



A Company Man: The Remarkable French-Atlantic Voyage of a Clerk for the Company of the Indies

Marc-Antoine Caillot

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Recently rediscovered and never before published, Marc-Antoine Caillot's buoyant memoir recounts a young man's voyage from Paris to the port city of Lorient, across the Atlantic to Saint Domingue, and up the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Only twenty-one when he set sail as a clerk for the French Company of the Indies in 1729, Caillot was in many ways the ultimate company man. His descriptions of flora, fauna, and native peoples mirror the sentiments and literary conventions of his class and his era. He would spend his entire adult life in service to the company, rising high in its ranks before dying, at the age of fifty-one, in a shipwreck off the coast of India.

Yet in other ways Caillot was fully his own man, possessed of a voice both witty and prescient. An incorrigible rake--if not an outright rogue--he documents with gusto a string of pranks, parties, and romantic escapades. He stakes narrative claim to New World terrain, and he speaks with immediacy across the centuries, illuminating racial and ethnic politics, environmental concerns, and the birth of New Orleans's distinctive cultural mélange.

Brilliantly introduced and annotated by Erin Greenwald, translated by Teri Chalmers, and enlivened by Caillot's own exquisite illustrations, *A Company Man* provides an intimate look at the early history of one of America's most storied cities, placing New Orleans and the fledgling colony it anchored within the nexus of the French-Atlantic empire.

The original manuscript, *Relation du voyage de la Louisianne ou Nouvelle France fait par le Sr. Caillot en l'année 1730*, is housed in the Williams Research Center of The Historic New Orleans Collection, where it is a capstone of the institution's rich archival holdings documenting life in French-colonial Louisiana.

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