



The Memoir of Lieutenant Dumont, 1715-1747: A Sojourner in the French Atlantic (Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia)

Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny

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In 1719, Jean-Francois-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny, son of a Paris lawyer, set sail for Louisiana with a commission as a lieutenant after a year in Quebec. During his peregrinations over the next eighteen years, Dumont came to challenge corrupt officials, found himself in jail, eked out a living as a colonial subsistence farmer, survived life-threatening storms and epidemics, encountered pirates, witnessed the 1719 battle for Pensacola, described the 1729 Natchez Uprising, and gave account of the 1739-1740 French expedition against the Chickasaws.

Dumont's adventures, as recorded in his 1747 memoir conserved at the Newberry Library, underscore the complexity of the expanding French Atlantic world, offering a singular perspective on early colonialism in Louisiana. His life story also provides detailed descriptions and illustrations of the peoples and environment of the lower Mississippi valley. This English translation of the unabridged memoir features a new introduction, maps, and a biographical dictionary to enhance the text. Dumont emerges here as an important colonial voice and brings to vivid life the French Atlantic.

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