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Assignment #1

There were a lot of different laws in the past that influenced people's lives differently. Laws like sumptuary law: A law that seeks conduct like what people eat, drink and wear. The definition of sumptuary law came from the Latin word which means expenditure. Sumptuary laws were used to limit people's expenses, this applies to food, furniture, jewelry, and clothing. Sumptuary laws were also used to control behavior and to ensure the maintenance of a particular class structure. The laws of sumptuary dictated who can wear what is in society for example; in 1786 in New Orleans, the governor of the Spanish colony, Don Esteban Miro banned colored women from showing "excessive attention to clothing" and declared that colored women, whether they were slave or free, should refrain from "excessive attention" to clothing and should cover their hair in a headdress or a tignon: a piece of fabric tied and wrapped around the head to cover their hair. Black women in New Orleans were compelled by the Tignon Laws to wear head wraps because their beautiful hairstyles were considered a threat. Therefore they were forced to wear tignon on their hair to demonstrate that they belonged to the slave class, whether they were slaves or not, which could be seen as a sumptuary law because the idea of sumptuary law was to prevent the lower class from blurring social distinctions, in this case, colored women had to show who they are and separate themselves from higher class by wearing tignon. In response to Tignon's law, women in New Orleans covered their hair, but they did it with fancy and

composite fabrics and jewels that made them part of their fashion. Wraps have become a symbol of style, not concealment. Women with their wrapped hairstyles with tignons continued to attract males. Tignon's laws were no longer applied after the United States gained control of Louisiana by purchasing Louisiana in 1803. However, as a sign of opposition to white colonialism, some enslaved and free women of African descent continued to wear the headwraps. Tignon law demonstrates the sumptuary laws because clothing provided an immediate distinguishing of who was who.