

1983

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Recommended Citation

Kinnaird, Lawrence (1983) "War Comes to San Marcos," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 62 : No. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol62/iss1/4>

WAR COMES TO SAN MARCOS

by LAWRENCE KINNAIRD AND LUCIA B. KINNAIRD

OF all the military posts established by Spain in West Florida after the Revolutionary War, San Marcos de Apalache was the only one ever to come under enemy fire. When Spain signed the treaty of San Ildefonso on August 19, 1796, and joined France in the war against Britain, military posts on the Mississippi were prepared for possible attack from Canada. There were many alarms, but all proved false. Along the Gulf coast no Spanish post was besieged by the enemy until war was brought to San Marcos by William Augustus Bowles, a British half-pay officer, and his Indian supporters.¹

As early as 1789, while acting as agent for New Providence Island merchants, Bowles had conceived the bold idea of creating an independent Indian state in the Florida area. The following year he led a delegation of Creek and Cherokee chiefs to London in an attempt to secure support for his project. Although he failed to receive the recognition he sought, he did obtain minor trade concessions for his Indian state. The ship which returned him and his Indian chiefs to New Providence significantly was flying a new flag— that of the Creek nation.²

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1. Information relative to Bowles's payment as a British half-pay officer is found in the following: Bowles to Pendock Neale, September 13, 1798 (draft); Evan Davies to Bowles, September 18, 1798; Bowles to David Thomas, September 21, 1798 (draft), and East India House to Bowles, October 9, 1798, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 2371, hereinafter cited as AGI, PC, followed by a legajo number. All legajos cited are available at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, on microfilm, and a copy of legajo 2366 cited herein is also available at the P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.
2. Frederick Jackson Turner, ed., "English Policy Toward America in 1790-1791," *American Historical Review*, VII (July 1902), 708, 728, 732-33; *Canadian Archives*, 1890, Part I, 154-56; Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Diplomatic Contest for the Mississippi Valley," *Atlantic Monthly*, XCIII (May 1904), 681; Benjamin Baynton, *Authentic Memoirs of William Augustus Bowles* (London, 1791), reprinted as No. 46, Vol. XII of *Magazine History* (Tarrytown, 1916), 22-23; *European Magazine and London Review*, XIX (1792), 268-69; *American Museum*, IX (1791), Appendix III, 22, 26.

Bowles was soon back in Florida endeavoring to implement his plan to open the Indian country ports to free trade and break the monopoly granted to Panton, Leslie and Company by Spain. He maintained that neither Spain, nor Britain before her, had obtained legal title by treaty to Indian land between Apalachicola Bay and Cape Sable. Therefore, the establishment of San Marcos and Panton's trade monopoly in the region were violations of Indian rights. Consequently, with a large band of Creeks, on January 16, 1792, he seized the store of Panton, Leslie and Company near the Spanish post of San Marcos.³ Diplomatically he avoided hostility toward the post's garrison and later proposed to Baron de Carondelet, governor of Louisiana and West Florida, that the question of an independent Indian state be negotiated. The governor accepted Bowles's proposal and gave him a safe conduct to come to New Orleans. Then, in violation of his pledge, he had Bowles sent to Havana. Bowles was held prisoner for seven years in Cuba, Spain, and the Philippines. When the war between Spain and Britain occurred, Bowles was shipped back to Spain, but enroute managed to escape and make his way to Sierra Leon. From there, with British aid, he returned to Florida where, taking advantage of the war, he again planned to establish his Indian state.⁴

The Spaniards at San Marcos and Pensacola first learned of Bowles's presence from Andrew Ellicott, United States commissioner, who had been engaged in surveying the international boundary lines established between the United States and Spanish Florida by the 1795 treaty of San Lorenzo. On St. George Island Ellicott encountered the officers and crew of the British armed schooner *Fox* which had been stranded there. The *Fox* was on the wartime mission of transporting "General Bowles, chief of the Creek nation, and his staff back to the Florida coast."

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3. Lawrence Kinnaird, "The Significance of William Augustus Bowles' Seizure of Panton's Apalachee Store in 1792," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, IX (January 1931), 163-66.
 4. The most accurate Spanish version of Bowles's early activities and his capture is in Captain General Las Casas's report to Floridablanca, April 21, 1782, Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1945*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1945-1949), IV, pt. iii, 22-34; Bowles to Lord Grenville, June 5, 1798 (draft), and Bowles to the Duke of Portland, October 12, 1798 (draft), AGI, PC, legajo 2371; *Naval Chronicle I* (1799), 554.

Ellicott explained to Lieutenant Wooldridge, commander of the *Fox*, that United States neutrality during the war between Britain and Spain prevented him from taking the stranded crew and passengers aboard his ship. Nevertheless, he gave them a considerable amount of supplies. Reciprocating, Bowles presented Ellicott with a detailed map of the Florida coast. Ellicott's departure from St. George Island was delayed by storms, and, during the delay, he became well acquainted with Bowles. Later he described him as "a man of enterprise and address, added to considerable talents."⁵

Reaching San Marcos on October 8, 1799, Ellicott informed Tomás Portell, the commandant, of his encounter with Bowles and of danger to that Spanish post. The commissioner also sent similar warnings to Lieutenant Governor Vicente Folch at Pensacola.⁶ Folch wrote immediately to Marqués de Casa Calvo, acting civil governor of Louisiana and West Florida, asking for reinforcements and proposing that he be placed in command of an expedition to capture Bowles. Before any action could be taken, the crew of the *Fox*, together with Bowles's party, were rescued by a New Providence privateer.⁷ Bowles, with his small band of volunteers, was successfully landed on the Florida coast where the Creeks and Seminoles had for some time expected him. Benjamin Hawkins, United States Indian agent for the Southern Department, had more reliable intelligence concerning Bowles than the Spaniards. He had already written to a sub-agent that he had "received from London an account of Bowles leaving there for this country countenanced by that court, and the Seminoles have heard of it." On October 22, 1799, Casa Calvo replied to Folch that he had dispatched as reinforcement a detachment of twenty-three grenadiers under a capable officer, but he refused to place him in command of an expedition against Bowles. In a too-sanguine expression of confidence, the governor

5. Andrew Ellicott, *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott* (Philadelphia, 1803), 230-32.

6. *Ibid.*, 238.

7. A British naval report states that the officers and crew of the *Fox*, together with Bowles's party were taken off St. George Island by a New Providence privateer on her way to Jamaica. In the Gulf she met the *Thunderer*, a British man-of-war of seventy-four guns commanded by Captain T. Harding, which took the *Fox* crew aboard. Apparently Bowles's party was landed on the Florida coast by the privateer. Plymouth Report, February 25, 1800, *Naval Chronicle*, III (1801), 235.

asserted that Bowles could never succeed in reducing San Marcos.⁸

Bowles first began operations at the Indian village of Wekiwa. Here, on October 31, 1799, he issued a proclamation which he signed as "Director General of Muskogee." The proclamation declared that the 1795 treaty between Spain and the United States was designed "to subvert and destroy the right of Sovereignty which this nation and its confederates have held from the beginning of time." Furthermore, the proclamation ordered all persons in the service of Spain or the United States to leave the territory of Muskogee on or before November 8, 1799.⁹ Apparently the proclamation was designed to be disseminated by word of mouth among the Indians to win their support. Writing early in November, Hawkins provided significant information concerning Bowles's success in dealing with the Indians: "Bowles has had a conference with the Chiefs of the Townes on the Chateuche [Chattahoochee] and with the Seminoles. The latter consented to his making an establishment on the East side of this river some distance below our Line of Limits and he has brought some powder and ball but no arms: and he has promised Barrills [*sic*] said to contain 3300 pounds of powder to the Indians . . . and some Pack horses have been sent down to receive it."¹⁰ Before the end of Novmber, Bowles was located at a place he described as the "free port of Appelhachucola." By the end of the year he had returned to the Ocklockonee River where the men he had recruited from the British West Indies had erected a small camp.¹¹

Eventually, alarmed by reports of Bowles's increasing activities, Casa Calvo sent an expedition to search for and destroy any

8. Casa Calvo to Folch, February 7, 1800, Louisiana Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

9. Proclamation by Bowles, October 31, 1799, AGI, PC, legajo 2371; R. S. Cotterill, *The Southern Indians, The Story of the Five Civilized Tribes before Removal* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1954), 127. Bowles used the title "Director General of Muskogee" which had been given to him by his partisans on October 22, 1791, after return from his London mission. It was apparent that he used the general linguistic term Muskogee for his proposed Indian state because it could be applied to all tribes which spoke the Muskogean language.

10. Hawkins's letter quoted in Schamburg to Manuel de Lanzos, November 23, 1799, Louisiana Collection.

11. Proclamation by Bowles, November 26, 1799, AGI PC, legajo 2366; Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803* (New York, 1934), 167-68.

hostile force found in Spanish territory. According to a report by Carlos Martínez de Irujo, Spanish minister to the United States, sent to Luis Mariano de Urquijo, the Spanish force reached the Ocklockonee early in February 1800, took the intruders by surprise, and destroyed their camp. Although Bowles and his followers managed to escape, they were forced to abandon much personal property including books and papers belonging to the "director general." Taking refuge among the Seminoles who had become his principal partisans, Bowles established his headquarters at Miccosukee and began to organize a war party for an attack on San Marcos. He successfully aroused resentment over the fact that the Spaniards had established San Marcos in their territory without their consent. The possibility of again looting the store of Panton, Leslie and Company probably was a strong inducement for following Bowles.¹²

On April 5, 1800, Bowles declared that a state of war existed between Spain and the State of Muskogee. Within three months of his Ocklockonee rout Bowles was ready with a force of over 300 Indians and laid siege to San Marcos. Although Tomás Portell, the commandment of San Marcos, had served successfully at New Madrid on the Mississippi, he had never experienced an Indian attack. Also on the Florida coast he was somewhat out of his element, yet he had a fairly well fortified fort and a garrison of 106 officers and men. The post was located on a point of land situated between the mouths of two rivers, the San Marcos and the Nordeste (Wakulla), as they joined to flow into Apalachee River and Bay. According to Ellicott, the walls of the fort were constructed of stone. On the north side, a ditch had been cut from river to river so that the place was protected on all sides by water. In addition, the fort was defended by several cannon, whereas Bowles and his Indians had only small arms. Even the terrain

12. Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 167-68; Irujo to Urquijo, April 22, 1800, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Estado, legajo 3889 (Bancroft Library microfilm); also available at P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History); Cotterill, *The Southern Indians*, 129-30. Hawkins thus described the Indians who gave Bowles his chief support: "The Seminoles are Creeks and are called wild-people, as their name imports; because they left their regular Towns, and made irregular settlements in the Country to which they were invited by the plenty of Game, the mildness of the climate and the abundance of food for Cattle and horses. Not withstanding their name, I have found them as decent & orderly as any of the Creeks." Benjamin Hawkins to Stephen Minor, May 2, 1799, Louisiana Collection.

adjacent to San Marcos was not advantageous for Indian style of fighting. There were pine woods beyond gunshot, but much of the surrounding region was without trees and only slightly above water level.¹³

Bowles's strategy was to avoid direct assault and to weaken the garrison by cutting off supplies. He stationed men between the bay and the fort so that vessels ascending the narrow navigable channel would come under fire. When three vessels finally came with provisions, only one was able to reach the fort. Bowles's Indians in canoes succeeded in boarding and capturing the second. The third turned back to sea. The captured vessel, which belonged to Pantón, had cannon on board. Portell was alarmed by a false report that the cannon were of large caliber. Although artillery in the hands of Indians was little reason for alarm, Bowles was accompanied by a small band of soldiers of fortune in whose hands heavy cannon might be devastating. That prospect influenced Portell's decision to surrender. More important, however, was failure of Mississippi River galleys, then patrolling the coast, to come to his aid. He had sent requests for assistance to officers of the galleys, but due to a common lack of cooperation between army and navy, his requests were ignored. On May 10, 1800, Portell surrendered San Marcos to Bowles. The State of Muskogee had won a surprisingly easy victory.¹⁴

Although galleys of the Mississippi River fleet had failed to prevent capture of San Marcos, they were essential if Spain were to recover the post. Because of its location a land expedition against it was impossible. The only feasible approach to the post was by water and only maneuverable galleys were effective on the rivers protecting the fort. Governor Casa Calvo recalled to duty Pedro Rousseau, who had begun his service with Spain during the Revolutionary War, and placed him in general command of naval operations along the Florida coast. Rousseau's experience in the area dated back to 1781 when he participated in the

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13. Ellicott, *Journal*, 238-39; Claude C. Robin, *Voyages dans l'intérieur de la Louisiane de la Floride occidentale et dans les îles de la Martinique et de St. Dominique pendant les années 1802, 1804, 1805 and 1806*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1807), II, 22; Spanish map signed by Vicente Folch entitled *Encenada y Entrada del Rio de Apalache* showing the location of San Marcos post at the juncture on the San Marcos and Nordeste (Wakulla) rivers. Bancroft Library photograph.
 14. Whitaker, *Mississippi Question*, 169-70.

Spanish conquest of Pensacola. As commander of the *Galveztown*, with Governor Bernardo de Gálvez on board, he successfully sailed into Pensacola harbor under fire of British guns. Later he commanded the fleet of Mississippi River galleys during Governor Carondelet's administration. Rousseau was already acquainted with Bowles. Under Carondelet's orders in 1792, he had taken Bowles as prisoner to Havana after he had been trapped by the governor's false promise of a safe conduct to New Orleans.¹⁵

Within three weeks of the loss of San Marcos, preparations were being made for its recovery. Lieutenant Governor Folch at Pensacola was instructed to organize and command an expedition against San Marcos. Success depended on the effective use of armed galleys of the Mississippi River squadron. Rousseau placed Manuel García, a young Andalusian who had seen much service on the Mississippi, in charge of naval operations. García commanded the *Leal*, largest of the galleys. The *Leal* was built at New Orleans in 1793, and was designed for patrolling the lower Mississippi, lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas, and the Gulf coast. Equipped with a sail, it made occasional trips to Havana. Its complement usually consisted of a captain, navigating officer, *proel* or sailor stationed in the bow, eleven artillerymen, thirty-six oarsmen, and twenty-five soldiers. It was armed with three cannon and eight swivel guns. The other armed vessels of the San Marcos expedition were the galleys *Luisiana* and *Venganza* supported by the *canoneras* or gunboats *Socorro* and *Fetis*. The *Luisiana* and *Venganza* each had two cannon and five swivel guns. Their complements at full strength included a captain, navigating officer, *proel*, seven artillerymen, thirty-two oarsmen, and twenty soldiers. The gunboats generally carried a captain, sailing master, five artillerymen, twelve oarsmen, one sergeant, and eight soldiers. Each was armed with one cannon and four swivel guns. At full strength the five galleys should have carried about 170 officers and men. However, a report by Manuel Garcia to Governor Casa Calvo on July 11, 1800, stated that the number was only 150.¹⁶

15. "The Services of Don Pedro Rousseau, commandant of galleys on the Mississippi," Louis Houck (ed.), *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1908), II, 324-26; Kinnaird (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valleys, 1765-1794*, II, pt. 1, xxx, IV, pt. 3, 31.

16. Relación de la reconquista q^e del Fuerte de Apalache hace dⁿ Manuel García, and García to Casa Calvo, July 11, 1800, as cited in Whitaker,

With a company of grenadiers, the expedition of five galleys and four schooners sailed from Pensacola on June 16, 1800. One week later, the galleys were off San Marcos ready for the attack. They moved up the narrow channel in single file without receiving any fire from the shore. As they approached the fort, they reformed into a line abreast with the *Leal* in the center, protected by the gunboats on right and left, and with the *Luisiana* and *Venganza* positioned on the flanks. Under cover of a white flag, the galleys moved in close to the fort under García's pretext of offering to parley with Bowles. This strategy secured a delay and enabled the *Luisiana*, which had run aground, to free itself. The galleys then opened fire on the fort. Although very shorthanded, Bowles managed to return the fire and delay the galleys' ascent of the rivers. That delay was crucial for Bowles. The Spanish plan was to land grenadiers behind the fort and thereby cut off Bowles's means of escape. The *Luisiana*, with a detachment of grenadiers aboard, began to row up the San Marcos River. At the same time, the *Venganza*, with another detachment of grenadiers ascended the Wakulla. Bowles had no possibility of a successful defense because his only effective force consisted of a few white followers. Most of the Indians who had participated in the capture of the fort had returned to their villages. He hastily loaded two small boats and escaped up the San Marcos River before he could be entrapped by the galleys and the grenadiers. The few remaining Indians vanished into the pine woods and the grenadiers occupied the fort without resistance. On the evening of June 23, 1800, the Spanish flag again flew over San Marcos.¹⁷

Although the Spaniards had recaptured San Marcos, the post was not out of danger. Bowles took refuge among the Seminole Indians who lived on the upper waters of San Marcos River and Miccosukee Lake. The village most hostile to the Spaniards was Miccosukee and that was not much more than thirty miles distant from San Marcos as the crow flies. After Spanish reoccupation of the fort, Captain Pedro Olivier was appointed to succeed Portell who was in trouble because of his surrender to Bowles. The new

Mississippi Question, 171, 305. Description of galleys used in the reconquest of San Marcos is based on Abraham P. Nasatir, *Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi*. (New Haven, 1968), 31, 38-40, 50, 58.

17. Plano de la reconquista de Sⁿ Marcos de Apalache para el teniente colonel Dⁿ. Vicente Folch y Juan Gobernador de Pensacola, en 23 de Junio de 1800, Bancroft Library photograph.

commandant soon learned that on July 13, Bowles, accompanied by six Negroes and three Indians, had departed for Tampa Bay. There he had arranged to be picked up by New Providence privateers and taken to Nassau where he expected to obtain munitions and then return to Florida.¹⁸

In the interval, a temporary cessation of hostilities occurred, although for eighteen months San Marcos was under an almost constant state of alarm. However, Olivier's presence brought some prospects for peace with the Indians. He was highly respected by the Creeks among whom he had lived for several years as Spanish commissioner. As an indication of this regard, on August 4, Perryman, mestizo chief of Casistas village, with thirty-four other chiefs and headmen, came to visit Olivier on a peace mission. Most were Upper Creeks although Mislogue, headman of the Seminole town of Miccosukee, was with them. Perryman induced the Indians to bring Olivier thirty-three head of cattle. The gift was welcome since the garrison was limited to salt meat and many soldiers were ill; one from the Mexican regiment had died. Perryman also surrendered two prisoners who had been captured by the Indians near Pensacola. Olivier persuaded Mislogue to carry a peace message to Kinache, principal chief of Miccosukee. Kinache was a strong supporter of Bowles and had permitted many of his white followers to remain at Miccosukee during his absence in New Providence. Mislogue gave his word that he would return to San Marcos with Kinache's reply.¹⁹

On August 7, 1800, Lieutenant Colonel Zenon Trudeau arrived at San Marcos with a large force to be used in subduing Indians who threatened the post's safety. Lieutenant Governor Folch had warned the Indians that those in rebellion would be punished. Trudeau's mission was designed to make that warning effective. In Spanish Illinois Trudeau had served many years as lieutenant governor and, like Portell, he was ignorant of conditions on the Florida coast. Only eight days after his arrival he encountered his first Indian trouble. At high tide it was necessary for water carriers to go upstream about three-quarters of a mile to obtain water free of salt and return with it to the fort in small boats. On August 15, Seminoles fired upon the gunboat *Socorro*

18. Trudeau to Casa Calvo, August 22, 1800, Louisiana Collection.

19. Olivier to Casa Calvo, August 29, 1800, *ibid.*

which was guarding the water carriers; a sailor named Mariano Ceceles was killed. A detachment of grenadiers commanded by Lieutenant Juan Delassize and another from the regiments of mulattoes and Negroes under Lieutenant Luis Declouet were immediately dispatched from the fort to aid the *Socorro* in the skirmish. The Indians were driven off and pursued for a short distance without further encounter. Although the war party apparently numbered only about twenty-two, it was obvious that hostilities had not ended.²⁰

There was little doubt that the marauding party was from Bowles's stronghold Miccosukee. Trudeau considered the destruction of that village essential for the safety of San Marcos. Therefore, he decided to lead an expedition against it. Preparations for the operation were extensive. Each soldier was issued thirty-four cartridges for his musket. Some soldiers carried axes and hatchets in addition to their regular equipment. Rations were supplied for a six-day campaign. When organized, the expedition seemed formidable and sufficiently strong to destroy any Seminole village encountered. It included fifty-eight soldiers of the detachment from Mexico, 102 mulattoes and Negroes, fifty-eight volunteer sailors from the galleys, and fifty-four grenadiers and cadets. With this force of 272 men and officers, Trudeau set out on the seventeenth of August. Unfortunately, the commander was not only unfamiliar with the country, but also his guides were unreliable. His failure to obtain adequate information concerning the terrain proved disastrous from the beginning. After marching less than three miles he was forced to halt and camp at one of the few spots where good drinking water was available. At four in the morning the march resumed. Progress was very slow. By eleven o'clock excessive heat had so exhausted the men that a halt was necessary. Water was still a problem since much of what was found was stagnant. By noon, ten men were sick and two had met with accidents. The troops were so fatigued that Trudeau ordered a rest for the remainder of the day. Finally, he realized that progress was so slow that he could not hope to surprise the Seminoles.²¹

20. Copy of talk addressed to the Seminoles by Don Vicente Folch and transmitted by Olivier to Trudeau, Trudeau to Cassa Calvo, August 22, 1800, and Olivier to Casa Calvo, August 29, 1800, *ibid.*

21. Trudeau to Casa Calvo, August 22, 1800, *ibid.*

Failure of his expedition to cover more than four leagues in two days forced Trudeau into abandoning the plan of attacking Miccosukee. Climate and terrain had defeated him. He later tried to explain the reasons for his decision to Governor Casa Calvo: "I was in danger of finding two hundred men under arms and perhaps in places on the road favorable to the enemy. With one call they could be assembled in the town I desired to attack. I had not been able to learn at first hand the various hidden trails and many others which the guides told me I would find further on, particularly nearing the town. This circumstance made me realize that the attack could only be most unfortunate and withdrawal even more so on account of the wounded, sick, and fatigued which we could expect to have. It would have been necessary to abandon the expedition if only fifty men had wished to block our way."²²

The expedition returned to San Marcos on the afternoon of August 19, making more speed than it had on the two previous days. Trudeau at least was intelligent enough to realize the errors he had made in planning the venture. For a military force to travel from San Marcos to Miccosukee and return would require at least ten days instead of six. In the future, more packhorses should be used to carry provisions and equipment so that troops could travel light. There should be covering for all provisions and military supplies. Because the humidity was high, powder flasks should be used instead of cartridges. Trudeau's conclusion, which he should have reached as a result of his experience in Spanish Illinois, was that "the whites have never surprised the Indians."²³

Failure of his expedition caused Trudeau to forsake all plans for further military action against those Indians who were loyal to Bowles. He wrote to Governor Casa Calvo that, in future, he would rely on diplomacy: "Without compromising my honor, I shall employ patience, dissimulation, and all that seems prudent in order to arrange matters in such a manner that I shall be able to talk peace under conditions which Your Lordship has ordered."²⁴ The day after the expedition's return, Mislogue arrived at San Marcos with a message from Kinache. It stated

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

that until he learned Bowles was not coming back to Miccosukee and was withdrawing his white followers, he would not participate in any peace talks. Unfortunately for Mislogue, the ranking Spanish officer, soured by his Miccosukee fiasco, ordered him held as prisoner. Thus, for keeping his word to Olivier, Mislogue became the only prisoner taken as a result of Trudeau's expedition. As late as January 1802, he was still held confined at San Marcos. So much for honor.²⁵

Failure of Trudeau's expedition demonstrated that even the Seminoles who lived near San Marcos had little to fear from Spanish military operations. Furthermore, Bowles soon was able to secure additional supplies from New Providence for distribution among his Indian supporters because it was in the British interest to keep the Indians at war with the Spaniards. Pedro Rousseau was given the responsibility of trying to check the flow of British arms into the Florida Indian country. The safety of San Marcos depended upon his success. His task was made more difficult when Bowles returned to Florida and began to commission privateers who were willing to raid Spanish commerce under the flag of the State of Muskogee. When Bowles captured a supply ship bound for San Marcos, it seemed apparent that he intended to keep that post blockaded. As a counter measure, Rousseau, who had taken command of the *Leal*, began to patrol the coast from Pensacola to Cape Sable. His first accomplishment was in recapturing a Spanish ship which had been taken by the English. In July of 1800, he captured the schooner *Walther*, armed with "eight four-pounders," which was loaded with military supplies destined for "the adventurer Bowles." The following year he duplicated that feat by taking the schooner *Favorite*, armed with ten cannon of the same caliber, which was transporting artillery and munitions of war to Bowles for another attack on San Marcos. A short time thereafter, Rousseau recaptured the schooner *Betsy* owned by José Vidal. It had been taken by one of Bowles's privateers while sailing to Havana with a cargo of flour. On other occasions Rousseau burned a schooner and seized various small craft belonging to Bowles. One of his major achievements was in burning two large storehouses and a watch-tower on Cedar Island

25. Olivier to Casa Calvo, August 29, 1800, and Du Breuil to Salcedo, January 20, 1802, *ibid.*

where Bowles had a base of supplies.²⁶

Despite the continuous efforts of Rousseau, Bowles's activities increased on land and sea. By the beginning of 1802, he had brought sufficient war supplies to his Seminole supporters for an attempt to capture San Marcos a second time. With Trudeau's departure most of the troops had been withdrawn and conditions at San Marcos had deteriorated. Captain Jacobo Du Breuil had been appointed to succeed Olivier as commandant of the post. He was a competent officer, but his garrison was undermanned and inferior in quality. He complained to the new governor, Manuel de Salcedo, that he had been sent "the most useless soldiers, the most vicious, and the most persistent in their object of avoiding duty." Two had deserted. Fortunately, his officers were above average. Du Breuil especially trusted Sublieutenant Juan Bautista Pellerin who was intelligent, skilled in woodland warfare, and well-known for his bravery. The chief protections for the post were two Mississippi River galleys, the *Luisiana*, commanded by Manuel García, and the *Felipa*, commanded by José Clouet. On the land side of the fort the threat of attack by Seminoles was always present, and it was unsafe for Spaniards to go even a short distance beyond the walls.²⁷

Finally, Bowles was ready to take the offensive, and, on January 5, 1802, he led a large force of Seminoles against San Marcos. The first act of hostility was capture of a Spanish soldier named Juan Dozal. Disregarding the commandant's orders, he had gone out too far to round up some horses grazing in an area beyond cannon shot from the fort. Before it was known that Dozal was missing, two Indians came to the fort under the pretext of selling fresh meat. Du Breuil suspected that they might be spies and had them detained. They loudly protested that they were not spies, but they did not convince the interpreter Juan Sandoval, and Du Breuil ordered them locked up. Later he learned from Mislogue, who was still held at the post, that the meat sellers were indeed Miccosukee Indians. Du Breuil blamed García, commander of the *Luisiana*, for failure to protect Dozal because he had not

26. The Services of Don Pedro Rousseau, Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, II, 325-26; D. C. Corbitt and J. T. Lanning, "A Letter of Marque Issued by William Augustus Bowles, Director General of the State of Muskogee," *Journal of Southern History*, VII (1945) 489-96.

27. Du Breuil to Salcedo, January 20, 1802, Louisiana Collection.

followed instructions to anchor his galley farther up the river. On the afternoon of January 6, a band of Indians approached the fort and opened fire with their carbines. The garrison replied with two cannon shots of ball and grape. The galleys also opened fire, and the Indians retreated to a camp which they had set up just out of range. Once again San Marcos was under siege.²⁸

In an attempt to learn Dozal's fate, Du Breuil employed an Indian woman called La Camarona who worked at the fort. Secretly she visited the scene of his capture and reported that she had found Dozal's dog dead from a bullet wound, but no sign that Dozal had been killed. Shortly afterward, one of La Camarona's relatives came to the fort and told Du Breuil that Dozal had been taken to Miccosukee and that the Indians there wished to exchange him for the Miccosukee prisoners in San Marcos. This messenger said that several Miccosukee Indians were waiting in the nearby pine woods for an answer. Du Breuil rejected the proposal and sent a message stating that he would free the Miccosukee prisoners only if he received in exchange Dozal and two Spanish deserters, Sánchez and Sandoval, who were living at Miccosukee. In an attempt to guarantee Dozal's safety, he added a threat to kill the Miccosukee prisoners if he were harmed. After the message was delivered, a party of Indians began to move closer to the fort. Because it became obvious that they had not accepted Du Breuil's counter proposal and their movement seemed hostile, he ordered that they be fired upon. The galleys also opened fire, and the Indians fled.²⁹

Although the Indians withdrew beyond cannon range, it was apparent that the siege of San Marcos would continue. In assessing his situation Du Breuil needed to ascertain the strength of the enemy. At the fort was a Creek Indian named Topahuaique who acted as confidential courier for the commandant. When several fires were observed quite near the fort one night, Du Breuil persuaded him to go out and reconnoiter the enemy's camp, although it would be at great personal risk. Topahuaique scouted the area as far as he dared, but could not come very close to the camp because the many fires increased the possibility of his being seen. He returned to the fort about twelve o'clock at night and reported that the enemy force was very large. At one of the fires

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

he estimated that the warriors encamped there numbered about 150. Contrary to the usual Indian custom, there were sentinels posted in a military manner. The arrangement of the camps and the posting of sentinels indicated that Bowles or some of his white staff members were in charge of the operation.³⁰

The Creek scout's report caused Du Breuil to abandon a plan for a surprise attack against the camp. Not only were the Indians on the alert, but they also were probably well equipped with munitions brought in from New Providence. Although they had not been observed, the likely presence of Bowles and an unknown number of his white followers was an added reason for caution. Du Breuil could only spare twenty-five or thirty men for a surprise attack because his garrison was not up to full strength and a sortie with such a small force might result in disaster. On the following day, Du Breuil learned that there were more than 300 Indians on the land side of the fort and that other parties were guarding the river as far as the sea. Equally alarming was confirmation that there were many white men and Negroes among them, including deserters from Spanish garrisons at Pensacola and San Agustín. The commandant was in a more dangerous situation than that of Portell in 1800, except for the presence of two Mississippi River galleys.³¹

On January 12, a curious incident occurred. At five o'clock in the afternoon, a band of the enemy placed a red flag at the edge of the pine woods. Among them was a white man who was observing the fort through a spyglass. Du Breuil watched the performance and thought that the man who set up the flag looked like one of his deserters. Surprisingly, the flag appeared to be a Spanish royal standard. In reply to this arrogance, Du Breuil ordered two cannon shots, and the galleys joined in. The enemy sought cover so hastily that the flag was left behind. Later in the evening, despite additional fire from the fort, they returned and recovered the flag.³²

The next day at eight o'clock in the morning the schooner *Eugenia* was sighted entering the river from Apalachee Bay. It was laden with essential supplies for the fort. The galley *Luisiana* went down to assist and protect the *Eugenia* as she passed through

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

the dangerous channel called the strait. Because the tide was low the schooner ran aground and was unable to free herself until the next day at high tide. During the night there was heavy fog, and the *Luisiana* remained anchored near the *Eugenia*. When the fog cleared, observers in the fort could see Indians across the river moving toward some old trenches bordering the strait. At that place the Indians had previously destroyed a schooner belonging to Bernard Migues. Du Breuil ordered that a culverin be fired at the Indians. That proved to be ineffective because they were just out of range. The Indians were obviously intending to entrench themselves where they could fire upon any vessel coming upstream to the fort. If vessels with essential provisions for San Marcos were stopped at the strait or were captured there, the post would be in serious trouble. Bowles had used a similar plan in 1800.³³

Du Breuil reacted to the critical situation by ordering the galley *Felipa* to go downstream and join the *Luisiana* in a concentrated fire upon the enemy. Engineer Juan María Perchet proposed that he, with a detachment of soldiers, go aboard the *Felipa* and attempt to destroy the Indians' earthworks. Du Breuil accepted Perchet's offer and selected twenty of his best men to accompany him. About eight o'clock in the morning of January 14 the galley *Felipa*, with Perchet and his detachment on board, pulled away from the fort. On doubling the first point before arriving at the strait, two trenches became visible at a distance of a little more than a musket shot. The *Felipa* opened fire and continued as she moved in close to shore. The Indians soon abandoned the trenches and sought refuge in nearby woods. Perchet then landed with his soldiers and began destroying the earthworks. He posted several guards and set the remainder of the men to work filling up the trenches. It was a difficult process, despite the fact that the competent engineer had equipped his men with shovels.³⁴

The earthworks were carefully planned, and the Indians were in the process of enlarging them. There were two trenches, and the larger was not more than half finished. When it was completed it would have provided space for about 100 men. The

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

second trench was entirely finished and was long enough to hold eighty men. It was well protected by a bank of earth which had been excavated from the trench and augmented by more earth from the river bank. Between the trenches was a communication passage protected by pitch pine logs. Perchet's men threw several logs into the trenches, others into the river, and destroyed as much of the well-planned fortification as possible. They then set fire to the nearby brush and reembarked under cover of the smoke. As the *Felipa* pulled away, it fired one more charge of grapeshot at the Indians in the woods. While destruction of the trenches was in progress, the galley *Luisiana* and the schooner *Eugenia* had safely ascended to the fort and anchored in the San Marcos River. The *Felipa* came up later at about one in the afternoon. Mail delivered by the *Eugenia* contained the very good news that war between England and Spain had ended and peace negotiations were under way.³⁵

About the time Perchet returned from his sortie, several Indians bearing a white flag appeared at the edge of the woods north of the fort. Du Breuil responded in kind, and an Indian brought him a letter. It was from Bowles and the first definite proof that he was in the area. In his letter Bowles repeated the offer to exchange the soldier Dozal for the Miccosukee prisoners held at the fort. Du Breuil decided that instead of answering Bowles's letter he would write to Chief Kinache of Miccosukee. Thus he hoped to show that he considered Kinache superior to Bowles. Then, calling the post's interpreter Juan Sandoval, he gave the Indian envoy a verbal message for Kinache. It explained that the war had ended and the Seminoles could no longer expect to receive any support from English sources. Finally, to make the occasion of the war's end more impressive Du Breuil ordered fifteen cannon shots be fired by the fort and the galleys.³⁶

On January 15, Sublieutenant Pellerin, with a strong detachment, went downstream in the *Felipa* to see whether the enemy had returned to repair their trenches along the river. He found that they had restored some of the earthworks. Consequently, under fire of the *Felipa*, he landed with his men and repeated the work of the preceding day. By the sixteenth Du Breuil had

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

completed his letter to Kinache in which he once again stated that he would only return the Miccosukee prisoners in exchange for Dozal and the two Spanish deserters. Under cover of a white flag, he sent the letter to the Indian camp. An Indian who received it explained that both Kinache and Bowles had gone to Miccosukee. Nevertheless, the siege continued until Rousseau arrived with two galleys and a *bombardera*. Then the Indians gradually withdrew. The end of the war and the prospective termination of English support, clandestine or otherwise, without doubt was the main reason for Bowles's abandonment of his second siege of San Marcos. However, it was the presence of Mississippi River galleys which made the difference between what occurred in 1800 and in 1802.³⁷

After Bowles and his Indians had withdrawn from the siege of San Marcos, the Spaniards made strenuous diplomatic efforts to arrange a peace with the Seminoles, especially those of Miccosukee and neighboring villages. Bowles's failure to take San Marcos was one factor in the success of this policy; the transfer of his headquarters from Miccosukee to Estefunalga was another.³⁸ Eventually, with cooperation of Upper Creek chiefs, a peace conference was arranged. Creek and Seminole chiefs came to San Marcos where they met with Du Breuil and other Spanish officers. There, on August 20, 1802, a preliminary peace treaty was drafted which terminated hostilities between Seminoles and Spaniards. It specified there should be an exchange of prisoners, although there was no mention of Spanish deserters living among the Indians. The most important part of the treaty as it related to the safety of San Marcos was article five: "The Florida Indians, and particularly the Mesasuques, and their chief, Captain Micko Kinache, obligate themselves not to lend aid, direct or indirect, guards or auxiliaries, to the adventurer William Augustus Bowles, and not to trade with him since he has been the cause and moving spirit of all the hostilities which have occurred; and they shall leave this adventurer to his fate, taking notice that this article will form the essential base of the treaty."³⁹ When the

37. Ibid. The Services of Don Pedro Rousseau, Houck, *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, II, 326.

38. Bowles's commission of Richard Powers as post captain of Marine, Estefunalga, June 23, 1802, Bancroft Library photograph.

39. Preliminary Treaty of Peace between Spain and the Seminoles, August 20, 1802, (Copy for the Governor General), Louisiana Collection.

Spanish officials signed this treaty and the Indian chiefs affixed their marks the war was officially ended for San Marcos.