

30 September 2020

National Endowment for the Humanities  
Office of Digital Humanities  
Digital Advancement Grant  
White Paper (HAA-258706)

## **Louisiana Slave Conspiracies**

Project Director: Bryan Wagner

University of California, Berkeley

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary	3
Personnel	4
Background	7
Research and Design	
Collection, Preservation, and Digitization	11
Transcription and Translation	15
Bibliographic and Demographic Data	19
Named Entity Recognition	23
Geospatial Research	25
Forensic Data	32
Website Design	35
Outcomes	40
Evaluation	42
Future Work	43
Acknowledgements	44

## **SUMMARY**

Louisiana Slave Conspiracies is an interdisciplinary and collaborative research project dedicated to preserving, digitizing, transcribing, translating, publishing, and analyzing manuscripts related to two slave conspiracies organized at the Pointe Coupée Post in the Spanish territory of Louisiana in 1791 and 1795. Our research team has transcribed and translated more than 2,000 manuscript pages in French and Spanish and created bibliographic, demographic, geospatial, and forensic data about documents, persons, places, and assertions relevant to these conspiracies. Our website ([lsc.berkeley.edu](http://lsc.berkeley.edu)) employs a custom facing-page display to present facsimile images alongside transcriptions and translations, permitting users to search, browse, and navigate among documents, a census, and a digital map.

## **PERSONNEL**

### **Project Leads**

Director: Bryan Wagner (University of California, Berkeley)

Geography: Patty Frontiera (University of California, Berkeley)

Data Architecture: Shadrick A. Small (University of California, Berkeley)

Language: Jenelle Thomas (Christ Church, Oxford University)

### **Research Associates**

Brian Costello (Pointe Coupée Parish, Louisiana)

Quinn Dombrowski (Stanford University)

Jane Henderson (University of California, Berkeley)

Julie Lee (Pointe Coupée Parish, Louisiana)

Sue Mobley (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Amani Morrison (Georgetown University)

Susan Powell (University of California, Berkeley)

Gerard Ramm (University of California, Berkeley)

Stacy Reardon (University of California, Berkeley)

Pepa Robles (Seville, Andalusia, Spain)

Elena Schneider (University of California, Berkeley)

Janet Torres (University of California, Berkeley)

### **Translators**

Romeissa Belmeliani (University of California, Berkeley)

Antonio Bereincua Pastor (Sciences Po)

Julie Lee (Pointe Coupée Parish, Louisiana)

Julia Lewandoski (University of California, Berkeley)

Arianne Marcellin-Little (University of California, Berkeley)

Dexter Zavalza Hough-Snee (University of California, Berkeley)

## **Advisory Board**

Edward Ayers (University of Richmond)

Vincent Brown (Harvard University)

Kaiama Glover (Barnard College)

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall (Michigan State University)

## **Statement on Graduate and Undergraduate Student Research Contributions**

Graduate students have been core members of the Louisiana Slave Conspiracies research team. They are Amani Morrison (African American Studies), Shad Small (Sociology), Jenelle Thomas (Spanish and Portuguese), Gerard Ramm (English), Julia Lewandoski (History), and Dexter Zavalza Hough-Snee (Spanish and Portuguese). These students brought distinctive expertise into the project. A lot of transcription, for example, was done by Dexter Hough-Snee, whose field is paleography, and our French and Spanish translation was led by Jenelle Thomas, whose research focuses on French-Spanish bilingualism in late-eighteenth-century Louisiana. (Thomas continues on the project as our lead translator; she is now a lecturer at Christ Church, Oxford University). At the same time, graduate students collaborating on the project have received training that they have brought into their own research. Shad Small was trained in Drupal at Berkeley's 2017 Digital Humanities Summer Institute. Amani Morrison was trained to use CARTO, Map Warper, ArcGIS and other tools. Morrison left the project when she graduated in 2018, but she has continued the work in digital humanities that she began with us. In 2019-2020, Morrison held a Council on Library and Information Resources postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Delaware, where she joined Colored Conventions, a leading digital humanities project. She is now Assistant Professor in English at Georgetown.

These graduate positions are paid. All graduate students working on Louisiana Slave Conspiracies receive the same rate (\$25 per hour). Graduate students who traveled to Harvard to present their work had travel, lodging, and per diem paid, and all members of our research team received the same \$1,000 honorarium.

Between 2017 and 2020, twenty-seven undergraduates contributed to Louisiana Slave Conspiracies through Berkeley's Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program ([urap.berkeley.edu](http://urap.berkeley.edu)), receiving academic credit for their work (1 credit for 3-5 hours a week, 2 credits for 6-8 hours a week). Skyler Marshall and Liam Magee worked with Julie Lee to produce an inventory of manuscripts held at the Clerk of Court's office in Pointe Coupée, Louisiana. Other students worked in three teams. Students on the language team, supervised by Bryan Wagner and Jenelle Thomas, included Laure Barthelemy, Harsimran Bhandal, David Contreras, Jeanne Gissinger, Nina Larochelle-Landau, Joel Sedano, Antonio Pastor, Brian Urrutia-Ceja, and Mariana Zuniga-Linares. Using transcriptions made by graduate students, this team drafted our translations of testimonies and other municipal documents from French and Spanish into English, translations subsequently revised by Thomas, many of which are displayed on our website. The data team, supervised by Patty Frontiera, the academic coordinator in the D-Lab, and Shad Small, a PhD student in the Sociology department, included Briel Brown, Samara Michaelson, Itzania Castro, Jordan DePasquale, Diego Fan, Kaelin Garemani, Nils Jepson, Cheyenne Lewis, Arianne Marcellin-Little, Jay Shenoy, Anjali Shrivastava, Sannidhi Shukla, and Mia Villanueva. This team extracted demographic and geospatial data from translations made by the language team. This data was subsequently checked and refined by Shad Small. It is now in use on our website. The preservation team, led by Stacy Reardon, Literature Librarian in Doe Library, included David Garcia, Romeissa Belmeliani, and Ulises Antilano. This team organized documents and document metadata for long-term storage. This tiered system of mentoring worked well.

## BACKGROUND

This project grew from our interest in a general problem in historical research on slave conspiracies. The problem is that knowledge of slave conspiracies is based on unreliable evidence. Confused and contradictory, or even paranoid and delusional, available records characteristically do not give a clear picture of events. Testimonies are mostly rumor and speculation. They feel like they are from the film *Rashomon*, in that they show different people telling different stories about the same events. Despite this instability, some historians are willing to credit these sources while others rush to point out their undecidability. Scholars have come to diametrically opposed conclusions based on the same evidence, with revisionists such as Michael P. Johnson suggesting that landmark events considered basic to Black history—like Denmark Vesey's 1822 conspiracy in Charleston—may never have happened.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Akira Kurosawa, dir., *Rashomon* (Tokyo: Daiei, 1950). Michael P. Johnson, "Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators," *William and Mary Quarterly* 58 (2001): 915–976. For representative source materials on slave conspiracies, see the following examples. Edmund Bohun, *A brief, but most true relation of the late barbarous and bloody plot of the negro's in the island of Barbado's . . . to kill the governour and all the planters, and to destroy the government there established, and to set up a new governour and government of their own* (London: George Croom, 1693). Daniel Horsmanden, *A Journal of the Proceedings in the Detection of the Conspiracy formed by Some White People, in Conjunction with Negro and Other Slaves, for Burning the City of New-York* (New York: James Parker, 1744). "Expediente Sobre Declarar. Conspiración de José Antonio Aponte," 24 Marzo 1812, Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Fondo Asuntos Políticos, Legajo 12, Número 17. Lionel H. Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *An Official Report of the Trial of Sundry Negroes Charged with an Attempt to Raise an Insurrection in the State of South Carolina* (Charleston: James R. Schenck, 1822). *Report of the Trial of Fourteen Negroes at the Courthouse, Montego Bay, January 28, 1824 and the following two days, on a Charge of Rebellious Conspiracy; with the Arguments of the Advocates and the Speeches of the Judges* (Montego Bay, Jamaica: 1824). Lemuel Conner, "Testimony of Fourteen Slaves Relative to a Proposed Slave Uprising in Adams County, Mississippi." Lemuel P. Conner and Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University, Hill Memorial Library, Baton Rouge. On the interpretive challenges posed by this kind of source material, see for example the following works. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Policing Slave Society: Insurrectionary Scares," in *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 402-434. Gordon S. Wood. "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (1982): 402–41. Winthrop D. Jordan, *Tumult and*

This polarization is apparent across existing scholarship on slave conspiracies. Looking at the trial records concerning the discovery of a planned insurrection on Barbados in 1692, Jerome Handler sees a large-scale conspiracy organized by the island's slaves, and Jason Sharples sees a paranoid fantasy imagined by colonial authorities. Based on the records from a slave conspiracy trial in New York in 1741, Thomas Davis sees premeditated coordination in fires set by discontented slaves, and Jill Lepore sees inconclusive evidence supporting several interpretations, including the possibility that the conspiracy was really meant to be a joke. Looking at second-hand reports from a trial transcript from Virginia in 1800, Douglas Egerton concludes that Gabriel Prosser was motivated by the political ideology of artisan republicanism, while Michael Nicholls finds these same records to be little more than gossip. Looking at testimonies on the *Conspiración de la Escalera* in Cuba in 1844, some historians like Robert Paquette and Aisha Finch perceive a multiracial coalition stretching from Havana to the rural parishes of Matanzas, and others like Franklin Knight and Laird Bergad describe a ruse invented by colonial authorities to justify a crackdown on slaves. Among skeptical accounts, Johnson's prize-winning article on Denmark Vesey's conspiracy has drawn the most attention, with a large number of direct responses published in academic journals, prompting leading historians such as David Brion Davis to admit that they have changed their minds more than once as they have followed the debate. By some lights, Robert Paquette and Douglas Egerton's *The Denmark Vesey Affair: A Documentary History* (2017) has now offered sufficient evidence, including reports from clergy who spoke to accused conspirators before their execution, to confirm the existence of the conspiracy, overturning Johnson's argument. Still, even this new study, by looking outward to corroborating sources rather than intently at the trial documents scrutinized by Johnson, leaves us with the question of how to credit testimonies

---

*Silence at Second Creek: An Inquiry into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993). Greg Childs, "Secret and Spectral: Torture and Secrecy in the Archives of Slave Conspiracies," *Social Text* 33 (2015): 35-57. Jason T. Sharples, *The World that Fear Made: Slave Revolts and Conspiracy Scares in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).

that are vague, coerced, inconsistent, and seemingly self-interested, especially in cases where such testimonies are the only available evidence.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of unreliable evidence takes a particular form in Pointe Coupée in 1791 and 1795. There were two separate trials following the 1791 conspiracy, the first in Pointe Coupée and the second in New Orleans. They present irreconcilable accounts of purpose and coordination among the slaves. In the most influential work written on the 1795 Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall suggests that the conspiracy was inspired by the French and Haitian Revolutions, citing witnesses who overheard slaves say that they should imitate “les révolutions de la France & Le Cap.” Hall also notes the rumor that Joseph Bouyavel, a white school teacher, had read aloud from the Declaration of the Rights of Man to slaves gathered in the cypress swamp behind the Goudeau Estate. She finds connections between Pointe Coupée and covert activities in Natchitoches, Opelousas, and New Orleans. Gilbert C. Din, however, has argued that the evidence for these claims is

---

<sup>2</sup> Jerome S. Handler, “Slave Revolts and Conspiracies in Seventeenth-Century Barbados,” *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 56 (1982): 5-42. Jason T. Sharples, “Discovering Slave Conspiracies: New Fears of Rebellion and Old Paradigms of Plotting in Seventeenth-Century Barbados,” *American Historical Review* 120 (2015): 811-43. Thomas J. Davis, *A Rumor of Revolt: The ‘Great Negro Plot’ in Colonial New York* (New York: Free Press, 1985). Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York: Vintage, 2005). Douglas R. Egerton, *Gabriel’s Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). Michael L. Nicholls, *Whispers of Rebellion: Narrating Gabriel’s Conspiracy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012). Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988). Aisha K. Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Insurgencies of 1841-1844* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 137-153. Laird W. Bergad, *Cuban Rural Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 67-88. David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 222-226. Robert L. Paquette and Douglas R. Egerton, “Of Facts and Fables,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 105 (2004): 8-48. Douglas R. Egerton and Robert L. Paquette, eds., *The Denmark Vesey Affair: A Documentary History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017).

inconclusive and insubstantial. He argues that these alleged conspiracies probably originated in overheard offhand comments, or at best in rudimentary small-scale plots that were blown entirely out of proportion by rural investigators and paranoid slaveholders in the New Orleans Cabildo.<sup>3</sup>

Our project began with the recognition of this seeming historiographical impasse. We decided to collect and publish the available sources on the alleged conspiracies in Pointe Coupée. Our intention, however, was not to break the scholarly deadlock, resolving things once and for all. Instead, we have worked to build an archive that will allow us to characterize more concretely the terms of our uncertainty about the conspiracies, showing what we can and cannot know about these conspiracies from the available evidence, in particular from the manuscripts from the four conspiracy trials presented on our website. These manuscripts can be very confusing. Barriers to understanding include not only language and sometimes illegible script but also fundamental inconsistencies in the exposition of events. We have addressed these challenges by combining proven approaches to documentary editing with digital tools—an interactive census and map; legal, linguistic, and historical annotation; and in future updates, narrative and network visualizations—designed to clarify the competing accounts of social and political organization suggested by our sources.

Our project shows how the epistemological problems involved in the study of slave conspiracies only become more intense and interesting when they are elaborated through the digital presentation of primary source materials. Documenting these conspiracies, we look to particular details, attending to contingencies of time and place and the local adaptation of legal and linguistic conventions. At the same time,

---

<sup>3</sup> Ulysses S. Ricard Jr., "The Pointe Coupée Slave Conspiracy of 1791," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* 15 (1992): 116–29. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 343–374. Gilbert C. Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763–1803* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 154–176. On the 1795 conspiracy, see also the following works. Jack D. L. Holmes, "The Abortive Slave Revolt at Pointe Coupée, Louisiana, 1795," *Louisiana History* 11 (1970): 341–62. James Thomas McGowan, "Creation of a Slave Society: Louisiana Plantations in the Eighteenth Century," (PhD Dissertation, University of Rochester, 1976), 347–400.

we approach these slave conspiracies as specific instances of a general problem of historical knowledge, using methods from a range of disciplines including history, literature, and data science. Our intended audience includes not only specialists in Louisiana history, the French and Spanish empires, and the Age of Revolution, but also a range of scholars in the humanities and social sciences who have confronted the issue of uncertain evidence as they have sought to understand slave resistance. This is a challenge known to anyone who has thought about the politics practiced not only by slaves but also by peasants, natives, and other subaltern groups.



LOUISIANA SLAVE CONSPIRACIES

Home Documents People Places Research About

## 1795

### Pointe Coupée, Louisiana

*In April 1795, a number of slaves were arrested at Pointe Coupée for planning a revolution. Their idea was to set fire to a shed on the Julien Poydras estate. Lying in wait, they would ambush the whites who came to extinguish the fire and then travel from plantation to plantation, killing their former masters and gathering other slaves to join the revolt.*

[OVERVIEW](#)

1791

1795 Conspiracy Front Page. Louisiana Slave Conspiracies (lsc.berkeley.edu)

## RESEARCH AND DESIGN

### Collection, Preservation, and Digitization

Our research process began by collecting digital facsimile images of all known source materials related to the 1791 and 1795 Pointe Coupée slave conspiracies from the General Archive of the Indies in Seville; the National Historical Archive in Madrid; the Pointe Coupée Clerk of Court's Office in New Roads; the Louisiana State Archives in Baton Rouge; the Louisiana Historical Center, Notarial Archives, City Archives, and Amistad Research Center in New Orleans; and the Bancroft Library in Berkeley. Microfilm of the Original Acts of Pointe Coupée produced by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the 1960s proved difficult to decipher, so we digitized the 1795 testimonies ourselves. Legibility improved as these folios had since been treated and preserved in the early 2000s thanks to a grant written by Gwendolyn Midlo Hall with the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. The volume with documents from the first 1791 trial, however, was still in its original condition. We paid to have this volume treated and digitized. Written on cotton parchment, these records have cleaned up beautifully. New prints of these records from the Original Acts of Pointe Coupée appear on our website. At the same time, we obtained digital copies and a license to display the testimonies from the second 1791 trial in New Orleans, which are held by the General Archive of the Indies.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Testimonio del Proceso Criminal de los Negros Rebultos de este Puesto contra los Blancos de Dicho Puesto, Volume 1792, Number 1758, Original Acts of Pointe Coupée, Pointe Coupée Courthouse, New Roads, Louisiana. Trial of Mina Conspirators in New Orleans, Legajo 168A, 26 March 1792 to 8 April 1794, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain. Procès contre les Esclaves du Poste de Pointe Coupée, Original Acts of Pointe Coupée, Volume 1880, Folders 1-265, 25 April 1795 through 29 May 1795, Pointe Coupée Courthouse, New Roads, Louisiana. Proceedings against the Negroes of Pointe Coupée for the Crime of Revolution, 1795-05-02-01, Spanish Judicial Records, Louisiana Historical Center, New Orleans Jazz Museum, New Orleans, Louisiana. Province of Louisiana v. Coffy, 16 June 1795, in Notarial Acts of Francisco Broutin, 1790-98, Vol. 36, Doc. 21, pp. 944-984, Original Acts of Orleans Parish, Notarial Archives, Orleans Parish Clerk of Civil District Court, New Orleans, Louisiana. Official and Reserved Correspondence among Governor Carondelet, New Orleans Cabildo, and Post Syndics and

Documents currently displayed on our website include the complete records from the two trials of the 1791 conspirators in Pointe Coupée and New Orleans, as well as complete records from the single month-long trial of the 1795 conspirators in Pointe Coupée and the separate 1795 trial of Antonio Cofi Mina, a black militiaman who served as a translator in the second 1791 trial in New Orleans only to surface a few years later as one of the probable ringleaders of the 1795 conspiracy. There are 468 trial documents in total, divided into 1356 page nodes on our website. We have also collected, transcribed, and translated the relevant manuscripts from Governor Carondelet's correspondence; council minutes taken at emergency meetings at the Cabildo; reports circulating between the Cabildo and rural commandants; and a notice on the 1795 conspiracy from *Le Moniteur de la Louisiane*, the first newspaper in the territory, preserved as an enclosure in a letter written by Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, currently held in the National Historical Archive in Madrid. In most cases, we have yet to obtain permission to display these manuscripts on our website, but in future updates, we will add as much of this material as possible.

In 2017, we located the original version of the 1795 testimonies at the Louisiana Historical Center at the New Orleans Jazz Museum. Our website currently displays the scribal copy from the Original Acts of Pointe Coupée, but we have also licensed this original version of the 1795 testimonies from the Louisiana Historical Center.

---

Commandants, Legajos 22, 31, 211AB, 212AB, and 227A, April 1795 to February 1796, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain. Minutes of the Extraordinary Sessions of the Cabildo, Actas del Cabildo, Book 4, Volumes 1 and 2, 25 April 1795 through 2 May 1795, City Archives and Louisiana Collection, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana. *Moniteur de la Louisiane*, 22 June 1795. Enclosed in Gayoso to Alcudia, Legajo 3902, Folder 6, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección de Estado, Madrid, Spain. Circular of Carondelet, April 29, 1795. Box 3, Folder 355, Louisiana Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Berkeley, California. Intestate Succession of Claude Trenonay, Planter at Pointe Coupée, Murdered by Runaway Slave on July 10, 1792. Document 1792-10-03-01, Spanish Judicial Records, Louisiana Historical Center, New Orleans Jazz Museum, New Orleans, Louisiana.

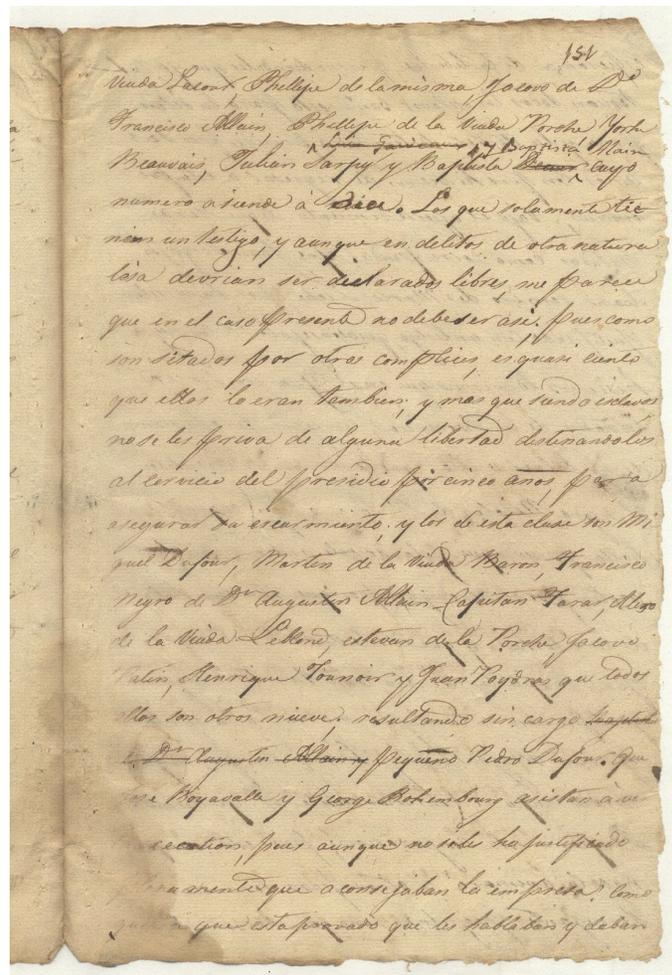
We are the first researchers to work with the original copy of the 1795 trial. The OAPC scribal copy is used by historians Gwendolyn Midlo Hall and Gilbert Din as well as by James McGowan in his 1976 dissertation. McGowan was the first scholar to write about these trial documents. In the 1790s, there existed a long tradition of reproducing manuscripts through handwritten (or “scribal”) copies, a tradition that had continued even after the advent of the printing press. For instance, although the first printing press arrived in Louisiana in the 1760s, the documents printed on the press were books and newspapers or official documents needing multiple copies, including public notices, royal edicts, or proclamations of the governor.<sup>5</sup> Most daily documents continued to be handwritten. Documents such as court proceedings were written by a scribe at the time of the trial and subsequently copied if necessary. These copies were typically controlled for quality and contain a note certifying the copy as accurate. Scribal copies were made for record-keeping purposes, especially if part or all of the document in question needed to be sent elsewhere. For researchers, scribal copies are sometimes more accessible and more legible than the original documents and are therefore a useful source.

At first glance, the document images that we have for the 1795 testimonies show a stark difference in material appearance. The original documents show changes in handwriting from session to session. This variation also appears in the outside materials incorporated into the record, for example letters and acts. The scribal copy is the work of one individual, so there is uniformity of appearance (and also increased legibility) that is not present in the original documentation. The originals also show signatures, paraphs, or the X made by the various persons involved (for instance, defendants and witnesses) at the end of each trial. In the scribal copy, these are enumerated as a list of names of people having signed the original. We are still comparing the original manuscript and scribal copy of the 1795 trial documents, and plan to include both on our website, potentially with a table of discrepancies. In most but not all respects, the scribal copy is close to the original. Most differences appear to be as small as punctuation, or spelling changes, or the addition or deletion of a word. Some of this is editing for the sake of clarity; on a

---

<sup>5</sup> Florence M. Jumonville, “Frenchmen at Heart: New Orleans Printers and Their Imprints, 1764-1803,” *Louisiana History* 32 (1991), 279–310.

larger scale, this editing also takes the form of clarification of content, for example specifying a time period or the race of a speaker. Finally, there are also cases of paraphrasing or synonym replacement that still preserve the general meaning.



Example from the original manuscript of the 1795 trial documents. "Proceedings against the Negroes of Pointe Coupee for the Crime of Revolution," 1795-05-02-01, Spanish Judicial Records, Louisiana Historical Center, New Orleans Jazz Museum, New Orleans, Louisiana.

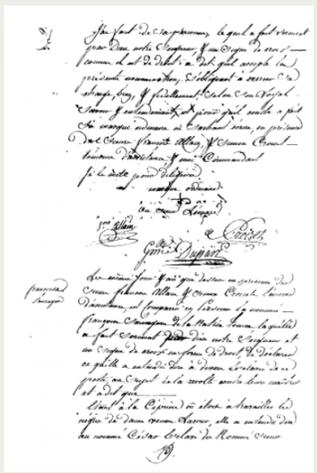
## Transcription and Translation

Transcription and translation were the next stages in our work process. Excellent transcriptions of both 1791 trial transcripts were produced in the 1980s by Ulysses Ricard. These have been licensed for publication from the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans. Draft translations of the 1791 trial documents were produced by

Jenelle Thomas, at the time a PhD student at Berkeley in Spanish and Portuguese specializing in French-Spanish bilingualism in eighteenth-century Louisiana. Draft transcriptions of the 1795 trial documents were made by Dexter Hough-Snee, a PhD student in Spanish and Portuguese, and Julie Lee, an independent historian in Pointe Coupée. Translations of the 1795 documents were drafted by Julie Lee and Julia Lewandoski, a Berkeley PhD student in History specializing in land tenure in colonial Louisiana. Dexter Hough-Snee also transcribed a variety of miscellaneous documents for the project. Our translation process was aided by an undergraduate research team at UC Berkeley working under the auspices of the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program ([urap.berkeley.edu](http://urap.berkeley.edu)). This team was responsible for drafting translations of correspondence, council minutes, and other works from which we have extracted demographic and geospatial data. This undergraduate translation team was led by Bryan Wagner, who supervised the day-to-day process, and Jenelle Thomas, who has corrected and approved the students's work.

Our transcriptions aim to decipher the script while modernizing it only minimally. Capitalization, punctuation, and word separation are modernized, and contractions are signaled with an apostrophe. Archaic and inconsistent spelling has also been modernized, and in a few cases, passages obscured in the manuscript have been completed with best guesses or text from another copy when possible. As they are meant to be read together with the facsimile images and transcriptions, our English translations attempt to be as faithful as is feasible to the manuscripts. Following the approach we are taking in transcription, we have decided to retain where possible variation in capitalization and the spelling of proper names (for example, Falza Rivera / Falsa Rivera) while abbreviations, scribal notations, and eccentric spellings are standardized for clarity. Also like our transcriptions, translations respect order, punctuation, and line breaks to facilitate reference to images and transcriptions.

PAGE 1 OF 3   ← ● ● ● →   [Send Feedback](#)

ORIGINAL IMAGE	TRANSCRIPTION	TRANSLATION
 <p>PAGE 234 1795-B 1880-1894</p>	<p>françoise sauvagesse Les mêmes Jour &amp; an que dessus en presence des sieurs françois Allain &amp; Simon Croiset témoins d'assistance, est comparu en Personne la nommée françoise sauvagesse de la Nation tonica, laqu'elle a fait serment par dieu notre seigneur et un signe de croix en forme de droit, de déclarer ce qu'elle a entendu dire à divers Esclaves de ce poste, au sujet de la revolte contre leurs maîtres et a dit que Etant à la Ciprière où étoit à travailler les négres de dame veuve Lacour, elle a entendu dire au nommé César Esclave du Nommé sieur</p>	<p>Françoise, savage On the same day and year as stated above, in the presence of Messrs. François Allain and Simon Croiset, witnesses, Françoise, savage of the Tunica nation, appeared in person, took an oath to God to tell what she heard several of the slaves of this post say regarding the revolt against their masters. She said that: When she was at the swamp (à la Ciprière) where the widow Lacour's slaves were working, she heard the slave called César, who was the slave of the man called Mr. Frédéric Léonard say</p>

Our facing-page display facilitates comparison of images, transcriptions, and translations. This is Françoise's declaration on April 27th from the 1795 trial in Pointe Coupée. Declaration of Françoise (April 27, 1795), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1795-B 1880-1894), 234.

Our transcription, translation, and interpretation of all of these manuscripts takes into account the culture of multilingualism in colonial Louisiana. Ethnic groups of African origin in Louisiana spoke a variety of languages, only some of which were mutually intelligible. The predominant language in Pointe Coupée was Louisiana Creole, a kind of French dialect. Administrative communication, however, required translation into Spanish or sometimes into formal French. This was the case with the trial records of the Pointe Coupée conspirators. In some cases, these records were written by officials who needed the Spanish dictated to them due to their poor command of the language. All of which raises questions to be investigated about syntax, spelling patterns, and command of legalese in a language one does not speak well. Doubts were expressed, for example, about the competence of Commandant Valentin LeBlanc, who acted at once as interrogator, interpreter, and scribe in the first 1791 trial in Pointe Coupée, leading to the second trial in New Orleans with formal procedures and trained agents including an official scribe and

two sets of interpreters, one to translate from Mina (the slaves’s native language) to French, and another to translate from French to Spanish. These two trials provide incompatible accounts of the conspiracy allegedly formed at a late-night dance in June 1791 at Jean-Louis’s cabin on the Widow Robillard’s estate, raising interesting questions about the ways that the culture of multilingualism in colonial Louisiana was manipulated by various parties as a tool for both prosecution and defense.

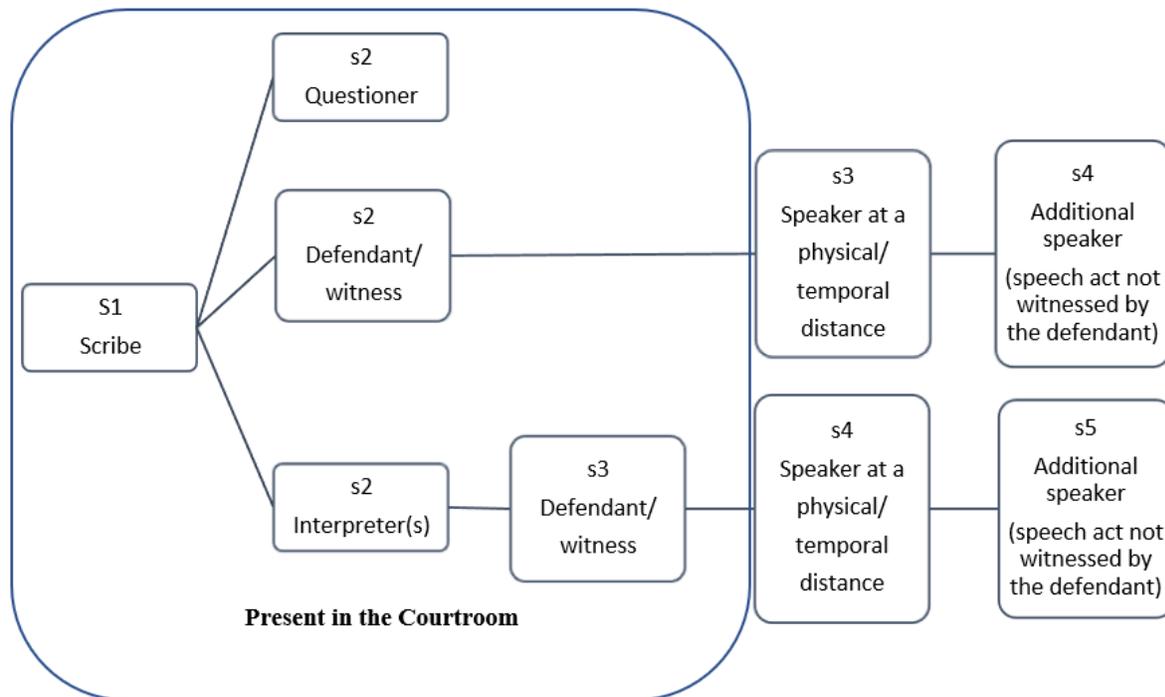


Diagram by Jenelle Thomas marking the roles and relationships in the 1791 conspiracy trials, representing the complexity of the written record of the courtroom proceedings, including its mediation by both scribes and interpreters and the relay of reported speech acts (or hearsay).

Our linguistic work is continuing. Thomas is writing essays based on our archive, including “Repeated, Imagined, Hearsay: Representation of Reported Discourse in 18th Century Legal Testimony,” forthcoming in *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*. Her interests include tracking patterns of variation in macrosyntactic legal formulae, measuring degrees of certainty in verb tense and mood, and interpreting how speakers express relative time and how they report speech from third parties. Thomas is also interested in the terms in which the various languages spoken at trial are characterized, as when slaves are described as speaking “black creole”

French, or a “corrupted” language. The layers of narration, interpretation, and formulae of legal documentation in the testimonies and related documents also provide further opportunities for analysis of reported discourse, language contact, and language ideology in the historical courtroom. Some of this research will be integrated into our website in the form of linguistic annotation. Annotation will provide culturally or historically specific information (titles, nicknames, or legal procedures) while also parsing exchanges that were conducted in one or more spoken languages but transcribed in another language in the written record.

### **Bibliographic and Demographic Data**

After transcription and translation, the next stage in our research process was to produce data on documents and people. This data was produced by a team of PhD students, librarians, and staff at UC Berkeley: Shad Small, PhD student in Sociology; Patty Frontiera, staff technologist in the D-Lab; Amani Morrison, PhD student in African American Studies; Gerard Ramm, PhD student in English; Janet Torres, PhD student in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Design; Stacy Reardon, Digital Humanities Librarian; and Susan Powell, Map and Earth Sciences Librarian.

Once a sufficient corpus of translated and transcribed material was collected, our research team began to elaborate an initial data model for the digital archive of the website. Fairly early on, we decided that the major object classes should be *persons* and *places*, on one hand, and the *documents* which formed the foundation of our knowledge of the other two classes, on the other. The only real question would be what sorts of attributes for each class were relevant and available in our materials.

Our first step in gathering document metadata was to divide manuscript collections into discrete units (individual testimonies, letters, official acts), each of which ends with the signature of an official or correspondent sometimes along with signed attestations. We also recorded additional fields for provenance, dates, locations, and all roles in the legal and scribal process (which could include respondents, attesting witnesses, and translators in addition to duly appointed officials).

Demographic data was produced by reading each document's translation in the corpus one by one, identifying each individual, where possible linking them to the individuals already identified in secondary sources by Holmes, McGowan, Ricard, Hall, and Din. Supplemented by census records and estate inventories, these documents provide detailed information about the individuals allegedly involved in the conspiracies, especially for those who gave testimony. Part of the typical ritual of taking sworn testimony among the enslaved meant placing them within a matrix defined by race, ethnicity (or “nation”), status (which always meant invoking the name of a slaveholder, but occasionally also an occupation), age, and marital condition. During the 1795 trial proceedings, one Petit Pierre was queried as to “what nation he is from, if he is married, and what is his profession.” He confirmed that “he is called Petit Pierre slave of Sr Goudeau, he is a creole, that he is arrested for the matter of the conspiracy to massacre the whites, that his profession is to serve his master and that he is a bachelor.”<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, we can also infer literacy for respondents. Presiding officials and witnesses (respondents and attestors alike) were obligated to sign their names at the end of a testimony. If an individual did not know how to write their own name, the record indicated the fact. Regardless of their status, respondents were routinely asked to provide their ages, but only the enslaved and free blacks were consistently identified by their race. Even a cursory reading of the documents indicates the incessant attention to racial and ethnic distinctions and the imperiled but resilient ties that bound slaves to slaveholders and estates. This practice extended to the *commandeurs* (enslaved supervisors) of the estates linked to the conspiracies, and by the same token, any *commandeur* was identified as such when he appeared in testimony or was named in an official act.

The most significant challenge we faced in creating this demographic dataset was the proliferation of aliases in our documents. In order to connect every mention of an individual to a canonical name for use in our data, we had to untangle a range of aliases as well as variant spellings of individual names—which reflected, among other things, overlapping language constituencies and overrepresentation of some names among the enslaved. Across the documents, individuals mentioned more

---

<sup>6</sup> Confession of Petit Pierre (May 16, 1795), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1795-A 1880-1880), 307-08.

than once are typically denoted with multiple aliases. See, for example, the table below, which lists the various names applied to two individuals implicated in the 1795 conspiracy. Some of the differences between aliases are relatively trivial issues of unstable orthographic convention (e.g., ‘Rochemborg’ versus ‘Rokemborg’), while others are clearly related to language constituency (‘George’ versus ‘Jorge’).

<b>Known written aliases of two 1795 conspirators</b>		
Canonical Name	Alias	In secondary sources only
George <u>Roquemborg</u>	G <u>Rochauborg</u>	
	George	
	George <u>Rockemborgh</u>	×
	George <u>Rockemburgh</u>	×
	George <u>Rockembourg</u>	×
	George <u>Rokemborg</u>	
	George <u>Roquemborg</u>	
	Jorge <u>Rochembur</u>	
	<u>Rochemborg</u>	
	<u>Rokemborg</u>	
<u>Tham</u> [Poydras]	Cham	
	<u>Lham</u>	
	<u>l'Ham</u>	
	Pham	
	<u>Tham</u>	
	Thom	×
	Thomas	×

In particular in the documents related to the 1791 conspiracy, recognizing the interlingual analogues of various given names proved important given that the first trial in Pointe Coupée was documented in French, and the subsequent documents for the second trial in the colony capital of New Orleans were primarily in Spanish. For instance, knowing that Santiago and Jacques shared a common root (*Jacobus*), as did Hyacinth and Jacinto, made it much easier to link first trial aliases with their second trial cognates. In other cases, however, it's unclear whether we're dealing with genuinely distinct aliases for the same person or a simple misspelling. Having high-quality manuscript images proved important in distinguishing the characters of always hard-to-read (and often near-illegible) handwriting. For instance, our transcribers were able to glean that the Pilche brothers named in Jack Holmes's

article on the 1795 conspiracy might be better identified as the *Riché* brothers. (This suggests that the material examined by Holmes was such that the “i” might have been confused for an “l” and the leg/tail of the upper-case “r” mistaken for an “i.”)<sup>7</sup>

Another challenge was that in both conspiracies there were slaves with the same given name. It was often difficult to understand which Jean Louis, or which Petit Pierre, was being referenced. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall addresses this problem by appending ethnic identification as a surname, but there are enough instances in the documents where ethnic labels more so resemble simple descriptors than surnames that we eschew Hall’s convention to focus instead on the mandatory citation of slaveowners that made it possible to distinguish whether, say, the l’Ham in question belonged to the Farar, Poydras, or Widow Barron estate.<sup>8</sup> The elliptical style of the documents, with recursive references to prior testimonies, allowed us considerable purchase on who’s who when combined with the ritualistic allusions to slaveholders and ethnicity. In cases where close examination of our documents was inconclusive for individuating or amalgamating named persons, we turned to estate inventories, bills of sale, and other documents referenced in Gwendolyn Midlo Hall’s Louisiana Slave Database ([ibiblio.org/laslave](http://ibiblio.org/laslave)) for further clarification.

This complete (or near-complete) list of aliases has provided several benefits. First, we were able to identify at least forty individuals not previously mentioned in the extant secondary literature addressing the two conspiracies. Many of these persons are marginal players in the stories of the two slave conspiracies; several, however, are very important to the events in question. One such person was Françisque, a slave on Augustin Allain’s estate who evades mention in the sentencing documents despite being directly implicated by Jean Baptiste Forgeron (alias Juan Bautista Herrera). Jean Baptiste’s accusations were taken seriously. Indeed, he seems to have won emancipation as a reward for his testimony. Françisque’s omission from

---

<sup>7</sup> Holmes, “Abortive Slave Revolt,” 345.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Hall, *Africans*, 357-65.

the sentencing documents is therefore curious.<sup>9</sup> We also discovered at least one phantom person in the secondary literature. Ricard lists two slaves named Ata among the individuals imprisoned as suspected conspirators in 1791. A closer examination indicates that there was only one Ata: the two declarations—ordered consecutively in the original archive (OAPC 1792, 1758-1762, 53v-60r)—have near-identical accounts with negligible differences in wording. All of the accused who testified in Pointe Coupée were re-interrogated in New Orleans the following year, and there’s only a single Ata present in the record of the second trial.<sup>10</sup>

### **Named Entity Recognition**

Our document corpus proved compact enough to allow for manual processing. We decided, however, to embrace the opportunity to experiment with automated text analysis, applying named entity recognition to extract the names of persons from our documents in order to measure the accuracy of this automated approach against the demographic data we had already created and confirmed manually.

---

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the accusation, see Statement of Jean Baptiste Forgeron [Widow Lacour] (May 8, 1795), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1795-B 1880-1894), 296-98. Confrontation of Jean Baptiste Forgeron [Widow Lacour], Francisque [A. Allain] (May 15, 1795), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1795-A 1880-1880, 228-29. Regarding Jean Baptiste’s ostensible reward, see Hall, *Africans*, 368; Gilbert C. Din, “Carondelet, the Cabildo, and Slaves: Louisiana in 1795,” *Louisiana History* 38 (1997): 20-21. However in his trial summary *Asesor* Don Manuel Serrano wrote, “And let the same punishment [i.e., exile] be given to the Black Juan Baptista Herero, as well as some reward given to the Black María Luisa, and to the Indians Magdalena and Francisca, who alerted the Commander, Don Guillermo Duparc, to this conspiracy, since this example will not only encourage others to denounce similar plots but it will also contain the bad ones due to the Possibility of being discovered, and so that the mistress of Juan Baptista not suffer damage, it seems that she should be given his value, raising it from All the Province.” Advice of the Assessor (May 22, 1795), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish, (1795 1832-1880), 169-70.

<sup>10</sup> Ricard lists two slaves named Ata among the individuals imprisoned as suspected conspirators in 1791. Ricard, “Pointe Coupée Slave Conspiracy,” 128. Our analysis indicates that the two Atas were merely one Ata with two declarations—ordered consecutively. Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1792, 1758-1762), 53v-60r.

Named Entity Recognition is a subarea within the larger domain of natural language processing that employs methods from linguistics and computer science to extract information from semi-structured or unstructured text. It is specifically concerned with finding and labelling named entities, including but not limited to people, locations and organizations, and date/times. Named Entity Recognition methods combine linguistic information (sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization) and statistical models (such as machine learning) to locate and label named entities. When applied to most classes of contemporary documents in English, Named Entity Recognition achieves results approaching near-human performance. However, within the Digital Humanities Named Entity Recognition remains an active research area. The use of Named Entity Recognition on historical documents has specific challenges, because historical documents often have different linguistic structures than the standard text collections on which available statistical models are based. Several of the available software toolkits allow researchers to add custom rulesets or create custom statistical models trained on their own document collections. However, the requisite technical expertise and the size of the document collection required for training a statistical model that could outperform readily available models are typically beyond the scope of most digital humanities projects.

We decided to apply Named Entity Recognition to a subset (100 documents) of the documents from the 1791 conspiracy, using the data manually processed by our research team as a baseline against which to evaluate automated results created using the Stanford CoreNLP application and the Stanza Named Entity Recognition module. Each document translation was submitted to processors, and only named entities of type "person," along with their frequency counts, were maintained for each of the documents. There were a number of steps to post-processing, including disambiguation by fuzzy string matching and manual checking of a custom stoplist of potential names outputted by the applications.

Our manual approach extracted a total of 687 names from these 100 documents, 83 of which were unique, counting a person only once in a particular document even if the person was mentioned multiple times. Measured against this baseline, both the Stanford CoreNLP and Stanza tools produced strong results considering

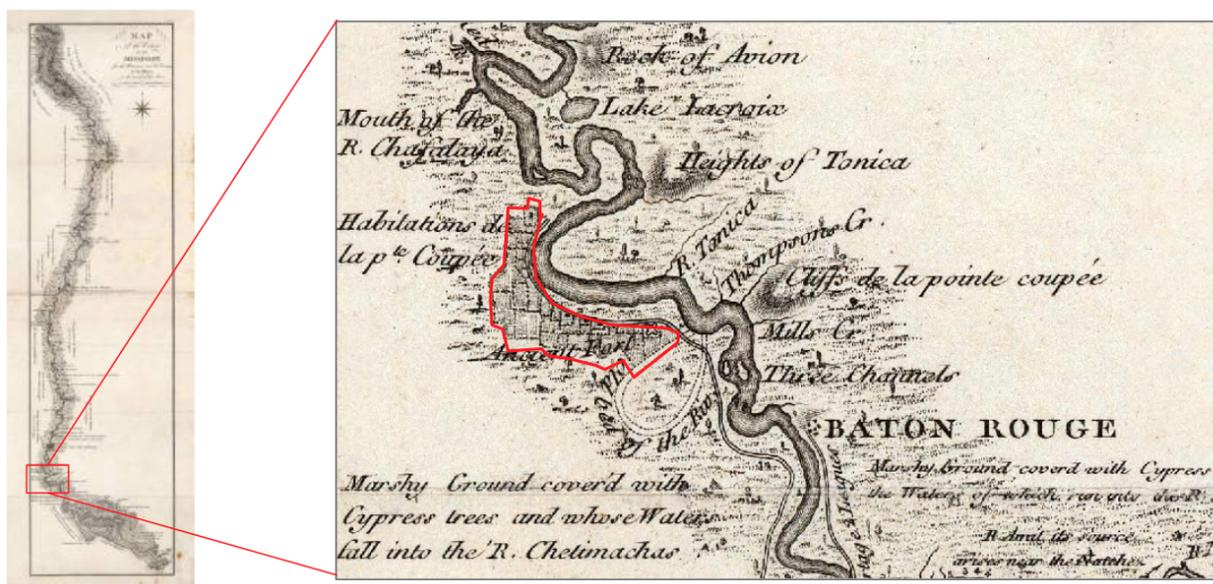
our minimal preprocessing of the input documents. Results were evaluated both for precision (the number of correct results, or “true positives,” divided by the number of all returned results) and recall (the number of correct results divided by the number of results that should have been returned). Stanza delivered the best overall performance, particularly in terms of recall, locating 80% of all the names that were found manually. However, both tools show lower scores for precision indicating they cast a wide net and returned a lot of false positives. Narrowing the range of valid results by considering only matches with high scores improved precision but at the expense of recall. We believe that improvement in precision scores could be achieved by refining our disambiguation processes. A complete account of our short experiment with Named Entity Recognition, including detailed results, appears in the working paper, “Named Entity Recognition and the Louisiana Slave Conspiracies Project,” which is available on our website ([lsc.berkeley.edu](http://lsc.berkeley.edu)).

## **Geospatial Research**

Patty Frontiera, Amani Morrison, Susan Powell, and Gerard Ramm were responsible for our geospatial research and data process. The majority of the places relevant to the 1791 and 1795 conspiracies were large agricultural estates in the settlement of Pointe Coupée, ranging in size from approximately 62 to 8500 acres with a median of 346 acres, or locations on these estates such as cabins, storehouses, or swamps. Other named places in Pointe Coupée include the fort and church, as well as more indeterminate locations such as roads or places along a road, along the river, or somewhere within the vast swamp which ran between the estates located along the southern banks of the Mississippi River and the northern section of the False River.

Our geospatial research process encountered several challenges. First, available historical maps provided contradictory, incomplete, and/or not quite temporally relevant information. Second, not all locations mentioned in our documents could be found on historical maps. Third, the historical maps varied in accuracy. Fourth, the area’s geography, including the course of the Mississippi River, had changed. Fifth, maps of this region had place name references in French, English, and Spanish. Consequently, like with our demographic data, we had to disambiguate

references by identifying the multiple aliases used for a single place. Like persons, places had to be assigned canonical names for the purpose of data analysis.<sup>11</sup>

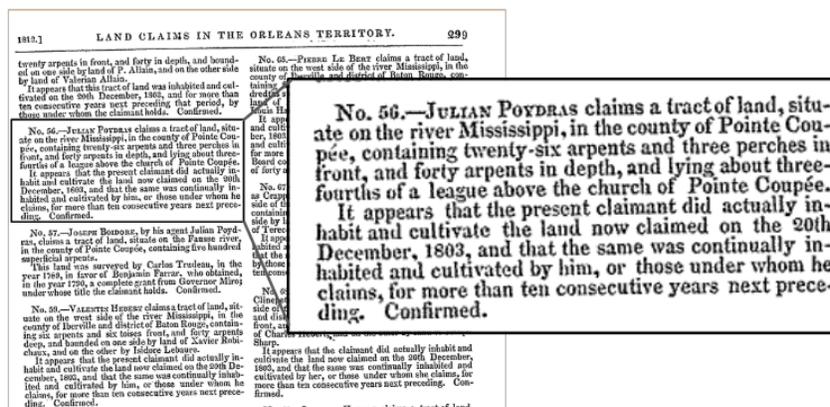


George Henri Victor Collot and P. F. Tardieu, *Map of the Course of the Mississippi from the Missouri* (Paris, 1796). This is the only map from the 1790s that we could find that portrays Pointe Coupée with any detail. This map identifies the footprint of Pointe Coupée along the Mississippi River, and the Fort of Pointe Coupée Poste but does not contain any other locational information. Moreover, the level of local positional accuracy is likely low given the way in which the False River is depicted symbolically as a loop (labelled “old bed of the river”) rather than with geographic detail.

<sup>11</sup> Henry L. Abbot, *Atchafalaya Basin, Prepared by order of Maj. Gen. N. P. Banks., Capt. & Chief Top. Eng'rs* (S.l., 1863). David H Burr and John Arrowsmith, *Map of Mississippi, Louisiana & Arkansas Exhibiting the Post Offices, Post Roads, Canals, Railroads, &c.* (London: J. Arrowsmith, 1839). Mathew Carey, *Louisiana* (S. l., 1814). C. H. Dickinson, *Map of the Parishes of Iberville, Most of West Baton Rouge, and including Parts of the Parishes of St. Martins, Ascension, and Pointe Coupee, Louisiana: Accurately Compiled from Latest and Most Authentic United States Surveys.* (S. l., 1883). Jean Baptiste Bourguignon D'Anville and G. De La Haye. *Carte de la Louisiane par le Sr. d'Anville* (Paris, 1752). William Darby and John A. Melish. *Map of the State of Louisiana with Part of the Mississippi Territory, from Actual Survey By Wm. Darby.* (Philadelphia: John Melish, 1816). John Melish, *Map of Louisiana* (Philadelphia: John Melish, 1820). Marie Adrien Persac, Benjamin Moore Norman, and J.H. Colton & Co. *Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River* (New Orleans, B. M. Norman, 1858). *Map of the Mississippi River from the Mouth of Yazoo River to the Southern Part of Louisiana* (S. l., 1774). Lieutenant Ross and Robert Sayer, *Course of the River Mississippi, from the Balise to Fort Chartres; Taken on an Expedition to the Illinois, in the Latter End of the Year* (London, Printed for Robt. Sayer, 1765). George Henri Victor Collot and P. F. Tardieu, *Map of the Course of the Mississippi from the Missouri* (Paris, 1796).

Given these research challenges, we turned first to local experts to help with our reconstruction of Pointe Coupée. Historian Brian Costello, author of several books on the parish's history, identified a number of historical places on a current map. Costello's handwritten annotations have been a boon to our research, helping in particular with locations from the 1791 conspiracy like the Widow Robillard estate.

A breakthrough came when Julia Lewandoski, a History PhD student working as a translator on our project, suggested that we use the American State Papers to locate the estates in 1791 and 1795 Pointe Coupée. Costello confirmed that this was a good approach, which he had already used to identify the location of lands purchased by Julien Poydras.<sup>12</sup> The American State Papers are a set of thirty-eight physical volumes, containing congressional legislative and executive documents during the period 1789 to 1838. Two years after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, congress required all inhabitants of the new territory to submit a land claim.<sup>13</sup>

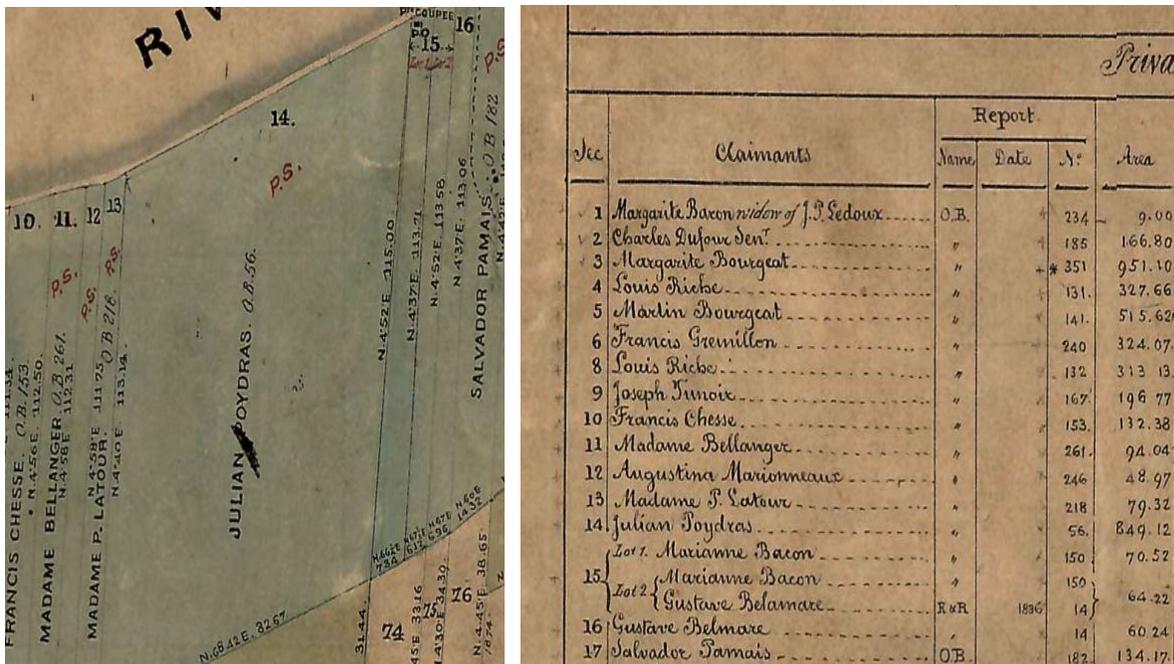


The land claim referenced here is the estate of Julien Poydras, the geographic center of the 1795 conspiracy. *American State Papers: Public Lands, vol. 2* (Washington DC: Duff Green, 1834), 299.

<sup>12</sup> Brian Costello has provided invaluable consultation and support throughout our research process. See his book, the standard work on the parish's history, Brian J. Costello, *A History of Pointe Coupée Parish* (Donaldsonville, LA: Margaret, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> The land claims from this period for Pointe Coupée can be found in the *American State Papers: Public Lands, vol. 2* (Washington DC: Duff Green, 1834), 299.

Land claims in the American State Papers include the name of the claimant, the location of the claim, and the area of the tract of land being claimed. They also confirm that the tract was inhabited by the claimant or by the person from whom the claimant obtained the land for at least ten years prior to December 20, 1803. A second component of the congressional act required a land survey and subdivision of parcels in the new territory. Maps from these surveys, known as *historical survey plat maps*, contain the results of these surveys as well as subsequent updates. It is possible to locate tracts claimed in the American State Papers on these plat maps using the reference (or so-called “Old Board”) numbers that are listed in both.



This detail comes from a plat map of Pointe Coupée, marking the location of the Julien Poydras estate. Note that the number on the map (“14”) matches a row on the key, and also that the key includes in its third column the corresponding Old Board Number (“56”) for the Poydras land claim, connecting the plat map to the claim information contained in the American State Papers. Survey Plat Map, T4S R10E, Louisiana Meridian, Dependent Resurvey (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records, 1858).

Once the relevant claims in the American State Papers were collected, we obtained the six survey plat maps for Pointe Coupée. These plat maps were georeferenced using the United States Geological Survey plat map vector files, aligning them with a geographic coordinate reference system. The six maps were merged into one map

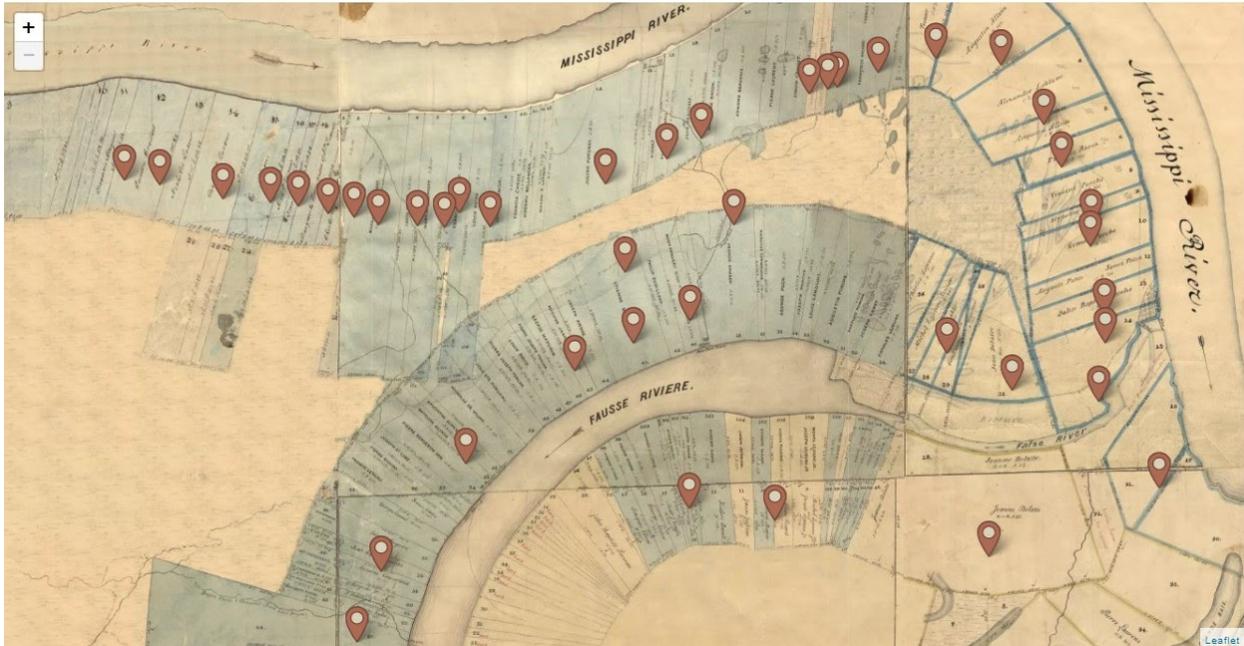
with tracts assigned unique identification numbers. The information obtained from congressional land claims and surveys was then linked to the trial documents and estate records from the Original Acts of Pointe Coupée, with a field indicating which estates were referenced in the 1791 and 1795 conspiracy trials. The resulting data has been used to create the interactive historical map currently on our website.<sup>14</sup>



The six historical survey plat maps covering Pointe Coupée are here merged into a single map. The estates mentioned in the 1791 and 1795 conspiracy trial documents are superimposed in green.

---

<sup>14</sup> General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, US Department of the Interior, Survey Plat Map T5S R11E (Louisiana Meridian, Original Survey, 1853). General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, US Department of the Interior, Survey Plat Map T5S R10E (Louisiana Meridian, Dependent Resurvey, 1842). General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, US Department of the Interior, Survey Plat Map T5S R9E (Louisiana Meridian, Original Survey, 1842). General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, US Department of the Interior, Survey Plat Map T4S R11E (Louisiana Meridian, Dependent Resurvey, 1858). General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, US Department of the Interior, Survey Plat Map T4S R10E (Louisiana Meridian, dependent resurvey, 1858). General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, US Department of the Interior. Survey Plat Map T4S R9E (Louisiana Meridian, Original Survey. 1829).



Louisiana Slave Conspiracies digital map ([lsc.berkeley.edu/places](http://lsc.berkeley.edu/places)).

The interactive map currently displayed on our website is our best estimate given the available information. Not all estates and places noted in the 1791 and 1795 trial documents are listed in the American State Papers or shown on survey plat maps. Some slaveowners sold estates after 1795 but before the Act of Congress of March 2, 1805. The Goudeau estate, for example, figured prominently in the 1795 conspiracy, but it appears to have been sold to Julien Poydras in 1798. There are also instances where names listed in the 1791 and 1795 trial documents do not match those listed in the American State Papers or the survey plat maps. For example, we assume that the Santiago Vignes listed in the American State Papers is the same Jacques Vigne noted in the 1795 conspiracy documents since Santiago is a Spanish variant of Jacques. Common family names pose another problem. Many estates shown on the survey plat maps share family names listed in the 1791 and 1795 trial documents, but it is hard to be certain if a property listed in the American State Papers as being owned by “Madame Jarreau” is the same property owned by the “J. Jarreau” mentioned during the 1795 trial. We have addressed these issues, pinpointing remaining estates and corroborating the locations on our map, by

turning to other sources including published scholarship and research shared by Brian Costello, Winston De Ville, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Julie Lee, and Laverne Thomas as well as the records available on the Roots Web genealogy website ([wc.rootsweb.com](http://wc.rootsweb.com)) and Tulane University Digital Library ([digitallibrary.tulane.edu](http://digitallibrary.tulane.edu)).<sup>15</sup>

We are planning a last phase of archival research to finalize our geospatial data. Our map is based on a broad foundation of evidence, but we still need to process remaining land grants, surveys, deeds, estate inventories, and probates from the 1780s and 1790s. These records are likely to indicate properties in relative terms of metes and bounds, saying things like, “Goudeau’s land is bordered at the oak tree by Poydras’s land.” Although not geolocatable on their own, this type of information can be integrated into our existing georeferenced data, allowing us to demarcate estate boundaries with better precision and perhaps even to pinpoint locations on estates—slave cabins, tobacco fields, and supply sheds—that are mentioned in the trial testimonies but presently unmarked on our maps. This research process will also involve work with the LDS microfilm of the Original Acts of Pointe Coupée. This microfilm is incomplete and in places illegible and therefore cannot substitute for work with original materials. At the same time, however, there were two arson fires at the Pointe Coupée Clerk of Court’s Office in the 1980s, which means there may be a few records in the LDS microfilm that are no longer available in the records we

---

<sup>15</sup> Costello, *History of Pointe Coupée*. Brian Costello, *The Life, Family and Legacy of Julien Poydras* (New Roads: Brian Costello, 2001). Winston DeVille, *Slaves and Masters of Pointe Coupée, Calendar of Civil Records, 1762-1823* (Ville Platte, LA: Winston DeVille, 1988). Laverne Pike Thomas, *Pointe Coupée Families in Colonial Louisiana: Abstracts of Civil Records 1771-1782* (Baton Rouge: Claitor’s Publishing, 2010). Julien Poydras, *Act of Sale of Property, a Transaction between Jean Jarreau and Salvador Pamiás, both of the County of Pointe Coupée, September 25, 1806*. Document. Certified copy, dated April 25, 1836 signed by A. Robin, Judge, Pointe Coupée. Rosemonde E. & Emile Kuntz Collection. Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University. Julien Poydras, *Act of Sale of Property, a Transaction between Pierre Laurant and Jean Jarreau, both of the County of Pointe Coupée, January 6, 1806*. Document. Certified copy, dated April 25, 1836 signed by A. Robin, Judge, Pointe Coupée. Rosemonde E. & Emile Kuntz Collection. Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University. Julien Poydras, *Act of sale of property, a transaction between Jacques Vignes and Jean Pierre Laurans, both of Pointe Coupée, November 4, 1804*. Document. Certified copy, dated April 23, 1836 signed by A. Robin, Judge, Point Coupée Parish. Rosemonde E. & Emile Kuntz Collection. Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University.

digitized from the Clerk of Court's office. We will consult both sources and continue to work toward a comprehensive presentation of relevant materials on the website. Pointe Coupée Clerk of Court Lanell Landry has arranged access to closed archives in Baton Rouge. Other research will occur at the Louisiana History Center, Notarial Archives, and the Natchez Trace Collection at the University of Texas, Austin.

## **Forensic Data**

We have also produced forensic data on *events* and *assertions*, which we plan to use in narrative and network visualizations analyzing the conspiracies. Our event data is focused on a limited number of events whose existence is known even when details remain uncertain. This event data covers things that actually happened (the show of force at St. Francis Church on Easter Sunday in 1795) as well as things that were planned but never happened (the meeting behind the Vigne Estate or the fire that was to be set on the Poydras Estate). We decided to rely exclusively on secondary sources as a scaffold for our events data on the grounds that we wanted to focus on events whose existence was obvious and already stipulated by scholars.

Building on the data we have produced on persons, places, and documents, we have also created forensic data tabulating the assertions made at trial about *who was where when with whom*. This forensic data process began with undergraduate students recording every instance in the four trial manuscripts in which a person is asserted to have been in a particular place. Students produced this data by reading each document's translation, identifying all the relevant assertions, linking them to canonical names for persons and places, and recording temporal markers, whether contained in text or inferred from context. Shad Small has checked this dataset for accuracy and incorporated it into our website. Ambiguous and relative references to dates, times, and chronology remain a challenge for our forensic data process.

We are currently working on a new set of forensic data recording every instance in which a person is asserted to have said something to another person (*who said what to whom*). Undergraduate students have again drafted this data by reading each document's translation, identifying all the relevant assertions, linking them to

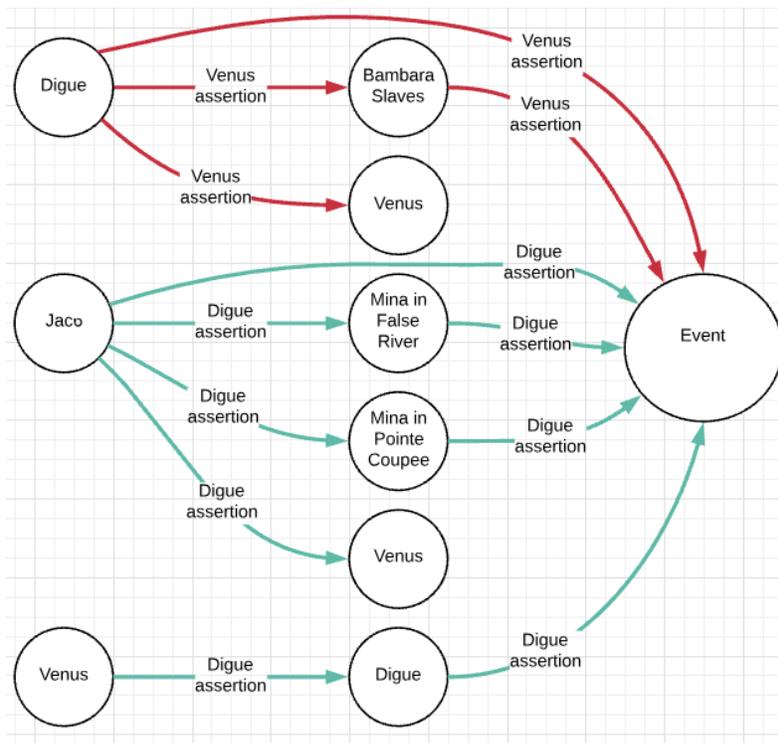
canonical names for persons, and recording verbatim the putative content of the communication. These statements frequently do not include information about time and place, but when they do, we are linking them to our forensic data on *who was where when with whom*. During this process, we are closely tracking the nested structure of hearsay—shown, for example, when Frederick Riché testifies that while listening outside a Poydras slave cabin, he heard Guillaume say to the assembled slaves that not all of them could have guns but that there were knives and that a good stick would do. There is some complexity involved in parsing an assertion by Riché at one known time, in one known location, to one known set of interlocutors concerning another assertion allegedly made by Guillaume at another known time, in another known location, to an unknown set of interlocutors allegedly involved in the 1795 conspiracy. We are still working on this dataset on *who said what to whom*. Current spreadsheets are still in draft and are not yet integrated into our website.<sup>16</sup>

We intend to continue refining our forensic data, which will supply the foundation for the network visualizations that will eventually be included on our website. We are interested here not only in the content of assertions but also in their possible routes of circulation within the social networks that the assertions helped to build. Take, for example, the following prototype visualization of testimonies from Venus, Digue, and Jaco during the first 1791 trial in Pointe Coupée. Venus asserted that Digue had said to her that there were Bambara slaves involved in the conspiracy. In his testimony, however, Digue denies this Bambara involvement, citing an exchange with Jaco, one of the alleged leaders of the 1791 conspiracy, in which Jaco told him that if there were not enough Mina in False River that they would join with the Mina in Pointe Coupée to execute the plot. Digue also said he learned of the conspiracy through Venus, and Venus maintained she had learned of the plot through Digue.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Declaration of Frédéric Riché (April 25, 1795), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1795-B 1880-1894), 230.

<sup>17</sup> Declaration of Venus (July 9, 1791), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1792 1758-1762), 7r. Declaration of Digue (July 9, 1791) Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1792 1758-1762), 11r. Confrontation of Venus and Digue (September 11, 1792), Trial of Mina Conspirators in New Orleans, Legajo 168A, 362v, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias.



This chart depicts the conflicting assertions made by Venus and Digue. The nodes in this network illustrates the relationships between the named entities in the two assertions, with colors marking the differing accounts. Note that each node is an instance of an assertion, rather than a representation of the persons themselves. Note the event on the right—in this case referring to the conspiracy as a whole—is independently stipulated. We take its existence for granted even as it is differently constituted in relation to the competing networks represented in the visualization.

The figure above is a prototype. The network visualizations we are planning for our website will be interactive, representing the competing accounts of the organization of the conspiracies as a dynamic web, in which the network's shape changes when you click on one of its nodes, recomposing itself to match the testimony offered by an individual (in this case, Digue, Jaco, or Venus) or else a subset of individuals (for instance, a language group or the residents of an estate). We also plan to build narrative flow charts from our forensic data that will show conditional, forking plot sequences (if X is true then Y follows) reflecting the competing accounts of the

conspiracies presented at trial. In all cases the visualizations will be attuned to specific questions about the organization and composition of the conspiracies. Who led the effort to liberate Antoine Sarrasin from his confinement during the second phase of the 1795 conspiracy? Was it Jean Baptiste, as Joseph Mina and his associates claimed? Or was it Joseph Mina, as Jean Baptiste and his associates claimed? How were the conspiracies structured? Was there a clandestine network in 1795, connecting slaves across the Louisiana territory, as some officials in the Cabildo believed, with divisions in neighboring parishes ready to spring into action as soon as events were set into motion? Or were the conspiracies limited to Pointe Coupée, with the plan to spread virally, gaining momentum as the slaves moved from estate to estate picking up supporters? Our purpose, again, is not to resolve these questions once and for all. It is to represent a range of possible answers.

## **Website Design**

We used the open-source Drupal content management system for our website. Given the lack of coding knowledge on our team and the absence of any viable alternatives for a web platform suited to our data, Drupal seemed like the obvious choice. Translating our data model into the Drupal context required little effort, as there are clear parallels in Drupal to the typical elements of a relational database. What we might call object classes (akin to tables in a relational database) are called “content types” in Drupal, and class attributes (the table columns in a database) are fields in a content type. Elements that in a relational database would have been distinct rows thus became pages on our website. In practice, this meant that our research team maintained separate datasheets (in Google Sheets) for each object class. Once they were checked for accuracy, sheets were converted into text files (either comma-separated or tab-delimited) and uploaded to the Drupal website.<sup>18</sup>

Using our bibliographic and demographic data, we were able to create web pages

---

<sup>18</sup> Quinn Dombrowski provided detailed and indispensable guidance to the project during this early stage in our planning. Dombrowski’s *Drupal for Humanists* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2017) provides a comprehensive introduction to the process of building a digital humanities website using Drupal.

on which users can search, browse, sort, and filter lists of documents and people. From the documents inventory, users can search the text of the translations and the transcriptions, and they can also filter by conspiracy, trial, document type, and the respondent's name, status, and legal role. Our census allows users to search for people by name and filter by conspiracy, trial, race, ethnicity, gender, age, status, and residence as well as the sentence (if any) they received for their alleged crimes.

Below is an example of how users can filter the census data on our website. In this example, results are filtered to include only people who are (1) Mina ethnicity, (2) enslaved, and (3) connected in some way to the 1791 Pointe Coupée conspiracy.

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "People" with a subtitle "Search and browse people involved in the Pointe Coupée slave conspiracy trials". Below the title is a search filter panel with the following sections:

- CONSPIRACY:** A dropdown menu with "1791 Pointe Coupée" selected.
- RACE / ETHNICITY:** A dropdown menu with "Mina" selected.
- STATUS / OCCUPATION:** A dropdown menu with "Slave" selected.
- NAME:** An empty search input field.
- AGE:** An empty input field.
- SENTENCE:** An empty input field.
- RESIDENCE:** An empty input field.
- Apply:** A red button to apply the filters.

Below the filter panel, it says "Displaying 1 - 13 of 13 people." and lists 13 names in a grid:

- Thomas
- Leveille [Mayeux]
- Cofi [Christe]
- Jaco [Fabre]
- François
- Jacques [Santiago]
- Cofi [Porche]
- Pedro Mina
- Jaco [Leblond]
- Jean-Louis
- Joseph
- L'Eveille [Robillard]
- Ata

Our map is made in Leaflet, an open-source Javascript tool, and integrated through the Leaflet mapbox module for Drupal. The map allows users to zoom, drag, and click on locations for more information, taking them to individual place pages with geospatial information as well as linked to associated people and documents. Users can also search for place names and filter by conspiracy and place type. The map includes our best estimates for locations of all estates mentioned in the 1791 and 1795 conspiracy trial documents as well as other relevant locations such as the St. Francis Church, the bridge at False River, and meeting spots in the cypress swamp.

Our website takes advantage of the flexibility afforded by its digital medium. With each document, for example, we include not only the facsimile image, transcription, translation, metadata, and annotation, but also links to all places mentioned and all people mentioned or involved in the production of the document. Similarly, census entries offering information on people involved in the conspiracies include links to all associated documents and places, and map entries include links to all associated people and documents. A user can navigate, for example, from one document to a person mentioned in the document, then to a place associated with the person, then to another document associated with the place, and so on. We will integrate our forensic visualizations in the same manner so that it will be possible to navigate directly from a network diagram to a place, a person, or a document.

**PEOPLE MENTIONED**

<a href="#">Grand Joseph [C. Lacour]</a> , identified as <i>Grand Joseph</i>	<a href="#">Cesar [Léonard]</a> , identified as <i>César</i>	<a href="#">Antoine Sarrasin [Poydras]</a> , identified as <i>Antoine Sarrasin</i>	<a href="#">Jean Louis [Widow Barron]</a> , identified as <i>Jean-Louis</i>	<a href="#">Ami [Anis] [Widow Barron]</a> , identified as <i>Anis</i>
<a href="#">Antoine [Widow Lacour]</a> , identified as <i>Antoine</i>	<a href="#">Jacob [Widow Lacour]</a> , identified as <i>Jacob</i>	<a href="#">Philippe [Widow Lacour]</a> , identified as <i>Philippe</i>	<a href="#">Philippe Mancho [Widow Lacour]</a> , identified as <i>Philippe Mancho</i>	<a href="#">the Widow Barron</a> , identified as <i>Widow Barron</i>
<a href="#">J. Jarreau</a> , identified as <i>Jarreau</i>	<a href="#">Colin Lacour</a> , identified as <i>Colin Lacour</i>	<a href="#">Frédéric Léonard</a> , identified as <i>Frédéric Léonard</i>	<a href="#">the Widow Lacour</a> , identified as <i>Widow Lacour</i>	<a href="#">Julien Poydras [Poédras]</a> , identified as <i>Poédras</i>

---

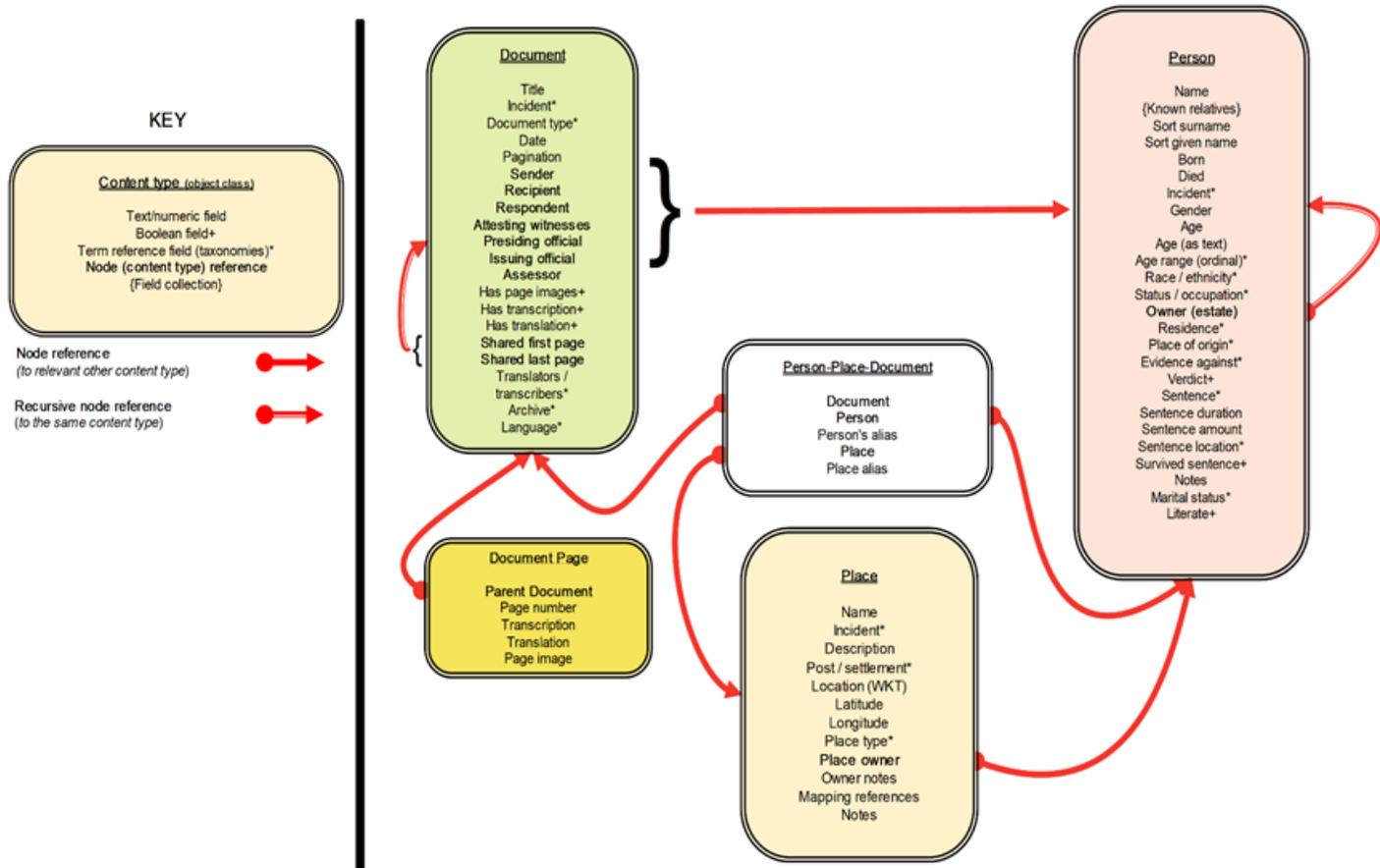
**PLACES MENTIONED**

<a href="#">Julien Poydras estate</a> , identified as <i>cabin of Mr. Poédras' camp</i>	<a href="#">Julien Poydras estate</a> , identified as <i>the store</i>	<a href="#">Pointe Coupée</a> , identified as <i>this post</i>	<a href="#">Widow Lacour estate</a> , identified as <i>swamp (à la Ciprière)</i>	<a href="#">New Orleans</a> , identified as <i>town</i>
<a href="#">Cypress swamp</a> , identified as <i>at the swamp (à la Ciprière)</i>	<a href="#">Cypress swamp</a> , identified as <i>at the swamp (à la Ciprière)</i>			



The information pane for each document displayed on our website includes tables listing the people and places mentioned in the document as well as a map of the places mentioned. Declaration of Françoise (April 27, 1795), Original Acts of Pointe Coupée Parish (1795-B 1880-1894), 234.

This flexible navigation is made possible by the data model currently in use on our website. The figure below represents a simplified version of this data model. Each box in the diagram represents a distinct content type in Drupal.



The person-place-document content type at the diagram's center is analogous to an "intermediate class" used to represent many-to-many relationships in a relational database. Each instance of this intermediate class represents the intersection of a person and a document, a place and a document, or a person and a place. We used the *who was where when with whom* data produced by undergraduate students and revised by Shad Small to populate this content type. Currently on the website, this person-place-document content type is what enables us to link (1) every document to every person mentioned in the document, and thus also every person to every document mentioning the person, (2) every document to every place mentioned in

the document, and thus also every place to every document mentioning the place, and (3) every place to every person associated with the place, and thus also every person to every place associated with the person. Note that this last set of links represents not certain knowledge about where individuals have been. Instead, it records all assertions (including conflicting assertions) that a particular person was at a given place during the development of an alleged conspiracy. More reliable information, such as residence, is also included in these person-place connections

Our website also includes a feedback mechanism that encourages users to submit questions, suggestions, and corrections. This mechanism appears as a prominent “button” on all document, person, and place inventories and entries. User feedback arrives in a common project email account tagged with the website location from which it was sent. Bryan Wagner is sorting and logging user feedback and sending them to appropriate members of our research team for consideration and analysis.

Our website, including important custom features such as our facing-page display, was designed by Bill Kennedy and Agile Humanities Agency ([agilehumanities.ca](http://agilehumanities.ca)). The D-Lab ([dlab.berkeley.edu](http://dlab.berkeley.edu)) at University of California, Berkeley has generously committed to maintaining and updating the website through 2024.

## OUTCOMES

Thus far the three main objectives of our project have been (1) to collect and, when necessary, preserve and digitize historical documentation related to the 1791 and 1795 slave conspiracies at Pointe Coupée, (2) to transcribe, translate, and share these documents with scholars, students, and the public, and (3) to develop data on documents, people, places, and assertions to facilitate analysis of the development and discovery of the conspiracies. Through extraction, classification, and recording of this data we have created a valuable new resource with consequences for our understanding of the interpretive challenges posed by historical sources on slave conspiracies not only in Pointe Coupée but also elsewhere. Our website is one way that we are sharing our research. With information on 292 people and 90 places linked to 1,356 document pages, our website offers a comprehensive presentation of the four trials that occurred in the aftermath of the 1791 and 1795 conspiracies.

Our work is also being published in more conventional academic formats including journal articles and essays in edited collections. We have arranged to submit three linked articles containing (1) demographic data, (2) geospatial data, and (3) forensic data to *Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation* (JSDP), a digital academic journal that publishes peer-reviewed datasets with accompanying articles describing methods and significance. JSDP uses Harvard University's dataverse ([dataverse.harvard.edu](https://dataverse.harvard.edu)) as infrastructure for long-term data preservation. Publishing our data through this platform will guarantee that our research will remain available for the foreseeable future independent from our website. The data and the accompanying articles we plan to publish in JSDP will be made available at no cost under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license ([CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)).

These published datasets will also be integrated with *Enslaved: Peoples of the Historic Slave Trade* ([enslaved.org](https://enslaved.org)), a searchable hub that will link a portion of our dataset to data from a multitude of other projects. Our project's integration with *Enslaved* will make it easier for scholars and students to discover our project and also easier for researchers to connect our work to datasets produced by others. Louisiana Slave Conspiracies a subgrantee on an application recently submitted (July 2020) to NEH's

Humanities Collections and Reference Resources Program by the institute behind the Enslaved project, the Matrix Center for Digital Humanities and Social Sciences at Michigan State University. Our contribution to this grant would involve mapping our data fields to those used by *Enslaved* to facilitate integration of the projects while also working together on controlled vocabulary. In addition to our integration with the *Enslaved* online data hub and our planned submission to JSDP, we also have a co-authored essay forthcoming in Daryle Williams, Walter Hawthorne, and Dean Rehberger's essay collection, *Encoding Enslaved.org: Slavery, Databases, and Digital Histories*, to be published by Michigan State University Press. In addition, Jenelle Thomas's article in historical linguistics, based on our archive, "Repeated, Imagined, Hearsay: Representation of Reported Discourse in 18th Century Legal Testimony," is forthcoming in *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, and Bryan Wagner is drafting another essay summarizing the project's historiographical contributions. This history article will also be co-authored with Frontiera, Small, and Thomas.

We have presented research at a range of venues. In March 2017, we were invited to present at the Department of African American American Studies at Harvard. Bryan Wagner gave an overview of the project; Patty Frontiera spoke on geography; and Shad Small, Amani Morrison, and Gerard Ramm spoke about the challenges of our data process. Wagner also lectured on the project at University of New Orleans (March 2019), Nicholls State University (March 2019), Louisiana State University (March 2019), West Baton Rouge Museum (May 2019), the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (October 2019), and New York University (April 2020). He spoke to local history enthusiasts in Pointe Coupée (March 2019). Patty Frontiera, Bryan Wagner, Amani Morrison, and Shad Small also presented at UC Berkeley for the D-Lab, the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, Digital Humanities Summer Institute, English Department, and Center for Race and Gender.

A related outcome of the project is the document inventory that UC Berkeley undergraduate researchers have produced with Julie Lee, inputting metadata on a range of extant records into the Pointe Coupée Parish Original Records 1762-1884 database. This database now includes 4133 entries spanning from 1771 to 1822.

## EVALUATION

We are ending this phase of work as we are finally approaching the problem that originally sparked our interest. Certainly at the outset, and also at various stages in our work process, we have underestimated the work needed (document collection, transcription, and translation; research and data processing; database construction and web design) to meet our objectives. One reason why we (and Bryan Wagner in particular) had difficulty anticipating the time required for certain tasks is doubtless the multidisciplinary nature of our enterprise. We learned a lot from each other as we discovered the complexity involved in specialized tasks that might have at first seemed straightforward from the intellectual distance of another discipline. Our attempt to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches forced us at times to suspend our disciplinary assumptions. This was especially true in our approach to the problem of uncertainty, as team members trained in quantitative methods geared toward reduction of uncertainty found ways to work with others trained in fields (such as literature) where intractable uncertainty (ambiguity, paradox, irony, instability, or undecidability) is taken for granted as the occasion for interpretation.

We still have work to do before we can begin analysis of our documents through close reading and data visualization, but within the timeframe of this grant, we have succeeded in producing an archive substantially larger and more complex than we were able to imagine at the project's outset. We had initially planned to document only the 1795 conspiracy, but we embraced the opportunity to digitize and process the 1791 trials once we had refined our language and data process. We produced datasets (including forensic datasets on *who was where when with whom* and *who said what to whom*) that we had not originally planned but nevertheless turned out to be indispensable to our visualization efforts and basic navigation on our website.

This substantial, meticulously anatomized archive provides a foundation for future research by our team as well as by other researchers in a variety of disciplines.

## **FUTURE WORK**

As described above, there are three aspects of the current phase of our research that remain unfinished. First, we have a final phase of archival research to complete in Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupée, New Orleans, and Austin. Second, we still need to complete our forensic data. Third, we need to build network visualizations based on our forensic data and integrate these visualizations into our website.

At the same time as we complete this work, we will also be adding exposition and annotation concerning documents, people, and places in order to make the website more meaningful to a wide range of users. Some exposition and annotation will be produced by students in courses taught by Bryan Wagner (University of California, Berkeley), Manuel Covo (University of California, Santa Barbara), and Richmond Eustis (Nicholls State). This new contextual description will draw from primary and secondary works on Louisiana, West Florida, and colonial slave societies across the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Throughout the website, Pointe Coupée will appear as a microcosm of the Atlantic world, a creole colonial outpost with complex history conditioned by the overlapping claims of French and Spanish empires, the vagaries of the transatlantic slave trade, sustained warfare with the Natchez and Chitimacha, and most importantly, the outbreak of the French and Haitian Revolutions.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Louisiana Slave Conspiracies thanks the following archives, libraries, and museums for contributing materials to our research: Pointe Coupée Parish Clerk of Court's Office (New Roads, Louisiana), The Clerk of Civil District Court for Orleans Parish (New Orleans, Louisiana), Louisiana Division at the New Orleans Public Library (New Orleans, Louisiana), Bancroft Library at University of California, Berkeley (Berkeley, California), General Archive of the Indies (Seville, Spain), Louisiana Historical Center at the New Orleans Jazz Museum (New Orleans, Louisiana), United States Library of Congress (Washington, DC), and Louisiana State Archives (Baton Rouge, Louisiana).

The Digital Advancement Grant received from the NEH Office of Digital Humanities made possible the research described in this white paper. Additional funding was provided by the University of California Humanities Research Institute; University of California Consortium for Black Studies in California; the D-Lab and Mellon Digital Humanities Initiative at University of California, Berkeley; the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities at the University of California, Berkeley; and the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South at Tulane University. We thank our sponsors for their generosity and faith in our work. In addition, we thank Joemari Cedro, Claudia Von Vacano, and the D-Lab staff for their indispensable support of our team effort.