

THE  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1973

VOLUME 74

NUMBER 1



COPYRIGHT © 1973 BY

SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
CHARLESTON, S. C.

## CORRESPONDENCE OF FRENCH CONSULS IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, 1793-1797

RICHARD K. MURDOCH \*

When the French government selected a young revolutionary, Edmund Charles Edouard Genêt,<sup>1</sup> to be minister to the United States, they chose a man determined to bring the two countries closer together, especially in the event that England entered the war against France. Even before his arrival in America his future course was being planned by another young revolutionary filling the post of French consul in Charleston. There is no need to expound on the activities of Michel Angel Bernard de Mangourit<sup>2</sup> in preparing the groundwork for the new minister as a major portion of the correspondence of the two men has already appeared in print.<sup>3</sup> What is of interest, however, is the correspondence of the consul with his superiors in France, for this divulges much not covered in his dispatches to Genêt. As far as this writer knows, no effort has been made to publish the dispatches of Mangourit to the minister of foreign affairs.

There is little doubt that in Mangourit's inventive way he considered himself the rallying-point for all French plans formulated within the United States. His greatest concern was the influence he exerted over a part of the population in South Carolina and Georgia who were not

\* Professor of History at the University of Georgia and Director of the University Center, Athens, Ga.

<sup>1</sup> Genêt's instructions appear in "Mémoire pour servir d'instruction au Citoyen Genêt Adjudant-Général-Colonel, allant en Amérique en qualité de Ministre Plénipotentiaire de la République Française près le Congrès des Etats-Unis," December 1792, American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1896, 2 vols. (Washington, 1897), I, 958-67. The generally accepted account of Genêt's projects in the southeast is found in Frederick J. Turner, "The Origins of Genêt's Projected Attack on Louisiana and the Floridas," *American Historical Review*, III (Washington, 1897-1898), 650-7 reprinted in Frederick J. Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History* (New York, 1932), 52-85.

<sup>2</sup> A short account of the diplomatic career of Mangourit is to be found in Frederic Masson, *Le Département des Affaires Etrangères pendant la Révolution* (Paris, 1877), 323-5, as translated and printed in a footnote in Frederick J. Turner (ed.), *Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-1797*, American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1903, 2 vols. (Washington, 1904), II, 930-2.

<sup>3</sup> See Frederick J. Turner (ed.), *The Mangourit Correspondence in Respect to Genêt's Projected Attack upon the Floridas, 1793-1794*, American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1897 (Washington, 1898), 569-679.

fully conversant with his schemes, in spite of the fact that he made no effort to conceal his intention of obtaining American assistance, no matter the cost or the illegality of his plans. He was much alarmed over the reaction of the planter class to the blood-thirsty activities of the Negroes in St. Domingue, where murder, rape and pillage were carried on in the name of political equality. He feared that a victory of the former slaves over their Royalist masters supported by the revolutionary government in Paris could easily change American friendship to hostility. As a result his efforts were directed toward discrediting Royalist agents. To impress the commercial interests in Charleston and Savannah he asserted that a victory over England and Spain would mean an increase in trading opportunities in both Cuba and East Florida.

Thus the French Alliance that had seemed perfectly respectable in 1778, when the fortunes of war demanded that military expediency take precedence over matters of political preference, appeared less attractive to some in 1793 as the events of the French Revolution took a steadily more radical turn. President Washington faced a ticklish problem in dealing with the demands for assistance made by the First Republic. Public opinion in America was widely divided on the merits of the case for assistance, and the more insistent the demands of Genêt and indirectly of Mangourit, the wider grew the difference within the president's close circle of advisors and the hotter waxed the debate in Philadelphia and Charleston.

The two letters here reproduced in translation were chosen from a collection of over a dozen in the foreign affairs archives in Paris because they present Mangourit's numerous projects at the start of his association with Genêt, and then again toward the close of the minister's stay in America when the plans became broader and more dangerous.<sup>4</sup> These letters contain several references to well known persons in South Carolina and Savannah. The second letter is of interest as the consul attempted to analyze what he considered to be the causes of the growing American disillusionment with the efforts of the French to obtain assistance in their European struggles. The conclusions of Mangourit were of sufficient interest for the minister of foreign affairs to have portions copied, as the marginal notations indicate.

<sup>4</sup> The two letters are located in volume two of Consular and Commercial Correspondence for Charleston, in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères in Paris. For a general outline of Mangourit's activities in preparing an attack on the Spanish colonies, see Richard K. Murdoch, "Citizen Mangourit and the Projected Attack on East Florida in 1794," *Journal of Southern History*, XIV (November, 1948), 522-540.

The third letter was written by Victor DuPont de Nemours,<sup>5</sup> the acting consul for the southern states, at a time when the international situation had changed due to the Treaty of Basel of 1795 and Spain's new relationship with France. In spite of these changes the authorities in East Florida still respected the trading privileges of the English, and DuPont tried to explain why the Spaniards refused to cooperate with their new allies.<sup>6</sup> Much of his report was colored by the growing hostility of the new Adams administration toward the Directory over the latter's restrictive trade policies.

The greatest difficulty in translating the Mangourit letters was in rendering his French, often in the form of broken sentences, into readable English. I wish to express my appreciation to Drs. Lee B. Kennett and Ralph P. Degorog, both of the University of Georgia faculty, for their kind assistance. I assume all responsibility for errors and misunderstandings in identifying unnamed persons frequently alluded to in the text by personal characteristics. In order to conserve space, a number of marginal notes have been excluded and others have been included in the body of the text and are identified by "Note:" within a parenthesis. Short sections of the letters of a repetitious or unimportant nature have been left out and these omissions have been duly noted.

Finally I wish to thank M. J. Laloy, Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Directeur des Archives Diplomatiques of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, for permission to publish these letters; and to his predecessor in

<sup>5</sup> Victor Marie DuPont de Nemours (1767-1827) was appointed attaché to the French legation in the United States in 1787, 2nd secretary in 1791, 1st secretary in 1795, and was sent to Charleston in July 1796 as acting consul for the Carolinas and Georgia. In 1797 he was appointed consul and later in the same year, consul-general at New York, but President Adams refused him his exequatur because of the latter's anger with the Directory. DuPont was on friendly terms with both Washington and Jefferson, visiting the former at Mt. Vernon in 1788. *Dictionary of American Biography*, V (New York, 1930), 533-4; and Stephen Higginson to Timothy Pickering, June 8, 1798, American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1896, 2 vols. (Washington, 1897), I, 807. François DuPont was French consul in Philadelphia from May 25, 1793 until his sudden death of yellow fever in September 1793. He has been confused quite frequently with Victor Marie DuPont.

<sup>6</sup> Panton, Leslie and Company was set up by William Panton and John Leslie in Charleston and Savannah prior to the American Revolution. Being Loyalists they fled to East Florida where they re-established their trading house first under English and then under Spanish protection. See Marie Taylor Greenslade, "William Panton," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XIV (1935), 107-129; John W. Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1938), footnote on p. 78; and Samuel Flag Bemis, *Pinckney's Treaty, America's Advantage from Europe's Distress 1783-1800*, reprinted edition (New Haven, 1960), 56-7.

that office, M. J. Wolfrom, for permission to use these materials and to have them microfilmed.

Consulate for the  
southern states  
No. 18

Charleston, May 29, 1793  
2nd year of the French  
Republic

Citizen Mangourit, Consul, to Citizen Monge,  
Minister of Marine <sup>7</sup>

(7 attached pieces) <sup>8</sup>

[Received August 13, 1793]

I have arrived, Citizen, from Savannah in Georgia, and from that city I have had the honor to write to you by the American vessel *Harmony*, "that eight ships of the line of the Republic had docked at Martinique and have doubtlessly strengthened the inhabitants and General Rochambeau <sup>9</sup> who has with him only 150 to 200 troops of the line; that Behagne, doubtlessly with the fruit of his plunder, had bought a sugar-refinery on St. Vincent; that the malevolent traitor had bought a plantation on Trinidad; that that island is everywhere exposed, without a garrison and very rich; that four to five thousand Martiniquans had sought refuge there with almost the same number of blacks; these emigrés were mostly counter-revolutionary."

Here is the account of my stay in Savannah. I made visits to everyone except to persons suspected of toryism. I was received there as a brother. Republicanism is not the accepted word among many of the people there and it is only the English merchants who find prosperity in slavery.

Generals MacIntosh and Jackson, Colonel and Major Habersham, the latter is the Collector of Customs, Judge Pendleton, John Clay, lawyer of first merit, his father,<sup>10</sup> all the former officers of the army, all those

<sup>7</sup> Gaspard Monge (1746-1818) was Minister of Marine from August 1792 until April 1793.

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately all the attachments were removed from the original document at some time in the past and are not now available.

<sup>9</sup> Donatien Marie Joseph de Vimeur, vicomte de Rochambeau (1750-1813), son of comte de Rochambeau of American Revolutionary War fame, helped quell the black revolt in parts of St. Domingue in 1793 and was then appointed governor in 1796. See Jean Edward Weelen, *Rochambeau, Father and Son* (New York, 1936).

<sup>10</sup> General Lachlan McIntosh (1727-1806) was the brother of George, William and John McIntosh. James Jackson (1757-1806) was a general, lawyer and senator from Georgia. Colonel Joseph Habersham (1751-1815) was at one time a partner of Joseph Clay and held the position of Post-Master General in 1795-1801. Major John Habersham, Jr., the younger brother of Joseph, was Collector of Customs at

to whom life is not associated with British money, the residents out in the country—are nearly all french, that is to say, Republicans. This affection shows itself in America at banquets. To do justice to them here one would need the liver of a goose and the gullet of Mirabeau tonneau.<sup>11</sup>

My first care has been to arm a privateer here (at Savannah). I have succeeded. A schooner formerly called the *Active* which I renamed the *Antigeorges* is going to descend the Savannah River quietly as Number 6 to be armed near Frederica Island with six guns and to take on a crew of 50 to 60 men [and] to watch out for four English vessels anchored at Savannah that had the insolence to unfurl their disgraceful colors at the news of the affair of March 17th in Holland.<sup>12</sup>

Here, Citizen, are the privateers dispatched by me in the last month:

The Republican	No. 9	(Note: I have done as do the sellers of shares in a new
The Sans Culottes	8	enterprise. They believe here that there are secretly armed
The Citizen Genêt	5	privateers with the Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 7)
The Antigeorges	6	

I am working on sending out a fifth which I will name the *Conquerors of Deceit*. Already the *Citizen Genêt* has taken nine prizes among which one can [be] counted [as worth] 50,000 pounds Sterling. The *Sans Culottes* has taken two, one of which is a three masted vessel coming from Glasgow laden with dry-goods. That is my fleet, my contingents. As to provisions, I applied to a very rich merchant in Savannah, devoted to our cause, Citizen Bolton.<sup>13</sup> Europe has attracted so much that there remains scarcely 2000 barrels of rice to sell here. As it goes in Charleston at 13½ to 14 shillings while the price in Savannah is 11½ shillings, I requested him to buy it close at hand and send it to me in Charleston which will create a profit. I am awaiting his letters.

---

Savannah from 1789 to 1799. Nathaniel Pendleton (1756-1821) was appointed first United States judge in Georgia by George Washington in 1789. Joseph (not John) Clay (1764-1811) was a son of Joseph Clay, a wealthy Savannah merchant.

<sup>11</sup> André Boniface Louis de Riquetti, vicomte de Mirabeau (1754-1792), was the younger brother of Honoré Gabriel Riquetti, comte de Mirabeau. He was a well-known French politician and political theorist with ultra-royalist tendencies. His nickname was "cask", reference to his habits of excessive eating and drinking that resulted in great corpulence.

<sup>12</sup> The reference is to the defeat of General Dumouriez at Neerwinden.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Bolton

On my return to Charleston, I found the vessels that I am sending with rice to Le Havre and Bordeaux, half laden. The reason for this delay comes from the scarcity of this commodity, but even more from the refusal of the sellers to take my 30 day notes on Citizen Genêt. (They want to wait until he is recognized.) A proclamation of the president of the United States written in the style of the oracles, serves the English faction in arousing the timidity of the planters and the merchants. I have written the Citizen Ambassador about it. I hope, however, that these two ships will set sail for France at once.

I have found all the French who live in Savannah divided; it is cruel that we always want to meet one another abroad and that we end up by hating one another. I have done so well here that I mustered enough people to form a club of the friends of the French Republic. You will find attached my speech at the opening. This society will be of the greatest use to our vice-consul and will contribute by giving an idea of our principles and by destroying the rancour of English calumny. Many Americans in Georgia are thinking of joining it.

I owe a great part of the preparations that I found in Savannah to Citizen Major Bert, born an Alsacian who spent all of the recent war in the United States in the Legion Armand;<sup>14</sup> he is an excellent Republican who left France to come to settle in Georgia solely because France was enslaved . . . now that she is free, he returns there to breathe the air and fight under the flag. When he departs, I will give him a letter of recommendation to you.

Upon arriving in Savannah I found as agent an old man of 82 years, almost in his infancy and drunk from early morning; he is nevertheless a very honest man and I put all the possible delicacy into the request that I made to him to retire. I would have preferred to replace him with a frenchman, but the aristocrats on one part and the intrigues and personal resentments on the other, have not enabled me to carry out my wish. The French themselves and the Americans have forced me to turn my eyes to an American worthy by his sentiments to have been born French. He speaks and writes the language perfectly. He is intimate with the principal personages in the state; his acquaintance with the Collector of Customs (Major Habersham) is important for us. Finally [although] he is rich, he is an enemy of slavery. [His] 40 years promise us every activity as well as his principles of zeal. I have appointed him temporary vice-consul until Citizen Genêt can advise me.

<sup>14</sup> Major Claudius Bert (Bart) de Majan, a former officer in the French forces in the United States, was one of Mangourit's most trusted agents.

I have given him orders to receive the statement of Captain Dusolier, commander, and of the crew of the little vessel from St. Domingue (purchased by a french company) that put in at Sapello Island. One of them who calls himself *Comte de Chapedelaine* was obliged to trample the flag of this vessel underfoot. His associates are named *Poulain de Bignon*, *Marquis de Trois Feuilles* [and] *Duc Mousse*y, brother of a banker in Paris. The rest of the partners live in France. *Grand-Clos-Mêlé* of St. Malo is one. They are all at daggers drawn and this establishment cannot maintain itself.

Citizen Genêt during his stay in Charleston intimated new instructions to me that I shall conform [to] with integrity. He gave me decrees No. 382 and 398. Attached you will find, Citizen, the receipt for these decrees and for one numbered 429. In regard to the last I am going to allow myself some observations on the steps necessary to be taken in applying them. Last month the frigate *Embuscade*, Captain Bompar, brought two prizes into Charleston, the *Morning Star* and the *Four Brothers*. Citizen Genêt and I thought that it was wise to see how matters stood in order to discover if they would permit these prizes to be sold in Charleston. If they permitted this, it would be of advantage to do this throughout America in imitation of South Carolina. Moreover it was of concern to kindle the courage of the crews in rescuing their prizes from delays and from quibbling over old forms. We therefore draw up this simple procedure.

Extracted  
by Otto<sup>15</sup>

Copy for the  
Minister of  
Marine, 8th  
August 1793

1. Declaration of the captain of the prize with an oral account of the capture of the vessel;
2. Inventory affixed with seals and proofs;
3. Judgment of the prize by the consul and two assessors and setting the day of the sale;
4. Posters for three consecutive days of the objects to be sold on the date set;
5. Sale and account of the sale under bond, in order to prevent cost of warehousing
6. Deposit in the Chancery of the proceeds of the sale because as soon as the decision is made of the shares set for the crew according to rank, or of the portion that ought to be reserved for the

<sup>15</sup> Louis Guillaume Otto, later comte de Mosley, was for a short time French charge d'affaires in the United States and later was appointed chief of the political division of the Department of Foreign Affairs.



public, the net remittance should be made to the captain of the capturing vessel to be divided legally.

The marine regulations bristle with discouraging, obscure and dangerous formalities. The Prize Council no longer exists [and] it is necessary therefore to have recourse, lacking legislation, to a simple and reasonable method. That is what I have done.

I have sold the *Morning Star* and the *Four Brothers* and I have kept the proceeds by order of Citizen Genêt until I learn by the receipt of a decree, if I am to send them in entirety on the *Embuscade*.

Decree No. 429 cannot be accommodated to the localities of the United States. Here [there are] neither commercial courts nor district ones [and] no justices of the peace. It will therefore be necessary that the Convention interpret as much as is necessary its decree of 14 February last, in which it set up (according to my interpretation) a form similar to that which I have followed under an appeal in case of contestation before the provisional vice-consul or the consul of the department.

[omission]

I received on the date of 19 October last, the duplicate warrant that the Citizen Ambassador sent me. It is very flattering to me that without friends, without protectors, I alone have escaped the general recall of consuls in the United States. It is a kindness of the Revolution and the gift of your justice. My retention is infinitely glorious to me; it has been a good day for me and my family. It is an attention of the mother-country. It has inflamed our hearts. My spouse is the *soeur grise* of the sick persons that the *Embuscade* left behind. My two children are daily occupied with transcripts; happy to be trained so young by a patriot father in the path of liberty and equality; they shall be more worthy than I. I have formed a chain of patriotic Americans who vigorously oppose the influence of the tories in our newspapers. These people who I could name are the leaders of the state. They desire to translate my ideas well; they translate them, comment on them, give them the American usage and Citizen Genêt to whom I have sent *The Star*, the paper of our adversaries for and against, is witness that the struggle is quite favorable to us.

[omission]

I have the honor to send to you the former patent. I have separated myself from it with the greatest of pleasure as the signature *Louis* is one of a perjurer and a traitor. The general opinion in Carolina as in Georgia is that France had her reasons in cutting off his head. It has changed for the better in a short time.

As soon as the state pays the money owing to Colonel Cambray, I will send it to the national treasury to repay it or to confiscate it.

English sailors always in double, triple or even quadruple numbers have often assaulted Frenchmen and have laid daring hands on their tricolors. I have complained of this but the difficulty of identifying the guilty ones has hindered the prompt and stern justice that has been promised me. On St. Georges Day<sup>16</sup> the English Tories had a drunken orgy like the life-guardsmen. One of these valiants of St. George insulted me at ten o'clock the same evening when I was returning to my house. He saw my sword and the comic retreated hurling at me from afar several "Goddam French rascal" (*Dieu damne ce fripon de français*). Subsequent attacks continued to irritate the French to such a point that they declared to me that they would not go outside except fully armed. I just sent under my signature my declaration to the governor of the state and to the public papers. The English party let go several jests at me in the newspaper to which I disdained reply and since that time we have had peace. They have grown tired of bothering the English sailors and they have the right to expect an end to the threat.

At such an orgy in favor of Lord Guelph where they found the most frantic faults, where the bigotry of slavery kissed the whip in the dust, they invited a Dutchman, William Decker,<sup>17</sup> a naturalized American, because of his business, to propose a toast of his own invention. "You will not be pleased," he told them when they pressed him further. "Very well since you want one of me, listen: *that George III might be beheaded as Louis XVI.*" They were about to hit him but the Batavian's bearing overawed the children of St. George.

[omission]

You will be persuaded, I hope, one day that my zeal has not restrained my correspondence. Citizen Genêt perhaps will send you an account of what he saw with his own eyes and of what the inhabitants of this country have told him about me. After my arrival I opened the boxes, the registers [and] my heart for him. I believe that the notes that I gave him will not be without use to the Republic. I maintain the most active correspondence with him and after his arrival in Philadelphia, he will not feel himself to be left out of Carolina and out of my department. We will do useful work aided by the colleagues the Republic gives us. I always maintain an active correspondence with the national civil commissioners of St. Domingue who the *enemies* of

<sup>16</sup> April 23

<sup>17</sup> Wilhelmus Decker

*liberty* as well as the *enemies of equality* would like to drag in the mud here. We have here a great number of aristocrats *under the skin*.

I have not yet removed the fleur de lis escuchion on my door. I did not want to put it there. I was awaiting that of the Republic. It has arrived and at the moment I received your dispatch of the 27th of October last, the painter finished it; it is six feet tall; tomorrow he will erect it. (No obstacle to fear in putting it up). It has been a long time since I wore plain gilded buttons. Citizen Genêt is going to have some stamped in Philadelphia as you desire him to do. In the name of liberty, deliver us from the livery of lace. Let us take on a republican simplicity. I await the new seal.

I have sent an express to Major Tintiniac on his plantation. Informed by Citizen Genêt that he had been mentioned in the assembly, he assured me that he was disposed to leave and that the difficulty to assign his small fortune has been up to now the obstacle to his plans.

I omitted to warn you that 3 weeks ago I sent to Cap François on board two American vessels 10 barrels of flour with the indicated precautions.

Liberty, equality, respect and execution of the law.

M. A. B. Mangourit

P. S.

copy for the  
Min of  
Marine, 8th  
August 1793

General Mackintosh according to his letter here adjoined [together] with one his son wrote him from Portsmouth, of the date of March 7th, eagerly requests that this son, prisoner in that port, might be quickly exchanged by your intervention, [and] employed as a simple sailor on a French frigate. Such are the republican ideas of this defender of liberty that he does not want his son to hold any grade other than his services or actions give him the right to obtain for him. General Mackintosh is one of our most zealous partisans. He is one to drive in the nail of the French Revolution in Georgia.

. . . . .

No. 3 Consulate of the Republic in the Southern States. U. S. of America

Charleston 10 Xbre 1793  
Year 2 of the French Republic

Mangourit to Citizen Minister of the Department of Foreign Affairs

Since Citizen Gaugain de Vitré, sergeant major of the 1st Battalion of Loire Infantry, is traveling to France, I am charging him with this dispatch, with several newspapers and with an index explaining

articles in these papers as this seems necessary to me. You are not unaware of the cavilling, of all the absurd and unseemly measures of the American government to preserve her *impartial neutrality* even at the price of shame. You know of what profit are the words "federal liberty" to the rich of the United States to instill them insensibly with monarchy, nobility and episcopate. This oppression of the people is not noticed at first but it spreads out remarkably and if our republic were to perish, North America might become subject either to these ambitious [ones] or to Great Britain.

[omission]

1st cause  
of our  
discredit

To Washington all seems perished in France since the civil death of Lafayette. The first step was the lessening of our credit in this frail infant country [because of] our sublime decree of the abolition of titles.

2nd cause

The second step [was] when the Senate of Congress proposed the title of *majesty* for the president. From that time on the germs of an hereditary nobility began

to grow with the selection of squires, of honors and of excellencies, with coats of arms and liveries.<sup>18</sup> Already the planters disdained the merchants. Already the haughty and ravaging pines were taking root in the serviceable furrows laid out in the wilds.

3rd Cause

The death of Capet has served our enemies to change opinions. They have not reflected that if the English nation had dishonored herself by centuries of regicides

in placing one tyrant in the stead of another, France had just immortalized herself in punishing a cheat covered with our blood and in tearing to ribbons, in the eyes of the misguided world, the maxim that butchers are necessary for the great flocks of men. The American government did not dare refuse to recognize the minister of the Republic because at that time Jemappes and Dumouriez<sup>19</sup> were terrible bugbears. We owe the recognition of the character of Citizen Genêt to the same sentiment that bent the tiara of diamonds, the crown of the Neopolitan and the mitre of the Bishop of Spire; to fear. But

<sup>18</sup> Fears had been expressed ever since Washington took command of the continental army in Cambridge that there were some who were pressing him to favor the establishment of a monarchy in the former English colonies. After his election as president, and especially after the termination of the French monarchy, some in the Jeffersonian camp claimed that Hamilton and others were fostering the idea of an American monarchy with Washington as king and Hamilton as crown prince.

<sup>19</sup> Charles-François Dumouriez (1739-1823), a member of the Girondist government as minister of war and later as one of the commanders on the northeastern front, defeated the Austrians at Jemappes on November 6, 1792.

they [our enemies] raised the question if they ought maintain with a nation regaining its sovereignty the treaties concluded with its despots when it was enchained.

[omission]

4th Cause           What difficulties have the agents of the Republic not met relative to the armaments for privateering and to the sale of prizes?

[omission]

They have forbidden our armed corsairs in these ports. They have had the audacity to threaten to expose us to punishments, to torments. They have recalled the vice-consul in Boston.<sup>20</sup> They have arrested some good friends of the Republic because they were born in a land that owes everything to the Republic. They have had the impudence to attack and to slander the minister of the Republic because in succeeding in detaching him from the esteem of the good republicans of America, they thus deal a blow to the friendship that they have for our republic. Jay, King and Wilcock have been the vile triumvirate who have sold out to Hamilton, Secretary of State for the department of finances.<sup>21</sup>

[omission]

If we were to be conquerors at this time, the government of the United States and its gang would be our trumpeters. There would be cries of long live the French Republic from one end of the union to the other. Likewise the burning of Lyons, the destruction of the Vendée, the utter rout of the Duke of York at Dunkirk, the unity of feeling at home, the abundance of our harvest [all] greatly embarrass these "messieurs". The infamous defection of Toulon that they so desired does not seem to them sufficiently substantiated. They are persuaded that we can resist tyrants and this opinion renders them more artful and less active.

5th cause           The noteriety of our republican constitution displeases this government in the extreme because we happily have adopted neither president nor senate, nor a general committee in secret. [It is] displeasing to the Senate because it is not at all necessary [to have] a marc of silver to represent virtue and talents because the population is the only basis for national representation, displeasing to the president because our legislative body

<sup>20</sup> Antoine Charbonnet Duplaine was recalled in October 1793 at the request of the United States government.

<sup>21</sup> John Jay, a strong opponent of radicalism, was chief justice of the supreme court in 1793. Rufus King of Massachusetts and New York, was a senator from the latter state, 1789-1796. William Willcocks of New York was a lawyer, a federalist member of the New York Assembly and a staunch supporter of Hamilton's views.

being permanent, no individual can take advantage of a gap [between sessions] in national power by proclamations or secret letters, displeasing to the ministerial corps because ours is chosen by electors taken from the people by the people themselves, and by the representatives of the people themselves afterwards, displeasing to individual legislatures of each state because they are molded on the faulty matrix of the federal legislature, displeasing to justices of the peace and judges of the federal courts, of city councils, of individual states and of chancellery because ours conciliate or judge free of charge, because they are not appointed for life but are elected each year, displeasing to barristers who carry on the functions of attorneys at the same time because we do not pay five guineas for an oral consultation because our public arbiters decree without appeal on verbal defenses or on simple statements without proceedings and without charges, displeasing to the Secretary of State for the department of finances because the agents named by our executive power are under surveillance by the commissioners named by the legislative power chosen outside of that body and responsible for the abuses that they do not denounce, displeasing to the rich because our constitution guarantees equality to every Frenchman. And, finally, displeasing to all the planters and possessors of blacks in the southern states because Article 18 of the declaration of rights appears to them to be a manifesto against their properties.

[omission]

The civil and military positions are everywhere occupied by the creatures of the president and ministers.  
**6th cause** These are not the ones who fought the war with the greatest honor, the ones who have been ruined by the war to whom the United States owes pay or reparations. These are not those who fill public offices. The great number of employees consists of men who were travelling in Europe during the quarrel or who knew how to take care of both sides by wavering conduct. There are some [who] were Tories, that is to say Aristocrats.

The priests of all the sects which surpass in diversity  
**7th cause** the numerous species of serpents that afflict this continent, are still against the French Republic. They observe with chagrin that opinion abandons the charlatans of France.

The American businessmen would like in this armed  
**8th cause** litispendance\* to be able as the Dutch were in the preceding one to milk the cows of Europe by the aid

\* An ancient term in jurisprudence which means the time during which a case is undergoing judgment.

of an *impartial neutrality*. Those in Charleston [are] exporting to Jérémie, to Môle St. Nicholas, to the Grande Anse,<sup>22</sup> in a condition [bordering on] high treason because flour and rice are selling there at a high price. The English treat them with the most insulting contempt. One hundred and forty of their vessels have been conducted into the ports of Nassau, Kingston, etc. What matter humiliations and injuries, provided they are paid for? Commerce in general has no other love than that of money, no other patriotism than thirst for gold. Add that of 100 merchants, 95 are English and that if I were to make the slightest solicitation that they not send victuals to Jérémi, for the sake of a few barrels of rice this would be to confuse a question that is already only too complicated by the Punic character of the [American] government. You are aware, Citizen Minister, that the English merchants or Tories have at their orders an army of clerks, manufacturers, stevedores [and] debtors who think only according to the opinion of the master.

Count in addition among the number of our enemies the printers who are paid or are intimidated by the federal government and by agents of England, soiling their presses with all sorts of filth inspired by Pitt and by all the suggestions of the rulers.

The Tories to whom an ill-advised decision has returned their property, paid for a dozen times its value, who feel regret for the influence they lost through their own fault or who having purchased the trust of the English for the Americans, now torment them [the Americans] without respite for payment.

(omission)

These are those who support the armies combined against us. Without their supplies, their transfers, their credit, and their gold, these packs of slaves hurled against us would perish of thirst, hunger and fatigue. These are the ones who have caused troubles at Paris, Lyons, Rouen, Nantes, Marseilles and Toulon, etc. Let us protect our commerce for our fellow-citizens and let it not be encroached upon, as in the case of the Americans, by those who sell themselves or who betray themselves according to the rate of exchange.

But the most obstinate enemy against the Republic in the United States are the French, the ones who come from France without passports or with utterly lying good citizenship passports who have not ceased since disembarking

<sup>22</sup> All of these locations are in Haiti, formerly St. Domingue.

in saying that the Republic was expiring, that the majority was tired of the terrible anarchy into which she was plunged, that they wanted as king a tiger, fox or a foolscap, etc. The others arriving in numerous swarms from St. Domingue, chased out by the commissioners, by fear or remorse, without any harmony among themselves except the dislike of the law of April 4,<sup>23</sup> mal-contented with Galbaud who they call a coward,<sup>24</sup> and cursing Polverel and Sonthonax who they call villains, assassins and knaves,<sup>25</sup> exasperated with France which did not send them soldiers to complete the cemetery of 14,000 men cut down in a year and a half. [They have] invoked the assistance of England to exterminate the mulattoes, their children, and the blacks, the source of their affluence and of their pleasures. [They have] sighed for the return of the ancient regime which they destroyed after supporting it so long, poppy against poppy, jonquil against jonquil (Marginal note: nicknames given by the colonists to blacks and mulattoes).

(omission)

[They have] relations with the English and the Tories on the continent, with those of Jamaica and London, with the revolted of Jérémie, of Môle or of Grande Anse. [They have] set up a newspaper in French and English in Baltimore to corrupt the opinion of the inhabitants. [They give] invitations to Americans in the public papers to preserve the neutrality carefully. [They make] direct or indirect attacks against the agents of the Republic in the United States, be it by representing them to the southern states as negro-philés (Note: ditto to the friends of the law of April 4), as incendiaries subdelegated by the Verrés (Marginal note: ditto to the civil commissioners) of St. Domingue in order to excite uprisings in the shops, of murders of proprietors, of burning down of habitations, be it in accusing them of being Brissotins of the vile and bombastic yoke of Brissot.<sup>26</sup> declared to be a traitor to his country for having conspired, contrived and having put into execution all the ills that have afflicted St. Domingue. [They have circulated] a letter supposedly written by a black in Virginia but in reality by an ingenious white to warn the government

<sup>23</sup> The famous law of April 4, 1792 granted equal political rights to persons of color and to freemen.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas-François Galbaud was governor-general of St. Domingue in May 1793 and he later came to the United States with a large number of royalist refugees from the islands.

<sup>25</sup> Léger Félicité Sonthonax, Etienne Polverel and Jean Antoine Ailhaud were the three civil commissioners appointed by the Legislative Assembly to attempt to bring peace to the French colony.

<sup>26</sup> Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville (1754-1793) was a Girondist leader and one of the founders of the Société des Amis des Noires in 1788.



of South Carolina to be on its guard, [declaring] that 15,000 Negroes menaced Charleston with arms coming from St. Domingue and furnished by a friend (it was I that they designated) for the 15th of October last (Marginal note: see the newspaper of the 9th of October, 4th column, left-hand page). [They] drew advantage from this dishonoring absurdity with the arrival of a vessel on the 9th of October last from Cap having on board military personnel on leave for France, in order that the Tories and the timid ones in great numbers refuse the entry into the city of our brothers [and] to have them secluded at great expense to the Republic on an island set aside for quarantine.<sup>27</sup> Citizen Goelan, volunteer of the 1st Battalion of Loire Infantry, died of scurvy because of lack of care. [All of this] has been done both to separate me, a simple representative of a powerful republic, from my fellow-citizens to whom I owe all my feelings and all my care, [and] to have my private letters intercepted, unsealed, copied and placed in the hands of the governor of the state by one named Saurine of Toulouse, a sailor from the corsair, *l'Industrie*, from the cape, who I recommend to national vengeance. [This was done] in hopes of finding in them phrases capable of rendering me suspect in this country in the matter of emancipation of the Africans and of spreading the word that the plundering commissioners had sent me, so some say, two barrels, others two tons, of gold.

Would you believe, Citizen Minister, that of 600 Frenchmen from St. Domingue who are here, the number of enrollees for service [with the Republic] on land and on sea, amounts to no more than four of those coming from that island? The remainder is composed of sailors scattered in my district from commercial vessels or [who are here] as a result of exchanges made in Providence or Jamaica. A single vessel, *l'Heloise*, has supplied me with five very doughty men. The captain of this schooner refused to take the oath to England at Môle. They gave him five French sailors to navigate his vessel and leave the port. Formerly one commemorated the names of generals who often had done nothing. (Marginal note: [He] discusses the patriotism of a captain and of five sailors of a schooner from Cap.) In a republic the names of valiant men ought to emerge from obscurity. As a consequence I recommend to the nation Captain Jean Durse, captain and owner of the schooner *l'Heloise*, from Cap, born in Bordeaux and enrolled in that department; Oliver Condanea, (mate of the crew) of Brest, 25 years old; Pierre Roux, coastal pilot of St. Domingue; Jean Rivière, of Royan, Charente Inferieure, sailor, 31 years [old]; Claude Dineuf, quarter-

<sup>27</sup> The quarantine station was located on the eastern tip of James Island near where Fort Johnson was built.

master, of Brest, aged 30 years; Leonard Barret of Toulazeau, department of Charente, aged 18 years, sailor. These citizens are here at the expense of the Republic and each day they long for the honor to shed their blood for her.

End of  
copying

*(to be concluded)*

## PLACEMEN IN SOUTH CAROLINA: THE RECEIVER GENERALS OF THE QUITRENTS

ALAN D. WATSON \*

The quitrent system in colonial South Carolina has been a neglected subject but the royal appointees responsible for collecting these revenues were not unimportant. Since the royal establishment in the colony represented the ultimate authority in society—the English government—it often became the focal point of colonial dissatisfaction, particularly after 1763. The separation of political and social authority, the filling of public offices by “fawning Courtiers,” and the hardening of social lines after 1763, intensified by royal appointments, gave rise to the colonial view in 1776 that the “English Crown and the imperial system had come to stand for all that was wrong with American society.”<sup>1</sup>

As representatives of the Crown, the Receiver Generals partially contributed to the colonial’s conception of placemen and the royal establishment, ultimately leading such a prominent South Carolinian as Thomas Lynch to equate placemen with rascals by 1774.<sup>2</sup> Of the Receiver Generals, John Hammerton (1730-1742), George Saxby (1742-1774), and Thomas Irving (1774- . . . ), only Hammerton would have qualified as a rascal. Saxby and Irving were no more rascally than the average member of their society, yet their responsibility for collecting an outmoded feudal due and their support of unpopular English policies made them appear suspect in the eyes of South Carolinians. A brief examination of these placemen as they related to South Carolina will reveal their markedly different life styles and demonstrate their contribution to the colonial impression of English government.

### I

Although John Hammerton resided in South Carolina less than ten years, he held office under royal appointment for over thirty years. During these years he occupied the offices of Secretary and Register of Mesne

\* Alan Watson is assistant professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, N. C.

<sup>1</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 75-80, quotation on 77.

<sup>2</sup> L. H. Butterfield, *et al.*, eds., *The Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), II, 118. See also Robert W. Calhoun and Robert M. Weir, “The Scandalous History of Sir Egerton Leigh,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, XXVI (1969), 47-74.