

# Spain's Involvement in the American Revolutionary War

by  
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The following was overheard at a platoon roll call during the American Revolutionary War:

“Cpl. Rios?” ..... “Presente!”  
“Pvt. De la Garza?” ..... “Presente!”  
“Pvt. Martinez?” ..... “Aqui!”  
“Pvt. Hernandez?” ..... “Presente!”

Possibly you think you are reading about a roll call in another revolutionary war. No mistake. Many Spanish soldiers were directly involved as combatants in the American Revolutionary War. In fact, the list of Spanish patriots extends beyond the military personnel of Spain. Ranchers, vaqueros, the Franciscan priests, members of the militia, privateers, Canary Islanders and American Indians living in that part of New Spain now known as Texas all contributed to the victory of the American colonists against the English crown.

To better understand these developments, a look into the history and geography of New Spain is beneficial.

## HISTORY:

In 1763 Spain occupied much of the new world. New Spain included Louisiana, and all of the continental North America west of the Mississippi River, “to the arctic snows”; and what is now Mexico and Central America. The Spanish colony of Peru, included all of it’s colonies in South America. Additionally, Spain occupied Hispanola, Puerto Rico and Cuba.

England, in addition to the 13 American colonies, owned parts of Canada, Bermuda, The Bahamas, Jamaica, Florida and West Florida, including some forts on the east bank of the

Mississippi River as far north as Natchez (now Mississippi). England and Spain were traditional enemies, since at least 1588 when Lord Nelson and Admiral Sir Robert Cross defeated the Spanish Armada; and the following year when Admiral Cross captured Cadiz.

Spain had lost Florida to England after a seven year war, which also cost Spain it’s valuable colony in the Philippines. British West Florida included the southern part of what is now Mississippi and Alabama. It resulted from cessions by France and Spain by treaty in 1762. Under the terms of that treaty, Spain regained Havana, a city captured by the British, and Britain obtained Spanish Florida. Under a separate treaty, Spain received Louisiana from France. Pensacola was the capital of British West Florida.

## SPAIN’S GOALS:

Spain sought the return of Florida and West Florida, and to keep Louisiana. Spain also desired the return of Gibraltar and the island of Minorca in the Mediterranean. It was also to Spain’s interest to remove England from it’s sphere of influence in the new world. Carlos, III, king of Spain, wanted revenge against England. As the rumblings of independence became louder in the American colonies, Spain saw it’s opportunity.

## SPANISH ASSISTANCE:

The courts of Madrid and Paris had agreed, early in the year 1776, upon a plan for giving secret assistance to the revolting colonies. It was agreed between them that in order to insure the

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secrecy of their support, all monies and supplies open business transactions.<sup>1</sup>

Sympathy for the Americans, when they began open hostilities against the mother country, ran high throughout Spain. At that time, however, Spain was not in a position to make her sympathy openly known. She was engaged in a war with Portugal over possessions in South America that was costing her vast amounts in money and many men and ships. England, the open ally of Portugal, held the dangerous points of Minorca, Mahan, and Gibraltar. Her navy was the most powerful on the seas, second in numbers only to the Spanish fleet.

Carlos, III was, at this time, diplomatically involved in peace negotiations with Portugal and could not afford to enter into any alliance that might endanger those negotiations. To become openly engaged in the struggle of the American colonists against their mother country would certainly lead to a declaration of war by England. It would invite an immediate blockade of all Spanish ports, which would end any possibility of signing the desired treaty with Portugal. This explains the reasons why Spain decided to keep secret her aid to the revolting colonies.

The two Bourbon Courts would initially make an outright gift of two million “livres tournaises,” one million to come from each country. One of the first moves consisted of setting up a fictitious company to direct the aid program, make purchases of supplies, arrange

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<sup>1</sup> Why was it feasible on 4 July 1776 for the American Colonies to declare independence? One partial answer is that the framers knew that France and Spain were in support and would presumably be trading partners for the future. Without such support, it would not have made sense to declare independence from one’s lifeline, and the war would have taken some other course.

should be handled by a third party and appear as for their shipment to the colonies, contact American agents living in France, and account for the money spent<sup>2</sup>. Even before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Carlos, III began to supply the colonists with guns, ammunition, supplies and money.

Thus, in June 1776, when the American Revolution had just begun, we find both Spain and France acting officially, though under the seal of secrecy, as allies of the English colonies against their mother country. Even before this date, however, supplies had been going out on a haphazard basis through the ports of Spain, France, and Holland, as ship captains from America picked up arms and ammunition in personal trading ventures. Moreover, much important trade of this nature had been going on through the Spanish ports in the West Indies. Using these same ports as bases, American captains had been able to prey upon British merchant vessels during the first months of the war.

#### **SPAIN SENDS SUPPLIES TO THE COLONIES UP THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER:**

In August 1776, General Charles Henry Lee, second in command under George Washington sent Capt. George Gibson, a Virginian, with a group of 16 American colonists, from Ft. Pitt to New Orleans, to obtain supplies from Spain. Lee’s request included guns, gun powder, blankets and medicine. New Orleans businessman, Oliver Pollock introduced Capt. Gibson to Spanish Governor Unzaga, who agreed to supply the colonists. The following month, Spain sent 9,000 pounds of gunpowder

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<sup>2</sup> The dummy company was the famous “Rodrigue Hortalez and Company,” and its main director was the French playwright and statesman Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais.

to the colonists up the Mississippi River, and an additional 1,000 pounds by ship to Philadelphia.

On 25 November 1776, Carlos, III ordered Bernardo Galvez to collect information about the British colonies. Subsequently, he was ordered to render secret help to the colonists. In 1777, Governor Unzaga introduced Pollock to General Galvez. By July 1777, Spain sent another 2,000 barrels of gun powder, lead and clothing up the Mississippi to assist the colonists in their revolutionary cause. Carlos, III made secret loans to the colonists of 1,000,000 livres. Additional arms, ammunition and provisions were sent by the Spaniards to George Rogers Clark's Mississippi River posts and to George Washington's continental army.

In 1777 Benjamin Franklin, American representative in France, arranged for the secret transport from Spain to the colonies of 215 bronze cannons; 4,000 tents; 13,000 grenades; 30,000 muskets, bayonets, and uniforms; over 50,000 musket balls and 300,000 pounds of gunpowder. A subsequent letter of thanks from Franklin to the Count of Aranda for 12,000 muskets sent to Boston from Spain was found.

By September 1777, Spain had already furnished the American insurgents with 1,870,000 livres tournoises. Before long, it became apparent to the court of Madrid that the funds which had been given equally by the two nations were being credited, by the Americans, solely to the Court of France.

During the period 1776-1779, Spain further provided a credit of about 8 million reales, which provided military and medical supplies of all kinds, and food to the colonists.

Nevertheless, Spain was still maintaining in 1777 the cloak of secrecy over its operations, a secrecy believed to be vital to the security of its (Spain's) American dominion. In the fall of 1777, Washington, his army short of clothing and war supplies, was facing the winter that might well decide the fate of his country.

Desperate agents of the colonies were becoming more and more indiscreet, announcing openly the sources of aid to America. By giving the strong impression that Spain and France were actually their open allies, they hoped to weaken England's will to continue the war.

#### **PATRICK HENRY WRITES TO GALVEZ:**

In October 1777, Patrick Henry wrote two letters to General Galvez, and another in January 1778. In each of those letters he requested more supplies. Henry also suggested in those letters that the two Floridas that Spain lost to England in 1763 should revert back to Spain.

In March 1778, U.S. Captain James Willing left Ft. Pitt with an expedition of 30 men. They raided and plundered British forts and property along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. They captured boats, barges, an armed British ship, and slaves. When Willing arrived in New Orleans with his rag tag flotilla of boats, the expedition had grown to 150 men. Galvez welcomed Willing and his men. He provided them with quarters and gave them free reign of the city. They auctioned off their British plunder. With the proceeds, they purchased military supplies for the Continental army from Galvez for their return trip.

George Rogers Clark received a considerable amount of his supplies which he used in his victories over the British at Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Vincennes in 1778-1779, up the Mississippi River from Galvez. Again, Oliver Pollock was instrumental in the transactions.

Galvez knew that a formal declaration of war was soon to come. Under the guise of recruiting an army for the defense of New Orleans, he prepared for formal war. Up until 21 June 1779, all of Spain's support for the colonists was secret. Much of the support was funneled through the French government, which took credit for these gifts and loans. On 21 June 1779 Spain formally declared war upon Great Britain.

#### **GALVEZ CAPTURES MANCHAC:**

On 27 August 1779 Galvez led his army 90 miles up the Mississippi to Ft. Bute at Manchac (in current Louisiana). He started with a force of 667 men, which included 170 veteran soldiers; 330 recruits newly arrived from Mexico and the Canary Islands, and an assortment of Cubans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, militiamen, free Blacks and Mulattoes, and 7 American volunteers, including Oliver Pollock. Part of the force traveled in a flotilla of four boats, under the command of Juan Alvarez, while the main body went by land.

Along the way Galvez enlisted an additional 600 men from the German and Acadian coasts and 160 Indians. When he finally arrived to confront the British, his army consisted of 1,427 men. They attacked and seized Manchac on 7 September, taking 20 prisoners. Nearby developed the town of Galveztown, which was later settled by the Canary Islanders<sup>3</sup>.

#### **GALVEZ CAPTURES BATON ROUGE AND NATCHEZ:**

Unknown to Galvez at the time, Carlos, III had issued a proclamation on 29 August 1779, stating that the main objective of the Spanish troops in American was to drive the British out of the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River.

On 20 September 1779 his army captured Baton Rouge and negotiated the surrender of Natchez also. He took 375 prisoners from Baton Rouge and an additional 80 from Natchez. By clearing the Mississippi, this allowed Capt. William Pickles to bring an American schooner onto Lake Pontchartrain. Capt. Pickles boarded and seized the English privateer, *West Florida*, which had dominated the lake for two years. The Canary Islanders took other prize ships at Galveztown. For his efforts, Galvez was promoted to Brigadier General.

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<sup>3</sup> Many Canary Islanders settled in and around San Antonio.

#### **GALVEZ ATTACKS MOBILE:**

On 28 January 1780 Gen. Galvez led a flotilla of 12 ships and 754 men from New Orleans to attack the English at Mobile. They arrived at Mobile on 10 February. Also under his command were an additional 1,412 men from Havana, which arrived ten days later. By 9 March he had forced the British to surrender. Galvez was promoted to Field Marshall and given command of all Spanish operations in America.

Because of perceived foot dragging by Havana officials in their preparations for an attack on Pensacola, Galvez went to Havana to supervise the operation. By 16 October he was ready. On that day he sailed from Havana with 7 warships, 5 frigates, 3 smaller war ships and 49 transport ships. His force totaled 164 officers and 3,829 men. Two days out of Havana, this flotilla was hit by a hurricane, and many were lost. The survivors retreated to Havana.

For fear that the English at Pensacola might try to retake Mobile before he could regroup for another attack on Pensacola, Galvez dispatched two warships and 500 soldiers to reinforce Mobile. It was not until 28 February 1781 that his second flotilla was prepared to set sail from Havana. This smaller force consisted of one man of war, three frigates, one packet and several smaller transports, with a force of only 1,315 soldiers. He had previously sent word to New Orleans and Mobile respectively to have troops from those posts to join in the attack.

#### **SPANISH SIEGE OF PENSACOLA TAKES TWO MONTHS:**

The two month siege of Pensacola began on 9 March 1781. Mobile sent 500 men to join Galvez, while 1,400 arrived from New Orleans. His total force consisted of about 3,500 men. Some 1,600 reinforcements from Havana arrived on 19 April. About the same time, four French frigates joined in the battle, together with 725 French soldiers. By 23 April Galvez commanded a force of 7,800 men. On 8 May

1781, the British surrendered. The British lost 105 men in the siege; 1,113 were taken prisoner and an additional 300 were allowed to return to Georgia, with their promise not to rejoin the British army. Spain's losses were 74 killed and 198 wounded.

The activities of Spanish privateers were also an important factor as they helped to cripple English means of communication and transportation. Among these privateers was the Spaniard Jorge Farragut, father of David G. Farragut, famous for his capture of New Orleans, during the War for Southern Independence, in April 1862.

Carlos, III added to Galvez' titles "Count of Galvez, Viscount of Galveztown, and Governor of West Florida and Louisiana". He was also promoted to Lt. General. Following Gen. Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown on 19 October 1781, but before the Treaty of Paris was signed between the colonists and England in 1783, Galvez continued in his attacks against the English. He personally supervised the attack on the Bahamas and its surrender on 6 May 1782. His army consisted on 274 regulars and 338 militiamen. They captured 12 privateer ships and 65 English merchant vessels.

#### **GALVEZ DEFEATS THE BRITISH IN THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY:**

Galvez' forces also secured the upper Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. He defeated the British at San Luis (St. Louis, Missouri), and San Jose (St. Joseph, Michigan). Spanish forces also assisted General George Rogers Clark at Vincennes (Indiana), Kaskaskia and Cahokia (Illinois).

Following his victory at Pensacola, Galvez gave the French flotilla that participated in the battle of Pensacola, some 500,000 pesos. The French used this money to reprovision their ships. Those ships were part of the French fleet which blockaded Yorktown, which led to the surrender of the British on 19 October 1781. In 1782 Galvez forced the British out of the Bahamas.

#### **Spain Engaged the British Elsewhere:**

During the American Revolutionary War, Spain also engaged the British in other places around the world. There were battles in the Philippines, Galapagos, Juan Fernandez Islands, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Minorca and Gibraltar.

#### **THE TEXAS CONNECTION:**

It is well known that an army travels on its stomach. A well fed army is a good army. During the period 1779-1782, somewhere between 9,000 and 15,000 head of cattle were provided to Galvez' army by ranchers living along the San Antonio River between San Antonio and Goliad. In addition, this area sent several hundred head of horses and many bulls to perpetuate the herds. These herds of cattle and horses were driven from Texas to Louisiana by soldiers, militiamen, Indians, and vaqueros from San Antonio de Bexar, La Bahia (Goliad) and El Fuerte del Cibolo (a fort no longer standing, in what is now Karnes County). Some of these men stayed and fought with Galvez' army.

#### **THE PRESIDIO, MISSIONS, PUEBLAS AND RANCHEROS OF SOUTH TEXAS:**

The area of our primary concern was called Nueva Espana (New Spain). It was divided into five provinces: La Provincia de Nuevo Mexico (New Mexico), which included Santa Fe, the capital of which was El Paso; La Provincia de Nueva Vizcaya (New Biscay, the capitol of which was Chihuahua, and which included the Big Bend area of present day Texas; La Provincia de Nueva Estremadura (Coahuila - which included Laredo, and north west along the Rio Grande to the Big Bend; and La Provincia de Nuevo Santander (New Santander); and the last, La Provincia de Texas o Las Nuevas Filipinas (The Province of Texas or The New Philippines), extended from the Nueces River on the south and west to the Red River on the north

and east; and from the Gulf Coast on the south to the “Arctic snows” on the north.

Although described as a large chunk of present day U.S. and Canada, the hostile Indians limited the land actually occupied by the Spanish, to present day Texas and Louisiana. The attention of this article will be directed to the Province of Texas.

Spain followed a very rigid order of settlement in New Spain. In each settlement there were four pillars: the presidio, the missions, the pueblos, and the rancheros. San Antonio de Bexar became the capitol in 1773. At that time it contained five active missions, a pueblo and a presidio.

1. **The presidio**, like a fort, is where the soldiers were garrisoned. On a typical day at the presidio of San Antonio, which normally had a roster of between 81-106 men; 25% of the men were on duty at the presidio; 25% were guarding the horse herd; while another 1/4 were out looking for Indians. Of the remainder, about 20 were stationed at El Fuente del Cibolo, to guard the ranchers; while between 4-7 were assigned guard duty for the mail and payroll.

2. **The missions**, with a small settlement of Indians and those who worked the rancheros owned and operated by the mission. San Antonio had five missions, all of which were built along the banks of the San Antonio River. They are listed in the order of their respective location along the river:

- a) **The Alamo**. Construction began in 1724. It was nearest to the presidio and near the governor’s mansion.
- b) **Mission Conception** was originally built in East Texas in 1716. It was moved to San Antonio in 1731. It boasts Moorish archways and intricately carved stone.
- c) **Mission San Jose** was founded in 1720, and is famous for it’s stone rose window. There was a wheat mill on the mission grounds. It is the only mission that has been fully restored, and is still operated as a Franciscan parish church..

d) **Mission San Juan**. It also was founded in East Texas. This 1716 church was also moved to San Antonio in 1731. It is known for it’s distinctive bell towers and a laminated, carved altar. Pataguilla, was a ranch run by the Indians of this mission.

e) **Mission Espada** is the oldest of the five. Founded in 1690 in East Texas, it was the third of these missions to be moved to San Antonio in 1731. This mission owned and operated Las Cabras Ranch, which was later owned by Manuel Barrera. The foundation walls, a granary, a two story convent, workshops and Indian apartments are still standing. There is now a small museum featuring ranching traditions.

3. **The pueblos** or villas are where the remaining settlers and Indians lived. All men, including Indians, over 16 years of age, were part of the militia. They provided their own horse, saddle, weapon and ammunition. They were called up as the need arose, primarily to fend off attacks by raiding Indians. The main town was San Antonio. Other place names in the area were: Las Islitas was a settlement of Canary Islanders who lived near “Sheep Crossing”, on the present road to Elmendorf.

- a) Paso de Maldonado was probably named for the Maldonado family. It was located near present day Floresville, was
- b) Los Chayopines, near present day Floresville, was
- c) Fuerte del Santa Cruz de Cibolo. Don Andres Hernandez
- d) Ojos de Santa Cruz “Holy Cross Springs”, now S
- e) La Bahia (Goliad), which had two missions: Spirit
- f) Nogales “walnuts”, which later became Walnut Springs;

4. **The ranchos**, where longhorn cattle were raised included the following:

- de la Garza (on Leon Creek & the San Antonio River).
- Delgado (on Leon Creek).
- Navarro (on Leon Creek).
- Ruiz (on Leon Creek).
- Perez (on Leon Creek).
- San Lucas (on the Medina River) [owned by

Domingo Costelo].  
 Perez (on Leon Creek).  
 Laguna de las Animas "Lagoon of the Spirits" (on the San Antonio River) [owned by Manuel Delgado; then the Zambranos.  
 El Atascoso (on the Atascosa River) [owned by Mission San Jose].  
 Montes de Oca (on the Salado Creek & San Antonio River).  
 de la Garza - north (on the east side of the San Antonio River).  
 Gertrudis Rodriguez (on the Salado Creek).  
 Rancho de las Hermanas (on the Salado Creek) [owned by Courbier-Duran heirs].  
 Gortari (between the San Antonio River & Cibolo Creek).  
 Monjaras (between the San Antonio River & Cibolo Creek).  
 Seguin (on the San Antonio River).  
 Las Cayopines [Francisco Flores de Abrego] (on the San Antonio River).  
 San Yidefonso de Chayopin [owned by Joseph Ygnacio de la Pena].  
 Nuestra Senora del Chayopin [in 1791 owned by Dona Manuela Montes, widow of Juan de Arocha].  
 Paso de las Mujeres (on the San Antonio River) [owned by the Ignacio Calvillo heirs].  
 Las Cabras (on the San Antonio River).  
 Rivas (on Leon Creek).  
 La Mora "Mulberry Ranch" (on the San Antonio River)[owned by the Mission San Antonio de Valero]. Manual Diaz was a vaquero on this ranch in 1789.  
 de la Garza - south (on the west side of the San Antonio River).  
 Senor San Jose (on the San Antonio River) [owned by Carlos Martinez, who was killed by Indians in 1815].  
 Rancho de Capitan Piscina (on the San Antonio River) [the La Bahia captain].  
 Pasture lands of Rosario (between the Aransas & San Antonio Rivers).  
 San Rafael (on the San Antonio River in present day Wilson County) [owned by heirs of Simon & Juan de Arocha].  
 San Rafael de los Varais [owned in 1791 by Luis Antonio Menchaca].  
 San Francisco (on the San Antonio River to

Marcelina Creek) [owned by Luis Antonio Menchaca].  
 Pataguilla (on the San Antonio River) [owned by the mission Indians].  
 San Bartolo (Between the San Antonio River & Cibolo Creek).  
 San Bartolome del Cerrito (west bank of the Cibolo Creek) [owned by Andres Hernandez, and wife, Juana de Ollos; but leased to 8 users].  
 Rodriguez (on the Cibolo Creek).  
 El Paistle (on the Cibolo Creek) [owned by Sebastian Monjaras in 1770's; then by the Balmacedas family].  
 Tarin (on the Cibolo Creek ).  
 Flores (on the Cibolo Creek).  
 San Vicente de las Mulas (on the Cibolo Creek) [owned by Vicente Alvarez Travieso & his sons, Tomas & Francisco].  
 San Lorenzo de las Mulas (on the Cibolo Creek) [owned by Maria Robaina de Betancourt, widow of Lorenzo de Armas].  
 Leal (on the Cibolo Creek).  
 Guerra (on the Cibolo Creek).  
 Los Corralitos (on the Cibolo Creek) [in 1761 deeded to Mission Espiritu Santo by Don Bernabe Carvajal].  
 Pasture lands of Espiritu Santo (north east of the Cibolo Creek).  
 Palo Quemado ( on the Ecletto Creek, east of the Cibilo Creek) [owned by Lorenzo de Armas, second husband of Maria Robaina de Betancourt].  
 San Antonio del Cibolo [owned by the Granado de Armas family].  
 Burnt Wood Ranch [owned by the Granado de Armas family].  
 San Jose de los Alamos {owned by Leonora Delgado, widow of Juan Jose Flores].  
 Nuestra Senora de la Candelaria de las Calaveras [owned by Macario Sambrano; by 1791, partly owned by Salvador Rodriguez].  
 Santa Cruz de la Laja [owned by Diego Yrineo Rodriguez].  
 San Cristobal de Espanta Perros [operated by Manual Delgado].  
 San Antonio del Cibolo (on the Cibolo Creek) [owned br Maria Robaina de Betancourt, widow of Lorenzo de Armas].  
 San Miguel de Amoladeras (on the Cibolo

Creek) [operated by Miguel Guerra].  
Senor San Jose (San Antonio River) [owned in 1791 by Carlos Martinez].  
Rancho del Diesmero [rented from Mission Rosario by Juan Barrera].  
Small ranch owners near San Antonio, whose ranches had no distinctive names included: Joseph Martin del la Garza; Juachin de la Garza; Miguel Gortari; Herrera family; Leal family; Micheli family; Navarro family; Juan Ignacio Perez; Luis Perez; Juan Manuel Perez; Francisco Xavier Rodriguez; and Juan Manuel Ruiz.  
Antonio Gil Ybarbo, Lt. Governor of the Texas Province, owned a ranch at Lobanillo, near Nacogdoches, which also supplied cattle to Galvez.

### **TEXAS WAS PRIME CATTLE COUNTRY:**

In the Texas census of 1783, there were 1,248 men, women and children living in the presidio and adjacent San Antonio de Bexar area. Another 554 lived in the missions. The total population of Texas in 1783 was 2,819. This census labeled each resident by name, age group, sex, and heritage. The heritage categories included Spaniard, Frenchmen, mestizo, mulatto, lobo (Indian and mulatto cross), coyote (Indian and mestizo cross), Indian and slave. The San Antonio population included immigrants from the Canary Islands, who began immigrating in 1731. Six of the 23 towns in New Spain between the Nueces River and Laredo were on the San Antonio River.

The prime cattle raising areas of Texas in those days were in a rough diamond shaped area with San Antonio in the north; Brownsville in the south; Laredo on the west; and Old Indianola in the east. The nucleus of the best land was between San Antonio and Goliad, along the San Antonio, Cibolo and Guadalupe Rivers.

The ranchers who sold beef to Galvez and the drovers were all patriots. Additionally, all the men who were members of the Spanish army and the local militia during the time in question, qualify as patriots within the definition of the Sons of the American Revolution. In addition to

their service in the army and/or the militia, each Texan male over 18 most likely made a financial contribution to the war, as requested by Carlos, III in August 1781. Each Spanish male over 18 was expected to donate 2 pesos, while Indians and those of mixed blood were asked to donate 1 peso. Collections continued until 1784, when news of the peace treaty finally arrived. No contributor lists survive, but there are census records.

The king's declaration of war included a request for public prayer directed to all priests and church officials. The priests complied, praying both in Spanish and in the local Indian dialects on a regular basis. Thus, each of the mission priests and the church hierarchy in New Spain were also patriots.

Because of hostile Indians, the cattle were driven to New Orleans by way of Nacogdoches. The militia leader there was on Antonio Gil Ybarbo, who held the title of Lt. Governor. Cattle from his ranch were added to the herd driven to Galvez. From there the herds went through Nachitoches and Opelousas to New Orleans.

### **CURRENT DESCENDANTS OF SPANISH PATRIOTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN PATRIOTIC LINEAGE SOCIETIES:**

An exhaustive list of known soldiers garrisoned in Texas; the priests and citizens of the pueblos; the ranchers who sold the cattle and vaqueros who drove the cattle to Louisiana; the mission Indians, including those who served as scouts and interpreters, and other patriots of the American Revolution are contained in *Spain's Texas Patriots in its 1779-1783 War with England During the American Revolution* by Granville W. and N.C. Hough, which also contains the names of many of their wives.

Names of many of these patriots are also found in *The Texas Connection With The American Revolution*, by Robert H. Thonhoff, Eakin Press, Burnett, TX, 1981), including the names and



positions of the “Cavalry Company of the Royal Presidio of La Bahia del Espiritu Santo”.

It should be noted that at the present time the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) accepts descendants of king Carlos, III; General Bernardo Galvez and members of his army in Louisiana, which are referred to as “Louisiana Patriots”. Those who served as early as 1776 are accepted by the DAR based on Spain’s covert support of the colonists. They also accept the descendants of those ranchers who provided cattle to Gen. Galvez’ army.

To date however, it is not believed that the DAR has accepted as patriots, those members of the Spanish army and/or militia who served during the period after Spain’s declaration of war; those non military colonists who answered king Carlos’ call for contributions; or those who served as drovers on the cattle drive to Louisiana. Perhaps no one has applied for membership in the DAR using one of these men as their patriot. Mr. Hough’s comprehensive studies of the Spanish involvement in Texas, California, Arizona and New Mexico have been donated to the libraries of both the DAR and the SAR.

It is certain that many of these early Spanish patriot’s descendants still reside in Texas. Hopefully many of them will take the time to apply for membership in the Sons of the American Revolution<sup>4</sup> and the Daughters of the American Revolution. It will be up to the membership chairman of each chapter to encourage this group of descendants to apply for membership.

#### **Descendants of Spanish Royalty Are Eligible For Membership in Patriotic Organizations:**

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<sup>4</sup> Any man interested in joining the Sons of the American Revolution can obtain information from the author at 210-698-8964 or by e-mail at [judge58@aol.com](mailto:judge58@aol.com)

The descendants of Carlos, III, King of Spain, during the American Revolution, are eligible for membership in patriotic lineage organizations. His Royal Highness, Juan Carlos I, current King of Spain, was inducted into the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) in 2000. His cousin, His Highness, Don Francisco Enrique de Borbon y Escasny, Duke of Seville, was inducted into the SAR in May 2001.

#### **SUMMARY OF SPAIN’S ASSISTANCE TO THE COLONISTS:**

Galvez and his troops were successful in their attempt to remove England from the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Their actions prevented the British from creating a second front with the American colonists, and removed the British soldiers involved from the war with the colonists. Spain’s military attacks in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere, actually caused England to divert ships and men which could have been used against the colonists. It left the Mississippi (and the Ohio) River open as a vital life line to the colonists. Spain also provided both directly (through Galvez and the dummy corporation) and indirectly (through the French) loans, gifts and much needed supplies.

Spain’s entry into the War came at a time that was highly critical for the colonists, who were trying to fight the strongest nation in Europe almost barehanded. In 1778, the center of gravity of the war had been transferred from the North to the South and there the fortunes of war were not exactly favoring the colonists. That year the English took Savannah and Charleston, as well as other towns, causing severe setbacks for the American forces which had lost some 5,000 men.

It was then that the British hastened to implement their plans for the capture of New Orleans. There is little doubt that their success would have given them permanent command of the Mississippi Basin, from Canada to the Gulf. This would have been tragic for the colonists. With the British already controlling all the east

coast, Canada and Florida, and the Bahamas, their possession of the Mississippi River valley would have strangled the rebellion to death.

Spain's declaration of war on England forced the British to fight on several fronts at the same time, having to oppose the combined Franco-Spanish fleet of 90 vessels which was laying siege to Gibraltar, and (which) had even threatened to invade England itself. In this way, they tied up a sizeable percentage of the British fleet from the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean, making it impossible for England to effect a blockade on the American Coast, and so facilitating the operation of an ever-growing fleet of American and foreign privateers.

Upon his father's death in 1785, Governor Galvez was named Viceroy of New Spain. He died in Mexico City on 30 November 1786 at 40 years of age.

#### **OFFICIAL THANKS TO SPAIN FROM THE UNITED STATES:**

On 8 November 1779 Thomas Jefferson wrote to General Galvez, expressing his thanks for Spain's assistance to the revolutionary cause. In George Washington's farewell to his officers, he toasted Spain for its assistance during the revolutionary war. In 1784 the U.S. Congress cited General Galvez and the Spanish government for their aid during the Revolution.

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#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Judge Edward F. Butler, Sr. is a retired U.S. Administrative Law Judge, before which position he served as Presiding Municipal Judge for South Padre Island, Texas. He is an honor graduate of Vanderbilt University School of Law, and was a board certified civil trial lawyer before assuming full time duties on the bench. He is the author of six books, three of which are on family history.

Judge Butler is a frequent seminar and after dinner speaker on historical and genealogical topics, and is a regular contributor to national and state historical and genealogical society journals and magazines.

Since his retirement in 1997, he has devoted a considerable amount of his time and energy to the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, where he served as President General, and Chairman of the Board of the SAR Foundation.

In March 2001, SAR President-General Larry D. McClanahan, appointed Judge Butler as Ambassador to Mexico and Central America. Judge Butler's interest in Spain's assistance to the colonists in the American Revolutionary War stems from his participation with the SAR.

Judge Butler is an active member of the National Genealogical Society; the Texas Genealogical Society; and the San Antonio Historical and Genealogical Society; as well as numerous other state and local genealogical societies.

Judge Butler, previously served as Genealogist General of the national SAR before which he served as Genealogist for the Texas Society, SAR. He served for seven years as a member of the National SAR genealogy committee. He served for two years as genealogical editor of *The Texas Compatriot*, magazine of the Texas Society of SAR. He also published a monthly column for SAR chapter newsletters, entitled "The Genealogy Corner". He was the current author of the monthly historical column, "Remembering Yesterday", carried in many Texas newspapers.

In July 2011 he was made an Honorary Member of the Order of the Granaderos Y Damas de Bernardo de Galvez. In July 2012 he was the founder and Charter Grand Viscount General of the Order of the Founders of North America 1492-1692.