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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WILLIAM AUGUSTUS BOWLES' SEIZURE OF PANTÓN'S APALACHEE STORE IN 1792

William Augustus Bowles accompanied by William Cunningham and a band of Indians made up of Cowitas, Broken Arrows, Hitchetas, Ufales, Chichas, and Ousutches captured the Apalachee trading post of Pantón, Leslie and Company on the 16th day of January 1792. This event was one of the most important incidents in the commercial warfare waged by the merchants of New Providence against the house of Pantón.

William Pantón, a Scotch loyalist trader, was forced to move his base of operations from Georgia to St. Augustine as a result of the War of the American Revolution. There he entered into partnership with Robert Leslie and later formed a connection with Alexander McGillivray, chief of the Creek nation. The firm of Pantón, Leslie and Company by the end of the war was transacting more business than any other concern engaged in Southern Indian trade. Although England ceded both East and West Florida to Spain in 1783 and most of the English population prepared to leave, Pantón and Leslie continued their operations and made plans to establish themselves under the Spanish régime.

In the year peace was signed Charles McLatchy, an associate of the firm, established the trading post on the Apalachee near the site occupied by San Marcos in the days of the first Spanish occupation. Two years later the Apalachee region was added to the jurisdiction of West Florida, and in 1787 a new Spanish fort called San Marcos de Apalache was erected a short distance below Pantón's post.

Through the influence of McGillivray, who had so successfully negotiated with the Spaniards that he had been appointed commissioner for His Catholic Majesty in the Creek nation, official Spanish sanction was granted in 1784 for the continuance of the trading post on the Apalachee. Shortly after obtaining this advantage the arrival of Zespedes, the new Spanish Governor of East Florida, gave to the house of Panton an opportunity to establish itself effectively there under the Spanish régime.

Many Indian delegations came to visit the new Spanish governor. Zespedes found it was very important to give presents to these visitors as they were accustomed to receive them from the British. Since the Spanish government had failed to provide for this contingency, Panton offered to furnish the governor a large supply of goods on credit. Zespedes accepted and later recommended that Panton, Leslie and Company be permitted to continue their business in East Florida. Zespedes realized that it was necessary to take immediate measures to exclude the Americans from the Florida Indian trade until Spanish trading companies could be organized.

When all other British subjects who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the King of Spain were required to leave Florida, Panton, Leslie, and their associates and employees were allowed to remain merely upon taking an oath of obedience. Due to Zespedes' recommendation, a royal order was issued on May 8th, 1786, which allowed the company to carry on a specified amount of trade directly with England upon payment of a six per cent import and export tax. As Spanish merchants never entered the field, Panton, Leslie and Company soon obtained a monopoly under the Spanish government for all the Florida Indian trade. With the aid of Alexander McGillivray, whose power among the Southern Indians and prestige with

the Spaniards had increased rapidly since 1783, Panton's firm was able to supplant Mather and Strother at Pensacola in 1785, and at Mobile in 1788.

Although the Spanish government had granted Panton, Leslie and Company the exclusive right to exploit the Florida Indian trade, the firm's monopoly was challenged by British merchants of New Providence. A great many East Florida refugees moved to the Bahama Islands after the arrival of the Spaniards. The Indians had become so dependent upon the British that many even begged to be allowed to follow their white friends into exile. Commercial intercourse, therefore, naturally continued between them and the English inhabitants of New Providence. Nassau soon became the center of a growing contraband trade with the Florida Indians. The Providence Island traders penetrated into the Indian country chiefly by way of the Mosquito, Indian, Ocklockony, and Apalachicola rivers.

When Lord Dunmore became governor of the Bahamas in 1786, the activities of the contraband traders assumed a more serious aspect. The Governor himself became involved in the Florida trade through his commercial connections with John Miller, of Miller, Bonnamy and Company. Lord Dunmore's interest in Florida probably was not limited to trade alone. He desired to control the Indians of the Florida region in the same manner that the Canadian officials were then trying to keep the Indians of the area north of the Ohio under British influence.

The situations in Florida and the Northwest Territory were analogous. British mercantile interests were endeavoring to retain lands that British diplomats had relinquished in 1783, and the traders of New Providence were as actively involved as the traders of Montreal. Trade had always been the most important factor in Indian diplomacy, and Lord Dunmore apparent-

ly wished to make it serve again as a political instrument. The Spaniards soon began to suspect that the British were plotting to recover Florida, and there seemed to be ample grounds for their suspicions.

When Lord Dunmore and John Miller looked about for a man qualified to act as an unofficial British representative among the southern Indians, they chose William Augustus Bowles. His was to be the task of establishing a trading house among the Creeks in opposition to Panton, Leslie and Company, and in defiance to Spanish authority. Bowles was only twenty-three years of age at this time but he had extensive knowledge of the Creek Indians and their country. In addition, he possessed an attractive personality and a reputation for daring that made him the logical leader of the enterprise.

Bowles had come to Florida as an ensign of the Maryland Loyalists in 1779, the year that Spain joined France and the American Colonies in the war against Great Britain. He was dismissed from the service for some slight breach of discipline soon after his arrival at Pensacola; and so, at the age of fifteen, he found himself in a strange country without means of livelihood. In this situation he was befriended by a party of Creek Indians who chanced to be at Pensacola. They took him with them to the Indian country where he soon adopted their language and method of living.

As an Indian warrior among a band of Creeks, Bowles in 1781 accompanied a British force which made an unsuccessful attack upon the Spaniards at French Village on Mobile Bay. When Bernardo de Galvez besieged Pensacola later in the year, Bowles with a number of Creeks came to the assistance of the British. He distinguished himself during the siege and General Campbell, the English Commander, recommissioned him in the army. After the surrender of Pensacola to the Spaniards, Bowles was sent with the

other British prisoners to New York, but he soon obtained leave on half-pay and returned to the Southern Indian country. He resumed his life among the Creeks for a time but came to St. Augustine in 1785 shortly before the departure of the last British ships, and embarked for New Providence. There he soon made the acquaintance of John Miller and his associates, and began a career of contraband trader and filibuster.

If the Providence Island merchants were to prosper in their Florida trade, it was of great importance that they should win the favor of Alexander McGillivray, the most powerful chief of the southern tribes and commissioner for Spain in the Creek nation. He had agreed, when he signed a treaty with the Spaniards, that he would exclude from the Creek country all traders who did not have Spanish licenses. Strict enforcement of this agreement would prevent the entrance into the Creek nation of all traders except those in the service of Pantón, Leslie and Company. Lord Dunmore, therefore, through Bowles sent to McGillivray a letter designed to win him back to the English interests. The overtures from Governor Dunmore came at a very opportune time, since the Creek chief had just had a disagreement with the Spaniards.

McGillivray had signed a treaty at Pensacola in 1784 by which a Spanish protectorate had been established over his nation. Thereafter, the Spanish government had given to the Creeks an annual subsidy in arms and munitions to aid them in their troubles with the Americans. The Spaniards, however, withdrew their subsidy in the spring of 1788 after repeatedly urging the chief of the Creeks to make peace with the United States and end the warfare along the American-Creek frontier.

McGillivray soon made it evident that he could not be coerced into permitting Spain to dictate his policies. Governors Zespedes at St. Augustine and O'Neill

at Pensacola both expressed fears that the Tallapoosa chief was plotting with British adventurers and American frontiersmen to drive the Spaniards from the Floridas.

In June, 1788, McGillivray went down to the Lower Creek towns for the purpose of holding a conference with Bowles. The exact nature of the agreement arrived at is unknown but apparently the Creek chief made arrangements for securing supplies from New Providence, and assured Bowles that he would offer no opposition to the activities of the Nassau merchants in the Floridas.

Bowles returned with the news to New Providence where preparations were at once begun for an armed invasion of Florida. With the sanction and aid of Governor Dunmore, Miller, Bonnamy and Company publicly enlisted about fifty men and outfitted two ships for the venture. Bowles was chosen as commander of the expedition. The filibuster band landed on Indian River, East Florida, in October, 1788.

The promoters of the enterprise made no secret of the fact that one of their principal objects was to destroy the stores of Panton, Leslie and Company, completely ruin that firm, and displace it in the Indian trade by Miller, Bonnamy and Company. The plan of campaign was first to capture Panton's store on Lake George, arouse the Indians against the Spaniards, take possession of the eastern part of Florida, if possible, and then march across the peninsula to St. Marks. Bowles would there join forces with Bonnamy who planned to meet him with an armed vessel at Apalachee. The Providence Islanders hoped there to capture Panton's store and perhaps the Spanish fort of San Marcos as well.

Misfortune pursued the venture from the beginning. Warned that Panton's post on Lake George had been reinforced by Spanish troops from St. Augustine,

Bowles believed it useless to attack and proceeded to Alachua. Here he was unable to induce the Indians to join his enterprise and several of his men deserted. He completed his a c r o s s the peninsula of Florida but found that due to warnings of his approach, both Fort San Marcos and Panton's trading post were too well fortified to capture with the meagre forces at his disposal. Bowles himself afterwards pointed out to Cunningham, one of his associates, a building of square hewn timbers at Panton's post which he said had been erected to prevent him taking the place in 1788.

Although the expedition was a failure, Bowles had many partisans among the Lower Creeks, and the danger to the Spaniards had by no means passed. In the Indian country there was a strong "English party" made up largely of Englishmen and Indians whose fathers or grandfathers were English. McGillivray belonged racially to this group, and, upon his support, the Spaniards depended to a large extent for their safety in the Floridas. At the very time Miller, Bonnamy and Company were enlisting men at Nassau for their expedition into Florida, McGillivray resigned from his connection with the Spanish government as commissioner for the Creek nation. Alarmed at the unexpected turn of events, the Spanish officials quickly renewed the subsidy to the Creek nation and thereby placated its chief.

Since McGillivray had obtained all he wished from the Spaniards, he had no further need of Bowles and the commercial interests he represented, and attempted, according to his own statement, to dismiss him "to seek new adventure". Bowles was not to be gotten rid of so easily. In the face of opposition from McGillivray, Panton, Leslie and Company, and the Spanish government he remained in the Indian country and attempted to unite the Creeks and Cherokees

into one nation which he hoped would be able to declare its complete independence from Spanish domination. Success in this scheme would have enabled Bowles and his partisans to obtain control of the Creek and Cherokee trade and open the way for unrestricted commerce with New Providence.

Bowles realized that the ambitious project of organizing an independent Indian state could only succeed through assistance and recognition on the part of Great Britain. He induced the Creeks and Cherokees to select a delegation to accompany him upon a mission to England. In London he was partially successful and secured permission for all vessels flying the flag of the Creek-Cherokee nation to enter duty-free Nassau and certain British ports of the West Indies. The recognition on the high seas by Great Britain of the flag of the Indian nation was perhaps the most significant result obtained by Bowles' mission. For this seemed to be, at least, an indirect method of recognizing its independence.

When Bowles returned to Florida in 1791, he learned that, while he was absent, Alexander McGillivray had signed a treaty at New York which ceded to the United States certain Creek lands along the Oconee River. He cleverly used the resentment among the Creeks occasioned by the Oconee cession as a weapon against McGillivray. He built up a strong personal following in the Lower Creek country where McGillivray's authority was never as much respected as among the Upper Creeks. Bowles, himself a chief both by adoption and election, assumed the title of "Director-General" of the Creeks and challenged McGillivray's leadership of the nation. He prevented the execution of the treaty of New York, and the American commissioners waited in vain at Rock Landing for the delegation of chiefs that was to assist in surveying the new boundary line.

Bowles' power in the Indian country increased in spite of the fact that the United States, the Spanish government, Panton, Leslie and Company, and McGillivray were all anxious to be rid of him. Attempts to take him by force and through rewards offered for him dead or alive all proved futile. Bowles' capture by the Spaniards was eventually effected through a treacherous violation of a safe-conduct to New Orleans issued to him by Governor Carondelet himself; before that, however, his activities caused grave concern to the Spanish government.

After his success in combating the ratification by the Creeks of the treaty of New York, Bowles decided that the time was ripe for putting into execution the project he had conceived a long time before, of opening to the commerce of the world the sea-ports located in the territory of the Southern Indians. Bowles wrote to Arturo O'Neill, the commandant of Pensacola, on December 4, 1791, that the "Chiefs of the Creek and Cherokee Nation" demanded free ports on the coast of West Florida. He enclosed with the letter a "memorial from the Council in behalf of the Nation to his Catholic Majesty addressed to El Conde de Florida Blanca," and expressed a desire for a peaceful understanding between Spain and the Indians.

"We have already ordered 500 men to the coast," Bowles said, "with orders to take possession of the harbours & I shall march the 6th day of this month with 150 men to join those—Your Excellency may be assured I shall act with every degree of caution and respect toward all subjects of Spain untill the answers return from his Catholic Majesty which I hope will settle all in friendship—I therefore request that your Excellency will give immediate orders that no violence be offered to persons or vessels going to or from our ports and wearing our Flag, for if any should be com-

mitted we shall look upon it as a breach of the peace, and shall take steps accordingly."

Bowles advised the Spanish officials to consider well the matter and declared that, if through ill-advised conduct they obliged him "to commence hostilities and unite himself with the Americans," the consequences would be serious for Spain.

Las Casas, the captain-general of Cuba, Louisiana and the Floridas, informed Floridablanca that Bowles ventured to set up in regard to Florida some claims that, were they realized, would cause the ruination of that province. He also explained that Bowles' "plan was to establish a new system among the Indians and open a new commerce directly between them and the English Colonies." The "new system" referred to was evidently Bowles' scheme of organizing an independent Creek and Cherokee nation, later named by him the "State of Muskogee."

Exactly one month after Bowles wrote his letter of warning to O'Neill he issued the following proclamation :

"Being appointed Director of the Affairs of the United Nation of Creek & Cherokee, I do hereby declare that my intentions are to Establish the free ingress & egress of the Vessels of all Nations (not at War with us) to the Ports & Rivers on this Coast, & I do also declare that I have no Intention to Intercept or molest any of his Catholic Majesty's' Subjects, unless they or any of them shall give me molestation."

Bowles did not, however, regard his old commercial enemies, Panton and Leslie, as Spanish subjects, and he moved quickly against them. Colonel Ellicott reported from Rock Landing to the United States Secretary of War, on January 14, 1792, that Bowles had "retired eighty miles down the Flint River," and that it was rumored he was preparing to return to the Bahamas. Two days later with a band of Lower Creeks

Bowles seized the Apalachee store of Panton, Leslie and Company, and thus put into effect a plan he had conceived four years before.

The following documents contain the best existing accounts of the affair. Furthermore, they reveal something of the nature of Bowles' schemes, and give an indication of the extent of the Anglo-American intrigues along the Spanish border.

LAWRENCE KINNAIRD

WILLIAM AUGUSTUS BOWLES ¹ TO JAMES BURGESS ²
February 7, 1792^a

Camp Feby 7th 1792

Sir:

In order that you may understand the true meaning of my seizing the stores of Panton Leslie & Co I write these few lines to you & declair that Mr Panton had at the evacuation of St Augustine embezzled a quantity of Government stores and applied them to his own & having lately (against all Law) offered a reward for my life to several Indians.—I do declair him a Traitor and deem his property liable to seizure wherever it may be found—I informed by some Indians who was here yesterday that Mr Leslie had

¹ A biography of William Augustus Bowles has been written by the editor of these documents and will be published within a short time.

² James Burges, an English trader, lived on the lower Flint River at Burges town not far from the village of the Chehaw Creeks. He belonged originally to the "English party" in the Indian country and was friendly with Bowles. Burges, like Bowles, was hostile to the Americans and in 1793, more than a year after the latter was captured by the Spaniards, was accused of having instigated the Chehaws to rob Robert Seagrave's store at Trader's Hill on the St. Mary's River. During the raid several Americans were killed. Burges denied that he took any part in the affair but admitted that one of his Indian brothers-in-law had been with the party that committed the robbery. He said that the Indians had been incited to the deed by Panton and the Spanish governor of Pensacola.

wrote to you from St. Marks Fort⁴—a strange request, for you to collect a body of men to act against me. If so I wish you to inform me of the particulars, for if the Spaniards give me cause to act against them I shall not hesitate a moment—But they must give me the first offence as I am determined not to begin with them but provoke them to begin with me—

I wish you to send for Perryman⁵—who was obliged

Burges acted as one of the interpreters for the Creeks at the negotiation of the treaty of Colerain with the United States. After Bowles' departure from the Creek country Burges entered Spanish service. He sent a memorial on May 9th, 1796 to Diego de Vegas, the commandant of San Marcos, requesting him "to take Siche Steps as will Procure him a Reimbursement of at least the unavoidable Expense he has Ben At On government Ackount."

American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I, 378, 384, 389, 597; James Burges to Diego de Vegas, May 9, 1796, Pinart-Bancroft Collection, Bancroft Library. The entire Pinart-Bancroft collection of manuscripts pertaining to the history of the Spanish regime in Louisiana, the Floridas, and Texas is now being prepared for publication by Herbert E. Bolton and Lawrence Kinnaird at the University of California.

³ This document is from the Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 2371.

⁴ Fort St. Marks, or San Marcos of the second Spanish regime in Florida, was established on the Apalachee River in 1787. Andrew Ellicott described it thus: "Fort St. Marks (frequently- called Apalachy), is situated on a point of land at the confluence of the Apalachy, and another stream nearly of the same size; they are too small to be called rivers. The Fort is built of hewn stone, and the work tolerably well executed: on the north side of the Fort, and adjoining the wall, is a deep wet ditch, which extends from one of the streams of water to the other." The Spaniards designated these streams as Rio del Nordeste and Rio de San Marcos. Fort San Marcos served the double purpose of protecting Panton's nearby store and of preventing contraband trade between the Creeks and the British of New Providence.

Bernardo de Galvez to Estevan Miro, May 6, 1785, and Miro to Arturo O'Neill, May 8, 1787, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Cuba, *legajo* 11 (Bancroft Library transcripts); Andrew Ellicott, *Journal* (Philadelphia, 1814), 239. The location of Fort San Marcos is shown on Map of "Encenada y Entrada del Rio de Apalache", A. G. I., Papeles de Cuba, *legajo* 1330 and "Plano... del Fuerte de Sn. Marcos de Apalache", *legajo* 1659, *ibid*.

⁵ William Perryman was probably the man referred to by Bowles. He was a Chief of the town of Kasihtas. Spanish

to run away from this for his conduct however tell him that if he will purchase a boat and bring my Baggage to the Oaklockny I will pay all the charges and forget all bad, between us,—if he by these actions will convince me that he is an honest man I shall treat him with respect, and trust him with goods as he has been before—though upon different principles—as he has no claim or tie on me—Also give out to the people on the River below you to send whatever corn or other produce they may have to spair down to the Oaklockny where it will be purchased from them—I am

documents usually refer to him as Periman. He was friendly to Bowles when the latter first came to the Lower Creek country but later changed his attitude. After Bowles' capture, Perryman agreed to assist the Spaniards in the capture of Wellbanks, the former's chief lieutenant. When Bowles returned to Florida in 1799 and incited the Seminoles and some of the Lower Creeks to a war against Spain, Perryman assured the commandant of San Marcos that he would assist in the capture of the English adventurer.

The following year Perryman demonstrated his friendship to the Spaniards both by urging the Indians to make peace, and by bringing thirty-three head of cattle for the garrison of San Marcos. Pedro Olivier on August 29, 1800 wrote to Governor Casa-Calvo concerning him as follows:

"I can do no less than recommend to your Lordship the conduct of Periman and all his family, not only for his great efforts on this occasion to return to our party those of his nation who have accepted the words of Bowles, and in bringing to this garrison the great succor of fresh meat, at a time when a large part of the garrison and the sailors of the squadron were sick, with no recourse but salt meat for their diet, but also because of his own free-will and authority he made those Indians deliver up seven men, one woman, and two children, who had been taken prisoners in the neighborhood of Fort Panzacola."

In later times a branch of the Perryman family lived among the Ocmulgee whose village was on the east bank of the lower Flint River. This family was very influential and eventually two of its members, Joe and Legus, were chosen as chiefs of the Creek Nation.

John R. Swanton *Early History of the Creek Indians, and their Neighbors* (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin No. 73, Washington, 1922), 179; Statement of Guillermo Periment, San Marcos, October 5, 1799, transcript in the Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Miss.; Carondelet to Francisco Montreuil, December 13, 1792, and Pedro Olivier to Marques de Casa-Calvo, August 29, 1800, Bancroft Library.

short of horses here and wish the express by the Cow-tah man to go quick if you have a spair horse about you let him have one & I will settle it with you besides there was a white horse of mine left by Mr Gray at your house formerly which you promised to bring or account to me for—nevertheless furnish the Bearer with a horse & hurry him on as fast as you can-

I cannot conceive what has kept the vessels from arriving before this time I have sent Capt Wellbanks

⁶ Coweta or Kawita, located on the west bank of the Chatahoochee River three miles below the falls, was one of the principal towns of the Muskogee Confederacy. It was an offshoot of Kasihta and in turn its people made other settlements. One of these was Coweta Talahassee or Coweta Old Town. It was located on the same side of the river two and a half miles below Coweta. Another was Wetumpka. The Broken Arrows were a branch of the Cowetas who also had built an independent town. Coweta was the capital and meeting place of the Lower Creeks. The Cowetas were regarded as the leaders of the Lower Creeks and frequently of the entire nation.

Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians*, 227-229; Frederick Webb Hodge (ed), *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin No. 30, Washington, 1907-1910), Part I, 669.

⁷ William Wellbanks was one of Bowles' chief supporters, and assistants in his scheme of organizing an independent Creek-Cherokee nation, and of driving Panton, Leslie and Company, and their Spanish protectors from Florida. He signed himself in a letter of March 8, 1792, to Governor Carondelet, as "Lieutenant of hunters". The Spaniards were convinced, by various intercepted communications from New Providence, London and Canada, that Wellbanks as well as Bowles was in the British service.

Wellbanks was described by John Ormsby as "a low, illiterate fellow", but Jacob Townsend, an English trader of the Creek country, maintained that he was a "man of good opportunity, and undoubtedly a man of trust." Wellbanks became the leader of Bowles' partisans after the latter's capture by the Spaniards, but he possessed less ability than his chief. He, nevertheless, attempted to carry on the settlement started by Bowles on the Oclockony River, and to promote the commerce between New Providence and the Lower Creeks.

The Spaniards learned, in the fall of 1792, that Wellbanks had gone to New Providence and made special efforts to capture him on his return trip. Governor Carondelet ordered the armed schooner *La Cecilia* dispatched to intercept him and sent reinforcements to Fort San Marcos.

Wellbanks slipped through the fingers of the Spaniards and returned safely to the Creek country. Early in 1793 he

with Indians of [f] in Quest of them, & make your
self easy for I will carry [on] matters in this Coun-
try at the Risk of a war with *Spain or any other power*
that may oppose themselves

I am Sir your
Most Obedt Friend
& Servant

GENL WM A BOWLES
Dr of Indian Affairs

Jas Burgess Esqr.

[On the outside of the letter]

N B should you stand in kneed of anything send
down down [sic] for to me for it-
[Addressed] Jas B Burgess Esqr
Flint River.

STATEMENT OF EDWARD FORRESTER
February 28, 1782^e

By order of Don Josef Havia Commandant of the
armed Schooner the Galga, I Edward Forrester, Clerk

made overtures to various Americans in an attempt to induce them to join him in an attack upon the Spaniards of Florida. He failed in this and, according to several reports, departed on May 24th for Detroit with a party of Shawnees who had met with the Cherokees in council at Willstown.

American State Papers, Indian Affairs I, 297-298, 303, 439-440, 454-455; Luis de Las Casas to Conde de Floridablanca, April 21, 1792, A. G. I., Estado de Santo Domingo, legajo 9, No. 18 (Bancroft Library transcript) ; Carondelet to Francisco Montreuil, December 13, 1792, and Le Clerc de Milford to Carondelet, May 26, 1793, Bancroft Library.

⁸ A. G. I., Papeles de Cuba, *legajo* 2371.

⁹ Josef Hevia was one of the Spanish officers instrumental in capturing Bowles in March 1792. Acting under orders of Governor Carondelet he offered to Bowles a safe-conduct to New Orleans so that he might carry on there negotiations with the governor relative to the demands of the Creeks for free ports. Some of the Indian chiefs warned Bowles not to go but, when he was assured that he would be brought back to Apalachee within forty days, he consented. Bowles, however, was sent to Havana and thence to Spain as a prisoner.

Carondelet recommended to Floridablanca that Hevia be promoted from the rank of ensign of frigate to that of captain

to Messrs Panton Leslie & Co, English merchants, residing in the Floridas under the protection of His Most Catholic Majesty; & assisting in the management of their affairs at Appalachy, make affidavit; That upon the Sixteenth day of January last past, on the Evening of the Same ; a man now Calling himself William Cunningham, with about nine or more Indians, Come to the Store at Appalachy, and was acoasted in the yard by Mr John Hambly & my Self, by Inviting him in to the House under the name of Major Cunningham, of whom we had heard of, and had reson to Expect as a British officer from Detroit to Enquire what Bowles was about.—Who after having Sat about a minute or two arose from his Seat & Steping towards the Door drew his Sword or hanger Saying the House & Stores were his, & not one Soule Stur a foot, or offer the least Resistance or he would

in the army for his part in the capture of Bowles. Las Casas, the captain-general, disapproved of Hevia's promotion and wrote to Floridablanca: "I find that on this occasion he proceeded with little circumspection in the arresting of Bowles."

Las Casas to Floridablanca, April 21, 1792, A. G. I., Estado de Santo Domingo, *legajo* 9, No. 18 (Bancroft Library transcript) ; *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, I, 315.

¹⁰ John Hambly was an English trader in the service of Panton, Leslie and Company. At the time of Bowles' 1788 expedition into Florida, he was in charge of Panton's trading post on Lake George in East Florida. He was later transferred to the Apalachee store only to return to East Florida where he was employed by the governor at St. Augustine as interpreter. He had extensive knowledge of the Indians and their language and, in 1795, Enrique White, the commandant of Pensacola, recommended that Hambly be promoted to the position of Indian Commissioner. Shortly after this he received a commission to visit various southern tribes in the interest of the Spanish government.

"Voluntary declaration made by sundry of Bowles' Banditti at St. Augustine", November 21, 1788, Florida and Louisiana Papers, Archivo Nacional, Havana, Cuba (transcript secured through the courtesy of Sr. Carlos M. Trelles) ; Roscoe R. Hill, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Documents Relating to the History of the United States in the Papeles Procedentes de Cuba Deposited in the Archivo General de Indias at Seville* (Washington, 1916), 401; Enrique White to Baron de Carondelet, October 13, 1795, Bancroft Library.

Cut them to pieces, if there should be the least resistance made ; & demanded the Keys of all the Stores & Houses, with vehement threats, that if Refused I Should be Cut to pieces which I thereupon brought & Cast upon the Table ; Saying these were all I had in my possession. After which he took the Keys up & ordered me go with him and Shew him the different Houses & Stores, that he wanted to Examin if the Doors were lock'd or not—and on Coming to the Counting House asked for the key of it, on which I told him Mr. Leslie had it & was at the Fort with it, on which he seem'd very Suspicious, & Still threatening Very Severly he would take my life, to which I told him being in his power he might do as he pleased, & this I repeated Several times & that he might Cut away;—The next he asked if there were any armes, & wheare the armes were, & he ordered the door opened & the key was not among the rest, he asked whare it was I told him I did not know writely, very prople Mr. Leslie had it—he Said no matter brake open the doore, & let See them which was done & 25 Guns ordered to be Carried down, by which time Bowles was in the yard, with a great meany Indians¹¹ & to the Best of my recollection thro the hurry Confusion & uneasyness & threats of my Life that Cunningham ordered 50 Guns taken down, but Bowles Said Twenty five was Sufficient at present, on which the doore was made fast by driving the Staple over the Hasp ; & I was then desired by Cunningham to open the Store below, wheare the dry Goods &c wheare, that he might get Some Sugar & other things for the Indians ; all this time with his drawn Sword or hanger in his hand by which time Mr. Leslie Came in who

¹¹ Among the Indians who participated in the seizure of Panton's Apalachee store were Cowetas, Broken Arrows, Hitchetas, Ufales, Chicas, and Ousutches. *American State Papers, Public Lands*, IV, 161.

asking what was the matter & for what was all this, was told by Cunningham, that the property was Seized & to the best of my recollection added that Bowles had authority for so doing; & I Shutting the doore & giving him the key he ordered the provision House opened & going there he Served out provision for the Indians Rum & Some Meat, as they were to go to Camp—& after he had finished He then delivered the keys to Bowles, saying there is the keys of all the Stores, & all Secure according to your direction, & if he had any other orders. and after dark the armes was taken in the House & Some indians in the House Constantly Sitting by them & some with him Bowles & Cunn.ingham weare I was, tho not Constant, but did heare the Said Cunningham threaten most vehement to John Hambly for Speaking with Some of the Indians as he did not understand what they Said & that he Should be put to his oath & many other things which I could not well heare as I was back & forwards, & Seing the Said Cunningham being inclined to Drink & that freely & Speaking high, & making vehement Threats of what he would do & Could do I thought it most proper to go to my own room—from which I could heare him in the most violent Rages Threaten, & Chopping the table with His Sword, that he hoped Soon to be Master of the Rest of Pantons Stores, & many other things which I could not well understand for the noise made-In the morning next day he told me not to be affread that I should not be hurted [sic], that it was the Generals wish that I would remain, that I would be in better Imploy & receive more pay than I had got—I informed him that I had long been in the House & no pay Could make me brake my Honour or Stane My Carrector - Tho I was willing to Stay provided they would Treat me well & Should keep a just account of the things, as they give them out-on which he Spook to Bowles & he said meany other

as frivolous questions, which I do not recollect or took any notice of ;—one or two days after Mr. Leslie left the place ; some Indians was Sent out to Bowles Camp with provisions & other things for the Indians,—& Henry . Smith Hireling to George Barnett who was Cunninghams guide, from George Barnetts House to Bowles the Said Henry Smith Came in a few days—& wanted Goods which I was desired to give him being 22d Jany I opened the Store & in Serving him the goods, he told me put them up they were two deare, I told him they were the Same as I had directions to Sel them & he Said Stop he would get them Cheeper, & went to Bowles who ordered him take what he wanted & he would Settle that which he did & told me to put it to his own account, I told him I should Charge them to George Barnett & he might Settle that as he pleased & made out the acct. & gave it to Bowles & he Said it would not do & then gave me Mr. Pantons Price Current which he took out of the Counting House & on which he give ritton orders for one forth to be Deducted on every article whatever ; & the Indians to have their goods lower ;—and as long as I remained they took & gave the Indians Goods Gunpowder, Ball, Flints, Strouds, as Guns Blanketts & in Short anything they pleased or thought proper & Compelling me at Sometimes to go with them & Take & account of them & at other times give them out them Selves and saying at the Same time to the Indians I had, & account of the Same & I was obliged to deliver the keys every night to Bowles ; & he often give things out without my having any account of them.¹² & Sometimes Cunningham & he was sent as a Guard with me to the Stores, & Houses ;-

¹² Robert Leslie, Edward Foster, and John Innerarity certified on June 24, 1792 that the losses inflicted by Bowles on Panton by the seizure of the Apalachee store amounted to 2,674 pounds 1 shilling. *American State Papers, Public Lands, IV*, 161.

& declaring I was in their Service & Should be happy, I met with him for now I was in a fine way, & Bowles thinking that as I was (as He then thought) in his Service that He desired Cunningham to tell me come to him which I did, & he then proposed to me, that he intended in a few days to go to Ocklockny, to run of [f] the place which he ment to Settle a Town on and that He would if I Chose run of [f] two grants or lots for me, & that he thought it would be to my advantage & many other things ;—I told him it was very well but it was a matter that needed Some Consideration & I Should think of it—& if he did run them & I did not take them he could find them that would be glad of them and observed to him, & Supposed he had no objections tho I was now with him, that He would not detain me, & he said no that I might Be free to go when I pleased and He Bowles often Said, & declared that he ment to hurt none, or Sieze any property But Pantons, which he would do wheare ever he Could find it, & said he would have some more of his Stores yet—& give for his reasons that Mr. Panton Had offered two thousand Dollars for his Head¹³ & that he would do every thing in his power to oppose him—and while Cunningham Stay'd he had his orders from Bowles, & in this way things went on untill I Came to the Fort with the Perrymans, which was allowed me only on my promise of returning, & after my return with them, I was not allowed to keep the keys no longer as they threatened Bowles much and told him he was positively a liar, &

¹³ Panton wrote to Leslie shortly after the capture of his store and urged him in the strongest terms to get rid of Bowles by any means possible. He told Leslie to inform one John Milled who had "a good gun and a steady hand" that, if he disposed of Bowles, he would never "be poor again as long as he lives".

William Panton to Robert Leslie, March 4, 1792, A. G. I., Papeles de Cuba, *legajo* 203, quoted in Arthur Preston Whitaker, "Alexander McGillivray, 1789-1793", *North Carolina Historical Review*, V, 303. A transcript is in Bancroft Library.

had acted as Such ever Since he Came to the Nation, & now was turnd Rober & many threats which he Bowles was surpris'd at & wonder'd what the Devil they ment & Forrester; & that he would send me to the Devil as well as he had done Leslie,—& threaten'd Perrymands lives & which from what the Indians says was to be done by Cunningham & them Selves—& that night there was a number of Indians dancing & hoop-ing Round the fire when the Said Cunningham offer'd a reward of fifty Chalks¹⁴ for every Spaniards Head or Scalp that was brought him—& Bowles & Cunningham having Some Disputes with each other I perceived my life in danger, and likewise that as George Welbanks having Just arriv'd this 28th Jany who was tited major immediately—I thought proper to Take a Dark night and Come to the Fort with the Books of Panton Leslie & Co. and with Such articles or clothing of my own as I could easily get away with. These being the most material CircumStances respecting the Robery Committed on the Evening as above mention'd I have made oath to, & Subscribed the Same in presence of the Commandant as afore Said

EDWD. FORRESTER
[Rubric]

Haviendome traducido por un Ynterprete fiel esta declaracon me consta ser Cierito quanto contiene fha. ut supra =

YGNO. RUIZ [Rubric]

PEDRO ROUSSEAU¹⁵
[Rubric]

Fort Saint Marks
February 28th-1792

¹⁴ A chalk, or chaque, was equal to about four tenths of a peso.

O'Neill to Carondelet, April 12, 1792, Bancroft Library.

¹⁵ Pedro Rousseau was the most distinguished naval officer of Louisiana during the Spanish occupation. He took active part in the American Revolution after Spain's entry in 1779.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM

April 2, 1792^a

William Cunningham born in Maryland in the County of Frederick, now called Washington County, formerly a Captain in the 34th regiment of the loyal Emigrants Second Battalion, having resigned his commission in the year 1784 at St. John Nueva Scotia, & Joined immediately the merchants Volunteers Company of Detroit in the Upper Canada, where he served as a Major to guard them against the incursions of the Americans & Indians, where he remained till the month of April 1790. that he applied to the Commander of Detroit Sir James Wiseman for a passport to come to Maryland in the same County where he was born to recover and settle a estate that was bequeathed to him by one Uncle called Kirk Patrick & stayed there about five or six months, and came to the new

He captured a British sloop on Lake Pontchartrain, was soon afterwards appointed by Governor Galvez commander of the brig Galvextown, in which capacity he took part in the capture of Mobile and Pensacola. At the latter place, with Governor Galvez on board, he sailed his ship successfully across the bar into Pensacola bay under the fire of British batteries after Irazabal, the commander of the supporting Spanish fleet, had refused to attempt the passage.

Captain Rousseau was selected in 1792 by Governor Carondelet as one of the officers to undertake the mission of bringing William Augustus Bowles to New Orleans. Although the capture of Bowles was effected by means none too honorable, Rousseau was acting under the orders of the governor. He was further charged with the delivery of Bowles to the Governor-General in Havana. For these services Carondelet recommended that he be given an increase in pay.

After Bowles had returned to Florida and had captured Fort St. Marks, Rousseau was appointed commander of a small fleet and assigned the task of recovering the fort. He retook St. Marks on June 23, 1800. Throughout the period of the war between England and Spain he continued to operate against the British privateers and contraband traders along the Florida coast.

Rousseau captured a number of vessels and by cutting off supplies from New Providence was largely instrumental in causing the failure of Bowles' plans to drive the Spaniards from Florida. To Rousseau, perhaps more than to any other one man, belongs the credit of preventing the British from securing a foothold in Florida at this time.

state of Francklin where he was about two months at the house of Mathews Wallace, & went to the Chera-kis nation where the stayed about five or six weeks & returned back again to Francklin state where he stayed four months as school master, being reduced for having been plundered by robbers on his way from Maryland to Francklin state, & having raised money enough to undertake his return to Detroit, I William Cunningham in the month of October 1792 did apply to Thomas Gayge Esqr. Chief Justice for a passport in order to return to Detroit, who having observed to me that I could not go through by the highway called Fort Pitt or fort Duquesne, on account of the American Army under General Morgan[']s Command. I requested his honour to grant me my passport & to recommend me to General McGillivray as an honest man & a old British officer, in order to recommend me also

Charles Gayarre, *History of Louisiana (New Orleans, 1903)*, III, 140, 141; Louis Houck (ed.), *Spanish Regime in Missouri* (Chicago, 1909), I, 410-412; II, 4, 7, 25, 89, 90, 91, 114, 119, 121, 323-325; Las Casas to Floridablanca, April 21, 1792, A. G. I., Estado de Santo Domingo, *legajo* 9, No. 18 (Bancroft Library transcript); Diary of His Majesty's Galliot, *La Fleche*, January 5 to March 25, 1793, Bancroft Library.

¹⁶ A. G. I., Papeles de Cuba, *legajo* 2371.

¹⁷ The State of Franklin ceased to exist in 1788 when it was suppressed by North Carolina but the name was still applied to the region comprising Greene, Sullivan and Washington counties in the Southwest Territory.

The organization of the State of Franklin took place in 1784, when the people of the Holston settlements became convinced that North Carolina was attempting to avoid her obligations to them in regard to land grants, proper administration of justice, and protection from Indian attacks by ceding her western territories to the United States.

For further information on the State of Franklin see: George H. Alden, "The State of Franklin", *American Historical Review*, VIII, 271-289; Samuel Cole Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin* (Johnson City, Tenn., 1924); Constance Lindsay Skinner, *Pioneers of the Old Southwest* (New Haven, 1921), 226-245; Arthur Preston Whitaker, *Spanish American Frontier, 1783-1795* (Boston, 1927), 55, 108-111, 113, 117, 190; Justin Winsor, *Westward Movement* (Boston, 1897), 341-343, 350, 354; *American Museum*, II, 6, 10-11, 580-581 (Chronicle); III, 388-389; V, 209, 313.

to Mr. Panton merchant at Pensacola to procure me a passage to New Providence & a Genl. Cunningham [sic],¹⁸ which passport was granted, & signed when I came to the Cherakis nation by John McDonald¹⁹ who was Commissary in that Nation in the time of the English under Mr. Cameron Super Intendant,²⁰ & now Chief master trader of Mr. Panton, & came to the

¹⁸ The General Cunningham referred to was probably Brigadier-General Robert Cunningham, a South Carolina Loyalist who served the King with distinction during the American Revolution. He was commissioned brigadier-general of militia in 1780. When South Carolina was evacuated by the British, he moved to St. Augustine. General Cunningham left East Florida in 1783 for Nova Scotia. Wilbur Henry Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774-1785* (DeLand, Fla., 1929), II, 315-316.

¹⁹ John McDonald was a British trader who established himself among the Cherokees before the American Revolution. He was loyal to the British cause during the war, and at its conclusion he continued to live in the Cherokee nation. Although the United States negotiated a treaty with the Cherokees at Hopewell in 1785 in which the latter promised to exclude all traders not having licenses from the United States government, McDonald continued to trade in the nation as before.

In 1792, the year the document under consideration was written, Panton, at Governor Carondelet's suggestion, persuaded McDonald to enter the service of his company and to accept a commission to act as agent for Spain among the Cherokees. McDonald entered the service of Spain at a salary of five hundred dollars a year. He continued to work for Spain until 1798 when the execution of the 1795 treaty of San Lorenzo was finally accomplished, and all relations between Spain and the Cherokees were severed.

Arthur Preston Whitaker, "Spain and the Cherokee Indians, 1783-1798," *North Carolina Historical Review*, IV, 257-269; White to Carondelet, October 19, 1795, and McDonald to White, December 31, 1795, Bancroft Library.

²⁰ Alexander Cameron was a Scotch officer who fought in America against the French in the Seven Years' War. After the war he became British agent for the Cherokee Nation. When the newly founded Watauga settlement was discovered to be upon Cherokee lands, Cameron, in support of Indian rights, demanded that the white settlers depart. Robertson avoided the necessity of abandoning Watauga by leasing from the Indians for a period of ten years the region in which the settlement was located.

Cameron succeeded in inducing most of the Cherokees to support the interests of England against the Colonists during the American Revolution and caused much trouble for the Americans on the frontiers of the old southwest.

Creek nation at the town of Euphalis, where I met with Mr. James Leslie to whom I showed my Passport, & recommended me to go to one Mr. Clark² trader of Mr. Panton, where I went & I stayed one night said Clark been sick, & started next morning early to go at Ikory ground³ where I was informed that Genl. McGillivray resided, said Clark not knowing if he was gone, or not to Pensacola, & travelled eight miles that morning to one Brouner a Dutchman at a place called Yuokis who informed me that Genl. McGillivray was positively gone, being apprehensive of his life been taken as it was a general talk amongst red & white in that village, by the orders given to the Indians by General Bowles, from Brouner going towards Ikory ground I met one Rowling, who told me that he was going to the Ushitas after a horse stolen from him, and asked me who I was, & told him that I was a poor & distressed man with a passport to Genl. McGillivray for to recommend me to Mr. Panton in order to get a passage for new Providence he

J. G. M. Ramsey, *The Annals of Tennessee* (Charleston, 1853), 143-144, 147; Winsor, *Westward Movement*, 79, 89, 136; Skinner, *Pioneers of the Old Southwest*, 170.

²¹ Euphalis, or Eufaula, was an Upper Creek town located on the west side of the Tallapoosa River near the present site of Daderville, Alabama. Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, Part I, 445.

²² The Mr. Clark referred to was perhaps "Woccocoe Clarke" who was mentioned by Pickett. James Albert Pickett, *History of Alabama* (Sheffield, Ala., 1896), 422.

²³ The "Hickory Ground" was described by Pickett as a town of Creek Indians, three miles above the old French fort Toulouse "on the east. bank of the Coosa and embracing the lower suburbs of the modern city of Wetumpka". Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 229.

²⁴ The Ushitas were probably the Cushitas, or Kasihtas. Bartram refers to the village of Kasihta as Usseta. Kasihta was a Lower Creek village situated on the west bank of the Chattahoochee River about two and a half miles below Kawita. At the time the document in question was written Kasihta was considered the largest of the Lower Creek towns. Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, Part I, 661; William Bartram, *Travels* (London, 1792), 456.

told me then that if Genl. McGillivray was not gone yesterday, he was to set off that morning, & added that he was also going by the desire of one Bulford, w[h]ere he told me I should be well accomodated, to Inquire about that Mr. Bowles who was making great noise amongst the Indians, & that he would met me again at said Bulford where I went twenty miles nearer Ikory Ground.

Q. How long did you know Mr. Bowles, what have you done with him, & what reason has engaged you to leave him.

A. I know him from the 9th January 1792 till the 25th of said month during which time I contrived to find out what was his business, been all this while upon a good footing, till the 16th in the morning that having marched about forty miles the night before & that morning, we stoped about half or three quarters of a mile from Mr. Panton stores he then called me and told me, Major you must go towards the stores in order to ask according to the authority he was invested for the arms & ammuniton. Which I refused representing to the said Bowles that he was wrong in his undertaking because Mr. Panton stores were under the Spanish protection ; & that I was not come for such business, but only to procure me a passage for new Providence, & to see him. then said Bowles began to talk to the King²⁵ & little Prince²⁶ in their tongue which I did not

²⁵ The Hollowing King, a chief of the Lower Creeks, lived near Coweta. Pickett described him as "a fine-looking man and a great orator". At the Council of Ositchy held in May 1790, the Hollowing King made the speech of acceptance for the Creeks of Colonel Willett's invitation for them to send a delegation with Alexander McGillivray to New York to visit President Washington. Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 402, 403.

²⁶ The Little Prince was chief of the Broken Arrows. He was evidently a friend of Hollowing King for in many documents they are mentioned as being in each other's company.

understand. I saw by their motions that I was not safe and that altho I was repugnant I was obliged to go. I then asked Mr. Bowles who was to go with me, upon which he answered me his negroe fellow which affronted me, & going forwards in the front he told me that when I should see him coming, to draw my sword, & to tell the people of the stores to not be disturbed, & advancing little more he told me that I was to demand the keys, accordingly I went & found there a parcel of Indians & demanded to Mr. Forster the keys, Mr. Leslie being not present & having asked if it was all the keys, Mr. Forster told me that Mr. Leslie had some ones, with this I took the keys from Forster & told him to lock every door, to which he answered that they were all locked except one, which I desired him to do. the same night Mr. Leslie returned to the store from the fort, & meeting with him he asked me what was this business, to which I answered bad doing enough. then Mr. Leslie told me that I was to take care of what I was about & I answered that I could not help it, desiring him at same time that if he had any money of his own or Mr. Panton to take Care of it & that I was not come willingly. that same night Bowles asked Mr. Forster where the arms & ammunition were, & having answered that he had not the keys & that they were up stars & in the stores, he ordered the locks & doors

Little Prince, or Cowipa, as he was called in his own tongue. was a friend and supporter of Bowles. When the latter returned to Florida in 1799 he was hospitably received by the Little Prince at his home in Coweta Tallahassee. The Little Prince was interested in the scheme of forming the independent "State of Muscogee", and Bowles entrusted him with many of his important papers for safe keeping.

White to Carondelet, October 16, 1795, October 19, 1795, and October 26, 1795, Bancroft Library; Bowles to Cowipa, Little Prince of the Broken Arrows, November 30, 1799, A. G. I., Papeles de Cuba, *legajo* 2371.

to be broke open to me, which I refused to do, & notwithstanding I told him that it was dangerous to brake open the doors & locks & that perhaps the keys might be got, he obliged Mr. Forster & Mr. Moore to do it, which they did being compelled. Standing before the store door of Mr. Panton at the wharf at a building of square timbers, Mr. Bowles said that said building was made four years ago to prevent him the taking of the store which he had now in his power, upon which I told Mr. Bowles that he was going further than what he had told me. to which he answered Yes, & that he had authority to knock down all Panton's stores to de [sic] Devil, & asking Bowles if he had seen the extent of the store. he answered Yes I have & they may amount to about ten or twelve thousand pounds, & asking also what he intended. to do with the skins, he told me that as soon as his own ship should arrive at Ocolokany, he would claim St. Marc, being on the Indian ground & authorized by the Indians to do it,²⁷ & then send the skins to the shipping. having asked him also what he intended to do with the good besides the fifteen thousand pounds which he said he expected from antigue, he answered that he would divide the ammunition & arms to the Indians & keep an account of the goods taken in Panton store to divide them also & save them out from those he was expecting for the presents. findind[g] by all this that Mr. Bowles was only one active man in robbery & plunder without any power nor authority & that

²⁷ Bowles wrote to Arturo O'Neill as follows: "The Creeks & Cherokee Nations are now united & have formed a Council They have appointed me director of their affairs and as such I now, in the name of the Council, address your Excellency in behalf of the United Nation." Bowles to O'Neill, December 4, 1791, A. G. I., Papeles. de Cuba, *legajo* 2371.

his contrivances were only to cause disturbances between the Spaniards, Americans & Indians I took within myself the resolution to leave him the first opportunity I could find, which I executed in the manner following. Mr. Bowles having given me order to go & to apprehend Mr. Leslie, & to go to St. George Island I went as far as Ocolokany & stayed one night & returning the next day to the Indian town & camped at the little Prince camp, where I had opportunity to see all Mr. Bowles papers among which I did not see any ones signed by nobody, but Copies of letters wrote by him to the ministers representing the Country & situation & the advantages of supporting those Indians, without any answer, nor power or authority whatsoever, I found also a seal which said Bowles had told the Indians was the King's seal, who was nothing but a counterfeit one of the Prince of Wales coat of arms representing three ostrich feathers. being one day after examining Bowles papers, the little Prince came in, & took them out of my hands, which paper was a kind of instruction from Lord Dunmore & Mr. Miller setting for[th] that he was to be supported & assisted by Captain Young, Mausen and another one, & coming back that same day to the store, Mr. Bowles was very angry that I had not executed his orders, & that he was dubious of me, and a traitor who was to take his life, upon which we had a severe struggle & th[o]ught that my life

²⁸ Lord Dunmore, before the American Revolution, was the Governor of Virginia. He conducted the successful Indian campaign in the Ohio valley known as Dunmore's War, and defeated the Shawnees, Miamis, Delawares, Wyandots, and several other tribes. At the close of the war the Indians were forced to relinquish their claims to Kentucky. Winsor, *Westward Movement*, 72-74; Robert McNutt McElroy, *Kentucky in the Nation's History* (New York, 1909), 29-32.

was at an end having ordered the Indians to tie me & weep [keep] me. been tyed pretty close I made a bold attempt to to brake the ropes in which I succeeded & run away being obliged to throw myself in the water to prevent my being taken again & arrived at St. Marc almost naked, where I surrendered my self to the commanding officer.

Q. What have you been able to discover of his Instructions by his papers-

A. That the whole of it was a plot of conspiracy from Lord Dunmore of Providence, General Clark of Georgia,²⁹ & Governor William Blunt³⁰ & John

²⁹ General Elijah Clarke of Georgia was a distinguished partisan leader of the American Revolution. He engaged in several campaigns against the southern Indians, in addition to fighting the British, and assisted in the negotiation of a number of treaties that added large tracts of land to Georgia at the expense of the Creeks and Cherokees.

Clarke opposed the ratification of the treaty of New York in which the United States proposed to give back to the Creek nation a part of the territory acquired by Georgia in the treaties of Long Swamp (1782), Augusta (1783), Galphinton (1785), and Shoulder-Bone (1786).

In 1793 Clarke became involved in various filibustering projects sponsored by Genet, the French Minister to the United States. He accepted a French commission, and enlisted men for the purpose of invading Florida. After the collapse of Genet's plans, Clarke led a force across the Oconee river and established a settlement on Creek territory. He built several forts and attempted to found a "Trans-Oconee State", but was forced to abandon his enterprise by the interference of Georgia State troops.

After the Trans-Oconee venture, Clarke continued his filibustering activities, recruiting men for Richard Lang, who invaded Florida in 1795 and captured Amelia Island. A report came to Pensacola from East Florida in October of the same year that "Clarke took a fort, sacked the country, was repulsed and returned with reinforcements." At a later date, when France and Spain had made up their differences and the latter was at war with England, Clarke was accused of plotting an invasion of Florida with British assistance. He was, however, so popular among his fellow frontiersmen that, although brought to trial on one occasion, he escaped punishment for his illegal acts.

E. M. Coulter, "Elijah Clarke's Foreign Intrigues and the 'Trans-Oconee Republic' ", *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, X, 260-279; Lucian Lamar Knight, *Georgia's Landmarks, Memorials, and Legends* (At-

Surveyor³¹ & Lawyer Cock³² at Francklin State, Lawyer Hancock of Bokutor County³³ & Coronel Ross³⁴ of Virginia in Washington County to take possession of Walnut hill, the Yasoos, Tenesis, Pensacola, New Orleans &c. in order to open the navigation of the Mississippi River, & to make themselves independant of the United States & Britain with the support of the British merchants,

lanta, 1914), II, 106-114; William Bacon Stevens, *A History of Georgia* (Philadelphia, 1895), II, 412-414, 416-417, 429; Hubert Bruce Fuller, *The Purchase of Florida* (Cleveland, 1906), 62; White to Carondelet, October 16, 1795, Bancroft Library.

³⁰ William Blount was Governor of the Southwest Territory and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department at the time this document was written. In 1797 he became involved in a scheme for a joint attack upon Spanish Louisiana by American frontiersmen and a British fleet in the Gulf. The foregoing document is interesting in that it mentions Blount in connection with British intrigues against Spain several years before the "Blount Conspiracy".

Frederick Jackson Turner (ed.), "Documents on the Blount Conspiracy, 1795-1797", *American Historical Review*, X, 274, 594-606; Fuller, *The Purchase of Florida*, 80-82, 84, 88, 92, 201; 209, 265.

³¹ John Sevier, the hero of King's Mountain, and former governor of the State of Franklin, was an inveterate land speculator. He had been associated in 1784 with William Blount and a number of other prominent men of the west and later on his own account in a scheme to found a settlement at Muscle Shoals, and was one of the active members of the Yazoo Land Companies. See: Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 372-373; Whitaker, *Spanish American Frontier, 1783-1795*, 54-55, 109-111, 133; John Haywood, *The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee* (Nashville, 1891), 157-158.

³² Reference was probably made to William Cocke who took active part in the organization of the State of Franklin. He attained the rank of captain in the American Revolution, and, in 1782, was admitted to the bar at Jonesboro. In later years he was prominent in the politics of Tennessee. For a sketch of his life see Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin*, 287-291.

³³ Botetourt County, Virginia.

³⁴ David Ross, described by Claiborne as a "well known capitalist of Richmond, Virginia", was one of the promoters of the Yazoo Land Companies. J. F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State* (Jackson, Miss., 1880) I, 144; Arthur Preston Whitaker (ed.), "The South Carolina Yazoo Company", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVI, 386.

for which the different Company's had bound themselves by the double oath of secrecy & performance, having raised about 18 thousand mens for that purpose, this plan being formed upwards of three, or four years-

Did you believe that Mr. Bowles will be supported by England-

- A. No, by no means
- Q. how many Chiefs & Villages has Mr. Bowles in his favor
- A. The Cowhitas, the broken narrow,³⁵ the Ushitas & Echitas & only two white men called Barnett & Smith that has any respect for him, & out of those four towns, there is only 120 warriors in his behalf, & the whole could raise between 7 or 800 warriors. Among the Generalty of those villages Mr. Bowles is called Captain Locksa, or Captain liar
- Q. Did you believe that those Indians will take revenge against the Spaniards, if Bowles remains prisoner.
- A. They will not, because Captain Forest having been amongst the Indians, they expressed their concern for me & give all the blame to Bowles, upon which Captain Forest desired me to tell the truth as an old English officer upon every thing relative

³⁵ Broken Arrow, or Hlekatchka, was a village of the Lower Creeks located on the west side of the Chattahoochee River about 12 miles below Kasihta. Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, Part I, 552.

³⁶ The village of Echita, or Hitchiti, was situated on the east bank of the Chattahoochee River four miles below Chiaha. The Hitchiti were a Muskogean tribe whose language differed from that of the Creeks. The Hitchiti language was spoken by several other tribes on the Chattahoochee, Flint and Apalachicola rivers, and by the Mikasuki who lived near Mikasuki Lake. The Yamasi are supposed to have spoken Hitchiti and the Seminoles originally spoke a mixture of Hitchiti and Creek. Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians*, Part I, 551; John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians, and their Neighbors*, 172-178.

to said Bowles, as it was not an English affair but absolutely an American one—

- Q. did you hear or saw the the Americans raising troops & for what purpose-
- A. I have & believe that the purpose was for the above expedition formed by the different company's of Yasoos, Walnut Hill, & Tenesis
- Q. Have you been in the Cherakis Nation, and how many warriors are they: What number are the Creeks, & if the Americans are raising Forts upon their lands, & if the ground that they want to occupy, which is pointed by the treaty of limits is fertile & considerable
- A. I have been in the Cherakis nation & believe that the number of the warriors may be about 18 hundred. The Creeks are about 8 or 9 thousand warriors and hunters. & the Americans are raising

³⁷ The Yazoo Land Companies were formed for the purpose of conducting speculation in western lands upon a grand scale, and included among the promoters were many prominent men such as Alexander Moultrie, Patrick Henry, and John Sevier. By an act of December 7, 1789, the state of Georgia granted to the South Carolina Yazoo Company 10,000,000 acres, to the Virginia Company 11,400,000, and to the Tennessee Company 4,000 000, upon the payment of certain sums.

The South Carolina Company was the most active and through its agent, James O'Fallon, attempts were made to secure the approval of the Spanish government for the proposed settlement at the mouth of the Yazoo.

The Nootka Crisis of 1790 destroyed any possibility of successful negotiations with Spain because reports came to New Orleans that the South Carolina Company was planning an armed invasion of Spanish territory with British aid from Canada. President Washington issued a proclamation forbidding any encroachment on the lands of the Chickasaws or Choctaws and the Spaniards built a fort at Nogales. Neither the South Carolina nor Virginia Companies were able to establish colonists on their lands. The Tennessee Company, under the direction of Zachariah Cox, started a settlement at Muscle Shoals but the settlers were driven off by McGillivray's Creeks.

American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I, 114, 115, 172-173; Charles H. Haskins, "The Yazoo Land Companies", *Papers of the American Historical Association*, V, 66, 72-73. Many interesting manuscripts, photostats, and transcripts from Spanish archives pertaining to the activities of the Yazoo Land Companies are found in Bancroft Library.

Forts from the mouth of the St. Mary to the upper Canada or Fort Vincennes all along the lines pointed by the treaty of limits between the Americans and Indians, which Land is very extensive & fertile, & the same which is in dispute between the Spaniards & Americans.

- Q. Did you put any faith or credit to the papers you have seen of Mr. Bowles, & did you know any other circumstances that show their veracity or Possibility
- A. I do not put any Confidence in those papers because they were only copies, & without any authority whatsoever
- Q. Did you believe that Bowles & those concerned in the plot are in relation with the undertakers of the Yasoos, Walnut hill, Tenesis Companies & the Inhabitants of Kentucky
- A. I justly believe & am almost sure of it, because I have seen the different plans of those Companies, altho none signed by nobody, as also of the Iron banks³⁸ & L'ance a la Graisse
- Q. Did you know one Doctor James White⁴⁰ & one

³⁸ The site of Iron Banks was on the east side of the Mississippi about five miles below the mouth of the Ohio. In 1780, George Rogers Clark built Fort Jefferson at Iron Banks but it was soon abandoned because of Indian hostilities. Winsor, *Westward Movement*, 174, 178.

³⁹ L'Anse a la Graisse was the bend in the Mississippi below the mouth of the Ohio where George Morgan founded New Madrid. Gayarre, *History of Louisiana* III, 243-245, 264, 265, 275-279.

⁴⁰ James White was one of the first advocates of separatism in the Tennessee region. In August 1786, while he was a delegate to Congress from North Carolina, he told Gardoqui, the Spanish diplomatic representative to the United States, that such was the resentment of the western people at the action of Congress on the question of the Navigation of the Mississippi that they might secede from the Union and place themselves under the protection of Spain. In this way they could obtain the use of the river.

White was a friend of John Sevier. He took part in the organization of the State of Franklin and was at one time speaker of the Senate of that State. After the collapse of this

- named O Fallon,⁴¹ & if he knows where they are
- A. I know doctor James White by sight. only being one of the principal undertakers of the three different companies, & believe that he is about Muskingum, or Cioto. & I do not know anything about the named O Fallon, altho I have hear very often his name.
- I Cunningham asked Mr. Bowles what would come of him if the Spaniards was to make him a prisoner. he answered that without doubt they would

State, Gardoqui sent White to work among the discontented Franklinites in behalf of Spain. "The King", wrote Gardoqui to his government, "claims that territory by the late conquest and I propose to do the rest by sending Don Jaime White there." In messages to prominent men of Cumberland, Gardoqui guaranteed them civil, religious, and political rights if they would place themselves under the protection of Spain.

Robertson, Bledsoe, Sevier and others expressed willingness to accept Gardoqui's proposition. They hoped thus to gain Spanish consent to establish the long-desired settlement at Muscle Shoals, and perhaps open a new water route to the Gulf by way of the Alabama or Tombigbee rivers. White, a land speculator himself, was also apparently interested in the Muscle Shoals scheme.

He returned to New York and was sent by Gardoqui to Havana and thence to New Orleans, but could obtain no favorable action upon the Muscle Shoals project. Spain would not risk giving offense to her Indian allies by authorizing any intrusion upon their lands. Governor Miro, however, promised White that Spain would assist the people of Franklin if they would declare their independence from the United States and informed him that the Spanish government had lowered the duties on American goods from 25 to 15 per cent.

In 1790, the cession by North Carolina of her western lands to the United States, and the organization of the Southwestern Territory put an end to White's Spanish intrigues.

Archibald Henderson, "The Spanish Conspiracy in Tennessee", *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, III, 232-243; Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Pinckney's Treaty* (Baltimore, 1926), 157, 160; Gayarre *History of Louisiana*, III, 258-259; Whitaker, *Spanish American Frontier, 1783-1795*, 109-111; Williams, *The Lost State of Franklin*, 294-296.

⁴¹ Dr. James O'Fallon was selected as chief agent in the West for the South Carolina Company. For information concerning his activities see Haskins, "The Yazoo Land Companies", *Papers of the American Historical Association*, V, 66-73; James Alton James, *The Life of George Rogers Clark* (Chicago, 1928), 403-404.

send him to the mines, & asking him if he would not be supported, he told me no because it was no war between Spain & Great Britain asking also Mr. Bowles what would be done at the point of Florida, he told me that the advantages of that point were so great to their undertaking, that a town was to be built & a couple of guard ships to lay in the stream, in order to prevent any vessel to pass & repass without a passport from him or the Company of Bahama⁴²
New Orleans in the Barracks the 2th of April 1792-

JUAN JOSEF DUFOREST ⁴³

(Rubric)

WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM

- Q. Where have you been when you left Mr. Bulford, what reason had you to go to Mr. Bowles, & for what reason did he appoint you his Major General
- A. I went from Bulford to see Mr. Bowles in order to see if he was an English officer, or if he had any authority or Instructions from the Court of England, & he appointed me his Major General by knowing that I was a british officer & enemy to the Americans, well acquainted with the Western Waters of Mississipy & the Commission he was to give me was to be signed by the Prince of Wales, & left Mr. Bowles when I discovered that he was nothing but an adventurer, without any

⁴² The firm referred to by Cunningham was Miller, Bonamy, and Company of New Providence. "Voluntary declaration made by sundry of Bowles' Banditti at St. Augustine", November 21, 1788, Florida and Louisiana Papers, Archivo Nacional, Havana, Cuba.

⁴³ Juan Josef Duforest for many years acted as translator for the Spanish government in Louisiana. He was described as "Interprete jurado en esta Provincia de los Idiomas ingleses". A number of documents translated by him from English to Spanish are found in the Pinart-Bancroft Collection, Bancroft Library.

authority, only to support as an Instrusted person
in the Merchants Company for the Instigation of
the Disturbances between Spain & the United
States in order to open the free Trade & naviga-
tion of the Mississipy river—————

JUAN JOSEF DUFOREST
(Rubric)

WILM. CUNINGHAM