanation of the role of the *métis* in the expansion of French imperialism in the pre-colonial period. Natalie Reyss and Sylvain Sankale examine the same period of *métis* dominance in the gum trade and the ascendancy of *métis notables* in early electoral politics and government service. Reyss asserts that racial mixing acted as a means of survival for French men unaccustomed to

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[17] James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Sénégal River valley, 1700-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[18] Ibid., xi.

[19] The three dissertations under consideration here are Michael David Marcson, "European-African Interaction in the Pre-Colonial Period: Saint Louis Sénégal, 1758-1854" (Ph.D diss., Princeton University, 1976); Natalie Reyss, "Saint Louis du Sénégal à l'époque pre-coloniale: l'émergence d'une société métisse originale, 1658-1854" (Thèse de 3éme cycle, Université Paris I, 1983) and Sylvain Sankale, "A la mode du Pays...Chroniques Saint Louisiennes d'Antoine Francois Feuiltaine, Saint Louis, Sénégal 1788-1835" (Thèse de Doctorat, l'Université de Montpellier II, 1998).

living in a tropical climate. She further suggests that this produced a unique form of *métissage* or creolization based on racial tolerance rather than segregation as occurred in the French Caribbean.[20] Sankale's more recent dissertation chronicles the evolution of social and cultural institutions in Saint Louis through the biography of a French notable and his *métis* family. These two studies offer description of the social and cultural life of the *métis* community in the nineteenth century in much greater detail. Yet all three scholars conclude that the mixed race population in Sénégal reached the height of their influence once France embarked on a new phase of imperial expansion in the mid-1850s.

Recently, several historical studies have stimulated debate over whether the Sénégalese commercial elite were able to sustain their position in the colonial economy in the second half of the nineteenth century.[21] Samir Amin's neo-Marxist analysis of the history of the commercial bourgeoisie in Sénégal describes the great Saint Louis and Gorée families (mainly *métis* and Wolof inhabitants) as the first generation of Sénégalese commercial elites.[22] Roger Pasquier affirms the importance of this group of commercial agents and the powerful trading houses they created in his study of the economic crisis in

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[20] Reyss' theory of *métis*sage as a means of survival is interesting in its analysis of demographic and public health issues within this community. Her thesis of "*signareship*" however, fails to take into account the economic motives of European men. Moreover, her comparison does of Saint Louis to the French Caribbean does not take in to consideration the ways in which Saint Louis' history may parallel to that of urban slave societies like Charleston or New Orleans.

[21] This debate is outlined in Boubacar Barry and Leonhard Harding, eds., *Commerce et commerçants en Afrique de l'ouest: Le* Sénégal (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992). For more on Sénégalese traders and the implementation of French commercial firms see Laurence Marfaing, *L'Evolution du commerce au Sénégal 1820-1930* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991).

[22] Samir Amin, "La politique coloniale française à l'égard de la bourgeoisie commerçante senegalaise (1820-1960), in *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*, ed., Claude Meillassoux (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971): 361-376.

Sénégal at the middle of the nineteenth century.[23] Both authors, however, conclude that the definitive disappearance of Saint Louis traders occurred between 1850 and 1860.

Laurence Marfaing challenges this argument in her work on the development of commerce in colonial Sénégal.[24] She maintains that in 1880 a network of African traders, coming from Saint Louis and Gorée, emerged in the peanut trade and adapted to the conditions created by French commercial houses with the approval of the colonial administration. In a case study of Hamet Gora Diop, a Muslim resident of Saint Louis, Mamadou Diouf suggests that Diop exemplified the success of a number of independent Sénégalese traders who acted as middlemen in the import and export trade of the Upper Sénégal region at the end of the nineteenth century.[25] This work, followed by a similar study on Gambian traders by Mohamed Mbodji, argues for a revision of Pasquier's thesis by situating the marginalization of local commercial agents in the early twentieth century.[26] According to these studies by 1920 monopoly capital firms from Bordeaux and Marseille with their Lebanese agents succeeded in dominating the intermediary trade in peanuts and eliminating the role of both *métis* and black African middlemen.

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[23] Roger Pasquier, "Le Sénégal au milieu du 19ème siécle: la crise economique et social," (Thèse du doctorat d'Etat Université du Paris IV, 1987).

[24] Laurence Marfaing, *L'Evolution du commerce au Sénégal 1820-1930*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1991).

[25] Mamadou Diouf, "Traitants ou negociants? Les commercants Saint Louisiens (2e moite du 19ème siécle-debut 20 siécle) Hamet Gora Diop (1846-1910), étude de cas," in *Commerce et commercants*, p. 107-153. Barry cites Abdoulaye Bathily's 1985 dissertation that makes the argument that the process of eliminating independent traders occurred after the economic depression of 1875-1880 and that there was a significant growth in the volume of peanut trade and influx of independent African traders to the Upper Sénégal region in the 1880s.

[26] Mohamed Mbodji, "D'une frontière á l'autre ou l'histoire de la marginalisation des commercants sénégambiens sur la longue durée: la Gambie de 1816 a 1979," in *Commerce et commerçants*, p.191-241. Mbodji discusses the links between the Saint Louis traders and the Christianized African or Aku traders and Muslim traders in this region. He maintains that the Aku and Saint Louis *métis* operated as independent traders in peanut exports between 1860 and 1890.

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Although my study does not specifically address commerce, it does provide additional information on *métis* traders who made the transition to the export trade in peanuts, retained control over the real estate market in the towns, and sustained moderately successful businesses in the peanut producing regions of southern Sénégal and Gambia until the early 1900s.

The expansion of military rule occurred in Sénégal earlier than in other regions that were incorporated into the federation of French West Africa. As a result, historians consider the initiation of French campaigns of territorial conquest under Governor Faidherbe in 1850 as the opening of the colonial era in Sénégal. Scholarship on Sénégal in the second half of the nineteenth century examines resistance movements, the rise of Muslim leadership and the development of colonial policies.[27] The city of Saint Louis appears in these studies as the center of the growing colonial empire and as the location for the emergence of a new class of urban Sénégalese leadership. Recent studies of Saint Louis have expanded on this view to provide greater insight into the role of educational, financial and legal institutions in the development of this community and as sites for negotiation and contestation between French authorities and local leaders.[28] The story

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[27] See for example, Martin Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Sénégal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968); David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Lucy Colvin, "Kajor and its Diplomatic Relations with Saint Louis, Sénégal 1763-1861" (Ph.D. diss, Columbia University, 1972); Chris Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa 1860-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); William Cohen, *Rulers of Empire: The French Colonial Service in Africa* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971) and James F. Searing, *"God Alone is King": Islam and Emancipation in Sénégal* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002).

[28] See, Denise Bouche, "L'Enseignement dans les teritoires française de l'Afrique Occidentale de 1817-1920. Mission civilisatrice ou formation d'une elite?" (Paris, 1975); François Manchuelle, "Métis et colons: la famille Devès et l'émergence politique des Africains au Sénégal, 1881-1897," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 96(1984): 477-504; Dominique Sarr and Richard Roberts, "The Jurisdiction of Muslim Tribunals in Colonial Sénégal, 1857-1932," in *Law in Colonial Africa*, eds. Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1991); Kalala Ngalamulume, "Urban Growth and Health Problems, Saint Louis from the Mid nineteenth century to World War I,"(Ph.D. diss, Michigan State University, 1996) and Ghislaine E. Lydon, "Les péripéties d'une institution financière: la Banque du Sénégal, 1844-1901," in

that emerges in the historical literature increasingly presents an image not only of French power but of local activity and empowerment as well.

The two seminal works on electoral politics and colonial rule in the four communes are Wesley Johnson's, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Sénégal* (1971) and Francois Zuccarelli's, *La vie politique sénégalaise* (1987).[29] Both authors trace the development of modern Sénégalese political life to the electoral institutions of these cities and colonial policies that fostered the growth of an urban electorate. The *métis* figure prominently in these accounts. Johnson describes the "Creole domination" of local politics before the "African political awakening." Zuccarelli refers to the central role of the "*mulâtres*" in forming "electoral clans" that served as the basis of commune politics. He suggests that these groups provided the structure for the patron-client system that characterized electoral politics in urban Sénégal. Both studies illustrate the relationship between the colonial state and local politicians and make the argument that Sénégalese nationalism began in the four communes.

While these two studies contribute to a better understanding of the collective nature of all four cities they also reinforce the dichotomy established by the colonial regime that sought to separate the communes of full exercise from the protectorate. This approach obscures the individual characteristics of each city and the particular context of the surrounding regions that city residents were constantly in contact with. Furthermore,

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AOF: réalites et heritages, eds., Charles Becker, Saliou Mbaye and Ibrahima Thioub (Dakar: Direction Archives du Sénégal, 1997).

[29] G. Wesley Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Sénégal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971) and François Zuccarelli, *La vie politique senegalaise: 1798-1940* (Paris: CHEAM, 1987).

in describing the evolution of commune politics according to discreet categories of French, Creole, and African participation, this interpretation ignores alliances formed between all three groups at various times and the fact that black commune residents participated informally in electoral politics from its inception and not simply with Blaise Diagne's 1914 election to the deputyship. In focusing on the political history of the communes and local male leadership, Johnson and Zuccarelli have laid the groundwork for further explorations of gender, class, social organization and cultural life in these colonial cities.

Studies of labor migration and slavery have drawn attention to class and labor relations in the nineteenth century capital. In *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*, Martin Klein examines the history of slavery in Mali, Guinea, and Sénégal between 1876 and 1921.[30] In this work, Saint Louis appears as a refuge for runaway slaves seeking freedom on French soil and as the location where slaves bought upriver could be redeemed and placed into the custody of *originaire* families as part of the colonial government's apprenticeship policy. Klein maintains that despite the 1848 decree prohibiting slavery in Saint Louis and Gorée, abolition occurred gradually in the colony because it conflicted with the goals of imperialism and the interests of slave owners.[31] Black African and *métis* families in the town advocated the wardship system

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[30] Martin Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For another study of labor in this region of West Africa see, Francois Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants: Soninke Labor Diasporas, 1848-1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997). Manchuelle offers a brief discussion of free and slave labor in Saint Louis and along the Sénégal River in the pre-colonial period and the result of emancipation on labor relations in the colonial period.

[31] In 1848 the French issued a proclamation abolishing slavery in its colonies. Since the colony of Sénégal consisted of Saint Louis and *Gorée*, citizens of these cities were prohibited from owning slaves and all slaves in these two locations were emancipated. In 1855, however, Faidherbe decreed that subjects of the French empire in Sénégal had the right to keep their slaves and continue the practice of slavery outside of

as a means of fulfilling their demand for labor and used electoral bodies in the communes to vocalize their interests. Klein's treatment of Saint Louis as a "slave society" opens new areas for inquiry into the nature of servitude in *métis* households and the patron-client relationship between former slaves and former masters in the colonial period.

A common assumption in the study of colonialism is that it involved the total domination of subject people by a foreign ruling power. Recent scholarship, however, has challenged this notion by viewing colonial rule as a dynamic process and recognizing the agency of all historical actors engaged in the struggle for power.[32] Studies of colonial Sénégal, in particular, have emphasized the ways in which French administrators depended on the cooperation of certain African rulers to carry out their objectives. David Robinson describes this process of negotiation and contestation between local actors (primarily leaders of Muslim Sufi orders) and French officials in terms of the emergence of "patterns of accommodation."[33] In this framework, Saint Louis is located at the center of this exchange and is depicted as an increasingly important location for Islamic learning and the organization of Sufi orders in the second half of the nineteenth century. By examining *métis* strategies for adaptation to colonial rule and their role in this system of

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the communes. The apprenticeship system designed by Faidherbe continued until slavery was theoretically abolished in 1904.

[32] A good example of this literature is John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* and the essays contained in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

[33] David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000) and David Robinson, "An emerging pattern of cooperation between colonial authorities and Muslim societies in Sénégal and Mauritania," in *Le temps des marabouts*, David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud, eds., (Paris: Karthala, 1997), 155-180. James Searing also emphasizes the ways in which urban and rural elites developed strategies for influencing and even challenging the administration. See Searing, "Accommodation and Resistance: Chiefs, Muslim Leaders, and Politicians in Colonial Sénégal, 1890-1914."

alliances, my study casts light on networks that joined city dwellers with traders, aristocrats and Muslim leaders in the interior.

Finally, scholarship on French Empire in West Africa places the city of Saint Louis at the center of empire building in this region and as the model for the development of the Third Republic's policy of assimilation.[34] The concept of assimilation, however, presented contradictions with the goals of colonial expansion and republican ideology. Historians of modern France and French Empire have examined this problem through the ideological debate between assimilation and association as policies of French colonial rule. Alice Conklin returns to this question in her recent book, *A Mission to Civilize* (1997). This work deals with France's notion of a "civilizing mission" and the society that policy makers in Paris and Dakar envisioned for their colonies.[35] According to Conklin, the content of the civilizing mission was not static between 1895 and 1930 but evolved in response to changing circumstances in the colony and in the metropole. This argument suggests that when French officials were faced with the problem of extending assimilation to the entire subject population of French West Africa, they turned to the concept of association that promoted respect for local custom as a more pragmatic solution to this dilemma.

While Conklin focuses on the society that French policy makers wanted to build, Mamadou Diouf calls attention to the ways in which residents of Sénégal's four

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[34] For traditional scholarship on this theme see, Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961) and Michael Crowder, *Sénégal: A Study in French Assimilation Policy* (London: Methuen, 1967).

[35] Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*.

communes built their own community within the context of assimilation.[36] In an article on assimilation and religious identities in the four communes, Diouf explains that Muslim *originaires* successfully engaged in a long struggle to claim their political rights as voters without having to subscribe to the cultural and civil codes of France. This approach underscores the impact of local demands on French policy by revealing the ways in which commune residents transformed the colonial project to establish a unique society based on their belief in Islam and their claim to citizenship in the Republic.[37] These interpretations allow for greater understanding not only of how France determined developments in its West African colonies but how the colonies influenced the history of Third Republic France. My study of the *métis* builds on these works by examining the contributions of Sénégal's *métis* population to shaping colonial policy and electoral politics in Sénégal's towns.

Scholars have engaged in the study of Saint Louis and its Creole community from the perspective of the encounter between Sénégal and France and the changing nature of this exchange over three centuries. The image of Saint Louis presented in the literature is often one of a French city in West Africa. Saint Louis is often described as the center of French military authority, commerce and government and its people as allies of the French. New research on the social and cultural history of this city offers a wider vision of the actions of local residents and their impact on French policies, practices and the maintenance of order in colonial Sénégal. My study will focus on the interplay of race,

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[36] Mamdou Diouf, "Assimilation coloniale et identités religieuses de la civilité des *originaires* des Quatre Communes (Sénégal)," 565-587.

[37] For more on the distinction between nationality and citizenship and the ambivalent application of this term in Sénégal see, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Nationalité et citoyenneté en Afrique occidentale français: *originaires* et citoyens dans le Sénégal colonial," 285-305.

class, gender and power in the city of Saint Louis in order to broaden our understanding of the nature of urban communities formed in a colonial context. The following discussion of the sources used in this study shows that reading the archival record with oral evidence, allows for a more in-depth view of the internal dynamics of *métis* society and the community that they created in Saint Louis at the end of the nineteenth century.

Sources: Archival Evidence and Oral History

The use of either archival evidence or oral testimony poses particular challenges for interpreting African history. The methodology that I use in this work incorporates evidence from public archives with sources from private archives and information from informants. In examining marriage records, birth certificates, genealogies, bank records and church documents, this study offers insight into the family histories of the *métis* population and the social organization of their community. Oral history is an important dimension to this project because it allows us to compare tangible evidence of the past with the ways in which the descendants of this group interpret their history. This approach offers a more complete picture of colonial rule and the *métis* community in Sénégal by giving us a perspective from inside this community as well as from the outside.[38]

The period of colonial rule in Sénégal is well documented due to the volume of reports, correspondence, and policy decrees between the minister of colonies, the governor, and colonial officials in various regions. The political history of the communes

[38] Jan Vansina refers to oral history as "inside information" to underscore the importance of these sources for the interpretation of the past. See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985): 197-199.

for this period is equally well documented since official publications such as the *Moniteur du Sénégal* and the *Journal Officiel du Sénégal* carried news of municipal elections and reports of the General Council's sessions. In addition, the colonial government reported on electoral politics and the activities of elected officials. I focus primarily on administrative reports of the General Council and transcripts of the council's deliberations because of the central importance of this institution for the *métis*. As an elective institution that deliberated on issues of economic and political importance to the colony, accounts of these sessions offer a rare glimpse into the attitudes and opinions of *métis* politicians.[39] Administrative records concerning the mayor's office and municipal council provided further documentation on city administration.[40] Finally, the papers of Governor Henri de Lamothe (1890-1895), housed in the French overseas archives, supplied additional documentation of official attitudes towards the *métis* in the 1890s.[41]

There is not as much information in the public record, however, on the social activities of urban residents in Saint Louis. Sources contained in the national archives deal primarily with institutions that were linked to the colonial administration. The Bank of Sénégal records between 1867 and 1902 offer important evidence of *métis* wealth and business interests.[42] The series on primary and secondary instruction provided information on secular education, government scholarships and the relationship between mission schools and the government. The dossier on work, labor and slavery contains

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[39] A more in-depth study of the General Council sessions for this period may yield more information on the intellectual responses of the *métis*.

[40] Conseil General du Sénégal, 1878-1894 *ANS* 4E4 and Institutions Municipales *ANS* 3G3.

[41] Papiers d'Henri de Lamothe, *CAOM* 4PA1

[42] Banque du Sénégal, 1895-1901 *ANS* Q40; Travail et main d'oeuvre, *ANS* K23 and K31.

important documentation on the liberation of slaves in Saint Louis and the Congo labor recruitment scheme involving Saint Louis businessmen. The *état civil* or civil registry, kept for Saint Louis and Gorée since 1871, served as a key resource for marriage, birth, death, and inheritance information among the *métis* and *originaire* population.[43]

The most important collection in the Sénégal archives for this study is the private archives. This series contains documentation on notable families and individuals in Sénégal's history as well as records of associations like the Maurel and Prom commercial firm and Catholic missions in Sénégal.[44] The Devès family papers, donated to the national archives by Elisabeth Devès in 1961, forms the basis of my examination of the Devès family and their influence in colonial Sénégal. This valuable source of documentation on the *métis* in the colonial period remains largely unexplored by researchers. In addition, this series contains key information on other influential families. The d'Erneville, Crespin, and Guillabert documents found in this collection offers information on the history of these individuals and their political affiliations in the early twentieth century. Notarized acts indicating property sales, power of attorney, loans between two parties, and other legal transactions also provide unique documentation on the business affairs and partnerships of the *métis* community.[45]

The works by Saint Louis inhabitants Frédéric Carrère and Paul Holle and *métis* chaplain Abby David Boilat offer important information on Sénégal in the 1840s.

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[43]French officials maintained a civil registry for Saint Louis and *Gorée* since 1817. After 1872 all four communes maintained a civil registry. The mayor of each commune acted as the officer of the *état civil*. Etat Civil, Commune de Saint Louis *ANS*.

[44] Fonds Privees, *ANS* Z Series.

[45] Mamadou Sèye at the Sénégal National Archives was particularly helpful in locating the etat-civil records and notarized documents for Saint Louis.

Although this period is not the primary concern of this study, their eyewitness accounts provide essential background on economic, political, social and cultural changes in the colony. Both authors, however, present a particular viewpoint. Boilat writes as a native of Sénégal and a missionary chaplain. Carrere and Holle give their viewpoint as residents of Saint Louis who served in the administration. Their accounts must, therefore, be placed within the context of the times and their individual perspectives.[46]

To obtain additional information on trade, religion, education, associations and political discourse, I consulted archival documents from the Catholic Church in Saint Louis and the public archives in France. The Catholic Church has maintained records of marriage and baptism for their parishioners since the 1850s. A church newsletter, entitled *UNIR: Echo de Saint Louis*, began circulating among members at least since 1906. In 1967, after a period of absence, the Church began republishing the newsletter.[47] In addition to presenting information relevant to the contemporary Catholic community, the newsletter published articles on their history, relations with the colonial government and the activities and associations of their parishioners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The newsletter re-printed stories from the original 1906 publication and documents from the Church in the late nineteenth century that contains information on electoral politics, anti-clericalism, and *métis* leadership. In addition, the Catholic

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[46] Abbé David Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, (Paris: P. Bertrand, 1853; reprint Paris: Karthala, 1984) and Frederic Carrère and Paul Holle, *De la Senegambie Française* (Paris: Librarie de Firmin Didot, 1855).

[47] I do not have a precise date for the first publication of *UNIR*. The examples I consulted contain information recorded by the church since the 1860s and stories published in the original newsletter under Father Daniel Brottier who arrived at the mission in Saint Louis in November 1903. Brigaud and Vast refer to information published in the third issue of Echo published in September 1906. The reprinting of stories from the original newsletter and its focus on the history was due in large part to Father Jean Vast's interest in the history of this community and preserving evidence of the Church's role in Saint Louis. See, Felix Brigaud and Jean Vast, *Saint Louis du Sénégal:ville aux mille visages* (Dakar: Clairafrique, 1987).

diocese in Saint Louis kept matriculation records for young boys who attended the Brothers of Ploërmel mission school in the town as well as a register of correspondence between the *préfet apostolique* and the governor of Sénégal from 1852 to 1910.[48] In France, I located information on *métis* students from Saint Louis who attended Lycée Michel Montaigne in Bordeaux during the 1880's to sketch the educational and professional path of some young *métis* in the late nineteenth century. Sources from the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce also helped to establish background on the relationship between Bordeaux commerce and *métis* business in the colonial period.

Since several scholars have noted the beginning of an independent press in Sénégal led by *métis* representatives in this period, I attempted to locate extant copies of these newspapers.[49] In contrast to the vast numbers of independent newspapers published by Krio journalists in Freetown during this era, relatively few of these publications appeared in Sénégal.[50] My search in Sénégal and in France only yielded a few examples of these publications in incomplete series. The existing examples, however, leave the impression that these short-lived publications communicated important information on political and economic debates in the metropolis and the colony that affected the community. Most importantly, these publications served as a vehicle for criticizing the administration and their political opponents. Since the majority of the independent

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[48] Unfortunately, I could not locate similar records for young girls who attended the school run by the sisters of St. Joseph de Cluny in Saint Louis.

[49] Titles of these publications are, *Le Reveil du Sénégal* (July 1885-Dec. 1886), *Le Petit Sénégalais* (Aug. 1886), *L'Independent* (1896), *L'Union Africaine* (Nov. 1896) and *L'Afrique Occidentale* (July 1896). A few examples of these publications can be consulted at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. See Roger Pasquier, "Les débuts de la presse au Sénégal," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 7(1962): 477-490.

[50] Leo Spitzer notes that over two dozen newspapers appeared in Sierra Leone between 1860 and 1900. These documents provided a rich source of documentation for his analysis of their intellectual responses to colonial rule in Sierra Leone. See Leo Spitzer, *The Creoles of Sierra Leone*, 227.

journals produced in this period were run by members of the oppositional groups in the towns the views expressed in the newspapers were primarily aimed at promoting their viewpoint.

Finally, my meetings with the descendants of these families afforded me the opportunity to collect private photos, genealogies, published speeches, and letters that give a greater impression of the personal history of these individuals. Information from the official record alone could not provide the kind of data needed to examine the social history of the *métis*. The nature of this study, thus, required searching for documentation from a variety of private sources in order to gain a more complete picture of *métis* society and culture within the context of colonial rule.

The second component of my methodology concerns the collection of oral evidence and material culture. Historian Jan Vansina has argued for the importance of using oral tradition and material culture as evidence for African history.[51] Scholars of Africa commonly use oral data to address African voices that are often silent in the accounts of European travelers, missionaries, or colonial officials. Yet this approach is employed more often in the study of African societies that established stronger traditions of oral communication than written documentation. My study argues that oral history and cultural analysis offer new techniques for uncovering the history of western educated communities in colonial cities as well. Through analysis of oral data and material culture we gain greater insight into the nature of the inner lives of these communities and social

[51] Jan Vansina explains his approach to oral tradition and cultural history in two books on these topics. See, Jan Vansina, *Art History in Africa* (New York: Longman, 1984) and *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

and cultural change that is not perceptible from official reports or evidence of their public discourses alone.

The oral sources collected for this study constitute what Jan Vansina terms "reminiscences," or "bits of life histories that are essential to notions of personality and identity."[52] As organized memories, these recollections tell us as much about past events as they do about the image of the past that the narrator wishes to convey. The interviews that I conducted for this study provided critical information of the inner dynamics of *métis* society. Meetings with members of the d'Erneville, Devès-Senghor, Brigaud, Crespin, Valantin, and Guillabert families provided key information on relationships between families, their customs and cultural practices and how they define themselves in Sénégalese society.[53] In addition, interviews with Muslim, black Catholic, "Antillean" and Protestant residents of Saint Louis offered additional perspectives on the relationships between all of these communities and the nature of city life for local residents in the colonial period.[54]

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[52] Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, p.8.

[53] Madelene Devès-Senghor is the last descendant of the Devès family in Sénégal. Our meetings revealed key information on the legacy of this family, the relationship between the Devès and Floissac families and the dispersal of the *métis* to Rufisque and Dakar in the twentieth century. My meetings with Annette Mbaye d'Erneville and Alfred and Clotilde d'Erneville broadened my understanding of *métis* traders and their settlements in lower Sénégal and the southern rivers region of Guinea and Sierra Leone. Clotilde d'Erneville provided additional information on the Dolly family of Gorée and allowed me to view rare family photographs. Judge Marie-José Crespin of Gorée and her brother Georges Crespin in Paris also afforded me access to private family documents and photographs and pertinent information on the family's role in politics and the legal profession in Sénégal. Additionally, Andrè Guillabert, former ambassador to Paris and former mayor of Saint Louis allowed me to visit his home in Saint Louis and shared documents from his private collection. Similarly, Christian Valantin, deputy in Sénégal's National Assembly, elaborated on the Valantin/Guillabert family history and answered many questions on the place of this family in Saint Louis society.

[54] I refer here to interviews I conducted with Saint Louis notable, Almamy Mathieu Fall, Dakar, Sénégal, August 2000; Mireille Desirée, a descendant of the Catholic families of Saint Louis who have roots in the French Caribbean at Sor, Sénégal 16 February, 2001 and Paul Watara, one of the last descendants of the nineteenth century Protestant community in Saint Louis, interview with author Saint Louis, Sénégal 2 December, 2000.

Although there are great advantages in using this method, the nature of oral tradition poses certain limitations for historical research. Today only a small number of the descendants of these families still exist in Sénégal although most no longer live permanently in Saint Louis. Moreover, the relatively closed nature of the group makes it difficult for outsiders to gain access to information kept within the group. The informants interviewed for this project are at least one generation removed from the period under consideration and thus can not provide eyewitness accounts or memories of the particular events and changes that concern this study.[55] Georgette Bonet, born in 1919 and a life long resident of Saint Louis, is the closest informant to the actual period that could relate personal memories of city life and her experiences as a *métis* woman in early twentieth century Saint Louis.[56] Other informants may not have grown up in Saint Louis but posses some memories passed down from their parents and grandparents and are the guardians of photographs, family heirlooms and documents of their history. Oral history played an important role in reconstructing the history of the *métis* in Sénégal

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[55]Jan Vansina distinguishes between oral history and oral tradition by referring to the former as memories of those who participated in the event or situation and the latter as memorized speech, accounts, personal tradition, group accounts, myths or sayings that are transmitted to successive generations. The majority of oral data collected for this study can be considered as personal tradition since they involve the transmission of stories beyond the generation that experienced them. Historian H.O. Idowu interviewed "descendants of quatre commune mulattos" from 1963-1965. His article on Sénégal's *métis* community refers to informants who lived a generation before those identified for this study and thus offers some eyewitness information on the state of this group in the early twentieth century. See, H.O. Idowu, "Café au Lait: Sénégal's Mulatto Community in the nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 6,3(Dec. 1972): 271-288.

[56]Georgette Bonet, interview with author and Louis Camara, 1 and 17 December 2000, 4 and 10 January 2001, Saint Louis, Sénégal. My meetings with Georgette Bonet gave me a more in-depth view of the race, class, gender and color politics of Saint Louis in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. As a child of a *métis* mother and French father, Bonet did not belong to the elite *métis* families of nineteenth century Saint Louis but associated with them in school, church and in social activities of the town. Her recollections thus offered valuable insight into the internal dynamics of race, class, gender and color in *métis* society and the meaning of colonial government for this urban population.

because the subjects interviewed are probably the last generation to retain memories of this community and their activities as transmitted by their parents and grandparents.

The final aspect of my research involved establishing profiles of *métis* identity. In order to understand how this group defined themselves within the context of colonial rule, I examined evidence of their material culture. Descriptions of dress, adornment, building styles, and cuisine contained in fictional accounts, photographs, informant testimonies, and notarized documents, offered insight into changes in tangible representations of their identity. Two works, in particular, inform my inquiry into changes in the material world of the *métis* from the era of the *signares* to the end of the nineteenth century. Alain Sinou's study of architecture and urban planning in Sénégal's colonial cities treats the development of French policy toward city management and public building in Saint Louis, Gorée and Dakar.[57] Mark Hinchman's recent study of house and portrait in eighteenth century Saint Louis and Gorée deals with domestic architecture and the material possessions that defined households for upper, middle and lower class residents of these towns.[58] By considering visible indicators of identity, I hope to broaden our understanding of the dual heritage of the *métis* population and the ways in which the expression of this identity was a response to changes in their social, economic and cultural environment.

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[57] Alain Sinou, *Comptoirs et villes coloniales du Sénégal* (Paris: Karthala, 1993).

[58] Mark Hinchman, "African Rococo: House and Portrait in Eighteenth Century Sénégal" (Ph.D diss., University of Chicago, 2000).

By examining the various interpretations of colonialism and the history of the *métis* in Sénégal, this project emphasizes the relationship between history and memory in shaping narratives of the past. Re-enactment of the *fanals* and popular fascination with the *signare* as a historical character illustrate that this past continues to have meaning in the present. Scholars of colonial cities in Sénégal deal with similar questions of African and European interaction and the development of colonial policy, economy and society. *Métis* men and women, however, often appear in these discussions either as tragic figures or "collaborators" with the colonial regime. In focusing on the history of the *métis* after 1850, this study presents people of mixed racial heritage in Sénégal as historical actors responding and adjusting to the politics of colonial rule. Oral evidence and cultural information, thus, provides important analytical tools for investigating the silences that exist in the official record and in the historiography of this subject. The following chapter places this subject within the context of the development of colonial rule in Sénégal after 1850.

Chapter 2
From Outpost to Empire: Saint Louis and the Expansion of French Rule

In 1817, when the French regained their territories in Sénégal from the British, the colony consisted of the island settlements of Gorée and Saint Louis and a few river trading posts. Just over a century later in 1920, Sénégal was one of nine colonies in the French West African Empire that encompassed an area of 4.7 million square kilometers with a population of more than 15 million people.[1] Under the Third Republic, the colony of Sénégal was transformed from a mercantile trade post to a colonial empire. As the administrative, military and economic capital of the expanding empire, Saint Louis represented the center of French authority and the place from which the "civilizing mission" would spread. The nature of colonial administration introduced in late nineteenth century Sénégal and the liberal reforms instituted by the Third Republic stimulated the growth of a unique form of civil society in Saint Louis and intensified political activity among the town's residents.

This chapter describes the Sénégal colony's transition from a commercial outpost to the capital of French West Africa. It is situated in the period between 1850 and 1900 that witnessed French military occupation and the development of a more complex colonial administration. I discuss the process of military conquest and the introduction of a dual system of administration that established separate governments for urban and rural areas. I pay particular attention to the place of Saint Louis in the expanding colony and the development of civic and political institutions that allowed for the growth of civil society in the town. The final section gives an overview of the primary actors involved in urban politics in late nineteenth century Sénégal.

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[1] W.B. Cohen, "Overseas Empire: West Africa," *Historical Dictionary of The Third French Republic, 1870-1940*, 1st edition.

Conquest and Administration: Political Society

Colonialism in Sénégal unfolded over the course of the nineteenth century. Before 1850, Saint Louis and a number of trading posts along the Sénégal River served as conduits in a lucrative trade in gum Arabic between French merchants on the coast and Bidan Moors on the north bank of the Sénégal River. By 1850, military officers stationed in Saint Louis initiated wars of conquest in neighboring regions. This push toward territorial expansion, however, faltered in the 1860s and did not gain momentum again until the 1880s when the Third Republic embraced a new policy of empire building in West Africa. From the outset, the Third Republic was skeptical about investing in projects overseas. The Second Empire's forays into North Africa and Southeast Asia were largely unsuccessful. At the same time, the revolutionary uprising in the Paris Commune and defeat in the Franco-Prussian War cautioned lawmakers against pursuing an imperialist agenda. Nevertheless, colonialism presented important economic and political advantages. Empire building in West Africa could, for example, provide a valuable source of raw materials for newly industrializing France and bolster the country's reputation as a world power. Sénégal's strategic location and its long history of French presence made it the ideal spot from which to launch imperial expansion.

The doctrine of colonial rule espoused by the Third Republic took shape through the actions and writings of geographers, journalists, missionaries, businessmen and radical politicians.[2] This group of lobbyists defined the colonial agenda in terms of France's unique civilizing mission. The new ideology was first articulated by a small group of republican elite active in founding geography societies in Paris and the

[2] William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with the Africans* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 263-282.

provinces.[3] By the 1880s, the notion that France had an obligation to spread scientific, social, and technical progress to the "unenlightened" world garnered the attention of leftist members of government. Radical republicans Jules Ferry, Léon Gambetta, and Charles de Freycinet became some of the republic's most ardent supporters of overseas expansion. They argued three major benefits of colonialism for the French. First, expansion would assure French industry control of certain essential goods and raw materials. Second, France could spread the benefits of science, reason and liberty. Third, it would restore France's standing as a first rate power.[4]

By the time that the European powers announced their, "scramble for Africa," at the Berlin Conference of 1885 and colonial lobbyists in France began championing the benefits of empire, the process of conquest had already begun to take shape in Sénégal. Military occupation developed not from directives issued in Paris but through the actions of French military officers on the ground. Louis Léon César Faidherbe is generally considered as the architect of colonial expansion in West Africa. Faidherbe arrived in Sénégal in 1852 after having finished a tour in Algeria.[5] He was initially assigned to Sénégal to head the Engineer Corps charged with building a fort at Podor on the Sénégal River but he was promoted to governor of the colony two years later. As governor, Faidherbe envisioned the creation of a new empire that would link French rule from

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[3] In France, geography societies promoted the first major French explorations in the interior of West and North Africa that formed the basis for colonial expansion. Interest in these societies increased tremendously in the 1870s. Novels, magazines and illustrations by those involved in the geography societies further stimulated popular interest in Asia and Africa. The société de géographie de Paris was founded in 1822. Ibid., 264-266.

[4] Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: a History of French Overseas Expansion* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1996), 97-100.

[5] Faidherbe was only thirty-six when he became Governor. He had graduated from the Ecole Polytechnique in 1838 and began his career in Algeria before transferring to Guadeloupe. He was an avowed Republican and supported the abolitionist Victor Schoelcher. Kanya-Forstner, *Conquest of the Western Sudan*, p. 28-29.

Algeria's Mediterranean coast to Timbuktu in the desert and Sénégal on the Atlantic coast.[6] He garnered support for this mission from leading Bordeaux merchants in Saint Louis and was held in high esteem by Sénégalese residents of the town. The Bordeaux lobby, led by Maurel and Prom was particularly enthusiastic about his plans to strengthen French commerce in the region.[7] In addition, Faidherbe integrated himself into the Saint Louis community by speaking Wolof, fostering the growth of Islam in the town, granting concessions to Saint Louis traders in French posts, and even entering into a marriage, "*à la mode du pays.*"[8]

During his two terms as governor of Sénégal from 1854 to 1861 and 1863 to1865, Faidherbe succeeded in setting the stage for conquest and assuring Sénégal's place in the growing empire. First, he aided the Saint Louis merchants who complained of being overtaxed by breaking the monopoly the Bidan Moors held over the gum trade in Walo, a Wolof kingdom on the left bank of the Sénégal River.[9] Second, Faidherbe solidified the French military presence in the Upper Sénégal by building a fort at Medine. In seeking to establish French control over the Sénégal River and its gum trade, Faidherbe's forces

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[6] Louis Leon Faidherbe, *Le Sénégal: La France dans l'Afrique Occidentale* (Paris: l'Hachette, 1889).

[7]The Bordeaux firm Maurel and Prom, in particular, viewed Faidherbe as the best candidate to lead imperial expansion in Sénégal. They were largely responsible for convincing the colonial ministry to appoint Faidherbe to the governorship. It is also clear from his correspondence with Maurel and Prom that he consulted them on a number of important issues regarding the administration's policies in the colony. For more on the relationship between Maurel and Prom and Faidherbe see, Joan Droege Casey, "The Politics of French Imperialism in the Early Third Republic: The Case of Bordeaux," (Ph.D. Diss.: University of Missouri-Columbia, 1973), 115-118.

[8] Faidherbe lived with a Sarakhole women named Dionkounda Siadibi between 1857 and 1858. The couple had a son named Louis Faidherbe who became a lieutenant in the Tirailleurs Sénégalais, a corps of Sénégalese rifleman first organized by Faidherbe. A marker for his gravestone appears in the Christian Cemetary in Sor, Saint Louis. Also see Leland Barrows, "General Faidherbe, the Maurel and Prom Company, and French Expansion in Sénégal," (Ph.D. diss.: University of California, Los Angeles, 1974), 494.

[9] Boubacar Barry attributes the early defeat of the Walo kingdom to internal conflict among the ruling family and the expansionist aims of the French in the lower Sénégal. For more on Faidherbe's conquest of Walo see, Boubacar Barry, *Le Royaume du Walo* (Paris: Karthala, 1985), 281-284.

clashed with the Muslim cleric and jihadist al Hajj-Umar Tall who was also engaged in efforts to expand his own influence in the region. As the leader of a powerful religious movement, Faidherbe viewed Umar Tall as a potential threat to French commerce and security in the Sénégal River valley.[10]

In addition to these actions along the Sénégal, Faidherbe succeeded in bringing the Cape Verde Peninsula and much of the surrounding mainland regions under French control. In 1857, the governor established a new military post in the port city of Dakar. He also orchestrated a series of campaigns against the Damel of Kayor that did not result in the ultimate defeat of the ruling families but did bring the Wolof kingdom under nominal French protection.[11] Although Faidherbe did not realize his dream of a North-West African empire by the time he left the country, his policies solidified French commercial interests in Sénégal and began the process of establishing French military authority beyond Saint Louis and Gorée.[12]

Despite these gains, Paris was reluctant to support plans for enlarging their possessions in West Africa. After Faidherbe's departure, the colonial ministry put a halt to military action and instead adopted a policy of expanding and protecting their trade interests. In the 1860s and 1870s, Saint Louis shifted its attention from the Sénégal River

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[10] Umar Tall's religious movement gained momentum between 1852 and 1862. He succeeded in gaining a number of Muslim Fulbe followers and incorporating into his empire the Fulbe or "Tokolor" people of Futa Toro in the Upper Sénégal and non-Fulbe Mandinka and Bambara in the regions further east along the Niger River. For a chronicle of the jihad and the competition between Tall and the French see David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tall*, 204-241.

[11] As early as 1857, Faidherbe was making plans to bring regions of the interior between Goree in the Cape Verde Peninsula and Saint Louis under French control in large part to secure the export of peanuts from the interior regions along the coast. In 1861, he launched a series of military campaigns aimed at forcing the Damel to sign treaties allowing for the construction of a Dakar-Saint Louis railway line and telegraph service that would go through the ruler's territory. For more on these campaigns and the annexation of Kayor to France, see Mamadou Diouf, *Le Kajoor au XIXe Siecle* (Paris: Karthala, 1990), 217-223; 227-231 and James Searing, *'God Alone is King'*, 33-42.

[12] Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan*, 28-44.

Valley to the emerging peanut producing regions in Sine and Saloum and focused on competition with Britain for trade along the upper Guinea coast. They built new forts at Boke on the Rio Nunez and Benty on the Mellacourie in the Southern Rivers region. [13] While commerce remained of vital interest to the nation, Paris viewed territorial conquest in West Africa as too expensive to administer and too difficult to control. Consequently, the governors that followed focused on asserting French influence through commercial relations rather than direct military occupation.

In 1876 Colonel Louis Alexandre Brière de l'Isle assumed the governorship and embarked on a new phase of territorial expansion beyond Sénégal. A strong military figure, Brière de l'Isle was concerned with maintaining security and strengthening the financial stability of the colony.[14] During his governorship (1876-1881), Brière de l'Isle reinforced French authority in the Southern Rivers region, suppressed pockets of resistance among leaders of the Fulbe *jihad* in Futa Toro and established new military posts further east along the Upper Sénégal River. Moreover, Brière de l'Isle signaled the extension of former French rule further east by launching new campaigns moving towards the Niger River in the western Sudan. Fortunately, Brière de l'Isle's actions coincided with the increasing fervor in metropolitan France for empire building. As a result, Paris supported his initiatives and even began plans to secure parliamentary approval for the first phase in the construction of the Sénégal-Niger railway line.

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[13] Ibid., 45-50.

[14] Brière de l'Isle arrived in Sénégal at age 49. He had been trained at the Saint-Cyr military academy and had served in several campaigns in Asia. He had a reputation for being a strong military man who could not tolerate civilian rule in the colonies. Consequently, during his time in Sénégal he eliminated all civilian administrators and was constantly at odds with the merchant lobby and elected officials in Saint Louis. See Francine Ndiaye, "La colonie du Sénégal au temps de Briere de l'Isle (1876-1881)," 462-512.

By the 1880s, the Sénégal colony had become the seat of France's growing empire in West Africa. Saint Louis continued to serve as the headquarters of this initiative as France consolidated her authority among the Lebou population of the Cape Verde peninsula and in the Wolof regions along the coast. The administration continued their conquest of Kayor by launching campaigns against Lat Dior and eliminating independent members of the ruling family. [15] The Saint Louis to Dakar segment of the railway line was completed in 1886, a year after Lat Dior's death which resulted in the final annexation of the Wolof kingdom. In the late 1880s, colonial officials launched campaigns in Sine and Saloum, thus, solidifying their control of the peanut basin.[16] Finally, the French succeeded in maintaining their authority along the Upper Sénégal and gaining a foothold along the Niger with the final defeat of Amadu Sheku's "Tokolor Empire," in the early 1890s.[17] As a result of these disruptions, Muslim leaders and traditional aristocrats increasingly pursued strategies of cooperation with French officials by entering into treaties for peace and protection.[18] Although the French had not

[15]Lat Dior emerged as a leading resistance figure in the 1860s and 1870s. His relationship to French authorities was very complex including resistance to French initiatives, alliances against the French and treaties of cooperation. The weakness of the ruling family and Lat Dior's death in an 1885 battle with his nephew led to the final defeat of Kayor and its annexation to the French. See Mamadou Diouf, *Le kayor au XIXe siecle*, 256-280.

[16] On the conquest of Sine and Saloum see Martin Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Sénégal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 130-149.

[17] Amadu Sheku was the oldest son of Umar Tall. He took over what the French termed the, "Tokolor Empire" after Tall's death. By the time of his father's death Umar Tall's movement had expanded as far east as Segu on the Middle Niger River. For more on the pattern of conquest in Fouta Toro and the final conquest of Amadu Seku's empire see Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan*, 45-50, 72-83 and 176-183.

[18] James Searing, *'God Alone is King'*, 107-136 and David Robinson, "An emerging pattern of cooperation between colonial authorities and Muslim societies in Sénégal and Mauritania," in *Le temps des marabouts*, eds., David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud (Paris: Karthala, 1997), 159-167.

achieved complete "pacification" in West Africa by the end of the century, the boundaries of the new Sénégal colony had been established.

The administrative apparatus, including the military, constituted political society in Sénégal. Of the five colonies that would make up French West Africa, Sénégal was the only territory governed by a dual system of administration; one for "citizens" of the Four Communes and another for subjects in the Protectorate.[19] The protectorate encompassed the regions of the interior that had come under French control. Colonial officials called *commandants de cercles* administered districts called *cercles* and supervised a network of local canton and village chiefs appointed by the central government. As colonial subjects, Africans in the interior faced the arbitrary and authoritarian nature of foreign rule. The colonial regime imposed heavy taxation and could conscript Africans for work projects or enact summary justice.[20] Due to Sénégal's particular history of representative government in the communes and the nature of cash crop peanut production, however, Sénégal did not experience the same severity of forced labor or arbitrary justice under the *indigénat* as their counterparts in the Sudan, Guinea or the French Congo.[21]

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[19] It is important to note here that as the French expanded into the interior they established towns that were considered to be "French territory." The inhabitants of these towns whether French or African were also treated as citizens like residents of the communes. Consequently, these pockets of French citizenship in the interior would have significant impact on the re-structuring of the direct administration territories and the authority of the General Council over these areas in the 1890s. For more on this development see my discussion of "dis-annexation" in Chapter 7.

[20] On application of the *indigénat* and forced labor see Babacar Fall, *Le travail force en Afrique-Occidentale Francaise* (Paris: Karthala, 1993), 47-52 and Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 124-126.

[21] Babacar Fall points out that even though the *corvée* was not imposed in Sénégal to the same degree that it was in the other colonies, forced labor made up a significant portion of the labor force for administrative projects in the twentieth century. See Babacar Fall, *Le travail forcé*, 19-20.

Inhabitants of Sénégal's coastal towns, on the other hand, lived under the same laws and were granted the same form of representative government as commune residents in metropolitan France. An 1872 decree organizing municipal government in the colony recognized Saint Louis and Gorée as the first communes because of their long history of association with French culture, commerce, and government. Rufisque, a growing center for peanut exports became a commune in 1880, and the port city of Dakar completed the Four Communes in 1887. In 1882, a new administrative structure organized the communes and a number of administrative and commercial posts from Saint Louis to the Gambia into the Territories of Direct Administration.[22] For administrative purposes, the direct administration territories were considered French soil. These areas came under the direct authority of the governor but were administered through the elected General Council. In 1890, however, this organization was modified by a governor's decree that reduced the Territories of Direct Administration to the communes, their suburbs and the land along the Dakar-Saint Louis railway corridor.

In 1895, Paris created the position of Governor General to centralize administration for all of her territories in West Africa. In 1904, a permanent office was established in Dakar to house the new administration. The formation of French West Africa, thus, signaled an end to the formal phase of military conquest and the beginning of a new chapter in the colonial enterprise. Civilian administrators replaced military

[22] The Direct Administration Territories were divided into the first arrondissement which included Saint Louis and its suburbs; Walo; the Sénégal River valley posts of Richard Toll, Dagana, Podor, Aere, Saldé, Matam, Bakel and Medine; part of Kayor and the railway corridor between Dakar and Saint Louis. The second arrondissement comprised Goree and her "dependencies; the French posts along the "Petite Côté" of Portudal, Joal, and Nianing; Kaolack on the right bank of the Saloum River, Sedhiou on the Casamance River; the island or Carabane; Boké on the Rio Nunez; Boffa on the Rio Pongo and Benty on the Mellacorée in the Southern Rivers region. Francine Ndiaye, "Le Sénégal au temps de Briere de l'Isle," 465 and Saliou Mbaye, *Histoire des institutions colonials francaise en Afrique de l'Ouest, 1816-1960* (Dakar: Imprimerie Administratif, 1990), 30.

officials in the colonial service. Colonial officials turned their attention towards consolidation and a policy of *mise en valeur* or "rational" economic development aimed at exploiting the valuable resources of the colonies. In Sénégal, the transfer of the administrative capital shifted the center of power away from Saint Louis to Dakar. Prior to the creation of the Governor General's office, the Governor of Sénégal from his office in Saint Louis served as the highest representative of French authority in West Africa. With the new administration, Sénégal's governor became one of five lieutenant governors in the federation who were subordinate to the Governor General.[23] Moreover, the rapid population growth in Rufisque and Dakar in the first decade of the twentieth century indicated the shifting priorities of the colonial regime away from the "old" island settlements toward the "new" commercial centers of the peanut basin.[24]

The process of conquest and the development of French colonialism transformed the nature of power relations for African rulers and leaders of Islamic orders in the interior as well as for urban residents in the coastal towns. With the end of conquest, colonial officials concentrated on imposing French rule. The particular nature of colonialism in Sénégal, however, presented an inherent contradiction. Although the dual system of administration sought to divide residents of the communes from "subjects" in the interior, a network of social, commercial, and political ties allowed Sénégalese along the coast to maintain close ties with their neighbors in the mainland areas of the interior. Moreover, the existence of civic institutions and a strong Republican tradition in Saint

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[23] Between 1895 and 1902, the Governor of Sénégal also served as the Governor General and resided in Saint Louis.

[24] After 1910, Rufisque and Dakar experienced an influx of new European and Lebanese immigrants as well as African workers. Saint Louis and Goree, on the other hand experienced decline. G. Wesley Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Sénégal*, 35.

Louis provided avenues for the development of new leadership and complicated the process of enforcing colonial domination.

Institutions of Civil Society

A tradition of French Republicanism in Sénégal dates to the late eighteenth century when France was guided by a concept of assimilation that afforded all those ruled by France the same rights and privileges as French citizens. Consequently, in the revolutionary period notions of liberty, freedom of religion, democracy, and the right to own property gained currency in metropolitan France as well as in their colonies and commercial settlements.[25] The inhabitants of Saint Louis and Gorée understood these principles and articulated their own sense of belonging to the Republic. In the aftermath of the Revolution, the *habitants* of the towns petitioned the government to end the Sénégal Company's monopoly over the Sénégal River trade by presenting a *Cahiers de Doléances* to the National Assembly in Paris. In 1791, a similar petition drafted by the *habitants* proposed electoral government for Sénégal but was never enacted by Paris lawmakers.[26] A black Catholic reportedly acted as mayor of Saint Louis in 1763 and wealthy *métis* merchant Jean Thévenot became mayor of Saint Louis in 1778.

Although France did not grant Sénégal more extensive political rights until the 1840s, the metropolitan government continued to follow assimilation but in a partial and

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[25]For comparative studies of how the revolutionary era impacted Haiti and the French Antilles see, David Patrick Geggus, "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815" in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus, eds., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 3-5.

[26] "*Cahiers des Doléances et Remonstrances des Habitans du Sénégal aux Citoyens Francais venant les Etats-Generaux, 1789*," Copy from the private collection of Mr. Andre Guillabert (Saint Louis, Sénégal). For more on the 1791 petition see Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 40-42.

inconsistent fashion. For example, an 1830 decree that rendered the French Civil Code applicable in Sénégal gave free residents of Saint Louis and Gorée the same civil rights as French citizens. In addition, a practice of appointing distinguished town residents to the governor's advisory councils and judicial bodies developed. Most significantly, Paris endowed Sénégal with a General Council in 1840 to provide its residents with an elective body similar to those in the French Antilles.[27] The Second Republic furthered the political rights of the island populations by granting Sénégal representation in parliament.[28] In 1848 Durand Valantin, a *métis* notable from Saint Louis became the first deputy to represent Sénégal at the National Assembly in Paris. Unfortunately, Sénégal lost these offices when Napoleon III assumed power in 1851.[29] Despite the absence of these institutions under the Second Empire, Saint Louis and Gorée residents sustained a consciousness about being citizens. In the 1870s the Third Republic revived the policy of assimilation in Sénégal by granting even more extensive political rights to commune residents.

Between 1871 and 1879, a series of decrees organized representative government in the communes.[30] The decree of February 1, 1871 re-established representation from

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[27] The decree of November 5, 1830 that applied the Civil Code in Sénégal stated that any person born free and living in the colony would have the rights of French citizens as guaranteed in the Civil Code. Although, the 1848 abolition of slavery increased the number of free black Muslims in the colony, the voting instructions of March 27, 1848 confirmed that residents did not have to provide proof of naturalization only evidence of at least five years residence in the colony in order to vote. See Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 79-80.

[28] The same decree that established Sénégal's seat in the National Assembly announced that all inhabitants who could prove five years residency in the colony would be considered naturalized and thus eligible to vote.

[29] Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Sénégal*, 25-26; Idowu, "Assimilation in Nineteenth Century Sénégal," *Bulletin I.F.A.N.* 30B, 4(1968), 1421-1425.

[30] Mbaye, *Histoire des institutions colonials Francaise en Afrique de l'Ouest (1816-1960)*, (Dakar, 1991), 139-141, 152-153 and 178-179.

the colony to the National Assembly in Paris and in 1879 Sénégal officially received a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. On August 10, 1872 Paris legislated the creation of a municipal council for Saint Louis and Gorée elected by universal male suffrage and charged with, "regulating by their mandates the interests of the commune." In response to the re-establishment of the General Council in the French Antilles, Bordeaux traders and their Saint Louis allies petitioned the colonial ministry for a similar assembly in Sénégal. The decree of February 4, 1879 granted their request by forming a General Council located in Saint Louis comprised of members elected from Gorée and Saint Louis, the only two communes at the time. In modeling these electoral institutions after municipal and departmental government in France, these institutions re-enforced the close association between the communes and the metropolis.

The Municipal Council presided over the administration of community services, property and the well being of town residents. As the commune with the largest population, the Municipal Council of Saint Louis included a mayor, two deputy mayors and fifteen municipal councilors. In addition to the mayor and deputy mayors, Gorée received eleven councilors. Candidates for election had to prove literacy in French, thus, eliminating most Muslim African candidates from running for office. All male residents of the communes having at least one year's residence in the city and registered on the electoral list had the right to elect council members for a six-year term.[31] Initially, the mayor and deputy mayors were appointed by the governor until the law of March 28, 1882 allowed the Municipal Council to elect these positions from within the body. The Governor, however, had the power to suspend the mayor and deputy mayors for at least

[31]It was only in 1947 that a decree was enacted that gave women the right to vote in Sénégal's elections. Ibid., 179.

three months but could only revoke their election by decree of the President of the Republic.

As elected officials charged with managing community affairs, the work of the council included deliberating on the local tax rate, the collection of communal revenues and reviewing the annual commune budget presented by the mayor and submitted to the Governor for approval. The council met four times per year to make decisions on these issues and advise the mayor on commune affairs. The mayor had the added responsibility of publishing laws and rules enacted by the state, providing general safety, and serving as an officer of the *état civil*. He established market prices, oversaw community work projects, and represented the commune in legal proceedings.[32] The mayor was also in charge of the police, local roads, local tax collection and public health. For commune inhabitants the mayor and municipal council fulfilled a central role in managing the concerns and affairs of the local community.

The deputyship held particular significance for commune residents because it gave them a voice in metropolitan government and access to Paris lawmakers. From 1871 until 1902, metropolitan representatives of the Bordeaux houses or their allies in the Saint Louis community usually controlled the position.[33] In the late nineteenth century, however, prominent *métis* politicians acted behind the scenes to ensure the election of their candidate to legislative office. The nature of the position, however, required the deputy to carry out most of his duties in Paris. As a result, he tended to be more removed

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[32] Ibid., 180-181.

[33] Francois Zuccarelli claims that Alfred Gasconi who served as deputy from 1879-1889 was the descendant of a French man from Marseille and a metisse woman from Saint Louis. He also notes that Gasconi was educated in Marseille and even participated in the Franco-Prussian war. See Zuccarelli, *La vie politique senegalaise*, 54.

from the everyday politics of the communes and did not play as central a role in negotiating the daily issues of concern to *métis* and black African residents of the towns as the Municipal and General Councils.

The General Council was perhaps the most prestigious and effective of all of the republican institutions for the *métis*. The powerful budgetary authority of this council and the assertiveness of its members made Sénégal's council far more important than its counterparts in metropolitan France.[34] The General council met for a few days annually in its Saint Louis headquarters to advise the Governor on issues he presented to the council and to approve of the colony's budget.[35] Council members deliberated primarily on economic issues such as tax collection and assessment, customs fees and the establishment of trade depots, markets, and fairs in the direct rule areas. In a few cases such as the timing of construction of public roads and public works projects, or the management of public property and contributions, the council had the power to enact legislation. The most important aspect of the council's authority, however, was the control it exerted over the colony's budget. The budget was divided into two categories of mandatory expenditures and optional expenses. Mandatory expenses that pertained to the governor's operating budget and resources for administration were fixed by the governor and could not be altered whereas the council maintained control of optional expenses. Council members could, therefore, dispute and reallocate funds for budgetary items such as the services and furnishing of offices, or expenditures for books in public libraries.

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[34] Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, p.55.

[35] "Décret institutant un Conseil général au Sénégal et dependences du 4 février 1879," *Moniteur du Sénégal*, 4 Avril 1879, 64-69.

Representatives to the council served unlimited six-year terms that were renewable by half every three years. The council originally consisted of sixteen members. Saint Louis, owing to its larger population, received ten members and Gorée six. In 1897, the law augmented the number of councilors to twenty with ten from Saint Louis, five for Gorée-Dakar and five for Rufisque. The Governor convened the council for an annual fifteen day session in November or December at the end of the trading season when members had returned to Saint Louis from the interior or from overseas. The Governor could also call for an extraordinary session at anytime during the year and in August 1885 a permanent colonial commission of three to five members was formed to deal with the continual work of the council. The law maintained, however, that the Governor held the power to suspend or dissolve the council subject to final approval by the Minister of Colonies.[36]

The predominant role played by the council in the Saint Louis community is reflected by the inauguration in 1888 of a permanent building to house the council on the south central side of the island, overlooking the Sénégal River.[37] In addition, the ceremony opening the annual meeting revealed the weight that commune residents placed on their close relationship with the Governor of the colony. Council members selected a president at the start of the session, usually deferring to the eldest member, with the position of secretary reserved for the youngest.[38] A delegation of five members was then

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[36] Mbaye, *Histoire des institutions coloniales*, 152-153.

[37] For location of the General Council see map of Saint Louis, Appendix A figure 2.

[38] According to the internal rules of the council, the most senior member held the ceremonial position of "president d'age" but the meeting was presided over by the president who was voted in by members of the council. In the extraordinary session of Feb. 19, 1880 Charles Valantin was declared president d'age but Louis Descemet acted as the elected president of the institution.

chosen to accompany the governor as he entered the conference room to give his opening speech before the entire council. After his address, the delegation escorted the Governor from the conference room with the same ceremony so that the councilors could begin their work.

The issues addressed in the first council session, from November 24 to December 6, 1879, included the budget proposal, the construction of the Saint Louis to Dakar railway, rules for trade along the Sénégal River and a complaint by Bordeaux firm Maurel and Prom over the dues for anchoring steam ships in the port cities. The council also considered a request by the Catholic mission of St. Joseph of Ngazobil for a land concession and a certain widow Michel's request for admission and financial assistance for her two daughters to attend the school run by the sisters of Saint Joseph de Cluny.[39] In effect, the General Council acted as the primary location for negotiation between commune residents and colonial officials.

In addition to the political institutions described above, several other organizations played an important role in the Saint Louis community at the end of the nineteenth century. The schools, courts, chamber of commerce, and the Bank of Sénégal provided mechanisms for building wealth, resolving disputes, gaining access to knowledge and forming partnerships that influenced the political process. Although these institutions were created by the colonial administration, they formed the basis of the social organization in this urban community. In this respect, these civic institutions played an instrumental role in shaping the identity and interests of various groups within the community. They also provided the foundation for forming alliances and networks that bolstered participation in the political arena.

[39] "Proces-Verbal de la séance 24 novembre 1879 a 6 decembre 1879", *Moniteur du Sénégal.*

Religion had a great influence on the public and private life of this community. Catholic missionaries from the Congregation of the Holy Ghost arrived in the coastal towns at the end of the eighteenth century mainly to serve the Christian population. On November 4, 1828 the completion of the cathedral on the south side of the island, in the *quartier Kretian*, symbolized the importance of the Catholic presence in Saint Louis.[40] The Sisters of Saint Joseph de Cluny, led by Mothers Rosalie and Anne-Marie Javouhey, established a mission in Sénégal in 1819. They were followed by the order of the Brothers of Ploërmel in 1841. The sisters founded and ran the Civic Hospital from 1840 to 1926 and established a primary school for young girls in 1847. The Ploërmel Brothers organized a primary school that became the main educational institution for young *métis* boys and a few black Catholics in the town. In 1883, the brothers introduced a program of secondary education in the colony as well. Both schools provided a structure for Catholic and French instruction until 1903 when legal separation of church and state was enacted in the colony and religious instructors were recalled.[41]

The development of Mosques, Muslim Tribunals, and schools for Islamic education in mid-nineteenth century Saint Louis testifies to the growing importance of the town as a center of Islamic activity. The Great Mosque, built in the north of the island between 1844 and 1847, became a focal point for the majority Muslim population. Governor Faidherbe recognized the unique position of Muslim city dwellers and established an "Islamic policy" that provided government services and institutions for

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[40] For more on early Catholic history in Saint Louis and Goree see, D.H. Jones, "The Catholic Mission and Some Aspects of Assimilation in Sénégal, 1817-1852," *Journal of African History* 21(1980), 323-340.

[41] Felix Brigaud and Jean Vast, *Saint Louis du Sénégal: ville aux mille visages* (Dakar: Editions Clairafrique, 1987), 85-91.

Muslim commune residents. He initiated a plan for secular education to establish French schools for Muslim residents who were reluctant to send their children to Catholic schools. He also called on the Catholic schools to open evening courses for Muslims who worked during the day. The "School for Hostages," later known as the School for the Sons of Chiefs, was created to take children of the nobility from their homes in the interior in order to ground them in French education before they assumed leadership roles in their home regions. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century Saint Louis developed a reputation as a center for Islamic learning as leaders of the emerging Sufi orders established religious schools for their followers in the colonial capital.

The Muslim Tribunal, established by Faidherbe in 1857, affirmed the special legal status of Muslim residents.[42] The tribunal allowed the Muslim population access to French courts that would apply Islamic law and local custom in civil cases. Appointed Muslim judges or *cadis* who were also leaders of the town's Muslim community presided over the tribunal which rendered legal decisions regarding marriage, death and inheritance. In affirming the unique position of this group and confirming their legal status as French nationals, the tribunal granted Muslim residents of the towns the right to seek justice in civil matters within the French court system without renouncing their religion or culture. The tribunal functioned until Independence in 1960 and became a symbol of the unique status of Muslim citizens in colonial Sénégal.[43]

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[42]Sarr and Roberts, "The Jurisdiction of Muslim Tribunals in Colonial Sénégal, 1857-1932", in *Law in Colonial Africa*, Mann and Roberts, eds., 132-135.

[43] In the early twentieth century Muslim tribunals were extended to Medine and Kayes on the Upper Sénégal River to serve the population of Muslim commune residents who lived and conducted trade in the region. For more on the courts and the legal rights of this group see Rebecca Shereikis, "From Law to Custom: The Shifting Legal Status of Muslim Originaires in Kayes and Medine, 1903-1913, *Journal of African History* 42(2001), 261-283.

A parallel justice system existed in Saint Louis and Gorée that administered French commercial, criminal, and civil law for residents of the colony.[44] The *tribunal de premiere instance*, organized by ordinance in 1837, served as the primary court of the French judicial system in civil and criminal cases. In 1840, professional magistrates were appointed to the courts and an appeals court was established.[45] From the earliest organization of the judiciary, French officials selected distinguished commune residents, often *métis habitants*, to serve on the court with judges appointed by the colonial ministry. The assimilated population, Muslim residents of the communes, Africans involved in cases against French citizens, and Africans that voluntarily renounced their customary civil status were entitled to have their cases heard before the tribunal of first instance. The *métis*, in particular, became skillful litigants and used the court system frequently to settle disputes involving commerce, property, labor, crime, and inheritance. In this setting, colonial legal systems could simultaneously act as a mechanism for enforcing political domination and as an arena for contestation over access to resources, relationships of power and the meaning of morality and culture.[46] Cases involving inheritance, bankruptcy, business affairs and legislative issues that the *métis* brought before the courts exemplify the tension between the rights of commune citizens and the authority of the colonial state.

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[44] This dual system only existed in Saint Louis. The Government General reorganized the judiciary in 1903 to create as system of "native courts" that applied "customary law" in the rural areas of the federation but limited the Muslim Tribunal to the cities where French courts were in place to administer French law. The Muslim tribunal was extended to a few other cities but was never introduced in the protectorate. See Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 86-94.

[45] Mbaye, *Histoire des institutions coloniales*, p.83-87.

[46] Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, "Introduction," in *Law in Colonial Africa*, Mann and Roberts, eds., (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991), 3.

From the administrative point of view, financial institutions served an important role in the colonies as a means of providing financial capital for the development of infrastructure and to facilitate the economic objectives of imperialism. *Métis* and *originaire* traders living in Gorée and Saint Louis, however, advocated for the creation of financial institutions to obtain the credit they needed to finance their personal and business affairs. Furthermore, Bordeaux merchants and prosperous Saint Louis traders petitioned the ministry for the creation of a Chamber of Commerce that would defend commercial interests in the colony. In 1869, a ministerial order authorized the organization of two Chambers of Commerce for Saint Louis and Gorée and charged them with responding to requests for information on trade and industry and advising the administration on how to maximize profit and form better commercial legislation for Sénégal. Members of the chamber were elected from the list of wholesalers and traders who paid patent fees. Agents of Bordeaux firms and a few prosperous *métis* traders controlled this institution in the nineteenth century and used it as a forum for presenting their interests to the administration and to commercial leaders in Bordeaux and Paris.[47]

In 1851, after years of debate and due largely to the insistence of Saint Louis residents, the department of colonies authorized the establishment of the Bank of Sénégal. The 1848 decree abolishing slavery in French colonies gave rise to the idea of colonial banks as a means of facilitating indemnity payments to former slave owners. Initially envisioned for plantation colonies, colonial banks were organized first in Guadeloupe and Reunion then Algeria and Sénégal. The bank operated as a private company with an administrative council comprised of a director named by decree, three

[47]Mbaye, *Histoire des institutions coloniales*, 246-248.

administrators elected by shareholders, the treasurer of the colony and two censors who surveyed the management of the bank and reported to the minister in charge of colonies. The central Colonial Bank in Paris organized under the Ministry of the Navy acted as the intermediary between the state and the bank in Sénégal.[48]

The Bank of Sénégal primarily served the financial needs of small and medium scale *métis* and black African traders concentrated in Saint Louis. It managed accounts and offered limited credit. The bank also issued currency and bank notes in colonial francs that were fabricated in France but only circulated in Sénégal. Bordeaux merchants generally chose to export their capital to France and did not use the bank, thereby causing frequent cash shortages in the colony. In 1901, the administration dissolved the Bank of Sénégal and replaced it with the *Banque de l'Afrique occidentale* which operated from headquarters in Paris. [49] The new bank was guided by the interests of metropolitan monopoly firms that operated throughout the federation and could offer credit directly to their local agents. Churches, Mosques, schools, courts, banks, and electoral institutions formed the basis of community organization in late nineteenth century Saint Louis. This group of civic institutions shaped the distinctive character of the city and provided a structure for local actors to interact with the colonial administration. Through these institutions, the *métis* created a space to build relationships of cooperation and contestation with one another, and to influence the mechanisms of power and decision-making within the colony.

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[48]Ibid., 195-197.

[49]"Situation of the Bank of Sénégal," 30 April 1901 *ANS* Q40, #47.

Members of Civil Society

In late nineteenth century Saint Louis, the *métis* population, black African commune residents, and the French commercial lobby constituted the dominant groups engaged in struggles for power. They formed what may be considered as the most active members of civil society in urban Sénégal during this period. In many ways the local population, viewed the ensemble of civic and political institutions in Saint Louis as organizations that should serve them and facilitate their access to positions of power within the colonial system. Over the course of more than a century, both the *métis* and black African population in the communes developed a strong loyalty to the French in their capacities as interpreters, clerks, soldiers, workers and intermediary traders. At the same time, however, these urban residents guarded their autonomy within the colony and asserted their right to have a certain measure of control over local affairs. The *métis*, in particular, envisioned their relationship with the administration more as a partnership in which they provided the greatest knowledge and expertise about the local situation. As a result, the period of colonial expansion brought an intensification of the debate over the meaning of citizenship and the role of commune residents in colonial affairs.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a group of people with mixed racial ancestry emerged in the island towns of Saint Louis and Gorée. By the 1860s the *métis* population in Sénégal numbered approximately 1,600 people.[50] The majority of this group was concentrated in Saint Louis while a smaller percentage lived on Gorée Island. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the leaders of the *métis* community were wealthy property owners and traders called *habitants* or *notables*. They established

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[50] H.O. Idowu, ""Café au Lait: Sénégal's Mulatto Community in the nineteenth century," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 6,3(December 1971), 274.

their fortunes through inheritance and the investment of capital into the intermediary gum trade. Some parlayed their wealth into fortunes that rivaled that of Bordeaux wholesale merchants called *négociants*. By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the next generation moved away from commerce and entered the liberal professions, colonial service, or the military. Although elite members of this community gained reputations as wealthy and powerful individuals, in the late nineteenth century divisions according to class, birth, and political ideology became more apparent. By the middle of the nineteenth century, most *métis* identified with the Catholic Church and educated their children in French schools.[51] They spoke both French and Wolof. Although they came from a society that was deeply influenced by Wolof culture, the *métis* generally sought the privileges that assimilation to France implied.

As a francophone, Catholic elite who inherited the surnames of their European fathers, the *métis* population in Sénégal satisfied the requirements of the French Civil Code that guaranteed their legal and civic status as French citizens. As a result of their particular position, members of this group emerged as key leaders in local politics and thus had significant access to colonial officials. They won the overwhelming majority of seats on Saint Louis' Municipal Council, and secured the mayoral position for most of the late nineteenth century. Louis Descemet, a conservative *métis* politician, held the presidency of the General Council from 1879 until 1893 when he was succeed by his ally Germain d'Erneville. Theodore Carpot then held the position from 1900 until 1913, when another métis politician, Justin Devès, replaced him.[52] In addition, throughout the

[51] Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 206-213.

[52] Idowu, Café au Lait," 278-282 and documents assembled for the exposition " Serie 'Exposition': Cent ans d'elections au suffrage universel," 20 Mai-31 Juillet 1976, C.R.D.S., Saint Louis, Sénégal.

nineteenth century *métis notables* secured important positions on the Governor and Governor-General's advisory councils, the Judiciary and in the Chamber of Commerce to gain greater leverage in colonial affairs.

Muslim residents comprised the overwhelming majority of the population of urban residents in Saint Louis. With the abolition of slavery in the colonies in 1848, the free black population rose from 5,346 in 1845 to over 11,000.[53] Until the mid nineteenth century, most black city residents, free or slave, worked as laborers, artisans, or sailors who traveled the Sénégal River on trading expeditions for *métis* and Bordeaux merchants. A few worked as independent traders or agents of French firms and from the 1860s to the 1880s a group of Muslim Saint Louis residents developed successful commercial enterprises as intermediary traders in the upper Sénégal valley and in the peanut producing regions of the interior. Bacre Waly Gueye, Pèdre Alassane Mbengue, Hamet Gora Diop and Abdoulaye Mar Diop became successful merchants and political figures in the Saint Louis community. Others like Hamat Ndiaye Anne, Bu el Mogdad and his son Dudu Seck became interpreters in the administration's political affairs bureau and magistrates for the Muslim Tribunal.[54] As leaders of the Muslim community in the 1880s and 1890s this group of Saint Louis Muslims used their influence not only to negotiate with colonial officials but to form strategic relationships with important *métis* families as

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[53] Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*, 23.

[54] For more on the Saint Louis traders see Mamadou Diouf, " Traitants ou Negociants? Les Commercants Saint Louisiens and Babacar Fall and Abdoul Sow, "Les Traitants Saint Louisiens dans les villes-escales du Sénégal 1850-1930," in Boubacar Barry and Leonhard Harding, eds. *Commerce et commercants en Afrique de l'ouest* (Paris: Harmattan, 1992), 107-155 and 155-191. On Muslim interpreters and merchants in Saint Louis see, David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 79-85 and 117-139.

well.[55] A small population of black Catholics also lived in Saint Louis and by the end of the nineteenth century a larger population of Wolof fisherman had settled in the villages of Guet Ndar, an area situated on the Atlantic coast of the island. The Muslim population, like their *métis* neighbors, did not constitute a monolithic group but differed along class, caste, educational, and even ethnic lines.

Within Saint Louis, tradition held that Muslims born in the communes had the right to vote in local elections regardless of their "customary" status. Yet for French officials, this question was subject to debate and interpretation at key moments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was only with passage of the 1916 Blaise Diagne laws, in an effort to recruit Sénégalese participation in World War I that Paris conceded the legal status of Muslim commune residents as French citizens. For the most part, however, Sénégal's governors recognized the unique status of the Muslim residents and followed the voting instructions outlined by the Second Republic that stated that eligible voters needed only to establish proof of at least five years residency in the communes. The census taken prior to the 1871 deputy elections recorded 3,427 registered voters for Saint Louis yet only 1,587 Saint Louis residents actually voted in the election.[56] Although the Muslim population often formed the majority of registered voters in these elections, they did not vote in proportion to their numbers, and those that did often voted with instruction from one of the dominant coalitions. Moreover, the law required candidates to prove literacy in French in order to run for electoral office. This

[55] Almamy Mathieu Fall, the son of an originaire artisan and trader and son-in-law of Abdoulaye Mar (mayor of Saint Louis 1947-1952), discussed his family's relationship to the Guillabert family and the importance of originaire/metis associations in Saint Louis. See interview May 27, 2000.

[56] ANS, *Moniteur du Sénégal*, #786, 4 April 1871.

restriction benefited *métis* and French candidates by eliminating competition from the majority Muslim population and relegating them to the role of clients in the patron client relationship that characterized local politics. Despite this practice, Muslim Saint Louisians consistently appeared on the list of registered voters and a few were elected to the General Council between 1870 and 1900.[57] By the beginning of the twentieth century a new generation of young, French educated, black commune residents sought greater political rights and took over leadership in electoral politics.

Bordeaux interests constitute the third major group of actors in commune affairs. Bordeaux merchants arrived in Sénégal in the 1820s to capitalize on the lucrative Arabic gum trade along the Sénégal River. They set up family based commercial houses in Gorée and Saint Louis that became the model for the organization of *métis* commercial houses. Louis Hubert Prom arrived in Gorée in 1822 and established the company Maurel and Prom with his cousin, Hilaire Maurel, in 1831. After leaving Bordeaux as a sailor and passing through Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Justin Devès arrived in Saint Louis in 1807 where he entered into trans-Atlantic commerce. Three years later he associated with his brothers, Bruno and Edouard, to form the company J. Devès and P. Lacoste that later became Devès and Chaumet.[58] These firms controlled the import-export trade between France and Sénégal throughout the nineteenth century and in the 1840s played an instrumental role in stimulating growth in the cash crop economy in peanuts. With the advent of colonial expansion, these firms transferred their capital to

[57] Bacre Waly was elected to the General Council from its founding in 1879 and held a position throughout the 1880s. Pedre Alassane and Abdoulaye Mar also appeared on the Municipal and General Councils at this time.

[58] Letter dated April 3, 1981 from "etablissements Deves et Chaumet, Bordeaux addressed to the Centre de Recherches et Documentation du Sénégal, Saint Louis containing a brief history of the company.

the peanut economy and established factories, wholesale outlets and retail stores in the trading depots of the peanut basin. Their commercial operations extended east to the towns of Medine and Kayes, and south to the regions of Diourbel, Gambia, and Casamance. In response to the changing economy, *métis* and Muslim traders from Saint Louis worked as either independent agents or employees for these firms until the 1920s.[59]

Due to their position as agents of commercial imperialism, the Bordeaux merchants maintained a close relationship with the administration in Saint Louis. They used their position as prominent members of the Bordeaux merchant community to form a powerful lobby with the Ministry of Colonies in the Chamber of Deputies. Their influence with Paris lawmakers gave them significant input in the development of colonial policy. In signaling the important relationship between Bordeaux, Saint Louis, and Paris, the Governor and Governor-General routinely passed through the French port city on steam ships that frequently traveled between Bordeaux and Saint Louis. Colonial officials used the occasion to meet with leaders of the Bordeaux merchant community on their way to and from Paris.[60] For the merchant elite, Bordeaux viewed Sénégal as "their colony" and thus exerted significant influence on local administration and politics. Representatives of Bordeaux commerce held seats on the Municipal Council, sat on the advisory council to the governor, and controlled the leadership of the Chambers of Commerce in the communes. The nature of their position in Saint Louis, however,

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[59] Yves Péhaut, "A l'époque de la `traite' de l'arachide: les `Bordelais' au Sénégal," *Revue Historique de Bordeaux* 30(1983-1984), p.49-69.

[60] Interview Georges Crespin, Paris June 8, 2001. Minutes of the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce also reflect the frequent meetings between Sénégal's colonial officials and Bordeaux merchants. *Bulletin Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce*, Séance 14 Fevrier, 1883.

created an ambivalent relationship with the *métis* community. Bordeaux considered some *métis* as loyal partners in commercial affairs while others were viewed as problematic rivals in the control of imperial commerce. Consequently, the tension that existed between these two groups was often played out in local politics and community affairs.

Interaction between members of civil society and the colonial administration occurred through a variety of formal and informal channels. High ranking colonial officers, military personal and various administrative staff concentrated in the town served as representatives of the Third Republic in Sénégal. The Saint Louis population enjoyed close access to the Governor of Sénégal. The director of the interior held a permanent seat on the General Council and worked closely with commune politicians as the official responsible for all issues concerning the well being of the colony's population. The *métis*, in particular, maintained close contact with French officers by attending Sunday Mass, annual Bastille Day celebrations, hosting dinner parties and participating in the annual scholarship award ceremonies. Consequently, the assertiveness of various members of the *métis* population and their anomalous position within the colony contributed to the vibrant civic and political culture that emerged in Saint Louis, Sénégal in the late nineteenth century.

The period of conquest and the establishment of a more extensive administrative structure in late nineteenth century Sénégal dramatically changed the political landscape of this region. The system that emerged in the colony sought to both enforce French domination and satisfy republican principles. In reviving the policy of assimilation, the Third Republic probably never envisioned extending citizenship rights to a vast West African empire. Although assimilation remained limited to Sénégal's coastal towns, the

republican practices that emerged in the communes created an atmosphere of negotiation and contestation by urban residents over the meaning of citizenship, democratic rights, and their position within the expanding colonial empire. Electoral politics, the courts, banks, schools and religious institutions provided the arena for commune residents to develop strategic alliances and assert their interests within the colonial system. An examination of the interplay of these actors and the issues they grappled with in the late nineteenth century offers further insight into the meaning of republican citizenship and colonial rule in Sénégal. In order to more fully understand the role of the *métis* in commune politics, however, we must first examine the emergence of this particular group and the society that they created in the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3

The Economic Foundations of *Métis* Society (1750-1850)

The origins of the *métis* population of Saint Louis and Gorée lie in the era of the Atlantic slave trade. Although a mixed race population appeared in Sénégal in the late eighteenth century, it was only in the early nineteenth century that economic, social and demographic conditions allowed for the growth and persistence of a distinct *métis* group that could articulate their rights as a French speaking, Catholic, propertied elite. In the early nineteenth century, the *métis* emerged as the dominant commercial class in the expanding capitalist economy of the coastal settlements. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, this group of intermediary traders faced an economic crisis that threatened their socio-economic standing in the colony. While these changes had a significant impact on *métis* traders in Saint Louis, a number of families attempted to consolidate their wealth and find new avenues to maintain their privileged class position. A few even became independent merchants and adopted new strategies to redefine their role as powerbrokers in the late nineteenth century.

This chapter examines the economic foundations of *métis* society, their challenges and responses to the changing economic environment of late nineteenth century Sénégal. In outlining the commercial history of Saint Louis and its inhabitants between 1750 and 1850, this chapter offers insight into the importance of trade in the emergence of this mixed race group. The strategies that they adopted to respond to the challenges they faced in the mid-nineteenth century further suggest that they did not simply fail to adapt to the restructuring of the colonial economy but rather developed new interests in commerce. Consequently, by 1870 *métis* representatives in urban politics based their

leadership on their economic interests as well as their status as an upwardly mobile middle class.

Métis Society, 1750-1848

Founded in 1659, the French fort at Saint Louis emerged as a thriving commercial center on the west coast of Africa. The town became the nexus of a new system that linked Sénégal to the capitalist port cities of the Atlantic World. Women and men from a variety of racial, ethnic, national and religious backgrounds settled in the town to capitalize on the opportunities presented in this new environment. Military officials and company employees came from France, Holland, Britain, and even Ireland.[1] Hailing from both noble and poor peasant backgrounds, these men came to the colony to profit from the lucrative Sénégal River trade. Men and women from Wolof, Fulbe, and Soninke ethnic groups arrived in the town from the interior regions along the coast and the inner reaches of the Sénégal River. Some traded food, gold, or slaves to foreigners on the coast. Others both slave and free worked as artisans, manual laborers or domestics. In contrast to the more rigid caste based societies of their homelands, the relatively open nature of this commercial society offered African migrants new possibilities for socio-economic advancement.[2]

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[1] The Irish surname O'Hara appears in genealogies of the leading *métis* families. The history of this family dates to the second period of British occupation (1758-1778) and is probably linked to Governor O'Hara who served in Saint Louis from 1766 to 1786 when he was replaced by MacNamara. See Guillaume Guillabert, "Arbre Genealoguique des familles Descemet-Guillabert." On the actions of Governor O'Hara who was appointed to Sénégal in 1766 and his conflicts with the rulers of Walo see Barry, *Le Royaume du Walo*, 183-188.

[2] Castes, or what Tal Tamari calls, "endogamous artisan groups," existed in some but not all Sénégalese societies in the pre-colonial period. The Wolof, Fulbe and Soninke kingdoms, in particular, maintained a complex hierarchical system for free people, artisan groups, and slaves. For more on this see, Abdoulaye

The *métis* population that emerged in the late eighteenth century was the product of this multi-cultural trade settlement. From the founding of the French fort, a system known as *mariage à la mode du pays* established a pattern of *métissage* in these towns. This system, which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, involved temporary marriages between African women called *signares* and French men stationed on the island. *Mariage à la mode du pays* provided foreigners with a means of entering African trade networks while also allowing Africans to gain access to Atlantic commerce through Europeans on the coast.

Typically, these marriages conformed to Wolof custom. European men negotiated a marriage contract with the family of a young woman. He agreed to the customary obligation of marital exchange or bride wealth by presenting her family with gifts to symbolize the agreement and by providing a house for his bride to establish their household. The wedding ceremony followed Wolof tradition with feasts, praise singing, dancing and the obligatory installation of the bride in her new home. The father was expected to give his family name to the children of these unions and provide them with an inheritance. Implicit in the agreement, however, was the understanding that the marriage would end upon the death or permanent departure of the male spouse from Sénégal.[3] For African women, marriage allowed them to enter European commercial networks and gain access to valuable trade goods. For European men, marriage to local women facilitated trade relations and mitigated their physical survival in foreign lands.

Bara Diop, *La société Wolof* (Paris: Karthala, 1981) and Tal Tamari, "The Development of Caste Systems in West Africa" *Journal of African History* 32(1991), 221-250.

[3] European travellers accounts from the eighteenth century are full of detailed descriptions of the *signares* and these marriage practices. They confirm that *mariage à la mode du pays* conformed to notions of marriage and kinship in Wolof society. For more on *signareship* and marriage in this period see George Brooks, "The *signares* of Saint Louis and Gorée," in *Women in Africa*, 21-38.

Establishing households with local women secured the resources needed to engage in trade and also ensured the proper hygiene, nutrition, and healing techniques necessary to withstand life threatening diseases in an unfamiliar tropical climate.[4]

Portuguese merchants established this model of African and European interaction in their commercial relations with people along the Senegambia coast as early as the sixteenth century. French merchants adopted the same practice in establishing commercial networks from their base in Saint Louis and Gorée. Recent scholarship on similar marriage arrangements between French merchants and native women in the Great Lakes Fur Trade of North America suggests that this model was widely accepted by French men operating in the eighteenth century mercantile world. As Susan Sleeper Smith explains for the French and native encounter in the western Great Lakes, entering into the kinship networks of local societies transformed the impersonal and capitalist nature of mercantile trade into one that was socially accountable by making foreign men part of an indigenous society that based commercial exchange on social relationships.[5] Consequently, the formation of new inter-racial households contributed to the commercial development of this urban settlement.

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[4] Natalie Reyss argues that life threatening diseases such as malaria and yellow fever made this arrangement attractive to Europeans and caused company government to relax earlier laws that prohibited co-habitation between company employees and local women. Yet, the fact that this practice was in place in other regions of the world where the climate was not as foreboding suggests that the social benefits may have been just as important as practical health considerations. See, Natalie Reyss, "*métis*sage comme un moyen du survivre," memoire de matrisse and "Saint Louis du Sénégal à l'époque pre-colonial," part I, chapter 3.

[5] In the Great Lakes this practice was called *mariage à la facon du pays*. The French who settled among Native Americans and their *métis* descendents were named *habitants* by French colonial authorities like their counterparts in Saint Louis, Sénégal. There are intriguing similarities between this kinship system in the Great Lakes fur trade and the Sénégal River Trade. For more on the *métis* in the Great Lakes see, Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 28-40 and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empire and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

This initial pattern of African and European interaction occurred in the period of company rule. From 1659 until 1791, a succession of royal mercantile companies governed the French establishments in Sénégal.[6] Through most of the eighteenth century, the Sénégal Company held a monopoly over trade from these French controlled outposts along the coast. As part of a network of militarized national companies that controlled Atlantic Commerce from the coast of West Africa to the Caribbean, France faced competition from other European powers. Consequently, the British captured Saint Louis and Gorée from the French twice in the eighteenth century and again between 1804 and 1816.[7] During this period, slaves made up the primary export from Sénégal while gum Arabic followed as the second most valued commodity. In addition, French merchants sought supplies of gold, ivory and grain for consumption by residents of the towns and by slaves in transit to the New World. In exchange, Africans obtained iron bars, firearms, and alcohol from their trade with Europeans. By the eighteenth century, a blue indigo cloth called the *guinea* became the most highly valued import along the banks of the Sénégal.[8] Bidan Moors, in particular, stimulated a great demand for the textile to replace

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[6] The Sénégal Company here refers to the *Compagnie française des Indies et la concession du Sénégal* which became the *Compagnie du Cap Vert et du Sénégal* that governed the colony until 1767. In 1791, royal monopoly was abolished and company rule ended.

[7] The British took Saint Louis for a few months in 1693. The second occupation occurred from 1758 to 1778 during the Seven Years War. In 1800 the British captured Gorée but returned it to the French in 1804 only to recapture it a few months later. In 1809, Saint Louis was succeeded to the British. *Mariage à la mode du pays* continued under British rule and gave rise to a group of *métis* with British surnames. The withdrawl of the British in 1817 resulted in the displacement of some of these families to Bathurst in the Gambia. Further investigation of the common history between the Saint Louis and Gorée *métis* with those of Bathurst may reveal more continuity among mixed race groups along the Senegambia coast than previously assumed. For more on the dispersal of *métis* men and women to the Gambia and the Upper Guinea coast see George Brooks, "The Signares of Saint Louis and Gorée," 41-43. For information on mixed race group in the southern rivers region during the early nineteenth century see Bruce L. Mouser, "History of Trade and Politics in the Guinea Rivers, 1790-1865," (Ph.D diss: University of Indiana, 1971).

[8] James Webb provides detailed statistics on the rise in gum consumption on the European market between 1699 and 1808. He shows that gum exports increased from 500 to 600 tons per year in the early eighteenth century and nearly double that amount by 1780. He even suggests that gum was the most important

locally woven cloth. The gum for *guinea* trade defined commercial relations along the Sénégal throughout the nineteenth century and is still the most favored textile worn in Mauritania today.

In the period prior to the French Revolution, African women and their Afro-European children became the first generation of intermediary traders and cross-cultural brokers between Africans on the mainland and Europeans stationed along the coast. An examination of family histories from this period indicates that the oldest *métis* lineages trace their descent to an eighteenth century French merchant or company official and a *signare*. The Pellegrin, Sleight, Dodds, Crespin, Descemet and d'Erneville were among the first *métis* families to appear in this period.[9] In general, however, the mixed race and free black African population in the towns served as employees of the company rather than independent traders in their own right. French company officials found it to their advantage to cultivate a small group of local intermediaries who could communicate with their African neighbors, conduct trade on their behalf in the river regions, and provide diplomatic and military support for the small population of foreign men who rarely ventured beyond Sénégal's Atlantic coast.

In the nineteenth century, however, a new generation of mixed race inhabitants solidified their position as a commercial elite that increasingly identified with the values and principles of republican France. In 1817, the Treaty of Paris returned to France their

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commodity traded by Europeans from the coast of western Sahara to the mouth of the Sénégal River; even more important than slaves in the eighteenth century. Clearly, its importance to the history of Saint Louis cannot be underestimated. See Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 107-109.

[9]The Crespins, d'Ernevilles, Valantin, Descemet, Carpot and Duchesne have their origins in this early period. Their French ancestors came to Sénégal as company employees or military officials in the years between 1778 and 1816. For more on the background of these families see my family profiles in the appendix B.

territories in West Africa that were lost to the British during the Napoleonic Wars. As a result, the re-establishment of French rule on the islands brought a more concerted effort at colonization. Paris appointed a governor to run the colony and provided a colonial budget for its management. In the 1820s, Governors Schmaltz and Roger even initiated plans for developing an agricultural colony near Richard Toll, a fertile region of Walo.[10] Although the plantation scheme ultimately failed, renewed efforts at colonization strengthened the French presence in Saint Louis. The arrival of a new group of French military officers, colonists, and traders increased the population of metropolitan French in Sénégal. In addition, disruptions caused by civil wars in Walo in 1830 and the growing population of slaves on the island contributed to a significant rise in the black African population of Saint Louis in the early nineteenth century. Whereas the black African and *métis* population on the island numbered 3,000 in the mid-eighteenth century, by 1830 Saint Louis' population reached between 8,000 and 12,000.[11]

In addition to the demographic changes, commerce underwent a major re-organization in Sénégal between 1800 and 1850.[12] First, representatives of Bordeaux commercial houses replaced company directors and employees of the royal companies as the principle European commercial interest in Sénégal. The new colonial government was responsible for maintaining peace with their African trading partners, collecting customs duties on the import-export trade, and taxing and licensing traders. Bordeaux merchants, however, asserted greater influence in the development of economic relations

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[10]For a complete account of the plantation experiment see Marcson, "European-African Interaction," 97-153.

[11] Ibid., 38 and Searing, *West African slavery and Atlantic Commerce*, 165.

[12] Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*, 167-168.

between Sénégal and France. Secondly, the abolition of the Atlantic Slave trade significantly altered the nature of commerce from this region. Abolition of French participation in the Atlantic Slave trade accompanied British occupation in the early 1800s. As a result, legitimate trade replaced the external traffic in human cargo. In Sénégal, gum became the primary trade good exported from this region. Between 1800 and 1840 the demand for gum in Europe continued to rise and the gum-guinea trade generated enormous profits. Gum Arabic became the primary material used in the manufacture of calico print textiles and in Europe's pharmaceutical and book binding industries.[13]

In the Sénégal River trade system, those who had established commercial relations with the Traraza Moors could control the supply of gum from the river trade posts to French merchants at the port in Saint Louis.[14] The *habitants*, a class of distinguished *métis* and free black traders, became the dominant and most skilled middlemen in the gum for guinea trade. They were adept at negotiating tribute with their Moor suppliers and obtaining credit from French merchants on the coast in order to ensure the exchange of guineas for quantities of gum. In the early nineteenth century,

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[13] Gum exports from Sénégal doubled again in 1830 to 2,000 tons per year. Gum prices fluctuated, dropping significantly in 1831, recovering and the declining drastically in the late 1840s. Despite the changing market, gum remained a popular export from Sénégal until the 1870s. See Webb, Desert Frontier, 107 and Roger Pasquier, "Les traitants des comptoirs du Sénégal au milieu du XIXe siècle," *Actes du Colloque Entreprises et Entrepreneurs en Afrique* Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, ed., (Paris: Harmattan, 1983), 142-147.

[14] The Saint Louis population was largely dependent of the gum trade for their livelihood. The gum trade was organized around *escales* or the official river trading posts controlled by the three main groups of Bidan Moors on the north bank of the river. The *escale* trading season began in February and ended in July. Upon arrival in the *escales*, Saint Louis traders would settle the amount of taxes to be paid to the Emir then would begin negotiating the price of gum. Since gum acquired in the *escales* was less expensive than gum from the coast, the Saint Louis traders made their profit according to the difference. Before 1848, only registered traders had the right to trade in the escales. See Webb, *Desert Frontier* and Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, 46.

habitant intermediaries capitalized on their strategic position with French merchants on the coast and Bidan Moors along the Sénégal to move up from small-scale traders to specialized middlemen in the import-export trade. For example, a *métis* man might begin as a sailor or river trade worker.[15] He could then accumulate enough wealth through petty trade to buy a riverboat and acquire a slave crew. This would enable him to rent out his boat, crew and trade services to a French merchant which would allow him to acquire enough capital to establish himself as a small merchant in the grain trade. By following this path he could eventually earn enough capital to enter the gum trade and achieve the title *habitant*, the highest rank for local traders in the Saint Louis commercial hierarchy.[16] In the 1830s, *métis* traders Blaise Dumont, E. Sleigth, Durand Valantin and Guillaume Foy succeeded in distinguishing themselves as the wealthiest and most influential leaders in the gum trade.[17]

As the predominant commercial elite in Saint Louis, the *métis* population generally derived their socio-economic status from their role in the gum trade. Not all *métis* possessed the same amount of wealth or acquired the status of *habitant*. In the

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[15] This process worked for both *métis* and free black residents of Saint Louis in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Sailors, also known as *laptots*, developed into a specialized and important group in Saint Louis commercial organization. I will discuss the role of these workers in Saint Louis' labor system below. Manchuelle provides more analysis of the Soninke *laptot* in Saint Louis and the Upper Sénégal in, *Willing Migrants*, 77-84.

[16] An elaborate system of patent fees for trading licenses determined the commercial hierarchy. The highest fees were reserved for French merchants called *négotiants* who held the highest rank. The gum traders or *habitants* were second in rank followed by small-scale traders called *traitants* and lastly trade agents or *sous-traitants* who were employed by French merchant firms. In addition to determining a class division in Saint Louis society, this classification followed racial distinctions as well. The category of *négotiant* was strictly reserved for metropolitan French. *Métis* and free black Africans could obtain status as *habitant* but the *métis* dominated this group leaving the category of *traitant* for the mainly Muslim black African traders from Saint Louis. For more on what distinguishes these categories see Laurence Marfaing, *L'Evolution du Commerce au Sénégal, 1820-1930*, 16-17.

[17] Pasquier, "Les traitants des comptoirs du Sénégal,"147.

early nineteenth century, however, the vast majority of *métis* in Saint Louis participated to some extent in commerce. At the same time, the *métis* population bolstered their socio-economic standing in the colony through property ownership.[18] They owned the majority of buildings, small shipping vessels, and warehouses on the island and its suburbs. As evidence of the extent of their monopoly on real estate, most European merchants and officials who arrived in the colony in the 1830s and 1840s were forced to rent homes, buildings, and boats from *métis* residents.[19] As with trade, their control over the real estate market proved an especially important asset for these island dwellers since they could not depend on agricultural production for their livelihood.

Slave ownership served as a particularly valuable source of wealth for the residents of Saint Louis in the early nineteenth century. Like other societies in the Sénégal River region, slavery existed as a common feature of social and economic organization in the town.[20] Although Saint Louis' participation in the Atlantic Slave trade declined after British occupation in 1816, a domestic market for slaves continued to thrive in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, the Atlantic slave trade and the increasing trade in grain between the Wolof kingdoms and the coast stimulated a greater demand not only for export but also for local agricultural

[18] This aspect deserves further exploration since investigation of property ownership in the Saint Louis community after 1850 may provide more detailed information on the socio-economic status of the *métis* population in the late nineteenth century.

[19] Ibid., 150-153 and Saliou Mbaye, "L'esclavage domestique à Saint Louis à travers les archives notariés (1817-1848)," in *Saint Louis et l'esclavage* (Dakar: IFAN, 2000), 141-144.

[20] Martin Klein, "Servitude among the Wolof and Sereer of Senegambia," in *Slavery in Africa*, Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 343-345.

production.[21] At the same time, slavery became the cornerstone of the local economies of Saint Louis and Gorée. Slave labor increasingly replaced free migrant labor resulting in a slave majority on both islands from 1758 until 1845. In 1835, Saint Louis reported 4,924 free people, 634 indentured servants and 6,118 slaves. Over the next decade, these statistics remained virtually unchanged with only a slight increase in the free black population by 1848 when France officially abolished slavery in the colonies.[22]

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century a parallel system of labor organization existed in Saint Louis. Free and slave workers commonly performed the same tasks and both could earn wages for their work. This labor force was primarily responsible for manual labor, domestic work, craft production, and cultivating gardens on the island and its suburbs. Slave owners, however, hired their slaves out to colonial officials or European merchants and received a portion of their earnings in return. As a result, slave owners transformed Saint Louis into a society highly dependent on slave labor.[23]

Female slaves, in particular, remained in high demand throughout the nineteenth century.[24] Women and young girls served as laundresses and *pileuses* or grain pounders. They prepared millet, the staple grain of local dishes, for consumption by their owners

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[21] It is important to note that during this period the Wolof kingdoms did not supply the majority of slaves for export in the Atlantic slave trade but rather increased the use of slave labor in agricultural production. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*, 27-58.

[22] See the table compiled by Martin Klein from census data on Saint Louis and Gorée for 1758, 1767, 1835 and 1845 in Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 23.

[23] Searing, *West African Slavery*, 98-106.

[24] Searing argues that there was a high demand for female labor in the towns from the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. He presents further evidence to suggest that a clandestine trade in young girls continued until the end of the nineteenth century. See Searing, West African Slavery, 98-101 and 120-122 and Searing, '*God Alone is King*,' 151-166.

and the slave labor force. Female slaves carried out all of the household work for their owners from cleaning, cooking, and tending garden to taking care of children and tending to the sick. They were also hired out to company officials or European traders for work on the island or to provide domestic services for river trading crews. Moreover, as concubines of their masters and wives to slave men in the household, slave women had no claim to their reproductive labor. Their children automatically became part of the slave labor population. Despite these restrictions, however, the distinctly urban nature of slavery in the towns, afforded slave women opportunities to become petty traders and even earn enough to purchase their own slaves.[25]

Male workers also fulfilled a variety of tasks for the property owning commercial classes and the French administration. They provided the labor force for the government's construction projects on the island, repaired boats and worked in the warehouses of European merchants. The majority of male workers, however, supplied the labor force needed to conduct trade along the Sénégal River. A class of sailors called *laptots* emerged as a specialized group in the Sénégal River trade network.[26] Both free and slave *laptots* served as crew for commercial voyages. They manually hauled shipping vessels up and down the river and conducted commercial transactions with Africans in the trading posts. During the trading season between January and October, *laptots* traveled the river as navigators, riverboat captains, pilots, masons, blacksmiths, porters, interpreters, trade agents and security for the captain. These sailors generally

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[25] Searing, *West African Slavery*, 122.

[26] Manchuelle makes the important distinction that the job of the *laptot* was not a "slave occupation" that was carried out by free men but rather a wage labor occupation often fulfilled by slaves. He underscores the privileged position attributed to *laptots* in African society. For more on *laptots* and Soninke labor migration from the Upper Sénégal River see, Francois Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1997), p. 59-63.

received substantial wages for their work in currency or trade goods. Slave sailors, however, were required to give half of their earnings to their owners. *Métis habitants*, in particular, came to rely heavily on their slave workers too provide the labor force needed to carry out their gum trade operations.

In general, *métis* men and women acquired slaves by purchase in public markets or through dowries, inheritance settlements, debt payments or as gifts.[27] In the era of the *signares*, slave ownership became one of the primary forms of acquiring wealth for the women of Saint Louis. European traveler's accounts of their society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century emphasize the large number of slaves owned by the *signares* of Saint Louis and Gorée.[28] These women typically maintained an entourage of slave women to accompany them on public outings. For the *signares*, slave ownership served as a tangible form of wealth and conspicuous marker of their status. Free women in Saint Louis also used their access to slaves to fill an important niche in the local economy. They not only profited by hiring out their slaves to company officials and traders for work projects and trading missions but also charged their slaves with acquiring gold, salt, and other trade goods on their behalf.[29]

Although I have not attempted an analysis of the state of *métis* wealth in this period, some trends attest to the prosperity of this group in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Scholars have often referred to this period as the "golden age of the *habitants*" precisely because of their dominant role in the expanding capitalist economy

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[27] Saliou Mbaye, "L'esclavage domestique à Saint Louis," 148-154.

[28] Brooks, "The *Signares* of Saint Louis and Gorée," 23-24.

[29] Searing, *West African Slavery*, 98-101.

of the coastal towns. For example, *métis* names commonly appear with the title "property owner" in census records and lists of notable Saint Louis residents of this period. Furthermore, a study of dowries and earnings presented in marriage contracts for a number of *métis* families indicates that their level of wealth was comparable to that of the Parisian middle class during the same period.[30] Notarized documents describing transactions of slaves in marriage contracts, wills, debt payments and bills of sale further testify to the significant financial resources *métis* families held through ownership of slaves.[31] While the wealthiest families owned anywhere between fifty and a hundred slaves, most families owned at least ten.[32]

Additionally, gold provided an important asset for *métis* women and men in their economic ventures.[33] An 1834 notarized document signed by Nicholas d'Erneville shows that he owed his wife, Adelaide Crespin, 300 *gros* in gold for investment in his trading business.[34] *Métis* women possessed significant financial assets of their own in this period

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[30] This information is taken from Pasquier's analysis of marriage contracts for nineteen *métis* families between 1838 and 1850. He concludes that at least half brought together goods and earnings of at least 40,000 francs which would have been similar to that of middle class Parisian families during this period. See Pasquier, "Les traitants des comptoirs du Sénégal," 152.

[31] Saliou Mbaye's analysis of slave ownership through the collection of notarized documents for Saint Louis in this period testifies to the prevalence of slave ownership and its value for the habitant population. Further study of wills and marriage contracts for this period in comparison with notarized documents for the period after 1850 may offer greater insight into the changing nature of *métis* wealth in the last half of the nineteenth century. See Mbaye, "L'esclavage domestique," 149-157.

[32] Louis Alsace, a wealthy *métis notable* claimed to own 111 slaves. For an 1842 list of slave owners in Saint Louis see Reyss, "Saint Louis du Sénégal," 144.

[33] The reputation that Saint Louis women earned for their collections of gold jewelry testifies to the importance of this metal as a form of wealth. French officials acknowledged Saint Louis craftsmen for their skill in gold filigree design and as early as 1865 borrowed the collections of notable *métis* women for colonial exhibitions in Saint Louis and Sierra Leone. For more information on gold jewelry see Marion Johnson, "Black Gold: Goldsmiths, Jewelry, and Women in Sénégal (Ann Arbor: Ph.d diss., University of Michigan, 1981) and "The French Impact upon African Art: the case of Sénégalese Goldsmiths," in *Double Impact*, G. Wesley Johnson, ed., 262.

[34] "Obligation par Nicholas d'Erneville a Adelaide Crespin," 28 Avril 1834, *ANS* 1Z4, #16.

and brought these goods into their marriages with habitant men. Antoine Feuiltaine, for example, acknowledged that his wife, *signare* Marie Bamby, owned forty-eight slaves prior to their marriage and that their five daughters all had slaves of their own.[35] Similarly, Charles d'Erneville entered his 1847 marriage to the daughter of notable *habitant* with a credit of 6,000 francs, a box of silver, and five captives while his wife possessed a house, furniture, gold, jewelry, and forty-seven captives.[36] The *habitant* tradition of providing their daughters with impressive dowries suggests that women contributed significantly to the economic well being of their families in early nineteenth century Saint Louis.

In establishing new communities at the intersection of Africa and the Atlantic World, the residents of Saint Louis and Gorée created a society founded on commerce and cross-cultural exchange. As the descendants of French men and African women, the *métis* were able to capitalize on their unique position to dominate the intermediary trade between French merchants in the port city and African producers in the interior. Their socio-economic status, however, was not simply based on their position in the gum trade but was also due in large part to their ability to control real estate and slave labor in the town. Consequently, *métis* fortunes in this period can be directly attributed to the success of the gum trade and their position as the primary property owning class in the colony.

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[35] Information on French *habitant* Antoine Feuiltaine, his wife and children is taken from Sylvain Sankale, "'*A la mode du pays*...Chroniques Saint Louisiennes d'Antoine Francois Feuiltaine," 465-467.

[36] Mbaye, "L'esclavage domestique," 147-154.

Economic Crisis, 1848-1852

The year 1848 had a significant impact on members of the *métis* population in Sénégal. Although they felt the effects of the changing economic environment in the 1830s, the events of 1848 crystallized the financial difficulties facing the *métis* population. Competition from Bordeaux firms and a crisis in the gum trade signaled uncertainty about their future prospects in commerce and raised questions about their ability to maintain their elite status. The advent of the Second Republic, with its new imperatives for free trade and the abolition of slavery solidified the declining financial outlook for the *métis* in the middle of the nineteenth century.

In the 1830s, prices for gum fluctuated considerably on the Sénégalese market causing a crisis in the gum trade. This instability was largely due to a series of conflicts in the region. Civil war in Walo and a series of conflicts between the Traraza Moors and Saint Louis disrupted trade along the lower Sénégal. These events heightened anxiety among traders over the ability to conduct trade along the river. As a result, prices for gum on the Sénégal market fell by seventy-five percent. [37] Of even greater significance to the *habitants*, competition with Bordeaux firms over the middleman sector of the economy threatened the position of *métis* gum traders in the Sénégal River trade.

Ambivalence characterized the relationship between Bordeaux merchants and *métis* middlemen. On the one hand, both groups shared similar economic interests and a common cultural heritage. Both groups maintained close associations since they were dependent on one another for credit in merchandise and supplies of gum. Moreover, the educational background of *métis* traders afforded the group some knowledge of French business practices. A number of leading habitant firms based the organization of their

[37] Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 126-127 and Marcson, "European-African Interaction," 170-180.

commercial houses on the family business model presented by Bordeaux firms like Maurel and Prom, Buhan and Teisseire or Devès and Chaumet. Like their French counterparts, *métis* commercial houses relied on associations between brothers, cousins, fathers, sons and in-laws. Durand and Francois Valantin, for example, entered the gum trade and founded a successful commercial house in the 1830s and 1840s. In a similar case, members of the Pellegrin family joined in business together as did Louis and George Alsace, and Charles Floissac, father and son.[38] Sons often followed their fathers or father in-laws in the family business beginning as an *aide-traitant* or apprentice and eventually taking over as head of the operation. In this respect, the family based commercial houses established by the *métis* had a great deal in common with the group of Bordeaux merchants who became their primary competitors in the 1830s.[39]

On the other hand, to ensure their niche in the colonial economy habitant traders had to maintain their control of the middleman sector from both Bordeaux rivals and the growing number of Muslim Saint Louis traders. The Bordeaux firms looked for ways to circumvent habitant intermediaries to make more profit from the gum trade. In the 1830s and 1840s, conflict between habitant traders and Bordeaux firms intensified. Both sides called on government intervention to support their interests. In 1836, the colonial government granted French merchants access to the river trade posts, thus, breaking habitant monopoly on trade up-river.[40] To further disrupt habitant relations with Moor suppliers, the Bordeaux firms devised a strategy to flood the market with *guineas*. At the

[38] Reyss, "Saint Louis du Sénégal à l'époque pre-coloniale," annex 3, 61-63.

[39] Yves Pehaut makes an important observation about the family model as a defining characteristic of Bordeaux commercial houses in "A l'epoque de la `traite' de l'arachide: les `bordelais' au Sénégal," *Revue historique de Bordeaux et du Departement de la Gironde* (1883), 51-52.

[40] Marcson, "African-European Interaction,"175-177.

start of the 1837 trading season, the Bordeaux firms ordered a larger quantity of *guineas* than usual. They lent the first 100,000 to the *habitants* at the regular exchange rate then sold the surplus directly to Moors in the trade posts for fifty percent less than the rates offered by the *habitants*. Consequently, the *habitant* traders lost money on the exchange of *guineas* up-river while their creditors in Saint Louis were able to undercut their prices and sell their goods directly to buyers along the Sénégal River.[41] Although Paris helped stabilize gum prices by instituting a fixed exchange rate and reestablishing *habitant* control over the up-river trade, by 1842 the intermediary traders had already suffered unrecoverable losses.[42]

Faced with increasing debt and the inability to obtain merchandise on credit from the wholesalers, some of the wealthiest members of the *métis* population were forced to declare bankruptcy. In the late 1830s, the administration calculated the debt of the intermediary traders at between three and four million francs. While French officials attempted to put measures in place to relieve *habitant* debt and reform trade practices, by 1849 collectively they still owed approximately two million francs to their creditors.[43] As a result, a number of traders found it nearly impossible to operate independent businesses. According to Roger Pasquier, in 1843 fifty percent of registered traders

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[41] Webb notes that this competition not only affected the habitant traders but also forced French merchants who had recently established businesses in the colony out of the wholesale trade and into the up-river intermediary trade to avoid losses. Consequently, competition for trade in the escales intensified even further. Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 126-127.

[42] In 1841, the governor decreed a fixed exchange rate for the guinea-gum trade. A royal ordinance of 15 November 1842 further regulated the gum trade saying that trade in the posts could only be carried out by traders commissioned by the government. The criteria for registration included that of a free person born in Saint Louis who was not a *négotiant* and had traded in the *escales* since 1836. The ordinance also prohibited traders from paying customs to the Moors on the north bank. As a result, the ordinance sought to open the *escale* trade to competition from Muslim Saint Louis traders. For more on the implications of the law see Marcson, "African-European Interaction," 188-189.

[43] Pasquier, "les traitants des comptoirs," 161and Marfaing , *L'Evolution du Commerce au Sénégal*, 58.

worked for their own account. By 1852, only twenty-five percent were independent and by the end of the decade only six or eight *habitants* managed to maintain independent commercial houses.[44] As a result, a number of *métis* traders were forced to sell or mortgage their property in order to avoid bankruptcy and thus, had to dissolve the family trade houses that they had established in the early part of the century.

Revolution in France and the installation of the Second Republic solidified the declining financial situation of the *métis* population in Sénégal. First, the Republic's decree prohibiting the practice of slavery "on French soil" dealt a severe blow to the slave owning class of Saint Louis.[45] Since a great deal of *métis* wealth depended on the ability to use slave labor, abolition created new challenges for *métis* control of the labor force and the ability to recuperate the capital they invested in slave labor. Paris provided indemnity payments for slave owners. Compensation, however, was generally low and paid part in currency and part in stock titles issued by the newly established Bank of Sénégal.[46] In the current climate, in which speculation remained high, most habitants sold their stock shares or converted their indemnity payments into debt repayment. Typically, former Saint Louis slave owners lost money while French merchants profited. For the *métis* population, these changes highlighted the growing reality that they could no longer depend on slave ownership as a viable form of financial security.

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[44] Pasquier, "les traitants des comptoirs," 154-156.

[45] The decree announcing the end of slavery was one of the first measures instituted by the Republic on 27 April 1848.

[46] Colonial banks were established in the Antilles and Sénégal in large part to handle these indemnity payments. For more on the creation of the Bank of Sénégal and indemnity payments see my discussion in Chapter two and Ghislaine Lydon, "La Banque due Sénégal, 1844-1901," in *A.O. F.: realities et heritages*, 480-481.

Secondly, the liberal reforms instituted by the new republic enforced the principle of free trade in the colonies. Champions of the new republic argued that only the introduction of free trade in their overseas colonies would eradicate the practice of slavery and bring the values of "civilization" to their unenlightened subjects.[47] In 1849, new laws opened the gum trade to members of the entire indigenous population in Sénégal thus eliminating the monopoly habitants held over the intermediary niche.[48] This opened the door for a new generation of Muslim Saint Louis traders to enter the river trade without the restrictions of patent fees or customs duties that had prevented their competition with the *habitants* before. Contemporary observer, Abbé Boilat, summed up his impressions of the waning days of "gum fever" and the declining fortunes of the habitants in the following statement:

> In earlier times this trade was like an inexhaustible source where the *habitants* were able to make colossal fortunes without great difficulty... all the families were at ease; gold sparkled around the neck, ears, and arms of the wives and daughters, of the numerous servants; joy and happiness reigned everywhere. For several years the numbers of traders has multiplied prodigiously; all, even the *marbouts* [muslim clerics] go into trade and the quantity of gum that enriched a small number cannot suffice for so many traders... the return of the trade is no longer a subject of joy for the families but one of chagrin and sadness...[49]

These events marked an end to the days of prosperity from the gum trade. During the 1851 trade season the up-river posts did not even open for trade and by 1853, the administration abolished the last of its protectionist policies. As the gum trade declined,

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[47]Carrére and Holle were particular proponents of this approach in Sénégal. Writing in the early 1850s, they commented that only free trade would eradicate competition at the river trading posts. They viewed free trade as the key to instilling western notions of hard work, discipline, and the characteristics of capitalism that would make the traders good agents of French civilization. See Frederic Carrére and Paul Holle, *De la Senegambie Francaise*, (Paris: Librarie de Firmin, 1855), 353.

[48] Pasquier, "les traitants des comptoirs," 161 and Webb, *Desert Frontier*, 130-131.

[49] Boilat, Esquisses Sénégalaises, 210-211.

métis traders from Saint Louis faced greater anxieties about their place in the commercial structure and their ability to benefit from the Sénégal River trade as they had decades earlier.

Métis Responses, 1852-1870

The declining financial situation of the elite Saint Louis traders combined with the changing nature of the colonial economy created a climate of insecurity for the *métis* population. The economic crisis of the late 1840s caused serious financial setbacks for most members of the group and raised questions about their ability to adapt to the changing economic environment. After assuming the governor's office in 1852, Faidherbe initiated a plan for territorial conquest that was strongly linked to the new economic agenda of the French merchants. The main characteristic of the policy involved a shift from gum exports to the cultivation of peanuts as the primary focus of the colonial economy. While Saint Louis remained an important port for French commerce until the end of the nineteenth century, French imperial interests began to move away from the gum trade of the Sénégal River to strategic centers of the emerging peanut basin. As a result, in the next two decades imperialist interests turned increasingly away from the river to peanut producing areas of the mainland regions of Cayor, the Cap Vert Peninsula, the Gambia and the Southern Rivers region.[50]

The introduction of peanut agriculture provided a new market to satisfy the demand for oil products to supply Marseille soap manufacturers and the French cooking

[50] Marfaing, *L'evolution du commerce au Sénégal*, 66-74. For more on the beginnings and evolution of peanut culture in West Africa see, George Brooks, "Peanuts and Colonialism: Consequences of the Commercialization of Peanuts in West Africa, 1830-1870," *Journal of African History* 16,1(1975), 29-54.

industry. Although peanuts did not surpass gum as the primary export from Sénégal until the 1870s, French merchants began introducing the crop to growers in the interior and shipping supplies from interior regions that had come under nominal French control in the 1850s.[51] Moreover, the introduction of a regular steamship service between Bordeaux and Saint Louis in the 1850s opened up new opportunities for small-scale traders to ship smaller quantities of peanuts from the interior to the coast and to France. As a result, a new group of French traders arrived in the colony seeking to gain a foothold in the market.[52]

Faced with the reality of their weakening financial situation and the changing nature of the commercial hierarchy, how did *métis* men and women in Sénégal respond to these challenges? Contemporary observers generally predicted that the crisis in the gum trade and the abolition of slavery would lead to the complete financial ruin of the *habitant* traders.[53] Initially, historians also viewed these events as marking the triumph of Bordeaux commerce over the independent Saint Louis commercial elite. More recently, scholars have examined the role of Saint Louis traders and property owners after

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[51] Initially, the peanuts were transported by boat from strategic loading sites along the Sénégal River or overland by camel caravan through Cayor. The river trade posts still functioned for the gum trade but did not play a vital role in the peanut trade. See Marfaing, *L'evolution du commerce au Sénégal*, 64-66.

[52] Cheri Peyrissac represented this new generation of French merchants. He came to Sénégal in 1862 from Bordeaux. Having little money, he first apprenticed with French merchants already established in Casamance then settled in Saint Louis. He opened his own trade house that grew to include a large import-export firm specializing in peanuts, salt, electricity, transportation, rubber, bananas and cloth. This organization was typical of the new commercial firms that would dominate the import-export trade in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Pierre Guillard, "Cheri Peyrissac," *UNIR: Echo de Saint Louis* 140(Dec. 1994), 7-11 and Klein, *Islam and Imperialism in Sénégal*, 118-119.

[53] Both Carrère and Holle and Boilat wrote that the gum crisis would be the ruin of the major habitant families. See Carrere and Holle, *De la Senegambie francaise*, 346-352 and Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 210-211. This issue also stirred considerable debate in the metropolitan press over the fortunes of the habitants. For comments on the debate in France see Pasquier, "les traitants des comptoirs," 154.

1850 and have discovered that they remained an important force in the expansion of French commerce until the end of nineteenth century. [54]

An examination of *métis* economic activities between 1850 and 1870 illustrates their capacity for adjusting to the new environment. As a group, this mixed race population developed strategies to maintain their elite status and assert their interests within the expanding colonial economy. Strategic marriages, for example, led to greater consolidation of wealth between leading families and strengthened their ties to Bordeaux commerce.[55] In addition, *métis* men and women in Saint Louis and Gorée continued to own much of the real estate on the islands. The economic crisis of the 1840s did not result in the massive property losses predicted by contemporary observers. Rather, the mainly mixed race descendants of the *signares* maintained control of rental property and became the main creditors to the working class black African population on the island.[56] Furthermore, records of business transactions in the late nineteenth century indicate that *métis* men and women owned their own retail stores and pursued entrepreneurial projects

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[54]For an early interpretation see Samir Amin, "la politique coloniale francaise a le'egard de la bourgeoisie commercante senegalaise." On recent scholarship see the articles on Saint Louis traders in, *Commerce et commercants en Afrique de l'ouest*, ed., Boubacar Barry and Leonhard Harding (Paris: Harmattan, 1992) and Mbodj, "The abolition of slavery in Sénégal, 1820-1890," in *Breaking the Chains*, ed., Martin A. Klein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

[55] This subject will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. For examples of this pattern see the genealogies in the appendix for the marriages of Jean Charles Descemet to Josephine Sleight; Louis Descemet to Adelaide Ducesne; Marianne d'Erneville to Auguste Teisseire; and Gaspard Devès to Catherine Foy.

[56] Mohamed Mbodj makes this argument persuasively in his article on the impact of abolition in Saint Louis and Gorée. He suggests that the *signares* continued to act as the main suppliers of labor in the colony and that there was little difference in wages earned between slave sailors in the 1820s and free workers in the 1880s. He calculates that in 1820 a sailor earned 20francs a month and kept 10 for himself while in 1882 a free worker earned 25 to 37.5 francs a month with 15 going to the *signare* for food and lodging. The free worker took home approximately 10 to 15 francs a month. See Mbodj, "The abolition of slavery in Sénégal, 1820-1890," 297-208. The fact members of the black African population in Saint Louis often rented from or acquired their first home in Saint Louis from *métis* residents was also confirmed for me in an interview with Almamy Matieu Fall, Dakar, Sénégal 27 May 2000.

in public works, construction and transportation in the towns.[57] These activities suggest that the *métis* population sought new avenues for re-building their financial resources and continued to profit from their control of land, commerce and labor.

Although it is difficult to determine the extent of *métis* losses as a result of the end of slavery, a closer examination of the ways in which they obtained new sources of domestic and skilled labor offers additional insight into how this population adjusted to the changes brought about by abolition.[58] In some cases, slave owners circumvented the new laws by moving their slaves to villages on the outskirts of town to cultivate gardens. In other cases, former slave men were trained as apprentices to craftspeople and were commonly used as workers in their trade businesses. Enrollment records for the Catholic primary school for boys in Saint Louis show that *métis* and French residents sent a number of young boys who were "raised" in their houses and baptized to the school for training. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the 1850s several of these students left the school for Rio Nunez or Sierra Leone where their patrons surely had commercial interests.[59] For Saint Louis traders, training young slave boys to serve as apprentices

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[57] The notary acts for Saint Louis and Gorée in the 1880s confirm that the *métis* owned a number of retail stores and were the main property owners on the islands. The vast majority of real estate transactions involved women, in particular. Documents of debts owed, houses sold and inheritance settlements also indicate the nature of their trade businesses and their entrepreneurial activities. It is not surprising that Gaspard Devès appears as a primary creditor to a number of black African residents in the town. Examples of these sources include "sale of building by Louise Ndiack Gueye to Madeline Tamba," 6 September 1881; "sale of building by Elisa Guillabert widow of Alexandre Mahaux to Amadou Thiam, traitant," 25 September 1881-23 July 1879; "sale of building by J.J. Crspin to MM. Devès and G. Chaumet," 2 November 1881 Actes Notaires, Saint Louis, *ANS* 1881. For records of their business see, "situation of debtors" Bank of Sénégal, *ANS* Q40.

[58] I have not attempted such an analysis. The *métis* left very few systematic records of their personal or business finances during this period. Inheritance documents offer some clues but have yet to be fully exploited by historians. The best study of this question so far is Roger Pasquier, "Le Sénégal au milieu du XIX siecle: La crise economique et sociale (These de doctorat: Paris IV, 19).

[59] "Jean Aly eleve chez M. Valantin entrée 1846," "Francois Jupiter eleve chez M. B. Pellegrin entrée 1846," "Joseph Lelieve eleve chez M. O'hara entrée 1456, and "Edouard Bambara eleve chez M. Teisseire

provided a means for gaining a new source of labor and trusted clients who could assist them with their business affairs.

Immediately following the end of slavery in the colony French officials created a guardianship system to deal with the emancipation of slave children by placing them in the custody of town residents.[60] In 1857, Faidherbe reformed the system that he claimed had been abused by individuals who brought young girls to the interior, used them for domestic labor, and "resold" them into marriage until they reached adulthood. The reformed guardianship program, however, still allowed town residents to purchase slaves in the interior in order to free them once they arrived in Saint Louis or Gorée. Adult slaves over eighteen were considered legally free whereas minors without families were assigned to habitant families as "apprentices." For the most part, the court system that administered the program turned a blind eye to habitant practices and did not supervise their placement.[61] The system continued to operate until 1905 when French officials, responding to anti-slavery protests in France, took steps to eliminate the vestiges of "slavery" in the colony.

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entrée 1848," *Registry of Students of the Primary School of the Freres de Ploermel in Saint Louis, 1843-1892* (Catholic Church, Sor diocese, Sénégal).

[60] Klein estimates that 10 percent of liberated children went to *métis* households. This figure may reflect the percentage of *métis* in the overall population of the town rather than a lack of participation by the *métis* in this system. Because the names individuals who took in children were not always properly reported, and in some periods underreported, it is difficult to determine the actual number of *métis* guardians of liberated children. Moreover, children who were abandoned when French officials left Sénégal or because of the death of a guardian may have been taken in by other Saint Louis families who were not noted in official documents. See Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, p. 30 and 73.

[61] Although French officials were generally reluctant to disrupt the internal slave trade in Sénégal in order to maintain the status quo with rulers in the interior, the subject continued to garner the attention of anti-slavery groups in metropolitan France and within the administration throughout the century. In the 1880s, a member of the judiciary from the Antillies exposed the practice to the metropolitan press forcing Governor Briere de l'Isle to take measures against it. In a 1904 report, however, the lieutenant governor of Sénégal accuses the justices of ignoring corruption in the guardianship system. See Ndiaye, "Le Sénégal au temps de Briere de l'Isle," 502-503 and "Lt. Governor to Governor General" 4 May 1904 *ANS* K23 #15.

The liberation of slave children provided a new form of servitude in Saint Louis households and a labor force for their commercial operations. Girls generally outnumbered boys since they could supply a valuable source of domestic labor. Young men, however, commonly worked as apprentices to craftspeople or were employed as workers in the river trade or for work projects on the islands. As practiced under slavery, guardians could hire out boys or girls for wage labor but typically claimed all or part of their earnings in return. [62]

In general, the work of young girls differed little from the work performed by female slaves in the early nineteenth century.[63] Girls "confided" to Catholic families appear in baptismal records for the church in Saint Louis. In the 1890s, *métis* men and women acted as godparents to girls under their guardianship. These girls ranged in age from six to sixteen and came from major slave trade areas along the Sénégal and Niger River. They were given Christian names such as Madeleine Marie Charlotte Dialo, Josephine Marie Sene or Aminata Josephine Ndiaye.[64] Catholic baptism, thus, made these girls part of a new community and reinforced the ties between them and their *métis* patrons. The introduction of a system of wardship in Saint Louis provides a compelling case study for understanding the nature of patron-client ties on the island in the decades following the legal prohibition of slavery. Although the end of slavery may have eliminated slavery as a form of material wealth, the relationship between former slaves and former slave owners combined with the introduction of new dependants into the

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[62] "Lt. Governor of Sénégal to Governor General," *ANS* K23, #15.

[63]French officials reporting on the situation of liberated slave children claimed that girls were sought after for domestic work but could be hired out for prostitution or used as concubines by their masters. According to Klein between 1868 and 1888, sixty percent of the liberated slave children were female. See "Lt. Governor to Governor General," ANS K23, #15 and tables in Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule*, 72.

[64] *Parish registry of baptisms, 1891-1908*, Catholic Church (Sor diocese, Sénégal)

household provided residents of the town with alternative forms of wealth. By developing a network of mutually dependant relationships *métis* residents acquired what scholars of wealth in African societies have termed a, "wealth in persons" that enabled them to maintain their elite standing within the community.[65]

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the mixed race population in Sénégal continued to pursue opportunities to participate in the colonial economy. The expansion of French imperialism, as Barry and Harding point out, created new opportunities for metis and African entrepreneurs in the frontier regions of the colony.[66] Between 1850 and 1870, Saint Louis traders, and the *métis* in particular, played an instrumental role in the expansion of French commerce. Young men continued to register for the Sénégal River trade. Some remained active in the gum trade while others entered the new export trade in peanuts. In the 1850s and 1860s, a number of Saint Louis and Gorée traders moved south to the frontier regions in the peanut basin.[67] J. J. Crespin, for example, tried his luck in trade in Sherbro, Sierra Leone before embarking on a career with the administration. In the 1870s, Hippolyte d'Erneville left Saint Louis for the Rio Nunez area of the Upper Guinea coast. He settled at the French post in Boké, married a woman from the region and developed his own trade network that eventually linked him to

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[65] For a discussion of the concept of "wealth in persons" see Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, "Introduction: African `Slavery' as an Institution of Marginality," in *Slavery in Africa*, 7-11 and Jane I. Guyer, "Wealth in People, Wealth in Things," *Journal of African History* 36(1995), 83-90.

[66] Barry and Harding, *Commerce et commerçants*, 5-7.

[67] "Authorization by M. Francois d'Erneville, trader at Saly (Portudal)," 29 March 1880 *ANS* 1Z107, #28; "Charles Valantin commercial employe in Bathurst," 16 Sept 1880 *ANS* 1Z107, #28. Augustin Guillabert also entered the peanut trade. Christain Valantin, Interview with author 16 May 2000 (Dakar, Sénégal).

Theophile Turpin, a *métis* businessmen who emerged as a prominent figure in Kaolack, a growing trade depot on the Saloum River.[68]

While a few *métis* men continued to act as independent intermediary traders after 1850, it became more and more common for them to serve as commercial representatives for French firms. Leon d'Erneville, for example, served as representative for the Bordeaux firm Rabaud while his cousin Germain d'Erneville acted as an agent for Buhan and Teisseire.[69] As commercial representatives, these men generally managed the various factories of the monopoly companies along the coast and interior trade depots of the peanut basin. In some cases they were given power of attorney to oversee the business affairs for the owners in their absence or represent the firm in political campaigns.

Although fewer *métis* men were successful in establishing independent trade operations in the late nineteenth century, two men emerged as powerful merchants after 1850. Gaspard Devès and Louis Descemet represented a new generation of leadership for the *métis* community in the wake of the gum crisis. They based their authority in politics largely on their ties to the colonial economy and their connections to African

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[68] A series of administrative reports from the commandant in Boké to the commandant of the second arrondissement in Gorée explains H. d'Erneville's precarious situation as a trader in the region from 1874 to 1881. He apparently had a number of conflicts with the local commandant de poste who happened to also be a *métis* from Saint Louis. See "Correspondence of the office of the commandant 2eme arrondissement to the commandant of Boke," *ANS* 7G3, #226-229. For information on this branch of the d'Erneville family I relied on a family tree compiled by Yves d'Erneville (Dakar, Sénégal). More information on Theophile or Fine Turpin can be found in Laurence Marfaing, *L'evolution du commerce au Sénégal*, 253-255.

[69] There seems to have been a close affiliation between members of the d'Erneville family and the Bordeaux trade houses in this period. For more on their family and business ties see the d'Erneville family in the family profiles in the appendix. See also, "Leon d'Erneville representative of H. Rabaud, Bordeaux," 31 May 1881, *ANS* Actes Notaires Saint Louis, #109 and Idowu, "Café au Lait," 227.

rulers in strategic trade locations in the expanding colony.[70] In the 1850s, Gaspard Devès had established a commercial house that specialized in the supply of grain to the administration. By the 1880s, his network of contacts extended from the Traraza Moors along the north bank of the Sénégal to rulers in Sénégal's peanut basin and perhaps as far south as the Mellacorie River at the Sierra Leone frontier.[71] In addition, Devès became the primary creditor for Lat Dior, the ruler of Kayor and a number of black African residents in Saint Louis.[72] While less is known of Louis Descemet's business relations or his success in commerce, he followed a similar strategy to establish his reputation in commerce. Descemet left his position in the administration in the 1850s and soon after founded a trade house with Omer Teisseire. Among other interests, the firm held contracts to supply Dakar and Gorée with fresh cattle and developed an extensive network along the Upper Sénégal. It is not, therefore, surprising that Descemet's main creditor was Lam Toro Sidik, the ruler of a pastoral community in Futa Toro. By the

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[70] It must also be noted that kinship ties also linked *métis* men and women in the towns to particular rulers in the interior. Demba War Sall, a lieutenant of Lat Dior, married a relative of Descemet named Khady Diop. French officials also noted a "lieu de parent" between Descemet and Lam Toro Sidik. These ties undoubtedly played an important role in bolstering the credibility of these men in the interior. On Descemet and Demba War Sall see, Omar Ba, *La Penetration Francaise au Cayor* vol.1 (Dakar, 1976), 378; "Voyage dans les moyen Haut Sénégal de M. les members du Conseil Generale de Saint Louis," Podor 24 Aout 1886 *ANS* 4E4, #23.

[71] On Devès' business affairs see ANS Series Z, fonds privées, 1Z5-1Z18 and "Depot de piece par M. G. Devès sur l'achat de l'isle d'Arguin de Ely Ould Mohamed El Habib, roi des Trarzas" 31 October 1881 Actes Notaires Saint Louis *ANS*. For information on Devès interests in Mellacourie and his role in the expansion of French commerce in this region see John Hargreaves, Prelude to the Partition of West Africa (London: Macmillan and Co, 1963), 131-136.

[72] On the history of association between the Devès family and Lat Dior see "Mbakane Diop a Monsier le Maire, Justin Devès" Saint Louis 17 Mars 1910. Guy Thilmas notes that Lat Dior contracted a debt of 5,914 francs to Devès in the late 1870s and suggests that repayment may have motivated Devès to protest French plans to attack the kingdom to secure passage of the railroad through Kayor. See Guy Tilmas, "Lat Dior, Cheikh Saad Bou et le Chemin de Fer," *Saint Louis, Lille, Liege* 1(December 1992), 15. On debts owed to Devès by members of the Saint Louis population see Actes Notaires Saint Louis 1881 and "Creances et Reconnaissances de dettes, 1913-1931" 1Z10 *ANS*.

1880s, Sidik had become more and more indebted to Descemet who supplied him with horses in return for promised quantities of livestock and gum.[73]

Although these are exceptional cases of independent *métis* trade houses after 1850, the economic activities of the Devès' and Descemet firms show that members of the *métis* population continued to pursue new opportunities in commerce despite the restructuring of the colonial economy. In entering commerce during this period both men relied on their knowledge of trade relations in Sénégal and their contacts in the major commercial regions of the expanding colony. As a result they were able to capitalize on the changing nature of the colonial economy and link their interests to those of French merchants and officials in Saint Louis. The emergence of *métis* leadership, as we will see for the period, after 1870 was primarily based on their ability to control strategic spheres of influence in the interior and assert their influence in the development of French commerce.

From the genesis of this group in the eighteenth century, the economic foundations of *métis* society rested on their intermediary position in commercial relations between Sénégal and Europe. The decline of the gum market marked a turning point in the financial outlook of the group. Although the elite Saint Louis traders faced substantial economic challenges in this period, they adopted strategies to maintain their privileged socio-economic status and their position within the colonial economy. Between 1850 and 1870, French merchants and colonial officials relied on Saint Louis and Gorée intermediaries to facilitate the expansion of the new peanut economy. The *métis* population, however, increasingly lost their dominant position in trade to the newer

[73] "Note sur M. Descemet," "De la part de Louis Descemet à Lam Toro Sidik, Podor 13 Fevrier 1886." *ANS* 4E4 Conseil Generale.

generation of Muslim Saint Louis traders and eventually the Lebanese and French settler agents hired by the monopoly firms. As a result, members of the upcoming generation increasingly sought employment in the administration or the colonial military to guarantee their economic survival at the end of the century. Before turning to an investigation of their transition from commercial to educated elite, we will take a closer look at the process of cultural change for the *métis* in Sénégal.

Chapter 4

Religion, Marriage, and Material Culture

While trade and property ownership provided an economic base for the *métis* community, their social networks were formed and reformed through other institutions and practices. By 1870, mixed race groups in Sénégal expressed a greater sense of cultural affiliation to France. They practiced Catholicism and conformed to the requirements of French civil law with regard to marriage and family. *Métis* men and women also adopted the dress and housing styles of middle class Europe. At the same time the dual heritage of this group provided them with intimate knowledge of local customs and African traditions that tied them to Sénégalese society. In seeking the advantages associated with cultural assimilation, the *métis* population solidified their status as French citizens and re-enforced their claim to leadership in urban politics.

This chapter explores the institutions and practices that shaped *métis* society and identity in late nineteenth century Sénégal. Investigating the role of the Church in Saint Louis offers greater understanding of the importance of adherence to Catholicism for members of the mixed race population. In addition, an examination of the institution of marriage and their choice of marital partners in this period provides insight into the social dynamics that bound this group together. Finally, a discussion of material culture further illustrates the ways in which the *métis* articulated their identity as a Catholic, French educated bourgeoisie in Sénégal. Pursuing avenues of cultural assimilation to France while relying on their familiarity with African customs and social norms, thus, allowed this group to forge a distinctive identity that was simultaneously *originaire* and *assimilé*.

Religious Background

By 1870, the Church played a central role in the lives of the *métis* population of Saint Louis. Most *métis* lived in the *quartier Kretien*, and sent their children to schools run by religious orders on the island. The most distinguished members of the community belonged to the Catholic Church and participated in religious organizations like the *conseil de fabrique* that brought together the leading men in the Church or "the mothers of good families," for morally upstanding Christian women. Representatives of the Church even organized social clubs for young Christians in the town. From the emergence of mixed race groups on Sénégal's coast, Catholicism played an important role in the construction of their identity. Association with the Church distinguished Christian town residents from Muslim Sénégalese and provided this group with direct access to French society.

The *signares* and their mixed raced descendants in Sénégal claimed an affiliation to the Catholic Church as early as the eighteenth century. This early religious consciousness can be attributed to the influence of Portuguese Christians who arrived in the towns of Rufisque, Joal and Portugal on Sénégal's petite côté in the sixteenth century and succeeded in evangelizing a small African population on the mainland.[1] The close proximity of Saint Louis and Gorée residents to Europeans in the towns as well as their desire to create a unique urban identity contributed to the spread of Christianity in the island settlements. Although Catholic clergy were rarely appointed to the colony during the period of company rule, black African men and women called *gourmets*, the *signares*,

[1] Boilat, Esquisses *Sénégal*aise, 20-32 On Portuguese Christians and Luso-African converts on the petite cote see Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 188-197; and Peter Mark, "The Evolution of `Portuguese' Identity: Luso-Africans on the Upper Guinea Coast from the Sixteenth to the early Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History* 40(1999), 176-178.

and the *métis* population observed Christian holidays, held mass and celebrated Catholic baptism, marriage, and funeral rites.[2] In this early period, however, the Christian population did not strictly adhere to an official form of Catholicism but rather developed their own style of worship by incorporating local traditions and even Muslim practices.

Despite the emergence of this early Christian community, it was only with the return of French rule in the 1820s and the intensification of plans for colonization that Paris supported a permanent ecclesiastical staff in the colony. In 1816, the congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers, also known as the *Spiritains*, signed an agreement with the naval ministry to provide clergy to minister to the Christian population in France's overseas colonies and coordinate missionary activities.[3] In Sénégal, however, the governors soon recognized the strength of the Muslim communities surrounding the colony and discouraged missionary activity for fear of inciting a *jihad.* As a result, only a few clergy members were assigned to Sénégal until the 1840s. The main religious figures prior to this time included a chaplain, and members of the religious orders charged with providing medical and educational services in the colony.[4]

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[2] Between 1750 and 1817 an official Catholic presence on the islands was sporadic at best. Moreover, during periods of British occupation the residents faced attempts to suppress their religion and promote Protestantism. It is interesting to note, however, that during these periods of occupation the local Christian community continued to worship and demanded governmental support for their religion. Hargreaves, "Assimilation in eighteenth-century Sénégal," 177-184 and D. H. Jones, "The Catholic Mission and some Aspects of Assimilation in *Sénégal*, 1817-1852," *Journal of African History* 21(1980), 324.

[3]Brigaud and Vast, *Saint Louis du Sénégal*, 41 and Jones, "The Catholic Mission," 325-328.

[4] Prior to the arrival of the Plöermel Brothers in the early 1840s, the sisters of Saint Joseph de Cluny made up the primary members of the religious orders in the colony. Arriving in *Sénégal* in 1822, the sisters organized medical services for the military hospital and opened a school for girls as a charitable sideline. The educational services provided by these orders will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. For more on the sisters of Saint Joseph de Cluny see, Geneviève Lecuir-Nemo, *Anne-Marie Javouhey: Foundatrice de la congregation des soeurs de Saint Joseph de Cluny, 1779-1851* (Paris: Karthala, 2001).

By the late 1840s, as officials in the colony began making plans to expand commercial imperialism, the Holy Ghost fathers developed a stronger presence in Sénégal. The September 1840 ordination of three Sénégalese chaplains trained at the seminary of the Holy Ghost Fathers in France stimulated the order's interest in the colony.[5] The arrival of the Plöermel Brothers to provide religious instruction in the 1840s also added to the role of the clergy in the towns. Tensions soon erupted between the Sénégalese chaplains and the Brothers of Plöermel over the direction of French education. The Plöermel brothers arrived in Sénégal with a specific mandate from the ministry to establish primary schools. Yet, the Sénégalese clergy who recently founded their own college also felt it their duty to oversee Catholic education in the colony. Finally, in 1847 the *Spiritians* appointed a resident apostolic prefect or head chaplain and a number of subordinate clergy to oversee Catholic activities in Sénégal.

Despite the clergy's desire to evangelize, the role of the Catholic Church in the second half of the nineteenth century remained limited to ministering to the Christian population in the towns.[6] The administration generally viewed the independence of the

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[5] In 1827 Mother Anne Marie Javouhey of the Sisters of Saint Joseph arranged for twenty boys from Gorée and Saint Louis to attend seminary in France. The goal was to train an African clergy to assist with the evangelization of the *Sénégal*ese population. Only three survived the training. David Boilat, Jean Pierre Moussa and Arsene Fridoil returned to *Sénégal* as ordained abbots in 1842. Moussa, a black African Catholic, was appointed interim cure in Saint Louis. The group founded a college in Saint Louis. In 1843, Governor Bouet-Willaumez, named Boilat, the son of a Frenchmen and a *signare* from Joal, the first director of teaching. Conflict with the Plöermel Brothers combined with difficulties in making the school work and Boilat's problematic relationship with the Holy Ghost Fathers led to the ultimate failure of the school and his departure for France in 1852. See, "M. Kobès adresse a la propagande du journal de l'Abbé Boilat" 1852 *ANS* 2Z1 Annales Religieuses-Dakar. For more on the backgrounds of the *Sénégal*ese clergy and this conflict see, Abdoulaye Bara Diop, "Introduction," *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 5-6 and Jones, "The Catholic Mission," 333-339.

[6] This situation basically remained the same until the early twentieth century when Catholic missions were allowed to proselytize among non-Muslim Serer of Sine-Saloum and Jola of the Casamance. An attempt to establish a mission in Bakel in the 1850s failed and requests from the congregation in Paris to establish missions in the newly conquered areas of the Sudan were only considered by the ministry of colonies in 1885. See "Minister of Marine and Colonies, Paris to the Superior General of the Holy Ghost Congregation," Paris 22 August 1885, *Journal of Official Correspondence of the Saint Louis* Diocese, Sor,

clergy with suspicion. The state maintained control over the activities of the Church. The colonial ministry approved of the appointment of clergy to Sénégal and financed their operations through the colonial budget.[7] In Saint Louis, colonial administrators considered the clergy useful in training local inhabitants to be effective intermediaries for the French in commerce and political relations but did not support their expansion. In the 1850s, Faidherbe welcomed the educational services of the orders in so far as they could provide secular classes for the Muslim population of the towns and the "sons of chiefs" that he brought from the interior. Yet as administrative priorities turned towards suppressing resistance among the Traraza Moors and confronting El Hajj Umar Tal's army a Catholic missionary presence proved problematic. Tensions between the clergy and Faidherbe escalated during this period because of the conflicting interests of both groups.[8] In this largely Muslim environment, therefore, representatives of the Church found it nearly impossible to spread Christianity in Sénégal.

As a result, the clergy turned their attention to ministering to the long established Christian population of the coastal towns. Mixed race groups in Sénégal welcomed the presence of Catholic priests and religious orders who could provide long overdue pastoral services for their community. The chaplains of the Holy Ghost fathers catered to the spiritual needs of the Christian population in the towns and provided an avenue for parishioners to strengthen their affiliation with Church. For example, the clergy focused on instilling western notions of morality and eradicating what the Church viewed as

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Sénégal and Joseph Roger Benoist, *Eglise et pouvoir colonial au Soudan français* (Paris: Karthala, 1987), 52-55.

[7] Jones, "The Catholic Mission," 327-328 and Jean Delacourt, *Histoire Religieuse du Sénégal* (Dakar: Editions Clairafrique, 1976), 24-26.

[8] Leland Barrows, "General Faidherbe, the Maurel and Prom Company, and French Expansion," 494.

vestiges of superstition in the Christian population.[9] The indigenous clergy, in particular, concentrated on eliminating the unorthodox practices of the *signares*. They complained that Christian women in the towns commonly wore Muslim amulets called *gris-gris* to mass and spoke Wolof but understood very little French.[10] Of even greater concern to Catholic chaplains was the prominence of what they considered illegitimate "country style" marriages. From Abby Boilat's perspective legitimate marriages were "the most difficult to enforce and the most essential for Christian morality and civilization."[11] In instructing parishioners against moral laxity, he called for Catholics to abandon *mariage à la mode du pays* in favor of Christian unions that were legal under the laws of the Church and the French state.

Although the elite *métis* families were not the primary objects of the evangelical efforts of the Catholic chaplains in this period, the changing religious environment of the town stimulated greater adherence to the teachings of the Church and French civilizing notions by the Christian minority.[12] Tolerance and religious pluralism characterized Saint Louis society from its early founding. In the 1850s, however, new anxieties over the growing importance of Islam combined with the declining socio-economic status of

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[9] This was also reflected in educational programs that focused on moral teaching and religious education for girls. I will discuss this topic in greater detail in the following Chapter.

[10]Boilat's description of the *signares* denouncing *gris-gris* in mass is a recollection of the efforts of earlier missionaries. As a missionary, Boilat's account focuses on measuring the success of conversion and thus may not be a completely accurate indication of the persistence or disappearance of these traditions. See Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaise*, 218-220.

[11]Ibid., 221.

[12] Since the established metis families had a long history of affiliation with Frenchmen and some had even spent time in France, the religious officials directed their proselytizing towards the black African working class population of the towns; many of whom were former slaves and non-Muslims. Young girls who were orphaned were the particular objects of missionary attention by the sisters during the 1840s and 1850s.

the *habitant* population in the wake of the gum crisis caused Catholics to coalesce around the Church.

Beginning in the 1840s Governor Bouet-Willaumez also initiated plans to develop Saint Louis' reputation as sympathetic to the needs of the Muslim population. The announcement of plans to establish a Muslim tribunal in 1843 and completion of construction of the Mosque on the North side of the island in 1847 gave the religion new prominence in the town. In addition, reports that the Muslim Saint Louis merchant community warmly welcomed Umar Tal during his 1846-1847 visit to the trading posts along the Senegal River concerned some members of the Christian Saint Louis community.[13] Nonetheless, Faidherbe continued Bouet-Willaumez' policy by encouraging cooperation between Muslims on good terms with the administration and developing new institutions to support the needs of Saint Louis' Muslim population.

As a result, a new sensitivity to religious difference emerged in the town.[14] The changing climate prompted Carrère and Holle to write of a "Muslim invasion" and to warn against the "dangerous fanaticism" of certain Muslim clerics called *marabouts*. As prominent residents in the town, the authors used their authority to call for the *métis* and black Catholic population to demonstrate their faith and act as models for the advantages

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[13] Bouet-Willaumez disused the possibility of establishing a Muslim Tribunal in 1843 but the institution was officially opened in 1857. Carrère and Holle refer to El-Hajj Umar Tal's tour of Bakel and Podor in 1846-1847 and the support he received from both Muslim traders and colonial officials in *de la Senegambie française*, 194-196. While this makes the case for the development of religious tensions in the town, reports of Umar Tal's visit are second hand and were written for the purpose of encouraging French conquest and suppression of Tal's Tijani Muslims who were labeled as anti-French fanatics. Also see, Yves- Jean Saint Martin, *Le Sénégal sous le second empire: naissance d'un empire colonial, 1850-1871*, (Paris: Kathala), 57 and Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal*, 124.

[14] It is difficult to tell just how widespread these feelings were throughout the Saint Louis community. The nature of inter-dependence between Muslims and Christians and the history of tolerance may have minimized its impact. However, sources of this period attest to a greater awareness of the tensions caused by the growth of Islam in the colony during this period. Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 480-484 and Carrère and Holle, *de la Senegambie française*, 14-18.

of French civilization.[15] Although it is difficult to discern the degree of hostility towards the Christian population in this period, the general atmosphere of financial insecurity, their status as a minority religious group, and increased attention to the teachings of the Church solidified the attachment of the Christian minority in the towns to their religion. For the *métis* population in Sénégal, Catholicism served the same purpose in the mid-nineteenth century as it had for their ancestors in the eighteenth century. The decision to join the Church confirmed their distinctive identity in the colony. Abiding by the teachings of the Church and the laws of the French state in regard to personal matters of marriage and family, further, reaffirmed the *métis* community's position as an assimilated group and bolstered their claim to French citizenship.

Marriage Practices and Marital Choices

The institution of marriage served as the foundation for the development of the *métis* community in Sénégal. In the second half of the nineteenth century *métis* marriage practices increasingly conformed to French notions of family and responded to metropolitan debates pertaining to the domestic sphere. For the *métis* population, the choice of a marital partner provided a means of maintaining group exclusivity. Changes in *métis* marriage practices led to the consolidation of their identity as a group and guaranteed their civil status. The emphasis on inter-marriage in this period, thus, reflected the changing environment in which they lived and served as a means of cementing social ties between members of the group. As this examination shows, the

[15] Frederic Carrère was head of the judiciary service in *Sénégal* and Paul Holle, a habitant, was a military officer in charge of the fort at Medine and other posts along the Upper *Sénégal*. When the work was published in 1855 both men expressed their concern over the direction of French colonization and the importance of controlling the spread of Islam. Carrère and Holle, *de la Senegambie francaise*, 358-359.

main change in *métis* marriage practices from the era of the *signares* to the late nineteenth century involved a move away from *mariage à la mode du pays* towards greater acceptance of marriages sanctioned by the Church and recognized under French civil law.

Since Saint Louis was primarily influenced by Wolof cultural traditions, *mariage à la mode du pays* developed as a means of adapting Wolof notions of engagement, marriage and kinship relations to the needs of the urban environment. Abbè Boilat's description of marriage ceremonies among the *habitant* population offers insight into the nature of *habitant* marriage in the era of the *signares*. According to Boilat, first the young man convened a delegation of family, friends, allies, and notable inhabitants to present his intentions to the family of the young woman he hoped to marry. His representatives were charged with negotiating their courtship and engagement. With their approval he was given permission to visit her under the supervision of her parents for a period lasting from one to four years. At the end of their courtship, a chosen group of distinguished *habitants* presented her family with the young man's request and offered them a symbolic gift on his behalf. Boilat continues:

> The *demandeur* must carry a sum of 1,000 francs of which 10 to 100 must be distributed to the companies of *signares* in honor of the new couple and the rest goes to the bride...They respond with compliments in favor of the intended husband and agreeing to it they set the date when the bride will be taken to her husband's house and they immediately busy themselves with invitations for the wedding celebration...They then pass to a verbal contract whereby they acknowledge what each spouse brings: all the parents, close allies and friends pride themselves in adding to the fortune of the girl. Each one also furnishes their part in the celebration because outside of the guests, one must send dishes of food to the companies of *gourmets*, the old *signares* and *griots* who will sing praises to the couple for eight hours...The day of the celebration the bride is adorned with all of the *pompe africaine* that is to say her ears and neck are encircled with gold; she is dressed in white, surrounded by parents and followed by a

> multitude of domestics all luxuriously dressed and with their head covered with *Louis d'or* coins pierced in a manner to imitate a true headpiece. She is followed by all of the guests and all of the Christians of the place. The *mahometans* themselves are not absent, in the hope of receiving some gifts.[16]

While this description reflects idealized notions of marriage among the elite of Saint Louis in an early period, it does offer greater detail of the social relations involved in uniting two families and the influence of Wolof cultural practices in the wedding ceremony. The celebration of marriage provided an occasion to demonstrate family solidarity and to observe the ritual obligations required between family members, neighbors, associates and clients. Building bonds of kinship, friendship and clientage through marriage, thus, acted as a central component of Saint Louis society.

Since the *métis* did not leave records of their marriage practices in the mid-nineteenth century, it is difficult to determine when *mariage à la mode du pays* was no longer practiced. Birth records from the 1860s show that established *métis* families preferred Church and state sanctioned unions. As late as the 1880s, however, certain *métis* couples sought to legitimate earlier marriages formed, "*à la mode du pays.*" In so doing, they declared their adult children as legitimate offspring from these unions.[17] After 1830, two important developments transformed marriage practices among the *métis* population. First, the clergy placed greater emphasis on the morality of marrying according to the laws of the Church. Secondly, the promulgation of the civil code in the

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[16] Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 222-224.

[17] "Actes de Naissances" Etat Civil, Saint Louis, 1861 *ANS* 8M/52 and "Actes de Mariage," Etat Civil, Saint Louis 1887 *ANS* 8M/52.

colonies required state sanctioned marriage as part of the qualification for French civil status.

In forming the basis of civil law in France and its empire, the *Code Civil* not only determined the type of marriage recognized under French law but affected the notion of what constituted a family and how wealth could be transferred from one generation to the next. This document, enacted by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1804, emerged in the post-revolutionary period as a means of codifying national law for the new state. In 1830, Paris enacted legislation to extend the civil code to the colonies as part of the nineteenth century expansion of French empire. For the Sénégal colony, still comprised of the two island settlements, the law applied to "Frenchmen" living overseas and the population of *métis* and black Christian residents of the towns.[18] *Métis* men and women, in particular, met the requirements for French civil status because they carried the surnames of their European forefathers, had some French education, owned property, and practiced Christianity.

The *Code Civil* also known as the Napoleonic Code had a significant impact on the private lives of local inhabitants in colonial cities. It prohibited polygamy, gave instructions for civil marriage ceremonies, distinguished between legitimate and illegitimate children and specified laws of inheritance. In addition, the civil code established an officer of the civil state in each commune to keep a registry of marriage,

[18] Muslim residents of the communes were granted the same legal and electoral rights as French citizens but under the administration's "Islamic" policy, Muslim *originaires* retained Muslim civil status and thus could use Muslim courts to settle civil cases. There was, however, some effort to make Muslim *originaires* record civil acts with the *Etat Civil*. The civil registry for births in the commune of Saint Louis in the 1860s shows the names of more Muslim parents and interpreters for the Muslim court as witnesses. "Actes de Naissances," Etat Civil Saint Louis 1861-1863, *ANS* 8M/52.

birth and death acts and to officiate in legal ceremonies.[19] Publication of intent to marry had to be made at the town hall eight days before the ceremony so that an announcement could be posted on the town hall gates. Each party had to produce birth certificates and witnesses then presented their request to the Tribunal of First Instance for approval before going before the civil officer at city hall for an official pronouncement of marriage. For marriage acts, as for acts of birth, the state required listing the "Christian" names of the parties involved, their ages, professions, and residence as well as the names and professions of their witnesses.[20] Moreover, dowry rather than bride wealth was recognized as the main form of marital exchange and matrimonial agreements were written and notarized as part of the marriage contract. City hall and the officer of the civil state, thus, became as important as the local priest in sanctioning marriage, determining the legitimacy of children, and establishing rules of family inheritance.

By the 1870s, *métis* marriage practices corresponded more closely to notions of marriage and family dominant among the French middle class. The emphasis on dowry rather than bride wealth reflected similar trends among the merchant classes in Europe. Dowry provided a means of inheritance for women and guaranteed her ability to make a "match" within the appropriate socio-economic class. Wealthier *métis* families like their French counterparts, included real estate, cash, jewelry, or furniture in these contracts.[21] Moreover, acceptance of dowries indicated concern about the succession of property not

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[19]*Code Civil*, France, book I, title II, chp. 1, art. 34-39.

[20]*Code Civil*, France, book I, chp. 2 and chp. 3.

[21]"Marriage Contract between M. Alexandre Gabriel Angrand and Mlle H.P. Morel Boirard," 26 September 1881, *Actes Notaires* Saint Louis *ANS*.

only upon her death but also with respect to the marriages of her children and the inheritance of future generations.[22]

From the establishment of the Second Empire in 1851 through the consolidation of the Third Republic in the 1880s, metropolitan French society set about recasting bourgeois life.[23] These efforts focused attention on the domestic realm, in particular. For French republicans, cultivating a virtuous family life was central to instilling democratic values. In this framework, women constituted the center of the home and played an instrumental role in raising morally upstanding citizens and mothers of citizens. Just as these ideas symbolized progress and modernity for democratizing France they also became part of the civilizing discourse promoted in the colonies. For the *métis* in Sénégal, subscribing to bourgeois notions of marriage and household became important markers of their assimilated status.

Metropolitan debates over marriage reform undoubtedly influenced *métis* women and men in late nineteenth century Sénégal. The rights of women to divorce and re-marry became a source of contention under the Third Republic. In 1884, the regime succeeded in legalizing divorce. Freemasonry experienced a revival in Saint Louis in the same way that it had in the major cities of metropolitan France.[24] The masons, in

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[22]It is important to note that as dowries became an accepted form of marital exchange in Europe a system developed whereby the husband managed the dowry of his wife during their marriage but the property officially belonged to her and her offspring upon her death. Widowhood, thus, gave women greater economic and legal freedom since she was provided for and could even remarry. This is also explains the prevalence of widows who owned property and had dealings with the bank in Saint Louis. "Bank of *Sénégal* 1895-1901" *ANS* Q40, Actes Notaires Saint Louis 1881 and *Gorée* 1880 *ANS* 1Z107. On dowries in Europe see Jack Goody, *The European Family* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 87 and Beatrice Gottlieb, *Family in the Western World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 222.

[23] Nord, T*he Republican Moment*, 218-220.

[24] The Masonic lodge, *Union Sénégalais*, was founded in Saint Louis on April 14 1874. The first Masonic lodge to appear in the colony was established in 1784. A second called *La Parfaite Union* appeared in 1823 and included a number of metis habitants. The *Union Sénégalaise* had a controversial history with

particular, championed the rights of women in marriage and used civil marriage ceremonies to denounce the authority of the Church over marriage.[25] These liberal principles were directly opposed to the prohibition of divorce and jurisdiction over marriage long established by the Church.

Although there is little evidence to show the extent to which this debate played out in Saint Louis, one incident offers a clue into the ways that members of the *métis* community responded to these issues. In 1886, a newspaper article appeared in one of Sénégal's few independent newspapers that called attention to the civil marriage ceremony in Saint Louis of a *métis* woman to a French medical doctor.[26] The article criticized the clergy in the colony for denying Madame Angrand the right to marry again in the Church because of her status as a divorcée. The author further argued that the controversy it provoked among Catholics revealed the depth of anti-republican sentiment in the colony.[27] For *métis* men and women in Sénégal, the act of marrying became part of larger political debates concerning women's rights and the meaning of citizenship in

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the administration but remained active until the early 1890s. Although it developed from the undercurrent of support for freemasonry in Senegal that existed since the era of the Second Republic, a record of more intense activity among masons in Senegal appears in the late 1870s and 1880s. For more on this see Georges Odo, "Les quatre Loges de St. Louis du *Sénégal* de 1781-1899," from the private collection of Sylvain Sankale, Dakar *Sénégal* and "Correspondence between Union *Sénégal*aise and Grand Orient, Paris, 1876-1884," *BN* FM 153.

[25] The masons tended to support liberal politics in the late nineteenth century. The civil marriage ceremony was used as a means of demonstrating their beliefs and challenging the Church. For more on the rise of freemasonry and republican views of marriage and women's rights see, Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 28 and 197-199.

[26] *Le Petit Sénégalais* was one of the few independent journals to appear in *Sénégal* before 1900. It was founded by Gaspard Devès and J.J. Crespin and was known for its liberal pro-republican viewpoint and for criticizing the Church. See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of the independent press.

[27] "Civil Marriage," *Le Petit Sénégalais* No. 9(30 September 1886). The civil act of marriage for Dame Angrand and Jean Duval, a medical doctor from Bretton describes her as the "epouse divorcee de Dalmas, Joseph." "Jean Francois Vincent Duval and Dame Marie Anne Angrand," Acts of Marriage for the Commune of Saint Louis 7 Ocotber 1886, *ANS*.

the new Republic. Consequently, these issues had significant implications for the role of the Church and the state in private matters of inhabitants of the colonies as well as for those in metropolitan France.

In considering the marriage practices of the *métis* population in the late nineteenth century a related trend involving baptism and naming deserves mention. Choosing godparents served as an important sign of allegiance to the Catholic Church as well as the family's social ties in the community.[28] Since the late eighteenth century a tradition developed in Sénégal's towns in which *métis habitants* served as godparents for the children of black Catholic *habitants* and vice versa. An examination of the Catholic registry of baptisms shows the intricate ties between families spanning several generations.[29] Children were commonly given three, four, or even five first names and were often named after a deceased relative, the matriarch of a family, godparents, or family friends. Moreover, certain first names appear generation after generation and have thus become identified with particular family groupings. The names Jean Jacques, Alain, and Adolphe for example are found repeatedly among the Crespin's whereas Augustin, Antoine, Henri, Eulalie, and Eudoxie are identified with the Guillabert family. In other cases, black Catholic children were given the same name as their *métis* godparents while

[28] An example of the way that baptism cemented political alliances can be found in a baptismal record that shows that Germain d'Erneville, future president of the General Council, and his wife Mery Andre selected Louis Descement, the "dean" of Saint Louis politics, as godfather to his daughter. "Anne Louise Georgina Marie d'Erneville," 20 February 1892, *Parish Registry of Baptisms*, Sor Diocese, *Sénégal*.

[29] Georgette Bonet, interview with author and Louis Camara , Sor, *Sénégal* 10 December 2000; "Parish Registry of Baptisms, 1854-1863 and 1891-1908" Catholic Church, Saint Louis Diocese, Sor, *Sénégal*; "Actes de Naissance" Etat Civil Saint Louis 1861 *ANS* 8M/52; Arbre genealogique des familles Descemet-Guillabert; "Liste de Descendance de Benjamin Crespin," private collection Georges Crespin, Paris, France.

some Muslim children were named after their *métis* patrons.[30] Naming practices, in this respect, closely resembled the Wolof tradition called *turando* by emphasizing the special relationship that existed between a child and his or her namesake.[31] The process of selecting names and choosing godparents for children, thus, served as a means of reinforcing bonds of kinship and affiliation that governed social relations in Sénégalese society.

Changes in marriage practices had a significant affect on the marital choices of *métis* men and women in the generations that came of age after 1850. The gradual disappearance of *mariage à la mode du pays* limited the growth of *métissage* and fostered greater exclusivity among mixed race groups in Saint Louis and Gorée. The changing political, economic and social environment also encouraged this inward orientation. In responding to the changes brought about by territorial conquest, shifting priorities in the colonial economy and the growing importance of Islam in the town, the *métis* population turned to inter-marriage as a means of preserving their group identity and their unique status within the colony.

As *métis* families placed greater emphasis on marrying according to the laws of the Church and the state, their children increasingly sought marriages with mates of similar backgrounds. Young women had some opportunities to marry French men in the colony but they insisted on legal unions rather than the temporary marriages of their foremothers. *Métis* men, on the other hand, had fewer opportunities to marry European

[30] Madeleine Devès Senghor noted Muslim relatives that carry names of members of the Devès family in interview with author, Dakar, *Sénégal* 20 March 2000; "Parish Registry of Baptisms 1891-1908," Saint Louis Diocese, Sor, *Sénégal.*

[31] For information on this practice among Mande of the Western Sudan see Gregory Mann, "What's in an Alias? Family Names, Individual Histories, and Historical Method in the Western Sudan," *History in Africa* 29(2002), 309-320.

women since few European families with eligible daughters settled in the colony until the early twentieth century.[32] Moreover, race and religion prevented marriage between Christian *métis* and black African Muslims. While there were some instances of legal marriage between black Catholic women and *métis* men in the late nineteenth century, it is less likely that *métis* men married Muslim women.[33] Occasionally men who left Saint Louis for commerce or administrative service had the opportunity to marry women from similar mixed race groups along the coast. J.J. Crespin, for example, married Anna Issacs the *métis* daughter of a British lord and a woman from Bathurst in the Gambia.[34]

By the late nineteenth century, marriage within the group became the ideal choice for young *métis* men and women. As a result, the idea of new inter-racial groups entering the old established families of Saint Louis was increasingly looked down upon. Faidherbe's temporary marriage with a black African woman of Sarakole ethnic background, for example, became a source of contention with the old *habitant* families.[35] Faidherbe viewed *mariage à la mode du pays* as a means of integrating into Sénégalese society and creating a new "mulatto" class. As governor, he may have even encouraged

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[32] "Publications and Acts of Marriage for the Commune of Saint Louis, 1885-1890," *ANS* and "Notes taken by Omar Ba from Catholic Marriage Register to 1886," Saint Louis, *Sénégal*, courtesy David W. Robinson.

[33] The few possible examples are "Francois Stupiant Pecarrère and Marie Ndiaye Comba Waly" 26 Ocotber 1887; "Francois Patterson and Helene Fal," 12 March 1887 and "Gaspard Devès to Magdeleine Fatma Daba Daguisery dite Madgdeleine Tamba," 9 May 1889 *ANS* Acts of Marriage for the Commune of Saint Louis. Although these women all carried Christian first names, it is not possible to tell their religious affiliation from names alone. For examples of marriages between *metis* men from Gorée and black African women in the late nineteenth century, see Huchard and Angrand in the Family Profiles, Appendix two.

[34] Anna Isaacs was the daughter of Nathaniel Isaacs from Liverpool and Madeleine Diole who was born in Bathurst. The baptism record for J.J. Crespin and Anna Issacs' children list their place of birth as Melakore, Sherboro River (Sierra Leone). Georges Cespin, interview with author, Paris, France 8 June 2001; personal communication with Xavier Ricou, Paris, France; "Nathaniel George Joseph Crespin," 16 October 1870, *Parish Registry of baptisms*, Sor diocese, *Sénégal* and Idowu, "Café au Lait," 284.

[35] Faidherbe's decision to take an African mistress while being married to a devoutly Catholic French woman also caused conflict with the clergy in the colony who were trying to eliminate marriage a la mode du pays. Barrows, "General Faidherbe, the Maurel and Prom Company, and French Expansion," 493-494.

his soldiers to cohabitate with black African women yet cautioned against their involvement with the daughters of the old *métis* families. For the *métis* population, therefore, Faidherbe's view was not simply an affront to their standing in the colony but also raised concern about the emergence of new mixed race groups in their community. Consequently, members of the established *métis* population in Sénégal limited entry into the group through their marriage choices.

Other factors also influenced the spousal choices of *métis* men and women in this period. Economic factors, in particular, weighed heavily as families sought to make the appropriate "match" for their children. In the aftermath of the gum crisis of the late 1840s, a number of families who suffered significant financial losses attempted to consolidate their wealth through strategic marriages. Not unlike similar merchant and aristocratic classes throughout history, *métis* families who gained wealth and prominence through the gum trade married their children to families who had equal or greater standing within the community. The Foy, Valantin, Duchesne, and Sleight families were among the *métis habitants* most affected by the economic crisis. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the 1850s the daughters of these families chose spouses from among the leading families in the community. The genealogies in appendix two show a greater tendency towards marriage between the most prominent members of the *métis* population in the period after 1850. The marriages of Adelaide Duchesne to Louis Descemet; Jean Charles Descemet and Josephine Sleight; Gaspard Devès and Catherine Foy and Sophie Valantin to Pierre Carpot are examples of these unions[36] While an advantageous marriage concentrated wealth and status among the upper echelons of the mixed race

[36] See the genealogies Appendix C, figures 1-6.

population, marriage within the group also linked the established families more closely together.

Finally political considerations also factored into marital decisions at the end of the nineteenth century. The political culture that developed in Saint Louis during the nineteenth century relied on the social networks associated with the leading families of the town. Bordeaux merchants had long established family ties with the *métis* community.[37] Even French candidates who were newcomers to Sénégal recognized the importance of being affiliated with local families through marriage.[38] Within the mixed race community of Saint Louis and Gorée, marriages bolstered one's credibility in commune politics. The 1889 marriage between Hyacinthe Devès and Charlotte Crespin, the daughter of Devès' ally Jean Jacques Crespin, solidified the coalition of two leading liberal politicians at a key moment in electoral politics. Moreover, the marriage ties between the Carpot, Guillabert, d'Erneville and Descemet families created important bonds that helped to facilitate their political ambitions.[39] In this respect, marriage choices for the *métis* population had important implications for their social, economic, and political survival.

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[37] Members of the d'Erneville family, in particular, married individuals in the Bordeaux merchant community. See the marriage between Marianne d'Erneville and Auguste Teisseire and Anne d'Erneville and Henry Jay in d'Erneville geneaology Appendix C, Figure 3. French Merchant Raymond Martin also married Hortense d'Erneville. "Josephine Marie Virginie Martin," 2 July 1892, *Parish Registry of Baptisms*, Sor Diocese, *Sénégal*.

[38] Auguste de Bourmeiseter, a French legal specialist who became mayor of the town in 1881, married Anna Pecarrère, the daughter of an elite metis family. Similarly Maréchal, a French civil servant and 1879 candidate for deputy, married his daughter to Victor Beynis, a local representative for Maurel and Prom. Zuccarelli, *La vie politique senegalaise*, 52-53.

[39] On Devès marriage see, "Jean Lazare Hyacinthe Devès to demoiselle Charlotte Louise Crespin," 22 June 1889, Marriages Commune de Saint Louis, *ANS*. For more on the inter-connections between these leading figures see Appendix C, figures 1-6.

The institution of marriage played a major role in the development of the mixed race population in nineteenth century Sénégal. In choosing who to marry and how to marry, individuals determined membership within the group. Respecting the requirements of the Church and state with regard to marriage and family confirmed the francophone heritage of the *métis* and solidified their identity as a Catholic, French educated, property-owning elite in colonial Sénégal. At the same time, inter-marriage reinforced their position and provided a means of securing their economic and social status in the colony. These factors not only shaped social relations within the group and the larger society of which they were a part but also supported their political ambitions. In the late nineteenth century, their credibility as powerbrokers was largely based on their reputation as a group with intricate ties to Sénégal yet part of the cultural life of modern France.

Material Culture

For *métis* men and women in Sénégal, dress and housing styles served as an outward expression of their identity. In adorning themselves in the popular Parisian *couture* of the late nineteenth century and acquiring the furnishings appropriate for respectable middle class households, the *métis* population proclaimed their affiliation with the tastes and values of the French Republic. From the early nineteenth century the close proximity of the *métis* population to French trade houses on the coast gave them exclusive access to European fabrics, furnishings, food products and other manufactured trade items. By the mid-nineteenth century, regular steamship transportation and increasing opportunities to travel to metropolitan France for business or educational

pursuits gave this group even greater exposure to the latest trends. At the same time, the *métis* population lived and worked in Sénégal and thus adopted these tastes to suit the economic and social needs of the environment in which they lived. Material culture served as a means of articulating the distinctive identity of this mixed race group and strengthened their authority as leaders by confirming their close affiliation with the colonial regime.

The dress and comportment of *métis* men and women reflected the achievement of an intellectual and social status equal to that of the educated middle classes of Europe. Photographs of members of the *métis* elite at the end of the century depict the formal and dignified image expected of the bourgeoisie.[40] Women imported the latest taffeta fabrics from Europe and fashioned them into fitted gowns with intricate bustles and corsets embellished with lace or even fur garniture. They abandoned the conical head ties worn by their *signare* foremothers in favor of uncovered, European style coiffures with ribbons, or hairnets.[41] *Métis* men displayed a similar reserved yet sophisticated image dressed in tailored suits with jackets, vests, pocket watches, and European neckties. They appeared with elegant, neatly trimmed moustaches and sideburns, or the goatee popular among the educated elite of late nineteenth century Europe.[42] They wore their hair

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[40] The photographs that I consulted come from the private collections of the Crespin family (courtesy Georges Crespin, Paris, France) and the Devès family papers. Photographs of members of the Devès family from this period are contained in, "Devès family papers, 1891-1919 *ANS* 1Z11.

[41] For an image of the typical hair tie of the *signare* see the sketch of a signare in Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaise*. A Catholic resident of the town also informed me that Christian women in Saint Louis always wore western style hats (or hair ribbons for young girls) to Sunday mass rather than the traditional head tie as a symbol of their faith. Mireille Desirée, Interview with author, Sor, *Sénégal*, 16 February 2001.

[42] For discussion of the concept of *sincerité* with regard to the ideal comportment of men in Third Republic France see Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 230. For comparison with men's styles among the Krio elite of Freetown Sierra Leone in the late nineteenth century see Spitzer, *The Creoles of Sierra Leone*, 15-16 and Spitzer, *Lives in Between*, 139-141.

closely cut and parted on the side in a style appropriate for refined gentlemen. The physical appearance of the *métis*, and a few members of the black educated urban elite, thus, distinguished them from the larger black African, Muslim population who preferred long, flowing, robes, Moroccan slippers, fez, turban, or a traditional headdress befitting their status.

In the context of the times, the appearance of *métis* men and women conveyed significant meanings. First, their choice of garments, hairstyles, and accessories illustrated an acceptance of the civilizing discourse that accompanied colonial rule. In the mid-nineteenth century, leaders in the colony placed greater emphasis on wearing European dress as a means of displaying one's loyalty to the colonial regime and acceptance of the moral values promoted by the Church and the state.[43] Secondly, dress served as a tangible marker of difference between the Muslim and Christian populations in the capital city. Whether attending Sunday mass or traveling on trade missions through the interior, the *métis* were identified by their dress.[44] Wearing European style garments distinguished them from the Muslim population and indicated their close relationship with French commerce and government.

At the same time, the dress habits of the *métis* confirmed their membership in the Republic. In adopting the styles of the French ruling classes, the *métis* population

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[43] In the era of colonial expansion, dress became an important marker of identification with or resistance to French authority. Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Frederic Carrere and Paul Holle underscored the Muslim population's rejection of French dress and called for stricter laws pertaining to their appearance. They argued that, "... any agent paid by the State be required to abandon their African dress and that no one in this dress should be admitted before a judicial or administrative authority." *De la Senegambie Francaise*, 361-362. Boilat also remarks on changes in *metis* dress in, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 8.

[44] The importance of dress in the context of trading ventures raises intriguing questions about the meaning of material culture for urban and rural interaction. In the *Sénégal* River trade posts and in the peanut basin Muslim Saint Louis traders were recognized as sharing a common religious identity with Muslims in the interior by their dress. For metis traders, their dress reinforced an association with the French administration that to those in the interior represented a similar authority to that of colonial officials.

asserted their position as influential leaders in French politics. By choosing to represent themselves in the simple but elegant style deemed appropriate for the French middle class, *métis* men and women entered into metropolitan debates over the role of fashion for the modern citizen.[45] While the image that this group projected clearly situated them within the context of middle class France, it is also important to note that photos of this genre are deliberately formal. They depict the image, *métis* men and women wished to present to the public. We have little record of how they appeared in the informal routines of daily life. Practical considerations like wearing clothing appropriate for the tropical climate may have led them to incorporate more suitable forms of dress into their wardrobe for private moments. The presence of filigree jewelry in the collections of *métis* women of Saint Louis, for example, suggests that these families continued to appreciate and adorn themselves in the work of local goldsmiths.[46]

Domestic architecture served both stylistic and functional purposes for the residents of the town. In the early nineteenth century, the municipal government enforced laws that encouraged the local population to build in brick and abandon their old styles.[47] By the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of the *métis* population lived in European style brick homes rather than the square adobe dwellings that housed the

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[45]Nord, *Republican Moment*, 223-224.

[46] The Devès family papers also contain sketches of a filigree necklace, bracelet and hair comb resembling the gold filigree style of *Sénégal*ese goldsmiths. It was probably designed for one of the women in the family. *ANS 1Z11* For more on gold filigree in *Sénégal* see Johnson, "Black Gold."

[47] Building regulations enforced by the administration in the 1820s also served as means of making the local population conform to French notions of civilization. Many of the laws cited public health concerns like fire, flood and disease as the main reason for eliminating adobe and straw buildings. This change is noted in the fact that in 1828 there were 200 brick homes in Saint Louis. By 1838, there were approximately 320 brick homes and most were two story dwellings. For more on this transformation see Alain Sinou, *Comptoirs et villes coloniales du Sénégal*, 151-164.

majority of the black African working class population.[48] On the South side of the island, where the majority of the *métis* population was concentrated, two-story square houses lined the wide avenues of the town. Stylized door and window frames with wrought iron balconies imported from Europe became a sign of progress and modernity.[49] The ground floor known in French as the *rez de chaussée* contained courtyards busy with household workers, a ground floor shop or storehouse and servant's quarters. Winding staircases led to the second floor that opened up onto a number of rooms for the family's living space.[50]

As in metropolitan France, the salon became the center of domestic life for *métis* families in late nineteenth century Sénégal.[51] Many of the photographic portraits taken of people of mixed race heritage from this period are depicted in a salon-like setting. They commonly pose next to or seated in ornate, high backed Victorian style chairs. An 1889 photograph of Madeleine Tamba, the wife of Gaspard Devès shows her standing next to a well-stuffed chair with what appears to be needlepoint on the seat as an appropriate hobby for respectable wives and mothers.[52] While the sources do not provide greater detail of their interior lives, these images suggest that the aesthetics of their home

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[48] According to Boilat this square style was prevalent in Saint Louis in the 1840s. From his account this differed from the conical mud dwellings common in the Wolof region of Cayor. He also noted that it was not uncommon to find square windows and doors on these homes and European furnishings inside. For Boliat the use of square dwellings was a positive sign of European influence. See Boilat, Esquisses *Sénégal*ais, p. and Bonnardel, *Saint Louis du Sénégal*, 97-98.

[49] For examples of these imported fabrications see Appenix D, figures 1-4.

[50] Floor plans for two buildings are included in the Devès family papers. The design of "immeuble Pecarrère provides a detailed example of the layout described above. "Immeuble G. Devès a St. Louis and Immeuble Pecarrère," *ANS* 1Z11. Saint Louis and *Gorée* homes are also known for the unique horseshoe style double curved stairways that lead from the inner courtyard to the second floor apartments.

[51] Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 237-244.

[52] "Photograph Mme Gasprd Devès nee Fatima Daba Daguissery dit Madeline Tambe Diop," 22 June 1889 *ANS* 1Z11.

furnishing conveyed the sense of morality and modest luxury considered appropriate for a middle class lifestyle. In the context of Sénégalese society the salon or adjacent office space also served as a space to entertain clients or friends and to hold business or political meetings. Consequently, the physical structure of the house and the interior décor signified the authority, honor, and prestige associated with the family.

Material culture played an important role in the construction of mixed race identity in colonial Sénégal. For the *métis* population, adopting the tastes, styles and comportment of the French bourgeoisie confirmed their position as an assimilated group. Whether through the consumption of French wines, wearing tailored suits, or looking out over a second floor balcony, *métis* men and women declared their sense of being a Catholic, French educated propertied elite in urban Sénégal. The ability to acquire these material possessions, thus, strengthened their association with the colonial regime and enhanced their authority as powerbrokers.

By 1870, the *métis* families of Saint Louis clearly accepted the values, lifestyle, and culture of metropolitan France. In the second half of the nineteenth century, they responded to the changing nature of colonialism and their position within Sénégalese society by turning inward and solidifying their identity as a distinct group. Although the Catholic Church played an important role in the early development of this community, the intensification of a Catholic presence in the town after 1840 with its emphasis on stricter adherence to the teachings of the Church strengthened the attachment of Christians in the town to their religion. For *métis* men and women, the transformation from marriage a la mode du pays to marriages that conformed to the requirements of the civil code confirmed their status as an assimilated population. Moreover, choosing to

marry within the group served as a means of consolidating wealth and power among the established families in order to maintain their influence within the colony. By articulating their unique position through dress, comportment, and housing styles, the *métis* population established and maintained themselves as a significant force in Sénégalese society. The following chapter explores these questions further by examining the educational background of the *métis* and the professional and associational choices that informed their political decisions in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter 5

Education, the Professions, and Civic Associations

While métis men and women remained tied to Sénégal through an intricate web of social relations, access to French education gave this group exclusive knowledge of French politics and society. Western education provided the necessary tools for entry into the professional and intellectual classes that governed metropolitan France and its empire. In possessing the appropriate academic credentials, the *métis* population in Sénégal affirmed their identification with the dominant values and outlooks of the colonial power. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, members of the *métis* community were staunch supporters of associations like *Alliance Francaise*, the organization founded to promote the French language. They also espoused the virtues of the Republic, celebrated Bastille Day, joined rifle clubs, and held annual regattas on the Sénégal River.[1] By mastering the language, pursuing religious and secular education, participating in popular leisure activities, and engaging in the dominant ideological debates of metropolitan France, the *métis* placed themselves on an equal footing with the ruling classes of the empire.

This chapter investigates the role of education for metis men and women, their transition from commerce to professional vocations, and the civic associations that they belonged to in the second half of the nineteenth century. It also examines the dominant ideologies that shaped the outlooks and behavior of people of mixed racial ancestry

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[1]Germain d'Erneville served as both the president of the *Alliance Française* and a rifle club that was modeled after the Boy Scouts of America like similar groups in metropolitan France. For more on this see "Alliance Française au Sénégal Presidence gestion de Germain d'Erneville," 1889-1910, *ANS* 1Z1 and "G. d'Erneville President of the societe de tir de Saint Louis," 1910-1914, *ANS* 1Z3, #1. See also Christain Merlo, "Souvenirs d'Enface de Saint Louis," *UNIR: L'Echo de Saint Louis* 16(September, 1970), 9.

toward colonialism and the Third Republic. I suggest that gaining exclusive knowledge of French language, culture and society allowed individuals within the *métis* community to make the transition from a mainly commercial elite to a western educated elite in the late nineteenth century. As a result, they acquired the credentials necessary to become leaders in urban politics and stimulate the development of civil society in Saint Louis.

Educational Background

The *métis* of Sénégal were among the earliest groups in West Africa to pursue western education. Their exposure to French schools dates to the Napoleonic era.[2] In the early nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for European fathers or *métis habitants* to finance the education of their children by either finding tutors among French personnel in the colony or by sending their children overseas for training. Durand Valantin, the son of a Marseille merchant, studied in France before returning to the colony in the 1820s. Similarly, Gaspard Devès, the son of a Bordeaux merchant, spent his school age years in the French port city while Germain Crespin, a *métis* habitant, sent his son Jean Jacques to school in France in the 1840s.[3] As a result of their access to these educational opportunities, by the 1870s the children of these men became the second or third generation to attend schools in France and had acquired more French education than any other group in Sénégal. What role did French schooling play for this group and why did the pursuit of education become even more important in the late nineteenth century?

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[2] Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 10

[3] For biographical information on these men see their family profiles in Appendix B. Information on their educational background was taken from Brigaud and Vast, *Saint Louis du Sénégal*, 69; David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, p. 108-109; and, Reyss "Saint Louis du Sénégal," Journal Privée de Germain Crespin Annexe I.

In describing the eighty-six year history of education in Sénégal prior to the enactment of secularization in 1903, Denise Bouche suggests that French schools were essentially the creation of the colonial administration even though they relied heavily on private religious congregations.[4] Specifically, the colonial ministry called on the religious orders to open schools in the colony. Religious instructors were supervised by the superior general of the order in Sénégal but essentially acted as civil servants paid by the state. Although the administration ultimately controlled the development of these institutions, the mixed race population in Sénégal benefited the most from the creation of religious schools in the colony. In order to understand how metis men and women took advantage of this opportunity, we must first examine the role of education in the colony in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The first schools appeared in Sénégal in 1817 when France regained her territories in Sénégal from England and embarked on a new plan for colonization. Initial attempts to attract Muslims in the colony to French education through a secular mutual school failed, however, leading officials in Sénégal to abandon the notion of promoting French culture, civilization, and commerce through the establishment of schools. Yet, colonial officials still recognized the need to train local inhabitants as interpreters, bookkeepers, clerks, and mechanics for government or military service, and as workers in the commercial posts. In the early period these efforts were primarily directed towards the Christian population of the towns and the small Muslim population that had long established ties to French rule.

After 1840, however, the administration expanded the system of primary education in Sénégal through the establishment of girls and boys schools run by Catholic

[4] Bouche, "L'enseignement dans les territories français," 3-4.

congregations. The order of the Brothers of Ploërmel, also known as the Brothers of Christian instruction, was founded in Bretagne in 1819 to provide religious education for young men in France. Having established schools in the Antilles, the Brothers responded to a request from the naval ministry to supply teachers for Sénégal. In 1841 the Brothers opened a primary school in Saint Louis followed by a second school on Gorée in 1843. The order remained in charge of primary education in Sénégal until 1903 when the enactment of secularization laws and the re-organization of education under the Governor General of French West Africa replaced them with lay instructors resulting in their ouster from the colony.[5]

Similarly, the Sister's of Saint Joseph de Cluny considered it part of their mission to provide the proper education for young girls in Sénégal. Shortly after their arrival in the colony in 1820, the sisters opened primary schools in Saint Louis and Gorée as a charitable service in addition to their responsibilities at the civic hospital. They focused specifically on educating the daughters of the *signares* to be good Catholics and morally upstanding mothers of families. In the 1840s and 1850s, the order expanded their program in Sénégal by offering two different courses. The first was directed to young primarily metis "*demoiselles.*" The second provided courses in practical education for "jeunes negresses," who either came from poor black Christian families or were orphaned and, thus, destined to enter the working class population.[6] Unlike the Brother's schools,

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[5] By the time the Brothers left in 1903, they had expanded their mission by establishing schools in Dakar (1882), Rufisque (1888), Zuiginchor and Guinée-Conakry. "Report from the principal director of the Brothers schools to the Governor General," Saint Louis 2 June 1898 *ANS* J6.

[6] In 1854, the congregation opened an orphanage outside of the town in Ndar Toute with a subsidy from the administration. The sisters took in orphans with the intention of raising them as Catholics and training them in sewing, cooking, and laundering so that they could earn a living as domestics. The orphanage continued to operate discreetly throughout the twentieth century. "Brochure- Anne-Marie Javouhey," La

elementary education for girls was primarily considered as a missionary or pastoral enterprise. Colonial officials, therefore, focused their attention on the development of French schools for male residents of the towns and the countryside.

Between 1850 and 1892, a dual system of education existed in Sénégal. One program focused on providing French education for the Christian population while the other provided French education for the Muslim population. The educational system created by Faidherbe exclusively targeted Muslim and black African inhabitants of the colony.[7] As governor, he founded secular schools in Saint Louis and in the French posts that offered courses in French and arithmetic to Muslim students. These schools catered specifically to Muslims who participated in the Sénégal River trade. Faidherbe also attempted to regulate the Koranic schools in the town that had grown increasingly popular in the town. In 1856, he opened the "School for Hostages," in order to train the sons of chiefs to be trusted and competent allies of the French once they became rulers.[8] As part of this initiative, the governor sent some of the students to France and Algeria for training. Although these institutions were somewhat successful, the Muslim population

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Mission des Soeurs de Saint Joseph de Cluny, Saint Louis, Sénégal; Brigaud and Vast, *Saint Louis du Sénégal*, 85-88.

[7] Leland Barrows, "General Faidherbe," 472-476 and Densie Bouche, "L'ecole francaise et les Musulmans au Sénégal de 1850-1920," *Revue francaise de l'histoire d'outre-mer*, 61, no. 223(1974): 222-224.

[8] Faidherbe actually revived a tradition that had been in place since the 1820s. As part of treaty agreements between African rulers and the French, a son of the ruling family was taken to Saint Louis and "confided" to either the first mutual school or later the Brothers school. Three "hostages" were enrolled in the Brothers school in the 1840s and two, Mouhamed Saloum of Portendik (Mauritania) and Sidia Leon Celestin Dip, the son of Ndate Yalla the Lingueer of Walo, entered the school under Faidherbe's instruction. "Registry of the Students of the Primary School of the Brothers of Ploermel, 1843-1892," Catholic Church Archives, Sor Diocese, Sénégal; Bouche, "L'ecole francaise et les musulmans au Sénégal," 223; Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 61.

remained skeptical of French schools. By the 1870s, poor attendance and lack of funding led to the closure of most of the educational institutions created by Faidherbe.[9]

The second educational system in Sénégal concerned the French schools established by the religious orders. In keeping with the policy of assimilation, France established schools in the colony that provided the same academic program for girls and boys that was offered in the departments of metropolitan France. The metis population, in particular, supported this policy since they wanted schools that could guarantee their sons and daughters the same level of education that was offered to students in France. By the mid-nineteenth century, universal primary education was firmly established in France. In 1850, 70 percent of all school age children in France were enrolled in primary schools. [10] Therefore, the majority of young French boys and girls received some schooling by the middle of the century.

From the establishment of the restoration government in 1815, the religious orders had the greatest influence in the development of the educational system in France. The "Falloux Law" of March 15, 1850 marked a major re-structuring in French education. The legislation encouraged the development of girl's schools, kindergartens and adult classes. It also enforced a national standard for schools and their instructors.[11] The religious orders, however, remained the main providers of elementary education. Secularization of French schools only occurred in 1882 when educational reformers

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[9] The School for Hostages was closed in 1871. Governor Henri de Lamothe re-opened the school in 1892 under the name "School for the Sons of Chiefs and Interpreters." In 1893, a group of selected students were sent to a Franco-Arabic school in Tunisia for secondary education. See Bouche, "L'école française et les musulmans," 224-225 and Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 69-71.

[10] Raymond Grew and Patrick J. Harrigan, *School, State and Society: The Growth of Elementary Schooling in Nineteenth Century France*, 92-93.

[11] Ibid., 95.

under the Third Republic succeeded in the passage of legislation that established free and compulsory primary education for all French children.[12] Completion of primary studies was particularly important to the middle classes because it allowed boys, in particular, to obtain the qualifications necessary to pursue secondary education.

In the nineteenth century, the metis population of Saint Louis benefited the most from access to French schools. Out of the entire urban population, this assimilated group proved the most receptive to Catholic education. Unlike the metropolitan schools, enrollment in the colonial schools was free and school supplies were furnished by the administration. In 1858 between 158 and 200 students attended day classes in the school run by the Brothers of Plöermel in Saint Louis. In 1870, 153 were enrolled in the first semester and by 1879 their numbers increased to 265. In 1884 the number of enrolled students fell to 153 students and by the time of its closure in 1898 the school in Saint Louis registered only 157 students in the regular day classes.[13]

Some Muslim students did attend the primary schools established by the Brothers of Plöermel. The colonial administration required that the schools permit the voluntary enrollment of Muslim students. The Brothers allowed Muslim pupils to attend regular courses provided that they followed the course of Christian instruction outlined in the curriculum. Due to competition with the secular schools instituted by Faidherbe, in 1857

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[12] The movement for secular education emerged out of the anti-clerical campaign waged by liberal republicans in the late nineteenth century. The educational reforms enacted under the Third Republic sought to separate Church and state and thus removed religious instruction from the curriculum. Secularization of schools occurred gradually, however, once religious instructors were replaced by state educated lay teachers. Ibid.

[13] "Letter from the director of the school to the director of the interior," Saint Louis 21 Mars 1884, *ANS*, J6 #5 and "Report from the principal director of the Brothers of Ploermel to the Governor General A.O.F.," Saint Louis 2 June 1898, ANS J6, #31. For earlier statistics see Bouche, "L'enseignement dans les territories de A.O.F.," 143.

the Brothers of Plöermel opened night classes geared towards adult Muslims. After 1876, additional day classes were offered for young Muslim students who did not want to attend night classes or go abroad for education.[14] Although the night classes were well-attended and Muslim students made up the majority of their enrollment, the education provided by the religious orders focused specifically on offering religious and academic instruction most useful to Christian and specifically metis members of the community.

Between 1860 and 1890, the majority of young men who attended regular day courses in the Brothers school in Saint Louis came from *métis* families. Only two black Catholic students were enrolled in the school. A few Muslim students also attended day courses.[15] Between 1878 and 1886, *métis* students Augustin Crespin, Alfred d'Erneville and Omer Descemet, Muslim students Abdoulaye Seck and Iba Mar as well as the black Catholic brothers Jules and Louis Demba, all came to know one another as young classmates in the same school.[16] As a cross-section of children from the predominant families in this town, this group probably represented those from the upper strata of Saint Louis society. It appears, therefore, that by the late nineteenth century the Brothers

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[14]Because of their numbers Muslim students attending adult night classes made up the majority of students enrolled in the Brothers schools once these courses were offered. However, their these students generally attended courses irregularly. Muslim families in the town that opted to send their children to the Brother's Schools generally did so as an alternative to sending their children abroad for education through the programs sponsored by the administration. The enrollment registry for the 1870s and 1880s shows that only a few Muslim students attended regular day classes at this time. "Registry of the Students of the Primary School of the Brothers of Plöermel, 1843-1892," Catholic Church Archives, Sor Diocese, Sénégal and Bouche, "L'enseignement dans les territoires de A.O.F..," 154-156.

[15] This information comes from the Registry of the Students of the Primary School of the Brothers of Ploermel, 1843-1892, Catholic Church Archives, Sor Diocese, Sénégal. Abdoulaye Seck is listed as a "Mahometan" the son on Kata Seck and Marie Parsine. Iba Mar, the son of an Abdoulaye Mar and a "Mahometan" entered the school in 1886 and Bacre Gueye also called "Mahometan" entered the school in 1890 and continued in night courses. Although the record provides no further information on the background of these students, Iba Mar and Bacre Gueye may have been the sons of Saint Louis traders Abdoulaye Mar and Bacre Waly Gueye.

[16]Ibid.

school served as a common training ground for children of elite *métis* and some Muslim and black Catholic families in Saint Louis.

For the most part, members of the orders assigned to Sénégal concentrated on ministering to Christian residents in the town by instilling greater adherence to the doctrines of the Church through religious and moral instruction. After 1870, the Brother's school was located in a building constructed by a *métis habitant* and leased to the government specifically for this purpose. Students were divided into four different classes according to age and academic level. The youngest followed courses in catechism and reading. As they advanced the boys were given instruction in writing, French grammar, arithmetic, religious history, history of France, linear design, ancient history and Roman history. Out of five hours of class time, students devoted one hour and a half to Catholic instruction.

After 1884, the academic program of the schools was modified to correspond to the curriculum outlined by the educational reforms of the Third Republic. In addition to courses in moral and religious instruction, the brothers were required to teach civic education, French language, reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, basic agriculture and linear design.[17] In addition, instructors of the school only taught their students in Sénégal in French. Speaking in Wolof was strictly forbidden while in school which forced students to learn their lessons through recitation and memorization.[18]

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[17]The law of 28 March 1822 establishing secular education outlined the new curriculum for the schools in France. These changes followed at a slower pace in the colonies. For Sénégal see "letter from director of the school to the director of the interior," St. Louis 21 March 1884, *ANS* J6, #5.

[18] Strong emphasis was placed on prohibiting communication in Wolof while in school and limiting the use of the language at home in both the Boys and Girls schools. In the 1840s, this was one of Boilat's primary goals for young girls, especially. Learning the French language was a common theme repeated in the annual end of the year prize ceremonies and by members of *Alliance Francaise*. See Boilat, *Esquisses*

While this technique was considered an accepted method at the time, the emphasis placed on acquiring literacy in French shows the value French instructors placed on mastering the national language as a sign of advancement.

In the nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for girls from bourgeois homes in France to be educated in convents or private boarding schools run by female religious orders. [19] The elementary education programs developed in these schools expressed an elaborate view of women's domestic role in society. In keeping with popular notions of gender roles in Western Europe, these schools taught subjects suitable for the "feminine nature" of girls and appropriate for their class position in society. They placed particular emphasis on the "arts d'agrément," or subjects like music, dance, and sewing that would make young ladies pleasing to their husbands and families. Consequently, while the religious orders viewed primary education for young girls as a means of creating good Christian wives and mothers under the Third Republic the objectives remained basically the same with emphasis placed instead on preparing good citizens and mothers of citizens.[20]

Sénégalaise, 11-13;"Allocution pronounced by M. Crespin," *ANS* J5, #50 and "Allocution of Leopold Angrand," *ANS* J6, #27.

[19] Grew and Harrison actually show that in some departments there were more schools for girls than there were for boys by the mid-nineteenth century. Grew and Harrison, *School, State and Society*, 121-123. For more on elementary education for girls see Francoise Mayeur, *L'Education des filles en France au XIXe siecle* (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 17-33; Linda L. Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984), 5-11 and J.David Knottnerus and Frederique Van de Poel-Knottnerus, *The Social Worlds of Male and Female Children in the Nineteenth Century French Educational System* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), 88-91

[20]The main change that occurred for girls education under the Third Republic was that elementary education for girls became compulsory and secondary education became available. Legislators still believed that schools should be separate according to gender. Knottnerus and Van de Poel-Knottnerus, *The Social Worlds of Male and Female Children*, 88 and Clark, *Schooling the Daughters of Marianne*, 26-30.

The schools run by the Sisters of Saint Joseph de Cluny in Sénégal provided a very popular alternative among *métis* parents seeking to educate their daughters in the religious, moral, and academic subjects expected of young middle class ladies in Europe. The 1881-1882 class list for the Sisters school in Saint Louis reveals the names of girls who came from the leading *métis* families in Sénégal. Anna Dumont, Rose d'Erneville, Suzanne Descemet, Amelie Molinet and Constance Pecarrere appear among the students who attended the school.[21] The registry for the Sisters school on Gorée shows a similar profile. As colonial interests shifted south, by the 1890s the majority of students who attended the Gorée school came from *métis* or black Catholic families who were, "habitants of the commune," or were engaged in commerce in regions of the second arrondissement. Christian students came to the school from commercial towns like Rufisque and from areas as far south as the Gambia and Sierra Leone.[22]

While education for boys in Sénégal focused on more practical academic training, elementary education for young girls sought to create a class of young women trained in the proper domestic, religious, and academic subjects appropriate for middle class girls who would become morally upstanding wives and mothers. Abbé Boilat reinforced this message in a speech to parents at the annual prize ceremony at the Sisters school in Saint Louis. He emphasized the importance of speaking French and following a religious education as the key to developing, "virtuous girls," who could communicate these teachings to their families.[23]

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[21] "Ecole des soeurs de St. Joseph de Cluny, Programme des études année scolaire, 1881-1882," *ANS* J6, #14.

[22] "Ecole primaire de Gorée, dirige par les religieuses de St. Joseph de Cluny, Liste des Elèves," 1892-1893, *ANS* J6, #19.

[23] Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises*, 12-14.

Girls who attended the Sisters schools were divided into five classes. The youngest began with instruction in reading, catechism, and fables. The more advanced classes followed courses in French grammar, religious history, ecclesiastical history, history of France, some history of Africa, geography of Europe and Africa, and arithmetic.[24] As with boy's education, the academic program for the girl's school conformed to the official program for primary schools under the Third Republic. The curriculum expanded to include civic instruction, reading, recitation of fables, poetry, writing, grammar and spelling, arithmetic, history and geography, basic physical and natural science, home economics, singing, sewing, and design.[25] In following these lessons and receiving instruction in worthy hobbies like piano and needlework, young *métis* girls devoted their attention to activities that were popular among similar educated middle class girls in late nineteenth century France.

The annual ceremony for the distribution of prizes, following the public examinations, demonstrated the significance of these educational institutions for the *métis* community in the late nineteenth century. A commission of civil servants and distinguished *habitants* named by the governor was charged with overseeing the examinations.[26] Following the annual examinations, prizes and primary school certificates were awarded in a formal ceremony attended by students, parents, teachers, and members of the administration. The mayor or a prominent member of the

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[24] "Ecole des soeurs de St. Joseph de Cluny, Programme des Etudes Annee Scolaire, 1881-1882," *ANS* J6, #14.

[25] Bouche, "l'Enseignement dans les territoires francais de l'A.O.F.," p. 410.

[26] "Decision naming the permanent inspectors of the schools of the colony for the year 1876," Saint Louis, Sénégal 24 January 1876 *ANS* J5 #1.

community presided over the ceremony and delivered a speech to honor the occasion. In continuing the tradition established by an earlier governor, Faidherbe acknowledged the importance of their success by inviting the laureates to dinner at the governor's palace.[27]

The annual awards ceremonies also highlighted the importance of the religious orders in molding young *métis* girls into educated Catholic women. The sisters, in particular, were commended for providing an excellent academic instruction and the students of the Sister's schools were consistently recognized for exemplifying high standards of academic achievement. In an 1895 address at the annual prize ceremony for the Sister's school on Gorée, Leopold Angrand extolled the, "brillant success," of the student Clotilde Dolly while reminding young women to remain modest despite their success and cautioning the, "mothers of families," to, "keep a firm hand so that their children do not miss even an entire hour of their studies."[28]

The Catholic orders played an important role in the development of metis society. They provided the necessary academic and religious training that allowed students to pursue secondary education. For male children this was particularly important since in provided an avenue for possibly acquiring some higher education which allowed them to enter into the professional classes of late nineteenth century France. For young girls, in prepared them to assume an appropriate role in society and by the time of Third Republic opened some possibilities for educational and even career advancement.

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[27] Bouche, "l'enseignement," 176.

[28] "letter from Louise Angrand, student at St. Joseph of Cluny," *ANS* J6, #42, "Allocution for distribution of prizes," Gorée 29 July 1895, *ANS* J6, #27 and "Girl's school of Gorée, Names of Students who succeeded in the distribution of prizes," 29 July 1895, *ANS* J6, #28.

From Trade to the Professions

Why did the pursuit of secondary and higher education become of critical importance for metis families in Saint Louis? How did they benefit from opportunities to send their children to *lycée* or university in France during the second half of the nineteenth century? Writing in the late 1840s, Abbé Boilat advised *habitant* families suffering the affects of the changing economy and the gum crisis to follow new careers in the liberal arts and sciences.[29] As we have seen earlier, the metis population suffered significant financial losses as a result of the gum crisis. Increasingly, families and widows in particular were forced to rely on the administration for financial assistance.[30] Moreover, once the Sénégal River trade no longer dominated the colonial economy, the metis families found it increasingly difficult to maintain their position as the predominant commercial bourgeoisie in Sénégal.[31] Consequently, by 1870 a new generation of metis men sought higher paying jobs in civil or military service or entered politics as a means of earning a living.

In order to better understand the transition of this group from a commercial elite to the predominant French educated elite, we must address the nature of post-elementary education in France and what was offered in Sénégal during this period. Secondary

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[29] Boilat may have been partly motivated by the desire to attract students to the College he and his fellow chaplains founded in Sénégal in the 1840s. Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaise*, 211.

[30] "Demande de Mme Vve Michel pour l'obtention d'un secours et l'admission de 2 de ses filles a l'ecole des soeurs comme eleves entretenue," Conseil Général Proces-Verbal de la séance 24 Nov 1879-6 Dec 1879.

[31] Samir Amin uses the term "Sénégalese commercial bourgeoisie" to refer to the habitant traders of early nineteenth century Saint Louis in "La bourgeoisie commerçante senegalaise," in *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*, 361.

education became more widely available in France during the Second Empire.[32] In the 1850s, a network of public *lycées* and colleges was established in the departments and rural municipalities of France. Although religious orders had long established their own secondary schools, the Falloux law gave the Church the right to organize public secondary schools for boys.[33] This system remained largely intact under the Third Republic. Educational reforms enacted by the new government, however, secularized public schools by replacing religious instructors with lay teachers.

Most significantly, the education law of 21 December 1880 instituted public secondary education for female students. While this law legislated the opening of state sponsored secondary schools for girls, education for girls remained inferior to that of boys. Placed in separate schools, it was still widely accepted that girls should not be given equal education because they would never enter professional careers. Instruction in Latin, advanced mathematics and science was not taught because they were not considered appropriate subjects for female students. Young girls who pursued secondary studies were, therefore, directed towards the humanities in fields considered suitable for their gender.[34]

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[32] Robert Gildea, "Education and the Classes Moyennes in the Nineteenth Century," *The Making of Frenchmen Current Directions in the History of Education in France*, Baker and Harrigan, eds., 278-280.

[33] Prior to the Second Republic, secondary schools existed in France. Some were state sponsored but most were private and often run by the religious orders. A few independent secular schools also existed. This added to the prestige associated with particular schools and their curriculum. Grew and Harrigan, School, State and Society, 191-192.

[34]Secondary education for women was initially geared towards preparing women for teachers education training to provide qualified instructors for the new secondary schools. For more on these reforms and attitudes towards secondary education for females see, Francoise Mayeur, *L'enseignement secondaire des jeunes filles sous la troisieme republic* (Paris: Presses de la foundation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977).

Instruction in Latin officially defined a secondary education in this period since the language was widely used in the universities. The *lycées* and *collèges* prepared male students to take the baccalaureate exam that was considered the first degree of higher education and the pre-requisite for entry into the university system. The system of higher education that was in place by the time of the Second Empire awarded three degrees- the *license*, the *maîtrise* and the *doctorat*. The three main professional fields recognized by the university system included law, medicine and pharmacy.[35] In late nineteenth century France, the purpose of higher education was to train an elite cadre of men for careers in politics, the academy and the liberal professions.

For most of the nineteenth century, the upper and middle classes in France held a monopoly over secondary and higher education.[36] In addition to acquiring the appropriate credentials, where one attended school confirmed social status and acceptance in the upper echelons of French society. According to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the educational system of France simply reinforced the established order rather than providing an avenue for socio-economic advancement.[37] For the metis of Sénégal, attending the right schools and obtaining secondary and maybe some higher education became an important marker of their status. At the same time, however, education did

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[35] Reform of the university system began in the 1860s. In addition to the professional schools, the universities were comprised of the faculties of letters, sciences, and theology. Robert L. G Geiger, "Prelude to Reform: The Faculties of Letters in the 1860s," 338-340 and George Weisz, The Anatomy of University Reform, 1863- 1914," in *The Making of Frenchmen*, Baker and Harrigank, eds., 363-381364-368.

[36] Gildea notes that the introduction of compulsory primary education in the 1870s resulted in higher demand for secondary education among more members of the population in "Education and the Classes Moyennes in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Making of Frenchmen*, Baker and Harrigank, eds., 276-278.

[37] Bourdieu, *The State Nobility*. Gildea counters Bourdieu's argument by suggesting that the schools did provide upward mobility for some members of the rural middle classes. Gildea, "Education and the Classes moyennes," in *The Making of Frenchmen*, Baker and Harrigank, eds.

provide upward mobility by allowing a mixed race group from the colonies entry into the ruling classes of metropolitan French society.

Aware of the educational system in France, métis families of Saint Louis were eager to take advantage of opportunities in the colony to enroll their children in *lycées* and *collèges* abroad. Access to institutions of higher learning in France provided the generation of *métis* coming of age in the 1870s and 1880s with knowledge of bourgeois society and the ability to interact with future leaders of business, politics, and industry in Europe. A program for secondary education did not appear in Sénégal until 1884. After the closing of Boilat's unsuccessful *Collège de Saint Louis* in 1849, the inspector for schools decided that it would be more efficient to create scholarships rather than establish a costly secondary school that would serve only a few students in the colony. From the administration's standpoint, training beyond elementary education was only necessary to satisfy the needs of a few commercial and administrative employees, and to respond to demands from the *habitant* population for more education.

As a result, the administration instituted a scholarship program for "qualified" and needy students who completed primary studies in the Brothers schools to pursue higher education in France. In the 1850s and 1860s the scholarships only supported a few candidates chosen selectively by French officials from among children of the European and *métis* population who had provided important services to the administration and were held in high esteem by colonial officials. For example Roger Descemet, the older brother of future General Council President Louis Descemet, was among the first group of five students awarded government scholarships for study in France. In 1853, Descemet entered the Collège de l'Orient to prepare for entry in the military training school, Saint

Cyr, and returned to Sénégal as a *sous-lieutenant d'etat major.*[38] From 1850 to the early 1870s, most of the small number of students awarded scholarships by the administration came from distinguished *habitant* families, and particularly from families that demonstrated loyalty to the colonial government or had suffered financial setbacks as a result of the economic crisis.[39]

In 1879 the scholarship program gained new momentum as the newly established General Council took over responsibility for awarding the grants and voting on expenses for public instruction in the colony's budget. In the first meeting of the council, its members voted to raise the number of half-scholarships to three and increase the funds allocated to cover the cost of students returning to Sénégal upon completion of their studies. For 1880, the budget allocation for scholarships had increased from 15,000 francs in 1879 to 18,000 and continued to rise each year until 1887 when the total expense for metropolitan scholarships reached 125,000 francs distributed among 125 scholarship recipients.[40] In addition, the General Council named two representatives to the permanent commission of civil servants and notables appointed by the governor to rank students according to their examination results, their family background, history of service to the administration and their financial situation.

Students were required to take an examination that tested their knowledge of spelling, grammar, religious history, geography, and basic Latin. Scholarships were

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[38]*Arbre genealogique des familles Descemet-Guillabert.* For more on Roger Descemet see the Descemet family profile in Appendix B.

[39]Between 1853 and 1874, students Duchesne, Paule Holle, Abel Descemet, Frederic Michas, and Valantin, received scholarships from the governor. Bouche, "L'Enseignement dans les territories d'AOF."

[40]Proces-Verbal, General Council, ordinary session, 24 November to 6 December 1879 and Bouche, "l'Enseignement dans les territoires d'A.O.F.," 261-262.

awarded for five years or until the student reached eighteen years of age and recipients had the option of extending the grant for two additional years. The initial decision by the governor's administrative council that organized the program stipulated that the awards should only cover room and board. Under the General Council's direction, however, the amount of the award was expanded to include travel expenses. Moreover, students could use the scholarship at any *lycée*, *collège*, or trade school in France. [41]

After 1882, the General Council granted additional subsidies for students pursuing university education in France. Most awards were given for law school, with a few assigned for medical school, or the Ecole Coloniale.[42] In response to legislation establishing secondary schools for female students, in 1881 the administration in Saint Louis allocated a few scholarships for young women to attend *lycée* in France.[43] The assembly continued to direct significant funds to support metropolitan scholarships until pressure from the administration to balance the budget for "luxury expenses" led to gradual reduction in the number of awards available. The scholarship program was finally eliminated in 1903 with the reorganization of education under the Governor General.

Although records of General Council meetings on public education attest to the value Saint Louis residents placed on obtaining metropolitan scholarships, there is little information on the experience of these students in France, the schools they attended, the

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[41] "*arrete* concerning rules for scholarship concessions from the colony for institutions in the metropole," *ANS* J5, #3.

[42] The *Ecole Coloniale* developed the first training program for colonial administrators. For more on its history see, Cohen, *The Rulers of Empire*, 37-44 and Bouche, "L'Enseignement dans les territoires d'A.O.F.," 262.

[43] "arête #247 giving scholarships to young girls," *Bulletin Administratif du Sénégal*, 1881.

subjects they studied, or the degree to which they were successful.[44] A number of scholarship recipients returned to Sénégal in the 1880s and 1890s, to fill important positions in electoral politics, commerce, and colonial administration. Jean Duchesne for example, attended *lycée* in Bordeaux then returned to Sénégal to become treasurer then the director of the Bank of Sénégal. Charles Carpot completed medical school in France and returned to Sénégal to become the first Senegalese physician at the civilian hospital in the capital. The Devès brothers earned law degrees from the University of Bordeaux that contributed to the family's business interests and leadership in electoral politics.[45] While some scholarship recipients may have remained in France after completing their education, most returned to the colony and applied their newly acquired knowledge to the issues affecting them at home.

The enrollment register for Lycée Michel Montaigne in Bordeaux from 1875 to 1881 offers a possible scenario of the educational experience of a particular cohort of Senegalese scholarship recipients in France.[46] At least twenty young men from Sénégal enrolled in the *lycée* as boarding students during this period. Most of them came from prominent *métis* families in Saint Louis. The Devès brothers, Charles, Francois, and Ernest Carpot, and three Valantin children appear in the register. In addition, the names of a few children of colonial administrators and French merchants residing in Sénégal are

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[44]Through a careful study of the General Council records, Bouche concludes that the scholarship program was especially significant for members of the Saint Louis community in the nineteenth century. Bouche, "l'enseignement dans les territories de l'A.O.F.", 270-271.

[45] On Duchesne see *Bulletin Administratif du Sénégal*, 20 July and 20 August, 1898 and Bouche, "l'enseignement dans les territories de l'A.O.F." For Carpot and Deves see family profiles, appendix two.

[46] "Registres des entrées et des sorties des élèves," 1875-1881, *ADG* Series T, Bordeaux, France.

also listed. None of the "Senegalese," students, however, came from Muslim or black African backgrounds.[47]

Several of the students listed a widowed mother as their only parent, confirming the Council's emphasis on awarding scholarships to needy children who had suffered emotional and financial loss as a result of the death of a father.[48] Furthermore, the names of family representatives listed for each boarder provides additional insight on the networks of affiliation between French residents in the colony and the *métis* population. Hubler, an employee of the Post and Telegraph department, represented both Carpot children whereas the Bordeaux merchant, Maurel served as liaison for all three Valantin students. Perhaps it was not simply a coincidence that the Carpots came from families with strong ties to the colonial administration, or that the Valantin children would later become commercial agents for Maurel and Prom.[49]

Lycée Michel Montaigne was a major boarding school for children of the European elite living in France and the colonies as well as various regions of Europe and North and South America in the late nineteenth century. Strategically located in a central port city on the Atlantic coast of southwest France, the *lycée* attracted students from wealthy merchant families who lived in Bordeaux and its surrounding regions while also accommodating the children of diplomats, leaders of international commerce and civil

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[47] One of the students, Ernest Piecentin, was the son of a merchant who ran a trading house on Gorée. Two of the students were children of Hubler, an employee in the Post and Telegraph department. It is also interesting that several members of the same family were enrolled at the same time. Three Carpot children, four of the Deves brothers, Ernest and Frederic Michas, and Louis and Jean Duchesne appear on the register. Students who entered the school between 1875 and 1878 were chosen by the governor and his private council whereas students listed after this period were awarded scholarships by the General Council. "Registres des entrées et des sorties des élèves," 1875-1881, *ADG*, Bordeaux, France.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

and military servants stationed throughout the French empire. The boarders from Saint Louis lived and studied with classmates who came from Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion, and Algeria as well as key mercantile ports like Buenos Aires, Liverpool, New Orleans, and San Francisco.[50]

This particular *lycée* also provided a common meeting ground for sons of the *métis* elite and the sons of the Bordeaux merchant lobby who owned commercial houses in Sénégal. As classmates Justin, Hyacinthe, and Francois Devès undoubtedly shared the same educational experiences with future inheritors of Maurel and Prom, Rabaud or Buhan and Teisseire.[51] In this sense, *Lycée* Michel Montaigne acted as a microcosm of European bourgeois society in the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, in following college preparatory courses in math or rhetoric, this group of Senegalese students not only gained advanced academic training but also learned habits of civic participation that confirmed their membership in the Republic.

In 1884, Secondary education became available in Sénégal. The administration established a secondary school under the direction of the Brothers of Ploërmel. Despite the opening of a secondary school in the colony, the General Council continued to allocate funds for metropolitan scholarships and distribute them to *métis* families. Even when faced with budgetary constraints and pressure from the director of the interior, the council preferred to eliminate expenditures for other educational expenses rather than

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[50] "Livres d'inscription des nouveaux élèves," *ADG*, Series T, Dossier 4, Bordeaux, France.

[51] It is possible that the Bordeaux born and raised children of these firms attended the lycee during this period. Paul and Joseph Maurel, Joseph Prom, Felix and Louis Rabaud, and Louis Teisseire appear in the registry and may have been the sons of Bordeaux merchants. Coincidently, their fathers names appear as correspondents for several of the Saint Louis scholarship students at the school. Ibid.

reduce the budget for metropolitan scholarships.[52] A report on the students who attended the Special Secondary School of Saint Louis from its founding until 1889 reveals that only five of the twenty-nine students came from *métis* backgrounds and of those very few actually resided in Saint Louis.[53] This suggests that even when secondary education became available in the colony, members of the *métis* elite preferred to send their children to France for advanced education.

As a group, *métis* monopoly on French education guaranteed their access to various positions within the administration in the late nineteenth century. *Métis* men increasingly sought employment as municipal tax collectors, managers in the Bridges and Roads department, military officers, and lower level administrators in the protectorate. By the twentieth century, some were even assigned as administrators in other regions of French West and Equatorial Africa, or to other areas within the overseas French empire. Those from leading families who received professional training assumed positions as doctors, notaries, bankers, or lawyers in the colony.

Additionally, a few women worked as librarians for the public library, secretaries or in other administrative positions designated for female employees. Widow Jean Baptiste d'Erneville, for instance, became a well-respected midwife at the civilian

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[52] Bouche, "L'enseignement dans les territories d'A.O.F.," p.272-273.

[53] The names Victor Beynis, Emile Guillabert, Oumar Andrè dit Richard, Albert Carrère of Dakar and Gustave Legros-Diouf appear on this list. Based on their family names I have identified these students as possibly those of *métis* families. However, the precise origins of these students are unclear from the record. I suspect that they may have been part of a new generation of *métis* who were born to French officials and Senegalese women in the late nineteenth century and were not directly connected to the established Saint Louis families. Further research on this next generation of *métis*, those that Owen White refers to as "Children of the Empire," may add more insight into the nature of this group of secondary school students. See "Ecole Speciale Secondaire de St. Louis: Notes générales sur les élèves sortis de l'Ecole depuis sa fondation jusqu'au 30 Octobre 1889," *ANS* J6, #11.

hospital in Saint Louis.[54] Women of mixed racial heritage in Saint Louis may not have fitted neatly into the domestic stereotypes expected of middle class women in the late nineteenth century. Either for financial reasons or perhaps because of the history of entrepreneurship among their *signare* foremothers some metis women in Saint Louis did take advantage of the limited occupational opportunities open to them.

Ideologies and Associations

In his study of civil society in Third Republic France, Philip Nord writes that, "association, like the school, was conceived as a pedagogical instrument, a device for the instruction of working men and women in the habits of good citizenship."[55] Trade unions and the emergence of various organizations in the new republic stimulated the growth of civil society. The appearance of civic associations in Saint Louis during this period, thus, mirrored the development of associational life in France's urban centers. The organizations that members of the middle class belonged to reflected the dominant ideological debates of French society in the late nineteenth century. Members of the *métis* elite in Sénégal participated in this discourse through the associations that they were affiliated with. Consequently, ideological differences between conservative and liberal-minded individuals within the *métis* community found expression in the independent press and through their associational choices. .

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[54] "Mort de Mme veuve J.B. d'Erneville," *L'Afrique Occidentale*, 27(23 July 1897), *BN* JO 7679 and "Decision raising salary of dames et demoiselles employed in service of posts and telegraphs," *Bulletin Administratif* 1881.

[55] Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 56.

In the 1870s and 1880s, associations took on new meanings for commune residents. Several members of the *métis* community joined the Saint Louis committee of *Alliance Francaise*.[56] Instituted by the governor in 1884, the organization championed the spread of French language, and culture in the colony by financing the establishment of French schools in administrative districts of the Protectorate. During this period a number of "*cercles*" founded by "young people in the city" also appeared in the town. In 1887, the administration authorized meetings of the "*cercle des habitants notables du pays*" and the "*cercle de la fraternité*."[57] Although there is no further information on the purpose of these meetings or the organization's membership, the names of the organizations and their focus on organizing young people suggests that they probably corresponded to similar associations in France aimed at providing a model of civic behavior for young citizens of the Republic.

Members of the Catholic Church also formed associations for charity and to promote the role of religion in the lives of commune citizens. The, "mothers of good families," existed since 1867 and brought together, "60 to 70 of the most pious women of the city." The exclusive club of morally upstanding women dedicated their time to upholding the faith through prayer, providing a good example to others, and offering aid to, "needy families." Similarly, the most prominent Catholic men of the town came

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[56] The founding the Saint Louis committee followed the creation of *Alliance Francaise* in Paris in 1883. In Sénégal, the General Council allocated funds from the colonial budget for schools founded by the organization. In addition, members of the association contributed money to Church for mission schools in the petite cote, Thies, and Zuiginchor. "letter from Alliance Francaise to prefet apostolique," Saint Louis, 18 May 1889, *Journal of Ministerial Dispatches, Reports, Circulars and Letters,* Saint Louis Diocese, Sor. For more on Alliance Francaise schools in the Protectorate see Bouche, "L'enseignement dans les territoires de l'A.O.F.," 365-367.

[57] I am grateful to Roger Pasquier for bringing these references to my attention. "Decision authorizing opening of a cercle called cercle des habitants notables," and "Decision authorizing opening of a *cercle* called Cercle de la Fraternite," 27 September 1887 *Bulletin Administratif.*

together in the *Conseil de Fabrique* to oversee the maintenance and upkeep of the Church. One informant recalled that the council not only managed the material needs of the Church but also served as select society of men of "honorable name."[58] The council represented the Church at official functions and welcomed newly appointed religious officials and colonial officers to the colony. Other organizations like the Conference of Saint Vincent de Paul, comprised of young Christian men from *métis* families, focused on visiting the sick, poor, and imprisoned.[59]

The 1880s appear to have been a time in which the ideological divide within the *métis* community became associated with particular organizations. Founded in 1884, the *Cercle Catholique de Saint Louis*, sought to promote the faith in response to attacks by those who promoted secular republican values over the Church. Although the group's founders claimed that the organization had no political objectives, an observer noted that it was founded at a time when, "commercial and government employees are no longer free to be Catholics and to be part of a Catholic association."[60] The early membership of the organization was comprised of the wealthiest and most conservative individuals in the local Catholic community. Germain d'Erneville, Louis Descemet and the director of the bank Charles Molinet, were among the initial members. The group maintained its

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[58]Georgette Bonet, interview with author and Louis Camara, 10 January 2001, Saint Louis, Sénégal.

[59] J. P. Vast, " Pages d'Histoire: Les oeuvres catholique au 19eme siecle," *UNIR: L'Echo de Saint Louis* #40 Mai 1973.

[60] This reference comes from Information compiled from the Journal of the Holy Ghost Fathers, 12 August 1884. The society does not appear in records of the Church in the 1890s, then reappears in 1897 and remains in existence throughout the early twentieth century. J. P. Vast, "les oeuvres catholiques," *UNIR: L'Echo de Saint Louis* #41, June 1973 and #43 October 1973.

exclusivity by requiring members to make a significant financial contribution for the establishment of the society, thus rejecting those who could not afford membership.[61]

The Masonic Lodge also emerged in this period as a fraternal association that provided an alternative to more conservative Church based groups. Freemasonry developed a popular following during the Second Empire as republicanism gained momentum in France. In June 1874, Governor Valière authorized the opening of the *Union Sénégalaise*, a lodge affiliated with the Grand Orient in Paris. As mayor of Saint Louis, Gaspard Devès offered his recommendation for the creation of the lodge and hosted the first meeting at his residence. [62] The founding members came exclusively from the French merchant, military, and civil servant population in the colony. J.J. Crespin, an avowed republican, entered the lodge in March 1875 and achieved the rank of "master" in October of the same year.[63]

One incident, in particular, illustrates the significance of the debate over Church and secular state for these residents of the colony. Two years after the order's founding the governor called for the dissolution of the lodge in response to a public scandal over the burial of a colonial official. The head of the congregation in Saint Louis claimed that the director of the Bridges and Highways department received last rights by a priest and asked for a Christian burial in the final moments before his death. The masons were accused of interfering with the Catholic ceremony by placing Masonic insignia on the

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[61] Reprinted letter from Jules Bertheloot to the apostolic prefect 15 Dec 1884. Vast, "Oeuvres catholiques," *UNIR: L'Echo de Saint Louis*, #42 Oct 1973, 3.

[62] "Decision authorizing the opening of a masconic lodge in Saint Louis under the title Union Sénégalaise," Saint Louis 30 July 1874, *ANS* 3G3/4, #304,

[63] While other metis had joined the masons in Sénégal in the early nineteenth century, Crespin may have been the first metis member initiated into the Union Sénégalais. "Union Sénégalaise request for a diploma" Saint Louis 15 Oct. 1875, *BN* FM 153 dossier 3, Paris, France.

coffin during the funeral procession and performing their own rites during the ceremony. The issue became a source of passionate debate on both sides. The Church maintained that the act was a grave insult to the deceased and to all Catholics of Saint Louis.[64] Members of the Lodge argued that they were not guilty of accompanying their brother to his last resting place and that they are, "struggling now more than ever, against the attacks of a fanatical and ignorant clergy."[65] On March 30, 1876 Governor Valière ordered the suspension of the lodge thus signifying the administration's willingness to side with the Church and suppress oppositional voices in the colony.

In the 1870s Funeral ceremonies, like civil marriages, became occasions for protests against the Church and French authority.[66] Civil burials took on greater significance as a means of proclaiming one's belief in secularism, liberal thought, and freedom of association. In 1870s France, solemn funeral professions could easily erupt into a violent confrontation between the police and average citizens. The masons played a central role in this movement by establishing civil burial societies, substituting their rituals for the rites of the Church, and replacing the authority of the priest with members of the order who offered speeches in honor of their brother. The constitution of the *Union Sénégalaise* even attested to the importance of final rites by stating that in the case of a member's death, the entire lodge must attend the funeral.[67]

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[64] "Letter from P. LePennec, cure of the Parish to the Governor of Sénégal," Saint Louis 29 March 1876, *Journal of Ministerial Dispatch, Reports, Circulars and letters*, Sor Diocese, Saint Louis, Sénégal.

[65] "Letter from Venerable Blaixe, Saint Louis to G.O., Paris," 1876 *BN* FM 153, dossier 3, Paris, France.

[66] For more on civil burials in the Third Republic see Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 197-199.

[67] "Particular rules of the lodge Union Sénégalaise," Saint Louis, Sénégal 17 and 19 October 1874, *BN* FM 2, 863, dossier 7, Paris, France.

While it is unclear to what extent the *métis* affiliated with the lodge in the 1870s, by the 1880s freemasonry expanded considerably in Sénégal.[68] Clandestine initiations continued throughout the late 1870s and members lobbied their brothers in Bordeaux to intercede with the governor or officials in the colonial ministry on their behalf.[69] On December 20, 1880 Governor Brière de l'Isle announced the reinstatement of the lodge in response to a request from the Municipal Council, headed by mayor Gaspard Devès and his deputy, J. J. Crespin. In the 1880s, new members were initiated into the lodge including a number of *métis* Muslim residents of Saint Louis.[70] Furthermore, with the re-establishment of the lodge, the Saint Louis masons embarked on a new program to focus on "humanitarian and civilizing questions." They proposed a project to develop a school for, "apprentices, *hommes de couleur*, and former slaves." They hoped to remove these black African workers from the influence of Muslim *marabouts* and train them to be, "good French workers," in order to contribute to France's civilizing mission.[71] For the freemasons of Saint Louis, their anti-religious position encompassed a secular civilizing mission that targeted Muslim as well as Christian organizations in the colony.

By the late 1880s, freemasonry made significant inroads in Saint Louis society and became a voice of opposition to more conservative elements within the town. The

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[68] Augustus Casely-Hayford and Richard Rathbone discuss the emergence of similar Masonic groups in the Gold Coast in, "Politics, Families, and Freemasonry in the Colonial Gold Coast," in *People and Empires in African History*, eds., Ajayi and Peel (New York: Longman, 1992): 143-160.

[69] "letter from Albert Merle to Bordeaux," Saint Louis 3 Jan. 1876 and "letter to president of the G.O. Paris," Saint Louis 1 August 1876, *BN* FM 153, dossier 3, Paris, France.

[70] "Union Sénégalaise. request for diplomas for Adolphe Crespin and Biram Sady," Saint Louis 29 November 1884 and "letter refusing initiation of Francois Valantin," 20 Nov. 1884, *BN* FM 153, dossier 3, Paris, France. Georges Odo contends that J.J. Crespin may have been responsible for integrating the order. See Georges Odo, "Les quatre Loges de St. Louis du Sénégal de 1781 a 1899."

[71] "Proposal from Union Sénégalaise to the Governor," Saint Louis 22 July 1882, *BN* FM 153, dossier 3, Paris, France.

short lived independent press in late nineteenth century Sénégal provided another avenue of expression for liberal voices and became a source of controversy for town residents. A ministerial dispatch of February 16, 1880 extended freedom of the press to the colonies.[72] The *Reveil du Sénégal* was founded in July 1885 and the *Le Petit Sénégalais* in August 1886 as a voice of opposition to the administration and in commune elections. Two leading liberal politicians, Gaspard Devès and J.J. Crespin, were behind the creation and direction of the weekly journals.[73]

Although few examples of the newspapers exist today, an examination of the extant copies of *Le Petit Sénégalaise* shows that the paper sought to confront clericalism and champion the cause of liberal democracy in the colony.[74] The weekly journal reported on topics of civil marriage, the activities of freemasons in the empire, progress in public education, freedom of the press and women's rights. Its editor denounced colonial officials associated with the Church and singled out the judiciary, in particular, for their alliance with religious authorities. In addition, the paper criticized governors Briere de l'Isle and Genouille as well as the mayor of Saint Louis, Bourmeister de Radowkowski, and *métis* notable Germain d'Erneville as opponents of the anti-clercical movement.[75] In speaking of their role in commune politics, the paper called attention to the progress of the liberal faction stating that, "the only thing lacking is a little discipline

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[72] "Depeche ministerielle, application au Sénégal du decret du 16 Fevrier 1880 sur la presse," *Bulletin Administratif du Sénégal*, 1880.

[73] For more on the independent press see, Roger Pasquier, "Les debuts de la presse au Sénégal," *Cahiers d'etudes africaines* 7(1962), 477-490.

[74] A few remaining examples of *Le Petit Sénégalais* can be consulted at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France, J.O. 5966.

[75] *Le Petit Sénégalais*, No. 7 19 August 1886, BN, J.O. 5966

and unity in the second round of elections to succeed in achieving a near majority in the General Council."[76]

The debates over separation of Church and state and the politics of siding with oppositional groups clearly divided members of the Saint Louis community and had a marked affect on commune politics. In 1887, even the mothers of good families weighed in with their charges against the *Reveil du Sénégal*. Eighty-five prominent metis and European women in the Saint Louis community signed a petition addressed to the Governor of Sénégal that accused the newspaper of, "putting public peace and good order in peril by its attitude." The petition stated:

> This rag, covering itself in the cloak of republicanism, obnoxiously crowds the footing of all the principles which gives glory to the Government of the Republic. Abusing the situation of the absence of any other journal, only under the guise of hatred, jealousy, and of lowly spite, it drags our best intentioned administrators and our most honest judges through the mud... today it is all of the Senegalese families that it looks to attack, that it looks to dishonor with slander, scandal, and lies... In the name of the protection that honest people expect from their government, in the name of insulted and violated republican principles, we beg you to inform the Minister of the Marine of this situation...[77]

The newspaper aroused intense debate over liberal and conservative values among the metis and French community in Saint Louis. Moreover, the political consequences of this debate alerted colonial officials to the potential problems posed by allowing free speech in the colony.

The law announcing freedom of the press concerned officials in Saint Louis. Governor Genouille was suspicious of the new publications from the moment they

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[76] *Le Petit Sénégalais*, No. 17 25 Nov. 1886, *BN* J.O. 5966, Paris, France.

[77] "Les meres de famille de St. Louis," 15 March 1887 Saint Louis, Sénégal, *ANS* 3G3/4 #272.

appeared in the colony in 1885.[78] The *Reveil du Sénégal*, in particular, attacked the administration for its handling of conquest and a looming crisis in the peanut economy. Two months after the appearance of the first publication, Genouille wrote to Paris seeking permission to close down the journals. Liberal republican principles prevailed, however, denying the governor permission to interfere with the law granting freedom of the press in the colonies. In 1886, after a serious of personal attacks against the governor and some of the leading families of Saint Louis, a lawsuit charging defamation was filed against the paper. A guilty verdict against the owners resulted in the bankruptcy of the papers and their closure shortly thereafter. Although successive governors indicated their fear of the revival of the free press, it was not until the late 1890s that a new series of independent journals appeared in the colony.[79]

The 1880s witnessed the triumph of a radical republican agenda in the Paris legislature and a period of increased activity among republicans in Sénégal. Gaspard Devès and J.J. Crespin were most identified with the secular republican movement in the communes. Louis Descemet and his coalition of more conservative minded *métis*, French merchants, and clergy represented the right wing of the ideological debate. Philip Nord suggests that the consolidation of republican democracy in the late 1870s centered on an ideological shift that was embodied by the conflict between traditional aristocratic notables of the Second Republic and the "new stratum of bourgeoisie" consisting of entrepreneurs, professionals, and bureaucrats. Does this changing discourse in metropolitan France reflect similar struggles between the new generation of metis leaders

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[78] Roger Pasquier, "Les debuts de la presse au Sénégal," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* VII,7 (1962) 477-491.

[79] This was particularly true of Henri deLamothe who expressed his desire to make official publications more interesting in order to prevent the reappearance of independent journals. Ibid., 478-483.

in Sénégal and those who had stronger ties to an older, perhaps more aristocratic segment of the *métis* community? In this changing environment, two distinct coalitions with different political agendas emerge from the metis population in Senegal. The next two chapters explore the nature of these differences and how they influenced the development of electoral politics in late nineteenth century Sénégal.

Chapter 6

Electoral Politics and Métis Leadership, 1870-1890

> In the late nineteenth century the *métis* did a lot for what could be called "emancipation"... they did a lot for this intellectual, moral, and political emancipation. That is to say that they, my uncles, great-uncles and great grandfather, expected this to occur in Saint Louis, in the General Council. The Devès, the Carpots...situated it in a French and assimilationist framework. They wanted to have the same rights as metropolitan French people. That is what they fought for. The colonial administration did not look favorably upon this...[1]
>
> Christian Valantin.... Dakar, *Sénégal*

How did the economic, cultural, and social networks developed by *métis* families translate into political action in the late nineteenth century? In 1871 when the Third Republic came to power, a number of men in the *métis* community were well positioned to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by the expansion of democratic government in the towns. They had the appropriate educational credentials, maintained close ties to both French commerce and colonial officials and they possessed intimate knowledge of the local situation. As a result, the *métis* population considered themselves the best suited to introduce liberal democracy to the larger African population and guide the political assimilation of the colony to France.

The electoral institutions provided a new avenue for members of the *métis* population to articulate their interests and air their grievances at the highest levels of French authority. In becoming leaders in urban politics they asserted their sense of independence and even demonstrated their ability to challenge metropolitan commerce and colonial officials. This chapter investigates the role of the *métis* population in the

[1] Christain Valantin, interview with author, Dakar 16 May 2000.

development of electoral politics from 1870 to 1890. I argue that during this period the mixed race population used their networks in both Sénégal and France to gain access to power and define their interests as leaders in urban politics. In order to better understand the development of *métis* leadership and their strategies for power, we will first examine the particular role of the Devès family in late nineteenth century Sénégal.

Forming Coalitions: The First Generation

The role of the *métis* population in urban politics is often presented as a struggle between two competing families. In the late nineteenth century it involved the Descemet and the Devès. While this interpretation focuses on political rivalries within the *métis* community, it does not fully capture the nature of their interests or how their different leadership strategies demonstrated the ability of the Saint Louis community to wield power through the electoral institutions. A closer examination of the Devès family shows the nature of their leadership strategy in relationship to the Descemet group and also how this particular family was able to establish themselves as leaders of an oppositional group.

Under the leadership of Gaspard Devès, the Devès family emerged in the late nineteenth century as a powerful force in urban politics and colonial affairs. By 1870, Gaspard Devès was the head of an important Saint Louis family, the leader of a highly successful commercial firm and an influential figure in the colony. Born in 1827, Devès was the son of Bordeaux merchant Bruno Devès and a Fulbe woman named Coumbel Aido Ka who was also known as Sylvie Bruno.[2] Justin Devès arrived in Sénégal from

[2] According to some historians, Gaspard Devès was ostracized from the Bordeaux branch of the family because of he was the child of an African woman from the colonies. On his marriage certificate to

Bordeaux in 1810. His brothers Bruno and Edouard followed him and in the 1820s they established themselves as wholesale dealers in Saint Louis.

Young Gaspard Devès completed his studies in Bordeaux and returned to Sénégal. In 1851, he married Catherine Foy, the daughter of notable *métis* habitant Guillaume Foy and his wife Henriette Cecile Descemet.[3] A year later, following the birth of their daughter Elisabeth, Catherine Foy died leaving their only daughter to inherit her entire fortune. Twenty years later, Elisabeth Devès also inherited the fortune of her grandfather, Guillaume Foy. Gaspard Devès became the legal guardian of his minor child and remained her guardian when she was diagnosed with mental illness. As a result, he became manager of her estate and parlayed her financial resources into a fortune that after 1880, according to court records, totaled approximately two million francs in assets, interest and revenue from property.[4]

Devès entered commerce in the years following the decline of the gum trade. He began as a junior partner to John Sleight, a wealthy *métis* gum trader and former deputy from Sénégal. When Sleight left Sénégal to take the position in Paris, he granted Devès his contract to supply the administration with grain. Over the next two decades, Devès expanded his business interests to include investments in property and steamship

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Madeleine Tamba he is referred to only as the son of Silvie Bruno. Acte de Marriage, Pierre Gaspard Devès and Magdeleine Tamba," 9 Mai 1889 Commune of Saint Louis, *ANS*. This was also confirmed by Madelene Devès-Senghor in an interview with the author, 20 March 2000, Dakar, Sénégal. For more on the Bordeaux Devès and their firm see, Pehaut, "Les `Bordelais' au Sénégal," *Reveue Historique de Bordeaux*, 49-52.

[3] Guillaume Foy was one of the most successful gum merchants in the Sénégal River trade. He was appointed to the governor's private council between 1842 and 1852 and held a number of important positions in the commune during the 1830s and 1840s. Likewise, Henriette Descemet came from one of wealthiest *métis* families in Saint Louis. See Foy and Descemet family profiles in Appendix B.

[4] "Report of Liquidation of G. Devès," 21 June 1901 *ANS* 1Z10, #107. The fact that Gaspard Devès bequeathed Elisabeth's inheritance to his children from his second marriage apparently caused conflict with members of the Descemet family.

transportation. He became a major importer of *guineas* and may have established his own factory for peanut exports along the Mellacourie River.[5] By entering into the import sector, Gaspard Devès succeeded in building a commercial enterprise that rivaled that of the Bordeaux trading houses that enjoyed a monopoly over this niche in the colonial economy. By 1890 he commanded a network of employees and creditors in the fishing village of Guet Ndar, he had entered into an agreement with the Traraza Emir for ownership of the island of Arguin in Mauritania and was the major creditor to residents of Saint Louis and to African rulers like the Damel of Cayor.[6]

Although Devès married well in his first marriage to Catherine Foy, he chose not to marry within the established *métis* families for his second marriage. Instead, he entered into a *mariage à la mode du pays* with Magdeleine Tamba, a black African woman from Saint Louis.[7] Together Magdeleine Tamba and Gaspard Devès had nine children, six of whom lived to adulthood. Three sons and two daughters became active in politics and the family business in the late nineteenth century. As Devès consolidated his family's position in the colony, he also developed a reputation as a leader in local

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[5] "Messieurs les president et juges composant le tribunal de commerce de Bx de G. Devès," Bordeaux 2 Dec 1895," *ANS* 1Z9, #17. Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 50-51; Hargreaves, *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa*, 131-132 and "Le Sénégal et les guinées de Pondichéry," 1879 Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce.

[6] For a full list of Devès' business investments see the documents pertaining to his judicial liquidation (1895-1901) in *ANS* 1Z9. See also "Ely Ould Mohamed El Abib to Monsieur Gaspard Devès," Notarized Document Saint Louis 2 June 1880 ANS and Thilmans, "Lat Dior. Cheikh Saad Buh et le Chemin de Fer," *Saint Louis, Lille, Liege*, 15; and Robinson, *Paths of Accomodation*, 110-111.

[7] The Act of Marriage between Magdeleine Tamba and Gaspard Devès lists her name as Magdeleine Fatma Daba Daguisery called Magdeleine Tamba. It also indicates that she was born in 1837, the daughter of Tamba Daba Daguisery and Dame Awa Souleymane N'diaye. Although little is known of Magdeleine Tamba's origins or whether or not she was a Christian, her mother's name suggests that her maternal ancestors may have been Muslim. "Acte de Marriage, Pierre Gaspard Devès and Magdeleine Tamba," 9 Mai 1889 Commune of Saint Louis, *ANS* and Madelene Devès-Senghor, interview with author, 20 March 2000, Dakar, Sénégal.

politics. Known for his radical views and for being fiercely independent, Devès came to lead a faction in local politics that defined itself by representing "Sénégalese" interests. His political allies included other liberal *métis* politicians in the colony who were known for being "defenders" of African rights. J.J. Crespin was one of Devès' closest allies. Léopold Angrand, a *métis* representative from Gorée and well known defender of African rights, joined the Devès group in 1885.[8] In addition, Devès developed strategic relationships with key figures in metropolitan politics like Alexandre Issac, a noted Senator and human rights activist from Guadeloupe.[9]

Devès' most serious opponent within the Saint Louis *métis* community during this period was Louis Descemet. In some respects Descemet represented the more traditional element of the *métis* population. He traced his lineage to a French soldier who arrived in Sénégal at the end of the eighteenth century and married Suzanne Dodds, a *métis* woman from an esteemed Saint Louis family. The Descemet family gained prominence in the gum trade but suffered significant financial setbacks in the crisis of the 1840s. One of the early scholarship recipients, Louis Descemet completed his studies at the *lycée de l'Orient* and returned to Sénégal to begin a career in the administration. In 1865, he married Adelaide Duchesne, the daughter of another prominent *métis* family in the era of

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[8]It is interesting to note here that Devès and his allies generally chose to marry outside of the established *métis* families of Saint Louis and Gorée. Léopold Angrand married Madeleine Diouf. J.J. Crespin married Hannah Issac a mixed race woman from Bathurst. See the Huchard, Angrand, Crespin, and Devès family profiles in Appendix B.

[9] Issac was a member of a humanitarian lobby founded in France called, the *Ligue des droits de l'homme.* This organization observed the situation in the colonies closely and could pressure metropolitan politicians and government officials on issues of anti-slavery, freedom and equality. Issac a "man of color" from Guadeloupe was part of a group of *Antillais* who gained prominence in French government and colonial administration during the Third Republic. Issac became very involved in fighting for the political rights of Africans in Sénégal in the 1880s and early 1890s. For a more in-depth treatment of Issac's role in Sénégal and the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* see Manchuelle, "Le role des Antillais dans l'apparition du nationalisme culturel en Afrique Noire Francophone," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 32,3(1992): 390-396.

the gum trade. In the 1860s, Descemet left his position as secretary to governor Faidherbe for health reasons. He later established a trade house with O. Teisseire that continued to operate in the Sénégal River trade.[10]

Although less is known of Descemet's own trade house, his political alliances suggest a strong connection to the Teisseire family.[11] In the late nineteenth century, Descemet's main political allies included Albert Teisseire, Germain d'Erneville, Leon d'Erneville, Charles Molinet and Theodore Carpot.[12] All of these families were linked to one another through business, politics, and marriage. The Teisseire family gained prominence in Sénégal as merchants in the colonial economy. Auguste Teisseire, the founder of the Saint Louis family, arrived in Sénégal from Bordeaux in 1830. He settled in Saint Louis, opened a wholesale firm and married Marianne d'Erneville, the daughter of a well-respected *métis* family. In 1870, a merger between the Teisseire firm and another Bordeaux firm resulted in Buhan and Teisseire, a major export firm in the

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[10]It is not clear how long the trade house remained in business. A colonial report for 1886 lists Descemet as a representative of A. Tesseire, suggesting that he may have been a commercial representative for the larger Teisseire firm by that time. Guillabert, Arbre-Genealogique Descemet-Guillabert and "Commandant of the Cercle of Podor to Monsieur the Director of Political Affairs," 24 August 1886 *ANS* 4E4 #23.

[11] I have relied on information from Pehaut, "A l'epoque de la `traite'," *Revue historique du Bordeaux*, 49-52; Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 101-102; Zucarelli, La Vie Politique Sénégalaise, 48; Omer Ba, La penetration francaise du Cayor and "La Famille d'Erneville (unpublished genealogy) to obtain a better idea of the Teisseire family in late nineteenth century Sénégal. See my profile of the Teisseire family in Appendix B.

[12]Although I have been unable to obtain more information about the firms O. Teisseire and L. Descemet or the other descendants of the Teisseire family, the connections between the Descemet group and the Teisseire's suggest a close association with metropolitan commerce. Germain and Leon d'Erneville worked as commercial representatives for Buhan and Teisseire and Rabaud and Teisseire. They were also related to the Bordeaux firms by marriage. In addition to the marriage between Marianne d'Erneville and Auguste Teisseire, Hortense d'Erneville married Raymond Martin, a Saint Louis representative who was a repreentative for Buhan and Teisseire and probably part of Descemet's coalition on the General Council. See the d'Erneville, Carpot and Descemet family profiles in Appendix B .

growing peanut trade.[13] In contrast to the Devès, Descemet and his allies represented a more conventional branch of the *métis* community. They maintained a strong affiliation with the Catholic Church and tended to espouse more conservative political views. Moreover, the interests of Descemet and his allies were more closely linked to the Bordeaux trade houses since many of them worked as agents for these firms after 1870.

In late nineteenth century Sénégal, the Devès family was poised to become the leaders of an oppositional group. Gaspard Devès' knowledge of French politics, his skill in business, and his connection to powerful leaders of commerce and government in metropolitan France solidified his position as a dominant force in electoral politics. Moreover, his assertive personality, his reputation for generosity and his close ties to African rulers throughout the interior and with black African residents in Saint Louis bolstered his credibility among the larger African population. As a result, colonial officials increasingly viewed the Devès as an "anti-French" family that was willing to oppose the administration.[14] In developing a leadership style that differed from that of the Descemet group, Gaspard Devès presented a new challenge to the dominance of metropolitan commerce and the maintenance of the colonial order. The following discussion will examine how these leadership strategies played out in their rise to power in urban politics.

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[13]The Teisseire's have an interesting history in Sénégal. Albert Teisseire, the son of Auguste and Marianne d'Erneville orchestrated the merger between his family firm and his father-in-law's firm. The new company, Buhan and Teisseire was part of the re-structuring of Bordeaux trade houses into monopoly commercial firms geared towards interests in the peanut economy. While the Teisseire's operated on the same level as metropolitan French firms, they were also part of the *métis* community. It is difficult to unravel their relationship to other French firms like Maurel and Prom although their must have been a close alliance between Descemet's group and the merchant houses in this period.

[14] This was not always the case since Gaspard Devès worked closely with the French in the 1860s and 1870s. In 1871, Governor Valière depended on Devès assistance in resolving a conflict with Lat Dior, the Damel of Cayor. In the late 1880s the "anti-French" description of the Devès appears more frequently in colonial reports. Idowu, "Café au Lait", 282.

Electoral Politics and the Saint Louis Community, 1871-1879

The revival of electoral politics in the 1870s brought new opportunities for the *métis* population in *Sénégal*. After sustaining the changes in the colonial economy, the re-establishment of electoral institutions provided an avenue for the elite families of Saint Louis to articulate their power. Metis men, thus, gained significant influence within the halls of the elected assemblies that governed commune life. They considered the General Council, in particular, as the cornerstone of their political rights and a symbol of their independence from the colonial administration. Moreover, through their fearless and even aggressive critique of the administration, *métis* leaders demonstrated their ability to shape public opinion about colonial policies and practices.

The establishment of electoral privileges in late nineteenth century Sénégal occurred gradually. When the Third Republic assumed power in 1871, legislators returned to the notion of assimilation by re-instating Sénégal's seat in the Chamber of Deputies. Yet more extensive reforms only occurred at the end of the decade as republican politicians gained power in metropolitan France and colonial officials became more convinced that Sénégal should be endowed with greater representation.[15] The Saint Louis community, however, seized the momentum of these changes and took an active role in pressuring the government to provide more extensive rights to the urban population.

As the capital of the colony and the most developed French settlement, these innovations resulted in an intensification of political activity in Saint Louis. The nature

[15] Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 38-62.

of electoral politics developed into a struggle between competing interest groups.[16] Both sides courted the urban electorate with impressive speeches, campaign promises and their generosity with money and favors.[17] In the late nineteenth century politics was divided into two main interest groups. The Bordeaux merchants that dominated metropolitan commerce considered their interests more closely tied to the colonial economy. A second group was comprised of Saint Louis and Gorée residents whose businesses and activities were primarily based in Sénégal. In this early period, the Descemet group became more closely linked to the metropolitan commercial lobby while the Devès group defined themselves as representatives of Sénégalese interests.

The legislative campaign of 1871 provides an example of the ways in which both groups sought to articulate their different leadership strategies in the 1870s. The Descemet group backed Albert Teisseire, co-founder of the commercial firm Buhan and Teisseire. Gaspard Devès and his group formed the *Comité Sénégalais* to advance the candidacy of Clement de Ville Suzanne, their Bordeaux "relative" who had spent five years living in Saint Louis as a trader. For the conservative group a native son, an *enfant du pays*, affiliated with Bordeaux commerce best represented their interests. The *Comité Sénégalais*, on the other hand, argued that their metropolitan candidate was truly independent and thus completely devoted to liberal principles and the progress of their

[16] Zuccarelli, La vie politique, 47-58.

[17] Corruption in Sénégal was not much different from the nature of city politics in the United States or Europe during this period. In Sénégal, the wealthy Bordeaux firms had an advantage over the *métis* because of their financial resources. For a discussion of the characteristics of machine politics and how it has operated in city government over time see James C. Scott, "Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change," *The American Political Science Review* 63,4(1969): 1142-1158.

country.[18] This debate ended with the defeat of both candidates. A French Marine officer named Jean Baptiste Laffon de Fongauffier won the election with 1,186 votes. De Ville Suzanne came in second with 312 votes and Teisseire third with 158 votes.[19]

Despite the divisions between both groups, the Saint Louis community was unified in the practice of French citizenship and their desire for the same political rights as those guaranteed citizens of metropolitan France. In 1869 and 1870, leading residents of the towns petitioned the Naval Ministry to establish a General Council in the colony. In 1872, the same group sent another petition to their new representative in the National Assembly requesting that Paris grant Sénégal a Municipal and General Council.[20] The deputy from Sénégal, de Fongauffier supported the petition and convinced the Minister of colonies to present the request to the President of the Republic. In 1872, Saint Louis and Gorée were given commune status and elections were held by the end of the year.

Although the Saint Louis community petitioned for the right to elect a General Council since 1869, Paris was reluctant to organize an assembly in the colony. In 1879, the President of the Republic granted commune residents in Sénégal the right to elect a General Council. In his report presenting the decree establishing the assembly, the Minister of the Navy explained that this decision followed the logical progression of

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[18] This declaration provoked the conservative group to call a meeting of "illiterate" voters to protest the candidacy of de Ville Suzanne who they referred to as a "cousin" of G. Devès. Declaration by E. d'Erneville, E. Sleigth, L. Descemet, L. d'Erneville and declaration by le comite G. Devès, *Moniteur du Sénégal* 15 March 1871, p.58.

[19] Election results, *Moniteur du Sénégal*, 4 April 1871.

[20] The 1872 petition contained 230 signatures of which 79 were French (only 7 or 8 were recognized as Frenchmen, the others were *métis*) and the rest African. The petitioners also rejected the idea of a quota system for "mulattos, whites, and Negroes," and instead called for universal suffrage for all three groups and defended the rights of Muslim taxpayers to participate in these institutions. Idowu suggests that Muslim Saint Louis residents pushed for their inclusion in these proposals. See Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, p. 43-46 and Idowu, "Assimilation in Nineteenth Century Sénégal," 1436.

French policy by extending republican institutions to residents of the colony who have, "shown real aptitude in the management of local affairs."[21] While Paris based their decision on the notion of assimilation, pressure from the metropolitan commercial lobby, Sénégal's deputy and the Saint Louis community contributed to passage of this legislation.

As the petitions suggest, the expansion of electoral privileges in Sénégal was the subject of extensive debate for leading members of the Saint Louis community. In a May 2, 1878 meeting members of the Municipal Council discussed whether or not the municipal assembly should be suppressed and replaced by a General Council and what form the organization of the council should take.[22] Some maintained that there was no need for two elected assemblies while others argued that the functions of the municipal council could be attributed to the General Council. In the end, the majority voted in favor of maintaining the municipalities. The following statement by *métis* councilor Gaspard Devès expressed his opinion that Paris should grant Sénégal the right to elect representatives to both assemblies:

> In a short time the Minister will know that it is those who do not want Sénégal as a colony, who only want to permit it to be a commercial enterprise to exploit, that make their efforts to hinder the play of our institutions...but wait the commission named by the Minister will know how to discern between these intentions and we will soon finally see that Sénégal is not in Bordeaux but among us.[23]

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[21]"Rapport au Président de la République française," *Moniteur du Sénégal*, 4 Avril 1879.

[22] The issue that stimulated this debate was Governor Brière de l'Isle's attempts to subsume the city council under the General Council in order to avoid pressure from the Bordeaux lobby that sought to remove Devès as mayor of the council. Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 106.

[23]"Deliberation séance de 2-3 Mai 1878," *ANS* 4E4, #1.

From Devès point of view, the General Council would provide a means for Sénégal to assert its independence from Bordeaux. This meeting illustrated the different positions that both groups began to take with regard to urban politics. Beynis, an "*enfant du pays*" and representative of the Bordeaux firm Maurel and Prom, criticized the current municipal council led by Gaspard Devès as being ineffective and too costly. The Devès group expressed their concern that metropolitan commerce would gain control of the town council. Gaspard Devès positioned himself as a "defender of indigenous society" and an advocate of assimilation. In doing so he argued for extending more political institutions to Senegal so that its residents would have the same privileges as those granted to Algeria and France's other colonies.[24] While the divisions between the major actors became more pronounced in the political process, leaders on both sides in the Saint Louis community felt strongly that Sénégal should be endowed with an elected assembly and viewed these institutions as a means of asserting their particular interests.

In the fall of 1879 as town residents began to prepare their campaign for election to the General Council, urban politics in Sénégal had begun to take shape. In 1875, Gaspard Devès was named mayor of the municipal council which consisted of a strong opposition led by Frenchman Auguste de Bourmeister, who represented the metropolitan commercial lobby.[25] J.J. Crespin, Devès' close ally and deputy mayor, ran for the legislative position in 1879 against Marechal, a European civil servant and Alfred

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Although members of the council were elected the governor appointed the mayor until 1880. When Gaspard Devès was named to the position in 1875 J.J. Crespin served as his first deputy mayor. Zuccarelli, *La vie politique*, 52.

Gasconi, a *métis* lawyer who had a strong base of support among the clergy.[26] Gasconi won the election in the second round defeating the other two by 1,158 votes.[27] Although Gasconi did not initially identify himself as representative of the French commercial firms, he became more aligned with their interests once he assumed office.

Metropolitan commerce had the greatest influence in the General Council. In the September 1879 election, representatives of the French trading houses gained fourteen of the eighteen available seats. In addition, three of Gasconi's candidates won election to the council.[28] Louis Descemet, whose group had a strong affiliation with the Bordeaux trade houses, was chosen as the assembly's president. Consequently, by the end of 1879 the merchant lobby controlled the General Council and the deputyship and had significant influence in the Municipal Council. As a result, the representatives of metropolitan commerce began an attack on Gaspard Devès' leadership that targeted his management of the Municipal Council, his affiliation to Governor Brière de l'Isle and his imports of *guinea* textiles into the colony. An examination of the evolution of urban politics in the 1880s sheds more light on the nature of this conflict and the power that members of the *métis* community wielded through the electoral institutions.

Metis Leadership and Urban Politics, 1879-1889

In 1876 colonel Brière de l'Isle became governor of *Sénégal*. The Saint Louis community had an ambivalent relationship with the new governor. Prior to his

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[26] Although little is known of Gasconi's background, Zuccarelli claims that he was the son of a Marseille ship captain and *signare*, Eliza Fleuriau. He was born in Saint Louis yet upon his death Gasconi was referred to as a lawyer from Marseille. Ibid, 52.

[27] Ibid., 53.

[28] Ibid., 55.

appointment, the administration in Saint Louis directed its attention to spreading French influence through commercial expansion and consolidating control of territories gained under Faidherbe. Brière de l'Isle, however, embarked on a more aggressive phase of territorial conquest. A strong authoritarian governor, Brière de l'Isle disapproved of the interference of elected representatives in matters relating to colonial policy.[29] The Saint Louis community came to view him as someone who was not only hostile to the exercise of their political rights but also unconcerned with the development of French commerce. Consequently, tensions escalated between the administration and members of the Saint Louis community during the period of his governorship from 1876 to 1881.[30] The controversy over the importation of *guinea* textiles to Sénégal provides an example of the struggle between elected representatives and colonial officials and the impact it had on the development of *métis* leadership in the 1880s.

Sénégal's representative institutions offered commune residents unprecedented access to Paris lawmakers as well as to powerful merchant lobbies in France. The Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce, for example, maintained strong connections with the Sénégal colony. From the period of the Second Republic, several key members played an influential role in shaping colonial policy on economic issues in Sénégal. The debate over Sénégal's customs regulations illustrates the extent to which electoral institutions and the interest groups who dominated them could command power and affect important

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[29] Francine Ndiaye, "La colonie du Sénégal au temps de Brière de l'Isle, 1876-1881," 479-484.

[30] Brière de l'Isle not only angered the Bordeaux firms and many of the *métis* families but he also alienated members of the judiciary in Saint Louis, the deputy Gasconi and human rights leaders in France including the well known Senator Victor Schoelcher. My analysis relies of relations between de l'Isle and the Saint Louis community relies on earlier interpretations offered by Francine Ndiaye, "La colonie du Senegal," Francois Manchuelle, "Métis et colons," 483-484 and David Robinson in *Paths of Accommodation*, 105-106.

decisions in the colonial process.[31] The blue indigo cotton cloth called the *guinea* remained one of the most profitable import items for French wholesalers in Sénégal even after the decline of the gum trade. Mauritanian traders who specialized in the overland transport of produce from peanut producing regions in Cayor continued to trade their goods for supplies of the blue cloth.

On July 19, 1877, the French government introduced legislation that changed the customs regime in Sénégal. This new decree reduced the tariff for textiles imported to the colony from France and Pondichery, a French colony in India that specialized in the manufacture of *guineas*. Cotton textiles originating from manufacturers in Liverpool or Havre were thus subject to higher duties than *guineas* from Pondichery or Rouen.[32] Since the majority of Bordeaux firms obtained *guineas* from England or Belgium this put them at a disadvantage. Metis merchant Gaspard Devès, however, had exclusive access to the Pondichery *guineas* as the Sénégal representative of the French firm that produced the Indian textiles.

Agents of the Bordeaux commercial houses in Sénégal and their *métis* allies in the elected assemblies waged a protest against the legislation. They also attacked Devès and Governor Brière de l'Isle who proposed the new law as a means of increasing revenues to support imperial expansion. The new customs regime, thus, became the subject of heated

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[31] For a detailed account from the perspective of the Bordeaux merchants in Sénégal see the 1879 report presented to the colonial ministry entitled *Le Sénégal et les guinees de Pondichery*, in Fonds Chambre de Commerce de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France.

[32] To underscore the international nature of trade and imperialism in this era, the Indian *guineas* became more valuable after 1860 as a result of the disruption in American cotton production during the U.S. Civil War. As Indian cotton and Indian textiles became more valuable, Bordeaux merchants turned to the cheaper British and Belgian textiles to supply their African market. Ibid.

debate in the 1879 opening session of the General Council.[33] Gasconi, the newly elected deputy from *métis* used his position to bring the issue before the Chamber of Deputies and the ministry of colonies in Paris. In addition, the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce weighed in on the debate by placing their support with the "Bordeaux merchants of Sénégal" who sent a petition to the government to repeal the law.

As a result of their efforts on October 17, 1880 the Bordeaux merchants succeeded in obtaining a reduction in customs duties on textile imports from the minister of colonies. This issue proved to be an economic victory for metropolitan commerce and at the same time strengthened their position in the elected assemblies. Moreover, the *guinea* debate fuelled complaints against Devès in his capacity as mayor of Saint Louis. Brière de l'Isle who later described Gaspard Devès as, "the only notable in Sénégal for whom I kept a fond memory," was pressured into forcing the mayor's resignation and dissolving the city council.[34] In addition, this issue added to the criticism of the governor's administration by members of Sénégal's elected assemblies. Brière de l'Isle's removal and the appointment of Sénégal's first civilian governor one year later was due in large part to the negative publicity campaign orchestrated by Sénégal's representatives and their insistence on replacing the military regime in the colony with civilian government.[35]

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[33]"Procès-verbal Conseil General Session Ordinaire," *Moniteur du Sénégal* 24 November 1879, 55-60.

[34] This comes from a letter written by Brière de l'Isle to Gaspard Devès ten years after his departure in which he states, "Monsieur, votre pere M. Gaspard Devès est le seul notable du Sénégal pour qui j'ai garde un excellent souvenir..." "Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, Inspecteur Generale des Troupe d'Infanterie de Marine, General Brière de l'Isle a Monsieur le Conseileur Generale," 18 Juillet 1892 *ANS* 1Z11, #4.

[35] Servatius was appointed in 1882 to replace the military government. It is interesting to note that Servatius paid greater attention to the demands of the elected officials than his predecessor. For more on

As a result of the events of the late 1870s, *métis* representatives entered the 1880s with even greater confidence in their capabilities as leaders in urban politics. The Descemet coalition, in particular, solidified their position as allies of the commercial firms but also demonstrated their ability to go against the administration. They maintained their dominance in the General Council and Gasconi won re-election to the deputy seat in 1881 and again in 1885. Saint Louis' Municipal Council also remained under the control of metropolitan commerce. The governor appointed Charles Molinet, a *métis* member of Descemet's group, to replace Devès as mayor in 1880. When elections resumed for the town council in 1881 Bourmeister, leader of the opposition on the previous council, became mayor and held the position until 1889.[36] By the mid-1880s, the different interests of the Devès and Descemet groups were more clearly defined. Moreover, *métis* politicians established their role in the colony as power-brokers whose authority came from their position as citizens and inhabitants of the communes.

The activities of male representatives in the General Council revealed a great deal to the administration about the power that commune residents could command in France through the electoral institutions. On the one hand, colonial officials needed their trusted allies in the communes to further their goals for imperial expansion. On the other hand, the power afforded these groups through the electoral institutions challenged the administration's ability to make and enforce their own policies. During this period, colonial officials also became more aware of the influence that *métis* merchants and political leaders wielded in the mainland regions outside of the Four Communes. An

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the publicity campaign against Brière de l'Isle and all of the factors leading to his repeal see, Francine Ndiaye, "La colonie du Sénégal au temps de Brière de l'Isle," 497-511.

[36] Zuccarelli, *La vie politique senegalaise*, 57-61.

1886 report by the commandant of the *cercle* of Podor to the Director of Political Affairs concerning the steamship voyage of several members of the General Council along the Upper *Sénégal* indicates the administration's growing concern over the reach of *métis* influence in the interior.[37]

The mission that was described by the commandant as, "neither official nor commercial," was conducted to, "create and maintain politico-economic relations between the councilors and several "*grands chefs indigenes*" after the losses that their trade houses sustained during the last French campaign in the region.[38] The delegation was headed by Louis Descemet, the president of the council, who at the time worked as a commercial representative for the Bordeaux merchant house, A. Teisseire. Other members of the group included Raymond Martin, a representative of Buhan and Teisseire, and Leon d'Erveville who represented the merchant house Rabaud. J.J. Crespin, a member of Devès' group. Bacre Waly the noted Muslim trader and member of the General Council who operated a trade house in Podor also participated in the mission.[39] The delegation was, therefore, comprised of representatives from both the Descemet and Devès groups as well as the leading Muslim councilor at the time.

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[37] "Le Commandant Cercle de Podor au Directeur des Affaires Politiques," Saint Louis 24 Aug 1886, *ANS* 4E4, #23.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Bacre Waly Gueye (1834-1904), the most prominent Muslim representative in the late nineteenth century, is often over looked in studies of the political history of Sénégal in this period. The son of a Saint Louis trader, Bacre Waly attended the French schools in the town. He and his brothers all entered the Sénégal River trade. He began as an agent for the Bordeaux firm Rabaud in Bakel. He left the firm in 1868 to open his own trading house in Podor. During this period, Bacre Waly won election to Saint Louis' Municipal Council, he was a member of the Chamber of Commerce in the town and was elected to the General Council in 1879 where he held a seat as "doyen de l'age," until 1897. Although little is known of his political affiliations in this period he did not appear to have an alliance with the Devès group. I am grateful to Mansour Thioye, Saint Louis, Sénégal for further information on Bacre Waly Gueye and his family. Also see, Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 122-124.

In the course of their two-month voyage along the Sénégal, the commandant who was charged with following and surveying the councilors reported on the various meetings between notable inhabitants in the territory and the visiting councilors. In his report, the commandant called attention to the close ties that already existed between Descemet and Lam Toro Sidikh, the former ruler of Fouta Toro who the French had deposed two years earlier. Sidikh was in debt to Descemet for a number of purchases and according to the commandant the two were joined by a certain, "*lieu de parenté*." The officer, thus, noted his "great surprise" in finding Lam Toro Sidikh meeting with the General Council president on two separate occasions to solicit his assistance to be reinstated as ruler of the region.[40]

During the course of their trip, other notable rulers and traders from the region used the occasion to present their complaints to the Saint Louis delegation. A group of local traders voiced their concerns about the unfair commercial practices of the Brakna Moors on the right bank of the Sénégal. The ruler of Bosse also sent his own representative to present the councilors with his request that the governor enlarge his kingdom. Moreover, while in Bakel the councilors used the visit to question the inhabitants and traders in the region. The commandant was alarmed, however, that these gentlemen, "promised their protection to the inhabitants who claimed to be innocent of the charges they were being pursued for... and for the traders promised restitution for the goods they lost from the necessity of war."[41] The rulers and traders that the delegation met with in the Upper Sénégal clearly viewed the councilors as representatives of French authority. From the administration's point of view, however, the travels of these

[40] Ibid and "Note sur M. Descemet," *ANS* 4E4, #7.

[41] Ibid.

merchant councilors raised concern over the influence they held with prominent figures in the interior and the potential for this relationship to upset their plan for conquest. Furthermore, this voyage served as an example of the central role that the Saint Louis community continued to play in mediating political relations between the colony and the larger African population.

By the mid-1880s the political climate in Sénégal had changed considerably. Having embarked on wars of conquest, Saint Louis was primarily concerned with enforcing French dominance and suppressing resistance from African rulers. The series of weaker and less effective governors that held the position in Saint Louis through much of the decade depended more heavily on their allies in the town to accomplish their objectives. At the same time, the political climate in Saint Louis was changing. The struggle between the Descemet and Devès groups still dominated electoral politics. Having lost to metropolitan commerce in the early 1880s, Devès and his coalition were repositioning themselves to emerge as a dominant force in the electoral institutions and in colonial affairs of the late 1880s.

Although Gaspard Devès had already defined himself in urban politics as an adversary of the metropolitan French commercial houses, his actions in the 1880s more clearly positioned him as an oppositional force. He openly criticized the administration and took actions that interfered with official orders. Gaspard Devès aligned himself with secularist principles that had become increasingly identified with the radical republicans in metropolitan politics, thus, distancing him from the Church. Finally, he attracted a new group of supporters that saw themselves as defenders of "Sénégalese" interests and more specifically supporters of black African rights. Consequently, the strategies that

Devès employed in the late 1880s contributed to his reputation as someone who acted independently and outside of the administration's approval.

Gaspard Devès accomplished this by relying primarily on his knowledge of French politics and the intricate network of social relations that he developed over the years. First, between July 1885 and August 1886, Devès and Crespin created an opposition press. They founded two independent journals aimed at promoting their agenda. In addition to criticizing the administration and the Church, the newspapers reported on attacks against the French in the interior regions and called for extending greater political rights to the larger African population. More importantly, the journals gave their own accounts of the General Council meetings and provided a platform for their candidates during electoral campaigns.[42]

Secondly, Devès strengthened his coalition on the elected assemblies. Two of his sons, Justin and Hyacinthe, returned from France and joined their father in politics. Justin Devès won election to the General Council in 1885 and was followed by his brother Hyacinthe at the end of the decade. Leopold Angrand, who had strong ties to the Lebou population in Dakar and Rufisque, also joined the Devès group on the General Council the same year. The 1889 marriage between Hyacinthe Devès and Charlotte Crespin, the daughter of J.J. Crespin and Anna Issacs, further solidified the coalition between the two leading opposition candidates in Saint Louis.[43] Finally, Devès turned to

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[42] Pasquier, "Les debuts de la presse," 481-482.

[43] The civil registry shows that Gaspard Devès and Madeleine Tamba legalized their marriage on May 9 1889, just one month before the Devès-Crespin wedding. Although it is speculation, Gaspard Devès may have chosen to officially marry Tamba at this moment to satisfy the standards of respectability required in the union of two prominent families. "Acte de Marriage, Pierre Gaspard Devès and Magdeleine Tamba," 9 Mai 1889 Commune of Saint Louis and "Acte de Marriage Devès, Jean Lazare Hyacinthe and dlle Crespin, Charlotte Louise," 22 Juin 1889 *ANS*.

his connections in France to find the candidate that would secure his victory over the dominant metropolitan commercial lobby.

The Devès group accomplished a major electoral victory in 1889 when their candidate, Amiral Aristide Vallon, won the deputy election. Although J.J. Crespin had entered all of the deputy elections after 1871 as a candidate of the Devès group, in the Septermber 22 1889 campaign he did not run but rather deferred to Vallon. A Naval officer from Brest, Vallon participated in the wars of conquest in *Sénégal* from 1856 to 1869.[44] Since Vallon did not come from the Saint Louis community and did not appear affiliated with either the Devès or Descemet groups, he won some support from the merchant interests and received the backing of the administration that encouraged the electorate to vote in his favor. In the first round of elections, Vallon came in with only 84 votes more than Gasconi. Vallon won the election in the second round by only 289 votes over Gasconi.[45]

During the campaign, however, Gasconi and his supporters used fraudulent tactics to gain voters. Complaints of corruption were also lodged against the current mayor, Bourmeister, and certain members of the Saint Louis Municipal Council who were allied with Gasconi.[46] Their tactics not only affected voter participation and perhaps contributed to Vallon's win but also gave the opposition reason to attack the legitimacy of the mayor and town council. The day after the election, Vallon demanded that the

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[44] Vallon was even appointed governor of Sénégal in 1882 but returned to France for health reasons a few months after his arrival. It is interesting that he considered assimilation too premature for Sénégal while this was one of Gaspard Devès' political platforms. Zuccarelli, *La vie politique senegalaise*, 66.

[45] Vallon received 1, 773 votes to Gasconi's 1, 484 votes. Ibid., 65.

[46] For a more detailed discussion on the scandal surrounding the Gasconites and Bourmeister's Municipal Council in the 1889 election see Zuccarelli, La vie politique senegalaise, 65.

Governor dissolve the Municipal Council and call for new elections. On April 13, 1890 Jean Jacques Crespin was elected mayor of Saint Louis.[47] Devès and his allies, thus, emerged as the dominant group with control of the legislative office, the Saint Louis Municipal Council and the formation of a powerful coalition on the General Council. By the beginning of the new decade, they were well positioned to exercise their authority and test the extent of their power in the colony.

The period between 1871 and 1889 witnessed perhaps the greatest development of the powers of the electoral institutions in Sénégal. Yet, in many ways, issues concerning colonial commerce dominated politics in this era. Metis politicians, therefore, defined their role in the political process by choosing their allegiance to either the merchant trade houses or Devès' "Sénégalese" interests. In so doing, members of the mixed race population gained significant power both to affect decisions about the colony through their contact with lawmakers and lobbyists in metropolitan France as well as in their relations with important leaders in Sénégal's interior. The examples cited above show the degree to which the colonial administration became more aware of the extent of their influence and the power commune residents could wield through the electoral institutions. We will now turn to the events of the 1890s to understand how colonial officials sought to contain the power of urban leaders in the electoral institutions.

[47] Ibid., 68.

Chapter 7

Urban Politics and the Limits of Republicanism in Colonial Sénégal, 1890-1920

> And there it is gentlemen, the accusations that help those who would succeed in introducing in a country the prejudice of color!... You know that in no other country do elections take place with as much calm and courtesy between candidates and voters; that far from making choices based on origin, each list [in Sénégal] includes black, white and mulatto candidates. The reasoning of Mr. Sonolet is, therefore, in all points contradictory to the truth and it is enough to destroy the arguments of he who opposes the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, to remind him that in this country we have always firmly followed the sublime principles of the Revolution summarized by these words inscribed in the frontispiece of all the public monuments, `liberty, equality and above all fraternity.'
>
> Councilor Georges Crespin...Speaking before a meeting of the General Council, February 1912, Saint Louis Sénégal.[1]

For many twentieth century observers, the existence of democratic institutions in Sénégal's towns appeared as an anomaly within the context of empire building in Africa. The notion of assimilation that guided French overseas expansion in the nineteenth century was replaced by the idea that colonies should be governed through an authoritarian regime that could enforce French authority and carry out her imperialistic aims. The mixed race population in Sénégal, however, was a product of this nineteenth century vision of French colonialism. They considered the republican principles and claims of universal political rights embodied in assimilation as fundamental to their own existence and to progress in the country. As a result, the period from 1890 to 1914

[1]In this speech Crespin references a recently published work entitled, *L'Afrique Occidentale Française*, by M. Louis Sonolet that criticized the existence of democratic institutions in Sénégal. "Allocution presented by M. Georges Crespin Extraordinary Session of the General Council, Saint Louis, February 1912," Dakar, Imprimerie Ternaux, 1913. (Courtesy Georges Crespin, Paris, France).

involved greater contestation between leaders of the Saint Louis community and colonial officials over the meaning of citizenship and the exercise of democratic politics in colonial Sénégal.

This chapter examines the administration's attempts to limit the power of electoral institutions and the responses of *métis* representatives to these policies. I examine attempts by *métis* leaders to form new coalitions in the twentieth century and the challenges they faced as a new generation of black African representatives gained prominence in urban politics. The activities of *métis* politicians in this period proved that the electoral institutions could wield significant power. Moreover, the pattern of negotiation and contestation that these representatives employed demonstrated to French officials that the Saint Louis community remained an influential force in colonial affairs. Consequently, in the period between 1890 and 1920 French officials became increasingly concerned with the power of electoral institutions and made a concerted attempt to limit their influence and the influence of the mixed race population who controlled them.

Building Coalitions: the Second Generation

A new generation of métis leaders shaped by different experiences than those of their parents rose to prominence in electoral politics in the early twentieth century. These young men attended the most prestigious law schools in France. They witnessed the rise of the Third Republic and participated in the dominant debates of the era. At the same time, this group was aware of the transformations taking place in Sénégal. They understood the impact of conquest and the affect of the colonial economy on the larger African population. In addition, *métis* men and women experienced the changing

dynamics of race relations in Saint Louis and the larger French empire. Race mattered in a new way for this *métis* group than it had for their parents a decade earlier.

The Devès brothers and the Carpot brothers came to the forefront in urban politics during this period and represented a new generation of *métis* leadership. Although the Devès family was not typical of the majority of *métis* in this period, a closer examination of their activities shows how this group reasserted their influence in commerce and politics through the electoral institutions. In focusing attention on the role of the Devès family at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century we also gain additional insight into the challenges facing the *métis* population and their responses to colonial rule in this period.

In the 1880s and 1890s, the three eldest sons of Magdeleine Tamba and Gaspard Devès came to play a more important role in the family business and as leaders in electoral politics. Justin (1858-1916), Hyacinthe (1859-1910) and François (b.1861) began their education at the Brother's school in Saint Louis and continued their secondary studies as *pensionnaires* at Lycée Michel Montaigne in Bordeaux. All three completed their studies in law at the University of Bordeaux and returned to Sénégal having obtained the *license en droit*.[2] Justin Devès married Marguerite Laplène, the daughter of his French business associate and Adèle Dumont, a *métis* woman from a

[2] A forth son, Guillaume, was also registered at the school in 1880. He pursued studies in medicine. The two daughters Constance and Catherine may have also participated in the family business. Constance appears to have played a role in the family's financial affairs and correspondence relating to their disputes with the administration after 1900. Both sisters also appear in Catholic Church records as godparents to a number of black African Catholics in the 1890s and 1900s. See the Devès genealogy, Appendix 3, Figure 5; "Notes of Credit given by Constance Devès," 1912 *ANS* 1Z10 "Guillaume Gomis, 11 December 1890," "Justine Diop, 3 July 1900 and "Emmanuel Correa," 1905 in Parish Registry of Baptisms, Sor Diocese, Sénégal.

reputable Saint Louis family. Their only daughter, Elisabeth, was born in 1894.[3] As noted earlier, Hyacinthe married Charlotte Crespin in 1889, thus, strengthening the alliance between the Crespin and Devès families. No children where born of this union, however, and like many other *métis* families of this era the Devès family grew smaller as fewer children were born to this generation.[4]

When the Devès brothers returned to Sénégal, they entered into the family business and took a more active role in electoral politics. Justin Devès worked for the family firm. He also entered into a scheme to recruit laborers from Sénégal for construction of the railroad in Belgian Congo with his father in law, businessman and entrepreneur Albert Laplène. Hyacinthe Devès managed the family's business affairs in the peanut basin in Cayor, Baol and the second arrondissement. François acted as the family's representative in Mauritania. Justin and Hyacinthe were elected to the General Council in the mid-1880s and were later joined by their younger brother in the 1890s. Hyacinthe, in particular, developed a reputation for being a masterful orator and passionate debater. While less is known of François Devès' career or personal life, the records of the Devès commercial house show that he played a central role in managing

[3] Adèle Dumont was the daughter of Blaise Dumont, a highly successful *métis* habitant in the gum trade. In the 1850s, Dumont served as mayor of Saint Louis. Mme Adèle Dumont is described as the spouse of M. Albert Laplène in the sale of a house to their brother has part of the inheritance settlement of their father Blaise Dumont, "ancien propriétaire et négociant a Saint Louis." Marguerite Laplène was probably the daughter of Adèle Dumont and Albert Laplène. See "Vente d'immeuble par les Dames Dumont a M. W. Dumont," 10 May 1881, Actes Notaires, Saint Louis *ANS* and "Marie Virginie Elisabeth Devès," 1 July 1897 Parish Registry of Baptisms, Saint Louis Diocese, Sor, Sénégal.

[4] There is no record of a marriage for François Devès and the youngest son, Guillaume married a woman in France. Their only son Pierre married Angelique Floissac of a *métis* family in Rufisque. The two sisters, Catherine and Constance never married. This shows the demographic decline that was typical of many *métis* families in this period. See Devès family genealogy, Appendix C, Figure 5.

the family's business and continued to represent the family on the General Council until 1920.[5]

In the 1890s, the family confronted a series of personal, financial and political crises. They came under more intense scrutiny from the administration for their "anti-French" activities in the Protectorate. In 1894, Justin and François were implicated in official investigations of their business practices. The family business also suffered when both Justin and Gaspard Devès declared bankruptcy in 1895 and became the subject of an investigation into the failure of the Bank of Sénégal. In addition, a personal dispute between Devès and Crespin and litigation involving an inheritance settlement following J.J. Crespin's death in 1895, caused a rupture in the long standing alliance of the two families. Court documents suggest that the dispute may have been the result of a disagreement over funds owed to the Crespin family for legal services provided by the late J.J. Crespin. The conflict had particular repercussions for Hyacinthe, however, who as the husband of Charlotte Crespin found himself ousted from the family business for a short time.[6]

When Gaspard Devès left Sénégal and retired permanently to Bordeaux in the early 1890s, the brothers became the recognized leaders of the family business. Although they suffered significant financial losses by the end of the decade, the Devès brothers continued to pursue commercial ventures in the twentieth century. Their primary

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[5] François continued to manage the family business after Justin's death and remained active on the General Council. See M. Louis Huchard à "Mon Cher F. Devès," 28 June 1916, *ANS* 1Z11, #19 and Ankersmit and Co. to M. François Devès Conseiller Generale, Saint Louis, Sénégal," 28 February 1919, *ANS* 1Z11, #32.

[6]See "Hérités J.J. Crespin, G. Devès et Vernon, 20 Juin 1896 Tribunal du Première Instance Saint Louis," *ANS* 1Z10, #119 ; "Gaspard et Justin Devès contre J.J. Crespin ANS 1Z10 et "Gaspard Devès à Justin Devès, Bordeaux 20 Septembre 1896," ANS 1Z11, #12.

commercial network was in Mauritania, an area still under nominal French control. The brothers maintained trade relations with the Trarza Moors through an extensive network of commercial agents.[7] Durand Valantin, a *métis* trader from Saint Louis, acted as one of their main associates in trade with the Trarza.[8] The brothers also served as intermediaries for French prospectors seeking concessions for gold mining in French Sudan and continued to work with European import firms to obtain guineas for trade with Bidan Moors. To illustrate the extent of their interests in Mauritania, the Devès brothers even entered into a dispute with the administration over the island of Arguin and the right to exploit the salt mines and fish stocks in the Trarza region of Mauritania.[9]

At the same time, the Devès brothers continued to build on the family's reputation as an oppositional group. They upheld the family's position as advocates of "Sénégalese" interests and opponents of the administration. In commune politics, the Devès strengthened their alliances with Leopold Angrand and Louis Huchard of Gorée who had significant support among Lebou voters in Dakar and Rufisque and were known for being defenders of African rights. The Devès brothers also aligned themselves with emerging leaders among the young black African population in the towns. As one of the

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[7] In this period, the Devès strongest networks were among the Trarza of Mauritania. According to an official report, the house, "Devès Freres de Saint Louis," traded with guineas to the Trarza rulers for livestock, weapons and possibly slaves. The extent of the family's reputation was noted by the commandant who said that the network was popularly known in the region as "ahel Gaspard"- the Arabic term for the people of Gaspard. "Territoire Civil de la Mauritania, Saint Louis a G.G. A.O.F., Gorée 3 Avril 1907," *ANS* GG AOF. For more on this source and the Devès' operations in Mauritania see David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 113-115.

[8] Durand Valantin is mentioned in the report above as the proprietor of one of the Saint Louis trade houses with relations among the Trarza. He appears to have been and associate of the Devès brothers. Valantin married Rose Crespin, the daughter of Devès ally, J.J. Crespin. "Valantin, Durand Prosper a dlle Crespin, Rose Marie, 11 Fevrier 1888," Actes de Marriage Commune de Saint Louis *ANS* and "Photograph Justin Devès and associates," *ANS* 1Z11 #8. See Genealogy Crespin family, Appendix B, Figure 2.

[9] "Gisemements Auriferes du Sirimana 1907," ANS 1Z7, #3; "Salines du Trarza, 1904-1912," ANS 1Z6, #2-#14.

most esteemed members of the General Council, Hyacinthe considered the assembly as a means of protecting the interests of the local population and contributing to the social development of the country. He fought for reforms to promote the equality of French, *métis* and black African residents in local politics. [10] Similarly, Justin Devès relied on the family's reputation as an independent group with close ties to the black African population in his campaigns for electoral office.

The Carpot brothers are often viewed as rivals to the Devès in urban politics of the early twentieth century. Yet for a time, the two groups were aligned and even adopted similar leadership strategies to respond to the changing times. The educational background of the Carpot brothers and their ability to appeal to the established Saint Louis families, French officials and the black African electorate allowed them to become a dominant force in electoral politics. Theodore (b.1855), Charles (1857-1905), and François Carpot (b.1865) followed a similar educational path as the Devès brothers. Charles and François also attended the Brother's School in Saint Louis and received scholarships to attend Lycée Michel Montaigne in Bordeaux. Theodore Carpot, a commercial representative and entrepreneur, became active in commune politics in the 1880s. Charles attended medical school in France and later become the first Sénégalese doctor at the Civil Hospital in Saint Louis. The youngest, François, received a *doctorat d'etat* from the prestigious Paris law school. He worked in the prefecture of Corrèze in

[10] According to Idowu, at the time Hyacinthe Devès was considered "one of the greatest councilors who ever lived." For more on Crespin's role in the General Council see Idowu, "Café au Lait," 281.

France for a few years then returned to Sénégal to open a law practice. In the mid-1890s he joined his brother Theodore in politics.[11]

The Carpot brothers came from a family that had a long and distinguished history in service to the administration and as representatives in urban politics.[12] Their ancestor, Durand Valantin, was the first deputy from Sénégal under the Second Republic. The family was also related to most of the established members of the *métis* community in Saint Louis. The marital choices of the brothers reinforced their standing among the mixed race families in both Saint Louis and Gorée.[13] For example, Charles Carpot's marriage to Louis Descemet's daughter, Henriette, confirmed their alliance with one of the most important leaders in electoral politics. By the turn of the century, the Carpots were well positioned to take a leading role in electoral politics. Their academic experience and their family ties solidified their ability to provide a new generation of leadership for the *métis* community in Saint Louis. Politically, the Carpots could rely on the Descemet machine. Moreover, unlike the Deves brothers, the Carpots were on relatively good terms with the administration and could count on support from French merchant interests at election time.[14]

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[11]"Charles Carpot entrée Oct. 1862," "François Carpot, entrée Nov, 1868 *Registre de l'ecole primarire des Freres Ploermel* and *Registre Lycee Michel Montaingne* Series T, dossier 4. A fourth brother Ernest also attended the boarding school in Bordeaux. See Devès family profile in Appendix B.

[12]Their father Pierre was, a commissioner with the Marines. See Carpot family profile in Appendix B.

[13] Theodore Carpot married Georginie Pecarrère who came from a long line of distinguished *habitant* families with links to Gorée. François Carpot also married Marguerite Teisseire who may have been a member of the Saint Louis merchant family of Albert Teisseire. "Carpot, Jean Marius Theodore a dlle Pecarrère, Marie-Louise Adèle Georginia, 5 Mars 1887," Acte de Marriage Commune de Saint Louis *ANS*. See Carpot Genealogy, Appendix C, figure 1.

[14] While they were generally seen as non-threatening to the administration, when François Carpot became deputy Governor Roume cautioned that his support of local interests could be problematic. See Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 110-111.

Despite their differences, both the Carpot brothers and the Devès brothers responded to the changing times by advocating for the interests of the Sénégalese population and scrutinizing administrative practices. Both groups were largely influenced by the principles of the Republic and their desire to contribute to the development of Sénégal by acting as intermediaries with colonial officials. The electoral institutions provided a means to do this. The Devès family, in particular, used these institutions to challenge colonial authorities and bolster their reputation as an oppositional group. As a result, they became the subject of the administration's attempts to suppress their influence and eliminate the powers allowed commune residents through the electoral institutions. In order to more fully understand the nature of colonialism and its impact on the *métis* community, we will turn to an examination of the changing nature of French rule and the responses of *métis* leaders at the end of the nineteenth century.

Imperialism and the Metis Community, 1890-1902

By the 1890s colonial officials in Sénégal began articulating a new policy that dismissed the idea of granting African subjects the same political and civil rights as metropolitan Frenchmen.[15] At the end of the nineteenth century, Sénégal was no longer a commercial outpost but the seat of a vast territorial empire. As a result, Saint Louis focused greater attention on enforcing its dominance, consolidating French rule and organizing a more effective bureaucracy. For the series of governors and political affairs

[15]This new policy was described as association. It was based on the premise that Africans should maintain their customary status since they could never attain the status of French citizens. Alice Conklin marks the beginning of this shift with the creation of the Government General in 1895. In looking at the actions and views expressed by Sénégal's governors from Clement-Thomas (1888-1891) and de Lamothe (1891-1895) we can see these ideas beginning to take shape in Sénégal the 1890s. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 23.

directors who came to govern Sénégal in this period, the coastal enclaves and their tradition of democratic government proved problematic for the realization of their objectives. Moreover, the mixed race population who had gained considerable power through these institutions interfered with the ability of colonial officers to enforce their authority in the interior.

Despite the democratic nature of the institutions in Sénégal, the administration maintained a great deal of control over urban politics. The governor supervised the electoral process. He could interfere in elections by rescheduling the vote or invalidating the list of registered voters. The governor could also suspend elected representatives.[16] As demonstrated with the Municipal Council in 1880 and 1889, the governor could remove an elected official or nullify an election and appoint his own representative in the interim.[17] In the 1890s, the administration found an additional resource in its ability to bring in independent inspectors from the colonial ministry in Paris to investigate the operation of civic institutions for suspected mismanagement or corruption.[18] Consequently, Governors Henri deLamothe and Chaudié, in particular, became more aggressive in launching official investigations aimed at individuals or institutions that gained too much power or interfered with the realization of French objectives.

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[16] These practices were not specific to the colonies alone. Until 1882, mayors were appointed by the prefect in the municipalities of metropolitan France. The prefect could also dissolve the municipal council and he controlled voter registration. As a result, conflicts commonly arose between appointed mayors and elected municipal councils from the opposition party. For more on urban politics in metropolitan France see, William B. Cohen, *Urban Government and the Rise of the French City*, 21-41.

[17] Mbaye, *Histoire des Institutions coloniales*, 153.

[18] In 1887, the colonial ministry created an office of the *Inspection des colonies* when it was still housed under the Ministry of Commerce and the Naval Ministry. The role of the inspector became more effective after 1894 when Paris created an independent Ministry of Colonies. The inspector could examine any civil or military office and was responsible only to the official ordering the mission. With the creation of the Government General a permanent inspector was assigned to Dakar. Ibid.,16 and 20.

In their capacity as local representatives, candidates for public office could respond to the administration's actions by taking their grievances to the *Conseil d'Etat* in Paris.[19] This enabled town residents to protest the decisions of the administration and seek redress with authorities outside of Saint Louis. Moreover, those with connections to influential lobbyists or government officials in metropolitan France could mobilize support on their behalf and publicize the anti-democratic actions of the administration. The independent press also served as a valuable tool to assert their position. Yet within the Saint Louis community, the Devès group became the most skilled at using these options to protest French actions. Their position in the colony allowed them a kind of independence from the administration that most other members of the *métis* population could not afford by the end of the nineteenth century. A series of events in the 1890s shows how this conflict unfolded and the nature of *métis* responses.

In 1889, Governor Léon Clément-Thomas (1888-1891) announced the removal of certain regions in Walo and Cayor from the direct administration area of the first arrondissement. This declaration called "disannexation" meant that inhabitants of these regions were now placed under Protectorate authority which moved them beyond the administrative jurisdiction of the General Council.[20] "Disannexation," therefore, affected the territories surrounding Saint Louis that representatives in the town considered part of their sphere of influence. The new policy succeeded in reducing the power of the

[19] The *Conseil d'Etat* served as the central administrative court in Paris. The court routinely heard complaints of voter fraud and corruption by prefects in municipal elections of late nineteenth century France. Citizens in the colonies had the same right to redress as candidates for public office in the metropolis. See Cohen, *Urban Government*, 39.

[20] Searing, "Accommodation and Resistance."

General Council and signaled a change in French attitudes towards the role of the Saint Louis community in colonial affairs.

At the end of Clément-Thomas' term in Sénégal, an event involving the Devès family, the rulers of Futa Toro and the assassination of a French officer created even greater alarm among administrators about the influence of the Devès in particular, and the potential power that commune residents might wield in the Protectorate, in general. In September 1890, the director of political affairs sent Abel Jeandet to Podor just as the French were completing "pacification" of Futa Toro. Shortly after his arrival, he was murdered by a recently demoted soldier. A hasty investigation by the administration found Lam Toro Sidikh, the former ruler of Toro, and two others guilty of conspiring with the assassin. Gaspard Devès and his supporters in Saint Louis became involved in the incident when all three men were publicly executed in Podor, a French administrative district in which the Devès had a large client base.[21]

Devès and his allies criticized Clément-Thomas and the director of Political Affairs for their handling of the investigation and the summary execution of the alleged perpetrators. They took action by convincing the interim governor and the head of the judiciary to launch an inquiry into the actions of the officials in Podor. Devès then rallied the support of Alexandre Issac, their ally in the Senate and Vallon, their newly elected representative in the Chamber of Deputies. Both men publicized the event among

[21]The fact that this took place on French territory was particularly significant for the Devès because summary execution raised concerns about human rights violations by the French. In addition, Manchuelle suggests that this was an important moment for the Devès group because they were in danger of loosing segments of the black electorate in Saint Louis after the 1889 elections and because they had already lost the support of African rulers in the interior who had been their clients but were replaced by others linked to the Descemet group during the campaigns of conquest. For a full account of the "Jeandet Affair," the sources which describe this event, and a more in-depth interpretation see Manchuelle, "Metis et colons," 485-492 and Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation*, 65-66.

legislators in France and put pressure on the Ministry of Colonies to respond to their demand for an inquiry.[22] While the issue was eventually dismissed by the ministry, the involvement of the Devès group created a scandal for the administration. To show his resolve in dealing with those who opposed the administration the new governor, Henri de Lamothe, immediately acted against several members of the judiciary who sided with the Devès' by transferring them out of Sénégal and assigning them to other posts.[23]

Henri de Lamothe (1891-1895) arrived in Sénégal to assume the governor's office in the interim between the assassination, Clément-Thomas' departure and the Devès group's protest. The Jeandet assassination had a significant affect on the governor. It solidified his opinion that democratic institutions in Sénégal interfered too much in the business of colonization and confirmed his belief that it was imprudent to extend political rights to African subjects.[24] Writing in the year following his departure from the colony, de Lamothe rationalized his decision to reduce the General Council's authority by stating that creating further separation between the communes and the Protectorate would contribute to "progress" in the interior and provide a means to avoid the "irritating

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[22] Alexandre Issac was the Senator from Guadeloupe who was also a member of the humanitarian group, *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*. Amiral Vallon was the Devès candidate who was elected deputy in 1889. See Chapter 6 for more on both men and their relationship to Devès.

[23] "de Lamothe to under secretary of state, Saint Louis 6 Fevrier 1891," Papiers Henri deLamothe, *CAOM* 4 PA/1, #112. Manchuelle argues that the Antillian justices posed a particular threat to the governor and director of political affairs because of they tended to be more liberal and concerned with humanitarian issues like forced labor and summary justice. See Manchuelle, "Metis et colons," 490-491.

[24] In fact, de Lamothe agreed with Faidherbe's earlier assessment that, "former states of native Muslim and tiedos" under French control should be governed by their own customs and not French law. Although I do not focus on this aspect in my study, Searing gives a more in-depth treatment of de Lamothe's proposal to restrict the application of voting laws to the black African population in the communes and the Protectorate. "H. de Lamothe à Monsieur le Ministre des Colonies," 25 September 1896 *CAOM* 4PA/2 d.4 #8 and Searing, "Accommodation and Resistance"

debates and angry indiscretions" of the councilors.[25] The Jeandet incident also made the governor aware of the threat posed by Devès and Crespin and made him more adamant about suppressing the power of a group he considered as adversarial to French interests.[26] During his administration de Lamothe, therefore, concentrated on separating town from country, limiting the authority of the electoral institutions, and reducing the influence of *métis* leaders in urban politics.

One of the governor's first steps in the wake of the Jeandet assassination involved eliminating the dominance of the Devès group in the elected assemblies. Having just won a major victory in the 1889 deputy and municipal council elections, Devès and his allies had gained control of the electoral institutions and had amassed a significant power base in the colony. On February 14 1891, de Lamothe issued an administrative order calling for the dissolution of the municipal council and the removal of J.J. Crespin, the popularly elected mayor. The governor then appointed Jules Couchard, a *petit colon* and "*l'ancien intime*" of Clément-Thomas, to head an interim council.[27] When elections were held in June 1891, Couchard won the election. Crespin protested the results at the *Conseil d'Etat* in Paris claiming irregularities in the voting process. Although the

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[25] "H. de Lamothe a Monsieur le Ministre des Colonies," 25 Septembre 1896 *CAOM* 4PA/2 d.4, #8.

[26] In a letter to the under secretary of state regarding "certain personalities" that instigated the Podor affair, de Lamothe gives a detailed assessment of Devès and Crespin and their influence in the colony. He accuses them of giving "bad advice" to the African population and maintained that Crespin was "sous la dependance de la maison Devès. "a M. Sous-secretaire d'Etat." 16 Janvier 1891 *CAOM* 4PA/2 d.4 #50.

[27] *Petit colon* was the term coined for metropolitan French who settled in the colonies to work as shopkeepers, petty traders, employees of commercial firms or lower level bureaucrats. de Lamothe referred to Couchard as "l'ancien intime" or a former close friend of Clement-Thomas. "a M. le chef du cabinet du Sous-Secretaire d'Etat," 24 December 1892 *CAOM* 4PA/2 d.4 #7.

administrative council sided with Crespin and nullified the election, Couchard won at the polls again undoubtedly with the help of the administration.[28]

The second major decision that had a significant affect on the *métis* representatives concerned de Lamothe's decree limiting the budgetary authority of the General Council. A conflict with council members over approval of funds to re-open the school for the sons of chiefs and interpreters convinced the governor to further Clément-Thomas' earlier efforts to strengthen the governor's ability to operate freely in matters relating to the Protectorate.[29] On December 13, 1892 de Lamothe announced the creation of a separate budget for the Protectorate that came under the direct authority of the governor.[30] This restricted the General Council to approving only expenses involving the direct rule areas. In eliminating the input of the General Council from decisions regarding a major portion of the colonial budget, this decree dealt a striking blow to the councilors who considered approval of the budget as their most important role in managing the affairs of the colony.[31]

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[28] Manchuelle maintains that Couchard, de Lamothe and the French merchant firms joined together to defeat the Devès group in this election. de Lamothe's correspondence and reports that the black electorate in the towns were angered over the outcome supports this. See, "a Monsieur le Sous-Secretaire d'Etat," 7 April 1891 CAOM 4PA/5 and "a m. Chef de Cabinet du Sous-Secretaire d'Etat," Saint Louis 24 December 1892 CAOM 4PA/2 d. 4 #7 For Zuccarelli's account of African women who protested the results see *La vie politique Sénégalaise*, 68. Also, Manchuelle, "Metis et colons," 493-494.

[29]De Lamothe opened the new School for the Sons of Chiefs and Interpreters shortly after announcing the new budget for the Protectorate. For more on the revival of the School for Sons of Chiefs and Interpreters and de Lamothe's conflict with the General Council over this issue see James Searing, "Accommodation and Resistance," 87-90.

[30]"H. de Lamothe a M. le Ministre des Colonies, Mesnil-sur-Oge, 23 Septembre 1896," *CAOM* 4PA/2 d.4, #8. For more on the arrete establishing the budget for the Protectorate see Mbaye, *Histoires des institutions coloniales*, 154. Searing also gives an analysis of the affect of this budget decree on the General Council in "Accommodation and Resistance," 87-88.

[31]Although the councilors could not reverse the governor's decision, they responded by adopting two resolutions protesting the policy of dis-annexation started by Clement-Thomas but continued by de Lamothe who called for the separation of the southern Rivers region (later Guinea-Conakry) and the Sudan from the second arrondissement.

In addition to these efforts, de Lamothe intensified the administration's scrutiny of the Devès family and their commercial operations in Sénégal. For example, in March 1894 Justin Devès was implicated in an official investigation of alleged abuses of African workers in the Belgian Congo labor recruitment scheme. In August of the same year, François faced a trial for fraud involving customs duties on a shipment of goods. Their family friend, Senator Alexandre Issac, represented François before the court in Saint Louis and succeeded in winning his acquittal on all charges[32] De Lamothe's successor, Jean-Baptiste Chaudié (1895-1902), continued this assault on the Devès family through scrutiny of the bank's practices. Learning of generous loans made to Gaspard and Justin Devès, Governor Chaudié called for an inspector from the colonial ministry in Paris to investigate the bank's operations. The inspector found Charles Molinet, the director of the bank, guilty of mismanagement of funds and abuses of power.[33]

According to the report of the investigation, Molinet authorized credit valued at 322,000 francs to Gaspard and Justin knowing that the elder Devès had recently declared bankruptcy, thus, compromising the liquidity of the bank.[34] In addition, the inspector found that Molinet and his treasurer, Duchesne, borrowed money from the bank for their personal benefit by using the signatures of members of their own families to avoid repayment. Molinet accepted bank notes underwritten by his wife and his brother in law

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[32]Issac noted that upon hearing the verdict the Saint Louis courtroom erupted in loud applause. See "Senateur A. Issac a Gaspard Devès, Saint Louis 19 Aout 1894," *ANS* 1Z11, #15. On the investigation into Justin Devès involvement in the Belgian Congo emigration scheme see "Rapport Affaire Laplene, Dakar 4 Mars 1894," *ANS* K31, #47 and "Telegram Dakar 24 February 1894," *ANS* K31, #77.

[33] Charles Molinet was appointed by Briere de l'Isle to replace Gaspard Devès as mayor of Saint Louis in 1880. A native of Gorée, Molinet married a member of the Guillabert family and had strong ties to Descemet's group. He worked as treasurer of the bank from 1872-1884 before he was appointed director in 1885. The treasurer Duchesne also came from an established *métis* family.

[34]"Commissaire colonial Pinder a M. Ministre des Colonies, Saint Louis 30 November 1895," *ANS* Q40, #6

in order to construct homes in Saint Louis. He later replaced their signatures with signatures of his daughter who the inspector described as, "a widow without resources." In light of the inspector's report, the governor forced Molinet to resign and leave Sénégal in disgrace.[35] Chaudié appointed a bureaucrat from the ministry in Paris to replace Molinet and required all civil servants and employees in his administration who took loans from the bank to repay their debts immediately. In 1901, the bank was officially closed.

The Bank of Sénégal was an important institution for the Saint Louis community in the late nineteenth century. Metis men and women, notable Muslim traders and a few members of the French merchant community made up the majority of the bank's clients. For the *métis* population, in particular, the Bank of Sénégal provided access to credit that enabled them to buy property and finance their business ventures when they had little access to capital in France. Louis Descemet and Omer Teisseire borrowed money for their trade house. Frederic Michas and Charles Carpot depended on the bank to finance their electrical lighting company.[36] Although the investigation was aimed at the Devès family, the collapse of the bank and the scandal the investigation caused had a significant effect on the *métis* population. The closure of the bank effectively eliminated an institution that was critical to the economic survival of this group. Consequently in the context of the 1890s, the closure of the Bank of Sénégal must have been seen as another attack on the *métis* community and a sign of the uncertainty of their position in the changing colony.

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[35]Molinet was offered a position in the department of colonial treasuries or financial services in Paris. "letter from the Minister of Colonies to G.G. AOF" Paris 2 June 1899 *ANS* Q40 #38.

[36] "Banque du Sénégal Situation des debiteurs," 31 December 1896 *ANS* Q40 #31.

The *métis* population in Saint Louis responded to the changing environment by relying on their role as leaders in urban politics. During the 1890s, electoral institutions increasingly became an arena of contestation between the Saint Louis community and the administration. Couchard's victory in the mayoral race of 1891 changed the dynamics of commune politics. The 1893 deputy elections and the dominance of Couchard's group in the General Council solidified the rise of a candidate backed by the administration and the decline of the Devès' leadership. First, the Devès family's decision to support their former rival Gasconi instead of their longtime ally J.J. Crespin created a rupture among the main opposition leaders and opened the door for Couchard to win the 1893 legislative election.[37] In winning the deputy position, Couchard emerged as the first Frenchman from Dakar to gain entry into a political arena that had been mainly controlled by men who were either from Saint Louis or were connected to the leading families of the town. Secondly, Couchard's close ties to the governor indicated a greater involvement by the administration in commune politics and may have even appeared to the *métis* as an encroachment on the independence of one of their prized institutions.

By the mid-1890s, the *métis* population also lost their dominance in the elected assemblies. Although J.J. Crespin won the Saint Louis Municipal Council race in 1894, Couchard and his supporters held the majority of seats on the General Council. The influence of Couchard's group in the assembly focused even greater attention on the importance of the second arrondissement and its growing population of French settlers. Faced with these challenges *métis* representatives formed new coalitions. Theodore and

[37]The Devès group backed Crespin in the first round but not in the second when Gasconi pulled out and it became apparent that Crespin could not win. Couchard had the support of the French merchants, the administration, and the Church. For more on this election see Zuccarelli, *La vie politique Sénégalaise*, 69-70.

François Carpot joined the Devès brothers to create a new opposition group in the General Council. Gorée councilors Louis Huchard and Leopold Angrand also participated in the Devès-Carpot alliance, thus, strengthening the group's support among voters from the second arrondissement.[38] Finally, Louis Descemet's decision to join this new coalition represented a break from his long affiliation with the administration and metropolitan commerce. Although short-lived, the Devès-Carpot-Descemet union succeeded in defeating Couchard in an election on May 3, 1896 to replace recently deceased mayor, J.J. Crespin.[39] Descemet became mayor of Saint Louis and the opposition group won the majority of seats on the town council.

In addition to their strategies to regain control of commune politics, certain *métis* leaders in Sénégal responded to the actions of the administration and the impact of colonialism with a revival of the independent press. Although the appearance of private newspapers was again short-lived, the journals provided a forum for members of the urban community to articulate their concerns and criticisms. In this case, the independent press was spearheaded by opposition leaders from the second arrondissement. Louis Huchard, in particular, acted as the main contributor of *L'Afrique Occidentale.*[40] Appearing in 1896, the journal criticized the administration and spoke out against the unjust practices of monopoly commerce. As a lawyer and councilor who fought for the rights of African farmers and traders in the peanut basin, Houchard's editorials reflected a

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[38] Zuccarelli, La vie politique Sénégalaise, 69-71.

[39]Crespin died on January 3, 1895. Ibid., 72-73.

[40] The two main indpendent journals that appeared in this period were *L'Union Africaine* and *L'Afrique Occidentale*. *L'Union Africaine* started its run in 1895. It contained less editorial information and more reportage on the commercial activities of French firms and the state of the economy in Sénégal. It was called, "an organ of commercial interests of the French colonies on the West Coast of Africa." *L'Union Africaine BN* J.O. 6936.

growing concern with the expansion of cash crop agriculture and the exploitation of peasant producers.[41] The authors also criticized the Protectorate administration created by Clément-Thomas and de Lamothe and spoke out against Couchard and the commercial interests he represented.[42]

In addition to these issues, *L'Afrique Occidentale* brought attention to the evolving racial tensions between French authorities and settlers in the colony, on the one hand, and the population of black African and mixed race inhabitants of the towns, on the other. The journal argued that, "the colonies are farms of which the populations are without a doubt cattle," and called for its readers to oppose "the transformation of our soil into a farm and its people into cattle."[43] Its authors followed incidents of racism involving *gens du couleur* and complained of the growing climate of racism throughout the empire. In speculating that racial prejudice motivated a decision to remove fellow Saint Louisian, General Alfred Dodds, from command in Indochina, the journal expressed concern about the place of Sénégal's mixed race population at the turn of the century.[44]

Race, colonialism and urban politics came together in the electoral campaigns taking place in Saint Louis at the end of the century. The visit of the Minister of

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[41] "Le Syndicat des Arachides: Illegalite? Immoralite," 1(14 July 1896) *L'Afrique Occidentale* BN J.O. 7679.

[42] "Informations Couchard," 1(14 July 1896) and L. Houchard, "Le Conseil General," 14(15 February 1897), *L'Afrique Occidentale*, *BN* J.O. 7679. They specifically complained that the Protectorate system allowed colonial officials to ignore abuses by appointed African rulers against the peasant population.

[43] *L'Afrique Occidentale*, *BN* J.O. 7679 1(14 July 1896).

[44] "Préjugé", *L'Afrique Occidentale* No. 8 31 October 1896 BN JO 7679. General Alfred Dodds was an esteemed *métis* military officer from a notable Saint Louis family. In 1892, he led the French military campaign against the King of Dahomey. He received a hero's welcome upon his return to Saint Louis and continued to play an important role in the French military. See Dodds family profile in Appendix B.

Colonies, André Lebon to the capital city illustrated the changing mood in urban Sénégal at this moment. In October 1897, Lebon visited Saint Louis for the inauguration of the Faidherbe Bridge. The impressive steel bridge, seen as symbol of the technological progress that France brought to Sénégal, linked the island to the mainland. A journalist from *Le Temps*, a Parisian journal covering Lebon's visit, remained in the town and reported on the General Council elections taking place on November 7, 1897. The article noted that on the eve of the elections a crowd of, "blacks led by some *jeunes gens du pays* [*métis*]," ran through the town manifesting their anger at the regime and shouting, "'A l'eau les Blancs! A bas les Francais! Nous sommes les maitres! A nous le Sénégal!"[45] For the first time, the slogan "Sénégal for the Sénégalese" entered into electoral politics suggesting that the notion of race had gained new meaning for black and mixed race residents of Saint Louis.

The incident surrounding the November 1897 elections marked a transition from an older generation of commune representatives to a new generation of urban leaders. In choosing to sack the house of Bacre Waly, the oldest councilor and the only Muslim representative, Saint Louis voters expressed their disappointment with the established leaders of commune politics.[46] They also demonstrated the changing politics of race within the town. In order to gain the support of the black African electorate in the towns and defeat French settler interests represented by Couchard, *métis* leaders had to adopt a

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[45] Manchuelle gives the text of this 28 November 1897 article in the French newspaper, *Le Temps*. He suggests that after this moment a new agenda emerges in which the *métis* become more involved in issues concerning the Protectorate and the black African population in the communes. Durand Valantin, an associate of the Devès, was identified in the report as one of the two people arrested for starting the incident. Manchuelle, "Métis et colons," 499.

[46] The account mentioned above describes how the mob attacked Bacre Waly's home destroying windows and doors. The doyen of the council had been honored by Lebon and thus may have been viewed by the youth of the Saint Louis community as part of the colonial regime. Ibid.

new strategy. The Carpot brothers were well placed to become the dominant leaders in urban politics and assert a new agenda for local interests.

As members of the General Council who came from well respected families, Theodore and François Carpot had the ability to bring together the main interest groups in the town and appeal to the growing concerns of the black African and *métis* electorate in all four communes. Moreover, their ties to the administration, the Church, and the business community confirmed support from the most powerful groups within the colony. François Carpot's educational background made him a particularly attractive candidate for the deputy position. In 1898, he ran for the office but lost by a small margin to Hector d'Agoult, the candidate of the metropolitan commercial lobby.[47] Carpot ran for the office again in 1902 with the support of both the Descemet and Devès groups. This time he based his campaign on appealing to the interests of black African voters in Saint Louis as well as Lebou voters in Rufisque and Dakar. Carpot gave speeches in Wolof, defined himself as an *enfant du pays* and promised to defend the rights of local people and fight for Sénégal's place in the Federation. Moreover, he relied specifically on Louis Descemet's connection with leaders of Muslim orders who campaigned on his behalf with their followers in the communes.[48]

On April 27, 1902 in an election that generated the highest voter turnout of any previous race, François Carpot won the deputyship. In November of the same year, Theodore Carpot became president of the General Council as his group held the majority

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[47] Zuccarelli, *La vie politique Sénégalaise*, 83.

[48] According to informants, Descemet and his allies may have had specific ties to the family of Malik Sy of the Tijani order. Christian Valantin, interview with author Dakar, Sénégal 16 May 2000. For more on Carpot's campaign strategy see Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 110-111; Zuccarelli, *La vie politique sénégalaise*, 83.

of seats in the assembly.[49] The *métis* community in Saint Louis emerged from the difficulties of the 1890s to regain their leadership position in urban politics. They responded to the administration's attempts to suppress their influence in the electoral institutions by proving that they could work the system to their advantage. As a group, the mixed race population in Saint Louis would face new challenges in the twentieth century. The struggle for power would not only involve a more concerted effort by colonial officials to contain the influence of the Saint Louis community but it would also give rise to a new group of young black African leaders in the cities.

The Struggle over Colonial Politics, 1902-1920

The advent of the twentieth century brought significant changes for the Saint Louis community. The declining role of the island town as the center of French commerce and administration presented new challenges to the *métis* population in the colony. The transfer of the capital of the federation to Dakar in 1904 altered the nature of power relations for the residents of Saint Louis. The establishment of the new authority eclipsed the direct relationship Saint Louis residents had to the primary representative of French authority in West Africa and shifted attention southward to the second arrondissement. The commercial interests of the colonial regime, in particular, no longer centered on the Sénégal River but focused on the peanut basin to the south. At the same time, reforms enacted by the Governor General sought to diminish the role played by the electoral institutions in Sénégal in order to prevent commune citizens from gaining access to power. Métis responses to these reforms, however, showed the resilience of this group despite the obstacles presented by the administration.

[49] For details on both elections see Zuccarelli, *La vie politique sénégalaise*, 83-85.

The creation of the office of the Governor General in 1895 shifted the focus of French power from Sénégal to a federal administration for French West Africa. Under Chaudié, the first Governor General, the headquarters of the federation remained in Saint Louis. The transfer of the capital to Gorée-Dakar at the turn of the century, however, reflected growing French interest in Dakar as a more strategic port for cash crop exports from the peanut basin. In 1902, the Colonial Ministry appointed Ernest Roume (1902-1908) Governor General of French West Africa. In assuming the position in Dakar, Roume set about establishing federal authority and introducing a series of reforms to centralize administration of the territory.

As an experienced administrator and trained engineer, Roume considered the implementation of *mise en valeur* or France's policy of "rational economic development" as the main priority of his administration.[50] A number of these policies held significant consequences for the established mixed race groups in Saint Louis and Gorée. For example, the enforcement of metropolitan legislation regarding the separation of Church and state affected the role of the Catholic Church as the primary provider of educational services in the colony. The new laws ordered religious instructors from the orders of the Brothers of Plöermel and the Sister's of Saint Joseph to close their schools and leave the colony. The Governor General reorganized education by creating a new system of secular education for the entire federation, thus, eliminating the monopoly that *métis* families held on access to French schooling in Sénégal and higher education in France.[51]

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[50] Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 40-51.

[51] The scholarship program was also phased out by the time of this reorganization which restricted the availability of government subsidized higher education in France from young *métis* men and women.

Roume's assault on the political rights of urban residents, however, stimulated intense protest among members of the Saint Louis community. On October 18, 1904 the colonial ministry approved of Roume's proposal to create a general budget for French West Africa that would come from the revenues of the five individual colonies.[52] The Governor General was, therefore, given absolute authority over the revenues of the colonies and the right to collect Sénégal's customs duties expressly for the administration of the federal government. For Roume, this decision gave the Governor General the financial resources needed to govern the new territory. For residents of Sénégal's communes, however, this marked the final erosion of one of their most important responsibilities. Budgetary authority and deciding upon the allocation of Sénégal's customs duties constituted the primary function of the General Council. In establishing the new budget, Roume effectively continued the policies begun by Clement-Thomas and de Lamothe to reduce the role of the General Council in colonial administration.

In addition to budgetary reforms, French officials initiated new proposals that called for the suppression of the General Council and its replacement by a much less powerful body. The Governor of Sénégal, Camille Guy (1902-1906) maintained that the Saint Louis representatives had become too dominant on the council which undermined representatives of French commercial interests from the second arrondissement. In his report to the Governor General just prior to the opening of the 1903 General Council session, Guy referred to the "antagonistic" relationship between the "mulatto" councilors from Saint Louis who he maintained, "resolutely and surely sacrificed the interests of

[52] Mbaye, *Histoire des institutions coloniales*, 154.

Dakar and Rufisque, of Sine Saloum and Casamance, for the interests of their voters and even their personal preoccupations."[53]

In his view, the Saint Louis representatives interfered with official plans to develop the cash crop economy in Sénégal for French commerce. Based in large part on the suggestions of metropolitan merchant firms now headquartered in Dakar and Rufisque, Guy proposed the suppression of the General Council and its replacement with a "simple consultative commission." Their proposal included a body made up of seven members chosen by "universal suffrage" with the remaining twenty appointed by the governor of Sénégal. Although the colonial ministry was reluctant to eliminate the General Council, Roume's successors continued to support this plan until it was finally implemented in 1920.[54] In their view, a Colonial Council would better represent the "indigenous" interests of the colony, French commerce, and the administration, rather than serve a minority population of privileged residents in the towns.[55]

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[53] In this report Guy mentions that French representatives from Dakar and Rufisque complained about Carpot's election having "ruinous consequences," for their region and even resigned from the General Council in protest of the last election that gave the *métis* a majority in the assembly. It is perhaps worthy to note that unlike the Governors of the 1870s and 1880s, Guy came to Sénégal from the Ministry of Colonies in Paris and which meant that he was more in touch with French commercial interests and less concerned about satisfying the interests of the Saint Louis community. This incident provides another indication of the changing nature of power relations between the administration and the Saint Louis community. See, "Lieutenant governor of Sénégal to the Governor General of French West Africa," 18 April 1903 *ANS* 4E6, #4.

[54]Despite adamant requests by the Governor General's office, the colonial ministry avoided acting on either Roume or his successor Ponty's proposal to eliminate the General Council. Fear of appearing anti-democratic to voters at home by abolishing such an esteemed institution of Third Republic government may have prevented earlier implementation of this plan.

[55] In this proposal the governor proposed creating an assembly that would be a compromise between the General Councils of metropolitan France, the Colonial Council of Indochina and the financial delegations of Algeria. Control of the budget, however, rested with the Conseil Superieur of the Government and the Minister of Colonies. For more on the rationale of the administration and their proposal see, "Governor General of French West Africa to the Minister of Colonies," *ANS* 4E6, #2.

The final issue that had a significant affect on the Saint Louis community concerned the administration's attempts to deny full political and legal rights to the black African population of the communes. These practices went further than proposals introduced by de Lamothe in the 1890s by challenging the legal status of black voters in court.[56] Arguing that the administration acted "prematurely" in extending the privileges of citizenship to the black African population, Saint Louis made a concerted effort to curtail the freedoms afforded black commune residents operating outside of the towns.[57] French officials specifically sought to restrict voting rights to only "Europeans and assimilated Africans," in the towns. Colonial officials maintained that allowing black residents political rights only resulted in "a mass of *indigènes* not knowing how to read or write French often natives of Sierra Leone and the Gambia, becoming voters in Sénégal."[58] As a result, by the early 1900s black commune residents, who now referred to themselves as "*originaires*" to assert their special status, faced the reality that French officials wanted to eliminate their coveted citizenship rights.

This particular attack on the unique position of the black African urban population fuelled a movement among Muslim Saint Louis traders and the young black African elite in the towns.[59] A new group of political leaders emerged from the communes to protest

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[56] De Lamothe proposed establishing laws to limit the voting population in Sénégal to those who were born in the communes and met the conditions for French political rights. He argued, however, for making a "tabula rasa" of rights acquired by "*indigénes*" in the colonies and placing conditions on those in the towns who had already obtained voting privileges. The new administration sought to deny citizenship rights to the black urban population. "Mon Cher Amiral, Saint Louis 7 December 1892," and "Envoi d'un projet de decret reglementant les conditions de l'electorat au Sénégal, Saint Louis 7 Avril 1891," *CAOM* 4PA.

[57] "G.G. A.O.F à M. le Ministre des Colonies, Dakar," Projet de Creation d'un Conseil Colonial, 1903-1907, *ANS* 4E6, #2.

[58] Ibid.

[59] By the 1900s a number of black commune residents worked as traders, clerks, or elementary school teachers in the administrative and commercial districts of the interior. In practice, this group was afforded the same privileges as French citizens. They were not subject to the *indigénat*, they could seek the

the actions of the administration and create their own interest group in urban politics. Galandou Diouf and Mody Mbaye stand out in the historical record as the main figures who led the politicization of the black electorate in this period.[60] Both men were born in Saint Louis, attended the secondary school run by the Brothers of Plöermel, and worked as lower level civil servants in the interior. Galandou Diouf worked in the postal service before establishing his own business in commerce and agriculture in the areas around Rufisque. Mbaye served as a civil servant in Baol where he became the subject of numerous confrontations with French officials.[61] Diouf and Mbaye forged important ties with the *métis* leadership in this period. Diouf in particular, followed the political careers of Justin Devès and François Carpot. He became an "agent" for Carpot as the deputy's representative among Lebou voters in Rufisque and the African population in neighboring regions of the interior. In 1909, Diouf won election to the General Council as the first black African representative from Rufisque.

The movement spearheaded by these two men gave rise to a new interest group in commune politics. By 1912, the voluntary association that brought together young French educated black men in Saint Louis evolved into a political interest group called

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protection of French courts, and they maintained local voting rights. In the 1900s, officials in the Protectorate purposefully denied commune residents their ability to exercise these rights in the Protectorate.

[60]For more on these men and official actions against *orignaires* in the Protectorate see Searing, "Accommodation and Resistance," p. 324-343 and Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 133-138 and 144-149.

[61]Louis Huchard, the Goréan *métis* ally of Devès and noted defender of "indigenous rights," served as Mbaye's lawyer in his disputes with the administration. Through Huchard and perhaps the Devès' earlier connection to Alexandre Issac, the *Ligue de Droits de l'Homme* investigated the situation and put pressure on the administration not to deny Mbaye's rights. For Mody Mbaye's story and the main case involving his rights as a commune citizen see Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 133-138. For more on the *Ligue's* involvement in this case see, Manchuelle, "Le role des Antillais dans l'apparition du nationalisme," 395-396.

the *Jeunes Sénégalais*.[62] In speaking out against the inferior pay of black African civil servants, the lack of jobs, poor schools, and limited access to government sponsored scholarships, this group challenged the leaders of the Saint Louis community to work in their interests. They introduced new issues for debate and protested the denial of their political and legal rights by the colonial administration. *Métis* politicians in the twentieth century had to respond both to the reforms of French officials that limited their powers in the elected assemblies and the demands of the black African electorate.

First, *métis* representatives on the General Council protested the budget decree giving the Governor General control over Sénégal's customs revenues. The November 1904 meeting of the assembly turned into a contentious debate between the councilors and Guy, the Governor of Sénégal, over the budget reform. The councilors initially refused to vote on the budget proposed by the administration even though the Governor General asserted that the budget would be passed in his private council regardless of their decision. As president of the body, Theodore Carpot expressed the council's objections to the Governor of Sénégal and threatened to bring the issue before the *Conseil d'Etat*.[63] François Carpot used his leverage as Sénégal's representative in Paris to voice their opposition to the Minister of Colonies. Hyacinthe and François Devès and even Jules Couchard, their former opponent, joined in the protest against the new budget decree.[64] Although the issue provoked passionate debate within the assembly, the councilors

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[62] The group began as a voluntary association called the Aurore de Saint Louis that was founded to discuss intellectual issues, put on plays, hold French sporting events and provide a social network for the urban educated elite. See Johnson's discussion of the role of this group in, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 149-153.

[63] "President du Conseil Generale Th. Carpot à President Conseils Generaux," Saint Louis 21 November 1904 ANS 4E6, #10.

[64] "Lt. Governeur à M. Gouverneur Generale A.O.F.," Saint Louis 21 November 1904, *ANS* 4E6, #27.

reached a compromise in order to maintain good relations with French officials. The meeting ended, according to Guy, "without incident for the administration."[65]

During this period, the Devès brothers began to re-assert the family's reputation as an oppositional force in the colony. They came under greater scrutiny by the administration for their actions in Mauritania and their efforts to regain power through the electoral institutions. In a 1905 meeting of the General Council, Hyacinthe Devès introduced a motion to criticize the government for its policies of "pacification" in Mauritania.[66] He also became more actively involved in cases involving African defendants in customary courts. At the same time, Justin Devès reasserted his leadership by mobilizing black voters in the town. In July 1906, he presented a petition of two thousand voters that denounced Roume's reforms and his plans to eliminate the General Council. The group declared that the creation of a Colonial Council ignored the voting privileges of "*indigènes citoyens français*," and would eventually lead to the abolition of their privileges.[67] Guy responded to this act by addressing a similar petition to Roume in support of the new assembly. He boasted having obtained the signatures of "the principal representatives of the colony," including Theodore Carpot, Jules Couchard, Louis

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[65] "Telegram Lt. Gouverneur à Gouverneur Generale A.O.F.," Saint Louis 30 November 1904, *ANS* 4E6, #48

[66] In this session the councilors voted to denounce the recent assassination of Coppalani, the architect of conquest in Mauritania. Hyacinthe Devès used the occasion to introduce a proposal criticizing the government for "excess of power," in their policies in Mauritania. "Lt. Gouverneur Sénégal to Gouverner Genrale A.O.F.," Saint Louis 28 May 1905 *ANS* 4E6, #68.

[67] The meeting was held in the building of "citizen Hamet Gueye." "Ordre du Jour, les members du Bureau Justin Devès, Pierre Chimere, Jaques Blondin," Saint Louis 29 July 1906 *ANS* 4E6, #86.

Descemet and Leopold Angrand. According to the report, H. Devès, G. Crespin and Huchard declared their "hostility" to the project while Guillabert remained neutral. [68]

By April 1907, the Devès brothers were being closely monitored by the administration because of the support they held with the Trarza in Mauritania and with the black electorate in the communes.[69] This set the stage for the Devès family to reassert their position as an opposition group and regain their role as the dominant leaders of urban politics. Although the Descemet group recruited black African representatives for their list of candidates in the 1904 Municipal Council elections, Justin Devès appealed directly to the black African electorate.[70] He built his constituency around the masses of Muslim residents in the fishing villages of Guet Ndar and developed stronger relations with the *Jeunes Sénégalais*. On July 4, 1909 Justin Devès and his list of eight black, six *métis* and six European candidates won the Municipal Council elections for Saint Louis. In so doing they defeated the doyen of Saint Louis politics and the mayor of the town, Louis Descemet.[71]

In 1910, the Devès family had regained their dominant position in urban politics. At the same time, however, the Devès conflict with the administration intensified. As

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[68] This letter was an effort to counter the efforts of H. Devès and J. Devès to mobilize support against the administration. The report states that François Carpot and François Devès were both absent and therefore did not vote. It also mentions that Descemet and his allies signed in support of the governor's petition along with the signatures of certain "notables indigenes," in Saint Louis as well as the mayors of the other communes and representatives of French commerce. See Lt. Gouverneur du Sénégal à M. Gouverneur General de l'A.O.F." Saint Louis 15 August, 1906, *ANS* 4E6, #109.

[69] "Territoire Civil de la Mauritanie à Gouverneur General A.O.F." Saint Louis 3 April 1907, *ANS* GG AOF.

[70] Descemet and Guillabert recruited the black Catholic notable, Pierre Chimere to join their list. Zuccarelli, *La vie politique Sénégalaise*, 90.

[71] Devès won this election in part because he protested the results of the May 1908 Municipal Council elections in which the majority of registered black voters were struck from the list because of a decision by Sénégal's judiciary to deny black commune residents the right to vote. The Conseil d'Etat sided with Devès and new elections were called for July 4, 1909. Ibid., 89-90.

mayor, Justin Devès provoked French officials by defying their authority and was increasingly viewed as a threat to the colonial order. The administration feared that his influence in Saint Louis would translate into power with African rulers in the Protectorate. Devès also earned a reputation for being an authoritarian administrator who used the office to his advantage by implementing his own policies without regard to French authority. In one case, he reportedly de-segregated a school in Saint Louis by arguing that financial constraints required closing a school reserved for children of Europeans and *assimilés*. This incident caused Peuvergne, the Governor of Sénégal, to accuse him of seeking to implement, "his personal doctrine in matters of democratic equality," by forcing young white girls to attend school with "*indigenés*."[72] Moreover, in the May 1910 meeting of the General Council Devès refused to accompany the Governor to the traditional opening of the annual session. For Peuvergne this constituted an expression of "his desire to completely break relations with the government of the colony."[73]

As a result of these acts, Peuvergne called in an inspector from the Governor General's office in Dakar to investigate Devès' management of the municipality. The inspector found that Devès had created meaningless jobs with inordinate salaries for friends and relatives. The report also accused the mayor of mismanaging funds for the roads and public works department in the commune.[74] Peuvergne corroborated the

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[72] "Lt. Governor à Gouverneur General A.O.F.," Saint Louis 16 April 1910 *ANS* 1Z8, #4.

[73] "Lt. Governor à Justin Devès," Saint Louis 30 May 1910 and "Justin Devès, mayor à Lt. Governor," Saint Louis 2 June 1910 *ANS* 1Z8 #9, #10.

[74]This report launched a number of accusations against Devès. Due to the political climate, it is difficult to discern whether this was a completely accurate report or one intended to oust Devès from power. For more information see "Report by M. Fouque, Inspector of Colonies," 13 June 1910 ANS 1Z8, #23

inspector's findings with reports from his officers in the *cercles* of Dagana, Louga, Thies and Podor that suggested that Devès offered gifts to local rulers, promised to reinstate slavery and even claimed that he possessed powers superior to that of the Governor and Governor General.[75] This led Peuvergne to conclude that, "...Devès always makes himself known by an attitude of haughtiness and gross hostility against the administration...[he] considers himself invested with a new force permitting him to enter most energetically in conflict with the local administration." On July 15, 1910 the governor announced Devès' suspension as mayor and the dissolution of the Municipal Council.[76]

Although French officials succeeded in removing Devès from office, he continued to seek power through the electoral institutions. He protested his dismissal and the dissolution of the Municipal Council with the *Conseil d'Etat.* While Devès lost the case, he won re-election as mayor in 1911 and 1912 by popular vote. The electoral campaigns of this period signaled a shift in the political coalitions formed among the second generation of metis representatives at the turn of the century. Justin Devès challenged the Carpot brothers for control of the General Council and the legislative position. In 1914, Devès succeeded in wresting control of the General from his one time ally, Theodore Carpot.

Following his victory in the General Council, Justin Devès turned his attention towards the deputy race. In the 1914 legislative election Devès promoted Henri Heimburger, a European candidate, for the position. A young black African candidate

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[75] "Telegram, Governor to Administrators," *ANS* 1Z8, #25

[76] "Telegram Lt. Governor Sénégal à Gouverneur General A.O.F.," Saint Louis 13 July 1910 and "Telegram" July 15 1910 *ANS* 1Z8, #30, #31.

named, Blaise Diagne, presented the greatest challenge to both the incumbent, François Carpot, and his challenger, Justin Devès. A Catholic who learned about commune politics firsthand from his *métis* mentor Adolphe Crespin, Digane entered the electoral arena at a crucial moment in the history of urban Sénégal.[77] He represented the young black urban elite who wanted a candidate that would fight to secure their citizenship rights and become a leader for their generation. On May 9, 1914 after the second round of elections, Blaise Diagne became Sénégal's first black African representative to the National Assembly.[78]

Justin Devès died on June 22, 1916 ending the prominence of the Devès family in urban politics. While French officials succeeded in discrediting the former mayor and diminishing the influence the Devès group, the Saint Louis community did not forget the role that he played in their society. In a meeting of the Saint Louis Municipal Council on August 26, 1916 representatives of all of the popular neighborhoods in the town introduced a proposal to erect a monument in honor of the deceased mayor who they described as "having done a lot of good for the *indigènes*."[79] Although the administration ultimately denied the councilors request, he was remembered as one of the most powerful members of the Saint Louis community who, like other *métis* men and women of his

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[77]Blaise Diagne was born in 1872. His mother came from Lebou and Afro-Portugese origins. His father was Serrer. Adolphe Crespin brought Diagne into his Saint Louis household, sponsored his education in the Brother's school and the Secondary School in Saint Louis and followed the young Diagne's career as a customs officer in various regions of the French empire. Much is known of Blaise Diange's story, however, his correspondence to "Oncle Adolphe," as well as Charlotte Crespin and Louis Guillabert testifies of his relationship to the *métis* elite of Saint Louis in this period. "Mon cher President," 29 Septembre 1916 ANS 1Z129, #1 and "Ma cher Charlotte," Paris 11 Mars 1933 (courtesy Georges Crespin, Paris, France) For Diagne's biography see Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 154-159.

[78] For more on the election results see Zuccarelli, *La vie politique Sénégalaise*, 110-111.

[79] "Extrait de la Deliberation du Conseil Municipal, 26 Aout 1916," ANS 1Z11, #9.

generation, embraced the ideals of the French republic and contributed to the growth of a dynamic political culture in Saint Louis.

While François Carpot's defeat in the 1914 deputy election and the death of Justin Devès two years later signaled an eclipse of *métis* dominance in urban politics, they continued to maintain their influence through the electoral institutions. Louis Guillabert, a *métis* representative with ties to Louis Descemet, succeeded Justin Devès as president of the General Council. He became a close supporter of Blaise Diange and joined his coalition in electoral politics. In 1916, after Diagne succeeded in gaining passage of legislation solidifying the citizenship rights of the black urban population in return for their joining French forces in World War I, he called upon Guillabert to encourage, "blacks, mulattos, and Europeans," to work together to achieve their common objectives after the war.[80]

François Devès continued to run the family's business affairs and remained active in electoral politics. He represented the family's coalition on the General Council following the death of his two older brothers. In his capacity as a representative and established businessman, François Devès used his connections to solicit contributions from his business associates for a reception to welcome Sénégalese soldiers upon their return home from the war.[81] In this way, both Guillabert and Devès remained engaged in urban politics. Their activities show that even after loosing the legislative elections in

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[80] Blaise Diagne, Deputy of Sénégal to Louis Guillabert, President of the Conseil Colonial of Sénégal," 29 September 1916 *ANS* 1Z129, #1.

[81] In a letter concerning a transaction for guineas, H.J. Ankersmit in Antwerp informed Devès' that he was sending a contribution of 1,000 francs towards a reception honoring the Senegalese soldiers who participated in the war. "Ankersmit and Co. to M. François Devès Conseiller Generale, Saint Louis, Sénégal," 28 February 1919, *ANS* 1Z11, #32.

1914 *métis* representatives continued to play a leadership role in electoral politics by responding to issues of concern to black African voters in the towns.

French officials finally achieved their objective of eliminating the General] Council in 1920. With the closure of the war, the Ministry of Colonies turned its attentions to the proposals put forth by the Governor General's office for the creation of a Colonial Council. In 1920, Governor General Merlin, the former political affairs director in Sénégal under Henri de Lamothe in the 1890s, succeeded in gaining approval from the colonial ministry to dissolve the General Council and replace it with a much less powerful assembly.

The new Colonial Council was comprised of forty-four members representing the towns and the Protectorate. Citizens of the communes elected eighteen representatives to the new assembly while the favored *chefs du canton* and *chefs du province* of the various regions chose twenty-six members to represent their interests. The make-up of the new council shifted the balance of power in the electoral institutions. The Colonial Council gave greater representation to subjects in the protectorate over commune citizens. Moreover, appointed chiefs generally voted as instructed by the administration. In this respect, French officials achieved their goal of suppressing the power of the General Council and eliminating the interference of urban representatives in the affairs of the colony.[82]

Although the electoral institutions and the *métis* representatives who were actively engaged in urban politics during the late nineteenth century no longer held the position they once had in the colony, members of the mixed race population continued to

[82] Morgenthau, *Political Parties in French-Speaking West Africa*, 127.

champion their belief in the Republic and France's duty to spread democracy in the colony. On October 11, 1921 Louis Guillabert, the president of the newly created Colonial Council, gave a speech honoring the visit of the Minister of Colonies, Albert Sarraut, to Sénégal. He referred to the long tradition of republicanism in Saint Louis and called on the administration to make more efforts to extend democratic rights and privileges to all inhabitants on the colony in the following statement:

> In this forum as before *Monsieur le Ministre* you will find men entirely devoted to the Mother Country having profound attachments in the colony. Some are of pure race of this country while others are their brothers in race, sons of the first Frenchmen who planted the venerable flag here...several Europeans of democratic sentiments have come to join these men who think that freedom can even spread to West Africa and who generously defend without other motives and sometimes against their personal interests, the democracy of this country... how can one apply a policy of association and uplift if at each step that he takes the *indigène* finds himself lowered four ranks under the pretext that he is Sénégalese.[83]

Although the economic, social and political landscape in Sénégal had changed significantly by 1920, *métis* men and women continued to define themselves and their role in the colony in terms of the universal values proclaimed by the French Republic.

[83]"Discours prononce par M.H.L. Guillabert, Président du Conseil Colonial du Sénégal à M. Albert Sarraut, Ministre des Colonies," 11 Octobre 1921 ANS 1Z129, #2.

Conclusion

By the turn of the twentieth century, the *métis* population of Sénégal increasingly called themselves "children of the country," and rallied around the slogan "Sénégal for the Sénégalese."[1] These terms held particular significance for this mixed race group because it emphasized their ties to the land of their birth and their solidarity with the larger African population at a moment when French colonialism was gaining momentum. This dissertation has examined the society and identity created by people of mixed racial ancestry in Sénégal and their responses to French rule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The *métis* population of Saint Louis emerged as part of the eighteenth and nineteenth century world of Atlantic commerce. They were the sons and daughters of African women and French men who came into contact with one another at the intersection of Africa and the Atlantic world. Consequently, their story embodies the inherent contradiction between the ideals of French republicanism and the realities of imperialism.

This study has contributed to a greater understanding of the relationship between colonialism, urban politics and identity construction for the French educated and republican minded citizens of Sénégal's coastal towns. Chapter one places this study

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[1]The slogan "*Sénégal aux Sénégalais*," was used as a rallying cry in the 1897 disturbance following Minster André Lebon's visit to Saint Louis and was repeated by observers in the twentieth century. The young "mulattos" of the town were referred to as "*enfants du Sénégal*," in the Parish bulletin at this time and the term, "people of Sénégal," appears more frequently in public discourse and in official reports. While we do not know when the term *enfants du pays* or children of the country came into popular usage in Saint Louis, Peter Mark notes that the word *filhos de terra* meaning sons of the land was used to refer to the mixed race children of Portuguese and African descent on the southern coast of Sénégal in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. On the report of the 1897 incident in *Le Temps* see Manchuelle, "*Métis* et colons," p. 499; For use of the term "enfants du Sénégal" See, "Pages d'histoire 20 July 1907," *UNIR: Echo de Saint Louis* and "Allocution présentée par Georges Crespin," Février 1912 courtesy Georges Crespin, Paris, France. For more on this term among Luso-Africans see Peter Mark, *'Portuguese' Style and Luso-African Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 14. See Chapter six above for more on *métis* representatives as defenders of Sénégalese interests in the late nineteenth century.

within the context of the current scholarship on this subject. This chapter suggests that in order to fully understand the role of urban residents in the colonial period we must read the official record against oral histories, private archival sources and evidence of material culture. In using this approach to examine the history of *métis* men and women in colonial Sénégal we can better understand the complex strategies that they developed to maintain their position and wield significant influence in the colony.

Colonialism in Sénégal developed over the course of the nineteenth century. It unfolded as a process of negotiation and contestation between local inhabitants and colonial officials. The electoral institutions established by the French regime facilitated this interaction. As chapter two shows the notion of republicanism accompanied French colonialism in Sénégal from the late eighteenth century. Despite the political changes in early nineteenth century France, the practice of upholding republican principles in the coastal enclaves through electoral institutions provided a space for the Third Republic to expand democratic rights and privileges to residents of the towns. In this way, Paris created the structures that allowed urban residents with the right credentials to organize and assert their interests at the highest levels of French authority. As a result, the late nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a form of civil society within the colony. Members of the mixed race population seized this opportunity by establishing themselves as leaders of the civic community in late nineteenth century Saint Louis.

The foundations of the *métis* population lie in their connection to Atlantic commerce. They were born within the context of the slave and legitimate trades of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. As a result, the emergence of this group and their elite socio-economic status stemmed from in their role as intermediaries in colonial

commerce. Historians have pointed out the disastrous affects that the restructuring of the colonial economy in the mid-nineteenth century had on the merchant community in Saint Louis. The decline in the gum trade, the advent of the Second Republic that abolished slavery and the concerted efforts of the Bordeaux firms to break *métis* monopoly on the intermediary niche in the colonial economy had a severe affect on this population.

A closer examination of the strategies employed by *métis* traders in this era, however, show that this group adjusted to the changing environment by consolidating their wealth and operating on the frontiers of the expanding colony. As described in chapter three, the most successful *métis* merchants shifted their investments to the peanut basin and capitalized on their intimate knowledge of people and places in the region to establish themselves as the primary creditors and traders in these strategic locations. Further study of inheritance settlements and property records after 1850 will provide greater insight into the impact of the economic crisis on *métis* wealth as well as the nature of class stratification within this group in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In addition to the economic foundations of the *métis* population in Saint Louis, the institution of marriage served as the primary means of solidifying membership in the group. Choosing the right marriage partner involved a negotiation over the social capital of the family. The right match rested on the honorable reputation of both families and the economic resources each could bring to the union. In addition, the Church played a central role in the formation of *métis* identity and their sense of community in the late nineteenth century. Affiliation with the Church and stricter adherence to its moral teachings and religious practices distinguished *métis* families from the majority Muslim residents of the town and also solidified their status as an assimilated group.

The discussion of marriage practices in chapter five shows that after 1850 *métis* men and women had a greater tendency to adopt marriages sanctioned by the Catholic Church and recognized under French civil law. After this period the majority rejected *mariage à la mode du pays* which more closely followed Wolof tradition. This transition illustrates a desire by *métis* men and women to adhere to the principles of cultural assimilation to France. Marriage in the Church and according French civil law reaffirmed their status as citizens of the Republic and allowed the *métis* population to maintain their distinctive position within the colony.

The material expressions of this group offer insight into the ways in which *métis* men and women articulated their identity in late nineteenth century Sénégal. In choosing to adorn themselves in the latest European fashions, to drink French wine and acquire bourgeois furnishings for their homes, they defined themselves as middle class citizens. The material goods acquired by *métis* families further indicate that they were as familiar with the most cosmopolitan centers of metropolitan France as they were with regions far into the interior of West Africa. By their appearance, *métis* traders and representatives demonstrated their close association with French authority. Although photographs of men and women in this era offer information on their public image, we know less about their private appearance. A closer examination of portrait photographs, their dress and inheritance records detailing their possessions in the late nineteenth century may reveal that the *métis* in Sénégal also incorporated African elements in their dress, cuisine or architectural styles.

In examining the educational path of the *métis* population, their professional choices and their associational ties in the late nineteenth century, this dissertation has

shed new light on the class status of this group and the ideological positions of its members. Chapter five examined the educational strategies developed by *métis* families in the second half of the nineteenth century. The generation that came of age in the 1860s and 1870s pursued avenues for higher education as a means of gaining employment in the colonial bureaucracy or in the liberal professions. Government sponsored scholarships provided a key mechanism for acquiring the appropriate academic and social credentials to enter into these positions.

Obtaining degrees in law and medicine from the most prestigious schools in France not only afforded some members of the group the opportunity to pursue professional careers but also bolstered their authority in electoral politics. The organizational affiliations and ideological positions adopted by *métis* individuals further contributed to the formation of competing coalitions and solidified their reputation in electoral politics. In entering into contemporary debates over the Republic and its colonies, *métis* representatives defined their political agenda and negotiated their relationship to the colonial administration. This suggests that by turning to electoral politics, the *métis* population adopted successful strategies to weather the financial difficulties of the mid-nineteenth century and strengthen their role as power-brokers in the colony.

In the 1870s and the 1880s, the mixed race population in Sénégal's towns confronted a rapidly changing political environment as well as new opportunities to assert their interests with colonial officials. The emergence of the Third Republic at the same time that France embarked on a new phase of imperialism presented the French administration with the challenge of advocating the principles of republicanism in

Sénégal while enforcing colonial domination. The *métis* population in the late nineteenth century embodied this contradiction. Leaders of the Saint Louis community seized the momentum of the new regime to gain more electoral rights and privileges. In so doing, they used the republican institutions in ways that complicated the process of enforcing French rule. Their actions also indicated to the administration that this group could command significant influence with African residents of the colony as well as with influential leaders in Bordeaux and Paris.

Study of the different electoral coalitions formed by *métis* representatives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century shows that while part of a unique community, the *métis* did not form a monolithic bloc in the political arena. Chapter six and seven argue that their ideological positions as well as their sense of independence from the administration and the Bordeaux monopoly firms determined, to some extent, their role in politics. Despite their positions as leaders of various interest groups, at strategic moments, *métis* representatives demonstrated their ability to break with French authority. Descemet's meeting with the deposed ruler of Futa Toro in 1886 while on a trade mission for the administration and Devès' interference in the aftermath of the 1891 assassination of a colonial officer reveal the problem that these representatives posed for French officials seeking to maintain order in the colony.

Although the administration's attempts to suppress the influence of the leading families succeeded in the short term, by the late 1890s, *métis* representatives adopted new strategies to solidify their power and assert their interests in the colony. The attacks by Governors Clément-Thomas, de Lamothe and Chaudié on the *Devès* family as well as the dissolution of the Bank of Sénégal and their overt interference in commune elections

weakened the position of *métis* community. In response to this changing environment, métis representatives created new alliances with one another and promoted greater solidarity in the electoral arena. François Carpot's victory in the 1902 deputy race and the formation of new coalitions on the General Council represented a victory for *métis* representatives by solidifying their control of electoral politics at the turn of the century.

At the same time, the second generation of *métis* found themselves increasingly confronted with the realities of racial discrimination and the consolidation of French rule in twentieth century Sénégal. The General Council, in particular, continued to plague colonial officials in the twentieth century. The contest over the existence of these institutions and protests over maintaining their coveted rights as citizens illustrates the resiliency of the *métis* population and the challenge that their activities posed to the administration. The anti-French position of the Devès brothers in the early 1900s and their ability to mobilize support among Bidan merchants and rulers in Mauritania as well as among the black electorate in the towns illustrated to colonial officials the extent to which they could oppose French authority in the region. As a result, the administration relied on established tactics of interfering in the electoral process, bringing in independent inspectors, and discrediting the Devès family in order to eliminate their influence in urban politics and prevent their interference in colonial affairs.

This dissertation concludes in 1920 when Dakar finally gained approval from the colonial ministry in Paris to dissolve the most powerful of the local electoral institutions. The closure of the General Council and the creation of the new Colonial Council marked an important turning point in the political and social history of the Saint Louis community. For the *métis* population, in particular, this moment represented the end of

one of their most esteemed institutions and eliminated their main avenue for wielding power within the colony. The closure of the General Council was the culmination of a long period of contestation that tested the limits of republicanism in colonial Senegal. In giving greater representation to appointed representatives from the Protectorate over elected residents from the towns, the colonial administration effectively limited urban influence in colonial affairs. The residents of Saint Louis, however, remained active in electoral politics and continued to champion their rights as citizens in the colony. As this study has shown the activities of *métis* men and women and the strategies that they created to maintain power in the colony had a lasting impact on the formation of democratic politics in Sénégal and the development of the country's political culture in the post-colonial period.

APPENDIX A

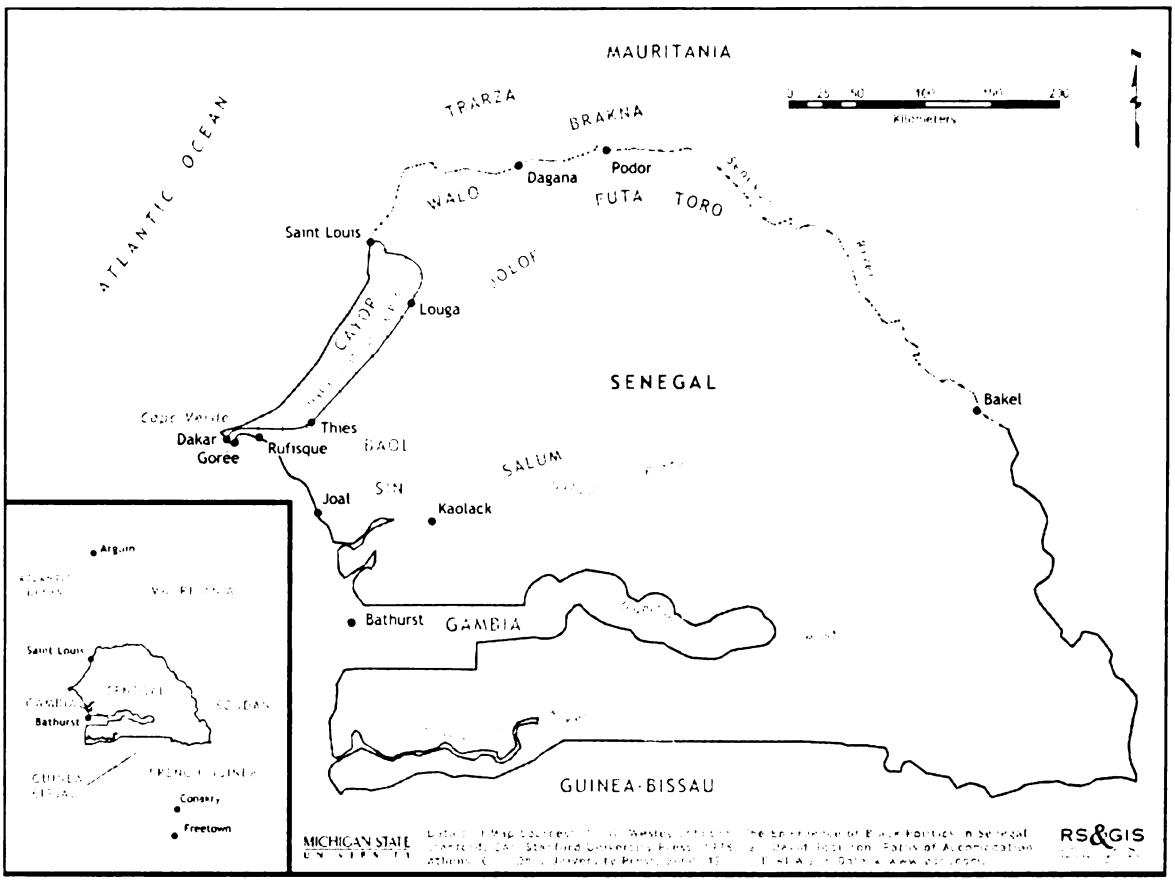
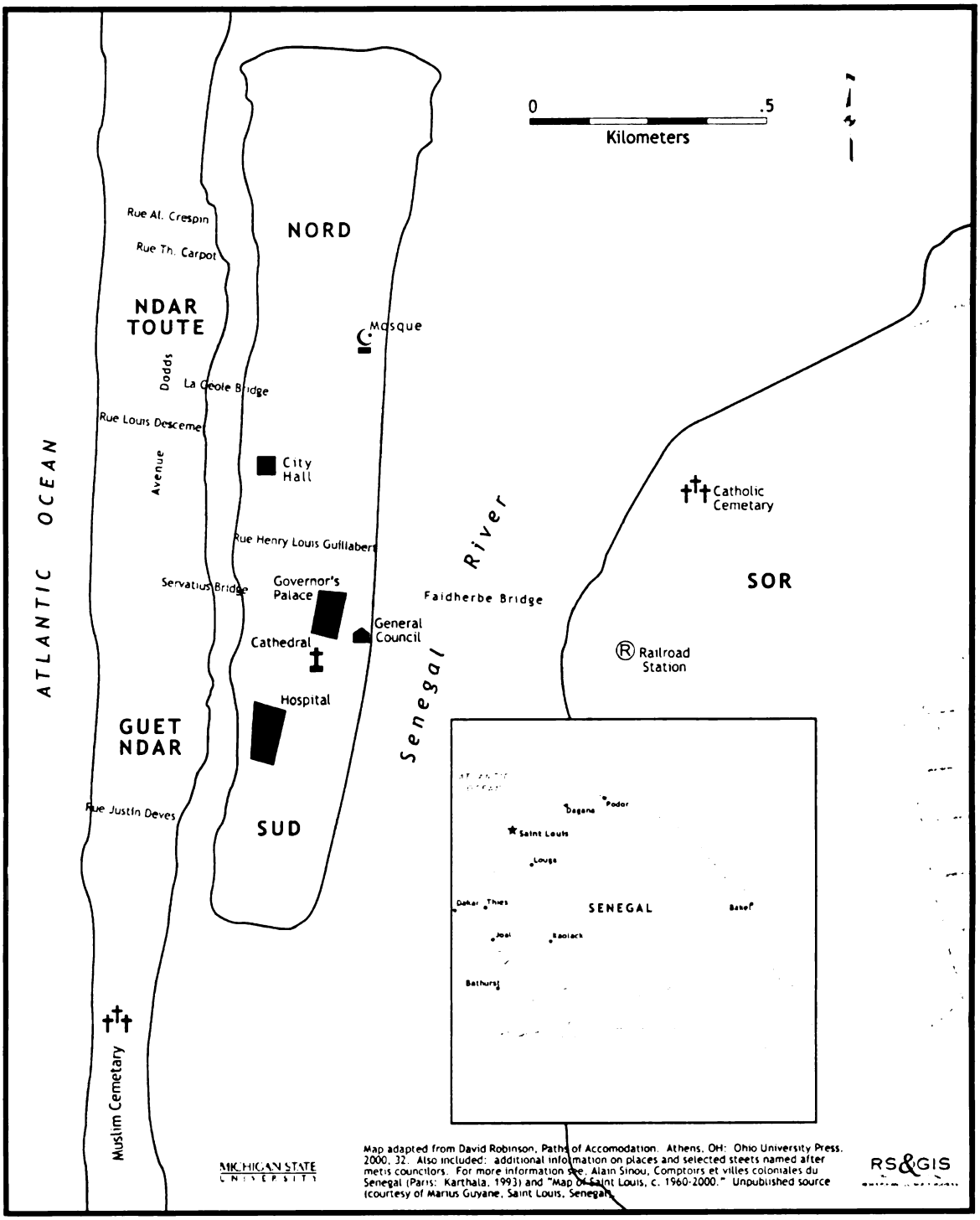


Figure 1: Senegal and Neighboring Regions, c. 1880 - 1920



Map adapted from David Robinson, Paths of Accomodation. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000, 32. Also included: additional information on places and selected streets named after metis councilors. For more information see, Alain Sinou, Comptoirs et villes coloniales du Senegal (Paris: Karthala, 1993) and "Map of Saint Louis, c. 1960-2000." Unpublished source (courtesy of Marius Guyane, Saint Louis, Senegal).

Figure 2: Saint Louis at the End of the Nineteenth Century

APPENDIX B

Family Profiles[1]

Alin- Jean Jacques Alin (called "l'Antillais") was a military officer and native of Martinique who came to Sénégal in 1799 to enforce anti-slavery legislation enacted in the aftermath of the French Revolution. He settled in Sénégal, married a *signare*, entered the gum trade and was elected mayor of the capital (1829-1848). Two of their daughters, Charlotte Alain and Louison Alin, married two Crespin brothers, Joseph "Dio" and Germain. A son of Joseph Crespin and Charlotte Alain, named Jean Jacques Alain Crespin became a distinguished political figure and lawyer in the nineteenth century. See J.J. Crespin (1837-1895) below.

Angrand- One of the principal *métis* families of Gorée, the Angrands trace their lineage to a French trader who married a young woman of mixed racial ancestry named Hélène de Saint Jean. In the 1880s, members of this family were employed as a commercial representative for Maurel and Prom and as civil servants in the colonial administration. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, Léopold Angrand became a leader in Gorée politics and forged ties with the Devès group. He married Madeleine Diouf and had seven children of which Armand and Joseph became influential members of the party, the *Jeunes Sénégalais*. The Angrands like the Devès developed a reputation for their support of Sénégalese rights.

Carpot- In the mid-nineteenth century Pierre Carpot, a military officer from Saint Louis, married Sophie Valantin, the daughter of a *métis habitant*. Three of their sons pursued higher education in France and became important political leaders in commune politics. The eldest, Theodore, was a commercial representative who served on the General council and was president of the assembly from 1902-1914. Charles completed medical school in France and became director of the Civil Hospital in Saint Louis. François Carpot graduated from the prestigious law school in Paris and practiced in France before returning to Sénégal in the 1880s. In 1902, he succeeded in winning the deputy election and remained Sénégal's representative to Paris until 1914. The Carpot brothers were related to most of the *métis* families of Saint Louis. Specifically, Charles Carpot married Henriette Descemet, the daughter of Louis Descemet and Adelaide Duchesne. François Carpot married Marguerite Teisseire who may have been related to the Teisseire family below. Politically, the Carpot brothers formed alliances with both the Devès and the Descemet coalitions at key moments in the 1890s and 1900s.

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[1] The profiles are of selected families in late nineteenth century Sénégal. These biographical sketches are comprised from a variety of sources. The principal secondary references are Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*; Idowu, "Café au Lait: Sénégal's Mulatto Community,"; Zuccarelli, *La vie politique Sénégalaise*; Natalie Reyss, "Saint Louis du Sénégal," and Sylvain Sankale, "A la mode du Pays...Chroniques Saint Louisiennes." The primary sources used include, Guillaume Guillabert, "Arbre genealogique des familles Descemet-Guilllabert;" "La famille d'Erneville," (courtesy Yves d'Erneville); "Liste de descendance de Benjamin Crespin," (courtesy, Georges Crespin); Notarized Documents Saint Louis, Sénégal, 1881 *ANS* and Gorée, Sénégal, 1880 *ANS* 1Z107.

Crespins- This family traces their origins to Benjamin Crespin (1760-1811), a merchant from Nantes who came to Sénégal in the late eighteenth century. He had eight children with *signare* Caty Wilcook and three with Khayta Macoumba Leye. Over time, the family came to be related to the Duchesne, d'Erneville, Alin, Armstrong, Alsace, Holle, Descemet, Carpot, Devès, Berteloot, Valantin and Guillabert families. The Crespins became noted *habitants* and gum traders in the first half of the nineteenth century. Future generations became specialists in law. Jean Jacques "Alain" Crespin (1837-1895) became a major figure in late nineteenth century Sénégal. A noted liberal republican, J.J. Crespin began his career in the colonial administration serving in the Southern Rivers region. He married Hannah Issac, the mixed race daughter of a British lord in Bathurst and returned to Saint Louis to become a local lawyer or *conseil commissioné*. In the 1880s and 1890s he launched several campaigns for legislative election. He held key positions on the General Council and Municipal Council. He was elected mayor of Saint Louis in 1891. J.J. Crespin formed an important alliance with Gaspard Devès in the 1880s. The family cemented their ties with the marriage of their children Charlotte Crespin and Hyacinthe Devès in 1889. Future generations also pursued law and politics. His son, lawyer, Georges Crespin served on the General Council and ran for the deputyship in 1914. Other members of the family continued the legal tradition acting as jurists in the Federation of French West Africa and in Sénégal after Independence.

Descemet- Born in Paris in 1771, Pierre Descemet arrived in Sénégal around 1800. He began as a solider then entered the Sénégal River trade and settled in Saint Louis. He married Suzanne Dodds, a *métis* woman and had two children; a daughter, Henriette who married Guillaume Foy, in 1831 and a son, Pierre Jean Marie who married Louise Maurel-Boirard in 1828. Both families became wealthy gum traders and distinguished *habitant*s. Of the children of Pierre Descemet and Louise Maurel-Boirard, Roger Frederic Edouard and Louis Jacques François were among the first to receive scholarships to attend secondary school in France. Roger (1833-1857) attended St. Cyr, a military academy and became an officer in the army. He died in the battle of Medine fighting for the French under Faidherbe. Louis Jacques (1839-1921) finished his studies at lycee de l'Orient, returned to Sénégal and began his career in the administration. Louis Descemet became a secretary to Faidherbe but left the position in the 1860s and later formed a trading company with Omer Teisseire. In 1865, Louis Descemet married Adelaide Duchesne of a prominent *métis* habitant family. A successful trader and politician, he served as president of the General Council from 1879 to 1890. Descmet was also president of the Saint Louis Chamber of Commerce from 1881 to 1889 and mayor of Saint Louis from 1895 to 1911. The Descemets were related to most of the *métis* families in Sénégal including the Sleight, Foy, Devès, Valantin, d'Erneville, Carpot, Guillabert, Bancal, and Brigaud.

Devès- Justin and Bruno Devès, two brothers from Bordeaux, arrived in Sénégal in 1810 during the period of British occupation. They settled in Saint Louis and established a wholesale merchant firm in the colony. Justin Devès became a major force as an import-export dealer and in the mid-nineteenth century led the expansion of peanut exports. The Bordeaux branch of the family formed Devès, Lacoste and Cie in 1850 which became Devès and Chaumet after Justin Devès' death in 1865. Bruno Devès established a family

in Sénégal with a Fulbe woman named Coumbel Aido Ka also called Silvie Bruno. Their son Gaspard Devès was educated in France then returned to Sénégal to form his own commercial enterprise. In 1851, he married Catherine Foy, the daughter of *habitant* merchant Guillaume Foy and Henriette Descemet. Shortly after the birth of their daughter Elisabeth, Catherine Foy died. Gaspard Devès built a highly successful merchant house in the 1850s and 1860s and succeeded in becoming a major force in commune politics with the opening of the Third Republic. Devès children from a second marriage to Magdeleine Tamba Diop, a black African woman from Saint Louis, inherited the firm and continued to manage the family's commercial affairs after Gaspard Devès' death in 1901. Justin, Hyacinthe and François Devès specialized in law at the University of Bordeaux. They held prominent positions in commune politics until 1914. As one of the wealthiest and most politically influential families in the colony, the Devès became leaders in urban politics. They formed political alliances with J.J. Crespin and the Carpot brothers in the 1880s and 1890s. The family also maintained a network of business relationships with various rulers in the interior as well as merchants, politicians and lobbyists in metropolitan France. Durand Valantin, a *métis* trader from Saint Louis, was one of their main associates in commerce in the 1900s. The Devès patron-client networks extended from various rulers among the Traraza Moors to Lat Dior as well as residents of the suburban fishing villages of Guet Ndar and a number of black Catholic residents in Saint Louis. They are related to a number of the Saint Louis *métis* families including the Crespin, Foy, Descemet, and Dumont.

Dodds- this family traces their lineage to John Dodds, an Englishman who settled in Sénégal during the second British occupation. He married Sophie Feuiltaine, a *métis* woman from Saint Louis. In the 1850s several members of the Dodds family entered the river trade in Melacoree, a location for peanut exports in the Southern Rivers region. Others pursued careers in military service or as civil servants in the colonial administration. General Alfred Amédée Dodds (1842-1922), *commandant supérieur des troupes au Sénégal*, participated in the battle of Medine against Umar Tall and led French conquest of the King of Dahomey in 1892. Politically he was linked to Louis Descemet. The Dodds family is related to the Beziat, Armstrong, O'hara and deCoutres families. In 1965, Monsignor Prosper Dodds became the fist Sénégalese to be appointed Apostolic Prefect of the Catholic Church in Saint Louis.

*d'Erneville*s- Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, Charles Jean Baptiste d'Erneville (1752-1792) came to Saint Louis as a military officer in 1780 and married Catherine Miller *a la mode du pays*. In 1788, he was named Governor of Gorée and moved to the island where he established a new household with Hélène Pateloux. The d'Ernevilles were related by marriage to most of the nineteenth century *métis* families including the Valantin, Sleight, Armstrong, Patterson, Alsace, Bancal, O'hara, Turpin, Duchesne, Descemet, Crespin and Andre. They also had strong ties to Bordeaux. Bordeaux merchants Auguste Teisseire, Raymond Martin, and Henri Jay all married d'Erneville women. Future members settled in the city or pursued higher education there. The first generation specialized in the river trade; a few became merchants. The second generation benefited from their ties to Bordeaux, serving as commercial representatives for Bordeaux firms. Others worked in the colonial administration. Leon and Germain d'Erneville were prominent members of

the General council. In the 1890s, Germain "Gino" d'Erneville, an ally of Louis Descemet, was president of Alliance Française in Saint Louis and President of the General Council.

Foy- Guillaume Foy, the son of a Charles Foy and Marie Allemaney N'Diaye, headed this distinguished *habitant* family. He emerged as one of the wealthiest and most influential gum traders in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1831, Guillaume Foy married Henriette Descemet. Their daughter Catherine wed Gaspard Devès in 1851. Guillaume Foy was active in municipal government from 1850 to 1854, serving as mayor and deputy mayor of Saint Louis.

Guillabert- Antoine Guillabert of Marseille arrived in Sénégal after 1820. His first marriage was to *signare* Felicite Bouba. His second marriage was to Helene O'hara, daughter of a *métis habitant*. Of this lineage Augustin Henri "Louis" Guillabert, born in 1866, completed primary education in Saint Louis then continued his studies in Toulouse where he was licensed to practice law. He was named supernumerary in Bordeaux and Paris before returning to Saint Louis where he worked as a clerk with the administration then served as a public notary. Louis Guillabert entered electoral politics in the early twentieth century becoming a member of the General Council. He served as this assembly's last president (1916-1918) and the first president of the Colonial Council (1921-1923). He married Suzanne Descemet, the daughter or Louis Descemet in 1877. His family continued the tradition serving in government and national politics after Independence.

Huchard- The Huchard family traces their origins to Gorée. Louis Huchard gained notoriety in commune politics in the 1890s and early 1900s. Born to a *métis* family on Gorée in 1859, Huchard became a lawyer then founded a journal called, *L'Afrique Occidentale* in 1890. The monthly newspaper was known for defending Sénégalese rights. Huchard settled in Dakar where he was able to gain support among the Lebou population of Cap-Vert. In the late 1890s he joined the Devès group as part of their coalition in the General Council.

Teisseire- Auguste Teisseire arrived in Sénégal from Bordeaux in 1830. He settled in Saint Louis and married Marianne d'Erneville, the daughter of a notable *métis* family in 1836. He began as an exporter of birds, feathers, and other goods acquired in the Sénégal River trade and established a reputation as a leading wholesale dealer. In 1870 a son, Albert Teisseire, merged the family business with another Bordeaux firm belonging to his father-in-law, J. Buhan. Like other metropolitan merchant firms, Buhan and Teisseire capitalized on the changing economy in peanuts. Albert Teisseire campaigned for the deputy election in 1871 as a candidate of the Descemet group. Successive members of the Teisseire family also participated in electoral politics in the twentieth century.

Valantin- Barthelemy Valantin, a merchant from Marseille came to Sénégal in 1801. He married *signare* Rosalie Aussenac. Born in 1804, their son Durand Valantin studied in Marseille then returned to Sénégal and joined his brother François in the gum trade. They

established one of the most successful trading houses in Saint Louis. Durand Valantin became a public notary. As a notable *habitant* he served on the General Council when it was founded in 1840 and was elected the first deputy from Sénégal during the Second Republic (1848-1851). He married Angelique Feuilltaine, the *métis* daughter of a *habitant* family from Saint Louis. François Valantin married Marie de Saint Jean, of a distinguished *métis* family from Gorée. In the 1860s and 1870s several members of the Valantin family entered the peanut trade in Gambia and Sierra Leone serving as agents for Maurel and Prom. Future generations filled key positions as diplomats, financiers, and politicians in national government after Independence. They are related to the Carpot, Descemet, Guillabert, Crespin, Dodds, Guillabert, and d'Erneville families.

APPENDIX C

Figure 1
Carpot Family

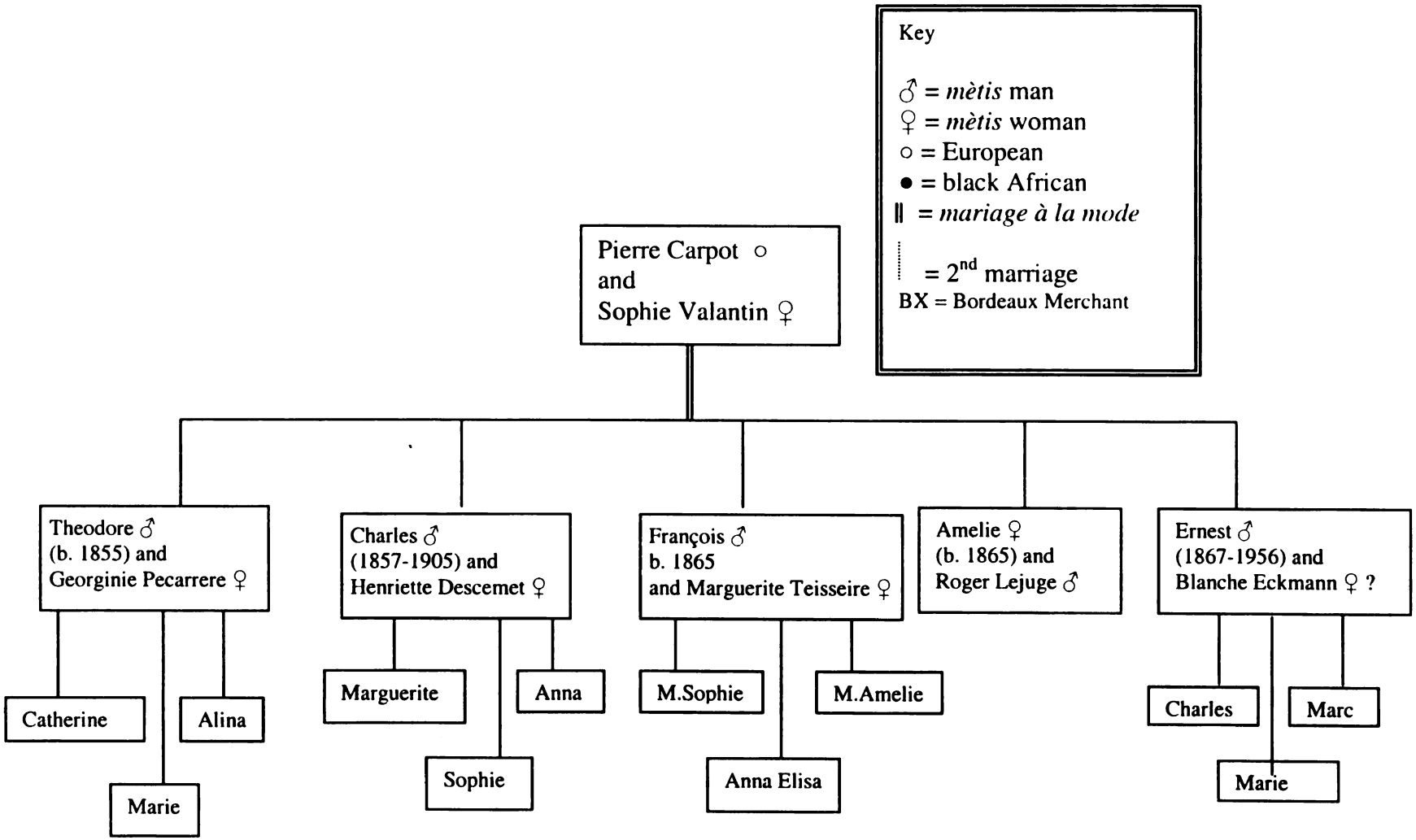
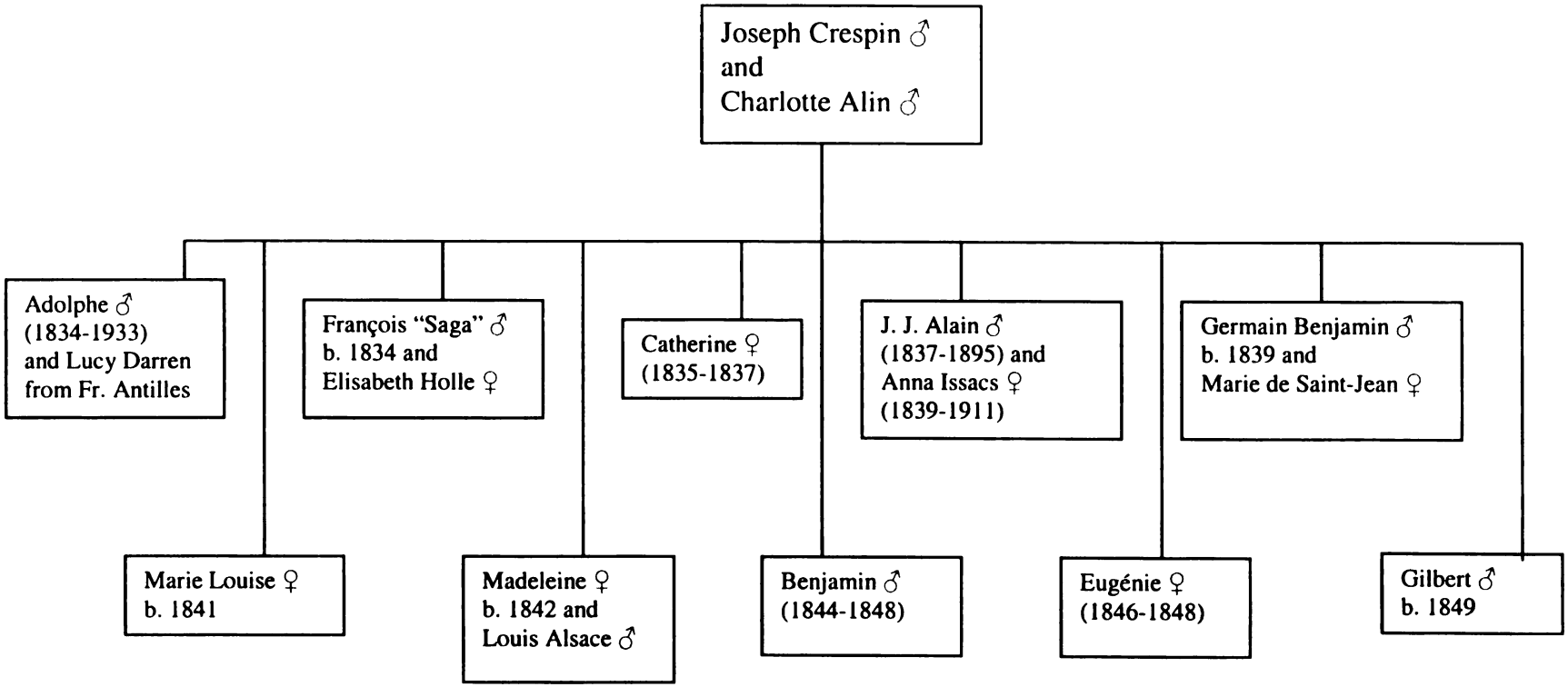


Figure 2
Crespin Family



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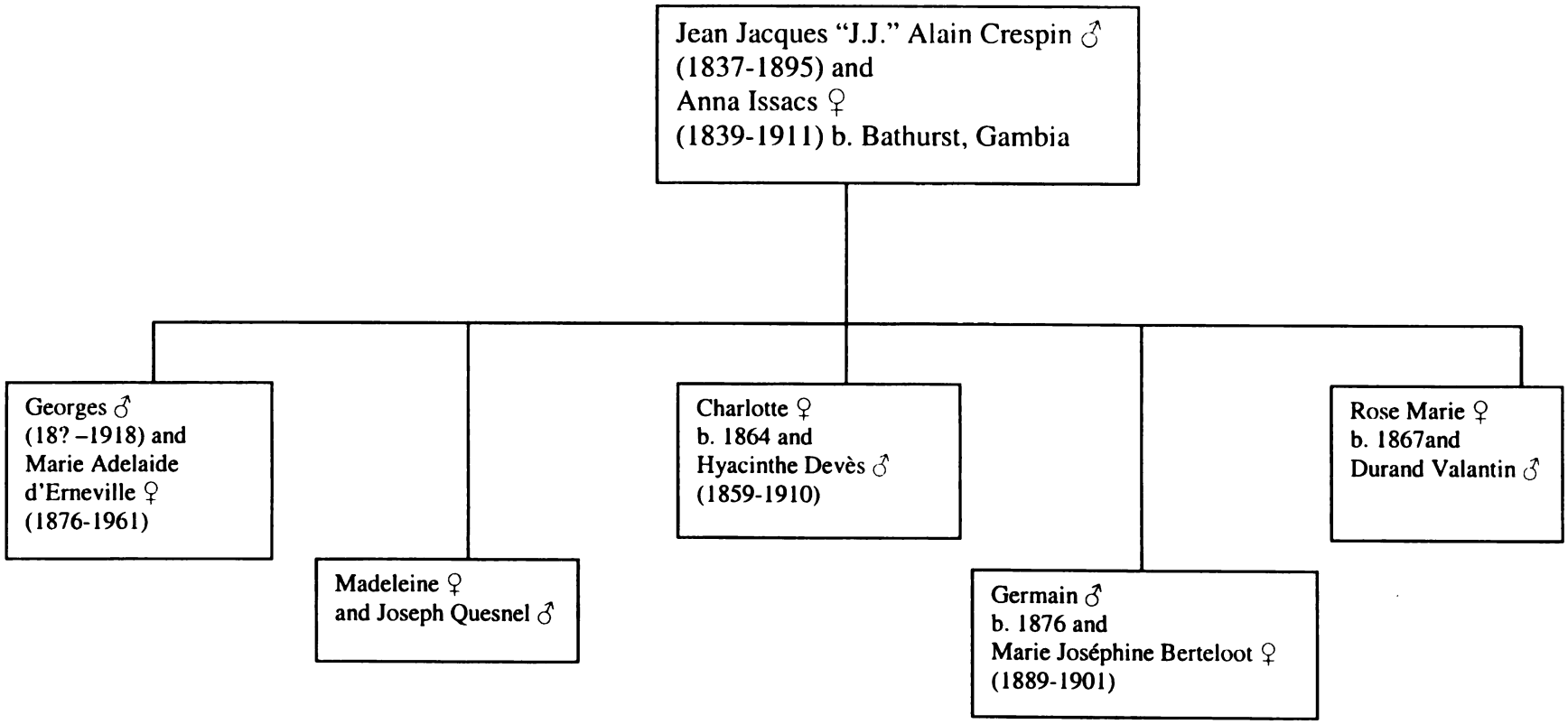
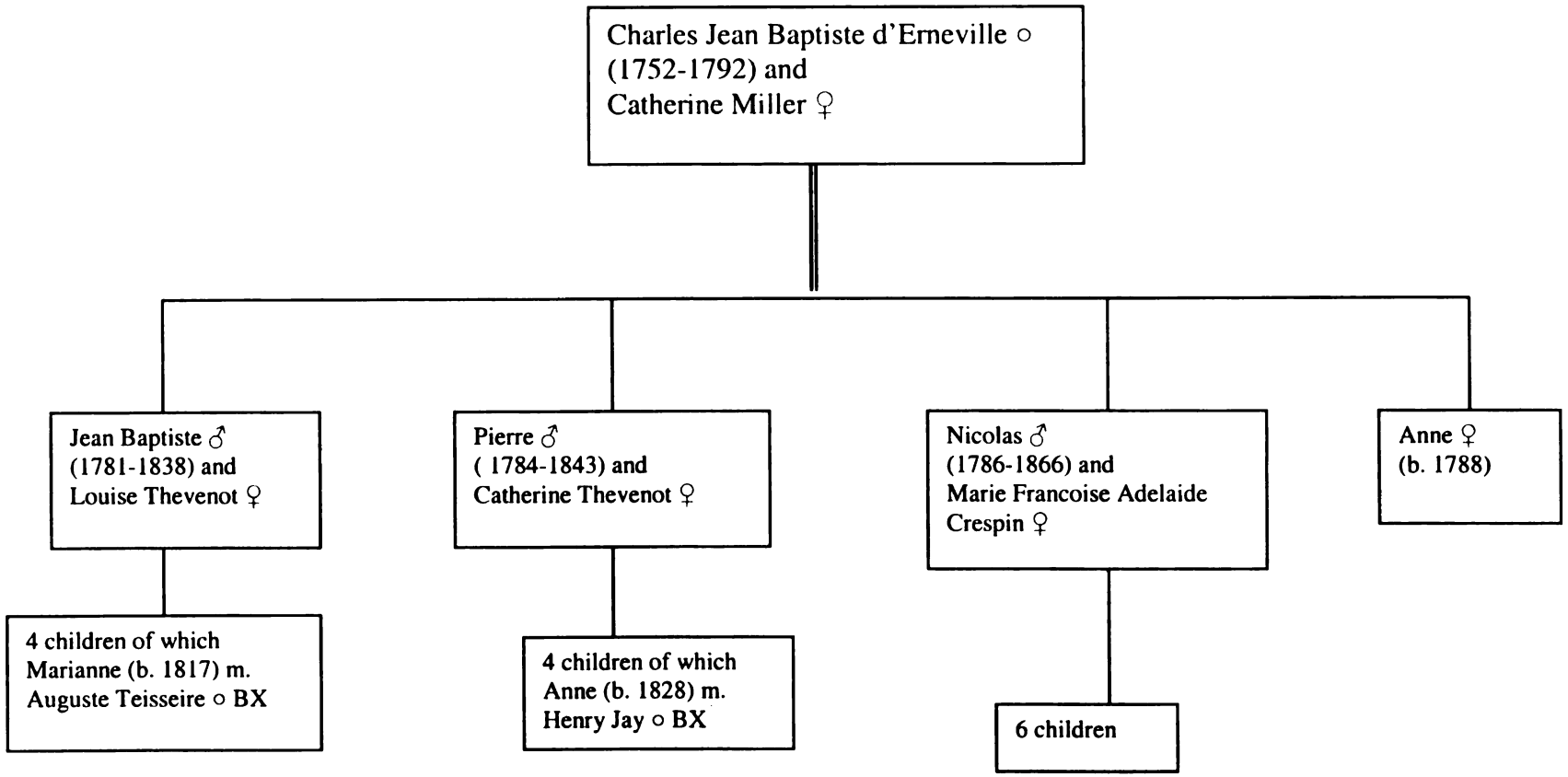


Figure 3
D'Erneville Family



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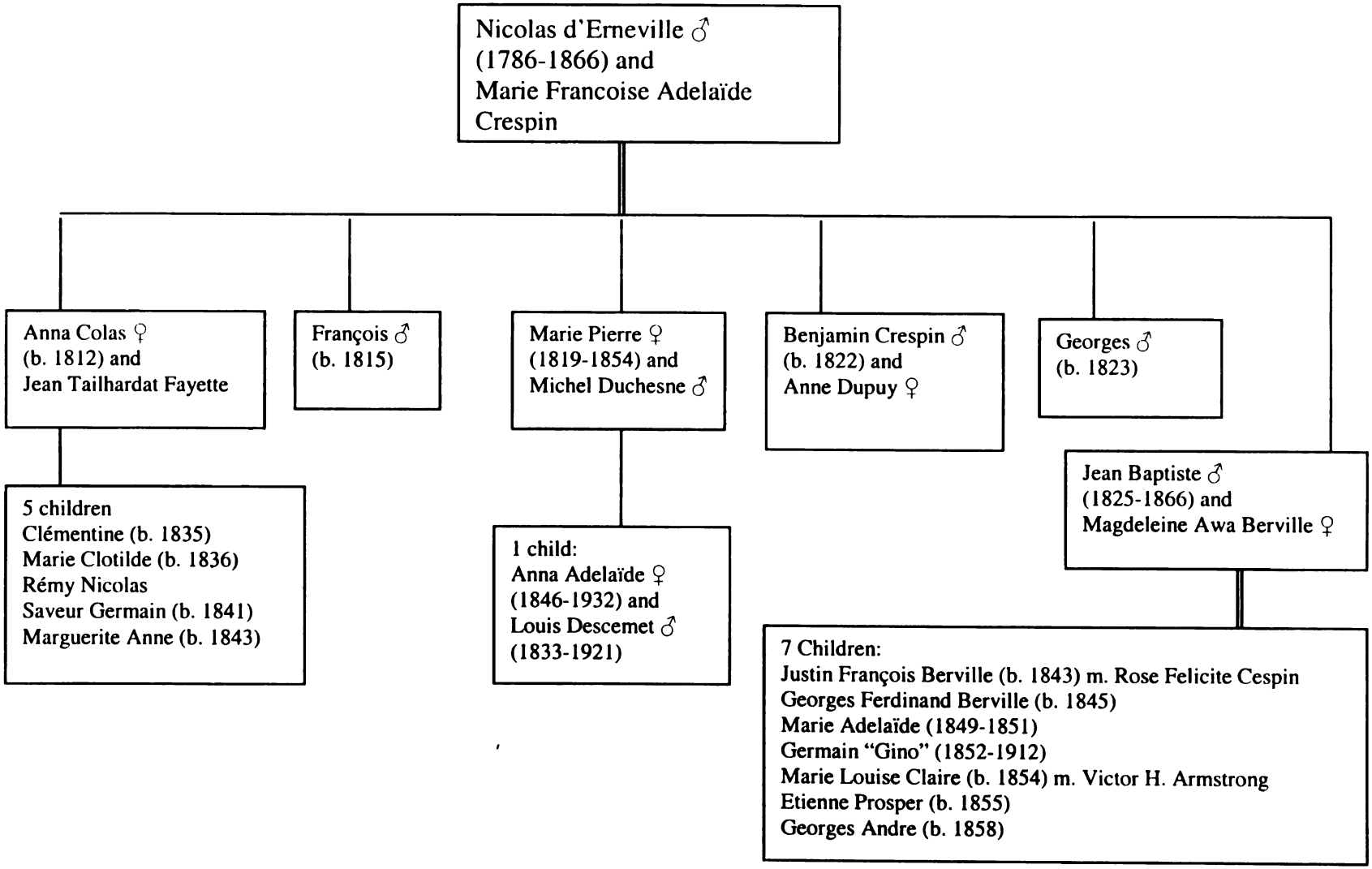
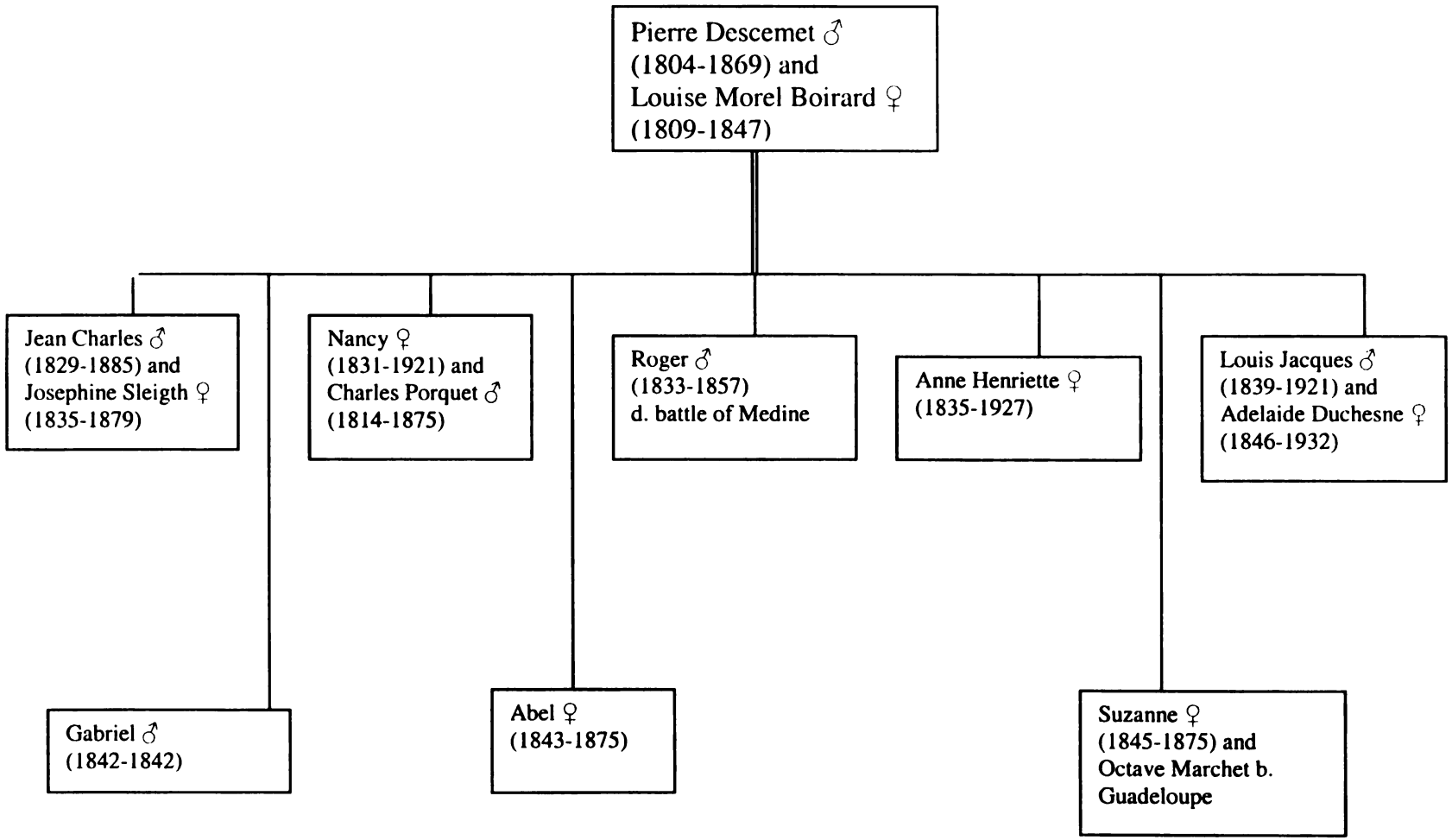


Figure 4
Descemet Family



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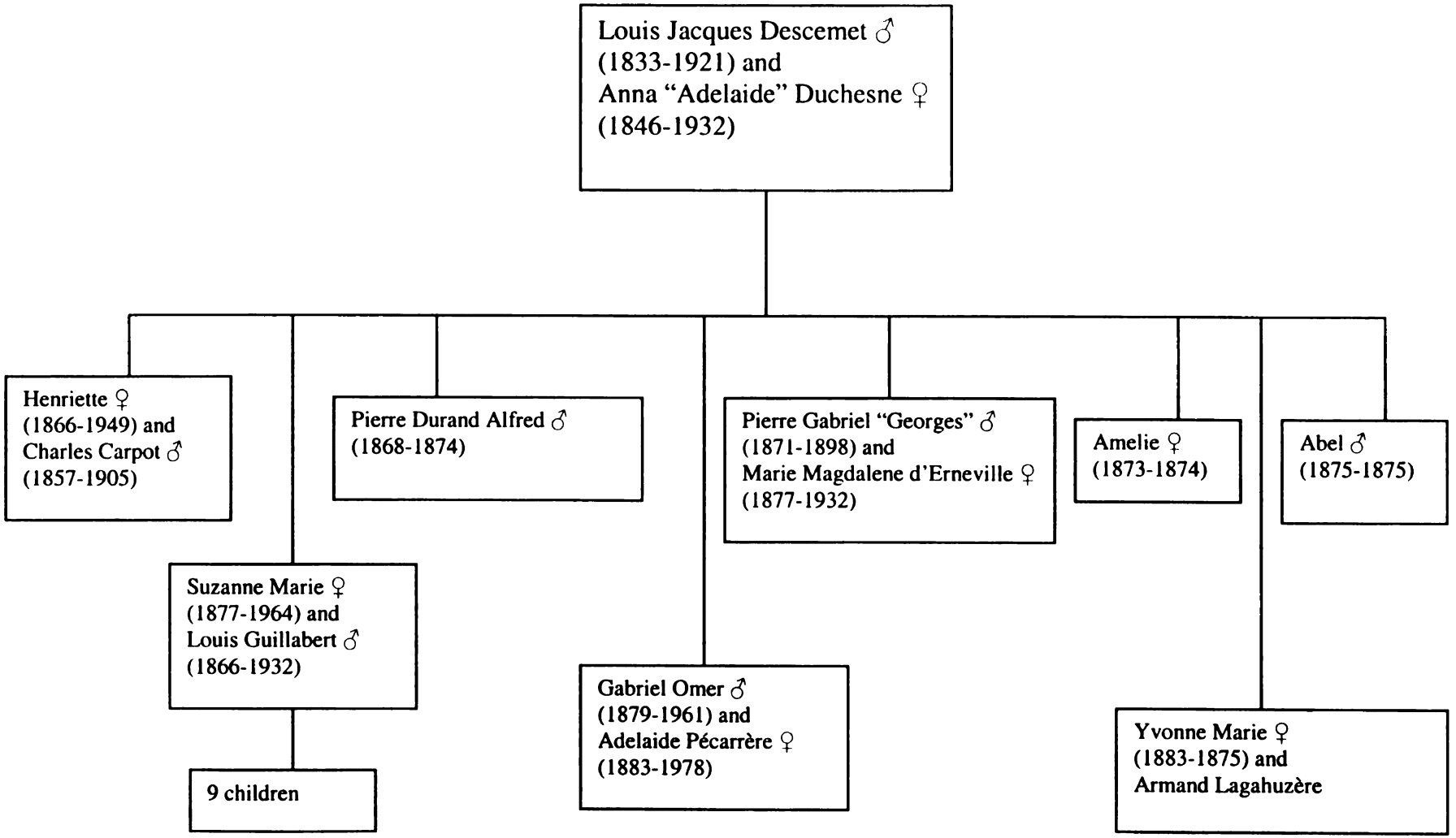
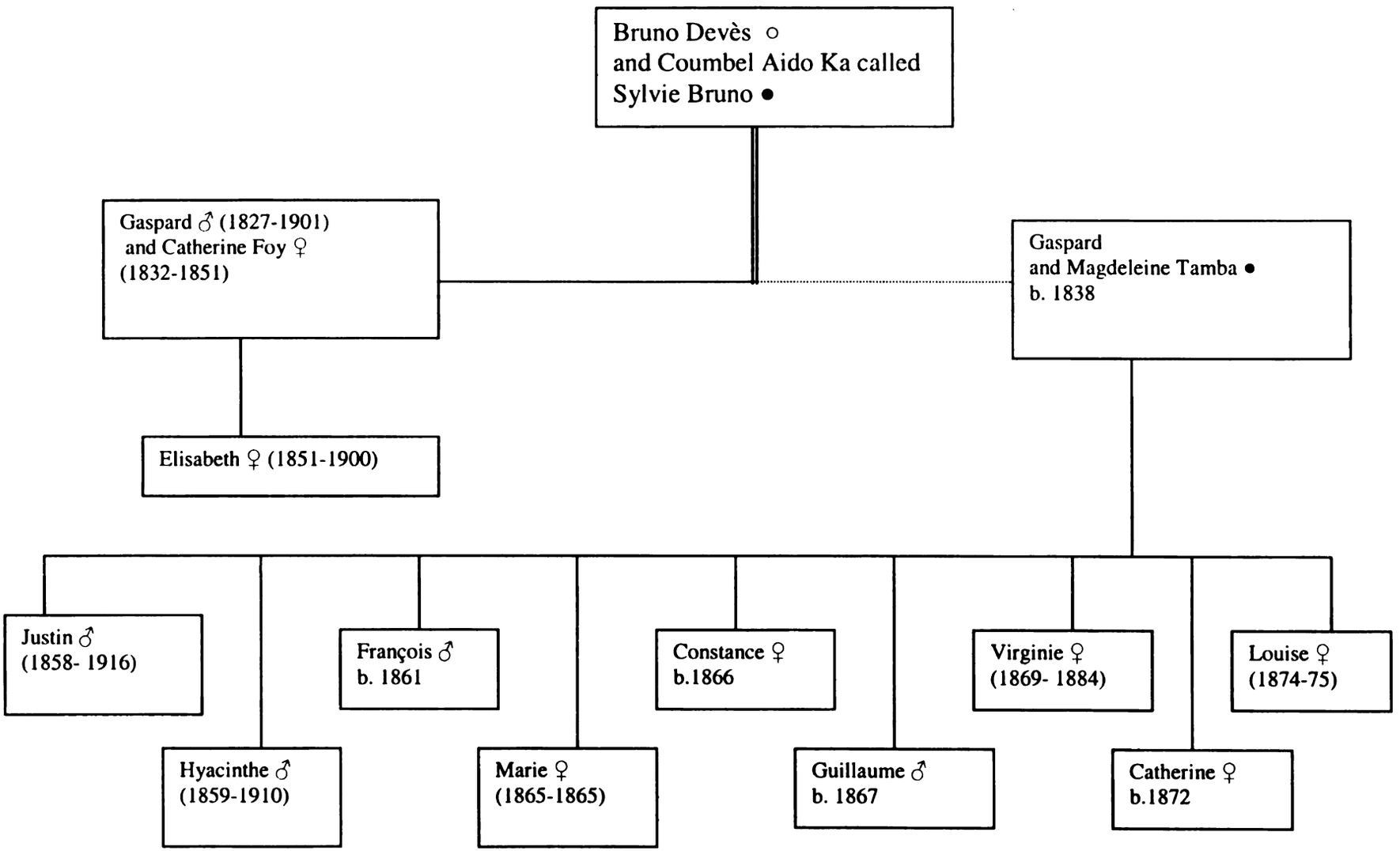


Figure 5
Devès Family



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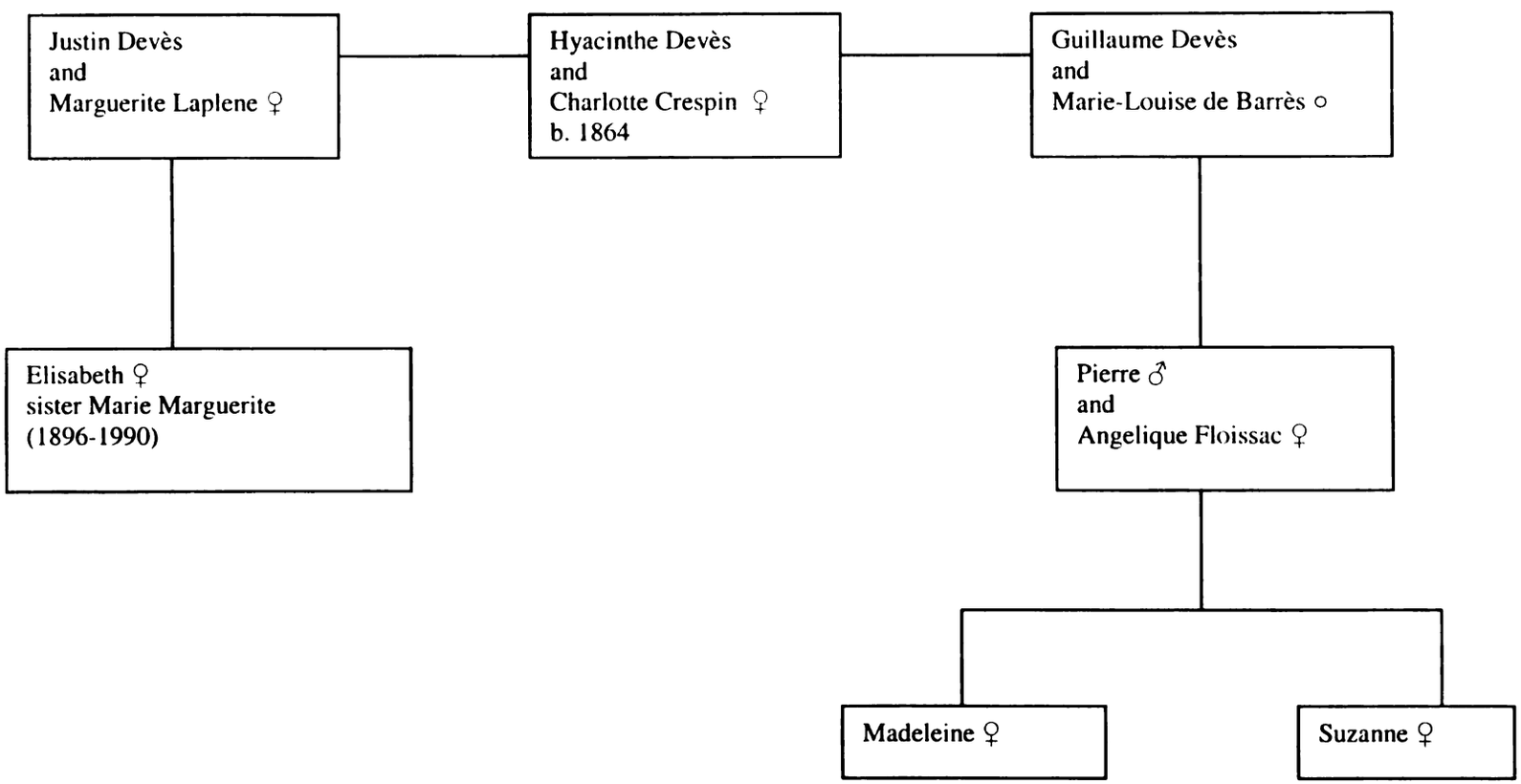
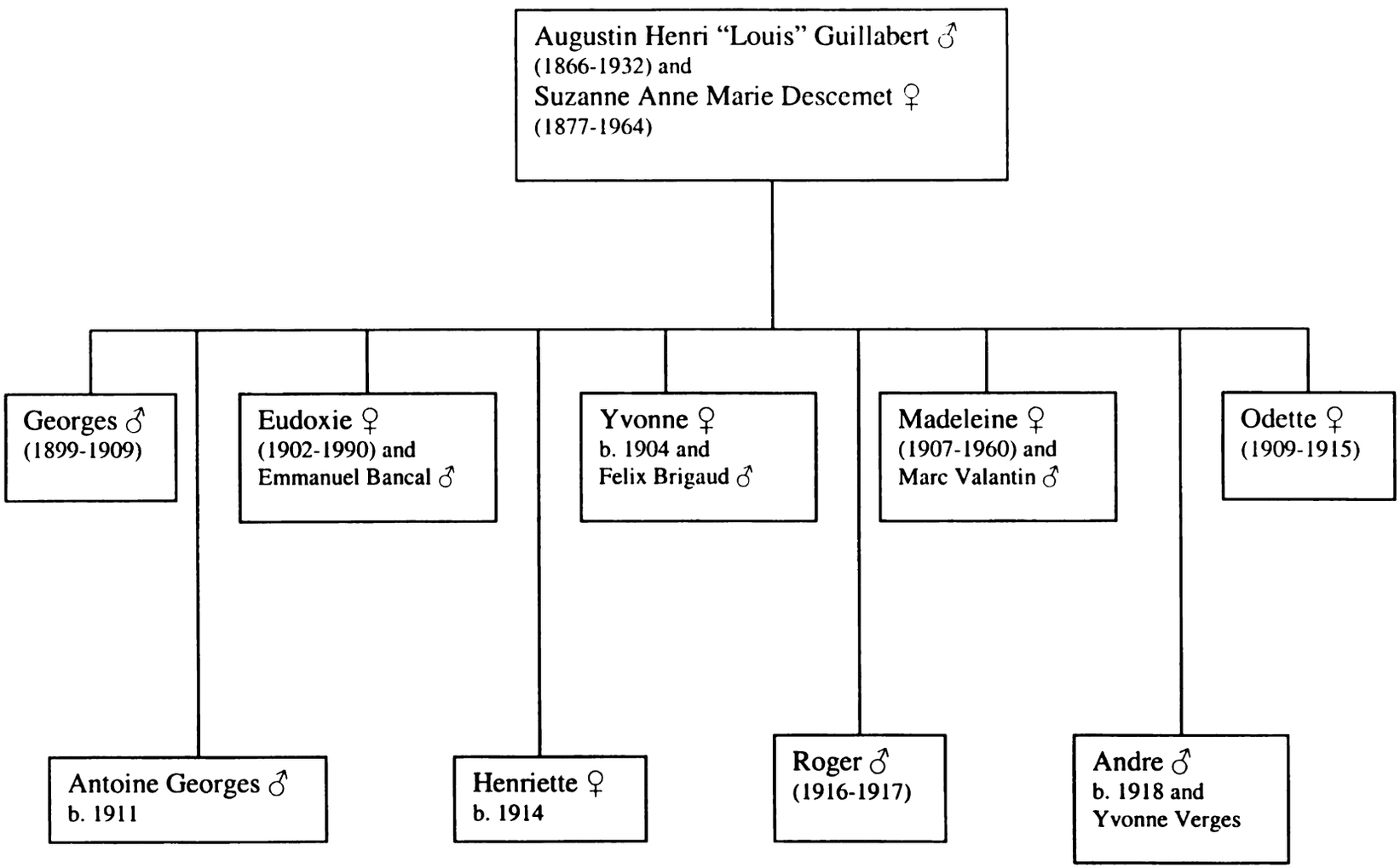


Figure 6
Guillabert Family



APPENDIX D

Figure 1
Second Story Residence with Ground Floor Shop or Warehouse
Saint Louis, Quai Roume
(Photograph by author)

Figure 2
Second Story House with Wrought Iron Ornaments
Saint Louis
(Photograph by author)

Figure 3
Door Frame with Semi-Circle Design
Saint Louis, Sud
(Photograph by author)

Figure 4
Door Frame with Prefabricated Moldings
Saint Louis, Sud
(Photograph by author)

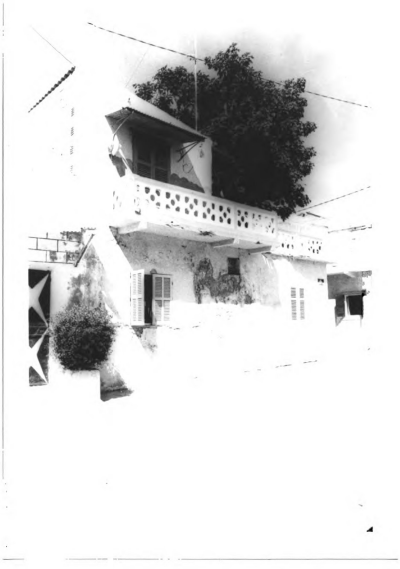


Figure 5
House with Second Story Balcony
Saint Louis, Sud
(Photograph by author)

Figure 6
Faidherbe Bridge
View from Quai Henri Jay
(Photograph by author)

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