

NEWSLETTER

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Containing the freshest Advi-



THE
GAZETTE.

ces, Foreign and Domestic.

From MONDAY October 24th, to MONDAY October 31st, 1748.

Brunswick in North-Carolina, September 23.

ON Saturday the 3d instant in the evening, 3 sloops came off our bar, but as there was not time to bring them in that night, the pilots did not go on board until the next morning, when they found them to be 2 *spanish* privateers from the *buconna*, and a sloop from *south-carolina* they had taken. The commodore was a large sloop, of 130 tons, named the *fortune*, of 10 6-pounders and 14 swivels, commanded by *vincenc Lopez*: The other sloop not near so large of 44 pounders, 4 6-pounders, and 12 swivels, *joseph lion munos* commander.

It seems their design was to take the negroes that were at work on our fort; but being inform'd that few or none of them staid there on sundays, and they were mostly at *brunswick*, they obliged the pilots to carry them there, which was done without our discovering they were enemies, 'till they anchored before the town and had fired at some boats that retreated on finding their mistake. At the same time a large number of men, which they had landed 4 miles below the town, appeared within 100 yards of us. — It is easy to imagine the confusion people must be in at such a surprize: In short, every body (that was able) ran, with whatever they could first lay their hands on, whilst the *spaniards* took possession of all the vessels in the harbour, *viz.* the ship *nancy*, capt. *burfell*, the snow *litchfield*, capt. *wakefield*, the brig *diamond*, capt. *bugnion*, the sloop —, capt. *spoddart*, and several small craft. They also took 2 or 3 men belonging to the town, in boats.

The party they had landed shot a sailer as he endeavoured to escape from them, and on entering the town took *john jean*, esq; our collector, prisoner, who fired upon the whole party, and received their fire without any damage. After this they plundered and destroyed every thing, without fear of being disturbed; and their confidence added not a little to our discouragement, as we were informed they had taken several of our people, whom undoubtedly they compelled to give an account of our weakness. However all the necessary steps were taken, in sending to alarm the country and to get assistance of the king's ships at *south-carolina*.

On monday the 5th, about 25 or 30 men appeared at the place of rendezvous appointed us by capt. *william dry*, but the greater part of us being inhabitants of *brunswick* who had lost our arms and ammunition, nothing could be attempted that day, especially as our neighbours neither assisted us with men nor any thing else we wanted. In the mean time the ship *bannab*, capt. *john smith*, that was got aground about 3 miles higher up the river (in endeavouring to go farther up) was taken by the *loretta* without opposition.

On tuesday the 6th we muster'd about 80 men, white and black, 22 of which were useless for want of arms. With this number capt. *dry* marched towards the town, and the scouts sent out seeing nothing to disturb them, he march'd on 'till he got behind the it, where a council of war was held, in consequence of which was that lieut. *seabring moore* march'd into the town with 12 pick'd men, with which he in a few minutes surprized a number of the enemy that were rolling of goods. Upon hearing the fire, capt. *dry* (concluding lieut. *moore* was engaged with the enemy) march'd his whole body in to his assistance. All the enemy in this part of the town were either kill'd or taken, and our people pursuing their good fortune 'till they were saluted with a very hot fire from the commodore sloop's great guns, which obliged them to be more on their guard, but however did not prevent their killing or taking all the stragglers.

The town being thus clear'd of the enemy, our men lay on their arms under cover of a high bank to prevent the landing any more men, which was not attempted; but the commodore's sloop continued firing, when to our great amazement and (it may be believed) joy, she blew up: A terrible, tho' in our circumstances a pleasing sight. As they had seized all the small craft at their first coming, our people could find only one small canow to save those that had got upon the wreck, by which means many were drown'd that might have been saved. In this confusion the mate and some of the crew of the *litchfield*, cut her cables and run her ashore. The *nancy* having 20 *spaniards* on board, with 2 of the *loretta's* guns, nothing could be done with her, for she began to fire upon us in a few Minutes after the commodore blew up.

When this accident happened, the other privateer, (which was up the river to get the *Hannab* off, attempted to burn that ship but had not time) hoisted bloody colours, and came down to town. In passing the hon. *roger moore*, esq; 's house, they fired two shot at it, which did no damage; but as soon as she anchor'd before the town, she fired pretty smartly upon us, in the mean while attempting several times to get the snow off, but were prevented by our small arms. In the evening they took down their bloody colours and hoisted white in their shrouds, and sent a *portuguese* on shore with a flag of truce, desiring to have liberty to go off with all the vessels, and promising on that condition to do no further damage. Capt. *dry* made answer, that they might think themselves well off to get away with their own vessel, that he would not consent to their carrying away any other, and would take care they should do no more damage; but propos'd to let them go without interruption if they would deliver up all the *english* prisoners they had, with every thing belonging to the place. To this they made no answer, but busied themselves in making every thing ready to sail the next morning with the ship *nancy*.

On wednesday the 7th, between 1 and 2 o'clock in the morning, major *john swan*, with the captains *jones*, *sampson*, *ast* and *hynne*, and such of their men as could be spar'd from the defence of *Wilmington* (our metropolis) to the number of 130, landed above *brunswick*, but did not join our men in town until day-light (and some time after the *loretta* and her prize were sail'd) being apprehensive that we might fire upon them in the dark, mistaking them for enemies.

Finding the *loretta* gone with the *nancy*, major *swan* ordered all the men to march to *fort-johnson* at the mouth of the river, to endeavour to stop the enemy there; but they having a fair wind and a strong gale, pass'd the fort before the major got there. They expecting to be stop'd at the fort, hoisted a flag of truce when they got there, but not seeing it answered, fired 2 shot at it (which hurt no body, for our engineer and gunner were gone long before) and came to an anchor under *bald head*. There they lay all this Day under their white flag, and in the evening sent captains *smith* (of the *bannab*) *wakefield*, and *smith* (of the *south carolina* sloop) with 3 or 4 sailors, ashore, desiring to exchange prisoners.

Thursday the 8th, major *swan* sent capt. *sampson* with a flag of truce, to treat about the exchange of prisoners. He told them the reason why he had not brought man for man, was, that they were sent up a great way into the country, that they were however sent for, and as soon as they arrived, they should have the same number as they had landed and as continued on board. The *spaniard* answered that he would stay 'till 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon and no longer, for that as the whole expedition had been attended with ill luck, some other accident might happen, as the arrival of a man of war or privateer; that he intended to give the *south-carolina* sloop

to the pilot, and that he would put all the "Englishmen" he had on board here, and desired that his people might be well used and returned as soon as possible. Accordingly about 3 o'clock, he sail'd and carried the ship and "South Carolina" Sloop with him. At the same time a brig appeared to which he gave chase, in a little time we lost sight of 'em all. He has carried our pilot off.

We can get no positive account what number of men they brought in here, but by the number they carried out, (between 70 and 80) and the great number buried and still to be buried, We judged they had about 260. How many our men killed is also very uncertain, since they were mostly shot in the water or thrown in afterwards; But we reckon this expedition has cost them (in killed and blown up) 140 men, amont whom capt. lopez and all his officers.

They have done us all the mischief they possibly could, for what they did not carry away they broke or cut to pieces. The negroes (whom they came to take) were of great service to us, and so exasperated, that they would have given no quarter had they not been stopt. We have not lost one man, and had but two slightly wounded.

Upon the whole, we have just reason to be thankful to Almighty God, as from the beginning of these our misfortunes, we had no reason to think we should so well or so soon get rid of our enemies: For, notwithstanding, our ignorance in military affairs, our want of arms and ammunitions (having but 3 charges per man when we attacked them) the delay of our friends in coming to our assistance, and the small number we were composed of (many of which were negroes). He has crowned our attempt with Success.

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We are indebted to Miss Virginia Rugheimer, of the Charleston Library Society, Charleston, South Carolina, for allowing us to reprint the above historic account of the Spanish attack, which appeared in the "South Carolina Gazette" newspaper, October 31, 1748. This very vivid report of the Spanish privateers' escapade in Brunswick, is probably one of the most swashbuckling, romantic incidents happening in this town's history. It was probably recounted and magnified by veterans of this attack, many years later. One reading the article would definitely say that the writer was in the midst of the intruders. We are very fortunate to have had this episode recorded for those interested in local history today. There are many questions which perhaps will be answered in the years to come, for instance, who wrote the eye-witness account, where were the Spanish dead buried, can the location of the sloop Fortune, which exploded and sunk off the port of Brunswick be determined for under-water exploration?

R. V. Asbury, Jr.  
Editor

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Anyone desiring additional information on Brunswick Town may write to P. O. Box 3544, Wilmington, North Carolina. For those who want to obtain back copies of the NEWSLETTER, or receive any information about Brunswick County history, please write to the Brunswick County Historical Society, P. O. Box 22, Winnebaw, North Carolina.

It is the desire of the Historical Society to preserve our history today, for tomorrow.