

## Document #1738-08-11-03 – Louis is Sold During the Chickasaw Wars

**K4BL Abstract:** After her husband was killed fighting in the First Chickasaw War, the Widow Bonvillian goes before the Superior Council to beg leniency. She wishes permission to sell an enslaved man from her late husband's estate so that she may settle debts owed to the Company of the Indies, claiming otherwise that she and her children may not survive. The Council grants her the right to sell this unnamed man, identified solely as "*un nègre*," as long as any proceeds from the sale go to the Company. However, by following the documentary traces of his life in the colonial archive, we are able to recover the name and fate of this man. Unnamed in one document,<sup>i</sup> he was also misrecorded in the archive as "Pierre" due to a misreading in another document of the phrase "*un nègre pièce d'Inde*."<sup>iii</sup> Louis (Mouton) was sold to *Sieur* Louis Cheval, resident of 303 Rue Bourbon (present-day location of Arnaud's Restaurant).

<https://lacolonialdocs.org/document/3781>

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Source - French Superior Council

LHQ - n/a

Names: Black - (Mouton), "*un nègre*"; (Mouton), Louis

Names: White - Salmon, Edmé-Gatien de; Mouton, Catherine; Bonvillian, *Veuve* de; Bonvillian, Antoine; D'Artaquiette, Pierre; Brosset, Michel; La Pierre

Names: Native - n/a

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Transcription (French, diplomatic)	Translation (English, modern)
<p>[feuille 1 recto] (digital )</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(10027.)</p> <p>A Monseigneur de Salmon Commissaire ordon[n]ateur<sup>iii</sup> pour Le Roy de Cette province</p> <p>Suplie humblement Catherine mouton veuve defun[t] antoine Bonvillain taillandier dizant que feu son_ mary est mort a La gui[r]re<sup>iv</sup> avec monsieur dartague et a Le[i]sse des debtes et voulant Satisfaire a Cas quelle peut devoir elle [s]e trouve obligee pour Ce Liquider avec La Compagnie de vous demander permission de vendre un negre crai[g]nant que La mort S[']en ꝑ Empare &amp; Cela vena[n]t a arrive[r] elle Setrouverai[t] Embarasee au[s]si bien que ces enfants pour satisfaire C[']est pourquoi Elle Espere que vous Lüy ferez Justice et ne Sachan[t] Signe[e] elle afais Sa marque En presence de temoins Ce 9f aoust <u>1738</u></p> <p>soussigne marque t de</p>	<p>[page #1] [digital 1]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(10027.)</p> <p>To <i>Monseigneur</i> de Salmon, <i>Commissaire-Ordonnateur</i> for the King of this Province [of Louisiana].</p> <p>[Before you] humbly pleads Catherine Mouton, widow of the deceased Antoine Bonvillain, toolmaker, says that her late husband is dead, [killed] in the war with <i>Monsieur</i> <i>D'Artaguiette</i>, and [he] had left some debts. And wanting to take care of this charge, she found herself obliged to liquidate with the Company [<i>des Indes</i>], [and] to ask your permission to sell <i>un nègre</i>, fearing that [otherwise] death would take hold [of her and her family]. If that were to happen, she would find herself encumbered, as well as these [her] children [that she] must take care of. This is why she hopes that you will do her justice. And not knowing how to sign, she has made her mark in the presence of witnesses, this 9th of August, 1738.</p> <p>Undersigned, +</p>

Catherine mouton	mark of Catherine Mouton
[Signé:] Brosset temoin	[Signed:] Brosset, Witness
[Signé:] la pierre temoin	[Signed:] La Pierre, Witness
Permis La venté a condition que les deniers qui en proviendront Seront employez Au payement de ce qui est dû a la Comp. <sup>[agnie]</sup> des Indes Ce 24 aoust 1738	[The Council shall] permit the sale [of the <i>nègre</i> ] on the condition that the money be used to pay that which is due to the Company of the Indies. This, the 24th of August 1738.
[Signé:] Salmon	[Signed:] [Edmé-Gatien de] Salmon

Please note that what appear to be typos (missing spaces, abbreviations, misspellings, strikeouts, superscript) appear in the original manuscript, but are corrected in the more modernized translation. For more on our editorial practices see <https://docs.k4bl.org/bestpractices>.

i. Although not named in this document, the man who Catherine Mouton sold in the wake of the First Chickasaw War was named Louis. He was identified in a related document, selling and transferring property belonging to the estate of the deceased Antoine Bonvillian. For this record see, "Sale and Transfer by Sr. Louis Cheval of a Negro," Louisiana Colonial Documents Digitization Project (LCDDP) #1739-01-13-01, <https://lacolonialdocs.org/document/3976>.

ii. For the document in which Louis was misidentified, see "Sale of a Negro, Pierre d'Inde, by Catherine Mouton, to Louis Cheval," #1738-08-12-01, <https://lacolonialdocs.org/document/3782>.

iii. The *commissaire-ordonnateur* of French colonial Louisiana worked alongside the governor to supervise financial and administrative affairs in the colony.

iv. After the Natchez Wars (1729-1731), Chickasaw villages harbored hundreds of warriors and their kin, protecting them from the French slave-raids and extermination campaigns that saw the Natchez people in diaspora. The French used this (and the Chickasaw's trade alliance with the British) as the reason to wage war against the Chickasaw nation in 1736. During what became called the First Chickasaw War, French colonial forces under the command of Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville lost disastrously. Pierre D'Artaguiette, mentioned in this document, led over a hundred French soldiers— alongside hundreds of Iroquois (Haudenosaunee), Arkansas (Quapaw/Ogáxpá), Miami (Myaamiaki), and Illinois (Illiniwek)—in an attack on the village of Ogoula Tchetoka at Chucalissa (Old Town). The Chickasaw successfully defended their people. For more on the history of the Chickasaw nation, see James R. Atkinson, *Splendid Land, Splendid People: The Chickasaw Indians to Removal* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004).