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From a Remote Frontier

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FROM A REMOTE FRONTIER

LETTERS AND REPORTS PASSING BETWEEN THE COMMANDERS AT APALACHE (ST. MARKS,) GOVERNOR GRANT AT ST. AUGUSTINE, GENERAL HALDIMAN AT PENSACOLA, AND GENERAL GAGE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AT NEW YORK, 1767-1769.

(Grant to Gage)

St. Augustine 30th July 1767

Sir :

Your Letter of the 30th April, I had the honor to receive a few days ago by Captain Philips of the Royal Americans who arrived here in his way to Pensacola, to sit upon a General Court Martial, a disagreeable business, which likewise carries Captains Jenkins and Sutherland from this place. 'tis to be hoped those Gentlemen to the Westward, will in future contrive to agree together, and allow our East Floridian Officers to live in peace and quiet at Home. I am almost afraid of an Infection from the Pensacola air.

Mr. Moncrief the Engineer made such Repairs as he found necessary for the immediate security of the Garrison at St. Marks, the whole Expence 37, 12/6, which I paid by Warrant upon the Money Contractors, and I transmitted the account to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, as the work was done by my direction upon an Emergency. I did not think it right to trouble you about the Payment of the account.

NOTE-This series of documents has been edited with an introduction by Mark F. Boyd (see this *Quarterly*, the issue of January, 1941). This is the seventh instalment, and includes documents from the W. L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan and from the Public Archives of Canada, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made. Letters from or to St. Marks are reproduced in full, but only pertinent paragraphs are extracted from those which refer only incidentally to that post. *Ed.*

In consequence of your orders Brigadier Haldimand has sent Mr. Pittman to examine into the state of the Barracks, and of such other Repairs as may be wanted-the Barracks will be found to be the most pressing article.

The Expence attending the Fort of St. Marks is not considerable, as the supplies for the Garrison are send by Water on Board the Provincial Schooner, it is of great use in keeping up a Friendly intercourse with the Indians, in case of Accidents it is a safe retreat for Traders, and from its situation I flatter myself in time to be able to draw a great part of the Trade of the Lower Creeks to that place,-besides the demand for Land is so great in this Province, by the Grantees or their Agents from England-that some of the Settlements must soon extend towards Appalache, the entrance into the Harbor or Bay is discouraging otherwise I should not despair of seeing a Town rise there in a few Years, but at any rate it will always be a post of importance to this Province in time of Peace or War; if we should unfortunately have a difference with Indians, which I shall take every step in my power to prevent, St. Marks would be a proper place to form an attack from, and we shall now be able to keep a Correspondence with West Florida by means of that Post-Brigadier Haldimand desires to know my opinion upon it, and I have told him there is nothing more easy, by a Boats going to and from Pensacola to St. Marks, and by expresses to and from this place to St. Marks, the Expence will be trifling to keep up an intercourse of once a Month, I have proposed to the Brigadier to pay for the Boat and I have offered to pay the Expresses on this side - I think such an arrangement will be of great use to the King's Service in these Infant Colonies-

As I have said so much about the Fort of St. Marks, I must take the Liberty to mention to you that Lieut. Swettenham's conduct the time he Commanded here was very satisfactory, and since he was called away Ensign Wright has acted with great prudence and propriety, during all the disturbances to the Westward I have never had a Complaint of or from the Indians, the two Gentlemen I have mentioned have great Merit from their Management of them, they are both loved and respected by the Indians. I have applied to Brigadier Haldimand to continue Ensign Wright in that Command if the Service will admit of it - I understood before I left England that an allowance would be made to Officers Commanding at distant Posts, if such a Regulation has taken place, it would be very obliging if your Excellency was pleased to put St. Marks upon that footing, in which case I beg leave to recommend Lieutenant Swettenham and Ensign Wright as being both very deserving of that Bounty-

I have the honor to be with the greatest Respect,

Sir-Your Excellency's Most obedient and most humble servant

James Grant

His Excellency the Honble General Gage

(*W. L. Clements Library*)

(*Haldimand to Gage*, Transl. from the French)

Pensacola, August 5, 1767

Sir :

* * * The Lieut. Pittman who has been for some time back from the Apalachees, handed over to me the plan of the Fort of St. Marks with the map of the surroundings and the observations which he has made.* I have the honor of sending them to you with a plan to change the casemates into bar-

racks which might be done at very little expense ; the old barracks are very bad and are not worth extra repairs.

I believe, Sir, that it would be necessary to continue an officer and twenty men at that post because of the ease that it gives us to have communications with St. Augustine. One may get there from here in 15 days (and perhaps in less time when one knows the roads better) whereas the opportunities to send by sea are always rare and very uncertain, and it would be advantageous, whether in time of war, or when something extraordinary might happen in this part of the continent, to have some kind of communication . . . and people always ready to take express. Besides, Sir, that post is not at all exposed, and one may abandon it without risk as soon as one judges it fitting. It has a very good quarry from which the Spaniards removed a great deal of stone.

The fort is not finished, but what there is of it completed is of good masonry work the same as the casemates, and may be put in a state of defense against the Indians with 5 or 600 palisades which it is easy to procure. It is even necessary if one preserves the post to plant a row of piles to prevent the effect of inundations. The points in yellow on the plan of the fort show how the stockade may be placed. * * *

W. L. Clements Library

* *Vide Florida Historical Society Quarterly XII-1934-114.*

(Wright to Haldimand)

Fort St. Marks, Apalacha.
Aug. 14th 1767

Sir,

I was favoured with yours Aug. 11th by Mr. Summers with the two saddles which shall be taken all possible care of. Our Gardens this year have

been in bad order owing to the greatest part of our seeds having been spoiled in the flood but what was planted came to perfection with very little trouble we have since got seeds of most kinds.

The weather now is so excessive hott that the men can't go a fishing in the heat of the day, but in the winter we catch plenty of fish. The Indians also bring in plenty of venison and Turkeys but the latter do not save our provisions the least as they always expect our Provision for it, otherwise they would not bring it in.

The inclosed came to hand August 7th by the Augustine express.

The covering of the Barracks and Guard house is in such bad condition that I must sett the men to work as soon as the cool weather comes on to gett it done by fatigue.

Mr. Barrow as he did not dispose of his cargoe had not room for any stones, particularly care shall be taken that they are not medled with.

I have lately fallen upon a method of punishing the men that "are guilty of small crimes by sending them to work at a road I am making across the marsh which was very bad crossing.

I have the honour to inclose you the returns of the State of the garrison & Barracks with that of the cloathing sent by Mr. Barrow for the party at Pensacola.

Should esteem it as a great favour if you could put me on the same footing with the officers commanding outposts in North America who I am informed have an allowance.

I have the pleasure to inform you his Majesty's Troops at this place are much more healthy than they were last year at this time.

I am Sir, Your Most humble & obedient servant,
Jas. Wright

(Endorsed:) Lt. Wright, 1767, to Haldimand 15th
August, Recd 22nd.
(Public Archives of Canada)

(Haldimand to Gage. Transl. from the French)

Pensacola, Aug. 1, 1767

Sir :

* * * I shall leave in the Apalachee only one officer
and twenty men and I shall send the rest, as well
as the detachment of the 9th Regiment which is
here, to St. Augustine as soon as the season will
permit it. * * *

(Public Archives of Canada)

(Gage to Haldimand)

New York, September 4th, 1767

(Postscript:) Upon Recollection, tho Colonel Taylor
does not mention it, he meant possibly that you
should use the Vessel to Transport the Garrison
of the 9th Regiment from Appalachie to join their
Corps at St. Augustine, relieving them at Ap-
palachie by a Detachment of 31st Regiment at Pen-
sacola, which was Ordered sometime since, and if
not done; I am to beg you would do it as soon as
it is possible.

(Haldimand to Taylor Transl. from the French)

Pensacola, Oct. 5, 1767

Sir :

I am making use of the return of the sloop from
St. Augustine to send there the detachment of the
9th Regiment which was here, keeping only 4 men
who will form part of the detachment of St. Mark,
where I shall send them as soon as possible. The
detachment of that post where Lieut. Wright will

continue to command will be reduced to twenty men. I am sending you, Sir, the orders which I am giving him in that respect, and I beg you to send them to him by the sloop of the province when it goes to the Apalachees with provisions. It will be suitable also, Sir, that you should take the necessary steps with Governor Grant, so that he may give the orders that the detachment that Lieut. Wright is to send away should be received on board. * * *

(Public Archives of Canada)

(Haldimand to Gage Transl. from the French)

Pensacola, November 30, 1767

Sir :

* * * As soon as I obtain the sloop of the province, (or rather if presents itself) I shall send an officer and twenty men of the 21st Regiment to replace the detachment of the 9th Regiment which is at Fort St. Mark which I shall send to St. Augustine; I have believed, Sir, that it would be proper to keep the battalion (?) entire here, so that you may have it at your disposal, persuading myself that the government will make in a short time some change in the distribution of the troops, in this district. * * *

(W. L. Clements Library)

(Haldimand to Gage Transl. from the French)

Pensacola, December 6, 1767

Sir :

* * * These ideas which up to the present appear to me sound, make me believe, Sir, that one could, without any risk, abandon the posts of Natchez, Iberville and Fort St. Mark. * * *

FROM A REMOTE FRONTIER

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I shall make no change in the quarters, nor shall I take away the post of Apalache until I receive your orders * * *

(*W. L. Clements Library*)

(*Wright to Haldimand*)

Fort St. Marks Apalache, March 14th, 1768

Sir :

In consequence of your last letter dated July 29th I put it in orders Aug. 18th for two men to work eight hours in a day to inclose a piece of ground behind the Fort for a garrison garden, they went on pretty well till Sept. 11th when they refused in a body to work any more. I represented the use of it to them & insisted on their going on with it. W. Kernathan who was the leading man & spoke for the rest said in an unbecoming manner that he would sooner go to the Black hole than work. I confin'd nine & ordered two men as usual to work. The morning after the Corp¹ reported two men he had confined for refusing to work and asked if he should order any more-but Ensign St. John & I considering the circumstances thought it most prudent to drop it at the present & by way of punishing their disobedience I exercised them twice a day. After the above I did not think it proper to order the Barracks to be bark'd by fatigue. I recd by Mr. Frazer a letter from colonel Taylor with instructions how to proceed. I this morning read that part of the letter to the men & I am happy to acquaint you Sir that refractory spirit seem to be broke & every man have agreed to go on with the greatest diligence. The two men who were confin'd by the Corp.¹ I released on their asking Pardon & promising never to offend again-but Kernathan who was the oc-

casation of it all, I think deserve some more punishment besides imprisonment.

I have the honour Sir, to enclose you the Returns of the artillery garrison Barracks and Provisions. There is some things noted at the bottom of the artillery return that are very much wanted here. You will see Sir, by the Provision Return we have only flour in the garrison which we have lived on for some time past. This place have always been badly supplied with Provisions it might be attended with fatal consequences and at best it expose us to the insults of the Indians who never fail taking the advantage of our necessity by asking extravagant prices for their meat.

The beginning of last Jany. I held a survey on the Provisions in Store when one tierce of calavances twelve Rations of another with three Barrels of Beef was condemn'd & buried.

March 2nd Mr. Sinnott received a Letter from a Trader acquainting him that Thlehulgee & another Indian that went to the Havannah in novr. 1766 returned to the nation last Sunday well drest &c. but he had no account when or where landed, though Indians that were lately in say there is a Spanish vessel lying at the mouth of the Appalachicola-but Mr. Frazer will be able to inform you Sir of the truth of that report.

I have the honour to be with the greatest respect Sir, Your most obedient & humble Servt.

Jas. Wright.

P. S. I forgot to mention Sir, that four of the men doing duty here are order'd for St. Augustine by the first opportunity.

Addressed: On His Majesty's Service To Brigadier
General Haldimand Commanding all His Majesty's Forces in the Southern District of North America at Pensacola, West Florida
(Public Archives of Canada)

(This series will be concluded in the next number)