special history report

ARKANSAS POST

THE COLBERT RAID

NATIONAL MEMORIAL / ARKANSAS

SPECIAL HISTORY REPORT

THE COLBERT RAID

ARKANSAS POST NATIONAL MEMORIAL

ARKANSAS

by

Edwin C. Bearss

DENVER SERVICE CENTER
HISTORIC PRESERVATION TEAM
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DENVER, COLORADO

November 1974

PREFACE

This report has been undertaken to provide a documented narrative of the Colbert Raid, its background, and sufficient collateral information to enable an artist to prepare an interpretive painting of this Anglo-Spanish engagement in the trans-Mississippi West. In view of Condition 2 of the donation agreement with the Daughters of the American Revolution, it was mandatory to determine the approximate site of Fort Carlos III and the location of the April 17, 1783, engagement.

The report, in accordance with suggestions made by management, consists of three parts--Section I, recommendations; Section II, a documented narrative; and Section III, data useful to the painter.

A number of persons have assisted with the preparation of this report. Particular thanks are due Superintendent D. L. Huggins and Ranger Gregorio S. A. Carrera of Arkansas Post National Memorial for their assistance, interest, and encouragement. My colleagues and friends Jack Walker of the Southeast Archeological Center, Ricardo Torres-Reyes of the North Atlantic Regional Office, and Dr. Harry Pfanz and Barry Mackintosh of Park Historic Preservation read the manuscript in draft, and shared with me their knowledge. Dr. William Sturtevant of the Smithsonian Institution and Mrs. Carol Irwin Mason of Appleton, Wisconsin, discussed with me the likely garb of Colbert and his partisans. My friend Historical Architect John Garner of the Southeast Region prepared the sections on the Fort Carlos III stockade.

To my friends in Arkansas County, I, as always, owe a debt of gratitude for assistance. Those who were especially helpful were: Bill Norsworthy, Johnny Gunnell, and Bruce Kendall at the Arkansas County Courthouse in DeWitt; Mrs. Norman Core of Almyra; Garner Allen of the Stuttgart News-Leader; and Mrs. Thelma Mattmiller of the Arkansas County Museum. Dr. John Ferguson and the staff of the Arkansas History Commission went out of their way to be helpful, as did Mrs. Margaret Ross of the Arkansas Gazette.

Mike Rumbaitis of the Denver Service Center's Southwest Team had the difficult task of coordinating and integrating this project in the comprehensive development program at Arkansas Post, while Barbara Hudson had the most difficult task of all--turning my scrawl into a typed manuscript.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE iii

LIST OF PLATES ix

I. INTERPRETING THE COLBERT RAID 1

A. Background 1
B. Recommendations 2

II. ARKANSAS POST AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR 5

A. War Comes to the Lower Mississippi Valley 5
1. The Post in the Mid-1760s 5
2. France and Spain Enter the War 6
3. The Relocation of Arkansas Post 7
4. Spain Seizes a Number of British Settlements 9
B. The Spanish Defeat the Natchez Rebellion 11
1. The Natchez Rebels Capture Fort Panmure 11
2. The Spanish Strike Back 13
3. The Spanish Move Against the Leaders of the Revolt 15
C. Captain Colbert Intervenes 18
1. Enter Capt. James Logan Colbert 18
2. Arkansas Post Braces for an Attack 21
a. Hard Times on the Arkansas 21
b. The Spanish Erect a Stockade 21
c. De Villiers Reinforces His Garrison 22
d. Fifth Column Activities at Arkansas Post . . . 23
3. Captain Colbert Strikes 24
a. The Spring of 1782 Brings Heavy Traffic on the Mississippi 24
b. The Attack on Pourré's Bateau 25
c. Captain Colbert and His Men Capture Labadie's Bateau 26
d. An Alarm Rouses the British 30
e. The Captors Divide the Loot 31
f. The British Talk Too Much 32
g. Labadie Describes Captain Colbert 34
h. Labadie Keeps His Eyes Open 34
i. Other Successes Scored by the Rebel Blockade 35
j. Colbert Releases Some of the Prisoners 36
k. Labadie Travels to St. Louis by way of Arkansas Post 37

4. The Spanish Counterattack 39
a. Acting-Governor Miró Outlines a Course of Action 39
b. Miró Negotiates with Colbert 40
c. Colonel Cruzat Intimidates the Chickasaws 42
d. Lieutenant de Villars Sends a Patrol to Chickasaw Bluffs 44
e. Governor Gálvez Releases the Natchez Rebels . . 45
D. Captain Colbert Raids Arkansas Post 46
1. Colbert's Band Renews its Attacks on Shipping . . . 46
2. Captain Dubreuil Takes Command 47
3. Arkansas Post Prepares for an Attack 48
a. Colonel Miró Seeks to Calm Dubreuil's Fears 48
b. Chief Angaska Returns from Patrol 49
c. The Situation Gets Worse 49
d. Chief Angaska Leaves on Another Patrol 50
4. The April 17, 1783, Raid 51
a. Colbert's Flotilla Moves Against Arkansas Post 51
b. The Raiders Surprise and Sweep the Habitant Coast 52
c. The Partisans Invest the Fort 53
d. A Sortie Routs the Partisans 54
e. The Recoil from Arkansas Post 55
f. Acting-Governor Miró Corresponds with Colbert 57
g. Colbert's Flotilla Suffers a Defeat 57
h. Death Interrupts the Colbert-Miró Correspondence 58

III. PHYSICAL SETTING 61

A. Natural Features 61
1. Arkansas River 61
2. Configuration of Terrain 61
3. Soil 62
4. Trees and Forest 62
5. General Character of Ground and Cover in Relation to Season of Year 62
6. Weather and Time of Day 63
B. Man-made Features 63
1. Relative Positions of Principal Features 63
a. Habitant Coast 63
b. The Village 64

c. Fort Carlos III 64
d. Village Architecture 66
e. Fort Carlos III 68
(1) The Stockade 68
(2) Bastions 69
(3) Embrasures 70
(4) Storehouses, Barracks, and Officers' Quarters 70
(5) Powder Magazine 72
(6) Cannons, Swivel Guns, and Ordnance Stores 72
C. Human Figures 73
1. Spanish Forces 73
a. Numbers and Composition 73
b. Uniforms Worn by the Soldiers 74
(1) Coat, Vest, and Breeches 74
(2) Hat 74
(3) Leggings and Shoes 74
(4) Stock and Shirt 74
c. Arms and Accoutrements 74
(1) Muskets and Bayonets 74
(2) Cross-Belting and Cartridge Boxes 75
d. Captain Dubreuil's Uniform and Accoutrements . 75
e. Illustrations 76
f. Physical Appearance of Captain Dubreuil and Sergeant Pastor 76
2. The Quapaw 76
3. Colbert's Partisans 77
a. Numbers and Composition 77
b. Dress Worn and Arms Carried by the Chickasaws and Mixed-Bloods 77
(1) Breechclouts 77
(2) Shirts or Blankets 77
(3) Leggings 78
(4) Moccasins 79
(5) Bags and Purses 79
(6) Manner of Dressing Hair 80
(7) Ear Ornaments 80
(8) Waist Bands 80
(9) Leg Ornaments 80
(10) Use of Grease 80
(11) Body Paint 81
(12) Speck's Summary of a Yuchi Costume 81
(13) Contemporary Illustrations 82
(14) Arms and Accoutrements 82

c. Garb Worn by the Whites and Blacks 82
d. Arms and Accoutrements Carried by the Whites and Blacks 83
e. Physical Description of Captain Colbert 83
f. Illustrations 83

BIBLIOGRAPHY 85

LIST OF PLATES

Plate

I. Section and elevation of the Fort Carlos III stockade 92

II. Uniforms of the Spanish Louisiana Regiment, 1779-81 94

I. INTERPRETING THE COLBERT RAID

A. Background

In 1970 members of the Daughters of the American Revolution contacted Management Assistant Frank Hastings about ways to commemorate the engagement at Arkansas Post between British partisans led by Capt. James L. Colbert and the Spanish garrison. They hoped to do something meaningful at Arkansas Post as part of the American Revolution Bicentennial. Management Assistant Hastings was agreeable, and in September he advised the Master Plan Team, headed by James Killian, of his conversations with the DAR.

The ladies informed the Master Plan Team that they would like the National Park Service to suggest to them various ways of interpreting the Colbert raid on site, and the cost of the resulting exhibit and audio visual facilities. The DAR would then determine which of the designs they liked best, and would conduct a state-wide drive to raise necessary funds to implement the project.

Apprised of what the DAR wished to do at Arkansas Post, Mark Sagan and Dr. Allan Kent of the Harpers Ferry Center outlined three alternatives for exhibits commemorating the Colbert Raid. These alternatives were considered by the Arkansas Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, and one adopted. Money was raised by the Daughters throughout the state to fund the Arkansas Post Bicentennial Project, which was headed by Mrs. J. S. Pollard of Stuttgart.

Frank Hastings had been reassigned, and D. L. Huggins became superintendent of Arkansas Post National Memorial. Like Frank Hastings, Huggins maintained close liaison with the DAR as plans developed.

By the last week of February 1974, the DAR had raised $15,000. At a Bicentennial ceremony held at Arkansas Post on February 28, the ladies presented the check to Regional Director Joseph C. Rumburg, Jr., of the Southwest Region, National Park Service. The money was to be "used solely for the purpose of planning and constructing a stockade-type exhibit to be located at the approximate site of the American Revolution battle of Arkansas Post in 1783, such battle sometimes referred to as the 'Colbert Incident.'"

The exhibit was "to be an enclosed structure providing a 20 person (standing) capacity and is to be built from rough-hewn lumber, with a painting depicting the battle and an audio describing it to be located in the structure."

The donation was subject to certain conditions:

"1. This organization [the DAR] to be furnished a review of the progress of the planning in two stages (1) after the completion of the historical research on the project and (2) after the completion of the conceptual plans for the model. Final approval of the plans to rest with the Southwest Regional Director, National Park Service. Should this Society wish not to accept either the research or the conceptual plans for the project, it will not be obligated to fund the project and the unused portion of the donation will be refunded.

2. Should future research reveal a more accurate site of the Revolutionary battle, the National Park Service may relocate the exhibit to such site, if within the confines of the Arkansas Post National Memorial grounds, if without the confines of the National Memorial grounds, then the donor reserves the right to reconsider the making of the donation.

3. There will be no obligation on the part of the Society for upkeep and maintenance of the project.

4. The Superintendent of the Arkansas Post National Memorial is to consult with and obtain agreement of the Society before any dedication or publicity related to this project is undertaken. Any expenditures related to such dedication and publicity will not be a part of the donated money.

5. In accordance with its standards, the National Park Service is to affix a metal placque on the structure acknowledging the donation of the Arkansas Society, Daughters of the American Revolution.

6. A report showing the status of the donated funds to be furnished the Society every six months, and any balance remaining after completion of the project is to be returned to the donor.

7. Completion date for this project will be no later than December 31, 1975."[1]

B. Recommendations

Historical research has been completed, and on reviewing the documented narrative several salient points emerge: (a) Colbert's Raid on Arkansas Post brought down the curtain on one phase (the Spanish-British) in the long struggle for control of the lower

---

1. Mesdames J. S. Pollard, S. E. Carroll, and B. Brazil to J. Rumburg, Jr., undated, files Arkansas Post NM.

Mississippi Valley; (b) the most significant moment in the April 17 engagement was Sergeant Pastor's sortie; and (c) the site of Fort Carlos III, as well as most of the battleground, is now covered by the waters of Horseshoe Lake.

Although the site of the fort and engagement are within the National Memorial, they are inundated. We therefore suggest that the painting and audio-visual equipment describing the Colbert Raid be incorporated into the exhibit design for the Arkansas Post Visitor Center now under contract to CPS of Little Rock. This would be in accordance with Condition 2 enumerated in the letter accompanying the check for $15,000 presented to Regional Director Rumburg on February 28.

The event to be depicted in the interpretive painting will be Sergeant Pastor's sortie, which routed the partisans and sent them fleeing back to their boats.

II. ARKANSAS POST AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

A. War Comes to the Lower Mississippi Valley

1. The Post in the Mid-1760s

The shots fired on Lexington Green on April 19, 1775, were heard around the world. They were destined to effect the lives and fortunes of people living in and around Arkansas Post, who had never heard of the little Massachusetts village nor knew of the long-standing difficulties between King George III and his ministers and many of their American colonists.

In that month the Spanish military post on the Arkansas River, designated Fort Carlos II, was sited on the south bank of the river 3 leagues above its mouth. Captain Philip Pittman of the British army, who had visited the area in the mid-1760s, had reported that the fort consisted of a stockade

> in a quadrangular form; the sides of the exterior polygon are about one hundred and eight feet, and one three pounder is mounted in the flanks and faces of each bastion. The buildings within the fort are, a barrack with three rooms for the soldiers, commanding officer's house, a powder magazine, and a magazine for provision, and an apartment for the commissary, all of which are in a ruinous condition. The fort stands about two hundred yards from the water-side, and is garrisoned by a captain, a lieutenant, and thirty French soldiers, including serjeants and corporals.[1]

Near the fort were eight houses

> occupied by as many families, who have cleared the land about nine hundred yards in depth; but on account of the sandiness of the soil, and the lowness of the situation, which makes it subject to

---

1. Philip Pittman, The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi, with a Geographic Description of that River Illustrated by Plans and Draughts, with Introduction, Notes, and Index by Frank H. Hodder (Cleveland, 1906), pp. 82-83.

> be overflowed, they do not raise their necessary provisions. These people subsist mostly by hunting, and every season send to New Orleans great quantities of bear's oil, tallow, salted buffaloe meat and a few skins.[2]

According to Captain Pittman, the Quapaw Indians in the mid-1760s lived on the riverbank "three leagues above the fort." The Quapaws were divided

> into three villages, over each of which presides a chief, and a great chief over all; they amount in all to about six hundred warriors; they are reckoned amongst the bravest of the Southern Indians; they hunt little more than for their common subsistence, and are generally at war with the nations to the westward of them, as far as the river Bravo.[3]

2. France and Spain Enter the War

The war, which began at Lexington and Concord, did not come to the Mississippi Valley until 1778. Long before she entered what had become a global conflict, Spain had been covertly aiding the American patriots in their struggle against Great Britain. Oliver Pollock, an Irish-American merchant residing in New Orleans, the capital of Spanish Louisiana, was the intermediary in securing assistance from Spain. As early as September 1776, the Spanish government in Louisiana was sending supplies to the Patriots. When Bernardo de Gálvez was named governor-general of Louisiana in 1777, he accelerated the flow of supplies up the Mississippi to the Patriots and strengthened the defenses of his province. With an eye to the future, Spain did not grant to the Americans free navigation of the Mississippi.[4]

In 1778 the Patriots organized and sent two military expeditions into the Mississippi Valley. One of these, led by Col. George Rogers Clark, surprised and captured the British posts in the Illinois Country. The other, commanded by Capt. James Willing, had as its

---

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. Ibid.

4. Lawrence Kinniard, ed., Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794, 3 parts (Washington, 1946), 1:xxiv-xxv.

mission conquest of the British settlements in the "old Southwest." Casting off from Fort Pitt, Willing in January and February 1778 descended the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and raided British plantations in West Florida, seizing property and capturing shipping.

Willing in February descended on Concordia, on the east side of the Mississippi, near the mouth of the Arkansas. Another force, organized by Oliver Pollock, ascended the Mississippi from New Orleans to reinforce and cooperate with Willing. Having scored a number of successes, Willing carried his plunder to New Orleans, where Pollock, acting as agent for the Continental Congress, disposed of it. Governor Gálvez winked at this violation of neutrality and allowed Willing's command to refit in New Orleans.[5]

The British meanwhile reinforced their posts in West Florida. They were therefore prepared and waiting when Captain Willing resumed his raids. Repulsed in an attack on Manchac, Willing and his people found themselves isolated in New Orleans. The British demanded that Governor Gálvez surrender them. Pollock and Gálvez, to escape from an embarrassing situation, arranged for the Patriots to return to Fort Pitt by way of Natchitoches and Arkansas Post, thus avoiding another confrontation with the aroused forces of His Majesty. The expense of this trip was borne by Pollock.[6]

In February 1778 the French government signed an alliance with the Continental Congress, and that summer the struggle became world-wide as France entered the conflict. Spain, France's longtime ally, entered the war in April 1779. The Spanish hoped to take advantage of the situation to embarrass their old enemy and to expand their colonial empire at King George III's expense.

3. The Relocation of Arkansas Post

Seventeen hundred and seventy-nine was also an important year in the checkered history of Arkansas Post. In that year the fort and trading village were relocated from the site on the south bank of the Arkansas, 3 leagues above its mouth, to a new location on the north side of the river farther upstream. The reason for this move was the periodic spring floods which inundated the lower

---

5. Ibid., pp. xxvi, 256.

6. Ibid., pp. xxvi-xxvii; John Caughey, "Willing's Expedition Down the Mississippi, 1778," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 15, no. 1:5-36. The men stopped at Arkansas Post on Jan. 8, 1779. Willing, himself, sought to return to Philadelphia by ship. The vessel was captured and Willing was taken to New York City by the British, where he was held prisoner until late 1782, when he was exchanged.

Mississippi Valley. The necessity to relocate the fort on higher ground had been called to Governor-General Gálvez's attention by the spring rise in 1777. In that year floodwaters from the Mississippi and Arkansas partially inundated Fort Carlos II. Having only recently been named to the position, Governor Gálvez, his attention occupied by other problems, took no corrective action. The June rise of 1778 caused the post commandant, Capt. Balthazar de Villiers, to repeat his complaint "relative to the bad situation of the post because of the land on which it is situated and relative to the benefit and advantage that would result to the king and to his subjects who inhabit it if it should be removed" to a site higher up the Arkansas.

Governor Gálvez agreed to refer the subject to the Crown for final decision.

Captain de Villiers, dissatisfied with continued procrastination, protested that annually the spring rise flooded the post. Moreover, he continued, the fort was "an inconvenient distance" below the Quapaw villages.

Governor Gálvez, taking cognizance of increasing traffic on the Mississippi, decided to move. Acting under authority allowing provincial governors to initiate action in emergencies, Gálvez on October 19, 1778, ordered de Villiers to relocate the fort on the suggested site.[7]

Captain de Villiers accordingly in 1779 abandoned the post near the mouth of the Arkansas, reestablishing it on a bend of the river about 36 miles upstream. Here it was on high ground at the edge of Grand Prairie and out of the flood plain. A short distance above the new site of the post was the village of the hunting community which had grown up here in the 1750s. Downstream about 10 miles, on the right bank, was the Quapaw village of Uzutiuhi, home of trusted chief Angaska. Upstream, also on the south side of the river, were two other Quapaw villages--Kappa and Toriman.

In 1779 the Arkansas approached the peninsula on which the village stood by a reach farther south than today. A sharp bend to the left carried the river around the head of the peninsula and to the north. The river, after flowing about one-half mile in the new direction, again changed course and veered toward the southeast. Fort Carlos III was positioned on the left bank, a little below the bend where the river changed its course from north to southeast. About one-half

---

7. Stanley Faye, "The Arkansas Post of Louisiana: Spanish Dominion," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 27, no. 3: 658-59.

mile below the fort, north of the river, was the habitants' settlement. Their fields paralleled the Arkansas to within a short distance of the village. Most of the habitants were newcomers to the Grand Prairie, as they had abandoned their settlement near the mouth of the Arkansas when the garrison moved upstream. Unlike the residents of the village, the habitants relied on trading and agriculture for their livelihood.

Some of the newcomers erected homes in the village adjacent to the cabins of the hunters.[8]

4. Spain Seizes a Number of British Settlements

Captain de Villiers and his men were busy relocating the post when news that Spain had declared war on Great Britain reached New Orleans in August 1779. Governor Gálvez, an able soldier and vigorous administrator, was ready. Seizing the initiative, he moved against the nearby British West Florida posts. On September 7 Gálvez, with a mixed force of regular troops, white and black militia, and a few American volunteers, attacked and stormed Fort Bute. He then advanced up the Mississippi to Baton Rouge, which was defended by a force of British regulars and militia led by Lt. Col. Alexander Dickinson. With a fourth of the garrison on sick call, Dickinson, after a brief bombardment, surrendered on September 21. By terms of the capitulation, Dickinson was allowed to withdraw with his command to Pensacola.

On the day that Baton Rouge capitulated, Capt. Juan de la Villebeuvre reached Natchez with 50 men and accepted the surrender of that British post. As first commandant of the Natchez District, de la Villebeuvre on October 10, 1780, issued a decree covering such "matter as night hunting, Negro slaves, vagabond, and vagrancy."[9]

In the winter of 1779-80 Governor Gálvez moved against Mobile. His first expedition, sailing from New Orleans in January, was turned back by a hurricane. After returning to New Orleans and refitting, Gálvez

---

8. Ibid., pp. 688-89.

9. Jack D. L. Holmes, "A Spanish Province 1779-1798," in A History of Mississippi, ed. Richard A. McLemore, 2 vols. (Hattiesburg, 1973), 1:158; J.F.H. Claiborne, Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State, with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens (Jackson, 1880), p. 125; Albert W. Haarmann, "The Spanish Conquest of British West Florida, 1779-1781," The Florida Historical Quarterly 39, no. 2:113.

again sailed for Mobile, entering the bay on March 10, 1780. By the 14th the Spanish had six batteries in position and opened fire on Fort Charlotte. The works were soon breached, and as Gálvez was forming his storming parties to exploit this situation, the British commandant capitulated, surrendering Mobile and the region between the Perdido and the Pearl. Gálvez's next objective would be Pensacola, the principal British stronghold on the Gulf Coast, and the seat of government for West Florida. Gálvez, realizing that Pensacola would be defended with greater vigor than Mobile or the Mississippi River settlements, proceeded to La Habána, Cuba, to secure reinforcements and to organize a siege train.[10]

The Arkansas Post garrison was delighted to learn of the capture by Governor Gálvez of Fort Bute, Baton Rouge, and Natchez. Commandant de Villiers was uncertain whether the articles of capitulation agreed to by Colonel Dickinson at Baton Rouge transferred to Spanish authority the east bank of the Mississippi between the Natchez District and the mouth of the Ohio. To give substance to a Spanish claim to the east bank of the Mississippi opposite his district, Captain de Villiers organized an expedition.

With writing materials, a box lined with tinfoil, and a coin bearing the coat of arms of His Catholic Majesty, de Villiers, accompanied by six men, left his new fort at Arkansas Post by a pirogue in mid-November 1780. On the 22d the expedition landed at Concordia, the small British trading settlement opposite the mouth of the Arkansas. The landing was unopposed, and as his followers stood at attention, de Villiers announced that he had taken possession of the east bank of "the Mississippi opposite the Arkansas, White, and St. Francis rivers, as far as the boundary of the district of Natchez." Henceforth this area would be administered from Arkansas Post. Before returning to Arkansas Post, the Spanish placed this document, along with His Catholic "Majesty's royal coat of arms in a tin box," which they buried 50 paces from the Mississippi at a depth of 18 inches at the foot of a copalm tree.[11] In 1775 there

---

10. Claiborne, Mississippi, p. 125.

11. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 662; "Act of Possession of East Bank of the Mississippi River North of the District of Natchez," in Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1:401.

had been five traders and 18 cabins at Concordia.[12] The men who accompanied de Villiers to Concordia were: Anselmo Billel, a prominent Arkansas Post trader; Estevan Gooding, an interpreter; Louis Poten, a boatman; and three soldiers--Pedro Tamina, Juan Bautista Anduezaj, and Lorenzo Quino.

B. The Spanish Defeat the Natchez Rebellion

1. The Natchez Rebels Capture Fort Panmure

Captain de la Villebeuvre, as commandant of the Natchez District, in the autumn of 1779 had taken measures to strengthen the fort guarding the town. Artisans were hired. Much of the materials for the project were purchased from John Blommart, a local millowner and merchant, who had served in the British army in the Seven Years War.[13]

During the winter of 1780-81, while Governor-General Gálvez was perfecting arrangements for his attack on Pensacola, Commandant de Villiers of Arkansas Post sent his wife to New Orleans. Besides visiting friends in the city, Madame de Villiers was to purchase trade goods for her husband. She descended the Mississippi in the pirogue of the Arkansas riverman Louis Poten. When Madame de Villiers ascended the river in April, it was in company with the big bateau belonging to Louis Parent, bound for the Ilinueses. Aboard Parent's boat traveled Francis Vigo of Vincennes, who had assisted George Rogers Clark in his conquest of the "old Northwest"; two prominent residents of Ste. Geneviève--Francis Vallé, a militia lieutenant, and Jean-Baptiste Datcherut, a trader--and the captain of the boat, René Rappicault, and the crew. The cargo was valued at $60,000.[14]

A number of British settlers of the Natchez District were in contact with Maj. Gen. John Campbell, commander of His Majesty's forces in West Florida. Knowing of the Spanish preparations to attack Pensacola, they dispatched a courier to General Campbell proposing to make a diversion in his favor, and asking him for

---

12. Orieta to Governor, May 31, 1775, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

13. De la Villebeuvre to Gálvez, Dec. 12, 1779, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

14. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 663-64.

assistance. General Campbell replied as the Spanish fleet was arriving off Santa Rosa Island, at the entrance to Pensacola Bay. Word was sent to the Natchez Loyalists that a British fleet was in the Gulf, and that it was about to move against New Orleans. They were called upon to sieze Fort Panmure and to assist in restoration of His Majesty's rule over the Natchez District. To cloak the uprising and give it the appearance of legitimacy, General Campbell forwarded a number of captains' commissions, which were to be distributed among the principal settlers.[15]

Thus encouraged by General Campbell, the veteran half-pay officers in and around Natchez perfected plans for the capture of Fort Panmure. They had been trained to hate the Spanish and the French--"the old hereditary feeling, growing out of frequent and protracted wars." They recalled the execution order by Alexandro O'Reilly, the Spanish governor-general in 1769, and as Protestants they subscribed to the "black legend." They determined to strike a blow against Spain while Governor-General Gálvez was occupied in a siege of Pensacola.

The courier, whom the conspirators had sent to Pensacola, on his return passed through the Choctaw Nation. There he prevailed on Folsom, a chief, and 50 warriors to accompany him to Natchez. On their arrival, the rebels assembled with their arms. Taking position on a hill commanding the fort, they unfurled the British standard on April 22, 1781.

Commandant de la Villebeuvre sent a conciliatory message, warning the rebels of the "responsibility they were incurring, and recommending them to retire to their homes, with the promise of amnesty for all but their leaders." The rebels, numbering 200 settlers and Indians and commanded by Capt. John Blommart, answered by opening fire on the fort with their three small cannons. The Spanish cannoneers replied, their projectiles tearing through the house the rebels had occupied on the hill, killing a corporal and wounding three others. A siege ensued.[16]

April 22 found Poten's pirogue and Parent's bateau tied up at Ellis Cliffs, 17 miles below Natchez, where the passengers dined with a planter. Next morning the boats cast off, and near Natchez they fell prize to the boat of John Turner, one of Blommart's lieutenants.[17]

---

15. John Caughey, "The Natchez Rebellion of 1781 and Its Aftermath," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 16, no. 1:57-58; Claiborne, Mississippi, p. 127.

16. Claiborne, Mississippi, pp. 127-28.

17. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 663-64.

Fort Panmure held out for 12 days. When Commandant de la Villebeuvre determined to surrender it was because of a ruse. While the siege was in progress, a man, Stille, residing with Captain McIntosh on St. Catherine Creek, was intercepted carrying a letter from McIntosh to the commandant "advising him to hold on, and that the revolt would soon die out." Captain Blommart determined to employ this letter to his advantage. John Alston, a skilled forger, was called in. Addressing a letter to the commandant over the signature of his friend McIntosh, it was pointed out that "further resistance was useless; that the insurgents had secretly undermined the fort, and deposited therein a large supply of powder brought by Indian pack-horses from Pensacola, and that that very night had been fixed on for the explosion."

With threats to murder him wherever they found him, the rebels compelled Stille to deliver the forged letter. De la Villebeuvre panicked. Satisfied of the veracity of the message from his friend and "most influential adherent," Commandant de la Villebeuvre on May 4 ordered the white flag hoisted. The rebels marched in and the British flag again flew from the ramparts of Fort Panmure.[18]

2. The Spanish Strike Back

Soon after the surrender of Fort Panmure, the victors divided into factions. The fate of the prisoners added to the bickering. One faction wanted to send them to Pensacola. Anthony Hutchins argued successfully against this proposal by suggesting to Captain Blommart that "the self-nominated guard for this journey intended to act as executioners as soon as they got away" from his control. Blommart was persuaded to send the garrison commander and his 76 men to Baton Rouge under a reliable guard commanded by Capt. Jacob Winfree. The journey was made without incident.

Another problem had been the question of raising the flag of the United States rather than of Britain. Blommart vetoed this scheme. The pro-United States faction led by John and Philip Alston and John Turner also hoped to plunder and divide the captured stores, and even went so far as to break into the Spanish commander's baggage. Captain Blommart, however, kept a tight rein on his men. His commissary kept careful records, and only issued what powder and shot was needed.

To checkmate his "more bloodthirsty" and avaricious followers, Blommart recognized the civil authority of Anthony Hutchins, who

---

18. Claiborne, Mississippi, p. 128.

had been the Natchez chief magistrate before the arrival of the Spanish.[19]

Word that Pensacola had surrendered to Governor Gálvez's expeditionary force on May 9, 1781, caused the Natchez rebels to have misgivings. They had counted on a successful defense of that city and an attack by the British navy on New Orleans. This news chilled their ardor. Some of them fled the district; others demanded a division of the spoils at the fort as a preliminary to their flight; but Captain Blommart and a majority of his followers resolved to hold the fort until it could be returned to Spanish authorities. Blommart's faction was satisfied that Governor Gálvez would treat them as members of the regular military establishment rather than as rebels.[20]

The New Orleans authorities, even before Governor-General Gálvez's return from the capture of Pensacola, had organized and put in motion a column with the mission of recapturing Fort Panmure. Commanding this force was Robert de la Morandier, a militia captain. He started from the Attakappas with 40 militiamen. As he advanced, his command was reinforced, until by June 18, 1781, it numbered 43 Indians, 66 militiamen, and 40 Canadians.

On their way northward, they encountered Colonel Hutchins and Doctor Farrell, acting as emissaries from Captain Blommart. They carried a letter from Blommart, suggesting a return "to the status quo ante 'rebellum'." Fort Panmure would be restored to Spain, with the residents of the Natchez District regaining "all the rights and privileges provided for by the capitulation of Baton Rouge."

Before dismissing Hutchins and Dr. Farrell with his promise of "personal protection," Captain Morandier informed them that Capt. Carlos de Grand-Pré was en route upstream from Pointe Coupée with artillery and reinforcements. But, as to negotiating with Blommart, Morandier cautioned

> an officer of his majesty, although in the militia, could never treat with one who was not only a rebel but even a traitor, who had voluntarily taken an

---

19. John W. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783 (Berkeley, 1934), p. 218; Caughey, "The Natchez Rebellion of 1781 and Its Aftermath," pp. 59-60.

20. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 218-19.

oath of fidelity to the king but had felt free to return to the service of his former sovereign.[21]

On June 14, the day after the parley, Captain Morandier sent a courier ahead to assure the inhabitants of the Natchez District that if they returned to their homes, his troops and Indians would not molest them. To guard against intrusions, they were advised to display Spanish flags in front of their homes.

Morandier's command, with Captain Blommart and his people looking on, landed at Natchez on June 22. Morandier bruskly brushed aside Blommart's efforts to establish conditions for surrender of the fort and return of the public property. Forty of his soldiers slipped into Fort Panmure unopposed, and at daybreak on the 23d Captain Morandier entered the fort. He then ordered 20 militiamen and 80 settlers in pursuit of the fugitive rebels. At 10 o'clock, the hour Blommart had proposed to give up the fort, Morandier arrested and sent Blommart and three of his lieutenants (William Eason, William L. Williams, and Samuel Benjamin) under guard to New Orleans.

3. The Spanish Move Against the Leaders of the Revolt

This precipitant action on Morandier's part was a blunder. Other leaders of the revolt, fearing for their lives, went into hiding.[22] Even before the arrival of Captain Morandier's command in the Natchez District, the exodus had begun. Some 80 fugitives sought refuge among the Chickasaws and 30 with the Choctaws. Others took to the wilderness with such provisions as they could carry and made for British posts in Georgia and South Carolina.

As events demonstrated, this was unnecessary. Spanish officials proved to be understanding. Amnesty was granted to the rank and file. Two hundred and forty settlers took a new oath of loyality to Spain within a few days of the recapture of Fort Panmure. Soon thereafter refugees began to trickle into the district from the Indian nations to which they had fled. In addition to the four leaders of the revolt taken into custody by Captain Morandier on June 23, the Spanish hoped to bring five others to justice (Captains

---

21. Ibid., pp. 220-21; Caughey, "The Natchez Rebellion of 1781 and Its Aftermath," pp. 62-63; Claiborne, Mississippi, pp. 128-31.

22. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 222-23; Claiborne, Mississippi, pp. 129-31.

Marr, Fulson, Turner, and the Alston brothers), and a reward of £100 sterling was offered for their apprehension.[23]

Governor-General Gálvez, who was called to Cuba at this time, delegated trial of the leaders of the revolt to Jacinto Panis. Examination of the four was commenced by the English-speaking Panis in New Orleans on July 2, 1781. Eason's interrogation revealed few details. Williams, who had served as Blommart's commissary, stated that he had neither participated in the attack on Fort Panmure nor had he seen any of General Campbell's blanket commissions. He said that Blommart had honored the terms of the capitulation of the Spanish garrison, but that Captains Marr and Turner had despoiled Commandant de la Villebeuvre's baggage. No record of Benjamin's examination has been found.

Blommart, as was to be expected, was closely questioned. He admitted to being a Swiss, a Protestant, and to receiving his commission as captain from General Campbell on April 20, 48 hours before the attack on Fort Panmure. He likewise admitted that he was a resident of the district at the time of Baton Rouge's capitulation, and that he had taken an oath of fidelity to Carlos III, King of Spain. He denied having any grievance against Spain, and stated that he had participated in the rebellion because he believed "Campbell's orders compelled him to do so."

After studying the case overnight, Panis ordered Blommart's property confiscated and the four men held. Zenon Trudeau, acting as attorney for the defense, pleaded for leniency.[24]

The next leader of the uprising to be apprehended was Jacob Winfree. When questioned, he claimed to have accepted his commission as a means of protecting his property against spoliation by pro-British Indians. He stated that, after learning of the surrender of Pensacola, he had exerted himself to prevent Eason and his confederates from burning Fort Panmure.

When cross-examined on September 4 and 5, Winfree sought to focus onus for what had occurred on Blommart, as leader of the revolt. As for his oath of allegiance, he believed it had expired after 8 months. Here he was in error, as the oath administered by Commandant

---

23. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 223-24.

24. Ibid., pp. 224-25; Caughey, "The Natchez Rebellion of 1781 and Its Aftermath," pp. 66-67.

de la Villebeuvre had no time limitation. Winfree evidently confused the Baton Rouge capitulation with the situation of the Mobile settlers, who were to become "eligible for an oath of neutrality eight months after the capitulation of Fort Charlotte."[25]

Other leaders of the Natchez uprising were apprehended and punished during the next several months. On September 25, 1781, four sons of John Alston and 14 slaves were landed at New Orleans. Commandant de Grand-Pré, on November 1, sent John Smith and Parker Caridine down to the provincial capital, along with a report that he had confiscated all the property of the leaders of the rebellion. Learning that John Alston and John Turner, having fled into the wilderness, were endeavoring to organize a force of Chickasaws and Choctaws to take revenge on the Spanish, Grand-Pré ordered out a patrol. The patrol, consisting of British settlers, descended on a Chickasaw village, capturing John Alston, one of his sons, and 10 slaves. Turner, however, escaped. Grand-Pré confiscated the slaves, released the son, and sent Alston under guard to New Orleans.

On May 6, 1782, 1 year and 2 days after the surrender of Fort Panmure, Commandant Grand-Pré filed a report of the returns from the public sale of property of 21 rebel leaders, some of whom were jailed in New Orleans, and the remainder fugitives. After the expenses of judges, sheriffs, interpreters, etc., had been paid, a balance of 3,121 pesos, 4 reales, 17 sueldos remained.[26]

Among the rebels who had found refuge among the Indians was John Holston. Writing his parents on May 15, 1782, he observed:

> We got all safely to the Chickasaws & are living all together with Thomas Holmes & wife. My greatest unesiness at present is on account of the great Distance thats Between us, but I still flatter myself that we shall see the day before long that we shall have an opportunity of getting together again. I'd advise you to stay there & Content yourselves as well as you can for I expect an alteration Shortly.[27]

---

25. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 226.

26. Ibid., pp. 226-27.

27. Louis Houck, ed., The Spanish Regime in Missouri, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1909), 1:220-21.

Archibald Campbell, British governor of Jamaica, sought to intercede for the rebels. Writing Governor Gálvez on November 29, 1781, he observed:

> Permit me to trouble Your Excellency in regard to two Captains, two Lieutenants, one Store Keeper, one Serjeant, and several privates taken at Natchez.
>
> I am informed that the harsh treatment which Captain Blommart, the head of the party, had met with; so unusual under Your Excellency's command, has arisen from the neutrality which he had infringed; a circumstance I have reason to believe, originated from intemperate zeal and indiscretion in him & his perfect ignorance of the customary Laws of Nations.
>
> From such persuasions I am led to solicit Your Excellency's foregiveness to those unfortunate men.[28]

Not so diplomatic was blunt-spoken Ferqr. Bethune, British Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Mississippi District. Writing from the Chickasaw Nation on July 19, 1781, to Captain Grand-Pré, he threatened:

> In short Sir the Fate of your Power depends on the treatment of the Natchez Inhabitants; Lenity & Compassion shown them will stop a Torrent ready to pour out and deluge the Bank of the Mississippi with blood.[29]

C. Captain Colbert Intervenes

1. Enter Capt. James Logan Colbert

Bethune failed to back up his threat, and there were no reprisals until April 1782. A man now stepped forward to throw down the gauntlet to the Dons and champion the rebels' cause. He was James Logan Colbert. James Adair, a contemporary, described him as "Capt. J. C-l-b-rt, who has lived among the Chikkasah from his childhood, and speaks their language even with more propriety than the English."[30]

---

28. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 227.

29. Ibid., pp. 227-28.

30. James Adair, The History of the American Indians (London, 1775), p. 370.

Colbert was a Scot, having been born in Scotland about 1720. According to tradition, he landed in Savannah, Georgia, in January 1736 from the ship Prince of Wales commanded by Capt. George Dunbar. Like many other Highlanders, he had migrated to the American colonies to escape reprisals against suspected Jacobites.

Colbert soon made his way inland, and, adopting the ways of the Indians, settled among the Chickasaws, who in the long struggle for control of the Mississippi Valley were faithful allies of the British. Colbert married into the tribe. His first two wives were full-blooded Chickasaws, while his third was a half-breed. By his first wife he had one daughter, whose name is unknown. His second wife bore him five sons--William, George, Levi, Samuel, and Joseph--all of whom became influential in tribal affairs. His third wife bore him a son, James, and a daughter, Susan.[31]

Colbert, like several of his fellow Scots, advanced to a position of influence in Chickasaw tribal councils. For a number of years the British cultivated his friendship, although the governor of West Florida in 1765 ordered him to leave. Colbert, however, refused to heed this order.

The Chickasaws, during the early years of the American Revolution, kept the peace with the frontiersmen. But after Spain entered the conflict in 1779, the Chickasaws became increasingly involved.[32]

The Spanish took official notice of Colbert in late autumn of 1779, following their capture of the British posts on the lower Mississippi. Commandant de la Villebeuvre, when informing Governor Gálvez of the measures he had taken to strengthen the defenses of Fort Panmure, warned that he had intercepted letters, one of them signed by General Campbell, urging James Colbert to organize "a Company of white men . . ., and some Indians, and march to Mobile," where they would place themselves under the general's orders. De la Villebeuvre's informant cautioned that two officers were supposed to enter the Natchez District to steal horses, "and Colbert is making 1,000 promises to the Indians to spark a plot against us."

---

31. Guy Braden, "The Colberts and the Chickasaw Nation," The Tennessee Historical Quarterly 17, no. 3:223.

32. Ibid.; D. C. Corbitt, "James Colbert and the Spanish Claims to the East Bank of the Mississippi," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review 24, no. 4:458.

Colbert was said to be telling the Indians that any "who died did so because of the poisoned drink" the Spanish gave them. When a chief answered that "many had died who had no drink" from the Spanish, Colbert replied, "the breath of the former caused the death of others." Before turning to another subject, de la Villebeuvre cautioned, "This Colbert is harmful by the influence he has on the tribes, mostly the Chicachas. I don't know yet the importance of his recruitment . . . but it can't be much yet."[33]

Colbert in 1780 led a force of whites and Indians to assist in the defense of Pensacola and Mobile against the Spanish. While on the Gulf Coast, Colbert prepared for the future by sending musket balls and powder to be stockpiled in the Chickasaw Nation.[34]

Colbert was influenced to employ force to secure the release of Captain Blommart and the other Natchez prisoners by capturing and holding for ransom Spanish shipping plying the Mississippi River. Indian Agent Bethune was in a position to bring pressure on Colbert to strike. In addition to official encouragement given by Bethune, there were in the Chickasaw Nation a number of British fugitives from Natchez, as well as from Georgia and the Carolinas. Many of these people were Colbert's personal friends.[35]

Rumors that Colbert was preparing to strike reached the Spanish posts, but were discounted. In 1781 the Chickasaws and their white allies moved against Fort Jefferson, the post established by Col. George Rogers Clark on the east side of the Mississippi, several miles below the mouth of the Ohio. Colbert and his Chickasaws destroyed the fields and cabins near the fort, and invested it for six days. At a critical moment for the garrison of 100 Virginians, Colbert was wounded in the arm and the Indians withdrew. Faced with starvation, and not knowing when the Chickasaws and their white allies might return, the garrison burned and evacuated the fort.[36]

---

33. De la Villebeuvre to Gálvez, Dec. 12, 1779, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

34. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 458.

35. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 228-29.

36. Braden, "The Colberts and the Chickasaw Nation," pp. 223-24.

2. Arkansas Post Braces for an Attack

a) Hard Times on the Arkansas

Arkansas Post was as yet unaffected by the Natchez revolt and its repercussions. The vagaries of nature, however, plagued residents of the post. The 6 years beginning in 1780 were a period of climatic extremes in the Mississippi Valley. There was a drought in the summer of 1780, which parched the cornfields around Arkansas Post and Natchez and drastically reduced the harvests in the Ilinueses, the Illinois Country, and around Vincennes. During the winters there were heavy snows, with the spring runoffs accompanied by heavy rains. These caused a succession of June floods on the lower Mississippi.

These floods did not inundate Arkansas Post, because in 1779 Commandant de Villiers had relocated the fortified post on high ground, at the edge of Grand Prairie, 36 miles above the mouth of the Arkansas.[37]

With harvests drastically reduced, the garrison and habitants were dependent on imports for their grain. On June 3, 1781, Captain de Villiers had at the post only enough grain to ration his troops for another 2 weeks.[38]

On July 5 a pirogue loaded with grain reached Arkansas Post from St. Louis. Its arrival was very timely, because the garrison was down to 3 days' rations. The habitants had been out of food for some time, and Commandant de Villiers had "had to help them all."

Later in the day de Villiers was vexed by the return of the couriers he had dispatched on June 22 to the Illinois Country. To insure that his next attempt to reopen communications would succeed, de Villiers on July 7 sent two Quapaws and two Kaskaskias, the latter having arrived in the food pirogue, on the same mission. The Kaskaskias had assured the commandant that they could make the return trip to the Illinois Country overland in 15 days.

b) The Spanish Erect a Stockade

Four Americans had arrived at Arkansas Post on July 2, accompanied by the son of the post interpreter. The latter, along with his father, had been captured by the British and held prisoner at Natchez. The Americans had formerly resided at the post. The group turned over

---

37. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 661.

38. Ibid., p. 663.

to Captain de Villiers several letters. When he opened them, he was disturbed to see that one had been written by "Stilman who knows particularly well all the environs of this post." Stilman and several confederates had "fled to the Chickasaws" and had "sworn on oath between themselves to spare nothing to capture" Arkansas Post.

Next day all the inhabitants, having learned of the contents of the letters, called on Commandant de Villiers and told him "it would be well to build a fort capable of holding their families in case of a raid by the Chickasaws joined to the bandits living with them." They volunteered to fell and haul logs for a palisade.

De Villiers took advantage of their gesture, as he deemed it a good opportunity "to construct a fort in this post which will cost the King little and will last long."

Assisted by the habitants, the garrison turned to and erected a stockade of "red oak stakes thirteen feet high, with diameters of 10 to 15 or 16 inches, split in two and reinforced inside by similar stakes to a height of six feet and a banquette of two feet."

The stockade enclosed all "necessary places, including a house 45 feet long and 15 feet wide, and a storehouse, both serving to lodge my troops, and around several smaller buildings." These structures had been erected by the commandant and his troops, at de Villiers' expense, following their arrival at the post. The embrasures for the cannons and swivel guns were "covered with sliding panels" which were "bullet proof."

If no difficulties developed and his health did not fail, de Villiers wrote Governor Gálvez on July 11, 1781, that before another 12 days passed, "the King will have here a solid post capable of resisting anything which may come to attack it without cannon." He had refrained from construction of a ditch fronting the stockade, which he believed necessary, "for fear of increasing the expense." To illustrate his financial plight, he informed Governor Gálvez that Pedro Piernas had refused to honor his voucher for 40 piastres for hire of a pirogue.

c) De Villiers Reinforces His Garrison

The addition of several hunters gave Commandant de Villiers a force of about 70, but his "principal guard" consisted of his Indian scouts watching the Grand Prairie toward White River. Since his last report, he had abandoned his outpost on the Mississippi, because it was too exposed. Until doing so, he had stopped every boat descending the Mississippi from the Illinois Country.

De Villiers' plan to send several Quapaws to confer with the Chickasaws had been dropped following a conference with their principal chief, Angaska. The chief had cautioned that "to be sending people so often to that nation" was a confession of weakness.

Captain de Villiers was "much satisfied" with his soldiers. Despite the heat and humidity, both noncommissioned officers and privates worked long hours without complaint. "Their pay," de Villiers protested to Governor Gálvez, "is not sufficient for their food and still less for their upkeep." He was sending back to the Louisiana Regiment a soldier of the 2d Company, Manuel Matu, who was suffering from "a fistula incurable in this country."[39]

d) Fifth Column Activities at Arkansas Post

In the Spanish army, as in all armed forces, desertion was a serious crime, punishable in time of peace by imprisonment and in war by death. But with Spain at war with Great Britain, Louisiana authorities welcomed British and Hessian deserters from Forts Bute and Charlotte and other posts. By the spring of 1781, 90 Hessian deserters had been enlisted in the Regiment of Louisiana. Some of these men were probably billeted to Arkansas Post.

Their presence may have caused Commandant de Villiers misgivings at the time of the Natchez uprising. More serious were his fears that British subjects who had married into the Chickasaw Nation might lead it against Arkansas Post.

A more immediate problem, however, were the activities of William Johnston and Edward Cockrane. These men, who had been licensed to hunt on the Arkansas, conspired with several other "Americans" and two of de Villiers' Hessians--Albert Faust and John Frederick Opendal. They proposed to seize Fort Carlos III and blockade the Mississippi. They talked too much, and their plans were leaked to Menoy, a voyageur bourgeois, who warned Captain de Villiers of the plot. De Villiers had the six arrested. Testimony was taken, and at the end of February 1782, the six prisoners were sent to New Orleans, along with guards and witnesses. There they were tried before a military court. The case against the two "Americans" was dropped, while Johnston, Cockrane, and the two soldiers, who had confessed their guilt to de Villiers, were sentenced to death. The sentences, after being reviewed and approved, were carried out.[40]

---

39. De Villiers to Gálvez, July 11, 1781, in Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1:429-31.

40. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 670-71.

3. Captain Colbert Strikes

a) The Spring of 1782 Brings Heavy Traffic on the Mississippi

Commandant de Villiers, in the late winter of 1782, again sent his wife to New Orleans. She may have traveled in the same boat with the six prisoners and their guards. Fearing trouble on the river and reminded that his wife had been stranded at Natchez at the time of the revolt, the captain sent with her a letter, asking that Jean Dean, a famed Arkansas riverman, be ordered to escort her on her return upstream.

With Governor-General Gálvez absent from the province and engaged in military operations, Estevan Miró was acting-governor. Acknowledging de Villiers's letter, he promised to issue the necessary order and to direct that boats enroute up the Mississippi travel in convoys.[41]

Miró's directive was ignored. Of the six boats departing New Orleans upward bound in late winter and early spring of 1782, several may have left together. But by the time they reached Natchez, they were widely separated. First to pass Natchez, doing so about April 5, was the large bateau owned by Silbestre Labadie, a St. Louis merchant. The craft was loaded with presents for the Indians, powder, and much other merchandise, including numerous casks of rum, 4,900 pesos for the subsistence of the troops garrisoning the Ilinueses, and $1,500 in private funds. Passengers in the bateau's deckhouse were 27-year-old Doña Anicanora Ramas, wife of Lt. Col. Francisco Cruzat, the St. Louis commandant, her four small sons, and her slaves.

Labadie's vessel had sailed from New Orleans on February 22, 1781. About 15 leagues above New Orleans, on the Acadian Coast, he fell in with Eugenio Albarez's boat bound downstream from St. Louis. Albarez called that his voyage had been uneventful, except that he had been closely watched as he passed the Chickasaw Bluffs by suspicious-looking individuals.

Labadie continued up the Mississippi to Natchez, where he was told by Commandant Carlos de Grand-Pré that several days before a score of men had fled the area and had taken refuge at Chickasaw Bluffs, "but they could not do him any harm."[42]

---

41. Ibid., pp. 672-73.

42. Ibid., p. 673; Declaration of Silbestre Labadie, July 5, 1782, in Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:21-23.

Next to pass was the bateau owned by Eugene Pourré, a captain in the St. Louis militia. Pourré said goodbye to Natchez about April 14. Two boats, traveling together, came next. One of these vessels was Albarez's returning to St. Louis, and the other belonged to Francois Vallé, an elderly militia captain from Ste. Geneviève. Probably aboard the latter craft were Vallé's daughter, Marie-Louise, and her husband, Lt. Louis de Villars.

Captain Jacobo Dubreuil reached Natchez on May 11, bound upriver from New Orleans to St. Louis with a shipment of government stores. He did not know that Madame de Villiers, who was to rendezvous with him here, had been detained at Pointe Coupeé.

Madame de Villiers had left New Orleans in mid-April, expecting to reach Natchez in the customary 4 weeks. She had stopped at a plantation 1 mile below the post at Pointe Coupeé, and had sent a messenger to request her visa to continue upstream. Commandant Nicolas Delassize refused her a visa, and threatened to confiscate her boat and cargo unless she satisfied "her husband's creditors or compromised his debts."

As a governmental official, de Villiers was not liable to suit except before the governor. Madame de Villiers accordingly appealed to Acting-Governor Miró. Valuable time was lost in communicating, and it was April 17 before Colonel Miró ordered Commandant Delassize to let her boat and cargo proceed. Because of this delay, she missed her Natchez rendezvous. Captain Dubreuil, having already waited too long, had already cast off for the Ilinueses.

Madame de Villiers and her boat were compelled to continue on to Arkansas Post without an escort. Upon her arrival at the post, she discovered that in her absence her husband had been stricken with a possibly fatal illness. In anticipation of death, he had made his will on April 14.[43]

b) The Attack on Pourré's Bateau

The first boat attacked was Captain Pourré's bateau, which had left Natchez in mid-April. On the 19th, about 20 miles above the mouth of the Yazoo, the bateau was intercepted by John Turner and 14 of the Natchez fugitives. Pourré and his crew were disarmed, and their weapons placed in a canoe manned by four men. Turner and nine companions took charge of the bateau and the prisoners.

---

43. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 673-74; Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107, May 26, 1782, Last Will and Testament of Baltasar de Villiers.

Four hours later, Pourré and his crew caught the rebels napping. Turning upon them, they pitched them into the Mississippi. Then, snatching up the oars, they bashed in the heads of six Anglo-Saxons and two blacks as they floundered. Turner and a black succeeded in reaching the canoe, where their companions pulled them out of the river. Having been bested in this deadly struggle by the rivermen, Turner and his five surviving men beat a precipitate retreat.

Pourré returned to Natchez, where he fell in with Albarez's and Vallé's boats. Before resuming the run up the Mississippi, Pourré informed Captain Grand-Pré that, before they had vanquished the pirates, John Turner had boasted that his friends intended to intercept Madame Cruzat and Labadie's bateau farther up the Mississippi. Grand-Pré dispatched two bands of Indians to "capture or kill these pirates, 'since humanity and clemency do not engender in them the slightest emotion,'" and Pourré started back up the Mississippi, accompanied by Albarez's and Vallé's boats.[44]

c) Captain Colbert and His Men Capture Labadie's Bateau

Silbestre Labadie's big, heavily laden bateau, breasting a powerful current, continued her ascent of the Mississippi. At Three Islands, midway between Natchez and the mouth of the Arkansas, two Caddos hailed the vessel. The redmen were carrying dispatches from Arkansas Post to New Orleans. One of them told Labadie that during the winter, while he and a companion were hunting near Chickasaw Bluffs, they had stumbled across a cache "in which there was a large quantity of powder, ball, merchandise, dried meat, flour, maize, and other provisions and goods." After spending the night at the cache, they returned to Arkansas Post, taking with them from it a bottle of ink, paper, an inkstand, a linen headdress, handkerchiefs, and several shirts. Nearby they found two pirogues loaded with bear fat and tallow.

Reaching Arkansas Post, they had informed Commandant de Villiers of what had occurred and had shown him the articles taken from the cache. Madame de Villiers had recognized them as belonging to the people in a boat which had left Fort Carlos a short time before loaded with provisions for the St. Francis River settlements. This caused fears that the boat had been captured and its crew killed or imprisoned.

---

44. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 674-75; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 229.

One of the Caddos had begged the commandant to give him 20 men, so that he could recover the cache, either burning or removing it. De Villiers refused. Whereupon the Caddo had traveled to Natchez and asked Commandant de Grand-Pré to sanction and support his plan. De Grand-Pré had paid him no attention, and he had returned to Arkansas Post.[45]

The run up the river was resumed. Fifteen leagues below Death's Head, they encountered a canoe manned by four Americans and Jose Meson (Maison), a former New Orleans constable. Meson told Labadie that he had come west from Virginia, traveling by way of the Ohio and Mississippi. When questioned about dangers ahead, Meson replied that on the entire voyage "he had not met a Cat." After requesting and receiving some supplies, Meson continued his voyage to New Orleans.[46]

At Death's Head, Labadie was hailed by Joseph Motard, bound downstream from St. Louis. He assured Labadie that he had nothing to fear, as "the greatest tranquility reigned" on the river.

Arriving at the "old fort of Arkansas," Labadie found it garrisioned by five men. From here he dispatched a message overland addressed to Colonel Cruzat, notifying him that he was bringing up goods in his boat. The tedious and time-consuming run up the Mississippi was resumed.[47]

At 7 A.M., May 2, 1782, while coasting along the west side of the Mississippi, Labadie sighted a bateau, a pirogue lashed to her stern, tied to the shore in Esperanza Bend, opposite the mouth of Wolf River. In view of Meson's assurances and satisfied the bateau belonged to Lafon (Charles Lafontaine), known to be enroute from Ste. Geneviève to New Orleans with a cargo of grain, Labadie called for his men to raise their oars as they approached within hailing distance.

Labadie called, "Boat ahoy! Where are you from, and who is the commander?"

---

45. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:21-23.

46. Ibid., pp. 22-23; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 459; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 229.

47. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:23-24.

Thomas Prince, one of two men seen walking along the bank near the boat, answered, "We come from Illinois, and the master of the boat is Monsieur Lafon."

"Are you Monsieur Labadie?" he inquired.

"Yes, Señor!"

Prince then shouted, "Is Madame Cruzat there with her family?"

"Yes, Señor," Labadie replied.

"How are you all? Are you well?" Prince inquired.

To which Labadie answered, "At your service."

Prince now called, "Here are some letters from Don Francisco Cruzat and refreshments for the commandant's wife, and also for you, which your family, who are well, sent to you, with word that they are impatiently awaiting you at the Ilinueses. If you wish, come and get these letters and refreshments."

To add emphasis, Prince brandished some papers. Satisfied that all was in order, Labadie called for his crew to resume rowing and pull for shore. As they passed to the starboard of the moored vessel, Labadie ordered a rope thrown ashore. It was caught by Prince and wrapped around a tree.

As Labadie braced himself to step ashore and secure the letters, about 40 men leaped out of a ditch near Lafon's vessel. Bringing their rifles and carbines to their shoulders and taking aim, they called "in clear and intelligible French, 'Surrender!' You are our prisoners, and if you move or shake your head we will fire upon all of you and kill you, for we are each one of us in a position to fire and, therefore, surrender or you will be entirely sacrificed."

Stunned, Labadie shouted, "Who are you who ambush us in this fashion?"

"We are Englishmen. Surrender!" was the reply.

"Where is your flag?"

"Here," they said, displaying their arms, which they continued to aim.

"And your orders?"

They replied, "Here they are," gesturing to their "powder and ball in their guns."

His efforts to parley rejected, Labadie surrendered his craft and crew. Four of the British closed in on Labadie while the rest took possession of the big bateau.

Madame Cruzat observed that all were whites, except one "mestizo, and that they were also armed with clubs, knives, and daggers."

While one-half the British continued to hold their aim, their companions disarmed and bound their prisoners, "even to the young Don Joseph Cruzat, whom they treated with the same ignominy as the rest of the prisoners." One of the "inhuman brigands" rushed at Madame Cruzat, tomahawk raised, "with an impetuous movement as though he meant to cleave her skull, which the scoundrel was miraculously prevented from doing by the lady, who, with a courage truly heroic in a woman of her quality and delicate constitution, arrested the arm of her cruel adversary."

The prisoners secured, the British lowered their weapons and joined their companions aboard Labadie's boat. Casting off, they crossed to the east side of the Mississippi and entered Wolf River. Here they rendezvoused with their leader, James Colbert, accompanied by four whites and one Indian. To calm Madame Cruzat, Colbert told her that he "would respect her person and her sons; that they should not receive the slightest offence, and that he would have her conducted in safety to" St. Louis.[48]

Continuing, Captain Colbert explained that he did

> not wish to catch you, but your husband; he escaped from me when he recently came up from the capital and I was coming down from the Iron Mine, where, while making an attack upon that American Fort [Fort Jefferson] with five hundred Indians, I received three wounds which you see here . . ., and that was the reason why I could not capture your husband, although I saw him when I was coming down the river and he was going up.[49]

---

48. Ibid., pp. 24-25; Col. Estevan Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, in Houck, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:223; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 459; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 229-30.

49. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:31-32.

d) An Alarm Rouses the British

The bateau ascended Wolf River about one-fourth of a league, where she was pulled into the bank. Here the prisoners were sent ashore, the boatmen and slaves being bound by pairs. They were then escorted to a prison about three-quarters of a league from the landing. The route led through the woods and brambles, across several streams, and into the rugged bluff country.

Mindful of Madame Cruzat's station, Captain Colbert had her, her four young sons, her four slaves, and Labadie placed in a pirogue. Escorted by four Englishmen they were taken "through a deep creek . . . to a hut which served as a habitation of Captain Colbert."

Madame Cruzat recalled that Colbert's camp consisted of one large and two small huts, in addition to the men's prison. The latter was built of "trees placed one upon the other after the limbs had been cut off." It might have been two stories, and was covered with bark, with no other opening beyond a kind of wicket, which was "closed with a board, and then a log." There was no light, except that entering through "a breathing hole in the top."

The cabin occupied by Madame Cruzat, Labadie, and their companions was between the prison and the cabin Colbert shared with Francisco la Grange.

About 9 A.M., on May 3, the day after their capture, there was an alarm. Several unidentified pirogues were sighted coming down the Mississippi. Captain Colbert rushed to the cabin, shouting that Labadie and Fropé, the captain of his bateau, should be "taken with the rest of the prisoners," who had been rousted out of the prison. As they and their guards were disappearing from the clearing, Colbert cautioned Madame Cruzat to keep her children quiet. He soon returned and announced that he was going to send her and her children aboard the bateau. Madame Cruzat protested, complaining of "the difficulties that would confront her by being alone and without any knowledge of the region, that he should give her the proprietor and the patron." Colbert was agreeable, and he ordered Labadie and Fropé to accompany her. On reaching the landing, they went aboard the bateau.

Here, after several hours, they were rejoined by Colbert. He explained that the American boats were on a peaceful mission, because they had "left a white banner" on Lafon's boat. Nevertheless, Captain Colbert and nine or ten of his men spent the night on the bateau, guarding Madame Cruzat, her children and slaves, Labadie, and Fropé.

It was almost daybreak on the 4th when the rest of the prisoners returned from their forced march into the rugged bluff country.[50]

e) The Captors Divide the Loot

On May 4, 1782, all the prisoners embarked on Labadie's bateau, and the oarsmen took their stations. The vessel proceeded up Wolf River another 4 leagues. As the boat was breasting a powerful current, the run took the better part of a day and a half. At the foot of a steep hill, the vessel was moored, and the prisoners sent ashore. Here a new camp was established and rude huts erected. On the 7th a log jail, similar to the one in which the men had spent the night of the 2d, was erected. While the crew was locked in the jail, Madame Cruzat, her children, and Labadie were confined in one of the cabins.

The British now began unloading their prize. They placed the cargo on the ground in the open, except for the powder which was covered with oilskins. Four days were required to unload the big bateau, during which time the men gave "themselves over to continuous drunkenness" and all gave "repeated proofs of insubordination." A distribution of the booty, "except the powder, bullets, and brandy took place."

First to be divided were the 6,000 pesos, "belonging to the king and private individuals." Tableware silver and slaves were auctioned to the highest bidder. Clothing, firearms, and other merchandise were divided equally. The powder and brandy were retained and shared with 200 Chickasaw allies, who arrived on May 10 or 11. The Indians accepted their share of the plunder and took charge of some of the prisoners, but although Colbert's son, William, was their principal war chief, it seemed to Madame Cruzat that the redmen were tolerating the raiders' actions against the prisoners rather than participating in them.

As Labadie lamented, their captors did not leave "a single thing to the prisoners except what they had on them, and of that only the poorest."[51]

---

50. Ibid., pp. 25-26; Col. Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:225; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 459-61; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 430.

51. Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:228; Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:25-27.

f) The British Talk Too Much

James Colbert, who declared his goal was to revenge the ill-treatment given his countrymen, was not reticent about his plans. He talked freely. Boasting to Labadie he announced that he had been apprised of

> your coming, who you were, on what day you left New Orleans, what cargo you were bringing, in short everything that was necessary for me to know in order to seize you. . . . In proof of this you may see here a letter from the capital.

Colbert showed Labadie a letter, but as he could not read English, he did not know whether Colbert was telling the truth or bragging.[52]

Madame Cruzat likewise heard that Colbert had been alerted to their approach. Francisco la Grange told her that "they received news from the post of Natchez in six days and that messengers or postmen came from that place nearly every day, and they received the information of the going up of the boat by letter sent by some inhabitant" of New Orleans.[53]

The British complained of the "vexations" to which they had been subjected by Commandant de Villiers of Arkansas Post and Commandant Grand-Pré of Natchez. The former was in the habit of claiming from the hunters skins they had taken, and in supplying them with merchandise, demanded such exorbitant prices that it was impossible for them to make a living. Grand-Pré, they protested, had confiscated their goods, claiming they had participated in the Natchez rebellion.[54]

Colonel Alexander McGillivray, a mixed-blood leader of the Creeks and a British agent, reached Captain Colbert's camp in mid-May. Colbert, in McGillivray's presence, told Labadie

> If we had not taken you . . ., we would now be masters of the fort of Arkansas, for we would have fallen upon it if you had delayed some days; but we shall not fail within six or seven days to carry out this project. We know also that the

---

52. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:28.

53. Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:224.

54. Ibid., p. 230.

> fort of Natchez is difficult to take at this time, but we shall blockade it within a short time, and, as we attack, we shall make it easy for those inhabitants who are not satisfied with the Spanish government to retire with their families and slaves; and in the case of those who do not wish to do this, and who abandon their possessions, we will destroy everything with fire and blood. If we cannot take the fort by causing its garrison to suffer from lack of provisions and munitions, we shall abandon the site, and retire satisfied with having done all the harm possible.[55]

Continuing, Colbert stated that a Mr. Harrison (Hutchins), who had fled Natchez, had gone east to Georgia to see if he could bring back with him two regiments. Upon their anticipated arrival in the autumn, all the British in the Chickasaw Nation would rally on Colbert's command. Accompanied by the Chickasaws and a number of Choctaws, the British would attack the Ilinueses settlements.

We know, Colbert droned on, that while St. Louis is fortified, "Ste. Geneviève is open on all sides." The Spanish garrison was "very small," while the Americans had withdrawn their troops from the Illinois Country. "If we cannot possess ourselves of that country we will at least cause a general destruction."

Colbert would have continued his monologue, but he was interrupted by Colonel McGillivray. Breaking into the conversation, McGillivray remarked, "You talk very freely, and are making our projects known to a man who, if he is given his liberty today or tomorrow, will not forget to publish our intention, which will not be in any way favorable to us in carrying it out."[56]

Although McGillivray did not enjoy the dominant position he was destined to gain among the Indians of the region during the next decade, he demonstrated a better grasp of the situation than Colbert. Following his May 15 arrival in the camp "a better defined program of action was launched." McGillivray had come from Savannah by way

---

55. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:27-29; John W. Caughey, McGillivray of the Creeks (Norman, 1938), p. 16.

56. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:29.

of the Chickasaw towns, and, according to Labadie, brought orders "which seemed to emanate from Monr. Tranble who is in the said Chickasaw nation."[57]

g) Labadie Describes Captain Colbert

Colbert, Labadie observed, was about 60 years old, possessed of good health, and a strong constitution. An active man, despite his years, he had a "violent temper," and was capable of "enduring the greatest hardships." He had lived among the Chickasaws for 40 years and boasted that he was owner of a "fine house" and "some hundred and fifty" blacks. He said he had several sons by Chickasaw women, who were "very important chiefs in that nation."[58]

Labadie found Colbert a violent Hispanophobe. "This man," he declared,

> is one of the greatest enemies of our nation, against which he is so angered that, notwithstanding the constant supplications of myself and Madame Cruzat, he would never consent to set at liberty the soldier of this detachment, Joseph Crespo. He said in an insolent, ironic, and contemptuous tone, that the latter was a native Spaniard, and that as such he wished to keep him, for he esteemed the people of this nation highly, and that he wished all the prisoners were the same.[59]

h) Labadie Keeps His Eyes Open

In the days following their capture, "many rebels came and went," and Labadie estimated their total strength at 150. Several of them bragged that they could field a force of 300 "whites, of different nations, English, American, and French, besides . . . Francisco de Grange, who speaks many languages, and who deserted from the fort of Mobile, where he was a Spanish soldier."

There were also, Labadie learned, "some hundred Negro slaves" who belonged to the rebels. These, he believed, included "the indentured servants of Monsieur Lafon, Lebran, Petiton, and Basco." The blacks were observed to "take up goods, divide them, and dispose of them."

---

57. Ibid., p. 32; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 232.

58. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:31-32.

59. Ibid., p. 30.

Most of Colbert's command consisted "of people from Natchez, Arkansas, Ylinueses," many of whom were known to Labadie.

All that he saw led him to conclude that "the Chickasaw nation and part of the Choctaws are not much inclined . . . toward the rebels, except towards the chiefs, Tranble, Colbert, Cilly, and McGillivray."[60]

The rebels, it was learned, also had a camp of 18 skin-and-bark huts on the west side of the Mississippi, near the site of Labadie's capture. Outposts had been established on the left bank of the Mississippi at Dunulieu Bluff, 15 leagues above Chickasaw Bluffs, and at a site an equal distance below the mouth of Wolf River to keep them apprised of traffic on the river.[61]

i) Other Successes Scored by the Rebel Blockade

Labadie and his companions learned that the rebels had captured several other boats. In the fourth week of April, they had seized Lafon's boat bound downstream from Ste. Geneviève with a cargo of corn and flour. An American member of the crew had joined Colbert's band, while the other nine were confined in the jail with Labadie's people. Other victims included a bercha belonging to Thomas Prince, who had also joined the rebels and had played a leading role in their capture; a pirogue from Arkansas Post manned by soldiers and the post baker; and an American scow loaded with flour.[62]

Madame Cruzat and Labadie were infuriated to learn that José Meson and his four American traveling companions had stopped at Colbert's camp before meeting them, but had been allowed to proceed on giving their word that they would not warn anyone of the danger. Meson had also shared his "provisions and rum" with the rebels.[63]

---

60. Ibid., p. 32.

61. Ibid., pp. 32-33; Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:223.

62. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 460; Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:223.

63. Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:229; Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:33.

j) Colbert Releases Some of the Prisoners

The British, during their 19-day captivity, held frequent meetings aboard the bateau and in Captain Colbert's hut. From these meetings there "resulted many orders, and injudicious and opposing decisions, which most of the time were not executed, by the unheard-of insubordination of the individuals who made up the party."

Some of the whites wanted to send Madame Cruzat and the other prisoners to the Chickasaw Nation to be held until ransomed by the release of Captain Blommart and the other Natchez rebels. To this neither Captain Colbert nor his son William, a Chickasaw war chief, would agree. Becoming disgusted with the conduct of some of his men, Captain Colbert remarked that if not for his fears that some misfortune might befall Madame Cruzat and her children, he would abandon "such disobedient people."[64]

William Colbert, the Chickasaw chief, advised Madame Cruzat that it would be better for her to return to New Orleans rather than expose herself to the dangers incident to attempting to reach St. Louis.[65]

On the day of his arrival in camp, Colonel McGillivray drafted a "Parole of Honour," whereby Labadie and nine fellow prisoners were to be released to go to New Orleans. It read:

> We the Subscribers, prisoners of War to his Britannick Majesty, taken by Capt. James Colbert, do hereby engage upon our Word & Honor (comprehending therein, all that is good & sacred in men) that we will remain, and consider ourselves as prisoners of War, to return to any of the British Dominions if called upon, unless Exchanged for the men under mentioned, it is hereby understood that we not only Bind ourselves, but the Spanish Nation, whose Subjects we are.

John Blommart	Jacob Winfree	Wm. Eason
John Alston	John Turner	Parker Caridine
Joseph Holmes	John Green	John Smith[66]

---

64. Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:227-28; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 461.

65. Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:228.

66. "Parole of Honour," May 15, 1782, in Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:220. Turner, unlike the others, was not a prisoner. He had been indited, however, and was subject to arrest if apprehended.

Colbert and his men were induced to ransom Labadie's bateau for 400 pesos, with Madame Cruzat signing a note for this sum, which was represented by a three-month promissory note to be paid "to Mr. Blommart when he comes off for the Chickasaws." Labadie at the same time ransomed one of his blacks for a note for 250 pesos, payable in New Orleans.

On May 22, 1782, Colbert released Labadie, Fropé, seven crewmen, Madame Cruzat, her four sons, and a black woman belonging to her. Labadie was handed a letter to Governor Gálvez, explaining the proposed exchange, stressing the humanity and consideration Colbert had shown his prisoners, and protesting "a matter that is prevalent in West Florida, particularly at Mobill, that is offering Great rewards to Indians for the Heads of particular Men in the Indian Country."[67]

k) Labadie Travels to St. Louis by way of Arkansas Post

Glad to be free, but saddened at leaving 43 of their comrades (including nine from Lafon's boat, four survivors of the Arkansas Post pirogue, and a sergeant and four privates captured by Colbert at Mobile), they cast off, proceeding down Wolf River. Turning into the Mississippi, they headed for New Orleans. About 30 leagues above the mouth of the Arkansas, they encountered the three boats commanded by Louis de Villars, Francisco Vallé, and Eugenio Pourré.

Madame Cruzat and Labadie violated their paroles, telling of their capture and the dangers to be encountered in passing Chickasaw Bluffs. The captains determined to return to the outpost at the mouth of the Arkansas. From there Labadie sent his bateau to New Orleans with Madame Cruzat and her children. With them they took a report of the incident prepared by Labadie and addressed to Governor-General Gálvez.

Labadie then proceeded to Arkansas Post, where he reported to Commandant de Villiers. While he was at the post, there was an alarm, when the corporal commanding the outpost near the mouth of the river notified Commandant de Villiers that "some people who appeared to be enemies had been seen in the immediate neighborhood of the old fort." Captain de Villiers responded by recalling his five-man outpost.

On May 30, the day before Labadie left Arkansas Post, Capt. James Willing arrived by boat from the Falls of the Ohio.

---

67. Colbert to Governor of Louisiana, May 15, 1782, in Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:219.

Willing reported that "the French and Americans were accomplishing great marvels; that General Washington was gathering his army in the north of the American continent, and it was believed that it was for the purpose of" invading Canada.

Continuing, Willing stated that he had been exchanged for Lt. Gov. Henry Hamilton, who had surrendered Fort Sackville to George Rogers Clark's command in February 1779. Hamilton, he reported, had returned to his former headquarters at Detroit. There he was rallying a force of regulars and savages with which to attack the Spanish settlements on the Mississippi.[68]

It was decided that the three boats should resume their run up the Mississippi, and Labadie left Arkansas Post on May 31 for the mouth of the river. Seeing that Commandant de Villiers was too ill to discharge his duties, Lieutenant de Villars, as an officer in the Louisiana Regiment, remained on the Arkansas to assist in the defense of Arkansas Post in the event that Captain Colbert sought to make good his boast.[69]

Madame de Villiers, arriving at Arkansas Post in late May, took her husband aboard their boat, intending to take him to New Orleans, where he could receive better medical attention. They reached Natchez on June 9, where the captain probably died on July 9, 1782.[70]

The three boats, on one of which Labadie had taken passage, passed Chickasaw Bluffs without difficulty and reached St. Louis on June 29, 1782, at 10 P.M.[71]

Labadie on July 5 appeared before Colonel Cruzat and made a report on his difficulties. Meanwhile Madame Cruzat, accompanied by Madame de Villars, had reached New Orleans on May 30 in Labadie's bateau. That afternoon she provided Acting-Governor Miró with

---

68. Declarations of Picoté de Belestre, Francisco Vallé, and Silbestr Labadie, made at St. Louis, July 5 and 8, 1782, in Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:34-39.

69. Declaration of Madame Cruzat, May 30, 1782, in Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:229.

70. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 677.

71. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:26-27, 33; Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:229.

an exhaustive account of what had occurred in the weeks since she had left New Orleans in late February.[72]

4. The Spanish Counterattack

a) Acting-Governor Miró Outlines a Course of Action

After studying Madame Cruzat's declaration, Acting-Governor Miró decided against acceeding to Captain Colbert's request for an exchange of prisoners. Writing Governor Gálvez, he asked authority to organize a 1,400-man expedition (1,000 regulars and 400 militia), reinforced by Indians, to lead against Colbert's band.

While awaiting Gálvez's reply, he proposed to proceed to Natchez with 200 regulars and "try to calm the inhabitants by tact treatment, and to instill respect by increasing the garrison there which" numbered 173 effectives. Much of the difficulty, he believed, was caused by Grand-Pré's severity, such as the arrest and transportation of John Smith and Parker Caridine to New Orleans for no other reason than that they were suspected of corresponding with some of the fugitives. Miró, in hopes of conciliating and weaning away from Colbert many of his partisans, released Smith and Caridine. He would release Mrs. Judah Holston, for whose return Colbert had offered five men. Mrs. Holston was elderly, and the charge against her was that of harboring fugitives.

Miró would have Colbert pursued and captured by Indians and woodsmen, but if he were captured, Miró was at a loss how to handle him, since Colbert claimed to have a captain's commission signed by General Campbell. Not having taken an oath of allegiance to the Spanish Crown, Colbert could not be considered in the same category as the Natchez rebels.

By inviting the "Great Chief" of the Chickasaws to come and "give him the hand," Colonel Miró hoped to make him a client of the Spanish or prevail upon him to remain neutral. The "extensive territories" added by Governor Gálvez to "His Catholic Majesty's" domain east of the Mississippi made it mandatory for Spain, Colonel Miró observed, to establish two new forts on that river's left bank, one at Chickasaw Bluffs and another between there and Natchez to prevent organization of additional bands such as Colbert's. Arkansas Post, he pointed out, might as well be abandoned, especially since the fort had been relocated 10 or 12 leagues up the Arkansas to avoid the annual inundations. Situated as it was some distance

---

72. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:34; Colonel Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:229.

from the Mississippi, the new fort did not protect river commerce.[73]

Governor Gálvez on July 21, 1782, approved all of Miró's proposals, except for the punitive expedition. He advised Miró not to regard Colbert as a captain in the British establishment, nor to release Captain Blommart who was to be transported, along with other leaders of the revolt then in custody, to Mexico or Cuba. While approving the clemency extended by Miró, Gálvez cautioned him to hold most of the relatives and friends of the rebels, so it would be possible to retaliate if any prisoners held by Colbert were abused.[74]

b) Miró Negotiates with Colbert

Acting-Governor Miró, not waiting for Gálvez's reply, had left New Orleans with 100 men on June 17 and had landed at Natchez on July 1. He remained there until late in October. When Miró returned to New Orleans, he could report, "the reënforced garrison had reassured the people of the district."[75]

On his arrival at Natchez in July, Miró had sent two Choctaw chiefs into their nation with a message inviting all chiefs to meet with the acting-governor and make peace. They also carried Miró's reply to Colbert's proposals for an exchange of prisoners. It was pointed out that Colbert's captives were not prisoners of war, because Colbert had not been commissioned by George III to wage war. As all of West Florida had been surrendered to Governor-General Gálvez, Blommart and the other Natchez rebels were political, not military, prisoners as Colbert had contended, and could not be exchanged. All negotiations for their release must be conducted through the governor of Jamaica.[76]

---

73. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 462-63; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 223-24.

74. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 463.

75. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 234.

76. Ibid., pp. 235-36.

Colbert replied on October 6, 1782. After acknowledging receipt of Miró's letter, he wrote:

> Wherein you mention as follows Concerning the late Inhabitants of the Notches Which you Term as Reb-[les] & Signifys in your As I harboured them Rebles. Now Sir you Ought to be the Last Person that Should Even mention Anything Of that Nature to me When you Upheld Mr. Willing in Robing & plundering the Inhabtents On the Mississippi before war was Ever declared between the Crown of great Brittain & his Catholick majisty notwithstanding I never mein to Uphold Or Harbour Rebles Of Any kind. for those People that Left the notches I do not Look Upon them as Rebles Neither do I emagine they were ever your Subjects therefore I can but Look on them as Other Inglish Subjects. you Signify in your Letter as though I had no right to go to war Without an authaurity. I would have you to know that I have as much Authority to distress my kings Enymys as you have to maintain Notches Or Any Other place in behalf of your King therefore The Prisoners I now have & any Others I may take you may depend I shall Look On As prisoners of war & Keep Them As Such till Proper Exchanges are made for them I am well Satisfyed with your Humanity in Regard Of not Setting the Indians On White People. I have prevaild With my Indians to make Peace both With you & the Americans & with all the world as it is proper that no Indians Ought to interfare with what Concerns none but white [Men.] As for the White People that Left Notches I much blame them for Not Remaining in Peace till war was desided between great Britain & Spain. Do Not think that Capn. Blommart had no Authority for what he did for he as well as many others had from Genl. Campbell--Therefore I desire you will Return the Prisoners I wrote for & at the same time I shall Return those I have here. If not I shall detain them As Such further orders--I shall Send Monsr. Laffunt to his Parents as hs is A youth I wish Well & having No Oppirtunity of Education here I would Not wish to keep him. I hope you will make

Some Retalliation to the Indian that takes him in--If you Should have Any Occation to write Any More to me, Please to write in Inglish Or Send an Interpreter with it having None here

I am Sir Yours &c
JAMES COLBURT
Captn. in his Majestys Serv.[77]

c) Colonel Cruzat Intimidates the Chickasaws

Colonel Cruzat at St. Louis had moved against Colbert's band from upriver even before he learned of his wife's adventures. Advised that disaffected persons were planning to intercept and capture Labadie's bateau, Cruzat on June 2, 1782, sent Diego Blanco and 25 men to meet and escort the craft upstream. This was too late, as the boat had been captured on May 2. Three days later, on June 5, a party of Loups reached Ste. Genevieve from the Chickasaw Nation with word of the capture of Labadie's and Lafon's vessels.

Cruzat reacted by ordering Captain Dubreuil, who had reached St. Louis with the supply boat, to Ste. Genevieve to take steps to recover the boats and rescue the crews and passengers. After questioning the Loups, Dubreuil dispatched Lt. Carlos Salles, eight militiamen, and some Indians (Loups, Peorias, and Kaskaskias) downriver. Reinforced by Lieutenant Blanco's detachment, they descended the Mississippi to Chickasaw Bluffs. Here they landed, and a patrol found and fired Colbert's deserted camp.

The whites then returned upstream to Ox Island, near the mouth of the Ohio River, while the Indians advanced southeast into the Chickasaw Country, determined to recover the prisoners. When at the end of the planned 25 days the Indians failed to arrive at the Ox Island rendezvous, the Spaniards returned to Ste. Genevieve, where Dubreuil reported to Colonel Cruzat.[78]

Colonel Cruzat meanwhile was endeavoring to detach the Chickasaws from their support of the rebels. He exerted pressure to get the Chickasaws to renew the alliance made with the Spanish the previous year. To do so, he made use of "all the strategems and subterfuges" he had learned in his negotiations

---

77. Ibid., p. 236.

78. Ibid., p. 237; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 464.

with the redmen. He knew the Chickasaws were "always at war with all those that dwell on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, especially with the Kickapoos and Mascutens, who are the ones most feared by the Chickasaws." As soon as he learned of the capture of the boats, he

> secretly and underhandedly raised a large party of Kickapoo and Mascuten Indians and excited them to war against the Chickasaws and rebels, telling them that the latter, who were in the Chickasaw Nation, had captured the Boats bringing the presents for all the Indians in this region and that it was necessary to avenge themselves of a robbery that had been done on themselves. A proposition of that nature, which I accompanied with a present in proportion to the end in view, inflamed them to such an extent that they left immediately to attack the Chickasaws and rebels fired with the desire for vengeance which they always breathe.[79]

When the Indians sent by Dubreuil returned to Ste. Geneviève from their patrol into the Chickasaw Nation on July 25, they brought with them six Spaniards. Three of the men were soldiers of the Arkansas Post garrison captured by Colbert's people on the St. Francis River on January 11, another was the post baker captured on the same craft, the fifth was from Lafon's bateau, and the sixth was one of the soldiers Colbert and his sons had made prisoner at Mobile on June 5, 1780.

The Indians reported that six Chickasaw chiefs and 35 warriors, whom they had seen, "promised in the name of Panimatajá not to try to help the rebels and pirates, but to try to expel the bandits from their territory." They wished Cruzat "to intervene with force and energy . . . to pacify the Indians of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, who seem to want war," and to put a stop to the hostilities being committed against their villages.

Writing Acting-Governor Miró on August 8, 1782, Colonel Cruzat proudly commented on the successful manner in which he had employed the big stick:

> The end at which I aimed in intimidating the Chickasaws being obtained, I told them that all the Nations they had mentioned, seeing that on their lands and in their very sight, they had allowed a

---

79. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 464-65.

band of rascal brigands to capture the Boat in which came all the presents for them, had been so enraged against the rebels and the Chickasaws that had I not detained several large parties, multitudes of Indians would already have made forays against their Towns and put all to fire and Blood. But if they promised to do what I asked of them I would also work actively to obtain for them the peace they desired, and that I was sure I could secure it because all the Nations whose valor they feared obeyed what I ordered and Followed my desires, and in proof of this I promised to rescue the Chickasaws who were Prisoners in the Kickapoo and Mascuten Nations if they wanted to return to their Nation, provided the Chickasaws would do their part. I do not know how to express to Your Lordship the Satisfaction my reply gave them, the thanks they gave me, and the happiness they showed at knowing that the said Indians would be restored to their homes.[80]

Colonel Cruzat's use of threats was rewarded by a promise on the part of some of the Chickasaw leaders to expel the "bandits" from their nation and "to clear the banks of the Mississippi of all malefactors . . . to show that the English no longer had their friendship, and to make evident their sincere affection for the Spaniards." They were assured by Cruzat that if they lived up to their promises, Spain would be "reciprocal and generous." He gave the Chickasaws a present "in keeping with the . . . circumstances and the imperious necessity . . . of keeping that Nation devoted by every means possible in order to reduce the rebels and Pirates" who dwelled there.[81]

d) Lieutenant de Villars Sends a Patrol to Chickasaw Bluffs

Lieutenant de Villars, on taking command at Arkansas Post, had also moved against Colbert's band. A Quapaw war party was sent to Chickasaw Bluffs and found on the riverbank eight casks of rum.[82]

---

80. Ibid., pp. 465-66; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 237.

81. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 466.

82. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 677.

e) Governor Gálvez Releases the Natchez Rebels

The activities of Captain Colbert and his partisans brought down on the Natchez prisoners harsher treatment rather than their release. Heretofore they had been treated leniently, being permitted to live in more comfortable quarters than those provided in the New Orleans calabozo.[83]

Captain Blommart's daughter, learning of the proposal to send the prisoners to Cuba or Mexico, petitioned Acting-Governor Miró:

> . . . in the hour of taking leave perhaps forever, of my fond, tender and affectionate Father, The unfortunate Mr. Blomart--I dare not (however much I wish it) petition for Pardon, but let me at least intercede with Your Excellency for Your Compassion in so far as to Order his Irons to be taken off. This will be an act of great pity, and give much Relief and Ease to him, and my consolation will be extreme.

If Miró replied, his answer has been lost. The Spaniards soon changed their plans, however, and determined that the situation no longer required the transfer of the prisoners. They were retained in New Orleans until April 1783.[84]

By January 1783, when Spain, Great Britain, and France agreed on preliminary articles for a treaty concluding the war, the imprisonment of the leaders of the Natchez rebellion had acquired a different prospective. The Consejo de Indias had already sanctioned Gálvez's policy, whereby he had refrained from inflicting the death penalty, the usual punishment for treason.[85]

The arrival in April in Jamaica of Prince William, Duke of Lancaster, offered Governor Gálvez another opportunity to demonstrate his leniency. Writing Prince William on the 6th, he reported that

---

83. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 238.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 667-68. The 9th Article read: "Prisoners taken respectively by the arms of His Catholic Majesty and [those] of His Brittanic Majesty, by sea and by land, shall immediately upon the ratification of the definitive treaty be restored reciprocally and in good faith, without exception."

imprisoned at New Orleans were the leader of the Natchez uprising and some of his accomplices, "who, having broken their word and their oath of fealty, are condemned to death by a council of war on the basis of just and equitable laws; the execution of the sentence waits only the approval that I am empowered to give."

Would Prince William, he inquired, "accept the thanks and the lives of these men?" If so, Governor Gálvez was prepared to hand them "over at once to whatever vessel your highness may send to Louisiana."[86]

Prince William was delighted with Governor Gálvez's gesture, which he described as "truly characteristic of such a Brave and Gallant Nation as the Spanish." A ship would be dispatched "to Louisiana to fetch the prisoners, who I trust will ever remember with gratitude your clemency."[87]

The day before he made his gesture, Governor Gálvez had forwarded orders to New Orleans to release the Natchez prisoners "on the single condition that under no excuse shall they return to the territory of that colony." On April 28 the six prisoners (Blommart, Winfree, Eason, Alston, Williams, and Benjamin) signed a parole not to leave New Orleans until authorized by the governor. Colonel Miró then gave them liberty of the city. A British ship soon arrived to carry them to Jamaica, and the incident was closed except for approval by the Spanish court of the release and the way it was effected.[88]

D. Captain Colbert Raids Arkansas Post

1. Colbert's Band Renews its Attacks on Shipping

Little was heard of Captain Colbert and his band during the summer and autumn of 1782. Acting-Governor Miró's general amnesty, and his and Colonel Cruzat's negotiations with the Indians, succeeded in bringing in some of the Natchez refugees, but they did not destroy Colbert's command. Fugitives returning to Natchez told Miró that Colbert's force was disbanding; that there had never been more than 100 British among the Chickasaws capable of bearing arms; and that news of the evacuation of Savannah by the British army had sapped their morale and satisfied them that they could expect no reinforcements. Forty of the partisans had accordingly left the Chickasaw Nation to settle on Cumberland River, and others planned

---

86. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 238-39.

87. Ibid., p. 239; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 668-69.

88. Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 240.

to collect what peltry they could and make for St. Augustine in East Florida.

Of the 100 whites in the Chickasaw Nation, only about 30, Miró's informants stated, belonged to Colbert's band; the others were traders who did not want to participate in his schemes. Following the harvest, Captain Colbert had sought to rally 200 Chickasaw warriors to join his band in a raid on Arkansas Post, or to resume attacks on boats ascending the Mississippi. The chiefs, desirous of peace, had discouraged the young firebrands, and Colbert had to forego his plans, because with whites alone he lacked necessary manpower.[89]

By December 1782 Captain Colbert and his band were back at their old haunts. An American bercha was captured. At the beginning of the new year, they seized an American flatboat, whose crew joined them, and attacked a boat commanded by Benito Vásquez.[90]

2. Captain Dubreuil Takes Command

Meanwhile, Acting-Governor Miró had satisfied himself that Arkansas Post had little to fear from Captain Colbert, and nothing to worry about from the Chickasaws. In accordance with Miró's orders, Lieutenant de Villars dispatched the riverman Lejeunesse to St. Louis to ask Captain Dubreuil to send down a bateau-load of flour and cornmeal for the garrison. Miró reinforced the garrison with 33 men, drawn from those he had brought with him to Natchez in July. These soldiers of the Louisiana Regiment would replace the militiamen called out by de Villars following the alarm caused by the capture of Labadie's bateau and the word brought by Labadie and his companions that Colbert planned an early descent on Arkansas Post.[91]

Colonel Miró was distressed to learn that the carriages of three of the four cannon at the post had rotted, and that the stockade had not been pierced for embrasures. He accordingly shipped up from Natchez four naval carriages for the cannons. With the carriages went Antonio Soler, an ex-sergeant in the artillery, to cut embrasures in the stockade, mount the cannons, and instruct the garrison in their use.[92]

---

89. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 463-64.

90. Ibid., p. 466.

91. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 681-82.

92. Ibid., p. 682.

Captain Dubreuil reached Arkansas Post from the Ilinueses on January 5, 1783, and within 48 hours, having completed the necessary paperwork and inventories, assumed command of Fort Carlos III.[93]

3. Arkansas Post Prepares for an Attack

a) Colonel Miró Seeks to Calm Dubreuil's Fears

On January 11 Boyer, a hunter, arrived at the post with alarming news. On the Mississippi, near La Fourche, he had come upon a campsite. From the signs he estimated the campers at between 60 and 80 British. He also saw signs of Indians, apparently on their way to the Illinois Country.

Dubreuil concluded that the 25 brigands who had recently attacked Benito Vásquez's boat had belonged to this force. This information was forwarded to Acting-Governor Miró and Colonel Cruzat, to enable them to take precautions to guard shipping on the river. When spring supplies were sent upriver from New Orleans to St. Louis, they went up in a convoy of heavily armed bateaux manned by 300 men.[94]

In an effort to learn the whereabouts and intentions of the force reported by Boyer, Commandant Dubreuil sent Chief Angaska with 20 of his Quapaws to scout toward the Mississippi. The other Quapaw chiefs, in whom he had little confidence, had "gone off to hunt on lands farther away." If Angaska learned anything that merited Colonel Miró's attention, Dubreuil would send a pirogue racing downstream to alert him of the enemy's plans.[95]

Dubreuil's message of January 11 reached New Orleans in 4 weeks. When he replied on February 5, Acting-Governor Miró sought to calm his subordinate's fears. He observed that he had "more than sufficient reasons to believe that all those alarms are false since the Chicachas remain quiet, and those who attacked Don Benito Vasquez scarcely" numbered 15. Captain Dubreuil would not dispatch any more patrols, such as Angaska's, unless the foe was threatening Arkansas Post.

---

93. Receipt signed by Dubreuil, Jan. 7, 1783; De Villars to Miró, Jan. 12, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

94. Dubreuil to Miró, Jan. 11, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 466.

95. Dubreuil to Miró, Jan. 17, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

To protect the convoy currently en route to the Ilinueses, Dubreuil was to employ the Quapaw chiefs and 40 to 50 of their warriors.[96]

Miró, on the same date, vetoed Lieutenant de Villars's request that he be allowed to remain at Arkansas Post. He could see no reason for two officers to be present at a post with no larger a garrison than that at Fort Carlos III. De Villars would resume his journey to the Ilinueses, interrupted 8 months before by his detail as temporary replacement for Commandant de Villiers.[97]

b) Chief Angaska Returns from Patrol

Chief Angaska and his warriors returned to Arkansas Post in mid-February. Calling on Captain Dubreuil, Angaska reported that they had seen no signs of intruders. On the Mississippi they had sighted two pirogues bound downstream from the Ilinueses. The boatmen had told Angaska that "they had scattered the rebellious ones, and that there was nothing to fear on the Mississippi."

He had also learned that the American hunters from the post operating on White River had fled the area, making off with horses belonging to a number of French hunters and absconding on their creditors at the post. This led Dubreuil to suspect that they might be in league with Colbert and his partisans.[98]

c) The Situation Gets Worse

On February 21, 1783, Baptiste Pinguet, one of Labadie's boatmen, reached Fort Carlos III, having escaped 6 days before from the brigands. He had been accompanied by Baptiste la Framboise, who had remained on their boat at the mouth of the river.

At the time of their escape, Pinguet told Captain Dubreuil, the pirates were encamped 3 leagues above the mouth of Wolf River, and they had boasted of plans to capture the supply boats en route from New Orleans to St. Louis. When he escaped, they numbered about 30, but they expected to be reinforced by 100 men from the Ohio River

---

96. Miró to Dubreuil, Feb. 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

97. Miró to de Villars, Feb. 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

98. Dubreuil to Miró, Feb. 18, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

led by a Captain George. In addition, they would be joined by about 200 Chickasaw warriors led by William Colbert.

Besides discussing the capture of the supply boats, the pirates had talked of plans to come and take Arkansas Post.

When he relayed this information to Acting-Governor Miró, Commandant Dubreuil reported that 2 weeks before he had granted an American, Suiger, a passport to move to Natchez with his family. Before doing so, however, Dubreuil had investigated Suiger's background since his arrival in the village to assure himself that he was an honorable man.

Suiger, however, hoodwinked the Spaniards. Instead of going downriver, he slipped off and joined Captain Colbert's partisans.

Dubreuil, satisfied that Suiger knew that most of the hunters were absent, creating a serious detriment to the defense of the fort, turned a working party out to erect a curtain on the river front where the caving bank had toppled a section of the stockade.

In reporting this to Acting-Governor Miró, Captain Dubreuil observed: "I hope that it shall be the shelter from the insults of a rabble without discipline . . . and that the expense will merit your approval."[99]

d) Chief Angaska Leaves on Another Patrol

To secure additional information on the activities of Colbert's band, and to insure a successful passage of the point of danger by the spring convoy, Captain Dubreuil on March 1 sent Chief Angaska with 23 of his Quapaw warriors up the Mississippi to reconnoiter toward Chickasaw Bluffs. They were accompanied by 11 white hunters. They were to look for the pirates' camp and determine their number. If the pirates had not been reinforced, they were to attack and destroy them.[100]

Captain Dubreuil would have sent more volunteers with the redmen, but the food situation, because of the previous year's poor harvest, was critical at the post. "The whites and the Indians" had been "obliged to eat roots from the mountains." His troops were almost out of corn.

---

99. Dubreuil to Miró, Feb. 21, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

100. Dubreuil to Miró, Mar. 1, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

Late in March good news came with a message from Colonel Cruzat that a boat was about to cast off from the Ilinuesus with food supplies for Arkansas Post.[101]

4. The April 17, 1783, Raid

a) Colbert's Flotilla Moves Against Arkansas Post

By early April 1783, Capt. James Colbert was finally ready to undertake the attack on Arkansas Post, about which he had been talking for almost a year. His force, numbering 11 mixed-bloods and Indians (many of them his sons and nephews), five blacks, one Frenchman, and 64 British and Americans, boarded a keelboat and Lafon's bateau.[102] The latter, during the winter, had been converted into a gunboat of sorts, although she mounted no cannons. At the camp on Wolf River, Colbert's people had raised two gunwales as protection against musketry.

Below Chickasaw Bluffs, Colbert's fleet overtook 16 pirogues of Americans en route down the Mississippi to settle in the Natchez District. About 20 leagues above the mouth of the Arkansas, Colbert ordered the settlers to land and wait for 6 days, after which they would be free to continue.

Near the mouth of White River, into which Colbert turned his fleet, the partisans captured a bercha bound upstream, manned by eight or ten men and loaded with rum and sugar. A bercha from New Orleans, with a cargo of powder, and two pirogues from Arkansas Post, loaded with beaver pelts and bear grease, were also taken.

The Mississippi was in flood, while the White and Arkansas rivers were very low. Consequently, the water in the lower reaches of these rivers, affected by conditions on the Mississippi, had pooled, backing up for many miles. With muffled oars Colbert's flotilla sailed up White River, passed through the cutoff, and ascended the Arkansas.

---

101. Dubreuil to Miró, Mar. 26, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

102. Captain Dubreuil placed the strength of Colbert's force at 100 whites and 14 Indians and mixed-bloods. The figures used in the text were extracted by D. C. Corbitt from the Declaration of Malcom Clark, a participant, in Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 3, No. 8.

A pirogue manned by some of Colbert's Chickasaw kin scouted the river ahead of the fleet. They stopped at Uzutiuhi, the Quapaw village 10 miles below Arkansas Post, early on the evening of April 16. They told Angaska, who had returned from his reconnaissance toward Chickasaw Bluffs, that they were "coming with a dozen Americans to shake hands with Captain Dubreuil" in the morning. They presented Angaska with Wolf River rum, and he decided to wait until the 17th to tell Dubreuil that friends were en route to visit him. It was after midnight when the flotilla, oars muffled with leather, passed the sleeping village.[103]

b) The Raiders Surprise and Sweep the Habitant Coast

The flotilla pulled into the north bank of the Arkansas at Red Bluff, a short distance downstream from the habitants' fields. Here the partisans landed. After detailing seven men, including Malcom Clark, to guard the boats, Captain Colbert set out for the post. It was 2:30 A.M., on April 17, 1783, when they closed in on the habitant coast.[104] Eight years before, the shots heard around the world had been fired on Lexington Green.

Commandant Dubreuil, having heard "nothing more of the pirates" since March 26, was asleep in his quarters. Lieutenant de Villars, Acting-Governor Miró's orders to the contrary, was still at the post. Upon Dubreuil's arrival in January, de Villars had turned over to him the commandant's quarters and he, his wife, and two servants had moved "themselves to a lodge of Indian style, also within" the stockade. A wind storm on April 12 had demolished this house, and the de Villars household had gone to live in a dwelling "on the habitant coast," one-half mile downstream from Fort Carlos III.

Although Sergt. Alexo Pastor and eight privates were on guard, Colbert and his partisans gained the habitant coast without being challenged. Breaking down the door of the dwelling in which the de Villars household slept, the raiders made them prisoners. Six other residents and their families were captured, while four habitant families escaped into the woods. The women and children from the hunting village, whose husbands and fathers had not returned from the winter's hunt, fled on the first alarm to the fort. They had been awakened by shots and shouts.

---

103. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 466-67; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 682-84; Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

104. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 467.

Sergeant Pastor and his men had encountered the raiders as they roamed across the habitant coast. Darkness added to the confusion. Men fired at flashes, and a great amount of powder was burned. Outnumbered, the Spanish were badly beaten. Two of the patrol were killed, another and one of the habitants' blacks wounded, and five captured. Only Sergeant Pastor escaped. Breaking away from three partisans, he fled to the fort, which he entered by crawling through an embrasure. All this transpired within 30 minutes.[105]

c) The Partisans Invest the Fort

At the first gunfire, Captain Dubreuil turned out the 40-man garrison. The troops, as the long roll was beaten, manned their battle stations within the Fort Carlos III stockade. Colbert's partisans, after occupying the village and mopping up the habitant coast, moved upon the fort. Because of its unsatisfactory location, the raiders were able to make a covered approach to within "pistol shot" of the stockade. Taking cover in a ravine, they blazed away. From 3 to 9 A.M., they peppered the stockade with small-arms fire. The defenders remained under cover, and the lead balls thudded harmlessly into the "evergreen oak of which the palisades were made."

To discourage the foe from rushing the fort, the Spaniards employed their four 4-pounder cannons, discharging them through the embrasures. As the besiegers had taken cover in a nearby gully, the more than 300 projectiles fired at them caused no casualties, but kept them from carrying off booty they had removed from the homes of the habitants.

Fearful that the raiders might have artillery with which to breach the stockade, Captain Dubreuil by mid-morning determined to rout them from the ground they held near the fort. He alerted Sergeant Pastor, nine privates of the Louisiana Regiment, and four Quapaws to make a sortie. When the gate was opened, they were to give a war whoop and dash toward the enemy.

Just as the Spaniards and their Indian allies were bracing themselves for the charge, Commandant Dubreuil sighted one of Colbert's officers approaching, carrying a flag of truce. He was accompanied by Doña Marie Luisa de Villars. They advanced by the road opposite the one down which the sortie was to be made. Captain Dubreuil called, "Cease Fire!"

Taking fright, the officer fled, leaving the lady to deliver the message.

---

105. Ibid.; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 684; Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

When the commandant received Doña Marie, she handed him a message from Captain Colbert, written in French. It read:

> M. Le Capitane Colbert is sent by his superiors to take the post of the Arkansas and by this power Sir, he demands that you capitulate. It is his plan to take it with all his forces, having already taken all the inhabitants, together with the Lieut. Luis de Villars and his family.[106]

d) A Sortie Routs the Partisans

Captain Dubreuil ignored Colbert's demand for surrender of the post. As soon as Doña Marie Luisa had retraced her steps, he launched his sortie. The gate opened. Sergeant Pastor, the nine soldiers, and four Quapaws dashed out of the stockade and toward the foe. Taken by surprise, Colbert's people panicked and fled toward the ravine in which they had collected their prisoners. No one stepped forward to rally them, and they continued their flight, crying in despair, "Let's go! Let's go! The Indians are upon us."

Hounded by the soldiers and Quapaws, with the terrible war whoops beating in their ears, the partisans retreated toward the landing. Captain Dubreuil now sighted some of the foe off to his left, and, fearing the newcomers might try to get between the fort and Sergeant Pastor's combat patrol, he called for them to proceed with caution. Taking cover behind fallen timber, they continued to shout and shoot. The foe, thoroughly cowed, did not pause but hurried on to Red Bluff, where their boats were moored. During the skirmishing and the retreat, one of Colbert's men was killed and a Chickasaw wounded.

After embarking his prisoners, Colbert sent a message to Captain Dubreuil by some of the women and children whom he released. It read:

> You can form an idea of my forces, at 12 today 500 Chickasaws are due to arrive and also two bateaux loaded with men, armed with four swivels and a cannon

---

106. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 467-68; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 684-85.

> and if the Commandant of the fort does not surrender before the said hour and I am victorious, as I have no doubt I shall be, I do not know whether I can hold my people or not, and if the . . . [Quapaw] are used against us I myself will order the prisoners killed.[107]

e) The Recoil from Arkansas Post

As Captain Colbert was preparing to reboard the bateau, he, to signify his intention to return, drove a tomahawk into the ground. Forty men having taken position at the oars, the little flotilla cast off and headed downstream, breasting a heavy swell. Aboard the crowded bateau, the prisoners were harassed and threatened. One of Colbert's sons pointed his carbine at Lieutenant de Villars and pulled the trigger. Fortunately for the Spaniard, the flint failed to strike a spark and there was no discharge.

Captain Dubreuil did not panic, and he ignored Colbert's latest threat. Earlier in the day, Baptiste Saussie, the post interpreter, had been sent to Kappa, the Quapaw village upstream and across the river from the post. The chief, Caiguaioataniga, despite Saussie's pleas, refused "to take part in a white man's war without orders from Angaska." But it would be some time before he could expect to hear from Angaska, so no help came from Kappa.

At 12 o'clock, the hour Colbert had promised to return with 500 Chickasaws and two bateaux loaded with men and cannons, Chief Angaska finally reached Fort Carlos III. After Dubreuil had berated him for allowing the pirates to ascend the Arkansas without alerting the Spaniards, Angaska explained how he had been deceived by the Chickasaws. Upon learning that the post was under attack, Angaska had called for his warriors. Valuable time was lost in rallying them, because they had scattered to the woods to hunt roots to feed their families, who were without food as a result of the failure of the previous year's harvest.

After listening to the chief's explanation, Commandant Dubreuil determined to employ him in an effort to recover the prisoners carried off by the raiders. Accompanied by 100 Quapaw warriors and 20 soldiers of the Louisiana Regiment, Angaska started in pursuit of the partisans.

---

107. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 468; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 685.

Angaska overtook the foe on April 24, camped 3 leagues below the mouth of the Arkansas River. His men took cover, and Angaska visited Colbert's camp.

Meeting with the partisans, he told Captain Colbert that he came to free the prisoners. Colbert inquired, "How many men do you have?"

"Two hundred and fifty," was the reply, and "if he wished to assure himself more concerning the number that he might send one to visit the camp."

Bluffed, Colbert decided to forego this opportunity.

He then released to Angaska all his prisoners, except four soldiers, a boy, and three slaves. Among those given their freedom were Lieutenant and Madame de Villars and their two servants--Madelaine and Jacques. Undismayed by the faithlessness of Labadie and others, Colbert allowed Lieutenant de Villars, prior to his liberation, to sign a document obligating himself to obtain the release of Captain Blommart and four other Natchez rebels. If they were not at New Orleans, he promised to ascertain their whereabouts and notify Colbert. Should he fail to secure their release, he promised to surrender to Colbert by August 1 or pay a ransom of 2,000 piastres.[108]

When he forwarded his report of the attack to Acting-Governor Miró on May 5, 1783, Captain Dubreuil wrote that all the garrison had performed their duties with valor. Cited by name for their gallantry were Sergt. Alexo Pastor, Pvt. 1st Class Josef Plaseras, Pvts. 2d Class Lucas T. Perez and Sebastian Molina, and Pvts. Mariano Barrios, Bruno Cuisasola, Antonio Longines, Antonio Lopez, and Mariano Perez.

In repulsing the rebels, all the ammunition and most of the cannon projectiles had been expended. Working parties since the attack had been turned to and had salvaged as many projectiles as possible. To augment the supply of lead, the habitants had been called on to turn in any they might have at the storehouse.[109]

---

108. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 685; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 468-69; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, pp. 240-41.

109. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

f) Acting-Governor Miró Corresponds with Colbert

Dubreuil's report of Colbert's attack on Arkansas Post reached Acting-Governor Miró after Captain Blommart and his fellow Natchez rebels had been paroled. The captain of His Majesty's ship Ajax brought with him a copy of the Jamaica Gazette, which featured an article describing the preliminary treaty of peace signed January 20, 1783.

On May 16, 1783, Acting-Governor Miró wrote Captain Colbert, notifying him that despite his gross provocations, "but of love of humanity he had prepared an expedition to go under a flag of truce to inform him of the treaty of peace which stipulated that all prisoners were to be returned without ransom, and all captures made subsequent to it were to be restored." Colbert was advised that he was accordingly expected to restore to Antonio Pino the pirogue captured from him on April 9, and all else taken after that date, including the prisoners taken in the Arkansas Post raid.

Miró enclosed with his letter a copy of the Jamaica Gazette, containing the text of the treaty. The communication was forwarded to Captain Dubreuil, with instructions for him to see that they were delivered to Colbert. Two days later, on the 18th, Colonel Miró wrote Governor Gálvez, reporting what he had done, and suggesting that if Colbert continued his attacks that he be treated as "a bandit without any scruples."[110]

g) Colbert's Flotilla Suffers a Defeat

After his meeting with Angaska, Colbert's flotilla started back to the Chickasaw Nation. Learning from some Indians that the Ilinuesus convoy was on its way to Arkansas Post, the partisans re-entered the Mississippi by way of the cutoff and the White River to avoid meeting it. After tying up opposite Concordia for 2 days, Colbert's vessels traveled up the Mississippi, making about 2 leagues per day, as they were delayed by the necessity to constantly stop and put men ashore to hunt for food. At one anchorage two keelboats were stopped. They were found to be American, and from them Colbert recruited three men.

Malcom Clark and a comrade left Colbert at this time, going downstream to Natchez in one of these boats. Colbert's band at this time was encamped about 6 leagues above the mouth of the St. Francis River. The partisans seemed on the verge of disbanding. Many planned

---

110. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 469-70; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 241.

to leave as soon as they reached Chickasaw Bluffs; some spoke of going to the Chickasaw Nation; others talked of taking horses and traveling to their own countries; and a few planned to continue up the Mississippi. Colbert was heard to declare that "he was expecting soon to hear that peace was made, and that when such news reached him he would cease hostilities."

The convoy that Colbert was seeking to avoid had in the meantime stopped at Arkansas Post. Returning to the Mississippi, it resumed its run upstream. On May 11, 1783, the convoy tied up some distance above the mouth of the St. Francis. There Joseph Vallière, the commander, learned that Colbert was coming upstream. He called for 100 volunteers, with whom, along with 24 Quapaws, he embarked. Dropping downriver 1-1/2 leagues, they engaged Colbert's flotilla--the bateau, a keelboat, a flatboat, and three pirogues. The partisans were bested. The flatboat and pirogues were captured, and McGillivray, Colbert's second in command, was killed. A second man drowned, and a third had his arm broken. Also released were three soldiers Colbert had captured in the Arkansas Post raid.

Stored aboard the flatboat were 400 barrels of flour. The former prisoners were sent to Arkansas Post in a pirogue with 50 barrels of the flour. After breaking up the flatboat and the two remaining pirogues, Vallière's convoy resumed its run up the Mississippi, the crews keeping a sharp lookout for Colbert's bateau and keelboat, which had escaped during the melee.[111]

h) Death Interrupts the Colbert-Miró Correspondence

Colbert and his partisans reached Chickasaw Bluffs without again running afoul of Vallière's convoy. Some weeks after he returned to his home in the Chickasaw Nation, the correspondence from Acting-Governor Miró was handed to him.

This mail had passed through Arkansas Post, and was accompanied by a letter written by Commandant Dubreuil and addressed "to James Colbert, subject of His British Majesty, who resides in the Chicachas Nation." Dubreuil, besides calling attention to the Miró correspondence, noted that in accordance with Article X of the Preliminary Articles of Peace, he was "authorized to reclaim the prisoners" captured in the April 17 attack, along with the slaves and private property carried off by the raiders. He also called Colbert's attention to the predicament of the "veterinary of the First Regiment whom you lured from duty in Mobile having him now more than three years together with a sergeant and a soldier; the sergeant you sent to Pensacola, and the other to the Illinois Indians."

---

111. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 470-71.

The veterinary, however, had been retained a "slave to the Indians."

Article X, Dubreuil continued, had nullified the obligation under which Colbert had placed Lieutenant de Villars.[112]

Colbert replied on August 3, 1783. He reminded Miró that 3 months and 12 days had passed before news had reached him that peace had been restored between their countries. He insisted that he had released his prisoners as soon as advised of the truce, and had called on the Chickasawsto free any they held. The Chickasaws had answered

> that they had sent several the preceding summer by the Kaduké [Cadoucas] and Loups on condition that Cruzat would deliver to them some of their people held by the Kickapoos. Loving their own people as much as Miró loved his fellow-Spaniards, they were surprised and dejected that Cruzat did not live up to his agreement.

Colbert was delighted to learn that Captain Blommart and his companions had been released from the New Orleans calabozo and had been sent to Jamaica. He informed Miró that as he was about to start for St. Augustine "to render account to his superior," additional negotiations would be held in abeyance pending his return.[113]

Writing Captain Dubreuil, Colbert advised: "I am persuaded by the articles of the peace that I am" not required to make restitution for the public and private property carried off in the raid on Arkansas Post. The prisoners, he added, had been released and sent to Mobile.[114]

---

112. Dubreuil to Colbert, undated, in "Notes and Documents, Fort Charles III, Arkansas, Reports for the Year 1783 by Jacobo Dubreuil, Commandant," trans. and ed. Anna Lewis, Mississippi Valley Historical Review 20, no. 4:545.

113. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 471.

114. Colbert to Dubreuil, Aug. 3, 1783, "Notes and Documents," pp. 545-46.

Commandant Dubreuil, on August 26, forwarded Colbert's reply to Acting-Governor Miró. He informed his superior, in a covering letter, that he had entrusted two of his soldiers (Pedro Classin and Antonio Lorginos) with the responsibility of carrying the communications to and from the Chickasaw Nation.[115]

Recently, a party of Chickasaws had arrived at Arkansas Post to make peace with the Spanish. They assured Dubreuil that, with the exception of the Colberts, "all are well contented with the new friendship which they have agreed upon, and they see clearly that all the promises of Colbert have been nothing more than falsehoods." Colbert, they continued, had sought to convince them that "the war which has been carried on with the Americans is nothing more than a sham, and that the Treaty of Peace which closed it between Spain and Great Britain will last only a short time on the part of the English."

Dubreuil gave the Chickasaws gifts (a blanket and a shirt for each of the chiefs and a breechclout and knife for each warrior). He hoped these would "destroy the evil impressions which Colbert wishes to give about our Government."[116]

Colbert did not live to resume negotiations with the Spanish officials. On his way back to the Chickasaw Nation from St. Augustine, 3 days after he left McGillivray's house, "his horse threw him down and killed him before his servant could assist him."[117]

---

115. Pedro Classin's task was to translate the documents into English, which were read to Colbert by Lorginos. While in the Chickasaw Nation, Lorginos's foot became infected, and he was left to return to the post as soon as he could remount his horse.

116. Dubreuil to Miró, Aug. 26, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

117. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 471; Caughey, Bernardo de Gálvez, p. 241; Braden, "The Colberts and the Chickasaw Nation," p. 226; Caughey, McGillivray of the Creeks, p. 68.

III. PHYSICAL SETTING

A. Natural Features

1. Arkansas River

The Arkansas River was adjacent to the fort's eastern curtain. Earlier in the year, Captain Dubreuil had turned out a working party to erect a curtain on the river front, where the caving bank had toppled a section of the stockade.[1]

The Mississippi was in flood in mid-April 1783, while the White and Arkansas rivers were low. Consequently, the water in the lower reaches of these rivers, affected by conditions on the Mississippi, had pooled, backing up for miles.[2]

Conditions at Arkansas Post would have been similar to those described by Captain Rousseau. In February 1793, he reported:

> The Fort of Arkansas, is situated in the middle of a hill [côte] that overlooks the Arkansas River, which may be forty-five feet in height when the river is low and six feet when it overflows. It forms a horseshoe that may be a half a league on the river and extends to the north.[3]

The river, at this season, would have been very muddy, with a brownish cast.

2. Configuration of Terrain

The north bank of the river, in the vicinity of the fort, was caving into the river. This was a slow but continuous process.[4]

---

1. Dubreuil to Miró, Feb. 21, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

2. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 466-67; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 682-84.

3. Abraham Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, 1792-1796 (New Haven, 1968), p. 165.

4. Thomas Nuttall, Travels in the Arkansas Territory, 1819, ed. Reuben G. Thwaites (Cleveland, 1905), p. 105.

The fort, village, and habitant coast were on level ground, about "10 feet above the highest inundations of the river."[5]

Above the fort, between it and the village, was a bayou or ravine. Below the fort, between it and the habitant coast, was a second bayou or ravine.[6] The fort shown, Fort San Estevan of the Arkansas, was built in the early 1790s near the site of Fort Carlos III.

In advancing upon the fort from the habitant coast, the partisans were able to make a covered approach to within "pistol shot" of the stockade. Taking cover in a ravine (bayou), they blazed away.[7]

3. Soil

The soil is a sandy loam, with a large quantity of humus. It ranges in color from dark grey to black.[8]

4. Trees and Forest

Except for solitary cottonwoods and prickly ash, the area about the fort, and between it and the village and habitant coast, had been cleared of timber. Back from the river, in the direction of Post Bayou, was an alluvial forest of oaks, hickories, box elders, elms, etc.[9]

5. General Character of Ground and Cover in Relation to Season of Year

Spring comes early to this region, and the deciduous trees would be in leaf.

The fields, between the fort and habitant coast, would be plowed and planted in wheat and corn. The corn would be about knee-high, the wheat 6 to 8 inches tall.

---

5. Timothy Flint, Recollections of the Last Ten Years (Boston, 1826), p. 264.

6. "Map of Fort at Post of Arkansas, 1807," Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Unregistered Letters Received, NA, RG 107.

7. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," pp. 467-68; Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," pp. 684-85.

8. Telephone conversation, D. L. Huggins with E. Bearss, June 13, 1974.

9. Nuttall, Travels in the Arkansas Territory, p. 110.

Nuttall, who visited the post in the fourth week of February 1819, reported: "After crossing this horrid morass, a delightful tract of high ground again occurs, over which the floods had never yet prevailed; here the fields of the French settlers were already of a vivid green."[10]

Captain Rousseau, in February 1793, observed: "Below the fort there are about a dozen quite pretty houses [or plots] of four by four arpents, where [sic] there are very beautiful fields of wheat on the highland."[11]

Francois Perrin du Luc, who visited the post in 1803, wrote that the settlers "only cultivate maize for the support of their horses and beasts of burthen."[12]

6. Weather and Time of Day

The attack took place on April 17, 1783, beginning under cover of darkness at 2:30 A.M. The event to be depicted, the sortie, took place at mid-morning, a little after 9 o'clock.[13]

Neither Dubreuil nor Malcom Clark, in their accounts of the raid, make any mention of the weather on April 17, so we do not know whether the day was clear or cloudy, fair or rainy.

B. Man-made Features

1. Relative Positions of Principal Features

a) Habitant Coast

According to Stanley Faye, the ten habitant families resided on the riverbank about half a mile below the post. Here they cultivated their fields. The habitant coast was a "rural suburb," but was considered part of the post.[14]

---

10. Ibid., p. 105.

11. Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, p. 166.

12. Francois Perrin du Luc, "Travels Through the Two Louisianas and Among the Savage Nations of the Missouri," in A Collection of Modern and Contemporary Voyages and Travels (London, 1807), 6:83.

13. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

14. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 688.

As stated earlier in this section, Captain Rousseau in 1793 observed: "Below the fort there are about a dozen quite pretty houses [or plots] of four by four arpents, where [sic] there are very beautiful fields."[15]

Nuttall, in 1819, reported: "after emerging out of the swamp, in which I found it necessary to wade about ankle deep, a prairie came in view, with scattering houses spreading over a narrow and elevated tract for about three miles parallel to the bend of the river."[16]

b) The Village

In his article in The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, Stanley Faye wrote: "Captain de Villiers in 1779 removed Fort Carlos III from the river mouth to a site adjoining the hunting village that during the years past had stood on the upland peninsula where the village stands today."[17]

Captain Rousseau, on February 3, 1793, noted in his journal: "Above the fort there are about thirty houses, with galleries around, covered with shingles, which form two streets. Below the fort there are about a dozen quite pretty houses. . . ."[18]

c) Fort Carlos III

Stanley Faye located the fort on a site adjoining the "hunting village." Describing the area, he wrote:

> From the west the river approached the village peninsula in a course somewhat farther south than the present course [1944]. A left bend that since has fluctuated without developing a cutoff carried it northward along the eastward side of the peninsula and thence eastward and southward to continue in bends to the forks [confluence with the Mississippi]. About half a mile below the post . . . the ten habitant families domiciled. . . .[19]

---

15. Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, p. 166.

16. Nuttall, Travels in the Arkansas Territory, p. 105.

17. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 688.

18. Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, p. 166.

19. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 688.

Captain Rousseau, in February 1793, visited the area. This was after the eroding riverbank had compelled the garrison to relocate Fort Carlos III. The fort was now known as Fort San Estevan of the Arkansas. Rousseau noted in his journal for the 3d:

> The Fort of Arkansas is situated in the middle of a hill [côte] that overlooks the Arkansas River, which may be forty-five feet in height when the river is low and six feet when it overflows. It forms a horseshoe that may be half a league on the river and extends to the north. Above the fort there are about thirty houses, with galleries around, covered with shingles, which form two streets. Below the fort there are about a dozen quite pretty houses [the habitant coast].[20]

The destruction of Fort Carlos III is detailed in the dispatches of the commandants. Josef Vallière in December 1787 informed the governor that the Arkansas had washed out the land on the river front, and now there was only "one and a half feet before the water would be up to the palisade." Vallière requested authority to return Fort Carlos III to the site of Carlos II near the Mississippi.

The situation got worse. On February 15, 1788, Vallière reported that half of the bastion, nearest the river, had been destroyed by the caving bank. He asked permission, if he could not return the fort to the site of Carlos II, to be allowed to transfer it to Uzutiuhi, 5 leagues downstream.

Governor Miró, in his report to his superiors, described Fort Carlos III as a work consisting of a "palisade made of thick stakes, able to withstand a fusil bullet with loopholes for musket and gunports, which is good enough to resist an attack from the Indians." Miró endorsed Commandant Vallière's proposal to relocate the fort. His first choice was a site near the Mississippi, and his second near Uzutiuhi.

The government, however, did not follow up on these proposals. Nor did it authorize the commandant to make repairs. In October 1789 the commandant reported "the total ruin and destruction" of Fort Carlos III.

When Ignacio Delino took command in 1790 he wrote that the fort was without a stockade, its artillery dismounted, and its buildings about to fall into the river.[21]

---

20. Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, pp. 165-66.

21. Ray Mattison, "Report on the Historical Investigations of Arkansas Post, Arkansas," NPS, 1957, pp. 95-96; Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, p. 164.

Delinó relocated and rebuilt the fort, which he called Fort San Estevan of the Arkansas, near the site of Fort Carlos III. In constructing the new fort, the garrison probably razed and salvaged materials from the Fort Carlos III structures, which Delinó reported in disrepair.

By February 1793, when La Flecha visited the post, Captain Rousseau made no mention of the remains of Fort Carlos III. This leads to the conclusion that by 1793 its entire site had either eroded into the river, or what is more probable, the garrison had razed the structures and pulled down the stockade on the land fronts, salvaging useable materials and burning the remainder.[22]

Fort San Estevan of the Arkansas is the post shown on the "Map of Fort at Post of Arkansas, 1807." The site of this fort, like the site of Fort Carlos III, caved into the Arkansas. The sites of Forts Carlos III and San Estevan of the Arkansas, having been destroyed, are now flooded by Horseshoe Lake. The lake was created when Dam No. 2 was completed and the Arkansas backed water into its former channel north of Arkansas Post.

d) Village Architecture

Captain Rousseau reported: "Above the fort there are about thirty houses, with galleries around, covered with shingles, which form two streets. Below the fort there are about a dozen quite pretty houses [or plots] of four by four arpents."[23]

The factory buildings erected by the United States in the years 1806-10 were typical of the village architecture. Samuel Treat, describing the factory, wrote:

> The present state of the buildings are: the dwelling House (in which the business has been some time transacted) is 20 ft by 33, one-story, pitched roof piazzas front and rear, roof over all, shingles and painted with eave troughs, two bed rooms finished, one above and one on piazza, seven windows . . . all glazed with blinds, two windows besides not glazed, but with Shutters, small sitting room finished except the ceiling, which . . . [has] only laths overhead. The large room or kitchen has only a rough floor laid, but is well secured and used as the store.

---

22. Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, p. 164.

23. Ibid., p. 166.

> At some distance is the [illegible] Store House and Skin Room, strong oak frame 20 by 38 feet, 2 Stories, the lower closed in all around with a small room, all the materials provided for the completing the building. . . .
>
> The lot [is] enclosed with strong Oak posts and rails, 7 bars high and measures 5 chains, 5 links square, and contains little better than two and half acres English measure. . . .[24]

In one corner of the lot was a half-finished log stable.

On April 10, 1809, Scull & Co., a prosperous Arkansas Post trading house, contracted with Daniel Mooney to build "a frame house 50 feet in length, 32 feet in breadth, and twelve feet high & to erect a gallery on each side of the house 10 feet wide and to enclose the same under a good & sufficient roof, the said building to contain four rooms, six doors & eight windows, all of which building to be finished neat & workman like & with as much dispatch as the nature of the case will admit.

"The said James Scull & Co. to furnish at the place all necessary timber & materials, good & sufficient to complete the said building, also to furnish the said Daniel Mooney with boarding for himself and such journey men as he may employ to work on said buildings.

"The following species of joiners' work to be observed in finishing said house, the two ends to be weatherboarded, the upper floor to be laid down rough, the lower floor in house and gallery to be laid neat with [illegible] to wit, gallery ceiled overhead, all doors & windows sheets panelled & cased neat, chairs and washboard throughout all the rooms, & stairs to ascend the gallery on each side with hand rails & balustrades on each side, eave gutters and conductors on each side, for all of which work, when finished the said James Scull & Co. agrees to pay Mooney the sum of $1,500."[25]

---

24. Treat to John Mason, Sept. 10, 1810, Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House, NA, RG 75.

25. Index to Book of Records (Deeds, Commissions, Indentures), Louisiana Territory, District of Arkansas, Aug. 3, 1808-Dec. 23, 1809, pp. 76-77; copy of contract, Scull Papers, Scull & Co. with Daniel Mooney, Apr. 10, 1809, Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock, Arkansas.

William Woodruff, editor of the Arkansas Gazette, in the first edition of the paper on November 20, 1819, informed his subscribers that "There are at present but few buildings, and those principally in the French style; or rather since the change of government from Spain to the United States many houses have been suffered to go to decay, and but few new buildings, erected lately."[26]

William E. Pope stopped at the post in October 1832. A number of years later he wrote:

> Many of the houses erected during Gov. De Villemont's administration were still standing and were built after the French style of architecture, with high pointed roofs and gables and heavy exterior timbers, and high chimneys. The old houses presented a sad but interesting picture to look upon. In many instances the tall chimneys had fallen down, and trees of considerable size were growing out through the roofs and chimney places.[27]

Photographs of dwellings similar to those in Arkansas Post can be found in: The American Heritage Book of Great Historic Places (New York, 1957), pp. 222-23; Everett B. Wilson, Early Southern Towns (South Brunswick, N. J., 1967), pp. 322, 326, 330, and 335; and the three-dimensional model in the Louisiana Purchase Room at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial National Historic Site, St. Louis, Missouri.

e) Fort Carlos III

As yet no plan or drawing of Fort Carlos III has been located. Descriptions of the fort are found in the reports of the post commandants. In addition, we may assume that Fort Carlos III was similar in construction to Fort Carlos II, its predecessor, and Fort San Esteven of the Arkansas, its successor.

(1) The Stockade

Commandant de Villiers in July 1781 described the fort. He reported that, assisted by the habitants, the garrison turned to and erected a stockade of "red oak stakes thirteen feet high, with diameters

---

26. Arkansas Gazette, Nov. 20, 1819.

27. William E. Pope, Early Days in Arkansas, Being the Most Part Personal Recollections of an Old Settler (Little Rock, 1895), pp. 66-67.

of 10 to 15 or 16 inches, split in two and reinforced inside by similar stakes to a height of six feet and a banquette of two feet."[28]

Captain Dubreuil in mid-February 1783 had a working party erect a plank curtain on the river front, where the caving bank had thrown down a section of the stockade.[29]

During the attack, Commandant Dubreuil reported, the foe peppered the stockade with small-arms fire, "but the bullets penetrated no more than an inch, because of the evergreen oak of which the palisades were made."[30]

There were apparently two gates giving access to the stockade. Captain Dubreuil, in describing his preparations for the sortie, wrote: "I gave the orders to yell as the Indians do when they attack."

"At this time Colbert sent, by a road opposite from the one which" had been selected for the sortie, Doña Luisa de Villars.[31]

Historical Architect John Garner, who has done extensive research on late-18th-century fortifications, has studied the commandants' descriptions of the stockade and has prepared the drawing of the Fort Carlos III stockade which is found in this report.

(2) Bastions

Instead of blockhouses, the fort had bastions. These bastions were probably at opposite angles of the stockade. On May 22, 1783, Captain Dubreuil reported, to enable them to employ effectively the cannons mounted in the north bastion, it had been "necessary to terrace it because it was too low and the shot hit it."[32]

On April 17, 1784, the commandant certified that "to erect two esplanades in front of the bulwark [bastion] at the north of this fort, there were employed 20 men" for three days at 2 reales each, "which includes a flag with a royal shield, for 37 pesos."[33]

---

28. De Villiers to Gálvez, July 11, 1781, in Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1:429-31.

29. Dubreuil to Miró, Feb. 21, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

30. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

31. Ibid.

32. Dubreuil to Miró, May 22, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

33. Fort Carlos III, Apr. 17, 1784, Folio I, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

Stanley Faye, in his monograph, wrote that Captain Dubreuil, after assuming command at the post, added a bastion at one angle of the stockade.[34]

At Fort Carlos II, Captain Pittman of the British Army reported, there was a stockade "in a quadrangular form, the sides of the exterior polygon are about one hundred and eight feet, and one three pounder is mounted in the flanks and faces of each bastion."[35]

Fort San Estevan of the Arkansas, of which there is a plan, had two bastions--one in the northeast angle and the other at the southwest angle.[36]

According to the inventory for Fort San Estevan, there was "one stockade with two doors [gates], banquettes and esplanades; two works [bastions], four loopholes [embrasures], each in normal condition."[37]

(3) Embrasures

Captain de Villiers in July 1781 reported that the embrasures for the cannons and swivel guns were "covered with sliding panels" which were "bullet proof."[38]

In the summer of 1782, Acting-Governor Miró sent Sub-lieutenant Antonio Soler, an ex-sergeant of artillery, to Arkansas Post to cut new embrasures in the bastions to mount the cannons, and to drill some of the garrison as artillerists.[39]

(4) Storehouses, Barracks, and Officers' Quarters

The stockade, Captain de Villiers reported, enclosed all "necessary places, including a house 45 feet long and 15 feet wide, and a storehouse, both serving to lodge my troops, and around several smaller

---

34. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 683.

35. Pittman, Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi, p. 82.

36. "Map of Fort at Post of Arkansas, 1807."

37. Mattison, "Report on the Historical Investigations of Arkansas Post, Arkansas," p. 126.

38. De Villiers to Gálvez, July 11, 1781, in Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1:429-31.

39. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 682.

buildings." These structures had been erected by the commandant and his troops, at de Villiers's expense, following their arrival at the post.[40]

Captain Dubreuil, on his arrival at the post in January, 1783, "even presumed to order repairs made to the commandant's house within the enclosure."[41]

On May 22, 1783, Commandant Dubreuil notified Acting-Governor Miró that "to shelter from the bad weather" the public property and commissary stores, "which had no more protection than a bad enclosure," he had been "obliged to erect a store house at little cost."[42]

The expense of erecting this storehouse, Dubreuil reported on April 17, 1784, was 205 pesos. He broke down the cost as follows:

Expenses for construction of a Storehouse for Food Supplies for Troops (16 ft. square)	
Abraham Fexton, master carpenter for 15 days labor @ 2 pesos daily	30
Eight soldiers who worked during the 15 days @ 2 reales	30
36 lbs. of nails @ 1 peso lb.	36
30 planks for the floor @ 4 reales	15
48 beams @ 1 peso each	48
600 wood tiles (shingles) @ 4 pesos per hundred	24
36 wagon trips @ 6 reales each	22[43]

Captain Dubreuil, when he filed his "after action report," called attention to the destruction by a violent wind of the quarters in the fort occupied by Lieutenant de Villars and his family on April 12, 1783.[44]

---

40. De Villiers to Gálvez, July 11, 1781, in Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1:429-31.

41. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 683.

42. Dubreuil to Miró, May 22, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

43. Fort Carlos III, Apr. 17, 1784, Folio I, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

44. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

Captain Pittman reported that at Fort Carlos II there was, within the stockade, "a barrack with three rooms for the soldiers, commanding officer's house, a powder magazine, and a magazine for provision, and an apartment for the commissary."[45]

The inventory of the structures within the stockade at Fort San Estevan of the Arkansas listed:

> One house for commandant 36 feet long, 16 feet wide, with two galleries, two closets at each end of that of the back apartment. One double clay chimney covered with shingles. . . .
>
> One barrack 50 feet long by 20 feet wide, covered with shingles, flanked on top with a double clay chimney and at the end a division which is used as a prison.
>
> A kitchen of the commandant 20 feet long by 12 feet broad covered with shingles. . . .
>
> A store house supported on props 45 feet long by 20 feet broad, covered with shingles with a division for war supplies.
>
> An earthen oven near the fort. . . .
> Three Sentry boxes
> One flag staff.[46]

(5) Powder Magazine

After his arrival at the post in January 1783, Captain Dubreuil had erected within the stockade "a small powder magazine."[47]

(6) Cannons, Swivel Guns, and Ordnance Stores

Emplaced in the bastions on naval carriages were four 3½-inch cannons. The garrison also had several swivel guns.[48]

---

45. Pittman, Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi, pp. 82-83.

46. Mattison, "Report on the Historical Investigations of Arkansas Post, Arkansas," p. 126.

47. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 683.

48. Ibid., p. 682; Orieta to Unzaga, July 14, 1774, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

On April 17, 1784, Captain Dubreuil requisitioned for his artillery:

1500 pounds of powder	1500
Balls of the size of 3¼ cannons	
Three gun carriages for cannon of ¼	3
Two poinards with lances	2
1 Spoon with ramrod	1
Balls of calibre for two flint guns of ½ pound	
Poinards with lances	2
Ramrods (as before)	1
Balls for flint guns which are 5¼	
Poinards with lances	4
Ramrods	2
Wadding for the guns	
Wicks needful for lamps	150
Lead for the 3½ cannon	3
Same for flint rifles of ½ pound	2
Same for flint rifles of ¼ pound	5
Whistles	2
Reams of paper for making cartridges	6
Shots for fusils	1000
Balls for fusils	

Notice that the balls and wadding ought to be in proportion to the quantity of powder.[49]

C. Human Figures

1. Spanish Forces

a) Numbers and Composition

The sally was made by Sergt. Alexo Pastor, nine soldiers of the Louisiana Regiment, and four Quapaws. Watching the sortie from the north bastion were Captain Dubreuil and the gunners, also of the Louisiana Regiment, manning the two 3½-inch brass cannons emplaced therein. An undetermined number of women and children, fleeing from the raiders, had taken shelter in Fort Carlos.[50]

---

49. Fort Carlos III, Apr. 17, 1784, Folio VII, in "Notes and Documents," pp. 542-43.

50. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

b) Uniforms Worn by the Soldiers

Spanish overseas troops usually followed the "dress regulations of peninsular Spain, but climate and supply conditions imposed some variations, and the usual cloth issues were substituted by lighter cotton fabrics." White was the predominant Spanish uniform color under the Bourbons.

(1) Coat, Vest, and Breeches

The dress issue of the Louisiana Regiment consisted of a white coat with blue collar, cuffs, vest, lining, and breeches, and white metal buttons. In the western hemisphere, the vest, lining, and breeches were made of white cotton, with only the collar and cuffs of regimental blue cloth, detachable when the white uniform was laundered.[51]

(2) Hat

The hat was a black tricorne with white lace and red cockade fastened by a yellow metallic loop. The soldier's hair was cut on "the upper part of the head, turned up into a simple curl at each side, powdered and gathered into a black-tied pigtail."[52]

(3) Leggings and Shoes

White canvas leggings were held up by black leather straps; the shoes were of black cordovan.[53]

(4) Stock and Shirt

The stock and shirt were white.[54]

c) Arms and Accoutrements

(1) Muskets and Bayonets

The musket issued the regiment was "the regulation flintlock fusil of 15 ball to the pound caliber, introduced in 1752, with a French lock

---

51. Francisco Ferrer Lull and J. Hefter, "The Spanish Louisiana Regiment in the Floridas 1779-1781," Military Collector and Historian: Journal of the Company of Military Historians 16, no. 3:79-80.

52. Ibid., p. 80.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

manufactured in Spain." One of these weapons, in possession of the Army Museum in Madrid, has an overall length of 60 inches. The "ornamental butt plate, trigger guard, flash pan, and top and bottom rings are brass, all other metal parts white," while the gun sling was made of buckskin.

Enlisted men wore a "straight, broad-based bayonet" suspended at their left side.

Non-commissioned officers also carried a "short curved saber with yellow metal guard and black leather scabbard."[55]

Captain Dubreuil reported on August 26, 1783, that Colbert's people in their attack had captured from his soldiers "8 guns and bayonets with straps."[56]

(2) Cross-Belting and Cartridge Boxes

In 1779 "Buckskin cross-belting with a plain black cartridge box at the right hip" came into use. The heart-shaped white patches at the turnback points were not specified by regulations, but are "shown in reputable reference works."[57]

d) Captain Dubreuil's Uniform and Accoutrements

His uniform would have been similar to those worn by the enlisted men. Around his cuffs he would have worn the silver lace of his rank. His neck was encircled by a plain gorget.[58]

Captain Dubreuil would be armed with a sword. The sword's scabbard was girded to his waist by a "waistbelt of natural color buckskin leather with a square buckle."[59]

---

55. Ibid.

56. Dubreuil to Miró, Aug. 26, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

57. Lull and Hefter, "The Spanish Louisiana Regiment in the Floridas 1779-1781," p. 80.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

e) Illustrations

Plate No. 246, found in the Military Collector and Historian, vol. 16, no. 3, depicts the uniforms worn by the Spanish Louisiana Regiment. A copy of this print is found in this report. A rendered copy of the subject print is on file in the Rare Book Collection at the Library of Congress.

For details, one should consult Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Pierce A. Chamberlain, Spanish Military Weapons in Colonial America, 1700-1821 (Harrisburg, 1952).

f) Physical Appearance of Captain Dubreuil and Sergeant Pastor

Except for their approximate ages, it has been impossible to determine their physical appearance.

Jacobo Dubreuil Saint-Cyr was a sub-lieutenant in the Spanish army by 1767, and by January 1780, when he was promoted from adjutant to captain, he was probably in his mid-30s.[60]

Sergeant Alexo Pastor, a veteran of 20 years service, would have been in his late 30s or early 40s at the time of the attack.[61]

2. The Quapaw

A good representation of the appearance and attire of the Quapaw warriors is the print found on page 229 of The American Heritage Book of Indians (New York, 1961).

The four Quapaws participating in the sortie would be armed with rifles, knives, and hatchets (tomahawks). They would be wearing powder horns.

The Quapaws would have painted themselves with vermilion.[62]

---

60. Faye, "Arkansas Post of Louisiana," p. 672.

61. Ibid., p. 686.

62. Commandant to Maxant, Mar. 25, 1775; Report of Expenses for scouting party sent to Chickasaw Bluffs, Jan. 12, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

3. Colbert's Partisans

a) Numbers and Composition

According to Malcom Clark, a participant, the attacking force numbered "eleven Indians, sons and nephews of Colbert, five Negroes, one Frenchman, and enough English and Americans to make the number eighty-two."[63]

Commandant Dubreuil reported that the attacking force included "a hundred white and fourteen Chickasaws."[64]

b) Dress Worn and Arms Carried by the Chickasaws and Mixed-Bloods

(1) Breechclouts

The one article of dress worn by all males, except infants and young children, was the breechclout. Until introduction of European cloths, the breechclout was of skin. In the 1700s English strouds, French Limbourgs, and other European materials replaced the skins.

William Bartram in 1782 reported the breechclout "usually consists of a piece of blue cloth, about eighteen inches wide; this may pass between their thighs, and both ends may be taken up and drawn through a belt round their waist, the ends fall down one before, and the other behind, not quite to the knee." It "is usually plaited and indented at the ends, and ornamented with beads, tinsel lace, etc."

Adair, writing in 1775, reported that the dimensions of a breechclout were "a quarter of an ell wide, and an ell and a half long," about 5½ feet long by 1 foot wide.[65]

(2) Shirts or Blankets

According to Swanton, "two garments were worn on the upper part of the body, a shirt and a blanket, but either they merged into each

---

63. Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 466.

64. Dubreuil to Miró, May 5, 1783, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 107.

65. John R. Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 137 (Washington, 1946), pp. 456-57; Adair, History of the American Indians, p. 8.

other or our descriptions lack clarity, so that it is often difficult to tell with which we have to deal."

Bartram in 1782 reported the Creeks "have a large mantle of the finest cloth they are able to purchase, always either of a scarlet, or blue colour; this mantle is fancifully decorated with rich lace or fringe round the border, and often with little round silver, or brass bells."

The Indians who accompanied Oglethorpe on his 1743 Florida campaign wore "a Skin or Blanket tied, or loosely cast, over their Shoulders; a Shirt which they never wash, and which is consequently greasy and black to the last degree."[66]

Adair reported that the Chickasaws "formerly wore shirts, made of dresd deer-skins, for their summer visiting dress; but their winter-hunting clothes were long and shaggy, made of the skins of panthers, bucks, bears, beavers, and otters; the fleshy sides outward, sometimes doubled, and always softened like velvet-cloth, through they retained their fur and hair."

Yet, he continued, the young Indians were wont to "wrap a piece of cloth round them, that has a near resemblence to the old Roman toga or praetexta. 'Tis about a fathom square, bordered seven or eight quarters deep, to make a shining cavalier of the beau monde, and to keep out both heat and cold."[67]

(3) Leggings

The Chickasaws, like other nations of the region, wore leggings. "They were made in two pieces, one wrapped around each leg and brought up high enough so as to be fastened to the belt by means of leather cords, while at the lower ends they were inserted under the upper edges of the moccasins." Their principal use was to protect the wearer from bushes and undergrowth.

Bartram observed that the leggings "reach from the ancle to the calf, and are ornamented with lace, beads, silver bells, etc."[68]

---

66. Swanton, Indians of the Southeastern United States, pp. 458-59.

67. Adair, History of the American Indians, pp. 6-7.

68. Swanton, Indians of the Southeastern United States, pp. 462-63.

Adair reported:

> The men wear, for ornament, and the convenience of hunting, thin deer-skin boots [leggings], well smoked, that reach so high up their thighs, as with their jackets to secure them from the brambles and braky thickets. They sew them about five inches from the edges, which are formed into tossels, to which they fasten fawns trotters, and small pieces of tinkling metal, or wild turkey-cock-spurs.[69]

(4) Moccasins

The moccasin was worn in traveling some distance from home, and on war and trading expeditions. Bartram described the Creek moccasins: "The stillepica or moccasin defends and adorns the feet; it seems to be in imitation of the ancient boskin or sandal, very ingeniously made of deer skins, dressed very soft, and curiously ornamented according to fancy."

Describing the Chickasaw moccasin, Adair wrote: "They make their shoes for common use, out of the skins of the bear and elk, well dressed and smoked, to prevent hardening; and those for ornament, out of deer-skins, done in a like manner: but they chiefly go bare-footed, and always bare-headed."[70]

(5) Bags and Purses

The southern Indians, Swanton has written, often "carried a bag or pouch hung at one side in which were kept tobacco, knives, pipes, and all sorts of small personal belongings."

Adair reported the Choctaws "weave shot-pouches, which have raised work inside and outside."

A Choctaw informed Swanton that "a small pouch for powder and shot was generally made of a gourd shaped like a citron upon which the skin of an otter, raccoon, or mink had been shrunk and which had afterward been hardened."[71]

---

69. Adair, History of the American Indians, p. 7.

70. Swanton, Indians of the Southeastern United States, pp. 463-64; Adair, History of the American Indians, p. 8.

71. Swanton, Indians of the Southeastern United States, pp. 479-80.

(6) Manner of Dressing Hair

Most southeastern Indians carefully removed their hair from all parts of the body but the head. Adair reported that the Chickasaw men "fastened several different sorts of beautiful feathers, frequently in tufts, or the wing of a red bird, or the skin of a small hawk, to a lock of hair on the crown of the heads." He also noted that they "had a large conch-shell bead, about the length and thickness of a man's forefinger, which they fixed to the crown of their heads, as an high ornament."[72]

(7) Ear Ornaments

Adair reported that the young Chickasaws "cut a hole round almost the extremity of both their ears, which till healed, they stretched out with a large tuft of buffalo's wool mixt with bear's oil: then they twist as much small wire around as will keep them extended in that hideous form. . . ."

These slits were "adorned with silver pendants and rings."[73]

(8) Waist Bands

Adair observed that strings of beads were worn around their wrists by the Chickasaws.[74]

(9) Leg Ornaments

Most southeastern Indians wore beaded garters, made of buffalo hair, opossum hair, or other materials.[75]

(10) Use of Grease

Adair observed that the Chickasaws"constantly anoited themselves with bear's oil, or grease, mixt with a certain red root."[76]

---

72. Ibid., pp. 498, 507.

73. Ibid., pp. 510, 513.

74. Ibid., p. 522.

75. Ibid., p. 523.

76. Ibid., p. 528.

(11) Body Paint

Body paint, according to Swanton, was "resorted to particularly in preparing for war and ball games, but was part of a man's make-up on all official or semi-official occasions." Red was the most popular color, followed by black and blue.

Bartram reported that the head, neck, and breast of the Indians of his acquaintance were painted with vermilion. Writing of the Chickasaws, Adair stated that the amount of vermilion was one of the criteria on which the traders made their estimate of a man's wealth.[77]

A warrior habitually wore his breechclout and belt, and moccasins, and was painted red and black. He carried a blanket, cords, and leather with which to repair his moccasins, and some parched corn for his sustenance.[78]

(12) Speck's Summary of a Yuchi Costume

At the time of the 1783 attack on Arkansas Post, the Indians and mixed-bloods were probably attired in a fashion resembling the Yuchi costume described by Speck, except for the turban:

> A bright colored calico shirt was worn by the men next to the skin. Over this was a sleeved jacket reaching, on young men, a little below the waist, on old men and chiefs, below the knees. The shirt hung free before and behind, but was bound about the waist by a belt or woolen sash. The older men who wore the long coat-like garment had another sash with tassels dangling at the sides outside of this. These two garments, it should be remembered, were nearly always of calico or cotton goods, while it sometimes happened that the long coat was of deerskin. Loin coverings were of two kinds; either a simple apron was suspended from a girdle next the skin before and behind, or a long narrow strip of stroud passed between the legs and was tucked underneath the girdle in front and in back, where the ends were allowed to fall as flaps. Leggings of stroud or deerskin reaching from ankle to hip were supported

---

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., pp. 693-94.

by thongs to the belt and bound to the leg by tasseled and beaded garter bands below the knee. Deerskin moccasins covered the feet. Turbans of cloth, often held in place by a metal head band in which feathers were set for ornament, covered the head. The man's outfit was then complete when he had donned his bead-decorated side pouch, in which he kept pipe, tobacco and other personal necessities, with its broad highly embroidered bandolier. The other ornaments were metal breast pendants, earrings, finger rings, bracelets and armlets, beadwork neckbands and beadwork strips which were fastened in the hair. . . .[79]

(13) Contemporary Illustrations

Opposite page 59 in Bernard Romans, A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida (Gainesville, 1969), is found a drawing titled "Characteristic Chicasaw head."

Found in Emma Lila Fundaburk, Southeastern Indians: Life Portraits, a Catalogue of Pictures, 1564-1860 (Luverne, Ala., 1958) are a number of drawings and paintings of southeastern Indians (Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles) made in the period 1771-1838, illustrative of the type of attire worn and weapons carried by the Chickasaws and mixed-bloods at Arkansas Post in 1783. Attention is called to these illustrations: Figure 142 (Cherokee), Figure 228 (Choctaw Eagle Dance), Figure 266 (Creek), Figure 275 (Seminoles), Figure 278 (Creek), and Figure 292 (Osceola).

The illustration found in Romans of the "Characteristic Chicasaw head" appears on page 59 of Fundaburk.

(14) Arms and Accoutrements

The Chickasaws and mixed-bloods were armed with rifled-muskets, knives, and hatchets (tomahawks). They would have powder horns slung over their shoulders.

c) Garb Worn by the Whites and Blacks

These people would have been attired in various frontier dress. Some would be wearing the familiar buckskins, moccasins, and coonskin caps; others would be clad in linsey-woolsey jeans and coats,

---

79. Ibid., p. 465.

embroidered or plaid shirts, shoes, stockings and hats; a few would be dressed like the Chickasaws, except they would be wearing trousers instead of breechclouts and leggings; Captain Colbert would be dressed as a gentleman.[80]

d) Arms and Accoutrements Carried by the Whites and Blacks

Colbert's men were armed with rifled-muskets and carbines, while their side arms were tomahawks, knives, and daggers. They would have worn powder horns and bullet pouches.[81]

e) Physical Description of Captain Colbert

Silbestre Labadie recalled that Captain Colbert was about 60 years old, possessed of good health and a strong constitution. An active man despite his years, Colbert had a "violent temper," and was capable of "enduring the greatest hardships." He had lived among the Chickasaws for 40 years, and boasted that he was owner of a "fine house" and "some hundred and fifty" blacks.[82]

f) Illustrations

Two illustrations found in The American Heritage Book of the Revolution provide good examples of promiscuous garb similar to that worn by most of Colbert's partisans. These illustrations appear on pages 339 and 340 of the subject publication. The first, the original found in the Tennessee State Archives, is titled "Gathering of the Mountain Men," and the second, from the Preston Davis collection, is titled "Crossing the Pee Dee."

Captain Colbert's attire would have been similar to, but not as ostentatious as, that worn by Col. Guy Johnson in the Benjamin West painting found on page 317 of The American Heritage Book of the Revolution.

The Book of The Continental Soldier, by Harold L. Peterson, published by the Stackpole Company, has drawings of representative arms and accoutrements carried and worn by Colbert's partisans.

---

80. Telephone and personal interviews, Carol Irwin Mason, Jack Walker, and William Sturtevant with E. Bearss, May 15 and June 13, 1974.

81. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:23-24; Col. Miró's interrogation of Madame Cruzat, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:223; Corbitt, "Colbert and Spanish Claims to Mississippi," p. 459.

82. Declaration of Labadie, Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:31-32.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

1. Manuscript Materials

DeWitt, Arkansas. Arkansas County Courthouse. Index to Book of Records (Deeds, Commissions, Indentures), Louisiana Territory, District of Arkansas, Aug. 3, 1808-Dec. 23, 1809.

Little Rock, Arkansas. Arkansas History Commission. Scull Papers. Scull & Co. with Daniel Mooney, Apr. 10, 1809.

Washington, D.C. Library of Congress. Archivo General de Indias. Papeles de Cuba. Legajo 107. Seville, Spain. Microfilm.
De la Villebeuvre, Juan, to B. de Gálvez, Dec. 12, 1779.
De Villars, Luis, to E. Miró, Jan. 12, 1783.
De Villiers, B. Last Will and Testament. May 26, 1782.
Dubreuil, Jacobo. Receipt. Jan. 7, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, Jan. 11, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, Jan. 17, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, Feb. 18, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, Feb. 21, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, Mar. 1, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, Mar. 26, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, May 5, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, May 22, 1783.
Dubreuil, J., to E. Miró, Aug. 26, 1783.
Fort Carlos III, Apr. 17, 1784, Folio I.
Miró, Estevan, to J. Dubreuil, Feb. 5, 1783.
Orieta, Joseph, to Governor Unzaga, July 14, 1774.

_____. National Archives. Record Group 75. Letter Book, Arkansas Trading House. Treat, Samuel, to John Mason, Sept. 10, 1810.

_____. Record Group 107. Records of the Secretary of War, Unregistered Letters Received. "Map of Fort at Post of Arkansas, 1807."

2. Published Documents

"Act of Possession of East Bank of the Mississippi River North of the District of Natchez." In Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1:401.

Colbert, James L., to Governor of Louisiana, May 15, 1782. In Houck, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:219.

_____. To J. Dubreuil, Aug. 3, 1783. In "Notes and Documents," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 20, no. 4:545-46.

Declaration of Madame Cruzat, May 30, 1782, in Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:229.

Declaration of Malcom Clark, May 13, 1783. In D. C. Corbitt, "Spanish Claims to Mississippi." Mississippi Valley Historical Review 24.

Declarations of Picoté de Belestre, Francisco Vallé, and Silbestre Labadie, July 5 and 8, 1782. In Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:34-39.

Declaration of Silbestre Labadie, July 5, 1782. In Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 2:21-34.

De Villiers, B., to B. de Gálvez, July 11, 1781. In Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1:429-31.

Dubreuil, J., to James L. Colbert, undated. In "Notes and Documents, Fort Charles III, Arkansas, Reports for the Year 1783 by Jacobo Dubreuil, Commandant." Translated and edited by Anna Lewis. Mississippi Valley Historical Review 20, no. 4:545.

Fort Carlos III, Apr. 17, 1784. Folio VII. In "Notes and Documents."

Houck, Louis, ed. The Spanish Regime in Missouri. 2 vols. Chicago, 1909.

Kinniard, Lawrence, ed. Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794. 3 pts. Washington, 1946.

Lewis, Anna, ed. and trans. "An Attack Upon the Arkansas Post, 1783." The Arkansas Historical Quarterly 2, no. 3.

Miró, Estevan. Interrogation of Madame Cruzat. In Houck, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:222-29.

"Parole of Honour, May 15, 1782." In Houck, Spanish Regime in Missouri, 1:220.

3. Travel Accounts

Adair, James. The History of the American Indians. London, 1775.

Bartram, William. Travels Through North and South Carolina, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogules or Creek Confederation and the Country of the Choctaws. Philadelphia, 1791.

Collot, Victor. A Journey in North America. 2 vols. Paris, 1826.

Flint, Timothy. Recollections of the Last Ten Years. Boston, 1826.

Hutchins, Thomas. Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and West Florida. Philadelphia, 1784.

Nuttall, Thomas. Travels in the Arkansas Territory, 1819. Edited by Reuben G. Thwaites. Cleveland, 1905.

Perrin du Luc, Francois. "Travels Through the Two Louisianas and Among the Savage Nations of the Missouri." In A Collection of Modern and Contemporary Voyages and Travels. vol. 6. London, 1807.

Pittman, Philip. The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi, With a Geographic Description of that River illustrated by Plans and Draughts, with Introduction, Notes, and Index by Frank H. Hodder. Cleveland, 1906.

Pope, William E. Early Days in Arkansas, Being the Most Part Personal Recollections of an Old Settler. Little Rock, 1895.

Romans, Bernard. A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida. Gainesville, 1969.

Secondary Sources

1. Biographies

Caughey, John W. Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783. Berkeley, 1934.

_____. McGillivray of the Creeks. Norman, 1938.

2. Monographs

Brinckerhoff, Sidney B., and Chamberlain, Pierce A. Spanish Military Weapons in Colonial America, 1700-1821. Harrisburg, 1972.

Claiborne, J. F. H. Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State, with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens. Jackson, 1880.

Fundaburk, Emma Lila. Southeastern Indians: Life Portraits, A Catalogue of Pictures, 1564-1860. Luverne, Ala., 1958.

Gibson, Arrell M. The Chickasaws. Norman, 1971.

Nasatir, Abraham. Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, 1792-1796. New Haven, 1968.

Peterson, Harold L. The Book of The Continental Soldier. Harrisburg, 1968.

Swanton, John R. The Indians of the Southeastern United States. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 137. Washington, 1946.

The American Heritage Book of Great Historic Places. New York, 1957.

The American Heritage Book of the Revolution. New York, 1958.

The American Heritage Book of Indians. New York, 1961.

Wilson, Everett B. Early Southern Towns. South Brunswick, N.J., 1967.

3. Articles in Journals

Braden, Guy. "The Colberts and the Chickasaw Nation." The Tennessee Historical Quarterly 17, no. 3.

Caughey, John. "The Natchez Rebellion of 1781 and Its Aftermath." The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 16, no. 1.

_____. "Willing's Expedition Down the Mississippi, 1778." The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 15, no. 1.

Corbitt, D. C. "James Colbert and the Spanish Claims to the East Bank of the Mississippi." The Mississippi Valley Historical Review 24, no. 4.

Faye, Stanley. "The Arkansas Post of Louisiana: Spanish Dominion." The Louisiana Historical Quarterly 27, no. 3.

Haarmann, Albert W. "The Spanish Conquest of British West Florida, 1779-1781." The Florida Historical Quarterly 39, no. 2.

Holmes, Jack D. L. "A Spanish Province 1779-1798." In A History of Mississippi, vol. 1. Edited by Richard A. McLemore. 2 vols. Hattiesburg, 1973.

Lull, Francisco Ferrer, and Hefter, J. "The Spanish Louisiana Regiment in the Floridas 1779-1781." Military Collector and Historian: Journal of the Company of Military Historians 16, no. 3.

4. National Park Service Studies

Mattison, Ray. "Report on the Historical Investigations of Arkansas Post, Arkansas." National Park Service, 1957.

5. Letters and Interviews

Huggins, D. L., to E. Bearss, June 13, 1974.

Mesdames Pollard, J. S., S. E. Carroll, and B. Brazil, to J. Rumburg, undated. Files Arkansas Post National Memorial.

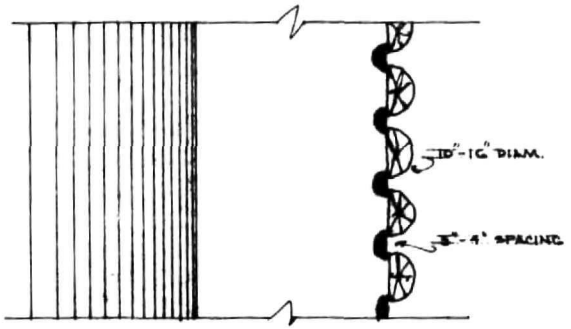
6. Newspapers

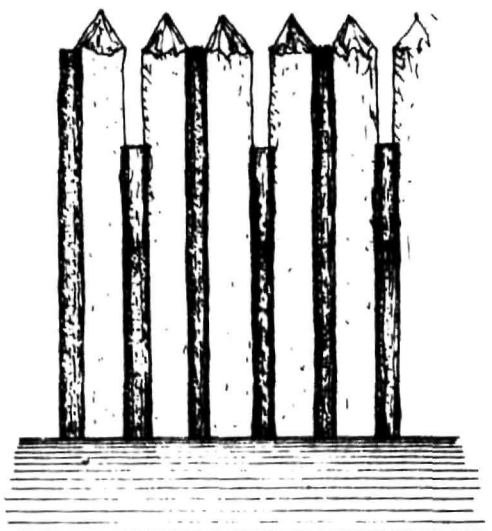
Arkansas Gazette, Nov. 20, 1819.

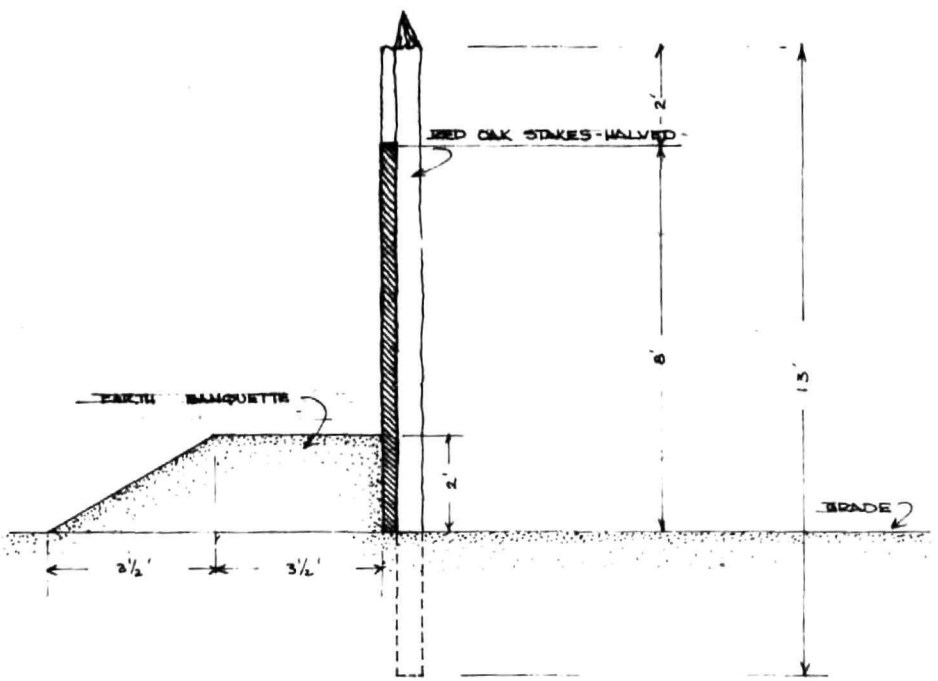
PLATES

Plate I.

Section and elevation of the Fort Carlos III stockade, prepared by Architectural Historian John Garner, Jr., Southeast Regional Office.







SCALE ½" = 1'-0"
JOHN C. GARNER JR 6/5/74

Plate II.

Uniforms of the Spanish Louisiana Regiment, 1779-81, from the plate found in the Military Collector and Historian: Journal of the Company of Military Historians, vol. 16, no. 3.

The Spanish Louisiana Regiment in the Floridas, 1779-1781

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service NPS 851