



# **Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier (Elma Dill Russell Spencer Series in the West and Southwest)**

*Helen Sophie Burton, F. Todd Smith*

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Strategically located at the western edge of the Atlantic World, the French post of Natchitoches thrived during the eighteenth century as a trade hub between the well-supplied settlers and the isolated Spaniards and Indians of Texas. Its critical economic and diplomatic role made it the most important community on the Louisiana-Texas frontier during the colonial era.

Despite the community's critical role under French and then Spanish rule, Colonial Natchitoches is the first thorough study of its society and economy. Founded in 1714, four years before New Orleans, Natchitoches developed a creole (American-born of French descent) society that dominated the Louisiana-Texas frontier.

H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith carefully demonstrate not only the persistence of this creole dominance but also how it was maintained. They examine, as well, the other ethnic cultures present in the town and relations with Indians in the surrounding area.

Through statistical analyses of birth and baptismal records, census figures, and appropriate French and Spanish archives, Burton and Smith reach surprising conclusions about the nature of society and commerce in colonial Natchitoches.

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