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LUIS BERTUCAT AND WILLIAM AUGUSTUS BOWLES: WEST FLORIDA ADVERSARIES IN 1791

translated and edited by

JACK D. L. HOLMES * AND J. LEITCH WRIGHT, JR. **

IN AN EFFORT to check the expansion of the American frontiersmen onto Indian lands after the American Revolution, William Augustus Bowles, self-styled head of the Creek-Cherokee Nation, and later "Director-General of the State of Muskogee," wrote the Spanish minister of state, the Conde de Floridablanca, in 1791. Bowles asked for Spanish protection for the Creeks and Cherokees and urged a wider alliance or confederation of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees and Creeks.¹ He also suggested that Spain modify its commercial restrictions and remove the monopoly which had been granted the firm of William Panton, Thomas Forbes, and Robert Leslie, and instead open Florida ports to all nations - especially Muscogee - on a free and unimpeded basis.² Spain not unnaturally refused to grant this request.

Bowles returned to West Florida from London by way of Nassau in the early fall of 1791 and began to stir up the Creeks against the cession of any land to the United States as specified

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1. Spain had already signed treaties with the Creeks, Talapuches, Alibamons, Choctaws and Chickasaws at Pensacola and Mobile in 1784. In the Treaty of Nogales (1793), Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos of the Natchez District brought in the Cherokees with these other tribes in an offensive-defensive alliance such as that suggested by Bowles in 1791. Jack D. L. Holmes, "Spanish Treaties with West Florida Indians, 1784-1802," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLVIII (October 1969), 148-49.
2. Bowles to Conde de Floridablanca, London, March 25, 1791, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla), Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba (hereinafter referred to as AGI, PC), legajo 2352. Transcripts are in the Mississippi Provincial Archives, Mississippi State Department of Archives and History (Jackson), Spanish Dominion, 9 vols. (hereinafter referred to as MPA), III, 493-502. On Bowles's early career, see J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *William Augustus Bowles: Director General of the Creek Nation* (Athens, 1967), 1-54.

in the unpopular 1790 Treaty of New York, by which Alexander McGillivray appeared to have joined forces with the United States. Bowles also opposed Spanish influence with these Indians and optimistically boasted he would drive the Spaniards out of West Florida.³ With tacit and overt aid from John Miller, a wealthy merchant in the Bahamas, and the British governor, John Murray, fourth Earl of Dunmore, Bowles developed self-confidence. Spanish frontier officials, however, regarded Bowles as an adventurous interloper whose influence among the Florida Indians had to be checked if Spain was to develop its own Indian policy and check American expansion. The governor-general of Louisiana, Luis Francisco Hector, Baron de Carondelet, ordered the Pensacola commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Arturo O'Neill, to capture Bowles. Anticipating these instructions, O'Neill had already sent several expeditions under the command of Captain Luis Bertucat, a skilled engineer temporarily stationed at Fort San Marcos de Apalache in West Florida.

Born in France in 1739, Bertucat had studied mathematics and civil and military architecture at the Royal Paris School, and as a sublieutenant, he continued his studies in Italy. With the idea of joining a scientific corps, he arrived in Spain in 1763 and became a professor (*academico de merito*) at the Royal School of San Fernando in Madrid. He was appointed lieutenant in the Luyano Militia on May 27, 1776, and served in that unit and that of the Provincial Dragoons of Arispe until 1780. Promoted to the regular army rank of lieutenant on July 7, 1780, he served for two years as voluntary engineer with the American Army of Operations, although officially a member of the Louisiana Infantry Regiment, in which latter unit he rose to the rank of captain on November 22, 1786.⁴

Bertucat's engineering schooling endeared him to the governors and commandants in America because there were never

3. Daniel M. Smith, "James Seagrove and the Mission to Tuckaubatchee, 1793," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XLIV (March 1960), 44.

4. Service records of Luis Bertucat, June 30, 1793, AGI, PC, leg. 161-A; and December 31, 1792, Archivo General de Simancas (Spain), Guerra Moderna, leg. 7291, VIII, 25. See also Jack D. L. Holmes, *Honor and Fidelity, the Louisiana Infantry Regiment and the Louisiana Militia Companies, 1766-1821* (Birmingham, 1965), 95; and Jack D. L. Holmes, "Some French Engineers in Spanish Louisiana," in *The French in the Mississippi Valley*, ed. by John Francis McDermott (Urbana, 1965), 139-40.

enough skilled engineers to go around. After having served for three years as a volunteer engineer in Havana, he was sent for six months' duty in the *Provincias Internas* on New Spain's northern frontier. In Havana he had developed a type of body shield for use against Indian arrows. Awarded the franchise of supplying this ancestor of the modern "bullet-proof vest," Bertucat invested \$2,000 in its production and shipment to New Spain.⁵ He also spent two years in an engineering capacity in Louisiana where he was given command over defensive works at the post of Balize, near the mouth of the Mississippi River, and at Natchez. On two occasions he served as military and political commandant at the San Marcos de Apalache post where he rebuilt the ancient Spanish fort and defended the post against an attacking Indian war-party.

In addition to his military plans of the Balize post, Bertucat was ordered to explore the mouths of the various passes of the Mississippi River. He took soundings and made numerous reports concerning the feasibility of widening and deepening the channels. He selected the most convenient location for a two-story blockhouse to guard the entrance of the river and another battery for protecting the southeastern pass. Upon these recommendations, plans and specifications, Captain Gilberto Guillemard, one of Louisiana's outstanding architects and engineers, continued the work at the Balize.⁶ Bertucat also examined the weak defenses of Natchez with a view toward making them able to withstand the type of siege which had enabled the Natchez Tories to capture it with ease in 1781.⁷ Behind him at Natchez he left a bell which ultimately came to serve as the church bell

5. Service records of Luis Bertucat.

6. Thomas Hutchins, *An Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and West-Florida* (Philadelphia, 1784. Facsimile edition, Gainesville, 1968), 31-34; Stanley Clisby Arthur and George Campbell Huchet de Kerniou, eds., *Old Families of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1931), 253-54; Esteban Miro, Instructions to Bertucat, New Orleans, April 30, 1784, AGI, PC, leg. 2352, and transcript in MPA, II, 97-99; Miro to Bernardo de Galvez, No. 133, New Orleans, October 1, 1784, AGI, PC, leg. 2352. On Guillemard, see Holmes, "Some French Engineers in Spanish Louisiana," 124-28; and Jack D. L. Holmes, "Dramatis Personae in Spanish Louisiana," *Louisiana Studies*, VI (1967), 175-77.

7. Service records of Luis Bertucat. On Fort Panmure de Natchez, see Jack D. L. Holmes, *Gayoso: The Life of a Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley, 1789-1799* (Baton Rouge, 1965), 164-66.

upon the dedication of the Church of Our Savior of the World at Natchez.⁸

On June 12, 1787, Bertucat became commandant of the new fort of San Marcos de Apalache. He assumed command on June 24 and remained in charge until the end of that same year.⁹ It seems that his successor, Lieutenant Josef Portillo, was chosen so as to leave Bertucat more time to direct the fortifications. His major assignment was the design and construction of a solid frontier-style fort at San Marcos. This post was to help establish Spanish dominion over a remote part of Florida, awe the neighboring Indians, and guard the trading post of Pantón's firm several miles up river.¹⁰ Bertucat performed other services as well. In 1791 he drew up plans for a royal hospital which was built at this post.¹¹ On at least one occasion Bertucat led an attacking force of troops against marauding Indians, presumably Seminoles, who had threatened the post, and his service sheets carries the notation that he acted with great courage in the brief encounter.¹²

His superiors recognized that he had mastered frontier-style military fortifications, and, as a result, on August 28, 1792, he was named director of works for a military post of two batteries to be constructed at Placaminas (Plaquemine) Turn below New Orleans.¹³ This was a pet project of Governor-General Caronde-

8. *Ibid.*, 74.

9. Service records of Luis Bertucat; O'Neill's instructions to Bertucat, Pensacola, June 12, 1787, AGI, PC, leg. 614 and leg. 2352. Correspondence from Bertucat to O'Neill from Apalache in 1787 may be found in AGI, PC, legajos 40, 118 and 1393; from Bertucat to Josef de Ezpeleta, *ibid.*, legajo 2361.
10. Three plans dated July 18, 1787, August 18, 1790, and February 1791, are in AGI, Planos, Luisiana y Floridas, Nos. 115, 135 and 139 respectively. The February 1791 plan, with side views of the buildings under construction, is in Arthur P. Whitaker, ed., *Documents Relating to the Commercial Policy of Spain in the Floridas, with Incidental Reference to Louisiana* (DeLand, 1931), between 97 and 98. The 1787 plan is reproduced in Mark F. Boyd, "The Fortifications at San Marcos de Apalache (St. Marks, Wakulla co., Florida)," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XV (July 1936), 17.
11. The plan is dated June 26, 1791. The chart is presently in AGI, Planos, Luisiana y Floridas, No. 141. A document concerning it is in AGI PC, leg. 178; Bertucat to O'Neill, Apalache, June 26, 1791.
12. Service records of Luis Bertucat. Bertucat felt that Bowles was responsible for the aggressive attitude of the Indians; Bertucat to Zéspedes, San Marcos, January 10, 1788, Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid), Sección de Estado, leg. 3901.
13. Service records of Luis Bertucat; pay records of Bertucat, AGI, PC, leg. 538-B.

let, who had taken charge of Louisiana and West Florida in December 1791. Stout defenses below New Orleans, he felt, would protect the vulnerable approaches to the city, and Palcaminas, where the Mississippi made a sinuous, hairpin curve, forcing ships to expose themselves to the land batteries, was an ideal location.¹⁴

In 1787, while Bertucat had been constructing Fort San Marcos, another Spanish engineer, Joaquin Peramas (who had also been at San Marcos earlier), was designing plans for the Placaminas and Mardi Gras Bayou.¹⁵ Construction was delayed, however, until Bertucat took over the engineering project in 1792. Accompanied by his faithful Negro Joaquin, Bertucat remained on the job, earning an extra salary of twenty-five dollars monthly in addition to his regular captain's pay. On August 18, 1793, when a disastrous hurricane struck lower Louisiana and ravaged shipping and the low-lying bottom lands, both Bertucat and his aide were drowned, thus ending the career of a responsible and dedicated officer.¹⁶

Apparently Bertucat, like most officers in Spanish Louisiana, was in debt at the time of his death, and numerous individuals lodged lawsuits against his estate.¹⁷ A family man with a wife and at least two children, Bertucat showed his benevolent treatment of his Negro slaves when he granted his slave Martona her freedom plus a cash payment of \$150 and two silver services. John Forbes of the house of Pantón, Leslie and

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14. George H. V. ("Victor") Collot, *A Journey in North America . . .*, transl. by J. Christian Bay (Florence, 1924), II, 100-03, and plan in III, plate 36.
 15. Four charts dated March 20, 1787, at New Orleans, are in AGI, Planos, Luisiana y Floridas, Nos. 106-09. See Jack D. L. Holmes, "Maps, Plans and Charts of Louisiana in Spanish and Cuban Archives: A Checklist," *Louisiana Studies*, II (1963), 200.
 16. In 1793 Bertucat drew up his "Plan for the Distribution of Lodgings for the main barracks of Fort San Phelipe de Placaminas," which was approved by Governor-general Carondelet, *ibid.*, 200-01. His death is recorded in his pay records, AGI, PC, leg. 538-B: Phelipe Trevino to Carondelet, Fuerte San Phelipe de Placaminas, August 19, 1793, and Carondelet to Duque de Alcudia (Manuel de Godoy), No. 14, confidential, New Orleans, August 27, 1793, Archivo Historico Nacional (Madrid), Seccion de Estado, leg. 3890.
 17. Suits against his estate for collection of debts were lodged in 1793 and 1794 by Jose Turcoty, Miguel Olivera, Santiago Lebaudaiz, Matheo Osten (Mathew Austin?), the free Negro Gabriel, and Sebastian Burat. His close friend, Jose Piernas, sued for delivery of the legacy which Bertucat had willed him. These cases are in AGI, PC, legs. 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, and 173.

Company, was named executor with power-of-attorney. Retired Sublieutenant Joseph Piernas, an old friend of Bertucat who had been a cattle rancher in Texas and southwest Louisiana, was left an inheritance. Unfortunately, there was much litigation over Bertucat's 1790 will, and the intendant, Joan Buenaventura Morales, set aside some of Bertucat's bequests.¹⁸

When Bowles had entered the Ochlockonee River near the post of San Marcos in the early fall of 1791 he had caused uneasiness among the Spanish officials here as well as settlers throughout Florida.¹⁹ Although Bertucat never captured Bowles, at the end of the year he led a party which apprehended David McLeash, one of Bowles's men.²⁰ The following year Bowles successfully captured Panton's St. Marks trading post, and then went to New Orleans to negotiate with Governor Carondelet. The Louisiana governor was pleased that Jose de Evia had brought Bowles to New Orleans, but Captain-General Luis de las Casas in Havana had misgivings, because Bowles had been treated not as an independent Indian leader but as a "prisoner of state."²¹ Sent on to Spain and later to the Philippines, Bowles eventually escaped, returned to West Florida, and in 1800 captured the fort at San Marcos which had been built under Bertucat's direction. In 1803 Bowles was captured in a plot hatched by Benjamin Hawkins, Esteban Folch, and John Forbes, although it was the promise of the Spanish reward that persuaded a faction of the Creeks to turn Bowles over to the Spanish authorities. Taken to Morro Castle in Havana, Bowles died in prison, leaving the southern Indians without their beloved "Eastajoca" when hostilities commenced against the United States during the War of 1812.²²

While supervising the construction of new fortifications for

18. Piernas vs. estate of Bertucat, 1794, *ibid.*, leg. 173; case of the Negress Martona, 1794, *ibid.*, leg. 169; case of Maria Luisa, free Negress vs. estate of Bertucat, 1793, *ibid.*, leg. 168.

19. Luis de las Casas to Conde de Floridablanca, No. 18, Havana, April 21, 1792, AGI, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, leg. 9, and translated in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, Vols. II-IV, American Historical Association *Annual Report for 1945*, 3 parts (Washington, 1946-1949), Pt. III, 29.

20. The interrogation of McLeash took place before Governor Gayoso, New Orleans, December 29, 1791, MPA, III, 778-85.

21. This is recounted in Jack D. L. Holmes, ed., *Jose de Evia y sus reconcimientos del Golfo de Mexico, 1783-1796* (Madrid, 1968), 193-230.

22. Wright, *William Augustus Bowles*, 77-174.

San Marcos, Bertucat had made several attempts to intercept Bowles and his ships during the fall of 1791. The second, unsuccessful, expedition to the Ochlockonee River and the third, more rewarding, mission to the Apalachicola River, are described below.²³

Luis Bertucat to Arturo O'Neill, No. 63, Apalache, November 14, 1791.

By my dispatch of September 29 last I advised you of my second sortie in search of the schooner of the Englishman Bowles, having secured from the English commercial house a half-breed pilot of the river on which the said schooner was discovered anchored. I was unable to secure him on my first sally, although I asked for him.

My expedition was composed of a large canoe and the king's boat on both of which I mounted two swivel-guns, plus a small canoe with two of my Negroes, to patrol ahead; fourteen regular troops, a sergeant, and the subaltern. The said half-breed, having led me to the mouth of the Kilacny [Ochlockonee] River, which I had visited on my first sortie up to a distance of three miles into the interior, and this said pilot having said that he had ascended it very far and that along its course one could navigate more than three days and that he found at its headwaters Indian villages, where it was feasible that along the river the schooner might be hidden. At dawn the following day I embarked alone with him and my two Negroes in my small canoe, leaving orders for the rest of my expedition to follow me at a distance of one league²⁴ in the event that I might discover the said schooner I would be able to return and take the most opportune measures to surprise the crew which comprised it. Likewise, in order not to expose my men by leading them into some ambush that might have been set along the dense-covered banks of the said river in the event that [the English] might have had news of my advance, and being easier to avoid them with a small canoe due to its speed, and likewise, to inspect the area itself, for this purpose I did it in this manner.

Having traveled until five in the afternoon and gone about

23. Bertucat to O'Neill, No. 63, Apalache, November 14, 1791, copy by O'Neill, AGI, PC, leg. 2352. There is a transcript in MPA, III, 765-78.

24. The Spanish nautical league was roughly 2.75 miles, although the French league was only 2.42 miles.

eight leagues without discovering anything, we landed on high ground so as to protect my rearguard, and having spent more than an hour there without seeing them appear, I inferred that they had strayed or gotten lost along one or another branches of the river, which compelled me to return again to its mouth, and in a little while the row-boat and the canoe arrived; they had, in fact, followed another branch which flows to the north.²⁵

The pilot, having informed me that after going up this river more than three days, he had come to another exit or mouth to the south called Kislacny Chico,²⁶ I decided the following day to order eight men and a sergeant with sufficient rations in the row-boat to follow all the turns of the river and continue until they had reached some Indian settlement and invite one or two of them to come with them in search of deserters by offering them rewards. Also, I advised them to proceed cautiously and to post a good guard at night and permit no fires and order a pair of men to go along the banks at suitable places to examine the tracks and other things that might occur to them. In the event they might have sighted from afar the mast of the schooner above the head of the river, they were not to double the head, but, avoiding discovery, were to return and give me word. Meanwhile, I ordered the officer with the rest of the men in the large canoe to inspect another branch that I had seen the evening before flowing toward the south, with orders to take only that day, while the guide, the two Negroes and I in the small canoe lay to across the mile width of this river. Having set foot on land on the southern bank I walked for the distance of five leagues and examined the lay of the land, its coves and anchorages as far as West Point [sic], from where we observed, at the distance of four or five leagues to the east-southeast, a schooner that seemed to be plying the windward, which made me suspect that it could be the one we were looking for and might have received word that we were going in search of it. Not having any craft of sufficient draught, I could not inspect it. Having completed my operation, I returned to destroy the road by the edge of the beach up to the canoe when we began to encounter nightfall. The wind, which had increased, augmented considerably the swell while

25. This is probably the Sopchoppy River.

26. This is probably one of the mouth of the Sopchoppy River.

we were making our tack, and, with the nightfall, darkness led us between oyster banks and the shore and threatened to run us aground. We didn't know where to point our bow to leave this labyrinth of banks which criss-crossed our route until one reached the channel. Since at the same time we were shipping water in a heavy sea, each moment increased our danger, but the officer having arrived at the camp with those who accompanied him and having lit fires, we were able to guide ourselves through the bad straits in which we found ourselves.

Thus, those from my canoe obtained no other success in inspecting the southern branch than acquiring a knowledge of its meandering course and direction. On dawn of the following day we left by water in search of Little Kislacny [Kislacny Chico], having assembled the row-boat and the rest of the expedition which should leave with it. At four o'clock in the afternoon of the second day of navigation we arrived there, and a little while later spotted the row-boat which came to join us, without having found either the schooner or a solitary Indian from whom we might be able to learn anything. Not being able to learn anything more from the said half-breed, I suspected that he had led me astray in order to give the schooner time to set sail, having been informed in some way of our presence. Otherwise this employee of the mercantile house lied to me. I had ordered the guide the first time that I asked for him to take me without delay directly to the mouth of the Apalachicola River where the said schooner was anchored twenty-nine leagues from this fort, and where the said half-breed went to the Indian villages, and when he came that far, I decided to return to the fort at the end of eight days counting from my departure.

It is significant that there have been no Indians at the fort since the arrival of Bowles or I might have obtained more accurate news during the second expedition. A chief from the village of Chiaja²⁷ did come and said he had been informed that I had left with swivel guns and soldiers in search of Bowles and his schooner, which proves my suspicions were correct: having conferred before my departure with Foraster,²⁸ a

27. Chiaja (Chiaha, Chehaw, Chewaws, Geehaws) was a Lower Creek town on the Chattahoochee River.

28. Edward Forrester was an employee of Pantón's store. See Wright, *William Augustus Bowles*, 66, 68.

factor of the said house, asking him for assistance, which he did not give me, and charging him to keep silent. It was only through the said company where the Indians meet daily that I was able to get word about the said Bowles, but the said factor having lived as if married with a half-breed squaw, the daughter of the half-breed Indian Esperiman,²⁹ in whose home the said Bowles used to lodge and who previously had lived with the same half-breed squaw, I discovered in the intervening time she had left Foraster and had gone to join the said Bowles, so he had been informed by the indiscretion of Foraster of what we were about. Nevertheless, I saw to it that it was publicized that I had gone in search of four deserters from the Pensacola garrison, of whom I had received news.

Some days after my return the Indian Birli's³⁰ large canoe came with various goods for the English settlement and, on his return, I persuaded him to come to the fort to confer with the chief of them. Having learned from him that the schooner had set sail from the place where it was when it had news that I had gone in search of it shortly after I had first spotted it, as I mentioned above; I tried to dissuade him, repeating that there were deserters from the Pensacola garrison that I was looking for and that I feared they might board the said schooner to flee to Providence,³¹ and that I would give them generous presents if they would help me to capture them. This seemed to me convincing to them, and I proposed that I accompany them to the mouth of the river that leads to their villages. They showed no reluctance, so I gave the necessary orders to leave the following morning. I was also informed that the Indians had granted to Bowles and to those who accompanied him, a land grant on which to live, which had water and firewood near the mouth of the river, as I was able to discover. On the other hand, I had been informed that he was bringing various arms with which to fortify himself and that the schooner mounted various bronze cannon for firing three-pound balls, was com-

29. Esperiman (Perryman) is the influential Lower Creek chieftain whose village was just above the forks of the Apalachicola River.

30. Bully, Buly, Birli, was another prominent Lower Creek chief whose village was on the lower Flint River.

31. A reference to New Providence Island on which Nassau, the present capital of the Bahamas, was located.

manded by a captain with a crew of six sailors, a Negro, and a half-breed with another Negro who accompanied Bowles, as well as several Indians who had made the journey to London with him.³²

In addition, I inferred that the departure of their schooner was precipitous, that it had landed doubtless to finish unloading the supplies and loading the peltry that the half-breed trader Esperimens had been promised. By which information, I formed anew the project of taking advantage of this circumstance to learn the true entry into that river, as well as the place where the said schooner anchored, and so that the Indians would not become frightened, I ordered the muskets hidden in the bottom of the canoe which I armed with eight men and a sergeant, a small canoe and two Negroes, all provisioned for twelve days; and at dawn on the day of October 9th, I left at the head of them, following the Indians who were returning to their village.

The fourth day of navigation in the afternoon we arrived at a place one mile from the mouth of the sought-after river where the Indians stopped to wait for one of their comrades, who had left the camp during the morning on the pretext of hunting, but probably his task was to go to the mouth ahead of us and advise the schooner of our coming, and if it were not there, make us pass slowly with them to another mouth of the several which the Apalachicola has, whose principal entrance is a considerable bay. Assured of the short distance which remained from the mouth to the point where the Indians had stopped to wait for their missing comrade, I took advantage of this circumstance to go ahead, telling them that we were going slowly and they could catch up with us. I set off with my little canoe and making myself follow my men at the distance of two or three hundred *toeses*,³³ I went ahead, doubling the points in clear view of land to reconnoiter. Having arrived near the spot, I spied several buoys which led to a deep channel that runs close to the right bank of the mentioned bay, at which place I discovered a considerable rise which stimulated my

32. Bowles and his Indian companions cut quite a fine group of figures in London! On this portion of his life, see Wright, *William Augustus Bowles*, 49-55.

33. The Spanish *toesa* or *toise*, based on the French measurement, varied from 66.3566 inches in Missouri to 66.72 inches in West Florida and lower Louisiana.

curiosity. Having gone to it and given signal to the canoe to step up the paddling, we arrived in time to the foot of it without having been able to discover from without anything more than a hill of trees and thickets, but we soon found a beaten track with footprints of Indians and white men. I immediately ordered the men to keep their arms handy and, with the sergeant and four men, I climbed to the top of said elevation, having left the rest of the men in charge of the canoes to insure us a line of retreat in case we met resistance. Reaching the top, I found the shape of an old fort surrounded by trees and branches that time had caused to grow up around it. A bayou which comes in from the sea surrounds the fort by water leaving only a narrow neck of land measuring one league, which connects it to the mainland. In the middle of this we found in a clearing a hastily-constructed house which had been built by Bowles's men and, below it, covered with palmettoes, I found fourteen weapons, two rammers and two muskets, as well as a piece of oil-cloth hanging from the roof of the said house, in which I found a letter from Bowles addressed to the captain of his schooner, Louis Esqual, by which I had no doubt but that this was the place where the schooner had anchored and that this was the land that he had asked for from the Indians. It was very strategic because his schooner was protected by the elevated hill and he already had sufficient weapons to make a vigorous defense.

Informed by the Indians that a century had passed without the Spaniards ever coming to those spots, Bowles felt safe in ordering the letter hung from that roof, certain that even if we went in search of his schooner, we would not find it and would pass at a distance. Advised by some signals that the Indians with him had a number of torches at the coast so that he could return [at night] to his anchorage, without losing an instant I ordered the weapons brought aboard and placed in the bottom of the canoe and covered with hides. This was done so quickly that several Indians who were present at almost the same time saw nothing of our handiwork and followed us to our landing. After a little while, Buly's canoe also appeared, and unaware that we had landed, called us to follow him in crossing the river, which proves what I have stated before that they wanted to hide the true whereabouts of these Englishmen.

We approached them bidding farewell to the others who doubtless remained confused, and after having given them some provisions and liquor, I said goodbye to them and asked them to turn over the deserters if they found them. Having lost sight of them I continued apace heading for St. George's Island which lay dead ahead eleven miles away,³⁴ which would give me protection against any possible attack from some Englishmen associated with them. There I gave a day of rest to my men and, at dawn of the following day, I broke camp and ran at full sail and oar until one in the morning. I returned to the fort on the eighth day after my departure, promising myself I would go out again when I received word of the arrival of the said schooner, or the arrival of another which they say Bowles was waiting for.

Not having had a pilot cognizant of this coast with which to guide me, I tried to guide myself by the French and English maps,³⁵ the latter being the most recent. Although I tried to guide myself by it, I found it bore no relationship to what actually existed, so I became a draftsman and, availing myself of available instruments, I drew up a chart which includes the area embraced in the three voyages from here to which I have referred. This, completed with the greatest precision and accuracy, I have the honor to present to your Excellency.³⁶ It includes the bays, coastline and inlets, rivers, islands, soundings, and depths from Apalache Bay to Apalachicola.³⁷ This could be of some usefulness and safety for the navigation of the ships which the Government sends to this port.

34. The Spanish judicial mile was 4,635 feet.

35. On the eighteenth century cartography of the Gulf of Mexico, see Holmes, "Maps, Plans and Charts of Louisiana in Spanish and Cuban Archives: a Checklist," 183-203; Jack D. L. Holmes, "French and Spanish Cartography of Alabama," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVII (1965), 7-21; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Maps, Plans, and Charts of Louisiana in Paris Archives: A Checklist," *Louisiana Studies*, IV (1965), 200-21. In 1803 a report noted that the maps and charts of the Gulf and of Louisiana and West Florida were mere sketches and not at all accurate. *ibid.*, 200.

36. Bertucat's map has not been located, unfortunately, but an interesting map drawn presumably by Stephen Minor is in AGI, PC, and Planos, Luisiana y Floridas, No. 201. Minor accompanied Andrew Ellicott in 1799 in drawing the southern boundary along the thirty-first parallel. His map covers the area from Cape San Blas to Apalache Bay.

37. Cf. the charts of Jose de Evia made in 1783 in the appendix of Holmes, *Jose de Evia*.

I have given the august name of our Catholic Monarch Charles IV to a luxuriant island measuring three and a half leagues long by one league wide, which the geographers have neither mentioned nor placed on maps of this area until now, and it is found in the southeastern part of St. George's Island.³⁸ This has given me a new opportunity to continue my patriotic zeal and constant love for the royal service: the forces of Bowles's camp remain destroyed.

May God care for your Excellency many years.
Apalache, November 14, 1791. Luis Bertucat.
Sr. Don Arturo O'Neill.³⁹

P.S. When I conjecture in this dispatch on the word given to Bowles's schooner, I found my hunches on appearance and guesswork, backed by actual circumstances, to be true: that Forester has no part indirectly, but his actions seem opposed to the interests of the company for which he works; therefore, I ought to insert here this observation. (rubric). This is a copy word for word of the original sent by O'Neill to the Governor of Louisiana.

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38. Bertucat apparently is none too accurate himself. Dog Island, to which he was probably referring, lies to the north-east of St. George Island, and St. Vincent Island is located north-west of the opposite end of St. George Island. Both are located on Evia's chart. *Ibid.*
39. Arturo O'Neill was commandant of Pensacola from 1781 until 1793. For a sketch of his life, see Jack D. L. Holmes, "Some Irish Officers in Spanish Louisiana," *The Irish Sword*, VI (Dublin, 1964), 243-44.