

OPELOUSAS POST RECORDS
(Ms. 4581)
Inventory

Compiled by
Germain J. Bienvenu

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

Fall 2005

CONTENTS OF INVENTORY

| | |
|---|---|
| Summary | 3 |
| Biographical/Historical Note | 4 |
| Index Terms | 6 |
| Appendix: Item Level Description of Documents | 7 |

Use of manuscript materials. If you wish to examine items in the manuscript group, please fill out a call slip specifying the materials you wish to see. Consult the Container List for location information needed on the call slip.

Photocopying. Should you wish to request photocopies, please consult a staff member. The existing order and arrangement of unbound materials must be maintained.

Publication. Readers assume full responsibility for compliance with laws regarding copyright, literary property rights, and libel.

Permission to examine archival materials does not constitute permission to publish. Any publication of such materials beyond the limits of fair use requires specific prior written permission. Requests for permission to publish should be addressed in writing to the Head, Public Services, Special Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA, 70803-3300. When permission to publish is granted, two copies of the publication will be requested for the LLMVC.

Proper acknowledgement of LLMVC materials must be made in any resulting writing or publications. The correct form of citation for this manuscript group is given on the summary page. Copies of scholarly publications based on research in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections are welcomed.

SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Size | 44 items |
| Geographic Locations | Louisiana |
| Inclusive Dates | 1776, 1788 |
| Bulk Dates | 1788 |
| Languages | French |
| Summary | Legal documents, most of which were written in the presence of Nicolas Forstall, commandant of the Poste des Opelousas, and deal with property and work transactions, sale and emancipation of slaves, assorted legal matters, and an investigation into a supposed murder. |
| Restrictions | No restrictions |
| Related Collections | Opelousas and Attakapas Districts Collection (Mss. 756, 1171); Opelousas District Papers (Mss. 756) |
| Copyright | Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries. |
| Citation | Opelousas Post Records, Mss. 4581, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. |
| Stack location | A:72 |

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Deriving its name from Native Americans occupying the region, the Poste des Opelousas (present-day Opelousas, seat of St. Landry Parish) received its first civil and military commandant with Louis Pellerin in 1763, during which time Louisiana was changing from French to Spanish rule. When Louisiana north of the Isle of Orleans and east of the Mississippi River came under British rather than Spanish control in the 1760s, French immigrants from the Alabama posts (many of them descendants of the first colonists of greater Louisiana) settled in Opelousas. Others arrived from Illinois (formerly Upper Louisiana), New Orleans, and Pointe Coupée, contributing to Opelousas' growth as a trade and agricultural center. The first Acadians arrived in 1765 from Halifax, Nova Scotia, where the British had imprisoned them. The Spanish also allowed Anglo-Americans into the region with the provision that their Protestant Christianity not be practiced in public.

Nicolas Forstall served as commandant of the Poste des Opelousas from 1787 to 1794. The overwhelming majority of the items in the Opelousas Post Records were written either in his presence or addressed to him in 1788. Born on September 21, 1727, on the island of Martinique to Nicolas Forstall, Sr., and Jane de Barry, Forstall rose to prominence in Louisiana under Spanish rule, serving as captain in the New Orleans militia, member of the Cabildo (1772-1785, 1794-1802), judge (1777, 1785, 1802), and military commandant at New Iberia (1785) before assuming the Opelousas post. He also participated in Spanish military campaigns against the British in 1779. Married to Pélagie de la Chaise (daughter of Jacques de la Chaise and Marguérite Darensbourg), he fathered Edouard-Pierre-Charles (1768), Elisabeth-Louise, Edmond (1779), Félix-Martin (1780), Louis-Edouard (1802), Emerancia, and Mélanie. In 1802, he was found guilty of numerous offenses, fined, and imprisoned. He died after 1805.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Complementing the Opelousas and Attakapas Districts Collection and the Opelousas District Papers, the 44 items (with the exception of a 1776 deed of sale signed by Chevalier Alexandre-François De Clouet) were composed in 1788, most either in the presence of Nicolas Forstall or addressed to him. The legal documents deal with property or job transactions, sale and emancipation of slaves, and assorted legal matters, mainly in the Opelousas area but also reaching as far as Pointe Coupée, Poste des Rapides, Bayou Goula, and New Orleans.

Five items (housed in Folder 3) involve Antoine Valentin Layssard's efforts to have Forstall intervene in getting the Frugé brothers (Jean, Nicolas, Joseph, Pierre, and François) to pay their creditors at the Rapides post.

OPELOUSAS POST RECORDS

1776, 1788

Mss. 4581

LSU Libraries Special Collections

Eight documents (in Folder 4) concern an ongoing dispute between Jean Gravier and Antoine Dubroca over possessions.

Two items (Folder 5) deal with the succession of Jeanne Dion Derbanne Manne and its division between Derbanne's widowed husband and her Baron grandchildren.

Eleven items (Folder 6) relate to investigations into the supposed murder of Guillaume Barjeau of Bayou Chicot. The December 9, 1788, item mentions the presence of Opelousas Indians in the area.

INDEX TERMS

Barjeau, Guillaume

Bayou Chicot, La.—History—18th Century

Brunet, François

Chabot Family

Dubroca, Antoine

Forstall, Nicolas (1727-ca.1805)

Frugé Family

Gravier Family

Inheritance and succession|zLouisiana|zOpelousas.

Layssard, Antoine Valentin (ca.1749-ca.1820)

Manne, Jeanne Dion Derbanne

Opelousas Indians—18th Century

Opelousas (La.)—History—18th Century

Slaves—Louisiana—St. Landry Parish—18th Century

APPENDIX: Item Level Description of Documents

---September 29, 1776, Opelousas. Document stating that Michel Brignac has sold his plantation on the prairie adjoining that of Mr. LaFleur to Joseph Thierry with the provision that Thierry perform some carpentry work. Signed by the Chevalier De Clouet.

---January 12, 1788, Opelousas. Jacques Roman and Etienne Lavigne appear before Nicolas Forstall to agree that Roman will furnish Lavigne a blacksmith shop and that Lavigne will teach blacksmithing to the Negro Jean Louis. Further details of the "société" thus formed are also spelled out. Sieurs Allard and Brunet also sign the document.

---February 21, 1788, Opelousas. John Buhler and Thomas Hoffpauir come before Nicolas Forstall to agree to procedures governing Buhler's placing cattle on Hoffpauir's pastures. Sieurs LeJeune and Brunet also sign the document.

---March 4, 1788, Pointe Coupée. Document presented to Nicolas Delassize, commandant at Pointe Coupée, by which Jean-Baptiste LaCour, Hypolite Baron, Jean-Pierre LeDoux, and Pierre Découx, representing the four children of the late Mister Baron and grandchildren of the late Mme. Manne (Jeanne Dion Derbanne), ask that Delassize place before Nicolas Forstall, commandant at Opelousas, the heirs' request for their share of their grandmother's succession. An inventory of slaves, lands, animals, and other belongings needs to be drawn up to determine what belongs to the late Mme. Manne's grandchildren and what belongs to her surviving husband, François Manne, of Opelousas. Mr. Manne has already granted liberty to two slaves, Pierre and Baptiste, now worth more than 3,000 piastres; he has given a young negress, animals, 12 arpents of land, and other effects to Dame Gueho; and he has also given Mr. Lamirande 12 mother cows and maybe other donations. After the processing of the inventory, the heirs will present their account through Ricard de Rieutord. Delassize and Ricard annotate and sign the document on March 5, 1788. Delassize adds further notations on March 6, 1788, and sends the document to Forstall.

---May 14, 1788, Opelousas. Baptiste Boutté appears before Nicolas Forstall to buy from Baptiste Fontenot for 900 piastres a slave that Fontenot had bought from Pierre Joubert. Boutté's brother Hilaire Boutté will pay the sum. In the meantime, Baptiste Boutté mortgages two slaves, Jacques and Perrine. Sieurs Brunet and Boisdoré also sign the document.

---May 27, 1788, Opelousas. Basile [?] agrees in the presence of Nicolas Forstall to deliver 100 barrels of lime to Thomas Berwick in exchange for horses and horned animals. Sieurs DesBordes and Brunet also sign the document.

---July 31, 1788, Opelousas. François Lemelle, officer at the Post, appears before Nicolas Forstall to agree to grant freedom to his mulatto slave Eléonore (who had been given to him by his late mother) and to her two children Victoire and Alexandre at the moment of his death. Luc Hollier and François Brunet also sign the document.

---August 6, 1788, Opelousas. Joseph Frédéric comes before Nicolas Forstall on behalf of Louis Veillon to annul the sale of a 21-year-old "Canga" male slave [named Azor?], worth 800 piastres, to François Brunet. Sieurs Escouffié and J. DesBordes also sign the document.

---August 12, 1788, Opelousas. William Lett appears before Nicolas Forstall to sell for 200 piastres to William Donegan 10 arpents of land situated on the other side of the Grande Prairie

1776, 1788

LSU Libraries Special Collections

and bound on one side by François Veillon's house and on the other by Louis Boisdoré's concession. L. Hollier and Sieur Brunet also sign the document.

---August 20, 1788, Opelousas. François Batin and his wife appear before Nicolas Forstall to agree to let Antoine Simien build a house on their land and stay there three years, taking from there all the firewood that will be necessary for him and making a yard and garden, after which time everything will belong to the Batins. Sieurs Brunet and Gradenigo also sign the document.

---September 17, 1788, Opelousas. Pierre Brosset and Joseph Andrepont come to Nicolas Forstall to form a "société" for harvesting that also involves John Ryan. Sieurs Chabot and Brunet also sign the document.

---September 18, 1788, Opelousas. Augustin Rodrigues dit "Campiranne" appears before Nicolas Forstall to agree to make the bricks for and build a double chimney and oven for Sieur Lastrapes on the plantation that Lastrapes acquired from Charles Percy on the condition that Lastrapes furnish him a horse and cart to carry water, feed Rodrigues and his hired hands, bring all the wood necessary to the brick-making furnace, pay 100 piastres (through Percy's power of attorney), and provide lime. Percy, Brunet, and Gradenigo also sign the document.

---October 7, 1788, Rapides. Antoine Valentin Layssard, interim commandant at the Poste des Rapides, writes Forstall to seek the latter's help in getting the Frugé brothers to pay their creditor.

---October 7, 1788, Rapides. Document addressed to Layssard in which Vincent Poirie (Poirot), François Martin, and Michel DeVille ask Layssard's help in getting the Frugé brothers to pay them money owed and to deny Joseph Frugé a passport until the debt has been paid.

---October 11, 1788, Bayou Chicot. César Archinard, Edward Murphy, and François Brunet, sent to investigate the sudden death of Guillaume Barjeau, report to Barjeau's farm to find the deceased on a bench with a pall in his cabin. After examining Barjeau, they determine that he died a violent death, such as suffocation from blood or by other hands. They question those believed to have the most information about the death and send to the commandant, under the guard of William Snoddey and John Reed, the deceased's widow and her brother for questioning.

---October 11, 1788. Nicolas Forstall testifies to going to Bayou Chicot to look into Guillaume Barjeau's death and interrogating Barjeau's son Louis Barjeau about the incident, the witnesses of the interrogation being César Archinard, Edward Murphy, François LeDoux, and François Brunet. Louis Barjeau is 16, a native of New York, and living and working with his father. He says that he knows of no illness or disputes that his father may have had before his death. Louis Barjeau states that Guillaume Barjeau had drunk much tafia with several persons without having lost his reason before his death. About a month before, Guillaume Barjeau had forbidden his wife to go with François Marcantel, with whom she often went walking, to which she had responded that that would not last and would be over one day, to which Guillaume Barjeau gave her three or four slaps. Asked where he was at the time of his father's death, Louis Barjeau says that his father had told him to go sleep at Fletcher's, where Guillaume Barjeau had to return a saddle. Arriving in the morning he found his father dead in bed, blood coming from the nose and mouth, the face and neck being black.

---October 11, 1788, Opelousas. Antoine Simien's account of what he knows about Guillaume Barjeau's death, made before Nicolas Forstall, César Archinard, Edward Murphy, François LeDoux, and François Brunet. Simien is 35, a native of Marseille, and a merchant at Opelousas. He went to see Barjeau the day before the death, and as they were going to Gabriel Martin's,

Barjeau told Simien of differences that he was having with his wife. Barjeau told Simien that he did not want a man to go see his wife, but Simien does not know to which man Barjeau was referring. Barjeau said he slapped his wife after she had told him to go tell the man that himself. The wife wanting to speak, Barjeau gave her two or three more slaps before his son separated the two. After that, she had been affectionate with Barjeau. Simien reports Barjeau's being redder than normal. After learning of the death, Simien went to see Barjeau's body at 8:00 a.m., and noticed blood on the face coming from the nose and mouth.

--October 11, 1788. Jesse Kirkland, Guillaume Barjeau's neighbor, comes before Nicolas Forstall, César Archinard, Edward Murphy, François LeDoux, and François Brunet to testify. Kirkland is 40 and a native of Virginia. Around midnight, Barjeau's wife came crying to Kirkland, saying that her husband was dying, to which her brother Joseph Moreau added that he believed Barjeau was already dead. Kirkland hastened with the two to Barjeau's house and found Barjeau on his bed, his face on his right, outstretched arm. Touching the left hand, Kirland felt it to be cold and could detect no movement, so he determined Barjeau to be dead, blood coming from the mouth and nose and smearing the face. The mosquito net was blood stained, and one of the cords was broken at the head of the net, which caused Kirkland to think that there had been some kind of fight at the time of death. The wife told him that Barjeau had drunk much that evening and had told her he had fallen twice when returning from Gabriel Martin's house. Her brother said that upon his arrival, Barjeau had drunk most of a pint of tafia. When the brother showed his surprise at the amount of blood that Barjeau had shed, Barjeau's wife pointed out more blood on the mosquito net.

--October 13, 1788, Opelousas. Nicolas Forstall has Guillaume Barjeau's wife give what she knows of her husband's death. Claude Chabot and François Brunet serve as witnesses. She is Rosalie Moreau, a Creole of the Opelousas post, and ignorant of her age. She says that her husband died some time Thursday night going into Friday. After having gone to see Fletcher Thursday morning, Barjeau complained to his wife of having fallen off his horse, the pummel of the saddle hurting his stomach greatly. Then he went to Gabriel Martin's house with Antoine Simien to get some shot and did not come back before three hours into the night. Complaining about his hurt stomach, he asked for some tafia and drank almost a whole "chapine." Sleeping next to him, Barjeau's wife heard him complaining during the night and heard something in his stomach like a rupture. The blood climbed to his head, and she heard thrashing. She called her brother, wanting to send him to Kirkland's for help, but he did not want to go by himself. Neither did she, so they went together. Upon returning with Kirkland, they found Barjeau dead, blood coming out of his mouth and nose. Asked if her husband had had any dispute with anyone, she says she knew of none.

October 13, 1788, Opelousas. Nicolas Forstall has Joseph Moreau, brother of Rosalie Moreau, give what he knows of Guillaume Barjeau's death. Claude Chabot and François Brunet serve as witnesses. Jacques DesBordes serves as "tuteur ad hoc" for Joseph Moreau, a minor. Moreau is a Creole of the Opelousas post and is not sure of his age. He has been living with his sister for a week and a half. He states that Barjeau, arriving Thursday night from Martin's place (where he had gone with Antoine Simien to get some shot), complained of great stomach pains that the pummel of his saddle had caused him in a fall that morning. Not wanting supper, Barjeau went to bed after having drunk tafia. During the night, Moreau heard his sister calling to him, saying that her husband was dying. Moreau tried to help get control of Barjeau, but the latter struggled and threw both wife and her brother off. The wife threw water onto Barjeau's face, which produced no effect. The two went to Kirkland's for help, and at their return, they found Barjeau dead, blood exiting from his mouth and nose, the cord of the mosquito net red from the struggle and

1776, 1788

LSU Libraries Special Collections

from Barjeau's throwing the wife and her brother off. Moreau is not aware of any disputes that Barjeau had with anyone.

---October 14, 1788, Opelousas. Jacques Brignac's widow appears before Nicolas Forstall to sell to Joseph Thierry for 25 piastres an arpent of land bordered on one side by Joseph Thierry and on the other by Sieur Robin, a doctor to whom Mme. Brignac had sold the land. Sieurs Brunet and Gradenigo also sign the document.

---October 18, 1788, Opelousas. François DeBrande comes before Nicolas Forstall to commit himself for a year to working at Claude Chabot's store, gathering beasts, driving the cart, and doing other things for the price of 180 piastres. In addition to Chabot, Sieurs Gravier and Brunet also sign the document.

October 21, 1788, Opelousas. François Marcantel, Jr., tells Nicolas Forstall why he did not come earlier (in response to Forstall's order sent through Philippe Fontenot and Chevalier Lamirande) to provide what he knows concerning the death of Guillaume Barjeau. He says that having heard that Samuel Fletcher, to whom Marcantel had sold a horse, was decamped, he thought he was being held responsible for what Fletcher owed at the post and was being summoned to report on that. Asked why he refused and took flight after a second order to appear (conveyed by Sieur Ramponeau and three militiamen), he says that it was for the same reason and that he feared being imprisoned. Asked if he knows about the cause of Barjeau's death, he responds in the negative. At the time of the death, Marcantel was at his house. He had not seen Barjeau for five weeks from the present. He does not know of any disputes Barjeau had with anyone. Asked why he had continued his known concubinage with Barjeau's wife even after the commandant's forbidding it, he said he never frequented the said woman in the said way. Asked if he has heard in what way Barjeau died, he answers that he understands that the wife, fearing her husband was dying, went to the neighbor for help and found her husband dead from unknown causes at her return. Marcantel is 28, a native of Pointe Coupée, and married to the sister of Barjeau's wife. Jean Gravier and François Brunet also sign the document.

---October 27, 1788, Opelousas. François Boisdoré with his wife Françoise Veillon come before Nicolas Forstall to sell to Forstall land situated in the village of Mamou along with all the horned animals, horses, and mules at 10 piastres a head, supposing there are at least 600 animals branded "32." Boisdoré also receives from Forstall four Negroes named [] []; [] of the Senegal nation; [], Portuguese Creole; and Pierre of the [Ouisi? Quisi?] nation for 4,000 piastres. Chabot, Brunet, and Forstall's wife ("Delachaise Forstall") also sign the document.

---October 29, 1788, Opelousas. François Escouffié appears before Nicolas Forstall to promise to deliver to Antoine Dubroca 30 barrels of pickled pork without feet or heads. Charles Vivant and François Brunet also sign the document.

---October 29, 1788, Opelousas. Sieur Duriblon and Claude Chabot appear before Nicolas Forstall to agree that at the first high water, Duriblon will deliver to Chabot at Lemelle's portage 50 barrels of hulled rice in exchange for 27-and-one-half barrels of indigo seed. Brunet and Paul Dufresne also sign the document.

---October 30, 1788, Opelousas. Duriblon and Chabot come again to Forstall to double their previous agreement. François Brunet and Chevalier De Villier also sign the document.

1776, 1788

LSU Libraries Special Collections

---November 2, 1788, Rapides. Valentin Layssard writes Nicolas Forstall to say that Pierre Tourenne is pursuing the Frugé brothers in Forstall's jurisdiction because of the debt that the Frugés owe.

---November 2, 1788, Rapides. Layssard's reproduction of a December 11, 1787, document in which Pierre Patur, Michel DeVille, Valentin Layssard, François Martin, Pierre Tournoi, Matthew Gray, and Louis Renoult, creditors of the five Frugé brothers, agree to extend the due date of the brothers' payment of their debt. The creditors agree also to let Pierre, Jean, Nicolas, and François Frugé go to Opelousas to work toward the payment of their debt while Joseph Frugé remains at Rapides.

---November 11, 1788, Opelousas. Pierre Tourenne, charged with power of attorney for the Frugé brothers' creditors, appears before Nicolas Forstall to acknowledge that he has received 255 piastres from the Frugés through a bond from Thomas Berwick. Brunet also signs the document. Attached is Thomas Berwick and Silvain Sonnier's appraisal of the Frugés' animal holdings.

---November 14, 1788, Opelousas. Michel Stutz comes before Nicolas Forstall to sell to James Brewster, John Reed, and Samuel Thompson six arpents of land (and everything on it) at Grand Coteau, bordered on one side by Mme. Robin's property and on the other by that of Michel Riter, at the cost of 200 piastres made payable in horned beasts and mares. François Brunet and Florentin Poiret also sign the document.

---November 11, 1788, Opelousas. Jean Gravier writes to Nicolas Forstall to ask that the latter summon Antoine Dubroca for the following: To show Gravier's letter dated June 1786 or, in its absence, officially register the letter's contents; to declare what he has done with a bed and some other household things, including two trunks and a little white iron cash box, which at the request of the supplicant he took from a house in New Orleans that he was renting to Mr. Fanguy; to state the number of times that the supplicant asked him for the trunk keys; to state the number of horned animals he received from the supplicant's envoys at Bayou Goula; to bring to the post various weights, butcher's basins, and knives that he took from Sieur Boisdoré to New Orleans without the supplicant's permission, as well as 35 ells of cloth for meat that he took on the same day.

---November 12, 1788, Opelousas. Antoine Dubroca appears before Nicolas Forstall to respond to Jean Gravier. Dubroca asserts that he cannot produce Gravier's letter of June 1786 because it was burned in the New Orleans fire and that all he can remember from it is Gravier's request for the trunks at Mr. Fanguy's house. As to the furnishings in the house, Dubroca says that after having been menaced by the governor because of Bertrand Gravier (who claimed to be acting on brother Jean Gravier's behalf), he gave everything over to Bertrand Gravier, whose Negro took the belongings away. As for the number of times Jean Gravier demanded the items, Dubroca said the former did it once at the Poste des Attakapas, but that he forgot about it at Bayou Goula. When asked about the number of horned animals he received from Gravier's envoys at Bayou Goula, Dubroca responded that he could not say, as he was not there when they arrived and that Mr. Chevallier received them. With regard to the butchering items, they were given to Bertrand Gravier, but Dubroca knows nothing about the ells of cloth. Toussaint Chabot and François Brunet also sign the document.

---November 15, 1788, Opelousas. A copy of the November 12, 1788, document.

---November 20, 1788, Opelousas. Jean Gravier to Nicolas Forstall. Given Dubroca's declaration that he had handed Jean Gravier's trunks over to Bertrand Gravier, Jean Gravier

wants Dubroca to say if he's given the trunk keys over to Bertrand Gravier as well. If Dubroca cannot attest to the number of horned animals that Gravier sent him at Bayou Goula, Gravier wants him to declare what he verbally promised Gravier at Mrs. Donato's pasture regarding a bill payable to Louis Fontenot for 123 horned animals that he sold him. To support his claims to the cloths, Gravier offers the testimonies of Messieurs Boisdoré and DesBordes. Gravier asks that a passport not be given Dubroca until he returns the butchering items to Opelousas. Forstall annotates the document on November 25, 1788, to forward it to Dubroca.

---November 25, 1788, Opelousas. Dubroca's response to the preceding. Dubroca says he must go to New Orleans ("la ville") to tend to the king's salt provisions, cannot stay at Opelousas, has already testified that he acted according to Bertrand Gravier's orders, and needs a passport. Forstall forwards the document to Gravier.

---November 27, 1788, Opelousas. Gravier responds to Forstall's communiqué, saying he was unaware that Dubroca had contracted with the king but that that still does not impede him from making a registered response to Gravier's last request, which Gravier wants him to do before he is granted a passport. Forstall forwards the document to Dubroca.

---November 29, 1788, Opelousas. Dubroca's response to the preceding. Dubroca still wants a passport to go to New Orleans.

---December 1, 1788, Opelousas. Dubroca appears before Forstall at Jean Gravier's request to state to what he had verbally agreed at Mrs. Donato's pasture concerning 123 horned animals as well as what became of the meat cloths. Dubroca defers to Bertrand Gravier in the first instance and to Antoine Boisdoré and Jacques DesBordes in the second. François Brunet and Toussaint Chabot also sign the document.

---December 3, 1788, Pointe Coupée. Division of the succession of the late Jeanne Dion Derbanne between her widowed husband, François Manne, and her heirs (Marie Baron, Marguerite Baron, Hypolite Baron, and "les Messieurs Baron"). Manne and Derbanne had been separated for more than 25 years, he at Opelousas and she at Pointe Coupée, but their possessions are still to be viewed as held in common. The amount for possessions sold at Opelousas and those sold at Pointe Coupée are given. Derbanne's marriage contract to Manne had been notarized by Duplessis at Natchitoches on January 7, 1736. The succession and its division between Manne and Derbanne's heirs are detailed. François Allain signs the document.

---December 9, 1788, Opelousas. Edward Teale appears before Nicolas Forstall to state what he knows concerning Guillaume Barjeau's death. Claude Chabot and François Brunet serves as witnesses, Adonise St. Julien as interpreter. Teale is approximately 51, Catholic, and a blacksmith. Teale states that Samuel Fletcher's wife said in front of several people (Teale, Crook's wife, and Ward's wife) that François Marcantel had strangled Barjeau with a tobacco cord and that three persons were involved in the death. The three had told Fletcher's wife their reasons for the murder, and she had counseled them in vain not to go through with it. Mr. and Mrs. Snoddey, Francis Daniel, and Susanna Fry might have heard the same talk. When asked if he knew whether or not François Marcantel had been at Bayou Chicot the day of the death, Teale says that three Opelousas Indians told him that having been at François Marcantel's, Marcantel left after dinner at his house, telling the three that he was going hunting, that the next day at daybreak, he returned and told them Barjeau was dead and that Fletcher and Carney had killed him. The Indians did not know whether or not Marcantel had gone to Bayou Chicot that night. Teale adds that Fletcher's wife's daughter told him that Marcantel had gone to her house that night and that her mother not being there, he left. The girl's mother whipped her for having said

that to the informant. Asked if he knew of any complicity Barjeau's wife may have had in the death, Teale says that John Reed having been assigned to guard the wife, she asked Reed's advice in responding to the commandant's questions, and Reed said to answer in the way she had done during her interrogation. Teale says further that Marcantel in the presence of John Crook [and at Teale's house?] had threatened to kill Barjeau and two or three other people at Bayou Chicot for banning Marcantel from Barjeau's house. Teale not understanding French well, Barjeau asked him, "Do you understand, Mr. Teale, that François Marcantel is threatening to kill me and two or three other people?" Thomas Berwick also signs the document.

---December 13, 1788, Opelousas. John Reed gives Nicolas Forstall what he knows about Guillaume Barjeau's death. François Brunet and Florentin Poirer serve as witnesses, Jean Gradenigo as interpreter. Reed is 34, Catholic, and recently a resident of Bayou Chicot. Reed heard from several people that the eve of Barjeau's death, Barjeau was in perfect health and that according to what people were saying, it seemed he had died a violent death, such as strangling. John [Pellen?] more than anyone else said the death resembled strangulation; he had seen many strangled people in his country, and Barjeau resembled them. Asked if he knows if François Marcantel had appeared in Bayou Chicot the eve of the death, Reed responds that he does not. When asked about any questions Barjeau's widow may have made after Sieurs Archinard and Brunet had put him in charge of guarding her, Reed says she asked him what the commandant wanted to do with her. He told her that apparently the commandant wanted to interrogate her on the manner in which her husband died, and Reed advised her to tell the truth. She told Reed that her husband died after coming home late from Gabriel Martin's, complaining that he was not feeling well. She asked Barjeau if he wanted supper and coffee, and he said no. Barjeau asked his brother-in-law for some tafia, drank two rounds of it, and went to bed. She went to sleep in the same bed, and after he elbowed her, she tried to wake him, thinking he was dreaming. He became so forceful that she could not stop him. Afraid, she went to Mr. Kirkland's with her brother, and upon her return, she found her husband dead, his face down. Asked if he has talked with Mr. Teale about the preceding, Reed said he thinks he has.

---December 13, 1788, Opelousas. William Snoddey comes before Nicolas Forstall to say what he knows concerning Guillaume Barjeau's death. L. Hollier and François Brunet serve as witnesses, Jean Gradenigo as interpreter. Snoddey is 38, Catholic, and a carpenter. He says that on the morning of the death, Matthew Nugent of Bayou Chicot told him that they had found Barjeau dead and that he believed he had died a violent death and that it would be necessary for people from Bayou Chicot to visit the body, which they wanted to bury in the morning. Asked if Samuel Fletcher's wife had told him anything concerning the death, Snoddey says she did say something to him and his wife about the death, but as Snoddey and his wife do not understand French, he does not know what she said. Asked if he knows anything about François Marcantel's going to Bayou Chicot the eve of the death, Snoddey says that Teale's son, Pierre [Faggty? Foggy?], and others said Marcantel had been at Fletcher's that evening.

---December 17, 1788, Opelousas. John Crook appears before Nicolas Forstall to state what he knows concerning Guillaume Barjeau's death. Martin Duralde and François Brunet serve as witnesses. Crook is 41, Catholic, and a resident of Bayou Chicot. Asked if Mrs. Fletcher had said anything in front of him about Barjeau's death, he responds in the negative. He says that he knows nothing about François Marcantel's having been in Bayou Chicot the evening of the death and that the only thing he knows about the death is that John [Pellen?] said it looked like strangulation.