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APALACHEE DURING THE BRITISH OCCUPATION

A description contained in a series of four reports
by Lieut. Pittman, R. E.

(According to Prof. F. H. Hodder, in the introduction to his reprint of Pittman's work entitled "The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi," there are but few available biographical data pertaining to Pittman. Hodder there presents such information as he was able to collect. Apparently Pittman must have accompanied the first British detachment occupying Florida, he states that he "resided four years as an engineer in those parts" and it is known that he left towards the close of 1768. Apparently during 1767 he was occupied in making surveys in different parts of West Florida, as records survive indicating his departure from Pensacola for Apalachee on June 16, 1767.

However the four reports here considered, submitted by Lieut. Pittman to General Haldimand bear no date. They are preserved among the Haldimand papers in the Public Archives of Canada, where they are calendared as Series B (Haldimand) Vol. 17, pp. 313-325. They are respectively numbered 313, 316, 319 and 322.)

MARK F. BOYD

Tallahassee

(I) *A description of the Fort at Apalachy and the Lookout Tower.*

THE FORT of Apalachy is in the Lat. of 30d 10m North and about 237 miles E. of Pensacola and 113 miles W. of Saint Augustine, is situated on a small point of land formed by the confluence of two small rivers, which run from N. E. and N. W. they mix their waters at this point and become one channel, of about 900 feet broad running S. 9 miles, and then empties itself into the Bay of Mexico. The Navigation of this channel for upwards of 4 miles is so intricate owing to a vast number of oyster banks, which form a labyrinth that it would require at least a month's examination before one could attempt to give any just account of it, however, vessels that

draw 7 feet water may go safely to the wharf at the Fort.

The Fort was originally designed for at least 200 men, but the surrender of it and the adjacent country to the English in 1763 prevented the Spaniards from completing their design, it at present consists of one Bastion which stands on the side of the N. W. River and part of a Curtain built of stone. The Bastion contains the Barracks and a store, which are made of boards, and covered with Bark, they appear to me at first only to have been intended as temporary lodgings for the Troops and are consequently very improper receptacles at present, not being even shelter from the weather, they are capable of lodging about 60 men. The commanding officer's house, kitchen, prison and Powder magazine are without the gorge of the Bastion, and are enclosed by a stone wall of an irregular form, and part of the curtain and the Ramparts as may be seen. On the North face the Bastion has been designed to be 5 feet 9 inches high and 15 feet broad but are not finished, and only here and there small pieces of the parrapet built up, and the faces are filled up by square pickets supported by a frame, the curtain is built up 64 feet from the flank and is discontinued for sixty four feet more, there being only a scarp to the ditch 3 feet 6 inches from the surface, then the curtain again appears, but unfinished, being only 10 feet above the level, and then extends itself 81 feet farther and is a back wall to the greatest part of the casemets, which go 21 feet further, with a wall of lesser dimensions. The exterior sides of the casemets of which there are 4, are 132 long by 37 in breadth and 17 feet high, and the interior dimensions of each are 21 by 31 and 15 feet 6 inches high, the whole built of squared stone, and might at very little trouble and expence been put and kept in good repair.

The ditch has never been finished being only 24 feet wide, and in the center not more than five feet deep; at high tides it is full of water which retires with the tide. The lands for the circumference of 2 miles round the Fort are very low, and are sometimes overflowed by the sea at high spring tides but a bank of 3 feet high, would sufficiently secure them from this inconvenience, the surface of the land is a fine black mould with a small mixture of sand.

On the opposite side of the River at the distance of 1018 yards, bearing about S. S. W. $1/2$, W. from the Angle of the Bastion of the Fort, stands a small castle of 51 feet long by 26 feet square, and consists of a tower which is designed as a sea mark, being 12 feet square and 45 feet high, an out yard in which is a cistern and a cooking place, a room of 22 feet 6 inches for the garison to lodge in and on a second story is one for an officer, of the same dimensions, the top is flat and covered with terrace having wall raised five feet high thereon, and has five embrasures, the walls of the castle are 2 feet 10 inches thick and pierced with loop holes on each side. It is at present out of repair, wanting stairs to ascend the Tower, and some joists to the officers room which have been cut away and all the planks of the flooring carried off. It appears to me that this castle was designed as a defence to the workmen employed in the stone Quarries, which are within a few yards of this building ; for every other particular the plan which accompanies this description must be referred to.

Ph. Pittman

Lieut. 15th Regt., Assist. Enger.

(II) *A Description of the Face of the Country.*

From the sea to the Fort at Apalachy the land is very low and flat, being bordered by the sides of the

River with (a) mark (muck?), which goes only a small distance back after which there is a very rich soil being black mould with a very little mixture of sand, but does not extend itself above one mile and a half back and then the pine barren commences, near the look out Tower the stratum of mould is not above 9 inches thick, and covers the stone quarries, which were formerly worked by the Spaniards, who took from them, all the stone made use of in building the Fort and look out; it is equally good as the Portland free stone. The N. W. River is navigable for small vessels about 3 miles above the Fort and for canoes about 7 or 8 miles, its source is 25 miles N. W. of the Fort, and near where a Spanish Fort formerly stood, and which the Indians obliged them to abandon many years ago. One can trace out the ditch and there remains many broken pieces of Ordnance, and an entire bell was taken from thence some little time since by the Indians. The N. E. River takes its rise from some small brooks near Mikisuki about 45 miles N. E.^{ly} from the Fort, it runs under ground for some small distances and then shows itself here and there like ponds. The bed of the river being about fifteen miles above the Fort, and the River is navigable for canoes about twelve miles and for small vessels 6 or 7 miles. Both Rivers abound with varieties of very fine fish particularly trout which is in great perfection. The rivers are bordered by swamps which afford many valuable woods, as cedar, cypress, live oak, white oak, ash and elm, besides there are a great number of laurel, tulips trees or magnolias, bays and palmetto or cabbage trees. The lands for two miles to the northward of the fort are tolerably good, and then the pine barren commences which however affords good grass and numerous herds of cattle might be maintained there, tho' there are no running waters, except in the N. E. and N. W.

rivers which are very distant from each other. Nature has nevertheless been equally provident, a number of fine ponds supplied by springs from the rocks and swamps supply that defect. The Pine Trees in general are remarkably large and Bees hive in them. The Indians take their honey in the proper seasons, and are well supplied with that commodity.

Both the Indian Towns stand in a very fine soil; and they rise a great deal of maize, french Beans, callivances, pumpkins, etc. They rear also a great many fowls, and some pigs but have no horned cattle.

As these descriptions are accompanied by a general sketch of the country as far as I saw, it will clear up whatever may appear wanting in them.

Ph. Pittman

Lieut : 15th, Assist Engr

[Endorsed:] A Report of the Fort of Saint Mark at Appalachy and the look out tower and a description of the face of the Country.

(III) *Communication from Pensacola to Apalachy*

During the time of the Equinox and winter, it is certainly far safer and all most as expeditious to go by land as by sea from Pensacola to Apalachy. As there are two different routes, the one more easy in the dry season, and the other more practicable all the year round I shall describe them both.

The first is to go from Pensacola by water to Rose Bay, keeping betwixt Rose Island and the Main. This Channel does not afford sufficient water for any boats drawing above four feet. On arriving at Rose Bay the person who is to go must land on a Bluff which is opposite to the East end of Rose Island, and must keep along the side of the bay about twenty-five miles, by which means he will avoid all

Bluff
38
from
Pensa-
cola

25

the swamps which lie nearer the sea; then by going a little to the Northward of the Northeast about fifty three miles, he will come to a river which empties itself into Saint Andrews Bay, this river is crossed by a sort of Natural Bridge. As the River goes underground for some small distance this place is known to the Indians by the name of Acouthinna, which word in their language is a description of it. These sorts of passages are not uncommon in this country. The road to this place is frequently interrupted by boggs, ponds, etc., but the Traveller must take care to keep to the Northward of them: following this course he will come to a small river called Chipouly, which empties itself into the River Apalachicola about thirty miles below the Forks, and is twenty three miles from the bridge. Then he must proceed to an Indian town called Tomothlies, situated on the east side of the Apalachicola and two miles below the forks; this place is twenty two miles from Chipouly. As far as this, the roads in general are very good, passing over a hilly country and pine barren, from hence he must proceed to the river Ocolacola, which is about thirty miles further, and then going South Easterly he will arrive at Apalachy which is forty five miles from the river Ocolacola. The road very good all the way and the country pine barren.

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Now we come to the second road which is Traveled as hereafter described. The person who is to perform this journey must cross the Bay of Pensacola at six or seven miles above Deer point and then go easterly 20 miles so as to clear the Bay, after which he must keep nearly a N.N.E. course through a pine barren about one hundred and fifty miles, which will bring him to a river called Chacto Hatchy which empties itself into Rose Bay. This river is about one hundred yards across, it is very deep and is generally passed on rafts, the road in general is pretty

25 good. From hence he must go to Chipouly going nearly east about twenty miles, the land is level being pine barren, and the road is very good quite to Ichiscafaloufa which is an Indian village situated on the west side of the N. W. branch of the river Apalachicola forty miles above the forks and twenty from Chapouly. From thence to Apalachy is one hundred miles and the road continues good.

These descriptions I got by interrogating some Indians and Traders, who have travelled these roads and they did not differ materially in their accounts.

Ph. Pittman

Lieut. 15th Regt. Assist Engr.

(IV) *Communication from Apalachy to Saint Augustine*

Miles
40

From the fort at Apalachy to the river of Scilly is 40 miles. Horses, etc. are ferry^d over the N. E. River by the soldiers at the Fort, and the Traveller immediately falls into the path leading Eastward, which to the Scilly in wet seasons is very bad, being so swampy that horses (in those times) without the greatest care are liable to sink to their bellies, but this obstacle does not render it impassable. The River Scilly is about forty five yards across, is very deep, and Rapid after heavy rains but at other times is fordable.

21

From the river Scilly to a small river, which at the crossing place takes a subterraneous passage for about ten yards and then appears again forming a Natural Bridge, which by the Indians is called Acouthinna, twenty one miles, the road is very good, being through pine barren.

From Acouthinna to another small river of about fifteen yards across, and sometimes fordable, six miles. The soil about it is a very fine clay having

many Palmetta trees growing on it. The road is very good. From this small river to a creek of nearly the same width but very deep six miles, and a very good road.

6

From the creek to Stony river so called from its bottom which is very rough and for that reason difficult to ford, fifty four miles. this river is nearly twenty yards across, and at the time of the freshes is not fordable, and runs with great rapidity. The soil about it is a red clay and the road to it very good, except two small bogs.

6

From Stoney river, Sauvanny [Suawanee] an Indian village thirty four miles. This village is situated on the side of a river of the same name, which is very deep, and about five hundred yards across. The Indians lend their canoes to Travellers and assist them in swimming their horses over; the road is good and through a pine barren, till within sixteen miles of Sauvanny where there is a fine plain of ten miles broad after which road goes through an oak swamp, which is however tolerably passable.

Miles

34

From Sauvany to Lockway [Alachua] fifty miles, this is an Indian village situated on the side of a very fine Savanna, the soil of which is remarkably good there are found here numbers of large stones variegated with red and yellow veins, the road very good and through a pine barren.

50

From Lockway to Picolata (a corporals guard on the east side of the river Saint Juans) fifty seven miles, passing very good lands and a very good road there is a ferey boat at the Post the river Saint Juans is here near three miles wide.

57

From Picolata to Saint Augustin twenty three miles through a very indifferent soil but good road.

23

The description wrote on the other side I took from the Journal of a gentleman who had travelled the

Whole distance 291 miles

road and was confirmed to me by the accounts *given*
by these other persons.

Ph. Pittman

Lieut. 15th Regt, Assist Engr

To General Haldimand

[Endorsed:] Descriptions of the Communications
betwixt Pensacola and Apalachy and Apalachy
and Saint Augustin.