THE SPANISH CONQUEST OF BRITISH WEST FLORIDA, 1779-1781[1]

by ALBERT W. HAARMANN

FLORIDA PASSED TO British control in 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. A Royal Proclamation on October 7 of that year established West Florida as a colony and Pensacola was designated as its capital.

West Florida was roughly rectangular in shape and included portions of the present day states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Its eastern boundary was the Chattahoochee and Appalachicola Rivers. To the west, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Maurepas, the Iberville River, and the Mississippi River defined the limits of British territory. The northern boundary was a line at approximately 32 degrees 28 minutes North, running east from the confluence of the Yazoo and the Mississippi Rivers to the Chattahoochee. To the south, of course, was the Gulf of Mexico.[2] Pensacola and Mobile were the most important towns, but other settlements later gained in importance, especially when Loyalist refugees resettled in this province at the outbreak of the Revolution.

Spanish territorial losses in the Seven Year's War had created considerable animosity in Spain towards Great Britain, and had left a strong desire to retaliate. The goal of King Carlos III and his ministers was to safeguard Spanish colonies in America, to regain Gibraltar and Minorca, and to obtain revenge.

The French, after signing their treaty with the Americans in 1778, exerted considerable diplomatic effort to bring Spain into active participation in the war. Extracting a heavy price for their military assistance, the Spanish agreed to the secret convention of Aranjuez on April 12, 1779. The Spanish ambassador to the Court of St. James delivered a note on June 16 offering mediation between Britain and America on terms which the British were certain to reject. When these terms were turned down,

1. An excellent source and guide in the preparation of this paper has been John Walton Caughey's *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1934); hereafter cited as Caughey.
2. James Truslow Adams, ed., *Atlas of American History* (New York: Scribners, 1943), Plate 50.

THE SPANISH CONQUEST OF BRITISH WEST FLORIDA, 1779-1781[1]

by ALBERT W. HAARMANN

FLORIDA PASSED TO British control in 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. A Royal Proclamation on October 7 of that year established West Florida as a colony and Pensacola was designated as its capital.

West Florida was roughly rectangular in shape and included portions of the present day states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Its eastern boundary was the Chattahoochee and Appalachicola Rivers. To the west, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Maurepas, the Iberville River, and the Mississippi River defined the limits of British territory. The northern boundary was a line at approximately 32 degrees 28 minutes North, running east from the confluence of the Yazoo and the Mississippi Rivers to the Chattahoochee. To the south, of course, was the Gulf of Mexico.[2] Pensacola and Mobile were the most important towns, but other settlements later gained in importance, especially when Loyalist refugees resettled in this province at the outbreak of the Revolution.

Spanish territorial losses in the Seven Year's War had created considerable animosity in Spain towards Great Britain, and had left a strong desire to retaliate. The goal of King Carlos III and his ministers was to safeguard Spanish colonies in America, to regain Gibraltar and Minorca, and to obtain revenge.

The French, after signing their treaty with the Americans in 1778, exerted considerable diplomatic effort to bring Spain into active participation in the war. Extracting a heavy price for their military assistance, the Spanish agreed to the secret convention of Aranjuez on April 12, 1779. The Spanish ambassador to the Court of St. James delivered a note on June 16 offering mediation between Britain and America on terms which the British were certain to reject. When these terms were turned down,

1. An excellent source and guide in the preparation of this paper has been John Walton Caughey's *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1934); hereafter cited as Caughey.
2. James Truslow Adams, ed., *Atlas of American History* (New York: Scribners, 1943), Plate 50.

Spain entered the war in accordance with the terms of their agreement with France.

The Treaty of Aranjuez was a Spanish diplomatic victory. Though the French achieved their long-sought goal of active Spanish participation, they bought it dearly. France was compelled to pledge that she would fight until Gibraltar was restored to Spain. In addition, France pledged all possible aid to Spain to wrest Minorca, Mobile, and other areas from Britain. There were other terms in the treaty, but in the main these did not affect the American scene. Perhaps the most important aspect of the treaty was that it did not make Spain an ally of the United States. She did not even recognize them. The treaty was at odds with the previous agreement of France and the United States and the French were hard put to reconcile the two. Thus the relationship of the Americans and the Spanish was that of co-belligerents rather than allies.[3]

The Spanish conquest was conducted in three separate campaigns. Overall objectives were defined in a confidential letter of August 29, 1779, to the Captain General of Cuba from the Minister of the Indies:

> The King has decided that the principal objective of his arms in America during the war with the English is to drive them from the Gulf of Mexico and the banks of the Mississippi, where their settlements are so prejudicial to our commerce, as well as to the security of our richest possessions. . . . His Majesty desires that an expedition be organized without delay, composed of whatever land and sea forces it is possible to assemble in those dominions, and that an attack be made on Mobile and Pensacola, the keys to the Gulf of Mexico, sending detachments before or afterwards to attack and clear the English from the banks of the Mississippi, which should be considered as the bulwark of the vast empire of New Spain.[4]

On January 1, 1777, a youthful soldier, Don Bernardo de Gálvez, became acting governor of Spanish Louisiana. This brilliant and dynamic officer, only thirty at the time, promptly addressed himself to the tasks at hand.

---

3. John Richard Alden, *The American Revolution, 1775-1783,* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), pp. 178-193.
4. Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794, Annual Report of the American Historical Association (1945),* II (Washington, 1949), p. 355. Hereafter cited as Kinnaird.

Spain entered the war in accordance with the terms of their agreement with France.

The Treaty of Aranjuez was a Spanish diplomatic victory. Though the French achieved their long-sought goal of active Spanish participation, they bought it dearly. France was compelled to pledge that she would fight until Gibraltar was restored to Spain. In addition, France pledged all possible aid to Spain to wrest Minorca, Mobile, and other areas from Britain. There were other terms in the treaty, but in the main these did not affect the American scene. Perhaps the most important aspect of the treaty was that it did not make Spain an ally of the United States. She did not even recognize them. The treaty was at odds with the previous agreement of France and the United States and the French were hard put to reconcile the two. Thus the relationship of the Americans and the Spanish was that of co-belligerents rather than allies.[3]

The Spanish conquest was conducted in three separate campaigns. Overall objectives were defined in a confidential letter of August 29, 1779, to the Captain General of Cuba from the Minister of the Indies:

> The King has decided that the principal objective of his arms in America during the war with the English is to drive them from the Gulf of Mexico and the banks of the Mississippi, where their settlements are so prejudicial to our commerce, as well as to the security of our richest possessions. . . . His Majesty desires that an expedition be organized without delay, composed of whatever land and sea forces it is possible to assemble in those dominions, and that an attack be made on Mobile and Pensacola, the keys to the Gulf of Mexico, sending detachments before or afterwards to attack and clear the English from the banks of the Mississippi, which should be considered as the bulwark of the vast empire of New Spain.[4]

On January 1, 1777, a youthful soldier, Don Bernardo de Gálvez, became acting governor of Spanish Louisiana. This brilliant and dynamic officer, only thirty at the time, promptly addressed himself to the tasks at hand.

---

3. John Richard Alden, *The American Revolution, 1775-1783,* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), pp. 178-193.
4. Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794, Annual Report of the American Historical Association (1945),* II (Washington, 1949), p. 355. Hereafter cited as Kinnaird.

Gálvez was the scion of a powerful family; his father was Viceroy of New Spain (Mexico) and his uncle, José, was the Minister of the Indies, one of the most important Spanish ministerial posts. He won his spurs as a lieutenant fighting the Portuguese. Later, he fought the Apaches on the Pecos River. After he returned to Spain, he took a leave of absence and entered the French army for further training. In 1775, he served in North Africa under General Alexandro O'Reilly, a former governor of Louisiana. Promoted to lieutenant colonel and given command of the fixed regiment of Louisiana, he was sent to America in 1776.

Once Gálvez succeeded to the governorship, he endeavored to strengthen the security of Louisiana. Indian friendship was sought and gifts were distributed. Both trade and aid to the American revolutionists was permitted. Immigration was encouraged and the colonists received governmental assistance. The commerce of the colony was strengthened. As war with Britain became more imminent, the size of the small garrison was increased and militia companies were raised, equipped, and trained.

Gálvez sent one of his officers to Mobile and Pensacola in 1778. The ostensible purpose of the mission was an attempt to secure Spain's rights as a neutral in the war between England and her colonies. Secretly this officer was instructed to obtain intelligence on fortifications, their garrisons, and other useful information.[5]

The Spanish court sent notice to her colonial officials on May 18, 1779, that war was to be declared, although the formal declaration was not made until June 21. News of the declaration reached Havana on July 17. Before Gálvez received the declaration of war from Havana, he intercepted two letters outlining the possibility of British attacks upon Spanish Louisiana.[6]

With all the signs pointing to a war with England, Gálvez called his officers together to draw up a plan of action. All the officers, except one, agreed that the defense of New Orleans was of first importance and that all effort should be expended in strengthening its defenses. The young commander did not agree with his staff, but he kept his own counsel. Outwardly he agreed

5. Caughey, pp. 140-146. See also the letter of April 29, 1779, from Captain Jacinto Panis to Gálvez on the defense of Pensacola, in Kinnaird, pp. 336-338.
6. Caughey, pp. 149-150.

Gálvez was the scion of a powerful family; his father was Viceroy of New Spain (Mexico) and his uncle, José, was the Minister of the Indies, one of the most important Spanish ministerial posts. He won his spurs as a lieutenant fighting the Portuguese. Later, he fought the Apaches on the Pecos River. After he returned to Spain, he took a leave of absence and entered the French army for further training. In 1775, he served in North Africa under General Alexandro O'Reilly, a former governor of Louisiana. Promoted to lieutenant colonel and given command of the fixed regiment of Louisiana, he was sent to America in 1776.

Once Gálvez succeeded to the governorship, he endeavored to strengthen the security of Louisiana. Indian friendship was sought and gifts were distributed. Both trade and aid to the American revolutionists was permitted. Immigration was encouraged and the colonists received governmental assistance. The commerce of the colony was strengthened. As war with Britain became more imminent, the size of the small garrison was increased and militia companies were raised, equipped, and trained.

Gálvez sent one of his officers to Mobile and Pensacola in 1778. The ostensible purpose of the mission was an attempt to secure Spain's rights as a neutral in the war between England and her colonies. Secretly this officer was instructed to obtain intelligence on fortifications, their garrisons, and other useful information.[5]

The Spanish court sent notice to her colonial officials on May 18, 1779, that war was to be declared, although the formal declaration was not made until June 21. News of the declaration reached Havana on July 17. Before Gálvez received the declaration of war from Havana, he intercepted two letters outlining the possibility of British attacks upon Spanish Louisiana.[6]

With all the signs pointing to a war with England, Gálvez called his officers together to draw up a plan of action. All the officers, except one, agreed that the defense of New Orleans was of first importance and that all effort should be expended in strengthening its defenses. The young commander did not agree with his staff, but he kept his own counsel. Outwardly he agreed

5. Caughey, pp. 140-146. See also the letter of April 29, 1779, from Captain Jacinto Panis to Gálvez on the defense of Pensacola, in Kinnaird, pp. 336-338.
6. Caughey, pp. 149-150.

with them; secretly he believed the best defense to be an immediate attack upon the British posts on the Mississippi while their forces were still scattered. Using the defense of New Orleans as a cover, he laid his plans for an expedition against nearby British posts. The commissary of war was taken into his confidence and made responsible for the preparations. Supplies were collected and boats were commandeered. When Gálvez received news of the declaration of war, he kept it a secret. The boats were loaded in preparation for the expedition and by mid-August all was in readiness for the first campaign. On the eve of the expedition's departure, a severe hurricane battered New Orleans, sinking the vessels, destroying houses, and ruining crops. At an assembly of the populace, Gálvez announced the English declaration of war on Spain as a result of the recognition of American independence. Then quite dramatically he announced his appointment as governor—up to now he had been acting governor only—and sought public support. An enthusiastic crowd pledged its support to help defend the threatened and now battered city, and preparations for the attack were pushed again. Undamaged vessels were brought into New Orleans and pressed into transport duty. Several sunken boats were raised and soon made serviceable. Within a week after the storm, arrangements were complete. Supplies and ten cannon were loaded aboard and the vessels went up the river.

On August 27, 1779, a small expedition left New Orleans. It consisted of 170 veteran soldiers, 330 recruits from Mexico and the Canary Islands, 20 carabiniers, 60 militiamen, 80 free blacks and mulattoes, and 7 American volunteers. Gálvez had no engineer and his artillery officer was sick. The column had to march through thick woods and over difficult trails. On the German and Arcadian Coasts Gálvez succeeded in raising 600 men of every class and color and 160 Indians. His force now totaled 1,427 combatants. Gálvez made a forced march, covering 115 miles in eleven days.[7]

Rapid marching reduced Gálvez' effective strength. One-third of the column was lost to sickness, straggling, or desertion, but the element of surprise remained as an advantage for the Spanish. As late as the second of September the English were still unsure of their intentions. Not only did Gálvez conceal his designs from

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

with them; secretly he believed the best defense to be an immediate attack upon the British posts on the Mississippi while their forces were still scattered. Using the defense of New Orleans as a cover, he laid his plans for an expedition against nearby British posts. The commissary of war was taken into his confidence and made responsible for the preparations. Supplies were collected and boats were commandeered. When Gálvez received news of the declaration of war, he kept it a secret. The boats were loaded in preparation for the expedition and by mid-August all was in readiness for the first campaign. On the eve of the expedition's departure, a severe hurricane battered New Orleans, sinking the vessels, destroying houses, and ruining crops. At an assembly of the populace, Gálvez announced the English declaration of war on Spain as a result of the recognition of American independence. Then quite dramatically he announced his appointment as governor—up to now he had been acting governor only—and sought public support. An enthusiastic crowd pledged its support to help defend the threatened and now battered city, and preparations for the attack were pushed again. Undamaged vessels were brought into New Orleans and pressed into transport duty. Several sunken boats were raised and soon made serviceable. Within a week after the storm, arrangements were complete. Supplies and ten cannon were loaded aboard and the vessels went up the river.

On August 27, 1779, a small expedition left New Orleans. It consisted of 170 veteran soldiers, 330 recruits from Mexico and the Canary Islands, 20 carabiniers, 60 militiamen, 80 free blacks and mulattoes, and 7 American volunteers. Gálvez had no engineer and his artillery officer was sick. The column had to march through thick woods and over difficult trails. On the German and Arcadian Coasts Gálvez succeeded in raising 600 men of every class and color and 160 Indians. His force now totaled 1,427 combatants. Gálvez made a forced march, covering 115 miles in eleven days.[7]

Rapid marching reduced Gálvez' effective strength. One-third of the column was lost to sickness, straggling, or desertion, but the element of surprise remained as an advantage for the Spanish. As late as the second of September the English were still unsure of their intentions. Not only did Gálvez conceal his designs from

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

the English, but his own men were not told the true purpose of their expedition until they were in sight of Manchac. Then, on September 6, Gálvez told his command that Spain had declared war and his orders were to take the posts on the Mississippi.

Manchac was a trading post defended by a backwoods fortification of log houses and a stockade. The post had been built in 1765 and was named Fort Bute in honor of the prime minister. This fort had been the main British post on the Mississippi until late July, 1779, when it was condemned as indefensible against cannon, and it was decided to build another stronghold at Baton Rouge. During the first days of September the English evacuated the post except for a small force to put up a token resistance.[8]

On the night of the sixth Gálvez deployed his troops. The regulars were posted to meet any English force that might come downriver to aid the forlorn garrison, while the militia were to carry the fort by assault. At dawn the attacking militiamen were led through an embrasure and carried the post without a loss. The little garrison surrendered; their loss was one enlisted man killed. The Spanish reported the capture of two officers and eighteen soldiers, while one officer and five men are reported to have escaped in the confusion.[9]

The taking of this post was a minor affair, but it gave the untried militia experience and bolstered their confidence. Gálvez remained at Manchac for a few days to allow his sick to recover before he set out for Baton Rouge.

Baton Rouge was the strongest post on the Mississippi. As previously stated, this post was recently constructed. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Dickson of the 16th Regiment, the commander of the English posts along the Mississippi, had apparently reliable reports that the Americans were preparing for a descent down the Mississippi to take the British posts in that region. Dickson, after consultation with his engineer and other officers, decided to build a work at Baton Rouge, as the post at Manchac had been condemned as indefensible. On July 30, 1779, it was decided to build a redoubt on the plantation of Messrs. Watts and Flower

8. "The Capture of Baton Rouge by Gálvez, September 21st, 1779," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly,* XII (April, 1929), 263. This article is a reprint of the London *Morning Chronicle,* April 3, 1780, that had quoted the original reports from the London *Gazette,* April 1, 1780; hereafter cited as *Gazette.*
9. Caughey, p. 155.

because this site had a large area of cleared ground. The engineer was sent to the area with a letter requesting the assistance of the local inhabitants and they are described as having cheerfully complied with the request.[10]

The redoubt was built in six weeks. It was surrounded by a ditch eighteen feet wide and nine feet deep. Inside the ditch was an earthen wall and outside a circle of palisades in the form of a chevaux-de-frise. Thirteen cannon were mounted within this work.[11] The artillery, supplies, and troops had moved into this work during the first days of September.

Almost four hundred regulars were in the garrison; the troops were from the Royal Artillery, the English 16th and 60th (Royal Americans) Regiments, Germans from the 3rd Waldeck Regiment, and a small independent company. The regulars were augmented by 150 settlers and armed Negroes.[12]

On September 12 the redoubt was invested. Gálvez realized that an assault would be too costly and therefore decided to lay siege to the works. The proper emplacement of his artillery was the key to his problem. A grove of trees near the post was the obvious place to begin throwing up earthworks for a siege. To deceive the garrison, Gálvez sent the militia, colored troops, and Indians to that quarter on the night of the twentieth with orders to cut down trees, construct earthworks, and keep up a blaze of musketry. The besieged were fooled by the feint and kept up a heavy cannonade on this party, but with little effect.

The Spanish, meanwhile, were constructing a battery on the opposite side of the redoubt, behind a garden wall. Although within small arms range of the works, Gálvez' men worked without being observed or molested. The battery was not discovered until the next morning, but by then both guns and their crews were well protected. Gálvez' ruse had worked.

Early on the morning of the twenty-first, the Spanish battery opened a concentrated fire that soon breached the walls. The British gun crews served their pieces well and replied vigorously, but after an incessant exchange of fire, Dickson was obliged to yield to the superior Spanish artillery fire.[13]

---

10. *Gazette,* pp. 263-264.
11. Caughey, p. 155.
12. *Gazette,* pp. 264-265.
13. *Ibid.,* p. 263; Caughey, pp. 156-157.

The garrison submitted to terms. Gálvez not only sought the surrender of Baton Rouge but wanted the garrison of Fort Panmure at Natchez, eighty grenadiers, to capitulate too. Colonel Dickson agreed. The garrison was permitted to bury its dead before it marched out of the redoubt with all the honors of war and gave up its arms. All the regulars, 17 officers and 358 men, became prisoners. The enlisted settlers and free Negroes were released. Spanish losses during the siege were one killed and two wounded. The vanquished suffered two officers and two men killed, two men wounded, and one officer and 29 men later died of wounds while in captivity.[14]

A small force of fifty men were sent to Fort Panmure to take the surrender of that post. The English officer in command, Captain Forster, surrendered on October 5.[15]

In addition to the three posts previously mentioned, the Spanish militia seized small outposts at Thompson's Creek and on the Amite River. These bloodless coups added more than a score of men to the bag of prisoners.

Besides their victories on land, the Spaniards seized or captured eight vessels on the rivers and lakes. Perhaps the most spectacular feat was the capture of an English transport on its way to Manchac. Vizente Rillieux, of New Orleans, was in command of a sloop of war that had been cruising the lakes. He had ventured up the Amite River as far as Bayou Manchac, when he learned of the approach of a heavily laden barque. Rillieux landed his crew, fourteen men, and a few small guns. Ashore, the men constructed a masked battery and concealed themselves, awaiting the oncoming transport. As the vessel drew abreast of their position, they opened fire and started to yell. The English sailors were taken by surprise and, convinced that they were met by an overwhelming force, they rushed below deck. Rillieux and his men boarded the barque and sealed the hatches, making everyone aboard a prisoner. This bold action added to the growing list of captives; on board the barque were 12 sailors and 56 Weldeckers, a force that outnumbered Rillieux's crew by almost five to one.[16]

---

14. *Gazette*, pp. 264-265.
15. Caughey, p. 158.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

In a campaign that barely lasted a month, the victorious Gálvez achieved startling results with the limited resources at his command. His polygot army took three forts, about 550 British and German regulars prisoner, and eight vessels with their crews. Another 500 armed settlers and Negroes were taken, but they were later released upon taking an oath of allegiance. Their victories gave the Spanish control of the lower Mississippi Valley and the western part of the British province.

The most important aspect of this short campaign was the improved defensive position of Spanish Louisiana. Although Gálvez seized the initiative and took the offensive against the British, his action was primarily defensive and limited to the immediate area. No longer did the colony lay open to a down river attack; the taking of the British posts in the Baton Rouge-Natchez area removed an immediate threat; while the Spanish garrisons established in their stead guarded against any potential threat from British posts in the Great Lakes-Ohio Valley region.[17]

The well planned campaign did credit to the youthful general. He demonstrated unusual leadership ability at the head of a motley army. The untried militia rendered yeoman service and was well behaved, while the Negroes and mulattoes served equally well, especially as scouts and skirmishers. Contrary to their usual practices, the Indians refrained from cruelties and excesses. Perhaps the best summation of Gálvez' abilities during this campaign comes from his biographer: "Gálvez should . . . be recognized; not for the brilliance of his military maneuvers, though he demonstrated his capability as a general; but rather for his vision in planning the campaign, for his disregard of timid advisors, for his courage in the face of disconcerting disaster, and, most of all, for the enthusiasm with which he inspired the creoles to wholehearted participation in the expedition."[18]

The news of the fall of British posts on the Mississippi reached Mobile in October. This intelligence was passed on to Pensacola, but the commander there, General John Campbell, did not believe the report and considered it a Spanish ruse to draw him out into the open. Later the same month, another report reached

---

17. Gálvez' campaign was conducted at an opportune time; the British, with their Loyalist and Indian allies, in western New York and the Ohio Valley were confronted by various expeditions fielded by the Americans in an effort to destroy the Indian threat to the frontier.
18. Caughey, p. 163.

Pensacola, but once again the general refused to believe the report. After issuing several conflicting orders, he decided to strengthen his position at Pensacola while it was further decided that Mobile would have to make do with what it had.[19] With his base now secure, Gálvez was free to direct his attention towards Mobile and Pensacola.

Gálvez encountered considerable opposition from the authorities in Havana on the method of conducting the forthcoming campaign. The Captain General of Cuba wanted a primarily naval campaign against Pensacola, whereas Gálvez favored the taking of Mobile first, both to deny Pensacola a source of supply and to control the Indians in that district. Gálvez was confronted with other problems too; he needed more troops, artillery, supplies, and ships. Havana refused to give him what he wanted.[20] Despite the lack of support, Gálvez decided to proceed with an attack upon Mobile.

Mobile was situated at the head of a large bay, approximately thirty miles long and six miles wide. The spacious harbor was considered a very good anchorage, although the Royal Navy never did take advantage of it. The town was located on the west bank of the Mobile River, extending nearly a half mile back on a plain above the river and almost a mile along its bank. Fort Charlotte stood near the bay at the lower end of town.[21]

The fort was a square, solid masonry structure with four bastions and embrasures for thirty-eight guns. From bastion to bastion it measured 300 feet. Within the fort were barracks, a powder magazine, a bakery, and several wells. The fort had been built by the French about 1717 of locally-made brick and oyster-shell lime and was known as Fort Conde de la Mobile. When their troops took over the post in 1763 upon the completion of the Seven Year's War, the British renamed it Fort Charlotte in honor of the queen of the young king of England. It had fallen into disrepair by 1779 but necessary repairs were ordered when hostilities became apparent.[22]

---

19. Peter J. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1910), p. 312. Hereafter cited as Hamilton.
20. Kinnaird, pp. 364-373, cites several letters relative to the forthcoming campaign.
21. Hamilton, pp. 223, 298.
22. The description of the fort is based on several bits of information contained in the Hamilton book.

The garrison at Mobile numbered more than 300 men. It was a mixed force drawn from the 4th Battalion of the 60th Regiment, the Royal Artillery, engineers, small detachments from the Pennsylvania and Maryland Loyalists, volunteers from amongst the local inhabitants, and artificers. A number of Negroes were employed as servants and in other tasks.[23]

Captain Elias Durnford, a British army engineer and a veteran of the Seven Year's War, was in command at Mobile. He had distinguished himself during the siege of Havana. In 1763 he had been appointed Commanding Engineer and Surveyor General for the newly created province of West Florida. For a time he had served as Lieutenant Governor of the province.[24]

The expedition against Mobile did not begin auspiciously. Gálvez sailed on January 28, 1780, with a force of 745 men, regulars from the Regiments of the Prince, Havana, and Louisiana, the Royal Artillery Corps, and militiamen, whites, free blacks, and mulattoes.[25] While at sea the eleven ship squadron was struck by a hurricane that separated the ships. By February 10 the expeditionary force had reassembled and lay off the entrance to Mobile Bay. Strong winds and a heavy sea made Gálvez determined to enter the bay at once. Six vessels ran aground during the attempt but three were soon afloat. The continuing bad weather hindered the landing of troops and supplies and their efforts to refloat the other three vessels. Men and supplies were unloaded from the grounded vessels and two smaller craft were floated again. The remaining ship, a frigate, was hard aground and was later abandoned. The ravages of the sea took a toll of supplies and ammunition; they had been lost or ruined during the storm, the grounding of the vessels, and the transfer of the cargo ashore.

Everything ashore was in a state of confusion. The landings were made in such disorder that Gálvez considered abandoning his artillery and baggage and retreating overland; however, he soon learned that he was not expected so he decided to press the siege of Mobile.

A emissary previously sent to Havana meanwhile had convinced the authorities in that quarter that Gálvez needed rein-

---

23. Hamilton, pp. 312-313.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 534-535.
25. Caughey, p. 174.

forcements. They finally relented and sent 567 men of the Regiment of Navarra. This force set out in several transports on the tenth of February and reached Mobile on the 20th, where they entered the bay and landed their troops without incident.

The appearance of the Spanish expeditionary force created considerable confusion in Mobile and Gálvez was able to assemble and reorganize his forces without interference from the British. Despite the losses suffered on account of the weather, Gálvez was able to report excellent morale amongst his troops.

The last days of February were spent in final preparations for the siege and ferrying troops to a point closer to Mobile. On the 28th the troops crossed the Dog River and established a camp. The Spanish had their first encounter with the English on the 29th when a scouting party of four companies was fired upon by the fort.[26]

On the following day the Spanish general, aware of his superior forces, summoned Durnford to surrender. The British commander declined, stating that his forces were larger than Gálvez imagined, and that his love of king and country and of his own honor directed him to refuse any offer of surrender until he was convinced that resistance was futile. Gifts were exchanged and proper concern was expressed for prisoners in Spanish hands. With this observance of the amenities of formal eighteenth-century warfare, the adversaries got down to the business at hand.[27]

Durnford sent a dispatch to his superior in Pensacola on March 2, giving a full report on his situation. He related that as soon as the Spanish flag left the fort, he drew his troops up in the square and read Gálvez' summons to them. The men were told if any were afraid to stand by him, that he would open the gates and let that man pass from the fort. "This had the desired effect, and not a man moved. I then read to them my answer to the summons, in which they all joined in three cheers and then went to our necessary work like good men."[28]

On the fifth and sixth there were further exchanges of letters. This time the topic was the burning of the town. Many houses had been set afire by the English to deny shelter to their besiegers. Gálvez in turn had offered not to set up his batteries behind any

---

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.
27. Hamilton, pp. 313-314.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 315.

house if Durnford would stay his incendiarism. The English commander declined, stating that he must do everything in his power to defend his post, and if it included burning houses, he would do so. That ended the affair.[29]

Meanwhile Durnford had received word from Campbell concerning a relief column from Pensacola. He welcomed the news and promised to defend the fort to the last.[30]

While the exchange of letters had been going on between Gálvez and Durnford, the Spanish were making further preparations for the siege and the troops worked with a will. They hauled cannon and prepared fascines and other material for the attack. By March 9 they were ready to open their trench.

The trench was opened on the night of the ninth by a work party of 300 men protected by 200 armed men. Gálvez made a speech to raise their morale and the work went well all night. At dawn English fire forced the Spanish to stop their work after they had suffered six killed and five wounded. Bad weather interrupted the work for a day but by the morning of the 12th the Spanish had a battery of eight 18-pounders and one of 24 in position.[31]

Scouting parties returned to the Spanish camp on the 11th and reporting sighting two English camps near Tensa.[32] This was the relief column that Campbell had promised Durnford.

On March 5 the 60th Foot from the Pensacola garrison set out on the 72-mile march to Mobile. The next day the remainder of the Waldeckers marched out. Campbell himself followed with the Pennsylvania Loyalists and artillery. All told, the column numbered 522 men. The relief column marched through a wilderness devoid of a single human dwelling. Campbell's force reached Tensa, a point about thirty miles above Mobile on the eastern channel of the Mobile River, on the tenth, but lost valuable time building rafts to transport the men and their equipment downstream.[33]

As soon as the Spanish finished their battery, they opened fire upon Fort Charlotte. The English replied and a vigorous exchange ensued. Spanish guns were played upon the walls of the fort and

---

29. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
31. Caughey, pp. 180-181.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Hamilton, p. 315.

managed to make breeches in two places. Whenever one of the fort's guns was dismounted, another soon took its place; true to the traditions of their corps, the Royal Artillerymen served their pieces until all shot was expended. At sundown the English raised the white flag and asked for terms.[34]

Fort Charlotte was surrendered on March 14. Captain Durnford capitulated on much the same terms that Gálvez granted Dickson at Baton Rouge. The small garrison marched out with colors flying and drums beating. Once outside the fort, the men grounded their arms but the officers were permitted to retain their swords.[35]

Accounts differ, but one, perhaps final, Spanish report listed 13 officers, 113 soldiers, 56 sailors, 70 militiamen, and 55 armed Negroes in the surrendered garrison.[36] The booty included 35 cannon and 8 mortars.[37] During the siege the garrison had only one man killed outright and eleven wounded, two of whom subsequently died. The bombardment of the fort was decisive but hunger and the lack of reinforcements from Pensacola were important factors.

Gálvez kept the relief column at Tensa under observation. On the 17th Spanish scouting parties brought in the news that Campbell was returning to Pensacola. Waldecker accounts of the return journey describe it as a trying march. It rained continuously and the route of march was a quagmire. Swollen streams could only be crossed single file by using fallen trees, and men who fell into the water were lost. The bedraggled column reached Pensacola on the 19th.[38]

With the surrender of the fort and the return to Pensacola of the unsuccessful relief column, active campaigning for 1780 came to a close.

Now that Mobile was captured, Gálvez turned his attention to the operations against Pensacola. His force included almost as many troops as Campbell had in his regular garrison, although

---

34. Caughey, p. 181.
35. Hamilton, p. 315.
36. Caughey, p. 182 and footnote 33.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
38. Hamilton, p. 315. For a Waldeck account, see Max von Eelking, *The German Allied Troops in the North American War of Independence,* translated from the German & abridged by J. D. Rosengarten (Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1893), pp. 218-225; hereafter cited as Eelking.

the British commander had numerous Indian allies. Gálvez had hoped for further reinforcements from Havana but wavering officials there ruined any hopes for immediate action. A fruitless exchange of correspondence ensued and Gálvez failed to wring any further assistance from Havana. Finally a garrison was left at Mobile under the command of Colonel Josef de Ezpeleta while the greater part of the troops returned to either New Orleans or Havana. Gálvez went to Havana to plead for men and supplies.

In recognition for his services to the crown, Gálvez was made field marshal in command of Spanish operations in America and granted the augmented title of Governor of Louisiana and Mobile. These were well deserved honors. In the face of all sorts of odds—lack of support from Cuba, the elements, the near-disastrous landings, and the threat of a British relief column from Pensacola—he did well. Once established ashore, he managed the operation with alacrity and chivalry. Gálvez maintained the morale of his troops and conducted the siege in a commendable manner.

In January, 1781, General Campbell decided upon an attack upon Mobile. On the third he sent Colonel Von Hanxleden of the Waldeck Regiment with 60 men of his own corps, 100 men of the 60th Regiment, provincials of the Pennsylvania and Maryland Loyalists, a few militia calvarymen, and about 300 Indians to conduct the attack.

The German colonel was ordered to take an outpost on the east shore of Mobile Bay known as the Village or Frenchtown. He was to delay the attack until the seventh when a pair of frigates would be on station in the bay to cooperate with him and cut communications with Mobile. This outpost was held by 150 men commanded by Lieutenant Ramon del Castro of the Regiment of the Prince.

A bayonet attack at dawn had actually penetrated the Spanish works before they recovered and repulsed the attackers in some bitter hand to hand fighting. When their commander fell, the assaulting party gave up the attack and subsequently returned to Pensacola. Besides their commander, the attackers had 2 officers and 13 men killed and 3 officers and 19 men wounded. The gallant defenders suffered almost equal losses, 14 were killed and 23 wounded.

The failure to carry the post has been variously placed on the Waldeckers and the Indians. In view of their known casual-

ties and comparatively small numbers, the onus for the failure probably cannot be placed upon the Germans. The Indians, with their decisive strength and known lack of propensity for attacking fixed fortifications, undoubtedly must be considered the responsible party. [39]

In August, 1780, Gálvez went to Havana personally to see to the arrangements for the campaign against Pensacola. When he sailed on October 16, he headed an expedition that included 4,000 troops and a fleet of 64 warships and transports. Once again nature intervened. While at sea, the fleet was struck and dispersed by a hurricane. Gálvez was forced to return to Havana, arriving there on November 17, where he learned that the ships had been scattered to ports about the Gulf of Mexico and at least one vessel had been lost at sea.[40]

Undaunted by this reverse, Gálvez made preparations for another expedition. Once again he encountered delays as the officials in Havana dragged their feet. Meanwhile, at his insistence, 500 men were sent to reinforce Mobile on December 6. The commander of the small convoy transporting these troops later reported that his ships could not negotiate the channel at Mobile, so he sailed on to Balize on the Mississippi, where the troops were landed. He then returned to Havana. However, just a few days after the unsuccessful attempt upon the channel at Mobile, two English frigates penetrated the bay and played their part in the unsuccessful attack of January 7.[41]

As preparations were being pushed for the forthcoming expedition, other commanders received their instructions. Word was sent to Louisiana for the troops there to embark and join Gálvez' squadron. The troops at Mobile were ordered to march by an overland route.[42]

About 1,300 troops were embarked aboard the ships and the squadron set sail again on February 28, 1781. At sea Gálvez in-

---

39. Information on this raid is based upon Caughey, pp. 194-195; Eelking, p. 223; Hamilton, pp. 316-317; and Buckingham Smith, editor, "Robert Farmar's Journal of the Siege of Pensacola, 1781," *"Historical Magazine and Notes and Queries* (June, 1860), p. 171; hereafter cited as Farmar.
40. Bernardo de Gálvez, "Diary of the Operations Against Pensacola, *Louisiana Historical Quarterly,* I (January, 1917), 44. Hereafter cited as Gálvez.
41. *Ibid.,* pp. 44-47.
42. *Ibid.,* pp. 47-48.

formed his commanders that once they arrived off Pensacola he planned to land on Santa Rosa Island and secure the east side of the passage into the bay in order that the fleet could enter the harbor without the risk of a crossfire. Once in the harbor, he planned to await reinforcements from Louisiana and Mobile.[43]

The Bay of Pensacola angled to the northeast and was shielded by Santa Rosa Island, a sandspit of an island on a east-west axis. About nine miles up the bay, on the north shore, lay the town proper. At this time Pensacola was a town of about 200 frame houses. The town occupied about a mile of bay shore and was approximately a quarter of a mile in depth. Its east and west boundaries were set by curving arroyos. In the center of the town was a large plaza, largely occupied by a stockade with several batteries on the waterfront. About 1,200 yards north of the plaza rose Gage Hill. The hill was 300 yards in width and extended to the northwest. On the southeast end of the hill the British had erected Fort George with its outworks in a position that dominated the town. The hill continued to slope upward, about 22 feet in 900 yards. This point was too far away to protect the town but it did overlook the work of the fort. To protect the fort, the British erected two redoubts. The most advanced, known as the Queen's, was a circular battery with wings, built on the high ground some 900 yards from Fort George. About 300 yards below this work as the second redoubt, known as the Prince of Wales'. This redoubt was oblate in shape and served principally to protect communications between the fort and the advanced redoubt.

At the entrance to the bay, opposite Santa Rosa Island, on the heights overlooking the passage into the harbor, was the Red Cliffs Fort, also known as Barrancas Colorados by the Spanish. This fort mounted eleven guns, five of which were 32-pounders, and was garrisoned by approximately 140 officers and men. About a mile to the east and near the water level, was a blockhouse at a place known as Tartar Point, which the Spanish called Aguero. Opposite these works lay Point Sigüenza, the western tip of Santa Rosa Island. This point had been fortified at one time but when the Spanish arrived, all they found were a few dismounted guns and a burnt stockade.[44]

---

43. *Ibid.*
44. For an excellent article on Pensacola's defenses, see Stanley Faye, "British and Spanish Fortifications of Pensacola, 1781-1821," *Florida*

A British army return of March 15, 1781, gave the strength of their forces in West Florida as 750 fit for duty with a total of 1,193 effectives.[45] This force was almost exclusively in the garrison at Pensacola. The troops were from the 16th and 60th Regiments, the Maryland Loyalists and the Pennsylvania Loyalists, both Provincial units, and the Waldeck Regiment. Despite the mixed background of the defenders, they were fairly well trained and experienced soldiers. To these must be added the sailors from Royal Navy vessels in the harbor and Indians who later joined the besieged garrison.[46]

On March 9, 1781, the fleet arrived off Santa Rosa and made immediate preparations to land. A force of grenadiers and light infantry under the command of Colonel Francisco Longoria was put ashore that evening. Soon after they landed, the troops started marching to the west to secure the works at Point Sigüenza. Marching all that night, they reached their destination early the next morning. Instead of encountering the defended works they expected, all they found was a demolished work and three dismounted cannon. Shortly after their arrival the light infantry captured some men from the British frigate *Port Royal* who had come ashore to take off some cattle. The Spanish were soon sighted and the fort at Red Cliffs and two English frigates opened fire upon them but with little effect. To protect his squadron and make the English ships keep their distance, Gálvez selected a site and ordered the construction of a battery. During the afternoon an English schooner entered the harbor, bearing booty, including Gálvez' dinner service, taken from a Spanish vessel. The captured foodstuffs provided some welcome supplies for the Pensacola garrison.[47]

The Spanish started to work on their battery early on the 11th and in the afternoon they were able to open fire upon the frigates *Mentor* and *Port Royal,* forcing them to change stations. Meanwhile the entrance to the harbor had been sounded and the

---

Historical Quarterly, XX (January, 1942), 277-292. Also extant are two contemporary maps by Captain-Lieutenant Henry Heldring of the Waldeck Regiment and Acting Engineer at Pensacola in 1781. These maps are in the General Clinton Papers at the William L. Clements Library of Americana, the University of Michigan.

45. *Diary of Frederick Mackenzie* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), II, 412. Hereafter cited as Mackenzie.
46. The composition of the Pensacola garrison is based on entries in Farmar's Journal.
47. Gálvez, pp. 48-49; Farmar, p. 166.

squadron attempted to enter the port. When the largest Spanish ship touched bottom, the whole squadron came about and returned to their former anchorage. During the evening the weather turned.[48]

On the following day the weather was still bad and Gálvez became concerned for the safety of the ships and the ultimate success of the operation. As he did not have command of the Spanish naval vessels, he tried to convince the naval commander that if the ship of the line *San Ramon,* a 64, could not enter the bay, at least the smaller ships should try to enter the port where they would be protected in the event of another storm. The naval commander complained about the lack of information on the depth of the water, the channel, and the lack of pilots. He was also worried about the possibility of cannon fire from the Red Cliffs raking his ships. Realizing that the naval commander was reluctant to act, and being without any authority over the naval forces, Gálvez finally decided to act on his own. On the 14th he ordered one of his vessels from Louisiana, the brig *Gálveztown,* to sound the passage into the harbor that night.[49]

A sloop from Mobile joined the squadron on the morning of the 16th and informed them that Colonel Ezpeleta would march to the shores of the Perdido River with 900 men. A request was made for boats to make the crossing. The squadron commander ordered the provisioning of small boats and sent a small armed vessel to cover the crossing.[50]

Tired of waiting and armed with information from the sounding of the passage into the harbor, Gálvez decided to enter the bay with the *Gálveztown* and three row galleys, vessels that were under his control. He still entertained fears that a storm might disperse or wreck the fleet. He hoisted a broad pennant on his flagship and led the four-ship flotilla into the harbor under heavy fire from the guns atop Barrancas Colorados. The vessels suffered some damage to their rigging but no personnel casualties. Men aboard the remaining ships in the squadron cheered his successful entrance into the harbor.[51]

---

48. Gálvez, p. 49.
49. *Ibid.,* pp. 49-50.
50. *Ibid.,* p. 51. Although it is stated in Farmar's Journal, p. 166, that Indians prevented this river crossing, Ezpeleta's column did join up with Gálvez on the 22nd.
51. Gálvez, p. 52.

On the following day, the 19th, fired by Gálvez' example, the rest of the fleet was determined to enter the harbor that day. Early that afternoon the ships set sail and within an hour they were safely over the bar and inside the harbor. Despite another heavy cannonade from the guns of the Red Cliffs Fort, the ships suffered only superficial damage and no personnel losses. During the squadron's entrance into the bay, Gálvez sailed about in a gig, offering assistance, and incidentally setting a fine example, to any vessel that might require it.[52]

With his fleet in a protected anchorage, Gálvez could now act with more certainty. He entered into an exchange of correspondence with General Campbell concerning the destruction of property and the lines along which the siege would be fought. Although the garrison commander rejected Gálvez' proposals, he was willing to negotiate for the safety of the town and the noncombatants. During this exchange the blockhouse at Tartar Point and some buildings at the Cliffs were set afire by troops as they withdrew to the Red Cliffs Fort. This, plus reports of ill-treatment of Spanish prisoners by the English, angered Gálvez and he broke off negotiations with Campbell's envoy.

At mid-morning of the 22nd, the force that had marched overland from Mobile was sighted along the opposite shore inside the harbor. Gálvez immediately crossed the bay with 500 men to reinforce Ezpeleta's column and permit them to rest. Meanwhile, other troops prepared for a crossing of the bay.[53]

On the 23rd a convoy of 16 ships arrived from New Orleans.[54] The ships had sailed on February 28 and had on board 1,400 troops, including contingents of regulars from the Regiments of Navarra, the King, Soria, Louisiana, and other regiments of the line, over 100 dragoons, and militia, both white and colored, plus cannon, ammunition, and other supplies.[55] Within the town of Pensacola, where the reinforcements had been sighted, orders were given to men of the 16th and 60th Regiments to take up stations in the redoubts above Fort George.[56]

---

52. *Ibid.* All the ships entered the bay except the *San Ramon,* which returned to Havana on March 29th.
53. Gálvez, pp. 53-56.
54. *Ibid.,* p. 58.
55. Kinnaird, pp. 421-423.
56. Farmar, p. 167.

The Spanish, meanwhile, were making a reconnaissance of the harbor area to select a suitable campsite close to town.

The Spanish commander realized that a direct assault upon Pensacola's defenses would only result in prohibitive casualties. A siege, therefore, was his only recourse. First he had to select a suitable campsite, then open trenches and approaches, and finally emplace his artillery in positions to batter the British works and bring about the reduction of the fortifications.

With the exception of 200 men left in garrison on Santa Rosa, all Spanish troops were ferried across the bay on the 24th and moved into the first of several camps. Although the new sites provided the Spanish with a better base for their operations, they were immediately exposed to attacks, especially those harassing raids that favored Indian open order tactics. During the last week in March and throughout April, the Indians carried the attack to the Spanish, keeping them on a constant alert and hindering their preparations for the siege. Spanish outposts and stragglers were attacked both day and night. These were usually small scale hit and run raids, although on several occasions the Indians were out in strength and were supported by a few fieldpieces and a company or two from the garrison. Many of the Spanish casualties during this period were due to these Indian raids. In his journal, Major Farmar makes frequent references to Indians returning from a foray with their grisly trophies.[57]

The Indians were from the southeastern tribes; Choctaws, Creeks, and Chickasaws, usually led by white men or half-breeds.[58] Perhaps the most noted of the Indian chieftains was the Creek, Alexander McGillivray. He had tremendous influence amongst the Creeks and was a staunch friend of the English. Later he was wooed by Spain, successfully, and by the United States, rather unsuccessfully.[59]

It was during this period of skirmishing that the Spanish commander himself was wounded. On the tenth the Quartermaster had been sent out to select a new campsite in the hills northwest of Pensacola. Two days later the Spanish moved to the new site and started to entrench their camp. Guns were set up cover-

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-170; Gálvez, pp. 58-71.
58. These are entries throughout Farmar's Journal relative to the arrival of parties of Indians.
59. "McGillivray, Alexander," *Encyclopaedia Brittannica,* XIV, p. 573.

ing avenues of approach and work on a redoubt was started to cover the ground about the camp. At first the English did nothing, but late in the day parties of Indians and a small number of the garrison came out to skirmish with the Spanish. Light infantry was sent out to oppose these parties but they had orders not to enter the woods where the Indian had the advantage. While the Spanish stood their ground and fired their volleys, it was with little effect. Realizing that nothing could be accomplished with this manner of fighting, Gálvez ordered his light infantry to retire to the protection of the nearest battery. Gunners were given orders to fire grape at any party of the enemy that approached too closely to the Spanish works. Not long after he gave this order, the Spanish commander was advised that several parties of the enemy with two small cannon were advancing from different points. He went out to one of the advanced batteries to survey the situation. While at the battery, he was struck by a bullet in the left hand which went on to furrow his abdomen. Although he was obliged to retire to his quarters and undergo treatment, he was at the active head of his army within ten days. During his recuperation, Ezpeleta commanded the troops.[60]

At the end of March two events occurred that soon galvanized the Havana authorities into action. First, the *San Ramon,* the most powerful ship on the Pensacola expedition, returned to Havana on the 29th and her captain was under a cloud for his failure to enter Pensacola Bay and return there. Then, on April 7, it was reported that a strong nine ship English squadron had been sighted on March 31. This latest bit of information caused the Captaín General to call a council of war. It was decided to send all available warships under the orders of Chief of Squadron Don Josef Solano and a reinforcement of 1,600 troops commanded by Field Marshal Don Juan Manuel de Cagigal. With surprising haste the troops were embarked and the artillery, munitions, and other stores were loaded aboard more than a score of vessels.[61]

---

60. Gálvez, pp. 64-65.
61. Francisco de Miranda, "Miranda's Diary of the Siege of Pensacola, 1781," translated from the Spanish by Donald E. Worcester, *Florida Historical Quarterly,* XXIX (January, 1951), 164-165. Hereafter cited as Miranda.

Although it had been decided at the council of war that a French squadron then at Havana would not accompany the Pensacola relief expedition, a later conference of the French captains decided in favor of joining their Spanish allies. The French squadron was commanded by M. de Montelle and included four ships of the line and four frigates. On board were 800 troops of the Agenois Regiment.[62]

The ships sailed from Havana on April 9[63] and arrived off Pensacola on the 19th.[64] While at sea the Spanish crews were canvassed to find out how many men from the fleet could be used ashore. The Spanish admiral was most cooperative. It was found that at least 1,400 men could be withdrawn from the vessels to assist in the operations ashore.[65]

The squadron from Havana was cautious in its approach to Pensacola until it was learned that Gálvez controlled the port. Representatives from the newly arrived squadron met with him and offered to serve under his command. Arrangements were soon made to put the men ashore.

Perhaps the words of a member of the expedition can best sum up the reaction of Gálvez' command:

> General Gálvez received us with many expressions of pleasure and friendship toward our General Cagigal. All the army welcomed us with infinite joy, for not only were they fatigued with the endless and not well-combined marches they had made in the 42 days since they had disembarked at the island of Santa Rosa, but by the various camps which they occupied, the entrenchments and so forth (seven counting this one), the construction of revetments, fascines, and other defenses. Besides this they considered all their work useless, and were in despair of the enterprise. The army numbered, including militia and Negroes, 3,701 men. Of these 500 were out of action, and so they were able to count on only 2,000 regulars for the attack. The garrison numbered 800 regular troops, 200 seamen, and 1,000 savage Indians for the woods. Thus their conjecture was not unfounded. With the consolidation of our detachment, 1,504 troops of our navy, and 725 French, the army amounted to 7,803 effectives.[66]

---

62. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

The reinforced Spanish army, and their French allies, set themselves to two tasks, reconnaissance and reorganization. Gálvez and his staff reconnoitred the high ground about the Queen's Redoubt and the other defenses of Pensacola. The besieging army was reorganized into four brigades, to be commanded by Brigadier Don Gerónimo Giron, Colonel Don Manuel Pineda, Colonel Don Francisco Longoria, and Captain of Ship Don Felipe Lopez Carrizosa, respectively. Captain of Ship M. de Boiderout commanded the French contingent.[67]

The last week in April saw the beginning of the more formal aspects of the siege. Engineers and artillerists selected sites for the trenches and batteries. Quite often these parties were fired upon by the cannon of the fort or harassed by parties of Indians and troops from the garrison. After several attempts to open the trenches had been frustrated, they were finally started on the night of the 28th.

Once the work began, it went forward with a will. Working parties numbered over 600 men and were supported by 800 men at arms. It was necessary to relieve these details under the cover of darkness as they were exposed to a heavy cannonade from the British artillery during the hours of daylight. As the work progressed, small batteries of four and eight pounders were set up to protect the working parties. Until the Spanish could mount heavier artillery, they had to endure the fire from the well-served artillery of the garrison.[68]

Despite the heavy English fire, The Spanish were able to emplace a battery of six 24-pounders and a few mortars on the night of May first.[69] Early the next morning the British resumed their bombardment of the lines. At nine o'clock the Spanish unfurled flags over their batteries and began to reply to the enemy fire.[70] The exchange of fire continued throughout the day and only slackened towards nightfall. Despite the day-long exchange, casualties were light on both sides. The Pensacola garrison lost one man killed and five wounded. Spanish casualties were eight wounded. There was no material damage to the British works and during the night they strengthened the exposed side of the

67. Gálvez, p. 67.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
70. Farmar, p. 170.

Queen's Redoubt. Spanish working parties continued to extend the trenches towards the advanced redoubt.

May third was a repetition of the previous day. British artillery commenced to fire upon the large Spanish working parties and soon brought down counter-battery fire upon themselves. Once again both sides suffered slight casualties. In his journal, Farmar records that the besiegers fired 534 shot and 186 shells during the day and that the garrison lost one man killed and two wounded.[71] Certainly a small casualty rate for that expenditure of shot and shell.

Combat on the fourth began as on previous days; British guns opened fire early in the morning. They kept it up until ten o'clock that morning. Meanwhile parties of troops had been observed coming out of the town and infiltrating towards the Spanish lines. This movement was reported to the commander of the trenches, Don Pablo Figuerola, who ignored the information. The British had collected about 200 troops on the low lying ground before the redoubt on the Spanish left. Ninety-four Provincials, commanded by Major McDonald, were formed to make a direct attack upon the Spanish works. Over a hundred Waldeckers under their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Albrecht von Horn, would support the attack.

At 12:30 the British mortars, howitzers, and cannon opened fire again. The rapidity and accuracy of the barrage forced those in the trenches to seek cover. Despite the cannonade and the unusual signals that were observed between the garrison and its field force, the Spanish in the trenches sat down to their noon meal. Only a pair of sentries were exposed to the fire to observe enemy movements in the direction of the fort. When they had completed the barrage, the garrison artillery signaled that the following salvos would be without shot. At that, the Provincials went over to the attack.

The Spanish in the trenches, grenadiers from the Irish and Mallorca Regiments and three companies of marines, were completely surprised. When their commander sat down to lunch, they relaxed their vigilance and stacked their arms. Only the guard observed the fort, but he was so inexperienced that the British signals were ignored. The attackers did their deadly work

71. *Ibid.*

with bayonets. The grenadiers felt the first blows of the attack and took flight, screaming, "We are lost! We are bayoneted!"[72] They spread disorder to the nearby companies of marines. Many of the grenadier officers and non-commissioned officers had stood their ground and fell in the attack and were later buried with honors for their bravery. The Provincials, having driven off the Spanish, spiked several guns, set fire to all combustibles, and returned to their own lines. Gálvez reported 19 killed and a like amount wounded. One Provincial was killed and a trooper wounded. A Spanish relief column arrived too late to interfere with the withdrawing attackers.[73]

Although the garrison achieved a minor tactical success in the only hand to hand fighting of the siege, it did not affect the outcome nor did it seriously delay the plans of the Spanish. The commander of the trench was later arrested and put on trial for his part in the trenches that day.[74]

Following the sally, the Spanish resumed their siege operations. The work was hindered by a heavy rainfall and the trenches were flooded. The continued exchange of artillery fire inflicted some casualties on both sides.

On the night of the sixth preparations were made for an attack upon the Queen's Redoubt by 700 grenadiers and light infantry. The columns were underway shortly after midnight, but some troops arrived at their positions too late, and with a bright moon above, it was decided to cancel the attack and return to the lines. The Spanish later learned that the English were particularly vigilant that night and any attacks would have probably ended in a costly repulse.[75]

Early on the morning of May 8 the British resumed their bombardment of the Spanish works. The Spanish replied with a howitzer set up in one of the redoubts. Farmar reported:

> About 9 o'clock, A.M., a shell from the enemy's front battery was thrown in at the door of the magazine, at the advanced redoubt, as the men were receiving powder, which blew it up and killed forty seamen belonging to H.M. ships the Mentor and Port Royal; and forty-five men of the Penn-

72. Miranda, p. 187.
73. Accounts of this sally are in *ibid.*, pp. 185-188; Gálvez, pp. 72-73; Farmar, p. 170.
74. Miranda, p. 188.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190; Gálvez, pp. 73-74.

> sylvania Loyalists were killed by the same explosion; there were a number of men wounded, besides. Capt. Byrd, with seventy men of the 60th Regiment, immediately went up to the advanced redoubt and brought off 2 field-pieces and one howitzer, and a number of the wounded men; but was obliged to retire, as a great quantity of shell was lying about filled.[76]

The explosion at first alarmed the Spanish camp, but once it was learned that the Queen's Redoubt has been blasted and that the works were on fire, Brigadier Giron was ordered to take over the damaged redoubt. The Spanish troops moved forward under the cover of the burning redoubt and soon poured a heavy blaze of small arms fire down upon the Prince of Wales' Redoubt. This musketry was supported by the Spanish artillery. Within the middle redoubt, an officer and thirty soldiers and sailors were soon wounded by the fusillade from the Spanish-occupied advance redoubt.[77]

The loss of the advanced redoubt made Fort George untenable. Early that afternoon a flag of truce was raised over the fort and the British offered to surrender. The commanders and their staffs met and soon agreed to the articles of capitulation and arrangements for the surrender.

Pensacola was occupied by two companies of grenadiers on the ninth. The surrender of Fort George took place the following day. General Campbell led his troops out of the fort with drums beating and colors flying; in keeping with the capitulation, the garrison was accorded the honors of war. The defeated garrison marched to a point some 500 yards from the fort where they surrendered their flags and laid down their arms, the officers being permitted to retain their swords. Two companies of Spanish grenadiers were detailed to garrison the fort and the French light infantry occupied the middle redoubt. The surrender of the Red Cliffs Fort, which was included in the capitulation, took place on the 11th.

With the siege over, the Spanish sang a *Te Deum* for their victory and many of the troops began to re-embark for an immediate return to Havana.[78]

In a return of prisoners a few days after the surrender, Gál-

---

76. Farmar, p. 171.
77. *Ibid.;* Miranda, pp. 191-192; Gálvez, p. 74.
78. Gálvez, p. 75; Miranda, p. 192.

vez reported 1,113 men as captives. This figure did not include Negroes or the 56 deserters that went over to the Spanish during the siege. Besides the prisoners, there were 224 women and children dependent upon the garrison. The Indians who had helped in the defense of Pensacola made off during the negotiations for the surrender.[79]

During the siege, the garrison had suffered casualties of more than a hundred killed plus scores of wounded. Most were inflicted by the explosion in the advance redoubt. Spanish army losses were 75 killed and 198 wounded, while the navy had 21 killed and 4 wounded.[80]

Considerable booty was captured at Pensacola. In a letter of May 26, 1781, Gálvez reported the taking of 143 cannon, 6 howitzers, 4 mortars, and 40 swivel guns. Over 2,000 muskets and numerous other weapons and tons of military supplies fell into Spanish hands.[81]

The British garrison embarked on board Spanish transports on June first and sailed for Havana a few days later. This was the first step in the repatriation of these troops. One of the articles of capitulation provided for the prompt return of the garrison to a British port and an exchange of prisoners. The only restriction was that these troops could not serve against Spain or her allies until exchanged, which in accordance with the Treaty of Aranjuez, did not include the Americans. This later caused some bad feelings amongst the Americans towards Spain. However, once the Pensacola garrison was landed at New York, although British command opinion was divided on this issue, General Sir Henry Clinton ruled against their employment until exchanged.[82]

With the surrender of Pensacola, the whole province of West Florida was in Spanish hands. England later confirmed the Spanish victory at the peace table; not only did she give up West Florida, but she ceded East Florida as well.

In recognition for his services to the crown, Gálvez was promoted to lieutenant general, raised to the nobility, being titled the Conde de Gálvez, and granted a coat of arms that bore the outline of the brig *Gálveztown* and the motto, "Yo Solo," for his

---

79. Gálvez, p. 75.
80. *Ibid.*
81. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
82. Farmar, p. 171; Mackenzie, pp. 560-564, 566-567, 574, 578.

forcing of the entrance to Pensacola Bay. There were other emoluments for his victory. He was appointed Viceroy of New Spain, the highest post in Spanish America, in 1784. Gálvez died at the age of thirty-eight, the victim of a fever, shortly after he took up his appointment.[83]

Gálvez's victories gained for Spain all the objectives she had sought in America at the outset of the war. The Spanish had wanted the English driven from their posts on the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. The protection of her commerce and the security of her colonies further south were the prime considerations for the Spanish operations in America.

---

83. Caughey, pp. 213-214.