

# New Orleans

1718

*La Nouvelle-Orléans* (New Orleans) was founded in the spring of 1718 by the French Mississippi Company, under the direction of Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, on land inhabited by the Chitimacha. It was named for Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, who was regent of the Kingdom of France at the time. His title came from the French city of Orléans. The location was selected due to rational and carefully weighted geographical reasons of accessibility, defendability, riverine position, arability, and natural resources, plus a lack of better alternatives.

Before the arrival of European colonists, the indigenous Choctaw people called the area of present-day New Orleans *Bulbancha*, which translates as "land of many tongues".

The Company, eventually convinced of the strategic superiority of a river site over a coastal position with its attendant risks of high tides and hurricanes and impressed with company engineer Pauger's new city plan, designated New Orleans as capital of Louisiana on December 23, 1721. In 1722, the royal governor, Sieur de Bienville, moved the administrative force moved from the old capital in Biloxi, Mississippi.

New Orleans remained the territorial capital of French Louisiana until it became part of the United States in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. This land area stretched from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Appalachian Mountains to the Rocky Mountains. Louisiana included two regions, now known as Upper Louisiana (*la Haute-Louisiane*), which began north of the Arkansas River, and Lower Louisiana (*la Basse-Louisiane*).

New France after the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) MINARM/SGA/DPMA/Joëlle Rosello

