

COLONIAL TRILOGY VII



The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Ohio

Presents

No French and Indian War, No American Revolution

by

John K. Alexander

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The Society of The Cincinnati

by

Frederic C. Hirons

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Santa Elena

by

Pierson R. Davis

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COLONIAL TRILOGY VII

After a considerable lapse, the Trilogy series resumes with a variety of offerings:

John Alexander, Ph.D., Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati, read his paper "No French and Indian War, No American Revolution" at the luncheon meeting of the General Council on May 13, 2000. A specialist in Revolutionary America, Professor Alexander is also the George Washington Distinguished Professor of the Tri-State Association of The Society of the Cincinnati.

Although originally prepared in 1990, the second paper, by fellow Warrior Frederic C. Hirons, discusses the founding and history of The Society of the Cincinnati. In view of Professor Alexander's association with that Society, we thought it particularly appropriate to insert the Hirons paper here.

The third item of the Trilogy, Santa Elena, is by Pierson R. Davis, an Honorary Governor of the Ohio Society of Colonial Wars. It deals with Spanish attempts to colonize what is now Parris Island in South Carolina, surely a new slant on American Colonial wars.

At the request of Governor General Holden Wilson, the Trilogy VII was to be dedicated to our Deceased Warriors Governor General Wilson died himself during the preparation of this Trilogy, which is therefore dedicated to Governor General Holden Wilson and all of our deceased warriors.

Frank G. Davis
Editor

"NO FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR, NO AMERICAN REVOLUTION"

*John K Alexander, Professor of History, University of Cincinnati and
George Washington Distinguished Professor of the Tri-State Association
of the Society of the Cincinnati*

In September 1762, just months before the hated French and Spanish officially capitulated in the French and Indian War, undergraduates at the College of New Jersey expressed their pride in being members of the British Empire by staging "an entertainment" honoring "The Military Glory of Great-Britain." But less than fourteen years later, in early 1776, another American play trumpeted "The Fall of British Tyranny 01 American Liberty Triumphant, The First Campaign," and on July 2, 1776 thirteen of Great Britain's North American colonies declared their independence¹. It is no easy matter to explain why that stunningly quick transformation from Americans as proud members of the British Empire to Americans as revolutionaries occurred. Still, whatever else one might say about the movement toward independence, this much is clear: the British victory in the French and Indian War laid the foundation for the coming of the War of American Independence². For Great Britain, victory in the French and Indian War was indeed a "Dangerous Triumph."³

Consider Britain's efforts to raise revenue in her American colonies. The fateful decision to tax the colonists came as a direct result of the French and Indian War which began with skirmishes on the colonial frontier in 1754 and in 1756 erupted into a general European conflict Europeans called the Seven Years' War. In 1755, the British national debt was £73,000,000. Although the people of the realm endured high taxes during the War, the government was still forced to borrow so much money that the national debt had almost doubled by January 1763. Merely servicing that massive £137,000,000 debt constituted a ruinous drain on the treasury. Britain's annual national budget was £8,000,000, and almost £5,000,000 of that sum went just to pay the interest on the national debt!⁴

The British government clearly faced an economic crisis brought on by the French and Indian War. And that crisis was exacerbated by the British government's decision to station about 10,000 troops on the colonial frontier to protect Britain's North American colonists from attacks by Indians or others. It cost almost £225,000 a year just to pay those troops; the total yearly cost of colonial defense ran well above £300,000.⁵ Desperate for funds, the politicians kept taxes high in the mother country and instituted new taxes. The new excise tax on cider, however, produced "tumults and riots" in England's apple producing areas. New sources of revenue had to be found. Not surprisingly, British officials looked across the Atlantic. They looked westward out of

economic desperation and because they believed the colonists should be grateful for the protection and care the British had lavished on them, especially in the 'French and Indian War'.⁶

From the mother country's perspective, Britain fought the French and Indian War, as William Pitt, the Secretary of State, put it, "to reduce the Enemy to the necessity of accepting a Peace on terms of Glory & Advantage to His Majesty's Crown, and beneficial, in particular to his Subjects in America."⁷ Pitt stressed that a successful conclusion to the War was essential to "the future Safety and Welfare of America."⁸ The peace terms that ended the War in February 1763 offered tangible proof for Pitt's claim that the mother country was particularly concerned about the future safety and welfare of the King's American subjects. As one of the prizes of victory, the British government had the choice of acquiring either the island of Guadeloupe or New France, essentially modern-day Canada. Guadeloupe, an extraordinarily valuable sugar island, would have provided the British government with desperately needed income. Canada offered no immediate financial benefit and was seen as having little future economic potential. Yet the British took New France. They did that to eliminate what could be called "the French Menace," a menace that had so often embroiled the colonists - and of course Great Britain - in expensive and bloody colonial wars.⁹

Because Great Britain fought the French and Indian War in large measure to protect its North American colonies and would now be stationing extra troops there to defend the colonists, it seemed natural for British politicians to look to the colonies for added revenues. Moreover, British politicians were well aware that the taxpayers in Great Britain paid far more per capita in taxes than their colonial counterpart's did.¹⁰ In the politicians' view, the colonists also deserved increased economic responsibilities in part to make amends for their despicable behavior during the French and Indian War. It was well known that many American merchants traded with the enemy during the War, which put bluntly means many colonists engaged in treason. In August of 1760, an exasperated William Pitt directed the governors in North America and the West Indies to stomp out the "illegal and most pernicious Trade, carried on by the King's Subjects...to... French Settlements... by which the Enemy is... enabled to sustain, and protract, this long and expensive War." Steps must, Pitt insisted, be taken to stop the colonists from acting "in open Contempt of the Authority of the Mother Country."¹¹

Governor Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island - a colony notorious as a center of illicit trade - offered an explanation for why the treasonous commerce flourished. The governor maintained that, even allowing for what they shipped to the British West Indies, the North American colonists produced huge surpluses of flour, beef, pork, fish and lumber. Hopkins observed: "How natural it is for the Proprietors of these [surplus] Commodities to seek some Market for them, and what Risques they will run to find it [,] I need not mention."¹²

George Spencer, a New Yorker employed to ferret out such illegal trade, became an unwilling example of how committed colonials were to keeping the treasonous commerce alive. When Spencer asked a printer to publish a tract denouncing those engaging in the nefarious

activities, the printer - saying he was afraid of reprisal - refused the job. The printer's fear was justified. What a modern-day historian called "[a]n organized mob" pulled Spencer out of his home, force alcohol down his throat until he became drunk, and then paraded him through the streets in a cart. For good measure, Spencer was beaten and pelted with "filth and offal." Adding injustice to insult, Spencer - not the members of the crowd - landed in jail on what he described as a trumped-up charge. According to his account, Spencer languished in jail for months because he had implicated two of the colony's Supreme Court justices in the treasonous trade.¹³

Governor Francis Bernard of Massachusetts also learned how determined the colonials were to profit by trading with the enemy in time of war. By all accounts Bernard diligently worked to squelch the treasonous trade, but he failed. In 1762, General Jeffrey Amherst commiserated with Bernard by telling him that "[t]he Measures you are taking to Bring the Guilty to due punishment are Everything that can be Expected from you, but I am afraid that this trade has already got to Such a height, that few Jurys will be found as free from connections as to be willing to Understand the Crime in its true light."¹⁴ As Amherst prophesied, the illegal trade continued to flourish.¹⁵ The colonists kept acting "in open Contempt of the Authority of the Mother Country."

Considering the benefits the colonists derived from the French and Indian War, the colonists' low tax burden, the traitorous actions of many colonists during the War, and the economic crisis the British government faced in 1763-1764 - all of which flowed directly from the French and Indian War - it made sense for British politicians to expect colonists to pay part of the cost of defending themselves. In addition to taxing the colonists, the British also decided to toughen up enforcement of the trade acts in the New World as well as in home waters. The ramifications of these economic transformations, which stemmed directly from the French and Indian War, made many Americans angry and raised questions about the benefits of belonging to the British Empire.¹⁶

The British, once again as a direct result of the French and Indian War, also angered colonists by increasing efforts to stop them from grabbing up Native American lands. In the colonial era, Native Americans were more likely to ally themselves with the French than the British. That was no minor problem. Right at the start of the War, Edmond Atkin, a South Carolinian, observed that: "[t]he Importance of Indians is now generally known and understood. A Doubt remains not, that the prosperity of our Colonies on the Continent, will stand or fall with our Interest and favour among them. While they are our Friends, they are the Cheapest and Strongest Barrier for the Protection of our Settlements; when Enemies, they are capable..., in spite of all we can do, to render these Possessions almost useless."¹⁷

Recognizing the truth of Atkin's observation and painfully aware that many Indians might support the French, the British government diligently labored to get Indians at least to be neutral in the War. For our considerations, the vital example is the Treaty of Easton concluded in October 1758. The treaty negotiations, which drew some 500 Native Americans to the

deliberations, were so important that the colonial governors of both Pennsylvania and New Jersey attended. From the Indian perspective, the crucial provision of the treaty stipulated that, if the Native American signatories maintained peace with the British, the British would stop their colonists from encroaching on Indian lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. According to Lt. Col. Henry Bouquet, the Treaty of Easton, which was duly ratified by His Majesty in Council, effectively "knocked the French in the head."¹⁸

The British, looking to the long-term as well as to the immediate military need, took their Treaty of Easton promises seriously. In 1761, as the French and Indian War still raged, Colonel Bouquet signaled the British government's intention to honor the Treaty of Easton; he issued a proclamation telling American colonists they could not settle or even hunt west of the Appalachians without permission. Two years later Britain established the famous Proclamation Line of 1763 which forbade colonists from seeking to acquire Indian lands west of a line which ran through the Appalachians.¹⁹ Sir William Johnson, the British superintendent of Indian affairs, thus was sincere when he said he would welcome "a solemn public Treaty to agree upon clear and fixed Boundaries between our Settlements and their Hunting Grounds, so that each Party may know their own and be a mutual Protection to each of their respective Possessions."²⁰

For their part, the colonists realized that, with the French effectively removed as the protector of the Indians, the opportunities for building their own western empire had brightened considerably.²¹ So, colonists generally treated the Proclamation of 1763 as contemptuously as they treated Pitt's pleas to stop supplying the enemy in wartime. For example, in direct violation of the Proclamation, George Washington entered into a secret arrangement with William Crawford to survey and snatch up Indian lands. Telling Crawford to keep his words to themselves, Washington asserted: "I can never look upon the proclamation in any other light . . . than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians.... Any person therefore who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good lands and in some measure marking and distinguishing them for their own (in order to keep others from settling them) will never regain it [the opportunity]."²² So many others joined Washington in violating the Proclamation that an exasperated Lord Dunmore, Virginia's governor, lamented that Virginians "do and will remove [into Indian lands] as their avidity and restlessness incite them.... Nor can they [-the Virginians-] be easily brought to entertain any belief of the permanent obligation of Treaties made with these People, whom they consider, as but little removed from the brute Creation."²³

As important as the issues of taxation and of Native American policy were, astute contemporary commentators pointed to another result of the French and Indian War as the *sine qua non* for the coming of the War of American Independence. In late 1773, Thomas Hutchinson, the star-crossed native son and royal governor of Massachusetts, proclaimed that "before the peace [of 1763] I thought nothing so much to be desired as the cession of Canada. I am now convinced that if it had remained to the French none of the spirit of opposition to the mother country would have yet appeared. "Indeed, said Hutchinson, the effects of the acquisition of Canada were "worse than all we have to fear from [the] French and Indians."²⁴ Josiah Tucker,

the Dean of Gloucester, emphasized the same point even more emphatically. In a brilliant 1774 essay on "The True Interest of Great Britain set forth in Regard to the Colonies," Tucker proclaimed: "from the Moment in which Canada came into the Possession of the English, an End was put to the Sovereignty of the Mother-Country over the Colonies. They [in the colonies] had then nothing to fear from a foreign Enemy; and as to their own domestic Friends and Relations [in Britain], they had for so many Years preceding been accustomed to trespass upon their Forbearance and Indulgence, even when they most wanted their Protection, that it was no Wonder they should openly renounce an Authority which they never thoroughly approved of, and which now they found to be no longer necessary for their own Defense."²⁵ As both Hutchinson and Tucker realized, colonial fear of the French in Canada might well have dampened and quite possibly extinguished the idea of waging a war for independence, an idea that seemed ridiculous in early 1763 but which became a proclaimed reality on July 2, 1776. As Tucker and Hutchinson correctly stressed, the French "menace" - really the French and Indian "menace" - served as a constant reminder to colonists of the benefits of belonging to the British Empire.

Josiah Tucker probably went too far when he asserted that the British acquisition of Canada guaranteed that the British colonists in North America would become independent. Nevertheless, take away the French and Indian War and crucial elements that fueled the revolutionary movement vanish. Take away the French and Indian War and the accompanying treasonous trade of the colonists and there would have been no special reason for the British to try to gain firmer control over the colonies by enforcing the trade acts with uncharacteristic vigor. Take away the French and Indian War and the British government would not have faced the economic crisis that led to the calamitous decision to tax the colonists. Take away the French and Indian War and there would have been no Treaty of Easton and consequently no Proclamation of 1763. Take away the French and Indian War and New France would still have been a French possession sitting ominously astride the British colonies and serving as a constant reminder of the dangers of trying to break away from the British Empire.

Even granting that the well-documented history of the colonists' illegal activities and ruthless selfishness does not negate the fears Americans expressed in the 1760s and 1770s about the British endangering their constitutional rights, the fact remains: the French and Indian War produced the transformations in the British Empire that made the War of American Independence possible. In sum, take away the French and Indian War and there would have been no War of American Independence as we know it.

Presented to the
96th General Council,
Society of Colonial Wars
May 13, 2000

John K. Alexander, a Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati, is a specialist in the history of Revolutionary America. In 1999, the Tri-State Association of The Society of The Cincinnati made him its George Washington Distinguished Professor. Professor Alexander has been awarded the University of Cincinnati's A.B. "Dolly" Cohen Award for Excellence in University Teaching. In addition to producing numerous scholarly articles and serving as an Associate Editor of the American National Biography project, Professor Alexander is the author Render Them Submissive: Responses to Poverty in Philadelphia. 1760-1800 (1980) and The Selling of the Constitutional Convention: A History of News Coverage (1990). His study of Samuel Adams: America's Revolutionary Politician is scheduled for publication late in the year 2000.

FOOTNOTES

¹Montrose J. Moses, ed., Representative Plays by American Dramatists, 1765-1819 (New York, 1964; originally published 1918), 280-82. Moses reprints The Fall of British Tyranny (pp. 283-349); for the 1762 play, see The MILITARY Glory of Great-Britain an entertainment . . . September 29th, 1762 (Philadelphia, 1762), Evans Number 9188.

² The classic brief statement of this position, which has deeply influenced my view, comes from Lawrence Henry Gipson who, speaking specifically of the French and Indian War, declared that "[g]reat wars in modern times have too frequently been the breeders of revolution." (See Gipson's "The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for the Empire. 1754-1763." Political Science Quarterly 55 [March 1950]:86-104, with quotation from p. 86.) Gipson expanded on that theme in his The Coming of the Revolution. 1763-1775 (New York 1954) and in his monumental fifteen-volume study of The British Empire before the American Revolution (Caldwell, Idaho and New York, 1936-1970). In A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and the Society in the Seven Years' War (Chapel Hill, 1984), Fred Anderson explored how the very different experiences of the British and the Americans who fought together in the War helped "transform" Massachusetts from the British Empire's "most enthusiastic advocate" to "its most intractable opponent" (p. 223). He has recently gone much further in depicting the French and Indian War as an agent of change. Anderson opens his Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and The Fate of Empire in British North America (New York, 2000) proclaiming: "[w]ithout the Seven Years' War, American independence would surely have been long delayed, and achieved (if at all) without a war of national liberation. Given such an interruption in the chain of causation, it would be difficult to imagine the French Revolution occurring as it did, when it did - or, for that matter, the Wars of Napoleon, Latin America's first independence movements, the transcontinental juggernaut that Americans call 'westward expansion,' and the hegemony of English-derived institutions and the English language north of the Rio Grande" (p. xvi). Having in the work itself essentially limited the coverage to the era of the Seven Years' War, he offered the more limited but still bold statement that the Seven Years' War was the American Revolution's "indispensable precursor and its counterpart influence in the formation of the early republic" - and beyond (p. 745).

³ Bruce P. Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793" in P.J. Marshall, ed., The Oxford History of the British Empire The Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1998), 151-68, with quotation from p. 159.

⁴ Allen S. Johnson, "The Passage of the Stamp Act," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d. Ser., 16 (Oct. 1959), 507. (Hereafter WMQ.)

⁵ John Shy, "The American Colonies in War and Revolution. 1748-1783." in Marshall, ed., Oxford History of the British Empire, 307-8 and John Shy, Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution (Princeton, 1965), 45-83; Gipson, Coming, 58; John L. Bullion, A Great and Necessary Measure: George Greenville and the Genesis of the Stamp Act 1763- 1765 (Columbia, Missouri, 1982), 21-23.

⁶ Johnson, "Passage of the Stamp Act," 507-8; Lenman, "Colonial Wars," 161; Gipson, Coming, 55-59 with quotation from p. 58; Ian R. Christie and Benjamin W. Labaree, Empire or Independence 1760-1776 (New York, 1976), 29-32; Thomas C. Barrow, Trade and Empire: The British Customs Service in Colonial America. 1660-1775 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 177; Bullion, A Great and Necessary Measure, 15-26.

⁷ Pitt to Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, 17 December 1760 in Gertrude S. Kimball, ed., Correspondence of William Pitt, 2 vols. (New York, 1906), 2: 367-70 with quotation from p. 367. Pitt (ibid., pp. 365-67) sent the same message in slightly different form to the Governors of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey.

⁸ Pitt to Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, 7 January 1760 in ibid., 234-37 with quotation from p. 236. Pitt (ibid., pp. 231-34 with quotation on p. 234) wrote the same thing to the Governors of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey.

⁹ Gipson, "The American Revolution," 89-92, 102-4; Lenman, "Colonial Wars," 150-63; Shy, "The American Colonies," 301-7; Peter Marshall, "British North America, 1760- 1815" in Marshall, ed., Oxford History of the British Empire, 372-74; J.R. Ward, "The British West Indies in the Age of Abolition. 1748-1815" in ibid., 418.

¹⁰ Bullion, A Great and Necessary Measure, 23-25 and R. R. Palmer, The Age of the Democratic Revolution:.. The Challenge (Princeton, 1959), 153-58. Palmer (p. 155) constructed an informative estimate on the annual tax burden in 1765 that showed people in Great Britain paying 26/, in Ireland 6/8 and in the six North American colonies he examined 1/ or less. The colonists and historians have, of course, pointed out that the Americans provided a number of economic benefits to the mother country despite the low tax burden the colonists had. For an instructive contemporary comment of 1764 on such benefits, see Harry A. Cushing, ed., The Writings of Samuel Adams, 4 vols. (New York, 1904-1908), 1:3-6.

¹¹ Pitt also lashed out at "this dangerous and ignominious Trade" because it led colonists to purchase foreign "Commodities" which worked "to the most manifest Prejudice of the Manufactures and Trade of Great Britain." Pitt to Governors in North America and the West Indies, 23 August January 1760 in Kimball, ed., Correspondence of William Pitt, 2: 320-21, with all quotations from p. 320.

¹² Hopkins to Pitt, 20 December 1760 in *ibid.*, 2: 373-78, with quotations from p. 377.

¹³ Henry L. Gipson, The Great War for the Empire: The Culmination. 1760-1763 (New York, 1954) and Milton M. Klein, "The Rise of the New York Bar: The Legal Career of William Livingston," WMQ, 3d. Ser, 15 (July 1958), 348-49 with Spencer's statement and quotation on the nature of the crowd from p. 348.

¹⁴ Amherst to Bernard of 10 June 1762 as quoted in Gipson, The Great War. ... 1760-1763, 81-82 with quotation from p. 82.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 78-82, 186-87 and Shy, "American Colonies," 306.

¹⁶ On the toughening up, see the Order in Council of 4 October 1763 reprinted in Merrill Jensen, ed., English Historical Documents: American Colonial Documents to 1776 (London, 1955), 637-39. For additional examples of how the evolving nature of commerce might have made colonists question the value of being a part of the British Empire, see Marc Egnal, "The Economic Development of the Thirteen Continental Colonies. 1720 to 1775," WMQ 32 (April 1975): 191-222.

¹⁷ Quoted in Gary B. Nash, Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North America, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 2000), 252

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 252-55; Henry L. Gipson, The Great War for the Empire :The Victorious Years. 1758-1760 (New York, 1957), 278-79 with the quotation from p. 279; Francis Jennings, Empire of Fortune: Crowns. Colonies and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America, (New York, 1988), 396- 403.

¹⁹ Gipson, The Great War 1758-1760, 279 and, for the Proclamation of 1763, see Jensen, ed., American Colonial Documents, 639-43.

²⁰ Quoted in Francis Jennings, "The Indians'. Revolution," in Alfred F. Young, ed., The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism (DeKalb, Ill., 1976), 332.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 321-48.

²² Washington to Crawford, 21 September 1767 in Douglas S. Freeman, George Washington: A Biography, 7 vols. (New York, 1948-57), 2: 467-71 with quotation from pp. 468-69. The full quote is: "I can never look upon that Proclamation in any other light (but this I say

between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the Minds of the Indians and must fall of course in a few years especially when those Indians are consenting to our Occupying their lands. Any person therefore who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good Lands and in some measure marking and distinguishing them for their own (in order to keep others from settling them) will never regain it"

²³ Quoted, with additions by the current author, in William T. Hagan, American Indians (Chicago, 1961), 27. The full quotation as given by Hagan is that Virginians "do and will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them.... Nor can they be easily brought to entertain any belief of the permanent obligation of Treaties made with those People, whom they consider, as but little removed from the brute Creation."

²⁴ Hutchinson to Earl of Dartmouth of 14 December 1773 quoted in Gipson, Coming, 215.

²⁵ Robert L. Schuyler, Josiah Tucker: A Selection from His Economic and Political Writings (New York, 1931) reprints "The True Interest" (pp. 381-69) with quotation from pp. 337-38. Tucker also emphasized that the colonists had over the decades routinely and shamelessly disregarded legal restrictions in their greedy pursuit of "Self-Interest" (p. 359). On the theme of trading with the enemy, see also Tucker's 1775 comments in *ibid.*, 376, 396.

THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

Reflections on Professor Minor Myers Book

"Liberty without Anarchy"

Frederic C Hirons, Member of the Cincinnati

In the State of Connecticut and

Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Ohio

The scene is General Washington's headquarters at Newburg, New York in the fall of 1782. Although the British had surrendered at Yorktown in 1781, the ports of New York, Charleston, and Savannah were still in British hands. It was felt that they might mount a new campaign, but the real topic of conversation was how to get Congress to fund retirement pay as the war wound down.

Discontent over pay had prevailed for at least five years, and many officers had actually used their private funds to equip and supply their men. Lacking the power to tax and because of the disinterest of the states, the issue of a pension just wasn't making headway. Some of the more militant officers prepared position papers known as the Newburg Addresses which fomented the thought of a military coup against congress to get action. Learning of this, General Washington's aim was to let the army be heard, but to keep the protests "within the bounds of moderation". Action was to be taken at a meeting called in March 1783. Washington strode into the room and took the podium quickly. He spoke forcefully for moderation and loyalty to Congress. Finally, speaking haltingly, he reached into his pocket for his spectacles and said "Gentlemen, you must pardon me. I have grown gray in your service and now find myself going blind."

He carried the day! With the war coming to end, the Army would soon be disbanded. When the officers returned to their homes, there no longer would be any organized political pressure on Congress to raise the money to fund the long-promised pension plans. The time was right for General Henry Knox to move on his long-cherished plan for an hereditary organization of officers of the revolution with a general society and supreme authority resting in thirteen state societies - France would also form a state society. On May 13, 1783 the Institution of the Society was born at the Verplanck House at General Van Steuben's headquarters at Fishkill-on-the-Hudson. The announced purpose was to provide continuing fellowship, perpetuate the ideals that had won the war, and provide a fund to take care of hardship cases among the officers. Each officer would contribute a set amount depending on his rank. \$166 for a major general, \$20 for an ensign. Future membership would be hereditary based on primogeniture. Washington was elected president general, and top officers were assigned to organize the various state societies.

As the word got out about this new organization, the public reaction was intense and vicious. "A nascent nobility, patrician, pompous, and members might soon try to trace their lineage to heaven", were some of the milder criticisms. Benjamin Franklin, who had spent much of his time in France, call the Hereditary Society an "absurdity", it should be noted, however, that Mr. Franklin accepted honorary membership in 1789. There was a widespread feeling that the Society would replace Congress and actually take over the government.

The organizational approach to getting congress to fund the pension certainly did not satisfy all the military. An example was one Henry Carberry, a Captain in Pennsylvania. He mounted a mutiny that was put down. Under sentence of death he escaped to England and later turned up in Pennsylvania and was sponsored for the Society of the Cincinnati in 1805 by David Zeigler, the First Mayor of the City of Cincinnati.

General Washington was sensitive to the sharp division and controversy over the new society. In early 1784 he discussed the situation with Thomas Jefferson, who was an arch foe of the society, concluding, "if the thing be bad, it must be totally abolished". By the time of the National Society meeting in May 1784, Washington, as President General, presented certain changes that would have been made in the Institution if it were not to be abolished. These included the elimination of all political activity, removal of the hereditary provision, no more honorary members, donations to come only from U.S. citizens, and no more general meetings. Strong objections were raised to the proposed amendments to the institution, but Washington was firm.

Then, wonder of wonders, Major Pierre L'enfant who designed the medal of the society and had gone to France to have it made, appeared with a shipment of dazzling golden eagles and word that King Louis XVI had approved the Society in France. More importantly, Major L'enfant had brought a special diamond encrusted eagle from French Admiral D'estaing for George Washington on behalf of the French Navy. Whoever said, "diamonds are a girls' best friend" was only half-right!

The sharp debate turned to murmurs of pleasure and the amendments to the Institution were toned down.

Any thought of abolishing the Society would be a gross insult to our loyal French comrades. The golden eagle had saved the day! Interestingly, this diamond eagle has been the badge of every President General of the Society through its history.

Approval of the amended institution by the state societies was mighty slow, and I rather think that it never was totally ratified. Conditions in the country were deteriorating financially, and the fear of anarchy prevailed. Rumors were rife - first it was said that Prince Henry of Prussia had been asked to become King of America. Another story was that the Duke of York was to take over as monarch. Finally, how do you like this one - - that King George III, our

recent adversary, would give us the Canadas, Nova Scotia, and other British territories in our country if we would accept one of his sons as King!

With all this confusion and turmoil, the members of the Cincinnati did not use their strength and experience to usurp power and take over the government, as people had feared. Instead they were always available when a strong stand for law and order was required. When the Shays Rebellion of 1787 shut down the courts in Western Massachusetts, so debtors could not be tried and sent to jail, a force led by Members of the Cincinnati crushed the uprising. Likewise, when an army of two thousand was authorized to "putdown the Indians", most of the officers were Cincinnati under the leadership of General Benjamin Lincoln.

It was not surprising then, when the Constitutional Convention was assembled, 22 of the 55 delegates were Cincinnati. By contrast the total number of Cincinnati represented only .7% of the total population. It has been said that the electoral college was adopted to serve as a check on the power of the Cincinnati. Actually, they did not operate as a group and were usually on both sides of any issue. On the need for a strong national government, however, there was complete agreement. This expression of individual views carried over the debates on ratification by the several states. The story is told of the hot debate in the New York Legislature where Alexander Hamilton was pushing for ratification and Governor George Clinton was opposed. Finally, Hamilton said that New York City would secede from the State if the constitution was not ratified. It passed 34 - 32!

With ratification accomplished, the attention of many Cincinnati turned to the West, land grants, and the formation of the Ohio Company. These included Von Stuben, Rufus Putnam in Marietta, Benjamin Tupper, William Duer (whose speculation landed him in jail) Winthrop Sargent, General Harmon, General St. Clair, General Anthony Wayne, Richard Clough Anderson, Moses Cleveland, Benjamin Tallmadge, and Major John Burnham who laid out the town of Gallipolis for the French colonizers. Settlements in Ohio were seen not only as a profitable promotion, but also as a safety net if the new Constitution failed.

For a change of scene, let's go over to France to see how their society was doing. Major Pierre L'enfant, whom you have already met, was busy organizing it around Lafayette, Rochambeau, and Admiral D'estaing. Mirabeau opposed it strongly. In French the word Cincinnatus came through where spoken as San Cinnatus, and the people wondered whether the Pope was announcing a Saint Senatus. As the French Revolution developed, eleven Cincinnati were guillotined, Rochambeau and Lafayette were imprisoned, and Admiral D'estaing was killed because of his loyalty and support of Marie Antoinette.

The chaos was recorded by the historian Lamartine. In writing about the revolutionary fanatic, Fournier, he said, "From the neck of his horse dangled a collar composed of crosses of St. Louis, eagles of Cincinnatus, and other military decorations snatched from the breast of victims." As other Cincinnati fled France, the Society disappeared, not to be revised until 1925.

Turning our attention back to the States, we find George Washington dispensing patronage. Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury, Knox Secretary of War, Pickering as postmaster, and Pickney and Humphreys as Ambassadors to serve under the arch-foe of the Society, Thomas Jefferson, who was appointed Secretary of State. One interesting appointment was that of collector of the Port of Wilmington, one George Bush! The appointments by George Washington have been described as prominent, but not dominate. However, when it came to appointing Generals and Field Officers for the National Army, 59 out of 62 were Cincinnati. When the Whiskey Rebellion arose in 1794, General Washington personally led the force that put it down.

Following Washington's death in 1799, the Societies went from dominant to dormant in the first half of the century. Members concerned themselves with erecting statues to the late President and pushing again for a new plan to provide retirement pay for officers, even though they had sold their pension certificates. This got nowhere in Congress, but after Lafayette's very successful tour of all the functioning State Societies in 1824 and 1825, Congress did pass an act that allowed full - not half pay - for all surviving officers and enlisted men. This worked well for the survivors, but not so well for Aaron Ogden, the Vice President General of the Society. He had contracted in 1825 to serve as lobbyist to get the pay issue through Congress. When the pay was finally voted, many of the recipients refused to pay the 5% contingency agreed on. Certainly an un noble act!

In this period societies were going out of business one after the other. In Virginia the Society voted in 1802 that its charitable fund would go eventually to Washington College. After years of discussion and Thomas Jefferson's efforts to change the beneficiary to his beloved University of Virginia, the original designation to Washington College was made official. Washington and Lee, as we now know it, received funds for the teaching of Military Science and an annual oration commemorating the Society of the Cincinnati.

In the second half of the Nineteenth Century, the Society experienced a rebirth. President General Hamilton Fish was a Senator with past experience as Governor of the State of New York. During his term of office, a liberalization known as the rule of 1854 permitted each State Society to set its own admission standards. This did not produce any great influx of new members, but did result in some changes that permitted collateral as well as direct descendants.

In 1872, a new force emerged in the person of Asa Bird Gardiner, a career military officer who had won the Congressional Medal of Honor at Gettysburg. When the Rhode Island Society sought reactivation, Colonel Gardiner took up the project and revitalized this and every other State Society during his lifetime. During this period, the "Nascent Aristocracy", which had been so feared in the Eighteenth Century became the model for many new hereditary patriotic societies - The Sons of the Revolution, The Daughters of the Revolution of 1776, The Children of the American Revolution, and The Daughters of the Cincinnati (an organization not readily

accepted by "The Cincinnati"). I have been told by reliable authority at home that the most significant founding was that of the National Society of the Colonial Dames in America.

It is not known whether Colonel Gardiner's success was the cause or result of his period of "Nascent Aristocracy". Suffice it to say that at his death, the New York Times wrote affectionately, "his essential genius as that of getting into and making trouble."

Moving to the middle of the Twentieth Century, one of the very interesting events occurred in the regime of President General Edgar Erskine Hume, who brought to the office a brilliant record as a medical officer in both World Wars as well as prolific writings. In 1952 a new member was being inducted into the Society. Genealogists had traced his descent and found him to be the great great grandson of a Lt. Murray of the Connecticut Society. In accepting the gold Badge of membership, Winston Churchill said, "History unfolds itself by a strange and unpredictable path", and then went on to say that his ancestry had served on both sides in the American Revolution.

Now, as we come to the 207th year of the Society, we find it alive and well with headquarters in the Larz Anderson House at 2118 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., in Washington. When Ambassador Anderson died, his wife left the Turn-of-the Century mansion, with a magnificent collection of art and memorabilia to the Society, as a permanent headquarters. Many of you, I am sure, know Ambassador Anderson's great nephew - V. Anderson Coombe. Our total membership is now something over three thousand, of which there are about one thousand honorary members - presidents, generals, statesmen, educators, poets, bishops, and other leaders of note.

In summary, the following words of professor Minor Myers - the author of *Liberty Without Anarchy* - tells it all.

"Today the Society of the Cincinnati survives and flourishes. Contrary to the expectation of Jefferson, Aedanus Burke, and Mirabeau, it has proved no constitutional threat, but became an organization devoted to principles Jefferson himself approved, the principles of the revolution, the preservation of history, and the diffusion of historical knowledge."

As our founding fathers look down on this world now and see so many countries struggling to manage their newly acquired freedom, I'm sure in their hearts they are cheering them on and reminding our own beloved country that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance - and a lot of work!

January, 1990

SANTA ELENA

*Pierson R. Davis, Honorary Governor
Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Ohio*

PROLOGUE

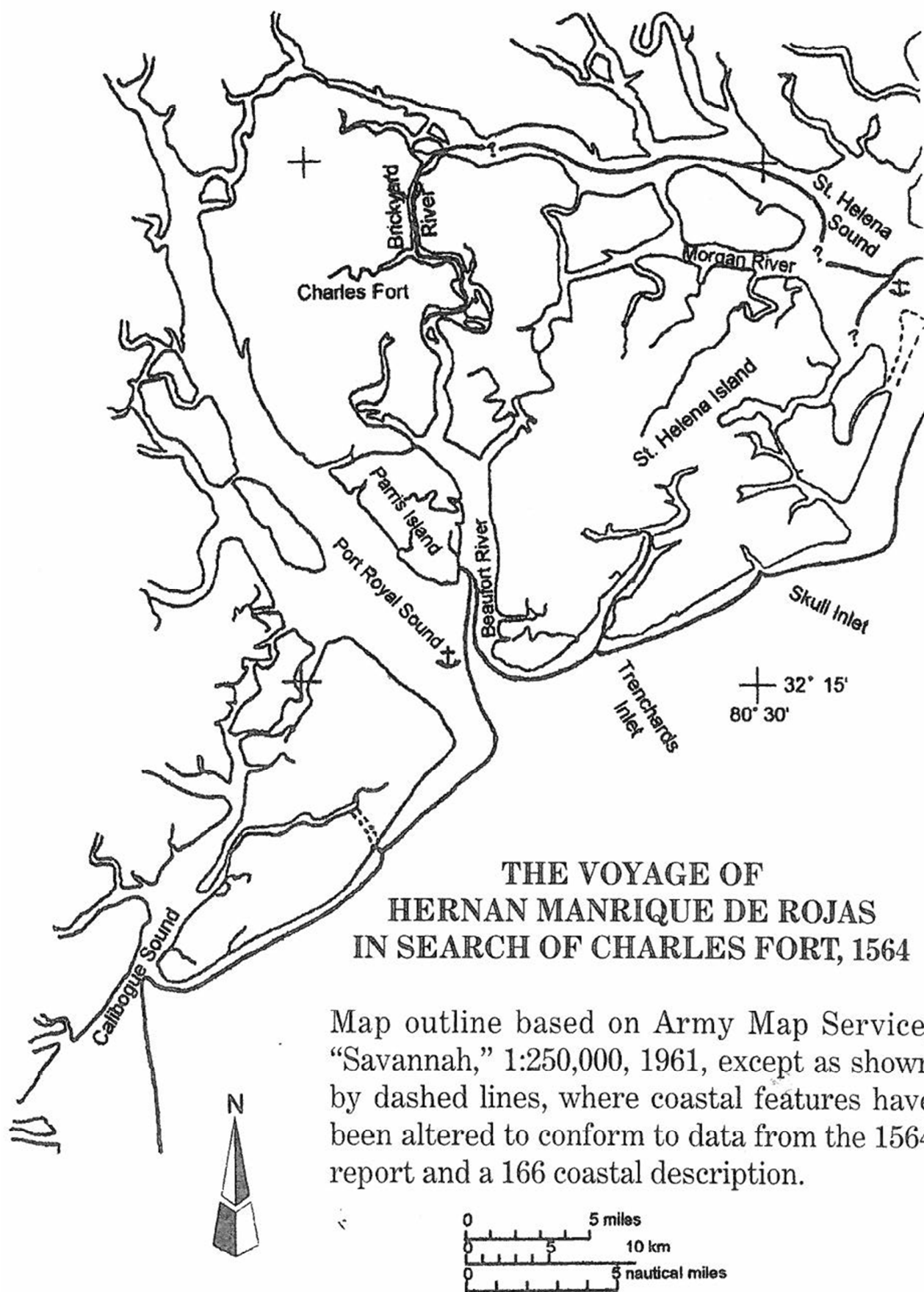
*As for man, his days are as grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*

*For the wind passeth over it and it is gone:
And the place thereof shall know it no more.*

“Your Excellencies, you have asked me to witness to the conditions at Fort San Felipe and the town of Santa Elena which the Fort protects, as to the physical emotional and moral circumstances. This is the most northern and distant outpost and settlement in la Florida. To help me keep everything in proper order I ask you to let me start as early as the first efforts to establish this Fort as his Majesty's “window on the Atlantic “as he calls Santa Elena. That will make my witness more orderly and accurate.

As your Excellencies well know we have the oldest town in the New World, on the island of Hispaniola, and have towns and enterprises elsewhere in New Spain that bring great wealth to Spain and his Majesty. Our treasure fleets must cross the Caribbean then sail north along the coast of la Florida until they reach the Westerlies which will drive them across the Atlantic and home. The Westerlies will occur anywhere from Punta Santa Elena, which was named by Captain Pedro Quexos when he sighted a headland on August 18, 1525 on the feast of Santa Elena and - - - -

“Yes, your Excellency, I will try to hurry, if you will bear with me for a little while - - - and he named it Punta Santa Elena. For ten years starting in 1550 his Majesty tried to get our bureaucracy to go to Santa Elena and provide his 'window on the Atlantic'. He told Luis de Velasco, Viceroy of New Spain, to send Tristan de Luna and Angel de Villefane to Santa Elena as governor of his provinces de la Florida Punta Santa Elena and they ended up setting up a fort on the West Coast of Florida. Finally Villefane reached the harbor at Punta Santa Elena and a great hurricane destroyed three ships and killed twenty-six men and that was the end of the expedition.



“Two years later - - -”

“Yes your Excellency I am trying to show how difficult that adventure has been.

“Two years later that French infidel, Protestant, privateer Jean Ribaut was able to build a fort right where his Majesty wanted to build Santa Elena and he named the harbor area Port Royal and it is still called that and he called his fort Charlesfort and it lasted for only a year when the bungling French had to leave.

“His Majesty ordered Governor Mazariego to send a Cuban force to destroy the French settlement and deliver justice fit for the Protestant trespassers and he sent Don Hernando de Maurique Rojas and the frigate “Neustra Senora de la Concepcion “and my army unit to do his Majesty's bidding and - - -.

“Yes your Excellency, I am getting to Santa Elena but I do have to keep it straight in my mind.

“When we reached Charlesfort in June 1564, we burned the fort, found a column erected by Ribaut and found a Frenchman named Roufi and took both of them back to Havanna.

As your Excellencies know, Ribaut returned to reinforce Fort Caroline on the St. John's River and got there just before our great leader Pedro Menendez de Aviles arrived to destroy the fort. Ribaut went in search of us but was wrecked on the beach a few leagues south of the fort at San Augustan where Menendez had anchored our fleet. Then Menendez led his forces, of which I was one, overland and captured Fort Caroline and killed 132 of the men. We executed all those Protestant trespassers, destroyed the fort and took all the women and children back to Fort San Augustan. This was a great victory for Spain and his Majesty. The march we made in a great storm through the swamps and under-growth of those tropical forests was an amazing feat that could have happened only with God's Greatest blessing.

“When we came back to St. Augustine we were told by Indians that Ribaut had lost his fleet in some hurricane and was stranded on the beach about 18 miles to the south and we attacked and after they surrendered we worked justice on most of them but Ribaut wasn't there. I remember October 11th that was the day that scoundrel Ribaut arrived at camp with the remains of his force and sued for peace and we worked the same justice on them.

No your Excellencies, we get to the founding of Santa Elena by that heroic Pedro Menendez who took three ships and fifty of us men, led by Capt. Juan Pardo, to settle Santa Elena in April of 1566 and he also took that Frenchman Roufi as his interpreter since he had lived with the Indians for many years. When we reached Port Royal Sound we met with the Orista Indians, feasted with them and Menendez even convinced them that our religion was the only true one. When that was all done we looked for a place for a presidio and found the ruins of

Charlesfort. Since there was already a moat and an earth parapet Senor Menendez built Ft. San Felipe on that site and that destroyed all evidence of those French infidels.

"It took us fifteen days to build the fort and then a garrison of over 100 men led by Estaban del las Alas was established there along with six pieces of artillery, four of these were from the French fort. Our forts were made of a moat with the dug dirt forming a parapet inside the moat then a wooden palisade was erected between the moat and the parapet and bastions were formed at each corner. Inside the parapet we built a two level casa fuerte - a fortified house you know - - -.

"Iam sorry your Excellency, I sometimes forget that not all civilians are ignorant of military terms.

"Our casa was about 70feet by 150feet with the artillery on the upper level and on the bastions and with arms storage and living quarters on the lower level. The farmers built houses and storage buildings of wattle and daub with thatch-like roofs of palm frond and marsh grass. The houses looked very much like the country houses here in Spain. Most of those farmers came from Castille.

"Your Excellencies, I now come to the information you asked for about the condition of the fort, Santa Elena and the soldiers and people. When we came here on the El Spiritu Santo we left fifty men in each fort at San Felipe, Saint Augustine and San Pedro.

"Your Excellencies it will help me now if you would ask just what information you want.

"You wish to know what artillery arms and munitions remain in the said forts of Florida ? There was left in the fort of San Elena, about forty seven men and fourteen pieces of artillery, among which are two large cannon and one demi-culverin; and the rest are culverins of a small bore, sakers and falconets, well mounted, with their wheels, and that there may be about a barrel of powder for cannon and arquebuses; I know not the quantity there may be, because it is some time since I have been inside the magazine; but there must be very little, because I saw that from San Felipe fort, we supplied the others, which are the forts of St. Augustine and San Pedro, and other points, and vessels which had arrived there, with the cannon powder, and therefore I know that there can be very little of it; and that the soldiers who are left in the fort are poorly equipped and lack supplies, and are without shirts or clothing, for they have none, and some go without; and some have no swords, and those they have are very poor and worn and many of the arquebuses are in bad condition, and others are broken, and they have not repaired them because they have not the wherewithal to do so. The provisions they have are only flour and maize, and nothing else whatever, and that this may last them through the month of December by giving them a pound per soldier each day; - - -

"Your Excellency wishes to know if there be in the country any meat or fish, or any other means of subsistence? There was neither meat nor fish nor any other sustenance, save when a

soldier went to fish at his risk, because they are in the habit of going fishing, and the Indians kill them, and sometimes there came a fish that dragged away the soldier after it and drowned him.

“What governor or head remains in the said province of Florida? In the fort of Santa Elena there remained Juan de la Benera, an ensign and lieutenant of Pedro Menendez (Marques) who is the captain of the fort. - - -

“You want to know whether with the people who were left in the forts and in each one of them, they remain a sufficient defense so that they cannot receive injury? With the men who are left in the said fort of San Felipe, which is at Santa Elena, where I have lived all the time that I have been in Florida, they can defend themselves very well if they do not want for food and munitions, because they have great protection in being at the place where they are - -

“What will be necessary to do in order that the said forts shall have the proper protection against the Indians, French, and other enemies? First, it is needful to supply arms, pikes, swords, arquebuses and munitions, so as to make use of them; and provisions of bread, wine, oil and vinegar, and clothing for the people who are and live therein, because they have great need of all this, and that they should be paid their salaries for the time that each one has served, so that they be able to clothe themselves therewith, and serve his Majesty as is proper; and as they are serving and have served him, and this is the way to keep them quiet in the province of Florida; and they likewise have need of a chaplain to say mass and administer the sacraments to them, since they are Christians”

(Adapted from
Colonial Records of Spanish Florida,
Conner p 315 et seq.)

This was the actual testimony of Francisco Dominques de Castellanos, a corporal in the service of Phillip II of Spain. This ends the dramatization. The corporal's testimony was personalized to add a little feeling to the dry, flat, legal wording of the actual records of the event.)

NARRATIVE

By 1570 it appears that Santa Elena was no longer self-sufficient, barely able to defend itself, and had lost the friendship of the Indians. The land was not as productive as at first believed and this settlement had supplied the other two Florida forts and passing ships.

One of the problems between the Indians and the settlement was the Spanish custom of quartering the troops in the native villages during periods of food shortages. The Indians suffered short food supplies on occasion also, especially in late winter and spring when the settlers also suffered. This practice years later by the British was so abhorrent to the colonists that its prohibition was included in our constitution.

Another blow to the Florida colony in 1574 was the recall of Menendez de Aviles to Spain to serve the King. An armada of 300 ships and 20,000 men was being assembled for the Flanders campaign or perhaps against England. The day this armada was placed under Menendez' command he was stricken with a mysterious illness and died on September 17, 1574, at the relatively young age of 55. It was thought the illness was induced by his foreign travels or perhaps by his enemies. There is room to speculate that had this powerful and brilliant sailor, tactician and politico lead the Invincible Armada in 1588 there might have been a different outcome. What a change that might have made in the history of Western civilization.

Menendez's program to develop the agriculture of La Florida and the domestication and Christianizing of the Indians was abandoned except at Santa Elena where Pedro Menendez Marques, the grand nephew of Menendez de Avilea succeeded in both areas.

For the next six years, the community seems to have struggled with very dry weather that damaged crops and cattle. They became increasingly dependent on the native villages for survival. At that time, there was a military garrison and forty-eight farmers plus their families.

During that period and later, the Spanish existed in part by bartering or begging food from the Indians. At times this method was more strong-arm than begging. The European arms were far superior to the native weapons. Gun- powder and shot, along with cross bows, armor and steel blades far out-weighed the primitive bows, arrows, spears, clubs and knives of the Indians. That certainly gave the Spanish the edge at the bargaining table. The native people had a decided advantage in knowledge of the countryside, and they were masters of stealth and deceit.

There were times and circumstances when there was genuine peace and friendship between the neighbors, but the desperation of near starvation and the Spanish need to rule by force usually ended in conflict. A lot of the apparent friendship and peace of the Indians was a result of fear of the Spaniards' superior force.

At that time, the Spanish felt threatened by the English pressure from the north and Bermuda. The French, though they had lost their land bases, still roamed the coast looking for

Spanish ships and threatening harbors and settlements. The artillery in the casa fuertes and the fort's bastions were facing both landward and seaward. The general in charge of Ft. San Felipe and Santa Elena was Fernando de Miranda, an uncouth and unfit leader. It was said he was unfit to govern anything but cattle. His forces often laughed at his orders. Ensign Hernando Moyano, who it seems was not much better than Miranda, did follow his orders to get food from the natives.

Let's now hear what might have been the words of Andres Calderon, a soldier stationed at Fort San Felipe at Santa Elena.

“On June 17, 1576, Ensign Moyano, an arrogant and ignorant soldier, took twenty of us inland to the Escaimacu village of Chief Orista. There was a feast going on with other chiefs and when Moyano demanded food they refused him but he drew his sword and ordered us to take it anyway. Right then the savages seemed to just disappear into the woods - a trick they have that is impressive and frightening. We told the Ensign that we should leave quickly but as was his manner he called us cowards and other things and ordered us to keep on collecting the food. I had to leave the group and step into the woods for personal needs. While I worked to remove the body armor and outer clothing an old cacique, a chief, came back and asked Moyano just what his intentions were. The Ensign answered that we had come in peace and just needed food and lodging. The old cacique said if that was the case we should extinguish the fuses on our arquebuses and the Indians would return. That ignorant Moyano ordered the men to extinguish the fuses and when that was done the old cacique gave a great shout and those treacherous savages rushed back and slaughtered all my comrades. I had no time to do anything but run away in my nearly naked condition, which may have been the blessing that saved my life for I reached a stream known as Whale Branch and swam for safety. With Indians in pursuit it seemed best to keep to the water in my condition and I swam the seven leagues or so back to Santa Elena. On the way I had shed my clothing and when some children found me exhausted on the bank I was quite naked. They helped me to the fort where I was able to warn the others of the probability of an attack and the massacre of the other twenty who had been with me.

"A friendly Indian brought word that Orista had his men cut off my friend's heads and gave them as gifts to the Guale Indian Chiefs who began gathering to attack Santa Elena. Our commander sent out a scouting party with our war dogs - a not too smart a move knowing that ambush was a favorite tactic of the savages - and all that came back were a few wounded dogs. That was when they attacked the fort and the battle lasted a few hours until all their arrows were gone.

“There were only seventeen of us soldiers left and they were mostly old men and boys who were not skilled at fighting. There were also the residents including sixty women and their children. Our fort was aging and in places the palisades were propped up and there were no munitions left. Shortly after the fight, General Miranda ordered us to abandon the fort and board the three boats he had with him. He had just returned from Ravanna with our pay and other

provisions but not enough to endure more attacks. He had everything put on board and all the people were loaded and as we left the Indians rushed in and pillaged and burned all we had left behind. It was a sad day as we made our way out of the sound and turned for St. Augustine”.

So ends the account of Andres Calderon, a soldier in the service of God, Spain and Phillip II.

General Miranda's actions were later attested to in a report by Don Cristoxal de Erasso at Hayaquanck, Hispaniola on January 17, 1577. The report contained a sworn statement by a sailor named Pedro Gomes from the boat Neustra Senor de la Ayuda confirming the actions taken by General Miranda.

There is a fanciful tale that the women seized General Miranda when he wanted to stay and fight. The women supposedly took him to a ship off shore and threatened to throw him overboard if he didn't give orders to abandon Santa Elena. They also had assumed that he was at the fort all the time and had not just arrived from Hispaniola.

There ends the first 10 years of occupation by the Spanish.

Later in the summer of 1577 Menendez Marques returned to Santa Elena and erected Fort San Marcos. The new fortification was located about 150 paces south of Fort San Felipe and on slightly higher ground. There was a moat on three sides and a creek on the east and beyond the creek salt marshes. Today the eastern half of the fort has been eroded away and there are salt marshes extending for at least one half mile to the east.

San Marcos was a rectangular fort with bastions at the corners to protect all sides. It was constructed in the same manner as San Felipe with a casa fuerte inside the parapet. This fort was larger and better manned than its predecessor and stood for ten years before being dismantled and moved to St. Augustine.

There were many Frenchmen, survivors of a shipwreck, living with the Indians in the general area, perhaps as many as 100. The French had always been able to maintain good relations with the natives, certainly better than the Spaniards had. As a result the Spanish worried about the French influencing the Indians to attack. To prevent this Menendez Marques spent a great deal of time searching for the French around the countryside. There are extensive and detailed letters to Phillip describing the hunt, capture and the “working of justice” on the Frenchmen. The “working of justice” is synonymous with execution.

A letter dated October 21, 1577, from Pedro Menendez Marques to King Phillip described poor conditions at St. Augustine and detailed the provisions needed there and at Santa Elena. He also said he had pre-cut all the lumber for Fort San Marcos at St. Augustine and despite many setbacks finally got to Santa Elena. The Indians surrounded the clearing staying just out of sight, thinking they were preventing the Spaniards from cutting the wood to build the fort. With

the lumber they brought, they were able to complete the fort before the Indians realized what was happening. Menendez Marques only fear was that the Frenchmen might have powder which would more than even the odds, in which case the King must send troops and arms as well as all other provisions, which he listed in great detail. He also noted that if bought in the New World the prices for those provisions plus the freightage was so high that it would save money to build two light ships in Havana, send to Spain and return with those provisions and save the King much money. Menendez Marques asks the King to hurry using as urgent language as was diplomatically advisable.

By 1580 Santa Elena had grown to eighty houses and a population of 350 or more. They now raised crops such as squash, watermelon, corn and persimmons as well as cattle. The soil was not fertile and the rain and droughts unpredictable, but they persevered for ten years. Today with better seeds, fertilizer and irrigation, a few acres of the same soil produce enough to support the entire population of Santa Elena and the nearby native villages.

The available records indicate a fairly peaceful existence. There was constant harassment by the French-influenced Indians, but not any large scale attacks. Pedro Menendez Marques brutally punished some Villages and the Indians kept peace more out of fear than peaceful desires. There is a very detailed report of inspections of the fort in 1577 and 1578 and records of government functions but not much more. Santa Elena was capital of all "la Florida" at that time.

The Spanish were feeling more and more pressure from the English and French. They thought Roanoke was a successful colony and would be followed by further expansion to the south. Drake attacked St. Augustine starting June 6, 1586 and burned it a few days later after looting the town. They also cut down all the fruit trees and ruined the fields.

Drake's fleet of twenty-three large ships and nineteen smaller ones and a force of over 2000 men sailed for Santa Elena or St. Helena as the English called it. Some accounts say he passed Port Royal Sound at night on June 20th and never saw it. Another says a storm kept them off shore and Hakluyt's account says: "When we came athwart of St. Helena, the shoals appearing dangerous, and we having no Pilot to undertake the entrie, it was thought meetest to go hence alongst". Here again is a discrepancy. Hakluyt says Drake was beyond Santa Elena and near Roanoke on June 6 and back at Portsmouth on July 28, 1586, where others put him off Santa Elena on June 20.

Following Drake's attack the Spanish decided to change from fixed bases to a more mobile force. Menendez Marques recommended to the King on July 17, 1586, that all Spanish forces be concentrated farther south. Captain Juan de Posada who brought reinforcements from Cuba that summer agreed with the consolidation of their forces. In August 1587, Fort San Marcos was dismantled and the timbers, artillery, soldiers and settlers with all their supplies were moved to St. Augustine.

There ends twenty years of occupation at Santa Elena. It would be nearly 100 years before what we call civilization returned to the Port Royal/Santa Elena area.

Why was Santa Elena able to survive for twenty years when other early attempts failed? The early attempts by the French were:

Quebec	1541-1542	(Cartier)
Charlesfort	1562-1563	(Ribaut)
Fort Caroline	1565	(Laudonierre)
Quebec	1608-1629(?)	(Champlain)

The English tried to settle:

Newfoundland	1500	Early fishing villages not intended as colonies.
Roanoke	1587	
Sagadahoc	1607-1608	
Jamestown	1607-1610(?)	

The early failures were caused by problems of purpose and preparation. The purpose of most of the expeditions was to find the supposed great wealth of the West Indies. They went in search of gold mines and diamonds and rubies. They expected cities and people like the Europeans living in a semi-paradise of lush vegetation and balmy climes. As we now know, even in the Caribbean Islands that is not entirely true. What the early English and French explorers found was a harsh forested land populated with primitive hunters and gatherers with no resemblance to Europeans. In eastern North America, there was no great treasure of gold or jewels. There was some gold in the streams and pearls in the oysters but not much else. The European arrogance soon turned the most friendly natives into wary and restive adversaries. This coupled with a preparation for exploiting and plundering the natural resources instead of living off the land and failure was almost assured.

The companies that were formed to finance these expeditions expected a return on their investments. As a result, the personnel were military and mainly male laborers, both skilled and unskilled. Not too surprisingly, they were recruited from less than successful backgrounds. Their needs were to be supplied by ships from home. When anything happened to break the flow of supplies, there was nothing to keep the people from demanding to go home.

Among the settlers were shipwrights and skilled carpenters. At Charlesfort, they built a craft that finally reached France, and at Sagadahoc they built a pinnace of 30 tons that not only took the company back to England, but served the Virginia Company for many years.

Another preparation problem was the selection of leaders. Too often the historical notes cite poor or inept leaders, both civil and military. Often leaders were men of means or social status unskilled in the qualities required to lead long, dangerous, expeditions into the unknown. Even Santa Elena faltered under the incompetent leadership of General Hernando de Miranda.

When the purpose of an expedition was to settle permanently and be self-sufficient, then the success rate rose. Plymouth led the charge, not without difficulty, but with ultimate success. Jamestown was caught in the transition but eventually prevailed. Santa Elena had the proper ingredients to succeed, but was the victim of the Spanish governmental and military policy. They were relocated at the height of their progress. They were a complete community with farmers, commerce, skilled artisans, complete families, and an effective local government. It seems as though the first non-native child born on North American soil was most certainly born in Santa Elena.

POSTSCRIPT

I became interested in the history of the area around Beaufort, SC, while spending time in the Low Country. While touring Parris Island Marine Recruit Depot, we found the site of Fort San Marcos on the edge of the base golf course. At the time there was an archaeological dig going on. They were excavating the site of Santa Elena in an area extending 300 yards from the fort. I was hooked.

Marine Major Osterhuit began excavations in 1923 of what he thought was Charlesfort. Much was made of this discovery, and the U.S. Congress and the Huguenot Society of South Carolina erected a monument on the site. It was mistakenly erected on the site of Fort San Marcos. In recent excavations, it has been discovered that Fort San Felipe was built over the ruins of the French Charlesfort.

Archaeological digs were started again in 1979 by Stanley South and Chester DePratter of the University of South Carolina and the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. They were also financed by a number of organizations, including the Spanish government.

The exploration has properly identified the forts, determined the approximate size and location of the town and revealed the life style of the inhabitants. The artifacts recovered have confirmed the approximate dates of occupancy and that it was a Spanish community. This all fits neatly with the documents of those times.

Santa Elena was nineteen years old when Roanoke became lost in 1585. It was settled 41 years before Jamestown and 54 years before Plymouth. I do believe it was only Spain's self perceived weakness that kept Santa Elena from being the oldest continuously occupied community in North America.

*“Man is like to vanity; his days are as a
shadow that passeth away. “
Psalm 144;4*

February 8, 2000

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