



## Primary Source

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pp. 111–112

## La Salle's Expedition

### Questioning of the Talons by the French

*La Salle and most of his colonists died, but the five children of colonists Isabelle and Lucien Talon were saved and raised by the Karankawas. Later Spanish explorers took them to Mexico City. In 1687, while in the Spanish navy, the two older boys, Pierre and Jean-Baptiste, were seized by the French, taken to France, and questioned. The following are notes taken during this questioning.*

Brest, the 14th of February, 1698

3. *On advancing inland, what sort of country did they find?*

Invariably flat and diversified<sup>1</sup> . . . with forests, woods, and prairies, in fact the most beautiful in the world, traversed<sup>2</sup> by several rivers. . . . Hardly ever is it too hot or too cold and winter lasts but a short time. . . . The savages generally live to be very old and nearly always possess perfect health. They also have a marvelous knowledge of the different properties of the medicinal herbs that abound in the whole country and can easily heal themselves of illnesses and wounds that befall them. . . . It is usually the old people who apply their remedies and cure their ailments; and the Talons assure us that, during all their stay among them, they saw no one die of illness. . . .

10. *The parts played by all the people who were with the said Sr. de la Salle. . .*

Some died, killing one another. . . . Those who stayed at the settlement . . . were nearly all massacred. . . . [The children] were saved by some savage women who, touched with compassion by their youth, loaded them on their backs and carried them into their cabins while their husbands massacred the rest. . . .

But they did not hurt the said Talons . . . who were reared and loved by these savage women who had saved them, as if they were their own children. . . .

11. *What they did, and their details.*

. . . The savages . . . first tattooed them on the face, the hands, the arms, and in several other places on their bodies as they do on themselves. . . . They insert this mixture between the flesh and the skin with strong, sharp thorns, which cause them to suffer great pain. . . . [The Talons] went to hunt and to war with them, who taught them how to shoot an arrow and

how to run like them. . . . [The Talons] all went naked like them, and every morning at daybreak, in any season, they went to plunge into the nearest river. . . .

Moreover, the Talons affirm that they were always treated by these savage people with the greatest kindness in the world, without ever having been maltreated with blows or otherwise. On the contrary, they loved them tenderly. . . .

16. *What sort of Indians did they meet along the way, and did it seem to them that they could trade with them?*

. . . As for trade among them, nothing appeared easier, for they communicated voluntarily with the Europeans . . . Sr. de la Salle would never have had war with the [Karankawas] if on arriving he had not high-handedly taken their canoes and refused them some little article of use that they asked him in return for them and for other services that they were ready to render to him. Nothing is easier than winning their friendship. . . . But also, as they give voluntarily of what they have, they do not like to be refused. And, while they are never aggressors, neither do they ever forget the pride of honor in their vengeance. . . .

### Review Questions

1. How did the Native Texans treat illnesses?
2. According to the Talons, what fatal error did La Salle make with the Karankawas?

### Critical Thinking

3. **Analyzing** Why do you think the French wanted to interview the Talon children?
4. **Identifying Point of View** On what subjects was the Talons' point of view very different from that of the French officials?

1 diversified varied

2 traversed crossed