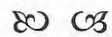
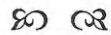


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Voyage to the Mississippi  
through the Gulf of Mexico,  
1687

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*Voyage  
to the Mississippi  
through the  
Gulf of Mexico*

[Translated by

ANN LINDA BELL

and Annotated by

ROBERT S. WEDDLE]

Brest, the 14th of February, 1698

Memorial on the questions asked of the two Canadians  
who are soldiers in Feuguerolles's Company

[[Questions on the Memorial sent by Monsiegr. Pontchartrain]]

Answers

These soldiers are two brothers, named Pierre and Jean-Baptiste Talon, natives of Quebec in Canada, New France, and sons of the late Lucien Talon, carpenter, and Isabelle [Planteau], who were residents there.<sup>1</sup>

They left Canada with their father and mother to come to France when very young. They are unable to tell precisely when, but they say that it was a short while before the departure of M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle on the last voyage that he made to Louisiana, because, having disembarked at La Rochelle and having gone to Paris, they enlisted with the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle, with their father and mother, two younger brothers, and two

<sup>1</sup> The cover sheet in the Archives Nationales, Outre-Mer (DFC, Louisiane 3) contains this caption: "Report of Two Canadian Soldiers who made La Salle's Voyage to the Mississippi and have returned thence in 1698." A note in a different hand observes, "This piece is very interesting for history. It ends with a too-short glossary of some Indian words."

sisters to follow him on the aforementioned voyage, and all returned to La Rochelle to embark with him, having been in France only about two months.

The said Sr. de la Salle had three ships; namely, the *Joly*, with 50 Cannon or thereabouts, on which he embarked; the *Aimable*, with about 20 Cannon, on which the said Talons and the rest of their family embarked; and one other, the name of which they have forgotten [the *Belle*].

1<sup>st</sup> question: How many men landed with Sr. de la Salle?

About 300, among whom there were three Religious of the Order of St. Francis and two priests, one of whom was the said Sr. de la Salle's brother, and nine women.

They set foot on land at the Baye du St. Esprit [Espíritu Santo Bay] or Ascension in the Gulf of Mexico, because the *Aimable* ran aground there and was lost a cannonshot from shore, by the pilot's fault, according to what they heard tell. Had it not been for this accident, the said Sr. de la Salle intended going farther, to look for the mouth of the Mississippi River. He sent back to France only the ship *Joly*, with her crew. She was commanded by M. [Tanguy Le Gallois] de Beaujeu, who set sail soon after the landing was made. The said Sr. de la Salle kept the other ship, but they took so little care of her that subsequently she also was lost in the Bay.<sup>2</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>: The nature of the country where they landed; whether there was a river and, if so, its width and depth at its mouth; whether there were any lakes, and whether the land consisted of prairies or mountains.

The country is flat and has an agreeable aspect—diversified, with woods and prairies or savannas—and appears very fertile. There was flowing into the bay a river whose length or name they did not know. It was a long pistol shot wide and five to six fathoms deep at its mouth. The said

2 La Salle, failing to find the Mississippi at the map location of the Río Escondido, established at Matagorda Bay a base from which to look further. This bay later was mistakenly called Espíritu Santo. The *Aimable* was lost on February 20, 1685; Beaujeu and the *Joly* departed on March 12. The *Belle* was later lost in a squall. A fourth vessel, the *Saint-François*, had been seized by Spanish pirates off Hispaniola.

S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle ascended this river with all his people,<sup>3</sup> using for this purpose some canoes of the savages he found there and some longboats from the ships. About 12 leagues from the mouth, he had built five or six houses of earth and wood to lodge his people, making no other fortification than a battery of eight cannon, which cast terror and fright into the savages' hearts every time they were fired, since the savages had never heard them before.

They lived in this dwelling about a year; that is, until the time of his [La Salle's] death,<sup>4</sup> which will be told later.

During all that time, the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle went to explore farther into the country with a detachment of 25 to 30 men, armed with guns, pistols, and sabers or straight swords, each with his own supply of powder and lead. They lived on the abundance of the hunt, for the buffalo [*boeufs sauvages*], deer, roebuck, and other wild animals were plentiful in the whole country, in the woods as well as on the plains. There were also all sorts of game, mainly turkey, partridges, parrots, ducks, plovers,<sup>5</sup> doves, woodcocks, and a prodigious number of little birds of all kinds, which were very good to eat. There are also cranes and swans in large numbers on the rivers and ponds. There are also large numbers of eagles, crows, and other birds of prey and of pillage and also a very particular species that is red all over, a red the color of blood, as also lions, tigers, bears, and wolves.

The hunters of the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle discovered the mouth of another beautiful river within this same bay while they were pursuing buffalo along the seashore. It is a musket shot wide and 15 to 20 fathoms deep at its mouth; and, in the nearly 20 leagues that they ascended, it appeared to extend far into the land. It was bordered by woods of very tall trees, but it was full of caimans or crocodiles, as were all the others. The said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle named it the Rivière aux Cannes [River of Canes], as much because of quantities of beautiful reeds [*Cannes*] or little canes with which the savages made their arrows as because there are many ducks [*Canards*] on the river.<sup>6</sup>

3 This was Garcitas Creek, flowing into Lavaca Bay, an offshoot of Matagorda Bay. The Lavaca River also flows into Lavaca Bay about five miles east of Garcitas Creek.

4 Although the answers recorded for the Talons exaggerate time spans in other instances, this one is reduced. The move to this location occurred in June, 1685, La Salle's death on March 19, 1687. The Fort Saint-Louis massacre is judged to have taken place around Christmas, 1688.

5 *Outardes*, or bustards. The French often applied the name to Canada geese. See Part I, note 33 to translation.

6 Henri Joutel ("Relation de Henri Joutel," in Pierre Margry, ed., *Découvertes et établissements de français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale*)

There is in all the land a great number of large saltwater as well as freshwater ponds and several small rivers and large streams, most of them abounding in fish. They are also full of crocodiles of which one must be wary. One must no less be on one's guard against the fury of these buffalo. When one had been wounded, it chased the hunters, even lying in wait with determination at the foot of the trees that they were obliged to climb and trying to uproot them with their feet until they had received the fatal shot. Their flesh is very good to eat, but they are quite different from those [cattle] of Europe, being much larger and having a big hump on the neck, their head and their eyes bigger in proportion to their body, and, instead of fur, [they have] a kind of wool, which could be spun. This wool is much longer on the head than elsewhere, so that it gives them the appearance of having a head of hair that almost covers their eyes. Their horns are smaller [than those of European cattle] and very sharp, and they have only a very small tail. All of them, male as well as female, are of a reddish-black color. The Indians dress their hides like those of the chamois, which renders them soft as cloth.

The forests and the woods are of oaks, nuts, pines, and several other kinds of trees, some of which are extremely tall, but they are unable to give the names. There are squirrels in abundance in those trees, especially the pines; and all the rivers are bordered with palms and mulberry trees, which produce much fruit.

3. On advancing inland, what sort of country did they find?

Invariably flat and diversified, as has been said, with forests, woods, and prairies, in fact the most beautiful in the world, traversed by several rivers, of which a number are deep and could carry boats. This whole territory is very temperate. Hardly ever is it too hot or too cold and winter lasts but a short time. This mild climate accounts for the fact that the savages generally live to be very old and nearly always possess perfect health. They also have a marvelous knowledge of the different properties of the medicinal herbs that abound in the whole country and can easily heal themselves of illnesses and wounds that befall them, since there was no professional physician among them. It is usually the old

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*nale* [1614–1754], III 261–62) describes the two-fork Rivière aux Cannes in a way that identifies it as the combined Lavaca and Navidad rivers. Concerning the Talons' observations on the flora and fauna, see Del Weniger, "Natural History," in the commentaries that follow.

people who apply their remedies and cure their ailments; and the Talons assure us that, during all the time they stayed among them, they saw no one die of illness.

4. Whether or not they found savages  
and whether they had communication  
with them.

The whole country is peopled with savages who are all divided into small nations, each bearing its own name and having a particular language, each different from the other. The aforementioned Talons had communication with two of these nations; specifically, Pierre Talon with the Cenís, which is the most gentle and the most civil of all the nations they have known. This nation lives about one hundred leagues inland. These Cenís Indians have a village and are divided into families in wood houses covered with straw. M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle made friends with them and took the said Pierre Talon there so he could learn their language, which he did perfectly, having stayed five or six consecutive years among them, until the time the Spaniards arrived, as will be said later on. But he has almost forgotten that language because he was for about ten years with the Spaniards in Mexico, where they took him and where he learned their language.<sup>7</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Talon, the younger of these two brothers, his two younger brothers [Lucien and Robert], and one sister [Marie-Magdelaine] also stayed an equal time span and even longer in the nation of the Clamcoéhs [Karankawas], a people much more cruel and barbaric than the Cenís or any of the other nations. They inhabit the seashore, without any villages or fixed dwellings, continually roaming, living by hunting and fishing, and camping where night overtakes them in makeshift shelters erected then and there, with two forked branches and one crossbar, which they cover with buffalo skins prepared for this purpose. With rushes they enclose this shelter, which is common with them and the other nomad nations of the country, as well as all those found from the seashore to the Cenís village. The Cenís, however, cultivate the soil and grow maize or corn, beans, and pumpkins of several kinds, with other

<sup>7</sup> Pierre actually lived about three years among the Cenís, almost seven among the Spaniards in Mexico and while serving in the Armada de Barlovento. Later on, it is said that Pierre and Jean-Baptiste remembered enough of the native languages to make themselves understood. See Schuetz, "Ethnological Data," on the Hasinai (Cenís) and Clamcoéhs (Karankawas), among whom they lived, and on other tribes mentioned.

kinds of vegetables and roots, whose names they do not know. They grow tobacco, but little, and only for their own use. They also raise horses, which they use only to transport their kill, since they are obliged to go very far to hunt the buffalo. [These animals] are very wild and habitually avoid the inhabited places so that they are found no nearer the villages than 15 or 20 leagues. These buffalo have such a sensitive sense of smell that they can scent hunters from far off, when they approach from upwind, and run away. So it is necessary, if one wants to catch them, to approach them from downwind. But once one succeeds in killing one in a herd, either with arrows or with gunshots, all the others surround it and stand looking at it, so that one can easily kill several more of them before they run away. This nation of the Cenis comprises about a thousand persons and is one of the most numerous.

About 12 leagues above the Cenis, going inland, there is another village whose nation is called Ayenny [Hainai], of which Pierre Talon also has knowledge, having communicated with them. They are allies of the Cenis and have the same language and the same manner of living, but they are fewer in number. He heard them say that, farther inland, there are several other villages of diverse small nations. They knew of no other nation more numerous than the Cenis. He heard them say only that there is another nation that is much larger, named Canotino [Kana-hotino], which is continually making war on them, but which has no fixed settlements.

All the nations that are along the seashore and up to the village of the Cenis are the most barbaric and cruel, and one can trust them only when they have proved they deserve it and when one is stronger than they are. Those who live farther inland than the Cenis territory are more humane, even helpful, and of easy access; and they extend hospitality to the Europeans who lose their way hunting or under other circumstances.

These different nations often war against each other, as will be said later, and have no other arms than bows and arrows, (which, instead of iron, have at the tip a sort of sharpened piece of stone, fish bones, or fish teeth), and clubs, because they do not know how to forge iron. But their arrows are not poisoned as are those of the Caribs and other savage peoples who are found among the Antilles Islands.

All these nations have the custom of going every morning at day-break to throw themselves into the nearest river, almost never neglecting to do so, no matter what season, even when the water is frozen. In this case, they often make a hole in the ice and dive into it. They run with all their might, going to the river and also returning, and then they stand in front of the large fire prepared for the purpose. And they stand

shaking their arms, their thighs, and their legs for a while until they are thoroughly dry. Then they wrap themselves in buffalo hides rubbed soft like chamois leather, which they use as robes, after which they walk about for some time. They claim that this gives them strength and renders them supple and fleet of foot. The men are very regular in observing this custom, without missing a single day when they are able. The women are not as constant in the practice. They all swim like fish, men as well as women. The Talons were obliged to do like them because they are so desirous that others imitate and resemble them in everything. They often exposed the said Talons and other young Frenchmen to make them become tanned like themselves. They nevertheless did not prevent them from praying to God, but they amused themselves by mumbling and mimicking them, even taking their prayer book when they saw them holding it, or some other book among those that the Clamcoëhs had found in the settlement of the French when they massacred them, as will be told later. They made ugly faces pretending to read, for they are naturally clowns, buffoons, and scoffers. But they are given to drunkenness (because they make liquors that intoxicate almost like wine). They danced and sang, but very rudely, for their only instruments are a certain stick full of notches, which they scrape with another stick, and gourds, which they fill with small pebbles or grains of Indian corn. One of these liquors is made with a sort of red bean, which they chew and soak in water. It is their opinion that its use renders them more supple and fleet of foot. Therefore they drink it to such excess that they vomit several times, drinking and vomiting alternately without pause. They make still another beverage with some leaves, the name of which the said Talons do not remember. These leaves are boiled in water and churned like chocolate, so that it also makes much froth, and they drink it very hot. They drink of it especially after they have walked a great distance.

5. Whether these savages gave them  
knowledge of whether or not there could  
be mines.

The savages knew nothing of mines or of minerals; and they do not value pieces of gold or silver money, preferring pins, needles, and pieces of glass or glass beads. Pierre Talon, saw, while he was with the Cenis, that they brought some 50 or 60 gold *louis* that M. de la Salle had on him when he was killed about six leagues or so from their village, as will be told later. The savages set no value on them [the gold pieces] and willingly gave a gold piece or even two for a pin, a needle, a small knife,



or some other trifle, so that a man named Pierre Meunier, from Paris, had no trouble appropriating them, and, having taken them to Mexico when he was taken there with the said Talon, he gave them to the viceroy. They did not see any mines, nor did they know whether or not there were any until they went to Mexico, where there is no lack of them, as will be told later, but they all belong to the Spaniards.

6. On the fruits and tender vegetation this land produces.

While describing the nature of the region, mention was made of some of the fruits found there, like nuts, berries, etc., to which one can add red and white grapes, for there are a great many vines in the woods, whose vinestocks are much larger than those in Europe and whose branches climb very high on most trees; but these grapes are sour, since they grow wild and are not cultivated.

Besides the ordinary nuts, there are some extremely large ones. There are also hazelnuts in quantity, and certain fruits that are called figs, but which are not like the figs of Europe. They are very much like the banana. There is also a prodigious quantity of berries with delicious taste that are very good to eat and on which, as well as on the grapes, diverse species of small birds feed; and there are also several other kinds of native fruits of which they know neither the name nor the characteristics. But there is one among the others that is extremely refreshing. It is shaped like an egg and grows on bushes with thorns. The Spaniards eat it and value it very much. They call it "tuna."

The whole country produces maize or corn, potatoes, gourds, pumpkins, and beans of several kinds. The said Sr. de la Salle had some sowed and cultivated at his dwelling and had some grain brought from the Ceniz village.

The soil there appears everywhere suitable for producing all sorts of grains and vegetables if one were to sow them there; however, it does not rain very much in that country.

There are many bees in the fields that make their honey in the grass and in trees. But the savages do not cultivate them, contenting themselves with eating the honey wherever they find it.

Tobacco could be grown there because the Ceniz cultivate some, though very little, and only for their own use. There is red pepper in quantity, small and strong, but the natives do not use any of it.

The said Talons also speak a great deal about a kind of strong-smelling root, which is common in all the country and which is related

to ginger. The natives believe that this root has the virtue of making the hair grow; and in view of this, they rub their heads with it after having chewed it.

They believe also that there is cotton, but they are unable to give any details.

It is believed that there one could gather and process turtles, there being an abundance of turtles of all sorts, large and small, aquatic and land, whose flesh is perfectly good to eat.

The savages have nothing to barter but buffalo and deer skins, which they dress like chamois skins and make soft as cloth, despite the fact that the cattle of this country [buffalo] are much larger than those of Europe, as has been said previously.

There will be presently a quantity of runaway or wild pigs all over the country, the French having released some that had already reproduced prodigiously by the time the Talons left there. The savages do not eat them, saying that they are the dogs of the French, which they imagined because they have not known dogs other than the wolves they capture when very small, tame, and train for the hunt.

The ordinary hens that were in the French settlement before the massacre, which will be spoken of later, and which escaped to the woods, had also multiplied considerably. The savages have not the same aversion for these chickens as for the pigs because they eat them without hesitation and find them good. There would be no lack of milk in this country if one took the trouble to tame the [buffalo] cows that give it in abundance. But the savages do not want to take the trouble, contenting themselves, when they have killed one, to suck at once all the milk she has.

According to the rather vague statements of the Talons, one can infer that there is salt, because they say that the French used to gather a sort of white sand along the seashore and the banks of saltwater ponds, which they boiled in water until it came to the consistency of salt, and with which they seasoned soups and meats. As for the savages, they use almost no salt; and to preserve their meats they simply dry them in the sun, after having cut them into very thin, round slices.

#### 7. Up to what spot did the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle take them?

The explorations of the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle did not go any farther than the Ceniz village, which is about one hundred leagues inland (as mentioned previously). During this second journey, which he undertook in

hopes of penetrating farther, he was shot in the head and killed by a Basque named Duhau [Duhaut]; about six leagues before arriving at the village he [Duhaut] did this to avenge the death of his older brother, who, he had been told, had been killed by the said Sr. de la Salle on the first trip he made to the interior to explore, immediately after his landing. The said Duhau the elder and many others who accompanied him did not return. He was not the only one who perished on this trip; most of those who had accompanied the said Sr. de la Salle, both on this journey and on others that he made into the country later, met the same fate. These trips lasted two or three months. Once he was six months without returning to the settlement,<sup>8</sup> to which he brought back only about half of those who had left with him, some getting lost and thus dying from exhaustion in the woods, where they were killed by the savage Clamcoehs, with whom they were at war; others deserting to live with the savages, among whom they were well received.

#### 8. What happened at the death of the said Sr. de la Salle?

The said Duhau the younger, having thus resolved to kill the said Sieur de la Salle, took the time appointed to him as the sixth one to go hunting (they were, as stated previously, six leagues from the Cenis village) to conspire against him; but he found among the five who were with him only one, an Englishman named James,<sup>9</sup> who agreed with his plan, which obliged the two to kill the four others while they slept. Among these four was a savage named Nica, a good hunter, whom the said Sr. de la Salle had brought from Canada, and the Sr. de la Salle's valet named Sagé [Saget]. The others were two Frenchmen whose names have escaped Pierre Talon, who is the one relating this deed, and who was with the said Sr. de la Salle when he arrived, having been brought with the intention of leaving him with the Cenis to try to learn their

8 La Salle was absent from the settlement from October, 1685, to March, 1686, when he inspected the Matagorda Bay area "before passing beyond"; from April 22 to late August, 1686, the first journey to the Cenis; and on several shorter journeys in late summer and early fall of 1685 (Margry, *Découvertes*, III, 248, 541).

9 Father Anastase Douay (Isaac Joslin Cox, ed., the *Journeys of René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle*, I, 224) calls him Hiens, "a German from Wittemburg." Joutel ("Relation," p. 336) refers to "Hiems, freebooter whom M. de La Salle had engaged at Petit Goâve as cannoner." "Hiems" or "Hiens" is a French rendering of James.

language. The said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle, impatient at not seeing his hunters return, went toward the place he had sent them, which was not far, to try to learn the cause of their delay. [He was] accompanied only by a religious of St. Francis [Anastase Douay]. The said Duhau and James, who had expected him to do this very thing, had placed themselves in ambush in two different places, so that if one missed him, the other would surely not. The said Duhau, having shot first, killed him outright with one shot in the forehead and then returned to join the group with the said James, as if they had done nothing.

Duhau told the brother of the one he had just killed, who was a good priest, and one of his nephews, a young boy of ten or twelve years, what he had just done to avenge (said he) the death of his brother. He told them that they could withdraw and go wherever they wished, for he would not be able from then on to see them without pain. At this the uncle and the nephew, full of sorrow, took off with the same religious who had been present at this murder and two or three other Frenchmen, friends of theirs, whose names he does not remember, by way of the Cenis village, where they left the said Pierre Talon, following the intentions of the late S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle, and undertook to travel through woods and unknown lands to reach Canada. They provided themselves with guns and ammunition for hunting, preferring to expose themselves to all perils that they would have to endure and to place themselves at the mercy of diverse nations of savages that they would have to travel through, rather than submit to the domination of the said Duhau, who seized command of those of this unfortunate party who remained, numbering only about eighteen or twenty. But he did not enjoy very long the authority that he had acquired for himself by his crime because division crept in among them. James, his accomplice, killed him two or three days later with a pistol shot, and, having seized command, the jealousy of the others procured for him the same fate as had befallen Duhau, for he also was killed several days later by a French sailor named Rutre [Ruter], who was subsequently killed by a surgeon, also French.<sup>10</sup> This surgeon, fearing that someone would do the same to him, fled to the nation of savages named Toho, close neighbors of the Cenis, who received him well, for he had with him his gun and ammunition. Not long afterward, they took him to war against another nation of savages

<sup>10</sup> This passage contains several ambiguous statements. Whereas Pierre seems to say Duhaut was slain after the one group departed for Canada, the eighteen or twenty who remained obviously included both groups, which actually totaled fourteen or fifteen.

named Paouïites or Temerlouans.<sup>11</sup> They also took along the said Pierre Talon. This surgeon perished on that occasion. Having stayed behind when the Toho took flight—which those savages always do when they find their enemies on guard and ready to face them, as all these people are extremely fast and fleet of foot—this surgeon was not able to follow the said Toho, and, having fallen or lagged behind, he was slain. The said Talon would have had the same fate had he not mounted a horse that belonged to the aforementioned surgeon, who had given it to him to go into combat, that he might be better able to shoot a gun. The said Pierre Talon returned to the Cenis village, where he always stayed—that is to say, during five or six years<sup>12</sup> until the arrival of the Spaniards who brought him to Mexico, which will be discussed later. He has never since heard tell of the said brother and nephew of the late M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle, or the others who accompanied him.<sup>13</sup>

9. What were the most remarkable things that happened to them up to this time?

What could be said on this question would be only useless repetition of what has been said already and which can be said later, so we proceed to the next one.

10. The parts played by all the people who were with the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle at the time of his death.

The destiny of several of these who were near M. de la Salle has already been spoken of. Some died, killing one another, as stated, and the others scattered and went away among the savages except those who followed his brother and his nephew.

11 The extract of the Interrogations in Margry (*Découvertes*, III, 612) spells the name “Lemerlouans,” an obvious misreading of the manuscript. The 1703 Delisle map has it as it is spelled here. See Schuetz, “Ethnological Data,” p. 260.

12 Actually about three years.

13 The others were the Sieur de Marle, who drowned in the Red River; La Salle’s brother, the Abbé Jean Cavelier; Colin Cavelier, his nephew; the pilot Tessier; Pierre Barthélemy, a young Parisian; Father Anastase Douay, who was to return to the New World with the Louisiana founding expedition of 1699; and Joutel, who spurned the opportunity to do likewise. Weddle, “La Salle’s Survivors,” p. 415.

One named Pierre Meunier, a young Frenchman, went with the Cenís, where he always lived in company with the said Pierre Talon, and in the same way, until they were freed by the Spaniards, as will be told later.<sup>14</sup>

As for those who stayed at the settlement when the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle undertook the journey on which he was killed, Jean-Baptiste Talon, who was of the number, reports that they were no more than twenty or twenty-five persons, counting the women, one priest, and two Religious of the Order of St. Francis. They were nearly all massacred by the savages named Clamcoehs, who had waged war against them because the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle, on arriving, arbitrarily took their canoes for ascending the river to establish a settlement. Even though they had made peace with them, they had no sooner learned of the S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle's death and the disunity that had arisen among his people than they came to surprise those who remained at the aforementioned settlement by the worst treachery in the world. As the French were no longer on their guard, believing them [the Clamcoehs] to be friends, these had little trouble slaughtering them all, except the said Jean-Baptiste Talon; two of his brothers, younger than he, named Robert and Lucien; their older sister, named Marie-Magdeleine; and another young Parisian named Eustache Bréman, who was said to be of the family. They were saved by some savage women who, touched with compassion by their youth, loaded them on their backs and carried them into their cabins while their husbands massacred the rest, after the said Talons had seen their mother fall before their eyes.

As for their father, he had become lost in the woods sometime previously, having gone in a party with the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle, and no one ever knew how he perished. Their other sister [Marie-Elizabeth] had died of illness at the settlement.

The aforementioned savage women also saved in the same way the wife of a French officer [Gabriel Minime, Sieur Barbier] who commanded the settlement in the absence of the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle and who was also slain. They were likewise moved with tenderness at the sight of the three-month-old baby she had at breast, but the savages returned to their cabins after the massacre, killed her first, and then her child, which one of them dashed against a tree while holding it by a foot. But they did not hurt the said Talons or Eustache Bréman, who were reared and loved by these same savage women who had saved them, as if they were

14 See Pierre Meunier, "Declaración," Mexico City, Aug. 19, 1690, UT transcript 69, AGI, Mexico 617.

their own children, for the six or seven years<sup>15</sup> that they stayed among them, living as they did until the Spaniards from Mexico came and freed them, as will be said later.

## II. What they did, and their details.

The said Talons have already said something of their particular movements and how they fell into the power of the savages, who first tattooed them on the face, the hands, the arms, and in several other places on their bodies as they do on themselves, with several bizarre black marks, which they make with charcoal of walnut wood, crushed and soaked in water. Then they insert this mixture between the flesh and the skin, making incisions with strong, sharp thorns, which cause them to suffer great pain. Thus, the dissolved carbon mixes with the blood and oozes from these incisions and forms indelible marks and characters on the skin. These marks still show, despite a hundred remedies that the Spaniards applied to try to erase them.<sup>16</sup> They [the Talons] went to hunt and to war with them [the Indians], who taught them how to shoot an arrow and how to run like them. These savages run so swiftly that there is no galloping horse, no matter how fast, that they cannot follow, and even leave behind. They all went naked like them, and every morning at daybreak, in any season, they went to plunge into the nearest river. Like them, they ate meat from the hunt, fresh or cured in the sun, but most often half raw. The only meals that horrified them were those they made of human flesh, as they are all cannibals, but toward their savage enemies only. They never ate a single Frenchman that they had killed because, they said, they do not eat them. And the said Jean-Baptiste Talon vouches that he once went three days without eating, because nothing presented itself during that time except some human flesh of the Ayenis whom they had killed on one of the expeditions, which will be discussed later.

Pierre Talon, the older of these two brothers, having been left with the Cenis as previously stated, remained always with their chief, who appeared to have no authority over the others except in war. Yet this authority is itself so limited that each one quits and returns to the dwelling when he feels like it, without asking permission or authorization from the commander. They wage war without observing a single rule or discipline, but only by surprise and without exposing themselves too

<sup>15</sup> Actually two or three years.

<sup>16</sup> See Enríquez Barroto's description (diary, April 18) of tattooing by the Arakapas.

much. These peoples never go to attack their enemies except at night or at break of day, when they believe them sound asleep. When they can surprise them and kill a few of them, they pull off their scalp with the hair, which they dry and then fill with hay, each one keeping those he was able to carry off to make trophies, hanging them on sticks on the timbers of the roof of their huts or cabins, or holding them in his hands while exhibiting them or raising them aloft, with much display and ostentation. Upon returning from some war that was favorable to them, they dance to the songs that are for celebrating their victory, as is their custom. The one who has the most scalps is the most esteemed by the others, and it is in this that all their glory consists.

The father of the Cenís chief was still living and he also bore the title of chief. They lived together, but it appeared that all authority resided in the son. The father was already old and had apparently bestowed on him [the son] all the honor of commanding, but they lived in concord and in an admirable union. Moreover, the said Talons affirm that they were always treated by these savage people with the greatest kindness in the world, without ever having been maltreated with blows or otherwise. On the contrary, they loved them tenderly and appeared to be very angry when anyone displeased them in any way and took their part on these occasions, even against their own children.

12. In what way they fell into the hands of the Spaniards.

The Spaniards from Mexico, having been informed of the incursion and of M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle's plan for the French settlement in La Louisiane, resolved to thwart him; and to that end made three expeditions,<sup>17</sup> even though they had to pass through an unknown and faraway land, according to what the said Talons reported having heard them say, where they had never been before. On the first expedition, they were about 500 men on horseback, armed with muskets or small harquebuses, pistols, and swords and all wearing coats of mail or iron wire made like nets of very small links, which protected them from the consequences of the savages' arrows. But, as it was already a long time after the massacre of

<sup>17</sup> Reference is to Alonso de León's expeditions of 1689 and 1690 and to that of Domingo Terán de los Ríos in 1691. Diaries of all three are published in Lino Gómez Canedo, ed., *Primeras exploraciones y poblamiento de Texas (1686–1694)*. On León's 1689 expedition there were 85 soldiers and servants to a total of 113 Spaniards, plus an unspecified number of Indians (Massanet letter in Herbert Eugene Bolton, ed., *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest, 1502–1706*, p. 357).



the French when they arrived in the country, they found only two of those who had scattered after the death of the said Sr. de la Salle and who were with the savage nations closer to the borders of Mexico than the ones who have been mentioned previously. One of these Frenchmen was a young man from Bayonne named L'archevesque [L'Archevêque], who appeared to be of noble birth and well educated, and the other a sailor named Groulé [Grollet]. The Spaniards seized them and took them with them to Mexico, where the said Talons saw them, as they will say later on.

On the second trip the Spaniards were no more than 200,<sup>18</sup> having diminished their number because they had learned from the aforementioned L'archevesque and Groulé of the French disaster, and that there remained only a few who had escaped the various perils they had encountered and who were scattered among the savages. Finally, wanting absolutely to have in their power these wretched few who survived, they penetrated farther than they had on the first journey. Pierre Talon and Meunier, having learned from some savages that the Spaniards were looking for them and were drawing closer to them, wanted to evade them, fearing their cruelty. They believed they were fleeing from them, going farther into the territory from nation to nation. But they [the Spaniards] met them on their way and captured them. They made the two Frenchmen take them to the Cenís village, to see if there were any others.<sup>19</sup> Not finding any, they stayed there several days and, finding this nation more docile and, in some ways, more civil than the others, they left with them three Spanish Religious of the Order of St. Francis,<sup>20</sup> with several soldiers as their guard, who built them a house in the village. They left them some clothes, some flour, and other provisions, which they did not lack, having more than 400 horses of which those not used by the horsemen were loaded with baggage and provisions.

18 The second León *entrada* (1690), to found a Franciscan mission among the Cenís, or Tejas, actually was larger than the first. It had 110 soldiers and 4 priests. Alonso de León, "Diario," March 26–July 11, 1690, in Canedo, *Primeras exploraciones*, p. 138.

19 By that time all the others were dead, with the possible exception of the man from Provence (mentioned later), who had become thoroughly Indianized. His ultimate fate is not known.

20 Besides Fray Damián Massanet, who was to return to Mexico to arrange for expansion of the missionary enterprise, the priests were Francisco Casañas de Jesús María, whom Massanet left in charge, and Miguel de Fontcuberta, and Antonio de Bordoy (Massanet letter, to Carlos de Sigüenza y Gongora in Bolton, *Spanish Exploration*, p. 368). They came to establish the Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, on a tributary of the Neches River in present-day Houston County, Texas.

These Religious, while the said Talon and Meunier stayed with them, worked at making a compilation of words for learning the Cenis language. Talon and Meunier served them as interpreters by means of the captain and lieutenant of this Spanish troop, who spoke good French.<sup>21</sup> They heard them say many times that they wanted to live in this country, that it belonged to them and not to the French. They also heard them say this later to the viceroy of Mexico.

As the aforementioned Pierre Talon saw that the Spaniards treated him very humanely, he made known to them that there were still in the country his three brothers and one sister and other Frenchmen, who were with the Clamcoeh nation, that he might have the consolation of seeing them brought with him and among Christians. It came to pass, for the Spaniards went there and brought his sister but only two of his brothers, namely Robert and Lucien. His other brother, Jean-Baptiste, and Eustache Bréman again remained with this savage nation—how this happened he could not say—until about a year later, when a third troop of about 250 Spaniards returned to fetch them and take them to Mexico.<sup>22</sup> Reluctantly, the savages allowed them to go, because they saw very well that the Spaniards were ready to carry them away by force if they refused. On the other hand, the Spaniards did not want to bring on themselves a war with [the natives] because they intended to establish themselves in the country. They agreed to give in exchange one horse for each French head. But when it came to the Talons' sister, who was taller and older, being their eldest, the savages wanted two horses for her. Beyond that, there arose a dispute that made them take recourse to arms, so that there were two or three savages killed with musket shots, which made the others flee because they greatly feared firearms. Finally, they gave up the girl for one horse as they had done for each of the boys. To appease them the Spaniards gave them some smoking tobacco, which they love so much that there is nothing they will not do to get it. On the Spaniards' side, only one horse was wounded by the savages' arrows, which they shot in great numbers. However, these had no

21 Reference is to Captain Gregorio de Salinas Varona, who was on the 1690 León expedition and that of Terán in 1691, and the *alférez* (sublieutenant) Francisco Martínez, who was with León in 1689 and Terán. Both were fluent in French and both served later at Pensacola, where they had frequent encounters with the French colonists of Mobile and Biloxi.

22 This was the Terán expedition, which had fifty soldiers and thirteen religious. An additional fifty men under Salinas Varona were brought by sea aboard the frigate *Santo Cristo de San Román*, of which Juan Enríquez Barroto was captain (Domingo Terán de los Ríos, "Diario," in Canedo, *Primeras exploraciones*, pp. 189, 191, 222).

effect against the Spaniards because of their coats of mail. These idiots feared not only the noise of the firearms, but even that of the drums; for example, the Clamcoëhs, having mobilized for the purpose of destroying the French, because M. de la Salle had arbitrarily taken their canoes, as has been said, were so terrified at the sound of the drum, which [the Spaniards] beat to prepare themselves for defense, that they all fled. Since then they have become somewhat accustomed to these noises of war; and, instead of fleeing immediately in terror, they were content thereafter with throwing themselves on the ground as soon as they heard the shot of cannon or musket, believing thus to put themselves out of reach. They felt so much regret on having to part with the brothers and sister of Jean-Baptiste Talon that the latter (who stayed yet some time with them, as stated previously) affirms that they all wept bitterly when the Spaniards took them; and they mourned them for a month afterward, especially the smaller ones, for whom they had greater attachment and tenderness than for the older ones. They cried no less when they parted from the said Jean-Baptiste Talon and Eustache Bréman and urged the former to desert the Spaniards and return to them as soon as possible, with a number of horses. This he promised them but without intending to keep his word, since he felt more at ease among Christians than with barbarians.

On the second expedition that the Spaniards made—the first time they penetrated as far as the Clamcoeh nation<sup>23</sup>—they brought also an Italian who happened to be among them. They have forgotten his name. He never wanted to acknowledge being of the number of those of M. de la Salle, even though the Talons believed that he was. He said that he had come alone to this region from Canada by land, which can hardly be believed.

13. They were asked what they saw in New Spain and in the countries they passed through to get there, and they gave the greatest detail they could.

The Talons and their comrades, having been captured by the Spaniards, as has been said, crossed with them—before arriving in New Spain—a big country very much like the one they had just left, and which they have previously described, also populated with savages separated into small nations, each one having its own particular name and language.

<sup>23</sup> León's 1690 expedition, the first to make contact with the Karankawa group that held the Talon children.

They often made war among themselves, but always by surprise and without previous declaration. That is why it is always necessary for Europeans who would go there and settle to remain on their guard and beware of them, it being naturally as easy for them to break the peace as to make it.

All their dialects are the more difficult to learn because they bear no relationship to the languages of Europe. Moreover, their way of living is rather uniform. Living mostly as nomads, by hunting and fishing, they are concerned only about what is necessary for their subsistence, going naked, possessing nothing as their own, knowing nothing about any sort of bread or biscuits, and living off the flesh of fish and fruit, without any seasoning or preparation of the food for cooking, simply roasting or boiling, which they do only halfway.

After two months and more of travel on horseback, they arrived at the village of savages that is only a quarter of a league from the Spanish dwellings.

Those savages are, in part, Christians and live with the Spaniards on good enough terms. They remember neither the name of the village nor the one of the nation that inhabits it, having only passed through there; but they remember very well that their number did not exceed 300.<sup>24</sup> It was there that they began to see some high mountains, which are like a natural separation of the countries inhabited by the savages from the one inhabited by the Spaniards. Several of these mountains are of a prodigious height, and there are a few that are covered with snow almost all the time, even though none falls on the plains. It is always hot, especially on the other side of the mountains toward the south. This snow will be refreshing to the Spaniards who send to fetch some for a cool drink. Among these mountains, there are also some that belch forth flames continually through their summits.

Leaving there, they entered a Spanish village named Caouil,<sup>25</sup> where there are only about 20 houses. They remained there almost a month. The inhabitants live there like in Europe, cultivating the lands, which produce good wheat and maize, or corn. They also make sugar there.

Having left this village, they arrived after six days of travel, always

24 Reference apparently is to the 1690 journey of Pierre, Marie-Magdelaine, Lucien, and Robert. They left the scene of the encounter on June 22 and reached Monclova on July 15, having crossed the Rio Grande near the later site of San Juan Bautista (Guerrero, Coahuila) (Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, pp. 212–13; León, “Diario,” in Canedo, *Primeras exploraciones*, p. 147).

25 San Francisco de Coahuila, now Monclova.

on horseback—during which they passed by several other Spanish villages, separated one from the other by only one or two leagues—at the town of St. Louis de Potosy [San Luis Potosí], which is large and beautiful, about like La Rochelle, and the See of a Bishop but without any fortification or surrounding wall. It is densely populated with Spaniards, who are all wealthy, working in the gold and silver mines not far away. The Talons did not see the mines, having simply passed through the town, where they slept one night only.

From there they continued on their road until they came to the one leading to Mexico, capital of the country, archbishopric, and place where the Spanish viceroy makes his residence. It appeared to them very large and beautiful, and they heard someone tell the Spaniards that it was as large as Madrid. The houses there are well built, all on a very high level and all with terraced roofs, so that one can go over them without difficulty, from one end of the street to the other. There are many coaches.<sup>26</sup>

The viceroy had ten of them for his own use and that of his household. And he is the only one in the city who can have coaches with six horses or six mules, it being permitted to others to have only 4 or 2, unless they are traveling out into the country. He alone can have teams of horses, even though they are numerous in that country. Private individuals and a few noblemen are allowed to have only mules. The town is heavily populated, but the majority are natives of the country; that is, descendants of the Indian peoples or savages, rather than of Spaniards. And it is not permitted to these natives to keep arms, which ensures that they do not know how to use them. Thus, they fight among themselves only by throwing rocks at each other. They [the Spaniards] take this precaution because of their great number and their inclination to revolt, for they endure the Spanish yoke only with difficulty. They revolted in the year 1692; and even though they were armed only with rocks, they put such a great fear into the hearts of the Spaniards that they all fled. Even the viceroy escaped through a window of his palace, with Madame his wife, and they took refuge at the archbishop's residence. On this occasion this prelate went in procession, followed by his clergy, through all the streets, carrying the Holy Sacrament; but the mutineers threw rocks at him and were not appeased. The principal ones among them call themselves by all the titles and dignities that the Spaniards have from the highest to the least. They would have ill-treated the viceroy if they

26 Concerning the coaches of Mexico City in this period, see "Los coches de la ciudad de Mexico durante la época colonial," *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, old series, 25, no 4: 537–87.

had found him. They set fire to his palace, reducing it to ashes, and would have created greater troubles or disorder if the Count of Santiago,<sup>27</sup> who is great lord of the Creoles—that is to say, of those born in the country but of Spanish origin—had not appeased them the next day. And even though he assembled what soldiers he could, he used only persuasion, having great trust in the spirit of these Indians. Afterward, when they were dispersed and those who had come from the fields had returned home, the viceroy had the cavalry dismount and made several examples of the more rebellious, who were flogged and put to death. It is to be noticed that the Creoles have no less an inclination to revolt than the descendants of the Indians because the Spaniards, mistrusting them, deprive them of all the civil and military offices. These descendants of the Indians are always so much inclined to idolatry, even though they have embraced Christianity, that there are still several who secretly adore carved idols that represent different sorts of animals with bizarre and unusual faces. This gives no little work to the Spanish Religious who want to try to abolish these superstitions entirely. It was during their long sojourn in this town that they saw boarded, in quantity and on all sides, gold and silver in ingots and bars, brought there from the aforementioned town of St. Louis de Potosy and the mines around it and Mexico, from which the closest mine is twelve leagues. Much of it comes also from a country the Spaniards call Sonora, which they heard tell is 200 leagues from there [Mexico]. Le Paral [Parral, Chihuahua] is another country inhabited by the Spaniards, which they say is 300 leagues from Mexico; but the said Talons could not tell whether there are mines there. The savages or Indians of the vicinity of Paral continually make war against the Spaniards and steal their horses and mules, which they eat.<sup>28</sup>

Mexico is a very temperate country and very healthful, abounding in everything, producing all sorts of fruits, those that grow in Europe as well as those of the Indies. One sees there also some of nearly all kinds of animals, both land and aquatic, as well as birds. The Spanish inhabitants there are pleasant and courteous, and the savages who live in their vicinity are Christians, civilized, and hardworking. They perform all the

27 The same man who in May, 1683, gathered two thousand men to repel the pirate invasion of Veracruz but arrived after the pirates had withdrawn: Fernando Almirante de Velasco Legazpi y Castilla: Conde de Santiago to Crown, Mexico, July 26, 1683, AGI, Mexico 91, ramo 3; Weddle, *Spanish Sea*, p. 400.

28 Concerning the continuous warfare in the Chihuahua (Nueva Vizcaya) region in this period, see Jack D. Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard*, p. 209 ff.

work along with the Negroes, mulattoes, *metis* [mestizos], both in the mines and on the land. [[The mulattoes are the children issuing from a Negro and a white woman, or a white man and a Negro woman, and the mestizos are those of a Spaniard and an Indian woman. There is a great number of the one and the other of these breeds in all of Mexico.]] The Spaniards live there in excessive indolence and great idleness and are neither warriors nor well armed.

Neither the said town of Mexico nor that of St. Louis de Potosy is defended by any fort or fortification. It is the same for all the other towns in this land, excepting Vera Cruz, which is 80 leagues from the city of Mexico. It is the seaport at which the fleet arrives from Spain to load the gold, silver, and merchandise from all Mexico. It is fortified and surrounded by eight small forts of four, six, and eight cannon and is defended on the side of the sea by another large fort, which is built in the sea a cannonshot from the town. There are at least one hundred pieces of cannon in the town, most of them made of bronze. Protected by this fort, the fleet and the galleons set forth for Porto Bello [Portobelo] or Cartagenne [Cartagena] to take on the gold, silver, and merchandise that come from Perou [Peru].<sup>29</sup>

The said Talons also went to another town 20 leagues from Mexico City going toward Vera Cruz named La Puebla, which is the See of a Bishop, half as large as that of Mexico, where there is also a large number of carriages. There are also several other towns in the vicinity and in all the surrounding country, but they are smaller; also a number of beautiful villages, whose houses are all covered with red tile.

There are all over this country some very venomous snakes and scorpions; and there is among the serpents one singular species that is called rattlesnake, for they actually have something like rattles on the tail, by means of which they can be heard when they move if ever one comes near. They are the most venomous and always crawl on the ground, never climbing trees, as some others there do.

The said Talons cannot say precisely how far it is from the Cenis village to the city of Mexico, but one can judge by the long time it took them to make this journey that it is far. It is true also that it is necessary to consider that traveling in groups and in unknown country, where there were no cleared roads and where they found rivers that had to be crossed nearly every day, they did not make much progress; but they

29 The fleet itinerary is confused. The Tierra Firme fleet that went to Portobelo via Cartagena sailed after lading directly to Havana, where it met the New Spain fleet from Veracruz (Lucas de Molina, "Quenta que se tomo a Lucas de Molina," February, 1554, AGI, Contaduría 876).

affirm that it is 300 leagues by sea from the bay where M. de la Salle disembarked to Vera Cruz.<sup>30</sup>

L'archevesque and Groulé, who were previously mentioned, having been sent to Madrid with the fleet, were detained there in prison for about six months,<sup>31</sup> after which time they were returned to Mexico, where the said Talons saw them, chains on their feet for being sent back, so said the Spaniards, to a faraway land about 400 or 500 leagues distant, which they wanted to settle and which they called New Mexico; and they did this, so they believed, to get rid of them because they were grown men who were intelligent, especially L'archevesque. They feared that they would bring back to France too much knowledge of this particular country, which they dreaded greatly; and there is nothing they would not do to prevent this.<sup>32</sup> It was apparent that this same distrust led them to imprison the Italian, mentioned previously, in one of the forts of Vera Cruz, where they saw him also and where he subsequently died. They did not have the same mistrust of the Talons because the viceroy took them into his home, four brothers and one sister that they were, still of tender age, and he raised them in their [the Spaniards'] own ways during the nine to ten years<sup>33</sup> that they lived in his palace, with great kindness and all sorts of good treatment, regarding them as his household servants and as naturalized citizens. That is so true that when the said Pierre and Jean-Baptiste Talon and another of their brothers, named Lucien, had come of age to carry arms, the viceroy made all three of them embark from Vera Cruz in one of the five warships that made up the Armada de Barlovento<sup>34</sup> to serve as soldiers. And the viceroy, having been relieved a short time later by another sent from Spain,<sup>35</sup> embarked with the fleet to return to Europe, taking with him their

30 Straight across the Gulf, the distance is about 375 nautical miles, somewhat short of 300 leagues (3.43 miles per Spanish marine league).

31 Actually thirty months. See Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt*, p. 236. Depositions of L'Archevêque and Grollet and related documents are translated in Walter J. O'Donnell, *La Salle's Occupation of Texas*.

32 The Talons understand the Spaniards' motivation quite well. See Report of Junta de Guerra de Indias, Madrid, May 6, 1692, AGI, Mexico 617, for the Spanish view.

33 Actually six or seven years.

34 This Windward fleet was assigned to guard Spanish interests in the Gulf and Caribbean, protecting shipping and coastal settlements. It was often ineffective but occasionally scored a coup, as in the capture of 120 French pirates fleeing after the sack of Campeche in 1685, among whom were deserters from La Salle's company who revealed his mission.

35 Gaspar de la Cerda Sandoval Silva y Mendoza, Conde de Galve, was succeeded as viceroy of New Spain in February, 1696, by Juan Ortega y Mon-



other brother, named Robert (who was the youngest of the four), and their sister, Marie-Magdelaine, who must be in Spain now, if God preserved them. And to say things as they are, the said Pierre, Jean-Baptiste, and Lucien were so accustomed to the Spaniards that, when they were taken by M<sup>r</sup>. Désaugiers, captain of the king's ships who carried off the vessel on which they were soldiers last year, they were very angry, and they relaxed only on returning to Europe, that they might be able to go to Spain to rejoin their other brother and their sister, the separation from whom they still felt severely. When the S<sup>r</sup>. de Boissieux obliged the first two to enlist in the naval company of Feugerolles, of which he was lieutenant, he had the other [Lucien] placed as a servant because he was found too young to be a soldier.<sup>36</sup>

14. Their special question: Whether they saw the Mississippi River and what they learned of its course and of the place it empties into the sea.

M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle, having been killed without discovering the mouth of the Mississippi River that he had gone to look for, the said Talons cannot say positively whether it is one of these mouths that they saw after his death, because they were among the savages. But Jean-Baptiste Talon reports that a short time after the murder, and the subsequent massacre of the Frenchmen at the settlement, as he has stated previously, the Clamcoehs with whom he was, having no more French to fight, turned their schemes against the Cenis, their ancient enemies. In preparation for surprising them in their village, they decamped from near the French settlement and embarked in canoes to go, according to their custom, to look for some safe and remote spot that could serve as refuge for their aged, their women, and their children while they were busy with their expedition. Navigating all along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, they passed the Riviere des Cannes, which has been mentioned elsewhere. Continuing their navigation, they finally stopped and entered a

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táñez, bishop of Michoacán, who served only until the following December (Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Guide to Materials for the History of the United States in the Principal Archives of Mexico*, p. 469).

<sup>36</sup> A letter of the Sieur de Boissieux, dated Morlaix, January 7, 1698, in Margry, *Découvertes*, IV, 43–44, indicates that the brothers had been denied permission to go to Spain. The trip, if made at all, must have been after they were interrogated the following February 14. Boissieux (p. 43) also says that the third brother from the Spanish ship (Lucien) was at Oléron, where he was apparently placed as a servant.

large river, distant from the Riviere des Cannes, toward the south of the Gulf, about as far as from the Riviere des Cannes to the bay where the said Sr. de la Salle made his incursion.<sup>37</sup> Finding this place very convenient for their plans, because of its natural shelter made by the mountains of sand and the woods around the two mouths of this river as by the abundance of fish, buffaloes, turkeys, ducks, and several other kinds of venison and game as well as all sorts of fruits that are found in the surrounding area, they left their aged, their women, and their children with the said Jean-Baptiste Talon; his two little brothers, Lucien and Robert; his sister, Marie-Magdelaine; and Eustache Bréman. They stayed there about six weeks, waiting for the return of their warriors, who came back at the end of that time. Victorious there, not over the Cenis, whom they had gone to look for, but over the Ayennis, neighbors and allies of the Cenis, they brought back about 50 to 60 scalps and 30 or 40 slaves (some of whom they served up as a feast) and several horses. This action is confirmed by Pierre Talon, who was then with the Cenis and who says he remembers very well this raid of the Clamcochs, news of which was brought to the Cenis by an Ayenny woman who had escaped from among their slaves. And this woman said that the Ayenny (who were not informed of the massacre of their own people) believed that some of the French were among them, because of several gunshots that had been fired at them, of which they had all been terrified. But, having known the contrary, from the chief of the Cenis, as well as from the four Frenchmen who were yet with them—namely, Pierre Talon, Pierre Meunier, the French sailor Rutre, and a man from Provence whose name he has forgotten—knowing without doubt that it was the Clamcochs themselves who had fired the shots from guns they had found loaded at the French settlement when they had committed the massacre, she returned to disabuse those of her nation, for they had believed that the French had been in the party with the Clamcochs.

To return to the subject of this river, the said Jean-Baptiste Talon affirms that it is very beautiful, more than two musket shots wide, and very deep, that it empties into the sea by two mouths, that it appears to be of great length and is a mighty river, having ebb and flow. He was unable to say if it is the Mississippi River, not having heard its name; but there is much evidence that it is. There are a great number of palm trees and pines along the banks and in the surrounding area.

37 The passage is misleading. The Talons have said previously that the Rivière des Cannes emptied into the same bay as the river on which the French settlement was situated (question 2), and other accounts (e.g., Joutel, “Rela-

15. To know whether they passed many other rivers on the way to Mexico, their size, and their depth.

The Talons, while going from the country of the savages to Mexico, crossed some rivers nearly every day while they were traveling; but most of them were small and several fordable, or, if it happened that they were deep, as a number of them were found to be, they were so narrow that to cross them all the Spaniards had to do was cut down a few trees on both sides, which fell one on top of the other across the stream and formed a sort of bridge. It is true that among these trees there were some marvelously high and extremely thick ones. As for the horses, they swam across. They are unable to tell more precisely either the width or the depth of all these rivers, among which they found only one that appeared to them so wide that to cross it the Spaniards were obliged to make boats of buffalo hides [*cuïres de boeufs*], prepared for that purpose. It was more than one long musket shot wide, very deep, appeared to be very long, and was not very swift. They could tell neither its name nor its exact location but they estimated that it was about midway on the road they traveled between the Ceniz village and that of Caouil [Coahuila, or Monclova] and that it seemed to be the same one of which they spoke in answering the preceding question.<sup>38</sup>

16. What sort of Indians did they meet along the way, and did it seem to them that they could trade with them?

This question has been partly answered by the different accounts that have been given in answering the preceding ones. All the different nations of savages in this whole country live in a rather uniform manner and resemble each other so much that it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to distinguish them except with respect to their different dialects and the different geographical regions inhabited by those who have villages. As for those who are from nations that have no fixed

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tion," pp. 261–62) indicate that it was the Lavaca River and its tributary, the Navidad. They could not have passed it while traveling by canoe along the Gulf Coast.

<sup>38</sup> The river described is the Rio Grande, which was at flood stage when Pierre Talon, with Alonso de León, crossed it in 1690 near present-day Guerrero, Coahuila. Jean-Baptiste's conclusion that it was the one where the Karankawa noncombatants had remained during the raid on the Ayenny (Hainai) is invalid, for the crossing is 250 miles from the mouth of the river.

dwelling place and wander continually, camping wherever they find themselves in the manner that has been reported, they have no place set apart. They move about often without ever coming to dispute the territory among themselves, not knowing what ownership is, or its limits or confrontations. They believe that all that the earth, the sea, and the air produces, being in common, incontestably belongs to the first ones who take possession of it.

As for trade among them, nothing appeared easier, for they communicate voluntarily with the Europeans, whom they call the Sons of the Sun. They consider this celestial body, as well as the moon, to be some sort of divinity, without, however, their rendering them any worship; they do not think that they ever showed veneration for them. M. de la Salle would never have had war with the Clamcochs if on arriving he had not high-handedly taken their canoes and refused them some little article of use that they asked him in return for them and for other services that they were ready to render to him. Nothing is easier than winning their friendship: a hatchet, a knife, a pair of scissors, a pin, a needle, a necklace or a bracelet of glass, wampum, or some other such trinkets being ordinarily the price, because they love passionately all sorts of knickknacks and baubles that are useful or ornamental. But also, as they give voluntarily of what they have, they do not like to be refused. And, while they are never aggressors, neither do they ever forget the pride of honor in their vengeance. But one need not fear their numbers, no matter how great. They never dare attack from the front Europeans armed with muskets and other firearms. There is nothing to fear from them but surprise attacks. It is for that reason that the Spaniards all have coats of mail when they travel among them. An unfailing means, other than small gifts, that the Europeans still have of winning the friendship of the nations whose alliance could help them the most in their settlements is to take part in the wars that they often wage against others. They believe themselves unconquerable when they unite with Europeans and spread terror and fright everywhere among their enemies by the noise and the effects of firearms, which they have never used and which they always have looked upon as inconceivable marvels. If the French had made more of a mystery to them about firearms, they would have regarded the French themselves as prodigies and invincible men; if they had squandered their lives less, and if they had taken greater precautions to preserve themselves as the Spaniards shrewdly do. For it is established that they never, as a people, had seen Europeans before the arrival in their country of the said S<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle.<sup>39</sup>

39 A questionable statement. See Enríquez Barroto diary entry for April 7,

All the savages are of such a great simplicity, so credulous and so sensitive to the friendship that is offered them, that nothing is easier than to impose on them; some examples that the said Talons relate establish that truth.

Here they are.

The savage Clamcochs had greatly desired to abuse their sister, Marie-Magdelaine, who was already tall, being the eldest, quite pretty, and well built.<sup>40</sup> They came in force and were all unaware of a stratagem to save her honor. Eustache Bréman, who has been mentioned previously, made them believe that, if they did violence to her, this girl's God would make them all die. This ploy succeeded, a fact that indicates this people's disposition to fear God, if someone were to teach them. The Italian, also mentioned previously, having lived a long time with these same Clamcochs, had learned their language perfectly. But it happened finally that he displeased them in something, so that they determined to kill him. He thwarted this with a trick, which marks the subtlety of his spirit and the credulity of these savages. Here it is. He told these idiots that they were going to kill a man who loved them so much that he carried all of them in his heart; and if they doubted it, he would prove it to them the next day, if they were willing to grant him these terms: he would show them his open heart, and they would all see themselves there. The savages, having spared his life until the next day to put him to the test, did not fail to come around him very early in the morning in great numbers to see the effect of his promise, or to kill him if he did not keep it. The Italian had so well affixed just over his heart a pocket mirror he had that the savages, who had never seen a mirror, did not suspect the trick; and, calling them all, one after the other, he said to each one: "There is my open heart. Look! Do you not see yourself?" And, each one in fact seeing himself in the mirror, they all remained amazed and allowed him to live. Jean-Baptiste heard this deed described by the savage Clamcochs as a marvel they could not understand; and Pierre Talon confirms it, having heard the Italian himself tell about it when they saw

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1687, concerning a prior visit to Matagorda Bay by Juan Poule and his pirate ship. Extent of the Karankawas' contact with Europeans before La Salle is not known, but the natives seem to have demonstrated, in pillaging the wrecked *Aimable's* stores, that they were accustomed to plundering lost ships.

40 Alonso de León, in his letter to the viceroy of July 12, 1690 (in Canedo, *Primeras exploraciones*, p. 157), referred to Marie-Magdelaine as "a little French girl of twelve or fourteen," suggesting that she was small for her age, which was sixteen.

each other in Mexico, as of a stratagem he had conceived to save his life in an extremely pressing danger.

One need have no fear about breaking relations with the savages over their wives and daughters, for they are not at all jealous of them and take no offense concerning their honor, willingly prostituting them and not being angry if they have intercourse with the Europeans. Some of M<sup>r</sup>. de la Salle's people had even taken wives among them. The French sailor named Rutre, who was spoken of previously, had changed seven or eight times and left two children by one of these women, following in this, as in all the rest, the custom of the savages, who have in truth only one wife at a time, but who change them whenever they want to, which is to say often.<sup>41</sup>

Several of these women accompany their husbands to war, but their only job is to carry away from the battlefield the enemy corpses to make a feast, all together, upon their return.

People of the same nation live among themselves in a marvelous union, never having scandalous quarrels, and never striking each other, especially the men. The women often have little quarrels among themselves, in which the husbands never take part. This is because one does not know, among the savages, what justice, or punishment, is. They help each other when the need arises; and those whose hunt was productive share it willingly with their unsuccessful neighbors.

It appears, however, that they have not a single principle or smattering of religion: one could only infer that they have some confused impression of the immortality of their souls [[and the resurrection of the dead]] by the ceremonies that they observe in the burial of their dead. After having wrapped the corpse in a well-prepared buffalo hide, the same one that he had used in life to cover himself, they bury him with his club, his bow, and his arrows, a quantity of smoked meat, some corn and vegetables, and two pieces of a certain wood that they use instead of gun flint to make fire [[For this purpose they make a little hole in one of the pieces of wood, which is flat, and which they lean against something; and, having sharpened the other, which is round, they adjust the

41 Father Anastase Douay (in Cox, ed., *Journeys*, I, 267) claims that several of the Frenchmen had married Indian women "to multiply the colony" at Fort St.-Louis and (p. 237) that the colony had been joined by some Indian families. The only "marriage" of French men and Indian women mentioned by the Talons and other sources were among the Cenis and certainly not entered into, as Douay says, with the intention of augmenting the colony. Joutel (cited in Cox, *Journeys*, I 237n., and II, 88) denies that any Indians joined the colony.

point of it in the hole and make some fire by rubbing these two pieces of wood, by turning the one that is round between their hands, as fast as they can.]] and all that in order that he may use them (so they say) when he wakes up.

Jean-Baptiste Talon says that the Clamcoehs wear mourning for their dead parents by smearing their body with a black substance made with charcoal of walnut wood soaked in water; and all those in the family weep regularly at a certain hour, evening and morning, for a very long time, without being able to say precisely how long.

Pierre Talon reports that he saw the Cenis practice a ceremony that resembles an act of sacrifice, for when they have killed a buffalo, a deer, or some other beast, they do not eat any of it; neither do they have it cooked, before the eldest—after having mumbled several words very low, which the said Talon was never able to make out—had thrown a piece of it into the fire, after which they put this meat either to boil or to roast, and then they eat it.

One sees among all these peoples only males [that are] well built and well formed, as well as those of the other sex, because, if it happens that a woman gives birth to a deformed child, she buries it alive as soon as it is born. They also practice this inhumanity toward the unborn children they are carrying if their husbands abandon them. Then they take another husband, and that happens frequently. These women give birth just like animals do, in some grassy spot, and in an open field, alone and without help, then go at once to wash themselves and their child in the nearest river or in the sea. And as soon as the child is born, if it is without defect and to their liking, they mark it by cutting its tender skin; and it was said elsewhere they did this to the said Talons and to the French children who stayed with them. If the child cries a great deal during this painful operation, they have a bad opinion of its courage and do not like it as much. This is why they like pins and needles [for tattooing] above all things, even though they have no clothes to fasten and do not know how to sew. They find needles better than pins and use them instead to make these incisions.

All the savages, generally, are strong and robust and made for all sorts of hardship. It has already been said that it was their old men who practiced medicine and dressed the wounds. They do this free and with so much success that never did the curable sick die while in their hands. Besides the perfect knowledge they have of the properties of medicinal herbs, as has been said, they draw blood and practice the sucking of wounds. To draw blood, they have little combs, made with the teeth of a kind of large rat found in that country, with which they scrape and tear the skin, and the very spot where one feels the pain. When they want to

cure a headache, they prick the skin [of the head] in several places, depending on where the pain is; and then they suck the blood, which spurts out with very great force. These practices are successful.

The Cenis eat the roasted grain of maize, or corn. They also make flour with it and various kinds of gruel; and, from time to time, all the aged of the village assemble at their chief's house, where they enter into conversation with each other and entertain each other in various ways. Then this chief treats each of them to a large jug of gruel made with corn, very clear, which they drink, and sometimes he gives them presents of bows and arrows, which come from a nation that lives above the Cenis. These bows are made of a more beautiful wood than their own, extremely strong and hard, and are red and yellow in color.<sup>42</sup>

They shoot the bow with admirable accuracy, and they know so well how to choose the exact place of the joints in the shoulders of a buffalo that it is rare to see them miss their shot. Also, it is the first exercise taught their children, who practice continually as soon as they have sufficient strength to shoot at little birds with small bows. These savages not only kill buffalo, deer, roebucks, and all other kinds of beasts and birds with the bow and arrow, but they also fish in the sea and in the rivers, having for that purpose bows and arrows that are larger than ordinary. They have a thousand other inventions for fishing because, in addition to nets, which they make of hemp and in the same manner as ours, they fish also with a line and, even though they have no hook, they arrange the sharp wood with the bait so skillfully that it serves the same purpose. They harpoon the larger fish with the harpoon at the end of a long line, which they release when they have wounded the fish; and at the end of this line there is a sort of buoy made of a certain floating wood to enable them to find it. Their other inventions for fishing, which are numerous, are very clever.

Nearly all these people speak very much from the throat,<sup>43</sup> which renders their dialects difficult to learn. That of the Cenis is one of the less harsh, for they speak less from the throat than do the other savages.

42 The wood was Osage orange, or bois d'arc (*Maclura pomifera*), the common name of which means "bow wood" in French. It is found abundantly in the Caddoan country of northeastern Texas and adjacent areas of Arkansas and Oklahoma. The tree has a yellow heart wood.

43 Minet (Part II, entry for February 27, 1685) also describes the Karankawas' speech, saying they clapped the tongue against the palate, making a sound like one makes when speaking to a horse. The Chevalier Grenier, shipwrecked at Matagorda Bay in 1745, observed that they spoke with teeth together, "making a clucking sound with the end of the tongue as one does when calling chickens" ("Relation," manuscript copy from Archives de Marine, UT archives).



Also, they are the most gentle and the most polite among them, as has been said elsewhere.

They listened with docility to the Spanish Religious who stayed among them—and who, having learned their language, began to preach to them—and willingly allowed them to baptize their children. This Jean-Baptiste Talon avows, having stayèd in the country a long time after his brother Pierre and having gone to the Cenis village with the Spaniards, who brought him [away] on their third expedition, as has also been said. [[There is much [reason] to fear that the Spaniards had prejudiced these savage and credulous peoples against the French, to render them odious.]]

All these savage peoples generally are great gesticulators while talking and have a marvelous talent for understanding one another and communicating their thoughts by signs. And this talent is common to all these different nations, so that when they meet or visit one another, even though their languages are different, they understand one another by signs.

17. Whether they saw the Spaniards' mines, the places where they are situated, and how one would go there.

They saw only the mines of Tescoupe [Texcoco] and Patchouque [Pachuca], the former 12 leagues and the others 20 leagues from the City of Mexico, but they know very well that there are many others. It would be very easy to get there by land, via the road that they made, and which the Spaniards smoothed on their three different expeditions; or by other roads, which one could easily follow for the country is everywhere beautiful and flat. They even say that two Cenis men had accompanied the Spaniards as far as Mexico on their second trip, and then had returned to their village; that these two men might still be alive, or had transmitted to their posterity, as is their custom, the knowledge of this road and the things they had seen during their trip. They also said that there are many horses among the Cenis and other savage nations who habitually live in that land, who also raise horses, and from whom one could easily get some in exchange for hatchets, knives, and other trifles.<sup>44</sup> They have seen them several times exchange a horse for a single hatchet or a single knife. And the way the said Talons spoke, it seems

<sup>44</sup> This ready availability of horses in eastern Texas at this early date is noteworthy; the nearest Spanish settlement was hundreds of miles away. It testifies to the spread of European influences far beyond the areas actually pene-

that it would not be too difficult for them to find the means of making this trip if they could find again the same nations with whom they had lived, for they still remembered enough of their languages to make themselves understood and to understand them also. In any case, they affirm that they could make themselves understood not only by the nations with whom they have lived but even by other nations of savages, no matter who they be, by means of signs they learned by practice.<sup>45</sup>

They added that neither the city of Mexico nor that of St. Louis de Potosy nor any of the others in the country have any defense or fortification, as far as the seashore, where lies Vera Cruz, which is the only fortified city, as they explained previously. That fact, combined with the indolence of the Spaniards of that country, who are neither warriors nor well armed, would facilitate access.

Nations with which the said Talons were acquainted in the country of La Louisiane:<sup>46</sup>

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|---|---|---|
| <p>The Clamcochs . . . who are on the seashore and almost never leave it.</p>   | } | <p>These two nations are cruel and made war on M. de La Salle because he had taken their canoes to use them.</p>                  |
| <p>The Temerlouans . . . who are a little farther up.</p>   |   |   |
| <p>The Toho . . . Still a little farther up, inland</p>   | } | <p>The first is a wandering nation like the Clamcochs and Temerlouans and the other two have villages and cultivate the land.</p> |
| <p>The Cenis . . . A little farther up.</p>   |   |   |
| <p>The Ayenny . . . Still a little farther up.</p>  |   |   |
| <p>The Amalcham . . . another roving nation.</p>  |   |   |
| <p>The Canotino . . . another roving nation that is always at war against all the others, being the most wicked.</p>  |   |   |
| <p>The Caouiles . . . another wandering nation but not so wicked.</p>   |   |   |
| <p>Choman . . . another nation. These Choman visit the Cenis and other nations quite often, not having war against anyone. They are neighbors of the Spaniards, but on a different side from the one by which the Talons passed. There are many among them who speak Spanish.</p> |   |   |

trated by Europeans. The animals came through native trade channels from as far as Chihuahua. See Enríquez Barroto diary entry for April 18, 1687.

45 Pierre Talon and his brother Robert evidently did make themselves understood when they served as guides and interpreters for the Saint-Denis expedition across Texas in 1714.

46 See Scheutz, "Ethnological Data," in following commentaries.

There is still a great number of nations of which the whole country is filled but whose names the Talons do not know.

There is, besides, a small collection of some Indian words, which the Talons remembered, and which is included only to give a little idea of their idioms

Clamcoch Language<sup>47</sup>

The fire . . . Cohoille	A bull . . . Teck
The sun . . . Colonu	A cow . . . Tech-nen
The wood . . . Cohab	A calf . . . Cocho
The water . . . Comcom	A stag or } Tecomandoi-sen deer }
The Sea . . . Cocomden, which is to say, saltwater	A knife . . . Bequecomb
A man . . . Techoyou	An eagle . . . Balséhé
The woman . . . Achadu	Another com- mon bird Te cot sen
A boy . . . Colohs	European
A bow . . . Crouin	clothes Alames
An arrow . . . Demo	A sword . . . Techbeillé
A cabin . . . Caham	Good, some- thing good Couist-baha
Fire pot . . . Coco	Tall Large Counin
Tobacco . . . Cahé	
The Spaniards . . . They call them Cahamqueamy, which is to say people of the land, because they came to them by land.	
The French . . . They call them Calbasses, as one might say, people coming from the sea.	
A horse . . . Canonaium. And all the savage nations generally call it thus.	
A wolf . . . Thus the savages call them who tame them, who use them as dogs: Quez.	
A pig . . . Quez Calbasses, which is to say, dogs of the French.	
Language of the Cenis and of the Ayenny, much easier than the one of the Clamoehs	
Water . . . Coko	Good, something good . . . Conhistanhat
A bull . . . Tenaha	Wicked . . . Abana
A woman . . . Senaty	A European, Spaniard or French, without making any distinction: Yayecha
Grease . . . Assayo	

<sup>47</sup> See Rudolph Troike, "Linguistic Data," in the commentaries.