

Louis Antoine Andry

1727-1778

I. CONTEXT

In the midst of political changes following the Seven Years' War and the Treaty of Paris, territorial boundaries shifted, affecting France, Spain and England. Specifically, Louisiana territories west of the Mississippi passed from the control of France to Spain with numerous implications. Loyal French subjects living there were faced with the difficult decision of whether to leave their homes or revoke their citizenship and pledge allegiance to Spain. Indians living on the Texas-Louisiana boundary had been trading with the French and were hostile to Spain. Even though Texas and Louisiana were both part of the Spanish Empire, they reported to different political jurisdictions with incompatible trade regulations, creating conflicts. Advances in technology aided cartography and the development of more accurate maps, at a time when Spain was threatened by English aggression in the Spanish Sea (today's Gulf of Mexico) and needed to gain a greater understanding of their territories. Towards the end of the period, the English were facing the prospect of colonial revolution, which prompted concerns that the conflict could involve Spanish America.

Through his military career, employing his skills of mathematics, engineering, and map-making, Revolutionary War patriot Louis Antoine Andry made important contributions to the Louisiana colony under both the French and Spanish regimes and his tragic murder had a lasting impact on Texas as well.

II. OVERVIEW

Born November 25, 1727 to Louis Andry and his wife, Marie Ainfroy, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Seine-et-Oise, Île-de-France, France, Louis Antoine Andry was baptized in the Catholic Church the following day.¹ In May 1746, he sailed as a soldier of the French Army to Louisiana where he was garrisoned in New Orleans.² He then married, in 1752, a native Louisiana girl,

Marie Jeanne Lapierre (1732-1818), daughter of Jean Baptiste Lapierre and Marie Josephe Roy, also natives of Louisiana.³ Louis and Marie Jeanne are known to have had three sons and six daughters: Bernard Noël (Manuel), Gilbert Sosthène, Jean Constantin Silvere, Madeleine Celeste, Louise Constance, Marie Rose Clara (Victoire), Marie Luisa Seraphine, Marie Rosalie (Corinne), and Maria Carlotta Eugenia (Eugenie).⁴ Louis Andry was one of the major landowners along the Mississippi River. At some time prior to 1765, Andry had been granted a tract of land approximately twenty arpents⁵ front on the Mississippi and forty arpents depth by French governor d'Abbadie.⁶ By acquiring the adjoining property of his friend, Francois Bidou Hebert, he increased his holdings to thirty-three arpents front by forty depth at some time prior to 1769.⁷

Louis Andry had an illustrious military career, first with the French and finally with the Spanish. His assignments capitalized on his engineering, mathematical and map-making skills. In 1750, he held the title of First sergeant, performing engineering work and establishing posts on behalf of France. In 1757, he was an *Engeniero Delineador* (second lieutenant,) responsible for architecture and fortifications for New Orleans in the service of the French.⁸ On June 18, 1762, he was listed as *Lieutenant Réformé* (Discharged Lieutenant) and *Sous-Ingénieur* (Sub-Engineer).⁹

One of Andry's first important duties was to aid in the establishment of the Acadian deportees. The Acadians who refused to pledge allegiance to the British government in Canada had been ordered by Governor Charles Lawrence to leave the country in 1755. Finding themselves unwelcome in the American colonies, a few began to settle around 1757 in the Cabanocey settlement in Louisiana, known as the First Acadian Coast. The Acadians did not begin to arrive "en masse" until 1765. These were the ones whom Louis Andry was ordered to accompany to Opelousas and Attakapas (present-day St. Martinville).¹⁰ As the sub-engineer, his instructions were to "establish a village." He was also assigned similar duties at the posts of Iberville and Natchez.¹¹

On November 3, 1762, France had ceded Louisiana to Spain in a secret treaty. The French officials in Louisiana were not even notified of this transaction until sometime in 1764. It was not until March 1766 that a Spanish official, Governor Don Antonio de Ulloa, arrived in New Orleans to take over in the name of Spain. Contempt for Spanish authority and the

commercial restrictions placed upon them caused the colonists to revolt on October 27, 1768. Two days later, the Superior Council, the local French governing body, officially rejected Spanish authority and ordered Ulloa to leave the territory. They planned to establish an independent republic. "Independence" achieved by this revolt against Spain was short-lived. Only ten months later, on August 18, 1769, Don Alexandro O'Reilly arrived in New Orleans, and formally received the colony from the French *comandante*, Charles Philippe Aubry. O'Reilly, arriving with three thousand troops, thwarted the Superior Council's plans to establish an independent republic. On December 21, 1769, O'Reilly abolished the Superior Council because of its instigation of the revolution; this governing body was replaced by the Spanish Cabildo. He also made Spanish the official language and Spanish law the governing force of the colony. Unlike most of his fellow colonists, Andry had "served well under the French Government and passed on to the service of Spain when that country acquired Louisiana."¹² He took the oath of allegiance to Spain on April 15, 1767.¹³ Henceforth, Louis Andry became known as don Luis Antonio Andry.

Because of his expert engineering ability, Andry was commissioned by O'Reilly to design the new Cabildo Building. On December 9, 1769, Andry submitted the specifications to O'Reilly. The structure was completed August 17, 1770, but was destroyed in the great fire of 1788.¹⁴

In the Louisiana colony, Luis Andry was best known as a land surveyor. In 1769 he had the title of Royal Surveyor, and after that date his name appears as the official land surveyor in numerous land grant records and court cases over land disputes. In this capacity, Andry performed many surveys on lands upriver from New Orleans, but also filled other duties within the New Orleans city limits. At a meeting of the Cabildo on November 12, 1773, Don Joseph Ducros and Don Luis Andry were commissioned to inspect the poor condition of the jail. As a result of this inspection (November 17, 1773) it was decided to demolish the corridors of the dungeons and use the tiles and bricks to rebuild the jail.¹⁵ Later on, in August of 1776, Andry, further promoted to Adjutant Major of the City, was commissioned by the Cabildo to repair the levee which had become eroded by the encroaching Mississippi River.¹⁶

On April 27, 1776, Governor Luis de Unzaga proposed to the Spanish Secretary of State, Julian de Arriaga, that Captain Don Luis Andry be named commander of the six companies of Acadian militia:

I can do no less than propose to you as the best person, brevet captain and second adjutant of this post Don Luis Antonio Andry, who, besides having acquired the experience in the service of France and Spain...has in addition personal merits, talents, and a knowledge of mathematics. He is the only one here grounded in this science, which he...employs to the benefit of the service.¹⁷

In 1776, Francisco Bouligny, wrote *Memoria*, describing the Louisiana province in terms of resources, inhabitants, and commerce, with proposals for improving the economy and strengthening defenses, and presented it to José de Gálvez, minister of the Indies. Gálvez used his proposals to form a set of instructions for the newly-appointed Louisiana Governor, his nephew, Bernardo de Gálvez. One of the instructions was for the mapping of the Gulf Coast to Bahía del Espíritu Santo.¹⁸ The need for this map became more critical when it was discovered the English George Gauld had unlawfully conducted a survey of the Spanish coast to Galveston Bay.

Luis Andry's service to the Spanish colony was highly regarded and he was carefully chosen for what would become his final assignment. In the latter part of the year 1777, Governor Bernardo de Gálvez "assigned the Second Adjutant of this Plaza (New Orleans), Captain Don Luis Andres, to design the plans for the fort at the Balisa and of all the coast up to the Bahía del Espíritu Santo."¹⁹ On December 13 of the same year, Andry sailed from New Orleans on this expedition as captain of the schooner *El Señor de la Yedra*. The ship carried supplies for a four-month journey,²⁰ a crew of sixteen Spanish and Frenchmen, including its captain, Luis Andry, his 15-year-old son, Cadet Jean Constantin Silvere Andry²¹, second captain and navigator Isidro Millet, a boatswain, harbor pilot, and two cooks.²² One of the sailors, Cristóbal Gómez, was noted as having familiarity with the Texas coast and its Indians based on his prior service as a soldier at Presidio de la Bahía. "The voyage was not undertaken without awareness of the risks involved [as] the coast remained little known and much dreaded."²³ It was known that whenever the coastal Karankawa Indians "see the misfortunes of and luckless [persons] who arrive there,

they take possession of all they are carrying, even if they do not take their lives.”²⁴ Furthermore, the navigation of the bay posed significant natural obstacles.

On January 29, 1778, Andry’s ship is known to have sailed from the Balisa. During the previous six weeks, Andry finished the plans for the Balisa and the neighboring islands. In early March of 1778, Andry's schooner entered Matagorda Bay (La Bahía del Espíritu Santo), his mission having gone smoothly and essentially complete. They observed Indians camping on the shore and Cristóbal Gómez recognized one as a “good friend” named Joseph María.²⁵ He requested permission to go ashore and obtain information for safe navigation to the harbor. Accompanied by four armed sailors, he went ashore, and they were never seen again. Andry had cannon shots fired and the flag raised to guide the lost crew back to the ship. After three days, they continued to Matagorda Harbor and dropped anchor with the hope of obtaining provisions from the Bahia for their return journey.²⁶ They were immediately greeted in Spanish by two Indians, Joseph María and his brother Matheo, who claimed to be there on orders of the commander of the Presidio of La Bahía del Espíritu Santo to monitor activity on the coast. They boarded the ship bearing meat, and to gain his trust, warned Andry to beware of “very bad” Indians on the coast and offered assistance in finding the missing crew members. Three additional crew members went ashore to gather oysters and never returned.²⁷ Joseph María and Matheo scouted the ship while awaiting a dozen Karankawa reinforcements to sneak on the ship on March 20, 1778. Using the ship’s own guns, they murdered the captain, Luis Andry, his son Jean, second captain, Isidro Millet, the coast pilot, and another sailor. The Indians danced over the dead bodies, stripped off their victims’ clothing and threw the bodies overboard. As was their practice, they took all the weapons and ammunition, and everything of use to them then burned the schooner,²⁸ “and with it perhaps the first detailed Spanish map of the Texas-Louisiana coast.”²⁹

Tomás de la Cruz, a 20-year-old Yucatan native of the city of Nisamal in the province of Campeche, was the only crew member who lived to tell the story. He was discovered by Joseph María while hiding in the ship’s hold during the massacre and was held as the Indian’s personal slave until rescued the following February by the Mission Rev. Fray Joaquin de Escobar. On March 12, 1779, Cruz appeared before Don Domingo Cabello, Governor of the Province of Texas and provided a sworn account of the events.³⁰

The fate of Andry and his crew had remained a mystery for a year following the arrival of their schooner in Matagorda Bay, and concern mounted regarding their welfare. Bernardo de Gálvez wrote his uncle José de Gálvez, minister of the Indies, on October 24, 1778 regarding Andry's assignment and his fears that "they have perished on the high seas." He implored him to beg King Carlos III of Spain, for financial support for Andry's wife and children.³¹ On January 15th of the following year, Gálvez wrote his uncle to confirm his fears that Andry and his crew had perished in the Bahía del Espíritu Santo and reiterated his plea on behalf of Andry's family.³² On April 24, 1779, a royal order was issued for Andry's widow, Marie Jeanne, to continue to receive the salary of her late husband.³³

As is evidenced by the disastrous encounter Louis Andry had with them, these Indians were considered a menace and an obstacle to the exploration of the Texas coast. After Andry's death, Spain became increasingly concerned about the dangers posed by the Karankawa Indians. There was concern that they were forming friendly and commercial ties with British and French traders. These traders were causing unrest among the Indians and making them disloyal to the Spanish settlers and missionaries. Their frequent attacks on ships proved that all previous attempts to civilize them had been to no avail. It became more and more apparent to some that the extermination of the natives was the only way to ensure safety and security along the Texas coast. Athanase de Mézières, a Frenchman in the service of Spain, was commissioned to do something about the problems with the Karankawas.³⁴ By fall of 1779, de Mézières had decided those Indians who surrendered to de Mézières and the Spanish troops were to be spared as long as they responded favorably to civilized life. For the others there would be no mercy.

. . . Let justice be satisfied by inflicting exemplary punishment upon the famous Joseph María, if it is possible to administer it in proportion to his atrocious deeds. Let the Engineer Don Luis Andri with numberless persons now buried in the forgetfulness of time owe theirs to him. O, sad event! O, deplorable adventure, in which a sad father saw assassinated his beloved son whom he clasped in his pious arms; in which a tender and helpless child saw the paternal breast to which he was clinging, laid open by dagger thrusts.³⁵

Andry's death led to important advances in the control of the Karankawas in Texas, but it also had unfortunate consequences for other parts of the Spanish colony. His loss was acutely painful to Governor Gálvez who, upon official notification of Andry's death, wrote to the Spanish Secretary of State to inform him of the loss:

Particularly aware of the dedication of this great officer (Andres) I thought that his delay was due to his desire to accomplish with all perfection, any mission assigned to him as I can witness. But I have now, with great pain, lost all hope for his return. He was an officer of great intelligence and virtues, who his royal majesty has now lost, and this Province is going to miss and feel his loss, because he was the only one who, due to his intelligence and dedication, could be commissioned to lay plans for our fortifications and edifices and direct all projects.³⁶

III. SIGNIFICANCE

Louis Antoine Andry was an important figure in the development of the Louisiana and Texas colonies in the Eighteenth Century. He served under both the French and Spanish regimes in Louisiana and held the positions of Engineer of the Colony, Royal Surveyor, Adjutant Major of the City of New Orleans, and Captain of the Infantry. He was valued and respected by the Viceroy of King Charles III of Spain, and the several governors of Louisiana under whom he served. He is recognized as a Revolutionary War Patriot by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Louis Antoine Andry's work as an engineer and a surveyor helped the New Orleans area to grow and prosper at a very critical point in its history. His accurate maps were an aid to settlement, just as his talents as an engineer led to the construction of many new buildings in the Spanish colony. Likewise, his death had an adverse impact on future projects, due to the loss of his talent and experience, in addition to the immediate loss of what was likely the most accurate map at the time of the Spanish Coast from New Orleans to Matagorda Bay. His ill-fated reconnaissance served as the precursor to the Evia mapping expedition of the Gulf from Florida to San Bernardo (Matagorda) Bay. His tragic murder also drew attention to the problems caused by the Karankawas and provided impetus to controlling their hostile activities, resulting in the Spanish-Karankawa War. Had Andry not died at such an inopportune point in his life, he could have made as significant a contribution to the development of Texas as he had to that of Louisiana. A Texas Historical Marker honoring Louis Antoine Andry would serve to recognize this little-known explorer of Texas and his lifetime of achievements dedicated to the development and service to his country. The chosen marker location is on Matagorda Bay, the final objective of Andry's mapping expedition.

VI. DOCUMENTATION

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2. Archivo General de Indias, Santo Domingo Archives, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Legado 2547, 101-03.
3. Family Papers of Alfred F. Reinecke, now in the possession of his daughter-in-law, Marie Elena Duvic Reinecke, widow of Dr. George F. Reinecke. The marriage certificate is believed to have been lost in the St. Louis Cathedral fire of 1788.
4. Family Papers of Eileen Kennedy Saling.
5. An arpent is a French unit of measure equivalent to a little less than an acre.
6. French Document no. 9051, p. 77480, July 31 1765. Exchange of land. Andry's original grant is located near present-day Vacherie, La.
7. Mrs. Steven Roy Campbell, "Louis Andry Senior's Grant," *New Orleans Genesis* 6 (Jan. 1967) 299.
8. Archivo General de Indias.
9. Winston DeVille, *Louisiana Troops: 1720-1770* (Fort Worth: Arrow Printing Co., 1965), 3.
10. Mrs. Steven Roy Campbell, "Judice Land Grant," *New Orleans Genesis* 6 (Jan. 1967): 7.
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14. Samuel Wilson, Jr., *The Cabildo on Jackson Square* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1973), 13-15.
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17. Letter from Unzaga to Arriaga (April 27, 1776) in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794: Translations of Materials from the Spanish Archives in the Bancroft Library* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946-1949), 1:231.

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19. Governor Don Bernardo de Gálvez to Don Josephe de Gálvez, Spanish Secretary of State, 24 October 1778, " Gálvez Letterbook, No. 2." Cuban Archives Transcripts, Austin Texas. Cecilia Gutierrez-Najera, trans.
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21. Family Papers of Eileen Kennedy Saling
22. Bexar Archives, 39
23. Robert S. Weddle, *Changing Tides: Twilight and Dawn in the Spanish Sea, 1763-1803*. Vol. 1st ed. Centennial Series of the Association of Former Students, Texas A&M University (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995) 153. <https://search-ebscohost.com.atxlibrary.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=18155&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
24. Bexar Archives, 40.
25. Bexar Archives, 36.
26. Bexar Archives, 47.
27. Account of the Capture of a Spanish Schooner by Indians at the Bay of Espiritu Santo (March 20, 1779) in Kinnaird, 1:332.
28. Charles Ramsdell, "Spanish Goliad," Sid Richardson Archives Center, Austin, TX., 40-42.
29. Weddle, 156
30. Bexar Archives, 44-45.
31. Gálvez to Gálvez, 24 October 1778.
32. Bernardo de Gálvez to Joseph de Gálvez, 15 January, 1779, " Gálvez Letterbook no. 2." Cuban Archives Transcripts, Austin, Tx. Cecelia Gutierrez-Najera, trans.
33. Weddle, 154.

34. Ed Kilman, *Cannibal Coast* (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1959), 128.
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