

# Florida Historical Quarterly

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Volume 27  
Number 4 *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol 27,  
Issue 4

Article 3

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1948

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### Recommended Citation

Osborn, George C. (1948) "Major-General John Campbell in British West Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 27: No. 4, Article 3.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol27/iss4/3>

## **MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN CAMPBELL IN BRITISH WEST FLORIDA**

by GEORGE C. OSBORN

Late in the autumn of 1778 Brigadier-General John Campbell received a communication from Lord George Germain to proceed from the colony of New York to Pensacola, Province of West Florida.<sup>1</sup> In this imperial province, which was bounded on the west by the Mississippi river, Lake Ponchartrain and the Iberville river, on the south by the Gulf of Mexico, on the east by the Apalachicola river and on the north by the thirty-first parallel but later by a line drawn eastward from the mouth of the Yazoo river,<sup>2</sup> General Campbell was to take command of His Majesty's troops. That the newly appointed leader of the imperial forces in West Florida was largely ignorant of local conditions is evidenced by a letter which he wrote Germain from Kingston, Jamaica, where he arrived on November 30.<sup>3</sup>

While in Jamaica Campbell learned from Governor John Dalling and others that the "conditions in West Florida were by no means pleasing"; in fact, Campbell reported to Germain that the province "must be in very great Distress." As evidences of chaos, the British Foreign Office learned that "the fertile parts of the province" had been deserted partially "in Consequence of the descent [of Captain James Willing's expedition] made last Spring by the Mississippi," that supplies customarily acquired from the Spanish Province of Louisiana, but especially from New Orleans, had been cut off, that "an Embargo [had been] laid, on Provisions" in Jamaica whence West Florida "usually received Con-

\* This paper was presented in part before the annual meeting of The Southern Historical Association, November 4, last.

1. The author did not locate Germain's letter, but the earlier communication is referred to in Campbell to Germain, 26 Dec. 1778, in the Papers of General John Campbell in the Library of Congress. This collection consists of photostatic copies of the correspondence of Campbell and Germain. Unless otherwise described all references will be to this collection. Brigadier-General Campbell was commissioned major-general soon after he arrived in West Florida.
2. Clinton N. Howard, *The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769* (Berkeley, 1947), 7.
3. Campbell to Germain, 26 Dec. 1778, in Campbell papers.

siderable Quantities” and that “the troops at Pensacola had no daily allowance of Rum made them with their Provisions.” To ameliorate these conditions Governor Dalling insisted that Campbell carry a “sufficient Quantity of Provisions to insure the garrison against want.<sup>4</sup> These precautions “were very proper,” replied Germain.<sup>5</sup>

If this picture of West Florida seemed alarming, the report which the Brigadier General sent to Whitehall soon after taking command in Pensacola in January 1779 was astounding. In brevity and frankness, Campbell wrote, he found himself: “without money or credit for Contingent Expenses, without Vessels proper for Navigation or even Batteaux . . . without artificers wherewith to carry on Works . . . without any Provisions or Materials to Work upon, without any Prospect of their being procured . . . but by the labor of the Troops, without Tools for accommodating the few Artificers that could be found among the army, without Engineers Stores, without even [adequate] Provisions.” Such were the conditions that collectively created “the most disagreeable, the most irksome, the most distressing of all situations” to this soldier. But, he promised that his endeavors would be “Strenuously exerted to remedy Evils, to supply Wants and to be prepared to begin the [construction of a] Fort on the Mississippi by September or . . . by October.”<sup>6</sup>

In sealed instructions from Germain, which Campbell found awaiting him in Pensacola, the General was urged to “avoid disputes with, or giving occasions of Offense to the Subjects of Spain.”<sup>7</sup> Campbell took “the earliest opportunity” after his arrival to write Don Bernardo de Galvez, Acting Governor of Louisiana, of his “Ardent wish and Desire to promote and encourage a good understanding between the subjects of their Cath-

4. *Ibid.*

5. Germain to Campbell, April 1, 1779.

6. Campbell to Germain, March 22, 1779, Campbell arrived in Pensacola January 19, 1779.

7. Germain to Campbell, July 1, 1778, in Germain papers, Foreign Office, London.

olic and Britannic Majestys,"<sup>8</sup> The Spanish governor was equally reassuring of his contributing to the "Friendship and good harmony observed by our respective nations."<sup>9</sup> A few months later, in the summer of 1779, "the shackles of neutrality were broken" and Spain declared war on England.<sup>10</sup>

General Campbell brought a "Detachment of Royal Artillery, the Third Regiment of Waldeck and two Provincial Corps—the Pennsylvania and the Maryland Loyalists"—from New York to reinforce the garrison at Pensacola.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the Sixteenth and the Sixtieth regiments, Governor Peter Chester of West Florida had organized three independent companies.<sup>12</sup> Still other troops had been raised by Colonel John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Southern District, who before the arrival of Campbell, was acting under instructions from General Sir William Howe.<sup>13</sup> Germain gave complete authority over all troops in the Province to Campbell,<sup>14</sup> who not only kept those troops found at Pensacola, those which he brought, the Indians recruited by Colonel Stuart, and his subordinates, but those organized by Governor Chester. Campbell was soon requesting of General Sir Henry Clinton a company of Negroes which was under Clinton's command,<sup>15</sup> and later urged his

8. Campbell to Bernardo de Galvez, January 24, 1779. Galvez became governor upon a declaration of war by Spain upon England, June 21, 1779. See John W. Caughey, *Bernardo de Galvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783*, (Berkeley, 1934) 152.

9. Galvez to Campbell February 4, 1779.

10. Caughey, *Galvez*, 149. The Spanish in Louisiana had adopted earlier a policy of benevolent neutrality towards the Americans. Openly the Spanish were neutral but secretly they were supporting the colonies. See Cecil Johnson *British West Florida, 1763-1783* (New Haven, 1943), 200-220.

11. Campbell to Germain, Dec. 26, 1778, in Campbell papers. The Waldeckers were German mercenary troops from the principality of Waldeck. See Max Von Elking, *Die Deutschen Hulfstruppen un Nordamerikanischen Befrenings Kriege, 1776 bis 1783*, 2 vols. (Hanover, 1863) for the detailed report of the experiences of these troops in the American Revolutionary War. These reinforcements numbered about 1200.

12. Germain to Campbell, April 1, 1779, in Campbell papers.

13. *Ibid.* Also see Campbell to Clinton, March 22, 1779.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Campbell to Clinton, February 10, 1779. Also Campbell to Germain, March 22, 1779.

commander-in-chief to send English troops to West Florida.<sup>16</sup> These efforts were augmented by additional levies of Indians and provincials from West Florida.<sup>17</sup> With the increasing number of troops came added difficulties: the problems of adequate quarters and sufficient provisions. Meeting these demands gave Campbell much concern.<sup>18</sup>

The proper defense of this province was the *sine qua non* of General Campbell's mission. In letters to Clinton and in others to Germain the British commander in West Florida wrote in detail his own plans for defense and sought confirmation or alterations.<sup>19</sup> There was the plan of erecting a fort at Manchac on the Mississippi river near Baton Rouge, and of sending troops, laborers, supplies and food to make secure this western outpost.

Germain thought that Fort Manchac should be erected at the "Entrance of the Mississippi into the Iberville at or near the place where Fort Bute stood."<sup>20</sup> Campbell informed General Clinton of the dangers of such a location. First, this site was overflowed by the Mississippi when in flood stage. Second, the surrounding land was so low that water stagnated the entire year and rendered the whole area "extremely sickly." Third, the Iberville was not really a river but was "perfectly dry for a considerable distance" during most of the year. Fourth, and last, the engineers believed that this location, at some reasonable date, would be "carried away by the Mississippi" whereby "the Course of this river may probably be greatly altered."<sup>21</sup> These arguments, apparently, were not confirmed by General Clinton, be-

16. See *id.* to *id.*, June 14, 1780, for a statement that Campbell had requested troops of Clinton.

17. *Id.* to Clinton, February 10, 1780. The English commander in West Florida discussed efforts to secure military support from the Indians and the raising of two troops of light dragoons in the province.

18. For an excellent example of the program for defense and for barracks which Campbell tried to achieve see Campbell to Germain, February 20, 1779, in Campbell papers.

19. Campbell to Clinton, February 10, 1779.

20. Germain to Campbell, quoted *ibid.*

21. Campbell to Clinton, February 10, 1779.

cause ultimately the opinion of the English Foreign Office prevailed and Fort Manchac was begun some miles north of where Bute stood.<sup>22</sup>

Troops sent to this outlying post, in too many instances, deserted to the Spanish. In short, wrote Campbell, "the fidelity of all except the Veterans of the Sixteenth Regiment is not to be depended upon."<sup>23</sup> The Regiment of Waldeckers was "totally unfit for active service" in the "woods and wilds" of West Florida. The provincial soldiers from Maryland and from Pennsylvania were composed largely of Irish vagabonds—deserters from the rebels who by "natural Fickleness and Instability of their Disposition" were "most unfit to be trusted in any post where there was the least Temptation to desert."<sup>24</sup>

General Campbell ventured the opinion that it was absolutely necessary "to detain two large Sloops at Pensacola." With these he would transport "heavy artillery and stores, if possible, up the River Mississippi" until roads could be made overland. These sloops would aid further in establishing a proper landing place at Manchac. Finally, they would be of infinite service in conveying the regiment of Waldeck to the entrance of Lake Ponchartrain from whence smaller vessels would complete the task to Manchac.<sup>25</sup>

Location of the fort, loyalty of the soldiers and provincial transportation were not the only problems which confronted Campbell in his desire for a successful military administration in West Florida. Payment of the troops was in arrears. Since October 1778 only small paper notes had been issued for money, wrote Campbell in February 1779. His Majesty's service was impeded

22. The location of Fort Manchac was on the Mississippi river twelve miles south of Baton Rouge. Consult William R. Shepherd, *Historical Atlas* (New York, 1927), 191, 195.

23. Campbell to Clinton, February 10, 1779, in Campbell papers. "Jail birds and German troops" deserted "even from Mobile and Pensacola."

24. *Ibid.* In February 1779, seventeen men of the Maryland Loyalists deserted in a body with arms and about 100 pounds of ammunition per man. They seemed to be returning to their homes.

25. *Ibid.*

further by the "want of Ship Carpenters" which could be secured only in England or possibly in New York. Furthermore, a naval force must be stationed in the Mississippi river to cooperate with shore batteries if navigation on the river was to be controlled.<sup>26</sup> Added to these difficulties was a scarcity of officers, more especially of artillery officers. Captain Johnstone had been an invalid for more than a year, Lieutenant Wilkinson had been ordered to Saint Augustine in East Florida, two other officers were prisoners of the rebels, still another had been detained on duty at New York and a sixth was laboring "under Insanity of Mind."<sup>27</sup> All of these were artillery officers but official ranks were equally depleted in the Waldecks and in the provincial regiments.

The Indian Department revealed great confusion due largely to the expected death of Colonel John Stuart, who was thought to be in the "Last Stage of Consumption." Though at least two men in this department thought themselves adequate, there was not a single person qualified to "succeed to the Arduous Duty of that office."<sup>28</sup> When Stuart died a short time later, Campbell's worst fears were realized. Governor Chester, with Campbell's advice and consent, resorted to appointing a commission of five men to carry on the work handled by Stuart.<sup>29</sup>

No adequate defence of the province could be realized until the neglected harbors of Pensacola and Mobile were strengthened. The former did not even have the protection of one frigate and there was "not a single Gun mounted to prevent an Enemy from Entering" the harbor. True, there were "two Sloops of war of fourteen guns each" but each was unworthy of being "Ranked in the list of the Royal Navy of Great Britain." Likewise,

26. *Ibid.*

27. Campbell to Clinton March 22, 1779.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Colonel John Stuart died March 21, 1779. For a discussion of this topic see Governor Chester to Germain, March 23, 1779, and *id to id*, April 1, 1779, in Chester's papers in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. Hereafter referred to as Chester papers.

the harbor of Mobile was practically unprotected. The "fort and barracks there are in a similar state to the other military works in this Province, Almost a Scene of Ruin and Desolation." Both "must be deserted or repaired" and 50,000 pounds sterling would not restore the fort alone to its "Original State."<sup>30</sup>

There was yet one other fort in West Florida, namely, Fort Panmure at Natchez. This fort Governor Chester repaired before General Campbell's arrival, but after "the Pannick occasioned by [Captain James] Willings Descent" from Fort Pitt to the lower Mississippi in February, 1775,<sup>31</sup> there had been a "revival of loyalism" at Natchez and the situation was "reported to be good."<sup>32</sup>

Finally, there was a general want of materials, a great need for tools with which to work, and a necessity for an increased number of artificers with which to proceed in the construction of defence projects throughout the entire province.<sup>33</sup> The general health of the military personnel was fair but new supplies of medicine were needed before the sickly season began in June.<sup>34</sup>

The acuteness of conditions in West Florida prodded Germain to action and he "immediately laid the dispatches before the King."<sup>35</sup> Shortly, the Right Honorable Lord informed this commander of the King's troops that George III was in agreement with the steps already taken by Campbell and of the acts contemplated further by him. Supplies and provisions had left England in January in a convoy for Pensacola via Jamaica. Alexander Cameron had been appointed Superintendent of Indian affairs in the Southwest and was to be under the commander-in-chief, General Clinton. If Clinton had no instructions for the new appointee, he was to follow Campbell's orders.<sup>36</sup>

30. Campbell to Clinton, March 22, 1779, in Campbell papers.

31. For a good discussion of Captain James Willing's expedition see Caughey, *Galvez*, 102-134.

32. Campbell to Clinton, March 22, 1779, in Campbell papers.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. Germain to Campbell, June 24, 1779.

36. *Ibid.*



In the late spring of 1779 Campbell reported to Germain the progress of the numerous activities under his supervision. Construction of the Fort at Manchac was proceeding with the use of cypress logs and clay. Until more carpenters could be secured, the building program there would be quite slow. The officers' barracks at Pensacola was literally "falling to pieces." Parts of this building dated from the Spanish period and part from early English occupancy but now Campbell was proposing "to build a New House on the location of the present old Spanish House." In praising Captain John Ferguson of the sloop of war *Sylph*, by whom this message was sent to Germain, as a man of truth, Campbell added that "the genuine Language of Truth is not always to be met with from this country." The persons perverting the truth were "most commonly swayed by Faction or Interest in Lands."<sup>37</sup> In short, lying in the Province of West Florida was caused by political or economic motives.

The annual fleet from England arrived early in April, but one ship, the *Lord Townshend*, with its cargo of provisions was totally destroyed in Port Royal Harbor, Jamaica and two other vessels apparently had been lost. These misfortunes created a distressing situation in that Campbell, who anticipated a twelve months' supply of provisions, was reduced to only fourteen weeks supply of flour. Cattle there were in the province, which could be had in one way or another, but, as a substitute for flour, there was only a small amount of Indian corn.<sup>38</sup> Requests for assistance had been made to Clinton and to Governor Dalling but Campbell was not optimistic that any success would attend his efforts.<sup>39</sup>

The relations between the military and the civilian government were not always ideal. General Campbell

37. Campbell to Germain, May 10, 1779.

38. *Id.* to *id.*, April 7, 1779, Indian corn was secured and when parched, was mixed with the flour.

39. Mention is made of these requests for assistance *ibid.* Campbell had news of a scarcity of provisions in Jamaica. He was forced to send the letter to Clinton via Saint Augustine and even then he was doubtful of the letter reaching its destination. See *ibid.*

and Governor Chester disagreed on several significant problems. Their opinions clashed in the proper steps to be taken in the Indian Department after the death of Stuart.<sup>40</sup> The governor appointed a commission of which Campbell was a member to direct Indian affairs until "His Majesty's Pleasure should be known." Very soon friction arose among the members of the commission as to whom should be recommended as Stuart's successor with Campbell seemingly in the minority. Anyway, he resigned from the commission, and gave as his reason the grave consequences which would ensue if the Governor's recommendation was accepted by the Foreign Office and by His Majesty.<sup>41</sup> Again, these two men differed on the location of Fort Manchac and the acreage of land which should be allocated for the fort and its environs.<sup>42</sup> Finally, Chester complained that Campbell failed to consult him, as the general should have done, about the defense plans for the Province.<sup>43</sup>

Spain declared war on England on June 21, 1779. Four days later a letter from Whitehall marked "Secret and Confidential," went to General Campbell at Pensacola. His Majesty, George III, and Lord George Germain had been in conference to consider "the proper measures to be adopted for making an impression upon the Dominion of Spain." The object of greatest importance was an attack upon New Orleans which was to be "executed with Force already prepared in West Florida." The English intelligence, wrote Germain, represented the Spanish forces at New Orleans to be "greatly inferior." Further-

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.* Governor Chester recommended Charles Stuart, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs to be Superintendent upon Colonel John Stuart's death. When Charles Stuart noted the opposition to his appointment, he requested of Governor Chester that another be named. Alexander Cameron, who had been Deputy Superintendent of the Cherokee Nation became Superintendent at Pensacola. See Campbell to Germain, September 14, 1779.

42. Campbell submitted to Germain duplicates of reports submitted to Colonel Dickson by Captain Miller and another by J. Graham on the best location of the fort. Both Miller and Graham were engineers. *Ibid.*

43. Chester to Germain, November 15, 1776, in Chester papers.

more, the inhabitants were "generally indisposed to the Spanish Government." If General Campbell thought possible to reduce the Spanish fort, he was ordered to proceed at once to make preparations. These preparations included: (1) secure from Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parker as many armed vessels as could be spared from Jamaica, (2) collect all forces which could be drawn together in the province, (3) take as many faithful Indians as the Superintendent could supply, (4) draw on the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury for all expenses.<sup>44</sup> This secret communication reached Campbell safely but when it was dispatched to the English garrisons at Manchac, Natchez and Baton Rouge the message fell into the hands of Governor Galvez at New Orleans.<sup>45</sup>

In the meantime, Governor Galvez had secretly organized the Louisiana province for war. "The independence of America," stated Campbell, "was publically recognized by the beat of the Drum at New Orleans on the 19th day of August," 1779.<sup>46</sup> Forthwith, the Spanish and their Indian allies marched against the English forts on the Mississippi.<sup>47</sup> So successful were they that they "nearly effected the Reduction of the western part of West Florida" before General Campbell at Pensacola had the "smallest Communication of Galvez having Commenced Hostilities."<sup>48</sup> Why Galvez did not follow up his successes along the Mississippi with an immediate advance on Mobile and Pensacola "is difficult to conceive."<sup>49</sup>

44. Germain to Campbell, June 25, 1779, in Campbell papers.

45. Caughey, *Galvez*, 150. The Spanish governor informed his government that he understood the attack was to be from English forces all along the Mississippi, from Canada southward, supported by a force from Pensacola. No such extensive plan of attack was proposed in Germain's note to Campbell. See *ibid.*, 149-150 and Germain to Campbell, June 25, 1779, in Campbell papers.

46. *Id.* to *id.*, August 5, 1779, in *ibid.*

47. General Campbell to Lord George Germain, 14th September, 1779, *ibid.*

48. *Id.* to *id.*, 15th December, 1779, *ibid.*

49. Richard L. Campbell, *Historical Sketches of Colonial Florida* (Cleveland 1892), 116. Apparently, Galvez did not know the real conditions in the British forts. He felt insecure without aid in men and ships from Havana. His Mississippi river campaign was essentially defensive and not offensive. See Caughey *Galvez*, 171-175.

On September 14, Campbell was ready to embark with five vessels and two flatboats and with five hundred men, ample provisions, and a large supply of gifts for the Indians. He was proceeding to the attack of New Orleans when news arrived of Galvez's attack on the Mississippi. "This news," wrote Campbell, "disappointed all my Hopes and ardent desire of fulfilling his Majesty's expectations, and converted my attention from that of attacking [New Orleans] to making Preparations for [the] Defence"<sup>50</sup> of Mobile and Pensacola.

For this surprise attack and the defeat of his Majesty's forces, Campbell offered several explanations.<sup>51</sup> Geographically, the Isle of Orleans, "seventy leagues in length, fertile, populous and rich," commanded the communication, by water, in the west. The Natchez-Manchac district on the west was divided from the Mobile and Pensacola district in the east by a large tract of wilderness which was inhabited by the Choctaw nation of Indians. Militarily, these Indians were not dependable for the English. The Spanish had numerically superior forces and were better equipped than were the English. Personally, Governor Chester was "indifferent in his conduct [of the defense of the Province] and would not proceed one Tittle beyond the strict and most limited Construction of the Law to save West Florida." Finally, despite information of the Foreign Office to the contrary, there was no division in loyalty among the inhabitants of Louisiana. "Sometime ago," stated Campbell, "the Spanish sway was hateful to their French Subjects" but Governor Galvez had adopted "Cajoling and lenient Methods" of dealing with the French. He had been very successful in winning their affections.<sup>52</sup> Of

50. Campbell to Germain, December 15, 1779, in Campbell papers.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.* In this same communication General Campbell wrote extensively of ample supplies having arrived from England and from Jamaica. Evidently, these ships had arrived within a few days and not early enough to transport any of the provisions to the forts in the west. Campbell demanded of Chester the privilege of invoking military law but the governor only called the Council into session. The governor and the Council voted against granting Campbell this power.

course, this was made easy by the alliance of their respective Majesties against England.

With the details of the attack upon and with the terms of capitulation of Manchac and Baton Rouge we are not concerned here. It might be well, however, in passing to note that to Lieutenant-colonel Alexander Dickson, who was in charge of the defeated English forces at Fort Manchac, but who had moved to Baton Rouge shortly before the attack, the terms were "honorable to the troops and Favourable to the Inhabitants."<sup>53</sup> With this conclusion General Campbell apparently was in agreement since he forwarded a copy of Dickson's report to the Foreign Office with the hope that these terms would meet with Germain's approbation.<sup>54</sup> In the Campbell papers there is a testimonial signed by fifty-nine inhabitants of Natchez and another signed by one Harry Alexander, "for and in the name of all the Inhabitants of the Settlement" of Baton Rouge expressing appreciation for the defensive stand of the English troops and assuring continued confidence in General Campbell for his efforts in behalf of the province.<sup>55</sup>

With the loss of the Mississippi area, General Campbell and Lord Germain, quite naturally, centered their attention on the defense of the eastern part of the province. More specifically, this meant the defense of Mobile and Pensacola. Germain expressed disappointment that the English forces were "so easily and so speedily subdued" along the Mississippi,<sup>56</sup> and declared to Campbell that now the "safety of what remained to His Majesty of West Florida" was their chief object, "until circumstances will admit of sending you such a Force as may be sufficient to enable you to act offensively."<sup>57</sup>

At some length, Campbell was instructed from Whitehall. The English forces at Jamaica and in the

53. See Lieutenant-colonel Alexander Dickson to General Campbell, October 20, 1779, *ibid.*

54. See Campbell to Germain, December 15, 1779.

55. Harry Alexander to Campbell, September 21, 1779; also Inhabitants of Natchez, to *id.*, October 4, 1779.

56. Germain to Campbell, April 4, 1780.

57. *Ibid.*

Leeward Islands would give the Spanish ships and troops at the Havannah "full Employment in defending their own possessions," so Campbell would have only Galvez's forces at New Orleans with which to contend. Since Pensacola was of great importance to the court of Spain, every precaution was to be taken against a surprise attack. In case of attack "a vigorous defence" must be made until "Succour can arrive from Jamaica."

The proper management of the Indians was of greater significance than ever. Efforts should be made to "connect the Chickasaws with the Cherokees and Creeks to act jointly" in behalf of the English. The defection of the Choctaws should be anticipated. Campbell was to seek neutrality with a pledge from them to prevent any attack being made through their country. To prevent Indians being used by the Spanish as spies Superintendent Cameron was to discontinue any constant place of residence and was to visit among all nations of Indians. Moreover, this was the best way to cultivate the friendship of the Indians as well as to counteract the intrigues of the Spanish among them. Furthermore, such a procedure would lessen the number of gifts and provisions necessary to placate these people. Lastly, the superintendent must realize that on every occasion he was subservient to General Campbell.<sup>58</sup>

For the first time since Campbell arrived in Pensacola he had ample provisions and supplies. This sufficiency of these necessities greatly pleased Germain "as the difficulties of procuring any considerable Quantity in the Country must now greatly increase and the Risk" of their getting safely to General Campbell from England was much augmented. Great care would be taken to keep a large stock at Jamaica so that "in case of accidents a supply may be drawn from thence." It was, he concluded, to Jamaica that General Campbell "must look for immediate Assistance of every kind."<sup>59</sup>

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

In the meantime, the commander of West Florida reported to General Clinton on steps taken in the recent past and acts anticipated in the near future to prepare for Governor Galvez's reception. First, the Pennsylvania and the Maryland Loyalists depleted by "Death and Desertion" had been combined into one corps.<sup>60</sup> Second, "two troops of Light Dragoons" had been raised to "protect the Frontier Inhabitants from Marauding Parties." These were to be commanded by Adam Chrystie, Esquire, Speaker of the House of the West Florida Assembly. Third, Superintendent Cameron had called a meeting of provincial Indians at Mobile on March 15, at which time it was hoped better relations with the Choctaws could be promoted. Fourth, cultivation of lands already granted was requested by Governor Chester so that additional provisions could be assured. General Clinton was warned again that there were no ships from His Majesty's Navy in the harbors of Pensacola and Mobile.<sup>61</sup>

The very day in which Campbell informed Clinton of the latest developments in West Florida, the Spanish were approaching Fort Charlotte and Mobile. Before the English commander learned more of the fate of Mobile, he emphasized to Germain that "the Fate of West Florida was suspended in the balance." Would the province remain in the hands of Great Britain or fall under the dominion of Spain? Certainly, General Campbell was not very optimistic. His resources for defense, he stated, were not very flattering to his hopes. But Germain could rely on the general's using what he had to the very best of his ability and to "the Good of the King's service." There was great expense in calling upon the "Indians for Military service in this Quarter of the world but this was no time to introduce a system of Economy and Retrenchment of Expenxe in dealing with these people."<sup>62</sup>

60. Campbell to Clinton. February 10, 1780, *Ibid.* Campbell had asked Clinton on February 10 and on March 2, 1779 for confirmation of this anticipated union but he had received no answer from the commander in chief.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Campbell to Germain, February 12, 1780.

On March 14, 1780, Fort Charlotte and Mobile capitulated to "His Catholic Majesty's Arms under the Command of Brigadier General Don Bernardo de Galvez."<sup>63</sup> In immediate command of the English forces at Fort Charlotte was Captain Elias Durnford. General Campbell had left Pensacola with reinforcements as early as March 5 but heavy rains, swollen streams and muddy roads had retarded his progress. When his scouts reported the display of Spanish colors over the fort, Campbell began his homeward trek. The troops returned to Pensacola on March 18 and 19 "without one man being sick." There were, however, three desertions and four men were drowned in the Perdido river.<sup>64</sup>

With the surrender of Mobile, West Florida was "reduced to the District of Pensacola alone." Unless Pensacola was "speedily relieved by a naval Reinforcement from Jamaica," there was "every Reason to Expect that this place" would soon be "invested and besieged."<sup>65</sup> "One Single Frigate," lamented Campbell to Germain, "would have prevented our late Disaster" at Mobile.<sup>66</sup> Vice-Admiral Parker promised aid if a sufficient reinforcement arrived from England,<sup>67</sup> and General Campbell was "flattered with a Possibility of Relief and Support."<sup>68</sup> Although Galvez had actually boarded ships with over 2,000 men for the immediate capture of Pensacola, when he learned of the anticipated aid from Jamaica, he disembarked for further preparations and in the hope that reinforcements would arrive from Havana.<sup>69</sup> Thus the fears of both Campbell and of Germain were assuaged temporarily.<sup>70</sup>

63. *Id.* to *id.*, March 24, 1780.

64. *Ibid.* According to one careful student, Campbell had "eleven hundred regulars, Indians and field artillery." See Caughey *Galvez*, 183. Campbell was not so specific to Germain.

65. Caughey to Germain, March 24, 1780, in Campbell papers.

66. *Ibid.*

67. Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parker to General Campbell, February 29, 1780.

68. Campbell to Germain, March 24, 1780.

69. Caughey, *Galvez*, 187.

70. Germain wrote Campbell on July 4 that he had little "hope this letter will find you in possession of Pensacola unless speedy succor should arrive from Sir Peter Parker." See Germain to Campbell, July 4, 1780, in Campbell papers.



While Governor Galvez was preparing for his advance against the English at Pensacola, the rivalry between Governor Chester and General Campbell flared up again because the governor sought to restrict the general's authority over his Majesty's forces.<sup>71</sup> The issue at stake was the awarding of contracts for supplying the provisions of the approximately 3,000 men in the environs of Pensacola.<sup>72</sup> Seemingly, Germain forced an acceptable solution. Again, Chester displayed indifference to arousing civilians to support Campbell's defense program.<sup>73</sup> The English were very active in bettering their relations with the Indians. Germain was informed that as many as 1600 Indians, including men, women and children, were collected at one time. By delaying their attack, the Spanish had exhausted the patience of the Indians, as well as most of the English provisions and presents.<sup>74</sup> Galvez learned of the increasing favor of the English with the Indians and addressed a "humanitarian appeal" to Campbell:

"The Indians who are in the English Interest believe that it is their Duty to Pillage and destroy all the Inhabitants which are of another Nation. Those who have taken part with Spain, think that by right of retaliation they may commit like Hostilities against the English Inhabitants . . . In order that a War which We carry on through duty and not through hatred might not be rendered still more bloody I hope your excellency will join me in a reciprocal agreement which may shelter us from the horrid imputation of inhumanity."<sup>75</sup>

71. See *ibid.* Also *id.* to *id.* July 27, 1780; *id.* to Governor Peter Chester, July 28, 1780; *id.* to J. Robinson Esquire, July 27, 1780; Chester to Campbell, July 28, 1780; Campbell to Chester, 28th July, 1780; all *ibid.*

72. J. Robinson Esquire to Governor Chester, October 31, 1779, in Chester papers.

73. Campbell to Germain, January 5, 1781, *ibid.*

74. Campbell to Germain, May 15, 1780, in Campbell papers.

75. Galvez to Campbell April 9, 1780, *ibid.*

To this idealistic appeal Campbell replied that he “never Encouraged, Countenanced or Authorized Depredations to be committed by Indians, whether on Spanish, French or English Inhabitants: on the Contrary I have always prohibited, restrained and absolutely forbid the smallest act of Licentiousness, Rapine or Cruelty whatever.” Indians who were attached to England had been “kept together under proper leaders and reserved for the purpose of resisting an Invading Enemy.” Campbell asserted that they had not “in one instance Committed even the most insignificant Acts of Wantonness, Pillage, Cruelty or Devastation.”<sup>76</sup> But, the English general concluded, that he rejected all proposals for not employing Indians in his defense of Pensacola “as insulting and injurious to reason and common sense.”<sup>77</sup>

Having disposed of the Indian issue with Galvez, Campbell sought from Vice-admiral Parker relief for the merchants and traders whose ships were tied up in the Pensacola harbor by an embargo, which had been clamped upon them by Governor Chester. The shippers, according to Campbell, wanted either a convoy to protect their vessels to Jamaica or the repeal of the embargo so they could take their chance against the enemy. Would the admiral “be positive and explicit” in his answer as to whether “Reinforcement and Protection” could be granted? Campbell desired both.<sup>78</sup>

Mid May came with no Spanish attack on Pensacola. In a lengthy letter to the Foreign Office, Campbell gave two reasons for the unexpected delay. First, there was “an arrival of Naval Reinforcement from Jamaica,” which, fortunately, the enemy had “estimated higher and of greater Force than it really merited.” Second, the dread of the Indians “appeared not only from pri-

76. Campbell to Galvez, April 20, 1780, in Campbell papers. This is the letter of which Caughey in his *Galvez*, 189, says that if written “the letter has not been located.” A copy of the original is in the Campbell papers, Record Office, London. A certified typed copy is in the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida.

77. *Ibid.*

78. Campbell to Vice-Admiral Peter Parker, May 13, 1780, in Campbell papers.

vate Intelligence" but was "greatly strengthened and Confirmed by a proposal. . . not to employ them on either side."<sup>79</sup> He might have added that Galvez probably had not received his expected reinforcements from Cuba.

The English had utilized these months to strengthen the fortifications in that part of West Florida which yet remained in their hands. There was, however, much which remained to be done.<sup>80</sup> They would, said Campbell, "Ever be unprotected until we have a separate Squadron from that on the Jamaica Station allotted for the Gulf of Mexico."<sup>81</sup> Renewed efforts had been made to Clinton for reinforcements.<sup>82</sup> Now that Charleston had surrendered, Campbell thought his chance with Clinton would be improved.

In mid-summer Campbell aired his views on the Indian problem once again to the Foreign Office. "Extravagance and unbounded waste had crept into the management of this Department." The division of the area into two districts was an excellent idea but the inconvenience of being detached from Pensacola had caused the Creek Indians some distress. At all times the department must be conducted with "Consequence and Dignity." Any program of dealing with the natives, said Campbell, must include: (1) "Civilizing these barbarians," (2) Conveying to them "a more fixed idea of Property," (3) "Establishing them in Communities and Settlements on Navigable Rivers," (4) "Planning our Townships and building Comfortable Habitations for them to live in," and (5) encouraging, "by Premiums, Intermarriage between them and the European settlers." Until such a plan was made effective, Indians would be a great expense, especially so when their favor was "courted by contending parties."<sup>83</sup> Supplies for the inhabitants and gifts for the natives were en route, declared Germain.<sup>84</sup>

79. *Id.* to Germain, May 15, 1780, *ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Id.* to *id.*, June 14, 1780.

82. *Ibid.*

83. Campbell to Germain, July 22, 1780. The other headquarters for Indian relations was at Augusta, Georgia. Colonel Brown was in charge. See Germain to Campbell, November 1, 1780, *ibid.*

84. Germain to Campbell, September 6, 1780.

From everywhere there was confirmation of the continuance of Spanish designs on Pensacola. The attack would come, declared the English general, in early fall. Two conditions were becoming grave in West Florida. There was no money with which to pay carpenters, artificers and laborers. Consequently, they had ceased to work and thereby, to Campbell's mortification, preparations for defense had stopped. Desertions were growing in popularity as the certainty of the attack became obvious. Sixteen men of the Maryland and Pennsylvania Provincial Corps had very lately deserted.<sup>85</sup> Could not those soldiers who were disposed to desert be sent to Jamaica? Germain thought so.<sup>86</sup>

As the heat of summer began to give way to the coolness of fall, Campbell was still in "possession of Pensacola and its harbor, the most valuable part of the Province to Great Britain." With the speedy arrival of reinforcements and with the "advanced state of the new Constructed Fortification," it was hoped that they would "long remain a part of His Majesty's Dominions."<sup>87</sup> Supplies were ample but the danger was that, in case of attack, they might not be able to protect what they had received recently. One possibility, heretofore not mentioned to the Foreign Office, Campbell now disclosed. It was possible, he wrote, for Galvez to receive aid from La Vera Cruz and "to attack Pensacola by land from Mobile, without any Capital Reinforcement from the Havanna."<sup>88</sup>

Again, in November 1780, Germain informed Campbell that it was "the King's Wish" that Governor Dal-ling, Vice-Admiral Parker and he collaborate in an attack on New Orleans. General Campbell was to do all in his power to render the attack successful.

Recent dispatches from the English general in West Florida had given "His Majesty great Satisfaction" in the judicious measures which had been taken in defense

85. Campbell to Germain, July 22, 1780.

86. Germain to Campbell, November 1, 1780.

87. Campbell to Germain, August 6, 1780.

88. *Id.* to *id.*, September 22, 1780.

of Pensacola, in the fortunate arrival of a convoy from Jamaica, in "the formidable appearance of so large a body of Creek Indians" and in the deterrence of Don Galvez from his attack. Germain optimistically hoped that Galvez would find it difficult to continue his garrison at Mobile.<sup>89</sup>

Throughout the autumn and early winter of 1780 Germain learned from Campbell of further failures of the Spanish in their efforts to win the friendship of the Choctaw Indians, of further defence work which had begun at Red Cliffs to help defend Pensacola harbor, of the need of clothing for the provincial troops-Pennsylvania and Maryland loyalists—,<sup>90</sup> of a fresh attempt at "invasion and attack" which hung precipitously over the province but which failed to materialize because of a tropical storm, of final defense preparations for the Spanish reception having been completed, of the giving of ammunition to the Chickasaws to defend their country, of the gathering of all Indian warriors possible at Pensacola,<sup>91</sup> and of his failure to secure the cooperation of the civil authority in establishing military law.<sup>92</sup>

Tired of waiting for the Spanish to assume the initiative, Campbell, in January, sent Colonel Von Hanxleden with more than 500 men to seize "The Enemy's Post at Mobile Village." "Taken somewhat by surprise, the Spaniards suffered some losses"<sup>93</sup> but, due to heavy casualties, the English thought it "prudent to Order a Retreat."<sup>94</sup> The miscarriage of the venture was attributed to the early death in battle of Colonel Von Hanxleden.<sup>95</sup>

A month later, the English general was confessing that the intelligence, which he had given the Foreign office of the proposed Spanish attack on Pensacola,

89. Germain to Campbell, November 1, 1780.

90. Campbell to Germain, October 31, 1780.

91. *Id. to id.*, November 26, 1780. Over 500 additional Choctaw warriors came to aid in defending Pensacola. See *id. to id.*, January 5, 1781.

92. *Ibid.*

93. Caughey, *Galvez*, 194.

94. Campbell to Germain, January 13, 1781, in Campbell papers.

95. Campbell to Germain, January 7, 1781. *Ibid.*

was not well founded.<sup>96</sup> Yet, further information was ventured that the enemy was apprehensive of the English receiving reinforcements which “would enable them to retaliate and attack” the Spanish in Mobile. Frankly, no such military aid was expected from any source, but Vice-Admiral Parker had “promised naval aid.” Furthermore, for some weeks no ships loaded with supplies had arrived at Pensacola. This fact, coupled with the “immense consumption of Provisions by the Indians,” with an added allowance of food to laborers who were working on defense projects, with the necessity of supplying some of the transports with victuals and with the maintenance of a large number of refugees, had caused a shortage of necessities.<sup>97</sup> Finally, a new and more extensive plan for the defense of Pensacola was sent by a trusted bearer— Lieutenant-colonel Stiel— who was retiring from the army after nearly fifty years of service<sup>98</sup> — to the Foreign Office.

The same hurricane which destroyed the Spanish fleet from Havanna, “intended for the attack of Pensacola,” also wrecked a greater part of the English Jamaica Squadron. The loss was so great that Vice-Admiral Parker would be unable to send aid to General Campbell. “Mortality among the Troops in Jamaica had been so considerable that Governor Dalling judged it unsafe to lessen his Force.” When an opportunity presented itself, declared Germain, to augment Campbell’s forces he would certainly avail himself of the circumstances. In the meantime, the English commander was admonished to retain the Indians, continue to cultivate their friendship and to take every precautionary measure possible against any surprise attack.<sup>99</sup>

96. *Id. to id.*, January 11, 1781.

97. *Id. to id.*, February 15, 1781.

98. *Id. to id.*, February 23, 1781, *ibid.* Campbell sent messages to Germain introducing him to men returning to England. He suggested that the Foreign Office question these men about conditions in West Florida in order that “official and Authentick Information” may be received “from every corner.” See *id. to id.* February 23, 1781. This is a second letter of the same date.

99. Germain to Campbell, March 7, 1781.

Early in March 1781 the long awaited attack on Pensacola was begun. On the twenty-first, General Campbell made a humane proposal to Governor Galvez that "the town and Garrison of Pensacola shall be preserved entire and without Wilful Damage by either Party during the Seige of the Royal Navy Redoubt, and Fort George and its adjoining works, where I propose to contend for the Preservation of the Province of West Florida to the British Crown."<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, in the night, before the Spanish Commander replied officially, one of the British officers in charge of a fort burned several houses.<sup>101</sup> Whether or not this act was committed with the knowledge of Campbell is not known but it gave Galvez grounds for accusing the English commander of insincerity. "The word humanity," wrote Galvez, "so often reported upon Paper is little known in your heart."<sup>102</sup>

Detachments from Mobile and New Orleans arrived late in March and with the coming on April 19 of reinforcements, naval and army, Spanish and French, from Cuba, Galvez began actual operations against Pensacola.<sup>103</sup> Too late, Germain promised Campbell further aid.<sup>104</sup> According to the English general, the enemy naval force consisted of "at least Fifteen Ships" and the land forces of not less than six thousand men who were "furnished with every requisite for carrying on a Seige of the greatest Consequence."<sup>105</sup> In reality, Galvez's forces numbered slightly more than 7,000 men.

On May 7, Campbell wrote a long letter to Germain in which he revealed many of the details of the Spanish campaign thus far. The fighting up to that point had been done largely by parties of Indians sent out as skirmishers against the Spanish. However, on the night of May 1 the Spanish had succeeded in reaching a small

100. Campbell to Galvez, March 21, 1781.

101. Caughey, *Galvez*, 205.

102. Galvez to Campbell March 22, 1781, in Campbell papers. This letter is quoted entirely in Caughey, *Galvez*, 205.

103. *Caughey, Galvez*, 208-209.

104. Germain to Campbell, April 12, 1781, in Campbell papers.

105. Campbell to Germain, May 7, 1781.

hill from which they could shell the advanced redoubt protecting Fort George. Early on the morning of May 8, "an unfortunate shell from the enemy exploded within the fort and precipitated its destiny." The explosion killed almost a hundred English soldiers, destroyed the redoubt and left Fort George completely exposed to enemy fire. By three o'clock that afternoon, General Campbell had run up the white flag and asked for terms. The defeated commander procured "an honorable and advantageous capitulation."<sup>106</sup>

With much feeling, General Campbell wrote: "It has been my Misfortune . . . to be employed in an ill fated Corner of his Majesty's Dominions . . . My Endeavors have unremittingly been exerted for West Florida's preservation to the British Empire since I took upon me the military command, and if my Labors and Exertions to that End shall but find favor with my sovereign. I shall forget the Frowns of Fortune and be happy in the Royal Approbation."<sup>107</sup>

106. *Id. to id.*, May 12, 1781.

107. *Ibid.*