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Entangled Borderlands: The 1794 Projected French Invasion of Spanish East Florida and Atlantic History

by Robert J Alderson, Jr.

In 1793-1794 a motley group of South Carolina and Georgia backcountrymen entered into a conspiracy with French revolutionaries to invade Spanish territories in Louisiana and Florida. Although the plot eventually collapsed under pressure from the French and American governments, support for the expedition and resistance to the planned invasion provide a revealing chapter in the history of the southern backcountry and the Atlantic world. The confluence of multi-national, multi-racial constituencies in the heat of revolutionary fervor is ripe for re-evaluation. The most recent examination of the plot was conducted by Michael Morris, who placed the planned invasion of East Florida within the context of Bertram Wyatt-Brown's analysis of southern honor and violence, which "observed that the southern idea of patriotism was built upon a loyalty to a place, a people, rather than upon abstract con-

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cepts of democracy and freedom.”¹ Notwithstanding the validity of the frontier commitment to expansion, analysis of the events assumes a greater complexity when viewed within the Atlantic migration of revolutionary ideas. Within this expanded framework of regional and global actions, Florida’s importance in the scramble for land and position in a world transformed by revolution becomes evident.

Scholarship on Atlantic history has proliferated in recent years. Bernard Bailyn, Alison Games, and Ian Steele conducted seminal examinations of Atlantic history that provided a “viable unit of analysis” for the study of life on and around the Atlantic, including the flow and significance of commodities, “the destruction and emergence of empires, the movement of people, the evolution of new cultural forms, and the circulation of ideas.” Paul Gilroy likewise called on historians to “take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis . . . and use it to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective.” The projected invasions blurred national boundaries in that American adventurers were to invade Spanish territory and attack British and Spanish shipping under the French flag. As the different elements of the Atlantic are explored, it is “often with a retributive tendency that supports . . . dissidents.” The Americans who took part in the invasions were dissidents in their demands for political power, land and their view on what it meant to live in a republic. The projected invasions are clear illustrations of what Eliga Gould has called “entangled Atlantic histories,” that the peripheries of the United States, Spain, Britain, and France were linked through “an array of interconnected processes,” and that events at the peripheries of Atlantic communities often moved in directions and at speeds that policymakers at the core could not always manage. “Territorial claims,” as Bailyn points out when speaking about an earlier era, “were unreliable, often ignored when known, and commonly contested.” The projected invasions can be seen as a prelude to Rafe Blaufarb’s interpretation of international competition for control of Spain’s holdings in the Americas as the “Western Question.”

1. Michael Morris, “Dreams of Glory, Schemes of Empire: The Plan to Liberate Spanish Florida,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 87, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 1-21. The quote is on 21. See also Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press Galaxy Abridged Edition, 1986).

Like Blaufarb's account, the projected invasion "demonstrates the difficulty of tracing clear lines between insurgents and adventurers, between revolutionaries and profiteers." By including the Atlantic context, the Florida expedition is an example of the "interplay between the local and the geopolitical" and places the American southeast, especially Florida, at the center of the Atlantic world.²

Second, and closely related to Atlantic history, is "the flow of ideas" which "permeated the Atlantic communities" during the revolutionary era. The concept of the Atlantic Revolutions, developed by R. R. Palmer and Jacques Godechot, posits that revolutionary ideals that were put into practice during the American Revolution migrated to France, where they combined with European revolutionary ideology to produce a rich base to feed the French Revolution. What this paper adds is that French ideology was then transmitted back to America, where it justified the invasion of Spanish territory. This study places an emphasis on the attempts of dissidents to make their views known in the public sphere. The struggle to articulate an alternative voice was not mere rhetoric but an attempt to create a grassroots oppositional sphere against the southern socio-political structure and the administration of President Washington. This is not to say that

2. For the outlines of Atlantic history, see: Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *The American Historical Review* 111 (June 2006): 741-757; Ian K. Steele, "Bernard Bailyn's American Atlantic," *History and Theory* 46 (February 2007): 48-58. The first quote covered by this footnote is in Games, "Atlantic History," 747-748. The second quote is in Ian K. Steele, "Bernard Bailyn's American Atlantic," 56. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 15. Gilroy also points out that in Atlantic history of "the image of the ship—a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion—is especially important . . . Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage . . . on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts (4)." The ship is also a powerful image in disseminating revolutionary ideals and individuals that would determine the progress of the Florida invasion. The third quote is in Steele, "Bernard Bailyn's American Atlantic," 57. The fourth quote is in Eliga H. Gould, "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery," *AHR* 112 (June 2007): 767. See also Gould, "Entangled Atlantic Histories: A Response from the Anglo-American Periphery," *AHR* 112 (December 2007): 1415-1422. The fifth quote is in Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 69. Rafe Blaufarb, "The Western Question: The Geopolitics of Latin American Independence," *AHR* 112 (June 2007), the sixth quote is on 760, the seventh on 756.

self-interest was not a motivating factor in the projected invasions, but rather that ideology informed self-interest to justify the invasion as not a mere land-grab, but as the spread of revolutionary republicanism. As a rule, however, interest and ideology were at odds, with self-interest taking precedence over any ideological considerations. This tension between self-interest and ideology helps historians "understand early modern people on their own terms" by illuminating "perspectives voiced incessantly by early moderns themselves."³

The relation of an Atlantic community to the pursuit of national self-interest is a salient feature of Atlantic history. The idea that self-interest was the trump card in international relations was a truism in the eighteenth century, just as it is today. For example, as early as 1778, George Washington came to the conclusion that self-interest ruled foreign policy considerations: "it is a maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it." A full understanding of this mindset contributes to a "transnational

3. The first and second quotes are in Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 107. See also Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," 748. For the Atlantic Revolutions, see Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 25-30. See also Jacques Godechot, *France and the Atlantic Revolution of the Eighteenth Century, 1770-1799*, trans. Herbert H. Rowen (New York: Free Press, 1965); R.R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, vol. 1, *The Challenge*, vol. 2, *The Struggle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959-64). The work of Palmer and Godechot was extended and added to by scholars such as Bailyn, Caroline Robbins, and J.G.A. Pocock which in aggregate pointed to an "Atlantic republican tradition (a part of the title in Pocock's, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965])." The public sphere has a complex historiography all its own. Its origins are in Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). See also Albrecht Koschnik, "The Democratic Societies of Philadelphia and the Limits of the American Public Sphere, circa 1793-1795" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58 (July 2001): 615-636; John L. Brooke, "Ancient Lodges and Self-Created Societies: Voluntary Association and the Public Sphere in the Early Republic," in *Launching the "Extended Republic": The Federalist Era*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 273-359. The January 2005 edition of *The William and Mary Quarterly* included a forum on "Alternative Histories of the Public Sphere." The third and fourth quotes are in Steele, "Bernard Bailyn's American Atlantic," 51. For the Atlantic community see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 8-9, 54.

diplomatic history 'from below.'" The same "entwining of interest and ideology" that informed the participants in 1793-1794 also influenced those who later solved the "Western Question." Gould acknowledges that British colonization of North America was justified by "pitting an Iberian model, in which authority descended from on high, against . . . the 'nascent republicanism' of Britain's decentralized, settler-based ideal." This ideology was important from the beginning of Anglo-Spanish entanglement in the Western Hemisphere. After American independence, Gould notes that Americans "embracing this settler republicanism also embraced the freelancing tendencies that had long characterized the expansion of British settlers into Spanish territory." It is no accident that Bailyn concludes that revolutionary "ideals survived . . . to unify the cultures of the Atlantic world." Revolutionary ideals, therefore, cannot easily be dismissed. During 1793-1794, Florida was a zone of interconnectedness not merely between American adventurers, French revolutionaries, and Spanish officials, but also of revolution, interest, and geopolitics.⁴

To illustrate the importance of the Atlantic connections and of revolutionary ideology, the projected invasion had its origins not on the frontier of the United States, but in the halls of power in France. The ruling Girondin faction believed that the world's monarchies should be overthrown through an international republican revolution. The Girondins, instrumental in the declaration of the French Republic in September 1792, also wanted better relations with the United States. To that end, their leader, Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, had traveled in the United States and commented on improving commercial relations between the two republics.⁵ The Girondins believed the United

4. The quote is in George Washington to Henry Laurens, 14 November 1778, *The Writings of George Washington*, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1931) vol. 13, 254-257. For more on the interplay between self-interest and ideology, see: William C. Stinchcombe, *Republicanism and World Diplomacy*, (Alexandria, Va.: Bicentennial Council of the Thirteen Original States Fund, 1978), 15; Daniel George Lang, *Foreign Policy in the Early Republic: The Law of Nations and the Balance of Power* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 68-69. Blaufarb, "The Western Question," the second quote is in 743, the third on 757. Gould, "Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds," the fourth quote is on 772, the fifth is on 783. The sixth quote is in Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 111.

5. Suzanne d'Huart, Brissot: *La Gironde au pouvoir* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1986); J. P. Brissot and Etienne Clavière, *New Travels in the United States of America: Including the Commerce of America with Europe, Particularly with*

States would aid France in a war against the crowned heads of Europe and hoped that the Americans would help export revolution to British and Spanish colonies as an extension of the approaching war in Europe. Of course, there existed the possibility of "imperialist expansion" and the recapture of the former French colonies of Louisiana and Canada.⁶

Edmond-Charles Genet was chosen to put the Girondin designs for the New World into action. Genet had served at several embassies before he was expelled from Russia for his repub-

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- France and Great Britain*, ed. and trans. Joel Barlow (London: J. S. Jordan, 1794; Library Resources, 1974, microfiche), iii-liv. In 1991 *French Historical Studies*, 17 (Spring 1991), contained an extensive forum entitled "Interpreting Brissot" that included Robert Darnton's "The Brissot Dossier," 191-205, which he argued that Brissot was "a disinterested idealist, who threw himself into . . . all sorts of worthy causes, including the American variety of republicanism, for which he died on the guillotine (Darnton, "The Brissot Dossier," 191. Italics added)."
6. The quote is from Albert Hall Bowman, *The Struggle for Neutrality: Franco-American Diplomacy During the Federalist Era* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1974), 42. D.M.G. Sutherland, *French Revolution and Empire: The Quest for a Civic Order* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003), 131-136, Paul R. Hanson, *The Jacobin Republic Under Fire: The Federalist Revolt in the French Revolution* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2003), 33-55; Leigh Whaley, *Radicals: Politics and Republicanism in the French Revolution* (Thrupp, UK: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000), 46-53; William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 174-176, 180; Bernardine Melchior-Bonnet, *Les Girondins* (Paris: Tallandier, 1989), 67-148; Patrice Higonnet, *Sister Republics: The Origins of French and American Republicanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 238-240; Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 168; Harry Ammon, *The Genet Mission* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), 10-17; M. J. Sydenham, *The Girondins*, University of London Historical Studies, vol. VII (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1972), 69-70, 101-109. François Furet and Mona Ozouf, eds. *La Gironde et les Girondins* (Paris: Editions Payot, 1991), includes a number of relevant articles, such as: François Furet, "Les Girondins et la guerre: les débuts de l'Assemblée législative," 189-205; Ladan Boroumand, "Les Girondins et l'idée de République," 233-264. See also French foreign minister to the president of the National Convention, 20 December 1792, France, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance politique, États-unis (Paris: French Reproductions, various dates, photostats in Library of Congress, Manuscript Division [hereinafter cited as AAE CP EU]), vol. 36, part II, folio 470; and *Adresse de la Convention de France aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 22 December 1792, AAE CP EU, vol. 36, part II, ff. 473-474. For a discussion of France's interest in reacquiring Canada and Louisiana see E. Wilson Lyon, *Louisiana in French Diplomacy, 1759-1804* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), 13-69 and F. J. Turner, "The Origin of Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas," *AHR* III (1897-1898): 650-671.

lican views.⁷ The Girondins named him minister plenipotentiary to the United States in November 1792 and ordered him to maintain good relations with the United States while simultaneously arming privateers in American ports and raising troops to attack Canada, Louisiana, and Florida. If the Washington administration did not lend its assistance, the French hoped American frontiersmen could be convinced to aid their cause. The Girondins mistakenly believed that the Americans would risk a war with Britain and Spain, clearly against American self-interest, for the sake of republican fraternity. Before sailing for America aboard the frigate *l'Embuscade*, Genet received 250 blank commissions for the officers of the expeditions and about the same number of blank letters of marque to commission privateers. On 8 April 1793 *l'Embuscade* arrived at Charleston, S.C. The citizens of Charleston received Genet warmly, with such local dignitaries as Governor William Moultrie visiting the new minister. During his stay in Charleston, Genet commissioned privateers and gave French consul Mangourit responsibility for the invasion projects in the South. Meanwhile, *l'Embuscade* took a number of prizes around Charleston. Proceeds from the sale of the prizes were to help the consul pay for the invasion projects. On April 18 Genet set off from Charleston on an overland trip to Philadelphia, enjoying enthusiastic public receptions along the way.⁸

7. For biographical information on Genet, see: Ammon, 1-9; Alexander DeConde, *Entangling Alliance: Politics and Diplomacy under George Washington* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1958), 183-185; Regina Katherine Crandall, "Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas, 1793-94" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1902), 12-14; William Frederick Keller, "American Politics and the Genet Mission, 1793-1794" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1951), 75-81; Maude H. Woodfin, "Citizen Genet and His Mission" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1928), 485.
8. Genet and Girondin leaders, such as Brissot, Foreign Minister LeBrun, and Thomas Paine, are among those responsible for drafting the minister's instructions. Instructions to Genet, December 1792, Frederick J. Turner, ed., "Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-1797," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1903 II* (1904): 202-211 [hereinafter cited as CFM]; Additional instructions and background information are in AAE CP EU, vols. 36 and 37. See also Eugene R. Sheridan, "The Recall of Edmond Charles Genet: A Study in Transatlantic Politics and Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 18 (Fall 1994): 464-467; DeConde, 183, 213; Ammon, 22-29; Bowman, 42-43. For Genet's arrival in Charleston, see: Keller, 111; Ammon, vii; *City Gazette* (Charleston, SC) 9, 16, 19, 20 April, 1793; *The*

Alarmed at the war in Europe and Genet's behavior, the Washington administration issued a neutrality proclamation on 22 April 1793, which declared that the United States would remain neutral in the European war and prohibited Americans from getting involved in the hostilities. Soon after Genet arrived in Philadelphia, the administration refused to advance payments from the debt owed to France, which the Girondins had hoped would pay for Genet's schemes. Rather than moderate his course, Genet informed Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson of his plans to appeal to the American people and he continued to violate American neutrality. The minister made contact with a hero of the American Revolution on the frontier, George Rogers Clark, who offered to raise a force in Kentucky to liberate Louisiana and West Florida. As late as July 1793, Genet outfitted a privateer in Philadelphia, although most privateers were deemed invalid by the American government. Therefore, when a mutinous French fleet arrived in New York, Genet tried to bring it under his command. However, the fleet sailed for France at the first opportunity, denying the planned invasions any naval support. Although Clark had successfully been brought into the planned invasions, Genet had

State Gazette of South Carolina, 17 April 1793. Moultrie continued to be a loyal ally of France. Upon Genet's departure for Philadelphia, the governor gave Genet a letter of introduction to President Washington. See Woodfin, 109. It is probable that Genet spoke to Moultrie about some of the invasion plans. Mangourit to Genet, 28 April 1793, Frederick J. Turner, ed., "The Mangourit Correspondence in Respect to Genet's Projected Attack upon the Floridas, 1793-1794," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1897* (1898) [hereinafter cited as MC], 575. "Liste des visittes faites au Citoyen Genet à Charleston," April 1793, Genet Papers (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Photoduplication Service, 1969, microfilm), reel 5, container 9, f. 2735 [hereinafter cited as Genet Papers, L.C.]; Genet to Mangourit, 17 April 1793, Genet Papers, L.C., reel 5, container 9, ff. 2720-2723. For the privateering efforts, see Genet to foreign minister, 16 April 1793, CFM, 213; Mangourit to Sonthonax, 29 April 1793, France, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale, États-Unis, Charleston, tome 2, 1793-1799 (Neuilly-sur-Marne, Fr.: Société d'Ingénierie et de Microfilmage, 1992, microfilm [hereinafter cited as AAE CCC]), f. 013; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 15, 16, 20 April 1793; *The State Gazette of South Carolina*, 17 April 1793. Various letters to Genet on his journey to Philadelphia are in Genet Papers, L.C., reel 5, container 9. See also Sheridan, 468; Ammon, 52-53. Genet's departure from Charleston was reported in the *City Gazette*, 19 April 1793.

been unable to provide either naval or financial support, rendering chances for the projected invasions exceedingly slim.⁹

Anxious to maintain its neutrality, the administration requested that the French government recall Genet. The Jacobin government, which had repudiated Girondin foreign policy, agreed to recall the minister. Rather than return to an uncertain fate, Genet requested asylum in the United States, married the daughter of New York's governor and settled down in the life of a gentleman farmer, essayist, and amateur scientist.¹⁰ During the Genet

9. For the text of the neutrality proclamation, see: United States Congress, *American State Papers, Foreign Relations* (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), vol. I, 140; *The State Gazette of South Carolina*, 13 May 1793. See also Elkins & McKittrick, *Age of Federalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 336-341; Sheridan, "The Recall of Edmond Charles Genet," 469-470; DeConde, 187-190, 224-225, 227-231. The debt is covered in: "Rapport du Ministre des Contributions Publiques sur la liquidation de la dette Américaine," January 1793, AAE CP EU, vol. 37, part I, ff. 3-8; "Rapport fait au Conseil par le Ministre des Contributions Publiques, sur le mode de remboursement. [sic] de la dette Américaine," 2 January 1793, *ibid.*, ff. 9-12vo. For Clark, see: Ammon, 82-86; DeConde, 236-251; F.J. Turner, "The Origin of Genet's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas," *AHR* III (1897-1898): 653-654; John Parish, "The Intrigues of Dr. James O'Fallon," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* XVII (September 1930): 230-263; F.J. Turner, ed., "Selections from the Draper Collection in the Possession of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, to Elucidate the Proposed French Expedition Under George Rogers Clark Against Louisiana, in the years 1793-1794," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1896* I (1897): 930-1107; Genet to Gen. "Clarke," 17 July 1793, AAE CP EU, vol. 38, part I, ff. 35-36; "Mémoire pour servir d'instructions au Cit André Michaux agent de la République Française dans l'état au[?] Kentucky et sur la Mississippie," 7 October 1793, AAE CP EU, vol. 39, part I, ff. 82-88. For privateering, see: Thomas Jefferson, "Memorandum of a Conversation with Edmond Charles Genet," 10 July 1793, Catanzariti, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, John Catanzariti, ed., vol. 26. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) [hereinafter cited as Catanzariti], 465; Ammon, 90-93, 100; DeConde, 221-223; Woodfin, 361-363. For the fleet in New York, see: *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, various dates, August & September 1793; Contre-Amiral Cambis (on board *le Jupiter*) to Genet, 12 July 1793, AAE CP EU, vol. 38, part II, ff. 30-32; "Copie de la Correspondance au C. Genet avec le Contre Amiral Sercey," 19 July 1793, *ibid.*, ff. 51-52. For the crew's attitudes, see: Genet to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 15 August 1793, CFM, II, 238-239. Genet's instructions to the commanders are: "Mémoire pour servir d'Instructions au Contre Amiral Sercey, Commandant les Forces Navales de la Republique Française en Amérique," 4 October 1793 (AAE CP EU, vol. 39, part II, ff. 99-103); "Supplément aux Instructions du Contre Amiral Sercey," 7 October 1793, (*ibid.*, ff. 104-105). See also: Ammon, 120-125; DeConde, 275-279; Keller, 343-347 354-355.

10. Ammon, 22, 29, 107-109, 157; DeConde, 296-301, 334-335, 337-340. Thomas Jefferson, "The Recall of Edmond Charles Genet," Catanzariti, vol. 26, 685-715.

Mission, it was clear that self-interest and republicanism could not be reconciled on the national level. It was counter to American self-interest either to anger Britain and Spain by supporting Genet's plans or to see the French return to North America. In short, American interest required a disentangled peace on the frontier. Nevertheless, Genet's subordinate in Charleston, South Carolina, Consul Michel-Ange-Bernard Mangourit, met with considerable success in bringing self-interest to the service of the republican cause, at least on the local level.

Mangourit, who had founded one of the first revolutionary publications, helped to "storm" the Bastille, and was a leader of a radical section of Paris, was appointed Consul of France for North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia on 2 March 1792 by Louis XVI. On 1 September 1792 Mangourit, his wife, and two children arrived at Charleston, where he quickly built a network of contacts with local authorities and surveyed his surroundings. Mangourit noted that the great majority of the people supported the French Revolution: ordinary farmers, the upcountry population, and veterans of the American Revolution. The consul grouped the friends of France into one class: the discontented (*mecontents*). Mangourit was aware that the friends of France hoped to reap personal rewards, but thought that these economic motivations made his supporters more valuable. Governor William Moultrie was the most important friend of France in South Carolina; Genet and Mangourit referred to Moultrie as their "venerable friend." The consul believed that the governor supported the invasion projects, although the consul divulged only limited information to Moultrie. "He knows all," Mangourit wrote, "except that which, in good taste, Providence should hide from weak humans."

The governor was an excellent source of information and contacts. Moultrie told Mangourit that most American army officers supported the French cause and encouraged the consul to meet with a captain of federal troops. With Moultrie's approval and in order to shed "some light on the opinion of the Georgians with regard to Spain," Mangourit visited the captain of federal troops whose post was on the Georgian frontier. It is possible that the captain was William Tate, who became a commander in the invasion schemes. Moultrie and Tate were, in some degree, motivated

The letter informing Genet of the American intention to request his recall is: Jefferson to Genet, 7 September 1793, Catanzariti, vol. 27, 52-53.

by interest in western land speculation. Moultrie may have been, and Tate certainly was, a member of the South Carolina Yazoo Company. The company was a speculative land venture which aimed at opening up lands to the Mississippi River and could expect to profit if the area was freed from Spanish control. The entanglement of these men with the frontier speculation blurs their intentions and makes it unclear if they were profiteers or revolutionaries. They were probably a bit of both. At the same time, their interest in western land is an extension of the decentralized "settler republicanism," in which what was most required from the central government was noninterference.¹¹

Moultrie also provided Mangourit with letters of introduction to important citizens in Savannah, Georgia. Around the middle of May 1793, Mangourit visited Savannah to inspect the Florida border, gauge support for an invasion of Florida, and try to arm vessels in Savannah. The consul helped spread the rumor that the British and the Spanish had fomented a recent Creek revolt. Indeed, the British firm of Panton, Leslie and Company was trading with the Native Americans with the consent of the Spanish. Mangourit formed a club called the Friends of the French Republic because Savannah was "more asphyxiated by the vapors of English coal than Charleston." During his trip to Savannah, or shortly before, Mangourit met another international republican, Major Claudius Bert de Majan (a.k.a. C.-M.-F. de Bert). Bert had

11. Louis XVI, 2 March 1792, "Provisions de Consul de Fr. auprès les Etats des Carolines—Septentrionale & meridionale & de la Georgie en faveur du S. Mangouri [*sic*]—resident à Charlestown," France, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Sous-Series BIII, carton 439 (microfilm in Library of Congress, Manuscript Division [hereinafter cited as AAE BIII 439]), f. 329. See also *The Columbian Herald or the Southern Star*, 3 September 1793; *The City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 22 October 1793. For the friends of France, see Mangourit to minister of foreign affairs, 10 December, 1793, AAE CCC, f. 171vo. "Le projet dont il Sait tout, excepté Ce que providence doit Cacher aux faibles humains est fort de bon Gout" (Mangourit to Genet, 11 October 1793 [AAE CCC, ff. 95vo-96]). On Moultrie's support, see: Genet to foreign minister, 16 April 1793, CFM, 211-13; Mangourit to Genet, 6 May 1793, AAE CCC, ff. 021-024vo; Mangourit to Genet, 11 June 1793, MC, 579; Mangourit to Genet, 14 January 1794, MC, 604. Mangourit to Genet, 24 April 1793, MC, 575. "Quelques Lumieres Sur L'opinion des Georgiens à l'Egard de l'Espagne" (Mangourit to Genet, 28 April 1793 [MC, 578]). For the Yazoo company, see Rachel Kline, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 188; Lisle A. Rose, *Prologue to Democracy: the Federalists in the South, 1789-1800*. (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), 60-65 & 85-100.

been a former officer under Casimir Pulaski during the American Revolution and had settled in Georgia because France was "enslaved." Bert wanted to return home and fight once the Republic had been declared. However, Mangourit convinced the major to serve France by remaining in the United States and Bert reached out to other Georgians who could assist the invasion plans. Mangourit thought him "un excellent Republicain," and gave Bert credit for setting the groundwork. Other Frenchmen also joined the effort. Far from being a local effort, the expeditions were an international effort, with ideology playing a significant role.¹²

After he returned to Charleston, Mangourit helped form another political club, the Republican Society of South Carolina. Many of the Republican Society's 109 members, such as the president, Stephen Drayton, and the secretary, William Tate, were openly involved in the invasion plans. Modeling themselves on French political clubs, the society pledged to support "equal liberty" in both France and the United States "against tyranny and iniquitous rule . . . by any character or body of men, appearing in these United States." With Drayton as his second-in-command, William

12. Mangourit to Genet, 6 May 1793, AAE CCC f. 021. Pantón, Leslie and Company traded arms and ammunition for the furs the Indians supplied. This commerce was carried on with the approval of the Spanish, who granted English merchants a monopoly on the Indian trade. Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 230, 233-241, 246-250. "Asphyxié par les vapeurs du charbon anglais que Charleston" (Mangourit to Genet, 6 May 1793 [AAE CCC, f. 021 vo.]) Mangourit to Genet, 24 April 1793, MC, 575; Mangourit to Minister of Marine Monge, 29 May 1793 AAE CCC, ff. 030, 035-035 bis vo; LeBrun to Mangourit, 13 August 1793, AAE BIII 439, unnumbered folio; Mangourit to minister of foreign affairs, 10 December 1793, AAE CCC, f. 172vo. Bert also served as de facto vice-consul at Savannah for a time. See Bert to Mangourit, 6 November 1793; and Bert to Mangourit 13 November or December 1793, Papers of the Republican Society of South Carolina, (Boston Public Library: General Microfilm Co., 1971, microfilm [hereinafter cited as Republican Society Papers]). Only republican French supported the invasion effort, with royalist or counterrevolutionary Frenchmen openly opposing the invasion. Frenchmen involved in the invasions included: François Meurice, who trained cavalry; Simon Mouchet, who was commissioner of war and provisions; and Abraham Sasportas, a French merchant who also helped obtain supplies and sold vessels taken by French ships. For Meurice, see: Mangourit to Genet, 5 March 1794, MC, 627-628; Mangourit to Hammond, 4 April 1794, MC, 653. See Mangourit to Leroi Hammond, 6 March 1794, MC, 594; Mangourit to Samuel Hammond, 4 April 1794, MC, 653 for Sasportas. See Mouchet's Commission, 25 March 1794, MC, 641; Mangourit to Mouchet, 26 March 1794, MC, 642.

Tate was commissioned colonel of the Revolutionary Legion of America in the planned invasion of Louisiana. Between June and October 1793, a plan for an invasion of Louisiana evolved. American backwoodsmen were to be recruited—ostensibly from outside South Carolina to avoid any violation of neutrality—for a force that was to march to Kentucky and link up with the forces that were forming under George Rogers Clark. From there, they were to descend on Louisiana, take and garrison New Orleans, then proceed against West Florida or, more ambitiously, turn west into the mass of Spanish territory known as “Nouveau Mexique.” Mangourit hoped that French naval forces could assist the attack on New Orleans with an amphibious assault.¹³

At the beginning of October 1793, Tate returned from New York after meeting with Genet to discuss the plans against Louisiana. As of the middle of October 1793, William Tate and his subordinates were recruiting among former officers in the American army with only “slight noise.” In need of funding to assist with the recruiting effort, Tate and Drayton requested advances, which the consul reluctantly doled out from the sale of *l'Embuscade's* prizes. Their requests for advances set the pair apart from other officers involved in the invasion scheme. Tate further drew an undue amount of attention to himself as the possible publisher of a recruiting advertisement. The leaders of the East Florida expedition, Major Bert and Colonel Samuel Hammond, were very angry at Tate's indiscretions. Hammond believed that if “imprudent people” had not been engaged in “an enterprise similar to the one over which I have direction” they “would be the tranquil possessors of Florida.” Instead, the Spanish had been forewarned. The consul began to lose confidence in Tate. After the beginning of March 1794, the consul began concentrating almost exclusively on the East Florida expedition. Whereas

13. Proclamation of the Republican Society of South Carolina, August 1793, Republican Society Papers. “Declaration of the Friends of Liberty and National Justice,” 13 July 1793, Republican Society Papers (duplicated in AAE CP EU, vol. 39, part I, ff. 5-8 and in the *Columbian Herald or the Southern Star* 7 September 1793). See also Matthew Schoenbachler, “Republicanism in the Age of Democratic Revolution: The Democratic-Republican Societies of the 1790s,” *Journal of the Early American Republic* 18 (Spring 1988): 242. For the invasion, see Mangourit to Genet, 6 August 1793, MC, 587-589. Tate's commission, dated 15 October 1793, is in AAE CP EU, vol. 46, part II, f. 181 (also MC, 599).

Hammond requested and received supplies, Tate only requested more advances. Meanwhile, many of the members of the Louisiana expedition, probably including Drayton and Tate, began to assist the East Florida operation. Despite his desire for financial gain, Tate's commitment to the cause of international republicanism was apparently quite strong; after the collapse of the projects Tate left the comfortable income of his family's upstate iron foundry and the possibility of great profits from his investments in western lands for the uncertainty of traveling to France where he served as a chef de brigade in the French army.¹⁴

The more organized and promising of the invasion projects against East Florida got off to a slower start than the Louisiana venture. C.-M.-F. de Bert convinced Samuel Hammond to lead the force against East Florida. Samuel Hammond and his brother, Abner Hammond, were involved in the Indian-trading firm of Hammond and Fowler. To see Hammond and Fowler replace the British firm of Panton, Leslie and Company as the dominant traders in the region was certainly a factor in Samuel Hammond's acceptance of Bert's invitation. Hammond's discontent with the status quo and his interest in the Indian trade makes it unclear if

14. *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 4 October 1793, announced "Capt. Tate's" return from New York aboard the *Favorite*. The same issue called for a meeting of the Republican Society the next night. Mangourit to foreign minister, 10 December 1793, AAE CCC, f. 173. See also letters of introduction for William Tate to Genet in Genet Papers, L.C.; Stephen Drayton to Genet, 21 August 1793, reel 6, container 11, f. 3309. "Petit bruit" (Mangourit to Genet, 11 October 1793 [AAE CCC, f. 096]). For requests for advances, see: Mangourit to Genet, 19 October 1793, MC, 602; Mangourit to Genet, 27 October 1793, MC, 602-603. As late as February 1794, Mangourit reported meeting with both Tate and Samuel Hammond. Only Tate requested more money. See Mangourit to Genet, 29 February 1794, AAE CCC, ff. 218-vo. Samuel Hammond, leader of the East Florida expedition, received bills of credit to purchase supplies in March 1794. Mangourit to Genet, 5 March 1794, MC, 625-627. Receipts from Mangourit, 5 and 25 March, MC, 628. Hammond later wrote Mangourit to say that his accounts from the expedition had been settled, but only after the projects had failed. See Samuel Hammond to Mangourit, 16 February 1795, Republican Society Papers. For Bert and Hammond's concerns about Tate, see: Bert to Mangourit, 15 February 1794, MC, 616; Mangourit to Genet, 16 February 1794, MC, 618; Hammond to Mangourit, undated, probably 3-19 March 1794, Republican Society Papers; Richard K Murdoch, *The Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1793-1796: Spanish Reaction to French Intrigue and American Designs* (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1974), 32. John Ahlstrom, "Captain and Chef de Brigade William Tate: South Carolina Adventurer," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 88 (October 1987): 188-191.

he was a patriot or profiteer. However, he was on record as opposing the centralizing efforts of Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton and his later restraint in seeking recompense for his services suggest that he was not completely motivated out of short-term financial gain. Whatever his personal motivation, Hammond was commissioned as a colonel in the Revolutionary Legion of the Floridas; Bert was designated as his second in command with the rank of major.¹⁵

In November 1793 when the major reported to the consul on Hammond's activities, it is clear that Bert was aware of his superior officer's interest in Hammond and Fowler, noting that self-interestedness enhanced his usefulness. Interestingly enough, Mangourit reported that Bert had as much property in Georgia as those he employed; the major also had a vested interest in the outcome of the invasion. So motivated, Hammond and Bert both found that their self-interest and their republican ideals were compatible. Mangourit did not take offense that his subordinates were personally motivated, nor did he trust them less for being self-interested, but readily accepted that their patriotism was leavened with the desire for profits. Indeed, Mangourit wrote that he counted on Bert as much as he counted on himself. Meanwhile, the major was recruiting and looking into logistical matters. Although no date had been set for the invasion, Bert felt that if they were able to procure supplies locally, it was best to start the invasion as soon as possible. If they ran into trouble with procurement, however, a delay of some kind could be expected. The East Florida expedition was eventually postponed to April 1794. Among the reasons for the postponement were the paucity of funds and naval

15. Samuel Hammond was a member of the Georgia legislature and an Indian fighter, who was involved in hostilities with the Creeks during the summer of 1793. See Mangourit to Genet, 11 June 1793, MC, 580; Mangourit to Bournonville, 24 February 1794, MC 620-621; Mangourit to foreign minister, 21 February 1794, AAE CCC, f. 210vo. See Michael P. Morris, "Samuel Hammond: Soldier-Statesman of the Old South," (M.A. Thesis, Georgia Southern College, 1989), 3-36 for an account of Hammond's early years, and 37-73 for Hammond's part in the East Florida project. In May 1793 Hammond was a member of the Grand Jury of the Southern Circuit Court of the United States. The Grand Jury published a number of grievances, most of which criticized the federal government over such issues as the unprotected frontier and Alexander Hamilton's financial policies. For the Grand Jury's pronouncements, see *The Georgia Gazette* (Savannah), 9 May 1793. For the formation of the legion, see: Mangourit to Genet, 1 July 1793, MC, 585; Mangourit to Genet, 3 November 1793, MC, 603-604.

support, of which Mangourit often complained. "Send me the money," Mangourit wrote Genet in October 1793, "I swear to you that it will be more respected than the golden Madonna of the superstitious Spaniards."¹⁶ Another reason was that the South Carolina legislature was taking steps to quash recruitment in their jurisdiction.

"How," the consul asked in December 1793, "to keep such an affair secret?" As early as 31 October 1793, the South Carolina newspapers printed speculations that "the French fleet, from New-York, were seen off the coast of Florida, on Sunday last, supposed to be destined against St Augustine, or St Mary's." In mid-December 1793, the South Carolina legislature launched an investigation into the nature and extent of French recruiting efforts. The state House of Representatives issued search and arrest warrants for people suspected of being involved in the invasion plans, including Stephen Drayton. Drayton quickly put his side of the story before the public in what became part of a critique of the governments of South Carolina and the United States. Calling into question the nature of the American republic, Drayton asserted, "when power is so far misused, as, upon the slightest grounds, to attack the freedom and the life and property of the citizens, it is full time to examine the government we live under." For Drayton, his experience clearly showed "that there still remains something despotic either in our general government, or in characters composing the executive part thereof. In either case . . . a remedy is necessary." Nevertheless, the House and Senate unanimously resolved that something must be done to thwart the projected invasions. Facing increasing political pressure, Governor Moultrie issued a ban on recruiting on 9 December. Information on the projects was forwarded to the Governor of Georgia, but was not

16. Bert to Mangourit, 5 November 1793, Republican Society Papers. Bert to Mangourit, 13 November or December 1793, Republican Society Papers. For the consul's opinion, see Mangourit to Genet, 11 January 1794, France, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Correspondance politique, États-Unis, Supplément. (Paris: French Reproductions, various dates, photostats in Library of Congress, Manuscript Division [hereinafter cited as AAE CP EU SUPT]), vol. 30, f. 265vo. "Envoyés moi des fonds. Je vous Jure qu'ils Seront plus respectés que la Madonne d'or des Superstitieux Espagnols" (Mangourit to Genet, 19 October 1793 [MC, 602]). See for examples of the consul's complaints: Mangourit to Genet, 30 April 1793, AAE CCC, ff. 020-020 bis vo.; Mangourit to Genet, 11 October 1793, AAE CCC, ff. 096-096vo.; Mangourit to Genet, 3 November 1793, MC, 603-604.

acted on until 8 March 1794, when Governor George Mathews also banned recruiting. Out on bail, Stephen Drayton met with Mangourit. They agreed that the projects must continue. Mangourit appeared untroubled by the legislature's investigation, calling it "a pimple of the Federalist virus that has been popped in that [legislative] chamber."¹⁷

By the end of 1793, republican fever and settler republicanism raged in Georgia. Newspapers reported that "a spirit of recruiting prevails" to such a degree in Georgia that "the people here have got recruitment mad, for the French service, to go against West-Florida, Augustine, and New-Orleans." In December the Georgia legislature called upon the governor "to issue as much powder," as necessary to celebrate the "success of our French republican brethren." Augusta scheduled a military review in a square which had been renamed "Republican Square." A correspondent from that city asserted that "no person is to be at it, but those who are the real friends of the republic of France" and warned that "none dare a fellow who has been hardy enough to pollute freedom, or abuse its cause, approach the sacred ground," claiming further that a strongly-worded "notification to that effect will be handed around." The writer was not concerned that enemies of France might show up; he reckoned that "there are not more than twenty such" in the upcountry of Georgia. In a tone much like Drayton's, the Augusta correspondent announced that the French were "the only real republicans in the world" and that when the American Constitution was compared with the French Constitution, "I find

17. "Le moyen qu'une telle affaire put être secrete!" (Mangourit to foreign minister, 10 December 1793 [AAE CCC, f. 173]). *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 12 & 14 December 1793. Michael E. Stevens, ed., *The State Records of South Carolina: Journals of the House of Representatives, 1792-1794* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 287, 328-329, 426-427. William Moultrie's proclamation and Drayton's comments are in *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 14 December 1793. See also John H. Wolfe, *Jeffersonian Democracy in South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 74-75. For Mathews's proclamation, see *The Augusta Chronicle and Gazette of the State*, 8 March 1794; *South-Carolina State-Gazette & Timothy & Mason's Daily Advertiser*, 26 March 1794; Murdoch, *Frontier*, 18 and 33. Despite this, Mangourit believed Governor Mathews to be a "bon républicain." Mangourit to Hammond, 4 April 1794, MC, 653. Mangourit to Hammond, 4 April 1794, MC, 653. For the Drayton-Mangourit meeting, see Mangourit to foreign minister, 10 December 1793, AAE CCC, f. 173. "C'est une pustale de virus fédéraliste qui a percé dans cette chambre" (Mangourit to Bournonville, February 24 1794 [MC, 621]).

that we are shackled with nearly as much aristocracy as when under the slavish chains of British tyranny." Such pronouncements were not mere rhetoric. Southerners who had been influenced by the French Revolution were constructing a critique of the status quo that went beyond self-interest. Backcountrymen in South Carolina warned their county court judge, "In the language of republicanism, following the glorious example of France, [we] address you as citizen judge!—We know your patriotism!—We know you will dispense with formalities!—Discrimination is necessary, but men should only be distinguished by their virtues." The backcountrymen of South Carolina and Georgia were letting their leaders know of their dissatisfaction in terms that would not have been out of place in France.¹⁸

The Spanish in East Florida quickly caught on that something was afoot; they warned southerners that "we are in peace, but prepared for war." By the middle of January 1794, Governor Quesada of Spanish East Florida ordered the arrest of several men suspected of being involved in the invasion scheme, including Samuel Hammond's brother, Abner. "In the present situation," Bert wryly reported, "it is pointless to observe that our plan of surprise can no longer take place." Meanwhile, the Spanish attempted to prepare their civilian populace and their military units for the invasion. The Spanish had allowed Anglo-Americans to settle in northern Florida since the American Revolution, leading to a frontier where loyalties and family ties crossed international borders. Sensing this entanglement of the borders of Florida and Georgia, Governor Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada ordered his military commander, Carlos Howard, himself of mixed Spanish-Irish ancestry, to arrest Anglo-Americans who were involved in the plot (including one who was a justice of the peace and militia commander) and institute a scorched-earth policy along the frontier. Such draconian measures sent some of the settlers over to the French side. Preparing the border for the invasion, Howard pulled back the majority of his forces from the St. Mary's River and made the St. John's River his main defensive line. Troops were in short supply, the militia was unreliable, and many were believed to support the rebellion. The

18. The first quote is in *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 3 January 1794. The account from Augusta is in *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 24 December 1793. The warning from the backcountry is in *The State Gazette of South Carolina*, 28 June 1793.

remainder were hardly front-line troops and consisted of "one battalion of infantry, one company of dragoons, one company of artillery, and a few sailors," not a force capable of withstanding a determined attack. While some loyal settlers armed their slaves to patrol the frontier, Quesada urgently requested reinforcements and naval support from Havana. Cuban officials denied naval support and sent four companies of infantry and support units, about 187 men. The paltry reinforcements set sail on board two vessels for St. Augustine. One of the ships, the *Santa Isabella*, was captured by the French privateer *la Sans Pareille*. When the captured Spanish ship arrived in Charleston, the troops and crew were imprisoned. When it was discovered that some of the support units were made up of Indian slaves, Mangourit granted freedom, referring to them as "victims of tyranny." In their joy, the former slaves offered to serve the Republic. The frontier situation was becoming increasingly entangled as the date for the invasion approached, with some Anglos assisting the Spanish, many opposing the Spanish, and some of the Spanish support units changing sides. Neither side could be sanguine over their prospects of success.¹⁹

Based on news of his brother's arrest, Samuel Hammond decided that he needed to increase the number of troops and rethink the invasion plans. With the Spanish forces now on alert, French naval support became critical. To that end, Hammond appealed to Mangourit's interest, reminding the consul that "the port of St. Mary is, in my opinion, of great importance for the nation that you represent" as a haven for French sympathizers, a safe harbor for equipping corsairs, and a place to procure supplies. After the mutiny of the fleet in New York in October 1793, the frequency of Mangourit's requests for naval assistance had dropped off somewhat. However, under pressure from Colonel Hammond and Major Bert, the consul renewed his calls for naval support

19. The Spanish warning is in *South-Carolina State-Gazette & Timothy & Mason's Daily Advertiser*, 13 January 1794. For the arrest of Abner Hammond and his followers, see: *South-Carolina State-Gazette & Timothy & Mason's Daily Advertiser*, 19 February 1794; *The Augusta Chronicle and Gazette of the State*, 15 February 1794. Charles E. Bennett, *Florida's "French" Revolution, 1793-1795*, (Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida, 1981), 33-47; Murdoch, *Frontier*, 38-49. "Dans la situation presente il est inutile d'observer que notre plan de surprise ne peut plus avoir lieu" (Bert to Mangourit, 15 February 1794 [MC, 615]). The next quote is in Murdoch, *Frontier*, 39. "Victims de la Tyrannie" (Mangourit to Genet, 7 February 1794 [MC, 607]).

from the minister in early 1794. Meanwhile, Hammond met with his officers at a 20 February council of war at Washington, Georgia. Compelled by the high level of enthusiasm for the invasion, some of the officers from Tate's force offered to enlist with Hammond.²⁰

As plans developed, Hammond took responsibility for issuing orders for the troops to assemble in Spanish territory, while Bert concentrated on strategy. Bert's plan looked promising, at least on paper. As soon as they were assured of naval assistance, Bert proposed to send one group of troops to set up bases on Amelia Island and on the Spanish side of the St. Mary's River. These bases were to serve as the rendezvous point for volunteers. Another body of troops was to advance on the St. John's River, which is to the south of the St. Mary's River and forms a rough crescent to the west of St. Augustine. They were to establish camp on the northern side of the St. John's until riverboats could be captured or armed to secure both the St. John's and the St. Mary's Rivers. With St. Augustine cut off, Bert believed that the garrison could be starved out. "All will depend," however, "on a naval force sufficient to act and to inspire the confidence of these adventurers." Mangourit found Bert's plan "très bon."²¹

As it became obvious that Genet was unable to provide a French fleet, Mangourit obtained naval support for the invasion from other sources. Most of the French privateers in Charleston refused to follow the consul's orders. However, in early January 1794, the French corvette *le Las Casas* arrived in the port city. Mangourit's goal was to "preciously preserve [her] for the Republic and its projects in this hemisphere." The consul hoped

20. Hammond to Mangourit, no date, probably 3-19 March 1794, Republican Society Papers. Calls for naval support are in: *ibid.*; Hammond to Bert or Mangourit, 12 February 1794, MC, 613-614; Bert to Mangourit, 15 February 1794, MC, 615-616; Hammond to Mangourit, 19 March 1794, MC, 636. See also: Mangourit to Genet, 3 November 1793, MC, 603-604; Mangourit to foreign minister, 21 February 1794, AAE CCC, f. 210vo. For Hammond's activities, see: Mangourit to Genet, 27 February 1794, MC, 621-622; Hammond to Mangourit, undated, probably 3-19 March 1794, Republican Society Papers; group of papers from Bert to Fauchet, AAE CP EU SUPT, vol. 28, part I, f. 143vo.

21. Hammond's orders are in: Hammond to Bert or Mangourit, 12 February 1794, MC, 613-614; Hammond to Mangourit, probably 3-19 March 1794, Republican Society Papers; Hammond to Mangourit, 19 March 1794, MC, 635. Bert's plan, including the quote, "le tout dependra d'une force de mer suffisante pour agir et pour inspirer de la Confiance aux aventuriers," is in Bert to Mangourit, 15 February 1794, MC, 615-616. The second quote is in Mangourit to Genet, 16 February 1794, MC, 618.

that "this corvette can be a great help for St. Augustine." Unfortunately, the French Revolution had infected the crew, who were close to mutiny. With a combination of an appeal to the crew's republicanism, interest in prize money, and veiled threats, Mangourit brought the corvette under his orders. On 9 April only *le Las Casas* and an unnamed schooner anchored near the town of St. Mary's.²² Since the East Florida expedition under Colonel Samuel Hammond had expected a mighty French fleet the sight of two small vessels was surely a blow to the morale of the troops. However, without Mangourit's efforts, the expedition could not have even counted on two ships showing up at St. Mary's.

In other developments, Samuel Hammond agreed to negotiate with the Native Americans in order to win their help for the invasions. On 3 March 1794 Hammond wrote to Mangourit that the idea was "very practicable, and at the same time necessary for the safety of our adventurers." Because of his brother's imprisonment, the colonel believed he could count on Hammond and Fowler to throw their weight behind the effort to "destroy all Spanish influence" and gain the support of the tribes. The best way to destroy Spanish influence was to destroy Pantón, Leslie and Company, which could be done by "intercepting as much as possible their future supplies." For this purpose, Hammond placed Hammond and Fowler at the consul's disposal. In the colonel's mind, the success of the invasions, the success of his brother's trading firm, and the cooperation of the Native Americans were inextricably entwined. Acting on Hammond's assessment of the situation, Mangourit drafted a treaty. Despite the obvious motivation of detaching the tribes, especially the Creeks, from their Spanish allies, the consul professed interest in "sowing the seeds of equality in the New World with our own hands." In the proposed treaty, the

22. With a top speed of 14 knots, a complement of 120 men and an armament of 18 six pounders, *le Las Casas* was, on her arrival, the most powerful French vessel in Charleston. For the Arrival of *le Las Casas*, see: Mangourit to Genet, 11 January 1794, AAE CP EU SUPT, vol. 30, f. 253; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 31 December 1793, 4 January 1794. "De Conserver precieusement a la Republique & a Ses projets dans cet hemisphere," "Cette Corvette peut nous être d'un grand Secours pour St. Augustin" (Mangourit to Genet, 11 January 1794 [AAE CP EU SUPT, vol. 30, f. 258]). *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 26 April 1794, ran a story from a correspondent from St. Mary's that "a French sloop of war and a schooner have arrived here, and are waiting for their consorts, to pay a visit to St. Augustine, which I believe will be taken." See also Murdoch, *Frontier*, 34.

Indians were enjoined to fight with France and maintain peace with the Americans. Hammond and his officers continued to plan. On 5 March 1794 it was decided that the Revolutionary Legion of the Floridas would assemble on the St. Mary's River on 10 April. Around the middle of March, Hammond held another council of war to go over the final preparations and give orders for the assembly of the troops on the St. Mary's River. Present at this council of war was the Revolutionary War hero General Elijah Clarke. Hammond seemed to envision Clarke as leading a semi-independent group that was to support the main body and then advance west once East Florida had been conquered.²³

Back in Charleston, the Republican Society of South Carolina, with help from the consulate, intensified its activities in the months leading up to the invasions. On 13 February 1794 the Republican Society held a celebration to honor the 1778 alliance between France and the United States. Tickets were sent out to the guests "to prevent confusion as well as intrusion" and maintain secrecy. The pace of the meetings quickened as the date for the invasions approached. These meetings often manifested a distinctly oppositional view of what it meant to live in a republic that was buttressed by an increasingly French tone in the proceedings. The society escalated their attacks on the state and national leadership. President Washington's neutrality proclamation was "unconstitutional, tyrannical, arbitrary, and . . . an usurpation of sovereignty of the most despotic nature and a direct attack on the liberties of the people." Toasts at these meetings provide an insight into the political ideals of the Republican Society. One toast called for "the guillotine to all tyrants, plunderers and funding speculators." The reference to tyrants obviously related to the European monarchies, but also implied a threat to the federal and local governments. Funding speculators had been made richer by Secretary of the

23. Hammond's observations are in: Hammond to Mangourit, 3 March 1794, Republican Society Papers. "De semer de nos mains les germes de l'Egalité dans le nouveau monde" (Mangourit to Genet, 10 February 1794 [MC, 610]). Instructions to Colonels Tate and Hammond, 3 March 1794, MC, 623-625; Plan for a treaty with the Creeks, probably 6 March 1794, MC, 591-593. See Hammond to Mangourit, 19 March 1794, MC, 636 for Hammond's optimism. For Mangourit's confidence, see Mangourit to Hammond, 4 April 1794, MC, 651-653. For the first meeting, see: Mangourit to Hammond, 4 April 1794, MC, 653; Mangourit to Genet, 5 March 1794, MC, 627-628. For the second meeting, see Hammond to Mangourit, 19 March 1794, MC, 635-636; Murdoch, *Frontier*, 30-32.

Treasury Alexander Hamilton's financial policies and consisted largely of the planter-lawyer-merchant elite in South Carolina. The Republican Society unveiled itself as a champion of the French model of an active form of popular sovereignty which held that elected officials were always susceptible to being called to account for their actions. The Republican Society resolved that citizens of the United States "retain an undeniable right to the fullest information of everything relative to their political interest & happiness." If those in government abused their power, and "if the trust is prostituted" by the elected representatives, "the people have the right to investigate the conduct of those whom they have entrusted . . . and to punish the transgressors." Thus, although interest certainly played a role, patriotism and ideology were a significant consideration for those involved in the invasion plans. Between the middle of March and the middle of April, the Republican Society held at least four meetings. The fairly secretive nature of these meetings suggests that the pro-French faction of Charleston had shifted their attention to planning for the invasion of Spanish territories.²⁴

In addition to working on the invasion plans, Mangourit designed the future political structure for a post-invasion Florida. Foremost in the consul's considerations was maintaining a viable link between republican ideology and the self-interest of the leaders and troops. One salient fact was that the "BRAVES amis de la liberté" would fight on the condition that they were guaranteed a "free and independent republic, a sister and friend of France, in the form of the most pure democracy." East Florida was to be considered a

24. Accounts of the celebration are in: Mangourit to Genet, 15 February or March 1794, AAE CCC, f. 189-190vo.; *South-Carolina State-Gazette & Timothy & Mason's Daily Advertiser*, 14 February 1794. For the fête's secrecy, see: Stephen Drayton to Mangourit, 12 February 1794, Republican Society Papers; *South-Carolina State-Gazette & Timothy & Mason's Daily Advertiser*, 7 February 1794. The anti-Washington quote is in *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 17 March 1794. The guillotine quote is in *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 15 February 1794. For popular sovereignty, see Horst Dippel, "Popular Sovereignty and the Separation of Powers in American and French Revolutionary Constitutionalism," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 34 (1989): 21-31; and "The Changing Idea of Popular Sovereignty in Early American Constitutionalism: Breaking Away From European Patterns," *Journal of the Early Republic* 16 (Spring 1996): 21-45. The resolutions are in: *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 20 February 1794. The Civic Feast of 15 March is covered in the *Columbian Herald or the Southern Star*, 19 March 1794. The feast of late March is covered in *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 28 March 1794. The 3 April meeting of the Republican Society was advertised in the *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 2 April 1794; that of 9 April is in the *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 9 April 1794.

French possession until hostilities ceased. Those who took part in the invasion were to be granted land and put to work preparing defenses. At that point, the Floridians could design their own government institutions, hopefully to be based on the French constitution. Because of Florida's independence, France would not bear the burden of defense. Most importantly, France could use Florida as a privateer base from which to dominate the Caribbean.²⁵

Much of the recent historiography on slavery in France during the revolutionary era has described what amounted to "Republican racism" or "a national myth of freedom" in which revolutionary ideals were not consistently applied to people of color in metropolitan or colonial France.²⁶ Although this is certainly true, both in France and the United States, Mangourit seemed to think differently. In 1789, while analyzing who should be electors for the first revolutionary legislature, the Estates General, Mangourit wrote in his newspaper that colonial people of color "are not less than men . . . the way of alleviating the harshness of slavery, if one does not want to destroy it and render the planters more human, would be to accord the blacks as well as the whites the faculty of being electors." In October 1793 Mangourit argued that the only way to retain control of the colony of Saint-Domingue, then in the throes of a slave revolt, was for France

25. "D'une republique libre et independante, soeur et ami de la france, Dans les formes de la plus pur democratie" (Mangourit to foreign minister, 10 December 1794 [AAE CCC, f. 172vo]). Mangourit to foreign minister, 10 December 1793, AAE CCC, f. 172vo; Mangourit to Genet, 10 February 1794, MC, 609; Address to the Floridians, no date, MC, 654-656; Mangourit to foreign minister, 21 February 1794, AAE CCC, ff. 210vo-211; Report of Assembly of Leaders of the Expedition at Charleston, 29 March 1794, MC, 630. See also Bennett, 94 & 97; Murdoch, *Frontier*, 18-19.

26. For "Republican racism," see Laurent Dubois, "Inscribing Race in the Revolutionary French Antilles," in *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, ed. Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003): 96. See also Dubois, "Republican Racism and Anti-racism: A Caribbean Genealogy," *French Politics, Culture, and Society* 18 3 (200): 5-17. For the "national myth of freedom," see Sue Peabody, "There Are No Slaves in France": *The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 140. Even the Abbé Grégoire, prominent revolutionary and member of the abolitionist Société des Amis des Noirs, who called for rights for freedmen in the colonies, felt that "black slaves did not yet merit rights" (Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution: The Making of Modern Universalism* [Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2005], 96. See also Sepinwall, "Eliminating Race, Eliminating Difference: Blacks, Jews, and the Abbé Grégoire, in *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003): 28-41. For a broader consideration of the Enlightenment and the Black Atlantic, see Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 46-58.

to extend freedom and equality to everyone in the colony, regardless of whether their skin was "white, black, or yellow." After granting freedom to all people in the colony, France could train the ex-slaves and form them into "an army that the climate cannot destroy," which could be landed along the Jamaican coast and infiltrate British plantations where they would recruit British slaves. Thus "enlarged by the plantation slaves," the French forces could "carry the insurrection to Jamaica." With this anti-slavery background, Mangourit felt that the conquest of East Florida would be impossible with men who "calculate the best use of their Negroes." Therefore, while designing post-invasion Florida, he believed that this "most pure democracy" should ban slavery. Under pressure from his American supporters, Mangourit withdrew the stipulation as the only way to be sure "to have the Floridians for us." At a later date and under French auspices, he hoped that a conversion away from slavery could take place. Mangourit drafted an address to the Floridians that guaranteed the ownership of slaves to reassure his allies. Although Mangourit's change of heart on the slavery issue could be read as a confirmation of the "myth of freedom," his reluctance to do so indicates that his motivation was more pragmatic compromise for the invasion than intent to rob enslaved people of their rights.²⁷

Events in France finally brought the invasion plans to an end. With the ascendancy of the Jacobins in France from early 1793, the days of the Genet mission were numbered. The Jacobins repudiated the Girondin international revolution; they turned towards retrenching the French Republic at home. Mangourit and Genet (who was replaced by a Jacobin minister, Jean-Antoine-Joseph Fauchet) were recalled under the pall of treason charges.

27. "N'en sont pas moins homes, que le moyen d'adoucir les rigueurs de l'esclavage, si on ne se porte pas à l'anéantir, & de rendre les planteurs plus humains, seroit d'accorder aux noirs, ainsi qu'aux blancs, la faculté d'être Electeurs" (Mangourit, "États-généraux," reprinted from *Le Héraut de la nation sous les auspices de la patrie*, no. 62, *French Revolutionary Pamphlets* [Cambridge, MA: General Microfilm Co., 1951], 985-986). "La peau Blanche, noire, ou jaune," "Une armée que le climat ne peut Detruire," "grossis des esclaves des plantations," "porter l'insurr_____ a la jamaïque" (Mangourit to foreign minister, 30 October 1793 [AAE CCC, ff. 156-156 vo.]). "Des hommes qui Calculent un meilleur employ de leurs negres" (Mangourit to foreign minister, 10 December 1794 [AAE CCC, f. 172vo]); Mangourit to Genet, 19 December 1793, AAE CCC, ff. 174-174vo. "Nous Sommes surs d'Avoir les floridiens pour nous" (Mangourit to foreign minister, 21 February 1794 [AAE CCC, ff. 210vo-211]). Mangourit to Genet, 6 March 1794, MC, 632; Address to the Floridians, no date, MC, 654-656.

Although at first he refused to believe it, the consul was convinced of his imminent recall by the end of February. The consul wrote Fauchet to present his case: there were almost 4,000 men ready to march against Louisiana and the Floridas; no more money was necessary because the expenses for the Florida expedition had been paid. Mangourit continued his preparations. Fauchet, however, was under strict orders to put an end to Genet's projects. On 28 March Fauchet's proclamation of 6 March was printed in Charleston newspapers. Fauchet's proclamation forbade any Frenchmen from infringing upon American neutrality and revoked any commissions issued for that purpose. The consul called a meeting of the leaders of the expedition. Among those in attendance were Tate, Drayton, and Bert. With one abstention, they all voted to continue the operation. The one abstention was important and probably unexpected. Major Bert had misgivings about continuing without the aid of naval assistance and left the meeting "muttering something about an attack with 'no ships.'"²⁸

28. See Laurence Cornu, "Fédéralistes! Et pourquoi?" in *La Gironde et les Girondins* eds. François Furet and Mona Ozouf (Paris: Editions Payot, 1991): 265-289; Sutherland, *French Revolution and Empire*, 163-174; Hanson, *The Jacobin Republic Under Fire*, 47-55; Melchior-Bonnet, *Les Girondins*, 151-329, 333-348, 367-387, 405-463; Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, 220-226; Ammon, 155-158; Bowman, 94-97; DeConde, 250 & 395-396. Documents relating to Mangourit's recall are: minister of foreign affairs to Hauterive (consul at New York) and Mangourit, 19 November 1793, AAE CCC, f. 167; and "Report on the Causes of the Recall of Mangourit," 24 Brumaire, an II (c. 14 November 1793), MC, 658. Mangourit to Genet, 29 February 1794, AAE CCC, ff. 218-vo. Mangourit to Fauchet, 25 March 1794, MC, 636-637. Fauchet's proclamation is in *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 28 March 1794; see also Melvin Jackson, *Privateers in Charleston, 1793-1796* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1969), 36 & 38; and Murdoch, *Frontier*, 22. The quote is from Richard K. Murdoch, "Citizen Mangourit and the Projected attack on East Florida in 1794," *Journal of Southern History* 14 (1948): 538. To his credit, Bert refused to dishearten his comrades by arguing at the meeting. The major gave his opinion separately two days after the meeting. Bert advocated postponing the invasion until the arrival of the fleet was certain. Now that he had been overruled, Bert was "prepared to aid the execution of the enterprise with all the energy and activity of which I will be capable" ("Me suis préparé à seconder l'exécution de l'entreprise avec toute l'énergie et l'activité dont je serai capable" [Bert to Mangourit, 30 March 1794 [MC, 647-648]]). The consul used Bert's arguments in his requests to Fauchet. However, the consul was determined to continue. Despite their disagreement, Mangourit still thought highly of Bert's military skills. Mangourit to Fauchet, 30 March 1794, MC, 645-647; see also Mangourit to Fauchet, 31 March 1794, MC, 648-650. Report of Assembly of Leaders of the Expedition at Charleston, 29 March 1794, MC, 629-631.

The consul sent William Tate, probably with the transcript and other documents, to lobby Fauchet. Mangourit reminded the new minister that "if these useful projects are destroyed, confidence in the republic will be destroyed with them: we would not find more than one solitary man, all our friends would be lost forever." Joseph Fauchet was urged to continue his support by not only Mangourit and Tate, but by many of the principal leaders of the expeditions. None of the appeals were heeded. Fauchet, however, expressed misgivings about abandoning France's friends in America. On 4 April Mangourit gave his final instructions to Samuel Hammond. Mangourit instructed Hammond to tell his troops that "discipline, obedience, and temperance are the virtues of warriors." Without them, Mangourit pointed out, there could be victories but not triumphs. Mangourit concluded that "soldiers of tyrants are sometimes courageous, but republican soldiers are always so."²⁹

Three days after writing Hammond, time ran out for the consul. Mangourit's replacement, Antoine-Louis Fontpertuis, arrived in Charleston 7 April. Mangourit stalled the new consul. Nevertheless, Fontpertuis ordered a halt to the invasion of East Florida. The expedition soon collapsed, although *le Las Casas* landed some supplies and men on Amelia Island, at the mouth of the St. Mary's River, before sailing away. These men dug in and prepared to defend their position even as the mastermind of the affair sailed away to an uncertain future. After the collapse of the invasion plans, Hammond and Bert returned to Savannah. Not all the recruits gave up. Some joined General Elijah Clarke around the end of April 1794. Clarke's group decided to set up a buffer state on the western side of the Oconee River known as the Trans-Oconee Republic. This settlement was abandoned by the end of

29. "Si des projets utiles étoient détruits, la confiance dans la République et ses agens seroit détruite avec eux: Nous ne trouverions plus un seul homme, tous nos amis seroient perdus pour jamais" (Mangourit to Fauchet, 30 March 1794 [MC, 645-647]). See Fauchet to George Rogers Clark, 9 Fructidor An II, AAE CP EU SUPT, vol. 28, part I, ff. 48-49; Stephen Drayton to Fauchet, 15 April 1794, *ibid.*, ff. 95-96. Major Bert hurried to Philadelphia after Mangourit's replacement and presented his case for continuing the expeditions, which Fauchet refused in Fauchet to Bert, 3 Messidor An II, AAE CP EU SUPT, vol. 28, part II, ff. 156-vo. Fauchet to minister of foreign affairs, 20 May 1794, CFM, 345 includes Fauchet's misgivings. "La discipline l'obéissance et la tempérance sont les vertus des guerriers," "Les soldats des tyrans sont quelque fois courageux, mais les soldats républicains le sont toujours" (Mangourit to Hammond, 4 April 1794 [MC, 653]).

1794, under threat of military action from the federal government.³⁰

Conclusion:

Those involved in the invasion plots were motivated by self-interest. Consul Mangourit believed that being so motivated made them better allies. The consul harnessed the self-interest of the friends of France to the cause of international revolution, even compromising his dislike for slavery to maintain the support of his slave-owning compatriots. This is not to imply that ideological forces did not move the friends of France; they were deeply concerned about the nature of the American Republic and about the increasing influence of the wealthy and powerful. For them, the personal liberties they had fought for during the American Revolution were threatened by an increasingly powerful executive. In the face of looming tyranny at home and abroad, France appeared to be the only protector of liberties and the rights of man on the world stage. Because the French Republic was also under mortal threat, it was only natural for those involved in the invasions to ally themselves with the French, who, while ruled by the Girondins, were committed to aid people who wanted to strike at tyranny. Interest and ideology were thus inextricably linked in this zone of interconnectedness between adventurers, French revolutionaries, and Spanish officials.

In the two years following Mangourit's departure from Charleston, there was a good deal of unrest in the Floridas. The Spanish maintained their hold on Florida with difficulty. A small number of French agents continued to live on Amelia Island. These men, left behind by *le Las Casas*, were joined by Floridians and some of Hammond's men. French privateers continued activities in Spanish waters and helped to supply the band on Amelia Island. In late 1795, the French flag was raised over the small fort. Fauchet's successor, Pierre Adet, ordered that the soldiers be supplied from Charleston. In 1817, in a move that had nothing to do with French ambitions, Scottish adventurer Gregor MacGregor, who had served under Francisco Miranda and Simón Bolívar, led an invasion of Florida in which he proclaimed a "Republic of Florida," although smuggling and privateering appeared to be more important than ide-

30. For Fontpertius' arrival, see *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, 8 & 14 April 1794. For the delivery of the recall order, see: Commissioners to minister of foreign affairs, 20 May 1794, MC, 660; Jackson, *Privateers*, 42. Murdoch, *Frontier*, 36-37 & 50-62.

ology. Thus there continued to be support for a French-aided invasion of Spanish territory in this zone where interest and ideology were so closely related. Also, the fact that the Spanish suffered defeats at the hands of small bands of unsupported adventurers and had major problems in defending their territory³¹ leaves one with the impression that, had the plan been executed, Florida, if not Louisiana, could have been taken. However, France had lost her best chance to obtain Florida when Mangourit was recalled. A man with his energy and drive was the best chance France ever had of taking Florida.

Mangourit returned to France and, arriving after the fall of Robespierre, was exonerated of all charges. He went on to serve in the French diplomatic service until his retirement during Napoleon's rise to power. He died in 1829. France lost an ideal and cost-effective opportunity to revive her fortunes in the Americas by not allowing Mangourit's expedition to reach its conclusion. The French would have had to weigh the benefits of having bases in Florida against the displeasure of the Washington administration. However, France could have repudiated Genet while still presenting the United States with a *fait accompli* of a pro-French republic in Florida. In view of the subsequent deterioration of Franco-American relations, the lack of an audacious French diplomatic effort ironically amounts not only to a repudiation of international republicanism, but also to a renunciation of French self-interest.

The planned invasion of Florida exemplifies the entwined nature of relations along the borderlands. French officials commissioned Americans to fight under the French flag against a Spanish province where American descendants worked with Spanish officials to quell revolution. Although geopolitics was involved, matters moved independently of and contrary to metropolitan policies. Those in charge took vague instructions and altered them to conform to the situation on the ground. One constant was that the ideals of revolutionary France allied with an indigenous settler republicanism played a significant role in justifying the invasions and forming the basis for a critique of the American power structure. Some tentative answers had been proffered to the "Western Question," answers that would only be played out in the years to come. Florida would continue to play a central role in the borderlands dispute until the addition of Florida to the United States in 1819.

31. See Murdoch 71-97, Bennett 172-185. For MacGregor, see Blaufarb, "The Western Question, 752-753.