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CAMPBELL TOWN: FRENCH HUGUENOTS IN BRITISH WEST FLORIDA

by J. BARTON STARR*

THE TREATY OF PARIS signed between France, Spain, and England in 1763, transferred Spanish Florida and French Louisiana to the Mississippi River to Great Britain. With the Proclamation of 1763, this property became British West Florida. Almost immediately an extensive publicity campaign began to attract settlers to the Gulf coast of Florida. Typical of such propaganda were the sentiments of George Johnstone, newly-appointed governor of West Florida: "Upon the whole, whether we regard the situation or the climate, West Florida bids fair to be the emporium as well as the most pleasant part of the New World."¹

Because of its remoteness throughout the two decades the English remained in Florida, there were constant efforts to bring in prospective colonists. Much of the energy expended was aimed at encouraging foreigners— both from overseas and from neighboring Louisiana— to migrate to West Florida.² As a result, there were numerous early schemes to settle foreigners in the colony. The Board of Trade presented a petition to George III in May 1764, on behalf of eleven men who wanted large tracts of land in East and West Florida which they proposed to settle with "Protestant white Inhabitants" within

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1. For a discussion of immigration into British West Florida, see Jeannette M. Long, "Immigration to British West Florida, 1763-1781" (M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1969); Clinton N. Howard, *The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769* (Berkeley, 1947), 29, 30, 36, 46, 70, 100, 104, 118, 124; Cecil Johnson, *British West Florida, 1763-1783* (New Haven, 1943), 132-44, 150-54.
2. Endorsed "Copy of Govr Johnstone's preamble to His Majesty's Instructions for the speedy & effectual Settlement of the Province of West Florida. In the Govr's Letter of 9 Novr 1764," in Great Britain, Public Record Office, Colonial Office 5/574. Hereinafter cited as CO. A fuller examination of the propaganda efforts for East and West Florida is in Charles L. Mowat, "The First Campaign of Publicity for Florida," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXX (December 1943), 359-76.

CAMPBELL TOWN

ten years. While most of these men did receive their grants, only two— Denys Rolle in East Florida and Montfort Browne in West Florida— ever fully attempted to implement the proposed colonization plans.³

Despite the lack of success of most of these schemes, the idea continued to intrigue British officials. When requested by John Pownal to determine “by what methods the most reasonable and frugal the new established colonys in America may be peopled and settled with usefull industrious inhabitants,” Governor Johnstone responded with an eighteen-point program. Apparently in spite of his personal feelings that a “European Colony” like West Florida “is generally made up of the overflowing scum of all the other societies,” Johnstone geared his program toward encouraging the immigration of those people who could not otherwise afford the journey.⁴ He proposed that the master of a ship transporting settlers be paid from two to twenty pounds sterling (depending on the worth the governor placed on different classes of individuals) and that tools, provisions, shelter, and medical assistance be provided to aid in the initial settlement. As an additional inducement, he urged that any man who remained in the colony for over a year be given a slave or two.⁵ British officials apparently accepted at least the goals of Johnstone’s plan, for on September 8, 1764, he received instructions from the Duke of Halifax to offer “every proper encouragement” to foreign settlers who might desire to immigrate to West Florida.⁶

As a result of this apparent unanimity among the British ministry, the government continually encouraged foreign immigration to West Florida. The French Huguenot colony established at Campbell Town under the leadership of Lieutenant

3. “Representation to His Majesty . . .,” May 8, 1764, CO 5/563; “List of the Names of Persons petitioning for Lands in His Majesty’s Provinces of East Florida & West Florida . . .,” May 8, 1764, CO 5/563.

4. Johnstone to Lord Hillsborough, June 11, 1765, CO 5/574.

5. Johnstone to John Pownal, July 27, 1763, CO 5/574.

6. Duke of Halifax to Johnstone, September 8, 1764, CO 5/574. Two years later the assembly of West Florida echoed these sentiments when they passed “An Act to encourage Foreigners to come into and settle in this Province,” December 22, 1766, CO 5/623, in U. S. Library of Congress, Records of the States of the United States of America, West Florida, Legislative Records, microfilm roll 1, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida, Pensacola. Hereinafter cited as RSUS/WFLR, followed by microfilm roll number.

Governor Montfort Browne was an example of this type of settlement.

The Board of Trade had early begun consideration of the settling of West Florida with foreign Protestants, and on November 21, 1763, it approved placing an advertisement in the *London Gazette* inviting requests for land grants for that purpose. This announcement resulted in a sizable number of requests, including the one presented on behalf of the eleven petitioners.⁷ Among the numerous petitions received by the board was one read on June 26, 1765, which ultimately led to the founding of Campbell Town. The memorial of "several French Protestants" stated that they wished to migrate to West Florida in order to apply themselves "to the culture of vines and bringing up silkworms"; and they therefore requested passage, clothing, tools, and temporary subsistence necessary for such a venture. At the same meeting of the Board of Trade, it was noted that Lieutenant Governor Montfort Browne intended to present a proposal for this purpose at a later date. Consequently, the commissioners postponed further discussion of the matter.⁸

Less than a week later the board again took the petition of the French Protestants and the proposals of Browne into consideration and decided to accept the lieutenant governor's plan. They agreed that Browne should transport the sixty French settlers to Mobile or Pensacola on a ship that was preparing to sail from the Thames River. For each settler he would receive seven pounds seven shillings sterling; two children under the age of fourteen would be counted as one adult. Upon their arrival in West Florida, the colonists were to be furnished arms and tools as well as nine months' provisions at the rate of four pence per diem. The board also agreed that the Reverend Peter Levrier should accompany the settlers as their pastor with an annual allowance of 100 pounds sterling. If he chose to serve as schoolmaster, he would receive another 100 pounds. Finally, all of the expenses, including Levrier's salary, were to be defrayed out of the parliamentary grants for the "encouragement

7. Minutes, November 21, 1763, in Great Britain, Board of Trade, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, 14 vols. (London, 1920-1938), XI, 407-08.

8. "Memorial of several French Protestants," read June 26, 1765, CO 5/574. See also Minutes, June 26, 1765, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, XII, 187.

of beneficial articles of produce" in West Florida.⁹ Three days later, July 5, 1765, West Florida Agent John Ellis and Browne signed a formal agreement incorporating the instructions issued by the Board of Trade.¹⁰

Despite the belief by the board that Reverend Levrier was a "man of virtue and piety," before the small band even sailed from England problems arose between the pastor and Browne.¹¹ The lieutenant governor reported to the board on August 23, 1765, that when he went to the ship to make sure everything was in order to sail, he found conditions in an uproar. Levrier and his wife had been provided quarters which for some reason were not satisfactory. Levrier wanted Browne's cabin, or that of the captain of the vessel. Browne reported that when he spoke to the minister, "he flew into a most violent passion, insisted upon his having a right to one of them, and used several expressions, I thought very unbecoming his profession." Levrier also insisted on eating in a small dining cabin with seven or eight other people instead of the "great cabin" with the rest of the passengers. Perhaps the most damaging charge, however, was that when a few of the original French settlers decided not to migrate to West Florida, Levrier substituted several other people on the list. Browne asserted that he believed these people to be "Papists," particularly one French officer he had known in Canada. He asked if it would be proper to administer oaths of allegiance to the immigrants upon the ship's arrival at Cork. He feared the "worst consequences" if he carried to the "infant colony a French officer & Roman Catholick, who may have it much in his power to poison the minds of the surrounding Indians."¹²

The Board of Trade considered Browne's letter the same day he wrote it. They were upset by Levrier's conduct especially as "that character of piety and meekness" had recommended him for their consideration. As for the "concealed Papists," the commissioners approved Browne's plan to have a magistrate issue

9. Minutes, July 2, 1765, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, XII, 188-89. An explanation of their intentions is contained in a letter from the Board of Trade to Johnstone, July 2, 1765, CO 5/599.

10. Agreement between John Ellis and Browne, July 5, 1765, CO 5/574.

11. Board of Trade to Johnstone, July 2, 1765, CO 5/599.

12. Browne to Board of Trade, August 23, 1765, CO 5/574.

oaths of allegiance at Cork. They ordered Browne to discharge all "Recusants" and to embark other foreign Protestants in their place. In the event he could not find such replacements, he could procure any others "whose knowledge in the culture of vines and silk may make them fit objects of this laudable charity." Finally, Browne was to signify to Levrier the Board of Trade's disapproval of his conduct and to inform him that the continuation of his salary depended upon Browne's approbation.¹³ Problems with Levrier were not yet over, however, and would recur in the future.

The vessel that carried Browne and the colonists was the *Red Head* galley, with Richard Neal as master. While fitting it out and providing for its passengers, Browne drew upon the £1,000 that Parliament had provided in the civil establishment of West Florida for 1764 and 1765. John Ellis, agent for West Florida, initially paid out £441 to Browne for the passage of the settlers, £75 for nine months' salary for Reverend Levrier, and £180 for necessities for the voyage, as well as tools, medicine, kettles, and other supplies, including chamber pots.¹⁴

The civil establishment included the £500 bounty to support the settlers for only one more year. The Earl of Shelburne informed the governor of West Florida on April 11, 1767, that the grant would not be renewed until "a plan shall be settled for the future application of this bounty, it not having been applied to the object for which it was granted." Despite renewed applications by Lieutenant Governor Browne and the Council of West Florida in 1767 for further funding, Parliament failed to appropriate additional bounties.¹⁵

With oaths of allegiance administered and final preparations for the voyage completed, the *Red Head* departed Cork bound

13. John Pownal to Browne, August 30, 1765, CO 5/599; Minutes, August 23, 1765, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, XII, 192-93.

14. Civil establishment, January 20, 1764, CO 5/599; Civil establishment, March 1, 1765, CO 5/599; "Account of Bounties to encourage commerce in West Florida from 24 of June 1763 to 24 Jun: 1764 and from the 24 of June 1764 to 24 June 1765," CO 5/574; "An Account of Sundry Necessaries bought . . . for the use of the 60 French Protestant Emigrants . . .," August 7, 1765, CO 5/574; John Ellis to Pownal, October 3, 1765, CO 5/574.

15. Civil establishment, March 6, 1766, CO 5/599; Earl of Shelburne to Governor of West Florida, April 11, 1767, CO 5/618; Hillsborough to Browne, February 14, 1768, CO 5/619; Browne to [Hillsborough], July 1, 1768, CO 5/620.

for Pensacola. While the date of the sailing is unclear, apparently Browne and the French Huguenots left Cork in September or October 1765, and arrived at Pensacola in mid-January 1766. There are no records to indicate that the voyage was anything other than uneventful, although they did stop briefly at Dominica where several of the passengers deserted.

The first notice of the settlers' arrival in Pensacola was the appearance of lieutenant Governor Browne before the West Florida Council on January 20, 1766. After being sworn in as a member of the council, he presented the July 2, 1765 letter of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations concerning the immigrants. In response to its orders to assist them, the council assigned as lodging the temporary hospital that had been built for the troops. The councillors felt that there was little chance that anybody would furnish provisions at the rate of four pence per day as set by the Board of Trade's instructions as it was too low for West Florida. They decided, however, to have Governor Johnstone issue orders to that effect, but in case nobody responded, the contractor for the troops in the colony must furnish the rations. Finally, the council made provisions for housing for Reverend Levrier by forcing someone to evacuate "one of the hutts" outside the garrison, if necessary.¹⁶

The emigrés had come to West Florida to establish a new community where they could cultivate grapes and raise silkworms. Accordingly, the Board of Trade had instructed Governor Johnstone to provide a township of 20,000 acres "on such convenient spot as they themselves shall choose, adapted to the objects they have in view." If possible, the site was to be on a navigable river, land was to be designated for town lots and for a glebe for the Reverend Levrier. The board's optimism was evident in their instructions; the French would not need 20,000 acres, but it was thought that their success would entice other settlers to follow.¹⁷

Johnstone accompanied a delegation of the immigrants to examine several tracts of land, and a site on the Escambia River

16. Minutes of the Council, January 20, 1766, CO 5/625. The *London Chronicle* reported on September 10, 1765, that a brigantine had arrived in Pensacola carrying ninety French passengers from Cayenne. While there is no other evidence concerning this report, these settlers clearly were not the ones who established Campbell Town.

17. Board of Trade to Johnstone, July 2, 1765, CO 5/599.

was selected.¹⁸ According to the governor, the area, twenty miles from Pensacola by water up the Escambia River, and ten by land, “in beauty or richness of soil, can hardly be excelled.”¹⁹ Lieutenant Governor Browne did not share Johnstone’s opinion, for less than a year later he reported to the Board of Trade that the settlers “had the misfortune, upon their arrival to fix upon a very unhealthy spot for their settlement.”²⁰

Because there were so few settlers, the settlement was distant from Pensacola, and Indians were numerous in the area, Governor Johnstone felt that the immigrants should be protected. Consequently, a sergeant and twelve men of the 31st Regiment were assigned to accompany the settlers and remain for a period of two months.²¹ This was a time when Johnstone was involved in one of his many disputes with the military, and Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Walsh insisted that while Johnstone had no authority to order him to furnish the troops, he would comply, since it was for the good of the colony.²²

The disagreement between Walsh and Johnstone was symptomatic not only of the early years of British West Florida, but also of the disputatious spirit which surrounded the settlement of Campbell Town. The first major argument began within less than a week after the immigrants’ arrival in the frontier province. Governor Johnstone complained to John Pownal on February 26, 1766, that the lieutenant governor had arrived in the middle of the disagreements between the governor and Walsh, and that he had joined the argument. Browne, according to Johnstone, had told the settlers that the governor could be removed from office “on the slightest representation.” Browne

18. Minutes of the Council, February 25, 1766, CO 5/625, RSUS/WFLR 1. At a later council meeting, Johnstone reported that as agent for Patrick, Lord Elibank, he had selected 20,000 acres according to Elibank’s mandamus grant. However, when the French immigrants arrived and selected the same site for Campbell Town and threatened to move to another part of the province unless they received it, he relinquished it and chose another tract. Minutes of the Council, December 6, 1766, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6.

19. Johnstone to Pownal, April 2, 1766, CO 5/574.

20. Browne to Board of Trade, March 25, 1767, CO 5/575.

21. Minutes of the Council, February 25, 1766, CO 5/625, RSUS/WFLR 1.

22. Johnstone to Ralph Walsh, February 26, 1766, CO 5/574; Walsh to Johnstone, February 26, 1766, CO 5/574. For more on difficulties between civil and military officers in British West Florida, see Johnson, *British West Florida*, passim, and my own book forthcoming from the University Presses of Florida, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida, 1775-1783*.

therefore had circulated a memorial to that effect. According to Johnstone, the people, believing it to be an address to the governor, had signed the petition without reading it.²³

A month later Johnstone explained the reason for the difficulties in more detail. In the original agreement signed between Browne and John Ellis, the lieutenant governor had agreed to furnish arms, ammunition, soap, tea, and sugar, valued at forty-one pounds, four shillings, five pence sterling.²⁴ Upon the *Red Head's* arrival in West Florida, Johnstone requested that Browne deliver the tools and other supplies that the Board of Trade had stipulated as well as the items provided in the agreement with Ellis. According to Johnstone, Browne had agreed to turn over all the supplies. Then, the next day, he announced that the supplies had never left England; the *Red Head*, it seems, had sailed before the goods were loaded. Browne insisted that John Pownal had known about this matter and had authorized him to keep the money for the supplies because of his efforts to obtain them. Johnstone found this explanation difficult to believe because of the "exactness" of Pownal, but decided that he would accept the lieutenant governor's word. To protect himself, the governor felt it wise to put all of this in a letter to Browne. The latter, believing that Johnstone was indeed doubting his word, "parted in ill humor." Nonetheless, Browne politely answered the letter, assuring Johnston that the supplies would be forthcoming. To replace the forgotten muskets, he would furnish guns at three times the value from his own stores. When the goods were still not produced and the ship was preparing to sail for Mobile, Johnstone, having received no satisfaction from Browne, threatened to arrest the captain. Finally, Johnstone reported, "after long negotiations," Browne landed the items as well as twenty inferior muskets. Powder and ball came from the king's stores in Pensacola, but they did not fit the weapons.

Because of this altercation with Browne, the governor concluded, "I am afraid, I have forfeited forever the good wishes of that gentleman." Consequently, the governor observed that Browne had become very friendly with Lieutenant Colonel

23. Johnstone to Pownal, February 26, 1766, CO 5/574.

24. List of Necessaries which Lieut. Govr. Browne agreed to deliver to the French Emigrants . . . , read July 31, 1766, CO 5/574.

Walsh. The “basis and cement” of that friendship, Johnstone claimed, was one of the female French immigrants that Browne had delivered to Walsh. Outraged at such “improper” action, the governor fumed that the young lady had been transported to West Florida at government expense, and besides she “stands on the list delivered to me.”²⁵ The records do not reveal any reply by Browne to Johnstone’s charges.

Another dispute arose from within Campbell Town itself. Less than six months after their arrival, the settlers informed Governor Johnstone that the Reverend Levrier had left the settlement and did not plan to return. The council ordered Levrier to appear before them on June 12, 1766, to explain his intentions. Answering in French, Levrier responded with vague answers, which the council found to be “indirect, delusive, and unworthy the character of a clergyman.” The councilmen therefore resolved to write a letter ordering Levrier to return to Campbell Town within a fortnight. If he failed to obey these instructions, the council would inform the Board of Trade that the pastor “is unworthy of the trust reposed in him” and that he should be replaced with another minister. There is no record of Levrier’s action in the face of the council’s demand.²⁶

The final point of contention had its origins in England but came to a head in West Florida. During the discussions by the Board of Trade and the preparations for the voyage, the figure of sixty French Protestants was accepted as the number of settlers to be transported to Campbell Town. When Browne first met with the West Florida Council on January 20, 1766, the subject of the settlers was introduced with the words, “relative to sixty French Protestants.” Two paragraphs later in the minutes of the same meeting, however, Browne reported one immigrant had deserted at Cork, he had discharged one at Cork upon discovering he was a recusant, one died in passage, three others had deserted at Dominica, and he had added one additional person at Cork. Consequently, Browne asserted that he had arrived with only forty-six persons: twenty-two men,

25. Johnstone to Pownal, April 1, 1766, CO 5/574. Clearly this last statement could mean that the girl was simply on Johnstone’s list of French immigrants transported to West Florida at government expense and therefore such a transaction was “improper.”

26. Minutes of the Council, June 12, 1766, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6.

eight boys, twelve married women, and four girls. There was an additional traveler, one man who had paid his own passage. He was willing to become a settler if the council would grant him the same indulgences the French Protestants were to receive.²⁷ Here the matter rested for nearly two years.

The next time anything concerning the number of immigrants appeared in the records was in a council meeting on February 21, 1768. At that session the lieutenant governor presented a letter from John Ellis which charged the Reverend Levrier with making a false return. According to the agent, the minister, apparently for personal gain, had presented one list of settlers embarking at London and a considerably different roll once he reached West Florida. The council summoned Levrier to the meeting and demanded an explanation. According to the minister, fifty-six French Protestants had left London, had been joined by four more at Cork, and a child had been born on board enroute to Florida. There was a total of sixty-one persons, seven of whom were under the age of fourteen. However, during the voyage, thirteen had either died at sea or deserted at Cork or Dominica; only forty-eight of the original sixty-one thus reached West Florida.²⁸

Four days after Levrier's testimony, the council again discussed it, but there was no new information.²⁹ The final recorded evidence concerning this dispute appeared on July 6, 1768, in a letter from Lieutenant Governor Browne to the Board of Trade. He asserted that the minutes of the West Florida Council of January 20, 1766, when he first reported on the French immigrants, contained some errors. Browne agreed with Levrier's figures as to the number of immigrants, but he still wished to point out some misbehavior on the part of the pastor. According to Browne, the "greater number" of the immigrants whose names were on Levrier's first list, had changed their minds and had remained in England. The pastor therefore filled their places with "the first vagabonds he could find such as hair dressers, cooks, etc." Browne also claimed that Levrier "for some particular purposes has winked at some of the

27. Minutes of the Council, January 20, 1766, CO 5/625, RSUS/WFLR 1.

28. Minutes of the Council, February 21, 1768, CO 5/626, RSUS/WFLR 1.

29. Minutes of the Council, February 25, 1768, CO 5/620. See this letter for a list of the immigrants by name.

emigrants running away at Dominique,” and that “his behavior at Cork and the whole passage was so very disagreeable that I cheerfully gave him up the command of the whole.”³⁰ While there are passing references to other letters, it would appear that this dispute ended with Browne’s letter.

There is little material available concerning the actual settlement of Campbell Town. Following the selection of the site, Provincial Surveyor Elias Durnford surveyed the new lands. He used a plan which he had drawn and which the council had approved, which provided for a division of the town into lots in which the married settlers would have preference. Unmarried immigrants would receive land by drawing in a lottery.³¹ While the settlers moved into Campbell Town, constructed houses, and cultivated the land, few took the trouble to petition for land grants. Records reveal only twelve people who took out grants, and only one name is recognizable as one of the original French immigrants. Apparently others intended to take out grants for there are references to land forfeited by one immigrant “when he deserted the colony.”³² If there is little information about the initial settlement, there is also nothing concrete to explain the name chosen for the new township. Why the French Protestants decided to call their new home Campbell Town is shrouded in mystery.

When Governor Johnstone issued the call for the first assembly in West Florida on August 18, 1766, he announced that there would be six representatives each from Pensacola and Mobile and two from Campbell Town. This first legislative body met in Pensacola on November 3, 1767, and one of its initial functions was to appoint a committee on privileges and elections. The returns from Campbell Town showed the election of John Satterthwaite and David Williams. Dr. John Lorimer, however, contested the results, charging that Deputy Provost Marshall James Johnstone had given a false return for the township. Lorimer asserted that he had received sixteen votes while Williams had drawn only twelve. After an investiga-

30. Browne to [Board of Trade?], July 6, 1768, CO 5/620.

31. Minutes of the Council, March 15, 1766, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6; Minutes of the Council, July 28, 1766, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6.

32. Howard, *British Development of West Florida*, 74-104; Minutes of the Council, 1766-1770, CO 5/625-5/626.

tion, the assembly expelled Williams and gave the seat to Lorimer. At the same time they discharged the provost marshal and reprimanded Williams.³³ The next election which resulted in the meeting of the legislature in December 1767, saw Dr. Lorimer and John Crozer selected as delegates from Campbell Town.³⁴

In the meantime, events in West Florida caused concern for the inhabitants at Campbell Town. Because of Indian unrest, primarily among the Creeks, a committee of the council resolved on October 3, 1766, to build a "respectable Block House" at the new settlement.³⁵ Three days later the council met to consider a letter from Colonel William Tayler, acting brigadier general for the Southern District, concerning the nature of the fortification. He was inquiring if the proposed structure was merely to be a post for the troops or if it should be large enough to accommodate and protect women and children in case of an attack. The council wanted the blockhouse to be large enough to quarter an officer and twenty men and to provide temporary shelter for the women and children. The fortification would mount only one cannon, but the weapon could be moved to swivels at four different locations. They also asserted that "proper signals" between Pensacola and Campbell Town would be of advantage to both settlements. The council hoped the post could be ready for use within a month.³⁶

In addition to the problem of Indian attacks, the immigrants were having a difficult time simply surviving, and Lieutenant Governor Browne decided something had to be done to prevent them from starving. The inhabitants petitioned Browne in early 1767 requesting a continuation of their rations

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33. Proclamation of Governor Johnstone, August 18, 1766, in Library of Congress, West Florida Papers, microfilm copies in Robert Manning Strozier Library, Florida State University, Tallahassee, microfilm roll 1. Minutes of the Lower House of Assembly, November 3-4, 1766, *ibid.*; Clarence E. Carter, "The Beginnings of British West Florida," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, IV (December 1917), 339-40. In May 1767, a motion was made that since William Satterthwaite had died, a representative should be elected in his place. Accordingly, John Blomart became the new delegate from Campbell Town. Minutes of the Lower House of Assembly, May 12, 20, 1767, CO 5/627, RSUS/WFLR 2.
34. Minutes of the Lower House of Assembly, December 15, 1767, CO 5/627, RSUS/WFLR 2.
35. Minutes of the Council, October 3, 1766, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6.
36. Minutes of the Council, October 6, 1766, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6.

and the establishment of a military post near Campbell Town to protect them from the Indians. With the advice and consent of the council, Browne allowed them six months' additional provisions and applied to Colonel Tayler to establish the post.³⁷ The council apparently wondered why Colonel Tayler had not already constructed the fortification, and called him in for questioning. Tayler asserted that he had intended to build the post, but that the settlers would not relinquish the lots where the fort was to go. Consequently, he had been unable to begin construction.³⁸

In order to "bind them to their settlement," Browne also required the French immigrants to sign an agreement of rules and regulations. This document, endorsed by eleven of the male inhabitants, bound the settlers to remain in the township and cultivate the lands for four years or forfeit them. They were also ordered to cut three trees a day per family until a sufficient quantity of logs were available to construct defense works. Any person who worked outside the township for more than a fortnight would forfeit his lands as if he had not cultivated them. Finally, in the event they found a better location on the "adjacent high ground," they could move "from the hollow where it now stands" in order to improve the health and defense of the town.³⁹

These efforts by Browne were to no avail. In December 1767, the Reverend Levrier presented a petition—ostensibly on behalf of all the residents of Campbell Town—to the assembly in which he stated that they had obtained a grant of land at Natchez, and he hoped to secure assistance in transporting them to the new area. The house tabled the petition and ordered Levrier to attend their next meeting. Four days later the pastor appeared before the lower house and, after examination, the assembly dismissed the petition, "it appearing that

37. Minutes of the Council, February 23, 1767, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6; Minutes of the Council, March 2, 1767, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6; Browne to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, March 25, 1767, CO 5/575; Browne to [Hillsborough?], August 10, 1768, CO 5/620.

38. Minutes of the Council, March 7, 1767, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6.

39. Minutes of the Council, March 9, 1767, CO 5/632, RSUS/WFLR 6; "Report of a Committee of the Council Appointed to draw up Certain Rules and Regulations to be entrd into and Signed by the French Emigrants in the Township of Campbelltown," March 1767, CO 5/575.

he had no authority to present the same in the name of the inhabitants of Campbell Town."⁴⁰ Levrier, however, still was not finished. He petitioned for a town lot in Pensacola in April 1770 and received lot 125, Eight months later, December 4, 1770, he requested 500 acres of land at Manchac, and the governor in council granted him 100 acres. While there are no extant records to substantiate Levrier's movements, it is assumed that he settled on the land he received along the Mississippi.⁴¹

The population of Campbell Town continued to decline so that by the summer of 1768, Lieutenant Governor Browne observed that the immigrants had "long since abandoned Cambletown on account of its unhealthfulness."⁴² Consequently, when the assembly met in the fall, a bill was introduced by George Urquhart providing that "as through various accidents the inhabitants of Campbell Town have removed from that township to other parts of the province," their representatives should not be elected solely from that area but that they should be included in the elections for the district of Pensacola. If Campbell Town became "repeopled" in the future, they would once again elect their own representatives. Urquhart's bill passed in the lower house and was sent to the upper house where it was read one time. Before the bill could be read the second time, however, the lieutenant governor dissolved the assembly.⁴³

The history of assembly elections from Campbell Town is one of fraud and multiple returns. As already discussed, the first election was confused as Dr. John Lorimer contested the election of David Williams. Other than the second election in 1767, every other race from Campbell Town was the source of constant bickering. In the session which began in January

40. Minutes of the Lower House of Assembly, December 24, 28, 1767, CO 5/627, RSUS/WFLR 2.

41. Minutes of the Council, April 3, 1770, CL 5/626, RSUS/WFLR 1; Minutes of the Council, December 4, 1770, CO 5/629, RSUS/WFLR 1. Browne had reported in July 1768 that Levrier planned to move to Charleston, but there is no evidence to indicate that he did. Browne to [Board of Trade?], July 6, 1768, CO 5/620.

42. Browne to [Board of Trade?], July 6, 1768, CO 5/620.

43. Minutes of the Lower Hose of Assembly, October 8, 19-20, 1768, CO 5/627, RSUS/WFLR 2; Minutes of the Upper House of Assembly, October 20, 1768, CO 5/626, RSUS/WFLR 2.

1769, John Campbell and John Allen Martin represented Campbell Town. John Maitland and Arthur Strothers, however, charged that the provost marshal had illegally prevented several freeholders from voting. After conducting a long investigation, the house removed Martin and Campbell and gave their seats to Maitland and Strothers.⁴⁴

All of this debate over elections in January 1769, became moot in March, when the king disallowed the law under which the assembly had been called. The governor therefore dissolved it and called for a new election. The assembly met May 22, 1769, and again Campbell Town sent two representatives and a double return. David Ross was elected without question, but returns for John Falconer and Walter Hood revealed that each man had an equal number of votes. The house declared the seat vacant and called for a new election. The records do not show whether this election took place.⁴⁵

This 1769 session of the assembly was the last time Campbell Town sent representatives. Twice in 1771 the council minutes indicated the lack of necessity for such representation as the township "is now entirely abandoned."⁴⁶ Governor Peter Chester, who arrived in West Florida on August 10, 1770, noted in the summer of 1772, "as it is entirely deserted no electors appeared to vote."⁴⁷

There are only scattered hints in the records as to why Campbell Town failed. One historian notes that in 1766 sixteen French Protestant families on the Escambia River were virtually wiped out by yellow fever, but there is no evidence to substantiate such a claim.⁴⁸ In March 1770, the governor in council

44. Minutes of the Lower House of Assembly, January 25, 30-31, 1769, CO 5/627, RSUS/WFLR 2. The provost marshal, John Campbell, and John Allen Martin had to pay the expenses involved in the investigation—amounting to eleven pounds one shilling and ten pence half-penny. Minutes of the Lower House of Assembly, May 24, June 10, 1769, CO 5/627, RSUS/WFLR 2.

45. Minutes of the Lower House of Assembly, May 22, 1769, CO 5/627, RSUS/WFLR 2; Minutes of the Council, March 5, April 7, 1769, CO 5/626, RSUS/WFLR 1.

46. Minutes of the Council, April 23, June 24, 1771, CO 5/629, RSUS/WFLR 3.

47. Peter Chester to Hillsborough, July 8, 1772, CO 5/579.

48. Francois X. Martin, *History of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1882), 201. He states that the sixteen families consisted of sixty-four persons. Campbell Town had problems with illness according to many references in the records. Bad health, however, was a constant problem for inhabitants

took up the subject of Campbell Town, and acting Governor Elias Durnford reported that after settling the township and four or five grants being taken out, the village was "entirely abandoned excepting by one or two, most of the people are now dead or left the province." The governor and council therefore decided that they would grant any abandoned lots to anybody who requested and promised to cultivate them.⁴⁹ While there were several petitions for the vacant lands, the governor and council granted land to only two individuals, and for all practical purposes by 1770 Campbell Town no longer existed.⁵⁰

of British West Florida. See Robert R. Rea, "'Graveyard for Britons,' West Florida, 1763-1781," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLVII (April 1969), 345-64.

49. Minutes of the Council, March 6, 1770, CO 5/626, RSUS/WFLR 1.

50. Minutes of the Council, June 5, 1770, CO 5/626, RSUS/WFLR 1; Minutes of the Council, December 4, 10, 18, 1770, CO 5/629, RSUS/WFLR 3.