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## United States Troops in Spanish East Florida, 1812-1813

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## UNITED STATES TROOPS IN SPANISH EAST FLORIDA, 1812-13

[Author's Note. In November, 1927, Dr. Thomas B. Hall of Miami Beach, Florida, wrote me that the State Historical Society of Missouri was in possession of his great-grandfather's papers written while in Florida. His great-grandfather was Lieut. Col. (afterward General) Thomas Adam Smith, who commanded the United States regulars in Florida in 1812-13. Through the courtesy of Arthur T. Williams, President of the Florida Historical Society, and Floyd C. Shoemaker, Secretary of the State Historical Society of Missouri, I obtained copies of the papers alluded to. They comprise the retained copies of letters written by Col. Smith, which were kept in blank record books and are well preserved, together with a number of original letters addressed to him. These letters, arranged chronologically, tell the story of the American troops in Spanish East Florida—a story that has been locked up so far as details are concerned until now. These papers will be published as a serial. Connecting text and footnotes have been added where necessary to complete the narrative.—T. FREDERICK DAVIS.]

The causes that led to the occupation of Spanish East Florida in 1812 need no elaborate discussion here, as that phase of the affair has been covered in many publications. The immediate excuse for the occupation of the province by the United States was the impending war with Great Britain. At that time Spain and Great Britain had treaty relations, revealed in a letter written by the British representative in December, 1810, to the American Secretary of State, complaining about certain events that had occurred in West Florida concerning the United States and Spain. This entry of the British into the affair was considered of sufficient importance by the President to bring it to the attention of Congress, Congress immediately passed a secret act permitting the occupancy of the Floridas under certain contingencies, namely, in case of their occupation by a foreign power, which of course referred to Great Britain, or should the local authorities, presumably meaning but not specifying the Span-

ish governors, cede the same. In January, 1811, two American commissioners, John McKee and George Mathews, were appointed by our government to visit the Spanish governors of Florida and secretly attempt to secure the country by cession. They were clothed with authority to call upon the military for needed assistance and orders were issued by the Secretary of War to that effect. It is not surprising that the Spanish governors refused, although Governor Folch of West Florida had some time before intimated that a cession to the United States might be advisable.

Failing to secure the cession, Secretary of State Monroe discharged Commissioner McKee, but wrote General Mathews to follow his own judgment with respect to East Florida. General Mathews proceeded to create a local authority that would cede the province, by fomenting a revolution in East Florida, but which really contemplated an armed invasion by Georgians in co-operation with the troops of the United States. He spent the last of the year 1811 and the forepart of 1812 in perfecting the plans for the intended invasion, of which he kept the American government advised. The day finally arrived to start the procedure that "would make Florida ours". About 180 Georgians, calling themselves "Patriots", crossed the St. Marys River into Spanish East Florida and occupied Rose's Bluff, opposite the town of St. Marys, Georgia, and in sight of Amelia Island, Florida. Thence on March 17, 1812, the Patriots proceeded to Amelia and forced the small Spanish garrison to surrender the island. The Patriots now had become the "local authority" and the following day, March 18, their leader, John H. McIntosh, after a handsome oration, offered to cede Amelia Island to the United States. General Mathews, the accredited commissioner, likewise with a handsome oration, accepted the island for the United States. At this stage Lieut. Col. Thomas A. Smith, U.S.A., took com-

mand of the troops, and henceforth his reports give the record of what happened to the United States regulars during their occupancy of Spanish East Florida in 1812-1813.

*Lieut. Col. Smith to the Secretary of War (copy).*

Point Petre, <sup>1</sup> 18th March, 1812.

Sir :

In obedience to my instructions of the 26th January, 1811, I have sent a detachment consisting of fifty men <sup>2</sup> to receive and defend in the name of the United States, the Town of Sn. Ferdinandina & the Island of Amelia. I have been informed by General Mathews, that he has good reason to believe that a detachment of English troops (blacks) are on the eve of being sent to occupy the military posts within East Florida. Should that be the case, the detachment under my command, disorganized & badly furnished with Arms & the means of transportation, will make but a feeble opposition against a well-disciplined force, provided with all the implements of War. I have only three officers for duty, and one of those, Major Laval, informs me he is under marching orders, the others being absent & in arrest. I shall be compelled should it be necessary to oppose force to force, to release the officers now under sentence, though contrary to military rule, & make the best defence in my power.

On comparing instructions with Genl. Mathews, I find he is authorized to call on the Military force to preoccupy East Florida, if, in his judgment it should be necessary; but having doubts about the propriety of exceeding my instructions, I will not attack any Post until further ordered ; as I consider the order im-

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<sup>1</sup> Point Petre was a U. S. military post on the St. Marys River about two miles east of the town of St. Marys, Ga., and five miles from Amelia Island.

<sup>2</sup> Under the command of Lieut. Daniel Appling.

perative as to occupying & defending places peaceably surrendered, I shall do it to the last extremity. I beg leave to call your attention to the situation of the two field pieces at this place, without harness or ammunition & the limbers unfit for service. I find no person to perform the duty of Quarter Master, and not a Cent to meet the contingent expenses of the Detachment. Authority to draw on the War Department will not obviate this difficulty as Money cannot be obtained without allowing a premium that might be considered extravagant, & be deducted from the drawer. The present Contractor will furnish provisions at any Point that may be required until the last of May, the United States making a reasonable allowance for transportation &c. If Amelia Island or the Town of Sn. Ferdinanda is not defended by suitable works provided with necessary artillery, it may be destroyed at any time a Naval Force superior to the Gun Boats at present on this station <sup>3</sup> may think proper to attack it.

I must request, Sir, that the Infantry & Dragoons may be consolidated, there being three little Detachments, the largest of which does not exceed a Sergeant's Command, & that Two hundred Muskets and bayonets, with an additional supply of lead and flints may be ordered to this place as soon as possible. The Rifles in their present situation will not do for active service as they cannot be fired to any certainty & having no bayonets to come to close quarters. The Troops are shabby beyond anything I have witnessed, not having received any clothing for the present year. I must also state that we are without a Surgeon.

I am respectfully, Sir,  
Your Obt. Servt.

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<sup>3</sup> A fleet of nine gunboats under the command of Commodore Hugh Campbell was in the St. Marys River near Amelia at the time.

*Gen. Mathews to Lt. Col. Smith (original).*

U. States Station, Picolata.

April 8, 1812.

Dear Sir:

By virtue of the powers vested in me as U. States Commissioner, with which you are furnished a copy, I have to request you to march tomorrow, or as soon thereafter as possible, to Moosa Old Fort, a military station in the vicinity of St. Augustine, with the troops under your command to hold & defend the same & the country adjacent it being ceded to the U. States by the local constituted authorities <sup>4</sup> of E. Florida, & accepted by me as U. States Commissioner. You will please to have such Detachment at this station as you deem adequate to hold and defend for the U. States.

I am very respectfully your  
friend & obt. servt.

(signed) Geo. Mathews

Lt. Col. Thos. A. Smith

Picolata Station.

*Lt. Col. Smith to Secretary of War (copy).*

Moosa Old Fort, 14th April, 1812.

Sir :

I was unable to procure transports for the Detachment under my Command until the 1st Inst., on which day I embarked for Picolata, <sup>5</sup> but owing to the violence of the wind & the boats being bad, I was unable to reach it until the 7th. On the 8th, I dropped down the river in compliance with the inclosed requisition of Genl. Mathews to Six Mile Creek, which I ascended

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<sup>4</sup> The Patriots had occupied Ft. Moosa about two and a half miles north of St. Augustine. Gen. Mathews had marched with them and the same procedure of "local authority" and "transfer of government" had been carried out as at Amelia Island.

<sup>5</sup> Picolata is on the east bank of the St. Johns River, directly west from St. Augustine.

about six miles. I deposited our little stores under a Sergeant's Guard and proceeded to this place, which was occupied by the Patriot forces; they delivered me peaceable possession on the 12th at 4 o'clock at which time I hoisted the American flag. On the following morning soon after the troops were dismissed at reveille a Gunboat at the distance of about three quarters of a mile fired four shot immediately over the Detachment, two of which passed within a few feet of some of the men. The moment our flag was hoisted & the Troops prepared for action, they ceased firing and sheered off. <sup>6</sup> This Post is within two and one half miles of St. Augustine & in full view; I think the situation a bad one for defence & will take a new position in a day or two. Genl. Mathews sent a flag to their lines today, which was preemptorily ordered back. From present appearances I have little doubt but ere this reaches you we shall have had an action. The Governor <sup>7</sup> has sent to Havannah & Nassau for reinforcements, which it appears are daily expected. Should they arrive I shall be compelled to fall back, but will oppose them at every defile until the Georgia Volunteers can come to my aid. Wagons and Carts to remove our stores cannot be procured. I shall consequently have to destroy them if I have to give ground. As the contract I made for the supply of rations in East Florida will be a losing one for the Contractor, I have no expectation of being able to get him to furnish longer than the time contracted for (31st May). The officers with me are active & attentive, but the number (four) is so small that I experience great inconvenience & wish the Public Service may not suffer on that account, as it is impossible for them for any length of time to pay proper attention to the many duties that at present devolve upon them.

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<sup>6</sup> This was a Spanish gunboat sent from St. Augustine.

<sup>7</sup> Spanish governor.

I beg leave to recommend Mr. John Findley of Washington, Georgia, for appointment in the Regiment of Riflemen.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
with high respect,  
Your Obt. Servt.,

*Lt. Col. Smith to U. S. Adjutant & Inspector (Copy).*

Moosa Old Fort, 26 April, 1812.

Sir :

From the great exertions making by the Spaniards to put the works around St. Augustine in the best possible state of defence, it becomes my duty to apprise the Honorable, the Secretary of War, that if it is his intention that I should attack the Town,<sup>8</sup> that no time ought to be lost in forwarding four Eighteen or Twenty-four Pounders, Ammunition, &c., &c., with the necessary tools for throwing up redoubts, which would enable me to attack it with a certainty of success. The field pieces at Point Petre are entirely useless, not having any ammunition or harness. I flatter myself that when the will of the Executive is known that this little Detachment will not be found wanting in duty or exertions to fulfill it. My present effective force, Non-Commissioned officers & Privates is one hundred & nine, having left small Detachments at Point Petre, Picolata, & Six Mile Creek. The Troops suffer considerably for the want of Clothing, that furnished last fall being so much damaged as to be unfit for issue. I have been without Provisions for several days, the vessel containing the Contractor's supplies having been detained in consequence of the Embargo in Savannah. I will trouble you to inform me whether it is necessary to forward Inspection Returns oftener than the troops are mustered.

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<sup>8</sup> St. Augustine.



I have the honor to be, Sir, with high respect,  
Your Obt. Servt.,

P. S. Since writing the above two British armed sloops have appeared off the bar & from the movements of the small craft about St. Augustine I should not be surprised if they attack me. I have just been informed by Genl. McIntosh that the Patriot force near me does not exceed 93 for duty. From the best information I can obtain the Spanish force is about 400-180 Regular Troops, 50 free Men of Colour, the residue Militia of the Town & vicinity.

*Lt. Col. Smith to U. S. Adjutant & Inspector (copy).*  
Moosa Old Fort, 5th May, 1812.

Sir :

I transmit herewith monthly & inspection returns of the Detachment under my command. The Governor of St. Augustine having received through the British minister information that the Government of the United States disavows the acts of Genl. Mathews their Commissioner, & that the United States Troops will be withdrawn, I have no expectation that they will make any movements that will lead to serious consequences. The Patriots increase in numbers daily & I believe will attempt to hold the country in opposition to any reinforcements they may receive, if the Government of the United States does not interfere.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
With high respect,  
Your Obt. Servt.

Much has been written on the subject of the U. S. Government disavowing the acts of its Commissioner, General George Mathews, who was discharged under date of April 4, 1812. Governor David B. Mitchell, of Georgia, was appointed in place of General Mathews.

*Governor Mitchell to Lt. Col. Smith (original).*

St. Mary's, 4th May, 1812.

Sir :

I have received a dispatch from the Secretary of State of the United States in which is enclosed the duplicate of an order from the Secretary of War addressed to yourself, revoking the order which required you to obey the orders or requisitions of General Mathews, and, transferring that authority to myself as Governor of Georgia.

I have to request to be informed whether you have not received the order alluded to, a copy of which is enclosed ; & if you have not, you will consider this as notice of the existence of such order & govern yourself accordingly. Under the authority of that order you will consider this as one to yourself to remain where you are until further orders, unless compelled to retire by superior force.

It is my intention to open a communication with the Governor of St. Augustine, & to establish a safe and expeditious communication between your camp & my quarters at this place, & for these purposes & others have sent on my Aids, Cols. Houstoun & Cuthbert, whom I have instructed to consult you as to the best means of accomplishing these objects.

I am, Sir, with much respect & regard,

Your very obedt. Servt.

(signed) D. B. Mitchell

Lieut. Col. Thomas A. Smith.

*Lt. Col. Smith to Governor Mitchell (copy).*

Moosa Old Fort. 9th May, 1812.

Sir :

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 4th Inst. by Colo. Cuthbert. The original order, of which you inclose me a copy, had

been received a few days previous. Colonels Cuthbert & Houston will inform you of the situation of my encampment & that of the Patriots. Not being clear as to the propriety of permitting any armed party to remain in my rear, I am induced to request that you will give me as early as possible such directions on that subject as you conceive proper. It has been represented to me that a faction on Amelia Island are doing everything in their power to injure the Patriotic cause.<sup>9</sup> The officer in command there conceives the Patriots have no jurisdiction & I fancy would interpose should they make any attempts to arrest them. I have declined giving him any orders on the subject, as I conceived it belonged properly to the civil authority. I have informed Capt. Williams of the unlimited authority you have to command the United States Troops in this quarter & directed him to call on you for instructions for his government [guidance]. I refer you for particulars to Colonels Cuthbert & Houston.

I have the honor to be sir  
with high respect,  
Your Obt. Servt.,

*Lt. Col. Smith to Governor Mitchell (copy).*

Moosa Old Fort, 14th May, 1812.

Sir :

Having received from Capt. Williams the inclosed order, I conceive it of sufficient importance to forward to you by express. There is no doubt in my mind of arms having been forwarded from St. Augustine to the disaffected on Amelia Island with a view perhaps of arming the negroes & the crews of British vessels in port to attack the Patriots in their rear &

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<sup>9</sup> This refers to the British traders in the town of Fernandina.

perhaps to cut off my supplies. My present effective force does not exceed 110, which I conceive sufficient to oppose with success, should it become necessary, any disposable force there may be in Augustine. If their expected reinforcements arrive the safety of my Detachment will depend on the possession of Amelia Island & the entrance into the St. Johns, where I beg leave to suggest the propriety of ordering a Detachment of 40 or 50 men with a gun boat to co-operate with them.

I have the honor to be sir  
With high respect,  
Your Obt. Servt.,

*Lt. Col. Smith to U. S. Adjutant & Inspector (copy).*  
Camp near St. Augustine,  
21st May, 1812.

Sir :

In my letter of the 5th Inst., I informed you that in consequence of the Governor of St. Augustine having received intelligence of the disavowal on the part of the United States of any participation in the revolution of East Florida, I did not expect the Spaniards would make an attack on the Troops under my Command. This opinion was strengthened on the 9th, by the assurances which the Governor of St. Augustine made to Colo. Cuthbert, aid to Governor Mitchell, that the American flag should be respected. In violation of this assurance, in violation of every usage pending negotiation, an attack was made on my advance guard on Saturday, the 16th.<sup>10</sup> I had removed my encampment a few hundred yards in the rear of Old Fort Moosa ; it was necessary however, that the Fort should

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<sup>10</sup> According to the agreement the truce ended on the 14th-see *Niles Register*, Jan. 16, 1813, Garzia to Mitchell.

be occupied. The Picket was accordingly stationed there.

In the morning of the 16th an armed schooner & four launches filled with men & mounting each a Six pounder were seen going up the North River. On arriving at the Creek upon which Fort Moosa is situated the schooner was moored & every preparation made for an attack. A reinforcement was immediately sent to the Picket under the impression that a landing would be attempted. They had orders, however, to retreat in the event of the enemy's balls penetrating the walls of Moosa, with the exception of fifteen men who were to be left in ambuscade. Under protection of a heavy fire from the schooner the boats advanced. The twenty-second shot, a Twenty-four, passed through both walls of Moosa & the grape was distinctly heard rattling against its sides. That part of the Detachment which was ordered now retreated. The stratagem took effect. The shouts of the Spaniards proclaimed their rapid approach & I expected in a few minutes that a deadly fire would have been poured in upon them, but by the disobedience of a Sergeant an opportunity of giving a character to this Detachment was lost which can never again occur. Positive orders were given to the Sergeant left in command of the party in ambuscade not to fire until the first boat arrived within sixty yards of the landing ; however from some strange infatuation he commenced firing at the distance of four hundred yards. The surprise of the Spaniards was great. They immediately halted & renewed their cannonade. The Sergeant now, in opposition to the entreaties of his men, disgracefully abandoned his post & the enemy taking possession of it we soon discovered Moosa in flames.

Their attention was now directed to our encampment. Finding that we were in reach of their fire I removed the men to a more secure position, ready how-

ever to make an attack if an opportunity should offer. The flag seemed to be the point upon which their fire was directed. Discovering that they evinced no disposition to effect a landing in any force & judging it prudent to retire beyond the reach of their armed vessels, I have fallen back to my present position, which is about a mile in the rear of the former encampment. In this affair we received no further injury than the damaging of a few tents by their twenty-fours. The cannonade commenced at eleven and continued until four o'clock. We did not leave the ground until the Spaniards had retreated & the schooner under weigh for the harbor of St. Augustine.

I have so frequently laid before the Department the situation of this Detachment that they cannot require further information respecting it. I would wish however that information seriously considered. I have already informed the Honorable the Secretary that the contract which I have made will expire on the 31st May, & that there is no probability of the Troops being supplied with rations unless some arrangement is made to that effect by the Department of War. However critical my situation may be in other respects, I shall not flinch from the arduous task imposed upon me ; but in this case, without the means of supply, I cannot overcome the difficulties which present themselves on every side.

Lieut. Haig joined me on the 12th Inst.

I have the honor to be, sir,

With high respect,

Your Obt. Servt.,

*Gov. Mitchell to Lieut. Col. Smith (original).*

St. Mary's, 25th May, 1812

Sir :

So long ago as last Wednesday I procured a Gun Boat from Commodore Campbell, with one hundred rounds of ammunition for Six-pounders & had the two brass pieces at Point Petre with their carriages put on board, for the purpose of being conveyed to you, but such has been the delay occasioned by negligence & head winds, that the boat has not yet left Amelia for St. John's. My object in sending you these Guns, is, to enable you to maintain your ground, in order to watch the Spaniards, as well as to convince them that they do not possess the power to drive you in case they should be disposed to make another tryal.

The letters I have received by last mail assure me of the determination of the Government not to relinquish the Province without ample security for the protection of the Patriots, & in case of War,<sup>11</sup> which is more than probable, that they may feel themselves authorized in proceeding to reduce it by force. Under these circumstances your removal may be viewed as at a distance, and in case of need you must be reinforced. I have written for such reinforcements of Regulars, but in the meantime, if you deem it necessary, I shall, until the Regulars can be sent on, endeavor to procure a Volunteer force from Georgia & send to your aid.

I will also thank you to state to me, what is the state of the Military stores in Savannah, & under whose control they are held, & what description & quantity of them will be necessary for your use. In bringing on Volunteers it is also necessary I should be informed how & by whom they can be supplied with provisions, for as they will be in the service of the

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<sup>11</sup> With Great Britain.

U. States, it is proper that they should bear the expense. I have to request an answer as speedily as possible, & am, Sir, with great regard & esteem,

Your very obt. servt.,  
(signed) D. B. Mitchell

*Lieut. Col. Smith to Gov. Mitchell (copy).*

Camp near St. Augustine,  
27th May, 1812.

Sir :

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication by Colo. Newnan. On the 23d Inst we took up our position, three quarters of a mile in advance of that to which we had fallen back on the 16th. The Town is in full view & we have an opportunity of seeing all vessels which enter the harbor. Determined to maintain our ground I have judged it expedient to throw up a small entrenchment around the camp. It will afford protection against their cannon. We anxiously wait the final determination of Government as it respects our operations in this Province. Should a favorable opportunity offer for carrying the Town by assault, I should be at a loss how to act. I would wish to be informed as far as is consistent with propriety to what lengths I might go. I could then be enabled to take such steps as might eventually be of service to the Detachment under my command.

I have the honor to be sir  
With high respect,  
Your Obt. Servt.,



*Lt. Col. Smith to Gov. Mitchell (copy).*

Camp before St. Augustine

30th May, 1812

Sir :

The receipt of your letter of the 25th Inst I have the honor to acknowledge. My last by Colo. Newnan will inform you that the position which the troops now occupy commands the view of the Town & harbor of St. Augustine. The Spaniards have remained quiet & permitted us without molestation to prosecute our works of defence. The Gun Boat with the Six-pounders has passed the Cowford on her way to Six Mile Creek. The Pieces will at least insure us respect from the launches. I must observe that reinforcements are not necessary (as experience has proved) for the maintaining of my present position. Should the Spaniards however receive a supply of men, the probability of which you are as well acquainted as myself, there is no doubt my force would be inadequate to maintain the ground against a force so far superior as they then would have. For the object of a reinforcement would not be to remain in garrison, but to drive us without the limits of the Province, as there are already more than a sufficient number of men in it to defend the works. You will permit me at the same time to observe that should the United States contemplate. active offensive operations against the Spaniards a reinforcement of whatever description it may be could not be too speedily ordered. For I am convinced if the Governor saw the determination of the United States to subdue the Province by force of arms & every necessary preparation made for' that purpose previous to their receiving succor from the British that he would immediately capitulate.

In the event of hostilities the utmost vigilance will be required at Amelia; Augustine is now furnished

with provisions from that place. Could not means be taken to prevent this? On the subject of supplies I must inform you that the Secy of War has been notified that the contract with Mr. McDougall expires tomorrow & that the troops are without provisions excepting those which I purchase for their use. Should a Volunteer force arrive I will pursue the same steps for their supply. From the list which I have seen of the Military stores in Savannah, there is camp equipage for one thousand men & nine hundred & fifty stand of arms, with medicines & hospital stores under the control of the Military agent subject to my order. Herewith you will receive an order for the whole or any part thereof which you may think necessary for the service. For this Detachment no requisition will be made at present. I have received intelligence of depredations having been committed on the north side of the St. John's by a party of Indians, who threaten destruction to the whole settlement. The fears of the inhabitants of that part of the Province have been very much excited. It is not known by whom these marauders were instigated. With the expectation of hearing from you intelligence satisfactory to the anxious wishes of the Officers under my Command,

I have the honor to be sir  
with high respect  
Your Obt. Servt.,

*Lt. Col. Smith to U. S. Adjutant & Inspector (copy).*  
Camp before St. Augustine  
4th June, 1812

Sir :

Herewith you will receive the Monthly Return for May of the Troops under my command. I have so frequently represented to the Honbl. the Secy. of War the situation of this Detachment that I feel reluctant

in again bringing it before his view. However the necessity of the case demands it. I must request that with this letter you will submit the Return for his Inspection. The very face of it must point out my wants. The greatest deficiency of Subalterns, where they are absolutely necessary-commands are obliged to be intrusted to Non-commissioned Officers, which require the direction of an Officer. With a weak Detachment, but badly provided, laying before one of the strongest fortified places on the Continent, containing a garrison five times our numbers, what can be expected from me? I shall endeavor to do my duty, but the consequences I am apprehensive will reflect dishonor on the Arms of the United States. We cannot always calculate upon the present disposition of the Spaniards. Our own tardiness must inspirit them. For the want of Cavalry we remain ignorant of their movements & are unable to cut off their parties. Upon any alarm the Infantry are obliged to perform forced marches for the protection of the depot near the St. Johns <sup>12</sup>, my force not permitting me to leave the guard necessary for its protection. Thirty Cavalry well mounted will obviate these difficulties. Indeed they are absolutely indispensable. Horses calculated for the purpose may readily be procured from the interior of Georgia, where men can easily be enlisted for that service. I must solicit the early determination of the Secy. on this point, & that no time may be lost in forwarding the necessary equipments. For this command I recommend Lt. Haig of the Dragoons, at present with me, who is one of the most active, enterprising & intelligent officers in the service & would do honor to himself & Country at the head of the Detachment. I received information from Capt. Ross Bird of the 3d Infty. of his having been ordered to join me. My

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<sup>12</sup> At Six Mile Creek.

returns must have miscarried, otherwise the order could not have been issued. There is no command for him. The few men here reported as his, I have requested to be transferred to Capt. Woodruff, that the trouble of making separate papers might be done away with. Capt. Bird at the head of a Company would be very acceptable in our present situation; alone he can render no service.

It is with regret I again advert to the difficulty which I experience in procuring supplies for this Detachment. The Dept. of War is already apprised of the expiration of the contract which I had made. For the means of procuring supplies I endeavored to negotiate a draft at St. Mary's on the Secy of War, but failed in the attempt. I then offered the Contractor twenty-five cents, but even this was refused. The only resource left was my private credit upon which I have purchased for the present month. Unless arrangements are speedily made for the supply of the Troops by the proper authority I will be under the necessity of withdrawing from the Province. Twelve hundred Dollars a month at least will be requisite for provisions & contingent expenses for the present number of Troops under my command. The difficulty also of transportation is very great & we have not the means of getting our supplies from the St. Johns. Shall I be authorized to purchase a wagon and team?

The situation in which I am here placed as a Military man is such as tends to cast the greatest reflection upon the Army. Having entered the Province & taken possession of the Country in the name of the United States, where no opposition was offered, but as soon as we came before the enemy all power ceased, the flag allowed to be insulted without orders to retaliate. Nothing but the knowledge which I possess of the President having disavowed the acts of the late Commissioner prevented my laying the Town in ashes

after the affair of Moosa. Smarting under the stigma which attaches itself to this Detachment from that unfortunate encounter, I applied to Govr. Mitchell for instructions to act, but he answered only that I should maintain my ground. Is it intended that I shall remain here and permit myself to be insulted with impunity? If so, I must insist upon being relieved in the command. The Government expects the Patriots to effect all that is necessary. The Patriots look to the troops for protection & through their aid alone see the accomplishment of all their wishes.

I have the honor to be sir,  
With high respect,  
Your Obt. Servt.

*Col. Ralph Isaacs to Lieut. Col. Smith (original).*

June 10th, 1812.

Dear Sir:

I left St. Mary's on the morning of the 7th Inst., when his Excellency, Govr. Mitchell directed me to inform you officially that it was the determination of the U. States Government to protect the persons & property of the patriots in East, Florida-and that as U. States agent he should for their protection continue the troops already in the Province, & that you might very soon expect to be reinforced by Colo. Cuthbert with a detachment of Volunteers from Savannah.

His Excellency also ordered me to communicate to you officially that should you be again attacked or fired upon by the Spaniards, you are to commence a system of annoyance by doing them all the harm you can, & to dislodge & dispossess them either by storm or in any way that your judgment may dictate of the

Town of St. Augustine or any post in their possession.

I have the honor to be most respectfully,

Yr. Obt. Servt.

(signed) Ralph Isaacs

Aid De Camp to his Excellency,

D. B. Mitchell, Governor & Commander

in Chief of the State of Georgia & U.

States Commissioner for E. Florida.

Lieut Colo Thomas A. Smith

U. States Rifle Regiment.

*(This series of documents will be continued in the following issues of the QUARTERLY.)*