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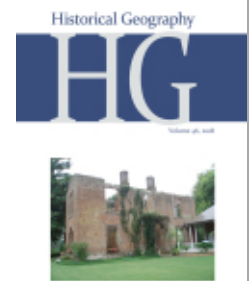
*Marc-Antoine Caillot and the Company of the Indies in  
Louisiana: Trade in the French Atlantic World* by Erin M.  
Greenwald (review)

Patrick D. Hagge

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*Marc-Antoine Caillot and the Company of the Indies in Louisiana: Trade in the French Atlantic World.* Erin M. Greenwald. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016. Pp. xiii+224, black & white illustrations, maps, notes. \$45.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-0-8071-6285-9.

In 1728 Marc-Antoine Caillot set off for the French colony of Louisiana, which was a destination “more likely to fill a twenty-one-year-old clerk with disappointment than with satisfaction” (39). An office employee who worked for the French firm *Compagnie des Indes* (Company of the Indies) between 1717 and 1731, the young and ambitious Caillot sought advancement working for the company abroad, and his business voyages took him to the French Louisiana between 1729 and 1731. In 2004 Caillot’s long-forgotten personal writings were acquired by the Historic New Orleans Collection, whose one-time curator, Erin M. Greenwald, published Caillot’s translated memoirs in 2013. Arising in part from those edited memoirs, Greenwald’s book, *Marc-Antoine Caillot and the Company of the Indies in Louisiana: Trade in the French Atlantic World*, takes a historian’s step back to investigate both the wider operations and local histories related to the far-flung Company of the Indies, from Louisiana to the rest of the globe.

*Marc-Antoine Caillot* digs deep into the fascinating global reach of the Company of the Indies, providing a detailed corporate history that is simultaneously intertwined with in-context stories of Caillot’s global adventures with the company. Greenwald notes that this book “examines Louisiana in a new way—as a colony of the French Company of the Indies . . . and places the development of the colony within the context of the company’s global trade network” (2). Based on the detailed histories of the company contained throughout the work, Greenwald has succeeded in this new approach to Louisiana’s history.

The book is organized into six brief chapters, which follow a general chronological narrative. A history of the company’s initial growth is followed by Caillot’s captivating journeys from Paris to West Africa to the Caribbean to Louisiana. A broad examination of colonial Louisiana follows, which contains details of Caillot’s life in and around New Orleans. The rise and greater fall of the company’s attempted development in Louisiana is similarly charted, as the French Crown reasserted control of Louisiana from the company in 1731. A final section places Caillot’s very global life after Louisiana in proper context with the

later organizational shifts taken by the company itself. Some chapters are succinct (the actual narrative portion of the entire book runs about 160 pages) but Greenwald's detailed notes add another 30-plus pages of very readable contextual information. Moreover, while Caillot's translated memoirs understandably provide a major source, this work is not a daily recounting of Caillot's diary, and Greenwald's extensive use of various archival sources published on both sides of the Atlantic is admirable.

Several sections of the book merit acclaim for their readability. The text's third chapter, "Tropical Baptisms," connects the Company of the Indies' history of transatlantic trade with a retelling of Caillot's own colorful Atlantic journeys, where his experiences ranged from being temporarily tied to the mast rigging of a ship to undergoing a ritualized seawater "baptism" as the vessel crossed the Tropic of Cancer. In the same way, the economic networks of the Company of the Indies are revealed not through a dry accounting of records or textbook definitions of mercantilism, but rather through engaging prose. Even a discussion of the financial minutiae of speculative stock and land investments in the run-up to the infamous "Mississippi Bubble" was appealing.

In a work largely based on employees of a large multinational company, the author's chronicling of issues related to the "other" peoples in French Louisiana was vital. In Caillot's time, the Company of the Indies generally regulated the slave trade for French domains, and transported thousands of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic. Here we are treated to the miserable economics of the slave trade, such as the company's attempts to keep its Crown-approved slaving monopoly by purposely escalating the frequency of its transoceanic slave voyages in the mid-1720s, in order to "prove to the Crown" that the company should be the only slave trader from France (72). Likewise, the interactions between French Louisianans and local Native American groups are discussed with important context. The company tried in vain to manage peaceful relationships with the Natchez Indians in particular, and the onset of the Natchez War in 1729 "brought the dream of creating a French version of the Chesapeake in Louisiana to a violent close" (139).

This book adds to an existing body of scholarship dealing with Louisiana history. As would be expected, the most immediate comparison for contemporary scholarship is Greenwald's previously mentioned 2013 edited work, *A Company Man: The Remarkable French-Atlantic Voyage of a Clerk for the Company of the Indies* (The Historic New Orleans Col-

lection). Additional scholarship about French Louisiana exists and has increased in recent years. Recent monographs on more specific topics, such as Shannon Lee Dawdy's *Building the Devil's Empire* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), Lawrence Powell's *The Accidental City* (Harvard University Press, 2013), and Gilbert Din's *An Extraordinary Atlantic Life* (University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2016) signal a continued focus by historians on French-era Louisiana.

After experiencing the book's narrative buildup to Caillot's journey toward Louisiana, a reader might be surprised to note the comparatively short amount of text related to Caillot's (and the Company of the Indies') time in southern Louisiana and New Orleans, as just two chapters of the six are focused on Louisiana during the years of Caillot's residence. But this is a small critique, as the author's global perspective (highlighted by the subtitle *Trade in the French Atlantic World*) would suffer from a more Louisiana-focused text—and such a text was already published by the author in 2013.

This work is a worthy addition to the existing body of scholarship on Louisiana history, and Atlantic history as well, as the geographic nature of the book argues for important evidence of globalization in various contexts. Erin M. Greenwald has successfully placed the Lower Mississippi region in a wider Atlantic commercial world, and *Marc-Antoine Caillot and the Company of the Indies in Louisiana: Trade in the French Atlantic World* takes its place as an indispensable book on the history of French Louisiana.

Patrick D. Hagge,  
Arkansas Tech University

*A Louisiana Coastal Atlas: Resources, Economies, and Demographics.*  
Scott A. Hemmerling. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press,  
2017. Pp. xi+186, color maps, index. \$75.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8071-  
6588-1.

Loss of coastal land and wetlands in Louisiana has been estimated to be about 1,883 square miles since 1932, with an expected loss of another 1,750 square miles by 2060. This area has always had a shifting coastline as the delta of the Mississippi River has changed course several times, with residents having to adapt over the millennia to changing coastlines