

FROM THE ASSASSIN LIMOËLAN TO FATHER CLORIVIÈRE: POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN EARLY REPUBLICAN CHARLESTON

SUZANNE KREBSBACH*

IF CAROLINIAN SETTLERS OF THE PROPRIETARY ERA WERE A contentious lot of British Nonconformists, Anglicans, and French Huguenots, then those refugees who found a home in South Carolina in the late eighteenth century were a rolling brawl. The refugees comprised French monarchists, French Federalists and Bonapartists, Irish revolutionaries, Protestants and Catholics, atheists, slave owners, enslaved people, free people of color, and speculators of most every nation and condition. They came seeking shelter, respite, or anonymity. As a British colony, South Carolina had been known for its spirit of religious toleration toward Protestants, but following the American War of Independence, the victors established both a new state and a new nation that were an even brighter beacon to Europeans of many faiths and political persuasions.

South Carolina's 1778 revolutionary constitution gave all Protestant denominations equal religious and civil privileges, but positive omission from the document excluded Catholics. Any group of fifteen or more Protestant men could incorporate themselves as a church; they merely had to agree that Christianity was the only true religion and proclaim that truth. They could elect their own pastors, and only a pastor chosen by a majority of the congregation could officiate.¹ Protestant vestries, which had a traditional right of electing pastors, now had the constitutional right to do so. The revolutionary ideals of religious freedom and the separation of church and state gave some in South Carolina's small community of Catholics incentive to claim full legal rights over their own congregations.

A bitter dispute within one of those Catholic congregations highlights issues of religious freedom, politics, and nationality in the revolutionary era. Part of the wider controversy involving trusteeism in the United States, the Charleston Schism, as it was called, pitted republican Irish laymen with scant experience of church hierarchy against a French aristocrat, Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoëlan de Clorivière, who was a priest with a violent past. Father Clorivière was the Old Regime foil to a whole spectrum of

* Suzanne Krebsbach is an independent historian in Charleston. The author thanks René d'Ambrières for generously sharing his research on Joseph Clorivière.

¹ "The Constitution of South Carolina" (1778), in *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, vol. 1, *Containing Acts, Records, and Documents of a Constitutional Character*, ed. Thomas Cooper (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by A. S. Johnston, 1836), 144–145.

republican ideals. The convergence of an Irish-led radical vestry and a monarchist priest in Charleston was the paradigm of the age. As such, it merits close analysis.

CHARLESTON'S PRIEST WITH A PAST

In 1816, amid the denouement of Napoleon Bonaparte's empire, the republican *Southern Patriot* newspaper of Charleston scorned French notables who had accepted the return of the Bourbons to the throne of France and the restoration of the Catholic church to prominence. "General Drouot is said to have embraced the clerical profession. The famous LIMOËLAN, one of the principal actors in the celebrated affair of the INFERNAL MACHINE is now a priest in Charleston under an assumed name. We do not despair to hear of Louis XVIII imitating such examples; and retiring to a monastery to conceal his disgrace and expiate his sins."² Many Americans knew about the 1800 Infernal Machine Plot to kill Bonaparte but likely would have been surprised to learn that one of the plotters was in their midst. Years earlier, the *National Intelligencer* of Washington, D.C., and other newspapers had reported events in France and mentioned Limoëlan by name as one of the chief conspirators.³ French intelligence kept tabs on him after he emigrated in 1801, and some Americans and European émigrés connected Limoëlan with Father Clorivière.⁴ Who was Limoëlan, and what was his connection to the Charleston priest?

Specialists in American art history are familiar with the work of Joseph-Pierre Picot de Clorivière. Under this name, Clorivière painted

² Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, July 31, 1816, doc. no. 12J21, Leonard Neale Papers, ca. 1792–1817, Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore (AAB), Associated Archives at Saint Mary's Seminary and University (AASMSU), Baltimore. The Clorivière quotes are from the *Southern Patriot, and Commercial Advertiser* (Charleston, S.C.), which reprinted the article from the *Virginia Argus* on July 26, 1816. Antoine Drouot did not embrace the clerical life at the Bourbon Restoration. See John R. Elting, *Swords around a Throne: Napoleon's Grand Armée* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997), 667.

³ "On the New English Ministry," *National Intelligencer, and Washington Advertiser* (Washington, D.C.), August 17, 1801. This news item, reprinted from the *Paris Moniteur Universel*, was critical of the British government for sheltering two conspirators, Limoëlan and Georges Cadoudal. In addition to being picked up by newspapers in major American cities such as Washington and Philadelphia, the story appeared in smaller publications from Vermont to Virginia and Kentucky.

⁴ The First Consul offered a reward of 12,000 francs for Limoëlan and 6,000 francs for Cadoudal and other conspirators. See Napoleon Bonaparte to Joseph Fouché, April 13, 1801, in *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier: Publiée par Ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III*, vol. 7 (Paris: Henri Plon and J. Dumaine, 1861), 123. See also *Procès Instruit par la Cour de Justice Criminelle et Spéciale du Département de la Seine* (Paris: C. F. Patris, Imprimeur de la Cour de Justice Criminelle, 1804), 1: 167, 239, 254, 257.

miniature portraits between 1803 and 1812 in Georgia and South Carolina, as he conducted the business affairs of his brother-in-law Jean-Baptiste de Chappedelaine in Savannah and elsewhere.⁵ Clorivière's subjects were prosperous Georgians and South Carolinians, both men and women. As such, Clorivière figures among the small, but important, group of French refugee artists in the United States during the early national period.⁶ In his later years, he also was a noted architect, remembered for the design and the construction of the Visitation Monastery in Washington.⁷

As "Limoëlan," Clorivière's reputation among European historians and writers differs dramatically from how he is remembered in the United States. Many nineteenth-century historians and biographers of Napoleon linked Limoëlan and his murderous connection to the emperor without recounting either the conspirator's later life in America or his priestly vocation.⁸ In contrast, historians of the French Catholic Restoration and Romantic

⁵ Jean-Baptiste de Chappedelaine was married to Marie-Thérèse Picot de Limoëlan. He was heir to the failed Sapelo Company (1790–1794). See Martha L. Keber, "Refuge and Ruin: The French Sapelo Company," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 86 (Summer 2002): 173–200. See also Keber, *Seas of Gold, Seas of Cotton: Christophe Poulain DuBignon of Jekyll Island* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002); Daniel P. Juengst, *Sapelo Papers: Researches in the History and Prehistory of Sapelo Island, Georgia*, West Georgia College Studies in the Social Sciences 19 (Carrollton: West Georgia College, 1980). Limoëlan's younger brother Michel Picot de Limoëlan was heir to considerable property in Saint-Domingue. See *État Détaillé des Liquidations Opérées par la Commission Chargée de Répartir l'Indemnité Attribuée aux Anciens Colons de Saint-Domingue, en Exécution de la Loi du 10 Avril 1826* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1828), 1: 202–203, 218–219.

⁶ For a discussion of Clorivière's art, see Stephen C. Worsley, "Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoëlan de Clorivière: A Portrait Miniaturist Revisited," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 2 (Winter 2002): 1–51. An earlier study is Anna Wells Rutledge, "A French Priest, Painter and Architect in the United States: Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoëlan de Clorivière," *Gazette de Beaux-Arts*, 6th ser., 35 (March 1948): 159–176. Clorivière may have painted a portrait of John Carroll, the first Catholic bishop in the United States, when the former was a seminarian in Baltimore. For a discussion of this portrait, see Toby Maria Chieffo, "Joshua Johnson Revisited: Filling the Lacunae" (Master's thesis, College of William and Mary, 1995). The New York Public Library has digitized a print of the Carroll portrait. See <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-9289-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99> (accessed February 22, 2019).

⁷ The architecture of the Georgetown Visitation Monastery is considered historic. See <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/item/dc0122/> (accessed February 19, 2019).

⁸ Kelly Diane Jernigan, among other scholars, argues that Georges Cadoudal was the ringleader of the plot and Pierre Robinault de Saint-Régent, with Limoëlan and a group of co-conspirators, put it into action in Paris. She assigns a smaller role to Limoëlan. See Jernigan, "Political Conspiracy in Napoleonic France" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 2015), 89–132. Jernigan does not explain how Limoëlan came to be the symbol of the Infernal Machine as early as 1801. Historians of the

writers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature marked the dashing exploits of the monarchist Limoëlan, but they too failed to consider his aristocratic origins and his subsequent clerical career. From this group, two of the better-known works are Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve's novel *Volupté, the Sensual Man* (1835) and François René Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* (1848). In the twentieth century, Xavier Lendormy's drama *Limoëlan* (1915) celebrated the eponymous hero's courage in the face of war, and in 1985 the French Academy awarded Pierre le Bastart de Villeneuve the Prix Thérouanne for his biography *Le Vrai Limoëlan: De la Machine Infernale a la Visitation* (1984). In the twenty-first century, historians continue to discuss Limoëlan, the enigmatic counterrevolutionary soldier and spy for the British, who used several *noms de guerre* and was part of the Infernal Machine Plot. Breton re-enactment groups sing of Limoëlan's exploits and his doomed royalism. Clearly, Limoëlan's legacy is complex.

Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoëlan de Clorivière (1768–1826) was a low-ranking member of the French nobility. He was born near Broons, Brittany, the son of Alain-Michel Picot de Limoëlan de Clorivière and Renee Jeanne Roche. Known as Limoëlan in his youth, he attended the College of Rennes, where he was a classmate of author-diplomat François-René Chateaubriand and future Bonapartist general Jean Victor Moreau. Limoëlan studied at the Royal Military School in Paris and served in the Régiment d'Angoulême. A monarchist devoted to the Bourbons, he resigned his commission and joined the counterrevolution in 1791.⁹

After the fall of the Bastille in 1789, the Clorivière family had become involved in the Breton Association, a counterrevolutionary Catholic monarchist movement that opposed the French Revolution. To preserve their local rights, religious practices, and loyalty to the monarchy, these Bretons waged a civil war within the Revolution.¹⁰ Limoëlan's father, Alain-Michel

assassination attempt may have been influenced by Joseph Fouché, who had a close view of the events but wrote his memoirs twenty-five years after the fact. See Fouché, *The Memoirs of Joseph Fouché, Duke of Otranto, Minister of the General Police of France* (London: H. S. Nichols, 1896), 1: 154ff. See also [François] Guizot, *A Popular History of France from the Earliest Times*, trans. Robert Black (New York: Hooper, Clarke and Company, 1899), 7: 44–48; Adolphe Thiers, *History of the Consulate and the Empire of France under Napoleon*, trans. D. Forbes Campbell and H. W. Herbert (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1855): 1: 233ff.

⁹ Pierre le Bastart de Villeneuve, *Le Vrai Limoëlan: De la Machine Infernale a la Visitation* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984), 27–40; Prosper-Jean Levot, *Biographie Bretonne: Recueil de Notices sur Tous les Bretons*, vol. 2 (Vannes, Fr.: Cauderan, 1852), s.v. "Limoëlan, (Joseph-Pierre Picot de)"; Samuel F. Scott, "The Royal Officer Corps and the French Revolution," in *Limits of Loyalty*, ed. Edgar Denton III (Waterloo, Ont., Can.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1980), 43–53.

¹⁰ A. Goodwin, "Counter-Revolution in Brittany: The Royalist Conspiracy of the Marquis de La Rouërie, 1791–3," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* 39

Picot de Limoëlan de Clorivière, the brother of influential Jesuit priest Pierre-Joseph de Clorivière, was a leader of the Breton Association. His sister Jeanne-Michelle Picot, her husband Marc-Pierre-François Desilles, and their three daughters—Angelique-Françoise, Jeanne-Julie-Michelle, and Marie-Therese—were all members of the Breton Association. Andre Desilles, Limoëlan's cousin and brother of the Desilles sisters, was a lieutenant in the Régiment du Roi who had achieved brief fame in the 1790 Mutiny of Nancy.¹¹

Georges Danton, president of the Committee of Public Safety, arrested Alain-Michel de Clorivière and the Desilles family and imprisoned them in L'Abbaye Prison. Politician and author Jeanne-Marie Roland also was confined in the prison. She observed that the Desilles women were charming and beautiful but tragically touching, given their fates.¹² Alain-Michel de Clorivière and Angelique-Françoise Desilles were guillotined on June 18, 1793, along with other Bretons. Two of the cousins were released. Facing death on the scaffold, the Bretons refused final rites from constitutional priests, choosing to die unshriven rather than receive the sacraments from "imposters."¹³

Limoëlan spent the early years of the French Revolution as an officer in the royalist Army of the Princes and an associate of Georges Cadoudal, the Chouan leader.¹⁴ Limoëlan's passport from General Labarolière was among

(1957): 326–355; Elizabeth S. Kite, "Charles-Armand Tuffin, Marquis de La Rouërie: Breton Leader of the French Catholic Counter-Revolution, 1790–1793," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society* 59 (March 1948): 1–33. See also Jean Meyer, *La Noblesse Bretonne au XVIIIe Siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Editions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1985), 2 vols.; Timothy Tackett, "The West in France in 1789: The Religious Factor in the Origins of the Counterrevolution," *Journal of Modern History* 54 (December 1982): 715–745; Alan Forrest, *Paris, the Provinces and the French Revolution* (London: Arnold, 2004).

¹¹ William Clinton Baldwin, "The Beginnings of the Revolution and the Mutiny of the Royal Garrison in Nancy: L'Affaire de Nancy, 1790" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1973), 273–274; Levot, *Biographie Bretonne*, vol. 1, s.v. "Desilles (André-Joseph-Marc)."

¹² *Mémoires de Madame Roland avec une Notice sur Sa Vie, des Notes des Éclaircissements Historiques*, par MM. Berville et Barrière, 3rd ed. (Paris: Baudouin Frères, 1827), 2: 222–225.

¹³ Levot, *Biographie Bretonne*, vol. 2, s.v. "La Fonchais (Angélique-Françoise Desilles, dame de)"; *Liste Générale et Très-Exacte, des Noms, Âges, Qualités et Demeures de Tous les Conspirateurs* (Paris: Channaud, Marchand, et Tous le Libraires, 1794), 7. Constitutional priests supported the French Revolution. Refractory priests were those who refused to abjure the pope. See Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791* (1986; repr., Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2016).

¹⁴ The Army of the Princes, or the Army of the Émigrés, comprised a counter-revolutionary force of refugees from France who opposed the Revolution. In 1791

his possessions when he died.¹⁵ During this dangerous time, Limoëlan used a variety of pseudonyms and secret identities, one of which was “Pouleroy” (“For the King”).¹⁶ Joseph Fouché, Napoleon Bonaparte’s minister of police, later described Limoëlan as being one of Cadoudal’s “most decided confidential officers.”¹⁷ Historian Elizabeth Sparrow, using British sources, identifies Limoëlan as a spy for the British.¹⁸ The assassination attempt on Bonaparte was the future priest’s last covert military mission. On Christmas Eve, 1800, Cadoudal, Limoëlan, and others ignited the “Infernal Machine,” a bomb designed to kill the First Consul on his way to a performance of Joseph Haydn’s oratorio *The Creation*.¹⁹

Fouché became aware of the plot and followed the conspirators on that fateful night. While Bonaparte escaped harm, the explosion killed twenty people and wounded fifty-six others. The First Consul knew that royalists like Limoëlan were the instigators, but he blamed his Jacobin opponents and used the plot to consolidate power.²⁰ Limoëlan went into hiding with the assistance of his uncle Pierre-Joseph de Clorivière and the priest’s society

numerous royalist army officers congregated in foreign countries, notably the Rhineland and Baden. After forming the Army of the Princes, they invaded France in 1792 but were defeated at the Battle of Valmy. See Jacques Godechot, “*Emigres*,” in *Historical Dictionary of Napoleonic France, 1799–1815*, ed. Owen Connelly (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 168–170; Donald Sutherland, *The Chouans: The Social Origins of Popular Counter-Revolution in Upper Brittany, 1770–1796* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

¹⁵ Safe passage signed by General Labarolière, September 27, 1799, Record Group 1 (Early Documents), ser. 7, Founders: Clorivière file, Georgetown Visitation Monastery Archives (GVMA), Washington, D.C.

¹⁶ See *Armée des Royalistes dans les Pays de Laval, Vitré, Mayenne, Fougères et Circonvoisins, ou Tous Autres où Ils Parviendront à Rétablir l’Autorité du Roi, sous le Commandement d’Achille Lebrun, Provisoirement Général en Chef; d’Achille Leblond, Général-Lieutenant, et de Pouleroy, Major-Général* (N.p., [1799]). The Bibliothèque Nationale de France determined that Pouleroy, “le ci-devant chevalier de Limoëlan,” was the author of this proclamation.

¹⁷ Fouché, *Memoirs of Joseph Fouché*, 1: 154. This work first appeared in 1825 and went through numerous editions in the nineteenth century.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Sparrow, *Secret Service: British Agents in France, 1792–1815* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, Eng.: Boydell Press, 1999), 221–222.

¹⁹ Many historians have discussed the Infernal Machine Plot. The most thorough description is David Darrah, *Conspiracy in Paris: The Strange Career of Joseph Picot de Limoëlan, Aristocrat, Soldier and Priest and the Gunpowder Plot against Napoleon on 3 Nivôse, Year IX (December 24, 1800)* (New York: Exposition Press, 1953).

²⁰ Fouché, *Memoirs of Joseph Fouché*, 1: 155–160. Fouché listed the survivors of the explosion, to whom he gave pensions.

of pious ladies.²¹ After escaping to the United States, Limoëlan eventually became Father Joseph Clorivière in Charleston.²²

CHARLESTON, A REPUBLICAN CROSSROADS

Charleston had a unique Anglo-French heritage. Huguenots had emigrated in the seventeenth century to settle the English proprietary colony of Carolina, established by Anglicans and their slaves.²³ National origins, however, did not predict religious preference, as the French Calvinists in short order made common cause with their Anglican neighbors. A century later, in the revolutionary era, Charleston witnessed a new wave of French immigrants. Monarchists fled France when its revolution began in 1789, and they continued emigrating through the tumultuous decades that followed. Additional Francophone migrants of all political stripes arrived in Charleston when revolution reached the French Caribbean in 1791. In the process, politics of liberty and reaction, black-white tensions, and confessional differences roiled South Carolina's wealthy, luxurious metropolis. Anglophone American sympathizers of the French Revolution formed political clubs in the 1790s such as the Republican Society of South Carolina.²⁴ Other Democratic-Republican societies were primarily French.²⁵ Of the numerous French "Jacobin clubs" in the United States, Charleston's French Patriotic Society was the most active.²⁶

²¹ Pierre-Joseph de Clorivière ministered in Paris even under threat of death. After the Infernal Machine Plot, Napoleonic authorities imprisoned the Jesuit in place of his nephew. See Jacques Terrien, *Histoire du R. P. Clorivière de La Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Poussielgue, 1892), 330–349. See also George M. Anderson, *With Christ in Prison: Jesuits in Jail from St. Ignatius to the Present* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 99, 207, 219.

²² French sources may have kept him under surveillance in the United States. See Villeneuve, *Vrai Limoëlan*, 137–143; Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondence des Consuls, Etats-Unis, Baltimore, 1781–1814, and Charleston, 1800–1815, Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Fr.

²³ See Bertrand van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon to Eden: The Huguenots and Their Migration to Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

²⁴ Robert J. Alderson Jr., *This Bright Era of Happy Revolutions: French Consul Michel-Ange-Bernard Mangourit and International Republicanism in Charleston, 1792–1794* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 185–188. Alderson includes a list of the founding members of the Republican Society of South Carolina, at least six of whom were mixed race, as evidenced by their membership in the Brown Fellowship Society. Ten members of the Republican Society also were members of the French Patriotic Society, and eleven were members of the Society of the Cincinnati.

²⁵ See Eugene Perry Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790–1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942).

²⁶ Michael L. Kennedy, "A French Jacobin Club in Charleston, South Carolina, 1792–1795," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 91 (January 1990): 4–22.

Distinguished French refugees were prominent in post-revolutionary South Carolina. The family of economist Pierre-Samuel du Pont lived in Charleston before moving to Delaware and making an immense fortune in explosives manufacturing. Natalie Delage Sumter, goddaughter of Queen Marie Antoinette and daughter-in-law of Revolutionary War general Thomas Sumter, settled near Sumter. A hero of the war's climactic action, the 1781 Siege of Yorktown, Admiral François-Joseph-Paul de Grasse and his family lived in Charleston for a time. Yet as visible as French émigrés were in the early United States, French population figures for the era are incomplete.²⁷

David A. Wilson estimates that over sixty thousand Irish immigrants arrived in the United States during the 1790s, though other historians put the number much higher.²⁸ Whether Catholic or Protestant, the Irish émigrés generally were committed to overthrowing British rule. Among the conspicuous Irish immigrants in Charleston was Dr. James Lynah, who served as a surgeon under General Francis Marion during the American Revolution. He was a founding member of the Republican Society of South Carolina, the Roman Catholic congregation in Charleston, and the Medical Society of South Carolina.²⁹ Architect James Hoban, who later designed and

²⁷ For an example of marriage between an American republican and a French monarchist, see Thomas Tisdale, *A Lady of the High Hills: Natalie Delage Sumter* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001); Mitchell Oxford, "The Delage-Sumter Family in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World" (Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 2014). Admiral de Grasse commanded the French navy at the Battle of the Chesapeake on September 5, 1781. His victory enabled Franco-American forces, led by American commander-in-chief George Washington, to defeat the army of British general Lord Cornwallis in the Siege of Yorktown on October 19, 1781.

²⁸ David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 2. See also David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815–1877* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 12–13; David Noel Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820* (Dublin: Published for the Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland by Mercier Press, 1981), 51–56. Doyle analyzed the 1790 census and estimates that Scots Irish comprised 11 percent of New Yorkers, 21 percent of Pennsylvanians, 11 percent of Marylanders, 14 percent of Virginians, 13 percent of North Carolinians, 24 percent of South Carolinians, and 27 percent of Georgians. He also points out the difficulty in separating Catholic Irish from Protestant Irish in these analyses. See *ibid.*, 61.

²⁹ Born in Dublin, James Lynah served in the British navy. He came to Charleston in the 1760s. See David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina, from Its First Settlement in 1670, to the Year 1808* (Charleston, S.C.: Published by David Longworth, for the author, 1809), 2: 120; James Lynah and A. S. Salley, "Dr. James Lynah, a Surgeon of the Revolution," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 40 (July 1939): 87–90; Richard C. Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina: A Record* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 24; Alderson, *This Bright Era of Happy Revolutions*, 186. Henry Benbridge painted a portrait of Lynah as well as other prominent members of the Society of the Cincinnati. See Alexander Moore, *The Fabric of Liberty:*

and built the White House in Washington, also immigrated to Charleston in the revolutionary era.³⁰

Despite a number of cultural barriers, including the linguistic divide, segments of these Irish and French immigrant populations arrived at common ground in two areas, their republican leanings and their Catholic backgrounds. Little Roman Catholic church structure existed beyond the seaboard cities of the Mid-Atlantic states, so Irish and French Catholics had few opportunities to practice their faith. In the colonial period, many had converted to the Church of England. After the Revolutionary War, they became Episcopalian or, given new liberties, asserted their Catholic heritage.³¹ In 1789, Pope Pius VI established the first Catholic diocese in the United States, the Diocese of Baltimore, and appointed Father John Carroll of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, who had trained as a priest in France and Belgium, as its original bishop. One year prior, several Catholic laymen had organized a church in Charleston. Located on Hasell Street and later named Saint Mary's, it was the first Catholic church in the Carolinas and Georgia. The biggest problem that faced the Charlestonians and American Catholics in general was a severe shortage of priests. Bishop Carroll subsequently would order a series of missionaries to minister to the Hasell Street congregation, one of whom was Joseph Clorivière.

After failing in the assassination attempt on Bonaparte and fleeing from France, Clorivière found himself at a crossroads of republicanism. He had traversed an ocean and assumed a new identity, but the French-born priest would not be able to escape his past. In Charleston, Clorivière's Irish and French republican enemies would conspire to unmask him as Limoëlan, the monarchist assassin. Moreover, his vestry would splinter, with Irish radicals turning the congregation away from Father Clorivière's Old Regime Catholicism, forcing him to establish his own French chapel that was independent of and in opposition to the mother church. Clorivière's Charleston career sheds light on republican-monarchist duality, Irish-French religious cultural differences, and possibly aristocratic-bourgeois antagonism.

The Society of the Cincinnati of the State of South Carolina (Charleston, S.C.: Home House Press, 2012), 272–273. Lynah's papers are housed at the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah.

³⁰ James Hoban was a founding member of the Roman Catholic congregation in Charleston. When President Washington visited Charleston in 1791, he invited Hoban to design what became the White House. See Beatrice St. Julien Ravenel, *Architects of Charleston* (1945; repr., Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 295.

³¹ Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 11–12.

THE IRISH CATHOLIC VESTRY

In the late 1780s, a disparate group of Charleston Catholics had aimed to start a church under prohibitive conditions, but the situation changed when South Carolina adopted a more liberal constitution in 1790. This state constitution greatly condensed the clause regarding religion while confirming the precise regulations from 1778 related to religious governing bodies.³² That authority to hire and fire pastors under the previous South Carolina constitution, which extended back to the colonial period, remained in force, vexing the state's Roman Catholics, whose parochial and hierarchical traditions stood at odds with the law.³³ In June 1790, the month in which the new constitution was enacted, the recently appointed bishop of Baltimore, John Carroll—whose diocese at the time encompassed the entire United States—pointed out to the nascent Catholic vestry in Charleston that they could not arrogate to themselves such civil or parochial administrative matters. If the vestry noted Carroll's rebuke or responded to it, then the evidence has not survived.³⁴

Under the 1790 constitution, Charleston's Roman Catholic congregation together with its near neighbor on Hasell Street, the Jewish congregation of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, petitioned the General Assembly of South

³² "The Constitution of the State of South Carolina" (1790), in Cooper, *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, 1: 191. South Carolinian Charles Pinckney drafted the Establishment Clause in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. He presided over the state constitutional convention of 1790. He is not credited with drafting the state's clause concerning freedom of religion, but the document reflects his experience and influence. See James Lowell Underwood, "'Without Discrimination or Preference': Equality for Catholics and Jews under the South Carolina Constitution of 1790," in *The Dawn of Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, ed. Underwood and W. Lewis Burke (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 60. For a biography of Pinckney, see Marty D. Matthews, *Forgotten Founder: The Life and Times of Charles Pinckney* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

³³ Vestry-led congregations and the subsequent conflict with Catholic European tradition is known as trusteeism. For a discussion of trusteeism in the U.S. Catholic church, see Patrick W. Carey, *People, Priests, and Prelates: Ecclesiastical Democracy and the Tensions of Trusteeism* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987). For insight into the Presbyterian and Congregationalist religious and political environment in Charleston, see Michael P. Johnson, "Telemaque's Pilgrimage? A Tale of Two Charleston Churches, Three Missionaries, and Four Ministers, 1783–1817," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 118 (January 2017): 4–36.

³⁴ John Carroll to the Trustees of Charleston, June [1790], in *The John Carroll Papers*, vol. 1, 1755–1791, ed. Thomas O'Brien Hanley (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 444–445. An unintended consequence of disestablishment was religious freedom for Catholics and Jews, which both groups were quick to appreciate. See Hannah Adams, *The History of the Jews from the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Printed by John Eliot Jr., 1812), 2: 218.

Carolina for incorporation in order to obtain the same privileges and powers granted to Protestants.³⁵ The speed at which these petitions moved through the assembly was impressive. On a single day—February 19, 1791—less than a decade after the end of the Revolutionary War, both Roman Catholics and Jews secured the legal right to practice freely their religion in a political climate that was very different from their European homelands.³⁶

The “subscribers” who petitioned the legislature, “being the vestry, Church wardens and Members of the Roman Catholic Church in Charleston,” were a cross section of kinships and livelihoods in the Irish community of early national Charleston.³⁷ At the top were Dr. James Lynah and his son Edward. The Lynahs were well-to-do and exemplified the opportunities open to talent in the late eighteenth century. Like his father, Edward was a physician. In addition to extensive property in the city of Charleston, he owned a rice plantation in Colleton District. James’s success in the medical field had enabled Edward to invest in acreage and join South Carolina’s landed gentry. No other Charlestonian Catholics were the Lynahs’ social equals.³⁸ Irish merchants and artisans, who comprised a large portion of Charleston’s middle class, were among the other subscribers. They included William McDonald, Daniel O’Hara, and Charles Crowley, merchants of some means, whose businesses allowed them to employ five, ten, and fifteen enslaved people, respectively.³⁹ Daniel Carrel

³⁵ “An Act to Incorporate the Roman Catholic Church of Charleston” and “An Act for Incorporating the Jewish Congregation at Charleston, called Beth Elohim or House of God” (1791), in *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, vol. 8, *Containing the Acts Relating to Corporations and the Militia*, ed. David J. McCord (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by A. S. Johnston, 1840), 161–162. Saint Philip’s Episcopal Church in Charleston and other Protestant churches gained incorporation on the same day, which reinforced their previous privileges.

³⁶ J. L. E. W. Shecut quoted a long passage written by “a learned member of their society,” which extolled the Jews of Charleston. See Shecut, *Shecut’s Medical and Philosophical Essays* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed for the author, by A. E. Miller, 1819), 30–32. For an architectural history of Charleston’s Jewish community, see Barry L. Stiefel, *Jewish Sanctuary in the Atlantic World: A Social and Architectural History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014).

³⁷ Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 21. For the list of the subscribers, see *ibid.*, 23–24.

³⁸ See J. Heyward Lynah, “The Lynah Family Genealogy,” 1965, <http://lynah.com/family/assets/Lynah%20family%20genealogy%201965.pdf> (accessed February 22, 2019). See also Kimberly Pyszka and Maureen Hays, “Dixie Plantation’s Rising Tide: A History of Saint Paul’s Parish in Microcosm,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 117 (January 2016): 44–47, 50.

³⁹ Jacob Milligan, *The Charleston Directory, and Revenue System* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed by T. B. Bowen, 1790), 9, 25, 29; John Dixon Nelson, *Nelson’s Charleston Directory, and Strangers Guide, for the Year of Our Lord, 1801* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed by John Dixon Nelson, 1801), 102, 125; Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau

was a silversmith.⁴⁰ James Hoban and his business partner, fellow Irish native Pierce Purcell, were carpenters in the city sometime after 1785. Purcell also was a surveyor. Historians believe that Hoban and Purcell worked on several civic buildings in Charleston, notably restorations of the colonial Statehouse and the Exchange Building.⁴¹ Michael Forrest was a schoolmaster.⁴² In all the petitioners pledged £215/12 for the annual support of the Hasell Street church.⁴³

The church's vestry consolidated its newly acquired legal privilege by asserting authority over priests. The concept of a Catholic vestry was a New World phenomenon known as trusteeism.⁴⁴ The controversy surrounding lay control of parish administration became an issue in Charleston when Bishop Carroll sent Father Angadreme Le Mercier to minister to the Hasell Street Catholics. The Frenchman made the mistake, however, of referring to himself as "rector" of the congregation. The vestry criticized him for overreach. "It is but justice to say that he (Mr. Le Mercier) has never been received (even) as Curate by the Catholic congregation of Charleston, or by their representatives the Vestry of said church—consequently [he] cannot be Rector."⁴⁵ As far as the vestry was concerned, Le Mercier was simply an employee who served at their pleasure. The rebuke to Le Mercier in 1804 was a prelude to the hostility that greeted Father Joseph Clorivière eight years later.

of the Census, *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790* (1908; repr., Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Company, 1964), 38, 41–42. Later in the decade, William McDonald would own a seventy-ton schooner, which he used to import sugar and rum from Caribbean ports. See Greg H. Williams, *The French Assault on American Shipping, 1793–1813: A History and Comprehensive Record of Merchant Marine Losses* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, 2009), 260. Daniel O'Hara had connections with the Belfast firm Joy & McCracken. See Kerby Miller et al., eds., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 95.

⁴⁰ Milligan, *Charleston Directory*, 6.

⁴¹ Ravenel, *Architects of Charleston*, 76–80; Nic Butler, "James Hoban's Charleston Home," *Charleston Time Machine* (blog), Charleston County Public Library (Charleston, S.C.), March 16, 2018, <https://www.ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/james-hobans-charleston-home> (accessed February 22, 2019).

⁴² Milligan, *Charleston Directory*, 13.

⁴³ Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 21–24. Madden posits that these sums were monthly pledges, which hardly seems likely given the social profile of most of the subscribers.

⁴⁴ See Carey, *People, Priests, and Prelates*, 17–18. Carey stresses that trustees invoked traditional Catholic lay systems of management and lay patronage to justify their position and republican principles inspired by the French Revolution. Positions on trusteeism resulted in intra-national conflict in American Catholic churches.

⁴⁵ "A Card, to the Rev. Mr. Le Mercier, Priest," *Charleston Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), February 21, 1804.

FRENCH CATHOLICS AND DIVIDED CONFESSION

For three decades, Irishmen dominated the lay leadership of the Hasell Street congregation. Still, French émigré republicans maintained a significant presence on the vestry.⁴⁶ Most of the French vestrymen were artisans. Examples from the early years included Gayetan (or Cajetan) Aiguier, Marcellin Paris, François Chupein, François de L'Orme, and Anthony Audin. Aiguier was a tinsmith from Saint-Domingue. After plying his trade in Charleston, Aiguier relocated to Camden, where he had a studio.⁴⁷ Paris, a baker, owned real property but had little capital; his annual tithe was £2/6.⁴⁸ Chupein, a barber, was one of the church's wardens. De L'Orme was an upholsterer, and Audin was a painter.⁴⁹ Aiguier, Chupein, and Audin were members of the French Patriotic Society.⁵⁰ As such, their "Jacobin" politics conformed to those of their Irish vestry partners. This is representative of historian Robert J. Alderson Jr.'s depiction of a shared republicanism that transcended religious politics.⁵¹ But by 1801, when Le Mercier arrived in Charleston, the non-republican French population—both black and white—had grown from the influx of Saint-Dominguan refugees. These French Catholics differed from those of the 1790s.⁵²

⁴⁶ For a list of vestrymen from 1806 to 1895, see Agatha Aimar Simmons, *Brief History of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Charleston, South Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: John J. Furlong and Sons, 1961), 22–23. Although the initial vestry of 1790 comprised men of several nationalities, the body contained only Irishmen by 1806. The year 1807 seems to have marked the rise of Saint-Dominguan Catholics to prominence in the congregation. That was when merchant Peter Laurans and physician Anthony Ulmo, both from Saint-Domingue, gained election to the vestry, the composition of which then began to show influence of French members. Marcus Datty, also from Saint-Domingue, served in 1815. In 1819 and 1820, John F. Plumeau joined Dr. Ulmo and Joseph Jahan on the vestry. Not until 1822 were French Catholics in a majority on the vestry. Data is not available for all years. Born in France, Plumeau served as a director of the South Carolina Insurance Company. Likewise a native of France, Jahan was a merchant, a Freemason, and an officer of La Société Française de Charleston, a benevolent organization established in 1816.

⁴⁷ Thomas J. Kirkland and Robert M. Kennedy, *Historic Camden: Colonial and Revolutionary*, vol. 1 (Columbia, S.C.: State Company, 1905), 189.

⁴⁸ See will of Marcellin Paris, proved February 27, 1797, Charleston District Ordinary's Office, p. 396, available online in Ancestry.com's South Carolina, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1670–1980 database, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9080/> (accessed February 22, 2019).

⁴⁹ Alfred Coxe Prime, comp., *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina*, vol. 2, 1786–1800 (1933; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 219–222, 301.

⁵⁰ Kennedy, "French Jacobin Club in Charleston," 22.

⁵¹ See Alderson, *This Bright Era of Happy Revolutions*, ix–xii.

⁵² Margaret Wilson Gillikin holds that Saint-Dominguans assimilated by mirroring republican values articulated in a pamphlet war between Charleston's Irish-

Many of the early priests in America were both missionaries and refugees from the French Revolution who sought to recreate an Old Regime way of life in the United States. Old Regime French society consisted of state sponsorship of religion, elaborate church structures, and thorough seminary training. In this society, every stage of life had associated religious rituals.⁵³ Priests prioritized regular attendance at Mass along with the sacraments. They provided spiritual guidance emphasizing holiness, modesty, and morality. Parish centers were the heart of communities, reinforcing conformity. Popular devotions such as praying the rosary and belonging to confraternities and sodalities strengthened the sense of religion as community.⁵⁴

In Ireland, Catholicism had different dynamics and a distinctive history. Irish Catholicism was based in the home rather than the parish, as was the culture on the Continent. This paralleled Catholic life in England and colonial Maryland.⁵⁵ It was shaped by a series of penal laws beginning in the Reformation that persisted through the nineteenth century. In general, the laws restricted clergy, marriage, education, and inheritance, preventing Catholics from voting, practicing law, or holding rank in the military. As an underground church, the home was the center of worship and the sacraments. Irish Catholicism thus became a political choice in opposition to British control. Since there were few priests and churches in Ireland, most of the laity were uneducated in the basic tenets of the faith.⁵⁶ It is important

dominated vestry and the French pastor, Joseph Clorivière. However, between 1817 and 1819, there were only two Saint-Dominguans on the vestry and seven Irishmen, two of whom wrote the pamphlets. See Gillikin, "Saint Dominguan Refugees in Charleston, South Carolina, 1791–1822: Assimilation and Accommodation in a Slave State" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 2014), 194–230. It seems unlikely that those who escaped revolution would espouse it in their new home.

⁵³ See Michael Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier: French Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Priesthood in the United States, 1789–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Carol E. Harrison uses evidence from nineteenth-century sources on this point. The Restoration French Catholic church sought to replicate the Old Regime church. See Harrison, *Romantic Catholics: France's Postrevolutionary Generation in Search of a Modern Faith* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2014).

⁵⁴ See John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, vol. 2, *The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969); Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation* (London: Burns and Oates, 1977).

⁵⁵ See Robert Emmett Curran, *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574–1783* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014).

⁵⁶ See Emmet Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1750–1850* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006). For an analysis of religion in Ireland and the European context, see Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

to note that Irish Catholics had faced prejudice and discrimination in their homeland, similar to French Huguenots and royalists. As immigrants, all looked for opportunities to exercise their own notions of religious liberty.

There is no evidence of any distinctive Irish spiritual practice in Charleston during this period. Instead of a parochial power structure, the Hasell Street vestry was more in line with fraternal organizations such as the Hibernian Society of Charleston, which Irish-born priest Simon Felix Gallagher had founded in 1801. Vestry minutes provide insight into Irish notions of church governance that owed as much to Protestant traditions as they did to Catholic ones. Later vestrymen, especially John F. Plumeau, Edmund M. Phelon, and Dr. Matthew O'Driscoll, showed a clear preference for revolutionary rhetoric.⁵⁷ Father Gallagher met with more approval from the vestry than Le Mercier. He was an eloquent preacher in the Irish style. His public drunkenness and erratic behavior, however, caught the attention of Bishop Carroll, who sought to discipline him.

The French Catholics from the Hasell Street congregation had asked repeatedly for a French-speaking priest, so in 1812, Carroll sent the newly ordained Frenchman, Joseph-Pierre Picot de Limoëlan de Clorivière, to Charleston as assistant pastor while Gallagher was on leave. Clorivière seemed like a good fit. He had the ability to preach and hear confession in French as well as English, and he could guide the Hasell Street faithful, who had lapsed in practice, back to traditional forms of piety. Clorivière's training at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore had fortified his Old Regime faith rather than tempered it.⁵⁸ In changing his name to resemble that of his saintly uncle, Clorivière adopted his uncle's religious values and signaled his intention to follow in the Jesuit's footsteps. The assassin Limoëlan's new identity was the genuinely pious Father Clorivière. Despite the apparent

Press, 2002). For background on the penal laws, see Ulster Historical Foundation, "Religion," <https://www.ancestryireland.com/history-of-the-irish-parliament/background-to-the-statutes/religion/> (accessed July 30, 2020). See also Colman M. Cooke, "Irish Catholic Immigrants, Historical Background," in *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*, ed. Michael Glazier and Thomas J. Shelley (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1997), 694.

⁵⁷ John Plumeau was French while Edmund Phelon and Matthew O'Driscoll were Irish. Irish members of the Hasell Street vestry also were Hibernians. See the member rolls in the Hibernian Society Records, 1801–1882, South Carolina Historical Society Archives, Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library, College of Charleston. See also Curran, *Papist Devils*, 7–11, 142–149, 175–182. For a discussion of this congruence of faith and politics, see Marianne Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France* (1982; repr., New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990).

⁵⁸ Founded in 1791 by Sulpician émigré priests from Paris, Saint Mary's Seminary of Baltimore was the only Catholic seminary in the United States at the time. See Charles G. Herbermann, *The Sulpicians in the United States* (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1916), 53–75; Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 29–42.

change in the new priest's character, his American reputation would rest, not on his piety, artistic talent, or prudence, but on his bare-knuckle contest with Irish and some French Catholic leaders from the Hasell Street congregation, a conflict that became known as the Charleston Schism.

Clorivière's native Catholicism was that of his confreres, who were trained in French seminary traditions, but his military career, his time as a royalist terrorist, and the influence of his Jesuit uncle augmented his enthusiasm amid a group in Charleston that held its own extreme views.⁵⁹ An examination of Clorivière's private library acquired while in seminary gives insight into his spirituality, pastoral practice, and politics. The library consisted of nearly eighty titles (about one hundred volumes) of French spirituality, French language editions of the Bible, and history. One title, William Playfair's *The History of Jacobinism: Its Crimes and Cruelties* (1796), underscored Clorivière's attitude toward republican-leaning vestry regarding matters of faith and practice.⁶⁰

The seeds of Clorivière's pastoral woes were planted long before he arrived in South Carolina. As early as the 1790s, the Charleston vestry and Simon Gallagher had created problems for Bishop Carroll, but because Gallagher was Irish and well liked in the city, potential local conflicts were overlooked.⁶¹ Although Gallagher and the Hasell Street trustees often proved compatible through the years, the latter made it clear that they were in charge by refusing to admit the former to their board.

CATHOLICS IN THE CHARLESTON STYLE

Clorivière was shocked that so few Charlestonian Catholics actively practiced their faith. He observed critically on the disparity between Gallagher's brand of Irish Catholicism and French practices. People postponed

⁵⁹ Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 5–22. For the section on Clorivière, see *ibid.*, 144–146.

⁶⁰ Clorivière left his personal library to the sisters of the Visitation Monastery, who donated it to the Georgetown University Library in Washington, D.C. Clorivière likely purchased his library from Baltimore printer and bookseller Mathew Carey. See "Selections from the Correspondence of the Deceased Mathew Carey, Writer, Printer, Publisher," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, 5th ser., 10 (September 1899): 345–353.

⁶¹ In addition to his clerical duties, Simon Gallagher had taught at the College of Charleston, then a small preparatory school. Students at the college admired him "extravagantly" for his sound scholarship. See J. H. Easterby, *A History of the College of Charleston, Founded 1770* (Charleston, S.C.: College of Charleston, 1935), 36–37. Gallagher died in Natchez, Mississippi, in 1825. See David C. R. Heisser, "Gallagher, Simon Felix," in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 356. Gallagher's problem with alcohol was public knowledge.

baptizing their children and their enslaved African Americans because Gallagher charged high fees to administer the sacraments. Attending Mass cost one dollar, but some devout people could afford only half that amount. The fees Gallagher charged for church burials were so great that Catholics preferred to use the common burying ground and omitted conventional requiem rites. Pew rents were as much as sixty dollars a year. Catholics of modest means could not attend Mass because the church was small and there were no affordable pews. In addition, if Gallagher was "indisposed," then no Mass was available. The French priest immediately decided to celebrate two masses on Sundays and feast days to accommodate those who wanted to receive the sacraments of penance and Holy Eucharist. Such ample opportunities for worship, unprecedented in their experience, surprised the Irish. As for the French, Clorivière noted that some of the "more decent" parishioners had called, but the "rest" seemed unwilling to acknowledge him.⁶² Since Clorivière made no secret of his royalist past, this comment clearly alluded to the political agendas within the French community of Charleston. Both Jacobins and Bonapartists had reasons to be wary of their new priest's counterrevolutionary career.⁶³

Soon, Clorivière's ministry to African Americans in Charleston raised alarms. He formed a religious-education program for about one hundred enslaved and free people of color. Skeptical of educational or catechetical attention to blacks, whites in the Hasell Street congregation protested, accusing Clorivière of trying to undermine their authority over their enslaved people and questioning him closely about his theology, especially his position with regard to slavery. On this important social issue, the congregation completely misread Clorivière's desire to be a true servant of the Gospel,

⁶² Joseph Clorivière to John Carroll, January 19, 1813, doc. no. 2Q5, John Carroll Papers, ca. 1750–1815, AAB, AASMSU. Clorivière observed that for the Mass fee of one dollar, a Charlestonian could purchase eighteen loaves of bread. The "more decent" parishioners seem to have been practicing Catholics and monarchists.

⁶³ One historian asserts that Clorivière wore the cross of the Order of Saint Louis, which Charles-Philippe, comte d'Artois, awarded to him in England for his service to the French monarchy, before the assassination plot. See "The Chevalier de Limoëlan," *Nation*, January 21, 1904, 47–48. Although the French priest received the cross, no source suggests that he publicly displayed it. On the comte d'Artois, later King Charles X of France, see Vincent W. Beach, *Charles X of France: His Life and Times* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1971). The cross is extant, in Record Group 1 (Early Documents), ser. 7, Founders: Clorivière file, GVMA. See also Jean-François Chiappe, *Georges Cadoudal; ou, La Liberté* (Paris: Librairie Academique Perrin, 1971), 309, 322, 327, 330, 332, 334, 552, 562. In addition to the cross of the Order of Saint Louis, Charles X gave Clorivière a painting of Christ at Bethany, painted at the king's order in 1825 by Constance Blanchard. In 1815 Martine Fortunée of the Monastery of the Visitation in Paris gifted a miniature painting of the Madonna and child to Clorivière. Georgetown Visitation records show that the

not an employee of the vestry. The French priest remarked to Bishop Carroll ruefully, "They do not know probably that I am not even a great friend of liberty of the whites." For Clorivière, "liberty" was not freedom, but license, the *liberté* of the Reign of Terror and the Haitian massacres.⁶⁴

Upon the downfall of Bonaparte in 1814, Clorivière became an even more controversial figure. When word reached the United States of Bonaparte's fate, Clorivière was the only Catholic priest in Charleston.⁶⁵ The French in the city divided between furious republicans and joyous monarchists. Rumors spread that Clorivière had dashed into the street, shouting "Te Deum" at the overthrow of his archenemy. He told Carroll that the news finally had set him free as a Frenchman and a loyal Catholic. Clorivière was celebrating the pope's liberation from Bonaparte's prison and his own freedom from retribution in his homeland. However, his opponents within and without the Hasell Street congregation took offense when they ascribed political meaning rather than religious sentiments to his outward expressions of joy. Clorivière planned to sing the Te Deum, a Latin hymn that had been associated with occasions of public rejoicing for more than a millennium, after Vespers the following Sunday, June 19.⁶⁶ On account of the increasing uproar, he took the precaution of having a few sympathetic French residents sign a petition requesting the service in honor of Pope Pius VII. French republicans actually attempted to kidnap Clorivière along with the church organist to prevent them from offering the divisive liturgy. At this point, the city's Irish Catholics, who usually sided with the French republicans, realized that they must defend their church from sectarian and political interference. The intendant (mayor) of Charleston, Thomas Rhett Smith, sent a guard to ensure Clorivière's safety. French

sisters later gave that image to Andre Maréchal, the archbishop of Baltimore from 1817 to 1828. See *Paintings, Engravings, and Prints Owned by the Georgetown Visitation Convent, with a Record of Its Benefactors and Donations* (Washington, D.C., 1924), copy available in the GVMA.

⁶⁴ Joseph Clorivière to John Carroll, November 2, 1813, doc. no. 2Q6, John Carroll Papers, AAB, AASMSU. Clorivière asked Carroll if the latter had any news of the former's uncle, who had visited Pope Pius VII, at that time imprisoned in Fontainebleau Palace, south of Paris, by Napoleon Bonaparte.

⁶⁵ In another example of Simon Gallagher's quixotic behavior, when Clorivière arrived in Charleston, Gallagher left the French priest alone in order to go on a fundraising tour. See "Momentous News," *Charleston Courier*, June 15, 1814; "Notice to Frenchmen," *ibid.*, June 22, 1814. Clorivière denied this in a letter to Carroll. See Joseph Clorivière to John Carroll, June 21, 1814, doc. no. 2Q9, John Carroll Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁶⁶ The phrase *Te Deum laudamus* is Latin for "God, We Praise You." A short, solemn thanksgiving liturgy, the Te Deum is usually sung or chanted following the Mass or Vespers, and a priest wears white vestments as a sign of rejoicing.

consul Simon Jude Chancogne joined the crowd at the church, "there (for the first time) with his white cockade—which he alone and his chancellor dared show—all the other Frenchmen here being terrified, indifferent, or averse to the cause—or terrorists," reported Clorivière. Briefly forgetting their political differences, some Catholic Irishmen formed a bodyguard around the altar. Despite precautions, a man with a dagger made it to the middle of the church before he was apprehended. Thwarted at Hasell Steet, the rioters attacked the *Bourbon*, a schooner in the harbor that flew the white flag of Bourbon royalty. Police guarded Clorivière for several days until passions died down. He took pains to explain to Carroll that he had not uttered his personal political opinions before or during the crisis; that "decent Frenchmen" had petitioned him to offer the celebration; and that false rumors had fueled the unrest.⁶⁷

The restoration of the French monarchy prompted Clorivière to reconsider his situation. He admitted to Carroll that he had concerns about his congregation. They were kind to him in general but had mistaken ideas about religion. "I acknowledge I am totally unfit for them," he wrote. "I would rather desert the place than to comply with—or resist their desires. . . . But I wish they would be so good towards God & the rights of the Church." Clorivière related to Carroll that his four sisters had begged him to come back to France. His Jesuit uncle also needed him, but he could not shirk his duty merely to secure happiness with his family. "I must make something more to get to heaven than to stay with them," he declared in August 1814. With Carroll's permission, Clorivière briefly left Charleston for France to discern his vocation. He returned the following year to a firestorm.⁶⁸

At the direction of Leonard Neale, Carroll's successor as archbishop, Clorivière arrived in Charleston ready to resume his post, only to discover that he had been replaced. Father Gallagher had assumed conveniently that the French priest's absence was permanent. Insisting that he was the rightful pastor, Gallagher also had assumed that he lawfully could appoint Robert Browne as his curate, with no authorization from the archbishop. The duo of Gallagher and Browne precipitated a new crisis when they refused to readmit the Frenchman, and Browne ignored Neale's order to return to

⁶⁷ Joseph Clorivière to John Carroll, June 27, 1814, doc. no. 2Q10, John Carroll Papers, AAB, AASMSU. Wearing a cockade was a public declaration of political allegiance. The white cockade was the Bourbon symbol, and the tricolor cockade was the revolutionary and Bonapartist symbol. See also Charleston, *Charleston Courier*, June 28, 1814. On Thomas Rhett Smith's career in state and local politics, see N. Louise Bailey, ed., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, vol. 4, 1791–1815 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), s.v. "Smith, Thomas Rhett."

⁶⁸ Joseph Clorivière to John Carroll, August 22, 1814, doc. no. 2Q11, John Carroll Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

Augusta, Georgia, his previous assignment. Neale reminded Gallagher that only the archbishop could assign priests, and obedience to authority was not negotiable.⁶⁹ However, Gallagher had the support of the vestry. The Irish-led vestry of the Hasell Street congregation had tried for several years to dismiss Clorivière, as they had done with the previous French priest, Father Le Mercier. They claimed that American law gave them the right to choose their own pastors. The tensions within the church were complicated by the fact that the Irish vestry was aligned with Charleston's ascendant republican political factions, while Clorivière remained a conservative monarchist.

The attempts on Clorivière's life in June 1814 had failed, but slander still was an option for his enemies. Gallagher hinted to friends that if Clorivière's past as a royalist counterrevolutionary had been known, then he never would have been ordained into the priesthood. In addition to highlighting the whisper campaign against Clorivière, Charleston's *Southern Patriot*, a republican newspaper, gratuitously denounced French leaders who had embraced Catholicism purely out of self-interest consequent to the Bourbon Restoration.⁷⁰

Believing that it would be disagreeable for the Frenchman to stay in Charleston, Neale told Clorivière privately that he could request a transfer to Savannah. Maryland was a possibility as well. "Should you return thither you might have an appointment in our neighborhood," Neale wrote from Baltimore.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Clorivière decided to continue on in Charleston, where he opened a small chapel for French speakers that was unaffiliated with the Hasell Street congregation.⁷²

"I did not hesitate to give them my resignation," according to Neale's authorization, wrote Clorivière to his superior. In a moment of doubt,

⁶⁹ Leonard Neale to Joseph Clorivière, December 22, 1815, doc. no. 12G1, Leonard Neale Papers, *ibid.* Archbishop Carroll died in 1815 while Clorivière was in France. Leonard Neale, born in 1746, succeeded Carroll as archbishop of Baltimore on December 3, 1815. Neale died on June 18, 1817, and was succeeded by Ambrose Maréchal. All personal communication relating to the Charleston Schism is in the Neale Papers. Neale's secretary, Father William Beschter, transcribed Neale's correspondence with Clorivière concerning the dispute and combined it into one eighteen-page document, which contains twelve letters from Neale and copies of all declarations and missives to Simon Gallagher, Robert Browne, and others. Clorivière's correspondence with Neale is scattered chronologically throughout the collection.

⁷⁰ The *Southern Patriot's* venture into international politics was uncharacteristic. For an example, see the edition of July 26, 1816.

⁷¹ Leonard Neale to Joseph Clorivière, February 4, 1816, doc. no. 12G13, Leonard Neale Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁷² Leonard Neale to Joseph Clorivière, January 7, 1816, doc. no. 12G12, *ibid.*; Clorivière to Neale, February 13, 1816, doc. no. 12H8, *ibid.*

though, the beleaguered French priest reflected on the source of the internal conflict at the Hasell Street church:

A thing I wish your Lordship would understand, is, that although there is 3 or 4, let us say 6 enemies of mine in the congregation . . . [who] are all great democrats and although my political opinions are the apparent subject of their opposition to me, I do not believe that it is the real one for Dr. Gallagher their friend is no democrat at all—and amongst mine I can count many of the different opinions than mine in politics. Besides I am by no means a politician nor so much carried by party spirit, that I communicate my thought on this subject to every one . . . The real cause I think of their dislike is that I am more scrupulous in many things than the Dr. [Gallagher] has been for twenty years.⁷³

In other words, Charleston's Catholics were indifferent to the faith, and the French priest had pushed them to conform to his idea of faithfulness.

Ill feelings between the three priests, the Hasell Street congregation, and the archbishop escalated quickly. Neale's next move was to discharge Browne from the diocese, and he warned Clorivière against permitting lay trustees to possess any authority in the new chapel.⁷⁴ Browne circulated the archbishop's letter around town, decrying the Frenchman as a troublemaker. For his part, Gallagher accused Clorivière of being a schismatic imposter.⁷⁵ Neale responded to the latest attacks on the French priest's character by suspending Gallagher for disobedience and drunkenness, and the archbishop asked Clorivière to collect declarations from respectable Charlestonians that would verify the charges.

Faints, accusations, and counter-accusations followed. Gallagher and Browne rejected Neale's orders and appealed to the vestry, which upheld their right to refuse the archbishop.⁷⁶ The vestry, in turn, tried to intimidate

⁷³ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, February 12, 1816, doc. no. 12H7, Leonard Neale Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁷⁴ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, February 19, 1816, doc. no. 12G14, *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, February 22, 1816, doc. no. 12I9, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, March 5, 1816, doc. no. 12I10, Leonard Neale Papers, AAB, AASMSU; Clorivière to Neale, April 1, 1816, doc. no. 12I13, *ibid.* In 1816 the vestry comprised Alexander England, a baker; Patrick Byrne, a sail maker; Mark Datty, who ran a boarding school; P. T. Ryan, a merchant; Edmund Phelon, a grocer; Charles Coslett, whose occupation is unknown; schoolmaster Michael O'Donovan; Barnard Mulligan, the keeper of a dry-goods store; and Peter Laurans, a merchant. Clorivière's supporters were Coslett, Datty, and O'Donovan, the latter of whom resigned a month later. See Mary Lucinda Morgan, "The Vestry Records of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Charleston, South Carolina, 1806–1823" (Master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1982), 60–61; James W. Hagy, ed.,

Clorivière.⁷⁷ The archbishop insisted that Clorivière distribute copies of Gallagher's suspension throughout Charleston.⁷⁸

Neither side backed down. Clorivière noted that the secular French community understood the archbishop's position better than the Irish Catholics, "who either refused to read it, or afterward, to convey it to another for fear of being branded a deserter of their national cause." Clorivière despaired that the men of "party," pride, and protestant principles who made up the Hasell Street vestry would not surrender themselves and "their" church to the archbishop or even the pope. The vestry doubled down, saying they would never give up the church.⁷⁹

In July 1816, Clorivière was stunned to see an article in the *Southern Patriot* exposing his past.⁸⁰ He apologized to the archbishop for the scandal, though he pointed out that among the French population of Charleston, his former life as Limoëlan, the assassin, was no secret, and it was well known that Archbishop Carroll and Father Jean-Marie Tessier, head of the Sulpician seminary in Baltimore, had given him dispensation to be ordained.⁸¹

Gallagher eventually sought reconciliation with Archbishop Neale. He agreed to leave the city and persuade others to renounce their rebellion. Although Gallagher repented and performed penance, Neale placed the Hasell Street congregation under interdict on January 23, 1817. Mass or any spiritual functions were forbidden. Neale wrote:

And as it appears that two lawful pastors have been driven from that Church by its Trustees or Vestrymen who pretend to a right of choosing their pastor, because they pay him his salary, I am determined & I here declare that the said Church shall be held interdicted, till it moulder into dust, unless the lawfully appointed pastor be wholly independent of the Trustees, both as to the tenure of the Church, and the temporal means of his support . . . for unless that be done, that Church can never be acknowledged as a Catholic church.⁸²

Charleston, South Carolina: City Directories for the Years 1816, 1819, 1822, 1825, and 1829 (1996; repr., Baltimore: Clearfield Company, 2002), 4, 6–8, 15, 20–21, 24, 56.

⁷⁷ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, March 28, 1816, doc. no. 12I12, Leonard Neale Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁷⁸ Leonard Neale to Joseph Clorivière, April 18, 1816, doc. no. 12G1, *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, May 13, 1816, doc. no. 12J17, *ibid.* For a thoughtful analysis of the role of ethnicity in trusteeism, see Carey, *People, Priests, and Prelates*, 143–153.

⁸⁰ See the July 26 edition of the *Southern Patriot*.

⁸¹ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, July 31, 1816, doc. no. 12J21, Leonard Neale Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁸² Leonard Neale to Joseph Clorivière, December 17, 1816, doc. no. 12G1, *ibid.* Neale subjoined a brief letter from Simon Gallagher to Alexander English, warden

Unfortunately for Neale and Clorivière, Gallagher and Browne had written to the Vatican, where the pope, lacking accurate information, reinstated the disruptive pair and the vestry. The archbishop asked Clorivière to travel to Rome and refute the misrepresentation. The Frenchman declined, stating that if he left the United States again, then he would not return. Living anywhere in France would be better than Charleston, Clorivière wrote. He urged Neale to send another priest to the city in his place.⁸³ Gallagher and Browne now made public pronouncements that they had triumphed over unholy, clergy-led oppression. Their supporters drew caricatures of Clorivière and sang rude verses about Limoëlan, each refrain ending with *cela est vrai*, or "this is true." Rumors of plots against Clorivière's life began to swirl. While the French priest endured taunts and threats in Charleston, Neale convinced Rome to retract its recent decision in favor of the schismatical priests and the Irish-led vestry.⁸⁴ Despite the daily humiliations, Clorivière continued to pastor the small flock of pious French who attended his chapel. Gallagher and Browne had been dismissed and the Hasell Street congregation was under interdict, but they and the vestry kept the doors open in defiance of the archbishop and the pope.

The controversy in Charleston was unresolved when Neale died in June 1817. The new archbishop was a Frenchman, Ambrose Maréchal, whom Clorivière knew from his time in Baltimore at Saint Mary's Seminary. When writing to Maréchal in July 1817, Clorivière apologized for dismissing his former teacher's insights into the post-revolutionary world, and in so doing, he identified the essence of the conflict involving the Hasell Street congregation. "I should have relied on your knowledge of the spirit of the age," Clorivière said, "and of the revolution of France to appreciate the character of these men, they want their liberty and independence in every respect and the Church is troublesome to them on that account and they

of the Hasell Street church, urging him and the trustees to agree that the archbishop alone had the right to appoint pastors. See "Interdict," January 23, 1817, doc. no. 12AR6, Leonard Neale Papers, AAB, AASMSU. See also "To the Roman Catholics of Charleston," *Charleston Courier*, January 23, 1817.

⁸³ Joseph Clorivière to Leonard Neale, February 11, 1817, doc. no. 12L32, Leonard Neale Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁸⁴ Giovanni Antonio Grassi to Ambrose Maréchal, September 21, 1817, in *Archivio Propaganda Fide, Scritture Riferite Nei Congressi: America Centrale*, sec. 3, follows 621 v. and 622 r., microfilm, University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, Ind. By the time Grassi arrived in Rome, Leonard Neale was dead and Maréchal had been appointed archbishop. Grassi wrote, "I had the consolation of hearing that Propaganda acknowledge to have been deceived in the Charleston affair and that proper letters already have been written apologizing for the step taken against the late archbishop."

[are] troublesome to the Church."⁸⁵ Owing to the revolutionary "spirit of the age," Clorivière thought religion was now in decline from the Old Regime standards. No one made a First Communion that year, and few made a Second Communion. Feasts and Holy Days were not kept correctly. In Clorivière's estimation, baptism, marriage, and burial were the only times that most Catholics approached the church, so it seemed improper to relax the rules. In the Old Regime, where the state influenced religion, the church had been managed differently. Conditions in the United States confounded the French priest: "I do not see why we should be obliged to compromise with our rebellious or unfaithful children. Why, for example, should I marry those who have not the Catholic faith? Or only bury them?"⁸⁶

Strained relations between the republican vestry and the monarchist priest boiled over in the summer of 1818. Both sides elaborated their positions in print. Referring to themselves as "American Republicans," the vestry addressed a letter to all American Catholics in which they claimed the right, based on the U.S. Constitution, to nominate their own priests. Clorivière countered that the episcopal character of the Catholic church required the bishops, not the laity, to choose the clergy. In a second pamphlet, he published letters and documents justifying the legitimacy of his appointment as pastor of the Hasell Street congregation.⁸⁷

At this point, Archbishop Maréchal asked the vestry a hypothetical question. If he agreed to remove Clorivière, then would they accept the appointment of a different priest? Since the republicans hated Frenchness,

⁸⁵ Joseph Clorivière to Ambrose Maréchal, July 2 and 3, 1817, doc. no. 14M2, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, ca. 1803–1827, AAB, AASMSU.

⁸⁶ Joseph Clorivière to Ambrose Maréchal, July 28, 1817, doc. no. 14H9, *ibid.* First Communion is a religious ceremony in the Catholic church (and some Protestant denominations) marking a person's initial reception of consecrated bread and wine. Considered a special occasion, it is celebrated by family and friends. See Harrison, *Romantic Catholics*, 28–65.

⁸⁷ See [Matthew O'Driscoll], *Documents Relative to the Present Distressed State of the Roman Catholic Church in the City of Charleston, State of South-Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed by J. Hoff, 1818); Joseph Picot de Clorivière, *To Dr. Mathew O'Driscoll* (Charleston: Printed by J. Hoff, 1818); Clorivière, *Further Documents Showing the Causes of the Distressed State of the Roman Catholic Congregation in the City of Charleston* (Charleston: Printed by J. Hoff, 1818). Historians have thoroughly discussed this pamphlet exchange. For the classic analysis, see Peter Guilday, *The Life and Times of John England, First Bishop of Charleston (1786–1842)* (New York: America Press, 1927), 1: 208–261. The schism had wider implications, as Guilday points out. The vestry appears to have had plans to form a separate Catholic church together with a splinter group in Utrecht, Netherlands. See *ibid.*, 1: 262–282. For a different analysis, see Margaret Wilson Gillikin, "Competing Loyalties: Nationality, Church Governance, and the Development of an American Catholic Identity," *Early American Studies* 11 (Winter 2013): 146–160.

especially Clorivière's version of it, they feared the prelate might send another Frenchman with the same Old Regime ideas. They would not promise to respect and obey another priest who did not adhere to their values of self-determination and free election of superiors.⁸⁸ By this time, both sides of the schism were tired of the debate over freedom of religion and obedience to religious superiors. French members of the Hasell Street congregation begged the archbishop to remove their stubborn priest. These French Catholics now either supported the vestry, had grown to dislike Clorivière, or simply wanted the controversy to end.⁸⁹

Unsatisfied by their interactions with Maréchal, the unrepentant vestry sent an additional petition to Rome in which they threatened either to become Protestants or to elect their own bishop unless the pope approved their radical course.⁹⁰ They blamed "French rule" in the American Catholic church hierarchy and the "Baltimore Junto" for the problems in Charleston. The archbishop could neither weaken their resolve nor "frenchify" Roman Catholics in the United States, the vestry asserted.⁹¹

Archbishop Maréchal then shifted strategies. He sent two Jesuits from Georgetown College, Benedict J. Fenwick and James Wallace, to settle the Charleston standoff. This was a shrewd move. As Jesuits, they would be acceptable arbiters to Clorivière, who revered his Jesuit uncle. Moreover, Fenwick was American and Wallace was Irish, so they likely also would be acceptable to the republican vestry. Maréchal prudently urged Clorivière to consider withdrawing from the conflict as well.⁹²

As it happened, the Jesuit negotiators took opposing views of the schism. Father Fenwick had a favorable opinion of Clorivière, while the

⁸⁸ "Answer to the Archbishop's Letter," January 26, 1818, quoted in Morgan, "Vestry Records of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church," 94.

⁸⁹ "To the Reverend Ambrose Mareschall, Administrator of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Memorial of the French Roman Catholics of the City of Charleston," undated, doc. no. 22A5, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU. There are two memorials contained in this document, each signed by fifty or more individuals. Since not all signatures are legible, it is difficult to determine how many are duplicates.

⁹⁰ "Petition of the Vestrymen of the Roman Catholic Congregation . . . to His Holiness Pope Pius VIII," May 11, 1818, quoted in Morgan, "Vestry Records of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church," 105.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 107–115. See also the letter from the vestry to Rome—to James McCormick, superior of the College of Saint Isidore, or Peter Damiani, penitentiary of Saint Peter's Church—of May 13, 1818, in Morgan, "Vestry Records of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church," 119–123. This letter further deplores French influence: "The only hope we have for the survival of our religion here is the appointment of a Bishop, who may not be in league with the Arch see of Baltimore."

⁹² Ambrose Maréchal to Joseph Clorivière, June 27, 1818, doc. no. 21AM3, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU; Clorivière to Maréchal, July 6, 1818, doc. no. 14N17, *ibid.*

vestry seemed to have Father Wallace's ear. Wallace noted that the vestry and the congregation agreed to modify their bylaws to restore peace, but they demanded Clorivière's immediate departure. Wallace was critical of Clorivière, who insisted on the schismatic Hasell Street congregation giving pews to members of his small body of French Catholics.⁹³ On the other hand, Fenwick found the French priest to be a "truly worthy and excellent man." Clorivière's reconciliation plan favored the conservative French, whom Fenwick considered "pious & edifying." When Fenwick addressed the vestry, he was incensed that Dr. Matthew O'Driscoll, author of a schismatic pamphlet, interrupted. Fenwick characterized O'Driscoll as the "arch contriver" of all the feuds. O'Driscoll asked the Jesuit if he were "offering" himself to the vestry as the new pastor. Fenwick exploded: "We have come here, sent by our lawful Bishop to take charge of this congregation & with the blessing of God shall remain here till recalled by him & him alone. Here are our papers."⁹⁴

Although the vestry as a whole agreed with Fenwick's proposed resolution, O'Driscoll objected to several points, including the right of the archbishop to appoint clergy. The vestry wavered. They speculated that the resolutions were a trick to reinstate Clorivière. But after further discussion, they capitulated, and Fenwick lifted the interdict. Clorivière, however, muddied the waters. He wanted an apology from the vestry and pews for his followers. Fenwick had reached his limit with the wrangling. He informed the archbishop that the imprudent French priest must leave Charleston immediately to keep the peace.⁹⁵

Clorivière had mixed feelings about the outcome of the schism—feelings that went deeper than his pastoral concerns. He worried about liberalism. He feared for the fate of religion under the schismatic Irish trustees. There would be no chanting, no solemnities, and the faithful probably would turn Protestant. Despite his misgivings, he dutifully obeyed his superior and in late 1818 departed for his new assignment at the Visitation Monastery, near Georgetown College, in the District of Columbia.⁹⁶

⁹³ James Wallace to Ambrose Maréchal, November 16, 1818, doc. no. 21D1, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁹⁴ Benedict J. Fenwick to Ambrose Maréchal, November 10, 1818, doc. no. 16N6, *ibid.*

⁹⁵ Benedict J. Fenwick to Ambrose Maréchal, November 16, 1818, doc. no. 16N7, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU; Fenwick to Maréchal, January 25, 1820, doc. no. 16O19, *ibid.*; Fenwick to Maréchal, February 1, 1820, doc. no. 16O20, *ibid.*; Fenwick to Maréchal, March 22, 1820, doc. no. 16O21, *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Joseph Clorivière to Ambrose Maréchal, December 2, 1818, doc. no. 14O24, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU; Clorivière to Maréchal, December 14, 1818, doc. no. 14O25, *ibid.*

Maréchal appointed Fenwick as vicar general of Georgia and the Carolinas, meaning that he was the archbishop's surrogate in all religious matters. Despite Clorivière's departure, Fenwick faced daunting challenges. He had few clerical resources with which to tend the Catholic communities in Columbia, Augusta, and Savannah. In addition, even though he lacked permission to celebrate sacraments, the erratic Simon Gallagher was still busy in South Carolina. For example, Father Gallagher astounded Fenwick by suddenly joining him on the altar during a requiem Mass. When Fenwick gave the Irishman temporary permission to celebrate Easter for the priestless congregation in Savannah, Gallagher initially refused, then changed his mind, then assumed he had a permanent position, and then left again "for his health."⁹⁷

Robert Browne was less erratic than Gallagher but nonetheless a worry to Fenwick. Father Browne went to Rome in 1819 and beseeched the Holy See to consecrate a bishop for Charleston. When Rome agreed that Charleston required a bishop's firm hand, Browne was sure that he would receive the appointment—and Fenwick was afraid that if Browne returned as bishop, then he would open old wounds. However, Pope Pius VII, whether wisely or accidentally, closed the door on the local trustee controversy when he appointed John England as the first prelate of the new Diocese of Charleston. England was a thirty-five-year-old Irishman from Cork with a reputation for piety and polemics.⁹⁸

Much to Fenwick's relief, Bishop England sent Browne to Savannah and started on a tour of his new territory accompanied by Gallagher, leaving Fenwick in Charleston as vicar general. Both pastoral troublemakers were out of town, and the congregation had welcomed the new prelate. Yet the complex resolution to the schism began to fall apart, as the incorrigible Hasell Street vestry started plotting against the irreproachable Irish bishop. They planned to expand their church to drain England's power. To avoid further difficulties over trusteeship, church ownership, and obedience to authority, Fenwick advised England to build his own church immediately.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Benedict J. Fenwick to Ambrose Maréchal, June 22, 1819, doc. no. 16N13, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

⁹⁸ Robert Browne claimed his intervention spurred Rome to create the new Diocese of Charleston, Browne, like Gallagher, thought he would be reinstated once the French priest departed. See Benedict J. Fenwick to Ambrose Maréchal, September 17, 1820, doc. no. 16O26, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU; Fenwick to Maréchal, October 5, 1820, doc. no. 16P28, *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Benedict J. Fenwick to Ambrose Maréchal, February 19, 1821, doc. no. 16P33, Ambrose Maréchal Papers, AAB, AASMSU.

CONCLUSION

A dynamic priest, John England was a gifted preacher who possessed not only republican values but also dedication to hierarchical church governance. England had experience dealing with the radical elements in his homeland, so he was able to bridge the chasm between American republicanism and traditional church hierarchy. The Hasell Street vestry claimed to be the legal representatives of all Charlestonian Catholics, but a Catholic was one who was baptized, made the Easter Duty, received the sacraments, and raised his family in the faith.¹⁰⁰ England challenged the vestry in a pastoral letter that defined who was a Roman Catholic. The vestry effectively spoke only for the pew holders of the Hasell Street congregation, so their claim to legal rights was invalid. England's definition of a Catholic undercut the vestry's arguments regarding incorporation, a secular civil administrative tool that was both alien and irrelevant to the ecclesiastical system (and one which John Carroll had questioned when he was bishop thirty years earlier). The bishop of the new Diocese of Charleston built a cathedral, transferred all religious functions to the new structure, and shut down the Hasell Street church until its vestry submitted to his episcopal authority.¹⁰¹

Father Joseph Clorivière, the one-time terrorist known as Limoëlan, left Charleston in December 1818 to accept his new assignment at the Visitation Monastery in the District of Columbia.¹⁰² In Charleston, Clorivière had found religious indifference and outright hostility among his flock. To the city's Jacobin and Bonapartist French and republican Irish, he was a monarchist, the epitome of Old Regime Europe. To the vestry on Hasell Street, he was a symbol of the ethnic differences in religious practice. To his superiors and the faithful few who followed him in the founding of his own chapel, however, the battered priest was pious, hardworking, and obedient. To the sisters of the Visitation, Clorivière would earn yet another reputation, renown for his talents as a spiritual director, a builder and a sustainer of the faith, and a man who found fulfillment in his pastoral duties.

When Clorivière died in 1826, the *Charleston Courier* published a generous tribute to him. The journalist reviewed the priest's early life as an aristocrat caught up in the anarchy and the confusion of the French Revolution. "After

¹⁰⁰ The Easter Duty is a requirement for going to Confession and receiving Holy Communion during the Easter season. Performing one's Easter Duty generally is considered the mark of a practicing Catholic.

¹⁰¹ Guilday, *Life and Times of John England*, 1: 301–307. Bishop England also wrote an English-language catechism to teach his new flock the basics of the faith. See *ibid.*, 313.

¹⁰² See George Parsons Lathrop and Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, *A Story of Courage: Annals of the Georgetown Convent of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Cambridge,

having spent several years in different avocations, honourably supporting a life which would have been lulled in affluence in his native country," the article read, he chose to be a priest in Charleston where, despite his ardor and piety, he met with desperate opposition. In the District of Columbia, "a new field was opened to his zeal, his prudence and his piety, and the citizens of Georgetown soon witnessed, with joyful astonishment, how deeply these virtues were rooted in his bosom." Even when his deeds are forgotten, "posterity will feel the gentle influence of the establishments" that he erected, and "with grateful feelings, breathe eternal rest to their founder."¹⁰³ Clorivière left distinct legacies—aristocrat, soldier, assassin, refugee, artist, and missionary priest. He embraced, or attacked, each one with passion.

Mass.: Riverside Press, 1895); Eleanore C. Sullivan and Susan Hannan, *Georgetown Visitation since 1797*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Visitation, 2004).

¹⁰³"Tribute of Friendship," *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 14, 1826, reprinted in the *Charleston Courier*, October 27, 1826.