Spain in the West During the American Revolution, 1775-1783

Joseph J. Dempsey
Loyola University Chicago

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SPAIN IN THE WEST DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1775-1783

by

Joseph J. Dempsey

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VITA

Joseph J. Dempsey was born in Chicago, Illinois, October 16, 1912.

He was graduated from Loyola Academy, Chicago, Illinois, June, 1930. He attended Loyola University, Lake Shore Campus, in 1930-31, and finished his undergraduate studies in the University College.

The Bachelor of Philosophy degree with majors in History and Economics was conferred by Loyola University, February, 1941.

He is now teaching at Loyola Academy.
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CHAPTER I

THE DIPLOMATIC FACTOR

From the beginning of the war with England, the Continental Congress felt the necessity of acquiring aid from foreign countries. On the 29th of November, 1775, Harrison, Franklin, Johnson, Dickinson and Jay were named by the Congress as a secret "committee for the sole purpose of corresponding with friends in Great Britain, Ireland and other parts of the world" and funds were set aside in order to pay the expenses of such agents that the committee might send on this service.¹

Choiseul, the Foreign Minister of France, had seen in the "sixties" a future rupture of the North American Colonists and their Mother Country. Since the removal of the French threat from America in 1763, and the promotions of the radical war parties in New England, this evidence grew yearly. France, under Choiseul's leadership, prepared herself for the struggle because she saw in it a chance of retaliating for the defeats of the late war.² In 1770, Choiseul fell from power, and Vergennes took over his office and his policies. By the time war broke out France was ready with aid.

On March 1, 1776, Vergennes sent a note to Grimaldi, the Spanish Foreign Minister, asking him if Spain would be prepared to join France in rendering secret aid to the Americans. Grimaldi answered on the 14th of the

same month that Spain would agree to such assistance. He expressed his
desire that the colonies should continue their revolt so that they would
exhaust both themselves and England financially. Spain had much the same
grievances towards England that France had. Grimaldi "complained of England
for the aid it had rendered the enemies of Spain in Morocco, in Algeria,
and near the Philippine isles." He added one proviso in his promise to
Vergennes to the effect that the supplies should be sent from French ports
so that the Spanish participation could be disavowed.

After Congress learned that Spain had matched the first million livres
that France had given to them, Congress decided to cultivate further
Spanish friendship. Franklin was appointed official secret-agent to that
country. Before the news of such an appointment arrived in Paris, Arthur
Lee was chosen by his fellow commissioners, Franklin and Deane, for this
task, and later his position was made official after Franklin's refusal. Lee
was to be sole commissioner to Spain and was to retain his powers as joint
commissioner at Paris; he was to attempt to gain the Spaniards' aid in the
war by promising them help in the conquest of Portugal.

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3 Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution, D. Appleton
4 George Bancroft, History of the United States of America From the Discovery of
5 Note:

Total Spanish Financial Aid:

<table>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>1776-79</td>
<td>397,230*</td>
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*Includes 1 million livres via Beaumarchais in 1776, and later war material.
Lee left Paris in February, 1777. When he arrived at Burgoss, he was ordered to return to Paris by the Spanish officials who were apparently coerced by the English into not receiving the American deputy at the Royal Court. However, he was finally allowed to continue to Madrid. In order to support his case, Lee, on March 6, 1777, sent a letter to Grimaldi from Burgos. In this dispatch, Lee showed the relative positions of America and England, and how Spain and France could benefit by their entrance and assistance. He wrote: "This then is the moment in which France and Spain may clip her (England's) wings, and pinion her forever."

Vague and ambitious promises were given to Lee of aid in money and arms. He was also allowed to make contracts for munitions and supplies with Spanish merchants. Although he gained nothing material at Madrid, Lee did present to the Spaniards an account of the American people which helped to further the Spanish-American relationship. Late in the spring of 1777 he returned to Paris.

***

The Spanish Ambassador at Paris during these years was the Count de Aranda, of the grandees of Aragon, "by nature proud, impetuous, restless, and obstinate; of undisciplined temper and ungenial manners." On the 29th

Total French Loan and Subsidies - $8,549,000.

Bemis, op. cit., 95.

7 Ibid., I, 76-77.
8 Ibid., I, 78-79; Bemis, op. cit., 52-53; Bancroft, op. cit., V, 137.
9 Lee, op. cit., I, 81-84.
10 Ibid., I, 84-85.
11 Bancroft, op. cit., V, 128.
of December, 1776, and on January 4th, 1777, he held secret interviews with
the American commissioners in which he promised American prizes and
privateers protection in Spanish ports. He was devoted to the French
alliance and "longed to see France and Spain inflict a mortal blow on the
power of England". 12

In March, 1777, Franklin made the same promises to Aranda that Deane
had made to Vergennes, namely, that in case Spain should come into the war,
the Colonies would help her in the conquest of Pensacela, but requested
that the Americans should be allowed the free navigation of the Mississippi
and the use of the harbor of Pensacela. Besides this, the Colonies would
also declare war on Portugal because she refused to allow American ships
into her harbors, and the United States would continue the war until Portugal
was made a part of Spain. 13

In February, 1777, Grimaldi fell from power and was driven from Spain.
He was succeeded by Don Jose Monini, Count de Florida Blanca. For the first
time in twenty years Spain had a Spanish Ministry, and for the first time
since Ferdinand and Isabella, a truly Spanish policy began to be found. 14
During the entire action between France, Spain, England and America, Florida
Blanca used "duplicity and cunning" to further the interests of Spain. He
was bent on enlarging Spanish commerce and in making the kingdom respected
among the powers. 15

12 Ibid., V., 129.
13 Semis, op. cit., 53n
14 Bancroft, op. cit., V, 135.
15 Ibid., V, 136.
It was apparent after Lee's failure that Spain had decided not to receive any American agents. Florida Blanca told the British Minister at Madrid that the attempts of all such agents would be equally fruitless. "His Catholic Majesty is resolved not to interfere in any manner in the dispute concerning the colonies; it is, and has been, my constant opinion that the independence of America would be the worst example to other colonies; and would make the Americans in every respect the worst neighbors that the Spanish colonies could have." Although he remained of this opinion, Florida Blanca knew that he could realize his passion to be "famous in his own time and in history" if, together with France, he brought about successfully the defeat of England. But the facts were ever-present: France and Spain had interests that were wholly different. Spain had far more to lose than a few sugar islands. At that time she had a great colonial empire, and exposed hostages on the sea such as the expedition of General Cevallos, who was returning to Spain after punishing the Portugese at the River Plata, and the annual treasure ship which was coming from Vera Cruz. France's argument that Spain might gain protection for her American colonies in case of an American-English reconciliation, and the abasement of British sea power were discounted by the Spanish minister. He wrote to Aranda that the Count must be circumspect in his actions at least until the return of the treasure ship and of General Cevallos.

16Ibid., V, 137-138.
17Bemis, op. cit., 75-77.
Vergennes, all the while, was working desperately for a Spanish alliance. After the demands, based upon the terms of the Family Compact, were disregarded by Spain, Vergennes offered Minorca, Florida, a share in the fisheries of Newfoundland, the ejection of the British from Honduras, and even the reconquest of Jamaica. But Florida Blanca wanted Gibraltar. Mr. Bemis says: "This explains Spain's part in the diplomacy and in the military operations of the American Revolution." 18 It seems that it was Gibraltar by diplomacy or by war, but always Gibraltar. Mr. Bancroft writes: "There was indeed one word which, if pronounced, would be potent enough to alter their decision, that word was Gibraltar." 19

Although France decided to wait for Spain, Florida Blanca made up his mind to treat with England, at least at first. He proposed to Weymouth, the English Minister at Madrid, a mediation in which England would have the basin of the St. Lawrence, together with the territory northwest of the Ohio, thus keeping the United States within limits of the Alleghanies. England refused but invited Spain into an alliance with her. At the same time the British warned His Catholic Majesty of the threat to his colonies that an American independence would produce. Florida Blanca replied that Spain would never precede England in recognizing the independence of the rebelling colonies. 20 Nevertheless, at the same time he dropped a hint in Paris that

18Bemis, op. cit., 77.
19Bancroft, op. cit., v, 260.
20Ibid., v, 303-304.
his country would ally itself with France if an attack on England could be successfully arranged. Florida Blanca's duplicity was at its zenith.

In answer to France's last plea, the Spanish Minister offered a counter proposal in which the two powers would send large reinforcements to their colonies in the New World. Vergennes refused since he knew that such an action would be costly and fruitless for France. Next, Florida Blanca suggested that France and Spain continue allowing England and the Colonies to exhaust themselves until the Catholic Monarchs were called in to mediate. Vergennes became exasperated, for the time was fleeing, and, especially after Saratoga, peace might be declared before France could render military assistance. If such a disaster occurred, France would lose the benefits promised by the American Colonies. He therefore set February, 1778 as the time when France would enter the war.

After the France-American Treaty of February 6, 1778, Florida Blanca remained aloof. He made up his mind what he wanted for the price of Spanish participation and stuck to them. He decided that in Europe Spain must receive Minorca and Gibraltar; in America she should get the Floridas. Besides these, the Gulf of Mexico must be made safe for Spanish trade by putting "an end to English contraband in the Gulf, contraband that was made possible by the English settlements in Honduras and Campeche, at Pensacola and on the Mississippi, and by the right, secured to England in 1763, to the free navigation of that river throughout its course." He wished to close
the Mississippi to all but Spanish shipping. 21

In order to gain these ends Florida Blanca worked out a plan: Spain's chances would be better if it appeared that she entered the war in the interests of peace, therefore he would present another mediation plan, and in the meantime he would make arrangements with France. Then when the mediation was refused, he would declare war. 22 His peace plan was set before the French Treaty. The Count de Almodovar was sent as a special minister to England in order to try to get Gibraltar. As Florida Blanca feared, his Minister soon informed him that England would not offer Gibraltar or anything else in order to keep Spain out of the war. Time dragged on; Gavalles and the treasure ships were long since in the harbors of Spain. Finally, on April 3, 1779, the Spanish Minister sent England an ultimatum, but before it could be answered, the secret Convention of Aranjuez was signed between France and Spain on April 12. It provided for Spain's entrance into the war if England refused Charles' final offer. 23 The Spanish terms were severe, especially on the Americans. She demanded from France freedom to exact from the United States "as the price of her friendship, a remun-

22 Ibm., op. cit., 77.
23 Ibid., 77-80.
Besides this, France promised not to make any terms with England without the consent of Spain, and that the war would continue until Spain received Gibraltar. The provisions of the French Treaty with America were known to the Spaniards, while those binding France to Spain were unknown to the Colonists. Spain entered the war in June, 1779.²⁵

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According to the French Treaty of 1778 "...a right was reserved to Spain of acceding to the treaty, and participating in its stipulations whenever she might think proper." Since the war was going poorly, and since further foreign alliances would strengthen its cause, Congress decided to invite the King of Spain to take advantage of this article. On September 27, 1779, John Jay was selected as plenipotentiary to the Court of Madrid.²⁶ He was to seek a treaty of amity and commerce and to borrow at least five million dollars if he could, for money was needed badly by the Colonists.²⁷ He was to insist upon the free use of the Mississippi "into and from the sea", and was also to try to get some convenient port or ports below the thirty-first degree parallel on that river "...for all merchant vessels,

²⁷Jay was unsuccessful in negotiating this loan although it was promised by Diego de Gardoqui, the Spanish representative, if the Colonists would abandon their claim to the navigation of the Mississippi. See Isaac Joslin Cox, The West Florida Controversy, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1918, 15.
goods, wares, and merchandises belonging to the inhabitants of the United States.\textsuperscript{28}

Jay arrived in Madrid early in 1780, but was received indifferently at the Spanish Court. Florida Blanca informed him that all the surplus money was tied up, but that he would be able to raise between twenty-five and forty thousand pounds sterling late in 1780 or early in 1781, and, in the meantime, if American bills were presented, the Spanish Court would satisfy all creditors. It appears that Jay was given little encouragement because the American claims were too high for Spanish consumption, and because the expenses of the war were disrupting the Spanish budget. Spain wished to bring an end to the affair in a satisfactory peace and as soon as possible. France was of this opinion also; she felt that the only possible way to accomplish such an end would be to make a full alliance between Spain and America. Accordingly, she pressed the Colonists to withdraw their demands for free navigation of the Mississippi. Congress yielded on February 15, 1781. Also, the French agents at Philadelphia, first Gerard and later Luzerne, informed Congress that the western boundary line for the Colonists was to remain the King's line of 1763. France's purpose was to

\textsuperscript{2}Secret Journals of Congress, op. cit., II, 261. Gerard, the French agent in the United States, had been pressing both Congress and Jay to give up the Floridas and the Mississippi to Spain "as indispensable prerequisites to a treaty." At that time Jay was of the opinion "that we should quit all claims to the Floridas, and grant Spain the navigation of her river below our territories, on her giving us a convenient free port on it, under regulations to be specified in a treaty, provided they would acknowledge our independence, defend it with their arms, and grant us either a proper sum of money, or an annual subsidy for a certain number of years." He changed this opinion after Spain's entrance into the war for reasons which he felt were not consistent with the independence and safety of America. See Jay, op. cit., I, 100-101.
keep the Americans away from Spain in the West, and to maintain the
conditions of peace on the part of the Colonists within narrow limits. 29

When Florida Blanca realized the new conditions which removed the
obstacles to a Spanish-American treaty, he also changed his mind regarding
the Mississippi as the western boundary line of the United States. He
feared the staying power of the Anglo-American people, who stretched from
Nova Scotia to Florida and from the Atlantic across the Alleghanies to the
Great Lakes and towards the Mississippi, as a future menace to the Catholic
King's North American domains. 30 Florida Blanca decided to lay claim to
the whole west as far as the Lakes to which the expeditions of Pourre and
Galvez gave him a slim claim.

Having failed in his purpose, Jay finally left Madrid in May, 1782,
but his experiences with the Spaniards helped the American Commissioners
in their negotiations at Paris. Aranda was delegated to continue the treaty
talk with Jay. 31 All the meetings between Aranda and Jay in the French
Capital were informal and non-official but the ideas of the Spanish Govern-
ment in regard to the West were fully disclosed. The United States claimed
as boundaries the Proclamation Line of 1763 on the South and the middle of
the Mississippi on the West; Spain claimed the territory West and South of
the line drawn "from a lake near the confines of Georgia but East of the
Flint River, to the confluence of the Kanawha with the Ohio; thence round

29 Hinsdale, op. cit., 172.
30 Ibid., 172-73.
31 Aranda was instructed to see to it that the western boundary of the
United States was finally set as far east of the Mississippi as possible,
and that England was left in possession of part of East Florida, so that
they might act as a buffer between Spain's American Colonies and the
the western shores of Lake Erie and Huron; and thence round Lake Michigan to Lake Superior." The land North of the line was to be divided between England and the Colonies as they saw fit, while that East of it should remain in the hands of the latter. 32

Vergennes made a counter-proposal. He drew a line "from a point on the Gulf midway between the Chattahoochee and the Mobile, nearly due North to the Cumberland to the Ohio. "His proposition was to make the Indians west of the line free and under the protection of Spain, and those east free and under the protection of the United States. According to this plan Spain would be eliminated from almost the whole course of the Ohio; the Americans would retain their settlements on that River and would also have a large space for making new ones; and Spain would have no claims north of the Ohio but she was to have control of the navigation of the Mississippi. 33

It became apparent to Jay and to the other American Commissioners, that France would assist Spain in dividing the West with England, especially after Rayneval, Vergennes' first secretary, was sent to England in order to inform Shelburne that the French Minister would not support the American claims in the West. Although according to the Treaty of 1778, the Colonists were not to make peace terms without the approval of France, the American Commissioners began to treat secretly with the English. The present line in the middle of the Lakes and the Mississippi was agreed upon and a provisional treaty was signed on November 3, 1782. The definitive treaty was signed on September 3, 1783, and was ratified by Congress on January

32Hinsdale, op. cit., 174-175.

restless Americans. See Whitaker, op. cit., 10.
The diplomacy of Spain during the American Revolution was largely in the hands of Florida Blanca, who succeeded Grimaldi in 1777. The steps taken by this man were of the worst possible kind. First of all, he let slip the chance of promoting American friendship by neglecting to allow Spain's aid in 1777 and 1778 to the United States as urged by Aranda and Vergennes. His policy alienated the Colonists, led to war with England and offended deeply Spain's one ally — France. At no time, during the negotiations of 1782 and 1783, did he make a formal protest against England's cessions to the United States, nor did he try to insert in the Spanish Treaty with England a definition of the boundaries of West Florida or any clause relating to the navigation of the Mississippi. His was a policy of "studied silence": England pretended to give territory and right that in

34A secret article in the Treaty called for the Yazoo Line or 32 degrees and twenty-six minutes, as the Colonists' southern boundary in case Great Britain recovered the Floridas, and the thirty-first degree parallel in case Spain retained them. See Cox, op. cit., 16.

The Treaty guaranteed to the United States free navigation of the Mississippi, and set our southern boundary at the thirty-first degree parallel, while the Treaty between England and Spain contained nothing of the "free navigation" idea, and also stipulated that England ceded East Florida to Spain and that Spain was to "retain" West Florida. The conquered West Florida included Natchez and all the territory as far north as the parallel passing through the junction of the Mississippi and the Yazoo Rivers, i.e., the Yazoo Line, 32 degrees and twenty-six minutes. Thus the United States and Spain, by the two Treaties, signed on the same day claimed the territory between the thirty-first degree parallel and the thirty-two degrees and twenty-six minutes degrees parallel, from the Mississippi to the Chattahoochee, including the important post of Natchez. Although it has not been proved, it seems that the English diplomacy was purposely directed towards embroiling the United States and Spain in a fight. See Whitaker, op. cit., 11.
nature could not be done, therefore, Spain had to do nothing to protect her rights. Furthermore, the points in question concerned only the United States and Spain and should be settled either in Philadelphia or Madrid, but not at the general peace conference. Even though Florida Blanca saw in England incompetence to make such questioned grants, he did not take exception formally and publicly to the Anglo-American Treaty. His omission enabled the United States to argue that by silence Spain had given consent. As time went on, these arguments grew stronger and were the chief reasons advanced by Godoy in 1795 which brought about the Treaty of San Lorenzo.35

CHAPTER II
SPANISH NEW ORLEANS AND THE 1779 CAMPAIGN OF THE SPANIARDS ALONG THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI

As early as the sixteenth century, French merchants were carrying on an illicit trade with the Spanish Indies. By the seventeenth century, an estimate put the French trade with Spanish America at ten million francs annually.\(^1\) Several monopolies were given by the King of France to French merchants; the first being in 1674 when Louis XIV and Colbert allowed the Company of the East Indies exclusive trade in the Indies and South Seas. While in 1698, the Royal Company of the South Sea received the right to trade in the region between La Plata River and the Strait of Magellan and along the Pacific coast in lands not already occupied by Europeans.\(^2\)

In 1701 the French Company of Guinea was authorized by a treaty between France and Spain. This Company could carry on a slave trade with the Indies, and build ships in Spanish Pacific ports, and deposite of the merchandise which was received from the sale of Negroes. This resulted in much illicit trade between the French merchants and the Spanish colonists.\(^3\)

Things were changed after the Treaty of Utrecht. All of the Spanish colonies were closed to direct foreign commerce, and England received the

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\(^2\)Ibid., 3.
\(^3\)Ibid., 4.
slave trading privileges which the French had enjoyed. France, however, continued her trade illicitly. France feared the English expansion in America and consequently she was desirous to convert the Spaniards to her way of thinking.

The Spanish Colonies of America are as dear to the French King as his own American possessions," avowed the astute Duke of Choiseul, French Minister in 1759 "and, if it should happen that the English attacked those colonies, aside from the friendship and union with Spain which would not suffer Louis XV to allow England to encroach upon the territories of the King, his cousin, the interest of France and of all other nations in that domain is such that they would unite to check English ambitions in Spanish America."

On August 15, 1761, a compact known as the Bourbon Family Compact was signed by the Kings of France and Spain. In the preamble, the signing parties declared that their intentions in the treaty were to perpetuate the sentiments of their common ancestor, Louis XIV. It was a pact of unity: anyone who attacked one Crown attacked the other; when both were at war with the same party they would act in concert; if one became involved in a war, it could call on the other for specific military and naval aid; the subjects of one in the colonies of the other were to have the same privileges as citizens of the other; in Spain, the French flag was to be treated with the same favor as the Spanish flag; and, finally, Charles III and Louis XV mutually guaranteed the integrity of each other's domains. This treaty was a diplomatic triumph for France.

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4 Ibid., 5.
5 Ibid., 5-6.
6 Ibid., 6-7.
Robertson writes:

It denoted a much closer intimacy between the contracting parties than did an ordinary treaty of alliance. In conjunction with a secret offensive alliance between the two parties signed on the same day, it constituted an offensive and defensive pact aimed against England.7

This compact was destined to exercise a persuasive influence not only on the policy which the various French Statesman pursued toward Spain but in addition on their attitude regarding her colonies in the New World.8 For example, Choiseul wanted to promote intimate relations between France and the Spanish Indies, and he wished to make his country master of South America. After 1765, when Charles III had changed the trade regulations, Choisuel planned to develop a French colonial empire in America with bases at Guinea, Martinique, and Saint Domingue. She could thus gain influence in Brazil, could check the English advance in the Caribbean, and organize a French and Spanish colony at the mouth of the Mississippi and counterpoise the English colonies in North America. As a consequence, the Gulf of Mexico would become a Bourbon Sea.9

During the American Revolutionary War, officials of both France and Spain in the New World contemplated joint action to defend Spanish-America against any attack by the English.10

After the Falkland Isle and Nootka Sound incidents, the Family Compact

7Ibid., 7.
8Ibid., 7.
9Ibid., 8.
10Ibid., 10.
broke down. The National Assembly of France decided that it would recognize only the defensive and commercial claims of the Compact and proposed that the pact be transformed into a national treaty.\(^\text{11}\)

During the French Revolution and the 1790s much action was contemplated to liberate the South American Spanish colonies. In 1794, a French publicist named Flassan composed a suggestive memoir concerning the future relations of the Bourbon allies. He believed not only that the Compact should be abrogated, but also that it would be inconsistent with her principles for France to support despotic rule in the Spanish Indies. Of course, France would gain in trade if South America were free from Spain.\(^\text{12}\)

In all, the French policy may be summed-up in the words of Robertson, who writes:

> A desire to conserve the Spanish Colonies for their Bourbon Ally, the alluring dream of a New French empire in America, and vague speculation concerning the separation of the Indies from the Motherland—all occasionally surged through the fertile brains of the French statesmen.\(^\text{15}\)

Charles III ascended the Spanish throne in 1759.\(^\text{14}\) He continued the

\(^{11}\)Ibid., 10-11.

\(^{12}\)Ibid., 12.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., 15.

\(^{14}\)He was the son of Philip V, who had been maintained on the throne by the armies of his grandfather, Louis XIV. Charles was born in 1716. In 1731 he took possession of the duchies of Parma and Placentia, which had been guaranteed to him by treaties in case of the extinction of the Farneses, his mother's family. He took possession of Naples and Sicily during the war of the Polish Succession, and was recognized as King of the Two Sicilies by the Treaty of Vienna in 1738. When his brother Ferdinand VI died in 1759, he became King of Spain at which time he ceded the Two Sicilies to one of his sons. He died in 1788 and was succeeded by his son Charles IV. See Alice Fortier, A History of Louisiana, Manzi, Joyant and Co., New York, 1904, 150-51.
reforms of his brother Ferdinand VI, but the power which was Spain's in the preceding centuries had been lessened considerably. A tremendous task beset him: the national income was small, commerce was stagnant, the army and navy were weak, and the colonial administration was very corrupt. 15

In 1763 Spain acquired French Louisiana by necessity it seems rather than by design. France and Spain had been beaten by England in the Seven Years War and on October 9, 1762, Louis XV offered western Louisiana, together with New Orleans, to the Spaniards both as compensation for the loss of Florida, which Spain had ceded to England in the war, and to end the constant Franco-Spanish friction over contraband trade. 16 Charles at first rejected the offer, but he was quick enough to change his mind when he realized the value of Louisiana as a buffer against the expanding English in North America. So the treaty of cession was signed on November 3, 1762, the same day that signatures were affixed to the preliminaries of the treaty of peace. 17

After the Seven Years War, Spain considered that another fight with England was inevitable, for Florida was gone and Louisiana made a poor substitute. Besides this, the French barrier was now eliminated as far as Texas, the far west and Mexico was concerned, and the Spanish west was open to the inevitable English advancement from Canada and from the thirteen

17 Bolton, Spanish Borderlands, op. cit., 234-35.
colonies. Charles began to strengthen his new acquisition and the other parts of the Spanish Colonial North American Empire.

Louisiana was Spain's first colony which had previously been controlled by Europeans and in it many new departures were made in her Indian policy. Spain used the French traders who were already among the tribes instead of employing her old control by missions and presidios. However this French way was reorganized along the Spanish characteristic paternalism. A corps of licensed traders were set up, while outlaws, unlicensed traders, and other undesirables were driven from the tribes, and merit medals were distributed to the friendly chiefs. 18

Commercial readjustments were instituted between 1764 and 1778 as a means of gaining new revenues. Jose de Galvez was sent to New Spain as Viztador General to carry out the reforms there which he did by reorganizing the fiscal methods, dismissing the corrupt officials and devising new sources of revenue even to making tobacco a royal monopoly. 19

Louisianaland consisted of New Orleans and the western watershed of the Mississippi River. Population at the time of the transfer was estimated to be between 8,000 and 12,000, fifty percent of whom were black, and the total did not include the Indians of the district. The principal settlements were along the Mississippi, the lower Red, and the lower region of the Missouri River. While the bulk of the population was located between New

18Ibid., 251-52.
Orleans and Point Coupée, there were other important settlements in the lower region such as Balize, Attakapa, Opelousas, Avoyelle, and Natchitoches. Up the Mississippi a way lay the Arkansas Post, St. Charles, and Ste. Genevieve, and to the west were the Cadodacho Post on the Red River and Fort Cavagnolle near the present site of Kansas City.20

The territory was principally agricultural. Small quantities of rice, indigo, tobacco, and grain were grown but there was little stock raising. Horses, mules and cattle were bought from the Indians, and the chief industries were the fur trade and business with the natives.21

The main relationship between the Spaniards in Louisiana and the American Colonists was to be in matters of trade. Despite the Proclamation Line of 1763 (which restricted the Colonists to the territory East of the Alleghanies), in the years following the French and Indian War the lands west of the Alleghanies were soon populated and the settlers quickly became accustomed to the use of the Mississippi River as the cheapest and most natural outlet for their products. Between 1763 and 1779, the privilege developed into a right which the Spaniards were careful to respect and later were even to promote.

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News of the Louisiana transfer, together with that of the French, who at the same time ceded to England Canada, the Ohio valley and all their possessions east of the Mississippi River, caused considerable consternation

20Bolton, Spanish Borderlands, op. cit., 236.  
in the province. In the north, a number of the French settlers left everything and crossed over to Saint Louis on the west bank, in order to avoid the promised British rule, while many in lower Louisiana were just as anxious to escape Spanish domination. An assembly of delegates from the lower districts gathered at New Orleans and sent a memorial to Louis XV. The hope that was nurtured with the passage of time and no arriving Spaniards was dashed to pieces on March 5, 1766, when the newly appointed Governor, Ulloa, appeared at New Orleans.22 Ulloa did not take formal possession of the province in the name of the King of Spain for he felt that the united French opposition was too strong. Instead he allowed the government to go on as before and merely ruled through the Frenchman, Aubry. A storm of protest gradually gathered among the French merchants because of the rather severe regulations promulgated by Ulloa in 1766, which restricted all the trade of the province to Spanish vessels and to certain specified Spanish ports. Under these conditions the British were soon able to monopolize the trade of the lower Mississippi and Gulf areas, which was formerly controlled by the French. In protest, the unhappy New Orleanians rose up in arms and forced Ulloa to leave the country in March, 1768.

King Charles was overcome with nationalistic pride. He determined that the next governor would be one capable of maintaining the Spanish prestige and right. Accordingly he sent "Bloody" O'Reilly, who arrived at the capital of Louisiana on August 17, 1769. With the assistance of Aubry, who played 22Bolton, Spanish Borderlands, op. cit., 217.
the informer, O'Reilly was able to convict the ring-leaders of the insurrection. Lafreniere, Nayon, Caresse, Marquis and Joseph Milhet were hanged, while the others involved were imprisoned with sentences ranging from six years to life. O'Reilly thus began the true Spanish domination of Louisiana, which province was to remain under Spain for thirty-four years and was to prosper as never before.

O'Reilly was followed by Unzaga who in turn was relieved of office by Galvez.

Don Bernardo de Galvez was appointed provisional Governor of Louisiana on February 1, 1777, when he was twenty-one years of age. He was a precocious young man of an old and influential Spanish family. His father was Don Mathias de Galvez, viceroy of Mexico, and his uncle, Jose de Galvez, was president of the council of the Indies.

The severe trade laws that Ulloa instituted had been continued by his successors. By 1777, French trade in the lower Mississippi and Gulf regions was practically extinct, while that of the English, being carried on surreptitiously, was booming. Galvez began a revision of these trade restrictions tending to rectify the French position; the four percent duty on all exports was reduced to two; trade with the French West Indies was permitted; Villars and Farre de'Aunoy, commissioners appointed by the French Government, were allowed to reside in New Orleans in order to buy for the

23Ibid., 248.
islands; and French vessels were permitted to purchase goods at the same capital. English smugglers were attacked and on April 26, 1777, eleven British vessels with rich cargoes were seized on the lakes. In the following year, on April 17, Galvez permitted exportation of goods to any port of the United States, and on the 20th, he issued a proclamation permitting exportation to any French port. The old trade ordinance of 1766 was thus completely revised by 1778, for besides these changes, the new Spanish policy allowed duty-free exports of furs and peltries to any port of Spain and also put Louisiana on a "most favored colony" status. As a result of these changes, the English trade, which formerly was so good on the lower Mississippi, was practically ended by July, 1778.24

Even before the appointment of Galvez the Spanish ports along the Mississippi had become centers of intrigues against the British in the war which the latter were waging with their American Colonists. The Spaniards' first military aid in the West began in September, 1776, shortly after the time Washington and his men had been badly defeated at Brooklyn Heights. At that time Oliver Pollock25 was given permission by the Spanish Governor Unzaga to purchase 10,000 pounds of powder in New Orleans. Mr. Pollock was an Irish immigrant who had grown wealthy in the West Indies trade and who

25Note: For an interesting account of Pollock's activities in the West see James Alton James, "Oliver Pollock, Financier of the Revolution in the West", Mississippi Valley Review, Vol. XVI.
proved to be a great promoter of the Colonial cause. Pollock’s bad financial condition as a result of his great help to the American cause was definitely recognized in the West. Clark pleaded with the Virginian Legislature to reimburse Pollock while John Montgomery wrote to Jefferson lauding the Irishman, (dated January 8, 1781, from New Orleans):

... and had it not been for the assistance of Mr. Oliver Pollock with whom I am now present, we must undoubtedly evacuate that Post (Fort Jefferson). He well knowing that Government having to heart the Setting a place of so much Consequence and from those good principles he hath Always Shewn Sent us Relief from time to time both Ammunition and Goods in our Greatest distresses until he has Sent All & is Still Striving to send Us further Supplies. I am fully convinced it will not be in his Power to send further Supplies without Relief, as I can See No other Method for the Preservation of the Illinois Country.

Pollock learned that General Charles Lee, Commander in Chief of the Southern District and second in command of the American armies, had sent Captain

26 Pollock’s aid consisted mostly in supplying military and medical needs to the Westerners and especially to George Rogers Clark. Up until July, 1779, Pollock paid silver dollars for the Continental bills of the Colonies and thus the American paper depreciated slower in the Mississippi Valley than in the East. But this good was soon eliminated when American traders came west to take advantage of the difference. By the end of 1779, the inhabitants of the Mississippi Valley began to lose confidence in the Continental and Virginian paper money which resulted in it becoming more and more difficult for American officers to buy supplies for their troops. Pollock bankrupted himself in the American support as, later, it became impossible for him to collect his due from the Virginians. A letter from Thomas Jefferson to Clark dated January 29, 1780, explains the reason: “We received letters from Mr. Pollock in the fall informing us of our debts at New Orleans and his distresses. We had just taken measures by shipping Tobacco to France to procure necessarys for our Army—having no other means of relieving (sic) Mr. Pollock, we were obliged to give him drafts on France which took the whole of that fund & has distressed us exceedingly...it being impossible to raise hard money... The difficulty of answering demands of hard money renders it necessary for us to Contract no
George Gibson to New Orleans in order to beg help of Governor Unzaga. On September 22, 1776, 7,000 pounds of the powder was sent up the river and finally reached Wheeling the following May at a most opportune time, for both that fort and Fort Pitt were in dire need of powder. The remaining 3,000 pounds were sent in October after Captain Gibson was released from prison where he had been confined in order to quiet the suspicions of the British Consul.29

Bernardo de Galvez became Governor-General in February, 1777. He was very popular, had married a French wife, and had even promised to buy 800 pounds of tobacco each year in order to stimulate the growing of that weed. After taking over the command of Louisiana, Galvez assured Pollock that he would extend himself to aid the Americans. His future actions bore him out. The port of New Orleans was open and free to American commerce. The City

debts where our paper money is not current. It throws upon us the tedious and perplexing operation of investing paper money in Tobacco, finding transportation for the Tobacco to France, repeating this as often as the dangers of captures render necessary to ensure safe arrival at some port, negotiating Bills, besides the expensive train of Agents to do all this, & the delay it occasion to the oriter (sic) Charles Walworth Alvord, ed., Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1780, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois, 1909.


28 Ibid., 498.

was open to the admission and sale of prizes made by American cruisers. When American trading vessels arrived at the mouth of the river, they were seized so as to protect them from the British armed sloops. The Spanish Governor also refused the Governor of Pensacola's demand for surrender of Pollock, who was appointed commercial agent for the Colonies early in 1776. Under Galvez's supervision, in July 1777, 2,000 barrels of gunpowder, a quantity of lead, and a large amount of clothing, were deposited in New Orleans subject to the order of Virginia. By the end of that year the Louisianan Governor had helped the Americans by delivering them arms, ammunition and provisions at the outposts of Pennsylvania and Virginia to the amount of over $70,000. Between 1777 and 1779, the year that Spain entered the war as an ally of France, Galvez continued his pro-American policy. On April 16, 1778, he issued an order requiring a temporary oath of allegiance from all British refugees residing in New Orleans. It seems that Galvez feared that the English frigates in the river would put a stop to his support of the American cause. He felt certain the English and the Tories desired an attack on the city and reprisals but at that time the British Government would not sanction such actions. In the meantime, British refugees and agents were success-

30Ibid., 71-72.
32Hamilton to Haldimand, January 24, 1779: "Though I have no doubt this minute of the existence of a Spanish as well as a French war, yet I have, as yet, no accounts by which I may venture to act on the offensive against the subjects of Spain, which I ardently desire, as there would be so little difficulty of pushing them entirely out of the Mississippi." As a matter of fact, General Carleton had definitely instructed Hamilton that the Spanish side of the Mississippi should be "respected upon all occasions". 
lful in stopping some of the goods flowing from New Orleans to the Colonies. 33

Early in 1778, James Willing and his party of "Banditta and adventurers" made raids on the towns of the lower Mississippi and brought the captured booty to New Orleans to sell. A storm of protest arose from the English along the river which made Galvez attempt to steer a middle course of profit to Spain without incurring too many dangers from either side, and he also saw the possibility of further raids. The captured goods furnished excellent bargains for the traders of New Orleans, and with the hope of lessening British opposition, he issued a Proclamation on March 3, for the residents of New Orleans to maintain a strict neutrality. Nevertheless, the English saw that the Americans were allowed to camp in the city, keep a guardhouse there, sell their captured goods at public auction and fit out boat loads of supplies, all this under the protection of the Spaniards. 34

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See: Report of the Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan; together with Reports of County, Town and District Pioneer Societies, Thorp and Godfrey, State Printers and Binders, Lansing, 1886, V, IX, 544. (Michigan Pioneers Collection); also, Clark Papers, op. cit., Introduction, CXXV.


34 The English did much complaining as witnessed by Hamilton's letter to Galvez, dated January 13, 1779, from Vincennes: "Your Excellency cannot be unacquainted with what was commonly practised in the time of your Predecessor in the Government of New Orleans, I mean the sending of supplies of Gunpowder and other stores to the Rebels, then in arms against their Sovereign --Tho' this may have been transacted in an underhand manner by merchants, unknown to the Governor, I must suppose that under your Excellency's orders, such commerce will for the future be positively prohibited." James, Clark Papers, op. cit., 103-104; See also, Albert James Pickett, History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi From the Earliest Period, Walker and James, Charleston, 1851, II, 36-58; J. F. H. Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State, with
In the meantime, much diplomatic bickering was going on in the Old World. Vergennes, the French foreign minister, having propelled his country from a "lend-lease" position towards the American Colonies, to active participation as a fighting ally against England, by the Treaty of Paris signed February 6, 1778, was trying desperately to involve Spain in the war on his side. After many feeble attempts at legalized black-mail, Spain finally signed with France the Treaty of Aranjuez in April, 1779, and then declared war two months later.

On July 8, 1779, Galvez was notified of Spain's latest position. At the same time he was made official Governor and Intendant, thus erasing the provisional status, and he was also instructed to begin active participation against the English.

Galvez's position was not enviable. He realized immediately the danger that he was in for it seems that at none of the villages had the Spaniards stationed sufficient troops to successfully withstand a well-planned invasion by the British. And he knew that the province was exposed from two directions. The British possessions of East and West Florida were strategically located in order to make an attack upon the southern villages, while in the north, Saint Louis was open to an attack from either Michilimackinac or Detroit.35 And Galvez' fears were well founded, for after the Spanish declaration of war in 1779, the British began to formulate a plan of campaign to sweep the

entire western American frontier from Canada to New Orleans and which they hoped would destroy both the Spanish and Colonists power in the Mississippi Valley. This order was given on June 17, 1779, by (Lord) George Germain to General Haldimand. The full scope of the plan need not be gone into here. Suffice to say, General Campbell was to sail from Pensacola, take New Orleans, and proceed to Natchez where he would be met by Sinclair's forces from Michelimacian, who would by that time have taken Saint Louis. On February 15, 1780, Sinclair wrote to Haldimand that he had sent a band of Indians to the country of the Sioux to sell the latter, and their chief Wabasha, a man of uncommon abilities. to proceed with all dispatch to the Natchez & to act afterwards (as) circumstances may require. (Wabasha) will be able to get information at the Natchez (so) that, if he did not hear of any English army coming up the Mississippi (he could) attack by surprise any of the Spanish forts and by assault (could capture) any of their exposed Parties, settlements or Villages. I suppose the Army for that service will arrive before Orleans about the first of May.

Galvez, however, had some plans too. Remembering the old adage that the best defense is a good offence, he determined to adopt the latter policy immediately. A council of war was held in New Orleans at which most of the delegates demanded that only defensive measures be taken until aid arrived from Havana. They severely criticized the young Governor's impetuous inten-
tions. Galvez argued in vain. For policy's sake he prepared as though for defense, all the while keeping secret his fixed plans. He did reveal his thoughts to Don Juan Antonio Gayarre, whom he appointed commissary of war, telling him that he had heard of a planned British attack and therefore he would "jump the gun" by attacking first on August 22. Feverous arrangements were made, but on August 18, a terrible storm visited the lower Mississippi region and caused a vast amount of destruction. All the ships that Galvez had gathered at New Orleans except the El Volante were sunk, and the rest of the preparations were thrown into considerable confusion. Galvez feared that the English would take advantage of the situation and therefore he decided to go through with his plans. He renewed his re-arming activities and was able to gain the full patronage of the townspeople by the use of a clever expedient. Fortier writes:

He assembled in the public square the principal inhabitants of New Orleans, and showed them his commission as governor, which he had just received. He said that he could not take, before the cabildo, the oath to defend the province from the English unless the inhabitants promised to help him. All present assented with enthusiasm. Galvez then took the oath of office, and began to collect a small fleet and army.

38 Galvez had begun to strengthen the defenses of New Orleans as early as 1777. During that year he built four river gun boats, each carrying a 24 or 18 pound cannon, in order to patrol the river. To him one gun boat was much more effective than two frigates, because of maneuverability and firing power. On July 10, 1777, Galvez sent minute information to Madrid regarding the garrison and defenses of Mobile and Pensacola. He said that the Creeks, Chootaws and Chikasaws had promised him that they would remain neutral. See Gayarre, op. cit., III, 110-111, 121-122.

Still keeping his real design a secret, Galvez told his followers that he would post troops where he expected the British attacks. Boats not damaged by the hurricane were ordered to New Orleans, while one schooner and three gun boats were raised from the river. These were filled with supplies and ammunition, and the artillery, which consisted of one twenty-four, five eighteen, and four-four pounders, were loaded aboard. This fleet was to accompany the army up the river.

On August 26, Galvez gave the command of New Orleans and of the garrison to Don Pedro Piernas; the civil administration being entrusted to the comptroller, Don Martim Navarro. Second in command to Galvez was Colonel Don Manuel Gonzales, next, Don Esteran Miro, and Jacinto Panis and Commissary of War, Don Juan Antonio Gayarre. Now all the plans were set. The next morning the young Governor recruited men at the German and Acadian coasts, and on the same afternoon the troops began to march northward. The forces consisted of 170 veterans, 330 recruits, 20 carbiniers, 60 militiamen and 80 free blacks and mulattoes, or a total of 670 men. Oliver Pollock and nine American Colonists were among the volunteers. A short distance from the city the troops were joined by 600 men "of every condition and color", and 160 Indians, gathered on the German coast, at the Acadian coast, at Opelousas, Attakapas and Point Coupée, which swelled the total to 1430. The Indians and colored men scouted three-quarters of a mile ahead.

40 Gayarre, op. cit., III, 125.
41 Ibid., III, 125-126; Fortier, op. cit., II, 63-64.
of the main body, while the militia brought up the rear.

The journey was long and strenuous. On September 6, after marching 115 miles, the army approached the fort at Manchac. By this time the men were exhausted; of the 1430 that made up the fresh forces outside New Orleans only about 950 reached Fort Bute, the rest having quit from sheer exhaustion. It was at this tense moment that Galvez told them of his real purpose. Enthusiasm greeted his words. 42

On the following day, the veterans were placed in an advantageous position to meet the 400 English who were said to be coming through the lakes with arms and supplies for the relief of Manchac. Then Galvez turned his attention on Fort Bute.

In January, 1765, Colonel Taylor began to clear the Iberville bayou between Lake Marepas and the Mississippi River in order to make effective the route through the lakes, and thus enable the British to avoid the French in New Orleans and also establish free contact between West Florida and the lower Mississippi. Fort Bute was erected in order to protect the workmen in the bayou and later to aid the English in monopolizing the trade of the region. It was of great strategic importance because the British constantly brought African slaves through the lakes and by the fort. The slaves were sold to the French, Spanish and British settlers in violation of the laws of Spain. The Ponchartrain-Marepas-Manchac route was also used by the English to supply the Mississippi settlers with all kinds of merchandise.

Ulloa had built a fort on the south side of the Iberville, only 400 yards

42Gayarre, op. cit., III, 126-127.
from Fort Bute, but it had proved very ineffectual. Negroes and other merchandise continued to be smuggled. Fort Bute, together with the other English posts in the lower Mississippi, were abandoned after a report made by The Right Honorable The Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations dated March 7, 1768, in which the recommendation was made that all posts in the interior which were not necessarily protecting the Indian commerce and the defeating of the French and the Spanish "machinations among the Indians" be abandoned. It was not reconditioned and rearmed until 1779 when the Spanish threat looked imminent.

Fort Bute was attacked successfully by the militia after Gilbert Antoine de St. Maxent led a strong advance through one of the embrasures. The fall of the fort proved shortly to be no great military achievement, however, for it had been defended by a very small force consisting of a captain, a first and second lieutenant, and but twenty privates. Of these, one was killed, four escaped with one of the lieutenants and the rest were taken prisoner.

A six day rest was granted to the men, but on the 13th marching orders were again passed along the ranks. The destination this time was Baton Rouge, fifteen miles from Manchac. About one and one-half miles from the former fort, quarters were established and the artillery was landed from the boats. In the meantime, Charles de Grand-Pre led the troops collected at

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43Pickett, op. cit., II, 7; Claiborne, op. cit., 105n.
44Rowland, Mississippi, op. cit., I, 260; Claiborne, op. cit., 122-123; Mrs. Dunbar Rowland, "Peter Chester, Third Governor of the Province of West Florida Under British Dominion, 1770-81", Publ. of the Miss. Hist. Society, Jackson, Miss. V. 5, 1925, 21-22.
Point Coupee on a circuitous route, and had taken two English posts, one on the Amite and the other on Thompson's Creek, thus placing himself in a position to prevent any possible communication between Baton Rouge and the northern fort at Natchez.

A scouting party soon discovered that it would be next to impossible to take Fort Baton Rouge by storm, since it was surrounded by a ditch 18 feet wide and 9 feet deep and was also protected by very high walls. Some 400 regulars and 160 militia and 13 pieces of heavy artillery also proved a formidable deterrent. Galvez therefore decided to set up batteries and dig trenches, and invest the place. On one side the woods were in the shape of a triangle facing the fort. Since this was the obvious point most favorable for an attack, Galvez sent the negroes, Indians and militia there with instructions to make as much noise as possible as though an advance was in preparation. While the British wasted their ammunition in that direction Galvez set the regulars about the task of erecting batteries on the other side of the fort behind a garden which shielded their operations and which was within gun shot of the fort. The British detected the strategy too late. By the time they could change the direction of their fire, the Spaniards were fully protected.

When the English took over in 1763, the French Fort Rosalie had been abandoned for some time and was then in an advanced state of decay. The Fort was then reconditioned but abandoned again towards the end of the 60s. It was again refortified in 1779 when the English hoped that a display of such might would attract the French from the Spanish side of the river. See: Mrs. Rowland, "Peter Chester", op. cit., 22; Rowland, Mississippi, op. cit., I, 275-274, 259-260; Claiborne, op. cit., 113, 122-123.
Everything was ready by the 21st. On that day the Spanish guns opened fire under the direction of Don Julien Alvarez, and by 3:30 of the same afternoon the fort was dismantled sufficiently to cause the English to send out two officers bearing a flag of truce. Unconditional surrender of the fort and of its forces of 375 veterans was demanded of the British commander Colonel Dickson, and it was agreed in the ensuing negotiations that Fort Panmure at Natchez would be given over to the Spaniards with its garrison of 80 men. The two posts that were taken by Grand-Pre also figured in the terms. After all the arrangements were made Galvez sent a captain and fifty men to take possession of the fort at the Natchez which was 150 miles away. The militia and free blacks who fought with the English at Baton Rouge were set free, for the British veterans that were taken constituted enough of a discipline problem to the now greatly diminished Spanish forces. Grand-Pre was left in command at Baton Rouge with jurisdiction over the officers placed at Fort Bute and Fort Panmure. A large number of the Spanish militia were left at these forts and the remainder were disbanded and sent home. The journey back home to New Orleans was begun and by the time that that town was reached Galvez had only 50 men left to control the hundreds of prisoners that were taken and the great number of Indians who had come to the capital. But the young governor managed to keep conditions well in hand and no disturbances of major consequences took place.46

46A good account of the Manchac-Baton Rouge campaigns will be found in Gayarre, *op. cit.*, III, 125-133; also see Fortier, *op. cit.*, II, 62-66; also Pickett, *op. cit.*, II, 40-41.
The naval activity in the lower Mississippi and the lakes during the summer of 1779 was definitely in favor of the Spaniards. An American schooner which had been fitted out at New Orleans captured a superior equipped British privateer in Lake Ponchartrain. Near Galveston, Spanish gunboats took over three schooners and a small brig which was returning to Pensacola; they also captured a schooner on the Mississippi, and two cutters that were loaded with provisions which were coming from Pensacola through the lakes to relieve the British ports on the Mississippi. Then too, a most notable sea exploit was that completed by Vincent Rieux, a native of New Orleans, who captured a British barque as it was coming to Fort Bute at Manchac. Rieux, by trickery and with only thirteen men, was able to take an enemy force of some seventy soldiers and sailors.47

In all, the results of the 1779 campaign in the lower Mississippi were very flattering to the Spanish arms. A recapitulation shows that eight vessels and three forts were taken; and 556 regulars, along with a great number of sailors, militiamen and free blacks were made prisoners, including Lieutenant Colonel Dickson, while on their part the Spaniards sustained little loss.48

As a reward for such great accomplishments, Galvez and Colonel Gonzalez were appointed Brigadier-generals and the latter was made Governor of the province of Cumanas. Lieutenant-Colonel Mire, Captain Piernas and Don Jacinto Panis were all promoted; and Don Juan Antonio Gayarre was made Royal Comptroller for Acapulco.

48Ibid., III, 131.
Spain ceded both East and West Florida to the English in 1763. On August 6, 1763, Colonel Prevost took possession of Pensacola in the name of the king of England and shortly afterwards (October 20, 1763) Major Robert Farmer arrived and took over Mobile. The French troops at the latter town were sent to New Orleans, and although there was little friendly feeling between the French inhabitants and the English, the majority of the settlers at Mobile remained, but some did seek refuge at the Spanish capitol. George Johnstone was appointed Governor of West Florida on November 20, 1763, and took up his duties at Pensacola, which was made the capitol, on October 21, 1764. Johnstone was relieved of office on December 17, 1766, and was succeeded by Montford Browne, who directed the province until 1770 because John Elliott, who was officially appointed in July, 1767, committed suicide before he arrived at the Gulf-land. Browne's residence was established at Mobile where he remained until Peter Chester became Governor in March, 1770. Chester continued as civil head of West Florida until the end of the British rule in 1781.

Shortly after the cession, the northern boundary of Florida was hurriedly set at 31 degrees north latitude on October 7, 1763, because of the fear of the Indians. On May 9, 1764, it was formally raised to 32 degrees and 28 minutes, or a line running East from the mouth of the Yazoo River. Since all the land was under English control anyway, it seems of little consequence.
but it had many future repercussions. The fact was that English land speculators influenced the Board of Trade and the Privy Council to take this definite action. In 1763, little was known of the country of Florida. Reports and surveys later showed that the inhabitants of the Natchez would be outside Florida Jurisdiction if the 31 degree line was maintained and a change in this line would enhance the value of this land and of the district in general much more than if they lay in Indian territory. Such a change would also make room for an extension of speculation to the lands along the Mississippi below the Natchez.

The possession of West Florida was very important to the British, especially in the control of the Southwestern Indians during the Revolution. John Stuart was appointed Superintendent for the Southern Department and he made his headquarters at Pensacola, although Mobile was considered the real center of control for the whole Southwest. The British held many meetings with the Indians and strengthened their position by following the policy of promoting inter-tribal dissensions. The Creeks, the Choctaws and the Chickasawa were at war frequently. The commercial system followed by the British

2Although running slightly to the emotional, there is not little truth in what Stevens writes in this connection: "See soon as a war with the American Colonies appeared inevitable, measures were at once taken to secure the Indian tribes on the side of Great Britain... The Indians were unable to comprehend the principles involved in the Revolutionary struggle, or the policy pursued by ministry and commanders in conduction the war. When they took sides with England, it was for gold, plunder, and personal interest; and the aim of the British agents was directed to stimulating such passions in their breasts as would make them most full of hatred toward the Americans
was one in which trading was open to all who had Government licenses and put up the proper bond. The biggest trading magnates at Mobile were Swanson and McGillinray; at Pensacola, Panton and Leslie. 3

During the period of English domination, West Florida prospered enormously. In 1763, Pensacola had but forty thatched huts and small barracks, but the British rebuilt the town which practically dates from that time. However, the only other large town, Mobile, remained French, even though its commerce was greatly developed through English stimulation.

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After his very successful campaigns in 1779, in which Forts Bute and Baton Rouge were captured and Fort Panmure at the Natchez surrendered, Bernardo de Galvez spent the winter in New Orleans. The combined British threat of an attack both from the North and from the East was broken. The Spaniards now had very strong garrisons at all of the captured British posts and hence the Mississippi was well guarded against any attack from the North. Moreover, Fort Bute controlled the Western outlet of the Ponchartrain-Marepas-Iberville route from the Gulf; and the land to the West was well covered with


scattered Spanish posts. Therefore, Galvez had but one direction to fear, namely, the Southern route. Although the Balize was Spanish, the British still had powerful forces not very far away at Mobile and Pensacola and Galvez was very well aware of that fact. He knew that retaliatory action would soon come and consequently he built up the defenses of the Isle and at the same time prepared to take advantage of the turn of things for an offensive against Mobile in the Spring of 1780.

The history of Mobile dates back to January, 1702, when Le Moyne d'Iberville began building Fort Louis dela Louisiana on the Mobile River at the Twenty-Seven Mile Bluff. As the first capitol of French Louisiana, Mobile was so situated that it could watch Spanish Pensacola and could also protect the Mississippi Valley by guarding the mouth of the great river that feeds it. At its commencement Mobile had 130 persons who constituted a fine nucleus for the French dream of a powerful colonial empire in Southern Louisiana. In 1710 the old town was flooded and in order to prevent a possible

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4When Baton Rouge fell to the Spaniards in 1779, Fort Pannure and the Natchez district were ceded in the articles of peace. The countryside was ruled by a Spanish administrator even though the majority of the people were English. Early in 1781 some of the Natchez citizens, headed by Philip Alston, Colonel Hutchins, John Alston and Captain Thaddeus Lyman, raised a number of the English settlers in an attempt to retake Fort Pannure and further drive the Spaniards out of the district. The attack was successful but short lived. On April 22, the attacking forces raised the British flag and began firing and on April 29th the Spaniards surrendered. (The latter chose to do this, however, only after a note had been delivered to the commandant, signed by a neutral resident of the district who was a very good friend of the Spaniards, a certain Captain Alexander McIntosh; his note said that the fort had been undermined and that resistance was futile.) The prisoners were escorted on the direction of Baton Rouge but near Loftus Heights (Fort Adams) a large allied force approached under Major Mulligan. The English fled but were overtaken by Mulligan's men. The allied band then pushed on to Natchez but were driven back. When news of the fall of Pensacola arrived the re-
reoccurrence of this kind, it was moved to the mouth of the river where Mobile now stands. The tremendous cost of the War of Spanish Succession prompted the king of France to farm out Louisiana for a period of fifteen years to the wealthy merchant Antoine Crozat. But, at the end of ten years, Crozat gave it back because he could not make it pay. Thereupon, the Scotchman, John Law, organized the Western Company and chartered the territory for twenty-five years. Law's company was aggressive and started the colony on what looked like the road to permanent greatness, but as a business venture it was a poor investment, and, in 1731, this firm also failed and the land was once more thrown back upon the resources of the crown.

During the middle part of the eighteenth century, the town of Mobile declined, and although its population decreased, Fort Conde remained the best in Louisiana. The town played little part in the Seven Years' War, but at the treaty which ended that action, Mobile became Charlotte County in the new province, while Fort Conde was renamed Fort Charlotte. Although the seat of Civil Administration was established at Pensacola, Mobile was important as a center of control of the Alabama basin and also as a basis of operations against the Spaniards at New Orleans. The Bay extended thirty-six miles...
North and South and was six miles wide. It was a possible check between the Mississippi and Europe. 8

When the English took over West Florida, they adopted the French diplomatic methods of dealing with the Indians by holding congresses and distributing presents. In this way, they soon gained the friendship of the neighboring tribes and were amply rewarded by Indian land cessions. In 1765, the Choctaws ceded a large area around Mobile and up the Tombigbee to the English, and a short time later, the Creeks relinquished the right to ownership of a small tract along the coast. 9

In 1768, General Gage, who was Commander of the British forces in America, was ordered to abandon the Mississippi posts and that at Mobile also, for it was felt that there should be a concentration of troops on the Atlantic coast. He commanded the transfer of most of the troops at these forts to Saint Augustine. As a result, Mobile's Fort Charlotte became merely a name while the people of the lower Mississippi became greatly alarmed. 10

During

7 Moore, op. cit., 69-70.
8 Ibid., 70-76.
9 Ibid., 77.
10 The following is a description of Mobile in 1777, written by a traveller: "The City of Mobile has been nearly a mile in length, though now chiefly in ruins—many houses vacant and mouldering away. There are a few good buildings occupied by French, English, Irish and Scotch gentlemen from the northern Colonies. Messrs. Swanson and McGillivray have here very large improvements and buildings devoted to Indian trade, which they control. Fort Conde (Fort Charlotte), near the bay, towards the lower end of the city, is a large, regular fortress of brick. The principle French buildings are of brick, one story high, but on an extensive scale, embracing a square or court yard. The ordinary buildings are strong frame, built of cypress, filled in with brick or Clay." See: J. F. H. Claiborne, op. cit., 112. Also, Moore, op. cit., 79.
the 1770s, the Spanish menace presented itself, and after a popular memorial was sent by the English settlers, the forts were rebuilt and rearmed, but, as subsequent events clearly showed, the defense action was totally inadequate. When news of the fall of Baton Rouge reached Mobile in October, 1779, a courier was quickly dispatched to General Campbell at Pensacola for aid. Campbell, however, was incredulous. He called it a Spanish trick to draw him out of Pensacola. Another messenger arrived from Mobile, but Campbell remained adamant. Then suddenly he changed his mind and gave orders for a relief detachment to sail. Then, as suddenly, he countermanded these orders and finally abandoned Mobile to its fate while he bolstered the defense of Pensacola.12

By the end of December, 1779, Galvez had finished his preparations and was then ready to begin his new offensive against the British, this time at Mobile.13 He left New Orleans in January, 1780, and sailed from the Balize...

12Hamilton, op. cit., 312.
13As early as April 22, 1777, the American George Morgan, had written to Galvez in reference to a possible Mobile and Pensacola attack: "Should we be able...to procure transports in New Orleans, I think that we could easily surprise Mobile and Pensacola, destroy their fortifications, and possess ourselves of all their munitions, unless these ports be better fortified and defended than we imagine. I would pay liberally to have a plan of the fortifications, and correct informations as to the garrisons and naval forces which protect these places. If one thousand men were sufficient to the contemplated expedition, and if we could, in New Orleans, purchase or charter vessels, and procure artillery, on as short notice as possible, we could strike the most successful blow in a quarter which it is least expected. But we shall never proceed to any action on the subject, before having previously obtained the permission and cooperation of your
on February 5th with an army of two thousand men which was composed of regulars, militia and a few companies of free blacks. Enroute a hurricane stranded some of his eleven ships and caused considerable damage to his supplies and ammunitions. Galvez, nevertheless, kept his course and on the ninth he captured the victualer Brownhall of 16 guns, which was carrying some presents to Mobile for a proposed Indian congress. The Spanish forces were landed with difficulty just below the Choctaw Point after the convoy was within the Bay of Mobile. General disorder ensued and Galvez, fearing a British attack, seriously considered leaving his baggage and artillery and returning to New Orleans by land. It is now believed that Campbell could have destroyed the Spanish forces at that time, and with them their future hopes, if he had taken advantage of this opportunity of confusion and attacked Galvez, however, when no British appeared, the Spanish General erected six batteries North and West of the Fort Charlotte and began a brisk cannonade. 14

In the meantime, there was much confusion in Mobile. The citizens abandoned their homes and fled to the fort, placing themselves under the pro-

excellency, and before having secured all the transports, provisions, &c., of which we may stand in need. If we cannot, expect so much at your hands, we flatter ourselves that you will at least permit us to trade freely with New Orleans, and I beg your excellency to inform me by an express messenger of your decision, and this, of course, at my expense." To this, Galvez gave no positive answer. See: Gayarre, op. cit., III, 109-110.

tection of Commander Durnford and his small group of men. The garrison at Fort Charlotte totalled 267 men besides the Minister Gorden, Commissary Thomas Strether, and the Surgeon's mate. There were also seventeen negroes who acted as officers' servants, and thirty-five more who were used in one way or another about the fort. Engineers, artillery, 4th battalion of the 60th Foot, sixteen of the United Provincial Corps of Pennsylvania, Maryland Loyalists, fifty-two volunteers from the inhabitants and twenty-one artificers were represented in the above number. Among the volunteers were Captain Walker's Provincial Dragoons and Captain Rees' militia who had arrived in canoes just at the critical time.

Well aware of his superiority in numbers, Galvez, on March 1, wrote to Durnford granting him the honors of war in return for an immediate capitulation. Durnford's reply was dated the same day. It read:

The difference in numbers I am convinced are greatly in your favor, Sir, but mine are much beyond your Excellency's conception, and was I to give up this Fort on your demand, I should be regarded as a traitor to my king and country. My love for both and my own honor direct my heart to refuse surrendering this Fort until I am convinced that resistance is in vain.

The attack was once more resumed. In the meantime, the English Commander gathered his men in the square and read to them Galvez's demands and his own reply. With this clever piece of psychology he greatly boosted the morale of

15Hamilton, Colonial Mobile, op. cit., 313.
16Ibid., 312-313.
the troops. Although he was told that Galvez had twenty-five hundred men in the attack, Durnford mistrusted this information. This incredulity together with the belief that Campbell was sending reenforcements, caused Durnford to hang on doggedly. The truth was Campbell had sent the 60th regiment on its way to Mobile on March 5th, and the remainder of the Waldeck regiment on the 6th. He himself followed with the Pennsylvanians some 522 men, and artillery. But Campbell's timing was poor. He had to march seventy two miles through a wilderness, and at Tensa, which was reached on March 10th, he spent too much time building rafts for a crossing, for on the 14th, after a break-through in the walls of Fort Charlotte was made by the Spaniards, Durnford surrendered. He wrote to Campbell the same day: "It is my misfortune to inform you that this morning my small but brave garrison marched down the breach, and surrendered themselves prisoners of war to General Bernardo de Galvez's superior arms."19

Galvez's success at Mobile was apparently one more of might than of superior prowess. Hamilton writes:

Hunger and lack of reenforcements from Campbell had had as much to do with the surrender as the cannonade, for only one man was killed outright, and eleven were wounded, of whom two died of their wounds. . . . When Galvez saw how small a garrison had so long resisted him, he was greatly mortified. But he kept his agreement to take them to a British port and land them,

18 Hamilton, op. cit., 315.
19 Beer, op. cit., 32.
upon their promise not to serve against Spain or her allies for eighteen months. 20

Campbell arrived at Mobile a few days after Durnford's capitulation and was forced to retreat ingloriously to Pensacola. 21

The surrender of Mobile included all its dependencies, which extended from the Perdido to the Pearl Rivers. Thus, Spain was now in possession of all of West Florida as far as the Chattahoochie, with the exception of Pensacola. For his exploits Galvez was made a Major-General which was rather an impressive rank for a young man twenty-four years old.

* * *

The history of Pensacola dates back to the year 1528 when the Spaniard, Panfilo de Narvaez, discovered the bay. In 1540, Captain Maldonado sailed into the same waters and called them Puerta d' Anchuse. Nineteen years later, Don Tristam de Luna made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a settlement there, which he called Santa Maria harbor. In 1696, Don Andres d'Arriola's settlement succeeded and a colony was begun. The settlement grew but a few years later, on May 14, 1719, Governor Don Juan Pedro Matamoros was forced to surrender Fort San Carlos, which the Spaniards had built for the protection of Pensacola, to the French from Mobile under Bienville. In August of the same year, it was recaptured by the Spaniards and in the following month it was back in French hands. Finally, Bienville burned the

20 Hamilton, op. cit., 316.
settlement and blew up the fort. 22

The Spaniards gave up Pensacola in 1763, and Commander Johnstone of the British Royal Navy established himself there as Governor of West Florida in February, 1764. The Scotch trading firm of Panton, Leslie and Company, made Pensacola a leading business center of the district, and under the guidance of the English these activities grew greatly. Trade and prosperity were highest during the administration of Peter Chester, who was appointed Governor in 1770. 23

The troops, almost all of which had been withdrawn from West Florida by 1778, were sent back, and General John Campbell arrived at Pensacola in January, 1779, with over one thousand men. The main defense of the town was Fort George, which had been built by Governor Chester. It was in the form of a quadrangle with bastions at each corner. The woods to the North of the fort were cleared away so that the defense guns might have free play in that direction and could bear on an enemy in the bay by firing over the town. A system of signals maintained communication with the Tarter Point battery and barracks at Fort Barrancas. It was at this place that the powder of the province was stored. Barrancas, on her part, was defended by two batteries; one at the top and one at the foot of the hill upon which she was built. 24

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23 Ibid., I, 367.
24 A description of the town was written by Bartram, the naturalist, who visited Pensacola in 1776: "There are... several hundred houses. The governor's palace is a large stone building with a tower, built by the Spaniards. The town is defended by a stockaded fortress, a tetragon, with salient angles at each corner, where is a block house or round tower, one story higher than the curtains, mounted with cannon. This is constructed
After his success at Mobile, Galvez turned his eyes Eastward toward Pensacola. He knew that the British strength in West Florida could not be broken effectively until that well-fortified capitol was captured, but because of its might, he bided his time, waiting until full and adequate preparations could be made. Most of the year 1780 was occupied in this manner.

In the meantime, General Campbell prepared his defenses. The troops that he was able to muster seem to have been not of the highest military type. In a letter to Sir Henry Clinton he wrote that his 16th regiment of seven companies of veterans were almost worn out in the service, that the German recruits to the eight companies of the 60th regiment were "condemned criminals and other species of galb-birds." He had many desertions and his chief trouble came from the provincial troops which were composed of Irish vagabonds and rebel deserters.25 The English alliance with the Indians proved exceedingly useful, especially after the Mobile attack when two hundred Chectaws and Chickasaws helped to drive back the Spaniards who had crossed the Perdido in an attempt to scare off the English horses. And, as shall be seen, they were very much in evidence at the defense of Pensacola. On January 3, 1781, Campbell sent Captain Von Hanxleden and 100 infantrymen of the 60th regiment, 11 militia cavalry, 300 Indians, and 60 Waldeckers to

with wood. Within this fortress is the Council Chamber, the record office, lodgings of the officers, barracks for the men, arsenal, magazine, etc. The Secretary resides in a neat building, and many professional and mercantile gentlemen have handsome dwellings." See: Claiborne, op. cit., 112. Also, Cutler, op. cit., I, 367. 25Hamilton, op. cit., 311.
drive the Spaniards out of their intrenchments at the French village on the coast below the point where the Apalache or Taensa flows into Mobile Bay. The forces arrived on January 7th. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to storm the Spanish fortifications, but after Von Hanxleden and Lieutenant Stirling of the Germans, and the English Lieutenant Gordon were killed, the army retreated to Pensacola.26

In order to be sure that his forces would be sufficiently strong for a successful campaign against Pensacola, Galvez sent a messenger to Havana for reinforcements. When the Captain-General was slow in complying, Galvez went himself and with his increased influence, he was able to obtain enough troops, artillery, ammunitions and supplies to satisfy himself. He sailed for Pensacola, October 16, 1780, but he ran into a storm which dispersed his ships and forced him to return to Havana where he arrived on November 17.27

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26Ibid., 316.
27Navarro, the Intendant at New Orleans in Galvez’ absence, wrote to Cruzat in Saint Louis on February 15, 1781, the following: "...a powerful fleet which left Havana to attack Pensacola under command of our Governor, suffered a storm of five days' duration, so furious that it scattered all the boats, many of which lost their masts. Among them were the war frigates, which put back to Havana with their transports. On the thirteenth of this month, two were captured at Noliva and at this river by the English, and the balance of the vessels put into Campeche Bay after sustaining rough usage, whence they did not sail until the fifth of this month. We are daily awaiting our Governor who is to come with one thousand men, after having sent forward the five hundred who are here. Your Grace will see by this detail, what a disaster the measures taken by our General for the inner government of the colony, and the contentment of the savage tribes both friends and enemies, must have suffered." See, Louis Houck, ed., The Spanish Regime in Missouri, R. R. Donnelly and Sons, Chicago, 1909, I, 199; Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., XVIII, 419-420.
Galvez again set about gathering more strength. He procured 500 men who sailed December 6, 1780, under the command of Don Joseph de Rada for Mobile defense. When he arrived there, Rada notices a change in the channel and therefore left the army at the Balize and sailed back to Havana. More re-enforcements were ordered for Louisiana and Mobile: 1315 men and sufficient transports were directed to sail under the protection of the man-of-war San Roman commanded by Don Jose Calbo de Irasabal, two frigates, a chambequin, and a packetboat. Calbo was to be under Galvez' command in the Pensacola attack.

The Spanish General sailed on February 13, 1781. The troops followed on the next day and the convoy on February 28th. Captain Maxent was sent to New Orleans with instructions from Galvez to the effect that the troops left there by Rada and those who had sought shelter at that place from the storm of the preceding fall should meet the fleet on the way to Pensacola. On March 1, Don Miguel de Herrera was sent to Mobile to tell Don Jose Ezpeleta to march his troops by land to the Eastern coast of the Island of St. Rosa where he could effect a junction with Galvez' men. Four days later the Spanish Commander informed his officers that he planned to land his troops on St. Rosa and then attack the battery on Point Sigienia so the fleet could enter the port without having to suffer the cross-fires of that fort and Fort Barrancas. Once within the bay, they would await the troops from Louisiana and Mobile. On the following day the brig Galveston joined

28 Fortier, op. cit., II, 76.
29 Ibid., 76-77.
the fleet, and on the ninth at six in the morning St. Rosa was sighted. At eight o’clock that night when the convoy was at anchor, a cannon shot from land and three leagues to windward from the mouth of the port, the signal was given for the troops to disembark and the grenadiers and cazadores with three days rations landed with their colonel, Don Francisco Longoria.30 The troops then marched up the shore of St. Rosa, all the time facing the sea, and at 5:30 A.M. they found the remains of the fort at Point Siglienza. Then seven natives were taken by surprise and they told the Spaniards that the town was well supplied with both men and provisions and that further assistance was expected daily from Jamaica. The Spaniards dug in to protect themselves from the fire of the fort on Barrancas and of the two British frigates in the Bay.31

The convoy moved closer to the port and Galvez, in the evening, sought a place facing the town where batteries could be erected which could drive the English frigates away and also protect the entrance of the convoy. He ordered that four guns and 150 tents be landed. During the night the channel was sounded and two twenty-four pounders were set up opposite Fort Barrancas. In the afternoon, while the Spanish guns were firing on the English frigates, the convoy tried to enter the port but soon gave it up after the Commodore’s ship ran aground.32 On March 12, bad weather appeared and Galvez feared that

30Ibid., 77.
31Ibid., 77-78.
32Ibid., 78-79.
a storm would ruin all his plans. He therefore ordered that the frigates should enter the port and that the transports should follow. Calbo answered for the naval officers who were against the plan. It seems that they feared the unknown channel and the cross-fire of the enemy, which could not be effectively answered. The brig Galveston was directed to sound the depth of the port in the following night. Rough seas the next day prevented the landing of provisions, and on the 16th, Lieutenant Don Juan Riano arrived in a schooner from Mobile with the news that Espeleta was about to march to the Perdido River with 900 men. Barges were immediately sent to that river to effect the crossing of Espeleta's troops. Then came the grand moment. On March 18, Galvez boarded the brig Galveston, which was at the entrance of the port, and after ordering a pendant to be displayed and a salute to be fired, he sailed up the channel followed by Riano's schooner and two gunboats. (These were the only ships directly under Galvez's command.) The guns of Fort Barrancas fired as quickly and as often as possible, but Galvez's small fleet moved into the bay without damage. Much rejoicing followed. Shamed into action, the naval officers set sail on the following day, and preceded by two frigates, they moved slowly into the port. In an hour the whole fleet was thus protected, except the San Ramon which remained without.

Galvez wrote a note to Campbell on March 20th in which he told the Englishman not to destroy any of the ships or buildings. Campbell's reply

33Tbid., 80.  
34Tbid., 80-81.  
35Tbid., 81-82.
stated that he would conduct the defense of Pensacola according to the laws and customs of war and he proposed that each side should protect the lives of the women and children by not firing on the town. He added, however, that if the Spaniards tried to occupy the town, then he would be forced to destroy it. These were the first of a series of feeble attempts at negotiation between the opposing generals, and in a short time even these were discontinued.36

On March 22, in the morning, Espeleta appeared on the mainland opposite the Island. Galvez crossed over with 500 men in order to rest and reinforce his troops. While on the following day, a convoy of 16 ships carrying 1,400 men, ammunition and guns arrived from New Orleans, and on the 24th, all the troops, except 200 who were left on the Island, were transported to the mainland in order to march on Fort George. The route lay through impenetrable woods and in the darkness two detachments who had advanced by different roads mistook each other for the enemy and fired. Several men were killed and wounded before the mistake was noticed.37 A camp and intrenchments were established on the 27th after repeated Indian attacks. These assaults kept up, the worst coming in the afternoon of the 28th when about 400 Indians unsuccessfully stormed the Spanish trenches. That same day the Spanish-British peace negotiations, which had been going on, were brought to an end.38 Two days later Galvez and 1,100 men established a camp within gun

36 Ibid., 82-88.
37 Ibid., 86.
38 Ibid., 88.
shot of Pensacola, where they were joined by Espeleta. It was here that the attackers learned from English deserters that Campbell had a force of 100 regulars, 300 sailors, many armed negroes and a large number of Indians.39

The siege dragged on for several days. On April 12th, Galvez was wounded by a ball which passed through a finger of his left hand and grazed his abdomen, and, adding to the Spaniards' misfortune, a severe storm arrived on April 14. This dampened the expedition in more ways than one, but things looked brighter when, on the 18th, two ships arrived with provisions from Havana. These were followed the next day by the Spanish fleet under Don Jose Solano and M. Monteill with 1,600 men, and on the 22nd by two companies of French chasseurs and batteries of artillery. Galvez thereupon formed the army into four brigades commanded by General Gironimo Germ, Colonel Manuel de Pinella, Don Francisco Longoria, and Ship-captain Don Felipe Lopez Carrizoza. The French division was placed under M. de Boiderout.40

From April 24th to May 8th, the Spaniards continued their artillery attack. On the latter day, a Spanish shell set fire to the powder-magazine of the fort. An explosion followed and 105 of the defenders were instantly killed.41 General Germ and Espeleta were ordered to advance, when, at 3:00 P. M. a white flag appeared from Fort George. Galvez's demands of un-

39Ibid., 89-90.
40Ibid., 90-91.
41Cutler presents a rather interesting view: "It is a question how long this military fuel would have continued, had not a British colonel, who had been drummed out of Fort George in disgrace deserted to the Spaniards and revealed to them the locality of the British powder magazine. Thenceforth, for three days the Spaniards' shot and shell searched for its
conditional surrender were finally termed in an agreement signed at one A. M. on May 9th, by Campbell, Chester and the Spanish leader. It was in this pact that the British surrendered the entire dependence of West Florida together with the fort over to the Spaniards. On the following day, the terms of the capitulation were carried out and there followed the usual surrender of arms. Two companies of grenadiers were ordered to take possession of the fort and the French chasseurs of the circular battery. Next-day Barrancas was occupied.

A recapitulation shows that Galvez took 1,113 prisoners: the garrison had consisted of 1,600 men, but 300 had escaped to Georgia, 56 had deserted, and 105 had died in the explosion. The 1,600 did not include the men killed in the siege, nor many negroes. On his part, Galvez lost 74 men killed, 198 wounded, and in the fleet, 21 were killed and 4 were wounded.

Fortier, in winding up a rather lengthy account of the attack, on Pensacola, praised Galvez's "great gallantry and ability as a commander." While Mrs. Rowland places the blame for Pensacola's fall more or less on the shoulders of Peter Chester. She writes:

On May 9, 1781, Governor Chester, who in his defense of the Province showed none of the brilliant qualities that had characterized his efforts in colonizing it, surrendered the capitol. It is true that its capture

vitals, and when they were found on May 8, 1781, there occurred an explosion that shook Gage Hill, a yawning breach was made in the fort, fifty of the garrison were killed outright and as many more fatally wounded." Cutler, op. cit., I, 368.

43Fortier, History of Louisiana, op. cit., II, 92-93.
44Gayarre says that there were 800 prisoners. Gayarre, History of Louisiana, op. cit., III, 147.
was a failure that should be laid at the door of the military department rather than at that of the civil, but it is evident that the Governor, now growing old and doubtless wearied with conflicts and problems of every nature, had lost his fire.\footnote{46}

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As a consequence of this, Galvez's final action against the British in his lower Mississippi and Gulf campaigns, all of West Florida was once more in the hands of Spain. The Spaniards now controlled the territory East of the Mississippi from the Natchez to Pensacola. In the Treaty of Peace signed at Paris in 1783, East Florida was ceded to the Spaniards, and this reunion, which brought back under Spanish control the territory as it was before 1762, was to remain Spanish until the Adams-Oniz Treaty in 1819, when Spain sold East Florida to the United States.

* * *

While Galvez was enhancing the Spanish military name along the lower Mississippi and Gulf areas, Spain was active in another theater of the War for American Independence, namely in the Atlantic Ocean. A word or two concerning Spanish activities on the sea would not be amiss.

At no time in her history had Spain been so well prepared for war as she was in 1779. She had 68 ships-of-the-line in European waters alone, and

\footnote{The above account of the Pensacola campaign had been taken wholly from the story in Fortier's history (op. cit., II, 75-93) already cited. Mr. Fortier took his account directly from "Diario de las operaciones de la expedicion contra las plaza de Pansaola" by Bernardo de Galvez. Another good account can be found in Gayarre's history, op. cit., III, 137-147. News of the Pensacola victory raced up the Mississippi and was good news to the Americans as well as to the Spaniards. On August 1, 1781, Gratiot wrote to Clark: 'I hope that after a capture so glorious for the arms of Spain and the disadvantage of the English in their expeditions, that}
many other but smaller craft. In American waters her naval strength was considerable, and, as we have seen, her military leader ship left little to be desired. Then too, there was another factor in the picture that added to the Spanish security: Portugal and Spain were at peace for the present, and thus England was deprived of an ally and a base of operations which had been of much help in former wars.\footnote{47}

The strategy of the new alliance that had joined Spain and France included a joint invasion of Great Britain and the capture of Gibraltar and Minorca. Consequently, on July 26, 1779, a strong allied fleet was assembled off Finisterre, consisting of 30 French and 20 Spanish ships-of-the-line commanded by Orvilliers, and 16 ships, a corps de reserve, commanded by the Spanish Don Cordova. An invasion of England was the immediate objective. The fleet sailed up the channel without opposition, but divergent views among the commanders resulted in their making no use of the opportunity. Not one soldier was landed. Nevertheless, by this action some good to the allied cause was forthcoming, for British ships were withdrawn from the sea lanes in order to protect the home ports, thus preventing the English from stopping the arrival of Spanish gold from America, and also, the British arms in America were denied the reinforcements that were so badly needed.\footnote{48}

\footnote{46}Mrs. Rowland, "Peter Chester, Third Governor of the Province of West Floridas Under British Dominion, 1770-1781," \textit{op. cit.}, 15.
\footnote{47}Louis Bertrand and Sir Charles Petrie, \textit{History of Spain}, Eyre and Spotteswoode, London, 1934, 430.
\footnote{48}Ibid., 430-431; McCarthy, \textit{op. cit.}, 54.
In March, 1780, 6,600 Spanish troops embarked at Cadiz. These, together with 13 warships under the command of Don Solano and Don Tomasco were ordered to the West Indies where they were to meet the French under De Grasse for a joint action. And as luck would have it, it was the unpreparedness of the Spanish Commanders, after their arrival in the West Indies, that permitted de Grasse to reply favorably to Rochambeau's plea in the following year. This reply proved the English's undoing.

Late in May, 1781. Rochambeau wrote to de Grasse, who was in the West Indies. He told the Count of the gravity of the crisis in America and urged him to bring five or six thousand men and 1,200,000 livres in specie. On August 12th, de Grasse's reply assured Rochambeau that he would set sail for Chesapeake Bay on August 13th, that he would bring 3,000 men, 25 to 29 warships, a quantity of siege artillery, and the 1,200,000 livres. As already stated, the reason that he could come was the fact that the Spanish Commanders not being ready on time for their joint action, the purpose for which de Grasse had been sent to the West Indies in the first place. Thus the successful Yorktown campaign was due to, as Professor Corwin writes: "Rochambeau's friendly solicitude for the American cause, Grasse's patriotic willingness to stretch a point in his instructions for the public good. Solano's unreadiness. . ."49

During the years 1780 and 1781 England was continually outmatched and embarrassed. Many times the English channel fleet was driven into ports by

49Corwin, op. cit., 312-313.
the superior odds of the allies. Gibraltar was constantly harrassed, being blockaded by land and sea, and, as a matter of fact, it was kept alive only by the unfortunate discord among the enemy. In the East Indies, Sir Edward Hughes met a superior in Suffren, Minorca fell to the Spaniards, and one by one the English Antilles had fallen. After France and Spain had entered the war, England was on the defensive everywhere except in the Atlantic Colonies.50

50 Mahan, op. cit., 392-393.
CHAPTER IV
THE ACTIVITIES OF SPAIN AT SAINT LOUIS

In 1762, before the cession of Louisiana to Spain, the mercantile firm of Maxent, Laclede and Company obtained from Kerlerec, the last French Governor-General of Louisiana, a license to trade with the Missouri Indians and with the other tribes as far north as the River Saint Peter. Taking advantage of this charter, Peter Laclede Liguest, a member of the firm, left New Orleans on August 3, 1763. He first went to Ste. Genevieve and then to Fort de Chartres. Finally, he selected for a trading post the present site of the city of Saint Louis which was later known among the traders as Pain-Court or Panoore, where work was begun in constructing the post on February 14, 1764. The location was perfect since the site was bounded on the North by the Missouri, on the South by the Maramec and on the East by the Mississippi. At the time Laclede thought that the Louisiana Territory still belonged to France.¹

The post grew into a little village, containing at the end of the first year all of 40 families.² As the French and Indians began to evacuate the

²After the French and Indian War the Illinois Country contained 6 villages, the principal ones being: Cahokia, which was situated near the mouth of Cahokia Creek about five miles below the present site of Saint Louis; Kaskaskia, which was located on the Kaskaskia River, 5 miles above its mouth and 2 miles from the Mississippi; Fort Chartres, which was on the east
Illinois lands (for as soon as the news of the cession reached the French settlements, there was a general exodus to the new post at Saint Louis, so much so that in a year the village on the west bank became more populous than Kaskaskia had ever been, and only a few, relatively speaking, were left on the Illinois side.) More and more buildings began to rise. In 1764, Captain Louis St. Ange de Bellerive arrived at St. Louis after handing over Fort Chartres to the victorious British. He became the leader of the new settlement and remained so until May 20, 1770, when Captain Pedro Piernas came from New Orleans to take charge of Upper Louisiana in the name of the King of Spain. Saint Louis soon became one of the most important trading settlements on the upper Mississippi. Its favorable location gave it a distinct advantage over its less fortunately situated competitors.

On April 24, 1775, Pedro Piernas was succeeded as Lieutenant-Governor by Cruzat. In June, 1778, Fernando de Leyba took up the position.*

After Spain entered the war in June, 1779, it was rumored along the Mississippi that England was secretly instigating the Indians, who were friendly to them, to make attacks on the Spanish settlements in America.6

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4 Perkins, op. cit., 78-181, which is a report of J. N. Nicollet to Congress made in 1843.
*Leyba was native of Barcelona in Spain. He came to New Orleans in 1769 with Unzaga. He was made Lieutenant-Governor of Spanish Illinois and took up duties June 17, 1778. He was a great friend of Clark's. He died shortly after the attack on Saint Louis, June 27, 1780. Collections of State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., XVIII, 407n, (5).
6 Scharf, op. cit., I, 70.
De Leyba at Saint Louis feared the British as he wrote to Galvez, February 5, 1779: "For my own part, I tell your Lordship that this Almilthon (Hamilton) is a depraved man who has countless Indians at his service and great ill will toward the Spaniards because, he says, they protect the rebels." As is known, the rumors were well-founded for the British had developed a plan by which all the Spanish and American forts in the West would be captured or destroyed and the English would take control of the outlets to the Southern Sea, prevent the Spaniards from aiding the Americans, and thereby isolate the latter along the eastern seaboard.8 An expedition from the North was to descend the Mississippi, attack Saint Louis and reconquer the Illinois country, which had been lost to the Americans under Clark in 1778 and 1779. Assuming that they would be victorious, the attackers were then to continue down the Mississippi River to Natchez9 where they were to effect a junction with General Campbell, who, in turn, was to arrive with a force from Pensacola after having captured New Orleans.

As the Spring of 1780 approached and the plan for the campaign got under way, it was apparent that Galvez's successes in the previous Fall had destroyed the southern part of the plan. But the northern half was pushed into execution. Emmanuel Hesse, a trader in the region, was selected to lead the attack. On February 15, 1780, he ordered the Menominee, the Sauk,
the Foxes and the Winnebago Indians to assemble at the portage of the Fox and the Wisconsin Rivers, as they had previously been joined by Wabasha and his Sioux. When this was done, the expedition then headed down the Wisconsin to the Mississippi where they were joined by Matchikius and his Ottawa tribesmen. Besides this main body, Captain Langlade with Canadians and Indians were ordered to proceed from Chicago and attack by the Illinois River, while another party was ordered to watch the plains between the Wabash and the Missouri, and a very strong detachment was sent by Governor de Peyster of Detroit under the command of Captain Henry Bird to engage Clark at the Falls of the Ohio.10

It was Lieutenant-Governor Sinclair's opinion that Saint Louis could be easily taken. On February 17, 1780, in a letter to Haldimand, he writes: "The reduction of Pencour (Saint Louis) by surprise, from the easy admission of Indians at that place, and from assault from those without, having for its defense, as reported, only 20 men and 20 brass Cannon, will be less difficult than holding it afterwards."12 But surprise was not a factor favorable to the British, for the whole Illinois country learned of the ensuing attack early in 1780. George Rogers Clark was made aware of Sinclair's plans by Prevost, a trader, in a letter dated February 20, 1780, and a little later,

9The British had been colonizing the territory between Baton Rouge and Natchez from 1765 to 1775, which region was under the civil command of Pensacola. See: Bolton and Marshall, op. cit., 408-409.
11Patrick Sinclair succeeded De Peyster on October 4, 1779, and served at Michilimackinac until 1782.
12Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op.cit.,XI,148.
on April 11, 1780, Charles Gratiot was sent by the citizens of Cahokia to
beg help from Clark, who was at that time supervising the construction of
Fort Jefferson on the Ohio. 13

So, all the towns of the Illinois bottom and the Spanish town of Saint
Louis were warned in plenty of time and since each feared the worst, they
prepared their defenses feverishly. Clark set out on May 13th for Cahokia
where he arrived just 24 hours before the main attack on Saint Louis.

De Leyba, the Lieutenant-Governor of Saint Louis had been "tipped off"
regarding the coming attack14 and like the civil leaders of the other towns,
he saw to it that his village was hurriedly put in defensive conditions.15

13In 1777, Patrick Henry suggested building a fort at the mouth of the Ohio
in order to facilitate the Spanish-American transfer of goods, and Galvez
was in complete accord. However, it was not until the early part of 1780
that Clark and Todd, the civil administrator for the Illinois County, de-
cided to build such a fort. Their purpose was to check the proposed
British expedition against the Illinois and Spanish countries and to
strengthen the former against the Spaniards. Clark wrote to Todd in March,
1780: "I am not Clear but the Spaniards would fondly Suffer their Settle-
ments in the Illinois to fall with ours for the sake of having the oper-
tunity of Retaking Both I doubt they are too fond (of) Territory to think
of Restoring it again." Then, too, the poor condition of Clark's troops
had a bearing on the construction of the fort. The troops were badly
supplied in 1780: no money was forthcoming from Virginia, no supplies were
obtainable, the time for enlistments had expired and there was no hope of
getting new men. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to both Clark and Todd to
concentrate what little strength they did have at the strategically located
mouth of the Ohio. In the meanwhile, Montgomery was ordered to withdraw
his troops from the villages of the Illinois bottom, but before this could
be successfully accomplished, the British attackers were on their way.

James, "Clark Papers, op. cit., Intro. cxxi, cxxii, 404.
14Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., XVIII,
404-405.
15Kinnaird, "Clark-Leyba - 105-106."
In 1780, Saint Louis was a town consisting of 120 houses, chiefly of stone, and about 800 people, the majority of whom were French. It was the capitol of Upper Spanish Louisiana and it flourished because it was the center of the fur trade of the district. A small Spanish garrison of 50 men which was supplemented by the militia, furnished the defense. Intrenchments were thrown up, a platform was erected at one end of the town upon which five cannons were placed, orders were sent to the surrounding posts for assistance, scouts were dispatched, and cavalry were strategically stationed. In response to the call, Lieutenant de Cartebona came from Ste. Genevieve with the local militia under the command of Charles Valle.

On May 2, the main attacking British force of some 950 traders and Indians began their long voyage, after having captured an armed boat and 13 men at Prairie du Chien. They also attacked the lead mines on the river and captured 17 men and plenty of supplies, thus preventing 20 tons of ore from being shipped to the Spaniards.

The attack on Saint Louis came on May 26, 1780. It was successfully repulsed and the attackers retreated in two main bodies, one by the Mississippi, the other across land to Michilimackinac. Clark sent some 350 French from the Illinois posts and Spaniards from Saint Louis, under Montgomery, to

16A list of the Roster of the militia at Saint Louis was sent to Galvez on December 27, 1789. It included the names of Captain Don Eugenio Pourre, Lieutenant Don Luis Chevalier, Sub-Lieutenant Don Carlos Tayon, Adjutant Don Benet Vasquez and two companies of 109 and 111 or a total of 220 men. These officers were conspicuous in the Saint Joseph raid in the following year. See: Houck, Spanish Regime, op. cit., I, 183-189.
follow them, especially the Sauk and the Foxes, this after an attack on Cahokia had been fought off. The pursuers went up the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to Peoria by boat then to the Indian village at the Rock River. The Indians there had fled so Montgomery burned the town and retreated southward.17

The following is the Spanish version of the Saint Louis attack and was written by the Spanish Intendant at New Orleans, Navarro, to Jose de Galvez, dated August 18, 1780:

... there was given a most amazing proof of the fact (that the English had not been falsely charged with the atrocities committed on North America) by Captain Esse (Hesse) at the head of three hundred regular troops and nine hundred savages which left not the least doubt that this nation, having forgotten how to make war according to the system practiced in Europe, does not desire to be false in America to the title with which an author of ability has characterized it. ... Captain Don Fernando de Leyba of the infantry regiment of Louisiana was commandant of the post of San Luis de Ylinoises; and having received information that a body of one thousand two hundred men, composed partly of savages and partly of troops, was being drawn up for an attack upon the town under the orders of Captain Esse, he fortified it as well as its open situation permitted. ... (He built a wooden tower at one end of the town and placed 5 cannon on it. He defended) the two intrenchments that he threw up at the other extreme points (with some cannon). These were manned by twenty-nine veteran soldiers and two

17 "Memorial of Cahokia," in Alvords, "Cahokia Papers," op. cit., II, 541. It is claimed that Clark went over to St. Louis before he went to Cahokia, and Clark himself later brought out in a bragging way that he and his men saved Upper Louisiana for the Spaniards. Yet Montgomery, who was present at the time, says that Clark would have aided the Spaniards had not strong Easterly winds prevented the signals from being heard. (Wm. P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and other Manuscripts, 1652-1781, Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond, R. F. Walker, Supt. of Public Printing
hundred and eighty-one countrymen. The enemy arrived May twenty-sixth at one o'clock in the afternoon, and began the attack upon the post from the north side, expecting to meet no opposition, but they found themselves unexpectedly repulsed by the militia which guarded it. A vigorous fire was kept up on both sides, so that by the service done by the cannon on the tower where the aforesaid commander was, the defenders at least succeeded in keeping off a band of villains who if they had not opportunely been met by this bold opposition on our part would not have left a trace of our settlement. There were also to be heard the confusion and the lamentable cries of the women and children who had been shut up in the house of the commandant, defended by twenty men under the lieutenant of infantry, Don Francisco Cartabona;* the dolorous echoes of which seemed to inspire in the besieged an extraordinary valor and spirit, for they urgently demanded to be permitted to make a sally. The enemy at last, seeing that their force was useless against such resistance, scattered about over the country, where they found several farmers who with their slaves were occupied in the labors of the field. If these hungry wolves had contented themselves with destroying the crops, if they had killed all the cattle which they could not take with them, this act would have been looked upon as a consequence of war, but when the learned world shall know that this desperate band slaked their thirst in the blood of innocent victims, and sacrificed to their fury all whom they found, cruelly destroying them and committing the greatest atrocities upon some poor people who had no other arms than those of the good faith in which

Richmond, 1883, III, 443. James believes that the mere fact that Clark was in the vicinity was sufficient to cause the Indians to withdraw. Quaife is also of this opinion. (James, Clark Papers, op. cit., Intro. oxxxiv, and Quaife, op. cit., 96.

*Syvlio Francisco de Cartabona was lieutenant in the Louisiana regiment. Had gone to Louisiana with de Leyba who left him to command Ste. Genevieve. Called to help defend St. Louis, he enrolled the local militia under Charles Valle. When close to death de Leyba again sent for Cartabona, who took over command of St. Louis till the arrival of Francisco Cruzat in September, 1780. He then went back to Ste. Genevieve which he commanded till 1784. Ibid., XVIII, 408n. (18)
they lived, the English nation from now on may add to its glorious conquests in the present war that of having barbarously inflicted by the hands of the base instruments of cruelty the most bitter torments which tyranny had invented. 19

The British version of the attack was comparatively short and is handled in a letter from Sinclair to Haldimand, dated July 8, 1780; it reads:

Twenty of the Volunteer Canadians sent from this and a few of the Traders and the servants made their attack against Pencour & the Cahokias. The two first mentioned Indian nations (Scioux and Winibagoes) would have stormed the Spanish Lines if the Sacks and Outagamies under their treacherous leader Mons'r Calve had not fallen back so easily, as to give them but too well grounded suspicions that they were between two Fires. A Mons'r Ducharme & others who traded in the country of the Sacks kept pace with Mons'r Calve in his perfidy. The Attack, unsuccessful as it was, from misconduct & unsupported I believe by any other against New Orleans with the advances made by the Enemy on the Mississippi, will still have its good consequences. 20

There has been much criticism of de Leyba as a man and of his defense of Saint Louis. Houck writes:

His death, it is claimed, was hastened by 'dissipation and remorse.' But it will be difficult to sustain this statement. By hearsay, in every respect, the memory of De Leyba has been covered with obloquy, but the archives show that he was a man of clear intelligence, business knowledge and sound judgement. His insight into the principles of law and his impartiality in the administration of jus-

19Navarro lists the results as follows: 22 killed of whom 7 were slaves; 7 wounded of whom 1 was a slave; and 70 prisoners of whom 13 were slaves. See: Ibid., XVIII, 406-409.--Sinclair claims Indians got 45 scalps, took 18 prisoners, and in all killed 70 people. He must have included those in raids on both sides of the River. Houck, History of Missouri, op. cit., II, 39; Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan, op. cit., IX, 559.

tice are unmistakable evidence of high qualities. He was on terms of intimacy with George Rogers Clark, and omitted nothing in his power to show his attachment to the American cause during the Revolution. As soon as Clark took possession of the Illinois country, he opened a correspondence with him, and Clark says that he was surprised to find him free from the reserve that characterized the Spaniards. 21

Blanchard, who draws upon Stoddard, Hall, Martin and the Western Annals, all inadequate by the author's own admission, charges de Leyba not only with dereliction of duty but also with downright sabotage: he says that de Leyba, aware of the forecoming attack, sent away all the powder and spiked the cannons, and that his death was the result of the storm of indignation that the townspeople turned on him, and he died by self-applied poison. 22 However, we see that de Leyba conducted a vigorous and adequate defense of the post over which he was responsible, and, as a consequence, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. 23

There are various versions of the St. Louis attack, some of which might easily have been mere conjectures, but in brief the attack took place as already stated. 24 The Reynolds version, which was upheld for some time, claims that the attack had a revengeful motive. As it runs contradictory to the apparent truth it is therefore deleted.

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21 Houck, History of Missouri, op. cit., II, 41-42.
22 Rufus Blanchard, The Discovery and Conquest of the Northwest including the Early History of Chicago, Detroit, Vincennes, St. Louis, Ft. Wayne, Prairie Du Chien, Marietta, Cincinnati, Cleveland, etc., Cushing, Thomas and Co., Chicago, 1880, 174n.
23 Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., XVIII, 409.
24 Blanchard, op. cit., 174; Frederic L. Billon, Annals of St. Louis in its Early Days under the French and Spanish Dominations, Nixon-Jones Printing
As for the motives of the attack, we have definite proof that it was part of a planned campaign. The Indians were enticed by the promise of spoils and a chance to fall upon their hereditary foe the Illinois Indians and the traders were promised by Sinclair the exclusive trade of the Missouri for the following winter provided they could gain and garrison the Illinois. 25

All in all, the attack was repulsed even though the threat remained and this it surely did. John Todd wrote on February 1, 1781, that "Accounts from all Quarters lead us to expect vigorous measures from our Enemies the next Campaign." The Illinois and Spanish settlers were preparing for new and powerful assaults. 26 And such a plan was fomenting as we see in Sinclair’s letter to Haldimand, July 8, 1780: "A like disaster cannot happen next year, and I can venture to assure your Excellency that One Thousand Sciox sic without any mixture from neighboring tribes, will be in the field in April under Wabasha (if no accident happens to him)." 27

As a consequence of the attack on Saint Louis and of Bernard de Galvez's exploits in the South, Spain found herself deep in the western war. She therefore strengthened her hand against the British by courting the favor of the Americans, and throughout the summer of 1780 the people of the Illinois bottom were continually alarmed by Indian attacks. Fort Jefferson

25 Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., XI, 152.
26 James, "Clark Papers," op. cit., 503.
27 Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., XI, 156; Pioneer Historical Society of the State of Michigan, op. cit., IX, 559.
underwent a severe siege; Kaskaskia repulsed an attack on July 17th. The people of Cahokia, Kaskaskia and the Spaniards on the west side of the Mississippi made "common cause" to defend themselves during this trying period.28

* * *

While Pollock continued his pro-American activities in the Lower Mississippi region, the center of allied aid in the North was chiefly in the hands of the two Spaniards, Vigo and de Leyba at Saint Louis. Francis Vigo was born in 1747. He had been a Spanish soldier first at Havana and later at New Orleans. Finally he left the army and went to the North to Saint Louis where he became partner with de Leyba in the fur trading business. His long experience gave him a tremendous influence with the Indians and, as a result, his trade flourished. He was early in sympathy with the Colonists in their fight against England, and his services in their behalf took active form upon Clark's arrival at Kaskaskia in 1778. He began to devote all his time, effort and fortune to the furtherance of their cause. Clark's destitute soldiers were supplied with his merchandise, while he maintained the Virginians' credit by taking their bills at par or guaranteeing their redemption.29 Thus Clark was able to get other provisions from skeptical Spanish and French traders. Through advances, liabilities and losses from enemy Indian re-

29 In 1779, the Continental & State Bills of Credit had depreciated severely in the Illinois Country. For instance: On June 10th of that year one silver dollar would buy 5 to 6 bills at Kaskaskia and 4 bills at Cahokia. Parity, or close to it, was maintained only at Saint Louis and at New Orleans. James, "Clark Papers," op. cit., 379.
prisals, Vigo's devotion to the American cause reduced him to poverty. A
tardy remuneration to his heirs was made later by the newly formed govern­ment which he did so much to help in the West.30

In 1778 Vigo was captured by one of Hamilton's31 scouting parties while
the Spaniard was on the way to Vincennes with supplies for Captain Helm.
Since he was a Spanish subject and Spain was not in the war yet, he was re­leased, and, according to his promise to Hamilton, he returned directly to
Saint Louis. But once there, he immediately went over to Kaskaskia where he
gave Clark much valuable information regarding the British post at Vincennes
which Clark was able to capture the following February.32

Fernando de Leyba was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Louisiana
in 1778. His relations with Clark and the Colonial cause began in that same
year.33 Leyba wrote to Patrick Henry, April 23, 1779: "From the time that
my friend Colonel Clark arrived in this place, fraternal harmony has reigned
between the people from the United States and the Vassals of his Catholic
Majesty."34 Again, Leyba to Galvez: "Colonel Clark deserves the greatest
courtesy from all the inhabitants of his district since they are debtors to

30See account by H. W. Beckwith in John Reynolds, The Pioneer History of
Illinois, containing the Discovery in 1673, and the History of the Country
to the Year 1818, when the State Government was Organized, Fergus Printing
31Henry Hamilton was made Lieutenant Governor of Detroit in 1775. In the
autumn of 1778 he retook Vincennes where he was captured by Clark in
February, 1779, and sent to Virginia as prisoner of war. He later became
Lieutenant-Governor of Canada, 1782-1785.
him for his pleasant manner, clemency, and upright administration of justice. Although his soldiers are bandits in appearance, he has them under the best of control. 35 On July 8, 1778, De Leyba congratulates Clark on his "happy arrival" at Kaskaskia and adds: "I should be flattered to be able to be useful to you so to prove to you the perfect consideration with which I have the honor of being. . . . 36 As de Leyba had had instructions from Galvez regarding his being nice to the Americans, so also Clark received instructions from the Virginia Council, dated December 12, 1778, to be good to the Spaniards. 37 Like Vigo, de Leyba used his influence and pledged his own fortune to help sustain the Virginian credit along the Mississippi. 38 If these two men did not do so much, Clark's position would have been impossible. He had little or no financial backing from Virginia, the supplies purchased by Pollock were utterly inadequate, and the French villages of Cahokia and Kaskaskia were too small and too poor to give Clark necessary succor. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the Spanish towns were reluctant to sell their goods for Clark's receipts and notes, and would do so only after de Leyba and Vigo guaranteed them. 39 On October 18, 1779, de Leyba wrote to Galvez that the exhaustion of helping Clark had brought him illness and that he would not live long (he died the following June 28). Says he:

36 Ibid., 94.
37 James, "Clark Papers," op. cit., 80.
39 Leyba's help brought him real tragedy: he lost a major part of his fortune in that aid, and the resultant financial worries hastened the death of his wife and probably his own. Ibid., 92-93.
the coming of the Americans to this district has ruined me utterly. Several inhabitants of this town, who put their property in the hands of these Americans to please me, find themselves in the same situation, and their losses are equally a matter of regret to me with my own since I consider myself the immediate cause of them. . . I accomplished this on my credit with all the inhabitants so that they might provide these Americans with whatever they needed.

These inhabitants did not want to give up their goods even for Colonel Clark's receipts. They gave them immediately when I pledged mine. If I lose my credit by not being able to pay them, the service may be retarded as a consequence since it is certain that, if I need some unexpected aid for my troops, I shall not get it. . .40

Thus it was fortunate for the American cause that such men as Vigo and de Leyba were willing and able to supply Clark and his troops with those supplies that were necessary for a successful completion of the war in the West.

40Ibid., 111-112.
CHAPTER V
THE SAINT JOSEPH EXPEDITION OF 1781

After the death of de Leyba in June, 1780, Cartebona ruled temporarily at St. Louis until September 24th of that year when Don Francisco Cruzat once more took over the duties as Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Spanish Louisiana. Cruzat was an able administrator and well-versed in the traditional Spanish Indian policy, but his new position at Saint Louis was tenable only if the Indians of the territory were properly controlled. As in his first administration at Saint Louis until he was released from office by de Leyba in 1778, his main energy was directed towards placating the Indians and thus strengthening the situation for his Catholic Majesty, Charles III. His competition came from the English, as he writes to Bernardo de Galvez, December 19, 1780:

"I am contriving to satisfy them (the Indians) more by astuteness than by presents, for although I work by means of presents as much as is possible to me, they never reach the hundredth part of those which our enemies are distributing among them, as is well known and as Your Lordship can inform yourself—a reason which makes it possible for them to find so many Indian auxiliaries as they wish."

Since he was short of presents, and since he was continually being cautioned by Navarro, the Spanish Intendant at New Orleans, to cut expenses at every

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1. Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., III, 504n.
2. Ibid., XVIII, 414-415.
turn in his effort to keep Saint Louis as invulnerable as possible. Cruzat used persuasion and political astuteness in his dealings with the Indians and with his Illinois neighbors. In order to keep himself informed of any

3 Ibid., XVIII, 418, 430.
4 It is evident from two letters that Cruzat wrote in the closing months of 1780, that he was worried about the Americans. He apparently distrusted them. See, Cruzat to Galvez, September 22, 1780: In this letter Cruzat writes that his suspicions were so great that he went so far as to employ a spy, a certain Bentley, who was a merchant of Kaskaskia. He writes: "The fact that they have almost abandoned Ylimeses, since there only remains in Oca (Kaskaskia) a very small detachment of Americans; (At the end of 1780, Cahokia was an independent village-state, the Virginian troops having been withdrawn in the fall of 1779, and it was garrisoned only for a short time in 1780, after Montgomery's expedition to the Rock River. Kaskaskia was abandoned by all but a few troops in the fall of 1780. See: Alvord, Conquest of St. Joseph Michigan, op. cit., 206); the fact that Colonel Clark did not come to succor the country as he promised; and the little attention which they pay to the defense of it; all give me a motive for many conjectures and reflections, and more so, knowing the inconstancy of the English who, in this case, are the same as the Americans."

"I must inform Your Lordship that this conduct of the Americans with the settlements of their district, which they have abandoned without relief or hope of having it, after having impoverished it, keeps them all in a general conflict so that they do not know what to do, what side to take, or how to defend themselves without powder, balls, or any other thing that is most indispensable." In conclusion, he says that the whole East side of the River could easily fall into the hands of the English and he blames the Americans for it. See: Houck, Spanish Regime, op. cit., I, 179-180.

On December 22, 1780, Cruzat again wrote to Galvez: "I have just had news that an American habitant who is in Oca (Kaskaskia) has received a letter from New England, in which they tell him that the American colonies had made peace with the English and had made a close alliance for defense and offense, and that Colonel Clark was about to come to these settlements with six hundred men for no licit purposes, according to what is declared in the said American district.

"If these news are really a fact, as I fear they must be, it would likely be that the Americans declared as our enemies would attempt, as is easy for them, to descend La Belle Riviere (the Ohio) to protect themselves in order to get food from these settlements, and then with the food provided in them they would continue their voyage by the Misisipy, taking until arriving at the ports of Nueva Orleans, all the forts and settlements which we have on both banks of the above mentioned river.

"It is morally certain that, if the Americans should separate from our
prospective British raid, he maintained Monsieur Boucher de Mombrum and 40 militia at the Sauk village just above the mouth of the Des Moines River and 40 leagues above Saint Louis. Another band of 12 militia under Monsieur Maye were stationed on the Illinois River.\textsuperscript{5} Navarro approved of this policy and added the following motive for the action: "... to win the affection of the tribes, by attracting those who are undecided about accepting our friendship, and maintaining our allies in the condition that is advisable for the conservation of those settlements."\textsuperscript{6} So his rule was to be successful only so long as he took every possible means to win over the Indians from the English control.\textsuperscript{7}

It was for this reason, namely, to placate the Indians and to strengthen the Spanish position "in the Misury", that the expedition against Saint Joseph, Michigan, was undertaken in the beginning of the year 1781.

The events that led up to the Spanish attack have caused many American historians to err in the proper placement of the Spanish motives which

alliance they will work against us and that then, united with the English of Canada, they can form an expedition in these districts for the conquest of Ylinneses and all the rest of the Colony, and I believe that if the Colony were once in possession of the English and Americans it would cost a great deal, because of its location, to take it by force of arms." He ends by assuring Galvez that if Saint Louis were ever attacked he would "take the most efficacious means to conserve it." See: Houck, \textit{ibid.}, I, 178.

Navarro, writing for Galvez, in a letter dated February 15, 1781, assures Cruzat that his fears are baseless and that if Clark did come with 600 men "you will enjoy more tranquillity than you do now." See: \textit{Ibid.}, I, 204.

\textsuperscript{5}Houck, \textit{History of Missouri}, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 309.\textsuperscript{6}Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, XVIII, 422.\textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid.}, XVIII, 412-413.
prompted that offensive. But first, the background of the story, which is as follows:

In the summer of 1780, a certain French officer by the name of Augustin Mottin de la Balme came to the Illinois country with the apparent purpose of raising the population of the Illinois Bottom against the English. He wished to attack Detroit and eventually march into Canada. De la Balme's authority was not clear, but he collected a considerable force at Cahokia, Vincennes and Kaskaskia, assembled all at Ouiatanon on October 18, 1780, and captured Miami—near the present town of Fort Wayne, Indiana, on the last of October. He never reached Detroit for he was ambushed at night by the Miami Indians near their village and destroyed. While De la Balme was in Cahokia, he incited the inhabitants sufficiently so that 16 of them, led by John Baptiste Hammelaine and Tom Brady attacked the garrison of 21 men at Saint Joseph's, Michigan. The assault was made at night and the defenders were all captured and a quantity of goods "of at least fifty Bales" was carried off. Lieutenant-Dagneaux De Quindre and Campion arrived at the Fort on the following day, and with the help of some braves, they followed the Frenchmen. On December 5, 1780, they overtook the party near present South Chicago.  

8Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, op. cit., II, lxxxix-xlxiv. Alvord says that La Balme's mission could possibly have been connected with a plan of Washington and his French allies to create a diversion in Canada in order to cover the proposed attack on New York. See: Alvord, Conquest of St. Joseph Michigan, op. cit., 202.  
10The goods of the merchants at Saint Joseph's was valued at 32,000 livres,
Sinclair, the commander at Michilimackinac, gives the full credit of the capture to Campion. He wrote to Powell, May 1, 1781: "... By the good conduct of Monsieur Campion the Pottowattamies were raised--They pursued, overtook and defeated them at the Rivere de Chemin & recovered their merchandise, tho' the loss is very considerable to the Traders."12 This band was considered as merely robbers by the British as is evidenced by the following letter written by De Peyster to Haldimand, January 8, 1781:13 "I look upon those Gentry as robbers and not Prisoners of War having no commission that I can learn other than a verbal order from Mons'r Trotter and Inhabitants of the Cahoes."14

* * *

During the years 1778 and 1779, the Illinois Country was occupied by the Virginians under George Rogers Clark. An Illinois County had been

and at the time the post was weakened by the absence of Campion and a number of Pottowattamies, who were away on a hunt. See: Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan, op. cit., X, 367; IX, 569.  
11Quaife says that the party was overtaken at a place called Petite Fort which was a day's journey beyond the River Chemin or the stream at the mouth of which Michigan City, Indiana, now stands. He claims this as a more definite location than near the Calumet River where the others place it. See: Quaife, op. cit., 100m.

13Sir Frederick Haldimand, K. B., succeeded Carleton as governor of Canada in 1778 and served until 1784; Lieutenant-Colonel Arent Schuyler De Peyster was the British commandant at Michilimackinac after 1774. He succeeded Hamilton at Detroit in 1779 after the latter had been captured by Clark at Vincennes, in February, 1779. He remained at Detroit until 1784 and then went back to England.

14Ibid., X, 451; XIX, 591-592; Blanchard, op. cit., 165-166; Reynolds, op. cit., 89-90.
established by the Virginian Legislature, the boundaries of which were vague and it is doubtful if its jurisdiction extended North of the Illinois River and East of Vincennes on the Wabash. Actually, this land was claimed by both England and America at the time. By 1780, the Illinois County still existed even though Virginian troops had been withdrawn from all the towns except Kaskaskia.15

Saint Joseph was a small trading post situated on the Saint Joseph River, one mile from the present city of Niles, Michigan, and within the British district of Michilimackinac. It was a Jesuit station as early as 1690, and a fort had been built there by the French in order to protect the fur trade of the region. The English took possession in 1761. It fell prey to Indian treachery in the conspiracy of Pontiac, and after the suppression of the Indian revolt, the fort was never again permanently garrisoned. In June, 1780, Saint Joseph had 15 houses and 48 people, all of whom were Frenchmen or half-breeds and the males of the village were mustered into the militia as a defense measure. The English-friendly Pottawatomies lived nearby. In 1780, De Peyster appointed Dagneaux de Quindre as lieutenant and Indian agent in the vicinity of Saint Joseph. A year before this the principal traders of Michilimackinac had formed a company in order to supply the Saint Joseph garrison with goods. They maintained a warehouse there in order to keep the friendly Pottawatomies in good humor by offering them

opportunities to trade. It was against this British held post of Saint Joseph that the Spanish directed an offensive at the beginning of the year 1781. The story is as follows:

On January 1, 1781, a force of from 50 to 65 men, made up of both citizens of Saint Louis and chokias, and a number of Indians, under the command of Don Eugenio Pourre, left Saint Louis on a planned attack against the fort of Saint Joseph, Michigan. Pourre had the assistance of Tayon and Chevalier, two men who were of great help in making the attack successful. The route followed the Mississippi to the Illinois River and up the latter to the vicinity of the present town of Peoria. The party was joined on January 9th by Jean Baptiste Maye and the 12 men who had been stationed there by Cruzat. On January 20th, when they were 80 leagues from Saint Louis, the party left the river, which had frozen, and continued on foot, all necessary articles having been cached. On February 11th, twenty days later, they had traveled all but tow of the remaining 130 leagues. Here Pourre sent an envoy to the Indians near the post with the offer of plunder for neutrality. On February 12th, at seven in the morning the whole detach-

17Richard McCarthy of Cahokia wrote a letter to Colonel George Slaughter, the Commandant at the Falls of the Ohio, on January 27th of that year and in it he places the number of men at 50. He writes: "There now is a party of 30 Spaniards & 20 Cahokians, and 200 Indians to take revenge on the people of Saint Josephs of whom we have no news as yet." See: Calendar of Virginia State Papers, op.cit., I, 465.
18Eugene Pourre, alias Beausoleil (Sun Flower), came to Saint Louis soon after it was established. He was a prominent merchant and exported goods from New Orleans. He was Captain of Militia under Cruzat and he died in
ment crossed the river on the ice and fell on the fort before a shot could be fired in its defense. The goods in the place were divided among the Indians while 300 sacks of corn were destroyed. The English ensign was struck and the Spanish one unfurled. The place was taken in the name of the king of Spain by right of conquest. Less than 24 hours later the party left, bound back for Saint Louis, where they arrived the 6th of March. Not one man was lost of the Spanish band, while it was reported that two of the defenders lost their lives at the hands of the Indians as they were attempting to escape. On the day following the departure of the Spaniards, De Quindre arrived at Saint Joseph and attempted to raise the Indians to go in pursuit as they had done in the preceding attack. The Indians, however, refused and made him take them in the other direction to Detroit.

* * *

The motives for the Saint Joseph expedition have been assigned variously by historians of the War in the West during the American Revolution. Actually they can be classified somewhat as follows: 1) to revenge on the part of the Cahokians; 2) to a possibility for plunder as was the first Saint Joseph attack; 3) to a desire to destroy the supplies at the British post and thereby prevent a possible reoccurrence of the attack on Saint Louis in 1783.

19Charles Tayon, alias Taillon, came from Canada to Illinois and was at Fort Chartres in 1748. He went to Saint Louis in 1764. Ibid., XVIII, 431n.
20Luis Chevalier was a native of Canada. Thwaites says that it was probably due to his influence that the Pottawatomie Indians allowed the expedition to pass on to Saint Joseph. See: Ibid., XVIII, 432n.
21Frederick J. Teggert, "The Capture of St. Joseph, Michigan, by the Spaniards in 1781," in Missouri Historical Review, The State Historical
the ensuing Spring; 4) to a diplomatic move that originated in Madrid in order that Spain might lay claim to the Northwest Territory. The whole gamut has been run. One can further simplify the story by grouping the various interpretations under the three main headings, according to the progress in time in which they were popular: 1) A diplomatic strategy on the part of the Spanish statesmen in order that their country might lay claim to the Northwest Territory. 25 2) A foray, in which friends from Cahokia and Saint Louis united for revenge and plunder. 26 3) A defensive measure, in order to destroy the stores at the British post and thereby prevent a threatened attack on Saint Louis in the Spring. 27

Within the last decade a letter, written by Cruzat to Galvez on January 10, 1781, has been uncovered by Dr. Kimniard. 28 This letter has proved to be the missing link and has become the final word in the Saint Joseph Society of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., V. 5, # 4, 214-215.

22Ibid., 217
23For his part in the successful campaign, Pourre was made a lieutenant in the army on half pay, while Tayon gained a sub-lieutenancy on half pay, and Chevalier was to be assigned "a gratification as shall appear appropriate to the Governor of Louisiana." Collections of the Historical Society of Wisconsin, op. cit., XVIII, 430-432.
25Edward G. Mason is the great espouser of this theory, while Blanchard, op. cit., 173; Houck, History of Missouri, op. cit., II, 42-44; Dillon, op. cit., 175; and Perkins, op. cit., 230 hold the same view.
26The main advocate of the revenge theory was Alvord, who claims that when the Cahokians who had escaped annihilation at the hands of De Quindre, after the first Saint Joseph attack, returned to Cahokia, the excitement was intense. "The loss of their citizens called for revenge and the hope of recapturing the lost booty added another incentive." See: Alvord, Conquest of Saint Joseph Michigan, op. cit., 205, 206-207; Reynolds holds revenge as the motive also, see, Reynolds, op. cit., 126-127, as does Boggess, who adds the revenge for the Saint Louis attack of the preceding year. See: Boggess, Arthur Clinton, "The Settlement of Illinois, 1778-
tale. It supplies the actual motives of Cruzat by whose authority the expedition was undertaken. It reads as follows:

On the 26th of last month the chief, El Returno (chief of Milwaukee Indians) arrived, bringing me news of the destruction (by a party of Canadians of the Strait Detroit) under the leadership of a certain Dequente (De Quindre) of a detachment of seventeen Frenchmen who had set out nearly three months ago from the pueblo of Kao (Cahokia) for the purpose of going to take possession of the Fort of San Joseph, situated in the English dependency fifty-five leagues from the bank of the river (Detroit River). In it there are four persons commissioned by the English, with seventeen men and a considerable quantity of all sorts of merchandise, which they use to purchase maize and different kinds of provisions from the neighboring Indians, in order to collect in the fort a store of supplies for the expedition which they are planning against us. In addition to this, they excite and urge the above mentioned Indian nations to commit in their hostilities their customary cruelties of which we have had bitter experiences.

The urging of the Indian Returno, both on his own account and on behalf of Naquiguen, (a chief of the Milwaukee) both chiefs being already known to your Lordship, that I should make an expedition against the English of the Fort of San Joseph, together with the reasons which I shall state to your Lordship, and which I believe to be well founded, compelled me to arrange for the departure from this town, as quickly as possible, on the first of this current month, a detachment of sixty volunteers under the orders of the Captain of militia Don Eugenio Pura, a person skilled in war and accustomed to waging it in these countries.

27Teggert, is the originator and defender of this interpretation. He claims that the expedition was a direct result of information Cruzat received of an English plan to attack Saint Louis in the Spring of 1781 and by such an action the English goods could be destroyed and the Indians could be made to remain neutral. See: Teggert, op. cit., 214-228, esp. 223-224. Quaife, op. cit., also follows this theory.
He, together with the two others from the land of the Xlinuesses (Illinois River) who take their nations with them, form a force sufficient to send to San Joseph endeavoring to destroy every thing that the enemy has in it. For if these stores remained in the hands of the English, they would be of assistance in furthering their hostile plans. I believe that the measures I have taken will be effective in realizing our hopes. Indeed, it has been indispensable for me to take this step, as I am going to tell your Lordship.

First. For me not to have consented to demonstrate to them our weakness and to make evident to them our inadequate forces; and perhaps, if they had learned of these facts, it might be sufficient reason for them to change sides, notwithstanding the evident signs of friendship which they have given us. For the Indians are in the habit of following the strongest one, and the English would not have failed to take advantage of this event, nor would we have escaped experiencing the fatal results of the unfriendliness and inconstancy of the two chiefs referred to.

Second. To go to San Joseph and seize the fort, the English commissioners, the merchandise, and the provisions would have the effect of terrorizing the surrounding nations. It would take from them the men who are inciting them to evil acts, and would deprive them of powder and merchandise given to them by the English for hunting and making war upon us. By this means would be accomplished both the destruction of the fort and the supply of provisions in it; and, even though the English might not be prevented entirely from carrying out their intentions, it would cut off their resources in part and lessen their hopes of having in that place a store of provisions with which to supply those who may attempt to come by that way to attack us this Spring.

By permitting El Retorno and Naquiguen to go to make war and giving them forces against our enemies we shall succeed in turning our allied nations against those who are opposed to us; and since both

sides are bent on sacrificing themselves mutually, it will compel our Indian allies to be loyal during the war because they will have need of our help to defend themselves. The enemy will not then be able to attack us so easily on account of the opposition and resistance which they will meet from the Indians friendly to us.

With the savages it is always necessary, in order to preserve oneself from their destructive inclinations, to keep them occupied by bringing about disagreements among them, and causing them to war among themselves. This has always been experienced in these countries and every day it is proved more and more. These reasons, and many others which your Lordship may think of, compelled me to take the unavoidable step of sending the detachment referred to with the Indians who asked for and were enthusiastic for this expedition. I gave them everything necessary for the success I desire. I am sure that every thing that I have done in connection with this affair will meet with your Lordship's approval...

The expedition was thus concocted not by Cruzat himself, nor by the Cahokians, but by the Milwaukee chiefs, Heturno and Naquigen. Cruzat decided to yield to the Indians' desire for plunder because in doing so, he was following the practice of the Spanish Indian policy of playing tribe against tribe, thus he could establish a difference between the Milwaukee tribes and those Indians who were allied with the English. Also the very existence of the Spanish regime in Upper Louisiana depended upon the conciliation of those Indians friendly to them.  

29Ibid., 187-189.
30Kinnaird says: "Indian alliances for frontier defense had already been used by the Spaniards in Texas and lower Louisiana against both the Apaches and the English. A similar system was later followed in the Old Southwest when Spain attempted to control the Indian nations by means of treaties, subsidies, and agents, and use them as a buffer against the expansion of the United States." Ibid., 189-191.
The expedition was not planned by diplomats in Madrid as Mason and the American historians of the 19th century had it, nor was it a revenge attack for the defeat of De la Balme and Brady and Hammelaine, the Cahokians who joined the party did so for the plunder that was in it, although there must have been little left after the previous attack. Summed up Kinnaird: "Above all, the safety of the entire district demanded that the requests of the Indians be complied with lest they learn the weakness of the Spaniards and go over to the British. Cruzat, therefore, yielded to their urging because he dared not refuse."31

* * *

The source of information which was most directly responsible for misleading the historians of the 19th century, was the following account of the Saint Joseph expedition. It appeared in the March 12th, 1782, issue of the Madrid Gazette and was inserted, no doubt, by the demands of the Spanish diplomats, who were, at that time, vitally interested in possible claims to the territory of the Old Northwest.32 Mason in his Chapters from Illinois History writes a very fascinating tale of the expedition but he gives no more information than was contained in the Madrid account even though he devoted some 18 pages to the story. It seems that his descriptions gave evidence of such detailed knowledge that no one dared to doubt him.

By a letter from the Commandant General of the army of operations at Havana, and Governor of Louisiana, his Majesty has advises that a detach-

31Ibid., 191.
ment of sixty-five militia men and sixty Indians of the nations Otaguos, Sotu, and Putuami, under the command of Don Eugenio Purre, a captain of militia, accompanied by Don Carlos Tayon, a sub-lieutenant of militia, by Don Luis Chevalier, a man well versed in the language of the Indians, and by their great Chiefs, Returco and Naquigen, who marched the 2d of January, 1781, to the town of Saint Joseph, which the English occupied at two hundred and twenty leagues distance from that of the above mentioned St. Louis, having suffered in so extensive a march, and so rigorous a season, the greatest inconveniences from cold and hunger, exposed to continual risks from the country being possessed by savage nations, and having to pass over parts covered with snow, and each one being obliged to carry provisions for his own subsistence, and various merchandizes which were necessary to content in case of need, the barbarous nations through whom they were obliged to cross. The commander, by seasonable negotiations and precautions, prevented a considerable body of Indians, who were at the devotion of the English, from opposing this expedition; for it would otherwise have been difficult to have accomplished the taking of the said post. They made prisoners of the few English they found in it, the others having perhaps retired in consequence of some prior notice. Don Eugenio Purre took possession in the name of the King of that place and its dependencies and of the river of the Illinois; in consequence whereof the standard of his Majesty was there displayed during the whole time. He took the English one, and delivered it on his arrival at Saint Louis to Don Francisco Cruzat, (sic) the commandant of that place.

The destruction of the magazine of provisions and of goods which the English there (the greater part of which was divided among our Indians and those who lived at Saint Joseph, as had been offered them in case they did not oppose our troops) was not the only advantage resulting from the success of this expedition, for thereby it became impossible for the English to execute their plan of attacking the fort of Saint Louis of the Illinois; and it also served to intimidate those savage nations, and oblige them to promise to
remain neutral, which they do at present.34

Thus, since it is incorrect to use the Madrid account when one is attributing motives for the Saint Joseph expedition, we do see that the attack itself became important later because of its bearing on the political rather than on the military situation. In 1780, the year before the attack, the French Foreign Minister, M. Luzerne, told the Americans that it was the view of the Spanish Monarch that the territory East of the Mississippi and North of the Ohio belonged to Great Britain and, as such, was a proper object of Spanish conquest. While two years later, in the summer of 1782, the Spanish representative, Aranda, informed the American, Jay, that the western country had belonged to England until it came into Spanish possession by the right of conquest.35

It was this difference of opinion regarding the western boundary of the United States, and the knowledge that Jay and the other American commissioners had that France was apparently striving to assist Spain in dividing the West with England, that brought about the secret treaty negotiations with the last that ended the war.

* * *

The British intrigues against the Spaniards continued in the West during the summer of 1781. At that time, (June, 1781), the Commandant at Michilimackinac, hoping to excite the French people of the Illinois Country to take

34Jared Sparks, Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution, IV, 425.
35See: Quaife, op. cit., 103.
an offensive action against the Spaniards by raising a militia which would be in the pay of England, sent seven men to the Illinois Bottom. The agents, unfortunately for England's sake, went first to Saint Louis where they were apprehended and their letters confiscated. Although these letters were addressed to the people of Kaskaskia and Cahokia, Cruzat sent them to Major John Williams, "knowing no officer in Illinois superior to him." This action on the Spaniard's part, created no little amount of jealousy among the French inhabitants of the two towns on the East side of the Mississippi. If Cruzat had not acted in this manner, there is little telling what the Frenchmen would have done, for the Illinois Country was without a strong head at the time because of the withdrawal of the American troops.36 Apparently, Montgomery's rule37 had been pretty hard on the settlers. On May 4, 1781, the villages sent a petition to the Governor of Virginia in which Montgomery was denounced. It said: "All these acts of tyranny are the causes that our best inhabitants have withdrawn to the Spanish government, and others, who were expecting your justice, prefer Spanish laws to the tyranny and despotism which they have suffered at the hands of your people."38

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

After the attack on Saint Joseph's, the remaining years of the War in the West were occupied with sundry raids between the Spaniards and the British. By the middle of April, 1783, official word of the signing of peace preliminaries and cessations of hostilities had been sent to the frontier settlements along the Mississippi River. Word of general peace soon followed.

By the definitive peace of Paris, September 3, 1783, the newly formed United States received the territory known as the Old Northwest. Although due credit should be given to George Rogers Clark for his daring and successful expeditions in this regard, yet the participation of the Spaniards should not pass unnoticed. Furthermore, there was the ever-potent British Jealousy of Spain, together with the carefully planned and excellently maneuvered diplomacy of the American plenipotentiaries in Europe. All these were contributing factors.

Spain's participation in the American Revolution won for her East and West Florida together with the control of the Bahama Channel, the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico (for the last was really a Spanish lake in 1783). On the whole Spain was to lose, however, for she found herself up against the first dynamic independent power in the New World. As Mr. Whitaker points out: America was "... a power possessing a numerous and energetic population animated by the British urge to expansion and liberated from that intimate participation in the European state system which had so often
checked England's spoliation of Spain.  

Also, the American Colonists were very much stronger than their Spanish neighbors. 

The border settlements of Spain extended in a thin L-shaped line around the southern and western extremities of the United States: Saint Augustine, Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans between the Atlantic and the Mississippi River and North of New Orleans there were Natchez, Arkansas Post and Saint Louis.

Spain's aid to the American cause can be summed up somewhat as follows: Galvez's attitude at New Orleans and on the lower Mississippi was of tremendous help to our western Settlements and their protecting forces. The cooperation that Clark received from the Spaniards of Saint Louis and of New Orleans was sufficient to be one of the prime causes of his far-reaching successes. Spain's financial assistance, amounting to some $397,230 in subsidies, and $248,098 in loans plus Leyba's aid, was less than seven percent of that which France was willing to give. While on the other hand, her navy, together with that of France, can be pointed out to have diverted English fleets and, as mentioned above, to have caused, indirectly enough, of course, the success at Yorktown. As it was, with the Spanish fleet, the Allies had naval superiority. Then there is the fact that Spain helped the American cause when in 1780 she captured two ships belonging to Catherine II.


2In 1779, both Pennsylvania and Virginia had considerable population west of the mountains. Settlements were rising in the valleys of the Holston and the Kentucky. Louisville began with the Clark expeditions and there were the old French settlements on the Wabash and on the Illinois that had always enjoyed the free use of the Mississippi River. Because of this long use of the Mississippi the settlers had begun to consider it an inalienable right. Between 1763 and 1779, the river was open to them as British.
of Russia. For Catherine was so incensed by this action, that she issued a Declaration very similar to the French one of 1778 regarding neutral shipping. As a result of this the League of Armed Neutrals of Europe developed which helped considerably in causing England to entertain peaceful thoughts and to end the war.

Subjects; from 1779 to the end of the war, Spain continued this policy as a war measure. Ibid., 8; Hinsdale, op. cit., 171.
CRITICAL ESSAY ON AUTHORITIES

1. PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIAL.


Frederick L. Billon, Annals of St. Louis in its Early Days under the French and Spanish Domination, printed for the author by the Nixon-Jones Printing Company, St. Louis, 1886. Story based upon those documents and letters that remained at St. Louis after the Spanish evacuation of 1804. Does not mention the St. Joe attack.

Collections and Researches Made by the Pioneer and Historical Society of the State of Michigan, Thorp and Godfrey, State Printers and Binders, Lansing, 1892, volume X. Contains the "Haldimand Papers", from copies on file in the Dominion Archives at Ottawa, Canada.

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2. SECONDARY SOURCE MATERIAL.