

1941

From a Remote Frontier: San Marcos de Apalache 1763-1769 (continued)

Mark F. Boyd



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Boyd, Mark F. (1941) "From a Remote Frontier: San Marcos de Apalache 1763-1769 (continued)," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 20: No. 1, Article 8.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol20/iss1/8>

FROM A REMOTE FRONTIER

(continued)

LETTERS PASSING BETWEEN CAPTAIN HARRIES IN COMMAND AT APALACHE (ST. MARKS) IN 1764 AND HIS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, GENERAL GAGE, IN NEW YORK

Harries to Gage

Apalache, Feby 25th, 1764

I informed yr Excellency from Pensacola of our misfortune on board the Curacoa sloop by Mr. Henry Whyte Master thereof, who expected to sail in ten or twelve days after we quited that harbour: our swivels, spare arms, provisions, carriages of two guns with six pounders each &c. were all lost in that disaster. I was obliged to buy two four pounders of Mr. Noble merchant at Pensacola in order to make some defence of the garrison of Apalache for the sum of twenty pounds sterling and gave him a draught on the Rt. Honble & Honble board of ordnance for the same, wch I hope will be duly honoured ; & wch expence might have been saved had Major Forbes thought proper to spare the carriages of some six pounders in the garrison, wch he might have safely done, as the Renown Frigate lay in the Harbour & he had artificers under his command [who] could immediately supply him with new ones. neither would he give us four swivels for our defence tho' [the] same lay quite useless & neglected. the 7th instant we embarked & took possession of this fort the 20th. I have only twenty five men fit for duty including the two servants one sergt and ten mount guard

Note - This series of documents has been edited with an introduction by Mark F. Boyd; see this *Quarterly* the issue of January last. The originals of these letters are in the W. L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan, and grateful acknowledgment is made to Mr. Howard Peckham, curator of manuscripts for copies. *Ed.*

every day & I cannot dispense with less than five sentries at night, so [that] the men will have but one night in bed, wch is too great a fatigue to be continued for any considerable time, & if more fall sick god knows what will be the consequence. I want twelve men & a drum to compleat me to [the] present establishment, am sure I am [the] only instance in all America of a Captain's command in any garrison without a drum. I have applied to Major Ogilvie for the above number but I want many more, and likewise a supply of cannon, swivels, ammunitiion and provisions. I have only three months provisions from the day of our embarkation, received fifteen barrels of flower for two hundred and thirty, and nine of pork for two hundred and twelve pounds meat each cask, two barrels of flower weighed, the one, one hundred & sixty eight pounds, & the other one hundred & sixty two; two of pork. the one one hundred & seventy one, & the other one hundred and eighty six each cask, wch the flower will run upwards of sixty pounds short & the pork upward of thirty wch is an additional grievance besides that of being limited to three months provisions only wch may expose us to run the hazard of starving if the sloop called the Two Friends shd be obstructed by contrary winds or any misfortune happen to prevent her return within the prescribed time, had Major Forbes supplied us with six months provisions we should not be subject to the same danger: to prevent accidents there ought always to be four or five months provisions in store, especially such a place as this whose navigation is so difficult & dangerous. as this place is excluded from all correspondence and communication with the rest of the world, there ought to be some small craft stationed here, wch was the method practiced by the Spaniards: some dispatches lately arrived

here could not be forwarded. for Pensacola by the Indian trader one Mr. Forester by land, nor by sea for want of such a convenience. they were sent hither by land from St. Augustine, but it was not in my power to forward them. such a small craft wd be very useful to expedite any expresses sent hither for Pensacola or Mobile. This garrison when possessed by the Spaniards had never less than eighty four men 'till within these few months, when they expected a relief daily, therefore sent away half their number, they had twelve cannon & thirteen swivels in this garrison, and two, and three swivels in an out post abt the distance of a mile from hence; this garrison cannot be defended at the lowest calculation with a smaller number than sixty men, together with eight cannon four pounders each & a dozen of swivels, the out post may then be occupied. the Spanish Commandant informed me [that] the water near the Fort all the summer is so brackish, [that] the soldiers were obliged to go up the river some miles in order to get it good & they labour under the like inconvenience for wood. wch makes it necessary that this garrison shd consist of at least sixty or seventy men. there is no place [that] required an interpreter more than this & there is an absolute necessity of making the Indians presents, for they come hungry & ravenous, & expect to be supplied now with provisions as they were by the Spaniards. Some of the Indians who lately visited me seem greatly disaffected to the English and Mr. Forester an Indian trader just gone off appears greatly terrified, he said he was obliged to go & look after his affects at the peril of his life, and his place of habitation lies at the distance of seventy or eighty miles from hence.

I have contracted with the Spanish Commandant for two large canoes at the rate of sixty dollars,

wch I think very cheap, and wch we could not want, therefore took no advantage of our necessity.

I have been obliged to engage John Bleak Master of the sloop called the Two Friends by Charter Party to supply us with provisions from St. Augustine, paying him two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, wch is more money than I wd willingly have given, but I was involved in such a dilemma, either to have engaged in such a contract or we must all otherwise starve.

I laid out for the use of this company abt twenty pounds sterling for soap, wch was lost in the time of our general calamity. when Mr. Bleak returns I intend to send by him an account to the QrMr Genl of all the money expended on this expedition for the use of the government and confide you will be so kind as to order me to be reimbursed.

I hope the welfare of a wife and an only child a daughter & the natural desire of recovery of my former health will prove such powerful motives with your Excellency to obtain my leave of absence for England next summer, wch favour shall be ever most gratefully acknowledged by

Sir Yr most obedt and most humble servant
Jon. Harries Capt in the 9th regiment.

P. S. I have but one sergt. & one corpl capable of doing duty, & fear [the] other two never will. for heavens sake consider by distressed condition, & be so good as to order a proper reinforcement with all possible expedition.

The geography of Florida will convince yr Excellency [that] Pensacola is more conveniently situated for relieving this garrison than St. Augustine, because not the fourth part of [the] distance from hence by sea.

Tho I agreed with Mr. Noble the merchant of Pensacola for nineteen pounds sterling for the two

small carriage guns, yet few hours before I embarked I was obliged to give him a bill on the Right Honble and the gentlemen of the Board of Ordnance for twenty pounds sterling, otherwise that I should not have them. this is the truth wch I can testify upon oath.

Notwithstanding that by Charter party there must be paid for the freight of the sloop called the Two Friends to supply this garrison with provisions &c. from St. Augustine the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling; yet it is very cheap comparatively speaking with what Major Forbes contracted for our passage from Pensacola to this place wch was fifty pounds sterling, besides refitting the sloop & wch was supplied with a new cable and anchor gratis; because the distance from hence to Pensacola is not seventy leagues while between four and five hundred from here to St. Augustine besides the return hither again, wch in the whole may amount to one thousand leagues.

Gage to Harries

New York, 7th May, 1764

Sir

I have received your Letter of the 25th Feby and very glad to find you had at length relieved the Spanish Garrison of Apalachi, & that you had taken Possession of that Post. your first Letter was Sufficient for me to relieve your wants, at least such as appeared absolutely necessary, which I hope you are by this Time sensible of: by having received my Dispatches by the Ship Industry, which I sent from hence with supplies for all our Garrisons. The Commander of the Squadron will no Doubt Station such Craft as he sees Occasion for in every port;

and you should make application to him if it is found necessary.

I am, Sir, &ca
Captain Harries: or
Officer Commanding at Apalachi

Harries to Gage

Apalache May 11th 1764

I must inform yr Excellency that the safe arrival of the sloop called the Two Friends, John Bleak Master thereof gave me no small Joy, wch was soon damped when understood there were but four months provisions aboard for this garrison & only for fifty instead of fifty four men. by some surprizing unaccountable mistake Major Ogilvie has sent a reinforcement of thirteen men to compleat the Company, and likewise at last a drum, wch after repeated solicitation he refused me whilst at St. Augustine tho a short time before he allowed one to a younger Capt. who now commands at N. Providence. As two men died since the sloop sailed from hence for St. Augustine the compy now consists. of forty five instead of forty seven men rank & file; there are arrived here also a surgeon's mate & two men of the Artillery who brought one brass six pounder with its apparatus and ammunition ; and there was one artillery man in [the] garrison before wch together with two officers & two sergts added to [the] afore mentioned number will amount to fifty four men wch will make some difference in the above space of time. I trust you will be so good as to order an immediate supply of provisions, in my humble opinion there ought to be one years provisions in store in such a place wch wd guard against accidents that may happen. it will be necessary to have fifteen men more wch wd enable me to occupy an Outpost, wch will receive

a serjt with ten men & the guard to be relieved once a week. a serjt with twelve mount here every day there are five fixed & one walking sentry to visit the rest at night in order to keep them alert. in the number of forty five there are two sick & three servants. three more four pounders & eight or ten swivels would be sufficient for the defense of this fortress & the other post wch last being situated near [the] wood will require two swivels at least. the Spaniards had fourteen guns and fifteen swivels. the wall is so slight [that] it will not bear heavy carriages three or four pounders will be best calculated. I purpose sending an account of the money expended for the use of this garrison &c. to the Qr Mr Genl, as I shall charge only the real sums laid out for [the] purchase I hope you will be so kind as to order me to be reimbursed & that the same shd be remitted into the hands of Lt. Crawford pay-master to the 9th regiment at St. Augustine. Sent at same time wth the subsistence for that ? [line illegible] All the buildings within the fort is of boarded timber (the magazine for powder only excepted) with a certain bark for covering the same ; there ought to be always a great plenty of boards & large spikes ready at hand upon any urgent occasion. these houses will hardly last two years more without a considerable expence in repairs for want of a cooper we have already lost some casks wch in our present circumstance is an unlucky affair as we have but few. an ingenious smith, as well as a good cooper who understands the repairing of locks and arms would be very serviceable and useful in such a place. which necessary men the Spanish Commanding officer always had. there is one Forester, an Indian trader, who offers to be an interpreter if agreeable to yr Excellency's pleasure, and would gladly know what you would allow him in that sta-

tion. the resort of Indians to this place makes it impossible to live in the least comfort without such a person, a small craft stationed in this bay would be very beneficial for the garrison. no ship should be sent here with provisions [that] draws above six feet water. Major Ogilvie has great plenty of rum at St. Augustine but has sent me only one puncheon for the use of the Indians and that not full. they are insatiable in the two articles of rum and tobacco; I wish I had three more puncheons of tolerable good rum wch might be multiplied into five good enough for the Indians, one hogshead of good tobacco, one hundred weight of rice, twenty bushels of Indian corn, twenty or thirty blankets for the winter might enable one to weather one year, and without presents there is no satisfying them. Don Bentura Diaz the officer whom I relieved, assured me that the donations here every year by his Catholic Majesty exceeded two hundred pounds sterling, but I am convinced that less than half that sum will conciliate them to the English government. . . . are piquets erected upon the greatest part of the wall wch with the assistance of the late repairs may last probably two years more. I cannot recollect whether I informed yr Excellency that [the] whole territories on which this fortress is built, ceded by the King of Spain at the late treaty to his Britannic Majesty doth not exceed four acres of ground ; the ditch of one side of the garrison limits our bounds wch when the tide is in, makes a communication of the one river to the other. this information I had not only from the Indians when an interpreter happened to be present, but also from Don Bentura Diaz. There are four rooms bombproof annexed to this fortress, had the Spaniards kept this place, they probably would have greatly augmented the fortification. if I am so happy as to obtain my

leave of absence I hope you will permit me to take my servant with me, paying [the] regiment what Genl Amherst allowed the recruiting officers. [the] man, he is but a mean figure & doth not exceed five feet two inches in heighth.

I am Yr Excellency's Most Obedt. & most humble servant

Jon. Harries Capt. in the 9th Regiment

P. S. With the greatest difficulty Forester a trader procured the messenger [that] brought the dispatches from St. Augustine an Indian guide to forward the him to Pensacola ; but as his return has been expected for few days past, I wish he may be amongst the living.

A good quantity of cordage is much wanted in such a garrison as this.

As I have not officers to form a Court-Martial, iron fetters for hands and feet would be very necessary.

Gage to Harries

New York 3d June, 1764

Sir,

I am sorry to acquaint you of the loss of the Industry Transport, in which the Subsistence Money for the Troops in Florida, with the Artificers & Tools &ca for the several Forts were embarked. She was wrecked on the Bar of St. Augustine, and very little saved. I am endeavoring to repair this loss as fast as possible by fitting out another Vessel, and making up a fresh assortment of Stores, in Lieu of what has been lost. The Money was saved, and will be forwarded to you, with the rest of the Stores destined for Apalachi.

I am, Sir &ca

P. S. The mention of Money to you was a Mistake,

as you will be supplied therewith from St. Augustine.

Captain Harries
Apalachi

Gage to Harries

New York, 20th June, 1764

Sir,

Tho' you will have been disappointed in the Stores intended for your Fort which were forwarded from hence some Time ago in the Industry, which Vessel unfortunately run upon the Bar of Augustine, and was wrecked, I hope you will receive everything you shall be in want of by this opportunity. The two Carriages intended for the two Six Pounders which were left at Pensacola were saved from the Wreck, and will be sent herewith from St. Augustine, so that I hope you will soon receive the Guns & the Carriages. The Chief Engineer, Lt Coll Eyre, will send you the proper Returns of everything which shall be Sent for your Garrison, which you will of Course Acknowledge the Receipt of and follow such Directions as are contained in my former Letters. I am

Sir, & ca
Capt Harries; or Officer
Commanding at Apalachi

Gage to Harries

New York June 23d 1764

Sir,

I Have Just time to Acknowledge the Receipt of Your Letter of the 11th of May, by Lieut. Lindsay of the Ninth Regt. who arrived here on the 20th Inst. And am to hope You will receive by this Opportunity about Six Months Provisions, Artificers, Carriages for the two Six Pounders which You

left at Pensacola, and everything else you Stand
in need of.

Colonel Robertson has received some Accts from
You, to which I conclude you will get an Answer
by this Opportunity.

I am, Sir

Capt Harries, 9th Reg.

Apalachi

(This series will be continued in the next issue)