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## THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF CHARLESTON, 1780-1782

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On March 29, 1780, a British force under Sir Henry Clinton crossed the Ashley River and entrenched itself on Charleston Neck to begin a month-and-a-half siege of Charleston. Major General Benjamin Lincoln, commanding the besieged city, finally was forced to surrender on May 12. The loss of the South Carolina capital was a severe blow to the American military position in the South, and has been regarded as the worst defeat suffered by American arms during the Revolution. Not only was a major Southern seaport lost, but also nearly six thousand troops, seven generals, and the lieutenant governor of South Carolina, Christopher Gadsden. As great as this disaster seemed at the time, it proved far from fatal to the American cause, and had the opposite effect to what the British intended.

With the assistance of the Royal Navy the British army conducted the siege with ease and efficiency. When the news of the surrender reached England, both houses of Parliament passed resolutions expressing appreciation to Sir Henry Clinton and Vice Admiral Marriott Arbuthnot "for the eminent and very important Services performed by them in the reduction of Charlestown."<sup>1</sup> However, the real task of the British was to effect a political reconciliation. In this the British failed—in part because of the methods they used, but perhaps more because of the spirit of the captive people. The failure was described as early as 1781 in the *Annual Register*, which observed that

the loss of Charlestown produced a directly contrary effect to that which might have been naturally expected. For instead of depressing and sinking the minds of the people to seek for security by any means, and to sue for peace upon any terms, the loss being now come home to every man's feelings, and the danger to his door, they were at once awakened to a vigour of exertion scarcely to be expected in their circumstances. . . . The very loss of Charlestown became a ground of hope, and an incitement of vigour. . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Franklin Benjamin Hough, *The Siege of Charleston by the British Fleet and Army under the Command of Admiral Arbuthnot and Sir Henry Clinton, which terminated with the Surrender of that Place on the 12th of May 1780* (Albany, 1867), footnote 1, pp. 20-21. (Hereinafter cited as Hough, *Siege of Charleston*.)

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1781*. Third Edition (London, 1800), p. 18.

In his memoir, *The American Rebellion*, Clinton stated that the capture of Charleston was to be followed by the suppression of the rebellion in the South. He left orders directing Lord Cornwallis to "consider the safety of Charleston and tranquillity of South Carolina as the principal and indispensable objects of his attention."<sup>3</sup>

According to Clinton, the articles of capitulation under which Charleston was surrendered "were formed in the mildest spirit of moderation throughout, with a view of convincing those misguided people that Great Britain was more inclined to reconciliation than to punishment." Moreover, they included "many important considerations [which] the moment rendered it advisable for us still to grant."<sup>4</sup> The most important conditions of the capitulation stipulated that: the town and its fortifications be surrendered; all Continental troops become prisoners-of-war until exchanged; militiamen be returned to their homes as prisoners on parole; and everyone in the city become a prisoner on parole. Other points were: care for sick and wounded prisoners, protection of private property, permission for the officers to keep their horses, swords, pistols and baggage, and permission for a ship to sail to Philadelphia with General Lincoln's dispatches.<sup>5</sup> As the occupation became manifest under these terms, Sir Henry Clinton's "mildest spirit of moderation" was to prove false to those Charlestonians who refused to take part in the "reconciliation" program.

In order to help South Carolinians return to British allegiance, Clinton and Arbuthnot, acting "in the character of commissioners for restoring peace to the revolted colonies", published a proclamation which offered pardon to the people "for their past treasonable offenses, and a reinstatement of those rights and immunities which they. . . had enjoyed under a free british government." In order to be pardoned and obtain British protection, one renounced his parole by pledging allegiance to Great Britain—a promise which included bearing arms should the necessity arise. This was welcomed by loyalists who took advantage of the opportunity to announce their allegiance to Britain. Clinton noted that it had the "most happy effects" and many inhabitants came "bringing their former oppressors."<sup>6</sup> A further development along this line

<sup>3</sup> Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion, Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of his Campaigns 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents*. Edited by William Bradford Willcox (New Haven, 1954), pp. 164, 222-223. (Hereinafter cited as Clinton, *American Rebellion*.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>5</sup> William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution . . .*, 2 vols. (New York, 1802), II, 99-104. (Hereinafter cited as Moultrie, *Memoirs*.)

<sup>6</sup> Clinton, *American Rebellion*, p. 175.

occurred on June 3, when 110 of the "principal and most respectable inhabitants of Charlestown" addressed a memorial to Sir Henry Clinton pledging their loyalty and tendering "warmest Congratulations on the Restoration of this Capital and Province to their political Connection with the Crown and Government of Great Britain."<sup>7</sup>

Upon taking possession of the city the British ordered the militia to surrender their weapons. A parade was held for this purpose—an event which caused Brigadier General William Moultrie to comment that "the timid. . .disaffected. . .[and]. . .infirm reported. . .which swelled the number of militia prisoners to. . .three times the number. . .we ever had upon duty."<sup>8</sup> After surrendering their arms, the militiamen were required to pledge loyalty and obedience to Great Britain and ordered to return home. The same day 274 American officers were relieved of their swords when they shouted "Long Live Congress!"<sup>9</sup> The officers protested that the seizure of their swords as well as their horses and some of their bodyservants was a gross violation of the surrender terms. The British ignored their protests.<sup>10</sup>

Three days after the fall of the city, while the weapons taken in the surrender were being stored, an explosion occurred which completely demolished the magazine, killed approximately two hundred people, and started a fire which destroyed six houses, "including a poor-house and a brothel." A few weeks prior to this a ship on its way to Charleston with four thousand rifles was lost at sea. These combined disasters left the British in the unforeseen position of being unable to arm the backcountry loyalists and under the ominous threat of becoming isolated in Charleston.<sup>11</sup>

In organizing the occupation administration of Charleston Brigadier General James Patterson was appointed commandant of the city with authority in civil affairs. Patterson was apparently a rather easy-going, genial person, who even asked Moultrie for counsel on certain civil mat-

<sup>7</sup> Hough, *Siege of Charleston*, pp. 149-152. See also Robert Woodward Barnwell, Jr., "Addressers of Clinton and Arbuthnot," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*, (1939), p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 108.

<sup>9</sup> Bernhard Alexander Uhlendorf, editor and translator, *The Siege of Charleston With an Account of the Province of South Carolina: Diaries and Letters of Hessian Officers From the von Jungkenn Papers in the William L. Clements Library* (Ann Arbor, 1938), p. 87. (Hereinafter cited as Uhlendorf, *Siege of Charleston*.)

<sup>10</sup> Brigadier Generals Lachlan McIntosh, William Moultrie, Charles Scott, and William Woodford to Major General Benjamin Lincoln, May 19, 1780, in Preston Davie Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

<sup>11</sup> Uhlendorf, *Siege of Charleston*, pp. 89, 299.

ters, explaining that he was "entirely a soldier" and unfamiliar with matters of civil administration.<sup>12</sup>

If Patterson had remained as commandant, Clinton might have realized, at least in part, his hope of making Charleston "an asylum for the friends of government. . . where they are sure of finding most perfect security," and of "restoring tranquillity and order to the country."<sup>13</sup> However, General Patterson was transferred to New York in June, and his place filled by Lieutenant Colonel Nisbet Balfour, described as a "proud, haughty Scot. . . [who] . . . carried his authority with a very high hand. . ." and who possessed a "tyrannical insolent disposition. . . [and] . . . treated the people as the most abject slaves."<sup>14</sup> Balfour's administration was to prove more help to the American cause than to the British.

The British commandant enjoyed virtually absolute control over everything that took place in the city. Colonel Balfour assumed broad civil powers and made his authority known by several means. A board of police was established which settled all disputes summarily. However, it recognized only those who had taken the oath of allegiance, and thus tended to settle disputes in favor of friends of the king. Another office functioned to determine the value of paper money, creating "a great deal of mischief and discontent." Policies such as these probably forced some people to seek British protection as a necessity for even the most meager existence. The commandant even possessed power to arrest and confine persons without having to show cause. The basement of the Exchange, known as the Provost, described as "damp. . . [and] . . . unwholesome," the cause of "much sickness and some deaths," was used as a prison. All prisoners, both political and criminal, men and women, were "huddled up together in one common room." Many persons who refused to take the British oath were incarcerated in this place "on the slightest pretense."<sup>15</sup>

An important phase of the British occupation of Charleston was the confinement of prisoners-of-war. At first this involved only 1,977 Continental troops and their officers—the militiamen having been sent home on parole immediately after the surrender. The British announced that they would prefer to enlist all Continentals in the Royal Army for service in the West Indies, rather than place them in prison ships where "they could not expect anything more but to perish miserably." According to the account of Moultrie, when the troops were asked for their

<sup>12</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 252, 299.

<sup>13</sup> Clinton, *American Rebellion*, p. 174.

<sup>14</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 252, 299.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 299, 300.

decision "a few seconds...[of]...gloomy...silence...[ensued]...followed by a loud huzza for General Washington; death and the prison ships was the universal determination."<sup>16</sup> In contradiction to Moultrie, David Ramsay estimated that the British were able to enlist 530 Continentals.<sup>17</sup>

Accounts of conditions on the prison ships vary, with David Ramsay estimating that eight hundred prisoners died in thirteen months of imprisonment. In favor of the British was the fact that when smallpox broke out in Charleston for the first time in seventeen years, they inoculated the prisoners.<sup>18</sup> However, dysentery and "jail fever" caused much suffering among the latter. They also had a shortage of food until public contributions assured them of regular provisions. One American physician who attended the prisoners reported "unbearable conditions" after nine men died in twenty-four hours on the ship *Concord*, a factor that seemed to influence Colonel Balfour into removing the prisoners from that vessel. A British doctor submitted a report contrary to the American, in which he denied that the prison ships were crowded, and pronounced them "perfectly wholesome."<sup>19</sup> To confuse the issue further, Mrs. Eliza Wilkinson, an avowed hater of all things British, visited one of the prison ships in the summer of 1781, and wrote that she "drank coffee with the prisoners [and found] the dear fellows...in high spirits, expecting to be speedily exchanged."<sup>20</sup>

In reply to a protest from General Moultrie about conditions in the prison ships, Colonel Balfour stated that "he would do as he pleased with the prisoners for the good of His Majesty's service; and not as General Moultrie pleases."<sup>21</sup> In March 1781, the British announced a plan to transfer the Continentals to some one of the West India Islands, but this was never carried out, and by the end of 1781, the Continental prisoners were "absolutely and reciprocally exchanged."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 403.

<sup>17</sup> David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina . . .*, 2 vols. (Charleston, 1809), I, 329. (Hereinafter cited as Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*.)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 319.

<sup>19</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 142, 144-145, 399, 400-401, 403.

<sup>20</sup> Mrs. Eliza (Younge) Wilkinson, *Letters of Eliza Wilkinson During the Invasion and Possession of Charleston, S. C. by the British in the Revolutionary War. Arranged from the Original Manuscripts by Caroline Gilman* (New York, 1839), p. 95. (Hereinafter cited as Wilkinson, *Letters*.)

<sup>21</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 142.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 173; David Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution in South Carolina . . .*, 2 vols. (Trenton, 1787), II, 289.

The prison ships were then used to confine militia prisoners taken in the struggle against General Francis Marion. Of all the prisoners held in Charleston during the Revolution, these seem to have fared the worst. The British justified their harsh treatment on the grounds that severe retaliation was required to counteract the treatment the Swamp Fox reputedly meted out to Tory irregulars.<sup>23</sup>

The captive officers and generals were not placed on prison ships but were removed to barracks at Haddrell's Point, just across the Cooper River. These officers were permitted liberty of movement to "an extent of six miles from the barracks, but to pass no river, creek, or arm of the sea."<sup>24</sup> For a time they were ill-provided with food, and later yellow fever broke out in the camp, but the biggest problem was the officers themselves. Moultrie described them as

very ungovernable indeed, and it was not much to be wondered at, when 250 of them from different states, were huddled up together in the barracks, many of them of different dispositions, and some of them very uncouth gentlemen: it is not surprising that their [*sic*] should be continual disputes among them and frequent duels.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of the constant strife among the officers, a court martial was organized to try offenders. Special provision was made to transmit the findings and sentences of this court to Congress.<sup>26</sup> However, by July 1781, most of the officers had been returned to their homes on parole and were awaiting final word of their exchange.

Planters and businessmen found that they had to assume the name and character of British subjects, or they would meet with considerable difficulty in carrying on their mercantile activities in the city. A number of businessmen virtually were forced to take the British oath or face complete ruin, since they had made large purchases from London merchants shortly after the surrender. One businessman, Josiah Smith, Jr., agent for a number of planters, for a time hoped to sell rice to both sides, but quickly saw the impossibility of such a plan. Smith, however, was in a position to refuse the British oath, but expressed fear that shortages of food and firewood would result because of the "very great destruction made among the cattle...[and]...the Capturing and deserting of Negroes from almost all the plantations within miles of Charlestown." The British also convinced skilled workers and artisans that they needed

<sup>23</sup> Robert Wilson Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution . . .* (Columbia, 1853), p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 104, 105.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 119.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



British protection to continue their trades. After the war there was a tendency to forgive some members of these groups for taking the oath, apparently on the ground that necessity justified their action.<sup>27</sup>

Many businessmen besides Smith refused to take the oath of allegiance or to have anything to do with the British since they considered themselves safe as long as they did not violate their parole, which supposedly permitted a limited degree of freedom within the city. However, Colonel Balfour, fearful that the "silent example" of these men might restrain some Charlestonians from exchanging parole for British citizenship, decided to send the most influential to St. Augustine, British East Florida.<sup>28</sup>

The Colonel first circulated an announcement disclosing the discovery of a group in Charleston that was planning to burn the town and massacre the loyal subjects. Then, on the basis of this, thirty-seven citizens were seized and placed on the ship *Sandwich* in Charleston harbor on August 28, 1780. They promptly sent a letter to Balfour stating that they had not violated their paroles and requesting information as to the reason for their seizure. The commandant sent them the following oral message recorded in Josiah Smith's diary:

Lord Cornwallis considered the persons sent on board this ship to be Prisoners on Parole, but for reasons of policy, thinks it necessary that the place of their residence be changed from Charlestown to St. Augustine.

That ended the matter; the ship departed for St. Augustine.<sup>29</sup>

The lettercopybook and diary of Josiah Smith, Jr., afford a description of conditions among this group of exiles. Smith wrote several letters to friends complaining of the "sudden and very scandalous manner in which I was . . . torn away from my dear Family & friends" and that the group had been "conveyed as Felons on board Ship. . . for no other crime . . . than that of being conscientiously attached to the cause of America."<sup>30</sup>

Upon arriving in St. Augustine the exiles were required to make their own living arrangements and were restricted to the limits of the town. Smith soon reconciled himself to captivity. "This place of banishment,"

<sup>27</sup> Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, I, 343; Josiah Smith, Jr., "Lettercopybook," Smith to Mrs. M. Hodsdon, August 5, 1780, in Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. (Hereinafter cited as Smith, "Lettercopybook.")

<sup>28</sup> Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, I, 370.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 371; Mabel L. Webber, editor, "Josiah Smith's Diary 1780-1781," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XXXIII (January 1932), 5. (Hereinafter cited as "Smith's Diary," S.C.H.G.M.)

<sup>30</sup> Smith, "Lettercopybook," Smith to George Smith, Dec. 5, 1780; Smith to James Poyas, Dec. 5, 1780.

he wrote, "proves healthy Prison to myself and suffering Companions we have a plentiful supply as yet of wholesome Provisions, and with thriving Constitutions seem to enjoy a tolerable flow of Spirits." In spite of his difficulties he would "endeavor to be content, and chearfully [*sic*] submit to the direction of an Allwise Providence, which doeth all things right."<sup>81</sup>

He found maintaining his family in Charleston while living in St. Augustine "attended with considerable expense" and tried to collect an old debt from William Cole, a resident of Georgetown. Smith assured Cole that he would not require gold and silver in payment of the four thousand pound debt, but would gladly accept "Continental Loan Office Certificates. . .at the rate of depreciation settled by the Commissioners." Even after repeated attempts, Smith failed to collect this or any other debts, and he and his family had to get along as best they could. However, after the war, when Cole was an exiled Loyalist in Jamaica, Smith magnanimously helped him collect some of his debts in South Carolina with the reminder: "I apprehend that you have. . .been fully convinced of the Error of your Ways."<sup>82</sup>

Not only was Smith cut off from his family, but also from the numerous business and legal matters that needed his attention. A friend, Edward Darrell, who attempted to run Smith's affairs as best he could, wrote to the latter's business correspondents that things were at a virtual standstill in Charleston, explaining that "the change of times here has reduced many respectable families and indeed many of our most eminent merchants to great distress." Just as Smith was becoming "reconciled" to his captivity, knowing that his friends "would not be backward in administering to the necessities" of his wife and business, he learned that his principal attorney, Edward Darrell, was on his way to St. Augustine "doomed to a state of Banishment." Even so, Smith was able to resume his business activities without great difficulty after the war.<sup>83</sup>

In July 1781, the St. Augustine exiles were given their freedom, but instead of being returned to Charleston they were sent to Philadelphia. Shortly before, on June 25, Colonel Balfour had ordered the wives and families of all exiles to "quit this Town and Province on or before the first day of August," since it was "equally Impolitick as inconsistent

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, Smith to George Smith, Dec. 5, 1780; Smith to John Dart, Jan. 31, 1781; Smith to George Appelby, Dec. 2, 1780.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, Smith to William Cole, March 5, 1781, April 30, 1784.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, Edward Darrell to James Poyas, Sept. 25, 1780; Smith to George Smith, Dec. 5, 1780.

...[that they]...should longer be suffered to Rest on the Government established here.”<sup>34</sup> Josiah Smith was reunited with his wife and family on August 3 in Philadelphia, where he found it difficult to rent a house.<sup>35</sup>

The exiled Southerners were in dire financial straits until Congress resolved to “set on foot subscriptions and contributions from all charitably disposed persons to afford such relief to them as their distressed situation requires. . . .”<sup>36</sup> The South Carolina exiles did not leave Philadelphia until the latter part of 1782, when they were carried South in British ships especially provided for that purpose. They reached Charleston in early 1783.<sup>37</sup>

The officers of the occupation garrison made every effort to enjoy their stay in the South Carolina capital, while at the same time they plagued the population with a series of petty harassments. Moultrie observed that “if one or two citizens . . . should happen to look at a British officer and smile, they were sure to be abused and perhaps sent to the provost.” In May 1781, an order was published requiring all persons who had not taken the oath to remain in their houses as prisoners, and requiring all “Loyal Subjects” to “abstain from any connection with Persons under such predicament.”<sup>38</sup> On the King’s birthday the British played “God Save the King” on the church bells throughout the entire day. Also, no citizen was allowed to leave the limits of the town without special permission, which could only be obtained with difficulty or by money.<sup>39</sup>

Many of Charleston’s best houses were commandeered for use as officers’ quarters where the “luxuries . . . of the cellar” were fully enjoyed.<sup>40</sup> “Concerts, assemblies, and other polite entertainments” were held, but the British had difficulty in finding feminine companionship among the better element of the city.<sup>41</sup> Most contemporary observers of the scene have written of the absence of gentlemen among the officers of the occupation garrison. It is little wonder that Dr. David Ramsay concluded that “the Royal officers . . . did more to re-establish the in-

<sup>34</sup> Charleston *Royal Gazette*, June 23, 1781.

<sup>35</sup> “Smith’s Diary,” *S.C.H.G.M.* XXXIV (April 1933), 71.

<sup>36</sup> *Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1789* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1912), XX, 748.

<sup>37</sup> “Smith’s Diary,” *S.C.H.G.M.* XXXIV (October 1933), 206-207.

<sup>38</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 211.

<sup>39</sup> “Smith’s Diary,” *S.C.H.G.M.* XXXIII (July 1932), 204.

<sup>40</sup> “Life Sketches of the Revolution,” unsigned manuscript in Wilmot S. Holmes Collection, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, p. 12. (Hereinafter cited as “Life Sketches.”)

<sup>41</sup> Wilkinson, *Letters*, p. 104.

dependence of . . . [South Carolina] . . . than could have been effected by all the armies of congress.”<sup>42</sup>

In 1780, Charleston offered far more to the British than an opportunity for a type of political missionary work. The real opportunity for the British at Charleston, and the one they exploited to their fullest advantage, was plunder. British plundering procedures turned Sir Henry Clinton's “mildest spirit of moderation” and hopes for a political reconciliation into a laughing matter. The city was rich, having enjoyed four years of virtually unmolested wartime trade with France and Holland. The British made it suffer in proportion to its wealth.

The removal of Negro slaves was a continual and almost systematic process during the occupation. Ramsay recorded that shortly after the surrender, “five-hundred negroes were ordered to be put on board . . . ships for pioneers to the royal forces in New York.”<sup>43</sup> A policy was announced which stated that “all the negroes whose masters have been declared prisoners are [to be] listed and . . . counted in with the booty.”<sup>44</sup> Instances are related of as many as two thousand Negroes being shipped from Charleston in a single embarkation. The officer in command of the Royal Engineers in Charleston reportedly made a small fortune when he shipped eight hundred South Carolina Negroes to be sold in the West Indies. Slaves were in demand in the Indies; they were easily transportable, brought good prices, and made themselves available to the British in Charleston by flocking to the city in large numbers. The temptation to make a fortune selling slaves has been described as too much for the British officers to resist, and so-called “reliable” sources have estimated that by 1783 the British had removed 25,000 Negroes from South Carolina.<sup>45</sup>

As the booty collected by the British army mounted in quantity, “commissaries of captures” were appointed to see to its proper disposition. The major portion of the spoils, aside from slaves, consisted of thousands of dollars worth of indigo, and a number of ships seized in port at the time the city was surrendered. While the organized removals were taking place, a considerable amount of petty looting occurred as soldiers took small items that struck their fancy. An example

<sup>42</sup> Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, I, 358.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 357.

<sup>44</sup> Carl Leopold Baurmeister, *Revolution in America, Confidential Letters and Journals 1776-1784 of Adjutant General Major Baurmeister of the Hessian Forces*. Translated and annotated by Bernhard Alexander Uhlendorf (New Brunswick, 1957); p. 350. (Hereinafter cited as Baurmeister, *Revolution in America*.)

<sup>45</sup> Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, I, 474.

of the latter was the missing gold clasp on the family Bible in the Gibbes house.<sup>46</sup>

In trusting the Royal Navy to transport the plunder, the British army was completely outwitted and obtained nothing for its work. The army apparently was used by the navy as a collecting agency. As late as 1794, Clinton published a pamphlet entitled: *Memorandums, &c., &c., Respecting the Unprecedented Treatment Which the Army have met With Respecting the Plunder taken after a Siege, and of Which Plunder the Navy Serving With the Army Divided Their More than Ample Share, Now Fourteen Years Since.*<sup>47</sup> Even though it focused some attention on the treatment the army had received, the effort came to nought, and Clinton's officers and men were never compensated.

By the end of September 1782, British activity in Charleston began to indicate a withdrawal. American fear of losing more slaves, and British fear of reprisals against loyalists who chose to stay in Charleston led to the signing on October 10 of an "Agreement on restoration of property." The agreement stipulated that the British would return all the slaves then in their possession to the owners. In exchange for the slaves, the Americans agreed that no loyalists would "be arrested . . . their property with-held by the executive authority of the state," or that the legislature would pass any act confiscating Loyalist property. Other sections included a provision for the collection of debts, a recommendation that slave owners forgive slaves who had "attached themselves to British troops," and that two British agents remain in Charleston to help carry out the agreement.<sup>48</sup>

As the time for the withdrawal drew near a rumor was circulated to the effect that the army of occupation was to be sent to the West Indies. This caused some British soldiers to desert, "despite the fact that every precaution was taken."<sup>49</sup> On October 27 a convoy of forty ships left Charleston with the greater part of the army, its supplies, and plunder. The remainder of the British, and the Americans, waited quietly for the completion of the withdrawal. Baron Ludwig von Closen, a French officer serving with the Americans, found the withdrawal "incredulous," and could not "believe that the English . . . [would] . . . abandon such important bases."<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 333; "Life Sketches," p. 19.

<sup>47</sup> London, 1794.

<sup>48</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 343-345, 472.

<sup>49</sup> Baurmeister, *Revolution in America*, p. 541.

<sup>50</sup> Baron Ludwig von Closen, *The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig von Closen 1780-1783*. Translated and edited with an introduction by Evelyn Martha Acomb (Chapel Hill, 1958), p. 267.

On Saturday, December 14, 1782, the British army was withdrawn from Charleston after a stay of two years, seven months, and two days. By 11:00 a. m. the Americans were in possession of the city, and by three in the afternoon it was once more the seat of the government of South Carolina. General Moultrie recalled that he could not "forget that happy day when we marched into Charlestown. . . . Both citizens and soldiers shed mutual tears of joy."<sup>51</sup>

There was, however, a group in Charleston which did not share in the happiness over the departure of the British. Even though 3,794 British citizens and South Carolina Loyalists took advantage of the opportunity to quit Charleston with the British fleet, a number of Loyalists remained.<sup>52</sup> It is probable that these people trusted in the "Agreement on the restoration of property," which was not entirely respected since 282 persons were banished for offenses that ranged from being "Addressors to Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot" to being classed as "obnoxious persons."<sup>53</sup> In addition, a schedule was drawn up with punishments for those who had pledged allegiance to the British Crown during the occupation. Of these, thirty-one were "restored to their property," thirty-three were "disqualified from holding any place of trust for seven years," and sixty-four others received the punishment of the thirty-three in addition to having to pay a tax of "twelve per cent on the equitable value of their property."<sup>54</sup>

The Americans never seriously threatened Charleston with recapture during the British occupation, although there was speculation that an attempt would be made. The safety of the British garrison was expressed by a high-ranking Hessian officer who observed that Charleston was "so well fortified that they need not worry about attack from the land side."<sup>55</sup> Communications by sea were never disrupted, and the British remained in Charleston for fourteen months after Yorktown. However, the ability of the British to remain in Charleston had no great significance—the war was lost in Virginia and Sir Henry Clinton's grand plan to crush the rebellion by creating a Loyalist bastion in South Carolina had failed. The only course remaining was withdrawal.

<sup>51</sup> Moultrie, *Memoirs*, II, 359.

<sup>52</sup> David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina, A Short History 1520-1948* (Chapel Hill, 1951), p. 331.

<sup>53</sup> "Smith's Diary," *S.C.H.G.M.* XXXIV (October 1933), 194-196.

<sup>54</sup> Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, I, 477.

<sup>55</sup> Baurmeister, *Revolution in America*, p. 485.