# The Eighteenth Century Caribbean & The British Attack on Puerto Rico in 1797

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MARIA M. ALONSO - MILAGROS FLORES

María M. Alonso & Milagros Flores

# The Eighteenth Century Caribbean & The British Attack on Puerto Rico in 1797

With Chronicles






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Printed in Colombia

ISBN: 1-881713-20-2

*To mother, uncle Heri and aunt Maggie*
María M. Alonso

*To my daughters Amanda and Tamara*
Milagros Flores Román

# Acknowledgements

We wish to express our gratitude to the many people who have assisted us in the compilation of this book. Whilst it is not possible to mention all the names, we should like to express our particular thanks to William P. Crawford and Mark Hardgrove, Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of the San Juan Historic Site, for their trust and support throughout and for their valuable ideas and contributions. Also for facilitating the research visits of Historian Milagros Flores to the archives and repositories of Spain, England and Washington D.C., many thanks to the Servicio Histórico Militar de Madrid, Archivo General de Segovia, Biblioteca Nacional, Archivo General de Indias, Museo Naval, Museo Británico, Biblioteca del Congreso de los Estados Unidos. It was from the information provided by these sources in addition to the documents already transcribed in the archives of the San Juan Historic Site that the idea for this book was born. Also to the remainder of the National Parks staff, in particular Carmelo Pillot and Orlando Roman.

We also wish to give special thanks to Inter-American University for granting Professor Maria M. Alonso sabbatical leave to undertake a year of research in the The British Museum, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Public Records Office and other archives in England. It was from the vast amount of primary source material which these institutions alone could provide that information was obtainable on British strategy and aspirations, factors which are debated at length in this book and which sets it apart from other accounts compiled in Latin America.

A great debt of gratitude is also owed to Dr. Luis González Vales for his advice and encouragement and the valuable time he spent in appraising the book prior to it's publication.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks also to the library staff at Interamerican University who "surfed the Internet" for obscure publications in other libraries, particularly Pedro Laureano, Edwin, and Rosa Pimental in the Puerto Rican section. Also to the Dean of Humanitiess Dr. Dalia Rodríguez for her unfailing support and to Heriberto and Magie Alonso, who in their unique way made the whole project possible. Thanks also to the staff of the many archives in Britain, particularly Mrs. Ann Mitchell, Archivist at Woburn Abbey.

A very special mention is also owed to Dr. Juan Manuel Zapatero, who kindly gave us permission to reproduce some appendices from his valuable publication, "La Guerra del Caribe en el Siglo XVIII", Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico 1964. The originals of these documents are no longer available and it is only through his diligence that the public may have access to them today.

Last but not least our thanks to Peter W. Buxton for his indefatigable assistance in English editing, researching and general encouragement.

# Presentation

The present volume, authored by María Mercedes Alonso and Milagros Flores, constitutes a significant contribution to the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the last and most important British attack against Puerto Rico in 1797. Based on extensive research in English archives and Spanish it is the most thorough attempt to examine that event in the context of both the European and the Caribbean eighteenth century scene. The authors have, in so doing, continued the tradition initiated in Puerto Rican historiography by Arturo Morales Carrión with his study "Puerto Rico and the Non Hispanic Caribbean: A Study in the Decline of Spanish Exclusivism"

Reading this book, one comes out with a different view of the events and the leading figures involved, and in particular of the commander of the British Forces, Sir Ralph Abercromby, thus redressing some of the misconceptions or tainted views reflected in the traditional historiography about the attack. The book is supported by an impressive scholarly apparatus and bibliography. In addition, the authors have included appendices of selected documents that will, from here on, be available to those interested in this important episode in our history.

I could think of no better way of commemorating the Bicentennial than revisiting through the pages of this book what for many, including this writer, is one of the most important chapters in Puerto Rico's military history.

Luis E. González Vales
Puerto Rican Academy of History

# Preface

Much of the detail of this book has been extracted from primary sources in England (see Bibliography) and copious footnotes have been included both in the interests of authenticity and for the benefit of those readers who may wish to undertake further research. For this reason, because some of the passages have been reproduced verbatim, there are certain words chosen by the original authors which could lead to confusion.

The major instance of this is in the use of the terms "England", "Britain", or "Great Britain". On the matters covered by this book the terms are essentially interchangeable, as both in the 18th century and today, English writers frequently refer to England when they really mean Great Britain or the "United Kingdom." For the record, Wales had long been joined with England, and Great Britain was finally formed when Scotland joined under the Act of Union of 1707.

Another frequent source of confusion concerns the terms "St. Domingue" and "San(to) Domingo", and even in the official documents and instructions of the time the names are sometimes used incorrectly. Actually, St. Domingue was the French owned western part of the island of Hispaniola, now called Haiti, and San(to) Domingo was the eastern portion of that island, now known as the Dominican Republic.

It is also worthy of note that chapters XIII and XIV of this books are based on probably the only English translation so far of Governor Ramon de Castro's journal of the preparations and events of the English attack on Puerto Rico in 1797.

# Introduction

Although the main theme of this book concerns the Caribbean, and in particular the British attack on Puerto Rico in 1797, events in that part of the world were shaped exclusively by the designs of the countries of Europe. Therefore, to have a full understanding of the forces which moulded the future of the islands we must first examine the motivations and aspirations of the European nations themselves throughout the eighteenth century.

The subject matter concerns mainly Great Britain and to a lesser extent, France and Spain, although an in-depth examination of these countries' internal politics has been omitted unless it has a specific West Indian connection. However, the first chapter is dedicated to the political and social scene in England at the start of the century, as it was this which defined the power base of the country and in turn influenced it's policies. Whilst this may seem at first sight to be a study of British rather than West Indian history, it is felt that without examining the social and commercial criteria of the home country, it is not possible to gain a full understanding of her colonial aspirations. The internal history of Puerto Rico herself, however, has been omitted as this is readily available in excellent works by a number of local historians.

The history of Europe during the eighteenth century was somewhat complex. Not only was the "old order" breaking down, but for the first time an industrial revolution was taking place which not only required a reassessment of traditional practices, but also brought about changes in the lives and living standards of the people themselves. Each nation had it's different ideas as to how it could best blend in the new technologies with the old commercial systems, and struggles for ascendancy gave rise to many wars and conflicts.

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In the eighteenth century, Europe saw the West Indies as having a dual role. On the one hand, they supplied tropical produce which she could not grow herself and on the other, they provided an area where wars could safely be conducted far from the homeland and any prizes gained could be used to obtain valuable trading concessions during the bargaining for the eventual peace. For this reason, unless a conquered territory had a considerable strategic value, as in the case of Gibraltar, it was the normal practice for a wartime gain to be handed back to the original owner when terms of peace were agreed.

Strategic value was not always the criterion, however. The French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique were of immense value to England, both as military bases and as suppliers of sugar, but as we progress through the century we shall see that although they were captured by Britain in almost every major conflict, they were invariably returned to France. Although this would seem illogical, the reasons are simple. Throughout the century, a coalition of West Indian planters and merchants, known variously as the Planter Lobby, the West India Interest, etc. wielded ever increasing political influence within the British Government. This power bloc would go to almost any lengths to ensure that British law and foreign policy protected their sugar trading monopolies and profits, and the national interest to them was a very secondary consideration. It was solely due to the political pressure exerted by this self-seeking coalition that sugar islands were relinquished after each subsequent peace treaty, giving the British planters a monopoly trade with England and until the American War of Independence, America.

There is no better example of this than the wars against France and Spain at the close of the 18th century. England had mounted attacks against Puerto Rico, St. Domingue, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Tobago, Trinidad, the Saintes, Marie Galante and Deseada. By the temporary peace of 1801, only Trinidad, Tobago, Martinique and St. Lucia were in British hands. Of these, the latter three were handed back to France, making Britain's sole gain Trinidad. For a final total gain of this small island, it has been

# INTRODUCTION

estimated that 120,000 men took part in the West Indies campaigns as a whole, of which 50,000 were killed or died of tropical diseases, whilst many thousands more were maimed.

It seems inconceivable now that at the time, so few questioned whether the value of these small islands was worth the huge outlay of men, money and human suffering.

This, then, is the story of a group of relatively small islands, thousands of miles from Europe,whose ownership was a frequent cause of war between what were at the time the most powerful nations in the world. It is a story of slavery, greed and ambition and traces the fortunes of these islands during their heydey, before they sank into the relative obscurity of the 19th century.

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# Chapter I

## British politics and society after 1700

Before commencing a study of the West Indian islands and the British and European influences which shaped their destinies, it is first essential to examine the political and social scene in England itself at the start of the eighteenth century, as it is these factors which shaped colonial and foreign policy throughout the decades which followed.

The situation in the country in 1700 had been largely influenced by significant events during the previous century. The first of these was the English Civil War, (1642-49) which was waged between the supporters of the monarchy and those of Parliament under Oliver Cromwell. The Parliamentarians won, thanks to the support of the army, and for eleven years Britain was essentially ruled by a military dictatorship. This fact led to a public distrust of a large standing army which was to continue long into the next century, and gave rise to the preference for hiring foreign mercenary troops to supplement the home army in wartime.

In 1660, however, the situation reversed and the monarchy was restored, with Charles II taking the throne. The restoration of the monarchy, though, did not bring peace. Charles had Catholic sympathies in a mainly Protestant country, and he was too willing to be influenced by the wishes and money of King Louis XIV of France for most peoples' tastes. It was a time of intrigues which abounded with rumours of Catholic and French plots to take over the country.

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One of the main sources of contention was over who was eventually to succeed Charles as king, and it was this question which gave rise to the formation of two distinct political parties who would between them rule the British Parliament long into the nineteenth century. Charles himself was firmly in favour of the succession passing to his brother James, the Roman Catholic Duke of York, but there were many in Parliament who opposed this and demanded that the next Protestant heir should take the throne. Parliament eventually coalesced into two distinct groups, those in favour of James, despite his religion, calling themselves "Tories" and those opposing him and championing the Protestant line, "Whigs".[1] The formation of these two parties gave rise to bitter election battles to decide who should control Parliament and between 1688 and 1714 there would be twelve general elections, such instabilility making it very difficult to form consistent policies.[2]

The Tories eventually won the day and when Charles died in 1685, James II took the throne. It was a far from popular decision, however, as apart from religious considerations, a Catholic King of England was always suspected of being too much under the influence of England's eternal enemy, France. James had somewhat surprisingly consented to the marriage of his young Protestant daughter, Mary, to Prince William of Orange, a staunch Protestant and arch enemy of France, and it was this that eventually brought about James' undoing.

William's Dutch territories were constantly under threat of French invasion, and to increase his military and political potential, he devised a bold plan. In November, 1688, he raised an army and sailed to England under the banner of freeing her from Catholicism and creating a Protestant state. As the majority of the English were already Protestant, William encountered little opposition; even one of James' other daughters, Anne, went to join him. James II fled to France and as his daughter Mary could claim some right to the

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1. Maurice Ashley, *England in the Seventeenth Century*, Penguin, London, 1958, p. 146.

2. Dorothy Marshall, *Eighteenth Century England*, Harlow, Longman House, 1993, p.61.

# CHAPTER I

throne, she and her husband William were proclaimed King and Queen on Feb. 6th. 1689. (The "Glorious Revolution").

William never really identified with England, spending much of his time abroad and using English armies to fight his French enemies. There remained in England a few who sympathized with James, and these came to be known as "Jacobites". In the minds of many, the existence of the Jacobites posed a threat for the future if the throne of England should again be in dispute. It was therefore decided that if William and Mary died without heirs, Mary's sister Anne should take the crown.

Mary did indeed die in 1694 without producing an heir and although William considered remarriage, this did not take place. There was growing concern in Parliament about the question of future royal succession and also William's use of the military for his own campaigns.

Finally, the Act of Settlement was passed in 1701 which decreed among other things that in future, no monarch could go to war without Parliament's approval and also, that in the event of King William and later Queen Anne producing no heir, the English throne was to pass to the Protestant Electress Sophia of Hanover (a granddaughter of the English King James I) or her heirs, thus ensuring a Protestant line and later establishing the House of Hanover in 1714.

This, then, was the situation at the start of the eighteenth century, and we should next consider the complex question of the division of influence in the country. The ultimate power, in practice as well as in theory, rested with the monarch, who had the right to make appointments to all of the high posts in Government, the military and the Church. This principal, known as patronage, was very important, and it continued down to a greater or lesser extent through all levels of society. At this time, influence opened all doors regardless of ability and the expression " It's not what you know, but who you know", was never more apt.

The degree of power available to those in high Ministerial office depended greatly on the abilities and personality of the monarch.

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A strong and able ruler would choose men of proven loyalty and ability who would ensure that his or her wishes were guided safely through Parliament, whereas a monarch with less ability would choose those who could be allowed to make their own decisions, whilst being trusted to look after the Royal interest. Thus, Ministers could either be servants, advisers, or even masters.

Although the monarch had the ultimate power, his wishes had to be concurred with by a majority of Parliament; he decided upon policy, but Parliament had to agree the funding for it. It was here where patronage could be used to great effect, as the more of his own supporters held Parliamentary posts, the easier it was for him to put his schemes into effect. One of the most delicate tasks of Ministers at the time was reconciling the wishes of the Crown with those of Parliament.

Obviously, then, the route to power and to the favours of the throne was by way of entering government. Although England has been hailed by many as a model of democracy, this was not quite the case in the 1700s. At the start of the century, the industrial revolution had barely begun and the vast majority of the population were based in agriculture. Outside London, there were few towns of any size and even many of these were constitutionally termed as villages. Government was split between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and only Peers of the Realm (Dukes, Earls etc.) could sit in the former. As these numbered less than two hundred at the start of the century and comprised most of the wealthiest families, most knew each other and banded together in their mutual interest. It was from this social class that the monarch selected the majority of his senior Ministers and other high offices. They in turn, on appointment, allocated less senior posts to their relatives and friends, who did likewise, extending patronage down to even the lowest levels.

Entry into the House of Commons was also subject greatly to patronage, influence, money and sometimes less wholesome practices. There were around five hundred members of the Commons representing England and Wales, these being allocated between the various counties in rural areas with some extra seats

in the larger towns. The members from the rural counties were invariably land owners, whilst in the towns there were also a number of the wealthier merchants and industrialists. In the Parliament of 1701 there were no fewer than 43 merchants and financiers and 18 members who represented other manufacturing and commercial interests.[3]

Women were excluded from voting, and the right to do so was restricted to male freeholders who had incomes of at least forty shillings.[4] Thus, there were many amongst the poor who had no vote at all and even those who did were often tenants of the local landowner, and had to vote as instructed or lose their homes. For certain seats, the number of eligible voters were in single figures, a tiny percentage of the total inhabitants. Thus, although the country was allegedly a democracy, the road to power was in reality controlled by the wealthy few. As in the case of the House of Lords, members of the Commons exercised patronage as rewards for those who had helped to elect them, and also served the interests of their social superiors who had financed and encouraged their campaigns. Thus, everybody owed everybody favours and members could seldom vote with their consciences or even on party lines, the interests of their benefactors being the sole consideration. This was facilitated by the fact that although two parties existed, they were not organized on the strict lines of the modern political party, but more based on areas of common belief. Even this was not constant, as by the early decades of the eighteenth century the Whigs, who had opposed the establishment, now favored control by the Crown and the aristocracy, whereas the Tories had reversed their creed of the "Divine Right of Kings" to favour taking control from the Establishment in favor of the landed gentry. Thus, it was not so important which party a Member of Parliament belonged, as to whom he owed his allegiance. This aspect will be of some importance later, when we

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3. Ibid. p. 17

4. J.H.Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, Penguin, London, 1987, p. 37.

consider the political power wielded by the West Indian planter groups.

Having seen how Government was formed, we should next consider briefly some of it's senior posts and their functions. There was a "Cabinet" of senior ministers but unlike today, they had no power to act independently, they simply reached a consensus of opinion and presented it to the King. Also, there was no official post of Prime Minister, this simply referred to the Cabinet's spokesman who presented the results of their deliberations to the Crown. It would not be until later in the century that the Cabinet was allowed to act independently on minor issues and the official post of Prime Minister introduced. There were a number of senior Ministerial posts, such as the Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, Lord Privy Seal and the Ministers of State. It was in the latter posts where the real power lay, making them much coveted by men of ambition, who could use the influence they conveyed to further their own interests and those of their patrons. It was through the Ministers of State that the Royal will was expressed. Their offices were more fluid and more personal than the other high appointments; they controlled negotiations with foreign powers, decided strategy in time of war and guided settlements when peace was made. They were in theory the mouthpiece of the King and as such were able link together normally separate departments in ways which no other Minister could.

Initially, there were two secretaries of State, one for the Northern Department and one for the Southern. This geographical split was cumbersome and ineffective and as the century progressed, each department tended to concentrate on specific issues regardless of location. It would not be until 1782 that the division into Home and Foreign affairs was adopted.

Another function of the Government was the administration of the military and again, patronage played it's part, with lucrative military supply contracts as the prizes. The army fell under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of War, who was responsible for recruitment, billeting, supply and the piloting through Parliament of the Army Estimates, the money required for maintaining it. As

stated previously, the country was still wary of a large army due to the spectre of the Civil War and there was often a balance to be struck between too large a force and the minimum requirements for the defence of the empire. Although the Secretary of War supplied the army, the planning and strategy of campaigns was the responsibility of the Secretaries of State and action in the field fell to the Commanders in Chief.

Money for supplying the Royal Navy was less grudgingly apportioned because unlike the army, which was held in low esteem, the navy inspired feelings of national pride and greatness, as in the song "Rule Britannia", which emerged in 1740. Even the navy, though, was governed by a cumbersome and inefficient administration. The Navy Secretary's Office arranged the movement of ships, the Board of the Admiralty had to ensure their fitness for service, and everyone had to work through the Navy Office, the Treasurer of the Navy and the Commissioners of the Royal Dockyards.

Having considered the highest echelons of society, we should now look briefly at the remainder of the population. Next in line to the peerage in social standing were the gentry, who although they had no claim to a title, were still wealthy and closely connected with the land. They were the country squires and landowners from which membership of the House of Commons was largely drawn. Rural England was divided administratively into parishes in which life was largely controlled by the local squire in his role of Justice of the Peace. He usually owned most of the land and controlled the lives of his tenants. He would generally meet with his fellow Justices every three months at Quarter Sessions, a court for dealing with more serious crimes, and would there discuss matters of mutual interest, such as which member of the wealthiest family in the county to support for Parliament, and what may be expected in return.

The next layer of society could best be described by the contemporary term the "Middling Sort". They comprised all those families whose income came from some non-manual occupation or profession, but whose lack of wealth, circumstances or attitude of mind precluded them from being ranked with the gentry. It

was these people who made up the solid backbone of the country and who controlled the day to day economy. The control of urban life was in their hands and they comprised a significant part of the electorate.

The last and by far the most numerous stratum of society was the poor, which included the artisans, the rural workers and the very poor. Life for these unfortunates was harsh indeed. For the rural worker, his conditions had varied little for countless years, although moves were afoot to terminate the age-old system of common lands (the Enclosure Acts) which actually took away his right to own a few animals and favoured the enclosure of fields, which could only be afforded by the wealthy. It was in the cities, though, where the poor suffered the most. There was virtually no rule of law, streets were open sewers and garbage dumps, and it was common for people to live ten to a room. Epidemics of smallpox and typhus were frequent and infant mortality was as high as 75%. Even so, people would move in increasing numbers from the country to the towns in the hope of finding the work provided by the emerging industrial revolution.

Before leaving this glimpse of life in the England of the 1700s we must consider one last aspect, that of trade and commerce. Although it is dealt with in more detail in later chapters, it is appropriate to consider the importance which the country attached to foreign trade as the means of increasing it's wealth and influence in the world.

Trade was divided into three separate areas, European, Eastern and colonial, and it was estimated that at the start of the century the European trade comprised 53% of total exports.[5] Four fifths of this trade was centred on London and did much to add to the wealth of that city but by 1721, Liverpool was constructing new port facilities and Bristol was sending more ships to take part in the African slave trade.[6]

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5. T.S.Ashton, *An Economic History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, 1955, p. 154.

6. Marshall, pp. 18-19.

# C H A P T E R I

Commerce was the one aspect which at the start of the century could unite all of the various factions in Britain, regardless of politics or religion. Experience had shown that wars of conquest in Europe or elsewhere for simple territorial gain were expensive, unpopular, and achieved little, whereas those which brought new markets or supplied products unavailable in the home country were often highly desirable. England had a growing manufacturing base which thanks to new technology placed her in the forefront in a number of fields, and she also had the beginnings of an empire to administer and profit from, particularly in the West Indies and the Northern Colonies of America. She felt that these advantages must be secured as far as possible from the competition of her European neighbours and to accomplish this, she set about introducing a wealth of legislation. For centuries, maritime trade had been fiercely contested between France, Holland, Spain and Portugal, and commencing in 1660, subsequent Acts of Parliament, known as the Navigation Acts or the Acts of Trade, spelt out how trade was to be conducted. Basically, products from the colonies could only be brought to England herself or to other colonies, and must be carried only in English or colonial ships. Certain products were "enumerated" and thereby subject to import or export duties to raise revenue for the country, and if foreign goods were to be imported, they must be heavily taxed. This policy was known as mercantilism, and gave rise to large and powerful organizations such as the South Sea Company and the East India Company, who were granted monopoly trading in large segments of the world.

It was these Navigation Acts and others designed to protect British colonial trading monopolies which gave so much power to the West Indian planters, and it is their use and abuse of this power which will appear again and again in subsequent chapters.

It is now time to leave England and look towards the Caribbean, where we shall again examine first the early days of developement before following the history of the West Indian territories through the eighteenth century.

# Chapter II

## The English in the Caribbean the Early Days

English colonization in the Caribbean originally emerged in the early 17th. century as a strategy for establishing footholds on the continental margins of Spanish America and conducting illegal trade with the Spanish colonies. During the 1620's Englishmen began to settle on the Leeward Islands of St. Kitts and Nevis and the Windward Island of Barbados, small but fertile isles which displayed immediate potential. They were relatively easily reached from Europe, but because of the prevailing winds, they could not easily be attacked from the Spanish colonies that lay to the West. By the mid 17th century, the islands were important colonies despite their small size, attracting substantial white settlement and becoming producers of tropical export crops, especially tobacco, cotton, indigo and ginger. However, their importance as an element in the emerging English colonial system became fully clear only after about 1650, when the islands' economies and societies were radically altered by the introduction of sugar and slavery, and when Jamaica was taken from Spain by Oliver Cromwell in 1655.

It was in the 1640s that Barbados began to emerge as the leading British West Indian colony, a status she was to enjoy for many years. There were a number of reasons for this and they are important in that they set the scene for life in the West Indies for the next 150 years. The first and possibly the most important was that the Dutch, who were having problems with their own sugar colonies, (Pernambuco

planters' revolt, 1645) began to encourage and subsidize sugar production by the Barbados planters, possibly hoping for a share of future transport by their merchant fleet. They were also willing to sell to the planters slaves previously intended for Brazil at low cost and generous credit. The next factor was an epidemic which killed many of Barbados' inhabitants, both rich and poor. This led to many land sales, where the richer planters bought up small lots and acquired larger and more productive estates. Thirdly, during the English Civil War (1642-49) many wealthy English families who supported the Royalist cause were exiled to Barbados, bringing with them new capital, enterprise and commercial and political connections. Lastly, when the Civil War ended, some 12,000 prisoners of war from Cromwell's campaigns in Ireland and Scotland were deported to the island.[1]

Thus, the scene seemed set for prosperity; Dutch sugar technology, large estates, money from England and a plentiful labour force. However, the tropics at the time were a harsh place for Europeans to live and by 1660, after disease, climate and conditions had taken their toll, additional sources of labor were needed. Initially, black slaves had formed only a small percentage of the workforce. The main replacements were sought from the poor of the English cities and " indentured labour". This was a system whereby a man would be brought from England on the promise to work for, say, five years for an employer, at the end of which he would be given a small parcel of land of his own. In practice, this was not as good as it seemed. If he was fortunate enough to survive the five years, land was becoming scarce, and even if he got his land, unless he had capital of his own he was unable to compete economically with the large estates and ended up selling back his land for little or nothing. It is not surprising that when the word spread that

1. Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves; The Rise of the Planter Class in the British West Indies. 1624-1713*, London, 1973, p.28

the West Indies was not the new Utopia, the supply of white labour rapidly diminished, eventually consisting only of British convicts sentenced to deportation. (It was alleged in later years that certain influential planters living in England bribed judges to award sentences of deportation for the smallest of offenses, just to augment the labour supply.)[2]

Therefore, if white labor was diminishing, there was only one alternative, that of black slaves. The demand for this human commodity was to give rise to the "Triangular Trade", whereby ships brought English manufactured goods to Africa, took cargoes of slaves from Africa to the West Indies, and brought sugar and molasses from the West Indies back to England. It was a very convenient system in that ships had a payload throughout their journey, and it continued to form a vital part of British commerce until slavery was finally abolished early in the 19th century. The volume of black slave imports was so great that from being a small minority in 1640, by the end of the century blacks outnumbered whites in Barbados by four to one.[3]

Another advantage of Barbados was it's gentle terrain and extraordinary fertility. It's dense population and intense cultivation led Sir Richard Dutton to describe it in 1681 as " like one great city adorned with gardens, and a most beautiful place".[4]

In this way, Barbados became the prototype of plantation society, producing sugar for the growing English and European markets, using black slaves as labour. Although the other West Indian islands were slower to develope, they eventually adopted the Barbadian example, as did the French on the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Domingue and later the Spanish on Cuba and Puerto Rico. Barbados long remained in the forefront of producers, and it was not until the 18th century that its supply was outstripped, first by that of the Leeward Islands,

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

then by Jamaica, and finally, from the 1760's by the French possession of St. Domingue and the Spanish island of Cuba.[5]

Meeting a growing demand for sugar and molasses, planters in the islands had doubled or even tripled their sugar production between 1660 and 1700. Unlike the Spanish Caribbean islands, which were relegated to the periphery of Spain's colonial economy during the 17th century, the Anglo-Caribbean colonies had developed specialized plantation economies and slave societies, and their trade stood at the core of a vigorous and expanding system of British colonial commerce.[6]

After Barbados, the Leeward Islands became the next major frontier for the British sugar-slave complex, with Antigua as the capital and core of the group. Although they had been settled early, the Leewards' development had been inhibited by native Carib hostility and foreign attacks for much of the seventeenth century. However, during the 1730's, they became the major source of British sugar, and through massive slave imports, were changed into highly specialized plantation economies, where small white populations dominated large African majorities.

There were other islands in the Lesser Antilles which belonged specifically to no nation, and were called the Neutral Islands. Of these, St. Vincent and Dominica were supposed to belong to the Carib inhabitants, but Governor Caylus of the French Windward Islands reported that the French had bought nearly half of Dominica from them. St. Vincent was the main settlement of the Caribs. The original stock of "Yellow Caribs" was about 400 and the "Black Caribs", descendants of the union of shipwrecked negroes and Indian women, about one thousand.[7]

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5. Anthony McFarlane, *The British in the Americas,* London, Longman, 1994, p. 133

6. Dunn, p.144

7. Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763,* London, 1963, pp.195-6

# C H A P T E R II

St Lucia and Tobago were neutral in that their title, disputed between England and France, had never been clearly settled. Yet, all four islands were frequented or inhabited by a number of English and French. The French outnumbered the English but did less than half the trade, which consisted of provisions and minor crops of cotton, coffee, cocoa, dyewoods and hardwood.

They did not produce sugar, as the status of the islands was too insecure for the large capital outlay required, but hardwood timber was important as it could be sold to the other islands for sugar boiling. The military value of the neutral islands was even greater. Tobago was to the windward of Barbados and so in French hands could threaten it's trade. Also, it's harbour was said to be safe from hurricanes. St. Vincent and Dominica were important to France because they assured communications between Martinique, Grenada and Guadaloupe. St. Lucia was vital to the French for the security of their Windward possessions and as a useful base for their privateers. The English did not want it, but did not want the French to own it. Needless to say, the planters in the established sugar islands strongly opposed sugar cultivation in the neutral islands because of the competition. In 1745, Vice Admiral Isaac Townshend appeared on the Leeward Islands station with a large force and proposed an expedition against St. Lucia. The planters from Barbados objected on the grounds that it was impossible to spare a man without great danger and the colony itself was in need of further support and an increased garrison of regular troops.[8] In 1748, Admiral Knowles proposed a further expedition against St. Lucia, but it came to nothing. The islands could not remain undisturbed indefinitely, however, and eventually, during the Seven Years War, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent and Tobago would all be conquered by Britain.

Thus, sugar became the mainstay of the British West Indian economy. Europeans of all social classes had acquired a taste for this new product which could not be grown at home and the

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8. Robinson to Townsend, September 14, 1745, ADM 1/305

resultant huge trade was to lead to fierce competition between the European nations, who would be prepared to resort to war if open commercial rivalry proved ineffective.

Maritime trade in the Caribbean had long been considered a dangerous business. The English West Indies were not a unified cluster and as such were not easily defended. The Leeward Islands, although fairly close, were part of a chain containing French and Dutch possessions. Barbados was separated from English territories by two French islands and Jamaica, lying between the Spanish islands of Cuba and Hispaniola, was a thousand miles from her nearest English neighbour. Such a scattered domain in the midst of a highly contested region would seem at best precarious and difficult to hold.

Initially, English aggression focused on Spain, who traditionally claimed all territory and rights to navigation in the Caribbean. However, once the Dutch, French and English had established their colonies, rivalry between these powers became a major cause of conflict in the region. Anglo-Dutch and Anglo-French wars were extremely destructive in the West Indies, where clashes between rival settlers and naval forces mingled with the depredations of buccaneers and pirates to create a persistent climate of violence and warfare during the latter part of the 17th century. The object of the battles was not to acquire new territory, but to destroy the enemy's sugar producing potential and if possible, carry off his slaves, thus securing a greater part of the market for one's own country.

From the 1680's buccaneers were rarely used by the Powers to fight their wars: their last appearance in a major attack was in the French assault on Cartagena de Indias in 1697. But their suppression did not guarantee the peaceful passage of merchant vessels through the Caribbean. Expelled from Jamaica, St. Domingue and the central Caribbean, the remnants of the buccaneers moved north to the Bahamas and created pirate bases from which they attacked the shipping of all nations. In the early 18th century, piracy reached it's peak, employing more than 5000 men, using ports on the North American mainland and ranging as far north as Newfoundland. The English Government took

concerted measures to close ports to pirate vessels and to hunt down and hang their crews, actions which greatly helped to reduce piracy by the middle of the 1720's.[9]

If a territory was captured during wartime, it was usually restored to it's original owner when the peace was made, having been used as a bargaining chip during the negotations. At the Treaty of Ryswick (1697) Spain formally ceded St. Domingue to the French. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) produced only one minor change in the West Indies, when the French ceded their half of St. Kitts to the English (although England gained large areas of Canada, plus Minorca and Gibraltar). There was then to be no further change in the British Caribbean map until the Treaty of Paris in 1763, when Britain acquired Dominica, St. Vincent, Tobago and Grenada from France. However, in addition to the spoils of conquest, England had acquired other small territories by inter-island migration, especially where poor planters, forced off the main islands by loss of their land, moved to look for better fortunes elsewhere. Such islands included Anguilla, Barbuda and Tortola in the Lesser Antilles and Eleuthera and New Providence in the Bahamas. Thus, although the territorial pattern of English colonies in the Caribbean looked precarious in 1650 and was frequently threatened by war, it was to prove surprisingly stable.[10]

Eventually, for all their individuality, the scattered islands started to coalesce into a larger British West Indian economy, modelled on the first successful sugar production in Barbados and bound to England and the North American colonies by the circuits of an increasingly sophisticated system of transatlantic and intercolonial trade.

The island of Jamaica followed its own peculiar path of development. It was by far the biggest of the English islands, with a land area 27 times that of Barbados and 12 times that of the

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9. McFarlane, p.129

10. Ibid.

# C H A P T E R II

Leeward Islands as a group. Initially peopled by soldiers who were turned into peasant proprietors by the island's military governor in the years after conquest in 1655, Jamaica's early agriculture was based on mixed farming which produced subsistence for settlers and provisions for the privateers who operated out of its ports. For a long time there were difficulties in cultivating the interior due to it's mountainous terrain, which became the province of "maroons", blacks who took refuge from slavery. In the long term, though, Jamaica developed the pattern previously laid down in the sugar islands. The effect on the island's social structure was one of large estates where the white population had declined and the numbers of slaves imported had risen dramatically. By 1689 there were about 40,000 slaves in a population of 50,000, so that slaves outnumbered whites by four to one.[11]

It became a highly commercialized and highly capitalized plantation economy based on sugar cultivation and by 1780, was producing 50,000 tons of sugar a year. It was at this time that it became Britain's main sugar producer, surpassing both Barbados and the Leewards, who had passed their peak due to exhaustion of the soil and other factors.[12]

The development of slave-based sugar plantations created a distinctive form of West Indian colonial society in which small groups of wealthy planters formed a white ruling class, or "plantocracy" who adopted an English style of local government which they used to rule their slaves and the rest of the population.This system of property and power concentrated in the hands of a planter elite spread sooner or later to all the British islands.

In their lifestyle, the rich planters copied the manners of the English gentry, whose clothing and social pretensions they tried to imitate. They built their houses in the country in the style of the English manors, unlike the landed classes of Spanish

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11. Ibid. P. 134

12. Ibid. P. 144

America, who preferred city life.They made little effort to adapt to the tropical conditions, or to identify with the territories from which they drew their fortunes. They did not adjust to local crops but preferred to import most of their supplies from England, Ireland or North America.

Having taken control and arranged their commercial empires to their satisfaction, one could be forgiven for thinking that the rich planters would be happy to sit back and enjoy their "tropical paradise", but this was not the case. Unlike the colonial elite of the North American colonies or of Spanish and Portuguese America, the British West Indian planters created the unique phenomenon of the absentee landlord. There were several reasons for this, not least of which was the fact that climate and tropical disease tended to reduce life expectancy. Another, doubtless more important to some, was that by making their fortune and employing managers to look after the running of their plantations, they could return to England to join the gentry whom they had previously sought to emulate. Also, instead of being a lone voice far away, they would be at the heart of the empire where they could use their money and influence to lobby the home Government to look after their interests and provide support and military protection. This system gave rise to a powerful Planter Lobby in British politics, as will be seen in later chapters. Even those who remained sent their children to school in England, thus adding to the dilution of the white population.

It would not be until the last decades of the 18th. century that the whites were to show more commitment to their island societies, by developing churches, schools and other public institutions.

# Chapter III

## Trade and Piracy

Conflicts between England, France and Spain would dominate commercial and political thinking throughout the eighteenth century and would immortalize some of the great military commanders. Among them the Duke of Marlborough, Frederick the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte and the Duke of Wellington on land, and Admirals Rodney and Nelson at sea.

Spain, originally the undisputed owner of the Caribbean, found her territories there at the end of the 17th century reduced to Trinidad, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Eastern two thirds of Hispaniola, St. Domingo.

Spain's decline in the Caribbean had opened the way for the expansionist aspirations of the English, French and Dutch and even as early as the 16th century, English thinking was that it was better to preserve the remnants of the Spanish empire than to let it fall into the hands of the real enemy, France.

The first of these conflicts was brought about at the end of the 17th century by the question of who should inherit the Spanish throne. Charles II of Spain ("Charles the Sufferer", allegedly half mad,) had for years been in failing health and as he had no obvious heir, the question of who should succeed him was the subject of many international schemes, aimed at creating favorable alliances in the future. The practice of intermarriage between the royal families of Europe meant that there were a number of possible candidates but all the schemes were beset by problems, either because the parties failed to agree over the spoils or by the untimely

death of the would-be heir, as in the case of Prince Joseph Ferdinand of Bavaria in 1699.

When Charles II finally died in November, 1700, he declared in his will that his sole heir should be Phillip of Anjou, loosely related to him and the Grandson of Louis XIV of France. The spectre of a Frenchman as King of Spain, with the new power bloc it would create, was quite unacceptable to the rest of Europe as it would give France control of the Spanish Netherlands (now Belgium), part of Italy, the Mediterranean and an uncomfortably large portion of the West Indies.

Therefore, in 1701, the Duke of Marlborough signed on behalf of England a Treaty of Grand Alliance. This treaty bound those countries who were opposed to a Franco-Spanish alliance to offer terms to France and Spain and to declare war on them if the terms were not accepted. These terms were basically that although Phillip of Anjou could take the throne, the monarchies of France and Spain could never be united. Also, Austria should be given the Spanish Netherlands (Belgium) and Spanish territories in Italy. Certain trading privileges should also be given to English and Dutch merchants.

Louis XIV of France rejected the terms of agreement, and the fact that he had supported the exiled James II and encouraged the exclusion of British commerce from the Mediterranean, plus the fact that Spain had given South American trading monopolies to a French company in 1701, helped to anger British feelings. Despite the promise under the Grand Alliance to go to war, however, the English Parliament was at first reluctant to do so as they still harboured resentment at William's expensive wars, the last of which had only ended in 1697 at a cost to the nation of £40,000,000.[1]

However, William died on March 9th, 1702, paving the way for Queen Anne. Now that an "English" queen was on the throne,

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1. Maurice Ashley, *England in the Seventeenth Century (1603-1714)*, Penguin, 1958, p.185

# C H A P T E R III

feeling quickly reversed and war against France and Spain was declared two months later on May 4th..

The declaration of war quickly affected the West Indies. In 1702, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty recommended that the fleet "do first attempt the French settlements and their plantations in their Windward Islands.... then, attempt any Spanish towns on the continent (of America)".[2] Also, by an order dated Jan 16th. 1703 they were instructed to "attack the French Cariby Islands viz. Martinico and Guadaloupe, and endeavour the *entire destruction* of their plantations and settlements, bringing the inhabitants away to England".[3]

After that expedition, Commodore Sir Howenden Walker's Journal relates "... and thus we left Guadaloupe..It had never before suffered so much by any attempt of the English as at this time, all their guns being either carried off, sunk or burst, their fortifications utterly demolished and a great part of their plantations destroyed."[4] Walker then stated that the Creoles (West Indian planters in this case) " did not want to keep possession of Guadaloupe, as it would reduce the price of sugar."[5]

The war dragged on for 11 years until the combatants, weary of fighting and divided internally, agreed to a cessation of hostilities under the Treaty of Utrecht in April, 1713. This treaty ended the aggressive policies of France which had began during Louis XIVs' reign but as Phillip of Anjou had become King of Spain, having renounced his eventual rights to the French throne, the two countries had become more closely connected.

Under the treaty, Britain received Gibraltar and Minorca, giving her bases from which to protect her Mediterranean commerce. As a result of pressure from the planters, she also demanded and was

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2. C.S.P. Col. 1702-3, no. 170
3. Ibid. no. 192
4. Ibid. no. 737
5. Ibid.

given the French half of the island of St Kitts. The planters had in 1710 pointed out that "the division of the island between England and France was an opportunity for illicit trade and a source of insecurity which discouraged settlers and investors."[6]

Also, the "Asiento" monopoly, formerly enjoyed by France, was transferred to Britain and assigned by Queen Anne to the South Sea Company. By accepting a French king in the Spanish throne, it was impossible for England to exclude France from all direct or indirect trade with the Spanish colonies or to induce her to forego all special privileges in Spain. As a result England and Holland claimed certain securities for their commerce. They meant by "security" the possession of some towns in Spanish America.[7] These towns would have been advanced posts for illicit trade. England already had such posts in Jamaica and Barbados, as had Holland in Curacao and St. Eustatius. Strongholds suitably placed on the mainland would have made smuggling easier still and in case of war they might be useful as starting points for expeditions of conquest. As expected, France and Spain resisted such a concession.[8]

The Asiento basically gave the British South Sea Company a monopoly in transporting slaves to Spanish America. As such it was coveted as it also gave opportunity for taking in other merchandise, legal or otherwise. This valuable concession was to be granted to England for thirty years, thus making her the only country involved in the war to obtain any special privilege in Spanish American trade beyond what was common to all nations. She also obtained a further advantage, that of sending a ship of 500 tons every year to the "fair" of Portobello.[9] It was evident that the Asiento and the Annual Ship would lead to smuggling. In addition, the South Sea Company tried to obtain in 1716 a further

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6. C.S.P. Col. 1710-11, nos.336, 520, 810
7. Pares, *War and Trade*, p.9
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. p.11

facility for clandestine introduction of goods into the Spanish colonies. Philip V promised "that no license, nor any permission at all, should at any time be given either to the French, or to any nation whatever, to sail to, traffic in, or introduce goods, into the dominions subject to the Crown of Spain in America, except the Asiento for introducing negroes, which was at present granted to England, but might be transferred to another nation after the expiration of the contract".[10]

The Treaty of Utrecht was hardly signed when complaints of Spanish "depredations" began to come from the West Indies. The first is dated from Bermuda in January 1714; a Spanish coastguard ship, or Guarda-costa, had seized some English vessels for carrying goods reputed to be the produce of the Spanish colonies.[11] This kind of incident had been ocurring for a long time, since the days of the buccaneers who had roamed the Caribbean preying on Spanish ships and their cargoes of gold and silver. As a result the Spanish authorities had given "letters of marquee" to certain sea captains authorizing them to intercept any ship which might be suspected of piracy. Some of these holders of letters of marquee exceeded their authority, intercepting both illegal and legal ships, confiscating their cargoes and getting rich by it. One such example was the decree of July 22, 1713 by the King Philip V of Spain to the corsair Miguel Hernandez, a Puertorican mulatto and a former shoemaker, recognizing him as "Captain of Sea and War" in recognition for his services and his valor during the English and Dutch raids on Puerto Rico. It was he who would later take part in a raid against English settlers on Crab Island (Vieques) in 1718. He became so rich in his enterprises that he was able to loan money to the Government. His success and his wealth had made him many enemies and they accused him of several derelicts including the abuse of his letter of marquee. Eventually he left his wealth to the Church.

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10. Ibid. p.12
11. C.S.P. Col. 1712-14, no. 544; January 4, 1714, C.O. 37/9, no. 27

# C H A P T E R III

Examples of such "depredations" were soon multiplied. The Governor of Jamaica, Lord Archibald Hamilton, was induced to allow reprisals from the English toward some possessors of Spanish letters of marquee. This gave colour to the Spanish counter complaints of English piracies. Hamilton was recalled from his post in 1716 in order to placate Spanish complaints in the interest of the friendship between the two nations.[12]

However, even those who criticized Hamilton's policy of retaliation continued to complain of the Spanish captures, which began to undermine the relations of England and Spain. The result in the Caribbean was a situation which subjected trade to some of the expenses normally incurred only in wartime. English warships had to cruise the Windward Passage to protect trading ships, and even to convoy the merchant fleets clear of the islands, just as in time of war.[13]

The seizures continued, there being 10 in 1731, 1 in 1732, 6 in 1733, 1 in 1734, 9 in 1735, none in 1736, and 11 in 1737.[14]

The Dutch were also subject to these seizures, which made them sympathetic to British complaints. French ships too were searched, but they reluctantly accepted this as a price of reducing Dutch and English competition. Despite this, the French did their share of smuggling to the Spanish West Indies as a means of disposing of their molasses, which could not be used for rum production for France, as this would have competed with home-produced Brandy.

One benefit to all nations of smuggling into Spanish territory was that the goods were either exchanged for mules, essential for sugar processing or better still, cash. The legal trading systems within the Caribbean and also to North America were almost

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12. C.S.P. Col. 1716-1717, no. 158, 203; 1717-18, no. 350
13. Petition of the Kingston Merchants to Rear-Admiral Stewart, May 28, 1730, ADM 1/231
14. *Gentlemens' Magazine*, March 1738, Vol. VIII, p. 163

completely based on exchange of goods or letters of credit, so there was always a chronic shortage of actual coin.

The tradition of piracy which had reigned for centuries was still prevailing, although the European nations had tried to suppress it. Unemployment among privateers and reductions in naval strength caused almost world-wide outbreaks of piracy after the War of the Spanish Succession. The Spanish government was less able to abolish the Guardacostas, for the revival of Spain was slow under Philip V and the control of colonial governors was difficult. Moreover, the Court of Spain had no desire to suppress the Guarda-costas altogether.[15] In order to appease English complaints, Spain gave her a share of her colonial trade but to no avail. The smuggling continued, the authorized traders taking part in it along with the others.

The South Sea Co. was the greatest smuggler of all, carrying out an unlawful trade under cover of the lawful. English goods appear to have been smuggled briskly from Jamaica to all parts of the Caribbean. Private traders received the protection of the English men-of-war, who convoyed the interlopers upon their business and sometimes took a hand for themselves in the slave trade. The navy had a special opportunity for it, since the Admiralty often sent out warships to the West Indies by way of the West Coast of Africa, where the officers took in slaves of their own for later sale.[16] George II promised in 1732 that he would put an end to this state of affairs, but it does not seemed to have improved.[17]

It would have been impossible to keep up a purely preventive system of defence against smuggling along the whole shoreline of the Caribbean. The centres of population were too far apart for

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15. Pares, p.18
16. C.S.P. Col. 1717-18, nos.566, 68iii
17. ADD MSS 38373, ff.130-1

that. The Guarda-costas on the other hand, kept preying upon the lawful as well as the illicit commerce of the English colonies, especially upon that of Jamaica, and they were aided in this by the natural elements and the limitations of navigational techniques.

Sailing a ship from England to the Caribbean presented some problems due to the prevailing winds. In the Northern latitudes of Europe, the winds blow for most of the year from the west, ie. against the direction of travel. Therefore it was not feasible to sail in a direct line or to head for the North American coast then follow that friendly shore southwards. However, in the tropical latitudes of the Antilles the prevailing wind is from the east. Also, there was no accurate way of measuring longitude until the 1790s, when the chronometer was introduced. Consequently it became the practice for ships leaving England to travel to the southwest, having waited for a favourable wind, even if they were not first calling at Africa, until they reached the approximate latitudes of the West Indies, then head due west with the wind behind them. Unfortunately, this course took ships bound for Jamaica near to the southern coasts of Puerto Rico and Spanish St. Domingo. There, they could be captured by the Puerto Rican privateers and accused of hovering on the coast for illicit purposes.

The run back to England was even more dangerous because they had two routes from which to choose if they were to head north to catch the favorable westerly winds. They could go through the Windward Passage between Cuba and French St. Domingue, or take the Gulf Passage round the west end of Cuba, past Havana, and through the Gulf of Florida. Either way they must pass very near some Spanish coast, for the Windward Passage is not very wide, and in order to avoid getting into the Bight of Leogane, between the two western prongs of St. Domingue, they had to keep to the Cuban side of the strait. Doing this, they must pass the privateering port of Santiago de Cuba. If they went through the Gulf, they had to sail along three quarters of Cuba. It might appear that the Gulf course was the less attractive, and that nobody would take it except for the excuse to smuggle near Havana. However, it was very often the most convenient if not the only possible one.

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The winds and currents on the south side of Jamaica were sometimes so strong that the homeward ships were a week or more rounding the eastern point of the island. If they took the Gulf route, the winds favoured them until they had rounded the west end of Cuba, and then, although there were often calms off Havana, they got another favourable wind and current to carry them eastward through the Florida Channel.

The ships of the other sugar colonies were not in so much danger as those from Jamaica, but even they had to pass through the islands for some distance and might meet a Puerto Rican privateer. Perhaps the shipping from North America ran more risk than any other, for it both came and went through the Windward Passage to Jamaica, or passed Puerto Rico on the way to the other islands.

It was mainly this seizing of innocent trading ships which enraged national feeling and would eventually lead to war.

# Chapter IV

## Sugar and the Planters

The single most important cargo of ships leaving the West Indies was, of course, sugar and it's by-products. The demand for sugar on the continent of Europe had been largely satisfied from England until near the end of the 17th century and of all the sugar imported into England the planters estimated in 1675 that only half was consumed there, the remainder being exported.[1] Refined sugar as well as raw was exported, particularly to the "East Country", that is the Baltic ports, often in exchange for other commodities. A decline in the export of refined sugar, however, set in after the increase of import duties on sugar from the colonies in 1685 under James II.[2] An examination of reports up to 1765 reveals that English sugar and other colonial products were widely sold in Europe but in amounts that, for sugar at least, steadily declined.[3] This was usually claimed to be due to competition from the French and Dutch, the sugar distributed by the Dutch often being of French origin.

The decline of the sugar trade from England to the continent was most marked in the decade 1713-1723. To ascertain the reasons for this, a number of merchants conversant with West Indian and

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1. Petition to the King from Barbadoes, April 16, 1675. C.0.31/2, pp. 179,180.
2. Frank Wesley Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies*, 1700-1763, Yale U Press, 1967, p. 1573.
3. Ibid, p. 158

# C H A P T E R IV

European trade were summoned before the Board of Trade and questioned. Some submitted written reports on the condition of the trade, which may be summarized as containing first, reasons for the loss of the European market, and second, recommendations for its recovery.

It was generally admitted by all that England had lost her standing in the foreign sugar markets. Among the several causes for this state of affairs, the most important was the enormous increase in the consumption of sugar at home. A London merchant named Drummond, remarked that "the consumption of sugar in England by the great use of tea and coffy is very much increased, of late, especially by the cheapness of Tea which will alwise enlarge the consumption".[4] There was also general agreement that England could not compete on the continent with Dutch, French and Portuguese suppliers. In fact, it has been questioned whether the British West Indies were ever, after the second decade of the 18th cent. prepared adequately to supply even the English market. Drummond, the London merchant, continued his testimony by remarking that the French outdid any other competitors because they sold their sugar immediately at auctions, instead of the English practice of waiting for an advantageous market and the spring consumption.[5]

Apart from this increase in home consumption it is generally agreed that the failure of British West Indian Sugar to compete on the European market was due to high duties and restrictive trading practices. The Navigation Acts of 1660, 1663, 1673 and 1696 decreed that sugar could only be exported to England or English colonies, and only in English or colonial ships. Sugar bound for Europe must first come to England, then be subject to both import and re-export duties. This pushed up the retail price, as did high insurance charges due to insufficient naval protection

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4. Memorial to the Board of Trade, June 16, 1724, C.O. 388/24, R 142
5. Ibid.

of cargoes from the guardacostas. These laws created a monopoly for English and colonial shipping and merchants but like any monopoly, it did nothing to reduce prices. At the same time, the powerful planter lobby was limiting supply to Britain to keep prices higher.

On the other hand, the chief articles of export from the northern colonies, consisting of building materials, provisions and live stock, were in times of peace under few restrictions. Their import into England was discouraged in the interest of British agriculture, but as far as England was concerned, these commodities could be sold wherever markets existed, if they travelled in British or colonial ships and were not exchanged for foreign sugar.

The years prior to 1733 saw a great rise in the commerce between British North America and the foreign West Indies. The period is also characterized by much uncertainty about the legality or illegality of this trade. In time of peace it does not seem to have occasioned serious alarm, but in wartime its existence was brought to the government's notice and measures were taken to suppress it.

To protect their interests, the planter lobby had previously pressured Parliament to increase penalties for illegal importation and also to decree that any sugar not proven to be direct from the British islands be deemed to be "foreign" and as such, liable to heavy duties.[6] This angered the North American merchants, as technically, the Navigation Acts permitted colonial vessels to bring produce to England.

The legislatures on the islands, too, were passing laws to try to reduce smuggling, whether outwards to escape duties, or inwards as foreign sugar for resale.[7] In spite of these laws, French sugar was still smuggled into the English colonies and later imported into England, paying only the lower colonial rate of duty.

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6. C.S.P. COL. 1720-1 nos. 44, 197.
7. C.S.P. COL. 1717-8, no. 495

# C H A P T E R IV

In 1733, the British Parliament passed the Molasses Act. This decree dictated that the North American colonies, when taking goods to the British West Indies, should receive payment in sugar, molasses and rum rather than in cash. This arrangement was very good for the planters, but not for the North Americans. The planters inflated the price of sugar, so they could effectively buy their supplies and provisions at a low price. The North Americans on the other hand were forced to accept highly priced sugar products which they could obtain more cheaply at foreign ports had the law allowed them to do so. As can be expected, the North American traders quickly decided to take their wares to foreign ports where they could illegally obtain a better rate of exchange. During the Molasses Act controversy, some political pamphlets charged the planters with wanting to stop the North Americans from smuggling so that they could do so themselves.

Not only did the North Americans illegally buy foreign sugar for their own use, they actually brought some of it to England, alleging that it was from British islands and even forging documents to confirm this. Thus, they avoided paying the "Plantation Duties" of 1674 on export from the islands, and were in direct opposition with the English producers

Between 1750 and 1756 the island legilatures would pass a series of laws for supplementing the Molasses Acts. Some amounted only to a declaration that whosoever imported French Sugars into the English islands was an enemy of his country and unworthy to be a member of civil society. Others obliged the masters of ships loaded for England to prove the English origin of their cargoes by furnishing the customs officers with certificates from the producers.[8]

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8. Antigua Assembly Minutes, Nov. 15. 1750, Courthouse, St. Johns; St. Kitts Assembly Minutes, May 18 and June 11, 1752; Montserrat Assembly Minutes, Feb 22, 1755, C.O. 177/8.

# C H A P T E R IV

The Board of Trade had sent out in 1751 a circular ordering the West Indian Governors to forbid the emigration of English planters to foreign sugar colonies and the introduction of foreign sugars into their own.[9] On the strength of this, Jamaica prohibited such imports and even recommended the death penalty for infringement in certain cases, although the Board of Trade had traditionally been against such extreme policy.[10]

As the instruction of 1751 in effect contravened the Molasses Act, which allowed foreign imports on payment of heavy duties, it was thought to be improper, and the Board persuaded George III not to re-enact it in 1761.

The Planters felt that the Molasses Act was a victory on two counts, not only would they get cheaper supplies, but diversion of more sugar to the American market would reduce the amount available to England, and so push up prices.[11]

There was another sensitive area in the planter's interest, and that was the commercial equilibrium between the northern and tropical colonies in America. As long as the West India islands could consume all the provisions and lumber of the Northern colonies, the economic ambitions of the latter were more or less satisfied, and the internal balance of the Empire was maintained. As will be seen later, the attempts of Britain to restrict North American trade to the empire and to suppress smuggling to the foreign West Indies was to have far reaching consequences, finally resulting in the American War of Independance.

After the Treaty of Utrecht, the productive power of the northern colonies had begun to outgrow the consuming capacity of the English sugar islands, and there seemed to be two ways to

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9. Circular of June 3rd. 1751, C.O. 138/19, pp.360-1
10. C.S.P. COL. 1717-18, no. 611 ; 1719-20, no. 201.
11. John Ashley, "The Sugar Trade and the Encumbrances Thereon Laid Open By a Barbados Planter", C.O. 28/40

preserve the balance; either to permit the export of North American provisions to the foreign West Indies, or to acquire new West India territories. The West Indian Interest opposed both these measures. Cheap North American supplies would make the foreign sugar producers even more competetive and in the other respect, if England acquired some of these foreign sugar islands there would be more sugar available to the British empire, thus decreasing the planters' profits. Increasing the North Americans' markets would allow them more scope in where to trade, selling their produce to the highest bidder. Also, more territory gave potential for the smaller planter and the poor whites to emigrate and it was upon these whites that the planters relied for local defense and maintaining a balance with the black population.

There were three purposes for which new acquisitions of territory might be desired: trade, colonization, and protection. The last had very little importance; hardly any conquests of a purely strategic value were suggested. The nearest thing was the proposal to take Puerto Rico because it could be used for intercepting the Spanish trade outward bound.[12] The people of Jamaica would also have been glad of the capture of Santiago de Cuba, as a place which commanded their homeward trade through the Windward Passage.[13] Both of these places were notorious nests of Guarda Costas, which was an additional reason for at least destroying them.

Martin Bladen was a man of some influence at this time, being a member of both Parliament and the Board of Trade. As such, he was among the first to be consulted by Ministers and their committees when war plans were to be made. He also received an annuity from the legislature of Nevis, presumably to look after their interests. When giving his

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12. John Hart to Lord Townshend, May 8, 1729, ADD MSS 32694,ff.37-38.
13. Trelawney to Wager, August 8, 1730, Vernon-Wager MSS.

arguments against attacking Puerto Rico, he said "We have more land already than we can people, more sugar and tobacco than we can dispose of to advantage."[14]

Another man of influence was James Knight, who had been one of the hotheads crying for reprisals against Spain in the early 1730s, and who later helped to place before Parliament evidence of their "depredations." He stated that the advantages of the conquest of Havana "will not compensate the damages our sugar islands will sustain thereby, as they will in such case be deserted and become easy prey to the negroes, if not to the French and the Spaniards, for if the middling and inferior sort of people remove, as they undoubtedly will even from Jamaica, the rich planters who are not many in number will not themselves be able to retain the possession". [15]

The Planters' Lobby were not against new conquests of all descriptions; they were quite happy to support any plan which did not result in a new plantation colony, but which would provide a new market for their products. At the same time, they used their power to try to reserve a high degree of naval strength for the protection of their islands and trade, sometimes at the expense of other areas of the empire.[16]

It is of interest at this point to consider once again the West Indian Planters' Lobby. The character of their society was in some respects, very similiar to that of Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. Their trade was not competitive with that of the mother country; they had a staple product, sugar, and their cultivation was carried on by slave labour. But there were two principal differences between the West Indian islands and North America's southern colonies. In the West Indian islands there was greater

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14. Bladen to Harrington, June 12th 1739. ADD.MSS 32694, f.21
15. Knight to Duke of Newcastle, Dec.3rd. 1739, ADD.MSS 2267 f.32
16. Pares, *War and Trade,* pp.84-85

disproportion between the negro and the white populations, and amongst the proprietors of the plantations absenteeism was far more frequent. These differences made the protection given by England essential to the islands, as preventing not only foreign aggression, but also rebellion at home.

As the century progressed, the planters and merchants in England joined with a third group, the colonial agents who represented their interests. A permanent organization of these three groups does not appear to have taken place until sometime in the middle of the 18th century. Their meetings would normally take place in "coffee houses", and they became known as the Planters Club. By 1760, the first definite trace of another West India Interest organization appears. This was known as the Society of West India Merchants. From 1769 onwards there have been preserved the minutes of its meetings. This new organization shows a definite advance towards the fusion of interests that resulted in the formation of the West India Committee. The merchants acted in business and private affairs as the representatives of the planters. The Society of West India Merchants acted as executive of the whole West India Interest. The meetings dealt with matters of trade, protection, printing material and aid to victims of hurricanes or fires.

The West India Committee appeared in it's final form during the last 18 years of the century, but it had matured it's way into politics long before. It's purpose was to ensure that the interests of the colonies should not be violated by the home government through lack of information.[17]

In England, no one dared to challenge King Sugar. The planters' proverbial wealth was not something that people merely heard of in the far off Caribbean, the absentee sugar planter was a familiar figure in 18th century English society.

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17. Lillian Penson, "The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century", *British Historical Review*. Vol XXXVI, 1921, pp.373-392.

# C H A P T E R IV

The absentees banded together, bought seats in Parliament, in the fashion of the day, and constituted the most powerful lobby of the century. In 1764 the agent for Massachussets in England reported that there were fifty or sixty West Indians in Parliament who could turn the balance any side they pleased. They counted among their group persons like Codrington of the Leeward Islands, who gave his valuable library to All Souls College, Oxford; Warner, also of the Leeward Islands, the ancestor of the acknowledged authority on English cricket; the Longs of Jamaica; the Lascelles of Barbados, who married into the Royal Family. But the prince of absentees was William Beckford of Jamaica, whose wealth was symbolized by his imposing country seat, Fonthill Splendens, which he built in Wiltshire. Beckford was the grandson of Peter Beckford, who, at his death in 1710, was the richest man in Europe. William Beckford and three brothers had seats in Parliament. He defended absenteeism on the grounds that "the climate of our sugar colonies is so inconvenient for an English constitution, that no man will choose to live there, much less will any man choose to settle there without the hopes at least of supporting his family in a more handsome manner, or saving more money, than he can do by any business he can expect in England, or in our plantations upon the continent of America."[18]

These, then, were the rich and powerful men who exercised such control over not only their business empires, but also the policies and destiny of their country. We shall see examples of their influence time and again in subsequent chapters.

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18. Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro; The History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969*, London, 1983, p. 132

# Chapter V

## The Art of War in the West Indies

A long standing problem for the British in wartime was posed by the Dutch and Danish Caribbean islands. Even at the start of the century, North American merchants were quite prepared to circumvent the restrictions of the Navigation Acts and trade with foreign islands, where they could often obtain better prices. A favoured system of doing this was by using the Dutch and Danish islands of Curacao, St. Thomas and later St. Eustatius as entrepots for exchange of goods. This gave rise to fears that the British islands would be starved of provisions and Peter Beckford, Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, wrote in 1702 that he feared "New England would send most of its provisions to Curacao, leaving Jamaica disfurnished".[1] He even hoped Jamaica might be permitted to continue its trade with Spanish America by way of Curacao for mules and coin.[2]

The British planters protested against this breach of the Navigation Acts and the fact that the Northern Colonies were assisting their French and Dutch rivals, and demanded that legislative action be taken to protect their interests. Even such laws as the Molasses Act, described previously, failed to turn the ba-

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1. Peter Beckford, Lieut-Gov. of Jamaica to the Board of Trade, July 20, 1702. C.O. 137/5, G.25
2. Ibid.

lance of trade in the British planters' favour, so more drastic action had to be considered.

When it became clear that Britain could not compete on the open market with foreign sugar producers and slave transporters she was faced with two alternatives. Either she could sit back and see her trade eroded or resort to that well-tried remedy, war. It was not to be a European war which spread to the colonies, but one rooted in competition over American resources. Grounds for war already existed on both sides. Spain's grievances included British encroachments on her Central American coasts, the log cutting settlements in Honduras, and the new colony of Georgia created in 1733 on the border of Spanish Florida. Britain's main complaint was the seizure of her ships in the Indies by Spain, and it was one such incident which sparked the commencement of hostilities. This took place in the Caribbean in 1738 when Guarda-costas boarded and searched a British vessel and in the ensuing confrontation, allegedly cut off the ear of the Master, a Captain Jenkins. This so outraged British popular feeling that Parliament, bowing to the pressure of the West Indian Planter Lobby to resort to battle to protect their fortunes, was able to declare the "War of Jenkins Ear" against Spain in 1739. Riding on a wave of anti-Spanish feeling, there were grand plans to reduce the Spanish empire by seizing her important bases on the American continent and inciting her subjects to rebellion so that they might taste and enjoy British liberty.

One of the few people in England who seriously doubted the value of the conflict was the Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, but owing to the war frenzy prevalent in the country, his opinion carried little weight.

There were many reasons for this popular insistence on the American war. It was in the West Indies that the Guardacostas had committed the offences which had provoked the war, and it was there that Spain should receive the punishment for her transgressions. There too, Spain was most vulnerable. Long experience had shown that little was to be expected from attacks upon her coasts and seaports in Europe, and that, on the other

hand, it was thought that even her greatest strongholds in America could be reduced by quite small expeditions. Drake and Morgan had attacked the coasts and sacked cities in previous centuries, so why not now? But the Spain of Philip V was quite different from the 17th century Spain of the Hapsburgs, which had been weak and poor. The English politicians and journalists did not understand Spain's new strength and believed that the Spanish empire was still in a chaotic and defenseless state. As one of the government's Ministers, Carteret, said to the Swedish Minister: "What is the good of taking ships? We shall take from Spain some countries in America, and we shall keep them in spite of the whole world".[3] Parliament addressed the King, asking him not to make peace until Spain would renounce the right of searching English ships in their voyages to and from the English dominions.[4]

Public opinion was voiced in the press, leading articles and anonymous letters all echoed the cry of "Take and Hold". Very few people, outside the circle of those who were responsible for directing expeditions, doubted the English ability to execute any fantastic scheme. The Government, however, also had to consider the reactions of foreign governments, who might dislike the upset of the Treaty of Utrecht's "equilibrium" by the substitution of England for Spain as the ruler of Central America. The fear of foreign repercussions had some influence on the choice of objectives.[5]

Another question in this respect was that of Neutral Rights. One way to reduce Spain to submission was the capture of her treasure fleets. These often contained goods which allegedly belonged to France and although international law stated that foreign goods in an enemy's vessel was a legitimate prize, Britain had no wish prior to 1744 to give France cause for complaint or an

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3. Carteret's speeches in *Parliamentary History,* XI, 17, 723, 835.
4. Cobbet's *Parliamentary History,* XI, 213-45.
5. Pares, *War and Trade,* p. 68

excuse for joining the war. Therefore, tactics had to be carefully considered.

As a result, a new policy was devised, that of promoting internal rebellion in Spanish America. The difficulties of this policy were underrated. Scraps of travellers' hearsay were collected and detailed to prove the existence of discontent, which according to them fell into three categories. All the Spaniards of America, except the officials, were supposed to groan under misgovernment, arbitrary taxation, and the crippling system of trade monopoly. The English thought that the French origin of the King of Spain rendered him unpopular among his subjects. Also, the local creoles and the Spaniards were supposed to dislike each other, and the creoles were ready to discard their Spanish allegiance in order to expel them. Finally, the English counted on the Indians' hatred of the Spanish in general. The advantages which the people of the Spanish colonies would gain by accepting independence or an English government could be put before them in a proclamation.

What was to be offered? Upon certain points there was universal agreement. The civil liberties and estates of the Spaniards must be safeguarded. Complete religious toleration would be offered to the inhabitants of conquered colonies. Some writers thought that the Spanish Americans could wish for nothing better than to share the rights of Englishmen. The wisest course of action, they reckoned, was to leave the colonists to make their own institutions, offering them a defensive alliance and an army and fleet strong enough for their protection. This was especially easy to promise in the Pacific colonies, for the Spanish fleets were reluctant to pass Cape Horn, and the difficulty of transporting an effective army from Spain to Peru, or overseas from one part of the Spanish dominions to another whilst being preyed upon by English squadrons, posed considerable difficulties to Spain. [6]

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6. J. Morris to Wager, May 1742, Vernon-Wager MSS.

# C H A P T E R V

After the revolutions, the question of trade with these colonies was a more important and more difficult question, and the suggestions more various. All agreed, however, that it was essential for England to use her advantages to keep the trade for herself, although of course Spanish merchants should be given some concessions.[7] Like many attempts at destabilization in the world before and since, these schemes were to prove of little effect.

The war with Spain was still in progress in 1744 when France, embroiled in another conflict, the War of the Austrian Succession, also declared war on England. This opened the way for England to legitimately attack the French West Indian sugar islands, which posed even more of a threat to the British sugar trade than the Spanish territories had done. Planters on both sides disliked the acquisition of fresh sugar-producing territory; they feared that increased production would lower prices within their protected markets. Each side hoped not to acquire and exploit the enemy's colonies but to destroy and depopulate them; to burn the canes, to wreck the machinery, and above all, to carry off slaves, who were the most necessary, and most mobile part of the planter's capital. Failing the destruction of the enemy's colonies, the next best thing was to cut off their trade, starve them of provisions and slaves, and prevent them from selling their sugar.[8]

At this point we should consider the strategy for conducting a war in the West Indies. The planters were always concerned with their safety and that of their possessions and were adamant that the responsibility for this task lay with the home Government. Throughout the 18th century the main topic of discussion in the various Island Assemblies was how to persuade Parliament to send more men and more ships to the West Indies, regardless of more important happenings in other parts of the empire. This was also one of the major preoccupations of the Planter Lobby in London.

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7. Unsigned paper dated June 6, 1741, Vernon-Wager MSS.
8. J. H. Parry, *A Short History of the West Indies*, London, p. 94-95

# C H A P T E R V

Provision existed for each island to have it's own militia, but again the small number of the white population presented difficulties, and as there were few "poor whites " to act as soldiers, and blacks could not be armed for fear of insurrection, there was never a satisfactory solution. The rich planters all wanted high rank in the militias, so there was a situation of plenty of chiefs but very few Indians. Governor Parke reported that the company of Colonel Codrington had only three officers and one man! Another problem was caused by planter absenteeism, which not only reduced the number of white men available, but possibly led to indiscipline amongst the negroes.[9]

The French had something of a similar problem, as many whites sent to their colonies were "scoundrels, and not to be trusted", but their problem was never so acute due to the larger size of their islands. In 1739, St. Domingue had 6,000 militiamen.[10] The disparity of populations in the French West Indies was not so vast but the planters were obsessed by it and was one of their strongest arguments for a permanent naval presence.

Experience had shown that it was possible for a small enemy force to do much destruction to property on an island without taking the principal fortresses. It was not enough to know that the enemy had no army in the West Indies, the planters were equally afraid that a few enemy ships could do irreparable harm to them.[11] When war began in 1739, Governor Mathew of the Leeward Islands tried to have the colonies pass laws for paying volunteers from the other islands in case of invasion.[12] This arrangement would never have worked for even if militias had been large and easily transported from one island to another, their quality was very low.[13] Everyone

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9. Jamaica Council Minutes, Dec 18, 1760, C.O. 140/42.
10. Pares, p.231.
11. Ibid, pp.227-8.
12. Antigua Council Minutes, Mathew's Speech, July 1. 1739, C.O.9/13; St Kitts Council Minutes Jan 19, 1740-1, C.O. 241/4
13. Mathew's "State of the Leeward Islands", C.0.152/24 and 54

was supposed to be a member of the militia but the fines for avoidance were so slight that "anyone of moderate fortune could quite cheaply buy himself out altogether."[14]

Thus the main burden of militia duty fell on the poor whites. They appeared most unwarlike, and were poorly trained by amateur officers. At the beginning of the Seven Years War in 1756, Jamaica was placed under martial law for several weeks, purely for drilling the militia.

Militia laws obliged the colonists to appear in arms not only at regular exercises, but for "alarms", which meant every time more than a certain number of "three-masted topsail of ships" ( the normal configuration for warships ) were seen off the coast.[15] The system was clumsy and annoying more than effective, and was another reason why the planters wanted regular troops.

In addition to manpower, the next requirement was fortifications and again, practicality took second place to self-interest. The island legislatures were responsible for financing and building the fortifications. Finance was provided by local taxes and duties, and was sometimes augmented by grants from England.

The sites of the works were chosen politically rather than strategically, depending on whose land they were situated. Skilled workmen were in short supply and poor construction was the norm. When an attack threatened, work would proceed at a furious pace but when the danger receded, work would stop until the next crisis.[16] The actual building would be done by unpaid negro labour, but apportioning the cost was a matter for vigorous political discussion.[17]

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14. Lieut. Governor Moore to Board of Trade, Nov 7, 1760, C.0. 137/2
15. Pares, p. 237
16. Montserrat Assembly Minutes, Dec 8, 1739, C.O. 177/3; Nov. 28, 1743, C.O. 177/4; Mathews, Oct. 16, 1742, C.0.152/24 & 54; Mathews to Newcastle July 20, 1744, C.0.152/44; 28, 1743, C.O. 177/4: Mathews. Oct. 16. 1742
17. St. Kitts Council Minutes, April 7, 1755, Dec. 6, 1756, C.O. 241/7

# C H A P T E R V

As can be expected, the result was confusion, inefficiency and above all, prodigious waste.

Even if the fortifications were built, there was a lack of artillery. The colonists did not always stop to ask themselves what was the use of fortifications without artillery, so at times there were emplacements without guns, at others, guns without emplacements.[18]

The islands expected the home government to supply them with ordnance stores at it's own expense, for which they petitioned loudly and often.[19] The Government was forced to make a distinction between what it would and would not supply free. From 1735, it decreed that it would not supply what the islanders could get for themselves, such as small arms or powder. After that time, the islanders ordered what they could get free, but made no effort to obtain what they had to pay for.[20]

There were three types of fortification, batteries along the coasts, fortresses commanding the principal towns, and refuges in the mountains. The batteries were thought useless because they were strong if only attacked by a few ships but inadequate if attacked by the full force of a nation's navy in time of war. Nearly every island had it's fortress which it considered it's strongpoint. Jamaica had Port Royal, St. Kitts had Brimstone Hill, which withstood a sedge of several weeks in 1782, and Antigua had Monks Hill. Barbados had no central stronghold, though Carlisle Bay was defended by several forts. Martinique had Fort Royal. Many of these strongholds were on the coasts, as merchant ships needed a place of safety to anchor. Some were not as strong as others; Fort Royal in Jamaica was never put to the test, but Vernon and Lestock were alleged to have said that three 74 gun ships could

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18. Robinson to Duke of Newcastle, June 25, 1743, May 10, 744, C.0.28/46; Thomas to Board of Trade, April 26, 1758. C.O. 152/29
19. Montserrat Council Minutes, July 21, 1739 & June 5, 1740, C.0.177/3
20. Pares, p. 244

take it, and the real strength of Kingston harbour was the capital ships stationed there .[21]

The value of even the best fortresses was doubtful, as at most they could only delay the enemy for a few weeks while sickness and climate took their toll of his troops. Also, some were far too large to be manned by the forces available. In 1756 the people of Jamaica found they had built works requiring 3,000 men to man them, far more than the numbers available, so they asked the King for another regiment.[22]

The planters were not only afraid of the damage that enemies might do to their property. They distrusted the loyalty of their own slaves and it was a contentious question whether negroes could safely be used and armed in the defense of their masters. Both English and French, however, were reassured by the comfortable illusion that each treated their slaves better than the other. Opinions differed as to whether it was right to encourage the enemy's slaves to rise against their masters in time of invasion.

Jamaica had only just come to terms with the Maroons (runaway slaves ) on the north side of the island when war broke out in 1739, and had to suppress a dangerous revolt in the middle of the Seven Years War ( 1756-1763 ). Antigua had demanded a regular garrison in 1738 as a precaution against negro insurrection. They offered to build a barracks, with a contribution from the king, and offered to supply food and equipment, provided there were never less than 400 troops on the island. The Legislature of St. Kitts suspected a great plot among the slaves to desert in a body to the enemy in 1747 and professed a few years later to be afraid that unless the fortifications were garrisoned by regular troops,

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21. Knight, Letter of August 15, 1745, ADD. MSS 22677 f. 48; Beckford to Knight, Oct 11, 1740, ADD. MSS 12431, f. 48
22. Thomas to Board of Trade, Nov 12, 1755, C.O. 152/28, BB72; Legislature of Jamaica to George II, Oct 14, 1756, C.0.137/29

the negroes might rise and seize them.[23] When the legislature of Jamaica voted to raise 500 negroes for one of Vernon's expeditions, Beckford hoped that only a third of these would be "shot negroes" (ie. carrying arms) and the rest merely "pioneers" or general drudges of the camp. A few months later, he wrote again, acknowledging the folly of giving them such an education.[24]

In times of invasion, though, slaves had to be used for defensive purposes regardless of the danger and inconvenience, and they were often armed. Some Governors insisted on it; Mathew and Thomas of the Leeward Islands frequently recommended the passing of laws for this purpose. Free negroes and mulattos were considered far more reliable, and were almost always members of the militias.

In contrast with the British islands' militias, those of the Spanish West Indies, especially Puerto Rico, were to be an important force in the defense of the land in case of attacks. The Spanish militias were a military body composed of civilian personnel of all professions and trades, and were mainly creoles. The first corps were called "improvised militias" and were composed of "able persons". They existed until 1691, when they were replaced by the Urban Militias. These were manned by males between the ages of 16 and 60 years and split into groups of about 100 men.[25]

They were not provided with uniforms and did not carry firearms, so their weapons were rudimentary. They were responsible for the defense of their towns and other duties. Since their service was obligatory, their numbers grew accordingly. These militias were the only defense in the coastal towns since the regular troops were usually stationed in the capital. Under

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23. Pares, p. 254.
24. Beckford to Knight, Aug. 19, 1741 & Feb. 10. 1742, ADD. MSS 12431
25. Chardon, Carlos Fernando. *Reseña Histórica del Origen y Desarrollo de las Milicias Puertorriqueñas Bajo el Régimen Español,* 1511-1898, San Juan 1978, p. 1.

these Urban Militias, the British were defeated in 1702 in their attack on Arecibo, in Loiza in 1703, in 1718 in Vieques and in 1742 in Boca Chica. These Urban Militias were effective in fighting "raids", but they were not sufficiently equipped or large enough to face large landing forces.[26]

The reorganization of the militias in Puerto Rico coincided with the apprehensions of the Spanish monarchs concerning British attacks in their possessions. A new kind of force, called the Disciplined Militias, would be introduced in 1795 and they would be issued with uniforms and firearms and given military instruction.

It was these Militias which helped defend the island of Puerto Rico during the **1797 British attack** under Sir Ralph Abercromby. The raising of local militias and the renovation of the fortifications by the Spanish Bourbons was in response to the frequent wars with Britain. At the time, British intelligence reports invariably assessed and drew attention to the impregnability of the Spanish fortifications in the Caribbean.

One very important difference between the British Caribbean militias and their Spanish counterparts was the drafting of local men who were not only used to the climate, but who felt patriotic toward the land and were anxious to defend it. As in the British Islands, though, racial prejudice existed in Puerto Rico and there were separate companies for white and for colored people.[27]

One can see from all these problems why the British West Indian planters felt that the only suitable means of defense was by use of regular European troops, despite their vulnerability to local diseases. The principal islands had their own garrisons, especially in time of war. The placing of a garrison on an island was not without it's problems, though, as the English Government

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26. Ibid, p. 2
27. Ibid.

decreed that the island itself must help to finance the garrison's upkeep. The cost of living was higher in the islands than in England, so a soldier's pay was insufficient to live on. As this high cost of living was partly due to the planters and local traders wishing to make high profits, the Government thought it only fair that the island paid the difference. It was this obligation to partly subsidize garrisons which prevented the islands from demanding unlimited numbers of troops.

The West Indies, though, were the grave of the English soldier. They were unused to the tropical climate and to diseases from which which they had no natural immunity. Throughout the eighteenth century, concern was voiced at home and abroad of the high mortality rate of troops in the Caribbean, disease claiming far more victims than any action of the enemy. Losses outpaced recruitment, so garrisons were always under strength.[28] In war campaigns, it was necessary to engage the enemy immediately on arrival, while the men still had the strength to do so.

The problems inherent in maintaining adequate land forces enhanced still further the importance of naval strength. The wars of the mid-eighteenth century saw England devote more of it's naval power to the West Indies than ever before, proving that the importance given to the sugar islands was out of all proportion to their size.

An English striking force had been continually maintained at Jamaica since the War of the Spanish Succession, in the hope of intercepting Spain's treasure galleons and fleets, or "flotas." Elsewhere, naval defence consisted of a warship or two attached to each colony for the protection of its coast and trade. These ships would convoy out merchant vessels, remain for a time on guard, and convoy the merchant ships home again. This system lasted until the establishment of the Leeward Islands station in 1743 and the North American station in 1745.[29]

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28. Report of June 12, 1745, C.0.152/44
29. Pares, p. 265.

# C H A P T E R V

The planters' lobby was always asking for more warships, lest the enemy attain naval superiority. Jamaica had asked for an additional 10 to 12 ships in the war of 1702. Due to her proximity to the Spanish Antilles, she made an excellent starting point for expeditions. Without such a force, she feared her trade would be lost and the island invaded.

Later, due to the concentration of naval power in the Indies, it was said that shipping in the English Channel suffered more than that of Barbados.[30]

In 1745, when the French transferred six ships to Martinique, the West India Interest took panic. They approached the Admiralty for more ships but the Admiralty refused due to demands on their resources by the invasion of England by Bonnie Prince Charlie, a Jacobite descendant of James II (see chapter three). The planter lobby used their political influence to petition the Duke of Newcastle, who had the power to force the Admiralty to reverse their decision. Four ships from the Mediterranean fleet were sent to the Indies.[31]

The next panic was in 1756 at the outbreak of the Seven Years War. Since the peace of 1748 at the end of the War of Jenkins Ear, the strength of the Leeward Island station had been allowed to fall to two ships-of-the-line and two frigates. Reinforcements were rushed out, and numbers never allowed to fall again.[32]

The functions of the West Indies squadrons were threefold, to attack the enemy's trade, to protect English trade by giving convoy escort, and to attack enemy forces wherever encountered. Most important to protect were the ships from Europe, bringing out necessities for the plantations and returning with their cargoes of

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30. Admiralty Minutes, Oct. 31, 1740, ADM 3/44, p.168, note 4
31. Admiralty Minutes, February 7 and 12, 1744-45; May 30, June 4 and 6, 1745, ADM 3/49-51
32. Frankland to Cleveland, March 24, ADM 1/306; Admiralty Minutes, May 27, 1756, ADM 3/64.

sugar, indigo, cocoa, cotton and other produce. The French islands relied more on provisions from the mother country, as they could not legally trade with British North America and they never really developed a regular trade with their own territories in Canada. The ships from Africa were also of high importance as they carried the slaves without which the plantations could not function.

Vessels from both Europe and Africa were relatively easy to meet and convoy, as they all arrived on more or less the same latitude, as explained previously. Those from North America posed more of a problem for protection, due to the prevailing easterly wind. Rather than sail past Spanish Islands en route for the Lesser Antilles, they would first sail south east into the Atlantic, then approach from the east on varying latitudes, making them difficult to find. Some squadron commanders complained at this but others replied that if the convoy escorts could not find them, nor could the Guardacostas.

Even with naval protection, the planter interest had it's problems during the war. They were responsible for the safety of their cargoes, and had to insure them. Insurance was cheaper to the West Indies than on the return voyage, as the outward trip was often convoyed all the way by warships going on station but on the return, the squadron would see them clear of the islands, then they were on their own. A typical insurance would be 15 guineas ($25) outward and 25 guineas ($40) on the return, a small amount now, but a poor man's yearly wage at the time.[33] The convoy system had significant drawbacks for merchants on both sides of the Atlantic. When goods arrived by escorted convoy into the West Indies, the market was glutted and prices fell. The same applied in England as although the merchant ships coming from the Indies were not escorted, they tended to travel in fleets and the sugar market suffered. Also, of course, whether war or peace prevailed there was the tropical hurricane season to consider, and the winter storms in the North Atlantic.

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33. Pares, p. 496

# C H A P T E R V

These factors combined to make supply, and therefore prices, very erratic, especially in time of war. Despite all their influence, the planters suffered from these fluctuations because although the sugar they were selling in England saw falling prices in times of plenty, the provisions they had to purchase from the North Americans saw no such price falls, as they did not arrive in convoy. Also, the planter was taxed more heavily in wartime and was expected to supply some of his negro workforce free of charge to build or man fortifications. War did have it's compensations for them, though. An increase in their island's garrison created a new market for their rum and molasses, which were consumed in large quantities. Stockpiles were often held in readiness for such occasions.

Price rises and supply fluctuation were nothing new. Since the beginning of the thirties the home demand for sugar was increasing faster than the production of it's sugar islands, who also had to set aside part of their production, under the Molasses Act, for the North American colonies, where the population was rising faster than in Europe and the climate necessited a high intake of rum and molasses.

Although high prices suited the sugar producers and they often took measures to maintain them, short supply was not always deliberate. With the exception of Jamaica, who operated a policy of keeping some land uncultivated, the smaller islands were at the limit of their production and their soil was beginning to become exhausted. Also, hurricanes and other disasters made their mark.

People began to acquire a taste for white sugar and as there was some wastage in refining, more raw sugar was needed. The art of the sugar baker had appeared and as they could not keep their product good in the cold and humidity of winter, refining had to take place all year round instead of seasonally.

In times of shortage or high price, the middle classes had to revert from white sugar to brown, and the poor from brown to molasses. As brown sugar and molasses were an inevitable by-product of production, their price also was significant to the

planters. Molasses could be used to make rum, for which the home market was also acquiring a taste. When there were bad grain harvests, the Government would prohibit the use of grain at home to make corn spirit in order to protect the bread supply, opening the market for more rum. This particularly applied in wartime, when French brandy was unavailable.

The more rum that was sent to England, the less there was for the North American market, which made up the deficit by smuggling from the French Islands, to the delight of the French planters who badly needed a market for their molasses.[34]

Meanwhile, the war which had begun in 1739 due to the misfortune of Captain Jenkins had been continuing, and it is the aftermath of this war which will be considered next.

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34. Ibid. p. 487

# Chapter VI

## From the Treaty of Aix La Chappelle to the Peace of Paris

The war which had begun in 1739 against Spain and in 1744 against France had mainly arisen over trade and conditions in the West Indies, but international events and a Hanoverian King on the throne of England resulted in most of the action taking place in Europe. As those European events are not strictly relevent to our theme, we shall not examine them in any detail. In fact, the West Indies did not see a great deal of action, although as mentioned previously, war in any degree was bound to have it's effects. Admiral Vernon sailed for Spanish America in the autumn of 1739 and that winter took the Spanish towns of Portobello and Chagre on the Isthmus of Darien, now Panama. During 1741 he attempted to take Cartagena in Colombia, and the eastern end of Cuba, without success. He attempted an overland expedition against Panama in 1742, again without success and returned to England in October that year. There were also a number of naval battles, but no sugar islands changed hands.

Eventually, in 1748, peace was declared under the Treaty of Aix-La-Chappelle. Under this treaty the minor conquests of Rattan, Belize and Black River were to be returned to their Spanish owners, (Britain declined to concur with this, and although Rattan was evacuated, they held onto Belize and Black River as retreats for their Central American log cutters.) Cape Breton Island (in Canada) was to be returned to France, who in turn was to relinquish the Austrian Netherlands, expel the Stuarts (Jacobites) and accept the Protestant succession in England. She was also to destroy Dunkirk's

fortifications, which were a threat to British shipping in the English Channel.

Being considered more important than territory, it was over trade that the most delicate discussions took place. The South Sea Company assumed that the Government would demand that the Asiento be re-allocated to them as part of the peace. The Court of Spain, however, was definite; there was to be no more Asiento and no trading monopoly for any nation. The Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Northern Department and negotiator for England, was willing to sacrifice a future Asiento but there were certain aspects which he would not relinquish. One of these was the debt owed to the South Sea Company by the King of Spain and the other was "Reprisalia", or the return of the Company's assets seized during hostilities. He also sought conditions which would give Spain independence in her trading policies, without interference from France. In addition, Sir Benjamin Keene, British Ambassador at the Court of Madrid, tried to include a clause which might be considered as a renunciation by Spain of all claim to Gibraltar.[1]

The trade treaty between England and Spain was finally completed in 1750 without full satisfaction for the South Sea Company, and this essentially ended their trading career. There was still some English involvement in the slave trade to the Spanish Colonies through special licences granted to Spaniards to deal in conjunction with British traders. It was hoped that this concession would reduce some of the smuggling.

The principal architects of Spanish foreign policy at the time were Ministers of State the Marques de la Ensenada and Don José Carvajal. Ensenada styled himself as the arbiter between France and England, although in actual fact his feelings were decidedly pro-French and he used his position as Secretary of the (Spanish) Indies to further the anti-British cause. It would be this lack of impartiality, plus allegations of acting without his monarch's authority, which would eventually lead to his replacement.

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1. Keene to Newcastle, October 8, 1750, SP 94/138

# C H A P T E R VI

Carvajal, on the other hand, was more pro-British and provided a balance.

Anglo-French discussions concerning North American territories took place, but the negotiations were inconclusive and no satisfactory agreement was reached. As the *Monitor* publication said much later, in 1763, the Treaty of Aix La Chappelle "was big with the spawn of another more expensive war".[2]

Even in England, the treaty met with a mixed reception. Some in the Government felt that a good settlement had been attained and welcomed the peace as an opportunity to reduce the National Debt, which had risen during the war from £46,900,000 to £76,100,000.[3] Others felt that more should have been done "by proper measures to secure the liberties of Europe and to preserve them from being overturned by that power, (France) which will always have it in view".[4]

In the years after the 1748 treaty, England and France constantly competed to influence Spanish policy. For a while, Anglo-Spanish relations were better than at any other time during the century. Ensenada, who had favoured France, was replaced by Don Ricardo Wall, previously the Spanish Minister in London, and British Ambassador Sir Benjamin Keene was well received in Madrid.

The peace was not to last, however, and those who saw the 1739-48 war as only a rehearsal for a bigger conflict were to be proved correct. Many felt that the Treaty of Aix La Chappelle solved nothing and that the old problems and antagonisms remained. Whilst France had only been involved in the latter part of the war, many English politicians felt that it was she who was the real enemy, and the main threat to England's future trade and prosperity. Among these politicians was the British Prime Minister,

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2. *Monitor*, July 9, 1763
3. Jeremy Black, *A System of Ambition, British Policy, 1660-1793*, London, Longman, 1991, p. 177
4. ADD MSS 32811, ff. 430-1

# C H A P T E R VI

William Pitt the Elder (Earl of Chatham). Pitt had for many years been studying French commercial statistics and these convinced him that if the French colonies could be taken and held, nothing could prevent Britain emerging as the predominant commercial power. Like so many of his predecessors, he felt that British naval supremacy was the key to open all doors.

In 1746, Pitt had been in correspondence with William Vaughan, a fish merchant in New Hampshire, requesting an on-the-spot view of the benefits and possibilities of taking French Canada. Vaughan quickly replied that if Quebec could be taken, French Canada would fall.[5] Although this plan was not put into operation before the peace of 1748, it was to be held in reserve for later.

Pitt's reasons for desiring such a conquest were as follows:

1. England would have a monopoly of the fur trade, and also fish with the exception of Spanish fishing rights around Newfoundland. He did not wish to antagonize Spain until he had dealt with France.
2. The French could no longer supply their West Indian islands with lumber, pushing up the price of their sugar to the benefit of the English planters.
3. France could no longer obtain masts and timber or build ships in North America.
4. France would lose an export market for her manufactures.
5. British territories on the North American continent would be more secure with the French presence removed.[6]

One may say that Pitt was farsighted for it was to prove that events in Canada and North America would be among the causes of the next war.

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5. J. H. Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, London, Penguin, 1985, p. 110
6. Ibid.

# C H A P T E R VI

Before we consider this, however, we must take into account basic differences between Britain and France in their policy towards their colonies. The British colonies obviously had to pay allegiance to the mother country and to a certain extent be ruled by her, but they were allowed to have their own Assemblies and legislature. This gave them, within certain limits, control of their own destinies and local policy; it also meant that there was some diversity of behaviour, and that what one colony did was not always common to all. France, on the other hand, kept a much tighter control. Hers were not colonies as such, more parts of France herself across the sea ruled by the same laws and operating in unison.

This meant that in large and only partly tamed areas such as Canada, the French settlers and officials acted under clearly defined territorial policy, whereas the British, under the authorities of the various states, felt it reasonable to expand into unsettled land whoever tried to lay claim to it.

French policy was that although she could not populate it, she could lay claim to large areas of the Ohio valley and southwards, to join her Canadian territories with Louisiana. The failures to agree over British and French American territories after 1748 meant that borders were not clearly defined and this inevitably led to clashes between British and French settlers over land rights. As time went on, these escalated and both sides appealed to their home governments for military assistance to back up what they considered to be their rights. First the French began to fortify their territories and to incresase the presence of regular troops then later, although with some reluctance, the British did the same and the clashes became more serious.

Even at this stage, neither of the two countries were fully prepared to go to all-out war and were considering at most a limited engagement in the disputed territories. This left the British Government with a dilemma. France had a population around three times greater than her own and so in theory could put more troops into the field, but if Britain used sea power to prevent the French reinforcements from getting through, would a naval battle escalate hostilities?

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There were, as is always the case, other factors to take into consideration. Firstly, there was the European situation. As in the previous war, a Hanoverian was on the English Throne. A European war would give rise to the usual varying alliances and if some of the European nations aligned with France to threaten Hanover, this would either dilute the British forces still further or cost the country dearly to buy the assistance of German princes to protect the King's Hanoverian interests.

In addition, there were the various political stances on the home front. This included those who did not want war in any form, those who were delighted with the prospect of another contest with the Old Enemy and of course, the West India Interest, who were quite happy to see French sugar islands taken provided they were no longer allowed to produce sugar. Better still, of course, were conquests where sugar growing was impossible. Matters finally came to a head in the spring of 1756 when France attacked Minorca, which had been a British possession since the Treaty *of* Utrech in 1713. To make matters worse, a British fleet under Admiral Byng was sent to retake the island but failed to do so. Apart from the humiliation of defeat, the loss of Minorca to the French would mean France required less ships to control the Mediterranean and could therefore send more to the West Indies.

In the circumstances, the call for action was too great to ignore and Britain declared war on France in May of 1756. The Seven Years War had begun.

At this stage the war had not developed into a full European conflict. Spain and England were still technically on friendly terms, but the situation was deteriorating. Minister of State William Pitt wanted to concentrate all his efforts against France, so he tried to avoid actions which would antagonize Spain. France, however, was quick to point out that Britain, once she had acquired French colonies, would use her new territorial monopoly to attack Spanish America. Spain was receptive to the French arguments, and had concerns about the future if Britain were to take the French part of Hispaniola, St. Domingue. In 1759, Pitt assured the Neapolitan Ambassador in London, Prince Sanseverino, that the English did

not mean to attack French Hispaniola, but would only conquer the Leewards Islands.[7] Even this was not wholly acceptable to Spain, who felt she still had some claim to the neutral islands on the basis that she had once owned all of the Caribbean so any territory not belonging already to another country must still be hers.

For the same reason, Pitt avoided conquests in North America which would annoy Spain. It may be for this reason that no attack was made on Louisiana.[8] Such a conquest would have given Britain a settlement on the Gulf of Mexico, uncomfortably close to Spain's treasure route. England declared that she only took and meant to keep what was necessary to her security and to the prevention of further wars.[9] France retorted that the military balance on land was no longer important; it was commerce, wealth and sea power that carried the day, therefore the colonial and maritime balance was the most essential of all.[10]

Decisions as to which enemy territories were to be attacked were not only based on strategic considerations. During the course of the war, the British West Indian planters had been faced with many difficulties. Their homes and possessions had been at risk from attack, their supplies from North America disrupted and most important of all, their trade to England put in peril.

In order to minimize their losses, they determined to use the political power of their representatives in England to steer the course of the war and the eventual peace to their best interests. It was here that they collided head on with the main body of public

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7. Pitt to Bristol, Secret, June 5, 1759, S.P. 94/159
8. Pitt to Abreu, December 13, 1759, S.P. 94/160; Hardwicke to Newcastle, October 19, 1760, ADD MSS 32913, f. 210
9. Newcastle to Hardwicke, October 22, 1759, ADD MSS 32897, f. 287; Abreu to Pitt, December 5, 1759, S.P. 94/160
10. Keene to Robinson, April 7, 1755, S.P. 94/148

opinion. They were horrified at the suggestions for capturing the French sugar islands, which would destroy their monopoly and excessive profits. They therefore strove to create the impression that both Canada and Guadeloupe could not be taken, and extolled the virtues of Canada, omitting to mention that Canada could not grow sugar, but could become a market for it. They argued that Guadeloupe was not necessary, as Jamaica had much land uncultivated and could increase production. Their opponents retorted that sugar had been expensive for thirty years, so why had Jamaica not done this before?[11]

The public, however, tired of high sugar prices but consuming little Canadian produce, felt that Guadeloupe would be the answer to their prayers. It's sugar capacity alone could almost equal all the British islands and it's retention would certainly reduce sugar prices.[12]

Even in political circles the French sugar islands were considered of value because if they were British, they would increase the scope of legal trade available to the North American colonies, thus reducing smuggling. It is of interst to note that although the mother country was at war, smuggling from the North into the French islands did not cease, rather it increased, supplying the enemy at the expense of the British islands and helping to fuel her war effort. This actually amounted to treachery.

Political argument over which targets should be attempted would be a major feature throughout the war partly due to the diverging views of the planter lobby on the one hand protecting their interests and their opponents seeking benefits for the nation and the people in general.

At this time, Charles III of Spain was aware that his army and navy were unprepared for a war in which he was soon to be involved, and he set about strengthening them. Meanwhile, the

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11. Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies*, p. 346
12. Ibid. p. 345

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controversy between Spain and England continued. There had been many complaints of British warships and privateers violating Spain's neutrality by seizing her ships, made worse by the inflexibility of the Britsh navy and courts when dealing with such complaints. These seizures included Spanish shipping in the Newfoundland fisheries, a very sensitive issue. Then, of course, the question of the logwood settlements in Central America (Belize, etc.) had never been satisfactorily settled.

Spain ordered her Ambassador in London, the Conde de Fuentes, to press for settlement for her complaints, and this may have been England's last chance to resolve the difficulties between the two countries. Charles III and Don Ricardo Wall, now his Minister of State, wished to know where they stood, to enable them to decide whether to join France in the war or leave her to continue fighting alone. If Spain entered the war she must risk attack against her territories but if she remained neutral, she could not expect to share in the eventual prizes, especially the Newfoundland fisheries and the logwood settlements.

England delayed her reply, Pitt saying he was prepared to negotiate over the logwood settlements, but not under the terms of Fuentes' brief. Regarding the Newfoundland fisheries it was declared that " Spain must cease to expect a sacrifice that England can never make."[13]

Thus negotiations reached a point of no return; Spain now knew what she had long suspected, that she would be next in line for Britain's attentions once France had fallen. Her suspicions were further aroused by the fact that Pitt would negotiate verbally but would put nothing in writing. At the same time, Wall ordered Fuentes to try to obtain something in writing about the logwood settlements.[14]

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13. Pitt to Bristol, September 26, 1760, S.P. 94/162
14. Wall to Fuentes, December 22, 1760, ADD MSS 38197, f.102

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Matters may have taken a different turn because of an event which took place in 1760. King George II of England died and his son Frederick having predeceased him, the throne passed to his grandson, George III. The new king was only 22 years old and inexperienced in the delicate arts of statesmanship and international politics. Although young, he still had the right to choose his ministers and it was essential for men of power and ambition to gain his favours in order to retain their influence. One such was John Stuart, Earl of Bute, the King's "Dearest friend"[15] He was against the war and intended to use his influence with the King to bring it to an early conclusion. Secretary of State William Pitt on the other hand, whilst conscious of the need not to anger the King, would not sacrifice his beliefs to this end. Although Pitt was not a warmonger, he felt that a confrontation was inevitable if Britain was to ensure her future security. The controversy in Parliament over whether or not to declare war on Spain increased to such an extent that Pitt threatened to resign if his policies were not adopted. This left his opponents to decide whether to give in to him , or oppose him and lose a very able war minister. They would then have to take the blame if things went wrong. In the end, Pitt was outvoted and duly resigned. The way was clear for Bute to pursue his desire for peace.[16]

It then became a question of whether France would sue for peace before Spain was ready to join her in the war. By 1761 the Spanish Ambassadors were convinced that it would be disastrous if an Anglo-French peace was made before Spain achieved her aims. It was this fear which prompted the Marques de Grimaldi, the Spanish Ambassador to France, to press so hard for the Franco-Spanish Family Compact of 1761.[17]

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15. J. Steven Watson, *The Reign of George III*, Oxford, 1992, p. 1
16. Marshall, *Eighteenth Century England*, pp. 325-6
17. Grimaldi to Fuentes, March 5, 1761, ADD MSS 32919, f.446

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This Family Compact included a provision by which each nation granted to the subjects of the other the same rights that were enjoyed by it's own people, and that no other nation should receive such a priviledge. Grimaldi tried to use the Compact to keep France in the war, and France did likewise to persuade Spain to join her.

Eventually, despite the fact that Pitt had been removed to the Opposition, Bute had to bow to circumstances and public opinon. It was decided to delay no longer, and on Sept. 18th 1761, England declared war on Spain.

The plans and projects devised in the war fever of 1739 immediately re- emerged, particularly the proposal to attack Havana, Cuba. The last attempt had failed but this time, the British Government left nothing to chance. The military machine was fully prepared, and past lessons had been learnt.The commanders were fully briefed, even as to route and rendezvous.[18] Britain considered the conquest of Havana so important that Admiral Rodney was ordered to give up the seige of Martinique if he had not already taken it, and to join forces with Admiral Pocock and the Army commander, the Duke of Albemarle.[19]

The French under the Comte de Blenac sent a fleet to relieve Martinique but they were delayed by the weather and when they arrived at the island, they found it already taken. They sailed instead to St. Domingue where they were to join forces with the colonists and the Spaniards to prepare an invasion of Jamaica. The Jamaican authorities had received warning of this through intercepted letters and the proposed strategy of the naval squadron commander, Commodore Forrest, was to lay off Cap Francois, where the Franco-Spanish fleet were most likely to arrive, and cut

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18. Secret Instructions to Admiral Pocock, February 8, 1762, ADM 2/1332, pp. 25-33
19. Orders to Rodney, February 5, 1762, ADM 2/1332, p. 17

them off as they approached. However, the Council of Jamaica felt that the security of the island could only be guaranteed by retaining the capital ships in Kingston harbour and sending the frigates out for news. They overruled Forrest's plan and thereby missed the opportunity to take Blenac's fleet, almost the last major French squadron at sea.

On two more occasions Forrest wanted to go out to fight, once when he heard of Blenac's arrival at St. Domingue, and again when he was ordered to join forces with Rodney's Leeward Island squadron at Cape Tiburon. On both occasions he was refused permission due to the cowardice of the Governor and Council of Jamaica.[20]

Admiral Rodney was so concerned for the safety of Jamaica that he dispatched a portion of his force under Sir James Douglas to protect it. Admiral Pocock was intended to collect most of Rodney's ships to advance on Cuba but when he reached Martinique he found nothing there. Rodney had sent the few ships not en route for Jamaica to cruise for prizes on the Spanish Main.[21]

Blenac could have cut the British forces with the help of the Spanish, but the latter failed to receive the five "avisos" (communications) sent to inform them. Blenac should have acted on his own but he was so weak that Douglas at Jamaica was able to divide his squadron and blockade him at Cap Francois. Thus, the British fleets were eventually able to combine without hindrance.

The British eventually took Havana, partly due to the sickness which reduced the Spanish defenders. A third of the Spanish naval forces were destroyed and a great amount of prize money was

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20. Forrest to Anson, January 28, 1762, ADM 1/1788; Jamaica Council Minutes, January 24 and March 16, 1762, C.O. 140/42; Admiralty Minutes, May 1, 1762, ADM 3/70
21. Pocock to Cleveland, May 26, 1762, ADM 1/237; Rodney to Cleveland, March 24 and 26, May 27 and 31, 1762, ADM 1/307

eventually distributed amongst the conquerors. In the Pacific, Manila was also taken but news of this was not to reach Europe until after peace had been made.

Another aspect of the war in 1762 concerned Portugal. It was Spain's plan to threaten Portugal into closing her ports to British ships. This would enhance France and Spain's hold on southern Europe and deprive Britain of the Brazil trade, which she rated as important. The British navy and privateers used Lisbon sometimes in preference to Gibraltar, so the loss of that port would be significant. Spain was confident that if Portugal did not respond to threat she could be taken by invasion. This, too, would be to Spain's benefit as it may divert Britain's forces from other theatres. or if Portugal was taken it would be a valuable bargaining chip which may bring about, among other things, the return of Gibraltar.

The British response was not as predicted. She would rather keep Cuba and lose Portugal to Spain for the time being. They could always buy back Portugal in exchange for other conquests at a later date, and keep Cuba as a pure gain.[22]

Charles III misjudged his abilities. The Family Compact was to have secured improvements for France and satisfaction for Spain, because Havana was impregnable and Lisbon an easy target. As it turned out, Havana was taken and Lisbon was never in serious danger. This failure of tactics to work out as planned was the reason why Spain conceded so much in the peace talks at the end of 1762, and why the "Bourbon Alliance" (The Family Compact) achieved so little for her and for France.

Shortly after Spain had entered the war, the Duc de Choiseul, negotiating for France, was approaching England for peace discussions. Events in Eastern Europe were also tempting Britain to sue for peace. The question was, whether to negotiate separately

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22. Newcastle's Memorandum, February 11, ADD MSS 32934, f.75

or jointly with Spain and France. Choiseul had offered to exchange Martinique for all French territory in North America east of the Missippi. Such an arrangement would isolate Spanish Florida and give Britain a foothold on the Gulf of Mexico. This had not been possible while Spain had remained neutral, but it was now quite legitimate.

On learning of this proposal, Spain raised objections that a British presence on the Gulf would increase her potential for smuggling and give her opportunity to molest the Spanish treasure fleets. Also, of course, Spain's own guardacostas would not be able to operate so freely. Spain therefore proposed that the territory between Florida and New Orleans be neutral Indian territory. After news of the fall of Havana was received, however, this proposal was withdrawn. Choiseul pressed Charles III to embark upon serious peace talks and again the Mississippi and the coast of the Gulf of Mexico were points of contention. Eventually, France gave Louisiana to Spain, as she did not value it greatly herself. (Louisiana at the time covered a huge area, far in excess of the present U.S. state).

News of the loss of Havana was a crushing blow to Spain's bargaining power. She no longer felt able to press too hard over the fisheries and she was prepare to allow the logwood settlements in Honduras to remain, provided England destroyed her fortresses in the area.

Long discussions took place in Parliament over the terms which should be offered to the enemy. The Earl of Bute, who was against the war, would have been happy to make an easy settlement but he knew that his colleagues would insist on territorial gains.[23]

George Grenville, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, was a hard liner and insisted that the Duke of Bedford, British Plenipotentiary in Paris, should submit his terms

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23. Bedford's Notes on a conversation with Bute, August 23, 1762, Bedford Correspondence, III, 96

to the British Cabinet for approval before he presented them to France. This was to prevent him from making too many concessions to secure an early peace. He was told to ask an impossibly high price for restoring Havana to Spain: England must have Porto Rico and Florida, besides forcing Spain to yield on all points already in dispute.[24]

Choiseul, still eager to end France's participation in the war but not wanting a separate peace, pressured Spain to allow further concessions, but Charles III declare that he would rather fight on until all the Indies were lost, than to yield an inch to England by negotiation. Eventually, though, he had to give in to pressure and Florida was ceded to England in exchange for Havana.[25] These disagreements over terms caused the Family Compact between Spain and France to break down in 1762.

The Seven Year's War had encompassed far more than the Caribbean and Central America, and the eventual terms of peace were inevitably wide ranging.

Agreement was finally reached at the end of 1762 and proclaimed as the Peace of Paris in March 1763. Britain gained from France all of Canada including Cape Breton and all the islands in the St. Lawrence river, and Louisiana east of the Mississippi river. France retained fishing rights in the St. Lawrence and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

In India France was to keep her trading stations but was barred from making fortifications, thus really ending her imperialistic capacity in that area. Britain received Minorca in exchange for Belle Isle, off the French coast, thus retaining an important Mediterranean base. Spain was to restore all conquests in Portugal and as discussed previously, cede Florida to Britain and allow logwood cutting in Honduras.

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24. Bute to Bedford, October 24, Bedford Correspondence, HMC 79, Vol 5, f. 44; Grenville's Memorandum in Grenville Papers, I, f. 483

25. Pares, *War and Trade*, p. 608

# C H A P T E R VI

It was in the West Indies that the real controversy arose and once again it was the power of the planters which decided events. Guadeloupe and Martinique had, despite the planters' wishes, been taken from the French and public opinion was firmly in favour of keeping one of them to increase and cheapen British sugar supplies. Bute, however, was so afraid of the power of the planter lobby that he agreed to return both to France, in addition to the former Neutral Island of St Lucia. Britain gained only Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tobago, none of which had any significant sugar growing capacity.

Thus the power of the planters to protect their interests reigned supreme. Britain lost the opportunity to solve her sugar problems, to drive the French from the West Indies and to reduce the capacity of France to wage later wars. Also, by allowing Guadeloupe and Martinique to remain French and thus outside the legal trading sphere of the Northern Colonies, she was later to lose her territories and markets in North America.

# Chapter VII

# From Peace in Europe to War in America

The Seven Years War had left Britain in a disastrous state financially. Before the war her national budget had averaged about £7 million but in 1760 it had risen to £15 $^{1}/_{2}$ million.[1] She not only had to bear the costs of the war, but her huge territorial gains in Canada and Florida had to be protected if they were to be retained and such an increase in the empire required a complete remodelling of the Administration.

It was not only the European powers which resented the new empire, many Indian tribes had peacefully co-existed with the French, who tended to leave their homelands undisturbed. The British North Americans on the other hand tended to expand their settlements into new territory and the Indians saw this as a threat to their hunting grounds and livelihoods. Towards the end of 1763 there were a number of serious Indian uprisings (Pontiac's Conspiracy) on the frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. To restore order, the Proclamation Act was passed which defined areas which were to be left to the Indians, but the Act was almost impossible to enforce and was resented by the colonists, whose expansion was restricted.

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1. Watson, *The Reign of King George III*, pp. 16-19

# CHAPTER VII

The traditional way to finance wars and expansion was to increase taxation at home. True, the colonies had to pay tax, but this was at a lower rate and it was administered by the colonial assemblies, usually being spent on their own local projects. In 1763 however, Britain was already the most heavily taxed nation in Europe and Parliament dared not make further increases without the risk of strong political opposition. The anticipated response from the English taxpayer was that the colonies paid lower taxes, so if more money was needed to defend them, they themselves should pay for it.

Such logic could not be ignored by the new Prime Minister, George Grenville, and he determined to raise the money by imposing duties on trade. First he introduced the Act of Trade of 1764, (widely known as the **Sugar** Act) in which he increased the duties of certain imports into the Northern Colonies, including their molasses from the West Indies. This was followed a year later by the Stamp Act, which placed duties on postage, newspapers, pamphlets and legal and commercial documents.

Both were greatly resented in the Northern Colonies, not only because of the money but because the control of tax paying and expenditure was being taken out of their hands. They responded by forming a number of opposition groups dedicated to boycotting British goods, refusal to pay debts owed to British merchants and threatening behaviour towards tax collectors.

Grenville, always the hard liner, was in favour of force to put down the "rebellious colonists" but before he could do so, George III replaced him with the more moderate Lord Rockingham, who defused the situation by repealing the controversial Stamp Act in March, 1766. At the same time, though, he passed the Declaratory Act which gave Britain "full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and peoples of America in all causes whatsoever."[2] Taxation was not specifically mentioned, but such general terms could not be said to exclude it.

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2. McFarlane. *The British in the Americas,* p. 256

# C H A P T E R VII

The opposition groups fell silent, but awaited later developments. Although peace was restored, the North Americans had sensed their commercial power and with this came awakening dreams of independence. Given time, the moderation of the Rockingham administration may have healed the rifts and relations may have reverted to their former basis, but that administration fell later in 1766. It was replaced by a return to government of William Pitt the Elder and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend. This new administration had no moderate intentions and quickly reimposed import duties, also revising the system of collection to make them effective.

The new duties caused the immediate regeneration of the opposition groups and so effective were their trade embargoes that the duties were again withdrawn, except on tea. As before, the withdrawal of the duties did nothing to dampen the growing anti-British feelings in the colonies.

Since the worsening of relations between the two countries basically arose from trade, we should look briefly at the commercial developement of the Northern Colonies. The trading potential of the Northern Colonies in 1770 was greatly different to what it had been at the start of the century. Then, the Navigation Acts which had restricted trade to England and her colonies had been no great burden.

Now, despite some relaxation of trading laws, the limitations imposed by the mother country were becoming an intolerable burden. True, these limitations were being partly circumvented by the illegal trading with the French, Spanish and Dutch West Indies. This smuggling, which had started many years previously, had been refined before and during the Seven Years War and was still continuing. Northern merchants and producers were feeling increasing resentment at their exclusion from what they considered to be legitimate markets, and the fact that they could be fined or imprisoned for simply earning their living. Their displeasure may even have been increased by the fact that many of the restrictions were at the insistence of a fellow group of colonists, the West Indian planters, who were anxious to keep their trading monopolies and

to prevent their foreign competitors from receiving cheap American produce.

Whilst the West Indian planters complained about North American smuggling to the other sugar islands, they were not really hurt by it. Although sugar prices fell after the Seven Years War due to increased production, the markets in Europe and America were increasing so fast that the trade remained highly lucrative. It simply meant that the planters had to compete in a wider market instead of one over which they could exercise firm control to ensure high profit for little effort. Even without the market factors they would probably have had to change their tactics, as there is evidence that from the 1750s, there had been a growing public opposition to their selfish control of their product. Before and since the recent war merchants' groups had been increasing their pressure on the British Government to allow purchase of sugar from foreign producers, to reduce prices and break the West India Interest's monopoly.[3]

Despite their pleas of poverty, the British planters were in a financially sound position. In the early 1770s, the average net worth of a white in the West Indies was almost £1,000, whereas that of his counterpart in the Northern Colonies was only around £74.[4]

It is of interest here to mention that although trade was booming in the British, and to a slightly less extent the French, sugar islands, the same could not be said of the Spanish. British colonial trading regulations, although abhorrent to the North Americans, were very relaxed in comparison to the Spanish. Until around 1778, when Spain had to move with the times by introducing her "Reglamento de Commercio Libre", her archaic trading restrictions and high taxes prevented her Caribbean territories from becoming exporters and international traders. This

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3. Peter A. Coclanis, "The Wealth of British America on the Eve of the Revolution", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1990, 21:245-260
4. Ibid.

reduced Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo and Cuba to the status of poor, largely self sufficient agricultural colonies instead of rich monocultures.Even when Cuba eventually began to be a major sugar producer, she obtained her supplies more from North America than from her Spanish neighbours.[5]

By the end of the 1760s, 14% of total British imports came from America, compared with 6% in 1700.[6] About 58% of North American exports went to Britain, 27% to the West Indies and 14% to Southern Europe. It was not just production that was booming, the various commodities had to be carried and shipping and transportation expanded to meet the need. It was estimated that at this time, transportation earnings exceeded those of America's primary export, tobacco.[7]

A nation whose trade is expanding normally feels the benefit in an improvement of living standards and despite the huge number of immigrants flooding in, this was the case in the Northern Colonies. This is not to say, of course, that all Americans were rich, but any increase in living standards raises the quantity and diversity of goods purchased and this in turn creates a desire to buy your goods in the market of your choice. In other words, this was another reason not to be bound by British laws and tarrifs, or to have to deal through British merchants who would only extend credit at high interest". A further disadvantage of being tied to Britain was the British banking crash of 1772, which caused some American bankruptcies.

Even in 1770, however, it could not be said that the total sentiments of North America were anti-British. Many still felt a strong affinity with the mother country. After all, they had defended the borders of their colonies against foreign aggression and some had even fought for Britain itself, as in the capture of Quebec.

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5. McFarlane, p. 241
6. Ibid, p. 237
7. Ibid, pp. 238-9

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It was to change the sentiments of such people that a number of political rabble rousers emerged, intent on using every excuse to incite rebellion, as in the "Boston Massacre" of 1770, when British troops opened fired on a rioting mob, killing five of them. Many such agitators were from poor backgrounds and seized the opportunity to become public figures, and thus gain power and influence normally enjoyed only by the wealthy.

It may be that the British Government underestimated the level of opposition in her colonies; in any event, she soon found that even the most moderate attempts to introduce legislation only stiffened resistance. An example of this was the Tea Act of 1773 which would actually have reduced the price of tea in the colonies but because it still carried a tax, the agitators were able to bring about the famous "Boston Tea Party" of 1773.

The events leading up to the eventual Declaration of Independence of 4th. July, 1776 and the course of the war which followed are well documented elsewhere, but they give rise to an interesting question. Why should one group of colonies, the North Americans, seek independence when another group, in the West Indies, chose not to?

The reasons can be analyzed quite simply. Firstly, after the Peace of Paris in 1763, the French and Spanish had been largely removed from the North American continent, whereas they remained a distinct threat in the Caribbean. Therefore, the Northern Colonies felt no necessity to contribute towards defense costs whereas the West Indies felt such defense vital for their survival.

Secondly, the West Indian planters had a powerful lobby in Parliament which was very effective in protecting their interests and ensuring that no detrimental legislation was passed, whereas the North Americans had no such power bloc to fight their case.

Thirdly, the North Americans remained in their colonies and built their lives there, whereas the planters, having made their fortunes, returned to England. It is a fact that some absentee planters in England had never actually seen their plantations, having inherited them. Basically it could be said that the West

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Indian planter was an Englishman working abroad, whereas his American counterpart was an emigrant. It is the nature of the emigrant to acquire nationalistic feelings towards his new country.

The fourth major difference was in trading potential. The planters were faced with a single basic crop, sugar, which relied heavily on political influence to maintain it's high price and monoploy markets in the face of cheaper foreign competition. Also, their production acreage was limited and their soil becoming exhausted, so they could not expand in an independent market. The Americans on the other hand had a wide range of goods to offer, almost unlimited potential for expansion, and instead of political protection for their products, they had only restrictions and taxation. To them, the benefits of independence and free trade were undeniable.

Britain began her war with America under a number of misapprehensions. She overestimated the degree of British loyalty remaining in the colonies and failed to appreciate and prepare for the logistics of supplying an army 3,000 miles from home. It had originally been thought that one or two decisive battles would crush the rebellious colonists and that only a token naval force would be required. This latter aspect was considered important because although even a large fleet could not blockade the long American coastline, it's presence in American waters would be considered by the French as a potential threat to their West Indian territories. There were rarely more than 70 British ships on the American station and many of these were used more for protecting British shipping from American privateers than for blockading. American tobacco and other commodities continued to find their way to the West Indies and Europe, and provided the Americans with funds for their war effort.[8]

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8. Ian R. Christie, *Wars and Revolutions,Britain. 1760-1815*, London, pp. 114-118

# C H A P T E R VII

Owing to these miscalculations, the war was still in progress two years later when other foreign powers decided it was time to intervene. The French were quick to take advantage of the fact that Britain was engaged in a difficult and costly war. They saw this a both an opportunity to take revenge on Britain for defeats in the Seven Years War and at the same time gain a firm foothold in the lucrative and expanding American market. In February, 1778, they signed a treaty of commerce and alliance with America.

This was a grave blow for Britain. Realizing that the continuance of the war was was no longer in her interest, she had already made overtures of peace to the Americans, but these had been rejected. The entry of France into the war now meant that not only would the Americans be supplied by the French, but the English Channel had to be defended to prevent invasion and naval forces would again be needed to protect the West Indies. The crisis deepened in 1779 when Spain also entered the war as an ally of France.

The West Indian planters suffered more in this war than in the previous conflicts. British naval protection was overstretched by it's involvements elsewhere but more seriously, the islands could not be supplied with provisions from the North American colonies. Prices of such staples as flour rose to more than double and there was an actual risk of starvation. This was particularly true in the Lesser Antilles, and it is said that in Barbados in the decade up to 1783 the slave population declined by over 10,000 as a result of malnutrition and natural disasters.[9]

Records of Island Council meetings at this time all told the same story, that without American provisions they could not survive.[10] Jamaica was a little more fortunate in that she was large enough to grow some of her own produce and could still be

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9. Parry, *A Short History of the West Indies*, p. 117
10. Dominica, C.O. 71/6, 1775-77; Barbados, C.O. 28/60, 1782-86

supplied by British held areas in the southern colonies but even so, she was forced to report her plight to England.[11]

It was not only incoming supplies which created problems for the planters, they had great difficulty in sending their products to the markets. In the first year of the war the amount of sugar reaching the London market had fallen by 50% and freight and insurance rates had risen sharply. This gave rise to renewed calls from the London merchants to be allowed to buy foreign sugars but the planters, although in dire straits, were reluctant to allow a practice which once started, would be very difficult to stop. They used their influence to reject the merchants' pleas, although they had later to accept some imports from Dutch Guiana while it was in British hands.[12]

There was one aspect of this war which made it different from the earlier conflicts of the century. The necessity to protect England herself and to provide troop and trade protection in the American conflict meant that Britain no longer had naval superiority in the West Indies or the ability to blockade the French ports. The French Navy meanwhile, under the competent guidance of the French Minister Choiseul, had attained a high state of efficiency and the Spanish, although not so well manned, had new ships of French design.

Naval superiority had long been the key to British strategy and once that was lost, so were the islands. Dominica was the first to fall in September, 1778 and although Britain took St.Lucia three months later, this could not prevent the loss of Grenada and St Vincent in the summer of 1779.

It was not only the Royal Navy which prevented the French and Spanish from totally conquering the British West Indies, natural forces and differing tactics played their part. In the first

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11. C.O. 137/71, 1775-77
12. Parry, p. 117

place, the journey by sailing ship to the Caribbean and back was a lengthy process and the months of the hurricane season had to be avoided. This left relatively little time to conduct a campaign. So far as tactics were concerned, it had long been British policy to maintain naval squadrons in the West Indies which over time, allowed their crews to become acclimatized to local conditions. The French, on the other hand, favoured sending fleets only when required. This meant that their men arrived with no immunity to tropical diseases, so they had to find and engage the enemy quickly while still fit enough to do so.

As if being at war with France, Spain and America was not enough, Britain faced a further problem. The Dutch owned a free port on the island of St. Eustatius in the Lesser Antilles, which served as a huge base for supplying war materials to the Americans. While Holland remained neutral there was little Britain could do about it but when the Dutch Government agreed to recognize the independence of America in 1780, Britain declared war on her. This made St. Eustatius a legitimate target and Admiral Rodney took it with little opposition in 1781. When it fell there were found to be over one hundred and fifty ships and vast amounts of contraband goods. The three Dutch South American colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice were taken soon after, but it was said that Rodney, ever greedy for prize money, was too busy counting his gains on St. Eustatius to attempt Curacao, and he shortly afterwards returned to England.[13]

The war continued to go badly for Britain. Her defeat at Yorktown, Virginia, had released the French fleet under de Grasse to sail to the West Indies and during 1781 the French recaptured St. Eustatius, together with the three Dutch South American colonies and Tobago. The Spanish retook Florida and captured New Providence in the Bahamas.

St Kitts capitulated early in 1782, closely followed by Nevis and Montserrat, but in the case of these islands, the inhabitants

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13. Ibid, p. 118

received very generous terms from the French which allowed them to retain their lands and possessions.

It was at this point that events turned in Britain's favour. Rodney returned with a fleet from England and joined with that of Admiral Hood. Their combined strength of 36 ships was roughly equal to the 34 French ships under de Grasse and the opposing fleets met at the Saintes, between Dominica and Guadeloupe. Rodney deployed his forces brilliantly and after he had destroyed nine of the enemy's capital ships, the French flagship, the 112-gun "Ville de Paris", surrendered.[14]

This battle was significant in that it destroyed French naval supremacy in the West Indies and paved the way for Britain to seek a peace on reasonable terms. The nation itself was weary of a war which it knew it could not win in America, but in the British Parliament, bitter arguments were raging over whether to sue for peace and if so, what terms should be offered. Lord Shelburne, a leading British politician, was in favour of granting generous land concessions to the Americans, both to secure their future trade and to persuade them against backing unreasonable claims from the French. Shelburne's political rivals felt his terms were far too generous and voted against them. Shelburne resigned and ironically, his successors used those self same terms to complete the Treaty of Versailles in March, 1783, thus ending the war. It is of interest to note that taking part in these negotiations was William Pitt the Younger, twenty three years old, already Chancellor of the Exchequer, and destined to become a leading figure in the years to come.

Under the Treaty of Versailles, France, although hoping for major gains in the West Indies, failed to get the American support she needed and ultimately received only Tobago and St. Lucia. In return she had to restore to Britain St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Dominica, Grenada and the Grenadines. Britain reluctantly

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14. Watson, *The Reign of King George III*, p. 218

returned Florida to Spain and gave up her claims to Minorca, but retained Gibraltar and her rights to cut logwood in Honduras. She also recovered her islands in the Bahamas. To the Dutch, Britain eventually restored all her conquests.

Although Britain had lost a lot of territory under the treaty, Pitt the Younger had been instructed by Shelburne to reach a preferential trade agreement with the Americans, and his country had retained the strategic bases necessary to allow her navy to protect this trade. As we shall see in the next chapter, the theory was not so easily put into practice.



*William Pitt, the younger*
*(Library National Portrait Gallery, London)*

# Chapter VIII

## From American Independence to the French Revolution

Following the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, Britain was looked upon by many of her European neighbours as finished, a second rate power which had lost a very significant part of her empire. In Europe, France was allied with Spain, Austria and later Holland. Austria was allied with Russia against the Turks and Prussia saw no benefits of further British alliance. Having no direct allies, it was therefore imperative for Britain to start rebuilding her commercial machine if she was to have any hope of regaining her place on the international scene. As always, though, agreement as to how this should be accomplished was the subject of much disagreement and manoeuvring for benefit between the various political power blocs.

The British West India Interest had suffered badly in a war with which they had never agreed, and had fared no better in the peace. America, their second largest market, was no longer guaranteed to them and of equal importance, was no longer obliged to supply them with their provisions.

Their representatives in London immediately requested that their trade with America be restored on it's prewar basis, but for once their pleas were denied. The trade agreement between Britain and America so hopefully drawn up by Pitt was not well accepted in Parliament. Lord Sheffield had drawn up a paper entitled "Observations on the Commerce of the American States" which favoured a hard line with the

newly independent nation, and an increasing number of politicians found themselves in agreement.[1] The new United States was a foreign power, and would be treated as such. Even when in 1785-6 the Americans made further trade overtures, these were largely rejected. There was a firm belief that the continuance of the Navigation Acts was the only way to ensure continued British prosperity. Almost a decade was to pass before relations between the two countries would really improve.

Pitt's proposals were rejected and an Act of 1783 spelt out the new policy. Sugar and it's by-products rum and molasses, coffee and pimento could be exported to the United States as if she was still a colony, and grain, flour, bread, livestock and timber could be imported, but only in British ships. Fish and meat could not be imported, so the West Indians must obtain these from the Canadian territories or Ireland, albeit at higher cost.

In an attempt to get around the new Act, petitions were made for Britain to join and extend the Free Port system, whereby foreign ships could use various nominated ports to tranship cargo to and from colonial ships on an open trade basis. The French had been operating this system since the war and were doing brisk trade with American ships. Although the British Government considered this they felt it went too far against the Navigation and Trade Acts which had stood for 120 years, and declined to take immediate action. It has also been suggested that whilst the planters were asking for the extension of free ports, they wanted to manipulate the system so that they got the supplies they needed but as always, they wanted foreign sugar excluded. This would have been against the whole free port principle and it is not surprising that the government were reluctant to be associated with it. Finally, after long consideration, Britain accepted that the free ports did encourage trade and they temporarily revived the system during 1786-7 whereby foreign ships could bring goods into Britsh colonial ports. Sugar and molasses were, of course, excluded.

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1. Ian R. Christie, *Wars and Revolutions*, p. 166

# C H A P T E R VIII

The inevitable result of this was a resurrection of smuggling but even so, the prices of provisions and barrel wood, essential for sugar exports, rose astronomically. Added to this was increased duties on sugar, raised to help pay for the war. Although the quantity and value of the sugar being sent to England was increasing, most of the profit was going to the London merchants rather than the planters. Even Jamaica, which had more capacity to grow it's own food, was badly hit by hurricanes in 1784, 1785 and 1786, and it was reported that 15,000 slaves were lost due to famine.[2]

Part of the reason for the exclusion of American shipping from the West Indies stemmed from outstanding disagreements after the war. These included, on the British side, debts owed by Americans to British merchants and compensation for the confiscation of loyalists' property and on the American side, compensation for slaves removed by Britain during the war and recognition of the new northern boundaries.

The West Indian planters cared little about these differences, they considered their supplies of much greater importance. If American ships could not trade with them, they requested an extension of old existing legislation which empowered island Governors to declare an emergency and open their ports to foreign ships. The British Government responded in 1788 with an Act which permitted trade with friendly foreign islands in times of need, and they also provided grants to alleviate the damage caused by an abnormal frequency of hurricanes, but it would still be a while before Americans were allowed to trade freely.

For the first time in many years the planters, for all their political influence, were suffering. They could no longer direct policy as they had done in the past and without the power of the Establishment behind them they began to fall into decline. To stem the tide, they realized the dangers of relying on a single product and their

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2. Parry, *A Short History of the West Indies*, p. 12

dependence on imported provisions. They began programmes of diversification of export crops and also of growing more home produced food but whilst they achieved some success, sugar remained the main product. Their fortunes were to revive for a while, not because of diversification, but due to revolution and war amongst their French competitors.[3]

Despite the problems in the West Indies, trade within Europe itself soon settled down after the war. Even France and England decided for once to lay aside their emnity and try to help each other's trade rather than destroy it. England had always been reluctant to trade with France as it was thought that such trade would be improving the economic strength of a rival. In these difficult times, however, commerce of any kind was welcome. The two nations reached agreement in a trade treaty in 1786, under which each was to welcome the other's ships into her ports on a "most favoured nation" basis, and many of the restrictive duties were abolished. Both felt the the arrangement would suppress smuggling and be to their mutual benefit and it certainly helped Britain, whose exports to France reached record levels by the late 1780s. The agreement was supposed to run for twelve years, but would eventually be terminated by the French Revolution.[4]

Although now a trading partner France, like her ally Spain, was secretly delighted that Britain had lost her American colonies. Also, the two countries perceived the sorry state of the British West Indies and set about improving their own Caribbean territories. France's sugar colonies boomed, especially St. Domingue, which became known as the richest colony in the world. Thanks to her "Reglamento de Commercio Libre" of 1778 Spain also saw great increases in her transatlantic trade, taking advantage of colonial commerce which had previously been the province of the smuggler. At the same time she revised her own colonial administrative and tax collecting procedures. This

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3. Ibid, pp. 113-121
4. Chris Cook, *Modern British History, 1714-1979*, 1988, p. 245

caused some local disturbances, but not on the scale of those in British America. At this time both France and Spain felt that their West Indian possessions were better prepared to fend off any future British expansionism than at any other time during the century.

It was in the late 1780s that Britain began to emerge from the European political wilderness in which she found herself at the end of the American war. Circumstances in Europe rendered it desirable for Prussia and the Dutch United Provinces to sign a triple alliance with Britain in 1788. Part of the southern Netherlands was under the control of Emperor Joseph of Austria and his attempts to rationalize the local administration there had led to a revolt. The other European powers feared that France may take advantage of the unrest to increase her influence in the area. The strategy of the Triple Alliance required the Southern Netherlands to be stable to prevent such French expansion, so they used their combined powers of persuasion to compel Joseph to abandon his reforms.

The support of Prussia under the Triple Alliance was beneficial to Britain in another incident which was to prove significant later. This was the dispute with Spain in 1790 over Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, on Canada's Pacific coast. Captain James Cook's three voyages of exploration, carried out between 1768 and 1781, had opened Western eyes to the vast trading possibilities with China. The problem was that there were few goods in which the Chinese were interested to exchange for the tea, porcelain and silks which the West sought. One of the exceptions was furs and when Cook discovered Nootka Sound in 1778, he identified it as a suitable base from which to conduct such a trade. With the approval of their Government, a group of British merchants soon set up a base and began trading.

On learning of this, Spain was quick to raise objections. Although she was a declining power, she still claimed the monopoly of trading in the Pacific and South Atlantic which

had been hers in her days of greatness. Britain, however, had never accepted that Spain had any territorial claim north of what is now California, but what was then part of Spanish Mexico.[5]

In reinforcement of her claim, Spain began to arrest trading ships and breaking up the settlement. When news of this reached London, William Pitt had to act, sure in the knowledge that any hostile action by Spain would cause a public outcry. Any Government which did not take firm steps would lose public support, and a general election was approaching. Consequently, it was decided to threaten Spain with war if she did not renounce her claims to the Pacific Northwest, and Vancouver Island in particular. Spain, without her traditional ally France, who was split by internal troubles, had to reluctantly concede defeat but to her, the matter was far from forgotten.

The internal troubles being experienced by France were, of course, the French Revolution of 1789. What started as an internal matter would eventually affect every country in Europe and lead to 22 years of almost continual war.

In it's early stages, the revolution was received in a variety of ways by the British Establishment, according to their political preferences. Radicalism, the desire for change in the political order of things, was nothing new in England and some saw the French as setting a shining example of the masses throwing off the oppressions of the elitist few. Some even saw it as "France at last trying to win some of the treasures of English Liberty for herself".[6] Charles James Fox, flamboyant, a great orator and a traditional political rival of William Pitt, described the fall of the Bastille prison in Paris as " the greatest and best event in the history of the world". Another great man of the time, Edmund Burke, quickly wrote his

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5. Muriel E. Chamberlain, *Pax Britannica? British Foreign Policy, 1789-1914*, London, Longman, 1988, pp. 23-4
6. John W. Derry, *Politics in the Age of Fox, Pitt and Liverpool*, London, 1994, pp. 71-73

# C H A P T E R VIII

"Reflections" on the revolution, stating the opposite view, that it would lead to "blood, war, tyranny, and a destruction of human rights". William Pitt, meanwhile, decided that it was prudent to keep his opinions to himself until events made it necessary to publicize them or they could be used to political advantage.[7]

Initially, the various reform movements in England, fired by the French example, took on a new lease of life. The Society for Constitutional Information, suspended in 1784, was revived in 1791 and the Corresponding Society and the Society of Friends of the People were formed in 1792. Such societies were encouraged and used by those who wished to disrupt civil order, and the forebodings of Edmund Burke were derided.

The sentiments felt by some at the start of the revolution, and the tolerance of the reform societies, began to change as events in France became more violent and excessive, and Edmund Burke began to be praised for his farsightedness. Also, the influence of the rabble rousers against the ruling classes was becoming a cause for concern particularly in the urban manufacturing areas, as in the case of the Birmingham riots of 1791.[8]

Even without the events in France it is likely that opposition to the old order in Britain would make itself felt. The population was growing, and more of it was centred in the urban industrial centers. (London by then had over one million inhabitants). Although agriculture expanded to meet rising needs, more of the nation's strength came from commerce and industry and the responsibility for this lay in the hands of the "middling classes", the skilled workers and artisans. Many of these people resented the fact that major policy was still decided largely by the landed elite, and such policy could severely affect living standards.

Realising that they could do little alone, they followed the example of the West Indian planters and began to form groups

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7. Watson, *The Reign of King George III*, p. 323
8. Ibid, pp. 323-25

and societies. Although they did not have the wealth to buy the influence which the planters had enjoyed, they had another ally in a flourishing and expanding press. Sale of newspapers increased rapidly in the early 1790s and it was through this medium that consistent demands were made for economic and political reform and the reduction of patronage. These demands became more radical and revolutionary as the decade progressed, and the influence of the press on the general public increased.[9]

Whether or not this new upsurge of radicalism would have changed the established order in England will never be known, as the country had shortly to unite to face the prospect of yet another European conflict.

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9. H. T. Dickinson, *British Radicalism and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*, Oxford, 1985, pp. 1-5

# Chapter IX

# The French Revolution and War with England

The general public in Britain were for the most part unconcerned about the situation in France at the start of the Revolution. They had no great love for France, the Old Enemy, and anything which caused problems for the French was likely to be to England's advantage. The British saw it as an internal problem which would keep the French occupied and so divert their attention from foreign trade and conquest. It was generally thought that things would settle down in the end, probably with a more democratic form of monarchy which would more likely be prepared to peacefully co-exist with her neighbours. In any event, few envisaged that the troubles would spread beyond France's borders and as such, they posed no direct threat. Until such a threat became apparent, or France tried to spread the Revolution abroad, there was no need for intervention. Neither seemed likely, but both were to happen in 1792.

The direct threat to British interests came from the Austrian Netherlands, (the Low Countries, modern Belgium), which Austria had acquired from Spain in 1713 through the Treaty of Utrecht. In November 1792, the French Revolutionary armies drove the Austrians out of Belgium, and on the 16th of that month, the new French National Convention issued a proclamation promising that the River Scheldt would be open to navigation.

The fate of the Low Countries had always been regarded as a vital British strategic interest, but Britain's attitude to the Scheldt question had not always been consistent. This river gave access to

the port of Antwerp and as such was of significant value in wartime, being conveniently sited to send fleets against England. It was because of that strategic value and the threat it posed that it had been closed to navigation since the Treaties of Munster and Westphalia in 1648. The question of whether the Scheldt should be open or closed arose many times during the 17th and 18th centuries and even the British felt on occasions that it's opening would be beneficial to their trade. In 1792, however, Britain was firmly against it's opening and considered the French proclamation as an act of war. Now, France was in control of Belgium and looked likely to invade Holland in their quest to spread their revolutionary ideas. For England, no rival Great Power, and certainly not France, must control the Low Countries and William Pitt's Government took their stand that the treaties of 1648 should be upheld.

Two months earlier, in Septemper 1792, King Louis XVI of France had been deposed and on November 19th, the French National Convention issued another proclamation offering to help all people who were struggling to free themselves from their monarchs. This was a challenge which the British Government could not ignore, particularly in the light of the wave of radicalism which had arisen at home.

Britain watched the events across the Channel with growing concern. The King's arrest was followed by the September Massacres and France seemed to be approaching total anarchy. The subsequent execution of the King would finally bring home the seriousness of the situation and realization slowly dawned that war would be inevitable, perhaps even desirable. Matters were confused by the uncertain position of the French Ambassador, the Marquis de Chauvelin, who was frequently excluded from negotiations.[1] As he had been appointed by the Crown, which no longer existed, did he still have diplomatic status?

In December, 1792, France asked Britain to formally accept Chauvelin's status as their Ambassador, which would have

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1. Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, Vol. 2 pp.199-202 & 210-211.

implied acceptance of the new French Republic. Britain felt disinclined to give a quick response in the face of a rapidly changing situation, although negotiations over the opening of the Scheldt were still continuing. In the meantime, French informers in Britain were sending home misleading reports over the levels of civil unrest in the country, which gave the French hopes that the British public would rise to support them as they had on the arrival of William of Orange a century before. In November, a French diplomat in London had been instructed to "block the hostile intentions of the British Government by increasing the number of our Friends among the London Merchants, as it is usually them who determine opinion over war or peace". A reference to the West India Interest, perhaps?[2]

Matters came to a head on 23rd. January, 1793, when the news of Louis XVI's execution reached London. Two days later, Ambassador Chauvelin was ordered to leave and his arrival in Paris on 29th. was greeted with much anger. On January 31st, France took the decision to attack Holland and on February 1st, the French Convention declared war on Holland and England, renewing their invitation to the British people to rise and join them.[3]

At this stage, Britain could not be certain of the reactions of the other European nations and had to wait to see what alliances were formed or offered before deciding upon a policy. One thing was certain,though, large numbers of fighting men were going to be needed, but although almost 150 years had passed since Cromwell's military dictatorship during the English Civil War, there was still a traditional distrust of a large standing army in peacetime, and the preferred way to fight battles was by the hiring of foreign mercenary troops. There was no conscription, or even the compulsory enlistment of criminals, a traditional way of increasing the ranks, if not the quality.[4] Despite this, the new French

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2. Black, *A System of Ambition*, p. 241.
3. Chamberlain, *Pax Britannica?*, p. 26
4. Ehrman, p. 478

peoples' army was a formidable force to be reckoned with and in preparation for the battles to come, the British Army as a whole was strengthened greatly during 1793. The army estimates for early 1794 show figures of 175,000 regulars, 52,000 militia, 16,000 in Ireland, 40,000 Fencibles and 34,000 hired foreign troops.[5]

The navy in 1793, however, was "in an unprecedented state of preparation".[6] Much repair and rebuilding had been carried out in the 1780s and adequate manning was assured for the navy from the merchant fleets and fisheries. It was for this purpose among others that the Newfoundland fisheries were encouraged, but settlement in that area was prohibited. In this way, a large pool of experienced England-based seamen could fish the seas in time of peace but were readily available for naval service in time of war.

New standards of hygiene had helped to improve the health of the fleet in Europe but despite great efforts, illness was still a problem within the West Indian Squadrons. Navy hospital records as a whole show 31,600 sick and 2,200 dead out of l00,000 in 1782; some 21,400 sick and 990 dead out of 81,700 serving in 1794; and some 12,000 sick and 1,600 dead out of 100,000 serving in 1804. These figures show the improving trend in health conditions.[7]

Of all the requirements for naval expansion the most important was that of manpower. The requirements quoted by Parliament approached the highest since the American War; 45,000 for 1793, an increase of 20,000 from 1792; 85,000 for 1794, and 100,000 for 1795.[8] There were various ways to raise men: by the naval royal bounty, by contracting with independent agencies, by encouraging

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5. Fortescue, pp. 216-18.
6. P.L.C. Webb, *The Rebuilding and Repair of the Fleet, 1783-93,* in Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, L, no. 122, 194.
7. Christopher Lloyd and Jack L.S. Coulter. *Medicine and the Navy,* III, 1961, p. 183.
8. Christopher Oprey, *Schemes for the Reform of Naval Recruitment. 1793-1815,* M.A. Thesis, University of Liverpool, 1961, p. 31.

extra bounties and inducements from corporations such as Lloyd's and Trinity House, and by the pressgang itself.[9]

The navy was the essential instrument of any British strategy; the conveyor and cover of troop movements and supplies, the guardian of trade, a means of denying supplies to the enemy, and the first line of defence if the homeland was threatened. The latter function fell in the province of the Channel Fleet, whose performance in 1793 had generally been disappointing. An example of the limitations of sea warfare at the time is demonstrated by the battle known as the "Glorious First of June". In this, a British fleet under Admiral Howe brilliantly defeated the French fleet from Brest but at the same time, a large convoy of American grain bound for France managed to slip by below the horizon and make land. Thus, although the battle itself was a victory, the whole purpose of tying up the French fleet and blockading France to prevent her supply was a failure. The time had not come when Britain could wield naval power "as an absolute mistress".[10]

The fact that American ships were supplying France with grain raises a significant point. France had taken the decision early in 1793 to open her ports to American shipping, and the Americans were taking full advantage of it. St Domingue provided a great shipping market both for planters fleeing the negro uprisings with their possessions and those who remained trying to ship out their produce as soon as the opportunity arose. Whenever the British captured a French colonial port they would continue to allow the Americans access and take the opportunity to stock up with provisions.

Britain was obviously concerned that France was being supplied by America under a neutral flag and orders were issued in November, 1793 to seize American ships in the Caribbean which

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9. Ibid.
10. Capt. A. T. Mahan. The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812. II, 1893, p. 372.

were suspected of carrying contraband. 250 ships were stopped and searched, 150 of which were seized.[11] This predictably angered the Americans and eventually, in 1794, the Jay Treaty was agreed upon. This treaty settled most of the points of disagreement which had been unsolved since the American war ended in 1783 and set up an arbitration system to deal with the rest. (It has been said that modern arbitration began with the Jay Treaty.)[12] It also allowed that American ships carrying war materials for a foreign power could legitimately be taken, but those carrying foodstuffs could not be confiscated, the cargo instead being purchased in full by the arresting power.

An equally important clause gave American ships of under seventy tons the right to trade with the West Indian islands, provided that sugar, molasses cocoa and coffee taken to the United States was not re-exported in American ships.[13] Although the United States did not accept the re-export clause, the trading agreement itself at least answered some of the continued pleas from the West Indian planters which had bombarded the British Government during the preceding three years.

One great source of concern had been the interruption of commerce with the United States due to the Council of State Orders. They had pleaded for the opening of ports to United States vessels for the importation of lumber.[14] There were more desperate messages from Tobago on the few supplies they were getting from America and exposing their predicament: "We have very few supplies from America this year, whether it is that they intend to starve us in order to ascertain their consequence over us, or to make us suffer for the many captures of their vessels which have been made by British cruisers in these seas, or that their trade is

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11. Ehrman, p. 509.
12. Ibid, p. 512.
13. Ibid, p. 513.
14. C.O. 137/91, No. 29, 1793.

directed into some new channel; whatever be the reasons we are the sufferers and it is almost impossible for the West India Islands to exist without the assistance of the American States."[15] Similar messages were sent from Jamaica, Nevis, Antigua and most of the other islands and all said the same. Without American trade the West India islands were lost. The West India Planters and Merchants wrote a formal Memorial to Henry Dundas explaining: "That your Memorialists are impelled by the present critical situation of the West India Islands respecting their intercourse with the United States of America. That the British West India Islands, containing 500,000 Black and about 50,000 white inhabitants have been for many years greatly dependent for food and other articles, and that by no internal resource can they render themselves independent of such a supply."[16] The Jay Treaty at least allowed for some of these problems to be alleviated.

Another of the planters' perrennial calls was for more military protection. The Saint Domingue insurrections by the black slaves and mulattos roused great apprehensions in the British islands and they requested additional naval and military forces to be sent immediately in case of negro revolts.[17] In response, the government sent one regiment of foot from Barbados to Jamaica.[18] In 1792 there were several reports from the planters that there was reason to believe that there was a fifth column in the Islands of British subjects who were French sympathizers trying to promote insurrection.[19] The Assembly of Jamaica pleaded for more slaves from Africa, due to a series of bad crops and public calamities.[20] There were several recommendations for the future of the islands,

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15. C.O. 318/17, April 26, 1794.
16. C.O. 318/17, 1794.
17. C.O. 318/17, Nov. 3, 1791.
18. C.O. 318/17, Whitehall, Nov. 11, 1791.
19. C.O. 318/91, Dec. 8, 1792.
20. C.O. 137/91, Nov. 8, 1792.

among them were conquering all of the French islands, encouraging the African trade, and allowing the Americans to supply grain and lumber but not to bring fish or manufactured goods.[21] The request for forces, both naval and military, was a constant plea as the war progressed.[22]

Although Britain had found it necessary at the outbreak of the war to await developments before formulating a European policy, there was one sphere in which long experience had shown that some preparation was necessary. This was the familiar battle ground of the West Indies. Following the American War, Pitt and the Government had followed a policy of reducing the army presence in the Caribbean due to the new trading accord with France, but this policy had been reversed in 1791 when it was feared that the negro uprisings in French St. Domingue might spread to the British sugar islands.[23]

At the outbreak of the war, Britain had 6,000 troops in the West Indies with a small reinforcement promised. Plans were made for an attack on St Domingue, partly because during the slave uprisings of 1791 and 1792, the French planters there had offered allegiance to the British Crown in return for military aid against the uprisings and also their uncertainty over the attitude of France's new revolutionary leaders towards men of wealth.[24] With the possibility of a French war looming, they had been given a friendly hearing. British Secretary of State Grenville had agreed that "in such an event, our attention would naturally be turned to the West Indies." St Domingue could not

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21. C.O. 318/17, Jan. 16, 1794.
22. C.O. 318/17, May 7, 1795.
23. Letters from Sir George Yonge, at the War Office, P.R.O. 30/8/193, 348, 358; Dundas to Pitt, October 15th, 18th, 1792, P.R.O. 30/8/157.
24. Pitt's copy of the Manifest of 1791, from the Island's Assembly. P.R.O. 30/8/149.

survive independently and he would examine means to place it "under the sovereignty and protection of England".[25]

The French planters on Guadeloupe and Martinique had also made similar requests for protection from England.[26] Britain had tried to use these factors in the final abortive peace talks as a means of preventing a French fleet being sent to the West Indies.[27]

Britain had not been able to take action until war was declared but the Jamaica command had been ordered to prepare for action against St. Domingue. British Secretary of State Henry Dundas thought success would be "of infinite moment" in both the East and West Indles, but as it turned out, the East Indies were left to themselves for over a year.[28] In the West Indies, though, arrangements were immediately made at the outbreak of war to strengthen the offensive, particularly when it was learnt that a French expedition was on it's way there.[29]

The main targets were to be St Domingue, Martinique and Guadeloupe. Many members of the British Government had long wanted to possess them but time and again, the West Indian planters had used their influence to prevent this for fear that it would lower their sugar profits. Now, however, the fact that the French planters were prepared to swear allegiance to England due to the situation in France and the instability of the slave population seemed to render the taking of those islands that much easier, and the pleas of the British planters for once went unheeded.

The campaign began well with the taking of Tobago in April, but an attempt on Martinique in June was abandoned. In June

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25. Grenville's Notes on meeting with M. Malouet, January 1st. 1793, W.0.1/85.
26. Pitt to Hawksbury, December 17th. 1792, ADD. MSS 38192.
27. Grenville to Auckland, February 4th 1793, F.O. 64/27, no. 17.
28. Dundas to Sir James Murray, April 16th, 1793, W.O. 6/7.
29. Pitt to Grenville, June-July 1793, H.M.C.Dropmore Papers, 402-3.

also, the Governor of Jamaica was authorized to accept a capitulation from St. Domingue if this should subsequently be offered.[30] This capitulation was eventually received in September of that year and a frigate squadron with 700 troops arrived to take possession of the fortified harbour of St. Nicholas Mole.

Their arrival was welcomed by the French planters because news had just been received of further unrest amongst the negro slaves in the north, and the presence of the British force dissuaded French republican sympathizers on the island from taking offensive action. The British were able to occupy strategic points along the north coast to secure the Windward Passage to Jamaica, but the smallness of their numbers rendered their position precarious. The British Government had authorized the raising of white and mulatto militias but this was not successful due to uncertainty that Britain would hold her territory and also because of distrust of the mulattos, who were known to sympathize with the negro rebels. The only other possible source of reinforcements, it was thought, was from the Spanish part of Hispaniola, San Domingo.

France had declared war on her erstwhile friend, Spain, on March 7th. 1793, making the latter technically a British ally under the First Coalition, formed between Britain, Prussia, Austria, Holland and Spain herself.

Accordingly, Britain and Spain entered into a treaty of mutual defence on May 8, 1793, the conditions of which were as follows:

1. A promise to engage in perfect concert.
2. Spain and Britain to engage in the same common cause in the war against France.
3. British and Spanish vessels shall convoy the trading vessels of the two nations in the same manner that each convoys it's own.

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30. W.0.1/158, June, 1793.

4. The two countries to engage reciprocally to shut their ports against French vessels.
5. To prevent neutral powers from giving protection on the seas to France.
6. The two countries promise not to lay down their arms (unless it should be by common consent) without having obtained the restitution of all the dominions, territories or places which may have belonged to either of them before the commencement of war.
7. If one party is attacked, the other party engages to succour and make common cause with him.[31]

This sounded all very well at the time but as we shall see later, the two nations paid little regard to the treaty.

The King of Spain, Charles IV, was a cousin of France's King Louis XVI and when the French Revolution began the Spanish Government had looked with suspicion on the events that followed.

At first, the Spanish people favoured the war against France, and all classes and regions rallied to the call to arms. It became a crusade to sustain the Catholic and Monarchist ideals against the excesses of the Revolution. The Spanish fought bravely, but by 1794 the problem of the continuation of the war was being considered in the Spanish Council of State. Godoy demanded that the war be waged until it could be ended honorably. Meanwhile, in the western Pyrenees the French invaded the Basque country and captured Fuenterrabia and San Sebastian, and later entered Navarre. The Spanish Prime Minister, Manuel de Godoy, had originally demanded the restoration of Louis XVII and the withdrawal of the republicans to American territory, where they

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31. Cobbet's *Parliamentary History, Vol. XXX* pp. 1048-1050.

might found a republic which Spain would recognize, but the successes of the French in the Basque country forced him to reduce his demands.

Revolutionary propagandists had been active in Spain and in Madrid, a conspiracy was discovered which aimed at the proclamation of a republic. These revolutionary symptoms quickened the desire of the government to negotiate a peace and Godoy would eventually undertake negotiations to end the war with France at Basel in July 1795.

Meanwhile, owing to Spanish reluctance to supply troops from Santo Domingo to help with the defence of St. Domingue, Britain's only solution was to bring more reinforcements from home. To this end, after several delays, 7,000 troops under the command of Lt. General Sir Charles Grey and Admiral Sir John Jervis left Portsmouth, England, in November, 1793. They arrived in Barbados in January, 1794 and took Martinique in March, followed by St. Lucia, the Saintes and Guadeloupe, before arriving in St. Domingue in May. It seemed that British strategy was working and vindicated William Pitt's forecast of "Valuable and important acquisitions which we have every prospect of making in the West Indies".[32]

The success was short lived, however. The French fleet, eluding the British naval forces, landed 1500 troops on Guadeloupe. The British were forced to leave half of the island and their numbers were lowered considerably due to battle and disease. In mid-December they had to give up the island entirely and retire to Martinique. Also, the troops in St. Domingue were being dramatically reduced by diseases such as scurvy, cholera, malaria, yellow fever, etc. and by the mulattoe and negro attacks.[33] Also, contrary to public knowledge, it appears that more soldiers suffered from the effects of chronic alcohol and lead poisoning

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32. *Parliamentary Register,* XXXVIII, p. 28.

33. P.R.O. 30/8/350.

than from tropical fevers. This was due to the consumption of "New Rum", rum which had been improperly distilled and which was often processed and stored in lead and pewter containers. This rum was not only consumed for it's alcoholic properties, it was believed by the troops to be a medicine against yellow fever and other illnesses.[34] The situation was so bad that there were even suggestions from a Thomas Brown to bring soldiers and sailors to the Caicos Islands for convalescence.[35]

In the meantime, the British Commanders Jervis and Grey had been recalled to England by Henry Dundas and censured for their method of exacting prize money. It was standard practice at the time that when a military objective was taken, military supplies and items of public ownership were taken as "prizes", and their value shared out amongst the victors, the commanders, of course, taking the lion's share. Where private property was concerned, however, it was accepted that the victors show restraint and allow private individuals to keep their property, other than war materials, if this did not pose a future threat. In the current case, it appears that the British Commanders had been over zealous and high handed (one could say greedy,) in their seizing of prizes. This prompted the British planters to make a formal complaint to Henry Dundas in which they stated "their lively apprehensions of eventual injury and ruin to the British interest in the West Indies, from the violent and unprecedented exercise of power by order of Commanders Jervis and Grey against the private property in the capture of West India Islands."[36]

In the West Indies, islands were apt to change hands with some regularity, and it was fair to assume that the actions of the victors of today would be copied by the victors of tomorrow. Thus, the

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34. R.N.Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats, The British West India Regiments 1795-1815,* Yale University Press, 1979. pp. 100-101.
35. Thomas Brown to Williamson, Nov. 20, 1795, W.O. 1/62.
36. C.O. 318/17, February 7, 1795.

# C H A P T E R IX

British planters feared that the actions of Jervis and Grey would set a precedent if the French were to be victorious at a later date.[37]

The casualties amongst troops in St. Domingue had caused Jervis to look again at the possibility of raising local militias seasoned against disease, but there still existed the problem of ethnic feeling. The French planters owed support to Britain in return for assistance, offered in a formal agreement containing assurances of their rights.[38] The planters alone, though, were insufficient in number and only the colored population could fill the demand.

In an effort to solve the problem, a very controversial decision was reached. The suggested solution for ensuring the support and loyalty of the negro population was to offer them their freedom after five years of army service, and Jervis thought this would bring forth sufficient numbers to ensure that important sections of the island could be secured.

This course of action was not well received in London and when Henry Dundas heard of it, his response was immediate. He replied "I am of the opinion that if the services of the negroes could be obtained by pecuniary gratifications, it would be far preferable to the measures of promising freedom to them, which if carried to too great an extent would inevitably create the most serious evils."[39] The raising of fresh negro levies for the defence of the Windward Islands were expressly forbidden without further instructions.

One can only speculate that if Britain had been more sympathetic to the feelings of the negroes and mulattos and persuaded them by better incentives to join the British forces, operations in the West Indies may have taken a different turn and

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37. C.O. 318/17, May 2nd. 1795.
38. W.O. 1/58.
39. Dundas to Williamson, October 7, 1794, W.O. 1/60.

the French islands may have been taken without the necessity for such vast and expensive reinforcements from England. As it was, the British had to contend not only with the decimation of their numbers by disease, desertion and enemy action, but also the depredations of the negroes and mulattos.[40]

In Europe, Holland had fallen to the French and there was immediate concern over Dutch possessions in the East and West Indies. The Dutch Stadtholder William V had escaped to England and had given his general approval for any future British actions. Britain had been looking with interest at the Dutch colonies for several years and now, with the Stadtholder's approval and the necessity to prevent them from falling into French hands, she saw her opportunity. Orders were sent out to take the Dutch West Indian territories, but these orders were later withdrawn.[41] Such rapid changes of policy were a frequent factor in West Indian campaigns.

The situation in the Caribbean was deteriorating. Guadeloupe had been abandoned, Martinique and St. Lucia were held but the British garrisons were weak and the British Windward Island forces were in a poor state. In St. Domingue the force was reduced by fighting and disease and confined to the western bay. The British Royal Navy no longer enjoyed supremacy in the Caribbean and privateering was rife.

Despite the sick and demoralized state of the army, however, the determination of the British Government to continue the campaign was unabated. Reinforcemnts were sent early in January 1795, but due to administrative delays and a shipboard epidemic, their departure was delayed.[42] The policy had to be changed

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40. Ehrman, p. 360.
41. Dundas to Major Gen Vaughan, nos. 5, 6, 7, 11, 19. February 19, 1795, W.O. 1/83.
42. Dundas to Williamson, no. 1. January 9, 1795, W.O. 1/62.

from grand designs of conquest to one of trying to hold on to the territory they already possessed.[43]

Even this holding strategy was ineffective. The native Caribs on St. Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada rose in rebellion in the spring of 1795, and St. Lucia had to be abandoned in June. At the same time, the Maroons (runaway slaves) began an uprising in Jamaica and although it was quelled by December, it tied up troops which could otherwise have been sent to St Domingue, where Toussaint L'Ouverture had emerged as a rebel leader.

The situation eventually became so bad that Britain had to reverse her previous policy and it became necessary to raise "Black Corps" to replenish the British losses, but one condition was set. It was "absolutely necessary not to raise expectations of freedom among enlisted slaves".[44] Before this stringent order had arrived, though, some of the commanders had promised emancipation after five year's service.

And so in 1795, the West India Regiments began what was prove to be a long and illustrious career. By April of that year, nearly all the British islands set about raising such black corps. Antigua, for instance reportedly had enlisted 1,000 slaves by August 1795 and in St. Christopher the number exceeded the size of the militia. Trained in the principles of light infantry tactics, these troops were paid when mobilized. The corps could not be removed from their colonies without the consent of both the colonial and the home government.[45] Not all the colonies, however, were able to raise the required numbers and early in 1796, to swell the ranks, resident blacks, unemployed lascars, and even several Portuguese were enlisted in Britain and shipped to the West Indies. Even this failed to meet quotas and it was decided that the only

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43. Dundas to Williamson, February 19, 1795, W.O. 1/62. no .2.
44. Dundas to Vaughan, June 4, W.O. 1/62, no.4 and no. 16.
45. R.N. Buckley, *Slaves In Red Coats*, p. 52

alternative was to purchase black slaves specifically for military duty.[46]

To this end, Secretary of State Henry Dundas stated in a letter to the Leeward Islands Commander, "As it appears impossible to procure Negroes for these... Corps except by purchasing them for the Government, I am to signify to you His Majesty's pleasure that you are to authorize the Officer commanding his Majesty's forces in the Leeward Islands to procure in this manner the number that may be necessary for this purpose".[47] It has been said that many British acivities during the war in the West Indies were shrouded in secrecy, making a complete understanding of Britain's wartime operations very difficult.[48] At this time the movement for the abolition of slavery was gaining momentum in England and it is not surprising that the Government was reluctant to risk public disapproval of the purchase of large numbers of African slaves for military purposes.

In 1797, the British army in the West Indies would find it necessary to take steps to prevent it's new negro recruits from falling under the jurisdiction of the local slave laws. In April that year, the British Commander, Sir Ralph Abercromby, declared under his own authority that any member of the Black Corps found permanently unfit for further military duty was to be given his freedom. Unfortunately, however, not only did the colonial legislatures refuse to acknowledge the free status of discharged black soldiers, but the British Government never officially endorsed the action.[49]

Meanwhile, 1795 saw another significant event in Europe. On July 22nd, Spain withdrew from her coalition with her European allies and made peace with France under the Treaty of Basle. One

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46. Ibid. p. 53.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid, p. 49.
49. Ibid. p. 70.

of the provisions of this treaty was that Spain should cede her part of Hispaniola, San Domingo, to France in exchange for prisoners of war and Spanish territory captured by the French. Charles IV agreed to serve as mediator in the general restoration of peace and Godoy was awarded the title "Prince of the Peace" for his success in preserving the territorial integrity of Spain.

The cession of Santo Domingo to France was a sad blow for England as it was of importance strategically in her operations in neighbouring St. Domingue. In fact, Britain had hoped to gain Santo Domingo in eventual peace talks by supporting Spanish territorial gains in Europe itself. Having said this, the colony had given rise to friction between Britain and Spain during their brief alliance, London claiming poor military support and harrassment of shipping, and Madrid alleging attempts at British takeovers. If Spain had given Britain so little West Indian help whilst the two were allies in war, she was even less likely to do so in the peace. In fact, judging on past experience, she was more likely to ally herself with France against Britain.

By the end of the year, therefore, preparations were in progress in England to send an even greater force to the West Indies to deal with the San Domingo question. They could not resort to open conquest, as Britain and Spain were not yet at war, but they saw no reason not to occupy any location which the Spanish abandoned, before the French could do so.[50]

The British government felt by this time that a new approach to tropical warfare was needed, and this would require a man of special talents and long experience. A new chapter in the campaign was about to start with the appointment of Sir Ralph Abercromby as Commander in Chief of the West India forces.[51]

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50. Dundas to Forbes, Most Secret, Nov. 4, 1795, W.O. 1/62.
51. See Appendix I, Biography of Sir Ralph Abercromby.

# Chapter X

## The Empire Strikes Back

On being appointed to the West Indies command, Sir Ralph Abercromby appraised the situation in the Caribbean and its British possessions and recommended to the Prime Minister, William Pitt, that "to ensure peace in the area, Guadeloupe should be recovered".[1] He went on to say that in order to conquer Guadeloupe a Force superior to those used in Europe might be required. "It is in the power of H.M. Ministers to adopt an offensive or a defensive plan. The instructions given in either case must correspond with the force."[2]

Over 15,000 troops with a naval squadron and adequate provision for medical advice and supplies were assigned for the winter expedition of 1795 and the government felt confident that such a force would bring success. St. Domingue was initially the main objective and the commander there, Major General Forbes, was informed that "you will be reinforced by an armament which...cannot fail to carry everything before it."[3]

This substantial expedition was double the size of Grey's and served an integrated command. It's mission was to recover lost territories, master the Caribbean and to ensure "acquisition of places for indemnity at the peace."[4] It underlined the rising

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1. Abercromby to Pitt, July 14, 1795, P.R.O. 30/8/107.
2. Ibid.
3. Dundas to Forbes, Most Secret, September 30 1795, W.O. 1/62, no. 2.
4. P.R.O. 30/8/335.

emphasis on overseas gains as events changed. The withdrawal of Spain as Britain's ally in the war against France necessitated a reappraisal of the strategy to be adopted in the Caribbean. "I am inclined to think", Pitt wrote, "that our Plan must now be changed, and that the only great Part must be in the West Indies to counter balance the enemy in Europe, in particular the cession of San Domingo makes it a new question."[5]

At the end of 1795, the government and people were restive after three years of expense with no apparent return. Fear of the French revolution remained vivid and patriotism had deep roots.[6] The country was growing tired of disappointments and failures. The English King, George III, was much in favour of the West Indies expedition, declaring in Parliament, "the great force which has been collected and sent to the West Indies...together with future additions ought to have sufficient time allowed for it to be seen what success may be obtained in that part of the globe".[7]

Further impetus for the West Indies campaign came with successes in Austria which relieved the English pressure in Europe. It was hoped that the mere size of the West Indies force would persuade the enemy to surrender those possessions which England sought without a battle. They could afford to await results, probably in the spring, which could play a mayor part in bringing France to terms.[8]

The expedition was inordinately delayed. The date for completion of the preparations had already been postponed from the first half of September to the first week of October, but this in turn passed before General Abercromby was given his instructions by the King, on October 9, 1795. In those instructions the King

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5. Pitt to Chatham, August 3, 1795, P.R.O. 30/8/101.
6. Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt.* Vol. 2, p. 603.
7. *Parliamentary Register,* XLIII, p. 2.
8. Grenville to Eden and Whitworth, Most Secret, December 22, 1795, F.O. 7/43, 65/32.

ordered the capture St. Domingue and the granting to the population there of "favourable and liberal conditions". Any islands which were secured were to be allocated garrisons.

The Dutch territories of Demerara, Surinam, Berbice and Esequibo, by then in French possession, were to be attacked. These settlements were to be respected and should they be retained by England after the peace, they would enjoy similar trading rights as the other British islands. The Dutch settlements should not be attacked before St. Lucia and Guadaleoupe, as this would weaken the British forces. British troops from Cork, Ireland, would be sent to St. Domingue, because that territory was considered so important that as soon as Abercromby considered the campaign in the Leeward Islands sufficiently advanced, a subordinate should be left in command and the Commander of the forces proceed to St. Domingo to take control. Any port in the island which had been Spanish but was now ceded to France could be legitimately attacked. The success of the mission would depend greatly on a good understanding between sea and land forces, so this aspect should be carefully considered.[9]

On October 10th, Abercromby received further instructions from Dundas in which he is told to remove the trouble making Charibs (also referred to as Caribs), from St. Vincent and to transport them to Rattan on the Mosquito Shore or the Bay of Honduras, in Central America. He also stated that full current instructions would be prepared regarding the procedures for seizing of property and prizes in the conquered islands, to avoid a repetition of the excesses committed by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis.[10]

Previously, on September 28, Dundas had instructed Sir Ralph "that a force of about 3,000 men be sent to Barbados as soon as

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9. King George III to General Abercromby, October 9, 1795, W.O. 1/84.
10. Dundas to Abercromby, Oct. 10, 1795, W. O. 1/84; Dundas to Advocate General, Sept 1, 1795,W.O. 1/84.

ships are available. The initial force to Barbados must be under the command of a General officer, who immediately on arrival should obtain all possible intelligence respecting the state of Martinique and of the British colonies devastated by the enemy or some local revolts. If any island requires relief, he is to provide it. It would be preferable, though, if the force remains at Barbados until you arrive. Based on our intelligence from Demerara and other Dutch settlements, it is likely that the inhabitants there will ask to be placed under the protection of this force. You are to decline, stating that a larger force is en route."[11]

By this time, the prevailing westerly winds of autumn had set in but when they relented early in November, the expedition was still not ready to sail. The reason lay mostly in the late arrival of East and West Indian transport ships needed to carry so large a force and its supplies. Dundas was agonizing over the delay and lamented to Abercromby "that an expedition determined upon six months ago, should not be in a state to sail seven weeks later than its appointed time".[12]

On November 16, the fleet sailed down the Channel in a light breeze, watched by crowds along the coast. Two nights later a gale set in, catching the fleet off Portland, sinking some of the transports and forcing the rest back to Portsmouth. It sailed again on December 3. Once more, it was caught by a gale which held Abercromby himself, on board the escorting flagship, in the mouth of the Channel for seven weeks, until he was driven into port once more. Some 30 transports had returned by then; the other 100 disappeared into the ocean, whether to the West Indies or the bottom was unknown. Most of them in fact reached their destination in ones and twos. It was the end of February before the remains of the fleet finally sailed, Abercromby preceding them and arriving in the West Indies in March 1796.[13]

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11. Dundas to Abercromby, September 28, 1795, W. O. 1/84.
12. Dundas to Abercromby, November 3, 1795, W.O. 1/84.
13. Ibid.

# C H A P T E R X

This catalogue of misfortune necessitated a change of strategy. As the initial delays had been caused partly by the absence of foreign troops expected from Germany, and since they were intended for St. Domingue, offensive operations were postponed in that country. The initial change of plans would have enabled St. Lucia to be attacked at the same time as Guadaloupe by revision of troop dispositions in the Leeward Islands.[14]

The further setback in December, however, caused severe problems and there was much conflict of opinion as to how the campaign should proceed. Considerable risks would have to be taken whatever was decided, and there were strong divisions in the Cabinet which were resolved only as Abercromby left. These decisions concerned local strategy but raised a more far-reaching question, for whatever was done, the season (before the hurricanes returned) would now be "advanced.. .before operations can commence, so much so indeed that they could not be prosecuted with full effect until the end of 1796".[15]

One aspect of the conduct of warfare in the 18th. century was the sometimes almost bewildering rapidity with which the choice of strategy and objectives was altered, particularly in the West Indies. This was due to various reasons, among them the fact that contemporary technology could not overcome the ravages of weather or the problems of long distance communication. Another reason was that instead of a Joint Command of experienced military men as in the present century, the course of the war was decided mainly by the King and his Ministers who for all their ability in administration had usually no military experience. Add to this that the politicians making the decisions were sometimes swayed more by their commercial or political interests (as with the Planter Lobby) than the national interest, and the reason for the confusion becomes more apparent.

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14. Dundas t.o Abercromby, Most Secret, November 23, 1795, W.O. 1/84.
15. Pitt to Grenville, January 3, 1796, H.M.C. Dropmore, III, 166

# C H A P T E R X

An example of this occurred on January 10th, 1796, when Sir Ralph received yet more instructions from Henry Dundas. Now, he was to proceed against the French possessions in St. Domingue, securing all the posts, forts and military positions there, even if he forego the enterprise against Guadeloupe and St. Lucia. He was only to attempt these latter two islands if he should receive information that indicated little or no resistance in either of them and even then, such action was not to delay the main expedition to St. Domingue.

With regard to the Spanish part of St. Domingo, if the treaty between Spain and France was applied and Spanish Santo Domingo was ceded to France, that territory was to be considered French. In the event that the Spanish population felt averse to be under French rule and they requested to be under British protection, Abercromby should not agree to such a request until it became apparent that any significant part of the Spanish area was in danger of falling into French hands, in which case he should listen to any such proposition. In the event that the Spanish actively assisted the French, they were to be regarded as Britain's enemies and treated as such.[16]

In a further letter of the same date, Dundas repeated his regret at the late departure of the expedition and expressed fears that if the campaign against St. Domingue was left for a further year, the weakened state of the island would strongly tempt the enemy to retake St. Nicholas Mole and the other areas in British hands. If the French were to do this and to also take over Spanish Santo Domingo, there would be no way it could be retaken later in the year by any force Britain could muster. If, however, the British forces could take it during the current campaign and also ensure the security of other possessions, Dundas felt that by the following autumn they could send an adequate force against Guadeloupe

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16. Dundas to Abercromby, Most Secret and Separate, January 10, 1796, W.O. 1/85, no. 23.

and St. Lucia. If a peace was achieved before the autumn campaign, Britain would be in a much better bargaining position by being in full possession of St. Domingue than if they held Guadeloupe and St. Lucia.[17]

King George was very concerned with the state of the West Indies fleet and it's inordinate delay in England. On February 3rd, Dundas sent yet another instruction to Abercromby. In this, he reported the King's concern about the delayed departure of the expedition, as he felt that had it departed on time, the whole of St. Domingue could have been taken. Indeed, it was still considered that this objective was more important than any other in the Caribbean. Owing to the lateness in the season, however, it had been reluctantly accepted that no protracted campaign in St. Domingue could now take place. Abercromby was told to reinforce all the island garrisons, including Martinique,then given a series of alternative options from which to choose. He could either a) try to take more ports in St Domingue or b) strengthen the ones already held, then attack St Lucia, or c) try to retake Grenada or St. Vincent or d) try to take Demerara, although St Lucia was considered more important. He was told that whatever he decided, he was to leave a garrison of 3,000 men as a reserve on Barbados as a standby for the defence of any island which may fall under attack.[18]

It was often the case that even before an order had reached it's destination, another was on it's way countermanding it. Such imprecise instructions placed a heavy responsibility on the Commander in the field and of course, helped to remove embarrassment and responsibility from the politicians back home if things went wrong. We are reminded of the unfortunate Admiral Byng, who made a wrong decision at Minorca during the Seven Years War and was subsequently court martialled and shot for it! Another important point is emphasized, though, in that an attack

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17. Ibid.

18. Dundas to Abercromby, Secret, February 3, 1796, W.O. 1/85.

on a specific island did not necessarily mean that island formed part of a grand strategy. Rather, it was a case of "take anything which looks easy, we can keep it or trade it when the war is over." This point must be borne in mind when we later consider the 1797 attack on Puerto Rico.

After the fleet had departed for the West Indies, there were overtures for a peace, presented by the British Ambassador in Berne. Neither the King nor many of his Ministers really wanted the negotations to succeed and George III was counting on a rejection of the terms by France, although Pitt was hoping for acceptance. Events proved to the King's satisfaction. Neither the French nor their principal allies were interested. Barthelemy, the French Ambassador, returned an answer which crushed any hopes. All British colonial conquests should be restored before they would consider sitting at the peace table. The Government in Britain published the main exchanges, in order to demonstrate its good faith to its allies.[19]

Spain's attitude was in doubt, and there had been rumours from the previous autumn that she would sign an alliance with France. The British tried to reach a settlement of differences with her on the basis of neutrality, but the Ministers were half prepared for the eventual unsatisfactory results.

Once peace had been restored between Spain and France under the Treaty of Basle, Spanish Minister Godoy decided to strengthen the ties of friendship between the two countries. The organization of the Directory as a form of government had given a degree of legality to the French Republic in Spanish eyes. Furthermore, a Franco-Spanish alliance seemed to be in Spain's best interests because of the continued grievances of Spain against the British. By the Treaty of San Ildefonso of 1796, an offensive and defensive alliance was agreed between Spain and France against Great Britain. Spain remained neutral toward the other nations with which the Directory was at war. Charles IV made Spain again a

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19. Ehrman, p.606.

French satellite and placed the Spanish fleet at their disposal. Secret clauses prohibited any French emigre from service in the Spanish navy, obliged Spain to declare war on Great Britain and provided for the surrender of Louisiana to France when Gibraltar was secured. Later in 1796, Spain would again be at war with Britain.

In August 1796, two months before the formal declaration of war by Spain against Britain, there were suggested plans for the conquest of the Spanish colonies by Nicholas Vansittart, Baron Bexley, a younger son of the governor of Bengal, who later became Chancellor of the Exchequer (1812-23). He was of the opinion that owing to their climate and position, it would never be possible to take and hold Spanish possessions in the West Indies or on the coasts of Central America. Instead, he laid forth a proposal for Britain to take Spanish possessions in more temperate areas, starting with Buenos Aires as a staging point, then rounding Cape Horn to take Valdivia and Valparaiso, then making claim on Peru and Mexico before ranging into the Pacific to take Manila.[20] It seems that little credibility was given in political circles to plans such as Vansittart's. An unathorized expedition in 1806 did briefly capture Buenos Aires, but this was not part of any grand strategy in South America and only succeded in rallying the local creoles to the Spanish cause against Britain. As a result of this, Britain changed her policy briefly to one of supporting creole revolutionaries in an attempt to overthrow Spanish authority from within. However, this new policy was very short lived, as in 1808, Napoleon took the Spanish throne, making her once again an ally of Britain, who then reverted to upholding Spanish claim to her colonies.

The idea of destabilizing the Spanish hold on South America from within was nothing new. Britain had considered it earlier in the century as an alternative to direct conflict with Spain. It may be that she had received earlier requests for support from Spanish American revolutionaries, but one specific instance from 1797 is

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20. See Appendix II. Plan of N. Vansittart for the Spanish colonies. MSS 31237, August 1796.

worth mentioning. This approach came on October 15 of that year from Pedro Joseph Caro, an envoy of Francisco de Miranda (the precursor of Spanish American liberation). This took the form of an impassioned plea for Britain to supply 5,000 men, a squadron of ships and war materials to aid an uprising in the territory of Santa Fe and a subsequent blockading of the Spanish authorities in the port of Cartagena. This in turn was supposed to spark uprisings throughout Central and South America. In return, once liberation was completed, Britain was to receive trading concessions on a "most favoured nation" basis.[21] Once again, it seems that no action was taken in support of this plan at the time.

Even Sir Ralph Abercromby himself had a plan for the liberation of South America, one of his favorite causes.[22]

Six years before Vansittart's plan for the conquest of South America, the British Ambassador to Madrid, Alleyne Fitz-Herbert had written to William Pitt in June of 1790 about what he had observed in political circles at the Spanish summer capital of Aranjuez where the Royal Family spent their holidays. He observed that Spain in 1790 was "entirely bent upon a war with Great Britain though they refrain from commencing hostilities under the presumption that their persisting in their present denial of satisfaction will produce such reprisals on our part as may afford them a pretext to complain of hostile aggression, and on that ground to demand the assistance of France." In other words, the Spaniards wanted Britain to lose patience and resort to acts which would give Spain reason to join with France against her. He then reported on numbers of frigates and ships of the line sent to America and advised that "the infantry does not exceed 20,000. But the military is numerous and well disciplined."[23]

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21. See Appendix III, Letter from Caro asking for British Aid in the Liberty of South America, October 15, 1797, F.O. 72 /45.
22. See Appendix.IV.
23. Alleyne Fitz-Herbert in Aranjuez to Pitt, June 16, 1790, ADD MSS 6958/4, f. 813.

# C H A P T E R X

Four months later the Duke of Richmond wrote to Pitt of a plan for the West Indies which had obviously been maturing even at that early stage, and which confirmed the mutual suspicion between Britain and Spain, even though war would not be declared until 1796. Already in October 1790, there was mention of 6,000 British disposable troops in the West Indies, "very ample for taking Trinidad, and for any other expedition to New Orleans – and I do not think there is any other object that presents such a probability of success. The Havana, Hispaniola and Porto Rico appear to me to be too great an undertaking at first – as any operation that requires a regular siege is destructive in the West Indies, and a great loss of men in the beginning of the war would cramp all our future operations." The Duke of Richmond was of the opinion that "Trinidad and New Orleans seem to require but few men and perhaps Buenos Aires might also be carried with the force you mention." He did not "see other alternatives except the places on the north side of South America such as the Caracas, Porto Bello or Carthagena." It seemed to him that they should not be undertaken "till Trinidad is in our possession, because it gives a good port to Windward and a communication with the Continent from whence we may get intelligence and perhaps assistance from the inhabitants in South America whom could be given arms to revolt against the Spanish authorities. If France should take part in this undertaking by the side of Spain, Tobago, would be an object of some value and worth taking if it can be done easily. St. Lucia would be an invaluable acquisition on account of its harbour but it has to be considered carefully because the works had been strengthened by the French since the Peace and a regular attack would not be advisable."[24]

It is plain that though diplomatic relations were maintained, each country was aware that they were sitting on a powder keg, waiting for an incident to make it explode and then resorting to conquests planned well ahead. The fact that Spain and France had been strengthening their fortifications and that intelligence

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24. Ibid, f. 857.

on the others' colonies was gathered by each country confirmed the fact that a war between Spain and England was expected long before it was declared.

Sir Ralph Abercromby in the meantime had returned to England in the spring of 1796 after an inconclusive campaign, and was considering the implications of Spain joining the war. Dundas wrote to him in September to update him on the current situation in St. Domingue, where Maj. Gen. Gordon Forbes had been left in command. Forbes had reported that the island was in a precarious state and that despite reinforcements received from the Leeward Islands, no significant offensive had been possible. To gain advantage would require much greater resources of troops and money than Britain could possibly supply in view of her commitments elsewhere, either now or in the foreseeable future. It would be necessary instead to look at ways of retaining what they still had, and to decide which type of troops were best suited to operate in the area.

Europeans made up only a small proportion of the total force, most of the remainder by then being colonial and Black Corps. The fact that the French had armed their negroes rendered it necessary to adopt the same mode of warfare, and it would only be by using such troops, who were acclimatized to local conditions, that a war either offensive or defensive could be carried on with success. A credit of £300,000 would be opened in favour of the colony, on which Abercromby would be at liberty to draw up to the sum of £25,000.[25]

By August of 1796, there were fears of an invasion by the French against Ireland, and possibly England itself. Also, the reports from Madrid were disquieting and England felt the necessity to prepare for the worst. By mid September, Spanish ships were ordered to be held in British ports and once that point was reached, there was little hope. After a last spell of procrastination Spain declared war on England on October 5, 1796.

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25. Dundas to Abercromby, September, 1796, W.O. 1/65, no.1.

# C H A P T E R X

On September 28th, 1796, The Earl of Bute, British Ambassador in Madrid, had written to Lord Grenville that "at a distance from the Court I really believe the general spirit of the nation (Spain) to be remarkably averse to hostilities with us, knowing as they do the miserable situation of their marine as well as their finances; indignation likewise at being subjected so completely to the will of the French."[26]

Days before Spain's declaration of war, Dundas wrote again to Abercromby regarding Spanish San Domingo. He was supposed to assist the inhabitants of that colony against the French who were going to take over. No money should be offered, but military stores could be given for the purpose of fighting the French. It was further proposed "that it might be of use to possess the little island of Tortuga, because it is said to be salubrious, abounding in culinary vegetables, cattle and wood, and would afford to watch all the motions of the enemy at Cap Francois."[27]

Spain's declaration of war against England was undated, but when it was finally presented to the Court of St. James in London, it itemized fifteen causes of complaint, viz:

1. The conduct of Lord Hood at Toulon in the expeditions against Corsica. Apparently in an action at Toulon, Hood failed to give any consideration to the Spanish fleet and "attended to nothing but the destruction of what he could not carry away with him". Also , his forces had taken Corsica but he concealed this fact from Spain, so that when Corsican privateers attacked Spanish shipping he could deny all knowledge and responsibility. Spain also alleged that the secret taking of the island was to be later used as a bargaining point in an eventual peace.

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26. Letter from Lord Bute in Madrid to Lord Grenville, September 28, 1796, F.O. 72/44.

27. Ibid, October, 1796.

# C H A P T E R X



*Charles IV, king of Spain*

2. The Jay Treaty which Britain signed with America in November, 1794, which Spain alleged gave no consideration to her rights and interests.

3. A Spanish ambassador, the Marquis del Campo, had apprached Lord Grenville with ideas for shortening the war with France and requested supplies to hurry this about. Lord Grenville gave only a "vague and unsatisfactory answer".

4. Seizure of the Spanish ship "Santiago" and her cargo, and Britain's refusal to restore it. This was one of the many instances on both sides of seizing the other nation's ships on the flimsiest of pretexts, both as a means of aggravation

and for the prize money involved. Britain felt that Spain was condoning or deliberately ignoring the actions of French privateers in Spanish or Mediterranean waters and she retaliated by seizing Spanish ships allegedly carrying French supplies.

5. Detention of Dutch ships carrying naval stores to Spain. The British had detained these ships and allegedly delayed releasing them under many pretexts, preventing them from continuing their journey to Spain until the stores were rendered useless.

6. Allegations that British ships were carrying on an illicit trade and reconnaissance along the coasts of Peru and Chile, claiming a right to do so under the whale fishing provisions of the Nootka Convention. (See chapter VIII, Nootka Sound controversy.)

7. That the large forces sent to the West Indies for attacks on the French islands were to be secretly used against Spanish San Domingo, in order to prevent that colony being handed over to the French.

8. The establishment of English commercial companies on the banks of the Missouri river in America with a view to penetrating through that country to the "South Sea". Navigation along the Mississippi/Missouri system had long been a source of disagreement and incomplete knowledge of the geography of the continent gave rise to visions of easy and advantageous routes to the Pacific.

9. Insults to the Spanish flag in the Mediterranean and of violence commited by English troops in carrying away Spanish conscripts bound from Genoa to Barcelona.

10. Piracies and vexations of Corsican and Anglo-Corsican pirates. As mentioned previously, Spain felt that Britain was encouraging and protecting Corsican privateers in their depredations. Britain no doubt felt justified in this as a retaliation for the actions of Puerto Rico based privateers who harassed British shipping in the Caribbean, despite

complaints to Spain over many years. Britain offered to meet with Spain to discuss differences over privateers, but the offer was not taken up.

11. Detention of Spanish ships loaded with Spanish property and carried to England, particularly the "Minerva". This ship had been carrying a particularly valuable cargo of silks.

12. The threatened arrest of Don Simon de las Casas, Spanish Ambasador in London. This appears to be a classic case of two nations, not unduly friendly toward each other, using foreign ambassadors in a game of mutual annoyance. The same principle is still used today in the "tit-for-tat" expulsion of diplomats. The matter began with the Spanish Ambassador in London, Don Simon de las Casas, secretly being instructed to return to Spain and requesting from Lord Grenville a passport to leave the country. In preparation, he consigned his belongings onto a vessel and part of these became lost. He subsequently received a freight bill for £98 sterling, which he refused to pay without negotiation over the items which were lost. As a result, a writ was issued in the Court threatening his arrest for non-payment of the debt. This immediately sparked a great diplomatic battle, Spain claiming a deliberate insult to herself and Britain replying that the writ mentioned only the Ambassador's name and not his title, the Court assuming him to be a private individual as opposed to a foreign diplomat. Spain further alleged that even after the case was brought to the attention of the British Government, two months elapsed before the action was finally terminated. Britain countered by saying that as the Spanish Ambassador had been given instructions to leave as early as August 1796, Spain had obviously decided to declare war on England before she allowed Britain to investigate and reply to the charges against her.

13. Violations of Spanish territory upon the coasts of Galicia and Alicante by the English ships Cameleon and Kangaroo. In these cases, British warships chased French

privateers into Spanish territorial waters and some of the shot fell on Spanish soil, terrorizing the inhabitants of a Spanish village.

14. The conduct of Captain G. Vaughan at the island of Trinidad. This refers to an incident concerning the British frigate "Alarm" which had called at Trinidad, at that time Spanish and therefore a neutral port. This ship spent much time in the Gulf of Paria, off the coast of Trinidad, where she sank a number of French privateers. A fight broke out ashore between members of the Alarm's crew and some French troops. In response, Capt. Vaughan of the "Alarm" assembled the ship's company and "loaded with colours flying and drums beating" marched to the French camp demanding justice and stating that if the French wanted to fight, he would be happy to oblige them. The situation was eventually defused, but the Spanish felt that such a show of force on their territory was an insult to the their flag.

15. The taking of Demerara. Spain felt that the recent British conquest of the Dutch colony of Demerara was part of a plan to gain a foothold in South America which would subsequently threaten Spanish possessions there.[28]

The alliance forced upon Spain and England by France's declaration of war in 1793 had always been at best uneasy. Spain found herself allied with a traditional enemy, England, against a traditional ally, France. The 18th century was a period when alliances changed rapidly to best suit the interests of a particular country at a particular time, this year's friend being next year's foe. Even so, political expediency changed much more rapidly than a nation's feelings of loyalty or distrust. In consequence each country felt only compelled to give lip service to the alliance whilst in practice looking after their own interests. This inevitably gave rise to grievances on both sides. Spain felt that England

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28. Causes cited by Spain for declaration of War on England, October 1796, F.O. 72/44.

disregarded joint interests when planning her campaigns, which she did without mutual consultation. England on her part felt that Spain was not carrying on the war with sufficient vigour and was only waiting an opportunity to make peace and ally herself again with France.

As soon as the Franco/Spanish peace was concluded it was not a matter of if, but when Spain and England would go to war. The reasons quoted in the declaration of war itself could more reasonably be described as excuses and the fact that the declaration itself is undated would imply that Spain had for some time decided upon war and was merely waiting for the appropriate opportunity.

The correspondence between General Abercromby and Henry Dundas continued, Dundas advising the General on the overall situation in Europe and the changes that had to be made according to the order of events. During October, shortly before the declaration of war, Dundas advised that "since war with Spain seems inevitable, we must watch carefully for any moves, either on her part or jointly with France, for an invasion of Jamaica. If any such plan is perceived, you should immediately go there and take charge of the forces until the enemy is diverted and peace restored, leaving affairs in St. Domingo in the hands of whoever you deem appropriate. To divert the enemy from any such invasion plans, you should endeavor to create the impression with the enemy that Britian intends to attack Havana. If this pretense can be kept up for several months it will cause the enemy to take a more defensive posture."[29]

From the correspondence between Dundas and Abercromby it becomes obvious that the main English objective in the campaign in the Caribbean was St. Domingue. It was the jewel that would top the crown. All the efforts were directed toward the retention of that colony and the acquisition of other islands were an afterthought or a complement towards the evacuation of the French royalists who wanted to leave St. Domingue if it fell.

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29. Dundas to Abercromby, October, 1796, W.O. 1785, pp. 563-569.

# C H A P T E R X

In November of 1796, Dundas wrote again to Abercromby advising him of the latest decisions on the campaign in the Leeward Islands. He informed Sir Ralph that it would be impossible to reinforce the West Indies squadron to the extent that he had hoped, but promised two or three ships of the line and a couple of frigates from Portsmouth. These reinforcements should give a sufficient force to attack Trinidad, if all other circumstances were favorable. Some two to three thousand troops would be made available for the campaign. He went on to say that the King wished to provide for the security and interest of the planters and inhabitants of St. Domingue. There were various contingent plans with the particular difficulties that each would entail. Any alternative plan would be happily accepted if it promised an equal degree of success without further expenditure of resources.

He went on to say "It has ocurred to His Majesty's Ministers that all the requirements of these plans, plus others of a more long-term nature, may be achieved by using those forces intended for St. Domingo, plus any other assistance which may be spared from the Leeward Islands, in an attempt to take possession of the Spanish island of Puerto Rico." Yet he stresses that the "present plan supposes no alteration in the intention which has uniformly prevailed of not abandoning a military and naval post so very essential as St. Nicholas Mole and that in relinquishing the other parts of St. Domingue, you are to provide for its security and defence in the best manner in you power."[30]

Thus, the island of Puerto Rico was about to take centre stage in Britain's plans.

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30. Instructions from Parliament St. to Abercromby for attack on Puerto Rico and Defense of St. Domingo, Most Secret, Dundas to Abercromby, Nov. 13, 1796, C.O. 319/4, pp. 314-342.

# Chapter XI

# England's Designs on Puerto Rico During the Eighteenth Century

Before we continue to consider the attack of 1797, we should look at earlier instances where official archives show evidence of British interest in Puerto Rico during the 18th century. This aspect was nothing new, indeed, she had been the victim of raids and attacks by England throughout the three centuries since her discovery, although none had succeeded in establishing a long term claim. Such attacks became a much more difficult proposition after the mid eighteenth century, when Spain reappraised the value of her colony and made significant improvements to her fortifications and militias.

There were several reasons why the British considered that Puerto Rico may be a valuable acquisition and they were, as always, influenced by the points of view of the parties concerned. To the British navy, Puerto Rico was considered of strategic value because it provided an excellent base from which to control the passage to and from Jamaica and the Caribbean, and the removal of the guardacostas would simplify the protection of merchant shipping and troop convoys. For the same reason, civilian shipping interests favored taking the island as they would be able to operate much more freely with the guardacosta threat removed. Also, those people in England who had the capital and the desire to enter the world of the sugar producer saw Puerto Rico as a relatively large underdeveloped and fertile island upon which they could base their enterprises. Now, at the end of the eighteenth century, it was also being viewed as a sanctuary for planters displaced from other

islands. The only protests against it being taken came, predictably enough, from the established planters on the British islands, ever fearful of the erosion of their monopoly.

At this stage we should look at some of these instances of British interest. In 1706 there was the case of Governor Parke of the Leeward Islands. He was a very colorful character who led a most interesting if somewhat lurid life, and who would ultimately perish at the hands of his own subjects due to his excesses with the island's ladies and his dishonest property trading. He wrote in glowing terms on the advantages of procuring Porto Rico: "If His Majesty will send us 3,000 men and siege materials, we will take Porto Rico. If we had Porto Rico, the land is so good, the island so large, timber enough for building and casks, in seven years we could make sugar so cheap as to be able to undersell the French. On these (British) islands we have to buy all our timber and provisions. Porto Rico is a much better island than Jamaica, for it is the most healthy island in America; if we had that Island, we should draw numbers of people from the barren land of New England, who are there of no service to England, and in Porto Rico every man would be worth to England at least' £200. per annum."[1]

It is interesting to note the motivations of Governor Parke for taking Porto Rico. It follows a pattern throughout the century, the cultivation of sugar, the acquisition of timber, vital for sugar production, and of the provisions which had to be acquired from New England. He was, in 1706, trying to avert a situation which would be critical during the later wars in the Caribbean and during and after the War of American Independence. The total dependence of the British islands on the North American colonies for provisions and timber endangered them whenever there was a disturbance with foreign countries. Another detail in his letter is the number of troops he believes is necessary for the invasion of the island. It is interesting to compare his appraisal of the forces needed with those used in the actual attack of 1797.

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1. Governor Parke to Secretary Hedges, St. Christopher, August 28, 1706, C.O. 239/1, p. 12

# C H A P T E R XI

The response to Governor Parkes' suggestion from Whitehall was negative as far as Porto Rico was concerned but there is no evidence of the reasons for this. Secretary Hedges responded to Governor Parke encouraging him to "find an opportunity to retaliate on the French Islands the violences the enemy have committed at Nevis and St. Christopher, but as to your project upon Porto Rico there are many reasons against giving any sort of attention to it, and I need not enter into them, but rather remind you of what you have in direction already for using your utmost endeavor to persuade and encourage the People under your care to resettle."[2] We can only speculate on the reasons for not wishing to invade Puerto Rico, but in the light of future diplomacy, we might venture to think England did not want to provoke Spain unduly at that juncture and or to upset the balance of power.

Governor Parke was not a man to be placated easily in his determination and the next year, in 1707, he wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations, raising his voice for the acquisition of the island. "The best way to preserve these islands would be to destroy Martinique, or take Porto Rico, and settle all the inhabitants on that one island; the advantage of the sugar trade would more than countervail the charge."[3] At that time, apparently, the sugar barons were not so averse to obtaining more sugar islands as would be the case later in the century.

The last letter we find from Governor Parke was dated in 1710, in which he still insisted on his project on Porto Rico and on his protestations that this "is a better island (take it in all respects) than all these islands." (ie the British Leeward Islands)[4]

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2. Mr. Secretary Hedges to Governor Parke, Whitehall, November 12, C.O. 324730, pp. 117-120
3. Governor Parke to the Council of Trade and Plantations, St. Christopher, January 13, 1707, C.O. 152/6, p.77
4. Governor Parke to the Earl of Sunderland, Antigua, May 11, 1710, C.O. 152/42, p. 18

# C H A P T E R XI

Another British description of Puerto Rico was written by Governor John Hart of the Leeward Islands. Describing the various Caribbean islands, he mentions "Porto Rico is one of the noblest islands in the West Indies for soil, wood and water, the inhabitants are computed at 25,000 persons, few of which are native Spaniards or decendants from them, but the gross of this number chiefly consists of mullatos, mesties, and free negroes, a rude and barbarous people. The Governor and the most civilized part reside in a large city situated on an island within the harbour, fortified after the old Spanish manner and contains by computation about 6000 inhabitants. The harbour is large and commodious and very narrow at its entrance, and commanded by two castles."[5]

Puerto Rico is also mentioned frequently in references to the guardacostas' "depredations" and the problems that were developing over the possession of Crab Island. In 1714 Governor Douglas acknowledged the news of the ceasefire at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession and mentioned that such truce "will prevent the Governor of Porto Rico from any further pretense of seizing any vessels belonging to the subjects of her Britannic Majesty and afford a just occasion of reclaiming those in due form that have been already taken into their ports."[6]

In 1718 Governor Hamilton reported that the Spaniards with "one man of war and six sloops came to Crab Island, (now Vieques, just east of Puerto Rico) demanded the surrender of the island to the King of Spain, carried Captain Howell with them, and after landing killed several of our men and taken others with their wives and children and upwards of 50 negroes and carried them all to Porto Rico."[7] The Governor of Porto Rico chose to ignore the British

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5. Governor John Hart, St. Christophers, July 10, 1724, C.S.P. Col. 1724-25, no. 109
6. Governor Douglas to Earl of Dartmouth acknowledges letter of October 15, C.O. 152/42, Antigua, February 22, 1712
7. Governor Hamilton to the Council of Trade and Plantations, St. Christopher, March 15, 1718, C.O. 152/12, p. 87

demands of restitution and although most of the persons were returned, their effects were kept by the Spanish authorities.[8]

Piracy by the guardacostas under the disguise of controlling illicit trade, and British retaliation against this, was one of the most common causes of diplomatic controversy between Spain and Britain, and was often cited a cause for war. We find numerous documents relating to incidents of Puerto Rican and Cuban guardacostas who confiscated English vessels en route through the Mona Passage (between Puerto Rico and Hispaniola), accusing them of illicit trade.

One such incident took place in 1722 when a Captain Chandler of the British warship Lanceston was sent to cruise the South West end of Hispaniola for protection of merchant vessels, and met and captured a notorious Spanish pirate ship commanded by an Italian, Mathiew Luke. The pirate's crew consisted of fifty eight, chiefly mulattoes and Spaniards from Puerto Rico. They were brought to trial, and the commander of the Spanish vessel pretended that he had a commission from the Alcalde of Puerto Rico to be a guard de la coast. It was proved that the pirates had taken English vessels which were going about their lawful business, nowhere near to or within the sight of any port of Hispaniola. The Judges found all the crew except seventeen guilty of piracy. The forty one found guilty were hanged, and the seventeen who were saved were sent to Europe on various merchant ships. Their later fate is unrecorded.[9]

The Governor of Cuba complained of the punishment given to the crew but Governor Lowes, by way of reply, gave a detailed account of the many depredations commited by the guardacostas and the connivance of the Spanish authorities who were involved

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8. Governor Hamilton to the Council of Trade and Plantations, Antigua, May 1719, C.O. 152/12
9. Governor Lowes to the Council of Trade and Plantations, Jamaica, May 18, 1722, C.O. 137/14

in it. He explained that "among innumerable instances there happened one in which a ship from Guinea with a cargo of negroes bound to Jamaica when passing near Porto Rico met with one of those pretended guard de la coasts who took the ship and carryed her into that Island (Porto Rico) and we have not yet heard what is become of either the ship or men belonging to her. I am sorry I have had so often complaints to make to the Spanish Governors of their guard de la coasts in general who let not one vessel escape them which they can make themselves masters of and have carryed them into Spanish ports where they received all manner of protection from their Governors."[10]

In 1729 there were reports on the nature of Puerto Rico, its resources and fortifications. John Hart, Governor of the Leeward Islands wrote to Lord Townsend informing him that Puerto Rico "is a very fertile island, well watered and capable of producing-everything that grows both on the Islands and Continent of America."[11] He informed Lord Townsend that "the Spaniards are restrained from planting sugar or tobacco, or opening their mines which are said to be rich in gold. Therefore they raise provisions, sell cattle for their hides and tallow. The principal port is esteemed the best in the American islands." He described it as "a deep and commodious Bay, situated in the north side of the island, defended by two castles at the entrance of the bay." He considered these two castles as of "no consequence, and St. John the capital is joined by a bridge to the main wall, and may be bombarded when the entry is forced. By taking possession of the bridge, the city might easily be reduced by famine. The soldiers may be about 2,000 and one fourth are supposed to drill in the town. Whoever is the Master of the town, may in time, reduce the rest of the Island as was formerly done in Jamaica."[12]

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10. Governor Lowes to the Council of Trade and Plantations, Jamaica, July 9, 1722, C.O. 137/14, pp.153-154
11. John Hart to Lord Townsend, May 8, 1729, ADD. MSS. 32694, ff 37-38
12. Ibid.

# C H A P T E R XI

He continued that in order to lead an expedition into the place, a strong naval force with two bomb-vessels and 2,000 regular troops with all equipment would be absolutely necessary. He even ventured to say that once the town was in England's possession a great number of inhabitants from the other British colonies of America might be induced to contribute to the reduction and settlement of the rest of the island. In order to encourage such reduction of the island the Crown should promise a certain number of acres of land to each adventurer free from suit for some years.[13]

Why was John Hart so in favour of the taking of Puerto Rico? He explained in no uncertain terms that the island was a "nest of pirates who, under pretense of being guarda-costas, greatly infest the American seas and make very frequent depredations on His Majesty's subjects, as is notoriously known; and therefore dislodging so troublesome a neighbour, would certainly be a very acceptable service to the public. Nor is it to be doubted, but the situation of this port and island, if we were Masters of them would enable us, not only greatly to annoy the Spanish settlements in those parts, especially Cuba and Hispaniola, but likewise to render their outward bound Navigation of their galleons and flota (treasure fleets) difficult if not impractical."[14] The points Hart exposes in his report summarize very well the constant causes of friction between England and Spain and he emphasizes in contemporary language some of the reasons why England thought of possessing Puerto Rico. He seems to have overlooked the island's strategic position in the Atlantic as a control point for access to the Leeward Islands, but perhaps he felt that Antigua fulfilled this function.

By 1731, the Spanish Court felt obliged to take some measures to minimize the "depredations" of the guardacostas. It was an open secret that despite instructions to the contrary from Spain the Puerto Rican Governors, instead of curbing the actions of the

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13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.

guardacostas, actively encouraged them in return for a share of the profits. The English Privy Council later acknowledged that the Governors of St. Domingo and Puerto Rico had been removed and sent for home to answer to complaints, and that the strictest orders were sent to all Spanish Governors in the West Indies to prevent a recurrence of the situation.[15]

Yet, two years after the Spanish orders to prevent piracy, there is a report of a Spanish sloop which boarded an English merchant ship even though there was no war between the two countries. The English ship was carried to the island of Margarita where the Spanish Governor refused to return the vessels until the crew were tried at Puerto Rico. The captain of the Spanish ship, a man called Simprianus, was reluctant to carry out the Governor's instructions and informed him that "he would drown them in the Passage or put them to shore on some desolate island, rather than send them to Porto Rico."[16] As the British captain lived to tell the tale, we can assume that Simprianus failed to carry out his threat!

So many cases of depredations were reported that Richard Cooper, an agent for St. Christophers, wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantations that "if regiments and men-of-war were sent to protect the islands, the pirates of Porto Rico would be prevented from coming among the Leeward Islands; ships bound to Jamaica would be protected, the French in case of war prevented from carrying prizes into St. Cruz and St. Thomas, and the persons would be discovered who carry provisions and stores to those neutral islands to enable the French to destroy us and our trade."[17]

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15. Minutes of Privy Council, Hampton Court, August 2, 1731, C.O. 5/36, ff.18-19
16. Deposition of Mariner Richard Crawden, Barbados, June 30, 1733, C.O. 28/23, pp. 106-108
17. Richard Cooper, Agent from St. Christopher to the Council of frade and Plantations, London, December 5, 1735, C.O. 152/22, pp.14-17

# C H A P T E R XI

The incidents kept occurring and Puerto Rico was repeatedly cited as the place to which the confiscated ships were taken, without their being returned to the country of origin. Needless to say, this state of affairs did not bode well for friendly relations between the two countries. Suggestions for solving the long standing problem of those semi-official pirates, the guardacostas, were conveyed to the Secretaries of State in England. In 1739, Governor Trelawney of Jamaica suggested that " Havana is the only place of great consequence to take. It would entirely give us the command of the West Indian seas. We are better able to take it and keep it than any other power due to the nearness of the Northern Colonies and our superiority in shipping. Havana is the place from whence the guardacostas have done us all this mischief. If we lose Jamaica we lose our footing in the West Indies; if we keep it, and get Havana, we drive the Spaniard out of the West Indian seas and make their possessions in America useless.[18]

Also in 1739, the same Lord Townsend who had so minutely inquired about the situation in Puerto Rico ten years previously, had not given up his ideas. He is referred to in communications from Martin Bladen, a British Member of Parliament and of the Board of Trade, to William Harrington, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, as being " fond of making a defense on the island of Puerto Rico". Bladen then explains his reluctance for an attempt on the island by saying "I would never approve of it because we have more land already than we can people, more sugar and tobacco than we can dispose of to advantage; and the Spaniards themselves have not yet thought it worth their while to settle that island; which is a kind of lawless retreat only for pirates who call themselves guarda-costas and deserve to be chastised."[19]

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18. Governor Trelawney to the Duke of Newcastle, Jamaica, August 8, 1739, C.O. 137/65, pp.240-242
19. Bladen to Harrington, June 12, 1739, ADD.MSS. 32698, ff.21-23

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It was to be expected of Bladen that he would be against any conquest of Puerto Rico since he received an annuity from the legislature of the sugar island of Nevis, in order to look after their interests. It is another instance among many of the planters' power in the Cabinet and in Parliament to affect foreign policy when their interests were at risk.

During the War of the Austrian Succession (also called "Jenkins' Ear") there were intelligence reports as to the military situation in the French and Spanish Caribbean and enquiries regarding the military defences of St. Lucia and Puerto Rico. The Governor of Barbados reported on the situation of both islands and recommended that "I believe from the strength, situation, or designs at present, the enemy can only act upon the defensive; and as the two places you mention, St. Lucia and Porto Rico, the former has been greatly recruited and strengthened since the commencement of the French War. St. Lucia is an island, both from its situation and consequence of so great importance to Great Britain and the sugar islands, that I am sorry others more nearly concerned in Interest than me, don't place it in such a view. As to Porto Rico, I have always been told the town is very strong, and the Harbour very difficult to enter, and if the Island belonged to a maritime power it might be made one of the most beneficial and important colonies of the world."[20]

Here is another instance of the importance of the island which some of the authorities in the British West Indies conveyed to Whitehall. They all agreed that Puerto Rico had a magnificent harbour, had great richness of soil and timber and was located in a privileged strategic position in the Atlantic passage to and from Europe. They also recognized the fortifications which protected the harbour and throughout the eighteenth century there are repeated warnings that these fortifications would make its attack difficult.

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20. Thomas Robinson, Governor of Barbados and Council, Pilgrim House, September 14, 1745, ADM. 1/305

# C H A P T E R XI

Barely two weeks after the first report from the Governor of Barbados, there was some discussion regarding plans for attacks on St. Lucia and Porto Rico. It was resolved unanimously that "in regard to any attempt that should be made upon Puerto Rico, wherein Governor William Mathew, Governor of the Leeward Islands offered to Admiral Townsend to further all he can any attempt that should be made, wherein he offers to furnish his said regiment of 400 men, and says he could add another 400, that the latter part of the Governor's proposition containing an uncertainty, he does not give sufficient encouragement, from the assistance to be depended on from his Government, to hazard the said attempt; and that if the whole were to be depended on, it would from all that can be learned of the place's strength, in all probability be an attempt very ineffectual".[21] In other words, there were insufficient forces available to take the island.

During the negotiations for peace at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1762, Puerto Rico again became a bargaining point. The English had taken Havana earlier that year and intended to gain the best settlement possible in exchange for this valuable possession. Accordingly, the English negotiators were instructed to demand as an exchange for Havana either Florida or Puerto Rico. The Earl of Egremont, writing to the Duke of Bedford, stated: "It is the King's pleasure that you do peremptorily insist upon one of the two cessions proposed in the 19th Article, as it is of indispensable necessity that a proper compensation should be obtained for the important restitution of the Havannah. The manifest inferiority in value of either of the two compared with the conquest which is to be given up, will afford your Grace irresistible arguments upon this ocassion."[22] The 19th article read: "Conquests on each part made since the negotiations be given

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21. Council of War on Board H.M. Ship Dorsesthire in St. Johns Road, Antigua, September 28, 1745, ADM. 1/305
22. Earl of Egremont to the Duke of Bedford, Whitehall, October 26, 1762, HMC 79, Vol. V, f.47

up on each side".[23] The reference in this case to article 19 referred to Florida and Puerto Rico. This was relevent to Havana, as news of it's capture was only received after the peace talks had begun.

This is yet another instance in which Britain was prepared to consider Puerto Rico only as a bargaining chip as opposed to having designs on the island for its own sake. Ultimately, Britain accepted Florida in exchange for Havana, thus consolidating her colonies along the east coast of North America and removing the Spanish threat to the plantations of the Carolinas, for which purpose the colony of Georgia had been created, to act as a buffer. Although there is no written confirmation, it could be that in view of the strong opposition to the retention of Guadeloupe from the planters' lobby, they could also have opposed the acquisition of Puerto Rico as another potential sugar rival. According to the historian Eric Williams in his book *From Columbus to Castro, The History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969* William Beckford, a tremendously wealthy absentee planter from Jamaica, was a personal friend of William Pitt the Elder, Earl of Chatham, and he states that it was Beckford more than anyone else who was responsible for the decision in 1763 to restore Guadeloupe to France, and no doubt he also had his say in the decision between Florida and Puerto Rico.[24]

The references to Puerto Rico then become scarce until 1774 when Governor Sir Ralph Payne reports on the island, mentioning that the " fortifications were exceedingly advanced and the Militia, being officered by regular officers is very much improved."[25]

The observation agrees with the works done on the fortifications of San Juan after Field Marshall Alejandro O'Reilly's

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23. Earl of Egremont Note to M. Grimaldi, July 19, 1762, HMC 79, Vol. III, f. 18
24. Ibid. f. 132
25. Extracts from Sir Ralph Payne, Governor of the Leeward Islands, June 26, 1774, C.O. 152/54

report to the Spanish King Charles III informing him of the state of the island, which was far from optimistic. (See Chapter XIII) Measures had been taken to remedy such conditions and Payne's observations attested to that fact. Payne continued to explain that due to the little intercourse between the Leeward Islands and Puerto Rico it was difficult to guess the number of its inhabitants and of the proportion of its militia. He emphasized the small proportion of cultivated land and their limited commerce, apart from what they could clandestinely carry on with the neighboring colonies. He presumed that the inhabitants were disproportionate to the size of the island. "As far as the military preparations in the capital, there are always as far as I know two regiments of regular troops, which are doubled on any appearance of war, and two companies of militia, one of horse and one of foot. The King's and companies' ships generally stop a couple of days on the North West part of the island in their passage from Old Spain to Saint Domingo, Carthagena, Porto Bello and La Vera Cruz in order to procure water and provisions, but there are seldom or never any men-of-war regularly stationed at Porto Rico."[26] He went on to say that "during times of peace, the French and Spanish settlements affect very little the Leeward Islands, but a very important grievance arises to the Leeward Islands from the propinquity of the Island of Puerto Rico due to the escape of slaves from Tortola and the Virgin Islands who take refuge in Puerto Rico and are baptized once they arrive and are granted asylum by the Catholic Government. The frequent applications by the British authorities for their return have been ineffective."[27] This was another British grievance concerning the island.

During the American War of Independence when Spain and France were aiding the American colonies, Governor Mathew Burt of the Leeward Islands reported that one of the French generals, M. de la Motte Piquet had sailed from Martinique with 6 ships and 2,000 troops and was to call at Puerto Rico for 4 Spanish ships

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26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.

of the line which were waiting for him. He reported that with such French force, the English forces could only act on the defensive. He went on to say that "Puerto Rico is a valuable island, which would contain the whole of Barbados. In 10 or 12 years it would yield more revenue than all the southern islands put together. It would seem now that the only way we could obtain Puerto Rico would be to exchange it for Fernando de Omoa, as the Spaniards do not seem to know the value of Puerto Rico."[28]

He went on to give an appraisal of the value of the island, stating; "It is my belief that if the Crown spent on Puerto Rico half the money it has spent on Grenada, Tobago, St. Vincent and Dominica it would prove more valuable than all his Majesty's other sugar colonies from Barbados to Jamaica and yield as great a revenue as they do now. Also, unless we take possession of Martinique and St. Lucia, our possessions from Barbados to Puerto Rico will be in constant danger. If we controlled Martinique and St. Lucia we could turn the tables on the French, we should command the sugar islands and with Puerto Rico we could supply almost all of Europe. I will send a map and account of Puerto Rico on the next packet."[29]

It was becoming obvious that all the reports on Puerto Rico described its fertility, its capacity for growing sugar and it's usefulness in reinforcing the Leeward Islands against the French and the Spanish. Why were all these advices neglected, filed away and forgotten? It is a fair presumption that the British West India Interest, who had spies everywhere and immense influence in the different Government Committees, did not allow measures to be taken for the conquest of the island.

Governor Burt proceeded to follow up his recommendations to the King on the taking of Puerto Rico and wrote him that "should His Majesty direct or permit arms being carried against Puerto Rico, a

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28. Governor William Mathew Burt of Antigua to Lord George Germain, Antigua, March 28, 1780, C.O. 152/60

29. Ibid.

colony by far superior to Jamaica and in the course of a few years subject to Great Britain would be of infinitely more value".[30] He received a reply from Lord Germain in which it was agreed that Puerto Rico should be taken for England. Burt was very pleased that his proposal had been heard and accepted. In order to gather the best possible information on the state of the island, he undertook to send a "trusted gentleman" to Puerto Rico in the guise of an officer appointed to exchange prisoners of war. This was the best ploy he could devise to get a man into the enemy fortifications.[31]

Governor Burt was faithful to his promise and on May 4, 1780 he sent a plan of Puerto Rico to Lord Germain, with a copy to Admiral Rodney. A copy of the spy's observations was also included, in which he reported that on arrival off Puerto Rico, his ship raised the flag of truce and proceeded into the harbour until stopped by a Spanish boat. Only the spy, in his disguise as an officer, was allowed to proceed, without his interpreter. On landing, he was received by an aide de camp and two regimental officers, one of whom spoke only Spanish and the other French. By struggling in broken French, the unfortunate Englishman explained that his orders were to speak with the Governor personally, at which point he was blindfolded and taken to the Governor's house.

He seemd shocked to observe that even though it was eleven o'clock in the morning, the Governor was still in his nightgown and slippers and some sort of "levée" was taking place. The spy went on to describe the fortifications and the situation of San Juan, the bay of Louisa, the channel and the batteries, conditions of the inhabitants, etc.[32] For reasons which are not recorded, the intelligence report was not acted upon, and no subsequent attack was prepared.

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30. Ibid.
31. Governor Burt to Lord Germain, December 20, 1779, C.O. 152/60
32. See Appendix V. Report of Spy on Porto Rico, Letter from Governor William M. Burt of Antigua to Lord Germain, May 4, 1780, C.O. 152/60

# C H A P T E R XI

It was during the treaty negotiations at the end of the American War of Independence in 1783 that Puerto Rico was next mentioned in the British records. The Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs at the time was Lord Shelburne, a firm believer in free trade who envisioned the Atlantic Ocean as a common area across which Britain and America should be trading partners. To facilitate this, he did all in his power to cultivate and restore feelings of American goodwill towards Britain. These overtures by Shelburne were not well received by the French, who sought both to use American pressure against Britain to extend French West Indian territories, and also to retain the bulk of the lucrative American markets for themselves.

The wily Shelburne then began to explore ways of using the French concerns to advantage to moderate the demands of Spain at the peace negotiations. Both he and George III had been toying with ideas for using Gibraltar as a bait to induce Spain to exchange it for some of her valuable overseas possessions. In 1782, the King wrote to Lord Shelburne indicating that "the holding of Gibraltar is quite judicious and if not taken I should hope Porto Rico may be got for it".[33] Spain, however, whilst resenting the British occupation of what was clearly part of her territory, was not ready to accept giving up any of her American empire to regain it.

The idea of obtaining Puerto Rico persisted throughout the negotiations and in a further letter to the King, Shelburne wrote "I have held the point of Gibraltar so big that the alternative of Ports Rico may be catch'd at. I flatter myself whenever the time comes for it to be hinted by way of compensation or exchange on the part of Your majesty." [34]

It was here that Shelburne planned to use the unwitting help of the French to achieve his alms. He recounted to the King a

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33. The Hon. Sir John Fortescue, *The correspondence of King George The Third, from 1760 to December 1783*, London, 1928. 6 Vols. Vol. VI, May 1782-December 1783. Letter no. 1923, the King to Lord Shelborne.

34. Letter no. 3922, Lord Shelborne to the King, Ibid.

conversation which had taken place between himself and the French Minister, Monsieur Vergennes, in which he had stated "the impossibility of prevailing upon Your Majesty to think of ceding Gibraltar, without a complete restitution on the part of Spain, of every possession which she has taken, and the addition either of Porto Rico or Martinique and St. Lucia or Guadeloupe and Dominique." [35] In other words, he was hinting that a French West Indian territory may be sought, to encourage France to pressure Spain to give up Puerto Rico and so keep the French West Indies intact.

In the end, however, all these intricate schemes came to nothing. Puerto Rico remained Spanish, and Gibraltar remained British. Britain gave up East and West Florida to Spain, relinquished her claims to Minorca, recovered her islands in the Bahamas, and asserted her claims to cut wood in Honduras.

No further significant references to Puerto Rico are found in the British archives until 1795, although complaints still arose from time to time over minor issues in contention. No concerted aggressive action could be taken against any foreign colony during peacetime without causing a further war, and perhaps this is one reason that there are long periods in which the island seems to be forgotten by Britain while she was at peace with Spain

Whatever had taken place in earlier years, however, by 1796 Puerto Rico was definitely significant in the minds of British strategists and in the next chapter, we shall rejoin the preparations for her attack.

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35. Letter no. 3985, Lord Shelborne to the King, Ibid.

# Chapter XII

# Trinidad and Puerto Rico: "To be or not to be British?"

Having looked at Puerto Rico during the eighteenth centuryas seen through British eyes, we must now return to the winter of 1796 and Britain's plans to mount one final invasion.

General Abercromby's expedition was about to depart when on November 13th, he received further instructions from Secretary of State Henry Dundas. On arrival in the West Indies, he was to provide adequate troops to protect the few remaining possessions in St. Domingue, after which "It is his Majesty's intention that all the remainder of the force in St. Domingue, British, Foreign, European and Colonial Troops, should be employed in the expedition against Puerto Rico and that all the planters and inhabitants of St. Domingo attached to this country and under His Majesty's protection, should be invited by you to remove to that island with all their negroes and moveable property and effects of every description."[1] This instruction clearly confirms that Puerto Rico was considered a good alternative for the repatriation of St. Domingue's planters, plus at a later date those of similar belief from Martinique and Guadeloupe, who had asked George III for protection against the French Republic.

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1. Most Secret, Dundas to Abercromby, Nov. 13th. 179G, C.0.319/4, pp. 314-342.

# C H A P T E R XII

Dundas left all the evacuation preparations to Abercromby and also the manner in which the planters would be persuaded to move to Puerto Rico. He said that "in the present situation it is realized that circumstances are constantly changing and it is left to you to decide the best course of action."[2]

For the attack, Abercromby was to use the forces he was taking from England, plus any which could be spared from the Leeward Islands without jeopardizing their safety, and also those surplus to requirements in St. Domingue. He would also have the assistance of the naval forces in the area. Steps were also to be taken to obtain advance intelligence of the state of readiness of Puerto Rico.

There were a number of options open to Abercromby in his planning of the attack, each with it's inherent advantages and disadvantages. Ideally, he should proceed directly from his Windward station to Puerto Rico, to give him the element of surprise; if he did this, though, he would not have the use of the troops from St. Domingue. If he called en route at St. Domingue to collect the troops, he would be stronger but would lose the element of surprise. He must also then decide how many troops to take and how many to leave for the protection of British interests and those planters loyal to England. If he chose this option, London suggested that he withdrew his forces and the loyal planters to the area around St. Nicholas Mole, giving a much shorter perimeter to defend and using less troops. A third option was to embark the planters onto his transport ships to sit out the battle, then to land them in their new home after the victory. This had the advantage of releasing even more troops from St. Domingue, but would prove embarrassing to say the least if Puerto Rico was not taken. Yet another option was to take San Juan or another port, leaving the rest of the island for the time in Spanish hands. This would ensure a place where the planters could disembark, and allow reinforcements to come from St. Domingue in the hope of assisting in the taking of the remainder of the island at a later date.[3]

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

# CHAPTER XII

The instructions were vague and full of uncertainties but in fairness to Dundas, he was trying to foresee every eventuality and it's possible solution in a theatre of war with which he was not familiar. Also, once the expedition left, he could not make up to the minute decisions as further instructions would be totally obsolete by the time they arrived, some weeks later. Abercromby did not record his opinions on the matter, so we do not know what he thought of the manner in which the campaign was being conducted from London. From the manuscripts it seemed that the direction of the campaign was imprecise. Also, unlike the attacks considered earlier in the century, as described in the previous chapter, Puerto Rico was on this occasion a secondary target as a means of solving a problem elsewhere, rather than being sought for it's own merits.

Dundas felt that the planters in St. Domingue would be reluctant to move to Puerto Rico if it not were for the precarious situation in their own island and stated that they were to be offered further inducements, such as land grants in proportion to their previous holdings and their ability to cultivate the land, plus loans of money and goods to enable them to build new homes and prepare new plantations. The King was to allow £300,000 for this purpose in the first year of occupation, that amount having been previously set aside for the defence and government of St. Domingue during the same period.[4] It is possible that if the attack on Puerto Rico had been succeesful, the island today may have been multilingual, with Spanish, French and English being spoken.

Precise instructions were given as to the manner in which the Spanish inhabitants were to be treated if the island fell. Dundas advised that "In all your arrangements you will take care to respect the rights and privileges of the Spanish inhabitants of Puerto Rico, avoiding measures which may cause animosity between them and the new settlers, or disgust with the British Government. On the contrary, you must do all possible to reach a good understanding

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4. Ibid.

with them and assure them you do not intend to interfere with their religion or customs."[5] It would be interesting to speculate what kind of government would have been established had the British won. Perhaps the best idea is to refer to the Articles of Capitulation which applied at the fall of Trinidad (see later in this chapter), as it is reasonable to assume that the same conditions would have applied had Puerto Rico fallen.

Another preoccupation of London concerned the inhabitants of the Spanish part of Hispaniola, San Domingo, which had been ceded to France. It was decided that if the inhabitants of the Spanish side did not wish to stay under French rule they could come to Puerto Rico, but they must bring their negroes and property so that they could be self supporting.[6]

In summary of the foregoing, two points emerge. Firstly, Puerto Rico was needed mainly as a sanctuary for the planters of St. Domingue and Spanish San Domingo who did not wish to remain under French rule. Secondly, Britain had no clear idea of the strength of the island or even of the numbers of their own forces available to attack it. This left a heavy burden on Abercromby as the Commanding Officer.

It will be recalled from Chapter Ten that in addition to Puerto Rico, the island of Trinidad had been selected as a further target for the expedition, and it was to be left to Abercromby to decide which was to be attempted first. Therefore, in addition to the official instructions, Dundas sent a private letter to Abercromby on the same date. He referred to a meeting the two had held a few days previously and reiterated his views. At the meeting, Abercromby had thought it was best to begin operations by attacking Puerto Rico because it was the more difficult of the campaigns, leaving Trinidad for later because it was considered an easier task. Having considered this, Dundas in his letter stated

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5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

that if he was questioned on the comparative value between Puerto Rico and Trinidad, he had no hesitation in replying that from what he had heard Puerto Rico was one of the most valuable possessions in the West Indies and "if it remains ultimately with Great Britain, is most likely to become of utmost value". He then reiterated that Puerto Rico would "serve as an asylum for the planters and negroes of other islands who are dissatisfied with their present situation."[7] Why, then, was Trinidad attacked first?

In the same despatch, Dundas remarked that he did not wish to retard Abercromby's progress for the attack on Puerto Rico, but the planters at Grenada and Tobago and other Windward Islands had conveyed their alarm and concern for their own protection. Dundas in a subtle way informed his cousin that "as the conquest of Trinidad appears an easy undertaking, perhaps you may be able to take it before your reinforcements arrive, without preventing preparations for the major expedition."[8] It means Trinidad was considered an easier operation and it was taken first because of the powerful lobbying of the West India Interest in Parliament, who because of their concern for the safety of their Windward Island bases, were able to change the course of a military campaign.

The taking and retention of Trinidad was also perceived as a future bargaining point with Spain. Dundas writes:"If Trinidad could be not only taken but retained early in the campaign, it's proximity to South America would create a very lively situation at Madrid and be the first, I hope, of many circumstances to make them severely feel the consequences of their perfidious and pusillanimous conduct."[9] Of course, he leaves the final decision to Abercromby.

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7. Dundas to Abercromby, Private, Nov. 13, 1796, W.O. 1/85. pp. 316-320.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

# CHAPTER XII

In the same month of November, 1796, Abercromby received further instructions on St. Domingue. He was ordered not to take part in any campaigns in St. Domingue until after Puerto Rico had been taken. Affairs in the former island had gone so badly that General Forbes had been recalled and was replaced by General Simcoe. All the territory previously held by the British had been lost and only St. Nicholas Mole remained. Dundas referred to the loss of territory on St. Domingue as "embarrassing", stating that Trinidad and Puerto Rico now became the main targets.[10]

The situation in St Domingue now gave even more importance to Puerto Rico. Dundas continued that "it is going to be very difficult for this country to continue our current presence in St. Domingue and it cannot long continue to be justified. It is for this reason that the planters from there are to be given the opportunity to resettle in Puerto Rico. The resettlement of the planters would enable all our forces to be withdrawn excepting those defending St. Nicholas Mole. The emigrant planters from Guadeloupe are now a burden to this country and it may be that they can be provided at Puerto Rico on the same basis as those from St. Domingue. The possession of Puerto Rico might lead to a great many other important results for this country, either during the continuation of the war or on the restoration of peace."[11]

A few days later, Abercromby and his expedition set sail for the West Indies. His next letter to Henry Dundas was from Trinidad, in which he confirmed that he had advised the Admiral in charge of the West Indies squadron, Henry Harvey,[12] of his instructions. He went on to recount the departure of the expedition from the Windward Station at Martinique en route to Trinidad.

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10. Dundas to Abercromby, Parliament St. Private, November 14, 1796, W.O. 1/85.
11. Dundas to Abercromby, Secret and Separate, November 13, 1796, C.O. 319/4, pp. 338-342; W.O. 1/85, pp. 312-315.
12. Biography of Rear Admiral Sir Henry Harvey. Appendix VI.

# C H A P T E R XII

The British fleet was made up of transports for the troops and equipment, plus the following warships and their masters:

98 Gun PRINCE OF WALES - Adm. H. Harvey & Capt.John Harvey
74 Gun BELLONA- Capt. George Wilson
74 Gun VENGEANCE- Capt. Thomas Macnamara Russell
74 Gun INVINCIBLE- Capt. William Cayley
64 Gun SCIPIO-Capt. Sydney Davers
Frigates, ARETHUSA and ALARM
Sloops, FAVOURITE, ZEBRA, ZEPHYR, THORN AND VICTORIEUSE
Bomb vessel, TERROR.[13]

The account of the attack is then best described by the reports in Admiral Harvey's log which stated as follows:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16,1797

At three A.M. made the island of Trinidad and at noon anchored two leagues from the East Bocas. Had received intelligence at 10.00 A.M. that the Spanish squadron remained at Trinidad. Made signal to prepared for battle.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1997

At 3 P.M. entered the Gulf of Paria Soon after saw the Spanish squadron at anchor in Chagaramus Bay. Four ships of the line and a frigate, one of the ships showing a Rear Admiral's flag. At six anchored in line of battle opposite Spanish ships three miles distance from them. Sent boats to watch their motions. At 2 A.M. one of the ships appeared to be on fire and soon afterwards three others. They burnt until daylight. At six A.M. sent armed boats to take possession of the surviving Spanish ship which the crew had deserted. It proved

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13. *The Naval History of Great Britain from the Declaration of War by France in February 1793 to the Accession of George IV, in Jan 1820,* London, Handing, Lepard & co. 1826, 6 Vols. Vol II, pp. 140-145.

to be the San Damaso of 74 guns, (Capt. don Josef Jordan). The ships burned were the San Vicente, 84 guns (Rear Adm. don Sebastian Ruiz de Apodaca), Arrogante, 74 guns, (Capt. don Raphael Bonasa), Gallardo, 74 guns, (Capt. don Gabriel Sorondo), and the Santa Cecilia, 36 guns, (Capt. don Manuel Urtesabel).

At 8 A.M. landed 100 men and took possession of the island of Gaspargrande. The ships and transports moved to anchor near the town of Port de España. The troops landed about three miles below Port of Spain and the same evening took possession of the town without resistance. The Governor offered to surrender the island and on meeting General Abercromby and the Governor in Port of Spain the articles of capitulation were agreed to and signed.

The English colours were hoisted on the batteries, the Spanish garrison quitting them with the honours of war.[14]

Some of the times in Harvey's Log appear confusing at first sight. This is because his logs did not run from midnight to midnight, but each day began at a specific "watch". Thus, although an event is shown as happening on a specific date, it may not have taken place until the early hours of the following morning.

Although Trinidad was surrendered without a fight, the actual numbers of troops available to Abercromby had he needed to use them were as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| COMMISSIONED OFFICERS | 137 |
| STAFF | 30 |
| SERGEANTS | 220 |
| DRUMMERS | 88 |
| RANK AND FILE | 3339 |
| | 3814 TOTAL[15] |

14. ADM 50/107, Admiral Harvey's Log.
15. Return of troops employed on an expedition against the island of Trinidad, Port D'Espagne, February 20, 1797, Sir Ralph Abercromby , W.O. 1/86. Appendix VII.

# C H A P T E R XII

Following the successful conclusion of the attack there remained the task of agreeing the method of dealing with the administration of the island and the handling of the prisoners of war which had been taken, some 2348 men[16], including the sailors from the warships.[17]

The normal method of making such arrangements was by the drawing up of "Articles of Capitulation" by the victorious commander and these being agreed by the Commanding Officer or Governor of the surrendering territory. In the case of Trinidad, these articles are reproduced as they give some idea of the gentlemanly way in which the vanquished were treated, particularly if they were officers or landowners.

## ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION FOR THE SURRENDER OF THE ISLAND OF TRINIDAD

Between General Sir Ralph Abercromby, Rear Admiral Henry Harvey and His Excellency Don Josef Maria Chacon.

ARTICLE I- The Officers and troops of His Catholic Majesty on the Island of Trinidad shall surrender themselves prisoners of war and deliver up all territory, forts, arms, ammunitions, money, plans and stores.

ARTICLE II- The troops of His Catholic Majesty are to march out with the honours of war and to lay down their arms three hundred paces from the forts they occupy at 5 o'clock this evening the 18th of February.

ARTICLE III- All these officers and troops are allowed to keep their private effects and the officers are allowed to wear their swords.

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16. Return of the Spanish Garrison of the Island of Trinidad made Prisoners of War, February 18, 1797, Port D'Espagne, February 20, 1797, Sir Ralph Abercromby, W.O. 1/86. Appendix VIII
17. Return of the Spanish Garrison of the Island of Trinidad made prisoners of war, February 18, 1797, W.O. 1/86. Appendix VIII

ARTICLE IV- Rear Admiral Don Sebastian Ruiz de Apodaca, being on shore after having burnt and abandoned his ships, he and his men are included in this capitulation.

ARTICLE V- As soon as ships can be provided for the purpose the prisoners are to be conveyed to old Spain, they remaining prisoners of war until exchanged by a cartel between the two nations or until the peace. It being clearly understood that they shall not serve against Great Britain until exchanged.

ARTICLE VI- There being some officers among His Catholic Majesty's troops whose private affairs require their presence at different places on the continent of America, such officers are permitted to go upon their parole to the said places for six months more or less after which they are to return to Europe.

ARTICLE VII-Stores are to be handed over to officers appointed by the British Commanders.

ARTICLE VIII- All the private property of the inhabitants, is preserved to them.

ARTICLE IX- All public records are to be handed over and all contracts and purchases which have been done according to the laws of Spain are to be held binding and honoured by the British Government.

ARTICLE X- The Spanish Officers of Administration possessing land on Trinidad are allowed to remain on the island if they take oaths of allegiance to His Britannick Majesty and they are further allowed, should they please, to sell their property and retire elsewhere.

ARTICLE XI- The free exercise of their religion is allowed to the inhabitants.

ARTICLE XII- The free coloured people who have been acknowledged as such under the laws of Spain shall be protected in their liberty, persons and property like other inhabitants, they taking the oath of allegiance and demeaning themselves as becomes good and peaceable subjects.

# C H A P T E R XII

ARTICLE XIII- The sailors and soldiers of His Catholic Majesty are, from the time of laying down their arms, to be fed by the British government, leaving the expense to be regulated by the cartel between the two nations.

ARTICLE XIV- The sick of the Spanish troops will be taken care of, but are to be attended and under the inspection of their own surgeons.

ARTICLE XV- All the inhabitants of Trinidad shall within thirty days from the date hereof, take the oath of allegiance to His Britanick Majesty to demean themselves quietly and faithfully to this government upon pain in case of non compliance, of being sent away from the island.

DONE AT PORT D'ESPAGNE IN THE ISLAND OF TRINIDAD THE 18TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1797.[18]

The report of the attack in the ANNUAL REGISTER at the time seems to have closely followed the official accounts.[19] In addition, Sir Ralph Abercromby commissioned the writing of a detailed description of the island and its history, including accounts by the Abbe Reynal in his "Histoire Politique et Philosophique de deux Indies." (It will be noted later that Abercromby was also to use the works of the Abbe Raynal in his consideration of the strategic state of Puerto Rico before his attack on that island.) Included in this description was a complete list of proprietors of land on the island and their names indicated their very multinational nature. They were mostly French, who seemed to outnumber the Spanish and those of other nationalities, for reasons which are explained below.[20]

To understand why the British attack met with such small opposition, we must look into the history of Trinidad itself. Unlike

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18. W.O. 1/86, pp. 85-88.
19. Report of Attack on Trinidad, 1797, Annual Register, p. 274.
20. Sir Ralph Abercromby, K.B. Descriptive Account of the Island of Trinidad, made by the order of Sir Ralph Abercromby, 1797, London, W. Faden, 1802.

# C H A P T E R XII

other Spanish possessions, it could almost be called the "forgotten colony". In earlier centuries, when many Spaniards were preoccupied with the quest for El Dorado, it was once thought that Trinidad may be the site of this fabled city. The native population were Indian and although Spaniards were the first Europeans to appear on the island, their numbers were always very few. They relied on the Indians to feed them and when the Indians withdrew, they starved. Trinidad was largely forgotten apart from a few foreigners who called there to barter, such as the English in search of tobacco. The island was part of the Spanish empire in name only. It is recorded that after 1635, no Spanish trading ships called there for 20 years. It was only the island's strategic position at the mouth of the Orinoco which made it valuable to Spain.

It was not until 1757 that Spain began to appreciate the real strategic value of the island against the fleets and armies of other nations, and she decreed that it should be populated and fortified and become an arsenal of the empire. Unfortunely, Spain did not have the men or the means to bring this about and the only way this could be done was by foreign immigration. These foreigners, some Irish, but mostly French, were readily available in the islands to the north and they began to arrive in increasing numbers. At the negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, Britain intimated that she may be interested in exchanging Trinidad for Gibraltar, at the same time, however, she was also expressing an interest in exchanging Puerto Rico or Florida for the Rock. In any event, the Spanish Ambassador was not interested, stating that to give away Trinidad would be to give away South America.

The beginning of the end came with the appointment as Governor of Jose Maria Chacon, Knight of the Order of Calatrava, and Captain in the Spanish Navy. He had distinguished himself at Mobile, Alabama in the American War of Independence. During this war he had been a prisoner of the British, and having been impressed by the humane way in which he was treated, he had come to like them.

On his arrival at the island, Chacon found the situation little to his liking. The Spanish inhabitants had taken to living an easy

life in the bush and had left administration to the foreign immigrants. Of the ten members of the Cabildo (local council), one was Irish and seven more were French. He began to renovate Port of Spain, even to the extent of importing British fire engines.

French influence was increased further by an influx of French royalist sympathizers from Saint Domingue and Martinique but at the same time, French republicans were also making their homes on the island. There were conflicts between the two French camps and Chacon had little time for either, but for the Republicans in particular. He found himself in the position of a Spanish governor in a Spanish colony with no forces, and no reinforcements from Spain to control the colony. The situation was further complicated by events in Europe when a peace treaty was signed between Spain and France which placed Spain at war with England. Chacon requested reinforcements but no official aid was forthcoming except for an offer from a former slave, Jean Francois from Saint Domingue, who volunteered to send his black guerillas to garrison Trinidad. Chacon refused, perhaps due to reluctance at having armed black troops on the island, which already had suffered black insurrection. The French population, however, interpreted from this refusal that Chacon intended to hand over the island to the English enemy.

The administration on the island at the time was in a very poor state. There was no stone or lime for building, there were no barracks and no prisons. Apart from a mole battery and washed out mud towers there were no fortifications. Venezuela sent an engineer and cannon to improve the fortifications but because of the frequent presence of the British navy in the Gulf of Paria in their hunt for French privateers, the Indian labourers could not get to the Fort to work. Even a corvette bringing money and munitions to the island from Puerto Rico was captured. Also, five new Spanish battleships called at Port of Spain on their way to Cartagena with troop enforcements. Chacon persuaded the Admiral in charge to stay to allow the troops to help with the fort. The soldiers, unused to the climate, fell ill in large numbers. This was the situation when the British fleet arrived in February 1797.

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A Trinidad militia force of 200 men who were ordered by the Governor to assist with defence at the fort, immediately disappeared into the woods.

Meanwhile, the British forces in the bay were manoeuvering for battle. The French republicans demanded arms and some sign of defensive action. Chacon opened the arsenal to comply with the request for arms, and the French departed as the militia had done before. With no adequate defense forces, nor fortifications, it became clear to the Admiral commanding the Spanish ships that the cause was lost and to prevent his ships falling into enemy hands, he took the decision to scuttle them. Similarly, Chacon found himself without the means to put up an adequate defense. As night descended a British officer under flag of truce approached and offered a cease fire and some written instructions from General Abercromby. Chacon agreed and that night both formalized the terms of capitulation. Trinidad became a British colony.

In this instance, Chacon was in charge of an island peopled mainly by foreigners for which he had no particular liking or allegiance. His enemies implied that he may have been bribed by the English but the fact was that in 1797, it looked as though England must soon face defeat and that at the eventual peace treaty, she would restore the island to Spain as was the usual practice. Soon after the British takeover, Chacon collaborated with the newly appointed British Governor, Colonel Picton, whom Abercromby had left in command, and whose forces kept the French under control.[21]

Once the island had been taken, interested parties in England were quick to provide reasons as to why it should be kept. A Mr. Duffe wrote on April 1, that the island of Trinidad had been made a free port to all countries, but it's mandate for this free status was near expiring when it was taken by the British. He went on to

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21. V.S. Naipaul, *The Loss of Eldorado, A History*, New York, Vintage Books, 1970, pp. 138-145.

state that "the inhabitants are a collection from all neighboring islands and a number of French from Martinica and Guadeloupe that have arrived since the beginning of the war. The commerce with the island up to 1783 has been very inconsiderable, but since that year Spain had considered it a most important point. Among the considerations to retain the island are the fineness of its port, the situation of the island to Windward, the commanding of the mouth of the river Orinoco and the proximity to Cumana, Guayana, Maracaibo, Carracas and la Guayra." He goes on to inform that " the settlements of Cumana, Guayana, Maracaibo and Vavinas have not been attended properly by Spain and their trade has been very inconsiderable. These settlements would readily and without hesitation, submit to the British government if required to it, by a very small force, or invited to it and protection offered." He observed that there was no force kept in all of them, except a few companies of militia.[22]

It was the original intention that as soon as Trinidad had been subdued, Abercromby was to proceed against his next objective, Puerto Rico. However, news had been received that the French fleet had sailed from Brest with troops on board and it had been deemed prudent to return and remain at Martinique until further reinforcements arrived from England.

The British reinforcements eventually arrived but were found to be of poor quality and less in numbers than had been hoped for. In addition, there seemed to be no prospect of making up the numbers from the West India regiments, so it was decided to proceed with the mission with about 3,000 men. Abercromby pointed out that if Puerto Rico was taken it would require a garrison of about 1,000 men, which would leave the defense of the remaining British colonies seriously depleted. Therefore, urgent

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22. Letters and Papers, Advices, Intelligences, Communications from Consuls Merry, Duffe, Gregory, Wilkie and others, resident in England to the Secretary of State, and Domestic Papers. January 14, 1797 to December 31, 1798, F.O. 71/45.

reinforcements would be required. If ample men were available, he considered Guadeloupe and Havana as significant prizes, stating that 10,000 men would be needed to proceed against the former and 15,000 or 16,000 men for the latter. He felt, though, that 5,000 men would be enough to harass the Spaniards considerably.[23] The expedition eventually got under way once more, passing Virgen Gorda on April 15th, 1797 and at 10:30 A.M. on Monday, April 17th the fleet anchored in 17 fathoms of water off Cangrejos Point, Puerto Rico.[24]

The ill-fated attack on Puerto Rico had begun.

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23. Abercromby to Dundas, March 13, 1797, C.O. 319/6, pp.40-45.
24. Admiral Harvey's Log, ADM. 50/107.

# Chapter XIII

## The Defenses of San Juan

It is appropriate at this stage to examine in detail the defenses which faced the invading English force, as it was these defenses which played the major part in rendering the attack unsuccessful.

From the earliest days of her conquest and colonization of the New World, Spain had been required to undertake defensive construction in order to defend and retain her new territories and after the attack on Puerto Rico in 1625 by the Dutch under Captain Boudewijn Hendricksz, an ongoing program was begun to improve the fortifications of San Juan and the surrounding area. This initiative was eventually to show significant results, including the completion of the city walls and a connecting wall between the forts of El Morro and San Cristobal on the north coast of the island.

The first half of the eighteenth century was for Puerto Rico one of relative tranquility, partly as a result of the peace between the mother country and her rival, France, and a reluctance by the other Great Powers to take an interest in the island. It is probably for this reason that between the period 1701 to 1740, Spain seems to have largely forgotten the island and very little defensive maintenance or improvement took place. As a result, by mid century, the defenses had fallen into a poor state of repair and were much in need of maintenance and revision.

By 1759, it had become apparent to Spain that unless she took action to defend her Caribbean territories, she was in danger of losing them to the British, as was to prove the case when Havana

fell in 1762. By the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, Charles III of Spain had initiated a series of reforms which would eventually culminate in the impressive defensive array which was to prove insurmountable to the British at the close of the century.

By 1764, it was Puerto Rico's turn to benefit from the new initiative, following repeated petitions from the Island's Governor regarding the unsatisfactory state of affairs. In response to a Royal Decree of September 26, Field Marshall Alejandro O'Reilly was commissioned to make his way to the island to compile a comprehensive report on the defenses and conditions prevailing at San Juan and the area in general. He eventually arrived at the island on April 8, 1765 aboard the frigate "El Aguila".(1)

It was the visit of O'Reilly which gave the impetus for the eventual defensive improvements. He complied diligently with his orders to provide a comprehensive report to Spain, spending a full two months inspecting the area in the company of the Governor and considering the opinions and questions of the local officials.

Once the investigation was completed, O'Reilly compiled a detailed General Program of Military Reform which included the state of the El Morro castle and that of San Cristobal with it's adjacent coastal defenses, together with the northern and western ramparts of the walled city. He also enclosed "a Plan and a project of Fortifications for the better understanding of this study..."(2) These he forwarded to the Minister for the Indies, stating "I feel it necessary to inform Your Excellency of the state in which I found the citadel and of that which I find necessary

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1 Ricardo Torres Reyes. *El Mariscal O'Reilly y Las Defensas de San Juan, 1765-1777.* Historia, Vol. IV. Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1954.

2 Ibid.

to ensure its protection". He continued "Honored Sir, For many reasons I wish to give you the results of my investigations, and it appears to me that it will be of infinite service to the King to have an exact and detailed report of the state of our colonies in America."(3)

The worth of this valuable information was quickly appreciated, and Charles III declared San Juan a "Defense of the First Order" on September 25, 1765. The Royal Decree stated that "San Juan in Puerto Rico shall be a city of the first order of support for the island, bulwark of the Antilles, safeguard of the Gulf of Mexico, depository, point of acclimatization, port of call and naval station of the navigating fleets, favorable to foster and secure the commerce that will improve industry, agriculture and art, the foundation of true wealth."(4)

The Minister for the Indies gave his approval and it was decided that Lieut. Col. Thomas O'Daly, Chief Engineer and Second in Command should be nominated to supervise the works. He was to be assisted by three engineers, Don Pablo Castello, Lt. Col. Don Pedro Carrasco and Juan Francisco Mestre, together with two architects, Diego Ramos and Antonio Sein.(5)

What appeared to O'Reilly and O'Daly as a major requirement was the necessity to extend considerably the exterior works to delay the advance of an enemy. O'Reilly's main observation was that the fortifications were "passive", and to make them "active" it was necessary to design certain types of defense which would keep the enemy at a distance.

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3 AlejandroTapia y Rivera. *Memoria de D. Alexandro O'Reilly Sobre la Isla de Puerto Rico, año 1765.* Biblioteca Histórica de Puerto Rico, Ed. Instituto de Literatura, San Juan, 1945.

4 Torres Reyes, op cit. 4

5 Ibid.

# C H A P T E R XIII

Finally, on January 1, 1766, the work began on the citadel of San Juan, under the direction of Chief Military Engineer O'Daly. Employed on the construction works were officers and soldiers of the Toledo Regiment,[6] workers, outcasts, prisoners and slaves. (See Appendix XIX)

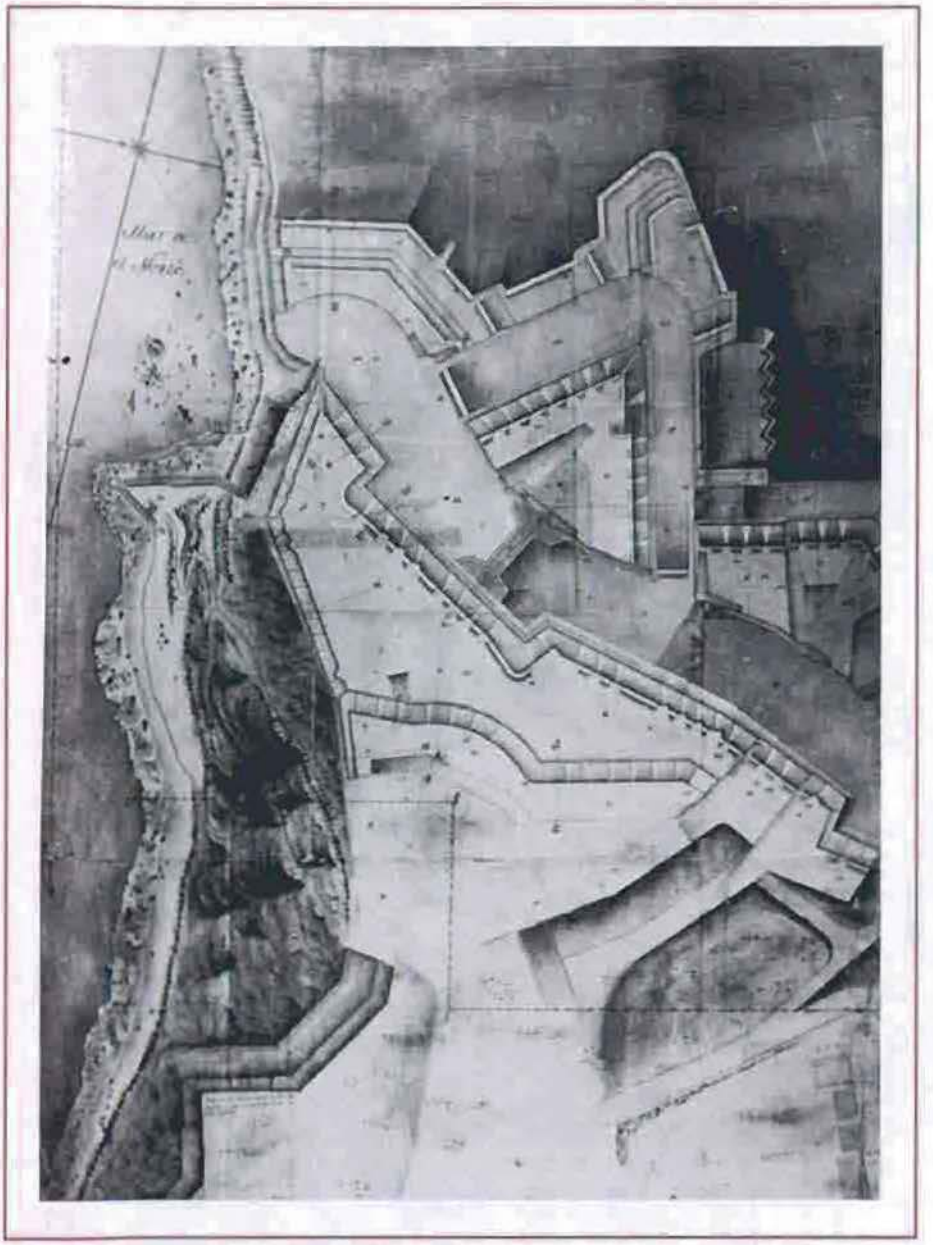
A description of the city plan stated that "On the western side of the City of San Juan was the Castle of San Felipe del Morro, situated on a promontory at the entrance of the bay for the purpose of preventing the entrance of enemy ships into the harbor. At the other side of the bay, the Fort of El Cañuelo (San Juan de la Cruz) was placed to provide crossfire in case of attack and at the same time to protect the passage between Palo Seco and the Isla de Cabras.

On the eastern side of the city lay the Castle of San Cristobal with its exterior works, fulfilling the objective of defending the city from enemy attacks launched from the shore line, and also from naval attacks. A sophisticated system of exterior emplacements completed the design of this defensive masterpiece, which consisted of the Ravelin of San Carlos with its defensive ditch, the battery of Santa Teresa, and the small fort of the Abanico, all these works encompassing three lines of retreat. The works were interdependent and incorporated the tactical concepts of active defense which prevailed at the time, with deep defensive positions and good distribution of fire."[7] The Trinidad battery, the ravelin del Principe, the bastion of Santiago and the provisional battery of San Francisco de Paula extended from the Castle of San Cristobal to the south of the bay.

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6 From 1765 onwards the "veterans" Battallion had been transformed into the "fixed regiment of Puerto Rico" and was later even further reformed. In 1787, spanish soldiers were incorporated into the naples regiment but during the following year, this practice ceased. María Cadilla Martínez. *Rememorando el Pasado Heróico,* Puerto Rico 1946.

7 Edward Hoyt. *A History of the Harbor Defenses of San Juan, P.R. Under Spain, 1509-1898.* Puerto Rico Coast Artillery Command, 1943.



*Plano de las nuevas obras del frente de tierra.*
*Thomas O'Daly, 1765. (S.G.E., Madrid)*

These exterior works were complemented by those built along the shoreline, extending towards the eastern coastal inlet. In that direction were also situated the battery of Escambrón, and the small fort of San Gerónimo. The purpose of these emplacements was to impede the entrance from the sea to the inlet of Boquerón which connected the Condado lagoon and the San Antonio Channel with the eastern side of the Bay of San Juan.



*View of San Antonio Channel from San Cristobal Castle*

The other strongpoint on the eastern shoreline was the San Antonio bridge, which provided the only access from the small island on which San Juan was situated to the remainder of the of the country.

The city of San Juan itself was surrounded by a sophisticated system of walls. On the southern side which faced the bay and the Puntilla area, joining the walls of the bastions of Santiago and San Pedro, there were the fortified moles of San Jose, Concepción

and the San Justo gate. On the western side, there were the bulwarks of Santa Catalina and San Agustin, (between which was the Gate of San Juan), Santa Elena and San Fernando.

Along the length of the north coast between the Castle of San Felipe del Morro and San Cristobal extended the bastions of San Antonio, Santa Rosa, Santa Domingo, Las Animas, Santo Tomas and San Sebastián, with the two gates of Santa Rosa, next to the cemetery and La Perla, in the vicinity of the old outer fort and the slaughter house.

O'Reilly's plans and projects had been designed specifically in preparation for the war with England which seemed inevitable at the time. His recommendations and plans would be the basis for all the successive studies and works which would be undertaken in San Juan under the supervision of the military engineers Thomas O'Daly, Juan Francisco Mestre and Felipe Ramirez. Their accomplishments would be relied upon to defend the city if necessary by Governors and CaptainsGeneral Don Jose Dufresne and Don Miguel Antonio de Ustariz between the years 1765 and 1791.

According to the scholar Dr. Juan Manuel Zapatero, in his monumental work, "*The War in the Caribbean in the XVIII Century*", a plan was presented of the general fortifications drawn up by Field Marshall O'Reilly, from which we quote: "Northwest Sector, principal entrance to the San Juan Bay. Castle of San Felipe del Morro: Reinforce the works with two batteries, one on the shoreline and the other to the sea. Improvement and addition to the Castle of San Juan de la Cruz or to the Cañuelo, which is constructed on the islet which blocks the passage to the West, opposite the Morro. A new battery of nine cannon would be placed on the Isla de Cabras to the back of the Cañuelo, their fire directed toward the left flank of the Morro. These would provide a crossfire to prevent any enemy incursions into the bay.

Northern Sector, extending between the Morro Castle in the West and San Cristobal in the east: A sheltered route would be extended from the Castle of San Cristobal via the heights of San Sebastián, Santa Barbara and Santa Domingo, connecting with the

battery at la Perla. Reinforcing batteries would be installed at the heights of San Sebastián and Santa Barbara.

Western Sector, between the Morro Castle and the Royal Fort: The old ramparts would be reinforced by new refuges.

Southern Sector, between the Royal Fort and the Santiago bastion: O'Reilly considered this portion very adequate because it comprised a system of ramparts well placed and preserved; these were San José, San Justo, Concepción and the Mole of San Pedro.

Eastern Section, shoreline between the Santiago bastion and the Castle of San Cristobal: Two raveling were to be erected to protect the eastern walls and the Santiago Gate.

Castle of San Felipe del Morro: Decommission the Carmen or lower battery. Widen the Santa Barbara or middle battery with parapets of 18 feet on the Northern front and Bay. The powder store, the Granados battery and the artillerymens' barracks would disappear, providing a protected space for the well.

Raise a wall in such a manner that it would be level with the natural terrain and the embankment, so as to provide a secure vault, leaving the ruined barracks, the house of Castellano and the chapel to be demolished. The wall would extend to a height of 30 feet, excluding it's parapet.

The internal sides of the two principal bulwarks, Austria and Ochoa, easily discernible in O'Reilly's plan of 1765 and in another anonymous plan of 1742, would be occupied by two vaults, leaving the flanks in the form that O'Reilly had envisaged and which had been drawn up by O'Daly.

By 1775, the works along the shoreline presented an imposing picture. Miyares González described them as follows in his memoirs of the same year: "The shoreline of this citadel is totally completed, of which the northern part ascends about one hundred feet above sea level and descends to form a beach at the bay. It's fortification consists of a semibastion called the Northern, a level work, and another by the name of Santiago. In front of the ramparts formed by these three bastions have been constructed two ravelins.

The one between the Northern and the level is called San Carlos and the other, el Príncipe. Between these two revelins one finds an arsenal called la Trinidad, because it includes three batteries which follow the irregularity of the terrain. All of these works are protected by a covered way with it's accompanying crossbeams and fences. In the rampart between the level bastion and Santiago is the gate of the same name, solely for leaving the city by carriage. All of the principal walls on this shoreline were built above the old foundations, but the ravelins and the other exterior works have been constructed from the ground. In the level bastion there are some works which together with the northern balustrade are called the Castle of San Cristobal, behind which there is a big parade ground with three vaults which could accomodate a batallion."(8)

These observations are confirmed by the chronicles of Abbad y Lasierra who in the year 1776 wrote in the *History of Puerto Rico:* "the most impressive and grandiose thing in this city, are the fortification works which defend it".(9) In that year, the principal defenses of the city were the castles of el Morro and San Cristobal and according to the description, "These fortifications enclose the City on the eastern side, occupying the width of the islet, from the bay to the sea, directing its fire everywhere, although its principal objective is to protect the land area.."(10)

"...Its construction follows the terrain which is uneven, forming a downward slope from the northern shoreline to the bay. At the top of the hill is the ramp through which one enters the castle courtyard, in which a batallion can be assembled. It has two large bombproof barracks with other offices and auxiliary rooms, on top of which there is the Caballero, which can hold from 22 to 24

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8 Fernando Miyares González. *Noticias particulares de la Isla y Plaza de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico,* Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1954.

9 Fray Agustín Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra. *Historia Geográfica, Civil y Natural de la Isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico.* Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, 1979.

10 Ibid.

cannon whose fire can dominate the City and the surrounding land and sea. Below the Caballero there is the parade ground. Its batteries point towards the open sea, the land and the drawbridge of the interior moat. After this there are three large ravelins; that of San Carlos occuping the top of the hill, the Principe on the slope, and the main one in which the drawbrige of the second moat is located and exits onto an open field and the countryside. All these works are surmounted by heavy artillery. These fortifications and their moats have openings in the rock in various parts and are bombproof, as are the barracks and wells. If the ramparts are viewed from the "mined" fields, three emplacements of batteries may been seen, one above the other, that direct their fire in all directions". ...Abbad y Lasierra.[11] The term "mined" here refers to the practice of digging tunnels and filling them with explosives beneath strategic approaches. These explosives could then be detonated beneath an advancing enemy.

The observations continue: "From this castle to San Felipe del Morro, which is located in the extreme western side of the City, there is no wall on the northern side, only six batteries placed near the seashore at regular intervals, this defense being considered sufficient owing to the inaccessibility of the coast due to the dangerous reefs which run alongside it.[12]

The Morro Castle forms an obtuse angle with three lines of batteries towards the sea, one above the other, which can direct their crossfire to defend the entrance to the port. On the city side it has a wall flanked by two guarded emplacements of heavy artillery, which dominate all the intermediate ground towards the City. That part which faces the northern shore can cross it's fire with that of the Caballero of San Cristobal. Its barracks, wells, stores, chapel, and auxiliary rooms are all bombproof. A tunnel goes down to a battery that is just above the waterline at the center of the entrance to the port, through which it is possible to send

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11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

out troops, receive provisions and communicate with the Cañuelo Castle.

"The Cañuelo castle is situated on an outcrop in the middle of the port channel. It is square and well fortified, and it's location prevents ships from forcing entry into the port since it can create a crossfire with the guns of El Morro. However, if the enemy could take the Isla de Cabras, which is low lying, of short extension and without defense, they could bombard the Castle of El Cañuelo from Palo Seco point.

From the City to the bridge in which the islet ends there is a powder store with it's guard house. At the end of the islet, where the open sea connects with the bay, is the Castle of San Jeronimo, which is a little fort for defending the passage of small boats, these being the only ones which may pass through the shallows of the Boqueron, a passage between the bay and the open sea. Nearby is a bridge of two carriageways which crosses the inlet. It's supports are of cut stone faced with lime, over which there are wooden cross beams which give safe passage and may be easily cut when necessary. At the entrance of the bridge there is a strongpoint for defense, and at the opposite side is a stone water fountain, the only one which may be found in the island (of San Juan).[13]

A further description reads "...The island is long and narrow. Entrenchments cut entirely across it rather more than half way up the hill and the town, which is situated on the summit, is fortified apparently by the strongest forts, presenting embrazures for at least two hundred pieces of artillery. The system of fortification is chiefly perpendicular as there is no situation where the works can be flanked except from a neck of land to the Eastward, but on which the nearest spot to the town that could be fired upon is at least 1,500 yards distant... The entrance into the harbour is defended by the Morro Castle and a strong insulated work (El Cañuelo) to the southward of the channel, independent of the other 12 guns of the place, so that it would be extremely dangerous to

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13 Ibid.

attempt anything with shipping, as the wind blowing constantly from the northeast makes it a lee shore, and in case of damage the ship must immediately run aground..."[14]

According to the historian Pedro Tomás de Córdova: "...in the year 1795 the military expenditures reached the sums of 356,813 ps. 20mrs. In fortification works 64.145ps. 1 real, 30mrs. were spent, and in the artillery 13,879 ps. 14 mrs. The citadel had 253 cannon, 20 mortars, 3 pedreros and 4 howitzers..."[15]

"Prior to the attack, on the fort of San Antonio and in front of the Rodeo, a battery of six pieces was constructed. To the left of the waterway, another battery of four pieces was built in order to defend the point of the Condado. A parapet was also constructed along this line and at its end was placed a battery of five pieces which defend the waterway between San Gerónimo and San Antonio. In case San Antonio should be taken along with the heights of Condado and Rodeo, this battery connected by another road to San Gerónimo. The castle of San Gerónimo was repaired and two embrasures were added facing the sea, with a further two at San Antonio. Also, another battery of three pieces was constructed which communicates with that at Escambrón. A straight channel was cut through Miraflores to enable it to face fire from the bay and in its center a battery of six pieces were placed, with another of four cannon nearby whose fire would be directed towards the Rodeo...."[16]

In 1796, 65,760 ps. 5 rs. 7mrs. were spent on fortifications and on the artillery, 14, 836 ps. 1 real 5 mrs. The review of the militia gave the numbers of 1871 infantry men and 300 horses.[17]

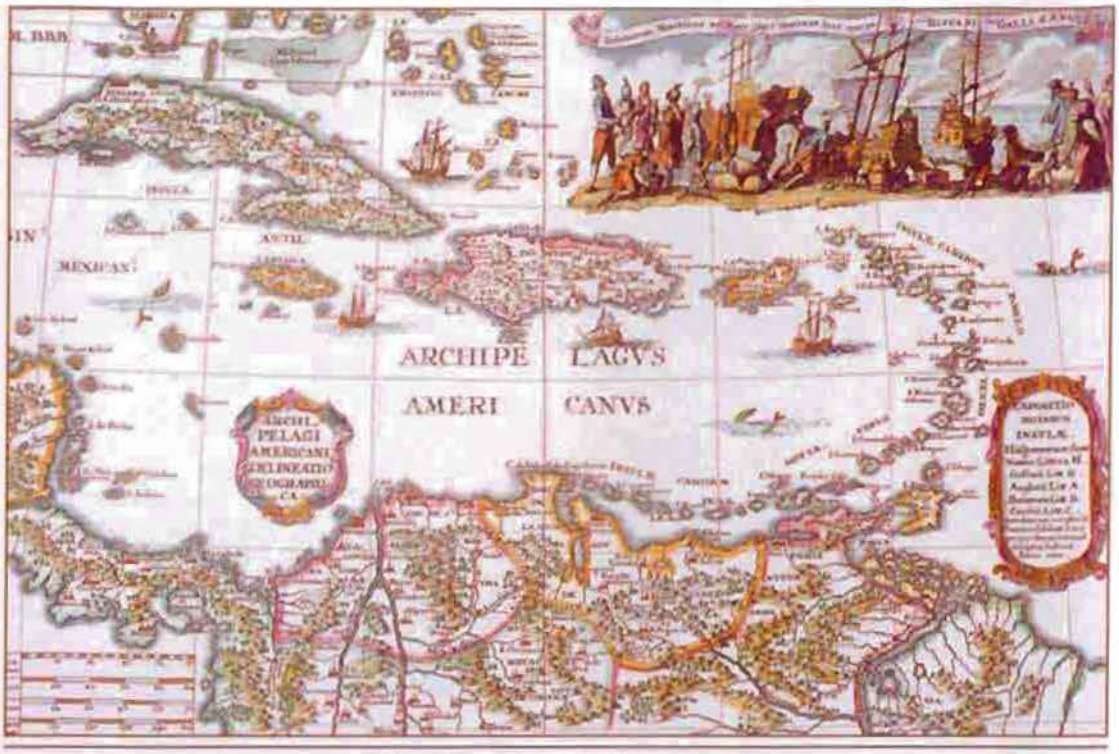
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14 Charles Stewart. *Report of British Spy at San Juan, Puerto Rico.* Enclosed with a Letter from Governor Burt of Antigua to Lord Germain.

15 Pedro Tomás de Córdoba. *Memorias Geográficas, Históricas, Económicas y Estadísticas de la Isla de Puerto Rico,* Tomo III, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan de Puerto Rico, 1968.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.




*Old Maps of the Caribbean, 1700*



*View of Plantation House, Crux Boy, St. Jan.*



*Henry Dundas, Secretary of State*
*(National Portrait Gallery, London)*



*Uniform of the disciplined militia of Puerto Rico, 1785. (A. G. I., Sevilla)*



*George III, King of England as a young man.*
*(National Portrait Gallery, London)*



*George III, King of England in his later years*
*(National Portrait Gallery, London)*



*William Pitt the younger in the British parliament on the outbreak of war with france in 1793. (National Portrait Gallery, London)*



*Plano del Castillo del Morro de Puerto Rico y todas sus inmediaciones por Alejandro O'Reilly. (S.G.E., Madrid)*



*Model of marships "Bellona", which took part in the attack.*



*El Morro, 1762. Cuba*



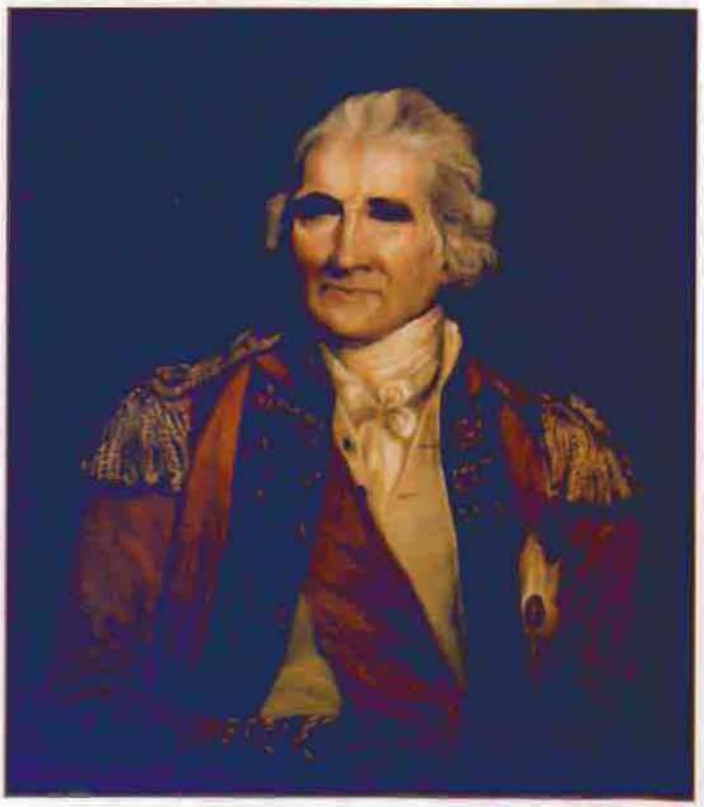

*Plano de la Ciudad y bahía de San Juan de Puerto Rico, 1785.*
*(S.H.M. no. 5.791)*



*Las hijas del Gobernador D. Ramón de Castro, 1797. Por José Campeche.*
*(En: Catálogo José Campeche y su tiempo.)*



*Don Ramón de Castro, Governor of Puerto Rico by José Campeche, 1800. (Col. Museo de Arte e Historia, Municipio de San Juan).*



*Sir Ralph Abercromby, Commander of the British Forces (National Portrait Gallery, London)*



*Exvoto del Sitio de San Juan por los Ingleses, 1797.*
*(Colección arzobispado de San Juan)*




*Caribbean Lithography. XVIII Century.*



*Plano de Puerto Rico por Francisco Ramón Méndez, 1782.*

# C H A P T E R XIII

Brigadier Don Ramón de Castro had assumed the position of Governor of the island on March 21, 1795 and would remain in office until November 12, 1804. De Castro's military experience and the preventive measures he took in advance of the invasion may have been decisive factors in his eventual victory.

Tomas de Cordova has left us with a detailed account of these precautions, which are interesting as they give an example of the type of defensive activity which must have taken place on most of the Caribbean islands during the many wars of the century. He states:

"...The news that Brigadier Castro had received of the hostilities taking place between the British and the Spanish in the autumn of 1796) and the intentions of the former to attack Spanish possessions in America, had made him assume an attitude of vigilance and a determination to complete military preparations for the city."[18]

These measures were as follows:

- As the battery of San Francisco de Paula was considered to be one of the most important defensive works, he hastened it's completion by allocating the largest possible workforce that could be spared without delaying the the work on the San Gerónimo fort. He also made great efforts to ensure that these two strongpoints were equipped with their respective artillery. He also:
  - Ordered all batteries, the land front, the outerworks, gates and stockades of the San Cristobal Fortress checked and repaired, to ensure their full readiness.
  - Advised all towns on the island that they should have their cattle rounded up at the first warning.
  - Held cannon, mortar and howitzer drills, which included giving instruction to officers and men from the militias.
  - Ordered increased vigilance from San Cristobal and all along the coast, to forwarn of any threat from the sea.

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18 Ibid.

- Recalled all men on temporary leave.
- Ordered the regular garrison increased by three companies of militia.
- Inspected the points most vulnerable to attack between the city and the mouth of the Cangejos River.
- Prohibited ships from sailing from any port on the island.[19]

When Governor de Castro heard in March of the fall of Trinidad the previous month, he correctly surmised that Puerto Rico would be next on Britain's agenda and he immediately:

- sent lieutenants to train all able-bodied men in areas where there was no militia.
- ordered a precise account of provisions to be stockpiled, and prepared warehouses.
- Had all cattle taken to enclosures in the interior of the island, with a view to supplying the city.
- Had the Cañuelo Fortress inspected and repaired.
- Commissioned two city councillors or "Regidores" to requisition sufficient rice for the Royal Storehouses.
- Cancelled the discharge papers of soldiers who had completed their tour of duty.
- Gave orders to the Urban Militias.
- Ordered the E1 Morro fortress to repel any suspicious ship.
- Sent an Engineer to prepare the town of Aguadilla's defenses.
- Transferred most of the powder from the magazines at Miraflores and San Gerónimo into the main fortress.
- Began the outfitting of two pontoons and four Barges with two 16 pounder cannon each, and twelve launches with

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19 Ibid.

3,4 and 6 caliber cannon, for defending the port and it's channels. Frigate Captain D.Francisco de Paula Castro was instructed to oversee this.

- Prepared the battery at the end of the moat.
- Sent word to Caracas, Santa Domingo and Havana warning of the real danger of attack and requesting help.
- Had stone-throwing mortars outfitted and set up workshops for preparing explosives and war rockets.
- Ordered 440 militia who were being drilled in various districts to be incorporated into the "fixed" militia.
- Expedited the outfitting of patrol boats.
- Commissioned local leaders, "jueces territoriales" to have the citizens plant all the produce that would be necessary in case of an attack.
- Requested loans from corporations and private citizens pending the arrival of the "situado", the funds from Spain.

The response from the local citizenry is exemplified as in de Cordoba's report. "...Doña Juana de Lara had constructed at her own expense two batteries of four pieces each on the islet of Punta Las Marias.."[20]

In April, as the threat of attack became more imminent, de Castro further reinforced his preparations and:

- Ordered Batallion cannon ready for use as necessary.
- Accepted the offer of the leader of the French community on the island, a Monsieur Paris, to join the defensive effort along with his countrymen.
- Ordered eight companies of militia to active duty to join the eight companies already in the citadel. Also to add 200 men from the militias into artillery service.

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20 Ibid.

- All citizens of San Juan were enlisted into the urban militias.
- As enemy privateers were constantly engaging in forays along the coast, he was appointed General Commander of the Northern Militia and Colonel of the "Fixed" Militia regiment to enable him to limit as far as possible the threat to the people posed by these privateers.[21]

The Governor, along with his Chief Engineers, also spent several days personally inspecting the bay area, the entrance to the port, the Boca-Vieja channel, the accesses and outlets of the Martin Peña San Antonio channels, the possible landing sites on the three Cangrejos beaches, Punta Salinas, and the entrance to the Martin Peña lagoon, where an embankment was constructed. He also inspected the posts, fortresses and castles of the city, the outerworks and those locations most vulnerable to attack.[22]

These most comprehensive preparations were a sound tribute to the knowledge and military experience of Governor De Castro and as the chronicler de Cordoba puts it, "It may be stated categorically that this Commander proceeded with the utmost prudence, not neglecting the slightest detail and preparing things as well as he could to save the country and ensure the triumph of Your Majesty's arms".[23]

These, then, were the defenses and preparations which faced the British invaders and according to the historian Salvador Brau,"...for the English fleet, the major obstacle was without any doubt the recently finished fortifications and the artillery emplacements with 415 guns and 10,000 quintals of powder", together with "the resistance offered by the garrison and those newly recruited."[24]

In the next chapter we will follow the course of the attack and see how these defenses stood up to the test of fire.

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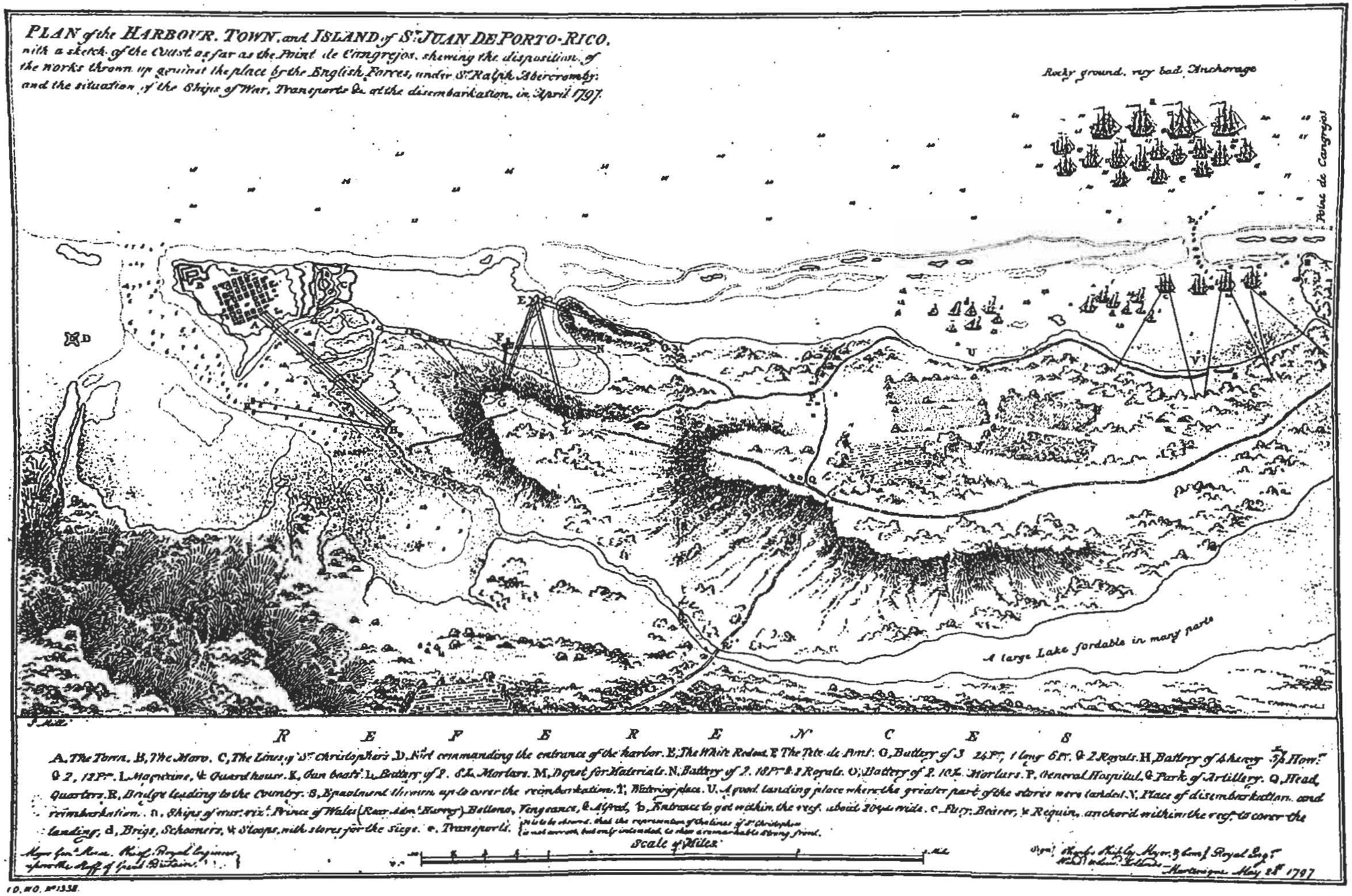
21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Salvador Brau. *Historia de Puerto Rico*. Nueva York, 1914.

1815




I.D. W.O. N.o 1338.

*Plan of the Harbour Town and Island of S. Juan de Porto Rico by Ralph Abercromby, 1797.*

# Chapter XIV

## Abercromby's Siege

In this chapter we shall follow the course of the attack itself on a day by day basis. The main source is the chronicle of the event left by Governor De Castro, "Journal of the commands and orders given by Brigadier Don Ramon De Castro, Governor, Quartermaster General and Captain General of the Post and Island of Puerto Rico beginning 17 April 1797, when enemy ships came into sight, and the main operations and movements of the two armies and the Squadron until today's date."[1] (May 4). For this reason, any reference to "our" in the narrative refers to the Puerto Rican defenders, "the enemy", of course, being the British.

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1 Ramón de Castro. *"Diario de las disposiciones y ordenes dadas por el Brigadier Don Ramón de Castro, Gobernador, Intendente y Capitán General de la plaza e Isla de Puerto-Rico, desde el día 17 de abril de 1797 en que se presentaron buques enemigos a su vista y de las operaciones y movimientos mas principales de los dos ejércitos y escuadra hasta el día de la fecha.* Tapia y Rivera, Alejandro. Biblioteca Histórica de Puertorriqueña, San Juan, 1945.

# C H A P T E R XIV

This valuable record is supplemented by other sources of the time which are no less important, including letters written by Felipe Ramirez[2] and Bishop Zengotita,[3] the accounts of the French naturalist Pierre Ledru and of Padre Miguel Rodriguez Feliciano.[4] Also referred to have been such valuable works as "The Three British Attacks" by E.T.Blanco,[5] the Boletin Historico de Puerto Rico by the famous historian Coll y Toste[6] and the Biblioteca Historica Puertorriquena by Alejandro Tapia y Rivera,[7] among others.

We shall also refer to the main English records, the log of Admiral Henry Harvey [8] and the account by General Abercromby in his letter of May 2, [9] making comparisons as appropriate.*

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2 Felipe D. Ramírez. *Escrito del ingeniero en jefe de las reales obras de San Juan, D. Felipe Ramírez, a D. Francisco Sabatini,* Puerto Rico, 4 de mayo de 1797. Servicio Histórico Militar, Signaturas: 4-1-7-9. Zapatero, Juan Manuel. La Guerra del Caribe en el Siglo XVIII. Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan de Puerto Rico, 1964.

3 Andre Pierre Ledru. *Viaje a la Isla de Puerto Rico en el año 1797...,* Ediciones del Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1957.

4 Fray Juan Bautista Zengotita. *Carta del Sr. Obispo Zengotita al Rey.* Puerto Rico 4 de mayo de 1797. Coll y Toste, Cayetano. Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico, Vol. VII, Correspondencia del Obispo Fray Juan Bautista Zengotita con motivo del Asedio puesto por los Ingleses a la Capital, en 1797. San Juan, 1920.

5 Rodríguez Feliciano, Miguel (Padre). *Extracto de una carta de Don Miguel Rodríguez Feliciano, prebendado de la Santa Iglesia de Puerto Rico, a un religioso de esta ciudad.* Puerto Rico, 22 de mayo de 1797, Gaceta de Guatemala, Tomo I, Núm. 31, folios 246-247: lunes 4 de septiembre de 1797. González Vales, Luis. Alejandro Ramírez y su Tiempo. Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1978.

6 Enrique T. Blanco. *Los Tres Ataque Británicos a la ciudad de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico,* San Juan, Puero Rico, 1947.

7 Alejandro Tapia y Rivera. B*iblioteca Histórica de Puerto Rico,* San Juan, 1945.

8 See: Appendix XVIII.

9 See: Appendix XIV.

* Maps are provided in Appendices XIX and XX for the purpose of orientation.

# C H A P T E R XIV

Monday, April 17

At six in the morning, more or less, a convoy was sighted, consisting of warships and what appeared to be transports whose number, kind and nationality could not be made out, but in view of the current war, and the earlier warning of an attack against this Post and island, it was suspected to be an enemy squadron. This was confirmed shortly because of the movements of the squadron even though none of the ships had shown it's colors.

The Chiefs of Staff were called immediately to the Morro Castle where they and the Governor implemented the defense plans. The call to arms was sounded and the troops of the garrison were deployed amongst the castles, fortresses, batteries and inner and



*Real Admiral Sir Henry Harvey*
*(the National Miritime Museum,*
*Greenwich, London)*

outerworks of the Post (Citadel). All these positions were supplied with the arms and provisions necessary to defend them. The trained citizens were issued with arms. Two armed pontoons and twelve gunboats were placed along with four armed barges under the command of Frigate Captain Don Francisco de Paula Castro. A platoon with four field cannon under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Don Isidoro Linares of the Regimiento Fijo (permanent or "fixed" regiment) were sent to prevent the landing. Orders were sent to the urban mounted militia and able bodied men of all the towns to take up arms and report immediately to the capital. Those not under arms were to bring supplies to the city to sustain the garrison. Written instructions were sent to all districts of the island.

The Ordnance Chiefs and their assistants were sent to their posts and the Storekeeper of the artillery was ordered to stay at the main artillery park day and night to supply equipment as necessary.

A Proclamation was issued ordering all women, children and elders to leave the Post, leaving only able-bodied men under arms. Powder stored in outlying magazines was hurriedly collected and stored in magazine ships in the bay.

By 10 o'clock in the morning, after observing it's manoeuvres, it was confirmed beyond any doubt that the squadron was British and that it was heading towards the shores of Cangrejos, with the transport ships anchoring at the far end of the inlet of La Torrecilla. In view of this, the outpost of Escambron and the outerworks of the post were made ready.

Engineer Don Ignacio Mascaro y Homar was sent with a team to prepare a battery at the Seboruco de Barrios[10] to defend the entrance to the Martin Pea channel and the bridge, where they

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10 "Seboruco de Barrios" (también llamado Seboruco de Barriga), según Coll y Toste, *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*, Vol. XIII, pág. 203, (2) lugar por donde se ha levantado después el Cementerio de Santurce.

were to raise a defensive embankment. They were to retreat if unable to carry out the work.

Two pontoons were to defend the entrance to the port, and two barges each were ordered to the Martin Peña and San Antonio bridges. These floating batteries each had two 15 pounder cannon. Some of the gunboats were to support the pontoons and barges and others were held in reserve.

His Excellency the Bishop and the Clergy pledged their services and some were appointed chaplains and deployed throughout the post. Surgeons equipped and manned the hospitals in readiness to care for the wounded. Arrangements were made for the Carmelite Calced nuns to leave the city with dignity, their convent and monastery being used as hospitals and quarters, as were several houses in the town.

No other movement of the enemy squadron was observed that day except that two frigates and a tender were sent out with the apparent objective of blocking the entrance to the port. The remainder of the squadron stayed by the inlet with the smaller transport ships nearer the shore. A ship was seen setting out to sea, apparently unarmed.

The British account is mainly in agreement although it stresses the problem of the offshore reef which runs all along the northern coast and the difficulty of finding a passage through. Even when the passage was found it was so narrow that only the frigates and smaller transports could get through, denying the British the use of their capital ships for close inshore support and increasing the problems of disembarking men and equipment.

The main dubiety arises regarding the number of British ships in the squadron. One Puerto Rican account lists them as follows:

1 ship with three decks.

2 with 70 cannon.

2 with 50 cannon.

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 | frigates, one of 40 and one of 36 cannon. |
| 2 | brigantines of 16 - 18 cannon. |
| 4 | corvettes of about 16 cannon. |
| 18 | schooners, with a bearing of privateers, 6-12 cannon. |
| 1 | large merchantman. |
| 28 | smaller ships. |
| Total = 60 | sail. |

Don Felipe Ramirez, Chief Engineer of Royal Works in San Juan, also states in a letter of May 4 , 1797 that there were 60 ships[11] but Father Miguel Rodriguez Feliciano, a prebendary of the Catholic Church of Puerto Rico[12] and who E.T Blanco mentions in a letter of May 22 , 1797 as being "one of the illustrious defenders of the post, being an eyewitness of the events being narrated", describes "the enemy squadron as being 64 ships".[13]

The British accounts do not give a precise number of ships, and this and other discrepancies in figures will be looked at again in the next chapter.

Tuesday, April 18.

The men of the cavalry company who lived in Bayamón and Guaynabo arrived on the night of 17/18, and 40 of them were deployed as reinforcements.

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11 See: Appendix XVIII

12 Miguel Rodríguez Feliciano. Op cit.

13 Enrique T. Blanco. Op cit. pág. 117.

# C H A P T E R XIV

At dawn there was heavy firing from the anchored ships to protect the landings which were taking place. The frigates were still blockading the port.

A platoon set out under the command of Lt. Cal. Don Isidoro Linares, together with Don Jose Vizcarrondo, Captain of the Infantry Regiment of Valencia and Don Teodomiro del Toro, adjutant of the disciplined militias.

Each had 100 men, Don Isidoro taking position at "La Plaza", by one of the Cangrejos beaches, Vizcarrondo with his cannon at San Mateo beach and del Toro with further cannon at La Torrecilla, deployed so as to give maximum effect and mutual protection.

Most of the enemy's fire was directed against Toro's position, it being the closest. Four large and heavily armed boats, one showing the British colors, approached the beach. Toro opened fire against them, causing considerable damage to the extent that only one man survived in the boat carrying the colors and few were left in the other boats, which were forced to retreat. They soon returned with a greater number of boats and managed to land about 3,000 armed troops.

The British record contradicts Toro's account of heavy fire and significant casualties. Admiral Harvey's log states that the British "...Landed in the bay without any other opposition than the firing of musketry from a small party at the edge of the woods, who soon made off, having wounded three men in the boats."[14]

Also, there are discrepancies in numbers of troops landed, Ramón de Castro mentioning seven to eight thousand, [15] Felipe Ramírez quoting eleven thousand[16] and Father Rodríguez Feliciano from twelve to thirteen thousand. [17] (See Chapter XV. )

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14 See: Appendix XIII.

15 Ramón de Castro. Op cit.

16 Felipe D. Ramírez. Op cit.

17 Rodríguez Feliciano. Op cit.

# C H A P T E R XIV

On seeing the size of the enemy force, the defending officers decided to retreat, Linares and Toro towards the Martin Peña bridge and Vizcarrondo towards the San Antonio bridge, in accordance with their orders. Vizcarrondo dug in with his cannon at his new position to cover the retreat of his two fellow officers but they, on seeing that the enemy were advancing towards him, decided to Join him. However, the strength of the enemy again proved too great and the defenders retreated over the San Antonio bridge into the Citadel, leaving some of their number to help defend the bridge and the San Gerónimo fortress. They had no time to retrieve their cannon, so they disabled and buried them.

The British account for this incident reads "A party of the enemy were soon along the shore, but as our advance guard went on they moved towards the town, leaving three brass cannon and some military stores at one of their posts and pickets".(18)

De Castro's Journal continues: ...The British, no doubt on seeing the firepower ranged against them from the main defenses of the Citadel, halted their advance and sent out scouting parties. That same morning, Vizcarrondo and a party of French Republicans, 50 militia and 30 cavalry were sent out to rendezvous and harass the enemy. They marched towards Cangrejos, splitting into three groups with orders to rendezvous later with a Captain of Cavalry and 25 infantrymen.

As they were advancing towards San Mateo, an exchange of fire took place with enemy advance parties. The British quickly brought up reinforcements, again causing Vizcarrondo to retreat over San Antonio bridge, taking with him a cannon he found en route. Fire from the San Gerónimo fortress covered the retreat, after which the order was given to destroy the bridge.

As a precaution, the order was then given that all thatched roofs of the "bohios" (huts) in the city be removed to avoid the risk of fire.

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18 See: Appendix XIII

# C H A P T E R XIV

That same morning a ship flying diplomatic colors approached the entrance to the port and was stopped by the Morro fortress. It was met by an aide-de camp and the officer in charge delivered a message to the city's Commanding Officer from the British Naval and Military Commanders, essentially demanding that the city be surrendered to the forces which were besieging it. (See Appendices XXIII and XIV) However, the British ship did not wait for a reply, so an attempt was later made to send it to one of the enemy frigates blockading the port. Unfortunately, possibly because of the darkness, the frigate did not see the flag of truce and opened fire, forcing the local ship to retreat.

Meanwhile, at three o'clock that afternoon, three gunboats were sent to reinforce the two barges defending the Martin Peña Bridge with the object of containing the enemy and covering the retreat of the engineers who had been sent to Seboruco de Barrios, who were in danger of being cut off. The British, however, attacked the gunboats from the land with a party of about 200 men. Fire was exchanged and the gunboats retreated. The floating batteries on the barges maintained their fire throughout the day and into the night to prevent the attackers from advancing or digging in.

Scout boats and reconnaissance parties were again sent out and they reported that the British were advancing towards the San Antonio and San Gerónimo fortresses, which sustained a continuous fire to prevent further progress. The Regimiento Fijo reported two dead and one wounded.

Wednesday, April 19.

A courier ship was made ready to leave the port under cover of darkness carrying word of the attack to the Commanders at Havana and repeating the Governor's request for aid in the form of warships, troops, arms and money, and confirming the intention of using all resources in an attempt to hold out until help arrived.

# C H A P T E R XIV

It was confirmed that the previous evening's heavy fire from the 8 and 12 pounder cannon at San Gerónimo and San Antonio, together with that from the barges, had severely restricted the enemy's operations, reportedly causing one fatality and several wounded. One of the mortally wounded was captured and on being questioned by the Commander at San Antonio, Don Ignacio Mascaro y Homar,[19] (the engineer rescued the previous day) it could only be ascertained that he was a German, a grenadier from one of his country's regiments in the service of England. He was one of a party of troops which had landed, more or less 3,000 men but there could be as many as 6,000. He was too ill to continue his statement, and died on the way to the Citadel.

The frigates blockading the entrance to the bay came further inshore than usual, although still out of cannon range. They were seen to send a boat to reconnoitre the point of the Isla de Cabras and the Cañuelo Fortress and to take depth soundings. Although they were out of range, a few shots were fired from the Morro Castle to discourage them, and in fact they hastily withdrew. With the same object in mind, cannon were fired from San Cristóbal Castle and the batteries of the Northern Line, but without effect on account of the distance.

To contain any attempted landing at Punta Salinas by the enemy following their reconnaissance, Lt. Col. Linares set out with 50 armed men to join others arriving from nearby districts to form a platoon to defend the post at Palo Seco.

On realizing how effective had been the fire from the barges in the Martin Peña channel in harassing the enemy, it was decided to reinforce that position with one of the pontoons from the port entrance, to increase it's potential. Also, San Gerónimo was reinforced with a howitzer.

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19 He was born is Arenys del Mar. Cataluña in 1760. For his services, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and awarded the cross of Charles III. He died in San Juan in 1815. María Cadilla Martínez. *Rememorando el Pasado Histórico,* Puerto Rico, 1946, pag. 241.

# C H A P T E R XIV

News was received from Río Piedras that 400 troops had arrived from the surrounding districts, 200 of which remained to counter any enemy attack and the remainder going to the city. Further men arrived from Toa Baja, making the city's reinforcements for the day 251.

Word was received that an enemy party of between 20 and 30 men had encamped near Bañacaballos[20] and had sacked the nearby sugar refineries of Don Jose Giral and Don Jayme O'Daly in Puerto Nuevo and San Patricia

A party of negroes from the Loisa district apprehended two German soldiers from the enemy force and sent them to the city. Efforts were made to obtain from them useful information about the enemy but their statements provided little of value, except that one had in his knapsack a paper on which was written the name of one of the city's residents. This was passed to the Judge Advocate for appropriate action.

This episode raised the spectre of enemy sympathizers and traitors in the city and arrangements were made to watch the movements of certain residents, particularly transients and those of British and Irish nationality. Investigations followed and some were even arrested.

The British account for the day mainly coincides, adding that they landed their heavy artillery by boat "as far to the westward as the navigation would allow".[21] They comment that the transportation of the guns was difficult due to the roads being of sand.

Thursday, April 20.

The frigates blocking the port remained on station and were accompanied by a brigantine and what appeared to be gunboats.

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20 See: Appendices XIX and XX

21 See: Appendix XIII

# C H A P T E R XIV

The fire from San Antonio, San Gerónimo and the barges continued to match enemy movements.

It was observed that the enemy was trying to establish a battery on the Cerro del Condado overlooking our positions to the east and at a distance of about 400 "varas" ("rods"- an old unit of measurement, about two feet eight inches). We fired grenades, which seemed to have a favorable effect.

Militia Second Lieutenant Don Vicente Andino and his brother Don Emigdio, adjutant to the post, were ordered to take 60 volunteers to contain an enemy attack which was being attempted at the rear. Don José Díaz, Master Sargeant of the Toa Alta district, set out with 50 men for the same purpose.

Standing Orders were given to the Commanders of the companies of civilians forming at the camp from elsewhere in the island to defend themselves as best they could from enemy attack, and to counterattack when the opportunity arose.

The Naval Commander ordered an inventory of all the pirogues (small boats) in the many moorings around the bay in order to use them for transporting food, cattle, troops and munitions, and for communication purposes.

During the afternoon another frigate joined the blockade and at around nine o'clock, enemy frigates and a brigantine were seen approaching the area of Punta Salinas. The Morro and Cañuelo forts opened fire, although it was known that the ships were out of range. It was decided that the Captain of the Port, Frigate Lieutenant Don Juan Hurtado would set out with gunboats for Palo Seco to observe the movements of the frigates and repel any attempts at a landing. Despite the darkness, it was possible to observe the movements of the brigantine, which eventually anchored near Isla de Cabras. The Cañuelo fortress opened fire, as did San Fernando's 36 pounder battery. At daybreak it was seen that the fire had been effective, as the ship set sail swiftly, leaving behind her anchor.

Three hundred and twenty-five men from the urban companies of Guaynabo and Caguas entered the Post on this day.

# C H A P T E R XIV

A total of 25 prisoners and deserters were taken during the day. From their statements the most significant information was that in the enemy camp there were German and English regiments, that the landing troops numbered six to seven thousand men, and that some heavy artillery, howitzers, mortars and a large amount of munitions and ordnance had been landed. They also stated that there were between 400 and 500 Frenchmen who were prisoners of the British and who were virtually forced to take up arms for the expedition by reason of their miserable circumstances. They were said to be unhappy about such service and that many had been killed and wounded on the day of the landings.

Strangely, the British records make no mention of these Frenchmen amongst their numbers. The fact that they were allegedly prisoners implies that they were French Republicans and as such, enemies, and it would seem most unlikely that a Commander would arm a large number of enemy prisoners and let them loose amongst his own troops. At best, if Frenchmen were present at all it would seem more reasonable to assume that they were Royalist sympathizers from the French territories who were volunteers in exchange for British protection of their islands. The record of British forces makes no mention of such a contingent, although it may have been incorporated into the regimental totals.

Harvey's log for the day states.."A.M. the enemy fired occasionally from their different batteries and gunboats but without any effect. All the heavy artillery and mortars were in great part landed within four miles of the enemy's works. The Requin sailed to join the Tamar and Arethusa off the port and the latter sent in a Spanish schooner taken by her from St. Jago de Cuba, having aboard 1700 dollars and a quantity of beeswax."[22]

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22 Ibid

# C H A P T E R XIV

Friday, April 21.

The blockade and enemy fleet remained on station except for one warship, which set out to sea in the company of a brigantine.

At daybreak, several platoons were sent out under the command of Second Lieutenant of Grenadiers Don Luis de Lara and the brothers Andino. They were ambushed by about 150 men near the Martin Peña bridge but in spite of being outnumbered they were able to make an orderly retreat to El Roble, where they joined a larger party with 48 cavalry who were able to put the enemy to flight. The few enemy left behind were forced to take refuge at the Martin Peña bridge, where three enemy cannon were sited.

In this action the enemy suffered a fair number of dead and wounded, and a Second Lieutenant and 32 soldiers were taken prisoner and sent into the city. On our side there were 5 dead, 20 wounded, 2 severely, and two men missing in action.

The San Gerónimo fortress was reinforced with two 24 pound cannon to harass the enemy, who were constructing two batteries directed mainly at the San Antonio fortress, one to the south about 250 rods distant at a place called El Rodeo and another by the bridge to the east, in El Condado, about 400 rods distant.

The Commander of the San Antonio fortress, realizing the danger posed by the enemy works and being hampered by lack of space for artillery, arranged for two 8 pounder cannon to be installed.

Today, the fire fron San Antonio, San Gerónimo and the barges was intermittent, as appropriate to the enemy's movements.

Orders were given to destroy the breastwork of the San Antonio bridge to prevent the enemy from taking cover from our fire...

The fort of San Gerónimo was reinforced with two mortars, one of 9 and the other of 12 inches.

# C H A P T E R XIV

During the evening a force of 15 men and two sergeants left the San Antonio Bridge in order to discover the enemy's works and their numbers. After advancing 100 feet from the bridge they were attacked by very strong enemy fire but they responded in kind even though they had inferior numbers and were able to retreat to the bridge under covering fire from San Gerónimo and the barges. After our Commandant was certain of the safety of his men, with only one wounded soldier, a general bombardment ensued against the enemy.

Thirty-five prisoners and deserters were taken to the Post, including those captured by Don Vicente Andino. The information given by these prisoners was useful as it was learned that the British were still disembarking artillery and munitions and that General Abercromby had established his headquarters in San Mateo Square, taking for his lodgings the house of the Bishop. Also, it was learned that the British were working feverishly in order to advance their batteries against our lines and that they were trying to construct some mortar batteries.

The urban militias entered the city with 530 men from the towns of Toa Alta, Vega Baja and Manaty...

Harvey states "The enemy's batteries of San Gerónimo and the gunboats continued to fire occasionally, but with no effect, on the works that were advanced."[23]

Saturday, April 22

Last night we fired bullets, bombs and grenades intermittently, causing damage to the enemy works. On seeing them dragging cannon towards their batteries, we intensified our fire in that direction.

It was rumored that the enemy General planned to advance on the Post and we feared a surprise night attack, as we could see

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23 Ibid

large columns of veteran regiments flying their colors beyond the range of our cannon. We knew that the enemy had landed horses and we believed that they planned to use them to wade through the shallow waters to attack the bridge, supported by columns of musketeers and artillery, while another platoon forced a bridgehead.

To repel this action, "chevaux de frise", or barbed sawhorses, were placed at the points where it was easiest for the cavalry to cross, and boards spiked with nails were placed on the banks to injure the horses. Cylindrcal fuses, "salchichas cargadas", were laid out together with incendiaries and hundredweight barrels of gunpowder. A trench was dug to give cover for 400 musketeers to face the cavalry, and an 8 pounder and two 12 pounders were added to San Gerónimo. At the sound of vespers the 400 men took up their positions and some field cannon were sited in the Great Moat of San Cristóbal fortress. 1500 infantrymen and cavalry were deployed to reinforce the San Antonio fortress and the trench, partly to cover retreat if necessary. Hand grenades were prepared and barriers with spiked planks were placed at the entrance to the bridge. Embrasures were prepared for musketry. The garrisons at the bridge and San Gerónimo fortress were reinforced and explosive mines and packed mortar shells were placed to be blown when needed. The barges and gunboats were relocated as appropriate.

It was suspected that the enemy might first attack the bridge to draw our attention while attempting under cover of darkness to make landings at the Escambron or San Jorge channels to the North. Accordingly, cavalry patrols were sent out and an infantry platoon with two field cannon were emplaced to give opposition.

Today, 22 prisoners and deserters were taken, but their statements added nothing to our information.

Also, 323 men fron the urban militias of Juncos, Arecibo and Cayey arrived at the city.

The British account adds little for the day, other than that the landing of the heavy artillery, the mortars and their stores was

completed, and that 300 seamen had been landed to assist with the artillery.[24]

Sunday, April 23.

The main part of the squadron were anchored further out.

The Commander of a platoon behind the enemy lines was ordered to break through and attack the enemy forward positions. Some foreigners in the town were imprisoned as a precaution, and they had information that the British intended to attack the citadel itself, a fact confirmed by some of the deserters.

The blockading frigates were coming closer inshore near Punta Salinas with some launches and it was suspected that information from spies had suggested the possibility of a mail ship leaving for Havana.

A 12 inch mortar was added to one of the pontoons at the San Antonio bridge, and fire from the batteries was kept up as necessary during the day to delay the enemy in their efforts. Two of our soldiers in the frontline were wounded.

Twenty nine prisoners and deserters were captured and taken to the Post, their statements adding no new information other than the damage which our fire was inflicting.

The British account for this day stated that the defenders' fire "did no mischief nor occasion any impediments to the advancing party at the batteries. The seamen in the night moved some guns to the newly constructed works."[25]

Monday, April 24.

From intelligence received of the enemy's positions, it was determined to launch a raid Militia Sargeant Francisco Diaz was

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24 Ibid

25 Ibid

chosen as leader with 70 volunteers, 20 from the Disciplined Militias and 50 from men being sent to prison. At daybreak they set out in pirogues, supported by two gunboats, passing down the San Antonio Channel to land nearest the enemy trenches and batteries. All floating and line batteries had previously laid down a heavy covering barrage and when they saw that our troops were landed, they were to maintain fire without cannon, also being prepared to cover a retreat if necessary.

Diaz landed his troops and advanced towards the enemy lines, shooting at the men working on the trenches. The British returned fire but Diaz continued to advance until, sabre in hand, he reached the trench, our men killing or wounding any enemy who stood in the way. Those who escaped our fire took flight quite shamelessly, even though we estimated their number at about 300. On taking the trench, Diaz discovered a cannon battery aimed towards San Antonio Bridge and San Gerónimo fortress, capable of accommodating seven cannon and having two 24 pounders and one 12 pounder already emplaced, along with two howitzers and three mortars. Not having the time or the means to retrieve this artillery, they decided to retreat, bringing in a Captain and 13 live prisoners. They became aware of a strong contingent leaving the enemy camp in pursuit but by the time these arrived, Díaz had re-embarked with his men and the prisoners, and was making an honorable withdrawal. The General of our Army had witnessed the action from San Gerónimo with some satisfaction, and ordered heavy fire from all our lines to cover the retreat and to force the enemy back to their line and batteries. In this action we had only one dead and three badly injured, two from the Regimiento Fijo and one from the militias.

Harvey's log refers to obtaining fresh water supplies from a spring near the landing ground and continues "The enemy fired much during the night, and we opened fire from the battery on the left. The fire continued very smart during the day."

# C H A P T E R XIV

Tuesday, April 25.

The blockading ships remained on station. Fire from both sides continued intermittently, ours being the heavier and with desirable results.

The San Antonio bridge structure was suffering badly from close cannon fire and more workmen were sent to repair it. The greatest problem was the lack of space, with nowhere to store ammunition or allow the troops to rest, or to build further protective barricades. The fire from the enemy's 24 pounder battery in the Condado caused falling masonry to disable our cannon on the left side of the bridge. Commander Mascaro was forced to retreat to the small interior plaza and set up a provisional battery aimed at the Condado emplacement. It's fire did considerable damage to the enemy, thanks mainly to the fine aim of Artilleryman Cristóbal Ortega of the Disciplined Militias, who at sunset took out one of the enemy cannon which was doing most of the damage.

A trench was begun to provide a line of retreat from the bridge and also a communicating road for the troops and workers from the Great Moat to the outposts.

The San Gerónimo fortress was sustaining considerable damage from the enemy's E1 Rodeo battery. It's Commander, Lt. Col. Don Teodomiro del Toro, tried to make repairs with sandbags and barrels and ordered the guardhouse and lower quarters covered with sand, as a shell had penetrated the guardhouse roof and burst, killing and maiming several men.

San Gerónimo then put up a heavy fire and Artilleryman Domingo Gonzalez of the Disciplined Militias, on seeing the enemy ammunition dump, managed to land a shell on it. The dump was blown up and a raging fire broke out, at which we all aimed our guns. The Captain General immediately ordered that Gonzalez be rewarded with 10 pesos.

This afternoon the enemy was observed moving towards the Miraflores Port and the magazine located there, which had been

emptied in accordance with Standing Orders. We had first considered blowing up the magazine after emptying it but as it was not shellproof, we decided that we could destroy it later if necessary, possibly with more damage to the enemy.

This afternoon, the blockading frigates approached San Gerónimo and fired on it with their cannon as they sailed along the coast, probably to see if it could be attacked by sea. We replied with our 24 pounders and they retreated. Nevertheless, both here and at El Morro and San Cristóbal, mobile furnaces for hot shot ("bala-roja")were prepared, should the need arise. (It was the practice when aiming against wooden ships to heat the shot in a furnace in order to start fires.)

Seven prisoners and deserters were taken, but no new information was obtained.

We suffered four dead from the militias and nine wounded, four from the militias, 2 from the Regimiento Fijo, two Frenchmen and a Navy man from the floating batteries. Don Ignacio Mascaro y Homar and Don José Quiñones were both hurt.

Today, 204 men from the Coamo Urban Militia and the Aguada Cavalry arrived at the Post.

Harvey's log adds nothing of note.

Wednesday, April 26.

One of the blockading frigates had anchored during the night near Punta Salinas. Gunboats were sent to investigate and at dawn almost captured one of the enemy's boats, but shellfire from the frigate intervened.

Artilleryman Ortega, who had the previous day taken out an enemy cannon at the Condado battery, observed that this cannon had been re-emplaced and was again damaging the bridge. He tried to re-establish his aim and despite being wounded, maintained his fire with great effect. The General awarded him 10 pesos for his efforts.

# C H A P T E R XIV

As the enemy had been observed the previous day taking up positions at Miraflores, Don Pedro Córdova and Militia Sargeant Rafael García, along with 60 armed negroes, set out for the area in pirogues, supported by gunboats. They disembarked and meeting no opposition,they advanced towards the enemy trenches, hoping to mount a surprise attack with artillery. They were seen, however, and the British opened fire with muskets. The negroes returned their fire but "as that kind of people are not able to act with the necessary discipline and order," Córdova retreated as best he could to the Miraflores magazine. On regrouping and finding that they had not been pursued, they returned and found an enemy force of about 300 infantry, 30 horses and 2 field artillery pieces. The enemy opened fire, causing our men to withdraw and killing 10 negroes and wounding a further five. The gunboats protected our re-embarkation, leaving 4 enemy dead, 10 wounded and some damage to the boats.

Knowing that if the enemy were able to site a battery at Miraflores they would be able to enfilade the advance troops at the San Antonio outerworks, it was ordered that a protective barricade be constructed there. A mortar was placed on the Caballero of San Cristóbal and another on it's parade ground. All the 24 pounder cannon between that fortress and the Pedro Martin battery were also aimed towards Miraflores. Also, one cannon barge was sent into the bay to enfilade the enemy battery and a further one into the Martin Peña channel to attack it from the rear.

Today we maintained a heavy fire from San Gerónimo, San Antonio and the floating batteries. The enemy replied and their 24 and 36 pounders, again severely damaged the bridge, which required continual repairs. Also, the south battery at San Gerónimo was damaged and needed repair.

One of the frigates again approached San Gerónimo but retreated under fire without achieving anything. (Harvey's log confirms this.)

A battery was designated for La Puntilla, to deal with any enemy gunboats which may enter the bay.

Our troops and workmen suffered 4 dead, 18 wounded and 2 injured, including 4 Frenchmen.

Fiftheen prisoners and deserters were captured, including an artillery sergeant who crossed over to our front line and gave us details of the enemy batteries and mortars.

Today, the cavalry from Añasco arrived at the Post.

Thursday, April 27.

A platoon emplaced behind enemy lines observed that a party had gone inland to take cattle and fowl for their camp. Our men under Militia Sargeant Felipe Cleimpaux attempted to cut off their retreat and opened fire. They captured a Captain, a Lieutenant and 16 men, leaving 2 dead, whereas we suffered two wounded.

The San Antonio Bridge and San Gerónimo fort continued to sustain damage and require repair.



*Olimpo, today Miramar, one of the battle-sites (from: album of F. Alonso)*

# C H A P T E R XIV

Our 12 inch mortars were aimed at Miraflores and we experimented with the propellant charges, to try to judge if the enemy would be able to reach the city with their own mortars, relying on information that they had none of larger caliber. We also found that our own 24 pounder cannon could be used effectively against Miraflores.

It was ordered that the following night, all gunboats should be brought to the San Antonio bridge to help ward off any surprise attack.

This afternoon, a warship and two frigates from the blockade again approached San Gerónimo and San Cristóbal and opened fire but our shooting kept them at a distance and they inflicted little damage. Our batteries were at the ready and hot shot was prepared but they retreated before we could use them.

Don Francisco Andino, commanding a platoon near the Martin Peña bridge, sighted an enemy advance post at his rear. He was able to ambush and take a lookout post, but when the enemy advanced on him he was forced to retreat due to being outnumbered. The enemy lost one dead and we had one man taken prisoner.

Some Urban Militia arriving from within the island at the Irregulars' Headquarters in Río Piedras were ordered to remain there to defend it, as were two cavalry companies from San Germán and Arecibo.

The historian Luis R. Arana in his publication *"Estudio Histórico sobre el ataque Inglés"*[26] explains that the Spanish troops deployed to the south of the Martin Peña lagoon in the Río Piedras area had as its specific objective the obstruction of any British attempt to enter the island's countryside further than the Martin Peña lagoon. Arana quotes: "from April 23, this

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26 Luis R. Arana. *Apuntes Para un Estudio Histórico-Militar sobre el Ataque Británico a la Isla de Puerto Rico en 1797.* Monumentos Históricos Nacionales de San Juan, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1952. Pag. 68.

officer had the specific order to upset the British attacks whenever the opportunity arose."[27]

100 men of the First Company, Ponce Urban Militia arrived at the Post, as did the prisoners taken by Cleimpaux earlier in the day.

In all, we suffered three dead and nine wounded.

Admiral Harvey's log for the day again confirms that attempts to bombard the defenses from the sea proved ineffective and that cannonading from the batteries continued, with some shells being thrown from the highest part of St. Christopher's castle (San Cristóbal).[28]

Friday, April 28.

Between 3 and 4 o'clock this morning the enemy opened fire from their battery at Miraflores with four 36 pounders, two mortars and a howitzer. Some shells and incendiaries fell on the post but most burst in the air or fell short. They continued this until about eight thirty or nine, until we returned fire with our batteries, mobile mortars, gunboats and a 9 inch mortar from one of the pontoons in the bay. Under such a bombardment the enemy were forced to cease fire and we suffered only a fire in a mess storehouse caused by an incendiary, which we quickly extinguished.

San Gerónimo, the bridgehead and the two gunboats continued their fire throughout and enemy batteries responded, although not as heavily.

Repairs continued on San Gerónimo and San Antonio and work continued on the redoubt, the covered way and the enfilade barricade at the Great Moat. Gabions were placed on the drill ground to protect the magazines from grenades or incendiaries. Two cannon were sited at the lower part of the San Gerónimo

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27 Ibid, pag. 69.

28 See: Appendix XIII.

fortress to obstruct the entrance to the El Boquerón channel, should any gunboat try to enter. The most decisive action was to gather brushwood from nearby areas and take it to easily accessible points.

Today we took only one deserter, who stated that the enemy was about to attempt another surprise attack. We suffered 18 wounded.

Two hundred and fifty-two men of the Toa Alta Urban Militia arrived at the Post.

Admiral Harvey reports that "the batteries were constantly employed and although the enemy's works both at the bridge and at St Gerónimo battery were much damaged, they continued a brisk fire from other works they had erected near them, and they appeared by large working parties to be throwing up additional works in different parts of the island.[29]

Saturday, April 29.

In the extreme event that our first line had to withdraw from San Antonio and San Gerónimo, it was felt necessary to obstruct the passage of enemy gunboats through the Boqueron channel. To this end, naval courier Don Miguel Asaldegui had set out the night before with 100 men in pirogues to drop large stones in the shallow water. They were forced to retreat when seen by the enemy but Asaldegui gave assurance that the passage had been well obstructed as his own pirogues had had a difficult time when returning.

Our gunboat in the bay opened fire on the Miraflores battery, making every shot count. The enemy returned fire, but the gunboat was undamaged.

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29 Ibid.

# C H A P T E R XIV

Three frigates and three smaller warships were seen approaching Punta Salinas that evening and our local commander was told to be prepared to repel a possible landing. Gunboats were sent to assist him.

Today we had four dead and five wounded. Four prisoners and deserters were taken, adding nothing to our information.

Reinforcements of 298 men from the Peñuelas, Aguada and Tuna Urban Militias arrived at the Post.

Militia Lieutenant Don Miguel Canales was ordered to site two field cannon aimed at the Bishop's house, where General Abercromby had his Headquarters. This position could not be attacked easily as it was protected by the Martin Peña channel and could only be reached by a circuitous route. It was also well defended. Second Lieutenant Don Luis de Lara of the Regimiento Fijo, Commander of General Headquarters at Río Piedras, was to assemble his troops and two cavalry companies facing the Martin Peña bridge and await the opportunity to attack.

The Sargeant of the Disciplined Militias, plus some irregulars, were to pass through San Antonio to take up position to cut off the retreat of the enemy who were advancing from the beach. At daybreak of the 30th. Canales was to sound the alarm with his cannon and signal the army to advance. At the same time, Lara was to attack from the rear and Cleimpaux should attack from his own position. The outpost line was then to open fire to distract the enemy. Orders were given to co-ordinate the efforts of the respective commanders in the hope of a successful outcome.

Harvey records "A howitzer battery was opened on the town and the other batteries continued their fire, which the enemy likewise kept up very briskly. Three seamen of the Prince of Wales were slightly wounded at the battery. Shells were thrown from St, Christopher's castle without doing any material injury.(30)

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30 Ibid.

# C H A P T E R XIV

Sunday, April 30.

Cannon and mortar fire against the enemy position at Miraflores continued during the night and in the morning it was seen to have had good effect, as the majority of the battery had been destroyed, some cannon taken out and few men remained at the post. The barge and the pontoon continued their bombardment.

Despite having received clear orders, however, Don Luis de Lara misunderstood the instructions he had been given by the General the previous day. He assembled 800 men and two cavalry companies with the field cannon in the front line and marched towards the Martin Peña Bridge, his troops forming several columns with others on the flanks in the mangroves to cut off enemy retreats. They were within pistol shot when the enemy opened fire with cannon, and de Lara replied with his own battery. He directed his cavalry to the flanks and opened up with musket fire. However, the lie of the land did not favor his further advance and as he was making no impression, he withdrew. He suffered three dead, including Sargeant Major Don José Díaz of Toa Alta, who was struck by a shell at the bridge. There were also eight wounded, none seriously.

Thirty-five prisoners and deserters arrived at the Post, from whom it was learned that following the morning action at Martin Peña, a general Call to Arms had been sounded in the enemy camp and that the army had formed into two corps. One was moving towards Martin Peña and the other towards the Post, intending to open a large space and attack from both sides.

Today 102 men of the Second Urban Militia of Ponce arrived at the Post.

Harvey's log states "It having been determined by the General to relinquish the attack and embark the troops and artillery, the latter of brass were accordingly moved during the night from the park, and boats from the ships of war and transports were sent at daylight to put them on board the ordnance ship. The seamen

were likewise embarked and sent to their different ships. One seaman of the Prince of Wales was killed at the battery."[31]

Monday, May 1.

From midnight of the day before, the enemy firing ceased and ours was very light. The previous evening, a very large fire had been observed in the mangroves near the enemy territory along the northern shore, and it was thought that this was to discourage an attack from our side.

At daybreak today, when the enemy normally opened fire, it was observed that their camp was quite silent. The pilots of the forts and the lookouts later reported that the British were embarking in great haste, a fact earlier stated by some deserters to our lines. On hearing this, the General and his three cavalry companies marched to attack the enemy from the rear and immediately sighted the abandoned batteries with their artillery in place. Other parties followed the enemy trail and found that they had embarked leaving behind all their land artillery with a large quantity of ordnance, munitions, rations and other items.

At seven o'clock in the morning the last troops had embarked and at ten o'clock when the breeze came in, the transport ships began to sail from the inlets. At four o'clock in the afternoon the last one left in full sail, leaving the warships, except for the blockading frigates, at anchor when night fell.

Historian González Vales, of the Gazeta de Guatemala. quotes Padre Rodríguez Feliciano, "Finally, the enemy found such preparedness, bravery, resistance and opposition in the men of war and civilians at the Post, that they were unable to occupy even a small territory in a fortnight, having lost about 211 men, not counting the wounded, who were taken on board, leaving behind everything they had on land, cannon, mortars, powder,

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31 Ibid.

provisions, horses, even beds, as well as cookware and many other furnishings of the General, they were forced to weigh anchor and withdraw hastily on 2 May..."[32]

Harvey states "Every preparation was making for embarking the troops, stores, etc. that could be carried off. At 5 A.M. all the boats from the ships of war and transports attended on the beach and the troops were all brought off by 8 A.M. and divided in the different transports".[33]

Tuesday, May 2

The warships began to set sail, and all of them were at sea by eleven thirty in the morning.

Work was continued to bring back to the Post the artillery, munitions and other items left behind by the enemy, and the San Antonio Bridge was repaired to facilitate this.

With regard to the amount of abandoned equipment, General Abercromby's letter of May 2 states "All our artillery and stores were brought off, except seven iron guns, four iron mortars and two brass howitzers, which were rendered unservicable, it being impossible to remove them. Not a sick or wounded soldier was left behind, and nothing of any value fell into the hands of the enemy." [34]

Harvey states "The troops that had been put on the small vessels were removed to the transports. At 9 A.M. made the signal and made with the squadron and the transports and stood to the northward. Our ship the "Fury" parted company with dispatches for England". [35]

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32 Op Cit., 5.

33 See: Appendix XIII

34 See: Appendix XIV

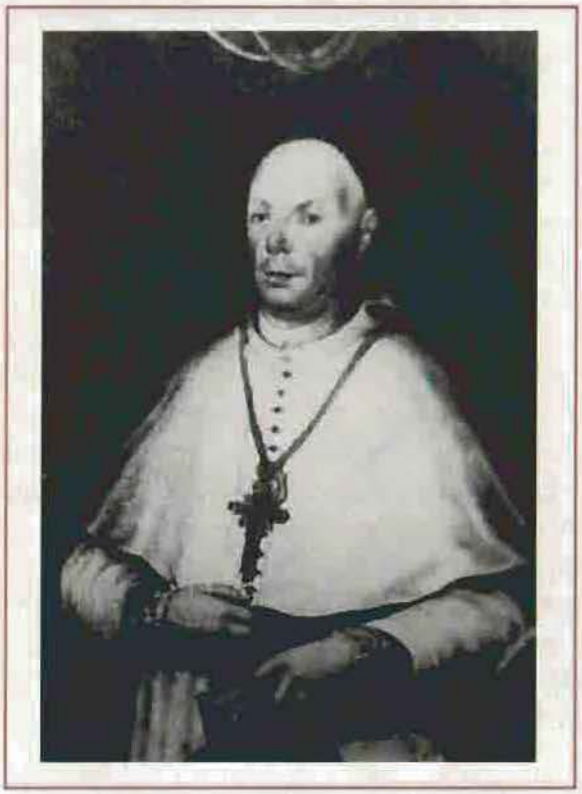
35 See: Appendix XIII

# C H A P T E R XIV

Wednesday, May 3.

At daybreak today the enemy squadron was already out of sight, and only one frigate remained to block the port. Four British soldiers were taken, apparently left behind.

The Gazeta de Guatemala quoted Padre Rodríguez Feliciano as saying that "... a Te Deum was sung at the Holy Cathedral and Governor De Castro led his troops riding the Britrish General's horse..." [36]



*Portrait of Bishop Zengotita*
*by José Campeche (Col. Arzobispado de San Juan)*

36 Op Cit., 5.

# C H A P T E R XIV

His Excellency the Bishop indeed sang a solemn Te Deum with High Mass, preaching a Sermon of Thanksgiving for the succor offered under such critical circumstances by the defenders of the Post and the inhabitants of the island who aided them.

May 6.

"...For the duration of the siege we have counted 43 dead, 154 wounded, 2 injured, 1 taken prisoner and 2 missing in action. The enemy, 286 between prisoners, deserters and missing in action..."

So ended the final British attack on Puerto Rico. In his report to England dated May 2, General Abercromby stressed both the natural and manmade defenses of the city of San Juan and the difficulties they posed in mounting an effective attack.[37]

The siege is perhaps best summed up in Abercromby's own words. "After every effort on our part we never could sufficiently silence the fire of the enemy, who had likewise entrenched themselves in the rear of these redoubts. As to hazard forcing a passage into the island with so small a force, this would have been in vain, as the enemy could support a fire ten times more powerful than we could have brought against them. The only thing left was to endeavor to bombard the town from a point to the southward of it, near to a large magazine abandoned by the enemy. This was tried for several days, without any great effect on account of the distance. It appearing therefore that no act of vigour on our part, nor that any combined operation between the land and sea service could in any manner avail, I determined to withdraw and re-embark the troops, which was done on the night of April 30 with the greatest order and regularity."[38]

In the next chapter we will consider the reactions of the various parties to the failed attack and look further at certain discrepancies

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37 See: Appendix XIV

38 Ibid

in the accounts. These differences in the figures and narratives give rise to interesting questions. Did the Spanish inflate the numbers and losses of the invaders to further glorify their triumph? Did Abercromby diminish the losses of his men and equipment to minimize the extent of his failure? Was it merely a genuine attempt to assess each other's strengths in the heat of battle? Have you ever tried to assess the crowd at a ball game In view of the time which has elapsed we can only evaluate the information quoted in the primary sources of both sides and speculate accordingly.

# Chapter XV

## Reactions on the Aftermath of the Attack

By May 1st, 1797, it had become obvious to Sir Ralph Abercromby that with the manpower and equipment at his disposal it would be impossible to achieve any significant success against the defenses of San Juan. Mindful as always of the well being of his men and reluctant to sacrifice them further in an impossible campaign, he reluctantly made a decision to call off the attack. With the able assistance of Admiral Harvey he began re-embarking his troops and equipment and on the following day, May 2, the British force set sail for Martinique. In his letter of that date to Henry Dundas he wrote: "I beg leave to assure you that the behaviour of the troops has been meritorious - they were patient under labour, regular and orderly in their conduct and spirited when an opportunity to show it ocurred. All the departments of the army exerted themselves to my satisfaction. A return of our wounded and killed accompanied this. The fleet sails this day for Martinique. Thus, Sir, has ended the expedition against Puerto Rico. We have to regret that the intelligence which we received in England with regard to this island was scanty, and that the information which we got in this country has proved erroneous. The enemy was in a state of preparation and ready to receive us. St. Johns of Puerto Rico is both by nature and art very strong, and the worst troops would stand behind such defense. It is justice to the Abbe Reynal to say that the account which he has given of St. Johns of the island, is correct as far as I have been able to observe".[1]

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1. Abercromby to Dundas, May 2, 1797, C.O. 319/6

# C H A P T E R XV

There is a particular quotation in the above report which was later to be the subject of an alternative interpretation. The quotation concerned is "and the worst troops would stand behind such defense". However, in a book on Abercromby's career *Lieutenant General, Sir Ralph Abercromby, 1793-1801, A Memoir by his Son,* published by his grandson in 1861, the author, Lord Dunfermline, quotes on page 59 that in a private letter, his father stated that "the troops, indeed, were of the worst composition, but behind walls, they *could* not fail to do their duty".[2] It is this latter version which appears in all the Puerto Rican accounts of the attack, and this implies that Abercromby had a very poor opinion of the defending troops. However, his official account makes no specific mention of the quality of the troops, but rather implies that the fortifications were so strong and well constructed that **even** poor troops could defend them if necessary, but he did not say that this was the case in the current instance.

As both of the authors are long dead we can never know exactly what was in their minds, but a long and exhaustive search of Sir Ralph Abercromby's correspondence has left an indelible impression of a man of great honesty and gentlemanly bearing who thought it beneath his principles to make disparaging remarks concerning friend or foe. Consequently, would seem to be out of character that he should choose to give a critical description of the defenders who after all had withstood his best attempts against them for a full two weeks. In fact, owing to his dislike of correspondence, it was his habit to give only brief descriptions of the actual facts and only passing opinions or comments when he found the conduct and bravery of his own troops particularly worthy of note. Unfortunately, whilst the official report is readily available and quoted above, the private letter from the General to his son is unavailable for inspection.

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2. Lord James Dunfermline. *Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercromby, K.B., 1793-1801,* Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1861, p. 59

In a private letter of the same date to Dundas, Abercromby intimated that the expedition against Puerto Rico had been undertaken without sufficient information but having received reinforcements, both the Admiral and himself had determined to proceed in the execution of their instructions, trusting in some degree to the weakness of the enemy. However, they found them well prepared with a numerous garrison and powerful artillery. He closed by stating his anxiety over the safety of the Windward colonies and his intention to proceed there immediately to consider further operations. He also stated that he would send a plan of the town and fortifications of San Juan and their mode of attacking it "should it later be considered an object of importance."[3]

When news of the failed expedition against Puerto Rico reached England, Dundas replied to Abercromby as follows: "I have now received your letters of May 2, which were immediately laid before the King. I am anxious to convey to you his Majesty's sentiments regarding the results of the expedition against Puerto Rico. I can assure you that on receiving your detailed account of the defensive advantages of the enemy, he fully approved of your decision to withdraw the troops. The security of the Windward colonies is certainly the first consideration and your decision to withhold the Puerto Rico troops from that objective as little as possible was correct. We approved that you chose to save the troops to protect our present possessions rather than use them for precarious conquest. Before you leave the area you should ensure that all the colonies, especially Jamaica, have adequate garrisons to protect them from enemy attack or internal commotion."

"With regard to the raising of Black Corps, it seems that the planters of Jamaica who were originally averse to the idea, now seemed to realize the necessity and support it. I am hopeful of a

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3. Letter from Abercromby to Dundas aboard the Prince of Wales in Puerto Rico, May 2, 1797, May 2, W.O. 1/86

similar change of heart on the part H.M. colonies to Windward, as I find most of the Gentlemen resident in England who are connected with these colonies already agree with me on the necessity of such a force to preserve peace."[4]

Abercromby had asked to be relieved of his West Indies post at the end of the current "season" and the letter continued to advise him that Major General Cuyler would shortly be setting out to relieve him.[5]

So ended the final British attack against Puerto Rico and it gives rise to interesting speculations as to what might have happened had the British been successful. If the history of other islands which remained British is taken as an example, it is reasonable to assume that English would have become the standard language and that when the importance of the islands diminished, independence would have been granted. Also, the island would not then have been significant in the Spanish American War a century later and America would have had no grounds on which to invade. We have seen King George's response to the failure of the attack but we should next examine the responses in other quarters and analyze their significance.

What were the reactions and comments in the newspapers after the abortive British attack? The Spanish wrote singing the praises of Spanish and Puerto Rican bravery. The English gave a very succinct account of their failure. Puerto Rican historians have also given versions of this incident in our history, relying mostly on Spanish accounts and interpreting it as an heroic deed on the part of the creoles on the island. There is no doubt that the Puerto Ricans acted bravely and demonstrated an esprit de corps in defending their land and showing their loyalty toward Spain. It is one of the pages in the island's history which has been singularized by the participation of the local population. Possibly the main cases of

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4. Parliament Street to Abercromby, June 7, 1797, W.O. 1/86, pp.255-264
5. Ibid.

concern Abercromby's comments on the creoles' participation and the number of British troops involved. Was it such a grand expedition that the British were baffled by its failure? Was Puerto Rico a prime target from the very beginning of the campaign and considered indispensable to Britain. Some of these questions were answered in the previous chapters. It remains to mention the interpretations and reactions which have lingered in history regarding this interesting attack, which celebrates it's two hundredth anniversary in April 1997.

In England the newspaper *The Times* stated on May 1, 1797 that "letters from Martinique mention the most formidable preparations in the making there for a former secret expedition. Sir Ralph Abercromby had collected all the men who could spared from the several islands and Admiral Harvey with six first of the line,(warships) and a sufficient number of transports were ready to convey them to their place of destination. Porto Rico is said to be the object of attack. Other accounts mention the expedition to be against Guadeloupe, the reduction which is essential to the quiet of our West-India islands. It was to sail from Martinique on the 30th or 31st of March."[6]

On June 9, *The Times* summarized the expedition to Puerto Rico in one sentence: "The expedition against Porto Rico was attended with some uncommon bad service--the officers and men under Sir Ralph Abercromby were 15 days employed without having their clothes off."[7]

There were no mention of the attack on Puerto Rico either in the *Gentlemens Magazine* or in Parliament. *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* published in 1940 simply mentions: "Abercromby's attempt on Porto Rico miscarried".[8] *The Cambridge*

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6. "Sir Ralph Abercromby's Expedition", The Times, June 9, 1797
7. Ibid.
8. Rose, Newton,ed. *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919,* Vol. II, 1783-1870, Cambridge U. Press, 1940, p. 68

# C H A P T E R XV

*History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919,* mentions in detail the acquisition of Trinidad but does not mention the failed attack on Puerto Rico. The *Annual Register* gives a rather extensive report on the attacks on both Trinidad and Puerto Rico. It is a very subjective narration in which the West India Interest had effective influence, as the facts in some aspects are totally at variance with the official secret records.

It states: "Two months after the reduction of Trinidad, an expedition was undertaken against the island of Porto Rico. The Spanish privateers from this place, were numerous, and greatly annoyed the British trade in the West Indies. The planters had repeatedly recommended an attack of this island, the capture of which they represented as of the highest utility, as it would not only deprive the Spaniards of an important possession but clear the navigation from the Windward to the Leeward Islands, from much of the danger attending it. Admiral Harvey and General Abercromby willingly undertook, for these reasons, to perform so essential a service. They sailed accordingly to Porto Rico, where they arrived on the 17th of April. The whole northern coast of this island being bounded by a reef, it was with much difficulty that a narrow channel was discovered, through which the lighter vessels, with the troops, were able to effect their passage into a small bay. But the approaches to it were so strongly fortified and defended by so many batteries, that it was found impossible to make any impression upon them, with the inconsiderable artillery that had with great exertions been brought ashore. An attempt was made to bombard the town but this proved, on account of the distance, totally impracticable. It appearing, therefore, that no endeavours, however vigorous, could surmount these obstacles, and that no combined efforts of the sea and land force could in any manner be effectual in the present circumstances, so it was judged advisable to desist from the attempt. The loss of men upon this occasion, notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy was small and the troops reimbarked without any molestation."[9] The

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9. "Ineffectual Expedition of the English against the Spanish Island of Puerto Rico", The Annual Register, Chapter VIII, pp. 91-92.

accounts also mention Abercromby's insistence that a large body of negroes should be raised for the protection of the British islands, but the planters unanimously concurred in condemning the measure as full of danger.[10]

It is obvious from all the previous accounts of the planters' interests that at no time were they in favour of acquiring any more potential sugar islands, as this would reduce their own share of the British and American markets and so reduce their personal profits. In fact, they had formed the main opposition to suggestions that Puerto Rico be exchanged for Canada in the Peace of Paris in 1763, and consistently pressed for the return of Martinique and Guadeloupe to France after each conflict, although the retention of these islands would have been in the British interest.

*The Annual Register*, whose account implied that the attack had been at the instigation of the planters, was edited by Edmund Burke, a very famous contemporary writer and well known for his foresight in predicting the eventual violent events of the French Revolution. However, one must wonder why he should subscribe to such a misleading analysis of the West Indian planters' feelings toward the acquisition of further sugar territories, particularly when there are ample official records which proved the contrary. Whilst it cannot be proved that he was retained by the West India Interest to further their cause, there must be some doubt as to why he should allow such a misrepresentation of the facts. One conclusion is obvious, however, the planter lobby had the power not only to influence future policy, but also to ensure that history was written in a way which would place them in a good light.

A further misleading aspect of this report is the fact that the reason given for attacking Puerto Rico was because of the problems caused by privateers, whereas in actual fact the main reason for its acquisition was for the relocation of French and Spanish planters fleeing the new regime in both St. Domingue and San Domingo.

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10. Ibid.

Possibly, however, this was not a deliberate distortion of the facts, but rather a case that the government of the day kept secret its motivations and left the public to draw their own conclusions, or practiced the art of disinformation which is still in use today.

Another more detailed account of the attack appeared on pages 274 to 276 of the *Annual Register* in the *History of Europe* section, which states that: "The British next directed their forces against the colony of Puerto Rico, many circumstances concurred to render this a desirable acquisition. Standing next to Jamaica in magnitude, it is fertile, and consequently capable of being turned to much advantage by a wise and vigorous government. It is likewise a severe thorn in the sides of the British colonies as its ports sent out a swarm of privateers which greatly annoyed and endangered the navigation from the Windward to the Leeward Islands. For this reason chiefly, the planters were anxious to see it rested from the Spanish Crown and had more than once recommended the sending of an expedition to reduce it."[11] The account goes on to describe the main aspects of the attack. It will be seen that once again, the planters are credited with the idea of attacking the island, although it has already been shown that for many years they had been against the enterprise.

Trade in 1797 was inevitably suffering due to the war, and was the cause of shortage and hardship in England. Public feeling made itself felt when the people of London made formal accusations that the King and his Ministers were continuing the war unnecessarily. [12]

When it was published in 1826, the *Naval History of Great Britain* described the attack on Trinidad and the English and Spanish naval forces deployed there very accurately, as was it's description of the attack on Puerto Rico, quoting the same figures for the British killed, wounded and missing as those given by Abercromby,

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11. *Annual Register,* History of Europe section, pp. 274-276
12. Ibid, pp. 85-87

although it does not specify the total strength of the invading force.[13]

In 1905, William Hunt, a British historian described the attack on Trinidad and Puerto Rico very briefly thus: "About the same time as the battle of Cape St. Vincent, Admiral Harvey, commanding in the Leeward Islands, and Sir Ralph Abercromby, captured Trinidad from the Spaniards but failed in an attack on Puerto Rico.[14] It seems incongruous that in 12 volumes the attacks in the West Indies were so summarily dismissed.

In 1906, the famous British military historian the Hon. Sir John Fortescue published several volumes on the history of the British military which included very objective and exact synopses of the motivations and actual attacks in the West Indies.[15] He was a close relative of one of the Ministers in the administration of King George III and it may have been this close relationship which gave him access to details of policy and strategy which were not readily available to the general public. Of all the accounts and analyses of the West Indies expeditions, Fortescue's was the closest in defining the true political motivations and with the exception of minor statistical differences on the troop numbers in the Puerto Rico attack, his was the version which followed most closely the official accounts reported by Sir Ralph Abercromby. Only by a study of the original official documents can this conclusion be drawn as so many other contemporary and subsequent accounts suffer inaccuracies on both interpretation and figures.[16]

The Spanish account published in the *Gaceta de Madrid* describes the attack rather accurately and praises above all the courage

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13. See Appendix IX
14. William Hunt, *The History of England,from the Accession of George III to the Close of Pitt's First Administration (1760 to 1801)*, Longman, 1905, 12 Vole., p. 389
15. See Appendix X
16. See Appendix X

and bravery of the Puerto Rican militias.[17] They quote that 3,000 British troops took part in the attack, of which 2,000 were casualties. The actual figures as quoted to London by the Adjutant of the British Commanding General show that 3,910 officers and men comprised the British force, of which 225 were killed, wounded or missing. The official British figures were quoted in much detail, even quoting names in the case of officer casualties, and there is no reason to doubt their accuracy.[18]

Some accounts of the British attack which appeared in books published in Puerto Rico are prone to similar errors. In one instance the attack is reported as lasting 10 weeks, whereas in actual fact it lasted only 15 days. In another instance a figure of 14,000 British troops is quoted for the invasion, although the figure of 225 casualties quoted in the account is accurate. Other accounts quote numbers of between 6,000 and 10,000 men as comprising the invading force.

The number of actual British ships which took part in the attack poses a difficult question. The British records, which named 13 ships in the Trinidad attack, mention only 11 such vessels in the Puerto Rico campaign according to Admiral Harvey's Log and *The Naval History of Great Britain from the Declaration of war by France in February 1793 to the Accession of George IV.* These were Prince of Wales, Bellona, Vengeance, Alfred, Tamar, Arethusa, Fury, Beaver, Pelican, Pendrix and Requin. The number of transports is not specified.

Thus, the Puerto Rican accounts based on the Spanish records, which quote anything up to 68 ships in the attacking force, can be neither confirmed nor denied, but as the same accounts in many cases inflate the number of troops involved, it may be that the same principle applies to the size of the naval force.

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17. See Appendix XI (Gaceta de Madrid)
18. See Appendices VII & XII.

Despite the anomalies in the various reports on the attack, it can be generally accepted that it was a significant event in the island's history which brought about a coalescence and a feeling of common national pride between the inhabitants of the walled city and those of the countryside. In response to the island's bravery in defending herself, she was awarded a commemorative shield by Spain. This would seem only fair when the spirited defence of their homeland put up by the Puerto Ricans is compared with the unopposed conquest which the British enjoyed at Trinidad.




*Shield awarded to Puerto Rico by Spain to honour the victory over the British*

# Conclusion

It would seem appropriate after everything that has been studied and discussed to recapitulate on the motivations and activities of the different nations in the Caribbean during the 18th century.

As we have seen, the British West Indies were controlled by an elitist white planter class who ruled domains populated by a small number of poor whites and a vastly higher number of mulattos and negro slaves. It was the aim of the planters to establish large and highly profitable sugar plantations, then return to England to take what they considered to be their rightful place amongst the English gentry, Once back in England, they formed associations with their merchants and used their newfound wealth to purchase their way into politics, using the power which money buys to infiltrate the highest echelons of Government. Here, they could use their influence to ensure that whatever policies or legislation were adopted, they could not adversely affect continued trading monopolies. Between them they controlled an exclusive and highly profitable product which was daily becoming more and more popular throughout the country and the rest of Europe, and they would stop at nothing to ensure that they did not have to face foreign competition, by fair means or foul. They insisted on the passing of laws (Navigation Acts, Molasses Act, etc.) which ensured that only their sugar was used in Britain and the colonies, although foreign supplies were cheaper. They then restricted supply to increase prices further. There is no doubt that had it not been for the selfish interests of the planters in their opposition to free markets, England would have enjoyed cheaper sugar during eighteenth century.

# CONCLUSION

The harm done by these planters to the nation, though, did not stop at increasing the price of the sugar in the Englishman's morning cup of tea. At times when despite the weight of legislation in their favour, they were experiencing difficulties in maintaining" profit levels, the country would go to war on some pretext or other (e.g. "Jenkins' Ear.") Considering the power of the West India Interst in Government, it is quite reasonable to assume that the planters were instrumental in encouraging these wars. Also, once the conflict was begun they would influence the choice of objective, advising against sugar growing territories but for the acquisition of potential sugar markets. If the exigencies of war necessitated the taking of a sugar island, the planters used their power to ensure that it was handed back at the peace, despite public opposition as in the case of Guadeloupe in the Peace of Paris in 1763. In almost every major conflict, islands such as Guadeloupe or Martinique would be captured, only to be returned when the war was over to prevent them from becoming British, and as such, competition for the established British islands. How many unfortunate lives were lost in the fruitless taking and retaking of such islands can only be guessed at, but these were of small consequence to the Men of Sugar.

Because of the small proportion of whites against blacks on the islands, and a fear of uprisings if the blacks were armed, the West India Interest felt that England should not only protect their profits by legislation, but also their holdings on the islands by military force. The records of the century show an unending sequence of demands from the islands for more ships, more ordnance, more men. Again due to Planter Power, these demands were usually met, even to the detriment of home and the rest of the empire, but a high proportion of the reinforcements sent soon fell to the ravages of disease and climate. It was to Britain's disadvantage that owing to the practice of absenteeism and distrust of non whites, she was unable to protect her territories adequately by the use of local militias, a scheme which worked well in the Spanish Caribbean.

It was towards the end of the eighteenth century that the scene began to change. There had been signs for many years that the

# C O N C L U S I O N

British public was becoming increasingly hostile to the self-seeking power of the planters, and an upsurge of radicalism and calls for Parliamentary reform meant that the old order was changing. Whether this in itself would have ended the planters' days of glory will never be known, as another event suddenly changed all the rules. This, of course, was the French Revolution, a rebellion totally dedicated to destroying privilege and wealth wherever it may be found.

By the 1790s, the most sought after territory in all the West Indies was St. Domingue, the western part of the island of Hispaniola. The older British islands were becoming worked out and it was time to seek new fertile and undeveloped lands. Britain was at war with France but not, as yet, with Spain, so if she wanted more territory she must look at a French possession. St Domingue was French and it had developement potential, so it was a legitimate target. The French Revolution had two opposite effects on the island, however. On the one hand the rich French planters, fearing that the violence against wealth may spread to them from the mother country, offered to transfer their allegiance to Britain in return for protection. On the other hand, though, the black slaves and mulattos, fired by the revolutionary creed of liberty, took advantage of the breakdown of the French administration to rebel and try to take the island for themselves. Events were further complicated when Spain ceded her part of Hispaniola to France when the two made peace.

In any event, Britain poured money and troops into efforts to take and hold St Domingue, partly for herself and partly for the French planters she had agreed to protect. London had tried to maintain control of the colony but by 1795, events were taking place so fast that orders were often obsolete before the local command received them. This necessitated the local commanders often making their own decisions, which were sometimes not approved of when news reached London.

This fact is very significant as it typifies the conduct of distant wars at the time, where politicians ignorant of the territory were using weeks-old intelligence to instruct their generals in the field,

who in turn were conversant with the military strategies but not with the political situations which rendered them necessary. It is small wonder that campaigns did not follow their planned course and became a case of "do what you think is best, take what you think is easiest".

It seems to have been just such a situation which led to the British deciding to attack Puerto Rico in 1797. Britain had no long term plans to attack the island, and made no secret of the fact that what she really wanted was St. Domingue. It was only when despite all her efforts, Britain realized that she could not hold St. Domingue that Puerto Rico was chosen , almost as an afterthought, as an alternative place in which the French planters with their negroes could be settled. Even then, Trinidad was mentioned as a secondary target, in case things did not work out. It is also apparent from the records that Britain was neither totally committed to the attack, nor too dismayed at it's failure, by the fact that in the first place Abercromby and Harvey "decided to try to carry out their orders, relying on the unreadiness of the defenders", and secondly that they gave up the effort after only fifteen days, while the majority of their force was still intact. This is further brought out by the apparent unconcern with which the King of England accepted the failure, plus the indifferent reactions in the British press. Even opponents of the Government in Parliament failed to make capital of it.

The choice of Puerto Rico and Trinidad as targets brings out yet another point. Perhaps for the first time in a hundred years, Britain was attempting to take and keep territories which could expand her sugar growing empire, a strategy which she had previously avoided at all costs. Time and again, successive Governors of the Leeward Islands had recommended the taking of Puerto Rico both as a strategic gain and for the expansion of the sugar industry but each time, Planter Power prevented such steps being taken. This above all would indicate that by 1797, the power and influence of the West India Interest was finally on the decline.

Something we do know is that despite the failure of the British attack, some families did make their way from St Domingue and

Santo Domingo to Puerto Rico, bringing their money with them and setting up in agriculture or commerce. The precise number of those migrants is not known.

It is interesting to speculate further as to what might have happened if the attack of 1797 had been successful, and perhaps the best way to do this would be to examine what happened to Trinidad, another Spanish possession which was conquered only two months earlier.

After the capture of Trinidad, Sir Ralph Abercromby appointed Colonel Thomas Picton as Military Governor. Although the Articles of Capitulation were respected, a large influx of French planters from St. Domingue and Martinique took place. As time went by, Colonel Picton found himself to be sympathetic to the views of these immigrants and their attitudes to slavery, even to the extent of acquiring property and slaves of his own. Thus, instead of Trinidad serving as a base close to the South American continent from which assistance could be given to Spanish colonies seeking independence in exchange for their trade, it became just another slave colony, and one under a strong foreign influence at that. We can only speculate as to whether Puerto Rico would have shared the same fate in view of the British intention to relocate foreign sugar planters and their negroes on the island.

In the event, Puerto Rico remained Spanish and during the 19th century, Spain seemed to become more appreciative of the value of her colony, possibly because she had lost so many of her other territories in the Americas. The island stayed Spanish until the Spanish American War in 1898, when she became a territory of the United States. Even a century later, though, Spanish is still the predominant language.

# LIST OF HOLDERS OF HIGH OFFICE IN ENGLAND AND THE WEST INDIES

## BRITISH PRIME MINISTERS 1721-1801

| | |
|---|---|
| 1721 | Sir Robert Walpole |
| 1741 | Earl of Wilmington |
| 1743 | Henry Pelham |
| 1754 | Duke of Newcastle |
| 1756 | Duke of Devonshire |
| 1757 | Duke of Newcastle |
| 1762 | Earl of Bute |
| 1763 | George Grenville |
| 1765 | Marquess of Rockingham |
| 1766 | William Pitt the Elder |
| 1768 | Duke of Grafton |
| 1770 | Lord North |
| 1782 | Marquess of Rockingham<br>Earl of Shelburn |
| 1783 | Duke of Portland<br>William Pitt the Younger (to 1801) |

## SECRETARIES OF STARE OF THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| 1714 | Charles Townshend |
| 1716 | Earl Stanhope |
| 1717 | Earl of Sunderland |
| 1721 | Charles Townshend |
| 1723 | Sir Robert Walpole |
| 1730 | Earl of Harrington |
| 1742 | Lord Carteret |
| 1744 | Earl of Harrington |
| 1746 | Earl Granville<br>Earl of Harrington<br>Earl of Chesterfield |
| 1748 | Duke of Newcastle |
| 1754 | Earl of Holderness |
| 1761 | Lord Bute |
| 1762 | George Grenville<br>Earl of Halifax |
| 1763 | Earl of Sandwich |
| 1765 | Duke of Grafton |
| 1766 | Henry Seymour Conway |
| 1768 | Viscount Weymouth<br>Earl of Rochford |
| 1770 | Earl of Sandwich |
| 1771 | Earl of Halifax<br>Earl of Suffolk |
| 1779 | Viscount Weymouth<br>Earl of Mansfield |

## SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1782 | Charles James Fox |
| | Lord Grantham |
| 1783 | Charles James Fox |
| | Earl Temple |
| | Duke of Leeds |
| 1791 | George Grenville (to 1801) |

## SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR THE SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| 1714 | Earl Stanhope |
| 1716 | Paul Methuen |
| 1717 | Joseph Addison |
| 1718 | James Craggs |
| 1721 | Lord Carteret |
| 1724 | Duke of Newcastle |
| 1748 | Duke of Bedford |
| 1751 | Earl of Holderness |
| 1754 | Lord Grantham |
| 1755 | Henry Fox |
| 1756 | William Pitt the Elder |
| 1761 | Earl of Egremont |
| 1763 | Earl of Halifax |
| 1765 | Henry Seymour Conway |
| 1766 | Duke of Richmond<br>Lord Wycombe |
| 1768 | Viscount Weymouth |
| 1770 | Earl of Rochford |
| 1775 | Viscount Weymouth |
| 1779 | Earl of Hillsborough |

## SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1782 | Earl of Shelburne |
| | Thomas Townshend |
| 1783 | Lord North<br>Earl Temple<br>Thomas Townshend |
| 1789 | Lord William Grenville |
| 1791 | Henry Dundas |
| 1794 | Duke of Portland (to 1801) |

## GOVERNORS OF THE LEEWARD ISLANDS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1704 | Sir W. Mathews | 1768 | William Woodley |
| 1706 | Colonel Parke | 1771 | Sir Ralph Payne |
| 1710 | Walter Hamilton | 1776 | William M. Burt |
| 1721 | John Hart | 1781 | Thomas Shirley |
| 1728 | Lord Londonderry | 1791 | William Woodley |
| 1733 | William Mathews | 1795 | Mad. Gen. Charles Leigh |

## BRITISH AND EUROPEAN POLITICAL CHRONOLOGY DURING THE 18TH CENTURY

1713 Treaty of Utrecht at close of War of Spanish Succession. Gibraltar ceded to England.

"Asiento" slave trading agreement with Spanish colonies awarded to British South Sea Company.

1714 Death of Queen Anne, last Stuart Monarch of England. George I, of the House of Hanover, arrives in England

1715 Meeting of first Parliament of George I with large Whig majority. Jacobite rising in Scotland under the Earl of Mar. Old Pretender (James III) arrives in Scotland to promote rebellion.

1716 Old Pretender flees Scotland after failure of England to rise in support.

1717 Triple Alliance formed between England, France and Holland to uphold the Treaty of Utrecht.

1718 War between England and Spain

1720 Spain makes peace with England. South Sea Company's scheme for taking over part of the National Debt in exchange for exclusive South Seas trade. The company's stocks reach record levels, then crash. (The "South Sea Bubble")

1721 Lord Townsend becomes Secretary of State. Walpole Administration formed. Principal figures: Robert Walpole (First Lord of the Treasury); Lord Townshend (Secretary of State); Carteret (Secretary of State)

1727 Death of George I; accession of George II

1729 Treaty of Seville with Spain; confirmation of **asiento** treaty allowing limited trade with Spanish colonies.

1738 Spanish ill-treatment of British sailors taken up by opposition to Walpole in the Commons and the City of London

1739 Convention of El Pardo to settle differences with Spain submitted to Parliament and approved by only 28 votes. Walpole forced to accede to demand for war with Spain, War of Jenkins' Ear begins. Capture of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon

1744 France declares war on Britain. War of Austrian Succession.

1745 Young Pretender (Bonnie Prince Charlie) arrives in Scotland. Scottish Highland Clans rise in support and invade England, reaching Derby before retreating.

1746 Young Pretender defeated at Culloden

1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle ends Wars of Austrian Succession and Jenkins' Ear.

1751 Gregorian calendar to be adopted. 11 days to be omitted from calendar between 3 and 14 September, 1752.

1756 War declared against France. Seven Years War begins. Loss of Minorca after failure of Admiral Byng to defeat French invasion fleet.

1759 Capture of Guadeloupe and Quebec.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1760 | Surrender of Montreal to the British; virtual loss of Canada by the French. Death of George II; accession of George III. |
| 1761 | Resignation of Pitt the Elder, Earl of Chatham, because of disagreements with colleagues about his war policy. Bute-Newcastle administration formed. Principal figures: Duke of Newcastle (First Lord of the Treasury); Earl of Bute (Secretary of State). |
| 1762 | Duke of Newcastle resigns from Government because of quarrel with Bute over foreign policy. Bute administration formed. Principal figures: Earl of Bute (first Lord of the Treasury); George Grenville (Secretary of State). Britain and Spain at war. British capture Havana. |
| 1763 | First treaty of Paris signed, ending Seven Years War. France cedes Canada, Cape Breton Island, Granada and Senegal to England; the Mississippi recognized as the frontier between Louisiana and the British colonies. Spain cedes Florida to England, but receives back all conquests in Cuba. |
| 1773 | Tea Act passed allowing direct export of tea to North America. "Boston Tea Party" |
| 1775 | Chatham's motion proposing conciliation with the American colonies defeated. First skirmish of British and American forces at Lexington. |
| 1776 | American Declaration of Independence |
| 1777 | Surrender of British forces at Saratoga. |
| 1778 | France signs treaty of commerce and alliance with America, placing her at war with Britain. |

1779 Spain declares war on Britain. Siege of Gibraltar begins.

1781 News of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown reaches England.

1782 Motion asserting the impracticability of the continued war with America passed in the House of Commons. Preliminaries of peace agreed with the American colonies.

1783 Preliminaries of peace signed with France and Spain. Treaty of Versailles signed between England, France, Spain and the United States. Recognition of the independence of the United States and establishment of its boundaries. United States' fishing rights established on Grand Banks, Newfoundland coast, and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Navigation of the Mississippi to be open to both Great Britain and the United States. Great Britain cedes Tobago and Senegal to France, and Florida to Spain.

1786 Treaty of Commerce and navigation with France.

1788 Defensive alliances with The Netherlands and with Prussia to maintain the peace of Europe.

1789 Storming of the Bastille in Paris, France

1791 Leopold II of Austria issues circular inviting rulers of Europe to demand release of Louis XVI of France and to intervene if Royal Family harmed. The French sent an army of 150,000 men to the frontier.

1792 France declares war on Austria. Prussia declares war on France. Declaration of Fraternity. The French Convention offers its support to assist any people against their rulers. They also proclaim the Scheldt an open river in defiance of existing treaties. Widespread alarm expressed in Britain, Austria and Russia.

1793 Execution of Louis XVI. Second Partition of Poland by Russia and Prussia. Belgian army incorporated into that of France. France declares war on Britain and Holland. France declares war on Spain. First Coalition formed including Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, Spain, Holland and Portugal.

1795 Treaty of Basle signed between France and Prussia. Treaty of Basle between France and Spain. France gives up her Spanish conquests but is ceded San Domingo, the Spanish half of Hispaniola. Treaty of Basle between Holland and France sets up the Batavian Republic, under French domination.

1796 France signs Treaty of San Ildefonso with Spain. Spain declares war on Britain. Peace negotiations between Britain and France collapse.

1797 Battle of Cape St. Vincent, British under Admiral Jervis defeat a Spanish fleet. British fleet at mutiny at Spithead. Sir Ralph Abercromby conquers Trinidad. The English attack on Puerto Rico is not successful.

# Appendix I

## Biography of Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercromby K.B. (1734-1801)

Sir Ralph Abercromby was born in 1734 at Tullibody in Scotland, a son of Mr. George Abercromby, the principal Whig landlord in the county of Clackmannan. His mother was of the Dundas family, which made him a cousin of Henry Dundas. the Secretary of State at the time of the West Indian campaigns of the 1790s.

Abercromby was educated at the famous Rugby School in England and studied law at the Universities of Edinburgh and Leipzig. He found his dislike for the legal profession so great that in 1756, his father procured for him a military appointment in the 3rd. Dragoon Guards. He went with his regiment to Germany in 1758, where he served under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, and learnt much about Prussian tactics and discipline. He became a Lieutenant in 1760 and a Captain in 1762, going with his regiment to Ireland at the close of the Seven Years War. His father lived to the age of 95, which meant that he could continue his military career instead of retiring to look after the family estate, as was the custom at the time. In 1770 he was promoted to Major, and in 1773, he became Lieutenant Colonel of his regiment.

His military career was temporarily interrupted when he was asked to enter politics to contest the seat of the county of Clackmannan, which had traditionally been held by his family

for the Whig interest. Political battles were usually very bitter at the time and as was often the case, ended with a duel between the two candidates. Neither opponent was injured, and Abercromby eventually attained the seat through the influence of his relative, Sir Lawrence Dundas. He did not fit well into the political scene, preferring to vote with his conscience rather than along party lines. Also, although he longed to return to the Army to lead his regiment, he refused on grounds of conscience to fight in the American War of Independence, although this precluded his further promotion. He was a sincere believer in liberty and he sympathized with the Americans in their cause. He was also a great admirer of General George Washington. He was not the only senior officer who was against the American war. Lord Howe said that had it been his own choice he would have declined to serve, Admiral Keppel refused to go, and Lord Effingham resigned his commission when ordered to serve there, writing to the Secretary of War "I cannot without reproach from my conscience, consent to bear arms against my fellow subjects in America in what, to my discernment, is not a clear cause".Consequently, Sir Ralph left politics and the military and retired as a colonel on half pay to look after his wife and children in Edinburgh.

The war with revolutionary France in 1793 brought an end to this peaceful existence. He immediately applied for a command and due to his reputation as a soldier and his Parliamentary influence, he was accepted and promoted to Major General and sent to Europe. Although the European campaigns in the early stages of this war were often disastrous for Britain, Abercromby himself invariably fought with distinction and even to his own surprise, when he returned to England in 1795, he was made a Knight of the Bath and hailed as Britain's greatest General.

Abercromby's return to military duty after so long an absence shocked him when he observed the degree of deterioration in the British Army. There was no organization, morale was non-existent, and the Corps was led by officers who owed their position to influence and patronage rather than ability, and who were

concerned only with the serving of their patrons' interests. The men themselves were considered as expendable and of no consequence. In light of this, he found no surprise in the defeats being suffered by his country, and he set about using his influence to improve organization and conditions.

In November, 1795, he left for the West Indies. Details of his campaigns are given in this book, but mention should be made of his attempts to improve the lot of the unfortunate troops in the West Indies. He was appalled at the high rate of sickness and mortality, and set about reorganizing the military hospitals. He adapted uniforms for the tropics, forbade parades in the heat of the sun and established mountain sanatoria. He also made great efforts to improve morale by encouraging valor and self reliance amongst officers and men, and rewarding them where possible with promotions and minor civil posts.

He returned to England in 1797, expressing a dislike of the paperwork and diplomacy which Command in the West Indies necessitated, plus a concern for the proper expenditure of the large amounts of public money placed at his disposal. He felt that administrative duties took far more of his time than leading his men, which he much preferred.

In 1799, he was sent to Ireland, a country of which he had some experience. This troubled land was at the time in great turmoil, mainly due to the harsh treatment of the Catholic population by the Protestant military. Once again, Sir Ralph's natural humanity prevented him from following the harsh and uncaring regime of the establishment, who seemed surprised that he should object to the wanton ill-treatment of the peasants. Following a disagreement with Lord Camden, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he resigned his commission and returned to England. He found on his return, however, that he was by no means in disgrace, and was immediately put in command of the troops in his native Scotland.

Later in the same year he was again recalled to serve in Europe by his cousin, Henry Dundas. Once again he fought bravely, in one engagement having two horses shot out from under him. However, his political masters agreed the Convention of Alkmar,

under conditions which Sir ralph thought were disgraceful, and when he was offered a peerage for his services in the campaign, he declined indignantly.

He returned to his Scottish command, where he was immensely popular with his men, until in 1800, he was appointed to the command of the troops in the Mediterranean. During all this time he continued in his efforts to improve Army conditions. Also, having been involved in an abortive attack on Cadiz, which failed due to disembarkation problems, he devised and drilled his men on efficient boat procedures.

Early in 1801, he had received orders to expel the remains of Napoleon's army from Egypt. Having waited for reinforcements, he eventually arrived in Aboukir Bay on March 2, 1801, with a force of over 15,000 men. Thanks to his previous training, the force landed on March 8. After some minor skirmishes, the battle with the French was joined on March 21. The French suffered immense losses, including three generals, whilst the English had only 1464 killed and wounded. Unfortunately, one of the casualties was Sir Ralph; whilst leading his men in his usual reckless manner, he was hit in the thigh by a musket ball. He was taken back aboard the British fleet's flagship and although he seemed to rally for a while, he finally died on March 28. He was later buried in Malta, where a small monument was erected in his memory. A more fitting monument may be found in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, where he takes his place amongst other British heroes.

So ended the life and career of a distinguished, modest and brave soldier, who more than anyone else transformed the British Army from the disorganized, dispirited and demoralized body of the late 18th century into the efficient machine which eventually helped to bring peace to Europe in 1815. He was renowned for his consideration for the men under this command, his refusal to become involved in political or military issues which went against his principles, and his concern for oppressed peoples everywhere, regardless of race or religion. One of his most favored causes was the liberation of the countries of Spanish America. (See Appendix IV)

# APPENDIX I



*Sir Ralph Abercromby's son James (1776-1858), the future judge Lord Dunfermline, by David Allan 1779*

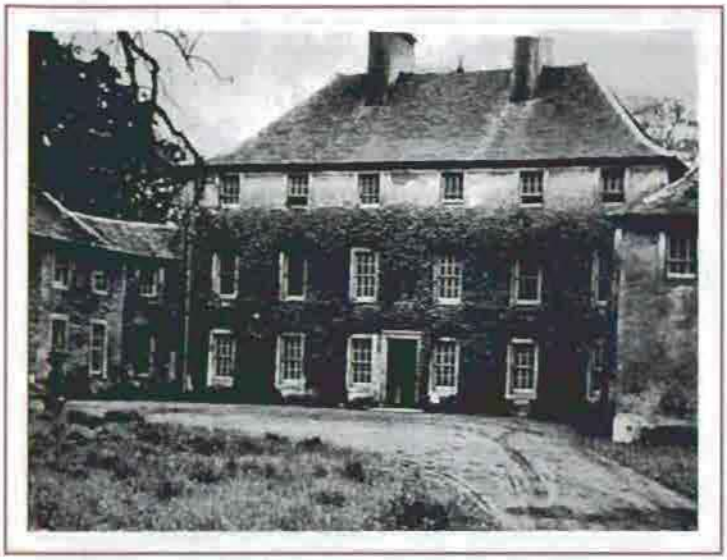
Today's visitor to Tullibody will find little to commemorate their local hero. One of the authors visited the area in 1995, to find only a small mining town built on the site of the once great estate. True, there is a public house called the Abercromby Arms, but it was only by a little local research and the help of the old Church Warden, Sandy, that events could be pieced together. There is a memorial to Sir Ralph in a ruined church on the outskirts of the town, unfortunately defaced by graffiti. Of the main house there is no sign, it having been demolished long ago to make way for a railroad. All that remains is an obscure drive leading to a cottage, used of late by railroad crossing attendants, but once the gatehouse to the estate. There are no surviving members of Sir Ralph's line, his last descendant dying in Edinburgh in the 1920s, without an heir.

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*Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1900, 63 vole. London, Vol. II, pp. 45-49.

Lord James Dunfermline, *Sir Ralph Abercromby K.L. 1793-1801.*

# APPENDIX I



*The Abercromby Estate in Tullibody, Scotland*




*Memorial to Abercromby in Tullibody, Scotland*

# Appendix II

## Plan of N. Vansittart for the Spanish Colonies

The expeditions which have been undertaken against the Spanish Colonies in America either have totally failed or have occasioned great loss of lives from the unhealthiness of the country. The climate of the coast of Tierra Firme is perhaps the most fatal in the world and that of the larger islands in the West Indies which they have cleared and cultivated is little less destructive. We have therefore reason to believe that any attack upon the Spanish settlements in the Gulf of Mexico would prove finally unsuccessful if it required any length of operation in the settlements, and the capture of any place except Havana need not give any serious alarm to the Court of Spain.

The Havana is now so strongly fortified that considering how much the climate would co-operate with the defenders it is very doubtful whether it could be reduced, and even if it were taken the capture would only cut off the communication between Spain and her colonies without putting the conqueror into possession of the resources to be derived from them. On the other hand, the climate of the Spanish Colonies in the Pacific is known to be remarkably healthy and an attack would not only be made with greater ease but would in case of success immediately afford a very considerable revenue and great commercial advantage. At the same time I think we might derive such assistance from the strength of our military force in India as to render the success of the enterprise almost infallible.

# A P P E N D I X II

As to Hindu regiments, they have a great aversion to the sea and have seldom failed to mutiny when they embark.

If there was reason to believe that Manila would surrender without resistance to so large a force, it would make an excellent place of refreshment as it is directly in the way, but if the garrison was known to be in any degree prepared for defence the fleet had better proceed to the Ladrones and follow the usual course of the galleons to the Capes of California, taking care to set sufficiently to northward to meet with the steady westerly winds.

To co-operate with this expedition a squadron should be despatched as soon as possible from England proportioned to the naval force the Spaniards may have in the South Seas. The sooner this armament sailed, the greater would be the probability of it's meeting with a successful passage and it should proceed immediately to Buenos Aires which would make very little if any resistance. The squadron would then find a healthy climate. Every means should be used to bring about an amiable intercourse with the Indians and the late Jesuit missions in Paraguay, and the whole of that extensive country might perhaps be induced to claim the protection of the British Government. The passing of Cape Horn should be rapid; the stay of the armament at Buenos Aires should be as short as possible and leave a garrison there.

The first operation after entering the South seas would be to attack Baldivia which is a place of some strength but very unlikely to be vigorously defended. This conquest would afford abundance of refreshments to the troops and furnish the country with the best and cheapest horses in the world. It would likewise be the best permanent station for the fleet as it might be refitted there and would be so situated as to intercept any force which might be sent from Europe to the relief of Peru.

The subsequent operations would depend on the intelligence obtained at Baldivia.It would probably be advisable to attempt nothing more until the arrival of the Indian Army except the reduction of Valparaiso and La Concepcion, places utterly

incapable of defence but which would put us into possession of all the resources of Chile. Some vessels would be dispatched to cruise off the Capes of California and connect the means of effecting a junction as near as possible to Callao, which would be the next object to be attacked.

There is no probability that the Viceroy of Peru would be able to collect an army at all capable of coping with our forces after their junction. It is much more probable that the surrender of Lima would be followed by the submission of the whole colony; but if an obstinate resistance was attempted it would not be difficult to obtain the assistance of some of the savage tribes.

The two fleets should join and sail for Manila before the end of July. After the reduction of that place as many troops as could be spared from the garrison should be sent on to operate in the reduction of Peru, or if that was completed to assist in attacking Acapulco, which would open the way to Mexico. Though I think no real attack should be made in the Gulf of Mexico it might be very proper to give a false alarm to the Havana and care should be taken to intercept any supplies which might be sent to Vera Cruz.

British Museum, ADD. MSS 31237, August, 1796.

# Appendix III

## Letter to the English from Pedro Joseph Caro, Envoy of Miranda, Regarding British Help for the Liberation of South America from Spain

It is not necessary to use logic to persuade the universe that Spanish South America stands in need of a government of it's own, independent of Spain and of every other power in Europe. It's extent, population, mines and other rich productions, which are so interesting to the trade of Europe in general, but more particularly to that ... enlightened nation to which the undersigned addresses himself in the name of his countrymen. The natives of these countries (in South America) are of a known disposition to improve themselves when a just and equitable government shall by the means of more able masters furnish them with the liberty of unfolding their talents. The force which the Almighty has placed into our hands is for our liberty, defence and preservation, and not for supporting that tyrannical dominion (Spain). Everything stirs us to independence, and to bear the yoke no longer, a yoke the more iniquitous that it deprives us of communicating, trading and connecting with our fellow creatures.

In different parts of (South) America, attempts have been made to begin the enterprise, but it is so arduous a decision, as is the choice of European power in which to place our confidence, and from whom we should request the necessary assistance. We must also guaratee the acknowledgement of the new government and

where it should be situated, as the country is so vast that it cannot be taken in all at once.

At length it has been decided that after all precautions have been taken, the province of Santa Fé shall raise the standard of liberty for all Spanish America, as this place is the fittest for extending it to the neighbouring provinces of Quito and Chile, and as far away as Peru, where the fermentation is no less active, and by the Isthmus of Panama to Guatemala and as far as Mexico, where we can communicate with North America. The vicinity of Jamaica to Cartagena and Portobello is a great advantage to give us a hand.

It is useless to explain the funds reckoned for this undertaking, since the notoriety of the inexhaustible means and resources in America, where the want of precious metals is never to be feared, goes beyond anything that could be said.

The precise form of Government or Constitution to be adopted cannot yet be said, as this is too distant from the first steps. The first business is to ask assistance for the founding of a government of a nation absolutely separate from the Spanish or any other Dominion, under just laws adequate to the country and it's inhabitants.

In good faith I will disclose to you the forces of this part of America available to undertake the first blow. There are to be considered the veteran troops, and also the disciplined and municipal militias. The whole of the militia is for the cause of liberty, including the chiefs and officers, in a country where the populace is accustomed to follow the nobility, and the populace itself is no less eager to emerge from their oppression. Also, the influence of the Clergy is not the least support where there is no intention of touching the established Religion as being the principal basis of good order.

It is to be feared that the veteran troops, their officers and castles, etc. who are bound absolutely by the King's pay, united with the Viceroy and "Audiencia", may form a body of opposition and without these, there would be no enemy to combat and no need of protection. However, even in the regular troops there are many who are natives of this country, and would not wish to see their brothers in chains.

# APPENDIX III

It is certain that Spain may send reinforcements, but let us look at our plans. The moment the motion begins in the interior, an English squadron shall be ready to block the port of Cartagena, the only place of resistance and port of disembarkation of supplies, which can only be sent from Spain or Havana. From neither place can an expedition be mounted in under two months and to deter the Commander at Havana from detaching a force, the English fleet bound for Cartagena should first make a feint of a few days outside the Morro or Havana. Alternatively, if considered safer, the English Squadron could go first to Cartagena, then the uprising could start.

Our army of thirty thousand, led by men of spirit and military ability, need only arms and the aid of the wisest and most powerful nation in the world. When the uprising commences, the Viceroy, Audiencia, troops and the Royalist Party will retire from the capital to Cartagena, where our men can easily lay siege and if protected by the Squadron, have little to fear.

It is asked that 5,000 men be with the squadron, or ready in Jamaica, and that they be of the islands so as to be used to the climate and food of the country. Twenty thousand muskets are asked for, and twenty pieces of field artillery, ten being of large calibre, with ammunition. Gunpowder is not needed as there is good manufacture of it at Santa Fé.

This supply and expense will be paid or compensated for as soon as the new Government is formed as a nation absolutely independent of any foreign dominion. First we must implore the assistance of God, and afterwards that most illustrious nation to whose wisdom and generosity America will be eternally grateful.

For all that is set forth in this memorial the undersigned repeats that he can at present give no other Guarantee than good faith.

Pedro Joseph Caro

October 15, 1797. F.O. 72/45.

# Appendix IV

# Memorial Communicated by Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercromby to the English Government on the Liberation of the Spanish Provinces in South America

The people of Great Britain in general take little concern in the affairs of foreign nations. The balance of Europe is something they do not understand; and they are little interested in anything that does not tend to the security and extension of commerce, and to the dominion of the sea.

To keep up the spirits of the nation, and to engage it heartily in the further prosecution of the war, it seems necessary that every military enterprise that we shall undertake, shall be directed to such objects as shall tend to secure to us, or to enlarge, the sources of our commerce and wealth.

With this view, it has occurred that the removal of the French from Egypt should be affected before a negotiation for peace should take place. To allow it to remain in their possession would threaten the security of our dominions in the East; at any rate, were the cession of it to become an object of discussion at the peace, a considerable degree of weight would be given to it in the general scale, and concessions would be demanded of more consequence than we would be inclined to grant.

# A P P E N D I X IV

But of all the objects which ought to claim our attention, the liberation of South America from the dominion of Spain seems to stand first. It can only be affected whilst we are at war with Spain, and if it should be happily accomplished, it would be beyond the reach of negotiation at a peace.

It should be undertaken without any view to conquest, to exclusive commerce, or to plunder. Every port in South America, and the whole trade of that extensive continent should be declared free; every country would feel interested in it (Spain and Portugal excepted).

Great Britain, however, from her enterprise, from her capital, and from her industry, would in reality possess nine parts in ten of this great commerce. A market would be equally opened for British and for East India commodities. In a short time the Brazils (which would follow the fate of the Spanish settlements in South America), and the other countries now under the dominion of Spain, would produce more sugar, cotton, and indigo, than all of our West India islands, and at a cheaper rate. By degrees we should be enabled to drop our sugar islands, which we retain at a great expense, and which are frequently the source of wars.

Should Great Britain decline at this time to undertake this great enterprise, some other nation will attempt it on principles less liberal, and less advantageous to the happiness of South America, and to the world at large.

The present state of that country gives us reason to believe that it would not be difficult for us to accomplish this object.

The Creole Spaniards and Indians are oppressed beyond measure. No office can be held in that part of the world but by a native of old Spain, and the restrictions on trade are severe in the extreme. Justice is venal, and extortion commonly practiced by all in power. The Clergy, who have great influence over an ignorant and superstitious people, are in general natives of New Spain, and would consequently favour a revolution. It seems only necessary that we should remove the Spanish forces; declare to

the people what our intentions are, and the Spanish government would fall to the ground.

Two expeditions should be fitted out, - one to proceed to the Cape of Good Hope, and from thence to the River Plate; the other should rendezvous at Barbados, or the Gulf of Paria, and should act on the provinces of Cumana, the Caracas and Venezuela.

Monte Video is the principal port and rendezvous for shipping in the river Plate. It is situated on the left bank of that great river; Buenos Aires, the capital of the country, is situated on the right. One or two line-of -battle ships, and as many frigates, are commonly stationed in Monte Video, and two battalions of Spanish infantry at Buenos Aires, for the defence of that country. Of the force at Monte Video, little is known.

The approach to Buenos Aires by water, can only be made in vessels of a small draught, on account of the shoals. The climate is good, and the country abounds in provisions. Roads have been opened across the country to Chile and Peru, and European commodities are carried overland into these provinces which are paid for in specie, and brought from Buenos Aires to Europe.

The expedition against the Terra Firma should act in the rivers Orinoco and Guarapichi, and against La Guayra and Porto Cabello; the above mentioned rivers give an opening into the province of Cumana.

La Guayra is the port of St. Juan de Leon of the Caracas, it covers the approach to that great capital, and is strongly fortified to the sea. A landing, however, may be affected to the right or left of La Guayra, particularly at the small river Tuy, and if the batteries to the sea can be turned (which they probably may) this fortress would soon fall, and consequently the capital of the province.

Porto Cabello is said to be a place of considerable strength, but probably like La Guayra, it is not equally strong on the land side as on the water.

It may admit of a doubt whether in carrying on these operations, we should do more than blockade those fortresses,

taking it for granted that as soon as the revolution had taken effect they would surrender; but it is to be apprehended, that a people who possess so little energy as the Creole Spaniards would not venture to adopt so decided a measure as throwing off the Spanish yoke until they saw their enemies removed, and British garrisons at La Guayra and Porto Cabello.

If a revolution could be set fairly on foot in the principal settlements on the coast, it would spread with rapidity into the interior of the country. Emissaries would be sent to propagate the joyful event, and to assure them that the British troops should not quit the country until relieved from the Spanish yoke, and until a new government of their own should be established. All that would be required on the part of Great Britain in the first instance would be, to furnish them with arms and ammunition, and to assist them in framing a form of Government best suited to the genius and temper of the people.

Much information and many details will be necessary before these undertakings can be set on foot. Captain McDowell of the Ganges (who was an Admiral in the Portuguese service when Portugal endeavoured to establish a colony at St. Sacrament) certainly knows the navigation of the river Plate; and amongst the Spanish prisoners now in England, with a little address, some of them may be found who can give pretty accurate knowledge of the river Plate and of the coasts of Terra Firma, and General Miranda is still in London.

Lieutenant Colonel Picton, the Commandant of Trinidad, was instructed in 1797 to procure every possible information relative to the neighboring provinces of Cumana, the Caracas and Venezuela, and Colonel Maitland might be directed to go to Trinidad to arrange with Colonel Picton the plan of operations.

The province of Guyana is already newly in our possession; there remains, however, in the possession of the French the small island of Cayenne, and some inconsiderable plantations on the mainland; it may be necessary to root out the French by removing the garrison and the French settlers in this island, and by a total destruction of the fort and the adjacent town.

# A P P E N D I X IV

To ensure the success of this great enterprise a very considerable force (probably not less than 12,000 men) would be required. Were it to fail, the unfortunate natives would be left to the merciless revenge of their cruel masters, and many of them would end their days on the scaffold, or in the mines.

The difficulty seems to be to find a sufficient disposable force; this, however, may be procured, provided the general principles in which this enterprise is founded shall be approved of.

Nothing has been said of Mexico. Unless the Americans were to co-operate we have not a sufficient force to favour a revolution in that part of the Spanish settlements; the probability however is, that the same spirit would prevail through that great continent.

Lord James Dunfermline, *Sir Ralph Abercromby*, pp. 311-316.

Note - the precise date of this suggestion is not recorded, but as he refers that "Colonel Picton was instructed in 1797..." and Abercromby himself died in 1801, it must have been compiled within this timespan.

# Appendix V

## Report of British Spy at San Juan, Puerto Rico. Enclosed with a Letter from Governor Burt of Antigua to Lord Germain

I have the honour of now sending your Lordships a plan of Puerto Rico and have advised Sir George Rodney that I have one for him. I have the following information from a gentleman in whom I can confide who was sent there under a flag of truce.

He reports:

"I set off fully equipped for Puerto Rico, where I arrived on Monday, December 6, 1779. The flag of truce was hoisted some distance from the city and we proceeded towards the harbour until the vessel was stopped by the Moro, which commands the entry to the harbour through a very narrow channel. We proceeded a little further and were met by a Spanish boat from the Governor who instructed our vessel to proceed no further, and that the Officer of the Truce (myself) should go ashore in the Spanish boat. By this order I lost the services of my interpreter.

On landing I was received by an aide-de-camp and two Regimental Officers. The former spoke only Spanish and the latter interpreted in French. I was informed that I may deliver my despatches to the Governor's aide-de-camp and return if I pleased on board. I told them as best I could in French that I

had been instructed by Governor Burt of the Leeward Islands to present his letters directly to the Governor of Puerto Rico, and to pay him my respects. I was then informed that as my Chief had ordered it I could see Governor if I complied with certain conditions. I agreed, and was taken blindfolded to the Governor's palace, where the blindfold was removed. My conductors behaved very politely.

I found the Governor at eleven o'clock in the morning sitting in an ante-chamber wearing his cap, nightgown and slippers, and with a number of well dressed officers standing around him. On my entrance the Governor accosted me with "Parlez-vous francais?" (follows an exchange in bad French where the Governor asks writer to speak with a Colonel Daley for translation).

The Governor asked me which island I came from and I replied Antigua, although the ship came from Tortola.He opened the letters and seeing they were in English, handed them to Col. Daley for translation.

He then asked what I would do with my prisoners as he had none to exchange. I said I would leave them if he would agree on his honour to return a similar number of British prisoners if he should acquire them later. He accepted and undertook to confirm this in writing to Governor Burt.

After a delay, the Governor returned with a letter and I tried to engage in more talks to gain further intelligence, but the Governor implied that there was nothing more to say, "c'est tout, c'est tout, monsieur."

The report goes on to say that the officer received no politeness from the Governor, not even a glass of wine or water, although the table was set for dinner. He said he was sure that a Spanish officer on British territory would have been much better treated, and that the officers were much more polite to him than the Governor. He described the Governor as being "about 50 years old, of middle stature, with rigid features, round shoulders and a prominent belly. He does not walk with the

solemn, stately gait of a Spaniard, but is rapid in movement from room to room. I could not help imagining that if the island was attacked he would show spirit at the commencement, without military knowledge to guide it or resolution to keep it up. Colonel Daley, who is Chief Engineer, seems to possess prudence, presence of mind and resolution."

On leaving the Governor's palace he was again blindfolded but this was later removed and he could clearly see where he had been walking, but feared that the shortness of his stay would provide little useful intelligence.

He went on to say "the city and fortifications are situated on an island, and not on a peninsular as had been supposed. It is separated on the east by a narrow channel navigable only by boats and on the west by a deep, narrow channel controlled by the Moro. A vessel entering the harbour is under musket shot from the Moro, the guns on the lower tier of which are placed on an abrupt fall of ground almost level with the sea, and are pointed through embrasures. The wall is exceedingly thick. This tier consists of two flanks and a small front.

The upper tier of the Moro is of considerable height above the sea and pointed over a parapet. It has communications with the lower tier by what appear to be steep steps, visible when passing through the channel. I think this upper tier cannot be attacked by musketry or swivels from a ship's tops, nor I believe can it's guns be directed to a vessel's hull when she is in the channel and directly under the fortifications. I think that a ship of war in the open sea, within cannon range, can be elevated sufficiently to reach the highest parts of the Moro."

After making lengthy reference to compass bearings, winds and sea conditions, he continues "To the East of the City on the mainland is an extensive bay called Louisa. There is a reef close to the shore. From the bay to the city is about six miles. The ground is low and level.

The castle of St. Christophers is situated on the north side of the island to the east of the Moro, and seems to command

it's flank. The ground between St. Christophers and the Moro seems to be a plain, a good deal elevated from the sea and difficult to access from it, not only by the nature of the coast but by very strong outworks. The Governor's house is on the west and south part of the island between the city and the back of the Moro. It is a quarter mile from the not more than a musket shot from the channel which flows by it.

Between the Governor's house and the Moro is a battery of 12 6- or 9-pounders pointed across the channel. There are several other batteries on the island which I did not see. After entering the lower Watergate near the Governor's house, the ascent is by steps. At the outside of the steps is a very good landing place.

If works could be erected between the Governor's house and the Moro, they would command that part of the fortification, the lower tier or flanks being too low to be seen from there. Here, near the Governor's house, a great deal of earth and gravel has been dug up which has left a hollow way or cavity on that part next to the Moro, by a quarry of stone covered with shallow soil. I could not see any cannon pointed from the back of the Moro to the Governor's house, but apprehend there must be some. I believe the quarry may shelter some men from their fire.

When a vessel arrives opposite the Governor's house, I believe her to be subject to the brass battery only. The guns on the lower tier could not, I think, be brought to bear, nor those on the upper tier. There is a high wall on it's outside which begins at the termination of the western flank of the Moro and is continued towards the city along the channel as far as my eye could reach. This wall and the brass battery might soon be silenced and appear to be the only obstacles to prevent troops getting possession of the Governor's house and the ground near it, but this is the difficulty as a vessel must receive the full fire of the Moro before it arrives there, unless a dark night should favour the entrance, which with a fair wind should take a very few minutes.

Except for the artillery, whose numbers I do not know, there are only two regiments of regular soldiers at Puerto Rico. The

uniform of one regiment is white and red, the other white and blue. A great number of these troops are now sick and several companies are stationed at the outer bays. The uniforms of all the regimental officers I saw were white and red, with the exception of the Governor's aide-de-camp.

The circumstances of the sickness and station of the troops I learnt from a person very lately arrived in this island (Antigua) in a Danish vessel from Puerto Rico, where he had been visiting a relative, an Irishman by birth who lives there.

The appearance of three topsail of vessels while he was there threw the inhabitants into great consternation and occasioned an order from the Governor for the instant removal of all women from the city to the mainland. It was reported that an account had been received from the Marquis de Boullie containing intelligence of a design of the English against the island, and promising the assistance of a regiment from Martinique.

There was neither bread nor flour in the city, except 80 barrels of the latter lately sent from St. Thomas by the Royal Danish Company. The vessel which conveyed it is still in the harbour with a load of French sugar with which she was taken returning from Puerto Rico where it had been stranded.

Instead of flour, the troops used plantains procured from the mainland. The supply of water is obtained in the same way both for the troops and the inhabitants of the city, though it is said there are cisterns on the island."

He closes by saying that the information is for the Governor's use only, as although he has done his best, the intelligence may not be completely accurate, and some has been obtained from other people.

May 4, 1780. C.O. 152/60

N° 80
Duplicate

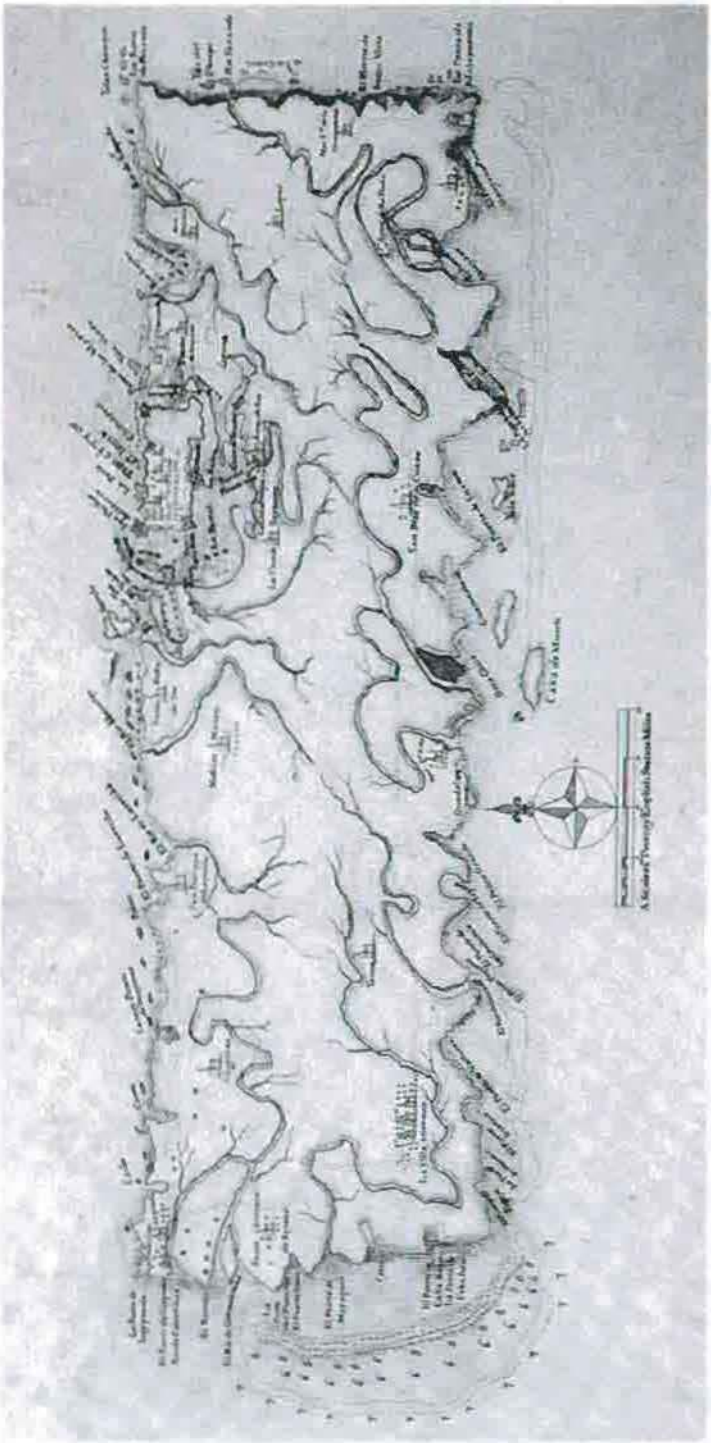
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( ) My Lord

I have the Honor of now sending your Lordship a plan of Porto Rico: I have acquainted Sir George Bridges Rodney that I have one ready at his service, and also the following information which I received from a Gentleman in whom I can confide, & sent Mathias in a Flag of Truce. &c. I am now to give your Excellency an account, in detail, of the Embassy in which your Excellency was pleased to employ me: Equipt with the Instructions I was sent off for the City of Porto Rico, where I arrived on Monday the 6th day of December - I directed the Captain of the Truce to hoist his Colours at some distance from the City, and to proceed into the Harbour without delay, unless the Vessel was stopped by the Moro which Commands the Entrance of the Harbour through a very narrow Channel — When the Vessel had passed the Front of the Moro, after being hailed from thence and had sailed a little way up the Channel, she was met by a boat with a Message from the Governor directing that the Sloop should proceed no further, and that the Officer of the Truce should immediately come on shore in the Spanish boat: By this order I was deprived of the assistance of an Interpreter whom I had brought with me: On my landing I was received by an Aid de Camp and two Regimental Officers: the former spoke only Spanish, the two latter served as two Interpreters in French, and informed me that I might deliver my dispatches to the Governor's Aid de Camp, and return if I pleased on board

The Right Honorable Lord George Germain &c &c &c

# APPENDIX V



# Appendix VI

## Biography of Rear Admiral Sir Henry Harvey (1737-1810)

Henry Harvey was born in 1737, the second son of Richard Harvey of Eastry in Kent. He received his early education in L'Ecole Royale De La Marine in Calais. and entered the Royal Navy in May, 1751 aboard the "Centaur". His early service was mainly on the North American Station and in the West Indies, where he was promoted to a lieutenant on the "Hampshire" in 1757. He later served on the "Hussar", which was shipwrecked off Cape Francois in May, 1762. He was taken prisoner, but was returned to England on parole and on the journey home, he met the Hon. Constantine Phipps, then a lieutenant but later, as Lord Mulgrave, a Lord of the Admiralty.

In 1763, he was made first lieutenant on the "Mermaid" in North America and in 1764 commanded the schooner "Magdalen" in the Gulf of St. Lawrence to prevent illicit trade. From 1768 to 1771 he served on a revenue cutter in the English Channel and North Sea, before being released for two years on half pay. In 1773 he was invited by the now Captain Phipps to serve as his First Lieutenant on the "Racehorse" on a voyage of discovery towards the North Pole. On the return of the expedition he was promoted to Commander. In January, 1776, he was appointed to the "Martin" sloop and served at the relief of Quebec. He then joined the squadron under Admiral Montagu at Newfoundland and in May, 1777 was given command of the "squirrel" frigate on convoy duty.

# A P P E N D I X VI

In December, 1779, he was sent to join Admiral Rodney in the West Indies, where on the "Convert", he was engaged mainly in cruising and scouting, but saw action with the fleet off Dominica in April, 1782. In 1786, he was given temporary command of the "Pegasus" which was refitting. The "Pegasus" First Lieutenant at the time was Prince William Henry, and having a member of the Royal Family as a subordinate required tact on Harvey's part.

In 1793, he was appointed to the "Ramillies" in the Channel Fleet under Lord Howe and on July 4, 1794, he was promoted to Rear Admiral. In 1795, he took the "Prince of Wales" as his flagship and saw action in the English Channel before being appointed Naval Commander in Chief in the Leeward Islands in April, 1796. He took part in the attacks on Trinidad and Puerto Rico as described in the main narrative, and eventually resigned his command and returned to England in July, 1799, where he was invested as a Knight of the Bath the following year.

In the summer of 1800 he was made second in command of the Channel Fleet under Lord St. Vincent, where he remained until retirement from the service. He died at Palmer, Kent, on December 28, 1810.

*Dictionary Of National Biography,* Vol. XXV, pp. 88-89.

# Appendix VII

| BRITISH REGIMENTS INVOLVED IN THE TRINIDAD AND THE PUERTO RICO ATTACKS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| TRINIDAD | | PUERTO RICO | |
| ROYAL ARTILLERY: | 180 men | ROYAL ARTILLERY | 160 men |
| ROYAL ENGINEERS: | 25 men | ROYAL ENGINEERS | 47 men |
| 2ND CORPS QUEENS: | 606 men | 26TH LIGHT DRAGOONS | 171 men |
| 3RD FLANK COMPANIES: | 174 men | 42ND FOOT | 245 men |
| 14TH FOOT: | 635 men | 14TH FOOT | 649 men |
| 38TH FOOT: | 227 men | 87TH FOOT | 525 men |
| 53RD FOOT: | 558 men | 53RD FOOT | 573 men |
| 60TH FOOT: | 234 men | 60TH FOOT | 231 men |
| LOWENSTEINS: | 314 men | LOWENSTEINS FUSILIERS | 785 men |
| HOMPESCHE'S REGT: | 861 men | LOWENSTEINS CHASSEURS | 373 men |
| | | TOBAGO BLACK CORPS | 151 men |
| TOTAL | 3,814 men | TOTAL | 3,910 men |
| It will be noted that the 14th, 53rd, and 60th Foot Regiments, plus Lowensteins Corps, the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers were used in the attacks on both Trinidad and Puerto Rico. Although the forces used in the two attacks were almost similar in number, and the two incidents were only two months apart, Abercromby obviously saw fit to change the content of his strike force, even to the extent of including the Tobago Black Corps in the second attack. | | | |
| TRINIDAD. February 18, 1797, W.O. 1/86. | | PUERTO RICO. May 2, 1797, W.O. 1/86. | |

State of His Majesty's Forces Porto Rico 243
2 May 1797

| Corps | Comd Officers | | | | | Staff | Serjts | | Drums | | Rank & File | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lieut Col | Majors | Capts | Lieuts | Ensigns | | Sick present duty | Sick | Sick present duty | Sick | Sick present duty | Sick in Hospital | Sick on Furlough | Total |
| 26th Regiment | .. | .. | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | .. | 3 | .. | 134 | 4 | 8 | 151 |
| 60th Battalion | 1 | .. | 4 | 5 | .. | 2 | 5 | .. | 4 | .. | 128 | 6 | 5 | 139 |
| 60th Engineers | .. | 1 | 1 | 6 | .. | .. | 6 | .. | .. | .. | 33 | .. | .. | 33 |
| 14th Regt | 1 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 41 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 326 | 17 | 17 | 360 |
| 42d | 1 | .. | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 17 | 2 | 5 | .. | 187 | 18 | 4 | 204 |
| 53d | 1 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 5 | 30 | 8 | 17 | 4 | 438 | 47 | 3 | 488 |
| 60th | 1 | .. | 1 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 11 | .. | 1 | .. | 190 | 3 | 3 | 196 |
| 87th | 2 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 1 | 5 | 42 | 3 | 22 | .. | 371 | 21 | 35 | 426 |
| Clermont's Regiment | 1 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 45 | 2 | 6 | .. | 222 | 48 | .. | 290 |
| D. Rawlins | 1 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 32 | .. | 20 | .. | 660 | 41 | .. | 701 |
| Tobago Black Corps | .. | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | .. | 13 | .. | .. | .. | 115 | 8 | 8 | 131 |
| Total | 9 | 11 | 34 | 88 | 23 | 39 | 257 | 16 | 103 | 5 | 3029 | 213 | 83 | 3325 |

John Hope
Adjt. Genl.

W.O. 1/86 P. 247 Return of killed, Wounded and Missing in Porto Rico. May 2nd. 1797.

# Appendix VIII

| RETURN OF THE SPANISH GARRISON OF THE ISLAND OF TRINIDAD MADE PRISONERS OF WAR, 18TH FEBRUARY, 1797 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ROYAL ARTILLERY | | TRINIDAD REGIMENT | |
| 1 | Captain | 2 | Lt. Cols. |
| 1 | Lieutenant | 2 | Captains |
| 53 | Other Ranks | 15 | Subalterns |
| ENGINEERS | | 1 | Adjutant |
| 1 | Brigadier | 2 | Engineers |
| 2 | Captains | 1 | Surgeon |
| 1 | Subaltern | 1 | Chaplain |
| | | 504 | Other Ranks |
| FRENCH OFFICERS | | | |
| 1 | Lieut. Col. | 2 | Engineers |
| 3 | Captains | 50 | Men sick in General Hospital |
| 1 | Subaltern | | |
| February 18, 1797. W.O. 1/86. p. 105. | | | |

| RETURN OF NAVAL OFFICERS AND SEAMEN MADE PRISONERS OF WAR AT THE CAPTURE OF TRINIDAD, 18TH FEBRUARY, 1797 | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Rear Admiral |
| 1 | Brigadier |
| 5 | Captains of Line of Battle Ships |
| 3 | Captains of Frigates |
| 7 | Lieutenants of Line of Battle Ships |
| 74 | Other Officers |
| 581 | Marines |
| 1032 | Seamen |
| 1704 | Total |
| February 18, 1797, p. 109. | |

# Appendix IX

## The British Navy

During the eighteenth century and for several centuries before, British strategy and foreign policy had relied heavily on the British Royal Navy. During peacetime, it was the navy's job to protect the country's merchant fleets from the attentions of privateers and in wartime, it had to maintain supremacy of the seas to further the nation's strategies and protect her possessions.

It was Samuel Pepys, the famous 17th century diarist, who laid the foundations for the navy of the eighteenth century. He was introduced to the Admiralty in 1660 by his cousin the Earl of Sandwich, then Commander of the Fleet, and immediately brought to bear his talent for reorganization. It was his belief that "there is no such thing as a bad sailor, only a bad officer." He therefore decreed that no-one could become a lieutenant in the navy without passing a rigorous examination after several years of actual seagoing service. He also brought into being the preparation of Admiralty charts, and in 1681 alone he commissioned the preparation of 120 plans of harbours and open coasts. Prior to this, Dutch charts had had to be relied upon, even for use in English waters. Even today, Admiralty Charts are widely used by both military and commercial shipping throughout the world.[1]

Although the Royal Navy was vital to British defence and foreign policy, Governments were often reluctant to provide adequate funding. In 1660 the fleet consisted of 109 ships, which cost £30,000 a month to operate. In the summer of that year the navy was £678,000 in debt, nearly half of which was in the form of unpaid wages to seamen.

# A P P E N D I X IX

The next great naval reformer was George Anson (1697-1762), a professional seamen who circumnavigated the globe in 1744 and was eventually to become Baron Anson, First Lord of the Admiralty. He shared Pepys' view on the importance of proper training for officers and inaugurated the first naval academy at Portsmouth, England, in 1733. He introduced standard uniforms for his officers, reconstituted marine regiments into a separate force as the Royal Marines, and rewrote the Articles of War. He also reorganized the Royal Dockyards.

In 1748, he introduced a system of classification of warships that was to last to the end of the sailing era. He first divided them into two categories, the Ships of the Line (battleships) and the frigates, not powerful enough for the line, but faster, more manoeuvreable and useful for intelligence gathering. He further refined the classification as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ships of the Line | First rate | 100 guns or more |
| | Second rate | 84-100 guns |
| | Third rate | 70-84 guns |
| | Fourth rate | 50-70 guns |
| Frigates | Fifth rate | 32-50 guns |
| | Sixth rate | Up to 32 guns if commanded by a post captain. If not, they were called Sloops. |

There were also "Bomb Vessels", or "Mortars", equipped with large calibre cannon which could fire in a high trajectory, to put shot over walls to reach the inside of fortifications.

Life was incredibly hard in the navy, and the main instrument of recruitment was the press-gang, gangs of men who would roam the ports and docks and forcibly abduct any ablebodied man they came across for service at sea. The sailors had to clothe themselves

and pay for medical attention, and pay an extra fee if the disease was venereal. The food was appalling, especially after several weeks at sea. Scurvy, a condition caused by vitamin deficiency, was rife and although Dr. James Lind discovered the lemon juice cure for it in 1753, it was not used as standard practice until 1795. Cleanliness was unheard of until such disciplinarians as Admiral Vernon (1684-1767) and Admiral Boscawen (1711-61) realized the connection between dirt and disease and ordered that a little washing take place and the lower decks be aired and fumigated!

In view of the terrible conditions of service, it is amazing that the sailors fought as bravely as they did in countless battles. It is probable that there was a psychology at work here, in that the sailor felt he had to keep up the proud tradition of triumphing over Britain's enemies as his forbears had done against the Spanish, Dutch and French in years gone by. Added to this was a greed for prize money which arose from a successful campaign, plus the fact that if a captain or admiral would show a genuine care for the men in his command and do his best to improve their sad lot, these men would go to almost any lengths for him.

This, then, was the Royal Navy in the eighteenth century. It was an institution in which a man must live in terrible conditions, fight battles of the utmost barbarity, and in return perhaps have to wait years for his pay, or be released with no means of support at the end of a war, whilst being expected to hold himself in readiness to serve his country again when the need arose.

Things became so bad, in fact, that while the attack in Puerto Rico was going on, in 1797, the Channel Fleet at Spithead mutinied, and their counterparts at The Nore followed their example the following month. Some of the ringleaders were hanged, but the protest made it's mark and after this time, the Admiralty began a slow programme of improvements.

Warren Tute, *The True Glory, The Story of The Royal Navy For A Thousand Years*, McDonald & Co. London, 1984 pp. 78-91.

# Appendix X

## Extracts From:
## *The History of the British Army*
## by Sir John Fortescue

Long before the disasters of 1797 had begun to burst upon England, Abercromby had again sailed for the West Indies. A rapid course of untoward events had caused frequent changes in his instructions in October and November, 1796. Dundas had given him to understand that he could furnish him with few troops and few ships for the coming campaign. As regards operations against the French, the Ministers looked for no more than the retention of the conquests already made, and were prepared even for the evacuation of the whole of St. Domingo, except Mole St. Nicholas. But the declaration of war by Spain had introduced a new element into the struggle in the West Indies. The planters of Grenada and Tobago had represented the danger that threatened them from the vicinity of the Spaniards at Trinidad, and the reduction of that island was therefore the object first recommended to Abercromby, "Even if you cannot hold it", wrote Dundas, "you will remove a source of danger to our own islands", forgetting that the only possible source of danger to the British islands from Spain lay not in Spanish harbours but in Spanish ships. However, a month's consideration decided Dundas to favour rather an attempt on Porto Rico, for which purpose Abercromby was to employ most of the troops at St. Domingo. Having taken Porto Rico, the General was then to transport thither the people who claimed King George's

protection in St. Domingo, itself. He recommended Porto Rico as the prior object.

The only objections to the plan were, first, that the troops at St. Domingo were little more than a name; secondly, that neither the Government nor Abercromby possessed the slightest trustworthy information as to the strength of the Spaniards at Porto Rico; and, thirdly, that, even if Porto Rico were taken, it would be difficult to transport some tens of thousands of people with their goods and property for some 500 miles in the teeth of the trade wind. Since the people at St. Domingo had not been consulted as to this plan, it was by no means certain that they would be willing to migrate. These practical matters, however, naturally escaped Dundas.

At the last minute, Abercromby was delivered of all responsibility for St. Domingo and his command restricted to the windward sphere of operations. The Duke of Portland was anxious to entrust to General Simcoe the winding up of affairs in St. Domingo. The conflict of jurisdiction, between the Military and the Colonial Departments throughout these West Indian campaigns, was such that the Generals were often puzzled whether to address themselves to Portland or Dundas. Dundas after endless foolish intrigues with the Emigrant French nobility, had in January 1796 grown weary of the labour of fitting out expeditions to the French coast and tried to shift the burden on to the Foreign Office.

Abercromby doubted gravely his power to accomplish everything prescribed to him. The garrisons judged necessary for the security of the islands to windward were reckoned at 12,000 white soldiers, in reality there were 9,000, the only troops that he could expect to receive in the winter were 1200 Germans of extremely inferior quality.

Nothwithstanding, Dundas hinted that Trinidad need not be occupied, Abercromby left 1,000 men under Lieutenant Colonel Picton with instructions to obtain all possible information as to the neighboring colonies on the mainland. Being a liberal in

politics, he had seen visions of an American liberation by British help from the Spanish yoke, free and self governed, with 9/10 of its commerce in British hands and such a wealth of tropical produce as would enable Britain to dispense with troublesome and expensive sugar-islands.

Abercromby's losses in Porto Rico amounted to 100 killed and wounded and 120 missing, of which the last majority, being from foreign corps, were probably deserters. The attack began in 17 April, ended 30th April.

He was obliged to destroy and abandon 13 pieces of ordnance. The whole enterprise had, as Abercromby said, been undertaken too lightly. The Spanish garrison, which had been reported weak, actually outmatching the attacking force both in numbers and in weight of artillery. It was only fortunate that the attack should have ended without serious failure or serious success; for success would only have locked up another garrison of 1,000 men in the West Indies' or in other words have killed another 500 men every year for no object worth the cost.

Sir John W. Fortescue, *The History of the British Army*, London, Macmillan, 190G, Vol. IV, 1789-1801. pp. 537-542.

# Appendix XI

## Translation of Gaceta de Madrid

EXPEDITION OF THE ENGLISH AGAINST THE ISLAND OF PUERTO RICO AND OCCURRENCES DURING THEIR STAY ACCORDING TO WHAT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE GACETA DE MADRID AND WHAT WAS REPORTED BY THE CAPTAIN GENERAL OF THE ISLAND.

To protect their disembarkation, the enemy directed their fire against the port of Fore. The boat which carried the English flag was attacked and only one man survived, and in the others very few. 3,000 other men continued to disembark. The Spanish commanders were Don Isidoro de Linares, Don Jose Vizcarrondo and Don Teodomiro del Toro. Linares and Toro withdrew to Martin Peña and Vizcarrondo to San Antonio. They had to withdraw before the superior English force.

On April 18 Vizcarrondo went out to reconnoiter the enemy positions with 100 French citizens, 20 militiamen (de fijo) and 30 on horseback.

This force went to the beach at San Mateo, but withdrew and Gov. Castro then commenced firing from the fort of San Geronimo. The Spanish fire discouraged the English and hindered their plans to establish themselves on the Condado Hill.

Linares observed the rearguard of the enemy camp. On April 21, 190 English on the Martin Peña bridge attacked the grenadiers of Luis de Lara, Don Vicente Andino and his milicia, and his brother Don Emigdio. The Spanish forces retreated firing until they joined

with sufficient of their forces to equal their opponents, making so much fire that the enemy withdrew, leaving 32 prisoners and one Lieutenant. The Spanish suffered 9 dead and 22 injured. The fort Of San Antonio, under Engineer Don Ignacio Mascaró y Homar, was reinforced as was San Gerónimo under Don Teodomiro del Toro.

Militia Sergeant Francisco Díaz and 70 men were attacking 300 in the channel of San Antonio. Díaz remained in the trench and withdrew with his English prisoners before the arrival of enemy reinforcements.

On 24th the enemy batteries were directed at the bridge of San Antonio and San Gerónimo.

The English were seen to be established in Miraflores. Don Pedro de Córdova went out with Disciplined Militia sergeant Rafael García and 70 armed negroes. They disembarked on the dock of Miraflores. They launched an attack and although they had to fall back under enemy fire, they regrouped and counterattacked.

On 28th, the English attacked in force from Miraflores. Don Luis de Lara, Don Miguel Canales and Felipe Cleimpaux attacked the enemy camp. Lara mounted an offensive on the Martin Peña bridge.

After dusk, a growing fire was seen in the mangroves, which was thought to be for impeding a further Spanish attack, and after midnight on April 30 the enemy firing ceased.

At dawn on May 1, a time when there was usually much firing from the English, only silence was heard. The English had rapidly re-embarked, reported several deserters. The English abandoned their land artillery, munitions, foodstuffs and other supplies.

Such were the deeds of the garrison of Puerto Rico, which was composed mainly of native militias. There was also a small corps of French citizens under their commander, Don Agustin Paris.

During the action our soldiers and sailors suffered 42 dead, 194 wounded, 2 injured, 1 prisoner and 2 missing.

The enemy lost 2,000 men.

BRITISH MUSEUM, ADD MSS. 17629, 1797.

# GAZETA DE MADRID

## DEL VIERNES 14 DE JULIO DE 1797.

*Madrid 14 de Julio.*

El Rey se ha servido conceder grado y agregacion de Capitan en el Regimiento de infantería de Leon á D. Joseph Pacheco Tellez Giron, Cadete del propio cuerpo.

El Capitan general de Puerto-Rico D. Ramon de Castro, que como se dixo en la Gazeta de 27 de Junio último, habia tomado desde que se le avisáron los rezelos de un rompimiento con la Inglaterra las disposiciones y medidas convenientes para la defensa de aquella plaza é isla: así que se avistó sobre sus costas el dia 17 de Abril último un convoy compuesto de buques de guerra y velas al parecer de transporte, convocó á los xefes de la guarnicion; y habiendo conferenciado con ellos sobre el plan de defensa que anteriormente tenia formado, pasó con los mismos al castillo del Morro, situado en la boca del puerto á reconocer la esquadra.

Se tocó la generala, se distribuyó la guarnicion en los puestos que debia ocupar, se diéron las instrucciones correspondientes á los Comandantes nombrados, se repartiéron armas al paisanage, se habilitáron y colocáron en los sitios mas oportunos 4 ganguiles, 2 pontones, y 12 lanchas cañoneras armadas y tripuladas con la matrícula recien formada en el pais, baxo la direccion del Capitan de Fragata D. Francisco de Paula Castro, y se envió un cuerpo volante de 300 hombres con 4 cañones de campaña para impedir el desembarco. Luego que al dia siguiente se vió que los enemigos lo intentaban por la playa de Cangrejos, salió este cuerpo al mando del Teniente Coronel D. Isidoro de Linares, Capitan de aquel Regimiento Fixo, con los de igual grado D. Joseph Vizcarrondo y D. Teodomiro del Toro, Ayudante este de las Milicias disciplinadas, y Capitan aquel del Regimiento de infantería de Valencia: se apostáron estos Oficiales con igual número de gente cada uno en los parages mas ventajosos para oponerse al desembarco, y en ellos se atrincheráron, colocando oportunamente los cañones de campaña que llevaban.

El enemigo para proteger su desembarco dirigió su fuego principalmente hácia el puesto de Toro como el mas inmediato: se aproxîmáron 4 lanchas grandes llenas de tropa á la playa, una de ellas enarbolado el pavellon Ingles: rompió Toro su fuego con-

Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid . Sala de Revistas.

# Appendix XII

| RETURN OF KILLED, WOUNDED AND MISSING, PUERTO RICO: MAY 2ND 1797 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| REGIMENT | | KILLED | WOUNDED | MISSING |
| Royal Artillery | Men | 7 | 5 | |
| Royal Engineers | Men | 5 | | |
| 26th L. Dragoons | Men | 1 | 2 | |
| 14th Foot | Men | | 3 | |
| 42nd Foot | Men | 1 | 2 | |
| 53rd Foot | Officers | | 1 | 1 |
| | Men | 3 | 3 | |
| 60th Foot | Men | 1 | 3 | |
| 87th Foot | Men | 2 | 3 | 13 |
| Lowensteins) | Officers | | 1 | 2 |
| Chausseurs) | Men | 6 | 15 | 38 |
| Lowensteins) | Officers | 1 | | 1 |
| Fusiliers) | Men | 4 | 30 | 70 |
| Tobago Blacks | Men | | 2 | |
| TOTALS | OFFICERS | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | MEN | 30 | 68 | 121 |
| OFFICER CASUALTIES | | | | |
| 53rd Foot - Capt. Bryant wounded; Capt. Dover Missing. Lowensteins Chausseurs - Lt. Col Hammendorf wounded; Lt. De Gand missing. Lowensteins Fusiliers - Capt. Grasse killed; Lt. Montagnar missing.<br>It is interesting to note that most of those posted missing are from the two Lowenstein's Regiments. The British records do not make clear whether these men were taken prisoner or whether, as some Spanish accounts imply, they were French Royalist troops who went over to join their revolutionary fellow countrymen who were assisting the defenders. | | | | |
| May 2, 1797. W.0.1/86, p. 247. | | | | |

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Return of Killed Wounded & Missing

Dated Cruz 2d May 1797

| Corps | Lieut. Colonel Killed | Lieut. Colonel Wounded | Captains Killed | Captains Wounded | Captains Missing | Lieuts. Missing | Ensigns | Staff | Rank & File Killed | Rank & File Wounded | Rank & File Missing | Rank & File Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R. Artillery | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 5 | .. | 12 | |
| R. Engineers | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5 | .. | .. | 5 | |
| 26th Dragoons | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 2 | .. | 3 | |
| 14th Regt | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3 | .. | 3 | |
| 42d | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 2 | .. | 3 | |
| 53d | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | 3 | 3 | .. | 6 | |
| 66th | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 3 | .. | 4 | |
| 87th | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 | 3 | 13 | 18 | |
| 2 Battns Regt | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 1 | 1 | .. | .. | 6 | 15 | 38 | 54 | |
| 2d Battalion | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 4 | 30 | 70 | 104 | |
| Tobago Blacks | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 | .. | 2 | |
| Total | .. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | .. | .. | 30 | 68 | 121 | 214 | |

Names of Officers Killed Wounded & Missing

53d Regt. { Capt Byrnd.. Wounded
Capt Dover Missing Supposed taken Prisoner

2 Battalions { Lieut Col. Flammenden Wounded
Regt { Lieut De Grand Missing Supposed taken Prisoner
Capt Foster .. Killed

2d Battalion { Lieut Montegnac Missing..

John Roche
Major

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W. O. 1.86 P. 243

Statement of Forces in Porto Rico by Regiment. May 2nd. 1797.

# Appendix XIII

## Admiral Harvey's Log for the Attack on Puerto Rico

SATURDAY APRIL 15, 1797. ST. KITTS.

Light breezes. At 2.00 P.M. weighed and sailed with the squadron and transports to the northwest. At 5 passed St. Eustatia. At 6 A.M. the Virgin Gorda bore northwest seven or eight leagues. The Fury kept ahead during the night. Squadron in company. At 7 made the Beaver's signal to examine a strange sail in NE. At noon stood for the channel off Tortola.

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1797.

Fine weather and moderate winds. At 2 A.M. having made the signal, anchored with the squadron and transports off Peter's island in 25 fathoms. Sandy bottom. At 6 the Arethusa joined from the eastward, and the Requin with dispatches from Martinique. At half past nine made the signal and weighed with the squadron and transports and stood to the NW between Tortola and St. Johns. The Tamar and Arethusa and Pelican made sail for the North Coast of Puerto Rico. At noon sailing through the NW Channel.

MONDAY APRIL 17, 1797. CANGREJOS POINT, PUERTO RICO

Moderate breezes and fine weather. At 12 P.M. made the signal and brought to on the starboard tack. At 5 A.M. made sail and

ran down along the coast of Puerto Rico to the westward. At 10 made the signal for anchoring and at half past anchored in seventeen fathoms sandy bottom off Point Cangrejos, Fort Morro at St. Johns bearing west seven miles. The Beaver. Fury and Requin were ordered within the reef in a sandy bay which afforded good shelter and a fine sandy beach for landing the troops. All the small vessels went in likewise. Several ships appeared in view in the harbor of St. John. The Arethusa, Tamar and Pelican blockading the port, keeping at a proper distance for that purpose.

TUESDAY APRIL 18, 1797.

Light breezes and fine weather. The Fury, Beaver and Requin were anchored in CangreJos Bay within the reef as near as the depth of water would admit, to cover the landing of the troops. At 5 A.M. the boats of the squadron and transports rowed for the shore and at 6 landed in the bay without any other opposition than the firing of musquetry from a small party at the edge of the woods, who soon made off, having wounded 3 men in the boats. The Fury, Beaver and Requin kept up their fire until the troops reached the shore. The direction of the landing was under Captain Toddy of the Alfred. Party of the enemy's forces were soon along the shore, but as our advance guard went on they moved towards the town, leaving three brass cannon and some military stores at one of their posts and pickets.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 19, 1797.

PM the troops advanced with the artillery towards the town and remained about three miles from the bridge battery. Two gun vessels were placed by the enemy in the upper part of the harbour but by the fire of our musketry moved lower down, and the bridge was burned. The launches and boats of the squadron with those of the transports were employed landing military stores, and the heavy artillery was got into the boats

in order to be landed as far to the westward as the navigation would admit. The roads being sand made the heavy draughts fatiguing to the horses and men. The Tamar and Arethusa continued cruising off the port and the Pelican two leagues to windward. The enemy set fire to the wood and brush growing opposite the lower battery. A.M. a boat was sent as a flag of truce to the Governor of St. Johns.

THURSDAY APRIL 20, 1797.

The wind moderate and fine weather. A.M. the enemy fired occasionally from their different batteries and gunboats but without any effect. All the heavy artillery and mortars were in great part landed by the launches of the squadron and transports within four miles of the enemy's works, and a great deal of military stores and provisions. At noon a flag of truce came from the governor and returned again immediately. The Requin sailed to join the Tamar and Arethusa off the port, and the latter sent in a Spanish schooner taken by her from St. Jago de Cuba, having aboard seventeen hundred dollars and a quantity of beeswax.

FRIDAY APRIL 21, 1797.

Light breezes and fine weather. The Roebuck sailed to join the Tamar. The enemy's batteries of San Geronimo and the gunboats continued to fire ocassionaly, but with no effect, on the works that were advanced.

SATURDAY APRIL 22, 1797.

Fresh breezes and cloudy with a heavy swell from the Northward. The heavy artillery, mortars and their stores were all landed. The engineers with the pioneers were employed in constructing works for the batteries opposite the town. At 5 P.M. the small bower cable parted and appeared to be cut by a rock, lost the anchor. At 9 A.M. shifted further from the shore

and anchored in 39 fathoms clear sandy bottom. Moored with the stream anchor. At 5 A.M. a small battery was opened in some gunboats that lay in the upper part of the harbor and they moved on with great precipitation and went down the harbor. At 8 A.M. a detachment of 300 seamen under the command of Toddy of the Alfred and Captain Brown of the Beaver were landed and ordered to assist in working the artillery. They were to have been sent on shore the previous evening but the surf was so great as to render it dangerous. The frigates cruising as before.

SUNDAY APRIL 23, 1797.

Fresh breezes and cloudy. The fire from the enemy battery and some gunboats continued during the day and night and some shells were thrown from the castle, but did no mischief nor occasion any impediments to the advancing party at the batteries. The seamen in the night moved some guns to the new constructed works. The frigates continued on their station off the coast and to the windward.

MONDAY APRIL 24, 1797.

The wind blew fresh which occasioned much swell. The Ulysses had parted her cable in the night, found the bottom uncertain and irregular both in depth and in quality. Sent the boats to get water from springs rising a little above the beach, which was done by sinking casks, and appeared very good. A.M. it blew fresh and the surf was high, the channel was however safe and the boats got off some water. The enemy fired much during the night, and we opened fire from the battery on the left. The firing continued very smart during the day. The frigates in sight to the SW. Pelican to windward.

TUESDAY APRIL 25, 1797.

The wind became moderate and much less surf on the shore than on the preceding day. The batteries continued firing.

During the night the firing was slack. A.M. it was directed at the bridge battery and St. Geronimo, and we opened a second battery of three 24 pounders and one mortar. Continued to get off a considerable quantity of water and the springs furnished for both the ships of war and transports. A marine guard of 40 men protected the watering places. The frigates in sight off St. Johns and the Pelican to windward.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 26, 1797.

The weather very fine, and moderate wind with little surf. The batteries continued their fire and some shells were thrown from each and from St. Christopher's castle. The 14th. Regiment early in the morning took possession of a building formerly a magazine opposite the town. A.M. the Bellona and Vengeance were directed to run down towards St. Geronimo battery and go as near as the reef of rocks would permit, but it appeared by their landing to the wind and some shot that were thrown that they fell short of the shore and therefore had no effect.

THURSDAY APRIL 27, 1797.

The weather very fine and little surf. The Bellona and Vengeance returned to their anchorage, not being able to approach the island so as to be of any service. The cannonading by the batteries continued and some shells were occasionally thrown by the enemy from the highest part of St. Christopher's castle. The cruisers remained in the offing for the blockade of the port.

FRIDAY APRIL 28, 1797.

The batteries were constantly employed and although the enemy's works both at the bridge and at St. Geronimo battery were much damaged they continued a brisk fire from other works they had erected near them, and they appeared by large working parties to be throwing up additional works in different

parts of the island. P.M. the Tamar and Arethusa stood in and threw some shot on the island of San Juan.

SATURDAY APRIL 29, 1797.

Moderate weather. A howitzer battery was opened on the town and the other batteries continued their fire, which the enemy likewise kept up very briskly. Three seamen of the Prince of Wales were slightly wounded at the battery. Shells were thrown from St. Christopher's castle without doing any material injury. The frigates continued on their respective stations.

SUNDAY APRIL 30, 1797.

Moderate and cloudy weather. It having been determined by the General to relinquish the attack and embark the troops and artillery, the latter of brass were accordingly moved during the night from the park, and boats from the ships of war and transports were sent at daylight to put them on board the ordnance ship. The seamen were likewise embarked and sent to their different ships. One seaman of the Prince of Wales was killed in the battery.

MONDAY MAY 1, 1797.

Cloudy weather and moderate wind. Every preparation was making for embarking the troops, stores, etc. that could be carried off. At 5 A.M. all the boats from the ships of war and transports attended on the beach and the troops were all brought off by 8 A.M. and divided in the different transports. At noon the Fury and Beaver quitted the bay and all the small vessels being cleared off the inner harbour or bay.

TUESDAY MAY 2, 1797. MORRO CASTLE, PUERTO RICO.

Moderate and cloudy. The troops that had been put on board, the small vessels were removed to the transports. At 9 A.M. made the signal and made with the squadron and the transports and

stood to the northward. Fury parted company with dispatches for England.

WEDNESDAY MAY 3, 1797. EAST END OF PUERTO SILO.

The weather very fine and the wind moderate. Stood to the northward until 7 A.M. then tacked to the southward making at the same time the signal for the Alfred to follow the orders for proceeding to Martinique with the Roebuck and Beaver, having all the transports under convoy, they accordingly stood to the northward. The Bellona, Vengeance, Tamar, Pelican and Requin proceeded with me. At nine Tamar chased by signal SSE and at 10 examined a Brig in thar quarter. At 11 tacked to the northward. At noon to the southward. The squadron in company. P.M. the Aretusa was inside to windward.

(ADM50/107)

# Appendix XIV

## Letter from General Abercromby to Henry Dundas May 2 1797. Report of the Attack on Puerto Rico.

After the reduction of Trinidad, we found it impossible to proceed immediately to Porto Rico. The garrison left at the former place reduced our effective force to 2000 men, and we were embarrased with upwards of 2000 Spanish prisoners. We therefore determined to return to Fort Royal and to await the arrival of the reinforcements from England. As soon as the "Coromandel" arrived with the last division of the troops which we had reason to expect, a force was assembled for the present expedition, amounting to 3500 rank and file, with a small train of field and battering artillery suited to our numbers - of this force, 1500 men were Light Troops.

On 8th. April the fleet sailed from Martinique and arrived at St. Kitts on the 10th. where we awaited the arrival of Captain Woolley of the Arethusa, who had been sent to Tortola and St. Thomas to procure Pilots and Guides. This occasioned a delay of a few days.

On Monday 17th. we made the island of Porto Rico, and came to anchor off CongreJos Point - the whole of the north side of this island is bounded by a reef and it was with much difficulty that a narrow channel was discovered about 3 leagues to the eastward of the town, through which H.M.Sloops the Beaver and the Fury with the lighter vessels passed into a small bay in which the troops on the next morning were disembarked with little opposition from

about 100 of the enemy, who were concealed in the bushes at the landing place. In the afternoon of the same day, the troops advanced and took a position very favorable for our numbers, with our right to the sea and the left to a lagoon which extends far into the country. The artillery was brought up without loss of time and every preparation made to force a passage into the island on which the Town of Porto Rico is situated. It is necessary here to observe that as the Morro Castle completely commands the passage into the harbour, the enemy kept open their communications with the southern and western part of the island, and even teased and harrassed our left flank with their numerous gunboats. The only point therefore on which we could attack the town was on the eastern side, where it is defended by the castle and lines of St. Christopher, to approach which it was necessary to force our way over the lagoon which forms this side of the island. This passage was strongly defended by two redoubts and gunboats, and the enemy had destroyed the bridge which connects in the narrowest channel, the island with the mainland.

After every effort on our part we never could sufficiently silence the fire of the enemy, who had likewise entrenched themselves in the rear of these redoubts. As to hazard forcing the passage into the island with so small a force, this would indeed have been in vain , as the enemy could support a fire ten times more powerful than we could have brought against them. The only thing left was to endeavor to bombard the town from a point to the southward of it, near to a large magazine abandoned by the enemy. This was tried for several days, without any great effect on account of the distance.

It appearing therefore that no act of vigour on our part, nor that any combined operation between the sea and land service could in any manner avail, I determined to withdraw and to re-embark the troops, which was done on the night of 30th. April with the greatest order and regularity.

All our artillery and stores were brought off, except seven iron guns, four iron mortars and two brass howitzers, which were rendered unserviceable, it being impossible to remove them. Not

a sick or wounded soldier was left behind, and nothing of any value fell into the hands of the enemy.

During the whole of our operations I have received from Admiral Harvey the most cordial co-operation and every act of personal kindness. At my request, he landed 300 seamen under Captains Toddy and Browne of the Royal Navy, to whose exertions while on shore we are under the greatest obligation. From the arrangements of the Admiral, the landing and re-embarkation of the troops were conducted in the best order. to Captain Renou of the Royal Navy, Principal Agent of Transports, I desire to express the sense I have of his good conduct upon all occasions.

I beg leave to assure you that the behaviour of the troops has been meritorious - they were patient under labour, regular and orderly in their conduct and spirited when an opportunity to show it occurred. All the departments of the Army exerted themselves to my satisfaction. A return of our killed and wounded accompanies this. The fleet sails this day for Martinique.

Thus, Sir, has ended the expedition against Porto Rico. We have to regret that the Intelligence which we received in England with regard to this island was scanty, and that the information which we got in this country has proved erroneous. The enemy was in a state of preparation and ready to receive us. St. Johns of Porto Rico is both by nature and art very strong, and the worst troops would stand behind such defence. It is justice to the Abbe Reynall to say, that the account which he has given of St. Johns and of the island, is correct as far as I have been able to observe.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant.

Ra. Abercromby.

PS. I have omitted to say, that four Spanish brass field pieces fell into our hands, which were brought off.

( P.R.O. W.O. 1/86. May 2 1797. )

# Appendix XV

## Biography Governor Ramón De Castro y Gutierrez

He was born in Lucena, a province of Cordoba and was the son and successor of Marques de Lorca, Baron of San Pedro, Lord of Ontoria and Rio Franco and the Nobleman of the King.

In 1781 he received the "Encomienda de Santiago" and excelled fighting and defeating the British invading forces in the Battle of Pensacola and Louisiana in Florida.

On March 21, 1795 he took the position of Governor and Captain of the Island. He married Doña Teresa Fabra Fernández de Bazán, with whom he had a daughter called María Guadalupe who died in the capital on December 9 1804 at the age of twelve years. She was buried at the entrance of the "Las Carmelitas" Church. In 1800 his picture, painted by José Campeche, was placed in the Capital's Townhouse.

In 1804 he retired from the government but did not leave the island until 1809. Upon his return to Spain he was named General Captain of Valencia, but died in Cadiz before taking possession of his new position in 1810 or 1812.

*Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europea-Americana.* Tomo XI, Espasa-Calpe, S.A. Madrid, 1911.

*Lealtad y Heroismo de la Isla de Puerto Rico.* Juntas de Autoridades y 1er del Centenario de la Defensa de San Juan de Puerto Rico en 1797, Puerto Rico, 1897.

*Remomorando el Pasado Heróico.* María de Martínez, Puerto Rico, 1946.

# Appendix XVI

# Santo Domingo
# 2510
# (Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla)

Relaion que manifiesta con toda exactitud
el actual estado del Castillo del Morro de S.t Juan
de Puerto Rico, fuerte de tierra, y demas partes
del recinto de la Plaza, formada por el Mariscal
de Campo D.n Alexandro O Reilly, quien despues
de muchos reconocimientos, y de haver oido
en varios dias, y sesiones que tuvo sobre el
mismo terreno, y en su Casa al Señor Gov.r
D.n Ambrosio Benavides, al Theniente Coronel
D.n Thomas O Daly Ingeniero en segundo y Gefe
de esta Plaza, al Ingeniero voluntario D.n
Pablo Castello, y al Theniente Coronel D.n Pedro
Carrasco, Cavo Subalterno y Sargento mayor
de esta Plaza; propuso las obras y reparos
que explica este Papel, y manifiesta el Plano
en cuias muchas y preferencias ventajas
todos se acordaron."

Sto Domingo
25 B

# Appendix XVII

DETALLE INDIVIDUAL PARA QUE PUEDA RESISTIR QUATRO MESES DE SITIO EL CASTILLO DE Sn. Ph. DEL MORRO, SUPUESTA SU MAYOR EXTENSION COMO SE PROYECTO EN 16 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1793. (Extracto de Trancripción-
Sección Manuscritos SAJU-Military Archives)

PLAZA DE Sn. JUAN DE PUERTO RICO AÑO DE 1795

Detalle individual que presenta el Ingeniero en Gefe D. Felipe Ramirez, comprehensivo de la Guarnición que podrá contener el Castillo de Sn Phe. Del Morro supuesto que se construya el frente de fortificación proyectado en 16 de Noviembre de 1793, para su mayor capacidad y extensión; a fin de que en el caso de haber de sostener un sitio de quatro meses, encierre en su recinto los Viveres, Municiones, Alojamientos y demás necesario a dicha Guarnición, y objeto. Comparando asimismo la diferencia del importe que tendria la execución de este Proyecto, con el de los edificios que están propuestos, para completar los de la Plaza, y tal vez no se tendrán que precisar, supliendo por ellos, las vóvedas que actualmente tiene dicho castillo, y las que se le agregarian con el expresado Proyecto.

No siendo mi objeto por ahora detallar la Guarnición, y fuerzas que necesita la Isla para su total defensa, ni exponer el modo de hacer esta, distribuyendo aquellas en los puestos más apropósito, que deven ser sostenidos subcesivamente, por que esta materia se halla tratada ya con el tino, y delicadeza propios de sugetos de otro conocimiento, respeto, y caracter que el mio, para que sirviendo de norma la instrucción que ofrecen, pueda el encargado del mando seguir unas luzes que lo conduzcan al desempeño y acierto; Ceñiré mi escrito á considerar retirada y á la Guarnición al último recurso de las fortificaciones hasta no quedarle otro, que el castillo de Sn. Felipe del Morro.

# Appendix XVIII

*Escrito del ingeniero en jefe de las reates obras de San Juan, D. Felipe Ramirez, á D. Francisco Sabatini. Puerto Rico, 4 de mayo de 1797*

*(Arch. docum. Serv. Mil. Madrid; signaturas: 4-1-7-9)*

«Excmo. Señor.

Con la precipitacion q.e me concede la brevedad del tiempo q.e me estrecha p.r horas, participo á V.E. haver puesto sitio á esta Plaza la nacion Britanica el dia 17 de Ab.l q.e se dexo ver una esquadra de sesenta buques con once mil hombres de desembarco; este lo hicieron con alguna oposicion de nuestra parte en la playa de Cangrejos, y adelantandose con su Artilleria, y exercito formaron las primeras baterias en la punta del Condado, monte del rodeo, y Almahacen de Miraflores, la primera y seg.da tuvieron por objeto batir el paso preciso del fuertecito de S.n Antonio, y Castillo de S.n Geronimo, los q.e han dexado echos un monton de ruinas; pero como las defensas de estos puestos se confiaron á sugetos de acreditado espiritu, se han mantenido con los reparos q.e la necesidad les hizo apurar: el de S.n Antonio estuvo al cargo del Yng.ro Ordinario D.n Ygnacio Mascaró sugeto del mas intrepido valor q.e puedo yo expresar, el qual como portador de esta, informara á V.E. con mas individualidad .

La bateria de Miraflores dirigio sus fuegos al trincheron, á la Ciudad, y á la Marina. Cortamos el Puente de S.n Antonio, se reforzó con quatrocientos hombres de armas atrincherados, y con caballos de frisa, y en el trincheron se colocaron siete cañones de batallon y se guarneció con algo mas de mil hombres, haviendo sembrado de puntas agudas todo el foso en el p.a detener un ataque brusco. Se embiaron partidas de gente arrestada, q.e incomodase al enemigo en su campo y puestos fortificados, y vien-

do este nuestra resistencia y las providencias tan acertadas de nuestro Gen.l desp.s de haver perdido mucha gente, se retiró con precipitacion el dia 1.o del corr.te dexando en su fuga toda la Artilleria, municiones, viveres & y á nosotros la gloria de haver tenido el honor de conservar á S.M. esta preciosa posicion en su dominio.

Nuestras fuerzas han consistido en las milicias de esta Ysla, los Paysanos q.e tomaron las armas en q.e se distribuian diariam.te unas cinco mil raciones, por hallarse el reg.to fixo sin oficiales ni tropa á causa de haver embiado la mayor parse de el á la Ysla de S.to Domingo y no haver vuelto desde la guerra pasada con la Francia.

Con motivo de esta gloriosa defensa, recomienda nuestro Gen.l a los Gefes, y demas sugetos, q.e se han esmerado y distinguido: yo como uno de ellos espero el favor q.e siempre he devido á V. Ex.a tenga á bien apoyar dicha recomendacion p.a q.e sean al r.l agrado de S. Mag.d nuestras fatigas.

V. Ex.ca con su benignidad dispense la brebedad de mi relacion por q.e el tiempo no me dá lugar á otra cosa y quedo rogando á Nro. S.or gde. la vida á V. Ex.ca muchos años.

Puerto Rico, 4 de Mayo de 1797.

Felipe Ramirez.

Excmo. S.or d.n Fran.co Sabatini.»

(«Ent.do el 22 de Julio de dho. año»).

«Extracto de lo ocurrido desde que Desembarco el Exto. Yngles delante de la Plaza de Puerto Rico, hasta que se retiró vergonzosamente, y se reembarco con la mayor precipitacion.

El dia 17 de Abril de 97 al Amanecer se presento á Barlovento de este Puerto la Esquadra Ynglesa del mando del Almirante Jerwis, y compuesta del Navio de 3 Puentes Principe de Gales; otros quatro de Linea, 6 Fragatas, 2 Corvetas, 8 Navios de la Yndia; 12 Lanchas Cañoneras y unos 43 transportes, en esta esquadra y Comboy venian de 10 á 12 mil hombres de Tropas Ynglesas, Ale-

manas, Emigrados Franceses, Negros Armados y 800 Marineros para el travajo, toda esta expedicion á las ordenes del Gral. Abercromby y otros quatro Generales dicho dia fondearon en la Ensenada de la Torrecilla 3 leguas de la Plaza, los Buques Grandes fuera de los Arrecifes, y los demás entre hellos y la Playa. Al medio dia vino un Oficial con un Pliego que se le recivio á la boca del Puerto, hera la intimacion de rendir la Plaza, con las expresiones mas arrogantes. Aquella tarde se le contexto: Pero se volvió nuestro Parlamentario por haverle hecho fuego un Bergantin; pero á la mañana siguiente se llevo el Pliego á los Generales, en el que se le contextaba como hera devido, y ha acreditado la experiencia.

El dia 18 á la madrugada á favor de un terrible fuego se dirijieron al Desembarco con 55 Lanchas y no hallando otra oposicion q.$^{e}$ el del fuego de fusileria de unos 80 hombres á las ordenes del vizarro D.$^{n}$ Teodomiro del Toro Theniente Coronel graduado y Ayudante de Milicias á quien no le llegó el refuerzo ni los Cañones de Batallon, que devieron enviarsele por el Destacam.$^{to}$ que estava á su inmediacion. Despues de haver muerto muchos Enemigos, y de haver detenido por un momento el desembarco se exforzaron los Enemigos á hacerlo viendo la poca oposicion, puestos en Tierra se fueron replegando hacia la Plaza nuestras partidas avanzadas y haquella noche quedo cortado el Puente de S.$^{n}$ Antonio, Guarnecido y entregado su mando al Yngeniero Ordinario D.$^{n}$ Ygnacio Mascaró, que es el que con mayor valor, constancia y serenidad ha sobstenido trece dias de Ataque, tan terrible, que aquel Puesto á quedado hecho un monton de ruinas: El Fuerte de S.$^{n}$ Geronimo se encargó á dho. Toro que haquella mañana havia dado pruebas de valor en la Playa. Oponiendose con solo 80 hombres al desembarco de mas de 2.000 hombres sobstenidos con el terrible fuego de sus Embarcaciones.

Desde el dia siguiente empezaron los dos Comand.$^{s}$ á poner en estado de defensa sus Puestos, y tres dias despues Colocaron los Enemigos una Bateria en el Monte del Rodeo que domina al Puente y aunque algo mas distante tambien á S.$^{n}$ Geronimo con lo que empezó un terrible Cañoneo contra estos dos Fuertes algunos dias despues Establecieron los Enemigos una Bateria de Morteros

contra San Geronimo, y otra de Cañones contra S.ⁿ Antonio vatiendole por el costado de suerte que llegó el caso de hacer Callar los dos Cañones del Frente y otros tres que havia Havilitado Mascaró. Pero su Teson supo con los auxilios que se le franquearon havilitar tres cañones, y el dia 28 Amaneció haciendo fuego con hellos con mucha admiracion de los Enemigos; Franquearon desde el principio, defendian el Puesto dos Ganguiles con dos Cañones cada huno de á 24 y de noche existian algunas Lanchitas Cañoneras para sobstener y defender el ataque que pudieran hacer al Puente.

Los Enemigos establecieron en el Almazen de Miraflores una tercera Bateria de Cañones, y Obuses vatiendo con haquellos á los otros dos Ganguiles, y un Porton que montavan ygual Artilleria que los otros, y con los Obuses arrojaron á la Ciudad mas de 500 Granadas sin que huvieran Causado con hella al menor daño ni desgracia pero huvo algunas en el trincheron en que havia mil hombres de Guarnicion para sobstener los Fuertes atacados á mas de los que eslaban colocados en una Linea entre los dos fuertes.

No pudieron acavar de conducir á Miraflores dos Morteros que se han hallado atascados en el Camino.

Se hicieron varias salidas en que se les tomaron Prisioneros 4 Oficiales, y mas de 90 hombres y esto les obligó á que el 28 volaron el Puente de Martin Peña, con lo que quedaron hellos sitiados en el partido de Cangrejos.

El 30 se notaron movimientos extraordinarios en la Esquadra comboy, y en el Exto. de Tierra por lo que Estavamos dispuestos para recibir el ataque, aquel dia. fué lento el fuego que cayó á media noche, y á la madrugada del 1.º de Mayo no quedo duda de que se reembarcaban con la mayor precipitacion haviendo dejado en las vaterias siete Cañones dos Mort.ˢ y dos Obuses Clavados, y en el Camino dos Cañones desmuñonados; se han encontrado crehecidos repuestos de Polbora, viveres, vala, y de todas especies de Municiones, Escalas, Carros, Fraguas, Tiendas y por ultimo por todas partes no se ven mas que despojos que se van recojiendo é Ynventariando: En los 13 dias dc sitio tubieron

muchos heridos que se veian conducir diariamente á bordo, y los Muertos serian á proporcion pues se hallan muchos Cadaveres sobre la Tierra, y se les ha hido dando sepultura: La Guarnicion ha tenido 30 muertos y 115 heridos sin contar los que de una y otra Clase han tenido los Buques de la Plaza.

La guarnicion se componia quando se presentó la Esquadra Enemiga de 600 hombres del Fizo 400 Reclutas que se hacavavan de recibir y 1300 Milicianos con 319 Artilleros de hellos 71 Veteranos, y los demás Milicias, despues se aumentó el Cuerpo de Milicias con 300 Cumplidos, y las Milicias Urbanas para el travajo, que pasaron de 2.000 hombres y algunas otras compuestas de vecinos que ascendian á 400 hombres con unos 200 Franceses que se repartieron en las vaterias y que han servido mui vien en la de San Geronimo, no haviendolos havido en S.ⁿ Antonio.

Como queda dho. el Exto. Enemigo se reembarcó el dia 1.º y el dia 2 se puso á la vela; el comboy y Esquadra; para el 3 se dispuso dar gracias á Dios, y Celebrar el triunfo del modo siguiente.

En la Explanada se formó toda la Guarnicion en Batalla, y formando en Columna entro por la Puerta Santiago, y se dirigió a la Cathedral por el orden sigtuente: Abrian la marcha un Cavo, y quatro vatidores de Cavall.ª Seguia la Com.ª de Granaderos del Fixo á esta dos Cañones de Batallon, el uno conducido por nuestros Artilleros y el otro por los franceses, á los Cañones, seguia á Cavallo el Brigadier D.ⁿ Ramon de Castro Governador y Capitan Gral. de la Ysla á su derecha el Brigadier D. Benito Perez, Teniente del Rey, de la Plaza, y á su Yzquierda el Capitan de Fragata D.ⁿ Francisco de Castro á quien cargó el Señor Governador el mando de los Buques de la Plaza á Compañando además tambien á Cavallo el Mayor y Ayudantes de la Plana, los Ayudantes de los Gefes y otros Oficiales Sueltos á los Gefes seguian los Destacamentos de San Antonio y S.ⁿ Geronimo con las Vanderas de sus Castillos y al lado de hellas sus Vizarros Comandantes Espada en mano acompañados de los Oficiales de aquellas Guarniciones y á su retaguardia los 400 hombres de la Linea destinados á sobstener á los dos Fuertes en Caso de ser átacados.

El Rexim.to Fixo con sus Vanderas seguia y á el todas las Milicias Urbanas de la Ciudad y el Campo Conducidos por sus Tenientes á Guerra y Ofic.s y á todos armados de Lanzas ó Machetes, el Cuerpo de Milicias de Ynfant.a seguia á esta Tropa y detras de el Otros dos Cañones de Batallon Cerrando la retaguardia un esquadron de Milicias de Cavalleria.

Por este Orden se siguio la marcha á la Cathedral formando en Batalla en su Calle toda la Tropa Armada con fusiles; en la Plaza que haze Frente la Cavalleria, y los Cañones y sobre la Muralla todas las Milicias Urvanas; con la Musica y los Gefes á pie, se condujeron á la Yglesia las Banderas de los dos Fuertes una de los barcos de la Plaza y los Francos quisieron tener parte conduciendo Otra de las suyas los dos Comandantes el Capitán del Puerto y M. Baron, Colocaron las Vanderas al lado del Evangelio y las Tomaron en la Mano cuanto se cantó este: y al Té Deum: Al ofertorio hizo el S.or Obispo una Corta Platica mui fervorosa y tierra que como el acto obligo á derramar lagrimas de gozo.

Al Empezar la Misa hicieron su descarga los 4 Cañones de Batallon siguio la Fusileria formada en Batalla frente á la Yglesia, la de todos los puestos de la Plaza, sobre la Muralla, la Artilleria de todos los Castillos, y rezinto de la Plaza, empezando por el Morro, y concluyendo en el mismo, y la de todos los Buques Españoles que havia en el Puerto y esta misma salva se repitio al Alzar y al Te Deum.

Concluida la funcion en la Yglesia salieron de hella todos los Gefes, acompañados del S.or Obispo se paseo toda la Linea de la Tropa, dirigiendose todos á Casa del S.or Governador y Cap.n Gral. á Cumplimentarlo igualm.te que ha su esposa; este ha sido el ágradable fin de la árrogante expedicion de los Yngleses contra esta Plaza que se ha conservado á nuestro Soberano á pesar de los terribles esfuerzos de nuestros Enemigos.

Para colmo de nuestra felizidades el dia 11 por la mañana entró un Barco Americano con 700 Barriles de Arina que ya escasiava: á aquella tarde la Fragata Juno con el situado, y al dia siguiente dos correspondencia de España.

# A P P E N D I X XVIII

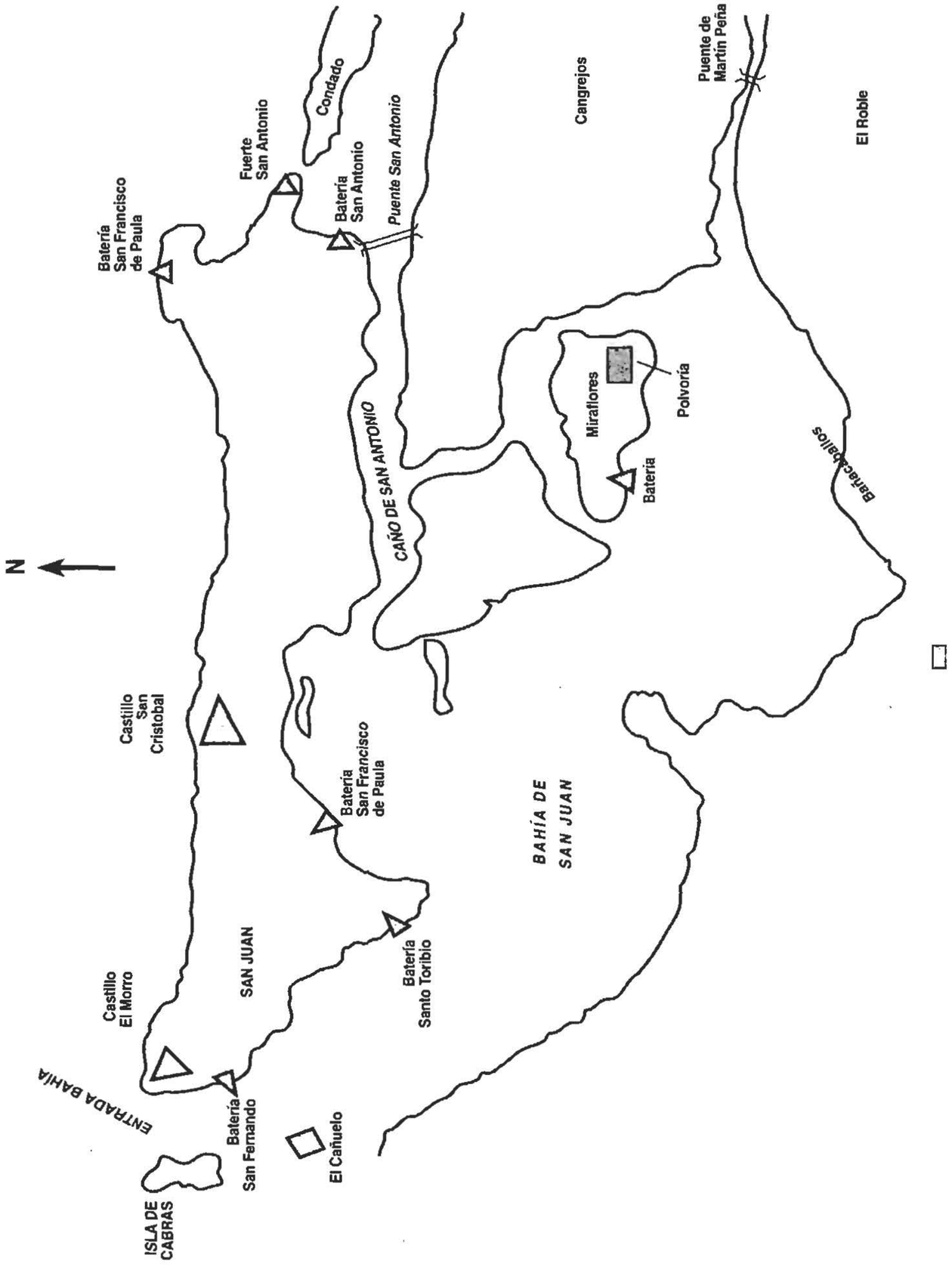
Despues se ha savido por la Ysla de S.$^{n}$ Tomas que en la de Tortola han dejado los Enemigos 600 heridos que con los que llevan y las perdidas que tubieron haqui se calcula podran haver Perdido mas de 2000 mil hombres.

Los Judios de Tortola han ganado á los Yngleses mas de 30.000 Pesos de apuestas que hicieron estos de que hantes del 10 heran dueños de Puerto Rico para donde tenian empaquetados todos sus efectos, lo propio que en las demás Yslas: En el dia que hellos señalavan para la rendicion salió de aqui el Correo para España anunciando el sitio que pusieron los Enemigos y la vergonzosa huida y Reembarco. En la Fragata Juno hiran los Prisioneros Oficiales y tropa para canjearlos con los que haya en Jamaica pues haqui no nos cojieron ni un hombre, como no fuese algunos negros que Vivaron.»

Juan Manuel Zapatero - La Guerra del Caribe en el Siglo XVIII. Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1964.

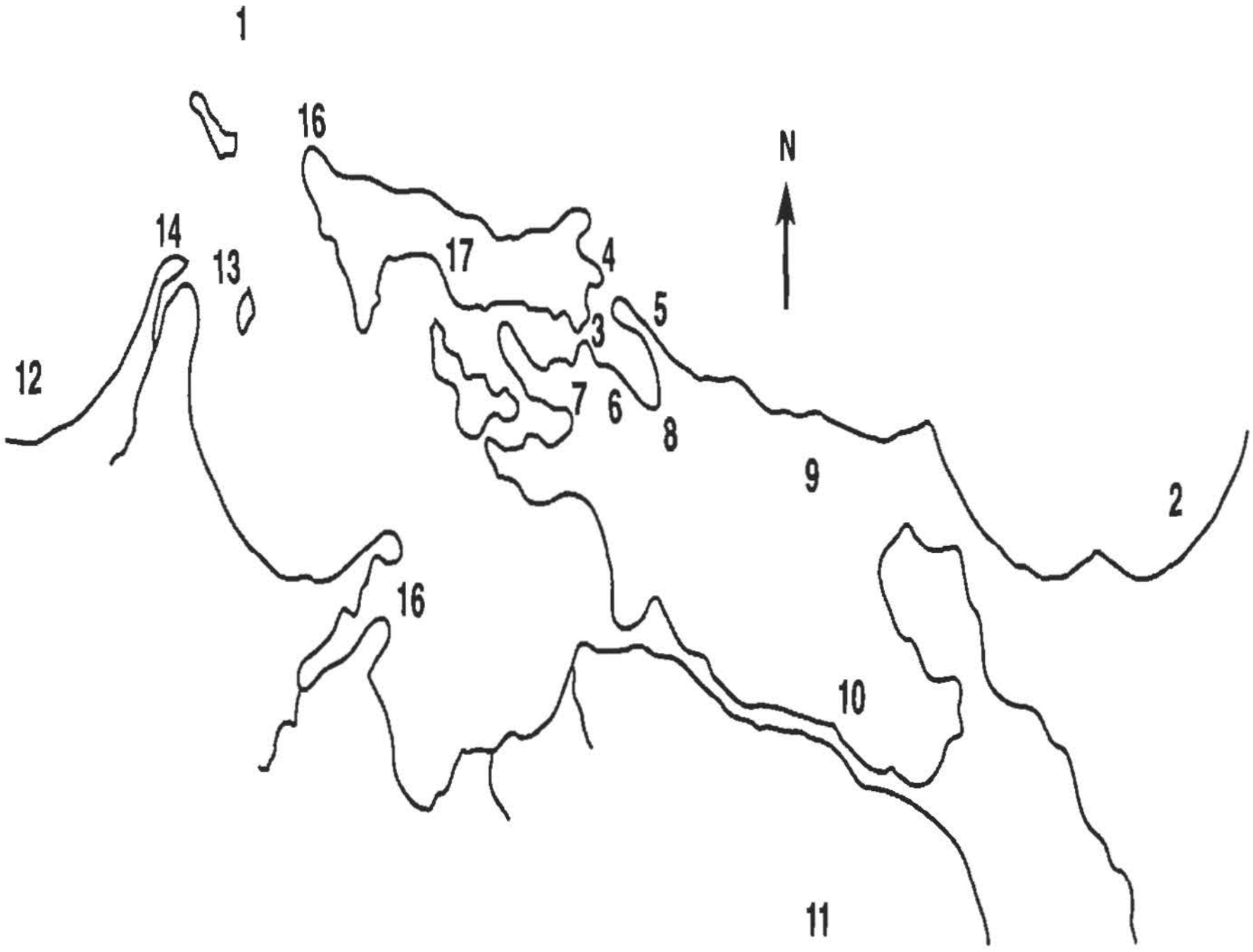
# Appendix XIX

Diagrama 1



# Appendix XX

## Diagrama 2




Leyenda Diagrama

1 Bloqueo al Puerto
2 Desembarco ("La Torrecilla" en Cangrejos)
3 Batería y Puente de San Antonio
4 Fuerte de San Gerónimo
5 El Condado
6 El Rodeo
7 Miraflores
8 San Mateo
9 Seboruco de Barrios
10 Puente de Martín Peña
11 El Roble
12 Punta Salinas
13 Cañuelo
14 Río Bayamón
15 Bañacaballos
16 El Morro
17 San Cristóbal

# Appendix XXI

N.° 8.°

Relacion Delas bocas De fuego Armas, Municiones, Carros
Municiones y Demas pertrechos De Guerra q. se han pre-
do reconocer Delos que el Exercito Ingles dexò abando-
nados y Inpeasos pra todo su Campamento y Baterias

Numero de Piezas

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cañones De à 24 inclusos Dos montados en Cureñas de Madera | } | 6. |
| Del calibre De à 16 montados en iguales Cureñas | } | 2 |
| Morteros de Ordenanza de à 12 | | 2 |
| Idem De à 8 | | 2 |
| Obuses de 5. pulgadas y cinco lineas montados en Cureñas con sus Juegos de Armas correspond | } | 2 |
| | | 14. |

Armas Municiones
y otros Pertrechos.

Cartuchos cargados dede el
calibre de à 4. hasta el de
à 24 inclusos algunos de

# Appendix XXII

*Extracto de una carta de don Miguel Rodríguez Feliciano, prebendado de la Santa Iglesia de Puerto Rico, a un religioso de esta ciudad.*

*Puerto Rico, 22 de mayo de 1797.*

*"El 17 de abril anterior se avistó por la Boca de Cangrejos una escuadra enemiga, compuesta de 64 buques. Fondeó en el mismo día, y al siguiente, 18, hizo su desembarco de 12 a 13 M, hombres asentando su Real en el propio paraje. El General de la Plaza, don Ramón de Castro, que desde el rompimiento de la guerra tenía hechos los aprestos necesarios para un caso de esta naturaleza, estaba prevenido para seis meses de sitio, con gente y armas suficientes en todos los puestos y puntos en que era necesaria la defensa; de modo que el 17 por la mañana en que se tocó la generala, en menos de una hora estaba cada hombre en su destino, las mechas encendidas, y esperando el momento de romperse el fuego. El martes 18 empezó esto y duró quince días consecutivos, en los cuales trabajaron los ingleses con tesón, despidiendo innumerables bombas y bolas, pero se les correspondía de nuestra parte con mucha más actividad y rectitud, matándoles o hiriéndoles desde el primer día mucha gente, con muy poca pérdida de los nuestros. Un navío y dos fragatas se acercaron a batir a San Gerónimo, pero luego que reconocieron cañones de a 24 y bala roxa, viraron de bordo sin poder sostener media hora de combate; y aunque por segunda y tercera vez intentaron atacarlo, se retiraron sin causarle el menor daño. Finalmente, tanta prevención, valor, resistencia y oposición encontraron los enemigos en los hombres de guerra y vecinos de la plaza, que sin poder aventajar en 15 días un paso de terreno, después de haber perdido como 211 hombres sin contar los heridos que cada día lle-*

*vaban a bordo y abandonando cuanto tenían en tierra, de cañones, morteros y pólvora, comestibles, caballos, hasta cama, adornos, cocina y demás inmuebles del General, tuvieron que levar anclas y retirarse precipitadamente el día 2 de mayo. Nuestro Gobernador ha acreditado en pericia, valor y serenidad de espíritu en esta ocasión: a todo atendía, todo lo prevenía y en ningún puesto faltaba nada para defenderse y ofender. También se ha distinguido don Ignacio Mascaró Comandante del Castillo de San Antonio, en la gloriosa defensa que hizo de él y generalmente nuestros soldados se han hecho dignos de el mayor reconocimiento. El día 3 se cantó el Te Deum en la Santa Iglesia Catedral y marchó el Gobernador al frente de toda la tropa, montado en el mismo caballo del General inglés, entre los vítores y vivas de todo el pueblo".*

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1 Gaceta de Guatemala, Tomo I, Núm. 31, folios 246-247: lunes 4 de septiembre de 1797.

# Appendix XXIII

Num. 1

A bordo del navio el Principe de Gales
a 18 de Abril de 1797

Señor:

Nosotros los Comandantes en gefe de las fuerzas Britanicas por mar y tierra en esta parte del mundo, creemos de nuestro deber, antes de dar principio a algunas hostilidades, el intimaros que rindais la colonia de Puerto-Rico y lo que de este depende a las armas de S.M.B.

Estamos dispuestos en este momento a conceder a vuestra persona, a la guarnicion y a los habitantes las condiciones mas favorables que con la proteccion en la continuacion de sus actuales goces de la religion, de las propiedades y leyes; pero si por desgracia reusareis aprovecharos de nuestras ofertas, sereis responsable de las consecuencias que se sigan, como de la variacion de los terminos en que despues haremos seais tratados.

Tenemos el honor de ser, señor, vuestros mas humildes y obedientes servidores.

Ralph Albercromby, y Henry Harvey.

A.S. E. el Gobernador u Oficial comandante en Gefe de las fuerzas de S.M.C., en San Juan de Puerto-Rico.

# Appendix XXIV

Num. 2

Excmos. Señores. - He recibido el pliego de VV.EE. de este dia intimandome la rendicion de la plaza de Puerto-Rico, que tengo el honor de mandar; y defendere como debo a mi Rey Catolico, hasta perder la ultima gota de sangre. Esta circunstancia me priva de admitir las generosas ofertas que VV. EE. Se sirven hacerme en el, particularmente a mi, a mi guarnicion y habitantes, los cuales, como su Gefe, estan dispuestos a vender caras sus vidas; y espero que en su defensa obtendre la gloria que he conseguido de la nacion Britanica en el puesto del Wilage cercano a Panzacola en el año pasado de 1781. - Nuestro señor guarde a VV.EE. Muchos añs como deseo.

Puerto-Rico 18 de Abril de 1797.-Ramon de Castro.-

Escmos. Señores D. Ralph Abercromby y D. Henry Harvey.

# Appendix XXV

## REGIMIENTO DE YNFANTERIA DE PUERTO RICO

Relacion de los Yndividuos de dicho Regimiento que con motivo del Sitio que pusieron los Yngleses á esta Plaza el día 17 de Abril de 1797, murieron en ella al golpe de la Bala, Casco de bomba & ó de resultas de herida recivida, en accion ó trabajo de dicho Sitio. Con expresion de la familia q.e las quedó certificaciones que acreditan lo expuesto.

| *Compañías* | *Nombres* | *Pueblos de su procedencia* | *Acciones en que murieron* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1ª 1.º | Laureano Rodriguez | Yauco | Murió en la Playa de Cangrejos de la Bala de fusil en la oposicion q.e se hizo al desembarco de los Enemigos bajo las Ordenes del Ten.e Cor.l D.n Teodomiro del toro Ayudante del Cuerpo de Milicias Disciplinadas de esta Plaza.. |
| 1ª 1.º | Manuel Galarza | Yauco | Ydem en todo. |
| 2ª 1.º | Pedro Lazo | Casares en Esp.ª | Murió en el Hospital de esta Plaza de resultas de haberle herido un Casco de bomba en el Fuerte de S. Geronimo bajo las Ordenes de dicho Ten.e Cor.l graduado D. Teodomiro del Toro. |
| 2ª 1.º | Victor Lopez | Tuna. | Murió en el Hospital de esta Plaza de resultas de haberle herido una Bala de fusil en la Playa de Cangrejos en la operacion q.e hizo al desembarco de los Enemigos a las Ordenes Susodicho Don Teodomiro del Toro. |

| *Compañías* | *Nombres* | *Pueblos de su procedencia* | *Acciones en que murieron* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1a 2.º | Eusebio Herrera | Arecibo. | Murió en el Fuerte de San Antonio de una Bala de Cañon bajo las Or.nes del Yng.o Ord.o D. Ygnacio Mascaró y hallandose con la Tropa de este Cuerpo que defendia aquel Puesto el Subteniente del mismo D. Bartholome Lizon. |
| 1ª 2.º | Juan Bern.do Garcia | Natural de Santiago en Caracas. | Murio en el Hospital de esta Plaza de resultas de haberle herido una Bala de Cañon en el Fuerte de S. Antonio bajo las Ordenes del Ingeniero Ordn.o D. Ygnacio Mascaró y hallandose con la Tropa de este Cuerpo que defendia aquel Puesto al Subt.e del mismo D. Bartolome Lizon. |
| 1ª 2.º | Luis Villa Rubia | Aguada. | Ydem en todo. |
| 2ª 2.º | Lorenzo Heredia | Arecibo | Murió en el Fuerte de S. Antonio de una bala de Cañon bajo las Ordenes del mismo D. Ygnacio Mascaró y hallandose Con la Tropa de este Cuerpo el propio Don Bartolome Lizon. |
| 2a 2.o | Fabian Torres | San German. | Murió en el hospital de esta Plaza de resultas de haberle herido una bala de Cañon en el Fuerte de S. Antonio bajo las Orns. Del mismo Don Ygnacio Mascaró, y hallandose con la Tropa de este Cuerpo el propio D. Bartolome Lizon. |
| 2a 2.o | Jose Cordova | Natural de como avecinado en San German. | Ydem en todo como el anterior. |

| *Compañías* | *Nombres* | *Pueblos de su procedencia* | *Acciones en que murieron* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3ª 2.º | Manuel de Rivera | Rincon. | Murió en Martin Peña de una bala de fusil á las Ordenes del Subten.e de este Cuerpo D. Luis de Lara. |
| 3ª 2.º | Antonio Ocario | Faxardo. | Murio en el Fuerte de S. Antonio de una bala de Cañon á las Ordenes del Yng.o Ordin.o Don Ygnacio Mascaró y hallandose con la Tropa que de este Cuerpo defendia aquel Puesto el Subt.e D.n Bartolome Lizon. |
| 4ª 2.º | Jose Vega | Moca. | Murió en el Hosp.l de esta Plaza de resultas de haberle herido una bala de Cañon en el Fuerte de S. Ant.o bajo las Orns. Del mismo d. Ygnacio Mascaró y hallandose con la Tropa de este Cuerpo el propio D. Bartolome Lizon. |
| 4ª 2.º | Jose Chasin | Natural de Perija en S.ta Fee avecind.o en Caguas | Murió de una Bala de fusil en Martin Peña á las Ordenes del Subt.e de este Cuerpo D. Luis de Lara. |

## MUERTOS

Relacion de los Paysanos de varios Partidos de esta Ysla que concurrieron á la defensa de esta Plaza, con motivo del Sitio que pusieron los Yngleses el dia 17 de Abril de 1797 y murieron en ella al golpe de bala. O de resultas de herida recivida en accion. O trabajos de dicho sitio con expresion de la familia que les quedó, y Certificaciones que acreditan los expuestos.

| *Nombres* | *Pueblos de su procedencia* | *Acciones en que murieron* |
|---|---|---|
| Juan Serrano | Arecivo | Murió en los travajos de S.n Geronimo de golpe de bala. |
| Luciano curazado | Coamo | Murió en los trabajos de la Sanja del trincheron al golpe de bala de Cañon. |
| Justo del Rio | Manaty | Murió llevando Barriles a los fuertes atacados. |

## ESTROPEADOS O YNUTILES

Relacion de los Paisanos de varios Partidos de esta Ysla que concurrieron a la defensa de esta Plaza, con motibo del Sitio que pusieron los Yngleses el dia 17 de Abril y quedaron estropeados. O inutilizados para trabajar de resulta de herida recivida en las fatigas. O accion de dicho Sitio con Certificaciones que lo acreditan.

| *Nombres* | *Partidos* | *Clase de su inutilidad* | *Acciones en que se inutilizaron* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Juan de Valle | Faxardo | Ynut.l de una pier.a | Fue herido en el Sitio del roble allandose a las Ordenes de D.n Isidoro Linares. |
| Jose Paulino Fig..a | Yabucoa | Bald.do de una | De resultas del ataque q.e hubo con los enemigos en la casa de Yaque. |
| Juan Urbano Pach.o | Toa Alta | Cojo | Fue herido en el roble a las Ordenes de D.n Jose Dias |
| Juan Fran.co de Castro | Rio Piedras | Ynut.l de un braso | Herido en Martin Peña a las Ord.s de D.n Luis de Lara. |
| Ant.o Jose Garcia | Rio Piedras | Manco | En Martin Peña a las Ordenes de D.n Luis de Lara. |

# Appendix XXVI

*Escrito núm. 142, 1 de julio de 1801, del gobernador y capitán general de Puerto Rico. don Ramón de Castro a don Antonio Cornell.*

*(Arch. Gen. Mil. Segovia: Ultramar; legajo 36, expediente 6.)*

"El Gob.or de Puerto Rico da cuenta con relaciones documentadas de los muertos e Ynutiles de resulta del ultimo Sitio de 1a Plaza de su mando, que dejaron de comprehenderse en las respectivas Relaciones por los motivos que se expresan".

N. 142.

Excmo. Señor.

Quando en mi oficio de 29 de Noviembre de 1798 N.o 182 dirigido al Ministerio del actual cargo de V.E. di cuenta de los inutiles y Viudas o parientes de los muertos resultante del Sitio que sufrio esta Plaza en el año anterior, expedí anticipadamente las Ordenes necesarias exigiendo las correspondientes noticias y justificaciones respectibas de ambas clases con el fin de formalizar expedientes que comprobasen la legitimidad de las inutilidades, Muertos y partes interesadas é informar con ellos a S.M. como lo executé, á que se si guió la Real Orden de 21 de Junio de 1799, en la que la Piedad del Soberano concedi6 varias gracias á los comprehendidos en dichos expedientes.

A pesar de mis Ordenes y noticias exigidas dexaron algunos interesados de la misma clase de presentarse y justificar su derecho y por omision, imposibilidad, o descuido de los encargados

en publicar mis disposiciones de modo que nadie las ignorase: lo han executado despues; y me pareció conforme á Justicia admitir sus solici tudes, formalizar la justificacion y dar Cuenta á S.M. como lo executo con las adjuntas Relaciones documentadas N.os l.o, 2.o y 3.o en que constan tres muertos y un Ynutil del Regimiento de Ynfanteria de Milicias Disciplinadas, y otro Muerto Paisano, todos en accion al tiempo del expresado Sitio.

Dirijolas a V.E. á fin de que, si lo estima conveniente, se sirva dar cuenta á S.M. y proporcionar la Soberana Determinacion que fuere de su Real Agrado.

Ntro. S.or gue. La vida de V.E. m.s a.s como deseo.
Puerto Rico 1.o de Julio de 1801.
Exc.mo S.or
Ramón de Castro.

Excmo. S.or d.n Antonio Cornell.

N.º 1.º

Regim.to de Milicias Disciplinadas de Ynfant.a de la Ysla de S.n Juan de Puerto Rico.

Relacion de los Soldados q.e Murieron en la Defensa de esta P.za con motibo del Sitio que pusieron los Yngleses el dia 17 de Abril de 1797. A golpe de bala, o de rresultas de Herida recivida en Accion, o trabajos de dicho Sitio, con expresion de la Familia q.e les quedo y Certificaciones que Acreditan lo Expuesto.

| *Compañias* | *Nombre* | *Acciones en q.e murieron* |
|---|---|---|
| Maiagues | Vicente Olibera | Murió de resultas del ataque de Martín Peña, donde fue Herido con Casco de Metralla. |
| S.nGerman | Juan Baut.a Martin | Murió de bala de Cañon en la Linea entre S.n Geron.o y Puente. |
| Toa Baja | Feliciano Roman | Murió de un Casco de Bomba en el Trincheron del Charco de las Brujas. |

N.º 2.º

Regim.to de Milicias Disciplinadas de Ynfant.a de la Ysla de S.n Juan de Puerto Rico.

Relacion de los Soldados q.e Se allan p.a continuar del Servicio por resultas de haver sido Heridos en el Sitio de esta Plaza con expresion de la Causa y acreedores á Ynbalidos.

| *Compañias* | *Nombres* | *Causa de Ynutilidad* |
|---|---|---|
| Toa Baja | Andres Matheo | Herido en Una Pierna de Vala de Fusil de lo Q.e quedo estropeado. |

N.º 3.º

En el Sitio que pusieron los Yngleses á esta Plaza el dia 17 de Abril de 1797, murió en él al golpe de bala, el Paisano Juan Bruno de Rivera, hallandose empleado en los trabajos de dicho Sitio como lo acreditan las Certificaciones que acompaña.

| *Nombre* | *Partido* | *Servicio en que murio* |
|---|---|---|
| Juan Bruno de Rivera | Manatí | Ocurrió llevando Barriles vacios a San Geron.o de golpe de bala. |

# Appendix XXVII

*Escrito núm. 140, 9 de mayo de 1797, del gobernador y capitan general de Puerto Rico, brigadier D. Ramón de Castro á D. Miguel José de Azanza.*

*(Arch. Gen. Mil. Segovia: Ultramar; legajo 36, expediente 3.º)*

"El Gober.or de Puerto Rico recomienda á S.M. el merito de los Oficiales é Yndividuos que defendieron la Plaza de su mando del sitio y ataque de los enemigos, y propone sus respectivos premios .

N.º 140

Ex.mo Señor.

He prometido á estos fieles y leales Vasallos recomendar á S.M. el merito que han contraido en la defensa de esta Plaza del Sitio de los enemigos. Asi crei deben hacerlo en remuneracion de sus buenos servicios, y aliento para que no desmayen y los continuen en ocurrencias iguales sucesivas; y asi lo he anunciado á V.E. en Oficio de esta fecha con que acompaño el diario de las operaciones del enemigo y mias durante el sitio.

He reconocido en todos mucho zelo, y amor al R.l Servicio, y algunos particularmente se han distinguido. Para proceder en este asunto con el pulso debido he pedido informes á los Comandantes de los Puestos; y á ellos y á lo que he observado por mi mismo arreglaré la recomendación conforme al merito de cada uno.

Doy principio por el Yttm.mo S.or Obispo de esta Diocesis D.n Fr. Juan Bautista Zengotita, en atencion á su alta dignidad, quien con su Secretario el Presbitero D.n Juan Ant.º de Uribe exhortaba á

las Tropas á combatir valerosamente contra el enemigo. Proveyó de Capellanes á todos ellos y á los Hospitales de Sangre; hizo prestamos a las R.s Caxas de los caudales de Obras Pias y alguna cantidad de su peculio: franqueó el Convento de Monjas, y las casas de su dependencia para alojam.to de las tropas: aprontó sus Clerigos de Abito Talar, prima Tonsura y Menores Ordenes para tomar las Armas: ofreció generosamente su Palacio y quando le pertenecia para la defensa de la plaza: y ultimamente como buen Pastor alentaba á su Grey al sufrimiento y desempeño de su obligacion y como buen Vasallo encendido del amor á su Rey la persuadia á ellos.

Los Oficiales que particularmente se han distinguido en acciones de valor, serenidad y disposiciones constan en la Relacion N.º 1.

Los que generalmente se han reconocido zelosos para el R.l Servicio, y cumplidos sus deberes sin particular accion que los distinga están comprehendidos en la Relacion N.º 2 en la que se anotan los que han hecho algun servicio particular.

La falta de Oficiales en este R.l Cuerpo de Artilleria, Regm.to fixo y Milicias Disciplinadas de Ynfanteria y Caballeria me ha obligado á propuesta y solicitud de los Gefes respectivos á nombrar por Subtenientes de aquellos y estos á los Sargentos, Cadetes y Distinguidos contenidos en la Relacion N.º 3 desde el dia diez y ocho del mes prox.º pasado. En consequencia han hecho en lo sucesivo el servicio de tales dandose á reconocer en sus Cuerpos y Orden de la Plaza: por tanto, los considero dignos de que se les confiera el Grado de Subtenientes desde la fha. en que fueron nombrados por mi; pero sin que los del Regim.to fixo perjudiquen con su antiguedad á los Sargentos y Cadetes mas antiguos que se hallan en la Ysla de S.to Domingo con los Piquetes del mismo Cuerpo y me han sido ya propuestos, ó deban proponerse antes, pues que estos despues de tanto tiempo de separacion de sus Casas y buen servicio que han hecho alli, parece no deban posponerse quando aquellos no tienen accion particular que los distinga en este Sitio.

La Relacion N.º 4 contiene los Oficiales del Estado Mayor de Plaza y Edecanes nombrados p.ª distribuir mis ordenes durante el Sitio, los que estimo acreedores á las Gracias que se expresan á continuacion de cada uno.

Es comprehensiva la Relacion N.º 5 del Secretario interino de este Gobierno Yntendencia y Capit.ª Gral. y sus Dependencias bajo el mismo metodo que la anterior.

Designa la Relacion N.º 6 los Oficiales de la Compañia Urbana y agregados que he nombrado p.ª hacer el servicio durante el sitio, extendida en los mismos terminos que las precedentes.

Yncluie la N.º 7 al Contador de esta R.s Caxas con sus dependiendientes Escribano de R.l Hacienda y Sobrestante de ella Guarda Almacen provisional de Viveres.

Detalla la N.º 8 los Magistrados de esta Judicatura con los demás Yndividuos de su comprehension, y Administrados de Correos.

El Brigadier D.n Joaquin del Sasso Coronel del Regimiento Fixo de esta Plaza fue nombrado por mi, antes de que los Enemigos la situasen y bloqueasen, Comandante Gral. de los Partidos de la Costa para dirigir sus preparativos, y defensas de los insultos del Enemigo que con frecuencia experimentaban. Solicitó pasar á incorporarse en sus Vanderas luego que supo hallarse sitiada la Plaza; pero no combiene por esrar enfermo de gravedad. Parece por tanto que es acreedor á alguna R.l Gracia.

El Ten.te á Grra. Subdelegado de la Aguadilla, D.n Rafael Conty. Y Capitan que fué del Regimiento de Napoles, y actualmente retirado con sueldo de tal, mandó de mi orden el Cuerpo Volante de Punta Salinas; y aunque se presentó en los ultimos dias por no haberlo llamado antes juzgo que es acreedor al Grado de Ten.te Coronel pues que edemás ha trabajado en el Pueblo de su mando para preservarle de hostilidades.

Al valor y lealtad de estos Ciudadanos, y habitantes me parece corresponder algun Dictado que distinga esta Ciudad, é inmortalidad una gran gloriosa acción como la muy fiel Ciudad

de Puerto Rico, teniendo además en consideracion que con los auxilios de ellos se ha evaquado el sitio sin los gastos que correspondian. Tambien pudiera concedersele la libertad del R.[l] dro. de Alcavala de Ventas, Trueques, y Cambios por tiempo de diez años, cuyo alivio y remuneracion trasciende á los Yndividuos de esta Ysla, en general.

El Dean y Cabildo de esta S.[ta] Yglesia Catedral se ha prestado con sus Votos al S.[or] Dios de los Ex.[tos] y con las ofertas de sus temporalidades á la conservación y defensa de esta Plaza.

Los Prelados y Comunidades de los Conventos de S.[to] Domingo y S.[n] Fran.[co] se han ofrecido generosamente al servicio del Rey: han franqueado sus Claustros y Celdas para el Alojamiento de las Tropas; y han estado prontos para servir sus Ministerios en los Puestos y Hospitales.

Los Tenientes á Grra. que han entrado con sus compañias en esta Plaza, y se han apostado de mi orden en los Partidos inmediatos son dignos de que se les atienda con alguna Gracia que mas adelante imploraren de S.M. cuyos recursos dirigirá informados. Han asistido las Compañias á los trabajos de trinchera, y a quantos se han destinado; y por ultimo es acreedor á la mayor recomendacion el Cura del Partido del Pepino D.[n] Joseph Dolores del Toro, quien acompanó á sus feligreses hasta en los Puestos y Baterias á que fueron aplicados alentandolos con su presencia, y voces persuasivas.

He publicado Yndulto á los Desertores de las Tropas y Presidio de esta Plaza. En su virtud se han presentado algunos y se han incorporado en los destinos de su clase. A los Presidiarios q.[e] se han distinguido en alguna accion como los que hicieron salidas al Campo enemigo he concedido su libertad, y á los demás he prometido rebaxarles la mitad del tiempo prescripto en sus condenas; pero á los desertores me ha parecido que solo un tercio debe rebaxarseles. Lo que V.E. se dignare determinar sobre este punto eso mismo se cumplirá.

Por lo que toca al merito contraido en la defensa de la Bahia y sus Cañones por el Cap.[n] de Fragata D. Francisco de Castro, á cuya

direccion mandé estubiesen las fuerzas de Mar que he podido reunir en ella doy cuenta á S.M. por el Ministerio de Marina para que este valeroso instruido y activo Of icial, el Cap.ⁿ del Puerto Ten.ᵗᵉ de Fragata D.ⁿ Juan Hurtado, y dependientes sean remunerados.

La brevedad del tiempo á que me he reducido por no diferir esta noticia tan plausible me priva de hacer á V.E. presentes en esta ocasión mis pensamientos, apoyados principalmente en la experiencia que me ha suministrado el sitio para adelantar ó cubrir algunos puntos, y reforzar otros á fin de resistir por ellos los ataques del Enemigo; á los que por ahora quedo atendido en el modo posible. Mas adelante lo manifestaré á V.E. é imploraré otras Gracias que en mi concepto fueren atendibles, y que por dho. motivo hubieren caido en olvido.

Ntro. S.ᵒʳ gue. La Vida de V.E. m.ˢ a.ˢ como deseo.
Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797
Exc.ᵐᵒ S.ᵒʳ
Ramon de Castro
Ex.ᵐᵒ S.ᵒʳ D.ⁿ Miguel Joseph de Azanza.

Numero l º

Relacion de los Oficiales y demás Yndividuos que se han distinguido en acciones de valor, serenidad y disposicion durante el Sitio y considero acrehedores al premio que se expresa.

*Yngeniero Ordinario d.ⁿ Ygnacio Mascaró y Homar.*

Estubo comisionado para el proyecto y piano de la Bateria conveniente en la Aguadilla. Estaba encargado de la construccion de otra Bateria, y de poner Escollera en el paso de la Laguna al Caño de Martin Peña y sitio llamado el Seboruco de Barriga, que no pudo efectuar por haberle cargado los Enemigos el dia de su desembarco en esta Ysla y hallarse indefenso, habiendose visto en riesgo eminente de que le hubieran cortado la retirada, hecho prisionero ó muerto que seguramente hubiera sucedido si no hubiere concurrido á su auxilio con Lanchas Cañoneras el Capitan

de Fragata d.ⁿ Francisco de Paula Castro. Despues estubo con el Teniente Coronel Ayudante de Milicias d.ⁿ Teodomiro del Toro en el Castillo de S.ⁿ Geronimo desde donde paso á mandar la Bateria de la Cabeza del Puesto de S.ⁿ Antonio. Acreditó pericia en su facultad activa y amor al Servicio de la Comision que tubo para varias obras en esta Plaza; pero dió mayores pruebas de estas circunstancias agregando las de valor y acierto y serenidad en el Puesto de S.ⁿ Antonio que defendió gloriosamente de los Enemigos. Desde el instante que entró en él, proyectó y llevó á efecto con mi conocimiento y aprobacion, en quanto era posible y permitia la situacion, no solo los medios de defender su Bateria, sino de ofender al Enemigo que desde luego se esforzó á la destruccion de este Puesto. Fué incansable dia y noche en hacer fuegos á las Baterias contrarias, siendo el objeto de la mayor parte del fuego de estas: acudia personalmente no solo á dirigir sino á ayudar con sus manos á los Trabajadores empleados en el reparo en las continuas crecidas ruinas que le causaron tres contuciones.

El estado de demolicion en que ha quedado esta Bateria manifiesta el empeño del Sitiador en batirla, pero el valor actividad y constancia en este Oficial fueron tan constantes el primer dia como el ultimo de defenderla. Considero seria muy util su residencia en esta Plaza por el conocimiento especulativo y practica que le acompaña de los puntos interesantes á su defensa y obras de Fortificacion.

Le juzgo muy digno del Ascenso de Yngeniero en segundo, y de qualquiera otra gracia con que S.M. quiera premiar su merito relacionado.

*Teniente Coronel Ayudante de Milicias Disciplinadas d.ⁿ Teodomiro del Toro.*

Salió en el primer dia que se avistó la Esquadra Enemiga á resistir al desembarco en las Playas á que se dirigia situandose en parage oportuno en el que efectivamente rechazó con mucha vizarria á pesar del fuego contrario las quatro primeras Lanchas con tropas que se arrimaron á la Playa, matando é hiriendo mucha gente de ellas y obligandolas á retirarse con la poca que les quedó,

pero se vio precisado á una prudente y bien ordenada retirada con vista de la superioridad de Lanchas Armadas que se acercaron á la Playa, del vivo fuego de los Buques de Guerra acia su Puerto y de la debilidad de su partida reducida solamente á la defensa de cien hombres con fusileria, por no haber permitido la constitucion de la Plaza destinar otros mayores auxilios á aquel puesto. Pasó inmediatamente á mandar el Castillo de S.ⁿ Geronimo en donde continuó acreditando su valor serenidad y disposicion, ya resistiendo el mucho fuego de los contrarios y correspondiendole vivamente con el de todas las bocas de fuego de aquel Castillo ya incomodandole oportunamente en sus trabajos, ya atendiendo cuidadosamente en el reparo de los muchos descalabros que las Baterias Enemigas causaron en las suyas principalmente en las del Sur, y ha ocasionado mucho estrago en los Sitiadores con la buena direccion de sus fuegos.

Le considero acreedor al grado de Coronel con sueldo de Teniente Coronel agregado á este Regimiento Fixo, segun solicita, por el mérito contrario en esta ocasion.

*Sargento lº de Milicias Disciplinadas de esta Ysla Francisco Diaz.*

Salió con setenta hombres á atacar al Enemigo por el costado de su trinchera, y lo hizo con tanto acierto y valor que logró desalojar los trabajadores y tropa de auxilio que habia en aquel sitio. Les acometió primero con su fusileria sin embargo de la resistencia del Enemigo, y luego con sable en mano asaltó toda la partida la trinchera matando é hiriendo quantos encontraban y quedando solo libres de su rigor los que precipitadamente huyeron ó se entregaron Prisioneros. Se quedó dueño de la Bateria, la reconoció muy bien, y no clavó su Artilleria por falta de proporciones. Sintió el movimiento que su accion causó en el Exercito contrario; y recelando que le cargase algun trozo grueso de Enemigo dispuso con arreglo á la instruccion que tenia, su retirada con los trece prisioneros y un oficial despues de haber hecho un destrozo considerable y sin que resultase en su Partida mas que un muerto y tres heridos. Fui testigo de esta accion con satisfaccion y embidia desde el Castillo de S.ⁿ Geronimo con que me hallaba, y dispuse inmediatamente sostener su retirada con

todos los fuegos de la Linea. Este Sargento es uno de los nombrados para hacer servicio de Oficial comprehendido en su respectivo lugar y relacion N.º 3. Le considero acrehedor á la gracia que en ella se digne y á q.e S.M. tubiera á bien concederle por accion tan distinguida.

Puerto Rico 7 de Noviembre de 1797.
Ramon de Castro.

*Num. 2.º*

Relacion de los Oficiales que se han reconocido zelosos por el R.l Servicio y han cumplído sus deberes durante el Sitio, considerandolos p.r esto acreedores á los grados q.e expresan.

*R.l Cuerpo de Artilleria.*

Comand.te el Teniente Cor.l del Cuerpo, Coron.l graduado D.n Eleuterio de Murga. Fué nombrado Comandante del Castillo del Morro; desempeñó con el mayor zelo y honor las obligaciones de uno y otro encargo: ha sido muy constante en el cumplimiento de ellos, atendiendo dia y noche á el. Considero q.e es muy acreedor al grado de Brigadier.

*Para el grado de Ten.e Coronel.*
Capitan D.n Josef de Ponce. Fué com.te de la Bater.a del Este.
*Para grados de Teniente.*
Subtenientes D. Andres de Vizcarrondo.
D. Luis Mendinueta.

Milicias agregadas al mismo R' Cuerpo.
Para grados de Capitan de Exto.
Capitanes D. Josef Romero. Fué Com.te de varios Baluartes.
D. Josef Rafael Pizarro. Fue Com.te de varios Baluartes.

*Para grado de Teniente de Exto.*
Teniente D. Pedro Santana.

*Para grado de Subteniente de Exto.*
Subtenientes D. Bernardo Zeno.
D. Manuel Ayesa

*Cuerpo de Ingenieros.*

Yngeniero en Xefe, Comand.te de R.l Obras de Fortificac.on D. Felipe Ramirez. Ha sido Comandante del Castillo de S.n Cristoval. Son muy recomendables su zelo y amor al R.l Servicio, su valor, serenidad y disposición: atendió con esmero á uno y otro encargo é hizo igualmente el Servicio de Xefe de linea alternando con otros. Es muy, acreedor al grado de Brigadier.

*Para el grado de Ten.e Coronel.*
Yngeniero ordinario D. Juan Pardiñas

*Regimiento de Ynfanteria Fixo.*
*Para grados de Coronel.*
Sarg.to mayor Ten.e Coronel D. Francisco de Torres. Fué Com.te de las obras exteriores.
Capitan, Ten.e Coron.l D. Ysidoro Linares. Fué Com.te del campo y part.s volant.s

*Para grados de Teniente Coron.l*
*Capitanes D. Domingo Aragón.*
D. Andres Ximenez.
D. Federico Gancen de S. Just. Comandante de la Bateria de San Francisco de Paula.
D. Nicolás Vizcarrondo.

*Para grados de Capitan.*
Tenientes De Granaderos D. Cayetano Valero.
De Fusileros D. Mathias del Castillo

*Para grados de Tenientes.*
Subten.s De Fusileros D. Jph. Maria Salazár.
D. Jph. de la Espada.

De Granad.s D. Luis de Lara.

De Fusileros D. Juan Davila

D. Rodrigo Ledesma.

D. Bartolome Lizon.

D. Sebastian de Arroyo.

D. Joaquin Goyena.

*Milicias Disciplin.s de Ynfant.a*

Comandante, Coronel graduado D. Luis Labusierre. Hizo el Servicio de Xefe de la Linea del Trincheron, manifestando su zero, valor y serenidad. Es acreedor al grado de Brigadier.

*Para grado de Coronel.*

Ayud.te el Ten.e Cor.l graduado D. Francisco Conde.

*Para grados de Teniente Cor.l.*

Ayud.te el Cap.n de Exto. D. Lorenzo Zarate.

Capitanes, los de Exto. D. Simon Valencia.

D. Josef Martinez. Fue Com.te del Cañuelo.

*Para grados de Cap.n de Exto.*

Capitanes D. Estevan Velazquez.

D. Josef Arnau.

D. Bernardo Zeno.

D. Yicente Llopis.

D. Josef Quiñones. Recibió una contus.on y dos her.

D. Miguel Ramirez.
D. Miguel de S.n Antonio.
D. Antonio Garcia.
D. Fran.co Sanchez.
D. Josef Mathias.

Teniente D. Miguel Canales. Por particular servicio.

*Para grados de Ten.s de Exto.*

Tenientes D. Juan Vazquez.
D. Manuel Ribera.
D. Pedro Alama.
D. Marcos Rotuli.
D. Juan Bullosa.
D. Sebastian Canales.
D. Faustino del Toro.
D. Francisco Bruno.
D. Juan Pulido.
D. Martín Perdomo.
D. Anacleto Ayabarrena.
D. Francisco Ximenez.
D. Ygnacio Padilla.

Subtenientes D. Francisco Dominguez. Por su particular servicio.
D. Diego Urrutia.

Otro el de Exto. D. Vicente Andino.

Para grados de Subten.e de Exto.

Subtenientes D. Santiago Cordova.
D. Juan Escudero.
D. Josef Quiñones.
D. Tomas Delgado.
D. Valentin Fernande:
D. Agustin Roman.
D. Manuel Rodriguez
D. Josef Umpierres.
D. Fran.co Rodriguez
D. Josef Gúrdanengo.
D. Francisco Fernandez.

*Para alguna medalla ó distintivo.*

Comp.ˢ de Moren.ⁿ Cap.ⁿ D. Felix Tanco.
Ten.ᵉ D. Juan de Dios Roman.
Sub.ᵉ D. Joaquin Belen.

Milicias Disciplinadas de Caball.ª

*Para grados de Ten.ᵉ Coronel.*

Cap.ⁿ de Exercito D. Casimiro Davila

*Para grados de Capitan de Exto.*

Capitanes D. Antonio Fornés.
D. Fernando Correa.
D. Manuel Malagon.

*Para grados de Ten.ⁿ de Exto.*

Tenientes D. Josef Cebollero.
D. Juan de Quiñones.
D. Antonio Estevan.
D. Martin Marrero.
D. Felix Davila.

*Para grados de Subt.ᵉ, de Exto.*

Subtenientes D. Luis de Solas.
D. Miguel Balceiro.
D. Josef Rodriguez.

*Maestranza del R.ˡ Cuerpo de Art.ª*

Maestro m.ᵒʳ herrer.ˢ el Sargento de obrer.ˢ Josef Mogas.
Maestro m.ᵒʳ de Carpinteros, Facundo Matanza.
Otro 2.° Benito Reboredo.
Maestro Armero, Miguel Bascaran.

*Parque*

Guarda Almacen, D. Juan Marron.
Ayudante de Guarda Almacen, D. Josef Saenz.
Sobrestante m.ᵒʳ Guarda Parque, D. Eusevio Urquizu
Peon de confianza, Andres Benitez.

*Maestranza de Fortificacion.*

Maestros Mayores, D. Juan Santaella.
Arquitecto, D. Luis Huertas.
Aparejatlores, Fernando Ximenez.
Juan Antonio Fernandez.
Fran.co Gonzalez Borbolla.
Domingo Nartallo

Maestro mayor de Carpinteria, Josef Gonzalez.
Sobrestante mayor, D. Pedro Bustos.
Otro 2.°. D. Luis Porcell.
Sobrestante m°r del Presidió, D. Bartolome Zamorano.

Tanto estos como los Albañiles, Canteros, Carpinteros, Herreros Armeros y Capataces del Presidió han desempeñado su obligacion á satisfacion de sus Xefes y son dignos de que se les atienda.

*Nota.*

El Sargento l.° del Regimiento fixo de esta Plaza Laureano Vega ha sido recomendado particularmente por el Teniente Cor.l Ayudante de las Milicias Disciplinadas D. Teodomiro del Toro con quienes asis tió en su partida destinada á rechazar el desembarco de los enemigos desempeñaron su obligacion con valor, serenidad y constancia, por cuyo servicio le considero á q.e S.M. se digne concederle la gracia que fuera de su R.l Agrado.

*Otra.*

El Sargento 2.° del mismo Cuerpo Francisco Nardini á sido igualmente recomendado por el Yngeniero Ordinario D. Ygnacio Mascaró en vista de su servicio, durante el sitio, del Puente de S.n Antonio acreditando valor y buena disposicion; por cuyo merito le estima acreedor á la gracia que fuera del R.l Agrado.

*Otra.*

Que en esta relacion van compreendidos algunos Oficiales propuestos para el grado inmediato á el que en el dia tienen, quienes hubieran pasado ya á aquel por ascenso natural en sus Cuerpos sin el merito del Sitio, si la falta de Correos no hubiera imposibilitado remitir las respectivas propuestas. Con este motivo me hare presentada D.ⁿ Luis de Lara, uno de los de aquella clase, Subt.ᵉ de Granaderos del Regimiento fixo, que el atraso involuntario de su propuesta á Ten.ᵉ de Fusileros, hecha antes del Sitio, le priva del grado que por el merito de este, si era acreedor, conseguiria, alcanzando ahora solamente el que le hubiera correspondido por su ascenso natural, suplicandome lo haga presente á S.M. como lo executo, para la resolucion que fué de su R.ˡ Agrado.

Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797.
Ramon de Castro.

*Num. 3.º*

Relacion de los Sargentos, Cadetes y Distinguidos que he nombrado para hacer el servicio de Subtenientes en el Sitio de esta Plaza á cuyo efecto se dieron á reconocer por tales en sus respectivos Cuerpos en 18 de Abril de 1797.

*R.ˡ Cuerpo de Artrll.a*

Sargento de la Comp.ª Veterana Josef Canals.
Otro de la misma, Pedro Guerrero.
Soldados distinguid.ˢ de ella D.ⁿ Antonio Saabedra.
D.ⁿ Gabriel Castañon.

Cadetes de las Compañias de Milicias agreg.ˢ á este R.ˡ Cuerpo
D.ⁿ Francisco Arroyo.
D.ⁿ Josenh Urquizu.

*Regimiento de Ynfant.ª Fixo.*

Sargentos 1.º D. Antonio Garcia.
D. Miguel Solsona.
D. Josef Lacomba.
D. Juan Ferreri.
D. Luis Gineti.

Cadetes D. Nicolas Gonzalez.
D. Josef dArnau.
D. Josef Aragon.
D. Josef Manuel Aguilar.
D. Fran.co Pacheco.
D. Ventura Ayesa.
D. Julian Padilla.

*Milicias Disciplin.s de Ynfant.ª*

Sargentos 1.º D. Felipe Cleimpau. Servicio particular.
D. Vicente Binegra
D. Francisco Diaz. Accion distinguida.

Cadetes D. Manuel Valencia
D. Pedro de Silva.
D. Joaquin Delgado
D. Rafael Ramirez

*Milicias Disciplinadas de Caball.ª*

Sargentos Fran.co Biana.

Cadetes D. Manuel Davila.
D. Pedro Guerra.
D. Escolastico Quiñones

Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797.
Ramon de Castro.

*Num. 4.º*

Relacion que comprende á los Oficiales de Estado mayor de la Plaza y Edecanes que he nombrado para distribuir mis ordenes durante el Sitio los que estimo acreedores á las gracias que se expresan á continuacion de cada uno.

*Plana Mayor.*

Teniente de Rey, Brigadier, D.n Benito Perez.

Há hecho el servicio de Xefe de Linea: Há reconocido frecuentemente dia y noche todos los Puestos dentro y fuera de la Plaza: há desempeñado mis

Ordenes con mucha eficacia y actividad; y há manifestado valor, zelo serenidad y amor al servicio del Rey. Es acreedor á su ascenso de Mariscal de Campo.

Sargento mayor. El Coronel D. Estevan Desnaux: Hizo sus servicios de Comandante de las Baterias de la Linea del Norte entre el Castillo del Morro y S.n Cristoval. Es acreedor al grado de Brigadier.

Ayudante l.o. El Capitan de Exercito D. Manuel Bacener. Es acreedor al grado de Teniente Coronel.

Otro segundo D.n Emigdio Andino Subten.te de Exercito. Es acreedor al grado de Teniente.

Otro Ynterino. Ten.e de Exto. con sueldo de Subten.e de Exto. agregado á las Milicias Disciplinadas de Ynfanteria D.n Gabriel Rodrigo. Es acreedor al grado de Capitan.

Ayud.te del Castillo del Morro. El Teniente de Exercito D. Manuel de Arroyo. Es acreedor al grado de Capitan.

Agregado al Estado m.or, Capitan de Exercito, D. Alberto Bogouslousky. Com.te de la Compañia Urbana de Catalanes. Es acreedor ál grado de Teniente Coronel.

Edecanes.

*Para grados de Ten.c Coronel.*

Capitan del Regim.to Fixo D.n Josef de Vega.

Ayudante del mismo Regimiento. Capitan segundo D.n Miguel Palatino.

Capitan de Exto. retirado de la Caball.a de S.to Domingo D.n Jose Zeballos.

Capitan de Milicias Disciplinadas de Ynfanteria D.n Pedro de 1a Torre.

*Para grados de Capitan de Exto.*
Ten.e de Exto. retirado D.n Juan de Eliza.

*Para grados de Ten.e de Exto. ó el de Cap.n si ya es Ten.e mdo.*
Subteniente del Batallon Veterano de Campeche D.n Baltasar Gon zalei. Edecan del Teniente de Rey.

*Para grado de Teniente de Exto.*
Ten.e de Milicias Discip.s de Ynfant.a D. Josef de Toro.

*Para grados de subten.te de Exto.*
Subt.e de las mismas Milic.s D. Josef Ramirez.

*Oficial suelto Para el grado de Coronel.*
El Ten.e Coron.l graduado del Regimen de Valencia D. Josef Vizcarrondo. Recibió una contusion.

Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797.
Ramón de Castro

*Núm. 5*

Relacion comprehensiva del Secretario interino de este Gobierno Yntendencia y Capitania Gen.l y sus Dependientes baxo el mismo metodo que la anterior.

Secretario interino.

D.n Alonso de Cangas Llanos, se cree que se le haya conferido por S.M. la propiedad en el mes pasado de Septiembre y que no haya llegado su despacho por falta de Correo. Es recomendable el merito que contraxo en esta Secretaria que ha desempeñado interinamente desde el Marzo de 1793, y particularmente durante la Guerra y el Sitio: en este tiempo ha trabajado dia y noche con inteligencia manifestando mucho zelo y amor al R.l Servicio qual

conviene á su calidad distinguida. Es acreedor por tanto á que S.M. le condecore con el titulo de Comisario de Guerra honorario.

Oficial interino.

D.ⁿ Ysidro Gonzalez, meritorio desde Mayo de 1793, con el motivo del Sitio le he nombrado Oficial con el sueldo de quatrocientos pesos anuales que es su dotacion, tiene inteligencia y ha asistido dia y noche con el secretario. Es acreedor aquel en caso de que sea cierta la propiedad de este á que se apruebe su nombramiento, y con este motivo á que se le tenga presente para el aumento de su sueldo por ser limitado el de su dotacion.

Meritorio.

D.ⁿ Miguel Suarez. Se cree relevado del destierro q.ᵉ se le impuso en esta Plaza. Ha trabajado dia y noche con aplicacion. Conviene la creacion de un Segundo Oficial, para atender á las vastas atenciones de esta Secretaria en la que verdaderamente se carece de Operarios. Si se aprobare su creacion podra conferirsele este empleo con la dotacion de trescientos pesos anuales; á que es acreedor por el servicio que ha hecho en esta Guerra y mas durante el Sitio.

Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797.
Ramon de Castro.

*Núm. 6.º*

Relacion que designa los Oficiales de la Compañia Urbana que he nombrado durante el Sitio, y que son acrehedores á la gracia del R.ˡ Despacho de sus Respectibos Empleos con goze del fuego de Guerra y uso de Uniforme.

Com.ᵗᵉ Cap.ⁿ l.ʳᵒ D.ⁿ Felis de la Cruz.

Ha sido muy eficaz en el alistamiento de los Urbanos desde el instante que puse á su cargo la formacion de esta Comp.ª. Hiso con ella el servicio á q.ᵉ se le destino durante el Sitio: Ha sido muy exacto en la Solicitud y disposicion de Casas para quarteles de la

Tropa y es uno de los Sugetos Visibles en esta Ciudad. En cuyo Cavildo ha servido empleos honorificos.

Cap.ⁿ 2.º D. Juan Diaz de Barrios.
Ten.ᵉ D.ʳ D.ⁿ Josef Sanchez Bustamante
Sub.ᵗᵉD. Man.ˡ Sandoval.

Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797
Ramon de Castro

*Num. 7 º*

Relacion q.ᵉ incluye al Contador y sus Dependientes con el Ess.ⁿº de R.ˡ Hacienda y Sobrestante de ellas Guarda Almacen provicional de Viveres.

*Contador.*

D.ⁿ Man.ˡ de los Reyes. Estubo al Cuidado de los Almacenes de Viveres de reponer algunos de la produccion de esta Ysla, y en fin a cumplir las prevenciones que le hacia correspondiente á su recoleccion y otras propias de su Ministerio.

Oficial Mayor.

D. Josef Bacener. Estubo á sus ordenes empleado con el mismo objeto.

*Oficial 2.º*

D.ⁿ Vicente Pacheco. Estubo ocupado primeram.ᵗᵉ en llevar las listas de las Companias Urvanas de los Partidos, y atender á su Provision de raciones para q.ᵉ nada les faltare, y ultimam.ᵗᵉ escribiendo en la Sria. para atender al Cumulo de asuntos q.ᵉ ocurrian á su despacho.

*Escribiente l.º*

D.ⁿ Man.ˡ Martinez Valdes. Estubo en uno de los Almacenes de Viveres para arreglar las raciones y Subministrar las que se pedian bajo las formalidades debidas.

*Escribiente 2.º*

D.ⁿ Jose Nicolas Cesteros. Estubo escribiendo en la Secretaria durante el Sitio y aun despues á donde asistió incesantem.ᵗᵉ cumpliendo quanto se le encargava y prevenia.

Ess.ʳᵒ de R.ˡ Hacienda.

D. Juan Jose Cesteros. Manifesto su mucho amor y zelo por el mejor servicio del Rey ofreciendoseme á el con sus tres hijos y tres esclavos que se ocuparon respectivamente en el Servicio, y efectivam.ᵗᵉ se le ocupo en varias ocasiones en las q.ᵉ cumplio mis ordenes con exactitud, y ultimam.ᵗᵉ fué tambien aplicado al despacho de la Sria.

Sobrestante de R.ˡ Hacienda, Guarda Almacen provicion.ˡ de Viveres.

D.ⁿ Jose Carrion desempeño este cargo con actividad, y buena disposicion asistiendo durante el Sitio á los Almacenes de Viveres dia y noche con poco descanso y poca fatiga.

*Hosp.ˡ Real.*

El Medico y Cirujano D.ⁿ Tomas Prieto y D.ⁿ Fran.ᶜᵒ Oller, los Boticarios D. José Ayora y D. Ramon Hernaiz, y sus dependientes. El mayordomo Matias Escute Sarg.ᵗᵒde Minadores, y el Comisario de Entrada D. Man.ˡ Hernaiz cumplieron con esmero y puntualidad los deveres de sus Empleos; de modo que por ellos, y por quanto mas se necesitaba en el estubo completamente asistido y servido en beneficio de los Eridos y Enfermos.

Al mismo Hosp.ˡ en calidad de ayudantes primero D. Jose Dorado, D. Juan Castella. Cirujanos del Rexim.ᵗᵒ Fixo D.ʳ D.ⁿ José David, Doctor Luis Rayler, D.ʳ Guillermo Lasserre, D.ʳ Pedro Labasse. Hilario Tibaut y de 2.º D.ⁿ Pedro Robert, D.ⁿ Antonio Guzman, Antonio Larrosa, Dionisio Ribera, los quales con los practicantes de Numero y meritorios se han esmerado en el Cumplimiento de su obligacion.

Todos los individuos constantes de está Relacion son acrehedores á q.e S.M. los atienda por su buen servicio y exacto desempeño de sus obligaciones respectivas y comproporcion á los q.e de cada uno de ellos se ha referido.

Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797.
Ramon de Castro.

*Núm. 8.º*.

Relacion q.e detalla los Magistrados de esta Judicatura con los demás Yndividuos de su comprehension y Administrador de Correos Auditor de Guerra, y Oydor, honorario de la R.l Aud.a de S.to Dom.º.

D.n Fran.co Diaz Ynguanzo: ha estado mui solicito y atento á las indagaciones y pesquisas de las personas extrangeras sospechosas de intelig.a con el Exercito Enemigo, travajando dia y noche en este asunto, y ocupandose en rondar la Ciudad para el sosiego y tranquilidad de sus havitantes, y en hacer demoler los Buhios de ella para preservarla del incendio que pudieran ocasionar las Bombas y Granadas R.s ó qualquiera otro acaso. Diariamente se me ha presentado para que le emplease y efectivam.te ha sido mui zeloso y puntual en quanto he puesto de su Cargo. Es acrehedor á que se le atienda con la gracia que fuere del Soverano agrado.

Alcalde Ordin.º de primera eleccion.

D.r D.n Jose Ygnacio Valdeyuli ha cumplido bien con quanto se le ha cometido.

*Ydem 2.º*

D.n Antonio de Cordova Rexidor perpetuo y Capitan graduado de Milicias, ha cumplido exactam.te con el alistamiento de los Negros libres de esta Ciudad aptos para el servicio de las Armas, y hen estado á su direccion y cargo los Esclabos presentados por sus Amos par el propio Fin. Ultimam.te ha desempeñado otras Comisiones de que le he encargado durante el Sitio y antes de el,

pues que en el mes de Diciembre del año proximo pasado se traslado de mi orden a los Partidos de la Costa del Sur arrecojer para el acopio que se hizo de ellos en los Almacenes de Viveres de la Plaza para su provision en el Caso de ser sitiada, y por tanto le considero acrehedor al grado de Teniente Coron.[l] de Milicias que anteriormente ha solicitado de la piedad de S.M. cuya instancia, dirigi informada.

Rexidor.

D. Tomas Pizarro: estubo mui puntual al cumplimiento de su obligacion y de cuanto he puesto á su cargo.

*Ydem.*

D. Jose Davila: estubo comisionado en la recoleccion de Arroces por la parte del Norte de esta Ysla del mismo modo que Cordova por el del Sur: y Ultimam.te alistó y recojio los Negros Esclabos que presentaron para el servicio sus amos vecinos y hacendados en dha. para el propio Fn. Ultimam.te ha desempeñado otras Comisiones de quantas mas le he encargado.

*Ydem.*

D. Domingo Davila ha ofrecido generosam.te sus bienes y ganado para la provision de esta Plaza y ha cumplido con todo en lo q.e le he ordenado.

*Procurador Gral.*

D. Fran.co de Andino estubo mandando una Partida de Paisano Vecinos del territorio de Loissa que se mantubieron en los confines del campo Enemigo para impedir los robos é insultos de el y alguna vez se internaron hasta sus mismas lineas de que resultó haver introducido en esta Plaza varios Prisioneros de Guerra y Desertores del Ex.to contrario.

El Licenciado D.n Juan Mauricio Ramos de Gracia q.e fué asesor Gral. de este Gob.no Ynt.e y Cap.n Gral. Se me presentó ofreciendose al servicio del Rey en quanto se le mandare y efectivamente ha Cumplido los encargos q.e le he conferido y asistio con el Auditor de Guerra auxiliandole en las Patruyas, y demás negocios puestos

á su Cargo. Es acrehedor á la gracia que fuere del Soberano agrado de Su Majestad.

*Adm.or de Correos.*

D.n Josef Antonio de Urdapilleta. Es mui zeloso por el Servicio del Rey y se ha presentado con prontitud á quanto le he mandado é igualm.te ha aprontado los Buques Correos quando han sido necesarios.

Todos los Yndividuos relacionados son acrehedores á las gracias propuestas y que S.M. se dignare dispensarles.

Puerto Rico 9 de Mayo de 1797.
Ramon de Castro.»

# Appendix XXVIII

## XIX

## CARTA DEL SR. OBISPO ZENGOTITA AL GOBERNADOR CASTRO.

Sr. Gobr. y Capn. Gral.—Dirijo á V.S. el Plan de distribucion de los Eccos. destinados al servicio del Rey y defensa de la P'laza, para su gobierno e inteligencia, y para que sepa V.S. los puestos que ocupan en los casos en que V.S. tubiese necesidad de valerse de alguno de ellos.—Dios guarde á V.S ms. as.-Fr. Juan Bta., Obispo de Puerto Rico.

Los Eccos. destinados al servicio del Rey y de la Patria en el presente sitio deberan alternar de cuatro en cuatro horas, destinadas para el descanso Todos los sacerdotes tienen licencia de confesar mientras dure el sitio, y la presente necesidad; y tienen mis facultades. El servicio debe empezar á las doce del día mañana 19 y lo podrán hacer vestidos de paisanos, con solo el cuello ó sotagola y los Religiosos como pudieren. El objeto de su servicio se reducirá á animar la tropa, con las correspondientes consideraciones de Religion, de Honor y Fidelidad al Soberano; absolver y auxiliar á los moribundos y ayudar á retirar á los heridos: en una palabra, dar todos los socorros y auxilios que pidan las necesidades y los casos.

CASTILLO DE SAN CRISTOBAL

Obras avanzadas del Abanico y Baluarte de la Providencia.

Jefe Don. D. Pedro Martinez.

D. Francisco Meseadillo.

ESPIGON DE SAN FRANCISCO DE PAULA Y BALUARTES INMEDIATOS.

Gefe Dor. D. Lorenzo Cestero.
D. Pedro Artaud.

PUERTA DE SANTIAGO Y FORTIFICACIONES ADHERENTES.

Gefe Dor. D. José Ma. Ruiz.
Padre Cura Teniente que no esté de semana.

CASTILLO DEL MORRO CON TODOS SUS BALUARTES Y BATERIAS

Gefe R.P. Prior de Bayamo Fr. Manuel Caballero.
R.P. Predicador Fr. José Martinez.

CASTILLO DE SAN GERONIMO Y SAN ANTONIO.

Gefe Sr. Francisco Victoria.
Fr. Alejo Barco.

CASTILLO DEL CAÑUELO

Padre Fr. Lorenzo Romano.
Padre Fr. Felix Salvador.

FUERTE DE LA PERLA.

Fr. Domingo Reyes.
Fr. Rudernido Díaz.

CAMPO VOLANTE A LAS ORDENES DEL SR. LICENCIADO DON NICOLAS ANDRADA.

Gefe de dicho campo Sr. D. Nicolas Andrada.
El Padre Comisario Fr. Francisco Javier Caparrós.

Todos estos deberán emplearse en los lugares, sitios ó destinos que les diese el dicho Sr. D. Nicolas Andrada, quien arreglará las horas de servicio y de descanso, segun lo exijan las circunstancias.

HOSPITALES.—El del Rey,. comandante general: El Sr. Dean Dor. D. Nicolas Quiñones.

El Sr. Canónigo D. Esteban Gonzalez.

El Sr. Canónigo D. Miguel. Rodriguez Feliciano.

El de la Concepcion Gefe: El Sr. Dor. D. Sebastian Conde.

El Padre Fr. Buenaventura Ortega.

Para los nuevos Hospitales de Sangre destinarán los necesarios del Campo de Socorro ó volante, y de otros puntos en donde no haya necesidad.

El Sr. Obispo, con sn confesor al lado, corre y correra todos los puntos por mañana y tarde y aun por la noche animando á toda la gente.—Puerto Rico 18 de Abril de 1798. Fr. Juan Bta.. Obispo de Puerto Rico.

Este plan se leyó en el Púlpito de la Catedral el 19 á las ocho de la mañana, á presencia de todo el Estado Eclesiástico, Secular y Regular, habiendo hecho un exorto fervoroso antes á todo el auditorio el Sr. Obispo.

Mañana 19 de Abril se erigirán tres Campos Santos, con las ceremonias y formalidades que previene el Ritual Romano, para enterrar á los que mueran en el presente sitio en defense de la Plaza.

1er. CAMPOSANTO.—Detrás del almacen viejo de San Gerónimo, para los que mueran en dicho Castillo; en el de San Antonio, en las lanchas cañoneras, Baterias Flotantes, y en los Campamentos y trincheras de aquella parte.

2o. CAMPOSANTO: En la Puntilla, de acuerdo con Don Francisco de Paula Castro, para los que mueran en el nuevo espigon de San Francisco de Paula, y en las funciones de la Marina; esto es, de las Lanchas, Baterías flotantes, Piraguas de desembarco, Canoas, &a.

3r. CAMPOSANTO: Detrás del Hospital del Rey, para los que mueran en el; en el de Concepcion, en los nuevos hospitales de Sangre, y en las fortificaciones de dentro de la Plaza, Castillo, Baluartes, Baterias, &a.

En todos estos Campos Santos se ha de tomar una razon exacta de todos los que se entierren en ellos con la nota de su edad, estado y naturaleza, segun se pudiese.

Desde mañana 19 de Abril no se debenl tocar á las agonías como se acostumbra, ni permitir que se toque campana alguna, ni por los muertos ni para los entierros de la Ciudad ni de la Plaza; y todos se deberán hacer de noche, sin convites ni aparato. Tampoco se podrá administrar el Santo Viatico á enfermo alguno, desde que empiecen á caer en la Plaza las granadas reales y balas incendiarias por no esponer á mucha gente á ser heridas y á tan Augusto Sacramento.

En los casos extraordinarios que ocurran, mientras dure el sitio, se reunirá al Sor. Obispo, que se mantendrá en la Plaza, hasta derramar la última gota de sangre.

Su Sria. Iltma. determinará y avivará la hora en que se han de servir las Santas Hostias consagradas en los Tabernáculos de todos los templos, y lo demás que se deberá hacer en estos casos.—Puerto Rico 18 de Abril de 1798.—l~r. Jua'~ Bta., Obispo de Puerto Rico.

## XXII

## CARTA DEL SR. OBISPO ZENGOTITA AL REY.

Señor:—He tenido la particular satisfaccion de ver triunfar las armas de S.M. de un modo el mas brillante y heróico en la defensa de esta importantísima Plaza y siendo yo tan interesado en estas glorias y triunfos, por tener la dicha de ser un vasallo distinguido de V.M. y un Prelado Ecco. honrado por su dignacion y bondad, he creido ser de mi obligacion esencial manifestar a V.M. esta mi gran conplasencia con la más afectuosa enhorabuena. —Ni puedo pasar en silencio el imponderable servicio que en estas críticas circunstancias han hecho a V.M. estos fieles y dignos vasallos, que logran la fortuna de vivir bajo su recta proteccion y poderosa sombra; y en su virtud ha de permitir V.M. que yo interceda por ellos, rogando (como lo ejecuto) con el mayor rendimiento que les con-

ceda todas aquellas gracias conciliables con los intereses de la Corona, fraternal que caracteriza el magnánimo corazón de V.M.C. —Soy, Sor. su padre, soy su Prelado y soy su Obispo y estos sagrados títulos me dan aliento a interceder por ellos representando al mismo tiempo a los pies del Trono de V.M., que esta Isla, la más fértil, la más abundante y la más amena, que posee S.M. en toda la América, es sin duda alguna digna de que V.M. la mire con particular predileccion y preferencia, alargando su mano poderosa hacia ella, para su conservacion, para su fomento en la Agricultura y Comercio, y para preservarla del inminente peligro en que se ha visto de caer en poder del enemigo; pues ella es, en mi inteligencia, el baluarte o antemural de toda esta vuestra América. Como yo no soy militar de profesion, me abstengo de hablar a V.M. de los esfuerzos heróicos, que han hecho este vuestro Gobernador y toda esta valerosa guarnicion para conservar a V.M. esta importantísima Plaza; pero segun yo he observado en todas las otras situaciones en que nos hemos visto, creo han dado pruebas, nada equívocas, de que al mismo tiempo, que están llenos de honor, valor y fidelidad a V.M. poseen en todas sus partes el Arte de la Guerra, y que son dignos de los mayores elogios y premios. — Ayer se cantó un Tedeum en accion de gracias, y se celebró una misa solemne con el Santísimo Sacramento descubierto, con asistencia del General y del Ejercito, con una triple salva de toda la fusileria y artilleria. El Señor conserve la importante vida de V.M. para muchos años, para gloria de la Nacion como se lo ruega postrado a sus reales plantas este su humilde y fiel vasallo.—Sr. Fr. Juan Bta., Obispo de Puerto Rico.—Puerto Rico 4 de Mayo de 1797.

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