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CASTLE ST. MARK AND THE PATRIOTS OF THE REVOLUTION

by ALBERT MAUNCY and ALBERTA JOHNSON

CASTILLO DE SAN MARCOS is a token of Spain's determination to protect her vast New World riches in the face of seemingly inexorable English rivalry, encroachment, and actual piracy.

This aged citadel, renamed Fort Marion by the Americans, is now Castillo de San Marcos National Monument at St. Augustine. Engineer Ignacio Daza laid the first stone for the foundations in 1672, and the fort became a focal point of colonial culture - Spain's last impregnable outpost on the shores of the North Atlantic. Now, with the passage of two and a half centuries, it represents to us something of the Spanish contribution to life in the western hemisphere.

There is a long, dramatic story of the fort as a link in the chain of Spanish colonial defenses - a barrier against British advances; that story is widely known. Not so well known is the connection of the venerable fortification WITH the English nation, which held it during the turbulent years of the American Revolution.

When, in 1762, the city of Havana fell to England's Lord Albemarle, it was a catastrophe for Spain. *La Habana* was a key port in the Spanish colonial life line, and to regain this Cuban city Spanish diplomats gave Florida to England along with mighty *Castillo de San Marcos* that had withstood four separate English attempts to take it.

It was irony that Britain should occupy the *castillo* less than a decade after boastful Fernandez inscribed the bold Roman capitals over the sally port: THIS FORT WAS COMPLETED THE

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YEAR 1756. ¹ Castle St. Marks, or Fort St. Mark, the Englishmen called it. And it was one of the prettiest forts in His Britannic Majesty's dominions : walls shining white, red sentry towers overlooking the blue water of Matanzas bay on one side and the cushioned green turf and the waving marshes on the other. What matter if the old drawbridge had not stirred in a dozen years? And if the round-arched rooms were cold in winter and wet in summer, if a northeaster made the sentries shiver for the warmth of the big guardroom fireplaces, if the very boots a man was wearing turned blue with mold and sabers rusted in the scabbards -why, a soldier's life was hard, and the fort was still a mighty defense, good reason for making the city of St. Augustine the "Capital Settlement" of East Florida. This was an honor resting but lightly upon the quaint little town that had been the Governor's City for two centuries.

A surprising number of Britons came to St. Augustine and to the nearby plantations that one after another were carved from the forests. Aside from the planters there were the King's officials, the carpenters, masons, innkeepers, the merchants, slaves and many others. ²

There were also the soldiers. The military were a necessary adjunct to any pioneer province, especially where Indian trade was involved, and it was likewise true that the strategic harbors and surf-pounded beaches still lay next to the "tract" of the treasure-laden Spanish galleons. Nor had

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1. CONCLUIO ESTE CASTILLO EL ANO D 1756 is part of the lengthy inscription, which was more politic than factual. Though the main work was done, construction was still incomplete ; opportunist Governor Fernandez however, seized time by the forelock and raised the inscription on the name day of the King, who was pleased to approve this action.
 2. Census in William G. De Brahm, "History of the Three Provinces" (MS., 1765).

Spain lost her love for Florida. More imminent, however, were the storm clouds gathering to the north.

The War of Independence began in 1775. While the thirteen colonies banded together against the tyrant George III, Florida stoutly proclaimed loyalty to the king. In Philadelphia the patriots signed a Declaration of Independence, but in St. Augustine His Majesty's subjects burnt the effigies of Sam Adams and John Hancock ; so hundreds of Loyalists left the embattled colonies to find refuge in Florida. Wartime influxes of soldiers, refugees, guns and supplies changed what had been a steady, normal and healthy development of Florida's latent resources into a boom of land-office proportions. The inadequate East Florida ports hummed with activity: "many industrious Persons," wrote Patrick Tonyn, governor of East Florida, "have by planting considerably increased their fortunes, and the inspection of the Custom house Books evinces that notwithstanding the difficult navigation [i. e., the want of good ports], if we can raise produce, it will find its way to the Markett. . ." ³

The records bear out the statement with long lists of exports that show the substantial character of British exploitation of the new province. While Washington's troops were starving at Valley Forge, the plantations around St. Augustine were producing over 1,000 barrels of rice, 148 hogsheads of molasses and 13 puncheons of belly-warming rum, in addition to sugar and experimental coffee and cocoa. Naval stores-tar and

3. Governor Patrick Tonyn to George Germain, July 3, 1779, British Public Record Office, Colonial Office 5, v. 559, pp. 433-456. These records, the Library of Congress transcripts of which were used for this study, are hereafter cited as C. O. 5

turpentine-brought in profits for the settlers ; lumbering was a growing business with shipments of over 500,000 feet of pine lumber, 52,000 feet of mahogany, 419,000 oak staves, 124,500 cypress shingles, 4,000 hoops and even 120 handspikes being loaded aboard British freighters. Tortoise shells and rawhides were commercial items, while 7,000 tons of deerskins were shipped during 1777. Indigo was a staple, for about 15,000 pounds of it were packed for export. The next year, Madeira and claret wines appear on the lists, along with 5,000 oranges and 16 hogsheads of orange juice, 5 barrels of vinegar, and such other articles as pimiento, ginger and sarsaparilla. Prosaic tallow, aromatic cedar and red bay lumber found markets. A few spars were cut from surrounding pine barrens that could have outfitted the entire British fleet.⁴

St. Augustine became a British base of operations against the southern colonies and military activity was focussed at the fort. In the magazines of St. Marks were stored provisions, arms and ammunition for troops and vessels. The garrison was strengthened, which necessitated second floors being built in some of the rooms to accommodate more men as well as more supplies. The harbor was a rendezvous for patrol boats and privateers. The East Florida Rangers were organized. Indian allies were supplied from the King's stores. Troops marched from here against Savannah and Charleston, the Rangers made destructive raids in the Georgia country, and Deveaux's spectacular capture of New Providence in the Bahamas was the climax of another move from the St. Augustine base.

4. Account of the exports from the Province of East Florida, C. O. 5, v. 559, pp. 465-472.

Governor Patrick Tonyn, once an army officer, was, to quote his own words, "still animated with military ardour".⁵ Rather wistfully he longed for military power along with his civil authority, but on that score he was consistently snubbed and found himself obliged to look elsewhere for outlets to his military ambitions. The results were considerable, as he reported to the Colonial Secretary :

"The Spirit of Privateering, my Lord, which I endeavoured by every means in my power to excite, and keep up, while it answered the publick purpose of annoying, and distressing the Rebels, has accumulated wealth to the adventurers, and I will venture to assert that the depredations by the Loyal Inhabitants of this Province by Sea, and Land, have contributed to sicken the Rebels of their Revolt, and forced them to keep those Troops in the Southern Provinces for internal defence, which would otherwise have strengthened Washington's Army . . ."⁶

In fact, Florida's role as a loyal colony encouraged Governor Tonyn to hint that King George might be pleased to "confer upon this Province some distinguishing mark of royal favour for its adherence to its allegiance during a general revolt of the Colonies, and I beg leave," Tonyn smugly persuaded, "to suggest the propriety of altering the Northern Boundary by extending it from the St. Marys River to the River Altamaha, the Lands lying between these Rivers were annexed to the Province of Georgia only in 1763, and this Province may claim them upon a kind of title of conquest, they being during the Rebellion generally occupied by the Florida Rangers, and the Rebel Forts on

5. Tonyn to the Earl of Shelburne, Nov. 14, 1782, C. O. 5, v. 560, pp. 469-474.

6. Tonyn to Germain, July 3, 1779, C. O. 5, v. 559, pp. 443-456.

the North side of the Altamaha have been repeatedly demolished . . . ”⁷

During the war Spanish spies in St. Augustine furnished complete data on the condition of the defenses there, and, when the conflict broadened after Saratoga with the entry of France and Spain in the fight against England, Spanish strategists drew minutely detailed plans for the capture of the formidable castillo. True, the Spanish attack did not materialize, but the English were not blind to its possibility.⁸ More guns peered from the embrasures of the castle, repairs were made, huge barracks were built, outworks were strengthened, and the old palisades and earthworks surrounding the town were either reconditioned or replaced by other works more strategically located. Three-quarters of a century before, the *castillo* had received its baptism of fire from British cannon; now it was ready to defend the very nation which had attacked it.

Yet, except as a threatful deterrent to invasion, Castle St. Mark did not prove important to Britain as a fortification. Instead, it became a prison for patriots. The dark, damp bombproofs held the

7. *Id.*

8. Pensacola, West Florida capital, was captured by the Spanish under Galvez in 1781. For details of the proposed Spanish attack on St. Augustine see “Ataque de San Agustín de la Florida,” Mar. 13, 1779 (no. 52); “Estado en que se hallava la Plaza de san Agustín de la Florida . . .” Oct. 29, 1780 (no. 50); and “Por haver variado los datos sobre los quales se fundo el Plan de ataque . . .” Jan. 12, 1781 (no. 49), all in bundle 76, *Public Buildings, Fortifications and Defenses*, East Florida Spanish Papers (Library of Congress); and transcripts of the Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, *Legajos* 1290, 1291 (Library of Congress). See also such letters as that of Tonyn to Germain, Mar. 5, 1781, C. O. 5, v. 560, pp. 191-194, enclosing copies of Tonyn’s letters to British commanders Cornwallis, Clinton, Gayton, Clark and others. Of considerable interest in this connection is Kathryn T. Abbey’s “Spanish Projects for the Reoccupation of the Floridas during the American Revolution” (*The Hispanic American Historical Review*, v. IX, no. 3).

rebels who could not be trusted to the town gaol or the more comfortable State House or the prison ship *Otter*, anchored in the harbor.

Some of the first American prisoners came in September 1776. They were men taken in the Virginia campaign by the Earl of Dunmore, who explained to Governor Tonyn:

"I have sent you a number of prisoners on board the *Otter*, that have fallen into my hands from time to time which I find absolutely impossible to keep any longer here. I have therefore to request you will put them in some place of *security*, 'till an exchange shall be made, which I frequently offered, but the Rebels have ever evaded it . . ." ⁹

The best "place of *security*" was judged by Tonyn to be the castle, so on September 22 the patriots tramped over the bridge and into the sally port to their gloomy prison cells.

Soon afterwards, His Majesty's Sloop *Otter* was appointed a station ship for the province and the men were marched out of the castle and again boarded the floating prison. It turned out that Captain Squire, master of the *Otter*, had his own sympathies. Twelve of the rebels he sent back to the castle, with the word that their behavior showed them "too dangerous" to keep on board; then, voyaging northward, he released the rest of his charges near the St. Marys river.

Meanwhile, those in the castle were within reach of sympathetic Chief Justice William Drayton and *habeas corpus* proceedings, so Governor Tonyn made the best of a bad bargain. He paroled the ranking officer, Lt. Col. Anthony Lawson, and sent him to Virginia for exchange. Prisoner Will West-

9. The Earl of Dunmore to Patrick Tonyn, July 31, 1776, C. O. 5, v. 557, p. 135. Dunmore's letter enclosed a list of prisoners (*ib.* p. 136), which is reproduced in Appendix I of this article.

cott threatened Lord Dunmore with a lawsuit for illegal imprisonment, so Tonyn let him go after coaxing him to sign an agreement to forego legal action. With the rest, matters took their due course and on December 21, 1776, they applied for writs of *habeas corpus*.¹⁰

The number of the prisoners was augmented from time to time; and not the least of these were the seamen-French, Spanish and American-whose ill fortune brought them to the Florida port. For two centuries the *guarda de costas* had brought maritime prizes into the harbor, but now the tables were turned and Spanish vessels were among those sailed by prize crews into the erst-while Spanish stronghold.¹¹ The *Nuestra Senora del Carmer*, captured off Charleston by the *Carysfort*, was brought with its Spanish master and crew and several shipwrecked French sailors to St. Augus-

10. Wrote Drayton: "It is only by Inference, or Conjecture, that it can be concluded . . . that these Men were taken up for having been in Rebellion.-Ld. Dunmore says, that they are Prisoners, whom he wish'd to have exchange'd with the Rebels for others--But it does not appear even generally [sic], that these Men had committed Treason, or been in Rebellion: much less is it particularly specified, what Kind of Treason . . ." (Exhibit A, Drayton's opinion, Jan. 6, 1777, C. O. 5, v. 557, pp. 127-134, which see.) Also see the letter enclosing this opinion, Drayton to Germain, Jan. 30, 1777, *ib.*, pp. 123-126; letter, Tonyn to Germain, Oct. 18, 1776, *ib.*, pp. 1-4; letter, Tonyn to the Earl of Dunmore, Dec. 24, 1776, *ib.*, pp. 73-76; and its enclosure, copy of "Parole Honour, Anthony Lawson", Nov. 23, 1776, *ib.*, pp. 77-80.

Drayton's action did not necessarily free the Virginians. They were required to furnish bail and appear at the next session of the court six months later. Many St. Augustine prisoners, said Drayton in his letter to Germain (C. O. 5, v. 557, pp. 123-126), "have now been in Confinement near two years, & . . . only one of them has been able to profit himself of the Judgment of the Court in their Favour; for being in a Province remote from any of their Friends, or Connexions, no more could find Bail . . ."

11. See the general accounts for expenses incurred for refugees and prisoners, 1777-1783, C. O. 5, v. 559, pp. 125-132; v. 560, pp. 137-140, 551-554. See also W. H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida* (Florida State Historical Society, Deland, 1929) v. 1, p. 56.

tine. There, just inside the harbor, the tide grounded her on a sand bar. Hoping to lighten ship, Pilot Smith jettisoned the cargo of salt, while much of the more palatable merchandise—rum, sugar and molasses—was confiscated by certain local residents before the sloop broke up in a northeaster. It was no wonder that the Spanish ambassador protested.¹²

Rumors about the evils of prison life at St. Augustine spread rapidly but they were perhaps due mainly to an association of ideas, for to the Anglo-Saxon mind a Spanish-built *castillo* must be fully equipped with the dungeons and apparatus of the inquisition,¹³ According to official reports, prisoners in St. Augustine were generally treated “with great tenderness”, most of them being either paroled to their own homes or given the liberty of St. Augustine’s narrow streets.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the rumors seem to have been rather widely believed. In the summer of 1777 the American ship *Franklyn* had been taken off Charleston by Lt. Ellis of the *Hinchinbrook*.¹⁵ Late in August Governor John Rutledge of South Carolina dispatched an accusatory letter to Tonyn, asking for the truth of the report that Captain Engs and his crew of the *Franklyn* were lying in a dungeon, and threatening retaliation on British captives at Charleston.¹⁶

12. Tonyn to Germain, Oct. 13, 1779, with enclosures listing prisoners, cargo, and giving pertinent depositions, C. O. 5, v. 559, pp. 381-434; and Germain to Tonyn, Feb. 10, 1779, v. 559, pp. 53-60.

13. Torture had practically disappeared by 1700. As for the dungeons at which Rutledge (see post) professed horror—the inky powder magazines of U. S.-owned Fort Jefferson made excellent dungeons during the 1860’s, almost a century after the Revolution.

14. Tonyn to John Rutledge, Aug. 21, 1777, C. O. 5, v. 557, pp. 717-724.

15. *Id.*

16. John Rutledge to Tonyn, Aug. 5, 1777, C. O. 5, v. 557, pp. 711-716.

"The well established Character of the English Nation for humanity and generosity," wrote Tonym in reply, "I doubt not will remain unsullied in this unhappy Contest . . ." ¹⁷

Engs and his fellows were not in a dungeon, but in a "healthy and airy situation", getting fat (Tonym intimated) on provisions from the King's stores. ¹⁸

But as the war progressed and expenses mounted it apparently became more and more difficult to find the means for keeping the prisoners alive. Until the general exchange at the conclusion of hostilities, there were an estimated 300 or so prisoners who had to be housed and fed, and the Florida governor was hard put to find the 2,000 per year required to pay the commissioner of prisoners, buy the rice, flour, beef, pork and medicine, and repair the gaols for these unwilling inhabitants of St. Augustine, especially when loyal British refugees also had to be fed. Still, nobody starved and the little town had been known from earliest times as an exceptionally healthful post. If a prisoner did die (there were eight deaths in 1780), His Majesty's Government paid a carpenter to make a simple coffin and the gravediggers and the rector to handle interment. ¹⁹

Of course, prisoners were exchanged from time to time as opportunity presented. Yet, unless the fortunes of war at the moment favored the cause of King George, the Florida governor was reluc-

17. Tonym to Rutledge, Aug. 21, 1777, C. O. 5, v. 557, pp. 717-724.

18. *Id.*

19. General Accounts of Sundry Contingent Expences, 1778-1779, C. O. 5, v. 559, pp. 125-128, 539-542; for 1779-1780, v. 560, pp. 63-66, 137-140; also Tonym to the "Commissioners for Sick and hurt", Apr. 14, 1783, with enclosures, v. 560, pp. 543-554; and especially "Memorial of His Excellency Governor Tonym to the . . . Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury", Dec. 10, 1779, v. 559, pp. 573-576.

tant to negotiate direct exchanges, for, as he said, the rebel prisoners "were too well acquainted with our weak situation. . ." ²⁰ In one notable instance, a French cartel from Charleston anchored in the St. Augustine roadstead and proposed a reciprocal exchange of prisoners. Tonyn refused. He had news that the French fleet was busy in the West Indies, and he evidently believed—since the prison ship had no English prisoners aboard—that the Frenchmen intended to carry his prisoners off to the scenes of action without bringing any Britishers back from Charleston. Consequently, the French were not even allowed to come into the harbor, much less set foot ashore. Then, in order to have a *bona fide* excuse for refusing exchanges in the near future, Tonyn cannily delivered his informed prisoners to the privateer Hero for a voyage to England. There they would doubtless be out of action for some time to come. ²¹

The gaols at St. Augustine caught only a few of the patriots operating in southern waters. Many adventurous privateers were consistently employed throughout the war at their chosen profession of twisting the British lion's tail for their own benefit.

One of the first successes came on a calm summer morning in 1775. The English brig *Betsey* was hove to in the roadstead outside the harbor in plain view of the watch in the castle tower. She was heavily loaded with badly needed gunpowder. Before tide was high enough for her to cross the bar a South Carolina privateer, manned by a crew of 26 armed rebels, stole alongside. The rebels overpowered the soldier-laborers aboard, and took away 111 barrels of His Majesty's powder. As a final piece of insolence, the sloop's captain, one Clement

20. Tonyn to Germain, Nov. 29, 1779, C. O. 5, v. 559, pp. 547-550.

21. *Id.*

Lempriere, left payment for the powder in the form of a 1,000 draught on a Charleston merchant. Tonyn's men gave chase, but the rebel sloop slipped into the Savannah river and sailed the tortuous inland passage to Beaufort. The *Betsey's* captain "protested against these violent proceedings" and Tonyn issued a proclamation against the "pirates".²² But the powder was gone.

The best known prisoners to arrive in St. Augustine were the South Carolinians. In the century past the founding of the nearby Carolina settlement had been a weighty factor in the decision by the Spaniards to build *Castillo de San Marcos*. And in the following years Carolina troops marched more than once against the impregnable castle. Now that St. Augustine was at last a British possession, the Carolinians were again on the wrong side, and this time they might have wished that the walls of the castle were even harder to achieve.

On May 12, 1780, Charleston surrendered to British forces, among whom were troops from St. Augustine. Many of the most influential and active South Carolina patriots were captured and then released on parole. About a month later General Clinton issued a proclamation which the affected citizens considered an affront to their honor and a violation of the articles of capitulation.²³ One result was that Lord Cornwallis loaded sixty-three of the rebel prisoners and some of their servants aboard two ships and sent them to the Florida capital as

22. Tonyn to Earl of Dartmouth, Aug. 24, 1775, C. O. 5, v. 555, pp. 323-326.

23. B. J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (New York, 1852), v. II, p. 768, especially footnote 1.

hostages of war. The first ship came into port on September 15, and the other on November 24, 1780.²⁴

Here the patriots were turned out on parade and a British officer stepped forward,

"Expediency, and a series of political occurrences," he told them, "have rendered it necessary to remove you from Charleston to this place; but, gentlemen, we have no wish to increase your sufferings; to all, therefore, who are willing to give their paroles, not to go beyond the limits prescribed to them, the liberty of the town will be allowed; a dungeon will be the destiny of such as refuse to accept the indulgence."²⁵ Most of the Carolinians gave their paroles, but some preferred the castle.

The majority of the paroled men were lodged either in the gaol or the more pleasant State House, where they had the privilege of a nearby orange grove. Several of them even set about planting and cultivating small garden plots, probably as much for exercise as for the produce. In the Parish Church, the prisoners were provided with seats, but they refused to attend services where prayers were said for the success of the British forces. They had their own minister, John Lewis, the rector of St. Paul's Parish, until he addressed them upon the text, "The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee" (Kings, xxi, v. 3). This ambiguous dissertation took him to quarters in the

24. "Alphabetical Return of the names and titles of the Rebel prisoners landed from Charles Town at Saint Augustine, September 15th and November 24th 1780", C. O. 5, v. 560, pp. 115-118. See Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South* (Charleston, 1851), pp. 317-319, who lists 68 prisoners; and compare also Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War* (Charleston, 1822), p. 165. Prisoners were also sent to Havana from time to time; see Tonyon to Don Juan Manuel de Cagigal, Governor of Cuba, Nov. 30, 1781, C. O. 5, v. 560, pp. 317-320.

25. Garden, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.

castle. Tonym accused him of leading his compatriots in "very improperly held private meetings for the purpose of performing divine Service agreeable to their rebellious principles, and . . . such proceedings are thought injurious to His Majesty's Government, and of seditious tendency, and an infringement on their pledge of honour . . ." ²⁶

The roster of prisoners from Charleston reads like a contemporary *Who's Who*. A third of them were members of the South Carolina Assembly. And there was David Ramsay, noted historian, the surgeon of the Ancient Battalion of Artillery, who saw service at both Savannah and Charleston; two other surgeons, John Beed and Noble Wimberley of Georgia; Lt. Hugh Rutledge, Judge of Admiralty; Attorney General Alexander Moultrie, Major of Militia; schoolmasters James Thomson and Benjamin Waller; attorney Jacob Read; General Griffith Rutherford and Colonel Elijah Isaacs, both of whom had been taken previously at Gates' defeat at Camden; and the aging General Christopher Gadsden. ²⁷ Gadsden, Rutherford, Isaacs and Read were among those sent to the dungeons at Castle St. Marks. ²⁸

Perhaps the most famous of the Carolina prisoners were three men who had signed the Declaration of Independence—Arthur Middleton, Edward Rutledge, and Thomas Heyward, Jr.—and fiery old Chris Gadsden.

Arthur Middleton, gentleman planter, traveler, congressman and soldier, had the peculiar honor of having been elected South Carolina's governor

26. Tonym to William Brown, Nov. 18, 1780, C. O. 5, v. 560, pp. 111-114. Also see *Traditions and Reminiscences*, pp. 319-321, especially footnote, p. 321; cf. Garden, p. 200.

27. "Alphabetical Return", cited in note 24, which see. The roll of honor, paraphrased from the Return, is printed in Appendix II.

28. G. R. Fairbanks, *History and Antiquities of the City of St. Augustine, Florida* (N. Y., 1858), p. 172.

(1778) and then declining the office. Like Heyward, he was one of the thirteen members of Carolina's defense committee, the Council of Safety, under whose authority Captain Lempriere sailed to loot the *Betsey* off St. Augustine bar in 1775.

Edward Rutledge, captain in the Charleston Battalion of Artillery, lawyer, congressman and statesman, was the youngest (31) of this trio of signers.

Captain Thomas Heyward, youthful plantation-born jurist, agriculturalist and statesman, wounded in action against the British at Port Royal Island, was again in active service at the fall of Charleston.²⁹

It was Thomas Heyward, who on July 4, 1781, wrote words that are yet remembered. By special permission this day the patriots all ate together. An English plum pudding was brought in, and surreptitiously on its top waved a tiny flag with thirteen stars and stripes. Then, at this Fourth of July patriot dinner in British St. Augustine, was heard for the first time the hymn afterwards sung from Georgia to New Hampshire:

"God save the thirteen States,
Thirteen United States,
God save them all."

Heyward's verses were set to the tune of God Save the *King*, and the guard, peeping in at the windows and deceived by the familiar air, wondered at what they took to be the sudden return of loyalty to King George.³⁰

Brigadier-General Christopher Gadsden, described by Governor Tonyn as "titular Lieutenant Governor [of South Carolina] an old Man of a distinguished inflammatory disposition" and one of the

29. A. S. Salley, Jr., *Delegates to the Continental Congress from South Carolina* (Charleston, 1927).

30. *Traditions and Reminiscences*, p. 320.

“Rebellious Prisoners . . . who were troublesome in keeping alive the flame of Rebellious Principles amongst the Inhabitants in Charlestown”³¹, refused to give a second parole after the one in Charleston had been violated. This refusal, said Gadsden, was a “Standing protest against such outrageous tyrannical Conduct . . .”³² His imprisonment is best described by himself:

“forty two Weeks . . . I was confin’d in the Castle, & none of my Friends permitted to see me . . . Their Treatment of me when taken up the 27th of August last, was much more severe & pointed than against any of my friends, which appears to me more owing to the Station I was In, than as Mr. Gadsden, (tho I beleive [*sic*] no Favourite as such,) & my lot not being mention’d in the Capitulation gave them an opportunity to affect treating me with Rigour & Contempt . . . When in the Castle the Officers were order’d frequently not to converse with me, however many of them often did, & all of them behaved with Decency. I never had the least Insult offer’d me there. Once indeed there was an Order against my lighting a Candle in Consequence of which I went without for two or three nights, but the pitifulness of this they were soon asham’d of themselves . . .”³³

It was at this time that Benedict Arnold betrayed the American cause and was found out through the capture of the British spy, Major John Andre. The execution of Andre was ordered.³⁴ General Washington was informed that the British would retaliate

31. Tonym to Germain, Dec. 9, 1780, C. O. 5, v. 560, p. 102.

32. Christopher Gadsden to (George Washington), Aug. 10, 1781.

33. *Id.*

34. Arnold proposed to betray the American fortress at West Point. Andre was captured behind the American lines, courtmartialed, and finally executed as a spy on October 2, 1780.

if Andre died, and Colonel Glazier, Commandant of the Castle, sent word to Gadsden that Gadsden himself would probably be the one selected to pay for Andre's death. Even this threat did not break the old Patriot's indomitable spirit. He simply told the Commandant that he was always ready to die for his country.³⁵

Nor was this the only threat to the lives of the patriot prisoners. Another came in June 1781 after the siege of Augusta, Georgia. Lt. Colonel Thomas Brown, commander of the East Florida Rangers, was captured and threatened with death. Colonel Glazier at once announced his intention to hang six of the patriots if Brown were executed.³⁶ There was a general exchange of prisoners which came in time to relieve the tension.

Early in August 1781 two small vessels transported the Carolina prisoners to Philadelphia where "in good Health & Spirits" the gentlemen made arrangements to return to their homes.³⁷ A few

35. Garden (pp. 172-173) furnishes an indirect quotation of Gadsden's words: "he was always prepared to die for his country; and though he knew it was impossible for Washington to yield to the right of an Independent State by the Law of War, to fear or affection, yet he would not shrink from the sacrifice, and would rather ascend the scaffold than purchase with his life the dishonour of his country."

36. Ramsay, *History of North Carolina* (Charleston, 1809) p. 372. Ramsay was one of the Charleston prisoners sent to St. Augustine. See also Siebert, v. I, p. 86. Brown, a stormy petrel only recently from England, had been forced by circumstance into his Florida career. Tonyn referred to him as "Mr. Brown, a most respectable Gentleman of very considerable Fortune in the back Countries of Carolina and Georgia. He was most inhumanly treated, he was tar'd and feathered, about eighteen months ago, was scorched with hot Irons, and some of his toes were burned off . . ." Tonyn to Germain, Jan. 7, 1777, C. O. 5, v. 557, pp. 89-92; cf. the "Georgia Gazette", 1775, cited in C. B. Reynolds, *Old St. Augustine* (St. Augustine, 1885), pp. 92-93, footnote.) It was this event that caused him to seek the more salubrious Florida climate. He led his Rangers on several forays into Georgia Territory.

37. Gadsden to (Washington), Aug. 10, 1781.

weeks later, Cornwallis surrendered to Washington at Yorktown and the conflict was virtually ended. Most of the prisoners left at St. Augustine were sailors, and at the close of the war they were either released or sent on exchange to Havana, the British West Indies, or New York.³⁸

Then, one day under the guns of the fort, there sailed a ship with portentous news. By the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Spain had ceded Jamaica to Great Britain and Florida was relinquished to Spain. So for a little while the proud banner of Spain waved again over the province, and the fort once more took its Spanish name of *Castillo de San Marcos*.

The iron-leaved Book of Fate was not yet turned to the American destiny of this weathered old castle.

APPENDIX I

Patriots from Virginia who were imprisoned at Castle St. Mark in September 1776:

Col. Anthony Lawson	Jack Morro
Lt. William Hunter	Finlay Irwin
Ensign William Harewood	John Fever
Charles Decay	Thomas Watkins
William Westcoat	William Hill
Zebidiah Sheperson	Matthew Stubbs
John Mc[C]lenachan	John Mason
Isaac Wickershand	William Kimblen
John Freeman	George Wishurt
Samuel Cardeale	George Demy
David James	David Parsons
William Johnston	Charles Lee
James Sharwood	David Cranley
Antony Boyle	James Murphy

33. "General Account of Extraordinary Expences incurred . . . for the Maintenance and support of Marine Prisoners of War . . ." Aug. 27, 1782, to Mar. 2, 1783, C. O. 5, v. 560, pp. 551-554.

APPENDIX II

Patriot prisoners sent to St. Augustine after the fall of Charleston in 1780:

Beresford, Richard, planter.
 Berwicks, John, planter, Member of Assembly.
 Bee, Joseph, planter.
 Beed, John, Surgeon.
 Blake, Edward, merchant, 1st Commissioner of Navy, Member of Assembly.
 Bourdeaux, Daniel, merchant.
 Cochran, Robt., powder receiver.
 Cudworth, Benjamin, vendue master.
 Cripps, John Splatt, merchant, formerly Lieut. Militia.
 Crouch, Henry, planter, Member of Assembly.
 Darrell, Edward, merchant, Commissioner of Navy.
 DeSausseur, Daniel, merchant, formerly Paymaster General, Southern district, Member of Assembly.
 Edwards, John, merchant, Commissioner of Navy, Member of Assembly.
 Ferguson, Thomas, planter, member of Privy Council.
 Flagg, George, painter.
 Grimball, Thomas, attorney, sheriff, Major of Militia, Artillery.
 Gadsden, Christopher, temporary Lieut. Governor, formerly Colonel of a Continental Regiment, Brigadier General, Delegate to Congress.
 Gibbs, William Hasell, attorney, Lieut. Militia, Member of Assembly.
 Hall, George Abbot, merchant, Collector of Customs, Charles Town and Captain of Volunteers.
 Hutson, Richard, planter, member of Privy Council, formerly delegate to Congress.
 Holmes, Isaac, planter, Lt. of Militia, Member of Assembly.
 Hall, William, formerly captain of the Notre Dame.
 Hal, Thomas, formerly Captain of Continentals.
 Heyward, Thomas, attorney, assistant Judge, Captain of Artillery, Militia, Member of Assembly, and formerly delegate to Congress.
 Isaacs, Elijah, Lt. Cot. Militia, taken at Gates' defeat.
 Jones, Noble Wimberly, surgeon.
 Johnson, William, blacksmith, Member of Assembly.
 Lushington, Richard, merchant, Captain of Militia.
 Loveday, John, gardener, messenger of Privy Council.
 Logan, William, merchant.
 Lewis, Rev'd John, Rector of St. Pauls Parish.
 Lee, William, watch maker, Captain of Militia.
 Livingston, William, factor, Captain of Militia.
 Moultrie, Alexander, Attorney-general, Major of Militia, Member of Assembly.
 Massey, William, formerly Deputy Muster-Master general Southern district with Lieut. Col. rank Continentals.
 Middleton, Arthur, planter, Member of Assembly, formerly Delegate to Congress.
 McCrady, Arthur, tavern keeper.
 Mowat, John, formerly Captain of Continentals.
 North, Edward, merchant.

- Neufville, John, merchant.
 Parker, Joseph, formerly Major of Continentals.
 Poyat, John Ernest, planter, Member of Assembly.
 Prioleau, Samuel, Vendue Master.
 Portell, Benjamin, planter, formerly Lieut. Continentals.
 Peters, Christopher, planter.
 Read, Jacob, attorney, Captain of Militia.
 Rutledge, Hugh, Judge of Admiralty, Member of Assembly, Lieut. of Volunteers.
 Ramsay, David, surgeon, Member of Privy Council.
 Rutledge, Edward, attorney, Member of Assembly, Captain of Militia, formerly delegate to Congress and one of the Commissioners deputed to treat with the British Commissioners.
 Rutherford, Griffith, planter, Brigadier of Militia taken at Gates' defeat.
 Smith, Josiah, merchant, Commissioner of Navy, Member of Assembly.
 Sansom, John, crier of the Court of Admiralty.
 Singleton, Thomas, Tavern keeper.
 Savage, Thomas, planter.
 Smith, Phillip, planter.
 Timothy, Peter, printer, Clerk of Assembly.
 Todd, John, Tavern keeper.
 Thomson, James, School Master.
 Toomer, Anthony, brick layer, Captain of Militia Artillery and Member of Assembly.
 Wilkinson, Morton, planter.
 Wakefield, James, merchant.
 Waller, Benjamin, school master.
 Weyman, Edward, Cabinet maker, Marshal of Court of Admiralty, member of Assembly, and Lieut. Artillery Militia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Primary Sources :

This monograph is based mainly upon data found in the Library of Congress transcripts of the British Public Record Office papers, Colonial Office 5, and especially upon v. 555, 557, 559-560. Class 5, the Colonial Office series, v. 540-573, is the largest body of British archival material in this country relating specifically to the East Florida province. (Castillo de San Marcos study collection contains microfilms of v. 540-560, 563, 571-572, 577-582.) The mass of the Colonial Office transcripts relates to civil administration of the province with the attendant economic and judicial problems but, as is natural, considerable military data are also included. The Library of Congress has other reproductions also of official British papers pertinent to the field.

The William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan is the repository for the Gage Papers, indispensable original source, many of which have been used in developing the background of the narrative. (The Castillo collection has a reference microfilm of bundles 540-568, 1000, 1020-1032, from the correspondence of this British General.) Obviously military documents, the Gage Papers are by no means limited

to the military alone. For the purpose in hand, the essential section of these papers comprises correspondence between Gage, Commander of the British forces in North America, and the commanding officers at St. Augustine, which is an indication of their significance for the history of the Fort. In the same repository are valuable but less productive collections such as the Shelburne, Clinton, and Amherst Papers, among others. Charles Mowat, "Material Relating to British East Florida" (*The Florida Historical Quarterly*, v. XVIII, no. 1), evaluates the pertinent material.

An important manuscript by William Gerard De Brahm, "History of the Three Provinces" (1765), is in the Harvard College Library. (A microfilm of the St. Augustine section is in the Fort Marion study collection.) It contains a contemporary description of Florida at the beginning of the English occupation, a description which is supplemented with statistics and numerous beautifully drafted maps.

Christopher Gadsden's signed autograph letter to General George Washington bears the dateline of Philadelphia, August 10, 1781, and summarizes Gadsden's St. Augustine experience. The original is in the Library of Congress, and the text has been published in Spark's *Correspondence of the Revolution* (v. III, p. 376). (A photostat copy of the manuscript is in the museum at Castillo de San Marcos.)

II. Memoirs :

Of the personal anecdotes which are too often lacking in official correspondence, there is an unusually large supply in the memoirs of men who either were here at the time or had the stories directly from friends or relatives who were at the scene. Undoubtedly the most reliable of such works, at least for the present purpose, is David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina* (Charleston, 1809). Dr. Ramsay was one of the Charleston prisoners brought to St. Augustine; and his narrative, though distinctly partisan, is first hand so far as the St. Augustine episode is concerned and is the earliest publication of the memoir group.

Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War in America* (Charleston, 1822) has brought together a collection of stories, printed articles, and letters. Garden, one-time aide to General Greene, was a contemporary of the characters in his book, and a check against primary sources indicates that his material is reasonably dependable.

For intimate details of the life of the Charleston patriots during their St. Augustine stay, Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South* (Walker and James, Charleston, 1851, is the most comprehensive of extant publications.

III. Secondary Works :

A study adequately covering the history of Florida during the period of British ownership has not yet been published.

Perhaps the most easily available of books giving an overview of the period is Kathryn T. Abbey's *Florida, Land of Change* (University of N. C. Press, Chapel Hill, 1941), ch. V,

"The British Interlude". Dr. Abbey, however, devotes most of her space to events in West Florida.

Of the earlier writers, James G. Forbes, *Sketches, Historical and Topographical, of the Floridas* (C. S. Van Winkle, N. Y., 1821), publishes as part of his narrative several official letters, proclamations, and other documents relating to the British period, as well as material from contemporary publications which have since acquired the status of rare books. Forbes's section on British Florida is by far the most detailed account published prior to the appearance of Siebert's work in 1929, and virtually all 19th century historians apparently regarded the work as the authority in the field, drawing heavily from it. Forbes, however, lacked the historian's approach, and in addition the Spanish material he presented is extremely sketchy and flagrantly inaccurate.

A more accessible book is George R. Fairbanks, *The History and Antiquities of the City of St. Augustine, Florida* (C. B. Norton, N. Y., 1858), which has chapters on the British occupation prior to the appearance of Siebert's work in 1929, and virtually all written in more facile style, is Charles B. Reynolds, *Old St. Augustine* (E. H. Reynolds, St. Augustine, 1885). The two chapters on British Florida are developed from Forbes, published reminiscences, and other printed works which are now rare.

Several modern authors have devoted considerable space to important aspects of the period. An exposition of the administrative, social, economic and judicial systems is definitively treated in the unpublished dissertation by Charles L. Mowat, "East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784" (583 pp., University of Minnesota, 1939). Wilbur H. Siebert has written numerous short articles for various historical magazines, but his major publication on the period is *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774-1785* (2v., Florida State Historical Society, DeLand, 1929). Volume I comprises the narrative, most of which was gleaned from a survey of British archival material in connection with editing the transcripts which appear in the second volume and deal mainly with Loyalist claims for losses in the province.

Burton Barrs, *East Florida in the American Revolution* (Guild Press, Jacksonville, Fla., 1932), has contributed many details to the picture, and in an article of similar title, "East Florida in the American Revolution, 1775-1778" (*Florida Historical Quarterly*, v. IX, no. 1), Edgar L. Pennington has liberally transcribed certain of the Stevens and Brown, Library of Congress, transcripts (from the British Public Record Office, Colonial Office class 5) for a rather thin chronicle of military events in the province.

A. S. Salley, *Delegates to the Continental Congress* (Historical Commission of S. C., Columbia, 1927), furnishes biographical information on the Signers who were brought to St. Augustine in 1780.

For a detailed and profusely illustrated history of the War of Independence, Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (Harper Bros., N. Y., 1852), has been used. It is written from the United States viewpoint.