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*Iberville's Gulf Journals* by Pierre LeMoyne D'Iberville. Translated and edited by Richebourg G. Gaillard McWilliams

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only playing for time. He had precious little to work with. Without supplies, pay, or reinforcements from his superiors, Folch was faced with threats from filibusters in Mobile Bay on the one side and the United States on the other. Spanish authorities were unimpressed by his explanations and, for a time, it appeared that he would be tried for treason. Charges were dropped, he was reassigned to Cuba, and was even promoted again before he retired in 1822, but his career was largely ended by his ambigious negotiations with the Americans in 1811. Written in a matter-of-fact, unadorned style, Americans in the book is a lean account of Folch's public career in Florida. Although it reads as if the author were allowing the surviving correspondence to guide the story, it is a useful book because as White said, “the story of Spanish Florida is not complete without the name of Vicente Folch.”

Jerrell H. Shofner


Between 1698 and 1702 French explorer and soldier Pierre LeMoyne D’Iberville (cl661-1706) made three voyages to the Gulf coast in behalf of the French Crown. During these voyages he explored the lower Mississippi River valley and planted the first permanent posts to assert French control of this strategically important area. The three journals of his voyages, dictated by him in France during the years 1699-1702, provide a day-to-day account of his travels and accomplishments on the Gulf coast and along the lower reaches of the Mississippi. Along with documenting the spadework of exploration on fort building, the journals give valuable glimpses of the tribes of native Americans, some soon to vanish, that Iberville encountered. They also illuminate the interplay of colonial rivalry between France, Spain and Britain for control of the Mississippi and influence with the native peoples inhabiting its valley. Incorporated with the journal of Iberville's second voyage is a subsidiary account by his brother, Jean-Baptiste LeMoyne d’Bienville, of an expedition through the waterlogged wilderness around the great river. Masterfully translated by Richebourg McWilliams, the Iberville journals are a useful tool for students of Louisiana and northern Gulf coast history.

Although his name is strongly associated with Louisiana, Iberville has been called the first Canadian hero. Born in New France around 1661, he played a prominent role in France’s conflict against England in Canada. Having distinguished himself in King William’s War (1689-1697), Iberville was selected by Louis XIV to reassert the French interests in the Mississippi established by LaSalle in 1684. The journals of Iberville's three expeditions in pursuit of this goal portray graphically the difficulties of venturing into virtually uncharted lands. Much effort was spent during the first voyage (December, 1698 to May, 1699) in simply finding the Mississippi and trying to reconcile the terrain and peoples encountered with those mentioned in LaSalle’s accounts. The second (October, 1699 to May, 1700) and third (December, 1701 to April, 1702) voyages contain descriptions of the foundations of French posts like Biloxi and La Mobile from which La Louisianne was to develop as a French colony, of further travels among the tribes along the Mississippi, and of hardships encountered and surmounted.
Richebourg McWilliams’ translation of Iberville’s journals is meticulous. Obviously great pains to ensure accuracy both in literal meaning and sense have been taken. The text is heavily annotated, with many valuable informational notes that add greatly to the reader’s comprehension of the narrative. In cases of interpretation of doubtful words or passages in the original manuscript, Professor McWilliams’ notes explain precisely his reasons for choosing the interpretation he did. The well-written introduction by Tennant S. McWilliams that precedes the translation adds greatly to the reader’s appreciation of the journals, placing Iberville and his accounts in their proper historical context.

The Iberville journals touch on Florida only in passing. There are some interesting glimpses of the wretchedly poor and isolated Spanish fort at Pensacola, and the interplay of France and Spain on the Gulf coast is interestingly illuminated. The reader whose primary interest is Florida history, however, will not find the journals particularly relevant. Those interested in the early history of Louisiana and northern Gulf coast history, on the other hand, should find *Iberville’s Gulf Journals* a valuable door to the past.

*Paul Eugen Camp*